



Sacavin Courier



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Sacavins and their guests assemble for dinner at the Château du Breuil.



Our thanks to John Muggleton, Martin Hart and Sid Price for the photographs in this issue of the Courier.

Sacavin Wine Challenge Chapter 9

Friday 12th February at the National Liberal Club

Chevaliers and their guests, numbering 44 in total, gathered in the splendid surroundings of the N.L.C. for this popular annual event. With less of us than usual, one could see the finely tiled walls and wonderful Victorian architectural eccentricity in the David Lloyd George Room – not a thing one generally notices. For me the sweeping staircase is also such an attractive feature.

Now to business, as this time Des Holland provided us with a challenge of wines from across the world, chosen to test our palates and to complement the food.

MENU

Vin d'honneur:

Codorníu Grand Grand Plus Ultra Vintage 2013

Spain Chardonnay 11.5% alc

~*~

**Warm Red Mullet & Lobster,
Provençal salad**

Robertson Winery - Chenin Blanc 2015

South Africa 13.5% alc

ℓ

Silver Ghost Sauvignon Blanc 2015 Central Valley,

Chile 12.5% alc

~*~

**Entrecôte Steak Bordelaise,
Dauphinoise Potatoes & Vegetables**

Parcel Series Old Vine - Zinfandel 2012

USA 13.5% alc

ℓ

'Les Galets' Côtes du Rhône 2014

France Grenache, Syrah 13.0% alc

~*~

French Regional Cheeses

Alamos Malbec 2014 Catena, Mendoza

Argentina 13.0% alc

ℓ

First Class Malbec 2014 Clare Valley

Australia 13.0% alc

~*~

Tart Tatin, Cinnamon Ice Cream

A Sticky End – 100% Noble Sauvignon Blanc 2014

Marlborough, New Zealand

~*~

Coffee and Mints

The next pair of Old Vine Zinfandel – which one does not often drink – and a classic Côtes du Rhone – one would have thought to be an easy challenge indeed. The Rhone proved more popular.

Following on with the cheese an Argentinean Malbec and an Australian one proved a good talking point. They both went very well with the cheese.

The mystery wine proved to be a little taste of a late harvest Marlborough Sauvignon Blanc. This was a delicate and delicious wine, which I felt was rather overpowered by the dessert. However this was just my opinion. I did hear a fellow chevalier say that he did not like the wine – whereas at least I did.

After dessert Grand Commandeur Geoffrey Wheal gave a vote of thanks. Firstly to the kitchen staff, the chef, and Sandra and her marvellous team. The dinner was superb and we certainly particularly enjoyed the delicious entrecôte steak. I heard many people remark about this.

Then he mentioned how very much we all missed Des Holland. We were all very grateful to him for his continued help in running the Challenge, despite being laid low by illness.

Geoffrey also mentioned the new venue for the AGM, being the Oriental Club.

The Savage Club kindly asked us to repair to their bar if we so wished, at the end of the evening. Several members did just that to continue the good camaraderie which Sacavin always engenders.

Felicity Bellamy

I thought the pairing of a Chenin and a Sauvignon was clever, as both these whites are stalwarts of the Loire, so we should know them well. They displayed their classic characteristics despite being from South Africa and Chile!

AGM & Luncheon at the Oriental Club

Saturday 9th April 2016

IT was a happy group of 60 chevaliers who convened at the splendid Oriental Club in central London for the Sacavin AGM and spring lunch on 9th April. As Queen's Club had building works going on, we had to change to the Oriental Club, but may return to Queen's in the future as we have always enjoyed our AGMs there.

Fortunately the Oriental Club proved to be superb in every respect. It is in a good location just off Oxford Street. The new venue was suggested and facilitated by Chevalier Duncan Burnett, who is a member of the Oriental Club. We give him great thanks for this introduction.



Sacavins approach the Club in Stratford Place

The Club is in a fine Adam inspired mansion in Stratford House, dating from the 1770s. The Oriental Club was founded in 1824 by returning officers and officials from India and the East who had witnessed both wondrous and challenging sights. The Club was a valued haven in a London that must have seemed at once comfortingly familiar and yet so different to the exotic climate and culture that had become their everyday in the East.

