

Science of Wine class teaches chemistry, appreciation

NASIMEH EASTON | SENIOR WRITER

Imagine this: You're at a weekly wine-tasting at a local winery. You're sampling a wide variety of flavors, picking your favorites, chatting with your friends, and best of all, you're getting credit for it.

While this may seem an impossible dream to most college students, to the members of Marlene McCauley's course "The Science of Wine," it's nothing more than a homework assignment.

"How great is it to teach students, undergraduates particularly, to appreciate wine and understand it?" said geology professor McCauley.

This appreciation and understanding comes more through education about the scientific aspects of wine than actual tastings. Students are required to taste wine — either at wineries or by buying the wine themselves — as part of their homework assignments. Class time, however, is devoted to the geology and chemistry involved in the grape growing and fermentation process.

"We talk about the chemistry of wine," said McCauley. "We talk about the grape itself and growing it and the molecular archeology of figuring out where the first wine came from. There's a lot of science involved in wine; it's a science class."

It certainly is. I sat in on a class session one cool, blustery Tuesday night. At 19, I was the youngest one in the crowd by far (you must be 21 to enroll in the course). I found myself astounded by just how technical and scientific wine making is. The process, from grape growing to the final bottling, utilizes concepts from geology, chemistry, and even some biology.

"There's a lot of stuff that I had no idea had to even do with wine," said senior John Irwin. "I feel like I'm really learning."

Not all class time is devoted to lecture and discussion; there's also some very hands-on learning involved. In labs, for example, students get an opportunity to apply what they've learned by actually making their own wine.

"We are following the fermentation process throughout the semester," said McCauley. "There's a lot of chemistry and biochemistry happening in the lab."

"It builds confidence to implement class concepts (in the lab). It's proof of what you've learned," said senior Katharine Clark.

One of these labs, the field lab, includes a day-long trip to two local vineyards. There, students get an opportunity to talk to winemakers and witness the winemaking process up close.

"It was interesting to see the actual vineyard itself," said junior Joe Gillette. "We got quite an experience."

"We saw two very different winemakers," said Clark. "It gave you an idea of how much leeway there is for individual personality to come through in wine."

Vineyards are what led McCauley to teaching the class in the first place. About four years ago, she began a mapping research project in North Carolina in order to help grape growers select locations for vineyards. Before long, McCauley realized the potential of her knowledge in a college setting, and the course was created last year.

"The way research works at Guilford, you tie it into your teaching," said McCauley. "I said, 'why can't I teach this as a lab science?' That would be fun, I thought. People would like to take it, and they'd learn something about wine."

People do like to take it. There are waiting lists for the class each semester. And it isn't always to get the necessary lab science credit out of the way; some take it as an elective.

"I'd already fulfilled my lab requirement, but the course sounded like it could be interesting," said Gillette. "You learn something about wine. It's fun."

McCauley finds more value in teaching the course than just the academic aspect and students' enjoyment, however.

"We talk about various problems on this campus that arise when people are drunk and stupid," said McCauley. "Can you minimize that through education? I maintain that you can."

