

u3a ST AUSTELL WINE APPRECIATION GROUP

JUNE 2025 NEWSLETTER



Dear Wine Group Members

A very brief newsletter as we are just back from our travels, really to remind you of wine tasting events now open for booking and reaching deadlines, and of course a review of the amazing, hilarious and fabulous tasting from last month (your words not mine)!

Without boring you about our holiday, the photo above is from one of the many Monbazillac vineyards we saw just outside Bergerac. At Monbazillac Chateau, we had an excellent day including a

comprehensive tasting. One of the best vineyards for a total state of the art and immersive display of everything to do with their wines from planting the grape to the end result. The Chateau was also extremely interesting with a very good restaurant, and of course we purchased a few boxes. Another memorable tasting from many in the Bergerac area and near to where we were staying in one of our stops, was Domaine de L'Ancienne Cure where the winemaker gave us a tour, and detailed explanation of their organic wines whilst tasting many of them. The passion wherever we went was so apparent, it is not a job to them, it is their life and often generations before them. Ellis Wharton sell one of L'Ancienne Cure wines and obviously the dessert Monbazillac is available everywhere, but not so often do you see their many other whites and reds which is such a shame as they are excellent. Brexit and the associated paperwork plus charges, have certainly put a stop to many exporting to the UK.



Monbazillac Chateau

Malta

By the way, one of our long time members Janet Harvey, was in Malta recently and sent this comment regarding Maltese Wines,

which may be useful for anyone visiting Malta and indeed interesting to us all. Thank you Janet!

“While in Malta, I picked up the news that Malta has two international wine festivals: I have supplied the link to one below. The Argotti Gardens are delightful and have a magnificent view too.

The Maltese Tourist Board has also just appointed Josef Bonello as the first ever wine ambassador of the Maltese Islands, see: <https://www.thedrinksbusiness.com/2024/01/malta-appoints-first-wine-ambassador/> I read an interesting article by him in the flight magazine; he was pointing out that many people are now looking to drink lighter, fresh-tasting wines for health reasons and that wine made from both of Malta’s own native grapes, Gellewza and Ghirghentina, fall into that category. I agree, I like them both alongside food. Gellewza produces a very slightly sparkling pink wine which is particularly enjoyable, well-chilled, alongside the Mediterranean cuisine.

Moreover, recent research in Malta has shown that there are several other “native” varieties surviving in Malta. The race is now on to grow sufficient new vines from each of these to see which, if any, could produce good quality wine. Perhaps one day we could have a Maltese wine-tasting evening but I fear it won’t be any time soon!”

Thanks again Janet, it will be interesting to see how this develops, and whether anyone can find Maltese wines locally.

Review of Tasting in May, given by Jenny, Mick and Shirley

Well although sadly not present, I have had so many comments from members who thought this another excellent and comical evening from the trio.

Jenny sent me her notes for all to see including info on the wines and prices, and Sue O kindly sent some photos of the evening. Another huge thanks to the trio for planning this start to finish, and for their helpers. Here's to next time!!

THE 'NOT QUITE EUROVISION' WINE CONTEST

Our theme for this evening was Eurovision and how it was started to unite us in music. This is how the evening ran with the music played for each section highlighted in red. The summary of the wines is at the end.

INTRODUCTION

CHARPENTIER'S 'TE DEUM' PRELUDE

Eurovision is 69 years old in 2025 and the Final was to be held the following day. We listened to the Eurovision intro music as members entered to become the judging panels for the evening. Each table was decorated with the flag for their country and some voting slips were given out to be used at the end of the evening.

Mick then explained how we hoped the evening would run, and that music loosely connected with Eurovision and the wine's country of origin would be played. Jenny then explained the voting system and the score board, and the evening began, ably assisted by our extremely supportive helpers Sharon, Judith, Ann, Ann and Sue.



The Trio with their helpers



Mick running through Order of Play

SHIRLEY - WINE 1 [Germany]

DANCING QUEEN – ABBA

Shirley appeared in full Abba regalia and gave us a thorough description of her **VH Trocken Pinot Blanc** wine, which was German – [as 95% of wine drunk in Sweden is German – and because Shirley wanted to dress as Agnetha]. Within her description there were actually 14 references to Abba songs. To accompany the wine Shirley made mini smoked mackerel vol au vents.



Agnetha making Pete blush

JENNY – WINE 2 [Australia]

CAN'T GET YOU OUT OF MY HEAD – KYLIE MONOGUE

Jenny represented Kylie Minogue for this wine, as she has had many of her songs performed at Eurovision, [although she has not actually sung there herself]. Jen gave general information about Kylie's wines [although this was not one] - and the Riverina area that this particular **Viognier wine** comes from. She also informed the members of the Murrumbidgee irrigation system that is so important to the area. Macadamia nuts with raisins were served alongside this wine.

