



Food & Wine

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

Issue 150

July 2024

2022 VINTAGE REPORTS

**AN AFRICAN
ADVENTURE**

**THE JUDGEMENT OF
LONDON**



Chairman's message



I am delighted to welcome Jon Doneley as Treasurer for IWFS Europe Africa. He came to us through an advert in LinkedIn. He lives in London and he and his wife have joined the Capital Branch. He has also qualified at WSET level 3.

I also welcome Ruth Hurst, a member of Manchester branch, who joined Exco in January as Awards Officer after the retirement of Tricia Fletcher.

Much has happened in the past half year with several initiatives coming to fruition, an Instagram account, a Pinot Noir tasting video, a tea tasting video to complement the latest IWFS monograph, a strengthening of IWFS connections with Northern Catering colleges which attracted in its third year 4 sponsors and 8 colleges.

These new initiatives are in addition to organising the Loire International Festival and our AGM/Members' Forum weekend in September based in Leeds. Our branches throughout Europe Africa are organising and running events for their members, often welcoming members from other branches – keep up these great initiatives and get your fellow members involved.

The overriding message in these opening paragraphs is that without the members who volunteer to fulfil these tasks our Society will not be able to sustain itself. Firstly, it is incumbent on me to thank all of you who do help to make this Society happen. Secondly, I hope that more members will get involved and volunteer to organise an event, or do the "books", or drive

forward ways to attract new members, or devise and implement new initiatives. Please think about how you can help.

The initiatives that are being taken are to attract new members by demonstrating the knowledge that we have about wine and food, as well as the enjoyment that our members have from participating in events. Despite these initiatives it is important for all our existing members to continue to bring new members into IWFS, whether friends or fellow members of other organisation and clubs.

Communication channels have changed dramatically in the last few years, I am now a "dinosaur" because I use "email" to do most of my communication. WhatsApp is a great means of communicating with other members of your branch – if you haven't already set up a group – in my Zurich branch at the AGM, one of the younger members set up the Group in about 30 minutes – emails are no longer needed all the time!

To improve the Society's footprint outside the membership, we now have an Instagram account at [iwfs_eaz](https://www.instagram.com/iwfs_eaz) where members can also follow what is going on and, of course, the content needs to be produced by you the members.

Have a great summer and some inspiring events – please think about how you can incorporate a tea tasting and a Pinot Noir tasting in your programme and then report on it on Instagram or with a report for F&W.

John Nicholas
Chair, IWFS Europe Africa

The Society was formed on 20th October 1933 in London by wine writer André L Simon and bibliophile A J Symons. Within a month there were 230 members. Today there are over 6,000 in 131 branches worldwide.

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

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

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



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

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



Editorial

The International Wine & Food Society and Hong Kong Society are delighted to announce the launch of the publication of the 2024 IWFS Monograph, *The World of Tea*. The book is authored by Will Battle, who has 20 years experience in the tea trade, is a trained tea taster and has authored *The World Tea Encyclopaedia: The World of Tea Explored and Explained from Bush to Brew*.

With the increasing global interest in no and lo-alcohol drinks, it is a good time to delve back into the world of tea. Tea's popularity is growing around the world – flights are being offered in top-end restaurants (alongside wine lists). Sparkling tea is even being sold by the bottle. Tea shares a number of similarities with wine. The tea plant takes 3-4 years to be productive and natural yeasts play a part in the production process as does the careful cellaring for some styles. There are as many varieties of tea as there are terroirs that grow it. Will Battle describes the development of the tea industry and different tea making processes.

Looking ahead, the Annual General Meeting weekend of the Europe Africa Zone will be in Leeds, 13th to 15th September 2024. The invitation and details of the weekend programme are published in this issue. You will be able to reserve your places on our website www.iwfs.org.

It has been a great pleasure to publish reports of events and awards in the last quarter from a majority of our EAZ branches, but there are several from whom we hear little. Please keep in touch and share your experiences, we are developing a programme to expand the Society and your involvement would be welcome.

Peter McGahey
Editor

NOTICE OF ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

The Annual General Meeting of the International Wine & Food Society Europe Africa [IWFS Europe Africa Limited] will be held at 11 am on Saturday 14th September 2024 in the Leeds Marriott Hotel, 4 Trevelyan Square, Boar Lane, Leeds LS1 6ET.

David Chapman
EAS Secretary, International Wine & Food Society
www.iwfs.org

PUBLICATION DATES

- **Food & Wine Online (e-newsletter) Issue 24**
August issue, deadline for copy from contributor 31st July. *Copy for online e-newsletter to sec@iwfs.org*
- **Food & Wine (printed) Issue 151**
November issue, deadline for copy from contributors 30th September. *Copy for printed magazine to editor.eaz@iwfs.org*
- **Food & Wine Online (e-newsletter) Issue 25**
November issue, deadline for copy from contributor 31st August. *Copy for the online e-newsletter to sec@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.

Food & Wine

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One copy, per address,
is available for members.
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Geeta Lloyd at
info.eaz@iwfs.org





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WILLIAM HEPTINSTALL MEMORIAL TRUST APPOINTMENT OF MANAGING TRUSTEE

This trust makes an annual bursary to a young chef (under 30) to assist with their development by working, usually as a stage, in kitchens outside the UK. As a result of a generous donation by the Avery family, in memory of John, the winner is also required to undertake a course on wine. Further details can be found on the Heptinstall website www.williamheptinstallaward.org.uk.

Members of IWFS have managed the trust on a voluntary basis for many years and other Trustees are prominent members of the hospitality industry. Two meetings are held in London each year. After the selection interviews, candidates and trustees are invited to a lunch at a notable London dining facility.

The role is to manage the selection process from identifying potential candidates, organising the Annual Award Meeting to following up with the successful candidate. The role does not attract a fee nor personal expenses.

For further details and to express your interest in the appointment please contact Ali Graham, email Ali@WilliamHeptinstallAward.org.uk.

John Nicholas

Chair of IWFS Europe Africa and Chair of the Trustees

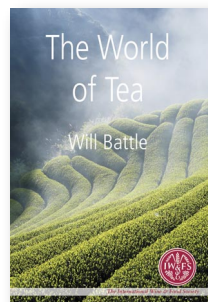
News from the International Secretariat

Dear members

Two international festivals have already been held this year with a great weekend in New Orleans, organised by the Americas, and the Loire Valley, France, led by the Europe Africa team. Looking ahead there is a trip along the Rhine journeying through Switzerland, France, Germany and finally docking in the Netherlands (Americas) in August and a festival in Hong Kong in November (Asia Pacific). Members of the International Council of Management met online in March to discuss other plans for the year ahead which you can do more locally and which give members the opportunity to learn about the world of tea as well as wine - in print, online and in-person.

BRINGING YOU 'THE WORLD OF TEA'

Our 2024 monograph is now in print and your complimentary copy of *The World of Tea*, written by tea expert Will Battle is enclosed with this issue of Food & Wine. Will Battle is among the top experts on tea in the world. He previously wrote the award-winning *The World Tea Encyclopaedia*, which is now in its second edition. He has over twenty years of experience in tasting, blending, and sourcing tea in the UK and around the world.



In addition, there is also a pouch of tea for you to enjoy while reading all about the world of tea. It is an English Afternoon tea, shipped from Lincolnshire, UK, made from a special blend of Assam and Darjeeling teas which replicates the gold standard prepared for London hotels and also used for

the garden party season and we hope you like it. The preparation details are on the pouch itself, if needed.

Although the IWFS is a wine and food society tea is now becoming part of the global gastronomic scene and it was thought that members would want to find out more too. If tea is not yet your drink of choice, you might be drawn in by the parallels with the world of wine. Tea has a broad history, multiple styles, and regions with widely different flavours. Tea has long been central to many cultures of the world.

Like to run a tea tasting?

To assist you and your branch to learn more about tea, keeping in the traditions of the Society events, why not hold a tasting? Two of the Europe Africa branches in London, Capital and London, recently joined forces to successfully hold a tea tasting in conjunction with the release of our tea monograph. The event was held at the prestigious Fortnum & Mason store on Piccadilly in London and led by Will Battle. To enable all branches to run something similar, with Will running the tasting, a tea tasting video will soon be available. Will presents six very different styles of tea, plus a sparkling tea (a delicious choice



when looking for a non-alcoholic reception drink) and will give members an insight into and a taste of tea. A 'shopping list' of the teas you will need to purchase along with a 'checklist' of the things that you will need to run a successful event will be made available. You might like to take a look at Chapter 7 of the monograph which lists top tea merchants within your region. The recording is just going through the final cut but will be available on the 'presentations – audio & video' page of the website.

Watch this space, or your email inbox, for more news.

If you take the plunge and run a tea tasting please do email us with photos from your event via sec@iwfs.org and we will publish them in future issues of Food & Wine.

We hope your members will welcome this different focus and agree it is 'time for tea'.

NEW BENEFIT FOR MEMBERS]

We are pleased to announce a discount for members from, Académie du Vin Library (incorporating Classic Wine Library) – the world's most comprehensive wine publisher. Members will receive a 25% discount for a number of their titles*. With over 50 titles from the finest wine writers, they cover wine regions on all five continents, on every subject from terroir to terraces and all points in between. For anyone, anywhere with a passion for wine.

To find out more about the titles available visit <https://academieduvinlibrary.com/> and use coupon code: IWFS25 when you checkout. You will see titles in the Classic



Wine Library collection from a number of our wines consultants <https://academieduvinlibrary.com/pages/classic-wine-library> including *The Wines of Piemonte* by new consultant David Way who is introduced below. A note for members joining IWFS trip along the Rhine in August – you will receive a copy of Anne Krebiehl's book *The Wines of Germany* so no need to buy a copy!

OUR WINE CONSULTANTS

Introducing new members of the team

Our Wine Consultants for our Vintage Guide (which is available as the printed Card or online via the Member App), provide invaluable information on the wine regions around the world. We are delighted to inform you that we have a number of new consultants who have joined us last year and this and you can now find out more about them below.

Lance Foyster MW Austria

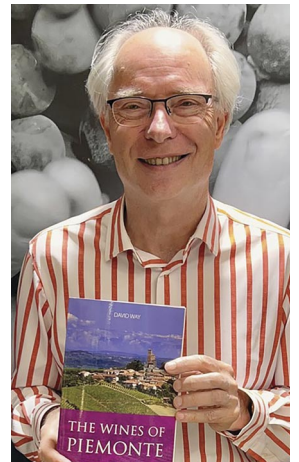
Lance, based in the UK, was seven when he first became aware of the existence of wine on family holidays to Portugal. He observed his parents' amazement and delight at the large and apparently free bottles of wine which regularly arrived on the dining table at lunch and dinner. Once he hit 18, there was no holding him back as he set off to work on the harvest in Tavel, where he discovered the romance of the vineyard. Later still, with his BA Hons (Oxon) in his back pocket, he passed over the opportunity to join the world of banking, law, teaching, academia (as if...!) and followed his growing passion in a series of menial jobs in the wine trade which eventually led him to the MW in 1991. The next 10 years saw him exploring all areas of the wine trade, from own-brand wines for supermarkets, to sourcing top Burgundy. The opportunity to set up Clark Foyster Wines came in 2002. He looks after buying and selling, in collaboration with his colleagues, and finds his enthusiasm for this endlessly fascinating subject as vivid and stimulating as he ever did.



David Way Piedmont

David has been engaged with Italian wine for the last fifteen years. He writes about it extensively on his website,

www.winefriend.org, which has been his platform since he began as a wine blogger in 2009. Since 2015, he has worked for Wine & Spirit Education Trust** (WSET). He was one of the two principal writers of the new digital textbooks for the WSET Diploma in Wine, the highest level WSET qualification, first issued to students in 2019. Since then his job has been to update and improve the five books which run to 1,100 pages. In his own name he researched and wrote a comprehensive book entitled *The Wines of Piemonte*. This was published in September 2023 in the Classic Wine Library, now part of the Académie du Vin Library. More details about the book can be found here (see 'new benefit' news above to receive a 25% discount on this and other titles). The book is the first to treat all 60 of Piemonte's wine denominations with the depth usually reserved only for Barolo and Barbaresco.



Adolfo Hernandez Sonoma

Adolfo is a Sonoma County winemaker with over 15 years of experience in the industry. California born but raised as an expat in Saudi Arabia, winemaking was a covert home family activity that was responsible for his initial wine exposure. Adolfo returned to California where he graduated in molecular biology and proceeded to work in organic pesticide production before following legitimate winemaking.



Adolfo has been a key member of winemaking teams at Eisele Vineyard (with both Araujo and Chateau Latour), Checkerboard Vineyards, Pahlmeyer, and currently with the Russian River pinot noir house Benovia.

In 2018 he launched his own brand, Monroy Wines, focusing on cool-climate expressions of cabernet sauvignon and fermentations only by closed-head rolling macerations which Adolfo coopers himself.

www.monroywines.com

Adolfo's food and wine recommendation

I most recently enjoyed a bottle of 2022 Matusko Grk, a native Croatian varietal. It's a beautifully tense and mineral wine, with a unique expression of tropical fruits alongside freshly savory notes and hints of pine resin. It was a lovely match for a crusty baguette, fresh brie, and local olive oil.

Greg Esch New York

Greg has been growing wine grapes in the Hudson Valley of New York for 20 years.

Greg's food and wine matching: He likes Pinot Noir with most foods, and Riesling (dry please!) with everything else. One of my favorite pairings is a Dijon mushroom sauce over chicken thighs with – you guessed it – a good Pinot.



Greg (left) is pictured here alongside the late, legendary Joe Rochioli Jr, the pioneer of Pinot from the Russian River valley.



Annette Lacey MW Australia

Annette has extensive management and operational experience across all levels of restaurants and hospitality venues. She is currently the Group Beverage Manager for Solotel, a large and diverse hospitality group in Sydney. Annette has held similar roles developing skills as a restaurant manager and head sommelier for

international hotel groups and award-winning fine dining restaurants across traditional, modern and Asian cuisines.

Annette became a Master of Wine in 2020, the highest academic accolade in wine, a globally recognised qualification that is the epitome of wine knowledge and excellence. She has also completed all levels of WSET and is a certified educator focusing on the development of the next generation through the delivery of wine courses in the Australian market.

Other accolades include the winner of the prestigious 2014 Vin de Champagne Award (Professional) and being selected for the highly prized Len Evans tutorial.

Annette also has extensive experience as a wine show judge and panel chair at numerous shows around the country and overseas, also participating in trade and educational tastings, presentations and master classes.

She is the Australasian co-coordinator for The Institute of Masters of Wine delivering a week-long educational seminars to MW students, additionally running several course days for MW students during the year.

Annette's recommended food and wine match (which she enjoyed at a restaurant on Balmoral Beach in Sydney – sounds wonderful).

A dish of snapper, cucumber, melon, wasabi – it was a delicate, pretty and refined dish with only a hint of wasabi as seasoning not flavour (pictured right). It went perfectly with the 2016 Louis Roederer Blanc de Blancs. The delicacy of the dish was matched to the delicate and fine boned Champagne made from 100% Chardonnay. There was as pithy chalkiness to the Champagne that offset the sweet melon discs whilst the texture of the champagne, its vibrant bubbles and taut acid line contrasted with raw snapper softness and, a lovely foil to the dish.



