



NEXT MEETING IS ON:

**Monday 14<sup>th</sup> December**

7:30pm for 8:00pm start

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

December 2009 edition

## A Christmas Party with Gilbert Winfield

The Christmas party takes place on Monday 14<sup>th</sup> December, and members must have pre-booked their places by December 1<sup>st</sup>. So unfortunately, if you've not done this, then there will not be any space for you.

For those who did book.... Read on.

This year, the party is a bit different. Of course we have food and wine, and this year we also have a speaker (Gilbert Winfield), to take us through the wines especially chosen to complement the food ordered by members.

Gilbert has been working with wine for more than 20 years, spending seven years in France, then a year in Italy making wine at a producer in Chianti as well as a brief spell in South Africa. Since returning the UK, Gilbert has been presenting wine tastings, so should be used to the buzz and constructive comments of knowledgeable wine society members.

As well as being a member of the Association of Wine Educators, Gilbert sits on the tasting panel of Decanter magazine, and holds the Diploma from the Wine and Spirit Education Trust, for whom he is an Approved Tutor.

**Please note that the evening starts at 7.30pm for 8pm and will finish at 10.30pm**

### *Diary notes*

Make a note of the following dates, (WSWS <b>always</b> meets on 3 <sup>rd</sup> Monday of the month unless stated) mystery pre-meeting wine at 7:30 onward; meeting commences at 8pm	
<b>NB: Date change</b>	<b><u>Christmas Function</u></b>
Monday 14 <sup>th</sup> December	3 course meal; wine, and tutoring by Gilbert Winfield
Monday 18 <sup>th</sup> January 2010	French wines – oaked v unoaked - David Howarth
Monday 15 <sup>th</sup> February 2010	Exploring wine styles – Anne Linder (Laithwaites)
Monday 15 <sup>th</sup> March 2010	To be finalised
Monday 19 <sup>th</sup> April 2010	Massaya wines from Lebanon – Mark Bedford (Caviste)
Monday 17 <sup>th</sup> May 2010	Alsace wines - Christopher Fielden

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## **November 2009 meeting report – making wine**

With our resident journalist in residence in South Africa, and no stand in volunteer, the best we could do for November was the following. If anyone thinks they can do better.....

Andrew Gordon has been in the wine trade most of his life and in many roles - a negociant, an agent, an importer, a grower and a winemaker. He has even received a decoration from the French government for his contribution to the wine industry. So his presentation at our November meeting was something many members looked forward to, and they were not to be disappointed. Over 20 years ago, Andrew bought a vineyard in Bordeaux in A C Cote de Duras. He set about the whole process of replanting, choosing root stock and varieties, vineyard management, re-equipping the winery with modern machinery and then producing sparkling, still and dessert wines. That only left the marketing, which he also reinvigorated with excellent results. Part of the solution lay in the idea of WineShare - probably the first 'Rent A Vine' business, now with interests in 5 vineyards (Domaine de Grand Mayne in Duras, Chateau Pizay in Beaujolais, Chateau Constantin-Chevalier in the Rhone, Castello Vicchiomaggio in Chianti Classico and Wickham Vineyard in Hampshire).

Andrew used the Grand Mayne wines to illustrate his talk about wine making – covering almost all the issues facing the professional winemaker, and how his choices influence the final wines, including the effect of weather on different vintages and the multitude of decisions surrounding the use of oak in winemaking (barrel size & type of wood; new or already used; costs; and the disposal of barrels beyond their productive life).

Tasting details by wine – courtesy of Liz Bateman.

### **1. Domaine du Grand Mayne Sauvignon blanc 2008 £5.99**

Screw Cap. Young, fresh and crisp, very aromatic with loads of flavour. It will make perfect drinking this summer. Juice refrigerated at 5 degrees; Selected yeast added at 15 degrees until all sugar converted into ethenol. (2-3 weeks) Classic Sauvignon: long finish, good acidity, crisper, more intense than 2007 on initial palate; late sunshine at the end of September ripened grapes to give the fullness to the wine.

