

## The North Hampshire Wine Society Blog



### Decanter Awards from Asda Presenters: Richard Brown & Elaine Longstaff

22 August 2018

Richard and Elaine stepped into the breach at very short notice with a selection of Asda's 2018 Decanter and/or IWC medal-winners

#### The wines

##### Whites

- 1. Clara Hills Albarino, Rias Baixas 2017, Spain** 13% £7.18  
Decanter 90 points. We scored each wine ourselves before Richard gave us the 'official' Decanter scores, which produced some interesting and quite diverse results. To start, a zingy Albarino from north-west Spain, pale greenish lemon colour, slightly herbal nose with lemongrass and 'lemon sherbet', reasonably weighty palate although some thought a minimal finish. A decent example.
- 2. Cocciola Terre di Chieti Abruzzo 2016, Italy** 12.5% £5.48  
Decanter 90 points. Various comments around the room – a nose of 'almonds and marzipan' but also 'a marmite wine!'. A softer palate than the Albarino. Some of us really didn't rate this in comparison to wine 1 - 'not interesting' - but others enjoyed it so a very mixed reaction. It's likely that none of us had come across this regional Italian grape before so here's the winsearcher.com description: *Italian grape variety from the east coast of southern Italy, specifically Abruzzo and northern Puglia. It is a green-skinned grape that produces straw-colored wine with pronounced acidity and grassy, herbaceous aromas comparable to those found in Sauvignon Blanc.*
- 3. Pouilly Fume 2016, Oscar Brillant, France** 13% £11.58  
IWC 90 points. A bit of bottle variation here – bottle 2 seemed cleaner on nose and palate than bottle 1 which tasted 'leesier' but I thought improved sitting in the glass (or perhaps I just got used to it!) Mixed reactions again – table 2 loved it, table 1 less so, although that may well have been due to the bottle variation. Quite characteristic of Loire sauvignon although the slightly smoky character Pouilly Fume is famous for wasn't easy to detect. A pleasant and well made wine.
- 4. Extra Special Chenin Blanc 2017, Paarl, S Arica** 14% £6.00  
Decanter 90 points. Quite an aromatic Chenin and some definite oak on the nose (it's barrel-fermented) and even more on the palate. I'm a fan of oaked Chenin from South Africa but I thought this one a tad obvious. However when you look at the price perhaps it's expecting too much to find refinement, or any more to it than immediately meets the eye. In that sense it delivers what you might expect at the price, and I scored it 88 (correct but not particularly exciting).

## Reds

**5. La Moneda Premium Collection Malbec 2017, Central Valley, Chile** 13% £5.00

Decanter 90 points. On to the reds and a sure-fire crowd pleaser Malbec. This has had whole-bunch maceration, and some thought there was a slightly greenish (stalky?) nose. Colour nice and deep but not black. A ripe sweetish palate, soft and plummy, all as expected, and for early drinking. Damsons were mentioned (you're damsoned if you do and you're damsoned if you don't – oh dear...)

**6. Cotes du Rhone Villages Plan de Dieu 2016, France** 14% £8.00

Decanter 90 points. A good stylistic comparison with wine 5 as this had definite Rhone structure whereas wine 5 was all plummy velvet. A good deep garnet, not really showing any age at the rim. On the palate some thought it 'acidic' – certainly there were some softish tannins present here which wine 5 almost completely lacked. Finished dryish (not a criticism for a Rhone wine). Mixed reactions again, though some of us appreciated this more structured wine. I scored it 89.

**7. Cinsault 2017, Western Cape, S Africa** 14.5% £5.48

Decanter 92 points. It's fair to say that Cinsault can be an acquired taste but I think this example surprised some of us by not perhaps displaying quite the characteristics we expected! A deep not-quite-opaque colour, and a very soft palate for a Cinsault with no discernable tannins and very little 'rubber' or 'farmyard' (perhaps just as well!). Put on the spot I'd have described it as a 'BBQ wine' – a perfectly pleasant quite robust beefy red with not a lot of obvious Cinsault character, which the price rather bears out. However Decanter scored this pretty highly so perhaps I was too severe...

**8. Busby Estate Shiraz 2017, Langhorene Creek, S Australia** 14.5% £4.98

Decanter 92 points. Some interesting notes here on both nose and palate of spice (expected) and mint/menthol (less expected at this price point). A full palate with the alcohol worn reasonably well, and a dryish finish with perhaps just a hint of bitterness – not at all detracting from what I thought was pretty good value at under a fiver! No complexity, but how could there be really at 4.98? I scored this one 88.

Some amazingly low prices for wines scoring 90 points and above in the 2018 Decanter World Wine Awards – and much appreciation for Richard and Elaine's ingenuity in pulling them into an interesting tasting for us at very short notice.  
A few of the group were planning to get down to Asda...