SHIRLEY - WINE 3 [Spain]

Y VIVA ESPANA – SYLVIA

Shirley returned to us as Manuel [Renee from our last event, reincarnated] – with moustache etc, She gave us a very cheeky and not always linguistically correct account of her wine, and enthusiastically encouraged everyone to vote for it . To accompany this **Beronia Rioja Reserva 2020** wine (this being one of the best vintages of red Rioja), she prepared individual cocktail snacks of olives and Spanish meats.



JENNY - WINE 4 [Italy]

GRANDE AMORE – IL VOLO

Jenny appeared after the break in a dress that can only be described as the Italian Flag with seams. She told us about her **Italian Valpolicella Ripasso** wine, and particularly the process by which this voluptuous flavour is achieved. She also explained how, because of its rich berry hints it could accompany dark chocolate as well as rich meaty or savoury dishes. Tiny homemade Parmesan and Rosemary cookies accompanied this wine, and some dark chocolate wafers to try also – with a suggestion that they save some of these for the next wine.

MICK – WINE 5 [Madeira/Portugal]

PORTUGAL EURO 2024 SONG – PORTUGAL FOOTBALL TEAM



Mick [who everyone thought was just the intro man and organiser for the evening] – then appeared, accompanied by the music and with a poetic introduction, -dressed as football superstar Cristiano Ronaldo [or Ron'old'o as I like to call him]. This really was a picture to behold – especially the toupee and the mascara darkened sideburns, and it certainly ended the evening on a high note.

He introduced his wine which was **Blandy's Duke of Clarence Madeira**, but was then unexpectedly interrupted by an unruly football fan [Shirley again] dressed also in Ronaldo kit. To accompany the Madeira we presented homemade Madeiran Honey Cake infused with Madeira and also encouraged members to try it with the dark chocolate wafers, and any cheese they had left.



We then asked all the Country's judging panels to present their votes for each wine in the order they were presented and it was added to the score board. At the end, once we had the final scores, each team was given an envelope to open with the cost of a particular wine , and there were a few surprises there!



DETAILS OF WINES AND FINAL SCORES

1. VH Trocken Pinot Blanc

Pinot Blanc is perhaps the mid-point between Pinot Gris' heady opulence and Pinot Grigio's ultra-refreshing crispness. Pinot Blanc is a versatile white-wine grape variety used in the production of still, sparkling and sweet dessert wines, well-travelled and producing delicate white wines. The variety is often regarded as Chardonnay's under-study as it has a similar medium to full-bodied style with good acidity and responds well to oak maturation with the appearance of pale straw.

The characteristics include peach, pear, (some say apple and/or mango) plus almond and sometimes a touch of smokiness but flavours can often depend on the palette/style of the wine producer. It is very versatile and can be served with Gravlax, shellfish, salmon, tuna and any rich seafood, plus poultry, mild and soft cheeses, cured meats and any light vegetarian fare, in other words a wide range of dishes.
The alcohol content is 11.5%.

2. Viognier Riverina

This is made from Viognier grapes grown in the Riverina wine region. The Riverina wine region was established in 1998, and produces 60% of the grapes in New South Wales, from over 49,000 acres of vines. There are 16 wineries in the region. This makes Riverina Australia's second largest wine producing region, after Riverland in South Australia. Riverina alone accounts for 15 percent of the country's entire output.

This Viognier is described as light and fruity in style, and pairs well with mild curries, roast pork and spiced veg dishes, also good with salted nuts, particularly the native macadamia nuts.

This highly aromatic wine, with layers of apricot and peach fruit, overlain with notes of honeysuckle and orange blossom, persists on a soft textured palate. It is best served between 8-12deg C, and after being opened for 15 minutes. This is a 2024 wine, with Alc 13% vol. It contains sulphites but is a Vegan wine.

3. Beronia Rioja Reserva 2020.

The best most recent vintages of red Rioja include 2021/2020/2019 and this is one of the best. This Beronia wine is bigger, richer and more complex with black fruits aplenty with earthy spices and a rich seam of smoky, creamy oak and mellow fruity tones. Beronia Rioja Reserva will develop further over the coming years so can be laid down until that special occasion. This wine will benefit from being allowed to breathe before serving. It has the power to stand up to complex, powerful dishes such as pan-fried steaks, roasted red meats, lamb shanks, even venison and strong cheeses.

Tasting Notes:

Appearance: Deep, cherry red

Aroma: Sophisticated nose of black fruits and sweet cinnamon spice

Palate: Soft tannins, black fruit base with balanced notes of cacao, roasted hazelnut

and a touch of pepper. Alcohol content 14%.

