



Food & Wine

MAGAZINE FOR MEMBERS OF THE
INTERNATIONAL WINE & FOOD SOCIETY EUROPE AFRICA

Issue 138

July 2020



**TRIBUTES TO MICHAEL
BROADBENT**

MEMORIES OF THE IWFS

**AN INTERESTING TRIP TO
BULGARIA**

COPING WITH COVID

CAN ROSÉ BE SERIOUS?

Chairman's message



I hope that in these uncertain and troubling times you, your families and friends are keeping well and staying safe. Some will be finding the constraints very difficult whilst others will be finding the slower pace of life rather easier to cope with. I am sure that all of us are missing the sociability that membership of our Society brings.

We can still drink wine and enjoy food, albeit at home, and I hope that you are all managing to get supplies. A few branches and individual members have successfully held virtual wine tastings and even dinners. These experiences cannot replace the sharing of wine in our many wine-tastings, the joy of good wines with expertly and/or professionally prepared food, nor, most importantly, the loss of the companionship of friends.

I have been in contact with the Chairs of most of the EAZ branches. It seems that from their contacts with members the situation is accepted though with a certain amount of regret. It was gratifying to hear that plans for future events, when permitted, are being made by many branches. The hope is that events may be able to re-commence in the autumn, and particularly during the Christmas holiday period. However, at the time of writing, there are still many uncertainties as to when venues will be able to re-open and social distancing rules may still have to be applied.

Details of festivals being planned are set out later. It is regrettable that the September weekend in Cambridge incorporating the 2020 AGM and the Members' Forum will not go ahead. The decision was taken because of the uncertainties about the viability of such events in September and to ensure

the safety of our members. The 2020 AGM will be held using ZOOM technology. The Madeira festival in November is still expected to go ahead.

Communication is vital during difficult times. Both the Society President and the Chairman of Council have sent an email to all members in recent months. You should also have received emails with links to F&W online and Grapevine. I sincerely hope that you have been able to access this "news" from the Society. Food & Wine is EAZ's flagship magazine and I hope you enjoy this edition and its somewhat different content cleverly developed by Sue Smith and Peter McGahey.

The Society has worked hard during lockdown and has launched various items for your enjoyment. Firstly, a new publication "Guide to Enjoying Fine Wine" is mailed to you with this edition of Food & Wine. In June, you should have received an email with a link to a podcast of the fascinating André Simon lecture given during the 2018 London Festival by Oz Clarke. Two videos will be available by link from an email or on the IWFS website and, in due course, there will also be a written version available to download from the website.

As the constraints of lockdown caused by the pernicious virus are relaxed, we are optimistic that events, perhaps with different formats, will re-commence. Event organisers will be very conscious that Government guidelines must be followed.

John Nicholas

If you have not received any of the emails referred to above or would like them to be re-sent, please email eaz@iwfs.org and the email will be re-sent; alternatively, you can find IWFS publications, the podcast and videos on the IWFS website www.iwfs.org for which you will need your membership login details.

The Society was formed on 20th October 1933 in London by wine writer André L Simon and bibliophile A J Symons. Within a month there were 230 members. Today there are over 6,000 in 139 branches worldwide.

The Society, which is an independent non-profit making organisation run by volunteers, is divided into three areas – the Europe Africa Zone, the Asia Pacific Zone, and the Americas.

In André's words, "The purpose of the Society is to bring together and serve all who believe that a right understanding of good food and wine is an essential part of personal contentment and health and that an intelligent



approach to the pleasures and problems of the table offers far greater rewards than mere satisfaction of appetites."

In the over indulgent society of the 21st century we endeavour to examine some of the excesses of the western diet and to persuade consumers of the need for quality rather than quantity in the food and drink they consume. To this end we support suppliers of quality produce worldwide.

New members are always welcome, please see page 3 for details. Please also visit our website www.iwfs.org or for information about the Society in brief visit our Wikipedia page http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/International_Wine_and_Food_Society

Editorial

At this time when our branches are not meeting as frequently we have reports of events from fewer branches so we are taking the opportunity in this edition to look back and we asked Helen Mills – a long standing member and currently President of Surrey Hills, whom many of you will know – to recall prominent moments in the life of IWFS over past years. We invited Helen to reminisce and she has found some gems. We also have a feature on Rail Road Dining which previously appeared in Wine Food & Friends, the Americas magazine. The menu and service offered on board are so extravagant compared with contemporary railway dining.

This will be the last magazine before the EA Ltd AGM in September. Chairman John Nicholas has outlined the revised arrangements for this meeting, which cannot be held in the normal style this year. Consequently the Cambridge Great Weekend has been postponed until the same month next year.

In a few months time we are assuming restrictions on groups and travelling will end and familiar patterns of meals and meetings will be re-established by our branches – but is this an opportunity to develop new relationships and concepts? Several branches have reported virtual gatherings – wine tastings, discussions and gastronomic feasts – staged simultaneously in members' private houses. Moscow has reported just such an event in this issue and it was a great success. Virtual meetings could be arranged with branches throughout the world, even if they are breakfast for some and dinner for others! This may open up chances for members to make even more friends and experience a wider range of events and cuisines.

There are expectations that branches will be able to arrange events before Christmas 2020 and give impetus to a bright and successful 2021. Best wishes to all and keep safe.

Sue Smith

VACANCIES

EAZ is in urgent need for at least two members to volunteer to join the Executive Committee of EAZ (Exco). The most urgent is to find someone to take on the role as **Membership Secretary**.

The role of **Treasurer** has still not been filled. Though I am still managing to juggle the roles of Chair and Treasurer, this is not good governance and I am professionally uncomfortable that this situation continues.

Please consider how you can help and contact me to discuss either role using email at johnsnicholas@aol.com or telephone in the UK 01993 880 532.

John Nicholas

PUBLICATION DATES

- **Food & Wine Online (e-newsletter) Issue 14**
deadline for copy from contributors 31st July; publication mid/end August.
- **Food & Wine (printed) Issue 139**
deadline for copy from contributors 30th September; publication to members in November.
- **Food & Wine Online (e-newsletter) Issue 15**
deadline for copy from contributors 30th November; publication mid/end December.

Please send photographs separately from text.

Advance notice of your events at which members of other branches would be welcome can be included, along with booking details. As always, we invite your event reports, articles and pictures.

Food & Wine

Food & Wine magazine is designed and published by IWFS Europe Africa Ltd

Editorial email:
editor.eaz@iwfs.org

Printed by
All Things Print (UK) Ltd
Upp Hall Farm
Salmons Lane
2 Lower Yard
Coggeshall
Essex
CO6 1RY
www.allthingsprint.co.uk

The Society welcomes applications for membership. For information please contact Margaret Chippendale, EAZ Membership Registrar, Apt 56 Chapelwood, Alderley Road, Wilmslow, SK9 1EN.

email: info.eaz@iwfs.org

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The views expressed by contributors are not necessarily those of the IWFS.

One copy, per address, is available for members. For extra copies please email Margaret Chippendale at margaret.chippendale@btinternet.com



Contributors

Memories of IW&FS

Helen Mills was born in 1924 and after leaving school joined the WAAF and became a Radio Direction Finding Plotter in various locations. After demob she did a teacher training course and taught in Croydon High School. She married her fiancé Geoffrey in 1950 and had three children. Geoff died in 1978. She carried on teaching, retiring in 1984. Helen has been involved with the Walton & Weybridge Operatic Society for 40 years and still pursues her artistic interests. She is President of Surrey Hills.



An Interesting Trip to Bulgaria

Jeffrey Benson is chairman of London Branch and has been in the wine trade for 35 years. He meets producers worldwide as a buyer and wine

maker, conveying his knowledge through his lectures and consultancy work. For twelve years, Jeffrey ran the annual evening wine school for the Society. He continues to lecture and adjudicate the Wine and Spirit Education Trust examinations and has written and contributed to seven books and many articles on food, wine and travel. www.jeffreybenson.net



Not Another Ban!



David Chapman joined the International Wine & Food Society (Manchester Branch) in late 1986 when he found that he had time to spare for evenings out. He has been a member of the Branch Committee for more years than he wishes to recall and has twice served as Chairman of that Committee, most recently vacating the chair in January 2012 after two years' service. David was recently elected as EAZ Company Secretary.

The Grove Hotel in Watford



Geraldine Cosh says: I live in London with my amazing family who are very important to me. I have two young children who teach me a lot about life. I have travelled to many places in my life and been lucky enough to enjoy a variety of foods and wines. Some particular memories I have (with regards to food) are the great steaks in Brazil and the choice of food in Chicago, but my favourite does have to be some of the food available in my parents birth place – Ireland. You cant beat good Clonakilty sausages, black pudding, Brennans bread and home made soup.

Coping with Covid – in Food, Wine and Hospitality

Leonie Allday is a former senior lecturer in Geography who in her retirement has indulged her passion for wine (and gin!) and now teaches for the Wine and Spirits Education Trust (WSET) as well as running a small business giving tutored wine, gin and port tastings. She has been a member of IWFS for 10 years and chairs the Bath and Bristol Branch. For the last three years she has served on the EAZ Executive Committee, on which she is the Marketing and PR lead. Her other interests are her family, gardening, good food, reading, music and travelling.



That 1983 sweet white Burgundy

Dr Bernard Lamb has been making wines, beers and liqueurs for 47 years. He is a member of Wines of Great Britain Ltd (formerly called the United Kingdom Vineyards Association) and is President of the National Guild of Wine and Beer Judges, 2017-2019. He has a DSc in fungal genetics and did research and teaching in genetics at Imperial College London for 40 years. His books include applied genetics, wine and beer judging, standards of English, how to use the Queen's English, and human diversity. He has been a member of the IWFS London Branch since 1993.



Can Rosé be Serious?

Elizabeth Gabay MW is an English wine writer who has worked the wine trade since 1986 and successfully passed her Master of Wine exam in 1998. She has been living in South East France since 2002, specialising in the wines of southern France and Central Europe as well as specialising in rosé wine from everywhere resulting in a book on rosé published in 2018.



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News from the International Secretariat

Dear members

Well, our everyday lives took a rather unexpected turn and I do hope that this finds you in good health. The lockdowns introduced as a result of the Covid-19 pandemic have naturally had implications on a number of the plans in process at the International Secretariat. Some have had to be postponed but I am pleased to say that some are also still on track.



Although Society events and meetings cannot take place as usual, at present, work is still continuing to help enhance your food and wine experience. The 2020 André Simon lecture, scheduled to take place in Bordeaux in April, will only be slightly delayed, as it will be a video recording and will be available for you to view via the IWFS website – a first! The seminar is titled **Is there such a thing as terroir in Bordeaux?** Our speaker is Jane Anson (pictured above) who is the Bordeaux correspondent and columnist for Decanter magazine. The lecture coincides with the launch of Jane's latest book 'Inside Bordeaux' which includes her findings on how seriously Bordeaux is starting to take terroir, which, as she says "was simply not the case even a decade ago". We hope you agree this is certainly an issue of interest and welcome the online recording of this IWFS event making it available to enjoy wherever you live. Inside Bordeaux is now available to purchase from the publisher Berry Bros & Rudd via www.bbr.com/bbr-press/inside-bordeaux.

We will also stay online for now to let you know of two other presentations that are, or will be, available for you online. The first is a podcast of the 2018 André Simon lecture presented by Oz Clarke (pictured below) on 29th May 2018 during the



London International Festival. The lecture is titled **Hot and Cold but mostly Cold. What the present and future holds**. This was a compelling presentation where Oz outlined the impact of global warming on wine production globally – how winemakers are having to adapt and identify new regions where grapes can be grown. Go to the website* to tune in and listen (47 mins duration). The second presentation is currently in preparation and will be by Beverley Blanning MW on **Biodynamic Wine**. Beverley was the author of our monograph and she will give a brief background on the biodynamics discipline and will then provide an update on developments and trends that have happened in the vineyards since it was published in 2010.

Aware that during these extraordinary times many branches are unable to organise their usual events there is now a **Step-by-step guide to arranging virtual events** available on the website along with a video to help too. Thank you to the Chicago branch who have used this format to run a number of such events successfully. It is hoped that organising such events will help you not only keep members in contact but also provides vital support for your local restaurants and maintain contact once their doors are open once again.

Our next monograph (no 21 in the series), looking into the world of **Modern Madeira**, will now not be published in 2021. Richard Mayson, the author and Madeira expert, has advised that his planned research visit to Madeira is unlikely to take place as a result of the strict travel restrictions the island's authorities have understandably put in place.



However we will be bringing you a publication **A Guide to Enjoying Fine Wine** written by Stuart Leaf and Joseph D'Ambrosio who are active members of the more recently opened Hudson Valley Branch, in New York State. They originally wrote this guide for the benefit of the members of the University Club of New York. However we are very grateful to the University Club for allowing the

Society to re-publish this under the IWFS banner. When Andrew Jones, the Society Chairman, received a copy of the original he 'immediately felt that their candid, concise and opinionated approach was a fresh take on understanding and enjoying fine wine which would appeal to the Society's members around the World.' If all systems are working as planned, you should receive your copy with this issue of Food & Wine. Extra copies will also be available to help you in the recruitment of new members.

A major project which has been finalised is the **archiving of the complete collection of the Society publication Wine & Food*** (and its other subsequent titles – The Journal of The International Wine & Food Society, World Gastronomy and Food & Wine). The complete collection spans some 66 years from 1934 to 2000 and comprises 204 issues. It was steadfastly published every quarter until 1983 (with a three year break from 1971-1973). It has now been indexed electronically and you are able to search by your chosen topic – you can search by your



branch name and if reported you will be able to see what events were held and the fare enjoyed. This may act as inspiration for future events or you may find out more about the history of your branch.

I am also looking at various items of branded merchandise to add to the range we already have. One area where I would welcome some suggestions are items for ladies to wear at Society events, or for those not wearing black tie. I look forward to hearing from you on email sec@iwfs.org.

MERCHANDISE FOR MEMBERS

Below is the range of IWFS merchandise available to branches and members which can assist in a number of ways from adding that extra touch of professionalism to your event (see DropSavers and Blind Tasting Bottle Kits), to carrying your bottles in style (see Neoprene bottle bags) or showing you are a member of the IWFS (see Lapel Pins). The most recent additions to the range of merchandise available are immediately below followed by the more traditional items.

Drop Savers (3 per pack) £2

These are very useful as they certainly do save drops from spilling onto the table. An added benefit is these Drop Savers have a unique design to stop the pourer slipping inside the bottle.



Medallions £20

Cufflinks £7.50

Lapel Pin (in presentation box) £1



To order please email Andrea Warren at the International Secretariat on sec@iwfs.org or telephone on + 44 (0)20 7827 5732 or + 44 (0)1753 882320.

Blind Tasting Bottle Sleeve Kit £25

This IWFS branded kit comprises 10 individually numbered woven cloth bottle covers (suitable for wine, not champagne) and presented in a handy carry bag. Give that professional touch to your own wine tasting events or private parties.

Neoprene Bottle Bags

High quality, IWFS branded, neoprene bottle bags that will help you to transport your bottles in style to friends or to IWFS events.

2 Bottle Bag, £10

1 Bottle Bag, £8



To order please email Andrea Warren at the International Secretariat on sec@iwfs.org or telephone on + 44 (0)20 7827 5732 or + 44 (0)1753 882320.

A TRIBUTE TO J MICHAEL BROADBENT MW

2nd May 1927 – 17th March 2020



Photograph © David Tett Photography

Michael Broadbent, IWFS 75th Dinner

At the time of his death on 17th March 2020, Michael Broadbent was one the longest standing members of The International Wine & Food Society. Michael joined the Society as a result of meeting André Simon in 1957 at a wine trade event in Manchester, England, where he was working as a regional sales director for Harveys of Bristol, then a major force in the UK wine trade. Having risen to become the firm's UK Sales Director, he left Harvey's in 1966 to set up Christie's Wine Department in London. It was as a result of this career move that Michael began to play an important role in the Society which was to continue for over 40 years.

Michael was a member of the Society's Council of Management for about ten years and in 1968 he became a member, and shortly thereafter, the chairman of the Wines Committee which is responsible for producing the annual Vintage Card. He played a key role in the production of the card for the next 27 years and its current reputation owes a great deal to his

leadership over such a long period. 1968 was also the year in which he published *Wine Tasting*, which established his reputation as one of the leading wine writers of his generation. It subsequently went through multiple editions and is now recognised as the classic guide for anyone planning to organise a serious wine tasting.

Michael's involvement with the Society went beyond chairing its Wines Committee for nearly three decades. His position as head of Christie's Wine Department and his growing reputation as a leading wine writer meant that he was in demand as a speaker and willingly gave the Society an immense amount of his time attending events, conducting tastings and making speeches, particularly in the United States where several of the Society's leaders in the 1970s and 1980s were also major clients of Christie's. In 1975, he conducted important tastings for the branches in New York and in Houston where the late Joel Stewart arranged a memorable vertical tasting of Ch. Mouton-Rothschild, including the famous 1945 vintage. During the 1980s he conducted a series of tastings for Miami Branch at the invitation of the late Dr. Louis (Lou) Skinner.

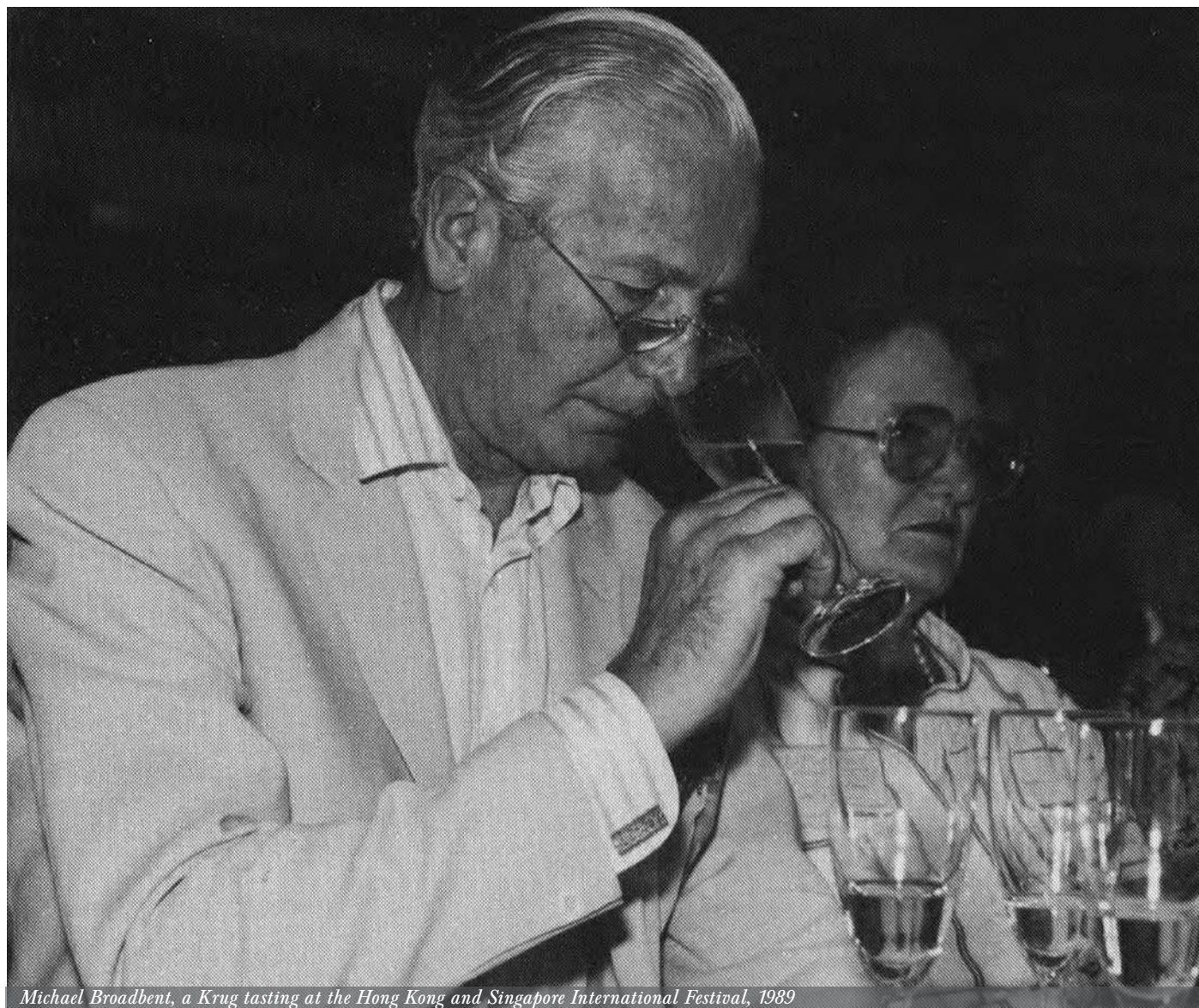
In 1977, Michael and his old friend, Harry Waugh, organised all the wines for The André Simon Centenary Convention (as festivals were then called). He commented on the wines served at all the events held during the five days of the convention. In 1983, he conducted a memorable tasting of 1970 Bordeaux during the Seventh International Convention held in Vancouver to mark the Society's 50th Anniversary. In 1987, he conducted a tasting of 2nd Growth Bordeaux at the North American Festival in Boston in conjunction with the late Dr. Robert (Bob) Charpie who was then both Chairman of the International Council and an important Christie's client. In 1989, Michael was in Singapore and Hong Kong for the Ninth International Festival which he attended as the Society's President and is pictured here attending the tasting of Krug Champagne held during the festival.

