



# *Food & Wine*

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

Issue 139

November 2020



**BURGUNDY: CHANGES AND  
ITS EVOLUTION**

**HOW MANY POINTS WAS  
THAT WINE?**

**WAS I CRAZY TO BEGIN  
MAKING WINE?**

**SHARING WITH  
THE ANGELS**

**ALCOHOL, MILK, RACE  
AND HEALTH**

**SALT AND PEPPER  
TO TASTE**

## Chairman's message



As I write this, it has become clear that Europe, including the UK, is having to deal with a resurgence of the Covid-19 pandemic, with lockdowns and restrictions on travel and numbers gathering together being re-imposed by Governments. Whether the steps to curb the virus being taken by European Governments will be effective or not remains to be seen.

Travel to and from the Americas and Asia-Pacific is likely to be very limited until there is a viable vaccine. Both those regions continue planning 2021 festivals.

The pandemic has restricted branch events in 2020, in all zones of the Society with the EAZ festivals in Cambridge and Madeira rearranged for 2021. There was a brief respite during the summer months when some branches successfully (and safely) held face-to-face events, both in restaurants and private houses (reports on pages 25 to 33). Joan and I were pleased to have been able to attend the very enjoyable lunch with the Zürich branch (see page 32) and meet up with friends.

Other branches have held virtual events with great success. We will review all reports submitted on virtual events and determine a reward for the best. If you have held a virtual event but have not submitted a report or intend to hold one, please send a report to [editor.eaz@iwfs.org](mailto:editor.eaz@iwfs.org) before the end of 2020.

I sincerely hope that in 2021, we will be able to hold the planned EAZ festivals in Piedmont, Cambridge and Madeira. However, more importantly, I hope that members will be able to resume "normal" branch events and again participate with their friends in enjoying good food and good wine. I am sure that restaurants and other hospitality venues will welcome us back. Let us hope that our favourite venues survive these hard times.

I urge you to read the ideas set out by Leonie Allday and Tim Hodges (page 24) – these show us a positive way forward and I

hope that with your branch you will be able to generate ideas and formulate plans to move our Society forward.

Communication with our members during these difficult times is vital and it is good to hear that Branch officers have written or spoken to their branch members. I have written a few times to branch Chairs to inform them of decisions taken by the Society and EAZ. I specifically asked them how to implement the proposal to reduce the membership fee to be paid to EAZ by 50% for 2021, resulting in the flexibility given to branches.

Our Society has delivered on-line talks for members to view or listen to online through the Society website – I urge you to watch these interesting views of the effects of biodynamics, terroir and climate on the wine industry. Details can be found on page 5.

As well as these talks, you can access other written publications online through the website: the Americas 'Wine, Food and Friends', the Society newsletter 'Grapevine' and our own 'Food & Wine Online', as well as all published monographs. A few clicks on the website will take you to these publications to read on screen or print out. If you are unsure how to access the website, I hope a friend or relative would help.

I would like to thank members of the EAZ Executive Committee (Exco) who have worked hard for members during lockdown. I would also like to thank all those who have kept in touch with their branch members and those who have initiated events, both face-to-face and virtual. Changes to the members of Exco were approved at the AGM in September and are outlined on page 5.

Finally, I hope that all of you, your families and friends remain healthy and stay safe and have a happy and enjoyable upcoming festive season within whatever constraints are imposed on gatherings of our friends and family.

*John Nicholas*

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](http://www.iwfs.org) or for information about the Society in brief visit our Wikipedia page [http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/International\\_Wine\\_and\\_Food\\_Society](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/International_Wine_and_Food_Society)

## Editorial

Hello it's me again. Sue Smith, ably supported by Peter McGahey, has produced the last series of F&W Magazines but have now stepped down from the editorship. We have to thank them for their time and effort in the role, particularly getting the last edition out as we endured lockdown. Whilst we are looking for a new editor Andrea Warren and myself have put this issue together, aided by your committee and the other contributors. We deemed it imperative that we keep regular communications going during these difficult times.

Sadly in my own branch, Blackpool & Fylde Coast we have lost two members to Covid-19 during hospitalisation. However it is not all bad news and we have to remember EAZ covers two continents. Talking to Dave Swinger in Cape Town about their Branch Focus article, he gave this upbeat message. "We're at Level 1 (down from 5) which is pretty covid free, and numbers are not increasing. Spring is also here, and Cape Town's dams are full." Our next event in Cape Town should be in 2022, so reinforced with suitable vaccine we hope for a successful visit. As you will see, events keep getting rolled back as the near future is not as certain, but with vaccines things should settle. We guarantee return of funds so try to be positive and make a booking. See the latest on Cambridge, pages 34 to 35. Firm numbers help in our events planning and costing.

I expect many of our members will have missed holidays this year so perhaps a time to reflect on past trips and activities. The front cover is not a recognition of lockdown as the bars are meant to keep people out rather than in. It was one of the more unusual places to have an event during the 2018 Perth Festival, The Royal Mint in Perth, Western Australia. Now a museum, we had a full tour, gold pour, wine tasting and food with entertainment in the courtyard. Our articles in this issue include a report from professional wine writer Stephen Brook who gives an insight into how Burgundy has changed and evolved over the past 35 years, plus Jeffrey Benson recounts his trip to Provence back in 1999. In addition we have included three reports from our members in the Americas, on a variety of topics, which we hope you will enjoy too.

What is the most unusual place, you have attended an event? Member or branch replies please to [editor.eaz@iwfs.org](mailto:editor.eaz@iwfs.org). Short anecdotes will be published in replies to the editor, longer articles with pictures will go in the Branch Pages.

Lastly congratulations to Dave Felton for taking on the Presidency of the Society for a further two years. Your ubiquitous President will keep you amused when he talks about his take on being a winemaker, see page 10.

*Ian Nicol*

### PUBLICATION DATES

- **Food & Wine Online (e-newsletter) Issue 15**  
deadline for copy from contributors 30th November; publication mid December.
- **Food & Wine (printed) Issue 140**  
deadline for copy from contributors 31st January; publication to members 28th February.
- **Food & Wine Online (e-newsletter) Issue 16**  
deadline for copy from contributors 31st March; publication mid April.
- **Food & Wine (printed) Issue 141**  
deadline for copy from contributors 30th May; publication to members in 30th June (to include AGM notification).
- **Food & Wine Online (e-newsletter) Issue 17**  
deadline for copy from contributors 31st July; publication mid August.
- **Food & Wine (printed) Issue 142**  
deadline for copy from contributors 30th September; publication to members 31st October.

## Food & Wine

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

Editorial email:  
[editor.eaz@iwfs.org](mailto:editor.eaz@iwfs.org)

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

The Society welcomes applications for membership  
For information please contact

Geeta Lloyd  
Membership Secretary  
Lai Yuen  
Higher Lincombe Road  
Torquay  
TQ1 2EY  
United Kingdom

email: [info.eaz@iwfs.org](mailto:info.eaz@iwfs.org)

All rights reserved.  
Reproduction in whole or part is strictly forbidden without prior written consent

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

One copy, per address, is available for members.  
For extra copies please email  
Geeta Lloyd at  
[info.eaz@iwfs.org](mailto:info.eaz@iwfs.org)





## Contributors

### Burgundy: Changes and its Evolution

**Stephen Brook** was born in London and studied English literature and philosophy at Trinity College, Cambridge. After 15 years as a publisher's editor in the United States and England, he became a freelance writer in 1982. He has written many travel books, including the bestselling *New York Days*, *New York Nights*, *Honkytonk Gelato* and *The Double Eagle*. He has also written guidebooks to the Dordogne, Prague, Vienna, the Veneto and Provence, and compiled three anthologies. His books on wine include *Liquid Gold: Dessert Wines of the World*, *Sauternes*, *The Wines of California* and three editions of *The Complete Bordeaux*. He is also a prolific journalist, writing on wine for *World of Fine Wine*, the *Financial Times* and other publications. He has been a Contributing Editor to *Decanter* since 1996, and won numerous awards for his wine books.



### Was I Crazy to Begin Making Wine?

**Dave Felton**, the Society's Honorary President since 2017, served as the Society's global Chairman of Council for the two-year period of 2015-2016. He previously served as the board chairman of the IWFS Americas. He has long been active in promoting the internationality of our Society by welcoming worldwide members to festivals and events held around the globe. At one time in his life, for a dozen years, he was a newspaper columnist. He still wants to think that he can write. Silly man.



### Alcohol, Milk, Race and Health

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



### How many points is that wine?

**Claire L. Torbeck** is a Certified Sommelier with the Court of Master Sommeliers and a student in the Diploma Program of the Wine and Spirits Education Trust. She is the Cellar Master for the IWFS Lake Tahoe branch in the Americas where she purchases and manages a cellar of 1,200 to 1,500 bottles (\$75,000 to \$100,000), similar to a small restaurant inventory. She develops and delivers educational seminars for winery staff, clubs and enthusiasts and judge at various wine competitions around California. Find more at her website [www.sudsyscellar.com](http://www.sudsyscellar.com).



### Trip to Provence, 1999

**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](http://www.jeffreybenson.net)



### Sharing with the Angels

**Alex Bielak** is a passionate cook and eclectic eater. After a distinguished public service career, linking environmental science and policy, he became known as an authoritative food writer. Alex has written for various media including IWFS publications and over 100 online columns in *The Hamiltonian*. A restaurant reviewer for the *Waterloo Region Record* since 2015, he is also proud to be the lead judge of the Living Rock Soupfest, a major charity fundraising event in Hamilton. With wife, Roberta, he resides in Waterloo, Ontario. Find him on Twitter (@AlexBielak) or visit [www.facebook.com/Food4ThoughtArchives](http://www.facebook.com/Food4ThoughtArchives) and [www.linkedin.com/in/alexbielak](http://www.linkedin.com/in/alexbielak).



### Salt and Pepper to Taste

Dr **Jeffrey Postman** is a retired physician with a life-long interest in wine and food. An inveterate New Yorker, he finds himself displaced to the West Coast for the sake of the weather and his grandchildren. Jeff is now a member of the Pasadena branch and previously of the New York branch since 1989.



## Contents

Chairman's Message	2
Editorial	3
Burgundy: Changes and its Evolution	7
Was I Crazy to Begin Making Wine?	10
Alcohol, Milk, Race and Health	12
How many points is that wine?	13
Trip to Provence, 1999	15
Sharing with the Angels	18
Salt and Pepper to Taste	20
Focus on Cape Town	22
Planning for 2021	24
Branch Reports	25
Cambridge Great Weekend	34
Dates for Your Diary	36

## News from the International Secretariat

Dear members

I do hope this finds you well. We are still charting an unknown course but I am pleased to learn that many of the branches in Europe Africa are continuing to arrange virtual events, creatively and with the assistance of online technology. I am sure you are all looking forward to being able to attend face-to-face events in the near future.

As I type, London is still very quiet, although busier than when I came here in July. The In & Out Club, home to the IWFS International Secretariat office, re-opened its doors on the 6th July with essential Covid-19 safety arrangements in place. I ventured into the Club soon afterwards, arriving at Piccadilly Circus underground station, which was not like Piccadilly Circus at all! It was absolutely deserted. As I looked around, tapping my ticket on the barrier to exit, I saw that I was the only passenger leaving the station. Today, some three months later, I am pleased to say that life is showing signs of a return to normality.

The latest meeting of International Council of Management was held on 19th and 20th October (the latter being the 87th anniversary of the Society – some of you may already be thinking how you can celebrate our 90th). With international travel still being restricted the meetings were held online with attendees joining from Perth and Singapore at 5 am, daytime across America and the Cayman Islands, ending up in the UK at 10 pm – so it was definitely a case of burning the candle at both ends! Council welcomed two new members Stephen Hipple of the Americas and Michael Tamburri of Asia Pacific. Both have also been appointed as Chairs of their respective zones. Antonio Escudero-Viera stood down as a representative of the Americas and was thanked for his time on Council.

Council are keen to provide more resources for you either online or in print, particularly during this time when getting out and interacting with your fellow members is not easy, or not allowed. We hope that you have already taken the opportunity to watch the video presentations now available on the website. Two highly respected wine professionals provide an informed insight into two specific wine topics. The 2020 André Simon lecture by Jane Anson discusses the topic 'Is there Terroir in Bordeaux?' (52 minutes). Beverley Blanning MW presents Biodynamic Wine (36 minutes) giving an update on her 2010 monograph about this



*André Simon Lecture 2020*

**Is there such a thing as terroir in Bordeaux?**

with  
**Jane Anson**



**Biodynamic Wine**

with  
**Beverley Blanning MW**

*July 2020*



## Our 2020 AGM

The Annual General Meeting of IWFS Europe Africa Ltd was held virtually using Zoom on Sunday, 20th September 2020. Twenty five members appeared on screen and apologies were received from five. The resolutions were passed without any objections.

Changes to the members of the Executive Committee (Exco) were confirmed. Margaret Chippendale and Peter McGahey both retired. New members of Exco were confirmed as follows:



**Stephen Graham**, who becomes Treasurer in succession to John Nicholas who is now the Chair. IWFS Member since 2014, currently member of Manchester, London and St James's Branches. Retired, former Partner at KPMG and subsequently Founder, COO and Commercial Director of a FTSE 250 software business. Now spends time enjoying food and wine.



