

# Organise your own wine tasting

16 Oct 2007 by JR

I thought you might be interested in a suggestion of how to get together with friends and organise a tasting that is both fun and instructive. The following from Michael Bloor of the *Cruvee Wine Society* in Lewes, East Sussex, outlines one possible approach. Note that everyone should feel quite free to disagree with me and each other. See [here](#)

for suggestions as to which glasses to use and [here](#)

for a reminder of how to taste. One bottle should have quite enough for 15 decent-sized tasting samples. The most instructive measurement at the end of the tasting is to see which bottle empties first

We have to acknowledge our debt to you for a very convivial evening recently at our wine society in Lewes. As a variant to our normal monthly routine we distributed your FT comments on eight approachably priced wines which we had been able to source locally from the more discriminating supermarkets, the Wine Society and the excellent Caves de Pyrene in Gullford. Collectively we found the wines distinctive, some of them provocative and several remarkable bargains – for these virtues we are particularly grateful to you to the credit of our own developing oenological confidence, with your comments in hand and the wine in the mouth, increasingly forthright reactions emerged – both for and against – as the evening wore on.

- Our selection from your piece – between May and July this summer – was:
1. Vendicchio dei Castelli di Jesi 2006 Cuvée de Cavallari, Unicoi Rosso 14%
  2. Sauvignon de Touraine 2005 Jacky Maréau 14%
  3. Albariño 2006 Pina Saborana, Ries Salava 12.5%
  4. Cuvée de Cuvée 2005 Gravel, Teppe, Cuvée de Jura
  5. Les Petites 2006 Agaveaux Blanc, Sancerre 10%
  6. Cuvée de Pines 2006 Caves de Pyrene 12.5%
  7. Cruvee Heritage 2005 Cuvée de Tain, B&S own label
  8. Marerange Cuvée 2005 Sereaux Valley, Turenock

For the record, we most preferred the very agreeable Sauvignon de Touraine to the less assertive Vendicchio, your – and my own – great enthusiasm for the Albariño was certainly not shared by everyone. The Jura Cuvée de Jura was praised – we felt we needed foregrounding that this was in the local semi-oxidised style that you need to sup with your mother's milk to appreciate [the claim were there – 'bone dry, traditional character, much unwin' – but clearly not explicit enough!]. We were equally categoric that A. Mollat's Pines had too much body and tannin to be at its best chilled [sounds as though I was an awful wine snob – J!]. M&S's Cuvée de Langueac was indeed a delicious bargain [as they say, you get the 2005 – the 2006 is a pretty nice value at present – J!]. The Cruvee Heritage isn't a Cuvée and should be even better in a year or two. But the old vines Barossa Turenock was the real one – super at any price and no doubtless.

So a vote of thanks from us all for providing the vital impetus that gave us a challenging and enjoyable evening. The FT has the same forwarded to Society leadership in mid-Summer. Your original commentaries should you've a reviewer we set out below.

## METHOD

## Wines

Jancis Robinson – from her FT wine columns, summer 2007

## Notes

Widmore, Burgess Hill  
M&S, Havant, Gosport  
J&C Wine Society, Dromoreville  
Caves de Pyrene, Gullford 01483 53820

## Cost per bottle

Price we paid in clear. Where we got a discount quantity in offer/retailing – normal retail price in brackets.

Background info  
Andrew Jeffery – *The New France – a Complete Guide to Contemporary French Wine*  
M. Aguiar, M&S, *domestic names Sancerre*  
John Robinson – *The New Spain – a Complete Guide to Contemporary Spanish Wine*  
Michael Schuster – *Essential Winemaking*

## [www.jancisrobinson.com](#)

## [www.cruveewine.com](#)

## [www.bonvino.com](#)

## and the back labels

[Here follow the excruciating (for me to read) relevant extracts from articles which already appear in [two](#) for all on this site.]

1. **Vendicchio dei Castelli di Jesi 2006 Cuvée de Cavallari, Unicoi Rosso 14%**

Grapes: Sangiovese, Cabernet Sauvignon  
Widmore 47.99  
21/10/07 14.99  
One of the best values in wine when it comes to my way of seeing. Stunning value. Single vineyard wine from Italy's Adriatic coast, made from grapes ripened to the limit. No oak but masses of energy. Focus.

