



Food & Wine

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

Issue 142

November 2021

BRANCH FOCUS: LONDON

**AGM GREAT WEEKEND IN
CAMBRIDGE**

**THE BEST BOUILLABAISSE IN
THE WORLD**

Chairman's message



We recently returned from the very successful EAZ face-to-face event in Cambridge since restrictions on events were relaxed in the UK. This was Europe Africa's first such event since our AGM weekend in Valencia nearly two years ago and represents a start of a return to "normality" for IWFS. What strange times we have lived through.

The events in Cambridge were followed, on Sunday morning, by the AGM and the Members' Forum concluding with a buffet lunch and you can read a report later in this edition.

It is very pleasing to hear that many Europe Africa branches have also resumed face-to-face events; many branches are extending invitations to other, often nearby, branches. In the UK where branches are geographically closer together it would be great to hear of more members from other branches participating in your branch events. To enable this, sending out emails is one way, but if all branch events were to be "posted" on the website, we could initiate emails from the region to alert members of new postings. Members can then see what might be available for them.

As well as face-to-face events, I do hope that some branches will continue with on-line Zoom events, particularly for wine tastings and food demonstrations where experts can be enticed to talk online to a group of members. One branch has even had a "hybrid" event where members gathered in a location and a guest speaker was broadcast on a big screen in the venue.

I would also like to encourage you to invite (persuade) friends, acquaintances and even relatives to join you as guests at IWFS events – with the ulterior motive being to entice them to become members.

Cover photo: London

Internationally, you will have seen that Michael Tamburri, the Chair of APZ has started his term of office as Chair of IWFS Council. Travel between the regions is difficult with regulations for entry into other countries and return home changing frequently. However regional festivals should go ahead as planned with St Antonio, Texas taking place in October and Madeira in November. Unfortunately, for the Madeira festival most of the participants expected from the Americas have felt it necessary to cancel and I am not aware of any non-Americas participants in St Antonio. The calendar of future events is shown on the rear cover. If you are interested in participating do book as soon as possible as places available may be limited.

Exco have had wide-ranging discussions during the lockdown period and a number of initiatives are being developed. Further ideas also arose during the Members' Forum. We will try to develop these into practical initiatives, but to implement change the key is to have practical achievable tasks and, even more essentially enthusiastic people, potentially including you, to turn great ideas into reality. Please let me or another member of Exco know if you would like to be involved, particularly if you have any experience of driving and maintaining social media feeds.

As this is the last edition of Food & Wine before the festive season, Joan joins me in wishing you and your families a joyous winter holiday season, stay safe and healthy and let us hope that in 2022 there will be further steps to restoring normality, both in the wider world and for IWFS.

John Nicholas

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

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

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

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



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

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



Editorial

Mid September and the sun shone in Cambridge where around 50 members gathered for the EAZ 2021 Annual General Meeting. Organised as an IWFS "Great Weekend" it extended over four days of touring and dining in three Cambridge Colleges, visiting Ely Cathedral and free time to explore the county and cities.

Returning to face-to-face meetings after nearly two years proved seamlessly smooth and, reassured by the rigorous safety precautions in place in the hotel and the venues, all seemed just about back to normal. Most branches have announced a programme of face-to-face events for the new season and many have commented on the noticeable increase in costs over previous years but are prepared to accept that hospitality has suffered more than other industries and needs time to catch up.

A few welcome features of lockdown have been no overcrowding at venues, table service offered rather than queuing at bars and counters, less traffic on the roads reminiscent of 40 years ago when driving was a pleasure and you "went for a spin" after Sunday lunch. Let's hope some benefits endure.

In this edition you will find extensive coverage of the AGM weekend in Cambridge and two articles that we are republishing from the Americas magazine – *Wine Food & Friends*. Asia Pacific has recently published a newsletter and in the future the three regions will be exchanging content for the magazines on a regular basis, bringing together IWFS members worldwide.

Widening the appeal of the society to new and younger members was a major part of the discussion at the Members Forum on the final day of the AGM weekend – broadening the scope of events – and expanding the range of member benefits. The Executive Committee (Exco) will be discussing the ideas put forward at their next meeting, which is planned to concentrate on the future development of the society.

This printed edition of *Food & Wine* is the last of 2021 so we would like to send our best wishes for the festive season and Happy New Year.

Peter McGahey

Food & Wine

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

Editorial email:
editor.eaz@iwfs.org

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

The Society welcomes
applications for membership
For information please contact
Geeta Lloyd
Membership Secretary
Lai Yuen
Higher Lincombe Road
Torquay
TQ1 2EY
United Kingdom

email: info.eaz@iwfs.org

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

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

One copy, per address,
is available for members.
For extra copies please email
Geeta Lloyd at
info.eaz@iwfs.org



PUBLICATION DATES

• Food & Wine Online (e-newsletter) Issue 18

deadline for copy from contributors 30th November 2021; publication mid January 2022.

• Food & Wine (printed) Issue 143

deadline for copy from contributors 31st January 2022; publication to members in March 2022.

Please send photographs separately from text.

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

Contributors

Branch Focus: London

Roger Ellis is a retired FTSE 100 IT Director and also a past Chairman of the London Branch of IWFS (currently their Membership Secretary). Other than that, he still keeps active by chairing or sitting on the committee of several organisations, and is a Freeman of the City of London, a Fellow of the Institute of Directors, the British Computer Society and the Royal Society of Arts.



Cambridge AGM Great Weekend

Sean and Maureen Coughlin are members of Blackpool and Fylde. They joined the Great Weekend and attended the AGM at Cambridge in September. They are well acquainted with the city and university – their daughter is an alumnus of Magdalene College.



A Tasting of English Sparkling Rosé

Rachel Burnett is a retired solicitor. A member of IWFS for 16 years, she has attained Level 3 WSET. She still dines out on memories of her first award, as Sunday Express Wine Taster of the Year 1990. She has presented various wine tastings, latterly by Zoom, and blogs about wine for London Branch.

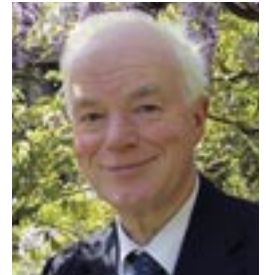


Contents

Chairman's Message	2
Editorial	3
International Secretariat News	5
Branch Focus: London	6
Cambridge: AGM Great Weekend	8
A tasting of English sparkling rosé	16
Useful tools	17
Screwcaps	18
The Best Bouillabaisse in the world	19
1931 Quinta do Noval: A Taste of History	22
Billionaire's Vinegar review	24
Wine and Food Pairing	25
New: Champagne branch	26
Website update	27
Branch reports	28
Dates for Your Diary	40

Useful Tools

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



Screwcaps

For over thirty years **James Halliday** has been Australia's most respected wine critic, and his *Halliday Wine Companion* is recognised as the industry benchmark for Australian wine.

SAFETY ADVISORY

It is important that IWFS does everything possible to ensure the health and safety of members and their guests at our events. For regional events in both Americas and EAZ, it is necessary for attendees to be fully vaccinated or have other proof of not having the virus. In Americas, they expect attendees to prove their vaccination. In EAZ we have not required any evidence of proof and relied on the common sense of the attendees. Please ensure that this trust is honoured. Branches may implement their own 'rules', but EAZ strongly recommend that all participants in branch events are fully vaccinated.



News from the International Secretariat

Dear members,

As life is beginning to resume to some sort of normality and face-to-face meetings and tastings with others are now beginning to take place, my column however focusses on the 'online' world as this is now very much part of our life and a very effective way of communicating, and keeping in touch, with our IWFS members across the world.

Online meeting – appointment of global Chairman

Since my last article the members of the International Council of Management held their second meeting of the year. At the meeting, held on 28th June, the new global Chairman was appointed. The Chairmanship of the Society rotates every two years between the zones, with the Americas taking on the role every other term. This term the Americas Chairman, Andrew J Jones, handed over the reins to Michael Tamburri who is also the Chairman of the APZ. It had been hoped that the handover of the role could have been held in person at an APZ festival in Singapore, so that Andrew could also take the opportunity to pass on the Chairman's official chain to Michael personally. However the impact of the pandemic meant that the festival had to be postponed, which thwarted the plans, but Michael has since received the chain which he is seen wearing here.



Online news – The Grapevine

With the handover of the Chairmanship the international activities continue and I generally use this printed publication, *Food & Wine*, as a way to let you have the details. However in addition this is also being done online via the e-newsletter *The Grapevine*, which recently underwent a redesign. Since its launch in 2013 the Europe Africa membership generally has a higher percentage of its members reading it, compared with other zones – 51% of EAZ members opened the latest edition of *The Grapevine* sent by email on 31st August. This is a fairly consistent figure but for the other 50% who do not, I would urge you to open this email, as it includes more up-to-date information and news. The August issue included new benefits – a special 10% discount for IWFS members for the latest *South*

American Wine Guide written by our Wine Consultant for Argentina and Chile, Amanda Barnes (and can now be viewed on the website); another provided by our new Wine Consultant for Germany, Anne Krebiehl MW, offered IWFS members free viewing of the latest high quality wine, food and travel magazine, *Falstaff*, in English. This was time sensitive and closed on 24th September – so it is definitely worth a look at *The Grapevine* when it drops into your inbox.

Online article – Drinkability of wines bottled under screwcap

As well as being able to read articles commissioned by the International Secretariat in print, you can also read them online, at your convenience and even while you are on the move. The latest article was provided by James Halliday, the respected wine writer, critic and international wine judge, and who has been our leading consultant on the wines of Australia for over 20 years (including a stint as a member of the Wines Committee itself in the 1990s). As a result of his many years of experience tasting wines from Australia, James has seen how the drinkability of wines bottled under screwcap has evolved and he feels that now is the time for IWFS members to have an update. James thinks that now is the time to reconsider the basis of drinking guidance for these wines on the Vintage Card, in particular Clare Valley Riesling and Hunter Valley Semillon. James commented this year that, for Riesling, "The screwcap (adopted by every Clare Valley Riesling maker in the 2000 vintage) has pushed the current drinking window out to a minimum of 10 years for vintages rated 4 or 5, and 15+ years for vintages rated 6 or 7. The default option of Diam is unproven beyond 10 years, but far better than one-piece natural cork." He continued, "'Possible to drink' is terminology for young red wines (and even then the gulf between young Pinot Noir and Cabernet Sauvignon is immense, Shiraz and Grenache the middle ground). All Australian Semillons and Rieslings are screw-capped, and Australian winemakers have got their heads around the necessity of eliminating precursors of sulphide/reductive aromas and flavours. So the pure varietal fruit flavours are at maximum intensity in newly bottled wine, complexity building with age. Thus the consumer has a purely personal choice of vibrant wine, with acidity also obvious, or complexity reaching its plateau with 7-10 years in bottle. Tyrrell's 2005 Vat 1 Semillon is still in its youthful prime of life, and has won truckloads of trophies. There's no space on the front of the bottle for more trophy emblems. It will live for many more years than I."

To read this article it can be found online via the following link where you can view the complete August 2021 issue of *The Grapevine*:

https://www.iwfs.org/about/publications/grapevine_e-newsletter

or to go direct to James's article go to this link:

https://www.iwfs.org/about/publications/grapevine_e-newsletter/august-2021/vintage-card-news

That is all for now – keep well and remember to keep an eye online too...

Andrea Warren



BRANCH FOCUS: LONDON

by Roger Ellis

Back in 1877, in a suburb of Paris, André Louis Simon was born. Aged 17 he was sent to Southampton to learn English. André then moved to London where he became a champagne shipper for the house of Pommery, based in Mark Lane in the City. But he not only sold champagne, he became a scholar, journalist and teacher – and most notably an author. His second book (and arguably his best) was the *History of the Wine Trade in England*. Nobody had written so deeply on the subject before, so he became the natural spokesman for the wine trade. In 1908, at the age of 31, with friends, he formed the Wine Trade Club where he gave technical lectures of a kind not seen before, the forerunner by some 45 years of the Institute of Masters of Wine.

At the age of 55 he began a second life, that of a spokesman for both wine and food and in 1933, with the writer, A.J.A. Symons, he founded the Wine & Food Society in London (subsequently renamed the International Wine & Food Society). His first lunch at the Café Royal, in the midst of the Depression, caused a sensation. Sponsored by the French Government, he also travelled frequently to the USA, forming branches of the Wine & Food Society firstly in Boston in late 1934, then in San Francisco in 1935. André sadly passed away in 1970 at the age of 93.

By the 1960s and early '70s, the IWFS HQ was now based at the Edgware Road offices of George Rainbird, a great friend of André, who was a well-known publisher having originated the technique of using coloured illustrations in his books. Claude Mornay was the charming secretary at the time, later to be replaced by Jane Moore after his untimely death. The Society then moved offices to Seymour Place just around the corner, a few years later moving to the basement of the Reform Club, briefly in the Old Brompton Road, then to the Lansdowne Club followed by the final move to the re-sited In and Out Club in St James Square where our International Secretary, Andrea Warren, still looks after the world wide affairs of the Society.

Whilst the Society held regular meetings in Edgware Road back in the '60s, there was a growing feeling amongst some of the younger members, that there was room for a Young Members section which was consequently formed in 1971 "to promote its objects amongst members under 36 years of age". They organised some remarkable tastings over the subsequent years, as well as starting a School of Wine led by Jeffrey Benson and Christopher Davenport-Jones. Blind wine tasting competitions were also popular for many years, both In-house and competitive against the Oxford Wine Society. These were sponsored by Tony Hepworth and Avery's of Bristol. Jeffrey Benson also recalls that his first tasting for the IWFS was a two-day Pomerol event at Edgware road in 1969.

However, as the majority of these UK based members were naturally located close to London, concern was expressed from some overseas branches that the IWFS HQ spent an excessive amount of time organising events purely for these London based members. Therefore, on 1st January 1981, a separate

break away entity called "The London Branch" was created, largely comprising these young members with Clive de Paula, formerly Treasurer of the European Committee, as its first Chairman. It is perhaps worth noting that the annual subscription was then a princely £3.10.0. (£3.50). In 1982 Louis Hughes replaced him, followed by John Ivinston in 1983. Indeed, from the end of 1983 up until 1985, events run by this branch were entitled "London Branch and Young Members Events". And in those early days, such was the demand, that it was common to run 20 events a quarter. And because of the success of this Branch, a few years following its creation, a second London based branch, "The St James Branch" was formed. Subsequent London Branch Chairmen were Ruth Hewlett, Sheila Robertson, Andrew Brodie, Roger Ellis, Judy Taylor-Smith – up to the present day with the aforementioned Jeffrey Benson.

