

U3A ST AUSTELL WINE APPRECIATION GROUP

JULY 2021 NEWSLETTER



Dear Wine Group members

Welcome to our July wine group newsletter. As to whether we will see this month an “opening up of restrictions” who knows, but in the meantime here are some wine related news.

Wine Group Events:

July 14th Knightor Winery visit

I very much look forward to seeing those of you who have booked at Knightor Winery on the 14th, arrival at 11.00 when you can purchase your own tea/coffee. The tour will start at 11.30 followed by the tasting and then lunch.

In the event of good weather we will be sitting outside on tables of 6 maximum, when hopefully you can meet other members perhaps for the first time and get to know each other, or renew acquaintances after a very long period apart. If bad weather, we will be inside the barn at socially distanced tables of 6 and we will have waitress service to our tables either way.

I attach here the relevant section of Knightor's Covid risk assessment which as a whole is produced for weddings, however this last section on Covid 19 will cover our event and any concerns you may have and I would ask you to take a moment to read this so you are aware of the Covid 19 regulations in place.

Spread of COVID - 19	All staff All visitors All traders	One way system in place for all indoor areas Queuing points marked with social distancing markers for areas of high use Stewards/staff to monitor numbers of people entering areas One person to use loos at a time - signage in position Loos and touch points sanitised regularly throughout the day Doors/windows open for ventilation Antibacterial hand soap in all bathrooms Sanitiser available at all building entrances Signage around venue to remind customers to maintain a social distance and wear a mask All staff and traders to wear face masks in customer facing positions QR codes on display around site for guest check in Record of attendees kept for each session - ticketed event Lots of event to take place outdoors Drinking/dining tables set up with 1m+ distancing in place	Daily & continuously for those working / visiting	yes
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I also attach a link to the u3a Personal Members checklist, which you should read prior to attendance and confirm to me on the morning. I will be giving Knightor a list of our attendees with the contact numbers I have on file, for their Covid check in procedures.

<https://staustellu3a.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/08/National-U3A-U3A-KMS-FRM-016-Personal-Members-Checklist-Pre-attendance-20th-August-2020.docx>

Garden Party chez Chris & Karen Scott , Penhallow, 4 Tremena Road, St Austell, PL25 5QG. Sunday 1st August 1200 onwards

If you haven't already done so, please would any members wishing to attend this event, notify me of their attendance together with the food they can bring to allow me to coordinate this and get final numbers. We still need cheeses & bread or biscuits, another "main", some salads, and desserts.

Please be Covid aware and slice/portion your food where possible in advance, and provide tools for serving to avoid any hand contact. Please bring your own cutlery, glasses and plates which you can then take away at the end of the day to wash at home.

This is a lovely opportunity to meet your fellow wine group members and have a gentle social time sitting in the beautiful garden of Chris & Karen who were simply amazing hosts last year. They can comfortably accommodate around 20 with chairs, but if we exceed this number (Covid maximum 30 of course) I may well ask some of you to bring your chairs. They are more than happy for us to stay just as long as we would like to.

Karen & Chris will give us their Dining Room (numbers coming in to be restricted at any one time) to lay out the food, and a cool utility room for the wines to be stored (although this year I think it may be prudent to bring and drink your own wines). The lavatory system will be one in one out, and there will be hand sanitiser and wipes in the kitchen, dining room and lavatory with disposable hand towels. I shall be doing my Covid risk assessment soon for committee approval.

Lunch & Tutored Wine Tasting at Edie's Restaurant, Carlyon Bay

Wednesday 8th September 12.30 onwards.

Unfortunately I am going to have to cancel this event due to lack of bookings from members, which I am most disappointed about given the high numbers who booked and paid last year. Should Edie's decide to hold this event later in the year themselves for their customers, I will certainly let those who did book know and perhaps we could join them then, meanwhile I will ask Chris Scott to sadly refund the monies paid to those members who did book and thank you for your support.

Members' Wine Reviews

The first from Janet Harvey: Spirits of Cornwall!

