

Whitewater Valley Wine Society

Tasting Report: December 2018

Society Members' Choices

Presented by Members of our Society

Report by Barbara Jones

We have many wine enthusiasts within our Society and it's always good to taste wines which are recommended by them. That's why at Christmas time, we open the floor to eight of our members, who each introduce a wine of their choice. Our 'master of ceremonies' this year was Nesta Downey, who organised an evening of interactive tasting, chatting, conferring and light hearted competition with wines having to be tasted 'blind'! After some feedback, the presenters then gave details of their wine and explained why they had selected it.

Our fun evening began with sparkle, a **Graham Beck Brut NV South Africa** [12%, £11.99, Majestic box of 6] from **Paul Wright**. This 50/50 blend of Chardonnay and Pinot Noir had lovely bready aromas, fresh fruit, fine bubbles and a rich, creamy complexity on the palate; a wine also with connections – drunk at Nelson Mandela's Inauguration and by the Obamas in November 2008!

It was followed by **Isola della Fiamma 2017 Cantine Rallo-Vesco Sicily** [12.5%, £6.25] chosen by **Alastair Dudley**; a wine made almost entirely from Grillo, the fullest flavoured of Sicily's white grapes and given extra lift and zing with a small amount of the aromatic Zibbibo, with lovely results!

Next came a **Les Dorures de L'Enfer** [The Gilding of Hell] **2016 Domaine Jeanneterres l'Occitanie France** [14.5%, £6.50 from producer] jointly presented by **Tim Sutcliffe and Diana Urquhart**. This wine, made from 100% Vermentino grape that has Sardinian origins, was pale yellow in colour and appeared clear and shiny. It had a nose of flowers and peaches with mineral tones. In the mouth it was fresh and rounded with a persistent finish.

Our first red wine of the tasting was a **Bovale Isola Dei Nuraghi ICT 2016 Melis Estate Sardinia** [14%, £11.80, Tanners] brought from their Shrewsbury shop by **Nigel Downey**. Made from the Bovale Sardo grape, this wine had lovely herbal notes and soft blackberry crumble flavours. It was succulent, chillable and softer than the usual rustic powerful reds from this region.

It was followed by a **Casa Nueva Late Reserva Cabernet Sauvignon 2014 Vina Echeverria, Central Valley Chile** [13.5%, £16.77 Pieroth Wines] presented by **Dave Palmer**. This was a bold and well-structured wine with intense red violet hues and aromas of ripe plums, cherries and notes of blueberries and chocolate. In the mouth it showed texture and intensity, good acidity levels with a sweet finish.

We moved north for the next red – a **Cline Ancient Vines Zinfandel 2014 California USA** [15%, £10.78 Majestic box of 6] chosen by **Peter Morrison**. The grapes for this wine come from scattered parcels of old, low yielding vines and not surprisingly the wine was heady and bold on the nose with hints of strawberries, coffee beans and cocoa. On the palate it was full of wonderfully ripe plums, warm with subtle touches of vanilla.

Our last red wine of the evening was a **Vin Alta Gran Seleccion Malbec 2015 Argentina** [14.5%, £13.00 M & S] selected by **Jonathan Buisson**. Aptly described as 'a beast of a wine, but a friendly one', this wine was concentrated and dense with lovely black cherry, plum and spicy flavours. The alcohol was well integrated making it a true winter warmer!

Our final selected wine was a **Domaine de Leyrissart Monbazillac 2016 Dordogne France** [12.5%, £10.49 50cl Waitrose] from **Valerie Richardson**. This blended wine of Semillon/Sauvignon Blanc was golden in colour with intense notes of honey and marmalade on the nose, richly replicated on the palate – smooth and fulfilling!

This was a most successful evening, a full house. Our grateful thanks go to Nesta for its planning and execution and to all presenters for their selection and willingness to share some of their favourite wines. The evening continued with chatter and some extras for those walking home...a glug of Port or Madeira..... Happy Christmas to all Members!