

SUPPER CLUB

"WINE AND FOOD FROM SOUTH WEST FRANCE"

10th April 2025

Building on the success of our initial Supper Club event last October, our second venture took place in the Moray Suite of the Kingsmills Hotel in Inverness and the subject was to be the "Wine and Food of South-West France". This is quite an extensive wine region with many little known grape varieties, so the wines were selected to cover quite a diverse area. The hotel chef had been given the brief to select dishes to complement the region – we were not to be disappointed! The popularity of the "supper club" type of evening is spreading and some thirty members and guests attended, being welcomed by Connetable Nicol, followed by Caroline Duncan giving a brief discourse on the wines ahead, whilst we enjoyed an enticing lip-tingling crisp white, a **2023 Domaine Tariquet Classic Blanc** from the **Gers** area of the **Côtes de Gascogne**. This area is probably better known for the production of Armagnac from the Ugni grape and the Domaine have been producing the spirit since 1683. Come 1980, the estate decided to produce a white still wine with the first vintage offered in 1982, a dry white using 32% **Marseng**, 25% **Ugni Blanc** and a combination of other varieties – **Colombard**, **Sauvignon**, **Chardonnay** and **Chenin**. The result is complex, with good structure and length – aromatic and elegant on the nose and flavours of grapefruit, citrus zest and nettles on the palate, sufficient to wake the senses for the evening ahead.



The tasting white wines.....

Moving through from the reception area into the Moray Suite for the tasting, the next white wine was a **2021 Saint Mont "Les Vignes Retrouvées"** from the **Plaimont Co-operative** on the River Adour, which is at the centre of a vineyard that had never regained its confidence following the phylloxera catastrophe of more than a century ago and **Saint Mont** had to be reconstructed from scratch, using traditional grape varieties which combine to make this wine, **Manseng**, **Petit Courbu** and **Arrufiac** indeed this Domaine has saved these varieties from extinction! Dry and full bodied with complex aromas of nectarine and citrus and hints of lemon curd and blanched almond on the palate which gave a long and lingering finish. This was followed by another white wine from roughly the same micro- region and quite a mouthful a **2022 Pacherenc de Vic-Bilh Sec** from **Domaine Sergent** (Pacherenc in the local dialect means "vine stake" and Vic-Bilh means "old country"). Having got our tongues round the name of the wine, the grape varieties of **Madiran Blanc**, **Petit Manseng** and **Gros Manseng** gave a full bodied, ripe and exotic wine with aromas of tropical fruits and spice and a juicy, fresh and citric palate.....a wee top up please!



....and the red

For the final tasting wine we travelled north to **Bergerac** in the Dordogne region which although just east of Bordeaux, is classified in the South West of France wine region and this was a red wine, a **2021 “La Gloire de Mon Père”** from **Chateau Tour des Gendres**. Established in 1981, this organic vineyard is surrounded by truffle oak trees and the wine is a blend of equal amounts of **Malbec**, **Cabernet Sauvignon** and **Merlot**, the classic varieties of Bordeaux. Similar to AOC Bordeaux wines, they are arguably better value than their western counterparts, which with their regional “superiority” command heftier price tags. The vines are grown on warm clayey-limestone terroir and being more inland and slightly hotter and less wet, the wines can be a little fuller as a result. Deep red with violet tints, the nose assails with forest fruits, chocolate and liquorice and the palate is generous with firm tannins with a subtle sweetness on the lingering finish.



**The very appetising
Bouillabaisse.....**

Gascony wine production! Soft and fruity, with hints of soft cherries, strawberries and raspberries evident on the palate, the wine was pale pink in colour but with plenty of character a very suitable accompaniment to the Bouillabaisse. The main course was indeed a typical Gascon speciality, a **Cassoulet** with **Confit Duck Leg**, **Morteau Sausage**, and **Free Range Pork Belly** on a **White Bean** and **Tomato Ragout** – well presented and most satisfying. To accompany the Cassoulet were two wines - an absolutely cracking **2021 Chateau**



**....and the satisfying
Cassoulet**

Pineraie from **Cahors**, famous for its “inky black wines”, particularly popular with King Henry II of England (12th century) and Pope John XXII (13th century and who was actually from Cahors) – you could say that this wine certainly has longevity in vinicultural terms! The chateau is situated above the River Lot and this vintage comprises 85% **Malbec** (or **Auxerrois** in local parlance) and 15% **Merlot** – a small amount of **Tannat** can also be included in the blend but not, seemingly, for the 2021 vintage. Intense notes of ripe blackcurrants, cassis liqueur and mulberry assail the nose with a little oak coming through on this medium bodied wine with firm tannins. The second accompanying wine for the main course was a **2018 “Chateau Bouscassé” Madiran** (adjacent to **Picheron du Vic-Bilh** – see above), in the commune of **Maumusson-Laguian**. Madiran is Gascony’s great red wine, grown on the clay and limestone hills along the left bank of the River Adour and Alain Brumont is its greatest ambassador, blending 70% **Tannat** with 15% each of **Cabernet Sauvignon** and **Cabernet Franc** – the resulting wine is then micro-oxygenated (minute amounts of oxygen are bubbled through the wine) which softens the often harsh tannins and also saves time normally spent on barrel ageing. Dark red in the glass with a nose of black fruits, black cherry and spice – these flavours are replicated on the palate and leave the drinker with a long, lingering, satisfying finish.

To round off the evening (although with no dessert) was a **2021 Jurançon doux** from **Domaine Laguilhon** in the **Pyrénées-Atlantique** sub-region just south of the city of **Pau**, famous for its connection to the Tour de France cycle race. Jurançon is one of France’s most distinctive white vines, a tangy green tinged essence made in a wide range of sweetness levels. An equal blend of **Gros**

Manseng and **Petit Manseng**, the wine was a lively gold colour, luscious but not overly sweet or cloying with nasal notes of exotic fruits (mango and pineapple) and on the palate hints of honey blossom giving a beautiful balance and a refreshing finish. Following a cup of filtered coffee with a piece of tasty tablet, carraiges were summoned, drawing to close a most enjoyable evening.

Wines and Suppliers

Domaine Tariquet Classic Blanc, Côtes de Gascogne
Saint Mont "Les Vignes Retrouvées", Plaimont Co-operative
Pacherenc de Vic-Bilh Sec, Domaine Sergent
"La Gloire de Mon Père", Chateau Tour des Gendres
Côtes de Gascogne Rosé, "Cuvée du Roy"
Cahors, Chateau Pineraie
"Chateau Bouscassé" Madiran
Jurancon Doux, Domaine Laguilhon

Great Grog	£11.65
The Wine Society	£ 9.95
de Burgh Wines	£15.49
The Wine Society	£14.50
Great Grog	£ 9.25
Woodwinters	£14.00
The Wine Society	£21.00
My Wine Man (Edin)	£14.00

