

# Decanter Club

## February 2001

### Coming Events:

**Cuisine tasting: Best buys under \$15.00** Thursday 15th February *cost: \$15.00*

Just when you need to know what the best value wines around are. Guaranteed that all wines are for sale under \$15. Check out the new Cuisine for a list of wines for tasting.

**Peter Robertson: Brookfields** Wednesday 21st February *cost: \$15.00*

A scholar and a gentleman is one way to describe Peter Robertson. I have known Peter through the wine industry for nigh—on 20 years and I have been following what he has been making with interest. James Halliday wrote in an early edition of his Wine Atlas of Australia and New Zealand, "Owner/winemaker Peter Robertson has worked steadily to improve the wine quality with each passing vintage. The Sauvignon Blanc and the smooth well balanced Chardonnay are both good, but the Cabernet Merlot with its overtones of St Emillion, is the outstanding wine" (which is a lot to be said from an Australian commentator). I also believe his Pinot Gris and Gewurztraminer are his two outstanding white wines.

**Mark Henderson: Mark's Summer Selection** Thursday 1st March *cost: \$20.00*

Mark will concentrate on his picks of the white varietals of this summer. They include Selak's Dry Riesling, Stoneleigh Riesling, Mt. Difficulty Pinot Gris, Forrest Sauvignon Blanc, Lawson's dry Hills sauvignon, Babich Gewurztraminer and others.

**Peter Munslow: McLaren Vale** Thursday 8th March *cost: \$20.00*

An opportunity to taste some of Peter's more unusual wine—likes. He'll open a range of McLaren Vale reds and probably the odd Italian Chianti.

**Angela Wilson: Framingham** Thursday 21st March *cost: \$15.00*

Framingham have been growing grapes since 1981 making them anything other than the new kids on the block as far as Marlborough goes. However after supplying the 'big boys' for 13 years they produced their own label in 1994. Framingham produce 3 styles of Riesling and in my opinion one of the best Riesling producers in the country. They also make a very good sauvignon and a charming sparkling wine.

**Sue Henderson: Grant Burge** Tuesday 27th March *cost: 20.00*

Laurie and I were invited to a tasting of the awesome Meshach in Christchurch with 'THE MAN' himself in 1999 for one of the most wonderful tastings we've attended. We were a little disappointed that he was unable to come as far south as Dunedin, but you get over that after a while! These wines are totally spectacular. Huge, buxom wines that are not for the faint hearted. Sue Henderson is the marketing manager.

## Wines Recently Tasted

### **Alexandra Davishon Pinot Noir 1999 \$27.95**

Rich and plummy with a supple mouth-feel and lovely cherry flavours. This has depth and persistence.

### **Benfield Delamare Cabernet/Merlot/Franc 1999 \$49.95**

This wine is exceptional; definitely one of NZ's best reds, with its sweet ripe fruit and wonderful balanced oak which brings a power and succulence not often seen in our reds. The blend is 75% Cabernet Sauvignon, 20% Merlot and 5% Cabernet Franc. A Martinborough vineyard and available only in small quantities.

### **Benjamin Museum Reserve Muscat 375 ml. \$9.95**

I love the Muscats and Tokays of Northern Victoria and this one is an absolute steal! Even 500 ml bottles now are routinely priced over \$20 so this is remarkable. A nose of treacle, toffee, caramel, spices and more, and that velvety raisiny palate. Need I say more?!

### **Chateau Rieussec (Sauternes) 1997 \$139.95**

As a vintage for red Bordeaux, 1997 was just so so, however the later harvested wines from the Sauternes and Barsac have turned out to be very good indeed. Since obtaining a majority interest in 1984, the Domaines Baron de Rothschilds have propelled Rieussec into being consistently one of the top half dozen wines of Sauternes, with excellent cellaring potential. This wine should be cellared to 2005, and then drink very well for a further 20 years. Definitely a very special treat.

