



INTERNATIONAL NEWSLETTER



THE OREGON WINE BROTHERHOOD

INTERNATIONAL UPDATE

June 25, 2025

Alba, Italy Wine Discovery Tour

The Alba Discovery Tour was an incredible trip to remember. For those of you who did not attend, please see summary of photos.

Slovenia Wine Tour

The Slovenia Wine Tour organized by Marin Berovič and me, was limited to 14 OWB members/spouses. This was a very special event for OWB only. The tour was spectacular and will stand in my memory as one of the best events we have ever done. Marin did an excellent job of organizing the tour and guiding us to each place.

Tokyo, Japan Wine Discovery Tour

This event will be held May 18-22, 2026, with an extension May 22-24, 2026.

Sponsored by the F.I.C.B., the event is organized by the Knights of the Vine, Japan. Registration is open and space is very limited. This is an incredible opportunity to visit Japan and its wine growing regions, and at the same time experience the culture and culinary delights of Japan! Don't wait – **only a few spots remain** – **sign up now!** Details on the Japan tour were emailed to all OWB members earlier in the year. If you have any questions, contact me or visit the F.I.C.B. website for more information:

<https://winebrotherhoods.org/en/2025/03/15/wine-discovery-tour-sponsored-by-f-i-c-b-in-japan-may-22-24-2025/> [please note that this URL link has the wrong dates]

F.I.C.B. 53rd International Congress

The 53rd International Congress will be held in Switzerland in May of 2027. The Congress will be hosted by the Swiss Wine Brotherhood and their Federation (17 Wine Brotherhoods) and will be based in the Lausanne area. Details to follow, as final approval will take place at our Board meeting in February 2026 and the registration will open sometime after that.

Future Wine Discovery Tours

Future tours are being proposed for the Alsace, France; Azores; Portugal; Roussillon, France and Provence, France regions.

Other Items

These international trips sponsored by the F.I.C.B. (International Congress, Wine Discovery Tour, Wine Challenges) are all very special. If you have not experienced one yet, please consider participating in any of the upcoming adventures.

Reminder, if you have any questions on these international events, please contact either one of us anytime.

Per Vitem! Ad Vitam!

Ken Hick & Cheri Cooley-Hick

International Delegates, The Oregon Wine Brotherhood
Board Members, F.I.C.B.

ALBA DISCOVERY TOUR PHOTOS FROM KEN AND CHERI - MAY 2025
[The photos and write-up on the following pages were put together by the organizers.]



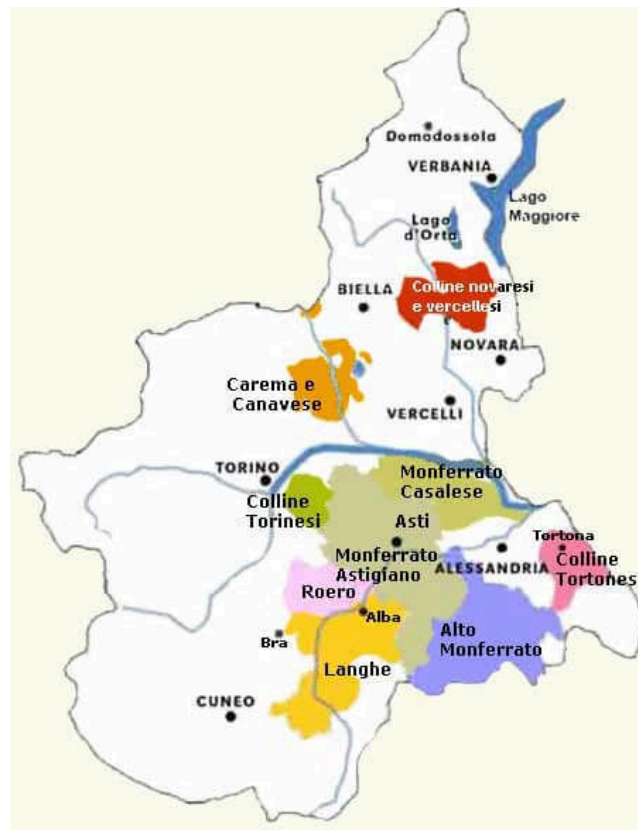
A LOOK BACK AT THE WINE DISCOVERY TOUR PATRONNED BY THE FICB TO ALBA (PIEDMONT, ITALY)

36 participants from the USA, Switzerland, Austria, Japan and France took part in this 4th discovery tour sponsored by the FICB. Staying at the **** Calissano hotel, they went from one discovery to another, discovering wines, gastronomy, history and the incredible landscapes of the Alba region in Piedmont, where the hillsides are planted with vines and the valleys with hazelnut trees.

