



# NEWSLETTER

1/2012 Double Issue

## *Calendar of BCSC Activities for 2012*

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*Sunday April 1, 2012*

*Santa Anita*

*Sunday May 13, 2012*

*Congo Trip viewing*

*Members only*

*Saturday June 16, 2012*

*Hike / Nethercutt Museum*

*Sunday July 22, 2012*

*Annual BBQ Beach Party*

*Sunday August 12, 2012*

*Pétanque, hosted by*

*LA Pétanque Club*

*Sunday, October 21, 2012*

*Wine Trip*

*Sunday November 18, 2012*

*Brussels Bistro Brunch*

*December 2012*

*Sinterklaas / Saint Nicholas*

If you want event details e-mailed to you, please let us know your up-to-date e-mail address.

Dear Friends,

A warm welcome to all our members and our new members that signed up for 2012.

I would like to thank our Consul General, Mr. Geert Criel and his wife, Elisabetta for hosting our 2012 New Year's reception in their beautiful home. It was a success once again. We had well over 100 guests that enjoyed all the festivities, from the food, to the libations, to the award ceremonies, yes, in plural...

I thank everyone that helped me prepare and plate the dishes served at the reception.. Any chef would love to have "sous chefs" as efficient as you. Everything looked beautiful and from the looks of the empty platters returning to the kitchen it was delicious too. Thank you to Madame Elisabetta for preparing all the desserts. We had many compliments throughout the evening. I also had my youngest team of future chefs on my prep line. Thank you Dillon, Logan and Sadie.



This year our Consul General, Mr. Criel was awarded the Van der Mersch award thanking him, as a non-board member, for all the support he offers our Belgian Club.

Alain was recognized for his years of participation and dedication to the Belgian club by being honored with the "Ridder in de Kroonorde" translated to "Knight in the order of the crown" acknowledgment. What a phenomenal accomplishment. Congratulations Sir Alain Missoul.



Brigitte Gaviola-Bequet was also a recipient of the Van der Mersch award for 2011 but was not present to accept...don't worry, we caught her off guard when Alain presented her the award at our Crepe event last month. Speechless she was, what a surprise!

I want to personally thank Alain for the many years as our leader, and in Alain's words at the reception, "Behind every great president there is a strong woman" Now that the woman has taken the reins, "Knight" Alain will be the strong man behind the new president.



I would like to introduce our 2012 board:

from left to right:

David McCue (Director), Sandy Casci (secretary), Chrissy Lion (President), Marc Claessens (1st Vice-President), Brigitte Gaviola-Bequet (2nd Vice-President), Pascal Dropsy, (Director), Annie Rahier (Treasurer).

Our next event is coming up on April 1st...Opening day at Santa Anita Race Track. Please don't forget to RSVP as we have to purchase the tickets in advance.

A final note: We really encourage our members to participate in our events as our club is nonprofit and every bit of support helps support our Belgian club. Also, if you have family or friends that are interested in joining our club we welcome them with open arms.

I hope to see everyone at our events throughout the year and feel free to contact me if you have any ideas or suggestions.

Thank you,

Christiane (Chrissy) Lion,

Your 2012 President

## **BCSC NEW YEAR'S PARTY @ THE BELGIAN CONSULATE**

This year's New Year's Reception hosted by the Consul General, Geert Criel and his lovely wife, Elisabetta was once again an enormous success. The elegant residence was the perfect backdrop for an evening shared by members of the Belgian Club of Southern California and its hosts.

Belgian beer, Italian wines plus the wonderful food prepared by our , Chrissy Lion, kept conversations lively.

The highlight of the evening was the presentation to Mr. Geert Criel of the Van der Mersch award for his tireless efforts and zeal in promoting the Belgian Club of Southern California. Alain Missoul, President of the Club, noted that Mr. Criel was not only a great promotor for the club, but also a great friend. Alain reminisced of his first luncheon meeting with Mr. Criel. Normally everyone in California drives to their intended destination, however, in true Belgian fashion, Mr. Criel suggested they walk instead. (This walk was 3 miles away!!)

