

WHITEWATER VALLEY WINE SOCIETY  
**October 2021 Tasting**  
**A Wine Tour of France**  
**By Tony Hill of Bordeaux and Beyond**

Our speaker for the evening was Tony Hill of **Bordeaux and Beyond**. Tony took us on a "Wine Tour de France", covering many different appellations, some famous and some not so famous. Tony gave the story behind the wines and the reasons why he decided to import them. **Bordeaux and Beyond** is a specialist wine importer now in its 13th year of trading, concentrating on wines from small independent vigneron in France. They sell only wines which they import and more importantly are happy to drink themselves!

Our opening wine was **Picpoul de Pin, Domaine de Bellemare, Piquepoul 2020 (£11)**. Our speaker was enthusiastic about the versatility of this wine as an aperitif and as a wine with food. This is a delicious late harvest wine with gentle acidity, rich fruit flavours of lemons and pears and a light salty almost creamy finish.

**Muscadet Sevre-et Maine, Cru Clisson, Domaine de l'Epinais 2015 Melon de Bourgogne (£18.50)** followed. Clisson is a strong area for Muscadet and this wine had been developed since the 1900s in this house and latterly by two brothers. The process of resting on natural lees and three years spent underground has resulted in a delicious wine with notes of citrus fruits and lycees and an intriguing complexity.

Moving south the next wine was a blend of three grapes Chardonnay, Viognier and Roussanne from **IGP Pays d'Oc, Domaine de Bellemare, Le Rivage Blanc 2019 (£13)**. Grapes were developed in new oak barrels and stainless steel. The wine offered yellow stone fruits and especially apricot on the palate with hints of vanilla. It was aromatic and long and would accompany food very happily.

A delicious Champagne followed. It was light in colour and refreshing in style so good on its own as well as with food. It was another good example of the flexibility that small wine producers have with their close knowledge of their terroir and grapes to produce wines of individual style according to the harvest. Larger Houses in contrast need to aim to produce wines of consistent style for their large distribution, **Champagne Domi-Moreau, Cuvee d'Argent (Brut NV) (£24)**.

Considering the richer, full bodied style of some Alsace white wines, the first red was surprisingly light in style, but was well received especially by those who prefer a softer style of red. **Alsace Pinot Noir, Domaine de la Tour Blanche 2019 (£17)**. This wine is recommended to be served chilled. It was grown following bio dynamic principles. Notes of cherries, violets and gentle spice are all present. It would be good served alone or with dishes such as duck.

Returning south a heavier wine followed. It was produced at a property with a long history **Minervois, Chateau de Bagnoles, Les Combes 2018 (£13)** It is composed of three grapes, Grenache Noir 60%, Syrah 30% and Carignan 10%. Rich ruby in colour, it offered fruit tempered with spice, peppers and hints of liquorice. It could easily accompany heartier dishes.

The next wine from the region east of the Dordogne features Merlot, Cabernet Sauvignon, Cabernet Franc and Malbec for extra body, **Lalande de Pomerol, Chateau des Moines 2018 (£16.50)**. This wine of rich red colour was brimming with citrus and red fruit flavours notably orange and mild tannins to give a smooth, velvety wine.

The last wine was produced in a small appellation close to Bordeaux **Pessac-Leognan, Chateau Bardins 2016 (£23)**. This wine is made from Merlot, Cabernet Sauvignon and Cabernet Franc grapes. This vintage of the wine, grown in this terrain, would be considered young by local producers. It could mature and develop to the end of the decade. It also benefits from decanting. However, it is very agreeable now with good fruit, a mineral edge and a nutty quality and was an interesting final wine of the evening.

Our thanks to Tony Hill for a lively, detailed presentation. The wines were very enjoyable. The Muscadet gained a convert on our table His enthusiasm and knowledge of the winemakers and their vineyards was very uplifting .and thought provoking.