



AMERICAN WINE SOCIETY Grapevine



Lehigh Valley Chapter January 2024

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Education: Suzanne Laverick-Stone

LehighValleyAWS.org

January Lehigh Valley Chapter Tasting

Virginia 2023 Governor's Cup

Sunday, Jan 14, 2024 at 2:00 PM

Terasas' Italian Restaurant

6561 Tilghman Street, Allentown, PA 18106

Hosted by Mike & Nancy Parker

Register at LVAWS.org by Saturday, January 6th



January Lehigh Valley Chapter BYOB

BYOB at Ayat

Middle Eastern Cuisine

Wednesday, Jan 17, 2024 at 6:00 PM

1243 Tilghman Street, Allentown, PA 18104

Hosted by Ann Vlot

Register at LVAWS.org by Friday, January 12th



February Lehigh Valley Chapter Tasting

Wines of South Africa

Sunday, Feb 18, 2024 - 1:00PM to 4:00PM

The Trapp Door Gastropub

4226 Chestnut Street (Rt. 29), Emmaus, PA 18049

Hosted by David & Shannon Tompkins

Register at LVAWS.org by Sunday, February 11th



February Lehigh Valley Chapter BYOB

BYOB at Ecco Domani Italian Restaurant

Tuesday, Feb 20, 2024 at 6:00 PM

216 E. Fairmount Street, Coopersburg, PA 18036

Hosted by Ann Vlot

Register at LVAWS.org by Thursday, February 15th



March Lehigh Valley Chapter Tasting

Taste the Difference

Sunday, March 10, 2024 at 2:00PM

Teresa's Italian Restaurant

6561 Tilghman Street, Allentown, PA 18106

Hosted by Mark and Kathy Breloff

Register at LVAWS.org by Saturday, March 2nd

SAVE THE DATE

Message from the Chair - Kevin Campbell

I want to first recognize the outstanding job Leslie and Peter did over the last four years! The Chapter was already recognized as one of the best in the country when they took the baton from Percy. They kept the momentum going and the Chapter is thriving in every way. It is no surprise that they were awarded the AWS Chapter Chairs of the year.

Now that the baton has been passed to me, I obviously feel a huge responsibility. The Staffeld's always gave credit to the team of members that contributed on a monthly basis to the success of the Chapter. I will be relying on the same, and really even more, support and am happy to report that the team is largely remaining in place and even growing stronger.

With my taking the Chair position, Kathy and Mark Breloff were elected and accepted the position as co-vice-chairs. Joe Pugliese was elected and has agreed to remain on as Treasurer. Mike Orbin will continue to coordinate the newsletter, Suzanne Laverick-Stone will continue with education, Mike Parker the website, Nancy Parker social media, Matt Green new members, Ann Vlot BYOBs and Dean Scott will continue with the AWSEF Scholarship and as the Regional Ambassador. I will continue to share responsibility for the Chairman Selection with the Breloff's and Tompkins.

Peter and Leslie, as well as Percy and Anne, will remain on the board as ex-officio members in advisory roles. Barry Isett and Judi Roggie will remain as active members but are stepping down from our Board and we thank them for their years of service.

I am happy to report that Shannon and Dave Tompkins have accepted my invitation to join our Board. I have also asked Michele Campbell to join our board and to act in a secretary type role. Michele has been an executive assistant for more than 30 years and possesses many skills that I am rather weak in. I have also asked her to be a two-deep backup and assist Mike Orbin with the newsletter and Mike Parker with the website.

Our first Board meeting will be on Jan 11 and the minutes will be included in the February newsletter. If you have not already, please renew your membership for 2024 both with National AWS and LVAWS – see the last page of the newsletter for detailed information on doing this.

We will work hard to have exciting high-quality tastings and BYOBs each month and I encourage everyone to be active participants and make the most of your membership.

Happy New Year!

Kevin

Chair of the Lehigh Valley Chapter of the American Wine Society

Summary of December 7, 2023

Board of Directors Meeting – Kevin Campbell

The LVAWS Board had a brief meeting on December 7, held virtually through Zoom. Participating in the meeting were: Peter and Leslie Staffeld, Kevin Campbell, Dean Scott, Matt Green, Joe Pugliese, Ann Vlot, Mike and Nancy Parker and Mike Orbin.

The purpose of the meeting was to discuss the transition to the new Officers, the upcoming holiday party, get a brief update from the Treasurer and to report that Judi Roggie was stepping down from the Board.

