

## The North Hampshire Wine Society Blog



### 'New Spain'

Presenter: Eddie Lewis

25 April 2018

Prices below in red included an on-the-night discount

#### The wines

##### Whites

#### 1. Oriol Rossell Cava Brut NV, Penedes

11.5% £13.49  
£10.23

Some good comments from the group started off this evening of 'new' Spanish wines from Laithwaites. This Cava made from organic grapes grown in a high part of Penedes was generally liked, and my own notes say 'fruit to the fore, not as austere as some'. Others thought 'Cox's apples' and 'sherbet lemons from my childhood'. Not a particularly long finish but a very pleasant ripe mouthfeel with some peachiness and a little breadiness - a good example of why Cava at more than a tenner can be worth the extra with quality generally on the up.

#### 2. Sendero des Santos Albarino 2011, Rias Baixas

12.5% £12.99  
£8.18

This rather unconventional Albarino really divided opinion in the room - some loved it, some really didn't. (Some also thought there might have been a bit of bottle variation - not unlikely given its vintage - but it seemed minimal.) If tasted blind many of us might not have picked it as an Albarino - it's richer and far more developed than 'normal', which is obviously deliberate as the producer apparently held back some cases in an attempt to show how well Albarino can age. But for some of us its age and stage of development was an issue, whereas for others its complexity, richness, and slightly over-the-top almost-a-hint-of-sherry character was attractive. I didn't dislike it and found its palate interesting, but my notes do say 'although some freshness retained it may be at the end of its life?' Bottle-aged Albarino can be expensive so this example may be at the lower price end of the style.

#### 3. Los Hermanos Manzanos Blanco Barrica 2015, Rioja

13% £13.99  
£8.62

On to two wines that perfectly illustrated the difference between the modern and the more traditional style of white Rioja. This modern version is a 50/50 Chardonnay and Viura blend, with barrel fermentation in new oak and 6 months ageing in cask. But the oak was nicely restrained, certainly not overpowering the creamy stone fruit palate. My notes mention a hint of mustiness on the nose which dissipated as it sat in the glass, and a soft structure with some tropical fruit character. The group overall seemed to feel that this was more successful than perhaps we expected. And coming back to it after wine 4 it held its own surprisingly well. Good value I thought.

**4. Marques de Murrieta Capellania Reserva 2012, Rioja** 13.5% £21.00  
**£18.84**

On to a big prestigious Rioja name – Marques de Murrieta’s celebrated white Rioja ‘Capellania’ is a big leap up in quality and price. 100% Viura from a single vineyard, 18 months in new oak, intended for a longer haul than wine 3. My notes say ‘an oaky nose but absolutely *not* woody, a savoury palate with remarkable freshness and balance, smooth, spicy and long, a dry finish with the oak more apparent than on the mid-palate’. Some of us noted the expected vanilla creaminess. I got the impression that most of the group really enjoyed this, and it was certainly a treat to taste a top quality traditional white Rioja from such a good estate.

**Reds**

**5. El Valin Mencía 2015, Bierzo** 13.5% £9.99  
**£7.44**

Mencia is a grape on a fashionable roll and this is an entry level Mencia from Bierzo, a region producing some exciting new Spanish wines. On the nose it’s a little reminiscent of a New World Gamay or I thought maybe a Bergerac – it’s a light style with vibrant raspberry/cherry character but richer in colour and deeper on the palate than the fruit-forward character might suggest. There is just a little tannin present but food immediately softens it right down. A really juicy mouthwatering palate that went particularly well with the Manchego cheese - one of the evening’s splendid Spanish food matches for the wines on show.

**6. La Canterra Reserva 2011, Carinena** 13% £9.49  
**£6.83**

60% old vine Garnacha 40% Tempranillo blend, 14 months in barrel plus the requisite bottle ageing for Reserva category. 2011 was a pretty good Spanish red vintage. A lightweight nose with loads of red fruit still dominant, with a fuller palate - soft and smooth and definitely ready now. A few of us thought perhaps a touch ‘commercial’ but there’s nothing wrong with drinkability at this price (especially the offer price on the night!) and it was generally enjoyed.

**7. Selecccion Numerada 29 2015, Ribera del Duero** 14.5% £12.99  
**£8.84**

‘Ribera de Duero makes some of Spain’s finest wines’ says Laithwaites’ notes – it does and they can be pricey. Laithwaites describes this as a one-off parcel of ‘declassified Ribera from a top estate, offered to you at a crazily good price’. As ever it’s the wine in the bottle that matters. Colour a vibrant garnet (not particularly deep for a ripe Ribero from 2015?), a good characterful Tempranillo nose with plenty of soft vanilla oak, on the mid-palate dark morello cherries - tasty and full, some prominent alcohol on the finish. My notes say ‘big, perhaps not all that complex’. A good price for a wine that got a general thumbs up from the group.

**8. Genium Celler 2010, Priorat** 15% £17.99  
**£15.46**

On to another in-the-news region Priorat, home to some exciting new reds. Low yields from schist slopes usually mean a minerally grip to the wines. This one is 45% 90-year-old Garnacha, 20% each Merlot and Syrah, 10% Carinena (Carignan). 12 months in 20% new oak. Some of us got the Syrah on the nose as ‘plimsolls (rubbery)’ and ‘unfurled lilo’, others got ‘mint but not coolmint – more liquorice’. My notes say ‘a really interesting complex nose as per descriptions, a whiff of coffee and spice’. Big blackberry palate, still young – the suggested drink by date is 2025, and a predictably alcoholic finish. Eddie described it as ‘an approachable Priorat’ and I thought it a bit reminiscent - in body if not flavour - of some big South African Syrahs.

**9. Pagos de Tahola Gran Reserva 2007, Rioja**

14% £17.99

**£13.98**

100% Tempranillo from 50-60 year old vines planted at altitude (650m) on limestone. 6m small new French oak barrels then 18m in older oak. Lovely Rioja nose with some maturity, a silky soft dark cherry/black raspberry palate with some chewiness, all overlaid by a vanilla smoothness, some nice tobacco notes at the end. As expected there was mature development on both nose and palate but both still very fresh with the fruit holding well. We all enjoyed this – ‘that is tasty’ was the overheard comment that put it most succinctly!

A very enjoyable tasting by Laithwaites with some interesting wines, good talking points, and lots of background from Eddie. And competitive prices for on-the-night purchases.

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