2. **Sauvignon de Touraine 2005 Jacky Maréau 14%**

Grapes: Sauvignon Blanc, France mid-Louis  
M&S 25.99 (25.99)  
16/07/07 16.99  
Crisp, clean, fresh, elegant, a real French wine. The reason is simple: the outstanding quality of 2005 and 2006 vintages – the two vintages coming on shelves over the coming months. M&S has noticed a substantial increase in demand for Louis Maréau Blanc and has consequently increased its range. Best value by far in a Sauvignon de Touraine 2005 from J&C. (Mollat's Sereaux Valley is better than most). The Sauvignon has cracking green fruit flavours, real density of fruit and good tension – a good wine for before meals or on a particularly hot day.

3. **Albariño 2006 Pina Saborana, Ries Salava 12.5%**

Grapes: Albariño, Spain Galicia  
Widmore 29.99 (29.99)  
21/10/07 16.99  
This is the Albariño – a gem – one of Galicia's jewels and just the thing to drink with shellfish. Among the best buys recently in white wines for everyday drinking. Albariño is the grapes, and sometimes manages to deliver aromatic refinement with great balance and intriguingly make flavours. Bone dry, unclouded, the wine could also be drunk without food.

4. **Cuvée de Cuvée 2005 Gravel, Teppe, Cuvée de Jura 10%**

Grapes: Chardonnay, France Jura  
Caves de Pyrene 21.99 (21.99)  
21/10/07 17.99  
An exceptionally fine answer to top quality Burgundy from 85 year-old vines grown at slightly higher altitude in the Jura. Bone dry, traditional character and extremely persistent. Unusual.

5. **Les Petites 2006 Agaveaux Blanc, Sancerre 10%**

Grapes: Pinot Noir, France Loire  
Caves de Pyrene 21.99 (21.99)  
30/07/07 17.99  
Very fine pinot flavoured. Thoroughly pretty and pure even if very light and perfect for chilling. Tastes like a baby and Sancerre – and much better than most of them. Red wines that have been when chilled are usually soft and low in tannin with enough heat or aroma to survive the chilling process that tends to diminish these aspects.

6. **Cuvée de Pines 2006 Caves de Pyrene 12.5%**

Grapes: blend of Merlot, Cabernet Sauvignon, France 16.6  
M&S 22.99 (22.99)  
16/07/07 16.99  
Outstanding quality of 2005 vintages – 2005 is so wonderfully successful/practical across the board in every French wine region. But M&S has had 2005 Sereaux Valley in its eye. This is not because it is a bad – if anything, it is a good – but M&S seem collectively determined to hide this fact from the consumer. Turenock is one of Australia's most renowned producers. Some of its Barossa reds from probably grafted sources of ancient vines sell for well over £100 a bottle. To be able to offer a wine made by Turenock on a British supermarket shelf one would think would be a badge of honour. But to work out that Marerange Cuvée comes from the sought-after address, you need a magnifying glass and probably a specialist too. The Turenock vines in Barossa are no higher than a cactus on black as the bottom of the 1940s.

7. **Cruvee Heritage 2005 Cuvée de Tain, B&S own label**

Grapes: Syrah, France northern Rhône 12.5%

Widmore 27.99  
16/07/07 20.99  
2005 was wonderfully successful/practical across the board in every French wine region. M&S's own label Cruvee Heritage 2005 from the admirable Cuvée de Tain also shows the exceptional combination of openness and balance that characterises this vintage. There's none of the burnt rubber and black pepper characters that sometimes mar the perfume of an underripe northern Rhône Syrah. While there is no shortage of tannin, and this wine should keep going for at least another two or three years, it's the supple security that that dominates a wine that is surely expressly made for drinking over time.

8. **Marerange Cuvée 2005 Sereaux Valley Turenock 14.5%**

Grapes: blend of Merlot, Cabernet Sauvignon, South Australia  
M&S 22.99 (22.99)  
16/07/07 16.99  
M&S's own range like me with Turenock, annual high. This is not because it is a bad – if anything, it is a good – but M&S seem collectively determined to hide this fact from the consumer. Turenock is one of Australia's most renowned producers. Some of its Barossa reds from probably grafted sources of ancient vines sell for well over £100 a bottle. To be able to offer a wine made by Turenock on a British supermarket shelf one would think would be a badge of honour. But to work out that Marerange Cuvée comes from the sought-after address, you need a magnifying glass and probably a specialist too. The Turenock vines in Barossa are no higher than a cactus on black as the bottom of the 1940s.