

Ep 45 Studying winemaking with Jenni Middlehurst

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SPEAKERS

Jenni Middlehurst, 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.



J

Janina Doyle 00:30

Hello to you all. So today's episode we are going to be talking about winemaking and what it's like to be studying to be a winemaker. So I'm chatting with Jenni Middlehurst who is studying at Plumpton college right now. Now their wine division allows you to get a wine degree. You can even do a part time course so on wine, business, wine sensory, Vine nutrition, Vine growing. And of course, you can also do a wine apprenticeship too. Now they're located in East Sussex in England, of course and some of our top English winemakers have studied there. So Jacob Leadley of Black Chalk, which, by the way, was one of my favourite sparkling wines of last year. He was previously at Hattingley Valley. You have Ben Wallgate. He's from Tillingham, who was previously at Gusbourne, and also Josh Donaghay-Spire of Chapel Down, so many to check out. So you can probably imagine that this episode is also going to be a little bit on English wine as well. So for those of you who are not in the UK, who are yet to try English wines, now is the time. The exports are increasing. They account for about 10% of our production, which is still only around 550,000 bottles, but we are getting there. You'll be able to grab some, especially if you're in Scandinavia, the US and Canada they are the top markets. So, in a bit you're going to hear from Jenni, but I'm going to touch a little bit first on the topic fermentation. Now this is something I often get asked about. So I figured you know what, let's get a little bit wine geeky now.

J

Janina Doyle 02:10

Now when I did my WSET diploma, I remember one of the questions on my winemaking exams was, what is the formula of fermentation? Well, okay, everyone take a pen, it is ready. $C_6H_{12}O_6$ converts into $2C_2H_5OH + 2CO_2 + \text{energy}$. Let's hope that comes up at the next pop quiz right. But in more basic terms, it means glucose and fructose turns into ethanol plus carbon dioxide plus energy. So what that means is that when the sugars

break down, they release carbon dioxide ethanol and energy by the anaerobic metabolism of yeast - boom. Right, so now let's look at what the winemaker can do. Now he could choose to ferment the grapes in different vessels. Now sometimes a winemaker chooses to ferment in oak barrels. Oak barrels retain heat far more than for instance, a stainless steel tank which you can typically control by a computer. So you have to be far more careful with this but as a positive with red wine that can help you with extraction from the skins which can give more colour and aromas and tannins. Stainless steel and cement tanks are actually much easier to clean and they're also cheaper, which can be a massive advantage for some winemakers. A French oak barrel as an example typically starts at around £600. Now these stainless steel tanks, they don't allow oxygen exchange and so if the winemaker wants to focus on more primary fruit flavours, this can be better than barrels but it all depends on what the winemakers time is, his costs and the style that he wants to achieve. Now for the fermentation to actually happen, we need yeast. This is what converts the sugar into alcohol. You may have heard of people talking about wild yeast and wild fermentations. So this is where the winemaker chooses to let the fermentation happen naturally using the indigenous yeast that live in the bloom on the grape skin. So this is rather than inoculating This is the more natural way to do things. However, you are leaving things to nature so this might mean you get some funky flavours. Also the wild yeast might not be that strong, so the fermentation might get off to a slow start. This then runs risks of oxidation or microbiological spoilage. However, winemakers choosing this method would say that it's the traditional natural way to do things. And also if you get it right, you can get greater complexity and a better quality. If the winemaker wants to choose specific strains of yeast and let's get a little bit wine geeky again, this is known as *saccharomyces cerevisiae*. Now remember there's a transcript, go to the show notes, and then you'll be able to download that and see the spellings. If they use this wine yeast, they can have more consistency, they can have more control of the flavours. So you specifically choose your strain of wine yeast and this will make the wine perhaps fruitier. You could pick a different strain to make your wine weightier or to encourage those green notes that we get in Sauvignon Blanc or, in fact to extract more phenolics from the skins. Now after that's all sorted, what temperature does the winemaker want it at? The temperature will change the speed of fermentation, so what wine typically ferments are 10 to 18 degrees celsius and read a little bit higher at 20 degrees celsius to 32. Now the winemaker has to get this right, because if you get too cold, you might get more volatile aromas, the red wines might not get much colour or tannin and why might get these banana pairedrop aromas, they're known as isoamyl acetate. Too hot and then the wine might oxidise or the aromas and flavours might in fact just disappear. The winemaker may want to add oxygen in to encourage the yeast to multiply. Now this is especially important for red wines that haven't been crushed yet or pressed beforehand. So that's why you may hear the French terms for example pigeage. This is in English "punching down". So it literally means where you punch down the grape

skins that have risen to the surface, they create a cap. Traditionally they would have done this with their feet. But now you can use paddles or basically any tool to submerge those skins and this can be manual or automatic. The other way is remontage, and this is known as "pumping over". So this is taking the juice from the bottom of the tank and you pump it back over the top of the skins. As an example between the two. The second method adds more oxygen, which of course is going to affect the flavours of the wines so the winemaker needs to decide what is the end result that he wants. Now encouraging yeast to multiply can be a very good thing. For a winemaker, their worst nightmare is a stuck fermentation. Now this can happen if you're using wild yeasts. As an example, they can die off before finishing fermentation. Perhaps they got the temperature wrong or the yeasts run out of nutrients. Now pay attention later on. You're going to hear Jenny mentioned DAP. I've actually looked it up now. This is di-ammonium phosphate and this is a nutrient that can be just added back into the fermentation to get it going again. You could also use vitamin B. Of course, you could also re-inoculate with some wine yeast cultures or change the temperature. Now as soon as fermentation has actually finished. This typically takes between two and three weeks. A winemaker must decide what happens next. Now with red wine, he might want to leave the wine in contact with the skin for longer maturation. So that's going to add more colour, tannin, aromas or the white wine he might want to add sulphur dioxide to make sure that the malolactic fermentation doesn't happen as he wants to keep the wine light and fresh. But if for instance, you have a rich white wine like Chardonnay, a winemaker may want that naturally occurring process, Malolactic fermentation to occur. Now Malolactic fermentation is very often shortened down to MLF. And this is where the malic acids, so think of the sharpness of apples, it is converted into lactic acid. So now think of the creaminess of milk, so you get a richer, softer, less acidic style of wine. So those buttery Chardonnays - Malolactic fermentation is perfect for it. And then what did he do? Does he lees stir the wine? Does he aged it in barrel or concrete or clay or glass? How is he going to fine the wine? How is he going to filter the wine? There are so many decisions that he or she can make. Right but for now, I think it's time to go over to the chat with Jenni and you can see what wines we are drinking.



Janina Doyle 09:18

Jenni, thank you so much for joining me, I'm super excited to talking about winemaking and of course English wine - goes hand in hand right?



Jenni Middlehurst 09:27

Exactly it does it does.



Janina Doyle 09:29

So tell me what wine have you picked for us because, I've got, we got different wines so we're gonna you know drink along as we go. What have you brought to the table today?