After the Van der Mersch presentation, Mr. Geert Criel bestowed on Alain Missoul the "Knight in the order of the crown" - for his lengthy service to the Belgian Club of Southern California. The presentation proved to be a highlight of the evening.

Unfortunately, after 7 years as President of the Club, it was time for Mr. Missoul to step down and hand over his duties to a new President. Voting for new board members was conducted during the evening and it is highly anticipated to find out who will replace Alain.

After an evening of awards, great wine, beer and food, our hosts bid us all farewell -- until next year!

Monique Lateste-McCue



*Belgian Club So Cal Day at the Races*  
*Picnic at Santa Anita Horse Racing Track*  
*April 1st .First Race is 12:30*

*\$12 for Members and only \$15 for non members, Children under 18 only \$4*

**Price includes Admission, Parking and Program.**

**Let's all meet at 12 pm**

Sunshine, gentle breezes, and thrilling Thoroughbred racing set the stage for A perfect day of fun in the sun. We will enjoy outstanding entertainment And the exceptional facilities of the beautiful Santa Anita Park Infield, right in the center of all the action in a reserved area! Look for the Belgian Banner and Flags if we can bring them. Our \$12 per adult Group Rate includes Admission, Daily Race Program, Race Handicapping Assistance and General Parking. . Great racing views • Gated semi-private area • Family picnic setting • Children's play area • Tables, umbrellas and chairs • Full service, no host bar • Easy wagering access • TV monitors • Private handicapping assistance

***Bring Your Own Picnic and something to share with the group.*** Santa Anita Park welcomes groups to **bring food into the infield picnic** areas. Bring in pre-cooked picnic- style fare. Beer, liquor, soft drinks, and ice will be conveniently available for purchase nearby.

**We are welcome to bring:** Ice chests or picnic baskets no larger than 15" high x 15" wide x 36" long • Sealed plastic bottles containing non-alcoholic beverages • Re-usable drinking containers (thermos, sipping container) containing non-alcoholic beverages

For the enjoyment of the racing season by all of our guests, please note that **you may not bring** the following items into Santa Anita Park: • Alcoholic beverages • Balloons • Glass bottles • Poles • Umbrellas • Fireworks • Beach balls • Projectiles

***This a prepaid event ,***

so you will need to send your payment in advance .

We will then send you your tickets and parking pass before the event

***You will need to RSVP by March 20<sup>th</sup>.***

Send payment to : **Belgian Club of Southern California,**  
PMB 333,2060 Avenida de Los Arboles, # D Thousand Oaks, CA 91362-1376 .

Let us know as well at our Message Center: (310) 512-7780,

Just to make sure we don't miss you .

***Don't miss this event; this is going to be lots of fun.***

See you all on the April 1st.

Your 2012 board of directors.

**MARK YOUR CALENDARS !!!**

**BCSC Visit to Nethercutt Museum**

**in Sylmar California**

**Saturday June 16, 2012**

**Keep your eye on your e-mail Inbox for confirmation of date and time.**

**The Nethercutt Collection features rare collectibles ranging from mechanical musical instruments and antique furniture to the true heart of the collection: over 250 American and European automobiles dating from 1898 to 1997.**



*Thank you from Brigitte*

"Hi all, after being absolutely speechless when I got the award (yep, me speechless) here is finally my Thank You Speech. Dear Board, this is an absolute surprise. I am so honored you thought of me for this Van der Mersch award. Working with and for my Belgian peers is a pleasure. We are away from the homeland either for 2 or 3 years or since 50 years, some probably feel as American as Belgian in the meantime but, still, the roots are there. It is my pleasure to do what I can and I will continue either in or out of the Board, depending on our activities outside of LA. Thank you again. Viva Belgica.

Brigitte Gaviola-Bequet

## **LICHTMIS...CHANDELEUR 2012**

On Sunday, February 19th, it was my privilege to attend, along with my wife Lynne, a delightful gathering of the Belgium Club's Crepe Fest. Being drafted by my neighbor Sandy Casci to assist in the setting up, it was an amazing transformation I observed as tables and chairs were set out. The Belgian flag was decorously arranged in table cloths arranged in black, yellow and red. Coolers were filled with delicious beverages ranging from soft drinks to wonderful Belgian beers. In all, a welcoming environment awaited arriving participants. At 1:00 p.m. as the Legrand brothers, Max and Felix, showed up the magic began in earnest as the crepes began being made and the other delectable items were placed on tables. The chafing dishes were filled with Ingrid's "vol au vent" and Chrissy's creamed spinach and Swiss cheese and ham fillings. Felix and his wife brought his wonderful Cesar salad and Max and his wife brought two yummy tarts.

