



# *Food & Wine*

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

Issue 155

March 2026

**VINTAGE REPORTS: EUROPE**

**THE JUDGEMENT OF PARIS +50**

**BRANCH REPORTS**

# Chairman's message



By the time you read this, it will be far too late to wish you a Happy New Year. Nonetheless, let's hope that it is a happy and peaceful one for us all. There is certainly much to be looking forward to, building on the efforts of the new Exco team who have met on a monthly basis since being elected in September.

Some highlights are as follows:

- The launch of 'Glass Class' – a new wine training video series. Thanks to the generosity of the sponsors of the Young Chef Competition (more on which later), Phillip Kim has curated a five-part video training series for anyone who wants to gain a grounding in the basics of wine appreciation. The series is particularly aimed at students at catering colleges, who for the most part currently receive negligible wine education as part of their studies. It will also appeal to anyone else who feels baffled by wine and the jargon that surrounds it. Presented by our own Mimi Avery, along with Vito Bowen, Retail Manager at Waud Handford Wines, the series will be accessible on [www.iwfsea.org](http://www.iwfsea.org) by any member, along with participants in the Young Chef Competition.

- A new partnership for the Region with leading London wine merchant Waud Handford Wines ('Wauds'). IWFS Europe Africa members will receive a 10% discount on all purchases made via [www.waudhandfordwines.com](http://www.waudhandfordwines.com) using a dedicated code. This will enable branches to profit from Wauds' broad ranges at competitive prices. Wauds have also worked with us to develop the Glass Class series, and will be supporting the Judgement of Paris + 50 events. While the partnership will primarily benefit UK members and branches, we will be looking to develop other partnerships throughout the Region.
- Expanded usefulness of the Marketing website. We are extending the scope of the [www.iwfsea.org](http://www.iwfsea.org) website to include features on the Young Chef Competition, videos including Pinot Noir, Tea, the Glass Class series, and a page on Judgement of Paris. We are also working on an exciting upgrade to the site that will allow anyone to join the Society directly with membership confirmed instantly on computers and mobile phones.
- The Judgement of Paris + 50 event series in May promises to be one of the most ambitious events we have ever attempted. Branches across the world are planning to host events during the week running up to the anniversary on 24th May, when we will announce the IWFS members' updated Judgement. There's still time to take part and organise an event – large or small, formal or relaxed – it's a chance to be part of something truly global and special. It's also a major opportunity for us to attract attention and we will be publicising the event through the press and social media. Many of the events will be at larger venues and offer the chance to invite non-members to experience what we offer. Please contact me if you'd like to discuss.
- This year's Young Chef Competition is just getting underway with heats being judged by IWFS members and local chefs.

*continued on page 3* ➔

Cover photo: Storage Jar with the Judgment of Paris (Greek, Athens, c. 360 BC) Paris, prince of Troy, surrounded by Aphrodite, Athena and Hera.

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 131 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](http://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](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/International_Wine_and_Food_Society)



# Message from the Global Chairman



After six years, I stepped down from my role as Chair of IWFS Europe Africa at the Europe Africa AGM in Bristol in September 2025. As you know, Stephen Harrison took over the role of Chair of IWFS Europe Africa. The restructured Exco has been streamlined into six Committees and is working hard to implement the strategy to secure IWFS Europe Africa during the second quarter of the 21st Century. Details of the strategy can be viewed on the iwfs.org website

My thanks to all members of Exco who served and supported me as Chair of Exco and IWFS Europe Africa. They should have been published in the last issue of F&W but a gremlin prevented their publication. Most of the Exco members will continue to support the new Exco and its Committees, but more members are needed to make things happen in the implementation of the strategy as well as to help branches to thrive. Think about how you can contribute your skills and experience to growing our Society, the oldest and premier international Food & Wine Society in the world.

Reflecting on my time as Chair, my one disappointment is that we have together been unable to increase our membership.

➔ *continued from page 2*

This is the fifth iteration of the highly successful competition and has attracted more entries than ever, with 12 colleges now taking part. We have secured record levels of sponsorship from The Savoy Educational Trust, Robinsons Wines, and Saga Cruises, all of whom recognise the difference that the competition makes to young chefs in their development. The Awards Lunch takes place on Wednesday 20th May at Cheshire College South and West Crewe Campus and it would be wonderful to see as many members there as possible to join the celebration.

Finally, I hope that you have been able to listen to the episode of the highly successful Wine Blast podcast featuring Essi Avellan MW discussing the *Sparkling Wines of the World* Monograph with Masters of Wine Susie Barrie and Peter

There are two main reasons: i) the closure of a few branches, usually because of a lack of successors to take over from long-standing members of branch committees; ii) reducing branch numbers in many, but not all branches, as our membership continues to age, and probably also affected by the hiatus of Covid. During Covid, it became clear that something had to be done to attract new membership and create new branches.

Branches remain the core of our Society, and I hope that you will all continue to make efforts to recruit friends and family to join the Society with its fundamental purpose of "good food and good wine in the Company of friends, both old and new".

We have had some great 'showcase' international festivals, which were not only fun and educational, but are also a prop to the financial well-being of IWFS Europe Africa enabling smaller increases in membership fees and raising funds for future investment.

During my stint as Chair our AGMs have been organised by different branches with discussions during the Members' Forum contributing to the strategy. I am also pleased that more branches are now organising joint events or opening their branch events to members of other branches, including those held in special locations such as Windsor Castle, Harewood House and Chequers.

In November, I took over the role of Chair of Council for a two-year term, and the 'Chain of Office' was bestowed (hung round my neck!) on me in Kuala Lumpur during the Malaysian festival, during which time I hope to reinforce the international aspects of our Society. I also intend to attend events around Europe Africa and elsewhere. I will continue to be a member of Exco with a very specific role and as a Director of IWFS Europe Africa.

Thank you all for your support over the last twelve years during my period of office first as Treasurer and then as Chair.

*John Nicholas*

Chair, IWFS International Council of Management (Council)

Richards. The episode also features Mimi Avery giving an overview of how the Society uses sparkling wine and her personal view of the benefits of being part of the IWFS. If you haven't had a chance to listen yet, the link is <https://susieandpeter.com/podcast-episodes/season-seven/top-of-the-pops-classic-fizz-beyond-champagne/>. Thanks to our Marketing Lead Clare Gill, the episode triggered over 13,000 Instagram views, and led to the sale of 90 monographs... we are determined to shed our 'best kept secret' label and boldly make the case for becoming a member of our wonderful Society!

With best wishes

*Stephen Harrison*

# Contents

## DID YOU KNOW?

- Pheasants are native to Asia and have been introduced to other parts of the world.
- It's thought they first came to the British Isles with the Romans, but became naturalised here when the Normans brought them to these shores during the 11th century.
- Pheasant shoots became popular during the 19th century.
- Males have vibrant plumage and long tails, while females are sandy brown. Females build nests on the ground in tall vegetation and lay clutches of seven to 15 eggs.
- Like all game birds, pheasants have a varied, foraged diet and get plenty of exercise, so pheasant meat is lower in fat than chicken.

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- It also has more protein, iron, zinc, and selenium than chicken.
- The average pheasant yields two breast fillets of around 125g each, along with the legs.
- Pheasant season in the UK runs from October to February.

*Simon and Kate King, Restaurant 1861, Cross Ash, Monmouthshire*

## PUBLICATION DATES

- **Food & Wine Online (e-newsletter) Issue 26**  
April issue, deadline for copy from contributor 31st March 2026. Copy for the online e-newsletter to [sec@iwfs.org](mailto:sec@iwfs.org)
- **Food & Wine (printed) Issue 156**  
July issue, deadline for copy from contributors 31st May 2026. Copy for printed magazine to [editor.eaz@iwfs.org](mailto:editor.eaz@iwfs.org)

*Please send your photographs and text file separately.*

Please send your photographs separately from the text file. Advance notice of your events at which members of other branches would be welcome can also be included, along with booking details. As always, we invite your event reports, articles and pictures.



## From the Editor

We are just entering the second quarter of 2026 – it's about six months since the accession of Stephen Harrison to the chair of EAZ. He succeeded John Nicholas who, having completed his term in the chair, was elevated to the Chairmanship of Council. Building on the initiatives of the last several years, 2026 will see the latest edition of the Young Chef of the Year Competition – predominantly featuring the scholarship of catering students in our northern branch areas and generously supported by representatives from the hospitality and tourism industries and catering colleges.

In May we are presenting a reimagined wine tasting – an EA regional reawakening of a competition first staged in France 50 years ago to compare and contrast international wines. The Paris Wine Tasting of 1976, also known as the Judgment of Paris, was a wine competition to commemorate the United States Bicentennial, organised in Paris, France, on 24th May 1976 by Steven Spurrier, a British wine merchant, and his American colleague, Patricia Gallagher, in which French oenophiles participated in two blind tasting comparisons: one of top-quality Chardonnays and another of red wines (Bordeaux wines from France and Cabernet Sauvignon wines from California). More information on these major events, how individual members and branches can support and be involved with them, is covered in features by the Event Directors in later pages.

In each edition of *Food & Wine* we publish reports from branches on their events – their experiences in restaurants and their favourite 'must return to' venues. Beyond branch activities there must surely be experiences of individual members, families and their friends that deserve to be broadcast more widely. We would be delighted to receive reviews, recommendations, suggestions and articles from readers – 250 to 1,000 words with pictures if possible: in this way we may introduce otherwise undiscovered gastronomic jewels to our broader membership and assess them as candidates for IWFS Excellence Awards.

*Peter McGahey*  
Editor

## Food & Wine

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### YOUNG CHEF AWARDS LUNCH

Cheshire College South, Crewe  
20th May 2026

The IWFS is thrilled to launch this competition for the fifth year which now includes a hospitality training programme comprising a video and booklet support, which is really appreciated, has been received from Saga Cruises, The Savoy Educational Trust and Robinsons Brewery.



Some twelve catering colleges in Northern England will be participating and they range from Durham in the North to Crewe in the South.

Paul Heathcote MBE is kindly heading up the judging panel for the chefs.

Paul Robinson, a director of Robinsons Brewery, and Ron Barker, chairman of the IWFS wine committee, will be judging the budding sommeliers at Leeds College on 24th April and the Grand Awards Lunch will be held on 20th May at Cheshire College South, Crewe.

Members interested in attending the Awards Lunch please contact Hilary Rylands at hilary.rylands@outlook.com or phone 07803 757 324.

# News from the International Secretariat

The International Council of Management (ICM) last meeting was held online on 21st October 2025 when the role of Global Chairman of the IWFS was passed by Michael Donohoe, from the Americas, to John Nicholas (pictured left), of your EA region. Thanks were given to Mike for a great job that he has done over the past two years steering the Society. John now takes on the role of working with the ICM members, from each region, to look to the future and new initiatives to expand and grow the Society in today's world...

Also looking back to the end of last year, this is a quick reminder to listen to the 'Top of the Pops: Classic Fizz Beyond Champagne' – this award winning Wine Blast podcast featured our monograph *Sparkling Wines of the World* by Essi Avellan MW and is definitely worth a listen. If you haven't



yet tuned in then go Susie and Peter's website, or via this link <https://susieandpeter.com/podcast-episodes/season-seven/top-of-the-pops-classic-fizz-beyond-champagne/> which will take you straight there. You can listen while you work, walk or wander the aisles of your local supermarket looking for a new fine fizz to try. It is just under an hour long.

Wine Blast presenters Susie Barrie and Peter Richards, husband and wife team and fellow Masters of Wine, chat with Essi about everything sparkling – Essi's love of sparkling wine is infectious and encyclopedic. Find out about the 'magnum effect' and the need for 'deliciousness' in wine. Some sparklers are also put to the taste test by Susie and Peter, from the better known producers, to new arrivals and to some surprise entrants!

For an added insight from the IWFS, Mimi Avery is also interviewed giving her overview of how the Society is embracing the arrival of top quality sparkling wines – from blind tastings to featuring in festivals. Mimi is the English Sparkling Wines consultant for our Vintage Guide, she is a longstanding IWFS Europe Africa member, has 30 years experience in the English



wine trade and the daughter of the late John Avery MW (past IWFS Hon President).

Before you head off to listen... For those of you who haven't tuned in before, Wine Blast episode is a highly successful podcast with listeners spanning 200 countries primarily in

the UK, US, Australia and Canada with individual episodes attracting 10,000+ unique downloads. Congratulations to Susie and Peter.

It is time to celebrate for us too as the numbers, so far, are looking good. Through this podcast the IWFS engaged with approaching 20,000 wine lovers, via social media and unique downloads. Over 50% of the listeners were between the age of 39-59 and they were from many corners of the globe – the majority being in the UK, USA, Australia and Canada. Not bad for a day's work. The groundwork has been set... We must continue to connect with non-members with an active interest in food and wine, an interest they wish to share with others, and to make sure it is with the IWFS.

Thank you to Susie and Peter, Essi Avellan and Mimi Avery for making this such a success. Also to the Europe Africa team for their collaboration in this initiative and in particular to Phillip Kim and Clare Gill.

Make sure you are part of the following... and please do pass on the podcast link to friends and contacts who may not know about the Society and what benefits and fun membership can bring.

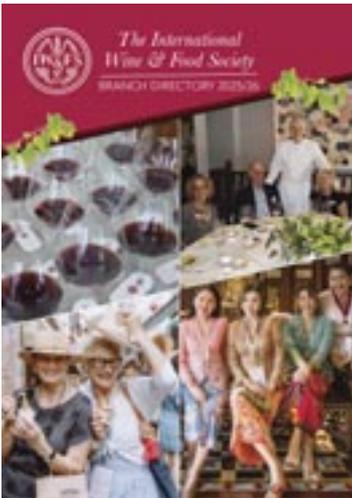
Looking ahead... Our 2026 monograph is now in the making. This year's topic will look into the grape varieties of the future. As the landscape changes as to which grapes grow well and where we felt it was time to look at which grapes may well feature in our glass in the coming years and which ones to look out for.

We are pleased to say that we have secured Dr José Vouillamoz to write this for us. He is an independent wine expert, wine writer, wine educator and lecturer. José is recognised as one of the world's leading authorities on the origin and parentage of grape varieties. He also co-authored the multi-award wine book *Wine Grapes* with Masters of Wine Jancis Robinson and Julia Harding – the ultimate reference on all the grape varieties that are cultivated in the world and one you may already have.



