

# Whitewater Valley Wine Society

**Tasting Report: May 2019**

**Chardonnay & Pinot Noir**

**Presented by Richard Girling, Fine Wine Director, Fells**

Report by Barbara Jones

This month we were pleased to welcome back Richard Girling, Fine Wine Director for Fells. The company can trace its roots back to the mid-19th century, so is one of the longest established wine importers in the UK. Over the last 20 years, they have made a strategic move to focus on the premium and fine wine sector. Richard is a popular speaker at our Society and this time he chose to focus on two classic grape varieties - chardonnay and pinot noir.

This tasting was a Society first in that it focused on two grape varieties – chardonnay – the second most planted grape and pinot noir, the sixth most planted grape, worldwide and the latter notoriously difficult to grow.

Our first wine of the evening served to a full house was a **William Fevre Chablis [Domaine] 2017** [12.5%, £25.00]. This wine was a pale lemon in colour with slight green hues. With notes of citrus and white fruits on the nose, on the palate there was the expected acidity and freshness associated with this French wine. This Chablis was elegant and well balanced regarding fruitiness and minerality.

Our second wine was from Spain – a **Familia Torres Gran Vina Sol 2017** [13.5%, £12.00] that had a more golden colour, more typical of the grape. This had a pleasant, fruity character with hints of butter on the nose. It was smooth with excellent balance and acidity was less pronounced than our first wine – most approachable and drinkable!

We ventured to the New World for our last two chardonnays – the first was a **Vasse Felix Filius Chardonnay 2016** [12.5%, £20.00] from Margaret River, Australia that had a light golden colour. The nose was fruit laden and the acid structure light – it was an elegant but restrained wine and most enjoyable!

Our final wine was from California – a **Kendall Jackson Vintners Reserve Chardonnay 2016** [13.5%, £18.00]. This had a light gold colour and a rich, buttery toast nose with hints of vanilla. It was smooth, fresh and well balanced with tropical fruit flavours of pineapple, mango and papaya; so different from the first chardonnay tasted and the favourite of many members present.

We returned to France for our first pinot noir – a **Famille Hugel Classic Pinot Noir 2015** [12.5%, £17.00]. This wine had the typical cherry red colour and translucency associated with this grape. The nose was

aromatic and reminiscent of cherries. The palate was fresh and light with fresh, red fruit flavours.

Our next wine came from Central Otago, New Zealand – a **Two Paddocks Estate Pinot Noir 2016** [13.00, £35.00]. In contrast this wine had a semi-opaque cherry red colour. In the mouth acidity was light and the soft tannins were well integrated with more concentrated fruit flavours whilst the nose had delicate aromas of red fruits and berries.

Our penultimate wine took us back to France for a **Bouchard Pere & Fils Beaune 1er Cru Chateau Rouge 2016** [13.5%, £36.00]. Appearance was again more opaque and there was a gentle hint of farmyard on the nose which quickly gave way to ripe red fruits, violet and spice. It was drier than the previous wine with a soft and rich palate with flavours of raspberry and red cherry, hints of plums and strawberry.

Our final wine from the Hunter Valley, Australia and was unusually screw-capped and un-oaked – a **Tyrrell's VAT 6 Pinot Noir 2005** [12.5%, £40.00] that was a semi-opaque cherry red colour. The nose was fruity with hints of mushrooms whilst in the mouth there were sweet red fruits, the tannins soft and a clean acid finish – excellent!

It is amazing how the same grape can present itself so variably as demonstrated this evening. We are indeed most grateful to Richard for his stunning selection of wines, for his enthusiasm and his knowledgeable and well informed presentation.