

West Leicestershire u3a

Wine Appreciation Group Meeting 25 Oct 2023

What subjects do the social norms suggest be avoided during convivial gatherings? Yes, that's it – Religion and Politics. So what were the primary discussion points at the beginning of our meeting? Try HS2, Asylum seeker's accommodation, A&E and ambulance waiting times, politicians, pensions and the state of the nation! Religion as such came out of it relatively unscathed.

Perhaps we should rename our group as the Political Appreciation Group, although that does hint at a level of approbation. Interestingly there was very little dissent about most of the subjects, which perhaps reflects our demographic – or that the views expressed were correct. No worry, when we rule the world it will all be okay. Now where is my nomination form? By the way, did you know the LRI A&E Department is one of the largest/busiest in the country? Fortunately, none of the foregoing put a dampener on our prime objective – to Appreciate Wine.

Joyce reported on her evangelical efforts with the Desford Wine Circle where she had been invited to give a presentation about specific wines. It seems they have a far more structured and formalised set up than ours, involving a proper agenda, food and wines supplied by the Group etc. By all accounts, her wine selections were well received, especially the post prandial reds. Little hope, though, of converting them to our more freewheeling approach.

Our subject this week was aimed at winking out some of the 'old bottles from the back of the cupboard' – or Pot Luck. Roger's luck ran out completely when an ancient bottle's cork totally disintegrated, rendering the wine inaccessible. Fortunately, he had back up – of which more later. Joyce brought a home-produced Cherry Wine, all that was left of a large batch from 1999 – a beautifully sweet semi dessert wine, pity there is no chance of a reorder. Paul assured us the optimum keeping period for a Chablis is 11 years which made his 2011 offering only just out of date, still very palatable though.

All this was overshadowed by my very special unlabelled Australian red which was, we believe, the first offering to receive a negative score! Such comments as 'rank', 'undrinkable', 'what the h***?' It really was not very good, although the (removed) label did give a warning – 'Red blend, Zero alcohol' with a picture of a fox who may possibly have been the source of the product, it certainly was not wine. No-alcohol beers have come on in leaps and bounds of late, from this experience no-alcohol wines have a long way to go.

I read recently there are more than 400 named cheeses, of which only one appeared at this meeting, we need to up our game a bit even though we are not a Cheese Appreciation Group. Now there is a thought – any takers for a new group?

Speaking of food – perhaps – we mentioned Roger's back up. Some years ago an Australian named Steve Grimley started producing a very palatable Shiraz, best known of which is probably the 'Black Pig' series. So successful in fact that it became the basis of a large proportion of the McLaren Vale's production. It is little known that the product was named after a herd of black pigs living in the vineyard, a favourite of which was called Tanuki, wonder what happened to him? Anyway, in his honour a "Wisdom Shiraz" named after the eponymous pig has been produced, a bottle of which was ceremoniously opened. It was exquisite.

We started to discuss future arrangements. Sue and Paul once again graciously invited us to theirs for our December meeting – theme will possibly be 'Christmas' and the prospective date being Thursday 21st December although this is to be confirmed.

Our next meeting – on November 22nd 7.30 at Alan's Way will highlight South American wines (now isn't California in the South?)

John Dexter Oct 2023