**Geeta Lloyd**, who becomes Membership Secretary in succession to Margaret Chippendale. Member of Devonshire Branch since 2008, committee member since 2009 and Secretary since 2012. Retired Company Director. Secretary and Membership Chair Torbay Wine Guild (Torquay).

**Tim Hodges**, who will work with Leonie Allday to develop strategy and marketing for EAZ. Member of the Merseyside and Mid-Cheshire Branch of the IWFS for 12 years and Secretary for the last five years. Organiser of the Great Budworth Wine group, Chairman of Lostock Gramam Parish Council, Secretary of the Lostock Gramam Community Centre. Business Development Consultant and M.D. of New Pool Solutions Ltd.





sometimes controversial topic. I would like to point out that while they are educational, they are also presented in an approachable way so you can sit down and enjoy them at your leisure. They can be found on the Europe Africa website pages under 'Publications and Videos / Presentations – Audio & Video'.

The annual Vintage Card and App are also being updated and will be available in November. This year, the pandemic has presented its own challenges in sourcing all the information from wine regions around the world about the quality of the latest vintages and the drinkability of previous vintages. As the annual round of vintage tastings and winery visits were not possible, many of our consultants had to be more resourceful and seek extra advice from the producers themselves. We are pleased to say that we received reports from all regions with the help from our Wines Committee members who reached out to their invaluable contacts when necessary. Once again, huge thanks must go to our Wines Committee, Chaired by Ron Barker (EAZ member) and our expert Consultants around the globe.

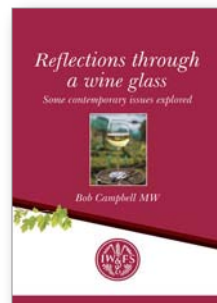
Members will receive their copy of the new Vintage Card (2021), free of charge, when they renew their 2021 Society membership. Please note you can now purchase copies, online, of the Vintage

Card via the EAZ merchandise pages. They are ideal to pass on as a gift to friends, family or colleagues. However, for those of you who prefer to view this vintage information electronically, this will be available to download via App loaded on the website via 'Publication and Videos / Vintage App & Card'.

I wish you all the best in the coming months and hope that some positives may come out of this situation. Maybe it is a time to enjoy wines from your cellar that may not have otherwise been opened for sometime. This reminds me of the very interesting chapter 'Hedonists and Horders' in past monograph *Reflections Through a Wine Glass*\* by Bob Campbell MW, who describes how he built up his cellar and also offers practical advice of the many aspects to consider. He amusingly describes himself as a 'hedonist' – which one are you?

Andrea Warren  
International Secretariat

\* Do hunt out your copy or alternatively download the pdf from the website under Secretariat/For Members/Monographs.



## 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) £3

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 £28

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, £13  
1 Bottle Bag, £11



### Medallions £21

### Cufflinks £9.50

### Lapel Pin (in presentation box) £4



Orders can now be placed online via the EAZ pages on the website. Please go to Resources / Merchandise for members. Prices include p&p in the UK. Please add an overseas postage £2 per order if you are outside the UK.

# BURGUNDY: CHANGES AND ITS EVOLUTION

by Stephen Brook

My first visit to Burgundy, though as a wine enthusiast rather than a professional, was in 1986, a time when a simple phone call was enough to open the doors to Domaine Rousseau. There the great Charles Rousseau gave up an hour of his day so I could taste every cru in his cellar.

It was also a time of flux, as I realised the following year, when I 'worked' a vintage at Domaine Dujac so as to learn how fine Burgundy was made. Jacques Seysses of Dujac was an outsider from Paris with the means to purchase a fine domaine. He was very much the exception. Most of his neighbours had been farming their vineyards for centuries. In many ways it was a closed world in which everyone kept to themselves. When I lunched with one of the region's most celebrated producers, he slid me the wine list. "You choose." It was clear he had never tasted his neighbours' wines.

That was beginning to change. On drizzly days during that vintage, we'd visit some other cellars. I'd encounter young winemakers from California or Germany, 'working' the vintage more seriously than me. At Dujac I shared duties with Australian Gary Farr from Geelong, a regular at harvest-time, and he could barely conceal his disdain for the indolent dilettante from London, and I couldn't blame him. Just as young foreign winemakers were coming to Burgundy to learn its secrets, so the next generation of Burgundian vigneronns were travelling too. Within a few years you could see the evidence in the tasting area: empty bottles from Au Bon Climat or Felton Road.

While the elder generation were often complacent, their offspring, freshly qualified or recently returned from travels, gathered in groups to blind-taste Pinots or Chardonnays they had brought back with them. There was a sense that all of Burgundy could do better. Remember the 1980s was also the time when the best growers were questioning the conventional farming of the time. Was it really a good idea to poison the vineyards with herbicides and pesticides, and to spread chemical fertilisers with abandon? Production may have soared but quality hadn't soared with it.

A few brave souls were experimenting with organic farming, and then with biodynamics. Some were very discreet about it, others, such as Lalou Bize Leroy and Anne-Claude Leflaive, went at it with the fervour of the newly converted. One day when work was done at Dujac, we drove down to Mercurey, where Francois Faiveley had just acquired a kind of wind tunnel. 1987 was a damp vintage, and Faiveley was trying out a system that would help dry the bunches and avoid dilution. I have no idea how effective the tunnel was, but Seysses and his winemaking friends wanted to know more.

I returned to Dujac every year for almost three decades, not pretending to give them a helping hand, but as a friend. Lodged close to the family house, I could spend my days visiting other domaines and researching articles. As the years went by, I could observe as I drove up and down the Côte d'Or, how the vineyards were being transformed. Once neat but arid,



Dom Leflaive, Chevalier Montrachet vineyards




*Jacques and Rosalind Seysses*

they were becoming more unkempt but more full of life, with herbs and grasses flourishing between the rows until they were eventually ploughed back into the soil. The change was more than cosmetic, as it was reflected in the wines.

On a visit to Domaine Leflaive, Anne-Claude Leflaive walked me through a parcel of Chevalier-Montrachet. Bending down she scrunched up in her palm some soil from a row devoid of vegetation and urged me to smell it. Not much there. Then on to one of her rows, farmed biodynamically. Again she presented a nugget of soil for me to smell. It was decidedly richer, damper, more vegetal. Back in her tasting room she had prepared two glasses of her wine from the same premier cru in Puligny: one from an organic row, the other from a biodynamic plot. After I had tasted both blind, she asked me which I preferred. Fortunately I chose the biodynamic wine. So did her neighbour, Francois Carillon, who by chance breezed into the tasting room and was asked to try both glasses.

This wasn't a scientific demonstration, but it was indicative of the movement to restore the health of Burgundy's vineyards. There was more evidence in the glass in 2002, when the negociant Chanson Père et Fils invited journalists and importers to a comprehensive tasting of its wines, the oldest of which was a 1915 Beaune Premier Cru. Some of the very old wines were tiring but most were still full of vigour and flavour. Then in the 1960s and 1970s the wines mostly lacked interest, being drab and fairly dilute. This period was of course the nadir for Burgundy, when vineyards were abused and doused in toxic chemicals.

The background to this tasting was that Chanson had been bought in 1999 by the champagne house Bollinger. They put an immediate stop to herbicides and mechanical harvesting, and reduced yields. It didn't take long for these measures to be reflected in a startling increase in quality. I had often been rebuked by Chanson's previous owner for my negative tasting

notes. Within a decade the wines were again of excellent quality, as they had been a century earlier.

Negociants such as Chanson were the public face of Burgundy. These were the labels you'd find in most restaurants worldwide or in duty-free shops. But the wines were often indistinguishable. Moreover there were 'irregularities', and Chanson was accused of adding colouring matter to its insipid wines. Soon after the late Joseph Henriot from Champagne took over the venerable negociant house (and domaine) of Bouchard Père et Fils in 1995 he and his team sampled the cellars. Thousands of bottles were considered of unacceptable quality and were either declassified or sold off to wholesalers.

Of course not all negociants were having to undo the errors of the past under new owners. Some, such as Jadot and Drouhin, had always made wines of impeccable quality. New ones, such as Dominique Laurent, bought grapes from top domaines and vinified and aged them in 100 percent new oak. Overall, there was a realisation that Burgundy could no longer rest on its laurels. Just as there was a new generation of winemakers, so there was a new generation of Burgundy enthusiasts, with palates and wallets enabling them to appreciate both the heights of which great Burgundy was capable and the need to reject wines that were clearly sub-standard.

More discerning consumers and collectors were a blessing, but also a problem. The production of top Burgundy wine is minute, certainly compared to Bordeaux or the Côtes du Rhône. Whereas past enthusiasts were mostly European, by 2000 or so there were new acolytes from Asia and the Americas. In 2008 I was fortunate enough to attend a tasting of some 25 different vintages of Montrachet from Comtes Lafon in the presence of Dominique Lafon, who admitted that there were wines poured that he had never tasted. This extraordinary tasting was held not in Paris or New York but in Rio de Janeiro, thanks to a rich, informed, and generous collector.

The growing worldwide interest in Burgundy has its consequences. The first is that supply cannot meet the demand, at least not at the more prestigious end of the market. Winelovers who twenty years ago could afford to buy a few cases of premier cru wines from good producers now find they can barely afford a plain Bourgogne from the same domaines. I recall the London tastings of the Domaine de la Romanée-Conti in the mid-1980s, when at lunchtime bottles of older vintages of Richebourg or La Tâche would be opened so that the invitees could just help themselves. Today at the same tastings, the very limited number of guests are poured a thimbleful of the new releases. Of course no top domaine can pour generous glasses of grands crus, otherwise they would be out of wine within weeks before selling a drop.

That's understood, and if the faithful Burgundy winelover has simply been priced out of the market by a richer clientele, so be it. It's good news for the domaines, of course, but there's a negative side too. The worldwide demand has led to soaring land prices in the Côte d'Or. Some of the most esteemed grands crus, such as Musigny or Montrachet, are 10 hectares or less in surface: were a parcel to come on the market, the price would be astronomical.

We know this from recent transactions. When Philippe Engel of Vosne-Romanée died suddenly in 2005, important Burgundian estates tried to acquire the five-hectare domaine. But the contest was won by an outsider: Francois Pinault, owner of Ch Latour, Christie's and a number of fashion houses. He allegedly paid €13 million for the property, and in 2007 renamed it Domaine d'Eugénie. That was chickenfeed compared to the next major purchase. In 2014 LVMH, the luxury goods brand, bought the Clos des Lambrays grand cru monopole for an

estimated €100 million (roughly €11 million per hectare), and Stan Kroenke in 2017 paid even more for the great Corton-Charlemagne estate Bonneau de Martray. In the same year Francois Pinault swooped again, buying the grand cru Clos de Tart next door, also a monopole, for an alleged €33 million per hectare. That cost can never be recouped by bottle sales alone, so these flamboyant purchases are essentially trophy-waving.

If you imagine the other domaines in the Côte d'Or were rubbing their hands with glee at the growing value of their vineyards, you'd be wrong. French inheritance law divides properties equally between heirs, and taxes of up to 45% must be paid. If you receive an inheritance tax bill for millions of Euros thanks to inflated land prices, there may be no way to pay it. The French are skilled at making deals within the family that can keep a property intact. But for many the only option will be to sell. The previous owner of Clos des Lambrays was a jovial German businessman called Gunter Freund, with whom I shared a kitchen lunch a couple of times. After he died in 2010 the property's sale became inevitable. And so it will be in the future with other prestigious estates.

Even the most revered estates in Burgundy find it almost impossible to expand. Both Comtes Lafon and Domaine Leflaive have grown by buying vineyards in the Mâconnais. The last great sale I can think of in the Côte d'Or was in 2005, when the Thomas-Moillard estate in Nuits St Georges came on the market. There was keen interest in the property, which included 12 hectares of premiers and grands crus. Etienne de Montille and Jacques Seysses teamed up and brought in some private investors. Theirs was not the highest bid, but it was accepted, as it would leave the domaine in ideal hands. De Montille concedes that a comparable operation would be unaffordable today.

It would be wrong to be too apocalyptic, but it does seem that the cosy family-owned domaines will dwindle as more and more rich trophy-seeking individuals and corporations take out their cheque books. The wines may still be great but who will be able to afford them? In 2014 the Château de Pommard was bought by Californian tycoon Michael Baum. He seems to be doing everything right: converting the vineyards to biodynamism, opening a wine school, offering tours to winelovers and children, organising wine and food pairings. But that is the exception. Each year I walk past the Domaine des Lambrays and see no signs of life.

If average, rather than super-rich, Burgundy lovers can no longer afford the top crus from top domaines, there are other ways to enjoy and even collect fine Burgundy. Villages such as St Aubin, Santenay, and Marsannay offer excellent wines at moderate prices, and no one can claim that Chablis or the Côte Chalonnaise are overpriced. I can easily think of six Marsannay domaines that I would buy from with confidence and pleasure.