From the beginning much attention was given to the educational aspect, not only of wines (and other beverages of course), but also of food, expertise provided by the likes of food writer Lucille Barber, who also provided a series of classic recipes in the programme, to which were added wine recommendations. Another popular series was the Meat Crafts and Skill courses held at Smithfield, with full participation in preparation for cooking of the full range of meats, poultry, offal, even sausage-making. Indeed, the emphasis was frequently on food as well as wine with many suppers after tastings highlighting dishes associated with the wine region under review – and these were usually prepared by members. There were also many memorable food tastings including cheese tastings, several caviar tastings over the years and a bread tasting organised by Silvija Davidson just after her book *Loaf, Crust and Crumb* was published in 1995. We even had a tasting of soufflés, cooked in person by that notable chef, Albert Roux.

The wine tastings were frequently led by experts in the field. For instance, in 1992, Remington Norman MW led a tasting of fine Burgundies, in 1994 Clive Coates MW led a tasting of Château Haut-Marbuzet and Adam Bancroft MW, a tasting of red and white wines from the Rhône and the Ardèche. There were also many tastings led by the producers of the wine including wines from Savigny-Les-Beaune from Lucien Jacob's vineyard and a Coonawarra tasting led by Kym Tolley, Managing Director of the Penley Estate.

And one has to remember that these events organised thirty years ago were when the concept of 'New World wines' was in its infancy. Back in 1992 Christopher Davenport-Jones arranged a New Zealand tasting organised by the newly formed "Guild of New Zealand Wine Producers" and in 1992 an event was held entitled "What's Afoot in South Africa".

Also, one of the great strengths of the branch in that era was how forward thinking the organisers were. For instance, on 10th March 1994 a dinner was organised at a restaurant called "Aubergine" which had just been opened by 'The Young Chef of the Year' – one Gordon Ramsay.



And looking back at some of the wines tasted in those early days, they include a Jaboulet Aine's 1961 Hermitage, a 1862 Terrantez from Camara Lomelino, another Terrantez from 1795, Mouton-Rothschilds of many vintages including the 1949 provided by John Avery, a 1953 Château Lafite and numerous other vintages, a Palmer 1961 on several occasions, Latour from many vintages including 1928, 1929, 1947, 1949 and 1953. Vintage Ports were not neglected either, with tastings from 1860 onwards with some lovely examples from 1896, 1927 and 1945.



But surely one of the most memorable occasions was held on 17th October 2013, the anniversary of our founder's wedding day some 113 years ago, when we held what we entitled the "Ultimate Tasting" featuring superb wines going back over the decades including Burgundy from the 1940s and '50s and a Madeira dating back to 1795. And talking of André, Jeffrey Benson (the current London Branch Chairman) recalls being told of the first visit André made to the Hambledon English Vineyard (England's oldest commercial vineyard – established in 1952) for lunch. Apparently, the dining room was situated right in the middle of the vineyard. Sir Guy Salisbury-Jones (the vineyard owner) poured André a glass of the new vintage, naturally expecting a comment. No comment came forth. Pressing André (and remembering where the dining room was located), André replied that "he did not think it had travelled well".

Finally, I would like to recall those many characters over the years that helped shape and aided the growth of the branch but are now sadly departed. They include Hugo Dunn-Meynell, Andrew Brodie, John Avery, David James, Ian Rushton, John Barker and Carole Goldberg.

Now wine has become a drink for everyone, but it is strange to recall that it was only in the '70s that wine became such a popular beverage, replacing spirits and sherry as the conventional drink. And with this change has come a bevy of wine tasting societies so the competition is quite strong throughout the UK, but the IWFS in general, and the original London Branch in particular, continues to draw a good level of membership and continues to organise interesting dinners, tastings and conferences.

With grateful thanks for the contributions and memories of Jeffrey Benson, Christopher Davenport-Jones, Sheila Law Robertson, Ruth Hewlett and Crispin Dunn-Meynell.

But equally there have been so many other memorable events over the decades where the surroundings played an equal part in the dining experience. Who can forget, if they were present, that most memorable of dinners held at the Leander Club in Henley in July 2012 (the year of the UK Olympics) when we were joined by that most eminent Master of Wine, Michael Broadbent MW. And the following morning (as most of us stayed in the Leander overnight), during breakfast, to be visited by Sir Steve Redgrave, the Olympic Gold medallist – and the Olympic Torch. Or perhaps the dinner held in Dr Samuel Johnson's House in 2010, the house where, in 1746, Dr Johnson compiled the first English dictionary.



CAMBRIDGE: AGM GREAT WEEKEND

by Maureen and Sean Coughlin

Cambridge is a collegiate university. In addition to the usual faculties and departments there are also 31 Colleges. Students become part of their college community, giving a sense of belonging that lasts long after they graduate. The colleges have been a part of the city for more than 800 years. The oldest college, Peterhouse, was established in 1284, and the most recent, Robinson College, in 1979. Each college is independent and self-governing with its own personality and traditions. Most have a chapel that traditionally was central to college life. Every college also has its hall. 'Formal Hall' is a formal dinner in this main hall.

The nature of Formal Hall varies widely between the colleges. In some it is just a second sitting for dinner. However, often they are special events and outside guests are asked and there is a speaker. Dress tends to be formal. Students and fellows are normally expected to wear academic gowns. Most halls have a High Table raised above floor level where members of the Senior Common Room and their guests sit. The students and their guests eat at the lower tables. Grace may be said, often in Latin.

For our first Formal Hall experience of the Great Weekend in Cambridge, IWFS members visited the College of Corpus Christi and the Blessed Virgin Mary. Corpus was founded in 1352. It is the only college to have been founded by the townspeople of Cambridge who, in the aftermath of the Black Death, wanted to train more priests to pray for recovery. With 250 undergraduates and 200 postgraduates, Corpus is the second smallest of the traditional colleges of the University,

after Peterhouse. Its beautiful dining hall is new gothic in style and the walls are lined with portraits of previous Masters. The upper walls are wallpapered with designs by Augustus Welby Northmore Pugin (1762-1832).

In Cambridge, history and tradition abound. Our speaker after dinner was Professor Christopher Andrew, a historian with special interest in the intelligence services, who is the Official Historian of MI5. In this context, he spoke of a famous alumnus, the Elizabethan poet and dramatist Christopher Marlowe. His surviving buttery bills show that he spent lavishly, amounts far more than his income could sustain. This supports the belief that he was a government spy reporting on Catholic conspiracies. His recruitment at Cambridge had resonance in the later more notorious spy recruitments in the twentieth century.

On our first full day we had a guided walking tour of Cambridge. From the coach stop the chapel of King's College (founded 1441) loomed above its neighbouring colleges across the Backs. In the meadow, punts glided up and down the River Cam. We crossed the river to the streets that led to Trinity College (founded 1546). Members of Trinity have won 34 Nobel Prizes out of 121 won by members of Cambridge University. This is the highest for any college in Oxford and Cambridge. Above its Great Gate is the statue of its founder Henry VIII. In his right hand he has, for many years, held a chair leg, that was swapped for his sword as a student prank. One of its most famous alumni was Byron who famously kept a bear, the College having banned the keeping of dogs.



College of Corpus Christi and the Blessed Virgin Mary



The wooden bridge at Queens' College

Further along Trinity Street is Gonville and Caius College (founded 1348). The College has three gates to mark the different stages of academic life, with students passing through the Gate of Humility upon matriculation, and the Gate of Virtue while they are students. However, students may only use the Gate of Honour to pass through Caius Court to the Senate House next door to receive their degrees.

Due to Covid-19 many degree award ceremonies had been postponed. Some of these were rearranged to the day of our visit. We therefore saw the graduands processing in pairs in academic dress from their respective colleges to the Senate House for the presentations. It was at the Senate House where the most notorious "Cambridge Student Prank" occurred. In June 1958 a group of engineering students from Gonville and Caius raised an Austin Seven van onto the roof. They did so by using steel rope and scaffolding. The students did not reveal their identities until later for fear of expulsion. However, the College Dean, while insisting nobody knew who they were, is said to have sent congratulatory champagne to their staircase. It took the University a week to get the van down.

The tour then reached King's. Its imposing chapel, a Cambridge icon, is regarded as one of the greatest examples of late Gothic English architecture. Its choirboys from the local King's College School are best known for the Christmas Eve Concert of Carols. The service always begins with the hymn "Once in Royal David's City", the first verse sung unaccompanied by a solo chorister. In

order to avoid putting one individual under too much stress, eight boys rehearse for this. The chosen one only knows as the concert is about to start.

Nearby, at St Catherine's College (founded 1473), Thomas Hobson (1544-1631) was an owner of a livery stable. His stables were extensive, giving an impression of many horses to pick from. However, to prevent customers always choosing the best horses, he would say: "You can have this horse or no horse". Thus "Hobson's choice" entered the English language, a choice actually offering only one thing.

Across from St Catherine's is The Eagle pub, a former coaching house dating from 1667. During the Second World War it was a popular drinking spot for allied airmen who used wax candles, cigarette lighters and lipstick to write names, squadron numbers and other writings on the ceiling of the rear bar. This has been preserved and the "RAF bar" has become popular to visit and for many, with connections to the airmen, this can be emotional. Also, The Eagle is near the old Cavendish laboratories whose staff often lunched there. Francis Crick and James Watson were regulars. On 28th February 1953 lunch was famously interrupted by Crick announcing that he and Watson had "discovered the secret of life" having proposed a structure for DNA.

We said goodbye to our guides and crossed the wooden Mathematical Bridge to Queens' College (founded 1448) for lunch. The College is named after its founders Margaret of

Anjou (1430-1482), wife of Henry VI, and Elizabeth Woodville (1437-1492), wife of Edward IV. After a reception on the lawn, lunch followed in the Old Hall. With its fireplace, decorated wood, stained glass windows, tiled floor and subtle lighting, the Old Hall is thought to be one of the finest halls in Cambridge. The speaker Jonathan Spence, the Senior Bursar, recounted the history of the College. Erasmus was a famous student.

Cambridge is in the Anglican Diocese of Ely, whose cathedral we visited in the second part of the Great Weekend. It is known as the "Ship of the Fens", because its great octagonal lantern tower rising above the surrounding fenland, like the prow of a ship, can be seen from many miles around. The original abbey church was built by St Etheldreda in AD 672. Some parts of the present building date back to 1083. Cathedral status was granted in 1109.

Oliver Cromwell lived in Ely between 1636 and 1646, having inherited a house from his uncle. The lease carried with it responsibilities for collecting local taxes. This is his only surviving residence apart from Hampton Court. It is near the cathedral and is a Civil War Museum. Cromwell had been a student at Sidney Sussex College (founded 1596), where his head is now buried.

The College of Saint Mary Magdalene, more commonly known as Magdalene (pronounced "Maudlyn"), was founded in 1427. It is beautifully situated on the banks of the Cam and boasts the

longest river frontage of all the colleges. It is also one of the smallest colleges. We had our final dinner here.

Magdalene was the last college to admit women in 1986. Some protesting male undergraduates wore black armbands and the College flag flew at half-mast. Waiter-served formal candle lit dinners are held every night during term time in the sixteenth century Hall. The College's May Ball (held in June) has been a biennial feature since 1911. This is a white-tie affair and lasts throughout the night. At 6.00 am "Survivors" assemble by the river, in front of the College, for the group photograph. Many of the more boisterous jump off Magdalene Bridge into the river. This is the bridge (Cam-bridge) that gave the city its name.

The College's most famous alumnus was the seventeenth century chronicler Samuel Pepys. His papers and books, to which none may be added or removed, are housed in the Pepys Library in the Pepys Building in the College. His portrait hangs in the Hall. We had our reception on the lawn in front of the Pepys Building before going into the Hall for dinner. There we were addressed by the Master of Magdalene, Sir Christopher Greenwood, who outlined the history of the College. He pointed out that since its foundation in 1427 this has been a college that has dined together, exchanging ideas and companionship over a table, in a similar way to the IWFS, as founded by André Simon. Although devoted to learning, the tradition of keeping a good table in the College has also been important. Sir Christopher concluded with a toast to the Society



Dining by candlelight at Magdalene



So ended an amazing weekend in Cambridge. This was the first live non-branch event since the start of Covid-19. We had three great dinners (on the second night at the University Arms Hotel) plus lunches and an afternoon tea. Organising such events is something the Society does well, providing the opportunity to dine with members from other branches and exchange ideas

and companionship just as Sir Christopher Greenwood had alluded to. For anyone reading this who is not a member, we hope that the latter should persuade you to join. For members who have never been to a regional event, we hope that these words will whet your appetite to come. We must thank the organisers who made this event a success.

CAMBRIDGE: AGM GREAT WEEKEND

by Ron Barker

Cambridge day one

I was asked to provide a critique of the food and wine matching at this festival but firstly I need to make two important caveats.

First of all, wine assessments including wine judging are personal and depend to a large extent on the tasters' preferences.

Secondly the Cambridge festival was primarily concerned with the University, its ancient architecture, its College Halls and history. For most international IWFS Festivals the wines are purchased in advance and maybe cellared for some time prior to use. In this case the organisers chose wines from those presented to them by the individual colleges and restaurants and had to stay within a budget operated by our treasurer, and they succeeded; every single meal over the four days was enjoyable.

The first event was a dinner at Corpus Christi College where the aperitif was served on the college lawn prior to dinner. It was a

fine champagne produced by Bauchet, a house of which, I confess, I had not heard. I was sufficiently embarrassed by my lack of knowledge that I consulted, by phone, a colleague who happened to chair the Decanter world wine awards for champagne and was gratified to learn that his knowledge was as limited as mine.

With a judicious use of Google we discovered that "the family Bauchet farm 34 hectares of land in Champagne and are based not far from the village of Ay. They appear to grow only Chardonnay and Pinot Noir". The resultant champagne was excellent. The initial nose was of Brioche and toast with hints of green apples. In the mouth it showed a firm and flinty structure with the citric going more towards grapefruit than lemon. After this superb champagne we were invited to enter the hall where the staff would be pouring "exquisitely chilled white wine". I remember thinking and hoping that it is the wine that would be exquisite and not the chilling!

When we were seated in the hall our first course was Seared Mackerel served with gooseberry sauce, avocado, cucumber and radish. With this we enjoyed a Hoopenburg Chenin Blanc a white "bush" wine from South Africa. This went extremely well with the mackerel. The citric notes cut through the oily fish and the underlying minerality worked well with the tropical notes on the palate.

The main course was a classic Beef Wellington served with pomme purée and seasonal greens which I think meant cabbage. This was accompanied by a Mendiarte Rioja Crianza 2016. This wine was deep red, and had aromas of strawberry and other red fruit along with a touch of leather. My only disappointment was that the pâté around the beef had spicy, peppery notes and I wanted something from the Northern Rhône or Italy to match this.

