



Cape Winemakers Guild Technical Tasting Report

Tasting Title: Hidden Gems
Presented by: Peter Finlayson
Date: 11 April 2019
Venue: Bouchard Finlayson

Peter Finlayson CWG – Hidden Gems – potential global players??

Theme – influenced by time at Geisenheim and some of the wines he tasted then.

Italian reds from Valtellina, north Piemonte, wines from Nebbiolo aka Chiavennasca. 'Sforzato' style aka Amarone, min 90% Nebbiolo, at least 14% abv.

Produced fine wine for more than 700 years, grown on steep terraces.

Tabarrini Montefalco Rosso 2011 from Umbria

Sangiovese, Barbera, Sagrantino

Savoury nose with red berries and leather. Nice perfume, medium body, lots of acid, plenty of tannins. Starting to show lots of tertiary – meaty, coffee, tobacco, earth and typical notes of herbs and red cherries. Warm mid-palate but enough flavour to carry it off.

Aldo Rainoldi Fruttaio Ca'Rizzieri, Sforzato di Valtellina DOCG 2013

Grapes dried in plastic boxes till January.

Some strawberries, quite jammy, less raisin than expected. Off-dry with well-handled but obvious alcohol (15.5%), full body, less tannin than expected though it builds. Strawberries and mint, long finish.

Carel Nel – no VA on any of these wines – often found on straw wines but none on these.

Peter – in 1953 virtually 50% of the town's population emigrated to Australia – post war, poverty - but those who stayed have worked to uplift the area.

Sebastian – what determines when you press? Thinks it's almost too ripe and alcohol makes it unbalanced – others more balanced.

Sforzato di Valtellina Albareda DOCG 2013

De-stemmed, lightly-pressed but then dried till mid-Jan. MLF in barrel, 20 months ageing, 10 months in bottle. 15.5%

Very Nebbiolo – strawberry jam confection and herbs with some tarry undertones. Silky and ripe with high acid and very dry tannins offset by the fruit here. Tar and tobacco aftertaste, lacks the signature bitterness of Amarone but has some bite here for sure.

Sassella Riserva Ultimi Raggi DOCG 2009

700m above sea level, sheer, south-facing terraces. Late harvest – mid-Nov – 30 days on skins, 4 years in big old chestnut vats. 14%.

Perfume and tobacco notes. Very ripe with very high, grainy tannins and some dark fruit notes. Least Nebbiolo of them all. Almost a cola bottle note, very ripe fruit, great length and lovely integration of alcohol.

JD – not sure about the Amarone style – seems a pity to use it on a grape like Nebbiolo. Better balance on this one – just picked very late.

Ronco del Picchio, Sforzato di Valtellina, Societa Agricola Fay DOCG 2011

90 days drying, organic farming, harvested early Oct. 15%

Dusty ripe red fruit sweetness. Off-dry with clean fresh ripe fruit, some mint overtones, riper and softer tannins than expected, again some cola bottle notes. Lots of acid, lovely balance between the sweetness, the ripeness and the acid/tannin mix.

Rasea Super Tuscan IGP 2013

Everything by hand, 15-18 days maceration, 12 months in oak, 8 months in bottle. 100% Sangiovese.

Red cherry notes with some wild herbs and tobacco. Very racy acidity and there's a bloodiness in here – iodine and iron. High acid, high tannins but quite fine-grained and due to develop further. Long finish.

JD – tastes like a rugby game!!

Niels – more of a New World feel, quite sexy, richer fuller fruit. Not sure he'd call it a Super Tuscan, showing less tannins than expected.

Peter – one of my faves since tasting with Michael Fridhjon last year. Was given a sample by the winemaker who visited in 2018 – impressed with the tannins and the style of the wine.

Momento Chenin Blanc/Verdelho 2015

91% Chenin, 9% Verdelho. Whole-berry skin-ferment on Verdelho for 7 days, old oak for 10 months.

Spicy, earthy notes with lemon curd, toast and toffee. Lots of pineapples and toffee notes, lovely acidity, lemon citrus in the middle and a sharp lemon finish. Lovely texture here with some grip and grit.

Peter – particularly noteworthy was the skin ferment on Verdelho – quite a lot of intensity added to the Chenin, helping preserve it (now 4 years old).

Jeff G – really enjoyed this wine, showing good for its age. Oxidatively-made so has ability to age well. Had freshness and minerality with good kick of fruit. Interesting to take skin fermented stuff and blended it with whole bunch – thinks phenolics nicely in balance.

Carel – only 9% of skin-fermented is enough – powerful grape and too much can overtake. Can't leave it over the weekend, if you need to pick it, then you must pick it.

Sebastian – works with this vineyard. Incredible fruit, small berries, ripens beautifully and evenly, very interesting and has a good future in SA. Early ripening grape. But this wine is led by Chenin – from Wildekrans, old vine stuff.

Miles – picks verdelho at 11abv and 11 acid, 13.8 abv and 10.2 acid. Great natural acid.

Scheurebe

Hybrid from Riesling and unknown grape. Made by Dr Scheu in 2016 to cope with sandy soils in Rheinhessen. Typified by grapefruit and refreshing acidity. Good for NLH wines.

Hans Wirsching Iphofer Kronsberg Scheurebe Alte Reben Trocken VDP Erste Lage

From Franken, late ripened grapes. 12.5%.

Grapefruit aromas with some floral notes and some sourness. Less acidity than expected, off-dry, med body, quite rich with short finish. Sour freshness throughout.

Pfeffingen Scheurebe SP 2017

From Pfalz, best vineyards to ripen it fully. Grows well here in warm sites. 12.5%

Off-dry, more tropical notes, lacks a bit of acidity but richness is very appealing – lots of tinned grapefruit, sweet confectioned note, good balance, stony mineral finish.

Weegmuller Scheurebe Trocken 2017

From Pfalz, in the shade of the Haardt Mountains, warm and sunny. 12.5%

Shy nose, quite reductive (screwcap) better on palate, quite restrained, again less acid than expected but refreshing sour note of grapefruit makes up for it. Pleasant length at finish.

Andries – love the aromatics on all three but very diverse. Like 2nd one from textural and mouthfeel and last one very fresh and elegant.

Frans – 2nd one has quite a lot of oak.

Pfeffingen Scheurebe Trockenbeerenauslese 2008

From Pfalz, multiple soils as in Alsace. 9%

Med gold, pronounced nose with honey, herbs, baked grapefruit with brown sugar and molasses. Thick and viscous with medium acid – rich and unctuous, needs some food. Candy floss notes and toffee apples – smells like a funfair.

Peter – bit sweet, but Scheurebe can excel when it comes to sweet wines.

Sebastian – would like to know Peter's experience on growing PN and Chard with v high density? Why have you chosen this approach?

Peter – reverts to times before tractors so narrow rows for horses.

Leaf area goes into the fruit. If you do modern planting will see 60% bare earth whereas on high density, 30% so gives you more engine room.

Canopy not so big so can ripen bigger crops especially on SB whereas if you have bigger canopies, it's harder.

Had problem with heavy clay soils – they compact so putting tractors down every row it makes it hard for the vines. Only have traffic on the 6th row – that's the spray row.

When vines are young they battle a bit but they settle down. Less probs with weed.

Kevin – is there a reason why some vineyards are more conventional? Peter - to do with more vigour in the soils.

Why does he pick earlier? Eben Archer proved that the higher the density, the earlier the fruit matures.

VoT – Gordon. Great to learn about new regions and new grapes always good to tread new ground.