

# U3A ST AUSTELL WINE APPRECIATION GROUP

## MARCH 2023 NEWSLETTER



Dear Wine Group Members

Firstly, welcome to our March Newsletter, and with this glorious sunshine the hope that Spring is on the way – Spring flowers are out and our clocks soon go forward which is always a good sign of longer days.

### **Why do we clink glasses?**

Clinking wine glasses is one of those time-honoured traditions we perform without even thinking. Some claim it was originally meant to drive away demons. Others believe the idea was to slosh a little bit of wine into your drinking partner's glass—that way, he/she couldn't poison you without risking dying himself/herself!

As exciting as those theories are, they're just not true. The real reasons we touch our glasses are much simpler.

Back before clinking was invented, a toast involved four senses: touch, taste, sight, and smell. The ears were left out of the equation, but as the manufacturing of wine glasses transformed into an art, people began

appreciating the fine sounds of struck stemware, and voila, the clink was incorporated into the toasting routine.

Clinking also produces a sense of community. Back in olden days, partygoers would pass around a single bowl of wine, and everyone shared from this single vessel. (After the bowl worked its way around the circle, the host would eat a piece of cooked bread, a literal toast.) Today, we're a bit too worried about germs to try that, so instead of drinking after our friends, we tap our glasses. It's a way of saying, "Hey, I'm part of this group and sharing in the good feeling, let's enjoy ourselves."

### **"Housekeeping"**

1. I would like to thank Ann Ford, with the help of Ann Smith, for buying and serving the food at our February meeting, which went down extremely well. Ann Smith has kindly offered to take the lead for our March meeting, but I am still looking for a volunteer, or a pair, for our June 23<sup>rd</sup> Quiz tasting please. There is a list of what sort of food to purchase, a budget will be given, and all costs reclaimed and paid promptly.

On this subject, as you are all aware the cost of food has increased enormously this year, especially when buying cheeses to accompany our tastings so we will be getting less for our budget. As I have said before, this is not a replacement meal, merely something to enhance the wines.

2. Without going over this point again, please do respect our Presenter this month, and keep chatter before and after the presentation. (I may well try having a short interval halfway to see if this helps). The whole point of this group is to learn more about wines....

**Quick review of Polgooth Inn Call my Bluff evening** - where, 17 of us Wine Group members attended and thoroughly enjoyed back in January. I thought it could be a good game to play amongst friends and family.

Tanya and Vicky excelled themselves with a blind tasting of 6 wines –we had to guess which was the correct wine from the two wines described, plus of course our own tasting of it. This was not as easy as it sounds as both profiles were extremely similar and many of us there were caught out on the odd wine! There was, as ever with Tanya, a lot of hilarity, extremely generous portions served of the wines, and after the tasting, lovely platters of cheeses,

dips, biscuits and breads were served, after which a wine based quiz took place. A great evening. The “Walter Hicks wines” we tasted were as follows with the correct one in bold:

1. A **Knighthor Brut**, Cornwall or A Prosecco Ca’Bolani, Veneto Italy
2. Outnumbered Sauvignon Blanc, New Zealand or **Menetour Salon Jean Baptiste Thiabult**, Loire Valley, France
3. Grand’Arte Alvarinho, Lisbon, Portugal or **Fincas de Azabache Tempranillo Blanco**, Rioja, Spain
4. **Orange, Banat**, Romania or Sand Tropez Rose, Provence, France
5. **Chateau Lamonthe Castera, Bordeaux Superieur**, France or Esk Valley Merlot Cabernet Malbec, Hawkes Bay, New Zealand
6. Amarone della Valpolicella Zonin, Veneto, Italy or **Miopasso Nero d’Avola Appassimento**, Sicily, Italy

### **Review of The Bimbling Barrel, “Unusual Wines”**

Kelly and Sophie who run The Bimbling Barrel as a pop up wine tasting company and who will also do private events, certainly presented unusual wines which I believe none of us had tasted,(at least the first 3 wines) before. The first 3 certainly split the room (think Marmite) and some loved, some disliked! Prices listed were those on the night. The Bimbling Barrel’s philosophy is to find natural wines made in authentic ways wherever possible. It was good to taste quality wines which had all been made with love and respect, and the fact that they were not all to our taste, really made no difference to the experience.



**FIZZ - Sparkling Pet Nat Mea Rose, Blaufrankisch, Podravje, Slovenia  
12.5% £24**

Firstly the old fashioned bottle with a crown (beer bottle) cap, showed a cloudy pink colour (which had cleared on one bottle). This wine produced in the organic unfinned and unfiltered method, with no added SO<sub>2</sub>, and using the Blaufränkisch grape. Hand-picked grapes are allowed to “bleed” for about 4 hours. It is followed by a natural fermentation that is closely monitored by the winemaker. Once the sugar level reaches the desired level, the wine is bottled with wild microflora and continues fermenting in the bottle.

Lively on opening, cherry fruit and pronounced yeastiness on the nose lead to a grapefruit taste with a slightly bitter acidic finish. Chill and do not shake before opening! Some thought it great as a zesty summer drink.

