

# **u3a ST AUSTELL WINE APPRECIATION GROUP**

## **MAY 2026 NEWSLETTER**



Dear Wine Group Member

How wonderful for us all to enjoy some sunshine and warmth recently and long may it last. Perhaps now the white wine is chilled in the fridge, alongside some rose wines, and the reds are now lighter and brighter?

Which reminds me, I tried a “Kylie Alcohol Free Sparkling Rose” recently, which although nothing like wine, I quite enjoyed. Fine bubbles, quite dry and complex with lots of strawberries on the palate. Served very chilled on a warm day, it hit the spot without any guilt from alcohol. It cost around £6.

I read recently that, Tesco (other supermarkets are available!) have some curated wine highlights, new

additions for the sunny season. Below are some of Decanter's recommendations from Tesco.

May will see Chris and I meandering our way down to the Dordogne and spending a few weeks there exploring, relaxing, eating swimming and no doubt the hard task of wine tastings. We don't return until mid June, and so there will be no newsletter for June, but that month is the Garden Party and hopefully all will be straightforward with Sue holding the fort and liaising with Lin and Mark. Any questions please email Sue: [susanosbrink@gmail.com](mailto:susanosbrink@gmail.com)

While mentioning the Garden Party, please do "book" with Sue (no cost) and discuss what food you could bring along as soon as possible, it will be a wonderful afternoon to relax, chat, listen to the band and admire the very newly planted garden of Mark and Lin. See below for further info.

### **Tesco "Sunny weather" recommendations**

*Don't forget, if you look out for their "25% off 6 wines offer" the prices will be that much cheaper. Prices as at April 22 2026*

#### **Sparkling:**

Balfour Winery, Blanc de Blancs, Brut, Kent £26

Gratien & Meyer Brut, Cremant de Loire, Loire, France  
£13.50/£11 with clubcard, also available as a Rose

Wind & Waves, Espumante, Vinho Verde, Portugal £9

#### **White:**

El Enemigo, Semillon, Mendoza, Argentina, 2024 £18.50

Tesco Finest Pouilly Fume, Loire, France, 2024 £17

Nepenthe, Gruner Veltliner, Adelaide Hills, S Australia, 2024  
£16/£14

Tesco Finest Vinas del Rey, Albarino, Rias Baixas, Spain  
2025 £12

### **Pink:**

Famille Perrin, Studio by Miraval, Mediterranee, Provence,  
France 2025 £12.50

Les Sarrins, Rose, Cotes de Provence, Provence, France  
2025 £15/£12

### **Red:**

Famille Lafont, Lirac, Thone, France 2024 (Organic) £14

El Esteco Estate, Malbec, Salta, Argentina 2024 £14.50

Tesco Finest, Cotes du Rhone Villages, Signargues, Rhone,  
France 2024 £9.50/£8.50

### **A review of April's tasting, by Louisa Fitzpatrick from Old Chapel Cellars in Truro. "Coastal influences on Wine"**

Firstly, thanks so much to Elaine Burgess for providing the food, and to Sue O for assisting us in setting out tables and chairs, and helping Elaine with the layout of the food. All these jobs go a long way to making YOUR evenings all the more enjoyable, so thank you to our great volunteers.

Louisa a Director of Old Chapel Cellars, kindly agreed to come to the Arts Centre, once we knew the minibus was not

a viable option, and boy did she give us an interesting and humorous tasting with her anecdotes. Her tasting subject was “Coastal Influences” and how the situation of a vineyard is greatly affected by many factors for instance, proximity to water, the weather, the soil (terroir) the climate but importantly how sea breezes will cool air down reduce mildew, influence flavour and give a salty saline taste.

Louisa had Chosen 6 separate wines to look at all of whom situated by the coast two in France one in Cornwall one in Chile one in Greece and finally one in Australia, and went through how the location affects the particular wine .

### **1. Domaine de la Bretonniere Muscadet Sur Lie, Cuvee Prestige, Loire, France £14.99 12.5%**

Muscadet, one of the main wines of this region, a youthful wine from the Melon de Bourgogne grape. Muscadet wine benefits from its proximity to the Atlantic Ocean where sea breezes help moderate temperatures promoting a longer growing season for the grapes this maritime influence also contributes to the wines refreshing acidity and usual mineral character. Light, dry, with freshness (acidity) and a definite saline taste and a long finish. Ideal with all shellfish. Very drinkable and enjoyable.

### **2. Mare Nostrum Picpoul de Pinet 2024, Languedoc, S France £15.99 13%**

Picpoul (lip smacking) grape, and generally all Picpoul are from a cooperative, in a distinctive shaped bottle

with embossed logo. Becoming more and more popular on wine lists. Picpoul grapes thrive in coastal regions where sea breezes help moderate high daytime temperatures and help moderate high daytime temperatures and prevent steep night time temperature drops which is essential for maintaining the high acidity and freshness this climate allows the grapes to ripen slowly enhancing their flavour profile and making them ideal for producing crisp refreshing wines. Ideal for shellfish pairing. A much “tarter” wine than Muscadet, but both good as food accompaniments or just sipping on a hot day.

### **3. Knightor Trevannion 2023, Cornwall £19.99 11.5%**

Although Knightor is based locally, the vineyard sits on the Roseland and benefits from the sea breeze, again enabling lighter fruity wines with balance to be made from a cooler climate. “Trevannion” named after Elizabeth Trevannion who lived at Knightor in the 19<sup>th</sup> Century. This wine had a nose of lychee or rose petals, very aromatic and off dry. Would be ideal to go with curries or Asian dishes.

