



Sacavin Courier



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The return of Vin d'honneur! Chapitre Bonne Santé

Wine Tastings 8-11

Through the Summer and Autumn of 2021 our Commanderie was sustained by the monthly Zoom wine tastings outlined below. Although opinions and preferences differed - for wine tasting after all is the most subjective of arts - it was unanimously agreed that each event provided a much-needed opportunity to get together, when all normal Sacavin gatherings were in abeyance.

The theme of our 8th Tasting, held on 23rd June, was rosé. Presenters John Muggleton and Martin Hart each chose a wine from Waitrose:

Champteloup, AOC Rosé d'Anjou 2019.

Leftfield Rosé, Hawkes Bay 2020.

Both wines met with approval. Martin's choice from New Zealand was made from an unusual blend of Malbec, Merlot, Syrah and Pinotage, with separately fermented Arnies grape juice blended at the final stage.

Conversation flowed, and there were memories of wine trips and rosés drunk in past times.

For the 9th tasting, on 21st July Jan Thurlow chose two white wines from the Loire. As we were in the middle of a heatwave, these wines were particularly appropriate! Jan was unable to present the wines due to illness, but Philip Wood kindly stepped in to guide us through her selection.

**Le Grand Ballon - Sauvignon Blanc 2020,
Thierry Delaunay.**

**Chenin Blanc Les Andides, Saumur Robert
Marcel, Belleville-les Chateau.**

About 30 members and guests enjoyed the tasting and agreed that each wine would make an excellent aperitif, or go well with seafood, poultry, and salads.

Our 10th tasting took place on 14th September. Felicity Bellamy selected the following wines from Marks and Spencer:

Sancerre Les Ruette France 2019.

**Malbec Facon Grabado, Mendoza Argentina
2020.**

The first wine was chosen as a preview of what to expect from our proposed trip to Sancerre next May. This particular example promised vibrant yet subtle flavours with a flinty intensity

The Malbec, a rich and full-flavoured red, was recommended as an accompaniment to roast meats, game, or spicy dishes. Twenty-six Sacavins and guests enjoyed discussing the wines, *'shoes and ships and sealing wax, cabbages and kings.'*

Wine tasting no. 11, on 13th October, was hosted by John Muggleton, who proposed a comparison of two Chenin Blanc wines, chosen from the two major areas of production: the middle Loire Valley and South Africa.

**Domaine des 2 Vallées, Anjou Blanc, Clos de
la Casse, 2019, Chenin Blanc.**

DMZ, Chenin Blanc, 2020. *

Both wines were available from Majestic Wine Warehouse.

John's introduction took us back in time to 1496, when Chenin Blanc was first planted in Chenonceau. It was known to Rabelais, who spoke of its medicinal qualities. The grape arrived in South Africa sometime after 1750, when it was known as Stein.

The South African vines lead a cultured existence, in more than one sense. Every day since 2009 they have imbibed the sound of Baroque music, played to them all day. It is claimed to improve yields!



The following article was contributed by a Sacavin who wishes to remain anonymous. We hope it is the first in an occasional series of entertaining and informative pieces on wine-related matters. The reason for the author's reluctance to be named is unclear: modesty? A mischievous wish to encourage speculation? We shall see...

Did You Know?

Some years ago, I was writing down a recipe from a well-known TV chef. A generous splash of **Marsala** was a key ingredient. But what was Marsala? Was it an obscure Japanese marinade? Surely Marsala was the childhood companion of the Prince of Hur? He turned nasty, locked up Ben's mother and sister, and sentenced him to death by rowing! He well deserved his come-uppance during the chariot race. But, back to the other Marsala

In the middle of the 18th Century an Englishman named John Woodhouse was peddling his pharmaceuticals to the Sicilians. He was much taken by the red and white wines of Trapani and thought they would appeal to English tastes. Quite why he thought this, history does not tell, since opinion was that the wines were heavily oxidized and flabby in the extreme.

Undeterred, he decided the only way to get them back to England was to fortify them: he added brandy in the proportion of two gallons to every 100 gallons (the size of the barrel then being used). He called the wine Marsala after the name of the small port from which it was shipped, but to the Sicilians it was always known as the English Wine.