The Oriental Club is proud of its rich heritage, some of which is catalogued among the impressive collection of books in the Library, acquired through the centuries. The Oriental Club also has an extensive art collection, which brings the history of the Club to life.

There is a fine portrait of Edward Snodgrass on the wall in the ante-room. He was a great supporter of The Oriental Club in its early

days, donating several fine art paintings to the Club. He was also a great character. As a civil servant in Madras he lived like a prince in a magnificent residence. The Company (East India) became suspicious and called him to account. When he returned, he claimed he had lost his accounts in a lake.

The directors were understandably unimpressed and struck him off the Civil Service list, depriving him of his pension. Upon dismissal Snodgrass swore they would end up begging him to receive his pension.

Snodgrass set himself up as a street sweeper outside the Company's offices to 'earn his bread' so he said, although he was clearly not short of funds. This attracted so much comment in the press and polite society, that to avoid further embarrassment Snodgrass was offered 'two or twenty' pensions to cease his street sweeping activities. Snodgrass pronounced himself satisfied with the one pension he felt he was owed!

Our meeting was held in an exquisitely cherry panelled room and lunch was taken in a beautifully proportioned room with a gilded ceiling and long large windows.

The AGM began slightly late as the Essex minibus was severely delayed – but they made it in the end. We welcomed them warmly especially Des Holland who is now restored to full health. Their arrival coincided with our Vin d'honneur! We enjoyed Cremant de Loire Louis Beauchant Duroc, 100% Chenin Blanc in the fine surroundings of the Oriental Club, marvelling at the pictures, fine rooms and high calibre of the surroundings.

AGM LUNCH AT THE ORIENTAL CLUB



Ann Price & Raymond Harris with his daughter Yvonne



Valerie Ingram & Ruth Wyman



Stuart Craggs



Rosemary & Duncan Burnett



Michael Gray, Diana Whitcutt & Karen Thomas



Cylwean & Robert Aitken-Sykes



Brenda & Geoffrey Wheal



Elizabeth & Ray Lindley

Our lunch was prepared by a Michelin rated chef, and it certainly lived up to expectations. The pressed lamb shoulder was particularly delicious. Chevalier Leslie Garner said grace, which was most apt:

*"He sleepeth well who wisely drinks
Who sleepeth well no evil thinks
Who thinks no evil never sins
Who sinneth not salvation wins
So let us wine and dine full well
And thus be certain safe from hell".*

Lunch Menu

Vin d'honneur:

*Cremant de Loire Louis Beauchant Duroc
100% Chenin Blanc*

~*~

**Home Smoked Salmon, Beetroot,
Pickled Cucumber, Lemon, Caviar**

*Muscadet Côtes de Grand Lieu
Domain Eric Chevalier 2014
100% Melon de Bourgogne*

~*~

**Braised & Pressed Lamb Shoulder,
Celeriac Purée & Wild Garlic,
Dauphinois Potatoes**

*Anjou Villages Brissac Domaine de Montgilet 2008
50% Cabernet franc et 50% Cabernet sauvignon*

~*~

Vanilla Crème Brûlée

~*~

Coffee & Chocolates

Convivial and lively chat ensued during lunch with many Chevaliers commenting on the ideal location for this AGM. We Sacavins enjoy a change of venue sometimes and the Oriental Club surpassed our expectations in every respect.

The Grand Commandeur thanked the chef and his staff, saying how very well we had been looked after. He thanked Duncan for organizing for us to be here. He also thanked Alastair for all his organizational input. He then looked forward both to the next committee meeting and the forthcoming trip to the Loire in May. Finally he mentioned the interesting visit to the Wallace Collection on 15th September to be organized by Felicity.

Chevaliers were kindly invited to repair to the Calcutta Light Horse Bar if they wished to partake of further liquid refreshment. With its large French windows opening onto the Terrace this proved a light and airy contemporary bar in which to round off our splendid day.

I am one of many Chevaliers who found the Oriental Club to be a superb venue in which to hold the AGM and spring lunch. It really was excellent in every respect. There was a very happy atmosphere amongst the Sacavin fellowship and as usual the friendships Sacavin generates were refreshed and toasted in proper Rabelaisian style.