### **4. Ventisquero Reserva Chardonnay, Casablanca Valley, Chile, £13.99**

Although sitting in a very hot climate, this vineyard benefits from a cool breeze from the Pacific Ocean and snow melt irrigation from the Andes. With a pale

golden colour and an aromatic profile filled with papaya, mango, honey, vanilla, and toast from barrel ageing. Without the breeze this would be a totally different wine. Cheese, pasta, shellfish or fish would be a great match.

**5. Diamantakis Petali Liatiko 2021, Crete, Greece**  
**£19.99 13.5%**

Without the cooling breeze from the ocean, this setting would be far too hot to produce decent wines. The Liatiko grape has a very thin skin, hence the very pale almost brown colour in the glass. A very smoky flinty nose, no fruit flavour, rather a strange taste! Apparently good with food. Can be chilled. This wine certainly split the room.

**6. Finisterre Cabernet Sauvignon, Margaret River, SW Australia 2019, £25.99 14%**

South of Perth, this area is so very hot, but as with these other wines, the coastal influence is huge in this wine. Finistere (ends of the earth). The original producer Robert Oatley (now deceased) but lives on through his descendants makes very small batch superior wines. The grapes for this wine are a minimum of 18yrs old, from a single vineyard, and hand picked to ensure only the very best are used. Matured 12 months in French new and old oak. Very deep dark red (the thick black skins of the Cab Sauv grape). Excellent fruit

nose with eucalyptus, blackcurrant mint and cedar taste, rich and deep, long finish. Can keep 15 years. Braised beef, lamb or thyme roasted mushrooms would be perfect alongside this wine. Delicious!

Such an interesting evening with a good selection of wines and of course Louise's many many years of knowledge and experience which gives us all another dimension to the wines we drink. Thank you Louise!

## **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:**

*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. If just tentative that is fine.*

**Sunday June 28<sup>th</sup> Summer Garden Party, 12 noon onwards, taxis to depart by 6pm** hosted by Mark and Lin Stephenson, 7 Kingswood View, Trewiddle, 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.*

**July 17<sup>th</sup> Arts Centre**, Start 6.45pm Finish around 9.15pm  
taxis 9.40pm earliest please.

**Kevin Conac: “A refreshing selection of Summer Wines”**. Cost to include 6 wines and food £25pp

**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 tasting looking at refreshing Summer Wines, where we will taste 6 wines – vibrant whites, chilled reds and crisp roses, plus some surprises tailored for (hopefully) hot summer days, with the benefit of first hand experiences as a Sommelier. Food thanks to Frances and Kim.

**Book by June 30<sup>th</sup>, ref xxxxWGJUL26.**

**Friday 14<sup>th</sup> 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 10<sup>th</sup> 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.

In brief and for your diaries, further details will follow in due course as soon as I receive them:

**September 18<sup>th</sup>** 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)**

## **Wine Titbits**

*From April's CNN Style in April –* **Rare wines, stashed away in a Castle's Cellar for a century and once considered undrinkable, head to sale**

“Glamis Castle has a rich history, reputed to be the most haunted castle in Scotland, it once hosted Mary, Queen of Scots and has strong links to the British royal family. It's also said to have inspired William Shakespeare's tragedy “Macbeth.”

But perhaps one of its most alluring offerings is what lay deep in its wine cellar, described by an expert as an “Aladdin's cave.”

For almost a century, bottles of Bordeaux wine previously considered undrinkable were hidden in the Scottish castle. Today, their contents are considered some of the best – and most valuable – in the world. Now, two magnums of Château Lafitte 1870 are going on sale.

The two bottles, central to the upcoming “Immortal Vintages” auction at Sotheby’s in April, are considered “legendary” by those in the know. Described by Sotheby’s as “a landmark single-owner sale,” the overall auction is made up of more than 250 lots of Bordeaux wine spanning two centuries and is expected to fetch in excess of \$1 million.

Discovered in Glamis Castle’s wine cellar in the 1970s the two magnums are expected to sell for up to \$50,000 each when they go under the hammer in New York.

Glamis Castle, situated in the east of Scotland, about 12 miles from Dundee, has been the ancestral home of the Earls of Strathmore and Kinghorne since 1372. The castle’s cellar, dubbed the “catacombs,” was fitted out in 1765 for John, the 9th Earl of Strathmore.

Two magnums hailing from Chateau Lafitte Rothschild estate of Bordeaux, were discovered by accident. They were among 42 bottles found shortly before a Christie’s auction in 1971 titled “The Finest and Rarest Wines from Private cellars”.

Michael Broadbent MW, the late founder of Christie’s wine said he found the Lafitte bottles when he first visited the Castle. The cellar’s log showed that the 13<sup>th</sup> Earl of Strathmore had purchased 48 bottles of 1870 Lafitte and stored them in the cellar in 1878.

Michael Broadbent wrote at the time “the wine was so astringent that he did not like it, and when he died the wine was virtually untouched and his successors just left it”.

Importantly bottles from this cellar that have since been opened are regarded widely as the best preserved examples of the 1870 Lafitte, giving them an almost benchmark status among collectors.”

Kind regards

Continue to enjoy the sunshine!

Regards

***Amanda***