

The North Hampshire Wine Society Blog



‘Argentina’s finest – Malbec & Torrontes and versions of’ Nigel Gibbes

28 May 2014

After his popular Australian tasting last year, Nigel Gibbes (Wineservice Ltd) returned with an evening dedicated almost exclusively to Argentina’s two signature grapes.

The wines are recorded below in the order in which they were poured (not the order on our tasting sheet) which should make sense to those who attended! Nigel asked us to compare two whites, then two reds, then the remaining three reds - and within each of those tasting flights to decide which wine was which. A final dessert wine rounded off the evening. So below is the order of the numbered bottles on the night (as on Wineservice’s order form).

The prices are VAT inclusive

The wines

Whites

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| 1. Pampas del Sur Chardonnay/Torrontes 2012, Mendoza | 12.5% | £6.80 |
| Pale greenish tint, aromatic nose. Fresh lively palate with a more vibrant acidity than wine 2. That, together with the floral aromatics on the nose, led me to think this might be the pure Torrontes (forgetting maybe that Chardonnay grown at altitude can have much more bracing acidity than usual). But the pronounced floral notes also proved deceptive, being more typical of Torrontes than Chardonnay. The majority of us (just about!) identified wines 1 and 2 correctly. | | |
| 2. Gougenheim Torrontes 2012, Mendoza | 13% | £9.11 |
| Yellower colour here and a rounder palate with a less ‘immediate’ aromatic character on the nose – more apricot than floral. To my mind this suggested the Chardonnay blend, but in fact this was the pure (Viognier-style?) Torrontes. Bottle 2 on the LH side of the room was much colder than the RH bottle (which someone described as ‘barely chilled’) which led to some debate about the level of aromatics on the nose. Opinion was divided - an interesting demo of the dampening effect fridge temperature can have on an aromatic nose. | | |

Reds

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| 3. Santa Julia Winemaker’s Selection Malbec 2013, Mendoza | 13.5% | £7.82 |
| This and wine 4 were poured together and again some of us were surprised by which was which. This was a little more purple in the glass than wine 4, and we generally thought more tannic, which with hindsight might have indicated the pure Malbec. | | |

4. Pampas del Sur Malbec/Shiraz 2013, Mendoza 13% £6.80
This had a very smooth palate and on first impression appeared more substantial than wine 3. Some of us felt this may have been the single Malbec, but with hindsight (a wonderful thing!) a mild spiciness behind the silkiness might have suggested some Shiraz in the mix. A lot of us (but not all!) were deceived however, and got the identification of this pairing wrong.

5. Santa Julia Reserve Malbec 2012, Mendoza 13.5% £9.11
A lightish nose and palate. 'Cherries' (Nigel). Pleasant but a much less concentrated palate than the next two wines – all three were poured together.

6. Gougenheim Reserve Malbec 2011, Mendoza 14% £10.26
A quality nose here – quite different from wine 5, with more 'developed' characteristics. Felt like a much bigger wine on the palate too – weighty with some nicely judged oak. Quite 'showy' compared with wine 7 but none the worse for that – an attractively substantial food wine that seemed to be showing off its virtues very well on the night.

7. Zuccardi 'Q' Malbec 2011, Mendoza 14.5% £15.72
More restraint on the nose here, although at least one of us thought it had the most seductive nose of the evening. Very narrow rim, showing very little age as yet, suggesting it has quite a way to go. Tobacco character on the palate and real tannic structure (the back label proposes 10 years cellaring). Definitely needs time and clearly a quality Malbec.

Dessert

8. Santa Julia 'Tardio' Late Harvest Torrontes/Viognier 2012, Mendoza 7% £7.42
A light, slight muscatty nose, an equally light floral palate with the saving grace of bracing acidity that gives a successful sweet wine its all-important balance. New to the Wineservice list, due in summer 2014, and would be perfect with some strawberries in a sunny garden. 50cl

An interesting tasting which showed how comparing wines with broadly similar characteristics can highlight the differences between them - and spring a few surprises!