

The North Hampshire Wine Society Blog



'South Africa: Coming of Age'

Presenter: Simon Taylor
Stone, Vine & Sun

23 October 2013

'International Wine Challenge Specialist Merchant for South Africa 2010' **Stone, Vine & Sun** returned to the Society with a presentation of modern South African wines

The wines

Whites

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| 1. Goedverwacht White Crane Colombar, Robertson 2013
Fragrant citrusy nose, zingy palate, nice lemony finish. Light textured, really fresh and lively. A bit reminiscent of Cotes de Gascogne. Though light, surprisingly persistent (old vines). | 11.5% | £6.53 |
| 2. Cederberg Chenin Blanc, Cederberg 2012
Pronounced greenish tint and legs on the glass. A hint of 'wet wool' on the nose. Another zippy palate with just a touch of spritz on the tongue initially. My notes say 'quite edgy and lean, grapefruit character'. Vines grown at altitude. | 13.5% | £9.68 |
| 3. Chamonix Reserve White, Franschoek 2011
Greenish gold colour. Sauvignon/Semillon blend (as white Bordeaux). Nose is tropical – pineapple I thought. Simon - 'greengages, custard apples'. French oak barrels – oak discernable but overall impression is of freshness, very like Argentinian whites grown at altitude. Creamy with a lively fresh finish. This is a Platter 5* wine (one of only four in his S Africa guide). Exceptional value and my favourite wine of the evening. | 13.5% | £11.66 |
| 4. Blankbottle The White Black, Western Cape 2010
Very small production – 2-3000 bottles pa. Blend may include Roussanne, Grenache Blanc, Clairette, Viognier, sometimes Chardonnay, and others. (Similar setup to Mas de Daumas Gassac in southern France – blend varies according to harvest.) Again a greenish tint, oak not so apparent compared with wine 3 (is there any?) – a nice mineral style. Brilliant long finish. Direct sales, a one-man-band operation. Simon – 'a nutter!' - but he sure can make a white Rhone-style wine... Tim Atkins – 93 points. | 13.5% | £16.65 |

Reds

5. False Bay Pinotage, Western Cape 201

14% £6.53

The False Bay brand includes some grapes from 30-40 year old vines. Simon – ‘the trouble with Pinotage is that there’s no belief in it’. A fresh Pinot nose, berries, unoaked. It had a very slight metallic character on the palate but the berry fruit won through. Some alcohol evident on the finish. Mixed reaction in the group - Pinotage does have an image problem.

6. Badenhorst Family Wines Secateurs Red Blend, Western Cape 2011

13.5% £9.45

Winemaker here was previously at prestigious Rustenberg. Tiny production. Blend is Cinsault/Shiraz/Mourvedre/Grenache/Pinotage. Tannins soft but prominent – needs time. Berries-cherries and herbal notes with a very dry finish. My notes say ‘distinguished’.

NB the 2012 vintage is recommended in Decanter April 2014 as a Weekday Wine with 93 points (page 96)

7. Fryer’s Cove Pinot Noir, Bamboes Bay 2011

12% £11.66

Pale developed brick colour. Flowery nose and a very fragrant palate. Next to no tannins evident – a very soft mouthfeel. Very little vegetal character (liked by one of our group who generally struggles with Pinot Noir.) Cool coastal climate and seawater-cooled tanks! Generally liked by all.

8. Joostenberg Bakermat, Paarl 2010

14% £12.83

A property currently organic in conversion. An interesting blend – Cabernet Sauvignon, Syrah, Merlot, Touriga Nacional. Restrained nose, gentle oak. Holds its alcohol very well – no ‘hot’ finish. Well balanced.

A huge pity that October produced the lowest member turnout of the year for what proved to be one of the most informative and interesting tastings of the year. Those who missed it missed a treat. Many thanks to Simon Taylor for sharing his insights into new South African winemaking.