

Circle Update

October 2016

IN THIS ISSUE:

- Chakana tasting
- Oregon's Eyrie
- Château Loudenne
- Sierra de Salamanca
- Update on Szekszárd



From the editor: **Wink Lorch**

It's all about the people

A wine loving friend was visiting recently and observed that places, specifically wine regions, are linked to their heroes. We went on to discuss the exciting young, up-and-coming heroes who emerge, especially those who while revering the heroes who went before them, push out the boat to make their own mark. On a recent visit to Oregon, this was evident not only with the well-established Eyrie family, who I feature in this issue, but also with the people behind considerably newer wineries. As much as we might write earnestly about special terroir, obscure grapes or the latest winemaking fad, when we question why we are in this business, we all know it's all about the people.

Most of us are motivated by the people we meet who work in wine. That motivation comes from the exchanges we have, the unexpected friendships we forge across international boundaries and in different languages, plus the mutual respect we have for each other's jobs within this world of wine. Indeed, people are often considered as an essential constituent of terroir.



The stress for wine producers of worrying about the weather hazards each year is not something all of us could bear – for me they are all heroes for just coping with that and getting on with it year after year. As so often this century, producers across Europe have endured yet another challenging growing season in 2016, though fortunately for most regions it was saved by excellent harvest conditions. Just one example is related in Caroline Henry's on-the-ground harvest report about how the growers in the southern Champagne region of the Aube have coped after a particularly difficult spring and summer.

Elsewhere in this issue, Robert Smyth meets some of those who are driving forward the red wine region of Szekszárd in Hungary, while Amaya Cervera visits the up-

and-coming Spanish region of Sierra de Salamanca to meet the local heroes reviving the Rufete grape variety. Looking back in time, John Salvi MW writes about the people who made Château Loudenne a home from home for the British wine trade and looking forward, Stephen Quinn meets the couple behind a young vineyard in Norway, who offer customers the chance to stay overnight in a barrel.

Within our own Circle, I want to thank all those who have taken the time to contribute to this issue including Rebecca Murphy from Texas and Raymond Blake from Ireland for sharing their stories in the 'meet the member' feature. My thanks go also to this issue's featured photographer Steven Morris, whose portraits adorn our covers and whose 30-year career is now evolving into shooting images by drone. Special thanks to deputy editor Robert Smyth, who has worked with me on this, our fourth issue of *Circle Update* together.

As you will see from Colin Hampden-White's chairman's report, there will be many changes for the Circle in 2017, among them a change to how we share news and features within and outside the CWW. January will see the last issue of *Circle Update* in this format, which has remained more-or-less the same since Liz Sagues, as former deputy editor, designed it in 2008 under the long editorial reign of Jim Budd. Please send your contributions for the January issue by 11th December and let's say goodbye to *Update* with a bumper issue.

Circle Update: the newsletter of the Circle of Wine Writers

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Circle Update is available to external subscribers for £60 a year. The Circle's membership list is available in various media from £95. A special joint package of the membership list with frequent emailed updates through the year and a year's subscription to *Circle Update* is available from £135. These options can be viewed at www.circleofwinewriters.org. For more information, please contact Andrea Warren (see right). Membership enquiries should also be directed to her.

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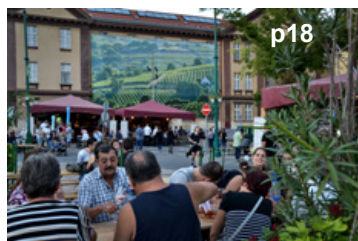
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Contents October 2016 Issue 128



Features

- CWW Chakana tasting**
by *Beverley Blanning MW* 9
- CWW pre-BYOB Balfour tasting**
by *Christos Ioannou* 11
- Rufete is the key to Sierra de Salamanca,**
says *Amaya Cervera* 16
- Robert Smyth finds much to applaud at the**
Szekszárd festival 18
- At Eyrie in Oregon it's not necessarily like**
father like son, discovers *Wink Lorch* 20
- John Salvi MW reminisces about a British**
home from home at Château Loudenne 22
- Caroline Henry reports on Champagne's**
Côte des Bar harvest 24
- In Norway, they do it in a barrel, finds**
Stephen Quinn 25
- The VDP tasting in Germany is planned**
to a tee, thinks *Richard Bampfield MW* 27

About CWW members

- Membership changes and news** 5
- Forthcoming CWW events** 11
- Meet the member:**
- Rebecca Murphy*** 12
- Raymond Blake*** 14

Regulars

- From the chairman** 4
- Featured photographer** 8
- Book news and reviews** 28
- Forthcoming wine events** 32

Front cover: Zack Charilaou, wine director at M restaurants in London.
Back cover: Mike Brown, winemaker at Gemtree, Australia. Photos by **Steven Morris**, this issue's featured photographer, who also took the portrait of **Hugh Johnson** on the right.



Membership of the Circle of Wine Writers (www.circleofwinewriters.org) is open to accredited wine journalists and other professionals communicating in the media about wine. As such, it is editorial policy to give the editor and each writer for *Circle Update* freedom to express his or her views. It must therefore be stressed that the Circle as an organisation does not formally associate itself with the opinions expressed by contributors, except where this is specifically stated.

Members who wish to send copies of articles in *Circle Update* to non-subscribers are requested not to forward the full issue. Pdf 'offprints' of specific articles are freely available from the editor, Wink Lorch.

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From the chairman: **Colin Hampden-White**

Our plans for 2017



subscription (to non-members) as part of the website. Members will be able to update their profiles whenever they wish and both members and subscribers will be able to download the membership list from the website at any time.

This brings me to *Circle Update*. Following much debate, we have decided that *Update* needs modernisation and the January issue will be the last pdf version. Exactly what form the newsletter will take online is still under discussion, and we plan its new format to be ready in time for our next AGM and the London Wine Fair in May.

Update has been a unique publication which has served as a hugely useful and interesting resource for members and subscribers. I would like to thank the many people who have made this possible and highlight a few stars. Our current editor Wink Lorch, with the help of her deputy Robert Smyth, has created a publication that has evolved and progressed, and we owe them both huge thanks. There are two other people who have worked on *Update* for many years who I would also like to thank: Liz Sagues as deputy and, of course, the inimitable Jim Budd. Jim was editor for 24 years and we owe him immense gratitude for keeping us so brilliantly informed; writing, commissioning and editing articles and members' news that offered incredible variety. Thank you, Jim.

We live in changing times in 2016 and we need to move with them. With this in mind the committee has initiated a series of changes and improvements to the way the Circle communicates, as outlined in my recent email to members. Particularly for the benefit of our subscribers, I will use this column to explain briefly some of our plans.

Our new website is nearly complete. It will be launched at the Christmas party on 1st December at the same time as the unveiling of a brand new logo that is clean and sleek, and links the world of wine and spirits.

The website will host services that have in the past been distributed on paper or pdf, primarily the membership list, which is a comprehensive directory of our members, the work they do and how to contact them. This is usually fully updated once a year and will now be accessible by

Friends of the Circle

Very soon we will have a new website, a new online Circle publication as well as a new method for our supporters to interact with our members.

As both our subscription service to access *Update's* replacement and the membership list will be online, updated more regularly and more comprehensively than ever, there will be some changes to the service, too. Details will be announced shortly and the subscription package will include the exciting addition of access to exclusive Circle tastings and events. Supporters and subscribers will be known as 'Friends of the Circle' and will have their own section on our website where they will be listed. We would like to thank all our subscribers for their support over the years. I hope that you will approve of our changes and enjoy our new subscription service.

I hope you enjoy reading the final issues of *Circle Update* and continue to enjoy reading what will come in the future. We always welcome suggestions and articles from members, as well as feedback from our subscribers, so please do get in touch. I hope to see many of you at the Christmas party on 1st December and thank you for all your support. Details and invitations will be sent out in early November.



Membership changes and news

We offer a warm welcome to four new members of the Circle: **Jane Clare**, **Dave DeSimone**, **Richard Pfister** and **Sue Tolson**.

Jane Clare

Journalist Jane Clare writes a weekly drinks column syndicated across about 20 UK regional newspapers owned by the Trinity Mirror group. She writes in a freelance capacity, as her 'proper job' is editorial project leader for Trinity Mirror regional newspapers. Jane has also been an editor, creative editorial director and editorial training manager. She caught the wine bug (all too easily) after a visit to Chablis and so began writing a column, initially in the *Liverpool Daily Post*. She has gained her level 3 WSET exams and is saving up to study for the diploma.

Jane says she is more eyebrow (inquisitively raised) than highbrow when it comes to sharing wine thoughts. A full career in and around wine is an ambition.

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Richard Pfister

Born in Switzerland to a family with a vineyard on the shores of Lake Geneva, Richard studied oenology at the Engineering School of Changins, graduating in 2004 with his thesis on possible relationships between oenology and perfumery. After working on perfume creation for seven years, his interest in tasting, aromas and sensory analysis has evolved into the main area of his work today. His work around the wine world mainly involves training professionals in wine sensorial analysis, presenting at conferences about aromas and consulting on the aromatic expression of wines.

Les Parfums du Vin, his book in French about wine aromas and perfumery, was published in 2013. He is currently working on creating a new wine aromas collection.

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Dave DeSimone

US-based wine writer Dave De Simone says that his passions for wine, food and travel took root during his youth in Western Pennsylvania. His paternal Italian Aunt Frances made wine in a spotless basement. Winemaking in her prized old barrels relied on "serendipity," as she quipped. His maternal grandfather, George, grew up speaking English and French and tended an extensive *potager* or vegetable garden. Inspired by countless happy hours with his grandparents and vivid memories, since 1994 he has written over 1,000 columns and currently writes a bi-weekly column on food and wine for the *Pittsburgh Tribune*

Review. He also shares his experiences through blogging, social media, radio interviews, escorted tours and wine events.

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Sue Tolson

Based in Budapest, Sue Tolson is a freelance writer, translator and editor, specialising in wine, food and travel. She translates from Hungarian, German, French and Italian. Originally trained as a linguist, then working in IT and business English training in various European countries, she later decided to further develop her love of wine, inherited from her father, and specialise in this area. She has recently completed the WSET diploma, is a judge at IWC and the managing editor of WineSofa, an online magazine focussing mainly on the wines

and culture of Central and Eastern Europe. As well as writing for WineSofa, she also writes a blog on Hungarian wines, Budapest Wine Snob, and translates and edits cookery books in addition to marketing materials for wineries in Hungary.

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The Circle currently has 255 members.

Other News

Louis Roederer International Wine Writers' Awards 2016

Our congratulations to members **Jane Anson, Nina Caplan, Suzanne Mustacich** and **Matt Wilson**, who won their categories in this year's Roederers. On the next page you will find full details of the awards and the ceremony.

Stephen Quinn asks if any CWW members would be interested in co-buying a cottage with him in a French wine region, preferably the Loire, but other regions would be considered. "I have an Australian passport," he said, "and according to Shengen rules I can only spend three months in all of the Shengen nations in a calendar year. So I can only be in France about two months each year." His email address is sraquin@gmail.com.

A 'Thank You' from the charity Room to Read

Andrea Warren has received a note of thanks from the charity Room to Read for the donation of £425 that was raised in the raffle held at the Cyril Ray lunch in May. Room to Read wrote: 'Every child deserves access to a high-quality education, regardless of their gender or where they were born. Thanks to the support of donors like you, we have been able to reach millions of children worldwide through our educational programs.'



YOUR wine trade charity: The Benevolent

It's surprising how many of us don't know – or have forgotten – about the UK charity dedicated to those in the drinks trade and that includes communicators. The Benevolent has assisted an incredible number of people who need extra support, be that financial, medical or social and it can continue to do so with your help.

Is there someone you know who is struggling? Put them in touch with The Benevolent.

Find out how you can get involved, be it by organising a fundraising event, becoming an individual or corporate supporter or even just spreading the word.

Upcoming event: The 'Thanks for giving' silent auction starts on 24th November. Details are on The Benevolent's website at <https://goo.gl/d7Og10>. Please donate what you can; anything from vouchers to hospitality gifts and 'money can't buy' experiences!

Follow The Benevolent on Twitter @drinkscharityuk. See more at www.thebenevolent.org.uk.

*And finally ... our featured photographer for this issue, **Steven Morris** has been filming the new vineyard run by Laithwaite's at Windsor Great Park ... by drone. See more of Steven's work on p.8.*





Photographs are courtesy of the Louis Roederer International Wine Writers' Awards.

Louis Roederer International Wine Writers' Awards 2016

executive vice president of Champagne Louis Roederer, and from the chairman of the judges, Charles Metcalfe.

The judges were: **Charles Metcalfe** (chairman), **Tim Atkin MW**, Fiona Beckett, **Sarah Jane Evans MW** and Bill Knott.

The winners were as follows, with shortlisted CWW members also shown:

Champagne Louis Roederer Artistry of Wine Award 2016: **Matt Wilson**. **Jon Wyand** was among those shortlisted. Matt Wilson's award-winning picture of Chilean winemaker Grant Phelps is shown below.

Champagne Louis Roederer Emerging Wine Writer of the Year 2016: Zachary Sussman

Ramos Pinto Online Communicator 2016: Ronald Washam. **Jane Anson** and **Yolanda Ortiz de Arri** were among those shortlisted.