I don't look back with nostalgia to my first visits to Burgundy in the 1980s. There were many poor wines: overcropped, over-sulphured, over-oaked, even fraudulent. In terms of quality alone, we are living in a golden age, and it's natural that winelovers worldwide want to experience it too. Wine regions, and economies, evolve, for better or for worse, or, in this case, for both at the same time.


*Photograph © BIVB / Daniel Gillat*



# WAS I CRAZY TO BEGIN MAKING WINE?

by *Dave Felton, IWFS Honorary President*

Who'd be so crazy as to begin making wine when entering his doddering years? Well, if you have the dubious fortune to already know me, then you also know the answer.

I like wine. I don't over-indulge, but I have endeavoured to imbibe on a regular basis over the past forty years or so. In liking wine, I found that a side-benefit was my actually learning a little something about the stuff. I found all that learning rather fascinating... to the point that I decided I would buy vineyard land, grow grapes and become a famous winemaker. All this thinking took place a number of years ago as I was about to turn age 70. What a silly man.

I live in Southern California in the US and have made frequent visits to all the fine wine regions of this great wine-growing state. But good vineyard land in California is quite expensive, so I looked immediately north toward the state of Oregon. Expensive. How about Washington state? Nope. Expensive. Possibly Canada's Okanagan Valley? Still too much. Then a friend chatted with me about Argentina's Mendoza wine region. I knew the area, as well as their acclaimed malbec grape. Argentine malbec has become famous due to its distinctly luscious flavours when grown in the nutrient-rich alluvial soil which has tumbled down from the towering Andes to the west. And the price was right. So, following some extensive due diligence, I decided that the place where I would become a famous winemaker would be Argentina.

Now that's a rather big leap, especially for an older fellow from the northern hemisphere. But remember that in Argentina,



passion rules. The tango sizzles. And the songs cry out. Latin passion agitates the blood, which leads to strongly emotional decisions. I succumbed. So we hired a good US attorney to advise us on the purchase of good vineyard land in Argentina, who then advised us to hire a good Argentine attorney. And then we located and bought land in the Uco Valley, approximately fifty miles south of Mendoza, in an area surrounded by flourishing vineyards. This was the beginning of the realisation that becoming a famous winemaker may prove to be... umm, expensive.

We decided to buy raw vineyard land rather than spend considerably more to buy someone else's already-thriving vineyard. Still, once the land was cleared, irrigated, trellised and planted, it would take five or six years before we'd have "estate" grapes that either could be sold or made into wine. But you must remember that I had become passionate. I wanted my own wine. And, given my age, it might be better to have it soon. Therefore, I would have to buy grapes. I then could blend those grapes into a perfect combination. I'd put that perfect blend of grapes into a fine oak barrel. And after a suitable time, I'd bottle that perfect blend, cork it, label it, box it and ship it back to my home in Pasadena, California. Hmmm. This is becoming expensive.

But it all worked. At the same time as I was purchasing the raw land, I began buying grapes which would go into our first blend – the 2016 vintage of Felton Family Farms "C-Cubed". Working together with an experienced Argentine winemaker, I selected a blend of 70% malbec / 20% merlot / 10% cabernet franc grapes for that first vintage, which – praise the heavens – proved passably good. I've since returned regularly to our vineyard where my now three-year old vines are stretching toward the sky, some six feet tall and producing clusters of beautiful small



malbec grapes. We've now blended four different vintages using purchased grapes, including our most recent 2019 FFF C-Cubed done in early March of this year. (We had arrived in Argentina in late February 2020 just as the news of the Covid-19 pandemic was becoming widespread. Upon arriving back into Los Angeles on 11th March, we went into a self-imposed quarantine. We continue to be very careful in a country where national leadership abandoned its citizenry in the response to the disease as of this writing in October 2020.)

Each of our four vintages has been a different blend of malbec-focused red grapes. We've used as much as 70% malbec in the blends and as little as 50%. We've blended, in different percentages, with cabernet sauvignon, cabernet franc, merlot, petit verdot and syrah. Originally, I had planned on only using

the great grapes found in 'Bordeaux' blends. But beginning with the 2017 vintage, I found that the syrah juice was sooo good that I couldn't ignore this 'Rhône' grape. I've since used a portion of syrah in each of the last three vintages. And the resulting C-Cubed has been better for it.

It's all been a lot of fun. I know it's a 'vanity' project. I use a local Argentine wine cooperative near our vineyard to do all the hard work on the land. Yes, that's expensive. My only serious professional involvement is spending hours on site doing the actual blending for each vintage. We haven't attempted to sell any of our wine, preferring to give it away to family, friends, charities and almost anyone who tries it and says with a perfectly straight face, "Wow. This is really good." And I must relate a story which both amazes and humbles me. Earlier this year, a blind tasting of South American reds was conducted by a group of experienced winetasters near Los Angeles. I was not in attendance. The group meets monthly to taste wines blind and comment upon them. Ten wines were tasted, including some famous names approaching \$100/bottle. The highest scoring wine was the 2017 vintage of FFF C-Cubed.

As I end this little tale, allow me to leave you with a couple of good lessons.

1) When you hear the tantalising music of the Argentine tango and find yourself swaying to the exotic dance, recognise that it has stirred your blood and made you passionate. Be careful.

2) You, too, can become a famous winemaker (like me, in your own mind). But wherever you choose to go, it will prove expensive. Be careful.





# ALCOHOL, MILK, RACE AND HEALTH

by Bernard Lamb, London and Surrey Hills Branches

The *Daily Telegraph* (News, 3rd September) reported that research on 14 million men and 12 million women had shown that even small amounts of alcohol could be bad for health: "Just half a glass of wine or one small bottle of beer a day can lead to obesity, diabetes and high blood pressure, a major study suggests." This was presented at the virtual European and International Congress on Obesity.

White Caucasians (most Europeans) should not be afraid, however, because the study was done on Koreans and about half of all Orientals have a defective liver enzyme (aldehyde dehydrogenase-2), impairing their ability to detoxify alcohol. That is why many of them show the facial flushing reaction to wine, beer or spirits. The young lady in the photos is Jasmine, half Vietnamese and half Chinese, photographed normally and after just one third of a glass of white wine. Studies on Caucasians usually show health benefits from moderate drinking.

When entertaining, it is useful to know about lactose intolerance in adults. Drinking milk can cause sufferers to vomit or have diarrhoea, with embarrassingly large amounts of gas (carbon dioxide, methane and hydrogen) in the lower intestines half an hour to two hours after consuming milk. The gene which enables babies to break down lactose (which is about 7% of milk and the main energy source for babies) is usually switched off at about the age of four, when for most Europeans a gene for adult lactase enzyme is switched on, allowing lactose to be broken down to glucose and galactose. Cheeses and yoghurts, although made from milk, are not usually a problem as bacteria

in their making break down the lactose to glucose and galactose. An inability to break down galactose causes galactosaemia, frequency 1 in 60,000 European babies, with severe symptoms of weight loss, vomiting, jaundice and galactose in the urine. It can be detected in the first week of life by testing blood from a heel prick for galactose, when sufferers can be put on milk substitutes.

Lactose intolerance in adults has quite different incidences in various populations, closely related to whether they have traditions of drinking fresh milk. McCracken (1971, *Current Anthropology* 12, 479-517) gave these frequencies for intolerance: Thais, 99%; Chinese, 85%; Finns, 18%; Arabs, 14%; UK, 9%; American Caucasians, 6%; Danes, 2%; Czechs, 0%. There is a gene on chromosome 2 controlling this, with intolerance usually recessive, and with lactose tolerance having evolved independently in Europe and Africa. Even pastoral societies in Africa often drink very little fresh milk as it goes off so quickly unless chilled, pasteurised or fermented, as in cheese-making. I met an Asian dermatologist with lactose intolerance; he was fine with hard cheeses but soft cheeses and milk caused internal gas. Recently he had taken to chewing a Lactaid® tablet (which contains a fast-acting bacterial enzyme) with the first mouthful of a lactose-containing food, and that avoids the symptoms.

The photos are from my book, *Human Diversity: Its Nature, Extent, Causes and Effects on People* (2015, Singapore, World Scientific), which contains details of many other heritable problems and dietary differences.



# HOW MANY POINTS IS THAT WINE?

by Claire L. Torbeck, Certified Sommelier, Lake Tahoe Branch



What about Wine Critic's Scores and Evaluations?

It is very helpful to rely upon the 'paid for' and 'free' critic's advice and written evaluations when purchasing wine. Shelf talkers tout the expert's scores to influence what bottle(s) of wine you will ultimately purchase. Should you believe them?

For the well-known wine raters, I have been watching their scoring and reading their reviews long enough that I have formed an opinion as to 'how' they score wine. I know who always rates higher than the others or which reviewer(s) likes fruit forward, highly extracted and high alcohol wines. Why does that matter? Because while I can tell you the flavour profile of a varietal from various places around the world and I can look to see what the vintage and nature gave us that year, it's helpful to read the opinion of someone who has tasted that bottle. I can then decide if it will be what I am searching for.

Sometimes these reviews will contain an unknown nugget of information. For example, "while this is a Côte du Rhone wine, it is crafted from 100% Syrah grapes". That's important information as most Côte du Rhone are made from Grenache, Syrah, Mourvèdre (referred to as a GSM) and maybe Cinsault. Château de Sainte-Cosme winery is in Gigondas, which by law, to label the wine 'Gigondas' it must be a GSM blend with

possibly some Cinsault. So, if I had merely relied upon the Côte du Rhone designation expecting a GSM gem, it would not meet my expectations. Clear as mud, huh?

If the expert's review gives a range, like 89-91 points, I am confident the wine was tasted from the barrel and prior to bottling. Why does that matter? Since the wine is still in the barrel, it is possible the final wine could taste somewhat different due to blending and/or filtering or completion of malolactic fermentation, for example. The evaluation before bottling might not match the final product. In that instance, it's good to see if other critics rated the wine after bottling to get a more up-to-date snapshot.

A store like K&L Wine Merchants lists their offerings on their website which has a picture of the bottle, a list of the wine critic's scores and commentary, general information about the grape, the country, and a description of the subregion/appellation. In addition, if the staff was able to taste the wine, a review written by the staff member will also appear as well as the date tasted. I find that all so very helpful and lean a bit toward purchasing when all the critic's scores seem to align. I take that nudge based upon my experience with judging at wine competitions. On any panel you can have a wide range of medals considered as we evaluate each wine independently





*Wine tasting with a group at Foley Vineyards*

and then come together to discuss and to agree on a final award. However, for the wines that are exceptional, the entire panel always seems to be in agreement before ever coming together for discussion.

Does the lack of a rating mean the wine is not good? For a publication such as *Wine Spectator*, they indicate they review approximately 16,000 wines on an annual basis and those wines are important wines, readily available and distributed in major markets. So, lack of a score does not mean a wine is not good. Similarly, the lack of a medal from a wine competition also does not suggest it's not good as wineries choose how they spend their marketing dollars and competitions do cost money to enter.

How about reviews on Apps such as Vivino? The creators of this site tout that their community of millions of wine lovers really know their stuff and are passionate about sharing that knowledge. However, we do not know what their experience level is or their qualifications for judging wine. As a worst-case scenario, the rater could really dislike French wines and be an All-American wine fruit bomb wine drinker. And, remember, Vinvino sells wine based on these ratings.

Critic's scores and evaluations can be very useful tools when you cannot taste a European wine or travel to Paso Robles or Lodi to visit a winery to taste before you buy. Equally useful are Vintage Charts\* published annually which will give you a quick look to determine if the vintage was a blow out success or had some serious viticultural challenges. Again, just an additional piece of information as good wine can be made in not so good vintages.

Finally, remember that the scores were assigned and evaluations penned at a frozen point in time. The challenge is that you are not purchasing Pepsi Cola or Coors beer, for

example, that is 'finished' when bottled or canned. Wine is a living, breathing beverage that develops and changes over time. That plum, for example, that tasted so fresh to Robert Parker shortly after bottling is impacted first by the aerobic conditions in the barrel and then by the reductive time in the bottle. The various components of tannin, both from the cluster and skin as well as the barrel, phenolics, and fruit all integrate over time and hopefully for the better. However, most wine is meant to be drunk young and fruit generally begins to lose its lustre after about six months. So, when reading that evaluation from November of 2017, expect that the wine you will meet in the glass may be very different. A wine's score(s) and evaluation(s) are great tools to help you find new treasures to enjoy but are not absolute. Wine is more often drunk beyond its time than too early.

So, at the end of the day, how should you view wine critics scores and evaluations? Definitely not through 'rose-colored lenses'. Scores and evaluations are 'opinions' of a wine at a frozen point in time. Critics have varying palates and you should definitely sample wines they have rated and see if these wines align with your palate. This can be accomplished by purchasing a wine that two or more critics have reviewed and determining by tasting, which reviewer you agree with. Generally, I stick with the critics that have a history and reputation: *Wine Spectator*, *Wine Advocate*, *Decanter*, Jancis Robinson and *Wine Enthusiast*. I do not rely upon reviews offered by establishments selling the wine and touting its virtues to sell me something. Using evaluations from critics can be a great tool to help you with future selections, but they are just tools... you are the final critic!

