

The North Hampshire Wine Society Blog



'The Naked Grape – new wines' Simon Evans

23 April 2014

Hampshire based independent wine merchant specialising in small estate wines

The wines

Whites

1. Les Cordeliers Cremant de Bordeaux Brut (Bordeaux, France)

12% £15.99

100% Semillon sparkling wine from 'walled vineyard behind the Cathedral in central St Emilion'. A sparkling St Emilion is definitely a bit of a curiosity! Fine mousse, lively creamy palate, idiosyncratic. They also do a sparkling rose, apparently Semillon blended with a 'red wine' (Merlot?) and a vintage sparkling wine as well. All presumably in very small quantities given the tiny plot. This was generally liked by the group.

2. Blume Rueda Verdejo Viura 2012 (Northern Spain)

13% £13.99

Group was mixed on this one – some thought a 'chemistry set' nose! - maybe a bit of development (2012) and/or a bit of minerality? My notes say 'hint of floral character and development on nose'. Nice greenish-gold colour. Legs evident. A dry mid-palate (characteristic of Verdejo) and a soft finish (less characteristic - Viura?). Some grip and body.

3. Sauvignon Gris, Giset 2012, VDP (France)

12% £11.99

Biodynamic principles (easy to scoff at some of the oddities but the fact is that several distinguished Burgundy names follow biodynamic methods – it's not all buried cow horns and battiness...) Pale lemon colour, again a slightly developed nose, good weight of ripe fruit and a nice persistent finish. 'A beginning, middle and end' you might say. Vivid, focussed, precise flavours and balance – all noted characteristics of biodynamic wines however implausible some of the theories may sound!

4. Bereich Wonnegau Spatlese 2011 (Rheinhessen, Germany)

9% £9.99

Disappointing advert for fine German Riesling which at its best is sublimely subtle, ethereal, unique. The group was generally a bit bemused by this. Said to be 80% Riesling 20% Muller-Thurgau but no true Riesling character was really evident here. My notes verbatim: 'Unexpected nose and palate, odd. Riesling not evident – palate fresh but none of the anticipated raciness or bracing acidity. Early drinker – won't develop'. (If I'd had to guess I'd have said the blend seemed more like 80/20 the other way around?)

Reds

5. Ramon Bilbao Edicion Limitado 2010 (Rioja, Spain)

100% Tempranillo. 8 months in oak barrels (French and American new oak), 14 months in bottle. Lovely soft Rioja style, creamy vanilla oak, bramble fruit. New oak quite obvious on the nose but it's nicely integrated. Soft rounded tannins, alcohol in balance. Well liked around the room.

14% £14.99

6. Chateau La Croix de Cabut 2010, Cotes du Blaye (Bordeaux, France)

The Naked Grape tasting sheet described this as 'modern style garagiste Bordeaux with Pomerol tendencies'. 80/20 Merlot/Cabernet Sauvignon, 100% new oak, 14% alcohol - so far it ticks all the 'garagiste' boxes! A good recognisable Bordeaux nose, palate very powerful. My notes say 'oak evident, vanilla evident, 2010 vintage (v gd) evident, a very modern *big wine* approach'. Fruit driven with lots of extraction and some nice Bordeaux fragrance. Tannic – needs a few years. Would be interesting to see if the fruit holds up until the tannins soften.

14% £14.99

7. Mahogany Ridge Shiraz 2008 (SE Australia)

Some interesting comments were made about the current state of Australian wine. Mahogany Ridge is a brand made by Hunter Valley-based winery First Creek Wines, so you might think it typifies the price point culture behind some of Australia's current problems competing with Chile and 'new France' at the lower price points. But this isn't typical Aussie Shiraz – for a start it's 13% alcohol not 14.5% and it's made in a deliberately lighter style. Mature rim, big Shiraz nose, precise fruit, rounded maturing tannins, good acidity, soft and mellow. Above all the savoury Shiraz character is enhanced by this restrained approach.

13% £12.99

8. De'Notaris Cesanese 2012 (Lazio, Italy)

Cesanese is the grape. Restrained nose with a hint of cherry. Full flavoured tangy acidity on the palate, balanced alcohol and fruit, rounded finish, pleasant, quite full, approachable, not too demanding. A softer palate than some Italian reds, with the tannins not quite as prominent as might be expected, so it's difficult to say how this might develop over time.

13% £10.99

An interesting selection of wines – an 'eclectic mix' as one of the group said! Some surprises and some unusual styles. Interesting that for the second month in a row we were able to taste a (very nice) Sauvignon Gris – still relatively uncommon as a varietal