

U3A ST AUSTELL WINE APPRECIATION GROUP

OCTOBER 2021 NEWSLETTER



Dear Wine Group members

Watching the rain come down, I am certainly not going to be depressed that Summer is leaving us for Autumn as I note that 6th October is Orange Wine Day - a type of white wine made by leaving the grape skins and seeds in contact with the juice, creating a deep orange-hued finished product, (a wine I have not tried as yet as have read many conflicting reviews.) Then October 9th International Pinotage Day (South Africa's signature variety grape) and October 28th International Carignan Day (Spanish grape generally found in French wines) so there are still days during this "Autumnal" month where we may "officially celebrate" with a glass of wine to cheer us up!

"Wine is sunshine held together by water" ...Galileo Galilei

September's Tasting - Members' choice of wines for around £10

It was very good to be back at one of our wine group tastings, where 19 members enjoyed a lighthearted and fun evening exploring some "wines for the £10 mark" with a great selection of food supplied by Shirley and Ann (thank you both so much ladies). The wines we enjoyed were:-



Cuvee Royale Cremant de Limoux, France 12.5% Waitrose currently on offer at £9.56 for 6 wines, usually £12.75

Gavi DOCG, 2020 Piemonte, Italy, Lidl, £6.99

Dry Fermint, 2019, Hungary, Sainsbury normally £8.50 but currently £6.38 for six bottles

Georges Duboeuf Fleurie, 2020 France 13.5%, Sainsbury £10

Terre di Faiano Organic, 13.5% Italy, Waitrose £9.99 (often on offer at £7.49)

I think from the reaction to taste and price, all these wines appealed to those present and many members were taking note where they can source them locally. For those more interested, there follows notes the presenters' gave on the night (otherwise skip to **Forthcoming Events**).

I started the evening off with a Sparkling Cremant, but prior to pouring the wine talked a little about **Sparkling Wines** in my quest to find a good cheaper alternative to Champagne for “everyday glugging” when only a fizz will do.

“Sparkling wine is a wine which bubbles when poured into a glass. To make sparkling wine you need a second fermentation in conditions where the bubbles can't escape, either in the bottle (classic champenoise method) to get serious bubbles and wines that can age for the longest time; or more economically in a tank (the Charmat method). The dissolved carbon dioxide dissolves into the wine and bubbles form within the wine, to emerge with great effect when the bottle is opened – this should be more a SIGH than a BANG!

Champagne of course, is a 'sparkling wine' but, importantly, **not all sparkling wine is champagne**. There are many differences in Sparkling wine but two important ones are location and grapes.

Let's start with champagne. **Champagne** can only come from the region of Champagne in north-eastern France and is usually made with chardonnay, pinot noir and/or pinot meunier grapes.

Sweetness levels can vary from Brut (very dry) right up to Doux (sweet) and sugar levels from less than 3g per litre to 50g litre! In the 18th & 19th century when champagne rose to prominence, Tsars & nobility went for sweet champagnes as they matched pastries and desserts so well as well as a match for rich salty foods.

In Champagne, non-vintage styles must be aged for at least 12 months on lees. The minimum ageing period for vintage champagne is three years, and many of the best Champagnes are aged for much longer. Champagne is typically toasty, buttery and has citrus-fruit flavours.

A level down is **Crémant**. The word Crémant actually originated in the Champagne region meaning creamy. It was used originally to designate sparkling wines made in Champagne by the same method champenoise that were less effervescent than 'fully sparkling' Champagne. Crémant sparkling wines can be a delicious, affordable alternative to Champagne and wines can only come from 9 specific regions within France, and generally use grapes from their home region. In fact Crémant pre dates Champagne as the Benedictan monks of St Hilaire near Limoux were the first to produce sparkling wine in 1531. When Dom Perignon — yes, *that* Dom Perignon — made a pilgrimage to Saint Hilaire Abbey, he was taught the method and experimented on Champagne wines when he came back home. So the Dom himself learned from the monks in Limoux!!

Crémant is generally lighter, more refreshing, less austere and certainly drier than most Proseccos. It sits happily between Champagne and Prosecco.

