

The North Hampshire Wine Society Blog



‘Cupari Wines – Argentinian Tasting’

Presenter: Nick Smith

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Boutique wines imported by Cupari Wines (established 2008) - Argentinian specialist based in Amersham with 23 wines currently listed from small wineries in Mendoza

www.cupariwines.co.uk

The wines

Whites

1. Mairena Sauvignon Blanc 2013, Mendoza 13.5% £10.95

Hot dry desert climate. Bright greenish-lemon colour, super restrained sauvignon nose developing in the glass, some legs visible. Big round mouthfeel, softish palate, acidity there but quite mellow and rounded. Feels like a warmer climate wine.

2. Gimenez Riili Buenos Hermanos Torrontes 2012, La Rioja 13% £11.45

Two versions of Argentina’s signature white grape to compare – the first from warmer La Rioja, the second from higher altitude Salta, with 3000ft difference in altitude between the two. This one at 2300ft had a floral citrus nose, immediately upfront. On the palate, quite full and soft with plenty of mid-palate weight. Some alcohol on the finish, and almost a slightly liquorice note.

3. Mairena Torrontes 2012, Cafayate, Salta 14% £11.45

5500ft – very high altitude for grape growing even in Argentina! A mineral nose compared with wine 2, very fresh. Fragrant rather than floral – ‘acacia’ was heard in the room. Great acidity attack, a full palate and a longish finish. Real character here. The room was divided on which Torrontes was preferred - this was my pick.

Reds

4. Hacienda Del Plata Zagal Syrah 2010, Mendoza 14.5% £11.95

A winery that now exports all its output. At 2200ft, relatively ‘low’ altitude. Narrow rim but developing. Big aromatic nose and a smooth savoury juicy palate with smoky notes. Nice acidity on the mid palate and minimal oak well integrated. Nicely balanced, for drinking now.

5. Cupari Malbec 2012, Mendoza £12.95

3600ft, close to Trivento and Michel Rolland’s vineyards. Very deep colour, almost no rim. Restrained vanilla nose, unctuous mellow palate, some firmness on the finish. For drinking young, and not quite as concentrated as their 2011 (Nick).

- 6. Hacienda Del Plata Arriero Blend Reserve 2009, Mendoza** 14.5% £17.95
 Malbec/CabernetSauvignon/Syrah. Aromatic nose with hints of mint and blueberry. Coloured legs in the glass. A big wine, some pleasantly cool freshness rather overtaken by a big alcoholic finish.
- 7. Monte Quieto's Quieto 2008, Mendoza** 14% £17.95
 Cabernet Franc/Malbec/Cabernet Sauvignon/Syrah. 12 months French oak (20%) and 12 months stainless steel (80%). A little age showing on the rim and a more developed nose. Fragrant and spicy on a very tasty palate with more mint, some wood on the finish but soft in the middle. More structure here, with the fruit holding up well.
- 8. Mairena Bonarda Reserve 2008, Mendoza** £19.95
 12 months new French oak. Lovely developed nose, big acidity on the palate (a 'good' thing for a Bonarda) – my notes say 'quite Italian in an Argentinian sort of way' although it seems that the Bonarda grape may not be quite as Italian as has previously been thought... A typically juicy mouthful, oak softening as it sits in the glass. A classy 'big' Bonarda.

A splendid tasting of unusual wines made in small quantities by quality conscious producers, showcasing why Argentina's reputation for quality – at (still) far from unreasonable prices - continues to grow. Enthusiastically presented, with lots of background on Argentina and its wineries. Wines are available via the website www.cupariwines.co.uk

The North Hampshire Wine Society Blog is by **Julia Shaw**