

The North Hampshire Wine Society Blog



Bordeaux

Presenter: Simon Plumtree

23 January 2019

The wines

Whites

1. Chateau Rampeau Sauvignon Semillon 2017, AC Bordeaux

Simon described this as a fairly simple Sauvignon to kick off this evening of Bordeaux whites and reds. Colour a pale lemon tinged with green, nose a little grassy and quite pungent for a French sauvignon - some thought almost a 'New Zealand' punchiness. Delicate citrusy palate, Semillon rounding out the more acidic Sauvignon. Short finish but decent value, generally enjoyed.

£6.99
Waitrose

2. Dourthe Roqueblanche 2017, AC Bordeaux

From the ever-reliable Dourthe stable, this had a more refined nose, less pungently grassy than wine 1. Colour similar, but a much more balanced palate – young and fresh still but with some real substance, weight and mouth-feel. Label says Sauvignon, Simon thought likely 80/20 Sauvignon/Semillon. A persistent finish, and all the characteristics of a typical white Bordeaux. Good value.

£9.49
Waitrose

3. La Tour de Chollet Semillon Sauvignon 2013, AC Sainte Foy Bordeaux

Nice to be able to taste a white Bordeaux with some bottle age. A much deeper yellow in the glass, still bright. A very different nose here – secondary aromas of 'honey, toast and nuts' and a much richer palate – some thought it reminded them of a sweet wine, which makes perfect sense given the grapes. This one is 85% Semillon. Some thought perhaps a year beyond its best? – it seemed to die a bit in the glass after 15 minutes or so.

£13.46
BBR

Reds

4. Good Ordinary Claret 2017, AC Bordeaux

Good bright colour but not particularly deep. On the nose some plummy cherry notes, very fruity - my notes say 'almost a Beaujolais nose' – with perhaps just a hint of vanilla too. On the palate the room was fairly united in their comments – 'stalkiness', 'unripe/green', 'lightweight', 'basic'. My notes say 'a bit thin'. Simon confirmed that this would very probably be Merlot-dominant, with whole bunch fermentation perhaps partly accounting for the Beaujolais-style nose.

£5.49
Waitrose

5. Chateau Pey La Tour 2016, AC Bordeaux (Dourthe)

£9.99
Waitrose

Here was a different animal though – much more characteristic of a basic AC Bordeaux, no doubt largely due to having been made by the respected Dourthe (see also wine 2). Much more concentration here on the nose (2016 is a pretty good Bordeaux vintage) and a bigger more robust but well-rounded palate, though still probably no oak used, or if so only old oak. 90% Merlot, and a very decent example of a drinkable well-made modern red Bordeaux with proper regional character. Good value.

6. Chateau Goubau 2015, Castillon, AC Cotes de Bordeaux

£16.96
BBR

Moving up the quality scale and back a year to the top 2015 vintage definitely showed in this lovely wine. Castillon is home to many relatively 'minor' chateaux with high aspirations. Colour was quite different again – inky black with coloured legs running down the glass, suggesting lots of viscosity and concentration. A lovely soft ripe nose with some minty hints, although the blend here is 95% Merlot/5% Cabernet Franc. Many thought this palate was 'opulent' and 'soft and unctuous'. I thought it was a very good advert for the ripe 2015 vintage at this (mid) price range. It was also many people's favourite red of the tasting.

7. Chateau Langlet 2014, AC Graves

£14.41
BBR

Moving back yet another year to the more 'classic' 2014 vintage (in terms of structure and tannins) - also considered to be a very good year but needing a little more time than the riper 2015s. This proved to be a fascinating comparison from the Graves appellation whose gravelly soil produces distinctive wines. Still mostly Merlot but in a more 'classic' Bordeaux style with real bite and tannic structure. It's had a year in barrel which will in time help to round out those tannins. There was a good debate in the room about the relative merits of wines 6 and 7 – a fine demonstration of two different styles of Bordeaux from two very different vintages.

8. Domaine Leyrissat 2015, AC Monbazillac

£10.49
Waitrose

And to finish, a really excellent example of a Sauternes-style sweet wine from Monbazillac - more Bergerac than Bordeaux - where you'll find some of the best sweet wine bargains in France. From the excellent 2015 vintage, this has all the honeyed marmalade notes you'd expect, with a lovely piercing acidity and a citrusy slightly floral nose and palate. Light, tasty, and unbelievably good value for a 50cl bottle. It's not a wine to keep for years – Monbazillac is best drunk relatively young and fresh.

A super Bordeaux tasting from Simon with some really interesting style comparisons.

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