

u3a ST AUSTELL WINE APPRECIATION GROUP

SEPTEMBER 2025 NEWSLETTER



Dear Wine Group Members

Welcome to September, the month when the air cools slightly, leaves turn golden in the vineyard and winegrowers in the Northern Hemisphere can start to make decisions as to when to pick their grapes, hopefully the vines are heavy with ripened fruit so the process can begin.

The month when perhaps our drinking habits, like the Seasons, change from lighter chilled wines to heavier warming wines. Of course we may have an Indian Summer, in which case this will be delayed, but a good time to think about stocking up on Autumnal

and Winter wines. By the way, Waitrose have announced their “buy 6 wines save 25%” offer.

WINE GROUP ADMIN

You will all have received the information on our Christmas event, to be held at the Cornwall Hotel. We need to confirm numbers with deposits to the hotel by the end of next week – numbers already confirmed mean we have secured the private function room. Many of you have either paid in full already or paid the deposit, but if you haven't yet please do so soonest and advise Sue Osbrink. This should be a lovely event to finish our Wine Group year.

I must request that if arriving at the Arts Centre for an event with friends, and tables are nearly full, please do not expect automatically that you will sit together. Once members are sat at the table and have settled, it is not fair to expect them to move to accommodate your group. We are a friendly bunch and anyone you sit with will happily make you welcome.

Finally. I have had to cancel two recent trips out, when we were using the minibus, as numbers were exceedingly poor and were not cost effective for the bus, or too low numbers for the supplier. I am not sure whether the cost came into members' decisions especially regarding the minibus, but I looked back and as an example - when we went to Polgoon in September 2019 the minibus cost £17.50 pp back then. The £23.50pp today is not a huge increase when taking all the inflation costs into account. Unfortunately our numbers are not large enough to warrant other larger transport which would work out less per head with larger numbers of attendees.

Perhaps another reason could be because the holiday season is with us, so for future years I will not make any trips out for August and September. A lot of hard work and administration goes into each event and to have two concurrent cancelled is very

disappointing especially for those who had committed and paid for the event.

REVIEW OF TASTING HELD AUGUST 1ST BY MAJESTIC WINES

Peter May from the Falmouth branch, came along to give us a selection of **“Wines for Summer Sipping and Sizzling Sausages”**

This was our first visit from Majestic, and honestly I didn't know what to expect. I needn't have worried, Peter was absolutely excellent with a huge wealth of knowledge which he imparted with such enthusiasm and humour, he had us all enraptured. He had chosen wines from unusual grape varieties in the main, and from different countries which he gave us “blind” so we had to guess where from and what grape. After a welcome fizz, we tried 2 whites 2 rose and 2 reds generously poured, as below, and could order on the night for free delivery. A wonderful evening was had by all judging by all the positive remarks I received at the end, and we will definitely invite Peter back next year. Interestingly Majestic who currently only have the Falmouth outlet in the whole of Cornwall, are opening a branch in Truro in October. A welcome addition, not so far to travel to mooch their shelves trying some wines on the way!

Thanks to Sue and Ray Smith for doing the excellent food, and for pouring wines on the night.



Peter in full flow



FIZZ

Krone Borealis Brut, South Africa 12% £14/£10.50

Flavours of melon, peach and pineapple, with biscuit notes from 18 months lees ageing. Crisp with a salinity, very dry and rather “flat” for me but many enjoyed this. Would accompany fish and shellfish and FISH AND CHIPS!

From the Western Cape. Grape varieties Chardonnay, Pinot Noir and Pinot Blanc.



All prices are shown per bottle, and buying 6 shows the discount.

WHITE 1

La Maree Bleue, IGT, France 11.5% £11/£10

A vibrant and fresh unoaked blend with notes of lemon, peach and herbs and very aromatic Grilled prawns, soft goats cheese and summer salads with courgette are good pairings. This was very popular amongst members.

From the Languedoc Region. The blend Ugni Blanc, Colombard, Viognier and Vermentino.

WHITE 2

Lyrarkis Assyrtiko, Crete, Greece 13.5% £13.50/£10

Crete's answer to Chablis. Aromas of meadow flower and orchard fruit from this native grape variety, with pronounced minerality. Grown at v high altitude.

Unfortunately this was not like a typical Assyrtiko and talking with Peter, I had thought perhaps it was corked, but he thought a different vintage to the one he had tasted prior. Not for me!



ROSE 1

Mythral Rose, Provence, France 13%, £14/£13

A Southern French Provencal rose, very pale and dry, made from 7 grape varieties. Zippy red berries, peach and citrus with a mineral almost bitter finish. Great aperitif but also good with shellfish, salads and chocolate.