Left: Tim Atkin MW celebrates Matt Wilson's award. Near right: Charles Metcalfe with Suzanne Mustacich and Erwin Faiveley. Far right: Jane Anson with Domaines Ott's Adelaide Beaudonk.

Pio Cesare Food and Wine Wine Writer of the Year 2016: **Nina Caplan**. Nina tells us that she received the award for a regular (but not monthly) column she writes for *Decanter* magazine, but they do not appear online. Members can read examples she submitted from the August and December 2015 editions of the magazine.

Domaine Faiveley International Wine Book of the Year 2016: **Suzanne Mustacich** for *Thirsty Dragon: China's Lust for Bordeaux and the Threat to the World's Best Wines*. **Oz Clarke** was shortlisted for *The History of Wine in 100 Bottles*.

Domaines Ott International Feature Writer of the Year 2016: **Jane Anson**. **Michael Edwards** and **Anne Krebiehl MW** were among those shortlisted. Jane tells us that she received the award for her features written for *Decanter* magazine. She believes the column that might have swung the award was one on the Himalayan winery owned by LVMH that sits at 3,000 metres on the border of Tibet. The article appeared in the September 2015 edition of the magazine under the title: The vineyards of Shangri-La.

Champagne Louis Roederer International Wine Columnist of the Year Award 2016: Andrew Jefford. **Michael Fridjhon** was among those shortlisted.

The award ceremony for the 12th annual awards was held on 12th September in the Fine Rooms in London's Royal Academy of Arts. As always, for what seems like the opening party of the autumn wine trade season, there was a packed crowd of those nominated for the awards, judges, other writers and many from all sides of the wine trade. Louis Roederer Brut Premier was served in magnum, and wines were also available from the other sponsors of the competition, Domaine Faiveley, Domaines Ott, Ramos Pinto and Pio Cesare.

Emphasising the close connection between Champagne Louis Roederer and the arts, the opening speeches were given by Richard Billett, managing director of Maisons Marques et Domaines (UK agents for Louis Roederer) and Charles Saumarez Smith, secretary and chief executive of The Royal Academy of Arts. These were followed by the main speeches of the evening from Michel Janneau,



Left: Michel Janneau of Louis Roederer; Below: Charles Metcalfe.



Featured photographer: **Steven Morris**

Steven writes: The year 2016 is a landmark one for me – 30 years of earning a living as a photographer. One of my first breaks as a professional photographer was working for *Wine* magazine. That introduced me to the world of wine, which has been very good to me, and has allowed me to travel all over the world.

The past ten years have seen the most dramatic changes in how photographers work. Firstly, digital cameras were introduced, which were revolutionary, then internet speeds increased, so the transfer of data around the world became the norm. When the Canon EOS 5D mkii was introduced we also had the option of being film makers. Now making short marketing videos is roughly 50% of my commissions. The iPhone 6s has also made a huge difference to how I capture images & footage. Not sitting still, I'm now moving into aerial photography and filming with a DJI Phantom 4 drone, which is ideal for vineyard shots.

Marketing budgets for winery imagery have declined since the global economic downturn, which started in 2008. Today, most of my work comes from Champagne houses, spirits, telecoms and international banking groups, but the wine industry is still my first love.

For samples of Steven's video work, see the vineyard footage taken with his drone at <https://vimeo.com/185231623> and his fun Italian travel video at <https://vimeo.com/165896063>.



From top, clockwise: Taittinger Comtes de Champagne shoot; Mark Davidson, Wine Australia's global education director; Jan and Allan Cheesman, when he became Master of the Worshipful Company of Distillers; Terry McAuliffe, Governor of Virginia (left) with Geordie Willis of Berry Bros & Rudd outside its London shop; showcase event at Kensington Palace; autumn in the Veritas vineyard in Virginia.



This excellent tasting was hosted by Chakana's chief winemaker and operations director, Gabriel Bloise (pictured above), and brand ambassador, Sophie Jump. Gabriel explained the origins and ethos of the winery before leading us through a tasting that showed the significant evolution in the style of wines since the company's inception.

Founded in 2002, Chakana is owned by the Pelizzatti family. Based at the 120-ha Finca Agrelo in Mendoza, the family also owns vineyards in Mayor Drummond (Luján de Cuyo) and the higher-altitude Altamira (Uco Valley) to the south.

In all, the winery owns 180ha of vines and buys 25ha of grapes from growers in Uco's Altamira and Gualtallary. Annual production is 90,000 cases, of which around half is from entry level La Adelina Vineyard (£10/bottle). The next quality level is Nuna Estate (Agrelo), which produces organic varietals and the white field blend (see p10). From the Uco Valley come terroir-driven wines, including varietal Malbec, Cabernet and Chardonnay, a red blend and the flagship single vineyard wine, Ayni.

Gabriel outlined the changing focus in Argentine wines in recent years, referring to the period post-2010 as the "era of terroir", whereby winemakers have moved away from

CWW TASTING: Beverley Blanning MW senses serious progress in the short history of Argentina's Chakana at a special tasting for CWW held on 16th September.
Photos by Colin Hampden-White.

Welcome to Chakana

the Napa-influenced focus on concentration and ripeness towards a desire to express terroir in wines that display elegance, finesse and diversity.

In recent years, Chakana has employed geographic information systems in the vineyards to analyse water infiltration and fertility, and used microvinifications and soil pits to understand how differences in soil types translate into differences in the wines. Since 2012, the winery has been in conversion to organic and biodynamic viticulture, and is certified from 2016. A slew of consultants in the vineyard and winery has aided them along their journey: Alberto Antonini (winemaking); Pedro Parra (soil mapping and terroir identification); the late Alan York (organic/biodynamic

conversion); Elaine Ingham (soil biology management); and Claude Bourguignon (terroir assessment).

Speaking of the differences seen since moving to organic methods, Gabriel comments that the soil pits had indicated compaction in the soils treated conventionally with herbicides, to which he attributed "problems you could see, but not explain in the vines". The aim now is to build fertility and extend the life of the soil. He has noticed that since conversion to organic viticulture the vines are more balanced and more able to survive difficult vintage conditions, such as those of 2016. There is also a better uptake of nutrients, he says, compared to conventionally grown vines. While enthusiastic about biodynamics, he

Left: guest tasters concentrate with Andrea Warren, CWW administrator behind; Right: our scribe Beverley Blanning takes her notes.



has found the certification process to be “dogmatic”. In his view, biodynamics is “the cherry on the cake: the maximum expression of the diversity of the vineyard”.

Wines tasted:

Chakana Estate White Blend 2013 (14.5%) Luján de Cuyo. RRP £12.99

A blend of Chardonnay (60%), Viognier (25%) and Sauvignon Blanc (15%), the wine showed creamy, peachy, tropical character from this warm vintage. Generous and juicy, with gingery, spicy length. Unoaked.

Chakana Nuna Estate Field White 2015 (14%) Luján de Cuyo. RRP £12.99

From the same vineyard and an almost identical blend (60/20/20), this was a very different wine from the first. Possible stylistic influences were the cooler vintage, the switch to organic viticulture and wild yeasts, and no acid additions in the winery. An elegant wine, with fresh, citrusy, pineapple notes, good balance and some richness. Unoaked.

Chakana Estate Selection Chardonnay 2015

(13%) Altamira (1,100m). RRP £18.99
Made with native yeasts, 10% oak fermented, the rest in concrete eggs.
The toasty and creamy nose is echoed on the palate. Quite rich and tropical, but with good acidity and length.

Chakana Nuna Estate Bonarda 2015 (13.5%)

Luján de Cuyo. RRP £12.99
Organic production, 40% aged in used oak, the rest in concrete. No added acidity. Plummy and round, fruit-forward style with crisp tannins. Fresh, juicy and attractive.

Chakana Nuna Estate Malbec 2015 (13.5%)

Luján de Cuyo. RRP £12.99. Organic. 100% concrete vats.
Dark, berry-fruited nose. Quite firm, with good

balance and density of flavour. Some chocolatey sweetness on the finish. Fresh, pure fruit. Delicious.

Chakana Estate Selection Cabernet Sauvignon 2015 (14%) Uco Valley (1,400m). Organic. 100% oak barriques, 40% new.

Oak spice on the nose. Youthful palate with moderate body of black fruit. Fairly lean style, with a long, spicy finish.

Chakana Ayni Malbec 2012 (15%) 10% saignée, added yeast and acidity, 100% oak, mostly new.

First vintage of this wine. Deep purple colour. Smoky, fragrant nose. The palate has lovely richness and fruity depth.

Chakana Ayni Malbec 2013 (15%) Organic. No saignée, native yeasts, added acid, 100% oak (lower percentage of new oak compared to 2012).

Fragrant and smooth-textured. A rich, ripe and spicy wine, with pure fruit character. Lovely balance, rich and generous.

Chakana Ayni Malbec 2014 (14.5%) Organic. RRP £21.49. No saignée, no added acid or yeast, aged in 235hl untoasted foudres.

Textured and rich, complex and long. Very elegant and fragrant wine, with delicious freshness. Very good. Lovely individuality.

Chakana Ayni Malbec 2015 (13.5%) Organic. RRP £21.49. No added yeast or acid, 60% aged in foudres, 40% concrete vats.

Bright and light style, with lovely freshness. A cool, cherry-scented wine.

Chakana wines are imported to the UK by Fells. For further information, contact Sophie Jump: info@winesolutions.com

The Circle would also like to thank Glass & Co for providing the glasses for the event.



The tasting line-up after the event. Andy Henderson, in the background, was one of several members taking the chance to ask Gabriel more questions at this excellent tasting.



CWW TASTING: Christos Ioannou reports on a tasting with Richard Balfour-Lynn of Hush Heath, held prior to the BYOB meal at London's Bull & Hide on 20th September. Photos by Colin Hampden-White.

A rose-tinted spectacle

Hush Heath winery was never intended to happen according to owner Richard Balfour-Lynn. Richard purchased Hush Heath Manor as a family home in the 1980s and there were orchards around the property at the time. But the 37 acres of land which the vineyards now cover were bought at auction in 2001, almost by mistake.

A local group of farmers had planned to carve up between them the various parcels on offer, but Richard put in a bid for one plot and was surprised when he got it. Having realised how cheap the land was, he successfully bid for several more plots, and by the time the farmers realised what was happening it was too late for them.

Richard always loved the style of Billecart-Salmon rosé and wanted to produce a rosé sparkling wine in a similar style. He hired experienced

English winemaker Owen Elias (previously with Chapel Down and now with English Terroir) as a consultant and they planted the three classic Champagne varieties. The blazing hot summer of 2003 produced a small crop but the first proper vintage was in 2004 and the first wine was released in 2007. When the wine won a gold and a trophy at the International Wine Challenge (IWC) that year they knew they were on to something.



Peter May concentrates on taking notes on the Balfour 1503.

For the next ten years only the sparkling rosé was made in order to consolidate the high quality of the brand. But now the winery produces five sparkling wines, including two new entry-level bottlings under the 1503 label, and also three still wines. Running through the whole range is an attractive fresh, linear style of winemaking. The 1503 sparkling Classic Cuvée and the Rosé Cuvée, created especially for two major British retailers, represent excellent quality and particularly good value for money.

Not content to rest on their laurels, the first shipment of Hush Heath wines is on its way to the US and will be available there before the end of the year. So much for a wine that was never meant to happen!

Far left: Richard Balfour-Lynn with Tanya Mann. Left: Sophie McLean, Christos Ioannou, Joe Fattorini and Colin Hampden-White.

Forthcoming CWW events

Seen and unseen wines from Greece

Date: November 1st

Venue: The Naval Club, London

A range of Greek wines will include The Tear of the Pine retsina from Kechris winery, Macedonia. A family member from the Manousakis Winery of Crete, will run the tasting and will bring along a selection of their organic wines including back vintages.

Spanish food & wine experience

Date: November 10th

Venue: The Naval Club, London

The 'soil to the table' tasting experience from The Haciendas Company in Spain's Duero Valley will be presented by Angela Reddin, who was on the CWW trip early this year. Wines from the Marques de la Concordia Family of Wines will be matched with their delicious regional meats, cheeses and balsamic vinegar.

The CWW Christmas party

Date: December 1st

Venue: One Great George Street, London

This year's host is Washington State Wine.



Meet the member: Wink Lorch invites US writer **Rebecca Murphy** to share stories about her varied career in wine going back to the 1970s. Her second interviewee is **Raymond Blake**, one of Ireland's leading wine writers. These interviews were conducted by email. Photographs were supplied by the interviewees.

Rebecca Murphy: 'Positive feedback, certainly from editors, doesn't come often.'

Rebecca is a freelance wine journalist and owner of Vintage Productions, a wine-consulting company, based between Seattle, Washington and Dallas, Texas, which is close to where she grew up.

She has written a weekly column for the *Dallas Morning News* off and on since 1982 and is the founder of the TEXSOM International Wine Awards, formerly the Dallas Morning News Wine Competition, which she started in



1985. It has become one of the largest wine competitions in the US. Rebecca has also written for various publications including *Wine Business Monthly* and *Wines & Vines*. She frequently runs educational wine events for both consumers and trade.

Rebecca at work as a cocktail waitress in the 1970s.

As a mother with young children, Rebecca started her career in the restaurant business as a cocktail waitress, but soon managed to persuade the restaurant to take her on as a wine steward instead. When she wanted to give up working in the evening to spend more time with her children, she moved into the buying department of the restaurant group she worked for, which brought her in touch with the wine trade. Based in Texas, she was far away from California, but in the 1980s managed to build relationships with many of the most important wineries and their owners at an important time in their development. In Texas, Rebecca is considered one of those who has influenced the burgeoning interest in wine there.

Tell us about your first experiences drinking wine

I grew up in a Baptist home in Fort Worth, Texas, where wine was not even considered. My parents drank beer and distilled spirits, but not where their fellow churchgoers would see them. Therefore, I had no experience with wine at the dinner table or anywhere else. My first husband introduced me to wine, which I recall was German Riesling.

His job as aide to the commanding general of American troops in Thailand took us to Bangkok. It was there that I was exposed to fine dining with fine wines in a protocol-rich environment. The general was host to practically any US VIP who visited Bangkok. My husband and I had the responsibility to act as extensions of the general in



Rebecca, earlier this year at a stimulating wine event in Brazil.

facilitating the many hospitality functions. I learned a lot about food, wine and taking care of important people, all useful experience for a career in hospitality.

How did you learn enough about wine for your early jobs in restaurants?

Texas in the 1970s wasn't a big wine drinking market, so I read as much as I could and tasted every bottle I opened for diners. My second job as a wine steward, we didn't use the term sommelier at the time, was at a restaurant that had an excellent and comprehensive all-American, but mostly Californian wine list, in the mid-1970s. I didn't know much about those wines, but neither did our customers, so my biggest challenge was just getting them to try the wines. I would ask them to tell me the type of European wine they enjoyed, because those were the benchmark wines at the time, and I would recommend something similar.

Winemakers from California started making a point of visiting the restaurant, so I was able to learn about their wines from them. Steven Spurrier's Paris tasting, which recognized that high-quality California wines belonged in the company of high-quality European wines, made my job much easier. The bonus was I had ten cases of Stag's Leap,

Napa Valley, Cabernet Sauvignon 1973 in inventory when George Taber's article in *Time* hit the newsstands.

And what about learning to write a column?

Just like my jobs as sommelier, food and beverage director for fine-dining restaurants, wine competition director and wine judge, I learned on the job. My undergraduate degree is in English, so I have at least some understanding about how to put words together. I talked my way into wine writing when I was working for Universal Restaurants with responsibilities that included food and beverage, as well as public and community relations. I organised many wine events and invited members of the press as guests. I often asked why there was no local coverage of wine, only syndicated articles from other markets. Finally, one of them asked me what I thought was needed. I proposed a tasting panel format, and the woman who became my editor for several years gave me the opportunity.

One person who was very inspiring to me was, and still is, Gerald Asher. First of all, he is a brilliant writer, but he also has been generous with his support. I first met him [when I was a] wine buyer for Universal Restaurants. He gave me very positive and helpful feedback on that tasting panel feature I was writing. I have always cherished those remarks. I have learned over the years that positive feedback, certainly from editors, doesn't come often. I consider the fact that I still get the opportunity to write for the *Dallas Morning News* to be the highest praise.

Who were the most impressive characters from California wine that you met in the 1980s? And what did they teach you?

[Winemakers] Mary Ann Graf and Zelma Long are inspiring role models and great friends. Robert Mondavi for his indefatigable energy, generosity of spirit and passionate love of wine. I recall a conversation at a wine event in Dallas when I told him I admired his pioneering role in wine and he said to me, "but Becky, you are a pioneer". Rodney Strong and Steve Mirassou, who came often to Dallas and were the first to welcome me in California, gave me feedback that made me realise that I had valuable insights, observations



On a press trip in Sydney, Australia.

and knowledge about wine. Gino Zeponi from ZD Wines and Domaine Chandon, who was the first to identify a corked wine for me. [The late California wine writer] Robert Lawrence Balzer, who supported our educational wine events at Universal Restaurants by bringing winemakers to present seminars. He was also a cheerleader for me.

What were the biggest challenges of running a wine competition in the early days?

The alcoholic beverage laws in Texas! I worked with an attorney to get permission [for a competition] from the Texas Alcoholic Beverage Commission (TABC), but it was still [only] semi-official. I think if anyone had complained to the TABC, they would have shut us down.

And apart from becoming bigger, how have wine competitions changed?

In the US we have a lot more of them, some more serious and better organised than others. Some are medal-producing factories... I think it is legitimate that a greater percentage of medals are given today than when I first started the Dallas competition, because grape growing and winemaking is better now. I've kept a spreadsheet of the results since the first competition in 1985. In the early years, judges gave around 30 per cent of the entries medals. In more recent years that number has increased to 50 or 60 per cent.

Worldwide, are there wine competitions that you admire? And any that don't impress you?

I enjoyed judging at the International Wine Challenge (IWC) a few years ago. Judges stand rather than sit around a table. I was afraid that I would be uncomfortable, but I was surprised that I liked it a lot. It was easier to stay alert. Also, we never really knew what wines were coming next, reds one flight, whites another, an additional feature that kept me alert. I am not at all fond of having to use the OIV score sheet, which was required when I judged at Concours Mondial, also a few years ago. I found that the scoring got in the way of giving a wine the medal I wanted it to have.

Judging requires a lot of concentration and energy that should not be wasted on tasks that get in the way of the goal. For the competitions that I organise, I try to get the best judges I can, be as organised as possible and get out of the way.

After so many years, do you still enjoy writing your regular column for the Dallas Morning News and what inspires you?

I do enjoy writing the column. Since 2004, it has been a wine of the week. I appreciate the consistency of the format and I taste a lot of wines to consider what I think will be attractive for our readers. I get to stay in touch with members of the distributor and retail community, many of whom give me great support and feedback. I love hearing from a retailer that a wine I recommended "flew off the shelves in a day".

Which wine region inspires you at present?

I am returning from a trip to Brazil's wine country, an area and wine community that has impressed me. It's still a very young wine region that is making some good wine, but still finding its way. I participated in an event unlike any I have ever attended: an evaluation of wines from the 2016 harvest sponsored by the Brazilian Association of Enologists. It began with the collection of 241 samples, many still in tanks, from the 46 wineries that entered the event. Those wines were evaluated by 90 winemakers over two days of blind tasting. Sixteen wines were selected as the best representation of the recent harvest. The finale was a public event attended by 850 people. Sixteen judges including

winemakers, journalists, sommeliers, wine competition directors, an actor, a musician and a randomly selected member of the audience were invited to comment on one assigned wine. The judges came from South America as well as Belgium, England and Greece.

The audience was the most attentive I have ever seen. They were taking notes about each wine and spitting rather than drinking the wines they tasted for the entire three hours of the event. The organisation of the day was impeccable. Since its beginning, this event has served as an avenue for improving wine quality and for engaging and educating the

public. It is an amazingly successful project.

When you travel, is wine always involved?

Always, even if it's a vacation. My husband and I both love wine and food, so when we travel together, we don't visit museums, we visit food and wine places of interest.

What is there to your life beyond wine?

I enjoy gardening. In Seattle it is a particularly rewarding endeavour, with the exception of warm weather veggies like tomatoes or peppers. I read for education and for pleasure.

I love spending time with family and friends.

I belong to and am a board member for Les Dames d'Escoffier Seattle, a non-profit organisation that provides scholarships and mentorship for women who work or hope to work in food, beverage and hospitality careers. We have created nearly \$600,000 in endowments at five colleges and universities to provide scholarships in culinary and oenology programs. I especially enjoy and am inspired by hearing the stories of the women who apply for our scholarships. Since I have a Master's degree in non-profit administration, I can also provide guidance to the organization.

Meet the CWW Member 2:



In Santenay, Raymond receives delivery of wines from JM Vincent.

Based in Dublin, Raymond is a freelance wine writer, editor and speaker. He has been the wine editor for *Food & Wine Magazine* in Ireland since its launch in 1997. He is the author of *Breakfast in Burgundy* and is currently preparing a second book, *Burgundy – The Wines and Winemakers of the Côte d'Or*, to be published in 2017 by Infinite Ideas for its Classic Wine Library series. He writes widely for other wine magazines in Ireland.

Raymond Blake: 'The biggest challenge is the fact that it has been "done" so many times before'

Raymond started his working life as a school teacher and in his early wine-writing years he juggled the two jobs, teaching by day and writing by night. He has been a member of the Circle of Wine Writers since 2003. Today, working as a consultant he is very much an independent voice at the centre of the wine world in Ireland, but also writes on food, travel and occasionally other subjects.

Raymond and his wife own a home in Burgundy.

Were you brought up in a household that drank wine on a regular basis?

Not exactly, my parents drank wine on occasions but not regularly. Curiously, however, I developed a non-drinking interest in wine at about the age of ten. I still have articles that I cut out from the old *Sunday Times* colour supplement about wine and a memorable one about a meal Cole Porter hosted for the Duke of Windsor at the Waldorf Astoria Hotel,

New York, in 1937. Château Ausone was the centrepiece wine. It was probably another 20 years before I drank Ausone.

What or who inspired you to start writing on wine?

Shortly after I left college, myself and two friends formed our own wine club – The Premier Cru Club – with me as 'cellarmaster'. We paid standing orders into a club account and when funds had built up I would blow the lot on prestigious wines, the purchase of which we otherwise could not countenance. For instance, when you could still carry wine on a plane as hand luggage, I brought home a few bottles of Vega Sicilia (1966 and other vintages) from Barcelona in 1992, having attended the Olympics there. We had club dinners in our respective houses in rotation and I would write them up. I wanted to take my interest further and reasoned that, at its most basic, all it took to write about wine was pencil and paper, whereas opening a specialist

wine shop involved all sorts of commitment and paperwork, premises, insurance... So, I had worked out that I wanted to write about wine and then the opportunity with *Food & Wine Magazine* dropped into my lap.

And how did you come to be offered the post of wine editor at the launch of Food & Wine Magazine?

That's a good story. It was advertised in the national newspapers and I took a little while to reply, reasoning that I had to think of something to make myself stand out from the crowd. When I thought of it I knew I was on the right track – I simply wrote to the publisher and invited him for dinner. He rang immediately saying he had received replies from every freeloader in Ireland but only one had invited him for dinner. At the end of a bibulous meal I asked if I had got the gig. He said he couldn't tell me because his wife decided all those things for him, so the three of us met the next week for another dinner and when she told me I had the job she followed up by asking: "And do you know why you've got it?" "Why?" I asked. "Because your shoes are shiny."

Did you have mentors in the world of wine in Ireland?

One of my lecturers in college was a keen wine drinker and we often discussed wine together. He then introduced me to a friend of his who was a specialist wine merchant, who in turn invited me to attend some epic New Year's house parties that he hosted, with grand dinners and wines to match. I bought a lot of wine from him and learnt a lot from him also.

In almost two decades of wine writing in Ireland, what are the most interesting changes in the wine scene there?

There was an explosion of interest in wine from about 1990, driven mainly by the New World, particularly Australia, with Chile coming in her wake a few years later. Chile is now market leader, a position that I don't think anybody would have predicted 20 years ago. As the 21st century dawned wine was hip and trendy. I wonder is it now losing some of that shine, what with the rise of craft beers, cocktails, speciality gins and a burgeoning range of whiskeys? The millennials may not find wine as attractive as their parents once did.

Apart from crippling levels of duty, the wine drinker is well served in Ireland by supermarkets, chains and, most importantly, the specialist independent wine shops. Their durability in the face of brutal competition and a recent tsunami of excise duty increases is to be applauded. How they have survived and even thrived is beyond me. Today, they work to a new template and many of them function as wine bars and casual cafés, as well as wine shops, to attract customers. We are much better served by specialist independents now compared to 20 years ago.

How did your love affair with Burgundy begin? And are you still enamoured with the region?

I often quip that I should have been born in Burgundy. I feel completely at home there. It started with the television adaptation of Evelyn Waugh's *Brideshead Revisited*: "I rejoiced in the Burgundy, how can I describe it?" asked Charles Ryder. I have been trying to describe it ever since. Yes, still enamoured.

What are the biggest challenges of writing your next book?

One challenge is the size of the topic – even though it is restricted to the Côte d'Or, it is still a vast subject and is packed with an extraordinary level of detail. Deciding what to include and what not to include is already proving difficult.

On a press trip in the Douro, home to a 'legacy wine'.



But I suppose the biggest challenge is the fact that it has been 'done' so many times before. I am determined to bring something new to it, make sure that it is very much a 21st century book that will hopefully stand the test of time.

Do you have any secrets to share about juggling your day between being a magazine editor, author, presenter ...?

Get up early, go straight to the desk and get a few hours' work done with the Wi-Fi turned off. And hide your smart phone – Twitter does not need to be checked every few minutes!

Apart from Burgundy, which wines do you particularly enjoy drinking at home?

Many people assume that because I am a big Burgundy fan I automatically do not like Bordeaux, which is definitely not the case. Myself and my wife were married in 2000 so we bought plenty from that vintage. I visit Bordeaux perhaps three or four times a year and to see the regeneration there is wonderful. It was a dingy, run-down city when I first visited. Great claret is great wine and I love it.

I delight in good Champagne, love Riesling from all over the globe, most especially the Mosel, then there's Barolo, the northern Rhône, Hunter Valley Semillon...

I also love all the fortified wines: sherry and port, Madeira and Marsala. I call them 'legacy wines', if they are allowed to disappear they will never come back. If they didn't exist today, they would never be created. Take port – who in their right minds would think of hurling raw grape spirit into half-fermented wine to create a sweet nectar that takes 30 years to develop fully? And what EU official would sanction such adulteration?

Is there a particular wine region that you would love to be invited to that you haven't yet visited?

Madeira, no question.

Can you share something surprising about yourself?

I always wanted to follow Neil Armstrong and walk on the moon, but I guess that's not going to happen now. Mars doesn't interest me.

Amaya Cervera discovers that a highly original grape variety is putting Sierra de Salamanca on the Spanish wine map. A version of this article was originally published on Amaya's Spanish wine lovers blog at <https://goo.gl/hHFOou>. Photos are by Amaya.

Rufete revels in its Spanish home

With barely 400 hectares under vine and only 90 of them within the appellation, Sierra de Salamanca – the smallest, lesser-known wine district of Castilla y León – is starting to define a space of its own on Spain's wine scene.

Sierra de Salamanca boasts an appealing individuality starting with its red grape Rufete that covers roughly 60% of the vineyard. It could be very well described as a Spanish version of Pinot Noir due to its lightness, delicate floral notes and either earthy or mineral character, depending on the type of soil it grows on. In this regard, the pattern is very similar to the Gredos region, which also possesses both granite and schist areas, yet the geological diversity is bigger in Salamanca, for it also has the rare, extremely hard and black *corneana* rock (a slate-like metamorphic rock known in German/English as Hornfels).

This green, rugged region on the southern edge of the Salamanca province, which borders Extremadura, is perfect for hiking. The area is a biosphere reserve and part of the appellation lies within the Las Batuecas-Sierra de Francia natural park. The region is actually known as Sierra de Francia, probably because Raymond of Burgundy, husband of Doña Urraca and son-in-law of King Alfonso VI, received the order to repopulate the area in order to repel the Muslim advance in the late 11th century. Surnames like Bernal or Gascón are still found in the area today.

A shared connection with Gredos

The region's rich local traditions find a parallel with Gredos in the way vines have been grown for centuries on terraces, which are locally called *paredones*. Spain's Sistema Central mountain range runs east from here towards Gredos. Rivers in both areas are part of the Tajo basin. In Sierra de Salamanca, the River Alagón and its tributaries flow through intricate and often narrow valleys where vines are grown.

The climate is distinctively Mediterranean, so therefore milder than in other Castilla y Leon regions. The area lies below the central plateau to the south and is surrounded and protected by mountains. With average rainfall levels reaching 1,000mm a year, Sierra de Salamanca is probably the second wettest wine region in Spain, behind Rías Baixas. Lush vegetation can exert a great deal of pressure on the vineyards, especially in rainy years like 2016.

The Portuguese origins of Rufete

Although it is the same variety as Portuguese Rufeta or Tinta Pinheira, Rufete has clearly adapted to this Spanish area. It has generally been believed that Rufete entered Spain through the Camino de Santiago, yet *Wine Grapes* indicates its Portuguese origins and ventures that it might be related to Touriga Nacional, as well as Prieto Picudo from León further north.



Above: stone vat in a vineyard owned by Bodegas Rochal, made from the local corneana rock; right: Rufete vine leaf against the same type of rock.



On the Spanish side of the border, Rufete is a relatively early-ripening grape. Harvesting usually starts between 8th-10th September – it is often picked before Tempranillo. Bunches are tight with small, thin-skinned berries that give light-coloured wines. Other features are its noticeable acidity and the floral (petals) plus spicy rather than fruity aromas. “While violet notes are prone to appear in hot years, petals are associated with fresh vintages,” explains César Ruiz, who makes a Rufete wine called Tragaldabas. Rufete fits in with the trend towards less structured, easy to drink wines.

Rufete was not easy to find as a single varietal red until recently. In fact, rosé wines (locally called *clarettes*) were the

speciality of Sierra de Francia. The first modern red blends were made in the early 2000s after a critical period which saw depopulation, the abandonment of vineyards and the closing down of many cooperatives. These were wines made from the main varieties grown in the area: around 60% Rufete, 30% Tempranillo (locally called Aragón) and 10% Garnacha and other grapes. Garnacha is locally known as Calabrés – some growers claim it is a specific clone.

A small bunch of producers

Considering the area under vine, the number of producers in Sierra de Salamanca is not large. Apart from the cooperative operating in the village of San Esteban de Sierra, the most interesting wines come from small independent producers. Two wineries have pioneered single varietal Rufete wines and both sell around 50,000 bottles on home and export markets. Viñas del Cámbrico was launched in 2002 by local entrepreneur Fernando Maíllo, who named it after the geological period when the region's mountains were formed. La Zorra was founded by Agustín Maíllo – no relation to Cámbrico's owner. Agustín, who runs the family restaurant Mirasierra in Mogarraz and produced his first wine in 2010, sells his wines in the US through importer De Maison Selections.

Cuarta Generación was established in the village of Sotoserrano, in the southern part of the appellation where Tempranillo is widely grown. Further north, in Santibáñez de la Sierra, José Carlos Martín founded Bodegas Rochal (25,000 bottles) in 2002 and usually blends Tempranillo and Rufete. His wines felt the most structured in the area with dark fruit and shoe polish notes, although they are capable of handling the oak rather well.

The uniqueness of Rufete has proved highly attractive to outsiders, most of whom go for single varietal styles. This is the case with friends César, Nacho, Silvia and Rebeca, who are colleagues at wine distributor Alma Vinos Únicos in Madrid. Mandrágora Vinos de Pueblo is the name of their project which aims to produce 25,000 bottles. For the time being they have rented a space at Cámbrico to make Tragaldabas; a fresh, airy and evocative Rufete. The winery has another tenant: sommelier Nicolás Sánchez Monge from Toro who makes Corneana; a riper, rather structured red with more black fruit than floral notes.

Winemaker David Sampedro from Elvillar in Rioja Alavesa buys grapes from the area and produces a medium-bodied, distinctively earthy Rufete outside of the appellation. So does winemaker Ismael Gozalo, formerly at Ossian, who currently makes different wines in Rueda and

other areas of Castilla y León. Rufián is the name of the wine he makes in Sierra de Salamanca – it is light and floral although it displays sharp acidity on the palate.

A new village wine category

Sierra de Salamanca has clearly benefited from being a small area with few producers who get along well. Its board approved the development of a village wine category in May. Further requirements include the compulsory use of 100% Rufete grapes for village reds. Additional requirements may include some organic winegrowing specifications and sourcing grapes from the best vineyards.

It became clear during my visit that the best single varietal wines convey both the soil's diversity and Rufete's purest expression. Some of the most interesting wines I tasted haven't reached the market yet. The team behind Mandrágora will release its first village wine in September. Starting with the 2014 vintage, it will bear the name of the village it comes from, Molinillo, which epitomises the character of *corneana* slate soils. This single-varietal Rufete is a captivating mix of airy aromas (lavender and rosemary) and earthy flavours, followed by a juicy palate with finely integrated tannins. This wine is aged for at least two winters in the cellar compared to one winter for the regional, entry-level Tragaldabas. According to César Ruiz, one of the great strengths of the region is that "phenolic and alcoholic ripeness come together".

La Zorra, which makes the excellent Raro Rufete from sandy, granitic soils, has just launched the new La Moza single varietal wine from vineyards planted on slate soils in the villages of Garcibuey and Miranda del Castañar. This juicy, elegant red with well-integrated tannins was released in September 2016 and should age for longer since slate adds extra structure. As opposed to the power and occasional heaviness of Garnachas from Gredos grown on schist soils, Rufete can offer notable finesse when grown in these sandy, granitic soils, even if the wines display dark notes (ink, charcoal). Incidentally, La Moza Calabrés (Garnacha) is part of La Zorra's portfolio, but the whole production of this wine is exclusively sold in the US. If you ever have the



Agustín Maíllo of La Zorra; Mandrágora vineyard.

Overleaf: a typical vineyard landscape in Sierra de Salamanca.

chance to try it, you'll find lots of sweet red fruit, spices and marked citrus acidity.

For its part, Cámbrico will split its current single varietal Rufete into two different reds to reflect two different villages (Villanueva del Conde and Garcibuey) and soil types (slate and granite).

Verdejo Serrano or White Rufete

While it is not a Rufete mutation, I would also like to draw attention to White Rufete, a late-ripener that produces fabulous whites with good cellaring potential that combine structure and vibrant acidity. This variety is locally called Verdejo even if it has nothing to do with Rueda's famous grape. Castilla y León's agricultural research centre,

ITACYL, listed it as a new variety with the name Verdejo Serrano, but producers in Sierra de Salamanca are fighting to call it White Rufete in order to create a more powerful brand for the region. Given that it is a relatively new discovery, White Rufete will not bear the appellation name until the grape is included in Spain's official register and subsequently included in DOP regulations. I found the 2013 vintage by Cámbrico really remarkable.

Were it not for its small size, Sierra de Salamanca could become the next Gredos. Even if it never achieves the reputation of its peer at the other end of Spain's Central Mountains, it is likely to gain a land classification that will allow producers to explain the singularity of their terroirs on their wine labels. After all, Burgundy still echoes throughout the area.



At the local wine festival, Robert Smyth discovers that Szekszárd is carving out a true identity for its red wines.

Szekszárd shines at Harvest Days Festival

Ottoman invaders. However, for too long Kadarka wines have all too often been watery and insipid on the one hand, or overdone and covered in an oaky, overripe and tannic cloak, trying to be something they're not, on the other.

On tasting the 2015 Kadarka offering from Tüske Pince, it was apparent that a nice balance had been struck between light playfulness and depth of flavour and that this was actually true Kadarka. On communicating the victory of finesse, purity and balance in the said wine to its maker, Csaba Halmai, a retiring type who eschews the limelight and appears happier driving his tractor around his vineyards, he remarked: "Yes, but that bigger style is easier to sell." This may still be true but thankfully many of the Kadarkas tasted at the festival from the 2015 vintage were light in colour and

*The Harvest Days festival in full flow.
Photo by Albert Kis from Szekszárdi Vasárnap.*

The Szekszárd Harvest Days (Szekszárdi szüreti napok) festival is always a joy to attend with the winemakers themselves out in force in the town's pretty central square. This year I detected a stronger sense of place emerging in Szekszárd's predominantly red wines. Indeed, the region is continuing to find its own path with confidence, allowing

local grapes to lead the way, thus moving successfully out of the shadow that has long been cast over it by the region of Villány that lies a little further south.

Szekszárd is the Hungarian epicentre of Kadarka, the same grape as Bulgaria's Gamza, which came to Hungary from the Balkans, supposedly brought by Serbs fleeing

airy on the palate, flavoursome with vibrant acidity, feather-light tannins and demonstrating the grape's trademark rose hip, raspberry and spicy notes. One of the best from 2015 comes from the Pranter Pince, which nails this tricky grape's qualities to a tee with a delightful lightness of touch and ethereal quality. It deservedly won a gold medal at Szekszárd's 2016 wine competition.

Winemaker Ferenc Prantner showed he's also cracked it when it comes to Kékfrankos, Hungary's most widely planted red wine grape. His 2015 had very appealing floral aromas of violets and sour cherry, with a hint of coconut on the soft palate. It wasn't aged in American oak, which the coconut may seem to suggest, but 500-litre Hungarian barrels. Some dismiss Kékfrankos for being thin and tart – this one is anything but. Prantner is a name hardly known beyond Szekszárd but his wines offer great value, like those from Tüske's Halmái, and both are certainly worthy of a wider audience. In fact, a feature of this year's Harvest Days was introducing many lesser-known winemakers, who are breaking through into the bigtime in terms of quality – the sign of a region on the move.

Ferenc Prantner's stepson Tibor Juhász from Pastor Pince is also a man on the move. Pastor's red wines used to have a distinct whiff of barnyardy brett and he himself knew it. The important thing is that he did something about it, as witnessed by a look into his spotlessly-clean, mould-

free ageing cellar at his garage winery. Indeed, Pastor's wines preach elegance over power, a concept which is thankfully catching on among the region's winemaking firmament. Pastor's Bikavér blend oozed juicy red fruit on the nose and palate and tipped the alcohol scales at 13%, which is relatively low for the sun-kissed southern region of Szekszárd. Vida's Bikavér 2013 was another that was had modest alcohol and restrained tannins, but impressed in a more subtle and structured way.

A bullish approach

Szekszárd is wisely focussing on a three-pronged approach of making single varietal Kadarka (including exploring different clones) and Kékfrankos, and Bikavér wines, which are packed in their own embossed Burgundy-shaped bottles, supposedly to emphasise elegance. The way the word Szekszárd is embossed below the neck of the bottle à la Châteauneuf-du-Pape is a nice reference to the spice of the Rhône, which is also a feature of Szekszárd reds.

Bikavér is typically based on a Kékfrankos backbone and is fleshed out with international varieties, especially Bordeaux grapes, enabling such grapes to play an important role without hogging the limelight. The finishing touch is the spice and aromatics added by a few percent of Kadarka. Interestingly, Bikavér is rarely referred to by its English form of Bull's Blood any more, probably due to the wine's

old association with the cheap and cheerful as opposed to the classy and concentrated. Szekszárd and Eger lock horns over which region coined the term Bikavér first but today, while the northern Hungarian region of Eger fights the battle with different levels of quality, Szekszárdi Bikavér tends to play the card of generally producing a higher end wine. In Eger, where the Kadarka grape was grubbed up during communism in favour of higher yielding varieties, winemakers are increasingly planting Kadarka to add it to their Bikavér blends. A few percent is all that's needed or else its pronounced aromas can start to take over, something not desired in a blended wine in which the aim is for no grape to dominate.

While Villány may have attempted to claim the Cabernet Franc grape for itself under its Villányi Franc brand, there are also some very good ones coming out of Szekszárd, such as those from Posta, Pastor and Takler.

The next step for Szekszárd is for thorough analysis to be carried out on the region's soils, explained Péter Vida jnr. While it is widely assumed that Szekszárd is only about loess, there is believed to be a lot of terra rossa lurking below the loess, as well as pockets of limestone. Indeed, you can see red soil breaking through the lighter coloured loess surface in many places.

In other festival news from Hungary, despite rumours to the contrary, the organisers of the Budapest Wine Festival

say that the bibulous bonanza will remain in the sumptuous setting of the Buda Castle next year. The 2016 edition held in September had around 40,000 visitors.



Far left: Wine and beer flows at the Harvest Days festival. Photo by Albert Kis from Szekszárdi Vasárnap. Left: A vineyard owned by Vida. Photo by Robert Smyth.

Eyrie is the focus for the first part of Wink Lorch's tale of her second visit to Oregon, 26 years after the first. Part 2 will appear in the January issue of Update. Photos by Wink, except where stated.

Oregon, a quarter century on, part 1

The original Eyrie vineyard. At the top, gaps have appeared due to vines killed by phylloxera.



Back in 1990, the late David Lett of the Eyrie Vineyards told me that his winery was older than 96% of all US wineries – I wonder what that percentage would be today. Although HillCrest in the Umpqua Valley was the first Oregon vineyard to be planted in the post-Prohibition era and included Pinot Noir, it was David Lett's early plantings of Pinot Noir in Willamette in 1966 that bore fruit and grabbed the attention of the wine world in the 1970s.

My short trip to Portland and Oregon's Willamette Valley in August included visits to just a tiny selection of the state's 700-odd wineries. It was my first time there since a two-day visit back in 1990 during a road-trip up the US west coast. My priority this year was to visit Eyrie again and to experience a snapshot of different aspects of Oregon today. In this article I shall cover only Eyrie – oh yes, and the Trousseau grape – and in the next issue of *Update* I will share my other impressions of Oregon, 26 years on.

David and Jason

David Lett was a notorious maverick and immensely difficult to pin down when I was arranging my winery visits in 1990. Yet, everyone said I must see him and that Eyrie was the one essential Oregon visit. At the first winery I visited, David Adelsheim (who straight away gave me a pronunciation lesson: "it's WillAMette, damn it!") went as far as to call David Lett, giving me a rave introduction. He handed me the phone, but it was no use, Mr Lett gave me the same answer that he'd given me on previous calls I had made from motels en route (remember the days of no mobiles or emails?): "I arrange my schedule in 10-minute segments, call me another time" and he wouldn't commit to an appointment time. Eventually, when I called from the McMinnville mall, saying that I could come right away, he told me to come right on down. My notes reveal that not only did I love his delicate 1987 Reserve Pinot Noir and delicious 1988 regular bottling,

but also that I was struck by David's sense of humour. The signs on the winery walls almost mocked the rest of the US wine industry with one stating: 'Just say no to Cabernet' (this was during the era of an ongoing, national anti-drug advertising campaign that

Far left: Jason with his line-up of wines. Left: David in 2000 with the only sign indicating the winery at the time. Photo by Mick Rock.

stated 'Just say no'). He referred to California dismissively as 'Baja Oregon'.

This year, David's son Jason Lett could not have been more welcoming, offering me a place to stay at the last minute and inviting me to a sit-down tasting of old Eyrie vintages at the winery, primarily held for trade customers in Portland. We listened with rapt attention as the affable Jason talked of the winery's beginnings and how he was trying to preserve the legacy. The highlight for me was learning that his father was just 24 years old, selling educational books for a living, when he brought 3,000 Pinot Noir cuttings up to the Willamette Valley, having fallen in love with the grape. A professor at Davis, where he had studied, had suggested he looked for land outside California. It was his very first visit to Willamette and within less than two months he had found the land he wanted, met Diana, Jason's mother, and married her – she was, Jason quipped, "dad's first vineyard worker".

When David Lett died in 2008, he left a 6,000-case wine library that he had built up in his bid to prove that Willamette wines were world-class. However, when Jason took over as chief winemaker on his father's retirement in 2005, he found huge variations in the library wines, due to cork taint and oxidation. The average case of 12 contained eight pristine bottles, three average and one terrible bottle. Jason developed a highly original procedure to rescue the library in a quite different way from the re-corking methods used by Bordeaux First Growths or Penfolds of Australia. Each year, he and his winemaking team open and taste 2,000-3,000





Tasting Pinot Noirs back to the 1980s.

bottles. All that are below par are thrown away and the rest are blended by batch. His argument is that the blending process ensures consistency whereas topping up does not. The procedure involves 21 steps, avoiding oxygen being the priority – they use

argon gas to push out the corks and protect the wines. The wines then receive Eyrie's 'cellar certification' and are sold both at the winery and through classic distribution channels.

We tasted six wines all over 20 years old, with prices at the cellar door ranging from \$81 to \$341 per bottle. The 1994 Pinot Gris had remarkable depth (Pinot Gris was also pioneered by David, who in the 1960s planted the first ever Pinot Gris in the US and possibly the New World). Of two Chardonnays, I preferred the 1992 Estate to the 1987 Reserve, though both were astonishingly good. Then there were three Pinot Noirs: an Estate 1989 (brambly, soft and mature); a Reserve 1985, my favourite (savoury and with good length); and then South Block Reserve 1987, which was still lively, elegant and with tight tannins on the finish. David never sold one bottle of South Block, holding it all back. Ten rows remain from this original block and Jason makes 50-70 cases a year from it. The 2013 we tasted afterwards was tight, but with sweet/sour cherry fruit and is definitely a keeper – the yield was 1.4 tons/acre.

Eyrie today

Annually Eyrie produces just 8,000 cases (about 10% of the Oregon winery average), the size it reached in 1983, and the winery remains in the old turkey-pressing plant in McMinnville that David converted in 1965. Jason is more realistic and open to the world than his father was – a few

years ago he opened a tasting facility and there is even a sign directing visitors to find it. He still holds back between four and seven cases for ageing from current vintages, but that's much less than before.

When David Lett studied at the University of California at Davis, students were taught in his words (as related by Jason), "here's the bug and here's how to kill it". Jason believes that his father intuitively took the eco direction: no herbicides, insecticides or systemic chemicals, as used by everyone else at that time, and no irrigation either; instead he allowed natural cover crops to grow, creating moisture, shunning ploughing. He adopted a low-tech winemaking approach, too. The traditions have continued and today the winery is certified organic. When asked what he has changed, Jason said that he works with much more accuracy in both the vineyard and the winery. It is obvious that he is a stickler for detail.

Tasting the current Eyrie wines revealed a very precise range. Yet, Jason is also experimenting and pioneering himself. He is known for using indigenous yeast, something his father didn't do and now he's experimenting with the occasional wine with no added sulphur, like the really good Original Vines Pinot Gris 2014. The wines labelled Original Vines are from the vineyards David planted in the early days. They were all ungrafted and have been hit, as other old



local vineyards, by phylloxera, but in Oregon it seems to kill the vines very slowly. The 2014 Original Vines Chardonnay was just lovely and I really appreciated the simple 2015 Estate Chardonnay, fermented and aged in two brand new oak barrels, and the rest much older, from 1993 or earlier. The Pinot rosé is oaked and serious, and then there was an excellent flight of Pinots from plots at different altitudes. The highest is the Daphne Vineyard, at 860 feet (or 260 metres) one of the highest vineyards in Oregon. For me this is not very high altitude, but all things are relative and the site is very exposed (I froze visiting one evening at sundown) – the result is a floral-scented Pinot with firm acidity and great elegance.

Trialling Trousseau

In what seems like a wonderfully low-key 'first', Jason is the first in Willamette to have made a Trousseau wine for sale. Having tasted Jura Trousseau, he thought it might be ideal to plant the grape in the region and he's not alone. A small group of Oregon wineries has followed suit, including Analemma in the Columbia Gorge, whose worthy attempt I tasted from demijohn, and various Willamette wineries, including amphora-specialists Beckham Estate. At the Eyrie tasting, Jason revealed his first release, the 2015 and it was spot on – pale-coloured with a blueberry character, some earthy notes and good acid grip. He made it with no added sulphur.

For Jason, growing up and later working with David was certainly not easy, I discovered in private conversations later, and how else could it have been with such a maverick pioneer for a father? But Jason is making his own mark in Willamette, taking Eyrie forward yet showing great respect for its history. He is a true family man who, almost in the European tradition, lives with his wife and children in a house on one of the estate vineyards. His mother, Diana, lives close by and is still very much involved with Eyrie, having her say on most things.

Eyrie's Daphne Vineyard at sunset.

John Salvi MW writes a modern history of the Médoc château, which became a Bordeaux home away from home to the wine trade between the 1960s and the 1980s. John was assisted in the article by Pamela Prior, secretary to Martin Bamford MW and châtelaine of Loudenne from 1984-1995.

Photos by Mick Rock of www.cephas.com

Half a century of Château Loudenne

In 1957, when I was just 20 years old, my new boss, Allan Sichel, sent me to Bordeaux for two years to learn the trade. He owned the négociant company of Maison Sichel and the majority of Château Palmer, which he had bought in 1938. As my father had been at school with him they were lifelong friends. My father was a wine importer, distributor and retailer in London and Edinburgh, as well as president of the Wine and Spirit Association of Great Britain. He therefore knew well most of the Bordeaux wine trade and I was taken under the wings of Ronald Barton of Léoville-Barton and Christian Cruse of Pontet-Canet.

In order to show me that good wine did not stop at Saint-Estèphe and the Haut-Médoc, Christian took me on a tour of the north Médoc, then known as the Bas-Médoc. This included a visit to Château Loudenne since Christian was an Anglophile and Loudenne, built in the 17th century, had belonged to the Gilbey family (famous, of course, for gin) since 1875. It was known as the pink château and had a wonderful view over the Gironde. At that time the wine was very ordinary and, from what I remember, the estate was in an advanced state of disrepair and the château frankly uninhabitable.

Some years later the Gilbey family sold the château to IDV, who were becoming major players in the fine wine trade in the UK. They decided to renovate the property and to use it not only to make fine wine again but also as a centre of hospitality where they could entertain their guests and customers. This was done on a grand scale and Loudenne was soon to become a beautiful château once more, as well as a magnificent property. This corresponded with the period when the châteaux of Bordeaux were once again blooming



after a long period in the doldrums. International Distillers and Vintners (IDV) had been formed in 1963 from three drinks companies: Twiss, Browning & Hallows (whose director, Geoffrey Hallows, was a fervent supporter of Loudenne), Justerini & Brooks and Piat. Watneys bought IDV in 1970, and very shortly afterward Watneys was purchased by Grand Metropolitan whose chairman, Sir Maxwell Joseph, very wisely separated the wine and spirits from the beer business. More recently, in 1997, Diageo was formed by the merger of Grand Metropolitan plc and Guinness plc – United Distillers and Vintners (UDV) was created from United

Distillers and the IDV part of Grand Metropolitan. Loudenne thus became part of the Diageo Group.

The Bamford era

When the restoration was almost finished, two senior members of IDV, Johnny Patrick and David Peppercorn MW, appointed a manager to run and oversee the property. This was Martin Bamford, who happened to be my oldest and dearest friend from his days with Harveys of Bristol. Bamford installed himself in one of the turrets of the château and set about turning Loudenne into a renowned and magnificent centre of gracious living and hospitality. In this he was helped by Sylvain and Josette Riondato who had been hired as major domo and chef three years earlier by Johnny Patrick. One of the first things Bamford did was to hire Hugh Johnson to design the rose beds. Bamford discovered that the château had a magnificent cellar of fine old wines and used them liberally to accompany Josette's culinary creations. Loudenne rapidly became famous and entertained the great and the good, including Edward Heath, the British Prime Minister. The property of course became part of the massive Maxwell Joseph empire and Maxwell Joseph himself, who had an even more massive property in the Dordogne, became a firm and immovable supporter of Martin Bamford and all his projects for Loudenne and visited as often as he was able.

The female touch

Professional hostesses were required to run such an establishment, to look after the guests and take care of the daily running of the property, which was now receiving

guests on a grand scale. The first hostess was Riti Tripp Van Staveren, a Dutch lady of decided opinions, authoritative manners and a genius of organisation. She pulled everything together until the daily routine of the château ran as smoothly as silk. Riti died quite recently in the Lot-et-Garonne. After several years she was replaced by Jacqueline Connolly, one of the most delightful people imaginable and godmother to one of my children. Bamford was godfather to another of them. Her husband, Thurloe, was the architect who had masterminded the renovation of the property. He became a close friend of Bamford and between them they continued to embellish the château, notably doting it with a fine vintage kitchen with swan taps on the cauldrons of which they were immensely proud. Both are still alive today and Thurloe is 95. Jacqueline was followed by Nicole Launay, a gentle and elegant lady who did not stay very long. The next one was a strong-minded Australian by the name of Priscilla Bonham-Carter who spent a lot of her time socialising with other local château owners, some of them intimately. Then came Marie-Christine Delorme who married Michael Longhurst,

Bamford's sales director, and yet another godfather to one of my many children. Marie-Christine was a feisty lady from Mexico and a wonderful hostess. After Marie-Christine left, Diana Ververka took over but only stayed a very short time. Diana was followed by Luce Naval and eventually by the greatest hostess of them all – Pamela Prior. Pamela, who had been Bamford's secretary since May 1980, ran the property from May 1984 until May 1995 and became close friends with many of the guests and visitors.

Bamford, who had been made President of IDV France with responsibility for public relations a year earlier, died suddenly in September 1982, on the eve of the Ban des Vendanges (the official start of the harvest). Eerily, Maxwell Joseph had died just two days earlier the same week. Pamela was at Loudenne when Bamford died and she subsequently worked for Jacques Bernard, who was made president of IDV France. Two years later in 1984 Pamela was nominated to be the châtelaine at Loudenne.

Loudenne in the 21st century

Bamford was eventually replaced as director of Loudenne by Charles Eve, who also replaced Pamela with the much younger Lucie Palmer. Charles and his wife Pat, together with Lucie Palmer, managed the property until it was finally sold by Diageo to the Lafragette family, Marie-Claude, Jean-Paul and Florence Lafragette, in the year 2000. Today, Pamela lives in Pauillac and is still in close touch with the staff at Loudenne and in fact she and I dined there this September with the manager Guy Durand Saint Omer.

Things changed under the Lafragette ownership. At first it was managed by the daughter, Florence, both attractive and sociable, but she married and moved away. Madame Marie-Claude Lafragette took over and was an excellent hostess. The château was run on a luxury bed and breakfast basis, but with not quite the elegance and style of their predecessors. Meanwhile Jean-Paul Lafragette was leading an exciting and unscrupulous life. He had a small Cognac family property and he acquired not only Loudenne, but also Château de Rouillac in Pessac-Léognan, and Château de L'Hospital in Graves,



an ancient property and an historical monument. He created a drink by the name of Alizé, a pungent concoction of rum, vodka, gin or tequila together with Cognac, exotic fruit juices (from passion fruit, guava, pineapple, cranberry, coconut) and sometimes jam from a jam factory he had bought in the Lot-et-Garonne. These came in fancy bottles violently coloured in red, blue, green, pink and gold.

Kobrand Corporation became Jean-Paul Lafragette's agent in the US and sales reached the colossal figure of several million bottles. Unfortunately, Monsieur Lafragette did not see the point of being honest and Kobrand discovered that some million dollars had somehow disappeared. For a long time, they tried to settle things amicably but to no avail. Eventually Kobrand brought a court case for 'misappropriation of company funds'. It dropped the civil case when Lafragette sold 49% of his company L&L to them in July 2008 on a supposedly amicable basis. He was forced to sell all three châteaux and faced prosecution in the French courts. After a very lean period I have just learned that he has recently bought another château, not a wine producing one, in the Lot-

et-Garonne and is marketing *Lamproie à la Bordelaise aux Grands Crus* (lampreys Bordeaux style).

The vast Moutai Group bought Château Loudenne in 2013 and appointed a manager, Guy Durand Saint Omer, who previously owned vineyards at Château Castan. He discovered that things were not at all what Moutai had expected and has spent three very difficult years trying to get the château back on an even keel. There was a scandal that made the front page of the *Sud-Ouest* regional newspaper because the staff were not paid for several months. Today, in spite of all the difficulties, the château is as beautiful as ever, lovingly looked after by Saint Omer, but the *chais* and cellars now require considerable investment. Things were looking somewhat dismal until quite recently when the Cognac House of Camus took a sizeable participation including an important sum of money (undisclosed) that Saint Omer hopes will enable him to '*redorer le blazon*' (restore the image) of Château Loudenne and reinstate it to its former eminence.



Caroline Henry reports on the considerable challenges faced by growers in Champagne's most southerly outpost in the most difficult growing season since the 1950s. The photos are by Caroline.

A small but beautiful harvest in the Côte des Bar

In numerology, 2016 is a 'nine' year; a year of cleansing, completion and rest. And this has translated into being one of the most difficult viticultural years in France. The country's winemakers endured all of nature's whims over the course of this growing season, resulting in the vines taking a rest from producing, and Champagne was no exception.

But while most of the region somehow managed to ride the wave and exit the tunnel fairly unscathed, the water came crashing down in all its might in the Aube department's Côte des Bar. Accordingly, Champagne's most southerly outpost – which is responsible for about a quarter of Champagne's production – suffered its worst growing season since 1957. Nevertheless, the grapes that survived came good. Incidentally, the Côte des Bar borders Burgundy and is mainly planted with Pinot Noir.

The main culprit was the spring frost of 26th-27th April; after evening drizzle, temperatures dropped to -5°C overnight and buds froze on the vines. The frost was especially severe in the valley around Bar-sur-Aube and to a slightly lesser extent in the Seine Valley between Bar-sur-Seine and Les Riceys, where it destroyed up to two-thirds of the region's potential yields. The incessant rain from May till July created the ideal climatic conditions for mildew and more losses were suffered. By the time the CIVC announced the maximum permitted yields at the end of July, those in the Côte des Bar were estimated at 3,000 kg/ha, a quarter of last year's average yields. The very dry and hot Indian summer from 20th August till the 12th September

added more damage, as grapes burned and shrivelled up on the vines. However, some solace came with the rains just before the start of harvest which boosted the overall grape bunch weights. At the time of writing, about half way into the harvest season, it looks like the quantity will be a little higher than the original estimates, and most growers so far are very happy with the quality.

Eric Schreiber, a biodynamic grower in Courteron in the Vallée de la Seine, was quite upbeat even though the frost damaged 5 of his 6.5 hectares. He explains: "Where it froze, the yields are very low, ranging between 1,000 and 1,500kg per hectare; however, we managed to stay on top of the mildew and the other vineyards are really beautiful with yields of between 10,000 and 12,000kg/ha. This means my average yields across my whole domain will probably end up being 3,500kg/ha and the juice is very well balanced. After this very difficult season, this is more than we had hoped for."

Maxime Barbichon, another biodynamic grower in Gye-sur-Seine, in the same valley, was less successful in battling off mildew. Maxime suffered frost damage on 6 of his 9 hectares, and mildew added on average another 50% loss to this. He decided not to open his press centre and instead outsourced the pressing to Champagne Fleury. Maxime estimates his total harvest volume at 24,000 to 25,000kg, which is a long way off from his usual 90,000kg. Unlike Eric Schreiber, Maxime Barbichon will not have enough Individual Reserve

to make up the gap and meet the 9,500kg/ha set by the CIVC. The Individual Reserve system in Champagne allows growers to harvest more grapes in abundant years to use in more difficult years. This allows the region to maintain its leading market position and protects it from big vintage volume differences. It also protects growers' annual income in smaller volume years.

Michel Drappier is one of the hardest hit producers. Drappier is the largest Champagne house of the Côte des Bar and suffered up to 90% frost damage on his 57-hectare estate; 75% of Drappier's grape suppliers are in the same

Below left: Maxime Barbichon was one of many growers battling with mildew on their Pinot Noir. Below right: Hugo and Michel Drappier with barrels containing macerating Pinot Gris.



boat as most are located in the same sub-region in and around Bar-sur-Aube. This will put pressure on the house's commercial strategy in a few years' time. "Even with the reserve we will not be able to produce the same amount of bottles we usually do. Purchasing more grapes from elsewhere is not really an option as nobody in the Aube has extra grapes, and even if things are a lot rosier in the Marne, most growers there do not meet appellation limits either," said Michel Drappier. "Furthermore, our house flavour is very much based on the Kimmeridgian limestone and clay terroir of the Côte des Bars, and we prefer to produce fewer bottles than change our flavour profile." He adds that like most people in the Aube region, this year will require him to use all the house reserves, making them very vulnerable for the next few years. "This year we will get through because of the Individual Reserve [allowance], however, if next year will be just as difficult we will be in serious trouble." The reserves in and around Bar-sur-Aube are already a little less than in the rest of the region after the severe hail damage the sub-

region suffered in 2013 and in the difficult 2012 season.

There are a few places with less frost damage, which are mainly located in between the two valleys. In Ville-sur-Arce only the lowest vineyards suffered frost damage. It was therefore also one of the villages which started picking earlier compared to the rest of the region. At Jérôme Coessens' press centre the average yield after eight days was between 7,000 and 7,500kg/ha. According to Coessens, this is because three-quarters of the village vineyards are located mid or high slope and because people worked very hard to fight off mildew. This was echoed by Michel Jacob, a grower with 18 hectares across several villages in the Seine Valley. He elaborates: "This year it was very important to treat with small doses but at the right time. It really is a year where one had to work twice as hard for fewer grapes, but if one slacked off nature was unforgiving."

Most cellar masters I spoke to confirmed Jacob's comments and agreed that this year really is the growers' year, and that overall the harvest is looking quite promising

in terms of quality. Régis Camus, *chef de cave* at Champagne Heidsieck summed the year up as follows: "After this very difficult growing season, which was full of challenges, I am very happy with the quality. The juices are well balanced between sugar and acid levels and I believe we will be able to create some beautiful wines this year."



Jérôme Coessens and his Coquard press.



Wenche Hvattum outside the original barrel bedroom she offers for guests. The accommodation can be booked up more than a year ahead.

Stephen Quinn encounters new berries and finds a creative use for old barrels as he goes in pursuit of Norwegian wine. A version of this article was originally published on Stephen's website at www.sraqinn.org. Photos are courtesy of Lerkekåsa Vineyard.

Northern exposure

Most of Norway's handful of vineyards are operated by hobbyists or serve as destinations for wine tourism, but Lerkekåsa Vineyard near Gvarv has become successful through a combination of innovation, a unique site and good wines. Lerkekåsa is the most northerly commercial vineyard in the world if we focus on sites that do not greenhouse or bury vines in winter to protect them.

In recent years winter temperatures at Lerkekåsa have reached as low as -29° Celsius. It sits at 59 degrees north, similar to

Alaska in the United States. Similar problems with freezing conditions are found in China, where workers bury vines in winter in a labour-intensive process.

Lerkekåsa is about a two-hour drive southwest of the capital Oslo, and makes wine from grapes and fruit. It has a restaurant and offers unique accommodation whereby people sleep in three wine barrels nestled among the vines. The concept is the idea of Wenche Hvattum and Dr Joar Saettem. Hvattum trained as a sommelier but tends to concentrate on food because her husband Saettem, the winemaker, "is a much better winemaker than he is a cook," she says with a smile.



The vineyard was first planted in 2009 with 20 varieties; Wenche Hvattum has obviously found a tasty one.

The largest of the three barrels, with a capacity of 7,600 litres, came from Germany. The other two — each has a capacity of 6,500 litres — were used by the Norwegian wine company Vinmonopol to import wines in bulk decades ago. Two people can sleep comfortably, if somewhat snugly, in each barrel. Hvattum says people tend to find Lerkekåsa through the YouWish.no website, on which people book unusual holidays. One guest named Henning was celebrating his birthday when I visited in August. He and friends were sleeping in the house on the vineyard because when his girlfriend booked several months earlier she discovered the barrels had been reserved for more than a year ahead.

Grapes were first planted here in 2009. Joar Sættem has experimented with 20 varieties to find those that best suit the climate. Lerkekåsa sits in a beautiful valley near Lake Norsjo, protected by hills and mountains, which creates a special mesoclimate. Daytime temperatures during my visit were in the mid 20s Celsius.

Of the 20 varieties, Rondo, Leon Millot and Solaris appear to do well in local conditions. Dr Sættem also likes Hasansky Sladki, a black grape originally from Russia, though he concedes that getting fruit to ripen consistently



will always be an issue. Dr Sættem started his project believing that changing climatic conditions would mean higher temperatures, and to a degree he has been vindicated. Indeed, the English sparkling wine industry has also benefitted from changing climatic conditions in the past two decades.

Lerkekåsa's best white comes from the Solaris grape, and this

zingy creation will improve as the vines age. Sættem also makes a range of wines from local fruit. Gvarv has long been known as a fruit-growing region and has more than 80 different varieties of apples and plums. Many now-famous wine regions around the world, such as Central Otago in New Zealand and Elgin Valley in South Africa, were originally home to orchards.

Norwegian wine laws require fruit wines to be made from local produce and Dr Sættem creates the wines from the white version of blackcurrants along with blackberries, raspberries, plums, apples and a range of berries I've not previously encountered, such as crowberry, rowanberry and mossberry. Some of the wines are labelled Mormors Hage, which translates as 'grandma's garden', and they sing of the kind of fruit aromas Sættem remembers as a child. He points out the connection between memory and flavour to the people who stay overnight during his pre-dinner tasting, after a tour of the vineyard.

Norwegian wine, only from the cellar door

In Norway the state-run Vinmonopol controls wine, beer and spirits sales to domestic consumers. It is not possible to buy Norwegian wine at any of the country's Vinmonopol shops. A new law that came into effect in June this year allows

vineyards to sell up to 15,000 litres of wine a year from the cellar door. Norway is a big country with a relatively small number of vineyards so for people in the major cities it requires a drive into the country.

The 2015 Lerkekåsa Mormors Hage and the 2015 Horst — the latter translates as 'autumn' — are delightfully zesty wines. Horst is a combination of blackberries, crowberries and mossberries. It looks and tastes like a young Burgundy with soft tannins. The red Mormors Hage is made from raspberries and delivers powerful aromas of ripe fruit. Dr Sættem gets a touch of tannin by fermenting the raspberries with their seeds. The delicious and tangy white Mormors Hage is made from white currants and has firm texture and aromas of white flowers.

Dessert was accompanied by a 2010 fruit wine from local plums. These plums came from a neighbour's tree. "She does not know the variety of plum," Dr Sættem said, "because the tree is so old." The wine, which looked like a pale rose, tasted dry yet had sweet aromas. A 2013 made from rowanberries had a pleasant umami appeal like a dry sherry. Both show that fruit wine can age well.

Norway-based wine writer Ann Samuelsen, a student in the Master of Wine programme and a CWW member, points out that Denmark, Sweden and Finland all grow more grapes than Norway. In Norway a handful of vineyards are planted in the south of the country, around Ålesund and Lyngdal. "Egge Gård makes sparkling wine from the Solaris grape, and Klaus-Peter Keller from Rheinessen has also planted Riesling grapes in Kristiansand," Samuelsen said. British winemaker and CWW member Stephen Skelton MW acts as a consultant to some of the vineyards.

Kvelland Vineyard in Lyngdal was planted in 1999 and has experimented with more than 40 varieties to find the ideal grapes. Like Lerkekåsa, Kvelland focuses on providing gourmet food from local produce. The menu includes salmon plus lamb, deer and elk from the Kvelland district.

Both vineyards have outdoor terraces overlooking the vines. Can anything be more enjoyable than drinking wine as the sun sets on a beautiful summer-blue sky after a day of sunshine?



GG '15 goes down as a first-class tasting for **Richard Bampfield MW**, pictured left, hard at work. Photos are courtesy of VDP.Die Prädikatsweingüter.

VDP Grosses Gewächs wines hit the heights in 2015

The VDP Grosses Gewächs tasting held at the end of August in Wiesbaden must rank as the best organised wine tasting I have ever attended, as befits the outstanding 2015 vintage in Germany. Over 400 wines were organised in flights with a maximum of six wines in each flight – enough to assess comparisons but small enough to be able to give due consideration to each wine. And the best bit was that each individual taster could decide which flights they wanted to taste and in which order. Guests simply held up a card and the fresh flight was delivered promptly and without fuss. It really was like tasting in First Class.

With only one day there, I had to be selective and kicked off with a few flights of Mosel Rieslings. Highlights were: the classic, mineral, tight wines of Heymann-Löwenstein – how I would like to see these age; dry, racy wines from Clemens Busch; wines with wonderfully defined peach and pineapple fruit from Loosen and S.A. Prüm; and a magnificent Bernkasteler Doctor from Geheimrat J. Wegeler. The star of the show was the Scharzhofberger from Van Volxem, but the Ockfener Bockstein from Nik Weis at St Urbans-Hof ran it close. 2015 is clearly a fabulous vintage in the Mosel and there was plenty of evidence to counter the claims from certain quarters that the wines might lack acidity.

Having discovered the wines of Von Winning at Prowein earlier in the year, I was keen to taste them again and, sure enough, I was again impressed by the way they manage to harness the oak in Rieslings of great precision and purity. Four years ago, I started to be excited by oaked Sauvignons, now I find myself seduced by oaked Riesling. Whatever next? Bacchus, beware.....

From the Pfalz, Von Buhl presented wines of fine expression and flavour, and I was delighted with my introduction to Gerhard Aldinger from Württemberg. I only tasted one flight from the Rheingau, but Künstler, Leitz, Kloster Eberbach and Geheimrat J. Wegeler all impressed.

In the Nahe, Dönnhoff more than fulfilled my high expectations – the Oberhäuser Brücke, Niederhäuser Hermannshöhle and Schlossböckelheimer Felsenberg were all predictably stunning: relatively tight on the nose, but with astonishing verve and length on the palate. I also tasted wines from Schäfer-Fröhlich for the first time – brilliant wines, though I found the reduction on the nose perhaps flattened the differences between the vineyards at this stage. Schlossgut Diel also stood out in the Nahe.

Of course, the tasting featured much more than Riesling. A flight of Silvaners from Franken threw up striking wines

from Rudolf May and Juliusspital Würzburg. I was also keen to find out what top-class Lemberger tastes like and a flight of 2014s demonstrated that the top wines have good depth of colour, crunchy black fruit flavours and a note of spice. It seems to wear oak lightly so my preferred wines were those with less obvious oak influence from Schnaitmann and Gerhard Aldinger.

And finally Spätburgunder. I know I came out of the tasting thinking that I had just tasted a range of wines of a consistency that Burgundy would be hard pressed to match. Most of the Spätburgunders were from the 2014 vintage. Keen to ensure I tasted the Ahr, I found wonderfully expressive and refined wines from Jean Stodden and Meyer-Näkel. From Rheinhessen, Keller and Gutzler showed well; very pure, perfumed 2013s from Friedrich Becker in the Pfalz; really world-class wines from Rudolf Fürst and Stadt Klingenberg in Franken; and equally beautiful, pristine wines from Bernard Huber in Baden.

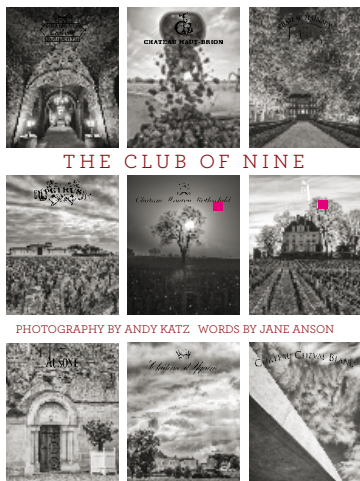
I must admit, somewhat shamefully, that I needed convincing about the merits of bone-dry German Riesling, having found too many somewhat austere in the past. This event certainly opened my mind to the wonders of this style, assisted no doubt by a genuinely outstanding vintage and producers of the highest order. Sometimes it feels a true privilege to attend a tasting and this was one such occasion. I just hope that I show sufficient self-restraint to allow at least some of my own 2015s to show their real potential in the fullness of time.



Book news

Compiled and written by *Wink Lorich*

Jane Anson has contributed the words to a new photography-led book by Andy Katz coming out later this



year in English, and with a separate edition in Chinese. *The Club of Nine* is about the nine 'so-called' first growth châteaux of Bordeaux: Lafite, Latour, Mouton, Margaux, Haut Brion, Yquem, Petrus, Cheval Blanc and Ausone.

The book will be available on Amazon for \$60/£42 with trade

discounts offered of 30%. Details will emerge on Andy's website: <https://andykatzphotography.com/>.

Sarah Jane Evans MW has joined the editorial board of the Classic Wine Library series from Oxford-based publisher Infinite Ideas, joining CWW member **Richard Mayson** and US-based Joshua Greene (editor of *Wine & Spirits* magazine). The nine launch books are available in paperback and ebook format and all but one are written by Circle members. See reviews beginning on p30 of the three latest releases. The publisher plans to have 40 titles in print by the end of 2016 and welcomes suggestions from prospective authors.

Hugh Johnson has been celebrating the launch of the 40th edition of his famous *Pocket Wine Book*, as well as a completely new book, an anthology of sorts. See the article that follows about the launch and two reviews.

A launch double and 40 years of Pocket Wine

It's rare to see Jancis Robinson MW at a book launch that is not for one of her own books. But, there she was, along with several other eminent colleagues who had gathered to pay homage to Hugh Johnson for the launch of the 40th edition of his *Pocket Wine Book* as well as his new tome, *Hugh Johnson on Wine* – reviews on the next page.

The event was rather appropriately held at the wonderfully historical Royal Geographical Society in Kensington ('dedicated to the development and promotion of geographical knowledge'), founded in 1830. The launch was low key and intimate with Hush Heath Balfour Rosé English sparkling offered before the talks and afterwards there was a tasting of six wines from Laithwaite's. Hugh has been involved with the Laithwaite family and its various wine companies since 1973 when he was wine correspondent for *The Sunday Times* and they founded The Sunday Times Wine Club together. Keeping it in the family is Hugh's style – it just so happens that his son, Red Johnson, CEO of the British Bottle Company, is involved in furthering exports for Hush Heath, among other English sparkling wines.

Before the official talks from Hugh's publisher and the man himself, I was able to sneak in a short conversation, where he regaled me with how he had at last been able to visit Arbois in the Jura... And how the highlight was finding a classical concert going on in Arbois' golden church, as he described it (the stone the church is built from is a yellow marl). "What a wonderful organ", he said. This is a man who has always embraced all that is culture and not – as some of us, I fear – become so over-obsessed with wine that he doesn't see the rest.

So, what could he give me as an exclusive quote for *Circle Update*, I wondered? "Writing is almost a drug," he responded. "If I'm feeling uneasy in the evening, I wonder what I've done during the day [and then] I realise that I haven't written anything. So I do – it's not always very good – but I prefer scribbling to anything else. I keep on winding the old handle."

Group publishing director for Octopus, Hugh's publisher, Denise Bates said that it was the first time she had



Photo of Hugh by this issue's featured photographer, **Steven Morris**.

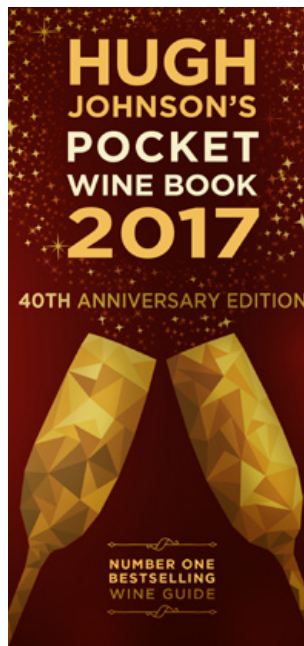
celebrated 40 consecutive issues of a book. She told us that 1977, the year of the first publication of the *Pocket Wine Book*, was the year Elvis died and was also the last time the French used the guillotine! She described Hugh as "not just a national treasure, but an international treasure".

As for the author himself, despite being relatively small in stature – to the extent that he chose to speak from a balcony above the room – he has never been a shrinking violet and always finds interesting ways to talk about his work along with his subject. Hugh began by reminding us that this year marks the 50th birthday of his very first book, named with, as he put it, a four letter word, *Wine*. Speaking about the 40 years of the *Pocket Wine Book*, he told us that his original publisher, James Mitchell, had advised him simply to keep going. He had found a subject that had built-in obsolescence and noted that apart from *Bradshaw's Railway Guide*, he couldn't think of any other publications that needed updating every year.

Hugh explained that the first *Pocket Book* he wrote was from memory, but the second one required some research. Today that research is done by an "A Team, marshalled by editor Margaret Rand" (many of whom are CWW members). The chief difficulty, he said, was not so much finding new producer names to include, but summoning up the courage to chuck out the old names.

"Have I ever been lucky?" He concluded.

Book reviews



Hugh Johnson's Pocket Wine Book 2017

Review by Brett Jones

Mitchell Beazley £11.99.

336 pages, hardback.

of *Hugh Johnson's Pocket Wine Book* was published. Thus, we wine lovers and explorers had a neat volume packed with information that we could easily carry whenever we went out to buy wine. Hugh Johnson's *Pocket Wine* (as it was known) quickly became indispensable for those who wanted to learn about wine and discover new bottles.

I swore by my Pocket Johnson (totally oblivious to the American slang connotations...) carrying it everywhere to open my eyes to new wines. Many of my customers did so as well, especially when they checked the wines on my list, many of them beyond the norm – it often led to interesting discussions and, most importantly, enlightenment!

So now I am the proud owner of the 2017 book, the 40th Anniversary Edition. Larger, heavier but still pocket portable, it is erudite with opinions and information charmingly written.

In his introduction, Hugh Johnson looks back to see what has changed in the last 40 years. He observes that we're drinking less: 'my big hunch is that it's all about cars; now we all drive cars (or ride bikes) we have to be careful.' He bemoans the bigger wine companies, run by accountants. And, he notes that in poor vintages today 'producers are getting very good at making silk purses out of sows' ears,' yet we still celebrate a good vintage.

Hugh also has a pop at the size of wine glasses – I remember in 1976 at Webber's our wine was served in 125ml glasses, while now wine is available in 250 ml glasses. Then he remarks that fashions have changed over the decades with the 'naïve craze for oak' and the 'seductive and damaging' 100-point system, but he notes that these fashions are on the wane. His introduction talks about the worries of climate change and there's much more.

The book ends with an entertaining chapter, 40 Wine Stories, including paragraphs on old and new stories from around the wine world, each one highlighting a different aspect of wine.

Hugh Johnson has honed his vinous knowledge, experience and expertise over the years, and the simplicity and elegance of his little book makes it the *vade mecum* of the peripatetic wine enthusiast. I look forward (as I expect Hugh does) to the next 40 editions.

Hugh Johnson on Wine

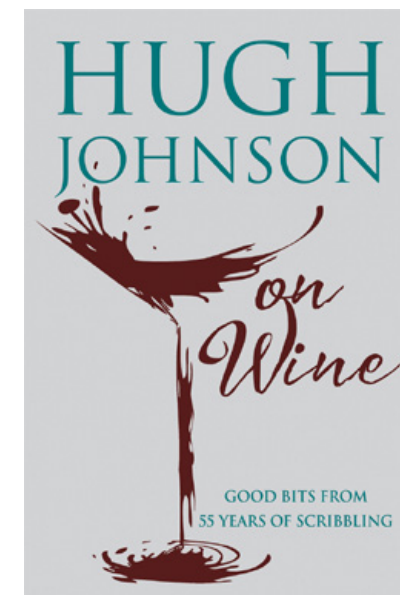
Good bits from 55 years of Scribbling

Review by Paul Howard

Mitchell Beazley

£20, 288 pages,

softback



To write well about wine, to engage with an audience and do that consistently over many years is no mean feat. These days, many aspire, but few are chosen. Hugh Johnson has been at it now for 55 years. His latest book, subtitled *Good Bits from 55 years of Scribbling*, does exactly what it says on the tin. Right from the start, he grasped that what you need are stories. There is no shortage of stories in wine, just a shortage of great storytellers.

This new book is living history rather than a stroll down memory lane. Grouped by decade, the period from 1960 through to our current day is covered. It's said that these have been the most revolutionary of times in wine. Hugh is there to bear witness, whether it's the emergence of new countries and regions, global warming, the advance of technology or pricking the conceits of Robert Parker.

During this time too, wine writing itself has changed, from being a hobby to an entire industry. Yet no one writes better, and, in my opinion, only one or two ever get close. He can say in a line what lesser mortals (myself included) need a paragraph for, and without the plague of technical babble or points systems. To paraphrase him, he has always known the difference between tinsel and gold.

Even in his oldest pieces, written as Giles Congreve, an early *nom de plume*, his style appears fully formed. There is a slight bias in content to the 1990s and 2000s. Regardless, every article is entertaining, expert and erudite. But many are prescient too, capturing trends and offering an opinion on them almost before they appeared. Occasionally, updated observations have been added in the margins, and, with typical open-mindedness, he is not above correcting himself or saying when he called it wrong. I was also delighted to find that there are magnificent illustrations by the late Paul Hogarth included. Those are almost as indispensable as the writing itself because they convey the joy of wine better than virtually any photograph.

In these short pieces and passages, nay, stories, collected from his many books, magazines, and journals, he manages that rare three-card trick of being authoritative, up-to-date and entertaining. His articles are expressed succinctly, economically and always with gentle humour. This book contains over 180 of them, and if I have a criticism, it is that this isn't enough. What did he leave on the cutting-room floor? Still, a great storyteller knows when to leave the audience wanting more. So read the book from cover to cover, or just dip in for inspiration or two, again and again.

There, I've taken a page to say what Hugh could have better stated in a sentence. In other words, if you only buy one book about wine this year, buy this.

Scribble on, Sir. Scribble on.



Photo of Hugh, courtesy of Octopus Publishing.

Nicholas Faith – *The Story of Champagne*
Review by Andy Henderson
 Infinite Ideas Classic Wine Library, £30.
 224 pages, paperback.



Nicholas Faith's book is unique: he provides a depth of historic detail but gives tight focus on changes in the 40-odd year crossover from the 20th to the 21st century – maybe Champagne's most critical commercial era.

Reims Cathedral and the huge chalk pits below mark the crossroads of Europe and for centuries have been the meeting place for commerce and combat. They pinpoint Champagne. This story takes us from before to after the 'taming of the fizz', through the culture and romance, the international markets, into World War Two and onto 2015 when the Champagne region was recognised as a UNESCO World Heritage site.

Champagne is the first 'agro-industrial' winner defined under 'Living Cultural Landscapes'. Those chalk pits, Les Caves, are now 600 kilometres of essential cellaring for Champagne's creation. They are one of the three UNESCO awarded 'sites' in Champagne. Incidentally, this excellent book is in memory of Pierre Cheval, the father of Champagne's nomination for World Heritage status.

The author's feel for the region resonates; he sees the people as 'hard-headed and hard-working, fully aware that no one *needs* to drink Champagne. It is their story I tell in this book, their efforts to produce, improve, sell and protect their wine.' And this he achieves effortlessly.

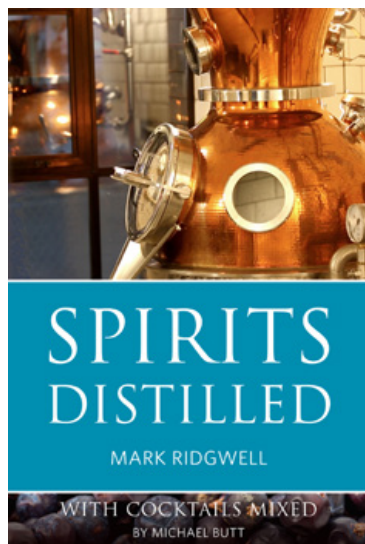
Quick to the point: 'when [champagne] arrived,' he writes, 'it was regarded purely and simply as an aid to seduction... or a recognition of freedom from the constraints of everyday life.' Here is an exemplary storyteller with quotes and anecdotes throughout reflecting both his knowledge and access to those who influence, control and risk change.

Nicholas Faith's empirical approach could almost have had him greeting Napoleon as he alighted in the Avenue de Champagne – the second UNESCO site. And he surely attended the Parisian nightclub when Michel Budin launched Perrier Joüet's Belle Epoque, in celebration of Duke Ellington's 70th birthday.

However, whilst he circulates with insouciance, never forget this is the journalist who squeezed out the story of the dubious practice of 'sales *sur lattes*' and later wrote about it in the original edition of this book, published in 1988. So, here in this fully revised new edition, we have the full explanations and now he writes that Champagne houses are: 'crucially, far more honest about their wines – and the grapes they contain – than they were.'

Fascinating information from new perspectives in a thoughtful layout make for compelling reading. It includes a boxed layout of topics, such as Bottles – shapes and sizes, including the huge Primat. Then, there's the Forgotten Quartet of grape varieties (Moutard Champagne 6 Cépages is a rare example). However, the glossary could have made reference to these useful boxes. Firms listed include the 16 Champagne Academy Grandes Marques Houses, but it does not actually give an entry to the Academy.

Above all this is an enjoyable read; essential for students, a great aide for tourists and probably the most important Champagne book of the year.



Mark Ridgwell –
Spirits Distilled
With Cocktails Mixed
 by Michael Butt.
Review by Colin
Hampden-White
 Infinite Ideas Classic
 Wine Library, £30.
 224 pages,
 paperback.

Nobody can be geeky all of the time, but those of us who profess a passion for spirits do quite like to be geeky some of the time. To get to this stage there are very good books which look at the methods of distillation, from Armagnac to whisky. There are also good books which offer a little history and background to a range of spirits, and there are books that can give you recipes for drinks that can be made from the different spirits. And I feel sure that there are quiz books focused on alcohol.

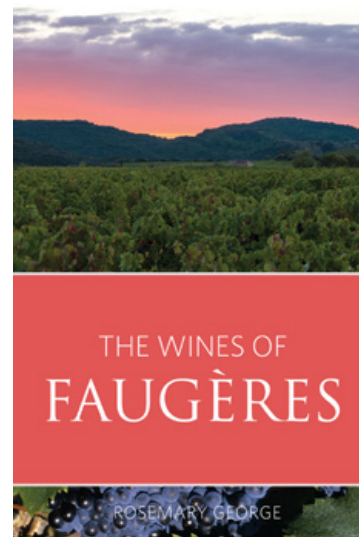
Spirits Distilled by Mark Ridgwell has taken the full array of spirits books on offer and spliced them together in one. By doing so he has created a not so large book that is informative to the novice and a good reference to the expert. For more in-depth study of the specifics of distilling, history or cocktails, other books may be more wholly informative.

There are very few books trying to be all things to all men. This book has made an admirable attempt; it covers the making of the different spirit groups in good detail whilst not getting too heavily into the science. It is educational on tasting and the use of different spirits, including their use in the classic cocktails. There is even a little quiz at the end of each section to see how much one has really remembered.

I found the book not only informative, but also easy to

read. It is separated into easily-consumable chunks. This not only makes it a book one can put down and pick up again easily, but also one to use as a quick reference book. It does not have lavish layouts and large pictures on glossy pages; they would make it far larger and more expensive. I live in a small flat in central London; space comes at a premium, and I have certainly made space for this addition.

Rosemary George
 – *The Wines of*
Faugères
Review by Liz
Sagues
 Infinite Ideas Classic
 Wine Library, £30.
 218 pages,
 paperback.



I've got a soft spot for Faugères – I remember drinking quite a lot of it over several years, long before I became involved in wine in any way professionally. It was our 'house wine' when we rented a gîte in the Dordogne and cost a pittance at the local supermarket.

It was also the origin of a long-standing joke in the family. The words 'Ste Agricole' appeared fairly prominently on the label and we convinced a rather naïve niece that it was a wine dedicated to a vinous saint and therefore heaven smiled on us when we drank it in quantity. As a result, Ste Agricole rather than Faugères was how we always described it.

Even then, well before these schist-soil vineyards in the hills north-west of Béziers were granted AC status, the wine was a cut above most French supermarket bottles, so I'm always delighted now to meet good, serious examples.

And all this makes Rosemary's book a particular, personal pleasure, both for evoking memories of happy times past and for teaching me a great deal more about everything to do with Faugères. Much more than that, she makes a valuable and sometimes gently provocative contribution to professional literature on wine areas in the south of France.

In the Classic Wine Library tradition inherited from Faber & Faber, the book is a serious, text-heavy compilation, starting with the story of this small part of the Languedoc from the Greeks to the 21st century and then dealing with climate, grape varieties, viticulture and winemaking (a lot of it organic) before a domaine-by-domaine tour through the appellation – that tour is the meat of the book, more than half of its content. The amount of work involved there is impressive indeed, and it's intriguing to see the differences as well as the similarities between vigneronns united by a rather special terroir.

After that, and before the final factual, statistical pages, Rosemary draws together all the threads into a more opinionated view of Faugères, where it is today and where it might go in future. She's convinced that the future could be great: "it has the potential to be one of the best appellations in the Languedoc, if not in the whole of France."

Rosemary, I know, had to complete this book quickly, but the information in it is immensely detailed and there's very little hint of undue haste. Just one quibble – I understand and accept her use of French expressions, but I wish the publisher hadn't felt the need to italicise so many of the more common, well-understood ones. Reading would be easier without that.

Forthcoming wine events

In our listings we include major generic tastings and events. Nearly all trade tastings and other events in the UK can be found on the Wine & Spirit Trade Association (WSTA) website at <http://www.wsta.co.uk/resources/trade-diary> or by downloading its app for iPhone/Android at <http://www.wsta.co.uk/download-app>. There is also a useful diary with events for the UK on-trade that may be of interest at <http://imbibe.com/events>.

Below and continuing opposite you will also find a list of major international conferences and trade fairs for November 2016 and the first half of 2017.

The table opposite lists key London tastings, mainly generic, up to the end of next January. This should be of help even to those travelling in from outside. These are tastings that, as members of CWW, you should be able to attend easily, even at the last minute. **Note the CWW events in red and reserve another date in your diaries: next year's AGM on 25th May in London.**

International conferences and trade (or part-trade) fairs 2016-17

DATE	Event/description	Location	Contact name/email OR website for details and registration
6th-7th November	Raw Wine Fair	New York, US	www.newyork.rawwine.com
7th-9th November	ProWine China	Shanghai, China	www.prowinechina.com
15th-16th November	Vinexpo	Tokyo, Japan	www.vinexpotokyo.com
5th-7th December	Wine Vision	Sonoma, CA, US	www.winevision.com
29th-31st January	ViniSud	Montpellier, France	www.vinisud.com/en
30th January - 1st February	Millésime Bio	Marseille, France	www.millesime-bio.com/en
5th-7th February	Salon des Vins de Loire	Angers, France	www.salondesvinsdeloire.com/en/

12th-14th February	VinoVision	Paris, France	https://en.vinovisionparis.com/
19th-21st March	Prowein	Düsseldorf, Germany	www.prowein.com
9th-12th April	Vinitaly	Verona, Italy	www.vinitaly.com/en/
8th-11th May	ProWine Asia	Hong Kong	www.prowineasia.com
22nd-24th May 2017	London Wine Fair	London, UK	www.londonwinefair.com

London tastings November 2016 - January 2017

DATE	Event/Tasting	Contact name/email OR website for details and registration
1st November	New Zealand new release tasting	victoria.kennedy@nzwine.com
1st November	CWW Greek tasting	andrea.warren@btinternet.com
7th November	Leithaberg DAC tasting	alison@dillonmorrall.com
7th November	The New Douro tasting	c.derler@wine-partners.at
8th November	Wines of Jura tasting	celine@bouteiller.co.uk
10th November	CWW Haciendas food & wine experience	andrea.warren@btinternet.com
14th November	Real Italian wine and food	a.kelly@ice.it
16th November	Wines from Spain awards tasting	alison@dillonmorrall.com
1st December	Washington State Wine seminar	kate@hilltopwines.co.uk
1st December	Circle of Wine Writers Christmas Party	andrea.warren@btinternet.com
5th December	Wine Australia Inspired tasting	uk@wineaustralia.com
10th January	French Diversity tasting	laure.monrozier@businessfrance.fr
16th January	New Zealand annual trade tasting	victoria.kennedy@nzwine.com
18th January	French Wine Discoveries tasting	london@wine4trade.fr
24th January	Australia Day tasting	UK@wineaustralia.com

