



Food & Wine

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

Issue 148

November 2023

**WHAT IS MALOLACTIC
FERMENTATION?**

GERMAN PINOT NOIR

AGM REPORT



**1933
2023**

**Celebrating
90 Years**

Chairman's message



On return from the AGM/Members' Forum in Brockenhurst in the New Forest, I reflected on the discussions. I would like to thank Stephen Harrison and his team for continuing to develop the 'Strategy for Growth'. The next phase is to 'make change happen' and therefore the team reconstituted as the 'Development Working Group' and is now focused on implementation.

This effort is directed towards increasing membership. The main strands are: i) to increase 'brand recognition'; ii) to communicate with potential new members using communication channels now prevalent, i.e. Social Media; and iii) to help branches by developing packaged events which can be used by branches, groups of branches or even other organisations or groups of individuals.

The Development Working Team need more help, firstly to develop the ideas into reality with actual products which can be used by members and to attract new members. Our Society, at all levels, is run by volunteers and therefore the more that members can contribute, the quicker we can implement the ideas.

Please may I ask each of you as members to consider how you can contribute to IWFS. Initially perhaps, through your branch activities. May I suggest that you could volunteer to organise an event (or help to organise one), contribute articles on branch

events for this magazine, promote the branch using the tools which are being developed or take on some of the administration tasks. You might be surprised how much satisfaction and enjoyment you get from 'helping out'!

Beyond your branch you might like to volunteer to work either with the Development Working Team or to join the Executive Committee (Exco). Exco is seeking a Treasurer to succeed Steve Graham and a replacement for Tricia Fletcher as Awards Officer. Furthermore, with increasing expectations of what can be achieved and the need to have succession plans in place, I would love to hear from anyone who would like to get involved. Exco meets twice (one in conjunction with the AGM) each year face-to-face with other meetings on Zoom.

I look forward to hearing about branch exploits to celebrate the 90th anniversary of our foundation, which kicked off with the wonderful celebration at Windsor Castle. Do use the special logo, alongside the regular one especially when communicating with non-members.

John Nicholas
Chair, IWFS Europe Africa

Cover photo: Queen Mary 2

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

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

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

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



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

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



Editorial

The Europe Africa Annual General Meeting took place at the Balmer Lawn Hotel in the New Forest in Hampshire, UK, in September and in this edition you will find digests of several of the discussions and reports of the fine dining dinners which formed parts of the AGM festival.

The principal topic outside the formal AGM agenda, at The Members Forum, was the progress of the creation of the strategy proposals to attract even more members and enhance the range of events and opportunities offered to them. The reality of implementing the forthcoming proposals was a major consideration – it would of course be possible to engage third party consultants and agents but that would be to overlook the enthusiasm and latent talent of existing members and would drain IWFS financial resources. As a Society we can offer members experiences they might be unable to enjoy as individuals – perhaps a private box at a sporting event or an opera, with a fine dining element. Charter a river boat for an exclusive few days wine appreciation cruise. Invite guest chefs to prepare banquets. We could involve the next generation of catering college students in branch activities, perhaps invite them (adequately rewarded) as guest chefs and sommeliers for an event. There were suggestions of arranging inter branch events, inviting branches to expand local events into mini festivals with administrative and, if required, practical help from HQ. Are there opportunities for joint events with compatible associations? We have a wealth of talent within our membership which deserves to be recognised, shared and even exploited! The fundamental tenets of good wine, good food and good company should surely be promoted to our and the next generations. Our mission is to get involved – ‘Delve & Discover’, although one wag at the Forum paraphrased this as ‘dig a hole’. A fuller summary of the Forum discussions is published later in this edition.

Underlying this and to support the development strategy we are seeking to identify the talents of current members and invite them to come forward – share their knowledge and thus ensure the future of the Society. Currently there are vast areas of the UK, Continental Europe and Africa that do not have the opportunity to enjoy and benefit from being members – surely we have a duty to broadcast the good word. We would be delighted to hear from members who support the concepts and who could be our ‘feet on the ground’ – local knowledge, new ideas, contacts with similar societies, maybe event organisers – please identify yourselves and contact editor.eaz@iwfs.org.

Equally we invite members with differing concepts to share them – write to the editor with your perspective, it will be published.

Peter McGahey
Editor

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Please send your photographs separately from the text file.

Copy for online e-newsletter to sec@iwfs.org

Copy for printed magazine to editor.eaz@iwfs.org

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

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Awards for Beverage Focused Column. Meg earned a bachelor of arts in visual studies and a master of arts in creative writing / liberal studies from Dartmouth. She is a certified specialist of wine through the Society of Wine Educators and is honorary secretary of the Circle of Wine Writers.

German Pinot Noir

Anne Kriebiehl MW, German-born but London based, is a highly accomplished, award winning and widely published freelance wine writer and she also lectures. She is the editor for Germany, Alsace and Austria for Vinousmedia.com and writes for a number of leading titles including The World of Fine Wine and Decanter. In June 2021, she launched Falstaff Magazine in the UK and was its editor-in-chief until its merger with another title. She has the WSET Diploma and is also a Master of Wine. She loves high-acid wines and her work often focuses on Pinot Noir, Riesling and traditional method sparkling wines. Anne was also the author for this year's IWFS monograph – Pinot Noir Around the World.



Contents

Chairman's Message	2
Editorial	3
International Secretariat News	5
Letter from Chair of the International Council	6
What is Malolactic Fermentation?	7
German Pinot Noir	11
IWFS Europe Africa AGM	13
Members' Forum feedback	14
Annual Report	16
Festival in Barcelona and Perelada	17
The Wines at Empordà	21
Queen Mary 2 and Dinner in New York	26
Devonshire branch awards	27
Branch reports	28
Catering Colleges Competition	43
Dates for Your Diary	44

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We receive many articles and pictures from contributors and it is not always possible to recognise the authors and photographers but please accept our thanks. In this edition we are delighted to credit **Geoff Williams** for photographs taken at the AGM and **Wayne Markus** for his coverage of the Festival in Empordà. You may view the collections on the website.
Editor

URGENT

Volunteer needed to take on the role of Treasurer for IWFS Europe Africa as a member of Exco

With regret, I have accepted the resignation of our current Treasurer, Steve Graham, who will step down after the completion of the 2023 accounts. Steve has been invaluable in managing our finances over the past three years for which many thanks.

We need to appoint a new Treasurer as soon as possible. Please consider, if you have any accounting or financial skills, whether you would like to take on this role.

The responsibilities can be defined to optimise the skills and interests of any volunteer. Being good with figures does help but you do not need to be a qualified accountant to fulfil this role. Please contact johnsnicholas@aol.com or telephone +44 (0)1993 880532 or mobile +44 (0) 7485 564208.

Volunteer to join Exco and take on the role of Awards Officer

Please contact in the first place Tricia Fletcher tricia.fletcher@btinternet.com to find out what this role entails.



News from the International Secretariat

Dear members,

The Society continues to thrive and 2023 has been a year not to disappoint with festivals being held for members to join by crossing the continents – Oregon (North America) and Barcelona (Europe) in May plus Sydney (Australia) in October and may well have happened when you read this. New branches continue to come on board with Capital branch in London plus Gulfstream and Jupiter in Florida and it is wonderful to welcome them to the IWFS family. With the Society enjoying and celebrating its 90th anniversary it is great to see.

IWFS Thank Yous and Gifts

With the celebration theme in mind please remember that there are a number of branded IWFS items available for members to purchase and which might be that perfect solution for you or your branch to gift (maybe as a thank you to that venue which has produced a memorable meal).

Amongst the items available you will see IWFS Branded Bottle Gift Bags – they are available in packs of 5 (£12) or 10 (£21.50) units. They are a very smart and easy way for you to package any wine, champagne or even port gifts you or your branch may be looking to make during the upcoming festive season. 90th Anniversary DropStops £3 (pack of 3) – why not share our anniversary celebrations with friends and colleagues with these special DropStops (you should have received yours with the last copy of *Food & Wine*). Champagne Stoppers £4 each – perfect to keep those bubbles in the bottle.

Plus don't forget our range of Monographs. The most recent titles have their striking covers and also cover a wealth of information, in easily digestible form, on wines, spirits and foods. They would be a welcome gift for anyone you know who is keen to find out more about the popular topics from Madeira, Blended Scotch, Olive Oils and Spices and so much more. Not forgetting our latest release *Pinot Noir Around the World*.

All these items, and more, can be found on the Merchandise page of the Europe Africa website via <https://www.iwfs.org/europe-africa/purchase2>.

Vintage Guide 2024 – talking about 'thank yous' next year's Vintage Guide is in the process of being updated and once again it would not have been possible without the generosity of our team of Vintage Consultants around the world, the majority of whom were able to provide us with their expert advice freely once again. We are pleased to welcome a new consultant this year for the wines of Austria, Lance Foyster MW. Lance came highly recommended by two of our Wines Committee members and fellow MWs. He has also provided us guidance on the sweet wines of Austria – these will be added to the App.

We are grateful to them all and if you would like to find out more about them they can be found on our website: <https://www.iwfs.org/vintage-charts---cards/vintage-card-consultants>.

Running through the assessments for 2022 vintages in the Northern Hemisphere and 2023 in the Southern Hemisphere it is interesting to note that there are currently only two regions which have so far been awarded a top 7 rating – Bordeaux (reds) and Sierra Foothills in California. This can be partly put down to the problems and extremes in the world weather but also the Wines Committee are cautious and would prefer to score a 6 that they may increase to a 7, rather than hope for 7 with the risk of moving down. As a reminder, when using our Vintage Guide (via the printed Card of the App) please note that our team of consultants are judging the better wines which are made to develop and improve rather. Look out for the updates on our App and also on our 2024 Vintage Card which you will receive upon renewal of your Society membership.

With Bordeaux being such a top vintage we now include a summary of the Bordeaux 2022 report from Charles Taylor MW, Wines Committee member and also owner of fine wine merchants Montrachet, London. (www.montrachetwines.com) – thank you to Charles for allowing us to reprint this.

Vintage report – Bordeaux 2022 by Charles Taylor MW (www.montrachetwines.com)

Profound and harmonious, an historic vintage

May 2023 – I'm just back from a fortnight in Bordeaux tasting the 2022 vintage and it is clear that it is a magnificent one. Everyone expected the warm, dry summer to give dense, concentrated wines but the 2022s also have unanticipated freshness and elegance. This is one of the most exciting *en primeur* vintages I have tasted and many of the château owners feel likewise. Henri Lurton at Château Brane Cantenac describes it as "legendary, like 1945 and 1961" whilst Christian Moueix likens it to 1982.

After the brief interlude of a cool, wet 2021 season, 2022 sees the return to the warm summers seen in 2018, 2019 and 2020. Fortunately, a wet winter had allowed water reserves to be built up and storms at the end of June provided enough rain in most places to allow the vines to withstand the hot, dry conditions of the three months that followed. The result was a small to average-sized crop of thick-skinned, perfectly ripe and healthy grapes that many growers at the time likened to caviar. There was very little need for any sorting, the only thing lacking was juice.

April was cool (the only month to record below average temperatures) and the growing season started later than in 2021 with only a few vineyards suffering losses from frost. May was warmer and June was hot with temperatures reaching 40°C. It was the first of several heatwaves and the warm, sunny weather ensured a good, even and early flowering. By the middle of June, growers were expecting a good-sized crop and the vintage in the middle of September. However, storms struck at the end of June and hail damaged many vineyards both in the northern Médoc (Saint Estèphe in particular) and to the south of Margaux.

July and August saw more days over 40°C and very little rainfall. Young vines on free-draining, gravel soils suffered but in most cases the vines coped with the water stress well. Fortunately,

night-time temperatures were more modest and acidity levels held up well in contrast to previous hot summers such as 2003 and 2009.

With the fruit in perfect condition, growers could choose their moment to harvest each plot at optimum maturity. Nearly all chose to pick their white grapes and merlot relatively early in order to retain freshness and to avoid excessive alcohol but most decided not to rush the cabernets and petit verdot, resulting in a harvest that often lasted for three to four weeks.

The thick skins and lack of juice meant that little work was needed to extract sufficient colour and tannin so pumping over was used sparingly and very few practised the more extractive techniques of délestage and pigeage. Fermentation temperatures were generally low but choices on how long to macerate were more variable as was the decision on how much press wine to add.

Overall the dry whites are fresh, ripe and aromatic. They have more concentrated flavours but less acidity and vitality than 2021. They will be delicious to drink young but lack the minerality and ageing potential of the finest vintages. The reds, in contrast, are dense, rich, generous wines that have a depth and concentration that is only rarely achieved. Many châteaux have made one of their finest wines ever which, given the quality of 2018, 2019 and 2020 makes the 2022s very special indeed. Many growers liken them to previous, great vintages with the older generation mentioning 1961 and 1982. For me, they have the opulence of 2018 and 2020 whilst retaining the freshness and vitality of 2005, 2010 and 2016.

The sweet white wines are similarly successful. The rain finally arrived at the end of September just as the last red grapes were picked and provoked an intense outbreak of the pourriture noble essential for the making of fine Sauternes. The richest, most intense wines were harvested in the third and fourth weeks of October with high levels of both sugar and acidity. These are magnificent, opulent wines that remind me of other successful, warm years such as 2005 and 2010.

André Simon Lecture 2023 – look out for this year's André Simon Lecture which will have a South American focus. We are very pleased that South American expert Amanda Barnes, and also our Wines Consultant for Argentina and Chile, will be presenting this year's seminar. Details will be sent out once available. In the meantime with the Bordeaux 2022 vintage report above you might like to watch Jane Anson's André Simon lecture from 2020 when she discusses 'Is there such a thing as terroir in Bordeaux?' (via the IWFS Presentations – Audio & Video webpage).

I hope that some branches take advantage of our 'seasonal bundle' of Society merchandise (details are on the rear cover) and also you find time to read some of our wealth of wine news – including our latest monograph about the delights of the Pinot Noir grape.

Until next time.
Santé

Andrea Warren
International Secretariat, London

LETTER FROM CHAIRMAN OF THE INTERNATIONAL COUNCIL



Hi Europe Africa members,

I am writing to you as the Chairman of the International Council. You may ask 'what is the International Council?' That is a good question, as I doubt there are few among you who know the answer.

Briefly, the IC comprises representatives from all three regions of the International Wine & Food Society: Europe Africa (EAZ), Asia Pacific (APZ), and the Americas (AMS). Each region has voting members: four from AMS (myself, Dwight Catherwood, Steve Hipple, Andrew Jones); and two from APZ (Michael Tamburri, Nicola Lee). This is based on the percentage of members in each region. We oversee a budget which provides products and benefits to the entire IWFS membership, and which is funded on a pro-rata basis by each region. We are ably assisted by Andrea Warren who is from a village outside London, and whose administrative skills are first rate. Further insight comes from Honorary Society President Chris Bonsall, who attends all meetings. Lucky me, I have the privilege of presiding over this group for two years.

The International Council arranges the annual André Simon Lecture series, this year featuring South American wine expert Amanda Barnes in a professionally recorded lecture that will be videotaped and made available to the entire membership. We also produce the annual monograph, most recently Pinot Noir

Around the World by Master of Wine Anne Krebiehl. Cooperatively, we manage any maintenance or special updates to iwfs.org, the society's website. Periodically you may receive a small gift, perhaps a packet of dropsavers for wine serving; a festive gift bag for the holidays; or maybe even a corkscrew. Always something small and handy. Our vintage card comes from Council and is updated regularly by a group of brilliant contributors, each of them a notable regional wine expert. These are highlights of our agenda.

Most importantly, we are sharing and planning, together, with the goal of perpetuating the success of IWFS globally. To do that, we meet two to three times a year, sometimes via Zoom, sometimes in person, always at our own expense. At our meetings, we compare plans and strategies, calendars and events, even governance; using our shared knowledge to help each other grow. We build a balanced global calendar, which facilitates our aim to invite the entire membership to our major festivals and cruises whenever possible.

The idea being that we need each other for all of us to succeed. Isn't that the point, and isn't that worthwhile? I believe it is, and we are all the better for it. Now you know 'what is the International Council?'

