

## The North Hampshire Wine Society Blog



### 'English Wine' Roger Marchbanks

27 May 2015

In English Wine Week, the former Deputy Chairman of the English Vineyards Association returned to give us a look at recent progress in the English wine industry

#### The wines

##### Whites

**1. Beaulieu Dry White 2013** 11% £8.50

100% Bacchus. Bottled at Setley Ridge Winery (New Forest). Pale clear colour, clean-looking. Astringent nose with a hint of something herbal. Searing lemony acidity on the palate, some fruit coming through but it's fairly hard work on its own. Some mouth-watering elements, clearly intended to be drunk with food, and still young. Roger - 'could keep this 10 years'.

**2. Court Lane Reserve 2013** 12.5% £9.00

100% Muller-Thurgau. Available only locally in the Arlesford/Watercress Line area. 82 year old vineyard owner. On the nose, more nettles here with just a hint of development. Palate had more obvious character than wine 1, with pear drops evident, however the finish was dry and seemed just a tad bitter. A number of us thought the nose more attractive than the palate. But the mouthfeel seemed to gain a bit of intensity as the wine warmed up in the glass, and the finish definitely improved with exposure to the air. A bigger riper wine than the Beaulieu - Roger drawing our attention to the 12.5% alcohol, a lot for an English wine. Verdict around the room was mixed.

##### Reds

**3. Sharpham Red 2013** 11.5% £14.95

100% Rondo with some new American oak. Well respected vineyard and winery near Totnes in Devon. Some coloured legs in the glass despite lowish alcohol shows a bit of viscosity. Nice clean nose, a bit like an uber-fruity Beaujolais in character. Palate just a tad Ribena-like (I thought!) - lighter bodied than the colour might suggest but exactly as expected for Rondo. Very fruity with only a little tannic structure (not a criticism, it's the style). Soft, and perhaps tasting a bit dilute in the middle, but a pleasant though shortish finish.

## Sparkling

### 4. Coach House Sparkling Pinot Noir 2009

12% £14.50

Roger's own sparkling rose. Zero dosage so the style is bone-dry and quite austere. No lees ageing either. Nose just a tad medicinal (but not unpleasantly so). Creamy bubbles, some strawberry and redcurrant notes. A relatively robust palate with a nice creamy finish. Generally liked around the room, especially at the price.

### 5. Hattingley Valley Blanc de Blancs 2010

12% £29.95

100% Chardonnay with a proportion barrel fermented in new and old Burgundy barrels. A leap in quality here - undoubtedly the star of the evening and a glimpse of why quality English sparkling wine is rapidly gaining such a reputation and cachet. A proper persistent mousse in the glass and a lovely lemony nose. Palate clean as a whistle, with a very interesting slight hint of 'wine gum' on the attack, and nice bready character coming through on the impressively concentrated mid palate. Lovely bright character and a long persistent finish. Real quality, and priced and marketed as such.

### 6. Hattingley Valley Entice 2014

11% £15.00  
½ bottle

100% Bacchus dessert wine - 'the first of its style to be produced from Bacchus in the UK' (from their recent press release, May 2015). Grapes were frozen to minus10C then cool-fermented to produce a fruit-driven dessert wine in the 'ice wine' style. Very fresh nose of pears and melons, a light fruity palate with freshness the keynote – this is *not* a rich botrytis-style wine, it's more like a dessert Riesling with fruit very much to the fore. As such, possibly the best match might be with summery fruit puds.

Interesting to compare a couple of small production white wines, and to taste a more mainstream red, with the undoubted highlight a cracking Blanc de Blancs from a local Hampshire winery, one of a growing band of premium sparkling wine producers in the south of England

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