### **2. Domaine du Grand Mayne Sauvignon blanc 2007 £5.99**

Stelvin top no air allowed through. Not a great vintage - better after 2 years, initially quite astringent. Gooseberry fruit bouquet .

### **3. Domaine du Grand Mayne Sauvignon blanc barrel fermented 2007 £6.99 (Cuvee des Vendangeurs) – Gold Medal Winner**

300 btls per barrel produced. Half new oak, half 1 year old French oak. 2 weeks fermentation then to barrel. Yeast adds complexity – gives a fuller flavour. Grapes picked 1 week later than rest to allow further ripening. Sweet / honey tones come from the oak. Rich/slight dryness – the tannin present which comes from the barrel maturation would make this wine better with food.

### **4. Domaine du Grand Mayne Merlot Cabernet 2006 £5.99**

Nice soft fruit, soft tannins, up front fruit. This is bottled 18 months after the vintage. Berries rise – have to be kept in contact with the juice. 2007 Vintage. 12-14 days on skins. More complex tobacco tones and lingers on palate for longer.

### **5. Domaine du Grand Mayne Cuvée prestige oak aged 2006 £6.99**

Juice kept in stainless steel barrels until February – then transferred to Oak Barrel for 12 months to mature. (New Oak). Vanilla tones from oak. More concentrated – short maceration to extract colour. 10% oak aged wine added to give extra finesse of colour.

### **6. Domaine du Grand Mayne Revolution Merlot 2005 £15**

2003 first vintage. 85% merlot, 15% cabernet. 2004/5/8/9 – 100% merlot. 1-3 year Oak maturing. 2006/7 not good enough grape quality. 400 litre barrels; Handpicked grapes. Yield reduced by hand to give more intensity to the remaining grapes. The berries are thus more concentrated. Skins removed in revolving barrels (hence "revolution")

### **7. Domaine du Grand Mayne oak aged 2000 N.A**

Tobacco – hint of licquorice ; When wines mature the bouquet opens up. Well balanced.

### **8. Domaine du Grand Mayne white Semillon dessert Wine NV £12.50**

Nice acidity; Few tannins still present and plenty of fruit; Grapes product of noble rot Botrytis Cinerea – shrinks grapes and concentrates the juice.

## Tasting notes.....

The relatively small Northampton Wine Society has for many years, been chaired by Greg, a local wine merchant. He's stepping down as he wants to devote more time to his endeavours to become a priest, so it wasn't really surprising when the topic of conversation turned to the communion bread and wine.

It was just at the point where we were enjoying a rather nice bottle of 1995 Ridge Monte Bello together with cheese and biscuits (the member who normally bakes special breads was absent, so it had to be Jacobs instead).

A member was commenting on a friend who makes communion bread for her church, and that on a visit, noticed her using Vanilla flavouring. "Only the best will do" she commented, and proceeded to buy vanilla essence. Everyone agreed with the sentiment - At which point, Greg was asked whether he intended to offer the "best" as communion wine. After some amusing comments about increasing his congregation with wine lovers, the consensus view was that most would probably not notice.

When considering new year resolutions, maybe we should all think about our own priorities, the effort we put in, and ask ourselves whether we also do the best we can.

David & Kim

## Thought for the month

BifSniff.com



The very thing that made Rudolph so good at his job, was the reason it was always destined to end in tragedy.

## Who's who in the Committee?

Graham C - The money man

Peter - Events co-ordinator

Sallie - Committee Chair

Kim & David - Editors (retiring from Committee at AGM)

Geoffrey - Secretary & all things snail

**1 (or more) Vacancies - go on, fill this gap!**

## **SUPERMARKET BEST BUYS ?? At least as seen by John Hemsley**

Some of you may know that I get invited by some of the supermarkets to their press/panel wine tastings. These occur twice each year for most supermarkets. Most of the other people there are the names you know – Oz Clarke, Charles Metcalf, Stephen Spurrier, Mathew Duke, Joanna Simon, Jonathan Ray, Jancis Robinson etc. Plus there are a few hangers on like me!!