In 1971, the year after André Simon's death, Michael delivered the first André Simon Memorial Lecture. He has the distinction of being the only person to have been invited to deliver a lecture twice. In 2013, on the occasion of the Society's 80th Anniversary celebrations in London, he delivered a fascinating recollection of his career which was intertwined with his activities as an active and dedicated supporter of the Society.

For today's generation of members, we remember Michael Broadbent as our Honorary President, a role which he performed with immense enthusiasm and pride for eight years from 1984 to 1992. His contribution to the Society was recognised by the award of the André Simon Silver Medal in 1978 and the Gold Medal in 1989. We have lost a dedicated member and great supporter who will always hold a special place in the Society's history.

Andrew Jones

Chairman, International Council of Management



Michael Broadbent, a Krug tasting at the Hong Kong and Singapore International Festival, 1989

EAZ MEMBERS' TRIBUTES

Ari Sofianos (St James's branch, London)

I first met Michael in the 1980s when he spoke at the first gourmet weekend held in Gidleigh Park, Devon. When he first got up and talked about the wines on that opening dinner I was immediately captivated by his unique style. During the weekend he would often get so excited about a great bottle (and there were many!) that he would use colourful superlatives, normally only attributable to human beings, to qualify it – but always alongside a precise, easy to follow description which clearly conveyed to the audience what the wine tasted like. His childlike enthusiasm was contagious, and I could see why he had become such a successful auctioneer at Christie's! That weekend marked the beginning of a long and wonderful friendship between us as we shared many more happy occasions, mostly related to wine and food, over the subsequent decades – with his wife Daphne always at his side.

Over many years Michael conducted several wine tastings for the London Branch. He was also very fond of the St James's Branch, of which he became an active member and supporter. After Daphne died in 2015, he had more free time available, and the two of us met up for lunch a few times – he was always

delightful company as his sparkle and love for life continued undiminished. The last time I saw him was at the dinner at Innholders' Livery Hall on 13th November 2018, jointly organised by the London and St James's branches to mark our Society's 85th Anniversary – he came together with Valerie Smallwood, whom he married in 2019.

For all his exceptional professional achievements, what I liked and admired most in Michael was that, to the very end, he kept the child in him!

Stephen Matthews (St James's branch, London)

In the 1960s I found myself working in the City. Knowing nothing about wine (except that I rather liked it) I began attending the weekly lunch-time Restell wine auctions nearby. It was here that I first met Michael Broadbent (although not acting as auctioneer at the time, he was probably sniffing around prior to bringing it into the Christie's stable, whence it prospered spectacularly under his leadership). He seemed friendly, seriously savvy about wine, and happy to offer advice and guidance to a dummy.

Our acquaintance progressed spasmodically as I stepped up my wine purchasing at Christie's, where I frequently sought his personal advice. By this time I had joined the IWFS as a Young Member and Michael was already a senior and enthusiastic contributor to our Society. Years later, shortly after the rebirth of the St James's Branch when I was involved, Michael agreed to lead a wine tasting – thus ensuring a lively sell out!

In addition to his many talents he was effortlessly urbane and 'clubbable' (Brook's), and of course always impeccably dressed! Later in my City career I thought that perhaps I should try different, more 'trad', Savile Row cutters, rather than the 'edgy' suits by Tommy Nutter I had favoured in earlier years – and so placed a couple of bespoke orders. The suits were pretty, but somehow I never really felt comfortable in them. At one of my dinners with Michael I mentioned this to him. He turned and fixed me with his piercing blueish eyes, "Stephen, let me give you just one word of advice: 'Huntsman!'" (Then, probably still, the most expensive house, and seriously Royal). "Don't bother with any of the others". Sadly, though yet to take Michael's advice, I do sometimes reconsider while glancing along my bookshelves or drawing a cork from an older bottle.

Further tributes to Michael's life and career have been written, the online links for two of these are:

Jancis Robinson OBE MW

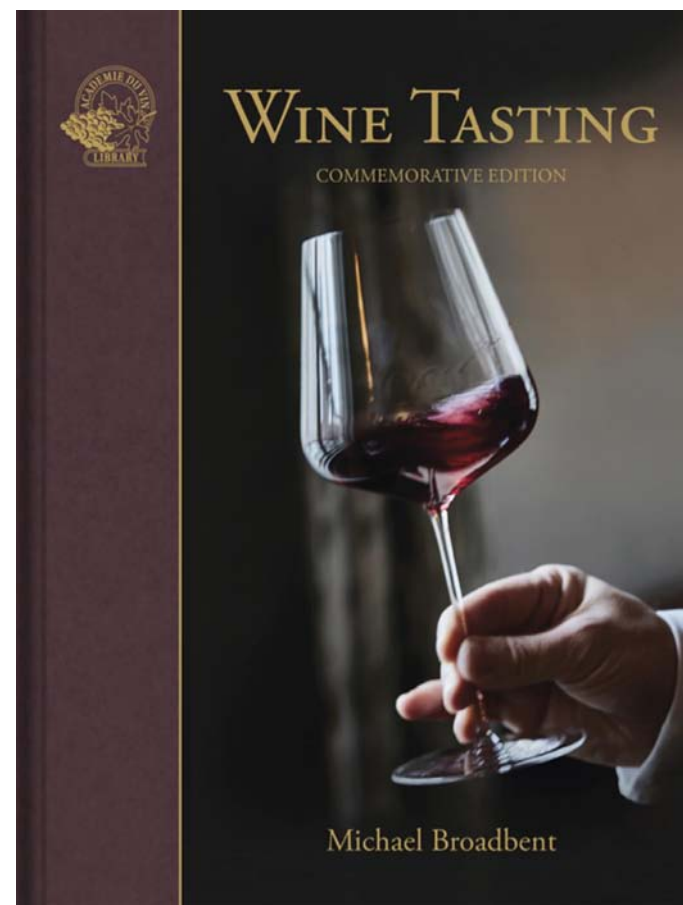
<https://www.jancisrobinson.com/articles/j-michael-broadbent-mw-rip>.

The Times, UK

<https://www.thetimes.co.uk/article/michael-broadbent-obituary-g7200jzrk>

Wine Tasting, Commemorative Edition

Last year, Michael republished his seminal work, *Wine Tasting*, in a Commemorative Edition with the new publishing house Académie du Vin Library. This special edition contains the original text from the 1975 edition, prefaced by a series of introductions by Hugh Johnson, Jancis Robinson, Steven



Spurrier and the late Gerard Basset assessing Michael's enormous influence on the wine world. There are also contributions from Paul Bowker and Fritz Hatton on Michael the wine auctioneer, and intimate portraits from his son Bartholomew and grand-daughter Leaf on Michael the family man. For more information about the book and to purchase copies of the book please go to:

- UK, Europe and outside of USA: <https://academieduvinlibrary.com/product/wine-tasting/>
- USA: <http://www.broadbent.com/books/>



Michael Broadbent at a St James's event

UPCOMING EAZ EVENTS

Can we beat the virus?

IWFS EUROPE AFRICA LIMITED AGM 2020

There will have to be important changes to the arrangements for the AGM this year. The Directors have been considering the evolving COVID-19 situation. The safety of members of the Society and in compliance with the “Stay at Home Measures” passed into law in England and Wales on 26th March 2020 resulting in restrictions and advice not to allow meetings of groups of people (especially those categorised as “vulnerable”), the AGM will now take place as a closed meeting held remotely. It will not be possible for members to attend the meeting. They are strongly encouraged to appoint the Chairman of the meeting as their proxy. This means that the Chairman of the meeting will vote on their behalf and in accordance with their instructions at the AGM.

Advance Notice is hereby given that the Annual General Meeting of IWFS EUROPE AFRICA LIMITED will be held remotely, on **Sunday 20th September 2020 at 11am** in order to consider:

1. The Report of the Directors and the Financial Statements for the year ended 31 December 2019.
2. To appoint an Independent Examiner for the financial year 2020.
3. To elect Directors.
4. To affirm the appointment of the members of the Executive Committee.
5. And to transact any other ordinary business of the Company.

Formal Notice of the AGM will be delivered in due course.

David Chapman

A Director and the Company Secretary.

EAZ REGIONAL EVENTS 2020 – 2021

Clearly we are living in ‘Interesting Times’. At the time of writing the government have just started to encourage us out of total lockdown, managing to sow confusion as they do so. By the time you read this we may have a whole new set of permitted behaviours, or we may be back to full lockdown. It will all depend on the number of new cases. Will that number continue to fall or not? When will the hospitality industry be able to re-open for business and what will it look like when it does. No one knows.

In view of this uncertainty EAZ have been reviewing the programme of regional events.

Cambridge Great Weekend

We have decided to move the Cambridge weekend to 2021. The 2020 AGM, scheduled for Sunday 20th September, will take place but we will be using the video-conferencing platform Zoom. More details on the AGM will be made available by email in the next few weeks.

The Cambridge Great Weekend itself will take place on 17th to 20th September 2021. As far as possible the format will be the same as we envisaged for 2020. Members who booked for 2020 will be given the option of simply rolling their booking forward to the new dates or cancelling and receiving a full refund. The event will be re-advertised in due course giving all members another chance to book. It is likely that we will have to review the cost of the event when it is re-advertised. At least one of the

COVID 19 PRECAUTIONS

Branch event organisers should take into account the current Government Regulations and guidelines on travelling and meeting in groups. Organisers should ensure that venues, including private homes, adhere to the guidelines. All participants should assess the risks to themselves and to others before attending IWFS events.

Argentina Triennial Festival 2021

The triennial international festival planned to be held in Argentina in November 2021 has been postponed and is likely to be replaced with a festival to be held in Portland and the Willamette Valley in May 2021.

colleges held their 2019 prices for our dinner in 2020, they are not very likely to hold them through to 2021. However, any price increase will only apply to new bookings, members rolling their reservation forward will not be asked to pay a supplement.

Madeira Festival

We are keeping this event under review. Portugal was fortunate to have a relatively low incidence of Covid 19 and the island itself had relatively few cases. We are hoping that it will still be possible to go ahead, possibly with some degree of social distancing, but much will depend on the regulations in place this autumn. Members who have booked for this event will be contacted individually nearer the time.

Events in 2021

We have decided that we must proceed with our 2021 events programme on the assumption that there will be no further disruption from the virus. If this assumption proves incorrect we will simply have to adapt.

Piedmont 12th to 17th April 2021

This event is being launched elsewhere in this magazine and by email to all members. Phillip Kim, a London Branch member, has worked hard to pull together a programme featuring not only some of the best wine makers in the region but also the home of the Slow Food Movement. He is very much looking forward to welcoming fellow members to Italy next spring.

Note: If you are toying with the idea of joining the Americas’ Paris-Bordeaux Festival, which thanks to the virus was postponed to 2021, but are reluctant to visit Paris for whatever

reason, why not join us in Piedmont instead? With flights from Genoa to Bordeaux it would be possible to fly on Saturday 17th April in time to join the second leg of this Festival. You would need to contact both organisers to book places at each event as their accounts are being handled separately.

Alsace 7th to 12th June 2021

We aim to launch this tour in the next issue of Food & Wine and by email to all members. David Ling the IWFS Wines Committee expert on Alsace wine has been helping put this programme together. We will be staying in Colmar and visiting some of the key wine producers of the region as well as dining at some very special restaurants. The final event of the tour will be dinner at the Château Kientzheim, home to the Confrérie St

EAZ PIEDMONT FESTIVAL

Monday 12th to Saturday 17th April 2021



Any region that showcases vineyards on sun-drenched Mediterranean slopes surrounding medieval hill towns is a magical place. But imagine if such a place also offers the following: the wine of kings and the king of wines, the undisputedly best white truffles in the world, the birthplace of the global Slow Food movement, a University of Gastronomical Sciences, one of the best cheese shops in Italy, and a Michelin-starred restaurant in a magnificent 11th century castle. That place would be a mecca for any food and wine lover. That place is the Langhe region of Piedmont in Italy – with Barolo, Barbaresco, Alba and Bra as its highlights.

We will be based at the Fontanafredda complex in Serralunga d’Alba in the Barolo wine region, a ten minute drive in the countryside outside the town of Alba. Alba itself is only a one



Etienne d’Alsace who will be our hosts. The Confrérie is the oldest wine guild in France. Some of us were lucky enough to take part in their wine tasting and dinner in London last November and are looking forward to a very special evening.

Cambridge Great Weekend 17th to 20th September 2021

An up-dated programme for this event will be advertised in due course but broadly speaking we expect that it will remain the same with two black tie dinners in Cambridge University Colleges, and a visit to Ely Cathedral and the Stained Glass Museum.

Stephanie Shepherd

23rd May 2020

and a half hour drive from Turin airport and a two hour drive from airports in Milan and Genoa. The Fontanafredda complex was founded by royalty – the son of the first king of Italy (Vittorio Emanuele II) in the mid 1800s. It now comprises a renowned winery, a Michelin-star restaurant and a luxury boutique hotel. It is owned by Oscar Farinetti, the founder of Eataly – the famous international chain of specialty food stores.

The event is limited to a maximum of forty participants. Transport will be provided by mini-coaches throughout the tour. Given the smaller winery facilities that are typical of this agrarian area, some visits will be split into two groups. Most will be scheduled consecutively, but all within the same day.

The cost of the festival programme will be €1,175 euros per person or GBP £1,050. Hotel accommodation must be booked directly by each participant. Details of reservation, payment and cancellation terms are given below.

PROGRAMME

Monday 12th April. Arrive in the evening for an informal dinner at Osteria Disguido, located in the host hotel (Le Case Dei Conti Mirafiore).

Tuesday 13th April. Pilgrimage to the global home of the Slow Food movement, in Bra. Morning visit and cheese tasting at Giolito Formaggi – one of Italy’s finest cheese shops. Lunch at the world-famous Osteria del Boccondivino. Afternoon lecture on Langhe wines at the Banca del Vino at the University of





Gastronomical Sciences. Back to the hotel for a winery tour of Fontanafredda. Dinner overlooking the valley at Bovio, one of the region's favorite restaurants. Wine pairing with the meal and wine making discussion provided by Rocche Costamagna from nearby La Morra.

Wednesday 14th April. Tour of the Barolo hill towns. Morning winery visit at Conterno Fantino, in Monforte d'Alba. Lunch and winery tour at the ultra-traditional Castello di Verduno. Afternoon in the village of Barolo, with a visit to the Museum of Wine and a winery tour of Borgogno. Dinner at the hotel at the one Michelin star Guido, housed in the former residence of King Vittorio Emanuele II. Meal paired with Borgogno wines.

Thursday 15th April. Tour of the region east of Alba. Morning tour of UNESCO World Heritage-designated Contratto-La Spinetta cellar, the birthplace of Italian sparkling wine, in Canelli. Lunch and winery tour of Marchesi di Gresy in Barbaresco. Afternoon spent exploring the surrounding villages, including Barbaresco. Dinner at Trattoria Antica Torre in the heart of the village of Barbaresco, accompanied by wines from Produttori del Barbaresco.

Friday 16th April. A day in Alba, epicentre of the Italian truffle trade. Winery tour of the ancient cellars of Pio Cesare. Lunch paired with Pio Cesare wines at L'inedito Vigin Mudest. Walkabout in downtown Alba, exploring shops, churches and other attractions. Though April is not truffle season, many retailers pay homage throughout the year through their product range to the finest white and black truffles in the world.

The closing event will be at the magnificent 11th century Castello di Grinzane Cavour. A traditional local flag and music troupe will be on hand to welcome and entertain us. Following a tour of the castle, cocktail reception and dinner will be at Marc Lanteri, the castle's one Michelin star restaurant.

Saturday 17th April. Event ends. You are free to explore the area, or move onward to Milan, Turin or other destinations.

Dress code

This area is very rural and informal so we have decided that there will be no black tie events on this tour. Dinner on the first evening will be informal, an opportunity to relax after your journey. There will be two 'business formal' (jacket and tie) dinners. For the tour itself and the remaining meals the dress code will be casual but no shorts or jeans.

Cancellation and Medical Insurance

All those who register for this tour are strongly advised to take out travel insurance which covers cancellation (to apply from the date of the end of the cooling-off period) as well as medical



insurance. UK members are reminded that their EHIC card may not be valid after 1st January 2021.

Hotel

As mentioned above, the Festival will be based at the four-star Le Case Dei Conti Mirafiore in the Fontanafredda complex in Serralunga d'Alba, a ten minute drive from Alba. There are a total of 25 modern, well-appointed rooms set on beautiful and historic grounds. All have been reserved for our Festival. You will need to book your accommodations directly with the hotel, quoting IWFS. Double room rates, including buffet breakfast, are €190 euros (€155 euros for single) per night.

You may stay elsewhere if you wish. However, there are no hotels in Alba itself that have the charm and features of this hotel. While there are a few other comparably appointed hotels in the surrounding area, they are located in remote areas only accessible by winding country roads. Pick up for the daily programme of visits will be from the Festival hotel only and transport will depart promptly. Therefore, IWFS strongly advises that you stay at the Fontanafredda complex.

For booking, please contact reception@hotelcasedeiconti.it, quoting promo code IWFS. The hotel's cancellation policies will apply. They have agreed to similar cancellation policies as IWFS' given the COVID-19 situation.

Reservation and Payment

Reservation should be made by email to eaz@iwfs.org. Places for this Festival are limited. If your reservation is successful, it will be confirmed by email which will include full payment instructions.

A deposit of €250 euros or GBP £250 per person will be payable within 14 days as your acceptance.

Because of the Covid-19 situation, cancellation by accepted participants is permitted up to and including 31st December 2020 with deposits returned. Final payment will be due on 31st December 2020 and must be paid no later than 15th January 2021. Non-payment of the balance owed by 15th January 2021 will result in the place being offered to any on the waitlist and the deposit being forfeited.

There will be no refunds for cancellations after 31st December 2020.

