

Whitewater Valley Wine Society

Tasting Report: February 2018

Wine Gems for 2018

Presented by Society Members Jim King & Keith Cooper

Report by Barbara Jones

An evening presented by our Society's intrepid duo has become a regular feature of our tastings calendar. So they took centre stage again this month, presenting their selection of wine gems for 2018. Jim & Keith have tasted numerous wines, often long into the night, and in their final selection this month, there was something for everyone, with wines from several countries around the world. As usual, Jim chose wines from suppliers with whom he has a close relationship. Keith chose to feature wines which he had tasted in the last couple of months. Initials indicate which of the two presented the wine – KC or JK.

After supping a most pleasant Spanish 'Welcome Wine' made from the rare and unusual grape Albarin during the AGM, the official tasting began with a **South Africa (Elgin): Paul Cluver Dry Encounter Riesling, 2015**, [£12.55,12%] **KC**. This wine was a very pale colour with apple green tints. Similarly, the nose echoed the apple green element with notes of apple blossom and honey. In the mouth it was crisp and clean and though subtle there was just a hint of petrol. This very dry wine had a refreshing and lingering finish.

Next we tasted a **New Zealand (Marlborough): Greywacke Sauvignon Blanc, 2016**, [£14.95,13%] **KC**. This medium-bodied wine had a pale lemon colour with a nose bursting of delicious aromas – fresh grass, bay leaves green beans and wild thyme. In the mouth it was creamy and intense with a long green veggie finish and well integrated acidity.

Our final white wine was also from nearby, a **New Zealand (Central Otago): Mount Difficulty Roaring Meg Pinot Gris, 2016**, [£12.99,14%] **JK**. This un-oaked wine, named after one of two fleeing prostitutes crossing two local streams named after them, had a nose reminiscent of a fruit cocktail, full of stone fruits, passion fruit and melon. These flavours were duplicated on the palate giving a rich and off-dry finish.

Our first of four red wines was an **Argentina (Mendoza): Corbeau Noir Dark Blend, 2015**, [£17.99,14%] **JK**. This purple-red blended wine of Malbec/Bonarda/Ancellotta 40/35/15% was rich and full bodied. The palate was full of sweet red fruits - blackcurrants and dark red cherries, with hints of black pepper and mint. Tannins were well integrated and the finish was long.

Then we crossed the South Pacific for an **Australia (McLaren Vale): Kay Brothers Amery Vineyards Hillside Shiraz, 2003**, [£12.95,15%] **JK**. This wine had a dense blackcurrant-red colour, and a nose full of blueberries and plums with a touch of vanilla and spice. In the mouth it was rich and round, even voluptuous, with soft tannins and a long and persistent finish. Buy it if you can find it!

This was followed by an **Australia (Coonawarra): Berton Vineyards Cabernet Sauvignon Reserve, 2014**, [£14.00,14.5%] **KC**. Well regarded as the best of 500 wines by Decanter Magazine where it scored 96 points, this dark red coloured wine had a nose of intense ripe black fruits with hints of chocolate, eucalyptus, mint and liquorice. On the palate there were crushed blackberries complemented by notes of elegant French oak. A little more restrained than the previous wine, there is time for further development of this particular wine.

Our final red wine was again from 'down under' an **Australia (Barossa): Two Hands Deer in the Headlights Shiraz, 2005**, [£14.95,15.5%] **JK**. This dark, opaque purple-red wine had a fragrant perfume of cedar, leather, lavender and pepper mixed with blueberries. In the mouth it was ripe and rounded with a deep velvety texture with hints of chocolate. The finish was fruit-filled and long.

We returned to the northern hemisphere for our final treat of the evening for a **Portugal (Douro): The Wine Society's Exhibition 10 Year Old Tawny** [£17.00, 20%] **KC**. This fortified wine had a delicate red-brown colour. Matured in cask it had sweet nutty flavours and would be an excellent accompaniment to blue stilton! What better way to end a tasting of excellent wines!

We are most grateful to Keith and Jim for their efforts in sourcing and sharing with Members a most interesting selection of mostly New World Wines. We look forward to another selection next year!