

The North Hampshire Wine Society Blog



'Four Tables'

**Presenters: Elaine Longstaff, Richard Brown, David Flanders, Paul Hibbert
25 November 2015**

The AGM was followed by the usual walkaround tasting with wines chosen on this occasion by four members of the Committee

The wines

Table 1: Elaine

Fanagoria Estate 'NR' Chardonnay 2014, Russia	12-14%	n/a UK
Fanagoria Estate 'NR' Saperavi 2014, Russia	12-14%	n/a UK

Two unusual wines from the Taman Peninsula between the Black Sea and the Caspian Sea. The Fanagoria Estate is the largest winery in the area and claims to be Russia's biggest producer of estate bottled wines, so quality is a priority.

Chardonnay – Decent Chardonnay nose, very reasonable acidity. Some character here, quite a full mid-palate and pleasant if fairly short (and a bit hot) on the finish. No alcohol level quoted on label but info sheet says 'between 12-14%' which covers quite a potential range! Comment heard that it tasted 'sweet' - I didn't find it so but possibly it might have given that impression tasted straight after Table 3's Saumur Chenin/Chardonnay blend.

Saperavi – Juicy, rather like a Loire red, such as Table 3's Cabernet Franc without the oak! Juicy berry finish, fresh palate, nice balance, really quite impressive. IWC Bronze award which may indicate they're looking to market this one more widely.

Table 2: Richard

Hildago Manzanilla Pasada Pastrana	15.5%	around £12.00
Blandy's Madeira Duke of Clarence	19%	£13.25
Charles Shaw Trader Joe's Shiraz 2013		\$1.99

A sherry and a madeira from two famous names. Plus a cheap'n'cheerful from Trader Joe's.

Manzanilla – Close to being the star of tonight's show, this terrific single vineyard Manzanilla from top producer Hildago surprised a number of us by its complexity and sheer drinkability. Many contrasts here – palate nutty but fresh, light delicate aromas but a huge depth of mellow almond flavour. IWC Silver 2015. Seriously underpriced, as much sherry is.

Madeira – A rich sweetish style, toffee and nuts on the palate with a nice tart finish. 100% Tinto Negra Mole, fortified then 'cooked' in the traditional estufa tanks for 3 months.

Trader Joe's Shiraz – Wikipedia describes Charles Shaw wines as 'a brand of "extreme value", bargain-priced wine'. Several varietals are bottled exclusively for Trader Joe's grocery stores in California at \$1.99, hence the nickname 'Two Buck Chuck'. It's fair to say this had a mixed reception, 'bit disappointing', 'mass market restaurant wine' were comments heard. Probably lives down to its price level! Interesting to taste it though, since you can't have an opinion till you do!

Table 3: David

Cuvee de la Contesse Saumur 2013 (white)	13%	n/a UK
Chateau Montreuil-Bellay 'La Flamboyante' Saumur 2011 (red)	13%	n/a UK

A Loire-fest from David with two locally produced wines that had travelled very well.

White Saumur – Chenin-Chardonnay blend that's increasingly popular in the Loire. Lovely upfront aromatic nose, lip-smacking savoury attack, nice lemony astringency and a decent finish. From a spectacular chateau on a hill near Saumur.

Red Saumur – Cabernet Franc with 8 months oak which was apparent on the nose (in a good way). Full bodied with a good long finish and a satisfying mouthfeel. Very nice example of Loire Cabernet Franc, which can vary from quite lightweight to relatively full-bodied like this one.

Table 4: Paul

Porta 6 Lisboa 2012	13.5%	£9.99
Cadillac 2010		

A Portuguese red and a Bordeaux stickie from Paul – quality affordable examples.

Porta 6 – Smooth palate, at first sip seemed quite light-bodied for this blend of port grapes (Tinta Roriz, Castelao, Touriga Nacional) but with an attractive silkiness. Gained more persistence on the palate and finish. Quite intense soft red fruit, mellow and very drinkable.

Cadillac – Sweet wine from an appellation close to Sauternes, made with the same Sauvignon-Semillon blend, and equally capable of a touch of botrytis in good years. Young, light pineapple and spice nose, very fresh with crisp acidity. Orange peel and apricot palate, sweetness most apparent on the finish. Very nice in a lighter style.

Some unusual and interesting wines, many of which you wouldn't find very easily if at all, which made this particular annual Four Tables tasting both enjoyable and mind-broadening!

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