

The North Hampshire Wine Society Blog



'Old World New World' Presenter: Richard Brown

26 July 2017

The wines

Whites

- 1. Hatzidakis Santorini Assyrtiko 2015, Greece** 13.5% £15.50
Amazon
Also available from The Wine Society and in limited supply at Waitrose. Visually maybe a little yellower than expected but perfectly fresh with a honeyed nose becoming more pronounced. A deliberately bracing palate with volcanic astringency, austere but full (this is *not* Assyrtiko lite! – the Hatzidakis winery is cutting edge experimental.) One of Victoria Moore's 'best volcanic wines'. Mixed reactions, some liked the finish, some didn't, but I can vouch for its drinkability with an authentic Greek salad...
- 2. Narince 2015, Kayra Wines, Anatolia, Turkey** 11.5% £13.70
Wine Pool
The first of two wines from the same Turkish winery, made by a Californian. Colour very pale, bright. A rather fruity upfront nose with a hint of leafiness, some thought also of whitecurrants. Pleasant enough mouthfeel but seemed rather dilute in the middle and short on the finish, with the nose promising more than the palate delivered. General reaction – well-made but nothing special.
- 3. Chateau Ksara Blanc de Blancs 2016, Bekaa Valley, Lebanon** 13% £13.85
Ksara, a distinguished winery from the Bekaa Valley, is probably second only to Musar in the Lebanon claim to wine fame. Oak immediately obvious on the nose (4 months in barrel) which interestingly some who usually steer away from oaky noses loved! Acidity and oiliness in good balance on the palate, full-bodied, oak all the way through to the finish which a few of us found a bit much. Some thought there were Riesling notes (acidity and oiliness?) Quality stuff, a blend of Sauvignon, Semillon and Chardonnay. 93 points from Decanter. Perhaps give it a year or so to settle down a bit?
- 4. Jerusalem Special Edition 2014 Gewurztraminer, Israel** 12.5%
Colour yellow and concentrated. Nose aromatic and not too Turkish Delight, but 'banana' was overheard. An off dry floral palate with a splendidly dry finish, good bracing acidity and quite a full mouthfeel. All very well balanced – not always the case with Gewurztraminer! This was very much enjoyed around the room, and did go pretty well with the blue cheese as suggested.

Reds

5. Gaia Agiorgitiko 2015, Nemea, Greece

13.5% £15.00

Another distinguished Greek winery, Gaia makes some splendid wines (their top notch Assyrtiko is part barrel-fermented and a real contrast to the Santorini style). From the price this would be their entry level Agiorgitiko. Attractively perfumed berry nose with darker damson fruit underneath. Chewy tannins and a slightly hot finish, deceptively powerful. Mixed reactions around the room - some thought it disappointing. I thought a year in bottle would be beneficial as it's still pretty young.

6. Recanati Shiraz 2016, Israel

13.5% £14.99
Waitrose

From the hot climate of the Golan Heights. The pungent 'bacon frazzler' nose was commented on all around the room. Perhaps a little less of the 'burnt rubber' character than some Shiraz, but it was there... A really savoury palate (even more bacon!) with obvious mocha notes on the finish. A big wine, not over-subtle but none the worse for that, and very drinkable. Both tonight's Israeli wines were very much enjoyed by the group.

7. Buzbag Reserve 2012, Kayra Wines, Anatolia, Turkey

13% £16.35

The second Turkish wine probably suffered a bit by comparison with the very enjoyable Shiraz. 'Vimto' was overheard... A rather insipid fruit cordial nose, a little reminiscent of some lesser Italian wines, correctly made but rather ordinary on the palate, short finish with little structure. Not particularly enjoyed by the group, but you certainly can't generalise about the quality of Turkish wine on the basis of a single producer.

8. Hochar Pere et Fils 2012, Lebanon

14% £17.99

The second wine of legendary Chateau Musar whose story of continued wine production under the most difficult of war-torn conditions is astonishing and well-known. This second label wine is made for more immediate drinking than Musar itself which can age for many years. 'Date and figs' was an apt description of the nose overheard, and though more 'polished' than Musar (more user-friendly if you like!) that almost-port dried fruit character and something slightly 'of the earth' is reminiscent of its big brother. What a good way to end the tasting!

Thanks to Richard for introducing wines guaranteed to open minds and divide opinion - not made to a stereotype nor to a commercial price point and not the sort of wines you come across every day. Very interesting and informative - a tasting that was appreciated by all.

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