

The North Hampshire Wine Society Blog



'South African Evening' Presenter: Chris Horridge

23 March 2016

The very welcome return of Chris Horridge from Altus Wine in Farnborough. Chris took us through half a dozen premium South African wines from smaller producers
Prices in red included a discount for purchase on the night

The wines

Whites

1. Waterkloof Circumstance Sauvignon Blanc 2015

Cool coastal site of 56ha, farmed biodynamically. This Sauvignon is made with whole bunch pressing and natural wild yeasts. "The Pouilly Fume of Stellenbosch" – Tim Atkin review. Restrained 'old world' Sauvignon nose, quite a vibrant full palate, nice finish. 'Clean' was heard around the room - my notes say 'precise'. Not at all a fruit-driven style, and the group really liked this - so much so that we opened a second bottle at half time to enjoy with the cheeses.

£11.00

£10.00

2. Waterkloof Estate Seriously Cool Chenin Blanc 2014

40 year old bush vines, again farmed biodynamically. Apple skin nose, with possibly just a small hint of creamy buttery wool, although the classic 'wet wool' nose of Chenin Blanc wasn't very prominent. A weightier palate here than wine 1, some mild honey on the mid palate, clean and fresh on the finish. Again the group enjoyed this – a show of hands was quite a close run thing with wine 1 which shaded it.

13.5% £11.50

£10.50

3. Perderberg Dry Land Barrel Ferment Chenin Blanc 2014

A barrel-fermented Chenin Blanc - a style South Africa can pull off remarkably well. Bush vines with low yields, 75% not irrigated so there's concentrated fruit, fermented in 225 litre French oak barriques. Only the producer's third vintage of this wine. Vibrant pale gold colour with just a hint of green. Lovely smoky nose with plenty of citrus fruit coming through. Huge acidity cuts through a rich palate and the finish is long. Some discussion about the nose as it developed in the glass – a hint of pine (rather like a modern retsina) was Chris' thought. Sadly the majority weren't keen on this style, and it does of course need food to show at its best, but it seems even well-balanced oak doesn't go down very well (such is the damage done by over-oaked cheapie Chardonnay!)

13.5% £12.50

£11.50

Reds

4. Perderland Dry Land Pinotage 2013

14% £12.50

If over-oaked cheapies have ruined many a Chardonnay, then the dire reputation of cheap Pinotage can taint even decent examples by association, so it was heartening that pretty much all of the group enjoyed this one! Low yield and unfiltered, quite a deep colour showing only a little age at the rim, just a little of the classic burnt character on the nose, a nice full 'lifted' mid-palate and a dry finish without any discernable alcoholic heat. Quite savoury – 'good with venison' was one comment overheard. Soft, attractively reticent tannins on the aftertaste. Two bottles opened, to enjoy as the half-time cheeses and pate went down.

£11.50

5. Glenelly Glass Collection Shiraz 2009

14.5% £12.00

Stellenbosch - Rhone-style 'Shiraz-moving-to-Syrah' old rather than new world style. Lots of entertaining discussion about the nose – 'burnt rubber' (the classic description) was topped by 'Scalextric wheels' (the left field description but agreed pretty accurate!). Rim not showing too much age for a 7 year old wine, a tannic palate with real complexity and decent length, plenty going on here – kept changing in the glass. Generally much liked around the room.

£11.00

6. Glenelly Grand Vin 2007

£15.00

Cabernet/Shiraz/Merlot/Petit Verdot blend (31/44/24/1%), fermented separately before blending. Very Cabernet on the palate, so quite surprising that the largest element is Shiraz – the Cabernet eucalyptus and blackcurrant fruit was definitely predominant. Very smooth, very fresh, elegant mid palate and lovely finish, quite backward still, lots more to come here it seems. Much enjoyed!

£13.50

A super tasting, lovely wines much enjoyed by all, with Chris' usual interesting insights and lively informative presentation - a real treat.

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