

WHITEWATER VALLEY WINE SOCIETY
September 2022 Tasting
Wines of Languedoc - Roussillon
Presented by Simon Taylor, Owner of Stone, Vine and Sun

The Society marked the end of an era this month as we welcomed Simon Taylor, owner of Stone, Vine and Sun, for what is likely to be his last visit to our Society. Simon has decided to reduce his presentations to wine clubs (his colleagues will hopefully take over!). So we are fortunate that he agreed to present to us for a final time, giving us the opportunity to show our appreciation for all the support he has given us over the past 20 or so years. Stone, Vine and Sun specialises in the wines of Languedoc - Roussillon and have just won the International Wine Challenge Award for Specialist Merchant for this area. The wines presented were exclusively from this area of Southern France.

After our Chairperson Keith Cooper congratulated Simon for the recent Award, the serious business of tasting some of these wines began with a **La Combe Saint-Paul Languedoc Calcaires d'Ensérune 2021** [13.5%, £11.50] that was pale with limey hints. Grown on limestone soils and with some barrel-ageing, this wine blended from 50%/50% Rosanne and Vermentino had floral elements on the nose with a touch of citrus. Grown in coastal vineyards it had some weight and was grassy and fresh on the palate. It was un-oaked and excellent value for money.

It was followed by another un-unoaked wine, a **Mas d'Agamas Marsanne IGP Saint-Guilhème-le-Désert 2021** [13%, £14.25] that was again pale in colour. This IGP wine [formerly called Vin de Pays] was elegant and aromatic with hints of pear and peach. It was fresh on the palate with some texture.

The final white wine was oaked, a **Château de la Liquière Faugères Cuvée Cistus 2020** [13.5%, £18.50] that was pale yellow in colour and slightly off-dry. Grown on schist soils of the Massif Central which are readily root-penetrable, this blend of Rosanne, Vermentino and Grenache Blanc had an aromatic nose with a certain creaminess on the palate that had hints of apricot and peach. The 'fizzy bite' in the mouth is attributable to the soils on which the vines are grown. This was well-liked!

The red wines were well anticipated and began with a **Mas Seren Étincelle Nomade IGP Cévennes 2020** [12.5%, £13.50]. Grown at altitude, around 400m, by a female winemaker in artisanal organic fashion, this cherry red wine, a blend of 60%/40% Syrah and Cinsault was light in weight and delightfully fresh and quaffable! A promising start!

It was followed by an unusual 100% Carignan, a **Clos de L'Amandaie Héritage Carignan IGP Vicomte D'Aumelas 2020** [14%, £13.95] that was more dense in colour, vinified from old vines and a short period of maceration to avoid strong tannins. This process results in a wine that is youthful and approachable - a good accompaniment to salami!

The **Villa Orae Languedoc-La Clape Sillons 2020** [14%, £16.95] that came next was a blend of 50/40/10% of Syrah/Grenache/Mourvèdre that was un-oaked. Another organically produced wine, this had a black cherry-red colour and silky black fruit flavours on the palate. Distinctively 'Languedocian', the wine had a hint of spice on the finish and will age well.

Our penultimate red was a **Grand Arc Corbières Cuvée de Quarante 2019** [14.5%, £13.50]. This had a black cherry colour made from a blend of Carignan/Grenache/Syrah. It had a dark fruit nose with masses of red fruit on the palate with hints of dark chocolate - a bold but smooth and silky wine.

Our evening ended with a **Fontanelle Côtes du Roussillon Villages Tautavel Prieuré 2017** [14.5%, £22.50] that had a black cherry colour. Made from vines over a hundred years old with a low yield, this wine had an intensity about it - of black fruits, dark chocolate, liquorice ending with a meaty savouriness.....best till last? This will keep until 2027.

Members' grateful thanks go to Simon for making us an exception, thus enabling us to experience his carefully chosen selection of wines from this area of southern France. A most enjoyable and informative evening. Many thanks!