This wine-growing region, which also produces truffles and hazelnuts, is one of the most beautiful and famous in the world, and was listed as a World Heritage Site by UNESCO in 2014 (1 year before Champagne and Burgundy, they say with a proud smile here; but 15 years after St-Emilion, for completeness).

See [Vineyard Landscape of Piedmont: Langhe-Roero and Monferrato](#)

Langhe (south of Alba), Roero to the west, Monferrato to the north towards Asti, are the three geographical areas of the region. The dominant grape varieties are arneis and moscato for whites, and barbera and nebbiolo for reds. The latter is the source of the prestigious Barbaresco and Barolo ('il re dei vini, il vino dei re'), produced in just a handful of villages.



The excellence of the region's wines was established in the mid-19th century, when the Marquise of Barolo called on the French oenologist Louis Oudart, who recognised the potential of nebbiolo and perfected its vinification.

Click [here to see the programme](#)

Visits to wine estates, museums, remarkable buildings, tastings, gastronomic meals in prestigious locations: from this litany of discoveries we will retain a few highlights, and to put it bluntly, unforgettable ones.



view of the vineyards at sunset

It all began with a **Welcome Dinner** at the panoramic **Ristorante Antico Podere Tota Virginia** in Serralunga d'Alba, a top-of-the-range restaurant run by an oenophile whose cellars contain thousands of bottles.

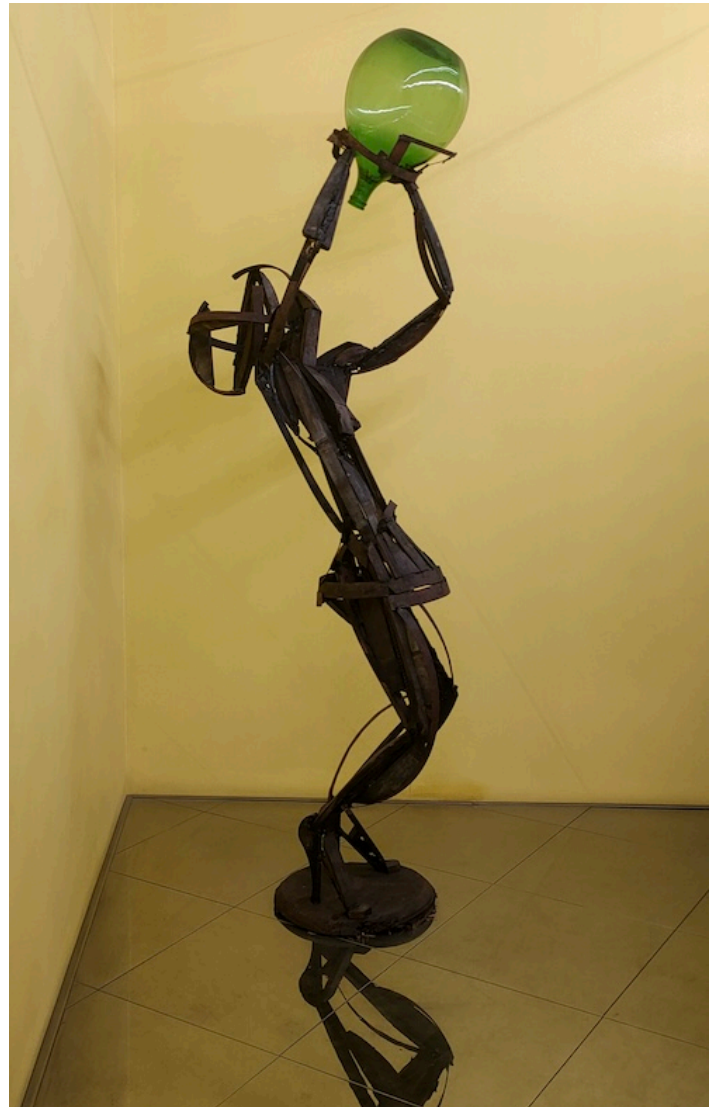


<https://totavirginia.com/cantina/>

This 5-course meal, accompanied by 4 wines, was a good foretaste of what was to come.

The castle in the legendary village of Barolo is home to the **WiMu Museo del Vino**, a unique wine museum featuring the cultural world of wine: its history, and the paintings, sculptures, film extracts and opera arias it has inspired....



the WiMu divine bar*a view from the castle**bacchanale, by Sophie Dickens*

After lunch at the **Ristorante Garden at the Albergo dell'Agenza in Pollenzo**, accompanied by Langhe Arneis and Nebbiolo, we headed to the **Banco del Vino** for more tastings.



