

## **THE TWENTY CLUB SESSION 117 MEETING 1 WINE NOTES**

### **Stainton Wines Kendal- Chile- Casa Silva**

Kendal, “The Auld Grey Town”, “Gateway to the Lakes” and still home to snuff and mint cake (handy as emergency food because it is so disgusting that you’d never eat it unless it was either that or the dog- that’s the mint cake not the snuff) but sadly the days of K Shoes (beloved by my father in 1940’s Ceylon) and Kendal Green<sup>1</sup> have long gone. But if you are leaving Kendal town centre and heading towards the Shap Road then, just as you approached the railway station, remember to stop at Stainton Wines. Mr Stainton is in his seventh decade in the trade and has a twinkly eye and a complexion remarkably free of jaundice, spider naevi and rosacea, and, when I shook his hand there was no hint of palmar erythema<sup>2</sup>. He stocks a relatively small but eclectic range including Louis Roederer Collection (to which we were treated by Carter last session). But of particular note is that Stainton has UK’s largest selection of one of Chile’s premium wineries, the auspiciously named Casa Silva.

Dom Emilio Bouchon<sup>3</sup> Poitvin emigrated from St Emillion to Chile in 1887, establishing the vineyards and cellars. In 1978 the fourth generation Maria Teresa married Mario Silva Cifuentes and in 1996 the winery began to develop fine wines sold under their own name. Since then, the house has become the most awarded Chilean winery of the 21<sup>st</sup> Centaury – including best South American producer at the 2000 IWSC. The family now have extensive vineyards throughout the Colchagua Valley, from the foot of the Andes, down to the coastal region. They cultivate a wide variety of grapes, with some plantings dating to 1912. Given the diversity of the terroirs, they’ve been able to make different styles based on the soils and climates available to them.

Originally cultivated for sacramental purposes Chilean wine was initially (meaning from 1520-the 1980’s) quite disgusting. No longer. Modern vinification in stainless steel with oak rather than local wood barrel aging, flying winemakers, vines free from phylloxera

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<sup>1</sup> Kendal was a centre of the production of woollen cloth and socks, the last sock factory closing in the 1980’s. But more important was Kendal Green, worn by the Kendal archers under the command of Thomas de Strickland at Agincourt on St Crispin’s day 1415 (England 1 France -6000 dead including swathes of the nobility and up to 2000 captured. Which all goes to prove the adage ‘*don’t try and walk about 1 km up a really muddy field wearing 25kg of armour whilst being subject to 500,000 arrows being fired at your head*’ – a better outcome than John Talbot’s effort at Castillon in July 1453 (see notes 116 meeting 3)). Now, I know if I fail to mention the presence of the ironic Welsh archers, then I’m sure to upset an esteemed and terribly artistic senior member. A notable aspect of the Kendal Green worn by the archers was that, on account of terrible bloody flux (dysentery) they had mostly cut away the seats of their hose, so, imagine for a moment a Welshman standing in a muddy field, pelted with sleet and rain with a huge hole in his trousers with unmentionable fluids trickling down his hairy legs. Henry V knew exactly how unpleasant being shot in the face by an arrow was- from The Battle of Shrewsbury. Also see Henry IV(Part 1) Act II, Scene IV- Falstaff: ‘*But, as the devil would have it, three misbegotten knaves in Kendal Green came at my back and let drive at me; for it was so dark, Hal, that thou couldst not see thy hand.*’ He was a terrible fibber. The cloth was associated with peasants, likewise Robin Hood’s Merry Men etc.

<sup>2</sup> Evans- I was actually listening.

<sup>3</sup> Bouchon- French for cork- hence the essential vocab. Tire bouchon- corkscrew as in ‘*vieux con- ou est le tire bouchon- vite, vite, j’ai un grand soife*’ in a delightful Irish brogue.