Early that morning the weather seemed uncertain, but as the event began at 2:00 p.m., it appeared all would be well. Over 50 people enjoyed the food and fellowship of the day, and my wife and I enjoyed ourselves very much. The stack of crepes was continually replenished, but over time they and most of the delicious morsels were consumed. The Steak Tartare recipe that was handed down by Andre Lion to his daughter Chrissy was placed with slices of baguettes as an appetizer and ten pounds disappeared just as quickly as it was set out....Sandy didn't even get a bite.

Alain Missoul handed out an award to Brigitte and then introduced the Belgium Club's new President, Chrissy Lion....as an elf. Chrissy took the stage and introduced her new board and also thanked everyone for attending. A special thank you went out to Louise for making "tarte au riz" a famous Belgian dessert.

A surprise awaited Marcel and Louise Casci as glasses of sparkling wine were passed around, Sandy presented a belated toast to their 63 years of marriage – an added boost to the splendid day. Everyone seemed to share the sentiments we had – it was a very successful event thanks to the tireless efforts of our hostess, the food preparation crew and the Club board members.

The fun continued as we stayed past everyone's departure and enjoyed some left over items with Sandy and Chrissy and recapped the wonderful day we'd had with the Belgium Club. Which would have been the almost perfect ending to a fun day, instead Chrissy had to make it perfect by whipping together steamed Mussels and sharing a bottle of beer, named the best beer in the world, Westvleteren XII, that had been gifted to them by Thomas the owner of the Brussels Bistro. Our congratulations to all involved for a very memorable event.

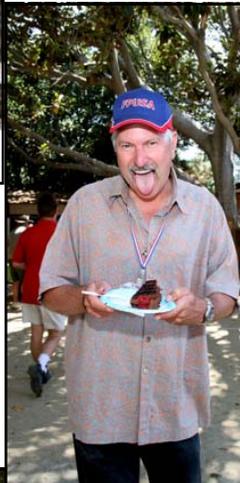
Vaughn Wendelstadt

The Chandleur, Lichtmis, February 19th 2012.





# Pétanque championship 2011





## BCSC WINE TRIP      OCTOBER 23, 2011

It started out a beautiful morning on October 23<sup>rd</sup> when our fearless driver Marc CLAessens made his first stop at LAX for our yearly wine adventure. It was still early for a Sunday morning... people found their seats said hello to old friends and met some new ones. Sandy took over the back of the bus to set up the breakfast and cocktail bar. The second stop in the Valley brought the bus to almost full capacity and people started to get a bit more animated. But something was still missing, due to poor planning on our part: our President, Alain Mis-soul was picked up at the last stop before heading out.... and wouldn't you know it, he had all the champagne!, guess he wanted to make sure that we would stop to pick him up.

The bus was filled to capacity, people were waking up and Alain was making his presence known by popping champagne corks over people's heads yelling "Incoming". Thankfully his VP was fielding the corks catching them mostly successfully.

Our first stop was the Gainey Winery where we had our first tasting and had a private tour of the facility. The Gainey Vineyard is part of a large, sustainable farming operation owned and run by the Gainey family for the past 50 years. The Home Ranch on the warmer, eastern end of the Santa Ynez Valley is ideal for growing Bordeaux varieties of Sauvignon Blanc, Merlot, Cabernet Sauvignon and Cabernet Franc. While the club toured the winery the board set up lunch at the second stop, Brander.

