

Decanter Club

August 2002

Coming Events:

John Forrest: Forrest Estate Wednesday 7th August *cost: 10.00*

One of Decanter Club's regular and popular annual tastings. John is the 'Maestro' of wine making being the befitting recipient of many awards, including the NZ Winemaker of the Year. His wines have gone from strength to strength not only with his famous Sauvignon Blanc, but also his Cabernet Merlot Cornerstone (which has just gone 'gold' in London), to the extraordinary Gewurztraminer. In fact all of his wines have received huge accolades with the exception of Pinot Noir which he has never produced on a commercial basis. Please book and arrive early for this tasting, because it is always very popular.

Cuisine tasting: NZ reds Thursday 15th August *cost: 25.00*

A big tasting dominated by Cabernet merlot's with a few Pinots. This will be a very good tasting. We tried the Brookfields reds (especially the Shiraz) last week and we were all blown away by the amazing standard. We expect similar quality from this tasting. I realise this is an expensive tasting, however the wines are right up there price-wise, and we will not cover the cost

Jane Ferrari: Yalumba Wines Tuesday 20th August *cost: 15.00*

Jane is the PR person for Yalumba and an astonishing energetic speaker. She was one of Yalumba's winemakers before her talents as a speaker were exposed. What Jane doesn't know about wine, South Australia and Yalumba are just not worth knowing. Besides, the wines are very good.

Peter and Laurie Munslow: Italian and Australian wines Thursday 29th August *cost: 15.00*

We will introduce a fabulous new range of Arbiola wines from Italy. These are mostly Barberas from Piedmont. These are really extremely good quality wines. We will also try the new vintages from Maxwell and Dennis wineries in the McLaren Vale

Tom Mailing: Nobilo Wine group Thursday 5th September *cost: 10.00*

Nobilo group is now one of the top 3 wine distributors in New Zealand. Their portfolio includes Nobilo and Selaks from New Zealand and Taylor's and Leasingham from Australia. Tom is the marketing manager for Nobilo group and as we are unsure as to the range of wines he will present we will endeavor to let you know what he will be presenting closer to the date.

Wines Recently Tasted:

A Mano Primitivo 2001 22.45

A wonderful discovery for us, Primitivo was long thought to be Zinfandel, but DNA profiling now shows then both to be offspring of the Croatian grape Plavac Mali. An earlier vintage of this wine (the '99 I think) was an International Wine Challenge of the Year, and the label has been garnering critical acclaim ever since.

We now know why. Hailing from Puglia in the south, this new wave Italian is deeply colour, spicy, savoury, and earthy with touches of cherry/plummy accented fruit, this is just delicious.

Brookfields Ohiti Estate Cab. Sauvignon '01 16.25

This classy Hawkes Bay cabernet was recently tasted at our wine club. Rich, smoky, blackcurrant aromas are followed by supple black cherry fruit and soft tannins with a hint of liquorice. Approachable now, but has some good ageing potential

d'Arenberg Stump Jump 2001 13.45

Stumpy's back! Bigger, stronger, faster (I think I can hear the theme top the six million dollar man breaking in). We've leapt (forgive the pun) into the '01 vintage and d'Arenberg have added Mouvedre (they like to call it Mataro in Australia) to bend this year making it a G.S.M. The Mouvedre adds a little more depth to the colour, and gives an extra savoury, gamy note to the wine. Another Munslow's favourite, which I'm sure will fly off the shelves this year.

EandE Black Pepper Sparkling Shiraz 90++

Ahhh... Sparkling Shiraz. Gazing into its vibrant purple heart, slipping into its velvety depths, sweet fruit cascading across the palate, prickles of CO2 massaging your tongue. Oops...got carried away there. 6 bottles available in Dunedin, we've got em. Bleeding expensive, bloody marvelous, nothing more to say.

