



AMERICAN WINE SOCIETY Grapevine



Lehigh Valley Chapter February 2024

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Education: Suzanne Laverick-Stone

LehighValleyAWS.org

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

March Lehigh Valley Chapter BYOB BYOB at Delizioso Italian Grill



Thursday, March 21, 2024 at 6:00 PM

1985 Brookside Road, Macungie, PA 18062

Hosted by Ann Vlot

Register at LVAWS.org by Monday, March 18th

SAVE THE DATE

May Lehigh Valley Chapter Tasting

Italy vs France

Tuesday, May 21, 2024 at 6:00PM

Delizioso Italian Grill

1985 Brookside Road, Macungie, PA 18062

Hosted by Joe Pugliese and Kevin Campbell

Register at LVAWS.org



Message from the Chair - Kevin Campbell

Our Chapter got off to a nice start for 2024 with an awesome tasting hosted by Nancy and Mike Parker and another great BYOB coordinated by Ann Vlot.

Many of us are looking forward to the Tompkin's "South Africa" tasting in February and the Breloff's "Can You Taste Price" tasting in March. Geoff Harrington has us covered in April with a "Malbec" tasting and then in May Joe Pugliese and I will be co-hosting a knock-down drag-out "Italy vs. France" tasting. For August, Dean Scott has agreed to welcome us again to his beautiful vineyard with a theme yet to be finalized.

We still have five months of tastings left to fill and I want to encourage those that have yet to host a tasting to take the plunge. It is not as difficult as it may seem and is actually a lot of fun and a great learning experience. Several members of the Board have offered to be mentors, including myself, Tompkin's and Breloff's and others. We promise to assist you from beginning to end.

Rather than selecting a theme you are familiar with, select a theme that is new to you and possibly also new to many members of the Chapter. Remember, our key purpose as a Wine Society is education. Maybe it is a location you enjoyed visiting or would like to visit. Maybe it is a wine varietal that you would like to learn about. Start off by researching on the internet and then start sampling wines, which is really the fun part of doing "research". As Joe Pugliese suggested, it would be fun to follow the Italy vs. France tasting with similar themes such as Spain vs. Portugal, or Australia vs. New Zealand, or California vs. Washington State, etc.

Please welcome **two new members:** Bethany and John Horne. Shannon Tompkins brought Bethany along to the BYOB at Ayat. Bethany had such a good time that the following day she registered herself and husband John. We look forward to seeing you at the S. Africa tasting!

Cheers to 2024,

Kevin

Chair of the Lehigh Valley Chapter of the American Wine Society

Summary of Board of Directors Meeting - Michele Campbell

The Board meeting took place on January 11, 2024, starting at 6:02pm.

Attendees (in person or via Zoom): Kathy & Mark Breloff, Kevin & Michele Campbell, Anne & Percy Dougherty, Matt Green, Shannon & Dave Tompkins, Mike Orbin, Joe Pugliese, Nancy & Mike Parker, Dean Scott, Leslie & Peter Staffeld, and Ann Vlot.

Roles & Responsibilities

The Board discussed the various roles of each of the members from the newsletter to BYOB coordination, welcoming new members, Scholarships, etc...

1) Shannon Tompkins volunteered to post LVAWS info. to Instagram;

Website Cost & Future Plan

The website cost will be increased to \$810 in March, 2025. Chairman stated the website is working well for us and members are comfortable with using it. Action Item was made to revisit the website cost at a future time.

Membership Registration

- Reminder that members cannot attend events until they register and pay yearly dues.
- Registration reminders are sent out before year-end, New Year through February.
- Approximately 90 members have registered for 2024, about 50 yet to re-register.
- Joe Pugliese will assist with cross-checking National Registration.

Brainstorm on new tastings and venues:

Discussion took place with several suggestions:

- Smaller 20 people tastings
- Educating with Wineries
- UTube – 5 minute educational clips
- Volunteer “mentors” to help coach new members encouraging event planning.
- Suggestion of tasting at Stone Cellar or other local wineries
- Opinion is that younger members prefer weekday wine tastings instead of Sundays.
- Topic of including ‘spirits’ in tastings was mentioned and conclusion was not to include.

New Members:

Matt Green requested new cards to hand out to new members with the LVAWS website and contact info.

BYOB's

Ann Vlot gave an update on BYOB's and requested a “Last Call” email 5 days prior for final headcount.

