

AGM Minutes January 2024

Minutes of the meeting held on January 18th 2024 at Restaurante La Senia, Denia

At the first call there were no members present so at the second call the meeting was deemed quorate therefore was called to order at 18.30. 31 Members attended.

It was noted that John Sloggie was acting as secretary for the meeting as Paul Smithard was unable to attend

PART 1

1. Apologies were noted from:-

Paul & Carolyn Smithard, Kathy & Andrew Johnson, Helen & Paul Nicholls, Sue and Elwyn Blewett, Hilary Blackwell, Debbie & Keri Theophilus, Maureen Holliday, Alan & Rosemary Murdoch, Keith Hyde

2. Membership and Financial Report

Treasurer Mike Granville handed out copies of the Society's financial position as at the end of 2023. He reported the following.

- a) The society has 110 members, with 17 new members having joined throughout the year. 27 members did not renew in 2023
- b) An average of 50 people (members and guests) attended each tasting.
- c) In total 54 guests attended tastings throughout the year, with 8 subsequently becoming new members
- d) 9 members did not attend any tastings in 2023, and a further 8 only attended one. Only 2 members had a 100% attendance record for 2023. - Tim & Sandy Fawle.
- e) We have had a good start to the new year. Of the 4 members who have already joined in 2024 3 will be with us for their first tasting this evening. 8 guests will attend the tasting tonight, including 2 ex-members.

A detailed financial report was issued to the members at the meeting. Full details are not included with this minute but they are available to any member by contacting Mike

- a) Noted that the society is in a strong position with a satisfactory cash flow. There was a loss made on the tastings in 2023 but this was in line with expectations. The society ended the year with a balance of €1700 in the bank.
- b) There was a new expense of insurance, €255, but Mike advised this would be dealt with later in the meeting
- c) Noted that the wine trips are run to be self funding and non surplus generating. The funds for the trips are held in the society bank account but they are dealt with as a separate account and do not impact on the surplus/loss of the society.
- d) The accounts were accepted by the meeting

3. President's Report

President Tim Fawle presented his report on the activity of the society for 2023. The report is attached in full as appendix 1 to this minute but in summary

- a) 2023 was a very successful year with a varied and interesting programme and the contribution of the Tasting Team, now in its second year, was acknowledged.
- b) There were 10 tastings held during the year in various locations and a very successful and fully subscribed wine trip.
- c) Tim thanked the members of his committee and also the Tasting Team for their support over the past year.
- d) Tim thanked all the members for their support. He confirmed he was standing down as President but would still remain on the wine trip team.

6. Election of a new President

The secretary noted that Vice President Neville Richardson was the sole nominee for the position of President. Neville was proposed for the position by Patrick Harrild and seconded by Gillian Ashworth and was unanimously accepted by the meeting.

At this stage Tim, as outgoing President, stood down from the chair and his place was taken by Neville who thanked the members for their unanimous vote.

PART 2

1. Election of Committee

In addition to the President Neville noted that Sandy Fawle (Seating arrangements), Penny Floodgate (place cards and scores) and Netty Sayers (deputy venues and Menus) had also stepped down from the committee. Neville noted these "positions" were not required by our constitution so he was not intending to replace them on the committee and that much of the work was now carried out under the auspices of the Tasting Team members.

Neville thanked all the above for their many years of service and made a presentation of a gift to each of them. In addition, he read some messages of thanks to Tim from Bodegas Martue, Castano and Vinyes del Terror

Neville noted that the remaining committee members had agreed to remain in post for a further year therefore no further election was required. These members are Mike Granville, Treasurer; Paul Smithard, Secretary; Sue Blewett, venues & menus; Helen Granville, Membership Secretary and John Sloggie, Webmaster.

2. Plans for 2024

Neville started by discussing some items of context.

- a) As a society we are in good shape
- b) During COVID we had built up excess funds and since then we had achieved a managed reduction in the reserves principally through subsidies at tastings
- c) 20+ member had left during each of the past 2 years but had been substantially replaced by new members. Reasons cited for leaving were principally age, relocating away from Spain and Brexit issues. Neville had prepared a membership recruitment plan to discuss with the committee. Principally it contains suggestions for more openness and publicity. Neville hopes, once implemented, it will increase diversity, age, nationality and geographic spread.

- d) Noted that inflation was hitting our costs hard with increased costs for meals and wines. A possible option would be to reduce the food quantity. Reducing the quality of food or wines was not considered an option. Increase prices on a selective basis for some tastings is another option.
- e) Neville raised the issue of our new liability insurance. It was deemed by the committee increasingly important to have liability insurance in case of any claim being lodged against the society and to protect the office bearers. Accordingly a policy was taken out late in 2023 The cost of this was €300 which equates to about €3 per member

Moving on to the plans for 2024 Neville pointed out that all dates, venues and presentation topics have been posted on the website for some time. He also noted that there was the possibility of hosting a wine workshop.

3. BUDGET 2024

Mike made the following points

- a) The liability insurance is a cost which should be borne by the members and, for that reason, he proposed the membership fee be increased by €5 to €30
- b) The cost for the tastings has been held at €40 for some time. Mike advised that at some venues which charged us more the committee had agreed there could be a selective increase in the price for that event.
- c) At present guests pay €5 more than members. It was felt this did not incentivise guests to join the society so it was noted that the committee had agreed the guest cost would rise to €10 higher than the member cost. However if the guest then joins the society before the next tasting the €10 would be reduced from the membership fee for the first year.
- d) Based on assumptions on membership and costs Mike intimated that he forecast the society would make a small surplus of around €200 in 2024

Neville then asked that the members present voted on the following:-

1. To increase the cost of membership for the 2024 year to €30 per person
2. To approve the budget for 2024

It was proposed that these items be approved by Tony Cabban and seconded by Patrick Harrild. There followed a unanimous vote in favour by the members.

3. Any other business

Neville intimated that there had been no items noted however two members raised points

1. It was suggested better use be made of Facebook in promoting the Society. Neville intimated that this was already in his plan to be presented to the committee
2. The proposal to bring forward the December tasting to the first week in December due to the way the dates fell. This was agreed.

The meeting was then closed at 19.34

APPENDIX 1

President's Report 2023

2023 has seen us develop a varied and interesting programme and the concept of the Tasting Team and its members have contributed significantly to that.

January :A total of 44 members and guests attended the tasting following the AGM in the hotel La Senia Restaurant, Denia. The evening was hosted by Tim Fawle with help from Committee members. The wines we tasted were those that had received the most points by CBWS members during 2022. We plan to start each year with a tasting of the highest scoring wines from the previous year and it was interesting to compare how these were scored by members on a second tasting. The tasting of our 2 whites was together as they are the same grape, Godello and achieved the top ratings.

February: Our February tasting was held at Javea Golf Club, a venue that we had not used for many years and it did not disappoint with an excellent tasting evening, attended by 51 members and guests, a really impressive turnout for this time of year. It was hosted by Sara and Neville Richardson. The wines were presented by Gonzalo Lainez, export manager for Principe de Viana Group, who own and distribute many excellent Spanish wines. He was supported by Jose Blasco, owner of Bodegas Blasco in Teulada.

All of the wines tasted were from the Clunia label. Whilst this producer is based in the lesser known wine region of Castilla y Leon, it is situated only 5 kilometres from the much better known (and expensive) region of Ribera del Duero.

Orders were taken at this tasting and we purchased €2700 of Clunia Wine.

March Our tasting was held at Los Amigos, Javea was hosted by Tasting Team members Gillian Ashworth and Hugh Epsom and assisted by Tim Fawle.

52 members and guests were in attendance.

This South American wine tasting included a great Chilean Carménère, an Argentinian Torrontés, and a couple of Malbecs, all from well-established Chilean and Argentinian bodegas from the Valle del Maule in Chile, and the Valle de Uco, Mendoza and Tupungato in Argentina.

It was great to taste these wines in Spain where as you know it is not easy, generally to obtain them locally.

Hugh and Gillian resourcefully obtained the wines from Blasco, Lavinia and Casa del vino. Obviously Spanish wines are cheaper here and any imported wine from South America or elsewhere has a price to them.

I think it was a good innovative idea to facilitate the opportunity for us to taste these great wines and demonstrates that, periodically in our homes, we can make comparisons with our Spanish wines.

As well enjoying the spectacular scenery in South America we will be planning a trip to Mendoza next year!

April We moved to The Food and Lounge Bar in Denia Marina where Tasting Team members Gordon and Caryl Sellars hosted the evening attended by 51 members and guests. This wine tasting was designed to pair 5 small food dishes to 5 specific wines. As a result of the positive feedback we received last year when hosting a similar format, at this same venue, they decided to repeat this style once again, but with different wines and food pairings. Again in response to some members' feedback, we presented lighter wines and they comprised 3 whites, a red and an interesting sherry to accompany the desert course.

May Wine Trip

DO Calatayud and DO Campo de Borja May 2023

It is 12 years since we last visited Calatayud and the Wine Society has never organized a visit to Campo de Borja.

Returning to this area we incorporated a visit to DO Campo de Borja where some interesting developments have taken place. These two DO's are the home of the Garnacha grape.

We visited 5 bodegas – 3 in Calatayud and 2 in Campo de Borja

Both areas have really embraced wine tourism constructing some impressive facilities to encourage wine tasting and purchasing.

Bodegas Borsao has been the engine for DO Campo de Borja, or the 'Empire of the Garnacha'. Robert Parker has called it his "favourite value bodega, not only in Spain, but in the world" – high praise indeed!

Bodegas Breca

This bodega has an interesting history. Founded in 2010 it is part of a group owned by the famous Winemaker Jorge Ordoñez. Jorge pioneered the introduction of the Garnacha grape into the US in the 1990's. and spends around 3 months of the year in the US. –

Another quote from Robert Parker *"Just when you think you've tasted the world's greatest value wines, along comes the Bodegas Breca"*

Bodegas Raices Ibericas

This is a unique and interesting operation focussing on innovation and creativity. The original winery was a Cooperative and was purchased by a Belgian wine business 3 years ago. They also have agreements with several Bodegas to manage and buy certain grape varieties throughout Spain which are hardly known.

There is no doubt that the Garnacha grape has developed well in this area with all 5 bodegas exporting on average 70 to 80% of their production. In each Bodega we experienced a different approach to their business and the quality of their wines tasted was borne out by the large quantity of wine everyone bought!

The Wine Trip Team always tries to include a cultural visit/activity and a visit to Monastario de Piedra was organised. This did not disappoint. There is a spectacular natural park with many waterfalls and interesting walks, also the Monastery provided the peace and history of this beautiful location.

An excellent trip enjoyed by everyone, including the 10 members for whom this was their first Wine Trip.

May Tasting was held at Hotel MR, Les Rotes, Denia and was hosted by Tasting Team Members Paul and Helen Nicholls with 50 members attending.

Marqués de Riscal is a bodega of excellent standing and is one the most prestigious in Spain, Their in bodega in Rioja has the iconic design of Frank Gherry and in 2022 voted the 2nd best winery in the world. Rafael Ruiz Isla a wine educator from Marques de Riscal presented the wines.

June We returned to the lovely setting of Restaurante Puerto Blanco where Tasting team members Andrew and Kathy Johnson hosted this event attended by 52 members and guests.

Andrew persuaded Chef Patron Patrick to produce a pairing menu with wines selected and presented by his Head Sommelier Alexander.

The result was a fabulous pairing menu with 5 wines each partnering a gourmet dish. Many members commented how much they enjoyed the food the wine and the venue. Always a favourite with CBWS.

September The September Tasting brought us to the Jesus Pobre Riurau near Javea where Tasting Team members Tony and Cherry Cabban had constructed a unique event never seen before within CBWS.

61 members and guests enjoyed an informal open air tasting in the unique historic Riurau.

Theme: Can you taste the flavour of the grapes in the wine? A tasting of local wines and a meal of local, traditional products. Presented by Santi Signes, Tony Cabban, Rodolfo Valiente, Andreu Costa

The wines were produced locally by a consortium of wine growers who, together with the expertise of Rodolfo Valiente owner of Bodega Vegalfaro Utiel Requena who is adviser to this group with his extensive expertise.

An atmospheric location. A combination of Spanish History, Tradition, Cuisine and different wines tasted with their grapes. The wine were a mixture of traditional and modern, challenging some palates.

Being September the wine harvest was in full swing and each attendee had a sample of the grapes that made up that wine. To be able to taste the principal grape of each wine we were able to make comparisons not just with the wine but also with the grape. A lot of planning and hard work by Tony and Cherry ably assisted by some fellow members made this a unique event,

October This was a monthly Tasting Dinner with a difference organised by Tasting Team members Vicky and Neil Robertson. We headed west of Valencia to Bodegas Nodus – a name familiar to most of us on many local restaurant wine lists.

This event was a 'Dinner, Bed and Breakfast' House Party located adjacent to the winery and owned by them in Hotel Rural Entreviños, a typical Spanish country hotel that can sleep 28 people. The beautiful setting is amongst the vineyards, with lovely walks.

The programme began with a Tour of the Nodus winery tasting 3 wines with a professional presentation from Winemaker David Pagan who originates from Yecla and related to the Castaño family but had spent 10 years in various US wineries gaining considerable experience. At the pre-dinner Cava reception we tasted Nodus' signature Cava, and then enjoyed a typical regional dinner accompanied by 3 wines.

Despite so many superb highlights, we could not ignore the one 'surprise' of the event!! This was the serving of a Nodus Sauvignon Blanc that was distinctly 'Rosado'. At dinner, there was only one out of eight bottles the correct pale straw colour. There was no representative from the Bodega in attendance during the dinner (hopefully a lesson learnt by Nodus!) and the catering team had no answers for us. For this reason we did not score that particular wine. The very distressed Winemaker David Pagan rushed to meet us after breakfast with genuine shock and apologies. The only possible explanation was an unprecedented bottling error involving an inadequate cleaning of the line after a switch from red to white wine.

The Society was generously compensated with two cases of wine which one case was used at the December meeting and the other case will be consumed this year with profuse apologies from the Winemaker.

We all accepted this was 'one of those things' and certainly did not define the wonderful visit to Nodus.

November 58 members and guests attended Tasting Team members Andrew and Kathy Johnson presentation of "Wines with Christmas in mind" held in Restaurante Los Amigos, Javea.

Andrew reminded us that several years ago Jose Peñin founder of the iconic Peniñ Guide presented to CBWS at the Parador in Javea. When asked about what wines would you share with the family at Christmas? Jose replied "just good price/quality wines but not too expensive!"

Many of us remember that sound advice!

This presentation had been prepared on which wines would be suitable with Christmas fare and pointed out the amazing value of the wines selected.

All the wines were sourced from Bodegas Blasco in Teulada, where members get a 10% discount (except on wines from the clearance display). He then thanked the members for their attention at what is likely to be his and Kathy's final tasting as tasting team members, as they are moving to the UK.

December Our December tasting is traditionally hosted by the President who has chosen the wines. We had 57 members due to attend this tasting but unfortunately several members were unable to participate due to illness issues.

However, 49 members attended in a convivial and relaxed atmosphere at A Bordo Club Nautica, Javea There was no formal wine scoring and the wines selected were some that we had tasted before and some of the President's favourites. There was also an interesting wine activity that was hosted by Sandy Fawle throughout the evening which ensured that every table participated to test their wine knowledge. The winning tables received a prize of a bottle of wine.

In summary, this has been an excellent year for CBWS. The Tasting Team concept is now in it's 2nd year has resulted in some new ideas into our Programme which is so important as we move forward. I would like to thank everyone involved for their enthusiasm, initiatives and execution in making sure their tastings achieved a high standard.

Also to our Committee:

- Mike for keep us on track on our finances
- Helen for managing Membership
- Neville for his ideas and extensive wine knowledge
- Paul for ensuring our communication to members is interesting and informative.
- John for managing the website and providing new initiatives on how we can develop in 2023
- Penny for managing the bookings and scores each month
- Sue for her meticulous planning with our menus and venues.

- Sandy for keeping me on track in every way and managing our table layout at each tasting.

Each member of this team ensures that our planning and organisation runs smoothly so all of us can enjoy the social and interesting pursuit of wine tasting as well as developing friendships.

So before I hand over to our next topic on the Agenda and as I am standing down as President it has been an honour and a very interesting role – the key to this enjoyment has been working with a great team.

The soul of CBWS is our members and that's why we are so successful.

I have enjoyed:

3 Presidencies – 6 years

3yrs as VP

13 years on the wine trip team which we will continue moving forward exploring new areas and innovation.

It is great to reflect how the Spanish Wine industry has changed. Sandy and I joined CBWS 30 years ago and the transformation of Spanish wines has been amazing and so has been CBWS!