



Food & Wine

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

Issue 137

March 2020



**FOCUS ON
NORTHAMPTON BRANCH**

CÔTES DE PROVENCE

**CHAMPAGNE FROM
THE DEEP**

VALENCIA GREAT WEEKEND

Chairman's message



I am honoured that at the AGM of IWFS Europe Africa Ltd in Valencia, I was elected as Chairman of the Europe Africa Zone (EAZ) for the next three years. My reflections on EAZ's sustainability are set out in an accompanying article.

Ian Nicol will be a hard act to follow. In his two terms of office, in total six years, as Chairman of EAZ, he did a fantastic

job in chairing EAZ through the transition from regional committees to regional companies and their changed relationship with Council, as well as dealing with the many day-to-day issues that arise in managing IWFS. He and Chris joined many EAZ branches for events and attended many International Festivals. He has also represented EAZ on Council and chaired it for two years. I am pleased that he has agreed to remain on the EAZ Executive Committee (Exco) and will contribute as EAZ Webmaster.

In Valencia, as well as the AGM, we held a very successful Members' Forum where members contributed many ideas for consideration by the Executive Committee. Plans and thoughts will emerge during the coming months and will form the basis of EAZ's Marketing Plan. In 2020, the AGM and Members' Forum will be held near Cambridge during a short festival from the 18th to 20th September (details and booking instructions are included later in this edition). I hope many of you will be able to attend and I look forward to welcoming you to the AGM and Forum.

On your behalf, I would like to recognise and thank all those on the Exco, who volunteer and work hard to ensure that EAZ is managed effectively, remains financially sound and develops plans to sustain its future. They, together, bring a myriad of skills to the team, as well as their time and effort. There are others, not formal members of Exco, whom we need to thank as they also volunteer their time and skills in ensuring that "things get done". We also need to thank Andrea Warren, the IWFS International Secretary, for the support that she gives to EAZ from her office in The In and Out Club in London. She also manages our merchandise, details of which can be found on the IWFS website www.iwfs.org.

I look forward to hearing of the continued success of events organised by branches, and Joan and I hope to attend some of these over the next three years.

With belated best wishes for 2020.

John Nicholas

TREASURER

Having taken on the role of Chairman of EAZ, Exco needs a member to volunteer to take on the role of Treasurer and to join Exco. It is not good governance to combine the roles of Chairman and Treasurer.

The responsibilities can be defined to optimise the skills and interests of any volunteer.

Please contact me at johnsnicholas@aol.com or on UK telephone 01993 880 532 to discuss how you could help.

Front cover: Northampton County Council Crest, (Rosa Concordia Signum – The rose, Emblem of harmony)

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

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

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

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



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

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



Editorial

I was delighted to attend the 2019 AGM in Spain. Hosted by the Valencia branch chairman Eduardo Aquila and his partner Sophia Lusch, the EAZ Great Weekend and AGM took place in November 2019 in the Mediterranean city of Valencia. At the meeting John Nicholas (Zurich) was elected as Chairman, unanimously, to succeed Ian Nicol who had completed his term of office but who will remain on the Executive Committee. The focus in the New Year will be on expanding the membership in Europe and Africa and encouraging more of our members to experience international and regional events. At the Members' Forum, alongside the formal AGM in Valencia in October, delegates from our newest branch, Valencia, introduced the concept of "whole family" membership or family support, and at the events during the weekend we were joined by the parents and older children of mainstream members. The majority were members in their own right, or came along as guests, but it introduced a whole new dimension. It has to be said that the weather helped and as we dined under blue skies and 200 year old oak trees, we tasted and compared a range of Vermouths produced at Bodegas Nodus, about an hour's drive from the city. We savoured prawn and mussel appetisers with local wines whilst cruising in the waterways and lake of the Valencian rice fields in a flotilla of river boats reminiscent of the "African Queen". This prepared us for a jumbo sized-paella prepared in one pan for 60 guests and served al fresco... more of this later.

We are not unique in the EAZ in striving to attract more members and to engage members in a wider range of gastronomic attractions which are not always readily accessible to individuals. There are many seductive commercial alternatives for high end wining and dining for individuals and couples but to have the dedicated attention of award winning Chefs and Sommeliers is a privilege and provides memorable experiences for our members in the company of good friends. Looking ahead to later this year, the 2020 EAZ AGM in September will be in the university city of Cambridge, UK, where we will dine in several colleges and first class restaurants. The next EAZ festival, announced in our last edition, will be on the island of Madeira in November and was fully subscribed within days.

I look forward to meeting many of you at the AGM and in the meantime please keep sending your news , comments and reports.

Sue Smith

PUBLICATION DATES

- **Food & Wine Online (e-newsletter) Issue 13**
deadline for copy from contributors 31st March; publication mid/end April.
- **Food & Wine (printed) Issue 138**
deadline for copy from contributors 30th May; publication to members in July.
- **Food & Wine Online (e-newsletter) Issue 14**
deadline for copy from contributors 31st July; publication mid/end August (dependent on summer holidays).
- **Food & Wine (printed) Issue 139**
deadline for copy from contributors 30th September; publication to members in November.
- **Food & Wine Online (e-newsletter) Issue 15**
deadline for copy from contributors 30th November; publication mid/end December.

Please send photographs separately from text.

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

Food & Wine

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Contributors



Focus on Northampton: No Detail Too Small

Piers Smith-Cresswell is the immediate past Chairman and current Secretary of the Northampton branch. He would like to record his thanks to Alex Corrin, Betty Meadows, Robin Sheppard, and

other members and former members for their memories, records, and assistance.

Côtes de Provence

Jeffrey Benson is chairman of London Branch and has been in the wine trade for 35 years. He meets producers worldwide as a buyer and wine maker, conveying his knowledge through his lectures and consultancy work.

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



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Champagne from the Deep

Simon Field MW is an Oxford graduate and reformed Chartered Accountant, this particular reformation including a brief stint in Oddbins Belsize North London and then over twenty years as a buyer for Berry Bros and Rudd, where he specialised in the Champagne, the Rhône and Loire Valleys, the Midi and

Spain, amongst others. He passed his MW at the first attempt in 2002, winning the Mondavi and Derouet prizes, and was made a member of the Gran Orden de Caballeros in 2012. He now freelances and consults, working closely with producers such as the Perinns of Chateau de Beaucastel, advising assorted London Livery Companies and also working with both the WSET and the Institute of masters of Wine in several guises, not to mention contributing to many publications, Decanter and The World of Fine Wine among them. He loves to travel and visit the vineyards and growers, especially when it involves such fabulous locations as The Mosel or The Douro, amongst others.

Note from Ed: Simon is also a more recently appointed member of the IWFS Wines Committee.

DATA CONTROL

A reminder that the General Data Control Regulation (GDPR) will remain in force after BREXIT. Keeping data secure, either electronically or as hard copy, is important for IWFS and when communicating with your members and groups please use the 'BLIND COPY' email facility (BCC) to avoid publishing the contact details of all the other recipients.

Any queries please contact me, Data Controller, email peter.mcgahay@btinternet.com or telephone 01291 690825

News from the International Secretariat

Dear members,

Happy New Year!

The International Council of Management held their last meeting in Charleston, USA, in October during the Americas Great Weekend. One point of discussion was how to assist branches in recruiting new members. It was agreed a supply of the recently updated non-member Vintage Cards would be useful as they are a great way to show those who have an interest in the Society one of the benefits of membership.



A supply of these will be forwarded to all Europe Africa branches along with your supply of 2020 Membership Cards (please do not mix them up!) and we trust they will arrive safely. We do hope that you, or other branch members, will have the opportunity to hand them to lovers of food and wine you meet and encourage some new members to join during the year.

For you, our members, please note that if you prefer to view the Vintage Card details online the updated Vintage App is now available to download from the IWFS website via the following link: <https://www.iwfs.org/secretariat/iwfs-merchandise/latest-vintage-card-view-and-download>. The latest vintage assessments have been



BENEFITS FOR MEMBERS

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Offers valid until 31st December 2020.

THE RITZ, LONDON

The Ritz needs no introduction and we are pleased to advise that IWFS members will receive a 10% discount when booking accommodation, based

on the published best available rate on The Ritz London website. Please note this discount does not apply to any special packages or promotions.

If you wish to make a booking enquiry please email Maryam Sajjadi, Assistant Director of Sales, on email: msajjadi@theritzlondon.com or via: reservations@theritzlondon.com and advise them you are an IWFS member.

Please visit their website for more details on staying and dining at The Ritz London on www.theritzlondon.com.

The Ritz, 150 Piccadilly, London, W1J 9BR

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added – check out 2018 Bordeaux plus 2019 in the Southern Hemisphere. Drinkability of older vintages has also been updated by our expert consultants around the globe.

There are also two new benefits. One is with Decanter providing those of you who like to keep up-to-date with fine wine news and recent tastings with a subscription to Decanter Premium giving you 20% discount or if you prefer your news in print save 50% on a year's subscription to Decanter magazine;

The second is from The Ritz, London (pictured right) which is providing a discount on its accommodation for members wishing to have a night of luxury when in town next – details for both are below. But don't forget that members are also able to stay at the In & Out Club, also centrally located, at the "Guests" rate. Prices are available on the Benefits page of the website and please email me (sec@iwfs.org) with your booking details so I can put you in touch with the Club.

Until next time.

Andrea Warren



MERCHANDISE FOR MEMBERS

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



Drop Savers (3 per pack) £2

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



Blind Tasting Bottle Sleeve Kit £25

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

Neoprene Bottle Bags

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

2 Bottle Bag, £10

1 Bottle Bag, £8



Medallions £20

Cufflinks £7.50

Lapel Pin (in presentation box) £1



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

REFLECTIONS ON EAZ'S SUSTAINABILITY

From the Chairman

IWFS has been a remarkable organisation founded by a Frenchman in London over 85 years ago. It rapidly founded branches in the USA, where prohibition had recently ended and spread its tentacles to parts of the then British Empire.

Today with over 6,000 members worldwide and operating through three regions Europe Africa (EAZ), Asia Pacific (APZ) and Americas. In EAZ and Americas, we are having difficulty attracting new and younger members and in Europe we are having difficulty in setting up new branches. In APZ, the story is very different, with many new branches being formed throughout Asia and membership nearly doubling from around 800 a few years ago to over 1,500. The growth of interest in wine and food in Asia reflects the rapid and continued growth in the economic environment, the thirst (!!) for new experiences and a wine industry which is rapidly expanding and supportive of IWFS to spread awareness of the joys of wine and its pairing with good food.

Your EAZ Executive Committee (Exco) is very aware of the issues in the UK, Europe and Africa. I would surmise that Africa may move in the direction of Asia as economic growth and the burgeoning "middle classes" look for experiences on which to spend their "surplus" income after basic needs have been met. However, Africa is for the future, we need to focus on Europe, including the UK.

Exco, led by Leonie Allday, is developing a marketing plan and through an IWFS marketing Committee gaining insights from and sharing experiences with Americas and APZ. The plan will be shared with the membership during 2020. To implement the ideas, it will need the active participation of many members.

The foundations of IWFS are the branches. Their success and sustainability are essential to the future. It is in the branches where members meet regularly and form friendships. Wine and Food are two of the pillars of the Society, but to me the "company of like-minded people" or friends and camaraderie is an equal pillar in supporting the purpose of the Society.

The success of the Society is dependent on the continued success of the branches and their attractiveness to members and potential new members. Exco has observed the success of events and mini-festivals where more than one branch has participated – notable links have been formed between Zürich and Wessex branches, the branches in the North West of the UK, London's various branches and between Bath & Bristol and Herefordshire & Monmouthshire. I would like to encourage more of such links.

When travelling, your membership allows you to contact local branches. If there is an event with places available, you should be able to join in. The Zurich branch has twice entertained small groups from the Americas – one from California and the other from Toronto.

Two very successful Members' Forums (the opportunity for members to express their views) have been held. Many ideas

have arisen and will be used in the development the Marketing Plan.

I am very aware that the implementation of the marketing plan and other initiatives will need funding and that is why Exco has launched a funding programme, details of which can be found on the IWFS website at www.iwfs.org. The funds that can be made available have been accumulated over the last few years from the success of International Festivals organised by EAZ, led by Stephanie Shepherd, in particular the IWFS triennial London festival in 2018. These International Festivals, rather like sporting world cups, are the showcase of the Society and generate funds for the Society. Like international sports bodies, we want to use these funds to invest in and develop the "grassroots" membership.

We do not have to wait for the Marketing Plan, and so any branch or individual can already apply for funding to promote membership, organise a promotional event, to form a new branch or to develop a festival where IWFS does not have a branch. There may be other initiatives which could be funded. One branch has already had a grant awarded and two further applications are in the pipeline.

The Society depends on volunteers to keep it alive. Branch events and branch management committees rely on volunteers, but so does EAZ and IWFS Council. The current members of EAZ Exco have all served for a number of years and, on your behalf, I would like to thank them for all their effort in "running" EAZ. However, in due course some (all eventually) will want to be relieved of their responsibilities and allow others to bring fresh ideas to the table.

Communication is essential to create a sense of belonging to a group. Such communication has become increasingly immediate through the internet, emails and social media. We will continue with EAZ's flagship Food & Wine magazine, but increasingly communication will be through the formal IWFS Grapevine and EAZ's Food & Wine online – we are trying to make it easier to access both of these electronic publications. Please do try to access them and hopefully you will find them of interest.

As Chairman of EAZ for the next three years, I would like to continue this dialogue with members around EAZ. Please let me know if you have a special branch event where my presence might help to promote the Society or to celebrate a key milestone event for your branch. I will try to attend if given advance notice – the longer in advance the better.

Please send any comments on this article to the Editor Food & Wine at editor.eaz@iwfs.org and they will be published in the next edition of F&W. A small gift will be made to the member or potential member submitting the most interesting and useful comment.

John Nicholas

FOCUS ON NORTHAMPTON: NO DETAIL TOO SMALL

Piers Smith-Cresswell delves into the history of the Northampton branch

The Northampton branch of the IWFS celebrates its 50th anniversary this year. This may seem surprising. Look at the map in any food guide and you will find that, though it is surrounded by fine eating establishments, there are very few in Northamptonshire. One can eat out with little difficulty, but for many people fine dining requires an hour's drive.

Things were rather better in September 1970 when a few food lovers got together to establish a new branch of the IWFS. Why they chose to call it the Northampton rather than Northamptonshire branch is, like most of the branch records, lost in the mists of time. With the help of some of the longest-serving members, I have been able to piece together a story.

Two of the key figures in the early years were David and Mary Partridge, of the French Partridge at Horton, a village south of Northampton. For many years they had one of the best small restaurants in the area. He ran the kitchen while she supervised the bar, the cellar, and the front of house. Somehow she also found the time to be a Magistrate and a Citizen's Advice volunteer.

The French Partridge is still a legend in Northamptonshire, many years after the Partridges sold it and retired. Smooth service depended on their guests arriving exactly on time, and Mary ensured that they did by making those who had the temerity to turn up early wait outside in the car park until their appointed hour. Heaven help latecomers! Once through the door, the food, wine and ambiance were excellent, and the Partridges built up a loyal (and very punctual) following, a number of whom became members of the branch.

The other key figure was John Stewart – or to give him his full title, Captain John Stewart, OBE, Royal Marines (retired). A fine cook himself, Captain Stewart was the branch Secretary for the

first 17 years. He is remembered with a mixture of admiration, affection and fear, being described by more than one member as "an absolute tyrant". Betty Meadows joined with her husband Cyril in 1976 and brought a poached salmon to their first annual picnic. More than forty years later, John Stewart's "Oh, how boring!" still smarts, yet she says he was "a kindly man, and so efficient. Things always had to be just so".

He certainly had an eye for detail. According to branch legend, he used to insist that the person who organised a visit to a restaurant should arrive early to check the toilets and ensure there were adequate supplies of soap, towels, and toilet paper. They were also to take some linen cloths with which to polish the glasses.

If this is true, it probably says much about general restaurant standards in the 1970s, but such matters do not feature in Captain Stewart's guidelines for "The Organisation of a Branch Dinner" from 1982 which have recently surfaced. The respective duties expected of the branch Committee, Secretary, Treasurer, and organisers are listed, as are some principles to be followed. Most of his dicta are still relevant today. "A good meal with average wines is better than a poor meal with good wines" was one. Another was "REMEMBER NO DETAIL is too small to be considered so as to provide a dinner which pleases all the guests."

