

U3A ST AUSTELL WINE APPRECIATION GROUP

MARCH 2022 NEWSLETTER



Hello Wine Group Members on the first day of March

“Wine Enthusiasts – Life long learners”

Our February belated Christmas Party event.

It was lovely to be back in the Arts Centre to see so many members supporting this gathering with wonderful platters of Christmas type finger food, enhanced by an array of wines. The wines were : Blanc de Noir Champagne on arrival, white Bourgogne and Villa Maria Sauvignon Blanc Private Bin, a French Rose, an Italian Primitivo and Argentine Reserva Malbec, Cockburn’s No1 Special Reserve Port and Blandy’s Duke of Clarence Madeira. Thanks to everyone for bringing such delicious food. In addition, David Hooper resplendent in Christmas hat and tie, gave a wonderful reading of “Twas the Night Before Christmas” to set the atmosphere. A great social evening and opportunity to get to know each other a little better and I would like to reiterate my thanks to one and all for supporting this group. The raffle raised £107 which has gone back to the Wine Group funds and will be used mainly to top up donations to the Charity

the Garker Street Band chooses, when they play at the Garden Party (yes we have booked them!) or to supplement wine tastings. Unopened bottles of wine (yes there were some left) will be used as Quiz prizes or go to the Garden Party to be shared by all.





EVENTS COMING UP IN NEXT FEW MONTHS – and booking info.

ALL PLEASE NOTE THAT FOR THE WINE GROUP ACCOUNT PLEASE PAY INTO ACCOUNT NO 23132587

- **March 17th 6.30pm Arts Centre, Wine Group Quiz** evening suitable for every level of knowledge.

Although the deadline for bookings has past, if would like to attend please let me know soonest and we will see if we can fit you in as it is an in-house tasting. £13.50pp including the £1 room fee. Quote your membership number followed by **WGMAR** as reference.

- **April 28th Ellis Wharton Wines, Indian Queens** depart Art Centre 6pm sharp, leave Ellis Wharton 9.30pm sharp (Coach transport)

Must book before March 4th! A visit and tasting at Ellis Wharton Wines, tasting a minimum of 5 wines with a theme “**Non-conventional Wine Tasting**” with nibbles to accompany. A tasting to challenge the most conventional palates with some rare and forgotten grape varieties.”

Cost is £20pp plus transport - pay now the £20pp cost and transport cost will be confirmed once we know total numbers - in the usual way **xxxxWGAPR**.

- **Deadline is March 4th as we have to confirm which transport is required.** Please let me know once you have paid.

- **May 19th Looe Valley Vineyard tour and tasting**

A lunchtime visit by Minibus (access issues) for a couple of hours at **Looe Valley Vineyard** with a tour and tutored tasting of at least 4 wines, by the very passionate and enthusiastic owner and artisan winemaker Charles. Great for any gardeners as he will talk a lot about the soil and growing of vines. There is only access for a minibus so numbers will be **restricted to 16**, so please book by **March 25th latest** as we have to pay Looe Vineyard early April, and to secure a place.

- **Cost £20pp** to include 4 wines and a platter of 3 Cornish cheeses, pickle, olives and bread, **plus cost of transport** in the minibus, to be advised.
- **Booking ref xxxWGMAY**, and let me know when you have paid.

- **June Summer Garden Party Sunday June 19th from midday**

Chris & Karen Scott have yet again kindly offered their wonderful garden to us for another **Garden Party**, so very generous of them. Usual form, everyone to bring a large sharing platter of food, plus their own wines, and there will be wines from the wine group for all to share. No cost for this event. I am hoping to persuade the wonderful Garker Street Band to attend again and play music for a few hours, donations to the RNLI. I will meanwhile produce a spreadsheet of ideas of food for people to bring to ensure a good balance. In addition, I shall be asking for volunteers to help prepare this garden in advance of the day.

