

Episode 33: Fortified Wines with Tim Jackson MW

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SPEAKERS

Tim Jackson MW, Janina Doyle



Janina Doyle 00:07

Welcome to Eat Sleep Wine Repeat a podcast for all you wine lovers, who, if you're like me just cannot get enough of the good stuff. I'm Janina Doyle your host, Brand Ambassador, Wine Educator, and Sommelier. So stick with me as we dive deeper into this ever evolving wonderful world of wine. And wherever you are listening to this, cheers to you. Hello wine lovers. So today's episode, I'm talking with Tim Jackson, Master of wine. So we'll pick his brain a little on how those exams were and how hard it was to do. Plus, his chosen subject as that's what he's drinking at the moment is fortified wines. So this episode is now all about that. So before we get to the interview, I'm going to talk about my winery of the week.



J

Janina Doyle 00:58

So I came back from South Australia in 2015. And with me, one of those bottles was a 10 year Tawny from Seppeltsfield. So I've been waiting for the opportunity where I'm going to open it up. And it seems now is the moment so let's talk a little bit about Australia and their fortified wine. Barossa Valley in South Australia is where it all kind of started, Shiraz came over. It was planted in 1843. And this whole area was actually founded on fortified winemaking. Very soon after Seppelts family arrived, they were escaping religious persecution and they set up Seppeltsfield in 1851. This is just 15 years after the settlement of South Australia. If any of you can get out to Barossa, to go and visit seppeltsfield, you need to go down Seppeltsfield road which is also known as the avenue of palms, vineyards on each side. It is absolutely beautiful. Google the avenue of palms and let me know what you think it's stunning. Now what's really special about Seppeltsfield they do make some still table wines as well and they're delicious. But in terms of their fortified, they have what they call the centennial cellar, which is literally the longest unbroken line of year-dated Tawny's. Now when I went there, I was lucky enough to go into this cellar, and they took a tiny little pipette of 100 year old Tawny for me which was just magical. So you can imagine your birth year super easy go there. They have every vintage from 1878 so you can taste it and they are the only winery in the world to release a single vineyard 100 year old wine every single year. So this is really cool. So sadly, I'm not tasting the 100 year old wine. I didn't quite have the money to bring that home. I'm having their Para Grand Tawny. So what they do is they age individually all the great varieties. This is Grenache, Syrah and Mourvedre. They age them in small oak barrels for 10 years, and then they blend them in to the Para Grand Tawny Solera. So I've mentioned solera system. solera is actually most famously used in Sherry's another type of fortified wines, so I'll touch on that in a second. But let's look at this sexy Para Gran Tawny now. Five years I've waited for this, this is actually a different label. In fact, it's now all a very elegant Blue Label and this one has a Red Label.



Janina Doyle 03:36

It's very much like roasted walnuts, with a kind of powdered coffee, powdered chocolate, so it's a nice mocha edge with with kind of a vanilla bean backbone. And you know what it smells like being on a cigar terrace. It's got that nice kind of smoky hints, this savoury vibe as it has a lot going on. Okay, delicious. This is medium, it's creamy, with a lovely, elegant finish. In fact, they said he's definitely there keeping it bright. Keeping it ripe. It's lovely. I'm getting a real fudgy edge of vanilla fudge edge, kind of those chocolate cafe curls that you get on the edge of a coffee. You know like there's little biscuits, it's got that as well. And this lovely spiciness to it with all that nuttiness that Roasted Nuts following all the way through. Fab, delicious! Of course great with chocolate. Now for those of you living in the UK, I found this online for 750ml bottle you can get this for £27.95 from winedirect.co.uk and also at vinvm.co.uk they have the still wines if you really want to get to know Seppeltsfield check out those two websites. enjoy the journey.



Janina Doyle 05:05

So let's talk about that solera system. It is Sherry that is the most famous for using this system. Sherry is a fortified wine that you're going to find down in the south of Spain, specifically in the region of Jerez de la Frontera. And they use the Palomino grape. But this system, as I've mentioned, has been used in the fortified wines in Australia. You can even use this system for still table wines, sometimes non vintage wines, when people want to create a complex and interesting different style where you get the freshness of a young wine with some of the characters or the tertiary flavours of an older wine, they will put it through this solera system. So what is it? Basically, the solera system is a maturation system made up of different layers of barrels, or what they would call butts. So the bottom layer is the solera, where your wine, your final product comes out from. And then each other layer is called a criadera, you have the first layer being called the first criadera, and so on. So generally, you have anything from between three layers of barrels above that final solera layer, going all the way up to 14. Now the objective here is that you're adding in the youngest wine at the top, you can't take any more than a third of each barrel (or butt) to go into the next level, which is further down. The younger wine blends with the older wines. So you've got this interesting complexity. And the idea is as it works its way down the barrels. When you take out your final product, the style and the quality is consistent. And you have of course this interesting wine with lots of different vintages. For this reason, you can't get a vintage solera because it's a mixture of all different vintages and therefore you have an average age obviously worked out from how many different created areas you have, and for how long you have been running that solera system. So hopefully that makes sense to you. But enough of my chat. Let's go across to Tim now.

