

## The North Hampshire Wine Society Blog



### 'Wines on a budget' Mick Gleed

26 November 2014

The AGM tasting had a suitably thrifty note – all wines bar the last were from Aldi. So just for interest I've included details of any awards given to these wines in the various 2014 competitions – the information is from Aldi's website:

*IWC- International Wine Challenge*  
*IWSC – International Wine & Spirits Competition*  
*Decanter- Decanter World Wine Awards*

We also had the bonus of being able to taste these wines with a selection of delicious canapés made by Ann James

### The wines

#### Whites

- 1. Cremant de Jura 2011, Philippe Michel, France** £7.29  
A longstanding Aldi favourite this – it's been consistently well-reviewed in the wine press and has been their list for a few years now. This 2011 was showing some nice maturity with a citrus attack, a creamy palate and a decent finish. And a classy bottle shape too!
- 2. Andara Sauvignon Blanc 2013, Central Valley, Chile** 12% £3.99  
*IWC Commended.* Nice upfront Chilean sauvignon nose, zingy vibrant mouthfeel although just a tad thin on the mid-palate (not surprisingly at this price). A more impressive nose than palate we thought. Nicely balanced though, and the bonus of being relatively low in alcohol for this style (many Chilean sauvignons reach 13.5%). Bottled by Concha y Toro.
- 3. Clare Valley Riesling 'Éxquisite Collection' 2013, Australia** 12.5% £6.99  
*IWC Commended, IWSC Silver, Decanter Bronze.* A definite leap up in quality here – Aldi's horribly named Exquisite Collection is designed to showcase regional styles. This is a nice example of Clare Valley Riesling - a racy, lime-driven fullish palate with some real concentration and already a bit of development. Held up well against the smoked mackerel canapé which both softened and complemented the lime notes very nicely. Many of us thought this the star white of the line-up (as a Riesling fan it's certainly one I'd buy for everyday drinking).
- 4. Freeman's Bay Pinot Gris 2013, New Zealand** 13% £5.69  
*IWC Commended.* The pink-skinned Pinot Gris grape produces a darker colour here. The palate perhaps could do with a little more punchy fruit – it felt a bit dilute (again no real surprise at this price - low for a NZ Pinot Gris). A trace of honey on the palate though, which gave it a reasonable mouthfeel. Interestingly the back label revealed that this is bottled in Germany – probably a fairly common way for the discount stores to hit price points.

## Reds

- 5. Toro Loco Tempranillo 2013** 12.5% £3.79  
*IWC Bronze, IWSC Bronze.* A proper Tempranillo nose and legs in the glass. Decent fruit, decent balance, very little length but a splendid 'quaffer'! Much liked in the room, and at this price why not?
- 6. Castellore Montepulciano d'Ábruzzo 2013** 12.5% £3.79  
*IWC Commended.* Not much offered on the nose here. Palate reasonably balanced but very straight up and down, not a lot of character. Perhaps that is expecting too much at under £4 but the previous wine did manage to achieve some. Very 'simple'. Many of us thought it disappointing - perhaps it's just trickier to capture genuine Italian regional character than Spanish at this price point...
- 7. Cambalala Pinotage-Shiraz 2013** 13% £3.99  
A real South African nose of burnt rubber apparent here! Substantial legs in the glass and a soft but unremarkable palate, though with a little Pinotage character (which may or may not be a good thing at this price point!). But a pleasant enough BBQ wine.
- 8. Cockburn's Late Bottled Vintage Port 2008 (Sainsbury)** 20% £12.00  
Very sweet (as expected of course, but even for a port), with a nice soft mellow palate, though quite simple and undemanding. Not perhaps the most characterful example of a late bottled vintage, of which good examples can be good buys.

Very interesting to see what Aldi has on offer at the moment. Its range tends to be more permanent than the other discounter Lidl (who tend to go more for shorter-term promotions) so Aldi offers perhaps a better chance of getting hold of a wine that's been tried and liked!