



The Event:

Bus trip to Walla Walla Revisited

On December 1, a band of thirty-three intrepid enophiles from Pullman, Moscow, and yes even Clarkston hopped onto a Wheatland Express bus to taste wine and sample appetizers at a number of Walla Walla wineries. The trip started very early in the morning so there were a number of groggy faces in the beginning. Abbie Aiken, the trip organizer, thoughtfully provided a variety of doughnuts and the combination of sugar and fat managed to perk up everyone. The day started out rather dreary and snowy and I think everyone on the bus was glad that they weren't the ones driving.

By the time we reached Walla Walla, the sun had come out and Tim Steffens felt it was warm enough to switch to shorts. The first stop was Woodward Canyon and L'Ecole 41. At L'Ecole 41, we tasted barrel samples of the 2000 Seven Hills Syrah and Merlot. The Syrah was a real crowd pleaser and the Merlot was very good. Then, we went upstairs to taste the bottled wines. They were serving a number of 2000 Semillons, the 2000 Schoolhouse Red, a couple of 1999 Merlots, a 1999 Cabernet sauvignon, and the 1999 Apogee. Checking our watches, we rushed over to Woodward Canyon and waited in line to get a clean glass. While we waited, we sampled their delicious wild mushroom pate. Their Syrah barrel sample was still a little funky, but their Cab out of the barrel was delicious. They were also pouring a number of wines from the bottle. We checked our watches and decided to head back to the bus.

The next stop was Tamarack, Reininger, and Buty. Reininger, Tamarack, and Buty had some good wines, delicious cookies, appetizers and a wonderful cheese called Drunken Goat. Before, you knew it, the time was up and it was time to return to the bus.

The next stop was Dunham/Trey Marie and Russell Creek. The 2000 Trey Marie Trutina out of the barrel was delicious and so was the Syrah. They were also serving a lamb stew over couscous. The aroma of the stew permeated the entire area with the smells of lamb, cinnamon, and orange. Russell Creek charged \$3 for a tasting glass, but the profits were going to charity. A number of people thought their barrel samples were outstanding.

At Canoe Ridge, we sampled a 2000 Gewürztraminer, a 2000 Chardonnay, a 1998 and a 1999 Merlot. They were pouring other wines, but at this point, this taster was wearing down.

The last stop was Seven Hills. Things were beginning to blur. I know there was more wine and tasty minestrone soup, but that is about all the detail I can muster. Then we were on our own for dinner in downtown Walla Walla. We gathered at the bus at 7 PM for the trip back home. Abbie brought some videos and we watched Monty Python's "The Meaning of Life" and a couple of Wallace and Grommit videos during the long ride home. Note to Abbie: Mr. Creosote is not good after dinner viewing.

Kudos to Abbie Aiken for doing a fabulous job of organizing the trip. She provided information about the different wineries and managed not to lose a single participant at any of the stops. (Not even Tom Carroll!)

Note: The Moroccan Lamb Stew Recipe served at Dunham Cellars is available as a link from our web site: www.palousewine.org