2025 IWAGY End of Year Summary

Oftentimes the memories of past events, including ours, are best stimulated visually, and fortunately in this regard we have our own Club photographer, JoAnn Norris. Some of her work is posted on or linked to our website. As you can see in the written summary below, these events were well attended; they were also enjoyed by participants. All the coordinators mentioned are IWAGY members. Please also see our website IWAGY.org, History Tab, Photos sub-tab for photos of our tastings and other events. Please scan the QR code or use your preferred browser to visit IWAGY.org.

During 2025 the 45th anniversary year of the Club was celebrated (our very first event ever was held April 30, 1980). This year there were numerous occasions where this achievement was marked, perhaps none more so than the September 30 food-wine pairing "retro" event in the home of Club members Carmen & Karl Najork. This fun and nostalgic event featured several aspects of the Club's existence in its first decade, when we occasionally held events in members' homes, with a "BYOG" requirement (Bring Your Own Glass).

This past year attendance at our events began frequently topping **50** people, including members and guests. This number is both a sign of success and a cause for concern:

- larger turnouts make it easier to achieve financial break-even results (0 losses, 0 gain)
- These turnouts make holding events in certain smaller venues more difficult, causing disappointment for those who don't fit.

We continue to explore new venues to augment the very nice ones we are already using. Our Advisory Committee also is vigorously searching for interesting and knowledgeable speakers.

Here is a quick summary of each of our 2025 events - [attendance]

Jan 21: Wine pairing dinner, the Milanese; coordinators Chris Umlauf and Tim Free [**49**]
On a very cold winter night we enjoyed the warming cuisine of Italy with paired Italian wines.

March 11: Marcus Guiliano, "Italy Nord e Sud", Casa Italiana; coord. Suzanne Lunham [**57**]
Marcus introduced us to wines from Piedmont and Lombardy in the North to Puglia (Apulia) and Sicily in the South.

April 13: Tim Free, ***Business meeting & informal tasting***, Casa Italiana; coord. Tim Free [**51**]
We hope we have convinced you that a potentially boring *business meeting* doesn't have to be that in an ambitious wine tasting club like IWAGY. A buffet offered a wonderful array of foods to sustain attendees during a tasting of Spanish, Portuguese, and French wines, the last poured by two "friends of IWAGY" from Boutique (Paige Flori) and Mid Valley (Dan Walski).

May 14: Chandler Webber, "Prehistoric Wine", Casa Italiana; coord. Clay Morrissey [**48**]
Chandler guided us through a multinational array of wines from countries that have made wine for centuries, including the Republic of Georgia, where it MAY have all begun. Just for the record, there's no real evidence that dinosaurs drank wine.

June 12: Cesar Baeza, "Trotamundos" (the Travelers), Casa Italiana;
coord. Suzanne Lunham [**53**]
Cesar Baeza is a fascinating man: a dual Citizen of Chile (where he was born) and the USA, he's also worked as an enologist in Spain, France, and California. He is now the co-winemaker for the Chilean company *Trotamundos*, whose wonderful wines were enjoyed by IWAGY attendees.

July 29: Quinn Thomas, "Oregon Wines", Casa Italiana; coord. Clay Morrissey [**54**]
Quinn Thomas has worked for a boutique retail wine shop in New Paltz, NY, and a craft spirits distributor in Brooklyn. Currently he works at Skurnik Wine and Spirits, a family-owned wine distribution company. He presented a carefully selected group of wines from the "*relative newcomer"* producing state of Oregon, including three Pinot Noirs with very different styles.

August 28: "The diversity of French Wines & Food", Powelton Club; coord. Tim Free [**65**]
IWAGY has come to enjoy this annual event (3 years and, we hope, counting) at Balmville's Powelton Club. It features hard-to-beat food combinations with a country wine theme (2025's wines were all French), sometimes spiced by a few oldies from the cellar of an anonymous IWAGY benefactor. This year there were old reds from western France and the Rhone.

September 30: Chandler Webber, "Wine and Food Pairing!", the Najorks' home;
coordinators Carmen & Karl Najork [**38**]
Chandler Webber is a 20-year veteran of fine wine and spirits distribution in the Hudson Valley, who began his wine career at Warwick Valley Winery. He has sold, at some point, about half of the brands available on the market. This "retro" tasting featured very diverse European wines from such origins as Austria, Spain, and France. Thanks to Carmen & Karl Najork!

October 16: Steve Carrizzo, "Piemonte: Wine and Food at the Fall Harvest", Casa Italiana;
coord. Stephanie Pyrek [**51**]
From a tasting of literally wines from everywhere (see September, above) to those of the very specialized world of Italy's Piemonte (home of the white truffle, the Slow Food movement, and, of course, Barolo), we could be accused of inducing whiplash. But our members in attendance enjoyed the stories of Steve Carrizzo, whose email name is TheWinePhilosopher. The evening's offerings included 3 Nebbiolo wines (including a Barolo), and they didn't disappoint.

November 19: "Member's Choice Wine Tasting", La Sorella; coord. Joe DiDonato [**61**]
IWAGY ended the year with the exploration of wines selected and presented by 8 of its members in a venue that didn't exist until a few years ago: La Sorella. The wines were as interesting and unique as their presenters are, and we applaud them for a job well done.

A great series of events like this isn't possible with just a single influence, as you may surmise from the diverse list of coordinators for IWAGY's 2025 events.

December: Although no event is taking place this month, your Club leaders are busily planning our activities for 2026.

If you would like to get more involved in an aspect of the Club, please contact any of the people listed at the end. Whatever your interest, we can probably use your help! Here are some specific jobs that we would like to fill or add to:

● **Membership committee**
We'd like to form a committee to help attract new people, and also to encourage our regular members to participate in as many events as they can. Once it gets going, the Committee's members will get to know the Club's members well, just via contact. The successes we hope to have in attracting new members can likely become a blueprint for doing this consistently.

● **Projector operator / Projectionist**
We need someone to become the understudy projectionist for Arnie Serotsky. Arnie and Joe DiDonato previously backed each other up, but Joe has assumed the chairmanship of the Food Committee in 2025. That requires his attention at almost all events, for the period before most tastings start.

● **Calendar planner**
Help the Board of Directors set up the events for an entire year. This will be a mentored position.

● **Wine Steward**
This is another newly created position. It will involve taking care of wines (at event end) that were not needed, both partial and unopened bottles.

● **Event Coordinator Trainee**
Event coordinators make the club run. They take charge of a specific month's event and handle as many of the various coordinator jobs as they feel comfortable with. [The club's *Coordinator Guidelines* were recently re-written to help new coordinators.] Additional support can be sought from the Club's leadership as we have a vested interest in helping you succeed and also from other people who have been an IWAGY coordinator. If you want to try your hand at this, but are unsure of what's involved, you can assist another coordinator and learn by doing.

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