Jenni Middlehurst 09:40

So I've gone for rosé so I've gone for a Pinot Meunier from Blackbook which is an urban winery based in Battersea in London.



Janina Doyle 09:49

Love that! I've gone with the Simpsons Wine Estate, one of their Chardonnays. I thought it's actually a perfect one to talk about because I think it's a really interesting winery, actually and I haven't even tried, I'm going pour. Have you poured yet? Are you?



Jenni Middlehurst 10:01

Yes, I've poured. I've poured. And I've tried. I've tried some of the Simpsons Chardonnay. Which one do you have? Because I think I've tried the Gravel road. Is it Gravelly road? There's a few.



Janina Doyle 10:10

Yes, there is a few. They have the Roman Road, I think, which is their top one. And then they have the Gravel Castle.



Jenni Middlehurst 10:15

That's it. Yeah, that's it.



Janina Doyle 10:16

The Gravel Castle. So I've only had the Roman Road Chardonnay. And it was just so flinty, it was so intense, it was absolute beautiful, but they are on the exact same chalky, lime rich soils as Champagne. So you know, they're in a fantastic spot. And actually, it's worth mentioning for their still wines. I haven't met Ruth and Charles. They're are a wine making couple but every time I've seen an interview from him, he's so particular about everything that they've done very, very anal, everything has to be perfect. And so all of the grape varieties that they use for the still wines are Burgundian grape varieties, as opposed to the

Champagne ones, and then just kind of 'Oh, by product, let's make a still wine and stuff'. And I think, you know, when you listen to the way he makes the wines, they spent £20,000 on analytical equipment as an example.

J Jenni Middlehurst 11:00
Oh I've got a lot of time for that.

J Janina Doyle 11:03
But I mean, he's kind of said, I don't know if you know, they had, well they have a Domaine in the Languedoc Roussillon region in France called Domaine Sainte-Rose.

J Jenni Middlehurst 11:11
I think I do know that I think I've heard that.

J Janina Doyle 11:14
That's where I first found out about them, drinking their French wine. And so of course, he said that they've been able to get the crew, equipment, people coming over from France, it's saved them a lot more money, whereas then so then they can invest properly. And they definitely have invested whenever I've seen any of their numbers, and I think it's starting to show So cheers. Let's virtually Cheers. So tell me, have a little taste, and tell me about your rosé.

J Jenni Middlehurst 11:42
So it's you know, it's absolutely gorgeous. So I had this the last time when I was at Blackbook Winery when I was bottling there for them. Okay, yeah, we just did a day where you can just go ahead and you can bottle and we first tried it and it's just lovely because it's very different from that kind of provincial style of rosé because it's got a bit more about it. It's got a slight bit more texture, and it's called bit more oiliness and it's just really quite fruity. A bit of a floral note to it as well. Grapefruit, Melony. It's delicious. Maybe a bit of like wild strawberry, I could go on and on.

J Janina Doyle 12:14
I love it. But you know that for anybody who doesn't know Blackbook winery, you can go and visit them. They are in London as well, which makes it so easy to get there. Funny. We

both picked husband and wife operations, haven't we here. So this is Sergio.

J Jenni Middlehurst 12:27
Sergio, and I can't remember his wife's name.

J Janina Doyle 12:30
Oh, no, I know. And I know she actually has a very big part. But Sergio, of course, is the winemaker. So that's why we... you know, but he has been everywhere. I've tasted so many of his wines. And funny enough, his Chardonnay was a wine that we tasted, a whole bunch of Sommeliers got together and we did a blind tasting and everybody had to bring a bottle. And I brought the Chardonnay 2018 and everybody was convinced it was a Premier Cru Chablis. They were like, Oh my God, we think it's about £30, and his Chardonnay is £20 a bottle. And when I unveiled it, everyone was like, Oh, my God, this is amazing. So it's such an amazing example for Hey, this is English still wine. This is how good we can make good.

J Jenni Middlehurst 13:08
Yes. Is it called, Is it controversy? Is that the, is that the Chardonnay you are talking about?

J Janina Doyle 13:11
No, I want to say Painter of light.

J Jenni Middlehurst 13:14
Oh, it could be yes. I can never remember them all. I know with the first rosé I had from them was, isn't it something about a rebel, how to be a rebel?

J Janina Doyle 13:22
Ah I'm googling. And it is Painter of light Chardonnay 2018. If anyone can find that in stock, oh, my God, go and get it. You'll be so so happy.

J Jenni Middlehurst 13:31
I think I tried to actually when we were there, because he let us go around all the tanks

and take some. And yeah, it was good.



Janina Doyle 13:37

I think as well with the Blackbook Winery. Well, everything is natural, isn't it? I'm pretty sure he's not....



Jenni Middlehurst 13:42

It's minimal intervention for sure. There's limited fining, filtering, especially on 2018 I'm pretty sure there was no fining or filtering.



Janina Doyle 13:48

Well that helps because of that wonderful, for anybody who's not in England. 2018 is just an incredible vintage and also we had so much of it as well. So the nice thing is you could actually get hold of a decent amount because the volume went up massively. But Sergio, I mean, he's so skilled. He was at Greyfriars as well, I think before you started Blackbook and then I remember he was at de Montille in Burgundy and then Flowers which I love in California and Ata Rang, so I remember in places where they do some really good Pinots and Chardonnays. He's got a very, very good CV, so he's certainly doing fantastic things for English wine.



Jenni Middlehurst 14:24

And he he started his winemaking course at Plumpton. Oh, look at that link. Look at that link there.



Janina Doyle 14:31

Yay. Segway to Plumpton college. So you are studying at Plumpton. What is it that you're studying?



Jenni Middlehurst 14:37

So it's Viticulture and Enology, but I'm doing the master's degree. So luckily for me, I did my undergrad in microbiology, sort of eight, nine years ago. So it meant that I had kind of a really good foundation, so could go straight in and do the year and a half Master's programme and I didn't go for the full three year degree, less cost than anything else to be honest.

- J** Janina Doyle 14:58
Ok so this Master's you're doing, if someone did the full three year degree they would finish off with what you're doing now, right?
- J** Jenni Middlehurst 15:04
No they would they'd finish it with a BSc, so they finished with an undergrad of, like a regular degree, but this is the extra year and a half that you would get after you've done your degree, to do a masters.
- J** Janina Doyle 15:13
Oh okay. Right. Well talk to me then.
- J** Jenni Middlehurst 15:15
It's a Master's of Science in wine.
- J** Janina Doyle 15:17
What are you learning then? Are you out in the vineyards? Or are you just doing the winemaking?
- J** Jenni Middlehurst 15:21
I think normally, we would be out in the vineyards a little bit more, but because of covid this year, we've not been able to get out as much as we wanted. But the the course is structured to it is both winemaking and grape growing, essentially. So we do do modules on a lot of the viticulture side, sort of how the grapes are grown. And we talk about berry ripeness, and we talk about all the different compounds and phenolics and how the grapes really are grown and how you can affect that using vine nutrition, canopy management, all of the different techniques that you would use as a viticulturist. And we apply that especially and it's really good that we're in the UK because we can apply that then to English vineyards themselves. And we've done a couple of days out picking grapes, and we made our own wine as well, which was amazing.
- J** Janina Doyle 16:09
Okay, that's awesome. Tell me about what that wine was.