Woodhouse was joined by Benjamin Ingham in 1806 and the business took off, providing wines to Nelson's fleet on its way to confront Napoleon. By the end of the Century, several million litres of wine were being exported to England. In today's money, both Woodhouse and Ingham

would have been billionaires at the times of their deaths. So many English ships were collecting wine from the port of Marsala that when Garibaldi staged his invasion of Sicily in the 1860s, he chose this area on the grounds that the Bourbon King of Naples would not fire on him, correctly as it turned out, in case he inadvertently hit one of the English ships. It seems both parties were well acquainted with the Don Pacifico Affair. In no small way, therefore, Woodhouse and his Marsala wine played a part in the unification of Italy.

During the 19th and much of the 20th Century the wine went downhill, being used primarily in cooking. It was and remains the essential ingredient in the millions of zabaglione dishes made around the world. Things changed dramatically in 1969 and 1984 when, no doubt to the delight of the spirit of Woodhouse, the wine achieved full DOC status.

The DOC grades the wine: Fine, Superiore, Vergine and Vergine Stravecchio. The first two categories are for the very basic wine, which should continue to be used in the making of zabaglione. But the Vergine and the Stravecchio are fine wines to be appreciated by any serious wine enthusiast.

The Vergine must be matured in wood for at least 5 years and the Stravecchio for 10.



Both these wines are often unfortified and achieve their strength of 18 percent ABV simply through evaporation and concentration in cask. Because both these wines are always dry, they can be used as an aperitif or as an accompaniment to a first course. They can also be enjoyed after a meal in place of a tawny port. Both go well with strong and blue cheeses.

These wines are available from any good supplier. Look out on the label for such terms as oro (gold), ambra (amber) and rubino (ruby red) as descriptors of colour and secco (dry), semisecco (medium dry) and dolce (sweet – but remember this is relative since they are all dry.)
Enjoy!

Anon Sacavin

Le Chapitre Bonne Santé

Wednesday 17th November 2021

Fifty-five Chevaliers and guests met, for the first time since January 2020, to celebrate Le Chapitre Bonne Santé in the magnificent surroundings of Vintners' Hall; the occasion named in celebration of a return to relative normality after the worst of the Covid-19 pandemic appeared to be over. As we mingled and chatted over Vin d'honneur in the Drawing Room, the sheer pleasure in being reunited was plain to see.

The Grand Commandeur opened the Chapitre by welcoming everyone and announcing the promotion of four Management Committee members to the rank of Officier, as follows:

Robert Aitken-Sykes became a member of Sacavin in 2006 and joined the committee in 2012. He has been a Halberdier and is now a most efficient Chef du Protocole, dealing with seating plans, table layouts, timings, announcements and general troubleshooting for all the things which can go wrong on the event days, and chivvying us all to keep to the arranged timetable at each event – especially tonight. It is not an easy job, and it is greatly appreciated by everyone.

Max Brittain joined Sacavin in 2011 and the committee in 2017. He was a Halberdier and is now Chef des Beaux-Arts, as well as being Editor of the Courier. The Courier

takes lots of research and persuading people to write articles, as well as organising photos and printing and distribution. His behind-the-scenes work for Sacavin has been tremendous – firstly in helping the Grand Commandeur when she was Echanson, producing spreadsheets for each event, and calculations for wine buying in the Loire in 2019, bringing wine back into the UK, and storing it in his garage. He has also delivered wines to London for some of our events. Max is a highly valued member of Sacavin.

Duncan Burnett has been a member of Sacavin since 2013 and joined the committee in 2017. He was formerly Chef de Cuisine and is now Chancelier. His role is invaluable to the running of the Sacavin Management Committee. He collates numbers, organises agendas, takes the minutes of committee meetings and sends out all Sacavin notices for events, including the highly successful Zoom wine tastings. He has also introduced Sacavin to the

Oriental Club, where we have had two very successful events, including the 2016 AGM.

John Muggleton joined Sacavin in 2010 and the committee in 2017. He has been a Halberdier and is now Echanson, as well as inheriting the job of Chef des Expeditions. He will be our leader on the Sacavin trip to Sancerre in 2022. He brings much experience of wine buying with him and fulfils this important post most efficiently. At our Zoom wine tastings, he has undertaken extensive research into the wines he has presented, and this has been greatly appreciated by members over the last 18 months.