The dessert course was a Roasted Peach Tartlet, with almonds and raspberries. This was the least successful of the three courses: my peach would have benefited from slightly longer in the oven but overall, the meal was excellent and the wine enjoyable. There was not a dessert wine but with the coffee we were served a glass of 20-year-old Tawny Port.

Personally, I would've preferred either a dessert wine with the peach, or a cheese course served with the port. However, I believe that the port was left over from the London Festival and the organisers were keen to find an appropriate way of using it.



Cambridge day two

Our second college meal was at Queens' College for lunch. Once again, the good weather allowed us to have the aperitif on one of the college lawns. This time instead of sparkling wine we were served a rosé from Provence. I confess that I am no fan of rosé wines and I can find no logical reason for that but it does affect my judgement. However even those who enjoy pink wine found this particular example difficult to love!

I understand that it was the organisers intention that during the two-course meal we would be served both red and white wines and it was anticipated that most people would select the red Rioja to accompany the starter of celeriac and move to the white wine to accompany the main course of fish.

However, the college staff poured the white Vinho Verde first to everyone and most people had finished their starter before the Rioja made its appearance. Most Vinho Verde is made from a selection of white Portuguese grapes, it is often bland but it shows a degree of spritz. This one was richer and I detected no spritz. It may well contain a high proportion of Alvarinho and Loureiro. It had aromas of apples and pears. This wine was excellent and was a great accompaniment to both the starter and main course. In the interests of providing this account I did taste the Rioja which was a Castillo Clavjo Reserva 2015 and despite its higher status I found that I enjoyed the younger Rioja wine served at Corpus Christi more.

In the evening we changed environments and had dinner at the University Arms hotel. Before the meal the chef, Tristan Welch, visited our private dining room to talk about the dishes that we were about to sample and of which he was very proud. I took note of the fact that he made no mention of the wines.

The aperitif (served indoors for a change) was a champagne from Charles Heidsieck. It was enjoyable but in my personal opinion not as great as the champagne served at Corpus Christi.

With the first course of hand dived scallops, we were served a 2017 Vermentino IGT Pays d'Oc which was sufficiently sharp and acidic to cope with the shellfish. With one of the hotel's signature dishes (Norfolk duck) they served the hotel's house claret which was vintage 2016. It is hardly surprising that they knew that these would be a good pairing. The dessert was an "Apple Epiphany" and I would've liked a sweet wine to round off an excellent meal. I should add that my wife and I stayed on after the festival for an extra night and chose to revisit this restaurant and hotel for another excellent dinner.

Cambridge day three

Our final dinner was in the superb halls of Magdalene College lit only by candlelight. Earlier we had enjoyed a champagne aperitif on the lawn. This time it was Champagne Moutard



Dining at Queens' College



which is made in the very south of the champagne area, very close to Burgundy. Moutard like its better-known neighbour, Drappier, make some of their cuvées with a wider selection of grape varieties than is currently normal. As members will know most champagne is made from a mixture of Chardonnay, Pinot Noir, and Pinot Meunier but the Appellation allows the use of up to 11 different grape varieties and Moutard are known to use six of them. I am unable to say whether the version we were served contained any of these unusual varieties but the final product was a gastronomic champagne, bold, fresh, tight and savoury with some lovely fruit and a herbal nose.

The superb starter consisting of a cèpe tortellini in a celeriac velouté was accompanied by a Sauvignon Blanc from New Zealand. But it was far more restrained than the typical Marlborough style and reminded me more of a Sancerre. The main course was braised shoulder of lamb which I thought was overcooked and a little stringy this was served with an Australian wine blending together Shiraz and Cabernet Sauvignon. The wine was spicy and alcoholic with hints of black pepper. I thought it would have been better with the Corpus Christi Beef Wellington because of the pepper notes. I would have preferred a Rioja served with the lamb.

There was no dessert wine served with the lemon, raspberry and white chocolate mousse but the Barros 20-year-old tawny Port made its final appearance with the coffee and truffles.

Summary

The festival was a great success and it attracted a number of members who have not previously attended regional events. The stars of the festival were the visits in Cambridge and Ely but the food was far better than I had anticipated and the wines were enjoyable if not remarkable.

I would like to make three wine related comments:

- On at least two occasions the staff poured wine of a different vintage to that shown on the programme or menu. As chair of the committee responsible for the societies vintage chart I find this depressing!
- We enjoyed three sparkling wine receptions. At all of them champagne was served. I would've thought that Cambridge university which prides itself on innovation would have had some English sparkling wine available.
- Throughout the four days we did not sample a single dessert wine. Now the stock of tawny port has been emptied I hope we will occasionally, at future regional festivals, be able to enjoy a sweet wine with the dessert.

CAMBRIDGE FESTIVAL: PERSONAL REFLECTIONS

by *Kip Punch*

As someone who many moons ago failed the Mechanical Sciences Qualifying Examination to read Electrical Engineering at the university, I didn't expect this Cambridge Festival to enlighten me as to what academic life at one of the Colleges might have been. And it didn't, but what a great place to soak up some history and to follow in the actual footsteps of some of those students of years gone by, all of whom must have been a lot smarter than me.

Apart from the impeccable organisation of the Festival, there were many highlights for me. Ignoring the excellent food and wine which others more qualified will no doubt comment on, a number of moments spring to mind. First of all, the opening dinner at Corpus Christi College set the tone perfectly for the following days. Professor Christopher Andrew's after-dinner talk was highly fascinating, although I found I had to pay very close attention at times as his tale switched between MI5 and the history of the college (which incidentally was established in 1352).

I thought the efficient transport arrangements throughout the weekend were first class with plenty of room and very comfortable seating. The short trips to and from the city allowed us to see a variety of architectural styles of housing, contrasting with the late perpendicular gothic of many of the older college buildings.

We were fortunate to find that our visit coincided with both a number of graduation ceremonies with gowned graduates in procession to the Senate House in the sunshine on Friday, often

followed by their proud family members, as well as an extended gathering of Morris Dancers or Morris Men ("Morris People"? I don't think so) whilst we were in Ely on the Saturday. The reason for there being at least a dozen groups performing at several locations was that the pandemic had disrupted plans for performances intended over previous weekends, and they all decided to come on the same day. It certainly made for a jolly musical walk through this lovely city and its street market, and at one location featured a spectating dog barking in perfect time with the drumbeat!

Visitors to Ely are encouraged to take a guided tour of the Cathedral – construction started in the 11th century and it became a cathedral in 1109 – and in particular its stained-glass museum which has examples spanning more than 800 years. It was worth climbing the traffic-light-controlled stairs to browse these mostly beautiful, sometimes a little grotesque works of art.

By now those of us who had not snuck into a pie shop earlier were starving and ready for a 'special afternoon high tea' at the Almonry Restaurant attached to the Cathedral. Our table tried to finish everything on offer, but we were defeated, though it was a close contest.

The final formal dinner at Magdalene College was yet another memorable event for me. The dining hall, originally created in the sixteenth century, is illuminated only by candlelight, and those lights are only on the tables. This caused some difficulty during the highly interesting talk by the Master of the College,



Ely

Sir Christopher Greenwood, when relating the history of the College and his referring to the portraits of some of the past Masters and benefactors hanging on the walls in full gloom. It was clear that iPhone torches do not throw a long enough beam to be effective in these circumstances.

So to a final summing up from my viewpoint. Three days was just about right for the activities on offer. Dinner jacket can go back in the wardrobe for another year or so. It was surprising that it still (almost) fitted after the lockdowns. Food and wine portions were of perfect quantity and quality bearing in mind

that three dinners and a couple of lunches could have been a bit of a marathon. The AGM was an AGM, and the Forum produced some interesting thoughts, which no doubt Exco will have been mulling over. The hotel accommodation was adequate if not spectacular, but at an affordable price, and they did proper breakfasts. We met many interesting members of other branches for the first time and will look forward to renewing acquaintances at future events.

Most of all, I must congratulate the organisers for coming up with such an entertaining and varied programme of events,

IWFS EAZ AGM AND MEMBERS' FORUM, CAMBRIDGE

by John Nicholas and Tricia Fletcher

Annual General Meeting

The formal business of the AGM was conducted within fifteen minutes with all resolutions being proposed and seconded and all votes in favour. The resolutions were the approval of the Annual Report including the accounts, authority for the Executive Committee to appoint an Independent Examiner and the appointment/re-appointment of members of the Executive Committee. There being no further business, the meeting was concluded. Over 40 members from 10 different branches attended the AGM.

Members' Forum

The Forum is an opportunity for members to think about the future of IWFS overall, but particularly Europe Africa. Ideas for taking our Society forward in the third decade of the 21st century and as we approach the 90th Anniversary of the Society are welcomed by the Executive Committee (Exco). However, ideas are not effective unless there is a clear plan to implement the ideas backed up by enthusiastic contributions from members to work out the details and drive implementation – Exco need support from a wide-range of members to achieve



change. Financial resources can be found, though as with any "business plan", the expected benefits need to be understood and clearly set out.

Six groups, each including a member of Exco, were asked to appoint a spokesperson and take notes of the discussions and ideas. Three core topics were discussed – Membership, Events, and Profile and Communication, with two groups assigned to each topic. Each topic was explained and prompts for discussion were included, though it was emphasised that Groups did not have to stick to those prompts.

Feedback was given by each Group to all the members and some discussion took place, though this was somewhat time limited. One of the feedback outputs was that more time was needed for the breakout groups and for the feedback and plenary session at future Members' Forums – it was suggested that the discussions might take place in the middle of the event. Exco will consider both timing and the length of the Members' Forum event next year.

Many ideas were put forward which the members of Exco are still digesting. All the discussions generated great ideas. The following is a first attempt at pulling together the main themes.

Membership

- Geographic presence – develop independent membership to fill gaps until there are enough members in an area to form a viable branch.
- formality in encouraging the "buddy" system; linking with members in other Societies; linking with the gastronomy industry and Chambers of Commerce.
- Target potential younger members before they have family commitments, but this may be too difficult; also target those moving towards retirement and/or reduced daily family commitments; or both with a presence on social media being essential.

Events

- Branches to be encouraged to consider a wide variety of events where members can share a variety of experiences rather than focusing on just wine tastings or restaurant food and wine lunches or dinners.
- The return of face-to-face events was welcomed, but Covid lockdown has shown that there is a place for Zoom events, e.g. cooking master classes, tutored wine tastings.
- EAZ to encourage branches to post events on the Society website and include write ups of the events on the website as well as in Food & Wine. If social media can be implemented both planned events and write ups could be included.
- Encourage inter and multi-branch events; publicise branch-organised international events; branches should make events more open to members of other branches.
- EAZ to support Zoom development.

Profile and Communication

- A new generation of celebratory leaders and figureheads in gastronomy and wine industries is needed following the death of a number of such members in the last few years; generate regular columns for Food & Wine from "top" chefs; develop relationships with young chefs.

- Collaboration with other food and wine societies and student organisations.
- Contact members by email; ensure emails are sent to both partners in joint memberships; use email to encourage members to open the online publications.
- Encourage use of the Society's website (which is much improved, but its use is still affected by its past reputation); hide the "boring" stuff and highlight "exciting current stories" on the first page, changing the content regularly and frequently.
- Develop social media and ensure that it is regularly replenished – needs to be driven potentially by paid professionals funded by EAZ; use the "exciting current stories" for website and social media.
- Develop greater contact between EAZ and branches; develop consistent messages for the whole organisation.

The opportunity to discuss issues facing the Society was appreciated by the members present. Exco held a meeting in the afternoon following the Members' Forum. Though there had been little time to absorb and analyse the comments and points raised, it was clear that Exco had a remit to work with all of EAZ's branches to develop a programme to sustain and develop the Society in Europe Africa.

Each and every member can help in this ambition. Please contact a member of Exco if you would like to help in any way. Exco cannot do it for you!

Finally, my thanks to all those members who enthusiastically contributed to the discussions during the Members' Forum and also to all the members of Exco for their continuing efforts and contribution to the welfare of our Society.



Trinity gate

A TASTING OF ENGLISH SPARKLING ROSÉ

by Rachel Burnett



London Branch's first live tasting since lockdown was held in the garden of Christopher Davenport Jones who led it – and to whom many thanks. We were warned to wear appropriate clothing lest the weather proved inclement. In the event, the forecast rain held off, and it was a fine evening for us to compare English sparkling rosés (and one Welsh).

Following the tasting, we enjoyed a delicious supper, accompanied by Barton Guestier Sauternes 2017 "Nectar d'Or".

English wine has greatly improved over the last decade. Its quality is highly regarded following the last three excellent vintages, climate change with more sunshine enabling longer growing periods, knowledgeable producers applying their expertise in the vineyards and to wine making techniques, and English wine gaining international awards. Over 70% of English wines are sparkling.

We tasted and compared:

Balfour Hush Heath Brut Rosé 2016

Kent

Chardonnay, Pinot Noir, Pinot Meunier

The vines for this single vineyard wine were planted in 2002.

Summer berry and plum flavours.

Langham Rosé NV 2016

Dorset

Chardonnay, Pinot Noir, Pinot Meunier. Non-vintage with base vintage of 2016.

The vines were planted in 2009.

Cranberry and strawberry flavours and well balanced. This was one of the favourites.

Bride Valley Rosé Bella, 2015

Dorset

Pinot Noir, Chardonnay, Pinot Meunier.

First wine release in 2014.

The wine estate of the late much lamented Steven Spurrier and his wife Arabella Spurrier.

Strawberry bouquet and palate.

Marlings Sparkling Rosé Brut

Hampshire

Chardonnay, Reichensteiner and Dornfelder.

The first plantings were in 1990; Reichensteiner and Dornfelder were at that time among the varieties widely used for English wine. These grapes are created from crossings, originating in Germany. The Chardonnay vines have been planted more recently.

Refreshing acidity, red berry and apple palate.

Wyfold Vineyard 50th Anniversary Rosé Brut 2015

Oxfordshire

Chardonnay, Pinot Meunier, Pinot Noir.

The first commercially-offered vintage was released in 2013.

Barbara Laithwaite is proprietor of the vineyard, and the "50th anniversary" is wine supplier Laithwaite's.

Citrus and dark red fruits.

Painshill Vineyard Sparkling Rosé

Surrey

Pinot Noir, Chardonnay.

The wine is made for Painshill by Bluebell Vineyard Estate from grapes that are handpicked from its vineyard – a very small production.

Reminiscent of the Balfour Hush Heath that we had tried, but with more evident fruit.



Ridgeview Fitzrovia Rosé

Sussex

Chardonnay, Pinot Noir, Pinot Meunier.