Jenni Middlehurst 16:12

So we made, our brief was to make an orange wine, or to make a white skin contact, which was really cool, actually. So we took some grapes from Plumpton vineyard, which is Rock Lodge, and we harvested them. We had this Piwi grape variety called Muscaris, which noone's ever heard of.



Janina Doyle 16:31

What's a Piwi?



Jenni Middlehurst 16:33

Yeah, so Piwi is a hybrid variety. So it's based on a German word that I cannot say, but it's a hybrid variety, that I'm not even going to try and say, but it's a hybrid variety. That means that it's more resistant to pests and needs less spraying. So they're typically not really known very well across the world, but there are quite a few vineyards now that are just planting Piwi's. Just especially in the UK, you'll you'll hear of Seyval Blanc is a, is a Piwi, or is definitely a hybrid.



Janina Doyle 17:02

Okay, so Piwi is not the name of this specific hybrid.



Jenni Middlehurst 17:06

Yeah, I think there's a group of hybrids called Piwi's. It there's not very much information online about them. And we've all kind of struggled to really know what that means.



Janina Doyle 17:15

Okay, so Seyval Blanc is a hybrid, also part of the Piwi kind of family, maybe. And there's this grape variety, which is a hybrid, part of the Piwi family is, what's the name of this grape variety?



Jenni Middlehurst 17:26

Muscaris. And I think it's a cross between Solaris and Muscat.

- J** Janina Doyle 17:33
Right. So we are talking pretty aromatic, very floral. Yeah?
- J** Jenni Middlehurst 17:38
Exactly that. Beautifully aromatic. Lovely grape variety.
- J** Janina Doyle 17:41
Okay. So how was it they're making it with a bit more skin contact and making this orange wine?
- J** Jenni Middlehurst 17:46
Yes, it was really interesting, because obviously, we're dealing with really small amounts. So we're basically only making, we've made three Demi John's, which are five litres, so only about 15 litres of wine, so really small amounts.
- J** Janina Doyle 17:59
That's cute! Just in case it's really bad, you know, you can just pour it down the sink.
- J** Jenni Middlehurst 18:02
Exactly. But the idea is that we get to see it, and you get to sort of pick the grapes yourself, take them back to the lab, and you'd put them through a crusher/destemmer. Then you would then press them in a little tiny hydro press, you know this, this is kind of like less than a metre high.
- J** Janina Doyle 18:19
It's like a baby version of making a full on wine like normal, really what you're describing so far.
- J** Jenni Middlehurst 18:23
Exactly. And it's quite nice, because you can touch and feel everything as you go. And you can see it all in a tiny little room and you feel quite close to it as well. And then you obviously let it settle for a little bit and we pressed it at different intervals. So we pressed

the first lot on day one, then we press the second one on day four, and then day eight, okay to see what the effect of skin contact would have on the phenolics, on the alcohol, on the sugars and all that sort of thing, and on the fermentation.



Janina Doyle 18:50

Lets get geeky. Tell me about that. What did you feel from tasting the wines after day zero, day two, day four.



Jenni Middlehurst 18:57

So we definitely had more kind of, there was, that we found that was more alcohol actually, which is really interesting. So we found that the sugar seemed to be higher on the grape varieties that had been with their skins. So the grapes that have been within their skins and in the juice for longer. So the ones that had had extended skin maturation found that they would, you know, have higher sugar, which would then result in greater alcohol, which was really interesting. And we put that down to a more kind of compounds for the yeast to then eat, essentially and convert that to alcohol.



Janina Doyle 19:33

Okay, and then at the end, okay, so then you put all of these different pressed grapes into fermentation and then afterwards did you blend back in or did you make separate wines?



Jenni Middlehurst 19:43

So at the moment, they're just there's just sitting and chillin. We don't know yet. So we've just we've done all of our initial tests, and they're still kind of in their separate bottles. So it might be a really nice idea for us to blend them and see what which sort of pressings we would like and then to create a couple of bottles of our final wine, which would be lovely.



Janina Doyle 20:02

Love that. So what got you into winemaking in the first place? Because it's funny. We were chatting and actually currently you work in banking, don't you? So the wine, like many others has grabbed you. So what is it? I know you went into the harvest, didn't you last year in South Africa?



Jenni Middlehurst 20:19

Yes, that's right. I guess the luxury being working in banking is a lot of people will know this if they work in finance, is you spend a lot of time trying not to be in banking, spending a lot of time on holiday or away from the office or trying to travel or, you know, go to nice restaurants. So I think my love of wine really came from travelling, and going to some lovely places, and then just kind of getting involved with wine tastings or visiting you know, I've been to Napa. And I've just kind of been like, Yeah, why don't we wine taste when we're in Napa. And the romance and the history and the story and the whole kind of creating something from the land and making it into a product. It's just really beautiful. And the whole idea that it's very scientific, but also has got a bit of a creativeness to it, it's completely up my street as a scientist myself. So yeah, it was just all these kind of components came together. And a few years ago, I was looking for kind of like a new hobby or something to get interested in. I was exploring whether I wanted to do something more to do with food, because I have a big love for food. And eating it, I think more than cooking it actually.



Janina Doyle 21:27

Yes, okay, definitely. You're my soul sister in that. I can't be bothered to bake, just give it to me in a box and I'll shove it down my throat.



Jenni Middlehurst 21:33

Exactly, exactly. So then I decided to do the WSET journey really. Started that a couple of years ago, and just absolutely was hooked. And then anywhere that I wanted to go, I just wanted to do wine tasting ready. So the past, and it's not been very long, to be honest, for the past couple of years. Wherever I've gone, I've just done wine tasting. And it was not last year, but the year before the end of the year, I did a beautiful wine tasting trip in Priorat, in Spain, which is an incredible place to go and just so quiet as well and peaceful. And it was there that I met this lady and she kind of walked us through all the vines and she kind of explained the role of the winemaker, which I didn't really, I mean, I'd heard about the winemakers and their role, but then it was kind of when she started saying, Well, our winemaker that makes these types of decisions. And it's kind of feels like his wine. And I was like, You know what, that's really what I want to do because it brings together that science element, that creativeness and the wine and kind of a bit of a food element. And it brings everything a bit together really. And I think straightaway I got home, I looked at wine courses that I could take, found Plumpton and was like, this is right up my street, applied like three weeks later.



Janina Doyle 22:48

Brilliant and then started I guess. Okay, so when you're at Plumpton. I know that there's no such thing as a typical day on the course because you're learning so many different aspects. But what is it that you are doing inside the winery? Or what is it that, do you find the most interesting part of winemaking?