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and a climate which is dry, sunny and yet surprisingly cool, combined with extensive irrigation and relatively free and easy regulation, makes for lots of clean, fruit forward and diverse wine. I'm sure members will remember their amazement on sampling the wines from Isla Negra and Errázuriz that appeared in Oddbins in the 1990's. Delicious, keenly priced and with funny plastic corks *'WTF's this??'*

**White- Casa Silva Cool Coast Sauvignon Blanc Paredones DO Valle de Colchagua 2019 13% about £17**

100% Sauvignon Blanc, unoaked. From the family's Paredones plantings a few kilometres from the Pacific and in a relatively underdeveloped area. Prior to vinification the grapes are chilled to 2°C, clusters are manually selected and then pressed cold, with fermentation at a cool 11-14°C for 18 days followed by 3-4 months in stainless steel tanks resting on its lees. Greenish yellow, aromas of green apple, pineapple, passion fruit, green chilli, asparagus and orange blossom. Medium – high acidity long finish. Serve at 7-9°C. Drink up. The vineyard also produces Sauvignon Gris, Pinot Noir and Syrah.

**Red- Casa Silva Quinta Generacion Red Valle de Colchagua 2021 14.2% a bit over £20**

A blend of red varieties. Cabinet Sauvignon 44%, Carménère<sup>4</sup> 44%, Petit Verdot 10% all from Los Lingues at the foot of the Andes and 2% Syrah from Lolol about 30km from the sea. A lot of wine for the money, the bottle is reassuringly heavy and wrapped in tissue. Winner of several medals and highly rated on Vivino. Black currant, plums, blackberries, coffee, liquorice, tobacco roses and mint. Medium high acidity, long. The grapes are again cooled on arrival at the vineyard, manually selected and destemmed. Each variety is harvested and vinified individually. 80% aged in oak for 12 months with a further 6 month bottle age prior to release. The Los Lingues area has recently been given its own status and the Cab Sauv and Carménère from this vineyard are regarded as Chilean benchmarks. pH 3.46, residual sugar 2.6g/l.

**Dessert- Casa Silva Late Harvest Semillon Sauvignon Blanc 2023 Valle de Colchagua 12% about £13 / 50cl- we only have a bit- so use the dessert wine glasses lest there be a desert.**

Whilst decompressing at the Arts Club after one of last session's meetings I had an engaging discussion with a distinguished senior member. My memory is rather hazy, I'd left my ear trumpet at home and had been trying to hum along to The Venga Boys (Boom, boom. Boom, boom...) However, I quite distinctly recall that he told me that at the end of an evening he quite often found himself gripping a semillon. I nodded

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<sup>4</sup> Carménère - One of the six original red grapes of Bordeaux but now essentially extinct in France after phylloxera. It is particularly sensitive to cold and damp (like me) but in the dry climate of Chile it thrived. Initially it had been inadvertently planted among Merlot grapes and it was only in the mid 1990s that it was identified as distinct. It has been officially recognised as a variety in Chile since 1998. Deep red with aromas of red fruits spices and berries with gentle tannins. At full ripeness chocolate ,tobacco and leather.

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sagaciously and said ‘*hummm*’, which is pretty much my default whenever I’m not really sure what’s going on, for example in ward rounds, prescribing large doses of psychotropic medications or being cross examined as an expert witness in a high-profile murder trial. Late harvest rather than botrytised grapes, so high sugar, fermented to 12%. Sweet but not cloying. Floral notes, pink grapefruit (allegedly) marmalade, honey and orange peel (surely that’s marmalade). Crème brulee, Roquefort, Comté, cake. Casa Silva varies the Late Harvest blend, so if you like this you might not find it. But you will find semillon / gewurztraminer or viognier.

**Port Ramos Pinto LBV 2018 19.5% - £25.95 – but reduced for us. Vegan**

Scoring 92 in The Decanter awards this unfiltered LBV is bottled after 4 years. Picked by hand and crushed by foot (really). A cool dry winter and a warm August and September leading to mature and ripe fruit. From two of the company’s vineyards, barrel aged until 2022, blended March and bottled September. Concentrated ruby red. A fresh nose with red fruit and cherry, raspberry, plum, eucalyptus and cedar. Silky tannins. Serve between 14-18°C. Whilst here in the UK we tend to drink red port only with cheese- this would also compliment game, red meat and a chocolate dessert. But let’s not do that. Apparently, an open bottle can remain at its best for 15-30 days?

