



News

WSWS

West Surrey Wine Society

<http://www.westsurreywinesociety.org.uk>

Next meeting: Monday 18th February
7:30pm for 8.00pm

February 2008

New Zealand beyond Sauvignon Blanc

For once we mean what we say, and in this tasting, there's no sauvignon blanc, definitely no chenin blanc, and even the merlot has been kept away as well. In 1960 there was less than 1,000 acres (400 hectares) under wine cultivation – a far cry from today. With 5 wines from South Island and 3 from the North, we should be in for a real treat.

Rachel Gibley from Caviste of Stockbridge, Hampshire, will be presenting on this, her favourite subject. Rachel has been in the wine trade for nine years, stemming from being secretary of the wine tasting society at university! After working for Majestic Wine for seven years as a store manager and spending some time abroad visiting various wine making areas (including those in New Zealand), Rachel moved to Caviste in 2007 to become the manager of the new Stockbridge shop. Rachel completed the WSET Diploma two years ago and holds regular tastings all over Hampshire.

Our 8 wines for this meeting will be:

1	Allan Scott Blanc de Blancs, NV, Marlborough	5	Allan Scott Gewurztraminer, 2007, Marlborough
2	Cairnbrae Wild South Riesling, 2006, Marlborough	6	Tinpot Hut Syrah, 2006, Hawkes Bay
3	Escarpment Pinot Gris, 2006, Martinborough	7	Amisfield Pinot Noir, 2004, Central Otago
4	Cloudy Bay Chardonnay, 2004, Marlborough	8	Ata Rangi Pinot Noir, 2006, Martinborough

Make a note of the following dates, (always 3rd Monday of the month unless stated) mystery pre-meeting wine at 7:30 onward; meeting commences at 8pm

18th February 2008	'New Zealand beyond Sauvignon Blanc', Rachel Gilbey, manager of Caviste (formally Celler Door) of Stockbridge
17th March 2008	Aromatic wines from around the world The return of our old friend, Neil Somerfelt of Laytons.
21st April 2008	Italian wines – A tasting featuring wines from 7 different wine producing regions, presented by Sarah Jane Bartlett of Colasanti UK
19th May 2008	AGM & Call My Bluff
16th June 2008	Wine Educators! A tasting aimed to teach us all something in a very nice way indeed !

January Meeting Report
Syrah/Shiraz from Around the World
Presented by Richard Stanes of CG Bull & Taylor Wine Ltd

When is a Shiraz a Syrah or a Syrah a Shiraz? Easy said Richard - Shiraz is generally used in the New World, but not in Chile or Argentina, and Syrah in the Old – but the Americans use both names according to the State. There you are, simple!

Richard has a long background in the wine trade and a distinct Old World charm, though his soft voice seemed to challenge certain tables to demonstrate the theory of opposing forces resulting in numerous calls to order. If some people missed the words I hope they did not miss the wines – a well thought out and varied selection of the many styles this widely grown grape offers. Many people think it started 7,000 years ago in Shiraz in Iran, and though it is one of the oldest red varieties, Richard debunked this as myth - recent DNA finger-printing puts its origins in 2 French varieties whose names I failed to note. At this point Richard nearly spoilt the evening – expect wine prices to increase by 15% thanks to the weaker pound AND he hears rumours that our beloved Government is planning a 24 pence per bottle duty hike at the budget – well I guess someone has to pay for Northern Rock.

We started the tasting in Australia with the Sparkling Black Chook from Penny's Hill in McLaren Vale Australia. It did cause a lot of interest but most of us found it rather hard and characterless. Who drinks sparkling Shiraz? asked Richard – just one hand belonging to our Chairman went up (hm!). Still in the McLaren Vale, the Gemtree Uncut Shiraz 2002 could not have been a greater contrast. Made by a family firm, the wine is rarely found in the UK – sadly because this was proper stuff – unfiltered, great structure and definitely chewy, spicy with huge blackberry flavours.

Linton Park in Wellington, South Africa provided 2 starkly contrasting wines. First the most unusual Capell's Court Shiraz 2006. Young, unwooded and strictly a fun wine for quaffing now – soft and slightly sweet and very un-Shiraz like. But - put the same wine, admittedly selected from their top grapes, in oak, give it a few years and you get the 2002 Shiraz - big, full bodied and vanillary – a good one to put away for a few years.

