

TÊTE-À-TÊTE WITH... DR. JOHN PARR



Dr. John Parr – Former Dentist,
Fine wine lover & organiser of
the 1st Cheltenham Wine

How did you fall in love with wine?

I have been a dentist for 30 years but bought some 1985 Bordeaux in my 20s. That was a revelation. I started reading about Bordeaux and was hooked by the history and stories surrounding the wine. I have also been fascinated by the wine's evolution, ever growing in complexity as I tasted through the case over time.

When I arrived in Cheltenham, I attended a Wine evening class with other wine enthusiasts, tasted wines from all around the world and discovered wine wasn't just a drink, but an education. I haven't stopped learning since.

How did you become the organiser of the Cheltenham Wine Festival?

I am currently completing the WSET Level 4 Diploma and wanted to organise a Wine Festival featuring a Grand Tasting to inspire other wine lovers to become more adventurous in their choices.

With thousands of places and styles to discover, I find it a shame that so many wine lovers lack the confidence to break free from the usual brands and price points.

The opportunity to organise the Festival came up thanks to a local Rotary Club. All profits will go to local charities including Macmillan Cancer Support and Kidney Research UK.

'I want to inspire other wine lovers to become more adventurous in their choices'

Most Wine Events tend to be in London these days. Why Cheltenham?

I attend 20 to 30 trade wine tastings in London a year and each one is an inspirational experience that reinforces my passion for wine.

However, there are very few, if any, sizeable wine tasting organised outside London. I felt that a dedicated wine festival would be a perfect fit in Cheltenham's busy calendar and a great opportunity to bring wines of interest to all the wine lovers living in Cheltenham, the Cotswolds and beyond.

What are your ambitions for the Festival this year and beyond?

We want to ensure that this year's visitors enjoy themselves, have a memorable fine wine experience and leave wanting to come back with (more of) their friends next year!

The 2016 Grand Wine Tasting sold out in only four weeks this year so we are already planning a move to the Regency splendour of the Pittville Pump Room in Cheltenham in 2017 where we will be able to welcome over 400 wine lovers.

What will Festival goers get to taste/experience during the Festival?

Wine lovers will taste and enjoy over 250 premium wines from some of the world best wine regions showcased by 20 leading independent wine merchants from the Cotswolds and beyond. There will be hundreds of interesting and characterful wines from France, Italy, Spain, Australia, New Zealand, South Africa, Chile, Argentina, USA and more. It will be a wonderful chance to taste discover and learn about different wine styles, grape varieties, the people and places behind them from the wine experts exhibiting.

The £20-ticket also includes a complementary tasting glass. We have a Grand Charity Raffle and are pleased to have a signed copy of Jancis Robinson's award-winning book 'Wine Grapes' as a prize, alongside many more great prizes.

The 2016 Grand Wine Tasting will showcase 250 wines from 20 independent wine merchants

If you were a wine, what would you be? Why?

A wine of outstanding quality obviously! Produced from a grape variety that likes the sun, warm weather and a beautiful vineyard setting, like me, so a Syrah from Hermitage in the Northern Rhône, France would fit the bill, I think.

What's your favourite Tittle?

Generally, I like quality wines wherever they are from but wines made from indigenous grape varieties are particular favourites especially the food friendly wines of Italy.

For under £10, I love the Syrah blends from the Southern Rhône like the [Domaine des Pasquiers - Côtes du Rhône 13](#) (£9.95 @ [Talking Wines](#)).

My desert island wine would be a sweet wine from Sauternes, a wine to meditate over if ever there was one! Chateau d'Yquem if you are buying!



STOP PRESS! DON'T MISS OUT A CHANCE TO GET ONE OF THE LAST TWO TICKETS !

The Festival is SOLD OUT but TittleTips readers can still enter a free draw for a chance to WIN 2 TICKETS to the The Cheltenham Wine Festival on Sat 14th of May 2016 by sending their full name to enter@cheltenhamwinefestival.com before 30th of April 2016 (Terms & conditions on festival website)