We would like to also take this opportunity to thank those consultants who have assisted us in previous years and have now handed over the baton to other experts in their field of wine expertise and they are Luzia Schrampf (Austria), Michael Garner (Piedmont), Jamie Kutch (Sonoma) and Peter Bell (New York).

You will find the second set of Vintage Reports from our consultants in this issue. Again we can only produce these reports through the contributions from our consultants who give this information freely and for which we are very grateful. We do hope that you find them of interest when planning wine purchases for drinking in the future. I am now working on sourcing vintage reports for the 2023 and 2024 vintages from our consultants.

Until next time.

Andrea Warren

International Secretariat

Footnotes

- * Exclusions apply. This offer is not valid on sale items, eBooks, The South America Wine Guide, Steven Spurrier's Wine Course, Slow Wine Guide USA, Jumbo Shrimp Guide books, Moniker Art and The Australian Ark.
- ** One of the leading providers of drinks education around the world.

2022/2023 VINTAGE REPORTS Part 2



LANGUEDOC

Matthew Stubbs MW

After the extremely dry and severe drought conditions of the 2021 vintage, many growers breathed a sigh of relief in 2022. Rainfall during the growing season came closer to "normal" levels with over 500mm in Narbonne, 660mm in Carcassonne and even a very welcome 420mm in Perpignan. Moreover this rain fell at the right times with a large amount in November and Spring. May to September was warm, dry and sunny

with early onset storms in June providing just enough rainfall for those drier areas. This coupled with warm temperatures and plenty of sunshine led to almost perfect ripeness and harvest for many was the earliest on record. Some had even completed picking by the end of August! Overall this is a wonderful vintage both in quality and volume. A vintage to put a smile back on hard pressed faces, particularly following the challenging and small harvest in 2021.

- Languedoc* (Red)
6 not ready yet

RHÔNE VALLEY

John Livingstone Learmonth
www.drinkrhone.com

Northern Rhône 2022

2022 in the Northern Rhône is a drinker-friendly vintage, with some stand out wines at Côte-Rôtie and Cornas, their main signature being enjoyable swoops of fruit, with moderate degrees a bonus. Cornas is certainly very successful pretty much across the board, the wines immediately likeable, spontaneous. The wines are well filled, balanced, and show good length, even a little flair.

Côte-Rôtie has given good quality, with some flamboyant wines. It was saved by mid-August rain that came just in time to thwart what was heading for another 2003, a year of the highest heat that resulted in jam-thick wines with severe tannins. Hermitage red, from the hottest, driest year on record, saw the vineyard canopy grinding to a halt, but things turned out successfully; there is a pretty fine vintage for drinkers to buy, and regard as a medium to long term affair, without the majesty and longevity of 2020, for example, but superior to 2021. Saint-Joseph reds have something of a stealthy quality about them, stealthy because it is not an obviously very good vintage, more one with homely, welcoming, open features that gives pretty instant reward, one that flourishes entertaining fruit. Crozes reds are sound, sometimes well put together, but quality is more variable there.



The Northern whites are firmly rich, lowish in acidity, but well structured. Condrieu 2022s are on modest levels of acidity, which means that it is down to terroir to keep them alive and well over the next ten-plus years – perfectly feasible for the best. Hermitage whites are full, proper table wines, though there is fine tuning in some of them.

Southern Rhône 2022

2022 in the South is more variable than the largely successful North, with blockages in ripening, and some uneven wines in with the successes. Matters were extremely serious and on a high wire of doubt from the extreme drought until rain came in mid-August, which served to inflate the grapes and lower degrees.

However, the harvest was in some cases tired, and picking had to be done quickly in a few areas, with rot looming. The 15 August tornado that came from the West wrecked a path across Châteauneuf-du-Pape's La Crau vineyard, with Domaine du Vieux Télégraphe especially hard hit.

The lower end wines are more varied than the noble terroir wines, with merchants – négociants - struggling to find good sources this year, which is always a vintage indicator. The reds can be high degree. 2022 is successful, and largely full-bodied at Tavel.

Châteauneuf-du-Pape reds are soundly filled among the best, though looseness due to uneven ripening patterns and dryness in some tannins is observable. It won't universally be a very long-lived vintage, unlike 2020 or 2019, for instance. The high Gigondas-Séguret zone was very good in 2022, also Ventoux and Beaufort-de-Venise, areas that had rain, well-timed rain, so less drought stress.

The Plan de Dieu and the low areas of Cairanne and Rasteau were complicated in 2022. Rasteau above and behind the village was notably good, as was Roaix, and the east side of the village of Cairanne, where Alary, Rabasse Charavin, Richaud and Oratoire have vineyards.

The whites are – no surprise – low acidity wines, but attractive, pretty immediate, with quality and production both rising year on year.

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

AUSTRIA

source www.austrianwine.com

The unusual weather conditions during the 2022 growing season certainly put Austrian winemakers through their paces.

Initially, it seemed that it would be a very dry year, were it not for the occasional showers of rain – which not always came at the best of times. However, the great dedication and hard work of Austria's winemakers were recompensed with ripe, well-balanced white wines with a fine display of fruit. The red wines are outstanding, showing power, structure and velvety tannins. Despite vagaries of the weather, Austria's 2022 wines display a pronounced ripeness, fine fruit and harmonious acidity. The 2022 vintage was a little more differentiated than 2021, for example, depending on the grape variety, microclimatic conditions and soil characteristics. Overall, however, the wines display a pronounced ripeness, fine fruit and harmonious acidity. With a harvest volume of 2.5 million hectolitres, 2022 is slightly higher than the long-term average (2.4 million hl). Repeated rainfall before the main harvest resulted in a higher harvest volume than was initially expected because of the drought.

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

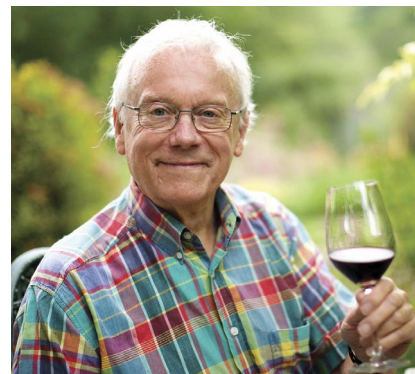
ITALY

David Way

Piedmont, Barolo & Barbaresco 2022

By any standards, 2022 was a remarkably challenging vintage in Barolo and Barbaresco due to drought and heat. An exceptionally dry winter was followed by very low rainfall through the growing season with only about 430 mm of precipitation being recorded in the calendar year, half the norm. The average growing season temperature was also more than 2°C higher than the ten year average, with June, July and August all recording exceptionally high average temperatures. While growers were fearful through most of the season, the average temperatures dropped to more normal levels in September, even if the new norm is hot and dry. This allowed Nebbiolo to complete its ripening and to surprise the growers by the quality of the fruit. Yields were down due to the persistent heat and drought, but the aromatic quality was remarkable given the stress the vines had been under. Growers are beginning to believe that Nebbiolo has begun to adapt to hot, dry seasons. Overall, the wines are mellow and approachable, not dissimilar to 2020.

- **Piedmont***
5 not yet released
- **Valpolicella (Amarone)**
See wine-searcher.com for their 'Europe's 2022 Vintage a Taste of Things to Come' article
- **Valpolicella* (Amarone)**
5 not yet released



PORTUGAL

Charles Metcalfe

The 2022 vintage in Portugal was marked by very high summer temperatures, resulting in lower yields, but good wines for growers who picked early enough. The Douro valley, home of both port and increasingly

good unfortified Douro wines, had almost no rain for the first seven months of the year, but earlier picking than normal, and some welcome September rain resulted in some surprisingly successful wines. Older vineyards, with their deeper root systems, also coped better with the dry conditions.

The central northern regions of Bairrada and Dão also fared well in the heat.

In the south of Portugal, the hot Alentejo region made less wine, and there were problems of sunburn for some vineyards. Taking everything into account, the Alentejo made decent reds in smaller quantities than usual, but few wines of really high quality.

Portugal*

North

6 not ready yet

South

5 not ready yet

NAPA (CS & Merlot)

If farming grapes teaches winemakers anything, it's to get comfortable not knowing what's going to happen next.

Few vintages proved that more than 2022 in Napa Valley. At first, the year progressed well despite the continued drought. August was sunny and mild with temperatures that hovered mostly in the 90s. The mood among winemakers in the valley was upbeat.

And then, just a few days into September, an extreme heat wave struck. Vineyard temperatures rose over 100 degrees Fahrenheit, and in some vineyards climbed to well over 110. Grapevines can cope with a single day or two over 110 degrees.





But in 2022, the unrelenting heat seemed to be stuck in place – sometimes for several days. Napa’s winemakers – no strangers to warm weather in September – had never experienced a vintage quite like this before.

And neither had the grapes. Which is why what happened next was so surprising. While one might imagine that the vineyards were instantly full of dehydrated raisins, counterintuitively, sugar levels actually went down in some cases. “Grapevines are really smart,” says Cathy Corison of Corison winery. “Right up until the heat set in, the vines had been controlling their own vigour to deal with the drought. And they held on to the acidity they’d built during cool August nights.”

Corison, who is known to always be among the first in the valley to harvest, was right in the middle of harvesting when the heat began. She continued straight on; other winemakers stopped or picked only certain blocks; still others waited out the heat entirely and didn’t start picking until late October.

Elizabeth Vianna, winemaker and general manager of Chimney Rock Winery, also experienced the unexpected. “Older vines usually tolerate climatic stress better than younger ones,” she says. “But some of our younger vines – which we harvested later – did better holding on to their acidity. And the best fruit was not overripe, although we feared it might be.”

“I would never call up Mother Nature and say, ‘Hey, can you give me seven days over 110 degrees Fahrenheit,’” says Peter Heitz of Turnbull. “We winemakers and our picking crews were working madly in that heat, but the grapes we picked right before and during the first days of the heat had tension,

opulence, snappiness, and freshness. The grapes that we picked after the heat wave passed made wine with an easy softness. Every winemaker I know had their own separate ‘truth’ in 2022.”

And so vintage 2022 will be known as “The Great Anomaly”. What winemakers expected to happen sometimes didn’t happen; what winemakers didn’t expect to happen, did.

What will this mean for the wines? With this vintage, the variables were—well, so variable—I think it’s too soon to tell. I’ve tasted some barrel samples that are densely-fruited, structured, and yet still have lift and energy. I’ve tasted other samples that are introverted and completely closed down.

Of course, most of the 2022 Cabernets won’t be released until 2025, so they have a good long stretch of time to evolve.

“We are making better wines in hotter years than we ever made before in hot years,” says Vianna.

About that idea, the 2022 vintage will certainly be a proving ground.

Report and image source – Napa Valley Vintners
<https://napavalley.wine/>

- **Napa*** (CS & Merlot)
5 not ready yet

SONOMA

Adolfo Hernandez (new consultant)

The 2022 vintage saw a beautifully steady growing season. There was a bit of spring frost, and we were still in drought conditions, so yields were slightly reduced and clusters stayed on the small side.



Harvest started early in Sonoma County with sparkling producers jumping the gun in late July. The rest of us were in full swing through the end of August and early September, which was punctuated by an extended heat wave from 4th to 8th September. A dearth of labour and crews did cause a bit of gridlock in getting some vineyards picked, but this was the sole hiccup. There was a not-unwelcome smattering of rain in the middle of the month to tap the brakes slightly on the ripening acceleration caused by the early month heat wave.

From a personal winemaking standpoint there was a clear delineation between the early-ripening varietals (pinot noir, chardonnay) and the longer hanging varietals (cabernet sauvignon). Most of my pinot noir was drained and pressed before I received any cabernet sauvignon.

The quality and quantity of the vintage seems directly comparable to the excellent 2021 harvest. The wines are expressive and harmonious across the board, with yields well below the peak tonnage vintage of 2018. Similar to 2021, the



incoming quantities were around 25% lower than normal. There was some scarcity around sauvignon blanc and a slight glut in chardonnay.

We've been blessed with back-to-back gorgeous seasons; both are going to make beautiful and cellar-worthy wines.

- **Sonoma*** (PN&Chardonnay)
6 not ready yet



CENTRAL COAST **Adam LaZarre**

North Central Coast Syrah ripens earlier than most red varieties. It appears to me that many of these grapes were picked several weeks earlier than most winemakers would prefer. In many of these cases, the resulting wines had lighter colour and

underripe flavours. Acid levels seem normal as the sugar increases outpaced acid respiration. A few I've tasted were quite acidic without the complementary tannins and primary fruit flavours. In contrast, many west-side Paso Robles wineries continued to hold their fruit until they felt it reached flavour and tannin ripeness. The wines I've tasted have all been deeply colored and extremely rich. But I'm attributing that to the higher alcohol levels and some of the overripe flavours. I feel many potential deficiencies resulting from a difficult growing season are now being mitigated by some advanced technology employed at many if not most of these wineries. Certainly the ones that receive the highest scores in the most influential publications. The crop was down as much as 40% in several areas.

In the case of south Central Coast Chardonnay and Pinot Noir, I would say that these fared quite a bit better than the previous variety I discussed. Although heat events were felt like the rest of the appellation, temperatures in the evenings were far cooler than in the north, allowing for proper acid respiration through the ripening process. The harvest was still about three weeks early, but dehydration was less of an issue. From what I've tasted, the Chardonnays are a bit thinner and less flavoured than normal, and the Pinot Noirs are too. Crop was down between 30% or 40% in most areas.

It will be fascinating to taste all of these wines in the future to see how weather plays a part in these wines ageability and how they will score in the following years.

- **Central Coast***
North (Syrah)
4 not ready yet
South (PN&Chard)
5 not ready yet

SIERRA FOOTHILLS

Bill Easton

The 2022 Vintage was difficult year in many ways in the Sierra Foothills. It was the last of a series of three drought years. The worst Springtime freezes in 40 years effected the vines growing above 1800 feet. Vines between 1,000 feet (the lower boundary of our Sierra Foothills appellation on the Westside) and 1,800 feet were affected less radically. There simply was no crop to pick in many high elevation and other cold vineyard sites dues to earlier bud break (drought) and freezes of 27°F on 8th April, and 7th, 8th and 9th May. Apple orchards in Camino (2,800 feet) were decimated. The good news is there were no fires that tainted grapes in our region in 2022.



In the Shenandoah Valley yield were reduced by half with many vineyards cropping at 2 tons per acre or much less. This was a bit better than in 2021. Flavours, balance, and intensity of fruit flavours was exceptional. Harvest commenced with Sauvignon Blanc on 22nd August. Everything was picked earlier than normal due to the small crop size, drought, and a hot week all across California from 9/5-9/9 – 115°F in Santa Rosa near the coast! All of harvest was in the cellar by 10/5. This was a year to be on top of your vineyard sampling, and having your labor crews ready to pick either at night or at day-break exactly at the time you requested.

Both reds and whites seem to have great breed, balance, and flavours. There just won't be a lot of wine available.

- **Sierra Foothills***
Zinfandel
7 not ready yet
Syrah, App only
7 not ready yet



NEW YORK

Greg Esch (new consultant)

2022 was a superior vintage for New York State, with a rank of 9 out of 10. The Long Island region saw one of its better vintages, while the Hudson Valley and Finger Lakes saw superior vintages with lower harvested quantities and superior fruit.

A January winter vortex did some damage to vinifera in the southern Finger Lakes, but the spring was frost free in all three zones, and was succeeded by a drier and warmer than usual summer. By late August, it was very dry in some portions of the Finger Lakes and in the Eastern portion of the Hudson Valley, but drought-like conditions were alleviated by early September rains. While bird pressure was very high in areas subject to the drought, disease pressure was correspondingly low.