José will look at the effect of climate change on viticulture, which grape varieties producers may now look to plant. Will it be old indigenous or non-indigenous varieties or could crossings be the future? There is also the option of resistant hybrids or maybe creating new clones. These are some of the many factors that Jose will look at and provide you with. Look out for your copy later in the year.

2026 – Branch Directory – the updated edition is now available on the website and is an incredibly useful resource providing members with a contact for each branch around the world –



currently totalling 132 branches. To view this online only directory go to [iwfs.org](http://iwfs.org) – Resource Directory and Branch Contacts / Global. You can also view it via the member App but have to be signed in to view this information, as it is strictly for members only. Please make use of these invaluable contacts if you are planning a holiday and need some local knowledge on the places to stay and the best restaurants in town.

Our latest Vintage Guide is now available for 2026 – either in printed format or via the member app. This edition of *Food & Wine* also includes the latest vintage reports from the European regions listed in the Guide. The majority have been written by

our Wine Consultants for which we thank them for passing on their expert knowledge – freely. Key points to take away for the 2024 vintage from some of the reports are: Bordeaux produced exhilarating dry whites and fresh, harmonious reds; Beaujolais and Alsace both have reduced volumes but a special mention for 2024 Gewurtztraminer from Alsace providing lovely freshness, fine acidity and delicate aromatic quality; Champagne is a tale of resilience and reward; Rhone has suffered less than some other regions in France; the vintage in Piedmont was challenging; 2024 will go down in history in Spain as top wineries have decided to sell wine en primeur – their wines from the north-east showing depth and power but also finesse and delicacy; and we finish on another high with news some outstanding Vintage Ports were made in 2024 and you should expect a general vintage declaration the first since 2017. Despite the challenges of 2024, in Europe, there will be some great wines produced – they may just need more focus to seek them out. Please see the report below.

*Andrea Warren*

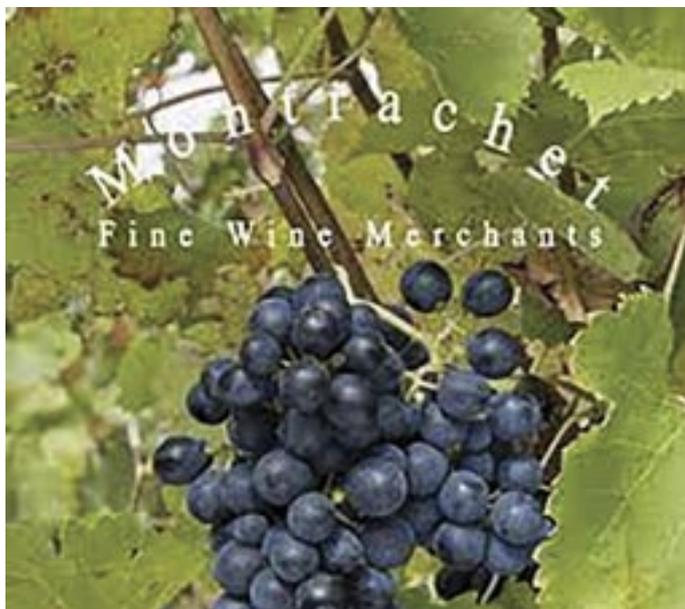
## 2024/2025 VINTAGE REPORTS

### *Part 1 Europe*

#### **BORDEAUX**

**Charles Taylor MW**  
([montrachetwine.com](http://montrachetwine.com))

Exhilarating dry whites and fresh, harmonious reds. 2024 was a challenging growing season with above average rainfall for much of the year and the greatest mildew pressure in living memory. Fortunately, the vintage was saved by a long, warm, dry period in July and August that dried out the soil, provided some essential water stress to the vines on well-drained vineyards and ensured that the fruit would reach a good level of both phenolic and sugar ripeness. The cool, night-time temperatures ensured high levels of acidity were retained and the dry white wines, harvested in the second and third weeks of



September are amongst the finest of recent years with a winning combination of ripe, concentrated fruit and thrilling acidity.

After one of the wettest winters on record (November, December, February and March were all amongst the rainiest of the past 20 years), bud break was early at the end of March. It was difficult to get into the vineyards on heavier soils to treat the vines and the consistently damp weather provoked an early onset of mildew on any vines that were left untreated.

The wet weather continued into May, and it was often necessary to spray repeatedly at close intervals. It was undoubtedly harder for organic producers to withstand the mildew pressure and the many French bank holidays played havoc for estates with inflexible workforces.

Fortunately, the weather improved at the end of the month and for some growers a week of sunshine coincided with the all-important flowering period. For others, however, it arrived either too late or too early or a significant part of the crop was lost to coulure or millerandage.

The rest of June reverted to dull, humid weather with continuing mildew pressure and growers became increasingly pessimistic about their chances of successfully ripening their crop. However, the weather changed dramatically for the better and July and August were both dry and warm. The soil dried out and the fruit started to ripen and thicken their skins. By the middle of August, the vines on free-draining soils were beginning to show welcome signs of much-needed hydric stress. The vintage had been saved and all that was needed now was a month of calm weather to bring the fruit to full maturity.

After a refreshing burst of rain at the end of August, September started clemently, and the dry white wine harvest was completed in good conditions in the second and third weeks of September. The quality of both sauvignon and sémillon is exceptional with good volumes of ripe, healthy fruit giving high quality wines. Both sugar and acidity levels were excellent, and the wines have a natural freshness and balance that hasn't been seen for many years. The aromatic quality of the sauvignon is the finest for a long time with the sémillon bringing both structure and flavour to the blend.

Unfortunately, the good weather failed to hold, and rainy conditions returned from 21st September. Growers had to decide whether to press ahead with harvesting whilst the fruit was still healthy, or risk waiting for greater ripeness and accept a higher incidence of rotten fruit. Most of the merlot was harvested by the last week of September with the cabernets following quickly at the beginning of October. The results are mixed with the well-financed estates on early ripening, free-draining soils at a distinct advantage. The hardier, more resistant cabernet sauvignon survived the wet conditions better than the more fragile merlot but, as a later ripening variety, it also struggled to reach full maturity.

In the winery, most producers opted for a gentle maceration and were careful not to extract too much tannin. The resultant reds are fresh and aromatic with red rather than black fruit flavours, refreshingly low levels of alcohol and excellent levels of acidity. They are harmonious, forward wines that will give a huge amount of pleasure at a relatively early age.

The sweet white wines, harvested in October, are similarly vibrant with good botrytis character and a fine balance between sugar and acidity. They are reminiscent of a less sweet style of Sauternes made in the 1980s and 1990s.

Overall, it is a vintage to enthusiastically buy the magnificent dry, white wines and to carefully select the reds. There are many successful wines, no blockbusters but plenty of well-balanced, harmonious wines that, providing prices are attractive, deserve a place in any cellar.

- Graves (Red) 5 not ready yet
- Haut-Medoc 5 not ready yet
- Pomerol & St Emilion 5 not ready yet
- Graves (White) 7 not ready yet
- Sauternes 6 not ready yet

## BURGUNDY

Report will be available in the following issue.

## BEAUJOLAIS

Will Heslop  
(flintwines.com)

2024 was an extremely challenging year for vignerons in Beaujolais, as it was throughout much of France. The overall yield for Beaujolais was over 20% down on 2023, owing to persistent rain and a series of hailstorms – the most dramatic of which, on July 31st, damaged around 300 hectares of vines. The rain disrupted flowering and meant mildew was a widespread problem. Picking in the Crus typically began in mid-September;



there was further intermittent rain during harvest but at least, as numerous vignerons pointed out, there were no concerns about the grapes (or workers) overheating. The best of the resulting wines are fresh and filigree, with good terroir-definition. Most reminiscent, among recent vintages, of 2021, they will please classicists.

- Beaujolais 4 not ready yet

## ALSACE

David Ling  
[www.confrie-st-etienne.com](http://www.confrie-st-etienne.com)

After a succession of exceptionally hot and dry vintages in Alsace, 2024 could be considered as atypical, but was more exactly a return to normal, a true 'winemaker's vintage' where skill was needed to obtain the best results after fluctuating weather conditions throughout the year.

A mild winter, the hottest February on record and early budburst forecast an abundant and early harvest. However, from May onwards alternating spells of heavy rainfall and cool temperatures set the scene for the rest of the year. Flowering was delayed, quite drawn out but generally promising.

The summer was warm with isolated rain showers, causing a rapid spurt in vegetation growth that required pruning to allow airflow through the vines and thus reduce the risk of mildew and other cryptogamic diseases, aided in this respect by a very hot August that accelerated grape ripening.

In September, temperatures fell and periodic rain showers returned, which slowed maturation and retarded the harvest date. In general, harvesting was completed faster than in recent





vintages and had to be fine-tuned as necessary to cope with isolated spells of rain.

The crop was of average size, but about 10% less than in 2023. The quality was generally excellent, giving precise wines with fine, ripe acidity and slightly lower alcohol levels than in previous years.

2024 Riesling and Pinot Noir showed particularly well in the first trade tastings but I can not resist a special mention for 2024 Gewurztraminer. The wines have such a lovely freshness, a fine acidity, a delicate aromatic quality and a lower alcohol level that perfectly match the current trend to enjoy Gewurztraminer just on its own or with a wide variety of modern fusion foods, far from its usual straitjacket of 'curry, dessert and Munster cheese'!

- Alsace 6 not ready yet

### CAHORS/MADIRAN (Sud-Ouest) Britt and Per Karlsson

Very low harvest yields in Cahors marked 2024; many producers had to settle for a quarter of a normal harvest. This is even more worrying as 2023 was also a small year. Several producers are starting to have serious problems. Over the last eight years, five vintages have been small.

Again, 2024 had some very challenging weather conditions. It started with frost in the spring. Some plots that survived the frost were instead damaged by millerandage during the flowering. The region also suffered heavy rains with severe attacks of downy mildew as well as dry and hot spells. It was a year that demanded a lot of work in the vineyard and the cellar. In some places, however, malbec (and



also tannat in Madiran) showed good resistance. The wines show richness and structure and have a good concentration of aromas. The quality potential is evident, both for the classic, age-worthy style of Cahors and the more easy-drinking, fruity style.

(This assessment is primarily for Cahors but is overall similar for the whole of the Sud-Ouest.)

- Cahors/Madiran 5 not ready yet



### CHAMPAGNE

James Simpson MW / Laurence Bialy  
(polroger.co.uk)



The 2024 Champagne harvest will be remembered as a tale of resilience and reward. Despite facing a succession of climatic challenges from mildew to storms, coulure to hail, the region has ultimately produced grapes of promising quality, albeit in reduced quantity.

In the Côte des Bar (South-East part of

Champagne near the city of Troyes), growers endured a particularly punishing year, with yields in some plots falling as low as 2,000–3,000 kg/ha due to a combination of mildew and frost. More centrally, in the Marne and Aisne, producers fared better but still fell short of the 10,000 kg/ha yield cap, averaging closer to 8,000 kg/ha. That said, many noted the excellent aromatic potential of Pinot Noir and the vibrancy of the Meunier, harvested at peak ripeness thanks to timely picking. Chardonnay presented a mixed picture. Early picked fruit showed great concentration and freshness, while later harvests suffered some dilution due to rain after 24 September. Nevertheless, many producers report wines with purity, balance and welcome acidity, qualities increasingly rare in warmer vintages. The Comité Champagne dubbed 2024 "la belle blessée"—a beautiful, if wounded, vintage. Despite low yields and the absence of a clear harvest "peak", the fermenting wines show concentration and freshness, with initial tastings offering cautious optimism. While the volume will be supplemented by reserve wines, the 2024 vintage may well reward those who look beyond the numbers.

- Champagne 6 not yet released

### LANGUEDOC

Matthew Stubbs MW

Winter was very dry yet mild with no significant frosts. Spring was generally wet and cool bringing much needed rain



especially in Southern Languedoc and Corbières. Flowering was delayed and somewhat haphazard but those that had dry conditions did well.

Summer dawned quite cool with bouts of rain leading to some fungal disease pressure. July was back to normal with sunny and warm weather typical of the South of France. 2024 did not witness the heat spikes seen in recent years though early August did see some very high temperatures. The second half of the month was much cooler with some rain in the last week. September began quite cool with rain in Eastern Languedoc which delayed ripening. Harvest generally started one week later than 2023. Yields are down around 10% but are much lower in the Roussillon where the impact of drought and water stress was more marked. Quite a challenging year but early signs show that aromatics are strong, alcohols are more modest than previous years and the wines look to be very approachable in their youth.

- Languedoc\* (Red) 4 not ready yet

## LOIRE

(source [www.vinsdeloire.fr](http://www.vinsdeloire.fr))

2024 was the year of all challenges. Marked by extreme climatic conditions, the 2024 vintage of Loire wines testifies to the adaptability and know-how of the winegrowers, guaranteeing a diversified and qualitative wine production, representative of the characteristic of Loire wines.

The 2024 vintage stood out for its particularly testing climatic conditions in the Loire Valley. Abundant rainfall, limited



sunshine and an increased spread of mildew marked this viticultural year. Despite these obstacles,

producers were able to preserve the quality of the grapes, resulting in wines reflecting a plurality of aromatic profiles, depending on grape variety and terroir. The whites combine freshness and crispness, the reds reveal finesse and elegance, while the rosés and fine bubbles promise to be fruity and gourmet.

- Loire Red 2 not ready yet
- Loire Sweet not readily available
- Loire Dry White 3 current drinking

## PROVENCE

Rod Smith MW

2024 was, as in the rest of France, variable, with especially abnormally high rainfall in March which brought with it humidity and mildew and presented the same issues for the budding and shooting vines as elsewhere. There were also a lot of hailstorms, which damaged the buds, shoots and fruit set into May and June.

After March, rainfall was down producing a dry and warm spring and above average temperatures from then on. From mid-July



to mid-August, the temperature was above 35°C consistently, with a record high on the first of August of 42.4°C.