ROSE 2

Denbies Chalk Ridge, England 11% £15/£10

Delicate with flavours of ripe strawberry and citrus, crisp and refreshing. Made from Pinot Noir grapes, a perfect summer sipping wine. Goes well with summer salads or grilled seafood.

RED 1

Ernst Loosen Pinot Noir, Germany, 13.5% £14/£12.50

Famous for making Mosel Rieslings for 200 years, this producer has branched out into reds. Pale in colour with long legs, lot of fruits like bramble, smooth tannins. Excellent with BBQ food. Could chill this wine. I loved it.

RED 2

Tbilvino Saperavi, Georgia 14.5% £12.50/£11.50

100% Saperavi grapes. This winery has achieved the most accolades in Georgia. Fruit forward style, floral aromas with bold flavours of forest fruits, elegant long finish to this very smooth deep black/red wine. I can confirm this is an excellent wine – we purchased a few bottles and have already had 2 of them. Would go well with pork, beef, veal or vegetables. Age up to 10 yrs. This wine is in a very elegant black very long necked bottle.

An excellent choice of wines from Peter!

Events to book for :

Sadly the Polgoon trip is cancelled and so the next event will be October, **with only a couple of spaces left.**

Friday October 17th Arts Centre, St Austell. Start 6.45pm end and clear up, taxis for 10pm. £24pp

“Chardonnay from around the World” by member Peter Howard. Well done Peter, who will give us a “blind” Chardonnay comparison wine to compare and contrast with 4 other Chardonnays – an individual comparison marking sheet will be provided. We haven’t had a single grape comparison tasting for quite a while, so a very interesting evening ahead.

To book your place xxxxWGOCT 25 before end of September please.

Thanks to Frances and Kim for offering to do the food for this event.

Friday November 7th, visit to Ellis Wharton, Indian Queens. Leave Penrice at 5.50pm/Arts Centre 6pm for arrival 6.30pm depart EW 9.30pm. £30pp for the tasting, £16pp for the minibuss

Always a popular tasting, especially prior to Christmas, Ellis Wharton always push the boat out for this tasting. The theme is **Festive Wine Tasting**. A festive themed fun and friendly wine tasting of wines from Ellis Wharton, wines they think are so good that they should feature in your celebrations! Expect everything from Sparkling to Sweet wines for this tasting. Suitable matching foodie bits to accompany. Afterwards time to browse exciting gifts of both wines and food from their excellent shop.

Only a couple of spaces left on the bus. If more than 16 wish to attend by bus, we can suggest 4 sharing a taxi for a similar cost.

For this tasting we may be joined by the Newquay u3a Wine Group.

To book by October 10th, xxxxWGNV25

Last chance to book and pay the £10 deposit before next Thursday August 28th.

u3a Wine Group Christmas Event, Thursday 11th December 2025, The Cornwall Hotel, Pentewan Road St Austell, PL267AB. Arrival 6.45pm for 7.30pm sit down, 10pm finish. Dress code Smart Casual or go the whole hog!

3 courses £38 per person to include a glass of fizz on arrival.

We will enjoy a 3 Course festive meal in a private function room with round tables. Quiz and raffle with prizes.

Taxi drop off right by reception, lift from reception to function room and disabled access.

£10pp non refundable deposit to secure your place by 28th August, balance due 9th October with menu choices. To book use xxxxXmas25dep and then xxxxXmas25bal

In addition, a Special hotel room rate offer £99.00 including breakfast for 2 people with double or single occupancy. This includes use of swimming pool, spa facilities and possible early check in. You can book direct 01726 874050 quoting "Party Night 11th December rate, Hannah"- saves booking taxis!

Sue Osbrink will be coordinating your booking and your 3 course menu choices with any dietary requirements, which will be captured on the back of your place setting in case you forget. If you wish to pre-order wines to have ready on the table you can add that into your booking choices, wine list was attached to previous note with menu. Alternatively order on the night. Please let Sue know if you would like to sit with friends, the tables seat 8, and we will do our best to accommodate this.

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

Old Chapel Cellars

As you know, we had to cancel our visit to Old Chapel Cellars in August due to lack of numbers. However, they are holding their Annual Wine Fair and I have said I would let the wine group members know. If you are interested it would be worth sharing a taxi with 4 of you, to Truro. You can book on line on their website.

Join us for our Christmas Wine Fair on Wednesday 12th November– back for a second year!