4. Valpolicella Ripasso DOC Classico Superiore, Fabiano

Valpolicella Superiore Ripasso is often referred to as "the poor man's Amarone or baby Amarone". There is some truth to the notion that Ripasso sits between basic Valpolicella wine and Amarone, combining the freshness, lightness, and value of the former with the structure and flavours of the latter. Ripasso wines can be incredibly satisfying, offering a complexity that is both approachable and intriguing, - perfect for sharing with friends, especially those who are new to the world of Italian wines.

Ripasso wines are incredibly versatile when it comes to food pairings. Their medium-bodied nature makes them an excellent match for a variety of dishes, from rich pasta dishes to hearty meat courses. Rich, hearty dishes like osso buco, braised short ribs, or beef stew. Flavourful pasta dishes, such as lasagna or spaghetti Bolognese. Grilled or roasted meats, like lamb, pork, or chicken. Mushroom-based dishes, such as risotto or mushroom stroganoff. Aged cheeses like Parmigiano-Reggiano, Pecorino, or Gouda. Dark Chocolate – the notes of blueberry and cherry will compliment deep cocoa flavours.

This particular wine is described as- Dark red, almost impenetrable. Intense and elegant nose with aromas of ripe cherries and blueberries with a silky vanilla spiciness on the palate which it has gained from 12 months spent in oak. Very firm but deliciously rich on the palate, this Valpolicella Ripasso from the Lake Garda region of northern Italy, is enveloped with soft, ripe tannins balanced with nice acidity and hints of pulpy fruits.

Summary –

Region: Veneto

Grape Variety ; Corvina

Bottle Size: 750ml
ABV: 14%
Vintage: 2022
Other: Vegan

5. Blandy's Duke of Clarence Madeira

This is a rich, medium sweet madeira wine crafted in the traditional Canteiro method. This historic style involves ageing the wine in oak casks stored in warm attic lodges [or estufas] on the island of Madeira, Portugal., where Blandy's has been producing Madeira since 1811.

The natural heat gently oxidizes the wine over years. [often decades] imparting deep complexity and remarkable longevity. This blend primarily uses Tinta Negra Mole grape, although Bual or Malvasia can be added for extra richness. It is a blend because it includes different vintages.

Tasting profile

Colour – deep amber with golden highlights

Aroma – enticing notes of caramel, dried figs, roasted nuts, toffee, and a touch of spice.

Palate- lusciously sweet yet balanced by vibrant acidity, offering flavours of raisins, brown sugar, candied orange peel and a hint of coffee.

Finish- long, warming and elegantly structured with a lingering nutty richness.

Food pairing:

Desserts- perfect with caramel flan, crème brulee, Madeiran Honey cake – that we are serving you, or dark chocolate torte.

Cheese- pairs well with aged gouda, stilton or roquefort

Savoury dishes -complements foie gras. Roasted duck or glazed ham

On its own - excellent as a digestif or after dinner sipper

A true tribute to Madeira's wine making heritage, Duke of Clarence offers a luxurious balance of sweetness and acidity making it a timeless choice for both casual enjoyment and special occasions. This blend is typically aged for 10 years giving it more complexity than other Blandy's blends such as 'Rainwater' aged for only 3 years, and 'Alvada' aged for 5 years. But being a blend also makes it more affordable than single varietal year wines.

COSTS OF WINES

FINAL SCORES

1.VH Trocken Pinot Blanc
£15.99 from Majestic wines [or £11.99 if 6 purchased] **28**

2.Viognier Riverina
£6.79 from Lidl **38**

3.Beronia Rioja Reserva 2020.
£18.99 from Majestic [or £13.99 if 6 purchased] **54**

4. Valpolicella Ripasso DOC Classico Superiore, Fabiano
£20 from Ellis Wharton Wines **28**

5. Blandy's Duke of Clarence Madeira
£14.75 from Tesco **52**

So, a few surprises, and more proof that wine is really about what you, personally, enjoy.

Thanks all for a fun evening and for your involvement,

Well reading the above, and seeing the photos I can imagine just what a fabulous evening those attending had. A good selection of wines not only to tie in with the music, but lovely home made snacks along the way too. Well done Shirley, Mick and Jenny, another resounding success!



Future tastings to book:

June 22nd midday onwards WINE GROUP GARDEN PARTY, 4 Tremena Road, St Austell.

Please book yourself in now as an attendee, and confirm with Sue the food you will bring, ready presented on a plate/platter/bowl. Finger food only please.

No cost just bring yourself, a bottle of wine and platter of food to share and indulge in a lazy afternoon chatting to fellow members.

Chris and Karen Scott have, once again, offered their delightful house and garden to us to use for the afternoon, and what wonderful memories we have of these events in the past. With everyone contributing (Sue Osbrink will co-ordinate food to ensure a good spread of items) we always have an enormous feast. Come along chat to fellow members, and enjoy a relaxing afternoon in a stunning setting, eating, drinking and talking.

