

# Decanter Club

**March 2004**

Due to overzealous spam mail (about 3000 a day) we have been forced to change our email address. It was munslow@munslovs.co.nz. It is NOW wine@munslovs.co.nz

## Coming Events:

**Peter Cummings: Lace Wines** Tuesday 4th May *cost: \$15.00*

Lace wines are the importers and distributors of some very fine Australian wines, and peter will show wines from the Beresford (McLaren Vale), Pauletts (Clare Valley) and Willows (Barossa Valley) range. This will be a fascinating comparison of red wines from such prestigious areas in South Australia.

**TBA** Thursday 27th May *cost: \$TBA*

Unfortunately one of the wine reps who had planed to do a tasting for us here cancelled yesterday. We will definitely be having a tasting on this date but we are unable to confirm this. We will send out a note on through email.

**Negociants NZ: 'Our Friends to the West'** Friday 25th June *cost: \$20.00*

Venue: The Copthorne Hotel, QUEENSTOWN. Time: 5–7 pm. A early notice of this wine tasting to put in your diary. Negotiants annually put on a winemakers tasting for the trade and consumers to show their premium wines. This year the tasting is held with Australian winemakers. Unfortunately they are not coming to Dunedin this year, but will show their wines in Queenstown. Winemakers form Yalumba, d'Arenburg, Peter Lehmann, Vasse Felix, Jim Barry and Heggies wineries will be there for you to discuss their wines with you. For tickets contact Negotiants at 09 366 2982 or chenty@negociants.com

## Wines Recently Tasted:

**Basedow Barossa Shiraz 1999 17.95**

The silent Australian Shiraz for under \$20 has roared! I had not had this wee beauty for a while, but was I impressed! A big gutsy Barossa style, with oodles of sweet berry flavours. Lots of spice, great tannin structure ad a delightfully long finish. If you are looking for a drinking buddy with a big steak– look no further–call Martijn!

**Claddagh Merlot 2001 36.85**

This is the first release of their Martinborough Merlot and it is a stunner. Darkly coloured and highly concentrated with plum and prune flavours and a gamey/savoury character nicely balanced with a good helping of oak. Magnificent stuff!!

**Dog Point Pinot Noir 2002 35.95**

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Scented and mouth filling with very good depth of flavour. Red berries and plums on the palate. Tightly structured and complex. Tasted more French than kiwi. Very good. Made by James Healy and Ivan Sutherland, ex Cloudy Bay.

### **Dog Point Section 94 Sav Blanc '02 29.65**

My style of savy, made with all the bells and whistles e.g. oak treatment, malo, lees stirring. A funky. Wine in the nicest sense of the word. Weighty, complex wine with quince, limes and a touch of gooseberries.

### **Dopff and Irion Gewurztraminer '02 23.35**

For those of you who like a drier style, with less alcohol (about 13%) this wine may suit you. Intensely perfumed with excellent length. Was voted by our wineclub on the top 3 tasted on the night. Great with Asian food

### **Escarpment Pinot Gris 2002 28.75**

From Larry McKenna, this Martinborough wine was hand-picked and fermented in seasoned oak barrels. This is very fresh, spicy and floral, the palate is rich and round with beautiful fresh concentrated flavours of pear and spice and a touch of oak. 5 stars Michael Cooper.

### **Ingoldby Cabernet Sauvignon 17.05**

I love McLaren vale reds, and this is good. The colour is deep and youthful and the palate is full of lush sweet fruit with high quality oak treatment and a long finish.

### **Johanneshof Gewurztraminer 2003 23.35**

Everyone's favourite at last week's gewurt tasting, this has it all. Rich and honeyed it explodes on the palate. Classic rose petal aromas and a long lingering finish. Trophy winner and we picked this when we tried it earlier this year!

### **Lindemans Premier Selection Riesling '03 8.05**

One of the best buys in the shop and the new vintage is a cracker! Just off-dry with lovely citrus flavours. Laurie and I often serve this at bbq's and it goes down a treat.

### **Logan Weemala Shiraz 1999 12.55**

A spicy earthy shiraz sourced from McLaren Vale of the NSW Central Ranges. Hints of pepper on the nose and plum on the palate. Not a normal Aussi shiraz, but very good none the less.

### **Maglieri Merlot 2000 17.05**

You don't often think of Merlot and MacLaren Vale in the same breath, but this is a lovely drop of merlot with a rich, earthy regional character. Lots of sweet charm on the nose. Blackberry and raspberry fruit with a hint of christmas pud on the palate, and a long generous finish. Drinking well now.