The Chef du Protocole then summoned the two candidates, Judith Bellingham and Major Stephen Marcham, for Sacavin membership. Their citations were read by Julia Bellingham and Felicity Bellamy respectively. In view of Stephen Marcham's long support and help to Sacavin as General Manager of Vintners' Hall, the Committee had agreed to offer Stephen Honorary membership of the Order.

Judith Bellingham: "After qualifying as a librarian through post-Graduate study, Judith worked as a librarian in several education settings for 15 years. She then moved into student support within schools, and next, the further education sector before eventually working in Adult Social Care. She enjoys spending time in her garden, including caring for her hens – a very opinionated bunch of ladies! She has kept chickens for about 10 years but like gardening, she says, it is a constant learning experience.

Her husband is a car fanatic and, in the spirit of 'if you can't beat them join them', she is now a classic car owner herself. She spends time working as an unskilled mechanic to help with the maintenance of both their

classic cars. She enjoys attending classic car shows; both to exhibit and to enjoy the cars and other vehicles on show.

She has a great interest in food and wine – when she is not eating and drinking, she is thinking and reading about them. She loves cooking and enjoys entertaining, as it gives her the chance to try out new things. She took the Wine & Spirit Education Trust Level 1 course in Wine in 2019 and would love to progress as soon as she has the time. I think Judith will be a great asset to Sacavin and I have great pleasure in proposing that she join our order."

Major Stephen Marcham MBE:

"Stephen was born in rural Gloucestershire in 1955. He joined the Junior Guardsman's Company at the age of 15 in 1970, which was a bit of a shock to the system! On completion of training, he joined the 2nd Battalion Grenadier Guards in 1972 and was immediately deployed on operations to the jungles of British Honduras, returning from there straight to Belfast; all in his first year of regular service.

Stephen completed a full 30 years' service with many overseas postings, as well as taking part in 11 operational deployments. He was awarded the Queen's Award for Valuable Service in Northern Ireland and is a Member of the British Empire. He also served as an instructor at the Royal Military Academy Sandhurst. He was commissioned from the ranks and retired as a Major in 2001.

Stephen joined Vintners' Hall straight from the armed forces: firstly as Beadle, then as the role grew, he was appointed General Manager. He has greatly enjoyed his second career and pinches himself that he works for the wine trade, with all the fun and wonderful people that make up this essential trade.

Stephen is married to Diana, has 3 children and lives in Ringwood in the New Forest.

He enjoys walking and is a keen vegetable gardener."

Following the induction ceremony involving the taking of wine and recitation of the oath, we welcomed our new members by singing the Optimé, accompanied by our Trumpeters. The new members were then formally inducted as Chevaliers by the Grand Commandeur. The grand fanfare then sounded, and members and guests proceeded to the dining room of Vintners' Hall. Announced by a fanfare from the high gallery, the new Chevaliers were led to their places to dine.

Vin d'honneur

Langlois-Château, Crémant de Loire, Rosé

Menu

CHARRED MACKEREL

*Puy lentils, chorizo, pickled kohlrabi,
lemon and marjoram dressing*

~*~

*Domaine de Grenadières, Champtoceaux,
Muscadet Coteaux de Loire, 2016*

~*~

LAKE DISTRICT LAMB RUMP

*Roast garlic mashed potatoes, heritage beetroots,
cavolo nero, rosemary jus*

~*~

Petit Clocher, Anjou Villages, 2016

~*~

CHEESE BOARD

a selection of English cheeses

~*~

CLEMENTINE TART

Roast maple plum, clotted cream.

~*~

Lebreton, Coteaux de l'Aubance

~*~

COFFEE & CHOCOLATES

~*~

*Choice of Cointreau or
Dalmore 15-year-old Single Malt*

Sid Price said grace, and our Echanson, John Muggleton, described the wines being offered at dinner.

The Vin d'honneur was a sparkling rosé from a blend of Cabernet Franc (minimum 50%) and Pinot Noir from vineyards at Montreuil-Bellay and Puy Notre Dame.

The white wine was a Domaine des Genaudières, Champtoceaux, Muscadet Coteaux de la Loire, 2016, made from the Melon de Bourgogne grape.

