



The ASSOCIATION of WINE CELLARMEN

Please address correspondence to: **The Secretary, AWC,
83 Cromwell Road, Wimbledon, London, SW19 8LF.**

No. 02/2022

www.winecellarmen.com

NOUGHTY TASTING of WINES from BORDEAUX

Monday 28th FEBRUARY 2022

At ST PETER'S CHURCH HALL, EATON SQUARE, LONDON, SW1

We herald in a new dawn! Tastings are back on the agenda, and at a new venue. We have investigated a number of establishments since Davy's announced a doubling of room hire costs. Some were unable to match our requirements, others proved even more pricy than The Boot, but St Peter's Hall in Eaton Square, we thought, was worth a punt.

In Bordeaux, no two years are ever the same. Despite the amazing technical advances made in viticulture, nature still has the major say. Different years have different aspirations, although all Claret benefits from some bottle ageing. This means that checking mature vintages is a wine tasting full of joy: one thinks one knows what to expect, but never knows what will unfold.

Thanks to judicious purchasing, we are able to draw on stocks from FIVE different vintages, all from the new century's first decade - **2009, 2008, 2005, 2006 & 2000**. Some of the Chateaux will offer us a revisit, which represents what the AWC strives for when making purchases – seeing how wines designed for bottle-ageing develop over the years. Skipping from Right Bank to Left Bank will guarantee stylistic variations with emphasis moving from Merlot to Cabernet.

The Chateaux to be tasted are ***Beauvillage, Chauvin, Lynch Moussas, Moulin Delille, Petit Bocq, Sigognac, St Pierre*** and ***Domaine de Chevalier***.

Since the madness of Bordeaux price hiking in 2005, and again in 2009, the cost of good Claret has been high, to say the least. By buying our wines young we have been able to keep the tasting ticket sensible. This event, if buying the wines from retail outlets today, would average out at £32 per bottle, so, although it may appear expensive, this tasting represents excellent value.

The event, to be held on **MONDAY 28th FEBRUARY 2022**, will be at **ST PETER'S CHURCH PARISH HALL, 119 EATON SQUARE, VICTORIA, LONDON SW1W 9AL**. We shall aim to start proceedings at around 6.30pm.

The entrance to the Parish Hall faces the church. Walk down the left to the bottom and the entrance door is on the right, clearly marked, the hall is situated on the second floor and there is a lift!

Tickets are available on application – Members £40, guests £45. There will be some wine to re-taste at the end of the tasting.

We shall need to vacate the hall by 9pm. Help with clearing up would be appreciated.

TASTING NOTES

Before we began our latest virtual tasting we sent our very best wishes to our regular AWC Zoom member, Roger Sanbrook, who had been admitted to hospital with Covid symptoms but had subsequently been diagnosed with a heart condition. Roger, we drank to your good health returning.

Because of ongoing investigations to find a new less expensive venue for our tastings, members held the sixteenth tasting and chat on January 24th, thanks to Andrew Caldwell and Zoom. The theme was fortified wine. For those who did not partake, you may wish to seek out the following

John Badley – PEDRO XIMENEZ, Emilio Lustau for M&S, in half bottle. 17%. This wine is made exclusively from Pedro Ximénez grapes, which are laid out in the sun after picking until they are practically raisins. A collaboration between Marks & Spencer and wine-maker Emilio Lustau, it is best served slightly chilled. Very dark amber shade with a yellow rim, it is rich and raisiny with a liquorice flavour. A little goes a long way. £8.50.

Gill Caldwell – FINE WHITE PORT, OPORTO BOTTLED, Warre, 20%. The firm that became Warre's was formed in 1670. It became part of the Symington Family Group in 1905, and it is still owned by them. The list of grape varieties sanctioned for use in Port wines is very long. There are roughly 80 permitted in Red Port and almost 50 in White Port. Very few producers state which grapes they use in their White Ports, the varietal character of each is largely lost in the melee of aromas. The most commonly used varieties are Donzelinho Branco, Gouveio, Rabigato, Malvasia Fina, Viosinho, Cerceal (not the Sercial of Madeira) and Bical. This sample has probably had an extra 20 years in bottle! Nevertheless, it was quite sweet as well as mature – Christmas Pudding aromas. Chilling it helped give the palate grip. Current incarnation is 19% at around £14.