Although the reservoirs remained full from the spring, the limited rain and high sunshine and heat provoked a very early harvest, beginning in many places in mid-August.

As previously this has resulted in Rosés which

are either fresh but lacking depth if picked early, or with good flavour at the risk of being a little flat and soft in acidity if producers waited to harvest. The best managed a fusion of both, as they did in 2023. Whites were generally more successful and captured Rolle's ability to guard its acidity and have resulted in some good rounded flavours.

Rainfall did come in September, but also with significant storms and hail, and a risk of mildew as a result, so the reds are again variable.

In general coastal sites seem to have fared better than those inland, but it is worth researching the commune for the success stories.

As in the rest of France the issues have affected quantity as much as quality, and the reds that have been made should be good for the future.

- Provence (Red) 4 not ready yet

## RHONE

John Livingstone-Learmonth

[www.drinkrhone.com](http://www.drinkrhone.com)

In 2024, like the rest of France, there were crop losses from the bad weather, but the Rhone was less blighted than the likes of Bordeaux. An attractive vintage has emerged.

Northern Rhone reds are low degree, fresh and free running, and possess discreet balance on a more restrained scale than in recent sun-filled years.

Northern Rhone whites, notably Condrieu, are richly aromatic; the Marsanne-Roussanne wines further south are more direct, vertical than the 2023s.





Chateauneuf-du-Pape, where some domaines lost half their harvest, has emerged in the leading cases with tender, at times neatly filled reds, though quality across the Southern Rhone is variable, the best terroirs giving the best results. Expect appealing fruit in the top reds across the region, and stick to estates that have the reputation for hand-made, precise wines.

The whites are fresh and flowing, if not quite at the level of the exceptional 2021 vintage.

- Rhone (Red) North 5 not ready yet,
- Rhone (Red) South 5 not ready yet
- Rhone (White) North 6 possible to drink

## AUSTRIA

(source [austrianwine.com](http://austrianwine.com))

After the weather proved to be particularly capricious during 2024, including late frosts, hailstorms and heavy rain, the year ended on a conciliatory note with a very beautiful late summer and autumn. Winemakers managed to bring in the majority of the main harvest in favourable conditions. Although harvest volumes were low, the wines they produced are very pleasing. In general, we can expect well-ripened, balanced white wines that display fine fruit, body and moderate acidity, clearly reflecting the typical varietal characteristics. The deep-coloured, concentrated red wines are expected to mature into an outstanding vintage that is likely to be one of the very best of the last few decades.

- Austria White 6 not ready yet
- Austria Red 6 not ready yet
- Austria Sweet (App only) 7 possible to drink

## ENGLAND (sparkling)

Mimi Avery

In general, 2024 was a cool year with high rainfall, a very challenging season. Yields were very low both due to disease pressure and the stress of the previous year being such a large harvest. The result was ripening was difficult and Chardonnay typically fared worst. Low yields were made less impactful by the volume of reserve wines from the 2023 vintage. However future blends may vary from the house styles. Even though not the driest of years it was a long growing season which has resulted in complexity in the finished wines. Despite the challenges of the year the winemakers have been very pleased with the quality of the wines.



- England Sparkling 5 not yet released

## GERMANY

(source [winesofgermany.co.uk](http://winesofgermany.co.uk))

What to expect from the 2024 vintage wines – fruity, tangy, mineral.

The 2024 vintage promises wines with bright acidity, fresh fruit, and excellent balance, despite challenging weather conditions. A cooler-than-usual growing season and a late frost resulted in smaller yields, but the surviving grapes have produced wines that will delight wine lovers with their quality.

- Mosel 6 not ready yet
- Rhine 6 not ready yet

## HUNGARY (Tokaji Aszu)

Charles Mount

The 2024 vintage with February and March which were unusually warm. A dry March with several days below freezing followed

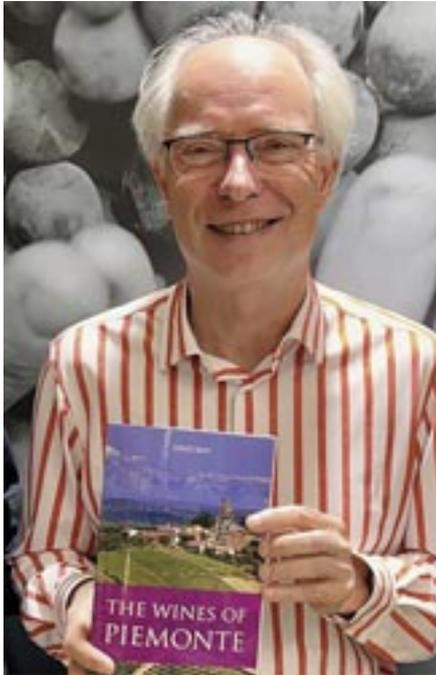


but good soil water reserves allowed an early start to vegetation growth. The next few months remained warmer than average, but with good rain. Towards the end of June hail caused some damage in the vineyards. July and August were extremely hot months. This not only influenced the vegetation but created some extreme conditions for further hail, mainly in the southern part of the wine region. Due to the hot conditions harvest for some producers started quite early and most finished the dry harvest before mid-September. At that stage those producers waiting for an Aszú harvest were starting to lose hope. The dry conditions were not conducive to the growth of Botrytis. But from mid-September until the beginning of October the weather turned quite wet and warm. The continuous damp and warm weather made Botrytis to cover the bunches. Had the damp conditions continued the crop may have been lost. Finally, from mid-October, the weather turned dry and sunny again and all botrytised grapes started to dry and become ready for the picking. The result was a fantastic vintage with a lot of concentration in the aszú berries and the largest ever aszú harvest from the Royal Tokaji vineyards. Overall, the vintage resulted in well-balanced dry wines with nice acidities and concentrated sweet wines with lot of texture and structure.

- Hungary (Tokaji Aszu) 5 not yet released

**ITALY Piedmont****David Way**

As now seems to be the new norm, 2024 was another extremely challenging vintage, following the drought of 2022 and the wet spring, followed by a very hot summer of 2023. In 2024, the



biggest problem was excessive, regular rain. By May, Barolo and Barbaresco had already received the rainfall they usually get in an entire season. By the end of the season, this had risen to 70–100 per cent above the annual average. Persistent rain meant that growers had to carry out twice as many treatments against fungal diseases and to thin the crop appropriately. Some growers reported large losses; others

that the concentration of flavour was not as high as usual due to the effects of dilution. Rain continued during harvest, which resembled the 'muddy harvests' of 40 years ago. Grapes had to be transported in the vineyard in baskets by hand as the soil was too wet for tractors. Grapes on the less-than-perfect sites were threatened by grey rot. When the rain relented in the first week of October but threatened to return, there was a scramble to pick and a shortage of pickers. The harvested grapes had lower sugar levels than in recent years and thinner skins, suggesting shorter maceration times and light extraction. Top producers speak of wines of finesse and modest alcohol levels. Only time will tell if they have the concentration required for extended ageing.

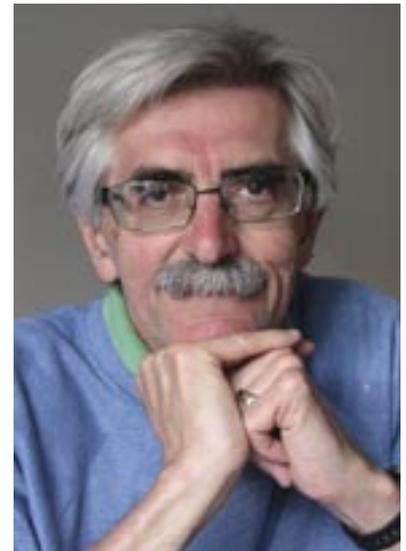
- Piedmont 5 not yet released

**TUSCANY****Richard Baudains**

The weather through the year was marked by great variability, with unseasonal extremes at critical points in the growing season, but also significant local differences. The cool spring made for late budding and flowering. May and early June were wet, while the second half of June and the whole of July were hot and dry, with record temperatures in parts of the central hills. Temperatures went down again in August, delaying the ripening of the late varieties. The bulk of the harvest was conducted between the rains of the first weeks of September and those at the beginning of October. Yields bounced back after the very meagre 2023 vintage. Overall quality is also superior to that of the difficult 2023. Merlot looks promising across the region. At Montalcino the wines can be expected to have good fruit, but less structure, so probably for relatively early drinking. At Bolgheri, the quality of the fruit was high and

predictions are for balanced wines with ripe tannins and complex aromas.

- Tuscany 5 not yet released

**SICILY****Richard Baudains**

After a very dry autumn and winter, water resources were critically low in many parts of the island and particularly in the south and west, and the hot, dry months of

June and July brought no respite. Budding and flowering were up to two weeks early, and the first white varieties were harvested exceptionally early, at the end of July. The pressure of disease was almost non-existent, making for extremely healthy fruit, but with possibly unbalanced sugar/acidity levels. The weather conditions impacted on growing conditions to a greater and lesser extent in different parts of the island, making it difficult to generalize about the outcomes of the vintage. Even more than in other years, Mount Etna stands out as the exception to the rule. While the average yield for the region was 16% down on the already very low 2023, producers on Etna were reporting year-on-year increases of up to 60% and comparing quality with that of the very good 2022.

- Sicily 6 not ready yet

**VALPOLICELLA (Amarone)****Sarah Heller MW**

Though very early in its evolution, 2024 is currently shaping up to be a classic-style vintage, having benefited from slightly cooler conditions during spring and autumn compared to recent vintages and a growing season nearly aligned with historical norms in terms of temperature and the dates of key phenological phases (budding, flowering and veraison). However, the results are somewhat heterogenous. Wines from



the hillsides generally had higher acidity that helped with balance, given comparatively high average alcohol levels in both the hills and plains. Rains during harvest, though prolonging the growing season to largely



positive effect, also created substantial disease pressure – possibly more of a challenge for those committed to organic agriculture – but overall volumes were not too greatly impacted, sitting above 2021 and 2022, though slightly below 2023. Initial samples tasted were aromatically intense, open fruited, and concentrated – occasionally bordering on warm – but nonetheless showed a distinct ‘sheerness’, likely reflecting producers’ stylistic shifts towards shorter (100-day or below) appassimento and less vigorous extraction techniques.

- Valpolicella\* (Amarone) 6 not yet released

## PORTUGAL

Charles Metcalfe

In Portugal, the vines got off to an early start after plentiful winter and spring rain. In Dão and Bairrada, spring rain posed



problems at flowering and resulted in lower quantities. ‘Challenging but beautiful’, said one winemaker in Dão. The Douro fared better, with a cool September prolonging the growing season, resulting in

perfectly balanced, very elegant wines. The rain in Vinho Verde led to considerable disease pressure, but dry weather at picking gave perfect grapes, harvested under optimum conditions. Wet weather in the normally dry Alentejo meant many producers lost grapes to fungal diseases, and there was a 10% fall in the volume of wine made, but growers who managed to treat successfully benefitted from a cool July with few heat spikes, and dry picking conditions.

- Portugal\* North 6 not ready yet
- Portugal South 6 not ready yet

## VINTAGE PORT

Richard Mayson

After a run of hot and frequently very dry years, 2024 saw average levels of rainfall and temperatures just below average. This led to a gradual ripening of the grapes with balanced sugar and acidity readings, without the excesses of years like 2018, 2020 and 2022. August was dry but not over-hot and, as a result of good weather continuing through the harvest,



some outstanding wines were made in 2024. Charles Symington, winemaker for Cockburn, Dow, Graham and Warre wrote: “It has been a while since we have had such a great alignment in ripening of the different grape varieties, consistently favourable weather both in the lead up to and during the harvest, fruit in such impeccable healthy condition, and fermentations of such excellent quality.” More detailed information will be forthcoming early next year when we should expect a general vintage declaration, the first since 2017.

Richard Mayson is author of *Port and the Douro*, published by the Academie du Vin Library where he is Series Editor. He also chairs the Port and Madeira panel for the Decanter World Wine Awards.

- Vintage Port 7 not yet released

## SPAIN

Harold Heckle

The 2024 vintage will go down in history for three and a half reasons. Principal among them is that top wineries have decided to sell wine en primeur for the first time. Second, slumping sales, worldwide, now emphasise the value of good vintages even though experts know an excellent winemaker can mitigate most of the ill-effects of a deteriorating climatology. Thirdly, buyers now comprehend more about how climatic conditions will affect market values.



Spanish producers traditionally sold their wines after having done most of the work for buyers, ageing them in wood and bottle prior to sale. Right now, there is an impressive portfolio of 2024 Spanish wines you can buy ‘a la avanzada’ (in advance).

This triumvirate of conditions has forced producing regions to take a microscope to the harvest and ageing potential of 2024 vintage wines. The discussions have been fevered. The D.O. Rioja officially rated its red wine vintage as Buena (5), a lowly benchmark not seen since 2018. Even more telling, the D.O. Ribera del Duero didn't stop arguing about it until 28th October, a full year after grapes were picked. Their conclusion: the harvest in D.O. Ribera del Duero was Muy Buena (6). The half reason is that for the first time, Rioja has published a separate assessment for its white wines, rating them as better than reds at Muy Buena (6). Once Cinderella wines, Rioja whites have improved exponentially in recent years.

Among producers whose wines you can now buy en primeur is Peter Sisseck of Dominio de Pingus in Ribera del Duero. He acknowledged it was a complex year having only been able to protect 15 of his 35 hectares from freezing in April. He is proud



of the results obtained with Pingus. He is more circumspect about his other lines.

Álvaro Palacios spoke poetically of his Priorat wines: "2024 wines will offer great joy. Their refinement is made from memory and sensibility, and they reflect a delicate yet firm world." His Priorat Garnacha vines have resisted two years of drought and high temperatures. "Still, they have shown incredible resistance," he said. However, he acknowledged being unable to produce any Les Aubaguets, a wine favoured by some Garnacha enthusiasts. Producers like Palacios, Joan Asens (El Masroig) and René Barbier; regulators, and Pedro Ballesteros MW describe 2024 as a severely drought-impacted vintage with massively reduced yields, more than 50% down, but with promising grape quality. We could give it a temporary 7 with a possibility of downgrading once the wines are ready for bottling.