\* Editor's note – of which your very own IWFS Vintage Card is updated annually and is due for delivery shortly. Members will receive their own copy as part of their 2021 membership.

## TRIP TO PROVENCE, 1999

*by Jeffrey Benson, London Branch*

*The trip was taken from 23rd August to 2nd September 1999*

A taxi arrives at 4.30pm to take us to Gatwick North Terminal, a journey that ends up taking an hour and a half. We're booked on the 7pm BA flight to Marseilles. It's 10pm local time when we arrive. I pick up a rental car and head for our overnight stop at Primotel hotel at the airport.

We drive to Marseilles in perfect weather, and breakfast on coffee and croissants at the Old Port, sitting at an outside table.

Driving slowly along minor roads, we make our way north to the wine growing region of Corbières, and stop for a glass of local wine at 11.30am. An hour later, we roll up for lunch at Le Petit Pascal in Manosque. Sitting outside on the tree-lined pavement, we eat very good steak and chips with a pleasant bottle of Côtes du Lubéron rosé.

After lunch, we head across the Durance on to the pretty village of La Fuste, where we will be staying at the Michelin-starred Hostellerie de La Fuste. Checking in at 2pm, we are given superb rooms with balconies overlooking a vista of trees and shrubs – a true Provençal scene.

The weather is luxurious, 30°C+, and at 7pm we have drinks on the terrace, pastis and champagne, with an amuse-gueule of aubergine and tapenade. At 8 o'clock, at a lovely table set under the trees, we enjoy a fantastic dinner, the *menu dégustation*. It begins with a warm mousseline, going on to a

soup of haricots verts, and then lamb in two ways – firstly, as a navarin with an excellent sauce, more green beans, carrots, onions, etc., and then as the whole roast leg, with three types of mushrooms and garlic cream. The cheese selection includes Reblochon and Pont l'Evêque, along with four other local types, and the dessert is a sandwiched creation of chocolate and raspberry mousses. With the lamb, we drink a 1969 Chapoutier Hermitage which shows very well.

After spending a fitful night – not surprisingly in view of the amount of food consumed last night – I awake to find the weather is once again glorious. I am writing this on the terrace overlooking vegetable gardens, olive trees, flowers and vines.

After breakfast on the terrace, we leave and drive through Esparron de Verdon by the Lake taking D and C roads all the way and drinking in the lovely Provençal countryside, the region of truffles and honey. We stop at Riez for an *assiette de charcuterie*, and then press on to Moustiers Ste-Marie, and La Bastide de Moustiers, south of the village which is owned by the well known chef, Alain Ducasse, where we shall be staying for the next two nights.

The rooms are excellent, adjoining each other to form a suite, and we have a majestic Alpine view. Later we have dinner, which is served on the terrace, a truly wonderful setting. I preface it with a couple of glasses of the very good pastis, and then we embark on the table d'hôte menu, on which the only choice is at the main course stage.



*Gorges du Verdon*



*Tomate farcie* is excellent, the tomato stuffed with minced courgette, baby olives and tapénade. Next is artichoke cooked in the regional manner with bacon, and including all the edible parts of the vegetable. For the main course, I opt for pigeon roasted with ceps and truffles, another typical local dish, and then there is a full range of goats’ cheese, with just one cow’s milk specimen to make up the numbers. With the pigeon, we drink a wine from Palette, Château Simone 1996, which has a lovely, rich, ripe cherry nose and is young and tannic on the palate, with good depth and length.

We breakfast on fresh fruit salad, crème caramel, brioche, breads and croissants with a range of home-made jams and local honey, and coffee drunk from a huge bowl.

After driving to Moustiers, an old Romanesque village cut into the hillside, we head on via the Green Route through the Gorges de Verdon, which have amazing views, to Point Sublime, where we have lunch. Rabbit in mustard sauce with frites is accompanied by a 50cl bottle of Château de Pousset rosé from a local grower. Continuing on along the very pretty Green Route to the other side of the Gorges, we pass through the Balcon de la Mescla, and then to the lovely Lac de Ste-Croix, before returning to the hotel in a 30-minute cloudburst. Later, it starts raining again with a vengeance.

We have booked a table tonight at Les Santons, a one-star Michelin restaurant in the Place d’Eglise, Moustiers. By now, the rain is coming down in torrents, and we drive to the old village, arriving at the restaurant at 7.15pm. Sadly, because of the wet weather, we are not able to sit out on the terrace.

A couple of *coupes* of champagne are served with over-concentrated tapénade and very thin cheese straws. The first course, a ‘minestrone’ of langoustines with Parma ham, vegetables and cream, is very clumsy and salty, while the *pièce de Charolais* with garlic sauce and chips is an absolute disgrace, covered in rock salt and quite inedible, a terrible waste of good meat. There is a full range of cheeses, but one is only allowed to choose three (and they aren’t in good condition anyway), and then cafe crème, and finally a congealed fig tart served with fromage blanc.

With these delights, we drink 1990 Château de Peyrassol, Cuvée Marie Estelle, an AC Côtes de Provence, which has a very deep colour, but is quite thin and hollow on the palate, with a short finish. Back at the hotel, I have a Vieux Marc de Bandol, planning my letter to the Michelin guide,

After breakfast on the terrace, we check out. And drive south through the lovely old town of Aups-Tourtour with its museum containing dinosaur eggs, Lorgues with its fourteenth century fortified gateways, and Vidauban through the vineyard areas of the Côtes de Provence, through Grimaud, with its eleventh century château and then to St Tropez, with its legend: that Tropez (Torpes), a Christian centurion beheaded in his native Pisa by order of the Emperor Nero, was placed in a boat with his head beside him and cast adrift with a cock and a dog, who were meant to devour his remains, which however they left intact. The boat is supposed to have come ashore where St Tropez now stands. Today it is the playground of the rich and famous with

many expensive yachts moored in the harbour. We have lunch at Les Mouscardins, a one-star Michelin restaurant by the port.

I have a much needed beer, and then order a bottle of the 1998 vintage of the local rosé, which accompanies *pot gourmand*, cod and potatoes cooked in a sealed pot, served with olive bread, ratatouille with a poached egg in olive oil (superb), and excellent sardines with roasted sweet garlic, onions, olives and roast potatoes. The cheese plate comprises Reblochon, Tomme de Pyrenées and a local blue, and we finish with crème brûlée and a selection of chocolate, raspberry and lemon sorbets.

In the afternoon, we drive along the coast to our hotel ‘83’ on La Fossette Plage, where we are assigned a perfect room, 32, with a panoramic sea view. We wander down to the small, crowded beach and then take a trip to Le Lavandou, which turns out to be a horrid place, full of concrete buildings all alarmingly close to each other.

Dinner is at the brasserie on the beach in the small village of St Clair. After a pastis, we try the L’Estadon rosé produced by M. Baconis at Pierrefeu. It’s a vin de pays du Var, quite thin and acidic, and with it I eat a pizza piola, topped with egg, ham and anchovies. I end the evening with a whisky on our balcony.

We begin the next day with a light breakfast in the La Fossette auberge. Friends of ours, who live in La Favière, come to meet us and we drive north into the mountains above La Fossette to Sauvage, a superb auberge miles from anywhere, equipped with a pool and tennis courts.

Over beers and a bottle of the local rosé, we eat a lunch of sardines and *pogre* (a local fish), grilled over a wood fire, and then drive on to Bormes les Mimosas, strolling around the old streets in this pretty little town with its colourful profusion of mimosa, oleander, camomile and eucalyptus.

Back at our hotel, I take a well-earned swim, and then we have drinks and dinner on the hotel terrace. After a couple of glasses of pastis and a *coupe*, we drink a 1998 Domaine de Peigros rosé and the excellent 1996 Domaine de l’Olivet, a red Bandol, alongside tough côte de boeuf and frites, followed by Reblochon, Pont l’Evêque and a local blue cheese.

I am woken at 8am by a severe attack of cramp in the calves; perhaps the local rosé is getting to me. The weather is still beautiful, if a little cooler, and we take breakfast on the hotel terrace.

Lunch is booked at the Pergola in Cavalaire-sur-Mer. After the concrete jungle drive through Cavaliere and La Raol, our drink on the beach turns out to be altogether more pleasant. The Pergola is given two knives-and-forks in the *Michelin Guide*, and is well situated, with tables set out under a vine-clad pergola, but sadly, it starts to rain again, causing everybody to rush inside.

The set lunch menu consists of melon balls with a glass of sweet Asti, Parma ham, a disappointing quail with polenta in an olive sauce and apple tart, with which we drink a passable non-vintage Côtes de Provence rosé from Les Maîtres Vignerons de St Tropez.

The rain finally stops and we drive back to the hotel. We eat dinner in their own restaurant, an excellent grilled *daurade* with the local rosé.

We pack and drive west along the coast to Giens to catch the 9 o’clock ferry for the 20-minute crossing to the Ile de Porquerolles, the largest and most westerly of the Hyères islands, measuring 7km long by 3km wide. We are collected by the hotel bus and taken for a two-night stay at La Mas du Langoustier, a lovely, very secluded, one Michelin starred hotel set in 40 acres of protected forest and parkland leading down to the sea.

After a stroll to the old fortress, then back for lunch on the hotel terrace. A superb dish of grilled *daurade* in a lemon butter sauce is served with green salad and a rosé produced on the island at the Domaine de l’Ile de Porquerolles.

At 7.30pm, we have drinks on the terrace, a couple of glasses of pastis, and are then led to a brilliant corner table in the open-air Gastronomique Restaurant. The *menu surprise* begins with a *coupe* of champagne, which we follow with a half-bottle of the light, dry 1998 island rosé and then a bottle of the 1997 island red, which turns out to be very good. These accompany duck pâté in a Beaumes-de-Venise jelly with almond toast, langoustine tails on crisp lettuce with tapénade, celery hearts and balsamic, *daurade* baked in pastry with spring onions, tomato and a lemon coulis, roast lobster lightly deep-fried in batter with spinach in balsamic, and a basket of garlic and tomato mayonnaise (a little too heavy on the garlic), poached beef in balsamic with an olive and potato mix, pistachio ice cream with avocado purée, a gâteau of strawberries, redcurrants and chocolate, fresh fruit salad with a sorbet of



melon and tomato, mini rum babas and chocolate nuts. It is a wonderful meal.

Breakfast consists of Parma ham with delicious home-made French bread, after which we take the hotel bus to Porquerolles village, a journey of 3.8 km. It’s small and extremely crowded, receiving 10,000 visitors a day in the high season. We walk up to the Fort Ste-Agathe, built in 1532 by Francois I, which has great views of the islands.

It’s now getting quite hot, and we stop for a couple of beers before taking the bus back to the hotel, for a lunch of grilled *faux-filet* and potatoes and a bottle of the local rosé.

After a pastis on the terrace, dinner begins with a *coupe* of Laurent-Perrier, with an appetiser of tapénade. The first course is *daurade* baked in pastry with a tomato coulis and lemon zest, followed by lamb fillet en croûte with couscous and onion coulis, concluding with cream cheese served with cold vegetables and olive oil. With the lamb, we drink a bottle of Domaine Gavoty, Côtes de Provence 1988, a very deep, rich and well-balanced wine. All in all, an excellent dinner.

Breakfast on the terrace takes place this morning with the opening of cards. It’s my birthday, amazing I have survived another year.

We check out of the hotel. The hotel bus takes us into the village, and then we leave by the 10am ferry. Collecting the car, we drive slowly along the coast road through Toulon. France’s second naval port is a most attractive old town with its colourful market in the Cours Lafayette. Then we move on to the pleasant resort of Bandol, where we have lunch at 12.30 at La Réserve, which is located right by the sea.

I drink a *coupe* of champagne on the pontoon, and we have lunch under the trees. Nine oysters served *bleu* and six grilled, red mullet with green salad are accompanied by the excellent Château de Pibarnon rosé 1998. Later, we stop for a walk at La Ciotat, which is a dreadful place, very crowded, with only a small beach.

We arrive in Cassis, a small bustling fishing port, at 5pm, and check into Le Jardin d’Emile, a six-room establishment that has a knife-and-fork in Michelin. The rooms are terrible, badly in need of redecoration, but at least they overlook the sea. We walk down to the port area, which is quite pretty if touristy, and have a couple of drinks.

In the evening, we have dinner in the garden. A version of pissaladière made with rascasse and onions on a pizza base is very good, and the main course of carré d’agneau with ravioli is almost as impressive. With them, we drink a half of 1998 Domaine du Paternel rosé, and then a 1997 Domaine Tempier red, which is deeply flavoured and very fine, rounding things off with a Marc de Cassis.

We have breakfast in the garden at 8.30am, and then check out and drive to Marseilles Airport, from where we should take the flight to London at 1.35pm, were it not delayed for an hour. This has been a great trip, even if very expensive; but then it was after all my birthday.



# SHARING WITH THE ANGELS

by Alex Bielak

Our genial, kilted guide, Colin Corson, emphasised no photography was allowed in any of the 47 whisky warehouses at the Glenfiddich Distillery in the Scottish Highlands. He declared the heady aether a fire risk, but I surmised the real reason: it's to prevent visitors from trying to take pictures of the magic in the air.