### **Omrah Merlot Cabernet 2001 16.15**

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Many of you will know the Omrah Shiraz—now meet its cousin/nephew/sibling, the Cabernet Merlot. Lots of blackcurrant and blackberry flavours with hints of vanilla. Full flavoured with a moderately long finish. Drinks wonderfully. I hope you all become acquainted because class runs in the family.

### **Pegasus Bay Riesling 2003 21.55**

One of the best! Richly flavoured with concentrated flavours of citrus fruit and honey. Made in a lush medium style. This is lovely to drink on its own.

### **Pepperjack Shiraz 2002 21.55**

Another big lush Aussi Shiraz. Rich soft with plums and lovely vanilla oak. Try it with a bit of veal (available from Eskrick's Butchery in North East Valley this Monday)

### **Sileni Cellar Select Chard 2002 18.85**

One of my favourites because in spite of being full barrel fermentation, it is not apparently oaky. Lots of lovely lemon and lime flavours, with a touch of butterscotch and excellent depth with a long finish. Very good value.

### **Taylor's Jarram Shiraz 2001 31.45**

A star at our recent wineclub. Sumptuous dark berry aromas with sweet spice and chocolaty flavours. Deliciously deep, long flavoursome finish. Try with veal shanks.

### **Tatachilla Breakneck Merlot '02 12.55**

The Tatachilla breakneck range hasn't been on our shelves for a while, but it has come back with a vengeance. A wonderfully crafted lush merlot. Plumy with berries as well and a hint of oak. This merlot is a soft easy to drink wine.

### **Te Awa Farm Boundary 2000 44.95**

This is Te Awa Farm's flagship wine and it really is something to behold. It is a blend of Merlot (85%), Cabernet Sauvignon (10%), and Cabernet Franc (5%) from the much talked about Gimblett Gravels area of the Hawkes Bay. It is a massively concentrated and powerful wine which exudes class and presence with ripe berry fruit characters and excellent tannin structure. Try and resist the temptation to drink this wine now as a few years in the cellar will be well rewarded.

### **Three Steps Cabernet Shiraz 1999 10.75**

A fully flavoured robust cab. Shiraz from Victoria. Plums, berries and soft tannins make this a very pleasant drinking experience.

### **Torlesse Canterbury Chardonnay '02 12.55**

This Chardonnay uses grapes from Waipara and the wider Canterbury area. It is a lightly oaked style with citrus and melon flavours and a hint of nutty, toasty oak. A very easy going style and great value for money.

### **Torlesse Canterbury Riesling 2003 12.55**

This vineyard has come on leaps and bounds in the past 2 or 3 years. It's latest release riesling is testimony to it! Made in the Waipara style riesling, it's a medium–off medium style with lime and stone fruit a plenty with a clean crisp finish. Stunningly good for the price.

**Torlesse Pinot Noir 18.85**

Great value from Canterbury. Strawberry and spice aromas are followed by ripe plum and cherry flavours, with some spicy complexity and a good finish. Vincent Girardin Santenay 1er Cru Clos de la

**Confrerie 2001 35.95**

The Girardin family have been producing fine Burgundy for 11 generations in the Cote de Beaune from the commune of Santenay. The Clos de la Confrerie has vibrant raspberry and blueberry aromas and is medium bodied. It's wonderful character reveals cherries, violets and blueberries with real opulence and an abundance of fruit. This will drink well over the next 3 or so years. Vincent Girardin Maranges 1er Cru Clos de

**Loyers 2001 35.95**

Maranges is a relatively new appellation having been given this status in 1989. It lies just to the west of Santenay and produces well structured wines with great depth of colour and ripe savoury fruit characters. This wine has these attributes, it is very well balanced, has good grip and could be one to hide away in the cellar for a few years.

**Waterwheel Shiraz 2002 23.35**

According to James Halliday, this is Australia's best red wine buy! From Bendigo, Victoria, this is serious stuff. Big, dark wine with a ton of blackberry fruit and lovely vanilla flavours. Very ripe and full bodied with a very long finish. Great now, but try in 6 years. Peter's choice.

**Wynn's Coonawarra Riesling 2002 15.25**

From Coonawarra oldest winery comes another masterpiece of winemaking. This riesling has an abundance of the tropical riesling flavours and a wonderful full finish. However, if you don't wish to drink it now, it'll benefit with cellaring. We tried a 1993 vintage with Mark a couple of years ago and it proved that cellaring this wine was well worth the effort. At this price and with the first vintage in stelvin, how can you lose?

