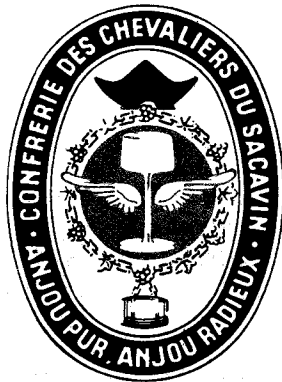


SACAVIN



COURIER

COMMANDERIE DE GRANDE BRETAGNE DE LA CONFRERIE DES CHEVALIERS DU SACAVIN D'ANJOU

No 2

Winter 1980/81

EDITORIAL

The best laid schemes of mice and men We had hoped to produce a Courier twice a year, Spring and Autumn perhaps. In the event, for a variety of reasons, it has not been possible to do so. Hence this Winter issue. We now have the opportunity to look back with happy nostalgia on the events of 1980 and to look forward, under new management, to 1981.

THE RETOUR HEUREUX CHAPTER - 7 May 1980

The Cafe Royal, Regent Street, was the venue for our last induction held on 7th May. As usual, the new chevaliers showed a great variety of professions and interests, all having in common, however, a knowledge and appreciation of the wines of Anjou.

Peter Barling, a cigar merchant with the distinction of being the only hand-roller of cigars left in London.

Arthur Bone, a director of studies for the Wine and Spirit Education Trust, has spent a lifetime in the wine trade and now directs students in the way they should go - Anjou-wards, we hope.

Emmanuel Drion, is already a great friend of the Commanderie, helping us in many ways on many occasions. He is the Director of the London office of 'Food and Wine from France' and, as such, is an authority on the wines of France. He is married to an Angevine and, of course, has a great appreciation of the food and wine of Anjou.

Raymond Harris, is an accountant and has the good fortune to be married, too, to an Angevine, an excellent foundation for a sound knowledge of the wine of the Loire.

Nicholas Kyriakides, had a distinguished and adventurous army career. His extensive travels, world-wide, have made him a real gourmet with a sound knowledge and appreciation of food and wine.

A. David Malpas, is a company director concerned principally with the retail trade, a good opportunity for furthering the appreciation of good wine.

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David Montague, is a solicitor by profession, but is also a bon viveur and a raconteur with a great variety of interest outside his legal duties.

John Sandell, has been involved in the wine trade since 1961 which was a good vintage in which to start. He works for one of the prime importers of Anjou wines which is an excellent reason for becoming a chevalier. He is also a Companion d'Alsacienne and Companion Beaujolais.

Donald Silk, is also a solicitor but his interests range widely, the theatre, hospital welfare, chess and general service to the community.

Now, we welcome these new Chevaliers to the ranks of the Confrerie and we hope they will be able to spend many enjoyable and interesting hours at our gatherings.

COMMANDERIE WINE-TASTING - 27 July 1980 - at the Oxfordshire home of the Chancellor, Commandeur Chris. Wilkinson.

The morning was dull and overcast, a spatter of rain seemed to preclude the possibility of a tasting in the open air, in the garden, but with the characteristic inconsistency of English weather, by mid-morning, the sun was shining in a typical summer sky.

Chough Cottage, in a beautiful part of the Oxfordshire countryside, is thatched and has whitewashed walls; inside are spacious rooms with low ceilings supported by oak beams. The house has all the mellowed charm which age and maturity can bring; it has none of the smug prettiness beloved of film-makers and Christmas-card artists. Here in the extensive surroundings of a wooded garden, about forty guests, members of the Commanderie and their wives, were privileged to take part in a tasting of about thirty fine Loire wines.

We were offered Muscadet, Saumur, Chenin, Sancerre, Malvoisie, Bonnezeau; wines from the cellars of Messrs. Hawkins and Nurick, John Fells, Mayor Swooner; Rawlings Voigt; R. and C. Vintners; Whitwham & Co., and of C.J. Wilkinson, our own Chancellor. A rare chance of tasting wines from some of the lesser known vineyards of the Loire and comparing them with some of the wines more frequently met with. One interesting feature of the tasting was the unique opportunity of comparing six different vintages of the small, ten acre vineyard of Coulee de Serrant.

