

Whitewater Valley Wine Society

Tasting Report: January 2019

Artisan Winemakers of the Mediterranean

Presented by Serhat Narsap, Sonvino

Report by Barbara Jones

This month we welcomed for the first time Serhat Narsap, Chief Executive Officer and Founder of Sonvino. Sonvino is one of the youngest independent wine merchants in the UK, having been set up by Narsap in 2015. His team travel to far-flung destinations to meet local artisan winemakers, who put their life and soul into making small quantities of excellent quality wines. At the moment, Sonvino imports wine from boutique producers in Portugal, Spain, Italy and Turkey. Serhat was born in Istanbul and has lived on three continents. He came to London in 2002 to work for the construction of the UK's first high speed rail. After a successful career as an engineer Serhat continues to follow his passion in wine. He is a lifetime student and speaks six languages fluently. His inspiration for Sonvino was a monastery in the mountains of Kutaisi, Georgian 2011 where he fell in love with home-made Georgian wine presented in clay pots and was inspired by the priests making eclectic wines using traditional methods.

Our tasting started with a **Cerro la Barca, Cepas Peridades A + B 2017, Extremadura, Spain** [12.5%, £14.90]. This wine was a pale gold in colour with a distinctive floral nose that had hints of lychees, passion fruit and mango. On the palate it was refreshing with a dry finish that lasted. The taste was rather unusual and different, possibly because of the 50/50 blend of two unknown grapes Alarije and Borba? The production is both organic and biodynamic.

Our next wine – a **Quinta do Ernizio, Campo da Porral 2016, Vinho Verde, Portugal** [11.5%, £13.90] was also made from an unusual blend 65/35% Loureiro/Trajadura and was very pale in colour with a lemony nose. On the palate it was dry, fresh with a hint of perfume and had a slight fizz.

We remained in Portugal for our third wine – a **Quinta do Ermizio, Vinha da Bouca 2016, Vinho Regional Minho** [13%, £19.90] vinified from 100% Alvarinho grape. This was a pale coloured wine with a hint of lemon. On the nose there was subtle fruit but on the palate fruitiness was pronounced with a hint of sweetness on the finish. This was a Gold Medal Winner for this grape!

Our final white wine was Spanish – **Martinez Payva, Cayetena 2017, Extremadura** [14%, £14.90] that was a lemony-gold colour and made from 100% Cayetana. The nose had hints of pineapple and banana and on

the palate it was off-dry and fuller bodied than previous wines. This was the favourite of most members!

Our first red was also Spanish and from the same winery and region - **Martinez Payva, Graciano 2016, Extremadura** [14%, £16.50]. This 100% Graciano had a dense cherry red colour with a nose full of black fruit character. On the palate it was dry with a slightly sweet, fruity edge making smooth and easy drinking!

We moved to Italy for our next wine - a **Palladino, Barbera D'Alba Superiore DOC 2015** [14%, £19.50]. This had a cherry red colour with a nose of black olives and black fruits with hints of smokiness. On the palate it was dry and smooth with tannic elements.

The penultimate wine was well liked - a **Cerro la Barca, Vegas Altas 2015, Extremadura, Spain** [14%, £15.50]. The colour of black cherries with blackcurrant aromas toast and coconut on the nose, this was a satisfying and most acceptable wine - dry with hints of blueberry and violets.

Our final wine introduced members to another unknown grape - a **Gutor Sayesta 2014, Thrace, Turkey** [13%, £19,99] vinified from 100% Okuzgozu. This was a big disappointment; its black cherry colour and veggie nose did not deliver on the palate for it was sharp and had little fruit character and was therefore obviously not worth the price.

However, one disappointing wine does not spoil a wine tasting which had introduced members to new grapes, new wine regions and different flavours! Our grateful thanks go to Serhat for his selection of very different and interesting wines.