

u3a ST AUSTELL WINE APPRECIATION GROUP
AUGUST 2026 NEWSLETTER



Dear Wine Group Member

I don't know about you, but in this heat of our Summer the last thing I want to do is cook heavy meals. I don't want the oven on, I want to eat outside in, hopefully, a breeze and under the shade and to consume lighter options, even non-cooked food.

A perfect lunch or even supper then, would be a grazing type platter with many little bits and pieces to pick at and enjoy. It could be very simply cheeses, crisps and breads with olives and grapes, or it could be a smorgasbord of spicy hummus, chorizo or coronation chicken or a variety of

meats. Really the world is your oyster, (or perhaps it should be your fridge is your oyster) when choosing to eat like this. Of course you can also choose to put together an extremely healthy salad based platter with a form of protein. Whatever you choose, it also has the added benefit of being a meal where many wines could match and the fun is choosing one which will go with most of the food chosen without killing the taste of the food. So I got to thinking about this.

Starting at a simple board of classic uncomplicated snacks, wines that refresh rather than overwhelm is needed. A bright Sauvignon Blanc would go perfectly with goats cheese, for soft cheeses perhaps a sparkling or light red, or if you have pickles on the board then something like an Albarino to cut through the salt. For charcuterie, herby dips and perhaps pork pies or sausage rolls (!) perhaps a lightly chilled Pinot Noir. Personally I couldn't drink a heavy red in this weather in any case.

A tomato and mozzarella salad, shellfish and vegetable dishes would pair very well with a dry rose. However if you fancy a spicy platter, chilli oil drizzle or paprika cooked chicken, then there is a need for fruit and freshness and an off dry Riesling would do the job admirably. For pure Asian dishes (hoisin duck rolls) a sweeter wine like a Moscato.

If in doubt a bottle of chilled sparkling whether white or rose, will do an admirable job and keep your spirits high in the heat! Have fun choosing which wine (or alcohol free drink) you have this lunchtime or evening by trying to ensure its flavour profile is right for your dishes. I will admit some

evenings I just want a jug of icy chilled sparkling water, and on other evenings I do put plenty of ice in my white or rose wine, much to the disappointment of my husband!! Needs must however. Cheers !

Continuing on and thinking of hot weather drinking, perhaps a non alcoholic drink fits the bill, but having been disappointed in non alcohol wines I am always looking for an alternative. Just this week whilst in Waitrose, I was looking (after reading an intriguing article) for a drink from the REAL drinks company, who source and naturally ferment the finest hand picked loose-leaf **teas** from India and China, to produce drinks with exceptional depth, flavour and complexity. They have won a host of awards in their category and I am intrigued. Their home, The Fermentery at The Bail on the Waddesdon Estate in the heart of Buckinghamshire, is the first of its kind in the world. They offer tours and tasting onsite.

Each year, they select exquisite loose-leaf teas that have been handpicked from small tea gardens in China and India, with the same respect that a winemaker affords their grapes, and ferment with the same care and passion as a fine wine. Nothing is added before, nor do they extract anything afterwards.

Wine begins with grape juice. These drinks begin with tea. But beyond that, the philosophy is surprisingly similar.

You start with a raw ingredient that has inherent structure—tannins, aromatics, a certain tension—and then you allow fermentation to unlock and reshape that potential.

The crucial ingredient is time. At the REAL company, they ferment slowly. Much more slowly than most people expect. Where many wines or beers might ferment in one to two weeks, their fermentations typically run for three to five. It's a deliberate choice. Slower fermentation allows the microbes to work more gently and more thoroughly—transforming sugars not just into carbonation, but into layers of flavour.

As they work, they produce a complex blend of acids—each contributing something slightly different. Brightness. Softness. Length. The result isn't a single, sharp acidity, but something more rounded and integrated.

At the same time, fermentation generates aromatic compounds that give the drink its character. Not added flavours, but flavours that emerge naturally from the process itself. The result is a drink that doesn't taste like tea in the traditional sense. But nor does it try to mimic wine.

Instead, it occupies its own space—something with body, balance, and a long, evolving finish. A drink that can sit alongside food and hold its own. A drink that rewards attention.

I purchased a REAL Blush fermented sparkling tea, but am yet to try it, although reading a description of the flavour profiles I am sure I will enjoy it....Made from a blend of First Flush Darjeeling and White Peony tea, with notes of fresh berry and summer fruit. (Store cool. Chill well. Pour gently.) **Waitrose sold it for £10.50**, Sainsbury also stock them or good old Amazon. It is already on wine list for places like The Pig and prestigious London restaurants.

They also produce a white dry or sec sparkling, and offer all these in tins too.

<https://realalcoholfree.com/>

Do let me know if you find a match made in heaven with your summer meals.

I read the following article with interest, and thought you all may enjoy it too.