The wine group will purchase some fizz to set the afternoon off with a bang.

To book and confirm food choice please email :

susanosbrink@gmail.com **SOONEST**

Friday July 11th DAYTIME VISIT, Atlantic Vineyard, Newquay. Minibus departs Penrice at 12.50pm or Arts Centre at 1pm. Return from there 5pm. **Cost £20pp for the tasting, £14pp minibus if required.**

Exclusive afternoon tour and tasting. This is a newly set up vineyard who are now harvesting their own vines but still developing the 7 acre vineyard just outside Newquay with far reaching views.

“The Atlantic Vineyard is a family-run business on a journey to develop a sustainable and innovative English Wine business in a wonderful rural location on the outskirts of Newquay, Cornwall. We are a pioneering vineyard and, to our knowledge, the only vineyard in the UK that grows exclusively **Earth-Friendly Vines™** that are particularly suited to the Cornish climate.

Our mission is to create a destination in Cornwall that attracts like-minded people from across the country to visit and experience our holistic approach to setting up and running a vineyard. We want to create “good wine for good people.”

We will have a tour of the vineyard which is steep in places and with some uneven ground, (WEAR SUITABLE FOOTWEAR AND CLOTHES APPROPRIATE TO THE WEATHER) a talk about their approach to viticulture, and then a wine tasting with snacks in the barn. It is a cashless operation so take bank cards if you wish to purchase.

Do eat lunch beforehand as they only serve snacks with the tasting.

Book ref xxxxWGJUL25 closing date 11 June. - We have to confirm and pay by this date so please book soonest.

NOTE: NEW TASTING

Friday 1st August, Arts Centre, St Austell 6.45pm start 9.30 finish, clear up so taxis at 10pm please.

MAJESTIC WINE presents “Wines for Summer” Cost £19pp to include 6 wines, food and room fee.

Peter May, manager of the Falmouth store will come along and give a tasting of 6 wines, 2 white, 2 rose and 2 red (with at least one full bodied) with the theme “Summer” and which suit all tastes. Peter a relative of Sue & Ray Smith, will present wines, some of which we may know, some we may not know, some may be tasted blind. Peter will bring order forms, and remember if you buy a mixed case of 6 wines you receive quite a good discount on individual bottles, and wines will be delivered.

I am delighted to be able to host a new presenter to our Wine Group, and thankful to Chris Timmins for securing the room booking, to enable an extra evening at the Arts Centre. This should be a great tasting.

Book before 1st July, xxxxWGAUG225

THURSDAY August 14th Visit to OLD CHAPEL CELLARS TRURO “Looking at Iberian Wines” 6.30pm arrival 9.30pm departure by minibus, includes time for purchases. **Cost £35pp for tasting and £14.75pp for the minibus.**

Note not a Friday!

Another relaxed visit to Old Chapel, where Steve & Meg will give another of their fun and informative tastings of 6 wines with snacks covering wines from the Iberian region.

Book ref xxxxWGAUG closing date July 25th

September 19th DAYTIME VISIT, Polgoon Vineyard, Penzance

Minibus departs Penrice/Arts Centre at 10.15am, return from Polgoon 3.15pm. Tour £20pp, minibus cost £23.50pp. Book by 25 August. xxxxWGSEPT25

Another visit to the fascinating and lovely Polgoon vineyard. Arrive for 1200 private tour and tasting alongside lunch (prebook lunch, menus to follow, and pay for lunch yourselves).

“Join us for a walk through England’s most westerly mainland vineyard and taste the wine grown and made here. Intimate, relaxed & informative, our tours last approximately 90 minutes where you will be shown the traditional method we use to produce our wines and the process from grape to glass. Our summer tours then finish with a guided tasting of 5 x award winning Polgoon Wines and Ciders.”

As we will be walking along the vines, please wear suitable footwear for uneven ground and clothing dependent upon the weather.

Further months’ tasting information will follow in due course once fine details are confirmed.

Your reference should be your membership number(s) followed by WG and the month eg xxxxWGJuly.

**PAYMENTS TO THE WINE GROUP ACCOUNT PAY INTO
ACCOUNT NO 23132587 (Barclays) SORT CODE 20-30-47 (U3a
St Austell)**

PLEASE DO CHECK THIS IS THE CORRECT ACCOUNT!

**On occasions when we use a minibus please state your
preference to Sue Osbrink, susanosbrink@gmail.com for
departure/drop off point. Penrice School or the Arts Centre.**

Well that's it for this month, a brief reminder of our events in
forthcoming months and please do confirm your attendance for
June and July soonest, many thanks.

Kind regards

Amanda