Ridgeview was set up in 1995, and is long established in making sparkling wines, now with a large production compared with many English wineries.

Freshness and finesse (from the Chardonnay), raspberries, strawberries and redcurrants. Another favourite.

Gwinllan Conwy Sparkling Rosé 2018

The winery is in **North Wales**, and the grapes are from vineyards in Anglesey.

Regent is a red grape crossing from the late 1960s. It is the fourth most planted grape variety in the UK.

Red fruit, cranberry, rosehip.

All these sparkling wines were pale coloured (pink or salmon), well made, with balanced acidity, light, and easy to drink and enjoy.

But they all tasted different with their own characteristics, so it was a wonderful opportunity to compare them directly with each other, to reach individual conclusions as to our preferences.

USEFUL TOOLS: NON-CONTACT THERMOMETERS

by Dr Bernard Lamb

I expect that many IWFS members know about and use non-contact (also called infra-red) thermometers. For those who do not, I can strongly recommend them for the kitchen and elsewhere. They look like small pistols: you point them at what needs measuring and pull the trigger. A red laser beam (wavelength about 650 nm) gives a spot to show the area being measured, which depends on the distance from the pistol to the object. The received reflection of the beam allows the device to calculate the surface temperature which is shown in its rear screen, with a choice of degrees C or F, with a vastly greater range than a glass thermometer. In mine, the DC 9V battery has lasted more than two years.

I find it very useful when heating up soups and puddings so that I can serve them at the ideal temperature and save fuel by not heating more than is necessary. It is much easier than a jam thermometer for finding when jam or marmalade has reached setting point in the rolling boil. It is wonderful for wine and

beer-making too. I use it for checking the temperature of musts, fermentations, demijohns, wines, bottles, etc. Unlike with a normal thermometer there is no need to sterilise it before use in wine or beer-making as it works from several inches away. It is particularly useful for measuring temperatures when pasteurising crushed fruits, say to 80°C, before fermentation; just point it at the fruit, pull the trigger and read off the temperature. One can even check one's bath temperature!

Such tools come with different specifications, prices and accuracies. Mine, ETEKCITY Lasergrasp 1080, is claimed to work from minus 50°C to plus 550°C, or minus 58°F to 1022°F. It worked in the freezer and on my gas fire! It cost £15.99 from Amazon, but there are cheaper and dearer ones. Its stated accuracy is within 2°C ± of the recorded temperature throughout its range. It is extremely easy to use but should not be pointed at anyone's eyes as lasers can be damaging.



SCREWCAPS

by James Halliday

The basic technology of screwcaps dates back to 1889 when the first patent was granted in the United Kingdom. In 1926 they were used on Scotch whisky bottles, and in the 1930s the University of California, Davis, conducted trials with table wine, included a 1936 Colombard that was opened 60 years later and found to be in very good condition. Given that the technology involved in creating the sandwich liner that sat at the top of the screw-cap where it intersected with the top of the bottle was vastly inferior to that of today, it's akin to one swallow making a summer.

There's a bit of nerdy science involved which I'll try to summarise in a moment, but some history may help the digestion. When I was first judging in the late 1970s to early '80s, the Royal Sydney Wine Show had classes for Riesling, Chablis and White Burgundy, almost all from the Hunter Valley, and in turn the best almost always from Lindeman's old plantings of Semillon (Riesling, like Chablis and White Burgundy simply denoted a style). All were sealed with one-piece corks of modest quality, and the senior judges knew these wines like the backs of their hands. In the first round of judging there would be a frequent call for another bottle, the first adjudged to be maderised/oxidised, the second usually much better. The top wine from each class went into the Trophy taste-offs on the last day, and once again, there might be a call from the judges for a second and occasionally a third bottle where the progression of trophies was in its favour. The wines were typically 10 to 15 years old, golden-yellow hued, rich, complex, looking for all the world like barrel matured wines. (barrel fermentation was unheard of) The always high acidity of Hunter Semillon balanced the maderisation, and the wines would be marked with the back labels attesting to their quality (and the perspicacity of the judges). Nowadays most wine shows don't allow recalls of cork-sealed wines, the rationale being purchasers of a bottle usually don't get a second chance.

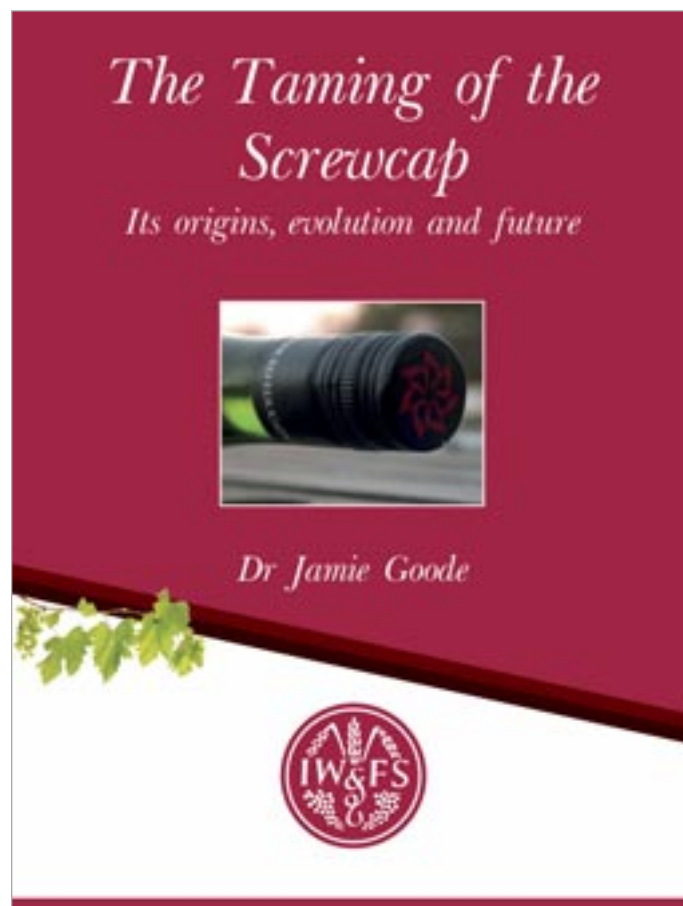
Roll forward 40 years to the present time, and the example of Tyrrell's 2005 screw-capped Vat 1 Semillon which has won 33 trophies and 57 gold medals. It is pale straw-green, brilliantly refreshing, wound around its backbone of acidity, and the lemongrass, flint and lemon zest lingering in the mouth for as long as the greatest red wines. The great Lindeman's Show wines would receive short shrift today. An easy by-line might suggest that Vat 1 would have received an equally emphatic rejection 40 years ago.

One final bit of history was the display in Brokenwood's cellar door and website of 12 bottles of 10-year-old cork-closed bottles of Semillon brought back to the cellar door by a customer in an unbroken cardboard box of the wine wanting to swap it for 12 bottles of the current release. The original box had come off a sophisticated bottling line fully labelled and packaged, so all 12 bottles had to have had an identical history, the ullage was identical – and minimal – but every bottle had a different colour, from pale strawgreen to deep golden-brown. The 'kick-ass' answer is that no two bottles of wine closed with a cork will ever be the same, and the converse for any two screw-capped bottles.

However, most of the extensive research, including the Australian Wine Research Institute's early study commenced in 1999 of 14 different closures, were of unwooded Semillon, and not of red wine. Next, high quality 54mm corks inserted with precise settings on the bottling line gives rise to an oxygen barrier similar to that of a screwcap. Cork taint, endemic 30 years ago, has been vastly reduced, and one brand is now available backed by a guarantee of zero taint. Next, both Diam corks and screwcaps are available with several oxygen barrier settings, allowing winemakers the ability to continue 'making' wine after it has been bottled and sold.

The message from almost all studies is that winemaking protocols are more important than the closure in determining the level of reduction/reductive characters. The use of copper to strip sulphide taints can have the reverse effect, and yeast selection can have the same outcome.

In 2019, some 97.3% of white wines tasted for my annual Wine Companion were screw-capped, and 87.9% of all wines. These are, by definition, the figures for wine being sold in the Australian market; cork (natural or Diam) are likely to be used for exports to countries that won't accept screwcaps. (9280 wines were tasted for the Companion).



Note from Editor – if you would like to find out more about screwcaps than please download a copy of IWFS monograph *Taming of the Screwcap* by Dr Jamie Goode available free for members on the website.



THE BEST BOUILLABAISSE IN THE WORLD

by *Mark Lazar, Montréal*

Do an internet search under Google, Michelin or the various Yelp type foodie sites for "Best Bouillabaisse" and invariably you will come across Le Restaurant Chez Michel in Marseille.

Following an exceptional river cruise with IWFS Americas – Lyon to Avignon, Vania and I decided to visit Marseille for a few days. We were so close to that city and did not know when we would revisit the area. As well, we needed some down time to absorb all the wines and dinners and vineyards we visited with IWFS Americas before returning home.

We had the finest of dining experiences. Being from Montréal we had our versions of Bouillabaisse, but nothing compared to the evening we were about to enjoy.

First, I feel it is important to absorb a little history to appreciate our adventure. Restaurant Chez Michel founded in 1946 is at a sharp narrow turn on the road looking over the seaport inlet.

We were about to live and eat the history of this city, of the fisherman creating a basic meal for themselves and the same core recipe that goes back over 2,000 years.

So a brief background of the city and our Bouillabaisse

Marseille, France was originally founded circa 600 BC as the Greek colony of Massalia and populated by Greeks from Phocaea (modern Foça, Turkey) Massalia became one of the major trading ports of the ancient world. At its height, in the 4th century BC, it had a population of about 50,000 inhabitants on about fifty hectares surrounded by a wall. Marseille was united with Provence in 1481 and then incorporated into France the following year,

The local population enthusiastically embraced the French Revolution and sent 500 volunteers to Paris in 1792 to defend the revolutionary government; their rallying call to revolution, sung on their march from Marseille to Paris, became known as La Marseillaise, now the national anthem of France.

Marseille is a port city known as the birthplace of this traditional Provincial Fish Stew.

Since 1946, located in the 7th arrondissement of Marseille, Le restaurant Chez Michel has been recognized as the specialist in fresh fish soups, Bourride and Bouillabaisse. The Visciano family is the 3rd generation: Paul and Pascal welcome you in the dining room and Michèle manages and cooks. The fourth generation is coming. And she's ready to take over!

The name Bouillabaisse comes from the method of the preparation Bouillabaisse. The French and English form bouillabaisse comes from the Provençal Occitan word bolhabaissa, a compound that consists of the two verbs, bouï-abaisso, bolhir (to boil) and abaissar (to reduce heat, i.e. simmer) – "when the pot boils, lower the fire.

Part of the ritual of Bouillabaisse is the presentation of the marinated fish before they are filleted and thrown into the simmering broth "à la minute " – at the last minute..

The origin of the dish is the stuff of legends. One has it that Venus, the Roman goddess of love, invented bouillabaisse to put her husband, Vulcan, to sleep so she could be with her paramour Mars. Many food historians speculate that Bouillabaisse is a descendant of kakavia, a traditional a simple fish stew of the ancient Greeks.

It developed over the centuries as a one-pot meal. Poor Marseillais Fisherman threw rockfish and other ends, which they were unable to sell to restaurants or markets, into a large iron caldron of boiling fish stock to feed the family. By the late eighteenth century, a version was served in restaurants. The recipe of Bouillabaisse became more refined, with the substitution of fish stock for boiling water and the addition of saffron (the saffron and orange peel are products of ancient Mediterranean trade. Cioppino is the Italian version with only tomato-based broth). Bouillabaisse spread from Marseille to Paris, and then gradually around the world, adapted to local ingredients and tastes.

There are at least three kinds of fish in a traditional bouillabaisse, typically red rascasse (*Scorpaena scrofa*), sea robin and European conger. It can also include gilt-head bream, turbot, monkfish, mullet, or European hake. It usually also includes shellfish and other seafood such as sea urchins, mussels, velvet crabs, spider crab or octopus. Vegetables such as leeks, onions, tomatoes, celery, and potatoes are simmered together with the broth and served with the fish.

What makes a Bouillabaisse different from other fish soups is the selection of Provençal herbs and spices in the broth; the use of bony local Mediterranean fish; the way the fish are added one at a time, and brought to a boil; and the method of serving. At Chez Michel, the broth is served first in a soup plate with slices of bread and rouille* then the fish is served separately on a large platter or, more simply, as Julia Child suggests, the fish and broth are brought to the table separately and served together in large soup plates.

According to the Michelin Guide Vert, the four essential elements of a true bouillabaisse are the presence of rascasse, the freshness of the fish; olive oil, and an excellent saffron.

Julia Child, who lived in Marseille for a year, wrote: "to me the telling flavor of bouillabaisse comes from two things: the Provençal soup base – garlic, onions, tomatoes, olive oil, fennel, saffron, thyme, bay, and usually a bit of dried orange peel – and, of course, the fish – lean (non-oily), firm-fleshed, soft-fleshed, gelatinous, and shellfish."

Dining

Our Taxi brought us to the front door of Chez Michel on a narrow turn in the rue des Catalans. We could smell the fresh



salt air overlooking the Plage (Beach) des Catalans towards the Mediterranean-Tyrrhenian Sea and looking straight towards Morocco.

The restaurant décor feels nautical and probably does not seat more than 60 people. We were fortunate to have a reservation (a cancellation), which was made available to us through our Hotel concierge just two days before. Our waiter, dressed in formal white "brigadier" style coat with brass buttons and epaulets brought us to the Blue and White rowboat containing a large selection of fresh fish on ice. He pointed to several and mentioned he would select our Bouillabaisse fish for us that evening.

We were seated by a window and the evening started. We were "presented" with our chosen fish on a plate ready to be prepared in the kitchen. As we relaxed (I had a Vodka Martini) we could view the other tables and the two-waiter service taking place at each of them. We had a preview of what we were about to enjoy.

A plate of toasts and rouille was brought to the table, with a garlic paste and the rouille. The tradition is to spoon generous dollops of the rouille on each toast and float them in the broth. . Of course, I tasted one or two without waiting for the broth to come. Just the correct amount of spiciness and wonderful garlic.

The broth was brought to an adjacent preparation table in a silver tureen and our waiter carefully transferred this broth into two bowls and presented each to us.

The soup, opaque and mud-colored was heavy, viscous and gritty with small pieces of rock fish at the bottom. As we inhaled the flavours and started dropping in the toasts, our waiters arrived with our fish. Two waiters working in unison deboned and prepared our fish and then laid them on a plate for us to add to our soup. Fine dining and watching skilled craftsman right next to us.