Harvest conditions in October were dry and excellent. As a consequence of winter damage, tonnage was reduced by about 30% in the Finger Lakes. A dry summer reduced crop loads in all zones by 10%-30%.

- New York*
6 not ready yet



OREGON
Pinot Noir
Alex Sokol Blosser

"So what did happen in 2022: Record Heat, record cold, record wet, record dry, no crop, wait... there is a crop. What the

hell?!? "The only constant in life is change" says Heraclitus, but the 2022 vintage year was one for the record books in terms of the change we saw and the extremes of those changes. The climate is altering, and we have got to become more "Climate Resilient," but with the extremes we saw in 2022 I am not sure how we can accomplish that from a winegrowing standpoint. Oh well, at least we got a crop, got it ripe, and it will be good if not great. Truly a miracle!

What started as a dryer winter in January/February/March (I had a lot of clear nights for stargazing!) turned into a deluge of rain in the springtime. We had the wettest and coldest April/May/June in recorded (130 years) history. It is not totally out of the realm to get snow in April (I remember it snowing on Easter one year in the 1980s), but the cold weather we got on 14th and 15th April was a record – 28°F on the morning of 15th April! Yikes! This is not just a frost (32°F), this was a hard freeze when the plants were growing. These temperatures would not be a big deal if the grapes were still asleep, but with the warmer/drier winter the vines decided to start budbreak on 10th April. This is not an early budbreak but is on the early side as mid-to-late April is more normal for bud burst. Those freezing temperatures on the morning of 14th and 15th April really knocked the fragile new growth back. In fact, until crop estimates were done in late August, we thought our crop yields would be down across the board by 50-60%. From the freeze on 14th and 15th April until the end of August we planned on being down. Until we were not down. Call off the apocalypse!

The lesson learned is don't second guess a grapevine. In over 51 years of growing grapes here in the Dundee Hills we have never seen a freezing event during the growing season, so we had no idea what was going to happen. The primary buds froze and died, but the secondary buds came on, produced fewer but larger clusters, and the vines made a miraculous comeback. Now I know! There is a lot I still don't know so I wonder what my next lesson will be...

The coldest and wettest spring turned into the second warmest and driest summer on record, and then we got to October. Everything depended on good ripening conditions (dry and warm) in the month of October since bloom was much later. Thank the Gods! We got the warmest October in Oregon history, I was able to let the grapes hang, and the rains stayed

put until all our estate fruit was in on Thursday 27th October. It started to pour on Friday the 28th and did not stop raining for two weeks. The fruit got nice and ripe, and I was in awe. A miracle, or shall I say a 'Manic Miracle Vintage'!

OREGON
Chardonnay
Luisa Ponzi

March of 2022 came in like a lion and went out like a lamb and after all the rain we were happily enjoying a beautiful early spring in April. Flowers were blooming, our cover crop was lush and full and the vines had decided it was time to begin their annual cycle of bud break allowing small leaves to begin to unfurl. Out of nowhere we were hit with a blast of cold Arctic air



and temperatures quickly dropped below freezing and held there for almost seven days in an unprecedented late frost event for the valley.

We collectively held our breath to see how the vines would respond and, in the end, were amazed by the resilience and forethought of Mother Nature. Though we lost many of the primary buds, the

protected secondary (and in some case, tertiary) buds appeared weeks after the event to continue the production of the fruit.

Despite the late start and anxiety producing spring, the summer came on strong and, thankfully, October arrived dry and one of the warmest in Oregon history getting our fruit to perfect ripeness late in the season.

The wines are remarkable in their lively and energetic nature, bright acidity and fruit forward aromas... almost as if to celebrate the joy of overcoming challenges earlier in the year!

Reminiscent of 2010, these wines hold the promise of enjoyment for years to come.

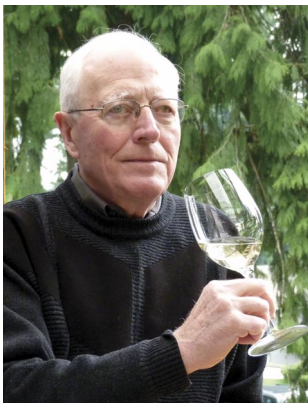
- Oregon*
Pinot Noir
5 not ready yet
Chardonnay
6 not ready yet

WASHINGTON
(source: www.washingtonwine.org)

The 2022 growing season in Washington was notable for a cool, wet spring, a hot, but brief, summer, and nearly-unprecedented warm finishing weather in late September and almost all of October. It is expected to be a top quality vintage, despite overall higher tonnages due to increased berry and cluster size. The growing season started out with a cold, wet winter, putting significant moisture into the soil. Early varieties started to bud at the end of March/early April, aligned with recent history. A freak blizzard hit Columbia Valley 11th to 14th April. Temperatures went as low as 26 degrees Fahrenheit in some areas. This caused primary and secondary bud damage in early varieties in some locations. It also stalled bud break for two to three weeks. Cool weather continued through bloom. The cool, high soil

moisture conditions, combined with the extremely small crop in 2021, contributed to a very fruitful 2022. Growers spent significant time thinning and working to control vigor. Summer temperatures finally arrived after the third week of June. July and August had above average heat. However, by that point, the growing season was already two to three weeks behind recent years, as it had been all season. As a result, most growers picked very little fruit in September. This left the state with both a sizable crop to pick in October and needing a month of exceptional ripening weather to bring the harvest home. October, however, delivered exactly that. Columbia Valley saw ideal growing conditions, with temperatures five or more degrees above average, resulting in near-perfect finishing weather given the coolness of the season. Growers and winemakers did 10-12 weeks of work in half that time or less. The final crop was heavier, particularly for white varieties, due to larger berries and clusters. Growers who managed to thin appropriately delivered exceptional flavors at lower Brix and higher natural acidity. It is expected to be a very high quality vintage for white wines and a standout vintage for higher end reds.

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



CANADA BRITISH COLUMBIA John Schreiner

The 2022 vintage in British Columbia began with a cool, wet and late spring. Then the weather turned; there was no extreme heat in summer, nor any issues with forest fires and smoke. The fine, warm days continued through October and into early November, leading to longer hang times than usual. Grapes

ripened with balanced sugar and acidity and with intense flavours. Some vintners believe 2022 was the best vintage of the past two decades. It was also one of the most abundant in volume; on average 25% larger than either of the previous two vintages. Unfortunately, the weather deteriorated in December 2022 with frosts so hard that the vineyards suffered substantial bud damage and, in some areas, substantial vine death. Whatever the quality of the 2023 vintage, the tonnage of fruit will be significantly lower than it was in 2022.

- **British Columbia***
6 not ready yet

ONTARIO Rick VanSickle

The big story in most of Ontario's wine regions in 2022 wasn't so much the quality, it was the quantity. The overall harvest in 2022 was slashed in half due a wet autumn in 2021 and a severe cold episode in the winter of 2020 that impacted vineyards across the Niagara region. Despite that, there will be some very good wines from this vintage, but it will take astute buying prowess to find them. Chardonnay and Riesling fared the best on the white side for both quality and quantity, while Cabernet Franc eclipses 2020 for richness and complexity. The Burgundian



grapes of Pinot Noir and Gamay should also provide some excellent wines. Lake Erie North Shore and Prince Edward County were less impacted by the short crop. As for icewine, it was one of the smallest harvests on record due to the short crop, but quality should remain high.

- **Ontario***
6 not ready yet

ARGENTINA Amanda Barnes

2023 was one of the smallest harvests in recent records, with countrywide frosts impacting yields, but winemakers are excited for the quality. Catastrophic late season frosts in November that swept throughout Argentina caused major losses, up to 90% for some producers. As a result, and in combination with pressures from the economic crisis, Argentina saw its lowest yield in over a decade with 36% lower crop than the previous ten-year average.

Although quantity was down, producers are confident with the quality. It was largely an early year with a warm, dry summer, although producers are very happy with the balance in the cellar expecting wines of refreshing acidity, concentration and great ageing potential.

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

CHILE Amanda Barnes

Chile's vintage 2023 was a story of two halves, with an early, hot vintage inland and cool conditions by the coast. The inland regions, from Entre Cordilleras to the Andes designations, were largely impacted by several heatwaves over the summer. As a result of the hot, dry conditions, devastating wild fires also impacted southern Chile, concentrated in Itata, with many producers losing vineyards to fire or smoke taint. Beyond the fire line and northwards of Maule, harvest was fast and furious although with good potential quality albeit with up to 20% lower yields. A much shorter ripening window than usual made the picking date vital to retaining balance in the wines.

The coastal wine regions, however, have a different story to tell of the vintage. An abundant crop and cool conditions made for one of their latest vintages of recent years. Quality is promising, with high acidity offering an ageworthy vision for the wines.

- **Chile (Red)**
4 not ready yet





AUSTRALIA

Greg Melick

2023 was recorded by Wine Australia as one of the difficult and challenging in the past 20 years. To support this at 15th May 2023 our consultant Greg Melick reported, "Some areas have not concluded vintage as yet – in the Barossa, some producers have still not

picked their Eden Valley Shiraz and in Tasmania we have just crushed the last of our Pinot and we only picked our late harvest Riesling today. Crops were very variable throughout Australia and many are talking up their small yields well beyond the quality. Some areas had severe weather issues and many had trouble ripening fruit. Those who were careful/lucky produced some very elegant wines. The ever-optimistic Bruce Tyrrell describes Vintages in the Hunter and Heathcote as good solid vintages. In Victoria the response is mixed with some saying it isn't any better than 5 and big companies are claiming a "cracker of a vintage". In Western Australia, Vanya Cullen picked her grapes just before the rain hit, many didn't. Tasmania is highly variable, very late flowering meant some didn't fully ripen and there may be more Rose than normal. Some yields down by as much as 50% (we were down 20%) and many had very uneven ripening.

• Barossa Valley

5 not ready yet

Clare Valley (Riesling)

6 not ready yet

Coonawarra (Red)

4 not ready yet

Victoria

5 not ready yet

Hunter Valley (Semillon)

5 not ready yet

Western Australia

5 not ready yet

Tasmania

5 not ready yet

NEW ZEALAND

Bob Campbell MW

New Zealand's 2023 vintage will be remembered for the impact of Cyclone Gabrielle which struck the northern part of the North Island in mid-February leaving a trail of destruction in its wake. Gisborne and Hawke's Bay were among the hardest hit wine regions although the damage caused by cyclone Gabrielle varied considerably in both regions. Heavy rain created disease pressure but several winemakers reported that free-draining sites produced clean fruit with promising potential.



Wairarapa/Martinborough was affected to a lesser degree while Marlborough, New Zealand's largest wine region, dodged the worst of it with normal yields and mostly good quality wines. Gabrielle didn't reach Nelson which had a slightly elevated rainfall but produced a good volume of high-quality wine.

Central Otago's continental climate is in a world of its own. Cyclones don't venture that far south but they might have an impact in weather which in 2023 was cooler and wetter than usual. A good to average vintage,

• New Zealand

North Island (White – App only)

3 current drinking

Hawkes Bay (Red)

3 not ready yet

Martinborough (Pinot Noir)

3 not ready yet

Central Otago (Pinot Noir)

6 not ready yet

Marlborough (Sauvignon Blanc)

5 current drinking

SOUTH AFRICA

David Swingle

Early 2023 harvest report: 'Even smaller volumes than the small 2022, many 'challenges' in the wettest SA harvest since 1977'



VinPro's authoritative South African Harvest Report has not been released by date, and neither have any national organisations (e.g. WOSA) or any of the regions published theirs. Single producers have published harvest reviews but they are characterised by the weather challenges and how said producer had obviated negative outcomes!

The reduced crop is due to at least a combination of vine uprooting reducing the national vineyard, a dry winter of 2022 with uneven berry set, frequent 'load shedding' (erratic power failures due to the unrelenting electricity crisis in the country), an unseasonal December storm and seemingly unceasing rain during harvest.

A late, warm and dry winter 2022 raised the spectre of the recent 2016-2018 drought, followed by a short spring that raced by. Rain, with hail in some areas, arrived with dramatic fanfare in December and, while it relieved water stress, it brought with it disease pressure (powdery and downy mildew). It was very hot and dry after that until rain revisited during the harvest late February through March, outstaying its welcome. Farmers who had brought in ripe fruit before the rain, and those whose viticultural practices mitigated the moisture, escaped the brunt of it but it was otherwise wet, wet, wet.

'Small volumes but good quality' is the rallying cry of many; we wait to see what's in the bottle.

South Africa

Red

3 not ready yet

White

3 not ready yet

Footnote

* 2022 vintage

AFRICAN ADVENTURE Part 1

Cape Town Pre-tour

Following the successful 2017 EAZ Baltic Cruise, which took members to visit four branches around the Baltic, the idea came together to take members to visit three EAZ African Branches, but how would we get there? The answer turned out to be short flights and the Rovos Rail train, but the adventure was delayed a couple of years by other festivals and Covid. The Harare Branch in the meantime found it could not continue in Zimbabwe, leaving only two branches to meet with, but in early November 2023, 25 members headed to Cape Town for some fine dining and a pre-tour of the Cape Winelands.

Day 1: Cape Town

Free time to explore Table Mountain, Robben Island and the Victoria & Alfred Waterfront, a thriving tourist destination incorporating the busy yacht harbour, sea cruises, restaurants and bars. The branch had chosen The Food Barn, a restaurant out of town in Noordhoek Farm Village, for the branch dinner, where Chef Franck Dangereux was cooking up a feast for us. Franck, formerly Chef at La Colombe, a Michelin starred restaurant in Constantia, had set up his own deli and restaurant a couple of years earlier and impressed the branch with his food and wine pairings, so much so that they wanted to present Franck with a Restaurant Award.

The first course entitled the 'rock pool' was a selection of seafood, vegetables and sea weed in a clear broth resembling



looking into a rock pool. The Cape Town Branch members talked the evening away with members from all over the world and new friendships were made.

Day 2: Walker Bay/Hemel en Aarde Valley/Hermanus

Heading east out of Cape Town our first stop was in Elgin at Paul Cluver Wines, we were received by the great man himself. Not only is Paul a great legend in wine making, viticulture and the environment but he stands 6ft 8ins tall and still has a great energy for all that he does. His belief is that all aspects of the environment matter to the wine and he has planted many thousands native trees and bushes (Fynbos) because the native insects and pollinators are critical to the vines.

We were told of the exceptional storm which had hit the district a week earlier causing many landslides from the surrounding mountains into the valley and vineyards, and a great cleanup was underway. Several bridges had been swept away, including

the one leading into the Hemel-en-Aarde Valley, so a diversion was needed along an old Ox Cart track which our coach driver tackled with great enthusiasm. At Bouchard Findlayson an excellent tasting of Burgundian style wines accompanied with appropriate game charcuterie. A red wine, Hannibal, was considered the pick of the tasting but then a Magnum of 1997 Galpin Peak pinot noir was opened and showed how these wines age; just as good as any Burgundy. Along with Hamilton Russell next door these are two of the oldest wineries in the valley.

Moving on to Criterion Winery for their 'Serendipity' lunch we were treated to an immersive tasting with much food coming straight from the garden, but we were encouraged also to have a sensory experience smelling herbs and plants as well as an incense burner, and to appreciate the mouth feel of the wines and the food.

