

Decanter Club

Christmas 2002

Coming Events:

Cuisine tasting Sauvignon Blancs Thursday 23rd January *cost: \$20.00*

Always a wonderful tasting, sauvignon Blancs have been a mainstay of the NZ wine market, both internationally and nationally. As a grape varietal, it is a consistent pleaser for most people. Sauvignon crops heavily and is adapts easily to most conditions. Styles range from the tropical passionfruit flavours to the grassy herbaceous style. See Mark's notes below on some of the Savvys in this tasting.

Peter Munslow: Summer BBQ selection Wednesday 5th February *cost: \$15.00*

A taste of what Peter and Laurie have been enjoying over the summer with their BBQs. A few big Aussie Shiraz's to go with steak as well as the odd white to match seafood.

Chris Staynes: Pinot Gris and Rieslings Thursday 20th February *cost: \$15.00*

These are two of Chris's favourite white wine styles. NZ is making some very impressive Riesling and Gris and quite different in style from those made in Australia and France for instance. Chris is one of our most informative speakers, and he will compare and contrast NZ styles with others from around the world.

Savvys for summer sipping

Try saying that five times after you've had a half a bottle! Summer and Sav Blanc do seem to be fitting companions. Brightness, light, the vibrancy of the season, and a zest for getting out and enjoying life seems to tie in with the vibrant zesty style of wine which is light on the palate and seems to capture the idea of summer sunshine in a glass. It's a wine style that NZ has made its flagbearer internationally, and in the nicest form of flattery, many other countries are now trying to emulate. Here's a handful in store at the moment.

Forefathers Sav Blanc 2002 16.15

A new label in store for us this summer, Forefathers is the prodigy of Nick and Yolyn Goldschmidt who now live in California's Sonoma Valley, and produce wines there under that label. They have sourced Marlborough fruit for this label with consultant help from one of NZ's top winemakers to create this classic Marlborough style full of herbaceous gooseberry and capsicum fruit with a touch of 'tom cat'.

Framingham Sav Blanc 2002 18.85

Marvellous producer with a flair for the aromatic varieties, and perhaps best known for their Rieslings. A ripe and weighty style with passionfruit and grapefruit notes and a touch of redcurrant. All balanced by zippy acidity.

Lawson's Dry Hills Sav Blanc 2002 17.95

A Marlborough winery that has built up an impressive track record over the years, particularly for their Sav Blanc and Gewurztraminer. A rich and complex style with passionfruit and tropical notes with hints of 'sweat'. A portion of the blend underwent barrel fermentation and malolactic, adding extra complexity to the finished wine.

Mount Riley Sav Blanc 2002 16.15

Mount Riley is one of those deceptive labels. While not seen that widely in this neck of the woods, they are actually a major player in Marlborough, producing large volumes of wine for export. Not a label that should be overlooked, as this is a stylish wine with layers of flavour and notes of mango, capsicum and lime. Lovely crisp drinking.

Saints Sav Blanc 2002 16.15

A stand-alone label under the Montana umbrella, of which many of you will have admired the Chardonnay over the years, for it has been a consistently damn nice drinking wine at a fair price. Sourced from vineyards in the Awatere Valley, this has ripe red capsicums and tropical fruit nuances overlaid on zingy herbaceousness, and a nice textured palate.

Saint Clair Sav Blanc 2002 21.95

This Marlborough producer is a perennial winner in the Cuisine Top 10 awards for its Sav Blancs and Chardonnays, and this is the case again this year. Another ripely fruited style with touches of redcurrant overlaid on to the passionfruit and gooseberry fruit. Added complexity comes from the touches of 'sweat'.

Sanctuary Sav Blanc 2002 12.55

No run down on Sav Blanc would be complete without mention of Sanctuary. Made by the Grove Mill winemaking team, this is year in year out one of the top value wines out of Marlborough. Fresh and fruit driven with zingy gooseberry cut-grass and citrus notes with a crisp finish.

Spy Valley Sav Blanc 2002 16.15

Situated in the Waihopi Valley in Marlborough (and thus the 'Spy' monikor), the Johnson family have long been grape growers, but in recent years have taken the value added approach and released their own label, with a very smart range of wines. This crisp, zesty, grassy and gooseberry flavoured wine is right in the classical Marlborough mode.