Jenni Middlehurst 23:01

Yeah, so I guess I guess the course is more theoretical than practical, but especially as well since the unfortunate event of Coronavirus. And that we would usually be going on a champagne trip next month. And that's been postponed. And we'd usually be out pruning in the vineyard, but we can't do that. So there's a lot of practical elements we've not been able to do, which is unfortunate. But the typical day is definitely more, we do do, usually in the mornings, we'd have a lecture which will go over you know, the chemistry of wine, or some of the vineyard growing techniques and those sorts of things. And then in the afternoon, we will then do a practical, so that might be sensory. So that might be tasting different wines and looking at how you would judge wines or how you would compare wines. Or we would be in the winery seeing some grapes get pressed. Or we would be in the lab and understanding how we would take out TA or different different sort of analysis that you can do. Or we'd be in the vineyard, do some picking and doing some you know, getting a little tour of what's going on.



Janina Doyle 24:04

What do you think is your favourite part?



Jenni Middlehurst 24:06

Um, I love it all really. Like I get really interested. I mean, yeah, for me, the most, the most interesting thing has been around the sensory side. Okay, so it's this perception of how people taste wine, and then what they think about that. So that's what my thesis is going to be on, it's around more of that sensory side, because I guess it links together some of the stuff that I've been doing around the tastings that I've been providing and getting, you know, doing a bit of wine education. And then the wine scientist in me, I guess.



Janina Doyle 24:36

Well, actually funny enough, you say that I started reading Cork Dork, the, I don't know what you'd call this kind of book. It's a girl that decides for one year she just wants to go

crazy and learn everything there is about wine, but of course she's a journalist and she's just she needs to know everything about everything. And there's a section on it that really talks about the, you should be able to tell me if I'm saying this correctly, the olfactory bulb. Did I say it correctly? Anyway, it's a myth that we actually don't smell things very well compared to animals and that this tiny little bulb at the front of our brain, and it's rubbish, and we can hardly smell anything. They have very recently been doing loads of tests, they've even done one that I thought was really interesting where they blindfolded humans, put them on all fours. And you had to chase like chocolate essence through a forest. And basically, they were doing this and comparing it to dogs. And we would basically doing things absolutely, to the same timing or to the same standard. And they think with all these different tests, should we be on all fours, which we wouldn't be, if we were on all fours more often and have the practice like dogs and rats, which are known to have these amazing sensory smelling abilities, we actually are far better than anyone has ever thought we've kind of been just told we just it's been dumbed down, like, No, we have rubbish smell, just get over it. And apparently, we have the same olfactory bulb, the same size as like a rat, well actually our brain being so much bigger, we're able to interpret the data in so many more ways. So that enhances our smell. But it just shows the research going into our senses and our smell. And certainly you don't just taste just on the tongue, there's a taste down the throat further down. There's like some tasting even apparently, in the stomach lining. A few other places, it was quite interesting. And this myth as well of just only sweetness on the front, and so on the side and whatever, there are so many tastebuds. So it'd be interesting to see where we are in 10/15 years with more and more science, just really understanding it. But yeah, sorry, carry on, you tell me why the sensory is so exciting.



Jenni Middlehurst 26:41

Yeah, and I mean, it's just that it's so we've done a few really interesting experiments where our tutor has laid out a kind of like 30 different boxes, and in with each of them, there's a strawberry or raspberry or banana, or Kiwi or pineapple, lots of different fruits, and also flowers and Herbs. And we'd have to go through and smell them and see what we could detect. And it's those sorts of things of like creating that muscle memory of your senses. Yeah, to me, it's just so interesting. Absolutely. And it's a real skill to have as well. And then we've done lots of analysis where we've had two different wines in the same wine in front of us. But we've had one that contains a little bit more salt or a little bit more sugar. And we've had to see if we can then detect the difference because as a winemaker, you need to be able to detect faults, essentially. So it's just seeing if we can detect that slightly difference in taste and training ourselves to do that, which is just amazing.



Janina Doyle 27:39

For me for anyone who's interested as well I got a many years ago Le Nez Du Vin, spelt Le Nez Du Vin for anyone who's who wants to search that.



Jenni Middlehurst 27:48

Are they the little aroma kits?



Janina Doyle 27:49

Yea really expensive unfortunately, they're not cheap. But when I got mine, I got it through eBay, somebody who had obviously got bought after the first year. So that was useful, but they're so handy just because you know, get a bottle, shove it under your nose and get smelling and they have done again, it said it in my Cork Dork book that just by smelling the same aroma two or three times a day for a few weeks, you can completely train your brain to identify that scent. But same thing, go on walks, lick wet stones, smell acacia flowers, get right in your dog poo, stick your nose right in there. Perfect.



Jenni Middlehurst 28:25

Yeah, exactly, it is that. It's about training yourself. And you don't have to, you can, the aroma sets are wonderful. But you can just be really mindful when you're eating or drinking. And it's just that constant, kind of like I'm gonna keep trying keep learning and keep getting better. And what I love about the sensory component as well is that when you're tasting wine, all your senses are working, right? So wine to me is quite different where you can be drinking a glass of wine and not just drinking it. When you taste it properly. You're looking at it, you're smelling it, you're tasting, you're touching it, you're trying to identify the texture of it. So it's everything about that wine takes your whole kind of focus and I just find it quite an immersive quite calming experience almost.



Janina Doyle 29:06

You know what, this is so funny because, I'm going to refer back to the Cork Dork again but...



Jenni Middlehurst 29:14

Do you know what somebody recommended it to me last week. You are the second person in the week so I have to now read it.



Janina Doyle 29:19

Well it's only because I'm actually rereading this part right now. It's so perfect timing but you know how you've probably heard that people sometimes say oh yeah, professional wine tasters or whatever, it's all a sham because if you put a red wine and white wine at the same temperature and a black glass, many wine experts and wine professionals have literally started describing, for a white wine with red fruit flavours things like that. You know it's seems very interesting that our mind when you see something we can come up with other flavours. So of course, oh, you know people are frauds... whatever. Well, anyway, they did a test on the brain sensory, I think was something like an MRI scan or some other tests where the brain was able to light up with them doing things, and they got a whole load of professional wine Sommeliers and wine tasters to smell some wine, whilst they tested them. And then they took the average consumer who happens to drink wine. And they were able to see that in the brain for the professional wine tasters, their brain was lighting up so much more than the average. So what was happening in the brain, it was stimulating all these different responses and all these nerves and everything were just going crazy. Isn't that interesting?



Jenni Middlehurst 30:31

That's amazing.



Janina Doyle 30:32

So okay, yes. When you put something in the same colour glass at the same temperature, people can get confused and tricked. But you can't turn around and say that wine experts and wine professionals with their knowledge and their understanding of smells, aromas, and texture and structure, that they don't know what's going on. It's a I guess, a different type of intelligence. You, it's a muscle, your training muscles in your brain, they can see that. Yeah, very cool. Yeah, I think that's amazing. Okay, so that's it. That's your thesis? What's going to be the question of that thesis?