À votre santé,

Mike Donohoe

WHAT IS MALOLACTIC FERMENTATION?

by *Meg Maker*

Malolactic affects wine's texture and flavour, and letting it roll (or not) depends on tradition, fashion, chemistry, and more

I remember learning, or rather being told, many years ago, before I knew much about wine (or much about anything, for that matter), that buttery Chardonnay was déclassé. I learned further this was caused by a process called malolactic fermentation, and while I didn't find the butter particularly objectionable, I was at the time both naïve and aspirational, so decided to avoid all wines treated to that process.

Whatever it was.

I remember learning, years later, that all Chablis, which is a Chardonnay I love, goes through malolactic. That most champagne does, too, and white Burgundy (also Chardonnay). Almost all red wines. Most orange wines, and natural wines, and even some rosé, especially natural rosé. And no, the results don't always taste buttery. (Anyway, what's wrong with buttery?)

And so to save you, dear reader, from the muddled state I endured at the start of my wine education, I present my best attempt to cover this magnificent microbial process.

One lump, or two?

Wine is a fermented product, its intoxicating charms the result of yeast chomping on grape sugar, converting it to ethanol, and

burping out carbon dioxide gas. This is the so-called primary fermentation, and you can't make wine without it.

But many wines, arguably the majority of wines, go through a second process, which is called a "fermentation" even though, strictly speaking, it's a conversion of one acid to another. This process is carried out by bacteria, specifically lactic acid bacteria, and is called **malolactic fermentation** (MLF or malo).

Hold on. What are lactic acid bacteria?

Lactic acid bacteria, or LAB, are important to the world's cuisines. Fermentations using LAB have been used for centuries to culture and preserve a vast range of foods, including milk, meat, fish, vegetables, legumes, and cereals. It gives us tangy yogurt, snappy kimchi, succulent salumi, savoury fish sauce, sour Lambic, and so much more.

In food production, lactic fermentation principally converts carbohydrates into lactic acid, plus (depending on conditions) acetic acid, carbon dioxide and ethanol. The conversion makes the raw food more stable, digestible, and delicious. Notably, it also lowers the food's pH, creating an acidic environment that's inhospitable to spoilage organisms.

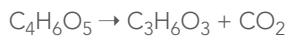
In other words, cooks use good bacteria to create conditions that prevent bad bacteria and other pathogens from ruining the food. In cuisine, we use LAB to **acidify** the product.



Bacterial fermentation in wine is a little different. Instead of using LAB to gobble carbohydrates, we use it for a different kind of transformation. **In wine, we use LAB to de-acidify the product.**

So, how does this bacterial process work in wine?

In wine, malolactic conversion is principally carried out by *Oenococcus oeni*. These bacteria arrive at the winery on grapes and vineyard matter, but winemakers can also inoculate their wine using a cultured strain. The bacteria chomp on malic acid, plus some sugars, turning it into lactic acid and energy they use for growth and metabolism. This is why technically the process is a conversion (of malic to lactic acid). The process, like yeast fermentation, also generates carbon dioxide. Here's the formula, greatly simplified:



Malic acid → Lactic acid + Carbon dioxide

The input of the reaction, **malic acid**, is present in many fruits and vegetables, including grapes and apples; *malum* is Latin for 'apple' and *Malus* is the genus of shiny orb we are advised to ingest daily. Grapes from cooler climates, colder vintages or early harvests have higher concentrations of malic acid. Although yeast also consume some malic acid, after primary fermentation, much of the malic remains in the wine. **Malic acid has a tangy bite and green apple flavour.**



Lactic acid is not present in large quantities in grapes, but as we've seen it's abundant in products cultured with lactic acid bacteria. The yeasts of primary fermentation can also create a small amount of lactic acid. The name is a nod to dairy production (*lac* is Latin for 'milk'). **Lactic acid has a softer texture and milky essence.**

Sometimes malolactic fermentation chews up all of the malic acid in the wine, and sometimes the conversion is arrested, or stalls, partway through. Maybe a few tanks of wine complete it while others don't, so the finished wine contains a mix. That's called **partial malolactic**.

In the end, though, there is less malic acid and more lactic acid and, since lactic acid is weaker, the process has reduced the wine's acidity, or raised its pH. This gives the wine a softer mouthfeel – less sharp and tangy, more round and creamy. **The net result is a shift in both the texture and flavour of the wine.**

When does malolactic fermentation occur?

Many factors contribute to the timing of malolactic fermentation. Different strains of LAB thrive in different environments, given variables of temperature, pH, alcohol, nutrients, sulfite, other microbes, and more.

In historic (cold!) wine cellars, primary or yeast fermentation completes in the autumn then the wine sits in barrel or tank, inactive, until spring starts to warm the cellar. At that point the LAB rouse from their hibernation and go to work. Or don't – it's not a foregone conclusion. Some winemakers, in particular natural winemakers, allow the ambient LAB cultures to kick off malolactic, but others will inoculate with a commercial strain they know will thrive given their preferred timing, conditions, and flavour results.

Malo can also happen concurrently with yeast fermentation, but most commonly winemakers prefer to let it roll in tank or barrel after that has finished. That's partly because yeast and bacteria both love sugar, and the competition doesn't always create happy outcomes. But it does mean relying on LAB that can tolerate higher alcohol.

Malo is undesirable after bottling in part because that trapped carbon dioxide makes the wine prickly or spritzzy. It can also lead to off flavours. Unlike with kimchi or yogurt, there are no active bacterial cultures in a finished bottle of wine.

Winemakers can prevent or arrest malo altogether through chilling, sulfite addition, pH adjustments, or filtering.

How does malolactic fermentation alter the aroma and flavour of wine?

Neither malic nor lactic acid contributes much to a wine's aromatics (you don't smell them because they are not volatile), although as we've noted the process does mute that green-apple taste.

But malolactic also throws off flavourful by-products that aren't shown in the simple equation above. These include certain aromatic esters that deliver a panoply of pleasing fruity notes. Another by-product, **diacetyl**, has a buttery flavour. Synthetic diacetyl is so potent it's used as a flavouring agent for popcorn,



margarine and other foods. Different strains of the bacteria create different amounts of it.

Diacetyl gives white wines flavours of cream, butter, almond and hazelnuts. It doesn't make red wines smell buttery, per se, in part because the creaminess is masked by other aromas, and in part because malo acts somewhat differently on red wine's chemistry. Malo has been shown to diminish fruitiness in some red wines, but it can also enhance spicy, toasty and cocoa aromas, especially if it happens in oak barrels.

Malolactic fermentation can also go terribly awry, especially if unwanted LAB species elbow their way in, causing faults that make the wine rancid (too much diacetyl), mousy (like a rodent den), bitter, cloudy, slimy or otherwise off-putting. Yuck.

Which wines go through malolactic fermentation?

Earlier I noted that "arguably the majority" of wines go through malolactic fermentation. That's true, but the list is not arbitrary.

In red wines, malo is indeed nearly ubiquitous. Red wine benefits from the reduction in sharp malic acid; 'tangy' and 'green apple' are generally unfavourable descriptors for reds. The same is true for most orange wines, which are white wines made like reds, i.e. allowed to macerate with their skins and seeds for extended periods.

Traditionally, **white wines from cooler climates do go through malolactic**. Those grapes are harvested with higher initial acidity and lower initial sugar, and they benefit from the softening step of malo. It's historically prevalent in Chablis and the base wine for many cold-climate sparklers, for example, and is traditional for white Burgundies. Climate change is (chillingly) shifting many of these conventions.

Malo's most famous application, some might say over-application, is in the **ripe, buttery style of California Chardonnay** that you might want to drink with a spoon. But as in Montrachet and other white Burgundy, that buttery quality can be brought into balance if the wine's total acidity remains high and its pH low, and the *élevage*, especially conducted in oak barrels, manages to knit together the fruit, cream, toast, texture, and acidity into a balanced glass of wine.

Many **natural winemakers** choose not to intervene with their fermentations, yeast or bacterial; they do not inoculate with a lactic acid culture to kick off MLF, nor do they chill, filter, or sterilise the wine to prevent it. Because LAB are pervasive in the environment, this non-interventionist approach means that, generally speaking, **most natural wines have gone through at least partial malolactic fermentation**, regardless of whether they are red, white, rosé, orange or sparkling. Proponents say the result is not only more natural but also more complex, with

enchanting textural and flavour dimensions. And if it doesn't happen, that's okay, too. In short, natural winemakers take their cues from the microbes, not the other way around.

Which wines don't go through malolactic fermentation?

Many **white and rosé wines** don't go through malolactic. The outcome depends on stylistic and regional traditions, vintage variation, market aesthetics, and a winemaker's personal taste.

In warm regions, malo is uncommon in whites, as the acidity can be low to begin with and the wine benefits from retaining its crisp edges. Assyrtiko, from sunny Santorini, is a good example DSCF2509 of this. On the other hand, there are cool-climate whites that historically don't go through malo, for example German Riesling, Austrian Grüner Veltliner and Italian Pinot Grigio, even from the mountainous Dolomites. Tradition has set a certain flavour expectations (snappy, juicy, refreshing) for those varieties from those places.

In continental climates, for example Bordeaux and the Loire Valley, the white wine decision making is more complex. Some winemakers choose to suppress malo, for example in Sémillon and Sauvignon blanc. In the Loire, Chenin is often put through MLF (although not in Vouvray). Loire Sauvignon blancs may or may not go through it. Partial malolactic is another possibility; a winemaker may choose to allow malolactic in some vintages, or during a single vintage only in some tanks, blending the final result for balance.

Malo is generally **uncommon for rosé wines**, because youthful freshness and crunchy acidity are hallmarks of the style. However darker rosés, for example the "fourth wine style" of Tavel, often go through it, as does Rosé des Riceys. Also, many natural winemakers feel that allowing malolactic yields a richer, more dimensional rosé.

Actually, some red wines also don't go through malo

In researching the world's wines, I've bumped into some red styles for which MLF is rare or impossible.

The first is **red port**. In port winemaking, the primary or yeast fermentation is halted after one and a half to two days by the addition of a potent grape spirit (essentially un-aged brandy). This process, called *mutage*, raises the alcohol level to 20%, killing yeasts and bacteria. This renders it stable, i.e. inhospitable to microbial growth despite high residual sugar. On my visit to Symington port properties in 2019, winemaker Henry Shotton confirmed that malo is suppressed, but that the 100 to 110 g/L of residual sugar smooths the wine's malic acid as well as its tannins.

Another curious exception is **Amarone**, a wine made from dried grapes. On a 2019 visit to Santi's grape drying warehouse (called a *fruttaio*), I noticed a large research poster on the wall outlining data they'd collected on the trajectory of sugar and acidity in the grapes during the 90 days of pre-vinification drying. My host, cellar master Christian Ridolfi, explained that as moisture drops in the berries, the sugar and acidity rise, but malic acid actually falls – from 3.0 g/L to 0.5 g/L. Hence, 90% percent of the lots do not go through malo (and if some lots do, it's fine with him). The finished wines have a pH of 3.3 to 3.4, which is not too tart, not too soft. Just right.

Finally, for wines that have been treated to full **carbonic maceration** – Beaujolais is the classic example, although it's used elsewhere, too – malo may be reduced or even preferentially eliminated. The intercellular, anaerobic process of carbonic maceration eats up malic acid, so a subsequent malolactic fermentation can lower the wine's acidity too much. Also, in the absence of malic acid, LAB may go to work on leftover sugars, which can create those off-flavours and faults mentioned above. On the other hand, speeding through carbonic, yeast, and MLF fermentations allows producers of Beaujolais Nouveau to press a 'finished' wine into consumers' hands by the middle of November.

Malo, or not, in your glass

If you've gotten this far, you're probably wondering how to translate this information into news you can use.

When popping open a red wine, know that except if it's a fortified or dried grape wine, or a fully carbonic Gamay, or another real oddball (Heitz Cellar famously suppresses malo in its Cabernet Sauvignon), you're almost certainly tasting the results of two processes: yeast and bacterial.

At the other end of the scale, most rosé is malo-free. Unless you're ordering pink wine in a natural wine bar, or hanging out with vigneron in tiny Riceys, you're probably drinking the product of a single fermentation (by yeast).

For other wines, it's a mixed bag. Labels rarely mention malolactic, and while some whites may say 'unoaked', that's a different issue. As we've seen, certain regions and wine styles have malo baked in, but in places with looser laws and customs, winemakers may choose to, say, put a rosé through it or suppress it in a red.

So what about that butter? Since the flavour can be galvanising, it's useful to learn what works for you, so try the exercise below. My best advice is to brush up on regional style, taste broadly, make notes of what you love – and ignore wine snobs proclaiming any style to be *démodé*.

Try This at Home

Round up eight or ten Chardonnays with different malolactic protocols, optimally made in different regions and following differing winemaking philosophies. (Ask your favourite wine merchant for help with this exercise.)

Pour these as a flight, ideally from non-malolactic to fully malolactic. Note how some feel crackly and sharp while others are satiny. Look for the difference in flavour, too, ranging from tart fruit to cream to custard. Do the richer wines feel balanced? What about the sharper wines? Which wines would you drink by the glass (if any)? Which foods would you reach for with these different wines, and why?

This article was originally published 8th April 2023, in Terroir Review (terroirreview.com). Images from the Cité du Vin, Bordeaux, photographed by the author, Meg Maker, in July 2016 and June 2019.

GERMAN PINOT NOIR

by Anne Krebiehl MW

In addition to our latest monograph *Pinot Noir Around the World* by Anne Krebiehl MW, this article expands on Anne's German chapter, her homeland, and delves further into the history of Germany's Pinot Noir and bringing it up-to-date. Germany is also today the world's third largest producer of Spätburgunder (as it is known in Germany) – translating into late (spat) ripening pinot (burgunder). Also congratulations to Anne who was recently named Communicator of the Year 2024 by the IWSC

SPÄTBURGUNDER'S STORY

From uncertain beginnings to a modern day renaissance – a look at the long, complex story of German Pinot Noir

I have to start you off with an excellent quote – by none other than Mr Robert Parker himself. He wrote this in 2002, at the height of his influence, in the sixth edition of his *Wine Buyer's Guide*: "Spätburgunder: This is the German Pinot Noir, a grotesque and ghastly wine that tastes akin to a defective, sweet, faded, diluted red Burgundy from an incompetent producer. Need I say more?" And you know what, even though it was unnecessary to be quite so scathing, he may just have had a point. That was 20 years ago, and I suspect that Parker, a lover of everything full-bodied and gutsy, had come across a particularly egregious example on a rainy Wednesday somewhere uninspiring. And while there already were plenty of beautiful and elegant Spätburgunders in 2002, which Mr Parker should have gone to the trouble of seeking out, there were plenty of uninspiring wines, too. So what is the story of German Spätburgunder? Over the past 30 years it seemingly came out of nowhere and now has fans the world over. So let us look at Germany's Pinot-wonder and delve into its complex history which traces the history of German viticulture itself.



Ancient history – if you find this boring, look away now

There is a good chance that Pinot Noir arrived in Germany along with the Cistercians from Burgundy. There already were numerous monastic settlements in Germany; the influential Benedictine abbeys of Prüm, Fulda and Lorsch, respectively founded in 721, 744 and 764, were known to have been endowed with land and vineyards by their Carolingian benefactors. Clearing land, tending vines and making wine was the lay brothers' and sisters' devotion to their God. What grape varieties they planted, who knows? But it was the Cluniac Reforms of the early 11th century that led to the foundation of the Cistercian order with its mother abbey in Cîteaux, south of Dijon in Burgundy. Its influential abbot Bernard of Clairvaux headed a movement that resulted in 344 filiations across Europe by his death in 1153 – also in Germany. It is likely that the brothers and sisters brought their *fin cépage*, or fine grape, possibly Pinot Noir or one of its precursors, to Germany. So far, so likely and logical. But is this documented? Following the sources of mentions of Pinot Noir in older books leads nowhere, there is no reliable information. There is a lot of wishful thinking and if there is documentation, nobody has found it yet. But there is a real reason for this lack of documentation. Much of it was obliterated during one of Europe's most devastating and destructive conflicts, the Thirty Years' War from 1608-1638. Since this was a religious conflict, abbeys and churches, usually keepers of records, were ransacked, leaving only ashes and death. Where Burgundy has a continuous and traceable history of Pinot Noir, one of the things that makes it so unique, Germany has vast gaps. German Pinot's causal link to Burgundy is thus plausible but undocumented.