Each taste was a gastronomic encounter. Understanding the centuries of prior preparation that is the heritage of this meal, looking out over the sea imagining the fishermen of yore had caught these fish and then delivered them to the restaurant gave the meal a unique perspective. The dinner was filling and the salted broth definitely weighed on me.

I don't remember the wine we drank, but it was perfect.

We ordered the suggested digestive (again I can't remember) and shared it with our two waiters and chatted about the evening. What a wonderful conclusion to a perfect evening. We taxied back to our hotel well satiated, with smiles for days and memories for a lifetime.

Julia Child said on her television show *The French Chef* in 1970. "I always feel that part of Marseille itself is cooked right into the Bouillabaisse. You can somehow just taste the flavour, the colour, the excitement of that old port."

For those interested, a recipe I found at <https://www.lhotellerie-restauration.fr/journal/recette/2013-04/la-bouillabaisse-chez-michel.htm>

Une recette de Paul Visciano, restaurant Chez Michel à Marseille (Vlle)

I have translated it for you. The French is on the link above.

La bouillabaisse Chez Michel

Ingredients for 4 people:

- 1 Scorpion fish or Lion fish (sometimes venomous, spines removed)
- 1 John Dory
- 1 mullet or red mullet, also known as a Sea Hen
- 1 Monkfish Tail
- 1 tail end of a conger eel or European conger, skin removed
- 1 weever fish (venomous spines removed. The flavour is said to be similar to sole)
- 2 kg of rockfish
- 1 onion
- 2 large garlic cloves, crushed
- 1 bouquet garni
- 3 tomatoes
- 0.500 kg of potatoes
- 0.10L olive oil
- Salt, pepper

Rouille

- 2 cloves garlic
- 1 egg yolk
- 0.10L olive oil
- 10 saffron filaments-Sweet red pepper
- Strong pepper (chili pepper or cayenne)
- Salt and pepper

Cook stock soup

Sauté in olive oil 1 chopped onion, add 2 crushed garlic cloves, a bouquet garni, 3 tomatoes and 10 saffron filaments.

Add 2 kg of 'soup', i.e. countless small Rockfish. Drain the larger ones but leave the smaller ones whole.

Cook for a few minutes then top up with water and leave to simmer for 30 minutes. Strain the soup into the vegetable grinder, or sieve. Return this soup to the pot and bring to a simmer again.

Peel the potatoes and cook them in the soup and poach the fish, starting with the firmest ones (rascasse, monkfish, eel...), which require a little more cooking.

After a few minutes, add the Dory, the mullet and finally the weever fish.- Continue cooking for 5 minutes and then clear the fish and potatoes on the serving dish.

Making rouille

Crush and mix with a mortar 2 cloves of garlic and 1 egg yolk.

Make this aioli-like a mayonnaise by gradually pouring the olive oil into a mesh.

Add a little saffron and a hint of sweet red pepper and hot pepper (chilli pepper or cayenne).

Presentation

At Chez Michel, the fish are cut in front of the customer and served on a deep plate with the potatoes. The Bouillabaisse is served with Rouille and an Aioli spread on a toast of garlic and



golden bread in olive oil. And certainly, no cheese! What happiness!

Recommended wine: A White Cassis

Preparation notes to the recipe

In the traditional Bouillabaisse served in Marseille restaurants, first the fish are cleaned and scaled and then washed, usually with sea water. Then the fish are cut into large slices, keeping the bones. Next olive oil is put into a large casserole, and onions, cleaned and sliced, are added, along with crushed garlic and tomatoes, peeled and quartered, without seeds. This mixture is browned at low heat for about five minutes, so that the olive oil takes on the flavors of the other ingredients.

When this has been done, the sliced fish are added, beginning with the thickest slices, down the smallest. The fish is covered with boiling water, and salt, pepper, fennel, the bouquet garni and the saffron. The dish is simmered at low heat, and stirred from time to time so that the fish does not stick to the casserole. The fish simmer as the broth is then reduced, usually about twenty minutes.

When the Bouillabaisse is done, the rouille is prepared: the stem of the garlic is removed; the garlic cloves are crushed into

a fine paste with a pestle in a mortar; the egg yolk and saffron are added and blended with olive oil little by little to make a mayonnaise.

The potatoes are peeled, cut into large slices and boiled in salted water for 15 to 20 minutes.

The last step is to open the sea urchins with a pair of scissors, and to remove the corail (gonads) with a small spoon. The pieces of fish are then arranged on a platter, and the corail of the sea urchins is added to the broth and stirred.

In this traditional version, the bouillon is served first, very hot, with the rouille spread on thick slices of bread rubbed with garlic. The fish and potatoes are served next on a separate platter.

First published in *Wine Food & Friends*, Summer 2021

* Rouille (pronounced [ʁuj]), A French term meaning 'rust' that is used to describe a burnt red colored spicy sauce consisting of olive oil with breadcrumbs, garlic, saffron and cayenne pepper. It is served as a garnish with fish, fish soup and, notably, Bouillabaisse. Rouille is most often used in the cuisine of Provence. (wiki)



1931 QUINTA DO NOVAL: A TASTE OF HISTORY

by Tom Murnan, Council Bluffs and Omaha

I hadn't thought of the 1931 Quinta do Noval Vintage Port for most of a quarter century, but my memory was jarred recently upon receiving some photographs taken in 1997 when I had the occasion to actually drink a great Vintage Port and not just read about it. Unfortunately, the occasion of receiving the photos was due to the death of one of the participants of my story: Jane Diesen.

Some time about 1990, I joined a small group of wine lovers who styled themselves as the Private Reserve Wine Group. We were a motley crew of various vocations, but two on our roster of 13 were librarians, one of whom was Mary Griffin. One day a few years later, Mary spotted a flyer promoting a new book printed in 1995 called *Cheers! The World of a 'Wine-osaur'* by Phillip Silverstone. Within this book, the author had set up a contest. On page 109 of the 147-page book was a chapter called "A Puzzling Word from the Author". He wrote that readers had until 31st May 1996 to find the hidden name of a USA landmark hidden in his book. The prize? A bottle of Quinta do Noval Vintage Port 1931. Wine critic James Suckling, in his 1990 Vintage Port book, had estimated its price as \$1,000, and Silverstone guessed it would be valued even higher. That got Mary's attention. Being the librarian that she was, she ordered eight copies of the book for the PRWG. But Mary also had a

plan. The Private Reserve Wine Group could pool our sleuthing skills and literary resources and have all 13 members enter the contest. But first, of course, we had to find the answer to the name of the historical landmark.

Now before you start thinking that the prize was perhaps one of the most famous Vintage Port (VP) wines in history, I must tell you it was not the 1931 Quinta do Noval Nacional. That wine is legendary for Port lovers. The Nacional vineyard had to be replanted in 1925. 1931 was a great year for Port, but the market was dead, with cellars full of the fabulous 1927. Besides, the Great Depression had suppressed the world's economy. Only a few Port houses declared 1931 to be a Vintage Port year. Noval was one that did, and the results proved legendary, especially coming from six-year old vines. The vines were planted on their own rootstock and, even to this day, there has never been a phylloxera infestation. The yields that year were miniscule as the berries were only half the size of other vineyards. Only 200 cases were made. This particular port, the Quinta do Noval Nacional 1931, became the holy grail of all Ports and was virtually impossible to find in 1995. But this wasn't the prize. Author Silverstone was offering the regular bottling of 1931 Quinta do Noval VP, which still got very high marks. Suckling for example gives the 1931 Nacional 100 points, whereas the regular Noval





VP earned a '99. This was one of the best wine prizes I had ever seen. One could only dream of winning,

Silverstone was a Brit who had moved to Philadelphia, PA, around 1994 after marrying an American woman. He was a wine importer for a while, but then he moved over to radio. He eventually had a show on classical radio WFNL where he "purported to talk about wine". The book we had discovered, *Cheers!*, seems to be the only one he ever wrote.

We all got our copies of the Silverstone books in due order and had plenty of time to read it from cover to cover. Silverstone was actually quite funny and irreverent in his approach to wine. He was not a regular wine critic. He didn't believe in wine ratings, let alone the 100-point scale. His forte was being a wine "anecdotalist". He strayed decidedly off the beaten path in his assessment of wine and its pleasures. One of the first things we learned about him, on page 3 was that he had lived in Wales, spending summer holidays motoring through that enchanting and beautiful area to in the west of England. Welsh language is difficult for anyone. As he put it, the Welsh "got a bit frugal when it came time to dispense the vowels" and you would see towns named "Cwm, Idwal, Rhyl and Tywyn".

So here we all were, reading a this short paperback, trying to find a famous American landscape hidden in the text. I have to admit that I was a miserable failure, as were all of the other PRWG members. All except Mary. When she spotted a long piece of "Welsh" wording she got suspicious. "Yllihpni Llebyt Rebil Rews Naecht Se Ilni Ereh". And Silverstone added "(The LI is pronounced as if you are clearing your throat of a chicken bone)".

Since no one could decipher Welsh anyway, Silverstone had put the clue in backwards, and it read "HerE in lles The aNswer libeRty belL in Philly".

Armed with the correct solution, all 13 of our group wrote the answer on the required postcard and mailed to the publisher, Camino Books. One single winner was randomly drawn out of all the correct entrants in the country. I got my "Dear Tom" letter shortly after January 30, 1997, winning a consolation prize of being invited to a wine tasting, hosted by Silverstone and held in the region that produced the most winning entrants. And I would have to pay my own way. He had hoped the mystery would remain unsolved for years. Evidently a good number of people had discovered the answer. But one of our number, Jane Diesen, was the glorious name drawn, which meant we all won. Incredible! Her UPS packet was mailed the same day as our sad denial letters.

When Jane opened the box, the bottle bore a generic label from Christie's Wine Department with Quinta Do Noval 1931 typed in the plain centre label, and the words Christie, Manson & Woods on the bottom. So the bottle was an auction item that Silverstone had acquired. Our author signed it "Cheers! Phil".

Jane and her husband planned a gourmet dinner for the PRWG on 9th May 1997. There was no point in waiting too long. The main attraction was fully ready, not needing more age except to let it rest from its travel from Philadelphia. Unfortunately, the



menu to that long-ago dinner no longer exists. But I remember that a few other Ports were thrown in to lead up to the *pièce de résistance*. I contributed a 1970 Taylor VP. A 1966 Dow VP and a Quinta do Noval Colheita 1971 Tawny Port showed up as well. Among the photographs Jane's family had sent was one of me using my new showpiece decanting cradle, and slowly pouring out our red booty, dutifully filtered by cheesecloth. Unfortunately, I did not take notes of the Ports, but I have fond memories of a fully mature Qunita do Noval VP, showing no signs of aging, that was just magnificent and one of the best and most historic ports of my life. We definitely cheered our librarian heroine, Mary Griffin, for planning our winning scheme and deciphering the answer. Mary, for her efforts, was presented the empty bottle.

Unfortunately, Jane had never shared those photos of the evening, and the event had faded from my memory. If it hadn't been for Jane's daughter disposing of her mother's estate in early 2021, the event would have remained just a vague memory. The photographs had been placed in an old shipping box and tucked away, only to be discovered after she died.

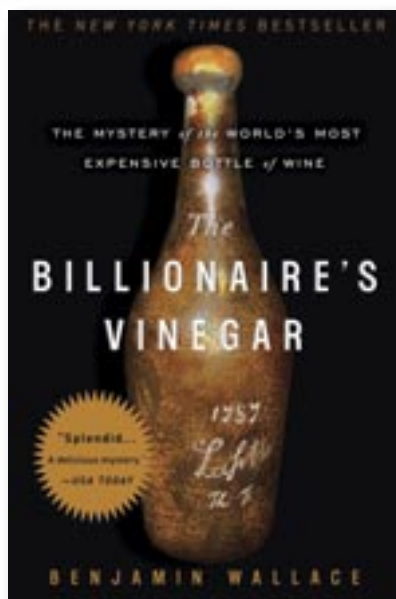
Memory can play funny tricks on you. Once reminded of the 1931 event, I mis-remembered the name of the book and searched all over my library for it. I definitely recalled the strange Welsh wording, however. I finally tracked down the date we drank our celebrity bottle from my old calendars, which led me to the correct book. And once reminded, I had a mission in me to preserve this unique story and share it with others.

There is a moral: if you have a memorable event, document it right away, before memory fades and moths invade.

First published in *Wine Food & Friends*, Summer 2021

THE BILLIONAIRE'S VINEGAR

Joseph Temple, IWFS Americas Inc. Technical Support



Over the past few years, the issue of wine fraud has been a hot topic of discussion amongst collectors and seasoned oenophiles. Back in 2016, a message board posting on the popular website Wineberserkers.com raised serious alarm bells about several supposedly rare bottles for sale in Geneva. The evidence turned out to be so convincing that the auction house pulled several lots from the collection, casting a dark

cloud of suspicion on all future auctions. In the realm of documentaries, the film *Sour Grapes* chronicles the story of notorious fraudster Rudy Kurniawan. Currently residing in a United States Correctional Institution for selling fakes on a grand scale, when his home was raided back in 2012, law enforcement found "17,000 labels and bottles soaking in the sink to soak the labels off," according to the FBI.

Covered in the pages of *Wine Spectator* and on numerous websites and blogs dedicated to wine, this fascinating subject is poised to break out into the mainstream when *The Billionaire's Vinegar*, a major motion picture starring Matthew McConaughey hits the silver screen. Based on Benjamin Wallace's 2008 book of the same name, the movie will highlight one of the most notorious cases of wine fraud in the United States when a bottle of 1787 Chateau Lafite allegedly owned by President Thomas Jefferson went for an unheard of \$156,000 – an accomplishment later tarnished after it was discovered that this and a series of other "Jefferson bottles" were all forgeries. So before you go out to buy a ticket, be sure to get your hands on a copy of this captivating story. After all, it's much cooler to read the book before seeing the movie!

Written as narrative non-fiction, the author uses a template similar to the 2003 mega-bestseller *The Devil In The White City*, where as the reader eagerly turns the pages of this true crime mystery, they will simultaneously soak up a ton of historical knowledge. As Wallace mentioned in a talk to promote the book, part of his inspiration for writing *The Billionaire's Vinegar* came from the lack of wine books appealing to a casual crossover audience. Unlike some dry technical guides that deal with climate and topography or the latest edition of *Wine for Dummies*, this is definitely the one to get if you want to learn more about wine. By the end of this book, you'll be able to cite all sorts of interesting anecdotes to your friends about famous estates like Château Pétrus and Château d'Yquem. There's no need to memorise a bunch of banal facts; this story will do far more to advance your appreciation of wine.

