



Next meeting: Monday 17th November  
7:30pm sample for 8.00pm start

November 2008

## Sherry & Tapas

Brian Buckingham returns to WSWS in November to take us through the delights of sherry, accompanied with tapas. This will be Brian's third visit to WSWS, but this is the first time we've matched sherry to food – so something new for everyone.

Brian founded the Sherry Institute in 1982 in response from the sherry producers of Jerez, and is now widely acknowledged as the leading authority on sherry in the UK. Brian holds the Spanish decoration "Commander of the Order of Civil merit" for services to the wines of Spain, and in 1988 was elected a member of the Gran Orden de Caballeros del Vino of Spain.

As there's food involved, we need to be able to book the food for the right number of people. If any members are unsure that they have booked the correct number of places, please could you let us know changes that are required. Or if you now plan to come – the more people, the merrier! Please contact David & Kim to confirm attendance by Sunday 9<sup>th</sup> November. Standard attendance fee applies, members £10; guests £12.

## Future meetings

Make a note of the following dates. WSWS **always meets on 3rd Monday** of the month unless stated; Mystery pre-meeting wine at 7:30 onward; meeting commences at 8pm

<b>17<sup>th</sup> November 2008</b>	Sherry & Tapas An unusual evening, matching the spectrum of sherries with food and led by the popular Bryan Buckingham from The Sherry Institute
<b>15<sup>th</sup> December 2008</b>	Christmas dinner at Blacknest Golf Club Booking required, £30 each
<b>19<sup>th</sup> January 2009</b>	Superb range of quality wines from South Africa Keith Cooper; Whitewater Valley Wine Society
<b>16<sup>th</sup> February 2009</b>	mystery tasting (ED: So not yet finalised then?)
<b>16<sup>th</sup> March 2009</b>	Fine Wines from Burgundy. Richard Household, Managing Director Revelstoke Wines
<b>20<sup>th</sup> April 2009</b>	New & exciting developments in Portuguese Wines Tasting led by Raymond Reynolds (Specialists in Portuguese Wines)

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## October meeting – Unusual Grape Varieties

Presented by David Grandorge MW

As befits a past Director of Wine at Waitrose, David had selected a range of the more unusual wines stocked by the store. David's long experience in the trade – he passed his MW exams back in 1978 when he claimed fame as the 100th successful candidate – was reflected in the wide ranging knowledge he shared with us in a well-paced and enjoyable presentation.

Apparently tastings at Waitrose always started with the reds as 'the whites cleared the tannins off the teeth' and he seemed disappointed we did not do the same. However tradition prevailed and he started us off with a very pleasant Verdejo (not to be confused with Verdelho) from Rueda in Spain. We then moved into unpronounceable territory with a dry but honeyed wine from the Assyrtiko grape from the Greek Island of Santorini (Thira) which had retained its acidity despite the hot climate and was a good example of modern Greek production, and an easy drinking fruity wine based on Gruner Veltliner from Moosburgerin in Austria. A Petit Manseng from Jurancon in SW France provided a delightful dessert wine that was not just sticky but had a nice clean finish with balancing acidity.

Gamay Noir is not an especially unusual grape – at least in Beaujolais - but it is in New Zealand. The example from Te Mata, the oldest estate in the country, in Hawke's Bay and very close to Craggy Range which we tasted in July, was a 2008 and a really light, fresh 'nouveau'. The Peter Lehman Tempranillo from the Barossa was also unusual for playing away from home, and a great contrast to the Gamay with a huge rich body and loads of fruit - very un-Rioja like. A good example of a variety that grows well in different regions but produces quite contrasting styles of wine, whether it is grown in different parts of Spain or further afield.

Zinfandel has become California's 'USP', though widely believed to be the same as Italy's Primitivo. However a Hungarian introduced it to the state where it thrived and its prolific production of big easy-drinking wines made it very popular with gold miners in the 1849 gold rush. One of David's interesting asides was that the Italians used to quietly ship Primitivo to the north of Italy to add body to the local reds – shades of Burgundy and North Africa! Anyway, the Bonterra had kept up Zin's reputation for drinkability and was a bigger spicier wine than examples I have drunk before.

Nebbiolo is not really that unusual a variety, but we rarely get the chance to taste a Barolo. So great expectations of the 2004 Oddero which should have been the evening's blockbuster, especially at nearly £23, but was rather a damp squib for half of us who landed up at the end of a tainted bottle and a disappointment for the other half who felt it was ageing too quickly- which David explained was because of shorter fermentation to enable the wine to be drunk younger – the accountants strike again!

### *Diary notes*

The menu for the Christmas dinner (Blacknest Golf Club 15<sup>th</sup> December 7:30pm for 8.00) is attached to the back of the newsletter. Wines will be selected by the Committee and included in the attendance cost. Members wishing to attend should notify Graham Cook as soon as possible together with choice of food and payment. Cost: £ 30 per member; guests welcome.

**ACTION:** fill in the menu, add a cheque, and confirm attendance for the Christmas dinner

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# In the Vineyard:

a monthly look at what is going on in the Northern Hemisphere

**November** is for “golden brown” – the turning of leaves from green through gold, and to a reddish colour – especially if they are infected by a virus (not necessarily a problem). They don’t last long, dropping off with the first frost. If the vineyard team want to save themselves the trouble of weeding in the forthcoming year, they may sew ground cover crops at this stage.

In the warmth & dry of the vineyard buildings, now is the time for cleaning the wines (clarification), using a fining agent. These attract solids that are in suspension in the wine, causing them to precipitate into sediment at the bottom of the vat / cask. Fining agents vary from special clays, gelatine, egg shells, and for serious red wines, then egg whites may be used.

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## Sampling notes

As the “credit crunch” bites into our pockets, so we naturally start to look a little harder at what we are individually spending, and consider the true value we receive from our purchases. We may be tempted to cut down on some of those excesses (the second bottle of wine; overseas holidays etc) but we should always remember that “value” remains important.

When we think about the cost of a bottle of wine, and the value of the actual wine (beyond the hype of the bottle, label, and marketing), that’s when we start to see the difference between a £3 plonk (cooking wine) and the £8 “let’s try” or the £23 “special”.

So that’s the theory – until we attended the October tasting..... one more theory consigned to the rubbish bin of experience.

**Kim (Executive editor) & David (still in training)**

<u>Who’s who in the Committee?</u>			
Sallie Payne	Our NEW leader (pro-tem)	Peter Smith	Events co-ordinator
Graham Cook	The money man	David & Kim Finch	Newsletter Editors
Sallie Payne	Membership Secretary	Additional help:	
Geoffrey Matthews	Secretary & all things snail-mail	Graham Parlett (The web master tekkie)	

# Christmas menu

## STARTERS

### **Game & port paté**

Served with Crispy salad & port dressing with homemade melba toast

### **Chicken Yakatori**

Served with crispy salad & a sweet chilli dip

### **Salmon & Prawn Timbale**

With fresh brown bread on a bed of baby leaf

## MAIN COURSE

### **Roast Turkey**

Served with all the trimmings

### **Roast Beef**

Served with all the trimmings

### **Champagne and Oyster Mushroom Risotto**

### **Salmon Wellington**

Served with baby new potatoes

**All served with seasonal vegetables**

## DESSERT

### **Traditional Christmas Pudding**

Served with Brandy Sauce

### **Woodland fruit cheesecake**

### **Dark chocolate mousse**

### **Coffee and Mints**

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Name (s):..... Cheque attached (£30 per person) £.....

Please note your choice of menu by initialling each item chosen, and return with your cheque.

Please use initials / names if there are 2 or more people responding on one menu