

THE TWENTY CLUB SESSION 116 MEETING 5 WINE NOTES

The Wine Society- Corsica

I've only visited Corsica once, just after graduating I went to do the GR20- the Haute Route Corse. As soon as the aircraft doors opened the smell of the maquis swept into the plane, it was wonderful. I spent most of my time on the trek and being hopelessly over equipped this was hard work. I did find a very useful travel guide and ethnographic text- extracts below.¹ An interesting feature was that every road sign in French was peppered with bullet holes. A fiercely independent place and the only emperor they would ever accept was a Corsican himself.

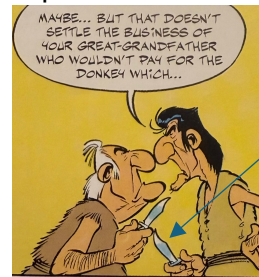


Desert des Agriates

Domaine Alzipratu
Typical Village Scene



Candid photograph from Village Square



Vendetta knife

White- Patrimonio Blanc, Grand Cuvée, Clos Teddi 2022. Vermentino (in Corsica- Vermentinu) 13.5% was £25 now £20 (this is a bargain because on some French sites it is €31.90!) From the granite wilderness of the Desert des Agriates (if you think of Corsica as a left foot with a very long hallux (that's a big toe Maloney- this caused mayhem in the Liverpool Anatomy 2ndMB paper of 1987- The Grove Street exam hall echoed with gasps of horror followed by stage whispers of –'what's a hallux?' Maloney left in a state of some distress and was then found muttering in a corner of The Cambridge). Anyway- if Corsica is a left foot with a very long hallux then the Desert des

¹ Asterix in Corsica Goscinny R. & Uderzo A. (1970) Hachette- the 20th in the series and the most popular.

Agriates is sort of where the middle of the index toenail would be. The Patrimonio appellation is quite small and extends between the base of the hallux and the index toe- which is more or less the area I'm most likely to get athlete's foot. Clean and fruity (I can't think of a member who might be used as an analogy) and from Vermentinu, the mostly widely planted white grape on the island, which is primarily found in Sardinia and increasingly in the Languedoc-Rousillion (it is also called Malvoiose). Jo Poli was the founder of the vineyard and a veteran of the war in Algeria, on his death it passed to his then 17 year old daughter Marie-Brigitte, who knew nothing about wine production and then also found that the neighbours had blocked the spring, she lived by tending goats and it eventually transpired that her father was the son of the father of the neighbour who had blocked the spring in the first place. Anyway, Marie-Brigitte restored the vineyard, modernised production and turned the estate into the reference for the Patrimonio appellation and this the Grand Cuvée is their premium white. Nose- vanilla and toast, lime, peach acacia. Palate finely woody, round. Ripe (white / stone) fruits. Grapes subject to careful plot selection, aged on its lees. A gastronomic (Epicurean- but *vide infra*) wine and if you could rustle up a lobster risotto then this would go nicely.

Red- Corse-Calvi Rouge Cuvée Fiumeseccu, Domaine Alzipratu 2023 Sciaccarellu and some Grenache, 13% £17 Grown at the foothills of Monte Grosso (which is very near the start of the GR20- allegedly the hardest trek in Europe- it used to be harder when you had to carry at least 7 days food- which was awful). Again grown on decomposed granite (who knew granite decomposed - I wonder what Liverpool City Council would say if I put it in my green bin?- Not much actually because I don't pay to have a green bin- but I can't help but wonder what they would say if I did, pay to have a green bin and then put some granite in it to see if it would decompose). The vineyard is owned by Pierre Acuviva past president of various bodies representing wine of the island and the various indigenous Corsican (and some other) grape varieties are fermented with wild yeast and in stainless steel, concrete eggs and amphorae. This will evoke Corsica, with flavours not only including red berries- strawberry, cherry, raspberry and cherry, but also the wild herbs that make the scent of the island itself so remarkable.² Sciaccarellu is only found in Corsica. Hopefully we too will feast on wild boar.

Dessert Wine- Samos Anthemis 2018 15% Muscat Vin Doux £12.50 50cl (elsewhere £16.50- 20!) Samos- 1.6km off the coast of Turkey and home to Pythagoras, Epicurus and Aristarchus. Having been assisted by the population to kill the Amazons, Dionysus taught the Samians to make wine- ordering them to drink 'just enough'. Alternatively it was one of the Argonauts who brought them viticulture. Either way this wine is produced by UWC The United Winemaking Agricultural Cooperative of Samos with 26 villages tending 1600 hectares of vines, many above 800m. 100% Muscat- 5 years in oak. Deep orange with bronze hues. Almost every sweet flavour. Honey, butterscotch, caramel, fig, honeysuckle. Long finish. Food pairings: Christmas pudding and mince pies. Fruit tarts, Tarte Tatin, Chocolate, anything sweet. Foie gras, blue cheeses, figs. We have had this

² Like many Corsicans Napoleon claimed he could tell he was approaching the island long before land was sighted by the scent alone. He was also known for his love of the smell of rosemary which featured in his favourite cologne and transported him to his homeland just as lime tea and a madeleine returned Proust to Sunday mornings at Combray.

