



Buckingham Wine Circle

August 2021

Stoneleigh Hotel 21st July

Another thank you to Terry for putting together a most informative newsletter and also thank you to all who have contributed. Please remember that this is your newsletter and it is great to see members' contributions. Keep them coming for the October edition.

By the time the next newsletter is circulated, we should have finally been able to get together at Chafor Wines in Gawcott and we look forward to seeing you there.

Best wishes

Ken

A couple of good friends invited us to join them at a Wine & Food tasting event at Stoneleigh Boutique Hotel on Castle Street in Buckingham on Wednesday 21st July this year.

The weather was perfect and so was the setting, our hosts for the evening were David Williams joined by Paul French both from Winslow who did an evening of Wine, Women and Song, Men invited!

We were presented with a Botter Prosecco as a welcoming drink, David explained the different sorts of Prosecco that were available the one we tasted was the Semi Sparkling

one which was very good.

The first wine we had with a Salt Cod Brandade dish was a Sauvignon Blanc followed by a Tomato Tart and a tasting of Sancerre. During the tastings David

her as she danced around.

The next wine we tasted was a Pinot Blush accompanied by Lemon & Black Pepper Chicken which made a good combination I am not usually a fan of Rose but enjoyed it, Garlic Chilli Calamari was our next dish this was complimented by a White Rioja which I have never had before and was pleasantly surprised by its taste and aroma, this was followed by a Pinot Noir with a Chicory and Curry Mayonnaise and Toasted almonds as an accompaniment.

The next to last wine we tasted was my favourite it was a Cuvee Papale, Chateaufeuf-de-Pape from the Rothschild Estate served with Steak Tartare on Sour Dough bread which was superb. The final wine we had with a Passion Fruit and Raspberry Indulgence dessert was a Sauternes Dessert wine which was an excellent match and finished off the tastings of wine and food.

David and Paul were an excellent duo, talented and funny who helped to make it a good night for all who attended.

Ray

"What's drinking? A mere pause from thinking!"
Lord Byron



and Paul sang songs from the past connected with wine and women and cracked jokes. At one stage a dog wandered into the courtyard followed by its lady owner called Eileen, David invited the lady to join us and started signing "Come on Eileen" apparently it was her Birthday the next day so the audience sang Happy Birthday to

GRUHN

Flamingos

The Camargue area of Southern France is not often praised for its wines. Before COVID I was in a tourist area – the Three Marys Seaside Town (Saintes-Maries-de-la-Mer) – buying sea salt when the bottle with flamingos caught my eye. I was inspired to buy it as a souvenir, not really for the wine. Well to waste the wine would have been poor does! On returning home we tasted it and found it surprisingly drinkable – worth buying.

It comes from the Pays d'Oc



region. It was a wine with protected status and from an area determined to improve its status; well worth following up. My example was a red wine, 12%ABV. The grape varieties are unlisted but, in the Camargue, the main grape varieties are grenache, cinsault and carignan.

Carole

“A surprise for a gimmicky label, full bodied plenty of fruit, easy drinking, while not a fine wine it does have a character” from our tasting note

2022 Events

Even though we have yet to start the 2021 year your Committee has started to give some thought to the 2022 programme. Initial ideas are-

- January - talk by commercial company
- February - Social and AGM
- March - Visit to wine retailer
- April - Italian Wines
- May – Virgin Wines
- June – Summer Meal
- July - Wine Based Quiz
- August – Member’s Talk
- September - Trip to English vineyards
 - Fairtrade talk
- October – Waddesdon Wine Cellar
- November – Call My Bluff
- December – Christmas Dinner

Let Ken know if you have any suggestions

Bin Ends

Nadia says "have you seen the white Malbec - available only in Aldi ? Not bad at all !" [£6.99 ed]



Where can I download that app?

The Vivino App is useful for keeping a record of your wine tasting. Take a picture of the label, the app identifies the wine, enter your tasting notes and see other reviews of the wine. App available on Android and Apple or use online for free .

Seeing Red—Sulphites & Other Additives

What is the point of buying organic wine – especially as generally anything with the tag ‘organic’ usually costs more? Also adverts for ‘sulphite free’ wine are appearing – probably best avoided as they may not be real wines as explained below. Slightly different, but acceptable, statements are “no sulphites detected” or “no sulphites added.”

Organic wines are supposed to be produced from vine to bottle with minimal intervention and without the use of artificial chemicals. An EU Certified Organic wine is permitted to contain 150mg/l of sulphites for dry white wines, 100mg/l for reds and even more for sweet wines. In addition, the winemakers are permitted to exceed these levels by an extra 50 mg/l if they “feel it necessary”. This may well mean that the organic winemaker is adding sulphites. (US rules state no sulphite may be added to organic wine.)