The 2025/26 UK Wine Market – The new flavour paradigm in the UK Wine Market. (from The Wine Guide 101)

A Nose for Change

Britain's wine drinkers are changing course, and it's not just a gentle swirl of the glass. The 2025–2026 UK wine market is being stirred, shaken, and spritzed by a new flavour paradigm: freshness. Gone (well, going) are the days of big, boozy reds stomping across supermarket shelves. In their place? Zippy whites, chillable reds, and sparkling everything.

This isn't just a passing fad—it's the result of a three-pronged attack: health-conscious drinkers, a shake-up in alcohol taxes, and a market split into bargain-hunters and bougie glass-clinkers. It's all reshaping how we buy, drink and talk about wine. Let's uncork it.

Mindful Drinking & the Lighter Touch

“Drink less, but drink better” isn't just a handy justification for spending £28 on a bottle of English Bacchus. It's become a full-blown movement. Over half of UK adults have tried a low-

or no-alcohol (LoNo) beverage in the last year. But here's the twist: this trend doesn't just impact the 0% aisle. It's changing full-strength wine choices too.

Consumers are waking up to what's in their glass—particularly the ABV. Wines at 14.5% feel, well, a bit heavy. Instead, people are leaning into wines that feel lighter and fresher: Albariño, Riesling, Bacchus and Pinot Noir from cooler climates. They're not just easier on the head. They're better aligned with wellness goals—and, let's be honest, more brunch-appropriate.

How Tax Policy Made Prosecco the Responsible Choice

As of February 2025, the UK government did something few predicted: they gave sparkling wine a break. By switching to a tax system that charges by alcohol strength, they scrapped the historic penalty that made bubbly pricier. Meanwhile, high-ABV still wines (we're looking at you, jammy Shiraz) are taking a hit.

This change doesn't just affect producers. It nudges the whole market. Sparkling is now fiscally responsible. Lower-ABV wines under 11.5%? They've become economic no-brainers for brands and buyers alike. So don't be surprised when supermarket shelves lean zesty and lean—and your favourite bold red disappears from the £7.99 section.

The Market's Split Personality: Value vs. Experience

What we're seeing is a "K-shaped recovery" in the wine world. One arm of the market is hunting bargains—off-trade staples like Sauvignon Blanc, Merlot and Chardonnay that come with discounts and familiarity. The other? It's all about discovery. Think natural wines, English sparkling, and experimental blends poured by-the-glass in trendy restaurants.

Younger drinkers, especially Millennials and Gen Z, are leading the charge toward authenticity, texture, and provenance. They want stories in their glass. Meanwhile,

older demographics—still the volume drinkers—are sticking with tried-and-true favourites, often hunting for deals. **(surely not members in our Wine Group!)**

This split means winemakers and retailers need to pick a lane—or, ideally, cater to both without losing their grip. On the shelf? Keep it simple, flavour-forward, and wallet-friendly. On a wine list? Get geeky and go big on terroir, texture and storytelling.

Wines That Are Winning

The biggest winners in this flavour shake-up are what we call the “Bright Whites”—think Albariño, Bacchus, Chenin Blanc. These wines combine freshness, zing, and a touch of texture. They’re the logical next step for consumers raised on New Zealand Sauvignon Blanc but looking for more.

Then there are the “Chillable Reds.” Once a niche curiosity, they’re now a booming category. Gamay, Frappato, Zweigelt, and cool-climate Pinot Noir offer juicy red fruit, low tannins, and a flexibility that includes serving them cold. Red wine, meet your summer wardrobe.

Rosé is also coming of age. No longer just for poolside sipping, premium rosé now has texture, lees-ageing complexity, and a structure that pairs beautifully with food.

The pink stuff is getting serious—and seriously good.

Meanwhile, natural and orange wines continue to find a home with adventurous drinkers. Earthy, funky, and sometimes divisive, these wines prioritise authenticity over polish. They’re less about consistency and more about character—and increasingly, that’s what a certain segment of consumers craves.

The LoNo Dilemma—and a Taste for Innovation

LoNo wines are flying off shelves, but here’s the rub: they don’t always taste great. Removing alcohol often strips out the

very qualities that make wine interesting. The result? A “wine-minus” experience that leaves consumers underwhelmed. So producers are getting creative. Green tea infusions add tannin. Verjus gives acidity. Fermentation with bacteria instead of yeast opens new paths to complexity—without booze. And perhaps most excitingly, there’s a wave of “wine-adjacent” drinks emerging: sparkling teas, botanical blends, kombuchas. They’re not trying to be wine. They’re trying to be better. (relates to my recent purchase and notes above).

Looking Ahead: Strategy for the New Palate

The future belongs to producers who adapt. That means reducing reliance on high-ABV reds and embracing wines that align with health, legislative, and flavour trends. Sparkling wines, chillable reds, and aromatic whites should be your new best friends.

Retailers should double down on clarity and value. On the hospitality side, the focus should be on experience, discovery, and building trust through sommelier storytelling and thoughtful curation.

For LoNo innovators, stop trying to make wine without alcohol taste like wine. Instead, create new rituals, new profiles, and entirely new categories that deliver complexity and occasion without compromise.