After the serious business of the tasting, a delectable buffet lunch prepared by Mrs. Chris. Wilkinson was served. To say that the accompanying Anjou wines were worthy of the lunch, underlines the excellence of both. An Eau de Vie de marc served with coffee, ensured that euphoria which persists long after the last cork has been drawn and the last glass emptied. After this, the highlight of the afternoon was the swimming pool cabaret, featuring George Wilks, supported by a juvenile cast.

The Commanderie is grateful to our Chancellor and to Hilary for allowing us to invade their home, for arranging such an interesting function and for providing such delicious food. Thanks, too, to the children, all of whom helped in many ways and contributed in no small measure to our enjoyment of a delightful day.

VISIT TO BLENHEIM PALACE - 27 September 1980

A party of over 50 Chevaliers and guests gathered at the portals of Blenheim on a wet and misty Saturday morning to be marched, well, almost,

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to the splendid palace. After a short history and explanation we formed up in two parties to be shown the treasures and magnificence of this great architectural triumph. As the indefatigable organizer of the day, Cyril Saper, remarked and wrote to his Grace, Blenheim is the best kept of all the stately homes. Those who were present at the first visit made by the Commanderie will know the excellence of the kitchen and the smoked salmon and roast lamb served in the India Room. Cyril had sprinted ahead to ensure that all was well with the roasting and, indeed, it was. Each small table of 6-8 was presided over by a Chevalier who did the honours of carving the succulent leg of lamb put before him.

As always, we were able to savour our own wines, those for the day being Bouvet-Ladubay Sparkling Cremant Demi-Sec as the aperitif, Cols des Fougeraies Domaine-bottled Anjou Blanc with the Smoked Salmon, Menetou Salon 1975 Domaine-bottled with the Roast Lamb and Chateau Bellerive Quarts de Chaume 1976 with the Sweet.

Although our Grand Commandeur was unable to be present owing to official duties in Scotland, we were delighted that Daphne Mackenzie was there to preside over the proceedings. Cyril Saper, to whom once again thanks are due, received a very nice letter from the Duke of Marlborough.

NEWS OF THE 1980 VINTAGE

At this stage of the proceedings, the best that can be said of the 1980 vintage of the Loire, which includes Anjou, is that it is likely to be of very mixed quality. The prime reason for this is that, early on in the year, the weather was rather too wet. Consequently, the flowering of the vines in the late spring/early summer was very uneven so some vineyards had very little grape formation as a result whilst others did rather better.

Certainly, in Muscadet, the wines appear to have rather an excessive acidity. This could be a vintage to be avoided in that particular area.

One of the interesting features of those areas of the Loire where they make the sweeter wines - a wine such as Coteaux Dulayon for example - they actually had snow on the ground whilst they were picking the grapes. If the French had possessed the same expertise as the Germans, they could have produced a form of 'ice-wine'. As it is, the sweet wines of the region will be demi-sec rather than 'moelleux' for this year. With regard to the red wines of the region, the vintage looks as if it could be up to average. Better than the rather poor 1977 and some could attain the quality of 1978. In one quick sentence, 1980 Loire wines will need to be chosen carefully.

Finally, the sparkling wines, as always, will continue to be extremely good but pick non-vintage and not vintage.

1981 ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

The 1981 Annual General Meeting took place on Tuesday, 20th January, in the Overlord Room of Whitbread & Co, Chiswell Street, London, EC1. With the Grand Commandeur in the Chair, the 40 or so members present adopted the reports, agreed programme plans for 1981, considered possible functions for 1982 and elected the Officers for the forthcoming year. The Minutes of the Meeting are enclosed with this Newsletter.