Despite Captain Stewart's efforts events did not always run smoothly. At one restaurant, service was so slow that all the wine was consumed before the first course arrived. At another it was noticed that the owner never opened any of the bottles at the table. It was suspected that he filled empties with an inferior product. Neither venue had a repeat visit.

Suspensions were not always one sided. Some members still remember the occasion when the branch had a private visit to a local historic house before their annual black-tie dinner in a country house hotel. Their evening was disrupted by the arrival of the police: their host of that afternoon had discovered that an ancient sword was missing. Jumping to the conclusion that it had been stolen he had alerted the local constabulary. In the best traditions of an Agatha Christie novel the meal had to go on hold while the dinner-jacketed or gowned suspects were interviewed by the police. Needless to say, no one had any weapons, antique or otherwise. John Stewart's fury did not abate when it transpired that the sword had been removed by the house staff for conservation a few days earlier.

While the French Partridge remained the branch's focal point, a new star appeared in the relatively local firmament in 1980 when Tim Hart opened Hambleton Hall Hotel in a Victorian former hunting lodge enjoying a stunning position on a peninsula overlooking the recently created Rutland Water. Inspired by Peter Herbert's Gravetye Manor in Sussex, Hambleton lifted the standard of dining available within an hour's drive of Northampton to new heights.



The earliest surviving Hambleton menu in our archives is dated 22nd November 1881. Commencing with an aperitif of Champagne Legras Présidence 1975, iced consommé with sour cream and caviar was accompanied by Mâcon Lugny Les Genèvres 1979 which may have stretched to the following course of mousseline of Rutland Water pike with crab meat. The main course was roast baby chicken with cream cheese and fresh herbs, partnered with Chateau Tauzinat l'Hermitage 1975, Grand Cru St Émilien. A dessert of toasted raspberries with almonds (*sic.* did they mean raspberries with toasted almonds?) was no doubt admirably complimented by Château Suduiraut 1969, Premier Cru Classé Sauternes.

Nearly forty years later, one is struck by the amount of cream involved. This may or may not have prompted Captain Stewart to put item 4 (C) in his guidelines of the following year ("Vary texture of dishes. Mix heavy with light. Do not duplicate ingredients"), but we can be confident that it was a very good meal, as the kitchen at Hambleton was awarded a Michelin Star in 1982, which it has kept with great tenacity ever since – it claims to be the longest retained one in the country. Having dined there before they gained that recognition and regularly ever since, it is appropriate that we are to celebrate our Jubilee Year there with our annual dinner in October 2020.

By 1985 membership numbers had risen to 36, a number of them local restaurateurs (one, Jim Ainsworth, became editor of the Good Food Guide in 1994) but otherwise the fact that the others were mostly French Partridge customers may have helped achieve both a relative diversity and a bond.

Programmes from that time show that most branch events took the form of wine tastings with a buffet supper, often held in the homes of members on a Sunday evening, when the restaurateur members could attend. The standard generally was high; for example, Bill Baker and Michael Broadbent led tastings. Several members had excellent cellars and were generous in drawing on them. Restaurants owned by members – notably the Falcon

at Fotheringhay and the Lake Isle at Uppingham – were also regularly visited.

In 1987 Ben Moffatt took over as branch Secretary when Captain Stewart retired. Succeeding such a strong personality cannot have been easy.

There was a certain amount of socialising with other branches then, including joint meetings and visits to other branches such as Leicester (with whom we still meet regularly), Berkshire, Hereford, and Limerick. The latter, in May 1989, raised certain challenges which can probably safely be revealed. One of the Northampton members held a senior post in the party of the Government in the House of Lords. In those troubled times a visit to Ireland by such a person was considered a significant security risk. The other Northampton members having been sworn to secrecy, he travelled to Ireland under an assumed name wearing a shabby raincoat and carrying a plastic carrier bag containing a toothbrush and a change of clothes which he took as cabin baggage. Everyone enjoyed excellent hospitality, his hosts apparently never being aware of "John Brown's" real identity.

The 1990s and early 2000s seem to have passed without excitement, though as older members withdrew from branch activities it became more difficult to maintain momentum and recruit committee members – the roles of Secretary and Treasurer were even combined for a time. The membership profile became mostly retirees. We were lucky that Robin Sheppard, a long-standing member of the branch and the Committee, steered the branch through the choppy waters of the second decade of this century. He is now our Honorary President. Our numbers currently stand at 41, and it is still a close-knit group, though there are no longer any restaurateur members. The dilemma remains, as ever, one of how to balance a healthy spread of membership with the desire not to have to turn anyone away from an event they wish to attend. Interesting times lie ahead, but we intend to celebrate our 50th anniversary in style and raise our glasses to the future.



The Limerick visit

CÔTES DE PROVENCE

by Jeffrey Benson, Chairman London Branch



From a wine point of view, Provence is that part of south-eastern France bounded on the east and west by Italy and the Rhone delta and on the north and south by the Alps and the Mediterranean. It includes the Riviera and the Cote d'Azur as well as Cezanne's Montagne-Sainte-Victoire. It is Marseille and Nice and Aix and Draguignan. It is Bandol and Cassis, the tiny appellations of Bellet and Palette and the large ones of Côtes de Provence and Coteaux d'Aix-en-Provence. Away from the bustling seaside resorts, this is a wild and rugged countryside; blazing hot in summer, bleak in winter; a land of olive groves and garrigues – a scrub land of bramble and broom, of stunted oaks and pine, of rocky outcrops with wild thyme, oregano and rosemary; at its prettiest in May and June when the land is still green and not yet parched, when flowers bloom and butterflies dally. It is a countryside of contrast. Here and ultra-modern development by Le Corbusier out of clockwork Orange; a few miles away, a crumbling brigade castle, a beat-up Romanesque church or a secluded monastery.

Yet it is also a fertile country. Between the coast and the mountains, near where the motorway thunders between Avignon and Marseille or Menton, the land is lush and the soil abundant. This is ideal country for the vine, the sort of land and climate the plant found in Kurdistan when it was first cultivated

by Neolithic man. The vine can withstand the long periods of drought it often encounters in Provence. Its roots dig deep for the moisture it needs to see it through the arid summers. The wines, like the climate, have tended to be larger than life: full and robust, fiery and alcoholic. Today, tamed by man and vinified by modern methods, often with the use of cépages ameliorateurs such as Cabernet Sauvignon to supplement the indigenous Grenache, Mourvedre and other varieties, the standard is rising. Wines of elegance and depth are being made.

Bandol, Cassis, Palette and Bellet are quality appellations, confined to small areas, while the rest are more general. All produce red wine, a certain amount of rosé, especially in Côtes de Provence, but little white. The one exception is Cassis; a curious appellation for a South of France wine in that its fame, and the bulk of its production, is its dry white.

Three quarters of all Provençal wine – 100 million bottles – is bottled as appellation contrôlée Côtes de Provence. Of this 75 percent red and 5 percent white. This is therefore not just the main generic appellation in the country.

Quite why Provence should have started to produce rosé in such volume – for it is a post-war phenomenon – while the Roussillon and the Languedoc did not, not only does no one seem to know, no one seems to have addressed.

Nevertheless with modern methods of temperature control of the fermentation, a generally very dry and sunny climate (hence ripe, healthy grapes) a delicious to look at, pale salmon pink, fruity, balanced, dry wine is produced and sometimes put up in the unmistakable "Brigitte Bardot" bottle which is almost entirely consumed on the spot by the locals and the hundreds of thousands of tourists who flock into the region every summer. Such Provence wine which is exported, and it is rather less than that of the Languedoc/Roussillon, is mainly red.

The Côtes de Provence area stretches from Aix-en-Provence and Marseilles in the west to Saint-Raphael and the Lac de Saint-Cassien in the east, a distance of about 120 Kilometres; but is interrupted by a gap containing the Coteaux Varois in the middle, above and below the motorway between Saint-Maximin-la-Saint-Baume and Brignoles.

The 18,000 odd hectares of vineyard can be divided into five district sub-areas, each with its terroir and mesoclimate.

These are as follows:

1. The area in the southern and eastern slopes of the Massif de Sainte-Victoire. The soil here is argillaceous sandstone on a limestone rock base.
2. Le Beausset basin, south of the Montagne de Sainte-Baume, between Cassis and Bandol. This is largely chalky-limestone.
3. The "Vallée Interieure". This follows the motorway that skirts the Maures mountains between Toulon and Le Muy: sandy clay and marl from the Palaeozoic era.

4. The coastal region from Toulon via the Saint-Tropez peninsula and along to Saint-Raphael. These are ancient schistous and granitic soils.
5. The hills of the "Haut Pays" north of the A8 autoroute between Brignoles and the Lac de Saint-Cassien. Here again the soil is calcareous on a limestone rock base.

In general, the soils are stony and well-drained, poor in nitrogenous matter, and therefore propitious for the vine. The weather is also beneficial. This is a dry and warm part of France with, on average, a mere 600mm of rain annually, falling mainly in the late autumn and in the spring, when it will encourage growth. The cold, dry Mistral is frequently present, especially in the western part of the region, and it will evaporate moisture, helping the vine protect itself against disease.

As a consequence of these largely risk-free climatic conditions, a great many vineyards are now worked ecologically or biologically, without recourse to chemical fertilisers, insect sprays or herbicides. In contrast to the increasingly dead and polluted sea nearby, the land is healthy and full of micro-flora and micro-fauna.

Côtes de Provence red wines can be expensive – or seem so in comparison with those of the Languedoc and Roussillon – but

they start out with a major advantage, the appearance of Cabernet Sauvignon in the recommended list of grape varieties. Cabernet Sauvignon, Syrah and Grenache, in various proportions and now with a modicum of new oak for the reserve cuvées is the Syrah in the hottest micro-climates nearest to the coast where it can properly mature.

The rosés, produced by a saignée after 12 to 24 hours maceration and malolactic fermentation blocked according to choice, can be very delicious, and have become very popular.

The standard of the white and rosé wines has improved immensely since the arrival of modern methods of vinification. Today's Côtes de Provence whites are increasingly concentrated on the two quality varieties: Semillon and Rolle. Fifty-fifty blends, vinified in oak – and then often with the malolactic fermentation having taken place – or in tank regulated at 18c, and the malolactic fermentation blocked (today the choice and the control rests with the wine-maker) are the rule rather than the exception, and many are admirable. I find them of much greater interest than the whites of Cassis. It does however take a little extra dedication to produce fine white wine. In the Provençal sun the grapes race to maturity in September, and the window of perfect picking opportunity is in any case narrower for white grapes than red.



CHAMPAGNE FROM THE DEEP

by Simon Field MW



The story of submerged bottles of Champagne is an endlessly fascinating one, beguiling us with heady ingredients which seem to borrow as much from fiction as from fact; the romantic imagination captivated by intimations of corsairs, sunken galleons and buried treasure. Twenty thousand bubbles under the sea and promises of untold wealth; Poseidon's secret hoard, Neptune's bounty. The stuff of myth and fairytales in other words. A great story for sure, all the more so because this one is, for want of a better word, grounded in fact and now bolstered by science and with a thriving commercial backdrop. After serendipitous initial discoveries, in other words, Champagne is now being routinely aged under the waves, and is, to some palates, demonstrably superior in taste, and continues to sell, in ever increasing volumes and at increasingly ambitious price points. It all sounds very positive – so let's take the plunge!

The story begins in 1998 with the entirely fortuitous discovery of a handful of astonishingly well-preserved bottles of Heidsieck 1907, petrified for posterity within a Baltic shipwreck; the ship had been torpedoed by a submarine whilst en route to Tsar Nicolas II, a famous Champagne connoisseur, known for his love of Roederer Cristal and these Heidsieck wines, which he had requested in person. It was with some surprise that a bottle, opened with great ceremony and no little trepidation in 1999, was found to taste rather good, albeit a little mature and maybe, who knows, slightly salty on the tongue! The experts enjoyed it in any event, and the remaining bottles were auctioned, each fetching several thousand Euros. Fast forward to 2010 and the discovery, in similar circumstances, but this time off the coast of Finland, of 47 bottles of 170-year-old Veuve Clicquot. A similar tasting ensued with equally positive results and one of the bottles in the subsequent Christie's auction fetched a mouth-watering Euros 30,000. Not bad for a briny old bottle!

Step forward our latter-day heroes, Michel Drappier from the eponymous Champagne House in the Aube, and Hervé Jestin, winemaker at the Épernay-based House of Leclerc Briant. Leaving aside the great marketing potential of the story and the sheer challenge, both gentlemen became increasingly fascinated by the phenomenon, intoxicated by the science and the intrigue of exploring the differences between bottles matured on land and those which had been aged under the sea. Working separately, every year they now submerge a relatively small number of bottles off the French coast, bringing them to the surface with great ceremony and, thus far, not inconsiderable commercial success. From the depths of an apparent fantasy we have a significant PR coup, and, more importantly, some fantastic Champagne.

Michel Drappier had long been fascinated by the effects of the environment on ageing Champagne; to this end he had conducted experiments, leaving bottles at the top of the Eiffel Tower, for example, and, somewhat more prosaically, in the boot of his car, whilst he traversed the USA, assessing, respectively, the impact of altitude and continuous motion on his fizz. Neither test proved especially successful; the inference eventually drawn being that the pressure in the atmosphere, less at altitude in any event, was most interesting when it mirrored that inside the bottle, 5 units psi that is to say, or as we are taught in our wine classes, the pressure of the tyre of a London bus. The only place where this could be replicated was deep in the sea, although the optimal depth is an ongoing subject of debate. This dark and silent miasmic under-world ticks a lot of boxes, it seems. Darkness and stability of temperature are ideal, ditto the gentle subaqueous swell, the motion thereby engendered mirroring perfectly the most literal interpretation of bio-dynamism. What is more, Champagne's famous Jurassic chalk also covers part of the sea's bed, thereby imitating the effect of terroir, so celebrated by wine buffs. In this instance, of course, terroir is perhaps something of a misnomer; indeed, the term *aquoir* has been coined by one wag. The word is rather vowel-heavy but seems to work well. The shadowy tomb of the sea is a drenched simulacrum of the deepest Épernay Cellars; the wine ages quietly on its lees and assumes a unique and entirely fascinating personality. Michel slightly dampens the coincidence when he reveals that there is in fact more granite than limestone in his selected location; key to him is that the coincidence of the Atlantic and the English Channel creates what he describes as a 'vortex of motion', which he considers perfect to facilitate the maturation of the wine.

At Leclerc Briant there is a unique submerged Cuvée, named, appropriately enough, Cuvée Abyss. Michel Drappier*, for his part, ages batches of his existing wines, most significantly his outstanding Grande Cendrée, under the water, thereby providing an intriguing opportunity to compare the two styles of the same wine. He calls the wines his "Immersio" series. Unlike the historical progenitors discussed above, these bottles are aged on their yeast (lees) and for considerably less time (generally a year or eighteen months) and then are brought to the surface for the ritual of the expulsion of the yeast, aka

disgorgement. The wines are stored in wire cages, reasonably tightly packed with 500 bottles, but with no inherent protection from the saltwater or, as Michel points out, from the fish! Drappier is not concerned; the fact that the pressure in his bottles is marginally more than that of the water protects them from the dangers of water ingress. Just to be sure, however, there is a light coating of wax applied on the top of each bottle. Both gentlemen have identified the waters off the northern French coast as optimal, Jestin ageing his wines off Finistère and Drappier close to St Malo. The geological footprint recalls the marine incursions of the latter Ice Age and thereby gives the story a pleasing air of finality; Champagne without a chalky backdrop is unthinkable, even several leagues under!

So far so good; an enticing story and a scientific foundation which seems, almost in spite of itself, almost plausible. But what of the wines themselves? Are they any good, and to what extent do they actually differ from their landed cousins? Finally, I suppose, we need to ask if they are worth the extra money – are we going to be seduced, or merely overwhelmed by an oddly appropriate sinking feeling?!

