

Quaffing

PWS Quarterly Notes & News



January 2006

From The Chair

If it is not too late may I take this opportunity to wish you all a very Happy New Year with lots of exciting wines to taste. The committee hopes that you will find the forthcoming year's programme of interest. We try to provide a varied selection but realise that obviously we are unlikely to appeal to everyone. I do however warmly recommend the February tasting, when I have persuaded Tim Clarke from the travel firm Arblaster & Clarke to come and talk. Tim is a very good raconteur as well as being knowledgeable about wine - you may have heard his talk on Sicily about 2 years ago (this inspired Julian & I to do a wine tour of the island last September), and this time he is doing 'The Malvasia Story'. There is a certain amount of discussion as to whether Malvasia is one grape or a group of closely related wines, but they are amongst the earliest Mediterranean wines and include reds from Greece, dry whites from Italy, and sweet wines from Sicily (including the luscious Passitos), as well as Madeiras.

With so many variations on this widely travelled wine/grape we can be sure that Tim will present a fascinating tasting.

March of course sees the AGM & blind tasting when I discover how little I know about wine! I hope that members will try to attend - remember it is free!

Perhaps I can also do an advanced trail for the July Birthday dinner at the Brookfield Hotel which we shall aim to make as good and as enjoyable as the recent South Downs feast. If the weather permits we shall have the aperitif and nibbles in the gardens & with wines chosen from the Brookfield cellar - it should be a good evening"

Sheila Robinson

PWS Committee Members & Contact Details

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DATES FOR YOUR DIARY

Tuesday 7th February 2006

Tim Clarke - The Malvasia Story

Mountbatten Centre 7.00pm

Tuesday 7th March 2006

A.G.M. + Tasting Challenge

Mountbatten Centre 7.00pm

Tuesday 4th April 2006

Brown Brothers - Tutored Tasting

Mountbatten Centre 7.00pm

Tuesday 2nd May 2006

Portugal TBA

Mountbatten Centre 7.00pm

Tuesday 6th June 2006

TBA

Mountbatten Centre 7.00pm

Friday 7th July 2006

PWS 30th Anniversary Dinner

Brookfield Hotel, Emsworth 7.30pm

Future Events subject to change. Visit www.portsmouthwinesociety.org.uk for more information

Tim Clarke - "The Malvasia Story"



Tim Clarke is Chairman of Arblaster & Clarke Wine Tours which he founded with his wife Lynette in 1987. Tim was listed by Condé Nast Traveller as among the worldwide list of "50 Travel Expert You need to know" A&C were described in January 2005 in the Daily Telegraph as "By far the best and the most experienced of the wine and gourmet tour companies" and in The Times on the same day: "The big

name in wine tours is Arblaster & Clarke run by husband-and-wife team Lynette Arblaster and Tim Clarke". Tim leads wine tours as far afield as Australia and Chile regularly, as well as throughout Europe, and visits Champagne several times a year. his views on Champagne are often quoted in the press. (A&C web site: www.winetours.co.uk). Tim and Lynette live in West Meon, Hampshire.

Malvasia (also known as Malvazia or Malmsey) is a group of wine grape varieties grown in Italy (including Sicily, Lipari, and Sardinia), Corsica, the Iberian Peninsula, the Canary Islands, the island of Madeira, California, and Australia. These grapes are used to produce white (and more rarely red) table wines, dessert wines, and fortified wines of the same name, or are sometimes used as part of a blend of grapes, such as in Vin Santo. Grape varieties in this family include Malvasia Bianca, Malvasia Negra, and a number of other varieties.

In the past, the names “Malvasia” and “Malmsey” have been used interchangeably. Presently, however, “Malvasia” generally refers to unfortified white table or desert wines produced from this grape, while “Malmsey” refers to a sweet variety of Madeira wine. Further confusion resulted from the fact that, in the past, the term “Malmsey” referred to any very sweet Madeira wine, regardless of the grape variety from which it was made. This was an outcome of the devastation of Madeiran vineyards by phylloxera in the late 19th century, after which, production of Malvasia and other “noble grape” varieties on Madeira was greatly reduced for the next century. As a result, most non-vintage-dated “Malmsey” was made from the widely grown Tinta Negra Mole or even from fox grape varieties. This changed when Portugal entered the European Union in 1986; EU regulations required that any wine bearing the name “Malmsey” be made with at least 85% Malvasia grapes. Even further confusion results from the fact that vintage-dated Malmseys are often labeled “Malvasia” or “Malvazia”, probably because the relatively rare vintage Malvasias were always made with Malvasia grapes even when most non-vintage “Malmsey” was being made from lesser varieties.

The Malvasia grape is of Greek origin, but there is some controversy over exactly where it originated and what grape varieties were its ancestors. Although Malvasia was produced mainly in Greece until the 15th century, the name “Malvasia” is Italian. Malvasia was probably brought to Italy (from where it spread to the western Mediterranean and the Atlantic islands) by the Venetians, who from the 13th to the 17th centuries controlled many of the Greek islands. The name “Malvasia” is thought to derive from Monemvasia, a Venetian fortress on the coast of Laconia, known in Italian as “Malvasia”. A competing theory holds that the name is derived from the district of Malevizi, near the city of Heraklion (known to the Venetians as Candia) on Crete.

Both of these locales have lent their name to grape varieties. In Greece, there is a variety known as Monemvasia and named after that locale (though it is now grown primarily in the Cyclades). In western Europe, a common variety of Malvasia is known as Malvasia Bianca de Candia, from its reputed origin in that area. The Monemvasia grape was long thought to be ancestral to the western European Malvasia varieties, however, recent DNA analysis does not suggest a close relationship between Monemvasia and any Malvasia varieties. DNA analysis does however, suggest, that the Athiri wine grape (a variety widely planted throughout Greece) is ancestral to Malvasia.

(Source: Wikipedia <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Malvasia>)

WINE NEWS

Another health benefit has been attributed to red wine - fighting off the common cold. According to scientists in Spain, drinking wine, especially red, stops people from developing colds. Something in wine seems to have a protective effect because the same was not seen with beer and spirits. The evidence comes from a year long study of 4,000 volunteers. Experts at five universities found that people who drank more than two glasses of red wine a day had 44% fewer colds than teetotallers. Drinking one glass of red wine a day also protected against colds, but to a lesser extent.

Lifestyle factors

Red wine has been associated with a number of health benefits, including a lower rate of heart disease. An ingredient in red wine may also prevent herpes, according to a recent study. The ability of red wine to ward off colds may be due to its antioxidant properties, according to Professor Ron Eccles, director of the Common Cold Centre at Cardiff University. Lifestyle factors - such as sipping red wine at home rather than drinking in crowded pubs - could also be a factor, he said.

Binge drinking

The British Heart Foundation warns that while moderate drinking may have a beneficial effect on health, too much alcohol is risky.

“Moderate drinking between one a ‘protective’ effect in attacks in men over 40 postmenopausal spokesperson.

“High levels of particularly binge increase the risk heart disease.”

and two units a day has preventing heart years of age and women,” said a

alcohol intake, drinking, can of coronary



“No thanks, Bob...that's too dry for me...”

Tuesday 7th March 2006 Mountbatten Centre 7.00pm

Annual General Meeting

Members are encouraged to attend the A.G.M as it is their opportunity to influence the running of the Society by proposing motions to the meeting. If you would like to make a proposal, please write the details below:

I, (name), wish to propose that:

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.....

I, (name), wish to propose that:

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.....
.....
.....

If selected, you will be asked to move your proposal to a vote at the meeting.
Please see also the Committee Nomination form overleaf.

Please complete these forms and return to: Bob Hawthorne
17 Lindley Avenue, Southsea, Hants. PO4 9NT
by 13th February 2006

Members are encouraged to attend the A.G.M as it is their opportunity to influence the running of the Society by nominating themselves or others for election to the Committee. Please complete the nomination form below if you wish to stand or nominate someone for election to the committee.

To serve on The Committee:

I wish to nominate:

Proposed by:

Seconded by:

I wish to nominate:

Proposed by:

Seconded by:

I wish to nominate:

Proposed by:

Seconded by:

If no new nominations are received or vacancies remain then the existing committee will automatically nominated for re-election. Where there are more nominees than committee places available (see constitution), then an election ballot will be conducted. The Committee will elect its Officers and Chair from the duly appointed members.

Please complete these forms and return to: Bob Hawthorne
17 Lindley Avenue, Southsea, Hants. PO4 9NT
by 13th February 2006

MARCH A.G.M & TASTING - Book Now!

Tuesday 7th March 2006 Mountbatten Centre 7.00pm

A.G.M. & Tasting Challenge

I/We would like to attend the A.G.M (Members Only)

Please reserve places

Name:.....Telephone:.....

Send booking form to:

Roger Foster, Little Horsecroft, Swanmore Park Farm

Upper Swanmore, Hampshire SO32 2QQ

By 25th February 2006

February Tasting - Book Now!

Tuesday 7th February 2006 Mountbatten Centre 7.00pm

Tim Clarke - The Malvasia Story

I/We would like to attend "Tha Malvasia Story". Guests are welcome.

Please reserve places at **£10** per head - Total enclosed £.....

Name:.....Telephone:.....

Send cheques payable to "**Portsmouth Wine Society**" to:

Roger Foster, Little Horsecroft, Swanmore Park Farm

Upper Swanmore, Hampshire SO32 2QQ

By 21st January 2006

Tuesday 7th March 2006 Mountbatten Centre 7.00pm

A.G.M. & Tasting Challenge

Please complete the booking form on the other side
and return to:

Roger Foster

Little Horsecroft, Swanmore Park Farm
Upper Swanmore, Hampshire SO32 2QQ

By 25th February 2006

Visit www.portsmouthwinesociety.org.uk for more information

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