It has been assumed that by the end of December we will be certain whether or not governments will permit this event to take place. IWFS may have to adjust the final price either for additional costs imposed by Italian Government regulations or because of fluctuations in the euro/GBP exchange rate.

ANNUAL REPORT 2019

IWFS Europe Africa Limited

The Annual General Meeting of the IWFS Europe Africa Limited (Company or EAZ) will be convened for Sunday, 20th September 2020 to approve, *inter alia*, the Annual Report. The Annual Report was drafted and presented to the Independent Examiner for review. With the completion of that review, the final report was approved by the Executive Committee and the Board of Directors on 9th July 2020.

The Annual Report will be posted on the website. If you would like a copy of the full report sent to you either by email or by post, please contact John Nicholas at johnsnicholas@aol.com.

IWFS Europe Africa Limited Income and expenditure account for the year ended 31st December

	2019	2018
	£	£
Total operating income	30,835	25,655
Total administrative expenses	35,050	31,470
Operating deficit	-4,215	-5,815
Net surplus from EAZ festivals and events	7,631	84,564
Surplus before taxation	3,416	78,749
Surplus after taxation	3,321	78,690

Balance sheet as of 31st December

	2019	2018
	£	£
Sundry debtors	0	50
Festival and event payments in advance	2,722	1,600
Cash at bank	281,720	302,130
Loan to branch	0	2,577
Total current assets	284,442	306,357
Subscriptions received in advance	620	956
Festival and event receipts in advance	47,796	69,061
Sundry creditors	289	3,924
Deferred income for IT training and development	2,956	2,956
Total creditors	51,661	76,897
Net assets	232,781	229,460

Accumulated funds

Balance brought forward	229,460	150,770
Surplus after tax for the year	3,321	78,690
Balance carried forward	232,781	229,460

Commentary

In 2019, the surplus after tax of GBP 3.3k compared with GBP 78.7k in 2018. The 2018 exceptional result arose from the contribution from the success of the London festival and its pre- and post-tours. The surplus in 2019 arose as the operating deficit was offset by a surplus on the Bordeaux festival.

The operating deficit of GBP 4.2k in 2019 was lower than that of GBP 5.8k in 2018. The improvement arose from a one-off benefit from the sale of surplus wine after the London festival, partially offset by an increase in discretionary marketing costs.

Operating income increased to GBP 30.8k by GBP 5.2k compared with 2018. In 2018, VAT had to be paid on membership fees because of the obligation to register for VAT for the London festival. On a like for like basis membership fees reduced by GBP 2.1k, primarily because of the closure of the branch in Malmö, Sweden. Operating income includes sales of merchandise and interest as well as the income from the sale of surplus wine from the London Festival.

Total administrative expenses increased to GBP 35.1k by GBP 3.6k compared with 2018. The 2018 figure included the benefit relating to the VAT credited to operating expenses and charged to the London festival. Total costs, including insurance, IT, marketing and administration, charged by the Society for its activities were GBP 1.0k lower than in 2018. The AGM and Members' Forum, held in Valencia in 2019, incurred lower costs than in 2018. This saving was partially offset by the costs of purchasing the new EAZ medallion for exceptional service.

The net surplus of GBP 7.6k on festivals and events arose from the successful event held in Bordeaux attracting 40 members from across all three of the IWFS zones.

The Company's balance sheet remains strong with accumulated funds of GBP 232.8k. These funds are held to cover the potential risks of holding events. If Coronavirus had caused lockdown in the spring/early summer of 2018, there would have been the potential for substantial losses for the Company, particularly as we now know that most insurance policies exclude cover for pandemics. Despite the risks of such a financial loss, as announced in 2019 it is appropriate that EAZ use its funds to invest to sustain the future of the Society. The impetus behind any such initiatives has been lost, or hopefully only postponed, because of the very unusual circumstances in which we find ourselves. To secure the future of our Society, we need to pursue opportunities to retain members, attract new members and develop opportunities to open new branches. The funds are available from the Company, but it is essential that there is a flow of initiatives driven by our branches and their members.

The accumulated surplus is held for the benefit of current and future members

John Nicholas

Treasurer, IWFS Europe Africa Limited

1942 REVISITED

Taken from Food and Wine, 1997

It was the ‘darkest hour’. André Simon, prophet of the good life, and founder and editor of this journal, was more concerned with advising his fellow members how to make the best of the limited food available than with organising wine tastings, especially since imports had ceased and there was very little wine to taste. As one person’s weekly meat ration was slightly smaller than a 1990s hamburger, banquets were not too practical either.

In his editorial role, however, André encouraged his writers to enjoy what little they had, and to look to a happier future. His own confidence in eventual Allied victory was as vigorous as that of Winston Churchill, and he felt – though many puritanical people disagreed with him – that it was no bad thing for those of our members who could somehow assemble the materials, to forget occasionally the rigours of war and dine in style and with appreciation. He permitted no mealy-mouthed envy for those living in places more happily provendered than Europe, and continued to welcome with enthusiasm articles from those bounteous countries where people could still plan tomorrow’s dinner.

‘Memorable Meals’, always a feature of this journal, were few and far between. However, the spring issue included the description of one special occasion, which we reproduce here. Perceptive vinophiles may be able to work out the identity of

A CHRISTENING

<i>The place</i>	Saltfords, near Bath
<i>The date</i>	6th January 1942
<i>The host</i>	Ronald Avery
<i>The guests</i>	Horace Annesley Vachell, E Wulstan Atkins and A.L.S.
<i>The fare</i>	Duchy of Cornwall Oysters Real Turtle Soup Steamed Fillet of Plaice, Sauce Suprême Casserole of Mushrooms Cheese Omelette Coffee
<i>The wines</i>	Ay Crémant 1928 Avery's Bristol Milk, 12 years in bottle 1934 Wehlener Sonnenuhr feinste Auslese 1934 Berncasteler Doktor Beerenauslese (We. Thanish) 1921 Steinberg Cabinet Hochfeine 1904 Sandeman 1914 Hine'sGrande Champagne, landed in 1915

the infant whose birth, within a few days of the attack on Pearl Harbour, was being so handsomely celebrated.

The occasion was one of rejoicing: there are so few in these grim days of war! But a son had been born just after Christmas; both mother and child were doing well and there was every reason why the father too should be doing well. So Ronald Avery summoned just three good men and true, members of the Wine & Food Society, who were not likely to smash Dresden plates or refuse to intern some of the greatest German aristocrats among wines.

The 1928 Ay, which opened the feast, was truly charming; fresh, delicate, intensely clean and dry with a sweetly smiling farewell that was most attractive.

The Bristol Milk served with the Turtle Soup was a very different affair, a wine of great dignity with that rich unctuousness, so rarely encountered, which is the reward of patient maturing in bottle.

With the steamed Fillets of Plaice, served unassisted by any vegetables, but adorned by a sauce which was not supreme but good, there came a very fine Moselle, one that poor A.J. [A.J.A. Symons, *the first Secretary of the Wine & Food Society, who had died exactly nineteen weeks earlier*] loved above all others, the best picking of the 1934 Sonnenuhr grapes at Wehlen. Beautiful bouquet and of exquisite texture; like rare lace upon brocade.

The Casserole of Mushrooms was a most pleasurable surprise, for with the mushrooms, which were Bath grown and freshly picked ones, there came the potatoes and petits pois which were intended to be served with the fish. Such a mistake would not have happened had the mistress of the house been present, but it was most fortunate as the three vegetables blended admirably and gave a more solid background for the greatest of the 1934 Moselles, the finest cask of the famous widow Thanisch’s Berncasteler Doktor. It has a wonderful honeyed sweetness and an amazing bouquet. A magnificent wine.

To finish, a Cheese Omelette which might have been more truthfully described as a cheese pancake, and all the better for it. One of the greatest Hocks of the memorable 1921 vintage, the Steinberg Cabinet was wonderful but not in the least superior, in the sense that it harmonised perfectly with the Moselle that had gone before. It was the same beautiful chord in another, deeper, and more stirring key; the Doktor had given us the tone and the Steinberg echoed it in an amplified form that was enchanting.

I cannot speak of the Port as I did not dare taste it, but the others said that it was very good: I find it hard to believe that any Port could have been worth drinking after such wines as we had just enjoyed. Which only shows how much I still have to learn. But I did not pass the Brandy, a clean, vinous, natural essence of wine, most refreshing.

A.L.S.

continued on page 15 ➡

MEMORIES OF IW&FS

by Helen Mills, President of Surrey Hills

In the 1970s Geoffrey and I were taken to a wine-tasting in the Edgware Road by my daughter Bridget and her husband, we liked what we saw and tasted and decided to join. We became members of the Surrey Branch. In the fullness of time some members decided to break away from Surrey after some acrimony and disagreements and formed their own wine club; so Surrey Hills was created; Joe Wilkerson was the first Chairman and I became its second incumbent until 1993.

We were closely allied with the Kent Branch, now disbanded, and Walter Badger, its Chairman, inveigled me onto the EAC, which was the forerunner of the EAZ and encompassed the tranche from Scandinavia to South Africa. One of our ideas on the Committee was to expand our knowledge and bring Branches closer together and that was when the European Festivals began and that have proved so successful. The first one was in Devon in October 1980 and was based at the Imperial Hotel, Torquay, The manager Michael Chapman was a member and incidentally my niece’s godfather, and it was a very successful Festival. Nils Sternby was the Chairman and it was then that I first met John and Sarah Avery and their three children. At a visit to the Gillian Pearkes Yearlstone Vineyard, one member from the Channel Isles was told she could not bring her dogs in; she was not amused but Gillian was quite right in her decision. From this small beginning the European Festivals were born, and in no chronological order here are others.

Helsinki is a great example. We went into the nearby forest for an alfresco lunch and some of us panned for gold; with no luck I’m afraid! It was difficult to get to sleep at night as it was high

➡ *continued from page 14*

In the same austere year, this journal found enough space (and, what’s more to the point, paper) to indulge Sir Osbert Sitwell’s nostalgia for Guatemalan quetzal-birds and dried armadillo, and Sir Ernest Oldmeadow’s fanciful prophecy that in 1992 the world’s connoisseurs would be drinking New Zealand wines.

1942 was a year when for many people ‘the wolf was at the door’; and this journal gladly reviewed young M.F.K. Fisher’s latest – appropriately titled ‘How to Cook a Wolf’.

But perhaps the most poignant piece (written, remember, at a time when the only fresh fruit available was that in season) was Eva Metzger’s lament for the ultimate luxury:

AN APPLE

I could be happy for an apple,
A grown, green apple straight off the tree
With a crown and a stalk and a leaf on it,
and I’d sit
By the windmill a-giggling with glee,
All I require,
My utmost desire
Merged into this

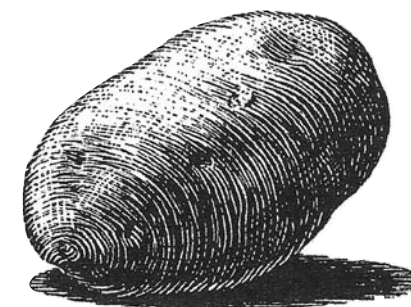
summer and there was almost perpetual daylight. We ate steaks from a member’s farm which came from his herd of Aberdeen Angus cattle, his homestead was situated on the edge of the The Gulf of Finland, just over the water where one could see Russia. This family property had been occupied by the Russians during the Finnish-Russian war.

In the same Baltic area there was another Festival held in Tallin, Estonia. This city has been entirely rebuilt as it was before bombing almost totally destroyed it after several World War II’s battles over its territory; there was folk dancing, great local food and innumerable shops selling amber; which solved a lot of the members’ Christmas presents that year.

The first South African Festival was held in 1999. We stayed at the Waterfront, Cape Town, the original dockyard harbour with seals gambolling just by the hotel windows. I stayed in the V & A (no, it is not the Victoria and Albert but it is named after Alfred, their second son), it is a converted warehouse, the beams in the ceiling were girders labelled ‘Made in Sheffield’. I’ll list some of our highlights: visiting the Jackass penguins at Boulders; visiting a member’s gold workshop; stroking a cheetah – I felt and heard him purr – which was at our final dinner; experiencing a genuine briai (bbq); listening to a wonderful native Choirs; wine farm visits (they are not called vineyards) one of these was at Constantia – so why are there all those white ducks around? Well, because they eliminate the snails amongst the vines of course!

Eating a lunch with omelettes: one ostrich egg serves 28 people. There were many memorable meals at historic venues.

And even the other sort of *pomme* was in short supply.



**DIG FOR VICTORY
NOW!**

Perhaps the real ‘bonne bouche’ was toasting the sunset with a glass of Champagne on the top of Table Mountain, from which one can see two oceans, the Atlantic and the Indian.

Another festival this time in the United Kingdom was in Herefordshire where we visited the Cathedral, with its memories of Edward Elgar. A special building holds the historic Mappa Mundi one of the world’s oldest extant maps, and a library of chained books ranging from 786AD to the 19th century. We visited Goodrich Castle slighted in 1640 and the Three Choirs Vineyard. At Grade One Moccas Court designed by Robert Adam there is original French wallpaper. Finally dinner at Hellens, where the Helyon family have lived since the 1300s, there were heirlooms of Anne Boleyn, Mary Tudor and the Earl of Essex.

Another promotional idea of the Committee to further integrate the branches was to have a Quiz between them to be called “Eat Your Words”. This was organised by Captain John Stewart in his typically military style. It entailed both wine tasting and verbal questions. Surrey Hills reached the semi-final and triumphed over Cheshire. However we lost to Bath & Bristol who finally triumphed over Northampton. With a participant called John Avery on their team would one have doubted the outcome?

There must have been a period when the IWFS had its office in The Reform Club as I remember visiting there, but only in the foyer (a woman in the Reform, oh la! la!) that was as far as I was allowed to go. Later in the late eighties the IWFS office was located at No 108, Old Brompton Road. The EA Committee often met in the Lansdowne Club, Fitzmaurice Place. One of the Committee’s ideas was a questionnaire, yes I know, no-one really likes them; we were trying to ascertain how we could encourage new members – does this strike a chord? The answers came back to the latter question; i.e. new members were obtained through friends and word of mouth. The second question was why were members attracted to IWFS? The overwhelming answer was meeting and making friends with similar interests and the camaraderie.


Perhaps out of some of this motley collection my memories and stories have brought to mind your own memories So many friends, so many faces some of whom are no longer with us but who are remembered with happiness and warmth of feeling. I had thought of including a list of people but then I thought that a) that it would be too long and b) probably be invidious!! So now we shall hopefully all move forward to a time when, in the words of Vera Lynn, (and yes, I have met her!) “We *shall* all meet again, but don’t know where don’t when ?” ... We all need that hope in our lives and hearts that the camaraderie of the IW&FS provides.

INTERNATIONAL WINE AND FOOD SOCIETY

FIRST EUROPEAN FESTIVAL -

West Country Luncheon

SATURDAY 25TH OCTOBER 1980



THE Imperial TORQUAY

MENU

Dorset Quail Paté

Crown of Dartmoor Lamb

Helston Vegetable Garnish

Baked Cottage Potato Pie

Buckfast Mead and Fruit Pancake

Sweetmeats

Coffee

*

WINES

RECEPTION : Clyston 1978

Borgueil 1978

Chinon 1979

AN INTERESTING TRIP TO BULGARIA

by Jeffrey Benson, Chairman London Branch

My first trip to Bulgaria took place in April 1977 when the country was still a member of the old Soviet bloc. ‘You are invited to Bulgaria for a week,’ the letter tersely said, and I found myself thinking, Bulgaria! A country steeped in mystery, magic, Balkan gypsy violins, sour cream, plum brandy... Information on the Bulgarian gastronomic scene not being readily forthcoming, I had nothing to rely on but my imagination...

I arrive at Heathrow, as instructed, at 11 a.m. sharp, there being only one Balkan Airways flight per day, only to be told on check-in that there is an indefinite delay. The information desk is unable to give any reason, but estimates five hours at least. No sooner have I settled down for a drink than the loudspeaker announces that my flight is now closing. Choking down my Bloody Mary, I rush through the gate and am escorted on to the plane.

There are five passengers, including myself, with seat reservations apparently unnecessary. Our flight time to Sofia will be seven hours, as we shall be stopping at Brussels, Belgrade, Bucharest, etc., to pick up other passengers. Over Belgium, it is announced that there are no passengers waiting there, so we are spared the Brussels stop, and indeed this turns out to be the case at every other one of the scheduled stops, meaning that we make Sofia in just four hours.

During the flight, lunch is served, hunks of delicious chargrilled meats with gherkins, and two litre bottles of wine each. The white is a 1976 Dimiat, fresh and clean but very high in acidity, while the red is a Cabernet Sauvignon of the same vintage, a wine of 14% alcohol, which cuts through the spicy meats very well.

Unexpected delays greet our arrival at Sofia. Since I am a guest of the Bulgarian Government, I need no visa, but this hasn’t been relayed to the immigration officers who were about to detain me. Eventually, my guide appears, and I am whisked through the formalities in minutes, after assuring Customs that I was bringing in neither foreign currency nor coffee.

Once in the car, my guide (who, having lived in Leeds for two years, speaks perfect northern-accented English) informs me that I shall be staying just outside the capital. We proceed to Gorna Bania, some fifteen miles out of Sofia, which I am told is the site of a famous spa, and indeed there are public fountains everywhere, gushing forth a warm liquid reputedly good for kidney and rheumatic ailments.

Having been allowed precisely five minutes to unpack and change, I am then driven back to Sofia for dinner at the Russian Club.

Two aspects of the local gastronomy strike me at once. One is the enormous quantities of alcohol everybody gets through (the spirits are served in measures of 100ml), and the second is the pronounced Turkish influence on the cuisine. Dinner is a salad

of tomatoes, cucumber and spring onions covered with strongly flavoured sheep’s cheese, accompanied by voluminous quantities of a local schnapps flavoured with rose petals, and then for the main course, a kind of steak formed of heavily spiced minced meat, served with both potatoes and rice. My host orders a 1976 Cabernet of 14.5% alcohol, which is tough, but well balanced and very fruity. I decline a dessert, but am prevailed upon to try the black tea and pliska (the local brandy), both of which prove excellent.

On returning to the hotel, I am told that, the following day being Sunday, a day of relaxation has been arranged. I am to be in the lobby by 8 a.m., all set to go skiing.

The local ski resorts are half an hour’s drive out of Gorna Bania, and this being the end of April, the season is just drawing to a close. The temperature is in fact in the 90s, and there is only one ski run open. At the hire shop I am offered a pair of lace up boots and a pair mismatched skis, and I ask, as unfacetiously as I can, whether it might be possible to have two the same length.

In the evening, I am taken to eat at a local bistro near the hotel, dining on kebabs, rice, and what turns out to be the ubiquitous salad, accompanied by a bottle of Mavrud, an indigenous red varietal, which is excellent, not unlike a half-decent claret. The currency is the leva, of which there are 1.46 to the pound. This repast costs about £1.50.



The Alexander Nevsky Cathedral in Sofia, Bulgaria

On my return to the hotel, I discover a note instructing me to be ready in the lobby at 8 a.m. sharp next day.

The wine and spirit industry in Bulgaria is owned and controlled by the state company Viniprom, whose export division is called Vinimprex. It is to their offices that I am now taken. I am greeted by the overseas director and UK manager, who promptly takes me up to their tasting room to begin what turns out to be a very arduous three days of tasting.

More red than white wine is produced. Whites include Dimiat, Misket and Tamianka, while reds encompass the likes of Cabernet Sauvignon, Mavrud, Melnik, Gamza and Dadarka. There is also some sparkling wine, both red and white, mainly quite sweet, as well as dessert wines in both colours. One of the latter was a memorable red Tirnovo 1975, which was exactly like concentrated raisin juice, with barely a hint of alcohol detectable on the palate. As it was, it was 18%, the local equivalent of port.