Felicity Bellamy



Wine & Gastronomy in the Touraine

9th to 14th May 2016

With the Loire just over 1,000 kilometres long, it takes a lot of exploring. However, British Sacavins are up to the challenge and over the last couple of decades have covered much of the wine-producing region between Tours and the sea, along with the section around Sancerre. One day, perhaps, we will even do a little research amongst those lesser known vigneron in Auvergne, near the river's source. In the meantime, the major wine area south of Blois beckoned, one which our Commanderie has ignored for many years. This was about to be corrected, with our party booked into Hotel Les Trois Châteaux in the little town of Cour-Cheverny, some 12 kilometres south east of Blois.

It was dull and overcast the Monday we arrived, with rain forecast for much of the week. But Sacavins are not easily discouraged and, as it turned out, things could have been a lot worse. Had our visit been a month later, the worst flooding for 30 years occurred in north-central France, with the Seine, the Loire and several other rivers bursting their banks. Blois was particularly badly hit. So we were lucky with our timing!

Our hotel was an old coaching inn, situated in the heart of Cour-Cheverny, next to the church. It had been recently restored and was named in reference to its location in the triangle formed by the three great châteaux of Blois, Cheverny and Chambord. An interesting feature was the dining room, set in the courtyard of the old inn, now covered with a glass ceiling.



Sacavins at dinner in Hotel Les Trois Châteaux

Your editor is grateful to those on the trip who volunteered their services as reporters. First off is an account of Tuesday's activities, provided by Martin Hart.

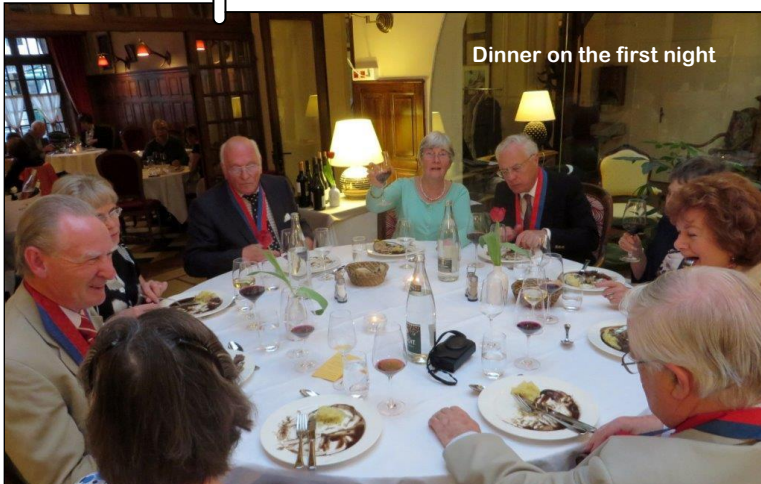
On a dull, dank and damp morning, promptly at 9.30am, we were picked up by our coach driver Jacky. He is going to be our driver for the remainder of our trip to this area of the Loire, The Touraine. We travelled along narrow roads, some of them tracks to the vineyard of Domaine du Salvard in Fougères-sur-Bievre. The vineyard is run by three members of the Delaille family, Emmanuel, Thierry and Lise.

We were greeted and shown around by Carola, a woman from Germany who has worked on the vineyard for seven years. Her English was excellent and clearly understood by the thirty-nine members of the Sacavin d'Anjou, Commanderie Britannique who were present.

Because of the weather we limited our visit to the bottling and tasting sections. On our arrival we were met by two delightful domaine dogs, one old, who commented on Carola's presentation with prolonged moans and a young animal who made up to us.

Carola informed us that the area of the Domaine was 45 hectares and the terroir was variable. They produced wines which were white, rosé and red. The grape varieties were, for the white wines, Sauvignon Blanc and Chardonnay. 85% of the former and 15% of the latter. For their rosé and red wines they used 65% Pinot Noir and 35% Gamay.

