

u3a ST AUSTELL WINE APPRECIATION GROUP
APRIL 2026 NEWSLETTER



Dear Wine Group Member

The clocks spring forward this weekend, April is here next week and with it, Easter celebrations.

I hope you have thought through Easter menus if you have family or visitors coming, and wines to accompany.

Personally I usually cook roast spring lamb at Easter and enjoy a bottle of something like a Pinot Noir to go with it, but an Austrian Zweigelt would be equally as good (not forgetting to splash some into the gravy)!

Good Friday fish? A good Rias Baixas Albarino would be my choice.

Having a vegetarian centrepiece instead of a roast? Then try a Riesling especially “off dry” a lovely match.

Not too sure about matching wine with (milk chocolate) Easter eggs, well perhaps a fizz like a pink Cremant, or a sweet Moscato d’Asti would work and perhaps a sweet port too. Otherwise stick to coffee or espresso!

Do try these combinations generally all available at Aldi or Lidl so as not to break the bank, and let me know what you served for next month’s newsletter.

Review of March’s Tasting Evening – Wadebridge Wines gave us Wine of South Africa

Firstly, many thanks to Andrew and Christine for providing the excellent food which accompanied our tasting. Thanks too to Sebastien from Wadebridge Wines, his 3rd visit to us here at the Arts Centre and his third triumph.

The subject of his tasting was **Wines from South Africa** and by the end of the evening I for one had quite a thorough understanding of the terrain, the climatic conditions and the proximity to the coastal winds or mountains that made the quality of the wines shine through. I was also interested to learn that some of the areas are akin to the terrain and conditions of Burgundy.



His knowledge of not only the wines but the vineyard and the winemaker was extensive and kept everyone interested in every detail. We tasted a sparkling 2 whites a Rose and two Reds. Purchases were made on the evening with a 10% discount.

South African wines now around 5th highest sales in the world, and have developed in the past 40 years into quality wines with excellent winemakers. Sebastien was looking at small pockets of land wineries, giving new fresh styles of wines, sometimes with new grape varieties, contributing to the overall huge explosion of South African wines. He told us the majority of the grapes grown will be approximately 100 kilometres from Cape Town in any direction, which have the best growing conditions for grapes, the remainder of land, far too hot.

SPARKLING

Krone Borealis Brut, 2023. £18.95,

75% Chardonnay 25% Pinot Noir. This family (Krone) run winery approx. 100km NW of Cape Town enjoys a cool Atlantic breeze which enables this crisp dry sparkling wine with flavours of brioche, lemon, lime and a minerality.

Absolutely delicious and could equal a cheap champagne any day of the week. It was served rather too cold and so initially there was a huge amount of bubbles in the mouth, which calmed down on swirling the glass and warming.



WHITES

Babylonstoren Candide £14.50 13.5%

A “Field” blend of chenin blanc (45%), viognier (24%), chardonnay (16%) and sémillon (15%) grapes, Candide is a good expression of the versatility of the white grapes grown on the farm, and reflects the garden in its fruity summer splendour. Pressed from grapes grown on the slopes of the Simonsberg Mountain, this wine is fresh and fruit-driven with a nose of ripe peach, zesty lime and sweet lichee yet remains crisp and dry on the palate, rounding off with a refreshing, lingering acidity.

It is best enjoyed chilled, sipped alongside a harvest plate of just-pulled-from-the-earth vegetables and a medley of yellow fruits, paired with a light fish dish, or simply enjoyed whilst watching the sun set

De Wetshoff Limestone Hill Chardonnay, 14% £21.50

Heavy clay soils in the Robertson area, rich in limestone allow this Chardonnay to emit optimum varietal expression in a cloak of rich complexity. An un-wooded wine, Limestone Hill has notes of grapefruit and nuts, with the complexity balanced by a nuanced elegance ending with a delicate ripeness.

The American critic Robert Parker describes this wine as such: “The De Wetshof Estate Limestone Hill Chardonnay never sees oak, and offers impeccably pure, refreshing apple, peach and lemon fruit, a lovely leesy richness of texture, and a nutty, chalky, fruit-filled finish of imposing length. Understated and less tropical than some of the better un-oaked Chardonnays, this wine possesses far

better balance and sheer drinkability – not to mention more finesse – than 99% of the world's Chardonnay I have experienced.”

Sebastien likened this to a good Chablis, which I agree with, and of course had to purchase some.

