

## AGM – a lively affair

→ Around 50 members gathered for the Branch AGM. These dedicated individuals were greeted with a glass of champagne before getting down to business.

Outgoing Hon. Chairman Carlos Antao gave his report on a successful year. Hon. Treasurer Petty Leung summarised the financial position, which is healthy as a result of the biennial seminar last year and should allow us to make donations to our three chosen charities.

Paul Walton was elected Chairman with Amit Bhargava as his deputy. Aalok Sharma replaces Amit as Hon. Secretary, while Petty was re-elected to the Treasury by acclaim. Some new faces were added to the committee.

After an efficient AGM, we heard a short presentation from Nicholas Brooke SBS JP, Chairman of Hong Kong's Harbourfront Commission (among many other distinguished public services). He gave us a short summary of the Commission's successes to date, and a more detailed explanation of present and

future targets.

Perhaps the most important task of the Harbourfront Commission in the next few years will be the enhancement of the Central harbourfront area. Developers will have to exercise restraint so the people of Hong Kong can get a world-class waterfront to complement our world-class harbour. Members were inspired by the talk, and Mr. Brooke received several offers of support as a result of his heartfelt address. The full presentation can be viewed on the branch website, and is well worth a look.

Mr Brooke was then succeeded by Gregoir Cleary and his team from House of Fine Wines. Guests were treated to a short speech by special guest Mr Laurent Brotte, the grandson of Charles Brotte, the founder of the famous independent winery in Châteauneuf-du-Pape, France. Laurent offered the guests a taste of the famous 'La Fiole du Pape' red wine, originally created in 1952, and even signed a few of the unusually shaped bottles for eager buyers.

Greg then showed guests how to taste wine 'like a pro', and we gladly sampled wines from France and Italy. Greg shared the interesting news that several European winemakers are now producing wines specifically for the Asian market. Apparently, we Asians are not too keen on high acidity, and the winemakers are responding with new wines which are more appealing to the Asian palate.

An excellent evening.

**Alan Loynd FNI**

