

# Eau de Vie

a wine, spirits, and travel newsletter

Vol. 6 June 2019

## THE FRENCH HAVE NOT FORGOTTEN

On the early morning of June 6th 1944, 2nd Lt. Gerald Heaney of the US 2nd Ranger Battalion was riding in a landing craft that was speeding toward the coastline of France. His boat consisted of 37 men and their mission was to assault the German held bunkers overlooking Omaha beach.

As Gerald Heaney later related, "At 6:30 we arrived close to the beach. We were having trouble getting our vessel in, so we could not get to the beach, but we got into relatively shallow water. And the door went down on the landing craft, and the captain said, everyone ashore, and just then, he was cut down by gunfire. And the first lieutenant said, everyone ashore, and he was cut down by gunfire. And then that left me, Second Lieutenant Gerald Heaney, in charge, and I looked up and said, we are not going down that ramp; everybody over the side."

By the time Heaney struggled ashore half of the men in his boat had been killed and the battle for Omaha beach and the liberation of France had just started.

On our recent trip to Omaha beach, as I stood atop the ruins of a German bunker, it was hard for me to imagine how anyone could have made it off the beach.

But the Americans, British and Canadians did clamber up the invasion beaches and as we approach the 75th anniversary of this historic day it was humbling to view these battle grounds.

As we drove around the beaches, villages, and cities we saw flags on telephone poles that had pictures of men and women that helped liberate these places. Their name, their photo, and the words "Never Forget / Ne Jamais Oublier, World War II Heros" were on the flags. I saw many of these flags throughout Normandy.

In the city of Cherbourg, which was devastated by the battle to liberate it, we saw shop windows, such as butchers and beauty salons, decorated with "Thank you to our liberators."

Of the 75 men in Gerald Heaney's company only 12 made it through D-Day. Heaney survived the war and went on to be judge in Duluth. He passed away in 2006 and the Federal Courthouse in Duluth was named after him in honor of his service to our community and our world.

In 2008, NPR did a short story about "[Les Fleurs de la Memoire.](#)" Click the title above to read or listen to the story.

## *Pink wine, Rosé*

Eventually summer comes to the northern hemisphere. And with summer we get heat and with heat we need refreshment.

In the south of France they know heat. To beat the heat they drink pink wine, otherwise known as Rosé. Here's how they make pink wine and how to enjoy a summer Rosé.

All grape juice is white. If you squish a grape, a red grape or a white grape, you'll get white juice. The juice contains sugars and acids and tannins and these chemical structures extract color from the skins of the grape. These colors compounds are called anthocyanidins.

To make a Rosé, wine makers reduce skin contact to just a few hours depending on the grape variety. Different grape varieties have different skin thicknesses and the thicker the skin the more color extraction in the wine.

Rosé wines from Provenance are dry (meaning not sweet), crisp and have refreshing red berry aromas. Rosé wines vary greatly in style. Some Rosé are made by diluting red wine with white, however this is not permitted by French law.

Enjoy well chilled with friends in



## VODKA

~ June 22nd ~

[12 spots still available](#)

We will be sampling: Ciroc, a Finish barley Vodka, ginger infused vodka, Baijiu, sweet potato Shochu and buckwheat Shochu

Practical Information:

Class starts @ 7:30pm ~ *sharp*  
@ 2620 E. Superior Street.

Cost is \$15/pp.

Class size is limited to 20.

Light *hor d'oeuvres* after tasting.

R.S.V.P. required.

July 20th ~ **GIN** Warm weather and gin go together. Taste: London Dry, Plymouth, Slow, Genever, Irish and Citadelle.

## WHAT IS BAIJIU?

If you look at the list of spirits we will be sampling in this month's Vodka class you'll notice Baijiu and Shochu listed. Here is a primer on Baijiu.

Baijiu is the most consumed spirit in the world, selling over 10 million liters in 2017. Of that 99% is sold in China. Let that soak in for a moment. The most consumed spirit in the entire world is mostly unknown to us in the west.

Baijiu means "clear liquid" or "white alcohol" in Chinese.

The spirit is usually made from sorghum but it can also include rice, wheat, barley, peas, corn or millet.

To make the spirit they first blend ground grains and gently steam or wet them. The amount of added water is very slight, just enough to make the gains slightly damp. Then various molds, bacteria and yeasts are added to the grain mixture and the mixture is packed into wooden forms and made into bricks. These bricks are called qu and are set out to dry for future use.

The qu bricks are the fermentation starter and the amount of qu bricks added to the fermentation vessel is a closely guarded secret. To start a new batch of Baijiu, base grains are steamed and qu bricks are added to a clay pit and sealed. The mixture is allowed to ferment for around 30 days. The grains are slightly damp and ferment in the presence of the qu brick. This is called dry fermentation.

After fermentation the grains are added to a pot and steamed. The steam carries the alcohol up to a collection vessel called the heavenly pot which condenses the liquid into spirit.

The spirit is then placed into a clay covered vessel and aged for at least a month but can be aged for years. Once aged, it is blended and bottled.

But what does Baijiu taste like? I don't know. You'll have to come to the Vodka class to try it out for yourself. We will also be sampling Shochu which is Japanese clear distilled spirit made from rice, barely and sweet potato.



## Midi and the Camargue

We've got 4 spots open for a fantastic week on a boat in the South of France.

Week of 9/21-9/28: 4 available

If you are interested in joining us or you'd just like to know more [follow this link to our Fall 2019 trip planner.](#)

It's been 5 years since our last trip to the Languedoc but this sun kissed region of France is never very far from our minds. The picture below is from the 2011 harvest. The farmer here is bringing in a load of Carignan.

