

Decanter Club

July 2003

Coming Events:

David Babich: Babich Wines Thursday 17th July *cost: \$15.00*

From THE family itself, David is the son of the famous Jo Babich. As if the name isn't enough David has taken on the chief winemaking for the company. What awards this company hasn't received are not worth mentioning and the ones they have been awarded are too numerous to name. Come and try these wines and get the information from the horses mouth (no insult intended) itself. The focus of the tasting will be on Babich's top reds. Sounds interesting, yeh!

Fiona McLeod: Nobilo Wine Group Thursday 24th July *cost: \$15.00*

Nobilo Wine Group is one of the largest wine companies in the world with BRL Hardy being the parent company. They have a huge portfolio including Nobilo, Selaks, Hardy's, Barossa Estate (Moculta) etc. etc. Fiona is the local representative and will present wines fit for the day (or weather I suspect). May need to have a few blind options for fun. Bound to be good.

John Forrest: Forrest Estate Thursday 7th August *cost: \$15.00*

Every year John co-ordinates his visits to wine tastings in Dunedin with the rugby Tri-nations. A reliable sort of block really! Assuredly he is back and presenting his new wines for us. I have to admit that this is a tasting we look forward to every year. Not only is John a good friend, but his wines are seriously going from good to superb with a succession of gold and trophy's awarded. Again this will be a very popular tasting, so please book early.

Nick Mills: Rippon Winery Wednesday 13th August *cost: \$15.00*

Yes I know it's only just July, but thought it advisable to add Nick's tasting to this newsletter so as to give people plenty of warning that Nick is coming to town! For those who don't know, Rippon was one of the first wineries in Central Otago to produce wine...as early as 1984. Nick is the son of owners Ralf and Lois, and has grown up in the industry, which is a rarity for the sapling Central Otago scene.

A reminder that tastings commence at 6 pm at Munslow's tasting room upstairs. Please let us know if you are unable to attend. We frequently have more people wanting to come to tastings than can fit in, meaning that we need to turn people away. And if you simply don't turn up for a tasting will disadvantage others.

Wines Recently Tasted:

Ashwood Grove Merlot 2002 14.35

Very rich and smooth with heaps of rich chocolate flavours. Great value and a nice change.

Basedow Shiraz 1999 17.95

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Powerful wine with plenty of everything. Very intense and powerful with rich oak, plum, cherry, herbs and spice. This very good Barossa wine begs for a roast of lamb.

Case Lapostelle Merlot 2001 22.45

This wine went down well at the vintage tasting last month. It is Chilean, but don't let this put you off that. Certainly many wines from Chile have received bad press for having a watered down effect, but don't count this one in that basket. It is a huge wine with subtle oak and spice with very plummy flavours. It reminded me of a left-bank Bordeaux

Castano Domino Espinal Selection '00 13.45

New vintage of this popular Spanish red. A blend of Monastrell (80%) Tempranillo (10%) and Cabernet (10%), produces intense plum and cherry fruit flavours with undertones of spice and oak.

Coto de Hayas Crianza 1998 12.55

Back in stock, this is wonderful Spanish red and a great seller. Complex, elegant yet concentrated, great pasta wine.

Dow's 10 year-old Port 49.45

As winter settle in, grab a glass of this luscious tawny, settle by the fire with a bowl of nuts and enjoy! One of life's treats. Very nutty, rich and complex.

Felton Road Pinot Noir 2002 43.15

Rich lush Pinot with heaps of rich, ripe fruit, and packed with black cherry and spice flavours. Very silky and seamless integration of fine oak and fruit. One of the best. Very limited supply.

Floating Mountain Pinot Noir 2001 26.05

Grown in the Mark Rattray vineyard, this has excellent depth and balance, with lifted raspberry and spice aromas, very fresh and vibrant with a long rich finish. Excellent value.

Hamilton Sturt Shiraz/Cabernet 2002 15.25

A beauty from the Barossa, the Hamilton family has been making wines since 1837. I'm not always a fan of these blends, but this works a treat. Huge, dense and very rich and powerful, packed with spice, cassis and plums. Great value winter wine.

Jamieson's Run Cab Sauvignon '01 17.95

A cool climate cab from Coonawarra with lots of plum and blueberry flavours. The spicy oak characteristics complement well. Fantastic for this price.