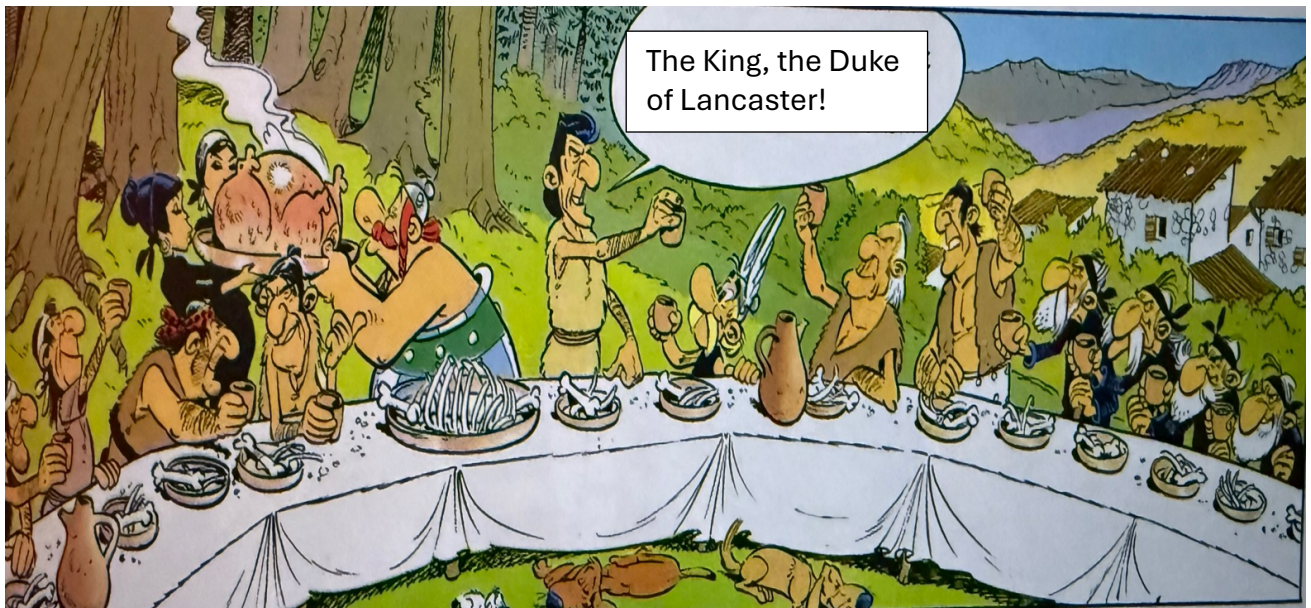
before- I'd happy to use it again as it is great value and from another Mediterranean island- I know- a bit feeble. As for Epicurus he seems to have advocated pleasure as the aim in life. But in a rather different way to that understood by our members. *'By pleasure we mean the absence of pain in the body and of trouble in the soul. It is **not** by an unbroken succession of drinking bouts and of revelry,...; it is sober reasoning, searching out the grounds of every choice and avoidance, and banishing those beliefs through which the greatest tumults take possession of the soul.'*³ He also came up with atoms. Aristarchus proposed a heliocentric model. All this will of course be well known to Hankin and McNulty- it's just in here for the rest of us.

Port- Leftovers.

When Ariaraj passed on the Tastevin of Destiny he also told me the greatest secret of the Twenty Club sommeliers. *The sacred resting place of where they hide the key to the cellar with the left-over wine.* It might have also been a secret that there is left-over wine in the cellar, but there – I've said it. Fortunately, I was reasonably sober when this was imparted and so I can remember quite clearly, unfortunately I keep forgetting what to do with the Port Funnel of Riotousness (*righteousness surely?*) but that's mostly irrelevant to this part of the wine note, except it is to do with port, except the port tonight doesn't need a port funnel, so it is irrelevant after all, bother. At the last meeting the left-over port was some rather grand 2005 vintage port c/o Wile. This meeting will be less prestigious but I'm sure it will be delicious. One bottle each of Taylor's LBV 2016 and a Taylor's Select Reserve. There may be more. Both retail at about £20 so it is criminal to just leave them there. I've used the money saved to buy the red and white wines at a slightly higher price point- but there are still 10 bottles of red plus house red so do not worry and we aren't going to have any casu merzu.

Early XX Club Meeting – Corsica. The year was 50BC...

Groom Silva Ariaraj Butt Maloney Carter McCormick (Minor) O'Mahoney Wilding – Senior Members x 4



³ Epicurus, "Letter to Menoeceus"