No Board decisions requiring votes were made. **Leslie** reported that our membership has now grown to 141. **Joe Pugliese** gave a brief overview that our financial status is good and that he will provide a detailed report at our next Board meeting on Jan. 11.

Lehigh Valley AWS Holiday Party 2023

The LV AWS Holiday event was held on Sunday, December 10, 2023, at the Aster Event Center. A total of 70 members and guests had a very enjoyable evening. Thank you to **Jan Thomas**, **Nancy Parker** and **Ann Vlot** for planning such a wonderful event.

The wine table for sharing was a huge success as always. We shared a wide variety of interesting and enjoyable wines. Thank you to everyone that brought a bottle to share!

Special thanks to **Bonnie & Dean Scott** for hosting the Silent Auction and to **Joe Pugliese** for coordinating the 50/50 drawing with such enthusiasm! A total of \$1,441 was collected to benefit the AWS Education Fund scholarship program. Please see Dean's summary for additional details.

As is our tradition, our Co-Chairs, **Peter and Leslie Staffeld**, recognized everyone who held a tasting or contributed in other ways toward the success of the Chapter with a bottle of wine. This year we were fortunate and appreciative that Paul Mas donated the wine.

The Chapter then recognized the outstanding leadership of **Peter and Leslie** and presented them with a lovely tray constructed of oak wine barrel staves.

Based on the positive feedback, we are planning to hold the event at the same venue next year and **Jan Thomas** has agreed to coordinate it again – thank you **Jan!**

AWSEF NEWS – Dean Scott

I want to thank everyone that donated items for the AWS Education Fund silent auction, everyone that purchased items at the auction and everyone that supported the 50-50 drawing.



We collected \$1,441.00 at the Christmas party. \$340.00 will go toward the 2024 (\$3500) scholarship and \$1201.00 will go toward our next scholarship. We are off to a good start on providing a 2026 scholarship for \$3,500. These scholarships are for graduate students that are doing research in Viticulture, Enology, or grape related Agricultural studies. The program was started in 1999 and since then AWS has provided 169 students with scholarships at 25 different schools, amounting to over 1/2 million dollars. Penn State students have been recipients of 11 scholarships. Thanks to your help we hope to add another student to that list in 2024.



Special thanks to **Joe Pugliese** for his salesmanship for the 50-50 and **John** and **Julie Hassen** for their cash contribution.

Our 2021 Lehigh Valley Scholarship went to **Demetra Perry**, a PhD student at Cornell University. She is doing research on making premium, high quality wine out of Concord grapes. The Concord grape is the largest variety grown in Pennsylvania and New York. The demand and price for Concord grapes is dropping so **Demetra** is conducting research on what can be done to help utilize the vast number of Concord vineyards in our state by providing research on making premium Concord grape wine. For a complete article on **Demetra's** research and other AWSEF scholarship recipients go to: <https://www.awsef.org/Scholarships/PastWinners> . Thank you, Lehigh Valley members for your support of the AWS Education fund.



Dean Scott

January Lehigh Valley Chapter Tasting

Virginia 2023 Governor's Cup



Sunday, January 14, 2024 at 2:00 PM

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6561 Tilghman Street, Allentown, PA 18106

\$55 per person

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Virginia is the birthplace of the American wine industry tracing its roots to the days of Thomas Jefferson. Today there are over 300 wineries in the state with many producing exceptional wines year after year. Each spring, the Virginia Governor's Cup, one of the most stringent competitions in the US, is held where wineries throughout the state submit their best offerings to a panel of world class judges. In 2023, 614 wines were sampled with 142 receiving gold medals and the top twelve being designated as the Governors' Cup Case.

For this tasting we have chosen a selection of gold medal winning wines, focusing on the Governor's Cup Case, consisting of four white and five red wines from wineries in Virginia's Blue Ridge Mountains and historic Charlottesville area.

A buffet dinner will follow the tasting.



Limited to 40 people

Remember to bring 2 wine glasses and wine to share with dinner.

Wine Education – Wines of Virginia

Suzanne Laverick-Stone

“Though I am an old man, I am a young farmer.” Thomas Jefferson

Founding Father Thomas Jefferson is also known as the father of Virginia wine, even though he went to his grave never having made even a trickle. His lifelong accomplishments are many – he drafted the *Declaration of Independence* at 33, served as both Washington's secretary of state and John Adams' vice-president, and was elected the third president of the United States, but he never stopped trying to cultivate *Vitis vinifera* grapes to make the wine he drank and considered a “necessary” of life while Ambassador to France in 1785. He spent ludicrous amounts on importing French and Italian wines, one of the reasons he was often cash poor, a problem that could have been overcome by making his own (wine, not money 😊). We now know that his long absences (being president is a lot of work), black rot, phylloxera, voracious wildlife, a humid climate, and a lack of scientific understanding did him in as a viticulturist. It would take until the 20th century for his dream to come true. (It must be noted that Jefferson was a lifelong owner of slaves, with many working the vines; their anonymous stories are an important part of the narrative of Virginia as a wine area.)

