

The North Hampshire Wine Society Blog



Wines from Chile Presenter: David Flanders

27 June 2018

The wines

Whites

1. Koyle Don Cande Itata Muscat 2017

13% £8.25

Koyle is the new project of the Undurraga family now that they've sold the family-name company. The vineyards are biodynamic in transition, mainly red clay, and at around 400m altitude so relatively cool climate. This is an unusually crisp Muscat with a bit of viscosity in the glass but a lightweight palate. Citrus floral nose, a big grapey muscat palate, very decent acidity, some of us thought the length quite impressive. A good aperitif - prawns and salted almonds were also mentioned...

2. Koyle Costa Cuarzo Rapel Coastal Sauvignon Blanc 2017

13% £8.25

A cracking price for a really nice example of Chilean Sauvignon. Pale lemon - a very light colour and texture in the glass. A really lovely grassy nose which many of us thought (unsurprisingly) less overtly gooseberry than NZ sauvignon – in other words a pretty classic Chilean nose. A ripe palate with a satisfyingly full mouthfeel, but again a certain delicacy and refinement rather than a big gooseberry cordial style. The Wine Society notes mention 'blackcurrant leaf' which I think I also heard mentioned in the room. Finishes just a little short perhaps. A Sauvignon with wide appeal.

3. Undurraga Cauquenes Estate Maule Viognier-Roussanne-Marsanne 2017

14% £7.75

Only the third vintage of a wine that's attracted some very appreciative tasting notes in the press for 'value', including from jancisrobinson.com. A 14% Rhone blend and much weightier than the previous two wines. The pale colour in the glass belies a substantial nose with some peachy perfume (not particularly upfront but persistent) and a classic peachy stone fruit palate with quite a bit of aromatic weight and heft for the price. Comments overheard – 'apricots, spice, oily'. A little warm alcohol evident on the finish, but overall this is surely a bit of a stunner at under £8 – very good value indeed.

4. The Society's Exhibition Limari Chardonnay 2017

13.5% £9.95

I'll declare an interest here – Chardonnay from the cool climate limestone-rich Limari Valley is a particular favourite style of mine, so I was interested to hear what the group thought of this, especially as we tend collectively to a certain hesitancy when it comes to Chardonnays that have visited an oak barrel. I think it's fair to say that some of the group surprised themselves here and some didn't! The Wine Society's Exhibition wines are flagship wines designed to showcase the typicity of their region and will be made by top producers – this one is from Concha y Toro. Many comments on the oaky nose, but it was well in balance, and the part-barrel fermentation is in first and second use barrels so it's not all new oak. Some vanilla on the very fresh palate, but minerality and leesiness is its main characteristic. Quite tropical too, with some pineapple notes. A fine example of the mineral Limari style for under a tenner.

Reds

5. The Society's Chilean Merlot, Rapel 2016

14% £6.75

Possibly the most enjoyed wine of the evening going by all the appreciative comments around the room while this wine was being poured with the half-time cheeses and pate. 8 months in 225l barriques. Conch y Toro again. Not a deep colour but vibrant. Some comments overheard: 'Lovely lovely lovely nose' and 'that is juicy!' Classic mineral-tinged plummy Merlot palate, ripe and flavoursome with soft tannins hardly apparent, very user-friendly and gluggable. A remarkable price we thought.

6. Koyle Los Lingues Single Vineyard Alto Colchagua Reserva Carmenere 2015

14% £8.25

A different look to this wine - dark and brooding in the glass, almost opaque. On the nose much more complexity and development – 'forest floor', 'mushrooms', 'like decaying wood' (all approving comments!) Quite a concentrated palate with some firm tannins, very ripe, with dark spicy chocolate notes too. 'A good extra £1.50's worth – it's all gone into the wine' was one very apt comment overheard. Again we were pleasantly surprised at the low price for this quality.

7. The Society's Chilean Pinot Noir, Leyda 2016

14% £8.25

'We know what it is' – from the group's Pinot-detector suggested that this wine was displaying the expected characteristics! Partial barrel-fermentation and quite a leathery nose, but the palate had both raspberries and a touch of the farmyard, though not too overtly. One of us thought the palate was 'salty' – I certainly thought savoury. My notes say 'succulent nose, ripe palate, dry finish'. Oak + spice + a bit of development – very nice.

8. Tabali Vetas Blancas Cabernet Franc 2015

14.5% £12.50

Limari (northern tip of Chile) is essentially a desert – 'if it isn't a vine it's a cactus' - so the vines really have to struggle and the fruit is concentrated and intense. 'Currants, raisins, dark chocolate' were all overheard – also 'pencils, cabbages, herby mint, Xmas fruit, tobacco'. So there's quite a lot more going on here at this higher price point. One year in barrel, big firm tannins on the palate but softening up nicely, and a notably cedary character typical of Cabernet Franc. Quality stuff and a terrific end to a very enjoyable tasting.

I think the group was generally surprised at the quality to price ratio of tonight's well-chosen wines from David – all from The Wine Society so perhaps we shouldn't have been too surprised given the strength of their list across all price points.
A thoroughly enjoyable evening and a very good advert both for The Wine Society and for Chilean wines.

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