

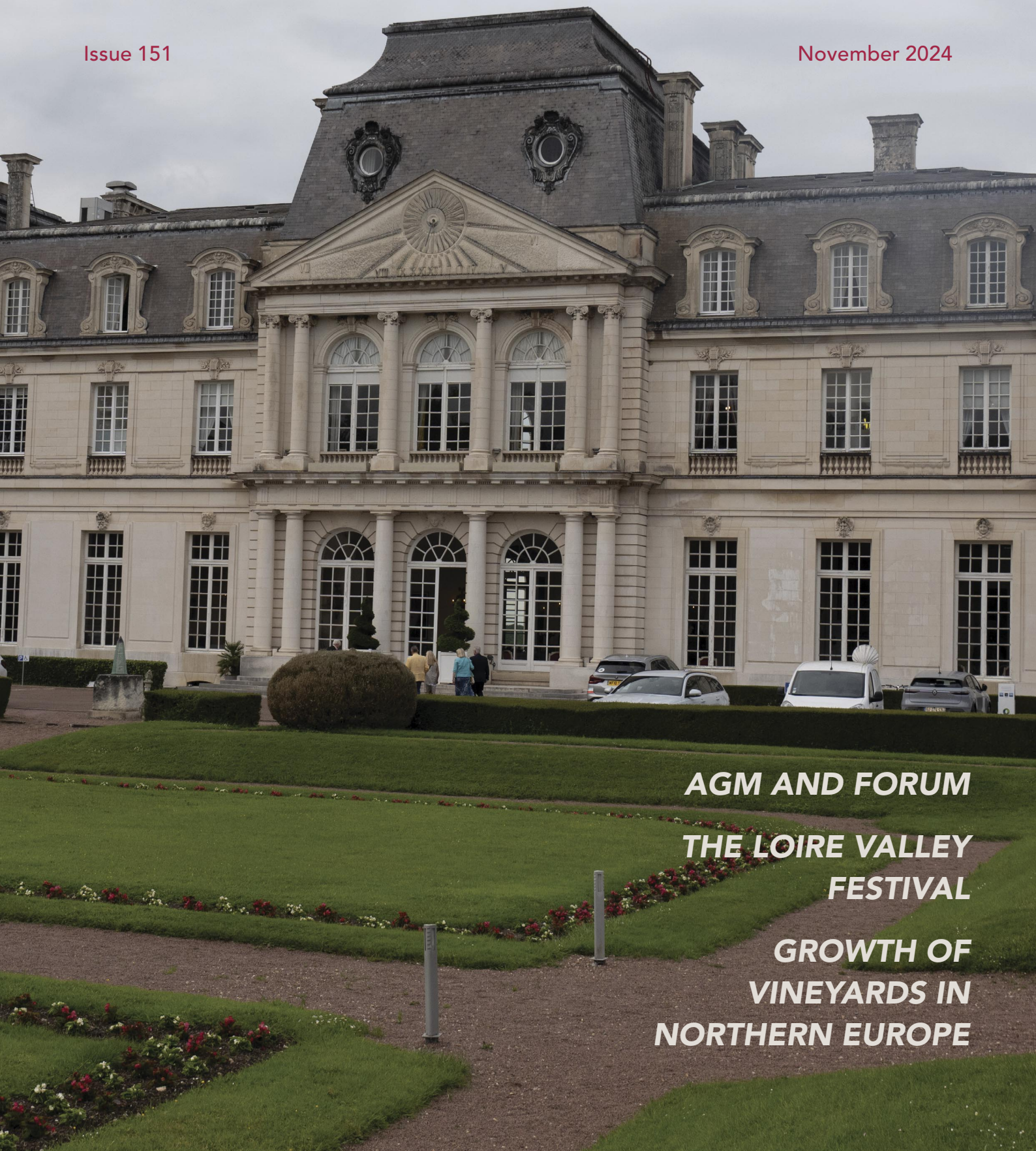


# *Food & Wine*

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

Issue 151

November 2024



**AGM AND FORUM**

**THE LOIRE VALLEY  
FESTIVAL**

**GROWTH OF  
VINEYARDS IN  
NORTHERN EUROPE**



## Chairman's message



The recent weekend for the AGM and Members' Forum was a great success. West Yorkshire branch created and managed a superb event about which there is much to read in the following pages.

From this event I learnt what a wonderful asset the Pinot Noir video is for the Society. It is both entertaining and educational and generated some lively discussion amongst those at the event.

The Members' forum generated lots of discussion on topics where progress has been made by IWFS Europe Africa in taking our region forward. Having created the means to "spread the word", we need our members to take the tools and make them work. All of us can do our bit.

As you read this the "showcase" festival in Rioja, Spain will have been announced. These festivals are vital to ensure that IWFS EA's obligations to fund IWFS costs are honoured and that we have funds to invest in IWFS EA's future. Without surpluses from these events which create terrific value for those who enjoy such festivals our membership fees would need to increase significantly.

We would love to invest in branch initiatives which support the objective to sustain the Society, attract new members and generate publicity about our "Brand". This opportunity has been available for some years but we have had very few applications for funding. It became clear during the Members' Forum that we are unlikely to find a volunteer to drive content to be used on our social media platforms and we will therefore have to "employ" someone to at least get the "ball rolling".

Tim Hodges is driving the Catering Colleges competition to be held in 2025. This is a great initiative in widening the IWFS profile whilst generating a worthwhile opportunity for burgeoning young chefs. Contact Tim to find out how best to get your local catering college involved (email [tim@new-pool.co.uk](mailto:tim@new-pool.co.uk)).

This is my final year as Chair of IWFS EA as I will have completed six years, the maximum allowed under the constitution. My objectives for the year are to ensure that my activities are passed on to others, to continue the momentum to increase the profile of IWFS EA from its very low base and to continue to find ways to attract new members

Writing this in September it seems odd to be wishing you a wonderful 2024 festive season and best wishes for 2025.

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



# Editorial

In the three or four months since our last edition there has been a noticeable resurgence of interest in the Society – enquiries for membership have increased, not vastly, but enough to suggest IWFS is an association worthy of attention in a world recovering from social and environmental crises. At the AGM this year in Leeds a major discussion point at the Members Forum concentrated on how the wealth and depth of knowledge on the society website ([www.iwfs.org](http://www.iwfs.org)) could be promoted more widely to wine and food connoisseurs and attract the next generation of aspiring gastronomes – surely the younger members of all our families and friends? The full report from the AGM is later in this edition.

The branches all do an excellent job in offering exclusive wining and dining experiences for members – however other members outside the immediate branch area often have little or no knowledge of events they may have been able to enjoy if there were the capacity to widen the catchment area (should we do it twice to meet demand!). The IWFS website is there to promote your events. The Members Forum sought to address these missed opportunities. Amongst the topics discussed: there was some conversation about promoting more joint events, earlier planning and promotion of events on the website and the use of social media linked to the IWFS website. Perhaps expand the on-line booking platform for events, which is already employed by London Branch. Encourage branches to avail of easy access to the website to announce their events to all members. We could consider offering branch secretaries and event organisers 'step by step' user-friendly instructions on using the website. Looking towards what the Exco of Europe Africa could offer to guide branches, the Forum suggested that ideas for and access to prestige events that individuals would find it difficult to attend would enhance programmes and add value to their membership, for example a box at the races with private catering, branch dinners at locations such as The Hovels at Harewood, which was a highlight of the AGM weekend, maybe at Chequers? Both dinners at Windsor Castle in the last year were fully subscribed. What other opportunities are there for IWFS? Should we (and could we?) promote and benefit from commercial opportunities, introduce a wine club and possibly add gourmet foods. This could be arranged in cooperation with existing providers and branded IWFS. A recent successful example was the premium brandy offer made to all members so similar offers which might be unavailable to the wider population at advantageous prices would also add value. Organising regional events and mini festivals was also recommended to the Exco and those events could be opened to a wider audience. There is much to go for to capitalise on the growing interest. There was great support for promoting our activities widely and, perhaps more importantly, in good time for guests to plan. Food & Wine publishes three editions each year, complemented by Food & Wine online. Both platforms can promote your events but we need advance notice. We may also have opportunities to work with commercial organisations – wine sellers, delicatessens – to promote IWFS. It is a 'two way street' as their clients as well as our Society could benefit. Exco would welcome ideas and suggestions from members so email [editor.eaz@iwfs.org](mailto:editor.eaz@iwfs.org).

The next edition of Food & Wine will be in March so enjoy the festive season and new year, and enjoy all your last quarter events. See copy deadlines below.

*Peter McGahey*

Editor

## DATA PROTECTION REMINDER

Always use BCC (Blind Copy) when contacting your members to avoid broadcasting their email addresses widely.

## Food & Wine

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### Growth of Vineyards in Northern Europe

Ann Samuelsen is a wine journalist, educator and an international judge and writes for the Norwegian trade magazine *Aperitif* and *Vinforum*. Since she began judging in 2007 Ann has been an international judge for IWSC, Berlin Wine



Throphy and Les Grands Concour du Monde in Strasbourg.

Formerly, Ann has worked as a wine consultant and a wine importer. Ann Samuelsen is a European Sommelier and a Certified Sommelier through the Court of Master Sommeliers in UK, she also holds a WSET Diploma. Ann has the Fine and Rare Wine Specialist exam from the Weinakademi Österreich. In addition to this she has just completed both the Mastering

Champagne course from Avize Viti Campus – Université de Reims and the Champagne Masters-Level Certificate from the French Wine Society.

### PUBLICATION DATES

- **Food & Wine Online (e-newsletter) Issue 24**  
December issue, deadline for copy from contributor 30th November 2024. *Copy for the online e-newsletter to sec@iwfs.org*
- **Food & Wine (printed) Issue 152**  
March issue, deadline for copy from contributors 31st January 2025. *Copy for printed magazine to editor.eaz@iwfs.org*

*Please send your photographs separately from the text file.*



# News from the International Secretariat

Dear members



Firstly – I do hope that you have received your complimentary pouch of English Afternoon tea with the last issue of Food & Wine and that you are able to enjoy it as the seasonal temperatures maybe begin to dip. Please note also that our 'Time for Tea' tasting video is now available to view from the website, and it is there to assist your branch should you wish to run an educational tea tasting – plus there is a checklist of all you will need to run a successful event – and please send pictures.

As I write the quieter summer months at the office of the International Secretariat draw to a close. The office is based in the In & Out Club on St James's Square in central London and during August the Club takes on a more serene vibe as many of the members leave town for their holidays. Summer also allows a quieter workload which allows time to focus on one of the main tasks of the year which is the careful updating of the Vintage Guide, now available in two forms either as the printed, concertina, card or online via our web-based app.

The Club also provides us with the venue to hold our annual Wines Committee meeting when we review and consider the submissions from our expert Wine Consultants. Any queries or suggestions then have to be referred back to the relevant Consultant. It is a thorough process which ensures the data recorded provides you, the members, with a useful reference about what to drink and what to keep. The meeting takes a full



While talking about the Club I should remind you that as a member of the IWFS you are entitled to stay at the Club at the guest rate. The best time to stay is in the summer months when there is more availability. It is a real haven and a slice of English club life which can feel like your own home, particularly during August. It is just a few minutes walk from Piccadilly Circus and then you can venture into the West End and restaurants and theatres galore... Or you can travel further afield and explore the beautiful city via the tube or bus network. At the end of the day you can return to what feels like a sanctuary and enjoy the Club facilities which include the recently renovated pool, spa and gym, formal dining in the elegant Coffee Room (over-



morning and is followed by lunch in the elegant surroundings of the Coffee Room (pictured above). This year the meeting was held on 6th June and pictured here are the Wines Committee members who attended (r to l) – Ron Barker (Wines Committee Chair, Blackpool & Fylde branch), Charles Taylor MW (Honorary Member), Gordon Lloyd (via Zoom, Devonshire branch), Beverley Blanning MW (Honorary Member) and Stuart Leaf (Hudson Valley branch founder).



looking St James's Square) or in the relaxed surroundings of The Goat Brasserie which on a nice day you can sit outside in the Courtyard. Full details can be found on the Benefits for Members page of the website (<https://www.iwfs.org/secretariat/iwfs-merchandise/benefits-for-members>). Please note the Club does have a dress code and guidance on the use of mobile phones which are in place to enhance your experience at the Club.

If you would like to make or discuss a booking please email me first ([sec@iwfs.org](mailto:sec@iwfs.org)). I can then introduce you to the Club confirming your IWFS membership and you can proceed with your booking from there. I have been pleased to meet with members over the years. This summer I was delighted to welcome longstanding member Ben Matheson of the Fort

Worth Branch in the Americas. It was interesting to find out about the activities of the Fort Worth Branch and also Ben's globetrotting over many years. Here we are pictured on the entrance steps of the Club. If you are visiting London and would like a tour of the Club then please let me know.

Before I sign off, it is with sadness that I write to let you know of the death of Susanna Forbes after a long battle with cancer. Susanna was the editor of five of the IWFS monographs from 2014 to 2018 and was involved in creating the new design and layout when our monographs turned to full colour, starting with *Reflections in a Wine Glass* by Bob Campbell MW. Susanna had a long editorial and writing career in the drink business and was a wonderful lady to work with. She was professional and certainly knew her stuff as an editor and was generous in her advice on improving the content and presentation of our titles. She was always calm and I really enjoyed working with her. She was fun too. We were sorry when she left us but her new passion was Little Pomona cider house which she set up, in Herefordshire, with her husband James. It was a privilege to work with her and a pleasure to know her.

For the cooler months ahead I hope you enjoy reading Ann Samuelsen's article 'The Growth of Vineyards in Northern Europe' where with the warmer temperatures vines are now growing successfully.

Until next time...

*Andrea Warren*

## ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING 2024

### *Marriott Hotel, Leeds*

On Saturday 14th September, 40 members were present representing the branches of West Yorkshire, London, Capital, Manchester, Vale Royal, Zurich, Merseyside & Mid-Cheshire, Blackpool & Fylde, Berkshire and Surrey Hills.

The meeting lasted all of 13 minutes and was followed by the Members' Forum. This started with a presentation by Stephen Harrison (West Yorkshire) on the New Initiatives efforts which he has been leading to try to "broadcast ourselves", to "tell our story" and to support branches and drive awareness. He illustrated these efforts by referring to the Pinot Noir educational video available to branches to use, free of charge, and the drive to create a secondary less sophisticated and less complicated edition than the international one, coupled with the great potential for the use of an Instagram profile which would give the Zone a wider spread presence on social media.

This was followed by an explanation by the newly appointed Awards Officer, Ruth Hurst (Manchester), of the currently available awards for restaurants, one of which can be decided by a branch itself and speedily presented. She then set out the various personal awards available for members themselves and the "qualifications" needed for each.



Next came Tim Hodges (Merseyside & Mid-Cheshire) who reported on the Catering Competition its nature, its history and its future with an expression of hope that branches that have catering colleges in their area would both support or continue





to support them and to share the available information about the competition to try to encourage an enlargement of the number participating.