After this long and leisurely Sunday lunch the group headed off to Hermanus in search of the Southern Right Whales, which can be seen along this coast with their young before heading to Antarctica. The time of day and the sea state meant none were around for us to see them other than on posters and educational material.

Day 3: Stellenbosch/Rustenburg/Babylon-Storen/Franschhoek

Stellenbosch is a university town majoring on viticulture and viniculture with elegant tree lined streets and buildings in the Dutch style. Just outside town we come to a T-junction at the foothills of the Simonsberg Mountains pointing left to Glenelly and right to Rustenburg, two of the oldest (founded 1682) wine farms in the area. Travelling along the estate road we arrived at the large Dutch style farmstead now converted to a winery, tasting and event space. Where once there were cows in the milking barn there are now shiny stainless vats and tanks and a large barrel cellar. Tasting took place on the terrace in the shade





of the trees. Stellenbosch is well inland and a much hotter climate suiting the Bordeaux varieties, although benches at altitude and south facing slopes (cooler aspect in the southern hemisphere) allow white wines, particularly chardonnay, to shine here. A magnum of 2008 Peter Barlow was opened during the tasting and showed how well the predominantly cabernet sauvignon wine develops here.

Moving on into the Franschhoek Valley settled by the French Huguenots, the Babylon-Storen Winery was a grand modern design with extensive gardens and tasting rooms, all attracting crowds of tourists in direct contrast to the tranquillity of Rustenberg. Wines were good and extensive in variety.

Further along the valley in Franschhoek town a food and wine matched lunch was enjoyed at Protégé, a restaurant belonging to the La Colombe Group. Returning to Cape Town a stop was made at a diamond warehouse where those wanting a gift could purchase Cape diamond jewellery. Dinner this evening was at Grub & Vine Restaurant; great food and an extensive wine list.

Day 4: Darling/Olives/San Museum

This time heading north and up the west coast we can look back on Table Bay and great views of Cape Town and Table Mountain. First stop at an olive farm for a tasting and more. Olives, tapenade, olive chutney, olive jam, olive chocolate, olive soap, olive cosmetics, you name it, they made it here. Then onto Groote Post wine farm for a tasting with lunch. Here the vines can get a cooler climate with the proximity of the Atlantic coast. The wine maker explained his ethos in bringing out the terroir into his wines but also matching the changing public demands. He has reduced significantly the oaking of the wine



and was looking to name a new range. On a visit to the Sportsman Restaurant in Seasalter, England, he seized the name for his new style sauvignon blanc/semillon calling it 'Seasalter': salt, reflecting the coastal terroir, appears throughout his new range 'Pinch of Salt' chardonnay, 'Salt of the Earth' shiraz/cinsault.

On to the San Museum. The San people, as hunter gatherers, being recognised as the earliest civilisation and direct ancestors of homo sapiens. Their language was explained as a series of 'clicks' made by the tongue and mouth. Each tribe had a different number and sound of 'clicks'. Their food and weapons were displayed, but solely for gathering food as they were a peaceful race.



The culmination of the Pre-tour was a Gala Dinner at the Queen Victoria Dash Restaurant, before an early morning transfer to Pretoria and the Rovos Rail station.

Gala Dinner menu

Charles Fox Cipher Blanc de Noir 2017

- Saldanha Bay Oysters, Seaweed, Coconut Chilli Dressing, or Mushroom Croquet, Truffle Pearls
Mukanya Brut Rosé
- Curried Broccoli Soup, Seeds, Coconut Milk, Masala Onion
Hazendal Rousanne 2022
- Salmon Gravavlax
Grilled Cumin Aubergine
AA Badenhorst Family Kalmoesfontein 2017
- Chalmer Beef Wing Rib, Oxtail Ragout
Hamilton Russel Pinot Noir 2021
or
Pan Fried Line Fish, Saldanha mussels
Hamilton Russel Chardonnay 2021
or
Roasted Pumpkin, Potato parat, Pine Nuts King Oyster
- Slices of Local Cheeses, Preserves and Crackers
Anthonji Rupert Cabernet Sauvignon 2018
- Nectarine Preserve, Lemon Thyme Sorbet Buffalo Yoghurt
Klein Constantia Vin De Constance

AFRICAN ADVENTURE Part 2

Rovos Rail – Pretoria to Victoria Falls

On arrival at the rail station in Pretoria you are welcomed by a glass of bubbly and the sight of a steam loco coming into the station. It only hauls a train once per year as the commercial trains are hauled by two strong diesel locomotives. Next welcome comes from owner, Rohan Voss, who invites guests for a tour of the station facility and engineering sheds where they build and maintain the engines and their sparkling green and cream carriages. 36 of our members make up just over half the complement of the train. Time for a briefing whilst they load the luggage and then we are onboard the fifteen carriage train to explore the accommodation, the lounges and dining cars.

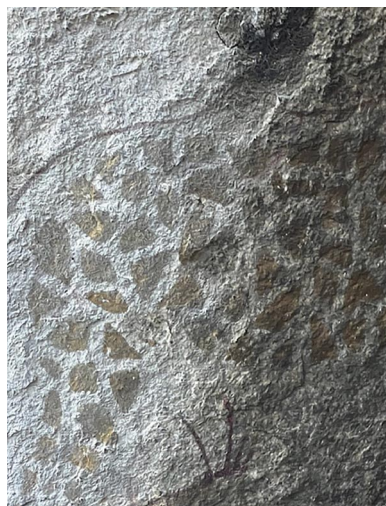
Unlimited South African wines, beers and spirits make for a convivial start before the gong goes for dinner at 7pm, with everyone dressed up for the occasion.

Day 2: A Day onboard

The train journeys steadily along as the countryside rolls by. Native villages, urban dwellings and abandoned station halts appear, as the only trains seem to be long distance freights and the tourist trains. It is early spring and only a shower of rain has encouraged the trees into leaf. It will take the heavy rains to turn the parched earth into a sea of verdant grass. There is evidence of giraffes having eaten the tops out of trees as most bush is the same height and elephants have pushed trees over; their dung is everywhere. No elephant sightings until John is woken in the night by banging on the carriage, only to raise the blind and see an elephant taking exception to the train blocking its path. Occasional stops to change drivers and engines as we cross into Zimbabwe. Lunch, afternoon tea and dinner are accompanied by a range of top class wines, Kanonkop, Bouchard Findlayson, Simonsig and more. Chris hands out the quiz sheet she has prepared. No chance of googling answers as there is no phone, internet or TV connection – a challenge to some who are normally hooked to their phones.

Day 3: Mpoto National Park/Rock Art/Game drive

We pull into Bulawayo Station and are back on terra firma. Although the train travels at a relatively low speed it is narrow gauge and the carriages rock, making the journey through all the corridors to the observation car at the back quite



challenging. A coach takes us to the Park where we board the rangers safari jeeps and set off through interesting landscapes with large rock outcrops worn smooth by erosion. It is amongst these rocks we see the ancient rock art – giraffes, buffalo and deer. The rangers explain how it was all done and, although faint, it has lasted millennia. As for wildlife we see deer, baboons and, in a



clearing, a female rhino and her calf. We get fairly close but the rangers explain they want to keep the rhino wary of humans and to avoid poachers. This pair have a round the clock guard from the ranger service and we are warned to have our phones off if they have a GPS facility as poachers monitor this to locate their targets.

Our train staff have brought out some drinks and refreshments as our next stop is a climb up another rocky outcrop and a sacred place to the indigenous tribes. It is here where they granted the tomb of Cecil Rhodes be carved out at the top.

Day 4: Hwange National Park/Game Drive

Again we depart the train and board the safari jeeps driven by the rangers. No sightings for quite a while and then an ostrich in the distance. We pause near some bushes and out walk two lionesses, which stroll nonchalantly past our open sided vehicle. We are asked to stay still and silent, but get our photographs. Then as we travel they keep coming, wart hogs, gazelle, impala, kudu, zebra, giraffes, elephants and many colourful birds. Another lioness allows us to see her family of six newly born cubs – a rarity to have so many. Then live action as a cheetah goes on the hunt and brings down an impala and hauls it over for her two juveniles to feed on.



We gather under some trees in a camp circle at 6pm, to watch the sun go down and have our sundowner drinks – a fabulous end to the day.

Day 5: Victoria Falls

An early start as we roll into Victoria Falls Station. A group of native dancers welcome us as we make the short walk into the iconic Victoria Falls Hotel. Time to check-in and then off by coach for the short journey down to the Falls National Park. Victoria Falls are higher than Niagara and a curtain of water extends for over a mile when in full flow. Today they are at two thirds capacity as the mighty Zambezi thunders over the edge. We follow the pathway which takes you to all the vantage points

on the Zimbabwe side and some spectacular sights. A few members took the helicopter flight for an even more spectacular view of the falls.

The Gala Dinner was held in the opulent Livingstone Room at the hotel where local produce including Zambezi bream and Zimbabwe beef featured on the menu alongside another fabulous range of South African wines.

The following day it was time for departures as members went their own way, 26 intrepid adventurers continued onto the Post Tour crossing the Falls bridge into Zambia.

AFRICAN ADVENTURE Part 3

Post Tour to Livingstone and Lusaka

Heading across the Falls Bridge into Zambia there were throngs of pedestrians, car drivers and lorry drivers all trying to get into the border post to have their passports stamped. With the outside temperature approaching 30°C our experienced coach driver collected all passports and disappeared into the building, emerging shortly after with all documents stamped without any of us getting off the coach – that's the sort of guy you appreciate.

Swinging by the David Livingstone Hotel to drop luggage we headed for the David Livingstone Museum in Livingstone Town Centre. Named after Livingstone it is not so much about the

man as the natural history of the area, its geography, history, people, animals and culture. With outside temperatures in the 30s and no aircon in the museum members did not linger long but headed for the comfort of local bars and cafés. A few braved the guided trip around the open market in town. Anything from welded metal goods, furniture or brightly coloured fabrics, local art and food can be bought here.

The David Livingstone Hotel on the banks of the Zambezi welcomed us with an African band and dancers as all members checked in, then we were back on the coach to the Elephant Café. Here a group of orphaned elephants are cared for with

the Café promoting awareness of their fate and raising funds to look after them. They wander freely in the grounds but congregate at the Café to be fed each afternoon. Members were welcomed to join in the feeding. That evening a barbecue dinner on the hotel terrace with copious South African wines was enjoyed by all.

Day 2 took us to the Mukuni Native village. The chief is ruler of a massive area of the region but his home is based in the village where traditional housing and village life are preserved. Villagers demonstrated making metal, stone and wooden items for selling to visitors and at local craft markets. A late afternoon sunset cruise on the Zambezi enabled animal spotting and photography – antelope, elephants on the banks, crocodiles, hippos at the waters edge. Cocktails, drinks and snacks were served as the sun dipped towards the horizon. A large bull elephant took to the water and swam across the river ahead of our boat a distance of a quarter of a mile, finishing off a memorable excursion.

Dinner was planned at the Royal Livingstone Hotel, a tutored dinner with traditional local food and recipes, held at several sites in the grounds close to the Zambezi. Chefs explained their dishes as we went. Unfortunately the heavens opened during the second course and we dashed back to the hotel to finish dinner on the veranda, but a fitting end to an enjoyable stay in Livingstone.

A flight to Lusaka next morning had us there quickly for a visit to an art gallery/jewellery showroom and a delightful buffet lunch

organised by members of the Lusaka Branch. Check-in at the Neilkanth Sarovar Hotel and out to dinner with the full Lusaka Branch at Mpoto Yanthu Restaurant ; again traditional Zambian dishes and time for chatting with local members. EAZ Awards were made to committee members and the Luring family (see report in last issue).

Many members know Arnie and Emily from their participation on many IWFS festivals and have heard tales of their game ranch near Lusaka. Mzimbilli was bought as a way of preserving a large area of natural bush in a fast developing town and making it a conservation area. Arnie, Emily and family are dedicated to preserving natural flora and fauna and fund the work and the people who work there by selling educational trips and shooting parties to cull the surplus antelope which thrive there. A game drive in vehicles and on foot showed us the extent of the reserve and some antiquities which had been found, as well as many species of antelope. A biologist had been invited to point out some rare flora. A barbecue lunch, inclusive of game, proved highly enjoyable, a second game drive, then a return to the ranch for sundowners finished a perfect day.

Farewells were said back at the hotel, over a last round of drinks, as members prepared to leave next day for their onward destinations. Some of us had been together for 14 days, one of the longest festivals by far.

Ian Nicol



CELEBRATING 90 YEARS OF EXPANSION

Ron Barker



Most members are aware that the Society was formed in London in 1933 by André Simon and A.J.A.Symons. One year later André was thinking of expansion and, because the USA had just abandoned prohibition, he thought it was time to try and educate the Americans to move from bath tub spirits to fine wine. Like many in the South East of England (and many politicians since) he was ignoring those Brits living to the North or West of the Capital. But to get to the States he needed a ship from Liverpool and, to get to Liverpool, he travelled through Chester where he had dinner with a number of supporters who then formed the Merseyside branch of the Society – perhaps the first act of levelling up!

And so, at the Society's 2023 AGM in Bournemouth, it was decided to organise a dinner and to invite the members of the six northern English branches.

Ian Rushton was Chair of the EAC from 2001 to 2006. He died in 2017 and his widow moved back to Blackpool. During his life he had purchased and cellared many fine wines particularly classic claret. Like many collectors he purchased faster than he drank.

It was agreed that Blackpool & Fylde Coast branch should host the event and the Rushton Family (Anita Rushton and Mark and Katherine Geoffrey) offered to donate most of the wine. Our problem was to find a hotel that could accommodate members from many miles away, which could put on an enjoyable event and would permit us to bring in our own wines. Branch Chair Peter Smith negotiated a successful package and menu with The Villa in Wrea Green. Forty three members from Manchester,

Merseyside & Mid-Cheshire and West Yorkshire joined Blackpool. Unfortunately two members missed the event due to the rail strike cancelling all trains from London.

The event started in the piano lounge with a champagne reception featuring Louis Roederer collection 8243 champagne and canapés. Members then moved next door to a private dining room where a four course meal was served by young but attentive staff. Members who wanted an alternative to the salmon, duck, cheese and sticky toffee pudding were accommodated.

With the starters we served a white burgundy (2016 Viré-Cressé). With the main course we were served two glasses of 2001 claret (Mission Haut Brion and Château Leoville Barton) to compare and contrast. Members taste in wines and wine matching are personal but I thought the Leoville showed better originally but the Mission went better with the food and improved with each sip. We are grateful to Andrew and Sarah Smith who double decanted the wines at their home and delivered them to the hotel; an arrangement made when we discovered that the hotel staff had little experience with 20+ year vintage wines. Members finished the claret with the cheese course and were served a South African sweetie with the dessert. At the end, the current Europe/Africa Chair John Nicholas thanked the organisers and the Rushton Family.

It was a successful event and one that hopefully leads to many more joint events. Perhaps Liverpool and Vale Royal branches will join us next time.

THE JUDGEMENT OF LONDON: WINE FAIR 2024

Ron Barker

I should start by re-emphasising that in the world of wine, taste is personal. Whatever the experts say, only you know what you like and what, in your opinion, accompanies which food.

In 1976 the wine world was turned upside down. Until that date those interested in serious fine wine only had to consider France, red from Bordeaux and white from Burgundy, and fizz from Champagne. There also was some very good stuff from Piedmont in Italy and recognisable styles from the Rhône, the Loire, Tuscany and Spain. But almost nothing from what we now call 'the New World'.

Then Steven Spurrier, the wine expert and author who died from cancer in 2021, persuaded a number of French top-end winemakers to compete in a blind tasting against the best California could offer. Although English he was, at the time, running the Les Caves de La Madeleine wine merchant in Paris. He signed up a panel of 11 judges from the French wine trade. The red flight featured wines from Bordeaux and Napa, whilst the white flight featured Burgundy and Napa. Everything seemed to favour the 'home team' but California won the collective award with Stag's Leap Wine Cellars 1973 Cabernet Sauvignon being named the top red. The shock shook the wine world and encouraged the new world to take fine wine seriously. This became known as the judgement of Paris.

Although often discussed it was not repeated whilst Steven lived. This year the organisers of the annual London Wine Fair decided to fill the gap but to expand the two 'teams' to cover Europe and The Rest of the World. Thirty two wines were tasted over a period of four hours by 21 judges, a selection of the UK's best palates, two-thirds of which were either Masters of Wine or Master Sommeliers. The wines – all of which were decanted and served in Jancis Robinson X Richard Brendon glasses – were tasted in pairs under exam conditions: eight pairs of white wines, followed by eight pairs of red wines. Each pairing comprised a European wine with their Rest of World counterpart, matched in terms of style. The judges scored each wine out of ten, which resulted in a grand total for each wine, and a final overall score for European vs Rest of World.

The wines were selected by Sarah Abbott MW, MD of Swirl Wine Group and Ronan Sayburn MS, CEO of The Court of Master Sommeliers. I do not know how they made their selection but I do know, from involvement in other competitive tastings, that the owners of the best (and most expensive) wines are reluctant to participate in publicity that cannot improve their status if they win, but damage them should they fail.

As it was the result was nearly a draw, less than one percentage point between the collective scores of the two sides, and I find that politically suspicious. I am not suggesting anything wrong with the judging (one of the Judges is a consultant and friend of IWFS, wine writer Anne Krebiehl MW) but the selection of wines and vintages as well as the decisions about which opponent against which they should be tasted must have an impact. For example a Portuguese white (Quinta dos Roques Encruzado,

2014 Dão) against a 2019 Swartland Chenin from David and Nadia. And if you are widening the entry where is the fizz, the fortified and the dessert wines? The top red was not a claret or a Burgundian Pinot but still came from France: a Rhône (Hermitage Rouge, 2012 Jean Louis Chave) but the runner up was Château Mouton Rothschild, Pauillac, Bordeaux, France 2009.

The overall winner was not from Europe or America. It was Pegasus Bay Riesling, Bel Canto, Waipara, North Canterbury, New Zealand 2011

In summary I am sure that the 'Judgement' achieved the objective of providing a talking point and publicity to the London Fair and its sponsors. I may have been more interested if they had been able to find more modern vintages of the wines originally tasted in Paris, and submitted them to juries in London, Paris and America to see if there was a noticeable difference in scoring. But I imagine that would be impossible. I do know some of the wines, although not always the same vintage, and I have been lucky to visit a number of the vineyards. Those I know are amongst my favourite wines but they exclude other favourites that have not been mentioned. I do appreciate that I prefer wines that are older than these selections, perhaps that is because I am older than nearly all the Judges!

I will end by quoting one of the Judges, Richard Bampffield MW: "Fascinating and inspiring tasting that provided a robust riposte to the view that wine styles are becoming more homogenous around the world. Just because it is becoming harder to identify wines as New World or Old World (which this tasting confirmed, at least for me) does *not* mean that we are losing diversity of style and personality. Fine wines, in a dazzling variety of styles, are being made the world over."



BERKSHIRE BRANCH EXCELLENCE AWARD TO THE RUCHETTA

Following discussion with our committee members and several other members, we decided that a visit by me and another member to Ruchetta 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.

Colin Mair

EXCELLENCE AWARDS FOR LES COLS, MIRAMAR AND CASTELL PERELADA

Almost a year has passed since our IWFS event in Barcelona and the Emporda. Over the last two days Elina and I have retraced our steps around the Emporda and Olot in a whirl of wonderful memories delivering the IWFS awards of excellence to the three restaurants: **Les Cols**, **Miramar**, and **Castell Perelada**, that all of you so graciously agreed upon. All the chefs and their teams were absolutely delighted, honoured and

thrilled to receive the awards. Here below are some photos of the award ceremonies.

Thank you all once again for your participation and for having helped make this event so special.

Wendy and Elina



Left, restaurant Castell Perelada, Perelada, Spain, head chef Javier Martínez and wine and cheese sommelier Toni Gerez. Centre, restaurant Miramar Llança, Spain, head chef Paco Pérez. Right, restaurant Les Cols, Olot Spain, head chef Fina Puigdevall.

BLACKPOOL LONG SERVICE AWARD



At the beginning of our March meeting committee member Ian Nicol made a presentation of an EAZ award for exceptional and long service to Anita Rushton, the widow of Ian Rushton who was a past chair of the Europe and Africa Zone. Because Ian's job moved him about she has been a member in London, Bristol and Hereford branches before she moved back home to

Blackpool; a total of more than 30 years service. When Ian served on the International Council she toured the world with him representing the Society. To ensure unity she visited branches in every single American state. In the days before zoom meetings, for six years she hosted EAC committee meetings in her London apartment, providing excellent hospitality.

Blackpool branch usually holds monthly wine tastings, sometimes with a guest speaker, and midweek restaurant lunches; all our members have retired! But once a year we try to cook a three course meal ourselves. We are fortunate to be able to use the kitchen of a local housing association. This year 20 members gathered to enjoy a starter of smoked mackerel paté presented by Georgianna Thersby, a main course of venison casserole cooked by Karen Smith and a tiramisu pudding made by John Gledhill. The meal was accompanied by 6 wines selected by Don Williamson from local supermarkets. Because the deer was shot by Karen's brother as part of a cull of Sika which were damaging Scottish forestry and because Don selected best 'value for money' wines from Aldi, Lidl, Co-op, Tesco and Morrisons we were able to charge only £20 per member and make a small surplus. Chairman, Peter Smith, thanked everyone for their help in a very enjoyable event.

Ron Barker

THE AWARDS LUNCH FOR THE IWFS YOUNG CHEF OF THE YEAR 2024

The IWFS Young Chef of the Year Competition was first held in 2022, spearheaded by IWFS members from Blackpool and Fylde Coast, Manchester, Merseyside & Mid-Cheshire and West Yorkshire branches. The aim of the competition is to support the catering industry by encouraging budding young chefs from catering colleges across the country.

This year eight colleges took part from across the North of England and the chosen theme was 'Free From'. The finals took place in May at Warrington and Vale Royal College under the watchful eye of Paul Heathcote MBE, Chef Consultant Steph

Moon, Mathew Wilkinson, Head of Kitchens at Rudding Park, Richard Morris the Production Director at the Bury Black Pudding Company and John McCerery, Executive Chef of Saga Boutique Cruises.

The quality of the entries was judged to be outstanding but there can only be one winner and this year that accolade went to Tara Hunter (pictured left) from Leeds College. Tara was presented with a certificate and an IWFS Crystal Trophy, together with cash prize of £500, from IWFS, a cash prize from Bill Webster, a hamper from the Bury Black Pudding Company, and an opportunity to spend time on board a Saga Cruise Liner. Second place went to Lucy Richmond from York College and third place to James Segar from Hugh Baird College, in Liverpool. The Judges Commendation went to Adrian Cretu from Scarborough College.

The Awards Lunch was hosted for the third year running by Bill Webster and his team at Bolton College. It was attended by representatives of the sponsors: Saga Cruises, The Savoy Educational Trust and The Bury Black Pudding Company; as well as the students, their lecturers and IWFS Members.

The Menu was chosen, cooked and served by the students at Bolton College, under the guidance of Jodie Cooke, Wendy Bissett and Chris Hood. The wines were chosen and paired by Ron Barker, to suit the menu, with the individual elements of the dishes broken down to create the perfect pairing. Ron was assisted by Master of Wine, Miles Corish of Milestone Wines in Clitheroe.

THE MENU

- Canapés
Syn, Sparkling Rosé, NV, Coonawarra, South Australia
This wine is produced by Leconfield and is a Pinot Noir led blend with a drop of Chardonnay, producing a beautifully light, pale rose style. A great opener made for Canapés.





The starter was a presentation of two dishes to accommodate the 'Free From' theme.

- Ham Hock and Black Pudding Terrine, served with Pickled vegetable and a Piccalilli Gel.
Beetroot, Goats Cheese and Spring Green Salad served en croûte.
Both dishes were accompanied by *River Farm, Pinot Gris, 2022*. This wine is a single vineyard expression from the Awatere in Marlborough. The thinking behind the pairing was very simple – a wine with lovely, bright acidity to match the pickled vegetables, but with a subtle richness to complement the black pudding, as well as lush sweet fruit to pair up with the salty ham hock. It worked very well!



The main course offered a choice between,

- Chicken Supreme with Black Pudding Dauphinoise Potatoes, served with Seasonal Vegetables and a Garlic and White Wine Sauce.
- Cauliflower Steak served on a bed of Butternut Squash Purée with Dauphinoise Potatoes and English Asparagus.
Two wines were chosen to compare and contrast with the dishes. *Scheid District 7 Chardonnay 2021, Monterey, California* and *Santa Macerena Pinot Noir 2021, Aconagua, Chile*. Both wines were deemed to compliment the dishes perfectly.



- The dessert was Poached Yorkshire Rhubarb served with Meringue, Mixed Berries, Honeycomb and Custard.
This was paired with *Richard Hamilton Day Dreamer Moscato*, a wine chosen for its sweetness to cope with the acidity of the rhubarb and the berries. The wine comes from Australia's McLaren Vale, by the family behind Richard Hamilton, one of the first families of wine in Australia, after settling there in 1837.

All the dishes were Gluten Free and the Gluten Free Black Puddings were provided by The Award Winning Bury Black Pudding Company.

This competition is going from strength to strength and it is hoped that in 2025 the range of colleges taking part will be extended. John Nicholas, Chairman of IWFS Europe and Africa, said that the Society was recognising the importance of helping the next generation going into hospitality and he invited students to apply for the annual Heptinstall Trust grant of £4,000.

In conclusion, Paul Heathcote MBE sent the students the following message:

"What great standards once again, more tough marking and deliberation from my fellow judges, who I would like to say a big thank you to, as the students made it very difficult to find a winner.

"As always there are winners and there are fellow competitors. For those who don't end up picking up a prize... come back again next year, with more experience and learning from your time in the competition.

"By all means be disappointed but don't judge yourself by how you perhaps performed on the day, but how much more you have to aim for in your career. You are only at the starting line and in the competition you demonstrated that you deserved to be in the race."

Angela Britland

Merseyside and Mid-Cheshire Branch

Bath & Bristol

WALKING TOUR, A BUFFET LUNCH AND LOCAL CIDER TASTING

As we were planning our programme for 2024 we realised that, quite by chance, all our events were very explicitly showcasing local produce. We then made a conscious decision to go very local and include a visit to Yew Tree Farm in my own village of Kingston Seymour, near Clevedon. In the distant past when I was a university lecturer in Geography I used to bring my students to this farm; some had never been on farm before and learning how their food is produced was a revelation to them. Much has changed in the last 25 years although apparently some young visitors to the farm (which hosts lots of school visits) are still remarkably uninformed. One youngster asked, apparently seriously, whether the strawberry milk shakes available from the Milk Stand come from cows producing strawberry-flavoured milk! IWFS members can be expected to be much more aware of the provenance of their food but nevertheless we all had plenty to learn.

We started our visit with coffee while farmers Richard and Anita Simmons gave us a brief introduction to the farm. They have been farming here for over 40 years and have a 200-strong dairy herd and 20,000 free range hens. They produce 1.5 million litres of milk each year, most of which is sold to a local cheese producer, though they now gently pasteurise some on the farm to supply their most recent enterprise 'The Milk Stand', which sells (from a vending machine) not only milk but an ever-changing variety of flavoured milk shakes, as well as cheese made from their own milk, local charcuterie and of course their own eggs. They buy in straw, but make all their own hay and silage. They still have a few sheep but this side of the business has been taken over by their son (a farm vet) and his partner.

The technology – and the bureaucracy – involved in contemporary farming is impressive. Every cow has a traceable bloodline and is not only tagged but constantly monitored throughout its life, with its feed adjusted and recorded according to numerous parameters – age, weight, milk yield being only a few. Inspections are frequent and rigorous – animal welfare, TB checks, milk quality, hygiene, etc. And of course buildings and machinery have to be kept in good repair, as do farm tracks, fences, hedges and ditches. Fluctuations in the



market prices for livestock and other produce are challenging. Profits, never big, can turn into losses in the blink of an eye and it can be hard to keep up with the ever-changing environmental regulations. This is not a job you would do unless you loved it – which Richard and Anita clearly do.

Every Somerset farm used to have a cider apple orchard, also the case in Devon and Herefordshire, but relatively few small orchards remain. So we were privileged, after a fascinating tour of the farm, to be treated to a blind tasting of eight local ciders, six made by local mid-scale cider producer Ben Crossman and two from Thatchers for contrast. None of us got them all right! Over a delicious 'posh ploughman's' lunch provided by the Branch committee, (accompanied of course by more cider!) we learnt that there is much more to cider than the variety of apples from which it is made. The many other factors include the effect of different soils and micro-climates and the fluctuating economics of cider production, which have waxed and waned with changes in consumer preference – and the tax regime.

All in all we had a most enjoyable, informative and 'different' day. And we were delighted to make a substantial contribution to the Farm Community Network (www.fcn.org.uk), a charity which exists to support farmers and farming families experiencing a range of problems including mental health issues (stress, anxiety, isolation), and financial, legal and animal welfare concerns. Richard and Anita have been involved with the FCN for many years and know from personal experience how vital its work continues to be.

Leonie Allday



Bath & Bristol

BLACK TIE DINNER AT THE PIG, HUNSTRETE HOUSE, NEAR BATH

Many of us have fond memories of Hunstrete when it was a lovely, small, independent country house hotel. About 10 years ago it was taken over by 'The Pig' chain and some of us continue to struggle with the change of name and ambience. However, it remains a handsome house, in a wonderful setting, and it has to be said that it has proved a perfect location in which the Pig '25 mile' ethos has been able to flourish. Therefore, on a midweek April evening, 22 of us met for champagne and a perfectly acceptable, if not outstanding, dinner in the beautiful Old Dining Room, with a choice of dishes all featuring produce sourced very locally, and much of it from the hotel's own grounds. These include a deer park and one of the options was a venison ragu, which was much enjoyed.

Desserts were particularly tempting, with a choice of bitter chocolate and malt tart, buttermilk and rose pannacotta with hobnob crumble, and rhubarb and custard fool.

Our meal was followed by an informative and entertaining talk given by Gordon Lloyd (Devonshire Branch). Gordon, holder of the WSET Diploma, has recently been invited to join the prestigious IWFS Wines Committee and we were keen to hear what that involved. The work that goes in to producing the annual Vintage Card is considerable (and pleasurable!) and we were encouraged to make more use of it, both for our personal benefit and as a recruitment tool. It was lovely to have Gordon and Geeta with us for the evening.

