



Sacavin Courier



NO. 63 SUMMER 2013

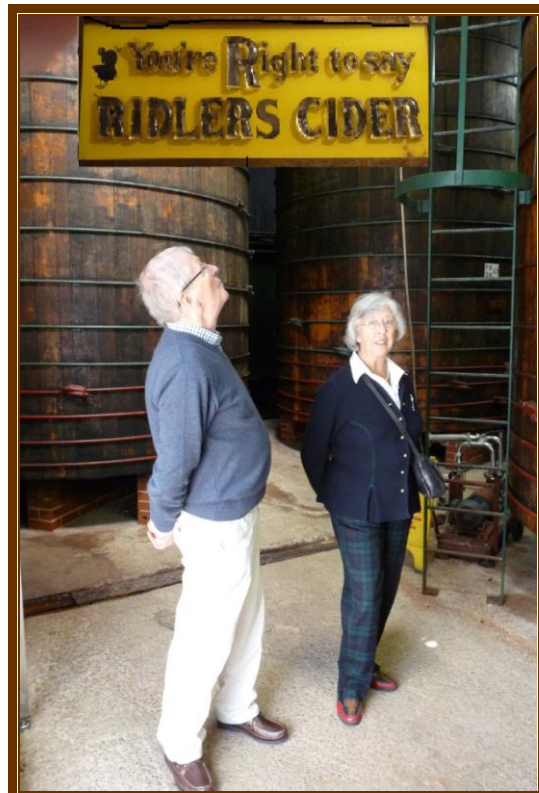
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The Sacavin in Herefordshire

Our thanks to John Muggleton and Sid Price for the photographs in this issue of the Courier and also to Felicity Bellamy, Sid Price and Ernest Lee who each contributed an article.

SACAVIN WINE CHALLENGE NO.6

TUESDAY 29th JANUARY 2013

This challenge was back where we started, comparing the wines from the Loire to those of the rest of France and a wonderful evening it proved to be. 61 of us sat down in the splendour of the Lloyd George Room at the National Liberal Club to be skilfully guided through the wines by Des Holland. He had gone to a tremendous amount of trouble in choosing and sourcing the wines and we benefitted from his knowledge and experience.

He began by thanking our logistics manager Chris Lewis for bringing our wines, as without his help we would have had nothing to drink. He also thanked Laurence Kauffman for the production of the excellent tasting booklet packed full of information. Next he thanked Sandra of the National Liberal Club for the decanting of the wines as well as the delicious dinner we enjoyed.

The vin d'honneur was one of our favourites - the Crémant de Loire from Pol Robert Thomas. The wines we compared were all shown in this marvellous booklet. Des added more details to the descriptions of each wine with gems of information to help us gain a deeper understanding of what we were drinking.

For instance he told us about the Berry Bros & Rudd Blog which is well worth a read. Thierry Germain produces the Domaine des Roches Neuves and we have previously tried some of his other wines at the AGM, and at the first Sacavin Challenge in 2007 held jointly with the Confrérie Saint Etienne d'Alsace.

The Domaine de Rome is owned by Hervé Baudry, who has 12 hectares of vineyards, mainly sauvignon, with some pinot noir for his red Sancerre.

Domaine Lois Dufouleur was established by Philippe and Anne-Marie Dufouleur in 1978. All the vineyard work is done by Anne Marie, while Philippe oversees the vinification, élevage and bottling.

Philippe Germain has been in control of Château de la Roulerie since 2004 and produces this superb Coteaux du Layon. The Jurançon is produced by a traditional wine growing father and daughter Charles and Marie Hours. All of the Hours vines are trellised high at two and a half metres to prevent damage from spring frosts. Most vines are over 20 years old. Charles is quoted as saying "Pyrenees, patience and passion make vintage wines of Jurançon".

I think most of the wines scored well, with the majority on our table gaining 6 or 7 out of 10. The first pair of white wines scored equally. For the main course reds the Loire scored more highly. While for the reds with the cheese the Beaune was the winner. The Jurançon narrowly beat the Roulerie in the dessert wines.

