

West Leicestershire u3a

Wine Appreciation Group meeting 24 Jan 2024

In the interests of propounding the founding tenets of the u3a Roger prepared a paper suggesting which wine glasses to use. Remember “Learn, Laugh, Live” – this paper covered the first, we seem, as a group, to have the second well covered and are working on the third.

With regard to the glasses, large ones for red wine to allow greater aeration, medium U-shaped glasses for white wine to better retain the chill with a slightly smaller one for blush wines. A flute is recommended for sparkling wines to minimise air contact and direct the bubbles upward. Dessert type wines and port, which are usually fortified, would be served in smaller glasses to account for the higher ABV (alcohol by volume).

This explains the plethora of glasses presented at dinner, but we need not worry too much as I find the staff are adept at setting the table correctly.

To the wines – our Parish Council presented our group (aka Joyce) – some bottles left over from a recent event, hence today’s topic “Corporation Wines”.

There was a selection of both red and white. We sampled a Chilean Chardonnay, an Australian Shiraz and a Tuscan Sangiovese, leaving the balance for a future meeting. All of these really were excellent with the general consensus being the PC should be a preferred supplier – especially at the price to us!

Inevitably additional wines were presented including a couple of very tasty rose/blush ones from both France and New Zealand. These were bolstered by a Rugido – a Spanish red being produced from the Bobal grape. No, me neither, but Roger was quite excited by it, having never heard of this grape before. It certainly does not feature in my wine bible. A fairly dry, full-bodied red and a good score from the group.

Bob presented an English red wine by Time Keeper – judged by all to be pleasantly fruity albeit a bit like fruit punch, as well it might with an ABV of just 5%. So low alcohol wines can be acceptable contrary to our previous experience.

Do you know how many window cleaners serve the good people of Newbold? A straw poll identified between 6 and 8, who knew? This led on to a bout of ‘village gossip’ which subject was compromised by our inability to recall names and relationships – “you know, his sister was what’s her name, who’s mother-in-law lived with thingy”.

This moved on to ‘the good old days’ of tin baths, earth closets and – heaven forbid – no central heating! Actually no electricity or running water and we were not talking of camping trips, although that did come up. It was hard in the good old days, apparently.

We are a disparate group and most of these days were not experienced here in Newbold, rather in Scotland, Yorkshire, Sunderland, Lancashire and the like, proving it was ‘Grim Up North’. It was very interesting to hear the effect of so many dialects around the country, with words and phrases being bandied about with phrases we have never heard before. I recall a colliery storeman locally explaining that pits just a mile or so apart had totally different names and words for common products such as crowbars etc. So imagine how

our different dialects affect others. Bob used to act as interpreter between colleagues from Glasgow and rural Ireland. Pat experienced even more challenges with Nigerian children trying to learn English from Scots, Yorkshire émigrés and Californian teachers.



At least we have all come together in a spirit of companionship to enjoy each other's company. We all took the opportunity to raise a glass to Pat Morton whose funeral was later that week – a lovely lady.

Joyce announced the room rental will increase in March. In view of our, deliberately depleted reserves, we will have to increase the charge for attending our marvellous meetings to £3 from our April meeting. This being a specially negotiated charge for concessions.....

Our next meeting – on the 28th Feb at Alans Way will be wines from the antipodean region.

John Dexter Jan 24