### **Coriole Lalla Rookh 1997 \$23.95**

87% Grenache, 13% Shiraz. Absolutely delicious. Plummy and raspberry/berry characteristics with earthy richness from old vines.

### **Giesen School Road Chardonnay \$15.95**

Rated by Halliday as one of the Top 10 in NZ. I well remember when this first came onto the market in the late eighties and feeling that this was a wine that could pave the way for a change of style in NZ Chardonnay with lighter oak and better quality, riper fruit. And so it has remained one of Canterbury's best. It's packed with savoury citrus fruit. We've done a great deal, thus the good price to you.

### **Houghton Wildflower Ridge Chardonnay 1998 \$12.95**

Ripe melon and peach with toasty oak characteristics. This is an excellent value quaffer

### **Jamieson's Run Pinot Noir 1998 \$16.95**

One of our staff opened a bottle of this recently and it came as a very pleasant surprise to see how well it had developed. With a wee bit of age under it's belt, it now shows some of those lovely secondary characters that Pinots can get. Quite savoury, almost hinting of hung game with that inviting mushroomy forest floor characters. a mature pinot at a great price.

### **Moris Farms Morellino Di Scabsano'99 \$29.95**

One of the new wave of Tuscan wines, this is from the Maremma area near the coast which is undergoing a revival. This Sangiovese based wine has much in common with the top Chianti's given its savoury morello cherry palate, but has an extra lift of acidity on the finish. Crying out for a good Italian meal to accompany it.

### **Rothbury Chardonnay 1998 \$10.95**

Another one of the great bargains from Australia. The palate is packed with peach, figs and melon with a touch of toasty oak to balance this into a great easy drinking wine.

**Sanctuary Riesling 2000 \$13.95**

Always great value never fails to win a medal. Made in a medium-dry style with lovely peach flavours. Great quaffing for a summer afternoon watching the cricket.

**Sanctuary Sauvignon Blanc 2000 \$13.95**

Classic Sauvignon Blanc with melon and gooseberry flavours with good intensity and finish.

**Selaks Drylands Sauvignon Blanc 2000 \$16.95**

Top wine in Cuisine. Bob Campbell writes "old vines may explain the impressive concentration. Strong passionfruit, guava and mineral flavours. Will age" Buy now, there is no more!

**Taylor's Shiraz Cabernet 1998 \$15.95**

Packed with spice, cherry and berry flavours, this is an elegant wine, with enough power to satisfy those who like robust wines.

**Tennyson Cabernet Sauvignon 1999 \$11.95**

Great value Aussi red with lots of blackcurrant flavours and a lick of spicy oak.

**Waterwheel Shiraz 1999 \$29.95**

Very dark with rich nose of berries, vanilla and chocolate. It lingers on the finish with hints of plums and liquorice. Superb!

**Wither Hills Chardonnay 1999 \$31.95**

One of my favourites. Mealy and complex with vibrant ripe fruit shining through. Memorable now but will cellar if you can resist for 2-3 years. 5 stars.

**Wither Hills Sauvignon Blanc 2000 \$21.95**

Arguably NZ's finest. Pure ripe gooseberry, melon and capsicum flavours, this is Sauvignon at its pure penetrating best. Very concentrated. Made by the multi-talented Brent Marris.

**Yalumba Oxford Landing Chardonnay 99 \$10.95**

Another Aussi bargain with rich ripe toasty flavours and pleasant toasty oak.

**Yalumba Barossa Shiraz 1998 \$18.95**

Brilliant fruit from a great year. Sweet with ripe intense fruit and hints of chocolate and coconut and a long voluptuous finish. Will cellar well.

**Zema Cabernet Sauvignon 1998 \$39.95**

Made in the classic cooler climate Coonawarra style Full of flavour, with ripe sweet cassis flavours, and hints of the French and American vanilla oak. Halliday wrote of the winemaking practices "if ever there was an example of great wines being made in the vineyard this is it". 5 stars and one for the cellar.