Spain's northwest is attracting connoisseurs due to the quality of wines from Bierzo, Rías Baixas, Ribeira Sacra, Ribeiro and

Valdeorras, where the red Mencía, the white Godello and Albariño, are standout varieties of increasing refinement. Álvaro Palacios and his nephew Ricardo agreed with the D.O. Bierzo that the 2024 harvest was exceptional and the consequent wines exhibit potential. "The wines possess depth and power, yet also finesse and delicacy. Their texture is a harmony of layered elements, the paradoxes of a shifting vintage. Such is the magic of old vines," said Ricardo Palacios. Another member of the family, Rafael Palacios (Álvaro's brother), who makes outstanding wines in D.O. Valdeorras, has high hopes for the vintage.

- Spain North East 7 not ready yet
- Spain Ribera del Duero 6 not ready yet
- Spain Rioja 5 not ready yet

See issue 156 for reports from the 2025 vintage for the rest of the world. Please note that these reports back to 2021 are available to download from the Secretariat/For Members/Vintage Card Information section of the website.

## THE JUDGEMENT OF PARIS +50: MAY 2026

*Stephen Harrison*

In May 1976, a blind tasting held in Paris organised by wine merchant Steven Spurrier rocked the world of wine when relatively unknown Napa Valley white and red wines outscored prestigious French wines from Bordeaux and Burgundy. The shock was intensified by the fact that the judges were exclusively leading French wine experts. This event was seminal to the development and democratisation of wine regions across the globe in the ensuing decades.

In May 2026 the IWFS will celebrate the 50th anniversary of this 'Judgement of Paris' by organising a blind wine tasting which pits French classics against challengers from around the world. This unique international event will allow the Society to deliver 'Judgement of Paris +50'.

We have had a tremendous response to the original brief for the event and are hoping to have events in at least five countries with over 400 members and guests taking part. This is a unique opportunity for the Society to shed its label as the World's 'best kept secret' and show off what we do to a global audience. Accordingly, we are planning a significant PR campaign to raise awareness of the Society and attract non-members to attend the event, giving branches an opportunity to convert them to membership.

### Background

The Judgement of Paris was held on May 24th, 1976. The wines, tasted blind in two flights of white and red, were the following:

### WHITE WINES (Chardonnay)

Total 10 wines: 6 Californian, 4 French

#### California

1. Château Montelena – 1973 (Napa Valley) 🏆 Winner overall
2. Chalone Vineyard – 1974 (Monterey County)

3. Spring Mountain Vineyard – 1973 (Napa Valley)
4. Freemark Abbey Winery – 1972 (Napa Valley)
5. Veedercrest Vineyards – 1972 (Napa Valley)
6. David Bruce Winery – 1973 (Santa Cruz Mountains)

#### Burgundy

7. Batard-Montrachet – 1973, Domaine Ramonet-Prudhon
8. Meursault Charmes – 1973, Domaine Roulot
9. Puligny-Montrachet Les Pucelles – 1972, Domaine Leflaive
10. Beaune Clos des Mouches – 1973, Joseph Drouhin

### RED WINES (Cabernet Sauvignon-based)

Total 10 wines: 6 Californian, 4 French

#### California

1. Stag's Leap Wine Cellars – 1973 (Napa Valley) 🏆 Winner overall
2. Heitz Wine Cellars "Martha's Vineyard" – 1970 (Napa Valley)
3. Clos Du Val Winery – 1972 (Napa Valley)
4. Ridge Vineyards "Monte Bello" – 1971 (Santa Cruz Mountains)
5. Mayacamas Vineyards – 1971 (Napa Valley)
6. Freemark Abbey Winery – 1969 (Napa Valley)

#### Bordeaux

7. Château Mouton Rothschild – 1970 (Pauillac, 1er Cru)
8. Château Montrose – 1970 (Saint-Estèphe, 2ème Cru)
9. Château Haut-Brion – 1970 (Graves, 1er Cru)
10. Château Léoville-Las-Cases – 1971 (Saint-Julien, 2ème Cru)

The wines were scored on a 20-point scale by nine French judges comprised of highly respected sommeliers and wine critics.

The event is celebrated in the book *Judgement of Paris: California vs. France and the Historic 1976 Paris Tasting That*



*Revolutionized Wine* by George M. Taber, and the 2008 movie *Bottle Shock*, starring Alan Rickman and Chris Pine, which is well worth watching. There is also an interesting blog written by Steven Spurrier on the website of the Académie du Vin Library <https://academieduvinlibrary.com>.

### What are We Planning?

In similar fashion to the original event, IWFS's Judgement of Paris +50 will compare Chardonnays and Bordeaux Blends. However, rather than aiming to re-create the original, we will be reflecting today's much broader wine world by including a diverse lineup from top wine regions, including competitors from France, North and South America, South Africa and Oceania.

Our aim is for hundreds (if not thousands) of IWFS members to determine whether France rules the international league table, or which of its international rivals now lead the way!

We are planning events across the region, and also in Asia, Oceania and the USA in the week leading up to and including Saturday 23rd May. Each branch will hold tastings with as many members as possible, delivering their own unique 'Judgements'. The results will be collated in London before press and social media announcements of the results on Sunday 24th May.

Already confirmed events are:

- **London/Capital/Surrey Hills**  
The Army and Navy Club, London  
21st May 2026

- **Bath & Bristol/Hereford & Monmouthshire/Devonshire**  
Kingston Seymour Village Hall, Clevedon  
21st May 2026
- **Manchester/Merseyside & Mid-Cheshire**  
Manchester Hall, Manchester  
23rd May 2026
- **West Yorkshire**  
Printworks Kitchen and Bar, Leeds City College  
22nd May 2026

Other branches planning events are Zurich, Singapore, Lake Tahoe and New South Wales, and we are optimistic others may also join in.

We will publish details of all events on the website as soon as these are confirmed.

### The Wines

Our events will celebrate the diversity in wine choice now available from across the world thanks to the legacy of the original 1976 event. We plan to select a list of 12 wines in total (six Chardonnay and six Bordeaux blends). Having taken advice from MWs and members of the IWFS Wines Committee, we are selecting a range of six Chardonnay and six Bordeaux blends for tasting. For each of the white and red tastings, we will feature two French wines, and four drawn from a combination of the USA, Oceania, South America and South Africa. The list below is indicative of the areas that may be featured:



Photograph © Belia Spurrier

Grapes	Country/Continent	Wine Regions
Chardonnay	France	Burgundy
	USA	Napa Valley and Sonoma Coast, Willamette Valley
	Oceania	Australia: Margaret River or Victoria; NZ: Hawke's Bay or Marlborough
	South America South Africa	Chile: Casablanca Bay Walker Bay, Elgin or Hemel-en-Arde
Bordeaux Blends	France	Bordeaux
	USA	Napa Valley, Washington State
	Oceania	Coonawarra or Margaret River
	South America	Chile: Maipo or Colchagua Valley; Argentina: Mendoza
	South Africa	Stellenbosch

The criteria for the choice are a combination of:

- Price** – we want to make the event as accessible as possible, while offering the chance to compare and contrast wines of some distinction
- Availability** – we are trying to select wines that are available globally. This will mean choosing wines that are relatively young, but still enjoyable
- Typicity** - how well the wine expresses the signature characteristics of its grape variety and its region
- Vintage** – we will choose 'comparable' vintages within a narrow range of years to allow for regional differences in growing conditions



Photograph © Beila Spurrer

## Marketing and PR

This event gives IWFS a unique opportunity to showcase our Society and the many advantages that our international scale delivers. We are working on a programme to publicise the event through PR within the wine press and, more broadly, aiming to boost our visibility and awareness, and attract non-members to attend one of the events.

For branches in Europe Africa Region, by the time of the event we will have introduced a simple online membership application process that will enable branches to help prospective new member join the Society on their mobile phone during the event.

We are also planning to feature the event on the Eventbrite app. which gives branches the option to advertise the event and sell tickets to non-members via an alternative route.

## Timetable and next Steps

Indicatively, our timetable for the run-up to the event is as follows:

- **Mid-March**  
Marketing programme starts  
Details of wine sourcing available  
Places available for non-members via Eventbrite  
Details of scoring system/logistics for collating the results
- **18th to 23rd May**  
Local Judgements take place
- **24th May**  
The big reveal – what is the verdict of the IWFS?!

## Getting Involved

We would be delighted if any other branches, or smaller groups of members would like to take part and organise an event. This could be regional (as is being done in the UK), branch level, or even just a group of friends – as long as at least one participant is an IWFS member then we're very happy! The format of the event along with the local pricing is entirely up to each branch. We are also happy for branches either to hold their events in one or two tasting sessions, or even to choose to judge only white or red wines. If you'd like to get involved, or want to discuss holding an event, please contact me or one of the UK organising committee:

- Stephen Harrison  
stephenharrison1@btopenworld.com
- Geeta Lloyd  
geetalloyd@gmail.com
- Phillip Kim  
pkimhk@gmail.com
- Stephanie Shepherd  
steph@ashepherd.net
- Amanda Fitzsimmons  
amandafitzsimmons@hotmail.com

This event gives IWFS a unique opportunity to showcase our Society and the many advantages that our international scale delivers. Let's have fun and show off the very best of what we are!



# A DAY AT THE TABLE: IWFS x WINE BLAST

by Clare Gill

There are some moments that quietly mark a shift and our recent recording with Susie and Peter for the Wine Blast podcast felt like one of them.

Hosted at the In & Out Club in London, the day brought together a brilliant mix of voices from across IWFS. It was a pleasure to spend time with Susie and Peter in person, sharing stories, ideas and naturally some exceptional sparkling wines. Essi Avellan MW and Mimi Avery represented IWFS on the recording itself, bringing expertise, insight and warmth to a conversation that many of you will now have heard.

The atmosphere throughout the day was relaxed, energetic and full of good humour. We styled the space to reflect the IWFS brand, dressed the table thoughtfully, and sampled sparkling wines in keeping with the episode's focus. Between takes, there was plenty of conversation, laughter and the easy camaraderie that comes from people who genuinely love food, wine and sharing both.

Alongside the podcast recording, we captured photography and video throughout the day... not just of the conversation, but of the moments around it: the interactions, the details and the buzz in the room. We also took the opportunity to photograph IWFS merchandise, making the most of being together in such a fitting setting.

For IWFS, this was something new and something worth celebrating. A day that felt important, enjoyable, and full of promise.



## INTRODUCING GLASS CLASS

*A Wine Education Video Series*

As a feature of the IWFS Europe Africa strategy to develop centrally available digital content for members and branches, we have created a five part wine introduction series, 'Glass Class'. It is available to all members for viewing on the [www.iwfsea.org](http://www.iwfsea.org) website in the Education & Videos tab. A members-only password required to access the episodes will be sent to members in a separate communication.

The Glass Class video series was conceived as an educational tool for competitors in the Young Chef Competition, who had requested a 'crash course' overview of wine to enhance their



skills in the 'Front of House' module. The Executive Committee determined that the lessons could also be interesting to the IWFS membership.

The lessons are delivered by Mimi Avery, a wine presenter and advisor and long-time IWFS member, and Vito Bowen, Retail Manager for wine merchant Waud Handford Wines, a strategic partner of IWFS EA. Both presenters are WSET Diploma holders.

The lessons cover the following topics:

- Episode 1 *Overview: How Wine Works*
- Episode 2 *Tasting: How to Describe What You Like*
- Episode 3 *White Wine: Styles, Structure, Pairing*
- Episode 4 *Red Wine: Styles, Structure, Pairing*
- Episode 5 *Sparkling Wine: Traditional and Tank Methods*

We aim to produce other digital content to continue to enhance the IWFS membership experience. Feel free to contact us with comments or suggestions about future content.

# THINK FOOD

by *Simon and Kate King*

At this time of year, we're often revamping our diets and aiming for a healthier lifestyle. One of the key ways we can do that is to add more lean protein to our diet.

*Here's why we should:*

- Protein helps us feel fuller for longer, reducing hunger hormones and helping to control our appetites.
- Our bodies use more calories to digest protein than carbohydrates or fats, so it helps speed up the metabolism.
- It stabilises blood sugar and that reduces the sugar spikes and crashes and reduces cravings for sugary foods.
- It helps us retain muscle mass and that's particularly important when losing weight and as we age, when we tend to lose muscle.

*Ingredients that will add protein oomph! to your dishes:*

**Lean meat** Think chicken or turkey breast or less than 5% fat mince. Chicken or turkey is the perfect addition to create high protein but lower fat curries and stews, and you can add lower fat mince to ragus and cottage pies.

**Fish** Oily fish is great for the joints and brain function, too. Try a homemade smoked mackerel pate on toast as a starter, or add flakes of tuna or salmon to your salads or grain bowls.

**Seafood** Adding prawns or crabmeat to a salad gives it extra protein and extra flavour. Add prawns to soups, stews, and curries, too.

**Cottage cheese** Add this to scrambled eggs or sauces to boost the protein content of your dish.

**Greek yoghurt** Put a dollop into soups or stews instead of sour cream for extra protein.

**Eggs** A fantastic source of protein. Top a salad with hard boiled eggs, add a softly poached egg to top bowls of noodles or grain bowls.

**Nuts** Add chopped almonds, walnuts, Brazil nuts, or hazelnuts to top your salads. Cashews are a good ingredient for curries or stir fries.

**Nut butters** From peanut butter to almond butter, this is an excellent way to beef up your sauces or your breakfast porridge.

**Peas and beans** Legumes are packed full of protein. Try lentils, peas, chickpeas, black beans, and edamame in salads, stews, and as sides. Pair peas with rice for a complete protein containing all nine of the amino acids that the body needs.

**Tofu** Add smoked or marinated tofu to salads, stir fries, omelettes, and fried rice to increase the protein content.

**Grains** Quinoa is a protein packed grain is perfect to add to rice dishes or salads. Try using quinoa or wild rice with stews and casseroles. Buckwheat and quinoa can also be used to thicken broth.

**Seeds** Add chia seeds to Greek yoghurt for a daily protein hit at breakfast, or put the seeds in oats and milk or yoghurt for overnight oats. Ensure you soak the chia seeds before you use them. Sprinkle pumpkin seeds on salads and add sesame seeds to stir fries.

