



Food & Wine

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

Issue 149

March 2024

2022 VINTAGE REPORTS

**AN APPRECIATION OF
ANDRÉ SIMON**

**YOUNG CHEESEMONGER
AWARD**

Happy **EASTER**

Chairman's message



I am surprised that we have not yet found a member to volunteer to take on the role of Treasurer for IWFS Europe Africa and join the Executive Committee. Please do your utmost to consider whether you could take on part or all of the role. Another possible answer might be a friend, acquaintance or colleague who is not currently a member of IWFS but might be

looking to take on new tasks and get involved with a new organisation... and who has an interest in wine and food!

Our focus continues to be to ensure that our events and festivals meet the expectations of our members but also to try to attract potential new members. If you have never organised an event – try it! From my own experience, it can be great fun and very satisfying when you get feedback that members enjoyed an event.

Some branches enjoy a certain pattern of events each year whilst others try to be innovative. Many members comment that they enjoy events in places they could not access as an individual or need to be in a group. Of course wine-tasting events enable you to enjoy wines that you would not normally buy – four or five whole bottles or even half bottles at home are difficult to consume and you may only want a small sample. Similarly, a different wine with each course limits the variety if it is “wine by the glass”. It is heartening to hear that more branches are inviting members from other branches to their events.

Cover picture courtesy of Kindel Media

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

We continue to focus on attracting new members. You, as existing members of IWFS, are the best means of marketing the Society. Encourage your friends to join but also use other organisations where you interact with others to promote IWFS, for example, your work place colleagues, other social clubs, even local wine groups, some of whose members might want to widen their experience of food and wine.

At the same time, we are developing ways to widen “our brand recognition”. This also needs help from members to make it happen. The Excellence awards are beginning to gain traction. If you have not made any yet you can find out how they work on the website www.iwfs.org. When the next stage of the communication strategy is launched, consider how you and your branch can help to make it happen.

Finally, I hope you all gain pleasure from your membership, widen your knowledge and understanding of food and wine and participate in some great events in 2024.

John Nicholas
Chair, IWFS Europe Africa

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

We reflect on 2023 – the 90th anniversary of the Society – as a year in which branches continued to recognise and celebrate the universal evolution of gastronomy and fine wines. Many branches have reported successful dining events which evoked memories and recreated menus from the earlier years of the society.

An appreciation of the life of André Simon was presented at two branch events by John Boyd, a founder member of Herefordshire Branch over 25 years ago. His presentation is published in full in this edition.

Stronger relationships were developed with catering colleges, which in turn attracted sponsorships for college programmes and competitions for student chefs.

The Marketing Development Group was set up to create a business plan, with supporting promotional materials and events, to introduce IWFS to a wider demographic – with particular focus on a younger age profile and on regions where the society is under-represented: the proposals will be introduced formally during 2024. Currently the Development Group is moving forward with a new type of wine masterclass – digitally recorded and streamed into any screen around world. The one hour video is tentatively titled Pinot Noir Around the World, and it will feature Anne Kriebel MW who is a world renowned authority on the grape. Anne was the author of the 2023 IWFS monograph by the same name. The concept of this project is to have Anne conduct a tutored tasting of selected pinot noir from around the world, with the viewer invited to source those wines in advance to taste along with her. The video will initially be made available for streaming exclusively to IWFS Branches and/or their members. A professional videographer has been engaged and is working on title sequences and production credits for the working team. The video should be ready for streaming and use by the end of April 2024.

One issue dominated comments from members during the year – favourite long standing fine dining restaurants closing down or severely restricting their opening times, accompanied by significant increases in the cost of the food and wines. However that did not appear to discourage members from enjoying their branch Christmas Dinners.

Reports of branch events and initiatives are always welcome, as are comments and articles from members. There are many regular contributors but we don't hear from some branches at all. Please keep in touch and share your experiences.

Best wishes for the success of events in this New Year.

Peter McGahey
Editor

Food & Wine

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- **Food & Wine (printed) Issue 150**
July issue, deadline for copy from contributors 31st May 2024. *Copy for printed magazine to editor.eaz@iwfs.org*

Please send your photographs separately from the text file.

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

Contributors

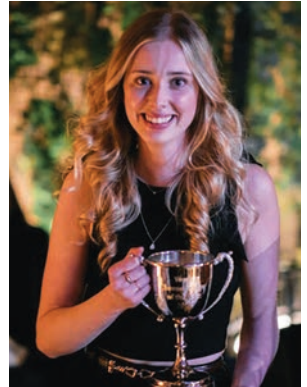
An Appreciation of André Simon

John Boyd has been an IWFS member since the 1960s. He is a former chairman of the Herefordshire & Monmouthshire branch (which he started with his late wife Ikka, herself an IWFS medallist) and a member of the Merseyside & Mid Cheshire branch. With Ikka he owned a prize-winning vineyard in Herefordshire, a role which he described as great fun. A retired KC and judge, he has recently immersed himself in the life and work of André Simon whom he regards as an inspiration.



Young Cheesemonger Award

Lily Morris, from Usk in Monmouthshire, South Wales was crowned Young Cheesemonger of the Year at the World Cheese Awards on 27th October 2023, at the Trondheim Spektrum, Norway. Lily, age 21, competed against five other finalists to win the award which was set up to recognise and champion fresh talent in the cheese industry. The competition, organised by the Academy of Cheese and sponsored by Snowdonia Cheese and the Guild of Fine Food, attracted competitors from across the globe, with shortlisted finalists hailing from France, Spain, Norway, the US and the UK.



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A Culinary Journey

Daniel Cornish, senior chef de partie at Le Manoir aux Quat'Saisons in Great Milton, Oxfordshire, was announced the Craft Guild of Chefs' Young National Chef of the Year in 2022. Subsequently he was a recipient of a bursary from the William Hepstinstall Trust and reports in this magazine on his culinary journey in Asia Pacific in 2023.

AN OPPORTUNITY HAS ARISEN...

An exceptional person is sought to join the EAZ Executive Committee as a senior officer contributing to the future development of the IWFS, which is a 'not for profit' entity. The particular role is that of EAZ Treasurer and expressions of interest are invited from members with experience in accountancy or book-keeping. You may be seeking to add another dimension to your professional career, your social life or enliven your retirement. The ideal candidate will be an altruistic, solvent, IT savvy, pragmatic gastronome. Apart from the satisfaction of being an insider and influencer of an international hedonistic association of 5000+ members, the post does not reward the incumbent with any remuneration nor reimburse personal expenses.

The Executive Committee convenes four times each year, either by Zoom or 'face to face' at various UK locations and otherwise communicates primarily by email. This is a prestigious appointment – for a confidential in-depth conversation interested parties are requested to contact John Nicholas, email johnsnicholas@aol.com. The post is available immediately.

Preliminary enquiries will not affect your credit rating!

News from the International Secretariat

The International Council of Management (ICM) held an online meeting on 2nd November 2023 when representatives from each Society zone discuss their activities and make plans for all members for the year ahead and beyond. Global Chairman Mike Donohoe (Houston and Santa Fe, Americas) led the meeting which was attended by representatives from the Europe Africa, John Nicholas (Zurich) and Ian Nicol (Blackpool & Fylde), from the Americas: Dwight Catherwood (Los Angeles, Treasurer), Andrew Jones (Cayman Islands and New York) and Steve Hipple (Omaha, Omaha Metro and Okoboji) and Nicola Lee (Singapore) and Michael Tamburri (Western Australia) for Asia Pacific countries. Two other Americas board members, recently appointed Americas Chairman, Chris Ankner (New York) and Ananth Natarajan (Lake Tahoe and Physicians of LA) also joined the meeting as observers.



Mike Donohoe

amazing events that had taken place across the Society during the year. There were also details of upcoming festivals at home and overseas, so do check out the Dates for your Diary to see what is coming up. Many of you are already reading the news as viewing figures, across the Society, for the last 12 months, ranged from 60% to 70%. However if it hasn't yet hit your radar please do remember to take a look when the next issue in the first quarter of 2024 arrives in your inbox.



Vintage Guide 2024 The updated version is now available via your Member App. With this online version there is the flexibility to keep in the older vintages and also to add in new regions. Additions which are not available via the printed Vintage Card are Loire (White), Sierra Foothills (Syrah) and just added this year Austria (Sweet). To accompany our Vintage Guide our consultants have kindly provided summary reports for their regions to provide you with valuable information once again to support the card and to help you make your buying decisions whether it be for drinking now or for laying down. The vintage reports from the 2022 and 2023 will be available on the website for you to view. [<https://www.iwfs.org/secretariat/iwfs-merchandise/latest-vintage-card>]

Some of the activities being worked on are:

2023/24 Branch Directory – this is one incredibly useful resource which provides members with a contact for each branch around the world, currently totalling 134 branches. It is now available online only, via the website (see Resource Directory and Branch Contacts/Global) and your member App (although you do have to be signed in to view this information as it is strictly for members only). If you are planning your travels for 2024 or maybe 2025 then here at your fingertips is the contact number or email of fellow members for each IWFS Branch. Please do make contact and outline your plans and they, or another branch member, will be able to provide you with invaluable advice on the 'must see' and 'must do' highlights and of course recommendations of the best restaurants in town. Now that it is online means that the information will be updated more frequently.



Global Grapevine – if you would like your travel plans to be shared with fellow likeminded IWFS members then can I recommend that you watch out for the Global Grapevine which is published three times a year. The last issue for 2023 was emailed on 16th November and provided a summary of the

Tea Monograph Our 2024 topic we will be venturing into new territory as the focus will be on the world of 'Tea'. It is the first time we will be looking at a non-alcoholic beverage in our monograph series. When the ICM were discussing various monograph topics they felt that with the increasing popularity



of low or no-alcohol drinks this was now a category which we should learn more about. It is becoming more popular in a number of countries around the world – tea flights are being offered in top-end restaurants (alongside wine flights), in Copenhagen they produce sparkling tea, in Japan they are now selling tea in wine bottles and it is also becoming more fashionable in the US. The author is Will Battle who lives in England. He has 20 years experience in the tea trade, is a trained tea taster and has also written an encyclopaedia on tea – he comes highly recommended. It is also a point of interest that tea production also has a number of similarities to wine too – there are different varieties of tea, there are tannins in tea plus some teas go through an ageing process... There is so much more but all will be revealed soon. So, it is now time for tea!!! (as we British say). We hope it is a timely title for you too.

To accompany the latest Vintage Guide (both the Card and the Vintage App) I am very pleased to once again be able to provide the first tranche of vintage reports, below, for the 2022

vintage to assist you in 2024. The regions included here are in the northern hemisphere and have been provided freely by our Wine Consultants and also our Wines Committee member, Charles Taylor MW (for Bordeaux and Burgundy). I trust these reports will assist you in making an informed decision on which wines to buy and to perhaps lay down in your cellar – some will be there longer than others! News on how these wines are developing will be provided in years to come...

The second tranche of reports will be published in the next issue of Wine Food & Friends. Both reports will also be available to read via the website. All the best for 2024 and until next time.

Santé

Andrea Warren

International Secretariat

2022 VINTAGE REPORTS

BORDEAUX 2022

Charles Taylor MW

www.montrachetwine.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 chateau owners feel likewise. Henri Lurton at Château Brane Cantenac describes it as 'legendary, like 1945 and 1961' whilst Christian Moueix likens it to 1982. [see issue 146 for full report]

- **Graves (Red)**
7 not ready yet
- **Haut-Medoc**
7 not ready yet

- **Pomerol & St Emilion**

7 not ready yet

- **Graves (White)**

6 not ready yet

- **Sauternes**

6 not ready yet

BURGUNDY 2022

Charles Taylor MW

www.montrachetwine.com

Ripe, aromatic whites – Sumptuous, fresh reds

After one of the warmest, driest summers on record, Burgundy has produced some of the freshest, most vividly fruity wines ever. The succulent textures and intense flavours make 2022 a hugely successful vintage where good volume and high quality go hand in hand. After a wet winter, an unremarkable spring enabled the vines to avoid any frost damage and good weather in May allowed the flowering to pass off successfully, guaranteeing an early harvest. June saw a return to mixed weather culminating in a series of thunderstorms including hail and heavy rain at the end of the month. For many vineyards, that was the last rain they would see. July and August were unremittingly hot and dry but the water reserves enabled most vines to avoid undue stress and relatively cool nights allowed the grapes to retain fresh flavours and adequate levels of acidity. By the second half of August the grapes were approaching full maturity and most growers opted to pick promptly to avoid the danger of over-ripeness. In the Côte d'Or, most of the white grapes were gathered in the last week of August and first week of September with the red wine harvest following immediately afterwards. Most growers were expecting a bumper crop after the successful flowering but the dry summer reduced the amount of juice in the grapes and the eventual yields in most places were only a little above average. The quality, however, is superb. The whites are fresh and aromatic with plush textures, rich, intense flavours and fine



structure. They will be delicious young but also age gracefully. They have the vitality and concentration of other, recent, successful white wine vintages such as 2017 and 2020. The reds, if anything, are even more impressive. It was easy for wine-makers to extract colour, flavour and tannin from such perfectly ripe, healthy and concentrated fruit. With the experience gained in the hot vintages of 2018, 2019 and 2020, most producers have mastered the art of picking promptly and speedily to retain freshness and acidity and extracting only the finest, ripest tannins. They have been rewarded with a magnificent range of wines that, in terms of recent vintages, combine the power and concentration of hot years such as 2018 and 2020 with the freshness and elegance of 2016 and 2017. In short, it is a great vintage for red wines that will rank with the finest of the past 25 years: 1999, 2005, 2010, 2015 and 2019.

- **Cote de Beaune (Red)**
7 not ready yet
- **Cote de Nuits (Red)**
7 not ready yet
- **Chablis**
7 not ready yet
- **Cote d'Or (White)**
7 not ready yet



BEAUJOLAIS
Will Heslop
www.flintwines.com

The majority of producers are very pleased with their '22s in terms of quality and fairly satisfied in terms of quantity. It's a millésime solaire: the rich, "sunny" profile of the wines indicative of a warm growing season

and low rainfall. Nonetheless, the best Beaujolais wines of the '22 vintage remain fresh and site-specific. Winter '21-'22 was relatively cold and long, causing a late budbreak around April 10th, but the warmest May since the Fifties meant flowering was complete by the end of the month. Most of the region received less than 10mm of rain in July but there had been sporadic heavy rain in June, and would be again in mid-August, so hydric stress was somewhat mitigated – though the size of the crop would be approximately 20% below the ten-year average owing to drought (and some localised hail in early May and June). Harvest for most producers began week commencing August 22nd.