The Burgundian prism of Pinot Noir

Early Burgundian Pinot history is also characterised by its circumstances: this was viticulture in a feudal age. Pinot Noir with its unreliable yields, challenging cultivation but undoubted quality needed such a protected environment to thrive: had it been left to farmers who often went hungry in ways we cannot imagine anymore, Pinot Noir would not have developed in the same way. Most vineyards over the past centuries were field blends: an economic necessity. Single-varietal vineyards were the exception that proved the rule. The church provided the land, the labour and the culture in which Pinot Noir could express itself as a single variety and thus show the lay of the land that resulted in Burgundy's famous mapping of its *climats* over a number of centuries of close observation, today enshrined as UNESCO World Heritage. Burgundy is where single-site viticulture was born, expressed through the prism of Pinot Noir.

Marginal existence

But back to Germany: Pinot Noir arrived and stayed. It survived through the centuries, mainly in small pockets that were able to ripen this grape: famously so in Assmannshausen in the Rheingau, in Ingelheim in Rheinhessen, in Klingenberg in Franken. Some of the wine must have been very good because 'red Hock' costing more than Volnay and Léoville was listed by the London wine merchant Berry Bros. & Co. in 1896. This makes sense because at the turn of that century, Riesling was the world's most prestigious and expensive white wine – 'Hock' being the English shorthand for Riesling, after the town of Hochheim am Rhein, where Queen Victoria's favourite vineyards were. But then came two devastating world wars. A statistic from the 1920s shows that Germany had around 72,00ha of vineyards and that just 2.9% (yes, German precision right there) or roughly 2,088ha of these were planted to Pinot Noir. By 1954, Germany's vineyards had shrunk to roughly 53,300ha and just 1.9% of these were planted to Pinot Noir – or 1,013ha, most of these in Baden. So Pinot Noir did indeed survive and was made into what American writer and wine importer Frank Schoonmaker described in 1954 as "an oddity called Weissherbst that hardly merits great respect and esteem," while red Spätburgunder wines "at their summit of excellence, are like rather light and common wines from one of the less famous communes of the Côte d'Or." The term *Weissherbst* means

'white harvest', and is in effect a *vin gris*, or pale rosé. This tells us all about German Pinot Noir in the mid-20th century: it speaks of a very cool climate and a lack of expertise. But note: in those decades even Burgundy only managed to have three decent vintages per decade and chaptalisation was the order the day.

Oh Pioneers!

It was in the 1980s and 1990s that pioneers emerged – people who wanted more than the drab image German wines had. In those days, it was the un-coolest thing you could do to drink German wine in Germany. Sophisticated people drank French and Italian, possibly Spanish, and you cannot blame them. Germany at that time, hobbled by a horrendous wine law, was in the grip of a technocratic devotion to quantity over quality, with a few notable exceptions. But these gallons of wine could not be sold due to sugar scandals in the 1980s. German wine had a gigantic reputational deficit. Considering this, these pioneering winemakers were proper contrarians with a real desire to make beautiful and touching wines. There was a tipping point – not just in one place but simultaneously in the Rheingau, in Baden, Franken, the Ahr and Pfalz – born out of frustration with the low esteem of German wines in the world, with the lack of ambition in the big and often co-operative wineries, with the blinkered view of many German estates at the time. Germany owes these men, and they were all men at the time, an immense debt of gratitude. They did missionary work with their early Pinots, often meeting ridicule. Yet they all still looked over their shoulders across to Burgundy. Their children and grandchildren today look at their own vineyards instead.

Indelible Pinot-ness

These youngsters have grown up in a different kind of Germany – most of them came of age when that anti-German tide had turned, when it was edgy to drink dry Riesling – because another key element had slotted into place. To this day, Germany is a winner of climate change. It is no longer difficult to ripen red grapes, the challenge today is to preserve the inherent tenderness and fine acidity of Pinot Noir. Hectarage explains the success: in 1990, Germany had 5,612ha of Pinot Noir, by 2000 this had grown to 9,255ha, today there are 11,602ha. What is more, German Pinot Noir thrives in every one of the 13 German wine regions, across four degrees of latitude: from the 47.5th degree of latitude of Baden, within spitting distance of Switzerland, all along to the 51.5th degree in Saale-Unstrut. All I can do is urge you to taste the fine-boned and delicate yet profound Pinots from red, iron-rich Triassic sandstone, especially from Franken, the juicy and scented offerings from Baden's volcanic outcrops, the smoky and poetic bottlings from the Ahr, the elegant and sinuous Pinot grown on both Jurassic and Triassic limestone from Pfalz, Baden and Württemberg, the slate-perfumed and slender Pinots from the Mosel. If you love Pinot and have not tasted Germany, you are missing out. The wines shine and shimmer in innumerable yet indelible expressions of Pinot-ness. Whether they would appeal to Parker is anyone's guess. But to me they are a delicious expression of my beautiful homeland. Zum Wohl!

This article was originally published in Full Pour, Issue No. 01 (Spring 2023).

Images credit: German Wine Institute

IWFS EUROPE AFRICA LIMITED AGM 2023

by John Nicholas, Chair

This year's Annual General Meeting was held on 21st September 2023 at the Balmer Lawn Hotel in Brockenhurst in Hampshire and was attended by 32 members coming from 12 branches within the Zone and four non-voting members from two branches in the Americas.

The three Directors (John Nicholas, Ian Nicol and David Chapman) whose terms of office had expired were re-elected for further terms of three years. The Directors' Report and the Accounts for the year 2022 were adopted by the meeting and the appointments of the existing 11 members of the Executive Committee were re-affirmed as was confirmation of the co-option of Stephen Harrison from the West Yorkshire Branch earlier in the year as an additional member.

The resignation of the Independent Examiner, Chris Langham, was accepted and the Board of Directors was authorised to appoint a replacement for the current year.

There was no other business raised at the meeting and the meeting was completed speedily and was followed by the Members' Forum which will be reported on page 8.

Members' Forum

This was a 'pick and mix' event, with a total of 43 members in attendance for all or part of the event and 32 members attending the AGM and Members' Forum representing 14 Europe Africa branches. We also welcomed five members from three Americas chapters, who were due to join the Queen Mary 2 cruise from Southampton.

We were based at the Balmer Lawn Hotel, a family-owned hotel on the edge of Brockenhurst with direct access to the New Forest and its freely grazing ponies and cattle. On the first evening, after a short but difficult coach journey (narrow roads, sharp bends, and gates hardly wide enough for the coach), we arrived at the Rhinefield Hotel, a grand house with historical links to the management of the New Forest. We commenced the evening with an English sparkling wine aperitif accompanied by delightful hors d'oeuvres, which unfortunately

could not take place on the terrace because of the inclement weather. We then assembled for dinner in the Grand Hall, with its minstrel gallery and part of which dates to the mid-17th century.

Our four-course meal commenced with cured chalk stream trout, homemade ricotta, samphire, and pickled cucumber paired with a delightful South African sauvignon blanc from Journey's End Weather station. This was followed by a 'cleanser' of a sorbet including Rhinefield estate distilled gin and bergamot. The main course was local venison accompanied by smoked aubergine and pancetta, beetroot and a spiced jus. Two red wines had been selected to accompany this splendid combination. Crozes Hermitage Rouge Les Jalets from Paul Jaboulet Aîné in the Northern Rhône and based on Syrah, and a Spanish wine from Bodegas Verde in the appellation DO Cariñena, a blend of Garnacha and Syrah. Both were well paired with the venison, but in a vote at the end of the evening, the Rhône wine was the favourite by a small margin.

After an enjoyable buffet breakfast, it was time for 'work'. The Annual General Meeting of IWFS Europe Africa followed by the Members' Forum where members present are able to express their views of the way forward for the Society. John Nicholas opened the Forum with a presentation on the 'Strategy for Growth' and a progress update prepared by Stephen Harrison, the leader of the EA Development Working Group recently formed to 'make change happen'. The presentation can be found on the website.

The group enjoyed a buffet lunch and some then departed while others boarded a coach to Beaulieu, where we spent a pleasant afternoon with a guided tour of the Palace House, home to the Montagu family since 1538 after the monastery with its medieval abbey was dissolved by Henry VIII. The medieval abbey gatehouse is incorporated into the house remodelled in the 1800s with many neo-gothic features inside. Many of us toured the iconic motor museum with a number of us reminiscing as we found our first cars or recognised iconic racing cars and land speed record holders.



Returning to the Balmer Lawn, we were 30 for the final dinner, starting with a sparkling wine accompanied by a selection of delightful appetisers, again inside because of the inclement weather. We made our way into the Savernake room, the scene of our earlier endeavours. The General Manager welcomed us and introduced us to his team. The young chef, Andrew Gault, introduced each course of our gala dinner menu and the wines were described for each course.

We started with blowtorched mackerel, accompanied by pickled baby beets and a compressed apple sorrel emulsion. This was served with an unoaked Chardonnay, from Domaine des Malandes close to the town of Chablis, a 29-hectare family-owned vineyard. The main course was Creedy Carver Duck breast with smoked pumpkin, fondant, and braised red cabbage. This was accompanied by two red wines. Le Coq Volant, from Domaine de Galuval in the Southern Rhône

blended from Syrah and Grenache and a Pinot Noir from Villa Wolf in the village of Wachenheim in the Rheinpfalz region. Both red wines were available for the array of English cheeses which followed. The Dessert a beautifully constructed Raspberry and pistachio entremet dome served with blueberry ice-wine, reflecting a trend in the UK of serving non-grape wines, particularly with desserts. Perhaps a step too far for some of the participants!

Thanks were given to Isabel Sinclair, the chair of the Wessex branch, for organising this event and to the team at Balmer Lawn who did a great job in hosting this event.

On Friday ten of the diners headed for Southampton for their seven-day cruise to New York. The relatively small group enjoyed the opportunity to be with old friends and to meet new ones.

FEEDBACK FROM IWFS MEMBERS' FORUM

by Tricia Fletcher

John Nicholas opened the Members' Forum by presenting a progress update on the 'Strategy For Growth' that the Development Working Group, chaired by Stephen Harrison, the West Yorkshire Chair, has been working on.

One of their main objectives was to consider ways of making the IWFS more widely known. The current ideas included:

- Expansion to a national scale of the Northern Teams Catering College competitions which involved lecturers, students and their parents together with the Michelin Star judges and sponsors, Saga and the Vegetarian Society.
- Promoting the Branch Excellence awards and asking the recipients to advertise IWFS on their social media.
- Developing social media appropriate to our membership profile and target groups for expansion, e.g. Instagram and Facebook.
- Forming alliances with other food and wine groups, e.g. Heptinstall Awards, wine writers, André Simon book awards.
- Supporting branches by developing material centrally which can be used as a basis for branch events, including wine tasting video presentations using our wine consultants who work with the Wines Committee. A Pinot Noir package is to be trialled based on the recent monograph. The material can potentially be used outside branches, e.g. online or in events targeting non-members.
- Supporting and mentoring existing and new branches.

The Development Working Group need more volunteers. If you can help, please contact Stephen Harrison (stephenharrison1@btopenworld.com) or Tim Hodges (tim@new-pool.co.uk).

The full presentation of this Strategy for Growth Update will be posted on the website at www.iwfs.org.

After the presentation, the members present at the forum were divided into three groups to discuss different aspects of development for branches and IWFS. After some lively discussion, each team presented their thoughts to a plenary session.

Group 1 – Resources to make change happen

Finance was important and it was felt that Exco and branch ideas about expenditure were not the same. How to get EAZ financial resources for development and recruitment was perceived to be a problem (the current process for requesting finance has been on the website since 2019). This group noted that in general under 45s had too many demands on their time to become involved with the society and it was the over 45s that should be targeted. Word of mouth recruitment has worked best in the past. It was noted that our model for organising events well in advance does not appeal to younger generations who tend to decide what to do spontaneously.

Creating separate branches for different types of members could work, with education being the focus for younger members. This could be possible in large conurbations. Making links with other organisations targeted at over 55s such as U3A and Probus may be possible.

Exco could consider incentives for recruitment, by awarding branches £x for 'x' new members.

Resources were limited at individual branch levels, so consider more inter-branch discussion and cooperation to put on joint and specialised events, separately in the North and South, possibly twice a year.

Wine tasting costs and types of wine were variable and as there was more specialisation centrally such events would be easier if developed centrally. It would be appreciated if Exco members

visited and attended branch events to explain new developments.

Comments. The Treasurer reported that there were very few applications for monetary help for recruitment initiatives, and none since he had been in office. He would welcome them.

Group 2 – Types of events for development by IWFS EA

As we are a Food and Wine Society, Group 2 thought that tutored wine tasting and food and wine pairings should be developed, to show and appreciate the synergy of the two elements complementing and improving each other. This could be done at many levels and need not be expensive.

They also thought branches could reach out and expand into different spheres, such as:

- taking a box at a race meeting and providing food, wine and good company in a pleasant environment;
- having joint events with complementary societies such as U3A and share the expense and workload.

Regarding the 2027 EAZ International Festival. Many volunteers and helpers would be needed if expensive companies were not to be involved. However there were companies and agencies that have the staff, tutors and teachers required to make arrangements for such events at reasonable rates, e.g. Flavours (Cooking holidays in Spain and Italy) and Grape Escapes (working with us on the Loire Festival), Tim Syrad Wine tours (led by Tim Syrad himself for the Berkshire branch), BK Wines (owners are IWFS members and run world-wide tours. It was suggested that Exco looked at these.

Comments. The Chairman had been impressed with professional help at reasonable costs for the Loire Valley festival and agreed that commercial support may work for festivals including 2027. If such a Festival were to be held in the UK, re-registration for VAT would be necessary.

Group 3 – Branch initiatives

A relaunch of the Branch Excellence Awards is probably necessary to gain traction so IWFS EA can compile a list of IWFS recommended venues. These awards are not just for restaurants and hotels, but for any organisation that 'helped' IWFS, including wineries, wine merchants and caterers. Smaller establishments not large enough for a full branch event should be included, provided the event included at least two IWFS members.

Keeping up to date with the website was considered to be important, and they suggested that one member of a branch was allocated to do this on a monthly basis and then inform the other branch members of up-to-date news.

Branches could develop their own social media platforms such as Facebook and Instagram and maybe share this with a neighbouring branch or branches for local events and news. (It is part of the development Working Group's plan to develop guideline as to how to make this happen.)

To consider giving IWFS 'drip stops' to restaurants when the branch visits them – it would advertise the society and stop waiters dripping wine on the tables and members.



To leave IWFS information in local libraries and give it out at IWFS and EAZ Events, such as Balmer Lawn and the Cunard Queen Mary 2 voyage. Branches can also do this when events are held that include other members of the public. (Chair comment – should all branches acquire an advertising banner similar to those developed a number of years ago?)

To promote and support catering colleges by arranging branch meals at local colleges.

Further to the development of links with Saga, to look at forming links with other organisations such as Cunard.

Comments: The members discussion agreed with the group about the Branch Excellence Awards. It was also pointed out that most establishments could display framed certificates more easily and preferred them to the present 'sticker'. It was also thought that the Branch Certificates should be simpler and less wordy so that they could be read easily and differentiated from the EAZ Restaurant Awards. The Awards Officer agreed to further the proposals.

Other matters discussed

- Stephanie Shepherd asked if there was information and statistics about the Northern Team's 2022 and 2023 Catering College's Competition. Tim Hodges said he would make these available in a report.
- Joan Nicholas raised the issue of succession planning and said this should be addressed as a matter of urgency, especially as the 2027 Festival needed organising by those who would be in office at that time. The Chairman supported this and said fresh eyes and enthusiasm would be needed.

Date and place for the 2024 EAZ AGM and Members Forum

This will be in September 2024 and is being organised together with the West Yorkshire Branch in Yorkshire.