OUR VISIT TO THE TOURAINE



Dinner on the first night



Des Holland



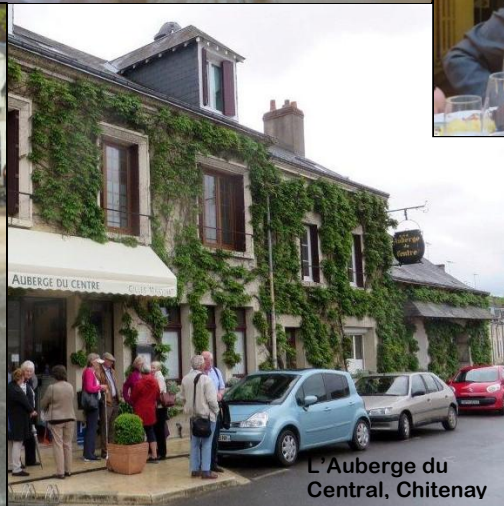
David Hollingsworth



Michael Gray & Brenda Wheal



Carola at Domaine du Salvard



L'Auberge du Centre, Chitenay



Isabelle Rouballay welcomes us to Domaine Octavie



Octavie's modern steel tanks



Caves du Père Auguste



Upstairs at Le Cheval Rouge



Adrian Godeau in the Caves du Père Auguste



Downstairs at Le Cheval Rouge



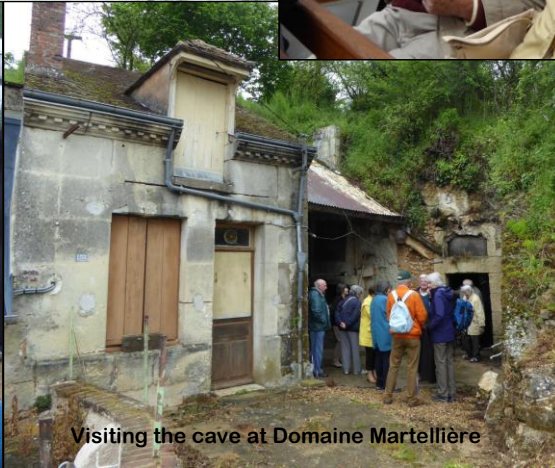
Le Château de Chenonceau



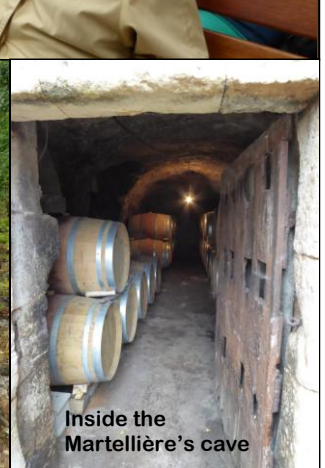
Cruising on the River Cher



Jean Martellière describes his domaine.



Visiting the cave at Domaine Martellière



Inside the Martellière's cave



Charles Jumert at Cave de la Berthelotière



Cave de la Berthelotière



Marina Chollet at Domaine de Rabelais



Domaine de Rabelais



Awaiting the tasting



Louis & Thifaine



Gala dinner at the Château de Breuil

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We were led to the tasting area, which was a small room, where we just about all fitted in and were invited to taste three wines. The white, a Domaine du Salvard, Cheverny A.C. 2015 was Alc. 12.5% by vol. It was quite, I felt, flinty in character and had a fruity flavour. The rosé was of 2014 vintage and was Alc. 12.0% by vol. This wine had a flowery bouquet but was very thin to taste. The red was 2015 vintage and Alc 12.5% by volume. Again this, I felt, was thin. Having thanked our host, we departed.

Lunch was at Chitenay, where we ate at L'Auberge du Central, a capacious restaurant and hotel. We had three courses, two of which were accompanied by wine. With the savouries we drank Cheverny 2014 Christelle et Christophe Badin, Sauvignon. The wine also accompanied the rabbit paté with pistachios. We had salad with that. With the main course, which consisted of duck, mashed potatoes and beans wrapped in bacon, we imbibed Cabernet Touraine, Philipe Oudin 2012, Cave de la Grande Broise. The dessert was ice-cream cake which, I suspect, contained a hint of Grand Marnier and we finished with coffee.

After lunch, some of our party walked round the garden.

The weather improved and by the time we arrived at our afternoon destination, the sun greeted us. The vineyard we visited was the Domaine Octavie, in Oisly. Isabelle was our guide and she, along with Noë Rouballay run this estate. They are the fifth generation, starting in 1885, to run this enterprise.