Certainly not – the wines are of the highest quality, subtly different from their peers and unerringly fascinating as a result. The experts, however, are somewhat divided in terms of actually describing these differences and thereby attempting to discern typical gustatory features of wine thus aged. A briny salt-fest? Not at all – unsurprisingly the reality is much more subtle than

that, although and maybe unconsciously, words to demark salinity are a common feature of many tasting notes. If there is to be an inferred consensus, it seems to be that the wines are fresher and maybe a little leaner, therefore potentially capable of more extended ageing. A comparison, for example of Drappier's La Grande Cendrée 2008, revealed tighter less expressive characteristics in bottles salvaged from the ocean and a more generous, almost tropical mouthfeel from the more traditionally aged wine. It seems that the environment under water, with particular reference to the pressure, closes down the structure a little, presaging greater ageing potential and maybe more innate complexity over a longer period. A similar perception surrounds the current release of Leclerc Briant's Cuvée Abyss, which is from the 2014 vintage; there is an almost Chablisien elegance to both nose and palate, a very persistent mousse, its pinprick bubbles released slowly and lasting for a very long time. Focus and purity are the watchwords; a certain yeastiness and maybe, to borrow the technical term, 'reduction' more in evidence, manifested by a flinty stone fruit aromatic. Each to their own, of course, and some may well prefer the apparently creamier richer styles of the land-aged wines; it's down to whether one likes Chablis Grand Cru more than Meursault Premier Cru, I suppose. There is an important implication, however, that the sea-aged Champagne will assume a richer more generous profile over the medium term, and that one should be patient before opening the bottle. The sea's slow motion dreamscape stops the clocks, almost surreally, ultimately to reveal its secrets with grace and dignity –



it's a classy wine to try; a good match for Beluga caviar, or scallops, I am sure, why not?

One should not get carried away; even these two pioneers only age small volumes of wine in this manner. As a process it is expensive and logistically onerous; the extra expenses thus incurred are inevitably passed onto the customer, with a little more cost added for good measure, courtesy of the PR machine and the de facto rarity. Others, including, appropriately enough, Veuve Clicquot, not to mention Louis Roederer, are pursuing similar experiments, as are some still wines from as far afield as California, Santorini and Croatia although, for me, the key to the success or otherwise of the process resides most fundamentally in the fizz factor, as influenced by the pressure both inside and out of the bottle, so the phenomenon maybe of less relevance to still wines. It is extraordinary that the tasters identified residual, if very faint, fizz in both of the older salvaged bottles; their tasting notes also included words such as leather, truffle, syrup and incense... descriptors not normally associated with Champagne for sure, but far from pejorative when referring to mature wine. It is worth noting as a parenthesis that the old Veuve Clicquot was exceptionally sweet; far far sweeter than

modern tastes would appreciate, but maybe the sugar itself has served as a preservative. Everything points to an extended ageing process, with the bonus of additional complexity garnered along the way. One can only hope that Messrs Dappier and Jestin (and others) continue with their good works, maybe experimenting further with ageing periods and other variable factors in the process, variables such as the nature and length of both the primary and secondary fermentation and the amount of sugar (dosage) added when the wine has been rescued from the deep.

In other words – all very exciting. A somewhat unlikely story, seemingly rooted in myth, turns out to be yet another compelling and entirely credible chapter in that wonderful volume which rehearses the virtues of Champagne, past, present and future.

* Michel Drappier has been involved in other experiments with Champagne. At the IWFS Gala dinner of the 2018 London Festival (in Goldsmiths Hall) his 1990 RD Vintage was served. In this case it was disgorged in May 2014 to experiment with extended time on the lees.



C'EST QUI LE PATRON? WHO'S THE BOSS?

by *Stephanie Shepherd*

How many times have you read articles in the press about the plight of farmers who receive less than the cost of production for their output? Articles about the high suicide rate among farmers and exposés detailing the 'sharp' practices which supermarkets visit on their suppliers. How often have you wondered just what you the consumer could do about it?

In 2014, two Frenchmen, Nicolas Chabanne and Laurent Pasquier, appalled at the price French dairy farmers were receiving for milk, which was indeed less than the cost of production, set out to do something about it. They reasoned that consumers would be prepared to pay more per litre if they were certain that the milk was being produced to clearly defined standards and the increase would go to the farmers rather than supermarket shareholders. They were right. Launched at the end of 2016, their C'est qui le Patron (CQLP) brand had sold 135 million litres of milk by December 2019, making it the fourth largest milk brand in France. Today the CQLP has more than 30 products, including honey, chocolate, sardines, butter, eggs, etc., sold in 12,000 stores. All but one of the big French supermarket chains carry its product lines and it's not just in the hypermarkets, I found CQLP milk in a tiny supermarket in a French ski resort last month.

How does it work? CQLP is run by a cooperative with 9,000 members. They don't advertise on TV and they don't have in-store promotions. They do have a strong social media presence and of course a website.

The website is the key to everything they do. It starts with an on-line poll to decide which product the company should tackle

Prix de vente conseillé, par nous les consommateurs :

0,99 € le litre
Où va notre argent ?



0,05 € de TVA

**0,39 €
vers le producteur**

**0,50 € vers
le collecteur,
le conditionneur,
la logistique,
le distributeur**

0,05 € vers



C'est qui le Patron ?! (SAS)

Assure un rôle d'expert sur les produits et aide à leur commercialisation :

- Fait les études produits
- Recherche des partenaires capables de répondre aux besoins des consommateurs
- Créé les questionnaires
- Établit les cahiers des charges
- Contractualise avec les partenaires
- Trouve les débouchés pour les produits
- Suit et coordonne la commercialisation

& La Société des Consommateurs (SCIC)

Assure un rôle de décisionnaire et oriente l'initiative :

- Accueille et rassemble les consommateurs-sociétaires
- Met en œuvre les outils de collecte des avis collectifs
- Décide collectivement des axes de développement et évolutions des produits
- Contrôle et garantit que les produits sont conformes aux attentes exprimées
- Est le porte-parole via des actions de communication ciblées
- Défend les produits auprès des distributeurs

next: consumers are asked to rank their top three from a list. CQLP, working with producers, packaging suppliers and retail outlets, researches and publishes a dossier outlining the basic facts of say, milk production and supply. They develop a questionnaire which is posted on their website inviting consumers to indicate what is important to them about the way milk is produced and packaged. Should cows be grass fed as

much as possible or kept indoors? Should milk be sold in tetra packs, re-sealable tetra packs or glass bottles? Should the price to farmers be set at market rates, break even, fair, or 'permitting investment'? Each of these multiple choice alternatives clearly shows what the additional cost to the consumer would be for making that particular choice. Armed with the dossier and the questionnaire, consumers vote on-line. Their votes are aggregated by CQLP and their choices set the specification and the price for a litre of milk in their local supermarket. The info graphic below shows part of the milk questionnaire that consumers were asked to complete.

CQLP suppliers – both the producers and the companies responsible for packaging and logistics – agree to abide by the standards the consumers have set. If consumer preference is for cows to be out on grass for 3-6 months a year then that is the benchmark for producers. Similarly if consumers want re-sealable packaging the packaging supplier will provide that. CQLP undertakes to audit the supply chain to ensure that consumer standards are consistently applied.

CQLP milk sells at 0.99 euros per litre as compared with the market price of 0.69 euros per litre. CQLP covers its own costs with a flat rate levy of 5c in every euro which pays for product development and on-going management, the website and its content and, crucially, support to current and new producers and suppliers. This info-graphic taken from the CQLP website shows where that sum of 0.99 euros goes.

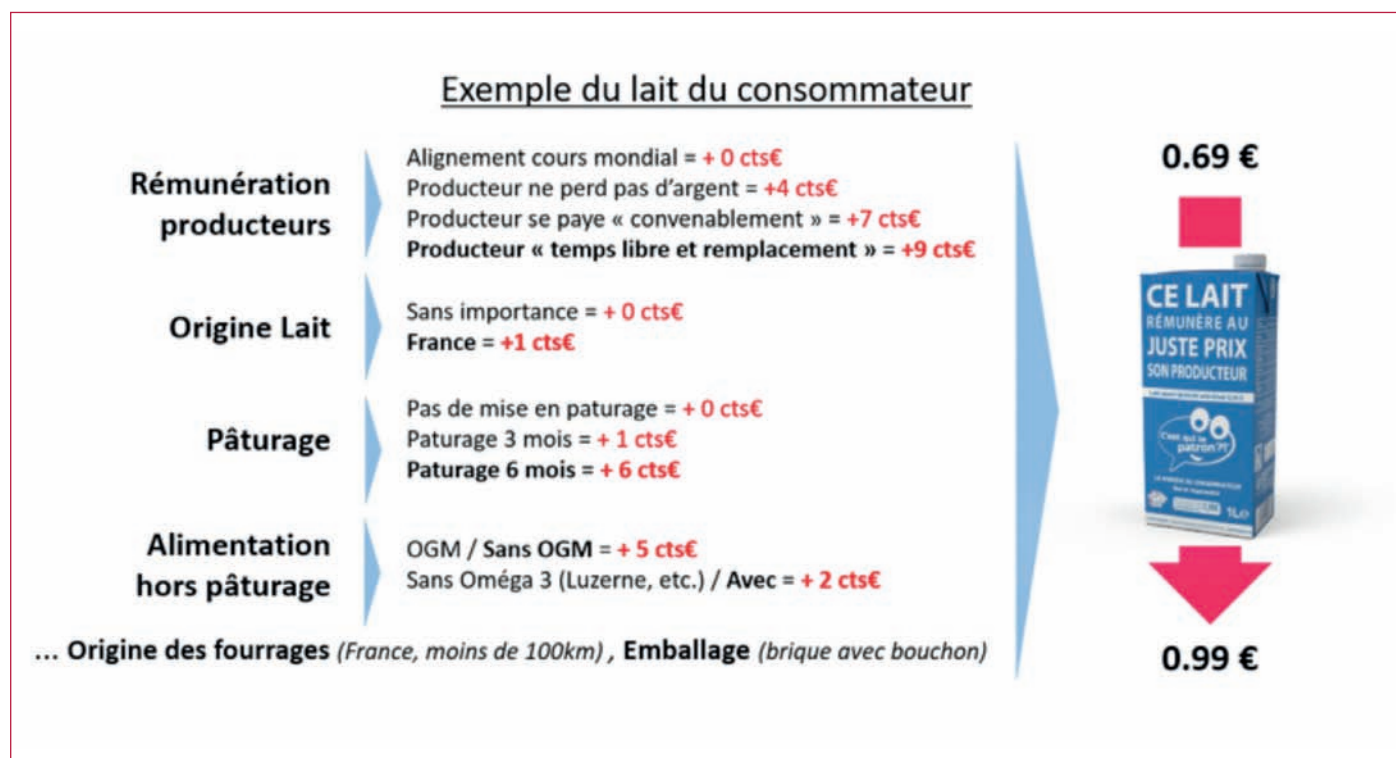
The initiative is proving popular not only with consumers but also producers, particularly the smaller producer who is wary of involvement with supermarkets but still must find ways of marketing his products. CQLP now supports more than 3,000 producer families. Even the big boys Nestlé and Danone have shown interest in developing products under the CQLP brand. A study by Nielsen indicated that CQLP products could be

found in 20% of French homes and that their products had reached 14 million consumers in just three years.

What does this have to do with the UK consumer? CQLP is keen to spread the concept to other countries. Belgium, Spain and the USA have similar projects in development. Here in the UK, The Consumer Brand (TCB) is hoping to have their first product on the shelves this summer. TCB's David Poussier points out that the UK and France have similar problems with supermarkets ever striving to drive down prices in the belief that all consumers want is cheaper food. Of course there will always be shoppers for whom price is everything, but increasingly consumers are showing concern for quality, transparency, presence of additives, traceability and environmental impact, all of which can be demonstrated by TCB products. TCB will be run on similar cooperative lines to the French model and their products will also be developed and marketed utilising the internet through social media and their own website.

And what is next for CQLP itself. The company already has an app allowing consumers to find the nearest store stocking CQLP products. The next step apparently is an app which will allow consumers to scan products in-store and find details not only of their nutritional content but where they were produced and their environmental impact. It will apply to CQLP products and to other manufacturers.

So, if you are concerned that your food should be produced to clearly verifiable standards and that producers should be paid a fair price for their wares look out for The Consumer Brand on the shelves when you shop; or CQLP if you're holidaying in France. You may be helping to make those famous French 'manifestations', where irate farmers block the roads to protest at wholesale prices, a thing of the past. Vive la Révolution! Brexit may be done but we can still learn from our neighbours across the Channel.



VALENCIA GREAT WEEKEND

by Peter McGahey



Valencia, city of Arts and Science, and the venue for the Europe and Africa Ltd AGM in October 2019.

The great majority of EAZ members are UK residents and in recent years the formal AGM and Great Weekend has been based in UK. We have always welcomed members from continental Europe & Africa and from other zones to the AGM but in 2019 the decision was made to accept an invitation from our members in Spain to hold the meeting there. The programme for the weekend was arranged and hosted by our most recently opened branch, Valencia, which although only just approaching three years old is developing well with the direction and enthusiasm of Eduardo Aguilar and his partner Sophia Lusch.

The weekend was centred on a 5* hotel within walking distance of the city centre reached by passing through a park created from the old river bed after the water was diverted several years ago in a city expansion scheme. Guests were transported by coach on the first evening to a roof-top restaurant overlooking the marina and harbour for the opening dinner. We were greeted with a flute of Domaine de la Vega, Authentique D.O. Cava and tempted with Cheese Stones – novelty canapés prepared to be indistinguishable from several actual stones, which were secured to the plate to avoid accidents. The entrée was a selection of potato soufflé, fried prawns with romesco herbs, lemon fish ceviche with cloud of bergamot, black pepper

ceps croquette, steamed brioche bread and black truffle, wedges of wood roasted piquillo peppers. We continued with Cubalibre of Foie, Mushroom Rice and Iberico pork between truffle ashes and finally a dessert of mixed citrus fruits. The wines: Enrique Mendoza Chardonnay D.O. Alicante and Les Alcusses D.O. Valencian.

Being in Spain inevitably means you dine later than in the UK – typically lunches didn't finish until 4.00pm and dinners were scheduled for 8.30pm or as soon after as you could arrive. The sunshine encouraged an informal relaxed approach to enjoying life, to dining al fresco and relishing local produce, typically grown organically, accompanied by regional and local wines.

Saturday found us at a vineyard about an hour's drive from the city, Bodega Nodus. Tapas were served under a 200 year old oak tree and savoured with their own Cava. Alongside their wines, Bodegas Nodus produces a range of Vermouths and we were invited to taste several varieties before being served a barbecue style lunch which offered venison stew, Iberico ham, a local traditional dish of codfish potato and egg, cheeses with thyme, truffle and black garlic, local sausage and pork chops. The wines selected from their cellar were a Tempranillo/ Cabernet Sauvignon /Merlot 14% and a Chardonnay 12.5%

Dinner on Saturday evening at the Colon Restaurant on the first floor of the old mercado – now converted into a multiple dining venue offering a worldwide cuisine choice – gave guests the opportunity to experience some Valencian specialties: Hervido, (a carrot soup), Fish Canelloni (hake in a lobster and sweet potato salsa), Coconut sorbet with fresh berries and a dessert of rum brioche with cardamom ice. For this dinner the wines were Bodega Mas de Rander Muscadet/Sauvignon Blanc, Cabernet Merlot Monastrell, a Tempranillo/Garnacha matured in new French oak barrels and Mistela Tinta – Muscadet.

The AGM on Sunday morning and the Members' Forum were the formal parts of the EAZ "Great Weekend" but from Friday evening until late Sunday afternoon we were chauffeured and guided in the old city and surrounding countryside. We indulged





in gastronomic treats in the central Mercado, we visited the chapel of the Holy Grail in the Cathedral and lunched al fresco in a vineyard. Throughout the weekend local branch members and their families joined us and made us feel at home.

At the AGM branches had been asked to share examples of unusual events they had arranged. These included a tasting menu executed by young chefs at a leading hospitality school, a lunch at the fine dining restaurant of an art gallery, and also blind wine tastings inviting members to describe the wines and

share their differing opinions. In one branch, members were invited to compare similar wines from different producers and estimate the retail prices of their preferences. A masterclass in Sous Vide food preparation had been presented in London.

The final event on Sunday was a cruise in a flotilla of three open boats through paddy fields of Bomba rice, reminiscent of the journey of the African Queen, with canapés and cava to add a touch of the good life, as the local wildlife fled into the reeds. Later that Sunday morning, more accurately early afternoon,





there was time for recollection and reflection over a superb Spanish traditional lunch – a jumbo Paella serving 70 from one pan. We also enjoyed garlic potato and eel, tuna with pistaccio, and codfish with red peppers and dates.

