

WHITEWATER VALLEY WINE SOCIETY
May 2022 Tasting
Pick of PIP's Best Selling Wines
Presented by Nik Darlington, Owner, Pip Manor Farm

You may not have heard of Pip. But some of you will remember Nik Darlington, who presented to us a few years ago when he was at Red Squirrel Wine. Nik has now created Pip, an independent wine merchant based just down the road from us in Seale, near Farnham. It's a local wine shop, run by locals, for locals – with around 200 wines on the shelves. Pip's philosophy is all about working with brilliant people who like us believe the best wine starts with good, honest farming. And they make their wines come alive when you hear the stories behind the bottles. Nik lives a short walk away from the shop. He's been in the wine business since 2012 when he created a small wine importer company that grew quickly to become a slightly bigger small importer and was named the third best supplier to the UK restaurant trade in 2019!

This evening the Society welcomed Nik to present his pick of Pip's Best Selling Wines and we started with three whites, a **Jean-Marc Barthes Bordeaux Blanc 2021 Entrée-Des-Mers France** [11.5%, £14.74], a **Maison Ventenac Tête l'Air 2021 Cabardes France** [12.5%, £13.00] and a **Sav'ron Ortega 2018 Kent England** [12.0%, £18.00]. All three wines were extremely pale in colour. In the first wine the presence of 5% Semillon subdued the zingy acidity of the Sauvignon Blanc resulting in a wine that was rich and elegant; in the second, the total absence of oak resulted in a wine that allowed the exotic fruits and honey to shine with hints of subtle toast, whilst the slight effervescence in the glass as the third was poured, negated any nose on this wine from the Ortega grape [of German origin] and a fairly bland palate.

The reds from both the Old and New Worlds were well appreciated. Our first was a **Bruno Lafon Le P'tit Pinot 2020 Languedoc-Roussion France** [13%, £14.75]. This cool terroir Pinot Noir was a semi-translucent ruby red in the glass with a raspberry and cherry-infused nose. Flavours of juicy summer fruit hit the palate and the tannins were silky and soft.

The **MacRobert & Canals Rioja La Nave 2020** [13.5%, £19.00] was a surprise - produced in Spain by a South African grower/winemaker and concentrating on terroir rather than barrels. This blend of 35/35/30% Tempranillo/Grenache/Mazuelo produced a medium coloured red wine with a red fruit predominant nose. The palate was light, soft and balanced with good acidity, body and length - not what would be considered a typical Rioja red! This led to a discussion amongst some members and the presenter of how perception affects our expectation of smell and taste?

Our next red was from the Southern Hemisphere, a **Cape Town Wine Co. Red 2020 South Africa** [13.5%, £10.50] that was excellent value for money! A Bordeaux blend of 76/18/8% Cabernet Sauvignon/Merlot/Cabernet Franc, this was a delicious and juicy wine full of soft fruits with a touch of spice on the palate. Tannins were soft and the finish lingering.

We returned to France for our penultimate wine - a **Jean-Marc Barthes Bordeaux 2018 Entres-Des-Mers France** [14%, £14.75]. This was another Bordeaux blend with Merlot predominant at 50% and no oak influence. It was bright and refreshing with balanced tannins and complexity.

Our final wine was a **Murdoch Hill Red Blend Adelaide Hills Australia** [13.5%, £19.00], a blend of 60/30/10% Cabernet Sauvignon/Merlot/Shiraz that had been aged for 10 months in French barriques. This wine had intense blackcurrant colour and nose and was full bodied with earthy cocoa and spicy notes - a most pleasant ending to our most interesting tasting.

The Society's grateful thanks go to Nik for sharing with members his terroir-focused wine appreciation. He has made us think about our usual perception of wine taste being related

to place name on the label at the expense of what is in the bottle! Will it take time for our palates to adapt?