

U3A ST AUSTELL WINE APPRECIATION GROUP

APRIL 2021 NEWSLETTER



Dear Wine Group members

Welcome to (nearly) April, Easter and finally some sunny weather, all with the real hope that we can slowly and safely now emerge from lockdowns. Also thank you all for your patience during this past year when our group has been on hold.

Unfortunately I firstly have to give some very sad news that one of our Wine group members, Chris Palmer, passed away peacefully in St Austell hospital on 23rd March not Covid related. I don't have any further details, but would like to say that Chris attended I believe, every wine group meeting and event we had since inception, and I know he enjoyed not only the tasting of wines, but talking about them and especially the

social aspect. Perhaps we can all raise a glass to Chris, who will be sorely missed.

EVENTS (how excited am I to be typing this word)

The first of our Wine events is a visit to local **Knighthor Winery & Restaurant** on July 14th. For those of you who remember from 2 years ago, it was a lovely day firstly spent looking at their display vines, discussing the varieties grown in this country and other regions around the world, with tips on how to grow your own. This was followed by a peek into the winery for a brief introduction to how wine is made, and finally a tasting of four wines (and a Vermouth) and relaxing in the sunny courtyard over a delicious lunch. At the end of this newsletter is a separate sheet giving details, and I would ask that to book your place(s), you pay via BACS as follows, and then confirm your payment to Shirley with your membership number and names for whom you have paid Shirley.salliss@btinternet.com.

SORT CODE 20-30-47
Acc No. 23132587 ST AUSTELL U3A WINE CLUB

ON YOUR PAYMENT REFERENCE PLEASE PUT THE FOLLOWING

“Your membership number XXXX plus KNI “

At last something to put in the diary and something positive to look forward to!

Other possible events:

Summer Garden Party

I would very much like to replicate the fabulous “Garden Party” everyone so enjoyed previously, where we were hosted in the beautiful garden of Chris & Karen Scott. We each took a large platter of food to share plus a bottle or two and spent the entire afternoon outside mingling, chatting and eating and drinking blessed with good weather. Of course we did have bad weather contingency of room inside Chris & Karen’s house. At this point I was going to ask if anyone was brave enough to offer their garden, but I am truly delighted to be able to tell you that Chris & Karen have again generously offered their garden, thanks so very much to

them, you are saints! Once I have had a chat to them about convenient dates, I will mail out further information - a truly relaxing afternoon getting to know each other a little better.

Lunch & Wine Tasting at Edie's Restaurant

I am talking to Edie's Restaurant again about reinstating our cancelled wine tasting with lunch event, waitress served, and having exclusive use. As they have been operating under Covid rules, I feel safe using them in the knowledge their following of the "rules" going forward will be strictly adhered to. This is likely to take place in September.

Wine Tasting at Polgooth Inn

Another current Covid secure venue, where some time ago now, Chris & I enjoyed a very interesting and fun evening wine tasting, with a representative of St Austell Brewery Wines leading the tasting. Perhaps one for late Autumn.

Obviously all these ideas are subject to confirmation, and depend upon no further lockdown restrictions coming into force. I shall keep you updated. However it does feel great to think we may be able to enjoy a few wine group events even without a "base venue".

Wine Reviews

A big thanks go to our regular contributors, for their wine reviews, without which this newsletter would be a lot less interesting.

Janet Harvey gave us two reviews:

Luminoso Leggero Prosecco 8.5%,

<https://www.laithwaites.co.uk> £9.99, or £7.99 as part of a mixed case of 12. Luminoso Leggero is made by the Zonin family. The Zonins are a serious wine-making dynasty, owning over 4000 hectares of land in Italy of which around 2000 are planted with vines. A further 90 hectares of vines are grown Virginia USA. The family's philosophy is to grow vines from specific areas and make wines according to their individual qualities. Their estates are located in seven of Italy's wine-producing Regions: the Veneto, Friuli, Piedmont, Lombardy, Tuscany, Sicily and

Puglia. This particular prosecco hails from the Veneto in Italy and is made from Glera grapes, as is traditional there for making this kind of sparkling wine. The aroma is muted at first, biscuity, almost musty, but in the glass it develops into something more strongly floral. The initial taste seems sweet but rapidly becomes drier as the full peachy taste emerges. It has a gentle, creamy mousse. Billed as 'off-dry', some might find this wine a little too sweet for any-time drinking, or as an aperitif, but it has two definite benefits. One is that it stands up well to strongly-flavoured foods and thus makes a good general drinking wine to go with a meal when one doesn't want to break the bank. The other is that, at only 8.5% alcohol, it's a healthier choice. The name, I have realised, literally means Light Light, which is apt!