The Chairman was pleased to note that 12 branches from Europe Africa along with three chapters from Americas had attended the AGM. He thanked everyone for coming and for their contributions. He wished everyone an enjoyable remainder of the event and safe journeys home.

ANNUAL REPORT 2022

IWFS Europe Africa Limited

The Annual General Meeting of IWFS Europe Africa Limited (Company or EAZ) was convened in Brockenhurst on Saturday Thursday 21st September 2023 to approve, inter alia, the Annual Report. The report was approved by the Executive Committee and the Board of Directors on 10th August 2023 and the Independent Examiner, Chris Langham, has completed his examination and signed the report. The Annual Report was approved at the AGM.

The Annual Report has been posted on the website. If you would like a copy of the full report sent to you either by email or by post, please contact Steve Graham at brackenridge.spg@btinternet.com

The following table has been extracted from the 2022 Annual Report.

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

	2022	2021
	£	£
Total operating income	28,789	14,260
Total administrative expenses	45,312	34,968
Operating deficit	-16,523	-20,078
Net surplus from EAZ festivals and events	16,781	11,622
Surplus/deficit before taxation	258	-9,086
Surplus/deficit after taxation	-327	-9,252
Balance sheet as of 31st December	2022	2021
	£	£
Sundry debtors	3,013	1,361
Festival and event payments in advance	54,295	539
Cash at bank	218,748	266,593
Total current assets	339,056	268,493
Subscriptions received in advance	1,422	432
Festival and event receipts in advance	113,505	45,406
Sundry creditors	2,918	1,117
Deferred income for IT training and development	2,956	2,956
Total creditors	120,801	49,911
Net assets	218,255	218,582
Accumulated funds		
Balance brought forward	218,852	227,834
Surplus/deficit after tax for the year	-327	-9,252
Balance carried forward	218,255	227,582

Commentary

After the effects of the Covid-19 pandemic during 2020/2021, 2022 was a more 'normal' year and in effect a break-even year, which can be seen as a good result. The deficit after taxation of £327 in 2022 compares favourably with a deficit after taxation of £9,252 in 2021.

The operating deficit decreased to £16,523 in 2022 and compares well with the deficit of £20,708 in 2021. The Membership fee discount provided in 2021 did not apply in 2022 and increased administrative expenses in 2022 were offset by the welcome surpluses generated from the Alsace, Piedmont and Torquay festivals.

Operating income of £28,789 in 2022 was more like previous years, rather than the £14,260 in 2021 (deflated by the Membership Fee discount), but Membership numbers were down by 35 with 904 Members in 2022 compared with 939 in 2021.

Total administrative expenses were £45,312 in 2022 compared with £34,968 in 2021. There were some increases in the costs charged by the Society (IWFS Limited) for insurance, IT and administration, but most of the increased expenditure relates to additional marketing, magazine costs and general cost inflation.

The Company's balance sheet remains strong with accumulated funds of £218,555. These funds are held to cover the potential risks that the Company might face. During 2022, the majority of cash was held in the Flagstone Cash Platform, secured by the Government backed Financial Services Compensation Scheme (FSCS) and generated some £3,077 in gross interest in 2022 compared with £873 in 2021.

The Executive Committee continues to consider how to invest funds to sustain and develop EAZ as a significant part of IWFS. Work has continued on the Strategy for Growth launched in 2022. Ideas from branches, as well as individual members are always welcome and can be supported by funds, if required, to implement good ideas.

I would like to thank John Nicholas, Chairman, for his continued support and advice and I would also like to thank our Independent Examiner, Chris Langham (a member of the Northampton Branch), for his diligent work over the last couple years. Chris has decided not to continue in the role of Independent Examiner, so we will be looking for a new Independent Examiner for the 2023 Annual Report onwards.

Steve Graham

Treasurer, IWFS Europe Africa Limited

FESTIVAL IN BARCELONA AND PERELADA

by John Nicholas and Wendy Levitt

This wonderful festival in May 2023 moved from the bright lights of the City of Barcelona to the little-known region, DO Empordà, of Northeast Catalonia, Spain, which stretches from the French border to Figueres.

The festival was organised by two members, Wendy Levitt and Elina Selin, of the IWFS Zurich branch, both of whom have been based in Barcelona for several years. The festival came together based on their local knowledge and extensive contacts in the wine and hospitality industry. Through their extensive efforts we were treated to the best of culinary arts in this region of Spain, gained access to places not easily available to all and were given the opportunity to learn about the relatively unknown wine region, DO Empordà.

Gordon Lloyd, a newly appointed member of the IWFS Wines Committee, has written separately about the wines, the tastings and the wines paired with food during our various meals. There are 43 wineries in the region which was established as a DOP (Denominación de Origen Protegida) in 1972. Many different grape varieties are grown in the region including several Garnatxa varieties (as Grenache or Garnacha are known in Catalan), sometimes blended, to produce red, white and rosé wines as well as Cava.

In order to provide the highest quality for this exclusive event, the festival was limited to 40 because of limits on numbers at

many of the venues and the logistics of transfers between the (two) different venues. We had a longer than usual wait-list and are sorry that more members were not able to join this most enjoyable festival in this relatively unknown wine region. The region is of course known as a Gastronomic centre with many Michelin starred restaurants inspired by the leadership of El Bulli which closed its doors in 2012, and which is now a foundation and a recently opened gastronomic museum supporting fine dining businesses. We accumulated 5 (Michelin) stars in three restaurants! The menus have been downloaded to the IWFS website together with some 400 photographs taken by Wayne Markus, an Americas member from Omaha.

The 40 participants, who assembled in Barcelona at the Hotel El Palace, were truly international with 19 based in Europe Africa, seven from Asia Pacific and 14 from the Americas, representing 13 different branches as well as three independent members. We were honoured that Chris Bonsall, the President of IWFS, joined us with his wife Sue. He is a former Chairman of the Council of the Society and we were joined by two further former Chairmen – Ian Nicol and Michael Tamburri. John Valentine, a gold medallion holder for his extensive contributions at a regional and international level, also joined us.

After a welcome drink in the Hotel El Palace, we boarded a coach to The Circulo del Liceu, a private members club opened in 1847 on Barcelona's famous Las Ramblas. The president of



The group visit to the Suqué Mateu family

the Club, Francisco Gaudier, explained that the Club was opened next door to the Gran Teatre del Liceu the home of the world-renowned Liceu Opera House. Members of the club enter the theatre through a private entrance from the Club. Our evening began with a private piano recital by Albert Guinovart, a noted Catalan concert pianist and composer who played some of his own compositions as well as pieces by Rachmaninov, Granados and Turina. A treat for all of us!

With a sparkling drink of Cava from Torelló (owned by the 23rd generation of their property in the Penedes region) in hand, we were guided around the Club's art collection, including its famous Wagner stained glass window panels. We then took our seats at a traditional Catalan long imperial table. We were joined by two members of the Liceu, Waltraud Maczassek, artist and wife of Miguel Torres of Torres winery, and by composer Albert Guinovart. A three-course meal, served impeccably, was carpaccio of salmon with a gribiche sauce, beef tournedos and a sauce Jabugo (a famous Iberian ham) and pine nuts, with puff pastry apple tart and vanilla ice cream as dessert.

Next morning, after breakfast and with our luggage safely on board, we departed by coach for Perelada. Our first stop was the newly rebuilt Perelada Winery, designed by the 2017 Pritzker Prize winning architects RCR and opened in October 2022. We enjoyed an aperitif, a tour of this outstanding modern winery incorporating its old farm buildings and Europe's first LEED GOLD sustainability certification. The tour included a video and sensory tour giving an ultra-modern wine experience. The very modern and large winery was designed to blend into the surrounding countryside rather than dominating it. We then enjoyed Perelada wines in the tasting room overlooking the

Mediterranean gardens and vineyards before boarding the coach for the short distance to our hotel, the Perelada Golf and Spa hotel, where we were to be guests for three nights. We were ushered into the dining room for lunch sometime after 2.00pm, for a typical three-course menu du jour with accompanying wines from the Perelada winery.

That evening, we travelled to the tranquil seaside town of Llançà. We were treated to an extensive and delightful tasting menu by Paco Perez, the chef and patron of the 2-star Michelin Miramar restaurant including a seasonal dish of tiny green peas he titles 'Peas to Cry For' which they were. Paco had organised his entire brigade to support our event and he presented them all at the end of the meal which had been served superbly by his front of house staff, his wife, Montse Serra, and son, Guillermo, as well as sommelier, Toni Gata, who selected interesting and well-paired wines.

The following morning, we departed for a very short coach trip to the Perelada Castle Museum, built in the 14th century as a Carmelite convent. We were given a tour of the library, home to nearly 100,000 books (including over a thousand different volumes of *Don Quixote*), the glass collection (one of the largest in the world by a single owner with more than 2,500 pieces) and a ceramics collection featuring 1,000 different pieces. We then followed the guide through the wine museum with artefacts of the wine industry and its development including an amphora dating back to Roman times.

After a tour of the French gardens around the castle, with its protected white stork community, we travelled to the Terra Remota vineyard and winery. We toured the modern gravity-



Former Chairmen Chris Bonsall, Michael Tamburri and Ian Nicol.



controlled winery, before a wine tasting and an informal picnic lunch inside the winery. The rainstorm which had threatened all morning became a deluge, flooding the outside picnic space within minutes. The winery which does not normally feed its guests had put together a delightful Spanish-style box of delicious local produce for the picnic.

After some free time back at the hotel, we returned to the Castle to the 1-star Michelin Restaurant Castell Perelada. The menu was presented by chef, Javi Martinez. The random playing card driven seating plan not only resulted in a row of men and a row of women around a second long traditional imperial table, but also in the three former Chairmen of Council being seated next to each other. Perhaps the way these cards fell discouraged the group from trying their luck in the Perelada casino after dinner!

The menu consisted of six different tapas, starters based on white asparagus and smoked leek with lobster with two main courses of cod with a creamy Iberian pork sauce and suckling lamb with scallop and Baerii caviar. The wine pairings selected by in-house sommelier Toni Gerez, formerly head waiter and sommelier at El Bulli for twelve years, were well chosen with two white wines followed by a rosé with the cod and red for the lamb and cheese. The cheeses selected from the extensive and impressive cheese trolley by Toni Gerez, a noted cheese specialist, and author of *The Art of Cheese*. Two desserts, one with strawberries and the other with chocolate, were paired with an off-dry wine.

Day four commenced with a drive into the hills and an uphill walk to visit the home of Laura Masramon for an olive oil tasting. Laura Masramon is a personal wine sommelier who also conducts tastings of olive oils. The location on the lower terrace of her Catalan stone farmhouse was under an umbrella of trees overlooking the valley towards the Mediterranean. The tasting with 5 very different oils and Laura's commentary and understanding of the olive product was enjoyed by the group.

The Suqué Mateu family businesses and cultural interests have now spread to many parts of the world. Innovative and significant business owners, wine makers, and patrons of the arts with their world renowned Perelada Castle Summer Music Festival, their story began three generations ago when their grandfather Miguel Mateu, a significant Spanish industrialist, who purchased Perelada castle and its wine estates in 1923. Their fortune was based on Hispano-Suiza, known today for its cars but in the past was a significant manufacturer of aircraft engines and armaments. In the museum there was a 1920/1930's Hispano Suiza limousine and pictures and a video of their newly released electric hyper cars costing nearly €2 million each. During the festival, we enjoyed using the Perelada Golf and Spa Hotel, the Cavas Perelada, Finca Garbet and the nearby family summer residence, as well as the Castle with its restaurant, casino, museum and gardens.



After the easier downhill walk to the coach, we headed to Fincas Garbet vineyard about 10 kilometres down the coast from the French border. Passing through the coastal town of Llança, we entered the vineyards overlooking the Mediterranean Sea, under an umbrella of large pine trees. An elegant picnic had been set up to be enjoyed during a relaxed wine tasting led by the same expert winemaker, from the Perelada winery, Borja Allue Olivan. We tasted three contrasting red wines, two from the Garbet vineyards that we were looking across and one from another Perelada vineyard, Finca la Garriga.

We then headed to the private summer home of the family Suqué Mateu. Our good fortune in accessing the Perelada venues lay in the relationship that Elina and Wendy had built with the Suqué Mateu family. We were guided through the house onto the terrace overlooking the sea. The staff had been brought in from the Perelada business, including several key chefs. Some of the staff were as fascinated as we were at being in this family summer home on a clifftop with its views over the bay and Mediterranean, because in many years of working in the organisation they had never visited the house. We were indeed privileged!

Lunch commenced with eight different tapas including Iberian ham, cheese from Toni Gerez, Beef Tartare, Tuna, Croquettes, Hake and Mussels. This was followed by a traditional sea and mountain Catalan paella cooked in front of us in an enormous paella pan. A refreshing dessert of honey and mato, a local ricotta style cheese brought to an end this great lunch in this wonderful location uniquely made available to this small group of IWFS members.

Following our clifftop lunch, a few had a quiet evening enjoying drinks with friends in the hotel bar. We entered the final day by checking out of the Perelada hotel and commenced our journey back to Barcelona. The first stop on our 'Women in Food and Wine Day' was at the Finca Olivardots, a small winery run by a mother and daughter. The vineyards are managed on Biodynamic principles. In brief, biodynamics concentrates on soil health, the rhythms of nature and the movements of the moon, stars and planets. The 2010 IWFS monograph, *Biodynamics in Wine* by Beverley Blanning MW (a member of the IWFS Wines Committee) explains the principles in more detail. Some of us enjoyed the walk through the vineyards to the winery and back, while others preferred to take transport.

After this relaxing morning, we re-boarded our coach and headed to Olot in the volcanic region of the Garrotxa. We were welcomed to the 2-starred Michelin restaurant, Les Cols, which has been owned and managed by chef Fina Puigdevall since 1990 and is in the Masia Farmhouse where she was born. Recently, she has earned a Green star from Michelin for her focus on local products and 'home-grown' vegetables and her flock of hens (that wander freely in the garden). Her daughters are Head cook (Martina), Pastry chef (Carlota) and responsible for 'front of house' (Clara), a planned generational succession!

We went through to the gardens, where preparations were being made for a wedding ceremony. We were shown the wedding venue with its transparent walls and ceiling – weatherproof, and with views of the gardens and sky. The music area was sound proofed within more transparent walls! In the garden, we were presented with a Cava aperitif and trays of hors d'oeuvres prepared from the garden produce.

We moved to the golden decorated dining room (also designed by Pritzker award winning architects RCR and looking like a set for a James Bond film) and were seated at our third traditional long imperial table. There followed a thirteen-course tasting menu, each course presented beautifully and with style on the plate. The service was impeccable, and wines served appropriately to match the dishes. Notable dishes included: white beans with pig's trotters, turnips and hot pepper oil; a fresh egg from the henhouse with morels in cream and wild asparagus; peas with blood sausage, bacon, snails and mint; cod in four different ways, fillet, brandade, guts and kokotxas (fish cheeks a traditional Basque recipe); duck with pears; an infused violet flower; and, to finish, a chocolate bar to share.

After this gastronomic feast we travelled back to Hotel El Hotel for a final sunset Cava cocktail party (both rosé and white) on the rooftop terrace. The Cava was sourced from the Giró i Giró winery and described by its representative Frank Merten. 'Nibbles' prepared by the resident chef were enjoyed. The terrace gave stunning views of the City of Barcelona including the Sagrada Familia, the still unfinished, but now consecrated basilica inspired by Antoni Gaudí (1852–1926). A light show and fireworks from the distant Olímpico stadium of a Coldplay concert were visible. For some, unfortunately without hearing the music.

After thanks and presentations of Europe Africa medallions to Elina and Wendy for their outstanding contribution, we said our goodbyes to both old and newly made friends with wonderful memories of a very enjoyable festival. We were each presented with a souvenir specially designed for IWFS by Jorge Egea, local sculptor – a wine stopper incorporating the logo and images of Bacchus and Apollo.

It was with great sadness that during the planning and execution of this festival, both Wendy's stepfather and mother, John and Trudi Macdonald, had died within a few months of each other. John and Trudi had been long-standing members of the Toronto branch before retiring to Switzerland. John had been a member of the Americas Board of Directors. After their move to Switzerland, John and Trudi missed the camaraderie of IWFS and together founded the IWFS Zurich in 2008.

