

Decanter Club

April 2001

Coming Events:

Paul Williams: The Rise of Tatchilla Thursday 5th April *cost: \$15.00*

Ex-Dunedinite Paul Williams is the Fine Wines manager for Montana and he will present a tasting of the best from this interesting McLaren Vale vineyard, from the Chardonnay to the well-reputed Foundation Shiraz. This is a well-priced vineyard with very interesting stylistic wines and a tasting well worth adding to your tasting calendar.

Lyn Wright: Dinner party wines Thursday 12th April *cost: \$15.00*

A great opportunity to try something different for special occasions.

Cuisine tasting: Chardonnays Thursday 19th April *cost: \$20.00*

Chardonnay is definitely the most talked about white wine style. The styles range from no oak to heavy oak (mostly French oak), full malolactic fermentation to different clones; each bringing a different dimension to the wine. Come and taste the Top 10 wines and see if you agree with Bob Campbell and his panel of learned men.

Paul Wright: Penfolds wines Thursday 26th April *cost: \$20.00*

The annual Penfolds releases is a tasting sought after by many every year. Don't expect the Grange, but hopefully the other 'Greats' will be. Wrighty as always is informative and amusing. Book for this tasting, as it will be packed and we may need to limit tasters to the first 50.

Alastair Picton-Warlow: Dow's Port Thursday 3rd May *cost: \$20.00*

Port is a rich ruby-red wine made from several different grape varieties: Touriga, Mourisca, Tinta Francisca, Tinta Madeira, Bastardo (honestly!), Tinta Co and other exotic grape varieties that you never hear about. The grapes are planted in unbelievably steep, terraced vineyards along a 50-mile sweep of the Duoro River in Portugal. Each vineyard is known as a Quinta, of which Dow's is a major player.

Chris Staynes: New World Vs Old World Thursday 10th May *cost: \$25.00*

Chris is one of the most knowledgeable people I know about European wines, and he will have a tasting that will challenge both the Old World smugness of 'always being right' against the New World arrogance of being the 'would be if they could be' new boys on the block. A tasting to expand and challenge your palate and your wine knowledge

Wines Recently Tasted

Angas Brut Sparkling \$9.95

Australia's best selling fizz and no wonder at this price. Fresh and crisp with a nice touch of toasty lees complexity. Great for weddings and parties.

Balgownie Cabernet Sauvignon 1997 \$30.95

Bendigo and Heathcote (lying to the North West of Melbourne) have been gathering a lot of good press recently for their powerfully built and flavoured wines, yet Balgownie in Bendigo have been quietly going about their business for many, many years. With their intense cassis fruit, and firm tannin grip, the Balgownie cabernets are always an exciting proposition for the cellar.

Bremerton Cabernet 1998 \$40.95

An absolute treat, the Bremerton Cabernet is a mouthfilling, earthy wine with blackberry complexity. An outstanding example of Langhorne Creek Cabernet at its best.

Brookfields Cabernet 1999 \$17.95

Finally we find a great value NZ red with no herbaceousness and full muscular dark berry fruit aged in French oak. Great with lamb or beef.

Charles Melton Barossa Shiraz 1998 \$47.95

Possibly Australia's best. Voted No 1 by UK's Wine Magazine. Penfold's Grange was in 2nd place, followed by Henscke's Hill of Grace. Very rich, ripe with dark spicy plum fruit and an explosively long finish. Very limited!

Matua Cabernet Merlot 2000 \$15.95

Rich and generous blackcurrant and berryfruit. Ideal with rare beef or a dish with a flavoursome sauce.

Matua Judd Estate Chardonnay 1999 \$24.95

A reminder of this delicious Gisborne Chardonnay. It has really classy French oak and exhibits intense tropical fruit characters. A favorite of ours at home because of the balance of fruit and oak. It's not one of those heavily oaked Chards that gets too much on the palate after the second glass or so.

Maxwell Lime Cave Cabernet Sauvignon 1999 \$33.95

Yes it's back in, (as are other Maxwell new vintage wines) and for those who love and adore this wine, be in quick as there isn't a lot of it.

Mission Chardonnay 2000 \$14.95

Gold medal at an affordable price! Full flavored Chard softened with malolactic fermentation giving a creamy peachy finish.

Mt. Edward Riesling 2000 \$18.95

Off-dry Riesling with flavours of baked apple, spice and stonefruit. The best Riesling so far tasted from Central from this current vintage. A truly stunning example of what Central Otago is capable of. Good cellaring potential.