Foradori Teroldego Rotilano 2000 31.45

Bored with cabernet, been there done that with Shiraz and grenache? Find Chianti too passe? How about Teroldego then? Grown in the Rotilano plain in Trentino in Northern Italy, this grape has been likened to a cross between Pinot Noir and Cabernet, combining an aromatic expressive nose, with a rich, fleshy, full-bodied palate. We've been able to source a dozen bottles of this rare and obscure grape variety that should confuse the living daylights out of the wine options set.

Maxwell Ellen Street 1999 30.55

Rated highly by Robert Parker who describes this gorgeous McLaren Vale Shiraz as a thermonuclear fruit bomb! Packed with spice and plums, most of Maxwell's production is now exported to the USA, where it sells for US\$ 35. Fabulous stuff!

Morris Sparkling Durif NV 17.95

The Morris label already has very many converts so I may be preaching to the converted, but talk of mid winter Xmas and mid-winter roasts means that it's time to talk turkey (forgive the pun). Sparkling red is a wonderful combination with roast duck or turkey, makes a great appetiser, and is corker with the steamed pud (or chocolate for that matter). Stuff the food and wine matching, a bottle of the Morris for each course, thank you very much.

Mt Maude Gewurztraminer 2001 18.85

Mt Maude is a small winery owned by Terry and Dawn Wilson and is situated just over the hill from Wanaka with the wines being made by Dean Shaw of Cowco. This is a striking Central Otago gewurz at the drier end of the spectrum, with intense rose petal and musk notes and hints of turkish delight on a mineral backbone.

Sanctuary Riesling 2002 12.55

The trickle of new vintage releases threatens to become a flood at this time of year, and it's always a juggling act as to what space will allow us to carry in store. However, the Sanctuary Riesling unquestionably earns its space in the shop. The price has been held again this year which makes it more and more of a bargain and invariably this wine goes on to notch up gold medals. Bright and zesty in its youth, and offering great drinking as it gains a little bottle age, this is very stylish and affordable drinking.

Selaks Sauvignon Blanc 2002 13.45

If ever the sunshine in a glass analogy was appropriate then this is it. During these cold gray wintry days, this wine comes as a blast of summer sunshine. One of the early '02 releases on the market, and quite frankly, yet another magic vintage of this perennially over performing label. Crisp, fresh, zesty: everything you expect of a Marlborough Sauvvy, yet unlike many of its competitors, this wine remains fairly priced and widely available. A wine to be enjoyed again and again.

Stonecroft Crofters Syrah 2000 17.95

We've been able to source one more shipment of this stunning Kiwi red, which we feel offers outstanding value for money. A reminder for those who have forgotten, this is Alan Limmers top syrah fruit, given the Rolls Royce treatment, French oak ageing the works, but prior to bottling Alan felt that it didn't quite reach the level he demands for his Stonecroft syrah label. He declassified it into his Crofters label, added 10% Cabernet and Merlot for extra backbone and released it at this fantastic price. More in the French mould than in the Aussie Shiraz zone, this wine is drinking beautifully now, but I'm sure will evolve gracefully in the cellar over the short to medium term.

Umani Ronchi Verdicchio 2000 14.35

Verdicchio who/what/where you might ask, but Verdicchio is widely grown in Central Italy and in this case in the DOC of Castelli de Jesi in the Marches. Subtle rather than flamboyant, I found this to be a wine that crept up on me with its fresh burst of citrusy acidity overlaid on an almondy nutty palate. Some Italian whites I have tried have been bland oxidized offerings, but this wine definitely drew me back for a second glass.

Wines of the Month

Mark's choice:

Te Whare Ra Riesling 2002 12.55

Many of our regulars will have enjoyed previous vintages of this wine, which has been a fond favourite for us at Munslow's. This vintage offers an intriguing counterpoint between nose and palate. It smells dry (does that sound dumb?) with its enticing bouquet of fresh cut flowers, citrus blossom and a touch of minerality, but then wham, on comes the lush honeyed palate with its freshening citrus notes to completely dispel the dryness suggested by the nose. Our distributor has managed to ratchet this down to the price of the '99 vintage, making this a bargain price for this lovely off-dry kiwi Riesling.