About 85,000 visitors are drawn to the manicured distillery grounds annually, embarking on a gamut of efficiently-run tours, ranging from a relatively quick hour and a half with tasting, to a first-class detailed exploration of the distillery's top offerings. Last fall, my wife and I were among them. Exiting Warehouse #1, built in 1889, we sighted two delicate angels who'd flown in, decided they were in paradise, and had taken off their wings, never wanting to leave. Titled 'The Angels Share,' the evocative sculpture by Lois Carson is part of an ongoing 'artists in residence' programme, a nod to the annual loss by evaporation of about 2% by volume from each of up to 900,000 whisky barrels stored onsite.

That mystique, not to mention evaporated profit, along with discerning customers who value rarity, helps explain why some older whiskies can cost hundreds or even thousands of dollars, and why visitors from every nation imaginable flock to distillery visitor centres across Scotland. For example, the most expensive Glenfiddich currently on offer at the Liquor Control Board of Ontario is the lovely Gran Reserva 21-year old single malt, finished in bourbon barrels that once contained rum. It sells for \$261.95, far shy of the tab for a listed \$18,556.00 bottle of 1976-vintage Dalmore, aged for 35 years in a single white-oak bourbon barrel.

In contrast, an 18-year old whisky from nearby Aberlour Distillery is just shy of \$150, while a ten year-old from the same source is one third that price. Cheaper yet, at \$29.95, is a blended standby, the world's most popular whisky, Johnnie Walker Red Label.

My wife is the Scotch aficionado, and Glenfiddich, in the heart of the Spey Valley, was our last stop before returning home from a short business trip to Inverness, Scotland. Founded in 1886 by Dufftown resident, William Grant, the distillery was built by hand with his wife, seven sons and two daughters. Five generations on, the business, now incorporating other top brands, is still in family hands. Remarkably, many of the techniques the founder developed are still used today: Corson said "the experience and judgement of the Stillmen still rule" when deciding which fractions of the distillate to use. No computers intervene, and, unlike many, the distillery still has its own cooperage, and employs onsite coppersmiths to maintain the stills and other equipment.

Over the years, Glenfiddich became the first Scotch whisky marketed as a single malt, and is now the undisputed global top-seller in that category. As part of our tour, we visited warehouse #8, where some of the rarest whiskies are maturing. I got to pat the oldest cask on site, dating from 1957: The angels

had been at work, decimating the original 500 liters of spirit, leaving sufficient for just 45 bottles of Scotch, worth north of \$8 million.

We also got to try combining samples from various casks to replicate the flavour profile of whisky from the giant 38,000 liter Solera vat, where all of Glenfiddich's 15 year old whiskies spend some time prior to bottling. For reference, its composition is about 70% from bourbon casks, 10% from new oak and 20% from Sherry casks, and Corson said, in his experience, the majority of visitors fail to get the proportions remotely right.

Earlier in our trip, seeking an introduction to Scotch whiskies, we took in a masterclass at the 'Scotch Whisky Experience,' steps from Edinburgh Castle. There, a breathtaking collection of 3,384 unique, backlit bottles, assembled over 35 years by Brazilian Scotch connoisseur, Claive Vidiz, graces the walls of the top floor of the building. Senior Visitor Assistant, Lali Grifell, pointed out some of the treasures on the glass shelves, including a chess set where all the pieces contained whisky. There was also a bottle of Dimple Pinch, one of the first special edition whiskies, sold in 1969 at an unheard of price of \$1,000 U.S. She noted that even though the bottles were unopened, the contents of some were diminished, the angels having snuck their share through failed seals or dried out corks.

Grifell took us on an olfactory and sensory journey, from the lowlands, to Speyside, and the Highlands to the Islands. As we sniffed, swirled and tasted, she patiently explained what, among dozens of characteristics, to expect from a given region, and why we might prefer a scotch with a particular flavour and aroma profile. I quickly came to understand my own tastes tended to spice, dried fruit and richly sweet, over peaty, smoky, delicately floral, grassy, and medicinal among others. She noted "people perceive different aromas" and drove home the point we should really drink what we like, something my wife was pleased to do.

Grifell told us, despite having assembled the largest collection of whiskies in the world, including some of the oldest and rarest Scotch ever bottled, Vidiz favoured Johnnie Walker Red as his tippie of choice. We finished our tour with a barrel ride through a delightful animated presentation of the distilling process. Then into the shop where we could take our new found knowledge of what we liked and, using a 'flavour wheel', pin point which distillery was producing a dram most likely to please. My wife was excited by this useful selection tool that takes some of the guess work out of choosing a new Scotch to try.

En route north, we stopped at the visitor centre in the small town of Crieff. There we were mesmerized by the skilled craftsmen hand making beautiful Caithness glass paperweights. We also lucked out at Buchan Thistle Pottery – the oldest in Scotland – and found a couple of items to match a dinner service acquired some 40 years ago. Along our way we ate well at pubs and restaurants, even experiencing 'Scottish Tapas', and



several surprisingly-delicious variants on haggis. Our routing took us through the Cairngorms National Park, the largest in the British Isles. True to form, the weather was variable, cold and drizzly one moment, with brilliant sun illuminating the wild landscapes the next.

Business in Inverness done, in the early morning and a few miles from the city, we stopped briefly at the desolate site of the battle of Culloden that took place in 1746. Alone, facing the misty, heather-covered moor and with the visitor centre at our backs, we reflected on the 2000 Jacobite supporters of Bonnie Prince Charlie, and 50 British Government soldiers, said to have fallen in bloody hand-to-hand battle, the last such conflict on British soil. Despite our sobering stop, and a subsequent, short, signposted detour down a steep lane to the Inveravon Parish Church, where we marvelled at Stones dating from 600-800 A.D., inscribed with intriguing Pictish designs, we were still well in time for our 10 a.m. tour of Aberlour distillery, another Speyside treasure.

It was founded in 1879 by James Fleming, and is now owned by Chivas Brothers, itself a subsidiary of Pernod Ricard, the global, French-based spirits group. (Unsurprisingly Aberlour is the biggest selling whisky in France.) With four large stills, rather than the 31 stills of various sizes at Glenfiddich, Aberlour probably has about a quarter of the production capacity of its neighbour. Aberlour is Gaelic for "the mouth of the chattering burn" and the site feels intimate, nestled in treed environs, with a cozy visitor centre at the side of the road. Susan Stables, the knowledgeable guide who led about a dozen of us through the distillery, said Fleming eventually became a noted philanthropist, locally, reflecting his family motto "'Let the deed show."

At Aberlour the deed indeed shows. The tour included a fascinating, intimate tasting, of six expressions of the distiller's craft: New spirit straight from the still, slightly reminiscent of grappa, Aberlour 10-year old single malt, a long-time favourite of my wife's, a "floral and spicy" double cask matured 16 yr. old, rich, dark 16 yr. Sherry cask, and pale, lighter 15 yr. Bourbon cask, cask strength whiskies. We also tasted A'bunadh, a non-

chill filtered cask-strength whisky, in the style of those made in the early 1900s, matured in Oloroso sherry butts. Under Stables' watchful eye, my wife experienced the thrill of personalizing and capping bottle number 555. Her preferred sample from the tasting, a 56.5% sherry cask matured 16 yr. old, she inscribed it in the Warehouse No. 1 ledger.

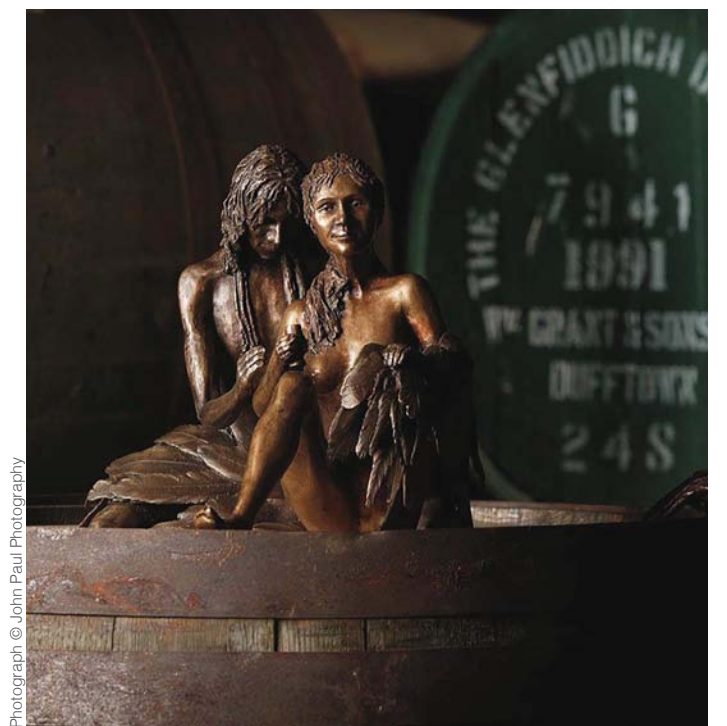
A quick stop at the close-by Craigellachie Hotel, at the confluence of the Spey and Fiddich rivers, afforded a peek at the 800 malts in their Quaich bar, and the opportunity to reflect on what we had learned during our singular visits. One can learn onsite from the experts, and read much more online about the ins and outs of single malt, single grain and blended whiskies, as well as the production process – malting, mashing, fermenting, distilling, coopering, ageing, marrying and blending. Ultimately it's the taste and aroma of what's in the glass that really matter, and, more so, one's own palate and preferences.

Simple, first-class ingredients, married with place, tradition, skill, science and art all contribute to a great whisky, but we agreed the key factor in the creation of a perfect dram was magic, namely what the angels chose to share with us.

## If you're going

The only thing seemingly as ubiquitous as sheep and wind farms are speed radar signs. Be especially-aware of the "average speed" reckoning systems on some highways. If you are planning on visits to distilleries, book ahead as some tours are very popular, and can only accommodate a given number of visitors. Some distilleries sell a handy "traveller pack" so you can taste just a sip, take the rest of your samples with you, and not risk exceeding the new 0.5 legal blood alcohol concentration limit.

*Note: the author was a guest of the Scotch Whisky Experience, and Aberlour and Glenfiddich Distilleries. They did not see, review, nor influence content prior to publication.*



Photograph © John Paul Photography



# SALT AND PEPPER TO TASTE

by Jeff Postman MD, Pasadena Branch

Salt and pepper endure as an inseparable pair in western cuisine. How many times have you seen a television chef add salt to a dish and then reflexively sprinkle on some pepper? The salt may have been required to bring out the flavours of the food. But the pepper was most likely lost and unnoticed.

At one time there were salt and pepper shakers on every restaurant table. When chefs and diners realised that freshly ground pepper was superior in taste, the pepper shakers were replaced with individual grinders.\* Nowadays, these often are absent. Instead, the waiter comes around with an oversized device and asks each diner if they want some ground pepper on their dish. The reason for this, I am told, is that the individual grinders on each table used to get stolen.

It appears that salt and pepper are almost a routine afterthought in the recipe ingredients for savoury dishes. To check if this impression is correct, I grabbed the NY Times Cook Book and leafed through the section on beef. It contained 63 recipes, of which 45 listed both salt and pepper as ingredients. 21 of those contained the specific words "salt and freshly ground black pepper", often with the addendum "to taste". Another 24 specifically indicated a particular quantity of one or the other.

Salt, of course, is a compound of sodium and chlorine (NaCl). It is easier to concentrate on just the sodium part which often comes complexed with other anions (negatively charged ions). Sodium is essential for life and one could probably survive with 500 milligrams a day if one never moved. 1500 mg/day is a better estimate for the minimum salt requirement for Americans. The US Government wants us to keep our intake below 2300 mg/day but very few of us do that. Actually, we average closer to 3400 mg/day. The amount of salt each of us consumes, of course, is a matter of taste, though we would probably all agree that the recipes from the NY Times Cook Book did need the addition of some salt.

There certainly are national and cultural differences in salt usage. Statistically, the lowest average daily consumption of salt in the world is in Rwanda (1600 mg) and the highest is in Kazakhstan (5980 mg). You have to take those figures with a grain of salt ("hah-hah") because daily consumption is hard to measure. Most salt intake comes from prepared and processed foods and just asking someone what they ate yesterday will provide skewed results. The most reliable estimates come from 24 hour urine collections. Among first world nations, Japan is an example of a country with very high national salt intake. Paradoxically, the incidence of cardiovascular disease in Japan is relatively low. Chinese cuisine is also particularly heavy in salt.

For my first thirty or so years in the practice of medicine, I agreed with everyone else that, beyond the minimum required, salt is bad because it contributes to high blood pressure, heart attacks and stroke. I believe I was wrong, as there is little positive evidence for this. The current view, per prevailing medical literature, is that the amount of salt we consume (at

least up to a generous 5000 mg. of Na+ per day), is not a factor in cardiovascular health outcomes. Indeed, the importance of a low salt diet, even in such conditions as hypertension or heart failure, is now being questioned.

