

THE TWENTY CLUB SESSION 116 MEETING 1 WINE NOTES**Presidential Wine**

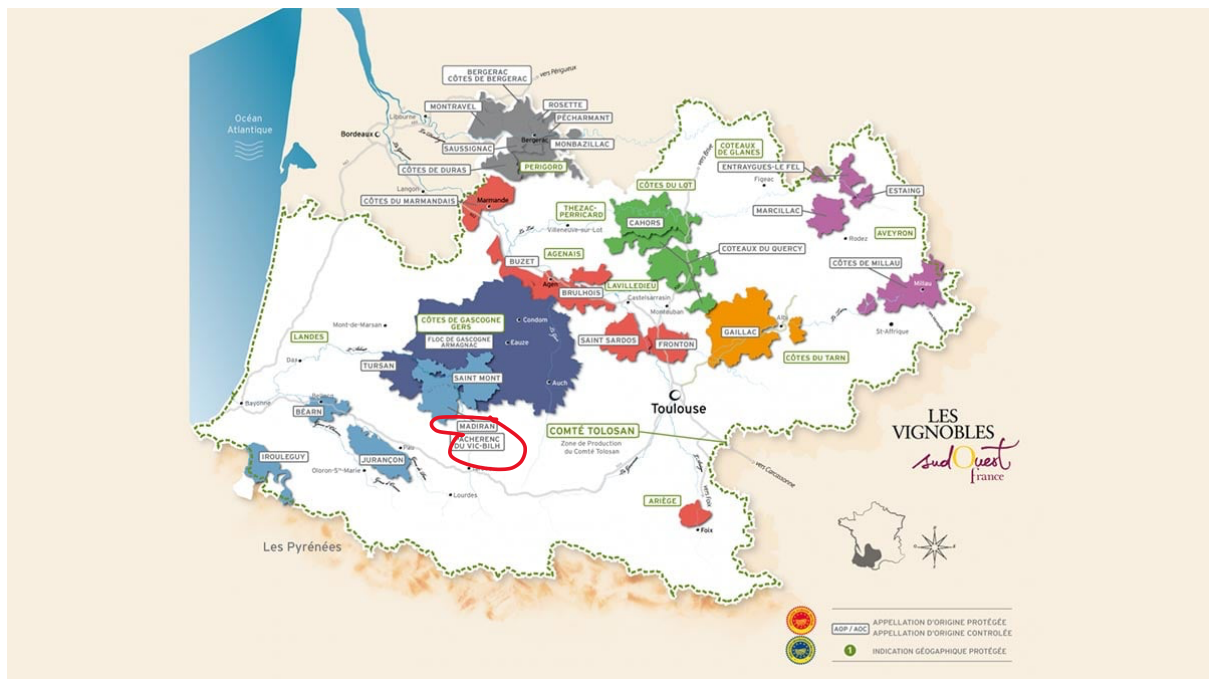
El Presidente Carter will only be a dictator on 'day one'. What a day.

Louis Roederer Collection 244

Louis Roederer- Champagne house of the Tsars, supermodels, The Notorious B.I.G., and now us. Established in 1776 it is one of the few remaining family run houses with about 250 ha of its own vineyards, enough for two thirds of production. Collection 244 (the 244th blend since inception, $1776+244=2020$) is the current premium multi vintage blend which has spent 4 years resting on its lees ($1776+244+4=2024$). 54% from the moderately yielding but magnificently mature harvest of 2019, 36% from the perpetual reserve (the wines Champagne houses use to maintain house style) 2012-2018 and 10% from older reserve wines aged in oak 2012-2018. A classic blend of the three most well-known varieties; Chardonnay (41%), Pinot Noir (33%) and Meunier (26%) and three gold stars to anyone who can remember the other four - I can't. Described in Roederer's notes as have a 'very champagne like' golden yellow hue (that's reassuring), dense bubbles with a bouquet of wild peaches (not sure I'd know a wild peach if one fell on me) William's pears and citrus. Also smokiness, which will come from the older oak-aged wines. A complex and robust texture (don't you just love the word robust- 'a robust plan to manage the risk of (insert thing that cannot be robustly risk managed here)) with bitey fruit, and a delectably rich roasted character, fresh and salivating a bit like me? A smoky and flavoursome finish. Maltolactate fermentation 35%, residual sugar 7g/l (a bit less than Bollinger).



The Wine Society- Madiran, Famille Laplace



Three wines from the same producer, I hope very good value and distinctive. Two from 100% tannat, a grape with a bit of character- lots of colour, tannin and procyanidins. The elixir of youth?

