

WHITEWATER VALLEY WINE SOCIETY
October 2023
Premium Red Wines - Comparing the Hemispheres
Presented by Ethan Harvey, Manager, Caviste Newlyn

It was with great pleasure that we welcomed Ethan Harvey, Shop Manager, at our local merchant Caviste to present to us for the first time this month. Ethan has been Manager at Caviste for the last year and it's fair to say that he's become very popular with Caviste's regular customers. Young and enthusiastic, Ethan has worked in wine retail for several years, before taking on this key role at Caviste. He was asked by our Chairperson to focus on red wines and the budget was rolled out so that he could feature some premium reds from the Caviste portfolio. His tasting featured several red varietals, comparing wines from the Northern and Southern Hemispheres.

Our 'all reds' tasting was welcomed by many members and the evening started with a **Moorooduc Estate Pinot Noir Mornington Peninsula Australia 2019** [13%, £27.00] blended with grapes from three different vineyards. Deep garnet in colour with a degree of translucency and hints of rose and violets on the nose, this was a Pinot with a difference - full of luscious dark fruit with a hint of spice. Fuller in body, with velvety tannins and a firm acid structure it was a delightful start to the tasting. It was followed by a **Thorpe Spatburgunder Rheinhessen Germany 2021** [13%, £22.00] a Pinot Noir similar in colour and slightly more opaque. Different in style from more traditional Burgundy Pinot and with more tannins than the previous wine, it was quite fleshy with hints of sour cherries on the palate and a long finish. Opinion was divided regarding which was preferred!

The first of our second pairing was a variant of GSM - an SGM [a blend of three grapes - Grenache/Shiraz/Malbec or Mourvèdre], a **Jeanneret 'Shiraz-Grenache-Malbec Clare Valley Australia 2021** [15.55%, £18.95] with 58/27/15% proportions, accordingly. This had an almost blackcurrant hue and was described by our presenter as 'a bit of a brute' being robust, powerful and spicy. The palate was definitely vibrant and zesty with hints of bramble, cassis and black cherry. Certainly different with a wonderful length! Alongside we tasted a **Domaine Font Notre Dame Lirac France 2020** [14.5%, £12.95] that was a classic GSM with Mourvèdre. Though similar in colour to its Australian partner but with a 60/30/10% blend, this Grenache dominated wine had some finesse accompanied with a full and concentrated palate and firm tannins. Yet, there was a freshness to it that made it lighter in the mouth and more preferable for many members.

We then ventured to South Africa for a **Holden Manz Visionaire Franschhoek South Africa 2019** [14.5%, £19.95] for a Bordeaux blend of Cabernet Sauvignon, Syrah, Merlot and Cabernet Franc. This wine had a deep, black cherry colour and was fruit forward on the nose. In the mouth there were elements of red and black fruits combined and a fresh, steely grip/bite though tannins were more soft and refined. For comparison we headed to France for a **Chateau Puybarbe 'Gaia' Cote de Bourg Bordeaux France 2019** [14.5%, £12.95] that was a fruit forward Merlot-dominant blend with no oak ageing. This well-priced medium bodied wine had blackcurrant flavours and hints of roasted coffee and fine tannins. Perhaps the perfect claret for some whilst others preferred the more elegant and lighter in the mouth Southern Hemisphere equivalent?

For our final pairing we tasted Merlot. Our first was a **Bodegas Sottano Merlot Mendoza Argentina 2021** [13%, £12.95] that had a dark cherry-red colour and jammy aromas on the nose with hints of tobacco and chocolate. Though one of the vineyard's 'junior/entry level' wines there was some intensity and complexity here accompanied by persistent and rounded tannins and a long finish. Portugal was our destination for our final wine for a **Quinta de Sant'Ana 'Homenagem' Merlot Mafra Portugal 2018** [13%, £37.00], a wine only released in exceptional vintage years. This was a velvety-textured wine with juicy plum characters, with well-balanced acidity and excellent structure. It was finer and more elegant than its Argentinian counterpart! The best was certainly kept till last!

Those present thoroughly enjoyed Ethan's first visit to our Society. It won't be his last! Members convey their thanks and gratitude for his selection of wines and friendly, enthusiastic presentation!