



NEXT MEETING IS ON:

Monday 15th February

7:30pm for 8:00pm start

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

February 2010 edition

Exploring wine styles with Anne Linder (Laithwaites)

This month we're delighted to welcome Anne Linder whose role at Laithwaites' head office sees her travelling the country presenting and running tastings on behalf of owner Tony Laithwaite. Anne started working for Tony in 1986 having applied on a whim as a disaffected banker! Anne has also run their French operation where Laithwaites has 10 hectares of vineyard in the Cotes de Castillon. She later set up their newest venture, Le Chai au Quai in Castillon la Bataille.

Wines featured in this month's tasting include two Sauvignon Blancs - from France and Elqui Valley, Chile showing us the old and new style of winemaking. Then we will compare a traditional French Chardonnay and an innovative barrel fermented one. The reds will compare old and new world Merlot based blends from France and South Africa and Grenache/Syrah blends from France and Australia. Finally the highlight of the evening for many members will be a rare opportunity to taste the Domaine Mas Mouriane Maury 1969, a sweet dark treasure with over four decades of mellow maturity.

Please note that the evening starts at 7.30pm for 8pm and is due to finish at 10.00pm

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	
Monday 15th February 2010	Exploring wine styles – Anne Linder (Laithwaites)
Monday 15th March 2010	Washington & Oregon wines - Andrew Williams, (Arblaster & Clarke).
Monday 19th April 2010	Massaya wines from Lebanon – Mark Bedford (Caviste)
Monday 17th May 2010	Alsace wines - Christopher Fielden
Monday 21st June 2010	AGM & Champagnes with John Hemsley
July	No meeting

May meeting – advanced notice

Our May meeting will concentrate on wines from the Alsace region of France, and our expectation is for more expensive wines than normal. In order that we can better estimate bottles, it would be helpful if members could indicate in advance whether they plan to attend the meeting.

We'll be including a column on the attendance sheets for the next few meetings, and it would be great if members could indicate their intentions.

Lost & Found

An attendee at the January tasting left behind a navy, purple and white striped scarf. Interested parties should contact Sallie Payne, who has promised to bring it to the next tasting

January Meeting Report by Peter Smith

French wines – Oaked v Unoaked - David Howarth – Hampshire Wine Shippers

The concept was a good one – to look at the affects of oak ageing and to learn something about the oaking processes, and mystique. And we did have a pleasant evening with an affable speaker, the wines did include oaked and unoaked, and we did taste wines from unusual areas such as the Camargue which was a bonus, but as far as my table were concerned, only marginally touched on the main topic, which was a pity as it is a fascinating subject.

David's range includes French, Italian, and New World wines, though as his website says there is a clear penchant for the first. All the wines we tasted were from his lower priced French range, with a couple of more special ones at the end – and he had been kind enough to bring an extra wine for us, so no complaints on that front.

The three whites were all based on Sauvignon and of course unoaked, so they did not really fit the theme. The first, the Ch Pierrail was by far the best and very drinkable with a zesty finish. It looked even better when we tried the other whites – a Grenache Sauvignon from Dom Haut Lirou in the Languedoc and a straight Sauvignon from Dom Listel Le Villeroy on the sandy Camargue soils – which my table judged to be rather dull and devoid of fruit. Maybe some oak would have helped! Why do the French still make wines like these and complain about their loss of market share!

But after this unpromising start the reds rode in to the rescue – plenty of fruit, lots of alcohol and a welcome absence of thin tannic wines that so often rub salt in the market share wound. Anyway, the smiles returned and the verbal volume went up and up – always a good sign even if speakers don't always appreciate it. We started with two unoaked wines, a 2008 Cab Sauv from Mas de Mare in the Languedoc – a bit stalky to start but quickly developing into a soft easy drinking wine and definitely more interesting than the Ch Naudon Merlot 2007, though – OK – it was a dreadful year.

The latter wine and the next, a 2006 65/35 Merlot/Cab Franc from Ch Pierrail which had spent a year in new French oak, did give us an unoaked versus oaked comparison. The Naudun, also from Ch Pierrail, is the unoaked version of the Merlot/Cab and while soft and ready to drink, it lacked the tannin, structure and underlying fruit of the oaked blend and certainly did not have its ageing potential. So the differences caused by ageing in oak, ie, much more structure and body and the ability to age, were apparent though it wasn't a totally apple/apple comparison as the oaked Merlot/Cab was from the excellent 2006 and benefited from the addition of the Cab Franc. Not all 2007 was bad, as the Cab Sauv from Dom du Bosquet, also from the Camargue sandy soils, showed. The wine had been in oak for a year but was described as lightly oaked – presumably 6 months new oak and 6 months in old. The oak was just there but did not hide the almost sweet start and soft fruit – very drinkable and at £6.50 probably the best value of the selection- but not a keeper.

The final 'official' wine, Ch La Bassonerie 2007 from Pomerol (6 months new oak and 6 months old), was a price step up at £16.50 and as expected in a different class. This had lots of guts and intensity and brought satisfied noises from the tasters. And again showed that there some nice wines made in that depressing year. David's extra wine was another price step up at £23 – a 2004 Ch Sensonet (60% Cab franc, 30% Merlot, 10% Cab Sauv). I have lost some of my notes on this but recall it was a Bordeaux and oaked. It was a light wine, almost thin with little fruit and disappointing for the price, especially after Bassonerie.

[Urgent request for committee members](#)

For the last 4 years, David and Kim Finch have commuted to WSWs meetings from Northampton, and have now confirmed that they will be stepping down from the Committee at the AGM in June. In addition, members may have noted that Peter Smith is spending less time in the Farnham area. Together, this will put an increasing strain on the remaining 3 committee members (two of whom have been on the Committee for well over 3 years).

The time has now come for members to step up to the plate and support their society. Responsibilities are not onerous, and when spread amongst a number of members, it is actually good fun. The difficulty arises however when that burden falls on only a few pairs of shoulders.

Members need to do the decent thing and support (by action) their wish to be members of WSWs – for without new committee members, the future of WSWs is uncertain.

Members interested in joining the Committee should speak to Sallie, Graham, or Geoffrey.

[Tasting notes.....](#)

People in the limelight go through some wonderful highs and terrible lows. They crave for the attention of the masses, but the endless stream of comments and speculation gives them no respite.

So it is with organising events. Some 34 people attended the Christmas party, and we did hope that by asking for feedback within the January newsletter, it would be sufficiently in the forefront of members' minds that they would still be able to offer constructive comment.

So when only 1 form (one – no mistype here) from non committee members was received, we were a little surprised, dismayed, and saddened. We felt unloved.

As we approach Valentines Day, spare a thought for the WSWs Committee, and show a little love. How about completing and returning the feedback form contained within the January Newsletter.

David
(Still in training - this month for tact and diplomacy)

Snapshots at jasonlove.com



"Let that breathe a little. But not too much.
My last bottle hyperventilated."

[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

2 (or more) Vacancies - go on, fill these gaps!