- J** Janina Doyle 07:09
Hi, Tim, thank you so much for joining me on the podcast.
- T** Tim Jackson MW 07:11
My pleasure. Thanks for having me.
- J** Janina Doyle 07:13
So for anybody who does not know who Tim Jackson is. He is an amazing, should I say amazing.
- T** Tim Jackson MW 07:26
I'm not gonna argue am I.
- J** Janina Doyle 07:27
You'll have it, you'll take it: an amazing Master of Wine. And as I told you before we started recording you are my first...my very, very first...master of wine.
- T** Tim Jackson MW 07:39
Yes, absolutely. We could make a joke about...
- J** Janina Doyle 07:44
I know that you want to. To be honest, I think you would like to make a joke, wouldn't you?
- T** Tim Jackson MW 07:47
I ought to, no, I'm gonna to be nice and not. I'm a nice boy.
- J** Janina Doyle 07:51
You didn't take the bait. Okay. Right. So let's talk about you. So when we met, you told me all about how you got into wine. And the one of the things I found really fascinating was that you started keeping the label of everyone you were drinking and created like a diary, didn't you? So can you tell me about that?



Tim Jackson MW 08:09

Yeah, more or less. I mean, it's, it's a bit more selective than that. It all kind of started, I suppose I've been seriously drinking wine for four or five years. And I was working, I was living with a friend of mine. And we were kind of buying bottles from majestic or wherever. And there's a bit of an aide memoire, picked up an old kind of black and red A5 book and just started soaking the labels off sticking in and writing a few notes about it. And maybe they're kind of almost like diary related stuff like who you were drinking it with or what the occasion was or where you got it, or some other story thing, maybe. It's all kind of evolved over time. Yeah, one book, five years later became two books. And I just kind of carried on going really.



Janina Doyle 08:47

And we are on book number eight now aren't we?



Tim Jackson MW 08:50

Yeah. And there's about, around about 191 to 192 labels per book. So I'm probably at about 1450 at this point, give or take.



Janina Doyle 09:01

Ok, so you know, you've drunk your fair share of wine.



Tim Jackson MW 09:04

Yeah. And a good chunk of that is obviously in the purest interest of science and education, of course.



Janina Doyle 09:10

Oh, yeah, of course, you weren't doing it for you. Or to have fun or to get pissed? Of course, that would be disgusting.



Tim Jackson MW 09:15

No, I have to drink bad wine. So you don't have to.



Janina Doyle 09:19

So everybody who's listening, you can actually go to winebook.co.uk and you've literally got every label up there and the diary entries, right?



Tim Jackson MW 09:27

Yeah, basically, I posted the whole of up to book 5 and gradually working because I was kind of about book 6 ish, when I thought it'd be a good idea to put these somewhere sensible, like online. And so I've gradually kind of working through the backlog and it takes quite a while to put each one up. But yet take a photo of the label literally type out, warts and all, wherever I wrote at the time so you start seeing evolution like right at the start you writing a few, a few things and it gets a bit more sophisticated. You also write stuff which you come back and you look at you say, you know, how can I set that about that wine? And that's because I didn't, I didn't appreciate it didn't get it, like, one of the classics I can go back and have a look very early is one of Donnhoff's single vineyard Riesling Kabinett, I think. And I kind of did dismiss it as like lemonade or something because I didn't get it, I didn't appreciate it, I hadn't learned how to see the finesse in it. And so just, you know, a bit sweet and lemony. And of course, there's a huge amount more to it than that. So you kind of have to go back and look at in shame Oh, oh, well, that that was me in my unsophisticated "I've been drinking wine five years". And you know, hopefully, by the time you get to books 4, 5, 6, and certainly 7. 7 and beyond when I've actually got those two, two MW letters as well. Hopefully it's a bit more a little bit more authorite.



Janina Doyle 10:42

So tell me, how long did it take you to do the Master of Wine?



Tim Jackson MW 10:45

Four years?



Tim Jackson MW 10:45

I would say, because I was thinking about doing the Master of Wine. And then I realised that I valued my life.



Tim Jackson MW 10:52

And your bank balance?



Janina Doyle 10:55

Oh, gosh, absolutely. Now, do you have to get sponsorship to try and help with the funding of those samples of wines that you need to try?



Tim Jackson MW 11:05

You don't have to but it helps. I didn't. I was fortunate that I mean, I was unusual, because today you have to be in the wine trade to be accepted on to the programme. But back in 2013, October 2013, when I joined the programme, and I wasn't working in the wine trade, but I got enough experience at the time to be allowed in, you can't do that anymore. But I was working in financial services or working in marketing for PR specialist insurance company, and a specialist mortgage company. And you know, the one thing that's true about financial services, it pays pretty well. So I could afford to fund myself through it. But if you don't have those resources, then yes, if you can get sponsors from a company if you're within the wine trade, or if you can pool your resources with other students. And that's not always possible because other parts of the world where there may be only one to one or two or three students, you are going to struggle with that a little bit. But pulling your resources is a good way of managing it



Janina Doyle 11:55

I can't remember if I was speaking to somebody or is read somewhere. But literally for a master of wine. Typically, if you want to go through the programme, this person spent well over £50,000 with sampling and the exams. And they said that it was very, very normal to be up at six o'clock in the morning before their job doing tasting sessions. So would you say that seems quite accurate.



Tim Jackson MW 12:22

Certainly on the financial side, it depends a little bit on how many times you fail the tasting exam, and we'll come back to that. But I spent about £10,000 a year, give or take. So I did in four years, it was it was 40 grand give or take. And that's including the course fees includes a whole week of a residential seminar. So there are things that covers, but also fees for exams, fees for samples and travelling off their own accord. So you don't have to travel, you can get examples of what winemakers are doing in reality, which is very, very important to passing the theory side of the MW. What he's actually done, as opposed to what a textbook says he could do. You can get that by talking to people and

reading things and borrowing examples from other people. So you could in theory, do that without leaving, leaving your desk as it were. But I found a lot more fruitful, and I learned it much better, if I were there in a vineyard talking to a grape grower or in the winery talking to the winemaker about what they did with this wine and why. Plus you get to go to some really beautiful places because most wine regions are.



