

BLACKHEATH WINE CLUB 2019 – 2020 PROGRAMME

For information on how to join please contact

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Session One: Regional and Variety focus on Beaujolais and Gamay.

Thirst quenching for an Indian summer. But some with body and cellaring potential. The last four vintages have been really good for the Beaujolais vigneron, and at last the region has moved on from the commercialization of Nouveau. Styles vary from wine maker to wine maker, and from Cru to Cru. So here we look at the highlights from Beaujolais and also explore the potential of Gamay from other traditional wine areas and some new ones too.

Cost £35.00

Friday 6th September or Tuesday 10th September

Session Two: Understanding Terroir

Varietal focus on Pinot Gris and Riesling in Alsace.

Alsace is the only place in the world that it is affordable to show terroir differences with the same grape.

Pinot Gris and Riesling are the premier grapes in Alsace – a region where the site really matters and winemakers strive to produce terroir driven wines. We will try to see how much there is a link between wine styles and the terroir with the samples shown and see what other influences come into play from the winemakers.

Cost £35.00

Friday 11th October or Tuesday 15th October

Session Three and Four. South American Update

A double bill for the start of the shorter days and longer nights which will give you an opportunity to see the new trends and maturing new regions in both Chile, Argentina and Uruguay.

Session Three. Exploring the Chilean Terroirs

Ask most people about Chilean Wine and they say the wines are red, often Merlot from a big brand. Good value and dependable.

Yes, the big brands from large consolidated companies are still there, and they are not to be sneered at, as they are still making exceptionally good wines, and are increasingly becoming more innovative. For many years Chile lacked small, young independent producers, but now this has changed and there are an increasing number of winemakers who are creative with lots of energy and ideas to explore the potential of the regions and varieties in Chile. Old vines are being resurrected, embracing its

Spanish roots, Biodynamic wineries are increasing and new and traditional winemaking methods are being explored.

Cost £35.00

Friday 8th November

Session Four: Argentina and Uruguay. The David and Goliath of South America?

This session will dip into the current trends from both of these two countries and contrast their differences and highlight their challenges in the face of climate change and challenging market forces.

Argentinean Malbec is the go to choice of many Millennials but red blends and lighter fresh whites are on the increase for the wine makers in Argentina.

Whilst Peter Richards MW said recently that 'Uruguayan wine inhabits a fascinating and promising niche. On the one hand, it's immensely varied - from fizz to fortified wines via a whole host of styles in between. But there's also a consistency of feel to the wines - fresh, upbeat, elegant, at home on the table, gastronomic, thought-provoking...

Uruguayan wines are the intelligentsia of the global wine scene'.

Cost £35.00

Tuesday 12th November

Session Five: Christmas Special – Sweet Sensations.

Time to get into Sherry, Port, Madeira and Vin Doux Naturel wines – the lusciousness of Christmas wines with the shops and on line specialists now providing lots of ideas to stock up with for the Christmas period and beyond. This session will be my pick of the best and hopefully will give you tips of the best sources of where to buy this Christmas. Some appropriate tasters of cheese and mince pies will be offered to make the session even more delicious!

Cost £45.00

Friday 6th December or Tuesday 10th December

January is always a challenge. Last year apparently over 3 million people went dry. But it would be a shame to miss any of these sessions!

Session Six: Original Zin. Zinfandel Investigated. A real vine Mystery.

Zinfandel's versatility has marred its reputation. You can make it pink and dry, pink and slightly sweet, red and juicy, red and sweet, red and alcoholic, or as a 'port'. Each style has its devotees, although the so-called 'white Zinfandel', usually vinified as a sickly rosé, has few admirers among serious wine lovers.

For years there had been intense debate over the origins of Zinfandel. Is it related to Puglia's Primitivo or the Croatian variety Plavac Mali? Or perhaps its origins lay with the Crljenak Kaštelanski?

Finally in the 2012 book *Wine Grapes*, Masters of wine Jancis Robinson and Julia Harding and Swiss grape geneticist Dr. José Vouillamoz detail the search for Zinfandel's origins. After years of research and DNA testing of vines from vineyards across the globe, a single 90-year-old grape vine from the garden of an elderly lady in Split, Croatia, provided the evidence to show that Zinfandel was a Croatian grape that has been known as Tribidrag since at least the 15th century.

Whatever its origins we shall explore the classic Zinfandel styles of Californian reds and also try by comparison some Primitivo from Italy and who knows something from Croatia!