Meeting adjourned at 8:01pm

February Lehigh Valley Chapter Tasting

Wines of South Africa

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

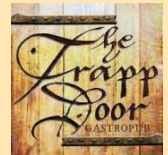
Hosted by David and Shannon Tompkins

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.

Wine Education – The Wines of South Africa

Suzanne Laverick-Stone

Name your favorite African wine! What is...

For many, that's a stumper. Of the 54 countries in Africa, only eight make wine, and only one, South Africa, can be considered world-class, yet the eighth largest wine producer in the world is still mostly unknown or disregarded by the global market. The story of us can be found in South Africa - the UNESCO "Cradle of Humankind" site introduced us to hominid fossils of prehistoric ancestors, but the story of wine in South Africa begins with silk. Portugal was desperate to find a sea route to China, and in 1488, they were successful when they rounded the "Cape of Storms," a name which, for advertising purposes, Portuguese King John II renamed the "Cape of Good Hope." Great name, but it was actually the beginning of a sordid tale that still reverberates today and includes centuries of atrocities: Dutch and British colonialism, war, human trafficking, slavery, and "apartheid," sanctioned racism. The Dutch East India Company established a "refreshment station" in the Cape of Good Hope, and as European settlers were accustomed to drinking wine and believed it to be an antidote for scurvy, planting grapes was high on the to-do list. The first governor of Cape Town, Jan van Riebeeck, is credited with beginning wine production with his inaugural harvest of white Muscadel in 1659. Despite a lack of knowledge in viticulture, failures in keeping European cuttings alive, and war with the native Khoikhoi (whom they called "Hottentots"), Cape Town prospered, eventually nicknamed the "Tavern of the Sea." Others began to arrive including French Huguenots, escaping persecution for their religious beliefs, bringing with them their winemaking skills. The next governor, Simon van der Stel, furthered production with 10,000 vines at his Constantia estate in the late 1600s. In 1816, phylloxera attacked vines and those continuing to make wine chose high yielding grapes such as Cinsaut. Then came the ostrich feather craze in the 1880s, when growing alfalfa to feed them was more profitable than the slow burn of making a successful wine business. In 1918, depressed prices resulted in the government-funded formation of the "Kooperatieve Wijnbouwers Vereniging van Zuid-Afrika," the Cooperative Winemakers Union or KWV, that set prices and encouraged the production of fortified wines. And so it went..

Post-Apartheid – "A Long Walk to Freedom." Nelson Mandela, 1995

For centuries, the South African wine trade has been synonymous with abuse of non-white people. Beginning in 1913, the government relocated the Black population and prohibited them from land ownership. In 1948, the government formalized racial segregation laws, apartheid, against the non-white majority (African Blacks such as Zulu and Batswana, and mixed-race "Coloureds"). Whites owned the vineyards but they needed workers, historically slaves, Blacks, and Coloureds. Wine was often "paid" as wages, known as the "dop" system, resulting in abject poverty and widespread alcoholism. Apartheid was so heinous that many countries boycotted South African products, resulting in, among other things, the world's lack of familiarity with South African wine. After much struggle, this legalized atrocity ended in the 1990s, boycotts began to be lifted, and there was renewed interest in selling wine in the global market, which resulted in a focus on well-known grapes such as Shiraz, Cabernet Sauvignon, and Chardonnay, as well as improved viticulture and winemaking techniques. The wine industry continues to try to right the many wrongs but justice is still a work in progress. In 2003, the government formed *Black Economic Empowerment* (BEE), creating a charter to encourage more representative ownership and ethical practices, and 98% of South African wine producers contribute funding to the *Association for Responsible Alcohol Use* (ARA). The *Wine and Agricultural Ethical Trade Association* (WIETA) was formed in 2011 to ensure fair labor practices, and today, a *Fair-Trade Certification* for vineyards indicates, among other things, at least 25 percent ownership by farm workers. In the last 40 years, the wine industry transformed from a brandy-centric to a wine-centric focus. In 1990, 70% of harvested grapes were distilled into brandy, but by 2019, 86% of the country's grape harvest was made into wine.

