

## WHITEWATER VALLEY WINE SOCIETY

April 2025 Tasting

Wines of Gonzalez Byass UK

Presented by Rob Markham, fine Wine Manager

This month we welcomed Robert Markham, who presented to us for the first time. Robert is Fine Wine Manager for Gonzalez Byass UK, a position he has held for 10 years. González Byass UK is a subsidiary of the historic González Byass business that distributes a considerable portfolio of wines and spirits. Whilst the main company was traditionally associated with Spain, nowadays it imports a carefully selected handful of complementary brands from around the globe. Robert's speciality is fine wine brands from across Europe, including Domaine Zind-Humbrecht, Champagne Deutz, Quinta do Noval, Disznoko Tokaji and Domaine Wachau. So for tonight's tasting we went on a mostly European tour, featuring fine wines from France, Hungary, Austria, Portugal and Spain and a surprise visit to South Africa!

For our first wine we went to Austria for a **Domaine Wachau Gruner Veltliner Liebenberg 2021 Wachau** [£16.00, 12.5%] that was pale yellow in colour with greenish tints. 2021 had a cool summer but a wonderful autumn giving optimal conditions for this grape. Aromas of apple and pear with pepper rise from the glass and the palate has a salty character, spicy mineral notes and fruitiness leading to a lasting, powerful mouthful of elegant wine, that should last another 6 years. An excellent start!

Next came Hungary for a **Disznoko Dry Furmint 2022 Tokaji** [£17.55, 13.5%] for a grape usually used for sweet wines and Hungary's 'flagship' grape variety. This bright gold-coloured unoaked wine had floral notes and aromas of white fruit and peach with hints of vanilla and leather. On the palate there were elements of white fruits, citrus and a lingering salty minerality providing a refreshing acidity....pleasant and different!

Our third stop was France for a **Domaine Zind-Humbrecht Pinot Gris Roche Volcanique 2019 Alsace** [£27.10, 14.0%] that had a golden yellow colour. Grown on steep slopes, in soils of volcanic origin these vines with an average age of 39 years produce the Domaine's second wine, after Grand Cru. It had a fruity and smoky nose and on the palate there was a velvety texture with lots of depth and length leading to some saline acidity on the finish. A memorable Pinot Gris!

We ended the first part of our tour in Spain for a **Tio Pepe Fino Dos Palmas 2024 bottling Jerez** [£21.58 - 50cl, 15.5%] that had a surprisingly golden colour for a dry sherry provided by the 8 years of cask-ageing. The nose seemed robustly sweet and the palate, therefore, surprisingly bone dry but typical. A wine with balance and grandeur and for Fino drinkers, a rare treat!

The next stage of our trip started in South Africa for a **Neil Ellis Jonkershoek Cabernet Sauvignon 2018 Stellenbosch** [£29.65, 14.5%] that had a deep and dense dark-cherry red colour. This was an unusual red wine that had a restrained nose of cassis and cedar and a fresh-like palate with dense tannins. This was an interesting wine that wasn't quite New World but had good ageing potential until 2033.

We then trekked back to Europe, to Portugal for a **Quinta do Noval Touriga Nacional 2020 Douro** [£30.50, 15%] that had the most dense black-cherry colour. This wine having spent some months in French oak barrels had a fruity and floral nose with a palate reminiscent of dark chocolate and wild berries with medium tannins edging towards smooth. This was an unusual red wine almost at port-wine level!

We crossed the border back to Spain for our penultimate wine for a **Leonor Palo Cortado 12 Anos Gonzales Byass Jerez** [£18.50, 20%] that had an unusual tan colour. The nose of this 12-year-old sherry was somewhere between an Amontillado and Oloroso and in the mouth it was dry with a hint of sweetness with a mix of nuttiness, citrus notes and leather that lasted. Quite delightful!

We returned to Portugal for our last treat, for a **Quinta do Noval LBV Unfiltered 2016 Douro** [£22.50, 19.5%]. This port had a very dense ruby colour and intense sweetness on the nose which transferred immediately to the palate when tasted with notes of blackberry and blackcurrants and hints of spice. In the background there

was a minty freshness followed by dark chocolate. These contributed to an overall broad rounded texture and a long after-taste; it was a wonderful way to end our evening!

Those Members present had a delightful and insightful treat of some excellent wines. Our immense thanks go to Rob for his careful selection of wines for an evening that was most enjoyable!