

IWFS - BERKSHIRE BRANCH - Meeting 365 - Friday 19th July 2013
TASTING BASED ON WINES FROM THE BRANCH CELLAR
BACKGROUND NOTES

Erbeldinger

Erbeldinger is at Bechtheim in Rheinhessen. This is Germany's most extensive wine region. Wine areas lying on the west bank of the Rhine heading north are Alsace, Pfalz and then Rheinhessen. The gently sloping ground makes automated cultivation easy, and this helps to keep costs competitive. It is the traditional home of Liebfraumilch, and there is probably a lot of mediocre wine produced here. But there are fastidious and discerning growers producing fine wines, and Erbeldinger is certainly one. Stefan and his family sell mostly direct, and their marketing is superb. If you are in the region and want to purchase a few bottles, you can have a delightful experience here. The tasting room is attractive and comfortable; you will be brought a catalogue, order form, glasses, water and bread, and invited to choose some wines to taste; the bottles will be brought to you and you can pour your own wines and take as long as you like.

Wolfgang Kohl

We are tasting two Rieslings both from Wolfgang Kohl in Brauneberg, in the heart of the Mosel wine region, in the Mittelmosel mid-way between Piesport and Berncastel. Those members who went on the IWFS Berkshire Branch trip to Germany in 2011 stayed at Wolfgang and Ulla Kohl's Weingutshotel in Brauneberg and enjoyed a wide range of Wolfgang's wines. The wines we are tasting tonight come from Colin's cellar.

Hugh Johnson (HJ) describes Brauneberg as a "top village: excellent full-flavoured Riesling – *grand cru* if anything is on the Mosel." Two areas within Brauneberg, Juffer and Juffer Sonnenuhr, are classified as *Erste Lagen* (first class sites). Juffer is a 31 hectare, south-facing slope of blue-grey Devonian slate on the left bank of the river with a gradient of up to 80%. The top wines come from Juffer Sonnenuhr, a 10 hectare area around a sundial.

Vines were planted on the Juffer at least back to Roman times and, according to HJ & Jancis Robinson, "one hundred years ago this was reckoned to be the greatest wine of the Mosel, perfectly satisfying the taste for wine that was full-bodied and golden". Although less well known than wines from neighbouring villages Berncastel and Piesport, top Brauneberg growers such as Fritz Haag and Willi Haag are still producing top-class Rieslings. Robert Parker's Wine Buyers' Guide lists 45 Brauneberg wines with scores of 87 to 98.

We are tasting a 2000 Spätlese and a 2005 Auslese. 2000 quality was very variable due to a very wet spell during the harvest, but Riesling fared better than other grape varieties. 2005 has been acclaimed as being exceptionally good, due to an extraordinarily sunny year – many of the Parker recommendations are from this vintage. Both wines are in the top category *Prädikatswein* ("quality wine with specific attributes"). *Auslese* (Select Picking) is made with riper grapes than *Spätlese* (Late Harvest): the legal minimum starting must-weight (*Oeschle*) for an *Auslese* is 83° and for a *Spätlese* (Late Harvest) 76°. *Trocken* and *Herb* relate to the dryness, i.e. residual sugar. *Trocken* indicates a dry wine without perceptible residual sweetness. It never contains more than 9 grams of residual sugar per litre and often less. *Herb* is an unregulated designation indicating an off-dry wine.

Chateau de Respide

The chateau is in the southern part of Graves, just outside Langon. HJ: "the southern end...has been coming to life. Nondescript wines have given place to fresh, lively, dry wines. Langon is now a regular resort of buyers looking for flavour and value." The chateau was previously the home of M. de la Reynie, police lieutenant to Louis XIV, and is one of the oldest winery chateaux in Graves. It was mentioned in 1850 in Guide Feret, the then bible of Bordeaux wines. It was sold in 1952, but the wine facilities retained and managed by Pierre Bonnet. His youngest son Franck and his wife Christine have managed the winery since 1995. A new chais was built in 1993, and the barrel vault entirely renovated in 2000, with full temperature regulation of 900 barriques. There are 50 hectares of vines, 10 planted with Semillon and 7 with Sauvignon Blanc. The white Callipyge is 60% SB, 40% Semillon. The vines are 35 years old. Production was 18,000 bottles. Fermentation was in 50% new futs de chêne; it was kept sur lie with regular stirring (batonnage) until bottling in June. It is full bodied with some fatness, but still fresh, and will go very nicely with a curry, according to Franck. He seems to think that his best wines (both white and red are called Callipyge) have beautifully shaped bottoms.

Fermoy Estate

Fermoy is a boutique estate established in 1985, located in the Wilyabrup region of Margaret River, Western Australia. Margaret River is the name of the town in the centre of the region, just over 100 miles south of Perth. The name of the winery comes from the town of Fermoy in County Cork, Ireland, which was founded by an ancestor of the winery's original owners. Winemakers are Liz Dawson and Coralie Garnier. Liz did a wine science degree at Perth in 2002, and has worked in Barossa, Bordeaux and Napa. Coralie is French; she studied in Bordeaux and moved to Australia in 2008; she has worked in Hunter Valley and New Zealand. They have 17 hectares, planted principally with Cabernet Sauvignon and Semillon, with smaller parcels of SB, Chardonnay, Merlot, Chenin Blanc and Malbec. Grapes are handpicked only in the early morning and processed immediately to retain their freshness. The environment allows grapes to grow relatively free from pests and diseases. This wine is called Yallingup, a region north of the winery. It is 58% Semillon, 42% SB.

New Zealand

New Zealand is now the world's fifth largest producer of Pinot Noir. We will be comparing two examples of New Zealand Pinot Noirs, both from South Island: one from Central Otago and the other from Marlborough.

Central Otago is New Zealand's highest and the world's most southerly wine region situated at latitude 45° south. The inland mountainous location provides a semi-continental climate with very cold winters, hot summers, cool night time temperatures and very low rainfall. This unique climate combined with the mostly glacially derived soils, with rich deposits of mica and schist, is ideally suited to Pinot Noir (80% of the plantings), producing expressive and elegant wines. The wine we are tasting tonight comes from Bendigo, 20 km northeast of Cromwell - one of the warmest areas in Central Otago with hot summer sun and cold clear nights producing intensely flavoured wines. The Bendigo Vineyard is located on a steep, elevated north-facing terrace at an altitude of 317 to 400 metres on clays and chalk mixed with schist and quartz.

Marlborough is the largest wine producing region in the country with 23,000 hectares of vines producing 79% of all New Zealand wine, the great majority being Sauvignon Blanc. Located on the east coast with mountains to the west, Marlborough is one of New Zealand's sunniest and driest areas. In these bright, but relatively 'cool' climate conditions, the grapes have the advantage of a long slow, flavour-intensifying ripening period. The average daily temperature during summer is nearly 24°C but clear cool nights keep acid levels high in the grapes. The contrast between day and night helps to enhance the colour development in the skins of Pinot Noir.

Nautilus Pinot Noir is made from handpicked grapes from five sites in Marlborough, each of which contributes different flavours and layers of complexity to the blend. Clay Hills from the Southern Valleys provides the backbone and mid palate weight. Components from the Awatere, Kaituna, Renwick and Yarrum vineyards provide the "seasoning". The grapes are chilled overnight before being de-stemmed into tanks. The fruit is given a cold soak of five to seven days and then wild fermented before aging in French barriques for 11 months.

In general, Marlborough Pinot Noirs show complex, tight structure with bright cherry flavours whilst Central Otago Pinot Noirs are known for herbal notes, berry-fruit and firm tannins.

Philip Shaw

Philip made his name with Rosemount. He looked for his own venture and decided upon land at 900m on the side of the extinct volcano Mount Canobolas at Koomooloo in Orange, 100 miles west of Sydney in New South Wales. The soil is volcanic, with red loam over limestone. The climate is cool because of the altitude; summer temperatures do not exceed 30°C. Philip has 47 hectares, planted in 1989. The vineyard is entirely hand-managed. No.17 is 50% Merlot, 40% Cabernet Franc and 10% CS. It is aged separately in 20% new French oak for 18 months and then blended.

David Franz

Barossa is the heart of Australian wine, with all the most important wine and vine research organizations. It is just north of Adelaide in South Australia. Here are the traditional large producers such as Penfolds. And it is here that the "Baron of the Barossa", Peter Lehmann, is credited with being one of the creators of modern Australian wine. He was born in Angaston in the Barossa in 1930. His family was part of the community of Lutheran Germans who had settled in South Australia following the King of Prussia's decision to create a state church with bishops; the community was persecuted after 1914, and even reduced to re-baptising their favourite Berliner buns "Kitcheners". His father was a pastor; he died at 55 in 1945, and Peter had to leave school and work to support his mother. In 1947 he started at the Yalumba winery, moving to Saltram in 1960. Then in 1980 he set up his own company, called Peter Lehmann Wines (PLW) from 1982. His successful company was sold to the Swiss Hess Group in 2003 for \$103 million. Over the years the state wine shows honoured Peter with a dazzling collection of medals, and he was appointed to the Order of Australia. He died on 28 June 2013, survived by his wife Margaret, three sons and a daughter. One of his sons is David Franz.

Clearly David gained a wealth of experience from his family. His father reckoned he needed to start at the bottom and work up, and between 1992 until 2000 he had jobs with various wine makers in Barossa and South Africa. But in 1998 he worked with his brother Phil, making the first (still unreleased) David Franz wines. In 1999 David got more experience at PLW, working on vinifying a lightweight Shiraz and a Cabernet Shiraz blend. In 2000 Andrew Wigan allowed David to use the PLW facilities to make his 2000 Reds. Vintages until 2003 were made at PLW.

From 2004 he branched out on his own. He purchased a dozen food grade plastic grape bins and 16 thousand-litre plastic barrels – fermenters and storage. Paul Lindner and David had been trying to get grapes into the fermenter with minimum handling. Their idea was to crush directly into the top of the fermenter, ideally in the vineyard. They developed an 'adapt as we build' successful contraption. There is no need to fork, and it leaves the piles of stalks out in the vineyard.

David now has a hydraulic 1 tonne basket press. He regards the basket press as the ultimate form of pressing for red grapes. He uses 2 milk vats for chilling during fermentation, using the drain and return method. The majority of the wine gets icy cold in the chiller while the skins and the last little bit of wine in the fermenter keep on steaming. Then you splash the chilled wine back over the hot ferment, extremes of temperature clashing to help extract even more flavours.

Georgie's Walk is a single vineyard wine from the 'Horse Paddock' and 'House on the Hill' blocks on the Stelzer Road Vineyard. Total production of the 2008 was 3100 bottles.