**In Case of Emergencies**

**Emergency White Casa Silva Chardonnay Semillon Valle de Cochagua 2023 14%. A bit over £10.**

Chilean wine rules might have let this be a straight Chardonnay as the blend is 85:15. A small portion of the Chardonnay was barrel aged. Should have a bit of apple / melon, tropical fruit a hint of oak and acidity.

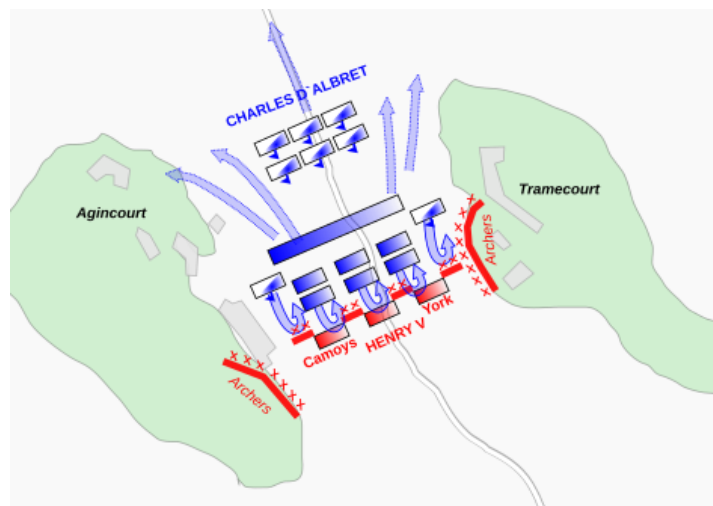
**Emergency Red Chateau Courac Cotes-du- Rhône 2020. The Wine Society £9.75 14.5%** No oak. Rhône blend of syrah (50%), grenache (40%) and Carignan (5%) from 50-year-old vines. Drinking now – 2029. Jammy, brambles, rosehips, liquorice, black olives, some peppercorns and soft tannins that should bear no resemblance to the stuff you drank as students. We have plenty of this, which is mostly under my office desk. I have a plan for when this runs out.

**Emergency Dessert Wine- Casa Silva Late Harvest Semillon / Sauvignon 2023**

Vide supra.

### **The Battle of Agincourt**

The French numbered somewhere between 15-25,000 and spent the night before feasting, with the nobles playing dice for which of the English they would capture and ransom. The English commanded by Henry V were 5-8,000, wet and mostly sick and spent the night in silence on pain of having an ear cut off. Charles VI was at home, he had a sick note from his mum on account of believing that he was made of glass. The French battle plan was not followed. The archers and men at arms were not at the front as, desirous of glory and ransoms, the nobility pushed in front (very French). Expecting reinforcements and or for the English to run away the French at first did absolutely nothing (arguably a good plan when faced with any problem). The English advanced, so forcing a fight. The French mounted knights charged- and 50,000 arrows darkened the sky, their mounts were hit and ran amok. Although their plate armour was sufficient to protect their bodies, they still had the vulnerability of their faces and so had to stoop, wading through the muddy ploughed field and increasingly over the bodies of the dead and dying. When the archers eventually ran out of arrows, they entered the mêlée and, unencumbered by armour were able to slaughter the French nobles who were packed so tightly that many could not wield their weapons. Henry V fought hand to hand in plain sight and there were no decoys. After 3 hours the main battle was over, with thousands of French captured. But then the English baggage train was attacked from the rear. Fearing encirclement, and amid a still armed French force Henry ordered all the prisoners killed (which must have hurt as a dead prisoner is worth nothing). French losses included 3 Dukes, 9 Counts, 1 Archbishop, 1 admiral, the Master of Crossbowmen, the Master of the Royal Household, over 3000 identifiable knights and another 2500+ without coats of arms remaining, the bailiffs of 9 northern towns (leaving Picardy ungoverned) and multiple generations of some noble houses were wiped out. Charles Duke d'Orléans<sup>5</sup> was found alive under a pile of corpses. He would spend the next 24 years of his life in captivity in England writing melancholic poetry (a bit self-indulgent) and on his return to France spoke better English than French.



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<sup>5</sup> Funnily enough Silva minor spent a year living upstairs from Prince Contantin Foulques Alexandre d'Orléans and dined with him on many occasions, but it seems that a discussion about the events above was not held.