

HAPPY NEW YEAR TO ALL OF OUR MEMBERS

Letter from the Chairman

Dear Members,

It is with sadness that I write to you via this newsletter, rather than speaking to you at the Club in person. Clearly, the possible news of 'tier 2' in Manchester did not materialise before Christmas. However, in retrospect it seems that this was for the best. I am sure several of our members will by now have received a vaccine or be in line for one in the near future. I very much hope this will provide the remedy we need for us to be able to mix again in the Club.

One thing you can be certain of is that we will have a big welcome for you when returning, whenever that may be. We will be ready whether it is the end of February or even later in the year. We know that the Club is a unique place and should have a unique welcome that sets apart the St James's Club from anywhere else. With that in mind we have taken the decision to find a new general manager, fit for our new post-COVID-19 world. We feel that given the current circumstances and the distinct job opportunity; we should have the best candidates available now. Iain Anderson left us on 15th January.

Some of you will have seen that our door entry system has been updated and this is a function of our new 'smart' IT infrastructure. Your new membership card also links your user account, the till system, and events bookings. You all received an email from us last year introducing the system with login details; some of you have signed up and I urge the remainder to do so sooner rather than later. Should you no longer have this email, please contact account@stjc.org.uk.

Despite the current circumstances, we feel confident about the future of the Club. Indeed, with the restructuring of expenditure within the Club and government aid through the pandemic, we are in a healthy Financial position, roughly 'breaking even' over the last 12 months.

I very much look forward to meeting you all on your return. Please remember that all of the committee are available to speak to you in the meantime should you wish to discuss anything Club related or, otherwise.

All the very best,



Howard T Spargo

SPRING FORWARD

Many enjoyed a little respite on Christmas day but unfortunately the newly discovered very highly infectious strain of the COVID-19 virus has led to additional restrictions being instigated on the nation. 2020 was a hard year but we are hopeful that the rollout of the vaccine offers some well needed light at the end of the proverbial tunnel.

So, with this light in mind I would like to look forward to some of the events that are proposed to take place in Spring. One of the first event planned is also one of the most popular in recent years and ironically one of the last to take place in the Club in 2020 the St Patrick's Day event. This is an extremely popular and entertaining event is a real celebration of Ireland's patron saint and a thoroughly good craic. The Easter lunch is taking place on Monday Thursday (1st April) and has in recent years included a charity element; attendees donating eggs to Manchester Children's charities. This year the committee hopes, because of the cancellation of the Club's Christmas lunches and dinner, that this event will prove popular to a broad spectrum of the Membership who wish to meet up and enjoy a fantastic lunch, glass of wine, great



► lunch, and of course the company and conversation of other Members. Cry God for Harry, England, and St George! Quickly following the Easter break the renowned St George's day lunch is one of the events some Members look for first, when the new social calendar is published to put in their diaries.

In addition to these fantastic celebrations the committee is hoping to organise a couple of cultural events, the first two planned are a Russian and Middle Eastern dinners. These events celebrate not only the cuisine and respective drinks of the region but their culture art and music and are a fantastic opportunity for Members to invite friends and family to a superb all-round evening's entertainment.

Many of the Members are itching to get back to the Club's month's wine tasting. And although Tony has continued to provide guidance on wine selections through the newsletter, the pairing of Head Chef's Steven Wright's small plates with Tony's selections is something many of the regulars sorely missed. It's hoped the series of events will resume with a bang on Thursday 25th March, with a very special selection of wines.

For those wanting something a bit more formal, the Club will be hosting a Chairman's dinner (9th May) and The Founders

dinner (20th April). These events present a rare opportunity in these extraordinary times to dust off our formal wear, dress up, something many of us have not done in over a year, but something is quintessentially part of Club life.

For those looking at making new senior business connections, in person, there are no better events than the Club's Property and Media & Technology lunches. These events offer industry professionals the chance to entertain clients whilst making new contacts in a convivial environment. The Property lunch will restart on Tuesday 13th April and the Media & Technology event will commence on Thursday 8th April, details on speakers and address titles will follow.

These social and business events are obviously going to prove extremely popular; Members are encouraged to book onto these events as soon as possible to secure their places and avoid disappointment.

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TONY'S WINE REVIEW

Try January

For many, January is a time for re-alignment. After the indulgences of the festive season, it is time to get things back on an even keel. Some sort of detox is called for; an arbitrary sacrifice that must be adhered to with sombre commitment. Now, do not get me wrong, I think 'dry January' is a noble pursuit, though a month without a decent glass holds little appeal for me. So instead of 'Dry January' I prefer 'Try January' – a chance to sample wines that you perhaps would not normally pluck from the shelf. **And here is what I found:**

Nachbil Riesling 2019 (Romania) - When we think of great wine producing nations, Romania would not feature on most people's lists. And yet this former member of the old Soviet bloc has a considerable area devoted to the grape: around 180,000 hectares. EU membership has also encouraged investment in its wineries and the results can impress. The climate is continental but moderated by the sweeping curl of the Carpathians. Indigenous varieties are plentiful – Feteasca Alba and Feteasca Regala to name two. But international grapes such as Merlot, Cabernet Sauvignon, Sauvignon Blanc, and Pinot Gris have also found a home here.