Is there a doctor in the house?

Way before Thomas Jefferson's farming disappointments, Jamestown colonists attempted to set the stage as the birthplace of American wine in 1607. They tried making it from native grapes with no luck. Undeterred, in 1619, the Jamestown Assembly passed *Acte Twelve*, a law requiring all males to plant imported European grapes, and, you guessed it, that didn't work either; unknown to them, they were dealing with the phylloxera louse, but even if they knew, they would not have been able to solve it, so they moved onto a more profitable newcomer, tobacco. Finally, in 1825, Dr. Daniel Norton cultivated a local grape now known as the *Norton*, a *vinifera*/hybrid resistant to pests and happy with Virginia's climate and soil. Farmers in Missouri purchased Norton vines from him, and their wines won a gold medal in an international competition in Vienna in 1873. However, the Civil War, Prohibition, and the Great Depression curtailed the wine business in most of the United States, so Norton and other vines were put on hiatus for a long while.

At long last – Virginia Vino

For centuries, horse farms and tobacco were the Virginian moneymakers. It was not until the last few decades of the 20th century that winemaking started to pay the bills, with astronomical growth in the last two decades with over 300 wineries (mostly small, individually owned) and 4,000 acres planted to vine. Historically, European grapes could not be tamed by Virginia's climate and pests, but happily the self-pollinating *Vitis vinifera* did survive long enough to cross-pollinate with native grapes, creating hybrids. Today, these hybrids stand out in Virginia vineyards:

- The **Norton** hybrid was successfully cultivated by Dennis Horton in 1989 and today, Norton thrives in Virginia's soils. Most importantly, the wine does not have the "foxiness" of some other native or hybrid grapes. High malic acid, high acidity, and high pH levels can be challenging.
- **Chardonel** (the offspring of Chardonnay and Seyval Blanc) is a late-ripening grape which has inherited the acidity and fruitiness of Chardonnay, but is more resistant to cold and disease.
- **Chambourcin** is a red French-American hybrid cross-breed developed in France in 1963. Popular in the Loire Valley and Bordeaux for a time, it is now primarily cultivated in New York and Virginia. It is a *teinturier* grape, (reddish instead of clear juice), and tolerates humidity and pests.
- **Traminette** was developed at Cornell University in the 60s, the child of Gewürztraminer and a white French hybrid, bred to resist disease and cold.
- **Vidal Blanc**, a French hybrid, is cold-hardy and disease-resistant.

Twenty-first century winemakers know so much more than Jefferson, finally allowing the *Vitis vinifera* to thrive in Virginia. Discovered in the late 1800s, the solution to the louse issue was grafting resistant American rootstock to *Vitis vinifera*. Modern practices to combat hot, humid summers, cold winters, and climate change challenges allow many wines grapes to flourish in Virginia:

- **Chardonnay** is the most planted white grape in the state, but it is not without its challenges: it is prone to early budbreak and disease and is susceptible to frost.
- **Viognier**: Chardonnay leads the way in harvested grapes, but *Viognier* (vee-AH-nyay) has a claim as Virginia's official grape. Native to the Rhone Valley and genetically linked to Nebbiolo, it was first planted by Dennis Horton in 1989. Viognier requires a long, warm (but not too hot) growing season, and is prone to bud abortion and low yields from spring frosts and cold winters. Virginia's Viogniers have received recognition from no less than Oz Clarke, one of Britain's most famous wine writers, saying the wine "oozes with sex and sensuality." Well then, note to self: Put Virginia Viognier on the shopping list!
- **Petit Manseng** is a white grape from the Jurançon region of France. It is resistant to fungi and needs a long growing season.
- **Sauvignon Blanc** is coming on strong in Virginia. The secret is planting various new clones on appropriate rootstock.
- **Cabernet Franc**, one of Cabernet Sauvignon's parents, originated from the Loire region of France, and is Virginia's leading red grape. It can be a varietal or used to make Virginia's Meritage blends with varying amounts of Merlot, Petit Verdot, Cabernet Sauvignon, and Malbec.
- **Tannat** is a red grape originating from southwest France, and a recent addition to Virginia, but it is susceptible to extreme cold (ex.: the entire 2014 crop was lost), and its vigor must be handled with canopy management and bunch thinning.