- **Beaujolais**
6 not ready yet



ALSACE
David Ling
www.confrie-st-etienne.com

First tastings of the 2022 vintage Alsace wines confirm our initial impressions at harvest time that the overall quality is extremely high. However microclimatic effects caused yields to vary

widely, not just from village to village but from one vineyard to the next, depending on altitude and aspect. In short, the wines

are expressive and aromatic, with moderate acidity. 2022 Riesling is particularly floral.

The year began with an unusually warm winter with hardly any rain in the first three months, so the vines remained dormant until quite late, with budburst only in early April. Temperatures throughout the month continued warm with the arrival of a generous amount of beneficial rain. Temperatures in May continued above the seasonal norm, with accelerated vegetation growth leading to predictions of an early vintage.

Flowering took place in mid-June without incident and with the appearance of the first bunches a bumper crop seemed likely. However this turned into one of the hottest summers on record. High temperatures with practically no rainfall caused certain vineyards to suffer and winegrowers were hard-pressed to protect them from excess sunshine.

Four months of heat and hydraulic stress blocked growth and delayed veraison until mid-August. In fact it was not until early September that welcome rain began to fall. These much cooler conditions enabled the crop to mature more slowly and prospects of an early vintage receded.

Picking began in mid-September, and throughout Alsace the general feeling is of a quite satisfactory result, as the September rains arrived just in time to save the harvest, by alleviating the effects of a warm winter, a hot spring and a scorching summer.

- **Alsace**
6 not ready yet



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

As was the case in most of France, the region of Sud-Ouest had a hot and mostly very dry growing season in 2022. However, in Cahors and in some other places, rain in the beginning of September helped to make this an outstanding, maybe even exceptional, vintage.



Temperatures over 40°C did cause alarm as ripening in some places were blocked but the September rain and the fresher nights helped to get it started again. At the time of picking the grapes were healthy with some heterogeneity in ripeness and with some grapes burnt by the sun. The yields were better than expected at around 40-45 hectolitres per hectare, so not far from normal. The alcohol is lower than expected at around 13 %. The malbec actually showed a good resistance to the drought and the heat.

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

- **Cahors/Madiran**
6 not ready yet



CHAMPAGNE
James Simpson MW
www.polroger.co.uk

This has been well and truly an exceptional campaign, the grapes in magnificent condition to the eye and producing musts of exuberant perfume, those of all three cépages tasting

extremely well. It is difficult to imagine a more promising start and, as the icing on the cake, the quantity is there too. From a purely technical point of view, the potential degree (if we take all the cépages together) is 10.7% vol. with total acidity averaging 5.3g/l and a pH of 3.16. If in reflecting on a vintage one is tempted to think purely in terms of the wines we are going to produce this same year, there is another vital consideration to be taken into account: the reserve. This is often described as the cornerstone of the champagne appellation in the sense that it permits every producer to release the quantity necessary to make up the shortfall, should he not achieve the level of yields fixed annually by the CIVC. The vigneron of Champagne are sheltered from the impact of a terrible year thanks to this unique stocking system, which ensures the continuity of the production of (non-vintage) champagne. The 2022 vintage will permit the rebuilding of the reserve and this comes at a timely moment. Last year, against the background of a more challenging vintage, the appellation as a whole was obliged to draw on reserves in order to reach a satisfactory level for tirage (first bottling, the first stage of production). This year, the exceptional quality and quantity of the grapes are such that the yield available for tirage has finally been set at 12,000 kg/ha (as compared to 10,000 kg/ha in 2021). It is the story of a year of sunshine which has given musts of an exceptionally high degree and we will need to prepare ourselves for this to be repeated in the future. This vintage would seem also to indicate to us – at least for the moment – that quantity is not necessarily incompatible with quality. Optimism can certainly be justified, but as always, let us remain cautious and wait for the tasting of the vins clairs which will prove, as always, to be the true test!

- **Champagne**
6 not yet released



LOIRE
Jim Budd
jimsloire.blogspot.com

Overall the 2022 growing season was marked by some periods of extreme heat and drought during the summer. Rain in August made a big difference. Grapes were very healthy. Overall quantities

vary considerably depending on April frost damage and whether the drought blocked grape maturity, which would have been dependent on soil type, the age of the vines and producers who encourage their vines to develop deep roots by not using weed-killers.

There was less frost damage than in 2021 as the frost struck at the end of March into the beginning of April early in bud-break. East of Tours there was little damage as bud-break hadn't

started. Also the substantial investment in frost protection since 2016 is paying off.

After a very hot and dry summer rain made a welcome return around 15th August came just in time to make a significant difference. More rain later provoked botrytis, so some sweet wines were made. However, the trend to make more and more dry wine in traditional sweet wine areas even in the Quarts de Chaume Grand Cru due to the current lack of demand for sweet wine.

2022 was another very early harvest with picking in the Pays Nantais starting from 23rd August.

This is a good quality vintage across the board. Some are hailing it as one of the great years – time will tell! Certainly more than a year on from the 2022 harvest there are some very attractive wines both red and white without the excessive alcohols of vintages such as 2019 and 2020. However, 13%-13.5% is increasingly the norm, where 10-15 years ago it was 12%-12.5%. Many wines in all styles should have a good potential to age

- **Loire (Red)**
6 not ready yet
- **Loire (Sweet)**
6 not ready yet
- **Loire (Dry White)**
6 not ready yet



PROVENCE
Rod Smith MW

As in the rest of France this was a vintage of great chaleur, with an August heatwave. But this followed a relatively cool and very dry winter, so the vines were well rested and there were no issues of frost at budbreak, or subsequent hail, as happened elsewhere.

The heat of the summer bodes very well for the reds, especially those from older vineyards. The fruit for the rosés was picked even earlier than usual, commencing mid August. (Although this is, in itself, becoming the usual). Flavour may have been lost in the pursuit of acidity (and vice versa). However, the reds experienced excellent September conditions and, if raising on the vine was avoided, will be substantial, concentrated and of very high warm-vintage quality.

- **Provence (Red)**
6 not ready yet



ENGLAND Sparkling
Mimi Avery

2022 saw the hottest summer on record. Much faster ripening and flavour development than they are used to.

"It will be interesting to see what happens to dosage levels when

the wines come out. Will they have the exhilarating English acidity we are used to?" quoted by Sam Lindo – (already 2023 is seen to have returned to more usual levels of acidity). "At camel valley we picked early but it wasn't much different to normal just a lot earlier. I had half term off for the first time ever."

In the east it got so hot the vines shut down for a couple of weeks, what was incredible is the amazing quality of the grapes. "Whilst volumes were slightly down due to lack of rainfall, we made up for this in the complex and intense flavour profiles while still managing to keep overall good acidity. What was very interesting was how much further advanced the Chardonnay was than the Pinots. It is usual for us to pick our Pinots first however this year we bucked the trend by starting with Chardonnay in all vineyards" Matt Strugnell, Vineyard manager Ridgeview

- **England Sparkling**
5 not yet released



GERMANY
Konstantin Baum MW
www.baumselection.com

The 2022 was another year of extremes in Germany. The summer was dry and hot, causing ripeness levels to accelerate while vines struggled due to high temperatures and lack of rain.

Winemakers had to monitor the vineyards carefully for signs of water stress, and many winemakers started to pick earlier than usual in order to maintain the balance between acidity and potential alcohol.

Heavy rainfalls in September brought relief to the vines and increased yields but also raised disease pressure in the vineyards. Winemakers had to keep a cool head in order to identify the right time for harvest. The volume of the 2022 vintage was up compared to 2021, and the quality was high overall. Hard work during the season paid off and the best wines are balanced, combining freshness and concentration.

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

HUNGARY
Charles Mount
www.royal-tokaji.com

A mild and dry winter significantly lowered the water table. March and April both had relatively normal rainfall and temperature. The second driest May of the past fifty years (the driest being 2001) marked the beginning of 10 weeks of severe drought in Tokaj. August was the second hottest in half a century (after 1992) but substantial rainfall, starting from around the 21st September alleviated the drought and allowed the development of botrytis for those with the motivation and patience to wait. Picking of botrytis-affected grapes for aszú wines took place from early October to the beginning of November. The aszú wines have intense botrytis and richness



and are round, tropical and balanced despite relatively low acidity for Tokaji.

- **Tokaji**
5 not yet released



ITALY
Tuscany (now including Bolgheri)
Richard Baudains

In Italy, seven of the years with the highest average annual temperatures on record have occurred in the last decade, and the trend towards ever drier and hotter weather conditions

continued in 2022. In Tuscany the winter was mild again and there was only light rain in the early part of the spring. Temperatures rose rapidly in May and continued high, with record peaks and virtually total absence of rain through to mid-August, resulting in inevitable drought stress in areas without access to emergency irrigation. However, rain in the second half of August brought welcome relief and the harvest was generally concluded in fine weather in the first ten days of September. The character of the vintage in different parts of the region will depend on the extent to which the vines were able to regain physiological balance in the run in to the harvest. In any case, sugar content was high and the wines can be expected to be concentrated, full and round with ripe fruit and breadth of tannins. Quantities are in line with 2020. Overall, producers are positive about the outcome of the vintage. The ability to adapt vineyard management to meet the challenging conditions means that the wines today are far more balanced than those of the first wave of heatwave vintages in the early 2000s.

- **Tuscany (now including Bolgheri)**
5 not yet ready

ITALY
Sicily
Richard Baudains

Overall, despite the temperature peaks of June and the extended period of drought, Sicily experienced more favourable weather conditions than many other parts of the country.

July was a little cooler, there was rain in August, September was warm and dry and in October there was light, well-distributed rain and long sunny periods. Generally among the first regions to pick, the weather favoured long, slow ripening and the red wine harvest in Sicily was late, lasting through October into early November on the north face of Etna. The combination of summer drought and extreme temperatures in June reduced yields, but overall grape quality was excellent. Nerello Mascalese in particular shone. Predictions are for wines with body but also very good balance which will have attractive fruit for early drinking but also great ageing potential.

- Sicily

6 not ready yet



VINTAGE PORT

Richard Mayson

www.richardmayson.com

2022 A challenging year with extreme heat and drought.

The year began with a very dry winter. It rained heavily in March but thereafter the spring and

summer were abnormally dry with frequent heat waves, starting in early June. July 2022 was the hottest since 1931 with nine days over 40°C and the temperature peaking at 47°C in Pinhão on 14th. Port grapes were being harvested in late August by which time 'the vines were looking brown and tired' in the words of David Guimaraens, wine maker for the Fladgate Partnership. At the Symington family's Quinta do Vesúvio grapes were already being trodden on 29th August, the earliest in the history of the estate. The grapes were small, acidity levels were low but there was very little raisinisation where the grapes shrivel on the vine. Temperatures dropped in the first week of September but from 9th September it rained on and off for ten days. Early picked Tinta Roriz and Touriga Nacional showed well with Touriga Franca taking much longer to ripen. As Sophia Berqvist at Quinta de la Rose wrote 'there was extreme uneven ripening in the vineyards with grapes ranging from very ripe to green'. Yields were 20% below average due to the drought. There was a lot of variation in quality with the Cima Corgo generally performing better than the Douro Superior. Producers are still circumspect about overall quality but it is expected that there will be some good single quinta and/or site-specific vintage Ports wines showing some lifted, expressive character.

- Vintage Port

4 not yet released



SPAIN

Harold Heckle

Spain was affected by high temperatures in 2022. The country suffered almost 500 wildfires that devastated huge swathes of land and disrupted many lives. Norrel Robertson MW saw how flames nearly engulfed

some of his vineyards in central Calatayud. He was spared, his neighbours weren't. Rainfall was also low in many regions, compounding the problems for many viticulturists.

Paradoxically, some important wine-producing locations saw increased yields. Álvaro Palacios said his vineyards in Priorat produced a fifth more grapes than normal. "What unprecedented phenomenon is behind the combination of extreme water stress and a quantity of grapes 20% higher than a normal harvest in the Priorat vineyard?" he posed, rhetorically. "The vines experienced a blockage of ripening due to the excessive heat, they closed down to survive, forgetting to ripen their grapes in the normal way by photosynthesis and photo-transpiration," he added. He said he had observed "pinkish, translucent Garnacha grapes," perhaps as a result of exceptional "distress and struggle." His conclusion was that "There are many lessons to be learned from the 2022 vintage." Despite the difficulties, Palacios rated the quality potential as being very high. On the basis of his recommendation and of others in the region, I would give Priorat a six (6), pending future assessments. No Priorat vintage 2022 wine will be available for sale for at least three-four years as the D.O. only authorises oak-aged wines.

Rioja saw a difference of opinions between the overall Consejo Regulador and its junior offshoot in Rioja Alavesa. The latter declared an Excellent vintage. "The analytical values allow us to conclude that we are dealing with wines with high alcohol content and the freshness typical of Rioja Alavesa wines. The colour intensity, phenolic load and dry extract are above those of vintages classified as excellent in the Denomination and the pH and total acidity are in line with those of recent vintages." The main Consejo Regulador of the DOCa Rioja rated the 2022 vintage as 'Very Good', "the authority said in a statement. "Our assessment of the campaign recalls how demanding the weather conditions were for the vineyard, where there was a very rapid vegetative cycle, with a shortening of the phenological stages, high temperatures from May until the end of the cycle, and a lack of rainfall that did not vary until August," the DOCa said in a statement. Pablo Franco, director of the Control Board of the DOCa Rioja, pointed out that the harvest was a prolonged one. "It began on 10 August and lasted 88 days," he said.

Ribera del Duero also acknowledged the climate had taken the edge off the quality of the harvest. "Taking into account the criteria of the internal reports of the Consejo's technicians, the Plenary has decided to classify the 2022 vintage as Very Good," the D.O. said in a statement. Winemaker Antonio Díez Martín, who makes wines for the single vineyard Martín Berdugo estate in the upstream, higher altitude, region of Aranda de Duero said the main challenge was maintaining the equilibrium in his vineyard. "In my opinion, the vintage was good to very good, depending on the terrain and when you harvested the grapes."

Overall, in Spain we can say with increasing authority that the country had a very good but not excellent vintage, rating it overall as a six.