So then we have **Prosecco** which comes from the Veneto region of north-eastern Italy and uses a grape now called *glera*. It is the most popular easy drinking wine of Italy and young female drinkers, around the world. Prosecco is produced using the tank method where wine goes through second fermentation in pressurised tanks, rather than in individual bottles, and then the wines are bottled under pressure. Wines that use the tank Method are designed to be drunk young and can be less expensive. Interestingly Prosecco production has recently been extended into 9 provinces of Italy to cover demand and the grape prosecco is now registered as a geographical name to protect it from imitation, and the name of the grape changed to glera. Prosecco has a very floral – almost soapy – perfume and often tastes very slightly of pear drops.

Next we have Cava. Cava comes from Spain and although it can also use chardonnay and pinot noir, it is also made using native grapes such as parellada and *xarel-lo*. 95% of cava is produced in Catalonia, mainly around Penedez with the industry being dominated by 2 companies Codornia and Freixenet (now owned by an American equity group). Although made in the champenoise method, the grapes used are very different. These days, lower yields and longer bottle ageing are slowly improving the quality of the best Cavas. Cava has a distinctive sour taste but can also have a toasty flavour.

Champagne, Crémant, and cava must be aged 'on lees' for minimum periods of 9 months +, which brings extra body and complexity to the wines. Lees, are essentially dead yeast cells left over from fermentation, can also bring those brioche and bread-like aromas to a sparkling wine.

There are many other sparkling wines from all over the world, and not forgetting English Sparkling wines not mentioned here, but each sparkling wine has different styles within their own range. Bone-dry, to sweet, white, pink, even red, a single vintage, a combination of vintages, one grape or a combination of grapes... the list goes on. That's why the world of sparkling wine is so exciting and delicious. There are endless possibilities and new styles to try to suit all budgets. By the way, it is said that the smaller the bubble, the better the wine.

Now to my choice, a **Cremant Cuvee Royal from Limoux in France**, bought from Waitrose. This sparkling wine is from Limoux in Languedoc, in the southwest of France south of the fortified city of Carcassone nestling in the foothills of the Pyrenees. The climate is dominated by the strong winds of the region, the dry, Atlantic *currents* and the warm Mediterranean winds. This Mediterranean climate has more Atlantic influences than other Languedoc wine regions. The soil in this area is rocky with clay, sandstone and limestone, creating a distinct *terroir* throughout the region.

This has all created ideal conditions for the slow, even ripening of the region's white wine grapes. Despite being located at a southerly latitude, the climate is cooler and moister than in most of the wine regions in southern France. Its location in the foothills of the Pyrénées allows the vineyards to be at a higher elevation, and planted in optimal locations on hillsides

This Cremant is made from 70% Chardonnay, 20% Chenin Blanc and 10% Pinot Noir grapes made in the traditional champenoise method. AOC regulations for this Cremant dictate that the wine be aged for a least a year on the lees prior to bottling. Over 40 villages around the city of Limoux are permitted to make Crémant de Limoux.

When I found this particular Cremant I found that it has a good structure from the Chardonnay grapes with fine little bubbles, flavours of honey and a sort of buttery lemon and apple. A depth of flavour and long finish and really just a great champagne alternative at a fraction of the price. I was sold! Perfect as an aperitif, with savoury canapes or serve with lobster for an extravagant celebration.

See pic below regarding which glasses we should use to serve Sparkling wines. I must say personally that I find a coupe difficult to drink elegantly from!"



For our 2nd wine, Janet followed and went on to explain her “mystery wine” which we tasted blind, a **Gavi**, which was inspired by the following article:

“Why are restaurants’ cheapest bottles of wine becoming so expensive?”

Wine lists shouldn’t be terrifying but too often they make me feel like a second-class citizen. In matters of wine, I am not Withnail, I do not crave “the finest wines available to humanity”. I merely want something drinkable from the cheap end of the list which won’t get me in trouble with the editor approving my expenses. It is not only about avoiding confrontation. I also hold that, while paddling about in the shallower waters of that list, I should not be made to feel like a second-class citizen. The opening price should be welcoming.