Finally, Gordon Lloyd (Devonshire and a member of the Society's international Wine Committee) gave a presentation on the history (it began in 1935) and present status of the annual vintage card. We learned that the Wine Committee has nine members – three are IWFS Members and six are Masters of

Wine. In addition there is a much larger number of Wine Consultants who lend their expertise. The Committee uses both email and Zoom and holds one formal meeting in late May or early June annually. A buffet lunch was followed, in the early part of the afternoon, by a widespread discussion involving those members who attended on a wide variety of relevant subjects.

*David Chapman*

## Minutes of the 2024 Annual General Meeting

### *IWFS Europe Africa Limited*

These are the Minutes of the Annual General Meeting of IWFS Europe Africa Limited held at the Leeds Marriott Hotel, 4 Trevelyan Square, Boar Lane, Leeds LS1 6ET on Saturday 14th September 2024 at 11am attended by 40 members with apologies from Richard Grieve, John Valentine, Peter McGahey, Susan Smith, Antony Griggs and Judith Griggs.

1. Proposed by Tim Hodges (Merseyside & Mid-Cheshire Branch) and seconded by Derek Fletcher (Manchester Branch) the meeting unanimously resolved to receive and adopt the Report of the Directors and the Financial Statements for the year ended 31st December 2023.
2. The meeting unanimously affirmed the appointment of the following persons as members of the Executive Committee, namely, John Nicholas, Ian Nicol, David Chapman, Hilton Kuck, Alan Shepherd, Timothy Hodges, Peter McGahey, Stephen Graham, Geeta Lloyd and Stephen Harrison and to

affirm the appointment of Ruth Hurst who had been co-opted in January 2024 to replace Tricia Fletcher as Awards Officer and Jon Doneley who had been co-opted in April 2024 to replace Stephen Graham as Treasurer with both joining the Executive Committee as members.

3. The meeting unanimously affirmed the appointment of Kathy Jeffrey as the Independent Examiner, following her appointment by the Executive Committee as authorised by the Annual General Meeting in 2023.
4. There was no other ordinary business of the Company which could have been transacted at this Meeting.

By order of the Directors.

*David Chapman*  
Company Secretary



# ANNUAL REPORT 2023

## *IWFS Europe Africa Limited*

The Annual General Meeting of IWFS Europe Africa Limited (Company or EA) was convened in Leeds on Saturday 14th September 2024 to approve, inter alia, the Annual Report. The report was approved by the Executive Committee, then the Board of Directors on 31st May 2024 and the Independent Examiner, Kathy Jeffrey, has completed her examination and signed the report. The Annual Report was approved at the AGM.

The Annual Report 2023 has been posted on the website. If you would like a copy of the full report sent to you either by email or by post, please contact Steve Graham at [brackenridge.spg@btinternet.com](mailto:brackenridge.spg@btinternet.com).

The following table has been extracted from the 2023 Annual Report.

### **IWFS Europe Africa Limited**

#### **Income and expenditure account**

#### **for the year ended 31st December 2023**

	2023	2022
	£	£
Total operating income	36,041	28,789
Total administrative expenses	48,995	45,312
<b>Operating deficit</b>	<b>-12,914</b>	<b>-16,523</b>
Net surplus from EAZ festivals and events	43,299	16,781
<b>Surplus/deficit before taxation</b>	<b>30,385</b>	<b>258</b>
<b>Surplus/deficit after taxation</b>	<b>28,602</b>	<b>-327</b>

#### **Balance sheet as of 31st December 2023**

	2023	2022
	£	£
Sundry debtors	7,095	3,013
Festival and event payments in advance	20,656	54,295
Cash at bank	281,172	218,748
<b>Total current assets</b>	<b>308,923</b>	<b>339,056</b>
Subscriptions received in advance	508	1,422
Festival and event receipts in advance	56,745	113,505
Sundry creditors	4,813	2,918
Deferred income for IT training and development	0	2,956
<b>Total creditors</b>	<b>62,066</b>	<b>120,801</b>
<b>Net assets</b>	<b>246,857</b>	<b>218,255</b>
<b>Accumulated funds</b>		
Balance brought forward	218,255	218,582
Surplus/deficit after tax for the year	28,602	-327
<b>Balance carried forward</b>	<b>246,857</b>	<b>218,255</b>

### **Commentary**

This year can be considered as a good year for EA as we secured a modest increase in Membership and generated good surpluses from the DO Emporda and South African festivals. The surplus after taxation of £28,602 in 2023 compares very favourably with deficit after taxation of £327 in 2022.

Operating income of £36,041 in 2023 was an improvement on the £25,670 in 2022 and Membership numbers were slightly up by seven with 911 Members in 2023 compared with 904 in 2022.

Total administrative expenses were £48,955 in 2023 compared with £45,312 in 2022. There were some increases in the costs charged by the Society (IWFS Limited) for insurance, IT and administration, as well as increased expenditure due to increased magazine costs and some general cost inflation.

The Company's balance sheet remains strong with accumulated funds of £246,857. These funds are held to cover the potential risks that the Company might face. During 2023, the majority of cash was held in the Flagstone Cash Platform, secured by the Government backed Financial Services Compensation Scheme (FSCS) and generated some £9,398 in gross interest in 2023 compared with £3,077 in 2022.

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

I would like to thank John Nicholas, Chairman, for his continued support and advice over that last three or so years and I would also like to thank our Independent Examiner, Kathy Jeffrey (a member of the London Branch), for her help and support this year and for kindly agreeing to continue to be Independent Examiner.

Finally, as this is my last act as outgoing Treasurer, I would also like to wish Jon Doneley, who has taken over from me as Treasurer, all the very best going forward.

*Steve Graham*

(Retiring) Treasurer, IWFS Europe Africa Limited



# ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING AND MEMBERS' FORUM WEEKEND

West Yorkshire was the setting for a highly enjoyable weekend sharing great wine and food with members from branches across our region.

On the Friday evening we took a short coach trip from our base at the Marriott Hotel in Leeds to Bardsey Village Hall where the West Yorkshire branch hold many of their events. After an aperitif of sparkling Pinot Noir we settled down to watch the recently launched Anne Krebiehl video based on her *Pinot Noir Around the World 2024* monograph. The opening section of the video covered the long history and development of Pinot Noir around the world. During the opening section we had the pleasure of tasting the first four wines and were served with small plates, tapas style, by a team from the branch. As each wine was served the video was paused for "deep and meaningful" discussions about the wines as well as other subjects.

Anne reappeared on the large screen to add her comments on each wine served. A highly-scientific show of hands on the merits of the wines from France, Germany, Australia, South Africa, New Zealand and the US voted the Australian as the best of the evening, possibly influenced by being the last! During the later tastings we were served the most delicious home-cooked salmon lasagne – a first for many of us and with many requests for the recipe!

This was a fabulous evening, easily repeated by any branch and at relatively little cost. Phillip Kim, Chair of the Capital branch,

drove the filming and editing of the video with support from Stephen Harrison, Chair of West Yorkshire branch, who has now trialled the event with each of the two tasting flights: Value at c.£15 per bottle and Medium at c.£25-30 per bottle, with very positive results including acquiring new members for the West Yorkshire branch. Phillip and Stephen were much applauded for their efforts. This is a great new asset for Europe Africa, it would be great to hear that all branches have "had a go".

Saturday commenced with about 40 members attending the AGM and Members' Forum.

Later we embarked on the coach again and drove to Moortown Golf Club for the West Yorkshire branch's annual 'Deliciously Yorkshire' dinner. A word about the Golf Club: it is in the top 100 courses in the UK designed by Alister MacKenzie (who also designed Augusta National). In 1929 it hosted the first Ryder Cup to be held in the UK which was only one of two Ryder Cup events won by the UK before combining with all countries in Europe.

An aperitif of a Cava sparkling wine and delicious canapés were served whilst admiring the magnificent sunset across the golf course. We were then seated to be served a superb menu created by the Golf Club chef, Stuart Scott, with products from winners of the Local Taste Awards for regional food producers. A prize-winning Pinot Gris from the local Dunesforde vineyard was served as a pre-starter course and stimulated lively debate! Kilburn ox cheek was then served with Yorkshire pecorino







espuma and chive oil, paired with a soft Moulin a Vent. Next we enjoyed Holme Farm venison loin with a port wine and red currant 'gravy' (as the chef insisted it was not a 'jus'). It was served with a collection of superbly presented local vegetables and accompanied by a full-bodied Alentejo red to match the richness of the dish.

A dessert of black cherry ice cream with a double dark chocolate brownie and salted caramel ganache was served with a sweet Mavrodaphne Greek red wine. Finally, a Yorkshire cheese plate with trimmings all produced in Yorkshire was served with a South Australian tawny which had oodles of chocolate and nuttiness to match the cheese.

Sunday promised us typical English weather of rain when, of course, we had two walks planned! In the morning, Tim Gittins, a long-term member of West Yorkshire branch, kindly took a small group for a walk to explore the heritage of the city as it developed through the industrial revolution welding together the 'old' with the 'new'. In the afternoon the coach took us to Harewood House, the seat of the Lascelles family, where we embarked on a rain-soaked tour round the lake to the walled kitchen garden – a vital part of Harewood's field-to-fork principles where 'no dig' principles are applied. Much of the produce there was used in our meal that evening. This was followed by a guided tour of the historic house built between 1759 and 1771 with its collection of paintings and unique Chippendale furniture. A glass of bubbly followed over-looking the landscape designed by Lancelot 'Capability' Brown.

We returned to the hotel to change for the final evening black tie gala dinner at the Hovels, part of the Harewood House Food and Drink project created and managed by Eddy Lascelles the youngest son of the current Earl. An aperitif of Nyetimber Classic Cuvée NV was served in the cosy (with a lit log burner) reception area with more delicious canapés. Having found our places Eddy introduced us to the Hovels and its purpose and then introduced chef Will Campbell to explain the first two courses. The first was grilled mackerel with a gooseberry Kosho

butter sauce and pine smoked caviar, which received great praise from those who love mackerel and not so much from those who don't! The second was an ash baked potato with a leek and nasturtium velouté and preserved wild alliums. Both of these were served with a 2022 Pinot Gris from Willamette Valley in Oregon, USA. The rich and aromatic style of the wine was a good match for the oiliness of the fish.

There followed beautifully cooked roast sirloin of highland beef, the cattle being reared on the Harewood Estate, with black garlic and ox cheek brioche with pickled chanterelle. This course was served a 2018 Serre Nuove dell'Ornellaia Italian wine from Bolgheri, and a 2017 Leeuwin Arts Series Cabernet Sauvignon from Margaret River in Western Australia. Lots of discussion ensued on the respective merits of the wines but in a show of hands the Ornellaia was favourite.

Two desserts followed, the first Plum and caramelised Weardley honey tart with Yorkshire blue cheese served with a 15 year old Pedro Ximenez from Jerez in Spain. This was red and unctuous! The second was a caramelised apple terrine, meadowsweet custard and rhubarb sorbet served with a 2014 Coteaux du Layon from the Loire Valley in the Region of Anjou towards the Atlantic.

Thanks were given by Stephen Harrison to Eddy Lascelles and his team who had created a great event. Stephen also announced that an award would be made at a future event to the Harewood Food and Wine project both for this wonderful event but also for their support for IWFS over the years including the presentation of a fine dining Zoom experience during the Covid lockdowns and an impromptu branch Anniversary dinner.

Finally, John Nicholas thanked the West Yorkshire branch team for all their efforts in making this a memorable weekend.

*John Nicholas and Stephen Harrison*



# LOIRE VALLEY FESTIVAL

*by Nicola Lee, Singapore branch and Asia Pacific Member of Council*

From 28th May to 1st June 2024, 58 IWFS members gathered for four days in the beautiful Loire Valley in France to enjoy friendship over food and wine. With the base at hotel Château d'Artigny, located 45 minutes from the town of Tours the festival kicked off on Tuesday evening with a talk by the Decanter Wine Awards regional chair for the Loire and IWFS wine consultant Jim Budd.

Following the talk the evening continued with a lovely dinner featuring sparkling Vouvray and some delightful Chenin Blanc. Dinner was in the Grand Salon of the host hotel Château d'Artigny.

Day two started with a visit to Château de Riveau. Family owned, this Château was purchased by the Laigneau family over 30 years ago and today offers a glimpse of what a 15th century château was like. Comprising of Renaissance Royal stables, a barn and wine press room, this estate offers beautifully designed gardens in addition to a selection of art works collected by the family. Lunch at the Château was in one of the large halls where members enjoyed a Loire tradition of having as an aperitif – white wine with elderflower.

Moving on a charming visit to Château du Petit Thouars was on the agenda. This family run winery is today led by Sebastien Count du Petit Thouars who was aided by his lovely wife the Countess and family. Such generosity was shown to us. We

tasted over 10 wines and enjoyed light bites. There was time to wander through the grounds and to admire this lovely château that has been in the family since 1636.

Dinner was split into two groups: alternating between L'Évidence and L'Opidom (both awarded a Michelin star) with the other group dining at the other restaurant on Thursday evening. Both restaurants produced a notable and enjoyable tasting menu paired with Loire wines.

Day three saw the group enjoy a cruise along the River Cher. As the Loire spans a wide cross section and travelling to all regions would prove challenging (without having to change hotels), our organisers brought the regions of Savennières and Sancerre to us at a tasting. Killing two birds with one stone as the saying goes, members enjoyed cruising down the River Cher whilst having a tutored tasting from Domaine du Closel (Savennières) and de Ladoucette (Sancerre). All this whilst taking in the magnificent views of Château Chenonceaux.

Lunch was at the charming restaurant Le Choiseul in Amboise Ville rated Table Originale in 2022 by Gault & Millau. Members were seated in their branches or regions depending on the size of each group and enjoyed a light lunch whilst soaking in the lovely ambience of the restaurant. After lunch we split into two groups. The first enjoyed a leisurely stroll to Caves Ambacia. A walk through the cellars, which included a scent counter where







distinct aromas found in wines from the Loire could be found, was the build up to a tasting that included Sparkling wine, Sancerre, Chinon and Rosé Amboise. The second group made its way to Amboise Château Royal for a very interesting guided tour. The château is on Unesco's World Heritage List and the tour was filled with facts and tales of how the Mona Lisa arrived in France through Leonardo da Vinci's visit to France in 1516. A final walk back to the bus, though the weather was not kind to us, we had to rush to head back for a free evening.

Day four was again an early start with a full day of tastings. In the region of Chançay we visited the family-owned winery of Domaine Alain Robert et Fils, led by the daughter-in-law Myriam Fouasse-Robert. We learnt about the wines of this family run winery and how her father-in-law personally dug into the mountain walls to create a bigger cellar. Lunch was a lovely experience in the winery – enjoying their wines with local delicacies which included the local cake Le Veritable nougat de Tours.