*Simon and Kate King, Restaurant 1861, Cross Ash, Monmouthshire*



## Berkshire

### A WINE TASTING TOUR IN SICILY

Over the years the Berkshire Branch has organised tours to several wine regions for its members: Lake Garda and the Veneto; The Moselle and the Ahr Valley; Virginia, USA; Navarra and Rioja; Piedmonte and, this year, Sicily. The two most recent tours have been led for us by Tim Syrad (<https://timsyradwinetours.com>), whose knowledge and contacts have resulted in exceptional experiences.

In October last year the tour was based around staying at the Stella d'Italia hotel in the lovely old town of Marsala, on the North West coast of Sicily. Our 21 Members took a coach to the six wineries on the itinerary. Lunches and dinners were either at wineries or at restaurants in Marsala, where one could walk to them down narrow streets paved with marble.

So, what did we learn about Sicilian wine? Firstly scale – in some years Sicily produces more wine than Australia; the wineries are predominately small to medium sized; the terroir varies greatly across the island and grapes grown in the West are not grown at all on the Eastern side; the terroir is generally very dry making it relatively easy to farm organically; a lot of the vines are bush type and much of the work, including harvesting, is done by hand. Many of the grape varieties grown here are not grown anywhere else, for example Grillo, Catarratto, Caricante, Zibbibo (Muscat), Inzolia and Nero D'Avola. The volcanic nature of the island makes much of the soil very fertile. One vineyard we visited had vines being productive within 18 months of planting. Some vineyards planted at height experience cool nights and good diurnal variation.

The highlights from our tour included the first wine we tasted at Quattrocielli (Four Skies) which was their Grillo 2024. Deep gold in colour, soft fruits and apricots on the nose and long and satisfying in the mouth. Tasted direct from the tank, their Grillo 2025 was suffused with Elderflowers. Look out for Grillo, a much-underrated grape.

Donnafugato, a larger producer, delivered many good wines, but the stand-out was their passito Ben Rye 2023. This is made



from Zibbibo using a third fresh grapes and two-thirds grapes which have been dried for three to four weeks giving dried apricots and spice. Great with Xmas pud.

The Marsala Masterclass from Curatolo Arini delivered to us by Alexandra Curatolo, the fifth generation of her family to run the winery, was mind blowing. The family have been doing this since 1773! We definitely should think of Marsala, not as a cooking wine at all, but something much more akin to Sherry or Madeira with a whole range of factors affecting the final wine. The grapes (red up to two types and white up to four types),

*continued on page 20* ➔



## Devonshire THE GLOBE

Tucked away in the heart of Torquay, The Globe is a restaurant that invites diners to journey around the world through flavour. The newly opened venture is the creation of husband-and-wife team Milan and Emily Lackovsky, whose combined 30 years in hospitality and travels across 55 countries have inspired a menu that celebrates both local, seasonal produce and global influences.

In October 2025, for 23 members of the Devonshire branch, their experience began with giant Perello olives from Spain, marinated in-house with olive oil, chilli, and orange – plump, aromatic, and perfectly balanced beside a glass of Blanc de Blancs Extra Dry Sparkling VINO Spumante from Vazzola in Italy's Treviso region. Light, crisp, and delicately fruity, it set a tone of relaxed sophistication.

Starters showcased The Globe's creative precision: Homemade Roasted Butternut Squash Soup served with warm focaccia, Goat's Cheese and Chicory Tarte Tatin topped with fig chutney, a classic Marinated King Prawn Cocktail and Chicken and Pork Terrine with whisky, cranberries, and pistachios. Each paired beautifully with a Pablo Fallabrino Estival Gewürztraminer/Chardonnay blend from Uruguay – aromatic and bright, with notes of grapefruit, lychee, and white orchard fruits.

Mains continued the global narrative: Beef Fillet Medallions with red wine jus and gratin potatoes bringing French elegance, while Pan-Fried Seabass on Spanish-style butter beans added a Mediterranean warmth. The Chicken Supreme with brandy, cream, and bacon sauce was pure comfort, and the Wild Mushroom and Truffle Risotto embodied understated luxury. A Santuario Malbec from Argentina, rich and velvety, completed

the experience.

To finish, desserts were indulgent and beautifully crafted – Basque Cheesecake with apricot jam, Chocolate Torte with port-soaked cherries, and Honey & Lemon Panna Cotta with buttery shortbread.

Elegant yet unpretentious, The Globe captured the spirit of travel and togetherness – a refined dining experience, organised by David Rowe and Linda Baker where Devon's best produce meets the flavours of the world.

*Linda Baker*



➡ *continued from page 19*

their proportion, the age and the maturation all count. They do not add any sugar or caramel to any of the Marsala wines.

At Gorghetti we tasted their spumante Palmarès Extra Dry Rosé made from Nero d'Avola using the tank method. Fresh and clean it had light red fruits in the long aftertaste and was very good quality.

Da Giovanna have been organic since 1997 and their team of 27 hand pick everything, including the olives whose harvest starts earlier than the grapes. Their Helio 2022 made from Nero d'Avola had two years in oak, deep red in colour, some earth on the nose and delivered an excellent dry but full, spicy flavours which filled the mouth. Delicious! This is a great grape for a Friday Night wine.

Planeta is one of the larger producers and has five wineries in different locations in Sicily. Ciara Planeta told us they wish to be independent and self-sufficient. They showed us some excellent wines, but a couple stood out. Their Eruzione 1614, recalling the eruption of Mount Etna in that year, is made from 100% Carricante. Tasting has an immediate impact, long, unctuous, fresh fruit and a touch of honey with balancing acidity. We were

lucky enough to taste the 2011 vintage of Santa Cecilia made from 100% Nero d'Avola. Grown on poor white limestone soils it has a dark brick red colour, earth on the nose and was very smooth in the mouth with black fruits and a long tail.

The food in Sicily was very good, very interesting and very different. We had lunches at Curatolo Arino, Da Giovanna and Planeta and two excellent dinners in Marsala at Osteria Siciliando and Bottega del Carmine. Highlights were arancini (fried rice balls), cannoli (pastry with ricotta filling), and pasta alla Norma (pasta with eggplant, tomatoes, and ricotta salata). Sicilian cuisine is known for a blend of sweet and savoury flavours, with a notable example being caponata (a sweet and sour eggplant relish). Street food is also a staple, featuring items like panelle (chickpea flour fritters) and granita (a semi-frozen dessert, made from sugar, water, and fruit flavours).

In all an excellent tour, which some people extended to take in more of Sicily and which has led to a discussion on 'Where next?' Currently, Alsace looks a distinct possibility for late 2027.

*Chris Graham*



## Devonshire

### DISCOVERING THE DELICIOUS FLAVOURS OF EPHEBUS

Torquay, known for its beautiful coastline and rich history, has no shortage of places to eat. But we were craving something a little different and chose Ephesus, a local restaurant in the heart of Torquay, which offers a unique dining experience with its blend of authentic Turkish and Greek cuisine, serving up a mouth-watering array of Mediterranean dishes. Of the 262 restaurants listed on Tripadvisor, Ephesus is within the Top 20.

The building housing the restaurant has had a long history starting from the Victorian period, having been used by a cabinet maker and upholsterer, and for a while was owned by the retailer that became known as Debenhams. It was converted into a hospitality venue in the mid-twentieth century, whilst retaining the attractive red sandstone exterior, and introducing strong art deco influences, making this a very elegant venue. As Christmas was approaching there was also a seasonal sparkle for us to enjoy, and this all set the tone for a very enjoyable dining experience for our group of 30.

The evening commenced with a glass of Prosecco Serenello Extra Dry on arrival. This was bright, gently aromatic and off-dry. When we sat down we enjoyed a generous procession of hot and cold meze including hummus, tzatziki, and baba ghanoush, served with warm homemade bread and chilled Cankaya, one of Turkey's most recognisable white wines with intense fruit

flavours. This provided us with a truly authentic taste of Turkish and Greek cuisine, shared among the diners at each table in the traditional manner.

Following the meze, each diner was served one of the seven main courses they had been asked to choose from, along with rice and salad. These dishes combined lamb, beef, chicken or prawns with rich marinades and tomato and cheese-based sauces, along with plentiful vegetables, herbs and spices. Ephesus prides itself on sourcing as much produce as they can locally to support local producers, and the fresh quality ingredients this provides really shone through in the main dishes. Where appropriate these were enjoyed with Ephesus Cabernet Sauvignon Okuzgozu, which has a radiant, ruby-red hue, exuding lively sour cherry notes. For dessert there was traditional Baklava featuring filo pastry, chopped nuts and honey, or chocolate fudge cake and ice cream.

In all it was a fun and enjoyable evening with lots of interesting conversation and laughter, and everybody was delighted with the unusual but traditional style of cooking and eating on offer. The restaurant staff looked after us very well and were roundly thanked at the end by our Chair David Rowe. We will be back.

*Heather Bignell-Blye and Kenneth Turner*



Photograph © Fiona Reed

## Herefordshire & Monmouthshire

### T'WAS NEARLY CHRISTMAS

In early December we celebrated Christmas with our annual Black Tie Dinner and we returned after four years to Orles Barn at Ross on Wye. In this building, which dates from fourteenth century, Matt and Roxy Cook have run this 'restaurant with rooms' for a number of years gaining a reputation for offering luxurious accommodation and excellent fayre for special events. This year we were a group of 20 and were delighted to welcome members from Zurich, Wessex, Blackpool & Fylde Coast and Berkshire. A particular welcome was given by our new branch chairman, David McIntyre, to John Nicholas, the newly appointed chairman of council and to his wife Joan.

#### Our Feast

##### To Start

- Confit of Duck Rondale with braised red cabbage, apple purée, bay leaf jus, vegetable crisp
- Warm Nut Crusted Brie with spiced figs, celery salad, mulled wine dressing
- Smoked Salmon and Mackerel Roulade with dressed leaves, melba toast, horseradish coulis

##### To follow

- Roast Turkey with chestnut, herb and apricot ballotine, vegetables selection

- Roast Rump of Welsh Lamb with fondant potato, ratatouille, spinach
- Baked Supreme of Cod with pesto potato crust, mange tout, roast cherry tomatoes, beurre blanc sauce
- Chestnut, Leek and Mushroom Filo Parcel with Château potatoes, melange of roasted vegetables

##### Dessert

- Individual Toblerone Cheesecake with toasted almonds, black cherry compote, Chantilly cream
- Home-Made Christmas Pudding served with brandy sauce or cream
- Vanilla Crème Brûlée with apple, date and amaretto compote, shortbread biscuit

##### Wines

- Prosecco Spumante DOC, Italy
- Picpoul de Pinet Carte Noir, France
- Cellier D'or Côtes du Rhône, France

T'was a grand way to catch up with friends and celebrate Christmas.

*Peter McGahey*



## Liverpool

### LIKE MOTHER USED TO MAKE



We at the Liverpool branch have a reputation for taking our members and guests out of their comfort zone! And you don't get much more off-piste than our July trip to Kopitiam Sentral, Liverpool's new Malaysian restaurant. When we told our Malaysian friend we were going to Kopitiam Sentral she said "that's interesting, Kopitiam, literally translated, is Coffee Shop and Sentral is the Malaysian word for Central, i.e. Central Café."

The restaurant was opened just seven months ago by Jaclyn Lee who previously worked for Malaysian Airlines and moved to England from Malaysia a decade ago.

Kopitiam Sentral is far from a coffee shop, the restaurant specialises in Nyonya cuisine, which comes from the descendants of early Chinese migrants who settled in Malaysia and married into the community. Recipes blend traditional flavours of Chinese, Malaysian, Javanese and Indian cooking, resulting in unique yet familiar dishes that are sweet and sour, spicy and fragrant.

We started our Malaysian adventure with Roti Canai which is a Malaysian version of Indian paratha, influenced by Indian Muslim immigrants. This was served with a glass of Colle del Principe Valdobbiadene Prosecco Superiore DOCG.

Our second course was Char Kuey Teow, a stir-fried rice noodle dish from Maritime Southeast Asia of southern Chinese origin. It is made from flat rice noodles, stir-fried over very high heat with garlic, light and dark soy sauce, chilli paste, whole prawns, shelled blood cockles, chopped Chinese chives, slices of

Chinese sausage and bean sprouts. It was served with Henri Ehrhart Gerwurztraminer Réserve Particulière 2023.

For main course we were served Nasi Lemak, a dish originating in Malay cuisine that consists of rice cooked in coconut milk and pandan leaf. This is considered the national dish of Malaysia. The wine accompanying was The Ned Malborough Pinot Noir 2021.

Dessert was the traditional Kuih Talam. Associated with Nyonya or Peranakan cuisine, this is a culinary style that blends Chinese and Malay traditions. It's a two layered cake; pandan flavoured bottom rice flour and an upper layer of lightly salted coconut cream or gula melaka.

And of course being in the 'Central Café' we had to sample their interesting coffees that are all authentically made including one which was a combination of a light tea and coffee – very different!

At the end of the meal, as our Chairman Terry Lim, who just happens to be a born and bred Malaysian, was saying his thank yous, I thought I would ask him the million-dollar question! How authentic was tonight's cooking?

"Very" was his answer. But what about the dessert the 'Kuih Talam' (pictured above), a culinary style that blends Chinese and Malay traditions? And with a small tear in the corner of his eye Terry said it was "just like my mother used to make". Praise indeed!

*Nigel Williams*

## Liverpool

### WHEN HARRY MET... THE IWFS!

On the 12th November it was a dark and stormy night, just the sort of night that Captain Barnacle Bill might have been setting sail from Liverpool. Who is Captain Barnacle Bill and what does he have to do with food and wine I hear you cry?! Well I will tell you, or I will at least tell you what Harry told the Liverpool Branch...

Barnacle Restaurant & Bar opened in Liverpool in October 2025, just about a month before our event, making us the first private party to visit – a very special privilege.

Barnacle Restaurant & Bar is set within the grade II listed building on Hardman Street which was once home to the former Royal School for the Blind instituted in 1791, and is located in the city's beautiful Georgian Quarter.

We arrived at 7pm to a very welcome glass of Henners sparkling wine. We were then taken through to the dining room where members and guests were introduced to Harry Askew, son of Liverpool's highly acclaimed chef Paul Askew.