In my latest restaurant review I shine a spotlight on an egregious example of the exact opposite; on wine pricing that will punch the very breath out of any reasonable person. It is, thankfully, an outlier. But it does raise wider questions about the whole approach to wine pricing and more importantly, the entry point. In my reviews I always list the price of the cheapest bottle. You can tell an enormous amount about a restaurant from that one detail. Those which have bottles for around £20 or less are simply more welcoming than those where the cheapest starts at £30. Recently, I’ve noticed a significant increase in the latter. I loved the food at *Humble Chicken*; the £30 wine entry point, far less so. Ditto the £32 charged at the *Restaurant Sussex*.

Am I now contradicting myself? Recently I said that we’ll have to pay more in restaurants if we want them to be viable. No. I still hold by that. When I hear about bottles marked up by a factor of three I don’t blanch. Restaurants have costs to cover. The problem is that, by not having something at a welcoming price to begin, even with a triple mark-up, all they are doing is frightening away those who in the long term are going to be part of the solution.

Restaurateurs say low entry points will encourage people to spend less. That’s not true at all. The moneyed who love their wines, who see themselves as a certain type of drinker, don’t suddenly trade down because there’s a £20 bottle on the list. But those on a budget will feel it’s somewhere that also wants their custom. And when they’ve got a bit more money, they’ll start exploring the upper reaches.

Some people complain that my cheapest bottle metric is reductive; that it grossly simplifies the complex joys of wine. These complaints always come from those earning their living from wine: they are sommeliers or wine writers. They never come from diners. Diners complain about wine lists apparently designed to be read only by those who have cracked the code. They complain about unreasonable mark-ups. It seems ludicrous to be saying it in 2021, but far too many wine lists still come across as grossly exclusive. And price remains the most obvious way by which to raise the barricades.

There are exceptions. The two Noble Rot restaurants, which grew out of the most gloriously accessible of wine publications, have huge lists pirouetting up in price to four figures a bottle. But they open at £22 and have a great choice below £30. Plus, they have an enlightened approach to wines by the glass enabling experimentation on a budget. It can be done. If Lidl can offer a great Gavi at £6.99 or Aldi, a cracking Malbec for £5.79, it should not be beyond the wit of restaurants buying wholesale to have a few bottles which won’t terrify those of more slender means. When checking out a restaurant online we tend to judge a place by the food menu prices. We rarely look at the wine list and we should. Because all too often, that’s where the real terrors lie. Jay Rayner, *The Guardian*, Thu 12 Aug 2021

GAVI

The **Gavi** DOCG is situated in the southern part of Piedmont in northwestern Italy. It is named for the town of Gavi, which is at the centre of the production zone, and is made exclusively from the white grape called Cortese which is indigenous to the region. Its close proximity to Liguria means these two regions share traditions in winemaking and in food, and may explain why Gavi has a light and fruity style which has more in common with Liguria than the rest of Piedmont.

Gavi gained DOCG status in 1998, was the first of Italy's white wines to gain international repute and is still considered one of the top-ranking Italian whites today. Its vineyards are mainly found in the hills of the province of Alessandria. Wines with *Gavi di Gavi* on their label must be made from grapes grown in vineyards in the township of Gavi.

The Cortese grape has a heritage dating back to the 1600s, and produces a wine that reflects its terroir, a mineral-rich soil. It is noted for bone-dry character, crisp flinty and fresh acidity, and a floral bouquet offering delicate aromas reminiscent of white flowers, lemons, green apples and honeydew or peaches. It also often shows hints of almonds on the finish.

A foaming *spumante* version is also made and, while most examples are vinified and matured in stainless steel, some producers' wines will undergo maturation in barrels. Gavi is generally considered an excellent partner to all kinds of seafood dishes, and also goes well with chicken. Vines of Cortese have also travelled, with some plantings now in the hills overlooking Adelaide in Australia, and some also in California."

Our 3rd wine, another white where Chris then presented his choice of a more unusual grape, a **Dry Furmint**

"How much is too much to pay for a bottle of wine?....Initially, just 2,906 37.5cl bottles of a particular 2008 wine were produced at an RRP of £391. However, in 2019 a total of 18 handmade 1.5 litre decanters were made with an RRP of just over £30,000 making it one of the most expensive wines on release in the world. Any Guesses on the Country? The wine in question isn't some storied Amarone or a rare French Bordeaux. This Tokaji Essencia wine hails from the Carpathian foothills of northeastern Hungary, where one of Europe's oldest and most legendary wine regions is staging an unlikely comeback after a century of tumult all but obliterated its winemaking industry. Each single grape must be harvested by hand, placing Essencia among the most labour-intensive wines in the world. This evening we will **not** be tasting a Tokaji Essencia! However, we will be tasting a wine made from the same Furmint grapes!

