

The 15 best wine buys in the UK today

Tandem 'Ars Nova', Navarra 2004



pronunciation: Tandem ars nova

origin: Navarra, Spain

There's a lot in a name. Especially this one. The 'Ars Nova' moniker is a nod to the musical movement accredited to Frenchmen Philippe De Vitry in the 14th century. More complex and filled with richer harmonies and rhythm than the music of previous generations, it was the arrival of polyphony. So what's that got to do with wine? Well, by using three grape varieties and new oak ageing the idea is that here we have a complex, polyphonic wines with rich harmonies of flavour and err, rhythm. Well, maybe not.

Tasting Note

Seriously classy stuff from Alicia Eyalal and José-Maria Fraile in Navarra. Sometimes dismissed as 'Rioja-lite', this is a masterclass in Navarra's own distinctive style. A light garnet colour (hot vineyards often make lightly coloured wines) it's a deep, rich harmonious wine. Smokiness soon melts into a slightly stinky character. Tomato and olive savouriness abounds and there's a kind of old whisky barrel woodiness. The fruit tastes ripe and sweet fruit at first, but this balanced, harmonious wine evolves on the palate. Stylish, ripe, strawberry zestiness and dry tannins. Very nice indeed.

Joe Fattorini