

# Whitewater Valley Wine Society

**Tasting Report: January 2016**

## **Cool Climate Wines**

**Presented by Torquil Jack, Carte-Du-Vin**

Report by Barbara Jones

This month, all the wines in our tasting were from cooler climate wine regions of the world. These are regions where the climate conspires to produce wines of finesse and elegance, often a touch lighter in alcohol, but where the success of winemaking is on a knife edge. Will the summer sun ripen the grapes sufficiently? Will there be a spring frost which damages the vines at a crucial time? These are the challenges which must be overcome. The cool climate winemaker has to be better, smarter, more patient and creative, and able to deal with heartbreak. But when they get it right, the results are stunning!

**Carte-du-Vin** - Torquil and his wife Marian started Carte-du-Vin in 2010. But their passion for wine goes back much further and their wine tastings started as a hobby enjoyed on their world travels. They are Hampshire based, selling mainly through their website, but also to local restaurants in our area. Through Carte-du-Vin, they want their customers to share their passion and feel part of the wine discovery process. They aim to showcase wines from small, passionate producers. Most of the wines sold by Carte-du-Vin are not available elsewhere in the UK. And they all had an interesting story to tell.....

The four white wines selected by Torquil came from New Zealand and Northern Spain. The first was a **Marlborough, Stanley Estates Sauvignon Blanc 2014, New Zealand** [£14.00, 13.5%] that was very pale in colour with a herbaceous nose. On the palate it was very aromatic and intense, with lush flavours of green capsicums and the ripe zesty fruit flavours of white peach, grapefruit and elderflowers. Compared to some large scale producers this wine was more refined and restrained and won a Gold Medal in the regional competition. Our second wine came from coastal Galicia – a **Rias Baixas Lagar de Besada 2012, Spain** [£11.50, 12.5%] and had a distinct yellow colour and a very elegant nose with hints of mature fruits. On the palate it was delicate, very pleasant with a clean finish and would be an excellent accompaniment to seafood. Next we tasted a **Marlborough, Stanley Estates Pinot Gris 2013, New Zealand** [13.5%, £15.50]. This was an aromatic off-dry wine that felt soft in the mouth from fruit richness and restrained acidity; it was well balanced with pear and honey flavours and a slightly spicy medium dry finish. We returned to Spain for our last white wine – **Ribeiro, Antonio Cajide, Sameiras 1040, 2011 Spain** [£18.50, 13.5%]. This wine had an intense yellow colour with light golden and greenish reflections and hints of honey on the nose. In the mouth it was slightly oily with good

structure, was rather dry with a hint of lees and even a nuance of slightly bitter spice. Acidity was well balanced.

Having been grown in cool climate regions all the red wines were of the 'lighter' variety. Our first was from **Marlborough, Stanley Estates 2013 Pinot Noir, Block 8, New Zealand** [£16.50, 13.5%] In the glass this was light in colour and crystal clear! It was fruit driven – full of red-black plums, raspberries and sweet red berry fruits. The oak was noticeable, but subtle and helped give the wine balance, depth and structure. This wine will last until 2020. Next came a **Loire Valley, Domaine Cune, Charl'Anne 2013, France** [12.5%, £12.50] that was darker in the glass but incredibly light on the palate. Made from 100% Cabernet Franc it was classic and fruity, displaying rich raspberry on the mid palate. Though enjoyable now it will last another 2/3 years. For our third red wine we stayed in France – a **Burgundy, Domaine Masse, Givry 2011, France** [13%, £16.50] that was much darker in colour than the first Pinot Noir tasted and had a delicious candy-like bouquet with hot fruit intensity that softened nicely in the glass. Tannins were soft with a hint of kirsch. Our final wine of the evening was a **Monterrei, Ladairo Mencia 2012, Spain** [13%, £12.50] that had the most depth of colour and yet with a light texture. Made from 100% Mencia grape which is identical to Portugal's Jaen, this wine was full of red and black berry fruits. It had medium tannins though which nuances of toffee and spices were also appreciated. Torquil's tasting notes included suggestions of accompanying foods – these included for the reds lamb, duck and chicken, even some seafood such as salmon, sea bass and Tapas. He reckoned that the last red would be superb with pasta carbonara or Spanish pork and bean stew. Thus lighter reds should never be over-powered with strong tasting foods!

Our thanks go to Torquil for a most interesting tasting of elegant wines from small, boutique estates and unusual regions. Members who couldn't make it missed a treat!