Cost £35.00

Friday 10th January or Tuesday 14th January

Session Seven: Mid Winter Special. Focus on the pinnacle classifications of Rioja - the Reservas and Gran Reservas.

Historically Rioja's success has been in creating a strong identity for an easily recognisable style – emphasising soft tannins and jammy red fruit from ageing in American oak. This however did not express the diversity found in the region. The region has moved from 'typicity' to 'the land of a thousand wines'. Recognising wines from single sub-zones, villages and outstanding vineyards in addition to traditional Rioja blends.

This session will explain the recent changes in the classifications of Rioja whilst sampling a selection from Reserva and Gran Reservas categories from a selection of traditional and new wave producers.

Cost £40.00

Tuesday 28th January

Session Eight and Nine. Double Session: Look East.

Exploring the growing interest and value in revitalized vineyards of Eastern Europe. There used to be a certain sniffiness about Eastern European wines. They always represented good value for money for those of you who can remember the 70s/80s and 90s. They were treated as unwelcome attendees at the wine-lover's party – OK if you wanted a cheap bottle of plonk but were never granted a place at the top table. But now all that's changed. With technology and know how often imported from Western Europe, a whole range of top-quality wines are now available at prices that won't break the bank from countries such as Romania, Hungary, Bulgaria, Slovenia, Croatia and Georgia.

Session Eight:

Look East for Unusual Grapes/Regions and Variety. This session will look at Croatia, Serbia, Hungary, Slovenia and Slovakia.

Cost £35.00

Friday 14th February.

Session Nine:

Look East for traditional grapes, unusual winemaking, revitalized vineyards. Here we taste the wines from Bulgaria, Romania, Moldova, and Georgia.

Cost £35.00

Tuesday 18th February.

Session Ten. New trends in winemaking.

A session where we sample wines from around the world illustrating wines which are reflecting the increasing methods of wine growing and production. They may be either organic, biodynamic, low Sulphur, orange, or natural. Sustainability is the buzz word but what is this meaning for the production of wine. What about canned wines or the real possibility of cannabis infused drinks? Lots to think and talk about but most of all some fascinating wines.

Cost £35.00

Friday 13th March or Tuesday 17th March

No wine Club in April.

Session Eleven and Twelve. Island Wines Double Bill for wines with a summery note.

Session Eleven. Greece and her Islands. Santorini, Crete, Samos and the Peloponnese. Wonderful varieties such as Agiorgitiko, Assyrtiko. Athiri. ... Malagousia, Moscofilero, Roditis, Xinomavro and of course Muscat.

Cost £35.00

Friday 1st May

Session Twelve. Sicily.

The largest island in the Mediterranean and one of Italy's biggest wine producing regions. But it is not a wine region – it's a continent with its own history, language and

customs and with wines from delicious grape varieties such as Grillo, Zibibbio, Cataratto, Insolia, Malvasia, Nero D'Avola, Frappato and Nerello Mascalese. Historically production focused on jug wines or fortified Marsala, and although inexpensive and good value Sicilian wines can be found in supermarkets there is growing demand for high end wines and from unique areas such as Etna.

Cost £35.00

Tuesday 5th May

Session Thirteen and Fourteen. Yet more English wines.

This was the most requested topic on my request sheet and the English wine scene is moving at such a pace that it does warrant an annual appraisal. Here two different sessions to pick from.

Session Thirteen: Varietal Focus Bacchus

Last year I attended the first Great British Bacchus tasting and it was fascinating to see the potential of this grape across over 36 different wines which suggest that for still wines Bacchus could be our great white hope. Many had the classic floral, Sauvignon-like character and some wines displayed similarities to Chablis, with a natural raciness and stony minerality that complement its bright fruit flavours perfectly. Also the naturally low alcohol of the wines (typically around 12%) is very much in tune with current trends. So here will be a tasting of wines across our regions displaying the versatility of English Bacchus and that I hope will give us a greater understanding of British terroir.

Cost £35.00

Friday 29th May

Session Fourteen. English Sparkling wines and Pinot Noir.

As each year passes I become more and more impressed by the quality of English Sparkling wines and so this is a great opportunity to highlight what I think are the best examples on the market. Also I will endeavour to get a couple of samples of Pinot Noir which after the 2018 vintage is showing really positive signs of becoming our signature red grape for red wines.

Cost £40.00

Tuesday 2nd June