



Newsletter

WSWS

Our next event is held on:

Monday 13th June
7:30pm start for AGM

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

June 2011 edition

AGM (short and sweet!) followed by Champagne tasting - Richard Bampfield MW

For our June champagne and sparkling wine tasting, we are delighted to welcome back Richard Bampfield, whom many of you will remember spoke to our society last November. As well as being an excellent speaker, Richard is a MW and European Champagne Ambassador. His knowledge and passion for champagne is outstanding and this is an event not to be missed!

Richard will be showing us a selection of champagne and sparkling wines from small producers as well as the well known producers like Bollinger, Moet and Dom Perignon.

Diary notes

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

Monday 13th June 2011	AGM (short and sweet!) followed by Champagne tasting - Richard Bampfield MW
Saturday 20th August 2011	Summer B-B-Q kindly hosted by Graham and Judy Parlett
Monday 19th Sept. 2011	'Wines of Italy' with Victor Chapman and Sergio De Luca of Enotria Wines
Monday 17th October 2011	'South African Wines' with Keith Grainger, founder member of AWE
Monday 21st Nov. 2011	Latest wine finds' with Chris Horridge
Monday 19th December 2011	Christmas party !!

Who's who in the Committee?

Sallie - Committee Chair

Graham - The money man

Geoffrey (M)- Secretary & all things snail

Peter - Events co-ordinator

Geoff Rose

Summer party details

This year's summer B-B-Q is kindly hosted by Graham and Judy Parlett on Saturday 13th August at 6.30pm with carriages at 10.15pm. The cost is £20 pp for both members and guests. Members wishing to attend should please send a cheque to Graham Cook by 31st July.

May Meeting

The Wines of Southern Germany by David Petche, Petersfield Wines

Peter Smith

Speaker David Petche has imported both his wife and his wines from Southern Germany, but despite our efforts he studiously avoided telling us which love came first. For those of us not familiar with this part of Germany the wines were quite a revelation, offering far more fruit and ripeness than those of the Mosel and Rhine and we learnt that reds, primarily Spaetburgunder or Pinot Noir, are at least as important as the whites.

As David explained, this is the warmest part of the country where the grapes can ripen fully. The soils are also very different from the river valleys to the north as they are mainly deep loess soils which allow the vine's roots to penetrate 50 feet down where they can tap into nutrients that lead to the fuller and more varied flavours the area is known for. He handed around samples of the crumbly yellow loess for us to see.

David has a very soft voice so people sitting at the rear tables found it hard to hear everything he told us, added to which he seemed to prefer to give out information in answer to questions which made it quite hard work and led to some of those sitting at the back of the room feeling frustrated. (I was reminded of Gaston Hochar from Chateau Musar who famously told an upstart questioner – "I do not speak about my wines – they speak for themselves"). But one way and another we, at least those in earshot, did learn a lot of interest and made us realise that the German industry is not as one dimensional as some of us had thought. We would all have guessed that it is highly regulated; for example if the label states the variety and vineyard then the wine must be 100% from both, and if the grower has excess production there is no option of a second label – it has to be thrown away or used for fruit juice. But I don't think many of us knew that red wines account for 50% of German production and 55% of all wine consumed – though exports are still predominantly white.

The wines came from small vineyards south of Baden mainly in the Ortenau area. This of course is the Black Forest (why Black, people asked, but nobody really knew – answers on a postcard please) and from the pictures David had brought to show us looked most attractive and well worth a visit - rolling wooded hills, narrow valleys and picturesque old villages (but not a cuckoo clock in sight). (Coincidentally we will be in Germany soon for a few days so may head south and explore!) There are 15,000 wine farms in the region, all small and typically run by husband and wife teams producing 10,000 – 20,000 bottles a year. Most of the wines are sold very locally and in fact one, Clemens Lang, has a maximum range of 13kms – apart from Petersfield of course.