The wines were Clar de Luna Nova 2017 13.5%, Senorio Real Verdejo Rueda 2018 12.5%.

To conclude lunch there was cinnamon sponge and coffee. As this would be the last time when the whole group would be together, our new chairman, John Nicholas, thanked Valencia Branch for the excellent programme and flawless organisation and he presented Eduardo with the IWFS Exceptional Service medallion.



VALENCIA GREAT WEEKEND: MEMBERS' FORUM

by *Leonie Allday*

Despite being held early on the Sunday morning the Members' Forum attracted over 50 participants – a few of our guests from the other Zones played hooky and either had a lie-in or went off to see a bit more of Valencia! The rest of us engaged in some lively small group discussion on the three topics that had been circulated to all attendees in advance:

- How do we make the best use of our publications and website?
- Recruitment and Retention – how can we attract new members? What can we do to raise the profile of the Society?
- EAZ events – within the IWFS contractual arrangements, what kind of events should we be running at local and regional

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level? How can we encourage inter-branch events? Is the current EAZ strategy of running “niche” regional events rather than large events the right one?

Reporting back was quick and efficient and this allowed time for a plenary session and the identification of some key issues to be addressed by the Executive over the coming months. It was encouraging that the mood of the Forum was in the main more upbeat than had been the case in Bristol the previous year – which may have had something to do with the wonderful warmth and sunshine; Bristol had been chilly and wet! So, although there’s no room for complacency, it’s worth noting the things the Society seems to be getting right:

- It was unanimously agreed that the mix and quality of existing publications was excellent and that the reformatted website was an improvement – more contemporary in style and more user-friendly.
- The new promotional leaflet had been well-received although orders from branches were (and are) slow to come in – one image (of a formal dinner) will be changed in future print runs as it conveys too elitist an impression.
- The collection of posters advertising “unusual” branch events indicated that branches are becoming more imaginative in their planning and would encourage branches to try some of these for themselves.
- Most members prefer smaller rather than larger events, as they are more comfortable with active participation and find it easier to make friends. However, branches are increasingly keen to hold joint events or to invite members of neighbouring branches to their events.

There is always room for improvement however! So here are just some of the ideas that emerged from our discussions. Most

are not new – far from it – but they are rapidly moving up our urgent “to do” list! Amongst other things, we need:

- To keep abreast of trends in food and wine production and consumption in order to project a vibrant and contemporary image of the Society (but to inform and educate, not to act as a pressure group!).
- A webmaster and someone to take responsibility for greatly improving the Society’s use of social media as a recruitment tool and to support branches in doing the same.
- To raise the profile of the Society amongst food and wine professionals through having a presence at Food and Wine Fairs and Festivals and perhaps through advertising events which could be of interest to our members (the question of advertising divided opinion – if we are to go down this route guidelines will be needed!).
- Branches and individual members to be more proactive in promoting the Society – grants are now available to support branch projects.
- To review and improve the Society’s offers and incentives – products and services
- To understand why people who attend one or two events don’t join the Society, or if they do join, why some don’t renew their membership after the first year
- Strategies to recruit younger members – ideas included separate events, less expensive events, more informal events, partnership events

Last but not least, there was unanimous support for celebrating the Society’s 90th birthday in 2023 – but probably at several sub-regional events to keep them local and affordable for as many members as possible.

MARKETING MATTERS

by *Leonie Allday*

Although a formal Marketing Strategy for EAZ (and indeed for the Society as a whole) is still a work in progress, I’d like to share with you some headlines as to the general direction of travel. SWOT analysis (strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, threats) is sometimes regarded as a bit “old hat” these days, but it still features in the marketing textbooks and provides a useful starting-point for developing a marketing strategy.

- The Society’s strengths lie in its uniqueness (it is much more than a dining club and there is no other comparable organisation); its appeal to its members (good, food, good wine, good friendships) and the loyalty, commitment and hard work of long-standing members.
- Its weaknesses are its declining and ageing membership; its difficulty in recruiting younger members; its limited use of e-communications and its low visibility in the market-place
- Its opportunities include raising the profile of IWFS amongst food and wine producers, professionals and influencers; broadening its offer of events, products and incentives to

members; supporting Branches practically and financially in promoting the Society at food festivals, wine fairs and in partnership with other organisations; and extending its reach to a younger age-group through more effective use of social media.

We need to be clear as to “What” we are promoting and “To Whom”, in order to move to the “How”. This currently varies considerably across the three Zones and, within EAZ, from branch to branch. Branches are autonomous entities and not subject to central “control”; for 85% of our members their Branches are all they are interested in; only 15% of our members ever attend any centrally-organised events. But we do need to recognise that branches which don’t manage to recruit new members will eventually wither and die, and the whole Society could cease to exist. This is the threat bit! So it is the Society’s responsibility to help, as far as it is able, in ensuring that this doesn’t happen. To this end, and guided by some useful input from the Members’ Forum (see report elsewhere), we are now working on Goals and Plans with measurable outcomes. That’s for next time!

Berkshire

SUNDAY LUNCH WITH LAFITTE AND MOUTON



Well not quite, but when the Berkshire Branch visited Waddesdon Manor in July for a tasting and lunch we got quite close! The magnificent 1877 French Renaissance style house is set in extensive and well-maintained grounds. We were not to get much time to appreciate these aspects of Waddesdon because we immediately descended down steep steps (wheelchair access is also available) into the cellar. Baron Ferdinand de Rothschild, who built the house and grounds, "dined on milk, cold toast and water" and believed that wine was poisonous! What is now the cellar was originally rooms for flower arranging, boots etc. and it was not until 1994 that the cellar was built.

Our tasting was led by Peter Tomkins who is the Wine Adviser for the Estate. He began by outlining a bit of history (there is a lot) and describing the 24 Estates that now make up the Rothschild wine empire, producing 134 different wines ranging in price from £7.50 to £9,500. The bespoke flight of eight wines selected by Peter for us ranged from South Africa to New Zealand, Chile, Argentina and, of course, Bordeaux. All the wines were very well made and very interesting, allowing us to taste some wines at over £100 per bottle that we would not normally get access to.

Highlights were the Rimapere Pinot Noir 2017 from New Zealand which scored 8.5 and was a reasonable £29.95. Then opinion became divided over the Château L'Évangile 2006, Pomerol (80% Merlot, 15% Cabernet Franc) at £155 and the Château Clerc Milon 2005, Pauillac (Cabernet Sauvignon) at £95. The scores were very close, 8/8.5, but those who preferred the one did not rate the other. The highest score of 9, which included some 10s, was given to the final wine, a Château Rieussec 2010, Grand Cru Classé Sauternes, at £65 per bottle.

Our lunch was to be served in a private dining room at the Five Arrows Hotel, formerly a Victorian Coaching Inn, located at the edge of the site nearest the village. The Estate transportation system of shuttle buses and small electric coaches made getting around relatively easy and all the staff were extremely helpful.

We had chosen our lunch from a menu of Braised Beef Nugget, Hot or Chilled Pea and Mint Soup or Grilled Mackerel fillet followed by Roast Pork Chop, Pan Fried Salmon Fillet, or Pearl Barley Risotto. All the tasty and splendidly presented dishes were accompanied by a moderate Picpoul de Pinet and an excellent Los Vascos blend from Colchagua, a cousin of the Los Vascos Le Dix 2015 that we had enjoyed at the tasting earlier.

Thanks go to Ian Roe, who has only recently become secretary of the Berkshire Branch, for arranging such a very enjoyable, instructive, sociable and satisfying day out.

Chris Graham



Berkshire

SUNDAY LUNCH AT MONKEY ISLAND ESTATE, BRAY



Monkey Island has always been a location full of charm, located as it is on an Eyot (Island) in the middle of the Thames through Bray Village – you have to walk from the car park on the banks of the Thames over a bridge to the hotel. The buildings are based upon two listed hunting and fishing lodges built on the island by Charles Spencer, the third Duke of Marlborough in the first half of the eighteenth century. One of these houses the famous ceiling painted with monkey scenes which gave rise to the name. These historic listed structures have very recently been the subject of a detailed total restoration and refurbishment by YTL Hotels who run the business under the Monkey Island Estate name.

The Berkshire Branch normally has two restaurant visits per year, one in the Summer and one in December, so this was something of a treat for 26 of our members. We had half of the River Room reserved for us with lovely views of the secondary

Thames stream passing the windows on one side and overlooking the landscaped gardens on another. A long table had been tastefully decorated by Keshi, the Restaurant and Beverages manager who, along with Oliver, Claudia and four younger member of her team, looked after us extremely well during the event.

Guests were welcomed by a glass of very refreshing pink sparkling from Belstar in the Veneto, made from Sauvignon Blanc, Pinot Nero, Merlot together with a selection of canapés prepared from pressed duck, marinated lamb and smokehouse mackerel pâté. There is a smokehouse on the island producing the mackerel for the canapés and also the smoked Loch Duart Salmon which was served as one of the two starters. The second starter was Whipped Bosworth Ash goats cheese, accompanied by a slice of beetroot cake with candied walnuts and sorrel.

The mains dishes were Braised Blade of Beef, slow cooked and just ready to fall apart, served with a delicious roast broccoli purée, glazed carrot and roast potatoes. The other main, much appreciated by our members, was a Luxury Fish Pie which included Salmon, Haddock, Mussels and Tiger Prawns covered with Gratinated Mash and Samphire.

The two wines selected for the lunch were a Castro Martin Albarino from Rias Baixas which has a golden colour, good body with just a hint of honey and a cool climate Pinot Noir from the Blind River Valley region of Marlborough by The Cloud Factory, both good lunch time drinking!

The desserts were a Caramelised Lemon Tart with White Chocolate and Lemon-Thyme Ice Cream or a selection of four tasty British Cheeses with toasted fruit bread and crackers. After the coffee and tea we invited the Brasserie Chef, Matthew Price, and his team into the room and our Chairman, Colin Mair thanked them for serving an excellent and enjoyable Sunday Lunch.

What became clear is that our members did what they enjoy most – eating good food, drinking good wine and talking with good friends. When the service is carried out by a friendly and helpful staff it makes the day memorable!

Chris Graham



Cape Town

THE GREAT WELLINGTON WEEKEND AWAY

Capetonians have organised a long line of culinary weekend getaways over the years, a heritage of 'Great Weekends Away' that spans from Hermanus, Franschhoek and Riebeeck-Kasteel in the early days to Bot River, Greyton and Hemel-en-Aarde more recently. But we've not, in thirty years, been to Wellington, just an hour from Cape Town's CBD. Too hot? Possibly. Unsexy? Certainly.

Research required for this Spring 2019 venture included reconnaissance at the annual Tuin van Digers, when poets, linguists and wordsmiths from all over the country – as well as international visitors of Dutch and Flemish persuasion – descend on Wellington for an annual carnival of creativity. It celebrated home-boy Breyten Breytenbach's 80th birthday in 2019.

But first, Friday saw us drop our bags at Diemersfontein Wine and Country Estate where most of the party were staying, shake off the dust and slip out of urban stress to meet at the Aan Tafel Restaurant on the Estate. Owner David Sonnenberg was on hand to welcome us with reflections on the empowerment vision of Diemersfontein before Tasting Room Manager Johann Olivier offered a theatrical introduction to Diemersfontein Wines.

Then Celeste Potgieter's team, managers of Aan Tafel, served a four-course dinner to show-case Diemersfontein's wines.

- Oven roasted glazed beet ravive, smoked aubergine caviar and toasted nuts
Diemersfontein Sauvignon Blanc
- Snoek and patat samoosa with tropical fruit chutney
Diemersfontein Chenin Blanc
- Beef cheeks tarte-tatin with caramelized onions with pecorino rocket salad
Thokozani SMV
- Rooibos semi freda with gooseberry compote and cinnamon palmiers
Diemersfontein Sweet Sue



Saturday morning saw us visit a trio of interesting agri-producers. We kicked off at Welgegund, founded in 1777 but recently refreshed, where Sales and Marketing Manager Emy Mathews welcomed us on the lawns of the beautiful Manor House and winemaker Friedrich Kuhne shows us their wares – the new-wave duo of lighter styled but still powerful Cinsault and Grenache Noir will win many friends.

We crossed the Horseshoe Road to Hildenbrand Wine and Olive Estate where the inimitable septuagenarian Reni Hildenbrand, author of the seminal *Olives and Oils in South Africa*, was on usual contrarian song, treating us to a tasting of her olive and wine products amidst tales of recent exploits judging olives in Peru.

Reni can talk a bit, so it was a dash across town to our next adventure, the most important vine nursery in the country, Bosman Family Vineyards. Now in the eighth generation, Hermanus Bosman put his goods down here in 1798. After a hiatus of 50 years during which the work concentrated on stokkie production, winemaking recommenced in 2007 and more recently expanded to De Bos in the Hemel-en-Aarde valley (there's a fabulous tasting room on Die Karwyderskraal Road). Sales Manager Angela Jordaan gave a Masterclass, leading an extensive tasting with vigour and arranging a grafting demo; the punters left with the gift of a newly grafted Sauvignon Blanc, and groaning car boots.

We were hungry though, so it was down the road to Val du Charron. Winemaker Juhan Hunlun introduced the property with a brief tasting before The Grillroom's F&B maestro Bernhardt Bieler and team produced a Comparative Steak Tasting Lunch – grass versus grain-fed beef, illustrated in different cuts served with Bearnaise Sauce, Hand-Cut Chips and Salad. The Theatre of Wine duo Four White Legs and Black Countess were accompaniments.

Guests needed to take the afternoon break to wander, explore, exercise or indeed, even nap, because they needed to bring



their A-game to Die Breytenbach Sentrum for our Gala Evening that evening.

“Die Breytenbach Sentrum in Burgerstraat 14 in Wellington is ‘n multidissiplinêre kultuursentrum vir opleiding in, en omgang met, beeldende kunste, musiek, drama en skryfkuns. Kom deel in gesprekke, idees, bekendstellings, opleiding en werksinkels en beleef kuns, musiek, drama en die mense wat dit skep, waardeur en beleef.”

Seat of the Breytenbach family from 1953 until 1974, these premises are where famous poet Breyten grew up. Older brothers Cloete and Jan lived independently but visited often.

Welcomed with a glass of Upland Methode Ancestrale Chenin Blanc bubbly, we browsed the two galleries, paused in Die Tuin van Digters, and perused the wares of the two shops.

Canapés offered by Slippery Spoon Kitchen included:

- Waitrons roaming with white linen gloves, carving knives and game biltong carving thin slivers of the biltong for guests on request.
- Steamed Boerewors Har-Gow with spring onion drizzled with caramelised onion essence.
- Westcoast smoked snoek, fresh mango, spring onion, coriander Vietnamese summer rolls served with an apricot noac chum sauce.
- Traditional Roosterkoek prepared on open fires served as small crostini with traditional makataan, Swartland olive oil and samphire.

Then, in the setting sun, renowned wordsmith Johann Nel – editor of The poem is the meaning of the poem – read works of Breyten Breytenbach in both original and the English translations of celebrated literary critic and academic Ampie Coetzee.

Suitably rooted in the cultural context, we repaired to Die Bordienghuis for a once-off pop-up meal. Wellington-based Slippery Spoon Kitchen is the brainchild of celebrity chefs

Johnny Hamman and Marius Uys who met on the set of Kokkedoor (which Johnny won in 2014) and now offer ‘a trendy, up-market food service that pushes boundaries with creative menus and unexpected catering solutions’.

They produced a sensational four course meal, which I paired with Wellington Wines:

First Course

Fresh Wellington guavas, thin and crisp west coast Bokkom, Swartland coastal foraged ocean leaves, pickled Saldanha bay mussels, with hot and crispy toasted sunflowers seeds
Duke White Pinotage 2019

Second Course

A “tinned” Swartland foraged fauna and flora ensemble with braised oxtail torchon and confit purple stem spinach
La Cave Cabernet Sauvignon 2016

Third Course

Fermented pumpkin pampoenkoekie “doughnut” with a burnt butter “icing”, thinly sliced homesmoked Swartland wild boar, smoked golden syrup drizzle, steeped guavas and lush micro sorrel – waitrons pour a miso broth around the doughnut at the table
La Cave Chenin Blanc 2017

Fourth Course

Milk tart ice cream served with hot and freshly baked cinnamon spiced palmier, whipped coconut cream and a dash of kumquat jam
Frizzante Blanc NV

But that’s not all! After savouring the meal, local muso Muldene Holloway sang a 40-minute set of after-dinner Jazz Standards – this was a theatre we were dining in, after all.