Menu

*Confit salmon terrine,
Watercress purée,
Pea shoots*

*Slow braised ox cheeks,
Bourgeoise horseradish mash,
Roasted carrots*

French regional cheese plate

Plum clafoutis

Coffee and mints

Thus the rest of France proved the winner by a very short margin scoring 199 whilst the Loire scored 195. Considering the Loire wines were from only one region and the others were from the whole of the rest of France, I think that is a pretty good result.

The Grand Commandeur thanked Sandra, the chefs and waiters. He also thanked Chris Lewis for transporting the wines, and then Alastair Bellingham without whom we could not use the marvellous facilities of the National Liberal Club.

He then gave effusive thanks to Des Holland, saying that each Challenge got better and better, with the standard being very high. The food was delicious and the quality of the wines

outstanding. He also thanked Laurence Kauffman for the high quality and helpful booklet.

He reminded us of the AGM in March and the Wye Valley trip in May. He also mentioned a new event on 17th September, which will be a lunch at the National Liberal Club with jazz to accompany our vin d'honneur.

Altogether Sacavin Challenge 6 proved a wonderful evening, banishing winter blues and warming us through with the usual Sacavin camaraderie.

Felicity Bellamy

Des Holland has added his own reflections on the evening:

In my introduction I said that we would find the wines from the Loire easier to identify because the grape style from the Loire were quite different from those I chose from the rest of France. I really got that wrong! From the first pair to the last I had great difficulty in separating them. However I think I got the food matching spot on.

Domaine Charles Pain
Cuvée blanche 2011
100% Chenin Blanc AOC Chinon blanc,
Silver Medal at Concours Général Agricole Paris,
Bronze Medal at Macon, Alc. 14%

versus

Château de Chantegrive
Cuvée Caroline 2008
50% Sauvignon, 50% Semillon,
AOC Graves Alc. 13.5%

The first pair of white: although overall we marked them an equal 52, with four tables preferring Caroline, I wonder if these scores may have been influenced when I tell you the Graves was more than twice the price of the Chenin.

Domaine des Roches Neuves
Marginale 2004
100% Cabernet Franc,
AOC Saumur Champigny, Alc. 13%

versus

Château Moulin de la Rose 2006
Cabernet Sauvignon and Merlot,
AOC Cru bourgeois Supérieur, Alc. 13%

The big reds with the main course:- not surprisingly the Marginale outscored the Bordeaux with 5 tables preferring the older Cabernet France. Both wines were priced at the top end of my budget, although the Marginale was best value.

Rome Antique 2009
Domaine de Rome, Hervé Baudry
100% Pinot noir, AOC Sancerre, Alc. 13%

versus

Les Planchots 2006
Domaine Lois Dufouleur
100% Pinot noir, AOC Savigny-les-Beaune,
Alc. 13.5%

The cheese reds:- I thought both these Pinot Noirs were great. The scoring was close, with 5 tables unable to separate the two! Although overall the Burgundy outscored the Loire. I have to admit that I have become fond of

the Pinot wines from round the world. I do hope that Hervé Baudry does achieve his ambition to produce an award winner, but it may be sometime before we can sample this again, as it was the most expensive wine of the evening!

Chaume Les Aunis 2009
Château de la Roulerie
100% Chenin Blanc
AOC Coteaux du Layon Chaume
Gold Medal Paris 2011, Alc. 12%