Jenni Middlehurst 30:59

So I've got to keep it relatively under wraps. But it could be I know, I know. But it will be something to do with perceptions in different contexts. So where you are might influence how you taste wine, or what how wine tastes. I'll leave it at that. Very vague and mysterious.

- J** Janina Doyle 31:17
So I am hoping that by the end of this the amount of tasting and absolute focus you're putting on, you are going to become a super taster then. You're going to be able to identify every fault, every little scent right?
- J** Jenni Middlehurst 31:27
I'm hoping so that I mean, that's that's the...
- J** Janina Doyle 31:29
Superpower!
- J** Jenni Middlehurst 31:30
Exactly. Because I'm also doing my diploma. So I'm hoping combined, they'll kind of really complement each other so that then I'll be able to go into be also, you know, that said, very good at tasting.
- J** Janina Doyle 31:40
Do you know, Funny enough, they came out it was recently in the wine news, you know, Harper's or Drinks business that they have discovered with clingfilm that you can take out TCA, trichloroanisole. So for anybody, that's the fault that creates that cocked, yucky wet cardboardy smell in wine, that's horrible. So yeah, apparently with clingfilm, you can take it out.
- J** Jenni Middlehurst 32:04
I've seen that as well, which is really interesting.
- J** Janina Doyle 32:06
They haven't gone into too much detail, but it's been proven they've done the tests, they have said, it is clingfilm, but it's not like the standard clingfilm that we buy in the supermarkets. Apparently not. Although I do say, I haven't tried this yet, because I haven't had a corked wine since. Anybody do give it a go. There's no harm, running your wine through clingfilm now, maybe it could do something. But basically, it's a type of clingfilm that they're using in wineries. And you can put the whole wine, I could take a whole barrel

and put it through that. And it will take out the TCA. And it doesn't affect too much the alcohol, the acidity, the other chemical components. And whenever there is a little difference, it has extracted a little bit, but not enough for actually anyone to worry about, or for you to just throw the wine out because it's gone. But that's about when you identify like a whole barrel has TCA as opposed to just one bottle. But if they've discovered that already, that will be a very, very handy thing, then presumably what in a few years time maybe we will be able to buy little squares, little strips of cling film TCA remover or something that you could put on a bottle and just as you pour into a decanter, put it on the top and clean it completely, maybe?



Jenni Middlehurst 33:16

Yeah, and there's there's so much innovation as well coming into the world of wine, which is really cool. And for me, it's about that balance, because it's really cool. We've got some innovation, but at the same time, I think it's just so wonderful when you want the grapes to taste of where they come from, and you want that minimal intervention. So there's, there's definitely a balance of, you don't want to you know, choke it with sulphur or have some crazy, you know, innovative things are going on. But that's one of our new modules. We've just started this term as well as around innovation in the winery and in the vineyard. So quite cool to start learning about these sorts of things.



Janina Doyle 33:50

What have you learned about so far there in terms of innovation?



Jenni Middlehurst 33:53

You are really quizzing me today?



Janina Doyle 33:56

Tell us everything. You're the font of knowledge for Plumpton college students.



Jenni Middlehurst 34:00

Oh God?.



Janina Doyle 34:01

No pressure! All pressure! Come on, tell me, tell us everything.



Jenni Middlehurst 34:04

So we had a lecture just last week, which was really interesting on some of the different things in the winery that you can use. And there was this really, we all have this idea of a Squarrel. So I don't know whether you've heard of that, which is like a square barrel.



Janina Doyle 34:18

Oh, that's amazing. I was like, Did she just say Squirrel wrong? A Squarrel, a square barrel? I quite like that. They haven't been like so they've created something innovative, but they haven't been innovative with the name. They're like it's square and it's a barrel: Squarrel, that will do. That's brilliant. Okay, a square barrel.



Jenni Middlehurst 34:37

And essentially, if you can imagine, they are basically majority of them, I think they're metal or they're some sort of maybe stainless steel, but they're metal and then they have half of them are kind of got wooden planks so you can replace the planks, and they're stackable as well. So from a storage perspective...



Janina Doyle 34:55

Saving space.



Jenni Middlehurst 34:57

and from a cleaning perspective, they're much easier. And yeah, they're much more useful. Our lecturer was saying that they're they're really good. I mean, they're quite an investment, but not just too dissimilar from how much you would pay for a normal kind of French oak barrel. But they offer it, such a space saving component. So yeah, that was really interesting.



Janina Doyle 35:16

Have you seen one?



Jenni Middlehurst 35:17

No, I've just seen a picture. But I would love to see them. But yeah, that really kind of blew my mind. I was like, Wow, that's really cool. Because I was like, that seems quite

traditional. And quite, it doesn't seem too far out that it would be weird. You know what I mean?



Janina Doyle 35:29

Well, I suppose now, winemakers are really playing around with concrete eggs. They're taking Amphoras again. Yeah, even glass. They're ageing in glass now. It's, everyone's looking at different ways to age and how it affects the wine. So yeah, okay. I'm definitely down with a Squarrel. Okay, good stuff. What else, what else?



Jenni Middlehurst 35:52

And they've also got things like drones, as well. So drones that can then map the vineyards and look at differences and of like, how the vineyard water usage is used. And you know, you can map all sorts of different things. Yeah, there's some stuff that's going on that is exciting. And I think it will be cool for the English wine scene because there's so much innovation going on within the UK because we're such a new kind of resurging country sort of thing.



Janina Doyle 36:20

I think that is something that people really need to understand about England, whereas France and Italy and Spain, they'd be making this incredible wine forever, but they've also got their PDOs, their PGI, their specific regions that have to follow all the specific rules, and in theory that can make better wine, but it also means it makes the same ish wine, whereas we have that ability to explore and go crazy. As an example, you're drinking Blackbook. They're making a red wine, which is a Cabernet Noir, which is a crossing a really, really interesting acrossing they don't know one of the crossings though. It's I don't know if it's a secret or whatever, but it came that's really interesting. Simpsons who of course, I'm drinking right now. They've created the Derringstone, which I haven't tasted yet. And I really want to, which is the first Blanc de Noir still, you know, it's the first white wine from Pinot Meunier, which of course, is a red grape. So that's only £19 a bottle. I say only, you know...



Jenni Middlehurst 37:17

Yeah, still, it's still on the end of, but comparing some of the, you know, french wines and stuff. Yeah.



Janina Doyle 37:24

Hush heath, who were one of my wineries of the week in one of my other English wine episodes. They have recently done a Pinot Noir Nouveau which I was so lucky. I was so lucky to have tasted, it was insane. It was so fun, interesting, pure, concentrated. Lovely luscious, red fruits but then with this real coffee chocolate mocha edge because they put it in like new barrels for like, just a few weeks. So again, you talk about winemaking techniques, even that decision of how long does the wine go in a barrel and is it new oak or not? And how that will affect the flavours at the end, is actually super interesting.



