

## The North Hampshire Wine Society Blog



### 'Bat and Bottle - Central Italy'

Ben Robson

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A great start to the new year with the very welcome return of Ben and Emma Robson from Italian specialists Bat and Bottle

#### The wines

##### White

- 1. Stefano Mancinelli Verdicchio Classico 2011.** Morro d'Alba, Marche 13% £9.85  
Very fresh zingy palate, predominantly citrus with some backbone and a nice dry finish. From a hot area subject to cooling winds. Alcoholic strength can vary significantly with the vintage (2003 a huge 15.2%, 2010 14.5%). Unoaked (Ben mentioned that some producers' experimentation with barrel-aged Vermentino has not been hugely successful!). A 3rd bottle was opened since bottle 2 was noticeably fresher than bottle 1.
- 2. Val de Toro Auramaris 2011, Vermentino.** Grosseto, Toscana 13.5% £14.00  
IGT. A pale golden lemon colour and a lovely light mineral nose. Just a slight hint of spritz on the palate that dissipates quickly. Immediate impression here of ripeness and a rounded mouthfeel (glass showed legs) but still fresh and lively. Great acidity balance and an elegant feel to this wine. Scots/Sicilian owners, small production at 40,000 bottles. Many appreciative comments heard around the room.
- 3. Ciu Ciu Merlettaie 2012, Pecorino.** Offida, Marche 14% £12.25  
DOCG. A more pronounced golden colour here and a bigger riper nose, but freshness still very apparent. 'Sherbet' was one comment from the group. My notes say 'big rich broad palate, lemons and almonds'. Partial barrel fermentation but a very light touch with the (old?) oak. Largest organic producer in the Marche. Ben – 'this will go a few years'. Delicious and distinctive, this was many of the group's favourite white of the evening.

##### Rosato

- 4. Val di Toro Alfa Tauri 2012, Sangiovese.** Grosseto, Toscana 13% £12.75  
DOC. 100% Sangiovese. Provençal-like pale salmon colour, juice probably left on the skins no longer than 'overnight' (Ben) – and apparently made 'to look like the sunset'! Very dry like a Provençal rose but with quite a full palate - manages to be both full flavoured and delicate at the same time. Salami and olives were mentioned as perfect accompaniments... Again this was popular around the room, many of us being fans of 'proper' rose!

## Red

- 5. Antigniano Convito 2013, Sangiovese.** Bastia Umbra, Umbria 13% £7.00  
IGT. A young look to this as you'd expect, but with a noticeably developing rim. Fruity cherry nose, plenty of fruit on the palate balanced by nice crisp acidity. Ben – 'good for 2013 and improving by the week'. Looks like a bargain at £7.
- 6. Colognole Chianti Rufina 2009, Sangiovese.** Rufina, Toscana 13.5% £15.00  
A real classic now – Chianti Rufina with a bit of bottle age from grapes grown at altitude where ripening is harder but the payback is firmer acidity and 'finesse'. This is an elegant style of Chianti, not a big hitter but full of minerality and with a touch of very attractive Burgundian Pinot-like development on the nose. Damsons on the full-flavoured mid palate and a dry Sangiovese finish, persistent with great length. Much liked!
- 7. Stefano Mancinelli Lacrima 2011.** Morro d'Alba, Marche 13% £13.85  
Where the Chianti was restrained, this Lacrima hits you with a blast of aromatics on the nose, which almost seems perfumed. 'Roses' was heard around the room. A velvety palate but a typically Italian dry cherry finish. Ben - 'you don't really need to drink it' (not sure I agreed with that!) but it's an unusual and very satisfying nose. Lacrima was virtually extinct at one stage and this another small production wine at 30,000 bottles.
- 8. Serrapetrona Robbione 2007, Vernaccia Nera.** Serrapetrona, Marche 14.5% £24.00  
A dried grape wine similar to Ripasso or Amarone. Big, big nose – herbal, dark and ripe. My notes say 'a bit like Southern Rhone' – making sense when Ben mentioned that Vernaccia Nera is related to Grenache. Slight hint of truffles amid the plumminess, no sharp edges, packing a velvety punch.

A fascinating, massively informative and thoroughly enjoyable evening with a diverse selection of Italian gems from Tuscany and the Marche, for which many thanks to Ben and Emma who will hopefully return in the not too distant future...