Te Mania Sav Blanc 2002 17.05

A departure of sorts, as this is a Nelson producer, rather than Marlborough. Like Central Otago, Nelson is a buzz of vineyard activity as plantings increase, and a number of new labels appear in the market (Alistair has just returned from summer holidays there, so is our current expert on the region). Te Mania (meaning 'the plains') is a small family owned concern. Something of a fruit bomb, with varied tropical fruits and bright zesty citrus notes.

Other Cuisine Top 10 Savvy's are due instore as we write this newsletter, so fans should keep their eyes peeled.

Wine tours to Central Otago

For the serious wine connoisseurs, we are pleased to announce the introduction of a wine tour departing from Dunedin and exploring the Central Otago region. The tour takes in orchards from three of the five major sub-areas in Central Otago for our one-day tour— Alexandra, Cromwell, and Bannockburn, and for the two day tour we also include Wanaka and the Gibbston Valley. The itinerary can be refined according to individual group requirements. Cost is \$146 per person for the one day tour and includes transport, tour guide, tastings at 5 vineyards and a light lunch. For further information contact Wayne Harry at Big Limo on 027 244 5466 (027 Big limo) or email biglimo@paradise.net.nz

Wines Recently Tasted:

Alexander Reserve Cabernet Merlot '01 33.25

In amongst the sea of Pinot Noir wines planted in Marlborough lie a handful of dedicated producers with a passion for Cabernet based wines. Alexander vineyard was planted more than a dozen years ago, and vine age is certainly contributing to this wine. This complex and elegant wine has intense cassis and currant fruit, well balanced by fine tannins and deft use of new and used French oak. A fine expression of NZ Cabernet Merlot.

Chapoutier Croze Hermitage Les Meysonniers 1999 29.65

The Chapoutier house is one of the larger producers in the Rhone Valley in France. They have vineyard holdings in (as far as I know) all the major appellations of both the Northern and Southern Rhone, along with joint venture vineyards in Australia. 1999 was fantastic vintage in the Northern Rhone showcasing what Syrah can do in a great year. From its deep colour through the rich nose of savoury grilled meats and wild herbs, onto the spicy palate with a light touch of oak, this is an excellent example of "Shiraz with a French twist".

Danzante Merlot 2000 18.85

Danzante is the product of a partnership between the Mondavi family in California, and the Frescobaldi family in Tuscany. Grapes have been sourced from vineyards in Sicily, giving lush ripe fruit. Lovely aromatics of spices and mulberry flow on to a mellow supple palate. Drinking well now, or even yummiier with food.

Sileni Merlot Cabernet 2000 30.55

Sileni is a no expense spared winery in Hawkes Bay owned by the Avery family. Any of you with a (very) long memory, might recall our first part timer Chris Keyes, Chris is now assistant winemaker at Sileni (having learnt his craft from Peter Robertson at Brookfields). The winemaker is the very talented Grant Edmonds and he's certainly put together a fine package here. Very much in the Bordeaux style, this is not a sweet and simple fruit bomb. Taut, elegant, and opening up in the glass, this wine combines its complex plum, smoke and blackcurrant notes with fine-grained tannins and a long finish. A keeper for the cellar, or with richer meat dishes in its youth.

Sileni Semillon 2002 21.55

We don't see too many varietal Semillon from NZ these days, but Sileni are one winery who takes this grape very seriously. More in the Bordeaux style with its lemony citrus, tropical fruit and nuttiness, this has a creamily textured palate and nice complexity. A nice change.

Spy Valley Merlot 2001 17.95

Another of the Spy Valley range to turn our heads (starting with their awesome Pinot Gris and followed by the Savvy), this gold medal winner at the Air New Zealand awards is dense rich chewy, with plum and chocolatey fruit kept in check by a good tannin/acid balance. We think this is excellent value, and comes with a heavy recommendation from us.

Aromatic Six Pack

We've managed to put together a six pack of some fabulous, hard to source wines for lovers (like us) of aromatic whites. Six, six packs only are available, so it has to be first come first served basis. Cost of this pack is \$150.

Cloudy Bay Gewurztraminer 2000

Cloudy bay has occasionally released a little Gewurztraminer cellar door, but this is the first time we've ever been able to source any for the shop! The winemaker sent us a sample bottle to try, and it's very good. Say no more.

