

## Meeting Notes

### WEST SURREY WINE SOCIETY: 16 January Meeting 2017.



Gerald Hackemer and Brian Arthur, respectively Chairman and Vice-Chairman of the West Surrey Wine Society, welcomed Tony Hall of 'Bordeaux & Beyond' to a return visit on the 16th. January at the Conservative Club, Ivy Lane, Farnham.

Tony and his two partners have been running their business since 2007, they specialise in wines from France and aim to provide a personal service at a reasonable price doing all the work themselves from a bonded warehouse, they never stock more than 40 wines that they have drunk & tested themselves.

The main focus of the evening was giving members the chance to evaluate and blend red Bordeaux wines, the resulting 'WSWS 2017' blend was then tasted against the professionals'

Ch.Larigaudiere's Winemakers's Blend 2014. This effort was framed by a tasting of two white wines from Bordeaux and a refreshing glass of Champagne followed by a typical red Bordeaux Superieur and Ch.Larigaudiere's 2011 Ch.Haut Breton.

The red wines were divided into two categories, 'left bank' and 'right bank', these appellations refer to the banks of the Gironde estuary of the Garonne river as it discharges into the Atlantic on the west of France at the port of Bordeaux. The 'left bank' looking sea-wards includes some of the most famous, historic and expensive wines available, always known as claret, generically, in England; 60 of

## Meeting Notes

their associated chateaux were placed in a unaltered five class classification in 1855.

The first sample that members tasted was of the white Graves Blanc Ch. de Respide 2015. Sauvignon Blanc, Semillon. Alcohol by Volume (ABV) 12.50% priced at £14.50 a bottle. The left/right bank categorisation does not apply to white wines. Members said, “very pleasing”, Tony said, “clean and fresh, a ’Tuesday evening, apple-pie wine” & “made by an individual, not a factory”. This was followed by another white, Graves Blanc Ch. de Respide, Callipyge 2014 Sauvignon Blanc, Semillon. 12.50% ABV and £14.50 a bottle. The name apparently refers, in Greek, to a woman’s bottom as illustrated on the wooden case, this caused some amusement but no bids, the case itself has attracted premium cash bids in the past! Members detected oak and exotic fruits & more complexity than the previous sample.

A show of hands vote showed this wine to be preferred, (it came top & not bottom).

Next followed the central event of the evening, members choosing their own blend of Ch. Larigaudiere-made wines, defined as high quality AOC Bordeaux Superieur.

There were three wines to taste, Merlot 2014, Cabernet Sauvignon 2014 & Petit Verdot 2014, the blend to be made up as WSWS 2014 and finally Ch. Larugaudiere Winemaker’s Blend 2014.

The Merlot was from Margaux, typically left bank, big fruity and plummy. Interestingly the three constituents ripen at different times, the Merlot first, giving characteristic features to the final blend. The Cabernet Sauvignon, which is actually a feature of right bank wines, had more tannin and black currant flavours. The Petit Verdot was a ’seasoning’ of spice, tannin, leather & violets — —like salt & pepper, one is not really aware of it when present but misses it when absent (or rather more fancifully, like jewellery & ear rings in addition to a woman’s gown).

## Meeting Notes

More than half of members preferred the blended (sum of the parts) wine than the individual wines. Tony then discussed the various possible effects of wine held in steel drums, not barrels, or in American or European oak barrels, new or old oak, there were plenty of possible variations on a taste theme but, of course, members were limited in their choices for one evening.

The WSWS preferred blend was for Cabernet Sauvignon (50%) by a small majority over the merlot (40%), the majority preference for the Verdot was 10%.

When it came to the Winemakers's blend, the preferred proportions were Cabernet Sauvignon 60%, Merlot 30% and 10% Verdot.

A popular red wine diversion was provided by a taste of Champagne Domi Moreau, Cuvee D'Argent NV Chardonnay, Pinot Meunier, Pinot Noir. A good class champagne at £22 a bottle, much appreciated.

The final two red wines were first: Bordeaux Superieur Ch. Montlau, Hors Serie 2010, Merlot, Cabernet Franc. 14% ABV and £25 a bottle. 75% Merlot and 25% Cabernet Sauvignon. Members found this lovely wine smooth, tobacco scented and tasting of liquorice.

The last wine of all was another treat, Ch. Haut Breton, Larigudiere 2011, Margaux. Cabernet Sauvignon, Merlot. Petit Verdot. £27. A very approachable left-wing wine, 85% Cabernet Sauvignon, 10% Merlot.

Displaying the true character of Bordeaux wines, showing excellent balance, harmony and blending. An excellent example of what Bordeaux wines are all about.

Gerald and Brian expressed their gratitude to Tony for an excellent presentation, members applauded vigorously and were most grateful to briefly escape the rigours of an English winter and be exposed to the delights of Bordeaux wines.

# Meeting Notes