Sundays’ 10am rendezvous was at Upland Organic Estate on the Blouville Road. Way ahead of their time, vet-by-training Edmund and Elsie Oettle have been GCS certified for years. Edmund makes ancestral method bubbly, wine and ports and is the master distiller many call upon – his brandies and grappa are highly sought after and fellow winemakers entrust their distilling to him. All the fascinating wine and spirit products he showed us are vegan with no added sulphur. Elsie is famous for her Hands Africa Cards, which were cleared out in brisk trade!

Then, one last leg across the valley again to the smallest registered wine estate in the country: Jacaranda Wine Estate. Rene and Birgit Reiser came to Wellington by way of Shanghai and, since 2009 have been creating and living their dream of operating a wine farm and guest house just up the Old Hermon Road. A hands-on place, they enthralled us with their compact range of wines, served on the veranda along with Wineland Tapas by Heidi Ahrens of Creative Kwezen.

Replete, deeply satisfied, and ever more respectful of the ways of Wellington, we wended our way home. Roll on Ceres and the Koue Bokkeveld in 2021!

David Swingler



Devonshire

THE ANGEL RESTAURANT, DARTMOUTH

For our September meeting we hired a small coach and, by crossing the river Dart on the upper ferry, the driver was able to deliver us within a few yards of the The Angel Restaurant, in Dartmouth. It is part of a very impressive mock Tudor building just back from the river Dart. The restaurant was highly recommended and head chef Elly Wentworth did not disappoint. The canapés on arrival were particularly delicious. We had a most enjoyable lunch and hope to come again.

MENU

- Parmesan Polenta and Mushroom Jam
- Canapés on arrival

STARTERS

- Bread: Rosemary and Sea Salt Focaccia
- Risotto of Butternut Squash
Sage Nosiette and seeds; or
- Heritage Tomato Salad
Smoked Burrata, Almond and Basil; or
- Dulse Cured Loch Duart Salmon
Citrus Dressing and Fennel.

MAIN

- Roast Chicken Breast
Roasted Baby Gem, Potato, Chicken and Whole Grain Mustard; or
- Spice Crusted Cod
Pomme Purée and Curry Velouté; or
- Beetroot Tarte Tatin
Pickled Beetroot, Beetroot and Apple Purée and Sorrel.



DESSERT

- Salted Caramel Tart
Tonka Bean Ice Cream; or
- White Chocolate Cheesecake
Fresh Raspberries and Raspberry Sorbet; or
- Selection of South West Cheeses
Truffle Honey and Rosemary Crackers.
- Coffee, Tea and Petit Fours.

WINES

Crémant de Loire Rosé, Sauvion
Cicada Blanc by Chante Cigale
Domaine Les Roches Bleues Brouilly, Beaujolais France 2018

Michael Swales



Devonshire

THE WADDLING DUCK

For our October meeting we re-visited an old local favourite, The Waddling Duck in Wellswood, Torquay. They didn't disappoint, we had a splendid evening. The chef was Russel Goodman, who is from a farming background and who learnt his butchery skills from his dad. He was ably assisted by Lydia Wolfenden, who provided the charm and efficiency for front of house. Since opening in Wellswood they have become extremely successful, so much so that getting a table at weekends needs advance booking.

MENU

Canapés

- Warm confit of Duck Leg on Braised Red Cabbage and Ginger; or
- Smoked Haddock Scotch Egg with Curried Mayonnaise; or
- Mussels in tomato, chorizo and basil sauce.

MAINS

- Duck breast cooked pink, with a pork and blackberry sauce, served with Dauphinoise potato; or
- Rump of Lamb, cooked pink, with Garlic and rosemary sauce served with a bubble and squeak potato cake (pictured above right); or
- Fillet of Hake on the bone, with garlic and parsley butter, creamed leek and spinach with Dauphinoise potato.

DESSERTS

- Sticky Toffee Pudding with toffee sauce and beer ice cream; or
- White Chocolate Panna Cotta, raspberry purée and berries; or
- Granny Gothard's Ice Cream



WINES

To welcome you:

Prosecco Borgo Sanleo Italy

Intense floral, fruity bouquet, wonderfully fresh and well balanced, appley palate with just a hint of delicate almonds. 11% abv.

White Wine:

Chardonnay (Rue des Amis) Languedoc

Pale gold in colour with a bouquet of ripe peaches and a hint of vanilla. This easy drinking Chardonnay culminates in a delicious, round, fresh finish. 12% abv.

Shiraz-Cabernet, Stringy Bark Creek, 2015/16

South East Australia, cool intensity is the style here, showing dark, fresh flavours. 14% abv

Michael Swales



Devonshire

THE CHURCH HOUSE INN, MARLDON



In November we visited an out of town restaurant at Marldon, known as The Church House Inn. This was arranged by a member, Sheila Brooks, who also chose the menu and the wine. A very enjoyable evening with good conversation and a laugh or two. The staff had gone to a lot of trouble and looked after us very well.

MENU

Canapés on arrival.

STARTER

- Butternut Squash and Nigella Seed Soup; or
- Goat's Cheese, Pear and Walnut Tart; or
- Gravlax, Orange and Honey Glaze.

MAINS

- Seabass Fillet, Lemon and Dill Crust; or

- Slow Roasted Lamb Shoulder, Port and Redcurrant jus; or
- Sun Blushed Tomato Risotto.

DESSERT

- Sticky Toffee Pudding, Toffee Sauce (pictured below); or
- Raspberry Brulée, Shortbread Biscuit; or
- Local Cheese, Biscuits

Coffee or Tea.

WINES

Prosecco Borgia Sanleo, Brut, Italy.

Dart Valley Reserve 2017, Sharpham Vinyard, Totnes.

Morgan, les Corcelettes 2017, Louis Latour, Beaujolais France.

Michael Swales



Herefordshire and Monmouthshire

CHAIRMAN'S LUNCH

On 22nd October twenty members and guests enjoyed this annual event at the home of the Chairman in Usk, Monmouthshire.

Menu

Aperitif and canapés

Graham Beck, Méthode Cap Classique, Brut

- Tagine Djaj (Chicken Tagine with dried apricots and cranberry)
Couscous mildly spiced
- Salatet Bandoora (tomato salad with onions, chillies, chopped cucumber and parsley)
- Salatet Shamandar (beetroot with basil pesto, roasted almonds and walnuts topped with goats cheese)

Klein Constantia, Sauvignon Blanc, 2018

Wide River Merlot, Robertson, 2016

- Cheese and Biscuits
- Apple and frangipane tart with calvados cream

- Eastern mess (meringues with raspberries, cream, pistachio and rose water)
- Pasteis de nata
Moscatel de Setúbal, Bacalhôa 2015

Coffee



Herefordshire and Monmouthshire

ORLES BARN



A group of some 15 members and guests experienced an enjoyable lunch at Orles Barn, a restaurant just outside Ross on Wye.

The restaurant has been through several ownerships of varying merit during recent years. It is good to report that under the ownership of Matt and Roxy Cook it is now established as one of the best in Herefordshire. The service in the hands of Roxy is justly described by Sawday's as "super-friendly" and the fare, prepared by chef Matt, using local produce, is imaginative and of high quality.

After an aperitif in the bar before a log burning fire, we repaired to the comfortable dining room which overlooks a pleasant garden. Amongst several menu choices some popular starters were deep-fried courgette and halloumi fritter and assiette of smoked salmon; followed as mains by sirloin of Herefordshire beef and panfried fillet of sea bass. The tempting desserts included a Toblerone cheesecake and an unusually tasty sticky toffee pudding. Of the wines, one which was particularly praised was Tudor Manor Sparkling Brut produced by the newly established vineyard of Wythall Estate on the outskirts of Ross.

Herefordshire, having been for many years described as a gastronomic waste land, is now happily favoured with several places well worth visiting with Orles Barn firmly amongst them.

John Boyd



A FOREIGN JAUNT

When the summons to Orles Barn was forwarded to me on 5th November, a quick look at the menu convinced me that this was a job that needed doing – plus the fact that, Valencia apart, I had never trodden another IWFS group's territory and this was within lunching distance of Bath.

Into and out of Wales I went – a very scenic 75 minutes, even in the rain – and mislaid Orles Barn once but found it at the second attempt.

Inside, the welcome from the Herefordshire & Monmouthshire members could not have been warmer and I soon found a tasty fizzy drink with a local pedigree in my hand.

The table layout, a hollow square, was very effective although the hoped-for calendar girl springing out of the centre did not put in an appearance (because it was a Tuesday, I think).

Delicious smells preceded the food which was nicely presented, well served, and carefully and creatively cooked. Sauté chicken livers on gingerbread was a new dish for me and very good, too, as was the very tender beef. If this is what one can expect, I strongly recommend inter-branch visiting!

Tim Instone



Herefordshire and Monmouthshire AND THE RAIN IT RAINETH EVERY DAY



Christmas Dinner 2019 at Glewstone Court with Chef Michael Fowler

Heigh Ho, the grand plan included a couple of days sightseeing around Ross on Wye. A short break before Christmas we thought, as well as a visit to the Hereford and Monmouth Branch Christmas Dinner. Unfortunately the weather had other ideas; it rained, as it had done for several weeks apparently. Riverside walks were off the menu, one could hardly see where the banks were and one certainly couldn't avoid the mud. Never have I been so grateful to the hotelier who not only welcomed dogs but actually supplied towels for them by the front door. We made copious use of them during our stay.

A total of thirty-three guests including members from Bath and Bristol Branch and from the EAZ Executive Committee, gathered at Glewstone Court Hotel for the Branch Dinner. Welcomed with a glass of fizz, we eventually migrated from the Entrance Hall bar into the Drawing Room where hotel staff served canapés. There was debate about precisely which fizz served as a very effective ice-breaker. We soon settled on a Crémant, but which? Loire and Bourgogne were the front runners but in fact it turned out to be a Crémant d'Alsace from Dopff au Moulin.

Dinner was served in a private dining room which was just a perfect size for our group; large enough for the staff to get around easily but not so large that one felt one should have practiced the semaphore beforehand. There was a choice of starters and mains. Diver Scallops with Braised Octopus, Cauliflower Purée and Sauce Nero, or Layered Game Terrine with Pickled Walnut, Quince Chutney and Walnut Bread to start, followed by Wild Duck with Chanterelle and Braised leg dumpling, Fondant Potato, Red Cabbage Puree and Braising Liquor or Fillet of Beef, Steak and Wild Mushroom Pie, Slow Braised Ox Cheek, Truffle Mash, Cep Purée, Sauté Spinach and Madeira and Truffle Jus or Wild Sea Bass with Celeriac Purée, Chestnut Gnocchi, Roast Chestnut, Vermouth Velouté.

My Scallop was a delight, perfectly cooked and the Octopus beautifully tender. Both Scallops and Octopus need careful cooking to be at their best and these had been well cared for. More of both would have been welcome. The Wild Duck was also a success; pink and nicely seasoned. The Dumpling seemed a bit stodgy but it was a tasty contrast. The Red Cabbage purée could



probably have benefitted from more seasoning. My husband reported that his steak was equally good, with the steak and wild mushroom raised pie a particular stand out achievement.

The wines, Domaine de Trotereau Quincy, 2017, and Madame Château de Pitray Castillon Côte de Bordeaux AOC, 2009, the latter supplied by David Chapman of Manchester Branch, went well with the starter and main. Despite convention, the white was a more successful match with the cheese than the red.

The cheese, Baron Bigod, was an unusual choice which several of us had never tasted before. Smooth and creamy, it partnered the white wine well and won many friends.

We rounded off the meal with an Apple Crumble Soufflé with Apple Ice Cream and Spiced Apple Syrup. A hot soufflé for 33 people, the cooks among us held our breath, knowing only too well how easy it is for a soufflé to go wrong. We need not have worried, it was perfect.

All in all a delightful meal served in very pleasant surroundings. It was well matched by the warm hospitality of Branch members epitomising the whole *raison d'être* of the Society.

Stephanie Shepherd

Baron Bigod

This modern British cheese takes its name from Hugh Baron Bigod, Earl of Norfolk and owner of Bungay Castle.

It is a white bloomy-rind cheese hand made on the farm from raw milk. It has a smooth silky texture and golden curd and long-lasting warm earth, mushroom and farmyard flavours. A true farmhouse Brie it is made to an original French recipe. The milk comes from a herd of Montbeliarde cows. This breed hails from the Jura region and is prized for its protein rich flavourful milk which is also used in the production of Comté and Vacherin Mont D'Or. Baron Bigod now appears on some very distinguished cheese boards in restaurants around the country and in specialist cheese shops.

If you're tempted to try it for yourself it is available by mail order direct from the makers at Fen Farm in 250g mini wheels as well as the familiar 3kg size.

Note from Ed: Baron Bigod was also served at the Northampton Branch Annual Dinner (page 41).

Leicester

ALCHEMILLA RESTAURANT, NOTTINGHAM, NOVEMBER 2019



Opened in 2017, Alchemilla has just been awarded its first Michelin star. A huge accolade for chef Alex Bond.

Alex has worked in Auberge du Lac in Hertfordshire and Sat Bains in Nottingham. He bought the abandoned coaching house, disused for over 100 years, and took on the task of converting it into an unusually minimalist, rather dark, cellar-like restaurant. It offers unusual, plant-based fare, exquisitely presented on bare, wooden tables against a living backdrop wall of plants. The staff, young, knowledgeable and enthusiastic in their dungarees and T shirts, served the five-course taster menu and accompanying wines with perfect timing and courtesy. Wine pairings were well balanced, Tender stem broccoli satay with 2017 Arneis, Seghesio vineyards, California, and yoghurt, pine wood and sorrel dessert with 2017 Chenin Blanc, Loire Valley, especially good.

Alex Bond was clearly delighted to win the first Michelin star for his staff and restaurant, but how did these symbols of culinary excellence originate and what does it mean to have one?

André and Édouard Michelin started their tyre company in 1889. At this time there were fewer than 3,000 cars on the roads of France and they hoped to increase the demand for tyres by publishing journey guides. These included maps, best routes, how to change a tyre and best hotels and food stops along the way. Success followed worldwide. Production stopped during the First World War, restarting afterwards. Restaurant ratings



were more specific and the first star awards were introduced to France in 1926. The three-star system began in 1931.

The first Michelin guide in America was not produced until 2005, adding Tokyo, Hong Kong and Macau. The guide now covers 23 countries, is sold in 90 and has 14 editions.

So how to gain one of these coveted awards? Discretion and secrecy are everything. Inspectors visit up to six times, only one is announced, the rest incognito. The judges claim to rate 'what is on the plate and only what is on the plate'.

The criteria are, quality of ingredients, mastery of flavour, cooking techniques, value for money and consistency between visits. On the first four of these it can certainly be said that Alchemilla deserves the star rating, the last we hope to test out at a later date. The responsibility of holding on to the most significant of award in the restaurant industry, falls to Alex and his team.

Michel Roux junior, interviewed on BBC radio recently said "don't cook for the Michelin Guide, cook for your customers, number one, the people who are paying good money to eat in your restaurant, make sure they enjoy the experience and make sure they come back because if they come back, they are validating what you are doing." We shall certainly be returning.

Sue Dennis



London

CORNEY & BARROW WINE TASTING AND DINNER

It is always a struggle to get a good turnout for the Branch AGM. We have to try to make the evening really attractive in its own right. This time we were very kindly hosted by Corney and Barrow at their premises near Tower Hill. We combined the AGM with a wine tasting of Corney & Barrow wines followed by dinner accompanied by more fine wines, making what was altogether a splendid evening.

We tasted the following wines:

Delamotte Blanc de Blancs Brut NV £49.95

Cellar-aged, this dry wine was light, refreshing, with good acidity, and most agreeable to drink.

Breaky Bottom Cuvée Koizumi Yakumo Brut Traditional Method 2010 £36.95

This English vintage sparkling wine is made from 100% Seyval Blanc, the most popular grape after Chardonnay, Pinot Noir and Meunier for sparkling wine production in England. It had a very nice, interestingly complex flavour, including lemon zest and biscuit notes. The wine maker, Peter Hall, focuses on sparkling wines at his estate in Sussex. He named this wine after his great-great uncle, a travel writer from the second half of the nineteenth century, who is still enormously respected in Japan.