***Wine of Origin: A Scheme to Promote Trust* (wineroute.co.za)**

To have an advantage in the global market, consumers need to have confidence that what is on the label is what is in the bottle. South Africa's system of appellations established in 1973 is known as the *Wine of Origin Scheme*, based on factors that contribute to the quality of the wine: terroir (soils and climate), grape choice, winemaking practices, and viticulture, with strict regulations that must be met for an appellation to be on the label. For example, 100% of the grapes must be from the named area, a practice more stringent than most New World appellation systems. WO areas have several levels of increased specificity: the **Geographical Unit** is

the broadest term, generally aligning with established borders. Within the units are **Regions**, smaller in size and defined by geographical markers, rivers, and mountains. **Districts** are smaller than regions, and smaller still are over 100 identified **Wards** which boast similar soils, climate, and other aspects of terroir, not unlike the French AOC system. Finally, the WO recognizes over 1,700 **Single Vineyards**.

- The **Western Cape** geographical unit in the southwest part of the continent is windblown and mountainous, yet it is the most productive wine area in South Africa due to its Mediterranean climate. The Cape Fold belt mountain areas provide grape-loving mesoclimates (elevation, aspect, slope, available water), and year-round precipitation; the Atlantic and Indian Oceans provide cooling “Cape Doctor” prevailing winds. The soils, some of the oldest in the world, are granite, Malmesbury shale, and Table Mountain sandstone. There are five regions within the Western Cape: the Coastal Region, Cape South Coast, Breede River Valley, Klein Karoo, and Olifants River, with the first two being the most significant. South Africa’s most famous wine districts, Stellenbosch and Paarl, are in the Coastal Region, and the Cape Town district claims the oldest winegrowing ward in South Africa, Constantia, which is also the name of a historically significant sweet wine made from Muscat de Frontignan, beloved by 18th and 19th century European aristocracy. Oh, and fun fact, there is a ward called Philadelphia.
- The **Northern Cape** is semi-arid with relatively low rainfall, hot summers, cold winters, and dry, sandy soils, with the Orange River providing irrigation. It has many vineyards, but most of the grapes are used for bulk wines. There are three districts, Douglas, Sutherland-Karoo, and Central Orange River.
- The **Eastern Cape**, with one ward, St. Francis Bay, is a great spot to sip wine while scouting lions, but the late spring frosts and unpredictable weather can make growing grapes complicated.
- **Kwazulu-Natal**, in east South Africa, is home to a handful of boutique wineries. Summer is rainy and soils are fertile, both requiring prevention against disease and vigorous vines. There are two districts, Central Drakensberg and Lions River.
- **Limpopo**, located in the north, has no designated regions, districts, or wards.
- The **Free State** includes the ward of Rietrivier, and has become a tourist destination.

“Grapes are not native to South Africa.” *MasterClass, June 7, 2021*

One of the problems the South African wine industry must overcome is the fact that when we think of South African wine, we think of Chenin Blanc and Pinotage, neither in the world-wide top ten. There are more than 90 varieties grown, but most wines produced are made from European noble grapes in the hopes of getting the world’s attention. Another challenge is that, like the rest of the world, climate change is impacting the South African wine business, and winemakers are experimenting with warm area grapes, including Assyritiko and Nero d’Avola, but most of the wines on offer are *Vitis vinifera*.

- **Chenin Blanc**, originally known as “Steen,” is the most planted white grape in the country with more there than the rest of the world combined. South African terroir is greatly different from that of the Loire, Chenin Blanc’s original home, so the wines are not comparable. Cooperatives continue to make so-so Chenin Blanc, but vintners with an eye to global wine drinkers are producing dry wines from old vines, bushvines, and dry farming. **Sémillon**, one of the first grapes planted by the Dutch, has been supplanted by Chenin Blanc and is used most often in blends.
- **Colombard** is a white grape that made its South African debut in 1976, with increased plantings in the 80s and 90s, as it tends to hold acidity in warm growing conditions. It is mostly used to make brandy and blends.
- **Chardonnay** is widely grown to make everything from light to complex; sparklings are made using the *Méthode Cap Classique* (the “traditionnelle” process of Champagne). Rounding out the whites is **Sauvignon Blanc** made in many styles.
- **Pinotage** is uniquely South African. Developed in 1925 by Dr. Abraham Izak Perold, the first professor of oenology at Stellenbosch University, it is a cross between Pinot Noir and Cinsault, in an attempt to meld both grapes into refined robustness. Even though Michael Broadbent once described its aroma as that of “rusty nails,” some winemakers continue to work towards Dr. Perold’s goal.
- **Cinsaut**, originally an important red, has been supplanted by **Cabernet Sauvignon**. It is still used frequently in blends. The wines often have an earthy quality known as “fynbos,” shrubs found only in the southern tip of Africa. **Shiraz/Syrah** (both names are used), follows Cabernet Sauvignon in popularity.

