

Decanter Club

June 2003

Coming Events:

Paul Wright: Mt Riley Wines Thursday 22nd May *cost: \$10.00*

Rescheduled from last month, and eagerly awaited, this is going to be an excellent tasting.

Joe McSherry: Central Otago Wines Thursday 29th May *cost: \$15.00*

Joe represents Blackridge and Leaning Rock wineries in Central Otago, and these will make up the bulk of the tasting. To cap the evening off, Joe will do a North V's South tasting of Pinots. Should be great.

Grant Edmond: Sileni Wednesday 11th June *cost: \$15.00*

Grant Edmonds is an award-winning winemaker and he will show his new release wines (including their top of the range wines) at wineclub. Their philosophy is to produce quality wines without compromise, and this shows through the wines. Top winery, top wines!

Jackie: Vintage Wines Thursday 19th June *cost: \$15.00*

Not quite sure what Jackie will be showing at this tasting yet, however they represent Jackson Estate, Brown's of Padthaway (a huge favourite of ours) and Maglieri wines. We will email out the list of wines closer to the date.

Rob Hay: Chard Farm 3rd July *cost: \$15.00*

One of the South's favorite wine sons (or at least winery!). Chard Farm has been producing wine since the late eighties and is one of Central Otago's best known wineries. If you are like us and are too timid to brave the road to the winery, then worry no more, and come and try these great wines with winemaker Rob Hay. Please book early for this tasting.

Please note that all tastings are held in the upstairs tasting room at Munslow's Wines on George Street, Dunedin. The tastings start at 6 pm and finish around 7.30–8pm. We appreciate it when people confirm their attendance, especially when the tasting is popular, equally we appreciate it when you let us know that you are not able to come when you have booked ahead.

Wines Recently Tasted:

This month's newsletter is dominated by wines that are in the lower price bracket, simply because we have been offered some pretty fantastic deals this month that we are able to pass onto our clients.

Albert Mann Pinot Gris 2001 29.65

This is fantastic Alsace wine, very rich and ripe. Lots of stonefruit flavours with a sweetness that is not cloying, unctious with a finish that goes on and on. We had this recently with Chinese food and it worked well

with all the different flavours.

Beelgarra Merlot 2002 11.65

Very vibrant Aussi Merlot with lots of plummy currant flavours. Great value. Try it with oxtail!

Charvin Chateauneuf du Papes 2000 62.95

Very limited amount available. The 2000 vintage in the Rhone was fantastic and this is highlighted in this superb wine. Complex yet elegant wine with a palate that really packs a punch. Hints of forest floor and mushrooms on the nose with flavours of white pepper, cassis and currants. Beautifully integrated with a finish that goes on and on.

Forrest Chenin Blanc 2001 TBA

John Forrest dropped this in while on a flying visit to Dunedin recently, and when we said that he was missing out on whitebait for dinner he insisted on us drinking his newly released Chenin with the wee fish. And we were impressed, not only did it go superbly with whitebait (and I can imagine with sushi) but the wine was fabulous. Off-dry style with wonderful aromas of peaches and cream, the typical Vovray (French Chenin) style. Will cellar very well I would think. Will be in stock next month.

Fossit Ridge Riesling 2000 17.05

From the Richmond foothills in Nelson, this 2000 Riesling is made in an off-dry style. It is full-bodied with strong citrus and apple flavours and is now showing a touch of kerosene with a slightly oily texture. Should be a good one to keep for a few years in the cellar.

Henry Lawson Cabernet Sauvignon 1998 17.95

We tried this wine from the fabulous '98 vintage at Wine Club last week and most people were in agreement with that it was one of the stand-out wines. Full of rich, ripe chocolate and berry flavours, with complexity and a long palate.

Joseph Haupt St. Michael Kabinett 2001 10.75

Terrific value, slightly off-dry German Riesling. Honey and peach flavours, and with alc.vol. as low as 8% it makes this an ideal wine for lunch or BBQs. Great on it's own.

Leaning Rock Pinot Noir 2000 32.35

Nice to find a gold medal Pinot with a bit of age that is drinking superbly now, and at a very good price. Very fleshy with ripe raspberry, cherry and spice flavours. Considerable complexity and along firmly structured finish.

Mildara Shiraz 1999 12.55

Excellent value for money Shiraz with lots of ripe berry fruit which is soft and well balanced. Made in an easy drinking style this would be a great red to go with a beef stew on those cold winter evenings.

Mt. Riley Sauvignon Blanc 2002 14.35

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We've done a great deal on this classic Marlborough savvy. It's packed with all those classic gooseberry and capsicum, flavours and has a good finish.

Nobilo Chardonnay 2002 1 litre 13.45

Lovely zesty citrus wine with just a lick of oak. Great buy for a BIG 1 LITRE.

Nobilo Merlot 2002 13.45

Nobilo's has lifted the quality of this wine over the years. The fruit is from Marlborough, and is not green/herbal, which is surprising for the price. It is juicy with rich ripe fruit and aged in American and French oak. Why not try it at this price? Plantaganet Omrah Shiraz 2001 16.15 If like me you're a fan of big spicy Shiraz, then this is for you. Loads of pepper flavours and a palate that oozes fruit. From West Australia.

Poets Corner 2001 11.65

One of the best buys in the shop that offers loads of juicy fruit flavours. A blend of cabernet, shiraz and cabernet franc.

Quartz Reef Pinot Noir 2001 35.95

The last of this fabulous Bannockburn Pinot made by Rudi Bauer and is in my opinion, among the best 3 from 2001 vintage. Rich cherry flavours, complexity with savoury earthy hints. Great wine. Ideal with duck.

Robertson's Well Cabernet '01 19.75

This label has been a favourite of ours since we opened the shop 7 years ago. The first vintage that we stocked was the 1993 Cabernet, which was a stunner and this, was followed a couple of years later with the Shiraz. Both made from grapes grown in the Coonawarra area. This wine is sumptuous, juicy and full of ripe berry flavours. Drinking superbly now, however this is a great wine to put aside in the cellar and guaranteed to please after a couple of years.

Robertson's Well Shiraz 2000 19.75

Intense varietal nose, deep red in colour and followed by fabulous spice, blackberry and plum fruit on the palate. The touch of vanillin oak smoothes out the wine to make this a total pleasure to drink. This will impress both you and perhaps a few good friends (if they are lucky!). If you're familiar with the RW Shiraz, you'll note that this price is at least \$3.00 down.

Saltram Shiraz 2001 13.45

Back in stock at an even better price and as good as ever. Blackberry drives the nose while the palate has n interesting savoury, berry flavours which fills the mouth, try with lamb.

Stump Jump 2001 13.45

Just adding this into the newsletter as it's so popular with our clients, and that's totally understandable. Huge and gorgeous! Try it if you haven't already.

Vidals Riesling 2002 12.55

Made in an off-dry style with lots of peach and citrus flavours. A really good buy, however it is in limited quantity only.

Vidals Sauvignon Blanc 2002 12.55

Another great buy. This is a crisp, delicate wine with good melon and lime evoking flavours and a touch of complexity due to the hint of oak.

Wynns Shiraz 2001 14.35

We enjoyed this while watching the rugby this last weekend, and I well understand the claim that it was voted 'red wine buy of the year'. A blackish cherry and berry fruit with a dab of sweet oak. Rich palate with dark fruit flavours. Great with kebabs.

Wines of the Month

Peter's choice

Les Salices Pinot Noir 2001 17.95

The best value Pinot I've found. Lots of aromatics, oozing juicy richness from very low yielding vines. Aged for 6 months in French oak barrels, this comes from the highest and coolest part of the Les Salices Estate in the Languedoc area in Southern France and cooled by Mediterranean breezes. If you can't go there yourself, then try this instead and enjoy with something French like Onion soup.

Chris Scott's choice:

Cloudy Bay Pinot Noir 2001 34.15

Technically another fantastic wine produced under the Cloudy Bay label. The 2001 vintage was grown in the lower Brancott and Fairhall districts of the Wairau Valley. A good powerful nose with real mint and raspberry. A medium bodied wine with savoury flavours and a ripe supple palate. This wine will cellar for 3-5 years.

Alastair's choice:

Pepperjack Shiraz 2000 19.75

Another corker from the Barossa, this Shiraz is packed with an abundance of wild berry and plum fruit with plenty of pepper and spice. It has been matured for 18 months in American and French oak providing soft tannins and adding complexity and good length.

Mutterings from Mark: (Near) Nudity in the Australian Wine Market

A major and very visible difference between the Australian and New Zealand retail wine markets, is the segment devoted to "cleanskins", or "own label wines" (known in the industry as BOB, or Buyers Own Brand). The term relates to the fact that they are generally sold on as "clean" "skins" or unlabelled bottles. They are still subject to government labelling laws which require a minimum of Grape Type/s,

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Alcohol Level, Vintage (where applicable), Country of Origin, Region of Origin, and Volume; but all of this could be printed on a label not much larger than a postage stamp.

In NZ they are virtually unknown, but in Australia, they are an integral part of the marketplace. Any Fine Wine store worth its salt will have a well thought out selection of its own label wine, while the big chains actively promote their own labels on the basis of..."if we do it this well with our own wines, take a look at the rest of our product"! Moreover, there are both chains and independents who exclusively sell nothing but their own label wines: generally the premises are cheap and cheerful; as if to emphasise that they put money into the wine, Not the decor! They stand (or fall) on the quality of their selections, or more precisely, the perception of value for money.

"Cleanskins" come about in a marketplace much more saturated (forgive the pun) in wine than the NZ one. Excess juice or wine may come about through a number of factors. New vineyards/growers having excess fruit for which they haven't secured a grape contract; oversupply from a vineyard which a winery does not have capacity for; grapes/wine which a quality orientated winery feels do not reach the standard they set for their own label (or which remaining unsold would reflect on their selling price); a vintage which is overlooked by the buying public due to it being perceived as a "poor" year; or a new(ish) label that has overestimated its ability to sell its product, or a particular varietal, before the next vintage is released. It may also be a channel through which a winery, given appropriate labelling requirements in the purchasing contract, may be able to build brand awareness through an otherwise passive audience.

Advantages for consumers may come through less money being spent on fancy labels/marketing/advertising, and by extension more on wine quality (?), while correspondingly, highly fashionable regions may come at a major mark-down. Also, there is generally a strong degree of reliability of wine quality, at its various price points. For retailers, there is the bonus of exclusivity (never having to be price compared), and normally a slightly better margin.

My interest in "cleanskins" has been piqued by news out of the U.S of a new label now dubbed "Two Buck Chuck". I am assured that this is not the end result of consumption; rather, it is the result of a retail chain called Trader Joes marketing and selling their own label wine at a \$1.99 selling price. Huge overproduction out of California due to massive plantings coming on stream has enabled Trader Joes to take advantage of this surplus juice/wine. Initial forecasts were to sell 400,000 cases, but at last count, the figure was approaching 2,000,000.

With talk of the NZ harvest in '03 being only 60% of the '02 crop due to early season frosts, a similar grape glut is still some way off, but perhaps in the near future, given the vineyard plantings that have gone in, we may well see the rise and rise of "cleanskins" in the NZ marketplace?

Sileni Verjuice: \$14.35

Verjuice is the juice from unripe green grapes. My favourite food author is Catherine Bell from the Epicurean workshop in Auckland, and she describes verjuice as having the tartness of lemon and the acidity of vinegar, but without the harshness of either. It's subtle acidity is quite unique, but is able to substituted with white wine (or apple juice as in the recipe below) if necessary. Maggie Beer brought this juice to life in the Southern Hemisphere, and her recipes are full of verjuice (in fact she has written a book on this subject). There are a few wineries in New Zealand who are making verjuice now, including Olssens in Bannockburn and Neudorf in Nelson, however these are generally only available from the cellar door. Munslow's has available an excellent quality verjuice made by Sileni Estate. Simon from the Home Dining Room in Filleul Street thought Maggie Beer's verjuice was fantastic until he

tried Sileni's. High praise indeed, and worth trying at only \$15.95.

Wandered what to do with that bottle of verjuice you've had in the refrigerator for the last couple of months? We cooked this fabulous dish recently substituting apple juice or white wine (as required in the recipe) with verjuice very successfully indeed. A warning that this recipe, as with most, is completely reliant on good quality ingredients. We bought a ribeye of pork from Eskrick's Butchery in North East Valley and were totally blown away by the fantastic quality. We have tried this dish in the past with meat bought from the supermarket and have ended up with a tasty sauce but really tough meat. So if you want to get the results don't go past your local butcher (same goes for fresh fish and vegetables...if you buy from the supermarket, don't expect top quality ingredients).

Favorite Recipe

Pork Fillet with Ginger and Apple

Ingredients:

2 Tbs olive oil

1 Tbs butter

300gm pork ribeye cut into medallions (you probably can't get this cut from the supermarket anyway; if not so choose a fillet cut)

sea salt

1 onion or 6 shallots, finely sliced

1/2 cup verjuice

1 cooking apple, peeled, cored and sliced into rings

Splash of balsamic vinegar

1 Tbs preserved ginger

White pepper

1 tsp. French mustard

Method:

1. Heat half the oil and butter in a heavy frying pan. When it starts to foam, turn the heat high and add pork medallions. Cook each side for about a minute, just to seal the meat. Sprinkle with salt, lower heat and cover the pan. Cook for 5 minutes or until the pork is no longer pink inside. Remove pork and juices to a dish.

2. Heat remaining butter and oil and cook apple slices until soft. Add apple slices and verjuice, cover and cook a few minutes until tender.

3. Stir in vinegar, pepper, mustard and ginger. Allow bubbling and reducing slightly. Return medallions to pan to heat through. Serve with John Forrests Chenin Blanc

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