

“Bibacious” writing in Cyprus Today

2 July 2011

LAST month I wrote that “competition, as always, sharpens the market and we are now seeing that here, as more and more wines become available. It does, however, also bring in some pretty useless, very cheap wines too, so be selective”.

I went on to say that if in doubt, ask for a sample. Supermarkets will very rarely allow this but some have promotional offers with a taste of the wines available. The more specialist wine shops will have wines to sample and it is always worth asking to try a particular wine — provided it is not the most expensive in the shop.

I asked in various shops if I could try a small sample of boxed wines. I tasted three, all South African, and they were from The Black Box (Swartland Winery), Simonay (Simonsvlei) and Cape Elephant (Lutzville), a newcomer to me. I have to say that while both Swartland and Simonsvlei were similar in both price and quality, probably the kindest thing I can say about the Lutzville wines is that they are cheaper than the other two.

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Another wine that fills all the criteria for drinking at this time of the year is a red which, having spent no more than an hour in the fridge, will wash down easily on its own or with a variety of dishes.

One of a recent shipment of new wines, the Van Loveren River Red, a blend of Merlot and Cabernet Sauvignon, is full-bodied with a rich, plummy taste that stands a little chilling very well.

It is available at about 12TL from Cape Wines, which also offers discount on a case.

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Fortunately, later in the week, I was able to taste the first shipment of the Van Loveren Papillon Brut Sparkling and at 14.95TL I think the word “value” is used in its correct sense. It’s a delightful sparkling wine that would give cheap champagne a very good run for the money.

Cape Wines have several new wines in the current shipment — a range of cold climate wines from Simonsvlei (“cold climate” in this instance meaning basically that the vines are grown higher up the slopes).

These wines, under the South Atlantic label, cost just over 20TL a bottle and there are two whites and two reds in the range.

For an ordinary quaffing white you won’t go far wrong with the Simonsblanc at 10.45TL but if you really want to try something special then opt for the Hercules Paragon SMCV 2008 (Oh, yes, it stands for Shiraz, Mourvèdre, Cinsault, Viognier) at 23.95TL. I don’t want to sound too enthusiastic because I want some for myself! Incidentally, don’t forget that Cape Wines offers a free bottle with every six purchased.