While many see the whole issue of wine fraud as nothing more than a rich man's problem, *The Billionaire's Vinegar* is interesting in that it shows us how anybody can be duped. In fact, it is simply amazing how former rock band manager Hardy Rodenstock, the man who claimed to have "discovered" a series of bottles in a walled-up Paris cellar containing the engraved initials "Th.J." was able to play many in the wine community like a violin. Trading in a top hat for a fine tailored suit, this glorified carnival barker succeeded in creating the illusion that buyers, which included the Forbes family, were "drinking history" by bidding on bottles purportedly owned by America's most famous oenophile.

Even more intriguing is that, despite the fact that red flags were waving nonstop in the aftermath of this auction, bidders decided to simply ignore them, treating Rodenstock's assurances as undisputed dogma. Wallace writes, "[Monticello research associate Cinder] Goodwin further noted that Jefferson had requested that the marking take place at the vineyard, which didn't explain how wines from four different vineyards seemed to have been engraved by the same hand... When Goodwin's report came out, [Christie's auctioneer Michael] Broadbent and Rodenstock reacted not with gratitude... but with rage."

It was this rage, combined with denial, abstraction, and their respective reputations in the wine world that kept this myth alive for nearly twenty years. Desperately holding on to the notion that they owned a rare piece of Americana, many buyers developed tunnel vision, refusing to listen to any facts that contradicted the Rodenstock narrative. After finishing *The Billionaire's Vinegar*, it makes you happy that we live in an era of instant communication where citizen journalists can use websites, message boards and social media as giant megaphones to inform the masses. Had those means existed back in 1985, the Jefferson bottles would have probably been exposed as a gigantic fraud in matter of days, not decades.

Like any good detective, the reader follows along as a rock solid case is built against Rodenstock and his wine bottles. Although there is a mountain of circumstantial evidence throughout the story, you can't help but feel a great sense of gratification when you finally learn about the smoking gun courtesy of billionaire Bill Koch and his team of high-priced investigators. Sparing no expense in uncovering this mystery, it would take the efforts of Scotland Yard and the FBI to finally prove this fraud beyond a reasonable doubt.

By combining wine history and true crime together into an irresistible blend, Wallace has created a riveting story that has attracted the attention of both wine lovers and Hollywood. Appealing to a wide cross section of the population, his book introduces the casual audience to the major players, estates and vintages in the industry, forming a bedrock of knowledge in wine appreciation that makes people want to go out and learn more.



WINE AND FOOD PAIRING

by Steve Hipple, Chairman, IWFS Americas Inc.

The IWFS has just added another button to your Member App named Wine and Food Pairing. This is a guide to assist you in pairing wine with food. Correct pairing improves the palate of both the wine and cuisine, as well as enhancing the dining experience.

Pairing wine and food can be complicated. The old adage "White wine with fish; Red wine with meat" is no longer observed. There are too many exceptions to this rule.

Our guide follows two important rules when it comes to wine-and-food pairing:

Wine and food should be in balance. Consider the weight, body, and richness of both the food and the wine. The wine and the dish should be equal partners, with neither overwhelming the other. Hearty food needs a robust wine. Cabernet Sauvignon complements a grilled beefsteak because they're equally vigorous. This entrée would overwhelm a crisp white wine. In contrast, a Pinot Grigio washes down the subtle flavours in poached fish because the two are equals in delicacy. The question is how do you determine balance? The main contributors are food, fat, sauces and method of cooking you are using. For a wine, the alcohol level contributes to its weight. Wines with less than 12% alcohol tend to be lighter-bodied while those with more than 14% are heavier.

Match wine to the components of the dish. The cooking method, sauce and seasonings can be more important than the main ingredient. An example is Chicken Marsala versus poached chicken with a creamy lemon sauce. Chicken is the main ingredient. The components in the dish make a difference in which wine should be paired with the dish. Chicken Marsala pairs well with a supple red wine, while the chicken in a creamy lemon sauce will pair best with a fresh white wine.

IWFS has developed the **IWFS Wine & Food Pairing Guide**. The guide can be viewed on a desktop/laptop computer, tablet or smart phone. It is easy to use and was created by John Danza (IWFS E-Communications Chairman), Sid Cross (IWFS Wine Consultant), Joe Temple (IWFS Website Administrator) and Stephen Hipple (Council Member).

Imagine you are at a restaurant or dining at home with friends. The guided will help you pair wine and food at the touch of a button. We will be adding more food pairings each month. Our App automatically self-upgrades. There have been hundreds of books written about pairing wine and food. Many of these books are inconvenient, as well as cumbersome to carry when you go out dining. IWFS Wine and Food Pairing Guide can be with you at all times, since you have it on your smart phone.

Wine & Food Pairing

Twenty-five of the world's most popular wines have been selected. Thirteen are red wines and 12 are white wines. A well-stocked cellar should include these wine varietals.

13 Red Wines

Barbera
Cabernet Sauvignon
Gamay
Grenache/Garnacha
Malbec
Merlot
Nebbiolo
Pinot Noir
Port
Sangiovese
Syrah/Shiraz
Tempranillo
Red Zinfandel

12 White Wines

Albarino
Chardonnay
Champagne
Chenin Blanc
Gewurztraminer
Muscat
Pinot Grigio/Gris
Pinot Blanc
Riesling
Sauvignon Blanc
Semillon
Vignier

Here is how IWFS Wine & Food Pairing Guide works: All you need to do is click the button Wine & Food Pairing. You have two choices: Pair by Food or Pair by Wine. Below are two examples how to use the button options.

Pair by Wine

(Example 1)

You want to serve Barbera with dinner. What foods pairs with Barbera?

1. Click on Pair by Wine.
2. Choose Barbera from the list.
3. A list of popular foods will appear.

Pair by Food

(Example 2)

You want to serve Beef Lasagna for dinner. What wines pairs with Beef Lasagna.

1. Click Pair by Food.
2. Here you will find high-level categories of food.
3. Choose Beef Lasagna from the list.
4. A list of classic wines varietals will appear.

NEW BRANCH: CHAMPAGNE

by *Fabrice Aquila-Laudrin, Champagne*

Fabrice Aquila-Laudrin has been the driving force behind the newly formed IWFS branch in Champagne, France. We republish an article written by Fabrice and welcome him and the members of the branch to EAZ.



Aux sources de l'art actuel dans le vignoble champenois

Elle stoppe devant moi. Un jeune vigneron longiligne et frisé fait coulisser la porte latérale et dispose entre deux rangs de vigne, une chaise et un lit de camp. Une promeneuse aux cannes nordiques nous observe du coin de l'oeil et passe son chemin. La scène doit lui sembler bien étrange.

Entre les rangs de vigne...

Cela fait plusieurs mois que je suis magnétisé par la sculpture de sarments de cette parcelle. Mais je n'arrive pas à la saisir. Tantôt je la regarde comme un vénérable éléphant aux défenses ondulantes au-dessus des pampres, tantôt comme des volutes de fumée coiffant une vigne.

Emilien Feneuil, l'un des auteurs de cette oeuvre, a accepté de m'éclairer. Nous avons donc fait le pari d'une séance de psychanalyse sous sa sculpture. Ainsi immergés entre ses ceps, nous espérons tirer l'essence profonde de ce trait particulier dans le paysage.

Je suis là, confortablement assis dans mon fauteuil de plastique blanc. Emilien est allongé devant moi sur le lit de toile. Au-dessus de nous les volutes de sarment, au loin les cloches de Chamery rythment les quarts d'heure.

Sa parole facile me berce, n'interagissant que lorsque le discours s'éloigne trop de son axe initial.

...OEdipe...

J'apprends que cette sculpture est une oeuvre familiale. Père, mère et fils ont tiré de cette parcelle tous les éléments composant cette sculpture: sarments et piquets métalliques.

Rien n'est exogène, tout est l'expression profonde de cette parcelle, des matériaux aux gestes et à la pensée.

Bien qu'Emilien en ait été le chef d'orchestre, elle m'est décrite comme le moment où une famille laisse de côté les chamailleries et les incompréhensions mutuelles.

Je perçois maintenant cette oeuvre comme le dépassement des craintes d'une génération solide face à l'imagination aussi bouclée et fleurie que la chevelure de leur rejeton. Un OEdipe plein d'amour qui a su, malgré lui, laisser à chacun sa place, son rôle naturel et sa dignité.

Je croise également au passage un profond besoin de sempérité... Cette volonté des boyaux à occulter le début et la fin des choses. Cette parcelle est plantée de petit meslier, un cépage devenu rare, sans origine réelle communément reconnue.

Emilien m'explique également que les piquets de métal classiquement en usage aujourd'hui ont été ici remplacés par de l'acacia... Un matériau noble, sans âge et pratiquement indestructible.

Cette parcelle est définitivement dans l'actuel, hors du temps. Comme un métronome éternel, seul le rythme annuel des pampres et de l'herbe entre les rangs en marquent le pouls.

...Volutes cristallisées...

J'interroge maintenant sur la forme de cette sculpture... Pas vraiment de réponse, pas vraiment de mots sur lesquels un

continued on page 27 ➡





Eaz Website Coordinator

WEBSITE UPDATE

A number of Branches have commented that the web site does little to promote their activities to potential members. But how many realise that the answer is largely in their own hands? The new IWFS web site has extensive facilities for each branch to establish a mini site within the whole. As it comes it might not look very inspiring, but in fact each branch is free to feature its own header photos, add additional pages, hide pages that it does not want and customise the menu to its own requirements. So why not try adding some exciting material about what your branch does?

Some may feel that their pages are too hidden away within the site to be of any use to them, but there are answers to that too. Members who log on to the site can now use the My Branch tab to go directly to their branch pages. And if you would like to establish a presence on local social media sites or on Facebook, Instagram or whatever, you can link directly from there to your Branch pages. There is also the possibility that we might be able to put links on the site home pages to any particularly notable material posted by Branches.

So why not give it a try? If you need technical support you are welcome to contact me.

Some of you who have used the email system on the web site to send messages to your Branch have reported that a significant proportion have been ending up in members' junk mail (spam) boxes or disappeared altogether. One reason for this is that their spam filters have detected that the email does not actually come from the 'From' address that the sender has specified. The web site system has now been changed to enable 'From' and 'Reply-to' email addresses to be specified separately. We recommend using eaz@iwfs.org as the 'From' address; the 'Reply-to' address can then be whatever you wish.

It is also worth asking your members to specify iwfs.org as a trusted domain, where they have the facility to do this.

Alan Shepherd
Eaz Web Site Coordinator
eazweb@iwfs.org

APPOINTMENT OF AN INDEPENDENT EXAMINER FOR IWFS EUROPE AFRICA LIMITED

At the AGM. In September 2021 the Executive Committee was given the authority to appoint an Independent Examiner for the 2021 Accounts. We are seeking a member prepared to be involved in the administration of the company on a voluntary basis .

The Independent Examiner does not have to be a qualified accountant but he or she needs to be knowledgeable of how bookkeeping is done, accounts prepared from the books and

to be content to sign the report included in the Annual Report. It can be found on the IWFS website (www.iwfs.org) when logged in as a member. Follow the Europe Africa tab, resources and open the Annual Report.

If you are interested in taking up this opportunity please contact Steve Graham by email: brackenridge.spg@btinternet.com.

➡ *continued from page 26*

critique d'art pourrait se conforter en se vantant de les avoir pêchés directement à la source.

Dès les premières minutes, Le terme volute nous était devenu consensuel. Une volute est en perpétuelle redéfinition, tout en dépendant de la densité relative de ses éléments et du contexte dans lequel elle flotte.

Pour Emilien, cette sculpture est un geste de défi visant à : *cristalliser hors du temps ma pensée toujours en mouvement.*

Cette sculpture est également sans nom... innommable...

Sortant non pas de toute filiation, mais de tout baptême, de toute naissance, de toute disparition, de toute notion de clan ou d'école stylistique... De tout attendu et non de tout désir.

Le nom crée la chose et cette oeuvre n'est pas une chose puisqu'elle n'a précisément ni début, ni fin, ni origine, ni devenir. La seule concession que m'a faite Emilien est que ce

mouvement perçu dans l'ondulation des faisceaux de sarments est là pour générer la sensation. Mais cette perception est une sensation subjective et non universelle.

L'absolu va encore plus loin. Lorsque l'on suggère à Emilien de planter un panneau devant cette parcelle indiquant le nom des auteurs, la date de création et l'adresse de sa cave, voire un simple flash code conduisant vers sa boutique en ligne. Il rétorque que cela trahirait l'essence même de cette sculpture, la réduirait à orienter et fixer sa perception.

... Et mon éléphant

L'hiver, j'y retournerai encore et encore, seul avec mon fauteuil en plastique blanc. Je laisserai mes yeux se perdre le long des volutes avec en perspective les nuages en mouvement.

L'été j'y reviendrai pour m'allonger entre les pampres, sur l'herbe tendre à écouter mon temps s'égrener au rythme du clocher... J'y attendrai mon vénérable éléphant.

Devonshire OUR AGM MEETING

Our last regular dinner event was at Old Vienna on 16th March 2020 and a few days later the country went into lockdown.

In January 2021 we had our first Zoom meetings to test the waters.

In February members who attended spoke of their choice of wine and appetisers.

In March we tasted Chilean Wines with Empanadas.

In April it was an Italian theme, where Gordon Lloyd spoke about Chianti.

In May we had white wine with a seafood platter

Finally, with restrictions being lifted we met at Geeta and Gordon Lloyd's home for our 44th AGM. John Slater, our Chairman, welcomed 23 members on 25th July 2021 for a silver service sit down lunch (unfortunately with all the excitement of meeting up photographs were not taken of the meal)

The AGM lasted 25 minutes.

Wines were sourced by Gordon Lloyd. The Redhead twins served some wonderful canapés which they had made. The cold food was sourced and cooked by Sue Slater. The main course

was cooked by Gordon Lloyd. It was a fun afternoon meeting friends after such a long time.

MENU

Canapés served with Champagne Monsigny No 111.

Main Course was served with Domaine Jean Marc Burgaud Morgon Les Charmes 2019 and Ch. Thieuley Blanc Bordeaux 2019.

Smoked Salmon Platter
Prawns in Rosé Sauce
Meat Platter
Cucumber Relish
Ottolenghi Chicken with Sumac and Zaatar
Steamed Potatoes with butter and parsley
Green Salad
Petit Pains

Dessert

Citron Tarts with fresh Berries and Cream

Cheese Platter Stilton, Brie and Cheddar accompanied with cheese biscuits, grapes, and chutney.

Finished off with Tea and Coffee





Herefordshire & Monmouthshire THE RAGLAN ARMS

The sun was shining in July when we met up with branch friends in the Raglan Arms at Llandenny in Monmouthshire for lunch. It



had been many months since we had seen each other and it was a great feeling to appreciate that we didn't look any older!

