

# Whitewater Valley Wine Society

**Tasting Report: June 2017**

## **Wines of South Africa**

**Presented by Chris Horridge, Altus Wine**

Report by Barbara Jones

It's been 9 years since Chris Horridge last presented to us. So it was great to be able to welcome him back in our 30th anniversary year. Chris has been in the wine trade for many years and has travelled widely within the grape growing regions of the world. He is a Panel Chair Judge at the International Wine and Spirit Competition where he has judged since 1997. Chris passed his Wine and Spirit Education Trust Diploma in 1996 and is working towards his Master of Wine Course. He is responsible for wine buying for the Altus Wines business, and every wine has been tried, tasted and passed Chris's high standards. South Africa is a region which is very popular with many of our members and the tasting was well supported.

The evening's tasting started with a **Gabrielskloof Sauvignon Blanc 2015 Overberg [13%, £10.50]**. Stainless steel fermented this very pale wine had a light nose of nettles and lemon grass. On the palate were some typical gooseberry and grassy flavours that were not overpowering. The finish was long and dry.

**The Glen Carlou Chardonnay 2015 Paarl [13.5%, £12.50]** that followed was a pale gold colour with a buttery, oaky nose [from French barriques]. This was crisp and fresh with some richness and roundness on the palate, with a good balance between fruit and oak. Again the finish was long.

Then we focused on two Chenin Blanc wines, a grape South Africa has adopted as its own. The first of these was a **Fairview Darling Chenin Blanc 2014 Paarl [13.5%, £10.50]** from low yielding 30-40 year old bush vine grapes. This un-oaked wine was light in colour and had a dried fruit/pear drop nose. On the palate there were baked apples with a hint of spice and flint minerality; it was pleasant but not distinctive.

The final white was a **Tim Martin Mothership Chenin Blanc 2015 Swartland [13.0%, £22.50]** and another oaked wine. It had a pale gold colour with a smoky and more expressive nose. On the palate there were apples and pears and more roundness and weight compared with the previous wine. This wine needed food for best enjoyment.

The reds followed and the first had to be South Africa's own – a cross of Pinot Noir and Cinsault [known as Hermitage locally] a **Fairview Pinotage 2015 Paarl [14%, £10.50]**. This had a medium red colour and as it is on the light side can be served lightly chilled. It was full of red

berries on the nose with a hint of spice from the French and American oak barriques. It was full and supple in the mouth with flavours of mulberries, black fruit, vanilla and spices. The tannins were soft and rounded.

The second red was a 100% Cabernet Sauvignon – a **Glenelly Glass Collection Cabernet 2009 Stellenbosch** [14.5%, £12.00]. This wine had a deep red colour and a black fruit nose. On the palate the black fruits were dominant and the tannins soft. This wine has good potential for ageing and should last until 2020. It was a good value wine when compared with French equivalents!

This was followed by a blended red wine of Shiraz/Cabernet Sauvignon/Petit Verdot/ Mourvedre, 40/39/13/7%, a **Glenelly Grand Vin 2008 Stellenbosch** [14%, £15.00]. Being Glenelly's signature blend of hand harvested and sorted grapes with a light crush and 14 months in French oak, this dark black-cherry coloured wine was different in style from the previous wine. The tannins were smooth but some members felt there was too much of a mix on the one hand and yet something was lacking on the other? Parker though gave it 91 points!

Our final wine of the evening was a **Tim Martin Qaisar Mourvedre 2014 Swartland** [13.5%, £21.00]. This was lighter in style than the last red with a hint of spritz. It was lighter in colour too with an unusual fizz on the gums. Still young surprisingly, it had a long finish – unusual and a bit different and whacky, but perhaps not worth the price?

It was good to have Chris present to us again and we thank him for his interesting selection of wines, most not readily available from supermarket shelves.