- North East

6 not ready yet

- Ribera del Duero

6 not ready yet

- Rioja

6 not ready yet

AN APPRECIATION OF ANDRÉ SIMON

by *John Boyd*

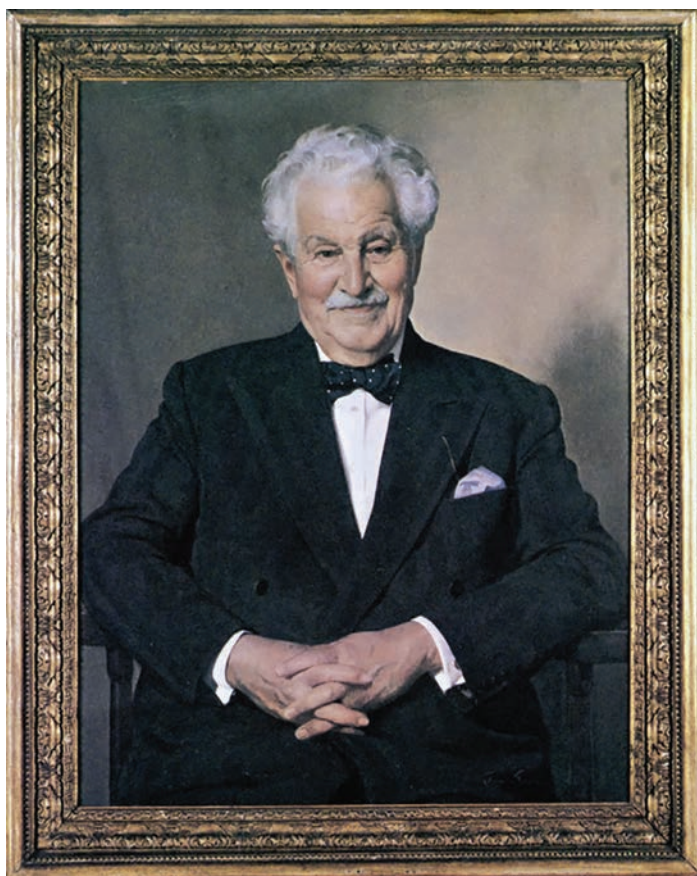
This year is the 90th anniversary of the Society's inaugural dinner and it may be appropriate to say a few words about André Simon, the Society's founder and moving spirit.

Most of us are aware that he was a Frenchman who for some reason settled in England, a bon viveur with some connection with the wine trade. We see his genial image on the menu resplendent in bow tie. In fact it turns out he was much more than that and I hope I may be forgiven if I take a few minutes of your time in saying something about the career and achievements of this remarkable man.

André (as I shall call him) was born in Paris in 1877. Parents were comfortably off. At age 7 he had an accident which badly damaged his back and caused him to be strapped down in a cast for a year. During this time, being unable to go out and play, he read voraciously. This was the foundation of his lifelong love of literature and writing. In his teens he studied English and Russian at evening classes. At 17 his parents, wishing to improve his English, sent him to Southampton for a few weeks. There he lodged with a family called Symons and he was attracted to their daughter Edith. They later married in Paris. The marriage was a happy one and lasted until her death in 63 years later. They had five children.

In 1902 – by this time he was 25 – he and his family moved from France to London when he became the UK agent for the Champagne house of Pommery. He was obviously seen as having an aptitude for business and he must have possessed great personal charm. His business prospered. Over the next few years he displayed his talent for writing with *History of the Champagne Trade in England*, the first of some 100 books he was to write. He set up the Wine Trade Club which organised tastings and lectures. This club became the elite Institute of Masters of Wine.

The First World War saw him spend four years in the French artillery. As a patriotic Frenchman he volunteered for service even though he was 37. When questioned by the recruiting sergeant about his occupation, he did not say he was a wine merchant in case he was put to work in the canteen. Instead he said he was a writer, a man of letters; he was made regimental postman. But he did more than that. Amongst other things he was instrumental in adding a clause to the Treaty of Versailles



limiting the use of the word Champagne to wine produced in the Champagne area.

On his return to England after the war he bought two properties, a flat near Victoria Station, the other a house in Surrey with 28 acres. When in London he was over the years to attend 7am mass every day at nearby Westminster cathedral. He turned part of the garden in Surrey into a cricket pitch. He had an affection for things English and the arts. He seemed to be in a happy financial situation, but in 1931 Britain came off the gold standard and Sterling crashed against the French franc. André was unable to pay Pommery for champagne he had bought. Pommery, not surprisingly, terminated his agency. Thereafter he turned to writing for his livelihood.

In the following year, 1933, he established the Wine & Food Society. By this time he had had acquired a circle of influential friends and supporters from the worlds of literature, gastronomy, the arts and politics. The Society's first dinner, held at the Savoy a few months later, was attended by nearly 400 people. In its first year the Society had one thousand members.

By this time prohibition had ended in US and André visited North America for the first time. What self-respecting wine drinking Frenchman would have gone there during Prohibition, you may ask? His purpose, he said, was to spread the gospel of gastronomy. He soon founded a branch in New York. Branches across US and elsewhere soon followed. Since then the Society has reached out across the world with over 100 branches, some as far afield as the Cayman Is, Taipei and Harare.

André was prolific writer. In total he wrote over 100 books, all but one of them on some aspect of food and wine. The exception was a Russian grammar written in WW1 and published by the War Office for use by British troops who were training Russian troops in Archangel. He said it was far and away his worst book, but it sold more copies than any other.

He had a flowery style – he described wine as: “A girl of 15 who is already a great artist coming on tiptoe and curtsying herself with childish grace and laughing blue eyes”.

André died in 1970. He was 93. He was a French citizen all his life. He was awarded the CBE and the Legion d'Honneur. He

believed that man dies too young if he leaves any wine in his cellar. In his personal cellar André left only two bottles of claret. What a master of timing! A lesson for all of us perhaps.

Let me end with an anecdote.

A group of London wine merchants wanted to test just how well he was able to judge wine. They blindfolded him and gave him a range of wines to try. He was able to name each wine and

vintage. Finally a glass of plain water was placed before him. "I don't know what it is", he said solemnly, still blindfolded. "I doubt if I have ever tasted it before. But I can tell you one thing. It won't sell".

Tonight we pay tribute to a wine connoisseur, a gastronome, a man of letters, a French patriot, an Anglophile, the founder of our Society and our inspiration. Let us raise our glasses and salute the memory of André Simon.

YOUNG CHEESEMONGER AWARD

by Lily Morris

Last year I was selected to compete in the international 'Young Cheesemonger Of The Year' competition along with five other people. It was set in Trondheim, Norway, and held alongside the World Cheese Awards.

The competition consisted of four rounds:

Round 1: Discuss a cheeseboard of their choice.

Round 2: Demonstrate their cut and wrap skills, cutting and wrapping different cheeses, timed.

Round 3: Identify four different cheeses using 'standard approach to tasting cheese' model.

Round 4: 'MasterRind' – a quiz about cheeses from around the world.

I have been working in my family's business, Morris' Of Usk, Garden Centre and Farm Shop, for six years. In January 2022 we opened our cheese and delicatessen counter and I was given full responsibility to set it up. I now manage the counters as well

as a small team. Before a cheese makes it into the counter I do extensive research on it, ensuring the highest quality and researching the artisan processes. I am at my most confident selling the very best cheese to my customers. This reflects my family's ethos of only providing a high standard product to our customers. I now stock over 40 different artisan cheeses. The favourite part of my daily cheesemonger life is the satisfaction of introducing a customer to a new exciting cheese and seeing the smile on their face when experiencing the complexities of flavours. Cheese really does make people smile! I source the majority of my cheese from loyal suppliers such as the Fine Cheese Co. and the Welsh Cheese Co. I visit my wholesalers so I can have full trust in their methods and to ensure they supply us with nothing but the best quality.

I passed the Level 1 Academy of Cheese course in mid August 2022. It inspired me not only to carry on my journey in the cheese industry but to gain more knowledge of the industry. I



am now studying level 2, which is aiding the development of my cheese knowledge. Once I had completed Level 1, I found myself with even more questions than I had started with. Level 2 is helping me to further understand the “why’s” and “how’s”. It has strengthened my appreciation of cheesemakers and cheesemaking; I still find it incredible that so many vastly different cheeses can be made from just four basic ingredients.

One of my biggest achievements so far in my cheese career is my social media account – @thepetitecheese – which I created just over a year ago. My page is all about education and about the world of cheese. I really enjoy sharing my passion with my 8.3k followers and it humbles me to receive so much support from cheese lovers, makers and mongers from close to home and across the world. The cheese community is such a friendly place and the opportunities I have had since creating my account have blown me away! I have ‘collabed’ with The Cheese Academy, teaching about ‘level one’ cheeses and in turn lots of makers have reached out to send me cheese samples to review, including: Cropwell Bishop Creamery, Yorkshire Pecorino, The Fine Cheese Co. and St James Cheese. I have made lots of ‘cheesy’ friends along the way and I have been lucky enough to host a handful of cheese and wine events, for local communities.

The competition was tough but I won! It was the best day, surrounded by thousands of tasty cheeses and lots of lovely ‘cheesy’ people. The award has inspired me to continue on my cheese career, selling and educating others about artisan cheese and, most importantly, it has reminded me to keep



spreading the message that it doesn’t matter who you are, if you have a passion for something, go do it.

A CULINARY JOURNEY

by *Daniel Cornish*

The William Heptinstall Trust

The William Heptinstall Trust is a charity set up by William Heptinstall's family to assist, financially, young chefs to undertake a stage or stages in their career development outside the UK. IWFS has been closely connected with the Charity for many years which has benefitted from an increase in its funds following a bequest in memory of John Avery, who had been Chair of the Trust as well as of IWFS. As a consequence of this bequest, the beneficiaries have to undertake wine studies. William Heptinstall was a well-known chef and writer who, in his younger years, had benefitted from working in the last Tsar of Russia's kitchens. Members of IWFS have managed the Trust for many years.

There follows a summary of a report from Daniel Cornish, the young chef who optimised the use of the funds awarded from the charity in 2022 with opportunities to work in a number of renowned restaurants in Singapore, Australia and Japan. We hope you enjoy reading about how IWFS indirectly helps the development of young chefs. When linked to the catering colleges competition, we can be seen by the gastronomic industry as making contributions to its continued development.

Editor's note: The full version of A Culinary Journey is published on www.iwfs.org.

I started on my intrepid culinary adventure when I arrived in Singapore in the early hours on a grey but humid Tuesday morning, after having a month in New York which included a three week stay at the only 3 Michelin star vegan restaurant – Eleven Madison Park. I stayed on in Singapore for a few days before my flight to Australia

Australia

I arrived in Sydney and for the first week I settled in and walked along the beautiful coastline in the Australian spring. Then I travelled to Melbourne to complete a WSET level 2 intense course at the Melbourne Wine School.

I started the intense wine course on a Wednesday and it ran for three consecutive days. I enjoyed learning about all the different types of wines and how each was unique depending on factors such as climate, and how the winemakers use different methods to change the flavour such as adding lees and aging the wines.

When my result for the WSET level 2 exam came through I was delighted.

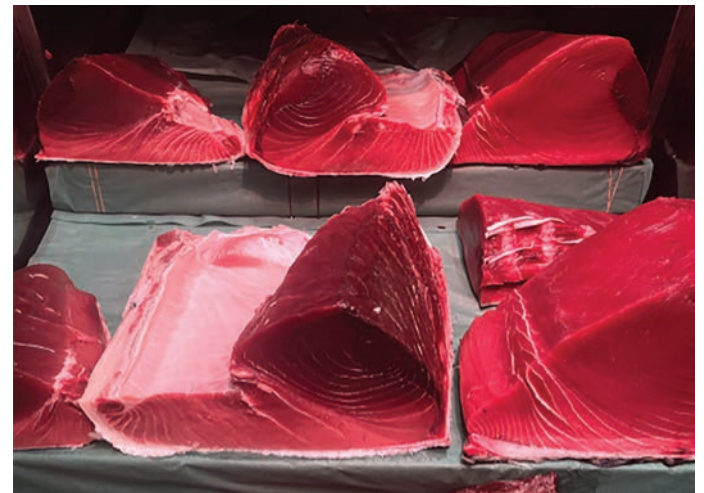
After this intense week, I embarked on a wine tour of some of the vineyards in the Yarra Valley. I returned to central Melbourne



I worked with Chef Daniel Calvert and his team at Sezanne for three weeks, where I learnt a huge amount and was inspired with countless new ideas about food and how to run a kitchen. I had a few days to explore Tokyo after my stint at Sezanne



Without the bursary from the William Heptinstall Award, I would not have been able to go to these amazing countries, to meet fantastic chefs and visit some incredible restaurants or learn how different kitchens are organised. The bursary has opened up to me the intricacies of wine pairing and wine production I hitherto had no knowledge about. I would like to sincerely thank the members of the committee for giving me this opportunity.



to get ready to head back to Sydney and start three months work at Lennox Hastie's iconic restaurant, Firedoor.

When my three months at Firedoor was completed I started at Quay in late December 2022.

As my time at Quay drew to close I felt sad; my time in Australia was coming to an end and I moved on to Japan.

Japan

I arrived in Tokyo and over the next two days set about exploring Tokyo, trying different foods such as tempura, donburi and yakitori.

I would spend the next few days going to visit different spots around Tokyo, such as Shibuya and Ueno market as well as the famous Kappaboshi street, well known for supplying anything and everything you would need for a restaurant.

DEVONSHIRE BRANCH EXCELLENCE AWARD TO THE ELEPHANT



In September 2022 the IWFS EAZ AGM was held in Torquay. For one of the festival activities the local Devonshire Branch organised a dinner at our 1-star Michelin restaurant, The Elephant by Simon Hulstone in Torquay.

So impressed were the members who came from all over the world that they wanted an award to be given to the Elephant.

On 16th November 2023, John Slater our Chairman presented Simon Hulstone with the IWFS Award for an outstanding Dinner on 22nd September 2022.

Gordon Lloyd

BERKSHIRE BRANCH EXCELLENCE AWARD TO THE CROOKED BILLET

I got agreement from committee members on 8th November that we approved the award.

The Crooked Billet, Stoke Row, had provided a lunch for our branch on 22nd July 2022. Several of our members have, both before and since, enjoyed meals there. I made the presentation on Sunday 19th November, when I and two other members had lunch.

We had starters including crispy duck and melon, then mains including roast beef, lamb and halibut; desserts included sorbets and treacle tart.

The quality of the food was exemplary. The dishes may be based on traditional British fare but their production and presentation is well above average. The choice of wines is excellent. We shared a bottle of Angelo Montepulciano. One of our party had a pint of local ale. The service was first class – we were made comfortable, and the food was accurately ordered and delivered with good timing.



Our justification of the award was based both on the excellent fare and its consistency over a period of several years.

Colin Mair

BERKSHIRE BRANCH EXCELLENCE AWARD TO RUCHETTA



Following discussion with our committee members and several other members, we decided that a visit by me and another member to Ruchetta in Wokingham on Friday 15th December was a good opportunity to present Angelo with an excellence award.

Our visit was as ever a wonderful occasion. We started with a glass of Prosecco, but it has to be said that this wine, often a rather bland and too-sweet froth, was a really excellent example. This is typical of the wines, mostly selected and imported by Angelo himself.

