

The Yorkshire Sommelier



Wine, Wit and Wisdom for Lovers of the Fermented
Fruit of the Vine and Reports from around the Region.

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The Yorkshire Guild of Sommeliers
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The President's Column

Well, this has to have been one of the best summers and autumns, weather-wise, of my life! This has meant that the events I have attended have been held on sunny days and evenings and that always adds to the enjoyment.

On the 5th July, our committee meeting was held at the new home of our Chairman, Diana (Naish) on a lovely warm, sunny day. It was followed by 'The Chairman's Lunch' where, following a glass or two of 'fizz' in the already perfectly tended garden, we squeezed into our places around the familiar, long and lovely table we remember from its days at The Chantry. The food was delicious and the wines well chosen. A day to remember!

In August, within a week of each other, I was fortunate enough to attend TWO garden parties. The first was at my 'home' section, York, where our Chairman, Mike (Harrison), opened up his extensive garden to some sixty members and friends on a beautiful evening. I was staying with my friend Hazel and we had to be reminded of the time, so arriving somewhat late and having to play 'catch-up' with the champagne! Terry (Herbert) gave us a splendid Tasting outside on the lawn assisted for one wine by his friend, Dr Stuart Calder. My favourites were the White and the Red Rully, often hard to come by but well worth seeking out. For supper we were treated to an excellent Hog Roast with plenty of crackling and apple sauce as well as very tasty puddings provided by our hostess, Linda, aided by some other lady members. Night was falling as we finally bade our hosts farewell.



The second was the Caistor Section's party, held in the garden of Anne and Michael Carr's delightful home at Ludborough. I had set out in good time but took a wrong turning at a roundabout and ended up arriving in a distressed state and over an hour late! A glass of champagne restored my sanity and I was soon enjoying the superb buffet and drinking good wines, all, both food and wine, supplied by the members. A good job I had remembered to take a contribution! The Johnson's and I

were lucky to have been invited to stay the night and we all slept well after much chat, supper and more wine of course! The next morning, following a delicious breakfast, I was sad to say goodbye but the journey home was a doddle.

My final visit in August was to Whitby Section where I was fortunate to be hosted by the Greens. The Tasting was at Lythe Village Hall where Nigel (Green) opened some lovely bottles of Loire wines from his prodigious private cellar as we ate a very good supper whilst listening to his wise explanations.

One final important point to mention - do please try to attend our Annual Dinner Dance at the Novotel, York on Saturday, 24th November where I will be presenting 'The Ken Buchanan Award' to this year's very worthy winner - none other than our excellent Magazine Editor, Ann Johnson, who has worked hard to keep us well informed for almost seven years now! Hope to see you in York?

Deirdre Buchanan

Chairman's Report

It has certainly been a vinously busy summer this year so I apologise if my report is longer than usual.



At the beginning of August I hosted the Chairman's Lunch for the Committee at my home which was a challenge as I had to cook lunch for 23 whilst at the same time chairing the meeting before hand. However, my trusty assistant (aka husband Nigel) kindly beavered away in the background while I did the business – so a very big thank you to Nigel.



On 22nd August Nigel and I were guests of Hull Section at their famous Garden Party at the home of Malcolm and Elizabeth Eley in Hessle. All that has been said about it in the past is true – amazing wines sourced by Michael Coupland and Nigel Green and a feast fit for a king prepared by their own members. To top it all it was a brilliantly

sunny day. Thank you Hull.

On 6th August York's Chairman, Michael Harrison together with his wife Linda hosted what has now become an annual Hog Roast Garden Party for York Section at their home in York. Wines for the evening were presented by Terry Herbert, aided and abetted by Dr Stuart Calder – all superb as ever.

14th August saw us as guests of Harrogate Section at The Masonic Hall – only 5 minutes walk from the station so Nigel was able to hang up his chauffeur's hat for the evening. David Colling from Derwentio Wines presented some very interesting wines from Portugal – even some with artistic labels designed by Howard Hodgkins. Sadly we later learned that David had suffered a stroke the following day but I am glad to say that he is gradually making a full recovery. We all wish him well.

Our final section visit this Summer was to Sheffield on 20th August where Barry Starmore of Starmoreboss Wines stepped in at the last minute to present wines from around the world. This was followed by their famous sandwich & chips supper – although sadly we hit the night when it was roast potatoes instead of chips! We were made warmly welcome by Sheffield members – thank you.

I referred in the last magazine to a request to make some tasting notes on honeys for York & District Bee Keepers Association and this I carried out on 20th September with the help of Dr Stuart and Pennie Calder together with Nigel. We all put our wine tasting skills to use and were very pleasantly surprised at the huge variety of colours, textures and flavours of the 11 different honeys we tasted. Thank you to the aptly named Bruno Hanneman for giving us this opportunity.



Finally, after many months of planning, the week of 7 - 14 October arrived and the Sommeliers Wine Trip to Greece. We visited 2 of the most important DPO areas of Greece, namely Nemea and Mantinia in the Peloponnese; and such wineries (amongst others) as Gaia, Palivou, Semeli, Tselepos and Skouras as recommended by Jancis Robinson. Our final visit was to an organic boutique winery called Giannikos whose exceptional wines were retailing at approximately £20.00 at the cellar door – sadly no chance of anyone paying for them in England after transportation costs and taxes! We

even managed a little bit of culture with visits to



ancient sites at Epidouros, Nemea, Mycenae and, of course, Athens itself (Parthenon and Argora) on our free day. And to top it all, great company!



Sadly, however, I received an email whilst in Greece, from Jack Hesketh whom many of you know as past Chairman of Leeds Section and latterly as Secretary of the Guild. He has decided to step down from the guild Management Committee following several years of health issues, in order, as he put it, to be able to take more holidays while he can. Thank you Jack from all of the Committee for all that you have given to the Guild – your loyalty, care, patience, hard work and above all your friendship and we wish you well in your travels.

I look forward to seeing you all at The Dinner Dance on 24th November, and if not, I wish you a Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year.

Diana Naish



Bingley Section Report

September



This tasting was presented by Majestic Wine Warehouse Ltd. From Ilkley Michael and Rick went about presenting 'A Game of Rhones Tasting' in a very relaxed manner which captured the group's imagination.

Twenty members and guests were in attendance for this evening at the Keighley Golf Club. It was generally agreed this is a very attractive location and the conservatory is a well admired room in which to have a tasting.

Six wines were presented really well by the two young men.



We started with two white wines a Jaboulet Viognier and a Leon Peridical Cote De Rhone Blanc... which, in my opinion were a little over chilled.



The four Reds that followed did really demonstrate just what a fabulous area the Rhone in the South East of France is offering, a huge contrast and complex flavours in each wine.

My pick of the reds was the Gigondas Carobelle 2016 at

somewhere around 14% but I can't deny the Chateauneuf-du-Pape to finish was great ending to a fabulous tasting list.

Ben Tierney



Caistor Section Report

June

Nichola and Sophie from Majestic Wines in Lincoln presented wines mainly from Eastern Europe, beginning with Royal Tokaji Harslevelux 2017 £9.99 12.5% HUNGARY. Tokaji has the oldest classified vineyards in the world and being at a similar latitude to Chablis makes it perfect for crisp, dry whites. Two World Wars and communist rule meant Tokaji's quality was never recognised outside Hungary, so today you can pick up top bottles at friendly prices. It is unoaked and packed with rich spicy notes of honey pollen, elderflower and citrus.

Grüner Veltliner 2016 Weingärten Weissenkirchen, Wachau. £10.99 12%. Austria. Grüner Veltliner is an aromatic variety primarily from Austria. It is the colour of fresh straw, a nose of gooseberries and green apple. Well balanced acidity and citrus fruits give a spicy, lively wine. One of the favourites of the tasting.

Krasno Sauvignon Blanc Ribolla 2016 £7.99 13% SLOVENIA . From Brda, a Slovenian wine region renowned for top quality grapes. Just across the border in Friuli, Italian lookalike wines cost at least £12. This sauvignon has delicate aromas and flavours of green apple, white flowers with a fruity finish and a touch of herbs. Excellent value.

Dr Loosen Slate Hill Riesling 2016 £8.99 ABV 8.5% GERMANY. The vines are ungrafted, average over 60 years old, the vineyard being in the family for over 200 years. Yields are limited with rigorous selection removing inferior fruit. A classic, fragrant honeyed Riesling with flavours of peach, apricot and lime.

Incanta Pinot Noir 2016 £6.49 12.5% ROMANIA. Romania may not be the first place you think of when buying Pinot Noir but this has all the classic red fruit flavours and spicy notes. Aromas of cherry and raspberry, with sweet spice on the palate, soft gentle tannins and a smooth finish. Royal Tokaji. 5 Puttonyos 2013 £21.59 . 50cl 11% HUNGARY. Sweet Tokaji is produced by blending hand-picked shrivelled or 'aszu' berries with top quality base wines. It has a medium amber colour with a nose of orange peel, figs and cinnamon. The sugar on the palate is balanced by a fine acidity. A world famous classic from Hungary and the star of the evening !

July

News reached us of the imminent retirement of James Long from Corney & Barrow. This proved to be false news and with much hilarity, we proceeded to taste the evening's wines "At James's Discretion" beginning with C & B's Blanc House Wine from Cotes de Gascogne 2017. From a co-operative but blended by C & B, this was easy drinking, good value (£7.72) refreshing bright wine, made from an unoaked Colombard blend. Andaina Godello from Adegas Galegas, Spain followed but not so well received. Subtle nose with a little more flavour if slightly oily, long aftertaste. The third offering came from the same producer as the first wine, Folie de Roi 2016 was well balanced, with peachy characteristics, fresh long length, from a good vintage. Gros Manseng, Petit Courbu, and Arrufiac grapes from sustainable viticulture. The last white Macon-Solutre from Maison Auvigue, Burgundy, 2017 from 100% unoaked Chardonnay. We enjoyed the bright golden, rich honey offering, one to keep. Onto the reds with Sanziana Pinot Noir from



Recas Crasmele, Romania, from vineyards said to be amongst the oldest in the world. An easy drinking but youthful picnic wine, with lovely cherry nose and Pinot colour. Wines are sold young in Romania for financial reasons, a shame as this wine had potential. Another Pinot Noir, Viellies Vignes 2016 from Domaine Gilles Jourdan, Burgundy. An amazing wine, oak integrated with dark fruits, strong tannins and acidity that will keep for even more flavour. More depth than previous P.N. but £10 more expensive. A Merlot next from Domaine St. Esteve and probably the best value wine so far at £8.75. From Languedoc Rousillon, this silky, round wine had structure with red plum fruits, very popular with members. Our last wine was C & B Rioja Crianza Bodegas Zugober 2014, the smallest vineyard to supply Corney & Barrow. Made from 95% Tempranillo, we found vanilla on the nose, dark cherry on the palate, softer but with good balance and structure. An eclectic, very enjoyable selection of wines all washed down with great humour relating to James's non-retirement.

August

We have had some memorable venues for our Summer gatherings, Thornton Abbey and Ferriby Hall on the banks of the Humber to name just two. This year's venue was another joy in the very pretty garden of Mike and Anne Carr. Good food, wine and friends – perfect!



September

Our much anticipated September meeting was with Jane Souter from Chateau Musar. I am sure we are all familiar with the Musar wine philosophy so with a healthy budget for the night, we embarked on a tasting from the 3 levels of wine Musar produce. Beginning with their cheaper, youthful Jeune range we began with a 2017 White. Reflected the fruits of the Bekaa Valley with no oak in this range (too expensive). From the same range Jeune Red 2016 was soft mellow, full of berry fruits and popular with members. Both wines were good value at around £12. Hochar Red 2015 followed, sometimes called their second wine. From a difficult year, the wine was more restrained, needed breathing and was just starting on its journey, it will last for decades. Onto the main event with Chateau Musar red from 2011, the youngest we tasted as nothing is released under 7 years. If a wine is not ready, it will be kept back.

Musar do not strive for uniformity but work with the characteristics of each individual year to produce that vintage's uniqueness. So sequences of release can be out of order. 2011 was classic Musar, (always from Cinsault, Carrigan and Cab Sav). with freshness, a good balance of fruit, alcohol and smooth tannins. Musar red 2010 was next, a tiny vintage due to frost, different in style with a sweeter nose, intense fruit but subtle too. A pity this one is not now available! Into the £30 mark with 2004 and we could see maturity and taste evolving, still young in Musar world! 2004 showed mellow fruits with palate more developed than the nose. The last red was 1998 with Cinsault dominating, dryer more elegant, colour showing age but still very lively. We finished with a White 2009, very different, deep colour, rich and concentrated with an oily texture. It did not appeal to all but perhaps better with food.

October

On the day the IPCC (Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change) published its latest report on climate change, our very own Past Chair, John Clark, gave us a presentation about climate change and wine. John is an educator in his own right and produced a comprehensive and insightful presentation - accompanied with excellent slides - showing the effects of climate on wine production. "Whatever the cause of global climate change.....the impact on the wine industry is becoming increasingly significant".

Wines being grown at higher latitudes:

We started by comparing 2 fizzes:- A Camel Valley Brut from Cornwall (Pinot Noir/Chardonnay) - £28 John reminded us that, following changing weather opportunities, the French are buying swathes of English countryside. A Jansz Premium Cuvee NV from Tasmania (Pinot Noir) - £18. Within one generation (1958-2008) Brown Brothers from Victoria, Australia were harvesting 5 weeks earlier and to mitigate climate change are now producing in Tasmania.

New wine varieties being introduced:

Atma Thymiopoulos 2017 from Macedonia, Greece (Assyrtiko) - £13 Jim Barry Assyrtiko 2017 from Clare Valley, Australia – £17.50 Jim Barry was introduced to the Assyrtiko grape in Santorini and believed that this would be well suited to the Clare Valley and provide a sustainable future. He was the first to introduce the grape variety to Australia in 2012 and is now reaping the harvests. Denbies Redlands from Surrey (Pinot Noir/Dornfelder/Rondo) - £13. Mount Difficulty 2017 from Central Otago, NZ (Pinot Noir) - £26. Central Otago is the world's most Southerly commercial wine producing area. Its extremes of weather from cold winters to hot dry summers, together with the large diurnal temperature variation, make the cool climate Pinot Noir grape suitable for the region.

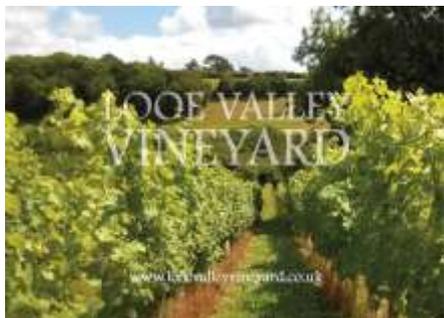
Wines being produced at higher altitudes:

Zuccardi 'On The QT' from Mendoza Uco Valley, Argentina (Malbec) - £18.50 The Uco Valley sits at a higher altitude than other Mendoza vineyards and is an example of how wine makers are adapting. The challenges and opportunities presented by climate change for wine growers were well explored. I can thoroughly recommend any section wishing to combine wine tasting with some cerebral exercise to contact John. I'm sure he could be persuaded to share his knowledge with you! **Anne Carr**

CORNWALL

September and another vineyard trip - this time to Cornwall. Mary and I had an extra person with us in Hazel. Not only did we look at some vineyards, but the Eden Project and The Lost Gardens of Heligan - well we couldn't go all that way and not see them! All the vineyards were down 'one car width' roads, picturesque but a bit 'hairy', Congratulations to Hazel for her excellent driving skills.

Camel Valley - we had paid £18 to have a tour with the winemaker! What a disappointment - some of the other 57 people on the tour thought he was very good as they knew nothing about wine. However to those who knew a little bit about wine, (and we were not the only ones) he was very poor. Very self promoting, showed us a row of vines, how a giropalate worked and then we tasted 6 wines, 2 sparkling and 4 still - all white. All the way through he spoke about his achievements and which wines had won which prizes. Nothing about his winery. I asked a question which he did not answer.



However, "Charlie" at Looe Valley Vineyard, a "one man band" was superb! He only has 6,000 vines on 5 acres. Only the three of us on the tour and he gave us the works!! He had Mary picking and pruning, Hazel tying up the vines, then we looked through the hydrometer for the sugar content. When we went for the tasting (in an extension to his house) he gave us a wine a week old and explained about the oxidisation, then he

showed us his equipment (no rude jokes please), all the same as a large winery, but on a small scale. He drew off some wine that he had started fermenting the previous day (he had just started picking) it looked like sludge. Then he had Hazel putting a cork in a bottle with a thing that looked like a one arm bandit! (I just took the photos!). It cost all of £7.50!! We just had to buy some wine!

Knighthor Winery was quite a large operation, and as they were preparing for a wedding the next day, no tour, but we had a very good tasting with cheese and charcuterie.

Bosue Winery was another "one man band" in a beautiful setting. The winery was attached to the house and Mary made the faux pas of saying "what a lovely tasting room", the reply was "this is our dining room". However as it was such a lovely day, we sat on the veranda sipping one of their 'sparkling wines' (they only make 2 sparkling, the still wine for the past year had sold out). We overlooked the gardens and vines, with 3 buzzards flying overhead. Lovely.



Next trip to Greece in October with Diana Naish, then it is thinking caps on for next year!! **MG**

Harrogate Section Report

July



In most of our meetings, we can sit back, relax, and listen to the speaker while sipping some lovely wines. This cushy format changed with ‘Where in the World?’ presented by Laura Kent of the Yorkshire Wine School. We had to do some work – but very enjoyable work, fortunately.

We tasted six wines blind, trying to decide where each one came from, with the help of some cryptic clues. As often happens with blind tastings, this was a great opportunity to surprise ourselves – about what we know or, more often, what we don’t.

Among the revelations was a richly coloured white with an intense, smoky nose. Many of us wanted it to be an oaked Aussie Chardonnay or South African Chenin Blanc, but Laura’s clue was that this was a unique style of wine, specific to its region. After much head scratching, we learnt it was a totally oak-free Australian Semillon from the Hunter Valley (2007 Mount Pleasant ‘Elizabeth’). We should have guessed!

Other wines also forced us to admit that recognising certain styles of wines isn’t as easy as we thought. Barossa Shiraz? It has to be a beast of a deep, dark red, doesn’t it? Well, the 2015 Peter Lehmann H&V Shiraz was surprisingly soft and approachable. This wine wasn’t giving away its origins.

Happily, Laura kept things very light-hearted, and the experience was entertaining as well as educational. There were only a few correct guesses, but even fewer sour grapes!

August

With the wines of Portugal becoming increasingly popular, we had a very good turnout for our tasting on the topic, presented by Steve Colling of Derventio Wines in Malton. Steve brought along seven of his best from various parts of the country, demonstrating an impressive diversity of styles – and great value.

At the bargain-basement end, we tried the 2015 Casa Santos Escapada Tinto. This soft, easy-drinking red doesn’t have much in the way of structure – but for just £7, it’s a lovely party wine, with decent fruit.

Moving a little further up the price scale to £13, we tasted a pair of wines with a (fairly tenuous) local connection. Howard’s Folly is a range named after Howard Bilton, a businessman from Yorkshire who now lives in Hong Kong. An ardent admirer of Portuguese wines, Bilton teamed up with Australian winemaker David Baverstock in 2002 – and we tried the results of this partnership in the 2016 Sonhador Alvarinho and the 2011 Sonhador Red. The former is a well-balanced, quite complex example of the variety, while the latter (a blend of 30% Syrah, 30% Alicante Bouchet, 30% Aragonéz and 10% Touriga Nacional) is a full-on food wine with dark, deep fruit.



We ended the tasting appropriately for Portugal with a good-value Port: Graham's 10-Year-Old Tawny. Full of figgy fruit and with a lingering caramel finish, this rounded off the evening very nicely – and very reasonably, at £18.

September

No meeting – we always have a break in September.

October



Occasionally a speaker comes along with a genuinely fresh perspective on wine. In October, we were very lucky to welcome one of these, in the shape of Chris Hill of Latitude Wines in Leeds. He brought along wines from various countries, including France, South Africa, Chile and

Greece – all with one thing in common: they're made with minimal intervention in the vineyard and winery, and with a commitment to preserving the land for future generations of winemakers.

Chris is a keen admirer of this sustainable approach to winemaking, and very knowledgeable about it. His enthusiasm became obvious early in his presentation, as he made this potentially dry (but important) topic extremely interesting. In particular, it was fascinating to learn how creating vineyard conditions that make chemical fertilisers and pesticides unnecessary can reflect in the style and taste of the resulting wine.



For many of us, the standout wine was the Yealands Estate PGR, from the Awatere Valley in Marlborough, New Zealand. PGR stands for Pinot Gris, Gewürztraminer, Riesling – an unusual blend outside Alsace, but tasting very much at home here: bags of aromatic, exotic fruit, well balanced with citrus acidity. The reds include Chapoutier's "la Ciboise" Luberon, an intense, spicy blend of Grenache and Syrah, and Montes Alpha Cabernet Sauvignon, a wonderfully pure-tasting example of the variety from Colchagua, Chile.

By the end of the talk, we'd discovered that sustainable wine doesn't have to be slightly odd 'natural' wine. It can be clean and commercial. And, most importantly, with these producers looking after things, we can keep enjoying it for years to come.

Tony Gamble



Hull Section Report

July



Didn't some clever chap once say that summer's lease hath all too short a date? Well, cor blimey what a scorcher of a summer we had and our annual garden party slap bang in the middle when, perhaps, too hot the eye of heaven shined. Once more, we were at the lovely home of Elizabeth and Malcom Eley. The green of their grass only outshone by their capability as

hosts and I have to say it was the first time in my life I had experienced "lawn envy". With fine fare provided by a bevy of volunteers and an exotic selection of wines selected by Michael Coupland all was set fair for a most enjoyable day. There was one non-member who I was delighted to meet, Totti the tortoise, who joined the company, moving, albeit slowly, amongst us and towards the end of proceedings was among the more coherent present. Many of you may give consideration to the colour of your underwear,



especially when clothing becomes more diaphanous but one person confessed to deliberately wearing "flesh coloured" pants to ensure a "good look". As to who this was I am unable to say but all enquiries should be directed to Renny Smith if you are looking to buy any. Pick of the day: Sancerre Rouge Les Champs Clos 2016, light and beguiling.

August



It is a truth universally acknowledged that a married man in possession of a great thirst is in want of a wine. So hastened I to an evening of entertainment by way of a discourse on the wines of Greece to be delivered by Mr Barry Stanmore, a most excellent and learned gentleman as we were to discover as events were to unfold before us. Although broadly having a little knowledge of wines I must confess that in the matter of Hellenic produce I was somewhat a novice, as indeed were many of the assembled company.

Thankfully the stain of such ignorance has now been lifted from our eyes as we were to enjoy a selection of wines whose names, sadly, we are no nearer being able to pronounce with any greater sense of conviction. Much admired by many was the Dom. Papagiannakos Assyrtiko 2015 whose bracing salinity indicated origins proximate to the sea but which was balanced with a delicate floral edge acceptable in any ladies boudoir. From the same producer we were also enchanted by the Erythios 2015 a blend of the indigenous Agiorgitiko and Cabernet Sauvignon with spicy aromas and a wild fruitiness which roused much excitement and ribaldry among some of the younger gentleman. A most suitable entertainment all round.

As an aside, you will know the expression "It's all Greek to me" but did you know the Greek equivalent is "It's all Chinese to me." Most languages have a version.

September



For our September meeting we were entertained by our current Chair Nigel Green who following a period of sterling service of over ten years has decided to step down from this role and take up life on the backbenches. To commemorate this transition he generously hosted an evening sampling selection from his impressive cellar. Early inroads were made with a gorgeous Longuicher Probsberg QbA 1975, a wine older than all but two of our gathering who were then gifted a bottle each for their achievement (or underachievement?). A fabulous vintage which had more of the character of sherry than wine, a light tan

in colour with light fruit on the nose revealing a gentle sweetness that only time can bring, I'm hoping this works for me as well. With the starter course we enjoyed the Bauer Gruner Veltliner 2012, orchard fruits and a hint of something peppery. For the main course we enjoyed a pairing of wines: the Reference Vinsobres 2009 from Dom. Jaune and Clos des Andes 2004 from Bodega Poesia. The former was delightful but paled next to the latter which was extraordinarily excellent, rich ripe fruits and a long satisfying finish, a fuscous Malbec for the ages. Dessert was polished off with a splendid Royal Tokaji. A wonderful range of flavours backed with Nigel's unimpeachable knowledge made for an evening few will forget, though some may struggle to remember.



October



Having read, in this most august publication itself, reports of Geoff Walker appearing at other groups we were delighted to welcome him for his first appearance with us, I feel it may not be his last. Billed as a selection of Italian wines but became a tour of both the Apennine and the Iberian peninsulas but none the worse for that as the selection was very well received. Starting with a crisp and satisfying Macabeo from Marques de Peurta Vella, good enough for King Juan Carlos apparently. We moved on to the rich La Pergola from Lugano featuring the Trebbiano grape, great nose and clean minerality. Among the reds it was refreshing to taste the Rame Garnacha from Borsao which delivered great brambly and fruits with a soft richness and tremendous value for money. Back to Italy for the Eusebio, La Civielle 2011 from Lombardia an even greater richness with a smooth and gentle mouthfeel. Dinner was accompanied by a Blanco, Rosado and Tinto from Vina Zancara all of which went down a treat. Geoff clearly has a great understanding of wines and a clear appreciation of what represents good value. His knowledge of other languages may not be quite as extensive and one must always be aware of the meaning of "preservativo", it may be nothing to do with sulphides.

Stephen Hussey

Leeds Section Report

July



July saw us return to Ambiente in central Leeds. Our event was a tasting of Lustau sherries, with tapas courses to match, something to really look forward to. Rob 'The Sherry Crusader' introduced the evening, and Philip Kirk from Martinez Wines talked us through the range of sherries. At its height of popularity, some 10 million bottles were consumed each year. Lustau was founded in

1896, in our great empire days, and are famous for their Almacenista sherries. First up was the Puerto Fino, (from Santa Maria) which was crisp and dry, with some yeast on the nose. This was followed by the Papisusa Manzanilla, a classic and bone dry sherry from Sanlucar. The tangy saltiness was a perfect match for the Salt cod cakes that accompanied it. Things went up a notch with the arrival of the Los Arcos Amontillado, which was an



attractive amber colour, with figs and nuts on the nose. This was bigger and rounded with a lovely persistent finish. Perhaps the finest sherry of the evening was thought to be the Palo Cortado Cayetona del Pino, this had wonderful concentration, was intensely nutty, and an incredible long finish. The pairing with caramelised onion tart and smoked cheese, was nothing short of sublime. The Old East India was a wonderful sweetened Oloroso (plus 20% PX) Traditionally this travelled as ships ballast, and during the long voyage was found to become smoother and more complex. This was rich with lots of caramel and toffee flavours. For our finale we tasted the Emilin Moscatel. This was an enticing mahogany colour with a greenish rim, and was made with appassimento grapes. Lovely citrus on the nose here, with a well balanced sweetness and acidity. A great grand finale. The evening was a real treat for all sherry lovers.

Mick Whitaker

Facebook page Leeds Yorkshire Sommeliers

Focussed on the wider Leeds area, this page is for absolutely anyone interested in learning about wine, sharing their enjoyment and finding local wine events and suppliers. It is intended as an unstuffy forum for wine stuff. The page is administered by members of the Leeds section of the Yorkshire Sommeliers, which meets monthly to taste wines and then dine in an informal atmosphere. Enquiries about membership of the Leeds Section are always welcome. There are also sections in Bingley, Caistor, Harrogate, Hull, Scarborough, Sheffield, Whitby and York.

August

The summer evening on board the Kirkstall flyboat provided an intimate atmosphere and a cohesive Society feel. The food was plentiful and served between the presentation of the white and reds, plus the wide variety of wines presented by members.

We raised glasses of Champagne Monsigny, Ferghettina rose 2013, Miraval rose, Domaine la Soumade Rasteaux 2014, Les Dauphins Cotes Du Rhone Villages and Monbazillac 2014.

A favourite for me was the Ferghettina rose however, the star of the night was something never presented before in our section possibly every section. A cheeky bit of secret decanting to be presented with food was the Les Dauphins Cotes du Rhone, from a wine box! There were quite a few surprised faces when this was revealed and much laughter, it has made us look more favourably on this style of packaging for wine on tap.

Molly Eastwood

September No meeting

October



We welcomed back our old friend Chris Mooney who has recently retired from Fells after 25 years at the company. He presented six of his 'favourite' wines and it was an exciting and varied lineup at 'The Olive,' a new venue for us in Chapel Allerton, and an excellent one at that. There was a high turn-

out, including several new members and guests. It was also the first meeting with our new Interim Chairman, Molly Eastwood, at the helm.

Chris opened with an easy drinking yet good quality entry level Alsace: Famille Hugel Classic Gentil 2016.

This was followed by Seifried Estate Aotea Nelson Sauvignon Blanc, a restrained contrast to classic Marlborough Sauvignon Blancs. For sherry lovers, the Antonio Barbadillo "Principe" Amontillado had a delicious richness, with a hint of salinity adding to the notes of chocolate and coffee. Apparently, this bodega also offers excellent lunches... a good vacation tip, perhaps? The Torres Purgatori Costers del Segre certainly wasn't purgatory! However, the standout wines of the evening were probably the Jackson Family Wines La Crema Sonoma Coast Pinot Noir, which had a lovely perfume of cherries and plums to compliment the complex but well-balanced palate, heavily influenced by the proximity to the Pacific coast, and the Guigal Gigondas, which was thoroughly enjoyed with our meal.



Chris's interesting and entertaining anecdotes provided an insight into his choices, and really added to our understanding and appreciation of this selection of great wines.

Becky Feldman

Scarborough Section Report

July

Steve Colling from Deventio Wines presented Gins for Summer. Unusually, we had weather to match.

With our support of chicken, we had a fine South African Chardonnay.

We tasted 8 gins; from the more straightforward, heavily dependent on juniper flavor to more aromatic fruity gins. Steve started by giving us a brief history of Gin and Britain. To make Gin, or Giniver, you start with alcohol made from some organic material, i.e. grain. You then redistill the liquid and allow the vapours to pass through some biological aromatic materials always with Juniper berries as part of the mix. The liquid that condenses is fit to drink almost immediately.

Soldiers from the UK in Holland during the 30 Years War were introduced to the drink and brought it back with them. British soldiers in India drank Indian Tonic, made from quinine, to help protect from malaria. Gin was quickly added.

Our gins were made locally and internationally. We started with a fine, if straightforward, Icelandic Eagle Gin. The early gins were heavily influenced by juniper, angelica and coriander.

As the evening progressed we tasted gins having more botanicals. We had a Saffron Gin from Dijon. This was a lovely colour and much liked by those who were not really gin drinkers. We then had a Nettle, then a Rhubarb and Ginger from the Hedgerow Gin company. In all cases we first “nosed” the neat alcohol and tasted it before adding ice and then tonic. Nearly all were improved after being diluted. Less so for our last two; a Coconut and Grapefruit from Hoxton and a Whitley Neill Quince. They were both almost like liqueurs. The latter was voted gin of the night by a large majority.

Another fascinating and informative evening expanding our taste buds. Many thanks again, Steve.



August

Our summer meeting was a Hog Roast held at Scalby Village Hall. Unfortunately, the weather was a little cloudy and cool, but the food, company and particularly the wine were excellent. We will be back next year.

September

Richard Goodacre, who is part of the Association of Wine Educators, presented “Life after Merlot” – wines from Chile.

With our meal of braised-beef we had an Australian Shiraz. Interesting to compare with the Chilean wines that followed.

We started with a white and a red; Sauvignon Blanc and Merlot. Both fine, at a basic level, but were intended to show how Chilean wine has improved.

Richard gave us a fascinating history of wine in Chile. It was introduced by the Spanish, and initially was for communion wine. It remained at this level until the devastating attack of phylloxera in Europe. Incidentally, I did not know that this is a small aphid-like insect initially spread via Kew Gardens. All European vines are now grafted onto American root stock.

The pests never reached Chile, and to this date many vineyards are organic, and an increasing number are bio-dynamic. Chilean wine was consumed almost entirely domestically all through the Pinochet years. After the fall of the dictator wine was produced in great quantities for the export market. It is only in the past few years that vineyard owners are looking to quality over quantity.

We tasted a further two whites and four reds. About the ratio of wine production in Chile. We had a lovely Riesling and an even better Koyle "Don Cande" Muscat. Not too sweet, but very aromatic. My wine of the night.

The reds went from a Pinot Noir, a Tempranillo, a Cabernet Franc to a Carignan. All were delicious and all less than about £18 from the Wine Society. All were fine, true, examples of the grape. I could hardly decide which I liked most. Perhaps Unduraga Vigno Old Vine Carignan. This was a new variety to me, but I will look out for it in future.

I will also remember how well the Muscat went with brie.!

Thanks again to Richard for a fascinating evening.



October

Our speaker this evening was our own John Armstrong who gave us an excellent quiz and introduced us to Beaujolais wines.

We were welcomed by a Cremant de Bourgone , from Lidl and was a steal at less than £8 a bottle.

With our meal of fish and chips we had a cooled red, Somaine des Vignes du Paradis. John had bought the tasting wines in France and brought to Scarborough in 5-litre bags. It was excellent.

Obviously, we concentrated on red wines, but we had two fine chardonnays, one with some oak and one without. The opinion was evenly split between the two. The unoaked was a Domaine Bertrund and the other was a Paradis.

All the reds were produced from Gamay grapes. Wikipedia describes it as a red grape with white juice. All 5 were very good. The favourite was a Domaine de la Chappelle des Bois, Fleurie Vieilles Vignes 2015. They were deep and dark, with some tannin, but not too dry. They went well on their own, and with our cheeses.

John told us much about the growing of grapes in the region. Many of the growers have very small plots and join co-operatives to produce the wine. Many are moving towards becoming organic. He urged us to visit the area and to meet the growers. Take an empty van to bring the wine home.

The quiz was excellent. It included musical clues and was won by our chair Bob. Many thanks again to John for an entertaining and informative evening.

Paul McCabe

Sheffield Section Report

July

Le Bon Vin – Mark Smith

It has been a number of year since Le Bon Vin gave the Sheffield Sommeliers a tasting so it was nice to welcome Mark Smith to give us a tour of France. So to the wine and my first stand out pick was the Domain Saint Roch Touraine Sauvignon Les demoiselles from the Loire. A white golden sauvignon which was zesty on the nose and clean and crisp on the palate with some mineral character. A delicious mouth-watering wine at £9.99. Next 2 reds that stood out, firstly the Chateau de Pizay Regnie. The Regnie of course being the most modern cru. This plum red wine didn't have much to offer at first but after leaving it to sit in the glass for a while the subtle fruity aromas shone through. On the palate, a touch of spice and a meaty body a real character of a wine for £13.50. My final pick was the Domaine Bonfils Cotes du Rhone Prince d'Orange. This wine from the southern Rhone made from 100% Grenache was garnet in colour and had a sulphurous nose to begin with. After a while though this settled and the fruit came through. Smooth on the palate with a good blend of tannin and fruit. Dense yet soft! A nice drop of red for £11.50. It was great to taste some old classic French wines, some things we

haven't tasted for a while – it's always worth a reminder of how good French wine is!

Le Bon Vin is a wine merchants based on Brightside Lane in Sheffield – a fantastic wine shop, definitely worth a visit. Go to their website to find out more and to order wine - www.lebonvin.co.uk.



August

StarmoreBoss – Barry Starmore

The Sheffield Sommeliers were due to be given a tasting from Chris Parker of New Horizon Wines in Virginia but due to a clash of diaries Barry Starmore, a Sheffield Sommeliers favourite, kindly and brilliantly stepped in last minute to deliver us a fabulous tasting. His theme was mixed but in the main Barry was testing us out with some weird and wonderful grape varieties. My first pick was a delicious white made by Cascina Ghercina, Roero, Piedmont, Italy. Made with the "little rascal" Arneis grape, which is notoriously difficult to grow. This wine shone through with peaches on the nose and a creamy yet refreshing character on the palate. Delicious at £13.95. Next to two reds and first a red wine with a crown cap closure! This wine is made by the Wilder and Wild winery in the Adelaide hills and is the brain child of 2 MW's. Made for the young Aussie market, this red wine is designed to be served slightly chilled and one you can take to the beach! To taste though it was great – plenty of fruit with a sweetish edge and plenty of body, very quaffable at £9.95. Finally, a Sicilian wine. This time a Nero d'Avola from winemaker Baglio. Dark plum in colour with a fruity yet nutty nose. Well rounded, spicy and delicious and not bad value at £14.95.



Thanks again to Barry for stepping in and delivering a great tasting. His shop is situated on Sharrow Vale Road in Sheffield and you can learn more by visiting the website – www.starmoreboss.com

September

HC Wines – John Hattam & Andy Clarke

John and Andy are becoming Sheffield Section regulars having visited us now 7 times but they always deliver an excellent presentation with great, affordable wine to match. They always surprise us with a bit of a theme and this time posing the question “Is wine just fermented grape juice?” – We were taken on a bit of a chemistry lesson (with me being a chemistry teacher, I particularly enjoyed this bit!) to discover what really ends up in a glass of wine. I have picked out my top 3 wines from the night. Firstly the Ontanon Tempranillo Blanco Rioja. This wine is made from a grape that is a mutation of the Tempranillo grape and makes a wine filled with tropical fruit aromas and on the palate? Mouth-watering, citrusy and an excellent length, something different and a talking point wine at £10.25. Next to a Chianti Riserva from wine makers Uggiano. Brownish red in colour with aromas of dark cherry on the nose. A very easy drinking red that is intense, spicy and fruity. Delicious and a bargain I think at £9.45. Finally to a Spanish wine made by Juan Gil named 4 Meses as it spends 4 months in French and American oak. 100% Monastrell (known as Mourvedre elsewhere) goes into this red giving it a lovely plum colour and vanilla and spice on the nose. Full of fruit on the palate with some nice cherry spice giving it a Christmassy feel. A nice drop at £9.95. Another fab tasting from John and Andy, looking forward to the next chemistry lesson!

Please visit HC Wines website at www.hcwines.co.uk to find out more about what John and Andy do.

October

Event - Tasting Menu with Wine at The Open Kitchen, Barnsley College.



Our events organiser, Sarah Whale organised, for a second year running, a delicious tasting menu dinner at Barnsley College. All the food and service was done by catering and hospitality students at the college and the both the food and service did not disappoint. Our chairman Michael France also did a great job pairing the food with some lovely wines including a champagne reception! A lovely

evening was had by all, already looking forward to the next one!

Thomas Darby

Editor's Report

What a superb summer! We have all enjoyed our Section Summer Events



and I certainly enjoyed both Hull and Caistor.

In September I had the pleasure of attending Bingley Section in the Golf Club.



Ann
Johnson

I would like to wish all Sommeliers a Merry Christmas and a Happy 2019!



Notice

The Annual General Meeting of The Yorkshire Guild Of Sommeliers

All members are cordially invited to attend the Annual General Meeting of The Yorkshire Guild Of Sommeliers to be held at the Novotel, York on Tuesday 23rd April 2019 at 7:30pm. There will be a Champagne reception hosted by the Chairman followed by Dinner.

Philip Laming Hon. Secretary

Whitby Section Report

March

Apologies from editor as this was not included in previous edition.

The Stables

Now I am somewhat at a loss
We had Barry as a presenter from Starmore Boss

I am still waiting for the wine notes
They must be arriving by boat
As when I last spoke to him
What a plight
He was on the Isle of Wight

The photo's of the bottles
I'm sure will suffice
And I'm left wondering
If that night we had rice ?

You see I'm as guilty too
As the menu has escaped me
And I can't remember it out of the blue.

So hoping you will forgive me
For not a lot I write
But as usual
It was a brilliant night.

Sue Canty

June



Our presenter was Martin Bayne and he chose to present wines from India and after our presentation many of us can understand why. India produces many wonderful things and has enormous resources but wine growing is perhaps not one of them. Martin had decided to source wines from India as he had to present, on another occasion, wines from a country beginning with

I. Perhaps Italy would have been too obvious! We drank two wines produced for Marks and Spencer and we were told made to specifications supplied by their wine buyer, these were to the majority of palettes the most acceptable. This tasting made us realise how used to certain tastes we are and perhaps how reluctant we are to step outside of that comfort zone. It was a most enjoyable evening, it provided huge talking points, it made us all think and took us of our comfort zone but I suspect that not many people will be going out to buy Indian wine and that we will stick with the people, the food, the culture and that wonderful, vibrant, brilliantly exotic place which we love to visit which is India.

Janet Peake

July



What a lovely summer we are having and what better place to have our meeting than Sanders Yard on a warm evening and sample wines that were classed as a selection of lighter wines for summer drinking and in one of my favourite places for a Sommeliers evening.

Our presenter for the evening was Geoff Walker a wine merchant from York. We started the evening with a pink fizz to enjoy with our canapés, in fact all the wines were white or pink during the whole evening, not a red in sight so that was a first for us and a

nice change. 34 of us as well which made for lots of chatting and new members too.

The food for the evening was as always at Sanders Yard very fitting for the time of year comprising of a spiced beetroot with goats cheese and candied walnut salad followed by a mediterranean summer fish casserole and pudding of a brandy snap basket with strawberries and mascarpone ice cream.

Every wine that we sampled on this occasion seemed to compliment the food very well and listening to Geoff was very informative and interesting and his knowledge of wine most extensive. He told us he also arranges holidays to wine regions and in fact these did sound very appealing !! Geoff also sells a very good selection of wine of which two bottles he gave for the raffle of which as usual the least said about the better as I won a bottle again.

A great evening as always made even more interesting because of the presenter and new members also.

Sue Canty.

August



We were delighted to welcome our President, Deirdre, to the meeting and pleased to note she was once again "in fine fettle" having recovered from her nasty fall earlier this year.

We also welcomed with enthusiastic applause that most popular of presenters - our very own Nigel Green.

Nigel treated us to a delightful and (as always) informative exploration of some boutique wineries of the Loire with his selection of fabulous wines at reasonable prices.

Our welcome wine (Langlois Chateau Cremant de Loire) is from the same stable (as it were) as Bollinger and was rated by us virtually as good as any champagne.

After that great start the wines flowed freely throughout our excellent three course meal by way of a lovely intermediate Rose (just to "fine tune" the hunger pangs), a superb Pouilly Fume and a Reuilly with our starter, a Gamay and Pinot Noir to compliment our main course and finally a scrumptious Chateau de Champteloup with the dessert.

According to our highly esteemed presenter this last wine was the best of all - and in my (very) humble opinion, he was absolutely correct!

As always with Nigel, we learned a lot about the Loire which in the past was more popular than the Bordeaux region. It is a area stretching about 500 miles from east to west and is the third largest wine producing area in France.

Once again the evening was living proof that "Good wine and good food always go well together".

Finally, I am pleased to report that despite an enjoyably indulgent and (slightly) bibulous evening no one fell over and all hopefully returned home safely!

PS. The unsung hero of all our 33 members present was Ian Grant, who had been rather poorly recently, but managed to turn up looking very smart and sporting the ONLY Yorkshire Sommeliers tie! **Fred Richardson.**

September

The Whitby Section always tastes wines with a meal. We met at Sanders Yard, where Andy Clark of HC Wines of York focused on the choice of wines to complement the food being served. Our meal included canapés, cream of mushroom soup topped with wild mushroom croutons, stuffed pork tenderloin with Dijon cream sauce, and pear and bramble oat crumble with vanilla custard. Andy took us through the wines he brought, highlighting the ways in which the flavour and weight of food and wine could be matched to one other. He selected a variety of wines



from England, France and Portugal. These were the highlights according to those sitting at my table. As an aperitif we loved the 2015 Domaine Laurens Crémant de Limoux "Les Graiménous", which Andy noted could in practice also be enjoyed with any food including the fish and chips for which Whitby is famous! We went on to a non vintage Denbies Surrey Gold, which was much liked by all, as a floral wine with flavours of lemon and lychees, that could equally be enjoyed on its own or with a spicy starter. The Vila Nova Vinho Verde 2017 was another light wine that went well with our soup dish. The Domaine Colinot Les Cailles, 2013, which was rich, smooth and spicy, was a fitting match for the tasty pork and Dijon mustard main course. Finally the Villa Dria Petit Manseng 2015 was an inexpensive tasty, honeyed pudding wine that perfectly complemented the pear and bramble crumble.

Nick Tilley

October



The Stables (at Cross Butts Farm) is one of our regular (and popular) venues and as always there was a buzz of anticipation as we gathered to greet Paul Tate-Smith of Derventio Wines. Paul presented some lovely (and very reasonably priced) wines from Chile and Argentina.

Our welcome wine (in every sense) was a Chilean sparkling rose from Miguel Torres. This particular rose is presently the only sparkling wine in the World(!) made from the pais grape - an ancient variety taken to South America by the Spanish Conquistadors over 500 years ago. Fresh and lively with plenty of fizz - a veritable steal at £10.

Our pre-dinner white was a 2015 Torrontes (The most widely planted grape in Argentina) followed by a (mainly) sauvignon blanc and a chardonnay, both from Chile, and excellent partners with our starter of farmhouse pate with winter chutney.

The best wine of the evening, however, for many of us (including the Dearly Beloved) was a Santa Alba Pinot Noir 2017 with its dark cherry and vanilla flavours. And all this from a family winery who were selling wine till the 1980's in 5 and 15 litre jugs! We also



enjoyed a fine Carmenere/cabernet from the Irene Morales winery. Both were perfect with our main course of beer braised beef in a Guinness and thyme sauce.

Our dessert of lemon and orange cheesecake was greatly enhanced by a late harvest Moscatel from Vistamar - good value at only £6 per half bottle.



Paul's main theme for the evening was that wine was all about having fun - and we did! **Fred Richardson**

York Section Report

July

Castlegate House



Six wines tasted blind by a room full of people who drink regularly, know something about wine styles and production methods, appreciate the stuff, even holiday to exotic locations to visit wineries, what could possibly go wrong? But then just to confuse your senses and confound your impressions you were provided with three very different, but plausible, descriptions for each of the wines.

Despite being advertised as having prizes no one got too competitive, though some mobile phones were glimpsed, and we were all winners on the night with an excellent, tasty and generous buffet, and a relatively low turnout was very nearly boosted by some scaffolders who thankfully finished working outside the windows just as the evening began.

Marjorie Gabbitas was the driving force behind a night of fun, a “CALL MY BLUFF” at the Masonic Hall at Castlegate, where members who arrived early had an opportunity to discover more about the historic lodge. Thankfully nearly everyone got the difference between the reds and the whites, although the colour was a bit of give away!

Larry Murray

August

A bright August Summer evening saw our Chairman Mike Harrison and his good wife Linda host what has now become an annual Hog Roast, Tasting and General Garden Party.

56 of us congregated in the Chairman’s garden to listen to a vibrant wine presentation delivered by the venerable Terry Herbert.

Whilst always sceptical of the budget he is given, Terry nevertheless came up trumps yet again.

We were all greeted with a reception wine of Champagne Gardet Brut Tradition NV, a Blanc de Noirs in any other guise.

That started the evening in the manner which we wished to continue.

The tasting on this occasion is limited to two whites and two reds then followed by copious amounts of specially selected supper wines from Terry’s cellars.

For the whites he presented a Cuvee Baptiste 2016 from the Languedoc followed by a Domaine Terres de ‘Fontenay’ again 2016, 100% Chardonnay with just a slight hint of oak from Southern Burgundy.

Reds followed with a 2013 Irancy AOP Cuvee Soufflot, Domaine Colinot almost 100% Pinot Noir with a minimal amount of Cesar, an ancient grape variety traced back to Roman times, which is unique to this appellation.

This wine was undoubtedly the star of the show.

But not to be outdone, it was followed up with a St Chinian 2011 a blend of Mourvedre, Syrah and Grenache aged 18 months in new oak plus 3 years bottle ageing. Delicious!



By that time the Hog Roast was creaking, and we all ate heartily whilst quaffing a very drinkable Gewurztraminer from Southern France (now there's an oddity!) and a Les Larmes du Volcan 2014 AOP Languedoc, Cave de Fontes, 60% Syrah 45% Grenache 5% Mourvedre.

The vines are grown on volcanic soil. Hence the silly name "Volcanic Tears"!!!!

The York section will be repeating this event in 2019, but it will take place on a Sunday

afternoon 4th August, to take advantage of the balmy summer weather and hopefully to encourage more members as well as visitors from other sections to join us.

Mike Harrison

September

Our meeting took us to Pike Hills Golf Club where we were rewarded by a superb presentation by Stuart Calder, which took us all on a delightful tour of the Western Languedoc's wine regions following his recent sojourn there with his wife Penny and son Fergus.

Stuart recounted many humorous and interesting anecdotes from his last and previous visits to the various vineyards as well as highlighting the challenges faced by the wine-makers due to climate change and economic uncertainties.



Three of the seven gems Stuart uncovered were an exceptional **Domaine J Laurens "Les Graimenous" Crémant de Limoux**; a Pouilly-Fuissé styled but affordable **Domaine Girard "Las Salvios" Chardonnay (AOP Limoux) 2014** and an opulent Merlot and Syrah blended **Domaine de Cabazan 2012 (AOP Cabardès)**, which was so highly rated by Robert Parker that the price for it commensurately rocketed!

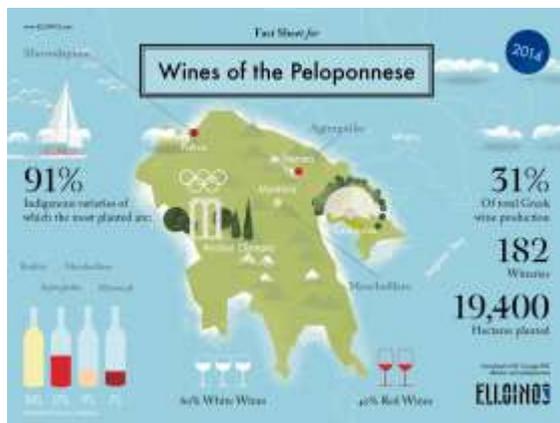
A real surprise of the night was a honeyed **Château Jouclary NORE Grenache Blanc 2017 (IGP D'Occ)** bursting with flavours of apricot from a vineyard named after the Pic de Nore, the highest point of the dramatic Montagne Noire. The winemaker Pascal Giancesini alarmingly lost 50% of his crop to hail in this vintage, reducing the yields from the usual 50hl/ha to a mere 12 hl/ha. The resulting concentration on the nose and palate is extraordinary.



To complete the magnificent seven Stuart also showed a Cinsault, Grenache and Carignan blended **Clos Bagatelle, Sentiers de Bagatelle – "Colline d'Assignan" Rosé 2017 (AOP Saint Chinian)**, an elegant Grenache, Syrah and Mourvèdre blended **Château Vieux Parc Sélection 2014 (AOP Corbières)** and finally a fabulous **Domaine de Bel-Air "Les Burdelines" 2013 (AOP Moulin-à-Vent)** – a wine of Burgundian complexity from a Beaujolais vineyard.

Jason Valentine

GREECE - THE GUILD 1918 WINE TRIP



According to Greek mythology the Greeks invented/discovered wine 3000 years ago. Not actually true, but it has been around for a long time. The main area for top wines is Nemea in the Peloponnese which is where our intrepid travellers were heading. 14 of us left the UK on the 7th October, heading for Athens then on to Napflio, our headquarters for the week. We were also lucky with the weather, quite warm (shorts

and tee shirts) but a bit chillier in the evening.

The pattern for each day was two wineries, lunch (usually at one of them) then a cultural visit. Back to the hotel to freshen up then out for Dinner, a different restaurant each evening. We did actually visit a distillery making Ouzo and Tsiparo but no sign of Retsina all week! 10 wineries and a distillery, about 8 wines per winery - so I am not listing all we tasted, just giving an overall impression. I am sure other members of the group also had their own perspective of the trip but overall I can say that we all enjoyed it and the wines were certainly different from the usual Cabernet Sauvignon/ Syrah/ Merlot etc. etc.

The main grapes we tasted were all indigenous varieties although many international varieties were also grown. Have you tried pronouncing those Greek names - the most popular were Moschofilero (mosco fee lero), Agiorgitiko (eye yor yit iko) translated to St. George, Assyrtiko (ass eer tee ko) indigenous to Santorini but which was a favourite, Roditis. Nearly all the vineyards were "Protected Designation of Origin" or PDO. Some small, some quite large. Generally after a tour of the vineyards or the winery, or both, we had a tasting that was nearly always accompanied by bread, olive oil, cheese, olives etc. What a pleasant surprise most of the wines were, very palatable. Taste is very personal, but you could not deny the quality.

The majority of the wineries had been updated at the turn of this century - dare I say EU money!! Not mentioned at all!! However we did hear about the mythology, Hercules slaying the lion etc. and also the origins of the Olympic Games, first recorded in 573 BC, The illicit stills up in the mountains etc. etc. Very entertaining. The food - very Greek! OK, I know we were in Greece, Moussaka was a favourite as was Chicken, Lamb Chops but covered in a vine leaf sauce, Octopus complete with skin and suckers, and the portions were huge - would have kept me going for days!! (I think I am getting old!).

A super trip, and many thanks to Diana Naish, not forgetting the help from husband Nigel, for her superb arrangements and an excellent holiday.

MG

Fairmile Winery Visit



On a recent visit to Oxfordshire, and on a beautiful day, we came across a vineyard in very close proximity to Henley-on-Thames situated on the Fairmile. On contacting the owners Jan and Anthea Mirkowski, we were invited to visit. Planning restrictions prevent them advertising the vineyard outside so it was a stroke of luck that we spotted the vines growing on the slope. The vineyard is situated at the foothills of the Chilterns, vines are south facing on a

flinty chalky soil- the same as northern France. Grapes grown are Chardonnay, Pinot Noir and Pinot Meunier. It was very interesting to hear from Jan how the vineyard was started only six years ago, turning a wine making hobby into a career. First, the 3 hectare site was fenced off to protect from deer, ploughed and then planted with a crop of winter mustard to fix nitrogen naturally from the atmosphere and 150 tonnes of compost purchased from the council was added.

12,000 vines were then planted by a machine especially brought over from Germany – very efficient!

The first harvest – 2015- was hand picked and sent to the Hambledon winery in Hampshire for vinification in the traditional manner. Jan and Anthea, together with a French winemaker assess the wines and decide on the assemblage . At the moment only two sparkling wines are produced and we were able to taste the Rose, which was released in August 2018. It was superb and equal to any fine sparkling wine produced abroad. It won a gold medal from the Thames and Chilterns vineyard association. It had a fine long-lasting finish with a good mousse , with complexity and freshness.



Jan endeavours to manage the vineyard sustainably and does not use pesticides but encourages wild flowers to grow between the vines.

Because of the exceptionally fine weather this year, he is expecting a bumper harvest, producing 25,000 bottles this year. The company’s logo is a rowing oar crossed with a bottle recognising the nearby Henley regatta.

Jan explained the producers of English sparkling wine are not as constrained by the AC laws as in Champagne and can be more innovative. The wines carry the designation “English Quality Sparkling Wine” The wines are not widely available as yet but they are hoping to open an online shop in the near future. The Fairmile winery declares itself a non vintage vineyard so there is no date on the label- although this may change in the future.

Sitting in the vineyard with not a cloud in the sky it brought happy memories of previous visits abroad with the Sommeliers. A perfect day – oh and Mary Berry lives just across the road! **Lorraine Collett**

Future Programmes

Bingley

20th November Chris Rothery Margaret River Keighley Golf Club

Caistor

12th November H C Wines This year's must have wines for the festive season.

Stallingborough Grange Hotel

8th December Christmas Dinner

2019

14th January AGM Stallingborough Grange Hotel

Harrogate

13th November James Long Corney & Barrow Christmas Wines

11th December Festive Christmas Supper

Hull

12th November James Long Corney & Barrow James ' Christmas Wines
Kingston Theatre Hotel

10th December HC Wines TBA Kingston Theatre Hotel

Leeds

12th November John Atkinson Cru Beaujolais

3rd December James Long Wines of Alsace and Rhone

Scarborough

5th November TBA Pork schnitzel with sauté potatoes

3rd December Paul Tate-Smith Bubbles of the World Roast turkey with chipolatas stuffing, cranberry sauce.

2019

7th January Christmas Diner at Nineteen 09

4th February James Long Corney & Barrow Italian N.S. E. W. (but not Pino Grigio)

Sheffield

26th November Barry Starmore Starmoreboss

December No Tasting

Whitby

19th November James Long Corney & Barrow The Ellerby Hotel

17th December Nigel Green Black Tie The Saxonville Hotel

York

5th November James Long Oenological Fireworks Fulford Golf Club

3rd December Stuart Calder Christmas Champagne Tasting York Medical Society

2019

January No Meeting

4th February Dr Gareth Morgan Premier Crus of Chablis and the Cote D'Or Betty's





- Text in Calibri is attributed to various authors
 - All Text in Comic Sans MS is by the Editor.
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