“With the exception of Lower Orange River and Douglas in the Northern Cape, nearly all South African wine comes from the Western Cape.” Wine Folly

The most important wines come from the Western Cape geographical unit for several reasons. The first three are terroir, terroir, and terroir, and the fourth is terroir. The Coastal Region includes the royal family of wine growing areas: the historic Constantia ward in the Cape Peninsula district, as well as the Franschhoek, Stellenbosch, Swartland, and Paarl districts.

- The **Constantia Valley**, in the Cape Town district, is known for both its wines and its pesky baboons who romp for tourists while gorging on grapes. Established in 1685, it lies in the mountainous area including the famous Table Mountain, with a cool climate moderated by the ocean. It gets a healthy dose of rainfall each year and the granite soils retain water. One drawback of the ocean’s influence is that it does such a good job of warming winter temperatures that sometimes it does not get cold enough for grapes to lie dormant, eventually deteriorating vines. Best known for Sauvignon Blanc, other notable wines include Chardonnay and blended reds with Shiraz taking the lead.
- East of Cape Town in the Coastal Region, the **Stellenbosch** district, established in the 17th century, is the most recognizable wine area in South Africa. Three mountains provide various exposures, aspects, and a good amount of rainfall; proximity to False Bay helps cool temperatures. Soils are mostly granite and sandstone, some very ancient, and the best are deep and well-drained. With eight official wards, it is best known for Cabernet Sauvignon, but Pinotage can be found in the ward of Simonsberg-Stellenbosch. Most whites are made from Chardonnay and Chenin Blanc. Distell, South Africa’s largest wine producer, has a huge presence.
- Moving northeast from Stellenbosch, the Coastal Region’s **Paarl** district is another well-known area. Settled by the Dutch in 1687, it is a warm area without ocean winds but good rainfall with decomposed granite soils that retain water. Dry farming is possible on the steep mountain slopes and the Berg River provides irrigation when necessary. Paarl takes a backseat to Stellenbosch as it has far fewer wineries and less tourism. The KWV, now a private company, is located in Paarl and the main facility is huge at 32 hectares. Paarl is best known for Chenin Blanc followed by Chardonnay, Sauvignon Blanc, and a bit of Viognier, which is used as a blending grape with Syrah in the Northern Rhône tradition. Cabernet Sauvignon is the most planted red.
- The **Breed River Valley** region has three districts, Bredekloof, Robertson, and Worcester, and 20 wards. There are many cooperatives, the most in South Africa. The **Bredekloof** district was established in 2006 and is best known for Chenin Blanc. The Badsbert Mountains provide rainfall, and clay soils retain water. The **Worcester** district is small and gets much less rain, with irrigation provided by two dammed rivers. Soils are alluvial shale washed into the valley. Chenin Blanc is the main grape, followed by Colombard; Worcester is the main brandy region in the Cape. The **Robertson** district, also known for horse breeding, has low rainfall so irrigation is a must. It has a hot growing season, tempered by afternoon winds with a diurnal shift in the evening, making it suitable for white wine. Limestone soils, rare in South Africa, were formed by prehistoric termite hills, and are great for Chardonnay; the area is also developing a niche in Cap Classique production.
- The **Franschhoek Valley** wine region, the “French corner,” was settled by Huguenots in the 17th century. Located in the Coastal Region, it is a narrow valley surrounded by mountains on three sides with the Berg River running through it. Vineyards are planted on the valley floor and mountainsides. Soil types are sandstone and decomposed granite. Chardonnay and Bordeaux blends dominate, with some Sémillon from old bush vines.
- Wine was introduced in **Swartland**, in 1806. Located in the Cape Coast region, it includes seven wards with distinctive terroirs. Even with low rainfall, less than half of the vineyards are irrigated; dry farming is more common here than any other region. Old vines and bush vines are commonplace, with vineyards found on mountain slopes with poor soils (grapes “dig” that 😊). Wines include Chenin Blanc, Syrah, and Mediterranean varietals, and Pinotage flourishes in the heat, reducing the grape’s malic acidity. The *Swartland Independent Producers* is a voluntary association that delineates guidelines for natural winemaking practices, such as a ban on yeast inoculation, added tannins, and chemical fining.

