

Whitewater Valley Wine Society

Tasting Report: February 2020

Favourite Wine Gems

Presented by three members of our Society

Report by Barbara Jones

Now a regular feature in our calendar, **Jim "Order Please" King and Keith "The Magnum" Cooper** were joined this year by **Alastair "No Short Measures" Dudley**. Together, they presented a selection of their favourite wine gems.

Jim started our tasting with a brief description of our 'Welcome, Starter Wine' which was a **Fledge Winery Bareru Sauvignon Blanc "Blend" 2018 South Africa** [13%, £11.50] vinified from two different clones of the grape from two separate regions. This unusual sauvignon was very pale in colour and bone dry on the palate. Tropical fruit aromas and flavours were subtle with a mineral finish.

Alastair then introduced the first 'official' wine of the evening – **Anselmo Mendes Contacto Alvarinho 2018 Portugal Vinho Verde 2018** [13%, £12.95] that was again very pale with a fruity nose. Coming from the home of the Alvarinho grape and from one of the best producers, this was a crisp, well-structured and precise wine with fresh acidity and a mineral edge.

The next wine introduced by Keith was a bit of a surprise as it was English – **Chiltern Valley Bacchus 2016 England [Oxfordshire] 2016** [11%, £11.39]. This wine was pale gold in colour and the nose was tropical-fruit driven with a trace of mustiness. Made from a blend of Bacchus, Reichensteiner and Madeleine Angevine, it was off-dry and less zingy as it was less acidic than previous wines – interesting!

And then came the reds! Our first presented by Keith was a **Musella Valpolicella Superiore 2017 Italy [Veneto] 2017** [13%, £17.95] that was reminiscent of Pinot Noir in colour and clarity. This bio-dynamic wine was medium-bodied with hints of vegetable and spice aromas. On the palate it was rich and intense – very pleasant!

Jim returned to South Africa for the next two wines, the first of which was a **Rainbow's End Mystical Corner Bordeaux Blend Stellenbosch 2018** [14.5%, £11.99]. Vinified from an unusual blend of Bordeaux grapes Malbec/Cabernet Sauvignon/Petit Verdot 20/66/8% it also included 6% Syrah. Made in the traditional way at a small family winery this was a big and rounded wine full of back fruits and nicely integrated oak. On the palate it was nice and smooth and surprisingly not too heavy – good value for money!

It was followed by another from the same producer – **Rainbow's End Merlot Stellenbosch 2017** [14.5%, £16.00]. Grown at 1500 feet where it is cooler this was a fruit-driven wine full of plums and mulberries on the nose. Dense and opaque, deep crimson in colour this was a bold and well-structured wine that again surprisingly, was not too heavy – most enjoyable!

Alastair then returned with a **Domaine Pichard Tannat/Cabernet Franc France [Madiran] 2009** [14.5%, £16.00] that had a dense blackcurrant colour. Made from a 60/40% blend of tannat/cabernet franc this was a full-bodied wine with light oak flavours and tannic in the mouth. It was good but needed fatty foods like pork belly and lamb shoulder to appreciate it fully.

To end our tasting Jim returned to a favourite haunt – Barossa and delighted us with two other gems. His first was a **Maggie Estate Black Craft Shiraz Australia Barossa 2017** [14%, £11.70] produced from some of the finest vineyards of the northern region. This wine was black-fruit driven in colour and aromas. On the palate it was deep and intense with velvety tannins and acidity – most pleasant!

Our evening ended with a **Rusden Estate Driftsand GSM Australia Barossa 2018** [14.1%, £16.20] that was medium-bodied, juicy and flavoursome. This wine was full of fruit flavours – raspberries, cherry, apricot and dark fruit, yet the spice and oak were gentle and well-integrated. Tannins were gentle too and the length notable – a most slurpable wine to end on!

Our grateful thanks go to all three members for yet again finding us some remarkable gems!