Madiran can be extremely long lived and slow to wake up- because of the massive tannin. But micro-oxygenation is now used by some producers to soften the wines. Wile will be delighted to know, if he doesn't already, that the oxygen bubbling through ceramic plates results in tannin polymerisation into larger molecules, so that they fall out of solution, as in barrel aging, but faster. I have had a few quite aged bottles of Ch Montus (where micro-oxygenation is not used) and can confirm that these wines can still be raging even after a good while in bottle. But much lighter styles are now being made.

The Laplace family were instrumental in Madiran achieving AOC status in 1948 and have been lauded by Robert Parker as one of the best French red wine producers.

If you like the red then you'll like Ch Boucasse (various wines including some absolute bargains that you'll find in the Bourg St Maurice Super-U on the way to Tignes / Val d'Isere- or at extortionate prices in the UK). Chateau Montus is the absolute classic- but does need age.

Alternatively- Uruguay. Tannat is the national grape where it is called Harriague, after the Basque settler who took it there (I see from the minutes that Garzon Tannat featured in session 111.1) Tannat is now being planted elsewhere including in odd places in the US.

Pacherenc du Vic Bihl Sec, Ode d'Aydie 2022 £12.95 (reduced from £14.40) NB elsewhere much more £21+/- 2.

Perhaps Dubois will help with pronunciation? 60% Petit Manseng 40% Gross Manseng. 14%. Drinking until 2027. Golden appearance. Lemon, grapefruit, vanilla, honey. Hopefully a long finish. Some retailers wax lyrical about aspects of Chablis, Puligny, Pouilly-Fume. But maybe they bought loads and need to shift it? IDK. Either way- maybe if you like a sauvignon blanc then maybe one of these might make an appearance. A funny little AOC which was almost extinct until the 1970's. The sister Pacherenc du Vic Bihl is for sweet wines- which seem to be brilliant value- although I've not had any- but perhaps we all will soon. I also don't really understand why the same area has different names for the red and white wines. I guess that's the French for you...

Madiran Ode d'Aydie 2019 £13.95

100% Tannat. 14%. Oak barrels 1 year (Chateau d'Aydie 40 months). Intense red, nose of blueberry and cassis, a touch of spice. Chewy tannins and so many will prefer with food- or leaving out for the weekend. I have found that I often enjoy a bottle more on a Sunday than on the Friday when I first opened it. Who knew it was possible to do that experiment? Can age a long time, I've not done that experiment. I've had several vintages of this and have not been disappointed. The full Chateau wine is a couple of quid more.

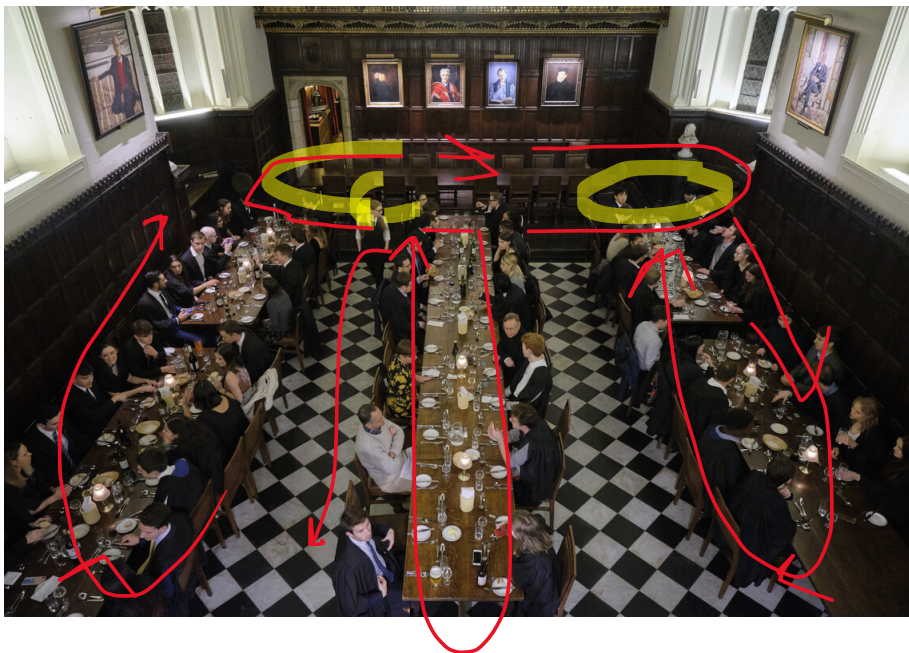
Maydie Tannat 2018 £17.00 50cl

Not a normal wine. 100% Tannat vines 30yrs old. 17%. Pretty sweet- not completely. A sweet fortified wine with fermentation stopped with wine alcohol. Aged 40 months before bottling. Serve 10-12°C. Very black, fruity, cherries, fruit cake, currants- one of the few wines that cut through dark chocolate. But- they say will also cut through the fat of roast duck, goose or confit. Chateau d'Aydie have been making this style since 1941 (I could comment about the timing).