In the evening, I am taken to the Park Hotel for dinner. The Park is Bulgaria's attempt at a Hilton, and has somewhat missed the mark. Drinks in the 'American Bar' are followed by a meal that begins with a single slice of ham with cucumber, served with a 1976 Dimiat (slightly reminiscent of a Touraine white), and then a very tough piece of either veal or pork (no one knows which), which has been grilled for who knows how long. The saving grace is a bottle of 1974 Melnik at 13.5%, which has some of the characteristics of a good Châteauneuf-du-Pape.

As it is becoming clear that Bulgarian haute cuisine leaves something to be desired, I ask my guide if, in future, we could perhaps eat in local restaurants and avoid the tourist hotels. He looks shocked but acquiesces, nonetheless insisting that tomorrow we must eat at The Crystal, in his opinion Sofia's best restaurant.

After three hours of further tasting in the morning, we head off for The Crystal. I am exceptionally hungry, but elect to leave the menu to him. To my amazement, the first course is the unavoidable salad, followed by a spin on veal chasseur (for which the very sharp knife is a godsend), served with tepid chips, rice, and a cold purée of tomatoes with chopped spring onions. The wine was a 1974 Misket, full, fresh and well balanced, with an understated flavour gently reminiscent of Muscat. My guide then insists I try a traditional dessert dish, which turns out to be plain pancakes with a scoop of strawberry ice cream in the middle. This is washed down with an excellent 1967 Tamianka dessert white, which is full and rich, with a lingering, vaguely Muscatty finish.

It is then suggested that I see some of the sights. Bulgaria has a population of only eight million people, mostly concentrated around the capital. Sofia itself is a very attractive city, full of parks and tree-lined streets, many monuments and statues. Especially memorable is the Georgi Dimitrou house museum, which is guarded by soldiers in brightly coloured uniforms, crowned by extravagantly plumed hats. The national art gallery, housed in the sumptuous palace of the former King Boris, has a splendid collection of works.

The next day, we visit one of the state vineyards at Plovdiv, some 200 miles south-east of Sofia. Each vineyard has its own bottling line, and bottles only its own production. Plovdiv is pretty much state-of-the-art, with recently modernised equipment and extensive new planting to cope with the ever-increasing demand.

At the present, Bulgaria is the world's premier exporter of bottled wines, with 80% being exported to the Soviet Union, followed by West Germany and Japan. For the time being, very little is exported to the UK, and what does arrive is nearly all shipped in bulk and bottled under various labels in Britain. It is hoped this will soon change. The country can trace its viticultural lineage back to classical times, when, as Pliny records, the first vineyards were established by the Thracian farmer, Eumolpius.

Once my guide has got the message, all our further meals are in the local equivalent of bistros. I enjoy many different types of kebab, ranging from pork to liver, with side dishes of chargrilled meatballs and a local skinless sausage, all served with the delicious cold tomato and onion purée. The food is always tepid, but I am assured this is normal.

The drinking habits are an unending source of fascination. Red wine is customarily mixed with orange or bitter lemon, with the same treatment applied to the local beer. The quantities of spirits consumed – vodka, schnapps, etc. – make my jaw drop. When I enquire delicately whether there is a high rate of alcoholism, the answer is an emphatic 'No!', but when I persist, pointing out that the streets are full of reeling men from six o'clock every evening, I am then told that it is legal for anyone to grow vines in their gardens and take the grapes to the local distillery, to be converted into schnapps at an equivalent cost of about 4p a litre.

Further sightseeing reveals much beautiful countryside, dotted with small villages, with tables outside the cafés. Sadly, I have no time to visit the Black Sea area, which is reportedly the perfect holiday resort – golden sands, a warm sea, good hotels – and is now very popular. Tourism is basically the Black Sea and skiing. The two main central hotels in the capital are the Grand Hotel Sofia and the older Grand Balkan Hotel.

We spend the last night in a local taverna, being entertained by a dancer performing to eastern harem-type music. The various kebabs arrive *en masse*. I enquire which is which, but as usual nobody knows. The food is accompanied by endless supplies of slinova (plum brandy) and Cabernet Sauvignon. After dinner, I reluctantly accept an invitation to join in the dancing, but return very quickly to my chair with bruised ankles.

Upon my return to the hotel, I find a message informing me that a driver will be collecting me at 2.30 p.m. tomorrow to take me to the airport. This is strange, as my flight is due off at 8.55 a.m. Trying to explain this to the night porter, who hasn't a word of English, is no easy task, but eventually, by means of a mixture of French, German and sign language, the matter is resolved.

To my great surprise, the return trip to London passes without incident.

NOT ANOTHER BAN!

by David Chapman

We have become used over time to politicians and others in authority imposing bans on this and bans on that, so to be told about a ban might give rise to concerns. There is another meaning of the word, however, that of an announcement such as, in religious settings, banns of marriage where a forthcoming marriage is the subject of a public announcement. Such is the meaning of the Ban des Vendanges in St-Emilion, France. This is, of course, to those who enjoy wine and food not an unknown place. Red wine from modest to great is made here every year. The vineyard owners and managers and the winemakers are members of an historic wine brotherhood – the Jurade de St-Emilion which was founded in 1199.

Each year the vines are pruned during the winter, in the spring they flower and then the flowers set into fruit (the grapes). During the latter part of the spring and the summer the grapes swell, change colour from green to black and become ripe. Much of this is left to nature but a human decision needs to be made at the end of summer namely to decide when the grapes are fully ripe and ready for picking. Today there are in every wine-growing area laboratories to which winemakers can take individual grapes for analysis of the skin, of the flesh and of the pips and on the basis of that information and of their own skill and experience decide when to start picking the grapes.

In times gone by, however, when science was not available to help, other means of reaching decisions had to be used. The great and the good of, in this case, St-Emilion (but much the same applied in other French wine growing areas) were anxious to protect what they saw as the reputation of the area for the quality of its wines. Nothing could be worse than allowing vignerons to harvest unripe grapes which would make poor wine and thus harm the local reputation. So, in St-Emilion, in years gone by the leaders of the Jurade required the growers not harvest until they, those leaders, decided that the harvest could begin. In French the word "vendanges" is an equivalent meaning to the word "harvest". So, the Ban des Vendanges was the announcement that the harvest could begin. This was done by a short period of ceremonial and celebrations.

History has been continued into modern times so that, although it is no longer a local legal requirement to delay picking until



the Ban takes place, the ancient ceremonies and celebrations are held on a fixed weekend each September. Your correspondent has had the pleasure of enjoying these weekends on more than one occasion. What happens (I hear you ask)? Well it all begins on the Saturday evening when, at the fall of darkness after dinner, the Jurats dressed in their resplendent red robes and carrying flaming torches process from the lowest part of the town (I digress to say – for the benefit of those who don't know its layout – that St-Emilion tumbles down quite a steep hillside) up one of the main streets,





climbing the hill and then climbing the steps of the Tour du Roy. This is an ancient stone tower which is the highest point in the town. The Jurats assemble on the top of the Tour du Roy and preside over a huge firework display which is watched from vantage points around the town by local residents and visitors.

Next day, the Sunday, a church service is held in the Église Monolithe de Saint-Émilion (somewhere between a parish church and a cathedral) to bless the harvest. The Jurats in their robes process to the church which soon fills up and the service starts. During it young children from vineyard families bring forward to the priest small baskets of grapes which are blessed. After the service, the Jurats process to an area which once formed part of the moat but is now a dry grassed piece of ground where on a stage before which are those invited including prospective members who are to be intronised as members of the Jurade. These prospective members come from all parts of the world and often include some quite famous people. They are intronised in "batches" of five or six each person having their CV read out by one of the Jurats. Once these formalities are concluded, everyone adjourns to take an apéritif of Crémant de Bordeaux, a sparkling wine largely made in the Entre-Deux-Mers area of the Bordeaux region, accompanied by canapés.

Thirst quenched all move on to lunch in an ancient hall, the Salle des Dominicains, where a vast gathering of invited persons

are seated at large circular tables for a splendid lunch with several flights of local wines starting at the lowest level (St-Emilion AOC) and moving up through St-Emilion Grand Cru, St-Emilion Grand Cru Classé to Premier Grand Cru Classé. After lunch the Jurats process (regardless of the extent of their liquid consumption) through the town and up the steep stone staircase of the Tour du Roy where, from the top, the Senior Jurat gives an address to the populace watching from various vantage points concluding with "blowing the whistle" for the opening of the harvest. It is worthy of note that, depending on the weather over the summer months, picking may well have started days or even a couple of weeks before the Ban des Vendanges.

There are Chancelleries of the Jurade all round the world including in England. These are like branches of the Jurade. There is one based in North Yorkshire covering the North of England; the other is based at Oxford and covers the South of England. The "English Jurade" visits St-Emilion each year to join in the celebrations described above and enlarges its time (to include the Friday and the Monday) spent there to include visits, tastings and meals at local wine estates where generous hospitality is received and a better understanding of the wines experienced. Another visit takes place in June when there are celebrations of the successful flowering of the vines but the "virus ban" has prevented that celebration this year.

THE GROVE HOTEL IN WATFORD

by *Geraldine Cosh*

I recently stayed at the Grove Hotel in Watford. The hotel is a 5-star hotel and part of "The leading Hotels of the world." This group of hotels comprises of more than 400 independent, uncommon, luxury hotels, in over 80 countries (according to: <https://www.lhw.com>). I have stayed in many hotels around the world and I have to say this was one of the best. The spa treatments, pool and bedroom were amazing, as was the food and service.

Before eating, the Glasshouse Bar makes the perfect place for a pre diner cocktail or glass of your favourite tipple. Drinks are accompanied with, what appeared to be, fresh homemade vegetable crisps which went perfectly with any drink. There are a few dining options but the Glasshouse is highly recommended. As noted on their site there are "eight bountiful live food stations with Chefs constantly preparing the freshest, tastiest International food." The additional bonus is that you can fill

your plate and then go for more, selecting what ever food item you enjoyed or felt you wanted more of. The meats section was particularly impressive with steak cooked fresh, to the level you desire and a wide choice available. There was a Japanese Kimchi soup made with all the freshest ingredients, fresh sushi, king prawns, scallops, vegetables and salad was also on offer – making the perfect meal.

The staff and ambiance were everything you would expect from such a restaurant and hotel. Although there were other diners present, a table for two didn't not feel imposed upon and felt very personal. The décor was also impressive with the largest pieces surprisingly made from cutlery (spoons and forks). Although the weather was not great (being February) the grounds were very impressive and I am sure would make a beautiful walk. Highly recommend this place and I am very much looking forward to going back one day.



DINNER IN THE DINER

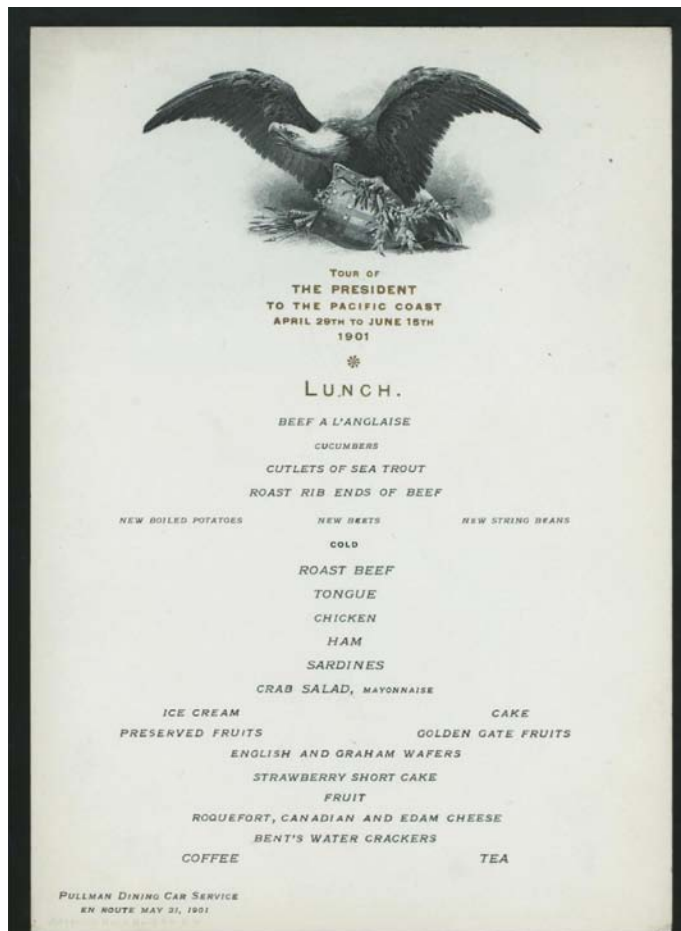
by Tom Murnan, Omaha and Council Bluffs Branches

First published in 'Food Wine & Friends' in 2020, dinner in the diner during the golden age of rail travel

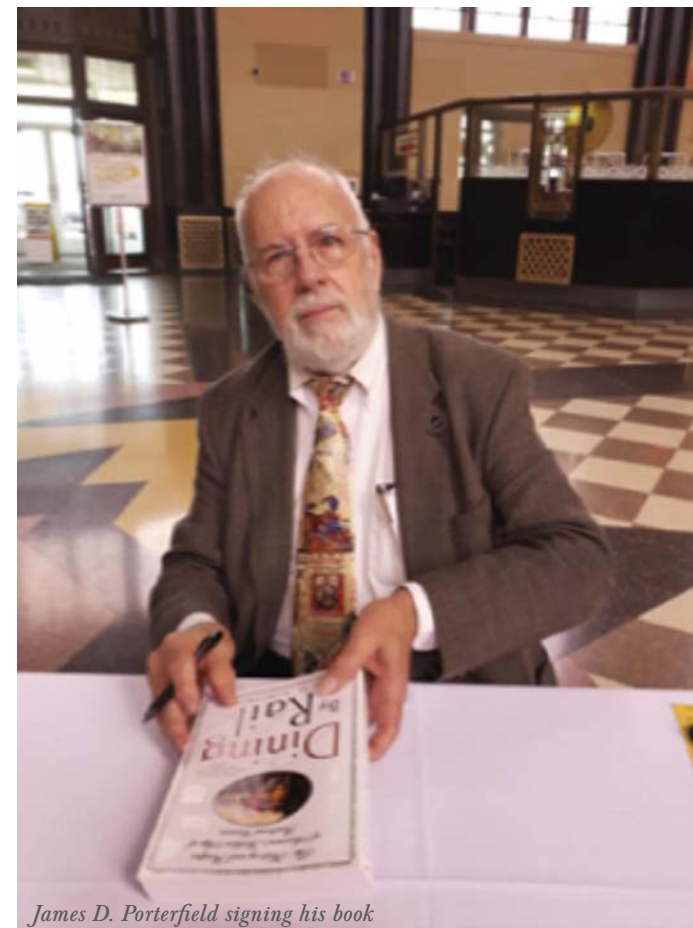
Two thousand and nineteen was the sesquicentennial anniversary of the driving of the golden spike for the transcontinental railway, with Omaha being the starting point for the Union Pacific Rail Road. It got me to thinking of dining by rail in the golden age of railroads in the United States during the 1930s, '40s and '50s. It is fascinating to follow the development of fine dining while traveling.

Author James D. Porterfield came to Omaha's Durham Museum, the old Union Pacific terminal, to discuss the topic. His book, *Dining By Rail*, details the history of rail car dining and has 330 recipes developed by the railroads as well.

There was little thought given to dining well in the earliest days of rail travel. Patrons sat in open coaches, eating more soot and ash from the engine than anything else. Food was an afterthought. The trains themselves had to be constantly resupplied with wood and water. During these stops, passengers had about 20 minutes to gulp down whatever was available, and the food was unfailingly horrible. Bitter black coffee, stale bread nicknamed 'sinkers', and dry, tough, salty ham may be a passenger's fate. In addition, with such a short time available, it was mob action getting to the food provider: a mad dash to buy something, choke it down, and get back on the train, saving the



Pullman Dining Car Service Menu for President William McKinley's 1901 visit to the West Coast



James D. Porterfield signing his book

indigestion for later. Many passengers brought their own box lunch to avoid eating the wretched fare available at the rest stops. 'News Butchers' were the next refinement. Boys would get on the train at one stop, sell their wares of apples, sweetmeats, candy, books and newspapers by going up and down the aisles, then get off at the next stop so they could work the train returning to their home station. News Butchers were universally condemned as being highly unsatisfactory.

The railroads then tried station houses. These would be restaurants subcontracted to provide food at a railway terminal. One of the best was the chain of Fred Harvey Houses, staffed with the Harvey Girls, around 1870. Their territory covered the USA Southwest. Fred offered above average food that was fresh and homemade, for a reasonable price. The eggs, for example, were never refrigerated. He recruited respectable women, the Harvey Girls, who were paid \$17.50 a month, to provide the service. These women were unmarried, agreed to work for six months, and were given room and board with a 10:00 p.m. curfew overseen by a matron. Many Harvey Girls married their customers. The Harvey establishments were a symbol of efficiency. A brakeman would notify passengers two stops ahead that there would be Fred Harvey service: a dining room for six bits, or lunch counter and pay a la carte. He would determine the number who wanted to eat and telegraph that

ahead one stop before the eating stop. Fred was perhaps the inventor of the fast food industry.

As good as the Harvey chain was, the passenger was still only given a limited amount of time to eat and re-board his or her train. The first written account of a meal served on a train was in 1842, when the President and Board of Directors for the Baltimore & Ohio Railroad were served a cold meal. It was not until the Civil War that food was routinely served on hospital trains. These were just box cars fitted out for food preparation. They included a kitchen, cupboards, sink and storage compartments. In 1867, George Pullman, who had introduced the Pullman sleeping car two years before, came out with his 'hotel-car'. It was the first rail car designed specifically to prepare food. The hotel-car offered all the amenities of a hotel while on a protracted journey. They had a three foot by six foot kitchen, a wine closet, and a pantry operated by a crew of four or five. More beer and wine was stored under the floorboard. These cars cost \$24,000.00, a fortune in those days, and carried 1,000 napkins, 150 table cloths, china, glassware, 133 food items, enough for up to a seven-day trip. The conductor walked around taking orders from a large menu, and the meal was served on tables temporarily fastened to the wall. It was royal luxury to the passenger of that time. Service was provided by white clad, impeccably clean waiters. But there was still a problem. How do you get to the dining car? It was a dangerous endeavor as one had to jump over the gap between car ends while the train was moving and twisting. In 1887, George Pullman invented The Sessions Vestibule. An elastic diaphragm mounted on a steel frame and held firm by powerful springs allowed the passenger to easily and safely walk right over the gap.

Still, despite all the advancements in rail car dining, many lines resisted investing in dining cars. Although they were wildly popular, they were also tremendously expensive. Ultimately, it was good old fashioned competition that persuaded the railroads to get on board with dining cars. The Union Pacific broke an agreement with Burlington not to have dining cars with its 1889 announcement that it would, in fact, have dining cars. This was only 20 years after the driving of the golden spike. Competition for passengers was fierce, and first class passengers would invariably select a line with a dining car over one without. By 1929, lines were also adding air conditioning.

The dining car was a marvel of organisation. From its humble beginnings of 60 feet long, modern cars turned into a length of 200 feet. Railroads developed their own logo marked china and extra heavy silver plated flatware. Re-equipping the cars was a never ending job, done with great skill. Only the highest quality of beef, veal, mutton, poultry, fish or pork was selected. Dairy and fruit items were of the best quality. They were always on the lookout for unusual items that a consumer could not get at home. For example, The Great Big Baked Potato was touted by the Northern Pacific. They discovered that large Yakima Valley potatoes were being fed to the pigs because, at five pounds, they were too large and were considered impossible to bake.

