

Whitewater Valley Wine Society

Tasting Report: February 2015

The Wines of South Africa

Presented by Jim King and Keith Cooper

Report by Barbara Jones

Our Society's intrepid duo returned this month to present some of their favourite wines from South Africa. Jim has been preparing for this tasting for months. Building on his vast knowledge of the country's wines, gained through several visits to the Cape, he has come up with four of the best for us to taste, sourced from his favourite suppliers. Keith is also a huge fan of South Africa's wines. He's recently back from his fourth visit to the Cape winelands and he'd discovered some exciting new gems for us to taste. The wines were mainly sourced from the historic Constantia and Stellenbosch regions and featured some big names alongside some rising stars. As well as single varietal classics, there were also some Bordeaux and Rhone blends.

Our tasting of the usual eight wines started with three whites. Our first was **Cape Point Sauvignon Blanc, 2013** [13.5%, £10.95, The Wine Society] from the area south of Cape Town. This pale lemony-gold coloured wine had the distinctive Sauvignon grassy nose from the 97% Sauvignon grape [remainder being Semillon] with a rounded dry, fruity finish on the palate. The **Grand Provenance Viognier** [55%]/ **Chenin Blanc** [45%] **2012**, [14%, £12.50, Good Wine Online] had a very pale colour with hints of apricots and bananas on the nose. This was a well-balanced wine with good acidity with a long, slightly wooded finish. Our final white wine was a **Jordan Estate 'Nine Yards' Chardonnay, 2013** [13.5%, £24.99, South African Wines Online], made to premium, reserve-style quality reflected in the price. Typically golden in colour it had the characteristic oaky, buttery nose of this grape and was full-bodied and rounded in the mouth. All three whites were well appreciated!

The first red wine was also well liked – an **Eagles' Nest 'Verreux'** [Bordeaux Blend], **2009** [13.55, £16.50, Good Wine Online]. Blended from predominantly Merlot [85%] and 5% each of Cabernet Sauvignon/Cabernet Franc/Petit Verdot, this wine was cherry red in colour with smooth tannins and jammy, chocolate flavours on the palate – a bold well-balanced wine! Next came the **Delheim Cabernet Sauvignon, 2011** [14.55, £10.50, The Wine Society] from the Stellenbosch region. Made from 100% Cabernet this black cherry coloured wine was still a little firm with tannins but softened in the glass. It had promise and should last a few more years. The **Grangehurst Pinotage, 2005** [14.5%, £14.99, Good Wine Online] the grape of South Africa – a cross of Pinot Noir and Cinsault sadly did not live up to its introduction for some, one bottle being

'tainted'! As a result the next wine was well received, a **Ken Forrester 'Renegade'** [Rhone blend], **2009** [14.5%, £11.99, South African Wines Online]. This wine, a blend of Grenache/Syrah/Mourvedre 46/42/12%, had a deep black cherry red colour, a subtle nose, and smooth tannins. On the palate it was full of berry fruits with a hint of spice, well rounded and very drinkable! Our final wine of the evening was another Rhone blend, a **Zevenwacht 'Z' 2010** [14%, £19.94, Good Wine Online] a blend of Syrah/ Mourvedre/Grenache 67/6/27%. This was a full-bodied wine, intensely plummy, smooth and very drinkable – ideal, to end a most interesting and enjoyable tasting.

Our grateful thanks go to Keith and Jim for their well-chosen selection of some of their favourite South Africa's wines. Our thanks go to Dolly as well for the extras - 'Valentine themed chocolates!