Peter's choice:

Kawarau Reserve Pinot Noir 2001 32.35

Each vintage gets better and better and this is a fabulous drop. Lovely rich cherry flavours typical of the best central fruit, bursts onto the palate with a hint of spicy vanillin oak, unlike a lot of other Pinots this is reasonably priced. Great with duck.

Alastair's choice:

Castano Pozuelo Crianza 1999 16.15

New vintage of this excellent red from the Bodegas Castano. Made from a blend of Monastrell (Mouvedre/Mataro), tempranillo and Cabernet Sauvignon. The wine is dark in colour producing a pretty powerful wine, but surprisingly without the harsh tannins that you might expect from a wine of this ilk. Good fruit backed up with some toasty oak and a long lasting finish. Excellent value for money.

Casina L'Arbiola – a new range/label from Italy

We are excited to showcase in store, a new label for us, that of Arbiola from Piedmont in Northern Italy. Arbiola were rated Italy's winery of the year in 2000 and have been gaining critical acclaim in some of Europe's finest wine publications (der Feischmacker from Germany and Gambero Rosso from Italy), so it's somewhat of a coup to land them in New Zealand.

The winery is owned by the Terzano family and supported by their winemaker Beppe Caviola who was awarded the Winemaker of the Year in 2002 in Italy, and Frederico Curtaz, ex. Gaja Estate. They specialise in growing the Barbera grape variety, making a series of ascending quality levels from vineyard sites around Alba, Asti and Monferrato.

Barbera is the second most planted grape in Italy (after Sangiovese) and accounts for about half of Piedmont's total production. There are also sizable plantings in both California and Argentina with small pockets popping up in Australia. As a grape it tends to have high acidity, good depth of colour and low tannins (DNA analysis suggests that it could be related to Mouvedre/Mataro) and ripens late in the vineyard, making it popular in warmer regions. This transposes in the finished wine to a style that invariably is highly fruit driven, a soft fleshy palate and a refreshing zip of acidity on the finish which makes it very food friendly. Early drinking styles tend to see little or no oak, with the more powerful ageworthy wines being deeply coloured and brooding with spicy oak notes. Fruit flavours are generally thought of as rich and cherry-like.

Expect to see this label around for quite a long time. Check out their website on

[www://arbiola.com](http://www.arbiola.com)

The wines

L'Arbiolin 1999 21.55

Ruby coloured with touches of woody, forest floor notes and sweet fruit. The nose (reminiscent of Pinot) hints of cherry and bramble on the palate with a touch of balancing astringency. Silky and slippery smooth over the palate, with good length and finish

La Carlotta Barbera D'Asti 1999 28.75

A step up the ladder with greater depth of colour and aromatics. This wine is a delight. It is medium–full in body, savoury and extremely flavoursome, with cherry and almond flavours and soft tannins. Extra fruit sweetness on the palate with added concentration and complexity.

La Romilda Barbera D'Asti 1999 44.95

This wine has a long line of international awards, including 'Top wine of the Year' in the Decanter Magazine, for the 1996 vintage (an exceptional vintage). The 1999 vintage throughout Italy has received reviews suggesting that it is exceptional, so it was with pleasure that we tried this wine recently. It's a big wine, taking no prisoners. The fruit is ripe, berryfruit.

Dom — Monferrato DOC Rosso 1998 53.95

Top of the range, this wine is an experience to be had. Like the 1999 vintage 1998 had an exceptional season. The Barbera makes up only a third of the volume, the rest being made from 33% Cabernet Sauvignon and 33% Pinot Nero (a clone of Pinot Noir). Like the La Romilda the grapes are picked from vines that are almost 60 years old and aged in small French oak barrels. This is definitely up there with Gaja, Sassacia, and Tignanello but at half the price. I have no doubt at all that this will cellar well for at least 10 years.

