

www.chalfamwineclub.org.uk

01494 + Mike Baldwin (876286), Sandy Clark (765227), Carole Hazlehurst (863142),
Naomi Jones (765820), Suzanne Thomas (765122), Ruth Lawrie (763601)

Club News

- Final chance to book for the March, Wines of Bordeaux meeting hosted by Paul Mapplebeck. Tickets are £20, available from Sandy.
- There are still some places left for the Filippetto's Evenings. Those who went before will know what a great evening it was ...with some excellent food! Remember - friends are welcome. The tasting evenings are Tuesday 13th March and Tuesday 20th March. Tickets £20 each. Reservations strictly with Naomi only (tel no. above or naomijones99@hotmail.com), on a first come, first served basis.

This Month

Gary White will be presenting an evening of wines from Portugal.

Next Month, 6th March 2012

One of the Club's most popular presenters, our very own Paul Mapplebeck will be exploring the Wines of Bordeaux.

The AGM

The AGM in April is a meeting we hope all members will attend. Mike will be standing down as Chairman so we require members to cast their vote for a new Chairman, as well as vote for the other committee posts.

In order to prepare ballot papers, please send your nominations for Chairman, Treasurer and Secretary. Other committee posts for nominations are: Meetings Secretary, Membership Secretary, Catering Secretary and Events Secretary. Nominations to me by e-mail by March 6th. For those not on e-mail, I will be at the February meeting to take nominations.

The AGM is also the meeting where we taste 9 wines of the nights from the last year and vote for Wine of the Year. For new members who haven't been to an AGM before, it's a great opportunity to taste our favourite wines from the last year. As usual there will be no speaker so we will be looking for volunteers to say a few words about one of the wines. A list of wines will be available on Tuesday so please see Carole to put your name down to speak about one of the wines.

We also want to hear your views on how you think the Club is run, what you like and more importantly where we need to improve, so we hope all will participate in the questionnaire that will be distributed on the night. If you have an idea or a question and want to know what others think, we can include your suggestion in the questionnaire. Please e-mail me with the details.

...And as if all this wasn't enough to entice you along, the evening will be charged at a substantially reduced rate. What a bargain!

New Catering Arrangements

We tried out the new catering arrangements in January and the feedback was positive. We've made a few tweaks for this month which should improve things further.

www.chalfamwineclub.org.uk

The main reason for removing the buffet tables and having the food placed on each table is to allow a sixth table to be set up for our ever increasing numbers. We're delighted the Club is so popular and with a lengthy waiting list, this is one of the ways we hope we can introduce more members to the Club whilst ensuring our high standards of comfort and club cosiness can be maintained.

The food will be divided equally and placed on each table at the beginning of the evening for you to graze. It will be interesting to see if our thoughts for the white wines change with the accompaniment of food.

If there is any food left at the end of the evening, we encourage you to take it with you to minimise wastage. Please also help us at the end of the night by throwing all plates and plastic cutlery in the bin bags provided and washing the cheeseboards, cheese knives and baskets in the kitchen.

Chairman's Jottings....

It's funny how 2 apparently totally disconnected items can combine to reach a conclusion - or if not a definitive conclusion, then at least a, hopefully interesting, question.

Such a circumstance has occurred to me recently. The first item was news that the average price of wine sold in the UK has only just topped the £5 mark, a figure that which is remarkably low compared with the average price of wines we taste at the Club. And that increase is caused largely by tax increases, rather than by customers 'trading up'. The wine can't surely be very good at that sort of price. Mind you, digressing for a moment, I have noted that it is possible to buy wine 'en vrac' in France at a price of about 2 euros a litre - cheaper than coffee! - which, although not memorable, isn't actually vile. I wondered how they can do that. I guess the tax regime in France is somewhat more friendly towards wine producers, and perhaps the fact that if you buy en vrac, then there are no labels with inconvenient information about the grapes, the appellation, the alcohol content, or indeed, provide a bottle (you bring your own petrol can, and fill it with a pipe that is remarkably similar to a petrol dispenser) must be part of the reason.

The other item that would appear to be totally disconnected with this, is the fact that this is the time of year when I get to make a fact finding tour of rum making regions - my motto being always drink what is local to the area - that's the way to make interesting discoveries, which is the main reason for a wine club's existence after all. This year I took some time to compare the offerings available, rather than just go for my regular favourite (Mount Gay's Extra Old), and was quite astonished by the range on sale - the local supermarket can put on many more offerings than Tesco's Amersham branch can !!!

Among them is an astonishing white rum firewater with 84.5% alcohol (no that is not a typo!!). A local shop demonstrated that this could be used as an alternative source of fuel, by pouring some on the floor (concrete) and then setting fire to it, much to the amusement of the other shoppers at the time. But, firewater it is, and brought home to me, yet again, that more alcohol isn't necessarily a good thing - the firewater lacks any suggestion of being subtle, unless you consider setting fire to things with alcohol to be subtle!!!

Soon after this investigation, I had an interesting conversation was with another local shop owner, selling rums where the price difference between cheapest and most expensive was about 4 fold - so I asked him what the difference was, expecting a thesis about aged on wood, greater concentration of molasses etc. His reply - a classic - was "man - they all have the same effect"!

www.chalfamwineclub.org.uk

So- the link? I wonder if for most people their only concern is - the effect? Well, of course, in a sense, we are concerned about that - we want our wines to improve, enhance, balance our experience at the time: that is certainly part of 'the effect'. But that isn't what my shopkeeper friend meant. He was suggesting that it was the effect of alcohol was all that mattered. I hope not.

Wines from December....

If, like me, you didn't pay sufficient attention to the excellent wines Carole chose for the Christmas Party, here is a list of the wines and where they can be purchased.

Country	Wine	Grape	Shop	Price
France	Heidsieck Heritage Brut NV Champagne	Chardonnay, PN & PM	Waitrose	£14.99
US	McManis	Viogner	Waitrose	£10.99
Chile	Paredones "Cool Coast" Casa Silva	Sauvignon Blanc	Wine Rack	13.99
New Zealand	Mt Difficulty	Pinot Gris	Majestic	£14.99
New Zealand	Clocktower Pinot Noir	Pinot Noir	Marks and Spencer	11.99
Australia	Jim Barry Cover Drive	Cabernet Sauvignon	Morrison's	10.99
Italy	Paolo Leo	Primitivo	Waitrose	9.99
Australia	De Bortoli Show Muscat	Muscat	Majestic	£11.99
Portugal	Quinta Noval 10 year tawny		Waitrose	£14.69

Set-Up Rota

March Help...

April Help...

Catering

A big thank you to Jude, Ernie and Kirsten for helping Ruth with the food this month.

March Elizabeth, Caroline, Pat and Ruth

April Help....

Diary Dates

<u>Date</u>	<u>Speaker</u>	<u>Subject</u>
Tuesday 6 th March	Paul Mapplebeck	A special evening of Bordeaux
Tuesday 3 rd April	AGM	AGM



Driving?Please use the spittoons provided and ask the pourers for less.
 For the facts, go to www.drinkaware.co.uk

