

West Leicestershire u3a Wine Appreciation Group meeting 26 July 2023

In view of our subject – Spanish Wines – I decided to give our members a treat. Dee and I were lucky enough to source a Limited-Edition Verdejo, a bright, dry white wine produced in Rueda where the Verdejo grapes have been grown since the 11th Century on limestone-rich soils. We were a bit disappointed by the mixed reactions of the group – varying from ‘awful’ to ‘okay’. So much for our efforts to impress! Perhaps the £5 price tag may have been a clue, but also illustrating the purple prose on the label may not have translated to the product!

Fortunately, the rest of the offerings were immeasurably better. Obviously, being Spanish, Riojas were in the ascendant although several other reds made their presence felt. A Pizo Gran Reserva 2015 – was excellent, Jon pronounced it had ‘good legs’ – he was at the other end of the table, so I hope he was referring to the wine. None the less the wine was as smooth as the comment. It is interesting to read the labels, one of the Tempranillos is produced by 5th generation owners, the Pizo mentioned above was grown on slate soil, each had a tale to tell.

We had our fair share of white wines to sample. As often happens the definition of the selected area is sometimes elastic, as seen with a Roero Arnais from the far east of Spain – an area known as Italy!

Back in Spain proper a dry Marques de Almeida Albarino was deemed better than the aforementioned Verejo – talk about damning with faint praise! However, a Jordi Miro Grenache Blanc was, it was reported, not just a fine wine but an M&S fine wine. The provenance being reflected in the price.

Speaking of price, Joyce really did push the boat out specifically for us. During a recent trip she bought a bottle of Fuvaios 1999 – a dessert wine from the west of Spain. To say it was exquisite would be an understatement. It was a privilege to have been able to sample it, the more so when she admitted how much it cost.

When it came to nibbles, Roger baulked at £7 for a 150gm sample of Spanish cheese, so offered up a German one – which was probably far nicer!

The evening started on a sobering subject, normally we are regaled with tales of sun, sea and sangria but today there were reflections on Auschwitz, Cambodia, Yemen and so many other centres of appalling inhumanity.

More close to home were memories of funerals, some heartbreaking, some uplifting, although the local one with up to 2000 mourners did take some beating.

Perhaps it is a reflection of our demographic that, having taken a deep breath, we moved on to politics and education, with universal university attendance coming in for particular comment. Global warming is something which exercises our members, with a wide range of views - from yes to no and plenty of scope for discussion in between. Even the cricket was discussed – was Global Warming responsible for the rain which curtailed the last Test?

Discussion about the cost of living brought us to the difficulties faced by the restaurant trade, it was even mooted our Lunch Club may be the saviour of the entire industry – or is that overstating the case? Speaking of which, a glass was raised to mourn the closure of The Case in Leicester.

On a lighter note – old French films were discussed – at some length. Unfortunately, your reporter was totally in the dark on this subject so would probably be unable to spell any of the titles and will have to leave it to your imagination.

Speaking of being in the dark, one must confess the specific mention of wines in this and other reports relies entirely on an immediate study of the relevant labels rather than a deep-set knowledge – and we have already demonstrated their partiality, so take it all with a pinch of salt!

Our next meeting – on Wednesday 23 August 7.30 at Alan's Way.
Subject Greek Wines.

John Dexter July 23