This review comes about because I read in a magazine about the arrival of the English Spirit company to open a new distillery at Treguddick, near Launceston, and was intrigued. Small batch distilling is thriving already locally, and it seems one can hardly go shopping without encountering a new gin! However, this company has some distinctive features, not least of them the amazing range of different spirits which it produces.

English Spirit was founded by a biochemist, John Walters, who decided to try his hand at distilling brandy from the grapes growing on a vine along the side of his house. He liked the product so well he experimented to produce other spirits. This led to the opening of English Spirit's first commercial distillery in Cambridgeshire, quickly followed by another in Essex. By this time the range had expanded to include gin, vodka, single malt whisky, sambucca, and the first English rum made 'from scratch' by distilling pure sugar cane molasses rather than using imported base spirit. The establishment of the new distillery in Cornwall enables the company not only to grow its wide range of botanicals but also to draw on the produce in the established orchard already there.

I sent for a sample range of miniatures, which should have contained Dr J's gin, plum gin, rhubarb gin liqueur, limongino gin liqueur, and raspberry gin liqueur. However the company only produces small batches, and seasonally, and had run out of plum gin. I was given a bottle of toffee vodka as a replacement, plus bottles of strawberry liqueur and spiced rum as an apology. This was, I felt, good customer service.

I review these items in four groups.

1) Dr J's gin. This is a straightforward gin of excellent quality. Botanicals of juniper, coriander, macadamia nut and citrus zest are used, of which juniper predominates appropriately in the aroma and the flavour. A seriously good gin, deserving respect and the best tonic one can afford.

2) Spiced rum. I don't much care for rum and I find this a bit too strong. It also smells (to me) overwhelmingly of vanilla, though that's not listed in the ingredients. I tried adding ginger and mint, as recommended on the bottle, and still found it rather aggressive. However I anticipate it will come into its own at Christmas, possibly used instead of brandy to create a rum butter to go with Christmas pudding.

3) The vodka-based liqueurs: toffee and strawberry. Based on vodka made from sugar beet, both of these have a strong flavour of their main ingredient. Both are recommended to accompany desserts: frankly I think that the toffee vodka, which is very sweet, is better incorporated in one, perhaps in a trifle or similar kind of dessert. The strawberry is easier to sip neat, but the makers suggest adding a dash to prosecco and I can confirm it adds joy to fresh strawberries too.

4) The gin-based liqueurs: raspberry, rhubarb and limongino. I found the raspberry the one real disappointment in this collection: I could hardly detect any aroma or flavour of raspberry. I may try adding it to fresh raspberries when my garden produces some. The rhubarb has some aroma of rhubarb but it is very faint. For me this spirit works best if treated like gin, but it's not as good as the real gin discussed earlier. Limongino, however, is impressive, a strong aroma of lemons offers promise of flavour which is not disappointed. Works well, chilled, as a liqueur to balance a citrus-based dessert or with cheese and coffee. It is not overly sweet, so it might appeal particularly to any lovers of lemons who find Mediterranean limoncello liqueurs too sweet.

English Spirit will be opening up for tastings and tours in due course. More information can be found at: <https://www.englishspirit.uk/> If anyone wants to order online, that's possible, and joining the online 'club' secures a 10% discount.

I would caution that two of my little miniature bottles had caps which failed to work properly after opening, so if you order and don't plan to drink the contents in a single session you might need a back-up bottle on standby. I hope this does not turn out to be a problem with full-size bottles!

Janet, how interesting and thank you so much for such a comprehensive review. A good place to visit for a tasting and tour once they are set up for these, and such a good idea to have a sample box from which one can taste without having to purchase a full bottle. The limongino appeals to me, and something I can see myself using in my lemon drizzle cake to pep up the drizzle! That is of course if I didn't drink it first...