The second tasting of the day was at Château Gaudrelle where we tasted some delicious aged 1996 Vouvray and enjoyed a dessert wine called Réserve Personnelle. Château Gaudrelle has transitioned to organic farming and was keen to explain their philosophy during the tasting. Returning to the hotel to change for dinner, we again headed to L'Évidence and L'Opidom with the groups swapping places. Both groups enjoyed both restaurants and the different styles, though there was no overall preference!

The final day saw us travel to Saumur, the main region for sparkling wine production in the Loire Valley. We were again split into two groups to visit Bouvet Ladubay and Langlois Château, notable wineries in the town. Between the winery visits with their tastings we travelled a few kilometres to the La Cave des Moines, a large troglodyte cave complex with a large restaurant deep inside the caves which uses the mushrooms and snails produced in other parts of the caves.

The festival ended with a black-tie gala dinner paired with Loire wines, two different ones with each course at Château Villandry, a château built during the Renaissance and noted for its gardens, which unfortunately there was no time to enjoy. Today it is owned by the Carvallo family who are dedicated to showcasing its beauty.





# LOIRE VALLEY FESTIVAL: MAIN MENUS

by John Nicholas

## Dinner in the Hotel, Château d'Artigny

Following a reception of a crémant from the Loire Valley and various hors d'oeuvres, we found our seats for a delightful four course dinner matched with six different Loire Valley wines.

- Flaky pastry tart with marinated herb salmon, creamy and crunchy fennel whipped lemon cream with chives
- Beef fillet cooked in thyme butter, Chinon wine sauce, mashed potatoes with Tomme de Touraine cheese, glazed small vegetables
- Assortment of matured cheeses and seasonal salad
- Pistachio madeleine biscuit, whipped Madagascar vanilla ganache, fresh strawberries and coulis and pistachio ice cream

At **Château de Riveau**, we enjoyed a farmhouse lunch of homemade Quiche with rillons of Touraine pork and goats' cheese also from Touraine and a garden salad followed by a home-made tart.

## Dinner at L'Opidom (Michelin star) with head chef Jérôme Roy.

Following Feuilletés and an amuse-bouche we indulged in an inventive five course menu with matching wines all served by a charming front-of-house team.

- Mackerel fillet in apple cider vinegar, peas and beans with fresh mint and Aonori seaweed
- Roast seabass, tartare with poutargue (a small, sausage-shaped pouch of salted, dried fish eggs), capers and fresh coriander, steamed sweet cabbage, smoked fish stock with rice vinegar
- Roast Veal, carrot paste with Hanoi curry, celery, carrots and kumquats
- Pouilly Saint Pierre, apple, gamay jelly, fresh goats' cheese and toasted bread
- Fresh strawberries from Touraine, poached, juice and fruit paste, almond ice cream, tarragon

**Dinner at L'Évidence** (Michelin star) with head chef Gaétan Evrard. Unfortunately, the restaurants computers had been sabotaged by a disgruntled employee and they were unable to produce a menu! Started with a mousse with beans, shallots and hummus served with delicious home-made bread

- This was followed by three different vegetable dishes, the first based on mushrooms, the next on beetroot and the last on carrots







- Monkfish with fennel and a black sauce
- The first group enjoyed a piece of veal, whilst the second enjoyed a risotto with asparagus and wild asparagus
- A strawberry based dessert – what else at the end of May!

#### Lunch at Le Choiseul Amboise

We took over the main restaurant in this delightful town across the River Loire, which after all the rain this winter was flowing much higher than I have ever seen it! Instead of mixing up the table this was the one event where people were seated with fellow members or in their region. The tables were Zurich branch, 'The Europe Africa Festivals Supporters Fraternity of Omaha support team', 'The Not the Omaha branch of Americas', Devonshire branch, Europe Africa North of England plus Bath & Bristol England, Asia Pacific and The rest of Europe Africa.

Lunch was simple but delicious.

- An amuse bouche and bread
- Rack of pork Roi Rosé de Touraine grilled and marinated with tandoori and herbs, braised cabbage and bacon
- Delicious strawberries and coconut

#### Lunch in the winery Rendez-Vous Dans les Vignes

This was another relaxed lunch on two long tables in the winery. The food consisted of local salad, local tart made from rillons and goats' cheese, fish terrine, local cheeses and a local dessert.

#### Gala dinner at Château de Villandry

This was a black-tie event in the stable block of the Château converted into a dining hall where caterers are brought in. Each course was paired with two wines and the sommelier introduced each wine.

- Four canapés were served with Vouvray Pétillant and Saumur Pétillant
  - Foie gras flan, port caramel
  - Touraine prune with bacon
  - Galipette (mushroom) with Loire fish rillettes
  - Tours snail and rilette puff pastry
- Tartare de Saumon Blinis, Mesclun salad
- Poultry ballotine stuffed with sage and Pecorino, gratin, vegetable tian
- Villandry goats' cheese and salad
- Winemakers tart (Tarte Tatin with mulled wine)



# LOIRE VALLEY FESTIVAL: RESTAURANTS, THE WINES

*by Dr Gordon Lloyd DipWSET, Member, IWFS Wines Committee*

## Restaurant L'Évidence

After a vermouth-based spritz aperitif, the first wine was a Sauvignon Blanc 2022, Touraine by Bonnigal-Bodet. With prominent aromas of cut grass, capsicum, asparagus and citrus and high acidity, it was pale lemon, medium-bodied and dry. It had wonderful balance and a lingering finish. This was a classically fresh Sauvignon Blanc.

By contrast the next wine was a Vouvray, Domaine Nicolas Brunel, Demi-sec, 2015. It was pale gold, with prominent aromas of honey, apricot, nectarine and pear, was off-dry and medium-bodied. It had a wonderfully long, balanced finish. This was an excellent wine.

Next came Terra Évén, Pinot Noir, 2022, Vin de France, Rousseau Frères, with aromas of raspberry, cherry, cranberry and cedar and a medium body. It was dry with ripe, silky tannins and a long, balanced finish. It was a good wine.

The final wine was Solstice, Pinot Gris, Rousseau Frères 2020. The grapes were late harvested and had been subjected to passerillage. The wine was medium brown with pronounced aromas of stewed apple and apricots, was sweet with high balancing acidity and was quite full-bodied. It was a succulent dessert wine that lingered on the palate.

## Restaurant L'Opidom

We began with a racy aperitif of Petillant de Loire, Domaine du Viking, with aromas of apple, pear and dough. It was brut with high acidity and a fine mousse. It had a long finish without being especially concentrated.

At the special request of our Chairman, John Nicholas, the next wine was a Pouilly Fumé, La Charmette, Benoît Chauveau, 2022. Pale lemon with aromas of gooseberry, grapefruit and green capsicum; it was dry with high acidity and a fresh, uncomplicated style, staying long on the palette.

Next was Côtes Catalanes, Domaine La Vallée de l'Aigle, 2020, a blend of Macabeu and Grenache Blanc from Languedoc. It was pale lemon with aromas of apple, passion fruit, vanilla and dough, was dry and quite full-bodied. It had acidic backbone, a creamy mouthfeel and a longish finish and was clearly no shrinking violet. An unexpected accompaniment for roasted seabass.

The first red to accompany roast veal was the outstanding Bourgogne Pinot Noir, François Carillon, 2020 from vineyards in Puligny-Montrachet. It had aromas of raspberry, red cherry, red currant and cedar, was medium ruby, high acidity and ripe, silky tannins. It had a long, fruity, satisfying and balanced finish.

Next was Côtes Roannaises, Éclat de Granit, Stéphane Sérol 2022. This was a deep ruby wine from Gamay grapes, was dry, with aromas of red cherry and raspberry and high acidity. It was well structured, with ripe, silky tannins and a longish finish but not as polished as the previous Pinot Noir.

We ended with Rosa, Rosé, Rosam, Pétillant Naturel Rosé, Domaine la Grange Tiphaine, Amboise. This was a blend of Grolleau Gamay, Côt and Cabernet Franc, was medium pink with light aromas of raspberry, strawberry and redcurrant, highish acidity, a light mousse and was dry. It was not well





balanced, lacking fruit intensity, and had a medium finish. It was an acceptable wine that complemented the strawberry dessert.

### Château Villandry

The final dinner at Château Villandry needed stamina, with a total of 10 wines. First was Vouvray Vincent Carème, 2022, Plaisir Ancestral, produced in the ancestral method in a Brut style with very good balance and a long finish. It was a delicious, complex wine.

Next was Domaine des Sanzay, Brut, Saumur, a 90%/10% blend of Chenin Blanc and Chardonnay. It was dry with highish acidity and aromas of orchard fruit but lacked aromatic and fruit intensity.

A Domaine Vincent Carème Vouvray Sec, 2022 followed. This was a muscular, well-structured wine, with aromas of apple, pear, peach and honey, high acidity and was dry; it was a very good wine.

The first red was Borgueil, Domaine Delettre, Passe Partout, 2023, 100% Cabernet Franc with aromas of red fruit, red cherry, raspberry and cedar and some bitter notes. A textbook Bourgueil with ripe, silky tannins it was a very good wine.

Saumur Blanc, Domaine de Sanzay, Les Bazilles, was next, a 100% Chenin Blanc blend with aromas of red apple, pear and peach and mineral notes. It was another excellent Chenin Blanc based wine with crisp acidity and persistence.

Back again to a red with Jean-Christophe Garnier, Les Tailles, 2021, Anjou. This blend of Cabernet Franc was deep ruby with prominent aromas of red cherry, raspberry, cedar and smoke. It was a bright fresh wine with good quality but few pretensions.

Next were two wines from the producer Le Chai de Thelème in Huismes, between Chinon and Borgueil. The first was "Rencontre en Chenin, 2022", an acceptable dry Chenin Blanc lacking concentration but matching the fruit dessert well. The second was "Cuvée Inspiration, 2022" a blend of Côt, Gamay and Grolleau which again lacked intensity and good fruit definition but was well balanced with ripe silky tannins. Despite its name it was uninspiring by itself but better with food.

The penultimate wine was Vouvray Moellaux, Domaine Vincent Carème, 2018. It was sweet with high acidity and unctuous flavours of orchard fruit and honey; a classic but somewhat understated dessert wine.

We finished with Domaine de Pallus, Les Pensées de Pallus, Cabernet Franc, Chinon 2019. This was a very good wine in a fresh style with flavours of red cherry, raspberry and cedar with notes of spice. With ripe, smooth tannins it lingered on the palette.





# LOIRE VALLEY FESTIVAL: WINERY VISITS

*by Dr Gordon Lloyd DipWSET, Member, IWFS Wines Committee*

The five days of the Loire Festival were insufficient for us to cover the entire 1,000 kms of the river, but our base at the Château d'Artigny near Tours midway between Sancerre and the river's mouth did allow us to visit vineyards in Saumur and Touraine, with producers from Sancerre in the east and Savenière in the west coming to us. So we would see how differing climates would determine the grape varieties grown, with Chenin Blanc, Cabernet Franc and Côt being progressively displaced by Sauvignon Blanc, Pinot Noir and Gamay as we moved from the maritime west to the continental east. The influence of different soils, from the acidic schists of Savenière, through the clay/limestone, gravels and sands of Touraine to the Caillottes and Terres Blanches of Sancerre, would be evident. We would also experience how such subtle trends would be an interesting challenge to our tasting abilities.

## Château du Petits Thouars, Chinon

This family-owned property 11 km from Chinon on the River Vienne specialises in Cabernet Franc, with 14ha planted (1978-88) with this variety on clay/limestone soils. There is a further 1ha planted with Chenin Blanc.

The first wine was Les Foux 2021, a sparkling rosé with zero dosage. Although lees-aged for 36 months it was very understated but exhibited light autolytic and red fruit aromas.

The next two wines were 2021 and 2022 vintages of Les Georges AOC Chinon, blends of 80% free-run and 20% press wine matured in stainless tanks. Both were medium ruby with aromas of red cherry, raspberry, cranberry and green capsicum. The 2021 vintage lacked fruit concentration whilst exhibiting prominent, coarse-grained tannins and lacked finish. However, the 2022 had greater fruit concentration, with ripe, velvety tannins, good balance and a long finish, illustrating the impact of vintage variations.

Next were L'Épée AOC Chinon 2016 and 2018, blends of 60% free-run and 40% press wine matured in stainless steel for 18 months (2016) or 24 months (2018). Noticeably more concentrated than the St, Georges, both wines had aromas of raspberry, red cherry cranberry and green capsicum, ripe, velvety tannins and long finishes. Both vintages were very good with the 2018 outstanding.

Four vintages of L'Amiral AOC Chinon followed, 2018, 2011, 2010 and 2009. All were blends of 100% press wine, aged for 24 months in old oak barrels (except the 2010 for 36 months), and with the same aroma profile as L'Épée. The 2018, 2011 and 2009 vintages were very similar, full-bodied wines, with well-defined and concentrated fruit flavours and prominent ripe and velvety tannins with long finishes. However, the 2010 was only medium-bodied, lacked fruit concentration and had obtrusive





fine-grained tannins and a short finish. It was a disappointing victim of vintage variation. Increasing the press wine component brought more weight and concentration but required the oak barrel aging to soften the tannins and add complexity.

We finished with two different Chenin Blanc styles. Les Plantes, AOC Chinon had undergone malolactic fermentation, was dry, with high acidity and subdued aromas of pear and citrus and was light bodied. The fruit concentration was inadequate to balance the acidity.

The second Chenin Blanc, Le Clos AOC Chinon, 2021, had also undergone MLF and had 4gm/L residual sugar. It was off-dry and lacked the acidity to balance the concentrated flavours of citrus and honey, resulting in a short finish and flabby wine.

Sadly, the white Chenin Blanc wines failed to achieve the quality of Château du Petits Thouars's generally very good Cabernet Francs.

### River Cruise with tastings

Evelyne de Pontbriand, the proprietor of Domaine du Closel in Savennière and two representatives from de Ladoucette in Sancerre offered possibly the most interesting tasting of the entire Festival as part of a river cruise. As we moved effortlessly along the River Cher, through the arches of the spectacular Château Chenoncau, we enjoyed some spectacular wines whilst also using the river as a ready-made, giant spittoon.

The first three wines from Domaine du Closel were from Chenin Blanc but differed in production and growing conditions. La

Jalousie 2021, from grapes grown at the bottom of the hill in the Domaine and fermented and aged in stainless steel for one year, had high acidity balanced by concentrated flavours of apple and pear and a longish finish giving a very good wine.

Les Caillardières 2021, from grapes at the top of the hill, was aged for 18 months in old oak barrels. Compared with La Jalousie there were mineral and saline notes, a creamy mouthfeel and a longer finish to give an excellent result.

Clos du Papillon 2021 used grapes grown mid-slope, picked over one month to ensure optimum ripeness and aged in old oak barrels for 18 months. The wine had much greater complexity and concentration than the first two. The aromas included added notes of honey, a creamy mouthfeel and more pronounced saline and mineral notes. This was an outstanding wine. These three wines illustrated the critical role terroir and location play in determining a wine's characteristics and quality.

