

# Whitewater Valley Wine Society

**Tasting Report: October 2019**

**Southern Rhone**

**Presented by Gilbert Winfield, Association of Wine Educators, in conjunction with Inter-Rhone**

Report by Barbara Jones

This month, we welcomed back Gilbert Winfield to focus exclusively on the wines of the Southern Rhone. This region is very popular with many of our members and we were looking forward to tasting the fantastic blends for which this region is so well known, especially reds. Gilbert is exceptionally qualified to present this tasting - he's a member of the Association of Wine Educators, a WSET approved educator and a member of the Circle of Wine Writers. He's also recently completed and passed the examination for the 'Master Rhone' programme with Inter-Rhone, the representative body for the wines of the Rhone Valley so he's now an Accredited Rhone Tutor.

After a short introduction to the geography of the Rhone Valley and the predominant grapes used in blends, especially the southern Mediterranean region, our tasting began with two white wines.

The **Cotes du Rhone Blanc Quatre Cepges 2016, Cave de Laudun Chusclan** [14%, £10.50] is a cooperative wine blended from four grapes - Grenache Blanc, Clairette, Viognier and Roussane the first two being predominant and each contributing characteristic elements to this delicately perfumed pale gold-coloured wine. Produced entirely in stainless steel tanks this nicely balanced wine was fresh and clean on the palate and immensely drinkable.

It was followed by a **Cairanne 'Les Travers' Blanc 2018 Brusset** [13.%, £17.00] slightly paler in colour with a floral nose - made from equal proportions of the same four grapes, 30% of which is aged in barrels - this wine seemed drier with hints of exotic fruit flavours and apricots on the palate. Round and fruity at first it became richer and meatier in the glass and needed food, chicken in a rich cream and herb sauce perhaps. Some members preferred it to the first.

Next, we tasted a **Tavel Cuvee Prima Donna 2018 Domaine Maby** [14.5%, £11.50] that was a deep pink colour reminiscent of strawberries. With fleshy pink fruits on the nose, this was a full-bodied wine with a long finish with well-integrated alcohol - ideal with ratatouille!

The first three red wines tasted were blends of four of the following grapes - Grenache, Syrah, Mourvedre, Carignan, Cinsault in various proportions. These three wines were served 'blind' and not in price order. Some members found arranging them in price order rather difficult and

confusing as the difference between the wines was not marked or spectacular. They are, however, described in price order.

The **Cotes Du Rhone 'Enfant Terrible' 2018, Cave de Laudun Chusclan** [13%, £10.00] had a deep dark red colour with slight hints of brown on the edges [a distraction?]. The nose was full of dark red fruits with hints of eucalyptus and mint; the red fruits were repeated in the mouth with fine silky tannins.

The **Cotes Du Rhone Villages Visan 2015, Domaine La Florane** [14%, £11.50] was a brighter, dark red colour and full of ripe figgy fruit on the nose. It was well balanced, smooth and elegant with well integrated tannins.

The last wine of the threesome was a **Gigondas Tradition 2017 Le Grand Montmirail, Domaine Brusset** [13.5%, £25.00] that had a similar colour and floral and herby notes on the nose. The palate was full of red fruits, mild spice, fine tannins and fresh acidity. It was not twice as wonderful in taste as the price suggests – perhaps it needs more time?

Our final red – and now we knew what we were tasting – a **Chateauneuf Du Pape Tradition 2013 Domaine De La Janasse** [14.5%, £42.00] and it was gorgeous! The blend of 80% Grenache, 10% each of Syrah and Mourvedre, the grapes from old vines - was a dark blackberry colour with dark fruits, cassis, herbs and liquorice on the nose. These aromas were repeated on the palate - it was a complex and elegant, medium to full bodied wine that will keep 10-15 years, worth 92 Parker points!

Our evening ended with a **Muscat de Beaumes de Venise 2017 Domaine des Bernadins** [15%, £18.00] that has a coppery colour from the dark skinned variety used for the sweet dessert wine. Intensely perfumed on the nose, on the palate it had flavours of marmalade, apricots, orange peel and almonds. It was luscious and a delightful end to our Southern Rhone tasting.

Members of the Society extend warm and grateful thanks to Gilbert for his selection of most interesting and enjoyable wines of the Southern Rhone. His detailed notes of grape blends were much appreciated as was his intimate knowledge of the area and its appellations.