Jenni Middlehurst 38:02

Yeah and what type of oak as well? So you've got, French oak, Hungarian, Slovenian, America and all the different types of oak: cherry oak you can even go for if you wanted to.



Janina Doyle 38:13

Cherry oak now? Is that becoming more popular, Hungarian is. I know Hungarian is a little bit more. Have you tasted specific wines looking at American oak versus French oak?



Jenni Middlehurst 38:23

No we haven't specifically, we just know technically what they should taste like. So you've got your American should have a little bit more of your kind of vanilla flavours and maybe some coconut as well or as your French oak will be a little bit more integrated, potentially because the pores are a little bit smaller. So that's that's just it's just those sorts of things, but we've not done any tasting yet.



Janina Doyle 38:43

Well, to be honest, they were saying that American out you said like the coconut and vanilla. It should also taste like dill. The dill herb. I'm always like can I smell any dill? I haven't quite got that yet. That's I think a sense that I don't get I think I'm missing dill.



Jenni Middlehurst 38:56

Oh I need to see that if I pick up dill. I don't think I've tested for Dill.



Janina Doyle 38:59

Okay. Right note to self: Must test for dill with the next like Napa Cab that you have. Let me know if you taste any dill because I'm just, I struggle with dill. But no, I think it's really interesting. And it is I would say that sweeter style. You do get don't you from your American, your Napa, Napa Cabs and your Riojas if they're the more traditional style.



Jenni Middlehurst 39:19

I was going to say on your Riojas aswell you get that.



Janina Doyle 39:21

But then you get this more kind of, I always get like a dark chocolate shards and even a bit more coffee and black pepper. I get that kind of just a bit more savoury with French oak.



Jenni Middlehurst 39:30

Yes, what's been really interesting to learn about as well as that winemakers typically won't really know I mean, unless they've been to that area and done a season or done a harvest in that wine country, they wouldn't know, you know, you're quite specific in your field, right? So if you work in the UK, you'd be very used to a lot of the techniques and the stuff that goes on in the UK wine industry. Whereas if you're in France, it will be very different probably individual regions as well. So it's very specific as to what you may know. So um, yeah, and there's a lot of chemistry as well, that's involved that we're told we kind of need to be aware of, but we don't need to know it off by heart, essentially.



Janina Doyle 40:08

When you're making premium wines, the whole point is to be very hands off, to do very little, pick the grapes, press it, ferment it, hopefully with wild yeast and don't even add anything in you know, it's no additions at all, isn't it and then don't even add any sulphur. But it's these cheaper wines, a five pound bottle of wine, which is very interesting, you know, when you start using, I don't know, gum arabic and adding in the acidity. And I mean, have you played around with a lot of additives that you can put into wine?



Jenni Middlehurst 40:36

Not practically because again, we've been a bit limited to what we can do with covid. But

we did do a really interesting project. And that's one of the things I can definitely say is a lot of the assessments we've had to do a really been really interesting and more research based. But our last assessment that we had was around creating a wine production plan for a specific type of white wine. So we got given a style of white wine and dry whites. And we've got given all different grape varieties with all of the TA's, the Brix readings, which is the sugar, and all of the different kinds of like how much they, you know how much they harvested, when they harvested. And then we had to put together a wine production plan including all the costs and financials of how much it would cost. So you know, any yeasts that you would use, any you know your nutritions. So any of your DAP. Don't ask me what it means. I just know and understand. It's definitely a nutrition for the yeast to kick it off. But any of the kind of things that we'll be using. So if you're using bentonite as a fining agent, if you're using any filtration, if you're doing any settling or clarification. It's really interesting to go through as a winemaker like, Okay, I've got these grapes, what would I do, and to go through that thought process, and to also then weigh up, what you think would be okay, from a financial point of view as well. So it's like, I could put it in oak. But the specification says it needs to be crisp and refreshing. So actually, do I want to do that? And do I want to do Malolactic fermentation? Probably not, because that's going to make it more rounder and creamier. And now, I'm not sure if that would work. So it was really interesting to go through all of these different decisions that you would have as a winemaker and actually work out what you would do.

J

Janina Doyle 42:24

Yeah. I've just been filling out very boring data forms from my work every single wine, you know, of course, the typical things: what finding agent has been used? Is there any eggs? Is there any fish? Is there any animal products used? Are they vegan? Are they vegetarian? And just very, very simply doing all these boring tick boxes, but you realise all the different types of additives that can go into a wine, of course affect that end result, right? You know, a lot of people don't even realise that a wine could be vegan or not vegan. And it's very often not just wine.

J

Jenni Middlehurst 42:56

Yeah. And you're completely right, though, I think with where you've got the premium styles of wine, you're going to get less editions and less interfering with the wine but where you've got cheaper bulk wine, there's going to be more additions, it might not necessarily be vegan or vegetarian. And they may have a higher sulphur concentration, and especially as well with where, unfortunately, if you have a year, which has got, you know more rot or disease, then again, you're going to have to have higher levels of sulphur or additions to compensate for slightly damaged or diseased grapes.



Janina Doyle 43:28

Absolutely, well, it's funny all of our wines in our portfolio, they start from, say £6/7 a bottle and then got to £50. And the lowest level always, when I literally go through range to range, the lowest quality grapes always have the most sulphur in, because they're just not healthy enough and strong enough to be able to stay in a bottle for years without any of the preservatives. That's basically what it is. And the other thing funny enough, it's very interesting, as you're saying that, a lot of our lower end wines are not suitable for vegans or vegetarians, and I asked the winemaker. So why is that but yet our premium is. Very simply, they clarify with some pork gelatine and that's because they have a machine to do the clarifying or fining, however you want to call it, and it just whizzes it through really, really quickly. So it's super, super efficient for high volume wines. So it's not, so they don't want to have to really use an animal product, it doesn't actually affect the wine or the flavour or anything in any way. So of course, why would you not make a vegan wine if you can? Well simply money and time. Shove it in this machine that has to have something like pork gelatine to make it efficient, and that's the reason. So I thought you know, it is true, isn't it for, if you are a wine lover, you are far more likely to get no additives and vegan at that premium level, aren't you?



Jenni Middlehurst 44:50

Yeah, exactly that, exactly that.



Janina Doyle 44:52

Clean living. And don't get me started on the healthiness of wine because I read every article that's on how healthy it is and how I'm not gonna have any heart attacks and stuff. And I'm like, Yes, yes, I'm doing it. The tannins, the resveratrol. It's gonna save my life.



Jenni Middlehurst 45:06

We're all joking to ourselves, right?



Janina Doyle 45:08

Well, as long as you have a 125ml glass with your meal, and that's obviously where sometimes I go a little bit over. You know, in Sardinia, they have the oldest generation of people and they swear by the fact that they all drink delicious, amazing Cannonau, which is also kind of a different version of Grenache. And with the tannins, a very, very intense and obviously, that resveratrol that we're talking about, is what they like to say, along

with, you know, walking a lot and hills and lovely sunshine, is partly the reason why they live so long. So, you know.

