

The North Hampshire Wine Society Blog



'Eastern European Wines'

Presenter: Simon Griffiths, Appellation Nation Cirencester

28 February 2018

The wines

Whites

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| 1. Liliac Feteasca Alba 2015, Romania | 13% | £14.75 |
| <p>A nose of dusky apricot, some thought peach, Simon said deliberately slightly oxidative, and honey was also mentioned. A fullish palate, acidity not prominent but sufficient to swerve any tendency to flabbiness. A number of us thought the mouthfeel was a bit like Viognier. 'Wine of Transylvania' emblazoned on the label – how could it not appeal?</p> | | |
| 2. Juhfark 2015, Tornai Pincészet Winery, Hungary | 13% | £12.50 |
| <p>A much more astringent nose here, a bit reminiscent of wines from volcanic soils, lots of granite stoniness. A vibrant zingy attack, some citrusy fruit and a slightly sherbety finish (in a good way) with some persistence. If you like Italian Greco di Tufo (from volcanic terroir) this might appeal? My notes say 'quite impressive' as it held up well coming back to it after the fuller-bodied wine 4. Of the whites this is the one I'd probably buy for interest and relative value.</p> | | |
| 3. Liliac 'Lily' Sauvignon Blanc-Chardonnay 2014, Romania | 13% | £7.00 |
| <p>A Sauvignon-dominant nose - 'bitter grapefruit pith' was one approving comment - but perhaps not quite as aromatic as you might expect on the palate, though there was some Chardonnay weight. Well made, decent balance, perhaps nose more convincing than palate, but very pleasant drinking and at 7.00 looked good value. The 2014 would now probably be right at the end of its drinking window.</p> | | |
| 4. Borovitza MRV 'Canyon Park' 2014, Bulgaria | 13% | £16.25 |
| <p>The most expensive of the whites, a southern Rhone-style 'MRV' blend (Marsanne-Rousanne-Viognier). 2 months in Bulgarian oak - too brief an exposure to be really apparent on nose or palate. Two bottles were opened and there was thought to be some bottle variation - the general consensus was that bottle 2 was significantly cleaner on the palate. Lots of harvesting and winemaking info on quite a fussy <i>front</i> label! Mixed reactions in the room to this wine, especially given the price.</p> | | |

Reds

5. Liliac Feteasca Neagra 2013, Romania

14% £14.75

The red version of wine number 1, the Feteasca Neagra grape blended with a little Merlot according to the back label. Aromatic, slightly menthol nose with red berries prominent, palate smooth and a bit fuller than the nose suggested. Soft mouthfeel, very little tannin, and again there were mixed reactions about this wine. Objectively I quite liked it but agreed with the general comment that you can get better value at the 15.00 price point. This is the trouble with limited production and/or limited availability wines – they're seldom going to represent 'value' in the way that consumers accustomed to a wide choice of well-made wines at lower price points now expect.

6. Melnik 55 2016, Logodaj Vineyard, Bulgaria

14% £14.95

A squat bottle, with quite an old-fashioned look to its label compared with most other wines this evening with their modern minimalist bottle design. A number of comments overheard included 'blackcurrant jelly' and 'tart cherry'. Palate smooth and rounded, but a really obvious hot hit of alcohol on the finish left the strongest impression, and the fruit seemed not quite robust enough to carry that alcohol. But it has to be said that the warming effect was pretty welcome on one of the coldest evenings we've had in the south of England for some years!

7. Nobile Rubin 2015, Logodaj Vineyard, Bulgaria

14% £17.50

A really interesting blend of Nebbiolo and Syrah. Not very obvious bedfellows but each was apparent on the palate as there was definitely some Nebbiolo refinement and fragrance mixed up with the Syrah spice, and also plenty of acidity with tart cherry notes again. Dark and dense in the glass. Some of us thought this unusual combo made a surprisingly satisfying whole.

8. Marble Land 2015, Yamantiev's Vineyard, Bulgaria

14.3% £25.00

A left bank Bordeaux blend (68% Cabernet Sauvignon plus Merlot) with a dash of Syrah. Simon said he thought this probably could last 15 years. A big wine with more obvious tannins, but also perhaps some slightly odd sweetish notes on the finish. Certainly ripe and muscular on the mid-palate and definitely one for the long haul.

A splendidly offbeat evening of interesting wines which it's certain that few of us would ever have come across previously – and I heard many comments at the end that the value of this sort of tasting is that it familiarises us with the unfamiliar, so many thanks to Simon for introducing us to these lesser known wines.

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