

Decanter Club

April 2002

Coming Events:

Peter and Laurie's Choice Thursday 11th April *cost: \$20.00*

Some goodies here. We'll be starting with the wonderful Te Mata Estate Chardonnay and going on to the Antinori Peppoli and some gems in between. This will be a fantastic mixture of white, red, new world, old world as we both look at wines with different perspectives.

Cuisine Tasting: Chardonnays Wednesday 17th April *cost: \$20.00*

There's still this ABC (anything but Chardonnay) thing around, but I'm not convinced that this is really the case as it still is the one variety all vineyards make (with a few exceptions that I can't think of off hand). It has the glory of being made from almost every site from Central Otago to Auckland and everywhere in-between. Styles have changed over the years though, from the big buxom heavily French oak styles to the more elegant lightly oaked styles. Wines in the tasting include Esk Valley Reserve, Matariki Reserve, Martinborough Vineyards, Babich 'The Patriarch' and more.

Chris and Peter: Winter reds Thursday 2nd May *cost: \$20.00*

Expect some big beauties at this tasting. Some of the new vintages will be coming on to the market at that stage and this will be an opportunity to check them out.

Paul Williams: Sangiovese Wednesday 8th May *cost: \$30.00*

I know this is an expensive tasting, but good Sangiovese doesn't come cheap! They say that Sangiovese is the base of all Tuscan red wines, great and small, and is 'gospel'. Paul will take us for a trip of the Tuscan countryside. He has an excellent wine knowledge and will show Sangiovese in its various expressions with some of the best wines available in New Zealand Wines for tasting include the Castelgiocondo Brunello and the Luce are both of which are on the shelf for over \$100. If you love Italian wines book early.

Wines Recently Tasted:

Ashwood Grove Shiraz 2000 \$13.45

This wine featured in last month's newsletter, and which rocketed out the door faster than "a rat out of a aqueduct" (to borrow a line from Monty python). The rep has now sold his grandmother into white slavery to hold the price on this wine. He begs us to buy lots, so he can get her back!

Brown's of Padthaway T Trellis Shiraz '99 \$16.15

It has been heartening to see that so many of you enjoyed this wine as much as we did so much so that we ran out before the end of the month! Another shipment is due in, so get in now. We have doubled our order, but have several forward orders from regulars, so don't delay. As an aside, the importer told us that the 2000 Brown's Cabernet is an absolute blinder!/? Alistair and Peter have volunteered to join Mark in the arduous

task of checking out the sample bottles. Watch this space for a report!

Cape Mentelle Shiraz 2000 TBC (but probably bucket loads of cash)

Mark tried this wine at the winery and was very impressed. This is a serious Shiraz with leanings towards Rhone rather than Eastern states. Slightly less ferrous than the 1999 release, but with wonderful complexity, balance and length and with finely integrated oak letting the fruit shine. As with all Cape Mentelle wines, this should be a serious cellaring proposition. Release date is towards the end of April.

Carrick Sauvignon Blanc 2001 \$17.95

Hallmark Sauvignon Blanc from Central Otago with notes of limes and gooseberries. Concentrated ripe, tropical fruit flavours of feijoa and nectarines.

Cedar Creek Chardonnay \$9.85

I keep trying to find a better drinking Chardonnay than this for under \$12, but so far, no luck. Peach and melon flavours. Very ripe and fresh with a lovely touch of oak.

Collards Pinot Noir 2000 \$15.95

Was \$23.95, our newsletter super special price is only 15.95, and this is the last at this amazing price. Lovely wine, full of cherries and spice. Buy a case...its only 12 bottles, and it never lasts as long as you think!

Collards Sauvignon Blanc 2000 \$12.55

Another super buy. 4 stars in the Michael Cooper's Wine Guide. Lots of tropical fruit and gooseberry flavours.

Crossroads Reserve Pinot Noir 2000 \$30.55

A ripper of a Pinot from Hawkes Bay of all places. Full of cherry and spice flavours. Very dense and concentrated. We really liked this wine.

Forrest Sauvignon Blanc 2000 \$15.25

Year after year, John Forrest makes one of NZ's finest Sauvignon Blancs. A Marlborough classic.

Fox Creek 'Short Row' Shiraz 2000 \$38.65

Bob Campbell gives this wine 95/5 stars in the latest Cuisine mag, and writes "another blockbuster red from one of Australia's top Shiraz producers. Incredibly deep, dense wine with plum, chocolate, mocha, mulberry and liquorice flavours. Very approachable now for such a big wine, but will reward with ageing".