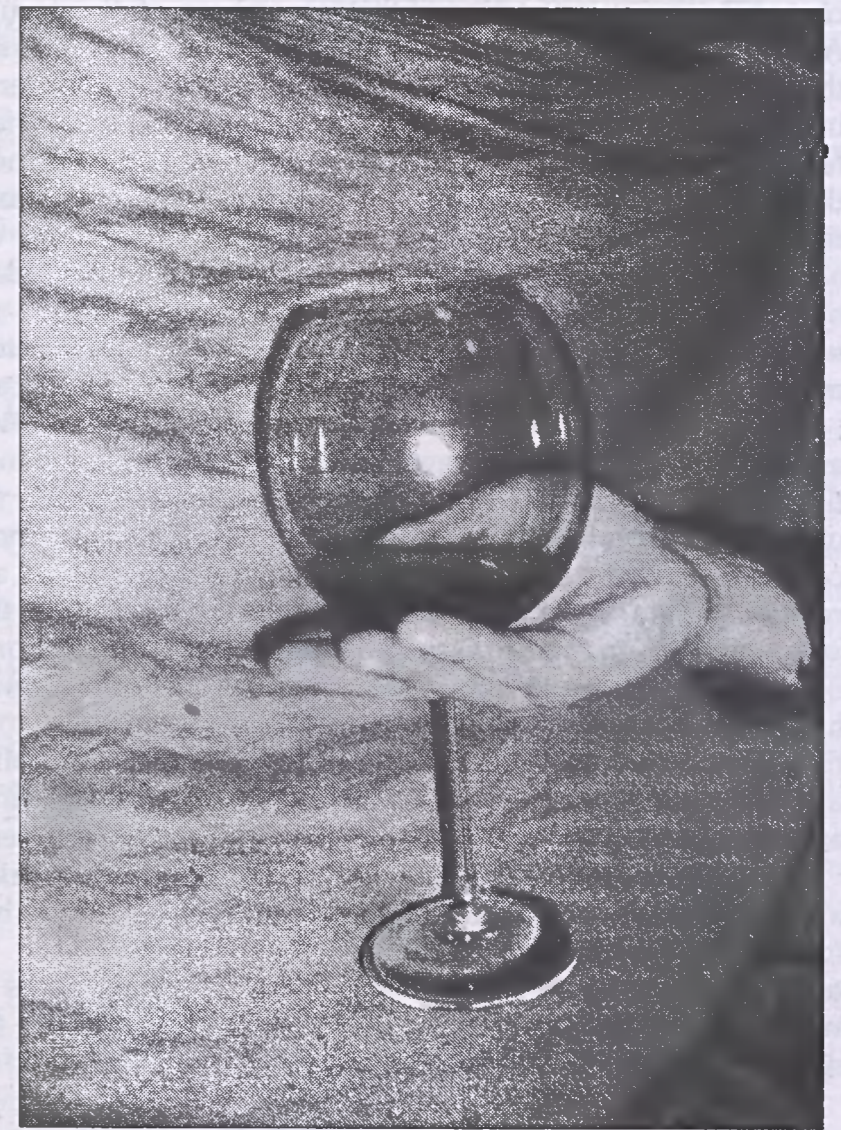
Students must sign a waiver at the beginning of the course stating they will not drink and drive, as well as agree to complete their drinking homework assignments responsibly and in moderation. Some students feel that the course has taught them about drinking safely in addition to its more scientific aspects.

"I'd only had boxed wine before. There's only one reason you drink boxed wine," said senior John Irwin. "I feel like I make safer decisions now when I drink."

"When you have a bottle of wine, it's a more social thing than other alcohol," said Clark. "You're not drinking it to get drunk. It's very different than I thought."

The course may be based around science and education, but McCauley ultimately hopes to leave a lasting impression on students that goes beyond the doors of the classroom.

"I educate students on the basics of wine



MORGAN HOWARD/GUILFORDIAN

STUDENTS VISIT VINEYARDS AND LEARN THE ARTS OF WINE-MAKING, WINE-TASTING, AND DRINKING SAFELY.

tasting and understanding its structure," said McCauley. "You teach a college student about wine, and how good is that for the rest of their life? It teaches them to think about what it is they're drinking instead of just pounding it back."

Vagina: know it, use it, and love it

ADRA COOPER | SENIOR WRITER

"Let's just start with the word 'vagina.' It sounds like an infection at best, maybe a medical instrument: 'Hurry, Nurse, bring me the vagina.'"

This was one of the many great lines of The Revelers' production of "The Vagina Monologues," which was performed Feb. 23-25 in Bryan Jr. Auditorium. The all-female cast performed a compelling series of monologues covering a variety of issues tied to one central theme — vaginas.

"When I first began to perform these monologues around the world, I realized that just saying the word vagina caused enormous controversy, because vagina is, in fact, the most isolated, reviled word in any language," said Eve Ensler, writer of "The Vagina Monologues," on the Web site www.vday.org.

As reported in The Guilfordian, the discomfort surrounding the content of the play was recently exhibited when a woman in Florida re-

"The Hoohaa Monologues."

Ensler wrote the first version of "The Vagina Monologues" in 1996. Based on interviews she conducted with 200 women, the play presents topics of sexuality, love, menstruation, birth, violence, rape, and perceptions of the female anatomy.

"My hope is to add a little puzzle piece into the audience's world view," said senior co-director Sarah Levenson. "I feel the purpose of the play is to demystify the vagina."

"The Vagina Monologues" also works to raise awareness about violence against women. Annual productions of the play, like the one at Guilford, raise money for V-Day, a global movement to stop abuse towards females.

The program has raised over \$30 million to date. This money has gone to various organizations

these causes.

Every year a new monologue is added to highlight a current issue affecting women around the world.

"This year's theme is 'women in conflict zones,' and there are two brand new monologues related to this," said junior co-director Mary Nevin Hobgood.