My fellow member, Diana Goodwin, had a crab starter and I had a mushroom dish. We decided to have glasses of wine rather than a bottle and Diana stayed with the Prosecco, while I chose a Valpolicella Ripasso from Tedeschi, a winery I have visited and whose wines I admire. With a main of veal, Diana chose a Montepulciano, and with my fish fritto misto I asked Angelo to recommend one of the white wines available by the glass. Angelo then said he had a particular bottle open, and he would like to offer me a glass of that. It was a wine from Mancini, who

famously produce white wines from Pinot Noir, though this one was from a blend of Pinot Noir with another autochthonous variety; it was of course delicious. We chose desserts and Angelo proffered us a small glass each of an Antinori muscat. Then with our coffee he gave us complimentary glasses of grappa (he knows I love grappa). I hope you can tell that Angelo really looks after his customers. The restaurant is not cheap but it is excellent value given the outstanding quality of the food and wine and particularly the delightful service.

Immediately after the presentation Angelo put the sticker on his door and said that he had several customers he was sure would be interested. This he demonstrated by introducing me to a customer at an adjacent table – he was interested and we exchanged details so I hope this may be followed up.

Colin Mair

CAPE TOWN EXCELLENCE AWARD TO THE FOOD BARN RESTAURANT

The Food Barn Restaurant's chef Franck Dangereux was chef at La Colombe, a Michelin starred restaurant in Constantia, before leaving to start his own food venture at Noordhoek Farm Village.

As well as being a very creative chef and keen on wine and food matching, he knows several wine makers and gets involved in making wine especially for his restaurant. He prepared an outstanding wine matched dinner for the Cape Town Branch.



Award presented by Council Member Ian Nicol (left) and EAZ African Representative Hilton Kuck (centre) to Chef Proprietor Franck Dangereux (right) of The Food Barn Restaurant

EXCEPTIONAL SERVICE AWARDS

On 23rd November 2023 at the Merseyside & Mid Cheshire branch's IWFS 90th Anniversary Dinner, John Nicholas on behalf of the EAZ presented to:



Angela Britland (left), a 10 year an Exceptional Service Diploma and Medallion for her dedicated service for the Merseyside & Mid Cheshire Branch as a member and Committee Member.

Anne Saville (right), a

25 year Exceptional Service Diploma and Medallion for her dedicated service to the Merseyside & Mid Cheshire Branch as a member and Committee Member.



On 30th November 2023, Tim Hodges the Merseyside & Mid Cheshire Branch Chairman, on behalf of the EAZ, presented to **Mike Saville** in Mike's own home, a 25 year Exceptional Service Diploma and Medallion for his dedicated service to the Branch as a member and Committee Member.

On 13th December 2023 at the Herefordshire & Monmouthshire branch Christmas Dinner Tricia Fletcher, on behalf of the EAZ, presented to:

Michael Hoddinott a 25 year Exceptional Service Diploma and Medallion for his dedicated service to the branch as a Founder member, Committee Member, present Chairman, past Treasurer and past Chairman.

John Boyd a 25 year Exceptional Service Diploma and Medallion for his dedicated service to the Herefordshire & Monmouthshire Branch as a Founder member, Committee Member and past Chairman.

LUSAKA LONG SERVICE AWARDS

When the African Adventure travellers had a dinner with the Lusaka Branch it was an appropriate time to recognise the long service given by members of that branch.

The first award was to **Ken Cummins** who had given long service as a committee member of the branch and is presently Secretary. Ken received a citation presented by Ian Nicol, Council Member, and an EAZ Excellence Medallion presented by Michael Tamburri, Chair of APZ and Council Member.



The second Long Service Award was to **Mairi Cummins**, Ken's wife who unfortunately was not present at the dinner. The award for long service to the branch, on the committee and in arranging events, was handed to Ken to present to her at home.

The third Long Service award was presented to **Emily Luering** for service to the Branch committee and for her general enthusiasm in supporting and promoting EAZ, including help with the African Adventure programme.

The citation to Emily was presented by Ian Nicol, Council Member, and the EAZ Excellence Medallion by Michael Tamburri, APZ Chair and Council Member.



The fourth Long Service award was made to **Arnie Luering** for long service to the branch and enthusiastic Ambassador for Society Festivals and for hosting the final day in Lusaka for the African Adventure.



The citation was presented to Arnie by Ian Nicol Council Member and the EAZ Excellence Medallion by Michael Tamburri, Chair of APZ and Council Member.

The fifth Excellence Award was a surprise to the recipient as he was aware of the other four framed citations, which he had been passing across, and then realised he had an extra one, which was quickly taken up, and the award was made to himself **Mark Luering**, present and long serving Chair of the Branch, which he has built up to be one of the largest branches in EAZ.

Ian commented that he had presented a husband and wife with awards in the past but never before an entire family.

The citation was presented to Mark by Ian Nicol, Council Member and the medallion by Michael Tamburri, Chair of APZ and Council Member.



Capital PAIRING MUSIC AND WINE



Mendelssohn and merlot. Led Zeppelin and zinfandel. Adele and albarino. Does experiencing one influence the other? And is it just emotional mood setting or is there some 'cross-modal correspondences' going on whereby the brain instinctively correlates attributes from one sense (i.e. sound) with that of another (i.e. taste). For example, imagine the tweeting of a piccolo with the zing of a lemon. A number of academic researchers such as Charles Spence of the University of Oxford and wine experts such as Susan Lin MW and wine writer Jo Burzynska have dedicated portions of their career to investigate this intriguing relationship. The widely held empirical conclusion of their (and others) experiments is that people reliably match certain wines with specific pieces of music even though the physiological factors behind the correlations are not yet well understood.

In October 2023 the IWFS Capital Branch held its own pseudo-scientific experiment pairing wines and music led by two of our experts – a DipWSET head of wine for a major corporate caterer and a keyboardist with a Royal College of Music MSc degree. The evening ended up being (in equal parts) educational, experimental, entertaining and ensuring that aching heads would prevail the next morning.

The attendees – some of whom had been rather nonplussed walking into the room – universally came away convinced that a link does indeed exist between the characteristics of music and wine. The most emphatic proof of this was when a song by

Adele (*I Drink Wine*) was paired with a Rioja. The organisers had originally thought that the pairing would work. However, on the night, a vast majority of faces were frowning and heads shaking. A consensus 'NO'. When an alternative track – Tito Puente's *Oye Como Va* – was played to the same wine heads started to bob and smiles lit the room.

The full running order of wines and music is below. In the third flight participants were asked to individually assign their own pairings of the three wine and music pieces. The results were as follows:

- *Romeo and Juliet* (Prokofiev) – a clear majority paired it with a St Emilion.
- *Sweet Lullaby* (Deep Forest) – a majority paired it with Pinot Bianco followed closely by the Pinot Noir.
- *Freddie Freeloader* (Miles Davis) – an equal number paired it with the St Emilion and Pinot Noir

What was the pairing of the night? The wonderful New Zealand chardonnay with Bach's Cello Suite no. 1. People might not automatically associate chardonnay with cello but the warm timbre and elegant legato-played melody of the Bach interwove perfectly with the crisp yet round expressiveness of the NZ wine. 1 + 1 equalled 3.

The Capital Branch has already received requests for follow-up events along the same theme, so watch this space...

Philip Kim

RUNNING ORDER

Flight 1

- Sauvignon Blanc – Touraine Gossaume 2022
Estampes L.100 (Debussy) (to 1:38)
- Malbec – Signature Susan Balbo 2019
Vocalise Op 34 No. 14 for Cello and Piano (Rachmaninoff) (to 1:37)
- Champagne – Pannier NV
Carnival of the Animals – Aquarium (Saint Saens) (to 1:12)
Violin Concerto 3rd movement (Brahms) (to 1:15)

Flight 2

- Chardonnay -Kumeu River Estate 2021
Cello Suite no. 1 (Bach) (entirety 2.5 minutes)
- Rioja Gran Reserva – Ramon Bilbao 2015
I Drink Wine (Adele) (to 2:11)
superceded by *Oye Como Va* (Tito Puente)

Flight 3

- Edmond de Rothschild St Emilion 2018
Romeo and Juliet Dance of the Knights (Prokofiev) (to 1:56)
- Pinot Noir – Organic Seresin Estate 2022
Sweet Lullaby (Deep Forest) (to 2:09)
- Pinot Bianco – Russiz Superiore 2016
Freddie Freeloader (Miles Davis) (to 2:13)

Flight 4

- Mystery Wine
Nocturne in E-Flat Major (Chopin) (to 2:13)
- Mystery Wine
Soul Vibrations (HipHarp Collective) (to 2:15)

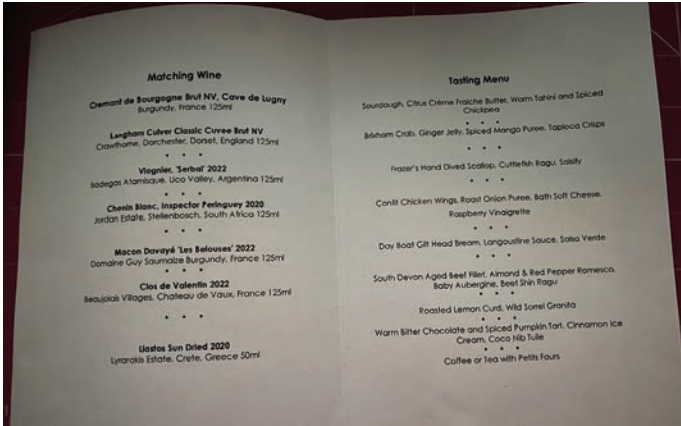
Devon

THE ELEPHANT

On 16th November, 20 members dined at our local 1-star Michelin star restaurant, The Elephant by Simon Hulstone. The dress code was formal with IWFS Regalia. The evening was threefold – first it was our monthly event, second to celebrate the 90th anniversary of our Society and third to present Simon

Hulstone with an award (see page 15). This was a seven course tasting menu with matching wines. The food and wines were enjoyed by all those members and the service was impeccable.

Geeta Lloyd



Devon

CHRISTMAS AT THE PAIGNTON CLUB

Trevor Cornish, the general manager of the Paignton Club, and his team did a wonderful job for our guests on 12th December when 28 members enjoyed a lovely Mistletoe Dinner. The wines to accompany the menu were chosen by Dr Gordon Lloyd.

Club was founded in 1882 for gentlemen and the architect for the now Grade II listed Victorian building was George S. Bridgeman, who also designed Oldway Mansion for the Singer Family. It has been part of the social fabric of Torquay and Paignton for a long time.

In 1881, a group of gentlemen proposed a non-political club, where the elite could meet in a club environment. The Paignton

Geeta Lloyd



Herefordshire & Monmouthshire WINE TASTING WITH A DIFFERENCE

We sometimes enjoy the more formal and forensic approach to wine tasting – tutored, appraised, analysed, criticised, compared and scored, but in October we took a different approach.

We invited a wine merchant based in Telford to be our guest speaker at an informal gathering in the country home of one of our Herefordshire members. Preet Sahota the MD of Edgmond Wines spoke entertainingly of his early introduction to wines in his family's business and his ambition to develop his knowledge further into his own company. Preet specialises in the wines of South Africa, particularly from smaller less well known vineyards which produce lower volumes of high quality wines. His approach was to introduce interesting wines to be enjoyed by individuals and to be tasted with various foods from smoked meats and fish to fruits and cheeses.

We tasted eight wines from his premium range, starting with two sparkling from Graham Beck, available only as a special "Yin-Yang" duo pack. The first was a Graham Beck Yin 2016 60% Pinot Noir 40% Chardonnay, the second a Graham Beck Yang 2016, an intriguing reversal, 40% Pinot Noir 60% Chardonnay. We didn't attempt to score them, we just savoured the subtle flavour distinctions.

We moved on to a Sauvignon Blanc 2022 from Villa Esposto, grapes from the renowned Skurfburg farm planted in 1993, and then a Villa Esposto single vintage Chenin Blanc from vines planted in 1982. Blake Family Wines offered us the rare opportunity to sample a single vineyard Malbec 2020 followed by a single vineyard Villa Esposto Pinotage 2018 and a Cabernet Sauvignon Merlot 2021.

As a special indulgence, not from South Africa, Preet introduced an Australian Wolf Blass Grey Label Shiraz 2016, a rarity due to the small production, which can retail for up to £99.

The finale, back to a Villa Esposto Muscat d'Alexandrie 2021 from vines planted in 1969, the oldest vineyard Preet had ever visited.

Members relaxed after valiantly and uncomplainingly accepting the challenge of sampling eight wines, by facing up to the pleasurable, if exhausting, duty of demolishing a cold buffet lunch which had been sourced from Waitrose Entertaining. A quite excellent experience for all.

Sue Smith



Herefordshire & Monmouthshire CHRISTMAS DINNER AT THE MANOR



Eckington Manor near Pershore was reserved exclusively for the branch 2023 Black Tie dinner in December. Many of the guests

MENU

Starters

- Smoked and cured salmon, yoghurt, cucumber, seaweed cracker
- Mushroom parfait, Madeira, red onion marmalade, toasted brioche
- Chicken and duck terrine, celeriac, quince, spiced almond

Mains

- Breast and leg of turkey, roast potato, charred sprouts, cranberry
- Sea bream, mussels, fennel, sea herbs, Eckington Cyder sauce
- Roasted Jerusalem artichoke, salsify, hazelnut, ricotta gnocchi

Cheese

Locally produced Double Gloucester

Desserts

- Christmas pudding panna cotta, cranberry, blood orange
- Iced tiramisu parfait, malted ice cream

Wines

- Simonsig Kaapse Cap Classic Brut 2020 S.A.
- D.O. Valle del Limari Chardonnay 2022 Chile
- Ignacio Recabarron Casablanca Pinot Noir 2021 Chile
- Casa Ermelinda Freitas Moscatel de Setúbal Portugal

Coffee or tea

stayed in 4* comfort in the old manor house and the adjacent converted stable block whilst others retired to the Bell Inn, a village pub and restaurant with rooms a few minutes away. More than 40 members and guests from at least four branches joined the party and to start the evening two members, Branch Chairman Michael Hoddinott and founder member John Boyd, were presented with 25 year service awards by Awards Officer Tricia Fletcher (see page 16).

Dinner was served in the Barn Restaurant, tastefully decorated for Christmas in a minimalist style of silver with white lights. The service throughout was relaxed and efficient whilst conversation flowed fluently between courses.

At half time the chairman formally welcomed and proposed a toast to the guests – he thanked Stephen Bennion for selecting the wines for the evening and expressed his appreciation for the support he has received from branch members in delivering the events programme during the year.

This dinner also celebrated the 90th Anniversary of the founding of the society in 1933 and John Boyd was invited to present recollections and anecdotes from the life of André Simon (the text is published separately). All present raised a glass to André.

We continued with cheese and dessert accompanied by the final wine of the evening, gradually winding down to cheerful exhortations from everyone to enjoy a good night's sleep and their forthcoming Christmas celebrations.