Moculta Cabernet Merlot and Moculta Shiraz 2000 \$15.25

I don't need to tell our regulars anything about the Moculta range; they have been firm favorites at Munslow's over several vintages for their opulent fruit and depth of flavour. Our friendly suppliers have managed to peg back the price a little for us this month (I can see their Christchurch Sales Manager fretting about budgets). Normally \$17.95 in the shop, this month only \$15.25 to our newsletter customers!

Morris Durif 1998 \$17.95

We've picked up another shipment of this stunning wine, and are able to ratchet the price down a little more. This is a big, ballsy b*! Of a wine, which I have previously likened to hand to hand combat in a glass, though while it has a big tannin structure, it balances that with intense fruit. I recently read a review by an Australian wine writer who had just sampled a twenty-year-old bottle of this wine, and found it stunning and with life ahead of it. While I cannot promise twenty years for this wine I'm sure it will soak up 10 plus years. Magic stuff.

Mt Edward Riesling 2001 \$17.05

A great wee local wine made by guru Alan Brady in Central Otago. It has an intense lemon blossom perfumed that follows through on the palate. I've no doubt this will develop really well in the bottle if you leave it for a few years. Like all Central Otago wines though, supplies are relatively small, so don't wait until the Indian summer they promised us comes to buy this.

Mt Difficulty Merlot \$20.65

Don't adjust your reading glasses just yet! Yes, Mt. Difficulty is making a Merlot, and jolly good it is too. Gone are the days of green, underripe red wines from NZ (other than Pinot). This really is a stunner. Great plum and berry fruit flavours with. More like the Aussi Merlot's with the level of ripeness they have achieved. Bound to surprise most of you, it certainly did us.

Nobilo Pinot/Chardonnay Brut \$12.55

It's great to have a good fizz at a good price. More finesse and fruit weight than many of the Australian wines in this price range.

Prunotto Barolo Classico 1997 \$58.45

Robert Parker Jr said of this wine, "The exotic 1997 Barolo offers aromas of liquorice, smoke, and overripe black cherries. It boasts powerful, concentrated, moderately tannic flavours, good glycerin and concentration as well as a spicy, well endowed, concentrated finish. Anticipated maturity: 2002 – 2014". 92/100 points.

Richmond Grove Coonawarra Cabernet 1997 \$16.15

Under the guidance of John Vickery, Richmond Grove is releasing an excellent range of varietals, chosen from the areas in which each grape is perceived to do best. Thus, there is the Barossa Shiraz, Watervale Riesling and so on and of course this Coonawarra Cabernet. Drinking superbly well now, this is full of lush blackcurranty fruit with the classic Coonawarra mintiness. Normally \$19.95. We also have a tiny allocation of the stunning '98 vintage due in, so if your interested, let us know. (Price to be confirmed for the '98)

Stratford Chardonnay 2000 \$28.75

A newcomer to our shelves and hailing from Martinborough. Strat Canning has been a successful grower they're supplying to some of the big names, but also runs his own label. This is a tightly wound Chardonnay, with more development and opening up ahead of it, yet showing the intensity from low yields. A stylish wine.

Torbreck 'The Steading' 1999 \$43.15

Tiny amounts of this available. A new Australian icon with rave reviews from Robert Parker. Made in the same style as Rockford wines as the winemaker/owner Dave Powell spent many years there. Made from Grenache, Mouvedre and Shiraz (GSM) blend. It has wonderful depth of flavour with blackberry and spice. Put it aside for at least 5 years, but will cellar well for 10 plus years.

Torbreck 'Runrig' 1999 \$260.95

The big brother to The Steading' is also available in even smaller quantities. This is a Shiraz rather than GSM. But alas, we have not tried this. It stands on its own reputation.

Weeping Sounds Cabernet Merlot 2000 \$27.85

Second label of Obsidian Vineyard from Waiheke Island, and certainly the most reasonably priced Waiheke Island red without compromising on quality. More Bordeaux like in style.

Wines of the Month

Mark's choice:

Morris Sparkling Shiraz Durif \$17.95

Let it be known here and now that I am a big fan of Aussie sparkling reds, though I have sadly watched as fame and demand have pushed prices up and up. I'm well chuffed that the folks who bring in the Morris range from Victoria have now added this to their portfolio. Pete and Laurie bought me back a bottle from Melbourne last year and I was mighty impressed. This is fragrantly perfumed, powerfully flavoured, not overly sweet and with good backbone. Simply this is a serious red sparkler at a bargain price (it's more expensive in Oz too). Red bubbles fan, believe me...you must try this.