Janina Doyle 13:26

But you know, so this is my point. You, my clever friend, did this in four years. And as you know, that is super fast for passing the Master of Wine exams.



Tim Jackson MW 13:39

I think the average is between five and six. I mean, there are some people who might take them maybe as much as nine years and they might take some breaks in the middle because it can be pretty, pretty full on. The fastest you can do is three years. So the programme is you do a first year.



Janina Doyle 13:52

Ohhhhh you're one year slow!



Tim Jackson MW 13:54

I am, one year slow! I'll show you how I managed to fail my... no I'm not bitter actually at all... So the first thing you do the first year and hopefully you pass through that about 40 to 50% pass straight through to go on to the second year. At the end of the second year, you are allowed to sit the real exams, its over two parts. The theory section, which is essay writing about wine and stuff. And there's the practical is the most difficult bit and that's a series of wine tasting pages and blind tasting exams - they're time pressured, they're difficult. And the pass rate there is kind of 10 to 15% but that's the difficult bit to pass. Once you pass both of those parts, you can then do the research paper which is an individual piece of research, should take one year, some people take a little bit longer. And there you are. So I joined the programme in 2013/14, sat the first year first stage assessment, passed that. In 2015 I sat the real exams. Passed the theory, failed the practical. 2016 passed the practical. 2017 passed my research paper. So, how did I fail? Let me tell you you know, I am, as with many people who go into the programme, you kind of, failing stuff is not what you do, it's not what I do? It's not what, you know, I've literally never failed a public exam, including my driving test. Other than this exam. It's the only exam I have ever failed. So the second paper is a red white paper, you have two hours

and 15 minutes, it's very, very time pressured to taste 12 wines and then write long form answers and them. You have about a half an hour to taste the wines, about two minutes per wine, give or take, and I was moving from wine number five to wine number six in the red wine paper and I knocked my spittoon full of red wine juice over everything.

J Janina Doyle 15:39
Nooooooooo. Well, that was silly, wasn't it?

T Tim Jackson MW 15:43
It was! And in the next year, I controlled the controllable. I got a big wide flat bottomed spittoon that I couldn't knock over.

J Janina Doyle 15:49
Now hang on a minute. Now you say you couldn't come back from that, now is that more actually mental like, "Oh my god, I'm horrified. And I'm too stressed. And I'm shaking, and I just can't" or literally, they're like, you're a wally, get out of the exam.

T Tim Jackson MW 16:04
They're not quite that harsh. It's the mental side. So you're under pressure, and you don't really genuinely have five minutes to spare. So if you waste five minutes mopping up which I did, go back quickly, and then you've got 10 to 15 minutes, just getting your head back into "Oh my god, what just happened".

J Janina Doyle 16:22
Oh, I'm so sorry. That sounds so sad. Okay, do you know what, sounds to me, then you didn't really fail? It was the wines fault. So if it wasn't for the wine, you would have passed in the third year? Would you? Take it!

T Tim Jackson MW 16:36
I am happy to blame something other than me.

J Janina Doyle 16:37
Oh, yeah, that's always easier, isn't it? Oh, bless you. That's a very good story, though. So

after all that, surviving, all the hard work, because my gosh, how much studying do you think you were doing a week?



Tim Jackson MW 16:48

On the tasting side, which we have probably put quite a lot of effort into, I would be doing a big tasting every Saturday more or less, and that meant going and getting the wines and then I would do either open tastings. So let's say you want to learn Chardonnay. So the first these type of tastings I did probably January 2014. I would get 23 different bottles of Chardonnay from around the world from different quality levels from the the different parts of Burgundy, and put them side by side. And then taste through them in like in a really kind of structured way. So not doing it like you would do a wine tasting where you're walking around and taste one and "oh yeah, that's pretty good". Oh, I'll give that a star or give that 15 out of 20 or whatever you choose to do. Maybe you scribble a few notes. I mean, sit down with A4 piece of paper and say look what is this, well not even a tasting note. What do I think the alcohol level on here is, you know what, acidity we got, what this what that, and kind of take really take the wine apart. And also compare side by side with all the other wines. The different styles in that case, Chardonnay and I did that... I probably did between 10 and 20 of those each year for different reasons, probably often, five or six hours on that day, just tasting through really rigorously these things then you pick maybe pick it up during the week. But in the run into the exams, probably for 12 weeks before exams, maybe maybe 16 weeks before the exams, myself in the tasting group. We would do a 12 wine blind tasting practice exam every Saturday morning 10am to, we finish at about half past one once we had a conversation afterwards and so on. So, you do have to dedicate something to it. My girlfriend was lucky, unlucky. I don't know, we met six weeks after I started the programme.



Janina Doyle 18:37

So this is the same girlfriend at the beginning as at the end? She stuck with you right?



Tim Jackson MW 18:41

Yes, She survived being an MW widow!



Janina Doyle 18:44

Amazing. I hope she got some rewards.



Tim Jackson MW 18:47

She did, well, got to drunk some nice wine. Well she's she's now on the diploma programme, funnily enough.