THE WINES AT EMPORDÀ

by *Dr Gordon Lloyd DipWSET*

The DO Empordà region is not well known outside Spain nor, probably, within it either. So, would it be just a continuation of the wine styles and traditions of Languedoc, and in particular Roussillon to its immediate north, or would it have its own distinct sense of place? Although the climate in Empordà and Languedoc-Roussillon are very similar, the soils are not, with Empordà's soils being uniformly acidic with very restricted calcareous deposits. Allowed red grapes varieties are similar with Grenache, Carignan and Lladoner being ever present, as well as Syrah Merlot and Cabernet Sauvignon. Cinsault, however, is only allowed in Roussillon and Tempranillo only in Empordà. White grape varieties show greater differences, with those allowed in Empordà more suitable for producing styles with higher acidity and less aromaticity. So Clairette, Marsanne, Rousanne, Bourboulenc and Viognier are not found in Empordà, whereas Xarel.lo and Parellada are not allowed in Roussillon. The principal white grapes in Empordà are Garnacha Blanca, Chardonnay and Macabeu, which are also common in Roussillon. So, what about the wines, of which we tasted about 50 individual examples?

VINEYARD TASTINGS

Day 2: Cavas Castillo de Perelada

An hour's drive brought us to the small town of Perelada with its imposing castle and our first tasting destination at the new winery of Cavas Castillo de Perelada, strikingly designed by RCR Architectes. The recently completed project cost €55m and is a serious commercial winery producing over two million bottles/year.



Perelada 'Stars' Rosé Cava

On arrival, and prior to the official tasting, we were offered a glass (or two or three) of 'Stars Touch of Rosé' Cava Brut. A blend of 85% Garnacha Tinta with 15% Pinot Noir, the wine had a deliciously long and refreshing finish. (A note for wine nerds – The wine was not a DO Empordà as it contained Pinot Noir, which is not allowed within the DO rules).

We were ushered into Perelada's new tasting room with views out over the countryside. We began with two single vineyard wines from differing terroirs and produced from international rather than local, traditional grape varieties. The first, Finca La Garriga Blanca 2021, DO Empordà was 100% Chardonnay from a vineyard on silt and clay with sand and gravel and a neutral pH. The wine had a longish finish and four months ageing in Acacia barrels gave a creamy, rounded mouth feel. This was a very good wine with definite tropical characteristics.

Perelada wines

Next up was Finca Malaveina (meaning 'Bad Neighbour') 2019, DO Empordà, from a vineyard situated on red clay interspersed with large rocks. It was a blend of Merlot (63%), Cabernet Sauvignon (17%), Cabernet Franc, (14%) and Garnacha Tinta (6%). There was good balance between acidity and the well-defined fruit and firm structure making this a very satisfying wine with good aging potential.

The final wine was Vino Homenaje RCR, DO Empordà, 100% Garnacha Tinta, 2019 and produced in honour of the architects that designed the winery. The vineyard of origin was on black, volcanic soil. The powerful aromas, intense fruit flavours and balanced by fresh acidity were a suitable tribute.

Day 3: Terra Remota

The 28 ha of the Terra Remota vineyard lie about 10 km North of Perelada on granitic gravel, sand and alluvial soils. It produces 100-150,000 bottles/year from Garnacha Tinta and Blanca, Syrah, Chenin Blanc, Chardonnay and varieties. 60% of its output is red wine. The owners, originally from the Loire region, appeared to have a fascination for the Chenin Blanc variety which is quite rare in Spain and not allowed under the DO Empordà regulations.

The tasting started with two limited edition wines, the first of which was 'E Chenin', 2020, Limited Edition, 100% Chenin Blanc. The wine exhibited classic Chenin Blanc characteristics and was without doubt a very good wine. Next came Clos Adèl (most of the Terra Remota wines are named after family members!), 2021, DO Empordà, Limited Edition, Xarel-lo (a grape variety native to Catalunya and a classic component of Cava). However, the wine lacked structure and balance.

To provide some entertainment and intellectual exercise, the third wine was a blind tasting. The pale amber appearance, however, was an immediate give away for an orange wine. However, it lacked fruit intensity on the palate leading to a short, unbalanced finish. The wine was in fact "Tardor", 2021, being a co-fermented blend of Chenin Blanc and Garnacha

Blanca. The grapes had been macerated on the skins for two weeks before maturation for six months in 500 litre French oak barrels.

Moving on to red wines, we next tasted a 'GG', 2020, Garnacha Tinta, Limited Edition, DO Empordà, which is produced as a tribute to Germaine (known as GG), the mother of the winery owner, Emma Bournezeau. This was an excellent wine, with silky tannins, well defined fruit flavours and fresh acidity combining to give a long, satisfying finish.

There were two more red wines, the first being 'Clos Adrièn', 2017, Tinto, DO Empordà, a blend of 90% Syrah and 10% Garnacha Tinta. The precise, intense fruit flavours were not balanced by the lowish levels of acidity. Despite having a fistful of awards from earlier years, this vintage was possibly a little overripe. Last we tasted 2016 'Usted', a blend of 65% Garnacha Tinta and 35% Syrah. This was a well-balanced, elegant wine with aromas of strawberry, red cherry and cedar.

Overall, the tasting had some stand-out wines such as the Usted, GG and E Chenin but the other three wines were rather a mixed bag.

Day 4: Finca Garbet (wine tasting)

Finca Garbet is a single vineyard situated on the Costa Brava and part of Cavas Castillo de Perelada S.A. Its slate soils (different from any of the other vineyards visited) would lead us to expect well-structured wines with concentrated flavours and this is precisely what we found.

We tasted three wines, the first of which was 'Aires de Garbet', 2018, DO Empordà. It was 100% Garnacha aged 15 months in second use 300 litre French oak barrels. With pronounced aromas of strawberry, red cherry, red currants and cedar, it had medium acidity and high alcohol (15.3%). This was a very good wine with good balance refined tannins and a long finish. Next was Finca Garbet, 2015, DO Empordà, 100% Syrah and aged 24 month in new French oak barriques. Wonderful aromas of blackberry, black cherry and black currant were combined with peppery and spicy notes to give a spectacularly intense and well-balanced wine with considerable ageing potential.

Finally we tasted an EX EX 14, 2019, DO Empordà. This was not produced in the Garbet vineyard but rather in Finca la Garriga, which has sandy, gravelly soils. The Ex Ex range of experimental wines is produced from a plot in Finca la Garriga which is planted with Garnacha vines trained with four cordons on a lyre trellis, which is designed to produce grapes with more concentrated juice. This wine is the 14th iteration of the range. The excellent wine was wonderfully powerful, with the alcohol (16%) and fruit integrated and balanced by the acidity, it had a supple tannic structure.

Finca Olivardots

Finca Olivardots, with just 10 ha of vineyards, is relatively small, producing just 50,000 bottles of wine/year. It was started, and continues to be run, by a mother and daughter team with a deep interest in and enthusiasm for viticulture and wine production. The mother, Carme Casacuberta, is a graduate chemist who later returned to university to study oenology



Wine tasting at Finca Garbet



'Tinajas' at Finca Olivardots

whilst her daughter, Carlota, is a graduate oenologist. The initial 4 ha vineyard was planted in 2002 with Garnacha Tinta, Syrah and Cabernet Sauvignon. 3 ha of 50-100 years old Carignan vines was acquired later and in 2010 a further 3 ha planted with 90-120 years old Garnacha Blanca and Gris and also Samsó Blanco. The vineyard is run on biodynamic principles. The old vines produce relatively low yields, but of concentrated juice, which would be evident in the wines that we tasted.

The first wine was 'Croc d'Amphora', 2022, DO Empordà. This was a blend of 50% Garnacha Blanca, 25% Garnacha Gris (both from old vines) and 25% Macabeu. The wine was fermented and then aged in 700-1000 litre clay amphorae. It was a very good wine with precise, concentrated fruit flavours and fresh acidity. The final wine was Finca Olivardots Vermell, 2019, DO Empordà, a blend of 55% Syrah, 20% Samsó, 15% Cabernet Sauvignon and 10% Garnacha. After fermentation, the wine was matured for 10 months in second fill French oak barrels. With intense aromas of blackberry, blueberry, red currant and red cherry and peppery notes, this was also an excellent wine, with good balance and structure.

Finca Olivardots is a wonderful example of what can be achieved, even on a small scale, with passion and professionalism.

RESTAURANT WINES

Day 2: Miramar Restaurant

The 2-star Michelin Miramar restaurant lies in the centre of the small town of Llançà on the Costa Brava, overlooking the Mediterranean. After an enforced walk along the promenade (in prima donna style the Miramar was not quite ready for us!) we were happy to quench our thirsts with a Cava Jaume Serra, Limited Edition. It was a very good wine and was dry, with

delicate aromas of brioche, apples, pears and grapefruit, fresh acidity and a restrained mousse.

The next wine was an interesting Mistager Selecció 2022, DO Empordà, Samsó Blanco. It was an orange wine orange with delicate aromas of strawberry, raspberry and red cherry. Tannins were detectable at low levels. It was uninspiring initially but came alive with the seafood it was accompanying.

Clos d'Agon Blanc, 2017, Viognier, Calogne, Baix Empordà, DO Catalunya followed. There was good balance between the ripe, precise peach, apricot and vegetal flavours and the acidity and it provided a good accompaniment to the fish with which it was served.

Next was Massia Carrereras 2020 Garnacha, Cariñena, Tempranillo, Cabernet Sauvignon, Syrah, DO Empordà. (It was 85% Cariñena with none of the other grapes exceeding 5%). With aromas of red cherry, red currant, cranberries and red



Wines at Miramar Restaurant

plum, it had bitter notes on the palette and had high levels of ripe, silky tannins. This is a very good wine with structure and balance.

We finished with a Vins dels Aspres Garnacha Tinta Dessert Wine, Limited Edition, Coupage 2016 and 2018, Cantallops, Alt Empordà. This dessert wine, with aromas of raisins, dried apricots, dried figs and dried dates provided an excellent end to an outstanding meal.

Day 3: Castell Perelada

It was a very short journey to the single Michelin starred Restaurant Castell Perelada where we were conducted to a baronial style hall. A cunning seating methodology involved each diner randomly picking a playing card from a pack and then finding the matching card on the table. However statistical principles were confounded when most of the gentlemen ended up sitting together on one side of the table and the ladies on the other.

The aperitif was Vermouth Iris Rojo, De Muller, DO Alt Camp. Alt Camp is south of Empordà in the province of Tarragona. It was served repeatedly to the point that some diners, besides worrying that it was the only wine of the evening, became quite squiffy.

However, wines finally arrived, the first being Oliver Conti Gewürztraminer, DO Empordà. It had aromas of honeysuckle, lychees and peaches combined with bitter notes on the palette and a longish finish. It felt intense coming directly after the vermouth. This was followed by Collection Blanc, Perelada, Chardonnay, Sauvignon Blanc, DO Empordà. Despite aromas of gooseberry, red apple, grapefruit and elderflower, the acidity was high and the wine lacked balance. The next wine was the pale pink Las Fincas Rosado, Chivite, VT 3 Riberas. It was a blend of 65% Garnacha Tinta and 35% Tempranillo produced by the Chivite winery with grapes sourced from Navarra. It had aromas of strawberry, red currant and raspberry. With highish acidity, the wine had a long finish with subdued fruit flavours. It was matched excellently with fish.

The only red wine was Finca Espolla, Perelada, 2018, DO Empordà, Monastrell (58%) and Syrah (42%). The wine comes from a single vineyard with slate soils. With intense, well-defined black fruit flavours, high acidity and ripe, silky tannins, this was a very good, well-balanced wine.



Wines at Castell Perelada

The final wine was a Gonzalez Byass Oloroso Jerex, 20% Pedro Ximenez and 80% Palomino Fino. The off-dry wine had intense flavours of raisins, dates and figs, providing a satisfying conclusion to the evening.

Day 4: Finca Garbet (lunch)

Seated in a shaded garden looking out over the Costa Brava, we enjoyed an ethereal paella lunch at the Finca Garbet, summer home of the Suqué Mateu family, owners of Cava de Castillo Perelada S.A.

View from Finca Garbet

The first wine was Obsequi Perelada, DO Empordà, a blend of Garnacha Blanca and Sauvignon Blanc. It was youthful and simple with fresh fruit flavours of pear, peach and apricots with a long, zesty finish – a very good wine that ably accompanied seafood. This was followed by Amfitrió Perelada, DO Empordà, which was a blend of Garnacha Tinta, Syrah, Cabernet Sauvignon and Samsó. It had juicy aromas of red and black fruit with hints of pepper and cedar due to limited ageing in French and American oak barrels. It had a long, satisfyingly smooth finish but a hazardously high alcohol content of 15%. The final wine was Garnatxa de L'Empordà 12 anys, Perelada, DO Empordà, Garnatxa Vermella, Garnatxa Blanca, which is a blend of 80% Garnacha Tinta and 20% Garnacha Blanca. This medium amber dessert wine had succulent aromas of raisins, orange peel, prunes, dates and figs and succulent, fresh and balanced finish. It had been aged for 12 years in a solera system.

Day 5: Restaurant Les Cols

Our final lunch was a tasting menu in the two Michelin starred Les Cols restaurant in the village of Olot. The first of the six accompanying wines was Natura Les Cols, Mont-Ferrant, DO Cava, a blend of Macabeu, Xarel·lo, Parellada and Chardonnay and produced especially for the restaurant by Mont-Ferrant, the oldest cava producer in Spain. The wine had a very fine mousse (Carbon dioxide pressure at 6.7 bar was high for a cava) with crisp flavours of apple and citrus fruits, brioche and a creamy mouth feel with a long finish. A very good, fresh wine, served in the garden with vegetable-based hors d'oeuvres.

This was followed by Ekam 2020, Castell d'Enchús, DO Costers de Segre (situated in the warm eastern part of Catalunya), an unusual blend of Riesling and Albariño. Fresh aromas of apple, grapefruit, honey and petrol were balanced by crisp acidity to produce a very good wine with a long finish. Next came Clos d'Agon, 2017, Mas Gil, DO Catalunya, a blend of Viognier, Roussanne and Marsanne redolent of a southern French white wine. This however was not reflected in the wine itself. Despite low intensity, simple aromas on the nose, the wine had intense citrus flavours, fresh acidity and a long finish. The two white wines were striking in different ways. The first in the quality of the Riesling component and that the blend worked so well; the second being that it was such an uncharacteristic wine that seemed, however, to work.

The first red wine was Julieta 2021, Josep Foraster, Trepas, DO Conca de Barberà. Almost all of the world's 1000 ha of Trepas plantings are in DO Conca de Barberà, situated inland in the northern part of Tarragona. The grape is normally used to



View from Finca Garbet

produce rosé wines rather than red and a 100% blend as here is rare. The pale ruby wine had faint aromas of red cherry, high acidity, low, silky tannins and a longish finish with good balance. However, the wine lacked character and intensity. Next came Salanques, 2019, Mas Doix, DOQ Priorat, which was a classic blend of Garnacha, Cariñena and Syrah from old vines. This was a classic Priorat with aromas of red and black fruit with hints of cedar, highish ripe, silky tannins and a long finish. This was an excellent wine with good tannic structure, and balanced acidity and fruit intensity.

Lunch ended with a Ratafia Russet liqueur. A Ratafia is a generic name for a liqueur produced by macerating a mixture of herbs, fruits and green walnuts in distilled alcohol and water for several months. The ratafia is then sweetened with sugar, syrup or caramel, ending with 26% to 29% ABV. This Ratafia was produced by Russet in Olot, near Girona. It had intense aromas of liquorice, raisins, cinnamon and cloves and was sweet with a long, smooth mouthfeel. It provided a satisfying end to lunch.