**WHITE - White Txakoli Flysch 2021, Basque region N Spain 11%, £20**

Although not a natural wine per se, this is organic. In 2008 the winemaker planted Hondarribi Zuri vines in an area of what is called “the Basque Coast Geopark”. The winery, named Gorosti, is located in Elorriaga, right next to the coast line, between Bilbao and San Sebastian.

As the vineyard sits right on the coast, this influences the freshness of the grape and gives a salinity to the flavour, which in itself is very unusual..

The soft, slight bubbles, also known as petillance, is a sign of how fresh this wine is! Would go perfectly with seafood.

**ORANGE - Matyas Organic Sari Blend Orange wine, Strekov, Slovakia, Organic and Vegan 13% £18**

Orange wine also called amber, skin-macerated or skin-contact white was being made in 6,000BC. This particular one is from the Matyas Family based in South Slovakia near the River Danube, who operate a bio-dynamic way of farming to ensure the natural biodiversity. Made from a blend of Chardonnay and Riesling, more a golden colour than orange, with a definite nose of apricot and blossom. Strong tannins on taste. Would pair wonderfully with vintage cheese or Asian cuisine.



**RED - Santa Cruz de Coya Pais 2021, Bio Bio, Chile 11.5% £25**

A light red from the Bio Bio region of Chile (cool climate), and m Santa Cruz de Coya Pais 2021, Bio Bio, Chile made from 200yr old 100% Pais grape indigenous to Chile with great historical importance. Light bodied, earthy tobacco nose with a dry strawberry/blackberry taste with delicate tannins. Reminiscent of a very light Pinot Noir. Would imagine this wine could be served chilled in the Summer.

**RED - Amarte Piemonte Albarossa 2016, Piemonte, Italy 14% £25**

Definitely a winner, but was that because we were more familiar with this style of Italian wine? Using the Albarossa grape with no oak, the deep ruby

wine gave scents of red fruit and spices, and tastes of smoke and leather. Full bodied with good structure and soft tannins. Would pair with pasta, white or red meat, medium aged cheese.

All in all a very different set of wines, presented by 2 young female wine appreciators who, with their choices, certainly got us tasting unusual wines.



## **Old Chapel Cellars own Wine Tasting Events**

Back in the Autumn when we had an exceptionally good evening with Old Chapel Cellars, they said they would keep us informed of any events they were holding at their premises in Truro. They have now announced the following, and if interested **book direct**:

### **Wednesday 15<sup>th</sup> March Cheese & Wine Pairing**

“We will be tasting our way through six delicious cheeses at this event, paired with some interesting wines. We will discuss which styles work best with a diverse array of cheeses, and – as this is not an exact science – we are hoping for some lively debate around our choices!” Tickets are £30 pp and we would love you to join us. Link for booking below.

<https://www.oldchapelcellars.co.uk/products/cheese-and-wine-pairing>

I would suggest St Austell’s 6 and 8 seater taxi sharing making the cost very reasonable between a few people.

Other Old Chapel event dates are:

23 March Grape Minds - with Ellie Owen, Sommelier

27 April Blind Tasting with iSight Cornwall

14 June Portuguese Wine Tasting

5 July Food and Wine Tasting

When more information on each event is available I will let you know.

**Ellis Wharton** have an event at their premises on 14<sup>th</sup> April when Exton Park are presenting their excellent quality English fizz wines. 6pm start, £45 per head. **Book direct**, tickets are likely to go very quickly.

**Our own events now booking:**

**Booking closed: March 17th 2023: Derek Crookes from Kernowine, Falmouth, "Wines of New Zealand".** 6.45pm Arts Centre suggest taxis 9.30pm.

A big thank you to two of our members who are donating some cold meats to the evening to accompany our cheeses, a lovely gesture much appreciated.

**April 21, Carol Avery presents "A trip through Italy" at Pentewan Sailing Club** (opposite the Ship Inn, other side of the water) **6.45pm for 7pm start, finish at 9pm. MAXIMUM NUMBER 24. Cost £20pp**

Suggest taxis, drop off by Ship Inn or car park, and cross over to the Sailing Club (NB some uneven terrain). Pale blue building in a compound, walk from Ship Inn 150m to the headland where there is a disabled friendly slope to enter the Club House. **BRING A TORCH** for coming out as no lighting.

**Take your own glasses.** Carol is back again by popular request and will lead us on a wine exploration. Starting with the Prosecco Road we will taste and evaluate 5 Italian wines (White and Red and probably a dessert) on our brief tour. No need to pack a bag but bring a tasting glass. Flutes for take-off will be provided! As there is no provision for food, we will be taking some Italian accompaniments.

**Pay by March 20 ref xxxxWGAPR23**

## **NO MEETING IN MAY, NOW MOVED TO JUNE 23**

As only one couple indicated their availability for the May meeting and other reasons, we have moved the May quiz night tasting to June mid way between the Garden Party and the July tasting. See below.

**Sunday 11 June, Annual Garden Party** - I am, as ever, delighted to confirm the date for our now **annual Garden Party at Karen & Chris home** from midday onwards. **NO COST**

Bring a platter of sharing food and a bottle or two of wine, hopefully enjoy some music if we can persuade the Barker Street Band to play, get to know fellow members and generally while away the afternoon in a beautiful garden.