Request:

Currently we have September free, and as our last Members' Tasting went down very well I wondered if there are more members willing to present a wine of their choice? If we can get 4 or preferably 5 members, then we have a good selection for a tasting. The wine you choose can be a favourite, a supermarket bargain, a special memory of an occasion, a holiday favourite or whatever you wish. As long as you could do a little research and find out about the area it comes from, the producers, how it is made (brief), etc and stand up for 5/10 minutes maximum just to talk about it. Then everyone would taste, comment and mark it. If you wish to wrap the bottles up so that no one knows what it is, we could blind taste and guess, or alternatively just guess the price.

Let me know if you are brave enough and willing to present one wine and the approximate cost so we can price the evening. Thank you. Our last one showed some very excellent wines under £10 which everyone thoroughly enjoyed.

Wine Reviews

Just a note before I start on the supermarket recommendations. For those lovers of the Old World French classics, do investigate or ask your wine supplier, and try the Californian equivalents, there are some stunning wines around that win many wine awards. On a recent tasting we sampled an excellent Chardonnay from the Napa Valley against a Mersault Burgundy, Chardonnay and although both excellent the Californian wine excelled. Similarly with Pinot Noir, although Californian wines do tend to be pricier.

SUPERMARKET WINE RECOMMENDATIONS

For anyone who reads The Times on Saturday, there is an excellent spread on “Wine Critics Guide to the Best Supermarket own label wines” in Saturday February 26th edition. I have scanned this in at the end, but quality not great copying from a larger paper.

Additionally here are some other recommendations.

WHITES

Domaine La Roche Blanc, Pessac-Leognan, Bordeaux 2020 13.5% Aldi £19.99

50/50 Sauvignon Blanc Semillon with a splash of Sauvignon Gris. Spiced oak is well integrated giving structure to the creamy mid weight palate, with citrus and herbs.

Spy Valley E Block, Sauvignon Blanc, Marlborough NZ 13.5% M&S £12

A new wine for M&S, this has classic aromas and tropical flavours of passion fruit, guava and melon, with a rounded taste from time spent on lees and 10% of grapes fermented in old oak.

Sainsbury's Taste the Difference Gaillac, SW France 2020 12% Sainsbury £8

White blend of local grape Len de l'El with 7% Mauzac. Bright aromas of apples, pears and lemon with a creaminess from time spent on lees. White peach on the palate, great value.

PINK

Bird in hand Sparkling Brut, S Australia 2021. 12.5% £15.99 Waitrose

Good value fizz blends Shiraz, Pinot Gris and Chardonnay with 85% Pinot Noir. Pale pink its bursting with juicy and fresh red cherry and strawberry fruit with a little cream. Delicious.

REDS

Kanonkop, Kadette Cape Blend, Stellenbosch, S Africa 2019 14% Tesco £11

Sweet black cherries and mulberries with a smoky ashy charred core, this has the complexity to stand up to a host of dinner options. Ripe, silky tannins wrap themselves round red plums. Great wine.

Lidl, Entre Quintas Reserva, Douro, Portugal 2019 14%, Lidl £6.99

A blend of grapes usually used in Port, this smooth red is aged in French and US oak for a year. Deep in colour, hinting at the depth of dark plums, fragrant and full bodied with an earthiness. Good tannins.