The red wine was a Domaine du Petit Clocher, Anjou Villages, 2016, a blend of 60% Cabernet Sauvignon and 40% Cabernet Franc produced by the Denis family. We drank their Anjou Blanc at the 2019 Chapitre.

The dessert wine was made by the Lebreton family, who are another long-established family of Loire vigneron. The wine is from the Chenin Blanc grape and will keep up to twenty years.

After dinner and the serving of Cointreau or 15-year-old Dalmore Single Malt Whisky, the Grand Commandeur rose to address the assembled company. Her speech is reproduced later in the Courier.

Major Stephen Marcham then spoke on behalf of the new inductees, and in appreciation of the excellent wine, food and companionship of the Chapitre. Having known Sacavin from the first time our Chapitre was held at Vintners' Hall, he had first watched the proceedings with some amazement at the esoteric nature of the induction ceremony, then with a modicum of understanding, never imagining that he would be asked to become a member.

Though honoured to be enrolled as an Honorary member, he said he wished to become a fully paid-up member and called on the Trésorier to make the appropriate arrangements.

He added that he and his wife Diane look forward to attending future events.

As the evening drew to a close, we all agreed it had been a great success, confirming

friendship, good food and fine wine as the lifeblood of our Commanderie.

Duncan Burnet



LE CHAPITRE BONNE



Susan & Stuart Craggs, Valerie & John Ingram arriving at Vintners' Hall



Michael & Ingrid Gray 'sit this one out'



'Tête-à-tête' – Richard & Marie



The Committee & new Inductees



Rapt attention!



Judith Bellingham

Felicity Bellamy

Major Stephen Marcham



The Grand Commandeur's Address

Le Chapitre Bonne Santé

What a wonderful evening we have had tonight here in the splendour of Vintners' Hall! It really has been magnificent. I would like to thank the Chef and the staff at Searcy's for looking after us so well, not to mention the staff at Vintners' Hall, and particularly to Steve Marcham for his support over the years.

Like all organisations, Sacavin has suffered during the pandemic through lack of social events. Luckily, our monthly Zoom wine tastings have proved a great success in bringing people together from the safety of their own homes. The Sacavin friendship glowed and thrived during these events, and I know that many members appreciated the social occasion, even if they had to stay at home for it! We have had no less than eleven tastings to date, and we will carry on with these, although they will be less frequent.

We are sad that our Grand Maitre Laure Pertus is unable to be with us this year, but she sent this message to us all.

"Please know that we in France will be with you all in spirit on the 17th November. We ask that you pass on our warm good wishes to all the Consoeurs and Confrères de la Commanderie Britannique."

Here in the UK, we have exciting plans for 2022, starting off on 19th January with a dinner and Two Rivers wine tasting at a new venue, Brasserie Blanc, just near Waterloo. Raymond Blanc opened his first Brasserie in the UK 25 years ago and still today his menus couldn't be more aligned with his original vision of freshly prepared, seasonal French food for everyone to enjoy. We will have a spacious private room as usual and our Echanson John Muggleton will guide us through a wine tasting comparing wines from the river

Loire and the river Rhone.

Our AGM will be on 9th April at Queens' Club as usual. We may have to expect increases on our ticket prices to reflect the effects of COVID on the hospitality industry, which has been very hard-hit.

We will be off to Sancerre from 16th - 22nd May. Plans are well afoot for this, and we will be sending out full details in January. I have read that the vintage in the Loire has come in well, with enough to meet market demand, although the frosts were particularly heavy this Spring. In 2020 the region produced 3 million hectolitres and the Loire vineyards have great ambitions for future exports, so that should keep us going!

We are hoping to organise a trip to Charterhouse Gardens in London in July, with lunch there or nearby. This again will be a new event for Sacavin.

To continue with new ideas, our Chef de Cuisine Sid Price is organising a trip to Essex from 6th-9th September. This will include a visit to Mersea Vineyard and lunch, a gala dinner, a tour of Wivenhoe Hall, and possibly a visit to Flatford Mill, as well as other excitements.

The date for our Chapitre in 2022 will be 23rd November, when we will look

forward to being back here in Vintners' Hall.

So, you see your Committee has been working very hard to help Sacavin flourish through thick and thin. We hope you will support us by coming to some or all the events. We also urge you to bring friends and spread the word about Sacavin, in case any of them might be interested in joining.

