

# Whitewater Valley Wine Society

**Tasting Report: October 2016**

**“Why Wine?” A kaleidoscope journey**

**Presented by Mark Bedford, Caviste**

Report by Barbara Jones

This month we were delighted to welcome back Mark Bedford of local merchant Caviste. After over twenty five years in the wine trade – and several visits to the Whitewater Valley Wine Society – Mark took us on a kaleidoscope journey of the wine world, with his selection of both white and red wines, carefully chosen to illustrate the story of wine. ‘Why Wine?’ is Mark’s personal journey from underage drinking of his father’s bottles at home to his own business and current home of Caviste. Whitewater Valley Wine Society has had a long association with Caviste, who have one of their retail outlets on our doorstep at Newlyn Farm, near Odiham.

Mark started the evening by explaining his rationale for his approach to this particular tasting. He sought to break the tradition of exploring wine by origin or grape to focus on personal likes and dislikes and accompaniment to food. His first choice was a **Vigne Lourac Antiquorum Modo Brut 2011** from Gaillac, Southwest France [11%, £17.95], a very pale lemon coloured sparkling wine. Made from the Mauzac grape, local to the region, the wine had a gentle fizz from the single fermentation method and a dry finish. The predominant flavour was one of rusted apples. Next he chose a wine from the Yeghegnadzor Valley in Armenia – **Zorah Voski Dry White 2014** [13%, £26.00] from a stone’s throw away from the Areni Cave where a 6000 year old wine press was discovered. Made from a 50/50 blend of two indigenous grapes, Voskeat/Garandmak and grown at an altitude of 1400 metres from vines on original un-grafted roots in the phylloxera free rocky, sandy soil, this wine was delicate in most respects - pale colour, subtle nose, a soft aromatic flavour in the mouth and good length. We tasted the third white wine blind and its origin too was somewhat unusual – a **Samas Isola del Nuraghi 2015** [12.55, £14.50] from Sardinia. This very pale coloured wine was made from an 80/20 blend on Vermentino and Chardonnay. This un-oaked wine was aromatic with good acidity, flavour being retained as a result of fermentation at lowish temperatures – a fine accompaniment to oriental cuisine, fish and asparagus. The first half of the evening ended with a 15 year old **Valdespino ‘Inocente’ Single Vineyard Fino** Sherry from Jerez [£17.50]. Pale gold in colour it had an oaky, musty nose and layers of flavour from being fermented in oak vats. It was dry, salty, nutty and yeasty with very good length – expensive but worth it for that special occasion!

For our first red wine of the evening we journeyed to Lebanon for a **Massaya Le Colombier 2013, Bekka Valley** [14.5%, £13.95]. This wine was a dark black cheery colour with lots of blackberry fruits on the nose. A fairly balanced 'Provençal' blend of Cinsault, Grenache, Syrah and Tempranillo resulted in a full-bodied, powerful spicy wine, full of chunky ripe red-berry fruits with soft, smoothish tannins. It was very well received! For the next red we returned to Armenia for a **Zorah Voski Dry Red 2013** [14%, £26.00] and were not disappointed, other than in the price. The long ageing in the traditional amphorae karasi produced a dark red fruity and peppery wine that was fine and elegant, had soft tannins and a long and delicate finish. The 'blind tasted' wine that followed echoed the white in that it also came from Sardinia – **Montessu Isola der Nuraghi 2014** [14.5%, £15.95]. A blend of mostly Carignan with 10% each of Syrah, Cabernet Sauvignon, Merlot and Grenache, produced a deep black cherry red wine that was full of intense aromas and flavours of blackberry fruits. It was full bodied with a velvety texture and balanced tannins – in brief, quite delightful! Our final red wine was from Portugal – a **Krohn Senador Tawny Port** [20%, £11.95. Bottled after five years in barrel this young port had a wide spectrum of flavours that included apples and raisins, backed by a spicy, nutty finish. It was well balanced with good weight. Our final treat of the night was a **Patricius Tokaji Aszu 5 Puttonyos** [10.5%, £29.00 for 50cl] from Hungary. This had a fine nose of tropical fruits, peach and apricot and was balanced with lively acidity and a kind sweetness with an elegant finish.

Our grateful thanks go to Mark for a most intriguing, fun evening of tasting some unusual wines that helped to unravel parts of the 'Story of Wine'. The well selected wines were a good reflection of Mark's own journey with wine which we thoroughly enjoyed sharing.