Kawarau Pinot Noir 2002 23.35

From Central this has got to be the best value Pinot from the area. The fruit is succulent, warm and full of distinctive cherry flavours that are the hallmark of Pinot's from Central.

Matua Wairarapa Pinot Noir 2001 26.05

Dave Cull put me onto this wee beauty, showing you don't have to pay \$40+. Grown in the Petrie vineyard, just south of Masterton, this is a very powerful wine with yummy cherry/plum fruit flavours and a lovely touch of forest floor.

Millton Bunch Selectn Gewurzt '02 28.75

Traditionally the best NZ Gewurz's have come from the Gisborne area. This is a classic Gisborne mouthfilling wine with rich, lush rose-petal characteristics and heaps of ginger and spice. Of course we can't not mention the fact that Millton Vineyards is certified organic.

Millton Bunch Selectn Riesling '02 28.75

If you loved the Opu Riesling you'll go mad about this. The Opu was always considered a benchmark Riesling in New Zealand and the Bunch Selection is yet another step up. Worth the price

Preece Merlot 2000 14.35

From the Victorian Mitchelton stable and made in a contemporary fruit driven style. The single varietal merlot has been made for a number of years now which has almost led the market place (see the amount of single merlot Australian varietals around now). Has a lovely flavour of vanilla, coconut and cranberry. Great value.
BUY OF THE MONTH

Preece Shiraz 2000 14.35

Both of these wines were being sold at 23.95, but we are able to bring these to you at a very special price indeed. You don't get many bargains these days so make the most of it.

Riverstone Shiraz 2002 14.35

This is a great wee wine made by a well know Australian winery and which has been repackaged and sold at considerably less than the original (it happens all the time in Oz). It's full of spice and ripe berryfruit and well balanced by vanillin oak with soft tannins. The wine is in stelvin so can be guaranteed not to be corked!

Salena Shiraz 2000 14.35 A

beauty at this price. A gold medal under 15 is a rarity and one that although is drinking well now, will benefit from a couple of years in the cellar

Sacred Hill Barrel Fermented Chard '02 17.05

The new vintage of this robust Chardonnay from Hawkes Bay. Rich, ripe tropical fruit flavours marry well with the mealy toasty oak. A pretty serious wine which could benefit from a couple of years in the cellar.

Sileni Cellar Selection Chard 02 18.85

Peter's favourite chardonnay. Lovely, lightly oaked, fantastic fruit

Sileni Late Harvest Semillon 375 ml. 19.75

This went down a treat at a recent wineclub tasting. Lovely rich pear and honey flavours. Sweet and rich, but not cloying. Try with poached pears. If you want to be extravagant, poach the pears with a cup of this!

Wirra Wirra Scrubby Rise 2001 17.95

A blend of Shiraz, Cabernet and Petit Verdot that works really well. It has great balance, structure and complexity. Packed with mocha and spice flavours and a lovely long finish

Wines of the Month

Alastair's choice:

Dashwood Chardonnay 2002 14.35

Vavasour's second-tier Chardonnay was produced from grapes grown in the Wairau and Awatere Valley's in Marlborough. It is a drink-young style with fresh, vibrant melon and citrus fruit flavours nicely backed up with a subtle use of oak.

Chris's choice:

Mount Edward Pinot Noir 2002 40.45

2002 will go down as one of the best from Central Otago so far. Warm, dry conditions and an absence of extremely high temperatures allowed flavours to develop slowly and evenly. Alan Brady aims for elegance fine texture and enduring structure and hits the target with his 2002 vintage. Jancis Robinson had this to say of a barrel sample tasted in March: "Extremely deep crimson. Very, very intense. Broad, complex flavours. Tannins creeping in sweet start and a real dry finish". drinking superbly now, however guaranteed to please after a couple of years.

Laurie's choices:

Kirrihill Companion Shiraz 2001 18.85

Originating from the Clare Valley in South Australia, this is a new winery on our shelves. One of the things that first struck me about this wine is its name. Silly really, but it seems to me that one of the pure pleasures of drinking wine is sharing a good bottle with friends and companions. So aesthetically it gets the thumbs up for me. However what's in the bottle MUST count for something, and it seems to me that this is a wine of good quality fit to share with the odd companion or two. The grapes are sourced from three different areas of SA so no distinct style is perceivable. The fruit is superb though, with fabulous vibrant, berry and plum flavours. The palate is dominated by clean, berry fruit and vanillin oak balancing it well.