Day 5 (Evening): Palace Hotel Rooftop Cocktail

We were all now back in Barcelona and, as if a tasting at Olivardots and an extended lunch at Les Cols did not offer sufficient opportunity for consumption, a Cava cocktail evening on the rooftop terrace of the Palace Hotel awaited us. We were offered two different Cavas by Frank Thomas Merten, Cava Jaume Giró i Giró, Grandalla Brut Rosé, 2019, and Cava Jaume Giró i Giró, Grandalla Brut White. Frank Merten exports Jaume Giró i Giró Cava to Switzerland. The latter was a classic blend of Macabeu, Parellada and Xarel.lo with small additions of chardonnay and Pinot Noir which had aged on the lees in the bottle for at least a massive 92 months. It had refined aromas of jasmine, apple and toast with a creamy mouth feel, zesty acidity and a long finish. The aromas of the Rosé, which was 100%

Pinot Noir, were delicate red fruit (strawberry, red currant) and remaining profile similar to the white Cava. The two wines were truly excellent and fortunately there were in total 12 magnums of them, leading to a very contented evening.

During the festival we encountered many very good wines. However, what stood out were the crisp, fresh white wines based on Garnacha Blanca blends and the odd Chardonnay, whereas amongst the reds the intense Garnacha Tintas, both 100% and blended with Cariñena, impressed, indicating that the Region really does have its own particular sense of place.



Evening Champagne Cocktail (note the Magnum)

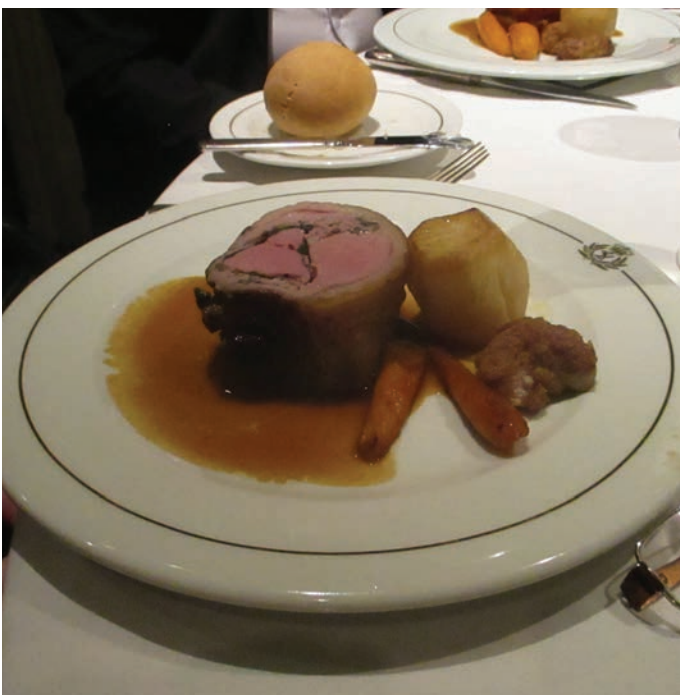
QUEEN MARY 2 AND DINNER IN NEW YORK

by Sue Smith



It was a dark and stormy night... in September thirty members from 13 branches in Europe and the Americas met on board the Cunard Queen Mary 2 en route to New York. The occasion was 'A Festival of Food & Wine at Sea' curated by Michelin starred chef Michel Roux who presented a selection from the menu of his Le Gavroche restaurant in London in the speciality Verandah Restaurant each day: in alternative dining restaurants individual items from the Le Gavroche menu featured on the daily bills of fare. Each evening we met for pre-dinner drinks in Sir Samuels bar which had been reserved for us and in the Britannia restaurant we were seated as group with dedicated stewards who ensured we savoured and enjoyed every morsel.

Not strictly an IWFS event – the society facilitated arrangements with Cunard and coordinated communications with the



members who had made their bookings and travel reservations individually. However as a venture into a hybrid event which attracted members from four countries, I think we all judged it to have been a success and a model for future occasions.

All in our cruise group had been invited to attend a dinner in Manhattan arranged by the New York City IWFS branch on the evening we arrived. Each day on board there were several seminars relating to food & wine: presenters included Will Lyons (Wine correspondent for *The Times* and *Sunday Times*) and Hanah Evans (Deputy Food Editor, *The Times* and *Sunday Times*). There were practical cookery demonstrations by chefs Michel Roux (Le Gavroche, London) and Martin Chiffers (international Pastry Consultant). A Conversation with Michel Roux played to a capacity audience in the Royal Court Theatre where he entertained with a serious but light hearted romp through his career. Many in the audience expressed their regret to learn that Le Gavroche will close in 2024. However before closing the restaurant will have served a million Michel Roux signature Soufflé Suisse.

On the first QM2 Gala Evening – theme Black and White – the menu featured items from Le Gavroche; a popular appetiser



Friday, September 29, 2023

Canapés

Polenta chips, salmon tartare
Gyoza, duck leg confit
Truffled Croque Monsieur
2008 Pommery Grand Cru

Pour commencer

HALF A DOZEN ESCARGOTS,
garlic & parsley butter
2006 Pommery Cuvée Louise Brut Nature

Plats

SKIRT STEAK,
pommes de terre Lyonnaise & Bordelaise

Green beans & shallots
2005 Château Lascombes

Desserts

SELECTION OF 2 MATURE CHEESES,
toasted country bread
1985 Quinta do Noval Vintage Port

was seared peppered tuna served with a ginger vinaigrette, Saddle of Lamb was the favoured entrée. A second Gala Evening – theme Masquerade – encouraged guests to don exotic masks reminiscent of the annual Venice Festival. The most popular entrée being Beef Wellington – I was told 180 kg of fillet steak was served that evening.

Throughout the voyage the sea was generally mercifully calm, with just two days when storm Nigel induced a slight swell. The captain charted a longer more southerly course to avoid the worst but we still arrived at New York on schedule. We disembarked in Brooklyn early on Friday morning in a rain storm which was so severe that transport to Manhattan was virtually halted – no subway trains, cabs stuck in floods, roads closed, Uber doubled or even trebled their charges – one month's rain in three hours! Taking the ferry was the solution.

The NYC IWFS branch dinner was arranged in a top rated French style Bistro, Benoit near Times Square. There were 27 guests, 12 of whom had been on the cruise. The welcome, the

food, the service and the company were all excellent. The dinner was supported by the Pommery Champagne house and we enjoyed a rare 2006 Pommery Cuvée Louise Brut Nature – 60% Chardonnay, 40% Pinot Noir – aged for 50 years.



DEVONSHIRE BRANCH AWARDS

Last September, the 2022 IWFS EAZ AGM was held in Torquay. For one of the festival activities the local Devonshire Branch organised a visit to the Sandridge Barton vineyard and winery (producer of Sharpham wines) followed by lunch at the adjoining Circa restaurant. So acclaimed was the event that the EAZ Society decided to present IWFS Certificate of Excellence Awards to both the Sandridge Barton winery and the Circa restaurant.

This July a number of members of the IWFS Devonshire branch reprised the event. As well as enjoying a private tasting and

winery visit, followed by lunch at Circa, Philip Redhead, committee member and former Treasurer of the Devonshire branch, made presentations of the awards first to Tom Wedgery (below left), who led the winery visit and tasting, and then to Rob Weeks (below right), Head Chef at Circa.

Incidentally, Andrew Moon, the owner of the Sandridge Barton, is a member of the IWFS Cayman Islands branch, making the visit almost feel like a family occasion.

Geeta Lloyd



Bath & Bristol ANNIVERSARY MEAL

Having been thwarted in plans to celebrate the 70th anniversary of the founding of the Bath and Bristol Branch in 2020, it was decided that it was definitely a case of "it's never too late" and a special dinner to celebrate our 73rd anniversary was arranged. This took place on the 15th June, and took the form of a Black Tie dinner at the home of Duke and Kathleen Ebenezer, who are members of our branch and who have been generous hosts of many of the Branch events.

On a beautiful warm summer evening guests were welcomed in their lovely garden with champagne and canapés which were followed by a three course dinner catered by Elaine's Kitchen – a local caterer.

Elaine grew up and learnt to cook in Cornwall but started her business in South Africa, where she spent her early married life. It remains a family business with daughters Catherine and Becca now also part of the team.

Whilst enjoying the champagne and canapés I, as president, welcomed the members and their guests, giving a short speech detailing the history of the branch. This included a reference to Isabel Ponting who was attending the event and was a founder member 73 years ago. We won't mention her age but she



actually knew and had dined with André Simon, which surely must be some sort of record in the IWFS.

Our Chairman, Leonie Allday, gave a short address on the wines which were to accompany the meal. The white was a Bernard Moreau Chardonnay 2015 from the Domaine of Chassagne-Montrachet. The red an Echo de Lynch-Bages 2013, which is a classic Pauillac.

The starter was Crab, avocado and smoked salmon tians served on a bed of crisp salad leaves. This was followed by Roast fillet of beef, served with a shallot, mushroom and red wine gravy and seasonal vegetables. To end there was a trio of desserts: glazed lemon tart, prosecco and elderflower jelly and chocolate mousse.

The wines were generously donated in honour of this special occasion by Leonie and the port by Duke and Kathleen.

It was an unforgettable evening and certainly supports the adage "better late than never".

Neville Bagot



Bath & Bristol

AT THE SEVERN AND WYE SMOKERY

We all (ten of us) arrived early for this lunch – several of us had been before and word gets around. Obviously, the food is good but the building is also very nicely designed in a rustic/industrial style with lots of light, high ceiling, natural stone walls, plenty of wood and exposed duct-work. All the facilities were excellent and several ladies paid more visits that were strictly necessary ‘just because the loos are so nice’. Praise doesn’t get much higher.

There was plenty of time to inspect the chilled delicacies on sale downstairs and several had brought insulated bags but, as it’s well known that shopping for attractive food before lunch causes excessive impulse-buying and girth enlargement, most refrained (this branch is pretty strong on willpower) and returned later – not feeling at all hungry after a substantial lunch – to make more moderate purchases.

We began with the usual Italian fizzy drink, olives and focaccia and a bonus of crispy salmon skins, clearly a local delicacy but not many of which were eaten.

The most-chosen starter was the onion tarte tatin – think heavily reduced French onion soup reanimated with balsamic vinegar and cooked on a light pizza-style base – which met with great approval. Smoked kipper pâté, crispy squid rings and cured salmon were also enjoyed.

The most-selected main course was kedgeree. It proved too much for some appetites but elegant take-out boxes were provided for the surplus. Fish and chips, roasted salmon and the mixed smoked platter were also praised.

We drank a Marlborough Sauvignon blanc and a very nice but unpronounceable Romanian light red festooned with ethnic diacriticals and rather in the Spanish Clarete style.

Service was good and poured rather more wine than we had paid for. A bewildering variety of teas and coffees were



promptly provided. Espresso coffee was Italianate and ‘quite evil’ according to your intrepid correspondent (who likes it that way). There didn’t seem to be any spare tables (Tuesday lunchtime) and booking here is definitely advisable. We’ll be back.

Tim Instone

Fun facts

DID YOU KNOW...?

- The focaccia originated in the ancient world. The basic recipe is thought to have started with the Etruscans, but there are many records referring to a flat bread called ‘panis focacius’ in ancient Rome. The word comes from the Latin for the hearth.
- In Rome it was traditionally baked in coals, and it was made using a rough flour, olive oil, yeast, and water. Now in the city, you may hear it referred to as ‘white pizza’ even though a focaccia is leavened bread rather than rolled immediately like pizza dough.
- There are now regional variants of the bread baked all over Italy, including focaccia genovese which has finger-sized holes in the surface and is often eaten at breakfast dipped in milk or cappuccino. In northwest Italy, many people love focaccia dolce, a sweet version topped with sugar and sometimes made with honey and raisins. In Venice, they make an Easter focaccia with sugar, eggs, and butter.
- A strong flour with a high gluten content is vital for a fantastic focaccia, as is a hot oven in which to bake it. Getting the right kind of yeast is also important to ensure it leavens.
- There are so many savoury toppings you could add to make your focaccia extra special, including herbs like rosemary or sage, salt, tomatoes, olives, asparagus, and artichokes.

Devonshire

WILD ARTICHOKE EVENT

On 15th June 2023, 12 members from the Devonshire Branch attended an outstanding event at Wild Artichokes in Kingsbridge, which is about 23 miles from our 'base' in Torquay.

Janet Baxter is a well-known chef and was responsible for the food and service concept of the famous Riverford organic farm field kitchen. She also compiled the recipes for her two Riverford Farm Cookbooks.

Jane Baxter and Samantha Miller met at the field kitchen, then teamed up to start Wild Artichokes. Jane does the cooking and Samantha organises. The food concept is a no-choice menu



comprising four course feasting with multiple dishes in each course.

We were served Bella Vista 'Alma' Franciacorta DOCG on arrival, followed by Vesevo Greco di Tufo, Campania 2021 with the first course of Focaccia Barese, Whipped cod's roe, Aqua e sale, Trout tartare, Smoked haddock soufflé with pepperonata or Aubergine Involtni and then a second course of red mullet maltagliata.

A Selvapiana, Sangiovese, Chianti Rufina, Tuscany, 2021 was served with the third course of Grilled guinea fowl with orange and onion confit, Chicken bourride with new potatoes or Spinach and fennel gratin.

The meal ended with Cherry clafoutis, Apricot and almond tart or Blackcurrant and custard pavlova.

On 23rd September 2022 members attending the IWFS, EAZ AGM, hosted by Devonshire enjoyed an equally outstanding meal at the Wild Artichokes and in recognition of this an IWFS Award was presented to Janet Baxter and Samantha Miller by Phillip Redhead, Committee member and past Treasurer of IWFS Devonshire.

Geeta Lloyd

Devonshire

NO 7 BISTRO AND WINE BAR

27 members had a fantastic seafood extravaganza meal at No 7 Bistro and Wine Bar in Torquay, organised by David Rowe and Linda Baker. Since 1993 the Stacey family have been running this Bistro style restaurant. About seven years ago Wine@7 was started with over 95 different wines.

Members were met and greeted upstairs at Wine@7, with a glass of Crémant d'Alsace Rosé, JB Adams, and some nibbles.

The meal started off with a choice of either a pot of curried prawns or king prawns grilled with lemon butter or a cold platter of king prawns with oak roasted salmon and marinated sardine fillets or Mussels Marinière which was served with Pecorino, Golden Fleece, Italy 2021.

Then followed a choice of either fillet of grilled cod with king prawn tempura or monkfish baked with black pepper and sea salt or grilled lemon sole fillets with seared scallops, all accompanied with seasonal vegetables and potatoes and served with Pinot Noir- Wairau River, NZ 2021/2022.

The meal finished with a choice of chocolate mousse cake or apple crumble with ice-cream or sticky toffee pudding, ending with tea and coffee.

Geeta Lloyd



Herefordshire & Monmouthshire A GREAT DAY AT THE RACES

On Monday 26th June, Herefordshire & Monmouthshire Branch had a day at Chepstow Races. They had kindly invited other branches to the event and were joined by friends from Bristol and Bath, Manchester and Merseyside & Mid Cheshire.

The weather was fine, not as hot as on previous days, and we had a superb view of the finishing line from our balcony. We had a private box and were able to enjoy the races whilst partaking of a delicious four course lunch, served by the friendly and very efficient, Mandy.



The Menu

Featuring local, sustainable ingredients

Aperitif

Ponte Prosecco Rosé Brut, Italy

Starters

- Sliced salami, Chorizo, Bresaola, Parma Ham and Carved Turkey
- Courgette, Leek, Chive and Cheese Tart
- Smoked Mackerel, Flaked Sea Trout, Poached Salmon and Fresh Prawns in a Mary Rose Sauce.



Salads

- Heritage Beetroot Summer Salad
- Orzo Pasta Salad with Sun Blushed Tomato, topped with fresh Chives
- Baby Gem Caesar Salad garnished with shaved Parmesan and Cherry Tomatoes
- Tomato and Red Onion Salad, served with Vinaigrette

Main Course

- Carved Loin of Bacon with a wholegrain mustard sauce, served with Minted New Potatoes, Carrots and Broccoli.
- Green Vegetable and Wild Mushroom Udon Noodle Stir Fry

Dessert

Dark Chocolate Tart, served with Raspberry Coulis.

