

U3A ST AUSTELL WINE APPRECIATION GROUP

MAY 2023 NEWSLETTER



Dear Wine Group Members

1st May is with us on Monday, and there are a few Bank Holidays for everyone to take time off and relax this month, but think of the vineyard owners or winemakers who are at one of their busiest times in their winemaking year.

Between disbudding and flowering, the winemaker selects the branches that will help produce quality grapes and removes all the buds or burgeoning branches that could add too much weight to the vine (detrimental to harvest quality). When buds or shoots are removed from the base of the vine or the ground, it is called suckering.



Buds from Bosue vineyard nr St Austell April 23

The branches grow fast, between 5 and 15cm a day: they must be lifted and attached to the trellis regularly before being trimmed. This all happens during May, hopefully just before the vines' reproductive cycle of flowering somewhere between May and June, depending upon climate conditions.



I read recently that **Looe Valley Vineyard at St Keyne** are now open for **Tours and Tastings** this year with a new purpose built winery extension and extended terrace. Those of you who came to our visit there last year, will remember the absolutely amazing time we had with Charles, who gave us a fully immersive time, pruning vines, turning machinery and a great understanding of how they really hand make their wines. Should you have visitors staying, I can recommend as a thoroughly good few hours spent there. <https://www.looevalleyvineyard.co.uk/>

Review of Carol Avery's "A Trip through Italy", April 21st 2023

After her successful "Wines for Winter" in November 2021, Carol hosted us again in Pentewan, this time at the recently built Sailing Club. The weather held for us walking to the headland both ways and the venue was a lovely cosy space, ideal for our numbers.



Carol presented 5 wines from Italy as below, which were a good selection of grape varieties, styles and locations with matching price tags. She gave us a lot of basic and more advanced information ranging from taste bud areas on the tongue, to minerality from the coastal locations and much more. Shirley as ever did a grand job with the food, giving us ideal matching items to the wines. Thanks Shirley!

We tasted the following wines (with my own brief tasting notes).



Prosecco Superiore, La Marca, DOCG, Veneto, Extra Dry 11%, Majestic £14.99 (£12.99 for 6) picked by hand with Glera grapes from the specific DOCG areas. Fresh, fruity, peach/apricot, apple and citrus. Dry with good bubbles. Ideal aperitif.

Pecorino Saladini Pilastris DOCG, Organic, 13.5%, Marche/Abruzzo Majestic £11.99 (£9.99 for 6) 100% Pecorino grapes grown near the coast, very aromatic and good depth of flavours of citrus, peach and tropical fruits. Would be good with soft cheeses.

Sea Change Montepulicano dAbruzzo 2021 DOC 12%, from seachangewine.com £12.99 red in colour with black fruits and fresh summer berries which are complimented with spice and soft, tannins, easy drinking and full of flavour for this lighter red. Contains sulphites and vegan friendly. Good in summer, or with meats.

Casa Giona Amarone Della Valpolicela DOCG, 15% £23.99 but prices can vary (according to year I imagine) from £25 up to £50. Similar available in Waitrose, Wine Society etc. 65% Corvina 20% Rondinella and other grapes 5%. This was delicious, full bodied, deep dark ruby colour, oak, vanilla and chocolate on the nose with spice and deep red fruit flavours, long finish. Definitely one to buy. Would be an excellent accompaniment to meats and blue cheese. Remember, Amarone is made using dried grapes giving deeper flavour, alcohol and viscosity.

Santa Cristina Vin Santo Valdichiana, Toscana DOCG 14%, £17.49 (37.5cl bottle) Waitrose (look out for buy 6 and save 25%) 50% Trebbiano

Toscano and 50% Malvasia Bianca grapes. This accompanied a balsamic vinegar infused Panettone, which complimented each other perfectly. The vin santo was fabulous, rich, unctuous, sticky toffee, fig and of course reminiscent of a sherry.



All in all another excellent tasting with generous measures, and judging from comments and emails from members everyone enjoyed themselves.

Carol has agreed to give us another tasting about this time next year, same venue and is currently looking at a very interesting topic which we have never covered, something up and coming!

Should anyone want to see the full presentation from Carol herself, I have a copy which I am happy to share and have put it on the u3a website under our Wine Appreciation tab under Interest Groups. (invite friends round and give your own Italian wine tasting???)

Still on an Italian theme ...

