



# The ASSOCIATION of WINE CELLARMEN

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**83 Cromwell Road, Wimbledon, London, SW19 8LF.**

## No. 05/2021

[www.winecellarmen.com](http://www.winecellarmen.com)

### **LOCKDOWN DISCOVERIES Part 12**

#### **Australia**

**6pm, Monday 24th May, via Zoom**

At last we have light at the end of the pandemic tunnel. The Boot & Flogger is reopening on Monday 17<sup>th</sup> May, although will still be unable to host our indoor tastings. However, this is expected to change on June 21<sup>st</sup> as long as there isn't another Covid surge in London. We have prepared a revised schedule for 2021 as below. In the meantime, we shall hold our next 2021 event as the 12<sup>th</sup> Zoom tasting on **Monday 24<sup>th</sup> May 2021**. Our theme will be Australian wines, choice completely open.

See below and attached for details on how to join in the fun. Remember, wine tasting is one excellent way of checking for Covid-19 sensory symptoms. Regular sessions are recommended.

Topic: AWC - Australia

Time: May 24, 2021 06:00 PM London

Join Zoom Meeting

<https://ankura.zoom.us/j/85716137651?pwd=ckRUL2pkUnp3bGZSSXo3SU1WbXcxdz09>

Meeting ID: 857 1613 7651

Passcode: 028994

One tap mobile +442034815237

#### **Provisional 2021 events –**

<b>30/06/21</b>	CHAMPAGNE CELEBRATION marking our return to New Normal
<b>24/07/21</b>	SUMMER SOCIAL
<b>06/09/21</b>	ANNUAL A.W.C. BLIND TASTING
<b>04/10/21</b>	NOUGHTIE CLARET (as prepared for March 2020 pre-lockdown)
<b>12/10/21</b>	ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING & SOCIAL
<b>09/11/21</b>	A.W.C @ 55, CELEBRATE OUR ANNIVERSARY with your President
<b>10/12/21</b>	CHRISTMAS SOCIAL MEAL

As our Zoom events have proved successful social gatherings for members, we hope to extend these as extra events – probably four times a year. Further details will be advised later this year.

## Tasting Notes

Members held the eleventh tasting and chat, thanks to Andrew Caldwell and Zoom. The broad theme for wines selected was United Kingdom.

As recommendations, those not partaking in April may want to seek out the following:-

*John Badley – 2019 ENGLISH ROSE, Chapel Down, TENTERDEN, KENT* 11.5% Chapel Down is based in Small Hythe near Tenterden where you will find over 25 acres of vineyards set amongst some beautiful Kentish countryside. Chapel Down is the official supplier to 10 Downing St., the official sparkling wine of the University Boat Races, and the first English wine to be served at Ascot racecourse. Big is beautiful! Pale pink shade from Rondo wine. Base is Chardonnay, Pinot Noir and Meunier, – plus Dornfelder and Regent. Flavours very English - strawberries and raspberries, a cool and crisp finish without any trace of residual sugar that often masks rosés. Waitrose £13.00 reduced to £9.69. I would recommend a taste during the summer and if you see the special offer then splash out and get a few bottles.

*Andrew Caldwell, Gillian Caldwell – a) N/V BRUT RESERVE CLASSIC ICON, Lyme Block, SOUTH DEVON* 11% Actually an English blend from vineyards in Devon, Dorset, Kent & Essex. Also multi-grape with Seyval Blanc as a base with Chardonnay, Pinot Blanc, Reichensteiner and Solaris. Distinct apple aroma; dry on palate. Good value from Aldi's Exquisite Collection series £14.99. Bizarrely same wine (different label) from winery is £20 - £16.67 when one buys 6 bottles.

*b) 2020 BACCHUS SPECIALLY SELECTED, "Bowler & Broly" for ALDI* 12%. Not to be confused with U.S. casual online retailer - the label states "James Lambert, Head Winemaker" - same winemaker as Lyme Bay Winery, hmm. Really good aromatic wine on Gewurztraminer lines. Crisp palate with good citrus elements. Aldi £9.95, but £8.99 online.