Janina Doyle 18:52

Oh, amazing. You've got her inspired. That's awesome. Okay, really nice to hear. So she's obviously got an amazing wine coach. What's your advice for anybody wanting to hone in their tasting skills? They're not going to go out and buy, Did you say 23 bottles of wine in one go? That's excessive for the average consumer.



Tim Jackson MW 19:11

I think it depends on the level that you're at, at any one time. You know, what's kind of right for you? So there's a certain amount about learning how to taste a wine and really there is helpful to have someone else to help you kind of calibrate so if someone says is a really acidic wine, well unless you have someone else to tell you this is acidic or it's not acidic, it's quite hard to kind of calibrate the notion, this idea of something like acidity or tannins or sweetness and dryness or you know, what is high alcohol, what is moderate alcohol, what's not. And even just to kind of learn to identify different flavour components and stuff like that. I found doing courses was particularly helpful, especially in that stuff around acidity and alcohol. These kind of, what we call structural components, so not just the flavour of the wine, but how does it feel, how does perform in the mouth kind of thing, which is kind of like fundamental stuff, that then makes it a lot easier to do that kind of higher level tasting and things like that. But again, it depends on where you are and also what you're trying to achieve what you're trying to get out of it. If you just want to learn about different styles of wine, then I'll get probably a couple of different examples of major grape varieties. What do we mean by major grape varieties? Well, for white wines, it's things like Chardonnay, Sauvignon Blanc, Riesling, probably Chenin Blanc, and I would always say taste Semillon because it's a brilliant grape variety, not necessarily the world's biggest grape variety. And then some of the some of the alternatives like Pinot Gris is a brilliant example where you need two styles of wine, you'll understand what Pinot Gris is. You buy Italian Pinot Grigio, which tends to be light and delicate, and you buy an Alsace Pinot Gris which is big, powerful and spicy. And you start to get a sense of what the grape variety is, in that case Pinot Gris but also what can it do? So you know that that range from kind of light, crisp, delicate, not particularly deep, and actually, a Pinot Grigio Style and then there's kind of rich, sometimes a little bit sweet, spicy style of how Alsace can be done. Okay, I see how a grape variety can be different in different places. Or with Chardonnay you make sure you've got an unoaked Chardonnay versus an oaked Chardonnay. You can see how the grape variety is in different forms, in different guises. So

I would do some of the major grape varieties and then I just be on the lookout for things that are a little bit different. A grape variety you've never heard of, why not? A place you've never come across? Why not? That's certainly what I did, the relatively early part of my journey because I was just interested to explore things. So I say to people just don't worry about making mistakes at the end of day it's a few quid here or there and if you're interested, just take the plunge pick that Gruner Veltliner off the shelf, or that Semillon or you know that bottle of Madeira, seriously do it. Go on, do it, do it, do it. Or dive into a Sherry or stuff like that. Just give it a try. Don't worry about not knowing, just give it a try.



Janina Doyle 21:57

That's so funny because your message basically is drink, drink, drink, go go go just keep buying. I like that. I think that's a solid MW message for the wine consumer.



Tim Jackson MW 22:09

Yeah, this thing about just don't worry about being unconfident. You know, again, assume that you can afford to take a few risks with a couple of bottles and some of them won't necessarily come off. But don't hold back. Don't feel unconfident about just pulling that bottle off the shelf and seeing what happens because at the end of the day, you know, nobodies going to die, if it turns out its a bad bottle you don't like, you don't buy it again. But do give it a go. You know, give it a bash.



Janina Doyle 22:34

When I do my wine tastings with consumers. I actually say to people when they don't like wine, especially when I know it's actually a well made wine. It's a good quality wine. I will say to people, that's great that you don't like it. Now let's quickly analyse it, what is it that you don't like about it? Is it too big in the mouth? Is it too strong? Is it too tart? Does it seem like there's too much acidity for you, so that they can actually then know what they don't like, which moves the more to what they do like, and actually they can talk with more confidence with a sommelier or with someone in a wine shop to help them with their wine journey. So I think it's a great thing to find bad wines for them. As much as it is defined good wines, I think, you know.



Tim Jackson MW 23:10

It's almost like any form of learning, we learn from mistakes as much from successes. So I completely agree. But all I would say to consumers who maybe don't know so much give a few things a go, you know, go to the supermarket, there's no pressure there, pick up a

bottle, it's maybe a couple quid more expensive, maybe it's just a little bit unusual. And give it a try. And you might just find something that you do like.

J Janina Doyle 23:32
Fab! And for anybody who doesn't know, since you've done your master of wine, you are now writing for Jancis Robinson, which is awesome. So people can find some of your literature online there, can't they?

T Tim Jackson MW 23:45
Yep, so some which is actually also for free, available to all. So I've done quite a few wine of the week recommendations, which you don't have to be a subscriber to read. Got one coming out tomorrow. So yeah.

J Janina Doyle 23:57
Good. And if anybody ever gets to fly again, you helped make the selection for British Airways.

T Tim Jackson MW 24:05
Yeah, I've been, I've been supporting BA for a bit more, a bit over a year. A pretty interesting year. This year has been extraordinary for all of us. It's even more extraordinary for the airline industry. But under normal circumstances, I help select the wines and schedule them onto the flight.

J Janina Doyle 24:25
I love that. So good. And I do fly with British Airways or at least I used to, and they do they have a nice selection. So let's talk about wine right now. What are you enjoying? What does Tim Jackson MW. enjoy drinking at the moment?