Review of a comparison tasting between two Barolos, a 2015 and a 2016

When looking at wines to match a 4 course Italian menu we were preparing for friends, Chris found 2 Barolos a 2015 and a 2016 in our wine store which he felt would match the main course well. They did and even stretched to the aged Italian cheeses!

Terre del Barolo, Barolo DOCG, Piedmont, Italy, 2015, 14% Waitrose (we think) £19.99

100% Nebbiolo grape. This elegant wine from 30-year-old vines in Castiglione Falletto, one of the key Barolo crus, is matured in French and Slavonian oak for 18 months and gives a cherry or even blueberry taste with maturing leather and liquorice touches, perhaps slightly earthy. It was decanted a few hours prior, quite a brownish red colour but very smooth tannins and delicious. Will age for a while yet.

We then tried the 2016, and it was a split decision as to who preferred which wine, as both had their many merits.



Ricossa Antica Casa, Barolo DOCG, Piedmont, Italy 2016 13.5% around £22.99

100% Nebbiolo grape. From Monferrato, the Langhe area which has interesting marine soil origins which consists of mostly calcareous-clay perfect for wine production creating wines with good structure and complexity. Barolo, one of the Piedmontese greats, gets its great structure from 38 months of ageing. Medium garnet colour. The nose gives spices, slight coconut with tastes of liquorice, red fruits, and caramel. The palate is full-bodied, and well balanced. Smooth and Moorish.

It just shows what a good look through the wine store can bring forth!

Just a brief reminder of the forthcoming events to book for. More information can be found in previous newsletters as well as on our u3a Wine Group webpages.

PLEASE do quote the reference given in your payments – we have many payments in and without a reference to which month this is for, sometimes it is difficult for us to work out!

Book now for :

Sunday 11 June, Annual Garden Party, 4 Tremena Road, St Austell PL25 5QG - from midday onwards. NO COST

IMPORTANT please email **Sue Osbrink** to confirm your attendance, plus the plate(s) of food you will be bringing (1 per person). Sue will endeavour to ensure a good mix of sweet and savoury, and with the help of Lucinda, a good vegetarian choice too. Sue.osbrink@gmail.com

Additionally if you can **help the Friday before (9th) afternoon with some gardening jobs, it would be good to have another garden group assisting Karen & Chris.** Last year we did some weeding, grass cutting, brushing and jet washing. Please also let Sue know if you are available to help for a couple of hours. Thank you.

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.

Pay by May 22, ref xxxxWGJUN23 and advise Sue Osbrink (as above)

July 28 Arts Centre - “An Evening of Spanish Food & Wines”, a relaxed evening with Vicki and Terry Howard (max 28 people) Arrival 6.45pm to sit at 7.15pm, **Cost £18pp to include £1 room fee**

NOW ONLY 2 SPACES LEFT. Vital you contact Sue Osbrink to check they haven't gone prior to payment! PAY NOW ref xxxxWGJUL23

August 18 2023, Bosue Vineyard, St Ewe, Tour & Tasting, £15pp - I suggest taxi sharing as it is so local. Arrival 11am depart at 2.30/3pm but we are welcome to linger longer especially on a nice day.

Numbers will be restricted to 20.

Pay by July 18, ref xxxxWGAUG23 and advise Sue Osbrink

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

Pay by August 10, ref xxxxWGSEPT23 and advise Sue Osbrink

VOLUNTEER PLEASE TO DO THE FOOD!

October 20th visit to Ellis Wharton Wines – Topic tbc, £30 pp to include food. Minibus transport cost £13.50pp maximum 16 by bus but venue can take 20. Final 4 may have to taxi share.

(nb date a Thursday) November 16th a visit to 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 £13.50pp maximum by bus 16 but venue can take 20 as above.

December 15th Wine Group Christmas Social Evening cost tba, Arts Centre. 6.45pm start. Everyone to bring a platter of Christmas canape style food. Wine Group to purchase wines.

For all bookings please email Sue Osbrink once paid, but if restricted numbers you must contact prior to paying. 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)

I am disappointed that no one has come forward to be responsible for and coordinate food for the meetings at the Arts Centre following my last request. For the past years “the girls” have frequently offered and done this job. It would be nice, in the spirit of the u3a if someone would simply take charge of this element of our meetings, and encourage other food volunteers please.

There are not that many months when we are at the Arts Centre and is another job I personally would like to relinquish.

