Mas des Masques, Silex Chardonnay NV

19 Apr 2012 by Jancis Robinson

From £14.50

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If you go for that struck-match quality in your white burgundy, this wine is a steal. It has it in spades. In fact it is almost a pastiche of the style but I found it was a wine I came back to again and again over several nights. In fact it was a sample bottle that got finished - almost a record in our household.

It was Swig.co.uk that drew it to my attention. And it's a really interesting story. This Provençal estate is run by a friend of Yves Cuilleron of Condrieu and Vins de Vienne. **Mas des Masques, Silex Chardonnay NV Vin de Pays des Bouches du Rhône** is sold as a non-vintage wine because the 2007 stubbornly refused to go through malolactic fermentation, so the winemaker called his friend Yves Cuilleron to ask for advice. According to James Bloom of Swig, 'Cuilleron tasted the 2007 and loved the mineral, struck-match character and didn't want to lose that, so he blended 30% of the thoroughly lactic 2008 into the blend. Voilà!'

My tasting note before a score of 17/20 and suggested drinking dates of 2011-14 reads 'Yummy, just-this-side-of-exaggerated struck-match aromas overlay some pretty ripe fruit. I wonder why this is non vintage? There's a strong salty character to this wine as well as its satiny palate. Finishes bone dry. Quite a lot of luxurious sensation for the money. Just a little faint, even faintly austere, on the end but definitely a good buy. GV [Good value].'

Although I fleetingly thought I'd found it for a mere €4.69 on some Belgian wine site (Champion?), I have been unable to replicate that tantalising reference and I'm afraid I can find definite stockists only in the UK.

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