If we do not have many new people joining each year, we will struggle to continue as a flourishing wine order in

the UK, and that would be a great shame.

All of you here have enjoyed the very best of Sacavin camaraderie tonight. It is a valuable thing which we treasure and wish to continue.

Now I would like to propose a toast to my Committee for all their very hard work, and to the new inductees Judith and Steve, wishing them a very hearty welcome into Sacavin.
Santé!



Sacavin Profiles no.1

Chevalier Graham Macfarlane

My introduction to Sacavin came thanks to a phone call from Geoffrey Wheal to ask if Janet and I would like to go to a free lunch in Sarratt the following day, as there was a late vacancy. The answer was yes, and my journey had begun. I was inducted at the Chapitre de l'Entente Cordiale at Bakers' Hall in 2004 when both the English and French national anthems were sung. At that time our Chapitres were held in different Livery Halls: I have memories of the Apothecaries', the Armourers' and Brasiers' before we made Vintners' Hall our home.

My education was at Haberdashers' School in Cricklewood, which closed there the year I left - there was no connection in these events! I didn't go to university but started work in banking with what was then the National Provincial Bank at their branch in Park Lane. My career continued at various branches and departments, mainly in the West End, and I took early retirement from Nat West in 1995, when I was Senior Manager at Wardour Street.

I have always liked sport and played Rugby for many years for Old Haberdashers, and have also been President of the Old Haberdashers Association.

Now it is social golf with friends, and bowls.



I have also been a member of Pinner Round Table and 41 Club.

I met Janet when I was at Park Lane, and we were subsequently married in

Newcastle under Lyme in 1968. The surprise during the service was a power cut which ground the organ to a halt mid hymn and resulted in the elderly organist having to cross the aisle to the piano so we could continue.

We have 3 children, all boys, and 4 granddaughters - 2 in Bedford and 2 in Auckland. Travel to New Zealand is not currently allowed, but it is a wonderful country to visit. Unfortunately, Janet's health has declined in recent years and she is now being looked after in a care home.

I have been a member of the Nat West Wine Society for many years and, apart from the monthly tastings, the highlight has to be a trip that was organised to Bordeaux which included visits to Chateaux Lafitte, Margaux, Mouton Rothschild and Cos d'Estournel.

The wines at those tastings were excellent, as you would expect! I am also a member of the Jurade de Saint Emilion, and visits there have also been very enjoyable.

Our family holidays have been very much French-orientated, initially by tent and then caravan. On one occasion we visited a Champagne house where we bought three bottles but, in those days of exchange control, these were well-hidden and were not disclosed to Customs when we returned to the UK!

On another occasion we ended up on a campsite in Cognac. Visits to brandy houses

were arranged and at one tasting, our children were also allowed to have a small glass, after which one of them said:

“Opal fruits make your mouth water, but this stuff makes your eyes water!”

(Needless to say, he still sleeps well!)

On one occasion we went to Italy and stopped in Chianti at San Felice. In those days of the Italian Lira, our banking skills failed us, as we got the decimal point in the wrong place, so it cost us more than we expected! As well as the wine, we also enjoyed an olive oil tasting. Like wine, they can have many different flavours.

In later years, much to the surprise of friends, we would have nowhere to stay booked for the entire holiday and would find somewhere to stay each night - a mixture of camping and hotels where we would often arrive late in the day

Janet would charm the receptionist to give us a reduced rate if we ate there that evening. It was a no-brainer! We covered many areas but wine was always involved and trips through Alsace and all of the Rhone valley come to mind. The Sacavin trips to the Loire that we have been on have all been very enjoyable and I would recommend them to everyone.

Graham Macfarlane



Horsenden Vineyard Update

The vineyard has been a labour of love this year, replacing our usual travel plans. We have been lucky to have a few regular volunteers and others who have turned up when we needed many hands. Last year the birds had a feast on our small crop of grapes, so this year we invested in a net, big enough to cover all the vines. Some thirty people walked down the aisles pulling the net over their heads. Thanks to their efforts, we saved a lot of grapes and were still able to work on the vines.

