

Decanter Club

July/August 2001

Coming Events:

Stephen Bennett MW: A Celebration of Rhone Varieties Wednesday 25th July *cost: \$25.00*

A whopper of a tasting of Rhone varietals which are predominantly Shiraz, Grenache, Mouvedre. Stephen is the youngest person to be awarded the Master of Wine (MW) in the world. This is a stunning tasting with the average cost of the wine being \$50.00 and will cover the wonderful Jenke (see last newsletter) and Glenguin wines and these will front up against Rhone.

John Belsham: Foxes Island Wednesday 1st August *cost: \$15.00*

John Belsham has been making wine in Marlborough for about 20 years. He is New Zealand's Chairman of Judges and rightly so. Charming, knowledgeable and eloquent, this is a wine tasting not to be missed. This is one of the 'sleeping superstars' of Marlborough, and what a line-up of wines we have for this tasting with some fabulous old wines as well as new releases.

Peter Munslow, Tony Montgomery, Mark Henderson and Chris Staynes: Shiraz Festival Thursday 9th August *cost: \$25.00*

Rock and roll, this is going to be a huge tasting. For all of you who missed out on the Penfolds tasting, be in quick because this is even better. The wines for tasting include Penfolds Bins 128 and 28, Rosemount's Balmoral, Hill of Gold and Show Reserve, Lindeman's Limestone Ridge, Wynns Michael and Dennis Shiraz. What a line up! Please book early.

John Forrest: Forrest Estate Tuesday 14th August *cost: \$15.00*

John's tastings are always one of the most popular throughout the year. We visited his winery last month where we spent a very pleasant afternoon tasting barrel samples of John's new wines. John has always produced beautiful fruit driven style wines and now I have to say that his wines from the Sauvignon Blanc through to his Pinot Noir are getting better with every vintage – must be because both he and his wife Bridgid are Otago graduates!!!

Cuisine tasting: NZ reds Thursday 16th August *cost: \$30.00*

Wines included in this tasting are; Esk Valley Res. '99 Merlot Malbec Cab. Sauv, Villa Maria Res. '99 Merlot, CJ Pask '99 Declaration, Peregrine '00 Pinot, Saint Clair Raupara Res. '00 Pinot, Valli Colleen's Vineyard '00 Pinot, Morton Estate 1998 Black Label HB Merlot Cab., Te Kairanga '00 Pinot and Villa Maria Cellar Selection 1999 Cab Sauv. Merlot. Should be good.

Wines Recently Tasted:

Basedow Shiraz 1998 \$19.95

From the Barossa Valley, this has to be one of the best buys for under \$20. Sweet berry fruit and a hint of

spice reasonably full with well tuned oak. Drinking very nicely now, it's the ideal winter warmer.

Cairnbrae Old River Riesling 2000 \$19.95

One of the Cuisine Top 10 Rieslings, and certainly an attractive wine. The ripe fruit edges more to the tropical end of the spectrum, with honey on the finish. There was a good response to this wine at the tasting.

Castano Domino Espinal Seleccion 1997 \$14.95

This Spanish wine is about to feature in Joelle Thomsons "Under \$15.00 Guide" as her top star pick! Intensely fruited, warm and savoury with spice and oak undertones, and, finishing with firm tannins. Stunning value for money. Ole!!

Cedar Creek Chardonnay 1999 \$10.95

Excellent value Australian wine. Full of peach, melon and citrus flavours with a nice touch of oak.

Chard Farm Finla Mor Pinot Noir 2000 \$34.95

Chard Farm winemaker, Duncan Forsyth, presented an extremely impressive range of Pinot Noirs at his tasting last month. The Finla Mor is Chard's second tier Pinot (second to the Bragato) and this was Alastair's favourite of the three. It displays great complexity with strong cherry and raspberry flavours balanced out with a hint of oak. It is drinking nicely now, but will no doubt benefit from some further bottle ageing.

Clos De Clocher Vacqueyras 1998 \$24.95

Vacqueyras was originally part of the Cotes du Rhone Villages appellation, but followed in the footsteps of Gigondas in seeking, and being awarded its own Appellation Controlee. Like Gigondas, these are more serious wines than the general Cotes du Rhone; rather more like a baby Chateauneuf du Papes. From an excellent Rhone vintage, this wine will stand some cellaring, or can be enjoyed now with food.

Corbett Canyon Zinfandel 1998 \$19.95

The new vintage of this wine has just arrived in store, and at the price it offers a cost-effective introduction to this Californian grape varietal

Crossroads Chardonnay 2000 \$19.95

We've reduced this in price and it now represents excellent value for its quality. Richly fragrant, very intense, mealy and complex with vibrant lush fruit shining through.

Cloudy Bay Chardonnay 1999 \$33.95

Winemaker James Healy loves to experiment with wild yeasts and different techniques to try and make a truly Burgundian wine and it certainly shows in this wine. Mouth-filling and muscular with savoury citric mealy flavours. Lees ageing adds to the complexity.