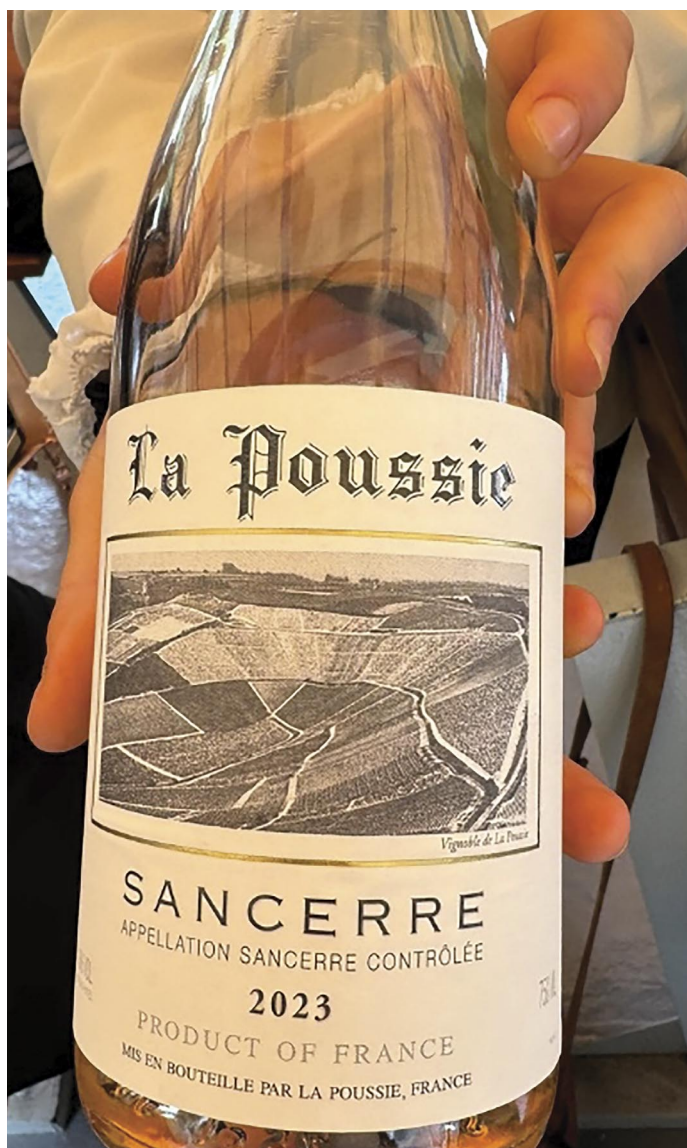
Next came Domaine du Closel Une Émotion 2022 Pinot Noir. After eight months in stainless steel, the wine had aromas of red fruit, was light bodied and had low intensity ripe velvety tannins. It was a well-balanced and good wine but lacked concentration.

The last Dom. du Closel wine, a Chenin Blanc, was named "In-Fini" because the fermentation would not complete. It was intriguingly cloudy with faint, yeasty aromas, off-dry, high acidity and light bodied. Interesting but not great.

De Ladoucette's first wine was a white La Poussie Sancerre 2022. It had aromas of grass, grapefruit, citrus, gooseberry and asparagus with mineral notes, medium acidity and medium







body. Whilst lacking some fruit intensity it had medium finish and was undoubtedly a good wine.

Next came La Pousseie Sancerre, Rosé 2023. It was pale pink with quite pronounced aromas of red cherry, raspberry, red apple and roses, high acidity and dry. The excellent balance and long finish indicated a very good wine.

La Pousseie Sancerre 2022 Red, also from Pinot Noir, followed. It was pale ruby with aromas of red cherry, raspberry, red currant and cedar and medium acidity. With ripe, light, silky tannins it was a very good wine with a long finish.

The final wine was the La Pousseie Sancerre Pinot Noir Vieilles Vignes 2022. It was identical to the previous wine except that it was more concentrated and intense clearly demonstrating the impact of old vines.

#### Caves Ambacia

Caves Ambacia claimed that their grapes were sourced from selected growers and then processed under their control in third party wineries before being aged and bottled in their own cellars. Indeed, we were shown some barrels in a rather confined cellar area but they appeared to be more for show than for maturing wines.

The tasting was supposed to have consisted of four Cabernet Franc reds and three white wines (a Vouvray, a Montlouis sur Loire and a Sancerre). In fact, it ended up as Two Cabernet Francs, a Côt, and six whites (three Vouvrais, a Montlouis sur Loire and a Sancerre). This was a pity because the Cabernet Franc tastings were supposed to be the highlight of this venue and the Vouvray wines were of variable quality.

The first red was a Bourgueil "Brunetière" 2022. With 18 months aging in French oak barrels it had wonderful aromas of red cherry, raspberry and spice with ripe, silky tannins. The second Cabernet Franc was a St. Nicolas de Bourgueil "Bergerons", aged for six months in oak barrels followed by six months in amphoras. It had similar aromas but more pronounced, ripe, velvety tannins. Both wines had notable acidity, concentrated fruit flavours and long finishes. Both were very good wines.

Next was a Côt (Malbec), AOC Chinon, aged for six months in oak. The intensity of the black cherry, black plum and blackberry flavours were insufficient to balance rather prominent ripe, fine-grained tannins, resulting in a medium finish. It was disappointing compared with the first two reds.

The first of three Vouvray was a Caves Ambacia Vouvray 2017. With high acidity, light aromas of apple, mushrooms and saline notes it had a medium body and finish. The wine was unbalanced with insufficient fruit intensity to match the acidity.

The next wine was a Vouvray 1983, Collection Duhard whose deep gold appearance reflected its age. It had aromas of honey, pear and mushroom, with medium acidity and body and was dry. It lacked fruit intensity on the palette and had a medium finish; it was well past its drinking date.

The final Vouvray, a 1990 Collection Duhard, had the same appearance and aromas as the 1983 wine. It was however sweet, with more pronounced acidity and greater fruit intensity, resulting in excellent balance and a long, satisfying finish. This was a very good wine.

The final Chenin Blanc was a Caves Ambacia, Montlouis sur Loire "Buisson Viau", 2021. It was pale lemon with aromas of pear and honey with saline notes, high acidity and sufficient fruit intensity to give a long finish. This was an excellent wine.

Last we tasted a Caves Ambacia Sancerre. The wine was pale lemon, dry, with aromas of peach, nectarine and grapefruit, medium acidity and medium bodied. It had a long finish. Although the style was unexpected. Sauvignon Blanc is being picked steadily later in Sancerre resulting in the appearance of stone fruit aromas at the expense of citrus. However, picking too late results in a loss of acidity, which appears to have been the case here.

#### Domaine Alain Robert

The first wine was a sparkling AOC Vouvray Extra Brut, Zero Dosage, Vignoble Alain Robert. After 18 months on the lees this delicious wine had aromas of pear, red apple and dough, was dry with high acidity and had a very long finish with a creamy mouthfeel.



Next came an AOC Crémant de Loire Brut, Vignoble Alain Robert, a 50:50% blend of Chardonnay and Chenin Blanc. It had aromas of dough, red and green apples, with high acidity and was dry. Fruit intensity and acidity were well balanced, giving a long finish. Both the sparkling wines were very good.

AOC Vouvray, Ammonite, Vignoble Alain Robert was the first of two still whites. Fermented and aged in oak barrels for two years, it had flavours of pear, red apple and peach, mineral notes, a creamy mouthfeel and was dry. High acidity balancing the fruit intensity resulted in an excellent wine with a very long finish.

Next was AOC Vouvray, Les Charmes, Vignoble Alain Robert. The fruit was riper than for Ammonite with aging in stainless steel for 12 months. With the same aromas, plus notes of honey, it had medium acidity but lacked the latter's creaminess. It was also an excellent wine with good balance and a long finish but a riper style than the Ammonite.

The final Alain Robert wine was L'Entre-Deux sparkling rosé. A blend of 55% Pineau d'Aunis, 30% Grolleau and 15% Pinot Noir with 20 g/l residual sugar, it was medium pink with aromas of raspberry, red cherry and dough, had high acidity and was off-dry. With a very long, creamy finish it was another excellent wine.

Alain Robert's wines were amongst the best we tasted during the entire festival.

The first of three externally sourced wines was AOC Chinon, Domaine de La Noblaie, "Les Temps des Cerises". From 100% Cabernet Franc, it had aromas of raspberry, red cherry, red currants and green bell peppers, crisp acidity and ripe, fine-grained tannins. This was a very good wine with a very long, satisfying finish.

Next was AOC Touraine, "Cent Visages", Domaine Jean-Francois Mérieau produced from 100% Côt (Malbec). After a lengthy maceration (for five to six weeks) the wine was aged in concrete tanks with micro-oxygenation. This fresh, full bodied wine had delicious flavours of blackberry, blackcurrant, black plum and cedar and ripe tannins. Another very good wine with a long, balanced finish.

The final wine was the somewhat disappointing Rousseau Frères AOC Touraine "Noble Joué, Côté Dorée" rosé. A directly pressed blend of 50% Pinot Meunier, 35% Pinot Gris and 15% Pinot Noir it was then fermented and matured in used, 400L oak barrels for 9-12 months. Medium pink, with aromas of red fruits, lowish acidity and off dry, it lacked balance and came over as flabby.

### Château Gaudrelle

The first of two AOC Vouvray sparkling wines was Nôtre Methode Chenin Blanc, Gaudrelle, 2019, Brut. It had high acidity, with aromas of dough, pear and red apple and was medium bodied and dry (2gm/L sugar). With prominent autolytic flavours (having spent 48 months on the lees) this wine had a very long finish and was clearly very good quality.

Next was Nôtre Methode Chenin Blanc, Gaudrelle, 2019, Brut Tendre (9gm/L of residual sugar). Its characteristics were virtually identical to the first wine, except for added creaminess. However, the higher sugar level, whilst still in the limits of a Brut (Brut Tendre is not a legal descriptor), gave a slightly better balance.

AOC Vouvray Turonien, Chenin Blanc, 2022 had aromas of red apple, lemon and pear with mineral and saline notes, was dry, medium-bodied but lacked acidity. Despite having a longish finish, the balance between fruit concentration and acidity was deficient, compromising quality.

Next was AOC Vouvray, Clos le Vigneau, Chenin Blanc. 2022. It had aromas of pear, red apple, honey and mineral notes, was off-dry and again lacked acidity. The finish was quite long but lacking the acidity to balance the sugar and fruit.

AOC Vouvray, Château Gaudrelle, Special Réserve, 1996, 13%, was medium gold. It had high acidity, was sweet and had aromas of matches, simple fruit and was oxidized. It lacked fruit definition and intensity. This wine was both faulty and way beyond its drinking date.

The swansong was AOC Vouvray, Château Gaudrelle, Réserve Personnelle, 2003. It was medium gold, with wonderful aromas of honey, orange, lemon and marmalade, high acidity, was sweet and full-bodied. It was very well balanced and had a very long finish. This was a truly excellent wine.







So, the Château Gaudrelle wines were a somewhat mixed bag which was unfortunate because I have found them consistently good in the past.

### Bouvet Ladubay

Lacking its own vineyards, Bouvet Ladubay sources Chenin Blanc, Chardonnay and Cabernet Franc grapes from between 80 and 90 growers. About 30% of its production (all is sparkling wine) is aged in old oak barrels for six months, before bottling and aging on the lees for a minimum of 15 months. The winery visit was intriguing as the building had been constructed by Gustave Eiffel (of tower fame) using a similar iron girder technique. There was also an interesting museum.

The first of four wines was Saphir, a blend of 90% Chenin Blanc and 10% Chardonnay with 9gm/L residual sugar (i.e. Brut) and lees aging for 15 months. With aromas of pear, red apple and dough, a medium body and with high acidity, it was dry with a long, pleasant finish.

Next was Trésor, an 80/20 Chenin Blanc/Chardonnay blend aged for six months in old oak barrels before 24 months on the lees. Its characteristics were the same as Saphir but with added creaminess. The oak aging and additional time on the lees led to increased complexity and a very good wine.

Excellence Rosé followed, a 100% Cabernet Franc, with 10 gm/L residual sugar and 12 months lees aging. It was medium pink with aromas of raspberry, red cherry and strawberry, with high acidity, a creamy mouthfeel and a medium body. It was Brut with a long finish.

We finished with Rubiz sparkling red, from 100% Cabernet Franc with 40 gm/L residual sugar. It was medium ruby with simple aromas of red fruit, high acidity, was medium bodied and medium-sweet. There were poorly defined red fruit flavours with bitter notes and a long finish. The style was Demi-sec.

This was an interesting tasting of uniformly very good wines from an accomplished producer.

### Langlois-Château

Langlois-Château produce Crémant and still Saumur wines with grapes from their own vineyards in Saumur (51ha in Saumur and 11ha in Saumur-Champigny) and Sancerre (33ha).

Langlois Brut Réserve, a blend of Chenin Blanc, Cabernet Franc and Chardonnay, was pale lemon with aromas of pear and green apple, high acidity and was dry. Medium bodied and with a long finish, the wine was well balanced but quite simple.

Next was Langlois Brut Rosé, a blend of 80% Cabernet Franc and 20% Pinot Noir with 18 months on the lees. It was pale pink with light aromas of simple red fruit, high acidity and was dry. With light, simple citrus flavours and a long finish, the wine was good but lacked concentration and complexity.

Quadrille de Langlois-Château Extra Brut Millesème, a blend of Chenin Blanc, Chardonnay, Cabernet Franc and Pinot Noir, was the final sparkling. With aromas of dough, pear, red fruit, apple and citrus and high acidity, it had a very long finish. It was markedly more complex and concentrated than the two previous wines.

Next came three still wines. Clos St. Florent, Saumur, Blanc, 2020, a 100% Chenin Blanc blend had been fermented and aged in oak. With aromas of pear, apple, vanilla and wood, a creamy mouthfeel and medium acidity, the wine was dry with a pleasant, medium finish.

Clos St. Florent Saumur, Rouge, 2020, a 100% blend of Cabernet Franc, was medium ruby, dry, medium-bodied had had aromas of raspberry, red cherry and red currants. Again its finish was medium and the quality was good.

The last still wine was Les Beaugrands, Coteaux de Saumur, 2020, 100% Chenin Blanc. It was deep gold with prominent aromas of orange, honey and marmalade, was sweet with medium acidity and had a very long, succulent finish. It was an excellent wine.





# GROWTH OF VINEYARDS IN NORTHERN EUROPE

by Ann J Samuelson

Wine grapes were typically grown between the 30th and 50th parallels in the northern hemisphere, but change is afoot, and they are now being successfully grown further north. For this article we are looking at the growth of vineyards in Northern Europe which not long ago would have been considered as inhospitable for successful grape growing for wine. The area will be defined by drawing a line around the 54th latitude by the Baltic Sea and north to include the Nordic countries Denmark, Sweden, Norway, and Finland and also the Baltic countries Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania. The most northerly commercial vineyard is Lerkekåsa in Norway (pictured below) on 59th parallel; which is the same as the south of Alaska.

