“Rhône Rangers:” Why the Popularity
Gudrun Parker and Floyd Hodges
Members, TCWS Board of Directors

Can’t do France this spring? How about this instead – an opportunity to compare several Washington Rhône-style wines with several French counterparts? Why focus on Rhône-style? Because, there is a growing demand here and across the United States for wines from grapes traditionally grown in France’s Rhône region.

Want to know more? Join us **Sunday, March 14, 2:00 to 4:00 p.m., Memories at Sunset Event Center.** Here are the plans – several wines for comparing and contrasting, palate cleansers and then, a special hearty stew.

As we wrote in last month’s EVOE, many people know names such as Syrah, Viognier, Grenache and Roussanne; but, what about Cinsault, Carignan and Mourvèdre? This event will be an opportunity to learn more about Rhône grape varieties.

The afternoon’s guest speaker, **John Martinez, Maison Bleue Winery,** has generously offered 6 wines from his cellar for us to sample. He has traveled extensively in the Rhône Valley and has now opened his own winery specializing in Rhône and Rhône-style wines. But first, something different to welcome you – **Goats do Roam**, a South African Rhône-style blend, and a tongue-in-cheek parody to the French Côte du Rhône appellation.

So – with wine descriptions from wineries and other sources – following are the other wines we’ll be sampling. To start, 3 whites:

- **2008 Maison Bleue La Vie Douce Roussanne,** **Alder Ridge Vineyard, Horse Heaven Hills.** This off-dry style wine with a bit of residual sugar exhibits a delicate nose of honeysuckle, lemon bar and peach followed...
March  
President’s Message  
Ted Davis, TCWS President

Wine Factoids
• It is said that before thermometers were used in wineries the winemaker would dip a finger into the liquid to determine the ideal temperature for adding yeast. From this we get the phrase “rule of thumb.” Also, in the 1600s, the first thermometers used brandy instead of mercury. (800.WINE.COM)
• In ancient Greece, a dinner host would take the first sip of wine to assure guests the wine was not poisoned, hence the phrase “drinking to one’s health.” Toasting started in ancient Rome when the Romans continued the Greek tradition but started dropping a piece of toasted bread into each wine glass to temper undesirable tastes or excessive acidity. (Robert Joseph & Margaret Rand: K.I.S.S Guide to Wine)

Wine Term
Do you know the definition for “Ampelography?” You’ll find the answer at the end of my President’s Message!

Tips for Men (Part I)
According to Karen MacNeil, a wine writer, here is a brief crash course on traits of women who like specific wines:
• The Chardonnay drinker likes clean closets, happy endings and credit cards. Opposed to TV violence. Favorite piece of clothing – white silk blouse; food, a salad; and, has a general trusting disposition.
• The Sauvignon Blanc drinker likes nail polish, driving fast, foreign accents and cookies for breakfast. Is opposed to lawyers. Favorite piece of clothing – stockings. Loves sushi and generally has a wild disposition.
• The Riesling drinker likes stuffed animals, picnics in the woods, bubble baths and wide-brimmed hats. Is opposed to premarital agreements. Her favorite piece of clothing is pearls and favorite food is muffins. Her general disposition is sweet.
• The White Zinfandel drinker likes leaving funny messages on answering machines, and likes candy bars and daisies. She is not sure what she is opposed to. Favorite piece of clothing is a soft, cotton T-shirt and food is French fries. Female White Zinfandel drinker’s general disposition is sunny. (K. MacNeil – Wine Lovers Calendar)

The Grape Vine
Would you like to become more involved in the Society, the Wine Festival, or know more about volunteer opportunities, e.g., helping on one of the standing committees? If so, please feel free to contact me for more general information and/or information on our standing committees – communication, finance, festival and program. I can be reached at: tdavis@bossig.com or 627-2615.

Upcoming Events
Be sure to read the articles in this month’s EVOE describing our upcoming events. As always, recommend signing up early so you are not closed out or don’t miss the deadlines!