We had accumulated a significant "wine cellar" over the last few years and we decided during lockdown that we would make an inventory of them all. This led to some interesting discoveries which we had forgotten about and there were a few which we thought we should drink sooner rather than later! One which we thought may be past its best was a 2011 bottle of a white wine originally purchased from an evening wine tasting event in about 2012 before we moved to Cornwall. This was a Dry Furmint from Royal

Tokaji. Probably best known for its infamous Tokaji Aszu sweet dessert wine made from the same native Hungarian grapes.

Whilst familiar with Tokaji Aszu we had not knowingly drunk a dry Furmint before. We were surprised and delighted with the minerality and subtle flavours of pear, quince and white peach combined with a slight hint of sage to give a fruity, fresh, complex and distinctive wine. 10 years old and not showing any obvious signs of deterioration. (Amanda included a brief review in her February 2021 newsletter), and this evening, whilst not exactly the same wine, (budget wouldn't allow) I would like you to taste a similar wine which you may not be familiar with.

Tokaj wine (region) became the subject of the world's first Appellation Control, established several decades before Port wine (1757) and over 120 years before the classification of Bordeaux. Vineyard classification began in 1730 with vineyards being classified into three categories depending on the soil, sun exposure and potential to develop noble rot, botrytis cinerea, first class, second class and third class wines. A royal decree in 1757 established a closed production district in Tokaj. The classification system was completed by the national censuses of 1765 and 1772.

The area where Tokaji wine is traditionally grown in the North East of Hungary close to the border with Slovakia. Tokaj is a small plateau, 457 metres (1,500 ft) above sea level, two hours east of Budapest, where the Great Hungarian Plain meets the Zemplén mountains a precursor to the Carpathian Mountains. The soil is of volcanic origin, with high concentrations of iron and lime. The location of the region has a unique climate, beneficial to this particular viniculture, due to the protection of the nearby mountains. Winters are bitterly cold and windy; spring tends to be cool and dry, and summers are noticeably hot. Usually, autumn brings rain early on, followed by an extended Indian summer, allowing a very long ripening period.



The Furmint grapes begin maturation with thick skins, but as they ripen the skins become thinner, and transparent. This allows the sun to penetrate the grape and evaporate much of the liquid inside, producing a higher concentration of sugar.

Royal Tokaji was established in the Hungarian village of Mád in 1990 when a group of vineyard owners, the famed wine writer and historian Hugh Johnson, and several investors formed an alliance and began the painstaking work of restoring Tokaj and the vineyards to their former, regal glory. During the communist era, the vineyard lands were confiscated by the government and formed into communist cooperatives focused on maximizing quantity, not quality. The post-communism restoration work has taken decades and what this means for today's wine drinker is the chance to rediscover a historic wine celebrated by kings with a legacy that goes back much further than Bordeaux or Burgundy.

As with Riesling in Germany, Furmint is also considered to be a mirror of the soil, meaning that it can show the differences in flavor according to the place where it is planted. In Tokaj's wide range of volcanic vineyards, Furmint is the variety of choice when producing single-vineyard wines. Like Riesling, aged Furmint also develops petrol-like aromas.

The Furmint grape is excellent for dry wines. Not only for fresh and soft young wines, but also for oak-aged ones it can produce wines that, after ten years of aging, can stand next to the big whites of the world. Today there are about 120 producers of Furmint in this area. 50% of grapes go to making Dry wine and 50% are left on the vine hoping that noble rot will eventually arrive and produce the Aszu berries needed for sweet wine. Royal Tokaji remains in private ownership and today their wines are exported to more than 30 countries. The wines of Royal Tokaji have won over 100 international awards and continue to seduce wine lovers throughout the world.

Grape: Furmint Style: Complex & Elegant Taste: Peach, Pear and Sage With: Grilled white fish or creamy pasta dishes" NB Tokaji wine is spelt with the i, Tokaj region is without!