Sue Smith

Herefordshire & Monmouthshire LUNCH AT THE HALL

We start each year with an informal lunch for all who renew their subscriptions in time for us to claim the 'earlybird renewal' rebate. This time we tried a traditional country pub near Usk in Monmouthshire that we hadn't visited previously as a group, although several of us knew it as one of the few hostelrys in the area that actually opened for food on a Tuesday lunchtime!

The Hall Inn at Gwehelog has low beamed ceilings, cosy intimate seating areas and was just the right size for our party of 17. They offer an extensive menu of popular 'pub-grub' dishes with particular attention paid to presentation on the plate which would not disgrace a fine dining restaurant. Portions were generous and the quality of the ingredients quite excellent. We had ordered in advance and the main course choices included: several varieties of meat and vegetable curries, hake in a coriander cream sauce, vegetarian 'Glamorgan' sausages served with mixed leaves and garlic mayonnaise or cottage pie topped with cheesy mash. All guests selected a starter from a selection that included Ardennes Paté, grilled goats cheese soufflé, black pudding or deep fried brie. A wide range of indulgent desserts appealed to most. For wines we chose from the house wine list a prosecco as an aperitif, then we served Tanners Claret (sourced from Tanners of Shrewsbury, a favourite wine merchant with our members) and a Mâcon-Lugny, Les Genièvres, Maison Louis Latour. Both were well appreciated.



One intrepid soul explored the dark depths of an alcohol free Guinness.

It has to be said that lunch occupied nearly half a day - we met at 12.15 and returned to our carriages at 3.30 – but no-one seemed to notice, just expressed surprise that dusk was approaching.

Sue Smith

Leicester

A ROUND-UP OF MEALS

After a degree of hesitation from some dedicated carnivore members, Leicester Chapter experienced a Michelin-starred vegan meal at Gauthier in Soho. The restaurant has the feel of the premises of a secret society, with a plain black door, no signage to indicate it is a temple of gastronomy, a narrow winding staircase and, in our private room, an old fortune telling machine, long defunct. Those who have read Agatha Christie's *The Clocks* will get the idea.

Lunch comprised mushroom, and sweet potato, canapés, followed by Lettuce and Watercress herb brioche – which was an exciting (if initially alarming) bright green colour, and which turned out to be delicious. Tis was followed by salsify, then



risotto truffle noir, then 3D printed 'steak' – a cube of swede, carrot and horseradish (which was the opposite of the brioche, conventionally meaty in appearance, exactly like a piece of beef, raising hopes, though sadly tasteless). There followed a very refreshing citrus and lovage water ice, then chocolate and pear pudding and petit fours with coffee. Very good wines to match.

Dishes which are exciting at the time sometimes fail to be conveyed so well by photographs afterwards, but the brioche has to be shown here (left). It was overall a very interesting and enjoyable experience. Did I need a steak afterwards, as some non-IWFS friends predicted? No, although I will admit to popping into Paxton & Whitfield for a sample on the way home.

We then followed our AGM by black tie dinner at the home of new members Ron and Cathie Sawers, hiring a very good chef and local team called Zest. Wines brought by members included Nicolas Feuillatte champagne (black label incarnation), which has improved no end over the last few years and is now one of our favourites. Not put off by the experience, in late summer Ron and Cathie provided a lamb barbeque for us with the most delicious éclairs and other treats for pudding provided by another member, Kim Bowman, who makes cakes in the kitchen of her farmhouse for Farndon Fields farm shop in Market Harborough.

Members Simon and Susan Faire subsequently treated us to a Cottage Pie and Champagne evening at their home in Mowsley. Inspired by Jeffrey Archer's Cottage Pie and Krug evenings, we savoured superb cottage pie and greens alongside champagne. We sampled a variety of bottles brought by members, of which in the NV category Bollinger proved the favourite. In the vintage category a 1986 Pol Roger, served with home-made blackberry and apple crumble, proved exceptional and showed how versatile champagne can be.

None of us, happily, were able to compare it with prison food, but we felt the evening could not have been better.

More recently, we visited Otto's Restaurant in Gray's Inn Road. French cooking at its very best! Scallops en croute, then



Tournedos Rossini (or lobster and monkfish risotto), then cheese (French, of course), then iced fruit soufflé. All were truly superb. These were accompanied by Canard Duchene NV and Ch. Ladignac 2015. The restaurant, complete with both duck and lobster presses, equal to those of Tour d'Argent and Divellec in Paris (from which the latter comes) is an absolute gem. The restaurant also has the advantage personally of being across the road from my Chambers in Gray's Inn Square, though it means a degree of discipline is sometimes required to walk past. Five stars. The photo shows Otto in the grey suit, fourth from left.

Steven Gasztowicz KC



London AGM AND DINNER

To encourage members to participate in their 2023 AGM London Branch decided to follow it with a dinner at the Army and Navy Club and a tasting of excellent mature clarets. They were most appreciative of this rare opportunity.

The wines were from the cellar of our member Michael Daiches and were selected from among the most highly rated from his previous tasting. They were showing superbly.

We were served *Army and Navy Club Champagne NV* for the apéritif.

- Game Terrine with Apple and Cider Chutney and Toasted Sourdough

Riesling Clos Häuserer, Domaine Zind Humbrecht 2018

The Humbrecht family in Alsace has a history of wine growing through the generations since 1620. Domaine Zind-Humbrecht was created in 1959, and is still run by direct descendants of Humbrechts.

Its wine is produced only from its own vineyards and is biodynamic. The vineyards for this wine were planted in 1973. The terroir is calcareous marl, deep and rich, with a significant amount of clay.

The wine was a very good illustration of Alsace Riesling: complex and integrated, with a long refreshing finish. It was ready for drinking, and would continue to age for years to come.

- Roasted Poussin with Leek and Herb Mousse, Potato and Vegetable Gratin, Curly Kale and Thyme Café au Lait.

With three wines:

Château Grand Puy Lacoste Pauillac 2005, 5ème Cru Classé

This is one of the oldest properties in the Médoc, dating back to the sixteenth century. Since 1978 it has been in the ownership of the Borie family.

The estate is highly regarded as consistently outperforming its classification. The terroir is deep gravel over limestone, near the river and rarely getting frost. The wine is predominantly Cabernet Sauvignon with Merlot.

The nose was classic Pauillac cigar box perfume with blackcurrant and black cherry fruit and cedar. The flavours were of black fruits. It was powerful, smooth and dry.



Château Batailley Pauillac 2005, 5ème Cru Classé

The estate also is in the Borie family ownership. The terroir is deep gravel typical of Pauillac, with clay and sandstone below the surface and excellent natural drainage.

The wine was a blend of 73% Cabernet Sauvignon, 23% Merlot, 2% Cabernet Franc and 2% Petit Verdot. The nose was of eucalyptus, blackcurrant and tobacco. On the palate it was elegant and quite light, with softened tannins, and a velvet finish.



Château Pichon Longueville Comtesse de Lalande Pauillac 2004, 2ème Cru Classé

In 2004 May-Eliane de Lencquesaing was the owner and general manager of Château Pichon Comtesse de Lalande. Under her management she expanded the estate and made substantial improvements to raise quality (and prices). Indeed she was an ambassador for Bordeaux wines world-wide.

The terroir is deep gravel with clay and limestone soil. Subsoils are clay and below this are sandstone, marl and limestone.

Cabernet Sauvignon is the larger proportion in the blend, but there is more Merlot than in the previous two wines; also a small proportion of Cabernet Franc. It has the reputation of being the most voluptuous of the Médoc wines on account of the Merlot.

The nose was blackcurrant with hints of graphite and vanilla. The palate showed concentrated flavours of black fruit, tobacco and cedar, with approachable tannins. It was dry, medium-bodied and balanced.

- Warm Candy Apple Tart with Candied Almonds, Caramel Sauce and Clotted Cream Ice Cream.
- Coffee, Tea, Herbal Infusion, Mints

Our warm thanks to Michael for selecting and very generously donating the wines for our privileged delectation. It was a wonderful evening.

Rachel Burnett

London

TRIBUTE WINE DINNER TO OUR LATE CHAIRMAN, ANDREW BRODIE

Memories abide of wonderful wine dinners in London, organised by Andrew Brodie and Jack Rubyn, chairman of the Marin County Branch in California. Following Andrew's untimely death seven years ago Jack sponsored a special dinner in his memory.

This year Jack very kindly offered to sponsor a repeat performance and we gathered at Noizé restaurant in Fitzrovia for a very special dinner, featuring Andrew's favourite California Zinfandels from Dry Creek Valley chosen from Jack's own cellar to complement each course – how fortunate we were.

The venue was appropriately chosen because Mathieu Germond, the master restaurateur and owner of Noizé, was formerly co-owner and restaurant manager of Pied à Terre restaurant where the previous special dinner was held. He has since launched Noizé, aiming for a French rustic and convivial atmosphere. Its byline reads: "Exceptional food, prepared to suit you personally. Ingredients are sourced from small, independent suppliers who live and breathe quality." Indeed!

We started with canapés and 2019 Marimar Estate Blanc de Noirs Sparkling Pinot Noir, Dona Margarita Vineyard – Sonoma Coast

This was followed by Marinated Sea-Bass, Escabeche Vegetable, Green Sauce, accompanied by 2022 Californian Albarino, Marimar Estate, Russian River

Next came Roasted Partridge Breast, with lentils and bacon ragout, and toasted oat, served with 2000 / 2005 Deux Amis Zinfandel – Sonoma Coast

Venison Wellington was complemented by 1992/1994 Teldeschi Zinfandel – Dry Creek Valley

French Cheeses were enhanced by 2001 Rued Zinfandel – Dry Creek Valley and 2002 Amphora Zinfandel – Dry Creek Valley

Dessert was Apple Tarte Fine with Caramel Sauce and Vanilla Ice Cream and 1995 Essensia – California Orange Muscat – A. Quady

It was a privilege to enjoy this sumptuous dinner and great wines specifically selected in memory of Andrew Brodie. Enormous and appreciative thanks to Jack Rubyn for enabling and organising this Tribute Wine Dinner, and for the superb wines he provided.

Rachel Burnett



London

A TASTING OF FINE CLARETS FROM THE 1996 VINTAGE



This outstanding tasting was held at the Army and Navy Club on 9th November 2023. All these wines had been extremely generously donated by London Branch member Lance Jaundoo, who purchased them when they first became available on the market. He had taken professional advice to obtain the most successful châteaux, resulting in a superb collection. The wines all had some similar features, which included lovely ripe fruit, tannins perfectly integrated into the wine, concentrated flavours and masked acidity. All were in excellent shape, but the Clos du Marquis had strange tastes on opening which resolved after an hour's decanting. All bottles had substantial muddy dregs, and were decanted and filtered appropriately.

The weather in 1996 played an important part in the genesis of these wines, by virtue of a hot June, some pre-harvest rain which adversely affected the right bank early-maturing Merlot, followed by a sunny, windy September in the left bank areas which led to dried grapes with good sugar levels and reduced rot. The resulting harvest was extremely successful and it is ranked among the best vintages in recent times. The wines at this tasting were only just mature, having been overtly tannic when young. All had been professionally stored.

We started with the *Sociando Mallet* which was reluctantly planted with vines when the owner was persuaded by some of his wine making friends to try his hand at making wine. The château had been a weekend residence for him and tonight's wine was a splendid example of a lighter style but in fine shape and no signs of its provenance from just north of Saint-Estephe.

Next came *Rausan Segla*, which was showing very well with loads of berry fruit, hidden tannin and an elegance in keeping with its Margaux origins.

Duhart Milon had not been a great wine until it received the magic touch from its Rothschild owners, now producing high quality wine. Our bottle tonight showed how successful had been the improvements with a charming well balanced very fruity wine in total harmony and showing the characteristic flavours of a Pauillac wine.

Grand-Puy-Lacoste is renowned for being good value for good wine and the bottle showed exactly what was meant by this statement; a fine example of Pauillac with rounded velvety tannins and ideal soft fruit flavour.

I thought that the *Pichon Longeville*, also from Pauillac, was not showing as well as might be expected: maybe it had been a one-off bottle? It had less fruit and weight than the other wines and tasted a bit thin, yet was pleasant enough.

The next three wines were all from St Julien. The *Clos Du Marquis* was a slightly lighter wine in very good shape, having pleasant soft acidity and relatively delicate fruit flavours: nothing to suggest that this is thought to be a 2nd growth wine when, in fact, it is made from a separate vineyard and only receives a small amount of the Leoville Las Cases, which is considered to be a 1st growth in quality.

The *Leoville Barton* was showing very well, a beautiful integration of its elements, at its peak and a real joy to drink. The owners at this Château must be very proud of what they have managed to produce.

The *Ducru-Beaucaillou* can only be described as awesome, a monumental wine packed with soft ripe fruit with beautifully integrated tannin. Top class and probably the favourite of the evening.

This was followed by the *Cos d'Estournel*, from Saint-Estephe which I thought was possibly the best wine of the tasting, because its balance and finesse was impeccable with delightful crafted dark fruit flavours, very full bodied and ripe reflecting masterful production techniques.

This was a memorable tasting showing just what accounts for the fantastic reputation that Bordeaux still enjoys in the world of wine. We are tremendously grateful for Lance and Ashah Jaundoo for making it possible.

Chris Davenport Jones



London

IS CHÂTEAU D'YQUEM THE BEST?



On 14th November at the Army and Navy Club we had an unusual tasting of some of the world's best sweet wines. The five Sauternes were tasted blind and all 10 wines were scored by the 18 participants. A pleasure-per-pound figure was constructed for each wine by dividing the average score out of 20 by the cost or present value of each wine in pounds, mainly using Wine Searcher.

Joh. Jos. Prüm Graacher Himmelreich Riesling Auslese, 2005. 8%. A miracle year, 7/7. Prüm's 2005 Ausleses were judged their best ever by Prüm. Straw. Lovely rich fruity bouquet and taste, with no petrol. Sweet with a superb balance, in spite of only 8% alcohol. Elegant and really satisfying. Will keep for decades. Average score 17.24/20, range 15-19, approximate value £104, so pleasure-per-pound (ppp) is 0.166 (17.2/£104). I think that no-one gave it 20 because they left room for something even better later, as I did.

Albert Mann Alsace Tokay Pinot Gris Grand Cru Furstentum, 2000. 13.1%. A 6/7 year. Gold. Legs. Rich bouquet and flavour. Big body. Sweet and satisfying. A little past its best? Average score 14.29, range 10-18, £50, ppp 0.286.

Domaine des Forges, Coteaux du Layon Chaume 1er Cru, Les Onnis, 2011. 12.5%. A 7/7 year. Gold. Legs. Rich mature Chenin Blanc bouquet and flavour. Hints of caramel. Big body, very long. Gorgeous. Average score 16.5, range 12-20, £29, ppp 0.569.

