

Whitewater Valley Wine Society

Tasting Report: June 2019

South Africa

Presented by Jo Locke, Master of Wine, The Wine Society

Report by Barbara Jones

We were very privileged to have a Master of Wine attending this month. The Master of Wine is the highest qualification in the wine world so we were delighted to welcome Jo Locke from The Wine Society. One of Jo's specialist regions is South Africa and she presented a range of this country's wines from The Wine Society's portfolio. Jo says that South Africa is recognised for great value for money and, increasingly, for quality. She finds it exciting because it's a re-emerging wine industry. There are a lot of bright young people working there and it's the most dynamic of the world's wine regions which she is lucky enough to visit.

A full attendance greeted Jo on her first visit to our Society and our evening started unexpectedly, with a **Spioenkop Riesling, Elgin 2016** [12.5%, £20.00]. Produced in the cool climate coastal region of Hermanus this pale wine with a touch of lime in the colour had an aromatic nose with a whiff of oil. On the palate it was light, fresh and dry with a hint of apple.

Our second white is produced by a Belgian – **Alheit Hemelrand 'Vine Garden' Hemel-en-Aarde Ridge 2016** [13.5%, £26.00] and unusually is a blend of whatever is ripe at the vineyard year on year, usually Roussane, Chenin Blanc, Chardonnay, Verdelho and Muscat in variable quantities. Pale lemon in colour with a subtle fruity nose, the palate was rich and concentrated with a good body...interesting!

Our final white was a **Botanica Mary Delany Collection Chenin Blanc, Citrusdal Mountain 2015** [14%, £21.00] that had a pale gold colour. Produced from old vines this wine had hints of orange and honey on the nose and on the palate there was concentrated fruit [hints of apple and pear] and freshness with understated oak. The finish was long and creamy. The lady winemaker hailing from New York has had successful vintages since her first foray into the business in 2008.

Our first red was a single varietal - a **Van Loggerenberg Geronimo Cinsault Stellenbosch-Paarl 2017** [13%, £23.00] from a young new producer based in a farm shed and had a semi-opaque red colour. Served lightly chilled the nose it had hints of red cherries and raspberries. It was a medium-bodied wine that was well balanced with crunchy tannins and fresh acidity.

Next came a **Thelema Cabernet Sauvignon Stellenbosch 2015** [14%, £19.50] that had a ruby red colour. With a nose reminiscent of an empty

cigar box and red fruits, this was a full-bodied wine with grippy tannins and a clean, elegant finish; it should last for up to 10 years.

The next wine was truly experimental – a **Fairview Extrano Coastal 2016** [14%, £12.95]. 'Extrano', Spanish for stranger hints at the grapes used in its production – Tempranillo, Granache and Carignan and represents a new atypical South African development. Dark ruby red in colour with an aromatic nose this wine certainly packs a punch...pleasant and different.

Of course, we had to taste Pinotage – South Africa's own from Pinot Noir and Hermitage [Cinsault] – **Kanonkop Estate Pinotage Stellenbosch 2009** [12%, £29.50]. A dense blackcurrant red in colour this wine was bursting with red fruits on the nose. It was full-bodied, complex, with soft ripe tannins and a classic dry finish – it should last 15 years!

Our tasting ended with a **Nuy Red Muscadel** [17%, £11.50] a traditional South African sweet wine with an opaque rose colour. This strawberry scented wine was very sweet and once opened will keep in the fridge for several weeks to accompany cheese and chocolate – wonderful!

The Society extends its warmest thanks to Jo for a delightful tasting experience. The wines were excellent and her themed presentation eloquent, informative and most interesting regarding new developments in South Africa's wine industry. Please come back soon!