“South Africa is making the best wines in its history.” Tim Atkin, 2023

South Africa’s winemakers still have daunting obstacles, because even though many of the wines and regions are centuries old, there are both historical and modern-day issues to overcome, like its reputation for

inexpensive, mediocre wines, the persistent focus on quantity over quality, climate change, poor economic turnaround, and the world's lack of geographical knowledge and travel to South Africa. Modern winemakers are increasingly more in touch with global trends, implementing practices that ensure quality over quantity. How? The South Africa Old Vine Project identifies and records the country's many old vines. Innovations are happening in viticulture, site-selection, and grape selection, including disease-free vines and night harvesting to get the best from diverse terroirs, giving the Cape of Good Hope an additional meaning. Racial inequality is still very much an issue, but Black South African ownership has increased to over 80 brands, and there is a growing number of Black winemakers, viticulturists, and sommeliers who have learned their craft in Europe and California, bringing their influence back to their home. What can be done? There are many cultures and much diversity in the "rainbow nation." As serious oenophiles, we should be duty-bound to seek out the wines and learn to say "Cheers" in any of their 11 languages; here are just a few: "Bajabule" in Zulu, "Impolo" in Xhose, "Nga" in Sesotho, and "Bophelo bjo bobotse" in Sotho. You're on your own with pronunciations, lol, but the sentiment is true. Drink well, my friends.

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

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



Sunday, March 10, 2024 2:00PM
Hosted by Mark and Kathy Breloff
Terasas' Italian Restaurant
6561 Tilghman Street, Allentown, PA 18106

\$55 per person

Register at LVAWS.org by Saturday, March 2nd

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.



March Lehigh Valley Chapter BYOB

BYOB at Delizioso Italian Grill



Thursday, March 21, 2024 at 6:00 PM
1985 Brookside Road, Macungie, PA 18062
Hosted by Ann Vlot
Register at LVAWS.org by Monday, March 18th



Guiseppe and Rosa are excited to have us at their newly remodeled restaurant formerly known as Italiano Delight. Even though they have a liquor license they are welcoming us to bring our own wine.
No corkage fee!

Please remember to bring glasses and wine to share.
Any questions, please call Ann Vlot 610-393-6498

May Lehigh Valley Chapter Tasting

Italy vs France

SAVE THE DATE



Tuesday, May 21, 2024 at 6:00PM
Hosted by Joe Pugliese and Kevin Campbell
Delizioso Italian Grill
1985 Brookside Road, Macungie, PA 18062
\$60 per person
Register at LVAWS.org

Because of the high quality of wines, well at least from France 😊, the cost of the tasting will be \$60 per person and limited to 40 people.

Limited to 40 people
Remember to bring 2 wine glasses and a bottle of wine to share.

Wines of Virginia Tasting Summary – Kevin Campbell

On Sunday, January 14, **Mike and Nancy Parker** hosted a Virginia Governor's Cup tasting at Theresa's Italian Restaurant. The Virginia Governor's Cup represents the best of Virginia wine. Starting with 614 entries from across the state, 66 of the top wineries in Virginia were awarded a grand total of 142 Gold Medals by a prestigious panel of 12 world-class judges that judged the wines blindly over three days.

To receive a gold medal, a wine must receive an average score of 90 points or higher on a 100-point scale. Gold Medal wines are recognized as superior in both character and style, with some being considered among the best wines in the world.

The Parker's visited several Virginia wineries to gather the wines for the tasting. Of the 9 wines we tasted, 7 of them were Gold Medal winners!



The table below gives a list of the wines, their prices, average score, standard deviation of the scores and a final ranking of the top 5 wines. The wines highlighted in yellow are the Gold Medal winning wines. As is often the case with our Chapter, the red wines all scored higher than the white wines. When scoring, we all need to remember, and this is not easy, that we are judging the wine for the quality of the wine, and we need to try to set aside our personal preferences for red over white, or one type of wine over another. For example, you may not prefer Chardonnay, but that does not mean that you give every Chardonnay a low score. You are judging the wine against the benchmark for that particular wine.