"There are those who understand that the soil makes the wine, and then there are those who are idiots." Terry Theise

Today, the Virginia wine business is one of the fastest growing in the US and that can't happen without favorable terroir. There are eight American Viticulture Areas (AVAs), legal geographical regions used to identify specific terroirs. For a winery to put the AVA on the label, it must contain 85% of grapes from within its boundaries. Virginia spans the Atlantic coastline to the Blue Ridge Mountains, from the sea to almost 6,000 feet in the mountains, with soils including sandstone and limestone west of the Blue Ridge Mountains, sandstone and shale in the central Blue Ridge, gneiss, schist and greenstone in the Piedmont areas, and clay and sand in the coastal plains. Climate varies with latitudes from 36 to 39 degrees, but overall, the state is warm and humid. Rainfall is prevalent ranging from 39 to 45 inches throughout the year. Research is continuous, including the search for grapes that will make great wine but are more resilient in the face of Mother Nature, such as Tannat, Gros Manseng, and Petit Manseng. The eight AVAs are as follows:

- The ***Middleburg Virginia AVA*** (2012) is in the northern region relatively close to DC; it is the fastest growing wine area in Virginia. It has breathtaking rolling hills with the Potomac River to the north, the Blue Ridge Mountains to the west, and the Catoctin and Bull Run Mountains to the east. The AVA's reason for being is its granite and gneiss bedrock and sandstone soils lacking nutrients but good drainage, the right qualities to grow Norton, Viognier, Cabernet Franc, and Bordeaux reds such as Cabernet Sauvignon, Malbec, Merlot, and Syrah. The climate is more moderate than some areas in Virginia, but there is more rainfall, so the well-draining soils are important.
- The ***Shenandoah Valley AVA*** was the state's first (1987) and is the largest, spanning parts of Virginia and West Virginia. Its boundaries are the Blue Ridge Mountains to the east and the Alleghenies to the west, which protect the area from the ocean's wind and rain, a unique mesoclimate with a drier and warmer growing season than other AVAs. The soils are predominately ancient limestone with good drainage. There are 22 wineries, where happy oenophiles will find Chardonnay, Cabernet Sauvignon, Merlot, Cabernet Franc, Chambourcin, and Traminette.
- The ***North Fork of Roanoke AVA*** (1986) is a sub-AVA of Shenandoah Valley. Vineyards are found in altitudes from 1,200 to 2,200 feet in the Alleghenies. The climate is maritime humid subtropical, with constant movement of air, mitigating spring and fall frost damage and disease. Soils are gravel and loam and hillsides provide good drainage. Grapes include Cabernet Sauvignon, Cabernet Franc, Chardonnay, and Viognier.
- The ***Rocky Knob AVA*** (1987), a neighbor of North Fork, is also a sub-AVA of Shenandoah Valley; the first vineyards were planted in the 70s. Found in the Piedmont region of the Appalachians in southern Virginia, it has elevations of 3,500 feet and soils of gravel and loam providing good drainage. Its climate is the reason for its AVA status; rainfall is abundant, but the winds delay the onset of spring and budburst, and provide protection from fungal diseases. Grapes include Riesling, Cabernet Franc, Chardonnay, Merlot, and Cabernet Sauvignon.
- Thomas Jefferson would be pleased as punch that there is a ***Monticello AVA*** named after his beloved home. It is Virginia's oldest AVA (1984 with an expansion in 2019) located in the Piedmont area near Charlottesville. Most vineyards are planted on the hilly eastern slopes of the Blue Ridge Mountains in granite-based clay soils. The threat of mildew created by relatively high humidity requires trellising, canopy management, and grape selection. The AVA is impacted by "rivers of cold air," natural corridors of moisture causing cool air to sink, mitigating frost damage. Grapes include Virginia's best hits - Viognier, Chardonnay, Cabernet Sauvignon, and Cabernet Franc.
- Washington was an avid wine drinker thanks to his friend Jefferson who sent him barrels of the good stuff from France and Italy, so he would very happy to know about the ***Northern Neck George Washington Birthplace AVA***. Vineyards are found along the western shores of the Chesapeake Bay which moderates both summer and winter climates. The Northern Neck is a peninsula between the Potomac and Rappahannock Rivers with free-draining sandy loam. The usual suspects do well, including Chardonnay, Cabernet Franc, Vidal Blanc and Chambourcin.
- The ***Eastern Shore AVA*** (1991) is separated from mainland Virginia on the southern end of the Delmarva Peninsula bordered by the Atlantic and the Chesapeake Bay, with a temperate maritime climate and a longer growing season. Cabernet Franc and Chardonnay as well as Bordeaux grapes do well in the deep sandy loam soils of the relatively flat landscape and summer breezes protect against fungal diseases. Despite its size, there is only a small amount of acreage under vine in this beachy vacay spot.
- The ***Virginia Peninsula AVA*** (2021) is the newest and the one you can visit when in "olde" Williamsburg. It is narrow (15 miles at its widest) with sedimentary and clay soils and a temperature-moderating maritime subtropical climate; challenges include humidity and harvest season rains. Its borders include the James and York Rivers, and several grapes flourish including Cabernet Franc, Merlot, Chardonnay, Riesling, Viognier, Tannat, Petite Verdot, Petit Manseng, Norton, Chambourcin, and Vidal Blanc, so literally something for everyone.

(The ***Appalachian High Country AVA***, 2016, includes portions of Tennessee, North Carolina, and southwestern Virginia; it is sometimes included as a 9th AVA. Located in the Appalachians, vineyards are high elevation with cooler temperatures and 26 distinct soil types.)

Virginia's Pride and Joy

Moving forward, Virginia winemakers need to support successful cultivation of grapes to make world-class wines, so research is key. For the last several decades, Tony Wolf from Virginia Tech (recently retired) experimented with grapes that would grow well, and crop management techniques that would keep them healthy. The Jamestown colonists, Dr. Norton, and Jefferson notwithstanding, more recent pioneers have had an immeasurable impact, including Gabriele Rausse, an Italian who became the winemaker for Gianni Zonin's Barbourville Vineyards in 1976 when no one was thinking making wine in Virginia was a good idea. His work with Virginia's terroirs has helped lead others to winemaking success. And let's not forget the ladies! In 1974, Lucie Morton began using expertise in Virginia that she learned while traveling the world of winemaking, consulting to push the fledgling industry forward.

Many things need to fall into place for a wine region to gain recognition on par with some of the best in the world. One strategy is the recognition received from competitions, including Virginia's own annual **Governor's Cup**. Thomas Jefferson was the second governor of Virginia (seriously, did the man never sleep?), and he would have definitely made time to be a part of this prestigious competition run by the state wine association. A panel of wine experts judge hundreds of entries (made from 100% Virginia grapes, a competition rule) on a 100-point scale including appearance, aroma, flavor, overall quality, and commercial suitability, vying for gold, silver, and bronze status. The highest ranking 12 are judged to be the "Governor's Case," a very distinguished honor. A list of the winners as far back as 1982 can be found online, making for great research when planning a Virginia wine country visit. The latest years' winners were submitted from some of Virginia's finest vineyards, including Delfosse (2023 top winner for '21 Screaming Hawk), Williamsburg, Jefferson, Barbourville, Cana (2022 top winner for 2019 Unitè Reserve), Maggie Mallick, Trump, Wisdom Oak, Breaux, King, and many others. Virginia wineries also submit to national and international competitions – a recent example is Covert Wineworks' Chardonnay and Viognier winning gold at the 2023 San Francisco Chronicle Wine Competition. And this just in, as of November, 2023, Charlottesville area's Monticello AVA was named "Wine Region of the Year" by *Wine Enthusiast*, in competition with international areas in France, Italy, South Africa, and Australia.

"Virginia is my favorite North American wine region, because it makes the kinds of wines I like to drink...and have a second glass of." Steven Spurrier

You know you're onto something special when the wine gurus take notice. We sadly lost British wine writer Spurrier in 2021, but he had many wonderful things to say about Virginia wine. He first learned of it in London's 2010 Wine Fair, introduced by friend and fellow wine expert Hugh Johnson. Spurrier even served as a judge in the Virginia Governor's Cup competition. The state's wines have also been touted by others, including Kevin Zraly, Bartholomew Broadbent, Richard Leahy, and Andrew Jefford. That's not to say there aren't challenges. Modern Virginians no longer need to fear the louse that caused the demise of winemaking in the Jamestown colonial age and Jefferson's run, but they often go through an obstacle course of difficult weather to bring wines to market with cold winters, spring frosts, high heat, and humidity, which in turn can cause rot, mildew, and other devastations. And climate change is certainly no help. But, within the last two decades, there is a sense of optimism that business is good. Jefferson, America's first oenophile, said "...in nothing have the habits of the palate more decisive influence than in our relish of wines." That's 18th century lingo for "Wine rocks!" He would be proud to see that Virginian winemakers did not give up. Huzzah, and drink well, my friends.

