

West Leicestershire u3a

Wine Appreciation Group meeting 23 Sept 2026

Who is to be the next James Bond, who is the hunkiest bloke on the TV, what has Katie Price done to herself, which of Marie Antoinettes breasts was used to form the coupe glass? All discussion items before we had even opened the first bottle.

Coupes come in many sizes and shapes, just like the real ones, perhaps she modelled at different times? Indeed, the further query about the exact form of a Champagne flute caused some discussion. There is little consensus on the internet although the traditional design is flared, perhaps. If you are in the market for a set be prepared for an extensive choice. Ikea do some, although a toast results in a clunk rather than a chink, you get what you pay for!



A "u3a Wine Lovers Weekend" for serious vinophiles – 3 nights in Harrogate nearly all in – for tastings, discussions, talks about wine, food etc. was on offer. All with likeminded people. This was an open invitation, but most of us are not that serious, we anticipate a whole article by those who have taken up the offer.

This meeting was on the subject of 'unusual or unexpected' wines and, boy, did we have some unexpected and unusual offerings. Posh Prawn crisps which actually tasted of prawn, eventually. Unnamed cheeses, assorted other potato-based comestibles were all on offer but these were to be expected. What was not expected was a locally sourced Rose! Manor Farm Rose – produced ... wait for it.... in Botcheston! Apparently the grapes are produced in Botcheston – 450+kg – then shipped to a wine maker for processing to a very flavoursome Rose, certainly far better than many/most other English wines we have sampled.

Next up was a pinkish, orange coloured wine, the label of which stated this to be "A smooth fruit-driven wine with notes of candied citrus fruits and quince". It was from Chassaux et Fils called 'Rosorange'. We have sampled an orange wine some time ago and this one....well let us just say this was in a very nice bottle.



Next up a 1000 Stories Zinfandel – nicely matured in bourbon barrels, then, rather unexpectedly a concealed label Liebfraumilch, who knew it was still a thing. Perhaps we could have a 'retro night' and bring out all the old favourites, or at least the only ones we could afford back in the day. We also had a Sturmwolken Reisling – a German white not normally stocked but produced by a mentally disturbed guy who was struck by lightning, I missed whether this was before or after but explains the lightning bolt on the label. A Journey's End 'Hunter's Man', a blend of Shiraz, Mourvèdre and Grenache grapes from the Stellenbosch coastal region of South Africa, judged to be deliciously full bodied. This compared well with the Stellenbosch Shiraz tried earlier, with similar tasting notes, so perhaps the two extra grape varieties were not really needed.

The stand out unusual/unexpected wine was presented by Sue – our first ever Israeli wines. Actually two bottles of Morad Winery white. The first was a Lychee Wine and the second a much sweeter Passion Fruit wine. Both very different to our usual offerings and all the better for that. Perhaps a 'Fruit Wine' themed night is calling?



A Tapardo Valley Chardonnay from Australia was unusual in not having been oaked, while, also from Australia came a Minotaur a Shiraz/Tempranillo blend which is unusual as Tempranillo usually hails from Iberia.

Our numbers were a little depleted as the Gardening Club had an important meeting, but this sparked a wide ranging and passionate discussion about the effects of the drought on vegetable/fruit cropping, not to mention the dirth of wasps. We heard about all sorts of tomato varieties and their uses, yes menus and recipies featured. Perhaps we should have a joint venture with the Gardening Club, there was certainly no lack of passion and expertise demonstrated at our meeting.

Perhaps we should skate over the discussions about Trump/Burnham, The vicissitudes of our new Town and Country Planning systems, Leicester nightclubs in their, or our, heyday, RNLI activities and famous singers of days of yore. Suffice to say a very enjoyable evening's entertainment.

Next meeting 28 October 7.30 at Alans Way – theme 'Medal Winning Wines'

John Dexter Sept 2026