

WHITEWATER VALLEY WINE SOCIETY
April 2026 Tasting
Spy Valley Wines, New Zealand
Presented by Tony Cloke, European Sales Manager

Last time Tony presented to us, we had a fantastic evening tasting Spy Valley Wines, from New Zealand. It was one of the best tastings that year. So, we had no hesitation in welcoming him back to taste a new selection from this prestigious winery. Tony is based in the UK; he started out as Brand Manager several years ago when he worked for Bibendum Wine, their UK market partner. Spy Valley Wines is one of the most highly regarded wineries in the Marlborough region of New Zealand. The company can trace its history back to the 1990s when Bryan and Jan Johnson established their 320 acre vineyard on land considered too hard, too dry and too infertile for wine. But their passion won through and the family-run-estate flourished. Today, they export seven varieties to 35 countries across the world. A key advantage of having an evening dedicated to one wine estate is that we are able to taste some of the varieties and different vintages produced by the company. Prices quoted below are heavily discounted for Society Members.

As folks gathered for the tasting our first wine of the evening was served - the Welcome Wine was a **Sauvignon Blanc 2024** [13.2%, £9.80]. This light-medium bodied, un-oaked wine had the usual pale lemon colour and a nose of citrus and tropical fruits. On the palate there were intense citrus fruit flavours with hints of minerality and herbs accompanied by a refreshing, crisp acidity.

The first 'tasting' wine was the second vintage of an **E Block Sauvignon Blanc 2022** [12.5%, £10.80] that age had benefited; more time on the lees and a hint of oak providing more texture to this dry, mineral-driven wine [generally preferred].

Our final sauvignon was an **Envoy Sauvignon Blanc 2021** [13.55, £14.50] from a single block that showcases the unique terroir of Wairau. It had intense tropical fruits aromas and flavours, accompanied by herbal and mineral notes and was very dry on the palate with a refreshing and balanced acidity.

Another grape that does well in this region is Riesling and we were privileged to be able to taste two older examples. The first was a **Riesling 2019** [12.5%, £10.80] with a pale lemon colour and a medium body. It was exceptionally dry on the palate that had flavours of citrus and green apple with notes of honey and spice. It was a complex wine with a clean, mineraly and zesty finish - in need of food - preferably Asian style!

The second example was a **Riesling 2016** [13.5%, £10.80] that had a slightly deeper lemon colour reflecting greater ripeness and enhanced flavour. Though still dry there was softer acidity and a clean vibrant finish for a wine with subtle underlying fruit flavours and stronger mineral elements - and generally preferred.

After a short break the second half of the tasting began with a **C Block Pinot Gris Orange 2025** [13.5%, £13.50] which was a 'skin-contact' wine with an orangey colour element. Here, there were delicate floral aromas of poached pear and ginger and a dry textured palate that had hints of apricot and raspberry, tea and spices. In the mouth there was a surprising hint of fruit sweetness compared with what had come before!

And finally, it was time to explore some ageing Pinot Noir; the first being a **Pinot Noir 2022** [13.5%, £14.40] that had a darker red berry colour than many French equivalents. Aromas of red berry fruit and cherries were evident, replicated on the palate that suggested this wine was still rather young having a lighter-medium body.

It was followed by a **Pinot Noir 2021 [tasting only, 13.55%]** the web having being scoured to find! This wine was in a different world with bright red fruit/berry aromas and hints of thyme and dried herbs and a soft, creamy palate with refined tannins from 11 months on French oak. It was a lovely well-balanced, medium-bodied wine with a long and elegant finish.

And to end there was an **Envoy Pinot Noir Outpost 2016** [13.5%, £18.00] that had a lighter mouth-feel than the previous wine. It had a medium ruby colour and aromas of red fruit with touches of mocha and lavender. The palate was smooth and medium-bodied with hints of dark chocolate, soft

velvety tannins and a lingering smoky finish; a very pleasant end to our tasting, perhaps overshadowed by its predecessor?

Our grateful thanks go to Tony for his selection of wines providing us with the opportunity for some 'vertical' tasting sessions of the same varietal; a most enlightening and enjoyable evening!