The vine producing area is 32 hectares and its vines have an average age of 25 years. In fact, their oldest vines are 100 years old. The grape varieties are Sauvignon, Pinot Noir, Gamay and Malbec (also called Côt). After picking, pressing, etc., the wine is stored in several 14,000 litre tanks. They produce both still and sparkling wines of excellent quality.

The white wines that were tasted were Touraine Sauvignon 2015 and Touraine Oisly 2015. These wines were fruity and very drinkable. The next wine to be tasted was a rosé. This was a Pineau d'Aunis

2015 which only came into production for sale at the beginning of the month. Again this was very palatable.

We were then introduced to a pair of red wines. The Gamay 2015 and Les Vieux Moines – Pinot Noir 2014. Some of our party imbibed the Pinot Noir before the Gamay and couldn't enjoy the subtleties of the Gamay. This was as the Pinot Noir was a fuller bodied wine. Liquorice was very prominent in the Gamay and its subtleness was denuded by having the Pinot Noir first. Both were excellent. For Loire reds to be so good is, in my opinion, a rarity. Finally we were introduced to the Cuvée Pauline, both blanc and rosé. The method of producing these sparkling wines is traditional. They are both interesting and well worth indulging in. After this tasting, quite a few bottles, unlike the earlier vineyard's produce, were procured.



A little-known aspect of the Grand Commandeur's duties

The group then returned to the hotel a very happy and satiated assembly of imbibers, having, of course, made a fuss of the vineyard's receptive and friendly French Spaniel and our Grand Commandeur thanked our hosts of the afternoon.

Christine and John Muggleton now take up the tale.

On Wednesday the weather was cloudy and cool with some spells of rain. A start at 9:00am was planned today for our trip to Civray but this was thwarted by an immobile coach. Jackie, our driver, called base and a repair man arrived 45 minutes later and diagnosed an electrical fault related to the battery. We boarded the bus but then the door kept opening and closing by itself and so it was not

possible to drive. More phone calls to base followed and the problem was finally solved by turning the coach's engine off and on to re-boot the computer. We finally left at 10:25. British patience had been maintained throughout.



*How to jump-start a coach*

By 11:30 we arrived at Caves du Père Auguste where we were greeted by Adrian and his father Alain. This vineyard consists of 37 ha and 200,000 bottles of wine are produced a year. It was started over a century ago by Père Auguste who dug a cellar into the white rock under the vines. Adrian showed us the old equipment not used anymore including two large oak barrels. Today they no longer store any of their wine in oak barrels. This enables them to produce fruitier white and rosé wines while the red wines contain sufficient tannins of their own and so do not need barrel storage. The reds can be drunk after 5 to 10 years with the best lasting 20 years or more.

The tasting took place in a large comfortable, modern room, with a table and chairs around it so we could all sit down. We started with a demi-sec rosé, Pastourelle, made from Cabernet Franc and Grolleau. (The Grolleau is a local variety with very dark grapes and the name is reputed to be derived from the old French for a crow.) The grapes are quickly pressed so a little colour of the skins stayed in the extract. It is good as an aperitif and with salads. It was followed with Sauvignon Blanc, very fruity, aromatic and dry, also good as an aperitif or with fish and shellfish. The next wine to taste was a red, Touraine Chenonceaux Rouge, made from Côt (aka Malbec) and Cabernet Franc, dark in colour, fruity with delicate and silky tannins. We finished with a méthode traditionnelle sparkling white, Blanc Brut, which was made from Chenin

Blanc and Chardonnay. It was an excellent presentation and Laila gave a very good thank you speech.

Adrian called the hotel where we were to have lunch to say that we would be late and we arrived at Le Cheval Rouge in Chisseaux by 13:00. It is run by Jacques Guillaumat, former Vice Champion of France for desserts. The group had to divide: 20 dined upstairs at a long table and 19 downstairs at oval tables. We had a very nice Kir to start with and fish mousse as an "amuse bouche". The starter was egg and ham with asparagus, artistically arranged on the plate; the main course was cod on wheat. A plentiful supply of a Sauvignon Blanc, La Gourmandière, AOC Touraine, 2014, accompanied these dishes. It was a delicious meal, pleasantly presented. Given the owner's reputation the dessert was awaited eagerly and so the profiteroles that arrived were a bit of an anti-climax.