After the success of last year, we're bringing back our Christmas Wine Fair this November—with lots of improvements and of course, the return of the best part: **over 100 wines open to taste!**

This time around, we're offering two tasting sessions:

- **Afternoon Session (12:30pm–4:00pm) £15**
- **Evening Session (6:00pm–9:30pm) £20**

What to Expect

- 100+ wines open to taste from all corners of the globe – explore a huge variety of wines at your own pace.
- All styles covered: White, red, rosé, sparkling, dessert & non-alcoholic.
- Our Chapel team and suppliers will be on hand to guide tastings, share recommendations, and chat all things wine.
- Enjoy our famous grazing-style spread of cheese, bread, chutney and more—perfect for pairing with your tastings (Evening Session Only).

- A great opportunity to stock up for the festive season or discover gift ideas for the wine lovers in your life.

Location

Old Chapel Cellars, The Old Chapel, St Clement Street, Truro
TR1 1EX

WINE NEWS

Thanks to Carol Avery for this article from Decanter magazine.

Phylloxera detected in the Canary Islands

The Spanish archipelago had remained one of a handful of wine regions around the world thought to be free of the devastating pest. The recent discovery puts the islands' centuries-old ungrafted vineyards – and the local viticultural heritage – are at risk.

Phylloxera has been detected for the first time in the Canary Islands, with confirmed cases in two locations on Tenerife. The discovery has sent shockwaves through the archipelago's wine community, where producers fear for their unique heritage of ungrafted old vines.

An emergency meeting was held in Tenerife on 8 August to devise a plan to isolate the affected sites, prevent further spread, and urge growers to monitor their vineyards closely.

Until now, the Canaries were considered one of the few viticultural regions in the world untouched by the pest, an insect that feeds on vine roots and leaves, causing fatal wounds to *vitis vinifera* plants. There is currently no cure or chemical control, neither are there mitigation measures for phylloxera. The only possible response is grafting *vitis vinifera* plants on American rootstocks – phylloxera is native to eastern North America and American vine species developed natural defences to the pest – a practice that is now compulsory in most wine-producing countries. The majority of vines

across the Canary Islands are planted on their own roots, making them particularly susceptible.

Producers believe the outbreak began when a local resident planted infected vines in their garden. The pest is thought to have spread from there to an abandoned vineyard in Valle de Guerra, where its presence was confirmed on 1 August. A second suspected case was reported last week in La Matanza de Acentejo, also in northern Tenerife.

With many abandoned vineyards across the island, there is concern that phylloxera could spread rapidly without swift action. 'We are all very concerned, and hoping it is only a punctual case that can be contained,' said Agustín García Farráis of Bodegas Tajinaste. 'Almost all of our plantings are done by massal selection, and we have this strong heritage of taking vines from our neighbours. We could lose a huge part of our own-rooted viticultural heritage if not.'

The riskiest of times

Producers from all of the wine-growing islands attended last week's meeting, and are now working together to establish protocols to contain and control the outbreak. The Association of Winegrowers and Winemakers of the Canary Islands (AVIBO) has already issued an emergency advisory to producers across the islands urging producers to immediately report any suspected cases and to avoid any potential contamination by disinfecting clothes, boots and tools, and not taking any leaves from the vineyards in the harvest bins. The harvest is already underway on the islands – marking the beginning of the most active – and risky – period of the year. 'It is going to be a big challenge – perhaps the biggest of our careers – but we also have to take it as an opportunity,' said Juan Jesús Méndez, the current president of DO Islas Canarias and the well-regarded winemaker and owner of Bodegas Viñátigo. 'We need to have a clear mind, a defined focus and motivation to move together. I am motivated to face this challenge and protect these centenarian, pre-phylloxera vineyards that are such an essential part of our heritage.'

The next generation is equally determined to safeguard the islands' viticultural legacy. 'In the past 30 years we have had more than 60 invasive species arrive to the islands, we need to use this as a wake-up call to control everything entering from now,' says Méndez's son Jorge, winemaker at the family winery. 'I am young and I want to continue working on this island for the rest of my life, so we can't be negative about this and we have to look at it as an opportunity to professionalise the sector and work together.'

Important for tourism, the Canary Islands see a large volume of international traffic with between 16 and 18 million visitors each year. Producers plan to press the regional government for stricter regulations and controls to protect the archipelago's 500-year-old wine heritage – before it is too late.

Thank you so much Carol, a very interesting situation and let's hope it doesn't spread throughout the Canary Islands.

And finally something that amused me!

The moment a thief concealed 76 bottles of stolen wine worth £24,000 in a wheelie bin from a London restaurant, before fleeing the scene of the crime on a tuk-tuk, was caught on camera....
Ooops! - he later pleaded guilty to the crime!

Kind regards

Amanda