Two-rosette Chef, Peter Hulsman, prepared a three course menu with choices. Starters included Duck Liver Parfait, or Wild Mushroom and Sundried Tomato Risotto, or blue Cheese Doughnuts with Cauliflower Cream. Main courses were Slow Roasted Belly Pork with Dauphinoise Potatoes, or Baked Cod with Asparagus, or red onion and goats cheese tart. The finale, Rice pudding, Crème Brûlée or Dark Chocolate Tart.

We paired the food with Rioja Blanco, Cune Monopole and Rioja Crianza, Montepulciano d'Abruzzo Farina.

The Raglan Arms is an old medium size country inn with five letting rooms. Judith and William Brown are retiring this year and are offering their award-winning pub restaurant business in Monmouthshire as a prize in a very special competition. For just £10 per entry anyone can be in with a chance to own and run this pub restaurant with no start up debts.

Peter McGahey

Herefordshire & Monmouthshire VISITING WYTHALL ESTATE

A late summer day in September was enlivened with a wine tasting, an excellent lunch, interspersed with liquid sunshine. The branch was visiting Wythall Estate situated not far from Ross on Wye in rural Herefordshire, one of the finest agricultural growing areas in England and where Jamie McIntyre and son Angus grow grapes to produce fine award winning English wines.

The family have held the estate for 500 years and for many years brewed cider. In 2010 with other family members, sister Anthea and her husband Frank, they planted 3,500 vines and now produce white red and sparkling wines. Wythall Estate Vineyard benefits from a unique micro climate created by the surrounding undulating terrain which protects the vines from cold weather and ingeniously harnesses the warmth of the sun during the growing season. Since first release in 2014, the range of still and sparkling wines has been extremely well received by wine judges and enthusiasts alike. The low-intervention approach, combined with the rich Herefordshire soil, sustains grapes of the finest quality, producing complex wines that characterise the terroir.

We learned from Frank about the history and development of the vineyard and then tasted four of their wines – all well



appreciated. Moving on to a nearby pub with a reputation for fine food, The Moody Cow at Upton Bishop, landlord and host Chris Bishop and his team served us an excellent three course lunch accompanied by the "house" prosecco. After the earlier wine tasting several members volunteered to be non-drinking drivers... it's a hard life in the country.

The menu included smoked salmon served with a gin and apple dressing, sea bass on crushed new potato cake with lemon and prune sauce, baked vanilla cheesecake with pineapple compote.

All together an excellent day out.

Sue Smith



London

BEST BORDEAUX CHÂTEAUX 2008



This fantastic tasting, led by Jeffrey Benson, featured ten wines from the cellar of one of our members, Richard Jackson – some of the best Left Bank châteaux of Bordeaux, all from the 2008 vintage. It was held in the Library at the Army and Navy Club, a comfortable setting, and a successful new venue for London Branch.

The wines had been taken out of storage only the previous week and were in excellent condition.

There were changeable weather conditions through 2008 on the Left Bank. Spring was wet and cool, leading to rot and disease, making spraying essential. Hailstorms contributed to delayed flowering, and yields were low. The weather was cool in June and August, although hot in July. In August, rainfall was average but persistent, with little chance for the grapes to develop thick skins. However, during September and October, an Indian summer of warm days and cool nights made for an extended growing season and rescued the vintage. Many producers decided to let the later-ripening Cabernet Sauvignon grapes develop fully, concentrating sugar and acidity in the juice and gaining complex flavours, before harvesting from mid- into late October. There is a high percentage of Cabernet Sauvignon in a number of Left Bank wines for this vintage, as you will notice below in several that we enjoyed this evening

The best 2008s, including these, are superb, ready for drinking now and over the next decade.

Château La Lagune, Haut-Médoc

60% Cabernet Sauvignon, 25% Merlot, and 15% Petit Verdot from old vines.

Château Pichon-Longueville Comtesse de Lalande, Pauillac
45% Cabernet Sauvignon, 35% Merlot, 12% Cabernet Franc

Château Léoville-Barton, St-Julien

75% Cabernet Sauvignon, 23% Merlot, 2% Cabernet Franc

Château Cos d'Estournel, St-Estèphe

85% Cabernet Sauvignon, 13% Merlot, 2% Cabernet Franc

Château La Mission Haut-Brion, Pessac-Léognan

51% Cabernet Sauvignon, 43% Merlot, 6% Cabernet Franc

Château Margaux, Margaux

87% Cabernet Sauvignon, 10% Merlot, 3% Cabernet Franc and Petit Verdot

Château Latour, Pauillac

94% Cabernet Sauvignon, 5% Merlot, 1% Cabernet Franc

Château Mouton-Rothschild, Pauillac

83% Cabernet Sauvignon, 17% Merlot

Château Haut-Brion, Pessac-Léognan

50% Cabernet Sauvignon, 41% Merlot, 9% Cabernet Franc

Château Lafite Rothschild, Pauillac

83% Cabernet Sauvignon, 13% Merlot, 4% Cabernet Franc

The wines were absolutely outstanding. Very many thanks, Richard!

Rachel Burnett



London

LUNCH AT GALVIN LA CHAPELLE

On the hottest day in summer for a while, we happily convened for a delightful real lunch around a rectangular table in the private dining room in Galvin La Chapelle restaurant near Liverpool Street, east of the City. Its suitably cool interior for such weather has high stone double-height ceilings from the ground floor upwards past the mezzanine floor where we were comfortably seated, large arched windows and marble columns. At different times in its history it was a chapel, a girls' school and a gym.

The restaurant was awarded a Michelin star in 2011, since retained. The cuisine is French.

The service was lovely, and Stephen, the Head Sommelier, told us about each of the wines.

Here is the menu, with the two choices for each course, and the accompanying wine.

We started with a glass of champagne: NV Galvin Grande Reserve Brut.

- Chilled Charentaise melon soup and fresh almonds
2020 Grüner Veltliner Strass, Birgit Eichinger, Austria
- Ham hock and pistachio terrine, apricot and pain d'épices
2019 Pinot Noir, Bruno Sorg, Alsace, France
- Chalk Stream sea trout, fennel, lobster bisque and ratte potatoes
2020 Viognier, Château la Bastide Languedoc, France
- Truffle stuffed Suffolk chicken breast, rösti potato and leeks
2018 Corbières, Château la Bastide Languedoc, France
- Fourme d'Ambert and pickled walnut purée, grapes and celery
NV Dry White Port, Quinta do Infantado, Portugal
- Valrhona chocolate Pavé and English strawberry meringue
2020 Brachetto d'Acqui, Contero, Italy

The restaurant looked after us really well, the cuisine and wine were both excellent. Our thanks to Persephone Lewin for organising this convivial occasion.

Rachel Burnett



London

AN UNUSUAL TASTING OF RUSSIAN WINES

This tasting was intended to be for those of us curious about wines that we do not usually get the opportunity to try – and which are not available in the UK. These wines were made for Russian tastes.

With the help of an interesting old map – it still showed Stalingrad – we learned where the wine growing areas in Russia now lie, between the Black Sea and the Caspian Sea in the south. Most of the vast country is too cold to grow grapes.

We concentrated on what we actually thought about the wines themselves. We had no idea of a price to assess value, The information on the bottles gave nothing away, since none of us was familiar with the Cyrillic alphabet.

We tasted and compared nine whites and seven reds, and a 1945 Massandra muscat rosé. Seventeen wines!

The whites were from 2015 and 2016 (and one sweet white from 1957), therefore none could be described as young and fresh. One was made from Sibirkoviy, and another from Rkatsikeli, both local grapes. The others were from Chardonnay or Riesling, and one a blend of Müller Thurgau and other grapes. The generally preferred wines were the Usadba Chardonnay 2015 and the Alma Valley Reserve Chardonnay 2015; flavours recognisable for our palates. Both wineries produce a range of



wines from various red and white grapes with which we are familiar.

The reds were from 2014 to 2016. Some were blends, and there were varietals of Syrah, Pinot Noir, Merlot and Cabernet Sauvignon. On the whole the reds were preferable to the whites. Opinion was divided as to which was the best.

Finishing with the 1945 Massandra muscat rosé. The Massandra winery was built in the 1890s on the coast of Crimea. to supply Tsar Nicholas II's summer palace. Massandra wines are very occasionally to be found for sale, at hundreds of pounds (or more for very old wines). Jancis Robinson describes them as "Crimea's liquid crown jewels". They are noted for sweet long-lived wines. This wine was delicious, but to some tastes cloying. It ideally needed more acidity to balance the extreme sweetness.

We happily ended our evening with a typical supper of goose, red cabbage and potatoes.

Where else would we have the chance to learn about and taste such wines? Such a wonderful opportunity for us to explore Russian wines, on the basis of tasting as we found – through the IWFS!

Rachel Burnett





London

ENGLISH SPARKLING WINES BEAT THE CHAMPAGNES AGAIN

On the 17th August 2021, keen wine-tasters from the London Branch met at the Army & Navy Club for a blind tasting of English sparkling wines versus Champagnes, over five rounds. In a previous tasting in March 2016, the English wines won by four rounds to one, with big-name producers. This time it was mainly "small growers" wines. The costs of the wines in each round were about equal. The English wines were chosen by the organiser, Bernard Lamb, a long-term amateur member of WineGB and its forerunners, and the Champagnes were selected by the branch chairman, Jeffrey Benson, with 35 years of experience in the wine trade. The wines were served in pairs of similar style, one English, one Champagne, in random order, with the people voting for which was the better wine, and trying to guess which was the Champagne. Not everyone voted each time.

The event got off to a great start as the first wine tasted, the Ashling Park, was utterly delightful. In Round 1, the **Ashling Park Estate Cuvée Brut, South Downs, NV**, easily beat the **Lelange Pugeot Extra Brut 1er Cru Tradition** by 12 votes to 4. There was then a long pause while the club's pourer went in search for extra bread, so Bernard and Jeffrey poured the next wine.

In Round 2, the **Bernard Remy Blanc de Blancs** beat **Alder Ridge Classic Cuvée Brut 2013, West Berkshire**, by nine votes to four. Three people got the Champagne right and six put it as English. In Round 3, the **Ridgeview Bloomsbury NV Brut, Sussex**, beat **Collet 1er Cru Art Deco** by eight votes to three. Eight identified the Champagne correctly and five put it as English. In Round 4, the **High Clandon The Halcyon Cuvée Brut, Surrey, 2014**, beat the **Hebrart 1er Cru Cuvée Special** by 10 votes to six, with eight getting the Champagne right and five putting it as English. These were the two most expensive wines,

£40, while most of the others cost between £24 and £30. In Round 5, the **Bernard Remy Rosé** easily beat the **Plumpton Estate Brut Rosé NV, Sussex** (made by students at Plumpton College) by 10 votes to two. Six people identified the Champagne correctly but seven got it wrong.

In summary, the overall score was three rounds to English sparkling wines and two to the Champagnes. The Champagnes were very good but the English wines were better when judged blind, without prejudice. Adding up the votes overall for the best wines, 36 were for English sparkling wines and 32 were for the Champagnes, which did well in Round 5. There were 25 correct choices and 23 wrong ones for which was the Champagne. It was hard to tell the two types of wine apart; they used the same grape varieties and methods. It is difficult to generalise but my impressions were that the English wines were fresher (whatever their age), with a higher acidity and easy appeal, while the Champagnes were more serious, with more body and complexity. Perhaps one should have the English wines as the aperitif and Champagnes with food.

My own favourites, with scores out of ten, were High Clandon's The Halcyon, 9.5/10, Ashling Park, Ridgeview Bloomsbury and Hebrart 1er Cru Cuvée Special Club, all with 9/10. The Halcyon is produced by a charming South African couple from only one acre of vines!

We are not allowed to take our own food to the Army & Navy Club. The food it provided was inferior to that produced previously by members at other venues.

Bernard Lamb



Manchester

70TH ANNIVERSARY LUNCH 2021 AT 20 STORIES RESTAURANT



On a glorious sunny September afternoon members and guests enjoyed N.V. Cava Brut Nature, MasSardanna, Franck Massard, Spain on the stunning terrace of 20 Stories to begin the celebrations of our 70th Anniversary. Canapés were served – wild mushroom Arancini with truffle mayonnaise; Jambon Iberico croquettes with tomato and chilli jam; and tuna tartare with Yuzu gel in a nori rice cracker, this being a firm favourite. Guests enjoyed the stunning views across Greater Manchester.

We then took our pews in the restaurant where Chair Ronnie Costello welcomed everyone and Bob Lloyd read an address from EAZ Chairman John Nicholas.

Our first course of seared scallops, squid ink risotto, pickled kohlrabi and tomato concasse was excellent with interesting textures decorated with nasturtium leaves. The 2018 Viognier Gran Reserva, Tabali Pedregoso, Limari, Chile was considered a perfect pairing.

Next we were served pickled vegetable salad, beetroot gel, and goats' curd with walnut and Sherry dressing. This was colourful, fresh and crisp served with NV Sherry Fino, Fernando de



Castillo, Spain which was considered an inspired pairing. This dish had people talking!

Our main course of herb crusted lamb cannon, pea and mint purée, lamb jus and decorated with pea shoots was perfectly cooked. A delicious 2017 Petit Verdot Zorgvliet, Stellenbosch, South Africa was a good match with its notes of plum and prune with delicate tannin.

Finally, Manchester tart and Eccles cake ice cream was a very popular pudding with perfect pastry and textures. The 2018 Monbazillac, Domaine de Grange Neuve, France was luscious with a fresh nose of marmalade and nectarine. Tea and coffee were offered.

This was a wonderful first face to face event and the food was exceptional, the wines, which flowed freely, were very well received and the service was faultless. A big thank you to Giovanni and all the staff. Chef Dario did a great job too. Also a big thank you to Becky Wilkes who was a great help in organising the event.

Ronnie Costello



Merseyside & Mid Cheshire SUMMER PICNIC

The Mid Cheshire branch resumed face to face meetings with a picnic hosted by Paul and Val Bishop in their lovely Welsh garden. Thirty members, and friends from the Manchester Branch and the Herefordshire and Monmouthshire Branches, enjoyed a reunion combining good food, good wine and wonderful company on a warm and sunny afternoon amongst the rolling hills of North Wales.

The sparkling, summer sunshine complimented a tasting of sparkling wines from England and Europe, supplied by the Wine Society, and presented by our chairman, Paul.

