

The North Hampshire Wine Society Blog



'Carte-du-Vin: South Africa'

Presenter: Torquil Jack

24 May 2017

The wines

Whites

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| 1. Clos Malverne Sauvignon Blanc Brut, Stellenbosch | 12.5% | £13.00 |
| <p>A sparkling Sauvignon Blanc. A hint of new mown hay on the nose and a little tropical lychee, but only a slight gooseberry character which did intensify a bit in the glass. Warm-climate Sauvignon, a full but dry palate, rather a warm finish, felt fresher on the palate than on the finish perhaps. My note says 'you get more of the traditional Sauvignon character on the nose after 10 minutes in the glass'. Comments around the room were generally positive.</p> | | |
| 2. Barton Estate Shiraz Rose, Walker Bay | 13.5% | £9.50 |
| <p>A deeply coloured rose due to 6 hours on skins, then apparently also left on its lees after fermentation, a technique more associated with generating complexity in white wines. This rose doesn't really attempt to be complex but some of us noted a nice raspberry nose, a very dry but full-ish palate – though some thought it 'a bit sharp' – and a punchy finish with strong cherry notes. A fairly simple robust rose that would probably stand up pretty well at the BBQ.</p> | | |
| 3. Noble Hill Bloem White 2016, Franschoek | 13.5% | £9.50 |
| <p>An unusual (and many of us thought a pretty successful) blend of 65% Chenin Blanc and 35% Viognier. Described by Torquil as this producer's entry level Chenin Blanc, and a 'party wine'. A peachy nose, quite aromatic in a light sort of way, with some 'non-fruit' Chenin character also there in the background. Warm Viognier on the palate, quite round and full, but with a really good streak of Chenin acidity lifting the predominantly Viognier weight and fruit. 'This has some guts' say my notes, and although comments in the room were mixed, some of us thought this blend worked rather well. Unpretentious and very drinkable.</p> | | |
| 4. Arendsig Chardonnay 2016, Robertson | 14% | £13.00 |
| <p>A sharp difference of opinion here. Bottle 1 went down the RH table and was adjudged to be faulty by about half the table. The others were happy with it. Interesting, revealing how individual tasters' palates and perceptions can differ. For example I know that my own palate is not very receptive to minor 'faults' such as reduction where individual preferences also come into play, as opposed to major faults such as obvious corkiness. So for some of us bottle 1 seemed faulty and for others it didn't. Vive la difference! There was a little bottle variation perhaps, and I did pick up a faint whiff of elastoplast on the nose of bottle 1 at first sniff which dissipated quite quickly - a touch of bottle-stink maybe. But on to the general characteristics – this is a single vineyard Chardonnay using natural yeasts, unoaked, with a lively citrus character, some yeasty leesiness, a lovely acidity on the mid-palate and a pleasant though not over-long finish. My style of Chardonnay, and I think the comments on the LH table - whose bottle was certainly sound - were overall quite positive.</p> | | |

5. Noble Hill Viognier 2014, Franschoek

13.5% £13.00

A much darker nose dominated by that catch-all description 'spice', the overall impression being herbal rather than fruity. 300 litre barrels are used in fermentation so there is some oak on the palate, and lees stirring makes the most of the Viognier stone fruit characteristics. Palate opening up in the glass. This is a weighty Viognier with some fat texture on the mid-palate, if you like that style.

Reds

6. Bellevue Estate Cinsault 2015

13.5% £10.00

The correct pale-ish colour for Cinsault, with a fresh but not over-fruity nose. Although not a heavy wine it packs more of a punch than you might expect from the appearance, with some strawberry/raspberry fruit and tannins not too intrusive, but a rather astringent finish. Good to taste a pure Cinsault as it's not all that common as a single varietal.

7. Lynx Wines Vino Tinto 2013/14

14% £10.00

The winemaker at Lynx Wines had worked in Spain and this had a developed, earthy, rather 'Spanish' nose in a way, though the blend is Cabernet Sauvignon, Merlot, Cabernet Franc, Petit Verdot, Shiraz and Mourvedre. A deep garnet colour, very little rim, legs in the glass, tannic structure dominant, and a hot finish (14% alcohol). I did overhear one comment 'fruit bomb' but my impression was more of a tannic palate with a rather dry finish.

8. Triton 'Black Oystercatcher' 2015, Cape Agulhas

13.5% £13.00

A very heavy bottle (no green considerations here then) – the blend largely Shiraz with just a dash of Cabernet Sauvignon and Cabernet Franc. Some softish peppery fruit, a little menthol (this is a cooler climate wine) with tannins to the background and a rounded full palate. Easier drinking than wine 7, and perhaps intended as more of a crowd pleaser.

9. Clos Malverne Pinotage 'Le Café' 2012

14% £11.50

Andy provided us with some background on the two styles of Pinotage – the traditional versus the newer 'coffee-style' - the name on the label identifies which this is! A deep purple colour, nice plummy nose with very obvious coffee notes, palate full and big and modern, soft tannins, alcoholic finish. The strong coffee effect worked rather well I thought. Basket press technique – gentle pressing meaning a higher % of free run juice and consequently very few rough edges here. Generally much enjoyed.

Thanks to Torquil for bringing a wide selection of wine styles to broaden palates and minds, and for demonstrating the rapid development and increasing diversity of South African wine