## Climate change?

Climate change has moderated the winters in the Nordic countries, especially in the southern part. Scandinavian farmers noticed 30 years ago that their growing seasons were lengthening and making it more and more feasible to grow grapes in Nordic countries a report published by the Swedish Meteorological and Hydrological Institute in 2022 found that in Sweden the growing season had lengthened by 20 days and the average temperature had increased by 2°C over the past 30 years.

According to climate scientist Borger Aamaas at the center for climate research, Norway has become 1.9°C warmer since the 1960s. The sea has a dampening effect on the temperature

increase and therefore there is a slower increase by the coast. While some of the inland municipalities Gausdal and Jevnaker have even warmed up 3°C. It is mostly since the 1980s that we have seen the temperature increases and it is seen more and more each decade. If temperatures continue to rise at their current rate, it's predicted that, for example Denmark's, climate will be like northern France in 50 years' time.

## Wines styles and grapes

In the Nordic and Baltic countries you will find sparkling, white, rose, red and sweet wine styles. The sparkling and white wines, in particular, made from the solaris grape have been successful in showing great potential in these cool climates. The wines are fruity with aromas of apple, citrus and elderberry with notes of honey. Acidity is high, which makes the wine fresh and lively. The key to success in these marginal climates is to use the right grape variety and rootstock, in addition to have a good sun exposure for the vines.

The most common grape varieties used are 'PIWI' grapes. PIWI is an abbreviation of the German term 'Pilzwiderstandsfähige Reben' which refers to fungus resistant grape varieties which are classified as sub-species of *Vitis vinifera*. They are hybrid crossings between *Vitis vinifera* from Europe and the mainly North American *vitis* species (which are resistant to fungal diseases which are common in these northerly regions).







The most successful of these hybrid grapes are the white variety solaris and the red variety rondo. Other white varieties used are souvignier gris, muscaris, johanniter, orion, hasansky sladki, donau riesling, vidal blanc. As well as the red varieties cabernet cortis, bolero, cabernet cantor, regent, fruh burgunder, sirame.

The most suitable rootstocks to use in the cool climate are the SO4 and 5BB, according to Lena Jørgensen at Vingården in Klagshamn (pictured) in Sweden. These rootstocks are suited to a humid climate and they slightly advance maturity by helping the grapes to reach a full phenolic maturity. Which again will lead to a higher quality wine.

The Nordic countries have also experimented with the international grapes such as riesling, sauvignon blanc, chardonnay, pinot gris, pinot blancs, pinot noir, merlot,

cabernet franc and cabernet sauvignon. For the moment Denmark and Sweden have the best potential to ripen these international grape varieties on a regular basis. Their most southern wine producing areas are between the 55th to 56th parallels. British Columbia in Canada and Lithuania in Northern Europe are other wine producing regions and countries on the same parallels.

#### State restrictions or not?

In 2000, Denmark, Sweden, Finland were accepted by EU law as commercial wine producing countries. Denmark does not have a state wine and spirit monopoly and can therefore sell wines at their wineries. Sweden, Norway and Finland have a state monopoly and can only sell their wines at the monopoly shop or direct to the Horeca market. These countries have been granted permission by EU to maintain their regulation with state monopoly. However, there has been a change as Finland was recently granted an allowance to sell up to four bottles of wine per person at the wineries. This is now up for discussion in Sweden and the Riksdagen (Sweden's highest decision making assembly) will make a decision about this in the Autumn. If this goes through in Sweden, hopes are that it may also be granted in Norway also. This decision will be a very important step for wine producers in these countries as it will help them build on their oenotourisme.

#### The Nordic countries

Denmark has the most advanced wine scene and has the longest experience with grape growing. They started in the early 1990s and the first Danish winery was started in 1993 by a few enthusiasts. Denmark now has four main wine regions –







Bornholm, Funen, Jutland and Zealand. The Dons sub-region in Jutland has now become the first protected designation of origin (PDO) in Denmark. This is the most northerly in the EU and covers an area of 500 hectares.

The two biggest winegrowers in Denmark are Dyrehøl Vingård in Roesnaes, Kalundborg on the northwest coast of Zealand and Skærsøgaard in the Dons sub-region in Jutland. Together these two form 20% of the total with 40,000 vines and 30,000 vines respectively. They both make award winning wines with the solaris variety – namely Dyrehøl Solaris Reserve white wine and Cuvée Brut Sparkling Wine from Skærsøgaard.

The Skærsøgaard winery is owned by Sven Moesgaard. Skærsøgaard's signature wine 'DONS' has gained the certification BOB (Beskyttet Oprindelses Betegnelse)

which are like the French AOC or the Italian DOC.

Skærsøgaard's sparkling wines is the only product in Denmark which has achieved BOB. In addition to a range of sparkling wines, Skærsøgaard also produce white, rose, red and sweet grape wines.



Sweden has 150 hectares under vine along the southernmost coast in Skåne, and on the islands Öland and Gotland, as well as some in the Södermanland region southwest of Stockholm. In just 20 years, Swedish viticulture has gone from being a hobby to being developed into a commercial success and being recognised as producing prize winning wines.

There are around 200 wine producers with their own vineyards and 55 of these are



commercial vineyards. 95% of the production are from PIWI grapes, with solaris being the dominant variety for white wine and increasingly for traditional made sparkling wines.

Two years ago Sweden's Branch Organisation for Oenology and Viticulture (SBOV) was formed and the country is now working to obtain a geographical indication of origin (PGI) status such as Wine from Skåne.

Just outside Malmö in Skåne is Vingården i Klagshamn (pictured below) which was founded in 2001 by one of the pioneers in Swedish viticulture Murat Sofrakis and Lena Jørgensen. They have 1.8 hectares vineyards planted with 80 percent solaris, and the rest 20 percent with the red rondo and cabernet cortis, plus a small quantity with frühburgunder. Their philosophy is to make something new for the wine world instead of making one more chardonnay or pinot noir wine. The intention is to make the best possible wine of the grape varieties they consider most suitable to their soil and climate. Vingården i Klagshamn is open for public from 15th May to 15th August, but it's very popular with wine geeks and visits can be booked during the other months.

Kullaberg Vingård is Sweden's largest winery with a total of 14 hectares, most vines planted a decade ago. They are located up the coast from Malmö and are surrounded by the three seas – Öresund, Skälderviken and Kattegat – which makes the climate mild with a longer growing season. Kullaberg produces mostly white wine and sparkling wines, and their wines can be found in high ends restaurants from Europe to Japan and many wines

are also sold through the Systembolaget (Sweden's monopoly). Their oenologist and winemaker Felix Åhrberg has been working in vineyards around the world and he returned to Sweden to head up Kullaberg Vingård in 2017.

In Norway, viticulture is in the early stages of viticulture and partly hobbyist, but with an exciting future. There are 50 registered wineries in Norway, according to the Norske Druedyrkere's association. Most vineyards are by the southern coast from Drammen to Kristiansand or slightly inland. Norway benefits from still having a marginal climate, even if the temperature has increased the last decades but with a high difference between day and night in the growing season, leading to a high acidity level. This will benefit the wines with a refreshing acid structure and a long shelf-life.

As mentioned at the start, Lerkekåsa Vineyard is the most northerly commercial vineyard and is a two-hour drive south-west of Oslo, in Gvarv. It is nestled in a valley near Lake Norsjø and protected by hills and mountains which create a special microclimate and one of the warmest places in Norway. The vineyard was planted in 2008 by Joar Saettem, a professional geologist by trade and his wife Wenche. Lerkekåsa now produces around a total of 1,500 litres of wine – white, rose and red.

Alongside Sognefjord, Norway's longest and deepest fjord, there are a group of eight wine producers trying to establish a new winemaking region which is as far north as 61 degrees





north. In total they have 15,000 vines between them. Slinde Vineyard, owned by Bjorn Bergum and his partner Halldis, works with a variety of grapes to create blends that have good aromatic notes and a minerality coming from the clay soil. Slinde planted their first vines in 2014 and now they have 3,000 vines. A secret to producing quality wines in this cool climate is frequent light, chilly nights, and the sun reflecting off the fjord and onto the steep hillside. Slinde Vineyard has won gold medals in Norway's national wine competition, and their plan is to go commercial.

Finland has traditionally produced wines mostly made from fruits and berries, but with the change in climate they are now embarking on becoming a wine producing country. Currently Finnish wine production is only small-scale, and mostly on experimental basis but this is set to change. Today there are about 25 wineries in Finland, mostly around the southern coast and a few up on the west. The wine producing association in Finland are called Viininkasvattajat ry.

A pioneer in Finnish wine production is Kaarlo Nelimarkka with a winery in Waasa on the western coast, only 400 kilometres south of the Arctic Circle.

Nelimarkka started experimenting with winegrowing almost 40 years ago and after decades of trial and error his Sundom winery now makes white wine and red wine from his 2,000 vine plants. His specialty is the Sundom white made from the hardier grape varieties solaris, madeleine angevine and gewurztraminer. A big advantage in this northerly region is that the grapes enjoy up to 20 hours of daylight each day during the summer months.

#### The Baltic countries

In Estonia, the wine industry is growing and their wine tourism is growing rapidly. Their focus is on cool climate grapes such as solaris, regent, rondo, cabernet cortis, leon millot, zilga and hasanki sladki to produce light, fresh and mineral driven wines with subtle grape aromas. Estonian winemakers also experiment with other fruit varieties such as apples, pears and cherries.







The Southern Estonia wine region is one of the most interesting areas for wine production with small, family-owned wineries. Visitors can enjoy vineyard tours, wine tastings, and cellar visits. Harjumaa is another interesting wine region in the northern part of Estonia, as well as the islands of Saaremaa and Muhu.

Latvia has been making wine from grapes for years, but also from fruits, berries and flowers. The winery Mazburkas, near Engure, has been growing grapes for 15 years and produces three whites, one rose and two reds. When visiting them you can stay in one of their cabins with a view of their vineyard.

Abavas winery is in Sabile, in the centre of the Curonian peninsula at 57th parallel, and they first planted grapes in 2010. This started as a family winery, but it is now owned by three families – Barkan, Gadazhi and Krasovsky. The best northern grape varieties for them are solaris, muskaris and rondo. They produce one sparkling wine from the solaris grape and a red wine from rondo. Before making wine from grapes they produced wine and sparkling beverages from fruits and berries.

Lithuania is a relative newcomer with vineyards starting to spread and cultivate different cool climate varieties. As global warming intensifies, the season for cultivating grapes in Lithuania is extending. It is considered that at least 180 frost free days are required (e.g. 15th May to 11th November which

would be a European norm) for successful grape production. Lithuania has 160-180 frost free days along the coast and 130-150 in the east (which could increase in time). There are over 200 farmers across Lithuania that cultivate vineyards, but much of the Lithuanian grapes ends up inside a juicer. The Viticulture Association has started to register vineyards and it is estimated that there could be around hundred grape growers there now. Some producers are starting to open for visitors on their farms and offering accommodation. The best wine region in Lithuania is in the southeast due to its light soil. One of the biggest wineries in Lithuania is located southwest of the capital Vilnius and are owned by Andrius Diliautas and his wife.

### The future

As drought, rising temperatures and other extreme weather events are forcing traditional winegrowing regions (France, Spain, Italy and Greece) to reassess their production methods, grape varieties grown and also vineyard location, the vineyards of Northern Europe look to be in a good position to go from strength to strength as producers of quality wines. England is a good example -traditionally only being able to ripen PIWI varieties southern England is now at the forefront of producing some of the finest sparkling wines, using classic grapes chardonnay and pinot noir – the future is definitely looking bright.



## Capital

### ALTO ADIGE, A VERY BLIC TOUR

BLIC, which stands for Balance, Length, Intensity, Complexity, is an oft-used acronym to shorthand the evaluation of good wine. Excellent wines score well across all these attributes. However, the BLIC criteria can also be applied to a wide range of encounters, not just tasting fermented grape juice. The best experiences would likely tick all four boxes.

The Capital Branch's tour of the Alto Adige/Südtirol region from 8th to 13th July endeavoured to do just that for its sixteen participants. First off, the region is the very definition of complexity. Given its history of passing from Austria to Italy in 1918, the place is a *mélange* of cultures, values, language and climate. Signs everywhere are bilingual (or even trilingual, giving a nod to the Ladin dialect from Val Badia). The cuisine is an offering of Italian pastas and meats as well as more-Teutonic *knödel* and *strudel*. Some wines go by three names, such as pinot noir / pinot nero / blauburgunder. The topography and climate are also a hybrid of continental and Mediterranean. The Tyrolean Alps and incomparably stunning Dolomites in the northern half of the region produce snow, rain, humidity, and hot days and cold nights. Those conditions give way to the dry heat and milder winters as the landscape flattens out to the south, towards Trentino.

This sort of complexity can lead to chaotic results, such as in several rapidly developed cities in Eastern Europe, Asia and elsewhere. But Alto Adige/Südtirol wears its complexity elegantly – like a Puccini or Mozart opera. Anyone who has walked Bolzano's old town or along the alleys of quaint mountain villages such as Castelrotto or Ortisei can't help but be moved by their charm and flair. Stylistically, there's a bit of this and a bit of that – traditional, modern, gothic, renaissance – all in the right proportions. The atmospheric mix is one that is in wonderful balance, like an alpine breeze in summer.

Wine-wise, there is much on offer in terms of balance, complexity and intensity. Given the preponderance of altitude, the wines generally reflect a cool weather climate, marked by restraint and elegance. Given the scarcity of arable land (much of which was given over to apple orchards after a phylloxera invasion), there's also a clear focus on quality over quantity. In fact, some of the best sparkling wines in the world outside Champagne are produced here (more on that below). The three 'local' red wines – *terldego*, *schiaiva* and *lagrein* – each have distinctive characteristics. They range from fresh and light (*schiaiva*) to deeper and more intense (*lagrein* and *terldego*). French varieties are prominent in the region given Austria's occasionally fraught history with France, which motivated Austrian nobility to secure their own supply of noble grapes by planting vineyards within their own southern borders. The pinot noir-nero-blauburgunder and the pinot blanc-bianco-weissburgunder produced here are widely considered the best in Italy.

The tour kicked off on Monday evening with an orientation dinner at a restaurant in Bolzano's old town. The menu focused on traditional foods – *knödel*, *schnitzel* and Austrian potato



salad. 'Generous' was a polite word to describe the serving portions. 'Belt-busting' was more accurate.

Tuesday was an intensive day of exploring the wine area around the village of Tramin and the Strada del Vino. First up was a biodynamic, low-interventionist winery and farm called **Alois Lageder**, located in the centre of a centuries-old farming hamlet. After a walk through a stretch of biodynamic Eden in the form of a chardonnay vineyard and its bordering forest, lunch was served in a stone courtyard aptly named *Vineria Paradeis*.

