

# BUCKINGHAM WINE CIRCLE

## February 2022



### Christmas Dinner

The Wine Circle held its annual Xmas dinner at The Cote, an annexe of The Woolpack, public house Buckingham.

From feedback received it appears there has been a mix of comments. Some members experienced a very pleasant social evening, whereas

unfortunately others did not. I am aware that due to overhead heaters not working, it meant some members spent the evening uncomfortably cold.

Due to having been forewarned that no Christmas decorations would adorn The Cote, Ken, Sandra, Helen and Mary, kindly volunteered to install decorations donated by members. On arrival members were greeted to a festive atmosphere.

Notwithstanding the problems the hospitality industry has

experienced throughout the pandemic, the catering staff were friendly and accommodating. Once the food began to arrive, in quick succession all courses were duly served.

Many thanks to Mary who organised this event

*Julie*



Pictures by Sandra

### Chairman's Column

I am fast running out of superlatives to describe yet another superbly put together newsletter from Terry. I think he must have been in sales, advertising or similar in a previous life!!

Thank you again for the articles by Richard Stevenson, one of our new members, Julie Leach who is a regular contributor and Sue Watkins for a really interesting article on the less well-known Lebanese wines. Also a big thank you to Sandra Aldren for the happy photos from our Christmas Dinner

The little asides and cartoons from Terry himself add a really professional touch to it.

Well done everyone and please, members, keep the interesting and very much appreciated contributions coming.

Finally, a big welcome to all of you to our 2022 programme and to our new members.

Kindest regards and best wishes to you all.

*Ken*



See details of events on last page

**“Wine improves with age. The older I get, the better I like it.”**

***Anonymous***

**But is it wine.....**

I know this goes against the grain, or should I say ‘grape’.

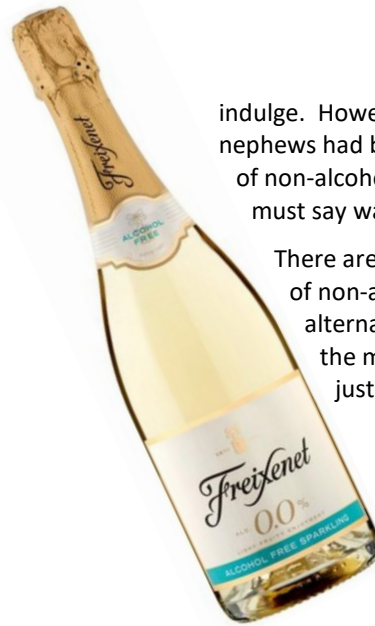
But, there are occasions, social/family events, whereby it is necessary for one reason or another, to go, non-alcoholic.

Recently I had such an occasion, as I was driving, and therefore could not

indulge. However, one of my nephews had bought a bottle of non-alcoholic drink, that I must say was very palatable.

There are quite a variety of non-alcoholic alternatives coming on the market. This is just one example

***Julie***



**New Zealand wine**

In Waimea in New Zealand's South Island we tasted a Sauvignon Blanc. The guy said this wine is fruity and delicious; it is certainly not plonk.

It is up-front and in your face but it sometimes lacks length and “tixture” so we blend it with the bigger, bolder Pinot Grigio and that blend is now a regular fixture

***Richard S***



**“The discovery of a wine is of greater moment than the discovery of a constellation. The universe is too full of stars.”**

***Benjamin Franklin***



## **Bekaa Valley Lebanon**

On a recent trip to Aldi, I discovered this unusual wine from Lebanon.

It is a blend of Cabernet sauvignon with an ABV of 14.5%, full bodied and from the 2019 vintage. It currently retails at £7.99

It is said to go with lamb and spicy casseroles. We tried it with steak and it complimented the food perfectly.

The Bekaa Valley is the heartland of modern Lebanese wine and almost 90 percent of Lebanon's wine is made here. The grapes from this high-altitude valley produce expressive aromas of cherries, rosemary and cloves. On the palate rich, savoury, cherry and blackberry notes meet earthy spices and fine tannins.