The good weather earlier in the year encouraged the vines to produce a forest of foliage on our carefully pruned and disbudded stems. Keeping up with trimming the excess became an important routine, along with removing potential bunches of grapes, so as not to stress the vines too much. As the vineyard doesn't stretch to its own winery, we had been searching on line for possibles locally. We were lucky enough to discover the Urban winery, which takes and processes grapes from small wine-growers around London.

On the harvest date our volunteers picked 156 kg of grapes, which we delivered to Tooting to be processed as Tooting wine. The wine should be available for us to buy from January. Hopefully, next year we'll send our crop straight to a winery which will bottle it under the Horsenden label. There were enough grapes left for us to pick and make a few bottles of our own wine. Two bottles were taken to our Christmas allotment party and comments were generally favourable. Someone was heard to say, "I would pay for this".

Sheila and Adrian Macintosh



Why we joined Sacavin d'Anjou (and still love it)

It was at a Parish Supper in 2005, sitting with John and Valerie Ingram, that we, John and Marie Foley, found out about Sacavin d'Anjou. We are sure John was not on an active recruitment drive for new members, but what he told us inspired us to find out more. We are both lovers of France and the French way of life; we both speak French after years of study at school and university and many visits to all regions of that large and beautiful country. The prospect of being in France with like-minded companions, sampling the various vintages and tasting the delicious meals was intriguing.



Our first visit with Sacavin was indeed not to the Loire Valley but to Burgundy in 2006, when we lodged at a lovely chateau just south of Dijon. This trip was organised splendidly by Ernest and Krystyna Lee, who had been organising Sacavin's biennial trips to France for several years, and who continued to do so until 2010.

The way we were welcomed was warm, generous and highly informative. Our dinners were held in the chateau's lovely dining room and we were impressed to see officers and chevaliers don their collarettes for the first dinner of the week, to show how they valued their membership of this august fraternity. The days of visiting the age-old vineyards, illustrious

and famous, in the Côte de Nuits and Côtes de Beaune were excellent. We learned how, in the early Middle Ages, the monks, mostly of the Benedictine Order, cultivated the vine, carrying on and improving a tradition dating back Roman times.

At one of the larger vineyards, we were given a tasting masterclass by an Englishman whose job was to market the wines. He seemed very generous with the number of wines we could taste. We then discovered that he was changing his job to another wine producer, so he was 'rather free' with his largesse. He suggested that with red wine it was normally or even always best to decant, so as to 'chambrier', i.e. bring it to room temperature, for greater enjoyment.

This trip was so enjoyable that we joined Sacavin officially at the Chapitre in 2006.

Later trips to France were, of course, made to the main producing areas in the Loire Valley: Anjou, Saumur, Chinon and the Nantes region. They were even more memorable!

The final trip organised by Ernest was in 2010, to the Sancerre region in the Upper Loire, where we sampled its famous wines (and to which we plan to revisit in May 2022). Memories of outstanding visits come flooding back:

- Visiting Charles Pain's vineyards not far from Chinon and being shown round the extensive series of caves in the 'tuffeau' (soft limestone of the Loire region) to be followed by a feast of oven-baked delicacies washed down with unlimited wine.
- A cancellation, due to the illness of a winegrower in the most northerly part of the (little) Loire, causing a rapidly rearranged visit to a vineyard further along the river. In their barn they had spread out an array of their wines and local delicacies to impress their first English visitors for many years.
- The Parisian lawyer, who had retired from the hurly-burly of the capital to set up a beautiful, peaceful vineyard near Bourgueuil, with extensive storerooms in the subterranean caves. Back in the UK, we received the sad news that he had died only 9 months later.
- The Michelin-inspired lunch at Le Prieuré overlooking the Loire, where we enjoyed a deluxe silver-service meal and wines, overseen by a larger than life-size portrait of Napoleon Bonaparte. We joked that we should come back again if they substituted a similar portrait of the Iron Duke.

Allied to the wine trips in France was participation in the Chapitre des Vendanges (The Harvest Chapitre) held each year in the

beautiful medieval hall of the Hôpital St. Jean in Angers. This is the culmination of the festive year of our French colleagues in the parent society of the Sacavin d'Anjou. The French chevaliers are always very friendly and welcoming to the British fraternity as we take part in the ceremonies, delicious dinner and in dancing with them.

