

Whitewater Valley Wine Society

Tasting Report: November 2015

A tasting of wines from Piedmont, Italy

Presented by David Allen, Master of Wine, representing Coe Vintners

Report by Barbara Jones

There are only 340 Masters of Wine in the world, so it was a privilege to welcome one of their ranks to present to our Society this month - David Allen, Master of Wine. According to David studying for the Master of Wine qualification was an enormous privilege. He recalls it was a long and thrilling journey, taking him round the world several times. In his own words: "I have had the opportunity to meet and learn from so many of the industry's most gifted and passionate personalities, who so generously shared their time, enthusiasm and brilliance." David's love of wine was initially kindled at Oddbins where he ran shops for 10 years before moving into their marketing department. Following stints at Uvine and Top Selection, he joined Coe Vintners in 2010 as their Fine Wine Manager. He's also a marker for the Wine & Spirit Education Trust and judged for the International Wine Challenge. He is now a judge at the Decanter World Wide Awards. Piedmont in Italy is an area which fascinates David so this month our focus was Piedmont in North West Italy.

Our Italian evening began with as **Asti Spumante, Canti 2014** [7.0%, £5.00]. This was a very pale zippy wine with lots of bubbles initially. It was clean and fresh in the mouth though slightly on the sweet side for some members; ideal though and very reasonably priced, for that afternoon cake or with Christmas pudding. Our second wine and the only still white wine was a **Gavi di Gavi, La Caplana 2014** [12%, £11.98] that was also a very pale colour – slightly lemony. The nose was particularly delicate with suggestions of flowers and grass. On the palate it was clean and fresh with a hint of sherbet – a straightforward wine to accompany a light lunch?

The remaining wines were red and the first was a **Dolcetto d'Ovada, La Caplana 2013** [13.0%, £10.00] that had a light translucent red colour. This wine was both delicate on the nose and on the palate. It had not been subjected to any oak and acidity was medium to low. This was an easy drinking, everyday sort of wine. The next wine was deeper in colour – a **Barbera d'Asti, La Caplana 2013** [13.5%, £10.43] that had smoky, secondary aromas. The oak present gave it some earthiness with low tannins and high acidity. It was interesting to note that as the grapes go into the vats whole [not mashed] this helps to make the tannins softer. This wine had more fruit than the previous one. To end the first part of the evening we tasted a **Barbaresco, Giacosa Fratelli 2011** [13.5%, £21.14] – now for more serious drinking! This wine had a fairly dark cherry colour accompanied by an intense fruity nose, possibly with hints of tar and roses. The Nebbiolo grape is difficult

to grow and is harvested late, the grapes being delicately crushed only. The tannins were very pronounced with oak evident from being in large French oak barrels. This wine was fairly generous and well-rounded now but will last between 10-15 years from bottling. For some of us it was the best wine of the evening.

We were then privileged to taste Barolo, a DOCG red wine that ranks among the finest red wines of the world and made exclusively from the Nebbiolo grape. Our first was a **Barolo, Giacosa Fratelli 2011** [13.5%, £24.64] that was medium red in colour and translucent and not unexpectedly was austere and tannic because of its youthful age. The **Barolo Bussia, Giacosa Fratelli 2010** [13.5%, £27.65] had a slightly deeper red colour and was slightly less austere though the tannins were sharper. Our final wine of the evening was a **Barolo Vigna Mandorlo, Giacosa Fratelli 2005** [13.55, £30.24] that was darker in colour and a little more opaque. Tannins were slightly smoother but still evident – so perhaps some small development towards the complexity and depth expected with age...on the road to the exquisite aroma of truffles and a rich, full-bodied taste? It would be a fairly long wait and need a much deeper pocket, sadly!

Our thanks go to David for his selection of some Coe Vintners' wines. His technical knowledge of the wine-making process was clearly evident and enlightening. We wish him well in the Antipodes!