	Wine	Price	Avg	Std Dev	Rank
1	2021 Pollak Sauvignon Blanc	\$26	16.2	1.63	
2	2022 King Family Viognier	\$30	15.1	1.77	
3	2022 Barboursville Vermentino Resv.	\$19	15.2	1.56	
4	2021 Eastwood Chardonnay	\$28	14.7	1.42	
5	2019 Barren Ridge Petit Verdot	\$40	17.6	1.65	2
6	2019 Jefferson Petit Verdot	\$43	17.4	1.80	3
7	2019 Pollak Meritage	\$42	17.3	1.46	4
8	2019 Michael Shaps Meritage	\$50	17.1	1.52	5
9	2015 King Family Meritage	\$72	18.8	1.38	1

Overall, I believe most were pleasantly surprised by the quality of these wines. We may have expected decent whites from Virginia. I don't believe we were expecting such high-quality reds, all five of which scored very well. The 2015 King Family Meritage was clearly the standout winner. Ten people actually gave the wine a perfect 20 score! The comment was made that the younger red wines are going to continue to improve.

Great job and congratulations **Nancy and Mike!**



See additional photos of Virginia Wines Tasting at end of Newsletter

Chairman's Selection **- Shannon & David Tompkins**

When choosing our wines, we look at varietal/blend uniqueness and price. This month, I was overjoyed to spend less than \$30 for these three wines. FWGS is offering great wines at an amazing price point. Enjoy!

Marques de Toro Mencia Finca la Moura 2021

VARIETY/STYLE: Mencia

COUNTRY: Spain **REGION:** Castilla y Leon

RATING: WE92 **PRODUCT CODE:** 100021516

\$9.99 (quoted at \$34)

An intense ruby color, with ripe blackberry and blueberry aromas and beautifully balanced smoky cedar oak notes. The silky smooth, mouthwateringly juicy, herbal-rounded palate results in a persistent finale. Ideal when paired with meats and cheeses. - **Winemaker's notes**

The Tomkins' Taste:

Mencia only grows in Spain and Portugal on the Iberian Peninsula which is what makes this wine special. This specific wine is made from 40–60-year-old vines. The profile for Mencia is medium across the board: alcohol, acid, body, tannin. We would compare this to a Pinot Noir, Gamay or even a Nebbiolo. We both enjoyed the red and black fruits, minerality, floral notes and lots of dried flowers. At 14% alcohol, it wasn't overpowering. This was a lovely light wine that can be enjoyed with anything!



Chateau Haut-LaLande Grand Rouge Blaye Cotes de Bordeaux Rouge 2019

VARIETY/STYLE: 70% Merlot, 20% Cabernet Sauvignon, 10% Malbec

COUNTRY: France **REGION:** Right Bank Bordeaux

RATING: WE90 **PRODUCT CODE:** 100021209

\$9.99 (quoted at \$40)

Nicely balanced Bordeaux with currant and red berry fruit, earth and toasted herbs and spices. The lifted acidity on the palate gives range and length. An incredible value!

— **Josh Hull, Chairman's Selection® wine buyer**

An intense ruby color and an expressive nose, with aromas of black and spicy fruits, gives way to a powerful experience on the palate featuring beautiful tannic texture and a pleasant, complex finish.

— **Winemaker's notes**

This softly textured, rounded wine shows richness, spice, licorice and bitter-chocolate flavors. They go alongside the developing black fruits to promise a rich, dense wine.

— **90 Points Wine Enthusiast**

The Tomkins' Taste:

We called this the "fireside chat" wine because it feels and tastes so much more bougie than the price suggests! This Grand Vin (refers to the best wines from a specific chateau) is full of dense red fruit, spice, earthiness, dried fruits. The nose is misleading in that you think you're going to drink a dense wine, but the flavors are subtle, balanced and smooth. We loved the delicateness of this wine.



Excelsior Chardonnay Robertson 2022

VARIETY/STYLE: Chardonnay

COUNTRY: South Africa **REGION:** Robertson

PRODUCT CODE: 100021251

\$6.99 (quoted at \$10)

Juicy with pineapple and melon fruits, good texture and balancing acidity on the palate with a lingering finish. Excellent value chardonnay from Excelsior once again!