ROSE

Fox and Flamingo Pinotage Rose £15.95 12%

From the SE corner of the Paarl, this elegant rose uses the free run juice of Pinotage, which is the first collected must when the grapes are moved into the press, essentially allowing the grapes to be crushed by gravity, ensuring a minimal extraction of colour from skins and also preserve the natural acidity. This style of production is typically very delicate giving fine, soft and very fruity wines.

This was extremely pale in colour with aromas of fresh red fruits and floral notes. The palate is crisp and full of flavours of raspberry, strawberry and grapefruit, finishing with a distinctive savoury minerality which belied its lack of colour. Perfect on a warm summer evening but also pairs well with thai food, salad nicoise and charcuterie.

REDS

The two reds were certainly a conversation starter, and split the room.

Restless River Pinot Noir 13% £34.95

Restless River is a rising star which has quietly achieved cult-status for its brilliant, Burgundian-style Chardonnay and

Pinot Noir, and super fine yet intense Cabernet Sauvignon. Launched in 2012 by Craig Wessels, their farm is located in the beautiful Hemel-en-Aarde Valley. It's home to some of the oldest Cabernet Sauvignon and Chardonnay vines in the region (planted in 1998). At Restless River, things are done in an unhurried way, with great dedication and attention to detail. Their production is done by hand, resulting in limited quantities of each wine, and demand far exceeding supply. Restless River is defined by its terroir, and Craig Wessels' thoughtful and careful winemaking allows it to be the star of the show. Personally it did not wow me, but Chris thought the opposite!

Anwilka Ugaba, Stellenbosch, 2019 £25.95 14.5%

The vineyard which lies 7 km from the ocean in the premium area of Stellenbosch, consists of 40 ha replanted in 1998 with Cabernet Sauvignon, Syrah and Petit Verdot in a poor and well-drained soil perfectly suited to the production of high-quality wines Ugaba grapes are:

- Hand-picked in small crates.
- Sorted before and after destemming.
- Fermented in stainless steel tanks.
- Gentle pumpovers and ten days of post-fermentation maceration enable a soft extraction of colour and tannins.

Conditions leading up to the growing season were favourable, leading to an even and consistent berry growth. Deep ruby red in appearance. A sophisticated nose opens up with aromas of blackcurrant, lavender and wood spice. Full bodied with ripe rich tannins, concentrated flavours of black fruit, cassis and nutmeg abound on the palate.

Elegant with a long flavourful finish. The perfect accompaniment to most red meat dishes as well as roast lamb and pork. Approachable now but will mature gracefully up to 5 years from vintage.

Again this split the room with some absolutely loving it, but many thought it too alcohol heavy.

Overall a wonderful tasting, and on typing my notes I realised that all tonight's wines have "different and unusual" names.



The selection of wines we tasted during the evening



From “WineGuide101, March 2026”

When I read this article, I was intrigued and wondered whether this is actually the case. Not being a Gen Z or Millennial it is difficult to tell, and our children have been bought up in our “wine mould”, although they seem to be very adventurous when it comes to wines, so perhaps the answer is yes. Anyhow, an interesting and thought provoking article, which gave me a good feeling as our Wine Group has explored most of the areas mentioned and “wines to try”. Well done us! Perhaps we should personally revisit some of them and retry the wines...

“NEW WINE MARKET DYNAMICS

The evolving global wine market characterized by a division between ultra-collectable wines and emerging regions

offering diverse, value-driven options favoured by younger consumers.

- Two-tier market: exclusive high-end wines vs. accessible, innovative wines from lesser-known regions.
- Millennials and Gen Z prioritize sustainability, low intervention, and unique flavours over traditional prestige.
- Emerging regions like Portugal, Greece, Georgia, Hungary, and Romania gain prominence with indigenous grapes and resilient practices.
- Climate change pressures traditional regions, enhancing appeal of adaptable grape varieties and diverse wine styles.

There was a time when dropping the name Burgundy or Napa made you sound knowledgeable. Now it mostly makes you sound expensive. And possibly a bit stressed about your credit card bill. Welcome to the new wine market.

By 2026, we're firmly in a two-tier world. At the top, a tiny slice of ultra-collectable wines continues to float around in its own tax bracket. Magnificent, mythical, and about as accessible as a private jet. Below that, something far more interesting is happening.