There follows **an article from a newspaper which Pippa Boardmann** found for inclusion here. *This is a most interesting and thought provoking article, especially for those of us who think of wine in a box as a "cooking wine" or one to endure on a picnic. And, would we want a paper bottle on a dinner table.... lots to consider. A couple of the 9/10 and 10/10 perhaps deserve a try perhaps. Thank you Pippa.*

THERE was a time when to be a bona fide wine buff meant knowing your Bordeaux from your Burgundy.

But forget talk of decanters and corkscrews. Because with young drinkers becoming ever more eco-conscious, the hot topic is wines made with the health of the planet in mind, and with demand booming, the market is growing fast. Welcome to the world of 'woke' wines.

With glass and transport accounting for at least 50 per cent of the industry's carbon footprint, woke producers are opting for environmentally friendly packaging.

This week, Essex-based winemaker The English Vine became the first in the world to commit to switching all its glass bottles for paper ones.

It's not just the packaging. Vegan wine lovers are driving demand, too. The Delevingne sisters Cara, Poppy and Chloe recently launched their own brand of vegan-friendly Prosecco, and actress Cameron Diaz boasts her own 'clean' wine brand in the U.S., called Aveline.

But do woke wines taste as good as their old-fashioned counterparts? Our wine expert HELEN MCGINN picks some of the best of the sustainable bunch...

BOX WINE I'D ACTUALLY DRINK

Domaine Jones Grenache Gris 2.5l Bag in Box, £38.50, bibwine.co.uk

FOR years bag-in-box wine had a bad reputation as what was inside was sometimes undrinkable. But for the woke wine lover, boxed wine offers one of the most sustainable packaging alternatives, with a carbon footprint ten times lower than glass. Now companies like this are putting properly good wines inside them.

This one is from Languedoc in France and although not yet certified organic, the grapes are sustainably grown by winemaker Katie Jones. A fruity, floral wine that'll stay fresh once opened for up to six weeks in the fridge.

VINO VERDICT: 8/10

CELEBRITY VEGAN BUBBLES

Della Vite Prosecco, £19.95, dellavite.com

IT'S no surprise that when the party-loving Delevingne sisters decided to turn their hand to wine, they went straight to Prosecco. And this vegan-friendly offering (in most wines, gelatine or fish is used in the clarification process) is pretty good quality, as it should be at that price. Made by the Blassioto family in the Veneto region, the winery is mostly solar-powered and online purchases include a donation to MyTrees charity to protect five trees. To drink, it's fresh and frothy with soft pear fruits. Delightful.

VINO VERDICT: 7/10

SAVING THE OCEANS

Hidden Sea Chardonnay, £8, Co-op

THIS Aussie wine brand is on a mission to remove plastic from the world's oceans and for every bottle sold ten plastic bottles are removed and recycled from the sea. The ReSea Project hopes to remove and recycle one billion plastic bottles by 2030.

The label, which is laser-printed using organic water-based inks, depicts a fossilised whale found underneath The Hidden Sea's vineyards in



WOKED WINES

TASTE JUST FINE

From paper bottles to vegan prosecco, the plonk you can sink while saving the planet



by Helen McGinn

South Australia's Limestone Coast and inside the bottle is a peach of a wine, all tropical fruits with a touch of oak adding oomph to the flavours.

VINO VERDICT: 7/10

SWEET TASTE OF GOING ORGANIC

Castellore Organic Prosecco, £7.49, Aldi

THE organic wine selection from this discount retailer is a bit hit and miss but the hits are smashing. This one's a real favourite, not to mention an absolute steal. Simply packaged, it's labelled as Extra Dry, meaning there's a little more sweetness to it compared with most but to be honest, that just makes it even more drinkable.

There are no nasty chemicals used in the vineyards so you can sip this in the garden and feel as smug as Tom and Barbara from The Good Life especially if you grow your own veg, too.

VINO VERDICT: 8/10

PAPER BOTTLES FOR YOUR TIPPLE

No.1 Paper Bottle Bacchus 2020, £13.99, theenglishvine.co.uk (main picture)

FOUNDER Neil Walker's mission is to move all the English wine he sells via his website away from glass within five years.