The ingredients were sourced from the property, including ox carpaccio and braised ribs from a gentle beast that until recently had trodden the land for a few bucolic years.





The afternoon was spent at two celebrated wineries, **Cantina Tramin** and **Tenuta J Höfstatte**. Tramin is considered the spiritual birthplace of the grape variety gewurtztraminer (literally 'spicy tramin grape'), although Alsatians might strenuously beg to differ. What is beyond dispute is that one of the cantina's labels – Epokale – is one of the most highly sought-after white wines in Italy, with a price tag in the hundreds of euros per bottle. Clearly, wine that is aged for seven years in the pitch-black depths of a defunct alpine silver mine simply doesn't come cheaply. Höfstatte, on the other hand, specialises in pinot noir produced from single vineyard terroir.

The cooling evening temperatures provided a welcome relief from the afternoon heat, as did the breathtaking panoramic view of Lake Caldaro and its surrounding slopes that provided the setting for an alfresco dinner at **Seehofkeller**. The meal was accompanied by J. Höfstatte wines, including glasses of a fabulous 2010 Barthenau Vigna S Urbano pinot nero.

Wednesday was meant to provide a fresh-air break from gluttony. The group travelled by cable car up to the Alpe di Siusi – Europe's largest alpine meadow – for a close-up view of the sedimentary carbonate and limestone peaks of the Dolomites. While some participants walked up to an observation point to survey the surrounding peaks, others chose to spend the time settled into lawn chairs with tall glasses of cold beer to enjoy gazing at the jagged ridgelines. Lunch was a simple but flavourful affair at a mountain hut called **Tschötsch Alm**, with wildflowers and grazing cows, horses and foals for company.

After a restful afternoon back in Bolzano, the group headed by another cable car up to the neighbouring village of



Soprabolzano for the first of the week's three Michelin starred meals – **1908**. This establishment featured dishes accented by liquid nitrogen and smoke-filled bell jars.

Thursday was sparkling wine day. The best known sparkling wine from the Trento province adjacent to Alto Adige is Trentodoc, a highly regarded wine which is made with the same traditional method and care as premium champagne. The winery visited was **Cantine Ferrari** (no relation to the racing car company). It has received the distinction of being named the 'Sparkling Wine Producer of the Year' six times including in 2023 at the prestigious global Champagne and Sparkling Wine







World Championships. Following the tour and tasting, we visited the sixteenth century **Villa Margon**, with its beautiful Renaissance architecture and magnificently vibrant frescoed walls. Lunch was at **Locanda Margon** – the property’s Michelin-starred restaurant.

The final day, Friday, focused on the area to the northwest of Bolzano. The morning wine tour and tasting was at **Cantina Terlano**, a premium white wine-focused producer that makes Terlaner I Grande Cuvée Primo – a select blend of chardonnay, sauvignon and pinot bianco that is considered one of Italy’s finest white wines. After the winery visit, it was time to visit local castles and farmhouses. Lunch was at Michelin-starred **Zum Löwen** in Tesimo, helmed by the formidably talented Anna Matscher.

Following that delightful meal was a quick visit to the **Versoaln vine**, which at 360+ years is considered the largest and oldest vine in the world. This majestic creation sprawls along pergolas in the gardens bordering **Katzenzungen Castle**.

The final gala dinner that evening was at **Haselburg / Castel Flavon**, perched above Bolzano. The meal opened on the terrace overlooking the Val d’Adige with canapés and glasses of Alto Adige sparkling wine. Given the heat, the necktie requirement for the men was relaxed. Over the ensuing three dinner courses, pictures were taken, toasts were made, and new friendships were sealed.

Whether enjoying a bottle of well-made wine, embarking on a journey or encountering any new experience, the true value of the time and energy invested can be far greater than the immediate sensations that are sparked. That smell of a dank cellar filled with oak barriques, the passing of wispy clouds across a limestone cornice, the spongy, mouthwatering texture of dumplings made from old bread and smoky speck – they live longer in memory when they are recollected with contented people at your shoulder or smiling back toward you. A life well lived is one filled with places, people and sensations that endure, years after those special times have ended and small details have faded into the past.

*Phillip Kim*





## Devon

### ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING



David Rowe (left) incoming Charman having just received his medal from outgoing Chairman John Slater on the right.

On 21st July 2024, 33 members from Devonshire Branch met for the 47th Annual General meeting at the home of Geeta and Gordon Lloyd.

It was with sadness that our Chairman, John Slater, was stepping down as being chair for over 23 years and from the committee.

David Rowe, our incoming Chairman, then presented a box of Champagne Boizel Brut Reserve NV to John Slater and a letter from John Nicholas, Chairman IWFS Europe Africa Zone, thanking John for his service. A gift voucher from the Elephant,

a 1-star Michelin restaurant in Torquay, was presented to Sue Slater for her service as she was also stepping down from having been on the committee for over 20 years.

For the buffet lunch which followed, wines were sourced by Gordon Lloyd, while Geeta Lloyd prepared the Canapés. The food was sourced and cooked by Sue Slater and Gordon Lloyd. David Rowe prepared the dessert with the help of Linda Baker.

- Canapés were served with *Crémant d'Alsace Cuvée Julien Dopff au Moulin NV*.
- The main course was served with *Pazo de Villarei Albariño, Rías Baixas 2022* and *Cairanne Peyre Blanche, Famille Perrin 2021*.
  - Mixed Seafood Platter
  - Gallia melon with Parma ham
  - Cucumber Relish
  - Ottolenghi Chicken Marbella
  - Steamed Potatoes with butter and parsley
  - Green Salad
  - Petit Pains + butter
- Dessert
  - Fruit Pavlova
  - Cut Fruits
  - Citron Tart
- Cheese Platter – Cheddar, Goat, Brie and stilton accompanied by cheese biscuits, grapes.

And finished off with Tea and Coffee.

## Herefordshire & Monmouthshire

### A PASTA FEST IN USK

About a year ago an Italian family opened a group of five restaurants in and around Herefordshire and Monmouthshire. Since then the family has gained an excellent reputation for the variety of items on their menus and the quality of ingredients, combined with competitive pricing for the food and wines. They trade as Casa Bianca and offer the same menu in each establishment. In their Usk restaurant, the tables are shaded by white mimosa blossom; the meal was served in a relaxed and friendly manner by wholly professional staff. Portions were generous and expertly presented. There are several areas within the dining space that can accommodate groups like ours – 18 on this occasion – but it also has smaller more intimate areas for couples and families that give a warm and private feeling.

Although the menu is extensive covering the many regional dishes typical in Italy, we chose to concentrate on their selection of pastas and risotto for the main course (although we did include one meat dish as an option). We asked members to pre-select from the menu below.





### Starters

- Bruschetta Formaggio
- Calamari Croccante
- Pepperoni Ripieni
- Gamberoni

### Mains

- Linguine Gamberoni
- Lasagna
- Ravioli al Salmone
- Risotto al Pollo
- Filetto di Maiale

Desserts were available but everyone declined in favour of coffee – they had been well fed!

For wines we welcomed members with Prosecco. We served a Pinot Grigio from Verona and a Montepulciano from Tuscany with the meal – good honest choices to ease digestion and lubricate conversation. We'll likely return in the next year.

*Sue Smith*



## Herefordshire & Monmouthshire ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING



Traditionally our branch holds the AGM at a member's home and for 2024 we were in Usk with hosts Pam and Nigel Williams along with a total of 19 members.

All were welcomed on Sunday 21st July as midday approached with chilled Cava.

The formal business occupied everyone's total concentration for nine minutes and there was unanimous approval for a rewarding year's dedication to hedonism and enthusiasm for its successful continuation in 2025.

The Chairman, Michael Hoddinott, then invited everyone to participate in an informal quiz which was based on an article

recently published in the Sunday Times exploring "questions about wine that you were too embarrassed to ask". The feeling was we acquitted ourselves more than adequately.

A buffet lunch was offered – and this year we sourced the selection from the Waitrose Entertaining range which was quite excellent and good value for money. Our accompanying wines were selected from the Wine Society.

- Cava Reserva Brut
- South African Chenin Blanc
- Valpolicella.

We look forward to another rewarding year in 2025.

*Sue Smith*





## *Herefordshire & Monmouthshire* **THE ROYAL MINT AT PONTYCLUN**

Pontyclun is a small town west of Cardiff and the home of The Royal Mint – not a glamorous building, it is grey, almost windowless and surrounded by a 12ft metal wall topped with razor wire. This did not distract from the enthusiastic welcome our branch received from the staff at the Royal Mint Experience, the visitor attraction.

The staff work in a modern airy building within the compound and arrange guided tours of the coin and medal production areas. There is a restaurant, souvenir shop, an extensive exhibition of the history of the Royal Mint and an opportunity to press your own 50p piece with King Charles III on the obverse, heroically priced at £7.50 but it does come in an attractive presentation folder!

To enhance the experience for the group we had proposed an indulgent lunch after the tour. However, Pontyclun is not well known as a gastronomic destination but the Mint had suggested they could cater for us – and they did superbly.

The Mint opened a private dining area for us and we chose their extravagantly described Ploughman's Lunch, which impressively matched its presentation when served. The majority of the ingredients were sourced from local producers – artisan breads, several Welsh cheeses, ham off the bone and locally produced pâté, all served with green and potato salads and pickles. The portions were generous – even over generous for some – and we were glad we had not ordered desserts.



Fortuitously the restaurant is licensed – although they do not generally hold an extensive wine selection. They had discovered we were the IWFS and they recommended two wines to accompany the feast, which they ordered specially for us: we were delighted with the choices, a Sémillon Sauvignon Blanc and a Rhône.

*Sue Smith*





## Liverpool

### DINNER IN SPAIN WITHOUT THE AIRLINE HASSLE

Monday 1st July saw Liverpool Branch take a fascinating and in-depth trip across much of Spain stopping off at some uniquely small, but high quality, vineyards including one of the largest sherry producers. Accompanied by fantastic tapas along the way, the guests never left Liverpool Dock!

Considering it was July the weather was hardly Spanish at all as we made our way down a damp and windy Liverpool Dock to all meet at Lunyalita, but the welcome from owner Peter Kinsella and manager Mikey could not have been warmer.

The six-course Spanish wine evening started with Catalan nibbles of roasted almonds, pickled garlic and Gordal Olives and Kikones. To accompany those we were served a special just released Tio Pepe Fino En Rama sherry.

Whilst we sampled the starters Peter explained the history and the philosophy behind their Lunya and Lunyalita restaurants. As the traditional Spanish food came out from the kitchen, Peter and Mikey poured the wines and gave us a knowledgeable insight into their wine making. They explained how the Lunya restaurant in town has a deli counter as part of the set up. They went through many of the authentic Spanish products available to buy in-store and on-line.

The evening finished with a Burnt Basque cheesecake, which was to die for, and that was served with a special Ariyanis David Merlot wine.

Both Chairman Terry Lim and Events Manager Ysanne Williams thanked Peter, Mikey and their team for an absolutely fantastic evening. We will be looking to book a 'Suckling Pig' night early in 2025.

*Nigel Williams*

#### Menu

##### First Course

- Roasted Catalan Almonds, Pickled Garlic, Gordal Olives, Kikones  
*Tio Pepe Fino En Rama*

##### Second Course

- Calamari a la Romana, Pujado Solano Mussels in Salsa Picante, Marsico Salad and Homemade Sourdough Bread  
*Luna Beberide D.O. Bierzo*

##### Third Course

- Tomato Bread with an Iberico Meat and Cheese Platter  
*Vi Ranci*

##### Fourth Course

- Crispy Chicken, Mushrooms with Asparagus Shavings and Chorizo in White Wine with Fennel Seeds and Honey  
*Rezabal Rose D.O. Txakolina*

##### Fifth Course

- Bavette Moruno, Padron Peppers and Patatas Bravas  
*La Fea Gran Reserva D.O. Carinyena*

##### Final Course

- Burnt Basque Cheesecake  
*Ariyanis David Merlot*

Members concurred and expressed the very enjoyable evening they have had. Chairman and Events Manager thanked Peter and Mikey for presenting a truly educative experience of Spanish wines and food.

*Ron Barker*





## London AT FORMAN'S



Friday 5th July saw London Branch make a return visit to H. Forman & Son following the success of the previous visit in 2018 as part of the Triennial Festival.

Founded in 1905, H. Forman & Son is a family business and one of the last, if not the last, traditional Smoked Salmon producers in London. Located next door to the Queen Elizabeth Olympic Park on Fish Island (named after the local road names) in a striking modern salmon pink building shaped like a darne of salmon.

Lance Forman, Managing Director and fourth generation owner of the business, provided a fascinating introduction highlighting the history of the firm and the challenges of leading it through numerous challenges including fire, flood, covid and, the most challenging of all, the London 2012 Olympic games. He also provided an interesting insight into how the perception of smoked salmon as a luxury product has been impacted in recent years, especially among catering professionals and younger generations, as the product has become cheaper and more widely available. The business is now split between wholesale supplying many high-end restaurants and shops (including Fortnum & Mason) plus a retail side including direct sales, which experienced significant growth during and following the pandemic. Products are also exported, with the USA and Hong Kong being the two largest export markets.

The visit continued with a tour of Forman's smokehouse with an explanation of the processes involved in producing smoked salmon and a view of the kilns in action. All production is done by hand by the skilled in-house team. We were then treated to an entertaining as well as highly informative smoked salmon carving demonstration by their carving expert, Darren Matson. As well as a large supply of one-liners, Darren demonstrated expert knife skills and has a Guinness world record for salmon

preparation! The demonstration showed the initial preparation of the fish including de-boning and salting pre smoking. Daren then demonstrated the different cuts available from the smoked fish, including D-cut and lateral, and how different styles such as fatty or lean are obtained. Interestingly no part of the fish was wasted, with different parts of the fish being used for different food products and anything else being used in non-food products or for bioenergy.







The smokehouse visit was followed by an excellent lunch. For starters we enjoyed a very generous salmon tasting plate with Lance Forman providing a tutored tasting of different types and cuts. These included London cure, beetroot cure, royal fillet, gin and tonic salmon, dill gravadlax, wasabi and ginger cure, black truffle infused fillet and salmon jerky. The starter was accompanied by Balfour Leslie's Reserve NV, an English sparkling wine.

The following two courses were all from the Forman and Field range of products. The main course options were Smoked

Haddock Fishcake, Poached Free Range Egg and Salad or Gourmet Truffle and Leek Macaroni Cheese. Dessert options were Forman's Salted Caramel Chocolate Pot with Peanut Brittle or Mrs Forman's Baked Cheesecake Pot with Blueberries. The main course was accompanied by Biddenden Ortega, an English still white wine.

Balfour's Leslie's Reserve Brut is a classic traditional method sparkling wine with elegant purity and fresh acidity. Predominantly Chardonnay with citrus, green apple and brioche flavours. The wine's distinctive aromatic and spicy character is created with the addition of a small percentage of Pinot Gris to the blend. Every parcel is handpicked and pressed separately before blending to create Leslie's Brut signature style. Fermentation in stainless steel tanks and full malolactic fermentation before ageing on lees for a minimum of 12 months (<https://balfourwinery.com/>).