It is interesting that for many decades, the negative view of salt would have been considered "settled science", since the vast majority of practitioners in medicine or related fields would have regarded it as obviously true. So if someone today talks about "settled science", you can tell them that you've been there before.

Pepper, of course, is not a required nutrient. It has a long and important history in Western commerce and cuisine which is unexpected since there is no nearby source. Originally from the region of Kerala in southern India, pepper's production has spread to many areas of the world where the climatic conditions are appropriate. Vietnam today is the largest producer.

Pepper grows as berries on a vine. Black pepper, the form we see most often, is picked when not fully ripe and then dried in the sun. Fully ripened peppercorns are red. If they undergo water treatment to remove the outer skin, you get white pepper whose taste is generally milder and less pungent than the black. Green peppercorns most often are picked unripe and dehydrated or packed in brine.

The trade in pepper has been ongoing since Roman times, moving progressively through the hands of Byzantium, the Muslim east, Italy's Venice and Genoa, Portugal, Holland and finally Britain. Importation of pepper has always exceeded that of all other spices by a wide margin. But why? The pure taste of pepper, isolated from its heat, can be pleasing but its potential for enhancing the flavor of a dish may be considered less than that of other spices such as cinnamon or cloves. The lasting appeal of pepper over the centuries is most likely due to its pungency. Medieval Europeans had some foods with a kick (mustard, horseradish) but those could not be used to enhance most dishes without significantly altering their flavor. So they used black pepper. Chilli peppers didn't arrive until after the discovery of America.

Now for some interesting chemistry. Transient Receptor Potential Vanilloid 1 (TRPV1) is an important cell membrane protein found throughout the human body. It is involved both with pain perception and the regulation of our body temperature. Strictly by serendipity, human TRPV1 can be activated by a small number of compounds present in foods which we experience as being "hot". Other species with slightly different configurations of their TRPV1 do not respond to those same chemicals. They can eat chilli peppers with impunity. It is the compound piperine in peppercorns which triggers the TRPV1 in the mouth. In chili peppers, it is capsaicin. Capsaicin is about 100 times as strong as piperine.

Still, we are left with the conundrum, why do we enjoy something that basically induces pain? Is it that mild pain, when

it is expected and not accompanied by fear or anxiety, can be enjoyable? Scientists postulate that this has to do with the internal release of endorphins, natural opioids, in response to the discomfort. It's a perplexing question.

But why do we continue to link salt and pepper together, with the result that we add pepper to many dishes that don't need and don't benefit from it? Some attribute this to François Pierre de la Varenne, a prominent sixteenth century chef and cookbook writer, who "modernised" the French cuisine of his time. He emphasised the natural flavor of food products and pared down the excessive medieval dependence on spices to primarily salt and pepper. His culinary principles spread to the court of Louis XIV which set the tone for the rest of France, and then for all of Europe. Still, why has the coupling of salt and

pepper lasted until this day? Perhaps, through habit, chefs and food writers have kept on doing the same thing as their predecessors. It is time to get over it.

**Addendum and more chemistry:** TRPV1 is also activated by hydrogen ions, i.e. acids. When you drink Champagne, the CO<sub>2</sub> is converted to carbonic acid by the enzyme carbonic anhydrase along the surface of the mucous membranes. The H<sup>+</sup> from the acid triggers TRPV1. So this mechanism is also responsible for our enjoyment of carbonated beverages.

\* Freshly ground pepper has a more complex flavour when it is applied directly to a dish although it is fine to use previously ground pepper in long cooked foods. One doubts if anyone can tell the difference. It is the same with fancy salts.





## BRANCH FOCUS: IWFS CAPE TOWN

by David Swinger, Cellarmaster, IWFS Cape Town

The IWFS Cape Town Branch is characterised by its relative youthfulness, vigour and unabashed joy in savouring the fine things of the table with like-minded friends in spectacular surroundings. Members who joined the 2009 Cape Town Festival will hopefully recall that spirit.

Records reflect that the Branch was founded on 9th February 1947 "at a Luncheon served under the spreading oaks of Mr and Mrs Nicolaas Louw's magnificent Steenberg Farm in Tokai" – the current home of the Steenberg Wine Farm, Golf Club and exclusive Residential Estate. It was only on the 14th of May that year that the first thirty Members dined together at The Vineyard Hotel, still a fine establishment.

For reasons not declared, an Italian Dinner was served: Melone con Prosciutto, Galantina di Vitello, Antipasta assortio, Canelloni alla Siciliana, Medaglione di Byu all' Albese, Punte di Asparagi al Burro, Pollo alla Cacciatore piselli patate, Tarta Margherita, Zabaglione al Marsala, Pezzo duro Napolitano, Fromaggio, Frutte, Caffè. Phew...

But that's not all! Vermouths preceded the meal service, which was accompanied by Orvieto Secco, Chianti Valle d'Oro, and Asti Spumante with Sregat with coffee. It's the sort of generosity of spirit that remains stitched into the DNA of the Cape Town branch.

There are currently some 70 members who enjoy a varied spread of fare throughout the year. After a financial year-end AGM held at Steenberg – the site of our founding – we open the new year with a Wine Tasting Lunch in early March (avoiding a clash with the Cape Town Cycle Tour as that closes the city down...), alternating between Champagne and White Wines of the World each year. A 'food' function follows in our Autumn and this takes the form of a formal Chairman's Dinner in alternate years. As winter sets in we host a traditional Wine Tasting and Dinner which allows us to call out the cavalry – 2010 Red Burgundy presented by the renowned Alex Dale (Radford Dale) in 2019 – and a set of 'food' and 'wine' functions alternate with Wine Estate visits through Southern Hemisphere Spring.

The delegation of functions as 'food' or 'wine' directs budget policy. For example, the bulk of the budget for a 'food' function would be allocated to the food tasting or meal, with wine very present, although in less costly form. Likewise, 'wine' functions would concentrate spend on the wines to be tasted, with the meal more to fuel the journey home.

We end the year with two Memorial Meals devoted to the memory of two great, late members: The Pam Hirschson Ladies Lunch and the Zak Bosman Gentle Men's Dinner, when "only Grand Cru will do," as Zak famously said offering a mature Musigny at his last supper, an IWFS Men's Meal.



An important biennial (usually Spring) event is the Great Weekend Away. We've produced a long line of culinary weekend getaways over more than thirty 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. Last year took us to Wellington, just an hour from Cape Town's CBD, but strangely not (yet) on the rock-star radar.

Two features define the Branch.

Firstly, we have Members who are both super cooks and have fabulous homes, so the Food Committee catered 'at home' functions are always well oversubscribed, and never fail to excite. An archive copy of *Wine and Food* shows that self-catered home 'Meetings' were adopted as 'policy' by Cape Town in 1948. On 18th December 1948 one Mr Dudley Hayman entertained sixteen Members in his (then fashionable) Fish Hoek home to 'Fare' of Tomates a la Madrid, Consommé Ste. Claire, Filets de Sole Danoise, Poulet Rodriguez de Castillo, Pommes Espagnole, Petits Pois, Epinards a la crème and Apri Duchesse (with unspecified sherry, white and red wine and 'Liqueur Brandy'). To appease disappointed Members who didn't make the first sixteen, he cooked the dinner again at a second 'sitting'. Generosity is woven into the fabric of the branch.

Secondly, we maintain a cellar, optimally stored at Wine Cellar Cape Town. Utilising members either active in the wine trade or with significant contacts, we have over time built up a collection of fine wine, currently 770 bottles. Leading the pack is France (394 – Bordeaux, Champagne, Burgundy, Rhone, Loire, the



South) with South Africa (67), Italy (54) and Germany (29) well represented. Australia, Portugal, Spain and New Zealand follow with small parcels from England, USA, Chile, Uruguay and Romania; 14 countries in total. This allows us to hold mature fine wine tastings when bottles that we acquired young would be out of financial reach, especially in Rand terms.

In sum, the direction of IWFS Cape Town strives to present wine and food opportunities that individual members may not be able to access or, indeed, afford in their own right, offered within an educational framework, while having rollicking good fun with like-minded friends in the process.



# PLANNING FOR 2021

by Leonie Allday and Tim Hodges



Let us raise our glasses (and our spirits) to a new and enjoyable phase for the IWFS in 2021

We look forward to a more normal environment in the next year and we have some exciting plans for our members.

Our objective is to become a more widely recognised organisation for people interested in the enjoyment of good food and wine and thereby to increase our membership in 2021 by at least five percent and we need your help in to achieve this. An increase in our membership is a clear indicator of how successful the IWFS is in addressing the needs of its members.

The founder's mission statement is worth keeping in mind: *The object 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 the mere satisfaction of appetite.* André Simon, Wine & Food Society Founder (1933)

In the early years of the Society, its members included a significant number of influential people who worked in the food and wine sectors and the profile of the Society in these sectors was much higher than it is today.

The vested interest worked both ways in delivering more business for the suppliers and also satisfying the consumers with high quality food and wine events.

To have a visible presence in many good hotels, restaurants, wine bars, wine merchants and societies we will be forming alliances with credible organisations who will then see the benefit of working closely with a prestigious organisation that will further enhance their business.

Branches will be offered help to assist with events including some or all of the following:

- Themed lunch time and evening events,
- Learning events through enjoyable doing (tastings, demonstrations, visits),
- Promotional events working with local bars and restaurants
- Representation at food festivals, wine fairs and societies.

These events will be publicised effectively so helping to raise the profile of both the supplier and the society.

The award system will be enhanced by delegating to the branches some award decisions so that any worthy supplier or venue hosting an IWFS event is clearly and quickly recognised.

Supplier or venue will receive confirmation of outstanding performance by being able to show a testimonial from the IWFS in the form of signage and certification.

Your help in using this new award system will be further promoted in Food and Wine and through the web site.

Branch input to the web site will be encouraged by grants to the participating branches.

Promotional materials such as leaflets, banners, will be made available to members and grants will be made to branches making their own video which would be posted on social media platforms.

It is recognised that 2020 has been an extremely difficult year for you but with the creative initiatives described, 2021 holds great promise and the success will be dependent on all of us having a close involvement.

## Blackpool and Fylde

### TASTING THE BEST OF NEW ZEALAND



In the glorious break between total lockdown and the imposition of Tier 3, Blackpool members met in the garden of Peter and Karen Smith... if you can call two acres of parkland a garden! Three of our members died in the pandemic so it was also an opportunity to catch up with friends and fellow members. Peter had erected a couple of gazebos, which was fortunate as there was an occasional drop of rain.

Chairman Ron Barker and his wife had spent three weeks in February visiting the best wineries of New Zealand. He was assisted by Bob Campbell MW from the Society's Wines Committee and Rowan Moss, Chair of our Auckland Branch, in arranging visits and tastings at some of the country's best wineries. For this open-air tasting he brought eight wines ranging from Felton Road in Central Otago, up through the South Island including Nelson and Marlborough, across to the North Island visiting Martinborough, Hawkes Bay and Waiheke Island. Many of them are difficult to find in the UK.

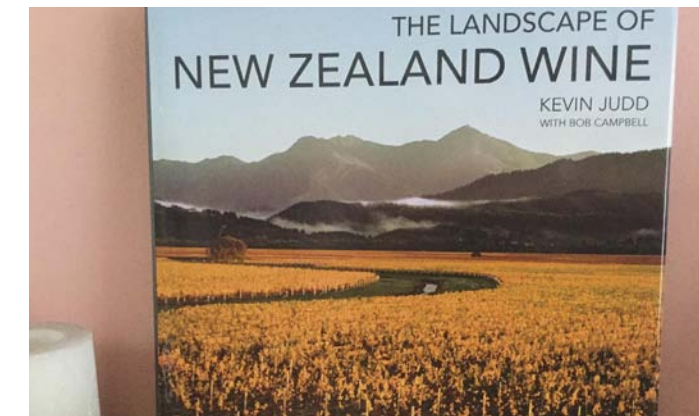


To prevent any risk of contamination members brought their own glasses, nibbles and crockery. Some also brought their own chairs. Each household was seated a social distance from others. The wines were dispensed in individual plastic cups so that only one person touched the bottles. The talk was illustrated by photos from Kevin Judd's book *The Landscape of New Zealand Wine*. Kevin was the original winemaker at Cloudy Bay and now owns and runs Greywacke with his wife.

New Zealand is best known for its Sauvignon Blanc and its Pinot Noir but Blackpool members preferred the Riesling, Syrah and Bordeaux Blend.

The Branch now hopes for some degree of normality before we organise our Christmas event.

*Ron Barker*  
Branch Chairman





## Herefordshire and Monmouthshire A VIRTUAL WINE TASTING



On the 16th August 2020 fourteen members took part on Zoom in an informal and experimental virtual tasting of wines made from the pinot noir grape. The occasion was intended to be lighthearted and was led by Stephen Bennion, a past chairman of the branch, who was sitting before a backdrop of ripe pinot noir grapes to set the scene.