Then onto reds and David (one of our new members and brave volunteer) presented another "wrapped wine" and gave us hints on how to tell the Country, grape and finally the wine, a rather nice **Fleurie**.

Ros then finished with her choice of a 2nd red : **Terre di Fiano Organic Primitivo**,

"We discovered this wine when on offer at Waitrose. We had decided to try more Italian wines having returned from a trip to Rome where we felt we did not know enough about which wines to choose with our evening meals. The only Italian red wines we were familiar with were Chianti and Sangiovese.

This wine was immediately appealing on first tasting. It is rich and smooth with the flavour lingering in the mouth. There is a hint of chocolate and vanilla along with a deep red fruits taste, particularly cherry and plum. It has become a firm favourite. We have drunk it most often accompanying a meal such as a baked pasta with a rich tomato sauce. It would make a good accompaniment for any hearty meat dish, on one occasion we enjoyed it with a meal of duck breast. Looking at reviews on line some have described the wine as velvety, others have commented on its deep red colour and also how it clings to the glass, not something I had considered.

This year 2021, the wine won an International wines and spirits Competition, Bronze medal.

The name of the wine can be translated as terre meaning ground of Faiano a small town in the south of Italy on the western coast. However the wine bottle informs us that the wine comes from Puglia which is the heel of Italy on the south east tip.

The wine is described as “organic” which means it is a product that’s been certified to organic standards by law. These standards cover pesticide use, land management, preservation and storage. Studying the label I think this wine has been certified to Italian standards. It does not have a British soil association stamp. The wine is certified by Orion wine as suitable for vegans. Orion is the company behind the wine production, presumably selling it to Waitrose. It seems that Orion is an Italian company that controls every step of the winemaking. To make this possible they have formed commercial relations with a small number of growers and wineries in different areas of Italy, taking complete control of the vineyards. Organic wines are said to have lower sulphite levels and have higher levels of antioxidants, so the healthiest type of wine. The alcohol content of this bottle is 13.5%.

The grape used to make this wine appears in the wines title on the label, it is Primitivo. Primitivo is a dark skinned grape known for producing inky, tannic wines, intensely flavoured and darkly coloured. The name Primitivo roughly translates as early one, there is an obvious link with Tempranillo which means the same in Spanish. It refers to the variety’s early ripening nature. A certain bitterness is found in Primitivo, combined with the tannins in the grape this means it needs a few years in a bottle or barrel. The wine is made by the appassimento method with oak aging. This means the grapes are dried for 2 to 6 months and then pressed. This method is carried out with Valpolicella more than any other wine. I assume it is aged in oak barrels.

There has been a long running debate about the variety’s geographical origins but currently Primitivo’s modern day home is southern Italy, particularly Puglia. Primitivo probably arrived in Puglia from the coastal vineyards of Croatia across the Adriatic Sea. It is still grown in Croatia under the name Crljenak Kastelianski.

I had never heard of the Primitivo grape but I had heard of Zinfandel which has been considered as the national grape of America. Back in 1967 a wine expert from California (Austin Goheen) visited Italy and thought the wine made from Primitivo grapes tasted very similar to Zinfandel. At that time the only way to compare the vines was to look at the leaves and fruit, comparing shape and colour. Modern DNA analysis carried out at the University of California between 1990 and 2002 (known as the Zinquest) recently proved that Zinfandel and Primitivo are the same variety of grape. Both thought to have come out of Croatia. It is now thought that while Primitivo came to Puglia from Croatia over the Adriatic Sea a very long time ago, the vine reached America in the first half of the 19th century. George Gibbs a horticulturist on Long Island received shipments of grapes and vines from Europe including a Zinfandel. A slightly different spelling. Nurserymen then took it to California in the Gold Rush of the 1850s. By the end of the 19th century Zinfandel was the most widespread grape variety in California, growing particularly well in Napa and Sonoma counties.

By the 1990s the popularity of dry red Zinfandel was so great that it became the signature wine of the US. The discovery that it was an Italian variety in disguise led to mixed reactions, some felt pride at the association with a prestigious wine nation, others a certain uneasiness that Zinfandel had lost some of its American individuality.

