

The North Hampshire Wine Society Blog



'Waitrose pairs' Presenter: Simon Plumtree

25 January 2017

Simon started off the 2017 programme with a series of paired comparison wines from Waitrose

The wines

Whites

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| 1. Cave de Beblenheim Kleinfels Riesling 2014, Alsace | 12% | £9.99 |
| Two different Riesling styles to compare. Both quite pale, this Alsace a nice lemon shade with just a little more colour than wine 2. 'Fruit polos' was overheard – I'd say that's perhaps a little harsh - but this was certainly a softer fruitier style with a 'sweeter' palate, quite delicate though with perhaps not quite the richness usually associated with Alsace Riesling. 'Palate doesn't really go anywhere' was another comment. | | |
| 2. Baily & Baily Folio Clare Valley Riesling 2014 | 11.5% | £8.39 |
| Big big Clare Valley lime and kerosene nose – either you like these classic Aussie Riesling characteristics or you don't! I thought the nose more smoky than petrolly but definitely developing nicely. A full-on palate with big lime fruit, the expected upfront style, a pretty dry finish. A very reasonable example, just a little simple on the finish, but at this price you wouldn't expect a lot of complexity.
Comparison winner: Wine 2 by a short head | | |
| 3. Dourthe La Grande Cuvee Sauvignon Blanc 2015, Bordeaux | 12% | £8.99 |
| Bordeaux vs New Zealand Sauvignon. Restrained nettley nose, quite pure. Grapefruit on the palate which is reasonably rounded, with the expected prominent acidity fairly well balanced with the fruit - a wine that has probably benefitted significantly from the very ripe 2015 vintage. | | |
| 4. Peter Yealands Reserve Sauvignon Blanc 2015, New Zealand | 13% | £11.59 |
| Massive gooseberry and currant leaf nose (some discussion over whitecurrant or blackcurrant leaf – the sort of dispute you don't normally hear until about wine 7...) and on the palate real richness with plenty of ripe upfront fruit but also hints of green pepper and nettles. Pretty complex and rather impressive for the price – no doubt this Reserve has a bit more to it than their entry level Sauvignon (widely available at a couple of pounds less). Interestingly this went down better than expected with those of us for whom this style is usually way over the top!
Comparison winner: Pretty much 50/50 (indicates a considerable triumph for Wine 4 I think!) | | |

Reds

5. **Dourthe Reserve Montagne St Emilion 2014** 12.5% £11.49

Merlot/Cabernet Sauvignon. I thought this had rather a jammy stewed nose, but I was in the minority – most of us preferred this to wine 6. Soft palate with rather a commercial feel to it I thought, and really very little discernible St Emilion character. 2014 is an ‘early drinking’ Bordeaux vintage so it’s perhaps not fair to expect much complexity or regional characteristic in a negociant wine like this made primarily for easy/early drinking.

6. **Waitrose St Emilion 2014** 12.5% £13.49

Merlot/Cabernet Franc. Again, not a particularly good example of what St Emilion is about. Many on our table thought this had a fusty nose, but it has to be said there wasn’t really a difference between the two bottles, so that perception may just have been by comparison with the pretty innocuous nose on the Dourthe. A dry palate, earthy, but the fruit was struggling a bit here. Not greatly enjoyed, although a few of us thought it still had rather more about it than the Dourthe.

Comparison winner: Dourthe (on balance I thought that was regrettable!)

7. **Waitrose Foundation Cederberg Shiraz 2015, South Africa** 14.5% £8.99

Fruit-forward Shiraz with loads of spice and pepper. Ripe smooth palate which wore its 14.5% alcohol well. Generally liked in the room.

8. **M Chapoutier Petite Ruche Crozes Hermitages 2014** 13% £15.99

Real quality here. An intense nose with that northern Rhone ‘cool’ (as in mint not hipster) – a smoky, savoury, smooth, silky palate with a decent finish. ‘Bacon frazzles’ was one description overheard, and ‘my old grandmother’s settee’ another - which perhaps indicated the start of some development on the nose. All very characteristic of northern Rhone Syrah from a fine producer, and a real contrast to the South African Shiraz – an interesting and instructive pairing.

Comparison winner: Wine 8 but with some takers for wine 7