Wine Trends for 2023 (something I read recently and thought may be of interest to you all).

Wine is an ever evolving culture, with new growing regions constantly entering the spotlight, habits of consumption fluctuating regularly, and wider movements for sustainability having their impact too. So what can we expect from the world of wine for the rest of the year ahead?

Buy better wine to elevate nights in

Berry Bros. & Rudd's Events Expert, Master of Wine Barbara Drew, foresees a rise in purchasing fine ingredients to elevate the humble night in. "I think a trend towards really savouring fine food and wine at home will become increasingly evident in 2023. After the initial flurry of excitement around heading out to restaurants and bars after lockdowns were lifted, people are recognising more and more that high quality ingredients, a bottle of mature wine and great company are all one needs for a lovely evening – whether at home or not."

Buy local

As with any produce, it is important to support independent makers, producers and traders and shop as locally as possible, an idea that certainly extends to wine. Rositsa Kasabova, Bulgarian wine grower, producer and owner of Villa Vinifera, recommends "a focus on small producers, specifically those who own (and can guarantee the quality) of their own vineyards." Always exciting are "those who dare to experiment with long forgotten technologies or try new ones," she adds. "With a growing emphasis on eating locally-grown produce, we are likely to see this increasingly reflected in the wine industry as well. English wines are improving year-on-year, with not only award-winning sparkling wines being produced but also white and red wines too."

Look to old vines and new wine regions

For Chablis wine grower Chris Watson, a glass half-full approach to 2023 will come with investing in pastures new...and old. "We can expect to see much more interest in older grape varieties as well as newer entrant countries to the wine producing world". Chris adds that we should look east towards

Ukraine, Bulgaria and Romania, with Romanian Pinot Noirs already gaining popularity on the UK market.

Know your cool climate wines

As well as focusing on newer and re-emerging wine producing regions in countries with an established viticulture, an industry shift towards cooler climates is currently taking place. “Partly as a response to climate change, producers are heading to cooler regions, whether that is higher altitude sites, or those at cooler latitudes. As producers really start to understand both the weather and soils in these newer regions the wines will get better and better”.

One such region is the Loire Valley. Famous for its fruity Sauvignon Blancs and crisp Muscadets, the Loire’s range of offerings is complex and truly deserving of our investment in 2023. “The cooler climate here along France’s longest river makes for beautiful fresh, lighter styles of wine and the range of grapes grown means there is a style to suit absolutely every palate”. With a strong presence expected in 2023, eyes are on South American Malbecs and Cabernets. Barbara adds that “South America continues to innovate and produce exquisite wines. In particular ultra-high altitude sites in Argentina are an increasing focus, making complex and layered wines from Malbec but also Cabernet Sauvignon and Cabernet Franc. These are a far cry from the heavy, overly fruity Malbecs of 20 years ago, and deserve a place in every serious cellar”.

Buy from regenerative growers

Climate change is having a serious impact on wine growing, as on all other types of agriculture. Harsher winters are impacting harvests, requiring innovative planting schedules and truly keeping wine growers and producers on their toes. “Early shooting wine varieties have become more susceptible to frost,” Chris Watson explains, and planting schedules are being “managed” accordingly.

In response, the growth of a multi-continental regenerative agricultural movement is helping to combat the consequences of climate change. ‘Regenerative viticulture’ is a term that refers to efforts to eliminate CO2 emissions and a focus on soil and vine health, and this is expected to grow in prominence in 2023. Regenerative agriculture focuses on strengthening the health and vitality of soil, increasing biodiversity above and below ground.”

In the coming months we are expected to see more wines incorporating biodynamic practices, going a step beyond the regular organic certification. As consumers, we are encouraged to navigate our purchases consciously,

but Barbara reminds us to be patient with producers and respect their limitations in uncertain times. “Consumers are starting to recognise organic and biodynamic ways of working. Although these suit many producers, they are not appropriate for everyone and alternative approaches are needed”. She adds “We believe it’s vital for our industry to be more sustainable, and regenerative viticulture is something that we should encourage our producers to adopt as they can, little by little”.

Well Chris and I are off to Italy, mooching around Umbria and Tuscany before finishing in Florence, with quite a few vineyard visits booked including Montalcino de Brunello, a firm favourite. Carol’s tour around Italy has also inspired us..... Keep well and see you in June!

Kind regards

Amanda