Penfolds St. Henri Shiraz Cabernet 1995 \$51.95

Legendary wine classically elegant with great depth and structure that is just starting to open up now. Delicious!

Richmond Grove Limited Release Shiraz 1997 \$19.95

Still a small amount of the Limited Release Richmond Grove Shiraz. Intensely rich, ripe and full of spice flavours that keeps you reaching for another glass.

Rosemount Shiraz 2000 \$15.95

Tried this week and what a nice surprise! Rich, spicy raspberry flavours with gentle American oak. Great for your house wine at home.

Salisbury Cabernet Merlot 1999 \$11.95

Bargain Aussi red! Very ripe, smooth and plummy. One of the very few drinkable reds remaining in this price range.

Seifried Old Coach Chardonnay 2000 \$14.95

Rich and refreshing lime and melon characteristics with gentle oak maturation.

Selaks Premium Sauvignon Blanc 2000 \$14.95

Due to the very limited supply of this gold medal wine we can only promise first in first served with this.

Taylors Shiraz Cabernet 1998 \$15.95

Superb silver medal, Clare Valley wine. Smooth and flavoursome berry and spice fruit. Value plus and unfortunately this is the last of the stock at this price!

Taylors Cabernet 1999 \$17.95

Full flavored well-balanced Cabernet with soft tannins and complexity from maturation in oak barrels.

Temple Bruer Shiraz Malbec 1998 \$19.95

A blend of 74% Shiraz and 26% Malbec from the Langhorne Creek. This is an excellent wine from the fantastic 1998 vintage. Excellent colour with sweet cherry fruit, good complexity with intensity and length. Will cellar well. Has received 4 gold medals to date.

Yalumba Barossa Shiraz 1998 \$18.95

We have managed to get more of this wine from this superb vintage. Ripe sweet berryfruit with licorice notes and subtle smoky oak.

Waimea Estates Chardonnay 2000 \$19.95

Delicious full fruit of fig, tropical fruit and cashews underlay nuances of vanilla butterscotch and mealiness.

Wild Duck Creek 1999 Spring Flat Shiraz \$69.95

Very stylish wine made from very low yielding old Shiraz vines. Choc full of plum, licorice and spice. Very, very intense on the palate. Cellar 5 to 8 years. 94/100. 5 stars Cuisine. Very rare.

Wines of the Month

Mark's choice:

Stonecroft Gewurztraminer 2000 \$32.95

If you're passionate about Gewurztraminer, this is a wine to sit up and take notice of. Made by Alan Limmer in Hawkes Bay this is always one of NZ's top marques. Made in a drier style this year, it shows considerable ageing potential, and is certainly crying out for at least another year before you broach a bottle. Floral aromatics, with hints of jasmine and rose petal beginning to unfold, a rich and textured mid-palate ('unctious'

to quote Peter) and a lingering spicy finish.

Lyn's choice:

Esk Valley Black Label Chardonnay 2000 \$18.95

Elegant creamy Chardonnay displaying flavours of stonefruit and citrus fruits and complex oak derived from the barrel fermentation. I really enjoy the texture and the creamy oak in this wine. It's the style of Chardonnay that I just love.

Peter's choice:

Te Mata Elston Chardonnay 2000 \$36.95

Michael Cooper writes of the Elston 'One of NZ's most illustrious chardonnays, Elston is a stylish and intense, slowly evolving Hawkes Bay wine. At around four years old, it is a notably complete wine with concentration, complexity and finesse'. This is a true NZ classic and this vintage is in my opinion the best Elston Chardonnay yet. Still restrained but packed with fruit. Very complex, with a long nutty mealy palate. As Michael Cooper suggests this is one for the cellar.

Chris's choice:

Sevenhill Shiraz 1998 \$24.95

Sevenhill Shiraz has always been one of my favorite wines and is a wine that I always add to my cellar. The 1998 is an outstanding Shiraz, and the Sevenhill will reflect the fantastic vintage in the Clare Valley. The wine is almost opaque with a deep crimson purple colour, which clings to the glass leaving a film of mauve. The nose is superb, youthful blackberry fruit aromas are layered by aromas of black pepper, plum and liquorice. The palate is every bit as the colour suggests, with globs of concentrated blackberry and plum flavours, overlain with spice and pepper. The finish is very persistent with pepper and liquorice flavours. The tannins are fine grained and provide a structure that will develop over the next 10 years or so. I think the 1998 Sevenhill Shiraz is an outstanding red with great cellaring potential and is exceptional value for money.