— **Josh Hull, Chairman's Selection® wine buyer**

This crisp, mouthwatering bottling is a blend of Excelsior's three best chardonnay blocks. It displays lively flavors of green apples, citrus and pineapple on a full, creamy palate. Traces of peach, orange blossom and delicate toasty notes combine with a mineral edge to round out this versatile everyday sipper, a consistent crowd pleaser. — **Winemaker's notes**



The Tomkins' Taste:

In honor of our February tasting featuring the wines of South Africa, we had to try this, and for only \$6.99, how could we pass this up? The limestone soil of the region shines through with nice minerality, acidity and notes of ripe peach, apricot, crisp pear. And fermenting and aging 25% of the wine in new French oak brings out delicious accents of spice. This wine was a pure delight. We would have several of these in our wine fridge for sure.

Wine Evaluation Online Bootcamp – Dean Scott

I thought this may be of interest to some of our Club members. **WineMaker** magazine is offering an online workshop on Friday, February 23, 2024, 2:00PM to 5:00PM Eastern time, to learn how to evaluate your own wines and other bottles in the same way as a trained wine judge.

This online three-hour workshop will be hosted by **WineMaker's** Technical Editor and experienced wine judge, **Bob Peak**. He'll walk through how to use sensory skills to improve your winemaking. You will be given a wine shopping list ahead of time so you can taste and evaluate the same exact wines with Bob live and in real time as you learn how to use the UC-Davis scoring sheet **WineMaker** judges use in their annual competition. Bob will go over evaluation techniques including the identification of common faults.

Registration includes full access to a video replay of this workshop after the event and Bob's presentation slides.

When: Friday, February 23, 2024, 2:00PM-5:00PM Eastern Time

Cost: \$75.00

More Information / Registration at: [Wine Evaluation & Judging Online Boot Camp with Bob Peak](https://winemakermag.com/product/wine-evaluation-judging-online-boot-camp-with-bob-peak-feb-23-2024-2-5-pm?mc_cid=68c0427eae&mc_eid=593eab150a)

(https://winemakermag.com/product/wine-evaluation-judging-online-boot-camp-with-bob-peak-feb-23-2024-2-5-pm?mc_cid=68c0427eae&mc_eid=593eab150a)



Lehigh Valley Chapter Wine Tastings & Events

<u>2024</u>	<u>Hosts</u>	<u>Theme</u>
Feb 18	Shannon & Dave Tompkins	South Africa
Feb 20	Ann Vlot	BYOB Ecco Domani
Mar 10	Kathy & Mark Breloff	Taste the Difference
Mar 21	Ann Vlot	BYOB Delizioso Italian Grill
April	Geoff Harrington	Malbec
May 21	Joe Pugliese/Kevin Campbell	Italy vs France
June	THIS COULD BE YOU!	
July	THIS COULD BE YOU!	
Aug	Dean Scott	

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 Virginia Wines Tasting



Sources for Wine Education Article

Sources: MacNeil, K. (2022). *The Wine Bible*; Clarke, J. (2020). *The Wines of South Africa*; <https://timatkin.com/product/2023-south-africa-special-report/>; <https://thirst.co.za/the-many-ways-to-say-cheers-in-sa/>; <https://www.southafrica.net/uk/en/travel/article/south-africa-has-ten-world-heritage-sites-proclaimed-by-unesco>; https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/History_of_South_Africa; https://thisdayinwinehistory.com/south-africa-wine-industry-before-and-after-apartheid/#_ftn6; https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/South_African_wine; https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Black_Economic_Empowerment; <https://www.vivino.com/wine-regions/eastern-cape>; <https://vclubwine.com/pages/the-region>; https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Northern_Cape#Climate; <https://news.wine.co.za/news.aspx?NEWSID=39330>; <https://www.masterclass.com/articles/south-african-wine-guide>; <https://winefolly.com/wine-regions/south-africa/>; https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/KwaZulu-Natal_wine; <https://www.wosa.co.za/The-Industry/Winegrowing-Areas/Winelands-of-South-Africa/>; <https://www.nytimes.com/2023/02/15/travel/black-south-african-wine.html>; <https://daily.seventy.com/south-african-wine-has-never-been-better-have-americans-noticed/>; www.henristeenkamp.org/comparing-wine-culture-south-africa-u-s/; <https://thirst.co.za/the-many-ways-to-say-cheers-in-sa/>;
