

# u3a ST AUSTELL WINE APPRECIATION GROUP

## AUGUST 2023 NEWSLETTER



Dear Wine Group Members

How can it nearly be August? - it seems that our Summer has flown past already, but hopefully good weather will return (currently raining as I type) for us personally, and vines and wine production can flourish. If we feel rather fed up with a few days of incessant rain, just imagine that in France a helpline has been launched to provide psychological support to the “traumatised” French winegrowers to cope with the damage from this summer’s mildew which is reported to have impacted up to 90 per cent of vineyards. French authorities felt the service was necessary after a spell of unusual weather wiped out swathes of vines in the Bordeaux region.

From 1<sup>st</sup> August 2023, the alcohol duty paid on wines produced, or imported into the UK will change and obviously many wines will have a price increase as from that date wine will pay duty in line with its labelled ABV. Despite a

large amount of critical feedback, the Government believes that this approach remains appropriate and will transition to an ABV-based duty rate for wine where each 0.5% increase in labelled ABV incurs additional duty of 9.9p per 75cl.

A wine of 11.5% ABV will pay the same duty under the new system as the current duty rate, but in line with the Government's initial proposals, wines over 11.5% will pay a lot more. For example a wine with 12.5% ABV will pay 44p per bottle more!

The duty premium on sparkling wine will end, i.e. duty will decrease on most sparkling wine. This will result in a bottle of sparkling wine of 11.5% ABV paying £2.23 in duty, 63p less than current rates, when the new system is implemented in full. Confusing really but no doubt prices will still vary according to where purchased.

And finally, some wine manufacturers are making weaker drinks in an attempt to keep prices down in advance of the tax rise. Australian Vintage, which produces the McGuigan brand, has already cut the ABV in some products ahead of the increased levy coming into force on Aug 1.

Talking of prices, as I type this Tesco and Asda have their 25% off 6 or more wines, and apparently Waitrose to follow suit perhaps next week.

## **A review of our July Spanish evening of Wine and Food.**

Before I start to describe the evening, for those of you who didn't attend, I have to tell you that this morning, the morning after the event, I have received many compliments on the evening, with special mention of the fabulous Paella chefs as well as the ladies who made the tapas, the cheese course and the excellent dessert. So, a huge thank you to Vicki and Terry Howard for offering to cook the Paella and suggesting the theme of A Spanish evening. Thanks also to Sue Smith, Nicky Tombs and Pippa Boardman for making the tapas, and Sue & Ray Smith for preparing the cheese course. Vicki baked a delicious Torta de Santiago which we all enjoyed at the end of the meal. It is very satisfying for me when our members put themselves forward to either run in total, or be an important part of an evening for our group, exactly in the spirit of the u3a. Thank you to everyone, and I know I say this often but you really are a great bunch of people, the atmosphere during the entire evening was great!



The weather had been mixed on the day but we were hopeful of a dry evening according to the BBC forecast (haha) however it did begin to rain lightly as Vicki and Terry were about to start cooking, but with their great foresight they were prepared.



Spanish music played in the background whilst we enjoyed a bit of social time enjoying the Cava. As we sat at the table, three tapas (stuffed padron pepper, tapenade and potato cake) were served to us, alongside a very palatable

Albarino. The enormous and absolutely delicious Paella with prawns, mussels, chicken and chorizo (with a vegetarian Paella for 2 members with asparagus and mixed vegetables) were served from the hall next, accompanied by a Reserve Rioja; a Spanish cheese course of Manchego and Iberico cheeses, grapes salted almonds and biscuits were next, with a recommended Manzilla, which on reflection was quite sharp in contrast. Finally a wonderful Torta de Santiago dressed with raspberries and unctuous dessert Moscatel wine. All in all “**una noche fabulosa**” a fabulous evening! I think it is safe to say everyone was well fed and very well “wined”!! Taxi companies in St Austell were extremely busy ....

Terry & Vicki have, very kindly, sent the recipes for both their Paella and Torta, and can be found at the end of this newsletter. Happy cooking!



