

U3A ST AUSTELL WINE APPRECIATION GROUP

MID SEPTEMBER 2022 NEWSLETTER



Hi Everyone

A quick review before I go on holiday, of Thursday evening's tasting for anyone who could not make the event.

Members' Tasting

Enormous thanks to our six volunteers who presented such great wines, with some beautiful accompanying stories. I was personally won over by the Fattoria and its artisanal approach to not only winemaking but all its other produce, its ethos and general appeal. (see below Chris and Chris Wright's wines).

Tablecloths, matching plates and napkins adorned the 4 tables each with 6 members with lovely bread, biscuits and cheese which Shirley purchased on our behalf and presented on each table with olives. Thank you as ever Shirley.



Chris & Karen Scott started the evening, and presented 2 blind whites, to be tasted alongside each other as they were the same grape – **Gruener Veltliner** the signature grape of Austria. Following strict fermentation and bottling stands, it is difficult to find a poorly made Gruener. Similar to Sauvignon Blanc in some respects but a good alternative to explore.

Der Komponist, Neiderosterrich, Austria 2019, 12.5% Aldi, £6.49 – Pale in colour, notes of apple, pear and a hint of spice, dry and fresh. Pairs with Asian dishes, pork chops, herby cheese.

Johann Quest, Lower Austria, 2019, Lidl £5.99 – Dry, delicate with a slight frizzante, citrus flavours of lime lemon and grapefruit. Pair with poultry fish or salads.

The room was split as to which wine was preferred, however a good extremely reasonably priced aperitif to commence with and start intense conversations!



Chris & Chris Wright then presented their two wines blind, one was Chris(topher)'s favourite and the other Chrissie's.

Here is their presentation.

We have 2 red wines for you to blind taste this evening which come from a **bio-dynamic farm in Tuscany, Fattoria La Vialla**. We first discovered their produce via an insert in the Good Food Magazine some years ago. It was so unusual (they have wonderful marketing techniques) that, after reading it and exploring their website we decided to place an order.

The farm is a family-run, organic-biodynamic farm and wine estate. Already a farm over two centuries ago, it was retrieved from abandon and taken into safekeeping by the Lo Franco Family in 1978. Today it uses organic and biodynamic methods to cultivate 1,600 hectares/3,954

acres of land (with the largest Demeter certified surface area in Europe) and produces its own wine, extra virgin olive oil, pecorino cheese, appetizers, sauces, pasta, vinegar, honey, biscuits and other sweet delicacies – directly from vineyard to bottle, from vegetable patch to jar. The Fattoria's specialities cannot be found in any shop.

Unfortunately everything was to be ordered in cases or boxes of 6 of the same product. I emailed the farm and explained that we would like to try a range of their products and would it be OK to order mixed boxes/cases as long as there were 6 items. They were fine with this and we placed our first order buying 6 different bottles of red wine, 6 bottles of white, 6 different pastas, some extra virgin olive oil (2 per box), and 6 different pasta sauces. You do not pay until your order has been delivered when they send you an invoice (all you have to do is declare how you will pay when you order). Delivery is free for orders over £75. This is not a problem if you are buying wine!!

We were delighted with the quality of all the produce and now regularly place orders – particularly for their red wines, pasta and olive oil. We have also had pecorino cheese and a delicious panettone. They also sell gift packs which have proved very successful in spreading the word. Many of our friends and family now buy their goods. Chris's brother and his family went on holiday to Tuscany a few years ago and booked to have lunch at the farm (they also do accommodation). They sat at a typically Italian long table with check tablecloth and had 5 or 6 courses, each with a different wine for 25 euros each! All delicious.

Tasting

The two wines we have for you to taste tonight are certified organic and bio dynamic. The first is Chris's favourite of the red wines we have tasted from this supplier, the second is my favourite. Both wines are unfiltered, hence we have brought along strainers in case the sediments have been disturbed in transport.

Barriccato, Tuscany, Italy 2019 14% £12.30

The first wine is a 2019 vintage. Aged in oak barrels (barriques) for 20 to 22 months. Alcohol content is 14%. It is a wine blend of 2 grape varieties. It would be interesting if anyone can identify them!!

FEEDBACK

Grape – It is a blend of two grape varieties - sangiovese and cabernet sauvignon.

Colour – deep and dark cardinal red that tends towards garnet as time passes.

Nose – toasted cocoa, coffee and vanilla, cigar box and a hint of fruitiness

In the mouth – strong and impetuous, it fills the mouth with flavour and leaves a lingering persistence of both aromas and tannic richness.

Casal Duro 2018, Tuscany, Italy, 15% £16.00

The second wine is a 2018 vintage. Alcohol content is 15% so it is a “big” wine.

