

Whitewater Valley Wine Society

Tasting Report: February 2016

Gems of the New World

Presented by Society members Jim King & Keith Cooper

Report by Barbara Jones

Back by popular demand, our Society's intrepid duo returned this month to present some of their favourite wines from the New World. Jim "*Order Please*" King had been tasting wines from his favourite suppliers in preparation for this tasting. His final selection featured three wines from top winemakers in South Africa and a stunning aged Australian Grenache to close the evening. Keith "*The Magnum*" Cooper chose to feature wines from three New World Countries – Argentina, New Zealand and Australia. So our evening was truly a whirlwind tasting of New World wines, offering our members the chance to taste some of the best in class.

After a stunning Chenin from South Africa as our 'welcome wine', Keith started formal proceedings with Argentina – **Faldeos Nevados, Torrentes 2014** [14%, £7.50], its signature white grape from leading winemaker Susana Balbo. This pale lemon coloured wine was full and fragrant, with heady grapey flavour and just a touch of sweetness on the palate reminiscent of pineapple and limes. It is well priced and would be a wonderful accompaniment to a fruit-enhanced salad or fragrant Thai dish. Jim's first wine was South Africa – **De Morgenzon Maestro, 2014** [14%, £13.95] a blend of Rousanne [26%], Chardonnay [25%], Grenache Blanc [19%], Chenin [17%] and Viognier [!%]. Another pale coloured wine that was surprisingly rich and textured, lively with lovely fruit – bold pear and peach notes and a hint of spice. It was rich and creamy in the mouth but still well defined. Keith introduced our last white wine a **New Zealand, Jane Hunter Gewurztraminer 2014** [14%, £11.00] which again was pale lemon coloured and again laden with fruit, both on the nose and palate – this time lychees. Reminiscent of the wines of Alsace it was just off dry and evoked thoughts of Turkish Delight for some members; another excellent accompaniment for Thai food!

Jim introduced the first red wine of the evening – **South Africa Boekenhoutskloof Le Cap Maritime, Pinot Noir 2012** [14%, £15.00] that was clear and translucent, typically of this single grape wine. Currently an 'experiment' from top producer Mark Kent and grown nearer the coast as its name implies, this wine was soft and smooth and full of characteristic strawberry flavour with red currants. Keith returned to Argentina for his first red of the evening – **Argentina – Norton Privada 2012**, 14.5%, £15.99] and not surprisingly a Bordeaux blend wine! It had a deep, black cherry colour, intense from 50 year-old vines grown at between 800-1100 metres. It was rich and full-bodied and slightly tannic

- excellent with steak and duck. Personally, it dominated what came afterwards being more robust. Jim returned though to his favourite South Africa for his next wine - **South Africa - Boekenhoutskloof The Chocolate Block 2013** [14.5%, £15.00-£18.50] and another blended wine of Syrah [71%], Cabernet Sauvignon [12%], Grenache [11%], Cinsault [5%], Viognier [1%]. Made from deep-rooted vines this had optimal concentration of colour, flavour and tannin structure. In the mouth it bursts with raspberry and grapefruit flavours ending with bitter chocolate, a smoky minerality and oak spice. For our last wines of the evening we ventured to Australia - **Australia - Robert Oatley Signature, Cabernet Sauvignon, 2013** [14%, £12.99] from Margaret River was Keith's choice. This single grape wine had a deep blackcurrant colour and was full of blackberry fruit and cassis on the palate; full-bodied but yet not heavy. The final wine of this excellent tasting was **Australia - Colonial Estate Alexander Laing, Grenache, 2006** [15.5%, £15.00] and was another single grape wine and this time from 100 year-old vines that produce small fruit packed with flavour and black berry colour. It had hints of jam on the nose and was subtly sweet in the mouth with hints of cloves, almonds and velvety oak - yet on the long finish there was a slight bitterness.

Our most grateful thanks go to Keith and Jim for their superb selection of wines for this tasting - 'not a bad one amongst them' and certainly thoroughly enjoyed by those members and guests present by their obvious wish to talk about the wines they were quaffing!