*Ken Claydon – N/V SURREY GOLD, Denbies, DORKING, SURREY* 11.5% The White family took over the Denbies Estate, originally a pig and cattle farm, in 1984. When they found the hilly landscape not really suitable for the cattle and pigs they acquired, a family friend, Richard Selley, suggested a radical change. In Richard's opinion, Denbies Estate was perfect for planting a vineyard. By 1986 the vineyard was created. Adrian and Gillian White have five children, Christopher, the oldest son, is now in charge of Denbies and its wine, with John Worontschak employed as winemaker. Surrey Gold is the Denbies flagship blend based on Muller-Thurgau grown on the flatter part of the site. Ortega, Bacchus and Reichensteiner give the blend its aromatic charm with its flinty middle. Medium dry with a ginger twist on palate. Waitrose £9.99.

*Susie Cooper – 2019 BACCHUS ORANGE WINE, Litmus Wines, DORKING, SURREY* 12.5% Modern white wines are generally pressed from their skins prior to fermentation. Orange wine is a term given to white wines that have been fermented and aged on their skins without pressing. This is one step back from "Natural" wines that spurn all human intervention apart from picking. Litmus Orange is produced from 93% hand-harvested Bacchus and 7% Ortega. The Bacchus was fermented and remained for sixteen weeks on skins without sulphur dioxide. This, with other ground-breaking techniques, is the brainchild of foremost English wine maker, John Worontschak, born in Australia, but now a cornerstone of the English wine movement. Unusual, and initially most un-wine-like. Astringent and tannic from the excessive skin contact. Improves with time, but weird. Waitrose £15.99. *Also tasted by Dave Wagner.*

*John Davis – 2013 RONDO, Frithsden Vineyard, HEMEL HEMPSTEAD, HERTS.* 9.5% Frithsden is a small hamlet. The name is Anglo-Saxon in origin, meaning 'sparse woodland on a hill'. A vineyard

was first planted between 1971 and 1979 by Peter and Anne Latchford. It is 122 metres high on a south-facing slope. The winery and house were built after lengthy discussions with the local authority, who were not keen on any industry in an area of outstanding natural beauty. The Latchfords retired and grubbed up their vines in the 1990s, finally closing in 2001. Out of use for years, Simon Tooley, a BBC cameraman with a passion for wine, and his wife Natalie, a fashion designer, discovered the vineyard on a map in 2005, and decided to explore, but there were no vines left. Seizing the opportunity to get it going again they bought the place in 2006. A month later 6000 vines specially developed to grow in a cooler climate were planted. All wines are grown, pressed and bottled in-house. Grapes are harvested by hand in September and October. The wines are bottled in March or April. Rondo is a dark-skinned hybrid variety that performs strongly in cold climates. It is a crossing of Saint-Laurent and Zarya Severa – an obscure Russian variety, prized for its frost-hardiness. First bred in the former Czechoslovakia in 1964, it was developed at the Geisenheim Grape Breeding Institute in Germany. As well as its ability to reliably ripen, Rondo is also highly resistant to mildew diseases and frost. It consistently produces quality wine with deep colour and good aroma, which many other red varieties struggle to do in cold-climates. Screw cap. Ruby shade with slight ageing light rim. Plums and blackcurrant nose, with a palate to match. Finishes a tad thin (9.5%), but good fun. Bought at cellar door £8.00. Good café serves cuisine with a Spanish twist, but need to book as space is restricted.

*Keith Eamer & Maggie Eamer – 2019 BACCHUS, Giffords Hall Estate, LONG MELFORD, SUFFOLK* 11% Giffords Hall is a family-owned vineyard planted on the site of an ancient glacial riverbed near Long Melford in Suffolk. The sandy/clay soil produces quality grapes, high in natural sugars and acids, that lend themselves particularly well to both sparkling and dry, aromatic still wines. The vineyard was planted around 25 years ago and the vines are now in their prime. Madeleine Angevine, Bacchus, Reichensteiner, Rondo, Pinot Noir and Pinot Blanc all do well on this site. Very dry and fresh, flinty and aromatic – typical traits of young Bacchus wines. Waitrose £13.99; again strange that winery sells same wine for £14.50!

*Margaret Fox – N/V APRICOT COUNTRY WINE, The Lyme Bay Winery, SOUTH DEVON* 11% Using a blend of (un-named) grapes from Somerset, the wine is infused with apricot. Result is a medium sweet brew. Refreshing and different. Cost £10.99, but Wine Searcher shows best price £6.90 from Bring Me Drink, Nottingham.

