

The North Hampshire Wine Society Blog



'Pairings and Comparisons'

Presenter: Simon Plumtree

25 September 2013

Simon stepped in at the last minute after the scheduled presenter cancelled, and brought along four wine 'pairs' – each with something in common – to compare and contrast

The wines

Whites

- | | | |
|---|-------|-------|
| 1. M&S Cotes du Luberon 2011, Paul Sapin (S France) | 13% | £6.99 |
| Grenache/Vermentino blend. A very dry palate with a touch of Vermentino 'fizz'. Quite a full palate with a definite hint of an alcoholic finish. A decent example of the reliable AC Cotes du Luberon though not particularly refined. | | |
| 2. M&S Fiano 2012 (Italy) | 13.5% | £7.99 |
| A good comparison in many respects – Fiano from southern Italy has a similar character to Cotes du Luberon from southern France – weight, price point, easy drinking style. A greener tinge to this, a peachier nose and a rounder riper character on the palate. Possibly also marginally fresher than wine 1 at a year younger. A slightly 'hot' finish again. Voting quite even between the two wines. | | |
| 3. M&S Sauvignon St Bris 2011, Union de Viticulteurs de Chablis (Burgundy) | 12% | £8.49 |
| 3 and 4 were two very interesting wines to compare. Sauvignon St Bris is the only sauvignon allowed in Burgundy under AC rules. This co-op wine has an austere mineral 'French' nose and an understated grassy nettley character on the palate. All as expected since with a French sauvignon you don't immediately think 'fruit' - restraint is the point... | | |
| 4. Waimea Estate Sauvignon Blanc 2012 (Nelson, New Zealand) | 13.5% | £9.99 |
| ...whereas with NZ Sauvignon everyone knows what to expect...or do they? This has the grassy nettley character again, now overlaid with that characteristic ultra ripe gooseberry fruit, but hang on - there's minerality here too! Nelson Sauvignon is subtly different from Marlborough – it has minerality in spades and is relatively restrained for NZ, so although you do get the gooseberries they're tempered by a palpable stoniness and 'structure' behind the fruit. This wine went down surprisingly well with a group instinctively more in tune with old world sauvignon. The St Bris 'won' but pleasingly not by much! | | |

Reds

5. Luis Felipe Edwards Signature Series Syrah 2012 (Central Valley, Chile) 14% £8.99

Two more very interesting comparisons since Chilean Syrah is much praised and can be quite different styles depending on the particular climate and terroir. This first one is from the warmer Central Valley. Rounder and more populist in style, no rough edges. Very drinkable with or without food because the tannins are soft.

6. Leyda Reserve Syrah 2011 (Leyda Valley, Chile) 14% £9.99

But in the Leyda Valley Syrah is a different animal. Here it's cool climate Syrah - vegetal, much leaner in style, idiosyncratic and interesting. My notes say 'a great farmyard nose - lighter textured Syrah'. It's fair to say that the group voted heavily for wine 5 over wine 6 which was not liked at all - some thought the climate perhaps 'too cool for Syrah?' I may have been the only one to give wine 6 my vote! But it really does need food.

7. Ogier Crozes Hermitage 'Les Brunelles' 2010 (N Rhone) 13% £8.98

A 'lesser' (in the sense of less expensive) wine from a famous Rhone name Ogier. 2010 was a really good vintage in the northern Rhone so wines at this level should be pretty characteristic of the style. This has a distinguished Rhone nose but it was felt that perhaps it didn't carry through completely onto the palate. Just a tad disappointing for 2010 perhaps?

8. Wm Morrison Barossa Shiraz 2011 (Barossa Valley, S Australia) 13% £8.99

This is a more straight down the line wine. Interestingly no vintage is shown on the label although it's described as 2011 - a bit puzzling... Much riper and 'sweeter' on the palate and very easy drinking. 13% seems a bit low for a 'big' Barossa Shiraz and this could have done with a bit more oomph.

A really interesting set of comparisons from Simon - it's easier to see each wine's characteristics more clearly when you can compare styles like this.