T Tim Jackson MW 24:41
Right now? right now?

J Janina Doyle 24:44

Well, yesterday, tomorrow?

T Tim Jackson MW 24:45

I've got a fair number of passions. Both my partner and I we are big fans of Spain. She lived in Spain for six years. So we spent a lot of time with Spanish wine. And we spent a fair bit of time in the last five years, as a result studying actually, and visiting South Africa and South Africa is a big passion, I think there's some fabulous stuff there. But I'm also a huge lover of fortified wines. I mean fortifieds, when I'd said you know, go drink Madeira. I do mean it, I honestly really mean it. Fortified wines are a much misunderstood collective category. And actually, it's quite hard to describe as a single category, you know, the MW exams in I think 2015 had this lovely question, It said, "Fortified wines are diverse. Why are they not more popular?" Well, it's true. They are diverse. There's lots, you know, hugely fascinating range of flavours, textures, they are brilliant with different kinds of food, but the side of diversity is complexity. And complexity, if the wine world is generally complex, fortified, their origins, the styles are so hugely different from a Fino Sherry, which is pale and smells, well, frankly smells of aldehyde. And I studied chemistry at university the first time around and, and aldehydes are not something you generally think of as a as a nice flavour. But actually, in that context, they're incredible. And then you go all the way across to vintage Port, with powerful deep fruit and full alcohol, and it's sweet and it's tannic, you've got a huge range of different styles to deal with within that category. But once you get to grips with it, once you get to understand and appreciate the styles of the different Sherry, the wines of the island of Madeira, and of course, Port and others, you actually find just really brilliant wines, frequently undervalued. And often, many of them are robust enough that you can open a bottle and you don't have to drink it the same day. You can come back to it in, with a Tawny Port, any time over 3, 4, 5 months or with Madeira, anytime. It's absolutely brilliant, so robust, so robust!

J Janina Doyle 26:47

Okay, Tim, tell me what is your favourite of the fortified wine category? Come on.

T Tim Jackson MW 26:52

Oh, you're asking me to choose between my favourite children.

J Janina Doyle 26:56

I want you to, but it is all about time, place, food, everything?

T Tim Jackson MW 27:00
Well let me instead just talk about the thing that I tasted most recently. How about that?

J Janina Doyle 27:03
Okay, let's do that. Go for it.

T Tim Jackson MW 27:06
I have been tasting quite a bit of Port recently. I'll talk about vintage Port, because that's what I have been tasting most recently. But something that's super exciting in the Port world is a resurgence of White Port and particularly White Port that's been aged in barrels for a long time. So aged like a Tawny Port, but its White Port, White grapes and if you get, you know, kind of 20 year old, 20, between 20 and 30 year old White Ports, they can be absolutely outstanding. And I think that you have to raise a glass, particularly to the Porthouse of Kopka who have put a lot of effort and energy into promoting the old White Ports, which they have a lot of stock. So go and find old White Ports.

J Janina Doyle 27:51
I was lucky enough to be tasting some Kopka at the Wines of Portugal tasting, you know, back then, when tastings existed, and when...

T Tim Jackson MW 27:58
Sorry, what are those tastings of which you speak?

J Janina Doyle 27:59
You get these tastings they were these things that human beings they were in one room together, and no no, this used to happen back in the past a long time ago, there wasn't like a maximum amount of people that could be together. Can you imagine? Mm hmm. And there was this tasting this one time, I think it was at the beginning of this year I think, the wines of, what was it the beginning of this year or the end of last year I can't remember the Wines of Portugal obviously had their annual tasting and Kopke was there and I got to take some of their their White Ports and they really are, I think, pushing the boundaries and certainly actually getting people to know about it more aren't they, so people should definitely get behind and try and, do you want to tell us about the white grape varieties actually because you'll probably pronounce them better than I will.



Tim Jackson MW 28:48

I'll do my best I mean there are a large number of them and that's true of Port wine in general but its the likes of Rabigato, Viosinho, Arinto, I think there is a bit of Gouais maybe and a myriad of others.



Janina Doyle 29:03

You missed my favourite, Gouveio, my favourite. It's because I like...Godello, Gouveio... I like that, this Spanish/Portuguese grape variety. For me as well the young white ports are very, very aromatic and actually very pretty. And perfumed, I love that. And then of course, as you're talking these aged, then they start getting very, very nutty and the complexity that... people have to try it don't they.



Tim Jackson MW 29:26

They do and it is very, very different style from from that kind of young aged white ports, which often are the kind of Port that you stick in a bit of lemonade, you've got kind of a nice, nice fresh, early evening cocktail, which is what they're often used for the young white ports but the old white ports as you say, completely different, they're richer. It's kind of could citrus fruit, caramel, vanilla, and a lot of nuttiness. Absolutely. And they get more so, the older they get and they get more concentrated, more rich, brilliant with kind of cheeses with some walnuts. I mean it's that kind of thing and something not just blue cheese which would be the kind of classic thing for red ports but actually some of the kind of harder cheeses, that kind of thing, they're a super super accompaniment for that. Really really lovely wine.



Janina Doyle 30:09

You're talking about white vintage port? I'm actually not that knowledgeable about white vintage port at all. Do you think when they choose the vintages of white port, it's as important as what they would do with the red when they make a vintage?



Tim Jackson MW 30:23

It's a little different because if you have a white port and it's vintage dated, generally it's the same style as Tawny Port that's vintage dated so a Colheita, is the term.



Janina Doyle 30:34

Okay. Yeah.



