

The North Hampshire Wine Society Blog



'Bumbling through Bordeaux' Presented by Derek Avery

27 August 2014

Derek definitely did himself a disservice with his own title for his Bordeaux tasting – a well-chosen selection of wines, all of which are currently available from Sainsburys, Laithwaites and BBR, presented with his customary knowledge and insights

The wines

Whites

- 1. Good Ordinary White – 2013 Bordeaux (BBR)** 12% £7.85
Berry Bros' own label entry level white Bordeaux, produced by Dourthe. 100% Sauvignon Blanc, clear Sauvignon nose with a hint of grapefruit and something mineral behind it – a typical white Bordeaux nose. Upfront zesty modern style with fruit to the fore on the palate. Heard round the room – 'lively, racy'. Light, easy-going, clean, with prominent acidity nicely balanced.

Reds

- 2. Chateau Le Ferrau Belair – 2008 Cotes du Bourg (Laithwaites)** 12.5% £11.99
70% Merlot, 30% Cabernet Sauvignon. Mild Bordeaux nose with just a hint of oak. Rim widening with age but still quite a deep core. Mellow 'developed' palate, tannins still fairly firm, quite an austere style, possibly needing to soften out a little more if it has the structure to go another year or two.
- 3. Domaines de Douves – 2010 Pomerol (Sainsburys)** 14% £23.00
Merlot dominant in the blend, as usual in Pomerol. This is a big wine, made in a modern powerful style and matured in new French oak. 2010 was an excellent 'classic' Bordeaux vintage so this ought to have a few years ahead of it. Dark core and plummy rim, massive coloured 'legs'. Still quite a closed Merlot nose but developed a bit more in the glass. Tannins still pronounced and chewy. Big modern red Bordeaux with alcohol to match.
- 4. Grand Barrail La Marzelle Figeac – 2006 St Emilion (Sainsburys)** 13% £22.00
St Emilion Grand Cru. 20% new oak. Deep colour still for 2006, but a much more developed nose than wine 3, as you'd expect with more bottle age, and showing definite warm vanilla notes. A really juicy palate with fine red fruit flavours - very attractive. Tannins still firm, so the prominent fruit and good tannic structure suggests a few years' development and possible further softening to come.

5. Chateau Lalande d'Áuvion – 2003 Medoc (Laithwaites) 14% £11.00

Another big wine – this one holding up very impressively from the heatwave 2003 vintage. Surprisingly well balanced with the black cherry fruit still holding its own against the 14% alcohol. Inky purple, very little rim, so not obviously showing its 11 year age. A ripe but savoury palate with plum and cassis notes. A weighty wine, retaining a surprisingly firm tannic grip for 2003, just needing a good roast dinner to do it justice!

6. Frank Phelan – 2009 St Estephe (Sainsburys) 13.5% £25.00

The second wine of Ch Phelan-Segur, a top flight Cru Bourgeois. A really classy nose here with St Estephe written all over it – minty notes very apparent along with the expected cedar wood character. Big structure but silky tannins and sweet, sweet fruit for a St Estephe. 2009 was a truly great left bank vintage with wines that are normally at the austere end of the spectrum showing incredible ripeness and balance early on in their lives. Great length on the finish. Lovely, and much liked around the room.

7. Lacoste Borie – 2007 Pauillac (Sainsburys) 13% £22.00

A pure 'developed' Cabernet Sauvignon nose in a very classic Pauillac style. A really interesting savoury palate – much more so than wine 6 which was voluptuous by comparison – almost a saline quality here with real 'bite' and attack. Development is definitely ongoing and the firm structure and mouthfeel suggests a good few years to go. Very typical high-quality left bank structured Cabernet Sauvignon, with lots going on already and more to come.

Dessert

8. Sauternes – 2010 (BBR) 13.5% £12.75
37.5cl

Berry's own label Sauternes, currently made by Ch Doisy Vedrines whose reputation has soared over the past few vintages. Lovely bright pale lemon/gold colour, showing no age as yet since this is almost as young as a Sauternes gets. A classic Sauvignon nose with grapefruit astringency apparent and some honey notes showing promise, 'legs' in the glass indicating the richness to come, and good upfront acidity. A little cube of Roquefort cheese was the perfect match and really did the wine justice. It obviously needs time to show at its best but young Sauternes has a charm all its own.

How nice to taste a range of Bordeaux reds from the reasonably modest to a couple of relatively distinguished examples, demonstrating two top vintages (2009 and 2010), the differences between right and left bank styles, and the significant improvements in quality and reliability in recent years at the lower levels