

**WHITEWATER VALLEY WINE SOCIETY**  
**December 2021 Tasting**  
**Drinking with Dickens**  
**Presented by Chris White of Ellis Wines**

This year we celebrated the Festive Season with a tasting of the wines inspired by the discovery of Charles Dickens' handwritten wine inventory. After his death his cellar was found to contain multi-gallon casks of ale, gin, brandy, rum and dozens of bottles of Champagne, Chablis, Sauternes, Metternich Hock, Claret, L'eau d'Or and Kirsch! Dickens was advised by and bought his wines through the historic Ellis Wines Company. As a Society we have had an established relationship with Ellis Wines and we were delighted that they agreed to help us capture the 'Bon Vivreur' spirit of Dickens.

Our tasting began with 'bubbles' - **Champagne AR Lenoble Brut Intense 'Mag 17' NV France** (£35.00, 12.5%) from a small family grower. This was a classic champagne blend with the Chardonnay sourced from the Grand Cru village of Chouilly. The wine had fresh acidity with notes of brioche, baked apples and a hint of nuttiness.

Our second wine was a **Riesling Reserve JB Adam 2017 France** (£19.00 13%) produced biodynamically by a producer that has been in the same family for 400 years. The wine had concentrated stone-fruit aromas with hints of kerosene and some dried fruit.

The last white wine was a **Chablis Domaine Dauvissat 2018 France** (£24.00, 13% that was terroir-driven with classic minerality, a zesty pear and floral character (natural yeast fermentation).

The first red of the evening was a **Chateau D'Anielle St. Emilio France** (£24.00, 14%). This left-bank Merlot-dominant blend (with 20% Cabernet Franc) had intense black fruit with hints of spice and subtle toast and had had 18 months in oak before bottling.

Next came a **St. Estephe de Calton Segur 2014 France** (£35.00, 14%) Medoc blend of Merlot/Cabernet Sauvignon (60/40%) that was full of cassis, plum and black cherry notes showing some signs of development - a wine that can age for decades more.

Our last French wine was a **Haut Medoc Ch. Gironville 2012 France** (£26.00, 13%). This Cabernet dominant right-bank blend was a big and bold red with well-structured tannins. The ageing in bottle is evident with tertiary notes of leather, tobacco and forest floor.

The penultimate wine was a New World Bordeaux blend - **Laibach Friedrich 'Founders Blend' 2018 South Africa** (£23.00, 14%) with over 60% Cabernet Sauvignon. (Wines from South Africa were imported during Dickens' time!). This small production was of outstanding quality with intense black fruit, rich tannins and smokey spice from being aged in oak.

Our Dickens' focused evening ended with a sweet sherry (used by him to make Sherry Cobbler), a **Mira la Mar Pedro Ximenez NV Spain** (£21.00, 15%) that was deeply coloured, concentrated and hugely complex. There was an almost intense syrupy sweetness with molasses, dried fruit, orange peel and treacle notes on the nose and palate. What a delightful end to an evening of learning about Dickens' drinking habits!

Our most grateful thanks go to Nesta for conjuring up such a unique event and of course to Chris for his 'Dickensian' selection! A great evening, we had some stunning wines!