versus

Jurançon Uroulat 2010
100% Petit Manseng, Alc. 12%

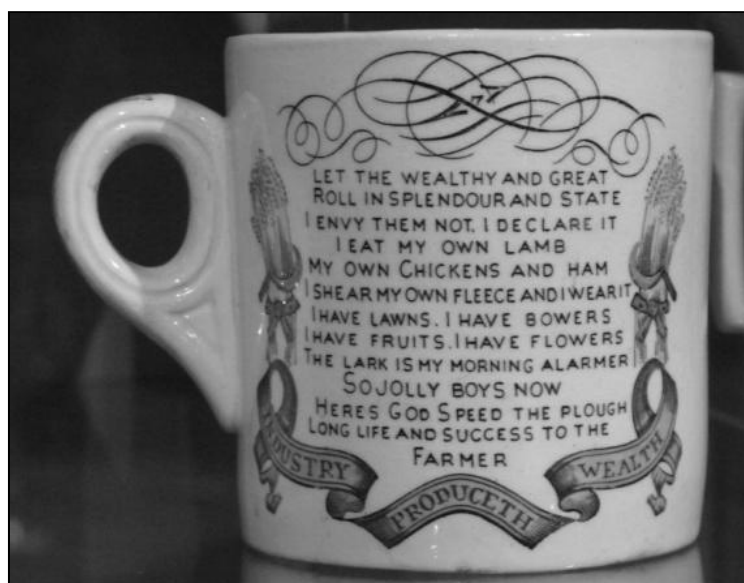
Last but not least:- the two dessert wines. As most of you will know, since joining Sacavin I have become a great fan of the Chenin Blanc and the wines, both sweet and dry, produced in the Loire! Nonetheless I am delighted to have introduced you to the Petit Manseng grape, and these great sweet wines from the Pyrenees. Although the vote on the evening was close, the Gold Medal winner from Château de la Roulerie was in second place, despite the fact that it was 30% more expensive than the Jurançon.



A COUPLE OF ODDMENTS.....

Our May trip into the Herefordshire countryside evidently generated a little nostalgia in the mind of John Muggleton, brought to life by the inscription on the mug he found there.

While from a wine producer amongst those in competition with our Loire friends, down in Australia's Hunter Valley, comes a less sentimental reflection on life, one which some of our lady members might share!



SACAVIN VISIT TO HEREFORDSHIRE





Trevor Harris, John Whitcutt & David Hollingsworth



Margot Boss, Stewart Craggs & David Hollingsworth



Margot Boss, Raymond Harris, Julia & Alastair Bellingham



Martin & Valerie Hart with Felicity Bellamy



Ray Lindley & Richard Ridler



Our group outside the Chase Hotel, Ross-on-Wye

THE HEREFORDSHIRE CIDER COUNTRY VISIT

15TH & 16TH MAY 2013

It was with some trepidation that we set out for this event: the outside temperature reading in the car was recording lows of 5 degrees and the forecast was for heavy rain and gales. Shropshire recorded a heavy fall of snow. Despite all this, on arrival, the Chase Hotel looked resplendent: bathed in warm late afternoon sunlight with its backdrop of wooded hills, extensive peaceful gardens, and a small lake with two resident Canada geese with a brood of chicks.

The first evening's dinner was a lively affair with the 29 Sacavin guests seated on three large round tables in "Harry's at the Chase Restaurant". We are sorry that Val and John Ingram were unable to make it and we all wish them a speedy recovery. The food was excellent and the wines well chosen and available in liberal quantities. For the record the white wine was a Chenin Blanc (Kleine Zalce Bush Wines) from Stellenbosch, and the two reds: Bardolino Classico (Bolla); and, of course, a Chinon (Les Morinières) by the ubiquitous Joseph Mellot.

On the morning of the 16th we awoke to a complete and near perfect mackerel sky which quickly turned to an unbroken blue with just a breadth of wind. Breakfast at Harry's was a treat with many of the guests availing themselves of a full English Breakfast inclusive of the local black pudding. Pick-up was at 9.30am and the short drive of about half an hour to the Cider Museum in Hereford was delightful. The Herefordshire countryside looked its best: the alluvial greens of the new crops and deciduous leaves, the yellow of fresh rape, and the late blossom of pear and apple, framed on one side by the brooding majesty of the Black Mountains and, on the other, by the gentle slopes of the Malvern Hills.