Sancerre Domaine du Nozay 2018 £20.95

The domaine is in the very north of the Sancerre region. The wine, from a single vineyard, is biodynamic. Grapefruit notes on the nose, complex mineral-driven flavours, sharp but a balanced acidity, good finish. A fine example of Sancerre.

Bernkasteler Badstube Riesling Spätlese Joh Jos Prum 2016 £25.95

An excellent Riesling from the Mosel region. Honeyed, floral scents. Fruit and mild mineral on the palate, clean with lightness and good acidity.

Corney & Barrow White Burgundy Maison Auvigue 2018 £14.25 AOC Macon Villages

Good value Burgundy for easy drinking, blended to Corney & Barrow's specification. Their brochure notes: "Fresh and lightly creamy Chardonnay, with ripe stone fruit on the palate and hints of almond".

De la Guerra Chardonnay Hyde de Villaine 2015 £46.45

The winery in the Carneros region in Napa Valley, California is formed by the de Villaine family from Burgundy – Aubert de Villaine is best known for Domaine de la Romanée Conti – and the Hyde family of Carneros. The climate is cooler and more moderate than further north in Napa Valley and Sonoma Valley, with coastal mists and breezes, very suitable for cultivating Chardonnay. The grapes are selected from vines 25 years old and more, with some ageing and oak influence. Mineral, refined, concentrated and subtle.

Bourgogne Côte d'Or Rouge Vieilles Vignes Domaine Gilles Jourdan 2017 £20.95

2017 was a high yield vintage generally producing a light fresh



style of red Burgundy. The generic wines from this vintage are ready to drink after two years in bottle. This wine was a superb example of an affordable wine with a jammy nose, good fruit, a lot of acidity – highly quaffable.

Corney & Barrow Company Reserve Claret Maison Sichel 2015 £13.95

Merlot-dominant with some toasted oak backing and well structured. Country Life wrote: "Better than a standard 'club' claret... fragrant and fresh on the nose, a characteristic of the 2015 vintage, and there is good precision on the palate". This wine got better in the glass.

Il Pino di Biserno Tenuta di Biserno 2016 £43.95

This full-bodied complex, very dark wine from the coastal area in Tuscany is a blend of the Bordeaux grapes of Cabernet Franc, Cabernet Sauvignon, Merlot and Petit Verdot. A spicy, tobacco, ripe, dark fruit nose, flavours of herbs, berry fruit, sweet spice and well integrated tannins. This wine is lovely now, and will get better over the next few years.

Hermitage Tardieu-Laurent 2011 £55.25

100% Syrah from very old vines, a wine from another talented vigneron. The nose is aromatically mineral, blackcurrant and rich spices. The palate follows through, with a long finish. Drinking now and onwards for several years. A fine wine.

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London

A RHONE WINE TASTING DINNER



Not everybody enjoys wine tastings without food and a popular format at London Branch in recent years has been to arrange a meal and taste several wines with each course. The latest of these featured wines provided by Paul Mapplebeck, and was held in the Cunliffe-Owen Room at the Naval Club. It was focused in particular upon wines from the renowned Domaine Vieux Télégraphe of Châteauneuf-du-Pape in the southern Rhône.

It began with a tasty fresh aperitif – Zind 2017 from the Zin Humbrecht Domaine in Alsace. Olivier Humbrecht MW is a great wine maker, but this was not quite as expected and opinions were mixed.

The first course was a Carpaccio of Lemon-Cured Salmon, with a crab salad, smoked mayonnaise and fine herbs. It was served with three white wines from the Southern Rhône, starting with 2017 Laudin Côte du Rhône Villages, and then two Châteauneuf-du-Pape: 2017 Les Closiers, and 2014 Vieux Télégraphe blanc. On the whole, the hierarchy was preserved, with the more prestigious wines being preferred.

The main course was Roast Rump of Lamb, with Boulangère potatoes, tender stem broccoli, rosemary and garlic juice. This was served with three red wines from Domaine Vieux Télégraphe – Châteauneuf-du-Pape 2013, 2010 (Parker score 97) and 2005 (Parker score 95+). The 2010 and 2005 are reckoned among the greatest wines ever from this producer. Both were superb, and again opinions were mixed, but some felt that the 2005 had lost some fruit without gaining much in return, and that the 2010 was to be preferred.

Our dessert was Dark Chocolate Marquise, kirsch-soaked cherries and cherry ice cream. This was served with two Sauternes: 2009 Château Filhot – 2ème Cru Classé and 1999 Château Climens – 1er Cru Classé Barsac (Parker score 90 and according to some second only to Château d'Yquem). Both were excellent, but in fact many preferred the less prestigious wine.

It was altogether a most enjoyable and instructive evening.

Alan Shepherd

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For dinner, we had:

- Seared fillet of plaice, potted shrimp butter
Accompanied by *Montagny Bonneveaux 1er Cru Olivier Leflaive 2017*
The vineyards for this elegant wine are in Meursault and Puligny Montrachet. It has a firm texture, fresh fruit and good acidity, and is drinking very well.
- Breast of duck, braised cabbage, trompettes and red wine sauce
Accompanied by *Château La Grave à Pomerol 2012*
Mainly Merlot, some Cabernet Franc, this was an

approachable, elegant light wine, although with a certain rigour, from a fruit enhanced vintage.

- Berkswell with quince jelly and oatcakes
Accompanied by *Corney & Barrow Sauternes 2017*
This was a Sauternes with typically lovely aromas and flavours, ripe fruit and a honey finish.

Finally, coffee and petit fours.

Our thanks to Corney & Barrow, who served us some wonderful wines from their lists and made us very welcome.

Rachel Burnett

London

A TASTING OF RED BORDEAUX FROM THE 1970s

On this evening IWFS London Branch enjoyed a wine tasting of a wide selection of Red Bordeaux from the 1970s. The idea was to see whether wines from a decade long ago had lasted longer than had been anticipated. We do this from time to time with Bordeaux and Burgundy fine wines. We are optimistic but do not know what to expect. Happily we are often surprised and reassured!

We tasted from the earliest through to 1979. All the corks were in good condition and the levels of all looked good. The first two wines were from 1970. This was welcomed as the best year for clarets since 1961 especially since it followed three consecutive bad vintages. The summer was hot and dry but rain arrived in August with cooler temperatures. The harvest started late at the end of September with a large production.

1970 Château Montlandrie – Côtes De Castillon

Côtes de Castillon is a large appellation east of St Émilion, with a clay and limestone terroir, and dominant grape varieties Merlot and Cabernet Franc, as for St Émilion. Montlandrie is an old property dating back to the late 1800s. It was purchased in 2009 so the wine in 1970 was different from what has been produced since then. For example it was not until 2013 that any Cabernet Sauvignon was included. The general advice for this wine is that vintages earlier than 2000 should have been consumed. Nevertheless it was holding up well; still a nice colour, fruit on the nose, soft taste and drinkable.

1970 Château La Tour Figeac – St Émilion

This was bottled by Ronald Avery for his family wine merchants Avery & Co. At the time the grapes were about 75% Merlot. For the last twenty years Cabernet Franc has replaced a proportion of Merlot. This wine is now made with bio-dynamic methods. It probably reached ideal maturity in the late 1990s. Yet it remained drinkable; a darker colour than the previous wine with a soft violet Merlot nose.

1971 Château Liversan – Haut Médoc

This is a large property next to Pauillac with a reputation for producing good wines. 1971 was a good vintage, although a small crop. Then, the Liversan vineyards consisted of 49% Cabernet Sauvignon, 38% Merlot, 10% Cabernet Franc, 3% Petit Verdot. The cork was shorter than the last one, but stayed more or less in one piece. This was a lovely wine, having really stood the test of time. It was a much deeper colour than the previous two wines, just brown on the rim, with a very ripe lovely nose and still a little tannin, and good rich ripe fruit.

1972 Château Cantenac Brown – Margaux

From 1968 this vineyard was in the ownership of Comte Bertrand de Villiers on behalf of the Bordeaux firm of De Luze until it was sold in 1987 to the Compagnie du Midi, a firm from outside the area. At the time of the 1972 vintage – a cold, wet year – the vineyards consisted of 40% Cabernet Sauvignon (since increased), 30% Merlot and 20% Cabernet Franc (both since decreased), 10% Petit Verdot. The colour was thin and the nose was better than the palate, which showed oxidation and high acidity.

1973 Château La Tour De Grenet – Lussac St Émilion

There was much rain in the late summer of 1973, and the wines were light for early drinking. This is an old property, bought by the Brunot family in 1970. It is situated on high slopes of clay and limestone, which get the sunshine, ten kilometres outside St Émilion. The colour was nice, but it was losing its fruit and did not last long in the glass.

1976 Château Gobinaud – Lustrac-Médoc

In the summer of 1976 the weather was very hot and sunny, with no rain. The grapes did not ripen. In the middle of September, the rains arrived, and it was very wet, which did not help, either. However, the vintage came through this, with some elegant wines. The cépage for this wine is now: Cabernet Sauvignon 40%, Merlot 40 %, Cabernet Franc 10%, Petit Verdot 10%. The wine of this vintage seemed to have proportionally more Cabernet Sauvignon than this. The wine displayed good fruit and some tannins but was beginning to dry out.

1978 Château du Moulin Noir – Lussac St Émilion

This was a lovely vintage. The spring in 1978 was cool and wet but there was sunshine throughout the summer and excellent weather in September before the late harvest. This is a tiny property whose wines fetch high prices at auction. About 60% Merlot, 40% Cabernet Franc. But we found that the wine was losing its fruit.

1979 Château Palmer – Margaux

The 1979 harvest in Bordeaux was said to be the largest since 1934 with variety in weather through the year. The vintage is regarded as easy light drinking and not for longevity. However, Château Palmer produces exceptional wines. Since the beginning of the 1960s they have been recognised as being consistently good. This vintage still fetches high prices at auction. The blend is 58% Cabernet Sauvignon, 36% Merlot, 4% Petit Verdot, 2% Cabernet Franc. The wine lives on. The nose showed aromas of cedar wood and ripe fruit. The palate was less significant with some fruit, some acidity and drying tannins but still eminently drinkable.

Our thanks to Jeffrey Benson for arranging and leading this tasting.

Rachel Burnett



London

A TASTING OF WINES FROM PORTUGAL

At London Branch we arrange a wide variety of wine tastings of different kinds. The aim of this tasting, led by Keith Ellis, was to show good value Portuguese wines for current drinking that were not expensive and which were readily available if we wanted to buy any that we had particularly liked.

In the twenty or so years since Portugal joined the EU it has become an exciting and innovative wine region. It is Europe's fifth largest wine producer in terms of volume, with amazing diversity – whether the types of wine, the regions with different climatic and terroir conditions, or the grape varieties, with hundreds of indigenous grapes as well as classic varieties.

Tonight we tasted nine wines. We learned the prices after tasting, and making our own guesses. In general we over-estimated – which goes to show!

Keith gave us helpful information about the wines as we went along. He had also kindly prepared notes – which he handed out afterwards – so that we would have no preconceptions as we tasted.

Planalto Reserva, Douro, 2018, 13% Majestic, £9.99 per bottle (£6.99 to mix 6)

This crisp dry white wine had been vinified in a contemporary style to preserve the fruit aromas and flavours, mainly citrus, also pear and melon. It consisted of a blend of local Douro grapes. It was a good wine for summer slurping!

Lobo e Falcão Branco, 2017, 13%, Laithwaites, £9.99 per bottle (£8.99 to mix 12)

Another fresh white wine for drinking now, this one from the Tejo region, a little more sophisticated and aromatic. Medium dry, it was a blend of local grapes Fernão Pires, Alvarinho and Muscat. its aromas were of peaches and orange blossom, with stone fruit flavours on the palate, and a hint of spice.

We then moved to red wines.

The Sardine Submarine, 2018, 13%, Waitrose, £7.49

This wine was from the Tejo region, a blend of Castelão, Syrah, Alicante Bouschet and Aragonês grapes. The flavours were fresh berry fruit, with a long smooth after-taste. There was a

sting to the taste. A wine for hearty drinking, it is suggested that it is best drunk chilled – and that it goes well with grilled sardines!

Carlos Lucas Ribeiro Santo Dão, 2017, 13%, The Wine Society, £8.50

This was a medium bodied wine, clean, fresh and balanced, for easy drinking, made from local grapes in the Dão region. Its colour was bright. Aromas and flavours were herbal and cherry with a slight hint of the new oak used. We really liked this agreeable wine – such good value!

Adega de Redondo Real Lavrador Alentejano, 2018, 13%, The Wine Society, £5.95

The Adega Co-op Redondo, which produces this medium-bodied wine for drinking now, is one of the largest producers in Alentejo. Again, it was made from grapes indigenous to Portugal. No oak, smooth and balanced, a bramble fruit palate. A star at the price!

Old Vines in Young Hands Tinto, 2016, 13%, Wine Society £5.95

Another bargain from the Douro Valley, made by the local co-operative in Villa Real, which sourced the combination of indigenous grapes from many wine growers across the region. For drinking now, no oak, smooth and fragrant, perhaps a rather raw finish.

Castelo do Vinteiro, Douro, 2016, 13.5%, Laithwaites, £10.49 per bottle (£7.99 to mix 12)

From the Douro Valley this full-bodied wine was very dry. The aromas were of figs and spices, blackberries and cherries, and the palate was silky with some black fruit, but not a lot. It had a long finish.

Rocksand Shiraz, Vinho Regional Peninsula de Setubal, 2016, 14.5%, Laithwaites, £9.99 per bottle

The wine maker of this powerful, rich, full-bodied wine, Jaime Quendera, is responsible for winning many awards for his wine. The grapes were Shiraz with a tiny amount of Alicante. It was aged in oak barrels adding a touch of vanilla to the blackberry, smoky, leathery nose. The flavours were peppery, spicy and black stone fruit. The wine got better in the glass.

Ramos Reserva 2017 Vinho Regional Alentejano, 2017, 14%, Majestic, £8.99 per bottle (£7.49 to mix 6)

This robust wine had aromas of stone and berry black fruit and spices and a bright fruit and jammy taste, integrated tannins from vanilla oak, well balanced and a good length.

Keith had certainly met the objective. We had tasted some terrific examples of well-priced Portuguese wines for easy, current drinking and which demonstrated excellent value. They were all easily obtainable – until they sold out that is! Many thanks to Keith for finding them, and for telling us all about them.

Rachel Burnett



London

JAPANESE WINE TASTING



"The new wave Japanese wines are very much in the same idiom as natural wines, being light-bodied and often relatively crisp" – quoted in the Financial Times by Jancis Robinson MW.

Japanese wine makers are becoming very successful. Wines are now being produced on a par with some of the finest wines world-wide. Many thanks to Christopher Davenport-Jones for organising this London Branch event, with the specific intention of introducing those of us curious enough to attend, to the novel subject of Japanese wines – a fascinating contrast to other, more traditional, although varied, events that we have held this year. A delicious supper followed the tasting.

Where indicated, the price is approximately what the wine would cost to buy in Japan (most of the wines we tried are not available for sale in the UK).

Whites

Grande Polaire Azuminoikeda Sauvignon Blanc Sapporo Breweries 2016

Clean and flinty with moderate acidity and a good finish. Pleasantly drinkable. A bronze medal winner at the 2019 International Wine & Spirit Competition (IWSC). £34.

Grande Polaire Azuminoikeda Hokkaido Kerner Sapporo Breweries 2016

Kerner is an aromatic white grape, most commonly grown in Germany. This wine was sweet yet with tart acidity which sharpened the finish. A bronze medal winner at the 2019 IWSC. £18.

Saint Neige Koshu, Yamanashi 2017

Koshu is a bright pink grape, long cultivated in Japan, but descended from *Vitis vinifera*. Nearly 40% of Japanese wines are from Koshu and Yamanashi (at the base of Mount Fuji) is the main growing area for the vine. The grape skins are thick and bitter-tasting and therefore the wine is often chaptalised to make sweet wine, although now dry wines are being produced.

The white wines tend to be delicate and light bodied with mineral, peach and citrus flavours. £15.

Sadoya Smoke Koshu 2017

We did not greatly enjoy this bottle. Initially the aroma was acidic and reminiscent of cheese, and we found it thin and bitter. However, it was a silver medal winner at the 2019 IWSC. £15.