Disznókó Tokaji Aszú 5 puttonyos, 1st Growth, 2005. 12.5%. 50cl. A 6/7 year. A first growth since 1732. Amber. Legs. Strong noble rot bouquet; some marmalade and barley sugar. Big body; viscous. Sweet but with plenty of balancing acidity. Long. Delicious. Average score 15.47, range 13-18, £70, ppp 0.221.

Sauternes A which was **Château Lafaurie-Peyraguey, 2001, 13.5%.** A 7/7 year. In the 1855 classification, this came second to d'Yquem. Darkish gold. Legs. Rich Botrytis bouquet. Good flavour. Excellent balance. Very long. Possibly a little past its best? Average score 15.53, range 10-18, £71, ppp 0.219.

Sauternes B **Château Rieussec 1998, 14%.** A 5/7 year. Gold. Legs. Lovely big fresh bouquet. Lovely balance. Long. Very rich

and excellent all round. Average score 17.41, range 12-20, £91, ppp 0.191.

Sauternes C **Château Rieussec 2005, 14%.** A 6/7 year. Lovely gold. Legs. Noble rot bouquet. Very big body. Very rich all round. Elegant and a great wine. Average score 17.41, range 14-20, £61, ppp 0.285.

Sauternes D **Château Suduiraut 2005, 14%.** A 6/7 year. Mid-gold. Big legs. Big honey and marmalade Botrytis bouquet. Lots of flavour. Very sweet. Very long. Average score 17.44, range 15-20, £65, ppp 0.268.

Sauternes E **Château d'Yquem, Premier Cru Supérieur** (the only one) **1999, 14%.** Not a great year. Yield, one glass per vine. Gold. Legs. Rich and complex noble rot bouquet. Very sweet but almost balanced by the abundant acidity. The biggest and longest of these Sauternes – the aftertaste went on and on. Delicious! Average score 17.47, range 14-20, £390, ppp 0.045.

Lustau Murillo Pedro Ximenez Centennial Selection. 50 cl. 17%. Dark brown. Legs. Big tartrate deposits. Great bouquet and huge body. Extremely sweet. A very good high-density really sweet sherry. Average score 16.3, range 12-19, £14, ppp 1.16.

I had to go to the second decimal place to get any score differences between the top four Sauternes: they were all wonderful. Votes for which was the d'Yquem: Sauternes A 0; B 3; C 5; D 6 (the biggest vote, including mine, Suduiraut 2005); E (the correct vote) 4. Someone scored the d'Yquem at only 14/20! The sweet sherry gave the most pleasure per pound, followed by the Loire wine, with d'Yquem predicably the poorest for that.

Brenda Lamb had randomised the five Sauternes, so I did not know which was which when I did a proper National Judges' judge-off. 5th A; 4th B, with 3rd, very close, D. Second was E, the d'Yquem, very close behind C. First, the Rieussec 2005.

The evening was greatly enjoyed by all and the format, with some blind judging, went well. A cold buffet was provided by the club.

Dr Bernard Lamb

London

IS DOM PÉRIGNON THE BEST?

On 30th January at the Army and Navy Club we tasted 10 Champagnes and English sparkling wines of different ages and styles. The wines were sourced by Dr Bernard Lamb, who also presented them. People scored each wine out of 20, so average scores could be worked out later. Approximate current prices are given for the younger wines but are not available (NA) for the older ones. 17 out of 18 who booked managed to come in spite of the train strike. It was pleasure to see several new and younger faces, with Beverley St. John Aubin doing a very good job of introductions.

Louis Pommery Brut England (NV), Hampshire, 12.5%. 100 acres were planted by this Champagne house in 2017 on chalk soil near Alresford. Pale. Fair mousse. Pleasant bouquet and good taste, but simple. Sweetish. My score 14, average, 13.9, range 9 to 18. £31.

Ashling Park Estate Cuvée Brut (NV), Sussex, 12.0%. The Gardner family planted 13ha in 2009. The wine is made by Dermot Sugrue and spends at least six years on the lees. Pale yellow-gold. Vigorous mousse. Bigger and more complex bouquet and a more developed flavour than the Pommery. Cooked apple? Delicious and very satisfying. My score 18, average 14.1, range 8 to 18. £34-50.

Nyetimber Blanc de Blancs Première Cuvée Chardonnay 2000, Sussex, 12.0%. Stuart and Sandy Moss, from Chicago, were thought mad when they planted Champagne grapes on greensand soil in 1988 near Pulborough. Shamefully, these pioneers of modern English sparkling wine are not mentioned

on the website. It is now a huge producer with vines in Sussex, Kent and Hampshire.

Gold but not dark. Low mousse (typical of older sparkling wines). Pleasant aroma with some caramel. Delicious flavour. Really good development. Well worth keeping so long. My score 18, average 14.2, range 10 to 18. NA.

Dom Pérignon 2000 Brut, Hautvillers, 12.5%. The Benedictine monk Dom Pérignon was cellarer at the Abbey of Hautvillers. Although often wrongly credited with inventing the Champagne method, he did use thicker glass, corks tied down with oiled hemp rope, and getting white wine from black grapes. The wine spends at least seven years on the lees. It is roughly equal parts of Chardonnay and Pinot Noir. It is part of the LVMH luxury goods group. Straw gold. Very small bubbles but no big mousse. Less bouquet and less developed flavour than the Nyetimber. Good flavour and length. Disappointing for its reputation and price. My score 17, average 16.8, range 13 to 20. About £300.

Exton Park Blanc de Blancs 2014, Hampshire, 11.5%. Photos were shown of the sloping vineyard on deep chalk soil. The wine is from 20-year-old vines, with six years on the lees, and was disgorged in 2021. Unusually, Exton also produces wines aged under the sea! Pale straw. Lots of very small bubbles. Fragrant bouquet and a lovely flavour. Fresh and refreshing. Some complexity. Delicious. My score 17, average 15, range 11 to 18. £65.





All Angels Classic Cuvée 2015, Berkshire, 12.0%. Owned by the Darley family, the vineyard is near Newbury, at Enbourne. Chardonnay 58%, Pinot Noir 19%, Pinot Meunier, 13%, Pinot Gris, 10%. This was a difficult year, with the harvest in late October, early November. Best mousse so far, with a big white head and fast bubbles. Very good bouquet. Fresh, fizzing in the mouth. Good acidity. Delicious all round. Lovely. My score 18, average 14.9, range 8 to 18. £40.

Camel Valley Pinot Noir Brut 2010, Cornwall, 12.0%. This is family run by Bob and Anne Lindo, with son Sam now the winemaker. Their wines have beaten Bollinger and Roederer in international competitions. Light gold. Low mousse. Moderate bouquet. Excellent flavour, very complex and developed. Very long. Has character, elegance and depth, but was let down a bit by the bouquet, so I did not give it 20. My score 18, average 16.2, range 10 to 20. NA.

Furleigh Estate Classic Cuvée Brut 2009, Dorset, 12.0%. This is near the Jurassic Coast and run by the founders, Ian Edwards and Rebecca Hansford. There is some oak-ageing in old Cognac barrels. Chardonnay 40%, Pinot Noir 30%, Pinot Meunier 30%. It was a perfect year. Light gold. Very small bubbles but not much mousse. Not a lot of bouquet. A good complex flavour. Slight oak. Very long. Possibly better younger. My score 17, average 16.4, range 13 to 19. NA.

Moët & Chandon Brut Impérial 1983, 12.5%. Now owned by LVMH, huge, producing about 28 million bottles a year from 2,900 acres, and they buy in grapes. Light gold. Low mousse,

small bubbles. Fair bouquet. Very big, complex, enjoyable flavour. Still fairly fresh on the palate. Well developed. Keeping well. My score 17, average 16.8, range 13 to 20. NA.

All Angels Sparkling Rosé 2018, Berkshire, 12.0%. This is very unusual, made from 61% Rondo (very prolific) and 39% Pinot Gris. That year there was no frost, with a big harvest on 23rd September. At least three and a half years on the lees. Beautiful. Lovely mid-pink colour. Attractive fruity bouquet. Lovely flavour. Good length. Fully ready. My score 17, average 15.6, range 10 to 18. £40.

On a show of hands for the best wine, the Dom Pérignon and 1983 Moët received four votes, Camel Valley and Furleigh Estate received three, All Angels Rosé received two, and Exton Park and All Angels Classic Cuvée received one. 18 votes from 17 people? Apart from the Nyetimber, it is clear that the older wines were preferred. Of the wines available now, the two All Angels offer the best value.

On the average scores, it is interesting that the cheapish Champagne house English wine came last, while the Dom Pérignon and old Moët came top. The Furleigh was the best English sparkler, while the Camel Valley did get one score of 20. The huge range of scores on all wines shows how much individual tastes differ.

A cold meal was provided by the club.

Dr Bernard Lamb

Manchester AT THE FRENCH



Exquisite! Fantastic! Memorable! Adam Reid at The French, Midland Hotel, hosted a perfect evening when the branch celebrated the 90th Anniversary of the IWFS. We could not have bettered the atmosphere and surroundings – moody blue décor, velvet seating, glistening modern chandeliers – and of course a most beautiful dinner.

After a softly sparkling wine, a 2018 Auxerrois from the organic Davenport vineyard in Sussex, and the most delicate and tasty

of canapés, Adam explained his choice of menu and accompanying wines – seven courses and seven wines. Each course was a work of art, professionally presented by the staff. Guests remarked on the inspirational and sometimes unusual choice of wines.

A Greek Papagiannakos, Savatiano Old Vines, Markopoulo, bright gold and clear in colour with a delicate citrus aroma which remained constant in the glass and accompanied pickled mussels on toast perfectly. Offal and kale paired well with a Marlborough Estate pinot noir and monkfish tail with curry spiced squash paired extremely well with a 2019 Californian chardonnay from the Carneros estate. Not over-oaked, with a fresh nose and well-balanced fruit, some considered this the treat of the night.

Our well-paced feast continued with melt-in-the mouth venison and salt baked beet from the Rhug Estate in North Wales. Did the Terre Brune Superiore, Carignano del Sulcis, Sandati, with its tannic structure remind us of glorious Sicilian beaches or Mediterranean scrubland or both? It was a most suitable choice with game.

There is more! A cheese course, served in the style of a traditional dessert with white port was loved by all – not too sweet, not too dry, just perfect. A paper thin tuile topped a baked English custard, this latter description sounding far too ordinary for this prettily presented fruity dessert. Our final wine with this dish was a Californian mourverdre from Cline Cellars.

What an amazing event! Ronnie Costello thanked chef Adam and his whole team of eight – a young, very talented team – for a wonderful occasion, each course surprising and delighting us and seemingly better than the course before. Words, however superlative, could not convey our appreciation or do justice to this occasion. Where is this man's Michelin Star? André Simon would be proud.

Nicola McLoughlin



Manchester

A CHRISTMAS LUNCH



Nestled within Manchester's architectural modernity overlooked by vertiginous elevated cantilevered structures sits Manchester Hall, an old Freemason's establishment, with its symmetrical neo-classical white faced stone facade accessed through a grand stepped regal entrance in a broken tooth Victorian streetscape, but not for long if the number of tower cranes is any reflection of a city's success. Surely in past years carriages disgorged passengers onto the street, suitably dressed and jewelled, rather than the number 1 free bus from Piccadilly Railway Station at the bus stop conveniently positioned opposite the building.

Inside one could imagine the cigar induced velvet voices lubricated with Bordeaux wine and vintage port discussing Soloman, business and one God religions.

Our journey from street to table was a carefully orchestrated customer orientated service. Our dining room was a splendid vast sumptuous arena with an ornate ceiling, elaborate hanging chandeliers, long velvet curtains, presumably never closed or opened these days, and framed Masonic memorabilia – an evocation of a bygone era. The view through the windows was again of modernity and Manchester's success, apart from the delightful Mansard roofed building opposite and to the right.

On a cold and wet Sunday afternoon members and guests gathered to celebrate the Manchester IWFS annual Christmas lunch. We were treated to a glass or two of Graham Beck Sparkling Rosé wine which was chilled to perfection. A fitting tribute to what lay ahead.

Then our meal:

- Broccoli and Stilton soup with Rosemary croutons and lemon and cracked pepper crème fraîche. A delicious opening paired with a dry white sherry.
Gonzales Byass Vina AB 12 year old Amontillado
- A main course of medium rare fillet of beef, glazed carrots, watercress purée and rosemary fondant potatoes, a cress dressing and a rich, velvety gravy paired with a fine red wine.
Masi Campofiorin Rosso Veronese 2019
- Old Roan Farmhouse Wensleydale Cheese with cider and ginger poached apple and fruit crackers.
Masi Campofiorin Rosso Veronese 2020

- Date and Walnut Cake with Dulce de Leche, a middle eastern take on a Christmas pudding, with Caramelised Banana ice cream paired with a sweet dessert wine.
L'Ouest de Lamothe Guignard Sauternes 2010 in a half bottle
- Coffee or tea.

It warranted passing of the port, anticlockwise of course, or a rolling up of trouser legs at the very least to pay homage to the room's past use, 50 years of Freemasonry commencing nearly 100 years ago. Nevertheless the committee had done us proud once again.

Mike Tilley



Manchester

AGM AND LUNCH FEBRUARY 2024



Manchester members gathered at the Midland Hotel for our AGM and lunch. Upon arrival we enjoyed a flute of Mademoiselle Marguerite, Blanquette de Limoux, Brut. This was fresh, dry and zesty with notes of apple and lemon, family-produced at the foothills of the Pyrenees. We then took our seats in the Lancaster Suite — this is a beautiful wood panelled room.

Chair Ronnie Costello welcomed everyone and handed over to Ruth Hurst EAZ Awards Officer to present Bob Lloyd with an Exceptional Service Diploma for his long service and commitment to the Manchester Branch. The meeting was brief and lunch commenced.

Suckling pig terrine with shallot emulsion, pickled pearl onions, crackling and nasturtium was our starter, a delicious combination of flavours with perfect crackling. Olivier Dubois, 'Cuvée Prestige' Pinot Noir 2022 was served, this was light, soft and velvety with aromas of redcurrants and cherries and married well.

The main course was butter roasted cod fillet with curried mussel broth, spinach and sweet potato fondant; perfectly cooked cod and delicious curried broth which was perfectly complemented by the wine. Paul Jaboulet Ainé Viognier 2022 which was aromatic, peachy but fresh. This was an exceptional course.

Our cheese course was a local artisan Burt's Blue with pickled pear, watercress and sourdough crostini served in ideal condition, the wine Gourmandise, Château La Rame, Ste-Croix-du Mont. Notes of lemon, pineapple and mango were perfect with the saltiness of the cheese.