Wine Quotes:
• Compromises are for relationships, not wine. (Sir Robert Scott Caywood)
• Wine can be considered with good reason as the most healthful of all beverages. (Louis Pasteur)

(Note: Ampelography – The field of botany concerned with the identification and classification of grape vines. Traditionally, this has been done by comparing the shape and color of the vine leaves and the grape berries; more recently, the study of vines has been revolutionized by DNA fingerprinting.)

COMING SOON!
EVOE  
E-Mail Address Change
For members receiving the EVOE and other TCWS announcements via e-mail, effective in May, the new EVOE e-mail address will be: evoenews@gmail.com
To help ensure a smooth transition and test the new address, the April EVOE will be sent from both evoe2go@aol.com and evoenews@gmail.com  
WATCH FOR THE CHANGES!

Welcome New Members  
Rick & JoDee Garretson
Syrah is becoming a very popular varietal around the world. Worldwide plantings increased considerably in the late 1990s and early 2000s, and are still increasing. With French origins, it is the most important grape of France’s Northern Rhône region; it is also Australia’s most popular red grape.

The Name

It is called Syrah in its country of origin, France, and in the rest of Europe, Argentina, Chile, Uruguay and most of the United States. Shiraz became popular for this grape variety in Australia, where it has long-been established as the most-grown dark-skinned variety. There it was also commonly called Hermitage up to the late 1980s, but since that name is also a French-protected designation of origin, this naming practice was dropped. There are numerous other synonyms that have been used for Syrah, including Schiras, Sirac, Syra, Syrac, Antourenein Noir and Marsanne Noir.

The Legends

Many of the legends about Syrah’s origins come from one of its many synonyms - Shiraz. Since Iran has a city called Shiraz, where the famous Shirazi wine was produced, some legends claim the Syrah grape originated in Shiraz, and was brought to the Rhône. In one version, the Greek Phocaeans brought Syrah/Shiraz to their colony around Marseilles, which was founded around 600 B.C. The grape later made its way to northern Rhône, which the Phocaeans never colonized.

In another version, the person who brought the variety to the Rhône is the crusader Gaspard de Stérimberg, who is supposed to have built the chapel at Hermitage. It is highly doubtful any crusader would have journeyed as far east as Persia, since the crusades were focused on the Holy Land. Another legend of the grape variety’s origin, based on the name Syrah, is that it was brought from Syracuse by the legions of Roman Emperor Probus sometime after A.D. 280. Even before the advent of DNA typing of grapes, there are several problems with these legends. No documentary or investigative evidence exists to back up the legends. Also, it is documented that the famous Shirazi wine was white, ruling out the use of dark-skinned grapes such as Syrah. No known descriptions of this wine’s taste and character indicate any similarity whatsoever with red wines from the Rhône.

The “Real Story”

Syrah has a long documented history in the Rhône region of southeastern France, but the true origin was not known until 1998. Carole Meredith’s research group in the Department of Viticulture and Enology, University of California, Davis, used DNA typing and extensive grape reference material from the viticultural research station in Montpellier, France, to conclude Syrah was the offspring of Dureza (father) and Mondeuse Blanche (mother). Dureza is a dark-skinned grape variety from France’s Ardèche region and has all but disappeared from the vineyards. Mondeuse Blanche is a white-grape variety cultivated in the Savoy region, and is still found in very small amounts in that region’s vineyards.

Both varieties are somewhat obscure today and have never achieved anything near Syrah’s fame or popularity. Thus, both Syrah’s parents come from a limited area in southeastern France, very close to northern Rhône. Based on these findings, the researchers have concluded Syrah originated from northern Rhône. The DNA typing leaves no room for doubt, and the numerous other hypotheses of the grape’s origin all completely lack support in the form of documentary evidence or botanical investigations.

The parentage information does, however, not reveal how old the grape variety is, i.e., when the pollination of a Mondeuse Blanche vine by Dureza took place. In the year A.D. 77, Pliny the Elder wrote in his Naturalis Historia about the wines of Vienne, which today would be called Côtes-Rôtie. Here the Allobroges made famous and prized wine from a dark-skinned grape variety that had not existed some 50 years earlier, in Virgil’s age. Pliny called the vines of this wine Allobrogica, and it has been speculated that it could be today’s Syrah. However, the description of the wine would also fit, for example, Dureza. ☻
Moving along in our tasting – Grenache:

by rich flavors of pear and wild flower honey. Firm acidity on the finish provides seamless balance.