J Jenni Middlehurst 45:41
Yeah all in moderation, right?

J Janina Doyle 45:43
It is all in moderation. Unfortunately, though, I'm drinking white wine. So I can't necessarily say that this is, this is helping my mental health. So I mean, depends on how I look at it, right? Oh, for everybody who wants to know about this wine? I think it's really pretty. This is £14.99. So again, in English wine context, this is not very expensive. I haven't seen a branded wine. I've seen one or two supermarket own brands that you know, that work with wineries that are less than £10, but generally, it's not really possible to get a £10 wine or less in England at present.

J Jenni Middlehurst 46:15
You can have Denbies, I think around the £10. That's the lowest I think I've seen.

J Janina Doyle 46:19
And Denbies, I mean, the volume that they can produce. Well now Chapel Down has beaten them in terms of when they bought the last vineyards. Now they're the biggest winery, but Denbies was before, but they are one of the largest, aren't they? So yes, if you're looking for an affordable wine, that's actually good Denbie's are fab for that. And this one, I don't know if they've used any oak on it. It smells like this a touch but it could be that they've done some bâtonnage, some lees stirring, there you go another winemaking technique that, I've done before, which I find really fun. When I made some wine in 2018. I don't know I just imagined the bâtonnage, mixing up of lees was some, of course some French person with a really big spoon, just sticking it into a barrel and just swirling it around and whatever. Well obviously when you think about a barrel that's on its side, it's got this tiny little hole hasn't it at the top, it's like you can't stick a spoon in there. So I was really shocked by seeing this contraption, we use a metal contraption. And it basically, you shove it in and then it opens out. And then it it's like a metal helicopter arm sort of thing. And then you just you know, you just dance around with it and you move it around and then because it's got these little arms, they just kind of touch all the lees and then they move gently. And then of course it's fun just trying to get it out because of course you got to try and get those arms back up but I thought that was so much fun, so they're,

really you know, wasn't quite as romantic as my my French person with a beautiful long wooden spoon but um, yeah, bâtonnage... I think this has got some lees ageing. And it's just, yeah, it's got this really soft creaminess. It's got much picture as it's warmed up since we've started the podcast. Before it was really kind of limey, really kind of seemed quite zesty and like a real direct like attack of a Chardonnay, but it's seeming to have got rounder and softer now. It's it's definitely not as like a mineral and flinty as their top wine as their Roman Road Chardonnay, but I wouldn't I wouldn't expect that. That's like 20 - like £25 a bottle. This is £15 so it's £10 cheaper, but lovely. Actually, it's to be honest, It's grapefruit, lime, quite soft, quite textural. But it's quite Zippy. If somebody didn't know you could definitely say it's Chablis in style, which again doesn't surprise me with the soils.



Jenni Middlehurst 48:27

Yeah, I would say my Simpsons Chardonnay that I had which was the Gravel Castle was delicious. But yeah, very Chablis-esque and very kind of, as you said zippy and limey. And just fresh and just gorgeous to be honest. Just super drinkable. And I think I drank quite a lot of it in one sitting to be honest. Dangerous.



Janina Doyle 48:45

Well, we've just talked about that. That's not healthy remember. Where's your 125ml glass?



Jenni Middlehurst 48:49

Exactly. I have to be very careful.



Janina Doyle 48:52

Oh, that's funny. Well, I have to say when people can travel again, I hope the people who are listening that are outside of England as well will come to England and actually go on wine tours. So many of these wineries are now set up for such amazing tours. I have not been to Simpsons Wine Estate yet and I do plan to because, do you know they have a Helter Skelter?



Jenni Middlehurst 49:15

What?



Janina Doyle 49:16

Uhhh Yes!



Jenni Middlehurst 49:17

That's the biggest reason to go right. Well, apart from the wine.



Janina Doyle 49:25

They basically have this, it's two floors. I believe that the winery is on the ground floor and the tasting room is on the second floor. So after you finish your tasting and you're like hey, I want to leave or I guess maybe see the winery. I'm not quite sure exactly what part. You're like: Bye everyone! And you go down what they call the Fruit chute. I love it. I mean, I ask all my wonderful wine friends around the world. Have you been to a winery with a Helter Skelter slide, I'm just just saying just putting it out there. That sort of thing exists in England. So...



Jenni Middlehurst 49:59

This level of innovation that, you know people want.



Janina Doyle 50:02

yeah. I think I think Simpsons are certainly a winery to look out for. I mean, these guys have had nearly 20 years of experience making wine in France. And then they brought that to here. So I think the English wine industry is still very young. And a lot of people are still finding their feet and actually playing around, which is actually what's going to move as so much further forward. But certainly, if you get somebody with all that experience, coming straight in and being really particular about what sites, what clones, how they make it, the finest equipment they possibly can, analysing like crazy, you know, you're going to get some pretty good stuff. And then you can go down a slide. That's the conclusion.



Jenni Middlehurst 50:37

Yeah. And then I've had their rosé as well and that is beautiful. That is lovely. Their rosé is gorgeous. It's very provincial, very just just stunning to be honest. I loved it.



Janina Doyle 50:49

Yeah. And it comes with the Vinolok.



Jenni Middlehurst 50:51

Oh, I didn't have a Vinolok on mine.



Janina Doyle 50:52

No?



Jenni Middlehurst 50:53

I think there was a couple of different types. But the one I had didn't it was just from, I think I picked it up from Waitrose, and it just had a grey cap.



Janina Doyle 51:00

Oh, oh well. The wine was still delicious. But yeah, shame. It happens.



Jenni Middlehurst 51:07

I'd have loved a Vinolok.



Janina Doyle 51:10

They look so elegant. But yeah, their top rosé, they use the Vinolok and I think it's really really pretty. Right, well, Okay. I have one more question for you. I just want to find out if when you work in in South Africa, even here in the winery and Plumpton college, any disasters anything either we should know about?



Jenni Middlehurst 51:32

There was a there was a couple of scrapes and a couple of knocks.



Janina Doyle 51:34

Oh accidents, like human accidents?



Jenni Middlehurst 51:37

Yeah. Human accidents. Yeah. I mean, working in a winery is manual labour. And it's tough work. And you're dealing with big machineries and heavy stuff. And I feel sorry for the guys that have been, had me in South Africa because they know that I'm a bit, I'm a little bit clumsy.



Janina Doyle 51:52

What did you do?



Jenni Middlehurst 51:54

Well, I just I was doing something and I just walked into a tank. What do they call? It's not even that glamorous. There's a little thing that sticks out, which is where you can sometimes draw the wine from.



Janina Doyle 52:06

Like a tap, should we call it a tap? That's a pretty, I'm pretty sure it's called a tap that so funny. You know, when you're trying to be like too fancy, you know, nah it's just a tap. Yeah. Okay.



