



Newsletter

WSWS

Our next event is held on:

Monday 16th May

7:30pm for 8:00pm start

West Surrey Wine Society

<http://www.westsurreywinesociety.org.uk>

May 2011 edition

The Wines of the Baden Region of Southern Germany

David Petche - Petersfield Wines

Baden is the odd one out in the German wine regions, producing wines very different from the rest of the country and also different from each other and a far cry from the pleasant but so often mediocre white wines of the Mosel and the Rhine.

As David's wife comes from the Baden area he has had lots of opportunity over the course of many years to make many visits and do much wine drinking. Based on this extensive research he has got to know the wines from the small vineyards around Freiburg very well and has been importing them since retiring from the pharmaceutical industry (which by happy chance also caused him to visit nearby Basel regularly).

We will be tasting wines from 5 small vineyards, all less than 10 hectares in size. We will be tasting a mix of both white and red wines. The whites include Riesling, Grauburgunder (Pinot Gris), Scheurebe and Sauvignon Blanc. The reds are some fine examples of Späetburgunder or Pinot Noir. Red wines are unusual in Germany and are usually thin and disappointing, however as Baden is the only part of the country warm enough for this grape to ripen fully the wines are much fuller and fruitier. David has known all the growers for a long time and will be able to provide us with the more interesting backgrounds and anecdotes we like hear but most wine merchants cannot provide.

So this is not your standard German tasting but a great opportunity to taste a range of quality wines from an interesting area that is only just starting to be known outside of Germany. And by Peter Smiths' memory, this is the first German tasting for at least 20 years – so do please come and support what will be a first for most members.

Diary notes

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

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| Monday 16th May 2011 | The wines of the Baden Region of Southern Germany David Petche of Petersfield Wines |
| Monday 13th June 2011 | AGM (short and sweet!) followed by Champagne tasting - Richard Bampfield MW |
| Saturday 20th August 2011 | Summer outing - Visit to Denbies vineyard |
| 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 |

Who's who in the Committee?

Sallie - Committee Chair

Peter - Events co-ordinator

Graham - The money man

Geoff Rose

Geoffrey (M)- Secretary & all things snail

WSWS MEETING: 18th April – notes by Peter Smith

The Corkscrew: A thing of Beauty – John Ericson; Accompanied by Wines from Around the World

According to Wikipedia, *"A corkscrew is a kitchen tool for drawing stopping corks from wine bottles. Generally, a corkscrew consists of a pointed metallic helix (often called the "worm") attached to a handle"*. Well, that sounds very straightforward and rather mundane – until you meet John Ericson, recently retired from Bath University, giver of talks on an extraordinary range of subjects – and a self-confessed corkscrew anorak! But he is not alone – he is a member of the Canadian Corkscrew Collectors Club (*the* international organisation) which has over 300 members across the world and holds an annual 3 day international conference. Add to this the thousands of collectors (one in Copenhagen has a collection of over 15,000) paying up to £20,000 at auction for rare corkscrews and you get the idea that Wiki might be oversimplifying. John's talk, illustrated with an informative and amusing set of slides, made 2 hours pass in no time – well lubricated by Sallie's excellent selection of wines of which more later.

The humble corkscrew dates back to the introduction of the straight sided bottle, itself a revolution as it enabled bottles to be stored on their sides in space-saving 'bins' – which led to the discovery of the benefits of 'laying wines down'. John was a mine of interesting snippets – 'bins' was the basis of our 'bin ends' beloved by bargain hunters, and the staff who carried bottles from the cellar to the house were called bottlers – the origin of butler. Anyway, these straight sided bottles were closed with cork stoppers and they needed to find a way to remove them. Corkscrews, or pulls or drawers as they were first called, were first mentioned in 1681 and may have derived from a gun worm used to clean musket barrels (never underestimate a thirsty soldier's ingenuity). The first recorded patent was in 1795 when the Reverend Samuel Henshall developed the button – the disc, now called a henshall, between the helix or worm and the handle that prevented the worm going too deep into the cork and forcing the cork's seal with the glass to break. Today the corkscrew is the most patented of household design with over 3,000 patents.

John told us that there are 10 categories of corkscrew and each contains numerous different versions demonstrating great ingenuity and inventiveness – so the range and choice is enormous. And added to this there are 6 different types of worm including a bladed worm for crumbling corks. Everyone's favourite was undoubtedly the first he showed us – the Champagne Tap that allows you to draw a glass without removing the seal or cork (if you don't believe it I have the photo!) – it has a long hollow worm with a small tap in the side. To describe all those that John showed us would take a lot of pages, but to give members who were not present a taste we saw spring pulls, single levers, double levers and compound levers (or lazy tongs) which give huge leverage, sliding framed and framed. This last category which contains the biggest group of all - coffee grinders.

Coffee grinders come in a huge range of ingenious versions – clutch rings, ratchet mechanisms, rack and pinion gears and reverse screws or 'hermaphradites' that remove the cork out of the bottle as you keep turning and then release it from the worm. Then there are figurals which of course include some naughty versions, flat backs, bar pulls, miniatures for picnics. Not all corkscrews feature screws or worms – back in the 1970's a device that worked by inserting a needle through the cork and pumping in air or a gas was trendy, others have 2 thin strips of metal you wriggle down the sides of the cork.