See Sources for Wines of Virginia Wine Education Article at end of Newsletter.

January Lehigh Valley Chapter BYOB

BYOB at Ayat

Wednesday, January 17, 2024 at 6:00 PM

1243 Tilghman Street, Allentown, PA 18104

Hosted by Ann Vlot

Register at LVAWS.org by Friday, January 12th



Join us to see what all the buzz is about. Everyone is talking about the new restaurant in an old familiar spot. Some of us remember it as the Roundhouse, some will remember it as Bellissimo's.

Please remember to bring glasses and wine to share.

Any questions, please call Ann Vlot 610-393-6498

February Lehigh Valley Chapter Tasting

Wines of South Africa



Sunday, February 18, 2024 1:00PM-4:00PM

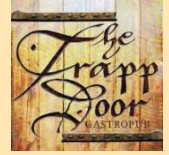
Hosted by David and Shannon Tompkins

The Trapp Door Gastropub

4226 Chestnut Street (Rt. 29), Emmaus, PA 18049

\$50 per person (wine and food)

Register at LVAWS.org by Sunday, February 11th



Get your palate ready! We will be blind tasting 10 wines of South Africa as well as starting with a Brut from Graham Beck (known for their sparkling wines)

Wines will include Chenin Blanc, Chardonnay, Sauvignon Blanc, Cinsault, Pinot Noir, Pinotage, a Red blend, Shiraz and Cabernet Sauvignon. We will be blind tasting these to the profile they should meet while discussing the area they are from to help assist in the nose and palate of the wine. Regions that we will be featuring will be Stellenbosch, Robertson, Elgin, Paarl, Walker Bay, Swartland and Cape Town.

Lunch will be buffet style and will feature food that will pair with the wines we will be tasting.

Limited to 40 people

Remember to bring 2 wine glasses and a bottle of wine to share.

February Lehigh Valley Chapter BYOB

BYOB at Ecco Domani Italian Restaurant



Tuesday, February 20, 2024 at 6:00 PM

216 E. Fairmount Street, Coopersburg, PA 18036

Hosted by Ann Vlot

Register at LVAWS.org by Thursday, February 15th

Let's make it up to Ecco Domani for our last-minute cancellation and gather for good food and cheer. They offer wood fired pizza, pasta, and traditional Italian fare in a casual atmosphere.

Please remember to bring glasses and wine to share.

Any questions, please call Ann Vlot 610-393-6498



March Lehigh Valley Chapter Tasting

Taste the Difference

SAVE THE DATE

Sunday, March 10, 2024 2:00PM

Hosted by Mark and Kathy Breloff

Terasas' Italian Restaurant

6561 Tilghman Street, Allentown, PA 18106

\$55 per person

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Does the price of the bottle/glass of wine influence us? Does the price alter our perception of the quality of the wine? If price is unknown, which wine would choose?

We will be doing a blind tasting of 5 different varietals at 2 different price points. We will provide tasting notes for each varietal wine.

A buffet dinner to follow the tasting.

Limited to 40 people

Remember to bring 2 wine glasses and a bottle of wine to share.



Chairman's Selection – Kevin Campbell

I continue to be amazed at both the quality and the prices of the Chairman Selection wines. Of the four wines described below, two of them are included in Wine Spectator's Top 100 Most Exciting Wines of 2023. The other two are both Wine Enthusiast 91 rated and Editor's Choice. We are very fortunate to have these wines so readily available to us and at such low prices.

All four wines below are available in large quantities at all the LV premium stores.

Chateau Jeremie 2021

VARIETY/STYLE: Red Blend

COUNTRY: France **REGION:** Languedoc

RATING: WS92 **PRODUCT CODE:** 100021075

\$9.99 (quoted at \$25)

There's a refreshing herbaceous lift in this delicious red, which nicely offsets the dense, ripe fruit profile. Cherry, plum and red currant fill out the palate, flecked with smoked meat, violet, forest floor and mineral details. Pencil shavings line the finish, marked by black pepper and smoke. Shows great character and balance. Blend of Carignan, Grenache, Syrah and Mourvèdre.