After so much wine it was pleasant to spend the afternoon sailing peacefully along the river Cher, to see the famous Château de Chenonceau. This is the largest and most sumptuous of the Renaissance châteaux and spans the river on a series of spectacular arches. Our boat was l'Ambacia which, together with La Gabare, has revived the old tradition of sailing on the Cher after a gap of 80 years. As we passed by the wooded banks one could imagine crocodiles sliding into the water to greet us but alas they were only logs. We sailed under the arches and then returned to where we had boarded. This was a relaxing end to our visits and a cuckoo sang as we made our way to the coach which was waiting to take us back to the hotel.

A report of Thursday's excursion is provided by Cylvean Aitken-Sykes.

In the morning we visited Domaine Martellière, Montoire-sur-Loir. This is one of the most north westerly vineyards in France comprising of 13 hectares with 3 appellations:

Jasnières Coteaux du Loir and Coteaux du Vendemois.

Apparently Jasnières (the chenin grape) is a favourite of our Queen and was exported by a M.

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L'Anglois which is coincidentally Norman for English.

The main grape variety is Pineau d'Aunis which produces a "gris" wine, what the French call a very pale rosé.

The vinification process is as natural as possible, spraying is only done when absolutely necessary and grass is allowed to grow between the vines which is mulched each year to provide hummus. The Martellière family do not use fertilizers. They also use enamelled steel casks which are airtight and more robust than stainless steel alone.

After a thorough tasting of 3 white and 3 red wines accompanied by delicious homemade rillettes, we departed for Vendome and a memorable filling lunch at the Moulin du Loir, seated next to the moving mill wheel, behind glass!



Lunch at the Moulin du Loir

In the afternoon we visited the Cave de la Berthelotière and the Jumert family at Villiers-sur-Loir. There were 15 vineyards in this village, now there is just the one and the Jumerts are the 7th generation to be working the vineyard, doing everything themselves with just 4 seasonal workers. This is also a 13 hectare vineyard, and they too use enamelled vats, but concrete instead of steel.

This vineyard also produce a delicious VDN, called "St. Catherine's wine" because the grapes are traditionally picked on her name day – 25th November. Their caves are 240 years old, chalk, and are beautifully darkened by fungal spores.

Friday did not start well. The forecast was a 90% chance of precipitation and we soon

discovered what that meant as we made our way westwards, through the drizzle with headlights on, to cross the Loire at Chaumont, its famous château to our left. On the northern bank was the village of Onzain, through whose narrow streets our driver deftly manoeuvred the coach until we came to Chemin de Rabelais, at the end of which was the Domaine of the same name. Marina Chollet greeted us warmly in English, she had mastered the language during 2 years spent in Stratford-upon-Avon.

Marina's story was typical of the Loire. The family of her husband Cédric had been vigneron since 1720, with three generations producing wine in the current location. Cédric's grandfather had built the cellar and planted 10 hectares with vines. The first harvest came 3 years later. Today, a comprehensive collection of vines extends over 20 hectares. For white and rosé, the pressing is fairly quick, but fermentation cool and slow. For red there is a maceration stage of a week to 10 days before pressing, and fermentation is at a higher temperature and quicker. Some reds go through a second fermentation, resulting in less acidity. Despite the history, it's a modern establishment, with a new cellar equipped with stainless steel vats constructed in 1997.

There seemed to be a lot to take in and, sensibly, further detail was provided by means of a film. We saw the layering technique used by the Chollets to propagate vines, pruning the vines and attaching them to wires, sulphur treatment and the making of vineyard posts. Did we hear a few sighs from the ladies as Cédric appeared on screen, stripped to the waist, magnificent pectorals rippling under a layer of grape juice? He was digging out macerated red grapes from an underground tank, ready for pressing. Despite modern technology and equipment, running a vineyard is still hard work. Yet Cédric and Marina, plus one full time and one part time employee manage the whole enterprise, except at harvest time that is, when a further two join them.

