



Newsletter

WSWS

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

Our next event will be held on:

**Monday 16th January
at 7.00pm for 7.30pm
NEW VENUE—The Bush
Hotel**

January 2012 edition

January Tasting

We have had to change the location for our January, February and March meetings this year. Blacknest are having renovation work done and cannot accommodate us in the short term.

The January meeting will be at The Bush Hotel, The Borough, Farnham, Surrey, GU9 7NN.
Tel. 01252 715237.

We are meeting in The Bramley Suite on the ground floor of the conference centre. There is parking available which is normally adequate, but in case of need there is the public car park virtually adjacent to the hotel grounds. We shall be given a code to release the car park exit barrier when we are in the meeting room.

Please note that **the meeting will start 30 minutes earlier than normal**, i.e. 7.00pm for 7.30 when the presentation will start, as the speaker is travelling from London. The meeting is expected to finish at 9.30pm.

We are very fortunate to have a winemaker from Chile as our speaker this month. **Fernando Espina** is the chief winemaker at **Vina Chocalan** – and if he is the guy pictured in the cellar on their web-site then the ladies are going to be charmed! – he is in London for Liberty Wine's January tasting event.

This will be a great opportunity to learn about a single Chilean estate, to listen to its chief winemaker and to taste an extensive range of their wines.

Chocalan (which means yellow blossoms) is a new estate at Melipilla in Chile's Maipo Valley and was started in 1998 with the first bottling in 2001. The vines are grown between 180 m and 380 m above the sea level and benefit from the cooling effect of sea breezes and the proximity to the Maipo river. There are a total of 100 hectares planted to vines – predominantly Cabernet Sauvignon, Syrah and Carmenere (Chile's answer to Argentina's Malbecs).

We are going to taste a wide range of wines, including Sauvignon Blanc and Chardonnay for the whites and Cabernet Sauvignon and Franc, Merlot, Carmenere of course and a Malbec which is not available in the UK and is being brought over for our meeting. The wines will cover their 3 quality levels – Seleccion, Reserva and Grand Reserva.

Chocalan are represented in the UK by Liberty Wines who have very kindly arranged the speaker and wines, and Harriet Wright from Liberty will be accompanying Fernando.

Please make a **special attempt** to attend this meeting for which the committee, particularly Peter Smith, have made extra efforts.

Can we forget mid-Winter for one evening and look forward to sampling some lovely wines from Chile?

PLEASE COME!

Who's who in the Committee?

Sallie	<i>Committee Chair</i>	Peter	<i>Events co-ordinator</i>
Graham	<i>Treasurer</i>	Geoff (R)	<i>Membership Secretary</i>
Geoffrey (M)	<i>Secretary</i>		

Guest fees

The committee has decided to offer a reduction in guest fees from £18 pp to £7.50 pp up to and including June 2012. Thereafter guest fees will be reviewed again by the committee. We hope this generous reduction will give an incentive to members to bring along guests to an exciting programme of tastings. Guests may attend up to 2 tastings at £7.50 pp before deciding whether or not to join the society.

Christmas Party

Our Xmas Party was attended by 19 members and 2 guests. We thoroughly enjoyed ourselves with very good food and excellent wines. Miniature bottles of port were presented as quiz prizes to the winning table and the raffle raised £64 for the Phyllis Tuckwell Hospice.

Diary Notes

Make a note of the following dates, (WSWS meets on 3rd Monday of the month unless stated)

Monday, 16th January 2012	Winemakers from Vina Chocalan, Chile on Chilean wines
Monday, 20th February 2012	A trip through the major Hungarian wine regions : A Sommelier's view. To be presented by Akos Hervia.
Monday, 19th March 2012	Karl Walton of Hennings Wine Merchants on Argentinean wines
Monday, 16th April 2012	Sarah Ahmed, wine writer and educator on Portuguese wines
Monday, 21st May 2012	AGM followed by Torquill Jack of Carte de Vin on regional French wines/setting up a wine business
Monday, 18th June 2012	Pierre Monsour of The Wine Society on Rioja wines

WSWS MEETING Monday 21st. NOVEMBER 2011

Chris Horridge returned to the Society to present 'Latest Wine Finds'. He brought a selection of 'New World' wines, red and white and one red 'Old World' wine.

Chairman, Sallie Payne, welcomed Chris and he soon got going with a white **Bremerton Verdelho 2009** from Australia which members found to be very fresh and citric, and an excellent aperitif, untouched by oak, 13% alcohol and £12.99 a bottle. Then followed two Sauvignon Blanc wines, the first from Chile and then a New Zealand wine.

These were **Centauri Sauvignon Blanc 2009** and **Bascand Estate Sauvignon Blanc 2009** respectively. The Chilean wine was oaked and had a smoky, oily character and reminded one member of the taste of asparagus, this wine was priced at £13.99. The New Zealand wine by contrast was unoaked and considered very good value at £8 a bottle.

Chris explained the criteria he used when searching for wines to buy world wide and sell to his customers from his business in Farnborough. He is Sales Director of ALTUS Wine. He generally looks for wines in a price bracket £8 to £15 pounds a bottle with not too much alcohol. He explained that some producers are now developing wines with a natural alcohol content of 16-17.5%, he stressed that this was without the added alcohol that is found in fortified wines such as sherry and port. This is a truly remarkable figure. One member wanted to know who would want to drink such strong wine ? It is hard to say whether the demand was driven by alcohol or taste. Chris firmly believes that such strong wine is not attractive and looks for wines driven by taste and not just alcohol. He is also very interested to find wines that have been recently bought by modern vine growers who are seeking to develop areas where they can use new vines and new vine growing techniques. He looks for wines that express the particular areas where the vines grow.

Chris then went on to the reds, first a **Bascand Estate Pinot Noir 2009** from New Zealand, 14.5% alcohol and priced at £11 a bottle. Pinot Noir is generally reputed to be very difficult to get just right for a grower. The soil and temperature conditions that are most suited to this grape are not

easy to find, and yet growers continue to try,

They believe the effort is worth while for the special qualities that pinot noir can develop when all is well. This wine was definitely full of ripe fruit tastes, not a heavy 'Burgundian' style and without the whiffs of 'forest floor' that some Pinot Noirs achieve, more like 'stale cabbage' as one member said! Next came the only wine from the 'Old World', **Urban Ribera Tinta del Pais 2007** from Spain. This was produced from the Tempranillo grape, much used in Spain. This wine actually came from a mixture of vines, some very old up to 57 years but the interest was in the techniques used to produce a modern taste. The wine is fermented in stainless steel and kept in French oak for 9 months. The overall effect was a fresh and lively wine. Chris explained that he is looking for wines where the quality comes from this year's fruit, which naturally varies from year to year, as opposed to brand-like wines that are made to taste the same whenever grown. He always looks for a balance of fruit, acid, alcohol and tannins that gives the best expression of his criteria, the emphasis is on the word 'balance' which is what Chris is striving for all the time.

Chris then followed with two Australian red wines that fitted his criteria and a South African **Glen Elly 2008/9** which was popular.

Finally Chris brought us a special treat, a **Don Melchior Cabernet 2005** from Chile which is on offer at £40 a bottle. This stretched the price criterion that he usually works to but was worth showing for its high quality, it certainly showed what could be achieved by modern growing techniques.

Sallie thanked Chris for bringing a selection of interesting wines that illustrated the use of modern techniques from around the world and demonstrated the values that Chris brings to buying wines and offering them to his fortunate clients.