Some of us stayed overnight and after a copious and delicious breakfast were able to explore the wonderful kitchen garden. At



four acres, it is the largest kitchen garden in The Pig chain of hotels, and truly impressive. They have four full-time gardeners but even so it was quite something to observe everything from radishes to beetroot to about a dozen varieties of kale all standing to attention in serried ranks with not a weed in sight! We even managed to take some photos, having spectacularly failed to do so the night before – we were all having way too good an evening to remember our responsibility to F&W!

Leonie Allday



Berkshire

WINE TOUR OF THE TERROIRS OF NEBBIOLO

Several of our members have been on Tim Syrad's wine tours and have reported that they are excellent. Very happily we persuaded Tim to do a tour specifically for Berkshire Branch and a visit to Piedmont fitted in with his schedule. Twenty members and one guest enjoyed great food and wine while learning about the region and its wines. We were all familiar with Nebbiolo, Barbera, Moscato and Cortese but many of us had never heard of Arneis, for example.

Most of us flew from Heathrow to Milan Malpensa on a Sunday where we met others who had been extending their holiday. We checked in to the hotel I Castelli in Alba, which was very comfortable with modern facilities. Breakfasts were excellent but the real surprise was that its restaurant had a very good menu at reasonable prices and that its wine list was exceptional, but on this first evening we dined at the restaurant Cortiletto d'Alba. Here the regional dishes were all beautifully presented. We started with a plate of three hors d'oeuvres items, vitello tonnato, a salad of celery, apple and cheese and polenta mousse. With this an Arneis white wine was very much admired. There followed ravioli, then pork in a marsala sauce with roast potato and for dessert hazelnut cake, each plate differently and beautifully decorated with chocolate, plum and mango sauces.

During the coach journey from the airport to the hotel, and on all other journeys, Tim took the opportunity to impart his in-depth knowledge of the area and its wines. He had explained the recent renaissance of the Arneis grape, and we were certainly convinced of its quality at the restaurant.

On Monday we travelled the short distance to the Roero district, where Arneis is grown. We visited Marco Porello, a third generation wine maker. He gave us a delightful tour and presentation of his wines. We tasted two Arneis, one Barbera and two Nebbiolos. The wines impressed – the Arneis is attractive and clearly a worthy dry white wine, good with food. The Nebbiolos were quite light and already enjoyable even though they would improve with five or even 10 years of ageing. It was going to be interesting to compare their style with the more traditionally robust Barolos. We were then taken to the lovely village Guarene and given a very fine lunch at the Miralange restaurant. Again we started with vitello tonnato. This was followed by risotto porcini, then chicken in Nebbiolo with carrots and roast potato and a dessert of two cakes, hazelnut chocolate and hazelnut cream. In the afternoon we went to the winery Montaribaldi, where we tasted some Barbaresco wines. Our reaction to these was rather mixed, with a 2018 for example being not very pleasant and needing several more years for the tannins to soften. We had an interesting comparison of two vintages of the Barbaresco Palazzina. The 2020 was quite attractive with good balance, the 2011 had seemingly more tannin with a more intense flavour but duller fruit; both would improve in a few years. We also tasted a Moscato d'Asti, a frizzante wine. This was a very nice dessert wine but very sweet; we had tasted a more refined version in the restaurant at lunch time. The schedule from here on left our evenings free and we were able to explore the most attractive town of Alba. A few of us had discovered that the hotel restaurant wine list included over 70 Barolos, with many older





vintages at reasonable prices (in the context of the very high general cost of Barolo wines). We found a 2009 vintage at €50, and shared it among six people; it was complex and delicious.

Tuesday took us to Barolo and we started at Domenico Clerico. This was a high-class modern winery clearly with ambition to attract rich clients. We were shown round the superb facility, with impressive rows of barriques in the cellars and a beautiful tasting room. Sadly the generous spaces all had boomy acoustics and it was difficult to follow the presentation by Domenico's glamorous daughter Cristina. It is said that the 2019 vintage is one of the best. We tasted two, the (€40) and the Ciabot Mentin (a bit more expensive). The first was very light, with little nose. The second had a soft fruity nose and a bit more colour; it was nicely balanced with soft tannins and fair length. I was assured that they would become wonderful with 10 or more years of ageing but I found it difficult to believe that they had enough complexity of fruit. The lunch that followed was at the very fine restaurant Tota Virginia. Here we were treated to an amuse-bouche of goat's cheese coated in chopped hazelnuts drizzled with honey. Then a fascinating soup in a glass – celeriac and saffron over a lightly cooked egg drizzled with olive oil and pumpkin seeds. Risotto porcini had much more intense flavour than we had had the previous day, and the secondo of braised beef cheek was impressively tender and delicious, served simply with a rich gravy sauce on carrot and squash mousse. The dessert was hazelnut and chocolate cream and panna cotta. In the afternoon we went to Corino, which contrasted markedly with Domenico Clerico. Again a family winery, smaller and more

modest, it is managed with a clear passion for quality by Giuliano whose father Giovanni founded the company. We were given a tour and tasting by Giuliano's wife Stefania. The wines all impressed. We tasted a Dolcetto, two Barberas, the l'Insieme, a blend of 50% Nebbiolo and 50% Barbera, Langhe Nebbiolo, and four Barolos. All the Barolos had great depth of rich fruit and distinct but not aggressive tannins. Three were priced in the forties, and the Riserva 2017, from 70 year old vines, at €80. The cheapest, the Giachini 2019 at €43, attracted a number of purchases.

On Wednesday we travelled further east, to Gavi, and visited one site, La Giustiniana. This is an historic venue with a beautiful seventeenth century house and three vineyard sites spanning 100 hectares. We visited the old winery and an exhibition of old wines from the estates and then walked around the central vineyard at La Giustiniana. Lunch was provided in part of the buildings being renovated to become an attractive wedding venue. We started with a quite overwhelmingly delicious plate of beef carpaccio on salad leaves. Then polenta cakes with mushroom and pine nut sauce followed by ravioli. Petits fours and coffee rounded off the meal. It had been accompanied by their white wines, all made from Cortese, which were very attractive and again resulted in several sales.

On Wednesday evening Tim invited us all to the outside terrace by the restaurant at the top of the hotel and chose four different old vintages of Barolo from the extensive list. We had 2013, 2011, 2010 and 2009. This was a privileged opportunity to taste old vintages and to see how Barolo wines can develop. They were all complex wines with distinct tannins. The two older vintages in particular were wonderful wines to drink now with food, but all will last several years yet before reaching their peak.

We checked out of the hotel on Thursday morning and, en route, to Malpensa stopped at Strevi to visit Marengo. We started in the town where the winery has a remarkable exhibition of old equipment used in winemaking and associated items representing local culture. Then we travelled out to their house in the middle of the vineyards where a delightful lunch was served, with their wines, under the trees in the garden. A focaccia oven in an outhouse prepared some of our starters, accompanied by Scracona Moscato d'Asti. Our hors d'oeuvres was a plate of charcuterie, then ravioli and a selection of local cheeses. Accompanying these were Carialoso, a white wine made from Caricalasino grapes, I guess a first for all of us; it was light, fresh and balanced. Then two Barberas that proved very palatable, the Ciresa 2019 and Nizza 2020. Another unusual grape was the Albarossa, the 2020 vintage showing very well. A dolce of hazelnut cake and amaretto biscuits was served with a sweet Moscato dessert wine.

This tour was an outstanding success, owing to meticulous research and logistical planning by Tim. We were particularly lucky with the weather, which at this time of year is typically 17°C and foggy. Of course we would have enjoyed it whatever the weather, but in fact were treated to glorious sunshine and temperatures in the mid twenties. What about Sicily in 2025?

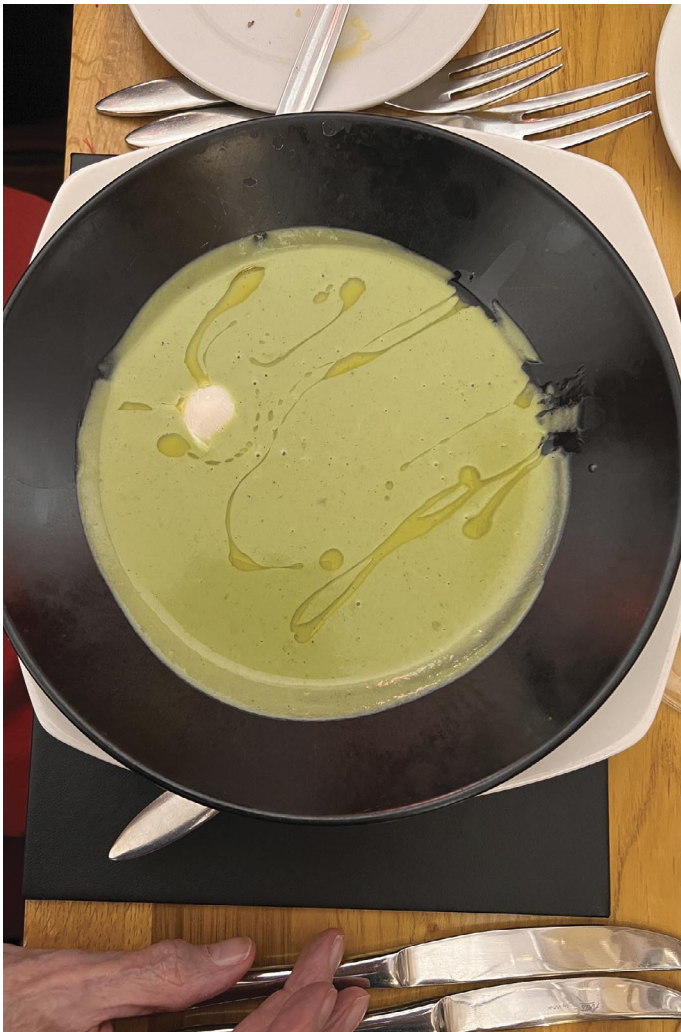
Chris Graham

Devonshire

DINNER AT OLD VIENNA

Devonshire branch has been going to Old Vienna for many years. Is it the food or the yodelling that captivates us? It is of course a mixture of both with Werner Rott, the Austrian chef/proprietor, always ready with a rendition.

The evening started with a selection of canapés and a glass or two of I Castelli Prosecco DOC (Italy), followed by a choice of starters from Asparagus Velouté with Poached Quails Egg and



White Truffle Oil and Pastry Cheese Twist, Home Cured Smoked Sliced Duck Breast with Cumberland Sauce drizzle, served with a Mango and Avocado salad, to Handpicked finest Brixham Crab, Smoked Mackerel and Smoked Salmon Paté with Pickled Ginger on Beetroot Carpaccio with Lime oil, washed down with a Grüner Veltliner from Austria.

Then came the main course, again with a choice from Roasted Rump of Lamb, sous vide – sweet potato fondant and crisps with smoked aubergine purée, rosemary and garlic jus, to the Classic Wiener Schnitzel Veal Escalope in breadcrumbs, served with lemon, anchovies, caper garnish or cranberry sauce. Or Pan seared Scallops with grilled asparagus and vine tomatoes, with saffron infused fish sauce and dill oil, all mains being served with a vegetable selection and paired with Zweigelt from Austria.



To finish, the desserts were a choice of Homemade Mothers Recipe Short Crust Pastry Apfelstrudel with Crème Pâtissière, a Mohr Im Hemd (a classic Viennese warm Chocolate and Almond Sponge Cake with Chocolate Sauce and whipped cream) or, for those not into sweet, the cheese platter with four Local Sharpham (Totnes) cheeses with garnish, chutney, and biscuits.

Finally, we ended the evening with Werner's yodelling performance and a glass of Marillenbrand (a schnapps from Lower Austria) before we dispersed into the night.

Geeta Lloyd



Herefordshire & Monmouthshire A RACING CERT...



A race day at Ludlow in Shropshire on 29th February sponsored by the LOO of the Year Awards attracted 20 members and guests from our branch, Bath & Bristol, Merseyside & Mid Cheshire and Zurich!

We took a private box overlooking the finish line for the afternoon – enjoyed a fizzy aperitif, a five course lunch and some very acceptable house wines. No physical effort was expended placing bets as a representative from the Tote came to our tables before each race and later to commiserate or pay out. Overhearing comments after each race I thought the group would come out even, but I heard later that one guest pocketed £40.

The weather was grey, the course was heavy, the rain held off until the last race. The actual races were a welcome distraction between each course we were served Gressingham duck and orange salad with red onion sweet chilli jam to start, then English sirloin of beef with a Jameson's and peppercorn sauce accompanied by hot buttered potatoes and a selection of vegetables.



A 'Trio of Desserts' preceded platters of English cheeses with grapes, celery and savoury biscuits, followed by coffee and mints

The previous evening we stayed at The Charlton Arms in Ludlow town, named after the squires of Ludford, the Charlton family (seventeenth to nineteenth century). The hotel is several centuries old, situated on the south side of Ludford bridge and prior to 1828 was known as The Red Lion. Owned and run by Cedric and Amy Bosi who have many years experience operating restaurants with Michelin stars in Ludlow and London.

Our party had pre-ordered dinner from an extensive and imaginative selection the most popular choices were:

Starters

- Crab risotto and pancetta crumb
- Double baked cheese soufflé, cheese and chive sauce

The Mains

- Truffle and burrata tortellini, creamy wild mushroom sauce
- Barbary duck breast, roasted plum, chicory and fondant potatoes
- Pork tenderloin, herb mousseline, parma ham, pickled cabbage, dauphinoise potatoes

The desserts

- Crème caramel & shortbread biscuit
- Classic rum baba, Ludlow spiced rum chantilly cream, frozen berries

For the wines we chose:

- Piquepoul Terret Pique & Mixe, Vignerons de Florensac, 2022, Languedoc, France
- Tempranillo Merlot 'ars in vitro' Tandem 2019, Tandem Navarra Spain

Sue Smith

Herefordshire & Monmouthshire

LUNCH AT THE CEDAR RESTAURANT, GLEWSTONE MANOR

The Cedar restaurant at Glewstone Manor near Ross on Wye in Herefordshire has been a long time favourite venue and over many years we have celebrated Christmas there and met for occasional lunches. Recently they changed their business model and now cater only for events rather than chance diners and hotel guests. In April fifteen of our branch members met for lunch in the elegant Yew Tree dining room and were delighted with the menu choices available, the quality of the ingredients and the high standard of service. The view from the dining room was over extensive lawns, flower beds, a vineyard and dominated by a 400 year old cedar tree.

Guests had pre-selected their choices for each course which ensured that only fresh and predominantly local ingredients were prepared for us, allowing everyone to be served simultaneously under the enthusiastic guidance of maître d'hôtel Charles. The offerings included:

- Cream of Wye Valley asparagus soup with watercress oil
- Duo of cured salmon, lemon crème fraîche and toasted dill bread

Mains followed with:

- Pressed pork belly with, bramley apple purée, Orchard Gold cider Sauce
- Adlington Farm chicken breast with dauphinoise potato rotolo filled with wild garlic, Wye Valley asparagus, spinach and asparagus Velouté
- Wild garlic and asparagus rotolo with butter and tarragon braised carrot, roast parsnips, hispi cabbage, roast golden and red beetroots

The feast concluded with indescribably calorific desserts and coffee.

The wines were:

- Ita Prosecco Rosé, Italy



- Amori Pinot Grigio, Delle Venezie, Veneto, Italy
- Paparuda Pinot Noir, Romania.