Final Sip: What the UK Will Be Drinking in 2027

By 2027, British wine drinkers will increasingly chase freshness, texture, and authenticity. Sparkling wines with biscuit complexity. Bacchus with zingy gooseberry notes. Pinot Noir with just enough chill to feel modern.

The losers? High-alcohol, faceless bottles clinging to old-school bulk sales.

The winners? Anyone who understands that great wine today is less about power—and more about personality.

Wow how interesting and a lot to think about, but I do agree about the lesser appeal of very heavy reds – which of course my husband would disagree with strongly!

Another new very local vineyard for wine tasting and tour

A wine group member very recently happened to notice a sign for a vineyard just after the turn for Polkerris en-route to Fowey, although when driving past today it is far easier to spot on the way back from Fowey at Trenant Farm.

This is “**Saintes Way Vineyard and Orchard**” situated on the pilgrim’s Saints Way route, hence its name. The land forms part of the Rashleigh Estate and has been in the family for generations. The orchard at Trenant has stood for hundreds of years, and in more recent times Graham the owner, has carefully restored and expanded it, replanting traditional Cornish apple varieties and tending the landscape with care.

The idea for the vineyard was seeded in Graham’s deep knowledge of the land. One particular south-facing field seemed to hold promise. In 2024, following soil and climate analysis, 16,000 grapevines were planted — a mix of red and white varieties chosen to suit the site and extend the harvest season. The vineyard and orchard are managed without the use of chemical pesticides, herbicides or fertilisers, and ongoing work includes the restoration of woodland and careful stewardship of the surrounding environment.

Their website offers a tasting with a self guided tour of the vineyard and orchard for £12 and currently you can

book online for July and August dates. Their first production is currently in process, but they offer samples of locally grown wines to give you an idea of what they will offer. Similar to our visit to the Atlantic Vineyard.

Chris and I will join our friends and do a tour and tasting in the near future, but thought on a sunny day, any of you may like to go and visit. For friends and relatives visiting this area, they also offer accommodation.

Link to the website:

<https://saintswaywines.co.uk/collections/tours-tastings>

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.**

ALL PAYMENTS TO THE WINE GROUP ACCOUNT PAY INTO

ACCOUNT NO 23132587 (Barclays)

SORT CODE 20-30-47 (U3a St Austell)

Events now open to book:

Now fully booked but a cancellation list will be available just in case.

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 xxxxWGAUG26

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.

September 18th Majestic Wines, Peter May returns to the Arts Centre. Start 6.45pm finish for taxis at 10pm. **Cost £20pp** to include food and room hire.

“Good/Better/Best tasting!” ~Taste a selection of standard, premier cru and grand cru styles to see what you really get for your extra £££. We will taste one white, one rose and one red with two quality levels of each – 6 wines.

A topic we have not so far covered, and I think a really good idea to see exactly what the differences are.

Book ref xxxxWGSEPT26 by end of August.

Volunteer for food please

October 16 Jenny and Mick are running a **Members' favourite Winter Reds** tasting at the Arts Centre. 6.45pm start, finish after clearing for taxis at 10pm please. **Cost £20pp** to include 5 wines, food and the room hire.

In preparation for long Autumnal and Winter evenings, Jenny and fellow members will be presenting a favourite red wine, 5 wines in total ranging both in alcohol percentage, country of origin and cost. Let's see who likes what type of winter warmer!

Book by September 16 ref xxxxWGOCT26

November 20 at the Arts Centre, **Andrew and Christine are giving us a Murder Mystery Wine Evening..."An evening at the Chateau Cludeau"**.

Arts Centre 6.45pm start, taxis for 10pm. **Cost £20pp** for 5 wines and the opportunity to do some detective work!

The heady combination of wine tasting whilst solving a murder mystery sounds fabulous, with lots of fun along the way. Well done Andrew and Christine!

Book by end October, ref WGN OV26

Volunteer for food please

Thursday December 10 Wine Group Christmas meal at the Cornwall Hotel. Arrival 6.30pm for sit down at 7.30pm (time for a welcome drink and raffle ticket purchases). Finish 10pm/10.30pm.

We will once again enjoy our own private room, a 3 course Christmas meal and time to socialise.

Hannah at the hotel has very kindly held last year's prices for us **£38pp**.

To reserve a space you need to pay **£10pp deposit by the end of August**, so that we can pay the hotel first week in September,

Then menu choices and **final payment by October 20th**.

Once the menu has been decided (later in year) it will be sent to you for your choice.

If you wish to stay overnight at the hotel, we have again been given a special discount rate of £99 per double room to include a full breakfast and use of their leisure facilities.

When booking, call hotel direct and quote our u3a event date, payment will be taken at the time of booking.

Regarding my question below, only one member bothered to reply to me, so I will ask again....

Would you like to revisit **the Atlantic vineyard** (near Newquay) next year, to see their progress? At least the transport cost is more realistic being closer to us.

Regards

Amanda