Peter's choice:

Temple Bruer Shiraz Malbec 1998 \$17.95

This is a wee beauty. A wine that's different in style to many other Langhorne Creek wines. The winemaker David Bruer informs us that he has added 30% Malbec to soften the tannins of the Shiraz (they were huge in the '98 vintage). The palate is intense with a wonderful depth of flavour. It's certainly drinking well now, but will cellar for at least another 5 years or so. We enjoyed this with a roast lamb. Yum! This also happens to be an organic vineyard. Cuisine rated it with 4 _ stars and very well rated in Australia.

Alastair's choice:

Leaning Rock Barrel Fermented Gewurztraminer 1999 \$17.95

Fermented in French oak, this has produced a powerful and rich Gewurztraminer. Orange peel and rose petal aromas predominate with a luscious lychee and spice finish. Quite an unusual style. Drinking nicely now.

OTHER WINES

d'Arenburg The Stump Jump Grenache Shiraz 1999 \$11.65

Boy have we got a deal for you! Stumpy bounded onto the scene (forgive the pun, but it was late at night over a glass of charders...and Mark's like that!) late last year and has very quickly become a firm favorite amongst our clients. It offers a rich, spicy flavour with that touch of raspberry and earthiness common in Grenache. This is a wine whose complexity and depth of flavour far outweighs its modest price. WELL! The rep has come in with a deal so hot, it came with its own set of oven mitts. For the course of the newsletter or while stocks last. Normally \$14.95 Newsletter price \$11.65

Sassicaia 1998 \$175.45

Can't say that we have tried this, but international media rate this as the best or near to the best from Italy. Made in Piedmont area from Cabernet grapes and traditionally in a Bordeaux style. One for the cellar or for adding to the auction to make a few dollars in a few years.

WINE INSTITUTE REPORT Autumn 2002

The predicted varieties by hectares and their percentage increase are shown in the table below.

Variety	2001	2004	% increases
Chardonnay	3221	3502	+12%
Sauvignon Blanc	2406	4376	+58%
Muller thurgau	368	279	-24%
Riesling	481	620	+29%
Pinot Gris	153	307	+101%
Pinot Noir	1454	2674	+84%
Cabernet Sauvignon	725	796	+10%
Merlot	889	1244	+40%
Total (including others)	11,357	15433	+36%

The interesting thing to me is the low amount of Riesling compared to what is available on the shelves. Also significant is the hectareage devoted to Pinot, but everyone's on that bandwagon now. This is the first year that Pinot Gris has stood alone in its own category and not included into the Others

Other interesting pieces of information include the area planted has doubled between 1985 and 2000, although the average yield has decreased from 13.2 tonnes per hectare to 6.3 indicating the increase in premium varieties and the decrease in blended high cropping varieties like Muller. Our consumption per capita has decreased but our export volume has gone from 0.8 m.litres to 19.2 m.litres. Our total exports in the 6 months to December 2001 were 13.8m litres worth \$147.3m, being an increase of 23% in volume and 28% in value over the same period in 2000. The markets have shown a steady increase of NZ wines include the UK, USA, Australia, Canada, Ireland and Denmark.

Vintage in central ~ A quick overview.

Mark was picking grapes at Carrick's Robertson-Green Vineyard in Bannockburn last weekend. They started picking the early ripening varieties prior to Easter and will continue through until the end of April. Other areas in Central tend to be latter ripening in particular the Gibbston area.

The big thing in the Bannockburn area this year is that volumes of wine will be up to 40% down on last years. The berry sizes are small and the bunch weights are lighter resulting in lower volume of juice.

Decanter Club Newsletter

On the brighter side, quality is looking excellent so far. The weather has been kind to Central with no early frosts and none of the heavy rain and hail storms Dunedin had to suffer over Easter.

A reminder that Decanter Club membership is due this month. The cost of membership is \$15.00 single, \$25.00 couple. For this cost, you receive the newsletter regularly by post or email AND a discount price on all bottled wines. Please forward cheques to Munslow's or email us with your credit card details.

We also provide free delivery of wines throughout the Dunedin area.

Cheers, Peter, Mark, Alastair and the crew at Munslow's