While the label indicates “contains sulphites” there is never any indication at what level. The true organic wine should probably contain less than 10mg/l and not have any other additive.



A low level of sulphite is unavoidable as sulphur dioxide (SO₂) is a natural by-product of fermentation. So there probably will always be trace amounts of naturally occurring sulphites in wine. The Romans first discovered that adding sulphites to wine acted as a pre-

servative. So, for 2000 plus years sulphur has been used to stop bacteria and other yeasts from growing, and, to ensure stability by preventing micro-organisms and oxidation from spoiling wine.

There are also some 40 different additives permitted, none of which need to be shown on the label. All these permissible additives, if used, really defeat the title organic. Broadly the additives fall into the following categories - anti-oxidants, yeast, acid control, tannins, fining agents and stabilisers.

Arabic gum is used to round off the green tannins that are the result of using immature grapes and might be used, for instance, with gamay based wines to mask the thin, green aspect in the finished wine. Ascorbic acid or vitamin C is added to preserve freshness in wine. Not necessary if the wine has been made from healthy grapes and

handled correctly until bottling. Metatartaric acid is added to prevent small crystals of tartaric acid occurring in the bottle if the wine is exposed to cold temperatures. It is effective for only a few months after bottling. Some wines develop faults during winemaking and end up smelling like rotten eggs, then



copper sulphate could be added.

There are other additives that winemakers can use in the wine-making process. These might enrich wine, stabilise the colour or reduce the acidity. There is no way of knowing what the bottle of wine contains just from looking at the label. Really the trendy “organic” methods are those old traditional methods that have always been practiced by skilled artisan winemakers. So, why aren't they organically certified? It costs money to be organically certified. It does not change the quality of their wine.

My conclusion is that the goal should be to opt for additive-free and low sulphite wine. On the other hand, life is too short to always go for the healthy option – if you find a wine that you like, drink it and be blown to if it contains additives. To the best of my knowledge, no vintner is using anti-freeze as they were not so long ago - in mid-1980s diethylene glycol was added to several Austrian wines to make the wines appear sweeter and more full-bodied.

Terry

Buckingham Wine Circle

Programme 2021
Thursday 16th September
Chafor Wine Estate—paella and wine tasting
Thursday 21st October
Waddesdon Wine Cellars
Thursday 18 November
“Call My Bluff”
December (date to be confirmed)
Christmas Dinner

More Detail

Chafor

The cost for this evening will be £25 to include the tour of the vineyard, tasting and a meat paella. A ‘pay’ bar will be available for additional drinks. As numbers are limited, bookings will be accepted with full payment on a ‘first-come-first-served’ basis.

You should have received an email from Mary. To book a place contact her at - maryesimons@hotmail.com

Call My Bluff

The evening is free to the 2020 members who opted to continue their membership. The ‘Guest’ charge of £10 will apply to others. Prospective members would be very welcome.

Waddesdon

As numbers are limited, bookings will be accepted with full payment on a ‘first-come-first-served’ basis. Members who have opted to continue their 2020 membership will get priority. [An additional ‘Guest’ charge of £10 will apply to others.] The cost of the evening is £30 per person which includes transport from the Buckingham Community Centre with pick-ups in Thornborough, Winslow and Whitchurch. A separate notice will be circulated when the bookings open.

The tasting includes a white Rhone blend from Casablanca that has won a gold medal at Vinales. A dry white from the grand cru estate of Chateau Rieussec in Sauternes. One of the finest Chenin blanc to come out of South

Africa, that is partially produced in amphora as an orange wine.. Samsara, quite possibly the finest Syrah from South Africa and rivals French equivalents at the £50 mark. A double gold winning Cabernet from Apalta. A rich and complex Malbec blend from Vista Flores and a single estate Pomerol from DBR Lafite.. The retail bottle range goes from £22.00 to £75.00.

The wines are expected to be-

- ⇒ Coleccion Blanc 2018
- ⇒ R de Rieussec 2018
- ⇒ Anima 2017
- ⇒ Apaltagua Signature Cabernet 2013
- ⇒ Samara 2011
- ⇒ Los Vascos Le Dix 2016
- ⇒ Gran Corte 2012
- ⇒ Blason de L’Evangile

Articles and Comments

your contribution would be welcome so please email it to

terry.wagstaff@live.co.uk

by 25th September for the October issue