The Society's Exhibition Crusted Port, Bottled 2013 – Now £19.50 (2022 £17.50) Gold medals in 2022 from Decanter and the IWC. Bronze in the 2021 IWC. Blended from the 2009, 2010 and (the universally declared) 2011 vintages It is always a bit mysterious to know exactly what is in the Wine Society's own blends. Especially with this. The Symington family own; 26 estates with over 1000 hectares of vines and control Graham's, Dow's, Warre's, Quinto do Vesuvio, Smith Woodhouse, Gould Campbell, Quarles Harris and Cockburn's. So what is this? I don't know. It is whatever the buyer negotiated, TWS does an excellent job at exactly this sort of thing. Highly praised by both The Daily Mail and The Telegraph as well as the Times of Tunbridge Wells. 20% Port blend. Drinking now to 2030. Stilton or similar, hopefully we will have walnuts, maybe next month some other tantalising titbits to tickle our tastebuds? Very highly rated on TWS website. Black fruits, dried fruits, coffee, oak, chocolate, leather. Throws a vicious sediment- so keep stored with the white stripe upwards, stand vertically for 24 hours and decant carefully- through the XX funnel (thanks Lax).

It's at this point that the Bishop of Norwich raises his ugly head. Further research has cast doubt on my previous assertion that it was Lewis Bagot in 1785 at Christ's College Cambridge. Other sources say it was Henry Bathurst (Bishop 1805-1837)- who was in the habit of falling asleep over dinner, a little like our own Cicerone who is Maloney and likes to talk baloney. Assuming it was Bagot- here is a picture of the Christ's College refectory. The Bishop of Norfolk probably behaved badly somewhere here.



Episcopus Norwici sui Portus cupidus est. Nimis cupidus est, nam improbus non transit cum debet.

I'll discuss more systemic solutions to the difficulties of port passing in due course. We might take a Human Factors approach¹.

¹ Reason J Understanding adverse events: human factors. *BMJ Quality & Safety* 1995;**4**:80-89.

TWENTY CLUB- HOUSE RED SESSIONS 116-117

Fixed supply and variable demand. The curse of the Copenhagen Telephone Exchange², internet providers, NHS managers, airports and me standing at the checkout of the Garston Lidl at about 11am on Sunday mornings. Also, Twenty Club sommeliers on six Wednesday evenings a year. There is a fixed wine call, wines need to be ordered in advance and are bought in an 8,8,3,3 formation (that's 22). £366 per meeting. But numbers vary between just over 20 and over 40. Oh dear. A deluge or a drought is near inevitable. What to do? Introduce some spare capacity that can be used as required. Also use the stuff lurking in the cellar. And so, a search for a great value wine with fruit, backbone, at least good enough to put before members and their guests, and a lot of mouth feel (meaning at least 14 and preferably 14.5% alcohol). To smooth the bumps.

The village of Laudun previously made only generic Cotes du Rhône and Cotes du Rhône Villages but 1000 of the 3000 hectares portions were promoted to Cru status on 11th September 2024. Until the noughties 95% of the wine was made by the grower's cooperative, the Cave des Quartier Chemins, which seems to have been crap³. However, as the Cru status proves, things have changed. The 90 ha estate of Chateau Courac has been cultivated since antiquity and since 1995 by Josephine and Frederic Arnaud, who were joined by their son Cyril in 2023. Their wines regularly feature in the Guide Hachette des Vins where the most recent CRD is given three stars.

So- **Chateau Courac Cotes-du- Rhône 2020. The Wine Society £9.75 14.5%** No oak. Rhône blend of syrah (50%), grenache (40%) and Carignan (5%) from 50-year-old vines. Drinking now – 2029. Jammy, brambles, rosehips, liquorice, black olives, some peppercorns and soft tannins that should bear no resemblance to the stuff you drank as students. Yet to be reviewed on The Wine Society website. Decanter World Wine Awards-[gives this 2020 95/100](#) and says of the 2022 (also 95/100)- "[an impressively long length](#)".



² Erlang, Agner K. (1909), "Sandsynlighedsregning og Telefonsamtaler" [Probability Calculation and Telephone Conversations], *Nyt Tidsskrift for Matematik* (in Danish), **20** (B): 33–39

³ P Parker RM. *The Wines of the Rhône Valley*. Rev. and expanded ed. Simon & Schuster; 1997.