

Decanter Club

March 2000

It's that time of year when wines abound; new wineries and new releases of favourite wines. There is plenty of wine in store that will be new to most of you (including us at Munslow's). These days the only way to find out what is happening in such a dynamic industry is to read, read and read some more. But that's our job! As is tasting all new wines and new releases so we can decipher for our clients 'what's hot and what's not'.

Coming Events:

Peter Munslow and Chris Staynes: Easter Show Results Wednesday 22nd March @ 6p.m. *cost: \$20.00*

This year the Easter Show was highlighted by very fine wines from both the 1998 and 1999 vintages, the 1998 reds were of exceptional quality and the champion wine of the show was unusually a Cabernet Sauvignon; Te Kairanga from Martinborough. The last time a Cabernet won this prestigious award was too long ago to remember. We will choose a selection of our favourite wines, both red and white.

Chris Staynes: Wines and Grapes Wednesday 29th March *cost: \$15.00*

Chris last hosted this tasting in April 1996, and for those who recall, it was a fascinating learning experience. Chris will arrange to have grapes picked and couriered to us on the same day and will match the different grape varieties with a good example of the wine of the same grape. Eat the grapes, drink the wine. This is an excellent opportunity, and one not to be missed.

Tyrrells wines Monday 3rd April *cost: \$15.00*

Tyrrells are one of the legends in the Australian wine trade, and from making somewhat old-fashioned Hunter Valley wines in the 80's (sweaty saddle dry style) wines they have invested in other wine-growing areas in Australia and with new technology are now producing some excellent wines.

Cuisine tasting: New Zealand Chardonnays Wednesday 12th April *cost: \$20.00*

We will be presenting Cuisine Magazine's top 10 Chardonnays or those available from the April issue. Book early as these tastings are very popular.

Paul Wright: Wynnsday Wednesday 19th April *cost: \$20.00*

Paul is familiar to many of the regular wine tasters and he will present the new releases from Wynn's, including the flagship wines the legendary Michael Shiraz and John Riddoch Cabernet. There is only a very limited stock of these wines, and will almost surely only be available for sale on the night.

Bill Spence: Matua Valley Thursday 27th April *cost: TBA*

One of the great characters of New Zealand wine industry. Bill Spence has agreed to come to Dunedin for a tasting at Munslow's. the quality of the wines across the board is outstanding and is reflected by Mark Robinson (not the Blues half-back) winning wine-maker of the year in 1998.

Ballingal Estate Chardonnay 1999 \$11.95

Great drinking at this price. Top 10 cuisine under \$15.00. You really can't go wrong with this one.

Banrock Station Sparkling Shiraz NV \$12.95

How do they get this much flavour into a bottle for so little money. A drier style than the Andrew Garrett version and bursting with flavour. I had it recently at a small concert, where we paid with chocolate covered biccies. Yummy! (Mark)

Cloudy Bay Pinot Noir 1998 \$33.95

Cloudy Bay has given up on their Cabernet/Merlot wine. And is now expanding their red wine energies on Pinot. Ignore the Cloudy Bay hype's this is a great wine. Supple, very complex, and likely to blossom with age. Not as dirty on the nose as the '97, but there are hints of that forest floor characteristic there. (Mark)

Collards Blakes Mill Chardonnay 1998 \$12.95

One of the best value NZ chardonnays on the market. The 1998 is a great vintage for this wine. A mouthfilling style with fresh vibrant melon flavours with a long finish. Fantastic value.

Collards Queen Charlotte Riesling \$14.95

A gorgeous wine which reinforces my love of riesling. Lemon/lime citrus notes, a touch of 'kero' on the nose and a long lingering finish. Crisp and dry should prove to be very food friendly. (Mark).

Collards Rothery Sauvignon Blanc 1998 \$13.95

Complex sauvignon made with full malolactic fermentation and aged in French oak. It is lush, ripe and slightly honeyed.

Elderton Tantalus 1997 \$14.95

The back label suggests that this wine will 'tantalise' you with its flavours of plum spice and with this shiraz/cabernet blend, they seem to have got it right. Soft in the mouth but surprisingly full bodied. It would probably age a little too, but who cares when it's drinking so well now.