In contrast to Zinfandel, Primitivo was at a low ebb in the 1990s, the EU's vine pull schemes had seen thousands of acres of Primitivo vines ripped out of the ground organised by the EU to reduce a wine lake and push prices up. Once it was confirmed to be identical to Zinfandel Primitivo had a new lease of life. At one time the Italians started to label their Primitivo wines as Zinfandel to sell them in America. Now some of the American wines are being labelled Primitivo."

As you can probably tell from the above presentations, we all enjoyed researching and finding out a little more about the wines we had chosen, and it goes to show that we don't always need "professionals" to present wine to us! I look forward to another evening such as this during next year's programme, and hope that other members will volunteer to find a wine to show.

Forthcoming Events

October 21st 6.30pm onwards, Art Centre, St Austell - Old Chapel Cellars presenting South African Wines, Cost £25 including platters of food

Louisa Fitzpatrick, co owner of Old Chapel Cellars will present a selection of wines from South Africa having spent much time out there gaining an impressive knowledge of wines from that region. We will enjoy 5 wines with platters of meats, cheeses and bread to accompany. Should be an interesting tasting with a new face and focussing on one country. For those who have not yet booked, please let me know if you will be attending by paying in the usual way and confirming to me, with the banking reference your membership number xxxx/WGOCT. I need to advise Louisa how many bottles of each wine to provide **by October 14th** so book prior to this date.

November 16th at The Ship Inn, Pentewan 7-9pm (make your own way, suggest taxi) **Cost £20pp**

A "selection of 5 wines for Winter from around the World" – red, white and a dessert wine along with complementing nibbles provided by the Ship. The evening will include some surprises along the way and a fun wine themed quiz. Hosted by Carol Avery a local from Pentewan, with a wealth of wine knowledge, and a chance to hear from someone new at a new venue. Carol needs to order wines, and needs our numbers **by 30th October latest**, so please book by then and confirm to me you have paid.

Please book in usual way, with code after your membership WGNOV

December 16th, Arts Centre from 6.30pm, Christmas Wines & Food social evening cost for wines & room fee **£12.50pp**

Another opportunity for a lovely social evening, where members are asked to please bring a platter of finger Christmas food – I will coordinate to ensure an even balance of sweet and savoury. The wine group will purchase champagne, white and red wines, a dessert wine and a Port or Madeira. There will be a raffle, so look out any wine or food related items you could donate, many thanks. More on this next month.

To book your place on any of the above events, please pay in the usual way as below. I hope you can all understand that due to the nature of our group, once the deadline booking date is passed there can be no refund as either us, or outside presenters have to order and pay for the wines in advance. Your reference for each event will be your 4 digit membership number followed by “WG & the month” eg WGOct or WGNov or WGDec

Bank account details as follows:

St Austellu3a

Account 23132587 (Barclays Bank)

Sort code 20-30-47

Regarding our programme for 2020

One couple have kindly offered to plan a Wine Quiz Night, so let's start the ball rolling and not just sit back and let someone else always organise our monthly events. Perhaps you and a partner or friend could arrange one evening? Have a think and let me know. We will not have a meeting in January, but hope to start anew in February 2021.

Members' wine recommendations

Here are two from Janet Harvey, who obviously has taken her homework very seriously! Please do continue to send me any reviews of wines you have enjoyed, our members do tell me how much they enjoy this section.

Vinha da Valentina Sauvignon Blanc <https://www.laithwaites.co.uk>, £10.99, or £9.99 as part of a case of 12.

Wine buffs appear to agree that the best regions for Sauvignon Blanc are found in France, New Zealand, California, and South Africa, with Chile developing a bid to join them. However, this wine shows that Portugal has now joined the fray.

It is not unusual these days for women to run successful wineries, but the longstanding tradition of this at Casa Ermelinda Freitas winery over four generations is a rarer phenomenon. Located in the Setúbal Peninsula Region, the winery was established in 1920 by Leonilde Freitas, but subsequently run thereafter by female descendants Germana Freitas, and Ermelinda Freitas, to whom Casa Ermelinda Freitas owes its name. Ermelinda ran the vineyard with her husband Manuel, and after his comparatively early death continued to manage the company with her only daughter, Leonor. Leonor subsequently assumed full command and continues to run the company, now assisted by her daughter Joana.