Jenni Middlehurst 52:15

I think it could have just been a tap. So there was a tap on the side, which, it was a very small tap and was just stuck out and very, very scratchy. Anyway, I was moving around this other barrel and those pipes everywhere. And I was, you know, going to get a hose and I just accidentally scraped this massive line across my shoulder, which is scarred. It's still there today.



Janina Doyle 52:34

Oh your own little winery tattoo.



Jenni Middlehurst 52:36

Yeah, that's exactly which is quite lovely. And I think I'm gonna put like a little Table Mountain tattoo over it, which would be quite cute. But I just went straight into the lab and was like, Sorry, I've hurt myself again.



Janina Doyle 52:45

Again, They are like: Urgh! Don't have her back next year. When I was doing harvest. One time I was working in, which many wineries have, they have these like little experimentation areas, you know, part in the winery where you're making wines and making blends that no one will ever see. It's just, you know, for the winemaker to see if something might work. And so I was literally, it's not glamorous at all taking bunches of grapes and putting them in like little plastic bags, and literally stepping on them with my feet so that I could just like get them all crushed. And so I could get them into like a little plastic bottle. You know, like the plastic bottles that the water bottles that you have in an office, you put it upside down and then you can press the button and the water comes out. We use using them that size because literally the quantity of grapes was so small these that you know one little row. And that was going to be what was going to make a few bottles of wine sort of thing. And then they were going to test that and see. Anyway, we needed to put, before doing kind of fermentation, I needed to put in some dry ice.



Jenni Middlehurst 53:40

Cool them down and all that sort of thing.



Janina Doyle 53:42

Absolutely. And I put the bung that, like there's like a little rubber bung that we were using, often for anyone who's interested, that's what they kind of shove into a barrel. And I put that into the top of it and carried all these bottles into the fridge. I needed to get them out then so we could start doing the fermentation process. And I picked up one looked down at it, obviously because that's what happens when you pick up a bottle and the bung just shot into my eye literally, like with so much power. No one had obviously ever told me that there could be some buildup of I guess carbon dioxide or anything or just pressure. And it hit me so hard. And I remember thinking, oh my god, like what if I go blind? I mean, I'm a I'm a drama queen at the best of times, but I'm literally within like two minutes I was able to open up my eye and I didn't even get a black eye. So I think I was an absolute hypochondriac. But nonetheless, I was just like, wow. Ummm accidents definitely happen in wineries, for sure.



Jenni Middlehurst 54:40

Yeah they do. But it's just one of those things. And I think you talk to anybody and if there's something that, you know went wrong, I'm very fortunate that I didn't fall in a tank or fall in a press. Because we did make the joke that if you fall in the press and you died

and the winery has to close for five days, so it's like well if one of you dies we will get five days off. That joke was made.

J Janina Doyle 55:03
Is that the rule in South Africa?

J Jenni Middlehurst 55:05
That was the rule from what I'm aware of.

J Janina Doyle 55:08
Yeah, that's nice. You get 5 days of respect.

J Jenni Middlehurst 55:11
Yeah well, you have to clean or whatever. I don't know.

J Janina Doyle 55:15
Maybe people are still working. They're just actually, you know, carrying out.... Okay, let's not talk about that. It sounds funny, but I'm sure not funny if it's happened to anyone who knows of someone. Anyway, moving on quite swiftly. Jenni, thank you so much just for sharing just a little bit about Plumpton college. I think it's amazing. I'll probably do a little bit of research on Plumpton college and let people know some details and bits and bobs if they're interested in going to.... Can people visit? Imagine if if we were all back in....

J Jenni Middlehurst 55:40
You can do short course. So they do a whole heap of short courses. So there's some smaller courses that you can do for one or two weeks just on the principles of winemaking or principles of grape growing. They also do some wine business courses. You can also go to an opening day they have a couple of years. There's a few ways that you can go and visit them for sure. And you can buy their wines as well from from, Waitrose is stocking their wines aswell.

J Janina Doyle 56:03
That will probably be Waitrose Cellar though won't it because I imagine they're not...

- J** Jenni Middlehurst 56:06
Exactly which is online.
- J** Janina Doyle 56:07
Awesome. That's amazing and I haven't tasted any Plumptions wine. So I probably should, would they be made by students or have they got an in house winemaker from somewhere?
- J** Jenni Middlehurst 56:17
They have a Head Winemaker that looks after all of the students, but the students will probably contribute, not the master students because we're not as hands on. But the bachelor students for sure would be, would be involved.
- J** Janina Doyle 56:27
Okay, there we go, a bit of a kind of community feel then as well with people go for a Plumpton bottle and we look forward to seeing how your orange wine comes on. And if we see on the market that we know that you guys did all right.
- J** Jenni Middlehurst 56:38
Yeah. 10 to 15 bottles will be selling pretty damn high.
- J** Janina Doyle 56:43
Absolutely. £1000 a bottle because they're so limited. Yeah, I won't be purchasing one. Sorry about that. Bless you. Thank you ever so much, Jenni. Really, really appreciate it. And I shall carry on enjoying my wine. I think of you whilst you're drinking your rosé and maybe at some point we shall share a bottle together. That's the dream.
- J** Jenni Middlehurst 57:01
Yes, absolutely. Thank you so much for having me. It's been wonderful. Great to chat about wine.

J Janina Doyle 57:06
Have a very good night. Cheers.

J Jenni Middlehurst 57:09
Thanks. Bye.

J Janina Doyle 57:13
So after chatting with Jenny online, Harper's did an interview with Ana Đogić who is one of the winemakers at Plumpton college. And she made a comment on working with barrels. Now she said: "In the last four years, I've started to work with bigger barrels from 500 litre to foudres of 1700 litres. And I'm delighted with the results. Big barrels allow slow micro oxidation and in combination with leaving the wine on its lees without sulphur addition results in complex layered and structured wines." I just think it's fascinating all the different types of oak barrels you could use, and of course, all the different types of vessels, whether it be amphoras, whether it be cement tanks, whether you use glass, they all affect the wine in different ways. So if anybody wants to know a little bit more about those effects on the wine, go across to patreon.com/EatSleepWineRepeat, where there are extension episodes of all of these podcasts. And on this specific episode, I am going to be looking at the different types of ageing vessels and their effect on wine. It's simply a couple of quid a month. It massively helps support me for all the editing, time and the money that goes into the production of these podcasts. So come across and join the Patreon team. I would love to see you there. So this brings me to the end of the podcast and you know, that means it's wine quote, time. And this one I love. It's an ancient winemakers proverb, and it says:

J Janina Doyle 58:44
"Give a man a bottle and he will drink for a day. Teach a man to make wine, and he will always have lots of friends."

J Janina Doyle 58:53
Wine has always helped me with making lots of friends and that's one of my favourite parts. Thank you, as always for listening to these episodes for sharing them for liking them for leaving me any comments. It's really appreciated. And so until another episode, cheers to you.