**Wynns Coonawarra Shiraz 2002 15.25**

Very purple in colour with spice, black cherry and berry fruit on the nose. The palate is full and rich with lots of dark fruit flavours. Try with kebabs.

**Yalumba Bush Vine Grenache 2001 17.95**

Yalumba has the resource of some very old, gnarly bush vines, producing low yields of Grenache that are classic in style with a depth of concentrated flavour. Deep purple in colour with wild blueberry and plummy fruit characters and a hint of pepper, supported by a fine tannin structure. Drinking very well now.



## MUTTERINGS FROM MARK

'Lets twist again like we did last Summer'

From an Australasian perspective, wineries in Australia have had a head start on NZ when it comes to the introduction of the screw cap closure. From the late 1960s and into the 1970s a number of Australian producers (notably Pewsey Vale, Orlando, and Yalumba) whole heartedly leapt into screw cap closures for some of their white wines, and in particular Riesling. That the general public totally rejected this new closure for wine, nearly leading to the demise of a couple of wineries, is a matter of history. In the pages of history books, screw caps remained for nearly thirty years (though used experimentally by several wineries over the intervening years) until in 1998 the Vintage Cellars retailer in conjunction with Richmond Grove winery released a mixed dozen of their Barossa and Watervale Rieslings onto the Australian market. The time was obviously now right for the screw cap, as wine enthusiasts eagerly snapped up the stock available. The success of this offer obviously gave hope to a group of Clare Valley Riesling producers who the following year released a percentage of their wine under screw cap, only to see sales of the screw capped wine outstrip that of the corked versions. New Zealand quickly followed suit, as a group of 13 wineries got together to form the 'Screwcap Initiative' and make the first commercial release of wines under the screw cap closure.

Working in wine retail in NZ at that time, it was clearly apparent that the screw cap movement was fast gathering momentum, as more and more wineries began to follow suit, and more and more varieties appeared under screw cap. Initially of course, Riesling began to show up under the closure, with the other aromatic whites such as Sauvignon Blanc, Pinot Gris, and Gewurztraminer soon following suit. They in turn began to be followed by Chardonnay and then the first of the reds as Pinot Noir also began to be sealed with a screw cap closure. As I left NZ, screw caps were definitely a potent force in the market. Imagine my surprise then in arriving in Australia to a wine industry where the use of screw caps seemed to have plateaued. Rieslings far and wide were screw capped, but relatively little else. I have heard various reasons for this including lack of available bottle shapes, and a longer table wine history with more entrenched attitudes to the use of cork but for whatever reason it has taken Australia a little longer to take the next step forward. In the last year I have seen a number of new releases hitting the market under screw cap including a number of reds including both Shiraz and Cabernet, and it seems that this closure is finally gaining wider acceptance.

I mention this because a Yarra Valley producer; Domaine Chandon has just released a new bubbly onto the market with a crown cap closure. Those of you in the know about bubbles will know that the crown seal (aka the beer bottle cap) is already used in the production of sparkling wines. As the wine is put into bottle to undergo it's secondary fermentation it is sealed with a crown cap, and stays under this closure as it rests on its yeast lees. The use of a crown cap on the finished product is a radical departure, and whether it catches on over here remains to be seen. I cannot help but think that this form of closure is guaranteed to be a success in NZ. Generations of Kiwis have learned to open beer bottles with other beer bottles, cigarette lighters, belt buckles, bbq implements and more. Will we see hardened Kiwi men cracking open a coldie with the egg slice and scoffing back a cold fizzy one. I for one can't wait to find out.

## Gewurztraminer Tasting

Last Thursday evening the Decanter Club tasting reviewed a number of gewurztraminers including, Dopff and Irion 02 and Greiner 2000 from Alsace, Whitehaven SVR 2001 and Johanneshof 2003 from Marlborough and from Central Otago, the Peregrine 2003 and Blackridge 2002 and the Late Harvest

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2003. The clear favorites were Johanneshof, Dopff and Irion and Greiner in that order, proving NZ can foot it with Alsace when it comes to gewurt. An excellent tasting over all.

A reminder to those who attended the gewurt tasting on Thursday and agreed to participate in a wine review focus group of an unnamed wine from Central Otago prior to the Lace tasting on Tuesday. Please be at Munslow's on or before 5.30. Thanks, Dave Christensen

Cheers, Peter, Alistair Martijn and the crew at Munslow's