The Waitrose and Sainsbury's Autumn Tastings took place recently. There were 252 wines available with Waitrose and 135 with Sainsbury's. I only manage to taste about 100 or so at each day's session – I must be getting old!! In both cases, there are many new wines which they have not sold before so the tastings were more interesting than normal. I have recently been asked to run a tasting of those I thought interesting and/or good buys. The list below represents my own choices out of which I made my selection for a tasting. You may or may not agree with them all but here it is anyway –

### **SPARKLING - 7**

Bloomsbury 2006, Ridgeview, UK

19.99 S

Waitrose Blanc de Noir NV

17.99 W

Waitrose Brut NV

19.99 W \*\*

Waitrose Blanc de Blancs NV

21.99 W \*\*

Charles Heidsieck Brut Reserve NV

28.99 W

Sainsbury's Blanc de Noirs NV. Rich, yeast and bread. Great balance – opulent 15.98 S \*\*

Clos Monistrol 2006 Cava, Spain (also Rose). Party Wine. 5.49 S offer

## WHITE - 16

Gruner Veltliner 2008, Terraces, Wachau, Austria. Great fruit, just off dry 7.99 W \*\*  
Torrantes 2009, Vinalba Selection, Medrano, Argentina 7.99 S  
Rustenberg Chardonnay 2007, Stellenbosch, South Africa 10.99 W \*\*  
Chenin Colombard 2008, Domaine Ventenac, VdeP Cotes de Lastours, France 6.99 W  
Cave de Lungy 'Les Charmes' 2008, Burgundy 6.39 W offer  
Domaine Naudet 2007, A C Sancerre, France 11.99 W  
Tesco Australian Reserve Riesling/Gewurztraminer 2008, Angove, Riverland 4.85 Tesco  
Giardini Falanghina 2008, Puglia, Italy 7.99 S  
Tahbilk Marsanne 2007, Victoria, Australia Rich full good oak and balance 9.99 S \*\*  
La Monetta Gavi 2008, Piedmont, Italy 8.99 W  
Araldica La Luciana 2008 Gavi, Piedmont, Italy 5.99 W  
Vasse Felix Semillon/Sauvignon Blanc 2007, Margaret River, Western Australia 9.99 W  
Viognier Domaine St. Gabriel 2007, V de P d'Oc, France 7.99 Coop \*\*  
Yalumba Viognier 2009 Eden Valley, Sth Australia V Rich apricot. Great balance 9.99 W \*\*  
Vouvray La Couronnes des Plantagnets 2008, Loire, France Off dry. . 5.79 S  
Virtue Sauvignon Blanc/Chardonnay 2008, Central Valley, Chile. Party Wine. 3.99 W

## RED - 13

Ninth Island Pinot Noir 2008, Kreglinger Wine Estates, Tasmania 9.99 W  
Santa Helena Pinot Noir 2008, Casablanca Valley, Chile 7.99 Coop  
Valle Cupa, Salento Rosso 2001, Apollonio, Puglia, Italy 8.49 S  
Chemin des Olivettes 2008, AOC Coteaux du Lanquedoc. No oak 7.99 S  
Domaine du Joncier 2006/7 Le Classique, Cru des Cotes du Rhone, Lirac, France 7.49 W \*\* offer  
Tinto da Anfora 2006, Vinho Regional Alentejano, Bacalhoa Vinhos de Portugal 5.00 S  
Douro 2007, T the D, Quinta De Crasto, Douro, Portugal 7.27 S  
Chateau du Gazin 2006, Canon-Fronsac, France 9.99 W  
Marques de Romeral Reserva 2004, Rioja, Spain 9.99 M&S  
Fairtrade Tilimuqui Single Vineyard Cabernet Sauvignon/Bonarda, Argentina 6.29 W  
Chateau Renella Basket Pressed Shiraz 2006, McLaren Vale, South Australia 14.99 W \*\*  
Cantina di Negrar 2006 Amarone della Valpolicella Classico, Veneto, Italy 16.99 W  
Tiger's Eye Shiraz 2008, Gemtree, McLaren Vale, South Australia 9.99 S