Until 1997, the wines produced were sold unbranded and in bulk, but Leonor began bottling in-house, creating the winery's first brand of red wine, "Terras do Pó" in 2002. The vineyard produces now seven red grape varieties and six white. Its south-facing location, cooled by Atlantic breezes, gives a crisp finish to its Sauvignon Blanc, which is also influenced by a brief period of storage in wood before bottling.

Frankly, however, without seeing the label I am not sure I would have known it was a "Savvy": it has neither the characteristic gooseberry flavour of New Zealand nor the melon flavour of California. This should not be taken as a negative, though, because this wine does its own thing, and does it well. The aroma is a blend of fruity and citrus, the flavour initially of peaches fading to a more herby and astringent finish. The label on the bottle recommends it for "al fresco lunches by the ocean, waves lapping at your toes", which fits pretty well with drinking in Cornwall. It would certainly go with any summer menu and is refreshing as stand-alone. I preferred it well chilled.

"La Scelta di Sofia" Toscana Bianco IGT Sangiovese
<https://www.laithwaites.co.uk> £11.99, or £9.99 as part of a case of 12.

Trying this wine was an experiment which turned out very well. "La Scelta di Sofia" means "Sofia's Choice" and the choice she made was to create a white wine from the Sangiovese grape, traditionally used to make red.

Sofia Barbanera was born into a wine-making family in Tuscany and was able to experiment on her family's estate, choosing the plots of vines carefully, picking the grapes early and pressing them gently, aiming for a light bright wine which retains the cherry aroma of red Sangiovese. I also found the aroma slightly herby but could not quite pin down the herb! The flavour is crisp, citrus and full - much more mouth-filling than most whites. It is recommended to go with risotto, and it would very nicely, but I think that suggestion downplays the versatility of its depth and strength of flavour. It would match well with pretty much any Italian food and I think it could even stand up to strongly flavoured dishes from other cuisines. I finished my last glass with a fruit dessert and it was quite at home.



Thank you Janet as ever for your recommendations, both unusual in their own way and most interesting.

I very much look forward to seeing you again next month in the Arts Centre for our next tasting. Meanwhile, I attach a note below about an event to be held in Truro Cathedral where Janet as part of Three Spires Singers, will be singing.

Regards

Amanda

Three Spires Singers

Fitkin, Poulenc, Ravel

Three Spires Singers return to **Truro Cathedral** on November 20th for a special concert to mark the **Choir's 40th Anniversary**.

They will join forces with internationally renowned performers of the arts: actor **Sam West**, pianist **Cordelia Williams**, counter-tenor **Rory McCleery** and soprano **Rachel Nicholls**. **The Three Spires Orchestra** will be out in force, conducted by **Christopher Gray**.

As well as a performance of **Ravel's** wonderful **Piano Concerto in G**, the programme includes **Poulenc's** energetic and tuneful **Gloria**.

The main work will be the much anticipated newly commissioned work by composer **Graham Fitkin, Humphry Davy – The Age of Aspiration**. The famous Cornish scientist, inventor, philosopher, poet and painter has provided a rich vein of material for this fascinating and accessible 21st Century musical composition.

Be prepared to be amused, intrigued, provoked and moved by this musical work!

Three Spires Singers will be joined by the **Cornwall Girls' Choir** and **Cornwall Boys' Choir**.

There will be two performances, at 7.30pm on Sat 20th and Sun 21st November 2021.

Seats will be Unreserved in three zones:

Nave £25.00,
Gallery £20.00 and
Side-Aisles £18.00
(all tickets include programme).

Linda Johnstone, who runs the U3A St Austell Theatre group has advertised this: if you are interested in going you might like to contact her to see if there will be a group travelling from St Austell: lindamj1061@gmail.com

There's also a pre-concert seminar in October, when the composer will be explaining to a public audience his thinking behind this work. This event takes place in the Burrell Theatre, Truro School, on Saturday 16th October, at 19.30 (but the bar will be open from 18.45!) See:

https://mcusercontent.com/af34e3859a0dd50d23f7585ae/files/3c50cb9b-ec87-aa3a-aea1-a51c039ed6c3/Sem_HumphryDavy_lflt_Oct21_rgb.pdf
which includes booking details.