Biddenden was one of the first vineyards to plant Ortega in the UK in the late 1960s. Today Ortega covers just over half of the vineyard. Ortega grapes ripen early and are known for their low acidity and high sugar levels. Semi-aromatic on the nose displaying appealing fresh aromas of green apple, grapefruit, cut grass and flora, whilst the palate is medium bodied, crisp and fruity (<https://biddendenvineyards.com/>).

Maybe the most surprising fact of the day – don't serve lemons with quality smoked salmon!

*William Arthur*

## London

### ARE FRENCH WINES THE BEST?

On 3rd September at the Army and Navy Club we had a blind tasting of prestigious French wines against wines from Chile, England, Hungary and South Africa, over five rounds. Most of the pairs, except the first, consisted of wines very different in age and/or grape varieties so it should have been easy to identify each wine in such very unusual pairings, some possibly being made for the first time ever. It was random which was tasted first in each round.

#### Round 1

Sparkling: Taittinger Brut Reserve, (NV), 12.5%; mainly Chardonnay plus some Pinot Noir and a little Pinot Meunier. Pale. Moderate mousse. Good bouquet and flavour. Rather bland. My score, 7½/10.

All Angels Classic Cuvée 2015, 12%, Berkshire, England; Chardonnay 58%, Pinot Noir 19%, Pinot Meunier 13%, Pinot Gris 10%. Light gold. Fair mousse. Bigger bouquet and more body. Fuller flavour. Excellent length. My score, 8¾/10.

Voting: best wine, Taittinger 3, All Angels 13. Which was the Champagne? Seven were right, seven wrong.

#### Round 2

Dry white, mature: Rustenberg Stellenbosch Chardonnay 2004, 14%, South Africa. Gold. Good rich bouquet. Good body. Big

flavour and length. Great all round. 9/10.

Stephane Montez, Domaine du Monteillet, Condrieu Les Grandes Chaillés 2011, 14%; Viognier. Deeper gold. Good rich bouquet. Good body and length. A little bigger. Very good. 9/10.

The two wines were surprisingly similar in spite of different grapes and ages.

Voting: best wine, Rustenberg 7, Montez 8. Which was the Chardonnay? Seven were right, seven wrong.





### Round 3

Dry red, mature, mainly Cabernet Sauvignon, with Merlot, Cabernet Franc and others: Lynch-Bages Grand Vin Pauillac 2002, 13%; Cabernet Sauvignon 75%, Merlot 15%, Cabernet Franc 15%. Dark, black-purple. Good deep bouquet. Plenty of tannins. Lacks enough fruit. A bit austere. 7½/10.

Tokara Stellenbosch Director's Reserve 2015, 14.4%; Cabernet Sauvignon 71%, Merlot 15%, Malbec 4%, Petit Verdot 7%, Cabernet Franc 3%, South Africa. Black-purple. Tannins mature and plentiful. Lots of attractive fruit. Good length. 8½/10.

Voting: best wine, Lynch-Bages 4, Tokara 12. Which was the claret? Six were right, eight wrong.

### Round 4

Dry red, mature, Syrah: Alain Graillot La Guiraud Crozes Hermitage 1990, 12.5%; Syrah. Very brown. Mature bouquet and tannins. Good length. Elegant but fading; not enough fruit. 7½/10.

Villány Bock Jozsef, Syrah 2006, 15%, Hungary. Black-purple. Good bouquet. Some tannins. Very good fruit. Good length. 8½/10.

Voting: best wine, Crozes Hermitage, 3, Bock, 13. Which was the Crozes? Three were right, eight wrong, in spite of the colour giving the game away.

### Round 5

Sweet whites from excellent years, Sauvignon Blanc with Sémillon or Viognier: Château Lafaurie-Peyraguey 1er Cru Sauternes 2001, 13.5%; Sémillon 93%, Sauvignon Blanc 6%, Muscadelle 1%. Gold to amber. Huge bouquet with some noble rot. Big body and length. Great flavour. 9/10.

Louis Felipe Edwards Late Harvest Viognier Sauvignon Blanc 2019, 11.5%, Chile. Lighter gold. Good fresh bouquet with some noble rot. Beautiful flavour; a lovely wine. 9/10.

Voting: best wine, Sauternes, 8, Chile, 6. Which was the Sauternes? Eight were right, five wrong.

Summary of voting. Best wine, French, 27 (and two rounds), not French, 51 (and three rounds) – a very clear verdict that French wines are not the best, in spite of generally costing more (current prices, Crozes Hermitage, £300, Lynch-Bages, £130. Rustenberg, current vintage, £13, Chilean, about £16). Which wine was which? So 31 right, 35 wrong, astonishing! There was a tendency to put the best wine as French. The evening was greatly enjoyed by the participants, many of whom were shocked when the wines were revealed at the end of each round.

A cold buffet was supplied by the club.

*Dr Bernard Lamb*





## Manchester

### SUMMER LUNCH AT THE IVY

The Manchester Branch Summer Lunch this year was very special indeed as we booked the opulent Geisha Room at the Ivy for our exclusive use. The Ivy curated a special menu for us and we selected the wines from their extensive list. We were looked after most assiduously by Cristos and Cath for the entire event.

Our arrival wine was the fresh and zesty Lafage Lafabuleuse, a slightly 'frisant' blend which was perfect for the beautiful summer day.



Our two starters were Flamed Edamame with Spicy Dip and Tuna, Yellowtail and Salmon Sashimi with truffle miso dressing and yuzu. Both dishes were full of flavour and got us off to an exciting start. We enjoyed Chemin des Dames, a Colombard and Ugni Blanc blend with the first two courses. This wine was

off-dry, delicate, fragrant and floral; a perfect match for Asian food.

The next duo was popcorn shrimp with a spicy cream sauce and Gochujang Glazed Fried Chicken with Wasabi Mayo. Both dishes looked beautiful and had fabulous punchy flavours – in fact for your scribe the chicken was positively addictive!

At this stage we needed a rest! Duly refreshed we moved onto Wagyu Denver Steak with Crispy Garlic and Sweet Soy, Tenderstem Broccoli with crispy chilli, lemon and sea salt and the famous Dragon Fries which are made with sweet potato, chilli and sesame. Again there were explosive flavours and everyone was in raptures over these dishes. These were paired with an Australian Merlot, Hillville Road, which was smooth and round.

After another pause for recovery (all of the dishes were extremely generous in size) we moved onto our dessert which was simply stunning – sticky toffee pudding with plum sake, salted caramel ice cream and spun sugar. This was surprisingly light and utterly delicious.

Finally we were served with teas and coffees and the chef joined us so that we could express our thanks to him and his team. Thanks were also expressed to Cristos and Cath who had made the whole experience so special for us.

*Nicola McLoughlin*





## Manchester

### ... AND THE WEATHER STAYED DRY!



Manchester IWFS enjoyed a guided food (and wine) walking tour of Manchester's Ancoats and Northern Quarter areas. Excellently organised by Scranchester tour guides to accommodate walkers of all standards, we learned about the history and rejuvenation of this area of the city. We admired commissioned art work and road signs of different colours whilst discovering and enjoying hospitality in new carefully chosen venues.

Meeting at The Craft and Design Centre, for cheese and wine and cured meats, we then separated into two groups to sample a variety of 'scan' in each venue: fish tacos, mushroom croquette with black garlic aioli, corned beef hash, a sausage roll with a difference, cheese and onion pizza, and pastel de Nata. We all met up again to compare notes and finish with a delicious Tarta de Santiago with clotted cream and saffron honey at Jayne Eyre's.

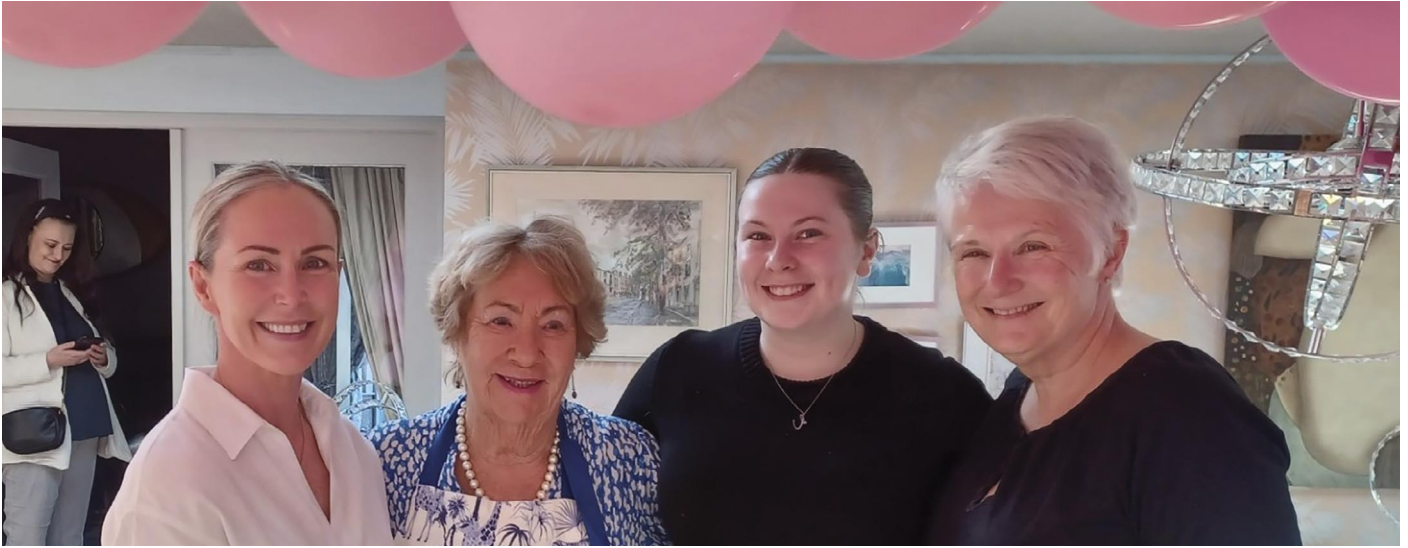
It was good to try something a bit different and much enjoyed! We will surely revisit.

*Ruth Hurst*





## Merseyside & Mid Cheshire CELEBRATING SUMMER



Merseyside and Mid Cheshire welcomed summer with a lunch party in the Clwyd countryside. The event was hosted by Jane Wynne Williams in her beautiful home near Denbigh. Jane is a branch member and our very own 'visionary' chef. She created and executed a six course menu for 34 people in her own kitchen with a small team of helpers to serve.

We were delighted to be joined by friends from other branches: Manchester, Herefordshire and Monmouthshire, Bath and Bristol.

### Aperitif and Canapés

- Cava Gran Reserva Brut served with Quails Eggs on Salmon Caviar
- Prawns on sticks with Chilli Dip
- Patum Peperium on Crisp Bread

### Amuse Bouche

### Starters

- Terrine of Welsh Smoked Cheese with apple jelly, walnuts and salad; or
- A Platter of Oriental Fruits accompanied by Gentil Alsace 2021

### Mango Sorbet

### Main course

- Baked Gammon with Curried Pineapple, Dauphinoise potatoes, a medley of root vegetables, peas, tender stem broccoli and Cumberland Sauce; or
- Poached Salmon, Hollandaise Sauce, Jersey Royal Potatoes, Asparagus, Braised Fennel and Garden Peas accompanied by Chianti Classico 2016

### Stilton Cheese Savoury with Meringue Topping

### Desserts

- Summer Pudding; or
- Pear Belle Helene Served with Sauterne 2016

### Tea/Coffee and Mints.

The company were unanimous in their praise for the food, the wine and the ambiance, all thoroughly enjoyed the afternoon.

Our wine steward, Paul Bishop, selected the wines from the Wine Society's list. These were a great success with our members who were particularly attracted by the quality and originality of the selection.

The cava produced by Conde de Haro Brut was bottled fermented and aged giving the same complexity and freshness as Champagne.

The Gentil by Hugel contained all the grapes of Alsace in 2021. This wine was very complex with a prolonged after taste and had maintained its freshness and minerality. This was perhaps the favourite of all the wines.

For me, the most outstanding was the Brolio Chianti Classico 2021 which was produced to resemble the methods used when the Classico nomination was founded. This was particularly elegant with a wonderful nose and finish, it was greatly appreciated by the red wine enthusiasts in the group.

The final sauterne was 2016, and whilst extremely sweet and luscious it retained a sharp finish preventing a cloying aftertaste. This went particularly well with the stilton and meringue cheese course at the end of the meal.

Our Chairman, Tim Hodges, and Secretary, Hilary Ryland, assisted with the organisation and setting up. Val Bishop produced her usual amazing menus and place cards.

I would like to conclude with a big thank you to Jane for her wonderful hospitality and her amazing food.

*Angela Britland*



## Sussex

### THE SUNDIAL, HERSTMONCEUX

What a gastronomic treat for the Sussex Branch and their friends to dine once again at this iconic French restaurant, the Sundial in Herstmonceux, run by Mary and Vincent Rongier.

This restaurant has been a firm favourite of the Branch for many years and it comes as no surprise that the restaurant and its team orchestrated a brilliant performance of beautifully presented and delicious food.

The Branch and guests were warmly welcomed upon arrival with an aperitif of Crémant de Bourgogne and canapés.



The dinner then commenced with an amuse bouche of Courgette Carpaccio, to cleanse the palate, followed by entrées that included melt in the mouth Scallops with Ginger and Orange Sauce.



Main courses included perfectly cooked Turbot with Fresh White and Green Asparagus and a delicious Boneless Saddle of Rabbit.

The accompanying wines were Terre d'Or Sauvignon Blanc Vin d'Oc 2020 and Terre d'Or Shiraz Cabernet Vin d'Oc 2020.

Then came all of the very tempting desserts especially the White Toblerone Parfait with extra bitter chocolate fondant and a passion fruit sorbet. All were served with a Muscat de Rivesaltes. However, before these desserts there were the traditional pre dessert lollipops. What a treat!

It was a truly exceptional dining experience for the Branch and their friends and one that will remain in the memory like all the other evenings spent at this wonderful restaurant. The chef and his team are truly deserving of their accolade received from the Society many years ago.

*Julie Wagg*





## Sussex

### AN EVENING AT THE SLOOP INN



The members of the Sussex Branch enjoyed an excellent evening at the Sloop Inn, a venue the Branch had visited in the past because of its reputation forged by its Head Chef Vincent Fayat.

Vincent Fayat was born and raised in the Dordogne area of France and first worked in 2002 at the Ockenden Manor Hotel where he held a Michelin star for 12 years. He now brings his expertise to the Sloop that describes itself as a place for "Great seasonal local food married with an exciting wine list and quality cocktails, served in a relaxed and friendly Sussex country pub". That was exactly what was delivered.

