

## **U3A Wine May 2018**

A Decanting Experiment!

There are many differing 'expert' views on whether decanting has any benefits apart from separating wine from sediment.

The two opposite schools of thought can be summarised as:

- + Decanting is detrimental because it allows important elements of the bouquet to escape.
- + Decanting is beneficial to many red wines and some white as it helps to open up the aromas and flavours.

So, it is a matter of personal preference!

### **White Wines**

Most people probably don't think about decanting white wine. However, there are quite a few white wines that can really benefit from it, particularly higher-end wines that can age, as these can sometimes taste a bit awkward or gangly when first poured from the bottle. Decanting helps the wine to open up. On the other hand most everyday young whites do not need decanting.

Also, with young white wines there can be an unpleasant aroma often due to excess sulphur (used by winemakers to kill bacteria) or a very tight seal, such as screwcap, that doesn't allow any gases to escape from the bottle. If you pour that wine directly into a glass, some of the gases will go with it. And other gases that were in-solution with the wine will gradually emerge in glass too. Splashing the wine into a decanter gives those (ob)noxious gases a chance to dissipate well away from your sensitive nose.

### **Red Wines**

Some think decanting alters the structure of tannins but, scientifically, that has been proved wrong as they need years rather than the odd hour to oxidise. That's why aged good reds often have a 'softer' texture.

However, for some, oxidation and evaporation seem to smooth out rough edges and can make a wine seem more expressive, more aromatic and better integrated.

Most agree that a good well aged red wine is best consumed from the bottle or straight away after decanting as the aromas of these wines can be much more delicate and easily lost.

Wines 2, 4 decanted an hour before tasting, wines 6, 8 around 2 hours earlier and wine 9, 5 hours in the decanter.

## The Wines

### **The Society's Exhibition Pouilly Fuisse; 2015; AC Pouilly Fuisse; Chardonnay; 14.5%; Wine Society**

Sourced from two differing vineyards with the AC, one rich the other more mineral and after fermentation matured for a year in mainly 3 year old oak with 10% in new oak and then 4 months in tank on fine lees to help marry the different elements before bottling.

Wine 1. "On opening very powerful and alcoholic.

Wine 2. After decanting these elements should soften and the wine will integrate and become an impressive, still powerful, but complete and structure white wine"

### **Greywacke Wild Sauvignon; 2015; Marlborough; Sauvignon; 14.0%; Liberty and Wine Soc.**

Unlike many others, this is fermented in oak with wild yeasts and has taken on a more rustic character with bold passionflower and asparagus notes on the nose with a medium bodied creamy palate with intense peach and melon notes.

Wine 3. "This might seem a little closed on opening

Wine 4. But decant and the wine will show its full complexity – sweet stone fruits, complex vegetal notes and interesting effects of oak and oxidation".

### **Wirra Wirra Church Block; 2015; McLaren Vale; Cab. Sauvignon/Shiraz/Merlot; 14.5%; Wine Soc**

Something of an Aussie classic which wins numerous awards every year and a reputation for intense, well-crafted reds

Wine 5. "On opening this great blend can seem a little closed

Wine 6. But after decanting this delicious full bodied red with blackberry and black pepper flavours is brought to life".

### **Reserve des Tuguets; 2015; AC Madiran; Tannat/Cab. Sauvignon/Cab. Franc; 13.5%; Tesco**

A Rich full bodied wine from the S.W. corner of France whose main grape is the well named Tannat

Wine 7. "On opening, lovely aromas and palate of fresh black cherries, liquorice and spice held back a little with noticeable tannins

Wine 8 But after decanting stronger aromas and a softer mouthfeel"

Wine 9. After 5 hours in a decanter, has it gone too far?