Everleaf Marine (<https://www.everleafdrinks.com/>) £18.00

Everleaf is a fairly new company which offers three non-alcoholic aperitifs: Forest, Marine & Mountain. The founder of the company, a conservation biologist turned bartender, was often asked to recommend non-alcoholic drinks as substitutes for spirits. He decided there wasn't anything he could recommend so he decided to create some.

I tried Marine, which is the recommended gin-substitute. It contains 16 botanicals, of which the most prominent are supposed to be juniper, bergamot, labdanum, sea buckthorn, olive leaf and seaweed. I confess I could only pick up the first two of these in the taste. Marine is a clear liquid, the colour of bitter lemon and smelling initially of pear drops. However it is transformed when mixed with 3-parts tonic and a slice of lime, as recommended by the manufacturers. Somehow the tonic releases the juniper and bergamot and the flavours become quite complex. Indubitably it's not gin, but it is definitely an acceptable non-alcoholic aperitif, and a vast improvement on the dull or over-sweet alternatives which are so often all a bar can offer. The website has recommendations for cocktails too. Suitable, obviously, for drivers, it could also be useful for those who like to practise dry January or Lenten abstinence. It is gluten-free and vegan.

Thanks as ever Janet for another pair of great reviews. The Everleaf Marine sounds interesting in particular, and perhaps one to try when trying not to drink alcohol for whatever reason. I quite like the Seedlip range of non-alcoholic drinks, again mixing with tonic.

And a review from Jenny Skipp:

Bianco Vergine Valdichiana Toscana DOP, 12.5% 2019

We just opened this bottle and were really surprised at how much we both enjoyed it. It came as part of a mystery case recently from Laithwaites, so had to check the price - it is normally around £9.49.

We found it really fruity, but also very soft, with no acidity to it.

A really easy drinking wine, and probably even more so as it was our first glass of wine on the patio this year. The sunshine is definitely something we all need.

Thanks very much Jenny, "Tuscany usually known for its Chianti reds, can also make dashing crisp whites. This tongue tingling, citrusy 2019 comes from the talented, award winning Paolo Masi. Mainly Trebbiano with Chardonnay and Malvasia, it is appetising and stony lemon fruit and should perfectly complement fish, charcuterie and soft cheeses."



And a 2nd review from Jenny:

Valle de Colchagua, Merlot 2019 14.5% . We found this while looking for something a bit different to include in our 6 bottles with 25% off offer at Tesco, the offer runs until 6th April. It is a much bolder red than we would normally go for, with quite striking initial tannin levels. However the fruity mellowness that follows makes it a very smooth and enjoyable accompaniment to a hearty meal. It's currently £8 a bottle before any bulk buy discount, so well worth a try.



Another review from Ros & Ian Mitchell:

This weekend we thought we would try a bottle of **Gamay 2019, £10 from Ellis Wharton.**

Gamay is the grape used to make Beaujolais in central eastern France in the Bourgogne-Franche-Comté area. However this Gamay wine was produced from vineyards at Vallet in the Loire region west of Nantes.



Apparently Gamay is a very vigorous vine grown on alkaline soils since the 14th century. Interestingly it's growth was outlawed by Philippe the Bold, Duke of Burgundy in 1395 as he described it as having a "very great and horrible harshness". He thought his land should be used for the more "elegant" Pinot Noir.

We enjoyed this Gamay which had a floral bouquet. It tasty fruity, reminding us of blackcurrants. The syrupy texture was thicker than we would expect from a Beaujolais wine.

Ros & Ian, great minds....I thought that label looked familiar, and checking my notes from our zoom tastings with friends, we tried this exact wine last September. We felt this Gamay (produced in an area known for its Muscadet wines) was light bodied but full of fruit flavours without the acidity of a cheaper wine, and one we would purchase again. We also noted it could be served chilled in the Summer.

What a lovely selection of reviews members themselves have tried and tasted and can recommend to the rest of us.

A few "**Supermarket recommended white wines** at reasonable prices and that are excellent drinkers, however when on offer many of these will be snapped up quickly:

Comte de Senneval Brut, Champagne France 2014 £19.99 Lidl – great value for a vintage Champagne, crisp red apple and red berry fruit, vibrant, youthful and fresh with some biscuit character.

Cave de Lugny, Macon-Lugny Les Charmes Single Vineyard Chardonnay, Burgundy, France 13% £10 Waitrose on special offer – usually £14.99 Quality white Burgundy for a great price, full bodied round and approachable, notes of yellow peach and mango. Fresh citrus acidity with length, will get nuttier with age.

