

The North Hampshire Wine Society Blog



'A Discovery Evening' Presenter: Mick Gleed

24 February 2016

An invitation to potential new members to come and discover our Society's meetings via an unusual selection of wines from Laithwaites, presented by Mick in his unique 'de-mystifying' style!

The wines

Whites

- 1. Bellarine Bay Fiano 2015, Victoria, Australia** 11.5% £8.99
Nice aromatic Fiano nose with notes of pear – 'you can smell the crispness' was one comment heard. Spritzy lively attack, very young and zippy, fullish palate and big fresh acidity on the finish. Someone said 'a hint of Lilt' meaning some tropical notes I think! Simple drinkable aperitif wine, well-liked in the room.
- 2. Nastl Cuvee Anno 1656 Gruner Veltliner 2014, Kempstal, Austria** 12% £11.99
Much less aromatic nose than the Fiano (to be expected), creamier attack but very crisp on the mid palate with just a hint of typical Gruner 'white pepper'. Family owned vineyards, also producing wine in another premium region Kamptal. Very mixed reaction to this – some didn't like it at all, some really did. Some thought the finish was a little bitter. 'Hard work' was heard - possibly so compared with the Fiano, but crucially Gruner is a food wine... There's strong competition at around £12 mind you – eg The Wine Society's Exhibition Gruner from Willi Brundlmayer is a very competitive £12.99 for its quality.
- 3. Tikohi Pinot Gris 2015, Marlborough, NZ** 12.5% £11.99
'Opal Fruits' was an immediate comment heard (we were clearly on form with our brand name comparisons this evening!) Label blurb was a bit more upmarket, quoting 'kumquat rind' ☺ Decent upfront nose, nice full palate though only 12.5% alcohol (to be applauded). General agreement that an impressive immediate attack fell away a bit on the finish. Very fruit-driven, generally liked, may seem a tad pricey but probably pretty much par for the course for mid-range Kiwi Pinot Gris - fast becoming fashionable.
- 4. D'Oro Chardonnay 2014, Monterey County, California** 14% £15.49
Derek had some interesting background on the producer of this wine – Turnkey Wines don't grow grapes or produce wine themselves – rather they produce for other growers/wineries. You might be tempted to call it 'vanity winemaking' in the same mould as 'vanity publishing'. Vanilla nose from 6 months in oak barrels, quite a tropical style as you'd expect from Californian Chardonnay. Felt to be overpriced (whether or not the fruit is all genuinely Monterey grown) but as soon as you put Monterey on a Californian Chardonnay label this sort of price is almost inevitable.

Reds

5. Weiler Schlipf Spatburgunder Trocken 2013, Baden, Germany 12.5% £11.99

Very pale colour, even for a Pinot Noir where it's expected. Unfiltered. Very slight (almost imperceptible) spritz on the tongue. Cherry nose, then raspberries and redcurrants on the palate, which is richer than the colour might suggest - again this is quite correct for Pinot Noir. Generally much liked around the room.

6. Danaris Blauer Zweigelt 2014, Kempstal, Austria 13% £9.99

A pretty cherry-red colour, deeper than wine 5, and a noticeable attractive savoury bite on the palate. A bit reminiscent of decent Chianti (but a bit cheaper!) - a number of us thought it felt 'Italian'. Very pleasant, looks good value, and a lot of the room would have bought this.

7. Chateau Vartely Dealu Nucului Cabernet Sauvignon 2013, Moldova 14% £8.99

'Ooooh - maybe just a bit volatile on the nose!' was my first thought. My notes say 'nose on the edge' - not always a bad thing in moderation! A bit reminiscent of the Ch Musar style... It had been double decanted by Derek, and prominent herbal notes were apparent. On the palate it tasted rather different - smooth, dark, brooding (say my notes!) with good blackcurrant Cabernet fruit holding its 14% alcohol well. The room liked this, and it looks a good off-beat buy at £8.99.

8. Stones & Bones Touriga Nacional/Tinto Roriz/Alicante Bouchet 2013, Lisboa, Portugal 14% £8.99

Inky purple colour (no rim at all really) and a 'porty' nose – unsurprising since these grapes are used in Port. 'Sturdy-looking' was an apt comment overheard! Typically for a Portuguese blend this was smooth, very soft, eminently drinkable, undemanding in terms of tannins (hardly evident) and arguably a tad lacking in character, but a typical example of Portuguese port-grape table wine. I bet Laithwaites sells this by the shed-load – it's what you might describe as a typical Laithwaites 8.99-er!

Some fascinating wines – a very good mix of geography and styles - presented by Mick in his inimitable fashion backed up by some useful insights from Derek

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