Dows LBV 1992 (1 litre) \$33.95

BARGAIN!! This is yummy stuff for these cold winter evenings. Rich powerful packed with ripe currants and christmas cake. We've done a deal, and this 1 litre is cheaper than the 750ml. To make the most of Port,

drink within a couple of weeks from opening, but will last for about a few months.

Foxes Island Pinot Noir 1998 \$34.95

This Pinot Noir from Marlborough spends about 10 months in French oak prior to bottling. Cherry and plum fruit predominate and backed up with pepper and spice and a subtle earthiness. Try it at John Belsham's tasting on the 1st of August.

Kaikoura Wine Co. Sauvignon Blanc 00 \$18.95

Those of you who have been up past Kaikoura recently will have noticed the signage for this winery on a bluff just south of Kaikoura town. The grapes in this silver medal winner are from Marlborough, and are in the riper end of the flavour spectrum; showing gooseberry– passionfruit and a nicely textured palate.

L.A.Cetto Petite Sirah 1997 \$19.95

Another wine with a strong following amongst our Decanter Club members. This Mexican has a savoury spiciness very similar to Southern Rhone wines, and is drinking really well now.

Moculta Cabernet Merlot 1998 \$17.95

All our very many Moculta fans will be delighted to see the new vintage of the Cab Merlot in stock. Bright, lifted berryfruit notes with the Merlot pluminess. Lovely drinking for the cold winter evenings.

Pirramimma 'The Stocks' Shiraz 1999 \$23.95

The Johnstons of Pirramimma (it means "the moon and the stars" in the local Aboriginal dialect, by the way) have been making wine in McLaren Vale for more than a century. This is perhaps a slightly old fashioned wine, honest and generous in its flavours of plum and chocolate, and its nose of vanilla and toasty oak. With its deep colour and full-bodied tannins, cellaring should be a rewarding prospect.

Salisbury Cabernet Sauvignon 1999 \$11.95

A little Aussie ripper! Good fruit, nice toasty oak, packed with blackcurrants, at a great price.

Sandalford Cabernet Sauvignon 1998 \$25.95

Sandalford is possibly less well known than some of the West Australian elite, but nevertheless, is a producer of high quality well priced wines. It has blackcurrant and raspberry fruit with leafy touches, great balance good depth and length and nicely balanced oak and tannins.

Santa Carolina Reserve Merlot 1997 \$15.95

We seem to have focused quite a bit on the Spanish speaking wine world recently, and here's another. A good bright colour, lightly oaked, and with a fruit driven palate hinting of plum and prunes. This Chilean merlot has a little maturity, so is drinking well now.

Selaks Marlborough Sauvignon Blanc 2001 \$14.95

There is always a lot of intense interest surrounding the release of the first new vintage wines, and the first couple of '01 Savvy are now in store. During these cold winter nights, here's a chance to drink a glass of

Marlborough sunshine. Vibrant, crisp and zesty – a memory of the summer that's gone, and hints of the summer to come.

Stonehaven Limestone Coast Shiraz '98 \$17.95

A blend of Shiraz grapes from the Padthaway, Coonawarra and the Wrattontully (who, what?) regions, and it's a pearler. Our bottle was already throwing a bit of sediment, so there is quite a bit of stuffing to this wine. Densely coloured, the weighty cherry, plum and currant fruit is balanced by an earthy, chocolate and anise hint. Scrummy now but will certainly cellar as well.

Tatachilla Keystone Grenache Shiraz 2000 \$18.95

Long a favourite at Munslow's for its combination of lovely drinkability and fair price. A deft combination of Grenache perfume, along with the vibrant plum and blackberry fruit and spice of the Shiraz. Full flavoured rich and smooth, this has always been a very food friendly wine.

Temple Bruer Cornucopia Grenache '98 \$19.95

This is a great anytime wine. Packed with rich spicy raspberry fruit, and a full rounded palate. This Grenache has a lot more oomph than your regular Grenache. Well worth the price. Great with pasta or even a curry.

Torres Sangre De Toro 1999 \$16.95

We should have had Chris and Cheryl write up this wine, as they have just attended a marvellous tasting at Torres (yep in Spain). Those of you with a Spanish bent will know that Sangre de Toro means 'bulls blood' and this is a rich zesty grenache based wine with lovely earthy nuances. The back label suggests that the wine has complex 'Mediterranean aromas' which I take to mean unwashed Spaniards but nevertheless, this is a jolly nice wine.

Terrace View Cabernet Merlot 1998 \$16.95

Rated 92 by the Wine Spectator magazine, this is great value. Lovely ripe berry fruit flavours and soft tannins with a nice lick of oak.

Wines of the Month

Peter's choice:

Dennis Shiraz 1998 \$24.95

As most of you know, Munslow's imports Dennis, Maxwell and Temple Bruer wines and I submitted this and the Lime Cave (see below) to Cuisine mags Best of the Bunch column. Bob Campbell gave both wines 5 stars and 93 points. He wrote; "rich McLaren Vale Shiraz with 'old vines' at a 'young vines' price. Plum, chocolate, mocha, cherry and tobacco were noted. Big cuddly, complex wine." Like the Lime Cave only small quantities are left, so order now.

