



News

WSWS

WestSurreyWineSociety

July 2006

Grape Varieties from France (or Wines for a Top Hotel)

As we reported last time, we have another first for the Society, in welcoming our first speaker from a 5 star hotel.

William Cowpe who until he retired recently was the Managing Director at The Goring Hotel near Buckingham Palace, is coming to talk on 'Grape Varieties from France'.

Extremely well known in hotel circles (and a Farnham resident), William's knowledge and love of fine wines suggests we can expect a really memorable evening!

Look at the wines we can enjoy and just think of the insights and anecdotes to be expected from someone with William's lifetime hotel experiences!

Wines to be tasted:

<i>Whites,</i>	
Pinot Blanc – Leon Beyer	2004
Sancerre – Pascal Jolivet	2004
Pernand Vergelesses Blanc – Olivier LaFlaive	2003
<i>Reds,</i>	
Vacqueras – Domaine Le Clos des Cazaux	2003
Beaune – Clos des Ursules, Louis Jadot	2000
Reserve de la Comtesse – Pauillac Pichon Languerville Lalande	2000

Enjoy!

Make a note of the following dates, (normally 3rd Monday of the month at 8pm)

17 th July	Grape Varieties from France William Cowpe
12 th August NB, a Saturday	A Pink Summer Party at Hazel's
18 th September	Italy tbc
16 th October	Simon Taylor – Chile/Argentina
20 th November	Fortified Wines
18 th December	Christmas Party

AGM Report Call My Bluff

Does the lady bluff or is it he who tells the truth? Not easy to decide when all the speakers are convinced they are the ones with the answer. If you are wondering what on earth this is all about, it's because you were not at the AGM and if the reason was because you avoid AGMs, then wrong call guys – because this was one of the most entertaining evenings we have had. Knowing how most people view these annual events, John Hemsley and Peter Godwin skilfully wove the business bits into a game of Wine Call My Bluff. They did a great job and ensured they will be called on to do this again.

As far as the business went, nothing contentious – reviews of what all agreed had been an enjoyable year, satisfactory finances and so on. The minutes will be posted shortly, but for the record the main points –

- Hazel Rimmer has decided she would like a well deserved rest from the post of secretary. Our thanks to Hazel for her Grand Cru service over the years
- Sallie Payne has agreed to take on the new post of membership secretary and has lots of ideas for boosting membership
- a timely reminder that WSWS has a constitution – probably only known to a handful of long standing members; duly unearthed, it has been declared well past its drinking date and decidedly vinegary – so your committee is creating a new vintage which will be tasted at an EGM later in the year.

Back to the wines. We tasted 8 and were given 3 alternative descriptions for each wine by 3 different speakers. We formed into 4 teams – the Sevens (because there were 7 on their table) Plonkers (because they were), Hiccups and Vines and our challenge was to choose which description was correct and to estimate the price within 49p. This was not as easy as it sounds because each presenter had been given information on a real wine and so were convinced that their's was the correct one. Descriptions were given with drama, seriousness, even emotion – and all

with great conviction. Pricing the wine was even harder and if memory is right, only one price estimate came within the 49p – partly thanks to Messrs John and Peter having found some of the wines at rather unusual discounts.

First and most important was that all the wines, 4 whites and 4 reds, were very enjoyable – I know our organisers will say but of course, but we did appreciate it all the same. Well, it's not everyday that you drink a wine from India, but that's where the first one came from and I must give it its full title – Omar Khayyam, Royal Maharashtra Narayangaon – dry and crisp, it fooled a lot of people who thought it was either from Australia or Sussex. The second white could have been a Verdicchio or a Vernaccia from Italy but it proved to be the Cono Sur Viognier from Italy – not the greatest example but recognisable at least to some of us.

We then had to choose which of the 3 Chardonnays we were being served – Argentina, California or France – and it was the first, a 2004 Alamos from Mendoza. A really nice mouthful; and excellent value at £6.25. We were offered a really mixed bag of choices for the last white which proved to be a Southbank Estate Riesling from Hawkes Bay in NZ – the nose gave it away, you could have run a white van on this and you don't get that with Pinot Gris from Alsace or Vinho Verde from Portugal.

The whistle then went for half time and the scoreboard showed the Vines team with a 100% record in identifying the wines and leading the Plonkers by 2 points, followed by Sevens and the Hiccups (the last presumably having difficulty tasting the wines).

The second half started with a luscious red, richly flavoured and full bodied. The choices – a Cab/Merlot from Vergelgen Estate in S Africa, the 2003 Ravenswood Lodi Zinfandel from California and a Kangarilla Road Shiraz from S Australia. This was a tough call for most, but from my wife's ecstatic reaction which started with yummy, yummy it was obviously the Zinfandel. So another good call, but the next one was no easier – a big wine with lots of alcohol and loads of cherry flavours. Not chocolatey enough for the Chilean Carmenere and definitely not a Pinotage from S Africa so it had to be the Zonte's Footsteps Shiraz/Viognier from

Summer Party 2006

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Western Oz – that J/P had found on the net at the amazing price of £5.22

The final red proved easier – the lighter almost sweet style and lovely spicy nose made the Valpolicella Classico Superiore Ripasso the choice for most people over the SMV 2002 from Fairview in S Africa and The Fergus from Tim Adams in S Oz

Last but not least – 3 stickies. And here the Vines Team after a superb clear round so far fell at the last fence. It was not the Late Harvest Semillon nor the Essensia Orange Muscat from California but the Late Harvest Sauv Blanc from Chile.

Ah well you can't win them all, but the Vines had done enough by the whistle for full time to finish as clear winners ahead of the Plonkers with Sevens and Hiccups bringing up the field.

Apologies for a few mixed metaphors but this was a truly excellent evening and our thanks again to John and Peter for masterminding it. And lots of thanks also to the presenters for their enthusiastic performances.

(Also many thanks to Peter for yet another excellent and entertaining report. Ed.)

Membership

Please note that annual subs (£15) were due on 1st May. If you have overlooked your payment, and you are unable to attend this month's meeting, please send you sub to David – use the form below.

This year our “theme” is **PINK** – and that means there will be at least one bottle of rose! However, the observant among you, may notice some whites and reds as well. (It is not recommended that you mix these 50/50 as you may lose some of the subtlety of the original components!)

A Party Committee has been formed and details of wines/food etc have yet to emerge. If past parties are anything to go by, this will be another 'not-to-be-missed' event.

The party is to be at Hazel's house,. Kick off 1800 hrs, last whistle, 2200 hrs.

There will be an opportunity to reserve your place(s) for the Party at the July meeting next week. **However if you are not expecting to go to that meeting it is important that you fill in the form below and send it to David by the last day in July.**

WSWS Website

If you were unfortunate enough to have missed the AGM you may not have heard that we have our very own website.

Visit westsurreywinesociety.org.uk and tell us what you think of it.

It is still in development so keep an eye on it as it is hoped that a number of improvements, including a “members only” section will be added.