- **2008 Maison Bleue Notre Vie Viognier, Den Hoed Vineyard, Yakima Valley.** This vineyard is in a cool, dry site producing wines with intense fruit aromas and flavors, complexity, and great acidity.

- **2007 Domaine Georges Vernay Condrieu.** A wonderful Viognier from the Northern Rhône region where Condrieu – original home of Viognier – is synonymous with Viognier. A small area, with limited production, its wines are relatively rare and expensive. Moving along in our tasting – Grenache:

- **2008 Maison Bleue Le Midi Grenache, Boushey Vineyard, Yakima Valley.** The vineyard is another site with cooler temperatures throughout the growing season, which in 2008, slowly brought the lighter crop to full maturity, giving the vintage intense fruit aromas and flavors, along with complexity and great acidity.

- **2008 Maison Bleue La Montagnette Grenache, Alder Ridge Vineyard, Horse Heaven Hills.** The vineyard’s proximity to the Columbia River, where strong winds and plenty of air drainage protect vines from harsh weather extremes, makes it an ideal site for Grenache’s sensitivity to extreme dips in temperature. Now, how about a Rhône blend and 2 Syrahs – the best-known Rhône varietal – for a compare and contrast?

- **2005 Châteauneuf du Pape Domaine La Roquette.** The winery is near Avignon – one of the greatest wine-producing areas of the Southern Rhône region – and the wine is a wonderful blend of Syrah, Grenache and Mourvèdre. Wine Spectator writers gave it 93 points and ranked it No. 41 in their 2008 Top 100. Their description is: “Layers of fig, boysenberry and loganberry fruit ripple across the lush, dense structure, while hints of red licorice, linzer torte, mesquite and plum sauce glide through the well-rounded finish.”

- **2008 Maison Bleue La Roque, Alder Ridge and Wallula Vineyards.** This is a very dark and spicy Syrah with lots of tobacco, pepper, smoked meats and Herbes de Provence. This leads to a nice fruity core of blackberries and red raspberries accompanied by cured black olives and a fine grip on the finish.

- **2008 Maison Liberté Syrah, Boushey Vineyard.** This wine has a gorgeous nose of violets, rose petals, tar and pomegranate, beautifully focused around an abundance of blueberries and black currants. The mouth feel is very dense, yet sleek, elegant and refined, with a finish that keeps pushing forth many nuances.

To assist you in assessing these wines, there will be palate cleansers – celery, cheese puffs and an assortment of fine cheeses. But, you’ll also need to save room, and some wine, for the grand finale – a hearty stew, Monsieur Henny’s Three-Beef Daube – and a John Martinez favorite.

We hope you can join us as we learn more about Rhône varietals and of course, sniff, swirl and sample along the way. As with spring, which is quickly approaching, so is our reservation cutoff deadline – **Monday, March 8!** Also, don’t forget to bring 3 wine glasses for comparing and contrasting the wines.♥

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**March Event Details**

“Rhône Rangers:” Why the Popularity

**Event Chairmen:** Craig Ferguson, Gudrun Parker

**Date:** Sunday, March 14

**Time:** 2:00 to 4:00 p.m.

**Location:** Memories at Sunset Event Center
Sunset Memorial Gardens
915 Bypass Highway, Richland

**Price:** Members, $30; guests, $35

**Limit:** 48

**Type:** Educational seminar

**Bring:** 3 wine glasses

**Cutoff date:** Monday, March 8

**Cancellation Policy:** For a full refund, cancellation must be made by phone to Judy Stewart, 627-6579, on or before Monday, March 8.♥

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**Coming in June**

**Wine & Food of Campania**

Join us in June for a wine and food adventure when we will be tasting some of the most exciting wines produced in Italy.