Hays Lake Pinot Noir 1999 \$26.95

Gold medal awarded at last weeks Easter Show. This Pinot is at the savoury mushroom end of the spectrum, which often does not stand out in competitions. Good on the judges for rewarding this very Burgundian style Central Otago wine. Congratulations to Hays Lake for continuing to provide us with a superb Pinot.

Henry's Drive Cabernet 1998 \$37.95

A new winery for Munslow's and a treat is in store for those who are willing to try something new, concentrated aromas of fruit and berries. The palate has ripe rich blackberry and chocolate flavours, balanced with sweet vanilla oak. Fab wine.

Henry's Drive Shiraz 1998 \$49.95

This blockbuster of a wine received 5 * in Winestate magazine, and gold medals at the Melbourne and Adelaide wine shows, both of which are very reputable shows. Has amazing liquorice and plum flavours and is an absolute delight to drink. Has great cellaring potential of at least 5 years or so.

Leasingham Bin 61 Shiraz 1997 \$19.75

Rich soft spicy and vanilla oak flavours. Another classic from the Barossa. We have had several bottles of

this at various occasions and it really is great.

Matua Late Harvest Muscat \$11.95

Ripe and flavoursome with spicy sweet honeyed finish.

Mt. Edward Riesling 1999 \$18.95

What a superb find we have on our doorsteps with Central Otago cleaning up the shows with Pinot. Well hold your breath, here comes this superb Riesling to follow suit. Although it has yet to reach the same heights as others, I predict that it will achieve as much acclaim as anything else will from the area. Buy when you can, and cellar for several years and you will be justly rewarded with a splendid wine.

Omni NV Brut \$10.95

I've been sharing a number of bottles of Omni with friends over the last months and it never fails me. This wine has got style and at the newsletter price is a steal. Everyone needs at least one of these in the fridge for a spontaneous occasion.

Pauletts 'The Quarry' Mouvedre 1997 \$21.95

Traditionally known as Mataro in Australia, but the dictates of fashion see its French heritage dominate. Gamey, spicy and a touch of barnyard, the palate and finish are very dry. Definitely a food wine and more for the eurocentrically minded. (Mark)

Penfold's Rawson's Retreat 1998 \$11.95

When the first vintage of the Rawson's Retreat hit the market, I must admit to being decidedly underwhelmed. This vintage I am please to say is a huge turnaround. I don't know how they can cram so much fruit into a bottle for this price.

Peregrine Pinot Noir 1999 \$32.95

A classic vintage for Pinot the wine shows a complex array of ripe black fruits and a gentle dried spices and herbs finishing warm and rich.

Pertaringa Shiraz 1998 \$36.95

Very ripe and generous, a lush, seductive, opulent mouthful of berry, plum and spice flavours that practically tumble over each other before harmonising on the long finish. Drink now through 2010. Wine spectator wrote this review and rates it 92:100. Totally awesome and worth every penny (and more).

Quartz Reef Pinot Gris 1999 \$20.95

Fantastic gold medal wine from this fledgling Central Otago winery and if this is recreated in future vintages will certainly set the wine-drinking world on fire. Dynamic wine worthy of a place in your cellar. I would predict that this wine will auction at much higher prices in 5 years or so. It will cellar well.

Saltram Classic Shiraz 1998 \$15.95

Rich cherry and berry flavours and soft velvety tannins. One of Lyn's favourites.

Selaks Drylands Sauvignon Blanc 1999 \$16.95

One of the most awarded Sauvignon Blanc from this vintage. Single vineyard wine which for some reason always seems to produce the goods. Ripe, rich, herbal and tropical fruit characters. A Marlborough Savvy at its best.

Shingle Peak Merlot 1998 \$16.95

Vibrant ripe and spicy merlot with a rich palate and soft tannin finish. A bargain.

St Hallet Faith Shiraz 1998 \$24.95

Sweet cherry and plum lifted fruit and soft smoked toasty flavours.

