

SUPPER CLUB

"TUSCAN FOOD AND WINE"

24th October 2024

by Ormond Smith

The eagerly awaited inaugural Goustevin Supper Club event was held in the Moray Suite of the Drumossie Hotel on Thursday 24th October with an encouraging turnout of members and guests. The chosen theme was Food and Wine from Tuscany, an Italian region renowned for both its cuisine and its wines and the selection of chosen wines for the evening and the quality of the supper from the Drumossie kitchens certainly did not disappoint! Three of the wines for the tasting were procured from Goustevin member Hugh Constable-Maxwell's organic **Val di Toro** winery (<https://valditorso.it>) in the gently rolling hills in the south of Tuscany near Grosseto in the heart of Maremma and there was



The "Anna's Secret" aperitif finds favour

an air of anticipation as the dining suite filled. A welcoming "aperitivo" of **Anna's Secret** **DOC Maremma Toscana Rosati Val di Toro** (Anna Maria being Hugh's Sicilian wife) greeted all on arrival, an elegant and harmonious rosé wine from Sangiovese grapes, hand harvested and showing a pale pink colour with lively and brilliant reflections. The nose gave hints of strawberry and red berries and on the palate, marked minerality and flavour. As an accompaniment, we enjoyed **Futtunta Bruschetta** canapés, very "moreish" with Burrata Cheese, Confit Tomato, herb panna cotta focaccia and basil.

The second wine of the evening was a **2023 Castello Banfi "Badalei**, a most appealing fruity Vermentino which reflected its unique Tuscan terroirs, exhibiting aromas of citrus and sage with yellow peach and floral highlights. Lively and vibrant, this wine is savoury and fruity on the palate with a long and harmonious finish and certainly found favour with the members. Our opening red wine was the second offering from **Val di Toro**, a **Riveresco DOCG Morellino di Scansano**, another example of the Sangiovese grape and this wine spends six months in French oak barrels prior to bottling. Bright ruby red in the glass with brilliant reflections tending to purple, the aroma assailed our olfactory organs with very intense fresh and expressive notes of ripe red fruits and forest nuances, the palate is soft and balanced and the dense and round tannins give the wine considerable depth and persistence – juicy notes of ripe cherries linger in a satisfying finish. Moving along to wine number 4, a locally sourced (from Majestic) **2021 Tenuta dell'Ornellia "Le Volte" Toscana Bolgheri**. The Ornellia winery, situated in the Bolgheri region of Tuscany to the south of Pisa, is a winery in demand – its first wine is one of the most sought after in Italy and the "Le Volte", their second wine, afforded us the opportunity to sample this winery's expertise but at a more attractive price! In this wine, Sangiovese is blended with Cabernet Sauvignon and Merlot- an exciting twist on the "Super Tuscan" blend. Aged for over ten months in oak, the resulting wine has great structure, fresh notes and red berry fruits and balancing acidity – it proved popular among the confreres.



The red wines await our deliberations

We were then invited to take our seats as the supper part of the evening was served, the chef and his team being inspired to create typical Italian dishes. The main course



**The "melt in the mouth"
Brasato du Guanciale di
Manzo**

was **Brasato du Guanciale di Manzo**, or for those of us less well versed in the Italian language, Slow cooked Beef Cheek with pappardelle, parsley and topped with a flaked lattice of Parmesan cheese. Tender and "melt in the mouth", the dish was well received and it was accompanied by the final red wine of the evening, and again from Hugh's vineyards, a **2016 Val di Toro DOC Maremma Toscana Sangiovese**. The grapes for this outstanding wine are hand harvested from the winery's best vineyards and undergo a lengthy fermentation process before being transferred to Slavonian oak barrels for 24 months, then a further 24 months in bottle before being released to the market. In the glass it shows an intense ruby red with violet reflections : the nose is dominated by fruity aromas of blackberry and blueberry which carry over onto the palate and accompanied by fine spicy hints of liquorice, vanilla

and black pepper and a subtle hint of chocolate. Described as a wine of great structure and fullness, savoury and pleasantly persistent, the richness of tannins and good acidity guarantee a marked aptitude for ageing and enhancing in the bottle – one of the most delicious Sangiovese testimonials you can find in a bottle, drinking very well now and if you can resist reaching for the corkscrew, will only improve with ageing.

The closing dish, the dessert, was a beautifully presented and traditional Italian **Tiramisu Toscano** (Ladyfinger biscuits, espresso coffee, mascarpone, cream and cocoa powder, served with chocolate sticks) and this was served with the final wine of the evening, a **2109 Santa Cristina Vin Santo DOCG Valdichiana Toscana**, an elegantly complex sweet wine from Florence and made with Trebbiano grapes that were dried for 5 months before gentle pressing. Following fermentation the wine was aged for at least two years in oak, the Santa Cristina is intense yellow in colour with amber reflections. Aromas on the nose are captivating with intense notes of candied fruit, raisins, apricots, and amaretto. The palate is full bodied and supple, sustained by excellent freshness. The wine closes with a pleasant, well-balanced finish with rich aromas of fruit in syrup – a perfect pairing with the Tiramisu.



**The Tiramisu with the Santa
Cristina Vin Santo wine**

Over coffee, conversation flowed and in the writer's opinion, the evening had been most successful, a view echoed by those present. What had emanated from a suggestion at a Conseil Magistral meeting as a different approach to our traditional tastings, has proved to be a successful venture. For members who were unable to attend this inaugural Supper Club event, the foregoing report will have hopefully whetted your taste buds and entice you to come along to the next event of this style at the Kingsmills Hotel next April. See you there?