Many Americans tend to think of Italian cuisine as either Southern or Northern Italian when, in reality, it is more regional and local in nature. With our June event, we will begin to explore the richness and diversity of Italian food and wine starting with the picturesque region of Campania where avant-guard Italian winemakers are now producing stunning world-class wines from an interesting treasure trove of indigenous grape varieties. You will discover Falanghina, Greco di Tufo, Fiano di Avellino and Aglianico. You will have the opportunity to taste wines made from grapes grown on the volcanic slopes of Mt. Vesuvius and the on hills of Ipirnia, in the province of Avellino, that historically have been centers of quality wine production.

Wines for the event have been selected from 3 of the most highly regarded vintners of the region: Mastroberardino, Terredora di Paolo and Feudi di San Gregorio.

Watch for more details, including date, time and location, in future EVOEs.♥
New Zealand: Kiwis Take On Pinot Noir

- **2007 Cloudy Bay Pinot Noir, Marlborough.** 90 pts., Wine Enthusiast: "Cloudy Bay is getting it right these days, almost regardless of variety. This Pinot Noir features pretty cherry and vanilla shadings, and a hint of briary complexity. It’s round and plump on the palate, marked by crisp acids and silky tannins on the finish. Drink now – 2012." (September 2009)

- **2007 Peregrine Pinot Noir, Central Otago.** 90 pts., Wine Enthusiast: "Peregrine’s wines have settled into a consistent groove, marrying subtle herb and mossy notes with an enveloping core of black cherry fruit. The 2007 is medium in body, with a slightly creamy texture and a supple, bacon-tinged finish that avoids being overly soft. Drink it over the next five years." (K&L Wine Merchant web site)

- **2006 Schubert "Marion's Vineyard" Pinot Noir, Wairarapa.** Strikingly ripe and sweet aromas of raspberry and boysenberries, this ruby colored medium-to-full-bodied wine has a lovely, pure cherry-filled palate with a liquor-like richness, but also a lively acidity maintaining the wine’s elegance. Long-lasting finish with some spicied undertones and an accessible soft tannin structure. (K&L Wine Merchant web site)

Want more information on New Zealand Pinot Noir? Check out K&L Wine Merchant’s newsletter and web site, www.klwines.com, or www.glengarry.co.nz/. Glengarry.com is a wine shop with international reach and focus.

There is still a wine to be selected from Wairarapa, so we are keeping close watch on our sources for a sixth selection. Additionally, we shall be serving an Oregon Pinot Noir as an entry wine for a modest compare and contrast with how the grape expresses itself in different regions.

This event will feature light Casa Vino appetizers and palate cleansers. Andy Kafentzis, our host, is planning a suitably tasty selection of small bites to complement the wines. So, don’t forget, **Saturday, April 17, 2:00 to 4:00 p.m., Casa Vino, Richland**, for a great opportunity to explore and experience how the Kiwis are taking on Pinot Noir. We hope you can join us.◆

April Event Details

**New Zealand: Kiwis Take On Pinot Noir**

**Event Chairman:** Bett Simpson  
**Event Co-Chairman:** Ambre MacHugh

**Date:** Saturday, April 17  
**Time:** 2:00 to 4:00 p.m.  
**Location:** Casa Vino  
1970 Keene Road, Richland  
**Price:** Members $40; guests $45  
**Limit:** 48  
**Type:** Wine education and tasting  
**Bring:** Desire to learn  
**Cutoff date:** Saturday, April 10  
**Cancellation Policy:** For a full refund, cancellation must be made by phone to Judy Stewart, 627-6579, on or before Saturday, April 10.◆

We invite you to join us for a very special evening of fine wine, art and gourmet dining at Perfect Harmony, a fundraiser for the Mid-Columbia Symphony. This fabulous event is Saturday, March 27, at the Meadow Springs Country Club in Richland.

The evening starts at 6:00 p.m. with an Artist Reception with hors d’oeuvres, wine and Champagne. You will meet top local artists and view fine examples of their art presented in silent-auction format so you can browse and bid at your leisure: Linda Andrews (Glass Art and Jewelry); John Clement (Photography); Tammy Ell (Jewelry); Victoria Gravenslund (Pottery); Ron Gerton (Sculpture); Vicky Gerton (Fiber Art); Laura Gable (Multi-Media Painting); Susan Kimmel (Painting and Collage); and Ted Neth (Sculpture). A wide range of other items also will be available during the silent auction.

