



News

WSWS

Next meeting: Monday 20th April
7:30pm start

West Surrey Wine Society
<http://www.westsurreywinesociety.org.uk>

April 2009

New and exciting developments in Portuguese Wines

In 1990 Raymond Reynolds set up Raymond Reynolds Ltd to promote and distribute Fine Portuguese Wines and Ports in the UK. It is a UK market leader in supplying the very finest single-estate boutique wines from Portugal to the specialist trade. Since that time, the company has been forging long-term relationships with their principals, and are closely involved with the development of most of the wines they distribute, and feel privileged to be associated with many of Portugal's best winemakers. Although often challenged by fickle harvests and uncertain weather, they have concentrated their skills on producing better wine each year.

Raymond Reynolds was born in Portugal, where he received his early education. He obtained a BSc in Chemistry at Leicester University (1980) and then supplemented this with a Diploma of Oenology at Bordeaux University in 1982. He then worked for 10 years at Taylor Fladgate and Yeatman in Vila Nova de Gaia reaching the position of senior winemaker. This gave him invaluable experience and insight into the emerging Portuguese wine industry.

This tasting has all the hallmarks of being something special. We will have 9 wines to taste this evening (instead of the usual 8), thanks to the generosity of Raymond, who will present a 9th Rosé wine at some point in the proceedings. In addition, there are wines from Lisbon, Bairrada, Duro and Dao. So, talk to friends and bring them along for what looks to be an excellent evening.

Note: The attendance fee for guests will be £18. If a guest joins straight after their 2nd visit in the membership year, they will be re-imbursed £6 the difference between the guest and membership fees. (£3 reimbursed if they join after their first meeting).

Volunteers needed!

Our summer party will be held on 15th August, and as ever, for these events to be a real success that we all enjoy, they require planning and help. So WE NEED VOLUNTEERS to set up marquees, tables and chairs, prepare food, lay tables with cutlery etc before hand and tidy up on the Sunday. If you are able to help please contact Sallie Payne.

To keep the interesting ideas for meetings flowing it would helpful if WSWS had another committee member. So please could everyone give some thought to whether they would like to join the committee. If you feel you have not got enough time to devote to this position, but have ideas for meetings or know of someone who would make a good speaker, this input would be gratefully received.

Remember - WSWS is your club and to keep successful needs everyone's input

Diary notes

Make a note of the following dates, (WSWS <u>always</u> meets on 3rd Monday of the month unless stated) mystery pre-meeting wine at 7:30 onward; meeting commences at 8pm	
20th April	<u>New and exciting developments in Portuguese Wines</u> Tasting led by Raymond Reynolds a specialist in Portuguese wines
18th May	<u>A new look at Argentina !</u> Robert Boutflower, Tanners of Shrewsbury
NB: Day change Thursday 18th June Note – Start time is 7.15pm	<u>AGM Followed by:</u> <u>A Fresh Look at the Wines of the Seghesio Family Vineyards, Sonoma, California</u> Camille Seghesio
July	<u>No meeting</u>
Saturday 15th August 6.00pm – 10.00pm	<u>Summer party</u> £25 per head. Geoffrey & Sheila Matthews are our hosts
NB: Date change Monday 14th December	<u>Christmas Function</u> Will be on 2nd Monday in the month

Who's who in the Committee?

Graham C - The money man

Sallie - Committee Chairman

Geoffrey - Secretary & all things snail

Peter - Events co-ordinator

Kim & David - Editors (Executive & "still" in-training)

Additional help:

Graham P (The web master "tekkie")

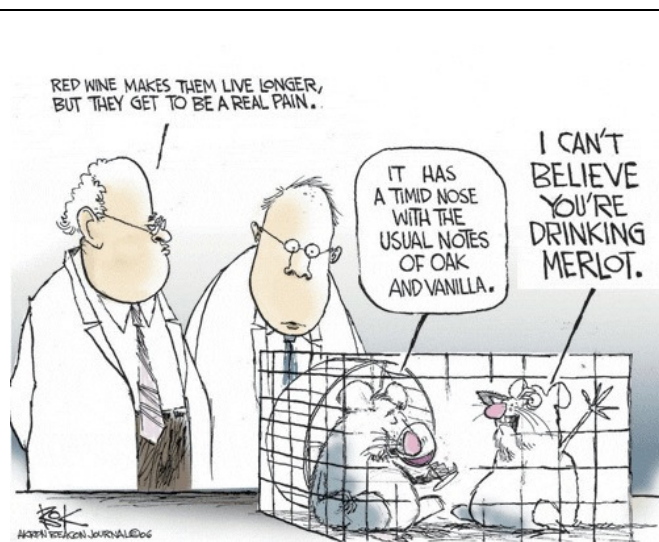
Tasting notes....

At the tender age of 49, it occurs to me that many of the truly pleasurable things in life are enjoyed to the full not from what we receive, but from the simple joy of giving.

So it is with WSWS – take for example the report from Peter Smith, reminding us of our latest tasting and what was experienced (or in my case, what was missed).

Also important is the work of those who put things together, often in the background and unseen. They give of themselves so they, and others can enjoy events and time together.