Tim Jackson MW 30:35

So there what you're looking for is the characteristics of grapes that are going to do well for a long period of time in a barrel, which might not necessarily be exactly the same set of characteristics you'd be looking for, for extended bottle ageing, necessarily. There'll be a lot of similarities but what you find with Colheita ports is quite often they're from vintage dates that are not classic port vintage years as in capital V capital P vintage port. And so I think there is probably a little bit more variety but honestly, I've explored Colheita white ports a fair amount, but I think that's a great question to ask some of the winemakers and progressively talk about this, but what are you looking for in the grape before you start to make a Colheita white port, that might be different from a vintage. When you're looking at vintage port, part of the thing about bottle ageing is blending for huge depth of flavour, depth of colour and also a large good solid pile of very ripe tannins so grape varieties like Touriga Nacional which has a lot of those aspects have become increasingly popular in vintage ports for making that lovely tannic backbone when you then leave them for decades, soften out and the tannins get polymerised and some of them will fall away in that deposit along with with quite a bit of the colour and the flavours just develop and become that complex, ethereal, and exciting glass of wine you can get from bottle aged, vintage port. I just tasted a whole bunch that were were put together as a lineup from some pretty serious vintages actually, including 63, 66, 70, 77, 80 and 85. Which are some of the more renowned Port vintages in the last few decades. And it's just fascinating to see the progression of those wines because if you open a bottle of like, 2016 is a great vintage if you open a bottle of that for now it inky black with a purple edge to it. It's powerfully tannic, huge concentration of flavour, very much like fruit and violat, and that kind of herbal aromatics from the whole bunches that are often used in the winemaking. And then you leave it, say for 50 years which the 1970s vintage ports are now and it becomes this elegant comparison, delicate, kind of scented, relatively pale coloured not very, varies abit but relatively pale coloured butterfly from that, not caterpillar of a 2016 young vintage port because it is not a caterpillar. But the transformation is absolutely extraordinary. And the longevity of those wines if you get a good one is extraordinary. I was finding some of the 63's just starting to fade a little bit in depth but I still have this incredible elegance of fragrance at 57 years or whatever.



Janina Doyle 33:30

Wow. So okay, when you've got a port as you do, in the 1960s and of course it's much lighter, it hasn't got that same power. What would you pair that with?



Tim Jackson MW 33:40

What I'd say is, when you've got something that's relatively delicate, but still has lovely perfume, it's hugely elegant, really, just really supple tannins, and it's complex and interesting. I would just drink on at home and literally drink it like that.



Janina Doyle 33:55

So let's actually look at food pairings then for port wines. We all know Stilton with a good intense Ru.. you can have Ruby port, Late Bottled Vintage port or even Vintage of course, what would you have with a Tawny port?



Tim Jackson MW 34:11

So Tawny's are sweeter, a little bit than vintage, sometimes only by 10g. But certainly as they get older they get more concentrated you can get quite noticeably sweeter and richer and fuller, but they're kind of, they also take on these, this aromatics of a little bit nutty, a Christmas cake and chocolate notes and stuff like that. And Tawny's are fantastic with a whole range different chocolate stuff. Brilliant with that because he does still have the kind of dried fruit component. Like red fruits top it, anything with chocolate and red fruit. I think it works really really well and in many ways it can work a little bit better than some of the young Ruby ports because what you don't really have with Tawny is the tannins that can kind of dry things out. So in many ways, Ruby port lightly chilled is a good tip, can be brilliant with kind of red fruit desserts and chocolate and red fruit, that kind of thing. I think they would they work pretty well and they're sweet enough to cope with those kinds of things. Again, they're actually pretty good for aperitif type wine because they do work pretty well chilled. So I'd certainly drink them again on their own, its the kind of thing where there's enough going on that pairing isn't an absolute necessity. Things with red fruit and things with milk chocolate, dark chocolate both work pretty well. When we talk about chocolate though when, if you're getting into really high cocoa solids, chocolate and really dark chocolate, then Ruby port, particularly a new kind of vintage quality is a sublime match, work perfectly well.



Janina Doyle 35:41

Would you recommend any port for savoury food?



Tim Jackson MW 35:48

It's funny. Sweet-savoury is a fascinating concept so something was recommended to me

was for Sauternes, it was actually Bérénice Lurton at Chateau Climens. She said we're exploring much more savoury foods not just the classic either Fois Gras if you're French and or Roquefort, or if you're English just desert. She said they actually drink Sauternes quite often with roast chicken, and also with curry and I've tried both and they do both work very well. On the curry side, I would tend to go for Indian curries which are little bit richer and fuller than perhaps the kind of Thai style. But botrytus has a very, it gives a very spicy character and can give a saffron aromatic note and kind of ginger spice character, which works very, very well with the spicy food and curry. The roast chicken does also work. The one challenge with those because they're sweet and they are full, is if you make that your food wine, it's quite hard to get through more than a glass or glass and a half because it is so rich and sweet. I think you do have a little bit of the same challenge with sweeter port and so on. I say if you have a port, which is perhaps longer aged, you know, getting into the 40 year old and then get expensive, but getting into a 40 year old and maybe even a 50 year old level. I've found they can quite often take on a really spicy character of their own, often a bit woody, a bit of tobacco dried tobacco character and there I could see those coming into more kind of savoury food. But again, you got to be, I think, careful with a wine that's that rich to be accompanying the whole dish, if you see what I mean.

