



Stags' Leap

PALISADES BOCCE

We played a game of bocce in the freckled light of the afternoon. Fists were raised and shaken, followed by laughter, the eloquence of affectionate teasing. Horace Chase, father and protector, played valiantly, but it was Amparo Grange who took the trophy away from the lesser gods, mocking them. Some said it wasn't sportsmanlike, but she isn't a man, after all, so who could argue?

At Stags' Leap, the bocce court is located below the Sensory Garden, overlooking the estate Cabernet vineyards, under the shadow of the Stags Leap Palisades. Olives often need to be swept off the court before beginning to play. Foul lines are four to ten feet from either end of the court (observe the metal markers on the side planks). If there is a difference of opinion as to which team has a ball closest to the pallino, someone has to take off a belt to measure; rulers don't seem to be allowed on court. Play is best in late afternoon, when the sun lowers to the hills in the west and bathes the vineyards beyond the bocce court in amber light. The purpose in playing such a leisurely game of ball is simply to be lounging outdoors when the light goes through its changes, lighting up first the olive trees like a woman fluffing her hair, then the palisades, the eternal rocky backdrop to any activity on this property, win or lose.

Players: Bocce is played by 2 equal teams, either 1, 2, or 4 persons per team. On a 4-person team, 2 persons from each team can stay at opposite ends of the court and play alternate innings, or frames.

Equipment: 8 bocce balls, 4 red and 4 green; 1 smaller white pallino

Object: Each player places her bocce balls as close to the pallino as possible, scoring points for her team. The team with the most points wins.



Stags' Leap

Play: The team winning a coin toss begins. A player from the starting team tosses the pallino toward the end of the court. The pallino must go beyond the centerline and may not hit the backboard. The same player then rolls or tosses a bocce ball as close to the pallino as possible.

The opposing team takes their turn next, with players taking turns tossing or rolling their bocce balls as close to the pallino as possible. The opposing team continues to toss balls, taking turns between players, until they succeed in getting a bocce ball closer to the pallino than the starting team.

The teams continue alternating in this way until one team has used up all of its bocce balls, at which point the other team bowls its remaining balls. The frame is over when all balls have been tossed. Play switches to the opposite end of the court with each frame.

Points: At the end of each frame, one point is awarded to a team for every ball that is closer to the pallino than the closest ball of the opposing team. This can be more than one ball, and as many as four. The team that wins a frame begins the next frame. Players determine what point count constitutes a game, usually from eleven to fifteen points.

Ball Tossing: Balls are delivered underhand. The ball must leave the hand before the player steps over the foul line. It may hit the sidewalls, but may not hit the backboard (in which case that ball is out of play and the team must roll a second ball). Any ball that hits the backboard is removed from play, even if it hits other balls along the way or is forced back by another ball.

Ball Toss Styling, Punto: the basic shot, a soft release of the bocce ball intended to roll up as close to the pallino as possible and stop; **Raffia:** a fast, rolling shot intended to knock opponent's ball away from the pallino; **Volo:** lofting the bocce ball in the air beyond the middle of the court, intended to knock opponent's ball away from the pallino with a direct hit on the fly.



Stags' Leap

Strategy: Knocking away an opponent's ball; knocking the pallino to change its position; bank shots off the wooden court walls. Players who are waiting their turn to toss the ball can remain active by scouting the court, encouraging teammates, acting as midcourt advisers and strategists, and enjoying some wine. All forms of distraction in good taste are encouraged.

Endgame: Playing bocce can work up an appetite, even when it's accompanied by a robust Tuscan picnic. The losing team handles the postgame barbeque. The winning team sweeps the court and puts the balls back in their crate. Everyone enjoys wine.

Recommended Food and Wine Pairing: Sicilian olives, rustic brick oven foccacia brushed with virgin olive oil, watercress leaves rolled around goat cheese with plenty of fresh cracked pepper, prosciutto, chilled bottles of Stags' Leap Winery Napa Valley Viognier.

Bacio = Kiss (Italian) When a ball gently taps another ball, the balls are said to kiss.

Pallino = Little Ball (Italian)

Copyright ©2002 Theresa Whitehill, All Rights Reserved

Written for Stags' Leap Winery

Excerpted from *Stags' Leap Winery: A Guide to the Estate, Volume I, The Book of Rules*

Stags' Leap Winery 6150 Silverado Trail, Napa, CA 94556

<http://www.stagsleap.com> StagsLeap@StagsLeap.com

(800) 640-LEAP (5327) (707) 944-1303 Fax: (707) 944-9433