Enjoy a 6-course gourmet dinner featuring Washington wines selected to pair perfectly with each course. Dinner begins with a Goat Cheese Napoleon and a Sauvignon Blanc. You’ll savor tangy Hunan Shrimp served with a Riesling and then cleanse your palate with a Semillon Lemon Sorbet. For the entree, you will feast on a Mixed Grill of Beef Tenderloin, Rib Lamb Chop and Duck Breast with a hearty red blend. Port will accompany the Cheese Course and a yummy Chocolate Hazelnut Dried Cherry Cake.

At the end of dinner, Master of Ceremonies Rob Griffin, one of Washington’s top winemakers and owner of Barnard Griffin Winery in Richland, will guide you through the live wine auction. The live auction offers a great opportunity to obtain some rare and difficult-to-obtain wines. Auction lots are mostly large format bottles of wine from top wineries as well as special multi-year vertical selections. There will be plenty of wonderful items to choose from, including cellar tours, wine dinners, and great vacation and entertainment packages.

Make reservations at the Mid-Columbia Symphony administrative office, 1177 Jadwin Ave., Richland, or by calling the Symphony administrative office at 509-943-6602. All reservations must be purchased in advance. The price is $125 per person of which $60 is tax deductible. Reserve now!!◆
Recently, I received an e-mail from a couple who have been loyal Festival attendees for many years. They complimented us on our venue change in 2009, the number of wineries attending, and the food exhibitors we had. They also offered some well-deserved constructive criticism.

Last year, for example, we did not have enough places to sit and relax. There were a few chairs and couches in the side hallways, but because they were outside the main event hall, most attendees did not know about them. This observation is well taken, and the Festival Steering Committee already has discussed this and some related issues. Thank you, thank you, thank you! This type feedback is so very much appreciated!

So, YES, we do welcome constructive criticism! We cannot effectively make our festival a premiere, “must-attend” Northwest wine event without feedback, ideas and suggestions. If you’ve been thinking about sending or calling us with your thoughts, but just haven’t gotten around to doing so, please consider moving those thoughts into action by calling or writing to us.

The Three Rivers Convention Center is a wonderful facility with much space that provides us many options. By way of example, last year we offered 4 seminars vs. just a single event as we’d done in previous years. Although each seminar could have accommodated more attendees, the expanded menu was well received by many who did attend, and when attendance was tallied, we had expanded our educational mission significantly. We want to continue with that expansion! Therefore, to help us, a few questions:

- What seminars would you like to see offered at this year’s festival?
- More seminars on fundamental skills such as selecting wines on a budget?
- What about easy hors d’oeuvres that pair well with wines?
- Or, do we delve into the chemistry of winemaking, how to grow your own vineyard, or more arcane knowledge?
- Do you want to explore regions or appellations?
- Prefer in-depth examinations on particular varietals?
- All or none of the above! Something else?

Again, we really do want your ideas and suggestions! They are most helpful as we move forward in seminar planning for our 2010 festival.

Finally, any more volunteers out there? Whether you have time to help only during the evening of the public tasting or throughout the year or anything in between, your time, interest and support are needed. Thank you for considering helping. Following are contact options:

- Ideas, suggestions, construction criticism, other feedback … e-mail us at tcwinefest@gmail.com, or feel free to call me, Blaine Hulse, at 509-547-4805.
- Want to volunteer or know about volunteering? E-mail us at tcwinefest@gmail.com, or call Marie Pennella at 509-783-9919.

Save the Dates
November 5 & 6

TCWS Event Policy

Attendance Confirmation
No tickets will be issued. In case the event is full when your reservation is received, you will be notified and put on the waiting list.

Courtesy
Event attendees are reminded that strong smells deter from an enjoyable tasting experience. Please be considerate and do not wear perfume or after-shave when coming to an event.

Guest Policy
With our banquet permit, events are open only to members and their guests. Guests must be sponsored by a TCWS member.

Liquor Consumption
Only wine served by the Society may be consumed during our events.

Minimum Age 21 At All Events
The WA Liquor Control Board regulations tied to our banquet permit prohibit any minors from attending our events. Only persons minimum 21 years of age are allowed at monthly program events or at the Tri-Cities Wine Festival.

