



The **Olde Raleigh Wine Club** aka Olde Raleigh Wineaux's, is a group of dedicated wine tasters that are drawn together with a common bond, that of learning about and enjoying the complex nature of wine. It began in the year 2000 as a social dinner club that Ted and Debbie Spader held at the clubhouse 3-4 times a year. As more and more people became involved, wine became a topic of the night and the search for answers to wine related questions begged for the start of a wine club. Over the years, the club has evolved from a pure wine tasting function to

an educational evaluation of the wines. We began to research the different aspects of each varietal and to evaluate how the wines were made. We then asked each member to bring a wine to share and a short presentation about it for the rest of the group. By 2004, we had grown to a group of about 30 people from within the gates of Olde Raleigh.

In 2005, Ted organized a weeklong trip to Arezzo, Italy in the center of Tuscany for a group of about 24 people. We stayed in a 14th century villa at the San Fabiano Winery and took bus tours to Florence, Sienna, San Gimignano and numerous wineries including a luncheon at the famous Banfi Winery. The wine club continued to progress by adding food dishes to our wine presentations. We now challenged each participant to prepare a food dish that paired with the wine that they were serving and present it together. We had also grown to a membership of 50 which caused some concern since a bottle of wine only holds 25 ounces and to serve any less would be unacceptable. It has become necessary to limit participation to 25 people and to date has worked out well.

By 2007, people were asking when our next trip would be so in October of that year, we spent a week in Bergerac which is about an hour from the famous vineyards of Bordeaux. This location turned out to be a 10 bedroom home in the French countryside with a sunset that could not be imagined. We befriended the owner who took us to many town markets, castles, cliffside villages and a Fois Gras farm. Did I mention that we also visited, Chateau Mouton Rothschild, Chateau Margaux and Chateau Cos d'Estournel among others in the Bordeaux region. We had now grown accustomed to traveling together and couples were now, doing side trips before and after their week to Burgundy, the Rhone Valley and Italy to name a few.

Our group has met almost every month at one of the member's homes, either on Saturday or Sunday night depending on the wishes of the host. We now have themed meetings, if the host wishes, such as wines from South America, Pinot Noir from France vs California, California Cabs, Italian wines, etc. Many of the group came into the club not knowing the difference between a sauvignon blanc and a cabernet sauvignon. Not we are able to discuss openly what the winemaking process entails, what flavor profiles each varietal has and many other aspects of the geographical location of these wineries. Each month we taste about 14 wines so we tend to build up a great mental library about the tastes.

This year, 2009, we took 19 wineaux to Sonoma Valley, California and stayed on the top floor of the Worldmark Hotel in Windsor, Ca. Fortunately some of the members are in the wine trade which allowed us to visit some exquisite wineries in Napa and Sonoma. We also had a gourmet chef that prepared a couple of phenomenal dinners for the group. The exposure to wineries during the harvest or crush, brought a new perspective to the guests. We visited the huge winery, Kendall Jackson along with the small boutique winery, Wind Gap where they still stomp grapes. We experienced a winery dug out of a mountain by the name of Jarvis in Napa and the most beautiful gardens of Ferrari Carano Winery. Each day had a special itinerary that the guests could join or not which mad the week very flexible for all.

We are not a traditional club by any means. We have no president or secretary. We do not read minutes or collect dues. What we do is have fun and make friends that will last a lifetime. Each year we have had a holiday dinner at a Raleigh restaurant. (Angus Barn Cellar, Bloomsbury Bistro, Fins, Nana's Chophouse). During the summer months we try to do a JUG Party and a microbrew tasting. We try to support wine related charities such as the Frankie Lemmon School and Triangle Uncorked. Many of our members have moved out of Olde Raleigh but we continue to include them in the club since they were the cornerstones to its early life.

I would invite anybody that is interested in wine to contact me and become a member of our club.

[Ted Spader](#)