Te Mata Elston Chardonnay 1999 \$36.95

Absolutely beautiful wine with concentrated flavours of grapefruit, apricots and nuts. Lots of power. Michael Cooper in his most recent book has given the Elston a 'super classic' identification alongside only 5 other chardonnays and I totally agree with this call. Will age. Rock and roll. A collectors item.

Te Mata Estate Chardonnay 1999 \$21.95

Fantastic wine at this price. Fragrant weighty and complex with strong nutty and peach flavours and a wonderful vanilla finish.

Te Mata Viognier 1999 \$23.95

As far as I know, Te Mata are the first NZ winery to release a wine from this white Northern Rhone grape variety, though many others have planted it. Honeysuckle and floral notes on the nose with a lovely oily texture on the palate. We have only a handful of bottles, so it is one for the adventurous wine drinker.

Te Whare Ra Gewurztraminer 1999 \$23.95

Trophy winner for the Gewurztraminer and my wine of the show at last years Air New Zealand show. This wonderful wine crams more flavour per millilitre than any white wine that I know of. Fantastic. We only have a small amount of this wine available.

Torlesse Medium Riesling 1999 \$9.95

Just what you need when you look at the shelves and find everything has gone up in price with the fall of the New Zealand dollar. This makes good drinking for not a lot of money. Fruity and ripe this wine fills the mouth surprisingly. A small amount of Muller adds to an aromatic lift.

Wither Hills Chardonnay 1998 \$28.95

Brent Marris continues to make one of the best chardonnays in New Zealand. Barrel fermented in French oak enhances this rich complex melon flavoured wine.

Wither Hills Sauvignon Blanc 1999 \$18.95

Herbal with gooseberry overtones in a crisp and intense style.

Wynns Shiraz 1998 \$15.95

Peppery spicy cherry and berry flavours and supple well- balanced oak in a ripe rich style.

Wines of the Month

Lyn's choice:

Cimicky Daylight Chamber Shiraz 1998 \$32.95

A classic hot Barossa shiraz. Rich robust and powerful, the wine has plenty of spicy black pepper and cherry fruit and balanced perfectly with vanilla oak giving it an extraordinary complexity.

Matua Matheson Chardonnay 1999 \$20.95

I was so disappointed when we ran out of the '98 vintage of this wine, but on trying the '99, I was delighted to find the currant vintage equally enjoyable. Full-bodied concentration of pure melon and spice flavours with an elegant toasty oak. Delicious and a surprise at 14% alc.vol. Try it with Bill Spence at the Matua tasting if you don't believe me!

Coming Events:

Mark's choice:

Huntington Estate Shiraz 1994 \$24.95

A friend who had spent a year working for a company in Sydney introduced me to Huntington Estate wines many years ago and he was keen to try the local wines. Coming from the then rural backwater of Mudgee, their wines were still (and still are) very highly rated by the Aussi wine press. Now Mudgee is one of the latest 'buzz' areas for wine growing in Australia. It's nice to have a wine on the shelves, with a little age on it, and while the palate has the softness and richness of age, I was surprised by the lashings of sweet fruit on the initial taste. I think it will cellar for a while.

Peter's choice:

Collards Chenin Blanc 1998 \$11.95

One of my favourite New Zealand wineries. Patriarch Lionel Collard is such a humble and knowledgeable man, has been a friend since an Australian trip in 1982. Bruce Collard has been a huge support and mentor for me with my judging, and a wine-maker that I have an immense amount of respect for. The 1998 is the best vintage yet, with wonderful apricot and honey flavours. Drinking superbly now. A great alternative to chardonnay and sauvignon. A steal at this price. Previous vintages have cellared superbly for 3-4 years, and there is no reason why this won't too.