Mark's Choice:

Leasingham Bastion Shiraz Cabernet 1998 \$14.95

We have mentioned this wine before, but it deserves to be mentioned again. In the vinous boxing ring, this wine is fighting well above its weight. It combines a lovely drinkability, yet has that bit of structure and grip that marks it down as something more serious. Lifted spice and berryfruit notes marry well with the bit of backbone given by the Cabernet.

Alastair's Choice:

Peter Mertes St. Michael Kabinett 1999 \$13.95

New in this month, this excellent German white from the Mosel is a real bargain. Lovely rich fruit flavours (apricots and citrus) are backed up with a good level of acidity giving it a thoroughly refreshing feel. At only 7.5% you can drink it until the cows come home!

Martijn's choice:

Tatachilla Breakneck Creek Shiraz \$14.95

After several changes to the winery, Tatachilla was reopened in 1995 to a trade just waiting for excellent price-driven wines. Certainly they have hit the shelves in New Zealand with gusto. With this label, comes a single grape varietal at a very good price. This Shiraz is a fruit based style with a hint of oak to add to the enjoyment. A delicious easy drinking Shiraz at a price that'll see you coming back for more.

Laurie's choice:

Cape Mentelle Shiraz 1999 \$30.95

Louis Vuitton stands for money, class and excess, for instance: expensive luggage, perfume clothes, the America's Cup etc. Their interest also extends to wine. Their coup de gras are two of the best Champagne houses in France i.e Veuve Clicquot and Krug. Clicquot subsequently has strong interests in Cloudy Bay in New Zealand and Cape Mentelle in Western Australia. I have no doubt they have wine interests in America and Central America, but I don't know of them Like everything that Vuitton is involved in, this wine will not disappoint. It seems to me that there are some wineries where everything that comes from there is fantastic, and Cape Mentelle is one of them. I buy a few bottles of this wine and the Zinfandel each vintage. But like all good things some must come to an end. In the last year or so, our allocation of Cape wines (including the fabulous Cabernet Sauvignon and Cabernet Merlot) have been steadily reduced. This is a wonderful complex, opulent wine with the most amazing berry, spice and white pepper flavours leading to a long unctious finish. Wonderful French oak (courtesy of Clicquot!) Great now or cellar confidently for up to 8 years.

RAVE REVIEWS FOR SOME STUNNER WINES.

Wirra Wirra 'The Angelus' Cabernet Sauvignon 1998 \$49.95

Mark subscribes to an Australian wine and food magazine called Divine, which had such a marvellous review of this wine that I just had to share it with you. "It's like Anthony Mundine in a bottle; power, aggression bravado, and a real need to stand out. The fruit – boy does this wine have fruit! Rich blackcurrant. Rich aniseed. Rich dark chocolate. And a rich swirl of coconut – I nearly keeled over just smelling it (actually, I lie... it's got all that but it simultaneously seems deft. There's real class here) the palate itself is accordingly packed with more blackcurrant, blood plums, a seriously sensational streak of strawberry and much more of that rich, dark, chocolatey oak. There's also a patch of earthiness in

there too – really for a young super duper premium, this wine is showing considerable complexity. Perhaps that's a result of its origins: it's a blend of 63% Adelaide Hills and 37% Coonawarra fruit. Whatever it is, it's a top eminently age worthy wine." Five stars in Cuisine, we have managed to source only a small quantity so may need to be allocated depending on the demand. For this reason, we would suggest you place your order immediately with Peter or Mark.

Maxwell Ellen Street Shiraz 1999 about \$29.95

Like everything Maxwell's make, the Ellen Street has come in for rave reviews overseas. Robert Parker writes. "A dense fat thermonuclear Shiraz fruit bomb. Opaque purple with aromas and flavours of black fruits mixed with earth, truffles, chocolate and a hint of coffee. This is magic wine, can be drunk now or cellar for 10–15 years. US\$30, a bargain." I think he likes it and with Maxwell wines selling so well in the States (thanks to Mr Parker), it makes for excellent buying in NZ dollars. You can rely on Maxwell wines. This wine is on the water as we write, and hopefully will be in-store by the end of the week.

Maxwell Lime Cave Cabernet Sauvignon '99 \$34.95

Sad news, the last of the '99 Lime Cave. Parker writes "Explosive bouquet of blackcurrants, blackberries and smoke. Full bodied, with generous density, sweet concentrated fruit and impeccable balance (93+)." Sells for US\$32. The Lime Cave was awarded 5 stars in the current Cuisine mag (as did the Dennis Shiraz), and since then, we have been overwhelmed with orders from throughout the country. We are offering Decanter Club members the last opportunity to buy this wine before stocks dry up. There is absolutely no chance of getting any more of this vintage.

An apology

Whoops! Oops! We had a problem with our newsletter mail-out last month, where it seemed that several of you did not receive one. Thanks for your patience, we should have the problem sorted out now.

Cheers, Peter Mark and the Crew