In the evening, we visited the famous **Roero Tenuta Carretta cellar in Piobesi d'Alba,**



followed by dinner at the estate's gourmet restaurant,



an opportunity for the Japanese participants to present their upcoming wine discovery tour to Japan in May 2026.



from left to right : Akihiko, Takeshi, Keiko

Saturday was devoted to a visit to Alba, punctuated by lunch at the **Enoclub** where, after a Roero Arneis and a Barbera d'Alba, a Barbaresco 2021 'Castello di Verduno' was served.



In the evening, the highlight of our stay was the Ordine 324th chapter of the tradition, held in the *salla delle maschere* of the Castello Grinzane Cavour.

This reception hall has a magnificent wooden coffered ceiling built in 1547, decorated with 'no fewer than 156 masks, i.e. paintings of faces, heraldic coats of arms of the Belli and Donati families, and various allegories, such as representations of animals, a metaphor for human gifts and virtues, and children, a symbol of love, playing various musical instruments'.

The castle itself dates back to the 11th century.

Welcomed by Grand Master Tomaso Zanoletti, surrounded by Bianca Vetrino and the Order's dignitaries,



the participants heard an actor introducing himself as Louis Oudart, tell the story of the 'wine of kings'.



Grand Master Tomaso highlighted the progress made in terms of reputation by the vineyard over the last sixty years, which is also demonstrated by the existence of 20 Ordine delegations around the world; Luciano Bertello highlighted the recognized excellence of Piedmontese cuisine, a fusion of peasant and bourgeois cuisine; Ugo Venturini recalled the history and variety of the wines of the Langhe, Roero and Monferrato, which have made Barolo and Barbaresco famous in particular, but also produce sparkling wines (spumante) and aromatized wines (Barolo chinato, vermouth). Finally, he presented the selection process for the great Albese wines, carried out annually for 50 years by Ordine.



Ugo Venturino

Alterati in chiave, a vocal group of eight singers, performed the Knight's Hymn, composed by Ugo Venturino, based on **Salieri's Imperial Fanfare**.

*“Alba è qui che guarda la vite al calor del sol
che il vino dà al nostro Cavalier”*



The performance, to the tune of “Parole,” was a resounding success.

Several participants were inducted in the Ordine : Sebastien Avanthay, Cheri Cooley-Hick, Kenneth Hick, et William Stefan.

FICB President Marc Lesk was named “*Cavaliere Onorario*.” He thanked our hosts for their hospitality and organization of the tour, and presented the FICB medal to the organizer, Daniela Ferrero, of the Langhe Experience agency.



He concluded his speech (in Italian) with these words:

“The mission of our International Federation of Bacchic Brotherhoods is to make such events possible, in order to raise international profile of our members’ terroirs and create bonds of friendship between them.
Long live wine, long live the Alba truffle, long live Piedmont, and long live Italy.”

Kenneth Hick of the Oregon Wine Brotherhood gave a speech thanking Alan Bryden, Honorary President of the FICB, for his work during his ten years as President and for his assistance in implementing his brotherhood’s programs; he awarded him the title of Wine Master.



Alan Bryden, in turn, thanked Grand Master Tomaso for his unwavering support, particularly during the difficult Covid period; Bianca Vetrino, for her action and participation in the FICB Bureau where she always made “*the voice of reason, pragmatism and tradition*” heard; and Giacomo Oddero, oenologist, great producer of Barolo and promoter of the white truffle of Alba, to whom he had presented the FICB honorary diploma in 2020.



Ken and Cheri Hick, then Marc Lesk and grand master Tomaso, then Sébastien, Bill et Alan Bryden

During the dinner, we had the pleasure of meeting Tedd Goldfinger, of the Renaud Society USA, a resident of the region and member of the Order, who, along with Teodora Todorova, presented the wines served that evening, such as this “*Barolo DOCG del Comune di Diano D’Alba Contadin 2019 – Bricco Maiolica.*”



For a report of this chapter on the 'Ordine website, [click here](#)
 For a report of this chapter in the local newspaper *Corriere*, [cliquer ici](#)

The last day of the discovery stay allowed to discover the historic *Contratto* cellars located in the “*underground cathedrals*”, where exceptional sparkling wines are produced.



After lunch at [Ristorante Enoteca di Canelli Casa Crippa](#), we headed to *Fontanafredda*, a famous historic estate in Barolo, born from a morganatic marriage between King Victor Emmanuel II and *Rosa Veracellana*, known as “*Bela Rosin*”. Their son, Count *Emmanuele di Mirafiore*, founded the Fontanafredda wine estate around 1870.



And it was in the estate's Michelin-starred restaurant, **the Guido restaurant**, that this wine discovery stay ended with the gala dinner, where many were keen to share the pleasure they had experienced during these 4 days.



Thank you to everyone—organizers, guides, restaurateurs, sommeliers, and participants—for this wonderful stay!

And thanks to the Cavalieri del Tartufo e dei vini de Alba !