Chris's choice:

Lanson Champagne \$53.95--\$69.95

Over Christmas and New Year I had the opportunity to try quite a few bottles of Champagne all of which were pretty good, but when it comes to cost the Champagne which I felt offered the most at it's price was Lanson. Lanson is a well established Champagne house, founded in 1760 and like Veuve Clicquot and Moet is a member of the Syndicat de Grandes Marques de Champagne. The Black Label Brut NV has a full fragrant fruity nose, (the house style does not use malolactic fermentation), a persistent fine mousse and good body. At the special price of \$53.95 I can thoroughly recommend it. (I've bought a case for a significant birthday later this year). For a few dollars more the 1993 Vintage Brut at \$69.95 has got to be one of the cheapest vintage Grande Marques and well worth a try. Like the non-vintage it has the distinct fragrant nose but is a little deeper in colour and fuller on the palate. If you intend having Champagne for a special occasion this year why not get a bottle or two now, while the special price is available, like petrol it will go back up in price!

Young Pete's choice:

Corbans Huntaway Chardonnay 1998 \$16.95

Peter Campbell wrote this after trying a few bottles of this wine. Golden in colour, heaps of tropical fruit on the nose and the palate complimented by lots of caramely oak characteristics. This fantastic Chardonnay is a gold medal winner and a steal at \$16.95. Enjoy.

Galbraiths Brewery

Always looking for something different to whet the palate, while in Auckland recently I and my fellow judges at the Easter show found ourselves having a few ales after a tortuous day of judging something around 150 wines and with jaded palates found ourselves at Galbraiths. What a relief! These are classic beers, based on traditional European styles and although expensive these are the first growths in the world of beer. I believe these are exclusive to Munslow's in Dunedin, and I hope to get Keith Galbraith down here later this year as he is very keen to hold a beer tasting with his good friend

Dunedin's Richard Emerson who makes the best beer in the South Island in my opinion. What a night that will be!

These beers should be arriving soon. I am unsure as to what will be available but will let you know in the next newsletter. They will cost about \$7.95 for 500 ml.

NEW ZEALAND VINTAGE CHARTS.

WHITE WINE	1998	1997	1996	1995	1994	1993	1992	1991	1990	1989
Auckland	8	7	8	6	8	7	7	7	7	7
Gisborne	9	6	7	8	9	5	6	9	8	9
Hawkes Bay	9	6	7	8	9	5	6	9	8	9
Martinborough	10	7	10	5	9	4	6	8	7	8
Nelson/Marlborough	7	8	8	4	8	6	6	10	5	9
Canterbury	10	9	8	9	6	4	6	9	9	8

RED WINES	1998	1997	1996	1995	1994	1993	1992	1991	1990	1989
Auckland	7	8	9	5	9	8	7	8	6	9
Gisborne	10	7	8	9	8	5	6	8	7	8
Hawkes Bay	10	7	8	8	8	5	6	8	7	9
Martinborough	10	9	9	5	9	6	5	8	8	8
Nelson/Marlborough	10	9	9	5	9	6	5	8	8	8
Canterbury	10	9	8	9	5	5	9	9	8	10

KEY

10 = it doesn't get any better than this

0 = Well, there's always next year

The above chart has been borrowed from Bob Campbell's internet site with his permission. Although Bob has not added a rating for Central Otago, I put forward the following vintages for your consideration for both red and white wines:

1999 9?, 1998 9, 1997 7.

To find Bob's site go to: <http://www.bobcampbell.co.nz/index.html>

Sometimes I complain about the lack of choices in Dunedin, but recently I have reassured myself that life isn't too bad here. Here are a few gastronomic delights that are can be found right here.

Konig's streaky bacon: the very best without doubt and available from Everyday Gourmet on George Street.

Blackball chorizo salami: so Italian you could think you were in Bologna itself. Also available from Everyday Gourmet. From the West Coast and probably not available in the North Island!

Italian Parmigiano Parmesan cheese: I never use anything other than Italian for things like pesto and

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Caesar salad. Yes it is available in most supermarkets but if you go to Leith distributors in Leith Street, you can guarantee it hasn't been sitting around for ages and it is much cheaper than retail.

Support your local providers!

Decanter Club membership for 2000 is now due. Cost is \$15.00 per person. Please contact Lyn.

Don't hesitate to talk to Peter, Lyn or Mark about your regular case orders. There is no charge for delivery anywhere in Dunedin. If you are from out of town then courier rates we have contracted for are very reasonable.

Cheers from Peter, Lyn Mark and the Crew at Munslow's