They gave us an outstanding party there to celebrate our 50-year anniversary in 2018. The party went on so well, with food and wine and the singing of French folk songs and English sea shanties, that I was afraid we should miss our coach, which was due to collect us at 10 pm. 'Relax, John, you are in France. It will wait for you all.' And it did.

The Anjou region and England share a great deal of history, from when Duke Henry of Anjou became the English king, Henry II, in the 12th century. These days, we share a love of the beautiful Loire/Maine region and its great variety of red, white, rosé and sparkling wines.

With increasing knowledge of these wines, and closer acquaintance with the actual producers has come a deepening love of this part of France, its varied landscapes and soils. So, we British members, together with our French friends, can raise a toast to Sacavin and our medieval patron, François Rabelais, famous for his stories and his love of food and wine.

Sacavin was re-founded in France in 1905 at the Chateau of Montreuil-Bellay near Saumur. Our British fraternity was established in 1968 with the help of the Cointreau clan.

The camaraderie of the Chevaliers is the hallmark of Sacavin; men and women from all walks of life: economists, accountants, teachers, engineers, musicians. entrepreneurs - all united in a common love of French, particularly Loire, wines, a wish to explore the wine-producing regions of France and England, and a desire to share in the friendship and joy that animates our fraternity.

John Foley

Wine Tasting no. 12.

8th December 2021

The final tasting of the year featured 3 wines, by way of a Christmas treat. The first was a **Crémant de Loire** from Lidl, presented by Felicity Bellamy. Though hugely popular in the bars and restaurants of Paris, Crémant is a very well-kept secret here. At £8.49 a bottle, it represented excellent value for money - a nicely balanced bubbly which would be delicious served as an aperitif with savoury canapés.

Crémant de Loire Lidl £8.49. 12% ABV

The second wine was introduced by Martin Hart.

Atlantique Sauvignon Blanc 12% ABV, Vin de Pays, from Waitrose at £8.49 a bottle. This wine is produced in an area at the mouth of the Loire, which may account for its fruity aroma.

The sea air may also lend a slightly salty flavour, although the example tasted didn't give that impression.

According to Waitrose, the wine has flavours of vibrant tropical fruit, and citrus aromas. It goes well with seafood and fish dishes.

The third wine, a red from Sancerre, was presented by John Muggleton. He explained that, as his original choice was out of

stock, this alternative wine was rather more expensive than planned.

Les Bonnes Bouches, Sancerre, 2016, Henri Bourgeois

from Majestic at £20.99 (mix six price).

Sancerre Rouge is produced from the Pinot Noir grape, which occupies about a quarter of the region's wine-growing area. It is typically light to medium bodied, with floral aromas and delicate flavours.

The vendor's tasting notes suggested flavours of Morello cherry, Violet. Oak and Spice.

Several members expressed disappointment with this wine, thinking it overpriced.

Nevertheless, Sacavin camaraderie ensured an enjoyable evening's fellowship.



Chris Mote 1949 - 2021

Chris died in July 2021 after a short illness. He was inducted at the Chapitre Les Deux Belles Dames in November 2019, proposed by Tony Moore. We are grateful to Tony for allowing us to quote from his funeral tribute to Chris.

Born in London in 1949, Chris became one of the longest-serving osteopaths in the country, being a member of their professional body for more than 50 years. He was a Major in the TA Signals



Regiment and served for over 25 years as Harrow Local Councillor. He led the Council for three years and later served as Deputy Mayor. We extend our condolences to his wife Janet, who is also a Chevalier, their three children and five grandchildren.

Laura Garner 1929 - 2021

Laura's passing last October at the age of 92, marks the end of an era for Sacavin UK. She and husband Leslie (obituary in Courier no.73) were inducted in Angers in 1971, at the 24th Grand Rallye International des Vins, Fleurs et Chateaux d'Anjou; a then annual collaboration of the Angers Flying Club and the French Confrérie.

When Commandeur Richard Ridler was revising the "History of Sacavin" for publication in our Jubilee year, he wrote to Laura, asking for her recollection of those events. Here is an extract from her reply:



"The [Rallye] was usually held in Spring. It was combined with the International Rally for Light Aircraft and was a competition.

