



Past Tastings and Dinners (2018 – 2019)

19 December 2019 - White Burgundy and Bordeaux

Detail to Follow

[White Burgundy and Bordeaux tasting sheet](#)

9 October 2019 – AGM and walk round tasting

After the meeting there was a walk-round tasting of the six bottles of Washington State wines which I had failed to bring to the corresponding event in 2017. The Chairman supplemented these with four attractive wines which he had obtained from Majestic.

[Tasting sheet](#)

6 September 2019 - Portuguese tasting

David Morgan presented with his usual style and scholarship a tasting based on a Wine Society selection which the Committee had bought. Roger Westbrook, who built up a formidable knowledge of the wines of the country while flying the flag during two postings to Lisbon, the second as HM Ambassador, was unable to come to the tasting, but he provided David with some insightful notes which David relayed. David has reported that the wines, apart from that from Colares, were much appreciated by those present. Niepoort and Mouchão were two of our hosts on the memorable tour of 1997.

[Portuguese tasting sheet](#)

18 July 2019 - Riesling tasting

This tasting was based on the Wine Society cases of six entitled 'Treasures of the Kabinett' in which we had invested. The response (at least 31 were present) was such that the six wines were supplemented by three which our Chairman drew from his cellar, and on the day John Killer brought along another. The Chairman, whose enthusiasm for German wines is matched only by one for serious and eclectic bird watching, described the wines, and Tim Willans, who, Richard told us, was an old school friend who had introduced him to German wines, added a comprehensive description of the intricacies of German wine classification.

A particular delight of a most convivial tasting was the presence of Janet Price who was on excellent form. There were many affectionate recollections of Freddy, who died just over a year earlier. He knew as much as anybody about German wine and the Riesling grape in all its manifestations worldwide, and he would have loved to have taken part in this tasting. Those of us who went on the excellent tours in 1998 and 2008 under his leadership also provided reminiscences.

[Riesling tasting sheet](#)

6 June 2019 - Contemporary Australian Wines

In the past a few events have been held south of the river, but only slightly south. So it was with some apprehension that the two of us who live in Streatham proposed to introduce the society to the Streatham Wine House at Streatham Hill, which is associated with the West London Wine School. We had spent a number of evenings in the wine bar upstairs and enjoyed a few tastings in the very serviceable tasting room in the basement. After a somewhat sluggish start to the booking we ended up with an impressive total of 23, including a few guests, and the space was well filled.

The young and enthusiastic Matt Wicksteed gave us a comprehensive - perhaps slightly too comprehensive - description of the history of Australian viticulture, well illustrated by a powerpoint presentation, before we embarked on a selection of eight wines. Matt sensibly warned us to expect that we would enjoy some more than others, and the fifth wine, a blend of some twenty-three varieties, some white, some red, was unusual to say the least. But there was much of interest in the selection, with the Shaw + Smith chardonnay being the most favoured, and the Tahbilk marsanne being considered the best value.

[Contemporary Australian Wines tasting sheet](#)

12 April 2019 - Ch Fontesteanu

Happily, we were restored to the Parish Hall for this tasting of six wines from Ch Fontesteanu, the case having been bought under one of the Wine Society's offers of mixed cases. Once again there was an impressive attendance, of not fewer than thirty, and in consequence Richard Andrews and David Morgan produced from their own cellars five wines of high quality to supplement the others. It was a delight to welcome back David and Mary Eckland after David's recovery from serious illness. Richard introduced the wines of Ch Fontesteanu and those which he had supplied, and David introduced those which he had brought. It was a treat to compare a flight of wines of a worthwhile château from the consecutive vintages of 1996 to 2001. Because of my hearing loss at the time I heard scarcely a word spoken by anybody, but I think that the consensus was in tune with my view, that the wines of the best vintages, 1996 and 2000, stood out from the crowd. We started with a pleasant dry white and ended with a flourish: a high grade 1er cru Sauternes.

[Ch Fontesteanu tasting sheet](#)

8 February 2019 – Lebanon

On this occasion we were unable to meet in the Parish Hall at St Peter's. Refurbishment was being carried out in the ground floor premises used by Alcoholics Anonymous, and we were told that, when informed that they could not meet there, an almighty fuss was made, and because they are of necessity more regular customers than The Winetasters we were offered a space in the church itself, to the left of and behind the High Altar. Space was limited, but we did not have to pay a fee. However, it is a bit shaming when those who can hold their drink are trumped by those who can't.