Members were asked to bring one or two bottles of inexpensive pinot noir (all were within a price bracket of about £7 to £14) and took it in turns to show their bottles and describe them and we were all asked to consider in turn the colour, acidity, sweetness or dryness, body, tannin content and flavour. The wines tasted, which had been obtained from such diverse suppliers as Tesco and Aldi to The Wine Society and Tanners, were:

### Chile

Ignacio Recabarren D.O. Casablanca Pinot Noir 2019 13%  
Estevez – Valle Central 13%  
Errazuriz Estate Pinot Noir 2019 13.5%

### France

Bourgogne Pinot Noir, Louis Latour 2019  
Vignoble Rousellet NV 13%

### Germany

Villa Wolf Pinot Noir, Pfalz 2017 13% (onetime spätburgunder)

### Hungary

Ostoros Egri Pinot Noir

### New Zealand

Brancott Estate Marlborough Pinot Noir 13%  
Marlborough Pinot Noir (with Indevin) 13%

### Portugal

Campolargo Rosé Espumante Pinot Noir, Bairrada 11.5%

### Romania

Paparuda, Cramele Recas Pinot Noir 2019 12.5%

We looked first at the colour of our wine with most likening it to a flower, fruit or jewel and also to different colours of lipstick. Roses, pink hibiscus, ripening mulberries, pale ruby and pale garnet were all mentioned.

Consideration of the aromas and then the taste produced a variety of comments, not all complimentary, ranging from blackcurrant for the Romanian and cherry, but musty, for the Bourgogne pinot noir to muddy for the Brancott and the “inside of a car tyre” for the Errazuriz. Most of the wines reflected the modern tendency towards fruit rather than more traditional pinot noir from Burgundy.

Two members joined in from Portugal with the Campolargo espumante which was likened to the colour of pink hibiscus which they described as pleasant enough but unlikely to cause the champenois to lose any sleep. The rest of us were envious of the sight of hot sun and a panorama stretching far down to the sea.

Two couples taking part from the same house experimented by tasting their wines, the Chilean Errazuriz and the Romanian Paparuda, in both a general purpose wine glass and in a Riedel pinot noir glass for comparison and were interested to find that there was a noticeable improvement with the Riedel glass (notwithstanding the smell of tyres for the Errazuriz).

While most wines were enjoyed, as a fairly rough and ready assessment on being asked to judge them on a scale of 1 to 10 the German Villa Wolf and the Romanian Paparuda scored best and the Brancott Estate and the Errazuriz were the lowest, only just beating the Hungarian Egri and the Chilean Estevez in the race to the bottom.

After the tasting there was a short quiz about the pinot noir grape and we learned the origins and meaning of the name, the most favourable climate in which to grow it and the countries which are the largest producers, of whom the USA and Germany are the major growers after France.

To round off the day we took the opportunity to look at some of the more outlandish flights of fancy to be found in tasting notes to see whether they were informative or just pretentious. Of these, “medium bodied with saucy but racy acidity”; “a faint soupçon of asparagus and just a flutter of Edam cheese” and “a freshly opened can of tennis balls” caused some amusement.

The Zoom experiment was generally deemed to be worth repeating later in the year if other activities are still constrained and our thanks go to Stephen whose chairmanship and meticulous preparation ensured the success of the occasion.

*Nigel Williams*

## London

### REOPENING AFTER LOCKDOWN

With many of our venues still closed, and others discouraging groups of more than a few people, our Committee decided to try our hand at some ‘virtual’ events online. The example of a full virtual meal pioneered by Chicago Branch was impressive, and Alan and Stephanie had recently attended such an event organised by their Livery Company, but we decided that something a little more modest would be appropriate in the first instance. So we started modestly with two Zoom tastings: one primarily social, the other a little more formal.

#### An Informal Social Event

For the first of these, the idea was to bring along a selection of the wines that we had each been drinking in lockdown. Alan Shepherd chose a theme of Pinot Noir, but members were free to bring along whatever they fancied. We opened them, tasted them and talked about them. Alan had a selection of Burgundies from a variety of vintages and price points, and was grateful for his Coravin so as to avoid wasting them! These included:

**Mercurey Rouge AOC, J M Pillot, 2015**

**Mercurey Premier Cru, En Sazenay, J M Pillot, 2014**

**Beaune Premier Cru, Les Avaux, Dom Lucien Jacob, 2014**

**Gevrey Chambertin, En Songe, Dom Lucien Jacob, 2012**

All proved to be a little on the young side. However, it was interesting to compare them in terms of taste and age. Another Burgundy brought to our attention was a bottle of **Côte de Beaune Dom Pierre André, 2007** which was drinking very well.

By way of comparison Alan also had **Heaphy Nelson Pinot Noir 2017, New Zealand**. Others brought along **Roaring Meg, 2018, Central Otago, New Zealand** and **Edna Valley Pinot Noir 2017, California**. These were pleasant wines for drinking early, without the same complexities as the Burgundies.

Another wine which came recommended during lockdown was a summer Rosado from the renowned Muga winery in Spain.

The conversation was wide ranging, informative and entertaining. A very convivial evening.

#### New World Chardonnays

For the second event, Rachel Burnett chose three “Rich and Oaky” New World Chardonnays available from Majestic; so we could each have them delivered from our local branch and taste them together on line. The aim was to compare different levels of New World Chardonnay and demonstrate what value you can get by paying more.

In the early 1970s Chardonnay accounted for only a tiny proportion of all vines grown in California and Australia. Yet by the early 1990s it had become the most planted white wine grape in both countries.

The wines we tasted were:

**Chile: Luis Felipe Edwards Gran Reserva Chardonnay 2019, Casablanca Valley 13.5%**

Chile is an isolated wine region, with a largely unpolluted atmosphere. It has a Mediterranean climate, with reliable sunshine, and can get cool at night. Wine growing has developed since the 1990s in the Casablanca Valley which gets cool ocean breezes. The Luis Felipe Edwards Winery is the largest 100% family-owned wine company and one of the largest wineries in Chile today.

We thought that the stylish label was rather better than the wine, which had little length, but that the wine was quaffable and easy to drink at the price.

**California: Edna Valley Chardonnay 2018, 13.5%**

From the 1990s wineries were expanding into the Californian Central coast region, where the valley has continuous breezes from the ocean and warm sunshine. Edna Valley Vineyards has been there for more than three decades.

This wine was in a similar style to the last one, but there was much more to it. It was balanced, with an elegant finish. The oak was more noticeable.

*continued on page 28 ➡*





## London

### WINE TASTING: RED RIOJA BY ZOOM

Our latest tasting by Zoom was to compare and discuss traditional red Riojas. We were delighted to welcome some IWFS members from the North West, an advantage of being able to get together technologically without travelling!

The three wines suggested, easily obtainable from Majestic, were all from the Rioja Alta region, in traditional/classical style, with extended ageing in oak barrels and bottle, ready to drink once released.

The Tempranillo grape is at the heart of Rioja's best wines. It may be blended with small proportions of Graciano and Mazuelo (the latter is another name for Carignan), or with Garnacha.

Many Rioja winemakers disapprove of decanting Reserva or Gran Reserva wines. Their view is that decanting risks oxidising the wine, and that the flavours should be allowed to develop in the glass. In ageing fine Rioja, the sediment falls to the bottom of the barrel, so there is very little by the time it is bottled. At our tasting this evening, we found that it was worth delaying our opinion beyond the first sip, as the taste improved, the longer the wines were in glass.

The first two wines were both from Beronia, a bodega in the heart of Rioja Alta founded in the 1970s and integrated into the González Byass group in 1982:

#### Beronia Reserva Rioja 2015

94% Tempranillo, 4% Graciano, 2% Mazuelo

Reserva wines have had at least one year in barrel and two in bottle. In this case the wine was aged for 20 months in barrel, then developed for 18 in bottle.

#### Beronia Gran Reserva Rioja 2011

97% Tempranillo, 3% Graciano

Gran Reserva wine is made only in the best vintage years, with rules requiring longer ageing than for Reserva. Again, this wine

➡ *continued from page 27*

#### South Eastern Australia: Eileen Hardy Chardonnay 2016, 13.5%

Chardonnays have become commercially successful in Australia, with reliable quality and varied character. The Hardy winery was founded in 1853 in South Australia. Eileen Hardy was the widow of the managing director who was killed in an air crash in 1938. She was the family matriarch and became well known for her contributions to the wine industry. The wine is their flagship Chardonnay and there is also a flagship Pinot Noir. It was made for her annual birthday present, and the 2016 vintage is the 30th year since it was first made. The wines have evolved over the years. It is a blend of hand-picked premium grapes from cool climate regions Tasmania and Yarra Valley.

This was agreed to be a complex wine, showing lovely aromas and tropical fruit palate, and a buttery finish. We liked it a lot. We did think that we would not have confused the taste with white Burgundy and that it had Australian characteristics.

was aged for longer than stipulated, with 28 months in oak barrels and 36 months in the bottle before release.

Both wines had been highly rated by various organisations, awards and professional reviews. Comparing both wines this evening, we generally felt that the first was better value. The second wine appeared rather closed at this particular time, and did not show quite as well as anticipated.

The third wine was:

#### Rioja Reserva 'Selección Especial' Viña Ardanza 2010

##### La Rioja Alta

80% Tempranillo from 30-year-old vines and 20% Garnacha

La Rioja Alta is one of the long established bodegas of Rioja, family owned since its foundation in 1890. They grow all the grapes they use, and hand pick them. They manufacture all the barrels. All bottling is on site. This is only the fourth time in 78 years that the bodega has made a classification of 'Selección Especial'. It is awarded by winemakers only to their very best wines in the very best vintages.

The wine is already beginning to drink well, but is expected to evolve over the next two decades. It was reviewed very highly by James Suckling, Robert Parker's Wine Advocate and Tim Atkin, amongst others. It cost very little more than the second wine, and we thought that it was better value.

The Zoom meeting framework made for a friendly environment. We were all able to see each other and to communicate our opinions or questions about the wines, as much – or as little – as we wanted to.

While we are prevented from our normal wine tastings, we shall happily continue.

*Rachel Burnett*

Our normal tastings would be of more than three wines, but this Zoom format works well for us, for one hour in the early evening. We will not be tasting fine, old or unusual wines that we might have at some of our tastings, because the wines have to be in a reasonable price range and readily available for us to buy individually. We announce the tastings via our website with the particular wines selected and how to have them delivered, take bookings as usual (except that there is no charge), and forward the meeting invitation link and tasting notes by email.

We shall be continuing to go online as an agreeable, undemanding way for us to keep in touch and enjoy tasting together, at a time when it is not easy for all of us to meet up at our usual venues in central London.

*Alan Shepherd and Rachel Burnett*

## Surrey Hills

### STARTERS AND PUDS No. 29



Many of you will have noticed that Surrey Hills has been holding this annual event for many years. The menu format is three starters and three puds – so six 'courses' – each normally prepared at home and plated up at the venue by members (who 'compete' for their dish to be selected!). Initially it seemed unlikely that we would be able to organise it this year, but the committee finally decided after much deliberation that we could legally go ahead with an outdoor event, by limiting numbers to 24 and by following as closely as possible the then current published government guidelines which applied to 'restaurants, pubs, bars and takeaways'. Almost all the food would be prepared by three committee members so as to provide full control over the necessary health measures.

Clearly this was not going to be the usual event! The special measures that we were obliged to take included the first time that the Branch has had to draw up a full risk assessment and procedures statement for a function; guests being required on arrival to confirm that they did not have any Covid symptoms; assigned seating to ensure household or bubble members sat together, and at least a metre away from all others; wide spacing of tables; discouraging loitering and chatting before sitting (probably the most difficult habit to crack), and thereafter encouraging the use of masks when not seated; providing individual water bottles instead of water jugs; every single item of cutlery, crockery and glassware being hot washed 24 hours

before use and thereafter handled only with gloved hands; paper napkins; chairs sanitised an hour before guest arrivals; food prepared, plated and served wearing masks or visors; wines opened and served by two nominated persons who handled only 'their own' bottles; only specific people allowed in the food prep areas, and only nominated people allowed to serve to table; no common items such as condiments on tables; regular sanitising of the toilet facilities (accessed via a specified route), and use there of disposable paper towels; checking all attendees seven days after the event for Covid symptoms.

Despite all that, our cooks did somehow manage to produce some imaginative and tasty dishes! The delayed 2020 Branch AGM was held immediately beforehand, and true to form took no more than 30 minutes, during which we were provided with small portions of Salmon Bonbons, Chilled Corn and Coconut Soup, and Smoked Trout Paté. The Starters were a Cucumber Gazpacho, a Bazargan Salad (Bulgar wheat, cauliflower, radish, coriander, and nuts) and a Bresola Salad with rocket, artichoke hearts and parmesan.

The puds consisted of a Chocolate Hazelnut Ice Cream Cheesecake, a Calamansi Sorbet, and a Moroccan Orange Salad with dates and flaked almonds, all accompanied by Royal Tokaji Late Harvest 2017.

The AGM was lubricated with Arestal Brut Cava NV. This was followed by Viña Taboréxa Albariño 2019, and Definition Marlborough Pinot Noir 2018.

The event was voted a big success because, apart from the usual excellent food and wine, this was the first time that most of us had seen each other this year. Of course, the social distancing, anti-mingling, and other precautions took some of the shine off the day, and for the organisers it was a lot more work than usual, but luckily the weather remained fair except for a couple of brief showers, and everyone seemed to depart in good spirits! Back to normal next year?