By launching England's first wine in a paper bottle (above), he's walking the walk. The pack-

aging is five times lighter and with a carbon footprint 84 per cent lower than a glass bottle.

Inside, is a deliciously crisp white made from Bacchus grapes grown in Essex and it's lush hedgerow-scented white I want when the sun's out and the crisps are on the table.

VINO VERDICT: 10/10

EMPOWERING WINE IS ALL HEART

Great Heart Chenin Blanc 2020, £14.99, Waitrose

THE idea for this wine came about during the pandemic when South African vineyard owners Chris and Andrea Mullineux saw how hard their team were working under the challenging circumstances.

They wanted to reward them properly and so Great Heart was set up, a staff empowerment company aimed at improving the livelihoods of all employees and their families. All profits go straight to the staff who own the brand as well as make the wine.

And fabulous it is too, rich and zesty with lemon peel flavours.

VINO VERDICT: 8/10

PHIL'S FLAT WINE IS A BELTER

Phillip Schofield Organic Nero Di Troia, £9.99, amazon.co.uk

TV HOST and self-confessed wine aficionado Phillip Schofield launched his own range of boxed wines last year, showing his sustainable side.

Now he's launched a wine in a flat 100 per cent recycled plastic bottle



and it's a belter. With a lower carbon footprint than glass, it also allows the producer to fit more wine on every pallet shipped, cutting environmental costs further.

Made from the little-known Nero di Troia grape grown in Puglia, in southern Italy, this gorgeous organic mellow red is packed with rich plum and blackcurrant flavours. The bottle's an odd shape, but once you sip what's inside, you'll soon forget!

VINO VERDICT: 9/10

VEGAN CAN IS BRILLIANT

Nania's Rosé Spritzer, 6 x 250ml, £24, naniavineyard.co.uk

WHEN James Bayliss-Smith and Shelley Nania inherited a 50-year-old vine in the garden of their house in Bristol, it inspired them to create their own wine brand.

Their canned vegan-friendly wine is made from Essex-grown Rondo grapes, blended with Glastonbury spring water and infused with a raspberry shrub to make a bonkers but brilliant Rosé Spritzer.

Cans have a much lower carbon footprint than glass and are infinitely recyclable. And even the labels are made using a compostable corn starch wrap. The wine's lightly carbonated and loaded with red berry flavours and a touch of sweetness. Joyous.

VINO VERDICT: 7/10

HELEN'S book, *The Knackered Mother's Wine Guide*, is out now (£8.99, Bluebird).

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Finally a review from my husband Chris Crane:

Muscadet Sur Lie, Sevre et Maine from Chateau la Noe, 2019 12%, Loire France, £8.35 Nethergate Wines (will deliver any quantity of wines for their standard delivery charge)

Remembering Muscadet many years ago as a very dry acidic white which made your cheeks suck in, I was not a fan. However Muscadet is having a resurgence spurred on by excellent examples and as we were having a seafood feast we chose this wine to “try once again” before consigning to the back of the rack!

However, we both changed our minds, so much so we ordered quite a few. Lovely pale yellow colour with a touch of gold, refreshing and elegant nose with lemon citrus notes, lime and rich notes of hazelnut and yeasty lees. Palate is quite aromatic, more citrus notes with lemon and lime peel, but with a lingering richness from being left to mature “sur lie” (left on suspended dead yeast particles). Certainly nothing resembled the Muscadet of years past which perhaps was just Muscadet and not a “sur lie”.

The grape, melon de Bourgogne is only grown in this part of France, and these are 35yr old vines carefully harvested, then spending an extended period of time on its lees before bottling. There is no racking or filtration before bottling. At £8.35 an absolute bargain. Seafood is the obvious choice but certain pale chicken dishes and an assortment of cheese would also be a good match.

Chris, I am just delighted you enjoyed this wine as I thought it delicious and a perfect summer white aperitif as well as to match food. For our members it may be worth trying a local supermarket version and see what you think.

That is it for this month.

Best regards

Amanda