A two pound spud was deemed ideal, but larger than we typically get today. The secret to baking was to deeply pierce each end with an ice pick and add a pan of water in the oven to replace lost moisture. Other lines promoted their French toast,

Dover Sole, Whitefish, Wenatchee apples, Lobster Newburg On Toasted Cornbread, steaks and the like. The Wenatchee Valley apple (Rome Beauty) was promoted by Great Northern for their large size and delicious taste, and special dishes were promoted using the apples on the train. Railroad lines would contract for food and beverage items. For example, the Union Pacific joined forces with the Roma Wine Company in the 1940's to private label white wine.

Amazing food came out of these small, cramped, very hot kitchens (up to 125°), where, on cross country Limited Trains, they would have to produce three meals a day. The chefs were very innovative. Bisquick was invented by chefs of the Southern Pacific and revolutionised American eating habits. An executive of General Mills was astounded how quickly he received an order of hot biscuits and asked the chef how it was done. The chef told him he blended flour, baking powder, salt and lard together, then put it in an ice chest for later use. Seeing the commercial, potential General Mills then turned it into a Betty Crocker product for sale to average consumers, and it didn't have to be refrigerated. The Pullman Loaf was sandwich bread baked in square, straight sided pans so that all sides were the same size. This enabled better stacking and storing of the loaf in a crowded kitchen than regular rounded top, beveled sided loaves. To keep bacon from curling up and breaking, it was first partially cooked in the oven to break the grain of the meat, then placed in the broiler to finish. Thus prepared, it laid flat on the plate without crumbling or curling. Menus were unusual, but not so far away from what patrons were used to lest they be afraid to order an item. One of the unusual recipes was Cantaloupe Pie on the Texas & Pacific Railway and can be found in Porterfield's book.



The cook in his well-equipped kitchen on a Hotel Car

Other railroad innovations include the Presto Log. Developed by Weyerhaeuser for the railroads, the logs were made by combining sawdust and wax under pressure. They were originally used as backup supplies for heat in case a train got stuck in the mountains in winter. They were clean burning and provided good heat. Bottled water also was a railroad innovation. A T&P Chef was disciplined for not topping off his car's water tanks in some small Texas town where he was instructed to do so. He objected because the water always had a red tint to it. Another line, the B&O, owned the Deer Park spring and resort near present-day Oakland, Maryland, and served and used that spring's water in their dining car service.

Patrons loved the combination of luxury, top quality food while moving and viewing an ever changing panorama of scenery. Especially desirable were the domed SKY VIEW cars that featured a glass dome above the regular roof of the dining car. Impeccable service started with the commissary loading the train. Perishable foods were packed in watertight containers and packed in ice. One hour before departure, any meat grinding was done to guarantee freshness. The cleaning crew had already washed down the walls and floors, wiped the tables and vacuumed the carpets. As the dining car was taken to the train, the chefs began preparations: baking bread, roasting meats, prepping desserts and vegetables. Waiters would set the tables with linen, dishes, silverware and glasses, placing a silver vase of fresh flowers on each table. Uniforms were spotless.

Typical evening dining seating was offered at 5:00, 6:00 and 7:00. Meals might be announced by a waiter using chimes, passing out menus or posting a sign for each cabin. Water and coffee were offered to the diner upon arrival to the dining car, as well as menus, order forms and pencils. The waiter tore the top copy of the two part order form off and submitted the order to the kitchen. He then delivered bread, salads and the like. A steward prepared alcoholic mixed drinks or opened wine. Attentive service was provided throughout the meal: delivering the courses and clearing the table. At the end of the meal, the waiter discretely handled payment and customers moved on, perhaps to the lounge, or back to their waiting seat. Then the process was repeated for the different sittings. After the passengers were fed, the staff of porters, conductors, brakemen were served. Finally, the dining car crew got to eat. Restocking the train occurred during stops at different terminals. Dining cars did not typically accompany the train for its full destination. They would be dropped off on a side rail after the eating service was over and be taken back to its city of origin or its next drop off point.

Rail dining, however, was always a loss leader for the railroads. By 1937, the average meal on the Pennsylvania RR sold for \$1.24, while its true cost to the RR was \$1.61, creating a loss of \$1 million. By 1949 the loss was \$4 million, and by 1957 it rose to \$29 million. The railroads considered low cost meals as an advertising expense. If they raised the price to break even, it would be higher than the finer restaurants and hotels and customers would balk. The Great Depression reduced ridership and passenger funds available for meals. World War Two further curtailed dining by rail, and after the war, most rail travel was intercity, not cross country. In the 1950s, trains had to compete with buses, automobiles and air travel. By 1st May 1971, Amtrak



The Hotel Car's wine closet

took over America's passenger rail travel. Rail car dining ceased altogether in 1983, but has started up again in certain areas.

But the memories remain. What was it that made dining on a train such a memorable experience? It was a combination of the "miraculous quality to the service of a freshly prepared four-course meal from the confines of a dining-car kitchen" and the romance of travel. Mark Twain described this as "an exhilarating sense of emancipation from all sorts of cares and responsibilities." And that feeling was enhanced by being on a train, being served high quality, delicious food, as spectacular scenery passed by, viewed behind large windows. Literally, a movable feast.

Postscript: There are still a few working dining cars in existence today. The Napa Valley Wine Train provides wine and gourmet dining. The Texas State Railroad has a dining car. The San Diego Winery Train offers a fine dining with wine luncheon. There is also My Old Kentucky Dinner Train out of Bardstown, KY, which operates in Bourbon country. The Golden Dome from Denali to Anchorage still has a dining car, but east of the Mississippi, they are discontinuing the dining cars on overnight trips. Outside the USA, there are also some dining cars still providing service, such as the Orient Express.

Source: *Dining By Rail* by James D. Porterfield, Saint Martin's

COPING WITH COVID: Food, Wine And Hospitality

by Leonie Allday, Bath & Bristol

Unprecedented times

In a recent article entitled "Managing Uncertainty" for the Institute of Hospitality, Michael Buerk from Embrace Resilience started out by saying that "We didn't need COVID-19 to remind us that we live in a highly complex and unpredictable world". How true. Uncertainty has always been built into our global DNA. Despite the best efforts of modern science and technology and consequent improvements in forecasting we are still constantly taken by surprise – by extreme weather events, natural disasters, conflict, economic and political upheaval and, not least, disease. Human society is not good at forecasting, or at assessing risk, or at learning from past mistakes.

In this world of uncertainty, however, some things are more certain than others. It is 100% certain that we shall eventually ride out the Covid 19 pandemic. It may take years, and we shall have to wait for either an effective vaccine or effective treatment, but it will happen. In the meantime, however, it is also 100% certain that many businesses, small and large, will fail.

IWFS exists to foster the appreciation of good food and good wine, enjoyed in the convivial company of like-minded people. At the moment we cannot hold international, national or branch

events. Hotels, restaurants and pubs are firmly closed (except in some cases for take-aways, see later). We cannot go away for a weekend, or out for a meal, or to a pub or wine bar. I'm hoping that by the time you read this our exit from Lockdown will have advanced enough to bring some of these a little nearer, but as I write (mid-May) the outlook is still somewhat depressing. It is not at all certain that we shall be able to resume "business as usual" before the autumn, or even next year, or what "usual" will look like, or whether members will have the confidence to emerge from their homes and socialise even when permitted to do so.

Hospitality – of key importance to visitors and locals alike

However, this article is not about us as individuals and our own coping mechanisms at this very strange time, but about the many businesses that underpin the life of our Society. Hospitality and leisure contribute 5% of the UK's GDP and account for 10% of all employment¹. The sector relies heavily on overseas visitors, two-thirds of these being from the major European countries, the US and Australia. With 95% of all aircraft grounded, passenger ferries not operating and cruise ships lying idle, these source markets have collapsed. Very limited opportunities to serve domestic customers during Lockdown have presented huge challenges. 47,000 pubs are



closed, along with most hotels and restaurants. It is estimated that between 10 and 30% will never re-open². The big group-owned premises are likely to survive; for example JD Wetherspoon, the UK's largest pub and bar chain that plans to spend £11 million to ensure the safe re-opening of its 875 venues³. The situation is much more challenging for the smallest licensed premises and for those with no outside space and there is already a growing lobby for the two metre social distancing rule to be reduced to one metre to assist such businesses.

Our daily bread

The UK food and farming sector is worth over £120 billion and employs over four million people. There are around 149,000 farm businesses – more than the number of businesses involved in the motor trade, education, finance and insurance combined⁴. Most are small-scale family farms and many have already had to diversify into a wide range of other operations in order to survive in today's highly competitive environment, but they still provide over 60% of our food.

Food producers (and processors) are having a tough time too. The NFU has estimated that 80,000 seasonal workers will be needed to help with the fruit and vegetable harvest across a wide range of roles, including pickers, packers, plant husbandry and tractor / forklift truck drivers. The DEFRA Pick for Britain Campaign website lists thousands of vacancies but although there has been quite a good response to the plea for furloughed UK workers to cut asparagus, pick soft fruit etc it is probable that this workforce will disperse well ahead of the ability of the usual migrant workforce to return in anything like the numbers required.

Wine – “the most civilised thing in the world”

So said Ernest Hemingway. And if at the present time we sometimes feel as if civilisation is collapsing all around us, we have wine to remind us that it is not! The UK's wine industry is perhaps fortunate that it is still small in scale compared with those of France, Spain, Italy, Australia, South Africa et al. It is estimated that a billion litres of wine are at risk of remaining unsold in Europe, due to a fall in demand⁵. Penal tariffs of 25% imposed by the US on a range of European products, including still wine, last year were only the beginning of it. France has been particularly badly hit - its domination of the growing fine wine market in China was already under threat from New World producers (especially Chile and Australia)⁶ and climate change is threatening viticulture in a number of the most historically important wine-producing regions in the country, including Champagne. And now Coronavirus. With exports plummeting, French growers have nowhere to store the 2020 harvest, so in order to free up space the French government recently announced a €140 million crisis distillation scheme which will be used to fund the distillation of two million hectolitres of excess, unsold wine into other products including hydroalcoholic gel⁷.

No such measures will be necessary here, but the British wine industry is facing its own challenges. It may be very small-scale in global terms (the amount of land under vines in the UK is only 0.7% of the global total) but it now produces almost four million bottle of still and sparkling wine each year, and has seen a tripling of output over the last two decades. The industry is

expanding rapidly – both 2018 and 2019 saw over a million new vines planted. In 2018 there were over 707 vineyards (of more than 1 ha) and 135 wineries⁸. Almost all the larger ones (and many smaller ones) have ancillary operations such as visitor centres, tasting rooms, event spaces, accommodation etc. which usually help to ensure that they remain viable even in the more difficult years, but now prove to be even more vulnerable to Coronavirus than the vineyards themselves. As viticulture is classified as an agricultural operation, the tending of vineyards and production of wine is still possible, and neither of the two major vineyard contract labour suppliers foresee any difficulty in providing the necessary labour for this season.

The challenge, however, is how to sell the wines when many of the normal commercial channels are at least temporarily suspended. Wine GB, the national umbrella organisation for grape growers and winemakers, has comprehensive details of all the financial support available to growers and producers on its website. It has also announced new initiatives to support producers during the current crisis, including weekly online English / Welsh Wine Nights focusing on different regional vineyard associations. This is supplemented by a “Shop Local” page, focusing on vineyards that are selling online, together with retailers that stock English and Welsh wines. It is hoped that these initiatives will encourage consumers to buy, and enable producers to sell, more UK wines directly, and if a reasonable proportion of screen views (over a million so far) translate into sales, this strategy will be seen to have had some success.. In addition a Marketing Plan is being drawn up to help members through the rest of the year and this will form part of a Recovery Plan for 2021 and beyond^{9, 10}.

In general, sales of alcohol in the UK have not only held up but have increased across the board (champagne excepted!). The



Office for National Statistics reports that in March sales were up by 31.4% in total compared with the previous month¹¹. Wine led the way, followed by lager, gin, whisky, craft beer and cider. Panic buying and stockpiling undoubtedly played a part in fuelling such a big increase. However, although supermarket sales are booming, and the off-trade has largely maintained its market, suppliers to the on-trade (a very competitive sector at the best of times) have seen their business decimated, and although there is Government assistance with employee retention the inevitable contraction in the market will mean that some of these suppliers face an uncertain future.

Rays of hope – turning challenges into opportunities

It is perhaps encouraging that there is a general recognition that the big chain operations in hospitality, food and drink will survive and it is the small, local businesses that need our support. Some of these are finding innovative ways to maintain at least part of their operations during Lockdown and are making plans which they hope will enable their operations to survive into 2021 and beyond. Here are a few examples from my home patch in the West Country; you will all know of similar enterprises in your own localities:

- The Tiffin Group is a privately-owned and owner-led group of several small brasseries and cafés including four outlets in picturesque rural and seaside locations in North Somerset. (Its other base of operations is Jersey!) When the virus struck, it was quick to diversify into “Tiffin Larder” and “Travelling Tiffin”, supplying meals which can be ordered online and collected from their rural venue or are delivered to key workers and the sheltered or self-isolating members of the community. Sunday lunches and cream teas are particularly popular! They are also supplying a wide range of local produce, sourced from their usual suppliers, boxed up for collection or delivery.
- Romajo's Community Meals are cooked by freelance chef Jonny Burnett (who trained under Raymond Blanc and Hugh Fearnley-Whittingstall) and his team of helpers. They have been “lent” a pub kitchen in a nearby village and are delivering meals free-of-charge to the elderly, the vulnerable and NHS workers within a 25-mile radius. The start-up was crowd-funded and still relies on grants and donations; so far around 20,000 meals have been delivered.
- Many distilleries, large and small, have diversified into making hand sanitiser. Small-scale Bristol craft gin and rum distiller Psychopomp has tiny premises and had to furlough its team. However owners Danny and Liam were so distressed by local shortages of hand gel (and consequent price gouging) that they turned to making hand sanitiser and now produce 250 litres a week, which is distributed free of charge to hospitals, care homes, the police, other organisations such as the Bristol Drugs Project – basically to anyone who needs it. The much larger Chase Distillery in Herefordshire has been able to continue its operations but has also teamed up with sister company Willy's who are donating 30,000 units of hand sanitiser to frontline medical professionals and key workers in Herefordshire and Worcestershire. They have also donated several tons of potatoes to local food banks. In common with many distilleries and vineyards they are also posting “how-to”



cocktail videos on their social media channels to entertain and inform their customers¹².

- It's also encouraging that even the big companies are finding ways to help and support their local communities. The Thatchers website homepage includes a message which offers assistance to those who live locally “and would like our help in collecting shopping or other similar jobs, or even walking the dog!”

We are all out clapping for our NHS staff, carers and key workers on Thursday nights – let's include in our thanks all those still working their hardest to keep us all fed and watered and to keep roofs over their own heads too!

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10. www.winegb.co.uk
11. ONS Retail Sales Great Britain 24.4.20
12. “WSTA Members show their fighting spirit this St George's

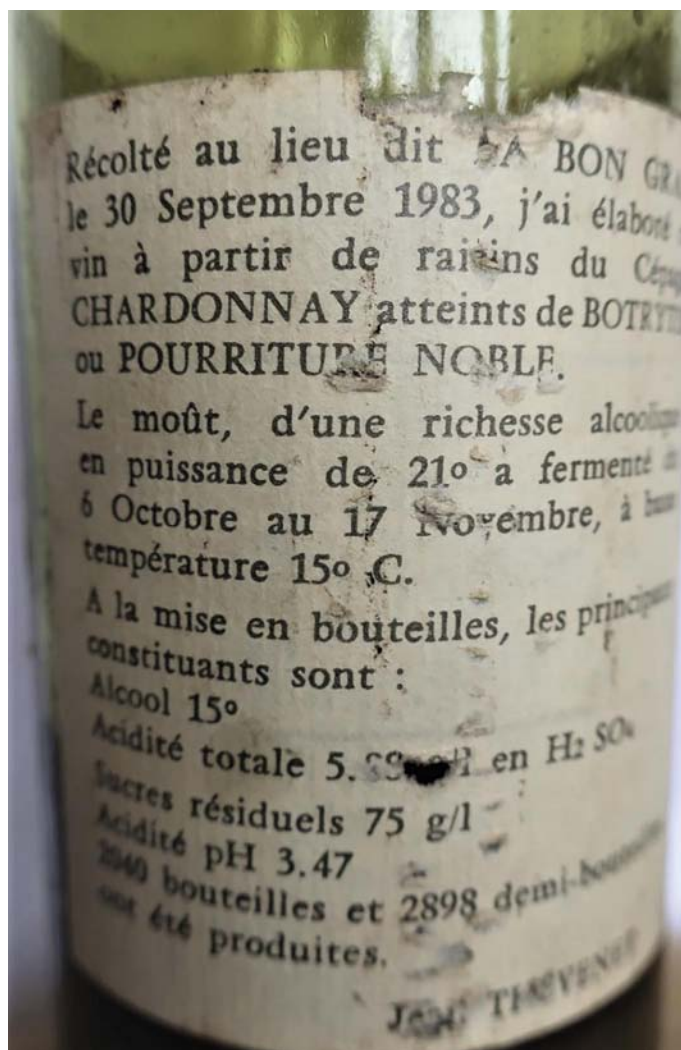
THAT 1983 SWEET WHITE BURGUNDY

by *Bernard Lamb*

One occasionally hears of a one-off sweet white Burgundy. I was very lucky to taste it recently at Richard Duncan's house and to take the half-bottle so that I could study the excellent detail on the back label. The wine was labelled *Cuvée Spéciale Botrytis DOMAINE de la BON GRAN, Appellation Mâcon-Villages Contrôlée. Mis en bouteille au Domaine par Jean THÉVENET Propriétaire-Viticulteur à Quintaine-Clessé, par Lugny (S.-&-L.). 37.5cl e.*

The back label stated that the harvest at the lieu dit La BON GRAN was on 30th September 1983, so it was not a late-harvest wine. Jean made the wine after leaving the Chardonnay grapes to get 'BOTRYTIS ou POURRITURE NOBLE' (Noble rot). The must ('moût') had a potential alcohol ('d'une richesse alcoolique en puissance de') 21°. It fermented from 6th October to 17th November at a temperature of 15°. At bottling, the main constituents were alcohol 15°, total acidity of 5.88 [the .88 may be wrong as the label is damaged there] g/l as sulphuric acid, residual sugars 75 g/l, acidity pH 3.47. 2040 bottles and 2898 halves were produced. Using the conversion factor that 1.7% (w/v) sugar gives about 1% alcohol (v/v), the must had about 357 g/l sugar. Using a conversion factor of 0.65, the acidity was about 9.05 g/l as tartaric acid, fine for a sweet wine.

In 1983, spring in Burgundy was very wet and cold, then there was localised hail in May. A hot, dry June gave good flowering



and July and most of August were sunny. There was heavy rain and little sunshine in late August to mid-September, giving unwanted rot. Perhaps Thévenet's vines in Mâcon had locally better weather and more sun to reach such a high sugar level that it did not all ferment out, leaving a sweet wine.

The wine now is gold in colour, with barley sugar/noble rot noticeable in the good bouquet. The flavour was delicious, with an excellent balance between the acidity and the medium sweetness. The body was slightly thin. The wine was fresh and has kept well, without oxidation. The specific gravity now of 1.030 is equivalent to 78 g/l sucrose in water, agreeing well with the stated residual sugar of 75 g/l. It was very enjoyable as well as being historic.

