

The North Hampshire Wine Society Blog



'France vs The Rest of the World'

Presenter: David Flanders

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The wines

Whites

1. Taste The Difference Touraine Sauvignon Blanc 2017

13% £8.00
Sains

A zippy little Loire Sauvignon from increasingly quality conscious Touraine to start off David's evening of France vs. Rest of... comparisons. To further encourage those comparisons the wines were poured in pairs – a great way to emphasize their stylistic differences. Pale with slightly greenish hints, nose fresh and grassy, palate 'very tart' some thought, and a little thin in comparison to the ripeness of wine 2. A fresh simple style, well-made.

2. The Ned Sauvignon Blanc 2014, Marlborough, NZ

13% £10.99
various

David chose to compare wine 1 with a widely available and well-regarded Marlborough Sauvignon from a mid-range price point, but unusually with some bottle age. These wines are often drunk young, but those with some structural backbone can age for a few years and will take on different characteristics once that full-on gooseberry fruit has had time to recede a bit. Comments heard: 'aging like a Riesling', 'waxy' and 'paraffin' – all good Riesling descriptions! Green pepper notes on the nose and still spritzy on the fresh palate. Good to see how this had developed – not perhaps to everyone's taste but all appreciated the contrast between wines 1 and 2.

3. Macon Villages 2017

12.5% £6.99
Lidl

Pale lemon, nose fresh and slightly backward, apples. Palate rounded, 'no edges', 'creamy and appley', 'hot on the back'. One of Lidl's special limited parcels, a decent young fresh example of the value that can be found in the Macon and other 'lesser' Burgundy ACs.

4. De Bortoli 'The Astronomer' Chardonnay 2017, SE Australia

12.5% £5.99
Majestic

A yellower colour in the glass than wine 3 indicating a riper wine. Nose quite yeasty and leesy. Some good acidity on the palate – some thought 'buttery', others thought more 'creamy'. My notes say 'surprisingly edgy palate, decent all the way through'. Not complex, but good value entry-level Chardonnay from this reputable Aussie producer.

Reds

- 5. Domaine du Vallon Plan De Dieu Cotes du Rhone Villages 2016** 14% £6.99
Lidl
One bottle was decanted an hour earlier, the other just poured – again a good experiment to see what difference a bit of airing makes. Verdict – the decanted wine marginally softer and rounder, but not a lot in it (some differences of opinion as to how much!). On the nose a hint of jam, but still fresh and fruit-forward. A big palate, some alcohol but not too intrusive. ‘Quaffable’.
- 6. Secret Cellar Shiraz Grenache 2018, Papegaaiberg Mountains, W Cape, S Africa** 13.5% £7.99
Waitrose
Hot off the press 2018 vintage. Bright colour, perfumed fragrant ‘violet’ nose. Great acidity balance, not so much a peppery Shiraz, ‘more like a fruits of the forest breakfast!’ Others thought a classic BBQ wine with plenty of sweet ripe fruit. Generally liked.
- 7. Saint-Emilion Grand Cru 2016, Union de Producteurs de Saint-Emilion** 12.5% £10.99
Lidl
Deepish garnet in the glass, with decent legs. Nose – some plum, a little sweet oak. A softish example of right bank Merlot-based claret, not a lot of structure and clearly made to be very drinkable very early. Quite a contrast to the next wine...
- 8. Bonny Doon ‘A Proper Claret’ 2013, California USA** 13.5% £12.00
Costco
The fabled Bonny Doon Vineyards in Monterey are responsible for some of the wackiest wine labels you’ll ever see – the back labels are essays and often very funny, but Randall Grahm is deadly serious about his wines and it certainly showed here. A disciple of ‘old world’ grapes and wine styles, especially Rhone varieties, his Proper Claret is a classic Bordeaux blend made with old world restraint but bursting with Californian ripeness. Mint and plums – one of us said ‘at the prune end of things!’ – a dark rich palate with silky tannins – someone commented ‘New World all the way’ in its power and depth. I *think* people generally liked it... A real class act to finish the tasting, and how Costco ever managed to sell it at 12 quid is a mystery.

Another super well thought out tasting from David, with some really interesting style comparisons between the French versions of Sauvignon, Chardonnay, Rhone blend and Bordeaux blend, and their treatment by NZ, Australia, South Africa and California.

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