

The North Hampshire Wine Society Blog



'New Favourites from Europe'

Presenter: Eddie Lewis (Laithwaites)

24 July 2019

Prices shown are Laithwaites' usual bottle price – there were generous on-the-night discounts

The wines

Whites

1. Danaris Gruner Veltliner 2017, Niederosterreith, Austria 12% £10.99

White pepper nose, good austere style, a little development showing on the palate but still zingy and fresh with a pleasant slight spritz – deliberate for this style of wine. Some thought the nose perhaps a bit reticent even for a Gruner?

2. Ultima Edizione Bianco NV, Vino da Tavola, Italy 12% £11.99

This blend of various Italian grapes (by Laithwaites stalwart Farnese) includes Pecorino and Malvasia. A nice 'Italian' nose with pear notes, then a soft palate with some brisk lemony acidity on the finish - overall a smoothly satisfying mouthfeel. A little barrel aging was mentioned but wasn't explicit on the label. Generally much liked around the room – very drinkable!

3. Bila-Haut 2017, Cotes de Roussillon, France 13.5% £14.99

A Chapoutier wine, so real pedigree here. Chapoutier follows biodynamic principles in all his winemaking but not all his wines are necessarily certified biodynamic (this one presumably not as the bottle didn't display a certification). Grenache Blanc/Roussanne Southern Rhone blend, a very persistent nose with a little autolysis (mild creamy yeasty notes from lees aging) and a light palate for the alcohol level. Classy.

4. Manzanos 2017, Rioja, Spain 12.5% £15.99

A barrel-fermented *modern-style* white Rioja – i.e. nothing like the fiercely oaked styles from previous generations that are still often associated with white Rioja. The blend is 51% Viura/49% Chardonnay and has 8 months barrel aging in French oak. Palate nicely balanced with good fresh acidity, some apple/pear/floral character, and the expected full rich mouthfeel with restrained toasty notes.

Rose

5. Domaine de l'Éstan Rose 2018, Provence, France 12.5% £15.99

Ultra-fashionable Provencal rose made from a Grenache-based blend. As per this style, very dry, very pale, but packs a good punch of berry fruit with a decent full mid palate and a pleasant finish. However at £15.99 we thought it looked a little expensive (although with a generous discount on the night) given that there are now a number of pretty classy examples available around the £12 mark.

Reds

6. Joseph Drouhin Beaujolais-Villages 2016, France

12.5% £12.99

Another top producer, this time Domaine Joseph Drouhin which owns vineyards across Burgundy and again follows biodynamic principles. The first thing that hits you is a superb classic Gamay nose with none of the bubblegum character that can overlay some cheaper Beaujolais (this prompted some interesting background from Eddie on the different ways that Beaujolais can be vinified). Eddie thought the nose had 'redcurrants and graphite' (not all agreed on the redcurrants...) and my notes say 'raspberry, cherry, vibrant nose and colour, palate silky, some grip on the finish, pedigree obvious'. But not particularly enjoyed by those who prefer their reds 'big'! Good value.

7. Gaudio Classico 2015, Alentejo, Portugal

14% £14.99

Portuguese blend of Touriga Nacional (65%) plus other 'port' grapes. So predictably this had a 'porty' nose with some development starting. Colour still a deep red with very little rim. A soft approachable port-style palate with ripeness from the warm 2015 vintage very evident. One question prompted a discussion and background from Eddie on cork and other closures.

8. Pagos de Tahola Gran Reserva Rioja 2009, Spain

14% £19.99

Mature Gran Reserva Rioja is always a treat and this one didn't disappoint. 100% Tempranillo with 9 years in combination of oak and bottle. American vanilla oak on the nose, very characteristic – my notes say 'fragrant with vanilla, in a good way!' Very deep colour still, but a widening rim as you'd expect. Softish mature tannins on the palate, then I thought some alcohol apparent on a slightly 'hot' finish. Much enjoyed around the room.

9. Il Papavero Papaverone 2016, Sicilia, Italy

14.5% £15.99

Sicilian take on Amarone, made from a blend of southern Italian/Sicilian grapes including (mostly) Nero d'Avolo, and using the same technique as in Amarone of air-drying the grapes to concentrate the flavours and texture of the finished wine. My notes say 'Italian nose' of dried cherries, palate rich and powerful, cut with characteristic Italian acidity. Some of us didn't like the nose by comparison with wine 8, but they are totally different animals... Good value, especially if you like Amarone but can't afford it!

Another super tasting from Eddie and Laithwaites – full of background and insights and a great selection of interesting wines.

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