Once we had taken our places Harry, who is Barnacle's Restaurant Director, welcomed us all and introduced us to Barnacle.

"My Grandfather was Captain Barnacle Bill Askew and he sailed the world on the Blue Star lines – his travels always inspired my father, Paul Askew, and set him on his course in hospitality and eventually fine-dining at The Art School.

"Here at Barnacle's we want to celebrate the city's maritime soul with seasonal, sustainable, field-to-fork menus crafted by Paul Askew who is Chef Patron and owner of The Art School. He, alongside Head Chef Kieran Gill, will be working with

Merseyside's finest local artisans, farmers and producers including Wards Fish, Almonds Fruit and Vegetables to the best rare breed meat from The Wirral and North Wales."

Throughout the meal Harry very kindly introduced both the food and wine pairings and why the various wines were selected.

#### To start

'New Liverpool Chowder'

with Ward's natural smoked haddock, cockles and mussels  
*Château Canteloudette Entre Deux Mers Blanc, France*

#### Main Course

Haunch of wild Cheshire fallow deer venison, roasted butternut squash, 83% chocolate peppercorn sauce, winter greens, enoki mushrooms

*Tormaresca Neprica Primitivo, Antinori, Puglia*

#### Dessert

Amalfi lemon meringue Tart with fresh lemon and basil sorbet and to finish Harry introduced us to, *Toxteth Limoncello!*

Established in 2020 by two Liverpool bartenders, Andrew Ayodele Oyeneyin and Seamus Patrick Sullivan. The idea was simple: to create a quality, carefully crafted Limoncello made with the freshest and highest quality ingredients. Liverpool Zest Limoncello is made from fresh lemons, premium grain vodka, raw organic cane sugar and fresh mineral water, which we all agreed was delicious, you really can get that fresh Amalfi feel with every sip.

*Nigel Williams*



## Liverpool

### AN INDIAN SPIRITUAL EXPERIENCE



We have had our Indian summer so now it was time for our Indian Christmas, and where better than Southport's prestigious Kalash Divine Indian. I say prestigious because Kalash Divine Indian, No1 Lord Street, Southport, is among 18 eateries from the Liverpool city region which are included in the newly released Harden's Best UK Restaurants 2026.

Kalash refers to the sacred Hindu pot (Kalash) representing creation, abundance and divine energy, and Christmas in India is called Bada Din, which translates to 'big day'. So our expectations were high.

Our host, owner and founder of the restaurant, Ranjeet Singh, explained to our group. "For Christmas Day we have created a special festive menu showcasing the very best of regional Indian cuisine and that is what the kitchen has prepared for us tonight."

Ranjeet added, "Kalash Divine celebrates the renaissance of Indian cuisine from this region of the world, bringing diners light, nutritious, aromatic food that's a feast to the senses with a perfect and subtle balance to delight a gourmet's heart and soul."

First out of the kitchen was a wonderful soup, Pumpkin Coconut Sorba with Cardamom spice. When I asked how many of our diners had had soup in an Indian restaurant before the reply was no one!

This was followed by a plate containing three starters each (pictured on page 26), Malabari Chicken Tikka, Lamb Parsi Boti Kebab and Bhutte ke Kebab – corn and mashed potato patties seasoned with Indian spices and cheese, each with its own sauce.

Our first wine of the evening was a white from the Del Pedregal family, one of the oldest and largest wineries in Chile. The Del Pedregal family founded the winery in 1825 and have celebrated 200 years in winemaking in 2025. So it was appropriate we had a 2025 'Aves del Sur' Sauvignon Blanc, ABV 12.5% from the Maule Valley in Chile. This wine is bright yellow in colour with greenish highlights. The nose has refreshing aromas of grape, green apple and citrus. On the palate it is elegant, delicate and soft with bright and crisp acidity, hints of grapefruit and citrus give a refreshing feel leading to a long finish. Making it a perfect pairing for our starter.

Main course there was a choice of three dishes, Ghansali Chicken, pan-seared chicken breast marinated with pink pepper, aromatic spices, served with the iconic peach curry from Ghansali, North India; Sali Boti, boneless lamb slow-cooked in a sweet, sour and spicy tomato-based gravy, topped with crispy potato straws; Paneer Pasanda, soft paneer slices filled with a sweet and spicy stuffing, simmered in a delicately spiced, creamy sauce. These were placed in the centre of the table so everybody could try the various dishes, the vegetarian was a big hit, the sauce was to die for!



This was all served with Motie Pilau Rice and hot Saffron Naan Bread.

Our second wine was a red from The Tittarelli winery, Mendoza Argentina. Nestled at the foot of the majestic Andes, Mendoza is Argentina's premier wine region, producing over 70% of the country's wine across 146,000 hectares of sun-drenched vineyards.

In 1915 Enrico Tittarelli, an Italian immigrant, bought three hectares in Campamentos (Rivadavia) and planted his first vines. Now over a 100 years later the winery is recognised worldwide

for the quality of its wines and today the Bodega consists of 1,100 hectares of vines aged between 30 and 80 years and still maintains a strong family identity, combining tradition and innovation to produce high-quality wines that capture the essence of the area. The 2023 Tittarelli Malbec ABV 13% is a fruity, vibrant red offering deep purple hues. A rich aromas of red and black fruits, particularly plums, raspberries, and blueberries and with just a hints of violets. On the palate this wine is fruit-driven and jammy, with good acidity and rounded tannins. It has a fleshy mouthfeel and offers flavours of dark and ripe plums and raspberries with a note of chocolate.

Dessert was specially chosen by Ranjeet. Jalebi with Rabri (pictured below), it had been one of his childhood favourites, in fact he reckoned back in Punjab as a child eating six or seven pieces was not a problem, but it is very sweet and we all agreed that one was more than enough!

Kalash Divine Indian is certainly doing something different from any other Indian restaurant around town, and this seven-year-old venue has expanded into the premises next door to meet demand for its family recipes.

This Southport establishment definitely lives up to its restaurant's name, with food they see as a 'spiritual' experience.

*Nigel Williams*



## Liverpool CULINARY ADVENTURES



It's a new year, don't ask where 2025 went! And so we began our culinary adventures of 2026. Where better to start the year than at Liverpool's top Spanish restaurant Lunya, a Catalan Deli, Restaurant & Bar. If you want a true Spanish/Catalonian night out without the air miles you can't do much better than Lunya; independent, staff owned and winner of many awards.

Lunya is becoming a favourite on the Liverpool IWFS calendar not only because of the great food and outstanding wines, but the real Spanish hospitality and this trip only endorsed that. From the moment we walked through the door you knew it was going to be a great night.

Our arrival drink was a glass of Vermouth, 'Italian!' I hear you cry, but no, many Barcelona bars serve vermouth and very often to their own recipe. We had Padró Blanco, a Catalan white vermouth with aromatic bitter-sweet flavours, with notes of laurel and elderflower.

Pasqualina, who was our hostess for the evening showed our group to a very long table and Chairman Terry Lim opened the meeting before we were served our first tapas course. As light as air Tomato bread, followed by a sharing platter with Smoked chorizo from León, Serrano ham, Black garlic Zamorano cheese and Azul Navigante blue cheese. This was served with a white wine! and yes it did indeed work, it was a great white from Tierra de León, Raíces Albarín, a very unusual grape variety with a light muscatel-like nose, fresh and aromatic.

The courses just kept on coming... Pan-fried coley with fideuà negra (squid ink noodles), samphire and allioli.

Cocido, a comforting bean stew made with creamy white Alubias beans from El Navarrico, in a light mushroom broth.

Chestnut-fed pork secreto, pan-roasted shoulder cut, served with spinach and an almond and herb cream sauce.

Cauliflower frituras in a cumin, paprika and fennel seed spiced batter, served with mojo rojo. These dishes were matched with the first of two reds: Tres de Priors a blend of Trepát and Merlot from Catalunya, with notes of strawberry, blackberry and a touch of liquorice.

Next came Estofado, slow-roasted ox cheeks in a rich cinnamon and orange reduction, served on creamy celeriac purée with carrot crisps and deep-fried Spanish goat's cheese, drizzled with wildflower honey and topped with beetroot crisps. Pasqualina had matched this with Maires Cuzo a modern, gentle style Toro with aromas of red and dark berries, hints of liquorice, herbs and soft oak spice. Again she got it spot on.

To finish, we enjoyed a slice of Tarta de Santiago, served as they do in Galicia, with a glass of sweet sherry to drink, and also to add a few drops over the cake to enjoy this amazing combination.

Ysanne Williams, our Events Manager thanked Pasqualina and all of the chefs and staff at Lunya and said they had set the bar very high for our culinary adventures of 2026.

*Nigel Williams*

## London

### AGM DINNER

Our London Branch AGM was held at Noizé restaurant in Fitzrovia, central London, starting with a glass of champagne and followed by dinner.

Alan Shepherd presented the Chair's report. We had held a wide variety of outstanding events during the year, amongst which were superb lunches and tasting dinners, and several interesting and innovative wine tastings led by knowledgeable members; some including mature wines generously donated from their own cellars. We also organised the summer garden party at Cumberland Lodge, a great success!

We look forward to another excellent year. Rising prices in London are a major challenge, but we do all we can to offer value for money.

Noizé restaurant is named after a small village in the Loire Valley, where the proprietor, Mathieu Germond, is from. Mathieu has been a great friend of IWFS for many years, having hosted splendid dinners and lunches for us. The Head Chef is George Farrugia, who joined the restaurant in 2021, and brings inspiration from his Cyprus origins. The Michelin Guide refers to: "A delightfully relaxed French restaurant, personally run by a warm and welcoming owner. The menu features a mix of classic and more modern French food, prepared with love and care."

As ever, this year we were well looked after. We had the additional benefit of wines specially selected by Mathieu, from his extensive knowledge.

The menu and wines were:

Cheddar Gougères

*NV Crémant de Loire, domaine des Hauts Perrays, Brut, Loire Valley, France*

Cod, Parsnip Salad, Vermouth Broth

*2023 Viognier, 974, Ventoux, Rhône Valley, France*



Slow-Cooked Beef Bourguignon with carrots and mushrooms, mashed potato

*2022 Carignan, Familia Cecchin, Mendoza, Argentina*

Île Flottante

*2024 Coteaux du Layon Saint Aubin, Domaine des Barres, Loire Valley, France*

*Rachel Burnett*



## London

### CHRISTMAS/NEW YEAR CELEBRATORY DINNER



Outside it was a miserably dark, cold and wet early January evening. But inside the Information Technologists' Hall, London Branch members and guests enjoyed light, warmth and a hearty welcome, gathering for a combined post-Christmas and New Year Dinner.

The Worshipful Company of Information Technologists is a modern Livery company, one of the more relevant and influential in the City of London today. Its Hall opened in 2001, centrally located in the medieval alleys of the old City.

As we mingled and chatted in the reception area, the pre-prandial Chardonnay Baron de Beaumont Brut, Bourgogne



flowed (refreshing, with apple and hints of almonds on the palate).

We dined in the Livery Room. The dinner was a sumptuous four courses, accompanied by specially selected wines, provided by The Cook & The Butler, whom some of us regard as the best in the City, and who make a point of using seasonal ingredients sourced from the London food markets:

Filo Pastry Envelope of Sea Bass & Aubergine Caviar, served with Watercress Sauce  
*Badgers Creek Semillon Chardonnay 2023 South-Eastern Australia*

Confit of Scottish Balmoral Wild Boar with Gooseberry Juice, Celeriac Potato & Roasted Spring Vegetables  
*Montepulciano d'Abruzzo, Villa Rocca 2023 Italy*

Whole Devon Conference Pear, poached in Crème de Cassis, served with Clotted Cream Ice Cream  
*Muskat Ottonel Late Harvest Spätlese 2018, Julius Hafner Mönchhof Neusiedlersee, Austria*

The Cotswold Wild Flower Gin Cured Smoked Salmon Quiche, served with Salad

We concluded with port, coffee or tea, and chocolate truffles.

We had a thoroughly convivial time, in comfortable surroundings with attentive service, celebrating the New Year in style.

*Rachel Burnett*

## Manchester

### A FOUR-COURSE INDIAN AND PAKISTANI BANQUET

Zouk is an award-winning restaurant and one of central Manchester's leading Indian establishments, renowned for its authentic cuisine and outstanding hospitality. With a proud heritage of delivering food and drink prepared with love and authenticity, Zouk has become a firm favourite amongst diners from across the city and surrounding areas.

Famed for its exceptional curries and freshly baked naan, the restaurant offers guests an opportunity to enjoy Indian and Pakistani dishes in stylish, contemporary surroundings.

The anticipation of a colourful and flavoursome evening, featuring an authentic four-course banquet, clearly proved very popular, with the event invitations receiving an exceptionally enthusiastic response.

In the early evening as the sun was setting over Manchester, thirty-five members and their guests, drawn from both the Manchester Branch and other North West branches, gathered in the bar at Zouk.

They received a very warm welcome from Mr Sylvester Nobert, and were greeted with an aptly named Apéritif, 'Sunset at Zouk', an elegant and delicious combination of vodka, peach schnapps, homemade hibiscus syrup, cranberry, orange, and redcurrant.

Before long, the bar resounded with joy and laughter as people greeted old friends and made new acquaintances.

Our Chair, Nicola, addressed the gathering, extending a particular welcome to new members and highlighting forthcoming events for our diaries. She then introduced Mr Amjad Bashir, owner and founder of Zouk, who spoke proudly

about the restaurant's journey since its inception in 2009 and its continued evolution up to the present day.

The banquet commenced with traditional appetisers of poppadoms served with a selection of chutneys, followed by a beautifully presented sharing platter of starters – chicken tikka, onion bhaji and kachumber salad.

The food was accompanied by Conde Bel Blanco Rioja, a crisp and elegant white wine which was generously poured throughout the evening. Pale straw in colour, it offered aromatic notes of citrus, green apple, and delicate floral undertones. Refreshing on the palate and perfectly balanced, it was an ideal complement to the spicy aromatic dishes.

