**ANNUAL CHRISTMAS CELEBRATION *9th DECEMBER 2022 at The BOOT & FLOGGER, SE1***

It was a pleasure to return to our previous ”home” at The Boot. Our venue move this year was not prompted by any problems with the manager and his staff, and this manifested itself on this celebratory occasion. The service and food were both excellent. Our wine selection was –

***APERITIVE***

**N/V BRAMBLE HILL ENGLISH SPARKLING**

This newly produced fizz from Kent was lively and fresh. With 10% of the blend being a favoured English vine, Bacchus, there was a distinct floral aromatic nose with latent gooseberry leaf. The balance 47% Chardonnay 23% Pinot Noir & 20% Pinot Meunier were well integrated here, and the palate’s vibrancy was a hit with members.

**2007 HEIDSIECK GOLD TOP MONOPOLE**

Gold Top equated to cellar aging of up to a decade pre-release. This was absolutely gorgeous. We sampled this earlier in the year, and remarks of ‘*creamy in all respects – shade, nose and palate. Although mousse had diminished, the aromas burgeoned*’ held good. If anything it tasted fresher than in July, with a pure fruit base and a very impressive lengthy finish.

***FIRST COURSE***

**2021 VIOGNIER LOS COCHES, CENTRAL VALLEY, Chile**

Made by the largest family-owned wine company in Chile, [Luis Felipe Edwards](https://www.frazierswine.co.uk/luis-felipe-edwards/). Soft pale straw in colour. Full bodied with an intensely floral nose; hints of white peach and a touch of oak ageing. Classic Viognier character of apricots, peaches, hints of pears and blossom. Quite tropical and rounded on the palate but with lively citrus character on the finish.

***MAIN COURSE***

**2018 SANGIOVESE di ROMAGNA ARMIGERO RISERVA, EMILA-ROMAGNA, Italy**

Casa Vinicola Botter had a real hit here. A relatively deep ruby shade with violet highlights. Intense fragrant bouquet with the trademark ripe red cherries to the fore. Harmonious and velvety palate showed dried fruit and spice. Went well with all the various main course choices.

***DESSERT COURSE***

**2020 CARMENERE ZAPALLARES RESERVA, COLCHAGUA VALLEY, Chile**

2017 disappointingly sold out. This classically styled Carmenere, made from a single vineyard of 60-year-old vines in Apalta, was vibrant and fruity with an abundance of cherry and cassis fruits. A touch of vanilla hiding away. Spicy black fruit palate with plush tannins and hint of dried herbs.

***DIGESTIVE***

**1963 QUINTA DO NOVAL, UK bottled**

This was an amazing contradiction. In decanting there was a staggering amount of colour deposit – flaky deep purple, nearing black. This left the decanted wine giving the appearance of aged Tawny. Yet the nose and taste told a different tale. No spirit kick, just pure sweet fruit which dried on the palate in a classic manner. Checking Michael Broadbent’s bible, he had remarked under the 1963 banner “*Good but not great. Relatively pale in colour; sweet bouquet, vanilla and liquorice; still sweet, lightish, easy”.* Mind you, he gave it a drinking window “*to 2000”.*  Our experience suggested Noval ’63 has better staying power than he reckoned., and more akin to other 1963s. A fabulous finish to a super evening.