



Next meeting: Monday 16th March
7:30pm start

March 2009

Fine Wines of Burgundy

Richard Household - Managing Director of Revelstoke Wines

Richard is the Managing Director of Revelstoke Wine Company, having founded the company 12 years ago in Wimbledon. Richard worked for a small specialist city wine merchant before setting up his own wine company. His passion for wine came about as a result of misspent summers working at his grandfather's vineyard in Somerset and a family friend's vineyard in Bordeaux!

The tasting trip around Burgundy will include wines from Domaine Meo Camuzet, quite simply one of the finest domaines in Burgundy and Chateau de Cary Potet who make stunning Montagnys. We will also taste wines from Domained Maratray-Dubreuil and Chateau Genot Boulanger. Richard will discuss the role of the negociant and we will taste winers from Pierre Bouree, a well established Burgundy negociant based in Gevrey-Chambertin. Founded in 1846, they own some wonderful holdings and produce a wide range of classic red and white wines. Thus should be another memorable tasting with very fine Burgundy wines.

Note: due to the cost of wines being tasted, the attendance fee for guests will be £15.

Diary notes

Make a note of the following dates, (WSWS always meets on 3 rd Monday of the month unless stated) mystery pre-meeting wine at 7:30 onward; meeting commences at 8pm	
16 th March	<u>Fine Wines of Burgundy</u> Richard Household - Managing Director of Revelstoke Wines
20 th April	<u>New and exciting developments in Portuguese Wines</u> Tasting led by Raymond Reynolds a specialist in Portuguese wines
18 th May	<u>Details to be announced</u> <u>(Surprise!!)</u>
15 th June	<u>AGM (oh yes, and some wine to taste)</u>

Who's who in the Committee?

Graham C - The money man

Sallie - Committee Chairman

Geoffrey - Secretary & all things snail

Peter - Events co-ordinator

Kim & David - Editors (Executive & "still" in-training)

Additional help:

Graham P (The web master "tekkie")

February Meeting Report by Peter Smith

Paul Jaboulet Aine Renaissance

Anne-Hélène Delage, Paul Jaboulet Aine, and Amy Mathews, Liberty Wine

Orders for 4 cases of these not exactly cheap wines were proof that members were won over by Jaboulet's new style wines - and possibly also by their charming presenter Marie-Helene, the Jaboulet UK rep, and equally charming Amy from Liberty, their UK import agent. The opportunity to taste across a really representative cross section of wines from one of the big names of the Northern Rhone attracted a large audience which was not disappointed.

Jaboulet has been an iconic name in the Rhone since it was established in 1834. Since then it has expanded to include vineyards in both the North and South Rhone including part of the famous Hermitage hill which would today would cost you one million euros for a hectare. However the sudden death in 1998 of the head of the extended Jaboulet family switched their focus to in-fighting over ownership rather than the quality of the wines and the halo slipped. As so often in these situations the only solution was to sell and in 2006 the company was bought by the Frey family who already had major interests in Champagne and Bordeaux.

The Freys moved in with a large new broom – new managers and winemaker, huge investment, lots of new oak, new modern labels and so on – and poured away thousands of litres of wines considered inferior. Their aim, explained Anne-Helene, was to improve quality but not change the basic Jaboulet style. All the wines we tasted were post the Frey takeover and notable for their freshness and clarity.

We started with a 100% Grenache Rose from the south of France – light but much more to it than just another pretty little thing – and then moved into the whites starting with the entry level 2007 Blanc Parallele 45, so named because the 45° line of latitude is only 2 kms from the cellar. A blend of Grenache, Viognier (for richness) and Bourboulenc, it was light and refreshing. The mid-range Mule Blanche 2006 - named after the mules once used in the vineyards – was a blend of Rousanne/Marsanne, the only white varieties allowed for Crozes Hermitage. A serious wine with aging potential, but a wine to drink not too cold to appreciate the complex fruits. Still oaky after 10months in barrel, the wine will mellow with age. Top of the range 2005 Hermitage Le Chevalier de Sterimberg was wonderful – dry but honeyed and destined to become more aromatic with age (Anne-Helene's words). The whites are grown at the top and bottom of the famous hill to preserve acidity that the higher temperatures of the slopes would destroy.

The first entry level red, a fruity and very drinkable 2007 Syrah from the south attracted a lot of orders. As did the 2006 Cotes du Rhone Rouge Thalabert, unoaked Syrah/Grenach, Jaboulet's top-selling label - full of fruit, in your face and drink me young. The mid-range (£30!) Crozes Hermitage Dom de Thalabert 2005 (an excellent year) was much more serious. Grown on stony soils which reflect the heat, the wine was young but warm and chewy with lots to look forward to.

