

Whitewater Valley Wine Society

Tasting Report: March 2018

Alternative Australia

Presented by Wine Educator Richard Bost

Report by Valerie Richardson

To present this month's tasting, we welcomed back Richard Bost of Amethyst Wine, who has become one of our favourite speakers. Richard is a leading provider of Wine Education Services in the UK and he is qualified to the Wine & Spirit Education Trust Diploma level. He's absolutely passionate about wine and his knowledge of wine stretches back over 40 years. On previous visits, Richard has brought us splendid tastings of really interesting wines. This month he introduced members to varietals which are new to Australia including Verdelho, Chenin Blanc, Gruner Veltliner, Barbera, Nebbiolo and many other less familiar grape varieties which are grabbing the attention of critics, sommeliers and wine drinkers around the world.

All four white wines were universally well received by our members. They were sourced broadly from areas east and south of Adelaide. The first wine Trentham Estate River Retreat Pinot Grigio 2016, Murray Darling, 12.0% abv (£9.30) made from night picked grapes had a cool, light freshness with grassy, lemony notes. A slight oiliness on the palate delivered peach and apricot fruitiness.

The second wine, Bremerton Mollie & Merle Verdelho 2017, Langhorne Creek, 12.0% (£14.50) was also light and fresh in the glass and on the nose but was more rich and long on the palate. White and citrus fruits were rich and strong. This wine had good keeping potential.

The third wine, Coriole Vineyards Chenin Blanc 2016, McLaren Vale, 12.5% (£11.99) was off dry but the honeyed notes and chalky minerality produced a fruity, well rounded wine. This wine could develop further.

The delicious Pike & Joyce "Separe" Gruner Veltliner 2015, Adelaide Hills, 12.5% (£18.50) followed. It had a distinctive white fruit, apple and pear perfume (with a hint of rhubarb) on the nose. It was long and fruity on the palate. An interesting example of the Gruner Veltliner grape which is deservedly appearing more often in our shops but is usually associated with Austria.

After the interval the red wines were eagerly awaited and did not disappoint. Richard was very enthusiastic about the Barbera grape and its place among other better known Italian grapes. This example, Coriole

Vineyards Barbera 2014 McLaren Vale, 14.0% (£15.95) stood its ground. It was rounded and full with strong red fruit flavours. He highlighted the slightly "austere note" that is present on the nose of "Italian" wines.

A more mellow wine, The Pawn Wine Co. "The Gambit" Sangiovese 2013, Adelaide Hills, 14.5% (£17.30) followed. Its pinky/red colour showed some sign of ageing. It delivered a rich fruitiness with perfumes of violet and sour cherries and gentle earthy tones.

The next wine, Trentham The Family Nero d`Avola, 2015, Murray Darling 13.5% (£12.50) gave rich brambly flavours but with smoothness and balanced acidity/tannins. This wine would be a great accompaniment for rich meat dishes.

The thin skin of the Nebbiolo grape produced a lighter coloured wine in the last wine, Trentham The Family Nebbiolo 2015, Murray Darling, 13.5% (£12.50). This was delicious and well balanced, with black and red fruit notes on the nose and palate and subtle oak influence.

Thank you to Richard for bringing such delicious, well chosen wines. It was a very intriguing evening to look at so many Italian grapes featuring on Australian wine labels. It was interesting to see how the growers are branching out, using different grapes and developing new wines with such good results. The use of a screen with photo images and notes really helped to outline the recent history of Australian wine and production. Most of all it was great to see photos of the vineyards where the wines were produced and the generations of families who were working on their production.