Wine lovers, sommeliers, and buyers are quietly moving on. Not dramatically. Just... slipping out the side door. And they're heading somewhere far more fun.

The Great Reset: Why the Old Guard Is Losing Its Grip

After the speculative highs of 2022, the wine world has had a bit of a lie down and a rethink. Costs are up. Margins are tighter. And consumers have started asking awkward questions like, "Hang on... is this actually worth it?"

With production costs climbing by up to 20 percent, a lot of mid-tier wines from traditional regions now feel like they've

missed the memo. The result? The market has become ruthlessly good at sniffing out poor value. If a wine is overpriced, it doesn't get debated. It gets ignored. And nothing scares a producer more than polite indifference.

A New Generation, A New Palate

Millennials now dominate wine buying. Gen Z is joining the party, and they've brought curiosity with them. They're not particularly interested in being told what they should like. They'd rather discover it themselves, ideally in a slightly dimly lit wine bar with a playlist that makes you feel younger than you are. They want wines that are: Sustainable. Low intervention. Slightly unusual, but not terrifying.

They're just as happy drinking a Greek orange wine as they are a Bordeaux. Possibly happier, especially if it comes with a story and doesn't require a small loan.

Portugal: The Quiet Powerhouse (That's Not Actually That Quiet Anymore)

If you're not already paying attention to Portugal, you're about five minutes away from being the last to know. With over 250 indigenous grape varieties, it's basically the wine world's version of a secret cellar that someone forgot to lock. The Douro: Not Just Port Anymore, The Douro has had a proper glow-up.

Once known almost entirely for Port, it's now producing still wines that can go toe-to-toe with much pricier bottles. Same dramatic scenery, same hand-carved terraces, just without the need to explain why you've re-mortgaged your house.

Dão and Bairrada: For the Elegant Crowd

If you prefer finesse over full volume, these are your playgrounds. Dão gives you perfume, freshness, and a bit of

restraint. Bairrada has taken the once moody Baga grape and turned it into something genuinely charming.

Greece: Not a Comeback. A Full-Blown Glow-Up

Greek wine isn't "emerging". It's already walked into the room, ordered confidently, and is now being asked where it's been all this time.

Assyrtiko: The Salty Rockstar. From Santorini's volcanic soils, Assyrtiko is sharp, mineral, and refreshingly unapologetic. It's one of those wines that makes you sit up a bit straighter. Like a cold sea breeze in a glass. Think Chablis... but with a tan and slightly better stories.

Xinomavro: Greece's Answer to Barolo (With a Twist). Xinomavro doesn't try to be easy. It's structured, high in acid, and develops flavours that sound like a deli counter having an existential moment. Tomato leaf, olive, spice... and somehow it all works. Give it time, and it becomes something seriously impressive. Rush it, and it will remind you who's in charge.

Georgia: Where Wine Began, and Still Does Its Own Thing

Georgia has been making wine for 8,000 years, which is roughly 7,900 years longer than most trends last.

The Qvevri method, fermenting wine in clay vessels buried underground, isn't new. It just feels new because the rest of the world has finally caught up. The wines are textured, complex, and occasionally a bit wild.

Saperavi brings bold, inky reds with real presence

Rkatsiteli, especially in amber form, delivers something that sits somewhere between wine, tea, and a philosophical conversation. Not always easy. Always interesting.

Hungary: Quietly Getting Its Groove Back

Hungary has moved well beyond its sweet wine stereotype.

Dry Furmint is now leading the charge. Crisp, mineral, and versatile, it can shift styles depending on where it's grown and who's making it.

Then there's Eger, where Bull's Blood has had a much-needed rebrand. Less rustic punch, more polish and finesse.

And Somló... a tiny volcanic outcrop producing whites that taste like they've been through something and come out stronger for it. Smoky, savoury, and just a bit defiant.

Romania: The One Everyone Will Pretend They Discovered First

Romania is one of those regions people talk about quietly... until suddenly they don't. Its star grape, **Fetească Neagră**, is ticking all the right boxes. Structure of Cabernet, spice of Syrah, smoothness of Merlot. It's like the greatest hits album, but with a slightly different accent. Quality has improved massively over the past two decades, and the rest of the world is finally catching on. If you want to get ahead of the curve, this is a good place to start before it becomes everyone's favourite "hidden gem".