The Cider Museum, located very much in the centre of Hereford, was once the home of Bulmer's Cider production. We were met by Margaret Thompson who gave us a brief introduction to the museum and encouraged us to have a good look around at the extensive equipment and other artefacts on display. Interestingly, the museum also contained two

copper single process stills brought over from Calvados which they had used and hoped to make more use of in the future.

Once a year a competition is held at the museum where ciders and perry, and not just from Herefordshire, are judged and awarded. We were fortunate that this competition had recently taken place and that many of the entries were available for sampling and purchase. We were doubly fortunate that Tom Oliver, of Oliver's Cider and Perry who had won the top accolade in the competition, was at hand to talk us through the samples on offer. Not only was Tom passionate and highly knowledgeable about the subject he also had a delightful sense of humour. His presentation was blind insofar as he was unaware of the producers whose products he was commenting on. An amusing moment was afforded when he clearly was less than impressed with one cider, but was reluctant to make too many derogatory comments having guessed who might be the producer. One piece of useful information I came away with after his presentation is that cider can contain up to 25 percent of pear and perry 25 percent of apple; and that this is necessitated by the way the fruit is grown with the larger and usually much older pear trees acting as wind breaks to the apple orchards.

From Hereford we headed to Weston's Cider factory at Much Marcle and lunch in the Scrumpy House Restaurant. The food was obviously so well appreciated that two portions of the fish and chips, not pre-ordered, were consumed. But the Chef quickly came to the rescue and all was put right. Becky, our guide,

took us around the plant starting with the founding father's cottage which sits at the entrance to the site. Judging by the clink of bottles winding their way back to the coach, the visit was well appreciated. Another piece of information I took away from this visit is that all Weston's products are sourced from locally grown apples and pears. And, as Tom Oliver would say, by buying locally sourced ciders you create a virtuous circle leading to more pear and apple blossom decorating the Herefordshire hills.

Our formal dinner was held that evening in Harry's Restaurant using the three round tables set aside for us. Once again we were able to draw upon the Chase Hotel's excellent menu and enjoy the same wines as noted

above. The conversation was even more lively no doubt facilitated by the day's cider tasting and assisted by the fact that we were joined in the restaurant by a golfing society whose best player, apparently, got to wear a big girl's blouse.

I am sure all of those who attended this visit would like to join me in extending our gratitude to Richard and Gillian Ridler for organising this event. We all appreciate that these things do not just happen and that much effort and no little expense is required to get it all right. We are all grateful for this.

S. A. Price



Caroline Salzedo kindly supplied us with this photo of the British Sacavin's first Induction Dinner, held in Vintners' Hall On 24th February 1970. Her father, Leonard is in the centre, in front of Grand Commandeur Robert Cointreau. Can anyone help identify the others?

The Loire 2012 Vintages

Those of us who made the journey to Azay-le-Rideaux last October will recall the awful weather that had plagued wine producers in the region. At the time it did seem that, for many, the harvest was one step short of disaster. However, miracles do happen. Délégué General Ernest Lee has kindly summarised for us a reassuring article from the French press.

Grand Maître Pierre Aguilas is President of the Salon des Vins de Loire and the Courier de l'Ouest interviewed him in that capacity. As a wine-producing region, the Loire extends from the Pays Nantais to Saint-Pourçain-sur-Sioule in the Allier – 70,000 hectares containing 79 AOC wines, which makes it the third largest wine-producing region in France.

Maître Aguilas first delivered his judgement on the 2012 vintages: he stated that, from the quality point of view, the 2012 wines will be decent, but the volume of production is 25-30% down on the normal quantity. The reds (particularly Cabernets d'Anjou) and rosés are acceptable, while the producers of Coteaux de Layon performed miracles to end up with excellent quality Chenins.

On the subject of prices, Maître Aguilas said that, in his opinion, the wines of the Loire should retail at higher prices than customary. His experience, gained as National President of AOC wines, convinced him that Loire wines are underpriced, when their quality is measured against Bordeaux, Burgundy and even Champagne.