Ken Claydon – MARSALA SUPERIORE, Cantine Pellegrino. 18%. Formed in 1880, when the notary Paolo Pellegrino, a passionate wine grower, founded the winery destined to become one of the most important in Sicily. This is the classic sweet style of Marsala and the UK's leading brand. Produced from indigenous Sicilian varieties Grillo, Catarratto & Inzolia. Aged for a minimum of 2 years in oak casks. Intense amber, Sherry-like aroma of dried figs and hints of plum. Rich and honeyed but sadly not outstanding. Waitrose £10.49.

Susie Cooper - MARSALA SUPERIORE, Cantine Pellegrino. 18%. Same wine as KC. Personally a purchasing mistake – not at all pleasing. Worse still, it cost me over-the-odds at £12.00.

John Davis – AMONTILLADO 51-1a, Very Rare Sherry, Domecq. 19%. This Amontillado 51-1a (51 primera) is named after the first row of a 51-butt solera, a group of casks first filled in 1830, probably by Pedro Domecq himself. The solera system of this Amontillado is distributed over 4 criaderas and a solera row. It started as a Manzanilla and turned into Amontillado over time. As a V.O.R.S. sherry, it is guaranteed to be at least 30 years old verified by the Consejo Regulador through a tasting panel and carbon dating, but in reality it's probably 50-60 years on average. Nowadays only around 725 bottles (50 cl) are withdrawn every year.

The age is very apparent in the glass – dark brownish amber, viscous, with persistent legs, very different from a young, relatively pale and light-bodied Amontillado. On the nose there are no real remaining hints of its time under flor – hardly surprising. It has rich, pungent aromas of caramel, dried apricots and golden raisins then walnuts rather like an aged Palo Cortado. On the palate, it's a rich, full-bodied mouthful. Its origins make a brief appearance at the beginning, with fresh, bright lemon zest flavours. These give way to hazelnuts in their skins, charred wood and a little caramel. It has a long, nutty and slightly bitter finish. The 19% alcohol is well-integrated with no discernible

heat. It's very complex, but some sharp edges that I think come from its age, but that I really rather like. Last noted by Wine Searcher at £58 + VAT. I sourced it as a mixed parcel of fortified wine & spirit in the mid-eighties. Now at home along with all those samples!!

*Margaret Fox – **DUKE OF CLARENCE MADEIRA, Blandys.** 19%. The Blandy family is unique in being the only family of all the Madeira wine trade founders that still owns and manages its own original wine company. Throughout its long history on the island the family has played a leading role in the development of Madeira wine, and members of the family continue to live in Madeira, maintaining a tradition that goes back to 1811. The famous brand Duke of Clarence is a 3 year old Madeira made from Tinta Negra grapes. Deep golden brown colour with honey and raisins on the nose, rich full bodied and quite cakey. Tesco £12.00.*

*Andy Grainger – **OTIMA TAWNY PORT, 10 YEAR OLD, Bottled 2004, Warre,** in 50cl bottle. 20%. Warre's launch of Otima 10 & 20 Year Old Tawnys caused a revolution in Port that introduced a completely new concept to consumers, helping to rejuvenate Port's image in the main markets. Otima is now widely acknowledged as the most successful new development in the Port trade for over 25 years. The merit of Otima was to show Port's versatility as an all year round, anytime drink, appealing to both women and men, dispelling many of the myths attached to Port. Relatively dark for a 10 y.o.Tawny. Rich nose of caramel, toffee, bit of butterscotch and black treacle. This makes it sounds heavy but it isn't. Palate: similar. Smooth and quite long. Feel a little bit of alcohol on the aftertaste. This suggests that the age since bottling is not a problem. Bought from HMRC Wine Shop approx. 2008 for around £10. Now £16.00.*

*Jenny Heald – **MANZANILLA LA GITANA, Bodegas Hidalgo.** in 50cl bottle. 15%. This is the best selling Manzanilla in the world and the flagship wine of Bodegas Hidalgo in Sanlúcar de Barrameda.. The Palomino grapes for this wine are harvested from the bodega's own vineyards in Balbaina y Miraflores around Sanlúcar. Its solera system, founded in the early 19th century, is made up of 14 scales, with a high refreshment rate and an average age at the time of bottling of five years. As with most other Manzanillas, it used to be bottled with a higher age, but changing market preferences made it into a light, young Manzanilla Fina. Very pale shade. Crisp and fresh with a salty tang from the sea breezes. Serve chilled. Waitrose £9.00 [£11.19 for 75cl].*