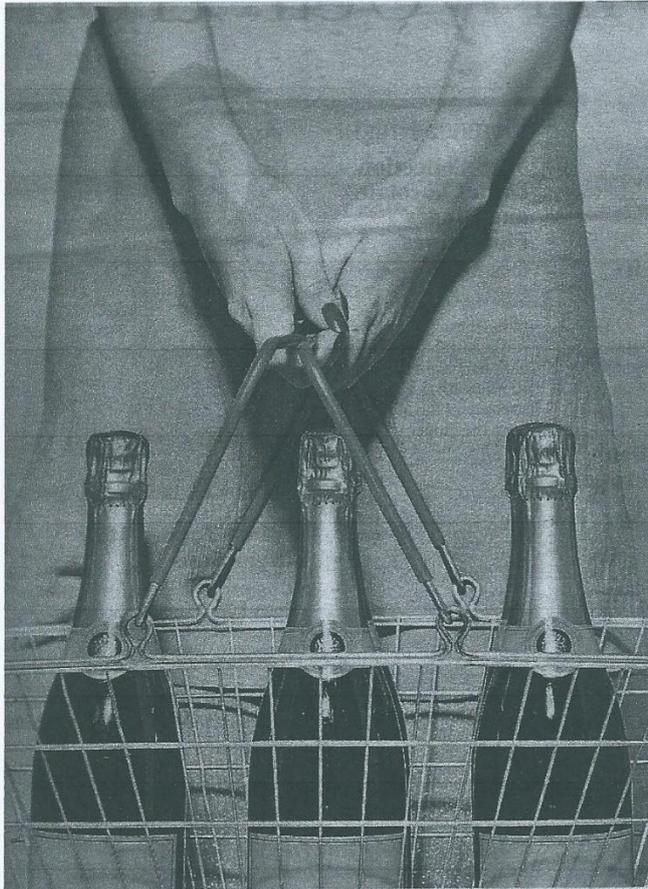
Tapa Roja, Old Vines Monastrell, Yecla, Spain 2019 13.5% M&S £7

Yecla's hot arid climate is perfect for ripening Monastrell to give dense, dark, meaty reds. Bold with chewy tannins, a herbal lift and refreshing acidity, great for a hearty casserole.

With the scanned pages following, I hope this gives you a good choice for some reasonably priced good wines to hunt out.

Regards

Amanda



style and, again, the wine will bear the name of the supermarket — though you can sometimes decipher the wine producer's name in tiny letters on the back.

Which supermarket has the best own-label wine?

Quality varies from season to season, but generally Aldi's buyers do a better job than most at finding good wines at keen prices, and not just the obvious choices, either. Its 2018 Skouras Greek Agiorgitiko, £10.99, is excellent. The Co-op is another decent source of good wines, from the old world and new world, at low prices.

Are the supermarket 'premium' ranges always better?

Not necessarily. The truth is that there are the good, bad and plain ugly at every level. What's worth noting is how many bottles are produced of each. Sainsbury's Taste the Difference Discovery Collection is a genuinely limited edition with about 1,000 cases of each, for example. Getting small parcels of top-quality wine is easier for supermarket wine buyers than trying to find 100,000 cases of a decent own-label champagne.

Is it worth spending more than a tenner on own-label wine?

That's at a cheaper or more expensive price point. Thus far it seems to be working, with drinkers increasingly choosing premium own-label wines when they want to have a better bottle. Sales of Sainsbury's Taste the Difference are up 13 per cent, and Aldi has registered record sales of its Specially Selected wines, some of which cost as much as £19.99 a pop.

Would you really bring an own-label wine to a dinner party?

Every one of the 31 bottles here are worth nabbing. And in any case, people won't necessarily know where you picked up your bottle. "Aldi" only pops up on its Specially Selected bottles in teeny-tiny letters on the back label, and you could always try peeling off the silver badge stuck on Tesco's Finest bottles. Or tell your friends not to be such snobs.

Which supermarket has the best fizz?

Sales of supermarket own-label fizz have rocketed of late — up 22 per cent overall. This means turnover is rapid, so it's worth noting that the sparkler you bought at Christmas may be a different blend from the one you buy for Easter, because the first batch will have sold through. Overall, Waitrose hits the sparkling wine spot more often than not, including delicious English fizz. Aldi's Crémant du Jura and Sainsbury's Prosecco Conegliano Superiore consistently hit the heights.

Should you buy marked-down wine?

Only with a recommendation. Supermarkets regularly inflate wine prices so that discounts look deeper. If you have a fa-

Aldi top 5

2014 Winemaster's Lot Baron Amarillo Rioja Gran Reserva Spain, 13.5 per cent aldi.co.uk, £14.99

An online-only treat. Oodles of leafy, dried strawberry and sweet coffee bean-scented oomph.