Finally, almost at the top of the range and retailing at around £60, the Hermitage La Petite Chapelle, the second wine of La Chapelle which retails at over £100 (a bottle I would add), but treated no less seriously. Blended from grapes grown on different parcels of that hill, it drank surprisingly easily but was clearly not showing the flavours that only several years of patience would release.

Renaissance achieved? Probably yes judging by the wines' clean flavours and freshness but the serious wines were young and the jury must wait several more years to be sure.

Tasting notes....

Running a wine society is not all grief – ask any of the past committee members how they felt about spending time with other like-minded wine lovers and taste wines while discussing forthcoming wine society meetings, and I'll bet they all say how much they enjoyed themselves.

So, it is with enthusiasm that the Committee recently met and, one item on the agenda was to discuss the need for another committee member. Thus it was agreed (the particular red of the moment was also agreeable if I remember correctly).

The departure from the Committee earlier this year by Peter Godwin left a chasm that we need to fill. Expertise is not essential, while enthusiasm is the only pre-requisite.

The Committee meets 4 or 5 times a year, for a 2 hour meeting, normally on a Sunday late afternoon.

If any member would like to be co-opted onto the committee, then please talk to Sallie Payne.



'It's a naïve domestic Burgundy without any breeding, but I think you'll be amused by its presumption.'

The following e-mails were recently received, and may be of interest to members:

Dear WSWS,

I came across your website recently and read with interest several of the recent newsletters and tasting notes. We are a small, family-owned vineyard in Gascony, SW France – producers of Cotes de Gascogne, Floc de Gascogne and Bas-Armagnac.

I wonder if you would mind keeping our details on file in case anyone within your group is interested in visiting this area, and specifically, our vineyard. We regularly welcome groups for tours/tastings and lunches and would be delighted to welcome your members to Lauroux.

Our website – www.lauroux.com gives lots of information about the vineyard and what we do here.

Thank you for your help,
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La Madelene Rhone Wine Holidays

Dear Wine Lover,

It's no exaggeration to say the wines of the southern Rhone are on a roll. Mr.Parker has recently declared the 2007 vintage to be "the vintage of a lifetime" following on the heels of a string of successful vintages. Furthermore, the Rhone is undergoing unprecedented change - a new generation of winemakers is challenging the practice of their parents whilst acknowledging their debt to the legacy, modernists and even postmodernists(!) are defying wine making tradition with a new ripe fruit focus, experimentation in the cave and new luxury cuvees are everywhere.

In the light of the above, has your wine tasting group you considered a tasting tour of the Rhone?

La Madelene Rhone Wine Holidays is a small residential wine tour specialist - the only one operating in the English language in the region. We offer superb accommodation (see gallery space at www.rhonewineholidays.com) and private visits and tastings to many of the region's top domaines such as Beaucastel, Pegau, Vatican, Solitude, La Nerthe, Clos du Caillou, Saint Cosme, Mordoree, Goubert, Montirius and many more. Groups are small – maximum 8 – and the tours are in English. Your host is Rhone enthusiast and WSET approved wine educator Philip Reddaway. You will walk in the vineyards, including the famous Le Crau plateau at Chateauneuf, talk to the principal winemaker as he or she talks with passion about their terroir and their wine making philosophy, as you taste. Around 50 wines will be sampled over our Selected Domaines 3 night tour.

You will stay with us in our carefully restored 12th c. priory surrounded by orchards and vineyards at the foot of Mont Ventoux. We have a wine education "atelier"as well as many terraces and an 11x6 m pool designed for perfect relaxation. Your meals will feature local Provencal produce and fine wines either at our table or at our favourite local restaurants. Transport for the tour is a very comfortable 9 seater Mercedes Vito.

We are well aware that in the current economic climate budgets are tight - although we have a standard tariff on our web-site if you give us a group budget we are happy to put together a bespoke solution that your group will find affordable - try us! - please contact us at rhonewineholidays@googlemail.com or phone 00 33 (0) 490 62 1933 or mobile 00 33 (0) 490 62 1933. Standard tour dates are to be found on our web site or we may be able to organize something around your preferred travel dates.

We look forward to hearing from you, best wishes from Provence

Philip and Jude Reddaway

www.rhonewineholidays.com; www.bighouseinprovence.com

If you are interested in keeping in touch with what is going on in and around La Madelene, then please [join our mailing list](#).