## DESSERT - 5

Domaine Poudroux Vendange Mise Tardive 2004, Maury, France. 50 cl 9.99 W  
Domaines Latrille, Chateau Jolys Cuvee Jean 2006, Juracon, France 11.49 W  
Tamar Ridge, Kayena Vineyard Ltd Release Botrytis Riesling 2006, Tasmania 13.49 W \*\*  
Anthemis Muscat of Samos 2002, Samos, Greece 37.5 cl If you can find it!! 9.99 W \*\*  
Sainsbury's Ltd Release Botrytis Semillon 2006, Be Bortoli, Riverina, Australia 9.99 S

## FORTIFIED - 5

Dry Amontillado, 12 years, T the D, Emilio Lustau, Jerez, Spain. 50 cl.	6.49 S **
Dry Oloroso, 12 years, T the D, Emilio Lustau, Jerez, Spain. 50 cl.	6.49 S **
Graham's Crusted Port (bottled 2002). Douro. Rich dry complex will age.	15.99 S **
Warre's Otima 10 year old Tawny Port, Douro 50 cl. ( NB Oddbins £14.49! )	11.99 S
Tesco Finest, 10 year old Tawny, Douro, Portugal	10.91 Tesco

Key - W = Waitrose, S= Sainsbury's + T the D = Taste the Difference,

**\*\* = CJH specially recommended**

In addition you may be interested in how Supermarkets compare. The first table is taken from this month's Decanter and is just their awards i.e. **DECANTER WORLD WINE AWARDS 2009**

RETAILER	TROPHY	GOLD	SILVER	BRONZE	COM.	TOTAL
WAITROSE	13	10	74	119	82	298
MAJESTIC	4	7	35	78	52	176
TESCO	1	3	24	58	51	137
SAINSBURY'S	1	1	21	45	50	118
ODDBINS	2	6	28	45	26	107
M & S	2	0	19	44	35	100
ASDA	0	0	18	29	36	83
LAITHWAITES	4	4	26	31	16	81
WINE SOC.	6	3	19	33	19	80
THRESHERS	1	0	14	22	19	56
SOMERFIELD	0	2	6	2	19	48

Also Waitrose, at their tasting, produced the table below showing their 'improvement' over the years. Very much Waitrose blowing their own trumpet.

AWARD	2009			2008			2007			2006			2005		
	G	S	B	G	S	B	G	S	B	G	S	B	G	S	B
DECANTER	22	74	108	15	49	102	14	28	59	10	40	64	0	0	4
IWC	21	90	130	15	55	95	12	67	85	20	44	65	4	13	17
IWSC	10	60	76	11	55	57	2	17	9	7	35	39	6	17	20
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>53</b>	<b>224</b>	<b>314</b>	<b>41</b>	<b>159</b>	<b>254</b>	<b>28</b>	<b>112</b>	<b>153</b>	<b>37</b>	<b>119</b>	<b>168</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>30</b>	<b>41</b>

IWC = International Wine Challenge – the largest blind wine tasting in the world with over 9000 wines tasted. IWSC = the International Wine and Spirits Challenge

All three of these tasting are only as good as the wines that are submitted for tasting - so some excellent wines are bound not to be in the tastings and therefore not evaluated. As far as the Supermarket press/panel tastings are concerned, the supermarket wine buyers are present at all these tasting and are keen to talk to you and even influence you. I would add that, from my view point, the Waitrose buying team are the best - more approachable and more willing to accept comments etc. than their colleagues elsewhere.