Kirrihill Shiraz 2001 24.25

I tried this first at the Indian restaurant after Rob Hay's fabulous tasting. It's a big brut of a fellow which supports the acclaim and several awards it, and the previous vintage have achieved (trophy at the Sydney Wine Show). Sourced purely from the Clare Valley it is definitely an excellent example of a wine from the slightly cooler climate with very complex and elegant fruit. The white pepper and spice of the oak beautifully balance the ripe berry and plum flavours. It's a beauty and will only develop with time in the cellar.

Martijn's choice:

Maxwell Lime Cave Cabernet 2000 32.35

We've discussed this wine before but I thought it was time to have another look. A very powerfully flavoured McLaren Vale cab, with an intense yet soft finish and beautifully rounded style. It drinks very well now but it also can be cellared for a further exploration of the flavours. If you have a 'cave' to hide this wine in then it's a perfect place for a while, since the wine is named after a big limestone cave below where the cabernet grapes are grown.

Peter's choice:

Queen Adelaide Riesling 2000 8.95

What a great buy! For those of you who like Australian Riesling this has a hint of kero and made in a just off dry style and with flavours on the lemon/lime end of the spectrum. It's drinking beautifully now but should develop even further with a couple of years in the bottle. A steal.

Ornellaia 2000 190.75

You could be forgiven if you found this label confusing, and assume that because it is from Tuscany it must be made predominantly from the great Sangiovese grape varietal. Well this is one of the 'classic' Tuscan wines that is not. It is made from a blend of Cabernet Sauvignon 65%, Merlot 30% and Cabernet Franc 5%. It is however considered one of the great wines not only from Tuscany but from the whole of Italy, and they make a huge amount of wine.

What can be said about this wine isn't worth reading about, and the wine from this vintage is even greater than usual. Jancis Robinson MW rated this as 18.5:20, the same rating as Chateau's Mouton Rothschild and Lafite and above Chateau's Latour (18.25) and Haut Brion (18) all from the same vintage. I might also add these first growth French Bordeaux's listed are valued at approximately three times this price. Robinson writes of this wine, "Very, very ripe, heady, extremely attention-grabbing nose. Glorious opulence. Ink and satin on the palate and definite sweetness. There's lots of fine tannin but the wine has the fruit to carry it"

I guess all this begs the question 'what would I do with a wine like this?' Well, firstly I might put it in the cellar for a number of years, or if I was feeling exceedingly generous, I might give it to someone who might appreciate a wine of this quality, or I might open it up with the most fantastic meal (obviously Italian cuisine), or I might put it into a fantastic line-up of wines for a very impressive tasting. Most of all, I'd think of myself as very lucky to have such a rare treasure. This wine is in limited supply and you definitely won't find it in any other winestores in the south.

Under \$15.00 wines

It's tough out there in the market place with supermarkets breathing down our neck. We have been offered a few wines at 'supermarket prices'. We found we couldn't resist the temptation to find a few wines under \$15.00 because they are so few and far between. All represent excellent value and most have been sufficiently reviewed in brochures etc.

Aquila normally 7.95 special price 7.11

Kingston Cabernet 2001 normally 14.95 special price 13.45

Lindeman's Cawarra Shiraz Cabernet normally 9.95 special price 8.95

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Nobilo Chardonnay 2002 1 lt. normally 14.95 special price 13.45

Queen Adelaide Riesling 2000 normally 9.95 special price 8.95

Timara Shiraz 2001 normally 7.95 special price 7.15

MUTTERINGS FROM MARK

If you thought that the expansion in wine labels in NZ was hard to keep up with, spare a thought for wine lovers over the Tasman. The new edition of the Australia and New Zealand Wine Industry Journal was out a little while ago and noted that (at the time of publishing) there were 1630 wineries/labels in the Australian marketplace, with a new player coming into the market every 36 hours. Out of that 1630, a mere 22 wineries (or companies) controlled fully 92% of the market, leaving the other 1608 squabbling over the remaining 8%. A very sobering thought indeed!

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