

The North Hampshire Wine Society Blog



'Wines of New Zealand – a tasting with Quentin Sadler'

22 March 2017

The wines

Whites

1. Villa Maria Private Bin Riesling 2015 (Marlborough)

12.5% £10.49
Waitrose

Very pale lemon colour with a hint of green. Pungent lime and lychee nose, pretty classic young NZ Riesling. Surprisingly full slightly spritzy palate, rounded and gentle in the middle with a pleasingly tart lime finish. Quite simple but very well done with really zingy lime fruit and vibrant aromatics. 8.5g residual sugar smooths out the palate.

2. Te Awa Left Field Albarino 2015 (Gisborne)

£12.99
Wine Reserve

Quentin described this as like sniffing almond blossom – 'delicately floral'. A fruitier riper nose and palate than a Spanish Albarino, but just as lively with grapefruit quite persistent on the finish. 'Grapefruit acidity dances across the palate'. I thought the ripe peachy mouthfeel sat very well with the zingy finish.

3. Villa Maria Reserve Wairau Valley Sauvignon Blanc 2016 (Marlborough)

12.5% £14.00
Asda, Majestic

Quite a grassy nose along with the expected gooseberry. A classy, full, absolutely fruit-driven palate but with some lees evident - 2 months on its lees adds some complexity and a little more depth. A little less overtly 'gooseberry cordial' than some Marlborough Sauvignons and all the better for it, giving the leesy palate a chance to shine. Very good length. Maybe one to keep for a year?

4. Villa Maria Single Vineyard Seddon Pinot Gris 2015 (Marlborough)

13.5% £17.00
NZ House of Wine

Lovely restrained 'cool' nose - tricky for a more restrained wine to follow NZ Sauvignon but this had a good stab at it! Texture full and round, and perhaps more interesting than the nose? Tasting significantly less 'sweet' than some NZ Pinot Gris which can vary a lot in residual sugar. More impressive the longer it sat in the glass.

5. Elephant Hill Chardonnay 2014 (Hawkes Bay)

5% £17.24
Gt Western Wines

The label displays a tactile elephant's trunk! Leesy yeasty nose with a little oak – 11 months in old/new oak barrels. Oak more prominent on the palate but this is no woody monster – it's admirably restrained but the oak definitely adds to the whole. Quentin mentioned an 'orange peel' character too. A tight taut Chardonnay, showing all the reasons why Hawkes Bay is such a great Chardonnay area.

Reds

6. Kumeu Village Pinot Noir 2014 (Auckland)

'Kumeu Village' is made by the rated Kumeu River Winery as a second label range – there's a top class Chardonnay too (an absolute bargain at 9.95). This is a properly pale colour with a redcurrant and raspberry nose, very aromatic with just a hint of development ('Transylvanian stuffed cabbage!') Juicy redcurrant palate with minor oak in the background. Open stainless steel fermentation with 11 months in French oak. Classy, very good value.

£9.95
Wine Society

7. Vidal Estate Reserve Syrah 2014 (Hawkes Bay)

Colour completely opaque with next to no rim visible. Black fruit nose developing in the glass. Some rubber and mint on the palate with the expected spice and dark fruit, but also a lovely cool finish. Mouthfeel full and spicy but also 'lifted' and fresh – a lovely balanced Hawkes Bay Syrah from a very good vintage.

2.5% £14.99
NZ House of Wine

8. Esk Valley Gimblett Gravels Merlot-Cab-Malbec 2011 (Hawkes Bay)

Bit of a treat – Gimblett Gravels is top NZ terroir and this was much enjoyed around the room. There's some Cabernet Franc in the mix which gives it an attractive edgy savoury quality. It's fermented in concrete with lees stirring and the complexity this produces was evident on the finish.

14% £14.49
NZ House of Wine

A terrific tasting, proving that New Zealand wine is (of course) 'not just Sauvignon'. The variety and quality of the wines was probably no surprise to many of us, but it was splendid to be able to taste the obvious quality across a range of wine styles in this super line-up, with Quentin's entertaining presentation

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