

u3a ST AUSTELL WINE APPRECIATION GROUP
JUNE 2026 NEWSLETTER (in brief)



Dear Wine Group Member

Just back from our time spent in France, with many lovely wine tastings in the appellation of Bergerac enjoyed, but this time we decided to source small local wine makers, generally a one man band, who were so passionate about their wines, and all of which we tasted were delightful. Due to shipment cost and now paperwork, they unfortunately do not ship to the UK. If anyone is going to that area I am happy to give you details. We shall certainly enjoy drinking the many bottles we bought back!

Additionally the owner of the gites where we based ourselves for the majority of our trip, grows vines which are then made by a cooperative into white, rose and red and at 7.50euros and available to buy on site, and quite quaffable.

Camel Valley Visit report from Ian & Ros Mitchell

Ian & Ros decided to take up the suggestion of visiting Camel Valley in May, and kindly sent this report which I hope encourages more of you to do the same

Camel Valley Visit 15.05.26

Ian and I thoroughly enjoyed our trip to Camel Valley and would urge other members of the wine group to go.

We followed a route suggested by our satnav which involved several Cornish Lanes! We would recommend the easier route we took home. The A389 through Lanivet, over the River Camel, taking the left turn at Tregainlands Park to go down the relatively steep valley to the winery. There is a large car park.



Bob and Annie Lindo planted the vines in 1989 and are considered the “grandparents” of British wine production. They still live on site but the vineyard is now run by their son Sam. The winery only employs 8



members of staff and they take turns to do the tours.

The original area of vineyard planted by Annie is known as Annie’s vineyard and is still maintained in the manner first used in the vineyard. For example the posts along the rows of vines are made of wood and the wires the vines grow onto are single stranded.

Elsewhere metal posts are used and the wires the vines grow on are fanned out so less time is required to hand train the vines. Digging in posts is hard work and the wooden ones need replacing unlike the metal.



At this time of year the vines grow rapidly and need regular pruning. The large woody head to each vine is known as the crown from which about 60 shoots grow. 40-50% are pruned away and the shoots left should be 6-8 inches and trained on the wires. The aim is to get uniformity so all the grapes ripen at once which makes harvesting easier. The shoots are allowed to grow to head height to facilitate grape picking.



The plants self pollinate. Once the grapes have developed, leaves are removed around the fruit to enable it to stay dry. The flow of air reduces the chance of the fruit developing disease.

Roses are grown at the end of the rows of vines. I assumed this was an artistic choice but they are grown there as the roses will succumb to diseases such as mould before it affects the vines. If the roses become diseased it alerts the vineyard workers that the vines may also succumb and they can treat them accordingly.

Pre Covid the grapes were harvested by pickers from Bulgaria but now locals do the job and the tours are seen as a way of recruiting people. The biggest group of pickers are the local running club. If anyone fancies picking they pay £12.50 per hour, the hours are 9-1 as longer is deemed too tiring. Picking takes place around October for six weeks but you can work for just a few days.

After leaf fall, winter pruning is heavy work as there is a huge amount of vegetation to pullout from the wires. The vegetation is turned into mulch which is put back into the soil removing the need for extra fertiliser which saves time and money. This also avoids non eco friendly fires which used to be lit to burn the vegetation.

At this stage of the tour we left the vineyard and went into the large barn where all the mechanised parts of the process take place. I took less photos inside in case I was accused of industrial espionage.

The picked grapes are loaded into a large metal container where the juice is squeezed out and hose pipes are used to fill large vats with the fluid which is then left until just after Christmas when it is tasted. The still wine is made without added yeast and is prepared to be ready at Easter.

The fizzy wine for which Camel Valley is particularly well known has yeast added to enable the creation of fizz. This takes 2 years before bottling.

The wine settles with the dead yeast forming the lees which are



removed. The yeast dies when there is no more sugar to feed on. The wine is bottled and turned or riddled for a six week period before the cap is removed and replaced by a cork and cage. Labels are put on the bottles

All these processes have been mechanised at Camel Valley and they even use a robot known as Archie to do some of the work which is how they have reduced their staff to 8.

It was fascinating to learn how Covid and computerised mechanisation have changed working practise in such a small enterprise.

The tour ended with each of us being given 4 glasses of wine: still and sparkling white and and still and sparkling rose. They have tables and chairs on the terrace and a covered area if it rains. It was possible to purchase snacks such as crisps, olives and cheese straws to consume with the wine.

Thanks to you both for a comprehensive review, brilliant.

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.**

Events now open to book:

Still time to put your name down to attend the Garden Party.... Let Sue know.

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 (ready 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.

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.

UNFORTUNATELY NOW CANCELLED DUE TO LACK OF INTEREST! July 17th Arts Centre, Kevin Conac: “A refreshing selection of Summer Wines.

For the 8 people booked onto the above, Sue will hold a credit for you.

A few spaces still left for Carol's evening

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. **Book early to avoid disappointment.**

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 WGSEPT26 by end of August.

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

November 20 at the Arts Centre, Andrew and Christine are giving us a Murder Mystery Wine Evening! Further information to follow.

Thursday December 10 Wine Group Christmas meal at the Cornwall Hotel. Further information to follow.

Please note:

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

Continue to enjoy the sunshine!

Regards

Amanda