The tasting was attended by the limit of 27 members, which had been fixed. A further three were unsuccessful; but it is now recognised that with careful pouring it is possible to accommodate 30 with two bottles of each wine being supplied.

I am scarcely the best person to describe the tasting, as at the time I was beset by the effects of chemotherapy, namely a total loss of the senses of smell and taste, and severe limitation of hearing. But none of this disabled me from witnessing a most impressive presentation, even by his own standards, by David Morgan. He described much of the fascinating history of the region and the tensions and conflicts between Sunni and Shia Muslims, Druze, Maronite Christians and Orthodox Christians. David told us of one vintage which occurred during a ceasefire, with the happy result that soldiers on both sides laid down their arms and helped with the picking.

A particularly notable fact is that the vineyards of Ch Musar lie some 200 km from its headquarters. Gaston Hochar, the founder in 1930, did not know what the boundaries of the future Lebanon would be; at the time the region was under a French mandate. The distance has regularly posed a serious challenge when the grapes are transported for vinification.

[Lebanon tasting sheet](#)

5 December 2018 - Old v New World Pinot Noirs tasting

David Morgan presented this tasting, which your correspondent was delighted to be able to attend. The message of the importance of maximising attendance had clearly made its mark, for not only was there an attendance of 27: two members had to be turned away because the practicable number for a tasting of two bottles of each wine had been reached.

By common consent the evening was a resounding success. David presented with elegance and style four well chosen pairings of Burgundies and Pinots from four New World countries. He predicted that the latter would hold sway, but in the event the competition was very close. The pairs ascended in price from £11-£13 to £19-£20, £25-£30 and £28-£40. In the last case the more expensive Burgundy won in respect of quality, while the Australian wine at 70% of the cost won on value for money.

Unaccompanied, these wines would have made a superb tasting; but David, fearing that there would be an insufficiency, started the tasting with an interesting comparison between two supermarket own label vintage champagnes. Apart from the fact that they were 13 and 14 years old the interest lay in comparing the presence of Pinot in the first with its absence in the second. The general view was that its presence made the first wine much to be preferred.

[Old v New World Pinot Noirs tasting sheet](#)

19 October 2018 - AGM and walk round tasting

Before the meeting a Crémant de Jura 2016 was served; and once the business was concluded there was a walk-round tasting, during which the buffet was enjoyed, of wines brought by those members of the Committee who were able to attend.

[Tasting sheet](#)

5 September 2018 - 'The Fine Chianti Collection' tasting

These wines also were obtained from the Wine Society. Jeffrey Preston, with Richard Andrews in support, presented his second tasting of the year and deserves grateful thanks. He had selected the two white wines which started the tasting. Eighteen members were present, and a fine Tuscan themed buffet was much enjoyed.

[Fine Chianti Collection tasting sheet](#)

12 July 2018 - 'Best of Both Worlds Whites' tasting

Rather belatedly the opportunity was taken to taste the contents of a pricey case of Chardonnays purchased from the Wine Society in 2004; and in the case of one wine, the Chablis, the opportunity was taken too late, with one bottle being oxidised and the other being on the margin. Twenty members booked, but the actual attendance was only seventeen. Nevertheless, a convivial evening was had under the guidance of David Morgan, who is becoming the Society's equivalent of a National Treasure. At a later tasting he told us that the Louis Jadot wine, in his view, was the best dry white wine he had ever tasted. He added two modestly priced wines to start the tasting.

[Best of Both Worlds Whites tasting sheet](#)

21 March 2018 - Beaujolais tasting

Committee member Jeffrey Preston undertook the task of selecting wines for this tasting and presenting the result, which was a most enjoyable tasting attended by twenty-one, including five guests. His presentation attracted much praise. The two whites were from just outside the region, so the relatively rare Beaujolais blanc was not experienced.

[Beaujolais tasting sheet](#)

26 January 2018 - Rhône tasting

Nick Fahey presented an expansive (and not inexpensive) tasting of wines from the Rhône, two of which came from his own cellar, the remainder from Yapp. An unpleasant seasonal virus and in one case surgery reduced the attendance to nineteen at short notice, which led to a distinctly festive occasion as well as a substantial financial loss.

[Rhone tasting sheet](#)