Te Whare Ra Gewurztraminer 2002

The trophy winner at the Air New Zealand Awards and deservedly so. Another in a long line of stunning Gewurz's from this Marlborough winery. These are our last bottles.

Peregrine Gewurztraminer 2002

Crops of Gewurztraminer in Central Otago were tiny this year, and this wine was all earmarked for cellar-door release only. We've resorted to begging (and threats of bodily violence) and have been given a small parcel of this wine. Central's top gewurz producer.

Escarpment Pinot Gris 2001

Larry McKenna will be recognizable to most of you as the winemaker behind Martinborough Vineyards. This is his own label, and a very stylish, almost Burgundian expression of Pinot Gris.

Carrick Pinot Gris 2002

For me, one of the stars of the vintage in Central Otago this year. We've managed to harbour our last half dozen bottles for this pack

Felton Road Block 1 Riesling 2002

Internationally famous, the Felton Road wines are always on limited allocation. Only the second release of this wine after the initial 1999 offering. Made in a Germanic Auslese style; a wine that will repay long cellaring.

Mutterings from Mark

As I tackle my last 'Mutterings from Mark', the question of my style of writing raises its head. I can now confide in you all that for a significant birthday of mine, Laurie bought me the Genius Edition of Magnetic Poetry (Peter bless him bought me a bag of crisps) in the hope that it might enrich my prose, and gild my adjectives and verbs. Some would say that this has in fact led to written diarrhea, but I think that it has led to amusing creativity. I'm saddened to think that I've never managed to find a place for the words caterwaul, obsequious or curmudgeon in my wine writings, but at least they have now had an airing.

I can tell you that I'm reluctantly leaving the nest and moving to Melbourne in early February to live. I've had a lot of fun in the years I've been here, and will miss you all as I've made so many friends amongst our regulars. Mind you, some of you may find this a cause for celebration as you will finally be able to come into the store and just buy a big gutsy Aussie shiraz without being sold a Russian saperavi, an Italian Teroldego, or a new wave Estonian Pinot Noir planted on a south facing slope on the shores of the Baltic (actually the Gulf stream does flow into the Baltic mitigating the effect of the chill weather that far north, but no., I don't know of any vineyards in Estonia). Nevertheless, I have been training Peter and Alistair in wit, abuse and the effective use of puns so hopefully my influence will remain after I've gone.

I would like you all to put in huge orders from this newsletter, so that Peter will recognise what a talented kind highly skilled etc etc person that he's losing. This could be a handy bargaining chip for negotiating a huge salary increase when I come back. No promises or certainties there, as I don't know what life will hold in store for me, but I hope to keep the door open on that one; or perhaps just leave the door ajar. Well okay, if the door is left ajar there'll be a draft, so how about we just close the door, but don't lock it! There settled! I do intend to keep in touch and have some thoughts on writing for the newsletters in the future, so watch this space. My final appeal harks back to my days as a barman in the UK in the early 80's! Last orders please! Last orders!

Sale

We need more room for the new vintage wines about to hit the shelves in the next month, so we are selling mostly Australian wines at very good prices (average is 20% discount, which means there is no margin in here). Most of these wines have been written up in the newsletter at some stage or another, and all without hesitation come highly recommended from us. The majority will cellar well for several more years, and some will even do well in auctions in two plus years. Prices quoted are special prices.

Clarendon Hills Liandra Shiraz 1999 – 127.46

Punters Corner Cab 1998 – 31.96

Clarendon Hills Piggott Shiraz 1999 – 161.46

Bremerton Cabernet 1998 – 29.56

Clarendon Hills Brookman Shiraz 1999 – 127.46

Knappstein Shiraz 1997 – 28.86

Decanter Club Newsletter

Peerick Shiraz 1998 – 32.76

Stringby Brae Cabernet 1999 – 29.56

Peerick Cabernet 1998 – 32.76

Logan Scarlet GSM – 23.16

Torbreck The juveniles GSM – 35.96

Fritz Old Vine Zinfandel 1997 – 44.76

Frescobaldi Mormoreto Cabernet 1997 – 83.26

Morton Estate Black Label Cab 1998 – 47.96

Frescobaldi Montesodi Chianti Rufina 1995 – 78.36

These wines are available in limited bottle quantities only

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