

The North Hampshire Wine Society Blog



'The Hungarian Wine Society' Chris Bowling

22 August 2012

Presenter Chris Bowling had given us an eye-opening presentation on Georgian wines in 2011. This year he had his Hungarian wine hat on.

Welcome aperitif

Vina Albali Verdejo-Chardonnay 2011

From the ever reliable Spanish Vina Albali stable, an unusual blend which did the job nicely as a fresh zingy aperitif. A bit more to it than the usual Airen blends.

The wines

Whites

Nyakas Irsai Oliver 2010

11.5% £8.99

A gold medal winner in Paris 2010. Muscat. 'Melon' and 'tinned grapefruit' were comments heard around the room. Lowish alcohol but 'legs' on the glass so some body. Decent acidity, pretty dry, nicely made for early drinking. Lively and fresh. Muscat character more obvious on palate than nose which was a little 'developed'. Slight spritz on the tongue. Generally liked.

Josef Bock Harslevelu 2007

13.5% £12.99

Winemaker (Bock) has a big reputation. Harslevelu is the second most widely planted grape in Hungary – easy to grow and a good blender. This wine includes some later harvested grapes (Nov and Dec) which were left on the skins for 24 hours for added complexity then fermented in stainless steel. Deep golden yellow and a mineral nose. Seems full on the palate but finishes dry. Full flavoured, big mouthfeel, hints of iodine and seaweed (in a good way!)

St Andrea Napbor (Sunwine) 2009

13.5% £14.15

Hungarian Winemaker of the Year 2009 (St Andrea). Sophisticated wines from a respected winery looking to maximise 'terroir'. The 2009 Sunwine is a wacky-sounding blend of Harslevelu, Pinot Blanc, Olaszrizling, Leanyka, Viognier, Chardonnay, Szurkebarat and Tramini. Greenish tint to the yellow, nice elegant nose, some vanilla and pineapple notes. A light hand with the oak (10 months in Hungarian barrels). Persistent finish. My notes say 'fruit is not really the point here' – darker flavours, again finishing bone dry. Elegant, balanced, idiosyncratic.

Beres Tokaji Dry Furmint 2010

12.5% £9.99

Dry Furmint is becoming quite fashionable – there are some more ‘commercial’ examples than this one around (including a good one at Majestic). This is a fruitier style than the previous wine, still dry, with good acidity and mineral notes. My notes say ‘very fresh, very dry, golden greenish yellow. Acidity high but well-disguised by weight. Apricot kernels’. The acidity suggests it might be a keeper?

Reds**Takler Kadarka 2009**

12.5% £14.95

Kadarka is a vigorous vine producing bright fruit-forward wines. However we thought this was perhaps showing its age a little – brick red and quite pale in the glass with some strawberry jam aromas, but also some attractive chocolate on the nose and a little spice at the end. Seemed perhaps a little dilute? Or perhaps just a year past its peak for a wine not really intended for keeping?

Takler Cabernet Franc 2008

14% £14.95

Takler being one of the most respected Szekszard producers, these final two reds promised much. We were told that Cabernet Franc does very well in Southern Hungary and is increasingly vinified as a single varietal. This was a different style and far more complex than the previous wine – 12 months in 2nd year oak, 14% alcohol, possibly still needing some time in bottle. A little age on the rim, very upfront nose of chocolate, much leafier in the glass, plenty of round fruit and dry tannins that maybe still need time to soften up. Very rich palate, quality. Some alcohol on the finish. Should balance out nicely in a year or two? Good value thought the group.

Takler Szeksardi Bikaver Reserve 2007

14.5% £21.99

A medal winner in 2011, here’s a ‘big’ modern style wine that’s described as an ‘ultra-high quality take on Bull’s Blood’ - that stalwart of 1970s off-licences... But this is not the same animal at all – it’s a quality blend of Kekfrancos, Cabernet Sauvignon, Kadarka (Blaufrankisch), Cabernet Franc and Merlot, and requires some bottle age to show at its best. Persistent nose, not unlike a decent Bordeaux, which grows and develops in the glass. Deep colour, rich and creamy on the palate. Good now but should last a year or two yet.

Dessert**Samuel Tinon Tokaji Szamorodni 2004**12% £35.00
(50cl)

A real treat to finish an interesting and unusual evening – a classic 5 putts Tokaji dessert wine. My notes say ‘orange marmalade!’ Honeyed palate with distinct orange caramel notes and characteristically beautiful balancing acidity. This wine so needs a marmalade bread-and-butter pudding... ☺