Wines to accompany each course were all purchased some time ago from Waitrose with a 25% discount, prices shown before the discount :

**On Arrival: Anna de Codorníu Brut Cava, Spain 11.5% £11.99**

An iconic Cava, with the woman’s name who changed the history of the winery. This Brut Cava is made with Parellada, Xarel lo, Macabeo and Chardonnay grape varieties, all collected at the optimum time for harvest. Freshness with delicate aromas of fruit and flowers. Spain’s bestselling Cava to get the party going!

**With the tapas: Viña Lareira Albariño Sobre Lias, Rias Baixas, Galicia, Spain 12.5% £12.99**

Hand-harvested Albariño grapes from vines in excess of 30 years old, rooted in the vineyards in Rías Baixas, Galicia on Spain's northwest coast. This

beautifully textured wine is matured on its fine lees ('sobre lias') for up to 6 months to deliver subtle richness and complexity. Fruit flavours of peach, apricot and apple are balanced with a mineral twist for a fresh, crisp dry finish. Should complement the three tapas, and would stand up to the Paella also.

**With the Paella: Baron de Ley Club Privado Reserva Rioja, Spain 14%, £12.99**

Made from Tempranillo grapes. This wine has been aged in American and French oak barrels for a minimum of 18 months and further rounded in bottle to complete three years of ageing. Plenty of black fruit with a hint of vanilla for those of you who enjoy a red.

**The Cheese course: Hidalgo La Gitana (the gypsy) Manzanilla, 15% £12.75**

Made from the Palomino grape and with an average age at the time of bottling of around five years makes this a light, young Manzanilla Fina. Crisp and fresh with a salty tang from the sea breezes in Sanlucar. Serve chilled, excellent match for Manchego cheese.

**With dessert: Lustau Moscatel de Alejandría, Cadiz, 50cl, 15% £6.49**

A floral and subtly sweet wine, located on the Atlantic coast oriented towards the ocean, gives the perfect conditions for growing premium quality Moscatel grapes. The nose is filled with seductive floral aromas including roses, honeysuckle and lime blossom. On the palate, succulent lychee and white peach flavours mingle with gorgeous grapefruit acidity. Delicate, sweet, balanced and refreshing. Perfect for our Spanish dessert.

**A reminder of the forthcoming events to book for...**

**For those coming to:** August 18 2023, Bosue Vineyard, St Ewe, make your own way there. **Arrival 11am** depart at **2.30/3pm** but we are welcome to linger longer especially on a nice day. Take your own picnic food to enjoy while having the wine tasting, in case of bad weather there is an undercover area.

DIRECTIONS to Bosue:

Leave St Austell on Meva road, past Pentewan and at top of hill turn right towards Heligan. Follow road past the Heligan campsite and turn right on the sharp bend, signed Grampound and St Mawes. Follow brown tourist signs to Lower Barn who are right next to Bosue. (SatNav will take you via Sticker and Griggs to Tregain Farm. If so, continue 300m to Lower Barn, as above)

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

A new presenter to our Wine Group, originally due to come when lockdown hit, from the very successful and helpful merchant in Wadebridge. (The very French) Sebastien will present a minimum of 5 wonderful Loire valley wines. This should be a very popular evening and covering an area we haven't yet touched on, so **do book as soon as possible**, deadline very soon.

Thank you Margaret & Mark who have kindly offered to do the food for this event.

**Pay by August 10, ref xxxxWGSEPT23 and advise Sue Osbrink**

**October 20<sup>th</sup> visit to Ellis Wharton Wines –**

**SPAIN off the Beaten Track, a tour around Spain**, (no Rioja, Ribera or Priorat) **£30 pp to include a minimum of 6 wines** and accompanying Spanish nibbles. Every event at Ellis Wharton has been a sell out, where we have tasted amazing wines at a reasonable price, plus the most delicious “nibbles”. A chance to purchase wines and their other goods at the end.

Minibus transport **cost £13.50pp** – a maximum of 16 by bus (although venue can take 20. Final 4 may have to taxi share.)

For those who have already booked and paid the £30, please now pay to secure your seat on the minibus.

**November 16<sup>th</sup>** a visit to Old Chapel Cellars, Truro for a 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. Another lovely cosy venue for what has been most interesting and varied tastings in the past, again with delicious bites.