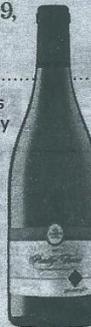
2021 Pinot Vigante Central Otago, New Zealand, 13.5 per cent aldi.co.uk, £10.99

Stunning sip from remote, beautiful Central Otago, almost as far south as you can go in New Zealand. At this keen price and crammed with silky, roasted plum and cranberry fruit, it's a steal. Nab it now online before it sells out.



2020 Winemaster's Lot Specially Selected Pouilly-Fumé France, 13 per cent Aldi, £9.99, down from £14.99

Grab this delicious sparky, gooseberry and nettle-spiked sauvignon. Part of the new top tier of Specially Selected wines, weirdly it's reduced to £9.99 in store but not online.



2020 Specially Selected Muscadet Sèvre et Maine Sur Lie France, 12 per cent Aldi, £6.29, £6.49 on aldi.co.uk

There's precious little chablis of note on supermarket shelves right now — so tuck into a bright and breezy muscadet instead. Even this cheap-as-chips '20 has some of chablis' smoky, mineraly, nutty charm.



2019 Specially Selected Crémant du Jura France, 11.5 per cent aldi.co.uk, £9.99

Crémant is the next best thing to champagne because it's made using the same grapes and method. A consistently good sparkler, with mouthwatering marzipan, quince and yellow apple fruit.



Co-op top 3

2020 Irresistible Carmenere Maipo Valley, Chile, 13.5 per cent Co-op, £7

A jolly, juicy oak-chipped Chilean is a treat for the taste buds. Brimming with exuberant yet classic carmenere fruit. It closes with a pleasing herby, curranty note.



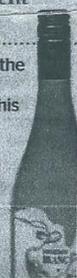
2021 Irresistible Fairtrade Sauvignon Blanc South Africa, 12.5 per cent Co-op, £5.50, down from £6.50

A vibrant, bosky, easy-sipping sauvignon, with lots of grapey, yellow citrus verve. It's not the best South African



2021 Irresistible Leyda Valley Sauvignon Blanc Chile, 12.5 per cent Co-op, £8

As much as I loathe the Irresistible moniker there's no denying this supermarket's considerable own-label expertise. Nab this stylish sauvignon blanc from cool, coastal Leyda, with its elegant, herby, pea



Own-label bottles to die for

Tesco top 4

2020 Finest Fairtrade South African Cinsault
13 per cent
Tesco, £5.50, down from £7.50

A juicy, sweet damson plum-packed cinsault, with bright, mouth-filling fruit.



2018 Finest The Trilogy Malbec
Argentina, 13.5 per cent
Tesco, £12

Majestic oak-aged, high-altitude malbec, sourced from three exceptional vineyards, by one of Argentina's top-drawer producers, Catena. Bursting with bold, spicy, black olive and black forest-floor fruit. Great with red meat and game.



2018 Finest Chianti Classico Riserva
Tuscany, Italy, 13.5 per cent
Tesco £7 down from £8 until March 1

Surprisingly good lightly oaked chianti, with polished tannins and fine fruit. This crowd-pleasing red is a light, leafy, floral midweek supper standby.



2021 Finest Stellenbosch Chenin Blanc
South Africa, 13.5 per cent
Tesco, £7.50

South Africa is one of the new world's most exciting producers, with wonderful wines at keen prices, just like this one. Bursting with bold baked apple and lemon zest fruit and part French oak aged, it's a joy.



Waitros

2019 Waitrose No 1 Quinta da Rosa Red Portugal
13.5 per cent
Waitrose, £12

A starry red overflowing with rich, velvety black fruit, lots of silviolet and bramble plus a fine floral finish. It's a joy.

2018 Waitrose No 1 Cava Castillo Perelada
Spain, 11.5 per cent
Waitrose, £10.79, down to £8.59 until March 2

Aged on its yeasty lees for nine months, what you get is a richly fruited sparkler with delicious spicy lime pickle.



2020 Loved & Found Roero Arneis
Italy, 13 per cent
Waitrose, £7.99

Loved & Found is Waitrose's unusual collection of single grape variety wines. This hand-harvested arneis, made from mature vines, is a delicious, ripe, nutty, apricoty class act, and the best white in the range.



Waitrose No 1 Rich Cream Sherry Jerez
Spain, 20 per cent
Waitrose, £11.99

Less lush than the Morrisons sherry, No 1 is made predominantly from palomino fino grapes with a dollop of sun-dried pedro ximenez. Ageing in old American oak casks has created a richly fruited toffee, date and mocha-scented charmer.



M&S top 4

2021 Found Grenache Blanc
South Africa, 14 per cent
M&S, £8

M&S's answer to Waitrose's Loved & Found, featuring unusual grapes and unusual sources. I enjoyed this greeny-gold, bold, buttery, spicy big-food white and so will you.



2020 Four Manseng Gascogne
France, 12.5 per cent
M&S, £9

Gascony's grape once destined for sweet wine, it has been turned into some perky white. With its ripe-spiced nectar and lemon-zest fruit, this green manseng makes a handy winter white.

Eat!
The 12 fastest puddings ever
Magazine

2020 Classics No 9 Alsace Gewurztraminer
France, 14 per cent
M&S, £10

A lychee and crystallised ginger of a low-yielding gewurz – this is the perfect bottle to drink with smoked trout and salmon.



Sainsbury's top 4

2020 Taste the Difference Beaujolais Supérieur
France, 13.5 per cent
Sainsbury's, £8.50

Brilliant crimson purple beaujolais, overflowing with melt-in-the-mouth, easy-drinking red berry and cherry fruit.



2019 Taste the Difference Château Tanunda Barossa Cabernet-Merlot
Australia, 14.5 per cent
Sainsbury's, £13

Enjoy this brooding, sweet cassis and bramble-charged Aussie red with cockle-warming fare.



2017 Taste the Difference d'Agassac Bordeaux
13 per cent
Sainsbury's

Surprising to Sainsbury's, this has stock of brilliant cru bourgeois. It's a classy, contemporary claret with plummy fruit and lots of chewy tobacco-soft oak.

Morrisons top 5

2020 The Best Marqués de los Rios Rioja Blanco Reserva
Spain, 13.5 per cent
Morrisons, £13



2020 The Best Côtes du Rhône Villages
France, 14.5 per cent
Morrisons, £8.25

A fruity red rhône and the best of its supermarket ilk. Brimming with



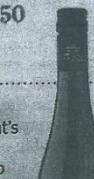
2019 The Best Gran Montaña, Uco Valley Chardonnay
Argentina, 13.5 per cent
Morrisons, £8.75

Knock it out of the park with this beautiful, buttery and consistently



2020 The Best Grüner Veltliner
Austria, 12.5 per cent
Morrisons, £7.50 (down from £8.50)

Morrisons' wine buyer knows what's what, and this is another stellar sip



The Best Ximéne
Spain, 17 per cent
Half bottle
Morrisons

A little of the bargain-but intensely lip-spiced fig and black moose raisin PX el



Chianti
Tuscany, Italy, 13.5 per cent
Tesco £7 down from £8 until March 1

Surprisingly good lightly oaked chianti, with polished tannins and fine fruit. This crowd-pleasing red is a light, leafy, floral midweek supper standby.



Chenin Blanc
South Africa, 13.5 per cent
Tesco, £7.50

South Africa is one of the new world's most exciting producers, with wonderful wines at keen prices, just like this one. Bursting with bold baked apple and lemon zest fruit and part French oak aged, it's a joy.



2019 Waitrose No 1 Quinta de la Rosa Douro Red Portugal, 13.5 per cent
Waitrose, £11.99

A starry red overflowing with rich, velvety black fruit, lots of sloe, violet and bramble, plus a fine floral finish. It's a cracker.



2019's Champagne
France, 12.5 per cent
Waitrose, £19.49, down from 23.99 until March 15

Not a great year so far for slashed-price own-label champagne, but this bouncy, black grape bubbly is as good as it gets right now. An attractive biscuity, musky-scented champagne.



Waitrose No 1 Rich Cream Sherry Jerez, Spain, 20 per cent
Waitrose, £11.99

Less luscious than the Morrisons sherry, No 1 is made predominantly from palomino fino grapes with a dollop of sun-dried Pedro Ximénez. Ageing in old American oak casks has created a richly fruited toffee, date and mocha-scented charmer.



M&S top 4

2021 Found Grenache Blanc
South Africa, 14 per cent
M&S, £8

M&S's answer to Waitrose's Loved & Found, featuring unusual grapes and unusual sources. I enjoyed this greeny-gold; bold, buttery, spicy big-food white and so will you.



2020 Found Gros Manseng Cotes de Gascogne
France, 12.5 per cent
M&S, £9

Gascony's grapes, once destined for sweet wine, have been turned into some perky whites, including this one. With its ripe spiced nectarine and lemon-zip fruit, this gros manseng makes a handy winter swig.



Cava Brut Penedes
Spain, 11.5 per cent
M&S, £7

My favourite cheap own-label champagne-method cava. It's the perfect party pop and comes from the popular Penedes house of Freixenet. Much tastier than M&S's £10 Prestige Cava, this has masses of light but lively zingy lemon and crunchy green apple fruit.



Sainsbury's top 4

2020 Taste the Difference Beaujolais Supérieur
France, 13.5 per cent
Sainsbury's, £8.50

Brilliant crimson purple beaujolais, overflowing with melt-in-the-mouth, easy-drinking red berry and cherry fruit.



2019 Taste the Difference Chateau Tanunda Barossa Cabernet-Merlot
Australia, 14.5 per cent
Sainsbury's, £13

Enjoy this brooding, sweet cassis and bramble-charged Aussie red with cockle-warming fare.



2017 Taste the Difference Chateau d'Agassac Haut Medoc
Bordeaux, France, 13 per cent
Sainsbury's, £20

Surprising that Sainsbury's still has stock of this brilliant cru bourgeois claret. It's a classy, contemporary claret with elegant plummy fruit and lots of chewy, tobacco-scented oak.



2021 Taste the Difference Prosecco Conegliano Superiore
Italy, 10.5 per cent
Sainsbury's, £8, down from £10 until March 1

If prosecco floats your boat, this is the cut-price bottle to buy, with lashings of sweet, frothy tutti-frutti charm, which closes on a pleasing white almond note.



2019 The Best Gran Montaña, Uco Valley Chardonnay
Argentina, 13.5 per cent
Morrisons, £8.75

Knock it out of the park with this beautiful, buttery and consistently good chardonnay. It's the sort of smoky, elegant yet easy-swinging sip that works well as an aperitif and



2020 The Best Gruner Veltliner
Austria, 12.5 per cent
Morrisons, £7.50 (down from £8.50)

Morrisons' wine buyer knows what's what, and this is another stellar sip in its The Best premium range, previously titled Signature. With spot-on spicy white pepper and dill pizzazz,



The Best Pedro Ximenez Sherry
Spain, 17 per cent
Half bottle, Morrisons, £6.50

A little of this bargain-buy creamy, intensely luscious spiced fig and black muscatel raisin PX sherry from the leading sherry house Lustau, goes a long way. Made from sun-dried grapes, it is a heady treat.



Asda top bottle

2019 Extra Special Chateauf-neuf-du-Pape, Rhône
France, 14.5 per cent
Asda, £18

Enjoy the herby warmth and tickle of spice in this keenly priced red.

