

The North Hampshire Wine Society Blog



'South Africa'

Presenter: Chris Horridge from Altus Wine

27 September 2017

Prices below included a generous 'on the night' discount

The wines

Whites

1. Paul Cluver Sauvignon Blanc 2016, Elgin 13% £11.00

Leading light of South African wine whose day job is brain surgeon! Elgin is a cool coastal climate and there are comparisons with Western Australia, although their sauvignons are riper with higher alcohol (it's warmer). This has 15% Semillon to round out the mouthfeel. Very pale with a slight greenish tint. A little restrained oak adds weight (but no oaky flavour) to the mid-palate. Fresh and persistent on the finish. This was really enjoyed by the group.

2. Fairview Darling Chenin Blanc 2016, Paarl 13.5% £9.50

Fairview is a massive all-Fairtrade property of 584 ha. These Chenin grapes are hand harvested from 75 year old bush vines grown at 300m. Winemaking is the usual cool fermentation then 2 months on lees. Very pale, no spritz on the tongue, seemed a little insipid on the mid-palate (but Chenin following Sauvignon is likely to make the Chenin appear lean by comparison). Certainly one to drink young, but the group felt this was perhaps a little disappointing.

3. Rustenberg Chardonnay 2015, Stellenbosch 14% £13.00

Whole bunch pressing, 300 litre barrels (large, French, not brand new), 12 month on lees. A lovely pineapple nose, oak certainly but citrus too; a balanced palate with decent acidity and a long finish with some oak evident at the end. Screwcapped. A big-boned Chardonnay made with an admirably light touch.

Reds

4. Fairview Pinotage 2015, Paarl 14% £9.50

Old bush vines, 15 months in old American and French oak. Not as much 'rubber tyre' here as you often get on lesser Pinotages. A nice vibrant plum colour (open top fermentation for colour and tannins) and plenty of fruit on both nose and palate. Smooth and drinkable – we thought this was great with the pate. No huge structure but finished with some softish tannins. One comment overheard that this was the best Pinotage they'd tasted.

5. Glenelly Glass Collection Cabernet 2014, Stellenbosch

14.5% £10.75

The property of the former owner of Bordeaux 2nd growth Ch Pichon Longueville Comtesse de Lalande. A deep blackcurrant colour, a 'dark' Cabernet nose with cedarwood notes. Quite hard going on the mid-palate with big tannins and a dry finish. A little aggressive at the moment perhaps, but would obviously benefit hugely from the right food. Some nice menthol on the finish but also some hot alcohol which perhaps just indicates the need for it to settle and harmonise. But a lot depends on whether you fundamentally like your Cabernets at 14.5% alcohol.

6. Glenelly Estate Reserve Red 2011, Stellenbosch

£14.50

40% Syrah/40% Cabernet/10% Petit Verdot/10% Merlot. The blend varies a bit with the vintage. Deep colour with coloured legs, looks quite young and bright. This was mellower and seemed much more integrated and balanced than wine 5 – and more typically Glenelly perhaps? Much enjoyed around the room.

Another informative tasting from Chris, and it might also be worth mentioning a feeling among some members of our group that 6 wines can be plenty as long as they're interesting - as Chris' selections always are!

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