

# Food and Wine Education in Penticton

Sandra Wong.

The 2010 BCLA Annual Conference took place in Penticton, BC under sunny skies at the new Penticton Trade and Convention Centre from April 22 – 24, 2010.

In addition to an opening plenary session by Tim Ellison, a Certified Chef de Cuisine, Sommelier, and Instructor at the Pacific Institute of Culinary Arts, several social events had a food and wine theme appropriate for the locale of Penticton, which seems to be surrounded by wineries, orchards and vineyards.

On the evening of April 23<sup>rd</sup>, conference attendees had two wine dinners to choose from at time of registration. The Wine Makers' Dinner at Amante Bistro was sold out with its limit of 30 seats while others enjoyed a similar offering at the Villa Rosa Ristorante Italiano.

## Amante Bistro

The lucky 30 registrants for the Wine Maker's Dinner at Amante Bistro were treated to a sumptuous 5-course meal all paired with local wines.

We started out with an antipasti plate featuring:

- grilled squid,
- grilled vegetable tapanade,
- smoked salmon,
- homemade meat balls
- and Poplar Grove tiger blue cheese.

This first course was paired with a white called Misfit from Misconduct.

It was then followed by a second course of Duck Confit with coriander fried rice with Mexian pipian (a kind of sauce, like a mole) paired with a Cabernet Franc from Fairview Cellars. The third course was Alaska Halibut, with a roasted tomato and arugula salad and a pesto vinaigrette paired with Six Vines from Twisted Tree.

We then followed with Fire Grilled Lamb Chops (yes there were two of them), a navy bean pure and wild game jus served with a Meritage from Seven Stones. A librarian at my table, who had never eaten lamb

before, commented that it was like butter (in a good way)!

We finally finished with a delicious Belgian chocolate pannacotta. This course did not require any accompaniment except for some fresh brewed decaffeinated coffee.

The evening was led by Gerrit Anderson, a professional sommelier from the area who provided detailed information about the wines and wineries to be tasted. He also educated the crowd about the history of BC wine and how to choose BC wine informatively.

In British Columbia, Pinot Noir grapes seem to thrive in area. Choosing a blended wine is often a good bet as well, since the vintner is often blending to taste. The names of these blended wines are also indicative of the varietals in the wine itself. A Meritage must contain two or more from a list of grape varietals with origins in the Bordeaux region of France. Typically for BC wines, a Meritage blend usually means Merlot and Cabernet Sauvignon grapes.



At Amante Bistro. Photo by Sandra Wong.

## Wine Information Centre and Cuisine du Terroir

Conference registrants who stayed until the very end were treated to a Closing Wine Reception that took place at the Wine Information Centre only 5 minutes

from the Convention Centre. In addition to the selection of wines poured, a local chef prepared a variety small plates and a dessert to be paired with the wine which were all made from ingredients from the same region that the wine came from. This concept was referred to as "Cuisine du Terroir" literally food of the earth.

The Wine Centre poured an 8<sup>th</sup> Generation Riesling paired with a choice of organic beer fed pork on a Naramata apple chip with green onion, ginger and citrus slaw or smoked chicken and sweet corn cake with chipotle aioli.

A Kalala Estate Pinot Noir was served with a choice of mini tuna nicoise with purple potato, green olive and cherry tomato or a roasted red pepper and eggplant strudel.

The final taste was a Gray Monk Odyssey III, a fortified red wine, similar to a port which was served with a dark chocolate tart with balaton cherries, a type of sour cherry grown in the Okanagan.

### Oenophiles

This final social event was a wonderful way to end the conference. Attendees got a chance to mix and mingle, compare notes on sessions and catch up with old and new friends.

Many attendees also took this opportunity to pick up a bottle or two (or a case for some oenophiles) of some BC wines that may not be readily available at your local wine shop.

*Sandra Wong is the Electronic Resources Librarian at  
Simon Fraser University Library.*