Brander Winery in Los Olivos is one of the original vineyards in Santa Ynez Valley and the producer of world-class Sauvignon Blanc wines in a variety of styles, as well as small quantities of hand-crafted Bordeaux-style red wines. They had a beautiful patio with large trees parasols and very cute, friendly and moochy cats. The one thing we didn't count on was how hot it was, with temperatures reaching the mid 80's and very little shade it was a good thing that everyone enjoyed the Brander Wines. It was a great opportunity to sit with new friends, eat a filling lunch and sip wines. It was obvious that everyone was having a great time by the amount of laughter filling the quiet valley. Leave it to the Belgians to bring the party with us.

Our third and final winery was BlackJack Ranch. Unlike the other two we visited that day the only thing to see at Blackjack was the tasting room. The style was California Rustic, having been constructed from materials salvaged from the buildings which previously existed on Blackjack Ranch. The bar in the tasting room was built from one of the bowling alley lanes salvaged from the old Solvang Bowling Alley. The wines served at the tasting were all fairly good but again it was the group of people and how well everyone got along and laughed that made the day really special.

As we got toward the end of the afternoon the group had the choice to go visit Solvang or go try their luck at the Chumash Casino. Since no one won a million at the tables we all headed back to Solvang to rendez-vous with the rest of the tour group. Patrice made the comment that munching on lunch leftovers in Solvang while waiting for the group to leave for home was the best part of the day. Despite the fact that Chrissy had to miss this wine trip we did our best to keep the fun going on the way home with most of the group getting up and dancing to old school music. It was again a wonderfully successful adventure and we have to give a special Thanks to Marc Claessens, President of LA Excursions, who provides the club the bus at much discounted rates and drives himself to help us keep the cost of the trip reasonable.

As it has been every year you mix a bunch of fun loving people, add a few Mimosa's each, mix in a bit of laughter a bit of old time Belgian music blend thoroughly in a bouncy bus and you have a great day.

Sandy Casci



## Annual Brunch

2011 at Brussels Bistro

Off we went to the Brussels Bistro in Laguna Beach for our 4<sup>th</sup> year in a row.... Always a wonderful feast....and always a success.

While our members, friends and family mingle around the restaurant enjoying a nice Hoegaarden, Leffe or Stella. First beer was offered by Thomas and Thierry, owners of the Brussels Bistro), appetizers were passed around. We started with a vine ripened tomato stuffed with our very own North Sea Grey shrimp, reminded me of being on "La Digue" in Knokke or La Panne....followed by a duo of Croquettes...the Croquettes au Crevettes (shrimp) and the Kaaskroketten (cheese)...my favorite. A delicious cup of White Asparagus soup with a texture like velvet was the next appetizer to be passed. Each table had a board with cheese squares and salami to accompany your beer of choice.

Once everyone sat down, our president Alain Missoul gave a speech and introduced our new Consul, Alain Leroy and his beautiful wife Isabelle. Alain also introduced the Brussels Bistro staff, owners Thomas and Thierry and the number 1 server, Kevin who is always there for us.

Steaming pots of Mussels and French Fries were then brought to the tables....if you finished one pot a refill was not far behind....mussels and mussels and mussels....!!! Everyone was enjoying them as I sat watching the happy expressions on everyone's face. That in itself made me smile! At that point each table was asked in turn to head to the buffet line where, Carbonnade (Belgian Beef Stew) Vol au Vent (Chicken and Mushrooms in a white cream sauce) and Belgian Endives Gratinee were being served. If you wanted a second helping it was there for the taking. Once everyone was pleasantly full.....a dessert bar was put out....Tiramisu, Chocolate Mousse, Café Liegeois...yummy, oh and I can't forget the homemade mini Eclairs, which were delicious, not too sweet

I think I am going to have some competition in the baking department...be careful Thomas!!! Once the brunch was winding down we all sang Happy Birthday, in three languages no less, to the chef/owner Thomas.... We may have embarrassed him just a bit, but he was a good sport.

It is always a pleasure for me to organize this event year after year. We hope that the Brussels Bistro will invite us to host our brunch again in 2012....maybe next year we can bring out the dancing shoes.

A bientôt ,

Live Love Laugh,

Christiane (Chrissy) Lion



BCSC BRUNCH @ BRUSSELS BISTRO 2011



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Marc Claessens

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Brigitte Gaviola-Bequet

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ADDRESS CORRECTION REQUESTED

To: