



Sacavin Courier



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SACAVIN WINE CHALLENGE CHAPTER 5

TUESDAY 14TH FEBRUARY
THE NATIONAL LIBERAL CLUB

What better way to celebrate Valentine's Day then by spending an evening in the august surroundings of the National Liberal Club with old ones, new ones and of course loved ones being challenged by Des Holland, as Echanson and Chef de Cuisine on delicious wines from the Loire and the United States of America.

The evening commenced in the convivial Old Smoking Room where we enjoyed tasting the Vin d'honneur, Crémant de Loire Pol Robert Thomas and mingling with other members and their guests. I was pleased to meet Christine Muggleton who was brought up in Chiswick where I too hung out in my youth and it was good to talk about teenage memories of the area, a good start to the evening ahead.

At 19.15 we were called by Alastair Bellingham, Chef du Protocole into the David Lloyd George Dining Room where laid out were nine tables for the 70 attendees. Alastair welcomed Sacavin members and guests and asked Julia Bellingham to give grace. The Grand Commandeur, Geoffrey Wheal then proceeded also to welcome guests and give Rablais greetings to the first Sacavin gathering of 2012. Geoffrey gave a very special welcome to John Ingram who had been ill and then handed over to Des Holland who would explain the Sacavin Wine Challenge Chapter 5.



Des Holland briefs our reporter Ruth Wyman

Before starting Des gave a special thank you to Lawrence Kaufman who produced the booklets and went through the rules. Each table elected a Sommelier/Sommelière whose duties were to chair the debate about each wine, act as a recorder and help the table group to come to an agreement of each wine – not an enviable task! Des then gave us a brief talk about the production and history of wine in the USA. The USA is fourth place behind France, Italy and Spain in terms of production. Having recovered from the effect of Phylloxera by the turn of the 20th century there were nearly 300 grape varieties supplying nearly 800 wineries. In 1919 when the 18th Amendment ushered in the beginning of Prohibition vineyards were ordered to be uprooted and it was not until 1933 when it was repealed that only 140 were left in production. In 2012 there are approximately 7,626 wineries.

The first pairing of wines with the first course of Fillet of Dorset Artic Char “Bonne Femme” was an organic Sauvignon Blanc AC Vin de Pays du Val de Loire and Morgan Monterey Sauvignon Blanc.

The second course consisted of a slow braised venison shank with chestnuts, beans and button onions served with creamed potatoes and cabbage. The wines to be considered were Domaine du Clos Roussely, anthologie du clos 2009 Cabernet Franc and Côt Malbec.

The Cheese plate of Loire and regional French cheese was excellent and the two wines to compare were Bourgueil Haut de la Butte, Domaine de la Butte 2009 100% Cabernet Franc and First Press Cabinet Sauvignon 2007, 100% Cabernet Sauvignon Napa Valley.



Derek Sheen with Sherlie Vidler and guests

The dessert was Vanilla and Fig Bread Pudding served with hazelnut ice cream absolutely delicious in my opinion which was accompanied by a Domaine de Montgilet 2009 100% Chenin Blanc AC Coteaux de l'Aubance Cuvée Générique and a mystery dessert wine from the Americas? Most of us thought the mystery wine came from California but we were wrong! However, there were a few oenologists in the gathering who knew that it was from Chile, Errazuriz Sauvignon Blanc (Late Harvest) from Aconcagua, Casablanca Valley.

Finally, Geoffrey gave enormous thanks to Sandra and all the kitchen and waiting staff, Alistair and last but not least to Des our Chef de Cuisine and Echanson a big and well-earned thank you for providing such fine

wines and making the spot the difference between Loire vs the USA such an enjoyable evening.



John & Marie Foley with their daughter, Anne-Marie

The evening finished with coffee and chocolates and loud chatter throughout the room before we stepped out into the cold winter air to find our transport home. Unfortunately my carriage lost a wheel on the way to meet me so I was forced to walk to Mansion House to catch the Wimbledon line home!

Ruth Wyman

Sacavin Challenge Chapter 5 - Retropective by Des.

The first pair of wines were approached by all with clear heads and a clear palate! The two Sauvignons, I thought, were excellent, and marking was consistent, 8 out of the 9 tables put the Pointe de Doux 2008 well ahead. If you take the cost index into account our wine from the Loire was nearly half the price of Morgans Sauvignon Blanc. I feel we have found someone in Frédéric Brochet and his wines from Haut Poitou? I have tasted his Sauvignon Marigny Neuf and his Pinot Noir, watch for them again!

Taking the second two wines, the first of the reds, which we tasted with a very strong main course, tables differed in their marking, 4 tables indicated? they thought the Anthology of the Clos was the better wine, 3 choose the Dry Creek Heritage Zinfandel, one table gave equal marks and one table thought the Zinfandel was corked? I can only apologise if this was the case. Without taking the purchase

price into account, I think the Anthology of the Clos is a very good blend, which worked well with the food! I was a little disappointed with the Zinfandel although I think this maybe because all the growers that I read seem to talk it up in a big way, they want to make it a true US product and I need to taste other Zinfandel wines. By the way white Zins. are light red grapes!

Table	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	total	ave	cost factor
Ampelidae Brochet Pointe de Doux 2008	7	8	6.4	8	8	7	7	7	7	65.4	7.16	7
Morgan Monterey Sauvignon Blanc 2009	6	6	6	4	7	6	5	5	8	53	5.9	12
Domaine Clos Roussely Anthology of the Clos, 2009	6	7	4.8	4	7	5	8	8	5	54.3	6	6
Dry Creek Heritage Zinfandel 2008	5	4	5.1	6	7	8	5	?	7	47.1	5.9	13
Domaine de la Butte 2010,	5	6	6	3	7	6	6	7	4	50	5.6	12
Delicato First Press Napa Valley Cab. Sav. 2007	7	4	5.8	7	7	8	8	2	7	55.8	6.2	16
Domaine de Montgilet Coteaux de l'Aubance "Cuvée Générique" 2009	6	8	6.8	8	7	7	7	7	8	64.8	7.2	6
Errázuriz Sauvignon Blanc Late Harvest 2008	7	6	4.5	4	7	8	6	7	7	56.5	6.3	9

Note1 The table numbers shown above are not necessarily the actual table number, only 4 of the papers handed in had completed the table number! so I have added a number to help with this analysis.

Note2 This shows in simple terms, cost in pounds but you should bear in mind that we are able to buy very competitively for our French wines, where the US wines are London prices.

As I said on the evening I had some difficulty in the pairing of the reds. In the end I thought they worked quite well, although with the benefit of hindsight maybe the big Cabinet Sauvignon from the Napa Valley would have accompanied the main course better!

Moving on to the third pairing, the two reds we had with cheese, before the tasting this was the pair I had most difficulty with, setting a Cabernet Franc from one of the most revered growers in the Loire, against an award winning wine, with some age on it, from the best grape growing valley in the USA. My concern was about getting the wine on the table at its best? I knew that the Delicato was in excellent condition. So my concern was about the Bourgueil Haut de la Butte 2009. Because Jackey Blott bottles his Bourgueil without 'fining' or 'filtering' which relies on good careful handling when it is served, we did open the wine very early and filtered it into fresh

bottles. Despite this the Napa Valley Cab/Sav. clearly won the vote, 5 tables to 3 with a split vote, one table giving 7 out of 10 for both wines.

Last of all the two Dessert wines, the vast majority clearly preferred the Coteaux de l'Aubance "Cuvée Générique" 2009, with two tables showing they preferred the 'Mystery wine' Late Harvest Sauvignon Blanc from Chile and two tables gave equal marks to both the wines. Although I am a great fan of Errázuriz I thought that the the Coteaux de l'Aubance 2009 was better than the late harvested Sauvignon Blanc from Chile which I found a little flabby! but, many of you will know that I often quote Jancis Robinson's "Chenin Blanc a magical chameleon of a grape".

Des Holland

2012 AGM

The presentation to
Ecuyer John Whitcutt
on his retirement



Jane Berger with Richard & Gillian Ridler



Adrian Macintosh, Martin Hart & Max Brittain



Martin Reynolds, Elizabeth & Ray Lindley
with Tessa Hollingsworth



Penelope Collins, Gillian Wood, Valerie Ingram,
Anne Price & Sheena Perry



Graham Macfarlane
with Julian Thompson & his daughter, Sally Tobin



Cylvean Aitken-Sykes, Felicity Bellamy,
Robert Aitken-Sykes & Stuart Craggs



Shirley Zangwill, Robert Timperley & Brenda Wheal



Peter & Sherlie Vidler, John & Susan Mitchell & Ernest Lee



OUR 2012 AGM

AT THE QUEEN'S CLUB

The order of play included 67 members and guests at Queen's Club for the AGM which proves that the service and quality of the event is second to none. Certainly our chevaliers are a discerning bunch and know how to spot an ace!

The meeting was conducted speedily and effectively by the Grand Commandeur.

Jokes ensued when the Tresorier announced he had left his brief case in Brightlingsea! However he reported the Sacavin coffers were in fine fettle and we thanked him for all his hard work on our behalf. We had a report from the Management Committee and then announcements of the programme for 2012/2013 from several of the committee members. There are lots of treats in store.

Once the AGM business was concluded our Grand Commandeur Geoffrey Wheal made a presentation to John Whitcutt on our behalf, on his retirement from the committee. John has given great service to the Sacavin since 1995 when he was inducted, and he served on the committee for 12 years.

He has been a loyal behind-the-scenes committee member taking on many tasks without fuss or complaint. He has written articles for the Courier, organized our visit to Vinopolis in 2001 and then in 2004 he produced our history booklet. For many years he has looked after all the Sacavin artefacts such as the barrel and flogger which we use at the Chapitre.

Geoffrey told us that he, amongst others, was introduced to the Sacavin by John. He also wished to thank John's wife Diana for all her help and support to the Sacavin, not least her marvellous idea of the present we could give John for his retirement. As he was a surveyor, she and her family suggested a surveying trip from the air – in other words, a hot air balloon trip.

John was duly presented with the voucher for the trip, which the Sacavin members gave to him with very grateful thanks and appreciation. One wonders if he will experience as much hot air in the balloon as he did on the Sacavin Committee for 12 years?!



Vin d'honneur

Cremant de Loire Louis Beauchant Duroc

Lunch Menu

SEARED CORNISH SCALLOPS

*Coleslaw & Crisp Pancetta,
Avruga Caviar Dressing*

~*~

Azay-le-Rideau Blanc, Pascal Pibaleau 2010

~*~

ROASTED RUMP OF WELSH LAMB

*Shallot Mashed Potatoes, Buttered Spinach,
Oven Dried Tomatoes and Balsamic Jus*

~*~

Bourgueil "Les Blottières" Domaine Nau 2007

~*~

FRENCH APPLE TART

*With Caramel Sauce
& Cinnamon Ice Cream*

~*~

Domaine de la Belle Angevine, "Les Bonnes Blanchés" 2010

~*~

COFFEE & PETIT FOURS

We then adjourned to the President's Room for our Vin d'honneur and a delicious luncheon accompanied by a fine array of wines organized by our Echanson Des Holland. Des gave us a very detailed summary in view of the fact that our numbers at the AGM were well in excess of the 55 people he had catered for originally! The wines came from the bit of the

Loire we are visiting in October. He told us of wines being decanted in various places before arrival at Queen's to ensure we could enjoy them at their best, which we certainly did.

So by close of play Sacavin members and guests had enjoyed a winning game set and match with plenty of audience participation, camaraderie and friendship, which is the essence of Sacavin.

Felicity Bellamy



THE ART OF FOOD & WINE

THURSDAY 4TH JULY
THE NATIONAL GALLERY

We drank our fill of some excellent paintings at the National Gallery during a new departure for Sacavin members and their guests (46 in total). Chevalier Felicity Bellamy had organized two art historians to be our guides to give us in depth mini masterclasses on several paintings connected with wine. Al Johnson is a highly experienced lecturer for Somerset House, the Wallace Collection the Victoria & Albert Museum, as well as an artist and sculptor. Linda Bolton has written 12 books on nineteenth and twentieth century art as well as being a lecturer at the National Portrait Gallery. Both lecture at the National Gallery.

In two groups we were shown a variety of paintings (not all the same ones) so here is a flavour of what we learned. With Linda we started with the Dutch School and the first painting we looked at was by Pieter de Hooch of a *Woman Drinking with Two Men*, dated 1658. Prior to the Reformation, artists painted mainly religious themes, but latterly they looked for other new areas of interest, such as domestic life with prosaic and moral themes. This picture shows the lady wearing black, which was an expensive cloth to dye, thus denoting her rank in society. Wine was imported into Holland which was an important trading country. The wine glass she holds looks very costly and would have probably been handmade. Often wine glasses in that period had lids. She holds the glass up to the light. De Hooch and Vermeer were masters of the use of light in their paintings.



Woman Drinking with Two Men – Pieter de Hooch.

THE ART OF FOOD & WINE LUNCH



Sacavins gather outside
the National Gallery



Raymond Harris, John Whitcutt & Valerie Hart



Trevor Harris, Diana Whitcutt & Margaret Harris



Alastair Bonar, Chris & Kathryn Lewis,
Des Holland & Peter Vidler



David Darlington & John Foley



Martin Hart, Max Brittain
& Adrian Macintosh



Stuart Craggs,
Adrian Macintosh
& Alastair Bonar



Felicity Bellamy & Geoffrey Wheal

Four Officers of Amsterdam by Van den Eeckhout was our next painting. He was a favourite pupil of Rembrandt. These men, all dressed in black, were members of the coopers and wine rackers guild. The guilds were like early trades unions. This group imported and distributed wine in Holland, which was not easy with all the land and sea battles going on at that time. In the background there is a painting of Saint Matthias, the patron saint of the coopers, and the tools carved into the frame are those used by the coopers in the making of the barrels. The object of this painting was to promote Holland as a good



Four Officers of Amsterdam – Gerbrand van den Eeckhout.

country to trade with. This painting was an expensive commission. The artist probably made a plan of the whole image, with studies of each of the four men. The painting would have been done in his studio, where the paints were kept in pigs' bladders.

Then we moved on to Willem Kalf's Still Life with Drinking Horns. This spoke of opulence and rich living. There was a fine glass with blackberries all the way up the stem; another flute with red wine, and also a glass with a lid, not to mention the large lobster in pride of place. The buffalo horn represented San Sebastian and the archers guild. It would have been filled with wine and passed around. This particular horn is still in the Rijksmuseum. The inclusion of citrus fruits alongside wine is often read as encouraging moderation in the use of alcohol, as lemon juice was added to

wine to reduce its potency and for medicinal effect. I am not sure what our current chevaliers would think of this practice in the 21st century!



Still Life with Drinking Horns – Willem Kalf.

Following this was a painting on the theme of The Effects of Intemperance by Jan Steen (1663). This was painted in a Europe which was very religious, where alcohol was regarded as a vice. However water was not safe to drink, beer and wine were drunk widely. It shows a lady slumped in a drunken stupor on a step smoking a clay pipe, with an overturned wine pitcher on the floor. Her child is a cutpurse stealing her purse tied round her waist. At



The Effects of Intemperance – Jan Steen.

that time there were no zips, and all clothes were attached with ties. Another child throws rose petals to a pig to signify waste as in pearls before swine. Their father is in the background with a buxom lady drinking wine,

and a church spire can be seen in the background again signifying morality. The main theme of the painting is that wine is a mocker and makes a mockery of us all by making us seem foolish. The parrot in the painting talks rubbish just as we do. The children are feeding a cat with pie, pie being a symbol of wealth. No one ate pastry in those days, just the meat. So all the children in the family are out of control.

We moved on to a Spanish Still Life with Oranges & Walnuts by Melendez (1772). This shows a carefully planned series of items from wooden boxes full of sweetmeats, to oranges, nuts, a melon, wine in pewter barrels and other everyday things. They sit on a battered wooden table, which may often have had a knife stabbed into it whilst people ate as there were no forks or spoons at that time. All the smaller objects in the painting are in the foreground and the artist uses a very limited colour palate of oranges and browns. In our minds' eye we were invited to remove objects from the painting to see how this would immediately make it unbalanced. Luckily we were all balanced at that stage as it was prior to lunch!

Our final and most splendid painting was Bacchus & Ariadne by Titian painted in 1520. (See front cover). Bacchus emerges from the right in a chariot drawn by cheetahs, and falls in love with Ariadne immediately on sight. He offers to marry her and makes her immortal by casting a constellation of stars into the sky above. Titian was one of the most important Renaissance artists and this painting was commissioned by the Italian Este family for a palace in Ferrara, being one of a series of 5 to hang all down one wall.

There are several references to wine here – Bacchus of course is the god of wine otherwise known as Dionysius. He wears a wine red cloak. The gold wine pitcher in the

foreground is clearly seen. There are vine leaves on the satyr and a barrel at the edge of the painting, as well as the drunken man Silenus on a donkey. Ariadne is the only mortal in the painting and she is fully clothed whereas the mythical figures are all lightly clad. There is a lot of lapis lazuli blue to be seen, the colour having taken over from gold as the most expensive of its time.

Al chose some of the same paintings as well as a series of Hogarths: Marriage à la Mode and then also the Adoration of the Magi. As I could not be in two places at once their descriptions eluded me!

So, with our eyes and ears having feasted at the National Gallery, we made our way to the National Liberal Club where a feast of a different kind awaited. Canapés in the Old Smoking Room followed by lunch in the Lloyd George Room proved a very convivial affair expertly organized by Des Holland. Chevaliers and their guests tarried until gone 5 o'clock to enjoy the Sacavin camaraderie and bonhomie.

Vin d'honneur

*Cremant de Loire Pol Robert Thomas
Served with Canapés*

Menu

POLENTA & PINE NUT CRUSTED SALMON

*With a Sweet and Sour Sauce,
Seasonal Vegetables and Potatoes*

~*~

Muscadet Domaine Le Fay d'Homme

&

*Pinot Noir "Les Bremailles"
Vignerons de Oisly et Thésée 2009*

~*~

ENGLISH STRAWBERRIES

With Homemade Vanilla Ice Cream

~*~

COFFEE & MINTS

The day was refreshingly different and most enjoyable for all those who attended.

Felicity Bellamy



Howard Davis

We were very sad to learn that Howard Davis had died on 9th March after a long illness bravely borne. He will be remembered as a very sociable man, full of jokes and anecdotes and, moreover, something of a linguist. He loved entertaining and being entertained. In fact, between school and university he spent a year in repertory. Having read law, he qualified as a solicitor. His career included positions with Mobil and the UK Treasury, together with a spell as legal adviser to the long established South African wine producer, Nederburg. It was this that prompted him to join various wine orders, and to study and subsequently lecture on oenology.



He became a member of Sacavin in 1977, inducted at the Chapitre de la Foire d'Anjou, and was promoted to Officier in 2001. Older Sacavin members will remember an excellent talk on Australian wines which he delivered in 2002. However, he had an extraordinarily wide range of interests, from writing poetry and studying military history, to collecting silk postcards, stamps and model tanks. He had a vast music collection, and amassed a library of some thousand books. Over the years until ill health prevented it, Howard and his wife Veronica regularly attended Sacavin functions and we offer Veronica our profound condolences.



Michael Forster

Our good friend and colleague, Michael Forster died on Tuesday 1st May after a short illness, having entered St Catherine's Hospice, Crawley a few days earlier. A familiar figure at our gatherings, along with his wife Madeleine, he will long be remembered for his kindness, quiet humour and sound common sense. Born in 1925 to a Yorkshire father and French mother, he was of an age that saw him involved at the tail end of the 2nd World War as a Lieutenant in the Royal Navy. He spent most of this period on a small craft patrolling the Greek Islands. On leaving the Navy, he started out on a highly successful career as a Chartered Accountant, leading ultimately to the position of senior partner at one of the largest accountancy firms in the world, advising in many major take-over battles.



It was in 1996 at the Chapitre Boeuf Ecossais that Michael was inducted into the Sacavin and only a couple of years later he joined the Management Committee. With his accountancy background, it is no small wonder that he soon found himself in the role of Trésorier, a position he held for 9 years. In business he had been described as a man of relatively few words but when he spoke everyone listened. And, in our turn, we soon learned to value his wise counsel. Under his careful budgeting, our finances not only prospered, but led to him introducing the idea of a refund, several times repeated, when the surplus from our Loire excursions allowed. It has been our privilege to know him and we extend our deepest sympathy to Madeleine and the family.



Our thanks to John Foley and Fouad Ghali for the photographs in this issue of the Courier and also to Felicity Bellamy, Ruth Wyman and Des Holland who contributed articles.

DATES FOR YOUR DIARIES

Management Committee meeting **Tuesday 11 September 2012** at
The National Liberal Club, Whitehall Place at 11.30 am



Excursion to the Loire **Tuesday 16 to Sunday 21 October 2012**
(Includes Chapitre des Vendanges in Angers, Saturday 20 October)
Now fully booked. Calling letters were dispatched in April



Chapitre 2012 at Vintners' Hall **Tuesday 20 November 2012**
Calling letters to be dispatched early October



Sacavin Challenge Chapter 6 **Tuesday 29 January 2013**
Wine tasting over Dinner at the National Liberal Club, Whitehall Place
Calling letters to be dispatched mid December