*Kip Punch*





## Surrey Hills

### LUNCH AT STOVELL'S, CHOBHAM

Stovell's was opened in 2012, the creation of chef patron Fernando Stovell. He found a charming sixteenth century Tudor farmhouse in Chobham, and opened his eponymous restaurant, which serves contemporary European cuisine with Mexican accents. Since opening, the restaurant has been honoured with awards including the Waitrose Good Food Restaurant of the Year for the South East, four AA rosettes and has been included in the top 100 restaurants in the UK by various publications.

Considering the current circumstances, we were very fortunate that the management had plans in place to accommodate 'groups', albeit with a considerable distance between tables. Eighteen of us gathered on Thursday 17th September in great anticipation for our first restaurant visit this year, in the knowledge that social distancing would deny us the usual chatter between tables.

On arrival we enjoyed a glass of Domaine de Valensac Sauvignon Blanc 2018, and thereafter guests ordered their own choice from the wine list (noting that no English wines were included!).



Stephanie Shepherd had negotiated a menu with a choice of five starters, five mains and four desserts, all from their à la carte list. The most popular starters were Porthleven Crab served on very thinly sliced beefsteak tomato with coconut and white onion shards, and Chargrilled Norfolk Quail with White Almond Mole. Both of these received particularly favourable comments, the presentation being outstanding. Others chosen by a few were Osmanthus and Chrysanthemum Broth, and Warm Aromatic Duck Foie, both being well appreciated.

The mains on offer were Halibut, Beef, Rabbit, Pork and Squash. The barbequed Halibut was beautifully cooked, full of flavour and with a spiced carrot and lemongrass puree and three-colour baby carrots. The Rabbit was surprisingly popular – probably because it doesn't feature on many menus – once again cooked perfectly, and accompanied by a fermented turnip and pistachio purée, and nettles. The deconstructed Beef Wellington, chargrilled over vine embers, was particularly delicious.

Although four desserts were available, only two were chosen! The Valhrona Dark Chocolate Mousse with Tudor Rose ice cream was "positively decadent and very yummy", according to one member. And a delight for the eyes and taste was the Pinata – multi-colour corn husk meringue with Jersey cream and summer berries.

Two members had lunched at Stovell's twice before this event. The cooking and presentation had on both previous occasions been of the same very high standard when they had only a handful of guests. To maintain that with a full restaurant (18 IWFS guests and eight members of the general public) and with a team of just two in the kitchen shows a very high standard of skill and organisation. We were pleased to thank Chef Kyle Robinson, Restaurant Manager João Soares and his assistant Mariana Lugo personally after the meal. Front of House had operated with efficiency and charm under difficult circumstances. Many of us will no doubt be visiting Stovells again very soon!

*Kip Punch*

## Zürich

### GALA WITH ROBERT BURNS

Instead of our classical year-end Gala Dinner in a renowned restaurant, we attended this winter the traditional Haggis and Whisky meal called "Burns Supper". This Supper is annually organised by the British-Swiss Chamber of Commerce. It was indeed an outstanding idea, very formal and very stylish. So, we celebrated the 261st anniversary of the birth of Scotland's national bard, Robert Burns, on 24th January. Burns Night is celebrated all around the world and is a truly unique event. There were 150 guests, haggis, whisky, exquisite piping and an energetic Ceilidh (a traditional Scottish social gathering).

The Order Of The Evening was: Piping in of the Guests – Selkirk Grace – Piping in of the Haggis – Immortal Memory and Appreciation Address – Toast to the Lassies – Traditional Dancing – Whisky Tasting – Auld Lang Syne.

The "Immortal Memory" was delivered by Reverend Albert Bogle. He is a minister of the Church of Scotland and Founder and Chairman of the "Vine Trust". He is well known in Scotland for his entertaining and engaging public speaking.

The Haggis and all the other food served was slightly strange, but nevertheless delicious. The whisky fitted well, but the wines served were also going well. The venue in the very traditional guild house "zur Schmieden" in the old town of Zurich added to a very stylish event.

Our members had an insight into another view of Great Britain, the Scots with their particular mentality, their customs, their food and their drinks. Our branch founder and president



emeritus, John Macdonald, could even wear his authentic Scottish outfit.

*Kurt Haering*  
Chairman Zürich Branch





## Zürich AGM AND COVID-19



Five days before the Covid-19 lockdown in March, the Zürich Branch had the last live event. Then, the AGM was on schedule early September. As the restrictions of the lockdown were eased, a poll amongst the members about staging a real AGM showed very positive results. So, the AGM was held on 5th September 2020. Of course, the current recommendations for precautions were observed.

The AGM 2020 took place in the group room of the Birmensdorf local museum. The members were asked to bring some starters, cheese and desserts, the main course was offered by a member, who cooked an outstanding Greek Stifado. Further, all member brought some local white wines and international Cabernet Sauvignons (even from Bangalore, India!) for great tastings.



Main topics of the meeting were the future and the goals of the Branch under the auspices of a changed social behaviour. It was unanimously decided to continue to pursue the set goals of the Society. Further, we got a panoramic view of activities and concerns in the Society worldwide from John Nicholas.

The mood during the gathering was great, as we could break the depressive influence of the virus threat. Although keeping reasonable physical, not social distance, renewed the spirit of the IWFS in camaraderie in its traditional way. And it was highly appreciated and enjoyed by the participants. It was a perfect start into a new era.

*Kurt Haering*  
Chairman Zürich Branch



## Zürich THE ZÜRICH BRANCH WENT ITALIAN

It has become a tradition, that the Zürich Branch tastes once a year the traditional cuisine of a different part of the world. Italy was this year's choice. The country is not really exotic or far away, but a genuine "cucina italiana della mamma (o della nonna)" is not so often found.

So, we had dinner at the Ristorante Italia in a nearly Italian manner. Traditional dinner includes aperitivo, antipasti, primo piatto, secondo piatto, contorni and dolce. We combined antipasti and the primo piatti or eventually the secondo piatto in order to fit with our actual appetite and capacity.

So, the courses looked like this:

- Antipasto misto Italia: Salumi, Formaggi, Agrodolci, Olive
- Secondo Piatti and Contorni: Bistecca Fiorentina, Salsicce, Polpo, Ravioli, Risotto, Verdure
- Dolce: Bunet (Amaretto flan), panna cotta, gelati, fruta

Of course, an Italian meal is no meal without wines and water

- Prosecco di Valdobbiadene Brut, Veneto
- Brunello de Montalcino 2013, Podere Brizio
- Water from the tap (which is quite rare in Swiss restaurants!)

The origin of the ingredients is quite special. It is all organic and from local sources. The only exception is the bistecca, which comes indeed from Florence. Further on, they donate the surplus to a water project in Zambia.

We were also extremely lucky in respect to the Corona lockdown. We had our dinner just four days before all events were cancelled and all restaurants were completely closed, and Zürich became a deserted and very quiet town. None of the participants (and all other members of the Zürich Branch) showed any sign of Corona infection since, and we hope we can keep this status.



The idea of virtual tastings during the lockdown period has not been followed, as most of our members are not very familiar with videoconferencing. Some members remarked, that through the savings by not frequenting restaurants, they invested the saved money in better wines!

*Kurt Haering*  
Chairman Zürich Branch





## GREAT WEEKEND CAMBRIDGE *Incorporating the EAZ AGM and Members' Forum*

### Thursday 16th to Sunday 19th September 2021

The Covid-19 pandemic forced us to move our Great Weekend in Cambridge to 2021. The result is not only a change of dates but also an expanded programme giving more time in the city of Cambridge itself.

The programme now includes two black-tie dinners at Cambridge colleges and a whole day in Cambridge visiting some of the architectural gems of the University. 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 followed by a buffet lunch. Transport by coach will be provided throughout the weekend.

Our base will be the Holiday Inn Hotel, Impington, 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.

On **Thursday 16th September** the first event will be a black-tie Reception and Dinner at Corpus Christi College; a coach will pick us up from the hotel at 6.30 pm. Corpus Christi College was founded in 1352 and 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.

**Friday 17th September** will be spent in Cambridge. Our coach will pick us up at the hotel and take us into the city. We will enjoy a guided walking tour around some of the other colleges followed by a private tour and light lunch at St John's College and a private tour of Queens' College. The coach will return us to the hotel for a short break before taking us back into the city



for dinner at the University Arms Hotel. Dinner this evening will be a smart casual affair. One of the icons of Cambridge, the University Arms now has a young chef, Tristan Welch who is making something of a name for himself reinventing British classics using locally sourced ingredients.

On **Saturday 18th September**, 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 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.

The EAZ AGM and Members' Forum will take place at the Holiday Inn on **Sunday morning** after which a buffet lunch will be provided before we all return home.

#### Booking Information

Early booking is recommended for the Great Weekend as numbers are limited. The cost of the full programme from Thursday evening to Sunday afternoon including three dinners

(two black tie) the visit to Ely, the guided walking tour, lunches in Cambridge and coach transfers throughout will be GBP £460 per person for IWFS members, GBP £490 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. An initial deposit of GBP £100 will be required to confirm your booking. Payment of the balance will be required by 1st April 2021.

All EAZ members may choose to attend the AGM, Members' Forum and lunch on Sunday 19th September without participating in the Great Weekend. If you intend to do this please email us by 1st September 2021. There is no charge for this option but the hotel will need to know numbers for lunch. We will be sending out further reminders in the coming months.

#### Cancellation

You may cancel your reservation up to 31st March 2021 and receive a full refund. For cancellations received between 1st April and 1st June IWFS will make a refund of 50%. After 1st June 2021 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 date of your initial deposit.



#### 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@hcambridge.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

The Zones are looking ahead and planning festivals for members to enjoy. It is hoped that these will be able to take place. However, we are sure you will appreciate that they can only proceed subject to advice from governments' travel advice and local restrictions. Details will be updated on the website as received.

EAZ festivals planned for 2020 in Cambridge and Madeira, were both postponed until 2021. We have refunded those who are unable or unwilling to participate in 2021 and, for Madeira, filled the places immediately from the waitlist. The festival in Cambridge, including the IWFS Europe Africa Annual General Meeting, has been re-launched. The festival launched earlier this year to take place in April 2021 in Piedmont was received very well by members both in EAZ and the other two IWFS regions – there is a significant waitlist as both the hotel and venues can only accommodate limited numbers.

### ITALY Piedmont

**12th to 17th April 2021**

Join the EAZ touring the vineyards around Bra, the home of the Slow Food Movement plus dinners with some of the most exciting wine producers in the area. If you are interested in Barolo and Barbaresco you won't want to miss this. This festival is now fully subscribed. Please contact [s.shepherd@ntlworld.com](mailto:s.shepherd@ntlworld.com) to be added to the wait list. See more details via: <https://www.iwfs.org/europe-africa/eaz-major-events/piedmont>

### FRANCE Paris and Bordeaux

**15th to 24th April 2021**

This amazing Americas event has been rescheduled for next year – the itinerary will be in essence the same. To be re-advertised for new bookings shortly. The itinerary includes visiting some of the most exclusive venues in Paris; then in Bordeaux a stunning itinerary includes private tours and tastings of top châteaux. For more details go to the website: [https://www.iwfs.org/festivals/paris\\_bordeaux](https://www.iwfs.org/festivals/paris_bordeaux)

### SINGAPORE

**18th to 20th June 2021**

The APZ is making plans for a festival on this delightful island country for members to enjoy its culinary delights and explore the many jewels of this island. Expression of Interest will be sent to members in mid-November.

### UK Cambridge

**16th to 19th September 2021**

The EAZ have rescheduled this from 2020 with the same format as far as possible. All members are invited to join us visiting this historic city which includes dining in two of the University's historic Colleges. See previous pages 34 and 35 for details, or visit <https://www.iwfs.org/europe-africa/eaz-major-events/cambridge>.

### USA San Antonio

**26th to 30th October 2021**

The Americas invite you to join them in enjoying the best in food and wine of this Texan city with its rich colonial heritage. Details to be confirmed.

### PORTUGAL Madeira

**30th October to 6th November 2021**

Join the EAZ to explore this historic island; 'the pearl of the Atlantic' and learn about its world famous wine, Madeira. You will stay in the capital, Funchal, and visit the major producers – Barbeito, Blandys, Henriques & Henriques and D'Oliveiras. You will also have the opportunity to discover something of the local cuisine. This will be a unique opportunity to discover Madeira wine in its home setting. Now fully subscribed but let us know if you wish to be added to the wait list. Visit our website for more details: <https://www.iwfs.org/europe-africa/eaz-major-events/madeira>

### FRANCE Alsace

**April 2022**

The EAZ are heading to the city of Colmar, the capital of this historic wine region and will aim to give you a taste of some of the best wineries and restaurants in the area. More details in due course.

### USA Willamette Valley, Oregon

**17th to 22nd May 2022**

An Americas festival which will give you the chance to visit some of the best wineries of this region which is renowned for its world class Pinot Noir. More details to follow.

*If you are interested in joining an event that is full, or reservations closed, then please contact the organiser in case space is available.*

