

## The North Hampshire Wine Society Blog



### 'Small French Independents' from Carte-du-Vin Presented by Torquil Jack

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Carte-du-Vin is a family-run importer of small production wines that the proprietors have discovered (mostly) on cycling holidays in France, Spain and Portugal. Based in Micheldever, Hants.

See [www.carte-du-vin.co.uk](http://www.carte-du-vin.co.uk) for more details.

#### Welcome aperitif

A rose to complement the lovely early summer weather we had this month. This was a Chilean Cabernet Sauvignon rose 'Castillo Varez' 2009 (from Chineham off-licence with a label in German...) Showing structure (Cabernet) and a bit of age (2010 the current vintage). 12.5% alcohol, dark salmon pink with legs, and a full palate but less fruit than you might hope for in a Chilean wine.

### The wines

#### Rose/Whites

##### **Domaine Berthet-Rayne Castel Mireio Rose 2009, Cairanne**

£9.95 14%

Typical Cinsault/Grenache/Syrah blend from 'on the up' southern Rhone wine village Cairanne, but (less typically) made as a rose rather than as a big Rhone red. Fresh subtle nose with a hint of perfume. Very structured palate with not a lot of fruit evident, but this style really does need food to do it justice (as did all the wines shown tonight). A rather dry alcoholic finish, quite austere, perhaps not quite enough fruit to back up the 14% alcohol? An unusual rose from an increasingly prestigious village that certainly provided an interesting contrast to the opening Chilean aperitif.

##### **St Jean de Conques Fastoche Blanc 2009, St Chinian**

£7.25 12.5%

'Fastoche' = 'agreeable' and this wine was certainly that. Rolle/Colombard Languedoc blend with a light lemony citrus character, refreshing on the palate with some nice zingy acidity. (Rolle is the same grape as the Italian Vermentino which accounts for the fresh zippy character.) Good bright pale yellow colour. Not perhaps showing quite as flowery as the wine's description implied, and no real apricot or 'bread' characteristics could be distinguished (at least on the night!) but the hints of lime did come through strongly. A fresh light summer white with a bit of body that was generally enjoyed by the group.

##### **Domaine Bourdon Pouilly Fuisse 2008**

£14.50 13.5%

Over to Burgundy and Pouilly-Fuisse which can of course produce some great white Burgundy. 2008 is a pretty good white Burgundy vintage and the top Pouilly-Fuisse wines might still have some years ahead of them, but at the 'village' level they are certainly ready to drink. Hints of green in the pale gold colour (a greenish tint always reassuring in white Burgundy of 2-3 years old!) and a fine yeasty nose. Well balanced acidity should provide enough structure for another year or possibly two in bottle. Slightly dry mid-palate but a good minerally finish, if a little short, and extremely restrained oak (if it was there at all?). Nice

weight. I thought this a pretty good example of a mid-range white Burgundy in a very good year, and not at all surprising to see a Lyon Concours 2010 'Medaille D'Or' sticker on the bottle.

#### **Domaine des Homs Viognier 2009, Vin de Pays d'Oc (Minervois)**

£10.25 13.5%

Producer is converting to organic. This started very well with plenty of Viognier peachy fruit on the nose and underlying spice notes. My notes say 'a very good nose, almost mild gewurz'. Excellent I thought – my personal Viognier 'blind spot' is about to be challenged! However I thought it rather fell away on the palate – there was concentration certainly, with viscosity on the glass, but also a slightly odd almost 'chemical' finish. The fruit seemed all on the nose, with the palate appearing just a little unbalanced. Another wine that might well have showed better with the right food (obviously impossible but a pity!)

### **Reds**

#### **Domaine Masse Givry 'Close de la Brulee' 2006 (Cotes Chalonnaise)**

£13.75 13%

Following the very drinkable Pouilly-Fuisse, a red Burgundy from 2 years earlier. This had been opened 2 hours before the tasting. Showing some age on the rim and also (I thought) on the slightly medicinal nose. Palate seemed to confirm the possibility that this may be a little past its prime? Not a lot of pinot fruit here, but some vegetal notes and a slight initial mustiness on the palate which did fade a little but didn't then really open out significantly in the glass. Tannins soft and 'developed'.

#### **St Jean de Conques Rouge 2007, AOC St Chinian**

£8.50 13.5%

A Grenache/Syrah/Mourvedre blend from the deep south. Deep colour, almost opaque, with a narrow rim. My notes say 'a big black monster' although the alcohol was only 13.5% - not huge for a Languedoc red. Surprisingly high acidity, less surprisingly high tannins, very black and dark with perhaps not enough fruit to produce a balanced impression. But definitely yet another wine that might have shown rather better with something meaty on a plate beside it! – perfectly illustrating the difficulty of 'tasting' wines that are intended for drinking with a meal. Still, perhaps not entirely typical of 'modern' St Chinian.

#### **David Moreno Tinto Reserva 2004, Rioja**

£10.95

Over to Spain and the very good 2004 Rioja vintage. A proper restrained Tempranillo nose and some age on the rim (as expected). Oak a little dominant on the palate though, obscuring the vanilla notes that you hope for in a mature Rioja – they were certainly there but a bit subdued. Some nice smokiness on both nose and palate though.

#### **Domaine Berthet-Rayne Castel-Mieiro Rouge 2007, Cairanne**

£12.95 14.5%

Grenache/Syrah/Mourvedre. Back to the producer of the first rose - this time his Cairanne village red. Here we were in relatively safe territory vintage-wise - 2007 perhaps the best southern Rhone year for a decade or more. The wines are big and ripe, and the challenge if anything for the winemaker was to turn the volume down. Quite a subtle nose, but on the palate much more character with ripe tannins balanced by equally ripe fruit. Clearly (again!) needs food, but the dark prune character here is wholly typical of a good southern Rhone blend in a ripe vintage. Many of us thought this was the wine of the evening.

Derek commented at the end that this was an 'eclectic selection of genuinely local wines'. It certainly offered us a welcome opportunity to try wines that might not otherwise ever make it into the UK market. And cycling from vineyard to vineyard seeking out undiscovered wines has to be a pretty good way to make a living!