From the comments, everyone at least found the wines much to their liking but for the most part rather expensive – though David assured us his prices are similar to those you would pay in Germany. So what did the wines tell us? Well the first white – Wolf Metternich's 2009 Riesling Kabinett - said I have lots of flavour, am easy to drink, have a nice clean finish and am so much more interesting than my northern cousins. And that really set the scene rather well. Lang's 2008 Grauburgunder Spaetlese (Pinot Gris) had been left on the vine 3 weeks longer and was fuller, a touch buttery and had more alcohol thanks to the longer ripening period - more of a food wine than for drinking on its own. Andreas Laible was Germany's top young wine maker of the year in 2009 when he also made the Riesling Spaetlese Alte Rebe which is his top wine. Had we been giving points this would probably have come top with us too – very intense and full bodied with plenty of fruit. The 2008 Scheurebe Spaetlese from Heinrich Maennie made us think we were drinking Gewurztraminer but the Scheurebe is a Riesling/local grape cross – delicate, sweet but not sweet and a scented finish – so like a Gewurzt, good with Asian food.

The reds were all Spaetburgunders (much nicer, chewier word than Pinot Noir). Lang's 2008 Kabinett was light with a bit of grip but low on character – the only disappointment of the evening. We compared this with his 2008 Spaetlese – the longer ripening period had changed the wine into a much fuller more intense product with plenty of fruit. Both these wines had been kept in the traditional 800L barrels which are used for generations – so the only difference was 3 weeks longer on the vines. The third red, Alfred Huber's 2007 Spaetlese had been kept in 200L standard oak barriques. Lots flavour but very oaky and some divided opinions as there were bottle differences. However – Jancis Robinson rated this wine very highly (16 out of 20) and though it costs £15.70 from David you have to pay over £25 at the General Wine Company in Liphook. Some members noted that all the reds were maturing much earlier than Pinots from other countries – David suggested this is because they are made for the local German market which prefers to drink young wines.

The obligatory sticky finale was a 2004 Sauvignon Blanc Auslese from Metternich. Not perhaps the variety we might have expected but clean and simple despite high residual sugar. This led to a last discussion on the various quality levels in German wines. We did not go into full detail but some interesting facts emerged linking them to the time of picking. So in this area a Kabinett is picked towards the end of September (usually the only really dry wines), Spätlese 2 or 3 weeks later, Auslese at the end of October, Beerenauslese in November and Eiswein in December when the temperature has to be at least -12C. So the longer the grapes are left on the vines the higher the sugar level which is then converted to higher alcohol and higher residual sugar levels. Simple really!



A Taste of Ports in the Cape

Peter Smith

Few people, even those familiar with the Cape and its wines, know that South Africa has a thriving port industry producing top quality wines. Maybe that's because we all associate port with just Portugal or more likely because the port producing region is centred 5 hours away from trendy Cape Town in the dusty little town of Calitzdorp in the Little Karoo. To go to Calitzdorp and this part of the Little Karoo is to go back in time. A small sleepy town tucked under the majestic Swartberg Mountains, burning hot in summer and full of wonderful old Victorian and Edwardian houses that have so far escaped the restoration wave that has swept through other old towns. Apart from port the main business here is ostrich farming.

South Africa has of course been producing fortified wines since the late 1600's with the famous wines of Constantia. They started to produce port in the early 1800's when the British arrived in the Cape, basing it on a range of grape varieties, and continued successfully until after the Second World War when it declined. Today's quality production dates from the late 1980's and the formation in 1992 of the South African Port Producers Association (SAPPA) which now has a membership of 30 cellars. Though these are spread across the Cape, the centre of quality production is Calitzdorp. Why – because of the Nel family who own Boplaas and have been producing port for well over 100 years and the dry, poor, well drained soils and hot, dry climate that suit the traditional Portuguese varieties.

The top producers are Boplaas and De Krans and they usually vie to take all the top awards in Platter, wine shows and competitions etc. Both estates use only traditional port grape varieties. We visited both of these in March and enjoyed excellent tastings of top quality ports that easily compete with the all but the best Portuguese. The main difference is that the South African style is generally sweeter - reflecting their amazingly sweet teeth – though fortunately for my palate the trend now is to drier styles.