— **92 Points Wine Spectator, October 15, 2023**



Kevin's notes:

Maybe it was the design of the label or the \$9.99 price, but we did not have high expectations for this wine. However, immediately upon tasting it, Michele and I looked at each other and said, "this is good!" At the time, we were not aware that the wine came in at #86 on the Wine Spectator Top 100 of 2023 and had a 92 rating. Although there is no indication on the bottle, the winery is owned by Paul Mas who acquired and renovated it in 2014. The winery and the Corbieres region looks like a great place to visit. According to the Wine Spectator, only 2,000 cases were made and only 500 imported. PA must have bought most of those as there is plenty across the LV premium stores. It also appears that PA bought the wine prior to the WS rating – lucky us!

Bela 2021

VARIETY/STYLE: Tempranillo

COUNTRY: Spain **REGION:** Ribera del Duero

RATING: WS91 WA92 **PRODUCT CODE:** 000079711

\$12.99 (quoted at \$30)

An elegant red, with fine tannins enmeshed with flavors of pureed raspberry and black plum reduction, soft fig, thyme and lavender accents, while a minerally underpinning echoes on the finish. — **Wine Spectator**

The bread-and-butter wine here is the 2021 Bela, produced with Tempranillo from the village of Villalba de Duero (mentioned on the label), from sandy and clay rich soils on limestone mother rock that delivers powerful but not overripe wines with a short-ish élevage to achieve a fine-boned and fresh wine. Mostly Tempranillo but some 5% Cabernet Sauvignon and Merlot too, and it matured in French oak barrels for nine months. It's ripe without excess, with very integrated oak and a velvety palate with silky tannins. — **Robert Parker Wine Advocate 92**



Kevin's notes:

This wine came in at #79 of the Wine Spectator Top 100 of 2023. This was again a wine that Michele and I completely agreed on – it is good! We echo everything that WS and Robert Parker say above. Very solid, but not over ripe. Oak, but not too much with fine tannins.

Le Vigne Nikiara 2018

VARIETY/STYLE: Red Blend

COUNTRY: USA **REGION:** Paso Robles, CA

RATING: WE91 **PRODUCT CODE:** 100021026

\$19.99 (quoted at \$54)

Dried cherry and fresh red-flower aromas show on the nose of this blend of 65% Cabernet Sauvignon, 13% Merlot, 12% Cabernet Franc and 10% Petit Verdot. Bright strawberry flavors are spiced by cinnamon and sumac on the lively (rather than brooding) palate.

— **91 Points and Editors' Choice Wine Enthusiast, December 1, 2021**

Kevin's notes:

At \$19.99, this is on the high end for what I would pay for a Chairman Select, but it is worth it. Very well-balanced wine with a nice mouthfeel and not with the overly ripe fruit flavor that some Paso Robles wines have. Nikiara is Le Vigne Winery's flagship wine, whose namesake is a combination of names "Niki" and "Kiara", the two children of Owners Walter and Sylvia Filippini.



J. Wilkes 2020

VARIETY/STYLE: Chardonnay

COUNTRY: USA **REGION:** Paso Robles, CA

RATING: WE91 **PRODUCT CODE:** 100021027

\$12.99 (quoted at \$25)

A sleek new package presents a very solid vintage from this affordably priced brand, which silently sources much of its fruit from the legendary Bien Nacido Vineyard. Aromas of nectarine, honey and chamomile lead into a palate where a rocky tension delivers cohesive flavors of lemon curd, apple flesh and vanilla spice.— **91 Points and Editors' Choice Wine Enthusiast, October 1, 2022**

Lively aromas of brown spice with hints of orange blossom. Juicy flavors with a rich, creamy texture and a smokey and spicy finish. — **Winemaker's notes**

Kevin's notes:

Although this has the WE rating and Editor's Choice, it did not really impress us. We did get the smokey finish, it was not overly oaked, but would not describe it as rich and creamy. Even at \$12.99, in our opinion, there are better Chardonnay's out there at the price level.



Lehigh Valley Chapter Wine Tastings & Events

<u>2024</u>	<u>Hosts</u>	<u>Theme</u>
Jan 14	Nancy & Mike Parker	2023 VA Governor's Cup
Jan 17	Ann Vlot	BYOB Ayat
Feb 18	Shannon & Dave Tompkins	South Africa
Feb 20	Ann Vlot	BYOB Ecco Domani
Mar 10	Kathy & Mark Breloff	Taste the Difference
April	Geoff Harrington	Malbec
May	Joe Pugliese/Kevin Campbell	Italy vs France
June	THIS COULD BE YOU!	