Manns Lunaris Koshu 2015

This wine was better, showing some citrus and integrated oak.

Château Mercian Koshu, Yamanashi 2017

Aged sur lie until bottling. Fresh sharp citrus aromas. Dry, balanced, aromatic, good mid-palate texture and finish. A very nice wine. This is available to buy in the UK at £15-£18.

Château Mercian, Cuvée Ueno Kiiroka Koshu, Yamanashi 2015

Very classy. Delicate lemon aromas, fresh acidic mineral palate with more fruit. A bronze medal winner at the 2018 IWSC. £100.

2016 Suntory Tomi No Oka Chardonnay, Yamanashi 2016

Aged in French oak casks. It was good although we did not find this exceptional but, perhaps this was because it immediately followed the previous very high quality wine. This was also rather more subtle a Chardonnay than some! £20.

Reds

Château Mercian Muscat Bailey A 2014

A pale red translucent wine made from Muscat Bailey A, a red wine grape cultivated in Japan to suit the climate. The wines tend to be light, fruity and low in tannins. This wine had red fruits on the palate and was reminiscent of Pinot Noir. Agreeable drinking. £13.

Grande Polaire Azuminoikeda Cabernet Sauvignon Sapporo Breweries 2015

Like a claret. A well-made wine. Dark colour. Cooked fruit flavours on the palate. This is a pleasant enjoyable wine. Not for laying down. A bronze medal winner at the 2019 IWSC. Approximately £80-£100.

Solaris Komoro Merlot 2015

A quality wine. Bright, lively, raspberry hints of flavour. A bronze medal winner at the 2018 IWSC. £112.

Grande Polaire Azuminoikeda Meritage Sapporo Breweries 2014

An intense deep red colour. Oak notes on the nose, black fruit. Very good. Bronze medal winner at the 2019 IWSC. £80.

Château Mars Quatre Rouge, Yamanashi 2015

Cabernet Sauvignon and Merlot. Elegant with integrated tannins, long finish. This is a good example of current production. £45.

What an excellent opportunity for us to discover Japanese wines!

Rachel Burnett

London

A TASTING OF FINE CHÂTEAUNEUF-DU-PAPE

At this London Branch meeting we tasted a special selection of Châteauneuf-du-Pape from different years and top estates, led by Jeffrey Benson.

"Old Châteauneuf can be sumptuous – complex, spicy and distinctly gamey, retaining much of its original warmth and ampleur" – Remington Norman.

We started with the earliest and worked forward.

1955 – Domaine J. Vidal-Fleury

This is the oldest maison du vin in the Northern Rhône, founded in 1781. 1955 was a hot summer, producing excellent wine here, as well as in both Bordeaux and Burgundy. The levels of this wine were good. Its powerful aroma was of cherry fruit jam. This wine had stood the test of time, but was beginning to dry out.

1959 – Sélection Société Vin Du Rhône

1959 was another hot summer, producing a great vintage. The grapes would have been very ripe. This wine had survived well. Again a note of cherries, the aroma was sweet, and it was high in alcohol.

1980 – Bottled In Germany

This mystery wine had been bottled by a co-operative. It said 'Frankreich' on the label. 1980 was not a good year. This wine was characteristically southern Rhône, but was ageing. The nose was of stewed fruit.

1988 – Domaine Delas, 'Cuvée De Haute Pierre'

This Rhône maison du vin goes back to 1835. 1988 was the first of three consecutive great vintages. The growing conditions in 1988 were excellent. It was a mild spring and hot summer with two rainfalls in July and August. The grapes proceeded to full maturity. This wine is a solid classic style Châteauneuf. It had more than 90% Grenache, evident on the nose, together with some Syrah. Firm, abundant soft tannins and deep colour. Drinking well.

1993 and 1996 – Château de Beaucastel

The original plot of Château De Beaucastel was bought by Pierre Beaucastel in 1549. The property passed through other families and back to family ownership in the early twentieth century. It is one of the largest wine estates of Châteauneuf-du-

Pape: "One of the finest and most consistent in France" – Remington Norman. It notably uses all permitted Châteauneuf grape varieties, at least a third Mourvèdre. It practises biodynamic farming.

This was a good comparison to make. In 1993 there was too much rain and not much sun. Tannin predominated in this wine and the question was whether the fruit would outlive the tannin. It would probably have been better four or five years ago.

The 1996 weather produced a better vintage. The winter was mild and wet and there was more sun in the summer. This wine was stunning. There was a marked difference in the nose and the lovely depth of fruit. The tannins were balanced. This would have been even better two or three years ago.

2004 – Clos des Papes

This was included in the tasting thanks to the courtesy of a member who brought it along. In 2004 the growing season was late. This wine too is biodynamic. It had not been fined or filtered: 65% Grenache, 20% Mourvèdre, 10% Syrah, and 5% others. It was double-decanted.

It was a wonderful garnet colour, with a complex nose of raspberries and other red berries and mushrooms. The taste was powerful, concentrated and harmonious, also of raspberries and other red berries. It was delicious and would continue for several years.

2013 – Domaine André Brunel, 'Les Cailloux'

In 2013, the growing season was very cold and very wet. The summer brought better weather, but the vintage was late maturing, harvested over a long time, with very low yields. Generally the wine was light in style and with a freshness for early drinking.

The domaine is owned by André Brunel, the third generation of his family, whose history dates from the 1700s. A small number of cases are produced each year and the wine is highly sought after. The vines are among the oldest in the area. The blend is Grenache (70%), Mourvèdre (17%), Syrah (10%), Cinsault (3%), making a traditional style.

2014 – Domaine De La Solitude, 'Cuvée Barberini'

The 2014 winter weather was mild but then came rain and more rain. Better weather in September could not redeem matters.

The domaine belongs to one of the oldest families in Châteauneuf-du-Pape. It is composed of Grenache (60 %), Syrah (30 %) and Mourvèdre, with complex aromas of cherry, spice and chocolate and a smooth, full-bodied palate with balanced tannins. It is enjoyable now and will age although many wines of this vintage, as for 2013, will be for early drinking.

All of us enjoyed the opportunity to consider and compare the different vintages of these fine Châteauneuf-du-Pape wines.

Rachel Burnett



Lusaka

BRONZE MEDAL PRESENTATION

In a first for the Lusaka Branch, an André Simon Bronze Medal for extraordinary service was presented to our longest standing member, Andy Anderson, on Saturday the 28th of September 2019.

The presentation was held in the newly opened Sarovar Prestige Hotel at an authentic Seychellois Dinner catered mainly by another long-term member of the Branch, Emily Lüring, who also sourced much of the seafood and many of the other tropical ingredients from Tanzania. The dress code was Tropical Island to match the menu.

Fifty members and guests attended the dinner and gracing the event was IWFS Honorary President David Felton and his wife Mitsuko, from the Pasadena Branch in California. David, who was visiting friends in Zambia, was delighted to be able to make the presentation on behalf of the Society to past Lusaka Branch Chairman and Committee Member Andy for his contributions to the Lusaka Branch for over 50 years. This included hosting our annual Glyndebourne event for the last 36 years at his residence. During this period Andy also served for three years as Africa Representative on the EAC.

As to the dinner itself, it started with a refreshing Golden Apple Bellini cocktail in the reception area and, once the guests were seated, it was followed by a Palm Heart and Lobster Tail Salad served with a Lemon Creole Dressing. This was enjoyed by all and paired with a Noble Hill 2019 Sauvignon Blanc. Emily then gave a short speech about the history of the Seychelles and described all the authentic dishes that were to be served during the evening.

The next course of Bouillon of Moringa Tree Leaves was unusual, and opinion reflected a bit of a 'Marmite' moment. Personally, the author loved it, some other guests were not so enthusiastic. The soup was accompanied with Noble Hill Mourvèdre Rosé which was both delicate and dry. It was at this point of the evening that David made the Medal presentation to Andy.

The main course was a Thali of Seychellois Culinary Delights served with a selection of various condiments, salads and white



rice. The Thali featured Seychellois Octopus Coconut Curry, Dorado Fillet with Spicy Creole Sauce, Shark Chutney, Chicken Chilli Fry and Suckling Pig in Ginger, Soy Sauce and Honey. In fact, something for everyone's palate. Most popular were the Octopus Coconut Curry and the Suckling Pig. The Thali was served with Noble Hill 2014 Estate Bordeaux Blend which was robust enough to not be overwhelmed by the host of spicy flavours in the Thali.

Finally, the dinner concluded with Lemongrass and Parsley Jelly and a home-made tropical ice cream, which was served with Limoncello.

All in all, the evening was a dazzling success and thoroughly enjoyed by all attending. Andy himself was both touched and delighted that his contributions to the Society over many years had been recognised by the International Committee of the Society with the award of the prestigious André Simon Bronze Medal. The Lusaka Branch is looking forward to the future and many more entertaining and successful gastronomic events.

Ken Cummins



Manchester

LUNCH BY PACO PEREZ AT TAST CUINA CATALANA



In October some 37 members and guests of the Manchester and mid-Cheshire branches visited TAST, the three-storey Catalan restaurant on King Street, Manchester, where we had the entire first floor to ourselves and were treated to an excellent lunch.

The menu invited us to “take a trip around Catalan food with Paco’s favourite dishes” and we duly obliged.

Paco Perez, was born in Andalucia, but almost immediately moved with his family to Catalonia. He is multi-Michelin starred, as the chef patron at Miramar in Girona (2 *) and Enoteca at the Hotel Arts in Barcelona (2 *), with a single star at the Restaurant Cinco at the Hotel Das Stue in Berlin.

TAST in Manchester is backed by the Fazenda Restaurant Group, as well as three people with Manchester City connections – the manager Pep Guardiola, the chairman, Ferran Sorano, and director, Txixi Begeristain.

On arrival, we were served a Cava, Bocchoris Brut Nature NV (Xarel-lo, Macabeo and Parellada), a pleasantly fresh and straw yellow coloured wine. Original cavas were produced exclusively in Catalonia and the heart of cava production remains in San Sadurni de Noya.

Once we were all seated we were served a series of “small bites” and “lots of joy” croquetas. The first of these was a delicious tiny donut of foie gras, encased in white chocolate topped with a vivid raspberry flavoured dust.

Two croquetas followed, both crispy on the outside and each with a different creamy inside – one containing red peppers and the other Iberian ham.

The last of the small bites were two small baked meringue wafers, arranged in a butterfly shape, enclosing sheep’s cheese with the texture like Brie and a slice of summer truffle.

After a short break, we moved on to the next part of the menu, starting with the very visual “smoking” Còctel de Llagostins, this comprised of tiger prawns, avocado, lettuce and tomato with “mayo cocktail nitro”. Liquid nitrogen rises, so the chef adds the food to the liquid nitrogen to prevent the top of the food freezing.

The next course was Ou d’anec amb xipirons, which was a fried duck egg, deep-fried baby squid, potato and tartare sauce. This came with the suggestion to mix up the elements because “the messier it looks, the better it tastes”! We did – and it did taste good!

There then followed the Papillote de Musclos, taking many of us by surprise, it arrived in a polythene bag! The dish was mussels, which had been cooked in the bag, along with chilli, basil, ginger, spring onions, lemongrass and white wine. Our waiter snipped off the top of the bag at the table, releasing beautiful aromas.

The next course was Arros De Verdures (Vegetable Bomba Rice), which had been cooked paella-style in the oven with a cauliflower and broccoli stock in emulsion. This was served in a very shallow tray with the best bits to be found around the edges!

The main course was Costella de Porc, a large pork rib coated with a homemade barbeque sauce, accompanied by tiny cubed chips.

And then there was the pudding! Pessic Fluid De Xocolata, a warm, dark chocolate fondant in a crumble, served with ice cream, spiced with cardamom and star anise with a mango coulis – and this was delightful.



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Merseyside and Mid-Cheshire

PISTE, TARPORLEY

We were spoilt for choice at this lovely friendly wine bar/restaurant in the pretty Cheshire village of Tarporley and treated to an excellent fine dining experience. Brexit did not once enter the conversation so that made it the best evening of the year so far.

Owners James Hughes and his brother-in-law Paul Bebe explain that the name started off as a joke but, with its cosy ski chalet associations, seemed to represent the rustic friendly feel they had in mind for the restaurant. They pride themselves on modern European cuisine using only the best ingredients; many of which are sourced from within Cheshire.

The food and service were of very high quality, beautifully presented and full of flavour. The shin of beef proved to be a particular favourite for many members and is a signature dish of the restaurant.

The wines were carefully chosen to match the flavours of the food.

Aperitif

Freshhello Spumante Rosé – a crisp, refreshing and elegant rosé.

Starter

- Ham Hock, Confit of Duck salad or Goats Cheese with Beetroot
Perchon Chenin Blanc Viognier as a starter or main course wine – a spicy white with fruit aromas and bright acidity.

Main

Shin of Beef, Grilled Hake or Vegetarian Pathivier
Valpolicella Ripasso Superiore, rich, smooth and velveteen with intense aromas of ripe black cherry and spice with a long finish.

Dessert

- Summer Tiramisu, Ice cream in Brandy Snap Basket or Cheese and Biscuits

Coffee ended the super meal served with homemade chocolate fudge.

Frank and Jean Whiteman



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Throughout the meal we were served a white wine Lumi Blanc Alimara 2016 (Macabeu and Grenache Blanc) and a red, Lumi Cellar Alimara 2017 (Syrah and Tempranillo) and the restaurant did not stint when pouring.

Both of these wines are from the Terra Alta (high land) in the west of the province of Tarragona in Catalonia. Grapes have been grown in this region for centuries but, because of its geographical isolation, the wines were mainly used for local consumption. However, during the nineteenth century, vinos rancios (rancid wines) from the region, such as Amber Blanc apparently attained great fame.

The area was then devastated by the Phylloxera bug and the current vineyards were replanted by grafting on to New World rootstock between 1920 and 1950 and Terra Alta DO acquired official status in 1982.

Both of the wines were well received, with some people opting to change from white to red at various stages of the meal.

Catalonia has a distinctive identity and culture from that of the rest of Spain and it was a pleasure to have been introduced to

its tastes and its flavours, a combination of traditional dishes, with some interesting modern twists.

The very efficient service was supervised throughout by Fernando, the General Manager of the restaurant, who hails from Galicia and his very able assistants Tim and Tay. Each dish was described in detail as it was served, which added significantly to the experience.

On the day Julià Castellò was the chef in the kitchen with Julian, Mikel, Albert, Welker also deserving an honourable mention and all are to be complemented both on the cooking and the presentation of the food.

Some of our members, visiting TAST for the first time, may have come expecting tapas, but they experienced the taste of Catalonia in the shape of Tastet, these are small tastes of food and more complex. I suspect many who attended that day will return.

Many may have stepped out of their comfort zone, but not a dissenting voice was heard!

Malcolm Tidmus

Merseyside and Mid-Cheshire

LAITHWAITE'S ALDERLEY EDGE, WILMSLOW



Chairman Dr Paul Bishop with David Crichton and Ron Barker

The setting for the meal was the tasting room at Laithwaite's wine store in Alderley Edge, Cheshire. The surroundings were decorated with wine areas of the world and plenty of display boxes and bottles to whet one's appetite for the meal.

Thirty plus members spent a very happy evening with David Crichton, 2018 MasterChef Runner-up. David was a Thomas Cook airline pilot until a few weeks before the event but has continued his culinary skills alongside his flying career.

He cooked us a superb three course dinner preceded by his homemade canapés. The whole evening provided members with an array of flavours beautifully complementing each course. The wines had been well chosen by Laithwaites to match the food. The Roche Loccur Cremant Rosé with its crisp, refreshing delicate red berry flavours was served with the canapés. The chicken based starter was nicely accompanied by a Vouvray Reserve Champalou 2018. This crisp wine is lively and refreshing with orchard fruit flavours and Chenin's classic honey nutty edge. The Pork Iberico Presa main course was served with

a carrot ketchup and pumpkin seed pesto. This wild boar derivative dish was served with an Italian red Pallastero Selezione D'Oro 2018. The full bodied style with aromas of black berries, cloves and exotic spices made for an excellent balance with the strong meat flavour. The signature apple crumble mille feuille dessert again displayed great skill in combining two familiar components and was a perfect finale to a most enjoyable meal.

Our guest chef had provided the members with a rich array of flavours in both the food and the wines confirming without doubt why he performed so well in the 2018 BBC MasterChef competition.

