

## Celebrating our 8<sup>th</sup> Anniversary

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## Schnauzer-Palooza is All in the Family



With proud owners coming from as far away as Santa Rosa and Oakley, members of the Standard Schnauzer Club of Northern California organized a walk around the Lafayette Reservoir last Friday afternoon. Most of the canines in this group are champions, winning prestigious awards from dog shows across the country, descendants from great Grandma Sophie of Blackhawk Standard Schnauzers. Despite their rock star status, there wasn't a



diva in site. Jackie-O was Standard Schnauzer of the year – two years running, Beau has won over 90 “Best of Breed” awards, Sophie has retired from the show ring and spends her days chasing frisbees. One owner describes the breed as, “smart, sweet and spirited.” A smaller group of local schnauzers and their people can be found walking the Res most mornings.  
C. Tyson

## The Science and Art of Wine

By Diana LaScala-Gruenewald

Many Lamorinda locals are savvy about tasting wine, but are unaware of the way art and science intertwine to create wine's vast panorama of flavors and textures.

Last Tuesday, an animated crowd of Lamorinda adults convened in the Community Hall of the Lafayette Library and Learning Center for the 6th session of the Science Café series. Previous sessions have included talks by the first woman to attempt to summit Mount Everest and by the founder of Google Lit. Tonight's topic was “The Science and Art of Wine”.

Four presenters were invited to be on the panel. The first was Dr. Keith Garrison, who earned his PhD studying the genetics of wine grapes at UC Davis. Garrison presented the mystery that was the heart of his doctoral research: Despite the vastly differing flavors of pinot noir, pinot gris and pinot blanc, the grapes' DNA appears identical when examined with standard genetic analysis techniques. Garrison and his colleagues investigated moving pieces of DNA, called transposons, to begin to elucidate the hidden genetic differences between these grapes.

Shea Comfort, a local independent winemaking consultant, spoke next. Comfort believes that science and art are inseparable when creating wine. He explained that different

strains of yeast and bacteria have different fermentation processes, and thus produce unique flavors. These strains can be used to engineer wine with almost any flavor or texture. Additionally, Comfort suggested that winemakers could use their knowledge of yeast biochemistry to rescue grapes that have been depleted by bad weather.

Dr. Valerie Uhl, a judge of many wine competitions and the Medical Director of Radiation and Oncology Services at Summit Medical Center, gave a powerful presentation on the health benefits of wine. Wine can reduce the risk of heart disease and increase longevity. However, Uhl emphasized that only small quantities of the beverage are beneficial. Women should drink one 5oz glass of wine every night. Men should drink two 5oz glasses. And no, Uhl reminded the audience, you can't save all your glasses for the weekend!

Monica Chappell, the Wine Merchant and Wine Club Marketing Manager for the website wine.com, was last to speak. She led the audience through the process of proper wine tasting. According to Chappell, the two most important things to do while tasting wine are slowing down and paying attention. She explained that swirling a wine glass simply adds oxygen, making the wine easier to

smell. Chappell also touched on how to properly pair a wine with food. The food and the wine should share either a texture or a taste.

Upcoming events at the Lafayette Library and Learning Center include “Why Blog – How to Leverage Social Media to Find more Readers” and “Writers' Series: A Conversation with Senior Film Writer Ruthe Stein.”

### Wines Tasted:

1. Albert Bichot 2009 Bourgogne, Vieilles Vignes, Burgandy, France
  2. Wente Vineyards Riva Ranch 2009 Chardonnay, Monterey, California
  3. Hill Family Estate, Barrel Blend 2008 Red Wine, Napa Valley, California
  4. Chateau La Commanderie de Queyret 2009 Bordeaux Superieur, Bordeaux, France
- \*All are currently available at Wine Thieves in Lafayette

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