Coco Chocolate Pave, peanut butter mousse, orange gel and salted caramel popcorn, was a beautifully presented dessert and tasted equally good. A shot of chilled Cointreau heightened the flavours. Tea and coffee were served with home-made petit fours.

Chef Andy, front of house staff Donna, Bradley, Luke and all the staff were thanked by Ronnie for exceptional food and excellent service as always at the Midland Hotel.

Ronnie Costello



Merseyside & Mid Cheshire CELEBRATING THE 90th ANNIVERSARY



On a wet and windswept evening in late November, Merseyside and Mid Cheshire celebrated the IWFS 90th Anniversary with a black-tie dinner at The Aspire Restaurant at Trafford College.

We were delighted to welcome friends from other branches including, Manchester, Blackpool and Fylde Coast, Herefordshire & Monmouthshire, Northampton, Berkshire and Zurich.

Before the meal, EAZ Chairman John Nicholas presented long service awards to two of our branch members, Ann Saville and Angela Britland (see page 16). Ann and her husband Mike have been members for over 35 years and have served on the Committee, with Mike as Wine Steward for many years. Angela has been a committee member since 2007 in a variety of roles including that of Treasurer.

The Staff and Students cooked and served an excellent menu, paired with wines chosen by our wine steward, Paul.

The Menu

- *The Wine Society's Côte de Provence*, accompanied by canapés.
- Fleetwood Smokers and Poached Cornish Mackerel Pâté, served with red onion and beetroot chutney, fresh leaves and sourdough toast.
Grillo Sicilia Isola della Fiamma, Cantine Rallo 2022

- Mini Smoked Wild Duck and Ale Pie, Haunch of Venison, served with celeriac and truffle purée, glazed carrots and Madeira Jus.
d'Arenberg d'Arry's Original McLaren Vale Grenache Shiraz
- Assiette of Miniature Desserts
Samos Anthemis 2016
- Cheese Selection
- Coffee

After the meal John Boyd from the Herefordshire & Monmouthshire branch gave an address paying tribute to our founder André Simon describing how he came to form our society. As a souvenir of the event and of the anniversary everyone was presented with a crystal wine glass bearing the anniversary logo. We had five guests who were not IWFS members. They so enjoyed the evening that they are considering forming a new branch in Cumbria in 2024

Everyone was united in their opinion that it was an excellent evening with good food, good wine, excellent service and superb company. The consensus was that Lola Docherty and her team at Aspire should be given our Excellence Award.

We look forward to other branch events where we welcome members from around the country and around the world!

Angela Britland

Northampton

2023 ANNUAL DINNER AT HAMBLETON HALL

Rutland was looking particularly alluring in the unusually warm autumn sunshine on the afternoon of 8th October when twenty members of the Northampton branch and two guests made their various ways towards the Hambleton peninsula for the branch's Annual Dinner at Hambleton Hall.

Gathering in the drawing room in our finery (our President sporting his Bronze IWFS award in honour of the occasion) we enjoyed an aperitif of the ever-delicious House Champagne from René Beaudouin. It was accompanied by two tasty canapés to whet our appetites. One was a liver parfait cunningly disguised as a small green crab apple (with a tiny chocolate stalk), the other a goujon which turned out to contain a succulently creamy leek and Parmesan interior.

Having been welcomed by our Chairperson, Dr Katie Lindenbaum, the party proceeded to the Dining Room where we were all seated at one long table. Though it is difficult to converse with anyone except one's immediate neighbours, most members agreed that it had a certain grandeur. The finely drilled waiting staff who marched in and served the courses in unison added to the sense of occasion.

Our first course was described as a Taste of Wild Mushrooms. Peering into one's bouillon bowl revealed some interesting-looking examples of fungi, concealing a mushroom velouté. No expert himself, your correspondent thought he recognised a Chanterelle; the others were certainly not things one sees in the market. Perhaps some were the spoils of Hambleton's ever-popular annual Fungi Foray with a mycologist in the local woods which had taken place the previous day. Whatever they were they were intensely and deliciously mushroom-y, as was the velouté beneath.

The dish was accompanied by Miles Mossop's Saskia 2019 a white wine from South Africa. It is a blend made from roughly two thirds Chenin Blanc and differing proportions of Grenache Blanc, Clairette Blanche, Verdelho and Viognier, all matured in French oak. It was quite complex, unsurprisingly: a slight smokiness from the oak mingled with flavours which recalled white peaches and citrus fruit with floral overtones. The Clairette added the freshness of a crisp apple. It was a perfect autumnal wine.

There followed a Tortellino of smoked Lincolnshire eel with cucumber and caviar bathed with a citrusy consommé which cut



Photograph © Tim Kidger

the richness of the eel. For many members this was the standout dish of the evening. The Mauro Estevez Ribeiro 2021 served with it was perfection. Also a blend, but of Treixadura, Godello, Albariño, Loureira and Lado grapes and unoaked, it was fresh yet complex and utterly delicious – a very good food wine. White wines from northern Spain (and Portugal too) have so much to offer.

How to follow that? With breast of Merryfield Duck served slightly pinkish with Beetroot and Yuzu and a strand of a samphire-like coastal vegetable which we discovered is known as Salty Fingers. The beetroot came as very small artfully arranged pieces of varied colours. The Yuzu zest was cooked and shredded; a little could enliven every forkful. The only thing lacking, to your reporter's mind, was something to fill "the potato shaped hole". Not that he was still hungry, it was just that he would have liked to have had something with which to mop up the lovely jus. He did not quite have the nerve to ask for some more of the delicious Hambleton Bakery bread.

The 2014 Rully from the Premier Cru Préaux Vineyard from Eric de Suremain proved what good value red Burgundy from the Côte Chalonnaise can be and how well it goes with duck.

After the Loyal Toast and before the dessert Hambleton's sommelier, Dominique Baduel, told us something about the evening's wines. Our President, Dr Robin Sheppard asked questions and commented on our behalf.

At a certain level of haute cuisine things are not always what you think they are going to be. This was certainly the case with the Millefeuille of Apple, Blackberry and Caramelised White Chocolate (pictured left). A finely balanced confection of textures and flavours, it seemed a triumph that the plates reached the diners without their contents collapsing. The three layers of the centrepiece (separated from each other by dabs of, presumably, apple, blackberry, and/or white chocolate) were not made of Ryvita as they may appear from the photograph, but from something much sweeter and tastier. It was very good, and a Coteaux de Layon St Aubin from Domaine des Forges complimented it admirably.

We finished with coffee and chocolates. We had decided to forego a cheese course this year but no one seemed to mind too much. With or without cheese one never seems to feel either uncomfortably full or slightly hungry after a Hambleton dinner; they judge the quantities so well.

Dr Tim Kidger gave the vote of thanks to the chef, James Stone and Charlie Jones. A special evening like this is very much a team effort and our thanks also go to Tim Hart, Hambleton's proprietor, and Chef Director Aaron Patterson, who both take a keen interest in creating a memorable menu and evening for us. To Dominique, for the wines, and to the restaurant manager Graeme Matheson for the smooth service. We have booked for next year, of course.

Piers Smith-Cresswell

St James's LUNCH AT THE FORDWICH ARMS

For the second year running, on 19th August 2023, the St James's Branch had their annual summer lunch at The Fordwich Arms, a former pub bought by Daniel and Natasha Smith in 2017 and soon turned into a fine dining restaurant, winning one star in the 2019 Michelin guide and keeping it ever since. Fordwich is 10 minutes' drive from Canterbury and is officially the smallest town in England with a population of under 400 and a town hall dating back to 1555. The restaurant has a riverside setting, nestling on one bank of the River Stour and, as it was luckily a warm and sunny day, we were able to sit on the terrace looking out over the river.

In his earlier years Dan worked in several of Jason Atherton's restaurants and then for five years was sous-chef at The Clove Club, which he helped acquire a Michelin star. Here he aims to an even higher level. He sources his produce from the very top producers, most of them from Kent, and his cooking shows exemplary precision and refinement. His wife Tash is the pastry chef and her creations reach similar heights. Nowadays they are assisted by Ryan Sampson whom they have trained to be a brilliant sous-chef.

We were served a six-course tasting menu in which every dish was beautifully presented and perfectly balanced, producing clean and delicious flavours. About half of the wines we drank came from the restaurant's excellent wine list and the balance was brought over by ourselves – all of them were a perfect match to the food. At the end of the meal all members present unanimously agreed that the restaurant deserved our Society's Award for Excellence. Our nomination was approved by the



Awards Committee and on Sunday 5th November eight members and guests were served an equally superb lunch at the end of which we presented the Award to sous-chef Ryan Sampson. Unfortunately Dan and Tash could not be there on that day.

In conclusion, The Fordwich Arms serves some of the finest food in the UK and, in my modest opinion, the Michelin Guide clearly undervalues this restaurant as it is easily worth two stars!

Ari Sofianos



St James's

LUNCH AT LA TROMPETTE

On Saturday 4th March 2023, sixteen lucky members and guests of The St James's Branch enjoyed a truly memorable lunch at La Trompette, arguably the finest neighbourhood restaurant in London. The restaurant opened in 2001, is co-owned by Nigel Platts-Martin (widely considered the most successful restaurateur in London) and Bruce Poole, chef/patron of Chez Bruce, and has deservedly held a Michelin star continuously since 2008. The current chef is Greg Wellman, originally from Hampshire, who had previously worked in several of Platts-Martin's restaurants including The Square, Chez Bruce, Elystan St and, more recently, The Glasshouse where he was head chef. The sommelier is Donald Edwards, originally from Berkshire, who is also a keen cook and is passionate about matching wine with food. The style of the cooking is modern French/Mediterranean.

For this event we were allowed to bring our own wines. We took this opportunity to feature wines from Corsica, a fascinating region little known to most of us. Four wines (a dry white, a rosé, a red and a sweet white), which came from some of the island's top producers were sourced and a sample bottle of each was sent to the restaurant in advance to enable the chef, in co-operation with the sommelier, to compose a menu to match our wines. The pair took the challenge very seriously and the result was quite simply faultless as every dish was not only delicious in itself but, just as importantly, perfectly matched the designated wine. For the aperitif we wanted fizzy and served champagne as there is no sparkling wine from Corsica of any interest. For the same reason we served a delicious vieille prune from Gascony with the coffee.

At the end of the lunch we unanimously decided that this meal fully deserved a nomination for our Society's Award for Excellence. Our nomination was accepted by the Awards Committee and we held a lunch event on Saturday 21st October, at the end of which we presented the Award to the Chef, the Sommelier and the Restaurant Manager.



The Wines

Nicolas Feuillatte Champagne NV

This is the most popular champagne label in France (served in countless wine bars there) and one of the most popular in the world, founded in 1980 by coffee magnate Nicolas Feuillatte. Creamy and ripe-fruit flavour (white peach, apple and raspberry) with a citrus fresh finish. Predominantly Chardonnay, but also Pinot Noir/Pinot Meunier. 12 deg.

Located 90km west of Italy, 170km southeast of France and 11km north of Sardinia, Corsica belongs to France but many of the island's grape varieties and winemaking traditions come from Italy. Its viticultural history can be traced back to a settlement by Phocian traders in 570 BC in what is now the commune of Aleria. In the eighteenth century, the island came under the control of France. Following the independence of Algeria, many Algerians immigrated to Corsica and began planting vineyards. Between 1960 and 1976 the vineyard area increased fourfold. Today Corsica has 9 AOC regions, but the majority of the wine exported is vin de pays. The three leading grape varieties are Vermentino, Nielluccio (sangiovese) and Sciacarellu.

Ajaccio Rosé, Dom Comte Peraldi

This is an organic wine from the heights of Ajaccio, Napoleon's birthplace. Crisp, bone-dry rosé, very refined with plenty of red-fruit flavours and great length. Dominant grape: Sciacarellu. 13.5 deg.

Corse-Calvi Fiumeseccu, Dom Alzipratu 2021

Fresh, fruity wine from a top estate in the northwest coast of Corsica. Made from the vermentino grape, this is round and full with a refreshing twist of citrus, plus apple and almond. 13.5 deg.

Ajaccio Faustine VV rouge, Dom Comte Abbattucci 2020

This is a stunning biodynamic red wine, with class and style. It has an acid backbone which makes it delightfully fresh and drinkable even when relatively young. It is made from Nielluciu (sangiovese) and sciacarellu. The flavours are sour cherry and red fruits with notes of herbs and leather. With a few years in bottle, this wine takes on a richness and suppleness that fills the mouth.

Muscat Cap Corse, Dom Arena 2017

This is a tiny appellation restricted to a few nagged acres in the far north of Corsica. A vin doux naturel with the flavour of fresh mint and citrus, it has a light and delicate touch. 16 deg.

La Vieille Prune, Louis Roque

This is an excellent eau-de-vie distilled from Gascony plums, first made by the eponymous Louis Roque in 1905 and renowned for its digestive properties. Its round, fleshy mouthfeel is very fragrant with an expression of sweetness as well as plenty of body.

Ari Sofianos

Surrey Hills

LUNCH AT LEBANESE PLEASE, WEYBRIDGE



Possessing possibly the steepest stairs of any restaurant in Surrey, Lebanese Please is situated just off the high street in affluent Weybridge (some say that you need to wear a tie or pearls to access Waitrose). The upper room – if you can get to it – can accommodate 30 people, which is just as well since 26 of us booked to have lunch in late October 2023 and the ground floor can't fit that many in. As usual our numbers were swelled by many members from the London and Berkshire branches.

What would William Sitwell in his weekend *Telegraph* article have said about the place I wondered? I think he would have been very complimentary about both the service and the food. The spacing of the courses worked perfectly and we were not hurried at all, although some of us had to rush out before the dessert to feed the car park meters.

The branch has savoured at least 15 nationalities of food in its recent events, but never Lebanese, so some of us didn't really know what to expect. The chosen menu worked much like the more familiar tapas with sharing plates and contrasting but distinctive flavours.

We started with some cold mezzes – the familiar hummus, chickpea purée with sweet paprika; muhammara, which is a roasted red pepper dip with crushed nuts, both served with pitta bread and tabbouli, a Lebanese classic of parsley and tomato salad with lemon juice.

Then on to hot mezzes – lamb croquettes with amaretto cherry jam and toasted almonds, fried halloumi wrapped in aubergines with pomegranates and tahini sauce. And lastly crispy cubes of flambéed Lebanese potatoes with chili salsa and coriander. Tastebuds were in full action by now!

The mains comprised perfectly grilled skewers of marinated chicken, minced lamb kafta and premium lamb fillet. Predictably dessert was delicate baclava bites with a choice of coffee styles.

Of course, we had to drink Lebanese wines – Ksara Reserve du Couvent, a red from the Beka Valley, very well received, and Domaine Wardy Blanc, billed as a blend of Viognier, Sauvignon Blanc and Obeidil, which was equally good but without much evidence of the Viognier according to our experts.