At De Krans we tasted their Ruby - OK for everyday, Vintage 2008 - nicely rounded but a little light, Vintage Reserve 2007 – lots more depth, quite sweet but a drier finish, and the Tawny (8 years in barrel) which was absolutely wonderful - pungent flavours, round and firm with an almost dry finish. We then decamped across the road to Boplaas's atmospheric tasting room where we savoured their Chocolate

Vintage – yes it does have chocolate flavours and a nice dry finish so who needs the After 8's with this around?, Vintage Reserve 2007 – really classy, smooth and rich, and their Tawny (10 years in barrel) – Xmas pudding on the nose and rich in mouth but not quite up to the De Krans Tawny. We also tried Peter Bayly's Vintage reserve 2007 which Boplaas are hosting while he builds a tasting room – very impressive and probably the best of the Vintage Reserves. Elsewhere we drank the Axe Hill Vintage 2008 which also impressed but a bit sweet for me. The last two producers are very small but highly regarded cellars on the edge of Calitzdorp.



If you are taking the very scenic Route 62 to or from Cape Town do allow time to stop in Calitzdorp and enjoy this unspoilt old town, its excellent restaurants and B&B's and of course its ports. If you are there in June then drop in to the annual Port Wine Festival – you will need warming up as the winters are as cold as the summers are hot. And then further along Route 62 "Ronnie's Sex Shop" awaits you and as we found out is a great place to have a change a car tyre!

WEST SURREY WINE SOCIETY;

ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING 13 JUNE 2011;

LOCATION; The Blacknest Golf Club. 7:30pm start

- 1.) Welcome.
- 2.) Apologies.
- 3.) Approval of the minutes of the 2010 AGM.
- 4.) Financial Review.
- 5.) Review of the year.
- 6.) Election of Officers.
- 7.) Membership.
- 8.) AOB

WEST SURREY WINE SOCIETY;

Minutes of the Annual General Meeting 21st. June 2010

LOCATION: The Blacknest Golf Club.

PRESENT; Committee Members: Sallie Payne (Chairman); Graham Cook (Treasurer); Peter Smith (Membership Secretary); Geoffrey Matthews (Secretary).

The AGM took place at 19:30, before the tasting, and was very well attended by members.

1.) **Sallie Payne** welcomed members.

2.) **Apologies;** None

3.) **Approval of the minutes of the 2009 AGM;** David Finch proposed, Graham Parlett seconded and members expressed approval.

4.) **Financial Review:** Graham Cook presented detailed accounts for the year showing a carry forward of £2648.14 and reported as follows:-

The last FY was quite a contrast to the previous one when we made a loss on all but one meeting. With the new charging structure, introduced in May 2009, we have made a profit on all but two of the meetings this year. One of these was the Christmas Dinner, when we had a paid speaker, and the other was the February meeting when the attendance was only 17. We avoided a loss on the March meeting by cancelling it when it became obvious that the attendance would again be poor.

As a result, there has been a fairly large increase in our reserves with rather more money carried forward than expected. This provides a good cushion against future expenses and enables us to be flexible in our choice of future tastings.

It is clear, however, that we have not been spending enough on wine for our tastings. This has been recognised by the committee and attempts are being made to ensure that we include some more expensive wines.

5.) **Review of the year:** Sallie Payne presented a comprehensive review, ranging from 'the charming' Camille Seghesio in July 2009 to the 'larger than life' Christopher Fielden in May 2010. We have been treated to tastings from California and Chile; from France and from the Lebanon. We have had producers and retailers of wine, and we have tasted wines of a great range up to a levels that we would not normally experience. The standard has been very high this year and with every sign of this continuing in the coming year.

6.) **Election of Officers:** The committee is now down to those noted above, barely a quorum when there are unavoidable absences. Sallie made a special plea for volunteers and was rewarded by an offer from Geoffrey Rose that was warmly accepted.

Kim and David Finch retired from the committee but will kindly continue to edit the WSWs Newsletter. They were presented with a bottle of wine each in appreciation of all their hard work.

7.) **Membership;** Sallie reported that we are down on members for this year with events not so well supported in 2010. Sallie urged members to bring friends and neighbours to enjoy wine tastings and noted that we have a full diary of coming events already prepared.

8.) **AOB;** Sallie reported that her Catering Committee for the Summer Party on August 14th. Had already met and delicious food is being organised for the event. The theme is 'England', so members might like to think about a touch of red and white clothing for the evening.