*Angela Roach – **2002 QUINTA DA ROEDA, Croft, Oporto Bottled 2004** 20%. This single quinta vintage port had a rich blackberry, plum and damson aroma. A fabulous, sweet fruit palate with a lingering oaky flavour. It was selling for £35 – AG spotted it in Nottingham. He recommended decanting the residue, as there would be quite a lot of sediment left. Then you should find that more flavours develop as the wine is kept. Even an ullaged bottle will keep for about a month, so enjoy a glass every few evenings. It gets smoother and continues to develop. Bought after an AWC tasting hosted by agents, Mentzendorff.*

*Robert Newman – **CHIP DRY WHITE PORT, Taylor Fladgate.** 20%. This original dry white port was created by Taylor's in 1934 to give a crisp and zesty yet fruity finish, making it a perfect aperitif. The name was inspired by the old English expression 'dry as a chip'. Chip Dry is delicious served on its own, chilled or over ice. It is also the heart of the classic Portuguese cocktail made with one part Chip Dry and two parts tonic water, topped off with a slice of lemon and a sprig of mint, as tried by the AWC Port tasting some years back. Waitrose £13.99. Also available pre-mixed port & tonic in cans.*

*Nick Seymour – **PEDRO XIMENEZ, EL CANDADO 10 YEAR OLD, Valdespino,** in half bottle. 17%. Valdespino is one of the oldest bodegas in Jerez, with a history of Sherry production going back six centuries. Back in 1264, Alfonso Valdespino was one of 24 knights who fought against the Arabs for the city of Jerez with King Alfonso X. As a reward for his efforts, he was given the land that formed the basis of the bodega. Today Valdespino belongs to the Estevez family, who purchased the bodega*

in 1999. They own 750 hectares of vineyards in Jerez, including the renowned 'Macharnudo' Pago. This vineyard ownership allows Valdespino very close control over grape quality. They are one of the few bodegas to make single-vineyard Sherries and are also renowned for their VOS (Very Old Sherry) with over 20 years of ageing and VORS (Very Old Rare Sherry) with over 30 years of ageing. Once the PX is fortified to 17% using grape spirit, it is fed into the 'El Candado' solera system in the Valdespino bodega. It ages oxidatively in the old American oak barrels for around 10 years, during which time it is fractionally blended through the four different 'criaderas'. It comes with a little padlock (candado) on the top – in memory of a Valdespino ancestor who once locked up a barrel of this wine because it was so good! A great colour here, a deep, dark, reddish-brown. Dripping with rich complexity on the nose; molasses, figs and treacle. Moderate acidity emphasises the richness. Great length. Worth £20.00.

Doug Stoneham – 2011 LATE BOTTLED VINTAGE [bottled 2016], Fonseca. 20%. This unfiltered port re-establishes the late-bottled quality that was questioned for decades by sub-standard examples from a number of shippers. Fonseca is one of the top producers of vintage port, so the basis of this wine being from a legendary vintage year, and from such a renowned house made for an easy decision to try-and-buy. Displays dense, dark chocolate and black fruit aromas with a touch of liquorice. Heaps flavours from bitter chocolate to blackberry fruit compote. Bought after an AWC tasting hosted by agents, Mentzendorff. Average price £19.00.

Simon Stoye – a] AMONTILLADO, ALMACENISTA, Emilio Lustau in half bottle. 18.5%. The origins of Emilio Lustau S.A. date back to 1896, when José Ruiz-Berdejo started cultivating the vines of the family's estate in his spare time. His wines were sold on to larger Sherry producers. This activity was known as being an almacenista or stock-keeper. In 1931, his daughter, María, acquired a small winery closer to the centre of Jerez de la Frontera and moved there with all the pre-existing soleras. In the 40's, Maria's husband, Emilio Lustau Ortega, moved the winery to the historic quarter of Jerez, still as an almacenista. This Amontillado is both dry and nutty. The wine undergoes both types of ageing: the biological as Fino or Manzanilla, then passing to Amontillado with the oxidative cask ageing. Bought in 1989 for £4.75 when these rare sherries were introduced to the international marketplace.