Frank and Jean Whiteman



Merseyside and Mid-Cheshire

85th ANNIVERSARY CHRISTMAS PARTY, CHESTER GROSVENOR HOTEL

For this year's special Christmas celebration Merseyside and Mid Cheshire returned to the Chester Grosvenor where the group was founded 84 years ago. Visitors included members from the Manchester and Blackpool groups including outgoing IWFS Chairman Ian Nicol.



As on previous occasions the setting was very gracious and Head Chef, Simon Radley, produced a beautiful meal with excellent wines to accompany the food. Local produce was well featured by way of Nantwich goats' cheese in the starter and Conway Valley Welsh lamb for the main course. The dessert was a cranberry and chocolate gateaux with iced Clementine.

A Prosecco Astoria aperitif opened the evening – this was a very well balanced single grape example with plenty of fruit and acidity. The goats' cheese starter was served with a mature 2013 Lapostolle D'Alamel Chardonnay having a fresh and fruity character. The main course red was a 120 Pinot Noir – Santa Rita 2015 displaying an excellent 'Burgundian' nose and plenty of red fruit. Overall a very happy start to Christmas.

Frank and Jean Whiteman

Northampton

ANNUAL DINNER 2019

On the 13th October 26 members of the Northampton Branch assembled yet again at Hambleton Hall for their annual dinner. As she has done for nineteen years, Betty Meadows involved owner Tim Hart, Michelin starred chef Aaron Patterson and sommelier supreme Dominique Baduel in planning an exceptional banquet with beautifully paired wines.

After the customary reception with the house Champagne from René Beaudouin and succulent and inventive canapés, we went through to the long table in the dining room trusting that our neighbours were not the same as we had been chatting to at the Reception.

The first course was another tour de force from Aaron: a parfait of blended chicken liver and foie gras encased in a red covering to make it all look like a tomato. The accompanying wine was a 2016 Pinot Gris from that star of Alsace, Rolly Gassmann – a deliciously rich, sweetish wine met with general approval.

The next course consisted of a seared scallop surrounded by wild mushrooms and cauliflower with a foamy, tangy grappa sauce – quite delicious! The wine chosen was a 2009 blend of Chenin Sauvignon Blanc and Semillon from Naudé in Stellenbosch – a great match.

The main course was Assiette of Rabbit. Betty Meadows assured us that this was the first time we had eaten rabbit at the dinner for 15 years. Aaron had produced the dish from special small and tender French rabbits with tiny rib cages, a large tube filled with a rabbit emulsion and a pasta shell holding kidneys, surrounded by a creamy sauce.

The red wine bottles were covered in silver paper, so the challenge was to identify the grape and the source. The main clue was the lightish colour. Our distinguished President and wine expert, Robin Sheppard, treated us to his thoughts on the wines so far and reduced the red candidates down to Grenache, Tempranillo or Pinot Noir. He eventually plumped for the third of these. Dominique Baduel gave his reasons for choosing the wines served so far with details of the vineyard's location, climate and the vintner. He agreed with Robin's comments and confirmed that the red wine was indeed a Pinot Noir: it was a 2015 Spätburgunder from Franken in Germany. It was maybe



not everybody's favourite of the evening, but it certainly was an excellent challenge.

After the Loyal Toast, we moved on to a serving of Baron Bigod unpasteurised cheese. This was a serendipitous choice since we had visited the producing creamery in our away break to Suffolk several years ago. The red wine picked with this was a 2013 Clos de Trias from Even Bakke's Ventoux vineyard. It clearly merits the attention and promotion that Hambleton Hall is giving this producer.

The dessert was one of Hambleton's classic dishes – Passion Fruit Soufflé. All 26 were produced simultaneously in perfect risen order, together with a little scoop of banana and passion fruit sorbet. Absolutely yummy! As at the wedding in Cana, the best wine came last: a lovely Coteaux du Layon 2017 from St Aubin Domaine des Forges.

Our Chairman Piers Smith-Cresswell did the honours in thanking all responsible for this memorable occasion. He summoned in Aaron Patterson and all the staff involved, then called upon Katie Lindenbaum to summarise her feelings about the meal – all favourable. There were very few members who did not agree that it had been four hours well spent in most convivial company and elegant setting.

John Kelly

Zürich Branch

BRANCH AGM 2019 "BY THE SEE/SEA"



Sunday 8th September 2019 was the date of the AGM, which is required by Swiss Law for organisations of all kinds, be it a large corporation or a small non-profit organisation. Fortunately small organisations with limited assets and small profits are tax-exempt, therefore quite informal. However they have to hold an AGM to elect or confirm their committee members and to approve the books.

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Zürich

CAVA AND CULTURE IN BARCELONA



Two of our members live in Barcelona, Spain. They offered to organise a weekend in this lively city to get an insight into the wine and food scene as well as the cultural heritage of the Catalan capital.

After a welcome cava at the roof top bar of the hotel the group stayed in, our first lunch was at the Restaurant 'Xavi Pellicer', whose approach is based on 'biodynamics' with organic and healthy products. The chef is reputed to serve the best vegetables in the world although the menu is not limited to veggies. The group enjoyed a healthy business lunch with selected wines.

In the afternoon we walked along the Paseo de Gracia to the famous Casa Batllo, a masterpiece of architect Gaudi, where we enjoyed a private tour.

The early evening aperitif was at the Circulo del Liceo, which is a private British-style club attached to Barcelona Opera House. A Barcelona Gin (BCN Gin) tasting with its sophisticated gin and tonic preparation was given by the producers themselves. A dinner followed at the restaurant 'Sculent'. The concept of this restaurant and its chef Toni Romero is to reinterpret popular flavours with respect to the history and the ingredients of Mediterranean cuisine.

The next day we travelled to Sant S'Adorni, the capital of cava. There we had a tasting of five different cavas at Giro-Giro, which was led by Ramon Giro-Giro, the owner of this boutique cava house. The production is still very artisanal, but they have had several nominations and in 2016 their Cava Montaner was nominated 'best cava of the year'. The tour continued with a



visit to Can Rafols, an old 'masia' (farm house) and vineyard. Can Rafols combine, in a stylish way, a rustique environment with the most advanced wine making. After the visit to the cellars, a traditional lunch was prepared by a local chef using the old kitchen and was served in their beautiful dining room. A rich Tapas dinner at Mediamanga concluded the day.

The next morning started with a walk in the recently renovated Sant Antoni food market and its neighbourhood. Then we had a typical Saturday lunch at Els Sortidors del Parlament with popular little snacks. The afternoon gave the opportunity to explore Barcelona individually and do some shopping. The evening brought another highlight, the restaurant Nectari, where the group had a special Menu de degustacion "Ruta de Catalunya" with selected cavas and wines. Restaurant Nectari was honoured with one Michelin star for several years, but the chef and owner, Jordi Esteve has recently handed back his star and is going his own way developing his cuisine. For our group, Jordi composed a Catalan menu with ingredients from all parts of this province.

On Sunday we enjoyed the traditional Spanish Sunday lunch: a Paella in the Paella Club cooking school. Here we learned the foundations of Spanish cuisine and with a hands-on approach we learned to make our own paella. The afternoon was spent back in the opera house ("Pêcheurs des Perles" by George Bizet) and the adjoining private club Circulo del Liceo. The event finished with a gourmet tapas dinner at the little sister of Mediamanga, where we gathered around a large table and enjoyed some very innovative creations. All things considered an unforgettable weekend and a unique experience.

Kurt Haering

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One of our members, the Keller family has a nice summer home directly at the shores of Lake Zurich. They were so kind to invite the Branch to hold the AGM there. They provided the main course and an Apéro with Frank's Cava, and red and white wine. The members supplied all other goodies for a rich buffet lunch. Frank's cava is an artisanal sparkling wine from a small winery near Barcelona, which has won several prizes for the outstanding quality.

The AGM itself went smoothly, all proposals of the committee were approved unanimously.

The weather was, despite being the end of summer, rather rainy and fresh. So, swimming in the nearby lake was not attractive, but sitting together, enjoying wine and views made the meeting a great event.

Kurt Haering

GREAT WEEKEND CAMBRIDGE

Incorporating the EAZ AGM & Members' Forum:
Friday 18th to Sunday 20th September 2020

Following the resounding success of our 2019 Great Weekend in Valencia, we will be visiting Cambridge in September 2020. The programme will include two black-tie dinners at Cambridge colleges. We will spend a day in Ely, visiting the Cathedral, the Stained Glass Museum and the Almonry Restaurant. Sunday morning will be given over to the EAZ AGM and Members' Forum. After a buffet lunch at the hotel a walking tour of Cambridge will offer the opportunity to see some of the architectural gems the University has to offer. Dinner on Sunday evening will be at the University Arms Hotel. Transport by coach will be provided throughout the weekend.

Our base will be the Holiday Inn Hotel, Impingham, Cambridge. The hotel is just outside the city centre with ample parking. (One word of warning however, you will need to register your car with the hotel reception on arrival to escape the possibility of a fine.) We have negotiated a very competitive rate for the weekend and the hotel will also host the AGM and Members' Forum on Sunday morning. If travelling by train it is a relatively short taxi ride from Cambridge Station.

The first event will be a black-tie Reception and Dinner at Corpus Christi College on Friday evening; a coach will pick us up at the hotel at 6.30 pm. Corpus Christi College was founded in 1352, it is one of the smallest colleges in Cambridge University. It is unique in that, while other colleges were founded by wealthy benefactors or religious orders, Corpus Christi was founded by the townspeople of Cambridge.

On Saturday morning the coach will pick us up at the hotel for the short drive to Ely. We will spend the morning exploring the splendours of the medieval cathedral (pictured below) and the Stained Glass Museum which is unique in the UK. There will be some free time either to explore the town itself or another museum, Oliver Cromwell's house is nearby, or you may wish to ascend one of the cathedral towers. (The towers, 165 and 288 steps respectively, demand a reasonable level of fitness and a head for heights. There would also be an additional charge for this option.) In the early afternoon we will head for the Almonry Restaurant and a special Afternoon Tea. The Restaurant is situated within the Cathedral precinct.

Magdalene College will host our dinner on Saturday evening. Magdalene was founded in 1428 and re-founded in 1542 by Thomas Audley, Henry VIII's Lord Chancellor. Samuel Pepys was a student at the College and subsequently a generous benefactor. Rowan Williams, the former Archbishop of Canterbury, became



Master of the College in 2013. Our Reception and Dinner will start in the Pepys Cloisters (weather permitting) before moving to the College Hall. Dress Code will be black-tie.

After an early start on Sunday morning for the AGM and Members' Forum we will have a buffet lunch at the hotel before leaving by coach for a guided walking tour of Cambridge visiting some of the other colleges before returning to the hotel in the late afternoon. Dinner that evening will be a smart casual affair taking place at the University Arms Hotel where a talented young chef, Tristan Welch, is making a name for himself reinventing British classics using locally sourced ingredients.

Booking Information

Early booking is recommended for the Great Weekend as numbers are limited. The cost of the full programme from Friday evening to Sunday evening including 3 dinners (2 black tie) the visit to Ely, the guided walking tour and coach transfers throughout will be GBP 365 per person for IWFS members, GBP 395 for guests. This price does not include travel to and from Cambridge, or hotel accommodation while you are there. Please contact EAZ Admin (eaz@iwfs.org) to confirm your place before making payment. Once your place has been confirmed, you will be sent details of how to make your payment.

As always, EAZ members may attend the AGM, Members' Forum and lunch on Sunday 20th September without charge. If you intend to do this please email us by 1st September 2020 as the hotel will need to know numbers for lunch. There is a possibility that we may be able to accommodate some additional participants for the walk on Sunday afternoon and for dinner on Sunday evening. If you would like to explore this idea please contact EAZ Admin (eaz@iwfs.org) for details.

Cancellation: There will be a 14 day cancellation period from the date of your booking during which you may cancel your reservation and receive a full refund. After that, no refunds will be given. Cancellations must be made in writing to eaz@iwfs.org

Cancellation and Medical Insurance: You are strongly advised to take out travel and cancellation insurance – to apply from the end of your cooling off period.

Hotel: The Holiday Inn is offering us a rate of £130.00 per room (£125.00 for single occupancy) per night, including breakfast, for the three nights of the Great Weekend. Members should book their accommodation directly with the hotel by email or telephone quoting 'International Wine & Food Society' or 'IWFS' to obtain this rate.

Telephone: 01223 582414 or 01223 582453 during office hours

Email: Reservations@hicambridge.co.uk

The Hotel's cancellation policy (not later than 14 days before date of arrival to avoid any charges) will apply.

The Hotel's address is: Holiday Inn Cambridge, Lakeview, Bridge Road, Impington, Cambridge, CB24 9PH. You are not obliged to stay at this hotel, but please be aware that coach transfers will start and end there.

DATES FOR YOUR DIARY

UK Torquay

16th March 2020

Old Vienna, Torquay. Dinner, 7pm for 7.30 pm Contact Geeta Lloyd at geetalloyd@gmail.com for details.

UK Manchester

17th March 2020

Irish Night at Nick's Restaurant Bolton. For details contact Ali Graham at brackenridge.amg@btinternet.com.

UK Berkshire

20th March 2020

Wines of South Africa (Red Squirrel Wine), with two-course dinner. 6.45 pm at Neville Hall, Waltham St Lawrence. For details contact Ian Roe, email i.roe@btinternet.com.

UK Bath & Bristol

24th March 2020

Lunch at The Ivy, Bath Brasserie (sister restaurant to the Ivy in Bristol). Contact Janet Bagot at janet_bagot@yahoo.com for details.

UK Merseyside & Mid-Cheshire

2nd April 2020

Dinner at Next Door, Frodsham. Contact Tim Hodges at tim@new-pool.demon.co.uk >for info.

UK Berkshire

17th April 2020

Wines of New Zealand (Antipodean Sommelier), with two-course dinner. From 6.45 pm at Neville Hall, Waltham St Lawrence. Contact Ian Roe at i.roe@btinternet.com for details.

UK Bath & Bristol

21st April 2020

70th celebration dinner at Merchants Hall. Black Tie event with speaker. Contact Leonie Allday at leonie@the-alldays.org.uk for details.

UK Torquay

23rd April 2020

Dinner at The Linny, Coffinswell, 7pm for 7.30 pm. Contact Geeta Lloyd at geetalloyd@gmail.com for details.

UK Manchester

24th April 2020

Evening Event, The Fisherman's Table, Marple. Contact Ali Graham at brackenridge.amg@btinternet.com.

UK Merseyside & Mid-Cheshire

5th May 2020

Dinner at Choy Hing, Grappenhall. Contact Tim Hodges at tim@new-pool.demon.co.uk for info.

UK Surrey Hills

2nd June 2020

Tasting and tour at High Clandon Vineyard, followed by lunch at the Queen's Head, East Clandon, Surrey. More details later. Contact Susie Punch at kipsusue@btinternet.com.

FRANCE Paris and Bordeaux

16th to 25th April 2020

Join the wait list to be part of this amazing event visiting some of the most exclusive venues in Paris and then in Bordeaux a stunning itinerary includes private tours and tastings of famous chateaux. For more details visit https://www/iwfs.org/festivals/paris_bordeaux.

UK Cambridge

18th to 20th September 2020

An EAZ AGM & Great Weekend.

UK West Yorkshire

10th October 2020

'A Feast of Venison' from deer park to table, witness first-hand the renaissance of a noble beast that has been eaten in Britain for thousands of years. A special event on the Harewood Estate, West Yorkshire, hosted by Josh Whitehead. Enquiries to Sue Timme, email suetimme@gmail.com.

PORTUGAL Madeira

2nd to 8th November 2020

This event is now full. Please email Stephanie Shepherd at s.shepherd@ntlworld.com if you would like to be added to the wait list.

CHINA Hangzhou and Shanghai

12th to 19th November 2020

Join the APZ for a wonderful festival in China. Key dates are: arrival dinner in Shanghai, east China's cultural centre, on the 12th; the main festival will be in Hangzhou 13th to 15th – a UNESCO site and one of China's most beautiful cities; the post-tour will be in Shanghai from 16th to 19th. See Upcoming Festivals. Invitations will be sent out in January 2020.

Looking to further ahead...

ARGENTINA Buenos Aires and Mendoza October 2021

The next Triennial International Festival will be held in South America's most sophisticated city and its most important wine region. Open to all members. Booking details available last quarter 2020.

