

**WHITEWATER VALLEY WINE SOCIETY**  
**May 2023 Tasting**  
**A Journey around Classic, Cutting Edge and Contemporary Portugal**  
**With Sarah Ahmed**

This month we were delighted to welcome Sarah Ahmed, aka *The Wine Detective*, who is widely acknowledged to be one of the UK's best presenters. She is an independent wine writer, educator and judge. One of her main speciality areas is Portugal and she has recently been awarded Wines of Portugal Personality of the Year (Europe). She regularly contributes to books by Hugh Johnson and Jancis Robinson. And she's also a regular judge for Decanter Magazine.

It was with great anticipation that our tasting began with a **Bageiras Colheita Branco 2021 Bairrada DOC** [13%, £16.50], a blend of three grape varieties - Maria Gomes, Bicol and Cercial. This wine's colour was pale with lemon hints and the nose subtle and gentle. On the palate there were hints of fruit - peach and citrus but overall it was dry and fresh.

The following wine had a pale straw colour but with a cloudy hue, explained away by the fact that it was unfiltered and unrefined - a **Pormenor Branco 2021 Douro DOC** [12%, £20.25]. This wine was vinified from a 'field blend' [where different grape types grow alongside one another] of Rabigato, Malvasia Fina and Codega do Larinho. Again, the nose was subtle with hints of citrus and stone fruit but in the mouth there was some fullness with a saline-marked-acidity. It was of medium weight, well balanced and elegant.

Our last white was another 'field blend' of grapes from old vines with almost unpronounceable names - Tamarez, Roupeiro, Antao Vaz, Arinto and Moscatel put together by three young wine makers - **Jorge Rosa Santos & Filhos Explicit Vinhas Velhas Branco 2019 Alentejano VR** [13.5%, £3.00]. This wine had a pale lemon colour with a little fruit evident on the nose. There was a slight bitterness in the mouth emphasizing the fresh and dry nature of this wine that had hints of oak flavour. The overall impression for these 'entry level' wines was dryness and freshness but at a price?

Our first red wine was again 'entry level' from the coming together of three top wine makers from the Douro Region, a **M.O.B. Lote 3 Tinto 2020 Dao DOC** [13%, £18.50]. This was a blend of Alfrocheiro, Jean and Touriga Nacional and had a dark cherry red colour. The nose this time had fruity elements with rubbery hints and in the mouth there was some freshness and hints of pepper. It was medium bodied, rounded with soft tannins, elegant and most pleasant.

This was followed by a **Hugo Mendes Castelao 2023 Lisboa VR** [14%, £23.75], 100% Castelao grape variety with a dark blackcurrant red colour with a fruit driven nose, accompanied by herbal notes. This was a rich and intense wine with notes of red berries and pepper and had a long and persistent finish.

Our third red wine was a blend of more common-to-us grapes, Touriga Nacional/Touriga Franca/ Tinta Roriz 60/20/20% a **Bahia Tinto 2020 Beira Interior DOC** [13.5%, £14.00] that had a dark cherry red colour. Grown at over 700m and from an organically certified vineyard this was probably the most 'conventional' wine of the evening. Some fruit was evident on the nose, as was oak on the palate, with a pleasant freshness and roundness. It was a more reasonably priced 'entry level' wine!

Our final red wine of the evening was Pinot Noir in style, an **Aphros Ouranus 2019 Vinho Verde DOC** [11%, £32.00] produced by a biodynamic-certified vineyard. Unfiltered and unrefined this wine of 'the sky god' had a hazy plum hue, spice on the nose and a plummy earthiness with mineral notes on the palate. It was interesting and generally not rated as being worth the price, a sad disappointment.

Our final wine of the evening had an intriguing orange hue - a **Horacio Simoes Moscatel de Setubal DOC 2019 Moscatel de Setubal DOC** [17.5%, £20.00]. This had a honeyed nose of lychees and caramelized marmalade. On the palate there was an intense sweetness that was smooth and concentrated - a most pleasant way to bring an end to our tasting of Portuguese wines!

Members extend their appreciative thanks to Sarah for a most interesting selection of 'cutting edge' wines from Portugal. Her knowledge of the wine scene there is impressive and her presentation both informative and classy!