Maître Aguilas – who is a Marketing expert as well as a respected producer of wines – ended his interview with a recommendation to his fellow vigneron. Make every effort to ensure that regional wines figure prominently in the region's restaurant wine lists.



Joan Bintcliffe

Why is it that it's only with their passing that we discover how much we didn't know about Sacavin members? One would not have described Joan Bintcliffe, who sadly died in February, as a woman of modest proportions. Yet it turns out she was an exceptional water-skier, travelling with the British Team to the World Water-ski Championships in Australia in the 1960s. National Titles were won in all three disciplines, but trick skiing was her forte. When she retired from the sport on her 50th Birthday, she celebrated with a lap of the lake on one ski!

Horse riding, ice-skating and dog breeding were other pursuits but her early career was as a music teacher, having graduated from the Royal Academy of Music following schooling at Adcote and Cheltenham Ladies College. A few years after the war, Joan met John Bintcliffe, a doctor whom many will remember as a fellow Sacavin until his death in 2008, and they were married in 1951.



Two sons followed. Exotic holidays, fine dining and watching the arrival of their 6 grand children took over as interests in later life and it was in 2001, at the Chapitre de L'Impereur held at the Café Royal, that Joan was inducted into the Sacavin. In recent years, we remember her as confined to a wheel chair, yet she bore her infirmities with great fortitude, regularly attending Sacavin events.

A generous heart and a loving spirit, Joan was a lady who lived life to the full. We will all miss her.

Michael Crowther-Watson

We bring you the sad news of Michael's death on 27th June after a short illness. He would have been 88 in September. The son of a Wesleyan Methodist minister, Mike's childhood was rather nomadic, as his father's postings were generally short term. That must have contributed in some way to his phenomenal range of interests. A more-than-passable clarinettist, his love of music, especially jazz, dated from his school days. As a sergeant in the Royal Electrical and Mechanical Engineers, his war service was in Malta, giving him an entry into the world of electronics which he turned into both a career with ICL and a hobby, particularly as a life-long radio ham. Sacavin members who visited his rambling former home on the North Kent Downs, may remember the 50 foot wireless mast in the garden and the recording studio which he permitted local musicians to use.



With Jackie Bilitch, his partner of over 20 years, he shared a passion for horticulture with spectacular results and, as keen Francophiles, they were both members of four local French twinning associations. But for Mike, France was also the avenue to another great passion, food. Over his long life he had probably eaten in most top French restaurants and was a member of the Chaîne des Rôtisseurs, the International Association of Gastronomy established in over 70 countries. Masonic colleagues in the Wayfarers' Chapter claim it was the prospect of fine-dining that led him to join the freemasons and it is no surprise, therefore, to have found him amongst our own Sacavin fraternity, inducted in 1978 at the Chapitre de l'Automne held in Vintners' Hall.

An excellent chef in his own right, guests at dinner learned to expect as many as ten courses, with the occasional odd quirk added, such as the theme "yellow" where Mike had gone to great lengths to ensure each course was of only that colour! Indeed, he was a man of independent thought which led to unconventional and provocative opinions that he delighted in sharing with others. His penchant for specialist sports cars, which over the years included a Dellow, a red Morgan and a Sunbeam Tiger, went along with the eccentric image, yet bee-keeping as a pastime revealed a more composed approach to life.

We offer Jackie and his children Robin, Penny, Noel and Tom our deepest sympathy.





DATES FOR YOUR DIARIES

Jazz Lunch at the National Liberal Club, Whitehall Place **Tuesday 17 September 2013**

Calling letters to be dispatched at the end of July



Management Committee meeting **Wednesday 25 September 2013** at
The National Liberal Club, Whitehall Place at 11.30 am



Chapitre 2013 at Vintners' Hall **Tuesday 19 November 2013**

Calling letters to be dispatched early October



Sacavin Challenge Chapter No.7 **Tuesday 28 January 2014**
Wine tasting over Dinner at the National Liberal Club, Whitehall Place

Calling letters to be dispatched early December