Chile provided the Armador Syrah 2004 from the Maipo Valley. The vineyard was set up 25 years ago by a Norwegian shipowner with the aim of making Bordeaux style wines (why do people go thousands of miles to copy a style grown in totally different conditions, rather than make what their own terroir is good at?) It was quite spicy with a touch of blackberry but still a bit green. From South to North America and the Columbia Valley in Washington State, USA and the oddly named Duck Pond Syrah 2004, especially odd as the area is technically a desert! But nothing odd about the wine – very approachable, perhaps benefiting from the touch of Merlot.

And finally to France – very different from the New World, lighter bodied and lower in alcohol – the only wines we tasted below 15% alcohol. The Ch Haut Blanville 2004 from the d'Oc made from 40 year old vines was the only true blend of the evening with 20% Grenache/Mouvedre/Carrignan. Drink it now said Richard because its fruit won't last. We ended with a 2001 Hermitage Delas from the Marquise de la Tourette. but for the most expensive wine (keeping the titled in the manner they are accustomed to perhaps?) a touch disappointing – lacking the flavour and depth I want for this sort of money.

On a show of hands at the end the Linton Park 2002 was the most popular by a short head from the Duck Pond and the Gemtree (France nil, the world 3).

Who's who in the Committee ?

Peter Godwin	Our leader
David Rathmell	The money man (not for long)
Sallie Payne	Membership Secretary
Geoffrey Matthews	Secretary & all things snail-mail
Peter Smith	Events co-ordinator
David & Kim Finch	Editors in training
Additional help:	
Graham Parlett	The web master (tekkie)

Promotions & events:

As highlighted in January, there is a Wine festival taking place at Ascot racecourse on 10th May in which members may be interested. call the ticket office on 0870 727 1234 between 9am and 5pm, Monday to Friday and quote 'West Surrey Wine Society 08 offer'.

NEW TREASURER WANTED

David Rathmell will be retiring at the AGM in May, and we **ALL** therefore need a replacement treasurer to carry on the good work.

David will be the first to admit that it's not difficult, and brings with it a valid excuse to go out and "taste" some wine all in the name of a committee meeting.

EARLY DIARY PLANNING NOTICE :

What? 20th anniversary meeting of WSWS
When: Saturday August 16th 2008 6:30pm start
Where: Quinnettes, Churt (<http://www.churt-pc.gov.uk/quinnettes.htm>)
Special food, special wines (if it's the 20th anniversary they **HAVE** to be special)
Further details to follow, but this is a **"MUST – ATTEND"** event, so book it in your diary.

In the Vineyard: - a monthly look at what is going on in the Northern Hemisphere

February is for – even more pruning, and when you can then see the wires, posts and stakes forming the support for what remains of the vines, then can then be repaired. Down in the cellars, the winemaker is concerned with the effects of wine contraction (due to cold weather). Minimising the ullage space between wine and barrel through topping up becomes all important, thereby minimising the risk of oxidation

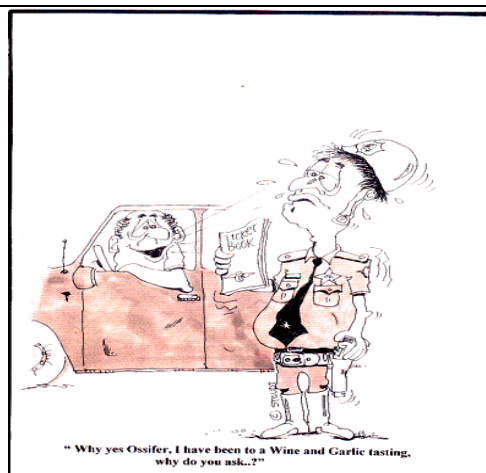
Sampling notes

As we approach Valentines Day, so the cultured palate turns once again to that annual favourite – champagne. Lots of places have offers on at the moment – some as much as 50% - so whether your preferred stockist is a supermarket or a more specialist outlet, there are bargains to be had. Obvious ones that come to mind are Tesco and Majestic.

If you've access to the www, then finding the best bargain is easier.. but Shanksy's pony is better for burning off those calories – and champagne has fewer calories than other wines.

Which reminds me, does anyone remember their new year resolutions – let alone keeping them?

David & Kim (editors in training)



Why yes Ossifer, I have been to a wine and Garlic tasting... why do you ask?