We will plan the food so that we have as much variety as possible, including vegetarian platters – a **volunteer to coordinate** this would be appreciated.

**June 23 at the Arts Centre, Wine Tasting Quiz Night by Christine and Andrew Johnson.** Arrival 6.45pm depart 9.30pm. **Cost £16pp** to include room fee and food.

After the huge success last year, another chance to enjoy a great evening of fun, testing your general wine knowledge, whilst tasting wines eating cheese and trying to win a spot prize. Christine and Andrew came up with a varied and interesting quiz all about aspects of wine, injected with a lot of humour!

**A Volunteer** to provide the food please (all costs reimbursed) Please let me know if you can do this, many thanks.

**Pay by May 22, ref xxxxWGJUN23**

**July 28 Food and Wine Pairing, Arts Centre** - I am so pleased to announce that this time Vicki and Terry Howard are cooking Paella in their enormous pans for us. This is intended to be a more relaxed evening, not fine dining, but we will still enjoy delicious food matched with wines.

**u3a Wine Group “An Evening of Spanish Food & Wines”, a relaxed evening (max 28 people) with Vicki and Terry Howard** Arrival 6.45pm to sit at 7.15pm, Paella to be served 8pm . **4 Course Spanish menu (Tapas, Paella, Cheeses, Dessert with wines & Spanish Cava on arrival)**



Paella will consist chicken and chorizo, with added prawns. A vegetarian "section" will be created. Unsuitable for shellfish allergies in case of liquid leakage. **Cost £18pp to include £1 room fee**

We have 3 kind volunteers already offering to cook some tapas, but Vicki will need help to lay up the room during the afternoon to make it look warm and inviting, or serve wines. Please let me know if you are willing to help make this event a wonderful occasion and I will put you in touch with Vicki.

**Pay by June 20<sup>th</sup>. Ref xxxxWGJUL23** (likely to be very popular, limited to 28 on a first come first served basis)

**Daytime: August 11 2023, Bosue Vineyard, St Ewe, Tour & Tasting, £15pp** - I suggest taxi sharing as it is so local. **Arrival 11am** suggest taxis again at 2.30/3pm but we are welcome to linger longer especially on a nice day.

Bosue is a small family run local vineyard, growing Cornish grapes and making award winning white, sparkling and rose wines and brandy. The first vines were planted in 1996 as a trial plot with further planting in 1999, 2004 and 2005. They now have 3000 vines of modern grape varieties.

We were due to visit when lockdown hit so had to cancel, and although Bosue no longer offer public wine tours and tastings, they are happy to do so for our Group. In brief we would have a tour, onto the winery for a tasting of their white wines, sparklings, a rose and for the brave their Brandy!! As they are no longer able to offer any food, we can take our own picnic (wet weather contingency in place) to eat during or after the tasting. **Numbers will be restricted to 20.**

**Pay by July 11, ref xxxxWGAUG23**

**September 15 2023, at Arts Centre, Wadebridge Wines present, Wines of the Loire Valley. £23pp** to include room fee and food. **6.45pm start**

Another case of Covid cancelling this event I was so looking forward to, as after speaking many times with Sebastien and hearing his enthusiasm (as well as gorgeous French accent!) he certainly knows his stuff. So I am excited to announce this event when we will taste at least 5 wines of the Loire Valley.

**Pay by August 10, ref xxxxWGSEPT23**

**October 20<sup>th</sup> will be another visit to Ellis Wharton Wines** – Topic tbc, £30 pp to include food. Our last visit to EWW was a complete success and we all thoroughly enjoyed the feast as well as some excellent wines, which many of us purchased. More detail to follow. Minibus to be arranged, cost tbc.

**(nb date a Thursday) November 16<sup>th</sup>** will see another visit to Louisa at Old Chapel Cellars, Truro for a pre Christmas tasting, **“Wines for Christmas Gatherings”** – what to drink/serve when the family or friends come over, or for formal dinner parties and large drinks parties. A mix of fizz, red white and dessert wines. **Price pp £30** with nibbles to accompany. Minibus cost to be confirmed. Judging by the success and purchases from our last visit here, a very popular venue and speaker.

Exact detail and costs for each event will always be confirmed in the previous 2 month's newsletter to give time for you to pay and for us to pay the supplier, always in advance often up to a month prior. For the events with restricted numbers, I suggest you pay soonest if you are interested. For all bookings please let me know once paid – this is important for me to keep a tally of numbers, especially where they are restricted. Thank you.

**PLEASE NOTE THAT FOR ANY PAYMENTS TO THE WINE GROUP ACCOUNT PAY INTO ACCOUNT NO 23132587 SORT CODE 20-30-47 “Wine Community” (Barclays bank). Include the reference number given for each event, with the xxxx being your membership number(s)**

Well that is it for this month, let us all hope this sunshine continues and I look forward to seeing everyone on the 17<sup>th</sup> for a New Zealand tasting.

Kind regards

Amanda