Promoting wine appreciation through education

National and Lehigh Valley AWS Dues

YOU MUST JOIN BOTH THE NATIONAL AWS & THE LEHIGH VALLEY CHAPTER
Both memberships run from January to December.

National AWS Membership: To join, you need to register with both the national American Wine Society (AWS) organization and a local AWS chapter. The national organization has a variety of membership plans available, but the most popular are an "individual" membership for \$49/year, and a "household" membership (for two people at the same address) for \$62/year. You can register for one or two local chapters. We ask that you select the Lehigh Valley Chapter as your primary chapter! You can sign up for national membership online at AmericanWineSociety.org.

Lehigh Valley Chapter AWS Membership: The Lehigh Valley Chapter has one membership level which is **\$10 per year per person**. To join you can complete the form (below) and **mail** it (LVAWS Treasurer Joe Pugliese, PO Box 98, East Texas, PA 18046), **OR** you can individually visit **LVAWS.org and pay on-line**, **OR** you can individually go on LVAWS.org, sign in as a member, and then click the **Donations Tab** to pay dues for a spouse, family member, or friend.

Once you become a Lehigh Valley Chapter member you can register for all of our wine tastings, educational events, and BYOB dinner parties.

Name(s) _____

Email Address _____

Mailing Address _____

Phone # _____ **City** _____

State _____ **Zip code** _____

Pictures of Holiday Party







Sources for Wine Education Article

Sources: Jefford, A. (2016). *Andrew Jefford's Wine Course*; Hailman, J. (2006). *Thomas Jefferson on Wine.*; Leahy, R. (2020), *Beyond Jefferson's Vines: The Evolution of Quality Wine in Virginia*; <https://www.loc.gov/exhibits/jefferson/jeffdec.html>; <https://www.whitehouse.gov/about-the-white-house/presidents/thomas-jefferson/#:~:text=As%20the%20%E2%80%9Csilent%20member%E2%80%9D%20of,minister%20to%20France%20in%201785.>; <https://wineandcountrylife.com/virginia-wine-story/#:~:text=Thomas%20Jefferson's%20Vision%20for%20Virginia%20Wine&text=In%201773%20he%20recruited%20the,par%20with%20France%20and%20Italy.>; <https://vinepair.com/wine-blog/fascinating-history-behind-americas-oldest-native-grape-norton/>; <https://www.virginiamercury.com/2022/01/03/virginias-wine-industry-is-expanding-grape-growing-hasnt-caught-up/>; <https://www.wine-searcher.com/grape-726-chardonel>; <https://www.winetraveler.com/grape/chambourcin/#:~:text=Chambourcin%20is%20a%20French%20American,the%20MidAtlantic%20and%20Midwestern%20U.S.>; [www.virginiawine.org](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Viognier); <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Viognier>; <https://www.prnewswire.com/news-releases/breaux-vineyards-secures-coveted-spot-on-oz-clarkes-250-best-wines-2012-139806003.html>; <https://www.virginiawineguide.net/viognier>; <https://visforvino.com/virginia/>; <https://daily.seventy.com/regions/virginia-wine/>; <https://daily.seventy.com/regions/virginia-wine/#:~:text=Virginia%20is%20home%20to%20eight,Southern%20Virginia%20C%20and%20Virginia%20Mountains.>; <https://www.virginiawineguide.net/mash/wine-map-of-the-middleburg-ava>; <https://www.vinography.com/2008/08/the-shakespeare-of-terroir>; https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/North_Fork_of_Roanoke_AVA#:~:text=The%20North%20Fork%20of%20Roanoke,and%20Montgomery%20counties%20of%20Virginia.; <https://www.wine-searcher.com/regions-rocky%20knob>; <https://www.wine-searcher.com/regions-monticello#:~:text=Monticello%20is%20an%20American%20Viticultural,third%20US%20President%20C%20Thomas%20Jefferson.>; <https://www.wine-searcher.com/regions-northern%20neck%20george%20owashington%20obirthplace>; https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Virginia%27s_Eastern_Shore_AVA; <https://peninsulawinetrail.com/our-story/>; <https://www.jancisrobinson.com/articles/virginia-varietv#:~:text=If%20you%20associate%20American%20Cabernets,northern%20part%20of%20the%20state.>; <https://blog.virginiawine.org/rememering-steven-spurrier/>; <https://www.bstours.net/virginia-wines-why-go/>; <https://wineindustryadvisor.com/2023/11/14/virginia-wine-country-on-the-world-stage>; <https://www.virginiawine.org/governors-cup>;