FEEDBACK

Grapes – Cabernet sauvignon and merlot

Colour – Copious legs of alcohol around the glass frame a deep shade of ruby red, with a garnet rim

Nose – Fine, intense nuances of wild fruit and vegetal aromas alternate with blackberry, blueberry and sour cherry, with hints of forest floor and Mediterranean scrub, with sweet spices, cedar wood, tobacco, pepper and aniseed, concluding with a refreshing menthol note.

In the mouth – Very soft, warm and silky, the close-knit tannins strengthen the structure. Well-balanced and pleasant to drink, with persistent, with a smokiness and fruity reminiscences of cherry, wood and new bitter traces of rhubarb.

Chris & Chris did an extremely comprehensive job in selling the “Fattoria La Vialla” artisanal products, ethos and even holidays to us with their enthusiastic recommendations on items they have received and enjoyed. It all sounds lovely and we have ordered their catalogue already, website: <https://www.lavialla.com/en-GB/>

Janet Harvey then presented her white dessert wine, all bottles beautifully wrapped in tea towels and gave us a mystery to solve of “which Heroine had made this wine?” and, what was the grape and

where was it from? This dessert wine was presented with locally grown, delicious plums and grapes.

This is Janet's presentation

Hukapapa Dessert Riesling, Marlborough, NZ (2014) 10%, £15.75

Made in Marlborough, on the South Island of New Zealand, the family-owned Hunter's vineyard was founded in 1983 by **Jane Hunter** (the Heroine) and her late husband Ernie. Since those early years, Jane has been owner, viticulturist and managing director of what became one of New Zealand's most established wineries.

The grapes are sourced from over 100 hectares in the Wairau valley. All of Hunter's vineyards are run under sustainable certification, meeting all requirements set out by the sustainable wine growing board of New Zealand. For this wine, fruit was picked in the cool of the morning and processed under anaerobic conditions. The tank was frozen, concentrating the juice. This is done by freezing the water allowing the grape juice to be run off leaving the ice behind in the tank. The juice is then concentrated for a second time. The resulting juice is then fermented until the correct balance between alcohol, sugar and acid was achieved.

The wine's name Hukapapa comes from Te Reo Maori and means "frosty". Hukapapa is a rich golden colour. It's only 10% alcohol but very full flavoured. It has aromas of peach and tropical fruits, with a hint of apple and citrus. The taste incorporates ample but not overpowering sweetness with a creamy texture. The tropical and citrus flavours are superbly balanced by the natural acidity and concentration of sugars. Conditions in 2014 were absolutely ideal for making Hukapapa and have not been so good since, so it has not been made since and is becoming very rare!

I obtained this wine from Nigel at Experience Wine in Lostwithiel, and he recommends the following food-pairing ideas: Lemon Cheesecake, Lemon Tart, or Eton Mess.

More information about the wine can be found at:

https://hunters.co.nz/media/uploads/2019_02/Hunters_Marlborough_Hukapapa_Dessert_Reisling-2014.pdf

Experience Wine, The Cold Store, Restormel Ind Estate, Lostwithiel, PL22 0HG. orders@experiencewine.co.uk 01208 871619

Ring or email first: it's a wine warehouse, not a shop, and Nigel and his colleague Lewis are often out making deliveries.

They had four bottles of Hukapapa left when I last spoke to them!

This dessert wine had the typical Riesling petrol nose, a rich golden viscous colour and typical Riesling tropical flavours. Very drinkable indeed and the plums certainly were a good accompaniment.

Finally Chris (Crane) presented an unusual RED dessert wine

Bodega Pablo Fallabrino Alcyone Dessert Wine, 15%, £22.50 Ellis Wharton

This was accompanied by a small chocolate brownie, which was an excellent match and really brought out the chocolate flavour of this absolutely gorgeous, unctuous and moreish wine. Everyone seemed to be blown away by this wine.

This is Chris' presentation, starting with a delightful story that I did not know.

Alcyone, a Greek demi-goddess, was the daughter of Eolo and wife of Ceyx. They were very happy together, but then Ceyx perished in a shipwreck and Alcyone, in despair threw herself into the sea. Out of compassion the gods changed her into a Haalcyon bird. (A type of Kingfisher). Since Alcyone made her nest on the beach and waves threatened to destroy it, Eolo restrained his winds and made the waves be calm during seven days, so she could lay her eggs.

These became known as the "halcyon days", when storms never occur. Alcyone became the goddess of calm and tranquillity.

Considered one of the most environmentally sustainable countries in the world, Uruguay is also the fourth largest wine producing country in South America. But in contrast to its neighbours (Chile, Argentina and even Brazil) Uruguay keeps more in step with its ancestors' European roots, where land small holdings are most common.

Most Uruguayan farms are tiny (averaging only about five hectares) and family-run, many dating back multiple generations. At this size, growers either make small amounts of wine for local consumption or sell grapes to a nearby winery. In all of Uruguay there are close to 3,500 growers but fewer than 300 wineries.

On these small plots of land, manual tending and harvesting, as well as low yields are favoured; this small agricultural country has never had a need for large-scale chemical fertilizers or insecticides. Their thriving meat industry also follows the same standards: hormones have been banned since 1968 and today all Uruguayan beef is organic and grass-fed.

