

## Goustevin Vergelegen Tasting March 2018

Thirty-three members and guests convened at the Waterside Hotel, Inverness, for a presentation by Malcolm Ogilvie of Wine Importers (Edinburgh).



Malcolm is one of the Goustevin's favourite presenters and he was talking about one of his favourite wine regions. The members were therefore anticipating an evening of good wine, good company, good food and a certain amount of education. They were not disappointed.



Malcolm presented wines from the Vergelegen estate in the Western Cape. Established around 1700, the estate was bought by Anglo-American in 1987. They re-established wine making of a significant scale, replanting vineyards in the locations most appropriate to specific grape varieties and replacing the winery. The modern winery, opened by Baron Eric de Rothschild, in 1992 is situated in a hilltop so that there is a controlled temperature and the flow of must is achieved by gravity rather than pumping. The winemaker is very much in the French mould, and Michel Rolland acts as Consultant.

Malcolm presented nine wines, that were accompanied by appropriate 'tapas'- style dishes. Members were invited to compare and contrast pairs or triplets of wine with each course. Whilst he introduced the Vergelegen, there was an amuse bouche of smoked salmon and caviar to accompany some Sekt. The first six wines came from the 'Premium' and 'Reserve' ranges. The white grapes were Sauvignon blanc, Chardonnay and Semillon; Chenin blanc, the classic South African white grape, which probably outshines its French equivalent, was conspicuous by its absence. The explanation was the personal taste (prejudice?) of the wine maker. The whites were tasted with orange crusted hake with a tomato fricassée. The two Reserve wines, a Chardonnay and the Semillon, were especially successful with the food, but all were suited.



Two reds followed, one (a Bordeaux blend) from the Premium range, and a straight Cabernet sauvignon from the Reserve range. They accompanied a dish of wild mushroom gnocchi and parmesan pesto. Both were good wines, but were somewhat overshadowed by the subsequent pair of reds: the "GVB" (another Bordeaux blend) and the "V", another straight Cabernet sauvignon. This last is billed as Vergelegen's top wine, and fully justified this

appellation. The braised beef, roasted vegetables and mashed potato emphasised how these wines needed food, but both were eminently drinkable on their own.

Those that were restrained with the last two reds were able to try them with some cheese and oatcakes, served to accompany a sweet white, the Reserve 'Straw wine'. A 50:50 blend of Semillon and Sauvignon blanc, the wine went beautifully with a local Brie from Connage as well as with some blue. With pleasing residual acidity, reminiscent of a Jurançon moelleux, it was another wine to sip and savour for itself. Red wine with cheese, although thought to be the obvious pairing, can be difficult because of the tannins; both the GVB and the V were balanced enough not to fight with brie, and robust enough to stand up to the chocolate that came with the coffee.



Malcolm cemented his position as a favourite presenter to the Confrèrie with an educative, witty, and relaxed presentation of wines that pleased everyone. The Members and Guests showed their appreciation with sustained applause.

