

# Whitewater Valley Wine Society

**Tasting Report: March 2020**

## **Wines from Three Vineyards from New Zealand and Australia**

**Presented by Stuart Porter of Corney & Barrow**

Report by Barbara Jones

We welcomed Stuart Porter on his first visit to our Society. Stuart is a Sales Executive for Corney & Barrow, representing the Southern Home Counties. He's worked in the wine industry for 20 years and has been with Corney & Barrow for 9 years. Our tasting took us 'down under' to focus on the wines of three specific estates. From Australia, we tasted the wines of The Lane winery in Adelaide Hills. From New Zealand, it was the wines of Elephant Hill in Hawkes Bay and Eradus in the Awatare Valley, near Marlborough. Tastings which focus on specific wineries are always interesting and great fun.....

The three vineyards selected by Stuart are all family owned and for various reasons, be it proximity to the sea or altitude, ensures that the grapes there ripen more slowly than in other areas. This helps to produce wines that are delicate and have more flavour as we were to discover. Prices quoted below include a Society discount!

Our first wine was a **Homer Riesling, Eradus, Awatare Valley, New Zealand 2016** [£10.00, 12.5%]. Named after the vineyard dog, this wine was pale with green hues and distinct petrol elements on the nose. It was fresh and dry with good acidity, lime flavours evident. Its age gave added weight to this well-made and well-received wine.

It was followed by a **Block 1A Chardonnay, The Lane, Adelaide Hills, Australia 2018** [£11.50, 13%] that was also very pale in colour. There were subtle citrus and stone fruit aromas on the nose and for a Chardonnay it was on the dry side – fresh and lean. It was a well-balanced wine with tangerine and nectarine flavours; reminiscent of Chablis but with a little more weight.

Next, we tasted a **Chardonnay, Elephant Hill, Hawke's Bay, New Zealand 2016** [£15.50, 13.5%] another pale coloured wine but this had a more pronounced fruity nose suggesting it was richer and fuller than the previous wine. Grapes are hand-picked and sorted and a mix of old and new wine is blended in oak barrels. This was a delicate but rounded wine - elegant with wonderful fruit purity.

Our last white wine was an **Ana Sauvignon Blanc, Eradus, Awatare Valley New Zealand 2019** [£9.65, 13.5%] again very pale but this time grapes had been machine picked and then cooled in stainless steel tanks.

Its gooseberry nose was fairly typical, but on the palate, it was more delicate with hints of passionfruit with a lingering finish

We stayed in the South Island for our first red wine – a **Pinot Noir, Eradus, Awatere Valley, New Zealand 2019** [£12.75, 13.5%]. Slightly darker in colour than its French equivalent, this wine had a well-perfumed nose with savoury notes. On the palate there was red fruit, especially cranberries which gave a hint of bitterness. It is still a young wine so tannins will soften with time – there is promise here!

We moved to North Island for the next red – a **Syrah Elephant Hill, Hawke's Bay, New Zealand 2016** [£16.50, 13.5%] that had a deep black cherry colour. Blended from grapes from three vineyards, some on Gimblett Gravels, this was an elegant rather than powerful wine, reminiscent of the Northern Rhone. Black fruits, pepper and spice were well-balanced with weight and acidity and it is drinking well now.

We returned to Australia for the remaining reds. The **Shiraz Viognier, The Lane, Adelaide Hills, South Australia 2015** [£12.30, 13.5%] was unusual as Shiraz and Viognier grapes 95%/5% are co-fermented with the latter adding delicate notes to both colour and taste. This combination adds freshness and brightness to the wine with some members preferring it to the previous red. It was unusual and very pleasant!

Our final red was a **19<sup>th</sup> meeting Cabernet Sauvignon, Adelaide Hills, Australia 2012** [£23.50, 14%] that had a dense, blackcurrant colour. This was a complex wine with notes of cassis, plums and tobacco leaf. On the palate it was smooth and creamy and rather gorgeous!

And when we thought it was all over there was a treat – half bottles of **Sticky Mickey Late Harvest Sauvignon Blanc, Eradus, Awatere Valley, New Zealand 2017** [£10.00, 12.5%]. This medium gold coloured dessert wine had aromas of apricot and dried fruits backed by honey. The palate was full of tropical fruits with a limey finish that brought balance and freshness. It was a wonderful way to end an evening of great wines delivered with expert knowledge and passion. Thank you, Stuart.