In the country driving to venues for daytime events is almost unavoidable. Our branch has adopted a policy of offering non alcoholic drinks alongside wines and averaging the overall cost so as not to disadvantage the designated drivers.

Sue Smith



Herefordshire & Monmouthshire LUNCH AT THE MOODY COW

Upton Bishop is a hamlet near Ross on Wye and the spiritual home of our branch – it was founded there 26 years ago by John Boyd and his late wife Ikka. The hamlet juggles around an offset road junction and it even attracts the occasional country bus. But a more significant attraction is the Moody Cow, a gastro-pub with a county, and even countrywide, reputation for excellent fodder under the leadership of landlord Chris Burgess.

We dined there in May, lunch for 15 members. The menu varies with the seasons but in May we were invited to pre-select from a wide range – all served in generous portions.

Starters

- French onion soup with a Dijon mustard and cheese croute
- Severn and Wye Valley Smokery smoked salmon with a gin and apple dressing, crème fraîche, warm bread roll and butter
- Deep fried brie coated in hazelnut breadcrumbs served with red onion marmalade
- Pan fried strips of fillet steak, with a lime and ginger dressing, topped with wasabi peanuts served with a coriander salad
- Tofu marinated in lime and ginger dressing, pan fried and served with a coriander salad
- Buttermilk chicken goujons coated in breadcrumbs, served with pesto mayonnaise and dressed leaves

Mains

- Slow roasted belly of pork with a quince glaze, served with caramelised apple mash, red onion gravy and crispy crackling
- Pan fried fillet of Brixham hake served on a crushed new potato cake with a prawn and dill sauce
- Fresh Brixham haddock in a light ale batter served with hand peeled chips, crushed minted garden peas and homemade tartare sauce
- Fillet of beef burger stuffed with Shropshire blue cheese on toasted ciabatta served with hand peeled chips and garlic aioli
- Vegan blackbean burger served in a toasted brioche bun with chilli mayonnaise, coleslaw, dressed leaves and sweet potato fries



Puddings

- Chocolate fudge brownies with clotted cream
- Vanilla crème brûlée with a shortbread biscuit
- Sticky toffee pudding with warm toffee sauce and vanilla ice cream
- Vegan chocolate and orange tart served with chocolate ice cream
- Baked chocolate and orange cheesecake served with a dark chocolate shard

For wines we selected Robinia Pinot Grigio and Caracara Vintage Reserve Merlot.

Members praised the quality of ingredients, the attractive presentation and the attentive service – overall a joy and delight!

Sue Smith



Liverpool

WELCOMES IN THE YEAR OF THE DRAGON



Liverpool members and friends from Blackpool celebrated the Chinese New Year with a Chinese banquet at the Yuet Ben restaurant, a selection of Chinese wines and a display of Lion dancing.

Ron Barker



London

CLASSIC FRENCH FAVOURITES

On 26th March at the Army and Navy Club we had a tasting of some of the organiser's favourite French wines from his collection of mature examples, with six reds and four sweet whites from classic producers.

1. J-L Chave Hermitage 1979, no stated alcohol.

Chave, from father to son over 16 generations from 1481. 21 ha in Hermitage. Some ullage. Brown-red with pale edges. Good mature bouquet and flavour, retaining some smooth tannins. Good length but clearly past its best. An elegant old lady. My score for quality, 75% (I am a generous scorer).

2. Vieux Château Certan Grand Vin, Pomerol 1990, 12.5%.

A 7/7 year on the IWFS chart. The Denny family came from Scotland in the early 16th century. 14 ha. Until it was overtaken by Pétrus, this was the top estate in Pomerol. 70% Merlot on deep clay, 25% Cabernet Franc on gravel and clay, 5% Cabernet Sauvignon on gravel. Black with red-brown edges. Legs. A big, mature bouquet. Great flavour, complex, mature, sweet tannins, good length. Perhaps a very little past its best. 90%.

3. Château Léoville Barton, Saint-Julien 2001, 12.5%.

A 6/7 year. 300 years of heritage, with Thomas Barton coming from Ireland in 1722. 45ha. 77% Cabernet Sauvignon, 20% Merlot, 3% Cabernet Franc. Clay-gravel soil. Black-purple. Legs. A big fruity bouquet and flavour. Good mature tannins. Very satisfying and delicious. Good length. Will keep much longer. Most people preferred it to wine No2. 93%.

4. Château Lynch Bages Grand Vin, Pauillac 2002, 13%.

A 3/7 year for the region, but much better for Lynch Bages than that. Founded at Batges in the first half of the seventeenth century by two of the Dejean family. John Lynch came from Galloway as a refugee to Bordeaux in 16thC. and his son married into the Dejean family. 100 ha red, 5 ha white. 75% CS, 15% M, CF 10%. Deep Garonne gravel from the Pyrenees. Black-purple with red edges. Legs. Excellent big black-fruit bouquet with blackcurrants. Excellent flavour. Good length. Will keep. 90%.

5. Château Lynch Bages Grand Vin, Pauillac 1988, 12.5%.

A 6/7 year. Deep black. Legs. A big classic Cabernet Sauvignon



bouquet with blackcurrants. Very fruity flavour, complex, soft tannins. Very long, balanced, everything integrated. Keeping well although one man thought it might be a little past its best. A fabulous wine. Most people liked it best out of the six reds. 98%.

6. Château de Beaucastel, Châteauneuf-du-Pape 2001, 13.5%.

A 6/7 year. A sixteenth century domain, now with the fourth generation of the Perrin family. Large round pebbles. 100 ha. They grow all 13 permitted (now 18 permitted?) grape varieties, red and white, but mainly Grenache and Mourvèdre. Deep brown-red, pale edges. A good aromatic bouquet with red and black fruits. Excellent big fruity flavour with elegant tannins. Great length. Complex and ready, a bit softer than expected. 92%.

7. Mayer-Fonné Gewürztraminer Grand Cru Kaefferkopf, Alsace 2000, 13.5%.

A 7/7 year in the 2003 IWFS chart but now 6/7. The Swiss family came to Alsace in 1732. Present domain in Katzenthal founded by Felix Meyer (1877-1964); now the third generation runs it. 15 ha over seven communes. Very variable soils: clay, chalk, sandstone. Depending on the year, fermentation lasts from two weeks to six months. Gold. Legs. A huge classic Gewürztraminer nose – lychees and rose petal. Big body and flavour. Sweet but balanced. A big wine. 92%.

8. Albert Mann Gewürztraminer Grand Cru Altenbourg, Alsace 2000, 13.1%, 50cl.

A 6/7 year. From a union of two wine families, Mann since seventeenth century, Barthelmé from 1654. 22 ha around

Wettolsheim, with vineyards in three Grand Crus. Gravel and calcareous clay. A slightly darker gold. Big legs. Lovely big bouquet with barley sugar as well as lychees and rose petal. Big body. Sweet but balanced. Very long. Delicious! 95%.

9. René Muré Clos St. Landelin Grand Cru Vorbourg Gewürztraminer Vendanges Tardives Moelleux, Alsace 2001, 12.5%.

A 5/7 year in Alsace but 7/7 in Sauternes. Twelfth generation. 22 ha. Warm, sunny site, loamy soil, low rainfall and very low yields. Made for long keeping. Darker gold. Legs. A beautiful elegant bouquet: lychees, mangos, tropical fruits. Sweet but a with a great balance, with more acidity than the previous two wines. Keeping very well. A real treat to smell and taste. 100%.

10. Château Rieussec, Sauternes 2003, 14%.

A 5/7 year, very hot. Founded by Carmelite nuns and confiscated during the French Revolution. Owned by the Rothschilds since 1985. 90 ha on gravel, sand, clay and limestone. 90% Sémillon, 8% Sauvignon Blanc, 2% Muscadelle. Vinified in French oak barrels, then matured in them, 50% new, for 18 to 30 months. Drink at 14°C. Gold. Legs. Rich bouquet with a little Noble Rot. Very sweet but balanced. Huge body. Excellent flavour. Very long. Will keep for several decades. 95%.

A cold buffet was provided by the club.

Dr Bernard Lamb

Organiser and presenter



London

FINE WINES FROM OREGON



This tasting of Oregon wines, mainly Pinot Noirs from 2018, was presented by Ian Shane. Willamette Valley in Oregon, where the wines are from, is renowned for its Pinot Noir wines thanks to unique climatic conditions and to talented and determined winemakers. It is the drainage basin of the Willamette River, which flows for 150 miles from north to south. Bounded by the Pacific Ocean and the Coast Range mountains in the west, and by the Cascade Range to the east, it is 60 miles at its widest point. It is the same latitude as Burgundy.

American Viticulture Area (AVA) is the United States designation of wine-growing regions. The Willamette Valley is its own AVA. The wines were all from Willamette Valley or one of its 11 sub AVAs with distinctive sets of geological, geographical and microclimate factors.

In 2018, the growing season was dry, sunny and hot across the region. Rain fell in September when temperatures became cooler and ideal harvest conditions prevailed. This was all helpful for the development of the fruit for potential greatness: dark fruit, balance and backbone, concentrated and powerful wines that can be tannic.

The 2018 Oregon Pinot Noir vintage is recognised in the IWFS vintage card as the highest category 7. This vintage is not easy to find now.

The tasting started with two whites.

David Hill Vineyards Block 2019, Sylvaner, Tualatin Hills AVA

The vines were planted at least 55 years ago. The wine was aged in 25% barriques and 75% stainless steel. We found it dry

and aromatic, with minerality and good acidity, and some flavours of citrus fruit and crispness on the palate.

The Eyrie Vineyard 2018, Chardonnay, Dundee Hills AVA

The second white, organic with no use of pesticides, and like the first white, was also made from old vines. It was judged one of the best Willamette Chardonnays this year by a number of experts – who differed in the various aromas and palates they perceived. It was more restrained than the Sylvaner with more complex aromas and palate, depth and finish.

On to the reds:

Oak Knoll 2018 Pinot Noir

A pleasant wine, with raspberry aromas and sour cherry on the palate; the tannins were not well integrated.

Montinore Estate Reserve 2018 Pinot Noir

This estate's vineyards are organic. It achieved biodynamic certification 16 years ago. The Reserve Pinot Noir is created from blocks from different parts of the vineyards, fermented and aged separately, and assembled after maturation in used French and Hungarian barrels for 10 months. The winemaker described the wine as "Wafts of black cherry, plum and fig jam are laced with a hint of fragrant violet and subtle cedar notes. Cherry continues on the palate, mingling with loganberry and pomegranate."

Most of us thought this wine was a step up from the previous one. The tannins were more integrated and it was more balanced.

Holloran 2018 Le Pavillon Vineyard, Pinot Noir, Dundee Hills

The grapes in this vineyard, Chardonnay and Riesling as well as Pinot Noir, were planted in 1972, which therefore makes it one of the oldest surviving vineyards in the Willamette Valley. It is farmed organically and biodynamically. We found it a vibrant wine with aromas of cinnamon and tastes of strawberry and raspberry.

J. Christopher 2018 Basalte Pinot Noir

This winery is owned by Ernst Loosen, who is one of the larger producers in the Moselle wine region in Germany and well known in the wine world. The wine has been described as a New World wine vinified in Old World style. It was more powerful than previous wines tasted, full-bodied with length and balance. It was elegant and had a fine tannic structure. Again, the grapes were sustainably grown.

The last three wines are heavy hitters by reputation.

St Innocent Shea Vineyard Pinot Noir 2018, Willamette Valley, Yamhill-Carlton District AVA

The philosophy behind winemaking at St Innocent is stated as "the function of wine is to complement and extend the pleasure of a meal... St Innocent wines tend toward higher acid levels, and more diverse and balanced flavours."

The winemaker described the wine as "a very complex wine that will emerge over months to decades of ageing. The finish has a rich density while fresh fruit persists... balanced concentration and lively clarity."

The wine showed concentrated fruit and acidity, lingering on the palate, and needed more time.

Ken Wright Cellars 2018 Freedom Hill Vineyard Pinot Noir, Willamette Valley AVA

Freedom Hill is known as one of the top vineyards in Willamette



Valley. A certified organic and sustainable wine from a single vineyard, it was aged in 100% French oak barrels for about a year. Powerful and structured, it was young to taste, needing at least another five years, and will age exceptionally well.

Ponzi 2018 Reserve Pinot Noir Laurelwood District

The Ponzi family were Oregon wine pioneers, establishing the vineyards in the late 1960s. The estate was acquired by Groupe Bollinger in 2021. The vineyards are certified sustainable and the approach low-intervention and natural. The wine is acknowledged as one of the best of the 2018 Pinot Noirs, gaining very high marks from wine judges.

It had the highest alcohol of the wines we tasted, at 14.3%. As for most of the reds we tasted, it will certainly continue to age well.

Our massive appreciation to Ian Shane for selecting and assembling these special wines and introducing them to us.

Rachel Burnett

London

A CLASSIC LUNCH AT MIELO, MARYLEBONE



A large group of us gathered to enjoy delicious Mediterranean cuisine at Mielo restaurant, near Baker Street. 'Mediterranean' encompassed a variety of seasonal dishes from Sicily, Athens and San Sebastian, amongst others. Meat, fish, seafood and vegetarian options were all catered for.

We had a free choice from the excellent set three-course lunch menu: six first courses, seven mains and three desserts, followed by coffee. The service was warm and attentive.

The food was complemented well by generous servings of wine:

- Chenin Blanc Kleine Zalsa
- Sauvignon Blanc Dashwood New Zealand
- Château Musar Jeune Rouge Lebanon
- Primitivo Del Salento 125 Italy

It was a most convivial occasion, good value and enjoyed by all.

Rachel Burnett

Manchester

LUNCH AT THE LIME TREE



The Manchester branch of the IWFS met for lunch at an old favourite, The Lime Tree in Didsbury on Saturday 22nd March 2024.

Members and guests sipped happily on a glass of Friuli Ribolla Gialla brut as we mingled and chatted. The sparkling wine was wonderfully fresh with floral and fruity aromas.

Our Chair, Ronnie Costello, greeted the members and welcomed guests from Mid Cheshire.

Ronnie presented the manager Stefan with an Excellence Award for the outstanding meal and service we received at last year's event. They were appreciative and added this recognition to their growing collection.

The appetiser was an explosion of concentrated flavours to start the lunch off. We were served tomato and fennel soup, in a quaint coffee cup, alongside a fresh tomato and spring onion Catalan toast. The soup was beautifully seasoned with rich flavours coming through, complimented by the crunch of the toast.

For the starter we then moved on to crispy salmon fish cakes, pea purée and tartare sauce.

The presentation was simple but impactful and looked fresh on the plate. A glass of Montresor Gran Guardia Soave Classico 2022 was served at perfect temperature and delicate floral flavours opened up and enhanced the salmon. The fish cakes were light and crunchy, which was a juxtaposition to the smoothness of the pea purée.

The main course was not disappointing either. The twenty-month old slow cooked lamb, bred on the Hardingland Farm in Macclesfield owned by chef patron Patrick Hannity, was succulent and extremely tender. It flaked beautifully when cut into and was divine with the rich red wine jus. It was accompanied by a rice stuffed tomato and a sweet crispy courgette side. Unusually, we had two red wines to accompany the main – the first Château La Garenne Bordeaux 2018 and also Quinta dos Quatro Ventos Tinto DOC Douro 2021. The enthusiasm, swirling and noses diving in and out of glasses and further discussions from table two was noted and appreciated. We later learnt that some had opted for a blind tasting. Comments of dark berry fruits and earthy tobacco were mentioned for the Bordeaux and ripe plum and blackberries with hints of warm vanilla spice for the Portuguese. This Portuguese wine seemed to be the most favoured wine with the lamb.