Simon Stoye – b] DRY OLOROSO, SOLERA RESERVA DON NUNO, Emilio Lustau in half bottle. 20%. Aged following an oxidative ageing for 12 years in Bodega La Campana, Jerez de la Frontera. Dark bronze colour with golden rim. Pungent nutty aromas with a smoky wood background. Rich flavours of bitter chocolate, walnuts and baked chestnuts. This Oloroso has an intense, concentrated aftertaste, lightened by a tangy acidity.

Dave Wagner - MARSALA SUPERIORE, Cantine Pellegrino. 18%. Same wine as KC. Amber shade. Dried fig and ginger biscuit aromas and tastes. Sainsbury £10.50.

Tim Jones - [let down by IT, so mulling over this gem on his own] – LILLET BLANC. 17%. Under the heading of 'Fortified Wines' there is the sub-category of 'Aromatised Wines', ie wines fortified and flavoured with herbs, roots, flowers etc. This group includes the likes of vermouths and one of these is *Lillet Blanc*. From a family firm established in 1872 outside Bordeaux in Podensac, this drink was one of many 'tonics' created in response to the general public's growing concerns over health following discoveries by Pasteur and his scientific colleagues. Originally named *Kina Lillet* to reflect the considerable presence of quinine, this is a Semillon-based drink flavoured mainly with oranges from Spain and Morocco.

Served neat over ice, it makes an excellent aperitif with a distinct honey flavour to complement the citrus. It is also used in cocktails, most famously in the Ian Fleming creation of the Vesper Martini which appeared in '*Casino Royale*'. That both Wallis Simpson and Hannibal Lecter were fans shows that this is a drink which appeals to all palates!! Amazon £14.00.

DIARY DATES for FUTURE TASTINGS

Monday 21st March – Blind tasting

Wednesday 20th April – Mellot's Loire

Monday 23rd May – Oatley's Aussie

Thursday 23rd June – Champagne celebration

July – Summer Social

? mid August (break with tradition) – Italy – to be confirmed

Monday 5th September – Clive Ashby with a Mentzendorff producer. Topic to be chosen depending on producer availability

Monday 3rd October – Stolarski selected Southern French wines

Monday 7th November – Rhone 2014 vs 2015 Rhone comparison

December – Xmas Social and Dinner

IMPORTANT PLEA TO ALL MEMBERS

If you can recommend a suitable venue for future tastings, please let us know. Any venue needs to seat 20-35, preferably not charge corkage, and ideally serve a buffet in lieu of corkage/room hire, although this is not a prerequisite. The venue must be easily reached by public transport, but we shall investigate anywhere within the Greater London area.

Email: Associationofwinecellarmen@outlook.com

Reply Slip

AWC Bordeaux Tasting -Monday 28th February from 6.30pm, at St Peter's Church Hall, Eaton Square, SW1W 9AL.

Members' name(s)

No. members at £40.....

No. guests at £45..... (please give names)

Total:

Please send this slip and your cheque to N G M Seymour, 30a Trewint Street, London, SW18 4HB. Alternatively, send a bank transfer request payable to:-

Sort Code: 309135 a/c No: 01253444 a/c Name: AWC

Reference: The first 6 letters of your surname, followed by the first 3 letters of your first name, then: BDX022

If using this method, please advise Nick Seymour by separate email of your transaction at nick.seymour@outlook.com.

Those having a standing order arrangement in place with our Treasurer are asked to confirm your attendance by emailing nick.seymour@outlook.com.

Slips and/or email booking confirmations must be received by Tuesday 22nd February.

*Membership prices only apply to those who have paid the current year's subscription.

Contacting the Association

Email: Associationofwinecellarmen@outlook.com

Chair - Nick Seymour: 020 8947 5082, e-mail: nick.seymour@outlook.com

Secretary - John Badley: 020 8540 4763, e-mail: johnandjane1816@btinternet.com

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

www.winecellarmen.com

Keep up-to-date by regularly clicking on to the website at www.winecellarmen.com