This months' newsletter includes a "call to arms" – with volunteers being sought for the Summer Party. Geoffrey and Sheila have volunteered their home, so lets have some volunteers to help put the evening together and make it one that we will all enjoy.



March Meeting Report by Peter Smith

Fine Wines of Burgundy – Richard Household, Revelstoke Wines

It was good to have a speaker who really understood both growing the grapes and making the wines and we all learnt something new about Burgundy. Richard's knowledge of the area and the wines was equalled by his enthusiasm, though this at times led him to dart off at tangents – however a refreshing speaker who we hope will come back for a future meeting.

But then Burgundy is renowned for being complex with many fascinating aspects – the holdings are small and fragmented, thanks to the Napoleonic laws of inheritance, appellations are attached to small parcels of land and Négociants play a huge role in marketing the wines because most growers own too little land to make it worth their selling or even making their own. The grapes are equally difficult – Pinot Noir just does not really like growing anywhere much and this thin skinned grape is difficult to make into wine – too much colour and the wine is too jammy, and vice versa, and if the pips are not really ripe it's stinky – and so on.

Rather than lemming-like saying ah Burgundy - great wines, and with no disrespect to Richard, he set me thinking about why Burgundy is so hyped up, indeed why do we bother with such an ungrateful beast – is it because its bloody-mindedness makes it an intellectual challenge or because it tastes so wonderful or because the 'experts' nod wisely and label it the world's best wine? To begin to understand I thought about Richard's own proclaimed wine tastes – he looks for acidity, complexity and subdued fruit which he sees as the epitome of a fine wine, which I interpret as a more intellectual challenge.

So – let's provoke debate! Does this mean Burgundophiles like thin, acid wines, prefer the challenge of a difficult wine or, dare one say, are palate lemmings? Maybe a bit of each, - though I suspect the Russian Oligarchs and their Far Eastern peers who drive the prices to such crazy levels are far more motivated by 'mine cost more than yours'.

Well the answers should always be in the wines. Richard had told us that acidity was the hallmark of white Burgundy and we certainly got it with the first white, a Macon, the 2007 Dom Deux Roches. It started with a lovely honey flavour – great I thought, then wham, without any warning an explosion of acidity that nearly terminated my taste buds. To me that was beyond all bounds of balance and clean finish – but some people liked it and it certainly illustrated where Richard was coming from! It also put down a marker for the evening and led me to the thoughts in this article. The other 3 whites were fortunately more balanced but all illustrated Richard's criteria of long acidity and subdued fruit. The Bourgogne 2001 Clos St Philibert was meant to show how a white Burgundy develops with age, but despite its rich nose still tasted fresh and young which showed its longevity but not the effect of time. The most enjoyable to me was the softer and rounder 2006 Les Vignes Blanches from Dom Maratray Dubreuil, north of the Cote de Beaune –also sadly the most expensive.

So, what would the cantankerous PN's show us? The entry level basic 2006 Bourgogne, but still costing £9.50, was a pleasant surprise – lightly smoky with lots of black cherries – drink now and enjoy. The other 3 reds were twice or more this cost and I was not the only person to be disappointed. The 2002 Mercury had no discernible fruit and seemed well past its sell by date. The two Premier Cru Beaunes – a young 2006 Auxey Duresses at £24 and a mature 2000 Les Epenottes at £22 – did provide contrast. The former was intense and long with lots of fruit but of course quite tannic. So drink now and enjoy the physical pleasure of its body and fruit - or wait a few years for these to dissipate and be replaced with the cerebral pleasures of composty nose and smoky vague flavours shown by the older wine. Well –intellectual pleasures have always escaped me!

So – some conclusions to the Burgundy conundrum. The wines certainly met Richard's likes of high acidity and structure in the whites and were definitely not in your face with fruit. Were they great flavours – only if you like acidity, were they an intellectual challenge – well the reds were not great in the mouth so I guess the pleasure was a more mental one. Finally, did they explain the burgundy hype – not to me but then I have different tastes. However I have tasted lovely Burgundies – but costing much more than these – and I recall a previous speaker saying that quality Burgundies only start at £30 (and that was some years ago), so on that criteria we only really looked at entry level wines. But – I and others remember great voluptuous affordable red Burgundies that we enjoyed in the 1970's – which of course we now know were blends with full bodied red grapes from North Africa because good old PN was lacking in a few areas.

And a final word of advice – if you want to drink great pure PN's but cannot afford at least 30 quid and are looking for some physical pleasures from your wine then look no further than Central Otago, especially our old friend Nigel Greening's wonderful Felton Road.

Farnham Wine Festival

The Farnham Wine Festival takes place on May 16th 2009 from 7:30pm to 11.00pm at Farnham Maltings, Bridge Square, Farnham. With over 100 wines to taste from all the major wine producing countries, together with food and live entertainment, this looks to be a really good evening out.

The wine merchants are offering a 10% discount for wines ordered on the night.

Tickets, priced at £20 (includes food and complimentary £5 of wine tokens) are available from Steve Green (01252 790035) or Brian Davis (01252 615014). If you are interested, you will need to apply quickly as they selling out quickly.

Although WSWS is not officially part of this event, we are hoping to be allowed to advertise the club and gain extra members. So, if you do attend, talk to others and promote WSWS.