Dishes included an entrée of Heritage Tomatoes, Goats' Cheese and Tapenade. A main course of Char-grilled Monkfish, New Potatoes, Peas, Spinach, White Wine and Chives. For dessert Milk and Dark Chocolate Cake and Raspberry Sorbet, all beautifully presented and delicious.

The wines served with the dishes were a Blanc de Blanc, Château Bekaa Valley, Lebanon and a Santo Isidoro, Pegoes Peninsula de Scrubal, Portugal. I am sure the Branch will be back.

*Julie Wagg*





## *Vale Royal* A ROUND-UP OF EVENTS



### ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

We began the year with the AGM in late January, celebrating our second birthday. At the meeting we served Nyetimber and canapés. Once the business was concluded we had a relaxed evening chatting and socialising.

### MAPLEWOOD RESTAURANT

In March both members and guests visited the Maplewood Chinese Restaurant in Bold Heath, Cheshire (pictured above). The restaurant is a particular favourite of one of our members and they created the most wonderful evening for us.

We began with Bollinger Champagne for our welcome drinks in the bar then moved on to our private area in the restaurant for an amazing banquet that included: Seafood Hors d'oeuvres Platter, Aromatic Duck with Pancakes, Cantonese Style Fillet Steak, Steamed Whole Sea Bass with Ginger and Spring Onions, Roast Duck in Plum Sauce, Stir Fried King Prawns with Asparagus and many other additional dishes and accompaniments.

The wines we chose to go with the food were Martin Codax Albarino and Bread and Butter Pinot Noir – they were a great pairing.

### WINE TASTING – 1999

When we began the Branch we decided that each year we would have an 'educational' event, and this year it was a wine tasting. Steve Graham has a number of 1999 wines in his cellar and he thought now would be a good time to see how they have performed over the years. Our wine expert and founding member, Chris Pacey, and Steve spent an enjoyable afternoon a few weeks earlier making a selection for the event.

I am happy to say that on a warm evening at the end of July all of our members, plus some guests, were able to come to the tasting and we were also delighted to have John and Joan Nicholas join us. John was able to present our Charter on the night which added to the special occasion.

We began the evening with a branch favourite of Nyetimber and a wonderful cheese and charcuterie buffet created by founding member Esther Greaves; then on to the tasting.

The 1999 wines were:

- Bollinger (still red wine)  
Champagne  
Pinot Noir





- Morey Saint Denis Premier Cru  
Burgundy  
Pinot Noir
- Charmes-Chambertin Grand Cru  
Burgundy  
Pinot Noir
- Hermitage  
Northern Rhône  
Syrah
- Domaine de Chevalier Grand Cru  
Pessac-Léognon  
Cabernet/Merlot
- Château Petrus  
Pomerol  
Merlot
- Urbina Crianza Unico  
Rioja  
Tempranillo
- Valpiculata Crianza  
Toro  
Tempranillo

- Valduero Gran Reserva  
Ribera del Duero  
Tempranillo
- Vega Sicilia Unico  
Ribera del Duero  
Tempranillo Cabernet
- Vouvray Demi-Sec  
Loire  
Chenin Blanc
- Château Laville  
Sauternes  
Semillon

Since we moved into our current house, which has a wine cellar, back in 2003, Steve has been amassing a collection various wines and, in particular, started to establish a wide-ranging collection of 1999 vintage wines. As these wines were approaching their 25th year and their silver jubilee, Steve decided that it was probably time to drink them and thought a horizontal tasting would be a good opportunity to compare and contrast this collection of more than a dozen different French and Spanish wines and even added a white Vouvray from 1999 that he discovered during the recent IWFS Loire Valley Festival.

All the wines had been sampled before to create the selection to be tasted but bottle variation is always a risk on the day. Luckily of all the bottles we opened there was only one reject, but many had very challenging corks!

The still Bollinger received a very favourable reaction. The Burgundies were liked by all but not everyone liked the same one. The Domaine de Chevalier showed very well. Steve thought the Vega Sicilia was very disappointing, quite a let-down, and was shown-up by the Valduero. The Valpiculata was a bit of a revelation and quite unique in its flavours.

Obviously different people enjoyed and preferred different wines but it was the first time many of the attendees had tried Petrus, which did not disappoint and was probably the star of the show. We never got around to tackling the whites, so they will have to wait until next time!





Interestingly as a number of bottles had not been completely consumed there was the opportunity to taste them a day or so after opening and they performed very variably. The Burgundies seemed to improve but the Rioja definitely went quickly downhill.

As Steve has supplied the wines from his own personal cellar, we decided not to make a charge for this event and instead asked those attending to make a donation to the East Cheshire Hospice (ECH) which is special to many of our members hearts. ECH recently let me know that our wonderful members generously donated £2,200. April Green, Philanthropy Manager said:

"East Cheshire Hospice needs to raise £9,362 every single day to provide essential services to our community. We are so grateful to Ali Graham hosting the event and the International Wine and Food Society for choosing to support East Cheshire Hospice, words cannot express our thanks from everyone here at the Hospice and all those in our care."

## SUMMER SUNDAY LUNCH

In mid-August the branch went to The Church Inn in Mobberley for a glorious Sunday lunch. This fabulous pub is straight across the road from St Wilfred's Church which was once the former home of George Mallory, the Everest Mountaineer. His father was the Reverend Herbert Mallory, with the family living there and then in the village from the 1880s to 1904.

Our group had one of the private dining rooms on the first floor where, as we arrived, we were served Chapel Down Brut that was crisp, refreshing and wonderfully sparkling on a summer's day.

We had a free choice from the wonderful Sunday menu. Starters included Devon Crab, Crispy Monkfish and Lamb and Anglesey Feta Croquettes. The traditional main courses were available including 28-Day Aged Roast Prime Sirloin of Lancashire Farmed Beef, Roast Yorkshire Middle White Pork and Roast Chicken Supreme, all served with enormous Yorkshire Puddings and seasonal vegetables. There were also lighter options including Grilled Seabass Fillet and Summer Vegetable Risotto. Some of the popular desserts chosen were Apple Crumble, Black Forest Sundae and the Church Inn Eton Mess. The menu had many more options and there was definitely something for everyone.

We chose wines from Spain to accompany the food, they were:

- White wine: El Jardin de Lucia Albarino, Spain
- Red wine: Borsao Zarihs, Syrah, Spain

A lovely, relaxed afternoon was had by all in a wonderful setting with great food, wine and local history.

*Ali Graham*





## Zurich FROM ZURICH TO BRAZIL



A Culinary Journey from Zurich to Brazil in a Brazilian style churrascaria. The churrasco grill masters, the 'churrasqueiros', prepare juicy meat according to traditional Gaucho recipes and grill it evenly on rotating skewers.

Then the 'passadores' bring the meat to the tables, round after round, until all guests are no longer hungry.

The meat on the skewers is sliced individually to demand. This traditional way of serving meat is called 'Rodizio', which literally translates to 'from the revolving'. The skewers carry beef, lamb, pork, poultry and fish.

A buffet of about twenty-five hot and cold side dishes and salads is part of an all-inclusive menu. So not only meat lovers can experience a culinary journey to Brazil.

A large group of Zurich members undertook this culinary excursion in April 2024, and were definitely delighted.

It all started with the national Brazilian 'Caipirinha' cocktail which opened stomachs and lively conversations. Meat and the buffet items were outstanding and a Brazilian red wine went extremely well with them. The red wine was also Brazilian, the Miolo 'LOTE 43', a blend of Cabernet Sauvignon and Merlot, vintage 2020, from the Valley dos Vinhedos (north of Porto Alegre). The wine was an excellent match to the grilled meat. As for the history, upon arrival in Brazil in 1897, patriarch Giuseppe Miolo purchased a land lot, known as 'Lote 43', in the Vale dos Vinhedos, where the Miolo Winery is still located today.

*Kurt Haering*





## IWFS YOUNG CHEF COMPETITION 2025

### Eligibility

The Competition is open to all students at Catering Colleges, either full/part-time or apprentices.

### Theme

The theme of this year's competition is 'British Fusion' reflecting the exciting trend to adding an international twist to traditional British staple dishes.

This year we are introducing a second element which reflects the 'Front of House' experience of restaurants in helping customers choose wines or drinks to match and enhance their food. Many voices in the catering industry are highlighting the critical importance of encouraging skills in this area and the IWFS with its long history of promoting the enjoyment and benefits of pairing wine and food are keen to help promote and support this.

### Criteria for the Dish

British Fusion merges British foods, formats and dishes with other global cuisines. There is little more British than the traditional black pudding and therefore this year's competition asks students to create a dish which combines black pudding with culinary influences from around the world to create a truly global taste experience.

Examples of the type of dish that have been successful in reaching the Final in previous years can be seen on our website: <https://iwfsyoungchef.com/>

The Bury Black Pudding Company Ltd is kindly supplying each individual student with a choice from their whole range of products to colleges and will provide stocks to enable students to practice their dishes for the heats.

### Front of House element

This year we will be awarding separate prizes for students who propose 'perfect pairings' of wines or other drinks (alcoholic or non alcoholic) that best accompany the winning dishes from each college's finalists. The selections will be made by other students rather than the chef creators of the heat-winning dishes – recognising that drink pairing is a distinct and valuable skill. We want to encourage students to research the way in which the choice of wines or other drinks enhances the taste of food. We will give each college an allowance of £200 to purchase wines or other drinks to select a drink pairing for each of the college's heat-winning dishes. To make the competition as fair as possible each drink needs to cost less than £12.50 per 75cl bottle (or equivalent price per volume).

### Timetable and Judging

The Competition will have three stages:

#### a) Stage 1: College Heats

Colleges will run heats by the end of March to select two chef winners from each college and one student who will present the College's drinks pairing as part of the front of house pairing at the final.

The judges will be the local college tutors along with members from the local IWFS branch. We suggest that each college runs its heats in the same conditions as will be used in the Final. Students have two hours to prepare and cook two plates of food (one for publicity photography and one for tasting by judges).

We would like each student to present their dish to the judges, with a brief description of what they have created. The judges will score each entry according to the following criteria:

Attribute	Maximum points
Innovation	25
Skill and technique using the ingredients	25
Overall flavour and texture	25
Presentation	25
Total	100

#### b) Stage 2: The Final

The Final will be held at Leeds College on Wednesday 30 April 2025. The judges will select the winning dishes and choose the best wine/drink pairings that accompany the dishes.

#### c) Stage 3: Grand Awards Lunch

The Awards lunch will be held at Cheshire South College in Crewe on Friday 16 May 2025

### Prizes

Thanks to the generous support of our sponsors - Saga Cruises, The Bury Black Pudding Company and the Savoy Educational Trust - we will award the International Wine and Food Society Crystal Trophy for the winning students in each category – Chef and Front of House.

First Prize £500 in cash

Second Prize £250 in cash

Third Prize £125 in cash

### Expenses

We will give each college £50 to help with transport costs for the Final.

We look forward to an enjoyable and successful competition.

*Tim Hodges*

North-West colleges

[tim@new-pool.co.uk](mailto:tim@new-pool.co.uk) 07931 374 206

*Stephen Harrison*

Yorkshire colleges

[stephenharrison1@btopenworld.com](mailto:stephenharrison1@btopenworld.com) 07879 480768





## DATES FOR YOUR DIARY

### UK London & Capital

19th November 2024

Pinot Noir Video – launch event starting at 6.30 pm at Information Technologists, London. Capital and London branches jointly invite you to a screening of the first IWFS video masterclass – Pinot Noir Around the World. The video stars Anne Krebiehl, a renowned Master of Wine who is a world expert on pinot noir. The video and tasting will be preceded by a delicious glass of bubbly (blanc de noir, of course!) and accompanied by an assortment of cold and warm nibbles. Join us for an educational, uplifting and delicious evening! See [www.iwfs.london](http://www.iwfs.london) for further details or contact [iwfscapital@gmail.com](mailto:iwfscapital@gmail.com).

### UK Devonshire

26th November 2024

We are heading to the Royal Torbay Yacht Club, Torquay for dinner. Contact : Geeta Lloyd at [geetalloyd@gmail.com](mailto:geetalloyd@gmail.com) for details.

### UK London

26th November 2024

Christmas Dinner at the Baker's Hall starting at 6.30 pm. Join us for an evening of fine food and wine in this prestigious venue and one of London's best livery halls. See [www.iwfs.london](http://www.iwfs.london) for further details.

### UK Merseyside & Mid Cheshire

28th November 2024

Black-tie Dinner at Aspire, Trafford College. Contact : Hilary Rylands at [hilaryrylands@talktalk.net](mailto:hilaryrylands@talktalk.net) for details.

### UK West Yorkshire

30th November 2024

Canapés for Christmas and AGM at Bardsey Village Hall. Contact Sue Timme at [suetimme@gmail.com](mailto:suetimme@gmail.com) for details.

### UK Bath & Bristol

1st December 2024

Christmas Lunch at 12.20 pm – venue to be confirmed. Contact Leonie Allday for details [chair.bathbristoliwfs@gmail.com](mailto:chair.bathbristoliwfs@gmail.com).

### UK Manchester

1st December 2024

Christmas Lunch at Manchester Hall – an historic venue in the centre of the city. Contact Chris Redman at [cdredman@talktalk.net](mailto:cdredman@talktalk.net) for details.

### UK Capital

2nd December 2024

Budget or Bougie? Is it worth paying more? We will be conducting a head-to-head budget vs bougie blind tasting of various bubbly, white and red wine styles. Find out which wines are worth the money! Venue: Royal Air Force Club, London from 18:30 – 21:30. Go to <https://www.iwfs.capital/events-1> to find out more.

### UK Sussex

12th December 2024

Black tie dinner at Ockenden Manor Hotel, Cuckfield. Contact Lesley Berry at [iwfs\\_sussex@yahoo.co.uk](mailto:iwfs_sussex@yahoo.co.uk) for details.

### UK Herefordshire & Monmouthshire

17th December 2024

Black Tie Christmas Dinner at Marriott St Pierre Hotel, Chepstow. Contact Peter McGahey for details at [peter.mcgahay@btinternet.com](mailto:peter.mcgahay@btinternet.com).

### UK Devonshire

19th December 2024

A dinner at The Linny, Coffinswell – set in a beautiful thatched building dating back to the fourteenth century. Contact Geeta Lloyd at [geetalloyd@gmail.com](mailto:geetalloyd@gmail.com) for details.

### Looking ahead to 2025

### UK Devonshire

23rd January 2025

An Italian focus with dinner at Bianco's, Torquay. Contact Geeta Lloyd at [geetalloyd@gmail.com](mailto:geetalloyd@gmail.com) for details.

### UK Devonshire

19th February 2025

Old Vienna, Torquay for dinner with the best produce of the season with that Austrian touch! Contact Geeta Lloyd at [geetalloyd@gmail.com](mailto:geetalloyd@gmail.com) for details.

### EAZ Rioja Festival

20th to 25th May 2025

Details and registration on line at [www.iwfs.org](http://www.iwfs.org).

