

Minutes - AWS - June 9, 2007

The meeting was called to order by Tom Hammond who welcomed the attendees and asked if there were any new members. Larry and Natalie Willoughby were introduced by Gary Cox. Guests of the Zoghlin's were Rachel Zoghlin and Kati Larkin. Linda Brown was a guest of the Hammonds.

Treasurer Rich Hammenway reported that the Chapter's treasury has a balance of over \$1,800.00. He suggested that perhaps for awhile the committees for future tastings should try to budget to use some of the excess funds.

Tom talked briefly about the entry wine. The 2006 Gamay from Sheldrake Point is the wine that was served although the committee had pretasted the 2005. Unfortunately the 2005 was sold out and not available anywhere. While the 2006 is a good wine, it is not as full bodied or fruity as the 2005. This helped prove the point why 2005 was selected for this tasting. 2005 was an outstanding year in the Finger Lakes, especially for red wines.

Steve Learch talked about early wines and wineries in the Finger Lakes. In the early 1800s only Native grapes were planted and used for wines. Some of these are Catawba, Concord, Niagara, Isabella, Dutchess, and others. The growers kept trying to grow vinifera grapes but this met with failure. It was thought that in 1866 the first commercial winery was opened. It was the Seneca Lake Great Wine Company. Gary Cox has found proof that at least 30 years earlier there were commercial wineries in NY State. In 1882 the Experiment Station in Geneva started. Unfortunately, this was just prior to Prohibition. At that time there were 50 wineries and 20,000 acres of grapes. The Finger Lakes had a hard time recovering from Prohibition since only the larger wineries were able to survive by selling juice and table grapes. In the 1950s French Hybrids were being planted to replace the Native stock. The Hybrids were more resistant to diseases that attack grapes. This made for better wines but farmers continued to try to grow vinifera grapes. In the 1960s Dr. Konstantin Frank and Charles Fournier were finally able to successfully grow vinifera grapes and make wine from them.

Steve pointed out the fact that the Finger Lakes in on the same latitude as Dijon France. He talked about weather and temperatures including degree days. His chart showed that 2005 was a warm summer with a reasonable amount of rain. However, at least in the Finger Lakes the amount of degree days has gone down slightly in the last 100 years.

The first three wines served are Hybrids. The first wine tasted was the Fulkerson Vincent. Tom talked about it being developed in Vineland, Canada and how it is a cold climate grape. Next was Merachel Foch from Swedish Hill. Foch is a hybrid from France, developed just after WWI. The Arbor Hill Noir is a blend of a newly developed grape, Corot Noir as well as Foch and Chancellor.

After discussing these wines and while the next flight of Viniferas was being poured, Tom talked about the Farm Winery Bill which was passed in 1967. Before the bill passed, there were about 50 wineries in operation in New York. Because of this bill

approximately 50 wineries per decade were opened. Now there are 225 wineries and 90% of those are farm wineries.

Ken Beard talked about the next three wines. First wine was the Keuka Spring Merlot. This is a delightful wine and well received. It is thought Len Wiltberger, the owner, is also the winemaker. Hermann Wiemer Cabernet Franc was the next wine. Hermann is also an owner/winemaker of a farm winery. He comes from over 300 years of family wine making and started his winery 1982. He also has a nursery and sells over 300,000 vines a year. The last wine was Cabernet Sauvignon from Fox Run. The owner, Scott Osborn planted his first vines in 1984. The Cabernet from this farm winery was appreciated for its full body, pleasant earth tones and deep color.

Steve again took time during the pouring of the next flight to talk about terroir of the Finger Lakes. He pointed out the glaciers were responsible for the soil and hills and valleys that resulted. Compared to Long Island, which is very sandy, the Finger Lakes has richer soil but a variety of conditions depending on whether the winery is in a valley or side of a hill. Tops of the plateaus are generally less desirable with acidic, poorly drained soil and colder temperatures. Native grapes are better suited for these conditions.

He talked about how vines were grown in the early years of grape growing as compared to the modern methods that grow the vines on high wires and open double curtain systems that open the grapes to more sun. The methods of picking grapes have also improved over the years. He discussed picking by hand compared to mechanized picking and the advantages and disadvantages of both.

Steve then talked about the next flight of blends. First was a Meritage from Ravines, a winery only in business for five years. The next was the Atwater Meritage. This wine hasn't been bottled yet and we were sold barrel samples. This will be available in the fall. The last wine was the Anthony Road Cab Franc/Lemberger. The Lemberger is a good winter hardy grape from Germany. This well-made wine was barrel aged in French and American Oak.

Marty Schlabach talked about the cheeses and sausages that were served with the wines. He bought them locally in the Finger Lakes. The soft cheese was a lemon/Black pepper goat cheese from Side Hill Acres in Ithaca. The Guda type cheese was made by Schuyler Farmstead, Bronson Hill Cheesery near Ithaca. The last cheese was a raw milk cheddar from Meadow Creek Farm owned by Urie Wengerd of Interlaken, NY. The sausages were both hard sausages. The Amish summer sausage was from Walnut Creek in Holmes County Ohio. The Pork Kielbasa is from Shirk's Meats Market in Dundee, NY.

As usual we voted on the three best wines for the evening. They were: Keuka Spring Vineyards Merlot first with 22 votes. Anthony Road Wine Co. Cab Franc/Lemberger second with 18 votes and Ravines Wine Cellars Meritage third with 17 votes.

The over all opinion of those attending was that they were surprised and pleased with the quality of the Finger Lakes red wines. Everyone knows the whites are good wines and now they will be looking to buy more reds, especially the 2005s.