



The first WineGB Winemaking Technical Conference

REPORT BY EMMA RICE, CHAIR OF THE WINEMAKING TECHNICAL CONFERENCE & WINEGB WINEMAKING WORKING GROUP. DIRECTOR & HEAD WINEMAKER, HATTINGLEY VALLEY WINES LTD.

The first WineGB Winemaking Technical Conference took place at Denbies Wines Estate on 24th June 2019 and was attended by well over 100 delegates, including 27 sparkling winemakers from Canada. The conference theme was 'Educate, Inspire and Collaborate' and it was organised by the WineGB Winemaking Working Group. The overall feedback for this event was very positive.

In the morning session, the mix of presentations was both highly technical on the research front and more general. Dr Belinda Kemp, from Brock University, provided an overview of current research on Nitrogen and its role in the kinetics of secondary fermentation as well as the Maillard Reaction compounds in sparkling wine. Nathalie Sieczkowski and Sigrid Gertsen-Schibbye, from Lallemand, spoke of the latest research using yeasts as biological tools, also active yeasts to add security to cold soak, and inactive yeast to maintain quality through ageing. Although some of the research was quite high level most found the presentations incredibly interesting.

An interesting presentation on Methode Cap Classique, written by Pieter Ferreira of Graham Beck, South Africa, and presented on his behalf by Emma Rice, was well received. Along with an update on our own PDO/PGI wine scheme.

The 'Ask the Expert' panel discussion with Craig McDonald, David Cowderoy and Emma Rice proved very popular, but as the conference over-ran in the morning, it was cut short – in 2021 we will make sure we have more time for this interactive session. However, there was time for a very informative discussion between the panel winemakers on the suitability of various filtration systems for different sized wineries.

The afternoon comprised four separate wine tasting sessions. The first session

was with Dr Asia Khafizova, Grape Breeder, VivaiCooperativi, Rauscedo, Italy, who presented a tasting of interesting new resistant varieties including: Soreli, Sauvignon Nepis, Sauvignon Rytos, UD. 109-052 (Pinot blanc type), UD. 156-869 (Pinot blanc type), UD. 156-537 (Pinot noir type).

Dr Belinda Kemp and Craig McDonald, winemaker at Andrew Peller Wines, Canada, gave a fascinating tasting entitled 'Gamay as a variety for the UK' which included four Canadian Gamays and Biddenden Vineyard's Gamay from Kent.

Emma Rice led a tasting exploring award winning UK traditional method sparkling wines styles including: Classic Reserve NV, Blanc de Blancs, Blanc de Noirs, Rosé and Demi-sec, along with the winemakers.

And finally David Cowderoy led an interesting tasting of some of the diversity of wines emerging in the UK, including non-traditional varieties and non-traditional methods for sparkling wine production.

During the refreshment breaks the delegates had the opportunity to view over 20 posters entitled 'Trouble Free Winemaking', and discuss their content with Tony Milanowski of Plumpton College.

It is intended that this conference will run alternate years with the WineGB Viticulture Conference. It is important that we keep learning as an industry, especially as we are in our infancy in international terms.

Exchanging ideas and interacting with researchers and winemakers from other regions is a key part of this. We hope that those of you who attended both enjoyed the event and took something away from it. The opportunity to try other wines with your fellow winemakers is a valuable experience for anyone making wine both still and sparkling.

WineGB was thrilled to have international winemakers from Canada attending the conference. We are a young wine industry and face all the challenges that an emerging wine region inevitably comes across. Canada's wine industry is more than a few steps ahead of us in terms of research and development; we were pleased to have the opportunity to engage with them to learn and share information. The drinks reception with a range of UK and Canadian wines at the end of the day was a great opportunity for networking.

WineGB thanks Denbies Wine Estate for generously hosting the conference and the WineGB Partners & Patrons for their support.

Some of the presentations are available on the WineGB website for members; others cannot be shared as they include research that is not yet published.

Photos by Tom Gold, 2019.

Picture above: line up of conference speakers: L-r: David Cowderoy, Nathalie Sieczkowski, Dr Asia Khafizova, Sigrid Gertsen-Schibbye, Emma Rice, Craig McDonald & Dr Belinda Kemp



Tasting session of non-traditional varieties and non-traditional methods for sparkling wine production.



Panel session with winemakers David Cowderoy, Craig McDonald and Emma Rice



Dr Asia Khafizova presenting a tasting of new varieties



Dr Belinda Kemp presenting



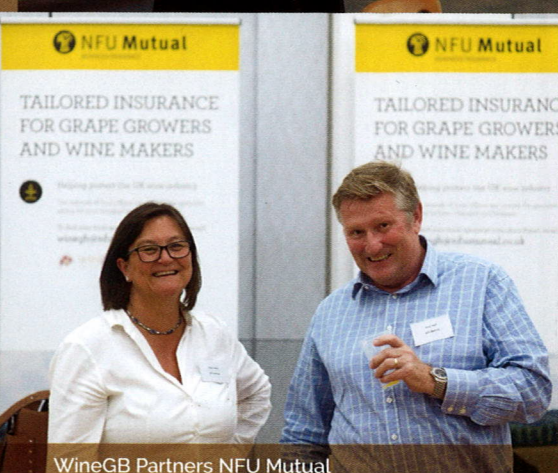
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