This restaurant rates highly in most online reviews and we would agree. We were looked after very well and it was hard to criticise anything except for the stairs, which seemed to be a lot steeper on the way down.

Kip Punch



Sussex

DINNERS AT LA TANA AND HORSTED PLACE



La Tana

The Sussex Branch enjoyed an informal gathering at a local Italian restaurant recommended by one of its members. La Tana is a mainstay and very popular restaurant with the local residents and serves the traditional Italian fare with its unique Italian atmosphere.

Dishes served were classics like parmigiana di melanzane, fusilli allo scoglio and tiramisu served with their Italian house wines. It was a delight for everyone to be reminded of Italy on a rainy October evening.

Julie Wagg

Horsted Place

The Sussex Branch celebrated their Christmas in style at the country house hotel Horsted Place. A Tudor revival country house dating back to the 1850's and originally built for a successful merchant from London. We celebrated with a welcoming drink in the beautiful drawing room by the fireside with its beautifully decorated Christmas trees and then dined in a private room. Entrées served included the choices of Pressed Ham Hock, Smoked Salmon followed by main course choices of Turkey Ballotine, Halibut, Venison or Butternut Squash and delightful dessert choices of Spiced Apple Marzipan Tart, Blueberry Bakewell or Chocolate Plum.

The accompanying wines were Icare Chardonnay France and La Serre, Merlot Vin De Pays D'Oc France.

The service and food presented was excellent and guests remarked about the quality of the dishes.

It was a joyous evening which took place in a wonderful traditional Christmas atmosphere.

Julie Wagg



Vale Royal

THE VALE ROYAL BRANCH ENJOYED THEIR LAST TWO EVENTS OF 2023

The first was a fantastic Sunday lunch at Vale Royal Abbey in Northwich at the end of October and was well attended by the Branch members. We began with a light crisp champagne Chanoine Freres 'Reserve Privée' Brut with delicate canapés, before sitting down to a fantastic menu created by Head Chef Ian Roberts.

Starter

- Mackerel
Spiced pumpkin velouté, coriander gnocchi, candied seeds
- Tartin
Glazed fig, goats' cheese mousse, smoked beetroot
- Terrine
Pressed ham hock, piccalilli, pork quavers

Main

- Roast Sirloin
Honey roasted carrot, braised red cabbage, tender stem broccoli, roast potato, Yorkshire pudding

- Risotto
Wild mushroom and tarragon, grated truffle, parmesan
- Fish
Spiced cod, roasted cauliflower, burnt carrot, butter shrimp sauce (pictured below)

Dessert

- Cheesecake
White chocolate, blueberry, lemon
- Marquise
Dark chocolate, banana, Hazelnut, salted caramel
- Mille Feuille
Peanut butter mousse, strawberry jam consommé

The wines complimented the dishes perfectly and were white Domaine de Saint Ferreol 'Grand Reserve' Viognier 2018 Languedoc and the red was the delicious Chocolate Block. We enjoyed Chateau Laville Sauternes with the dessert.



Our last event of the year was at the very popular French restaurant La Boheme in Lymm.

All of the wines were supplied by Charles Mitchell Wines, Manchester and were superb. We began with Champagne Bonville Grand Cru Rose with canapes. We then enjoyed a delicious dinner with a choice of starters including pan fried partridge breast, salmon and smoked salmon and the French classic onion soup. The white wine was 2021 Pouilly Fume – Cuvee Plaisir perfectly balanced to accompany these dishes. We then had the sorbet of the day, before we continued with the main course. The most popular dishes were duck a l'orange and pan fried fillet of seabass. Some people me included, continued with the white wine as I had the fish, those having the duck and the red wine which was 2020 Vacqueras – Rhone Prestige said it was a great success with the bold flavours of the meat. We finished with desserts, with the majority of people choosing another French classic Crème Brulee. Other choices on the evening were a Brandy snap basket with farm produced ice creams and a selection of cheeses with biscuits and fruit. The wine chosen to compliment these was 2017 Iqone – Sauternes which had a beautiful sweet taste. One of our members Alan Hambleton brought along some wonderful Croft 1982 Port from his own cellar, we all definitely enjoy this and it rounded off the evening in great style before enjoying tea, coffee and deliciously sweet truffles.

Ali Graham



Zurich

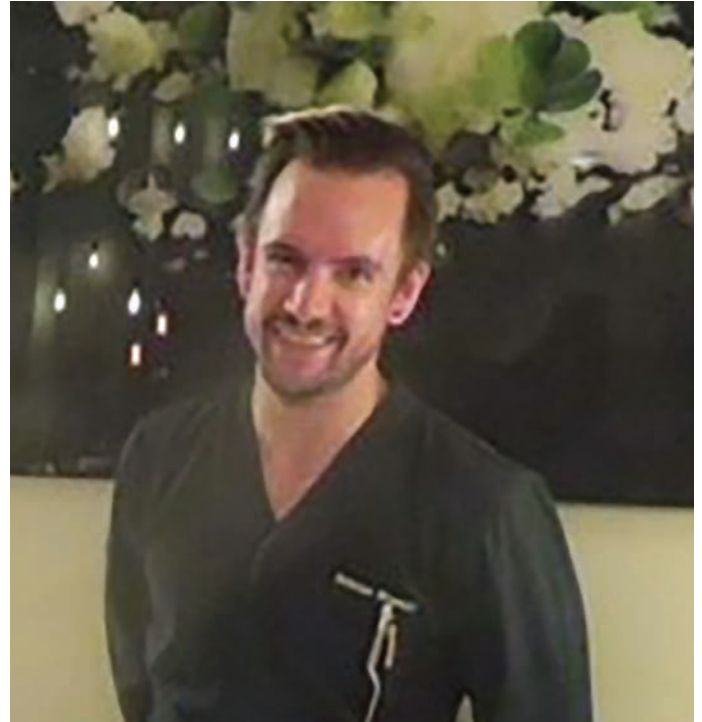
MULTI STARRED VEGGIE FOOD

In October we paid a visit to another vegetarian highlight of Zurich and met chef, Tobias Hösli (pictured right). His place is called Marktküche (market cuisine) and offers seasonal, regional and creative vegetarian dishes as a several course menu. The menu was unknown but promised innovative creations and “ultimate sensations of taste” – we were not disappointed!

We went for the six-course dinner which also included wines. The menu and the wines were not known beforehand as the food should reflect the seasonal availabilities.

The Menu and Wines

- Swiss Chard Wrap, Roasted Onion, Apple
Cuvée 1844 Grüner Veltliner – Roland und Karin Lenz | Thurgau, 2019
- Pumpkin Soup, Swiss Sea Buckthorn, Parsnip
Gewürztraminer ‘Hohenstein’ IGT – Baron Longo, South Tyrol, 2021
- Braised Baby Lettuce, Truffle, Salsa Verde
Pinot Noir AOC – Höcklistein, Lake Zurich, 2017
- Homemade Red Cabbage Raviolo, Celery, Spinach, Beurre Blanc
Blaufränkisch Leithaberg DAC – Gernot und Heike Heinrich, Burgenland, 2018
- Celery Roulade, Potato, Sauce Foyot, Wild Broccoli
Brunello di Montalcino DOCG – Ridolfi, Tuscany, 2018



- Lemon Cake, Rum, Corsican Clementine, Sorrel
Muskat Ottonel Auslese – Tschida Angerhof, Burgenland, 2020

The evening was greatly enjoyed and gave many inspirations for ‘alternative cooking’.

Kurt Haering



Zurich

FISH COOKING CLASS

Home cooking will always be a part of life. Even though cooked dishes in restaurants, in canteens and from deliveries are becoming more and more popular, home cooking will keep a firm place in our lives.

Switzerland is a country without direct access to the sea, therefore fish dishes are not part of the daily food fare. So Christian Daeniker, a member of the Zurich Branch and a gifted hobby chef, proposed a fish cooking course. The idea was well received and mid-November 2023, the class was attended by 15 members.

The participants cooked a menu with three types of fish:

- Trout out of the oven. Christian demonstrated that this fresh water fish has its own individual taste and so there is not really

a sauce necessary, just butter and sea salt added to the trout, wrapped in aluminium foil and baked in an oven.

- Pan fried salmon in saffron sauce (a simple sauce made of white wine, saffron and double cream).
- Poached cod with a home-made curry sauce, made from scratch.

A wine expert matched outstanding white wines with each course. These were Heida from Switzerland, Riesling from Germany, Cariñena from Oria/Spain and a white blend from Piedmont/Italy.

It was not only a gourmet evening, but we learned a lot about fish – far from the sea.

Kurt Haering



Zurich GALA DINNER 2023



Due to the stylish environment and all our friends of wine and food, all dressed up for the festive event, we enjoyed a great evening to celebrate another successful year of the Zurich Branch.

Kurt Haering



Wine and Food means really wine and food. So this year's Christmas Gala Dinner was in the wine cellar of a renowned Zurich restaurant on 16th December 2023. The dinner was served in the 'catacomb' of the place and we were surrounded by (empty) bottles of the best (and most expensive) wines of France and the world. The full bottles were next door and the door was locked!

However the excellent meal was refined by a sparkling Raventos Cava Brut, a white Nierstein Riesling St. Antony and a red Sereno Santa Stefano. They all went perfectly with the Apéro and the meal (duck liver, lobster bisque, veal loin con pimientos del padron and creamy cheesecake).

Long-time member of the Zurich Branch, and now Chair of EAZ, John Nicholas honoured us with his presence and gave us insights into the Society on a global scale.



Helping to save the Hospitality Industry



For the last two years the IWFS northern branches have been organising highly successful competitions for the catering colleges. These have raised the profile of IWFS with young chefs, as well as the staff at the colleges.

For the third year, 2024, we felt that the invitation to the colleges should also go out nationally as the problem in getting staff to work in the hospitality industry was not just an issue for the North.

CAPITAL BRANCH TOUR

8th July to 13th July 2024

The Capital Branch has arranged a small-group five-day tour of Alto Adige in Italy for 8th to 13th July 2024. We are inviting a few members of all IWFS branches to join us.

Alto Adige is best known as the home of the Dolomites, one of the most beautiful mountain ranges in the world, but the region is much more than that. Even in Italy, some places are more blessed than others. As its hyphenated name suggests (as well as its 'other' name, Südtirol), Trentino-Alto Adige is a place that combines two distinct cultures, part Italian, part Austrian. (This northern-most province of Italy only became part of the country after World War I.) It is the best of both worlds, combining Latin aesthetic flair with Teutonic efficiency. In any of its fairy-tale villages, gothic buildings stand harmoniously shoulder to shoulder with Romanesque structures. The clip of the German language mixes with melodious Italian, like a Mozart opera. The valleys below the limestone peaks are freckled with apple trees and grape vines hanging from pergolas.

The response to this year's competition across the North has been very pleasing with a record 11 colleges, and one college entering 30 students for the heats in February. However, the response from colleges in the Midlands and South has been very limited – although there is still time for some to get involved.

We can only conclude that reason for the high participation in the North is that the IWFS branches there: Blackpool and the Fylde Coast, Merseyside & Mid Cheshire, Manchester, West Yorkshire all hold successful events at the colleges and have formed productive and respectful relationships, which has encouraged participation in the IWFS competition.

Our suggestion to all branches is that you find your local college and book a meal – many have restaurants open to the public, and serve excellent food at very reasonable prices.

We have found the tutors and the students so committed and skilful that Merseyside & Mid Cheshire have made Excellence Awards to Bolton, Warrington and Vale Royal and Trafford already.

So please help the hospitality industry through enjoying the culinary expertise of your local college and maybe setting up your own competition in your locality.

For reference to our recent competitions see: www.iwfsblackpudding.co.uk or <https://iwfsvegetarianchef.com/>

Tim Hodges and Stephen Harrison are part of IWFS Northern Team and are happy to help with any questions. You can contact us at tim@new-pool.co.uk or stephenharrison1@btopenworld.com

Unsurprisingly, the food and wine scene is also a unique and delirious blend of cultures. We will base ourselves in a delightful boutique hotel in the charming town of Bolzano and make day trips into the vineyards, high alpine meadows, and leading restaurants of the region.

On the winery list are producers of outstanding red and white wine, one of the world's most highly regarded sparkling wine, and grappa. Meals will be in Michelin-starred restaurants, a biodynamic farm and medieval castles.

Contact Elena Frank at iwfscapital@gmail.com for details or see the website for registration and making a deposit. Early booking is highly advised as a maximum of twenty participants will be included in this tour. Confirmation with the local tour organiser needs to be done in the next few weeks.

The Capital Branch would love to have you join us!

DATES FOR YOUR DIARY

Capital

17th April

Dinner at 67 Pall Mall and an evening of Rioja Wines. For details contact iwfscapital@gmail.com

UK West Yorkshire

19th April (lunchtime)

Printworks Kitchen and Bar, a themed event with cookery demonstration at Leeds College. Contact suetimme@gmail.com

West Yorkshire

1st June

Pinot Noir tasting at Bardsey Village Hall with video presentation by Anne Kriebiehl MW.

West Yorkshire

6th July

Independence Day BBQ – an American themed event, hosted by Kate and Chas at Roundhay

Capital

8th to 13th July

Five day festival of Italian Austrian fusion of cultures at Alto Adige in the Dolomites, Northern Italy. Details at <https://www.iwfs.capital>

West Yorkshire

3rd August

Visit Ampleforth Abbey orchard and cider mill for an apple themed lunch and cider tasting. For details contact suetimme@gmail.com

IWFS Americas

19th to 26th August

Rhine Cruise Basel to Amsterdam. For details and to register online, visit www.iwfs.org

EAZ Annual General Meeting

14th and 15th September

This AGM weekend will be hosted by West Yorkshire Branch at Bardsey Village Hall. On the Saturday evening we'll attend one of the Branch's most popular annual events, Deliciously Yorkshire, which is inspired by the winning products and suppliers from Yorkshire's most recent Taste Awards. On the Sunday evening, we'll visit the Harewood Estate for a private dinner at Thehovels (www.harewoodfoodanddrink.com/thehovels). Full details to follow.

West Yorkshire

29th September to 4th October

Tour of Sicily, Ragusa & Syracuse to Etna. For further information please contact suetimme@gmail.com

West Yorkshire

28th October

Romanian Wine and Food at Halloween to be held at Bardsey Village Hall. For further details please get in touch with suetimme@gmail.com

IWFS APZ

15th to 17th November

Hong Kong Triennial Festival, and also on 17th to 19th November there will be a post tour to Macau. For more information contact apz@iwfs.org

West Yorkshire

30th November

Canapés for Christmas and AGM at Bardsey Village Hall. Contact suetimme@gmail.com for further details.