Mutterings from Mark

Last month I featured Riesling (my favorite white grape variety) and mentioned that this was one of the two longest lived white wines. The other and one that I also must profess a strong soft spot for is Chenin Blanc. Like Riesling, Chenin can be made in the gamut of wine styles, from sparkling to bone dry. Its high natural acidity means that good vintages can age gracefully, and magnificently. Its home; and is the Loire Valley in France, though there is in fact nearly three times more Chenin planted in South Africa where the grape is known as Steen. There are also significant plantings in California and Argentina, and smaller plots in countries as diverse as Australia, Canada, Brazil and Mexico. Prized for its high acidity in warmer vineyard areas, it is often blended with the more blowsy Chardonnay to provide spine and backbone, however, allowed lower yields and fair attention, it can be a star in its own right.

My first introduction to this variety came at the end of the '80s when a flatmate bought home a Collards Chenin for dinner. To this day, this wine is a revelation with its freshness, fruit and melange of flavours, yet at a bargain basement price. Its stubborn unfashionability means that it remains one of the outstanding wine bargains in the marketplace. Another fortuitous discovery some time in the early 90s was the first of many bottles of Houghton's White Burgundy from WA. The HWB is always an unspecified blend, a bit of a vinous menagerie, but Chenin always makes up a significant part of the blend. Once again a wine available in good volume, consistently excellent, and cheap as chips. While it drinks well young, they do also cellar brilliantly.

In recent years, I have discovered Vouvray, and one or two botrytised Chenins from the Loire Valley, which offer yet another slant to this variety. Good wines from good years in the Loire can live seemingly forever in the cellar, and we occasionally are offered older Chenins from the likes of Marc Bredif Vouvray and others.... a rare treat. Pete has tried them back to the 50s and says they remain as fresh as a daisy. Loire chenin is said to have aromas and flavours of apples, greengages, minerals, honey and damp straw, while I think we can safely add notes of pineapple and tropical fruits to some of

the new world versions.

In store now we have good stocks of the Collards Hawkes Bay Chenin Blanc 2000. Fabulous drinking now with touches of pears and honey, freshness and vitality and as cheap as! Showing its warmer climate origins the Houghton's White Burgundy 2001. A warmer climate origin, the Houghton's White Burgundy 2001 is mouthfilling with tropical fruit salad characters and good length. 2001 was a fantastic vintage in WA. In Vouvray we have two Vigneau Chevraux Methodes, the Brut* and the Demi-Sec*. Made in the Champagne style these are bubbly that will age, while the Demi-Sec with its touch of sweetness can be a good counterpoint to dessert. The Marc Bredif Vouvray '00 is due in stock any day now. Not yet tasted, but traditionally dry with strong apple/greengage notes with a touch of gunflint. Chateau Gaudrelle 2000 while remaining dry has a touch fruit sweetness to it, and moves into the nutty, damp straw part of the spectrum. The Jean-Pierre Laisnent Demi Sec 1999 is off-dry bringing in the wonderful honeyed elements, yet balancing acidity common to this style of Vouvray. In the not quite sticky category, we have the Vigneau Chevraux Moelleux 1997* from the stellar vintage in the Loire, and the full blown stickies give us the Forrest Botrytised Chenin 2000 from Marlborough and the Domaine Du Sauveroy Coteau Du Layon 1999* from the Loire. We also have a tiny handful of '83 and '89 Marc Bredif Vouvray due in store shortly, with several preorders. Anyone interested in these wines should ring Peter, Alastair or myself immediately if they wish to secure a bottle.

Wines marked with an asterisk have only a few bottles in stock.

Prices for chenins:

Collards Chenin 2000	11.65
Houghton's White Burgundy 2000	11.65
Vigneau Chevraux Methode Brut	26.05
Vigneau Chevraux Methode Demi-Sec	26.05
Marc Bredif Vouvray 2000	TBC
Chateau Gaudrelle Vouvray 2000	25.15
Jean Pierre Laisnent Vouvray Demi-Sec 2001	26.95
Vigneau Chevraux Vouvray Moelleux 1997	33.25
Forrest Botrytised Chenin Blanc 2000 (375 ml)	24.25
Domaine Du Sauveroy Coteau Du Layon (500ml) 1999	40.45

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