J

Janina Doyle 37:20

Well, I think that's a really valid point. And actually, I was very lucky when I went to Australia. I spent quite a few days with Penfolds and I was with the fortified wine maker James Godfrey, but I remember one of the days they really wanted to showcase that these fortified wines could be drunk with savoury, kind of salty foods and I remember one of the dishes which again, it makes a lot of sense it was a fois gras pate on toast. I remember that being the starter I'm pretty sure the main course was a chicken dish kind of all mixed in with like a kind of sweet sauce. Unfortunately, I wish I had written it down - all of it surprisingly worked. But you have hit the nail on the head that we were sipping going okay, yeah, this is good, this is good. But then the alcohol content starts hitting your head and you're like I you know, I would quite like a big glass of something still and fresh.

T

Tim Jackson MW 38:16

Were in certain circumstances actually Sherry can be even better because they often are a little bit lighter in alcohol, especially the Fino and Manzanilla styles, which are around 15 alcohol so basically a slightly strong white wine because they're so salty and fresh, they're very very good accompaniments for a number of foods like you know, olives and salted almonds and even even fresh anchovies and that kind of thing. While the Amontillado style, often you know 17, 18 alcohol, but not often in the 20s, Amontillado, especially older

Amontillado, and Jamon Iberico.



Janina Doyle 38:57

Jamon! I was waiting to see if you were going to come with a different one.



Tim Jackson MW 39:01

It's an epic mix, I went to Osborne (pronounced Oz-bor-nay) in El puerto del Santa Maria last year. And previously we stopped in at their Jamoneria, their Jamon Bodega, Cinco Jotas. The same company owns Cinco Jotas and Cinco Jotas make one of the top top Jamon Iberico and we had Jamon Iberico Bellotas and their VORS range of Amontillado and the flavour match is sublime, the umami character in the meat and the saltiness in the meat just match brilliantly with the similar kind of umami quality in that Amontillado and that's just absolutely exceptional match



Janina Doyle 39:41

Have you just made yourself hungry?



Tim Jackson MW 39:42

Oh, yeah, yeah. I have some Palo Cortado downstairs so I'm okay. I've got some Palo Cortado to drink so we are alright.



Janina Doyle 39:49

You know what I want to ask you a question, which I don't know if you can even answer it because it seems that winemakers can't answer it. Now we've obviously nipped across to sheries.



Tim Jackson MW 39:57

Are you going to ask me what Palo Cortado is?



Janina Doyle 39:58

I'm going to ask you what Palo Cortado is alright, so I'm going to try and give you my best explanation.



Tim Jackson MW 40:03

So people talk about it including flor sometimes it does, sometimes it doesn't have any. The idea is that the wines that you've selected to try and make fino with tend to be the first pressing juices with very little tannins and very light, very delicate wines and then they go into barrels, that develops flor and it goes and ages and becomes a fino. With Oloroso, you take the much more pressed wines so with a lot more tannins because it's going to stay in a barrel ageing oxidatively for an extended period of time. So you choose bigger burlier wines and you send them off to make an Oloroso. Palo Cortado by accident or by design. You take those first press fino type wines, and age them like an Oloroso. So you might spend a little bit of time, could even be a few weeks, maybe zero, maybe a few months, sometimes a little bit longer under flor so it can get some flor character but basically it's a finos that's aged or a fino lightness and delicateness of wine, that's been aged as an Oloroso. So it gains some of the character of an Oloroso but some of the characters that are more like kinda Amontillado, because it starts being a lighter wine, it tends to be a little bit lighter body and they say it will smell... my memory is, it smells like an Oloroso but tastes like an Amontillado but some people say it is the other way around, but it is kind of got those two key components. So that is my best explanation of a Palo Cortado.



Janina Doyle 41:33

Okay, okay, I mean, if the wine world wasn't complicated enough, and the fact that we would love people to drink Sherry more, just the simple I love that that you know, for anybody just very, very quickly kind of that levels of the more biological lighter style is Fino, then you have Amontillado, which is somewhere in the middle and then you have Oloroso, which is the nuttier more oxidative style. So just in case anyone doesn't know that. And then this Palo Cortado is, as Tim just said, this thing that kind of maybe is an accident or maybe it was deliberate and it could be maybe an Amontillado ish, or it might be more Oloroso ish, and it kind of is.



Tim Jackson MW 42:10

Take the wine you would have put into a Fino and just age it as an Oloroso.



Janina Doyle 42:14

Okay. No, I like, I like that. That's perfect so people can play around and see. I have to say that yeah, the elegance in Palo Cortados that I've tasted I've always picked up and really enjoyed so but either way it tastes delicious, so it's all good.

T Tim Jackson MW 42:28
It is. So that's where I'm going next, there is a glass of it with my name on it downstairs.

J Janina Doyle 42:33
Are you gonna tell me the the producer?

T Tim Jackson MW 42:35
Its an Almacenista Sherry, Cayetano del Pino is the producer. And Viniberia is the kind of team that sits behind these and puts them together and then sells them through Ehrmanns is the is the distributor who kind of own Viniberia. These are very interesting wines from little producers, all the labels are kind of old school pictures of like gypsies and stuff like that on the outside. Palo Cortado is available in Waitrose by half bottle for 10 quid, 12 quid maybe it's not expensive.

J Janina Doyle 43:07
People can give it a go. If you don't like it, you don't like it, you don't have to remortgage.

