



News

# WSWS

## WestSurreyWineSociety

September 2006

### Italy

After an over-long absence, we are looking forward to welcoming back **Trevor Ford** for another very personal selection of wines from smaller individual growers. Trevor runs the 57 Restaurant in Liss which specialises in delicious home cooked Italian dishes and is a favourite eating place for a number of WSWS members. He also runs a wine importing business which accounts for his varied and interesting wine list.

We thoroughly enjoyed Trevor's entertaining and personal style when he presented to us before (about 4 years ago) – and of course he knows many of the growers and their families personally which adds hugely to a tasting – so you get not just the wines but full immersion in the people, the food and the country.

We are tasting 3 whites and 5 reds – including Malvasia, Favurita, Roero, Babera, Aglianico - from the north to the south of the country.

A good turn out please – let's start the autumn season in style!

### July Tasting Report

### Grape Varieties from France by William Calpe

Well, I thought this was going to be a short tasting and a simple report – just 6 wines and a bit of background on hotel wine buying policy – not much to write about really. What I hadn't bargained for was William's enthusiasm and enormous store of knowledge and anecdotes gathered from over 30 years as MD of the Goring Hotel in London – one of the few remaining private 5\* hotels. And nor had I realised that he was bringing Sebastiano with him – Head Sommelier at the Goring (the Sommelier's role is to “match the wine with the food and to understand both), all which we found he certainly did). And what a duo they made – their flow undoubtedly helped by the bottle of 1983 Leoville Barton they had enjoyed with their warm-up dinner.

So instead of wondering how I would fill a page the challenge is how to capture it all in not too many pages. Incidentally, attendance was a bit disappointing, and the missing keen Francophiles missed a real treat because even we vinously Francophobes thought the wines were lovely.

We learnt that it was the first tasting William had given though he has been buying wines for over 30 years – his first job at the Goring in 1975 was to enhance the wine list and he has been doing this ever since. There are now over 500 wines on the Goring list and the value of their cellar would even now buy a decent size house in Farnham. He told us to approach wines with confidence - give firm opinions and do ask questions even if they seem silly. For buying wines, he rates Majestic and Odd Bins but is often disappointed by mail order companies and societies.

Why France – because William believes we are in danger of forgetting French wines and for him “there is no place like France”. Interestingly he started the tasting in Alsace – not the first French region most people would think of – because it is one of the most unsung parts of France but arguably the most

### Summer Party

Great time was had by all – comments were all very appreciative.  
Photos in next month's Newsletter

beautiful – a view that those of us who know Alsace would endorse 100%. Thanks to its protected climate, Alsace rarely has a poor vintage and the 2004 Leon Beyer Pinot Blanc was very drinkable – slightly honeyed, light and fruity it was an excellent aperitif wine.

The 2004 Pascal Jolivet Sancerre was from a single vineyard and unoaked which allowed us to enjoy a full bodied Sauv Blanc – on the nose, in William’s words – classic cat’s pee - and in the mouth minerally, crisp but certainly not acidic. An all round wine to enjoy with fish, shell fish or white meats. Sauv Blanc does well in many cooler areas of the world, especially the Loire where this wine was from and of course New Zealand. The mention of mineral flavours led to comparisons with Pouilly Fume and a long discussion on the affects of soil and terroir on flavours. And then on to how modern wine making methods enable drinkable wines to be made even in poor years. Impossible to reproduce here – you should have been there!

The last white was a Chardonnay, Pernand Vergelesses Blanc, from the southern end of the Cote de Beaune and from the hot 2003 vintage. This was a classic – deep colour and cream and vanilla on the nose and the palate – great to drink now but not to keep. Enter Sebastiano, stage left. He had been rather quiet and formal up to then, but when asked by William to suggest food to go with this wine, the wine evangelist came pouring out!

The result of a long and most entertaining discussion – the first of many – was that the perfect match for Sebastiano was Cheddar Cheese. Never, he said, drink red wines with cheese because the lactic acid clashes with the tannins – and how right he is! (William’s rule 1 – say what you think). Sebastiano then launched into a long and complex story of the family who own this vineyard and their various relations on neighbouring estates – all a bit confusing but what was clear was Sebastiano’s more than academic regard for the young lady wine maker!

Well finally Sebastiano drew to a close and with his closing comment “to think out of the box and drink Zinfandel with chocolate” it was on to the reds (all well chosen, with none overshadowing the others) and straight to my favourite French red wine region – the

Southern Rhone. And what better village to choose than Vacqueras.. Anyway, the 2003 Dom Le Clos des Cazaux from just 2 hectares in Vacqueras, had a strong spicy nose and was warm, round and chewy – if any area knew how to handle the heat of 2003 it was the Southern Rhone – great with casseroles and steak and kidney pud.

Burgundies, said William, should be drunk according to the year, but never before 7 years. So we tasted the 2000 - is there a maths problem here? - Clos des Ursules from Beaune. As with many Burgundies this was from a Negociant, the well known Louis Jadot. Though not a great year, the wine was classic PN - soft and fruity, light but not feeble. The last red was from Bordeaux, the 2000 Reserve de la Comtesse from Pauillac – and in fact the second wine from the 2nd Growth estate Pichon Languerville Lalande. The wine was still austere and needed a lot of air to bring out its potential richness and fruit.

9.30pm and time to call the taxi – but Sebastiano was only getting into his stride. “Bordeaux drives me mad he said, ‘because though they can produce the most stunning wines they more often disappoint. And 2005 even madder” – because of the stupid prices. England drove Bordeaux prices higher and higher for 700 years – until now when the Russians, Americans and Middle Easterners have put them beyond reach. If you want to buy, go for second wines such as the one we tasted and less good years and listen to the growers. Why, he said, pay £1,000 for a bottle of Petrus when you can buy 5 cases of Ch Lascalles for the same money and enjoy it for 20 years.

The questions came with a rush and we could have been there till breakfast had Sebastiano’s taxi not arrived. Should we decant – not as routine and certainly not an older wine, only if the wines tastes closed so always taste first. Wine does need oxygen, he agreed, but not too much – it’s a living thing so treat it well. Treat it badly and, like people, it will become ‘grimpy’, though I think he meant grumpy. “I am an ambassador between food and wine”, said Sebastiano, “I have a passion for wine. treat it well – like a nice lady” and on that note he departed – but, we sincerely hope, to return back to us before too long.

*Peter Smith*

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

<b>18<sup>th</sup> September</b>	<b>Trevor Ford - Italy</b>
<b>16<sup>th</sup> October</b>	<b>Simon Taylor – Chile/Argentina</b>
<b>20<sup>th</sup> November</b>	<b>tbc</b>
<b>18<sup>th</sup> December</b>	<b>Christmas Party</b>