

The North Hampshire Wine Society Blog



'New Zealand Isn't Just Sauvignon Blanc!' Nigel Gibbes

25 February 2015

A very welcome return of Nigel Gibbes who gave us a fascinating insight into the quality and variety available from New Zealand when venturing beyond supermarket offerings and price points

The wines

Whites

- 1. Domain Road Pinot Gris 2012, Central Otago** 13.5% £14.21
Winery established relatively recently in 2002. Nice mineral nose. Full mid-palate with a fair old whack of residual sugar immediately apparent – very common in NZ whites generally and certainly in their Pinot Gris. It has the effect of rounding out the palate which is otherwise fresh and zingy, lime-and-grapefruit-driven, with prominent acidity (helped by the day/night-time temperature contrast in Central Otago) but *silky* at the same time. The group really enjoyed this, and it's fair to say that many were surprised by the quality and character. A wine that many of us said we would buy.
- 2. C J Pask Declaration Chardonnay 2012, Gimblett Road, Hawkes Bay** 13% £19.08
11 months in new French oak. A lovely tropical nose (oaky but also fruity) – my notes say 'pineapple'. Just what you want from this style! Great acidity on the palate which cuts through the oak (less apparent on the palate than the nose). Really good balance and massive length. As ever the oak becomes less prominent with time in the glass (and it has to be said, once nose and palate become accustomed to its nuances!) I loved this - I was probably in a minority as we have a number of oaked-Chardonnay-haters in the group – but it was the wine I bought at the end of the evening which says a lot for it given that there was also an outstanding Riesling...
- 3. Domain Road The Water Race Dry Riesling 2012, Central Otago** 12% £13.45
...which I would also have bought if money was no object! A very restrained nose at present but some petrol just starting to develop. Lime very prominent as expected. Residual sugar again obvious, but it's needed as a balancing act due to the cutting acidity which should mellow in the next couple of years or so? Classy stuff, and a relative bargain at 13.45 - one to stick in the garage perhaps and see how it matures.

Reds

- 4. Little Beauty Pinot Noir 2013, Marlborough** 13% £16.32
 Fragrant raspberry nose, very little vegetal Pinot character here (yet?). Heard around the room – ‘kirsch’ and ‘cherry’. A light fruity Marlborough style of Pinot Noir, perhaps slightly misleading as there’s a persistence to the finish beyond the bright cherry/raspberry flavours on the palate. And it’s still young.
- 5. Domain Road Pinot Noir 2010, Central Otago** 15% £19.82
 This is a different Pinot style – a beautiful rich morello cherry colour, some development on the nose, deeper more persistent flavours, an altogether darker character. Even a hint of the farmyard! A bigger wine, a little chewy in texture, a hint of alcohol on the finish (unsurprisingly!) and 9 months in French oak – less than Little Beauty (12 months) which seemed surprising. A big wine, and for a quality Central Otago Pinot Noir at under £20, good value.
- 6. C J Pask Declaration Merlot 2007, Hawkes Bay** 14% £22.67
 Deep, deep colour, very little rim at 8 years old! Subtle plummy nose. Someone in the room murmured ‘rubber mats’ and ‘coir matting’! Really quite edgy for a merlot, savoury and lively. One of us thought it had resonances of Barbera (northern Italian red) due to its structure and precision. 18 months in new oak. Probably the group’s best-enjoyed red of the evening. I took the remainder of one bottle home (a smallish glass) - delicious the following evening.
- 7. C J Pask Declaration Syrah 2009, Hawkes Bay** 13% £22.67
 A bit of Syrah rubber on the nose. ‘Bacon bits’ also heard in the room. Savoury with chewy tannins. High acidity and quite extracted. My notes say ‘not quite there yet?’ Classy persistence on the mid palate but perhaps a tad less length than wine 6, at this stage anyway. Restrained northern Rhone style. I wondered if perhaps this is going through a bit of a dull patch?
- 8. C J Pask Declaration Cabernet Merlot Malbec 2007, Hawkes Bay** 14% £22.67
 My notes say ‘Bordeaux nose with beef!’ Deep cassis black, minty Cabernet on the nose. 18 months in new French barriques. A big wine, quite a restrained attack but *huge* on the mid- palate. Very impressive, needs more time still, has plenty of life ahead of it.

I have to declare a bias here – I’m a massive fan of New Zealand wine (not just its Sauvignons) and wish I had the funds to indulge in this sort of quality on a regular basis ☺
 Nigel gave us a splendidly informative and anecdotal introduction to three premium New Zealand regions, illustrated by top quality wines that were very much enjoyed and appreciated by us all

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