Non-drinker Policy
Requests to attend an event as a “non-drinker” will be approved or disapproved on a case-by-case basis by the event’s committee. Decisions will be based on the type of event.
Membership Application/Renewal and Event Sign-Up

☐ Single: $ 20.00   ☐ Couple: $ 30.00
☐ New   ☐ Renewal

Referred by:

How would you like to receive the EVOE newsletter?
☐ E-mail (current e-mail address requested*)
☐ US mail
☐ Both e-mail and US mail

Name 1 ____________________________________
Name 2 ____________________________________
Address ____________________________________
City, State, ZIP ________________________________
Phone Number ________________________________
E-mail 1* ____________________________________
E-mail 2* ____________________________________

“Rhône Rangers:” Why the Popularity – Sunday, March 14, 2010

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Limit : 60
☐ Would like to help at the event

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Phone Number ________________________________
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New Zealand: Kiwis Take On Pinot Noir – Saturday, April 17, 2010

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Limit: 48
☐ Would like to help at the event

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E-mail _____________________________________

Mail Payment with Coupons to:
Tri-Cities Wine Society
P.O. Box 1142
Richland, WA 99352

Do you have a new postal address?

Did you recently change your e-mail address?

If yes, or if you haven’t seen an e-mail or EVOE newsletter for awhile, contact Scott Abernethy at 509-783-8801 or by e-mail at tcwinesocietymembership@gmail.com.

You can also check our web site at http://tricitieswinesociety.org/web/ to access the latest EVOE. Download FREE Acrobat Reader here or go to www.adobe.com/products/acrobat/readstep2_allversions.html.

Thank you for your help in keeping your membership record current.

Membership Renewal

Tri-Cities Wine Society memberships are for one year. Please remember to renew your membership so you can continue to enjoy the great wine events the Society offers. If you do not remember when your membership is up:

- Members who receive the newsletter by mail can find their renewal date indicated on the mailing label; or
- Contact the Tri-Cities Wine Society membership chairman, Scott Abernethy, at 509-783-8801 or by e-mail at tcwinesocietymembership@gmail.com.

Tri-Cities Wine Society
Blue Chip Wines, March 5, Ellensburg, WA. Amy Mumma, head of the World Wine Program at Central Washington University, affords students the opportunity to taste some of the best wines from Bordeaux, Burgundy, Italy and Washington State for a small price. The program is open to anyone at least 21 years of age interested in wine. Sign up early as the class is limited to 60 people. Advance registration is required. Location: Central Washington University, Ellensburg. Time: 5:30 to 7:30 p.m. Cost: $75 per person. For more information, call David Winters, 509-963-1504, e-mail worldwineprogram@cwue.org or go to www.cwue.org/wine-education.


Taste Washington! Seattle, March 27 & 28, Seattle, WA. The Washington Wine Commission hosts this annual event to promote Washington wines and offer wine enthusiasts the opportunity to expand their wine knowledge! The weekend kicks off Saturday with educational seminars at the Bell Harbor International Conference Center, 10:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m. The Grand Tasting, Sunday, Quest Field Events Center, is the largest public wine tasting event Washington State. More than 200 wineries will be pouring up to 3 of their wines. More than 75 Seattle-area restaurants will be there offering tastes of their favorite bites. Other activities include cooking demonstrations, games and live jazz. The Grand Tasting starts with a VIP wine event, 2:00 to 4:00 p.m. followed by 3 hours of public tasting, 4:00 to 7:00 p.m. All events are priced separately. Costs: seminars, $40 to $75 each; general admission tickets to the Grand Tasting, $75 each; VIP tickets, $125 each or 2 for $240. For ticketing and more information, go to www.tastewashington.org.

4th Annual Taste Washington! Winemaker Dinner at the WAC, March 27, Seattle, WA. The Washington Athletic Club offers a reception and 6-course gourmet dinner prepared by 6 local area celebrity chefs. Seven premium Washington wines accompany the dinner. Location: Washington Athletic Club. Cost $175 per person/$150 WAC members; price includes parking. For more information and reservations, call 206-464-3050, or go to catering@wac.net.