

Whitewater Valley Wine Society

Tasting Report: June 2018

The wines of Bordeaux

Presented by Wine Educator Victor Maguire

Report by Peter Morrison and Jan Sellwood

This month we were very pleased to welcome Victor Maquire, who presented to our Society for the first time. Victor is a member of the Association of Wine Educators, which brings together wine specialists from around the world. AWE members have vast experience in the wine trade and many are wine writers or TV presenters. All of their members have obtained the Wine & Spirit Education Trust Diploma or equivalent qualification. This month Victor presented his selection of wines from Bordeaux. Because of the higher cost of wines from Bordeaux, it's a topic which we don't cover too frequently. So this was an evening not to be missed! Victor is passionate about wine and his knowledge, expertise and experience has been gained over many years in the hospitality industry including ships (notably Cunard), airlines, hotels and restaurants.

Our evening of wines from Bordeaux started with a **Cremant de Bordeaux, Calvet AOC, 2014 [11.5%, £10.80]**. A sparkler suitable for all occasions with a lovely golden colour and open body. A blend of 75% Cabernet Franc and 25% Semillon it has a soft fruity freshness combining brioche with fresh citrus flavours to enhance many styles of food and, of course, be great as an aperitif.

Our first still wine was **Dourthe No1 Sauvignon Blanc, 2017 [12.5%, £8.50]**. Dourthe were the pioneers of modern Bordeaux Sauvignon Blanc and this wine has a fresh fruity palate of lemon and grapefruit. The wine will go best with shellfish and goats cheese.

The first red of the evening was a **Chateau de Parenchere Clairet, Appellation Bordeaux Controlee, 2016 [13.0%, £15.50]**. This blend of 80% merlot and 20% cabernet sauvignon has a rich dark pink hue which recalls the style of wine imported by England in the middle ages, claret became "claret" over time. A fresh palate of red berry fruits with low tannins to accompany hors d'oeuvres and chicken dishes. A very unusual and distinctive wine.

We followed with **Chateau Mazeau, Cadillac, 2014 [13.0%, £6.75]**. Members found this to be an easy drinking claret made from 70% merlot and 15% each of cabernet sauvignon and cabernet franc. It comes from a family owned vineyard just north of Cadillac. It has plenty of blackcurrant on the nose and palate, is ready to drink and extremely good value.

Chateau de Pitray, Castillon, Cotes de Bordeaux, 2012 [13.0%, £8.95]. A right bank affordable classic coming from a vineyard of 36 hectares based on clay and limestone. It is made up of 75% merlot with the balance being cabernet franc. It exhibited smooth cassis aromas with peppery notes and will drink best from 2018-20. It scored a very respectable 88 from Decanter.

Our next red of the evening was a **Chateau Meyne-Veil, Fronsac, 2014 [14.5%, £12.99]**. This was a gentle style of claret consisting of 100% merlot with an underlying rustic earthiness. There was a degree of acidity coming through to balance the tannins. It should be drunk over the next 2 years.

Moving on to the **Chateau Cardinal Montagne, St. Emilion, 2015 [14.5%, £16.99]**, 70% merlot, 25% cabernet sauvignon and 5% cabernet franc. This proved a winner with members and it has also been rated highly at a Decanter blind tasting in April 2018 scoring 89 points. The wine is produced from 30 year old vines, the grapes being picked at full maturity and maturation takes place in vats of casks or vats for over a year. It has ripe fruit on the nose and goes well with steak or hard cheese.

The final wine of the tasting was a **Chateau La Tour de By, Cru Bourgeois, Medoc, 2012 [13.0%, £22.70]**. 60% cabernet sauvignon, 35% merlot and 5% petit verdot. This Medoc left bank example was a fine finish for the evening with its dense colour and fruitiness. The flavour of concentrated red fruits, blackberries, savoury tones of mushrooms together with subtle oak came through strongly. The drinking window is 2018 to 2023.

Our sincere thanks go to Victor for presenting a range of reds which, in particular, depicted the range of styles from a classic wine region. We hope to see him again to explore other regions of the wine world.