**Price pp £30** with nibbles to accompany. Minibus cost £13.50pp maximum by bus 16 but venue can take 20 as above.

**December 15<sup>th</sup>** Arts Centre. 6.45pm start.

*I wondered if this year you wanted something different to our usual social get together as we have had 3 or even 4 in the same format. Perhaps a **few of you** would like to get together to organise something with a wine theme, I can*

*give you a budget or you can come up with one which I will then advertise here. Do let me know asap, it would be nice to have something different this year. Comments please.*

For all bookings please email Sue Osbrink on her new email **only**:

[susanosbrink@gmail.com](mailto:susanosbrink@gmail.com) 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)**

Regarding next year’s events, this is YOUR group and so before I start to plan, I would welcome:

- a) Some Members to volunteer and are prepared to run an evening for one month next year, any subject connected with wine. You can get a group together to do this, and you need no experience, just enthusiasm!
- b) Any input as to what subjects – countries, grapes, you would like to see if I can find presenters to come to visit us.
- c) In the past we have visited Polgoon vineyard near Penzance, Knightor near Eden Project, Looe Valley Vineyard. We have not visited Camel Valley as they discourage group visits. I am happy to plan a revisit to any of these based on the majority, let me know.
- d) If you know of anyone willing to come and present a wine tasting, please let me know, or feel free to plan the evening yourself in conjunction with the external presenter.

Currently the only one plan in the pipeline is another evening from Carol Avery in April, covering Volcanic Wines. There is a new wine shop in Fowey, who once well established, hope to have wine tastings in their upstairs venue and I will discuss with them then.

I look forward to seeing you at our August vineyard visit, or whenever you are able to make the next tasting.

**See over for recipes.**

Kind regards

**Amanda**

## Paella de Mariscos History

The birthplace of paella is Valencia. It originated as a poor people's dish, but was often served at festive occasions and weddings. Strictly speaking, paella can only be so called if it contains the following ingredients:- saffron flavoured Bomba rice, olive oil, onion, garlic, green beans, tomatoes, rabbit, snails, stock and seasoning. The pan was heated over a wood fire, to infuse a little smokiness into the food. The stock, or caldo, would be made from the remains of the rabbit carcass, and covered the ingredients. The saffron spice would be introduced at this stage. Traditionally, in accordance with their Catholic faith, the rice would be the last ingredient added, and poured into the pan in the shape of a cross. All the ingredients would be stirred for a final time and the paella allowed to cook for 20-30 minutes WITHOUT DISTURBING. Once the stock had begun to boil, the pan was adjusted to allow a slow simmer. As the paella cooks, a thin layer of caramelised rice begins to form on the bottom of the pan, and if the cook is skilful enough the cooking process will be complete before this layer begins to burn. Known as the socarrat, this layer of crispy delight is universally accepted as the prize ingredient of the meal. And then, along came the holidaymakers! Although Valencia is a seaport, fish, and shellfish in particular, was expensive to buy, and so did not play a part in the evolution of the traditional Paella.

Holidaymakers, generally with greater wealth than the locals, and anticipated revulsion to eating snails, would ask the restaurants to include seafood with their orders for Paella, and the Paella de Mariscos was born. There are, of course many variations on this theme, but throughout, there are still a number of ingredients which have become sacrosanct to a Paella. i.e. Bomba rice, saffron, olive oil, tomatoes, a green vegetable, onion and garlic, water and seasoning. It wasn't long before the restaurants adapted and combined these two versions of Paellas to create the 'paella mixta' which is synonymous with our British perception of a "Paella". A true Valencian would recoil in horror at such an aberration of their World Heritage Status dish, arguing that it should be called arroz de mariscos. But when all is said and done, the food is cooked in a paella pan, and frankly, it's good for business. I'm sure that many arguments have gone on into the night along with jugs of sangria and bottles of rioja.