With the business proceedings safely concluded, members and their guests

then repaired to the City Cellars for the AGM Dinner. An aperitif of Bouvet-Ladubay Cremant or Blanc de Blanc 1976 Tirage Limite put everyone in the right frame of mind to enjoy the Anjou Blanc Civas with the Cream of Vegetable Soup; Chateau de la Roche, Anjou Rouge de Cabernet 1974 DB Mme Joly with the Steak and Kidney Pie followed by Cheeses; and the Anjou Rose, Moulin de Tigne FB Vins Touchais a Doue la Fontaine with the Lemon Syllabub. A nightcap of Cointrea or Dalmore 12 years old Highland Malt rounded off a very pleasant evening.

GLIMPSES OF ANGERS - I

This is the first of a series which will describe buildings and aspects of the town and environs of Angers, the county town of Maine-et-Loire. It stands on the Maine, a river formed by three others, the Mayenne, the Sarthe and the Loir, which meets the Loire ten kilometres to the south. Angers is reached by road (N23 from Paris, via Le Mans and Chartres), by air (Nantes Airport and 90 Km by road) and by train (at the junction of the Montparnasse-Nantes line with the Nantes-Lyons line). The population of the town is 135,000 and the larger conurbation 180,000.

Angers was the capital of the tribe of Gauls known as the Andecaves. Under Roman occupation it was called Juliomagus. Renamed Angers, it developed during the Middle Ages, primarily under the English Plantagenet line of kings, then as a frontier fortress town at a time when Brittany was outside the French kingdom (and it wants to secede again!). Angers has been a university town since 1364 and was the seat of many religious orders.

The town suffered through the many religious and political upheavals of France, particularly at the time of the Ligue and the Fronde. Henry III gave orders to rase the castle to the ground but this was never done. During the Revolution of 1789 Angers became a republican centre and many religious buildings were destroyed. Interesting historical buildings survive, however, to which we shall return in subsequent issues.

1981 VISIT TO ANJOU

In May 1981, however, Chevaliers of the Confrerie and their partners have the opportunity for more than a glimpse of Angers and Anjou. A 4-day visit is being arranged to cover the weekend of 15th/16th May with travel and half-board for 4 nights in Saumur costing £150 per person. A full social programme is being organised and will include an Induction Dinner at Fontevraud. Up to 40 can join the visit and, at the time of writing, approximately half the places have been taken. Chevaliers who would like to come, therefore, but have not yet indicated their interest, should notify the Chancellor - Chris. Wilkinson - as soon as possible.

1981 AUTUMN EVENTS

Various programme plans for 1981 and 1982 are being considered by the Management Committee and whilst more detailed information will be given later, mention can be made now of events planned for later in the year.

This year's Dinner and Induction Ceremony will be in early October or November - plans are still very provisional but full details will be circulated when they are finalised.

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A One-Day Symposium is planned for Saturday, 21st November, 1981 at Whitbread's in Chiswell Street, London, EC1. The purpose of the Symposium is to combine both instruction and enjoyment with notable personalities of the Commanderie passing on their expert knowledge. Talks on the History and Culture of Anjou, the Vini-Culture of Anjou, the veracity or otherwise of Labelling and an account of the Sacavin and other Wine Orders will be given as well as a demonstration wine-tasting. Further details regarding the Symposium will be circulated in the Spring.

1981 SUBSCRIPTIONS

As this Newsletter is going out to you rather later than first planned, we are already well into 1981 and our new financial year. Although the Banker's Order Forms for this year's subscriptions accompanied the Agenda for the AGM and were sent out well before Christmas, the Chancellor is rather despondent that only 35 of our Active Members have completed and returned these with another 17 paying by cheque. This means that, so far, only 52 have renewed their subscription for 1981 as opposed to 92 for 1980.

We feel that the other Banker's Order Forms must be buried amongst the Christmas cards and wrapping paper! Please retrieve them and forward them, duly completed, to the Chancellor or, if they are lost, send a cheque to him instead. The subscription rate is £5 per member or £7.50 'spouse' rate.

NEXT NEWSLETTER

The next issue of the Sacavin Courier is planned for April/May.