This bottle was one of a mixed case of 12 halves and six bottles bought en primeur by Richard Duncan from Adnams and cellared by him since then. He presented a bottle of it to a London Branch IWFS 2002 tasting of 'Premier White Wines' which he and Christopher Davenport-Jones gave at St John's Church, Ladbroke Grove, organised by Sheila Robertson, who was present at this recent tasting. Richard's tasting notes in 2002 were: "med. gold, rich but not marmalade nose, V. concentrated, rich, good length, good balancing acidity".

CAN ROSÉ BE SERIOUS?

by *Elizabeth Gabay MW*

Images of rosé for easy drinking, ice cold, during the summer are everywhere on Instagram by the sea or pool. Its attraction is often that it is simple, charming, inexpensive and not serious. With no varietal or terroir character, consumed within the year, in a consistent style. This image has resulted in an enormous market success, with sales growing year on year.

So when in 2006 Sacha Lichine had the chutzpah to launch his Garrus rosé at the then-unheard of price for rosé wine of 80 euros a bottle, the wine world gasped in amazement. Even more so in 2019 when Gerard Bertrand launched his rosé Clos du Temple at the much higher 200 euros a bottle.

Something is evidently going on in the rosé world. Are the high prices just marketing hype? Can rosé be both simple and serious or is that a contradiction? How can rosé be serious, complex, match with food, and have ageing potential? This is contentious amongst producers, with fears that offering serious rosé would distract from the successful volume sales of simpler wine.

Lichine and the late Patrick Leon created the first premium Provence rosés at Château d'Esclans in 2006. Garrus, made from old vine Grenache on volcanic slopes, is fermented and aged in new oak. Doubts as to whether there was a market for such a serious rosé were soon quashed as the wine sells out each year, proving that a more complex oaked pink is attractive.

Gerard Bertrand has a large range of rosés in his portfolio ranging from 8 to 200 euros a bottle. At the launch of Bertrand's Clos du Temple in 2019, some queried whether it was worth the

price. Bertrand defended his decision, commenting that no-one queries the high prices for some red and white wines. Its price reflects the extra work with old vine Cinsault on limestone slopes, low yields, manual labour, biodynamic viticulture, barrel ageing and small production. The resulting wine has power and richness while keeping to the elegance and pale colour of classic southern pink wines. Bertrand passionately believes in his range of rosés, not just as commercial products, but as wines which reflect our more relaxed lifestyle and changing tastes in food, noting few today eat the large amounts of meat normally matched with red wine.

Many serious rosés can be radically different in colour and style. While both Bertrand and Lichine aim for paleness, should rosé be defined by colour? Some rosés are dark enough to be mistaken for red wines, others pale enough to be white wines. But if rosé is not defined by colour, how can it be defined? My own interpretation is that, if not a blend of red and white wine, it is one made of largely red varieties which does not finish fermentation on the skins (although an exception could be non-European pink wines made with white grapes and coloured with a small percentage of red wine).

With the majority of rosé production resting on earlier harvesting for freshness, minimal skin contact and gentle pressing, with cool tank fermentation, what can be done for extra complexity? Add extra spice with ambient yeast, remove temperature control, vary fermentation vessels and ageing, and the world of rosé opens up to reveal some beautiful wines. Rosé can be as varied as red and white wines, with regional styles still developing. Key indicators give us clues to understand what



Dimitris Skouras

makes a more serious rosé and to help those searching for such wines. Many are produced in small quantities and are unavailable in the wider market, selling out rapidly to local fans. As gems from outside Europe rarely make it into Europe, here I concentrate on serious European rosés.

Short skin contact remains a key element and is often the first thing mentioned as a sign of quality. Temperature controlled gentle press with short skin contact (2-6 hours) produces paler pink. But this in itself does not result in a 'serious' rosé.

Darker coloured rosés can have up to four days skin contact. Long skin contact or bleeding-off from a red wine will increase the fruit and body - but also the colour. Deeper colour can be associated with historic rosé and all have longer maceration, deep colour and full body. Pinot Noir in Rosé de Riceys in Champagne such as those of **Olivier Horiot**; the clarets of Bordeaux; Tempranillo-based claretes of northern Spain such as **Dominio del Aguila** (Ribero del Duero); and Cerasuolo d'Abruzzo in mid-Italy. Grenache-based Tavel's such as **Domaine Mordorée's** Reine de Bois, where the intensity of colour and extra freshness is given by including the white varieties Clairette and Bourboulenc to the blend and **Domaine Maby's** Prima Donna from a warmer site giving bigger ripe fruit, both show the typical sour cherry, raspberry and strawberry fruit, restrained structure and subdued tannins..

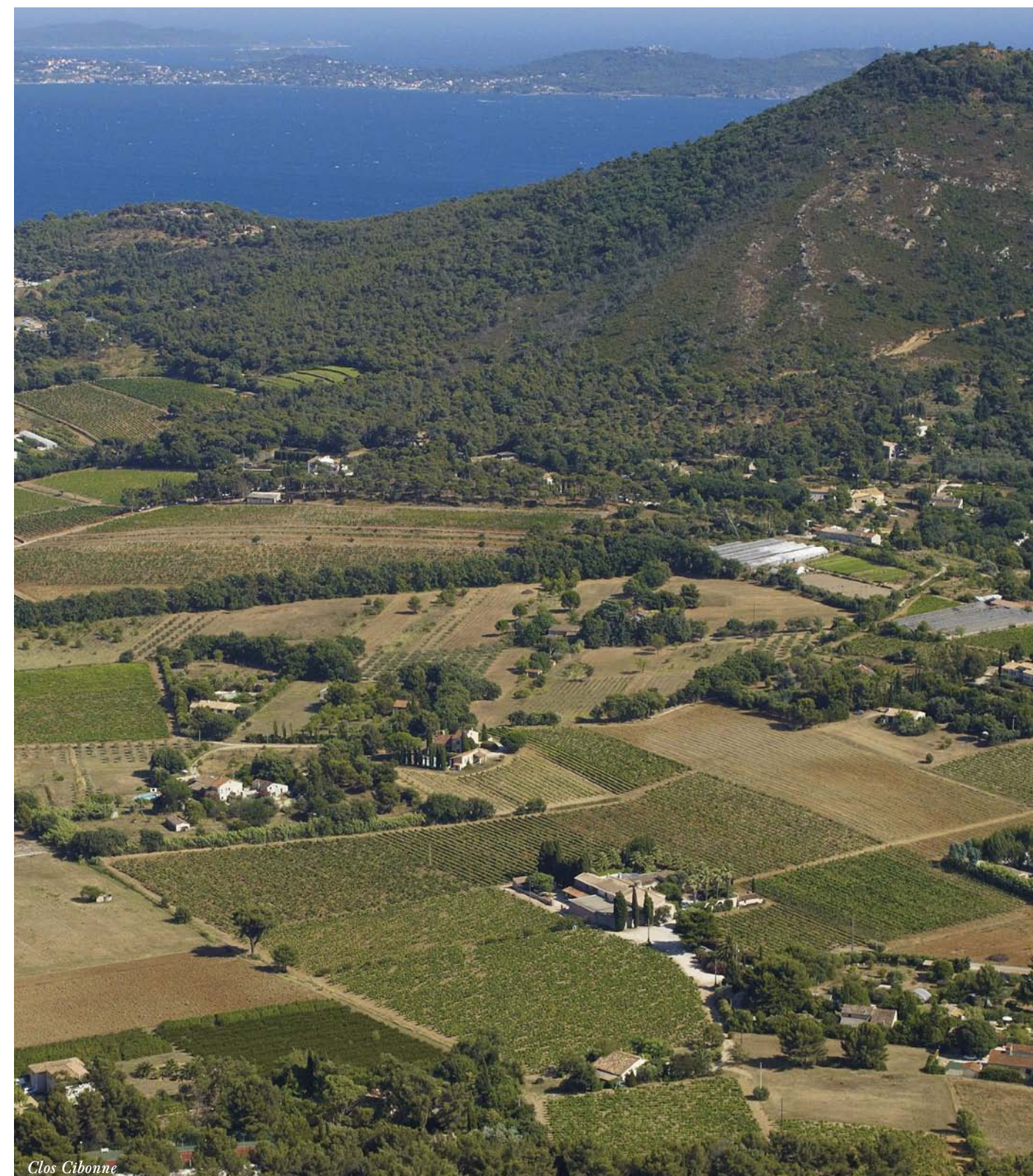
In Bandol, rosés made predominantly with Mourvedre (by no means all Bandol rosé), generally offer greater weight, structure and gastronomic charm. However almost all have moved from their traditional darker hue to the paler pinks, often citing the difficulty in selling darker pink wines. The darkest, one of the

most attractive, comes from Guillaume Tari at **Domaine de la Bégude**. Tari laughs that his Irréductible dark pink rosé, made from almost 100% old vine Mourvedre, is an 'enfant terrible' fighting against the 'current fashion of ephemeral and transparent rosés'. Instead, Tari works towards creating a rosé which reflects the variety and terroir, the highest in Bandol at 400m, on limestone slopes overlooking the sea. It has dark cherry red fruit and vibrant floral berry fruit when young and ages beautifully, developing darker fruit, spice and pot-pourri charm.

The rare Provence variety Tibouren is lightly tinted with a tendency to ripen unevenly. The unripe berries contribute valuable fresh acidity when blended with fully ripened grapes. The best-known example, with almost 100% Tibouren, comes from **Clos Cibonne**, on the coastal schist soils of La Londe. Made in a traditional style, Cibonne's Cuvée Tradition, is aged in large old beer barrels, where the wine develops a layer of flor during ageing, creating complex rosé, with superb ageing and food matching potential. The wine has intense dried peach, apricot and orange fruit, nutty oak, red berries, creamy texture, long fresh mineral acidity, phenolic finish. Their Hommage to Marius has pronounced new oak which gives richness and oomph, with oranges and dried apricot fruit balanced by long saline mineral acidity. Traditional winemaking can often produce rosés with interesting complexity and age worthiness. Tondonia from **Lopez de Heredia** (Rioja), is a rosé released after four years in barrel and several years in bottle. 2009 is the current release, and the recently tasted 2008, a blend of 60% Garnacha, 30% Tempranillo and 10% Viura is smooth and silky with long length with concentrated cherry and raspberry fruit leading to a long dry salty finish and well-integrated rich oak complexity.



Guillaume Tari



Clos Cibonne

The fermentation vessel can also add another layer to the complexity of serious rosé. Producers play with small tanks to ferment parcel by parcel. The use of oak is highly contentious. Powerful new oak can dominate, and some consider oak too aggressive. Acacia has been used to give structure and enhance the prettiness. **Heidi Schröck's** Biscaya from Burgenland, Austria, is made from nine varieties aged in acacia, and is full of ripe juicy cranberries and dried fruit, savoury notes, vibrating acidity and a long saline finish. **Massimiliano Apollonio** in Salento in southern Italy, puts their copper-coloured Negroamaro rosato, Diciotto Fanali, in acacia barrels to age, giving sweet spice to the orange

and strawberry fruit. **Château de Pibarnon** in Bandol, makes a premium rosé called Nuance, in large neutral Stockinger barrels and terracotta *jarres*, and released with some age, creating a wine with nicely integrated oak, honeyed, cherry fruit, creamy, nutty, honeyed ripe redcurrants.

Whatever the shade, use of neutral yeast or ambient yeast will further allow the varietal character to show, but can be the most difficult to identify. With the majority of rosé produced to be consumed within the year, rosés can be selected within weeks of finishing fermentation, ready for sales from the first signs of



Johannes Zillinger – pressing of the eight-month intercellular fermented St Laurent

spring sunshine, requiring speedy processing and bottling. As ambient yeast can have an erratic length of fermentation, risking not being available on time for ‘the season’, it is only used for rosés made ‘not for summer’ but for year-round consumption. Slower fermentation, often at warmer temperatures, results in more complex wines. **Theresa Haider** did not want to make an ephemeral rosé and her wine, called simply Pink, from Neusiedlersee in Austria, is almost blanc de noirs in colour. A blend of Blaufränkisch, Cabernet Sauvignon and Zweigelt, spontaneous fermentation and longer ageing on the lees, result in a wine with serious power, concentration of white nuts and wild berries, firm structure and long mouth-watering finish. **Johannes Zillinger**, also in Austria, plays with rosé with the definition of rosé with biodynamic viticulture, long skin contact for dark crimson rosés and ambient yeast. His

range of rosés even includes a solera rosé in amphora. Atypical but delicious, they highlight the extreme diversity possible within the rosé spectrum.

Altitude is a key element in an increasingly number of serious, high quality, rosés. Large diurnal variations and cooler climate allow for freshness and intensity in the fruit. In Rioja, **Bodega Ramón Bilbao**’s rosado is largely Garnacha with some white Viura. Pale and floral, with creamy silky structure, white stone fruit, red berries, fresh nuts and long citrus and stony minerality opening out with age to reveal riper red fruit. **Marqués de Murrieta**’s Premier rosado with 100% Carignan has an austerity and fresh acidity, with ripe white peach and creamy ripeness, the fragrant peach character becoming more evident with age.

Altitude gives quality to rosati from Mount Etna in Sicily. **Feudo Cavaliere**’s Millemetri rosé, made with the local variety Nerello Mascalese from 1000m high vineyards on the southern slopes of Mount Etna, is outstanding. Grapes, harvested mid to late October go through spontaneous fermentation and are released with a year’s age when its intense saline mineral structure opens up to rich charming fruit.

Many serious rosés use a number of the techniques described to create complexity. George Skouras of **Domaine Skouras** in Greece commented, in 2018, that he had “wanted to make a serious rosé wine. Something similar to our big reds or whites. We saw a lack of those wines in the international market of rosés and we worked hard on this project experimenting for three full years.’ Pepto uses fruit from high altitude, up to 1000m, to give fresh acidity and different varieties and vinification techniques. Agiorgitiko in acacia barrel contributes extra ripe red berry fruit, Syrah in tank gives structure, while Mavrofilero macerated in amphora gives floral notes and texture.

Soils, climate, varieties and winemaking combine to contribute extra weight and complexity, and sometimes play with the limits of what is a rosé. When used well, these contribute to an increasingly large range of serious rosé wines.

EAZ RESTAURANT AWARD

TAST in Manchester

Manchester recommended an award for TAST Restaurant in Manchester, which was presented on 14th February 2020 at the Branch AGM (see also page 45 for further details) in recognition of an outstanding Lunch held on 20th October 2019.

Chef de Cuisine:
Julià Castelló

Restaurant Manager:
Fernando Marques



EAZ AWARDS UPDATE

by Tricia Fletcher, EAZ Awards Officer

The IWFS and EAZ Awards have been updated and approved by Council and were implemented in Autumn 2019. This was done to bring the IWFS and Zone Awards into line with each other and acknowledge the service given and work done for the IWFS, the Zones and Branches by members, that was not previously covered.

The Awards given before Autumn 2019 are still valid and relevant and there is no need to change or alter them.

There are two main additions to the Awards.

Firstly, the EAZ Dedicated Service Medal and Diploma for personal, dedicated and significant service to a Branch, the EAZ or IWFS, in effect an award between the 10-year Dedicated Service Award and an André Simon Bronze Medal.

Secondly, the EAZ Award, a pin badge designed to be worn on the ribbon of an André Simon Bronze Medal by those who already hold an AS Bronze Medal and have continued to give years of dedicated and meritorious service to the Zone.

The application process for the updated and new awards is still the same as previously. Application is in writing by a member on behalf of the Branch, EAZ or Council and sent to the EAZ Awards Officer, together with the signatures of five members who support the application. Please include the printed full name as well as the signature and any offices held.

Details need to be given about the member being applied for and should include:

- the date they joined the IWFS (if known);
- any positions within the Branch, EAZ or Council with the relevant dates;
- any other special or meritorious service, such as significant

activities, organising significant events, festivals, setting up new Branches etc. Please give details and dates.

It can be difficult at times, such as in this present Coronavirus epidemic, to physically collect all the signatures required. In such circumstances the member responsible for the application can email the supporting signatories, requesting them to reply, acknowledging their support and giving their full name and position within the Branch, EAZ or IWFS.

Any member can be a supporting signatory including the member who is applying. The supporting replies with the signatory’s details, should be sent back to the applying member, who can then forward the supporting emails onto the EAZ Awards Officer.

The Application process for IWFS EAZ Restaurant Awards is still the same, and the application form can be found on the IWFS Website. This should be filled in and sent to the EAZ Awards Officer by post or email.

There does need to be supporting signatures from 50% or more of the IWFS members attending the Restaurant Event. We are pleased if guests enjoy the Event and Restaurant but the signatories do have to be IWFS members. Maybe our guests would like to join and become members too.

If the signatures required are difficult to collect, then please collect them by email and forward them as detailed for the members Awards application.

If you have any queries or comments please contact me and I will be happy to help. My contact details are email: tricia.fletcher@btinternet.com or you can call on landline 01204 884 934 or mobile +44 (0) 7711 39 66 89.

WELCOME HOME: A GRACE WRITTEN BY SIR ALAN PATRICK HERBERT

For André Simon and the International Wine and Food Society Victory dinner

Mimi Avery found this on a Welcome home Victory dinner menu of Avey’s and it was published in the IWFS magazine, vol 20, 1995 (a young Mimi is pictured with André Simon, right).

Thank God that we survive to see,
Our Glasses, full, our people free,
Wherever friends and freedom dwell,
We join their joy, and wish them well,
For all the sick, the sad, the dead,
Forget the glass and bow the head,
Then lift your hearts and glasses high,
For the love and laughter shall not die,
May the strong sun of Heaven shine,
In Gracious men and golden wine.

APH



Devonshire

OLD VIENNA, 16th MARCH 2020



Our dinner before the Government shut down all social gatherings for a few months was at the Old Vienna, Torquay. Werner Rott, the chef did not disappoint us with the food and his yodelling.

He did give us some extra surprise with the food – wild garlic with quail egg amuse bouche (unfortunately it was eaten before the picture was taken) and a tart apple sorbet to cleanse the palate.

To finish the evening Apricot Brandy to kill the Coronavirus.

The menu for the evening was:

- Canapés Served with a glass of Prosecco Serenello Extra Dry, Italy (The delicious aromas of apple and pear melt into a smooth and fresh wine on the palate)

STARTERS

- Carrot and roasted red peppers soup with croutons and basil oil; or
- Home cured and smoked duck breast – sliced- served with Waldorf salad and Cumberland sauce drizzle; or
- Lobster and Scallops ravioli – on wilted samphire and lobster bisque



- Served with *Gruner Veltliner Neuberg, Austria* (Awesome Austrian White! Dry, spicy, citrusy)

MAINS

- Local Venison Steak, cooked sous vide, served pink with sautéed exotic mushrooms, red wine jus and almond potato croquette; or
 - Roasted Rump of Lamb, cooked sous vide –parsnip and potato cake and parsnip crisps- rosemary and garlic jus; or
 - Roasted Monkfish with roasted vine tomatoes – saffron infused fish velouté wild garlic pesto and chorizo
- All mains served with a selection of vegetables

- Served with *Marlgraf Zweigelt, Neuberg, Austria* (Light, refreshing red similar to Beaujolais)

DESSERT

- Linzer torte – classic Austrian Dessert served warm with homemade vanilla ice cream; or
- Fresh Strawberries, Raspberries, Homemade (diabetic friendly) Sorbet topped with Prosecco and served with a Biscuit; or
- Devon cheese selection cheese biscuits

Coffee & Tea

Geeta Lloyd



Herefordshire and Monmouthshire

ST DAVID'S DAY LUNCH

As may have been observed before in this publication, the Herefordshire and Monmouthshire Branch is, in a sense, International in itself, striding the two countries of England and Wales. Since the Chairman and several members live in Wales it is not surprising that they decided St David's Day should be celebrated with a memorable lunch. So it was that 20 members and guests found themselves travelling on a bright sunny Spring-like day, and skirting the impressive floods of the River Wye, to the splendid late Georgian home of Angela Jefferson, a long established member of the Branch.