*Andy Grainger – 2019 ENGLISH WHITE LILY, Denbies, DORKING, Surrey* 12.5% The vineyards were established on the warm south facing chalky slopes of the North Downs in Surrey, encouraging the grapes to ripen in the cool English climate, whilst still retaining a lovely freshness. Internationally renowned winemaker at Denbies Wine Estate, John Worontschak [*yes, him again*] produces this classic English varietal blend. Pale and star-bright, this had a fresh and invigorating nose. Dry with a high acidity yet a rounded fruit taste. £8.99 from Marks & Spencer, but currently sold-out. *A good value summer wine - especially given the price of much English wine. Also tasted by Angela Roach.*

Very unfortunately I recycled the bottle before writing my tasting note so I am having to reconstruct one from the M&S website. Fortunately Angela had selected the same wine and done much more thorough research than I had – like looking up the cépage so my efforts may not matter.

Denbies English Lily – not sure of vintage – may well have been 2020 since the M&S notes suggest that it be drunk within twelve months of purchase. Denbies – an immediate memory of the AWC trip there organised I think by Bob Jackson in either in the Cretaceous or the Jurassic period.

Grape Variety (for the 2017): Ortega 68%, Muller Thurgau, 17%, and Bacchus 15%

The main note on the back label made reference to grapefruit and lime. The wine certainly had good acidity but I felt was rounder on the palate than a mix of those two fruits alone would suggest.

“This lightly aromatic wine is best drunk whilst still young alongside goat’s cheese salad, smoked salmon or with mildly spiced Asian dishes”. It would have been interesting to try it with goat’s cheese – I think the acidity would have held up.

*Jenny Heald – 2019 ENGLISH ROSE, Botham & Balfour, STAPLEHURST, KENT* 11.5% The grapes for this wine were grown on vineyards owned by the Hush Heath Estate in Kent. This is a collaboration between Sir Ian Botham OBE, one of the greatest cricketers that England has ever produced and now an accomplished winemaker in his own right, and Richard and Leslie Balfour-Lynn, the passionate driving force behind the award-winning Hush Heath Estate. Various described as “made in the Provence style” it was an orangey salmon pink, derived from Regent (45%), Pinot Noir (24%), with the remaining 31% Chardonnay, Pinot Meunier, Pinot Blanc and Pinot Gris. Distinct strawberry nose, yet tasted dry. A very pleasant drop. Tesco £12.00 – yet Botham wines sell it at £15.00!

*Tim Jones – 2018 DARK HARVEST, Bolney Estate, HAYWARDS HEATH, WEST SUSSEX* 11.5% Located in the heart of rural Sussex, Bolney Wine Estate is one of the oldest and most beautiful vineyards in England. The vines were first planted by owner Sam Linter’s parents 50+ years ago. Dark Harvest is a blend of two hybrid varieties, Rondo and Regent. Described as “versatile” I found its versatility to be in question, as all I tasted was raspberries – sharp tart raspberries at that. I’ll report later what happened to the rest of the bottle. Waitrose - £11.99. [Worth every penny of the .99!! – for a laugh, look up “Sediment” review of this wine – not 2018, admittedly; for that, look at Waitrose customer reviews]. 2017 tasted by Nick Seymour.

*Maria Politsis – 2019 BACCHUS, Forty Hall Vineyard, ENFIELD, GREATER LONDON* 11.5% Forty Hall Vineyard is an exciting social enterprise which has established a 10 acre community vineyard in Enfield, north London. Largely looked after by local volunteers, the vineyard is the first commercial scale vineyard in London since the middle ages. Situated on Capel Manor College's Forty Hall Farm, they are certified organic and dedicated to demonstrating environmentally sustainable farming and vine-growing practices. This wine was an Independent English Wine Gold Medal winner in 2020. An easy-drinking, elegant Bacchus with notes of greengage, nettles, pea-shoots and elderflower. Dry and pithy. Bought at the farm shop for £13.99, now sold for £14.99. Tasted with Nicky Rass alongside the 2018, and considered better.

*Nicky Rass – 2018 BACCHUS, Forty Hall Vineyard, ENFIELD, GREATER LONDON* 11.5% This Bacchus is a single-varietal organic still white wine, produced exclusively from the grapes grown at Forty Hall Vineyard, London. In the vineyard, there is no use of synthetic fungicides, herbicides or fertilisers. This encourages sustainability, biodiversity and natural balance. The vines grow in a living soil, free of chemical residues, drawing optimum levels of minerals from the soil, becoming stronger with better natural resistance to disease. Pests are controlled by biological methods and mildew problems are also managed by salts such as elemental (not man-made) sulphur. After harvest the grapes are driven to winemaker Will Davenport at the award winning Davenport's Vineyards in Rotherfield, East Sussex. He is the first and only winemaker in the UK to win gold medals and commendations every year since 2009 for wine made from organic grapes. Very different from the 2019. Deeper shade and some “spritz” noted in the glass and on the palate. Minerality similar to dry Loire. Tasted less vibrant than the prize-winner, but still an interesting wine from an enterprising group. Also from the farm market at £13.99. See MP’s notes.