Cheese Board

Mature Cheddar Somerset Brie and Stilton, served with crackers, grapes and a seasonal chutney

Tea and Coffee

Apart from the carrots being a little 'al dente', the food was delicious and plentiful, with excellent gluten free modifications.

The wines that accompanied lunch

Vignana Pinot Grigio-Venezie, Italy

Dead Man's Dice Malbec, Argentina

Everyone enjoyed a bet on the horses and nobody lost their shirts! It was a great inter branch event, with excellent company, food and wine, and one that I hope will be repeated.

Angela Britland

(Merseyside & Mid Cheshire)

Herefordshire & Monmouthshire BRANCH AGM, 30th JULY 2023

The weather was indifferent but the mood was positive, even enthusiastic, for the branch AGM and wine tasting. Over two-thirds of the members attended to review the previous year and plan the future. We were delighted to welcome a guest – as a potential new member. The chairman thanked all members who had attended the functions during the year and for making them so enjoyable.

The broad aim had been to meet about every six weeks and to have a mixture of formal and less formal gatherings. There had been 10 gatherings during the year. Amongst them the Black Tie Christmas dinner at The Cotford Hotel, Malvern, which was a huge success and we were delighted to welcome EAZ Chairman John Nicholas and his wife Joan plus members from Manchester, Merseyside & Mid-Cheshire and Bath & Bristol.

In February we had a new venture and supported the Hereford Catering College, taking lunch at their Cider Orchard Restaurant on campus. The training being given seemed very impressive, the table service was very professional and extremely attentive. In June we took a box at Chepstow Racecourse. There were 18 of us who enjoyed the racing, the betting and, equally important, an extensive running buffet lunch complemented by very acceptable 'house' wines – the catering was excellent. The day was enjoyed by everyone, more successful for some than for others.

Looking ahead, provisional notice of the 2023 Black Tie Christmas dinner on 13th December has already attracted 40 guests and it promises to be a great event at Eckington Manor, near Tewksbury.

The formal meeting concluded we moved on to an informal tasting of two sparkling, two white and two red wines, recommended and sourced from Tanners Wine Merchants in Hereford. Opinions varied but there was unanimous praise for the English sparkling.

The wines selected with the merchant's assessments:

André Clouet Grande Réserve, Brut Champagne, Grand Cru à Bouzy, £35.00

Rich and concentrated with excellent fruit, yet with surprising elegance for a champagne containing only Pinot Noir, which thrives in the soils at Bouzy. Broad, complex and biscuity.



Ashling Park Estate, Brut English Quality Sparkling Wine, £35.00

This English sparkling wine is floral on the nose with a well-balanced palate, showing plenty of delicious stone fruit flavours plus a round and persistent, crisp finish.

Menetou-salon, Morogues, le Petit Clos, Jean-Max Roger 2018, £19.50

The wines of Menetou-Salon are every bit as good as those of its more familiar neighbour, Sancerre; in fact the Rogers produce both! The wines have all the succulent mineral and herbaceous character of Sauvignon Blanc at its finest.

Domain Road Sauvignon Blanc, Central Otago 2022, £16.20

Dry, crisp with classic aromas and flavours of gooseberries, freshly mown grass and green peppers. A small proportion has been fermented in oak to give extra depth and complexity but no oak flavours.

Châteauneuf-du-Pape, Téggramme, Famille Brunier 2020, £37.00

Lovely soft fruit with spice, plums, herbs and a touch of leather behind. Quite forward in the mouth with soft, ripe tannins, great length and a luscious finish. This is the second wine of Domaine du Vieux Télégraphe.

Grouched Cru gsm, grenache/shiraz/mourvedre, McLaren Vale 2021, £15.50

A lovely mix of red and black fruits with floral hints and a lovely spice character, it is wonderfully balanced, rich without being over-powering and with a fine elegant finish.

A buffet lunch followed which gave further opportunity to enjoy what remained of the wines.

The whole event occupied around four hours, of which the serious business disturbed about 15 minutes.

Peter McGahey
Branch Secretary

Herefordshire & Monmouthshire

THE NEW INN, ST OWEN'S CROSS

A 16th Century coaching inn at cross roads in Herefordshire renowned in olden times for stabling horses, sustaining reputable and less reputable travellers with locally produced, or acquired, very low food mileage meat and veg whilst distracting them with strolling troubadours, prestidigitalists and fortune tellers. Refurbished by new owners, after an interlude as an Indian restaurant, this was the venue in September for our members to joyfully indulge in their seasonal luncheon tasting menu, the creation of chef Michael and presented by owner Michele.

The Fayre

- Squash Soup with smoked almonds
- Homemade Focaccia bread with whipped yeast butter
- Organic Salmon Tartare served with Crème fraîche sorbet and caviar
- A trio of organic pork – tenderloin, belly and cheek with carrots and apple ketchup



- Lemon tart parfait with lemonade foam preceded a perfectly timed Blackberry soufflé accompanied by a reduced wild blackberry syrup and blackberry sorbet

Guests were delighted with the selection and the quality – comments suggested that the crème fraîche was perhaps a little over-sweetened for some tastes and the blackberry soufflé could have benefited from a flavour contrasting rather than complimenting the sweetness.

The wines: an Austrian Riesling – okay but pale with a 'thin' taste. The Cabernet Sauvignon very acceptable but not memorable.

The service was excellent. Overall, a success for the branch. We had not dined there previously but will return.

Sue Smith



London

TASTING OF CHÂTEAU MUSAR AND SOME LEFT BANK CLARETS

Back in 2020 we sadly lost Carole Goldberg, one of the stalwarts of the London Branch. Always unpredictable, sometimes challenging, Carole was tremendously enthusiastic about the Society. Over the years she had organised many memorable tastings.

This tasting for London Branch members, held at the Army and Navy Club in Mayfair, was titled 'Carole Goldberg Revisited Part Two' and led by Rachel Burnett.

As Executor of Carole's Will, Roger Ellis suggested that in her honour we should conduct a tasting of some wines from her cellar. The first such tasting was held last year. This was the second.

It was particularly relevant for us to taste Château Musar, because Carole was an avid fan of this Lebanese wine made by winemaker Serge Hochar. Château Musar wines first came to public notice during the Bristol Wine Fair in 1979, where they were declared 'the discovery of the fair'. Around this time, Carole had her first taste of Château Musar and met with Serge

Hochar himself. Later in 2015, Carole held a tasting of these wines for us, conducted by Gaston Hochar, Serge's eldest son.

In each vintage, the proportions of Cabernet Sauvignon, Cinsault and Carignan differ and the grapes are selected from different vineyard sites, so while remaining distinctively identifiable, its character varies from year to year.

We tasted Château Musar from the years 1980, 1991, 1996, 1997, 1998 and 1999. It is fair to say that they were beyond their peak, but all drinkable, with life still left in them.

We were reminded of the back story of the 1980 wine, one of the worst years of the war in Lebanon. Every year from 1977-1990 when the war ended, Serge Hochar managed to produce excellent wine under nearly impossible circumstances.

The Bekaa Valley vineyards, from which all the grapes were sourced, lay in the no-man's land between the Syrians and

Israelis. The truck drivers transported the grapes out of the Bekaa to the winery at the coast 100km away, avoiding the latest killer checkpoints.

- 1991 was our favourite, a year in which Cinsault was predominant.
- 1996 was ageing, but nevertheless worth tasting.
- 1997 was showing concentrated aromas and flavours.
- 1998 was another vintage where Cinsault was predominant. This was smoother and softer than the 1997, and long lasting, another favourite.
- 1999 was more a Cabernet Sauvignon year. This has just a few years to go.

Oz Clarke once described Château Musar as “too wild, too exotic for Bordeaux”. So, by way of comparison, we followed on by having three clarets from the 1990s to round the evening off, all drinking well.

- 1995 Château Grand-Puy-Lacoste, 5ème Cru Classé Pauillac
- 1996 Château Lafon-Rochet, Saint Estephe, 4ème Cru Classé
- 1996 Château Langoa Barton, St Julien 3ème Cru Classé.

All in all, a splendid tasting.

Rachel Burnett and Roger Ellis



London

HISTORIC CHILEAN WINES, ESPECIALLY COUSIÑO-MACUL

On 3rd October at the Army & Navy Club, we tasted 10 mature wines from Chile, going back to 2004. None are currently available commercially. There were only 10 people present and we had a very cosy, enjoyable sociable evening.



The event came about by a disaster. My wife and I came back from a weekend away to find water flooding through the bathroom ceiling. So that the large plumber could get to the larger door into the eaves, I had to remove several cases of uncatalogued wine. To my delight, two were of old Chilean wines.

We were very pleased to have a Chilean neurologist at the tasting. He said that when he was young, the family drank Casillero Del Diablo routinely but Cousiño-Macul for special occasions. As Santiago grew in the early years of this century, Cousiño-Macul sold off all but 25 ha of their vineyards from which the Antiguas Reservas wines were made; they bought 360 ha 30 km south of Santiago.

1. Santa Ema, Sauvignon Gris Reserve 2015. Leyda Valley. 13.5%. This rare grape variety is no longer used by Santa Ema or Cousiño-Macul but is grown in small amounts in France. It is quite unlike Sauvignon Blanc, being more weighty and

without gooseberry or herby characteristics. Pale straw-gold. Pleasant aromatic bouquet, with some honey, melon and apricot. Lovely flavour, similar to the bouquet. Good balance, freshness and length. Lively and well-liked. I score the wines out of 10 and am a generous scorer. 9/10 for this delicious refreshing wine.

2. Cousiño-Macul, Sauvignon Gris 2006. Maipo Valley. 14%.

Darker than 1. Completely different bouquet and taste from 1, less freshness. Fairly good flavour but a bit past its best. It was with this wine, of an earlier vintage, that I fell in love with Sauvignon Gris in the vaulted brick cellars of Cousiño-Macul in 2003. 6/10.

3. Cousiño-Macul, Antiguas Reservas, Chardonnay 2006.

Maipo Valley. 14%. Light gold. Good aromatic bouquet with some honey. Bigger body and more length than wines 1 and 2, and was generally the most-liked dry white. 9/10.

4. Luis Felipe Edwards, Gran Reserve Merlot 2014, Family Selection. Colchagua Valley. 14.5%. Purple. Legs. Very fruity bouquet and flavour. Soft tannins. Keeping well. Easy drinking without food. This was in the style of most modern Chilean red wines, very fruity for drinking young, and inexpensive. Popular with the tasters. 8.5/10.

5. Cousiño-Macul, Lota Gran Vin 2004 (Cabernet Sauvignon, Merlot). Maipo Valley. 14%. Opaque black-purple with some brown in the rim. Big legs. Good complex fruity bouquet and flavour. A big, dense black-fruit wine. Good now but will keep. Delicious. 8.5/10.

6. Cousiño-Macul, Antiguas Reservas, Merlot 2005. Maipo Valley. 14%. Lighter, brownish. Big legs. Complex fruity bouquet and flavour. Soft tannins. Good without food. Great length. 8.5/10.

7. Cousiño-Macul, Antiguas Reservas, Cabernet Sauvignon 2005. Maipo Valley. 14%. Purple/red/brown. Legs. Good fruit bouquet and flavour with some blackcurrant. Seriously fruity and long. Very impressive. Smooth tannins. 9/10.

8. Cousiño-Macul, Finis Terrae 2004 (Cabernet Sauvignon, Merlot). Maipo Valley. 14.5%. This was their flagship wine and the most expensive Cousiño-Macul wine. Early navigators called Chile 'Finis Terrae', 'End of the Earth', as it was the southernmost country. Black-purple, with a pale red rim. Complex very fruity bouquet and flavour; hints of tobacco. Long. Tastes delicious. Quite wonderful. Very much liked. 10/10.

9. Errazuriz, Don Maximiano Founder's Reserve 2005 (mainly Cabernet Sauvignon). Aconcagua Valley. 14.5%. Their flagship wine, named after their 1870 founder. The 2019 had 22 months in French oak, 75% new, with 72% Cabernet Sauvignon, 15% Malbec, 10% Carmenère, 3% Petit Verdot. Black-purple. Legs. Another good complex fruity bouquet and flavour. Hints of dark chocolate and licorice. Plenty of tannins but not aggressive. Great length. Some preferred it to wine 8. At wine shows, I usually dislike this wine as it is so tannic when young, but the 2005 was fine now and keeping very well. Slightly bigger and more intense than wine 8, but less elegant. 9.8/10.

In spite of the differences in grape varieties or in their proportions, the six Chilean reds had so much in common in style, bouquet and flavour, hence my rather repetitive descriptions.

10. Luis Felipe Edwards, Late Harvest Viognier and Sauvignon Blanc 2019. Colchagua Valley. 11.5%. Lovely gold colour. Beautiful big bouquet with definite noble rot, marmalade, tropical fruits. Great body and length. Lovely flavour. Absolutely delicious and much liked. 10/10.

An objective test of how much the wines were liked was to measure the depth of wine left in each bottle after everyone had helped themselves to second or even third helpings. The sweet wine, number 10, was the clear winner, with only 20 mm left, followed by 9 with 38 mm, 1 with 50 mm, 8 with 60 mm, 3 with 70 mm; the rest all had 80 mm, no seconds taken.

A cold buffet was provided by the club.

Dr Bernard Lamb



London

CELEBRATING IWFS 90th ANNIVERSARY AT WINDSOR CASTLE

To celebrate the 90th Anniversary of IWFS, London Branch decided that it needed a very special venue. We were delighted when one of our members offered to use his personal connections to enable us to use the Vicars' Hall at Windsor Castle. With the opportunity to use such an iconic venue it seemed appropriate to bring the event forward to September when we would have enough daylight to appreciate it. Although it was a London Branch event, we invited members from other branches to join us. In all we had 72 participants, as many as the hall could hold.

We gathered first for evensong in St George's Chapel – a quite unforgettable experience. Seated in the Quire of the Tudor chapel, in the stalls normally reserved for the Knights of the Order of the Garter surrounded by evidence of their heraldic achievements, their individual banners mounted overhead, one was very conscious of the hundreds of years of history of which one was a temporary part.

The College of St George at Windsor was one of two founded by Edward III, the other being St Stephen's College at Westminster which is no longer in existence. St George's was

founded in 1348 at the same time as the Most Noble Order of the Garter – the oldest chivalric order in the world still in existence today. The famous chapel was originally simply the chapel of Windsor Castle. Edward IV commissioned a new chapel as a suitable home for the Order in 1475. It was finally completed in 1528.

Evensong over we moved down the hill to the Lookout, an open area on the ramparts, for a Reception with Champagne and Canapés. The Esterlin Brut NV Champagne was not one most of us were familiar with but it proved a nicely balanced wine well worth considering for future events. The canapés were delicious and came in generous – perhaps too generous – quantities. We were blessed with a warm sunny evening in which to enjoy the views over the town and out to the surrounding countryside with Eton College Chapel a distinctive landmark in the distance. Conversation flowed easily and no-one was in any particular hurry to go inside. The sunset offered just as we went into dinner was an extra flourish to an already special evening.

Dinner was served in the Vicars' Hall itself. Built in 1415, the hall originally served as a refectory. It has a spectacular vaulted ceiling. Gary McKeone, Programme Director at St George's House, gave us a brief introduction to the history of the hall. He recounted a conversation with a very eminent Shakespeare Scholar who, asked whether it was possible that the first performance of the *Merrie Wives of Windsor* had indeed taken place in the hall in front of Elizabeth I, would only say that 'it was not impossible'. So much for tradition!

Our first course was a beetroot and goat's cheese terrine, with baby shoots and balsamic syrup: an unusual dish and very tasty. This was accompanied by a Petit Chablis Vieilles Vignes 2022, from Domaine Dampt.

This was followed by duck breast with dauphinoise potatoes, red cabbage, green beans and redcurrant jus. The portions of duck generous, but it all went well with the Grand Chai Medoc 2019.

For dessert we had a baked vanilla cheesecake, with blackberry compote and ginger crumble. This was accompanied by Domaine Tariquet Premières Grives, Côtes de Gascogne: deliberately not too sweet so as to avoid overpowering the delicate flavour of the cheesecake. An earlier vintage was a favourite at the 2018 London International Festival.