Most wine production is associated with the Moldovan Hills to the east, while the Transylvanian Plateau is home to one of Europe's biggest if not the biggest vineyard at 2,400 hectares. But to find the fruit sourced for our bottle of Nachbil, we must go to Maramures in the North West. The sandy loam soils do well for the Riesling grape – or should I say Welschriesling – that flourishes here. Welschriesling has little to do with the more grand and famous Riesling that we know so well from Germany. It has a different genotype altogether, but when grown well can produce wines with a similarly complex profile. The Nachbil Riesling is such a wine exhibiting that delicate balance between residual sugar and taught acidity that allows the palate to be both full and structured. The finish goes on for miles. Proof that Romanian wine can be as enticing as its culture.

Teliani Valley Saperavi 2019 (Georgia) - For my other January gem, we must remain around the former USSR a while longer. Georgia boasts a far more distinguished wine making pedigree than that of the Romanians. It has been producing wine of quality long before it peaked out from the folds of a fallen Iron Curtain. Archaeological evidence points to a viticultural heritage that can be traced back to around 6,000 BC. Russia may be a neighbour to make anyone nervous, but its attentions have done little to harm or hinder Georgia's wine-making traditions. Quite the opposite. Even after the Georgians found their independence in 1991, the Russians remained a dependable market for its wines. Teliani Valley still sells most of its production across the Caucasus Mountains, though it is also attracting a following further afield, notably in the US – two vastly different audiences indeed.

So, what is the attraction? Well, Georgia has around 500 of its own indigenous grape varieties for a start. Chief among them is Saperavi, a black grape which, depending on how it is grown and vinified, is just as capable of producing wines reminiscent of crunchy Argentinean Malbec as it is exuberant Beaujolais! Then, there are its enchanting ancient traditions. The huge clay amphora-like pots (or qvevri) which were used to ferment grapes millennia ago are still in use today especially in Kakheti in the far east of the country where most Georgian wine production is based including Teliani Valley. The viticultural area spans the varied terrain of the foothills of the Caucasus producing wines that can amaze and delight and this bottle is no exception. Deep purple in colour with warm, juicy dark berry flavours, this is Saperavi of the 'Malbecian' variety and it is nothing short of a treat!



SLOW COOKED PORK & APPLE STEW

(Serves 4 people)

This one pot dish is easy to prepare and cook and is a perfect winter warmer to see us through this colder weather. The Granny Smiths pair beautiful with the pork in this West Country favourite. A warm generous, grenache-based red such as Côtes du Rhône Villages is an excellent pairing with this wintery pork and apple stew.

INGREDIENTS

1kg diced pork shoulder	200ml of dry cider
2x large onions (roughly chopped)	800ml of good chicken stock
2x carrots (cut into 1cm cubes)	Salt & white pepper
500g new potatoes (quartered)	100g of plain flour
2x parsnips (cut into 1cm cubes)	50ml of vegetable oil
½ a swede (cut into 1cm cubes)	2x granny smith apples (peeled and cut into 1cm cubes - do when needed to prevent browning)
1x garlic clove (crushed)	½ handful of fresh chopped parsley to garnish
½ teaspoon of dried sage	
½ teaspoon of dried thyme	

METHOD

- Place pork, flour, salt and pepper into a bowl and mix until pork is coated.
- Place a frying pan on a high heat - add half the oil and half the pork and fry until golden all over.
- Put into a slow cooker pot and repeat the process again.
- Add all other ingredients except the apples and cook on low for 6 hours.
- After 6 hours add the apples and cook for a further 2 hours.
- Serve topped with parsley and a side of buttered crusty bread.



NOTIFICATIONS

Membership Subscription

Thank you very much to those Members who have paid their subscriptions, the Committee would like to remind those who have not yet arranged a payment, to please do so as soon as possible.



Congratulations

The Club congratulates Robert Derek Calrow who has been made an Officer of the Order of the British Empire and Paul John Campion the Verger of St Ann's church has been made a Medallist of the Order of the British Empire.

PRIVATE HIRE

When the dining Tier restrictions are lifted many of us will be looking to treat ourselves, family, friends, and colleagues. And what better way to celebrate than a private lunch or black-tie dinner in the Club's Albion or Clarendon rooms. You can select from one of our carefully crafted set menus or work with Head Chef Steven Wright to produce a bespoke, personal menu to ensure a truly memorable event. Pair your menu with a selection of wines from our cellar and if you really want to make your mark start the evening with a champagne reception for your and your guests.

For more information and to check or reserve dates email events@stjc.org.uk.

For further information please contact:

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Don't forget to follow the Club on Twitter or join the WhatsApp Social Group!