Here are some European beauties that Mark has taken the time to taste and write up. We do carry a range of European wines that are more difficult to find, and with so many people traveling and tasting wines from around the globe, European wines are no longer the 'odd-balls' in New Zealand wine retail. The following are a list of new wines instore.

Chateau Gaudrelle Vouvray 1999 \$35.95

Another French Chenin for those of you who are feeling experimental. Perhaps more earthy than the Marc Bredif, and a hint more of the classic French 'barnyardy' aromas and flavours. Another very good example, and a label that I have in my cellar.

Coto De Hayas Tinto Joven 1999 \$12.95

This is a great little modern styled wine from Spain. Coming from the Campo de Borja region, the winery (Bodegas Aragonesas) is utilising a combination of traditional Spanish varieties as well as 'international' varieties such as Cab Sav. This wine is a blend of, Cabernet Sauvignon Tempranillo and Grenache creating red berry fruit flavours on a caramely chocolatey finish. Great value.

Domaine de Gerbaud Cotes de Luberon 1999 \$30.95

I don't have a copy of Peter Mayle's 'A year in Provence': at hand, but if my memory serves me correctly, he lived in the proximity to the Cotes de Luberon. If his was a modern look at Provence,

then this is a modern expression of Provencal red wine. Rather New World in its bright fleshy fruit, this is a mouthfilling wine with style and interest.

Dr Thanisch Bernkastler Lay Riesling Auslese 1990 \$64.95

What a joy to drink an aged Mosel wine from one of Germany's best producers. Simply fab! Fragrant, floral with beautiful peach/citrus flavours and a full, very long intense finish. Still very fresh, but no hurry, it'll stay on this plateau for at least 5 years. I love it!

Marc Bredif Vouvray 1999 \$35.95

Chenin Blanc is an underestimated and rarely seen grape variety here (off the top of my head, it's hard to think of good New Zealand chenins the exception being Collards), but at its pinnacle in the Loire Valley in France in appellations such as Vouvray. Noted for their incredible age-worthiness due to Chenin's natural acidity, in good years such as this, they combine lovely pear, apple and pineapple hints with a honeyed finish. Drinking well now, but a surprise in store if you cellar them.

Schlumberger Cuvee Fleur Gewurztraminer 1998 \$35.95

Many of our customers with a bent for Gewurz have enjoyed the previous widely available vintage of this wine—the '94. Widely perceived as the leaders of Gewurz, the Alsace region in Eastern France specializes in the aromatic varieties, with Schlumberger being a well established house with a fine reputation for their rich, fat, oily and very aromatic Gewurztraminer. Pair it with duck liver pate for a perfect match (its duck shooting in a another month or so, so good timing to try them). Staatliche Weinbaudomane Ockfener Bockstein

Riesling Auslese 1989 \$37.95

We had several wines from this Mosel co-operative last year, which went extremely well. Our suppliers continues to be able to source us aged wines from the cellars. A great opportunity to try a mature German Riesling.

Note: we have a good range of top German wines including the legendary Bernkastler Doctor Auslese 1998 for about \$160. Coming soon a range of excellent French Burgundies at reasonable prices. Contact Peter for details.

Clarendon Hills releases

James Halliday writes in his current 'Wine Companion 2001 Edition' of this vineyard: 'Clarendon Hills produces some of the most startling concentrated, rich and full-bodied red wines to be found in Australia. Roman Bratasiuk (winemaker) is a larger than life—than—life figure who makes larger—than—life wines. Technocrats may quibble about this or that aspect, but influential judges such as Robert Parker have neither reservations about nor problems with the immense, brooding red wines which Bratasiuk regularly produces from small patches of old, low-yielding vines which he ferrets out.'

This book does not have the current vintages reviewed and as I have not tried them I can only assure you that previous vintages have been outstanding. The Australis in particular is right up there with the Grange, and even in it's first vintage was reputed as being better. Try these for yourselves or cellar them for a few years and be rewarded for it with inflated prices at auction.

Australis \$269.95

Decanter Club Newsletter

Piggott Range Vineyard \$189.95

Brookman Vineyard \$149.95

Liandra Shiraz \$149.95

Cheers, Peter, Lyn, Mark and the crew