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We tasted several wines. First was a good and reasonably priced Sauvignon AOC Touraine. However, it was the local, Touraine Mesland AOC that occupied us for the next 4 tastings. A rosé, Cuvée Thifaine Demi-sec 2014 (Gamay), followed by two reds, (60% Gamay, 20% Côt & 20% Cabernet franc), Vieilles Vignes and Cuvée Anais Viellie en fut de chêne and a white, Cuvée Louis (Pineau de la Loire & Chardonnay). There were some who rated the Cuvée Anais the best red of the week, strong, with a good body, uncharacteristic of the Loire.

A visitor to the Domaine de Rabelais might expect to find some allusion to that great author's creations, the giants Gargantua and Pantagruel. However, as we made our purchases, it was the Chollets two young children, Thifaine and Louis, who made an appearance, a preferable alternative. Their names were reflected in wines we had just tasted.

The Château de Chaumont. That was our next stop and rain, on and off all morning, threatened again. It was also quite cold. We were free to make our own arrangements for lunch and most decided to head immediately for one or other of the dining venues, mostly dotted around the old farmyard and stables, in the hope that the weather might improve later. Your editor and his wife headed for the château itself, and we found a snug little café just inside the entrance. Refuelled, a tour of the château revealed its remarkable place in French history. Founded around the year 1000 AD, by Odo 1, Count of Blois, it soon passed into the d'Amboise family who held it for 5 centuries. Not without problems though, for it was burnt to the ground by Louis XI following a revolt against the king and had to be rebuilt. Catherine de Medici, who married King Henri II, bought the château in 1550. However, 9 years later she made her husband's former mistress, Diane de Poitiers, swap it for the Château de Chenonceau.

Much of the present day external appearance is due to Jacques-Donatien Le Ray, a wealthy

merchant who bought the château in 1750. He completed the south wing and knocked down the north one, opening up the courtyard to one of the finest views over the Loire. Internally, it was Marie-Charlotte-Constance Say, heir to the Say sugar refineries, and her husband Prince Henri-Armédée de Broglie who, as owners in the late 19<sup>th</sup> century, were responsible for the private apartments and fitting out the "historical" showcase rooms on the first floor, including Catherine de Medici's bedroom. But her bed itself seemed remarkably small for such a powerful woman! Finally, in 1938, the château was acquired by the State.

There was much of interest to see, so at least an hour went by before we braved the elements again. A pleasant surprise, the rain had stopped and the clouds were lifting. Another cuckoo was in evidence, calling repeatedly from the neighbouring woods. We headed for The Festival Gardens, leaving the château looking huge, imposing, magnificent, behind us.



*The Festival Gardens at the Château de Chaumont*

Members will each have their favourites amongst the 32 exhibits under the theme "Gardens from the Coming Century". Many reflected current concerns about climate change, pollution, the pace of life and the world's ever increasing need for food. Most of the entries were French but there was one from Great Britain entitled "Frankenstein's Nature", ushering one into an abandoned laboratory where unusual plants were springing up! Given the earlier rain, Sacavins could identify with the designer of "Je Reste", built around one man's refusal to leave his

home despite flood water approaching roof level. He builds a new life for himself at the water's edge in what's left of his property, with the few things he's been able to salvage.

Water continued to find a presence with "Que Vienne la Pluie", a floating garden which, intentionally or otherwise, had become the home to several raucous frogs. And the Netherlands had come up with a roof-terrace garden, ventilated using electricity generated by extraordinary "plant-batteries". However, unless we missed it, nowhere amongst the exhibits did we see any vines. Does this tell us something about the century to come?

The day ended with the valedictory dinner in another château, that of Breuil, just a short drive from our hotel. Vin d'honneur, in the form of a delightful sparkling Vouvray, was served in a beautiful period dining room, accompanied by various canapés. Once at our tables, we were offered a gorgeously light amuse-bouche of foie gras mousse. The meal that followed is recorded in the menu on the right, quite excellent and a tribute to the Foley's skill at seeking out good dining experiences.

As dinner drew to an end, Grand Commandeur Geoffrey Wheal rose to thank

John and Marie for a job well done. The hard work involved in organising such an excursion was well understood and their coolness under fire when the coach wouldn't start and when the weather turned against us was much admired. Geoffrey then presented John and Marie with an assortment of local wines as a gesture of our group's appreciation, reiterated by all with the applause which followed.