Entering the magnificent Entrance Hall, a glass of Crémant de Bourgogne, Blanc de Blanc, Méthode traditionnelle, Cave de Lugny was immediately placed into one's hand, delightfully fresh and not overpowered with the chardonnay grape, as can sometimes be the case. This was accompanied by delicious Black Mountains smoked salmon.

Lunch was then served, one table in the elegant dining room and the other in the glorious Conservatory, a later extension to the original house. We were served roast lamb and roast mutton, both raised from the Estate, which afforded an interesting contrast. Carving for the 20 diners was carried out swiftly and expertly by son Edward and I especially admired his skill, being a disastrous carver myself.

I found the lamb in particular outstanding and perfectly cooked and one of my charming companions observed that you would not find the equivalent even in the best restaurant. This was accompanied by a wonderful variety of vegetables, all grown one suspected on the Estate, including red cabbage and beetroot with anchovies, an original combination.

To accompany the main course was a choice of Saint Véran, Domaine Michel Chavet et Fils, 2016 and Côtes de Rhône, 'Les Bataliers', Clos de Caveau, 2017. I chose the red wine, which was delicate and very smooth and went perfectly with the lamb. A Rhône fan on our table said that it was one of the best that he had had.

For pudding, I enjoyed the Lemon polenta cake, which melted, together with almond cream, again an original choice, which



went beautifully with the lemon and did not overwhelm it. Others enjoyed the "Very Berry Crumble", mixed berries plus strawberries, berries and apple, with Welsh ice cream. The pudding wine was Moscatel de Setúbal, Alambre, José Maria da Fonseca, 2015.

At this point, a magnificent Welsh cheese board appeared, which – although a challenge after all the excellent things that had gone before – could not be ignored. This comprised Golden Cenarth, cows milk from West Wales, a soft "brie"; Dollas, also from West Wales, a Ewes milk "blue cheese"; and Hafod from Lampeter a "cheddar" from Ayrshire cows organic milk. Welsh cheeses are not as well known as they should be and all of these were in perfect condition. Cheese was followed by coffee and chocolates for those who were sufficiently resilient.

We all gathered in the Conservatory where the Chairman gave Angela an enormously well deserved vote of thanks and a bouquet of flowers. The First of March is traditionally a Feast Day and for those of us privileged to enjoy this lunch it most certainly was.

Michael Hoddinott



Helsinki

VIRTUAL MEETINGS

On **Saturday 9th May**, seventeen members attended a virtual wine tasting via Google meet. The wines were chosen from our monopoly's selection of half bottles:

- *La Nantaise Muscadet Sèvre et Maine 2018*
- *Markus Molitor Wehlener Klosterberg Kabinett 2015*
- *Speri Valpocella Classico 2019*
- *Ettore Germano Barolo Serralunga d'Alba 2013*

The idea was to find out how the taste of wines change with different foods:

- Pepper cheese
- Honey
- Fresh apple
- Brie
- Dark chocolate
- Dried apple
- Raw beef
- Cranberries
- Hard boiled egg
- Fresh cucumber

We noticed how wines tasted sweeter or dryer and tannins rounded depending on the food and how dark chocolate and especially cranberry killed them.

It was a delight to see all dear friends after a long lockdown and we continued the conversation long after the tasting was over.

On **Saturday 6th June**, nineteen members gathered again together via Google meet. This time the subject was IWFS on our private terraces.

MENU

- Toast Skagen
- *Pauly Bernkasteler Kardinalsberg Riesling Trocken 2016*

Gift of Membership

The gift of a year's IWFS membership to friends or relatives could be the ideal birthday, Christmas or 'thank you' present. When someone purchases such a gift they will receive a certificate and an IWFS membership application form to give to the recipient(s).

The cost is the same as current membership rates for the Europe Africa Zone of IWFS which are:



Joint	£58.00
Single	£42.00
Young Joint*	£29.00
Young Single*	£21.00
Partner of Life	
Single Member	£12.00

Some branches may have an additional branch membership fee which should be paid locally by the new member(s).

- Whitefish with new potatoes and onion-butter sauce
Albert Bichot Saint-Vérain 2017
- Bachelor's rhubarb pie with homemade ice cream
Chateau deLa Mulonniere a la faveur del'Automne Coteaux du Layon Beaulieu 2015

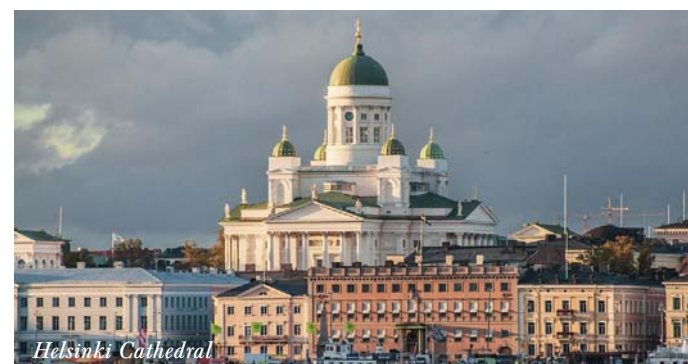
Recipes were sent in advance and wines were again chosen from our monopoly's selection of half bottles.

We all prepared the dishes in our own kitchens in advance and at six o'clock we were ready to start. The weather was unfortunately not suitable for eating outside so we were not really on terraces but it did not affect the atmosphere and the wines matched perfectly with the food.

It was almost as if we were really together and not only virtually. We kept on talking together for a few hours after we had finished eating.

We are going to arrange yet another virtual dinner probably in the end of August.

Ilkka Kiviharju



Membership can be redeemed for the calendar year in which the certificate was issued or the following year. If redeemed after 1st November in the year of issue it will cover membership up to the end of the following year.

Anyone wishing to purchase a gift of membership certificate should contact me, preferably by email eazmembership@outlook.com, giving their name, address, IWFS branch (if any), type of membership required and the name(s) of the intended recipient(s) and I will send them the required certificate.

Margaret Chippendale
EAZ Membership Registrar

* *Young members, both parties in the case of joint membership, should be under 36 on 1st January in the year the certificate is used.*

London

FINE DINING AT THE SAVILE CLUB

Members of London Branch were delighted to return to the Savile Club in early January for a post-celebratory season's formal dinner. We were pleased to be joined by some members of the Europe-Africa Committee.

The premises of this exclusive private members' Club consist of an elegant eighteenth century house in Brook Street in the heart of Mayfair. Many celebrated writers, artists, musicians, media people and scientists have been members: Thomas Hardy and WB Yeats, William Walton and Edward Elgar, John Cockcroft and Lord Rutherford, to name only a few.

In the late nineteenth century a well known firm of Parisian architects and decorators had transformed the house creating rooms in the French style of the time. We had the great pleasure of dining in the Drawing Room which had been part of a recent refurbishment.

Michael James is the Savile Club's Michelin-starred Chef.

The evening began sociably with a sparkling wine and canapés reception.

The first course was Black Ash panko bread crumbed, tempura courgette flower, finished with caramelised figs, pickled baby vegetables, feta cheese snow, honey and rapeseed oil dressing. It was accompanied by Burgundy – Macon Uchizy Mallory & Benjamin Talmard 2018, 13% (100% Chardonnay). This was a

well made wine with ripe citrus fruit flavours and minerality. The wine was kept on its lees before bottling and no oak was used.

The main course was Assiette of Lamb: Gremolata Fillet, Confit Belly, Herb Crusted Rack, pavé of root vegetable dauphinoise (turnip, swede, potato, celeriac, golden beetroot), wilted rocket, marrow bone and parmesan sauce. The matching wine was claret – Château le Gardera Bordeaux Superieur 2016, 13.5%; 17% Merlot, 30% Cabernet Sauvignon. Château Le Gardera has an excellent reputation for quality Bordeaux Superieur, using sustainable farming methods. The wine had been aged in oak for 12 months. It had a good tannic structure and was nicely balanced, showing tobacco, cedar and plum flavours.

Dessert was Vanilla Poached Pear, with orange syrup and cinnamon spiced shortbread, partnered with Sauternes Premier Cru Classé Château de Rayne Vigneau 2007, 80% Semillon and 20% Sauvignon Blanc, kindly donated by Richard Duncan. This honey-gold wine was delicious, aromas of lemon, peach and apricot and a balanced medium-bodied taste.

The dinner finished with coffee or tea and chocolates.

We had enjoyed a fine dinner in stylish surroundings: an interesting menu and splendid cuisine together with well-matched wines.

Rachel Burnett



London

FRENCH VERSUS SOUTH AFRICAN WINES, TASTED BLIND

On the 13th February at The Naval Club in Mayfair, French wines chosen by Jeffrey Benson competed against South African wines chosen by Bernard Lamb. The wines were tasted blind, in pairs of similar type, grape-variety proportions (except in the last round) and price. People voted on which of the pair was the better wine, and guessed which was the French one.

2015 Château de Tracy, Pouilly Fumé vs 2018 Tokara Reserve Collection Elgin Sauvignon Blanc. These wines were extremely similar in character and received equal numbers of votes, five each; six people put the French wine as French and three put it as South African.

2015 Chablis 1er Cru, Côte de Lechet vs 2017 Tokara Reserve Collection Stellenbosch Chardonnay, barrel fermented. This pair produced much puzzlement. One wine was deeper in colour and more heavily oaked. The other was a little more elegant; neither had the strong acidity which Chablis often has. The Stellenbosch wine, the less oaked one, won by six votes to three; five thought it was French and four put it as South African.

2014 La Réserve de Leoville Barton (second wine, 2nd growth, St Julian) vs 2015 Tokara Reserve Collection Stellenbosch Cabernet Sauvignon. Both were black-purple. I thought that the Tokara had the better fruity bouquet and flavour, with the Claret being more austere, but the voting was six to two for the Claret, with seven thinking it was French and two putting it as South African. The voting so far was one and a half rounds to each country.

2014 Château Batailly (5th growth, Pauillac; 70% Cabernet Sauvignon, 25% Merlot, 3% Cabernet Franc, 2% Petit Verdot) vs 2015 Tokara Director's Reserve (70% Cabernet Sauvignon, 15% Merlot, 15% together of Petit Verdot and Malbec). The Tokara was a slightly darker black-purple, with a good fruity bouquet and flavour, complex and long. It was my kind of wine, delicious. The Batailly had a typical Cabernet Sauvignon nose, plenty of tannins and fruit on the palate. The Tokara won by five votes to three; six put the French wine as French, with three thinking it was South African. All now depended on the last round, for red sweet wines.

2014 Gerard Bertrand, Banyuls (50% or more of Grenache Noir, plus other grape varieties) vs 2015 Rustenberg Red Muscadel, Western Cape. This was the only round with very noticeable differences between the wines. The Banyuls was darkish red-brown, with a very fruity flavour and taste, and a good length. The Muscatel was medium in colour, mostly orange, with a pleasant bouquet, sweet and balanced. Both wines were delicious. Voting was five to three for the French wine, with five putting it as French and four putting the Muscadel as French.

The overall result for best wine region was a tie, two and a half rounds each, the first tie in this series of Bernard's choice of New World wines against Jeffrey's choice of French.

Alternatively, one could score it as a win for Tokara against France by two and a half rounds to one and a half, and victory for France over Rustenberg by one round to nil. It was often difficult to guess which wine was French as they were well

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London

HOW CHAMPAGNES AND ENGLISH SPARKLING WINES MATURE

On 12th March at the Naval Club, we tasted old and young sparkling wines to see how they mature. All ten were made by the Champagne/Traditional Method of secondary fermentation in bottle. All wines are sparkling during the first fermentation, as in German Federweisser wines, but making sparkling wines from the secondary fermentation of added sugar in the final bottle was invented in England, as shown by a Royal Society paper by physician Christopher Merrett in 1662. In Homer's *The Odyssey* and *The Iliad*, written in about the eighth century BC, the ancient Greek warriors drank sparkling wines all the year round, not just after the grape harvest, but the method was not described. I gave a summary of modern sparkling-wine making, with a one-page handout and some photos, including one of disgorging the shaken-down yeast from a bottle of wine with its neck frozen, in my kitchen. Copies of a technical article from *The Grape Press*, 'Can ageing of sparkling wine be accelerated?' by Maximillien Bernardeau, were given to those who wanted it.

With the first modern English sparkling wine being released by Nyetimber in 1997, made by Sandy and Stuart Moss from Chicago, it is hard to find old English sparkling wines, but I had the 2000 and 2003 Nyetimber in my Eurocave, along with the 1983 Moët and the Jacquesson. I also had two 'middle-aged' English wines. Although for some types of wine 'vintage' implies coming from a very good year, for sparkling wines it just means that all the wine comes from one year, irrespective of quality. Non-vintage wines are ones where more than one year's wines have been blended together, typically with the bulk of the wine from one year and smaller amounts of reserve still wine from one or two, sometimes more, previous years. This can be done for uniformity of style, or to compensate for a bad year, or to add complexity and additional maturity before the final bottling. Bollinger is famous for having about 700,000 magnums of reserve wine. Some English sparklers use MV, for multiple or mixed vintages, rather than NV (non-vintage).

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matched in style. There were 28 correct guesses and 16 wrong ones as to which wine was French. The participants found the evening fascinating, with 10 really good wines to enjoy, and the fun of voting and guessing.

A bonus wine was also tasted blind, a rich, complex, dark brown, sweet wine. Jeffrey Benson said that the green tinge suggested Madeira, and others guessed Sherry with Pedro Ximénez as sweetener. It was labelled 'Sherry-Madeira blender 1990', so the guesses were sound as to style but not ingredients. It was made by Dr John Harrison (1925–2010), an industrial chemist and a world expert on formulations of old British beers, as well as a home-wine and home-beer maker on a heroic scale. The ingredients for six gallons of this wine were raisins, dried figs, dried apricots, pitted dates, dried bananas, sultanas, M.F.P. (?), Sherry concentrate and brown sugar. The six



As I emphasised, treatments and maturing before bottling are important as well as ageing on the lees in bottle. In Champagne the minimal time for ageing on lees in the bottle was changed in 1997 from nine to 12 months. Most sparkling wines have longer than that, with three years being typical for quality wines,

gallons were heated to 110°F (43°C) for three months for maderisation, for the Madeira style. What dedication!

The results of previous Jeffrey/Bernard challenges were: red Burgundy 1, New World Pinot Noir 4; white Burgundy 2½, New World Chardonnay 3½; Champagnes 1, English sparkling wines 4; French wines (1 round sparkling, 5 rounds still) 4, English wines 2; Bordeaux reds 3, Virginia reds 2; French wines 0, Australian wines 5. Cumulative totals, including this event, French wines 14 rounds, New World 23. Earlier, Carole Goldberg's choice of commercial wines 3½, Bernard and friends' home-made wines (not price matched) 3½.

Brenda Lamb provided a much appreciated supper of smoked salmon, pâté, turkey, ham, salad, three cheeses and two puddings.

Bernard Lamb

but that adds to costs and the price. The 2000 Nyetimber label said that the wine had been aged for a minimum of five years on the lees, but that statement had been dropped by the 2003. *Food & Wine* March 2020, had an interesting article by Simon Field MW, 'Champagne from the Deep', about some modern Champagne houses such as Drappier producing some wines matured under the sea. Field states that darkness and stability of temperature are ideal under the sea, but does not say what the undersea temperatures are. As the rates of chemical reactions, including those involved in wine maturation and yeast autolysis, vary greatly with temperature the water temperature, compared to that in Champagne cellars, is far more critical than the under-sea geology which he discusses.

Champagnes

Moët et Chandon 1983 Brut Impérial. Épernay. 12.5%. Light gold. No bubbles, but some pétillance in the mouth. Mature bouquet but not oxidised. Some elegance, complexity and a pleasant flavour, difficult to describe. My quality score out of ten, 7 (I am a high scorer).

Jacquesson & Fils. Blanc de Blancs Champagne NV but probably 25 to 30 years old. Dizzy, Épernay. A slightly darker gold. No bubbles but slightly pétillant in the mouth. It tasted past its best, but was still drinkable. Score, 6/10.

Bollinger Special Cuvée Brut (NV). 12%. 2 half-bottles. Light gold. A fair mousse of small bubbles. Aromatic bouquet with some bread/yeasty notes. Good flavour and lively. Score, 8/10.

Pol Roger Cuvée de Réserve Pure Extra Brut (non-vintage, zero dosage). Épernay. 12.5%. Equal parts of Chardonnay, Pinot Noir and Pinot Meunier. Reserved for Great Britain. Light gold. Very small bubbles. Good fruity bouquet and flavour. Very dry. Score, 8/10.

English Sparkling Wines

Nyetimber Blanc de Blancs Brut. 2000. 12%. West Sussex. Chardonnay. Mid-gold. No bubbles but some pétillance in the mouth. Mature bouquet. Good fruit and excellent length. Score, 8/10.



Nyetimber Classic Cuvée Brut. 2003 (a hot year). 12%. West Sussex. Chardonnay, Pinot Noir, Pinot Meunier. Light gold. A few small bubbles. Fair bouquet and good flavour. Excellent length. Generally agreed to be the best wines so far. Score, 9/10.

Camel Valley Pinot Noir Brut 2010. Bodmin, Cornwall. 12.5%. Light gold. Lots of very small bubbles, and lots of fizz in the mouth. Good fresh bouquet. Excellent flavour and length. Score, 9/10.

Ridgeview Bloomsbury Brut 2013. Ditchling, East Sussex. 12%. 59% Chardonnay, 27% Pinot Noir, 14% Pinot Meunier. Light to mid-gold. Good bubbles and the pressure blew out the cork when the muselet was released. Good fruit bouquet with some maturity noticeable. Elegant. Delicious taste and long. Score, 9/10.

Ridgeview Bloomsbury Brut NV. Ditchling, East Sussex. 12%. Chardonnay, Pinot Noir, Pinot Meunier. Lighter gold. Fizzy initially but that did not last. Fair bouquet and flavour. Fresh. Good length. Score, 8/10.

Hattingley Valley Classic Reserve (NV, blend of several vintages). Hampshire. 12%. 50% Chardonnay, 30% Pinot Noir, 19% Pinot Meunier, 1% Pinot Gris. Light gold. Good mousse. Fresh and pleasant bouquet. Excellent fruity flavours. Great length. Some detectable sugar from the dosage. Score, 9/10.

We learnt that old Champagnes and sparkling wines lose their fizz but can stay drinkable with pleasure as still wines with some complexity. Although these old ones had lost carbon dioxide through their corks, not enough oxygen had entered to have much effect at the ages tested. Even older ones can be much browner, with some oxidation/maderisation.

Brenda Lamb provided a cold supper of beef, ham, duck pâté, smoked salmon, salad, four English cheeses and three puddings. Supper wines were Luis Felipe Edwards Reserve 2018 Viognier, Beefsteak Club Mendoza Malbec (NV) and Barefoot Merlot (NV) from California. Members and guests socialised very well throughout the evening.

Dr Bernard Lamb, organiser and speaker

London

AN INTRODUCTION TO CHINESE WINES



An Introduction to Chinese wines for London Branch

"If you see in your wine the reflection of a person not in your range of vision, don't drink it." (Chinese proverb.)

Some fortunate members of IWFS London Branch had an unusual opportunity to learn about a range of Chinese wines, from Christopher Davenport-Jones at his South London home. He had bought the wine at auction, and selected a cross-section of styles and grape varieties for our entertainment and edification.

The label details did not necessarily indicate grapes, vintage or alcohol strength, and anyway were usually in Chinese. Most of the wines we tasted are not currently exported to the UK, so we did not know what they would cost. As so little information was available about them, we were therefore untrammelled in tasting by any preconceptions from our experience – an interesting and novel exercise!