"Say It: For the Comfort Women," performed by first-year Allison Martin, sophomore Kat Siladi, and assistant director of Friends Center Deborah Shaw, discusses the 200,000 Korean and Chinese women who were subjected to sexual slavery by the Japanese government during World War II.

The final monologue, "2007 Spotlight Monologue," performed by first-year Caroline Floyd, junior Elizabeth Mehaffey, and junior Chelsea Simpson, brings up the injustice of war and how women can participate in the healing process after such destruction.

While many of the monologues touch on serious issues, several of them also use humor.

"It's a very smart play for the way it combines comedy and social awareness," Levenson said.

For example, "Angry Vagina," performed by junior Kathrin Gilbert, discusses the injustices of the vagina, such as tampons and those feared visits to the gynecologist.

Also, "Woman who Loved to Make Vaginas Happy," performed by sophomore Caitlin Allen, is told from the perspective of a sex worker who only works with other women. The monologue involves impressions of the many different types of

moans and orgasms that she has become familiar with through her work.

While the monologues provoke consciousness about women's issues, some of the audience members might have found it "a little unsettling," as Levenson put it.

"(The play) is abrasive, but it raises awareness while also rebuilding peace and community," Hobgood said. "It's important to put the violence against women into context for campus. The play shows how these issues affect women, even at Guilford."

"The Vagina Monologues" does not just educate its audience but its cast as well.

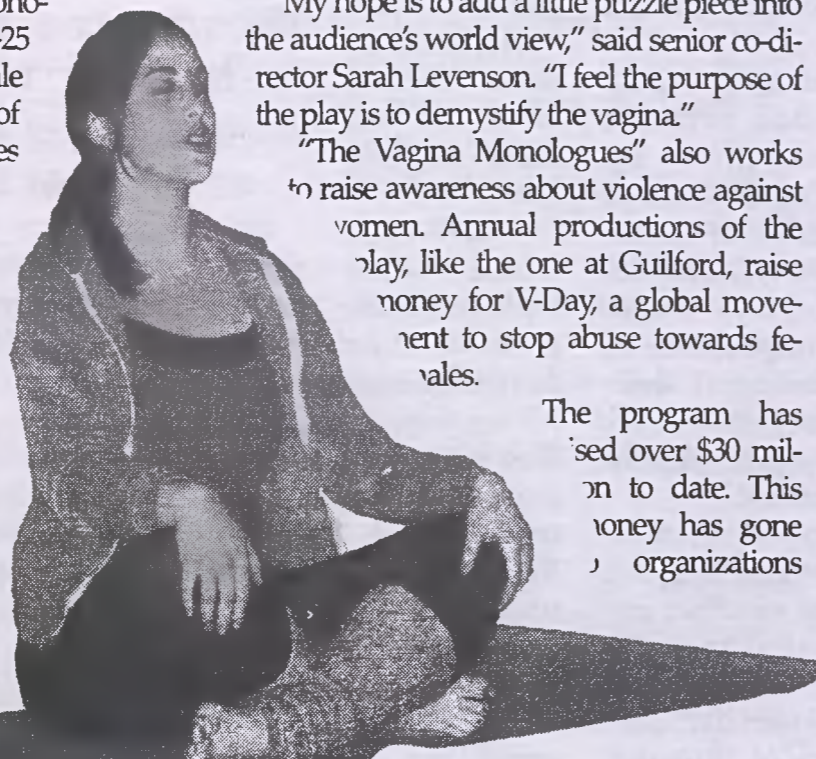
"Participating in the play becomes a social building (activity)," Levenson said. "It is a gathering of storytelling."

The cast at Guilford consisted of a diverse group of women: they were all of different ages, races, and backgrounds. Also, the majority of the cast did not have previous theatre experience.

"The cast is diverse, and it's a great opportunity for girls to meet each other," Hobgood said. "Even if it's just a performance, it represents the diversity of women on campus."

Overall, the production exhibited the power of theatre in inspiring activism and education.

"I did not realize the full potential and viability of the theater when I began 'The Vagina Monologues,'" Ensler said on www.vday.org. "I had certainly experienced the magic and the power before, but I had yet to understand its ... ability to ... empower people on the deepest political and spiritual levels."



MORGAN HOWARD/GUILFORDIAN

ANNA CLARK AND OTHER GUILFORD WOMEN PERFORMED THE VAGINA MONOLOGUES

quested a local theatre to change its marquee from "The Vagina Monologues" to the more ambiguous

like women's shelters and crisis centers. Guilford's production this year contributed \$1,200 towards