The long, narrow valley is a 3000ft high-altitude oasis of agriculture and viticulture that runs north-south for around 40 miles between the Lebanon and Anti-Lebanon mountains.

The mountains are the key factor in the terroir here. They provide protection from the deserts to the east and the maritime rains to the west. The vineyards benefit from the rain shadow cast by Mount Lebanon, which is actually a 100-mile mountain range.

The original Bekaa Valley vineyards were planted with Cinsaut, which was subsequently joined by other French vine varieties. Most of these remain in Lebanon's vinicultural makeup today: red Carignan, Grenache, Syrah, Mourvèdre, Cabernet

Sauvignon and Merlot, and white Ugni Blanc, Clairette, and Chardonnay.

The oldest winery in the area is Chateau Ksara, which was established by the Jesuit Christians



of Taanayel (Tanail), an ancient monastic settlement just down the valley from Ksara. The first vineyard there was planted in 1857, with plants brought from France via the colonies in Algeria. At that time Lebanon was ruled by the Ottoman Empire, whose Sharia law condemned the production or consumption of wine except for religious purposes. Thus, the initial winery was very subdued, and it was not until the French took control of the country after WW1 under the League of Nations' French Mandate for Syria and Lebanon

that Bekaa Valley wine production began to expand.

Chateau Musar, founded in 1930, is another long-established estate



of Taanayel (Tanail), an ancient monastic settlement just down the valley from Ksara. The first vineyard there was planted in 1857, with plants brought from France via the colonies in Algeria.

At that time Lebanon was

in the valley and the most famous in global terms. A 1979 write-up in Decanter magazine by Michael Broadbent helped to open up export markets. By 1990, the vast majority of their production left the country.

This year marked the end of the Lebanese Civil War, which had lasted since 1975. As well as causing around 120,000 fatalities, around one million people left the country so the domestic market for wine was decimated.

With the end of the conflict, the Bekaa Valley and wider Lebanese wine industry could at least begin to work towards modernization and expressing its full potential. However, the country has since then had to cope with further challenges such as the spill-over of the Syrian War, the explosion at the port of Beirut and ongoing civil protests and economic crisis.

**PROGRAMME**  
**8.00PM BUCKINGHAM COMMUNITY CENTRE**

**Thursday 17th February**  
**Social and AGM**

**Thursday 17th March**  
**Cavavin**  
**Local retailer presentation**

**Thursday 21st April**  
**Northern Italian wines John and Sian**  
**With nibbles**

**Thursday 19th May**  
**Pieroth Wines**

**Articles and Comments**

your contribution would be welcome so  
please email it to

[terry.wagstaff@live.co.uk](mailto:terry.wagstaff@live.co.uk)

by **25th March** for the April issue

Looking forward to hearing from you

**Cavavin Wine**

A presentation from the new local wine retailer, Jean-Francois of Caravin Wines. They bring together over 150 winegrowers and offer an exclusive range of wines, champagnes, and spirits.

**Northern Italian Wine**

John and Sian will introduce a selection of their favourite wines matched with some nibbles.

Every Italian region produces wine. Italy has some of the oldest wine-producing regions in the world, and, is the world's largest wine producer. It accounts for some 19% of the global production (for comparison, France 17% and Spain 15%). With an annual consumption of 42 litres/capita, Italy ranks fifth in world wine consumption league table.

**Pieroth Wines**

With many countries/regions, grapes and labels to choose from, Pieroth Wines goal is to find the ones you like. They focus on the customer's personal preferences so that there is a perfect match whatever the occasion. Courtney Brickstock will be leading the presentation.



DrinkWell have conducted research into the nutritional content of 24 of the most popular supermarket wines per glass and bottle. They found -

“Several of the brands contained more than the recommended daily intake of sugar in a bottle, which is 25g for women and 38g for men.

The brand of rosé tested with the highest sugar content was Barefoot Pink Moscato, with almost 50g per bottle - twice the recommended amount for women and the equivalent of four tablespoons of table sugar. “