The background

China is the fifth largest consumer of wine in the world, mainly red (both domestic and imported), and one of the largest producers, its growth largely taking place since the 1980s, above all in the last decade.

Wine is produced in several different regions in China, at various altitudes, on differing terroirs and in diverse climates, from around thirty different grapes, both traditional and some local. Cabernet Sauvignon is the most widely planted.

Massive investment is being made in wineries, international as well as Chinese. Wine companies, leading winemakers and other consultants from abroad are being brought in to help develop the industry.

The wines

Our first three wines were Chardonnays from the Ningxia region in the north of China, the second largest wine region, which has

been expanding its quality wine production in the last twenty-five years or so.

Most wine growing is in a valley of the Yellow River from north to south, parallel to the Helan mountain range, the vineyards being at a high altitude. The climate is continental with hot sun by day and cool nights. The growing season is short. In the long cold winters with temperatures which can reach minus 30°C, the vines are protected by being buried underground.

The region is sometimes said to be the 'Bordeaux of the East' for its (very broadly) similar climate generally, sunshine and terroir (although the shorter growing season is perhaps not really ideal for late-ripening Cabernet Sauvignon). Nearly ninety chateaux have already been established here, and the number is growing.

The following three wineries have all been winning awards at wine competitions – in China, Hong Kong and internationally.

Chateau Hedong 2016 Chardonnay, Ningxia, 13.5%

The owner of Chateau Hedong, Gong Jie, bought it as an investment in 2010. Its wines have been growing in reputation since.

This straw yellow wine was quite acceptable. Its nose was almost scented, possibly from the type of oak used. It was light bodied, but with a good level of acidity.

Jade Vintage Winery 2017 Chardonnay, Ningxia, 12.8%

The owner of this vineyard, previously an economist, banker and wine retailer, bought it seven years ago. Her aim is to make wine with a Chinese character.

We had different opinions about this wine. Although younger than the previous wine, it tasted older, as if it were on the verge of oxidising, and somewhat bland.

Legacy Peak 2017 Chardonnay, Helan Mountain, Ningxia, 13.5%

The owner of this estate was originally an architect. His father planted Cabernet and Merlot vines in 1997, which makes them unusually old in China.

Most of us did not find this particular wine enjoyable. Its nose was pineapple and its taste was of ripe tropical fruits. There was some acidity. It was a dry wine, but with rather unwelcome overtones of sweetness.

Next we tried a rosé wine from Ningxia, and a late harvest sweet wine from the Shandong region.

Helan Mountain Rosé 2017, Ningxia

This winery was established in 1998. In 2005, it became a wholly-owned subsidiary of Pernod Ricard. Its brand was re-launched in 2016 in order to increase its market share. It also wins numbers of awards.

This wine was a pretty pink colour, but tasted extraordinarily sweet.

Late Harvest Sweet Wine Changyu Pioneer Wines, Shandong
Shandong Province is the largest wine producing region. The Changyu Pioneer Wines company, with wineries in this region and in others, is the oldest and largest wine producer in China, dating from 1892. It exports wines to Europe. At first, grapes brought from the United States, and subsequently from Europe, were not successful and most did not survive. The solution was to graft Chinese plants on to the imported vines. This produced vines resistant to insects, disease and the cold.

Italian Riesling and Chardonnay white grapes are grown here. However, for ice wine, the primary grape variety is Vidal. It is made by traditional methods.

This wine was delicious.



The next four wines we tasted were from the remote Xinjiang region in the north west, far from the ocean and surrounded by high mountains. This is the largest geographical region for wine production in China. Its area is three times larger than France, but includes a vast plain, the Taklamakan Desert – the world's second largest shifting sands desert - and the Tourfan Depression - the fourth lowest point in the world. The climate varies from north to south of the region, but generally there is little rain, and there can be strong winds, with hot summers and cold winters.. However, the conditions of low rainfall and long summer sunshine are good for fruit production, especially for grapes (and melons). Here also, vines are buried every winter to protect them from the cold.

Guofeng Cabernet Sauvignon 2016 Ruitaiqinglin, Xinjiang

This wine was clear through the glass, dry and very sharp. We had different views on whether we enjoyed this. We did agree that it might get better later!

Chateau Silk Road 5-star, Xinjiang, 13%

This was an excellent Cabernet Sauvignon, dry with noticeable cherry and chocolate flavours, and smooth tannins.

Chateau Changyu Baron Balboa, Balboa Family Merlot, Xinjiang, 13.5%

Chateau Changyu Baron Balboa, another of the Changyu wineries, is situated by the Manas River on the northern slope of the Tiansha Mountain, with gravel soils.

The chateau is built in the style of a very large, extremely imposing French fairy-tale castle with extensive landscaped gardens. Like other recently built chateaux by Chinese wineries inspired by French styles, it has various attractions to welcome tourists. "Balboa" is named after Changyu's first winemaker, who came from Belgium at the turn of the 19th/20th centuries.

The wine was mainly Merlot with soft plum fruit flavours with a small proportion of Vingang, one of the lesser known local

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London

A TASTING OF FINE RED BURGUNDY

This terrific tasting was held by IWFS London Branch, thanks to the generous donation of wine from Richard Jackson's cellar. Jeffrey Benson led the tasting to our great benefit.

All the wines were from leading Burgundy producers, family-owned domaines with small production, the majority being either

Pommard or Vosne Romaneé. They were all classic pure Burgundy style and could be described as harmonious and elegant. We compared the vintages from 2006 to 2010, with two wines from each year. Jeffrey had arranged the order from older to younger, because the younger wines had more tannin, and we would not have appreciated the softer wines the other way round.



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grapes, and it was noticeably oaked. We preferred the previous wine.

XinJiang Ruitaiqinglin, Guofei Oak Barrels, 2016 Xinjiang, 16%
100% Cabernet Sauvignon, this wine won a Gold Decanter World Wine Award in 2018. A very likeable Bordeaux-style wine, although with a higher alcohol level. The first taste gave a grip at the back of the throat. Aromas were of oak and dried fruits. Chocolate and liquorice were revealed on the palate.

Finally we tasted two very good wines from traditional grape varieties.

Chateau Changyu Moser Cabernet Sauvignon 2016, Ningxia, 15%

The Austrian winemaker Lenz Moser has been involved with this winery since 2013. The brand "Chateau Changyu Moser XV" has been launched, and wines are being exported. A few wines

from Chateau Changyu Moser XV are available in England from Berry Bros. & Rudd, and, for the trade only, from Bibendum.

This wine's aroma was of blackcurrant and blackberries with a hint of butterscotch. This was a lovely full-bodied wine, with fine tannins.

Chateau Hedong Syrah 2015, Ningxia, 14%

This was from the same winery as the first wine we had tasted. This had an interesting nose, including cooked fruit, spices, vanilla oak. One description was of a cross between Bordeaux and port.

Following the tasting, we were served a delicious supper. Many thanks to Christopher Davenport-Jones for such an interesting introduction to Chinese wines and an informative learning experience,

Rachel Burnett

Treat the price I have given with scepticism as being no better than a very approximate guess, were the wines to be obtainable now in the UK.

2006

Domaine Dujac, Clos de la Roche, Grand Cru, possibly about £450 ex-taxes

This estate has been owned by the Seysses family since the late 1960s. They started to work organically in 2001, introducing biodynamic techniques and gradually extending this approach to the whole domaine by 2008. The Clos de la Roche holding is in Moray Saint-Denis within the Côte de Nuits.

Jeremy Seysses, co-proprietor, who joined his father Jacques, the founder, in 1998, has described Morey wines as spicy – musk, nutmeg and cinnamon - and having generosity and rusticity, warm-hearted with less silky tannins than further south.

Domaine de la Romanée Conti, Romanée St Vivant, Grand Cru, possibly about £2,000 to £2,500 ex taxes

This wine is acknowledged as top of the range. It was deep coloured, and had tremendous fruit and tannin. It was drinking very well and had longevity.

2007

Domaine Jean Grivot, Clos de Vougeot, Grand Cru, possibly about £120 ex taxes

Clos de Vougeot is the largest Grand Cru site in the Côte de Nuits. It is divided into 100 different parcels owned by more than 80 different producers, and the wines vary in character and quality. However, the domaine Jean Grivot is regarded as one of the best. Étienne Grivot took over the domaine from his father in 1990. (It is now run by his daughter Mathilde.)

The average vine age is forty years. The proportion of new oak is between a third to a half, depending on the vintage. The wines are produced by organic methods, although not certificated as such. They are bottled without fining or filtration. Etienne Grivot has described his Clos de Vougeot as a wine with power and energy. He focused on a concentrated style made to age.

We appreciated this extremely fine well-made wine, a lovely red-purple colour. still young with the fruit closed on the nose, and much tannin in evidence. It was old style ‘farmyard’ taste, smooth and full-bodied, with a long finish. We considered that it would will open up and improve in finesse over the next two or three years. Decant two hours before.

Domaine Sylvain Cathiard, Vosne Romanée, Aux Malconsorts, 1er Cru, 13%, possibly about £570 ex taxes

This is a cult grower, all the wines sought after for quality, and also because the sites and therefore production are very small. Most of the vines are over forty years old. This vineyard is to the left of the celebrated La Tâche Grand Cru. In 2007 the domaine was run by Sylvain Cathiard, the grandson of the founder. His son Sebastien has since taken over. The wines are bottled without fining or filtration, 100% new oak.

This wine was ready to drink. It had very ripe, well balanced fruit; it was slightly sweeter than the previous wine, with more pronounced fruit and softer tannins.

2008

Two more wines from Sylvain Cathiard, both wonderful.

Domaine Sylvain Cathiard, Vosne Romanée, possibly about £120 ex taxes

This was a very good colour and tasting very well. A beautiful wine.

Domaine Sylvain Cathiard, Vosne Romanée, Aux Reignots, 1er Cru, possibly about £520 ex taxes

We found the quality of this wine to be exceptional. It had a more powerful aroma and better body than the last wine, and will last longer. The fruits and tannins were beautifully balanced, and the wine had great length. Decant for 40 minutes to an hour beforehand.

2009

General advice for 2009 Burgundies is that they became ready to enjoy relatively early, and this showed in the following two wines.

Domaine Jean Grivot, Vosne Romanée, Les Beaux Monts, 1er Cru, possibly about £160 ex taxes

This is ready to drink, with a strong farmyard earthy nose. On the palate a lot of tannin showing - but missing good fruit back up.

Sylvain Cathiard, Vosne Romanée, Aux Reignots, 1er Cru, possibly about £350 ex taxes

This is also very drinkable. It did not need decanting now. Great fruit.

2010

Domaine de Montille, Pommard, Les Rugiens-Bas, 1er Cru, possibly about £520 ex taxes

The “Les Rugiens” area comprises “Les Rugiens Hauts” and “Les Rugiens-Bas”, the latter producing better quality. The clay in the terroir is red from iron oxide, said to enhance the redness of the wine and give it a distinctive flavour. Hubert de Monthille acquired the domaine to add to the holdings he had inherited in 1951. His son Etienne joined him, and then took over. The wines are organically produced and certified. This is another sought after wine. It was very well made. It had a concentrated vegetal nose and was well balanced, with good length.

Domaine Sylvain Cathiard, Vosne Romanée, possibly about £150 ex taxes

This wine was closed and appeared very young. At present the tannins were overpowering the fruit – we wondered whether there would be a better balance given more time?

Please bear in mind that any apparently critical remarks are in the context of comparing wines all of top quality and reputation, and how the particular bottle tasted on this evening!

This was a marvellous opportunity to taste some spectacular wines at their peak and our gratitude to Richard Jackson for sharing them with us.

Rachel Burnett

Manchester

AGM AND LUNCH



On Thursday 13th February 2020 IW&FS Manchester Branch held their AGM and lunch at Restaurant Tast Ciuna Catalana in King Street, Manchester. We had decided to have the AGM at lunchtime for a change to measure its popularity, and 52 members came along, our best number in three years. The meeting went according to plan.

An IW&FS Restaurant Award was presented by Chairman, Ronnie Costello, to Chef Julià Castelló for an excellent meal we had enjoyed in October 2019.

Our AGM menu had been prepared by Executive Chef, Paco Perez and the cooking was done by Julia.

Our first course was Bloody Mary Oyster and Croquettes of Chicken. Well received, some would have liked a little more vodka with the oyster – surprise surprise!

The second course Ou 64 was absolutely delightful, a fried egg, cream of mushroom, potato soufflé and mushroom foam, shared between two. A lovely succulent dish.

The third Course, Suquet de Rap – Monkfish Stew with Potatoes and Mussels, accompanied by toasted Catalan Sourdough – another delightful dish again shared between two. The fish and mussels were fresh and tasty, and complemented by the toasted sourdough.

We were then treated to two shared main dishes. The first one, a Catalan rice dish, with 40-day aged beef sirloin. The beef was tender and succulent, a joy to eat.

The second one – lamb shoulder, with roast potatoes, garlic mayo, lamb demi-glace and garlic crisps – another delight. The lamb was tender and beautifully cooked and melted in the mouth with the accompaniments.

The dessert was Xuixo de Crema, puff pastry filled with custard, rubbed in sugar and covered with dark chocolate. Excellent. His recipe goes back five generations in the family.

An outstanding meal enjoyed by all those present. Fernando and his team are to be congratulated for the wonderful service we received throughout the event.

The wines served were:

Aperitif: *Cava Giro*

White: *Pares Balta, Penedes*

Red: *El Seynal, Terra Alta*

Cava Giro, a pleasant Cava, with reasonable mousse. Perhaps not quite as good as the Cava on our previous visit from the same stable. We had copious amounts of white and red wine served throughout the meal. The white *Pares Balta* was a mixture of Maccabeo and Xarello, and was fruity with zest, and a medium long finish. The red *El Seynal* was a mixture of Terra Alta. Grenache and Carignan. This was a well balanced wine with blackberry fruit and a medium long finish.

Both wines complemented the food and were pleasantly received. As a surprise, we had a pudding wine from Coteaux du Layon, which finished the meal to the satisfaction of most of the members.

Bob Lloyd



Moscow

DISTANCE IS NOT A HINDRANCE



The spread of Covid-19 Coronavirus throughout the world and its consequences dealt a severe blow not only to the restaurant industry, but also to the moral and psychological state of members of the IW&FS Moscow (National) Branch. Almost all members of the Branch are keeping isolation in Moscow and other Russian cities, and the Internet has become the only way of communication. Therefore, the long-term Chairman of our Branch Leonid Gelibterman decided to organise our communication at a virtual common table.

By agreement with a long-time partner of the Branch, the Restaurant House 'Buloshnaya' (Moscow), we created an original menu with specially selected wines. Members of the Moscow (National) Branch and guests living in Moscow and the Moscow Region were offered to make a menu choice.

At the day of the first dinner, the restaurant provided safe cooking of the dishes and their delivery to the houses of the dinner participants. Some members of the Branch from other cities have cooked similar dishes at home. The online broadcast of the dinner, conducted by our Chairman Leonid Gelibterman, began at the appointed time. We discussed dishes, talked about the history of their ingredients and tasted wines.

The dinner scenario included video greetings and live broadcasts from different cities of Russia and countries of the world, in particular, Mr Gelibterman conveyed the best wishes from the IW&FS to all and demonstrated the IW&FS promo video.

The guests took a format of the online gastronomic dinner with great interest and enthusiasm. As a result, on May 20, 2020, the third such online dinner was held. At the moment, the online dinners were attended by members of the Moscow (National) Branch and other guests from more than 30 big cities and small towns of Russia, from Kaliningrad, located on the border with

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Sussex

THE SLOOP INN, SCAYNES HILL



A jovial evening was had by the members of the Sussex Branch at the Sloop Inn at Scaynes Hill. The original building was built in 1833 but with time it is now is a mixture of Georgian and

Victorian architecture and its name is derived from a type of boat – a sloop – that was used to transport bricks down the canal between Lewes and Balcombe.

The Inn has been in the hands of Chef/proprietor, Gary Morris, and his wife Nicky since 2013 and they pride themselves on their quality of cooking using locally sourced ingredients.

The menu gave us a choice of three dishes for each course and included an entrée of Venison Carpaccio, followed by a main course of Rosemary Crusted Rack of Lamb, with mini Shepherd's Pie. These were followed by a dessert of Raspberry Mille Feuille. The accompanying wines were Leaping Hound Chenin Blanc Viognier, from the Western Cape, South Africa and a Portal Duoro Tinto, Duoro, Portugal.

It was a very successful evening with delicious food, good service with very cordial and welcoming staff. We look forward to returning in the future.

Julie Wagg

➔ *continued from page 46*

the European Union, to Vladivostok on the border with Japan, as well as the guests from about 40 countries of the world (Argentina, Armenia, Australia, Austria, Belarus, Belgium, Bulgaria, Cambodia, Chile, Columbia, Croatia, Cyprus, Czech Republic, Estonia, France, Germany, Greece, Iceland, India, Israel, Italy, Japan, Kazakhstan, Latvia, Lithuania, Mexico, Moldova, the Netherlands, Peru, Poland, Portugal, Spain, Switzerland, Ukraine, the United Kingdom, the United States of America, Uruguay and Uzbekistan).

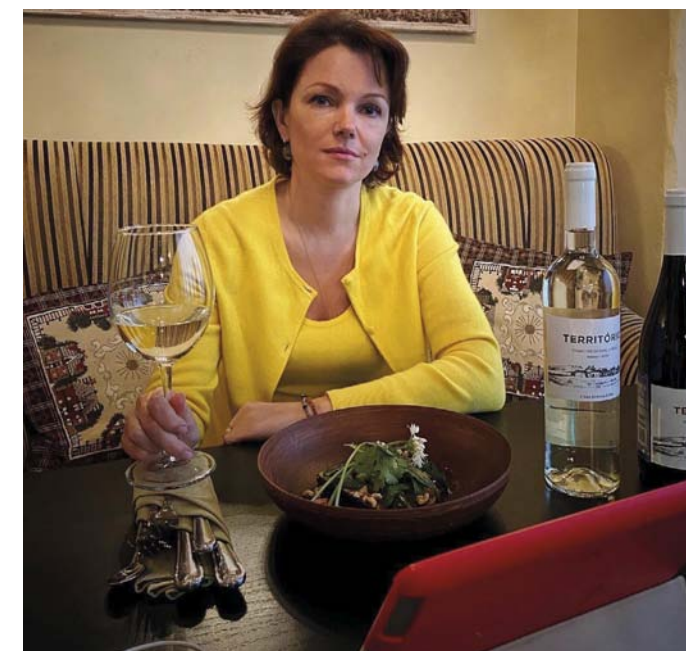
It seems that the motto of the online dinners 'Distance is not a hindrance' suits many people, and the dinners themselves allow us


to feel our human solidarity and support to each other, and also transmit a charge of positive energy that we all need so much now.

Members of the IW&FS who wish to join our project can ask for details of the online dinner that will be held on 16th June 2020 (at 7pm, Moscow time) by e-mail: info@icwag.ru

Marina Solopova,

Coordinator of the international gastronomic online dinners of the Moscow (National) Branch IW&FS 'Distance is not a hindrance'





HISTORY *on the* MENU



ENTRÉES

Oysters, natural (Sydney Rock)
Iced asparagus with hollandaise sauce
Duck pate

RELEVÉS

Game pies
Veal tongue
Chicken a la Provence
Truffled vol au vent

ENTREMETS

Custard Tartlets
Victoria sponge

DESSERT

Fruit and cheese, muscatels

WINES

Bloodwood Shirac 2009
Bloodwood Shiraz 2010
Bloodwood Chardonnay 2012
Bell River Reserve Tawny Port