## **Wines of the Month**

**Mark's choice:**

**Selaks Drylands Riesling Dry 2000 \$16.95**

I love Rieslings, they seem such a wonderful style of wine for the summer .if we ever get one! The Australian wine writer James Halliday rated the '99 version of this wine as the best NZ Riesling of the vintage, and I have no doubt that the '00 is equally as good. Certainly not searingly dry; it has heaps of lemon and citrus

notes, with that touch of honey, and a fresh crisp finish. Lovely on its' own or great with lighter summer meals.

**Lyn's choice:**

**Richmond Grove Shiraz 1997 \$19.95**

Rich and flavoursome. The spice and plum flavours have made this a favourite of ours this summer. For those who cellar this wine, I think it will show huge development in the bottle and you will be well rewarded for sitting on it for 5–8 years.

**Matua Judd Chardonnay 1999 \$24.95**

A slight price increase in this wonderful chardonnay from our `super special' before Christmas; but still nothing to beat it. The oak is creamy and tastes expensive with medium charring which characterises this wine above others in its price range. The oak is superbly balanced with ripe melon creamy flavours.

**Peter's choice:**

**Greenhough Hope Pinot Noir 1999 \$37.95**

Made by Andrew Greenhough, this follows on from the very good 1998 and is possibly even better. Complex berry and forest floor flavours and a palate that goes on and on. My pick of the Pinots currently available. Nelson Pinot at its finest.

## DENNIS WINES

I first came across Dennis wines when I lived in Adelaide for a short interlude in the late-seventies and was thrilled to see one of the smaller importers bringing these wines into NZ. This small family owned vineyard was one of the earlier vineyards to be established in the McLaren Vale (1970) and to produce consistent wines from the onset. Along with other small wineries like Maxwell and Temple Bruer, this region has shown to produce some of the finest and most elegant wines in Australia.

**Dennis Shiraz 1998 \$24.95**

Excellent Shiraz with already complex sweet berry flavours and lifted spice. Very deep colour and lush concentrated palate. Very Rhonish rather than the jammy style of Shiraz. Halliday has given this wine 4 stars, but I would add at least another 3/4. Superb. Cellar for 5 years now. Buy!

**Dennis Cabernet Sauvignon 1999 \$24.95**

Classic McLaren Vale Cabernet. Elegant, yet very rich. Packed with blackcurrant fruit, this is excellent wine. Still underpriced. It's slightly lower on the alcohol volume, which is nice for a change. That means you can actually drink several glasses and still be standing to appreciate the flavours. Buy a case. I have!

**Dennis Grenache 1998 \$24.95**

Not your everyday sweet raspberry Grenache. Many Grenache are aged in the bottle only without seeing a lick of oak, but not this beauty; it's been aged for 12 months in American and French barriques. This has buckets of depth and flavour with very aromatic fruit on both the nose and palate. Will cellar well for up to 5 years.

## Some wine purchases to think about:

### **\*\*\*1996 Grant Burge Meshach pre-release offer \$119.95**

Munslow's is offering Decanter Club members the opportunity to pre-order this amazing wine. It will be released in the next few months. 'En primeur' is the traditional way of purchasing most of the finest wines, in particular the French, Italians and now the Australians are offering this for their top wines only. The 1996 has been acclaimed as being the best Meshach to date. Halliday wrote "medium to full red-purple; the bouquet is rich and complex with lots of dark berry fruit and the oak under control. Dark cherry, plum and chocolate flavours on the palate are once again married with well-balanced and integrated oak; finishes with fine tannins. The best Meshach made to date". See Peter before the end of February to assure your purchase of the Meshach. It will cellar for close to 20 years probably and will certainly reach inflated prices in auctions within only a few years.

### **\*\*\*Penfold's Grange 1993 \$250**

Selar Henderson has 3 bottles of this superb wine for sale at \$250. He assures us they have been well cellared. Contact him directly on 472 8345. Not a bad price considering the auction value these days.

2001-2 Decanter Club membership is due in March. \$15.00 single, \$25.00 double.

Cheers, Peter, Lyn, Mark and the crew