

# Circle Update

April 2010



**INSIDE THIS ISSUE**    Temptations from Turkey to Tooting    Unique Napa Valley wines    Good news and bad on Bordeaux 2009

# Circle Update is the newsletter of the Circle of Wine Writers

It is published five times a year: March, May, July, October and December  
(in 2010, 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary year, February, April, June, August, October, December)

Editor: Jim Budd

34 Frobisher Court, Sydenham Rise, London SE23 3XH

tel: 020-8699 3173 Skype: gymbudd email: budmac@btinternet.com

Deputy editor: Liz Sagues liz@sagues.force9.co.uk

**Circle Update** is available to external subscribers for £60 a year. The Circle's membership list is available in various media from £95. A special joint package of the membership list with frequent emailed updates through the year and a year's subscription to **Circle Update** is available from £135. These options can be viewed at [www.winewriters.org](http://www.winewriters.org). For more information, please contact Andrea Warren (see below). Membership enquiries should also be directed to her.

## Circle Officers

**Julie Arkell** (Chair) 01277-354531 [julie.arkell@btinternet.com](mailto:julie.arkell@btinternet.com)

**Neville Blech** (Treasurer) 020-7589 6722 [Neville@bacchusandcomus.com](mailto:Neville@bacchusandcomus.com)

**Natasha Hughes** (Secretary) 020-7274 1224 [natasha@natashahughes.com](mailto:natasha@natashahughes.com)

**Christine Austin** (Membership Secretary) 01904-612107

[christine@christineaustin.co.uk](mailto:christine@christineaustin.co.uk)

**Stephen Brook** 020-7328 1001 [s.brook93@ntlworld.com](mailto:s.brook93@ntlworld.com)

(Stephen Brook is the programme secretary assisted by Tim Atkin MW, Jim Budd and Charles Metcalfe)

**John Radford** (Circle trips liaison) 07886-247132 [john@johnradford.com](mailto:john@johnradford.com)

**Stuart Walton** (web maestro) 01273-684218 [stuartinbrighton@O2.co.uk](mailto:stuartinbrighton@O2.co.uk)

## Committee members

**David Furer, Hervé Lalau, Patrica Langton, Lindsay Oram, Maggie Rosen**

**Andrea Warren** (Circle administrator)

01753-882320 [andrea.warren@btinternet.com](mailto:andrea.warren@btinternet.com)

## Contents

April 2010

Issue 96

Julie Arkell: chairman's report	3	Susan Hulme MW discovers Turkish delights	15-20
Jim Budd: after the <i>en primeur</i> hype	4	Sagi Cooper on a desert storm	21
Members' news	5-7	Books	22-23
The views on benefits	8-9	Other news: obituaries, media news with Arkwright's Corner, trade notices	24-29
Forthcoming Circle events	8	Noticed on the net	29-30
Circle tastings	9-10	Investment news	31-32
Jim Budd on AOC cultural thoughts	11-12	Your diary	33-37
Hugo Dunn-Meynell is tempted to Tooting	12		
More of Per Karlsson's photos	13-14		

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## Featured photographer:

This issue's featured photographer is Per Karlsson.

Per is the visual half of BKWine, the text-photo-travel business that he runs together with his wife Britt. They work with numerous specialist magazines to provide both articles and photography. In parallel they run a niche wine travel activity, showing wine enthusiasts and wine professionals the behind-the-scenes in the wine regions. They have written two books: on *Languedoc Wines*, and on *Vine Growing and Wine Making*. Per's latest project is BKWine TV (<http://www.youtube.com/bkwine>), a video channel on YouTube with interviews with winemakers.

You can see more of Per's photos on his one-photo-a-day blog <http://wine-pictures.blogspot.com/> or on his stock photo site <http://www.bkwinephotography.com>

*Front cover:* the Bourse in Bordeaux

*Back cover:* hand-sorting Merlot in Saint-Emilion

Membership of the Circle of Wine Writers ([www.winewriters.org](http://www.winewriters.org)) is open to accredited wine journalists and other professionals communicating in the media about wine. As such, it is editorial policy to give the Editor and each writer for *Circle Update* freedom to express his or her views. It must therefore be stressed that the Circle as an organisation does not formally associate itself with the opinions expressed by contributors, except where this is specifically stated.

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## Systemics

These penetrate into the soil destroying the microbacterial life, and this Didier believes is responsible for diseases such as esca because the protection this life provides for the roots of the vine has been destroyed.

Overall there is the concern that the long-term effects of the use of these products on the soil, flora and fauna are not properly known. Producers who want to use the above products and practices would have to opt to sell their wine as *vin de pays* or *vin de table*: they would not have the right to *appellation contrôlée*. Perhaps a new Pan-France *vin de pays* could be created – *vin de pays de Monsanto* – and could prove to be a popular choice. It is possible, however, that the VDP d'Oc producers might initiate legal action against this new Pan-France VDP citing unfair competition.

It is refreshing to see someone talking good sense about France's *appellation contrôlée* rules.

(This originally appeared on Les 5 du Vin blog: <http://www.les5duvin.com/article-les-trois-propositions-de-didier-barrouillet-48038042.html>)



Didier  
Barrouillet.  
Photos by  
Jim Budd.

Hugo Dunn-Meynell is tempted to Tooting

## And now for something entirely different

I love dropping in on eccentric viticulteurs, a hobby that has led me to some unlikely places, though rarely in England, let alone the metropolis. To help counteract that omission, AWS and I said an emphatic 'yes!' to the invitation for 'a tasting of Chateau Tooting' (*sans circumflex*) 2009. The night was overcast March chill, the location a bar in the looming Victorian ex-orphanage/hospital/interrogation centre which startles drivers descending the A214 in the southwestern borough of Wandsworth.

As everyone knows, Wandsworth includes the suburb of Tooting, home to writer and social worker Richard Sharp whose pergola laden with 2007 Vitis Brant led, together with grapes from neighbours' veranda, garden centre and fence, to an initial vintage of 30 bottles and the inspiration to establish The Urban Wine Company.

Greater London's doubtless first collective production is based on grapes now gathered from hundreds of gardens and allotments across the city and as distant as North Lodge, Windsor Castle. Quite a few of the growers had come to sip, not spit – this was more a festivity than a tasting – to greet each other and be reminded, via Richard and DVD, that 'Urban Wine' is a pale rosé based on Pinot Noir established in Kingston and Clapham, Chardonnay from Putney, and Solaris and Rondo that the company provides

to Developer Members in anticipation of their accession to full Producership.

There are Merlot and Melon de Bourgogne and much in the way of unknown varieties in the ripe October kilos which travel to Bookers, West Sussex, for vinification. In return, each participating member receives six bottles with bespoke labels -- Chateaux Smithers, Toogood and Brockwell among them. Those that night read 'Urban Wine 2009', with an image of Tower Bridge. Little of the output is yet available to the public, but the Excise gang have, of course, whacked stiff duty on to whatever may be sold.

Our warm-hearted *dégustation* of the 2009 vintage revealed an agreeable and refreshing 11.5-degree rosé with the suggestion of red berries, and a hint of stewed rhubarb in the *après-goût*.

We failed to get the opinion of the French film unit which had stopped by to capture the proceedings, but given the lively production of Clos Montmartre and the white wine of Suresnes, just across the Seine from the Bois de Boulogne, their celebratory presence at this widening of the urban *entente cordiale* was not surprising. Will there soon be an official English passetoutgrains, they doubtless wondered? After all, even Lafite had to start somewhere.

More information: [www.urbanwineco.com](http://www.urbanwineco.com)