Following a vote of thanks from EAZ Chairman John Nicholas, we returned to St George's Chapel for a guided tour with one of the military knights.

All in all a memorable experience, worthy of the Society's 90th birthday. The opening of some special branch events to the wider membership is a growing trend, and one to be encouraged, so as to enable more members to appreciate directly the benefits of their association with the wider IWFS.

Alan Shepherd



Manchester SUMMER LUNCH



On a not so sunny July afternoon members and their guests gathered at the historic pavilion of Bowdon Cricket, Hockey and Squash club for their annual Summer Lunch.

Sadly, due to the weather, there wasn't the background sound of leather on willow, as hoped, but there was the sound of a convivial reception to the lunch with a generous serving of the South African Graham Beck sparkling Rosé.

Following a short welcome to members and guests from our Chair Ronnie Costello the first course of our three-course lunch was served.

This was a well-presented dish of Burrata. The outer case was perfect soft Burrata with an oozing soft interior of cheese curds and cream, accompanied by vine ripened beef tomato with a balsamic reduction adding great flavour. Basil leaves added a finishing touch. The matching wine was a Marlborough Sauvignon Blanc.

The main course was a delicate Honey and Mustard glazed grilled Salmon fillet with roasted fennel and new potatoes, topped with a white wine and cream reduction. This was a delicious and very indulgent dish!

The pairing wine was a False Bay 'Whole Bunch' Cinsault Mourvedre Rosé ; perfect with the Salmon.

The Dessert course was a delicious Summer Pudding, rich in summer forest fruit and accompanied by Devonshire clotted cream and blackberry jelly.

Thanks were given to the staff and especially the Chef Duncan Dickinson who is MD and Executive Chef of the company Herb and Spice and has expanded his culinary expertise through a great deal of international travel.

The venue was brilliant. The food and wine was superb, we had a great atmosphere but the rain continued!

Ron Cowley



Manchester

A SUMMERY LUNCH AT EWE RESTAURANT

On a glorious sunny September afternoon Manchester members gathered on the terrace of Ewe Restaurant with wonderful views of Rivington Pike to enjoy a refreshing glass of Bouvet-Ladubay's Saphir Saumur Brut with a fine elegant mousse.



Lunch was in the garden room where we were warmly welcomed by manager Paul. Chair Ronnie Costello welcomed everyone before our starter was served. This was a beautifully presented trio of black truffle arancini with melted cheese and lemon aioli which were delicious, oozing cheese. Serenata Bio Grillo 2021 was the accompanying wine which, with its citrus and tropical fruits paired very well.

Perfectly cooked tender pink breast of Gressingham duck was our main course with braised chicory, baby carrots, black cherries and cherry jus. This was a very well executed dish. Monte Haro Rioja Joven with its red fruits and liquorice was perfect with the cherry jus and duck.



Dessert was art on a plate, picture perfect strawberries, cream, yuzu curd, mini meringues, almond nougatine and green basil decorated with edible flowers. Words don't do it justice – it was an explosion of flavours! Tea and coffee were offered.

A wonderful time was enjoyed by all and chef Neil Kall excelled with his delicious food, manager Paul couldn't have done more to make our event a success and Stefano and Rabu were most attentive which meant the service was flawless. Ronnie thanked them all at the conclusion of lunch.

Ronnie Costello



Merseyside & Mid Cheshire **SUMMER DINING AT THE CHURCH GREEN**

The Church Green in Lymm Cheshire is a favourite venue with members of The Merseyside and Mid Cheshire Branch. Aiden Byrne and wife Sarah run this independent pub, kitchen deli, wedding and event venue close to the picturesque Lymm dam.

Forty people attended this dinner on 13th July 2023, including branch members, IWFS members from Manchester, Blackpool and Fylde Coast as well as guests. On this occasion we organised a minibus run by the local Community Transport Company. This is a new initiative to help members to fully enjoy the event.

The theme of the meal was wild, sustainable fish with paired wines selected by Aiden.

On arrival we were greeted with a refreshing summer cocktail of white port, lemonade and fresh mint.

The Menu

Scottish Langoustines, served with Heritage carrots and decorated with Nasturtium flowers, paired with Fontanino Riesling 2020.

Spear caught, butter poached, plaice, served with brown crab thermidor and samphire, paired with Last Stand Chardonnay; a brilliant pairing!

Iced gooseberry parfait with Elderflower fritter paired with Cave de Turckheim Gewurztraminer Vendages Tardives.



Tea/coffee

Following this meal it was decided to award The Church Green their second Merseyside and Mid Cheshire Excellence Award.

Angela Britland



Northampton

THE GEORGE, GREAT OXENDEN

The Northampton branch of the International Food & Wine Society were this year's hosts to the annual get together with the Leicester branch at The George Great Oxenden on 5th September. We enjoyed a glass of Prosecco in glorious sunshine in the garden before the lunch. There were three choices for each course which were pre-selected by everyone.

Starters

- Roasted Flat Mushrooms on Brioche with Pesto
- Leek and Potato Soup
- Tempura Prawns, Sweet Chillie Source

Mains

Confit of Duck, Mash & Savoy Cabbage
Sea Bass, Chinese Greens and Crab Ravioli
Roasted Aubergine, Ratatouille, Parsley and Olive Oil Crumb

Desserts

Lemon and lime Tart, Raspberry Sorbet
Selection of Cheese and Biscuits
Liquorish Panna Cotta, Blackcurrant Sorbet

Coffee and Petit Fours

Choosing wine for this variety of options was a potential problem but overcome by our own Branch 'Wine Tasters' who,

after sampling several contenders settled on two wines, one red and one white, they thought would go with each of the food options. The George was very cooperative in allowing us to provide our own wine, for a modest Corkage charge!

Both wines were from the Iberian Peninsula:

The White wine

Anselmo Mendes Contacto Alvarinho 2022 (Vinho Verde (Moncao), Portugal)

Described as being stony, spicy, savoury, complex, dry, intense with mineral salinity.

The Red wine

Altolandon Bobal 2020 (Manchuela, Spain)

Described as bright cherry fruit with a rustic quality and a slight leafiness finish.

Both wines from The Wine Society were enjoyed by differing palates.

The members present from Leicester thanked the Northampton Society for organising this enjoyable occasion.

Roger W A S Clarke

Oslo

IWFS 90th ANNIVERSARY

Hello again all happy food and wine friends – and food and wine loving friends of friends.

The day has finally arrived where we can celebrate the international IWFS 90th anniversary. I believe we are the oldest



90 års dage mat- og vin meny torsdag 21. September 2023

Aperetiff

Speket svinenakke / brioche / wrångebäck ost
Hamachi tartar / fingerlime / yuzumajones
Makron / kyllinglever mousse / kirsebær

Vin: Champagne Gaston Chiquet Insolent Brut

Meny

Kveite carpaccio / ponzu / ørretrogn marinert i dashi / lett fermentert rettich
Vin: Albamar Albarino Pepe Luis 2021
Rype stekt på skrog / croquette med confitert rypelår / grillet og bakt løk / madeirasaus

Vin: 4 Monkeys Sierra de Gredos Tierra de Luna 2017
Ariscuren Solo Mazuelo Rioja 2017

Dessert

Norske plommer / melkesjokoladekrem / bringebærsorbet / havrekrisp
Vin: Chateau Lafon Sauternes 2019

Kaffe



90th Birthday Food and Wine Menu Thursday 21st September 2023

Aperitif

Cured pork neck / brioche / wrångebäck cheese
Hamachi tartare / fingerlime / yuzumajones
Macaroon / chicken liver mousse / cherry

Wine: Champagne Gaston Chiquet Insolent Brut

Menu

Halibut carpaccio / ponzu / trout egg marinated in dashi / lightly fermented rettich
Vin: Albamar Albarino Pepe Luis 2021
Ptarmigan fried on hull / croquette with confited grouse leg / grilled and baked onions / madeira sauce

Vin: 4 Monkeys Sierra de Gredos Tierra de Luna 2017
Ariscuren Solo Mazuelo Rioja 2017

Dessert

Norwegian plums / milk chocolate cream / raspberry sorbet / oat crisp
Wine: Chateau Lafon Sauternes 2019

Coffee

NB This is an auto translation from the Swedish. Editor



existing food and wine club in the world, and according to history, the one with the most members in total.

Kjell Arne and his crew put together a menu and prepared it for us. Many of you remember Kjell Arne from his time at Læringlekompaniet when he and Tore Namstad worked together – KjellToresMat, which was a regular feature of the club back then. Today they operate on separate sides, and Kjell Arne runs several restaurants around Oslo.

Anders Christiansen



Sussex

DINNER AT THE SUNDIAL



There is always enthusiasm by the Sussex Branch members for a dinner held at The Sundial restaurant in Herstmonceux. The family run restaurant of Mary and Vincent Rongier has long been a favourite venue in the Branch's annual calendar.

This traditional fine dining restaurant with its sophisticated elegance welcomes you with its white tablecloths, beams and inglenook fireplace where the cuisine is described as a perfect fusion of French and modern cuisine. It never disappoints.

The members and their guests enjoyed colourful imaginative and enticing delicious plates of food orchestrated by the waiting staff with aplomb. We enjoyed canapés and then an amuse-bouche followed by hors d'oeuvre with choices of scallops, lobster or duck. The entrées choices were lemon sole,



lamb and veal preceded by palate cleansers. We then enjoyed the traditional pre-dessert of the amusing lollipops followed by dessert choices of blueberry tart, raspberry millefeuille, rhubarb compote or French cheeses.

These dishes were accompanied by an aperitif of Crémant de Bourgogne with wines served with the meal of Terre d'Or Shiraz Cabernet and Terre d'Or Sauvignon Blanc Vin d'Oc 2021 with a dessert wine of Muscat de Rivesaltes.

The evening was a gastronomic experience and thoroughly enjoyed thanks to the efforts of Vincent and Mary and their excellent team of chefs and waiting staff.

Julie Wagg

Vale Royal

THE CHEESE YARD, KNUTSFORD, CHESHIRE



When the Vale Royal Branch was created in early 2022 we agreed that every year we would have one 'educational' event. Following on from last year's very successful tour and tasting, at The Beartown Brewery in Congleton, we decided to change from beers to cheese and wine this year. On Friday 18th August we had an amazing evening at The Cheese Yard in Knutsford.

We were welcomed with a glass of champagne by the owner Vincent Lazzarini. Originally born in France, Vincent now runs this cheese emporium in the heart of Cheshire. On the evening he had created a wonderful selection and pairing of six cheeses and six wines from around the world, they were served with bread, crackers, chutney, balsamic picked onions and boards of cured meats. He introduced each wine and each cheese and told us about their origins and pairings.

Particular highlights were:

Wine

- **Krasno Pinot Blanco.** Bdra is Slovenia's most westerly wine region. Its rolling hills and steep slopes mirror those of Friuli, which sits immediately across the border in northern Italy. Lively and fruity notes of citrus, green apple and zingy grapefruit. It has a mouthwatering minerality.
- **Von Der Land Zweigelt.** One of Vincent's favourite red and pairs very well with stronger Swiss cheeses, notes of cherries and a touch of oak.

Cheese

- **Robiola Bosina** from northern Italy. The mixed cow's and ewe's milk Italian Ribiola has a bloomy rind, a soft and supple texture and silky smooth interior. The blend of milk makes this characteristic Italian cheese so special. The flavour is delicate, fruity and buttery.

- The goats cheese was also a real success, **Buchette a la Sariette**, a taste of Provence with this delicate milk goat's cheese which melts in the mouth, finished with a little note of Sariette which, when you close your eyes, makes you believe you are sitting in the south of France.

As we all had such an enjoyable evening, the Committee decided that The Cheese Yard definitely deserved an Excellence Award. The following week I went back to visit Vincent and make the presentation. He was delighted and the IWFS Excellence Award sticker is proudly displayed in his window.

Ali Graham





International Wine and Food Society

National Catering College Competition 2024

We had very successful competitions in 2022 with the theme of the **Black Pudding** (see <https://iwfsblackpudding.co.uk>) and in 2023 with a **Vegetarian or Vegan** theme (see <https://iwfsvegetarianchef.com>) and we were amazed at the creative dishes that were produced by the students.

In 2024, building on the success of the events, we are expanding the scale of the competition to cover the whole of the country. We are also developing the theme of the competition so that it builds in an educational element by helping students to understand the link between good food and good wine.

We will be publishing the details later in the year, but the theme of the competition is to create the best **Free From** dish, with further prizes available for the students who produce the dishes which taste best when paired with **Pinot Noir wine**.

Local branches of the IWFS will work with the colleges to help the students to understand Pinot Noir wine with educational content prepared exclusively by a leading Master of Wine. Each college will hold their own competition in March or April 2024, assisted by IWFS members, and nominate up to 2 dishes to feature in the Grand Final in May. As before, the judges will be headed up by celebrity chef Paul Heathcote MBE.

Prizes this year will reflect the increased national scale of the competition.

If your branch would like to be involved with the competition or recommend a catering college in your area that we could invite to participate please contact

Tim Hodges < tim@new-pool.co.uk > T: 07931 374 206

DATES FOR YOUR DIARY

UPCOMING FESTIVALS

AFRICA

15th to 20th November 2023

This is a four-day African adventure on the luxurious Rovos Rail (see <https://rovos.com/>) train from Pretoria to Victoria Falls and night at the iconic Victoria Falls Hotel see <https://www.victoriafallshotel.com/>). There is also a pre-tour in Cape Town from 11th to 15th November and a post-tour to Livingstone and Lusaka from 20th to 24th November. There is a waitlist but see our website for more details: <https://www.iwfs.org/europe-africa/eaz-major-events/Africa>.

SWISS ALPS, RHINE CASTLES AND WINE CRUISE (AMS)

19th to 26th August 2024

Enjoy private winery tours from the foothills of the Swiss Alps to the canals of Amsterdam. Invitation due out soon.

HONG KONG (APZ)

15th to 17th November 2024

Pre-tour to Macau November 2024 and **Post-Gourmet tour** 18th to 19th November 2024 – put the dates in your diary. Full details to follow.

BRANCH EVENTS FOR THE DIARY

UK Berkshire

17th November 2023

Please join us when we will be tasting 'Cool Climate Wines from Western USA' which will be presented by Jennifer Williams-Bulkeley of Ally Wines (see <https://allywines.com/>), who work with top winemakers from exciting regions. Our venue is The Neville Hall, Waltham St. Lawrence. Aperitif served from 6.45pm for a 7.15pm start. Contact Colin Mair via email colin.mair@ntlworld.com.

UK Merseyside & Mid Cheshire

23rd November 2023

Black Tie Celebrations at Aspire Restaurant, Trafford College, 251 Manchester Road, West Timperley, Manchester, WA14 5 PQ. Arrive at 6pm for 6.30pm. Contact Hilary Rylands at hilaryrylands@talktalk.net for more.

UK Berkshire

8th December 2023

This special event will feature wines 'From the Chairmans' Cellar'. Chairman Colin Mair will carefully select some gems from his cellar. Our venue is The Neville Hall, Waltham St. Lawrence.

Aperitif served from 6.45pm for a 7.15pm start. Contact Colin Mair via email at colin.mair@ntlworld.com for details.

UK Herefordshire & Monmouthshire

13th December 2023

Black Tie Christmas Dinner to be held at the delightful Eckington Manor, Eckington WR10 3BJ. Contact peter.mcgahey@btinternet.com. There is a waiting list for this dinner.

UK Manchester

10th February 2024

The Branch AGM to be held at The Lancaster Suite, The Midland Hotel. Contact Chris Redman at cdredman@talktalk.net for details.

UK London

29th February 2024

Dinner at Windsor Castle – we are pleased to confirm that we are making plans for a second dinner at Windsor Castle. This was unsurprisingly extremely popular. If you were unable to secure a place on the event in September then please put the date in your diary and watch out for the booking details which will be sent out later in the year. Members across the globe are welcome.



This Seasonal Bundle includes five of each of these items of branded Society merchandise – Gift Bottle Bags, Champagne Stoppers and Anniversary DropStops (three per pack). Discounted Price £43 (inc p&p). Place your order now, via the website, as the number of packs available is limited and will be sold on a first come first served basis.