

Free Running with Kevin Ecock

Free Run refers to juice that is allowed to flow from uncrushed grapes. It embodies the life and style of the grape, the land and the vintage. The very best often flows from the least effort.

Wednesday 1 December 2010

Support your Local Wine Club - I did, at The Silver Granite Palmerston

It was cold last night. Below zero. Iceland and Ireland have a lot in common. We should get together sometime and share a few (fishy) stories. Wonder have the rats deserted that sunken ship as they are doing here? Well, despite the cold, and a week of doom and gloom, the **Cheers! Silver Granite Wine Club** in Palmerston, Co Dublin met last night. It was uplifting to be in the midst of a group of enthusiasts from all walks of life, all age groups and a huge mix of wine knowledge getting stuck into a diverse range of wines. For a few hours the cold, and everything with it, was left outside.



I had been asked to present a 'Personal Picks' for the evening. The Club then sourced the wines. As it is associated with the excellent Cheers! Silver Granite Off Licence, run by Kieran Towey, most of the wines were available. (Aurelio Montes, however, may not be too happy that after changing agents recently we were unable to source a single bottle of his Montes Alpha Merlot!)

My choice was loosely based on my experiences in 2010, wines that I reckoned should be given another look, price points slightly above 'affordable daily's' (a definite benefit of wine club attendance!) and styles that are often over looked in favour of more fashionable alternatives.

The eventual line up was spectacular. Rather than describe each wine I have given the reason why the wine was chosen in the first place - you 'll just have to take it from me that each was brilliant. Having the chance to taste, and then to chat about wines like these, is the benefit of being a wine club member. Mind you, the Club then discussed their forthcoming trip to Torres at Villafranca in Spain - time I joined up myself!

Laurenz V 'Charming' Gruner Veltliner 2008

In the mid eighties my brothers and I fell in love with the wines of Austria and imported a mixed container of wine from Lens Moser. It was our first import. A couple of months later the DEG scandal broke. We were caught in the cross fire. Two years later we were back this time with Italian wines! Every time I meet with Laurenz V I am caught up with his enthusiasm and with the quality of his Gruner Veltliner based wines. He has great newsletters. His work in China and association with Bulgaria should be tracked and noted for the future. Interesting stories. Versatile wine.

The Mesh Eden Valley Riesling 2008

Readers of this blog will know that I was in Australia for two weeks this year. One highlight, among many, was my meeting with Tim Adams in the Clare Valley. Unfortunately his wines are handled exclusively by the big T and that would not have mixed well with my hosts last night! I really wanted to show a good, modern, cool area Australian Riesling that was not of the 'battery acid style' but equally was nowhere near a tropical fruit bomb style. I had been very impressed with my Yalumba visit and remembered tasting The Mesh a few months ago. It is a fine tribute to Riesling, made by Jeffrey Grosset and Robert Hill Smith. Most importantly it opened the way for me to get on with the story of Australian Rieslings.

Vesevo Greco di Tufo 2009

I am constantly impressed by the quality of Italian white wines at the Liberty Wines portfolio tastings. This was confirmed by an excellent series of educational briefs given by the Italian Trade commission this year. I am beside myself with amusement that our shelves are full with so many very forgettable Pinot Grigio based wines when grapes such as Greco, Fallanghina and Cortese are frowned on. Time to fight back!

Louis Latour Macon Villages La Chanfleur 2008

Last year I was honored to be allowed onto the Burgundy Wines Educator Course in Beaune. This year I interviewed the very engaging Louis Fabrice Latour for Checkout magazine and later spent three days in the company of a fine negociant company in Burgundy, Albert Bichot. I am more than just a fan of the wines of Burgundy. I also, at every opportunity, want to let the consumer know why I am a fan. I want to show affordable, well made wines from Burgundy that are in wide distribution, again and

Flicker Wine Flicks



Free Running and firstpress



firstpress

Celbridge, Kildare, Ireland

I work wine, think wine, write and whine wine. I've been at this for 25 years now and thank god but the whine has all of it's enthusiasm intact. The best juice often flows from the first pressing of the grapes. But it's the Free Run juice that gives the most exciting ideas and flavours.

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Kevin Ecock's Blog Gran Reserva - What is it?:

again.



The ever ebullient Louis Fabrice Latour in Dublin this year

Montes Alpha Chardonnay 2006

Aurelio Montes changed agents and relaunched his label this year. This seems to have coincided with his Montes Alpha range of wines from Chile taking a drop in its retail price. Good news? Time will tell. Montes gives his time to us generously when he visits. He is not a precious celeb and what he says is interesting. Above all he lets his wines do a lot of the talkng - and they speak well! How does he squeeze so much into his wines and not let them go over the edge?



Yours truly with Aurelio Montes - photo courtesy of Paul Sherwood photography

Louis Latour Pinot Noir la Chanfleur 2007

as above

Allegrini Palazzo delle Torre Ripasso 2007

Kieran chose this wine as my choice of the Aurelio Montes Merlot 2006 was unavailable. Seems that Montes Cork to Dublin deliveries went awry! Allegrini is superb. This wine is everything a good Ripasso should be - rich, concentrated, intriguing and memorable.

Nicolas Catena Malbec 2008

This year I received a book in the post. It was 'Vino Argentina' by Laura Catena, daughter of wine maker extraordinaire Nicolas Catena. I loved the book for its personal journey through one of the most incredible wine making landscapes in the world. It brought happiness to the wines of Argentina. It bought memories flooding back of tasting some really great Malbecs over the years. The question must be asked again and again - Why do such good wines sell so poorly in Ireland? Let's all do something about it.

Vasse Felix Shiraz 2007

When I visited the Margaret River in Western Australia this year I found wines that were alive and vibrant and bursting with soft, fresh and interesting fruits. Among many great wine makers I also met with the brilliant Virginia Willcox at Vasse Felix. Her Chardonnays are majestic. Another Cahrdonnay wouldn't work last night and while Cabernet Sauvignon in the Margaret River will probably, in the future, shine as its signature red wine I knew that last evening would finish off with a wow by showing the Vasse Felix Shiraz - and it did!



The Brilliant Virginia Willcox at Vasse Felix

Thanks to Kieran and the Cheers! Silver Granite Wine Club for allowing me my trip down memory lane.

Posted by firstpress at 3:57 PM

Labels: [Allegrini](#), [Argentinean wine](#), [Catena](#), [Greco di Tufo](#), [Gruner Veltliner](#), [Laurenz V.](#), [Louis Latour](#), [Vasse Felix](#)

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