SA wine unleashes nearly □1m

13 Nov 2009 by Jancis Robinson

I did tweet about this at the time but I would just like to thank all those South African wine producers who supplied wine for our gala dinner at Le Café Anglais in London last Tuesday night in aid of Room to Read - and Martin Krajewski of Ch de Sours in Bordeaux who offered the opening lot in the live auction in the form of a harvest stay there.

Thanks to the efforts of wonderfully energetic auctioneer David Elswood of Christie's and founder John Wood's extraordinary ability to induce a crowd to back Room to Read's programme of establishing schools, libraries and scholarships in Asia and Africa, this one dinner raised very nearly £1 million.

This was helped significantly by a generous pre-dinner promise on the part of an anonymous donor to match what was raised on the night up to £500,000, but I'm sure that the quality of the South African wines played their part. Julia also played an important part in steering me towards wines that had particularly impressed her on her visit there last May. Wines of South Africa co-ordinated the whole thing and Sensible Wine Services took charge of storage and delivery in the UK.

Here's what Rowley Leigh and his team served us:

Cheese Straws, Anchovy Palmiers, Radishes

Quoin Rock, Simonsberg Oculus 2007 Stellenbosch
Scali Pinotage 2005 Voor Paardeberg

Scallop and Salmon Pate en Croûte, Fines Herbes Beurre Blanc

De Morgenzon Chenin Blanc 2007 Stellenbosch
Ataraxia Chardonnay 2008 Western Cape

Stuffed and Braised Breast of Veal with Ceps, Pommes Mousselines

Boekenhoutskloof Syrah 2007 Franschhoek
Tulbagh Mountain Vineyards, Syrah/Mourvèdre 2005 Tulbagh

Montgomery Cheddar and Vacherin Mont d'Or

Morgenster Estate Wine 2004 Stellenbosch
Kanonkop Paul Sauer 2004 Stellenbosch

We were lucky to have such crème de la crème wines and they went down very well with the generous crowd. You can read Julia's tasting notes on many of these wines here.