

Chateau Cissac.....a “Vertical” Tasting

by Ormond Smith

April 8th was to provide a unique opportunity for Goustevin Scotland members to enjoy not only a rather excellent Cru Bourgeois from one of the world’s greatest wine producing areas but a “vertical” tasting covering four vintages, including what is referred to as “THE vintage of the century”! James and Heather Sheerin played host to a tasting of Chateau Cissac from the Haut-Medoc in Bordeaux, slightly inland from the celebrated vineyards of Saint-Estephe and Pauillac but nevertheless, a wine most worthy of its location! Very briefly on the technical aspects of this family owned (since 1895) vineyard, it covers 50 hectares with vines of around 30 years of age planted in fine gravel from the Garonne river, over chalk and the annual production is around 220,000 bottles.



A welcoming glass of Sauvignon Blanc to start the evening

With a enticing glass of Mouton-Cadet’s Sauvignon Blanc to hand Connetable Nicol welcomed the members and guests with a short pre-amble to the format of the evening and also gave advance notification of the forthcoming 40th Anniversary Dinner of Goustevin Scotland which is being held on June 3rd in the Drumossie Hotel.....ok, plug over, but keep an eye on the website! Young clarets do require a bit of breathing and Nicol had opened the wines at noon and had decanted them, returning them to their

bottles/magnums less any deposits which had been thrown. There is no doubt that the wines we sampled had obviously benefitted from this course of action

although, with hindsight, Nicol opined that a double decanting would have been beneficial to the more “closed” vintages. Interestingly, subtle differences in aging were apparent between the wines in bottle and those in magnums. All four vintages for the evening were acquired through our member Malcolm Ogilvie of Wine importers (Edinburgh) Ltd and members wishing to indulge in examples for future enjoyment may be able to purchase subject to availability.

The Tasting opened with a 2013 vintage (in bottle), matured in oak barrels for twenty months and then egg white fined and lightly filtered, the deep ruby red wine gave cooked fruits and fine oak on the nose, the palate savouring generous body with cassis and cedar notes with fine tannins and hints of dried tobacco on the aftertaste.....a worthy opener to the evening.



.....let the Tasting commence - the 2013 Chateau Cissac

The 2012 was in magnum and displayed greater concentration and intensity due to the reduced yields of the vintage. A blend of Cabernet Sauvignon (75%); Merlot (20%) and a 5% contribution of



**Perhaps THE vintage of the century?
The 2010 magnum of Chateau
Cissac.....delicious!!**

Petit Verdot.....a subtle change from the previous two vintages.....this wine showed deep ruby purple in the glass, a nose of cassis and berry fruits and a palate displaying good depth of fruit and ripeness. Interestingly, this wine illustrated the winemakers desire to make the wine more approachable, getting away from the austerity of earlier vintages.....having said that, this wine still requires a few more years of maturing before reaching its zenith.

Ah, our third sampling.....the 2010, described by many as THE vintage of the century (well, so far!) Again ruby in colour but this time with just a hint of a brown edge, the aromas of juicy, chunky blackcurrant fruit with hints of fine

cigar boxes assailed our noses and the palate enjoyed a balance of depth and intensity, firm tannins and an attractive spicy “earthy” character with a long satisfying aftertaste.....that said, this wine would certainly benefit

from another five years in bottle before reaching its peak.

The fourth and final wine of this “vertical” tasting was a 2008 (in magnum) with a dark garnet red in the glass and the nose inhaled aromas of excellent black berry fruits with hints of quality oak in the background. On the palate, the elegance, the silky tannins, the medium concentration of fruit and despite its age, a degree of freshness was well received by the assembly, the lingering, luscious



The 2008 Cissac is dispensed to eager recipients

aftertaste most satisfying but, yet again, a few more years of maturing would be beneficial.

The dish of the evening was a Cassoulet (perhaps not a Bordeaux speciality but a hearty example of Languedoc cuisine) and as in any kitchen, the chef rules, in this case Chef Heather, and when the shout came that the meal was ready, “down glasses and line up!!” A hearty dish indeed and an equally

hearty vote of thanks to Heather (and James!) for the accompaniment to the wines, followed up with some delicious cheeses.



Contented Confreres before the cassoulet is about to be served

Thanks indeed also to the Connetable for the vision of putting together such an interesting tasting and acquiring

four vintages of such an illustrious Cru Bourgeois as Chateau Cissac. The wines were all most satisfying, the differences often subtle as the vintages aged but whether one discerned the finer elements of the vintages or just enjoyed four maturing wines of great character, the evening was soundly excellent. For members who enjoy in depth dégustations, the format was well received and it is something to which Goustevin Scotland may return in the future.

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