Ernest Wein, Pinot Gris, Alsace, France 2019 £7.99 Lidl 13.5% - This wonderful Alsace Pinot Gris is bursting with juicy, ripe pear fruit character, with some acacia and almost a faint savoury note. Delicious matched with mild, creamy cheese.

Ferdinany Mayr, Gruner Veltliner, Niederosterreich, Austria 2019 12.5% £6.99 Aldi – A weighty example of Gruner Veltliner, with ripe

flavours of stone fruit and juicy pear, with spice and a good structure from refreshing acidity.

Campogrande, Orvieto Classico, Umbria Italy 2019 12% £10 Co-op –

A blend of indigenous Italian varieties including Procanico, Grechetto and Trebbiano, with a perfumed nose of jasmine, candied pears and fresh green apples. Slight spice on the palate, pure and clean with citrus fruits and good acidity.

Asda Extra Special Albarino, Rias Baixas, Galicia, Spain 2019 13%

£9 Asda – Rias Baixas has an excellent reputation for white wines from Albarino grapes and this is no exception. Soft orchard fruit aromas, subtle lemon and orange notes in the mouth, grapefruit and apple, lemon pear and peach flavours with a seaside tang.

As I type this newsletter most of our local supermarkets Tesco, Asda and Waitrose all have their 25% offers running and Waitrose until 6th April have some “fine wines” reduced to £10.

Here are some thoughts on **Viognier wine** from a new member who moved down in August during lockdown, Margaret Steer:

“Viognier is a wine that over the years I had convinced myself I didn’t like. Just recently I had the opportunity to taste 3 Viogniers together and thought I should try to see if my resolve over the years was right, or was I missing out? The first was **Domaine des Tourelles £10.95**. This consisted of 60% Viognier and 20% Chardonnay 2019, 13%. This wine is from Lebanon and the climate is perfect for Viognier as it likes hot and dry. It comes from the oldest winery in Lebanon started in 1868. It has a nose of peaches, apricots a hint of spice and jasmine. A very easy drinking wine and well worth the price.

The second has the interesting name of **Smoking Loon Viognier 2017. Alc 13.5%**. This wine is from Sonoma California, and has on the nose the usual base for this grape, of stone fruits, including apricots and peaches. More complex than the first one retailing at **£21.75**

Lastly, my favourite of the three, **Condrieu France. alc 14%**. This is 100% viognier which makes for a very intense complex wine. With minerality, violets and the base stone fruits. It is grown on the West bank

of the Rhone. This should match well with seafood, goats cheese and pork. **The cost is £35.95.** I found all of these wines very enjoyable, which leads me to believe that in this interesting world of wine, you need perhaps to be prepared to revisit your ideas. In my case Viognier is a wine that I will not easily dismiss again.”

Of course the best Viognier comes from Condrieu which is arguably the northern Rhône's most distinctive wine appellation. Created in 1940, it covers white wines made exclusively from Viognier -hence the price difference but perhaps one for a very special occasion. Good to see a convert!

That's all for this month, have a Happy Easter.

Regards

Amanda

Knighthor Winery event information on the following page

KNIGHTOR WINERY, TRETHURGY, ST AUSTELL PL268YQ

VISIT JULY 14TH 2021

Knightor Winery is a producer of premium quality English still and sparkling wines, set in 4 acres in a tranquil location above St Austell Bay, Using grapes grown in vineyards in Portscatho and Seaton on the South Cornish coast, as well as other English vineyards, limited production of still and sparkling wines and English Vermouth are produced.

Our u3a Wine Group private wine tour and tasting visit :

- 1100** Arrival. Make your own way. Coffees can be purchased on arrival at your own cost.
- 1130 – 1245** Mini tour - and tasting of minimum 4 wines hosted by the winemaker, and will take place in the wine shop/tasting area
- 1245 - 1400** Lunch. Outside in courtyard, or inside the barn
- 1500** Depart

Lunch will be a hot buffet style BUT waitress served on plates to guests, menu as follows:

- Turkey, ham & leek pie,
- Baked salmon with herb crust
- Seasonal vegetable & Cornish cheese frittata
- Sides of : Roasted new potatoes, Braised cabbage & hot Root vegetable salad.
- Dessert of Cornish strawberry Pavlova or Devil's food chocolate fudge cake.

Dietary requirements can be accommodated, please let me know if this is required.

Cost pp £38

To book your place, please pay by bank transfer, using your "***membership number and KNI***" as the reference.

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