### **Château de Breuil** **Menu**

**Cassiolette de noix de St-Jacques à la  
badiane & fondue de poireaux**  
*Cour-Cheverny blanc Domaine de la Plante d'Or cuvée  
Salamandre 2010  
100% Romorantin*

~\*~

**Filet de boeuf poêlé à la bordelaise, asperge  
de Cheverny, shitakés bio & poire tapée de  
Touraine**

*Touraine Côt Garmon, Domaine de la Chapinière 2011*

~\*~

**Poire pochée au vin rouge de Cheverny,  
cannelle & citronnelle, poivre de Sichuan,  
macaron**

*Côteaux du Layon Château du Breuil 2013*

~\*~

**Coffee & Chocolates**



## **The Future**

Your Committee continues to plan for the years ahead. There are many matters to consider, whether they be the chapitre this November or our Commanderie's 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary in 2018. The world is changing too, offering opportunities which we exploit where they are to our advantage. Digital photography has clearly made a difference to our recording of events. Also, a website for Sacavin UK will be launched later this year. None of your Committee is getting any younger and their skills are generally restricted to those of their particular age group. Over the next few years, therefore, it will need to evolve, as older members retire. If Sacavin UK is to continue, it will only do so if sufficient younger members come forward to replace them on the Committee. Particularly, it is organisational expertise and know-how regarding information technology that are needed. Please think positively about this, and if you have something to offer, let us know. And it's not just the Committee. The Commanderie itself needs an annual supply of new members. If you have friends to propose, let us have the names by September, in time for this year's Chapitre.

## Hazel Sheen 1928 – 2016



**H**azel, the wife of former Grand Commandeur Derek Sheen died on 15<sup>th</sup> June. The second of three sisters, she was born in Kenya. Their father had founded a firm of chartered accountants in Nairobi immediately after the First World War, having fought with the King's African Rifles in German East Africa (now Tanzania). However, with war clouds once again gathering in Europe and unrest amongst the Kikuyu in Africa, the family returned to England in 1937.

**H**azel, together with her sisters, attended Queenswood Girl's School near Hatfield, where she proved herself to be strong at hockey and tennis and swam well. School memories include seeing the gliders being towed in the early hours on June 6<sup>th</sup> 1945 on their way to France.

She turned down the chance to follow her father into accountancy and, instead, took a secretarial training. She then joined ICI at their headquarters in London. On occasions she was called on to work for the Chairman, the somewhat formidable Lord McGowan.

Her marriage to Tony Wright in 1952 resulted in three children, two sons and one daughter. Sadly the marriage did not last and Hazel was left to bring up the children herself, with support from her in-laws. The need to have an independent income prompted Hazel to apply for the position of secretary to the Headmaster of the Yehudi Menuhin School in Cobham.

This appointment was her salvation. She joined a large, interesting and very friendly family, meeting many talented musicians, including Nigel Kennedy and Tamsin Little. It turned out that she had the same birthday as Yehudi and, at one party held at Croydon's Fairfield Hall to celebrate the Maestro's anniversary, he in turn presented her with a large bouquet of roses.

She remained at the school for 22 years, serving a total of four head masters and one head mistress.

It was in 1987 that she met Derek at a drinks party, when she was introduced by two mutual friends, Sacavin Tony Baker and his wife Celia. On 1<sup>st</sup> January 1988 they announced their engagement and were married on 28<sup>th</sup> May the same year. A quartet from the Menuhin School played at the church and afterwards at the reception. The music included Scott Joplin and, at the church, Haydn. She chose the same Haydn piece, the string quartet in D Major, Op. 76, No. 5, for her funeral.

Hazel was inducted into the Sacavin in 2000 at Le Chapitre du Millénaire, Vintners' Hall. Wine was one of several interests and she enjoyed many trips to France with Derek. However, she also saw beauty and satisfaction in gardening and her garden at Fetcham and, subsequently, at Hilton to which she and Derek moved in 1992, were great passions.

Described at her funeral as a gentle soul, with a beautiful personality, loved by many friends, we will miss her. We offer Derek and her children David, Pippa and James, our sincere condolences.



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