To finish, for dessert we had hot cross bread and butter pudding with a vanilla custard or ice cream.

This was a great seasonal choice and really highlighted the care and attention put into the menu planning. Gluten free dietary requirements were met to equally high standards with Neil announcing it was the best ever crème brûlée.

Ronnie once again thanked Stefan and his staff for another excellent event – the friendly, efficient and prompt service helped make the afternoon a most enjoyable, relaxing fun lunch and we look forward to revisiting.

Deloras Amato

Manchester

MANCHESTER BRANCH AGM AND LUNCH

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

Manchester

DINNER AT TNQ

I am delighted to review another successful IWFS Manchester Branch event held in April which received very positive and glowing feedback from the attendees. An evening comprising a delightful ambiance, fabulous food, good wine and convivial company, all enjoyed what has now become a favourite venue, TNQ Restaurant, located in the buzzing Northern Quarter of Manchester. The evening started with an aperitif of Champagne Paul Breteuil Cru made from Pinot Noir, Pinot Meunier and Chardonnay. This was a very palatable champagne, with a good colour and lovely smooth bubbles. It was followed by a delicious seasonal menu devised by Chef Patron Anthony Fielden.

The starter can only be described as a delicious bouquet of light and very individual flavours beautifully presented – grilled octopus, new potatoes, chorizo, mojo verde, pickled carrots and smoked cod roe. The accompanying wine was an unpretentious Pecorino Amodo Terre di Chieti dry white. This was straw-yellow in colour with a floral bouquet of acacia and jasmine, a most pleasant quaff.

A main course of roast breast of chicken, chicken livers, spring onion hash browns and truffle foam was perfectly accompanied by an absolutely delicious Italian red, Montepulciano d'Abruzzo DOC Marchesi Ervani. This was dry with a soft taste of red fruit and delicate hints of ripe cherry leading to a smoky-sweet finish.

Pudding was a pretty array of early season berries, meringue, whipped mascarpone and raspberry sorbet. A fitting end to an absolutely delicious flavoursome meal.

Dr Jane C Barber



Merseyside & Mid Cheshire AGM AT BUCKLEY'S RESTAURANT

On the 18th April 2024, the branch held its AGM at Buckley's Restaurant, which is part of Warrington and Vale Royal College, where the final of this year's IWFS Catering Colleges Competition took place.

Future events were discussed and promising venues were selected.

Our latest new member, Emma, who had joined the day before was warmly welcomed.

After the formal side of the proceedings, Chairman Tim Hodges invited members and friends to accompany him to lunch. A delicious five course lunch was planned, cooked and served by the students under the watchful eye of their tutor Paul Radcliffe. The food was accompanied by wines chosen by our Wine Steward Paul Bishop.

The Menu.

- Aperitif: Celebration Crémant de Loire 2020 served with canapés.
- Chicken Terrine served with grape chutney, sorrel, toasted hazelnuts, sourdough toast and roast chicken butter
The Wine Society's Exhibition Chenin Blanc, Western Cape, 2021
- Cured salmon, wild garlic mayonnaise, pickled sea vegetables and tempura mussels.



- Braised venison in red wine, shallots, mushrooms and Dauphinoise potatoes.

Pinotage Beaumont, Jackson River, 2020

- Rum Baba with pineapple cream.

A selection of cheeses served with Madeira followed by tea/coffee and homemade chocolate truffles.

As usual Paul and his team excelled in their menu planning, the quality of their food and their professional service.

Angela Britland

Merseyside & Mid Cheshire RETURN TO LA BOHÈME IN LYMM

The branch began its 2024 dining with a visit to La Bohème in Lymm. This is a favourite venue for the branch and has been visited in January for a number of years. We were joined by members of Manchester Branch and several guests and, as usual, owner/chef Olivier worked his culinary magic.

We were greeted with an aperitif of Château Rosé Crémant de Loire and delicious canapés.

The Menu

Mini Bouillabaisse de Chez Moi

Strips of turbot and seabream, pan fried and served on a base of braised saffron fennel and turned potatoes, dressed with a smooth fish soup and garnished with a Gruyère crouton.

Paired with *Picpoul de Pinet*

or

Perdix au Choux de Bruxelles

Pan fried partridge breast and grilled white pudding, served on a fricassée of shredded sprouts, pancetta and chestnuts, dressed with a Southern Comfort and redcurrant jus and garnished with crispy game chips.

Paired with *Guillame Aurèle Pinot Noir*





Duo de Chevreuil de Didier

Rump of venison served with a pulled venison pastry parcel, flavoured with pear and ricotta, served with braised red cabbage and black pudding Pomme Anna potatoes, dressed with balsamic and port jus.

Paired with *Torres Merlot*

Filet de Saumon au Champignons

Served on a bed of caramelised onions, green beans, baby carrots, chestnut mushrooms, deep fried diced potatoes, with a creamy Cep mushroom sauce.

Paired with *Chenin Blanc*.

A Trio of Praline Bohème

Smooth praline mousse, choux pastry filled with a chocolate cream and honeycomb ice cream.

Paired with a *10 year old Tawny Port*.

The evening was enjoyed by all and I am sure that we will return in January 2025.

Angela Britland

Merseyside & Mid Cheshire PUB FOOD AT ITS BEST

In early March the branch enjoyed a lunch at The Fox and Barrel, a recently refurbished pub, set in the lovely Cheshire countryside, near Tarporley. This was pub food at its finest!

In a charming room with a cosy log burner, Chairman, Tim Hodges, welcomed members and friends to a three course lunch with paired wines, chosen from the wine list by our wine steward, Paul Bishop. The food was delicious and the service was excellent.

Diners were offered choices from the menu, which were as follows.

Aperitif

Lieux Perdus Lost Places Pinot Noir Rosé.

Treacle Cured Salmon

Served with a mustard dressing, pickled cucumber and sourdough bread.

Chicken Liver Parfait

Served with preserved pear and toasted brioche.
Paired with *Wild House Chenin Blanc*

Homemade Steak and Ale Pie

Served with braised carrot, tender stem broccoli, mash and gravy.

Stone Bass

Served with tender stem broccoli, spinach, crushed new potatoes and caper butter.

Roast Chicken Breast

Served with charred corn, garlic Kiev and kale.

Paired with either *Domaine des Tourelles Cinsault Lebanon* or *White House Chenin Blanc*

Crème Brulée

Served with blackberry compote and shortbread

Sticky Toffee Pudding

Served with vanilla ice cream and toffee sauce.

Tea or coffee to finish.

Angela Britland



Sussex

DINNER AT THE PARSONAGE RESTAURANT

The Sussex Branch spent a very enjoyable evening at the Grade II listed building, the Parsonage Restaurant in the quaint little village of West Tarring which has a long and illustrious history dating back to 1066.

The restaurant originated as three fifteenth century timber framed flint cottages in Parsons Row, one of the most historic streets in Worthing. Once inside it felt like stepping back into the past with all its crooked beams, inglenook fireplaces and low ceilings.

The restaurant previously housed a museum but was acquired and turned into a restaurant in 1987 and remains still under the same management, having survived with the changing times and customers eating habits. Over this time it has gained many accolades for its food and outstanding customer service.

There was a good choice of dishes with entrées of twice baked goats cheese soufflé with fresh tomato and basil sauce, Jerusalem artichoke soup with stilton croutons, garlic and wild mushrooms; main courses of fillet of beef, halibut or roast rump of lamb, with desserts of crumble or dark chocolate and orange truffle torte. The accompanying wines were red and white Mirador Rioja. The portions to say the least were extremely



generous. You would never feel hungry after visiting this restaurant.

Julie Wagg



IWFS EAZ AGM WEEKEND IN WEST YORKSHIRE

14th to 15th September 2024

This year's AGM weekend will be hosted by West Yorkshire Branch on Saturday 14th and Sunday 15th September, with an optional event on the evening of Friday 13th September.

Highlights of the weekend are:

- a dinner at Moortown Golf Club, home of the 1929 Ryder Cup, made up of winning products from the Deliciously Yorkshire Taste awards.
- a tour of the 4,000-acre Harewood Estate and the State Floor of Harewood House, followed by a private dinner at Thehovels, the Estate's main event venue.
- An optional Pinot Noir event using the Society's video package in a trial recruitment event, which is designed to be a model which branches may wish to use to attract new members.

The AGM will take place at 11 am on the morning of Saturday 14th September 2024, at the Marriott Hotel in Leeds, followed by a buffet lunch at the Hotel.

The cost of the weekend is £390pp (Saturday and Sunday), or £430pp for all three days, and includes all the events, as well as coach travel from the Leeds Marriott hotel to each event. Hotel costs are not included in the weekend cost; however, we have secured a block booking of rooms with Leeds Marriott at a preferential rate.

EAZ Members may attend the AGM and buffet lunch on the Saturday free of charge.



Programme for the Weekend

Friday 13th September

Optional Evening Event: Pinot Noir Masterclass, Bardsey Village Hall, Bardsey 7pm

We will be running a masterclass aimed at raising the Society's profile in the West Yorkshire area. A video package has been produced featuring Anne Krebiehl MW, author of the excellent IWFS Pinot Noir monograph. Join us for the trial run of an event which, if successful, we plan to roll out across the Zone as part of a campaign to raise awareness of the Society and promote the many benefits of becoming a member.

Bardsey Village Hall is the unlikely "spiritual home" of the West Yorkshire Branch, where we host many of our events. Coaches have been booked to transport members to and from the Marriott Hotel to Bardsey, a village 8 miles from central Leeds.

Saturday 14th September

Morning: 11.00 am AGM and Members' Forum

Join us to have your say on the future of our Society. A buffet lunch will be served in the hotel meeting room suite following the meeting.

Afternoon at leisure: visit the shops, take in a football match at Elland Road (if you enjoy masochism), visit the Royal Armouries museum, or just have a well-earned nap.

Evening: Deliciously Yorkshire Dinner, Moortown Golf Club

Join us at the venue of the 1929 Ryder Cup, and of the recent England versus France competition, for the West Yorkshire Branch's most popular event of the year. The menu is built from the shortlisted finalists and award-winning products from the Deliciously Yorkshire Regional Taste awards and paired with carefully chosen wines. This being Yorkshire, you'll need a big appetite! A huge celebration of the county's food and drink businesses, the Taste Awards are now the biggest of their kind in the north of England and attract hundreds of entries from food and drink businesses throughout Yorkshire and the Humber.

Coaches have been booked to transport members from the Marriott Hotel to and from Moortown.

Sunday 15th September

Morning at leisure.

We will be arranging a guided walking tour of the heritage of the city as it developed through the Industrial Revolution. Otherwise, feel free to enjoy a coffee or a bite of lunch in a city centre café.

Afternoon: Tour of Harewood Estate

Coaches will ferry guests to the beautiful Harewood Estate, the land surrounding the famous Harewood House. The Harewood Food & Drink Project (HFDP) was set up in 2016 to celebrate and promote produce that's grown, reared and foraged on the Estate. Produce sourced from the land features heavily on all HFDP menus, with sustainable and seasonal eating at the forefront of the Project's ethos.

We start with a tour of the beautiful 4,000-acre Harewood Estate, with a talk on its approach to regenerative farming, a tour of the historic eighteenth century, 7 acre walled Garden and a tour round the State Floor of Harewood House, one of England's Treasure Houses including a collection of Renaissance masterpieces, Turner paintings, Chippendale furniture, ceilings by Robert Adam and a 1,000 acre landscape created by 'Capability' Brown. The tour of the kitchen garden will be escorted by Eddy Lascelles, Managing Director of (HFDP) www.harewoodfoodanddrink.com

We will conclude the visit with a glass of something fizzy on the terrace overlooking the magnificent 'Capability' Brown designed landscape, before coaches return to the Marriott in Leeds.

Evening: Dinner at The Hovels, Harewood Estate

Coaches will collect members from the Marriott to return to Harewood. Dinner will take place at the Hovels, a Grade II listed stable block conversion managed by HFDP. The venue has lots of charm and historic features and is the main event space on the Estate. Dinner will be a five-course meal, paired with wines, and will be a black-tie event.

Dress Code for the weekend

The dinner at Harewood will be black tie, and medals can be worn if desired. At Moortown Golf Club there is a strict no jeans and trainers policy – we suggest jacket with or without tie for men. On the Friday, dress is 'smart casual'.

Daytime wear is casual, but please no ripped jeans! Stout shoes and an anorak (it has been known to rain in Yorkshire) are recommended for the afternoon trip to Harewood where you will be riding in the back of a shooting trailer for part of the tour.

AGM Weekend booking and hotel accommodation

We have reserved Deluxe rooms on a Bed and Breakfast basis at the Marriott Hotel in Leeds for guests.

The rates are £179 per room per night (single occupancy) / £189 per room per night (double occupancy). There is car parking available opposite the hotel, and elsewhere nearby. The hotel is also just a short walk from Leeds train station for those who plan to journey by rail. Rooms are being held at the preferential rate until Friday 2nd August.

To book your AGM Weekend places please visit www.iwfs.org where you will find the registration information.

AGM Weekend Cancellation policy

Cancellation within a 14-day cooling-off period of registration: a full refund will be made. After 14 days and up to 13th July 2024, then 50% of the cost will be retained and 50% returned. After 13th July, we will refund to the extent that we receive funds back from venues/events that have been booked.

IWFS Europe Africa will not be responsible for any cancellation charges for travel to and from Leeds nor in respect of hotel accommodation arrangements made by members.

To book the Leeds Marriott hotel, 4 Trevelyan Square, Boar Lane, Leeds LS1 6ET, Telephone 0113 236 6366 and quote 'International Wine & Food Society' or follow/paste the link for 'Group rate for International Wine & Food Society Bedrooms'. Hotel cancellation policy applies. Other on-line hotel booking sites are available.

We look forward to welcoming you to Yorkshire.



DATES FOR YOUR DIARY

Herefordshire & Monmouthshire

21st July

Branch Annual General Meeting, Usk, Monmouthshire. For details contact peter.mcgahey@btinternet.com

West Yorkshire

3rd August

Visit Ampleforth Abbey orchard and cider mill. Apple themed lunch and cider tasting. Contact suetimme@gmail.com.

IWFS Americas

19th to 26th August

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

EAZ Annual General Meeting weekend

13th to 15th September

This year's AGM weekend will be hosted by West Yorkshire and based at the Marriott Hotel, Leeds. See details in this issue.

Merseyside & Mid Cheshire

28th September

Seven-day Taste of Tuscany staying at the Puccini Hotel. Contact Mistral Agency for details, tel 01352 756 864 quote IWFS.

West Yorkshire

29th September to 4th October

Tour of Sicily, Ragusa and Syracuse to Etna. Contact suetimme@gmail.com.

West Yorkshire

28th October

Romanian wine and food at Halloween, Bardsey Village Hall. For details contact suetimme@gmail.com

IWFS APZ

15th to 17th November

Hong Kong Triennial Festival, plus post tour to Macau, 17th to 19th November. For details contact apz@iwfs.org.

West Yorkshire

30th November

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

Herefordshire & Monmouthshire

17th December

Annual Black Tie Christmas Dinner at St Pierre Marriott Hotel, Chepstow, Monmouthshire. Contact peter.mcgahey@btinternet.com.