This is the way that we make paella at home. For 2-3 good helpings

Ingredients (listed in the order of use) ½ cup olive oil. 12 thin slices of chorizo, skinned. 1 chicken leg or breast from an extra large chicken, boned and cut into pieces. 1 large onion, finely chopped. 3-4 cloves garlic, crushed or finely sliced. 6 oz Bomba rice. (Paella rice) ½ large red pepper, coarsely chopped. ¾ tin chopped tomatoes. Good squeeze tomato puree. 1 cup



frozen peas. 1-2 pints chicken stock (Caldo) made from chicken carcass or stock cubes. (Saffron added at this stage, but we use turmeric, and also a small amount of smoked paprika, literally, just the end of a teaspoon – BE CAREFUL!) 12 cooked jumbo prawns (more or less according to taste) 12 St.Austell bay mussels (cooked separately to open with one shell and beard removed. More or less according to taste) Any seafood available, i.e. langoustines, shrimps, crab, lobster, scallop, cockles, clams, winkles. If using fish, choose a dense-fleshed variety such as monkfish or possibly cod.

**Method** We use a frying pan at home. Ideally a wide shallow pan, heated on a large ring. Add the oil and cook the chicken on a high heat, turning each piece to ensure the surface of the meat is seared all over. Be careful while doing this since the moisture in the chicken in the hot oil can cause it to spit. At the same time, the skinned chorizo can be cooked to release the oil. Beware if you use the spicy version of chorizo since it can be very intense – we don't. Add the chopped onion and garlic for a few minutes to soften. Add the rice and stir into the other ingredients, trying to coat each grain with the flavoured oil. By now, the pan will be crying out for liquid, so add the chopped tomatoes and the chopped red pepper, along with a good squeeze of tomato paste and the peas, if frozen. You will know your cooker and pan better than anybody, so keep an eye on the temperature. You do not want anything to burn at this stage. Add the stock. There should be sufficient to cover the ingredients completely. If you are feeling rich, then a good pinch of saffron strands added to a small amount of boiling water and stood for a few minutes will ensure a good colour. As authentic as this may be, the saffron imparts very little flavour, and so we use a good teaspoon of turmeric. The colour is very similar and it also does little to affect the flavour. The use of smoked paprika is an ideal way to introduce the slightly smoky flavour of a traditional, wood-fired paella. It is optional, but if you use it, be very careful. We use just the end of a teaspoon, no more than a pinch. All the ingredients should now have a final stirring to distribute evenly. The pan should be heated quickly to bring the paella stock to the boil. As soon as the pan is boiling throughout, reduce the temperature to a simmer and **DO NOT STIR AGAIN**. After about twenty minutes the seafood can be added, along with the peas, if not frozen. If any of the added seafood is not pre-cooked then add after 15 mins.

Cooking should be complete after 30 minutes from reducing to a simmer. During cooking, keep an eye on the amount of free liquid in the pan. If there is still cooking time needed then carefully add a little boiling water, but don't overdo it – the ideal texture is moist not sloppy when cooking is complete. The real skill of any paella cook is to allow a thin caramelized crust to form at the bottom of the pan. This is called the socarrat, and the most prized ingredient of all. Serve the paella by putting the pan on a trivet on the table so

that each diner can help themselves. Add a lemon or two, quartered into segments and sprinkle freshly chopped parsley. We tend to add seasoning to taste at the table. There is no finer accompaniment to a paella than evening sunshine, a jug of freshly made Sangria, and good company. Don't forget – a recipe is simply a guide. Use your own discretion and your own tastes to make the meal your own. Salud!

## **Tarta de Santiago**

Ingredients:

260g ground almonds

255g golden caste sugar

6 eggs (separated)

zest 1 orange

zest 1 lemon

half teaspoon almond essence

half teaspoon cinnamon

11 inch (28cm) spring form cake tin.

Oven 150 degrees C. Grease and line tin.

Cream 180g sugar, zests and egg yolks until light and fluffy.

Stir in almonds, essence and cinnamon.

In a separate bowl beat egg whites and remaining sugar until stiff.

Add quarter egg whites into almond mix and beat, Add further quarter and beat. Add the remaining egg white and fold in to the mix.

Turn into prepared tin. Bake 40 mins.

Remove, cool for 10 mins and turn onto rack.

Light dusting of icing sugar just before serving. Traditionally you use The St James Cross as a stencil and dust with the icing sugar (the stencil can be found on the internet).

The tarta looks good decorated with a few raspberries.

A small scoop of vanilla ice-cream or clotted cream goes well !