Uruguay's best vineyards are on the Atlantic coast, in Canelones and Maldonado (where cooling breezes lessen humidity) or found hugging its border with Argentina. With a climate similar to Bordeaux and soils clay-rich and calcareous, Uruguay is perfect for Tannat, a thick-skinned, red variety native to Southwest, France. A great Tannat from Uruguay will have no lack of rich red and black fruit, lots of sweet spice and a hefty structure. Sometimes winemakers blend Merlot or Pinot noir with Tannat to soften up its rough edges.

Previously known under the Viñedo de los Vientos, the winery is located 4 km's from the Atlantic Ocean in Atlantida Uruguay, a sub region of Canelones, one of the coolest growing regions in Uruguay. Pablo Fallabrino is the owner, grower and winemaker and he lives on the estate with his wife and two children. His grandfather, Angelo Fallabrino immigrated to Uruguay in 1920 from Piedmont and planted 5 vineyards and started 2 wineries in the 1930's. Pablo studied with both his father and grandfather and eventually started the current, single vineyard estate in 1997 where they currently have 12 hectares under vine on their 30 hectare estate. Bodega Pablo Fallabrino produces mostly Piedmontese varietals in addition to Tannat and their wines typically show an old world, nuanced style. Pablo is also an avid surfer.

Amanda and I had never tasted a Tannat wine until a couple of years ago at Penrose Kitchen when a glass of Red Anarkia wine from Bodega Pablo Fallabrino was recommended to us to accompany a fillet steak. It was very different but delicious and so now we usually have a bottle in our "cellar".

On a subsequent visit to the same restaurant this Alcyone Tannat dessert wine was suggested to accompany a chocolate dessert. We loved it so much that a couple of days later we went to buy a couple of bottles from Ellis Wharton. I would now like to share this special dessert wine with you all.

Alcyone Tannat dessert wine is a unique wine that combines two different techniques for dessert wines, Barolo Chinato and Marsala and fortified with brandy up to 16%. Like Barolo Chinato it's aromatized with different roots and herbs. The base wine was aged for several years in

French oak barrels. This combination of methods is permitted in Uruguay, but would not be allowed in most other wine producing countries. It is unfiltered and aged for 12 months in used oak barrels.

The wine is dripping with notes of creamy caramel like a Wethers Original. This is chocolate cake with a melted caramel middle and vanilla frosting in a bottle, with an amber purple hue and a honey like texture. Touched with a bouquet of winter flowers, Madagascan vanilla bean and wild apple mint indulged with a warmth and a hint of white chocolate. As the story of Alcyone ends with tranquillity so does the long finish of this glorious wine.

I am biased as this dessert wine has become a firm favourite, but everyone seemed to love it and luckily there was enough for generous portions.

As you can see from the above, a good selection of unusual wines accompanied by interesting facts and figures and great stories. Lots of chatter and laughs, and I hope our two new members felt at home. Another great evening.



The 6 wines we tasted

Meeting Venue for this Wine Group 2023 onwards

After the information I circulated about having to move to a Friday evening at the Arts Centre, a few members have said this is difficult for them due to existing regular Friday evening commitments. Obviously I really do not want to lose any members, and so I have

looked at other venues again. The only real alternative who accept Wine Tasting on their premises, have availability and are within our area, would be St Paul's Church Hall, Charlestown. However, this would come at a more expensive rate for the room to you, which has to be paid in advance, and therefore your commitment would be needed. It is a very nice hall with good toilet facilities, disabled access, a very clean kitchen etc, but I am also aware it would preclude some of your from walking to the venue. We could have a Thursday evening there currently, perhaps not the 3rd Thursday (as a couple of members cannot now regularly make that date), but the 2nd or even 4th in a month. We do not need this hall every month due to our external visits, so we would have to plan carefully which months we may need it to book far enough in advance. I am still awaiting confirmation of acceptance of our group by the Trustees before doing anything further.

So, firstly I would like to hear from you **ONLY IF** this move is not convenient for you (if you are happy to move, then please do not email me). I will have to, at the end of the day, go with the majority and if that is to leave as is at the Arts Centre, then so be it, but if the opposite works for you all great. This is your wine group.

Should we move, I would then need someone to help with the extra administration entailed in this move, to make the hall bookings and deal with the paperwork, ensure funds are taken separately to pay for the hall, as I have quite enough to do planning and arranging the 11 monthly meetings. Hopefully a volunteer may come forward.

Something for you to consider....

I look forward to seeing those of you who are coming to the Argentinian tasting at Old Chapel Cellars in October, and meanwhile if you wish to come to our November visit to Ellis Wharton (Wines for Christmas), please pay (see September newsletter) and advise Shirley (shirley.salliss@btinternet.com) as she is coordinating numbers for me.

Regards

Amanda