The Climate Factor: Not Just Dinner Table Chat

There's also a bigger shift happening in the background. Climate change is putting traditional regions under real pressure. Heat, drought, unpredictable weather. Not ideal for consistency. Meanwhile, many of these lesser-known regions are better adapted, with indigenous grapes that can handle extremes without throwing a tantrum. Less

intervention. More resilience. And fewer panicked harvest decisions.

So, Where Does This Leave Us?

The wine world hasn't fallen apart. It's just stopped pretending everything needs to come from the same few postcodes. Yes, the trophy wines will always exist. But for most of us, the real excitement is happening elsewhere.

Portugal. Greece. Georgia. Hungary. Romania.

These aren't substitutes anymore. They're where the stories are. An, if you're willing to explore just a little, you'll find better value, more personality, and wines that actually make you want to talk about them. Which, let's be honest, is the whole point."

2026 Wine Appreciation meetings

ALL TO REMEMBER, the way to book for any event is:

1. Contact Sue Osbrink to check there are spaces
2. Pay the amount online giving the correct reference, starting with your membership numbers then WG...dependant on the month
3. Quick email to Sue confirming you have paid.

If this process is not followed, **your place cannot be guaranteed. Thank you.**

TRIPS OUT

Further to my previous mails, it is obvious to me from your recent response that our trips out to Ellis Wharton Wines

and Old Chapel Cellars have to be cancelled certainly for this year, mainly due to the cost of the minibus, (which I have to say when fully utilised with 16 members is way cheaper than taxis) – but which I can totally understand in this economic climate, and which has led to very few bookings.

Old Chapel luckily are happy to come to the Arts Centre, a shame as their beautiful building is worth seeing, and their choice of wines and spirits amazing, along with full descriptions on the price tags. Ellis Wharton however would charge an excessive amount to come to us. I am disappointed as are those that booked the trips, so I can only apologise to those members, as they were booked in response to my “poll” last year. Obviously times have changed since then.

Perhaps we can find an opportunity to visit a **local** vineyard next year, either drive ourselves or get our own taxis to share. I will also send you links as and when either of the two wine merchants above, are holding their own in-house tastings where you can book direct and perhaps taxi share with friends on an ad-hoc basis, but remember they do get fully booked fairly quickly.

If we are to remain at the Arts Centre for the majority of tastings, and so as not to repeat ourselves annually, please think about getting together with another member and run an evening. For instance Mick and Jenny are running one in October and Andrew and Christine in November. You don't have to know too much about wine, Mr Google can help enormously, but you just need enthusiasm! Additionally if you know of anyone involved in the wine industry who would come and give us a tasting evening (without a huge fee)

please let me know. Luckily for us, Frances' son in law Kevin, another Frenchman, ex Sommelier and has worked in the industry for many years, will step in to our July spot.

Events now open to book:

Still possible to book until Monday lunchtime (30th March).

THURSDAY April 23rd at the Arts Centre, Louisa from Old Chapel Cellars "Wines with coastal influences"
Food thanks to Elaine Burgess.

Tasting to start earlier at 6.30pm, to finish by 8.30pm with time to purchase at the end. Taxis for 9pm, not earlier please. **Cost £30pp for the tasting.** Old Chapel Cellars have very recently won "No 1 Independent Wine Merchant in the UK" a very prestigious award and a reflection on their professionalism and wide variety of stock.

Director of Old Chapel, Louisa Fitzpatrick will present to us this fascinating subject tasting 6 wines. It is always a pleasure to enjoy Louisa's great expertise and anecdotes.

I have also extended this tasting to the Newquay u3a members who have an interest in wine and who joined us at Ellis Wharton last time, so as to have a decent number for Louisa to present to, assuming they can maximise their use of the minibus they hire.

Pay ref xxxxWGAPR26 and pay by March 30.

May 15th Camel Valley wine tour and tasting

Currently we have 4 members interested in doing the daytime Camel Valley wine tasting and tour. Can I suggest any others let Sue know, so that we may be able to group you together to book a 6 seat taxi to arrive for the tour starting at 10.30am, assuming you have booked yourselves onto it.

You book yourselves onto a **Camel Valley wine tasting and tour on May 15th (Nanstellon, Bodmin)**

<https://www.camelvalley.com/tours>

A very local vineyard, and Camel Valley has a fantastic reputation for their award winning wines. Unfortunately they will not book group tours, and suggest everyone books a tour direct through their website.