[Leslie and I] took turns as pilot and we took off from our own strip close to Sutton Bridge,

Lincolnshire, and flew via Biggin Hill or Southend for Customs' clearance before continuing to Angers.

We had hardly any navigational instruments in our Auster and followed railway lines, and rivers. On the way to Angers we landed at various small landing areas or small aerodromes in order to arrive as closely to the allotted arrival time. We had to fly over three Châteaux which had displayed signs which we had to note and write down on our Entry Forms. This was rather dangerous as several competing aircraft would all be flying over the Châteaux, all trying to see the signs whilst keeping out of the way of other aircraft.

Pilots had to take part in this Rallye for three years before being dubbed "Chevaliers" at the caves in Angers. The members of the Aero Club were most helpful in taking us to and from the aerodrome into

Angers where we were allocated Hotels and taken to the Confrérie for the evening.

The following day there was usually an outdoor lunch – with wine – so we usually stayed another night before flying again! Several years later we heard about the Commanderie de Grand Bretagne de la Confrérie des Chevaliers du Sacavin d'Anjou and we were pleased to be able to join, as we were included in the Gold Book at Angers.

We do not think that there can be any connection now between the French Confrérie and the Angers Flying Club (if there is still one) but it is an important part of the History of Sacavin."



Laura and Leslie met as members of the local Lincoln Air Club, when she was a teacher and he a corn merchant. They married in 1965 and travelled the world extensively but were regular attendees at Sacavin UK events. She was made Officier in 2004.

The following tributes from those who knew her speak volumes:

"What a great lady she was, with a laconic sense of humour...Sadly missed." (John Foley)

"She was such a lovely lady, and we are sure that her lively presence will be missed by all who knew her." (Richard Ridler)

"We were proud to induct Laura and her husband at the Rallye aérien in 1971. This was one of the highlights of the history of the Confrérie des Chevaliers des Sacavin. This evening, the members of the Confrérie will celebrate the Chapitre des Vendanges in the Grenier St Jean. Be assured that we will think fondly of Laura Garner."

(Laure Petus and Véronique Jérosme)



A Message from the Grand Commandeur

March 2022

Your Committee was very sad to have to postpone the Two Rivers tasting and dinner in January due to Covid. Happily, we are to meet again on 9th April for our AGM at an exciting new venue, as Queen's Club is now much more expensive. The AGM will be at Brasserie Blanc, just 5 minutes' walk from Waterloo station. We are assured of delicious food here and it will be good to try somewhere new.

Our trip to Sancerre is all set to go in May, and for the first time almost half our group will travel by coach from the UK. In the autumn, Echanson John Muggleton and his wife Christine visited our hotel in Pouilly, along with most of the vineyards we are visiting. They are all looking forward to welcoming us there.

We are also very pleased to announce a new event to one of London's hidden gems, on Friday 1st July: a visit to Charterhouse and its gardens at Smithfield in central London. Founded in 1348, there was once a medieval monastery here, then a school and now almshouses. The buildings convey a vivid impression of large rambling 16th century mansions that once existed all over London. You will see the courtyards of the opulent Tudor mansion and visit the restored Great Hall. We will also enjoy a pub lunch.

In the meantime, we will continue to hold Zoom wine tastings. I was thrilled so many of you attended the Chapitre, and what a splendid occasion it proved to be! Sacavin friendships and camaraderie are indeed something to be treasured.

Felicity Bellamy



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*Our thanks to John Ingram for the photographs in this issue of the Courier.*

## DATES FOR YOUR DIARIES



Management Committee meetings: **Tuesday 15 March 2022,**  
**Wednesday 8 June, Tuesday 13 September, Tuesday 8 November 2022**



Spring Luncheon & AGM **Saturday 9 April 2022**  
Brasserie Blanc 9 Belvedere Road Southbank London SE1 8YP  
*Calling letters dispatched at the end of February 2022*



Visit to Sancerre and its environs **Monday 16 May to Friday 20 May 2022**  
(UK Coach party departs 15 May and returns 22 May)  
*Calling letters despatched 17th January 2022*



Visit to Charterhouse and gardens **1st July 2022**  
*Details to be finalised*



Visit to Essex **6 to 9 September 2022**  
*Details to be finalised*



2022 Chapitre **Wednesday 23 November**  
Vintners' Hall, City of London

