

WHITEWATER VALLEY WINE SOCIETY
January 2026 Tasting
'Volcanic' Wines
Presented by Claudia Hussain, Noble Green Wines

This month we welcomed Claudia Hussain, who was presenting to us for the first time. Claudia is an enthusiastic and lively ambassador for Noble Green Wines, who are an independent wine, craft beer and spirits merchant located in the Twickenham area. Regular members will know that our Chair, Keith Cooper, is very keen to support our independent wine merchants. It's through them that our Members are able to buy and taste wines which typically offer more than those available through the supermarkets. Claudia's pick of 'volcanic' wines came vineyards grown near active, dormant, or extinct volcanoes. Here, rich ash and lava from past eruptions are present in the soil and have an impact on the agricultural functions that surround them. Volcanic soils are quite porous, which means that the soil near the surface isn't holding onto rainwater or humidity to hydrate the vines, so they develop deep roots in their search for moisture and nutrients. [Regular prices for the wines are given below].

Our first of four pale gold coloured white wines was from a region well known to many British holiday makers - the Canaries; this was an organic **Bodega Tajinaste Listan Blanco 2024 Tenerife** [13%, £21.50]; it had a light to medium body with zesty citrus and apple aromas and a touch of minerality shaped by the volcanic soils of the well-known volcano, Mount Teide. It was dry, crisp, and fresh on the palate.

Our next wine was from the slopes of another well-known volcano - Mount Etna. This was a **Luna Gaia Maganza Zibibbo 2024 Sicily** [13%, £17.90] and another light to medium bodied wine, produced according to biodynamic principles. The nose was full of white blossom and honeysuckle with a hint of herbs. The palate had flavours of peach with a touch of mango; it had noticeable acidity with some salinity. The finish was clean, dry and refined - and well liked.

We went north to Central Europe for the next wine - for a **Kardashian's Dry Furmint 2022 Hungary** [12.5%, £17.50]. This medium-bodied wine was unoaked. With hints of citrus on the nose, the palate was reminiscent of green apple and grapefruit with a clean, flinty, mineral edge that led to a clean and refreshing finish.

We crossed the Atlantic for the final white wine, for a **Shannon Ridge Chardonnay 2023 California** [13.5%, £21.50] from the northern part of that state. This had some fruity elements on the nose - green apple, pear and melon backed by citrus notes. These continued onto the medium-dry palate where there was a touch of creamy caramel and a hint of oak. This organic wine had a clean and juicy finish.

We returned to the Canaries for our first red wine of the tasting, for a **Bodega Tajinaste Listan Negro 2023 Tenerife** [13%, £21.50]. This organic wine had a vibrant red colour with violet rims. The nose had notes of red fruits and plums with hints of black pepper. The palate of this medium-bodied wine, made using traditional local methods, was smooth, fruity and approachable with easy-going tannins.

Our next red was an unoaked, biodynamic **Luna Gaia Logistilla Nerello Mascalese 2023 Sicily** [13.%, £18.50] that had a light-medium body and a colour density reminiscent of Pinot Noir. The fruity nose had a touch of spice. The palate had hints of wild strawberry and a cherry tartiness backed by a smoky earthiness attributed to the volcanic soils. A refined wine but with a rugged edge?

We ventured north for the next red, for an organic **Karl Heinz Johner Pinot Noir 2021 Germany** [13%, £26.50] from vines grown on the eastern banks of the Rhine where volcanic activity was associated with the formation of the Alps. This wine had a dark cherry colour. There were aromas of red cherry and strawberry, hints of earthy, forest floor and dried leaves. The mouth had hints of red cherry with some spice and savoury notes. This Burgundian-style wine was somewhat disappointing, lacking the expected depth and flavour of its French equivalent. The previous wine was preferred!

And to end we returned to the USA for a **Shannon Ridge Zinfandel 2021 California** [13.5%, £21.50] that had a dark cherry red colour. This rich and powerful red wine was medium to full bodied and full of ripe plum and black cherry notes on the nose. The palate was full of concentrated dark fruit flavours with a touch of spice from the oak. Here was a well-structured wine of good weight and richness, but also bright acidity and freshness - a delightful end to our tasting!

Members present extend their grateful thanks to Claudia for choosing this geological perspective of vine growing. As a result Members had the opportunity to taste wines from lesser known areas and producers. The impact volcanic soils have on wine flavour however, remains open and debatable?