



In September, a group of translators and interpreters came together for a very special LRG wine-tasting event, conducted under the expert guidance of Wine Educator Tim Andrews. **Hannah Lawrence** reports

On 14 September, a small group of translators and interpreters gathered in Chiswick for a gentle introduction to the world of wine. Welcomed by gracious host Pamela Mayorcas, we spent a thoroughly enjoyable afternoon sampling and learning about wine in her sun-filled conservatory.

In our midst were translators and interpreters working with French, German, Italian, Spanish, and Russian. While some of us were interested in specialising in food

and drink, others were interested on a personal level.

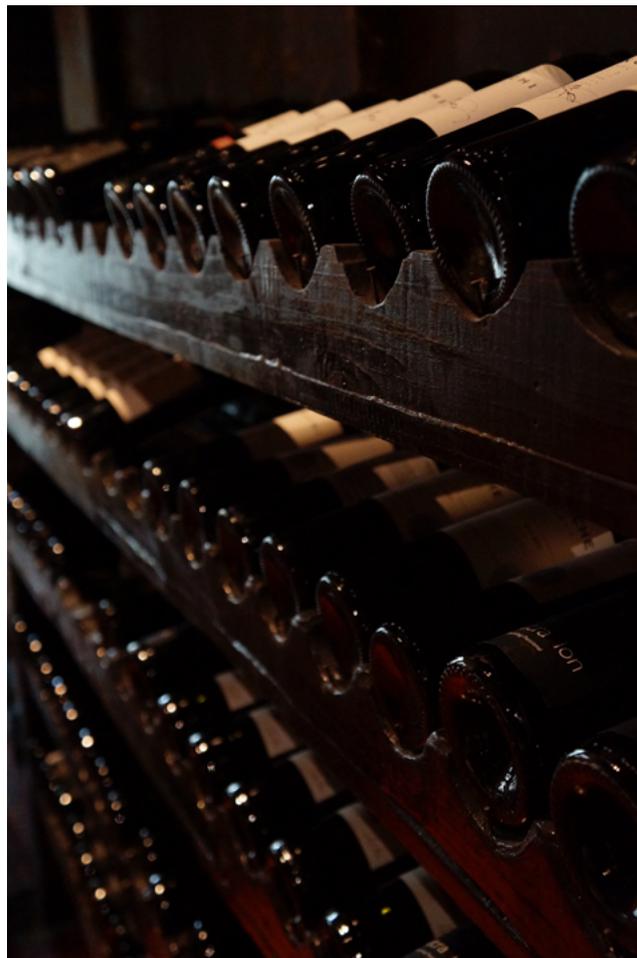
Friendly and relaxed Wine Educator Tim Andrews introduced us to six wines from lesser-known wine-producing regions in Portugal, Hungary, Romania, Austria, Italy, and Greece.

He provided insight into wine-tasting etiquette and philosophy for us relative novices, such as the proper tasting technique. This involves drawing air in through your mouth as you take a sip – resulting in a noise not unlike gargling.

We also covered some key wine terminology as questions came up, such as the differences between DOC and IGP wine.

For each tasting, Tim gave some background on wine growing in the region, the grape variety, and the vineyard in question. This was particularly helpful since many of the wines we tasted were new to us. Tim also provided a detailed handout describing each wine and we used this to take notes of what we were learning along the way – as well as our favourites, which was very helpful for those of us liable to

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forget such things quickly. A lot of thought had been put both into the wines selected, and, of course, the order in which we tasted them, progressing from light whites through to full-bodied reds.

We savoured some truly delicious and unique wines. For instance, the Etna Rosso Fondo Filara Nicosia 2016 had a pronounced smoky flavour resulting from the volcanic soil surrounding Mount Etna in which it was grown.

With such a punchy flavour, this was said to pair well with aubergine, mushrooms, pasta, and prosciutto. For me, the smokiness was so strong – similar to Lapsang Souchong tea for tea aficionados

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– that I don't think I could have more than a glass.

We learned that although the Tokaj region in Hungary has typically produced dessert wines, it has in the last 10 years ventured into making dry whites, such as the one we sampled. This wine had a subtle apple and spicy flavour and would go well with lightly spiced food, or seafood or white

meat in a creamy sauce.

Interestingly, in Portugal, it is not always known which grape varieties have been planted in the vineyards. This explained why the first wine's grape varieties were described as 'Antão Vaz, Roupeiro, Perrum and others.'

The Romanian white we tried, made from a similar grape to Muscadet, had been bottled quite young, which gave it a slight bubbiness, similar to Portugal's *vinho verde*. Tim suggested this could work well with South East Asian dishes.

My personal favourite, the full-bodied Greek wine Xinomavro Jeunes Vignes Thymiopoulous 2018 from Naoussa, in the

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Cyclades, was said to pair well with red meat, game, or broccoli and stilton soup.

Learning the lingo

As well as tasting some great wines – and learning about their history, their flavour profile, and ideal pairings – this was also an excellent opportunity to soak up some wine terminology.

For instance, ‘flabby’ in the wine world indicates there is not enough acidity in the wine, meaning you almost can’t taste it.

We also discussed the difference between organic wine (which contains sulphites) and natural wine (which generally doesn’t contain added sulphites, but for which there is no legal definition), and biodynamic (which uses naturally occurring sulphites).

Being a small group with a relaxed, informal guide meant it was easy to compare notes and preferences and ask questions. One such question was Tim’s opinion of English wine. For those who are interested, he is a fan, especially of sparkling, such as that

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from the Bacchus grape, which he controversially said not only rivals but beats champagne at its own game. He did admit, however, that the English wine industry has come a long way in the last 10 years, and that it was producing virtually undrinkable wines in the early 2000s.

Different tastes

It was interesting, although perhaps unsurprising, to note that we all had quite different palates, with the wines we preferred varying widely.

Wine tasting and being knowledgeable about wine can sometimes be seen to be the preserve of the elite, but Tim’s down-to-earth approach and explanations ensured it felt

accessible to us all.

Moreover, when we guessed the price of each wine at the end, we were pleasantly surprised to learn they ranged from £7.99 to £14.95, all available through The Wine Society.

Having worked our way through samples of all six wines, we were ready for a bite to eat and enjoyed a light supper of salads and cheese.

The afternoon provided an excellent opportunity to meet and talk to colleagues, and also to build some knowledge about a potential area of specialisation. What’s more, all of this was achieved in a relaxed setting with a glass in hand.

Hannah Lawrence recently completed her MA Specialised Translation at the University of Westminster and is a freelance translator (French to English), marketer and copywriter, and initiator of #ThatTranslatorCanCook. See hannahtranslates.com or follow her on Twitter @HLTranslation