Conde Bel Rioja is produced from 100% Viura grapes, fermented in stainless steel tanks at a controlled temperature of 16°C. Bottled without oak ageing, it retains a youthful freshness and vibrant character.

Some members opted instead to accompany their meal with a selection of refreshing beers.

The main courses, all served with pilau rice and freshly baked naan, featured a range of authentic and aromatic dishes:

- Chicken Karahi, a Pakistani chicken curry wok-fried over high heat with tomatoes, crushed peppercorns, cumin, ginger, and garlic.
- Lamb Handi, a Punjabi-style lamb curry, slow-cooked with tomatoes, onions, garlic, and Zouk's special garam masala.
- Tarka Dhal, channa and lentils cooked in a gently spiced sauce.

The meal concluded with a beautifully arranged platter of Zouk's scrumptious signature desserts.

As the evening drew to a close Nicola conveyed our thanks and appreciation to the Zouk team for their attentiveness and hospitality.

It was a thoroughly enjoyable evening, the result of outstanding food, elegant surroundings, attentive service, and convivial company. One which will remain fondly in members' memories for some time.

Feedback received both on the evening and afterwards was exceptionally positive, confirming the event as a resounding success.

Sincere congratulations are also due to Nicola for initiating this delightful event, together with thanks to the Committee and all those involved in its organisation. Their efforts ensured a truly memorable occasion for everyone who attended.

*Dr Jane Barber*



## Manchester

### LUNCH AT THE 1853: A CELEBRATION OF THE AUTUMN SEASON

The 1853 Restaurant is a hidden gem in the heart of Manchester, located within the City Campus of The Manchester College. It is a training restaurant offering a delightful, contemporary and stylish, relaxed dining experience. Guests experience a welcoming ambience where they can enjoy a variety of culinary creations crafted by the talented students of the College's Industry Excellence Academy for Hospitality and Catering.

The restaurant prides itself on using local seasonal ingredients, ensuring that each dish is not only delicious but also sustainable. The menu is dynamic, changing regularly to showcase the innovative skills of the student chefs.

The décor of yellow and black, with mirrors featuring a honeycomb design, is themed around the iconic symbol of the Manchester Bee!

On a beautifully sunny autumn day in 'Cottonopolis', the 1853 Restaurant hosted the IWFS Manchester Branch for an Autumn Lunch that captured the spirit of the season with warmth, style, and exceptional flavours.

Our party of 28 comprised members and their guests, including some from three other Northern branches: Blackpool & Fylde Coast; West Yorkshire, and Merseyside & Mid-Cheshire.

On arrival, we received a warm welcome from student maître d' Jack and front-of-house team member Mia. The afternoon got underway with a Harvey Wallbanger apéritif, its bright citrus notes providing a lively and palate-stimulating start to the meal. This colourful cocktail was accompanied by a selection of beautifully presented, delicious seasonal canapés – a combination that set the perfect tone for an afternoon of elegant dining.

People clearly appreciated the opportunity to mix and mingle with those from other branches, enjoying 'putting faces to names'. There was soon a very lively buzz of conviviality permeating the room.

Whilst gathered in the bar area, our Chair, Nicola McLoughlin, addressed us and thanked those who had been involved in organising the event. She expressed delight that Stephen Harrison, the newly appointed Chair of iwfsa.org, was able to join us from across the other side of the Pennines.

Stephen is someone who feels passionately about the mentoring and development of young people within the hospitality and catering industry – he is a founding member and a major driving force behind the annual IWFS UK Young Chefs' Competition.



As many of you will know, this competition is designed to provide young students with a forum in which to explore the culinary potential and flexibility of locally sourced ingredients. This year holds the promise of more outstanding entries.

Nicola then went on to remind us of the calendar of forthcoming exciting events for our diaries.

Introductions and welcomes over, we sat down to dine, fascinated to watch the students' activities taking place in the modern state-of-the-art kitchen being displayed in real time on a large screen situated within the restaurant.

The starter of Wild Mushroom Arancini with Saffron Aioli delivered an earthy depth balanced by the delicate, golden warmth of saffron. Paired with a Nero d'Oro Grillo Appassimento from Sicily, it offered a wonderful interplay of texture and taste - light yet indulgent. Many murmurs of appreciation could be heard around the room as people tucked into this initial dish.

Appassimento is a process of letting wine ferment on semi-dried grapes and is a technique normally used to give extra sweetness and richness to red wines such as decadent Amarone. Here, however, it is used in a highly unusual Sicilian white called Nero d'Oro ('black gold').

Made from the local Sicilian Grillo grape, it is deliciously peachy, not totally dry, but not as sweet as a dessert wine, with a refreshing acidity that prevents it from being overly cloying.

The main course comprised a comforting yet refined Braised Short Rib of Beef in Red Wine, served with Creamy Polenta and Seasonal Vegetables.

The beef, slow-cooked to perfection, was rich and tender, with the polenta adding a velvety backdrop. The accompanying Tbilvino Saperavi from Georgia proved an inspired match, its deep, bold character beautifully complementing this dish's richness.

Saperavi, which in Georgian literally means 'paint, dye, give

colour', is an acidic, teinturier-type grape native to Georgia, used in many of the region's best-known wines.

Tbilvino aims to become Georgia's premier winery, crafting exquisite wines from ancient indigenous grapes while honouring the timeless Qvevri winemaking method, rooted in an 8,000-year-old tradition. Its vineyards in Kakheti, Georgia's most celebrated region, yield grapes rich in sugar and character. The result is a fruit-forward wine with floral aromas, bold forest fruit flavours, and a fresh, elegant finish.

The dessert of Cherry Panna Cotta with Chocolate Crumb and Cherry Chantilly was a visual and sensory delight, silky, fruity, and perfectly balanced; this dish brought the meal to a delightful close.

Nicola asked all the students and staff to come together, so that she could offer our thanks and appreciation. Congratulating them on their hard work in providing culinary creativity, together with attentive service and warm hospitality, she went on to say how each course had been beautifully executed and every flavour thoughtfully balanced.

Guests rounded off the afternoon with tea and coffee, served alongside a tempting, melt-in-the-mouth, beautifully presented array of petit fours – a final elegant touch reflecting the kitchen's attention to detail and sense of occasion.

People were in no rush to disperse, staying on to chat and catch up with guests and friends, both old and new!

We all agreed that the event had been a celebration of fine food, thoughtful wine pairings, creating an atmosphere worth savouring – a wonderful reminder of how good food and wine brings people together in relaxed conviviality.

Grateful appreciation is due to the committee and all those involved in organising the event, especially to Ronnie Costello for arranging the wine pairings, which were elegant, well-matched, and globally inspired!

*Dr Jane C Barber*



## *Merseyside & Mid Cheshire* AT THE BELLS OF PEOVER

Knutsford in Cheshire. This charming pub was built in 1839 and it has an interesting history, most notably it was the setting for meetings between US Generals Eisenhower and Patton, when they were planning the D Day landings of 1944.

The venue prides itself on sourcing excellent local produce and the menus are drawn up and executed under the direction of Michelin starred Chef, Craig Sherringham.

Members were joined by friends from Blackpool and Fylde Coast and Manchester Branches, as well as new branch members attending their first event.

After an aperitif members and friends enjoyed the following menu, with wines chosen by the sommelier.

Goat's cheese and confit garlic bonbons, served with roasted beetroot, candied walnuts and a roasted garlic dressing. The accompanying wine was Pinot Noir Lautarul.

The main course was roast chicken, served with truffled Anna potatoes, wild mushroom and buttered greens with a tarragon jus. The wine was Domingo Martin.

Dessert was a chocolate and orange tart, served with marmalade ice cream.

The meal concluded with tea/coffee.



At this event, Chairman Tim Hodges, was delighted to present Hilary Rylands with the IWFS Exceptional Service Diploma and Medal. Hilary has been our branch secretary for many years, and she is also a valued member of the team who organise the annual Catering College awards.

*Angela Britland*

## *Merseyside & Mid Cheshire* CHRISTMAS 2025



The branch celebrated Christmas with a black-tie dinner at the Grosvenor Hotel in Chester. We enjoyed a delicious menu with accompanying wines chosen by the hotel's sommelier.

- Salmon Gravdax served with fromage frais, pumpnickel, apple and fennel slaw.
- Slow roasted turkey breast, confit leg and preserved fruit, duck fat fondant and traditional trimmings.
- Sticky Parkin Cake served with satsuma, orange and chocolate ice cream.
- Coffee and mince pies.

We had guests who were vegetarian and others with gluten allergies. The Chef managed to provide alternatives of a very high standard.

Jane Wynne Williams, a long standing member of the branch, was awarded the IWFS Exceptional Service Medal and Diploma, which was presented by branch Chairman, Tim Hodges.

*Angela Britland*

## Sussex

### DINNER AT THE BLACKBOYS INN



The Sussex Branch enjoyed a wonderful evening immersed in the relaxing characterful atmosphere of the picturesque Blackboys Inn.

This pub is considered one of the prettiest in the South East. Originally a fourteenth century coaching inn, it was used as a stopover for drivers transporting charcoal to Lewes and the

surrounding area. The name, seeming somewhat strange, originated from the appearance of the boys that used to emerge from the woods, in the olden days, after burning the charcoal. Now it is a thriving country pub priding itself on offering fine ales from the local Harvey's Brewery situated in Lewes, and locally sourced food with a diverse and eclectic menu.

The members enjoyed entrées including Chicken Liver Parfait, Tomato Tatin; mains included Chicken Supreme and Prosciutto wrapped Pork Tenderloin, with Triple Chocolate Brownie as one of the desserts. The meal was accompanied by wines of Rioja Blanco Valleymayor, Spain, and Cabernet Sauvignon Big Beltie, Pays d'Oc France. It was the Branch's first visit to this venue and I am sure we will be back in the future.

*Julie Wagg*

## Sussex

### DINNER AT PAMPA

The Sussex Branch once again enjoyed a dinner at the Argentinian restaurant called Pampa in the village of Cuckfield.

With its cosy atmosphere and welcoming attentive staff we enjoyed dishes that included excellent Argentinian steaks and the famous Churros, a staple food originally thought to have been made by Spanish shepherds who needed a simple portable food.

What better way to lift the spirits on a rainy night of October than to be given a welcoming glass of sangria. A flavoursome amuse bouche of Lobster Bisque or a Butternut Squash Soup commenced the meal. The wines served were Otonal Verdejo



Rioja, Spain, and An Amauta Absoluta, Male Salta, Argentina. A good time was enjoyed by all.

*Julie Wagg*

## Sussex

### DINNER AT OCKENDEN MANOR HOTEL



Once again the Sussex Branch had a thoroughly enjoyable and exceptional evening with the privilege of celebrating the Christmas Season with a dinner at Ockenden Manor Hotel.

This fine Elizabethan Manor House in the village of Cuckfield, West Sussex, has open fireplaces, oak panelled rooms and, at this time, beautifully decorated Christmas Trees. The wonderful

ambience and atmosphere certainly lift the spirits to a bygone age of opulence and elegance. It only seemed right for member to dress formally to experience once again a dinner produced by the outstanding staff and chefs, and overseen by the excellent restaurant manager, Russell Burbridge.

On arrival we enjoyed a glass of Bloomsbury Sparkling Wine from Ridgeview Sussex. The dinner commenced with entrées of Honey Roast Quail or Sauté Scottish Langoustine with the main course offered of local Balcombe Estate Venison or Roasted Fillet of Turbot, highly praised for its delicate flavour. The Desserts included the must have Christmas Pudding or a Dark Chocolate Tart with Baileys Ice Cream, who could resist. The wines served were a Picpoul De Pinet, Domaine Morin, Languedoc 2023 and Le Sabounet, Roger Sabon, Rhone, 2023. What a way to commence the Christmas celebrations.

*Julie Wagg*



## Vale Royal 'SALAD DAYS'



The Vale Royal Branch have enjoyed some great events during the middle months of this year.

We began the early summer season with a tasting menu dinner and wine flight at a branch favourite, La Popote in Marton, Cheshire. The evening began with a Pimm's cocktail in their garden area, before we moved indoors for our seven course dinner, which included:

- Torched Mackerel, wasabi cream, green apple and celeriac remoulade  
*Grüner Veltliner, Loimer, Kamptal, Austria, 2023*
- Duck Ham, orange and thyme crumble, pickled carrot and horseradish  
*Crozes-Hermitage white, Hauts-Chassis, Rhône, 2023*
- Scallops, fresh peas, broad beans, lemon and roe Cracker  
*Greywacke Sauvignon Blanc, Marlborough New Zealand, 2024*
- Fillet of Beef, beef cheek fritter, smoked potato cream, baby gem  
*Pinot Noir, Clayvin Vineyard, Marlborough, New Zealand, 2021*
- British strawberry salad, baked white chocolate, Meadowsweet ice cream  
*Sauternes, Château Briatte, 2019*

Our Summer Sunday Lunch this year was at Vale Royal Abbey Golf Club in Whitegate, Cheshire. The golf club is housed within an old manor house, which was built on the site of Vale Royal Abbey.

It was the day of the Wimbledon Men's final, so we began with a choice of Pimm's or champagne served on the lawn outside. The sun was shining and we congregated under the beautiful old trees in the shade.

We invited local historian Tony Bostock to come and give us a talk about the land and buildings. The first recorded documents on the site relate to King Edward I in the 1270s. He began by walking us to the remains of the High Altar, then continued inside walking through the building and stopping at various point of interest.

We had a traditional three course Sunday lunch, the menu consisted of a choice of starters including white onion soup, chicken liver parfait and mackerel salad. The main courses included roast beef or roast chicken, both were served with Yorkshire puddings and traditional trimmings. For those not wanting a roast other options included oven baked salmon. One of the desserts also had a Wimbledon theme with strawberries and cream cheesecake, others included honey and rosemary brulée and raspberry and dark chocolate brownie. The lunch was complemented with Rioja wines, the white was Muga 2024 and the red Cune Reserva 2020, both delicious.

After lunch Tony continued his fascinating talk about the site, the building, the people who lived there and the surrounding area. Altogether a very enjoyable way to spend the afternoon.

As the summer turned into autumn, the branch visited The Stolen Lamb in Knutsford. This is a newly opened Greek restaurant; it's the second establishment as the original restaurant has been in the neighbouring town of Wilmslow for many years.

