

WHITEWATER VALLEY WINE SOCIETY

March 2022 Tasting

Wines of Portugal

Presented by Tim Syrad

It was good to be back at the Raven Hotel for our first tasting of the year and to welcome back Tim Syrad who is well known to many members as both an excellent speaker and also as the organiser of great wine tours, in Europe and further afield. This tasting featured the wines of Portugal with Tim emphasizing the diversity of wines produced whilst also celebrating the country's indigenous grapes. In recent years there has been a transformation of production methods along more modern lines.

Our first wine was from North West Portugal, a **Vinho Verde Reserva 2020 Quinta de Acevedo DOC Vinho Verde** [12%, £11.50] that was a pale yellow in colour. A blend of Loureiro [70%] and Alvarinho [30%], this wine was clear and bright in the glass with aromas of stone fruit. Rich on the palate, it was well balanced with lively acidity and a lingering finish - an excellent aperitif!

Our second wine came from further south and inland, a **Branco 2020 Grao Vancouver Quinta dos Carvalhais DOC Dao** [13%, £9.00] that had a similar colour. This was a blend of four grapes that included the local Encruzado [32%] and grown on the granite slopes of the Dao Valley. Fragrant on the nose it was unoaked, of medium weight with good acidity and some complexity. Another excellent aperitif and a good accompaniment to fish dishes.

Our next wine was a blend of seven grapes [some unpronounceable!], a **Planalto 2020 Casa Ferreirinha DOC Douro** [13%, £9.50]. It had a pale lemony-gold colour, was again unoaked, with floral nuances and citrus and tropical fruit flavours with a touch of minerality. There was a crisp and lively acidity and a good balance of fruit and alcohol. The finish was clean and fresh.

Our final white wine of the evening was sparkling, made from 100% Arinto grapes and 'methode traditionnelle', a **Brito 2019 Quinta da Romeira BOC Bucelas** [12%, £25.00]. Pale in colour, it had fine bubbles and was fresh and light in taste. Produced on a long established estate sparkling is a new wine venture, hence its price!

After a short break Tim introduced us to some of Portugal's red wines. Our first was a **Tinto 2020 Evaristo Vinho Regional Lisboa** [13.5%, £9.80]. Produced in the coastal region north of the capital, this wine, a blend of four grapes including 50% Touriga Nacional, was a deep ruby-red colour. On the nose there were vibrant aromas of ripe cherries, juicy blackberries, blackcurrants and in the mouth tannins were medium/smooth, the fruit flavours mellow with a crisp acidity. This is a modern, easy drinking wine from the wine-maker Antonio Braga produced from carefully selected local and international grapes that would be an excellent accompaniment to Tapas!

Next, we had a **Tinto 2018 Azamor Vinho Regional Alentejano** [14%, £12.50] a large region in the southeast of the country. This was another 7 grape blend and like the previous wine a mix of local and international grapes, some vinified separately before blending. The nose was aromatic with deep red fruit perfume. On the palate it was well-rounded, full of soft fruit flavours with a long finish and ripe tannins. It was well received!

The penultimate wine went up a gear - a **Callabriga 2018 Casa Ferreirinha DOC Douro** [13.5%, £17.50]. It had a deep ruby-red colour and was almost opaque. Aromas were complex - a combination of black and red fruits, pepper, resin and pine needles with well-integrated oak. This 3 grape blend had a good body with balanced acidity, black fruit flavours, a hint of cocoa and a long elegant finish. Subdued compared with the previous wine this was a quality food wine worth the price.

The tasting ended with a top-gear priced wine, a **Tinto Reserva 2017 Quinta dos Carvalhais DOC Dao** [13.5%, £30.00] another blend with 3 grapes Touriga Nacional/Alfrocheiro Preto/Tinto Roriz, 65/20/15%. This too, had a deep ruby-red colour with an intense nose of blackberries, blackcurrants and wild berries and hints of menthol, violet and forest floor. The palate was full of black fruits, fine tannins and a balanced acidity that led to a long and elegant finish. A superb way to end the tasting!

Those present enjoyed an excellent evening of some interesting white wines and some excellent reds presented as usual at Tim's good pace with snatches of helpful information and humour.