T Tim Jackson MW 43:12
It screwcap, half bottle, you know, it'll sit in the fridge for weeks, months, it's fine. It's an oxiditive style, just buy a bottle. You know, go try it with some Jamon.

J Janina Doyle 43:20
Obviously, you've just said how the Sherry's age quite nicely in the fridge so you don't need to rush them. We know Madeira is going to last forever, well kind of - It will outlive us. What about Tawny and Rubies? How long would you keep them open for?

T Tim Jackson MW 43:34
So most Ruby ports really, Reserve ports and Late Bottle Vintage LBV, you can you can open them and hold them open for a couple of weeks, it would generally be what I try to do with them. For the higher quality ports, and especially vintage ports, people talk about you know, drink within 24 hours. So you know you got to have a good group of friends around you can appreciate vintage, because it's lovely stuff and as it gradually, you know, oxidises when it's open, you lose a lot of the nuances of it. So and especially if you've got

a very old one, a delicate one. I'd want to drink that in the same night. So you know, get really good friends around. Tawny Ports are pretty robust so you looking three or four months.

J Janina Doyle 44:16
Yeah, similar to Sherry.

T Tim Jackson MW 44:17
Yeah. And the longer they've been aged, the more that they've already been oxidised so they can't really optimise any further. You know, they're fully fortified, so they can't be affected by anything. So so they're pretty robust.

J Janina Doyle 44:29
So there we go. So people know. So go and try your fortified wines. We did not even touch on Madeira. But maybe I should have to leave that for another time. Tim, thank you so much. You're amazing. And that's so informative. And so it's interesting just listening to you talk so if we can ever be together again in the same room.

T Tim Jackson MW 44:47
What? Human contact, what? what?

J Janina Doyle 44:51
If I've ever able to touch your arm or shoulder again, I look forward to that and you tell me more about lovely wines that you've tasted.

T Tim Jackson MW 44:59
It would be my absolute pleasure.

J Janina Doyle 45:01
Thank you so much Tim. Take care and have a good day.



Tim Jackson MW 45:05
Cheers.



Janina Doyle 45:10

When you start talking about fortified wines, you recognise what a large category it really is. Now I've obviously already mentioned from Seppeltsfield, a new world fortified wine. Tim and I have already touched on Sherry and Port and there was that vague mention of Madeira. But there's also a category called Vin doux Natural. Fantastic, that's made with typically Muscat, occasionally Grenache, and talking of Muscat, there is also Rutherglen Muscat back in Australia.



Janina Doyle 45:40

Now after my chat with Tim I sent an email to James Godfrey who is the fortified wine maker of Penfold and he very kindly emailed back immediately with a whole list of savoury suggestion food pairings. So here is what he said for vintage fortified wines. Lots of slow cooked meat, beef cheeks, oxtail, lamb shanks, and with sides of mashed potato or cauliflower. He also says a chargrilled steak, so if you guys want to be adventurous, they are his recommendations. And in terms of sherry, some slightly more interesting suggestions. With a fino Sherry, he suggests almond soup and braised sheep brains with capers. Now that is taken food pairings to another level. With an Amontillado, try it with pumpkin soup, potato soup. And Oloroso try it with calves liver, or minestrone soup. So if anybody decides to be brave, and try any of these food pairings, let me know.



Janina Doyle 46:43

I want to touch on what Almacenistas are because Tim mentioned that he was drinking the Cayetano del Pino and this is an Almacentista. So what is that? You have the larger producers that are basically going from grape all the way through to bottle and that's bodegas like Gonzalez Byass. What you have was somewhere in the middle, these maturation, bodegas effectively. So Almacen in Spanish means warehouse and Almacenista means warehouse keeper. So they were taking the young wines and maturing them until they were ready. Now typically, when Sherry was having its heyday, the largest shippers often took a little bit of that juice, giving them flexibility, they added complexity as well, because they were taking flavours from a specific solera system owned by one of the Almacenisters. But as sales have dropped massively. Basically, the Almacenistas have disappeared. And by 2018, there was only 18 left. Something that's quite beautiful about very small family owned producers, is that the solera systems are very artisinal, and very interesting. So it's not something that you really want to disappear. The rules have

changed recently allowing some of these Almacenistas to get a shipping licence, meaning that they can start their own bodega effectively, because they've dropped the minimum amount of stock that you actually need to be able to apply for this licence. But it's something that Almacenistas really do represent something more diverse, more complex, typically more interesting. Lustau, who are one of the big shippers do an Almacenistas series, which celebrates these wonderful artisanal solera system wines, and the name of that Almacenista appears on the front of the bottle. So do check that out. Equally, look out for Equipo Navazos which started as just simply a group of sherry lovers who found some effectively abandoned butts filled with beautifully matured Sherry. There wasn't enough to commercially release it, but they came together, bottled it, drank it privately. But then as word got out, and slight more volumes increase, it became public so you can taste some incredibly beautiful aged matured complex Sherry's, now you know what Almacenistas are.



Janina Doyle 49:01

So I'm going to finish with what is more a poem and then a quote by sadly unknown, and it goes like this. "If out of sort we stick to Port, the medicine of soul, a Ruby gleam a Tawny dream, the Vintage is the goal!" So if anyone wants to share a bottle of vintage with me, give me a shout. So to all you wine lovers do go out there this weekend. Pick your favourite fortified wine to drink. Please, as always, if you haven't subscribed, do that now, Do it. Do it. What are you waiting for? Share it. Leave me your comments. I am really interested to find out what is your favourite fortified wine. So until the next episode, Cheers to you!