

OK, here's a bit of food and wine for thought for Sainsburys, Morrisons, Tescos, Marks and Spencers and Waitrose – stockists of roses from Anjou and Sancerre, but not from Devon!

Not from me, but from Susy Atkins, well known wine writer and regular host of BBC's Saturday Kitchen. Nice lady Susy, and she knows a thing or two about wines. This is what she said after chairing a blind tasting of Devon roses against Loire roses held at the end of Devon Wine Week.

'Devon's roses won fair and square in this professional blind tasting. At the end of a gloriously sunny English Wine Week, it's inspiring to see how well Devon's wines can perform against a similar group from a classic European wine region. I thought it especially interesting that the wines came from "difficult" vintages yet still showed so well.'

Full results can be seen shortly on the www.devonwineweek.co.uk site, but Devon took top two spots, and six out of the top Ten. Delighted to say that Juliet made the top two - and 4 out of the Top Ten.

So next time your finger hovers over a bottle of Rose d'Anjou or Sancerres, pause to consider why you're buying wine which is not quite of the standard of your local vineyards! You may not be saving money either - one of the Sancerre roses in the competition was selling for £14 a bottle, a lot more than a rose at your local vineyard farm shop...

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Oh dear, I still have trouble remembering the name of the Liberal Democrat leader and our esteemed Deputy PM. Almost need a Google...No, I remember - Nick Clegg. Dear Nick made a wonderful speech about rolling back Labour's Big Brother state. Great stuff Nick - perhaps you could start with DEFRA. Here's a snapshot of the stuff which piles up in the waste paper basket.

" You may be aware that are required by law to fill in this form...It is compulsory under national and European law for you to complete and return this form...blah blah."

So what's this? Now we have to tell them about anyone who is working on the holding, anyone who has worked on it in the past year, what diversification activities we are doing, who my wife is, her age, how much time we spend working, how time we spend on other outside work, what training we have, whether any members of the family work here...and on and on and on.

Nick, Nick - roll back DEFRA please before they ask the colour and make of our breakfast cereals and loo paper! Failing the attention of the great deputy leader, how about a bit of rolling back lobbying from our new MP Neil Parish?

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Finally the mini-drought has broken - thank goodness. Reports of serious spring frost damage in the South East vineyards, and a Somerset vineyard desperately watering in young vines. Having said that, the vines seem to have potential for a big crop - is this the winter chilling effect? Yearlstone vines are roaring away, including the new plantings of

red. Fantastic Devon Wine Week by the way - great weather and overflowing with visitors including another European delegation this time from winemaking colleges in Europe during which we learnt that England has about the same number of vines now as Luxembourg! Impressive huh?

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