*Angela Roach – 2019 ENGLISH WHITE LILY, Denbies, DORKING, Surrey* 12.5% John Worontschak is an Australian born winemaker who came to England in the 1980’s after honing his craft in Australia, California and France. In 1988 at the Thames Valley Vineyard he established a contract winemaking company receiving grapes from all over the country and made award-winning wines of outstanding quality. After a period in the noughties consulting to wineries around the world he returned to the UK wine industry. At this time the sparkling wine industry had taken off in the UK and although JW

was one of the pioneers in the making of quality English sparklers, English still wines were his passion, so he set out to make world class premium English still wines. Denbies gave him the raw material. The grape mix for White Lily changes each vintage. This 2019 is from Ortega, Muller-Thurgau, Seyval Blanc, Bacchus and Reichensteiner. Early blends have included Chardonnay. Described as featherlight, it is citrus-fresh. £8.99 from Marks & Spencer. *Also tasted by Andy Grainger*

*Roger Sanbrook –N/V ROSE, LIMITED RELEASE, Chafor Estate, GAWCOTT, BUCKS.* 11% Chafor produces multiple award-winning wines for every occasion, from Parker Points accredited Vintage Cuvée to the mouth-wateringly elegant Rosé limited release. Made from what is described as “a classic blend”, probably Pinot Noir, Pinot Meunier and Chardonnay grown mainly for the sparklers, this has produced a balance of ripeness and elegance. Bright aromas of wild strawberries mingle with soft forest fruits and peppery undertones. The blurb says “dry”, but I found it more like a French “sec”. Sold at the estate for £12.00.

*Nick Seymour – 2017 DARK HARVEST, Bolney Estate, HAYWARDS HEATH, WEST SUSSEX* 11.5% Same estate and brand as *Tim Jones’* but an earlier vintage. This blend is from Rondo, Dornfelder and Triomphe grapes. I reckon this is far better. Firm with tannic structure; a big mouthful of wine. Also from Waitrose £11.99.

*Doug Stoneham – 2019 ‘FINEST’ ENGLISH WHITE, Hush Heath Estate, MARDEN, STAPLEHURST, KENT* 11.5% Hush Heath Estate dates back to 1503. At the heart of the property is a Tudor manor surrounded by 162 hectares of perfectly manicured gardens, vineyards and apple orchards. Forward thinking Richard Balfour-Lynn first planted vines on the property in 2002. This blend of Pinot Blanc, Bacchus and Chardonnay is made for Tesco’s Finest range. It has overt juicy citrus aromas, though a touch sweaty. Description of hedgerow is often used for Bacchus blends from UK. Palate is pleasantly peachy though dry. Exuberant and fruit-driven. Tesco £11.00; 25% off - quantity discount.

*Dave Wagner –2019 BACCHUS ORANGE WINE, Litmus Wines, DORKING, SURREY* 12.5% This vintage of Litmus Orange Bacchus is produced from Kentish grapes, hand-picked and 100% de-stemmed. The unpressed grape must is pumped into a stainless-steel vessel where both alcoholic fermentation and malolactic conversion ensues. 10% of the wine was fermented in old oak for back-blending. The 90% remained on skins for 16 weeks without SO2. Very pale gold for an ‘orange’ wine. Very definite aromas of Bacchus – quite similar to Sauvignon Blanc. Some tannic firmness and depth with a pepperiness. Off-dry finish. Their press release mentions fennel. A good food wine, especially with my Stilton – recommend fatty foods with this. £15.99 from Waitrose. 2020 available direct from Litmus at £15.00. This contains 10% Pinot Noir made as a white wine with oak finish. *Also tasted by Susie Cooper.*

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## **Contacting the Association**

Email: [Associationofwinecellarmen@outlook.com](mailto:Associationofwinecellarmen@outlook.com)

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*Comments can be posted on the Association of Wine Cellarmen Facebook page.*

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## **ANNUAL SUBSCRIPTIONS**

Some annual subscriptions for 2020/21 are still outstanding. If you haven't paid, or aren't sure, please get in touch.

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