There are countless interesting variations – some that stick in the mind are the little brushes on the side of a lot of models that make them look like shaving brushes but were in fact to brush the dust off the bottle caps, the double lever in the shape of an owl that could also be used a nutcracker and the Syrocco figures made from pressed sawdust in Syracuse, New York State. And of course John's personal favourite – ladies' legs that look French but are German - and the barer the legs the more valuable they are. John finished with his party trick – removing a cork that has been pushed into a bottle with his handkerchief -

and yes you doubters it did work and I am sure some members will be keen to demonstrate their new found skill at the next meeting (clean handkerchiefs recommended).

And then of course we had wines. Sallie had put a lot of thought into putting together a selection that compared Old and New World that were served at regular intervals through the evening, the first served at 8.05pm prompt. We started with an English sparkling wine from Ridgeview in Sussex – fresh and crisp but at nearly £20 a bit short on flavour I thought. We then compared the Mercurey Clos des Barraults 2006 with a Maycas del Limari Reserva 2007 from Chile – both were lovely with soft fruit and a hint of richness, the former more elegant and the latter richer and longer – no clear winner here. The final white was a stickie – Ch de Fesles 2001 from Bonnezeaux in the Loire – almost mead-like, rich and honeyed with a clean finish.

The first pair of reds were Malbecs, the Ch de Gaudou 2008 from Cahors and Terrazas de Los Andes Reserva 2006 from Argentina. Both were nice chewy wines and again no real winner though the latter was already drinking well while the former was still a bit tannic in true Cahors style and needs several more years when it should be great (wonder what they were like before bottles could be laid down?) Finally 2 very different Grenache based wines – a Formiga de Vellut 2008 Priorat from Spain and a 2006 Chateauneuf de Pape Dom de la Janesse 2006. Almost impossible to compare. The Priorat was easy drinking, fruity and well structured. The Chateauneuf was quite extraordinary- liquorice nose, blackberry fruit, rich and almost sweet but with no acidity or tannin so you could be forgiven for describing it as a 'super Ribena' – except it cost £30, over twice the price of the former. To be fair there was some bottle difference and the other bottle was a bit more balanced. (For information on suppliers and costs of the wines please contact Sallie).

So – a really enjoyable evening, and any doubts that a talk that was not primarily about wine would not work were soon dispelled. The format worked really well and I am sure will be repeated before long.

New members are always welcome, please call 01252 782726 for further information.

Membership fees of £20 were due from 1st May

If you have not already paid and you are not coming to the May Meeting, please could you send them to Graham Cook. Many Thanks

WSWS SUMMER OUTING TO DENBIES VINEYARD, SATURDAY 20TH. AUGUST 2011.

Instead of a WSWS Summer Party in a member's garden, this year the committee proposes a special group visit to Denbies Wine Estate, Dorking.

The management has kindly agreed to provide experts from the vineyard and the cellars to answer our questions, aware that we are a well-informed group.

The proposed time-table is as follows:-

10.00 am coach from Sainsbury's Water Lane, Farnham, car park. The pick-up point is in a lay-by outside Sainsbury's 'compound', just behind the Petrol station. For the record Farnham Coaches have insurance, individuals may arrange their own insurance, if required.

11.00 am 'Ultimate Wine Experience' tour starts with a 'Virtual Vineyard Tour', a '20 minute surround vision film, full of amazing special effects instantly transports you into a magical world of Wine'.

This is followed by the Winery 'Indoor Train Tour', leaving the cinema you are transported at ease by our indoor 'people mover'. Passing through the working winery, with a full commentary, you will see the equipment used in today's wine production. Finally the 'journey ends in the atmospheric Denbies cellars' with a Cellar Tasting of three selected wines.

12.30 pm, The intention is to have our own allocated space for a light self-service lunch, £8.95 each for a

Denbies Vineyard Ploughman's Lunch or Jacket Potato Lunch. Restaurant lunches are available also picnic facilities, to choice. Wines are available to individual choice.

14.00 pm, The Vineyard Tour, this 45 minute train tour 'takes visitors to the most beautiful viewing points in the vineyard'.

15.30 pm Leave Denbies.

16.30 Arrive back at Sainsbury's Water Lane, Farnham, pick-up point.

Please note, times are approximate, the intention is to enjoy a relaxed day, hopefully with a 'Summer Party' atmosphere! There are good opportunities for some 'retail therapy' as required.

The cost is £22. Food and wine is (additional according to personal taste) and is purchased by attendees.

Will members who want to come, please confirm by completing the response form below, and return to Geoffrey – address details on accompanying e-mail. Please include a SAE so that the arrangement can be confirmed.

Last date for cheques 16 May 2011 (date of May WSWS Meeting).

WSWS SUMMER OUTING 20 AUGUST 2011

I/We enclose a cheque for £ to cover places on the trip.

We also include a SAE.

Name, address, telephone and e-mail and mobile number: