

U3A ST AUSTELL WINE APPRECIATION GROUP

Mid MAY 2022 NEWSLETTER



Hoping you are all fit and well and enjoying the Spring weather now that May is here. We are just back from our Italian holiday which we enjoyed tremendously, and tasted many wonderful local Italian wines which unfortunately are not available in the UK. However Limoncello is, and being THE place for growing lemons it was offered everywhere, and we visited a Limoncello “farm” where they make a great **40%**! version. I had quite a few Limoncello Cocktails as an aperitif – a good glug of Limoncello, a lot of ice topped with Prosecco with, wait for it, the largest basil leaf I have ever seen! Delicious and thirst quenching. Ideal for a Summer drink (pic below).

Having tasted a few in the past, we buy a pretty decent Limoncello from Ellis Wharton, **Bepi Tosolini Limoncello 28% £24.50** - an all natural Limoncello, and unlike many of the more commercial Limoncello available it contains no artificial flavouring, colouring or preservatives. Limoncello is traditionally made from Femminello St. Teresa lemons, which are also known as Sorrento lemons or Sfusato Lemons. Tosolini Limoncello is made using the peel only of yellow summer lemons and green winter lemons harvested from the Amalfi coast, which is considered to be the best area for lemons. The peels are steeped in neutral grape spirit which releases the lemon oils into solution. This lemon alcohol infusion is then mixed with a simple sugar syrup to produce the Limoncello liqueur.



I thought I should send a review of the Ellis Wharton tasting last month together with members' thoughts on it, while still fresh in everyone's mind. From all accounts Ellis Wharton did not disappoint both in terms of room layout, presentation, wines and food, and I would like to thank Janet for her excellent role in ensuring everyone got there and back, and for hosting in my place.

A review of Ellis Wharton Wines, Indian Queens “Non-conventional Wine Tasting” held on April 28th.

This was called “Unusual and Unconventional Wines” and listed below is the description Ellis Wharton used, but firstly members' comments (if you attended you have probably heard Ellis Wharton's comments already).

Janet's thoughts:

My personal favourite was the first wine, Gran Cerdo Blanco 2020: crisp, fresh, floral, excellent summer drinking. The only one I really disliked was the second wine, Punset NE? Langhe Bianco, which I thought smelled of wet mud and was far too acidic for its own good (or mine!)

Mick & Jenny reported:

We all had an amazing evening, ably led by Janet, and we were particularly impressed at how beautifully the room had been set out for us. The accompanying food was really tasty and the wine flowed well.

Our favourite wine of the evening was:

GRAN CERDO BLANCO 2020. This is from the Rioja region, but is not classed as Rioja as it contains multiple grape varieties: Including VIURA, GEWURZTRAMINER, RIESLING, PETITE MANSENG AND MACABEO. It is made using biodynamic processes, fermented with native yeast, unfiltered, and has minimal added sulphates. The nose was fresh, with citrus/ apples, but the taste was what made it for us. It was probably the freshest, cleanest tasting wine I have tried. The best words I think that described the taste for us, are NATURAL and PURE. **We scored this 4 out of 5.**

This next one was considered 'ok' by us but not one we would buy

MONTE BERNARDI, FIASCO VINO POSSO NV

The wine is a blend of organic Sangiovese, Canaiolo, Malvasia Nera and Colorino from Tuscany; Montepulciano from Le Marche and Frappato, Nerello Mascalese and Nero d'Avola from Sicily, so a real mish-mash .

The initial nose to me was similar to 'winter warmer' sweets, with hints of spices and cherries. I was quite disappointed when I tasted, I was expecting more richness after the nose was so promising. It did however improve when accompanied by food, and would probably go down well at a barbecue. **We scored this one 3 out of 5.**

Karen Scott commented:

My favourite wine, out of the 6 we tasted, was the second one, a white wine from a vineyard farmed by the Marcarino family for generations in Piedmont, Italy. This is the first estate to receive organic certification in Italy. The wine was called Punset NE? Langhe Bianco which seems at first glance to be a very strange name for a wine. Apparently Ne? is Piedmontese slang and is similar to saying eh? at the end of a sentence. It was a blend of Arneis, Favorita and Cortese grapes which are all locally grown in Piedmont. We were told that the wine was aged in concrete vats. Apparently concrete, though neutral, is still a semi-porous substance. It allows for micro-oxygenation, whereby the ageing is similar to a barrel but without imparting oak aromas or flavours. The wine itself was rich and fruity with aromas of honey, pineapple and pear. It would pair well with fish, especially sea bass and costs £16 a bottle.

Ros Mitchell gave these thoughts:

We arrived to a beautifully presented large table with 7 glasses each. (1 for water)The food was placed down the centre: Lancashire cheese bombs, small pots of pate, salami, focaccia, biscuits, nuts and crisps. We were looked after by 3 members of staff. The wines were presented by the sales manager, I am afraid I did not get the names.



They explained that we were tasting predominately light fresh wines made biodynamically ie. organically even if not officially certified. Whole bunch gentle pressing to enable air pockets to remain. There was very little ageing in barrels.

1. Gran Cedro Blanco A light white Rioja which I thought would make a good aperitif.
2. Punset NE?Langhe Bianco A fruitier white from Piedmont in Italy.
3. Weingut Judith Beck, Pink. This was the most interesting wine of the evening and so we bought 2 bottles home. It was almost effervescent with some red fruit acidity. Apparently excellent with mackerel and barbecue food. It came from Austria and did have a little ageing in barrels.
4. Radford Dale, Thirst Gamay 2021. A thin fruity wine with a dominance of strawberry, interestingly from South Africa.
5. Monte Bernardi, Fiasco Vino Rosso NV. My favourite of the reds, Sangiovese from Italy. Flavours of cherry, vanilla and cinnamon.
6. Gran Cedro Tempranillo 2020. A particularly fruity, flinty wine.

Thank you to those who gave comments, and as you can see proved here, everyones' tastes differ which is what I find so fascinating with wine tasting.

For those interested or who weren't able to attend, here is the detail sent from Ellis Wharton on each wine:

Gran Cerdo Blanco, £10

We've long stocked the red and now the white from Gonzalo Gonzalo - Biodynamically produced in the Rioja region, but not following the rules so NOT Rioja! This wine has some very tropical white varieties blended in with the main Viura grape. The Big Pig on the front is an ode to the Bank Manager who refused the winemaker a loan. This is a very clean and natural wine, dry but with a lovely fruitiness. Viura is the principle grape used here, but includes Gewurztraminer, Riesling and a whole bunch (see what we did there!) of other varieties.

Punset, NE? Langhe Bianco £16

This white is called 'Ne?' after a popular Piedmontese slang, used to finish a sentence, similar to 'eh. It is a blend of Arneis, Favorita and Cortese, local grapes in Piedmont, that are aged in concrete vats. Rich and fruity on the nose displaying floral notes and white fruit flavours of banana and pear. This fruity sensation transitions in the mouth to deeper notes of honey, butter and a light acidity that swiftly cleanses the palate. Well-structured with good balance.

While the vineyards that form Punset have been farmed by the Marcarino family for generations, it is truly thanks to Marina and her incredible energy that the estate is how it is nowadays. In the 1980s, she decided to pursue organic farming – a demanding choice that was rewarded by becoming the first estate to receive the organic certification in Italy. Her passion for the soil and the environment led her to embrace biodynamics and the agronomic philosophy of Manasobu Fukuoka. From one of the healthiest vineyards in Italy, Marina crafts wines that brim with life, energy, and pure terroir.

Weingut Judith Beck, Pink £14.50

The wine is crisp and crunchy and bristling with reds fruits, dry, zesty. The ideal glass of natural pink. Serve with barbecued ribs, grilled portobello mushrooms or baked salmon. Winery Judith Beck is a 15 hectare estate in Gols in Austria's Burgenland which has been farming biodynamically since 2007, aiming to respect the environment and produce the best quality grapes, using native Austrian varieties. Judith Beck herself studied abroad at places like Cos d'Estournel in Bordeaux and Errazuriz in Chile but returned home to take over from her father and move the winery in the direction of natural winemaking. They encourage the formation of humus as a basis of healthy soils, using their own natural composts and cultivating grass between the rows. Herbal remedies are also used and the vines are maintained under the rhythms of the moon. In order to produce authentic wines, they also avoid inoculated yeasts of any kind, and minimise sulphur, fining or filtration, with her Bambule! range epitomising this philosophy.

Radford Dale, Thirst Gamay £13

From the vibrant, pink hue with purple tinge on the rim to the soft, yet striking strawberry and cranberry aromas of the nose, this Thirst Gamay Radford Dale wine refuses to be defined by the rules of modern conventional

winemaking. The palate shows a range of red fruits and a touch of tomato leaf, before a bracing acidity brings the wine to a long, clean finish. Light, supple tannins provide texture and a lift in the finish which refreshes and rewards at the same time. Utterly moreish, this wine seems to disappear out of the glass on its own. The wine is lean and fine but by no means simple. It intrigues with its subtle vivacity and non-conformist attitude.

Radford Dale is a South African wine brand that is famous for its refreshing wines. It was founded in 1998. Alex Dale, a Brit, and Ben Radford, an Australian, are the joint partners of this brand. They set up this brand with the sole objective of making high-quality wines from the vineyards spread across the Western Cape. Alex and Radford have many years of wine experience between them, which reflects in the quality of wines that they craft under this label. The Radford Dale brand gives a lot of importance to the soil, climate and people while crafting wines. They grow only those varieties of grapes that suit the soil quality, which makes them special.

Monte Bernardi, Fiasco Vino Rosso £20 (litre bottle)

Customers of a certain age will remember Chianti bottles in straw baskets. Some of you may even have one in the attic, converted into an impromptu lamp. The chances are it didn't originally contain a wine this good. Fiasco is an affectionate, amusing nod in the direction of those straw-covered flasks. It is an unoaked red blend made with organic grapes sourced from all over Italy, and it's very drinkable. It is medium-bodied, full of juicy red berry flavours, with floral and spicy hints for company. Minimal SO₂, bags of energy, very easy to like and a bit of a bargain!

The Monte Bernardi estate covers 53 hectares, 15 of which are under vine. 4.8 of these hectares are held on a long lease, which was taken out in 2011. The vineyards are situated in the hilly, southern-most region of Panzano, an area long acknowledged as one of the Grand Crus of Chianti Classico. Michael Schmelzer and his family bought the estate in 2003, and have invested heavily in it ever since. The estate has been certified organic and bio-dynamic since 2004. Grass and cover crops are grown in alternate rows: composted cow manure and biodynamic preparations are used. Harvesting is by hand, usually from late September until mid-October. Annual production is between 55,000 and 65,000 bottles. None of the wines are filtered.

Gran Cerdo Tempranillo £10

Gran Cerdo Tempranillo is all about the purest expression of fruit with whole bunch fermentation, no filtration, no stabilization and minimal sulphur. The winemaker, Gonzalo Gonzalo Grijalba is a legend (and not just for his name) because he has proved that you can make a fantastic Rioja, following Organic & Biodynamic practices, at an affordable price. The wine has real character, all the juicy elements of Tempranillo, with no dirty oak to mask its charm. It has a natural way about it but with no funkiness. With its cherry-red, purplish, brilliant colour Gran Cerdo reveals primary notes of fresh fruit, strawberries, raspberries, cherries and violets with clean mineral tones from the granite. This little natural wine is phenomenal value.

In the Gran Cerdo Tempranillo Gonzalo Grijalba has produced a wine that shows, in the nose and flavours, an intoxicating combination of red and dark berries, faint lavender (or violets) and a slightly earthy edge. The herbaceous flavours give the wine a slight green finish with a little spice, while the tannin and acidity cry out for some red meat.

The back label... Gran Cerdo is a great wine dedicated to the bank executives that denied loans to us on the basis that wine is not a seizable asset. One day, these greasy and sweaty corporate suits will find that the best things in life cannot be impounded!

- **May 19th Looe Valley Vineyard tour and tasting, depart Arts Centre 11.10am, depart Looe 14.45pm for return journey. FULLY BOOKED**

I am looking forward to seeing those members who managed to secure a place on this visit, a vineyard I have not visited but whose owner is certainly a very passionate enthusiast. Please wear appropriate footwear for walking around vines, and outer clothing according to the weather as we shall be having the tasting with cheeses on the outside covered terrace. Report of the event to follow in next month's newsletter and perhaps then those who didn't manage to book, could visit independently as you can book on line.

- **Sunday 19th June - June Summer Garden Party from 1200 midday
4 Tremena Road, St Austell**

Please do NOW let me know if you are attending and what food you will bring. Just as a matter of interest in case of bad weather, does anyone have a marquee or similar that could be used on the day?

A couple of kind members have offered help to prepare this garden in advance - grass cutting, weeding and other jobs will need to be done. I would like to hopefully have a small working party in attendance on the Thursday and Friday afternoons prior (16th and 17th) say 2-4pm, plus help on arrival on Sunday to put chairs out. If you can spare an hour to help on the 16th and 17th please do let me know.

- **21st July - A VERY SPECIAL EVENING of Wine & Food Pairing, Sit down to 5 courses, Arts Centre 6.30pm**

Members are starting to book for this event - Members Pippa & David Boardman have kindly volunteered to run this entire event, around the fascinating subject of pairing food to match wines. We will enjoy 5 wines (including a sparkling and dessert wine), with a matching cold "small plates" tasting menu. From the brief details I have, the food sounds delicious and the whole event something not to miss, so do get in the diary now. When booking please let me know once paid, and if you have any specific food allergies.

**£21pp which includes the £1 room fee. Bookings open now. Ref
xxxxWGJUL**

- **11th August "A tour around France" wine tasting with Le Mistral Wine Company. Venue to be confirmed. Cost £15pp plus transport cost.**

A minimum of 8 wines to be tasted plus accompanying cheese and charcuterie with this French orientated wine group.

I know that the Lostwithiel Wine Group are often to be seen holding their tastings with this company, and by all accounts a great evening. (We were to have this event at Le Mistral's new venue in Lostwithiel, which unfortunately has been delayed/postponed, but they are meanwhile using two venues in the town and venue will be confirmed nearer the time.)

To book use reference xxxxWGAUG and let me know once paid

- **15th September Members' Tasting, Arts Centre 6.30pm**

An opportunity for members to show a favourite wine, a wine that dazzled them, a memory from a holiday or a wine which is a great match to specific food they enjoy. Ideally 5 wines for the evening.

Already 2 members have volunteered, so do let me know if you are brave enough and willing to present one wine.... you are among friends. Our last members' tasting showed some very excellent wines under £10 which everyone thoroughly enjoyed and many then purchased locally. I am told the presenters enjoyed doing their research and uncovered very interesting facts and figures!

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

That is all for now, back to my holiday washing!

Regards

Amanda