The tasting menu with accompanying drinks and wine was superb. Their speciality dish is The Stolen Lamb and it lived up to expectations.

The staff and service were spot on, this was the first time this restaurant had such a large party for the combined food and drinks menu and it was flawless.

*Ali Graham*



## Vale Royal

### DINNER IN MANCHESTER

On 17th November 2025, the Vale Royal Branch travelled up to Manchester for dinner at Hawksmoor. On the night we had 11 members and two guests. It was a Monday and this is a 'bring your own' evening with a £5 per bottle corkage charge.

We had booked their private dining room that can seat up to 14 guests, it has wood panelling and warm lighting making it the perfect venue for a winter's evening. When we arrived, they opened the Boizel Brut Réserve Champagne and served this as our aperitif. This was one of the three wines we had brought for the event.

The first two courses were served 'family style' and there was a wonderful choice of food. The starters were smoked mackerel salad, Old Spot belly ribs and ash-baked beetroot, I particularly enjoyed the mackerel salad. The wine chosen for this course was Springfield Estate Albariño 2024 from South Africa, a delicious white wine that complimented all three of the starters.

For our main course we were served charcoal grilled steaks, these were T-bone, sirloin and prime rib and they came with a selection of sauces. The sides were beef dripping chips, mash and gravy, creamed spinach, macaroni cheese and a lettuce and herb salad. We chose Chocolate Block to accompany the steak. We were lucky enough to find several special edition two bottle boxes, each containing one 2013 and one 2023 bottle, this allowed us to do a tasting comparison of the wines, we also found 2023 magnums, so brought one of these along too. The wines were well received, this led to interesting conversation on who preferred which vintage with which cut of steak.



There was a choice of two desserts, they were sticky toffee pudding and clotted cream or seasonal Pavlova, tea or coffee was served at the end of the evening.

From the comments received from those there on the night everyone enjoyed the food and the interesting selection of wines.

*Ali Graham*



## Zurich

### NEW YEAR GALA DINNER 2026



The traditional year-end Gala Dinner took place in early January and was organised by younger members of our branch, Andrin and Anna. They have discovered an uprising chef into the Michelin world, David, with his restaurant, the 'Wöschi' in Zurich.

And indeed, it was unique experience. Not only the chef was absolutely outstanding, but also Maître Sam was a great experience of presentation and knowledge. Each small plate of the menu was a unique experience in taste, and the portions were small enough to enjoy the entire menu.

The food menu followed the seasonal availabilities, and cannot be described in specific names, but the wines can. The accompanying wines started with a bubbling wine from the UK, followed by excellent wines from Switzerland, France and Spain and ended with the Riesling from Germany. These wines were:

- Wiston Brut Magnum, Sussex, UK
- Räuschling Zürichsee, Lüthi, 2024, Switzerland
- Ube de Uvérima, Miraflores, 2018, Spain
- Anjou Noir, Domaine Belargus, 2019, France
- Ausàs Interpretacion, Ribeira del Douro, 2022, Spain
- Barth Fructus, Riesling, Rheingau, 2024, Germany

The dinner was also attended by John Nicholas, still a member of the Zurich Branch, but also an appreciated member of worldwide committees of the IWFS. In this function, he honoured Kurt Haering, long-time chairman of the Zurich Branch with the André Simon Bronze Medal for his contributions to the Society and the Zurich Branch.

There was also the pleasure to welcome new members. So, we are confident, that the Society and the Branch will have a prospering future.

*Kurt Haering*



*For IWFS members*

## OUR 2026 MEMBERSHIP BENEFIT

IWFS Europe Africa is excited to announce a strategic partnership for our UK-based members and branches with Waud Handford Wines – an outstanding wine merchant headquartered in London. (We would be delighted to work with non-UK based branches to establish a similar arrangement with merchants in their countries.)

Waud Handford Wines is a leading fine wine group with a flagship shop in South Kensington. For over three decades, the store has been cultivated into a London institution, renowned for warm, knowledgeable service and an exceptionally broad selection of wines. It was established by James Handford, a Master of Wine. The business is a reference point for collectors and casual enthusiasts alike, with bottles ranging from an accessible £10 to rare gems at £5,000+. Customers have long prized the shop's deep focus on Burgundy, Piedmont, South African and more.



Alongside this long-established store, the group runs successful online shops making it easy for customers to explore and enjoy outstanding wines from everyday favourites to iconic bottles.

The scope of the IWFS and Waud Handford Wines partnership and its benefits are as follows:





- IWFS Europe Africa members will receive a 10% discount on all purchases made via [www.waudhandfordwines.com](http://www.waudhandfordwines.com) using a dedicated code to be circulated exclusively to members in the very near future.
- Waud Handford Wines will be a preferred supplier of wines to branches in the United Kingdom and for IWFS UK events. They will provide wine expertise, recommendations and logistics, and supply wine to branches at competitive prices.
- Waud Handford Wines will offer members other promotional discounts and benefits from time to time, including follow-on bottles of wine featured at IWFS events and dinners. WHW

has and will assist in creating and providing educational wine videos to IWFS Europe Africa, including filming at the WHW cellar in South Kensington.

- Their South Kensington cellar will be made available as an attractive, atmospheric venue for selected wine events.

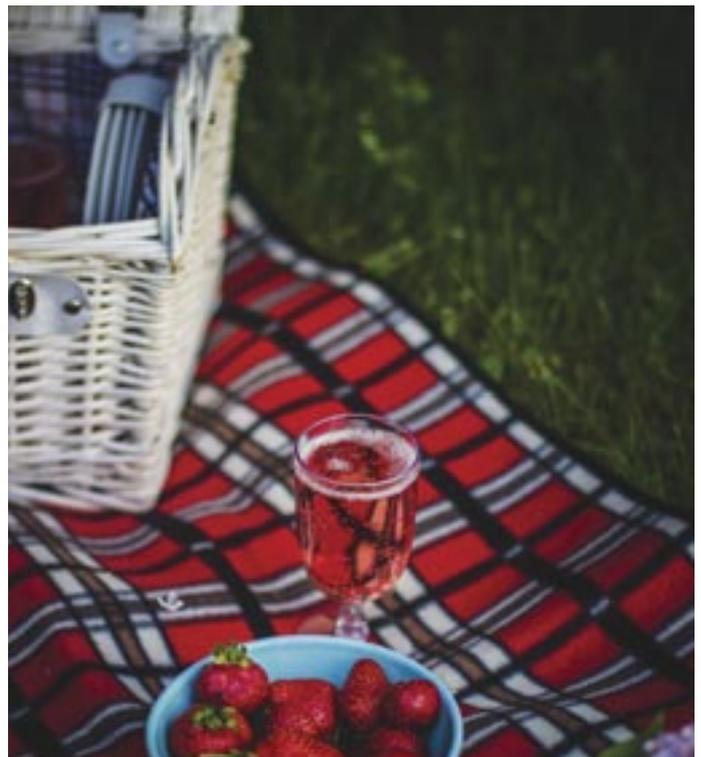
Once members receive the wine discount code, they can go online to take advantage of this partnership through the IWFS Europe Africa website at [www.iwfssea.org](http://www.iwfssea.org).

*For more information, please contact Phillip Kim [pkimhk@gmail.com](mailto:pkimhk@gmail.com)*

## DID YOU KNOW?

- The word 'picnic' comes from the French 'pique-nique', which was first used in the seventeenth century for a social gathering where the guests brought their own dishes.
- The practice became popular with royalty, who staged elaborate picnics with tables and chairs. When the royal parks were opened to the public after the French Revolution, more and more people enjoyed packing food to eat on their visits and picnics became more casual.
- The rise of the train, cars, and bicycling made picnics in the countryside even more popular across Europe at the end of the nineteenth century and start of the twentieth century.
- Now, families spend an average of £26 per picnic and the average person picnics three times a year.
- The most popular picnic snack is a bag of crisps, but sandwiches, quiche, pasties, and scotch eggs remain firm favourites.

*Simon and Kate King, Restaurant 1861, Cross Ash, Monmouthshire*



# DATES FOR YOUR DIARY

## UPCOMING FESTIVALS

### PORTO AND DOURO VALLEY

#### IWFS Europe Africa

6th to 11th May 2026

Join us to celebrate the wines, food and culture of this beautiful region. Now full, go to this link, <https://www.iwfs.org/europe-africa/eaz-major-events/porto-festival> to be added to the waitlist.

### PARIS AND BORDEAUX

#### IWFS Americas

14th to 23rd May 2026

Make sure you are part of this amazing trip to France's capital city, Paris, and its renowned wine capital, Bordeaux. Last few places remaining. Via this link: <https://www.iwfs.org/festivals/paris-and-bordeaux-2026>

### WALLA WALLA, WASHINGTON

#### IWFS Americas

1st to 5th June 2026

A town so nice they named it twice. A very special trip to a hidden gem – explore with us the historic town and of course visit the wonderful wineries. Via this link: [https://www.iwfs.org/assets/upload/images/Walla\\_Walla\\_Final.pdf?utm\\_source=campaign-7697&utm\\_medium=email&utm\\_campaign=2025+Is+Winding+Down](https://www.iwfs.org/assets/upload/images/Walla_Walla_Final.pdf?utm_source=campaign-7697&utm_medium=email&utm_campaign=2025+Is+Winding+Down) to find out more.

## BRANCH EVENTS

### UK Devonshire

5th March 2026

Dinner at Waddling Duck @ Hamiltons, Torquay. Contact Geeta Lloyd at [geetalloyd@gmail.com](mailto:geetalloyd@gmail.com) for details.

### UK Capital

10th March 2026

Cellar Series: Red Burgundy. Join us for this tasting to be held at the premises of Waud Handford Wines on Old Brompton Road. From 6.30pm to 10.30pm. Go to Events | IWFS Capital Branch for details.

### UK Northampton

11th March 2026

A Taste of Campania – a wine tasting lunch at The Palmichael restaurant in Burton Latimer. 12 noon for 12.30 pm. Contact Piers Smith-Cresswell for details [pierssc@yahoo.com](mailto:pierssc@yahoo.com).

### UK London

17th March 2026

Join us at an Excellence Award to the young chefs of Pillars Restaurant at West London University. A lunchtime event. See [www.iwfs.london](http://www.iwfs.london) for further details.

### UK Berkshire

20th March 2026

Andrew Walker of Solaris presents Slovenian whites and Spanish reds at Neville Hall, Waltham St Lawrence, 1845 for 1915. Contact Colin Mair via [maircolin1@gmail.com](mailto:maircolin1@gmail.com)

### UK Manchester

21st March 2026

Spring lunch at one of our favourites, The Lime Tree, Lapwing Lane, West Didsbury. Contact Chris Redman at [cdredman@talktalk.net](mailto:cdredman@talktalk.net) for details.

### UK London

24th March 2026

Young and vigorous, old and elegant wine – this is set to be a fascinating tasting of red, white and dessert wines, young and old. The evening starts at 7pm at The Army and Navy Club, 36-39 Pall Mall, London SW1Y 5JN. See [www.iwfs.london](http://www.iwfs.london) for further details.

### UK London

14th April 2026

Join us for a very special tribute dinner to our celebrated member Lance Jaundoo. Starts at 7pm at The Army and Navy Club, 36-39 Pall Mall, London SW1Y 5JN. See [www.iwfs.london](http://www.iwfs.london) for further details.

### UK Northampton

16th April 2026

Wine tasting dinner at the Northampton and Country Club (George Row) hosted by the branch President, Dr Robin Sheppard. Contact Piers Smith-Cresswell for details [pierssc@yahoo.com](mailto:pierssc@yahoo.com).

### UK Manchester

27th April 2026

We are heading for lunch at Hawksmoor, the award-winning steak restaurant, on Deansgate. Contact Chris Redman at [cdredman@talktalk.net](mailto:cdredman@talktalk.net) for details.

### UK Capital

5th May 2026

New and Aegean – A Modern Greek Culinary Odyssey at Aphrodite Taverna, 15 Hereford Road. The wines will be drawn from a member's private cellar to be enjoyed with generous platters of classic mezze brimming with Mediterranean warmth and flair. From 7pm to 11pm. Go to Events | IWFS Capital Branch for details.

### UK Northampton

5th to 7th May 2026

We are heading for 'May-away' to Bakewell. Contact Piers Smith-Cresswell for details [pierssc@yahoo.com](mailto:pierssc@yahoo.com).

## JUDGEMENT OF PARIS +50 EVENTS

It's not too late to be part of the celebration (see page 14 for details about how to get involved). Branches signed up so far are:

21st May

### UK Bath & Bristol/Hereford & Monmouthshire/Devonshire

at Kingston Seymour Village Hall, Clevedon

### UK Capital/London/Surrey Hills

at The Army and Navy Club, London

22nd May

### UK West Yorkshire

at Printworks Kitchen and Bar, Leeds City College

23rd May

### UK Manchester/Merseyside & Mid-Cheshire

at Manchester Hall, Manchester

### UK Devonshire

20th May 2026

Dinner at Old Vienna, Torquay. Contact Geeta Lloyd at [geetalloyd@gmail.com](mailto:geetalloyd@gmail.com) for details.

### UK London

4th June 2026

Join us for lunch at celebrity chef Angela Hartnett's Café Murano on Tavistock Street. Meet at midday. See [www.iwfs.london](http://www.iwfs.london) for further details.

### UK Manchester

13th June

The Tavern at the Black Friar gastro pub, Salford. Contact Chris Redman at [cdredman@talktalk.net](mailto:cdredman@talktalk.net) for details.

### UK Devonshire

18th June 2026

East in the West, Paignton. Contact Geeta Lloyd at [geetalloyd@gmail.com](mailto:geetalloyd@gmail.com) for details.

### UK Northampton

18th July 2026

Our Annual Picnic, a return to Gayton. For further details contact Piers Smith-Cresswell [pierssc@yahoo.com](mailto:pierssc@yahoo.com).

### UK Devonshire

9th July 2026

49TH AGM, Lunch at Lai Yuen (the Lloyds' home), Torquay. Contact Geeta Lloyd at [geetalloyd@gmail.com](mailto:geetalloyd@gmail.com) for details.