The wines were:

- The Society's Prosecco NV from the best vineyard of the Adami family; the "real thing", pure and dry.
- The Society's Crémant de Loire 2017 from the great champagne house of Gratien & Meyer, combining Chardonnay, Chenin Blanc, a little Pinot Noir and Cabernet Franc.
- Crémant d'Alsace. NV. Dopff au Moulin. An Alsace blend of Pinot Blanc & Auxerrois. Softer than the Loire style and less dry.
- Nyetimber Brut Classic Cuvée NV. The English "Champagne". Pinot Noir & Chardonnay. Traditional style, often preferred to many French producers.
- Henriot Blanc de Blanc Brut NV. Grand and intense, with the elegance and class of a great pure Chardonnay Champagne, from a famous producer.



- Alfred Gratien Brut 2007. At its best now after 10 years maturation on the lees. Rich brioche, lemon and hazelnut notes, with extra depth of flavour and a long intense finish. This is a very serious champagne, of the highest standard.

To accompany this excellent tasting, we enjoyed a superb buffet, supplied by Lance Kennett of Concept Catering.

The menu was as follows:

- Rillettes of salmon with asparagus
- King prawn, white crab and avocado salad
- Rib of horseradish beef with remoulade
- Maple roast ham
- A selection of salads
- Ciabatta, sourdough and brioche rolls
- Limoncello panna cotta with glazed strawberries.

The food was delicious and we would recommend Lance and his team.

The food, the wine, the ambience and the sunshine all combined to make our first face to face event a very enjoyable experience for all.

We hope that this is the first of many more to come!

Angela Britland

Merseyside & Mid Cheshire AGM LUNCHEON 28TH JULY, 2021



The anticipation of the coming together of people with discerning gastronomic palates, is always a pleasure to be savoured. What made this AGM Luncheon an even more stimulating prospect for many was that it would be their first time venturing forth from Covid Purdah to cross the threshold of a hostelry! A most welcome milestone indeed, and expectations were fully met on all fronts – enjoyable wining and dining combined with socialising in convivial surroundings.

The Spinner & Bergamot is an archetypal eighteenth century village inn retaining all the traditional qualities together with modern innovations, and boasts a large car park. Located in Comberbach, Cheshire, the pub offers delicious high quality food, wine and cask ales.

Built in 1714 and originally called The Kings Head, the inn became the favourite watering hole of the Smith-Barry family – an aristocratic family living at Marbury Hall, renowned for their love of horse racing.

During 1762, the patriarch of the Smith-Barry family, John Smith-Barry and his prize winning grey mare racehorse, known as 'The Spinner', won a series of high profile championship races across England. The name Spinner came from a local spinning loom located between Pickmere and Wincham called The Spinner.

This horse won the Ladies Plate at Scarborough and Smith-Barry was so delighted with the win that he promptly bought the village inn! Subsequently the name of a second even more successful horse, Bergamot, was added to the inn's name, which is how The Spinner & Bergamot came to get its unusual and distinctive name.

Burgamott was a type of tapestry made from the hair of goats or oxen, so both of the Smith-Barry horses were named after

this old connection to spinning and weaving in the area. Bergamot went on to win the Chester Cup in 1794, which made the Smith-Barry family's fortune.

Paul and his team greeted us warmly, and ensured that all requisite Covid-19 safety precautions were in place and adhered to, putting our group at their complete ease, enabling us to relax and enjoy ourselves.

Following on from a welcome prosecco or soft drink on arrival, we settled down to the business in hand of the AGM.

All the usual AGM business was satisfactorily conducted, concluding with the retirement and appointment of Officers, the most significant of which was Paul Bishop stepping down as Chairman after some 30 years dedicated service, with Tim Hodges willingly accepting the mantle from him. Paul will, however, carry on in the role of Wine Steward, so our members will continue to reap the benefit of his invaluable expertise and discerning palate.

Paul Bishop and Tim Hodges



EXPECT THE UNEXPECTED!

The service was very attentive, and the food was absolutely delicious, beautifully cooked with well presented generous portions. The wine choices perfectly complemented all the courses.

Starters: Cooking so many poached eggs to this degree of perfection, is to be applauded

Mains: Both the Duck and Lamb dishes were cooked, with just the perfect hint of pink – they melted in the mouth!

continued on page 37 ➡



Surrey Hills STARTERS AND PUDS



Our regular readers will know that our Starters and Puds lunch is three starters and three puds, which usually are personal favourites made by individual members. To celebrate the milestone of the event's thirtieth anniversary, we decided it would be nice to ring the changes and engaged a caterer, Georgina Taylor, who from previous experience we knew prepares delicious dishes, which meant we could all sit down and be waited on.

In most years recently the venue has been Kip and Susie's garden in Mayford, but due to a very poor weather forecast we were lucky to be able to hire a local village hall at short notice.

We began with a selection of canapés to accompany a glass of Arestal Brut Cava, 2009. The starters were a Spinach and Salmon Roulade, Beetroot Tarte Tatin with Goat's Cheese, and Seared Spiced Lamb on a Fattouch Salad.

To go with these were a Viño Taborexa Albariño 2017, and Majestic's Definition Pinot Noir, Marlborough 2019.

➡ *continued from page 36*

Pudding: Absolutely moreish, and the perfect end to the meal. A gluten-free Eton Mess was available, which did look truly scrumptious!

Prosecco or Juice on arrival
Starters...
Charred Kidderton Ash - beetroot, savoury flapjack, parsley mayonnaise, candied walnuts
<i>Pazo Torrado Albarino, Riast Bixas, Spain</i>
Asparagus & Poached Egg - Hollandaise sauce
<i>Casas Del Bodegas Forcada Rioja Vendimia Seleccionada, Rioja, Spain</i>
Mains...
Lamb Ramp - Potato rosti - parsnip crisps and Lamb Jus,
<i>Chateau Gabelet 16, Bordeaux</i>
OR
Gressingham Duck - Braised red cabbage, Farmentier potato & Blackberry Jus
<i>Casas Del Topai Reserva Pinot Noir, Valle Central, Chile</i>
Desserts...
Sticky Toffee Pudding - toffee sauce and vanilla ice cream
or
Cherry Chocolate Torte - cherry puree, aquafaba meringue, raspberry sorbet
<i>KONRAD NOBLE 2 RIESLING SAUVIGNON (Marlborough, N.Z.)</i>

The puds were Passionfruit Posset with Shortbread Biscuit, Chocolate Amoretti Torte (pictured left) and Carpaccio of Pineapple with Lime and Mint (pictured below), helped along with some Royal Tokaji Late Harvest 2017.

Our caterer provided some outstanding food, and her helpers did a splendid job of looking after us (and very importantly doing the washing up!).

Of course the big advantages of being indoors for an event like this are isolation from adverse weather and easily accessible facilities which are designed for the purpose, but the downside is that the surroundings are not as pleasant or as colourful as members' gardens. Next year we will have to order some sunshine.

Kip Punch



What did come as an unexpected accompaniment to our gastronomic experience was the sudden onset of a full-blown Monsoon storm, with spectacular lightning flashes and huge claps of thunder that shook the building... certainly an interesting climatic experience for lunchtime dining in Cheshire with thunderstorms and torrential rain. Many of the surrounding roads experienced extensive flooding, and extreme caution was needed in order to safely navigate them on our homeward journeys.

Paul later said it had been a pleasure to host our party, which bears testament to the fact that we were a well behaved group and will be welcomed back to The Spinner & Bergamot for a return visit!

In conclusion, a very successful and enjoyable event.

Dr Jane C Barber

Wessex

THE GUILDHALL LOUNGE



On 12 September 2021, Wessex branch had their first main event out post the pandemic and were delighted to be able to attend a sister restaurant of one of their awarded restaurants – the Guildhall Tavern in Poole, Dorset. The new restaurant is known as the Guildhall Lounge and continues to maintain the very high quality fish meals as served in the Guildhall Tavern but with a slightly more European take whereas the Guildhall Tavern is unashamedly French.

Reg Pielesz, the restaurant manager, worked with us to provide a superb menu with matched wines which were all very thoughtfully selected and of a very high quality. Their signature twice baked cheese soufflé was matched with a Three Thieves Chardonnay from California which cut well through the rich cheese whilst the Scallops with black olives and parmesan crisp (pictured left) were enhanced by a Hungarian Royal Tokaji, Dry Furmint.



The majority of us were served a huge portion of local caught Skate wing with Atlantic prawn and samphire butter with new potatoes (pictured above) and a delicious Baron de Baussac Viognier from France. Others has the Confit duck leg, dauphinoise potatoes with French beans and blackberry sauce which was matched with a Sanziana Pinot Noir from Romania.

For dessert, the tarte tatin with blackberry syrup and Dorset clotted cream was the most popular with a Château Septy, Monbazillac from Bordeaux whilst the selection of two local cheese were paired well with La Broutte rouge from France.

The whole meal was a great success and Reg is now working with us to arrange a themed evening for next year. Definitely a restaurant working towards an award and a bright future.

Isabel Sinclair

Zürich

A MICHELIN STARRED VEGETARIAN TAVOLATA

As the pandemic lockdown was lifted for restaurants in Switzerland, the Zürich Branch started to re-establish physical encounters immediately. For this restart we choose a vegetarian Tavolata in the "Neue Taverne". Nearly all members living in the Zürich area happily signed up, and a group of 14 joined the event, which happened at the end of July.

The straightforward cuisine of Nenad Mlinarevic, the creative director and co-owner, puts the focus on the product. Nenad knows exactly where to get the best regional ingredients, but he also highlights his creations with outstanding products from afar. Because at the end of the day there's only one thing that matters to him: the taste. Based on market offerings, they serve five to ten exquisitely composed dishes. Exceptional food calls for exceptional beverages, that's why we value a good balance of natural and classic wines. For those who prefer something else, we serve beer from craft breweries, homemade lemonades and kombuchas.

For us, who like to be surprised, they have put together a selection of lovingly composed dishes, that they served as the above mentioned "Tavolata" to share and enjoy together. Those dishes included among others:

- Field Caviar / Finger Limes / Egg Yolk Cream / Blinis
- Butternut Pumpkin / Burrata / Sea Buckthorn / Pumpkin Seed Pesto
- Smoked Tofu Tonkatsu / Mayo vegan / Cucumber Kimchi
- Roasted Eggplant / Mole / green Tomato Salsa (pictured right)
- Casarecce / Porcini Mushrooms / Spinach / Parmesan
- Chocolate / Red Shiso Sorbet



The Tavolata was accompanied by several organic wines, selected by the host, and included:

- 'Rozsa Petsovits' (Pinot Noir and Zweigelt from Austria, Syrah harvested a stone's throw away in Hungary.)
- 'Wabi Sabi' (A natural wine from de Mena in Languedoc Roussillon (biodynamically farmed). Wabi Sabi displays the traditional perfume, low tannin, red fruited qualities of Cinsault.)

After this restart, we look forward to return to a nearly normal life, even though we may need to carry a proof of vaccination to meet crowds.

Kurt Haering



DATES FOR YOUR DIARY

UK West Yorkshire

Saturday 27th November 2021

Branch Anniversary Dinner at Muddy Boots, Harewood Estate. Contact: suetimme@gmail.com

UK Wessex

Tuesday 30th November 2021

AGM at 11.30am, followed by a seven course taster menu luncheon. Contact: bellasinclair48@outlook.com

SWITZERLAND Zürich

Thursday 9th December 2021

Metzgete (Schlachtplatte) Gala Dinner
Contact: Khaering@bluewin.ch

UK Herefordshire & Monmouthshire

Thursday 16th December 2021

Black Tie Christmas Dinner at Orles Barn Restaurant, Ross on Wye. Contact: peter.mcgahey@btinternet.com

UK Merseyside & Mid-Cheshire

January 2022, dates to be confirmed

Dinner at Boheme, Lymm

UK Merseyside & Mid-Cheshire

February 2022, dates to be confirmed

AGM and Dinner on Board the boat at the Mill House Hotel, Chester. Contact: Hilary Rylands: T: 01928 712123; M: 07803 757324

FRANCE Alsace

25th to 30th April 2022

The EAZ are planning to head to the city of Colmar in 2022. Colmar is the capital of this historic wine region and will aim to give you a taste of some of the best wineries and restaurants in the area. These dates are now confirmed but the programme will not be finalised until later in the year.

ITALY Piedmont

2nd to 7th May 2022

in view of the continuing uncertainty around Covid-19 restrictions this event has now been rescheduled for May 2022. Members who booked for this year will be contacted individually. You might like to make a note of these dates in your diary. We will be announcing full details of the programme later in the year. NB – if you wished for an extended holiday in Europe It would be possible to join both tours, of Alsace and Piedmont, although they are being run separately.

FRANCE Paris and Bordeaux

5th to 13th May 2022

This amazing Americas event has been rescheduled for next May – the itinerary will be in essence the same. The itinerary includes visiting some of the most exclusive venues in Paris; then in Bordeaux a stunning itinerary includes private tours and tastings of top chateaux. A wait list is now in place. For more details go to the website: https://www.iwfs.org/festivals/paris_bordeaux

SINGAPORE

re-scheduled for 2022

The APZ are making plans for a festival on this delightful island country for members to enjoy its culinary delights and explore the many jewels of this island including the Singapore Botanic Gardens – the only tropical garden in the world to be awarded a UNESCO Heritage Site. Details to be released as available.

USA Willamette Valley, Oregon

2nd to 6th May 2023

Join the Americas for this exciting Willamette Valley five-day festival, giving you the chance to visit some of the best wineries of this region renowned for its world class Pinot Noir. Details to follow.

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



MERSEYSIDE & MID-CHESHIRE BRANCH

Tim Hodges, Chairman
Secretary. Hilary Rylands
(hilaryrylands@talktalk.net)
Treasurer. Jean Whiteman
Wine Stwd. Paul Bishop
Stewards. Anne Saville, Jane Barber
Angela Britland, Val Bishop



BLACK-TIE CHRISTMAS PARTY CHESTER GROSVENOR HOTEL 10TH DEC. 2021 7pm for 7.30pm INTER BRANCH EVENT Wine £89. No wine £69

Dear members and friends,
We are once again pleased to be able to offer one of our favourite venues in which to celebrate our Christmas 2021 Party. The hotel are delighted to host this event and the chef has created an excellent menu.
The first meeting of the Merseyside Branch, which now includes the Mid-Cheshire Branch was held in November 1934 with Andre Simon's co-founder A.J.Symon enjoying a dinner at the Chester Grosvenor Hotel.

YOUR CHRISTMAS MENU

Aperitif - Pure Prosecco

Mi'Cuit Salmon, Obsiblu Prawn, Bombay mix
Verdicchio Caselli dei Jesi

Roast Rump of Lamb, flaked neck dolmade, cracked wheat, spiced aubergine.
Malbec Santa Rosa

Steamed Sicilian lemon and almond sponge, whipped sweet ricotta

A selection of Artisan cheeses and pairings

Coffee and Sweetmeats.