The tour starts at 10.30am and finishes in a wine flight of 4 flagship wines, at a table until 12.30. **Cost £20pp**

Re Garden Party below: Please let Sue know (provisionally if necessary), if you can attend the Garden Party now, so we can let Mark and Lin have as much notice as to numbers as possible. I am away for most of May and the first two weeks of June, and Sue is away at the end of May, hence needing indicative numbers.

Sunday June 28th Summer Garden Party, 12 noon onwards, taxis to depart by 6pm hosted by Mark and Lin Stephenson, 7 Kingswood View, Trewhiddle, PL26 7FT (next turning after the Cornwall hotel from St Austell end)

There is **no parking, so please arrive/depart by taxi for a drop off only.**

After many happy Garden Parties in the garden of Chris and Karen Scott who have now passed the baton on, we are very lucky and appreciative of Mark and Lin offering their newly planted flat garden (which is also wheelchair friendly). There is plenty of space not only to have the band playing, but for little groups to gather to enjoy the afternoon. Come and go as you wish once the food has been eaten!

A wonderfully convivial afternoon sharing food and wines, get to know fellow members in a relaxed setting, with the fabulous **Garker Street Band** playing once again for us from 2pm, (donations to the RNLI so bring cash please). Always a complete joy. There is a contingency there should the weather not be kind. Thanks so much to our generous hosts.

There is **NO COST for this event**, simply bring a large platter (feady to serve) of either savoury or sweet, and Sue Osbrink will give you ideas if you need them, and will coordinate to avoid duplication Also bring a bottle of wine which is shared. To save Lin and Mark doing even more work, please bring your own cutlery and crockery and of course wine glasses. Plus some cash! We have enjoyed in the past, a veritable feast with wonderful food from members, and an afternoon to remember.

We will need extra tables and chairs, so if you have any please bring them, or drop them off in the morning or day before. Let Sue know and she will liaise with Lin and Mark.

I am away for most of May and the first 2 weeks in June, and Sue away a week at the end of May. It would be very useful if you can indicate your attendance sooner rather than later so that Sue can give indicative figures to Lin before her break.

July 17th Arts Centre, Start 6.45pm Finish around 9.15pm taxis 9.40pm earliest please. Theme tbc.

Kevin Conac has been in the wine industry for over 20 years working in restaurants and wine bars as a Sommelier amongst other roles. He will give us a wine tasting, theme to be confirmed, but we will taste 6 wines and have the benefit of first hand experience as a Sommelier. Cost £25pp to include food, thanks to Frances and Kim.

Further information on the theme will be announced as soon as I know.

Book by June 30th, ref xxxxWGJUL26.

Friday 14th August: “Summer Wine cruise along the Canal du Midi by Carol Avery, Wines with Carol”.

Dock: Pentewan Sands Sailing Club, Pentewan.

Welcome drink served at **1900hrs**, suggest **arrival 6.45pm**, Concludes by **21.30pm**. Tenders (taxis) **depart from**

21.45pm opposite outside the Ship Inn, Pentewan **Cost £24pp** to include wines and food.

Book by July 10th ref xxxxWGJUL26

After her visit late Summer 2025, Carol will regale us with anecdotes and wines from the beautiful South of France.

“Come on a summer wine cruise along the Canal Du Midi with Wine with Carol. We will likely start with deeper looks at both a well known fizz, and then a familiar white wine before sampling a delicious rose from the heart of The Canal du Midi. Then we will taste a red wine from an historic chateau and finish with a comparison between two more full bodied reds (a Reserve and a Grande Reserve) both from vieilles vines which are unusual to find produced as a single grape variety.”

Accompaniments: du pain et fromages. Thanks to Shirley who will assist Carol in the food prep.

Suggest everyone books a taxi for drop off outside the Ship Inn and walk from there. Any mobility issues please let me know.

This is always a SOLD OUT event, which is thoroughly enjoyable in a small intimate setting in Carol's inimitable style. Book early to avoid disappointment.

In brief and for your diaries, further details will follow in due course:

September 18th Majestic Wines, Peter May returns to the Arts Centre.

October 16 Jenny and Mick are running a Members' favourite Winter Red tasting at the Arts Centre.

November 20 at the Arts Centre, Andrew and Christine are giving us a Murder Mystery Wine Evening!

Thursday December 10 Wine Group Christmas meal at the Cornwall Hotel.

Please note:

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

Kind regards

Amanda