

Decanter Club

March 2003

Coming Events:

Ted Money: Spanish wines Thursday 27th February *cost: \$15.00*

Ted imports the Coto de Hayas Spanish range and we have done nothing but rave about these. We will try the whole range of wines from the Rosado to the top of the range, including the wonderful Fagus and 2 of the wonderful Quinta do Crasto wines. A rare chance to try these world class wines which sell for \$62. Judging from the popularity of these wines, this will be a very popular tasting, so please book early.

Shiraz tasting Thursday 6th March *cost: \$15.00*

A blind tasting of some Australian Shiraz which will be of value and quality. Surprise, surprise, surprise!

Brett Newell: Te Mata Launch Thursday 13th March *cost: \$20.00*

The tasting we've all been waiting for. It's a given that everyone knows that the Te Mata range of wines is one of the top 3 in New Zealand, so expect nothing but perfection from these wines. Most of you know the very affable Brett Newell who has been a very good friend to us personally and also to the business. Brett will present the South Island launch of the new vintage from Te Mata, including the Coleraine, Elston, Awatea and others. Please book early for this tasting.

William Hill winery Thursday 20th March *cost: \$10.00*

One of the new wineries from the Alexandra area in Central Otago. William Hill are making very good wine these days, with the present vintage looking above average already.

Roger Fraser: Murdoch James Thursday 27th March *cost: 15.00*

I recall the first Pinot from this tiny Martinborough winery. I tried it at an Air New Zealand Show, and was amazed at its quality. They are known for their Pinots not surprisingly, given they make 3 different styles, plus another blended red with a predominant Pinot. However their Chardonnay is definitely not overshadowed.

<p>A word about tastings: All tastings are held in the upstairs tasting room at Munslow's Fine Wines, 338 George Street, Dunedin. If you have booked to come to a tasting and are unable to attend, it is appreciated if you contacted us as soon as possible, as with some of the more popular tastings, there are people on a waiting list wanting to attend. Seating is on a first in first seated basis.</p>
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Wines Recently Tasted:

Astrolabe Sauvignon Blanc 2002 17.95

Weighty wine with lovely length and tropical melon and lime flavours. Made by Simon Waghorn, this is one of Marlborough's finest.

Bannock Brae Goldfields Pinot Noir 2001 28.75

Lovely new Central Pinot from Lake Dunstan. Well priced it has good depth of colour, a lovely fresh palate of black dawsen cherries, warm and savoury. Great with duck

Beelgara Merlot 2002 11.65

Great value wine with ripe, rich plummy flavours. Very moorish. Great bbq wine. A steal!

Browns T Trellis Shiraz 1999 16.15

The Browns T Trellis is one of those wonderful Shiraz that have come from this superb vintage. Packed with spicy chocolate flavours and a long finish. this will cellar happily for a few years if you can keep your hands off it.

d'Arenburg Stump Jump 2001 13.45

Say no more about this except this new vintage seems to have more shiraz and more body than the last vintage (my perception only).

Cedar Creeks 8.95

As good as it gets at this price.

Coto de Hayas Rose 2002 10.75

We have just received another delivery of this very popular rose. It represents extremely good value for money. Made from tempranillo and Garnacha (Grenache) it is fairly light, crisp and dry with lovely sweet strawberry flavours. Ideal for those warm summer evenings.

Coto de Hayas Reserva 1996 17.95

This is a seriously good wine at a very reasonable price. 100 percent garnacha sourced from old vines, aged for 15 months in American oak, then aged for a further 30 months in the bottle prior to release. The resulting wine is powerful with concentrated cherry and plum flavours backed with spicy oak.

Forrest Sauvignon Blanc 2002 15.25

Back in stock, our most popular savvy. Made in a very ripe style with lovely citrus and capsicum flavours, zesty and lively.

Gran Feudo Rose 2001 14.35

A serious style of Rose, made from grenache grapes. Packed with flavours, just off dry, with a palate of rosehips and strawberries. Great summer wine. Try with chicken.

Hunters Riesling 2002 17.05

Hunters took the world (well, the U.K) by storm in the '80s with a string of remarkable Sav Blancs which were at the forefront of NZ winemaking, yet perhaps because they have been round for such a long time, I have overlooked them a little. That's a shame, because under the talented and longstanding winemaker Gary

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Duke, the Hunters wines are always stylish and exemplary expressions of what Marlborough does so well. The merest whisper of honey is balanced by a fine cut of acidity with fantastic fruit expression and great length on the palate.

Konrad and Conrad Noble 2001 34.15

Last opportunity to buy this fantastic sweetie at this price. The new vintage is going up by about 20 percent, or so I have been told. Really is fantastic and I have no doubt it will only get better with age. I wouldn't waste cooking my nectarines in this quality, but I wouldn't hesitate to drink this with poached nectarines in dessert wine.

Main Divide Riesling 2002 13.95

Made by Pegasus winery in Canterbury in the Amberly area. This area is probably one of the premium riesling areas in the country, and is significantly different from other areas. Matt Donaldson is a very gifted winemaker and probably one of the best riesling makers in the country. This is definitely not to be missed, nor will it disappoint.

Marienberg Reserve Shiraz 1998 17.95

We dragged out of the cellar an old huge Aussi shiraz on the weekend to match our hefty Italian roast lamb which was a fantastic food/wine match. We followed up with this beauty. Some \$30 less than the Rosemount I expected it to fade in the limelight, but surprisingly it held it's own. From the McLaren vale, the spice and berry fruit is well balanced by the vanillin oak and light tannins. Good value wine.

Richmond Grove Shiraz 2000 17.95

New vintage for one of our favorite reds. For the fans of the '99, this is EVEN BETTER!! Bigger and even more juicy. Yum yum.

St Clair Riesling 2002 15.25

Juicy, full bodied style. Off-dry with a lovely long nectarine palate. Good value.

Wairau River Riesling 2002 19.75

A classic example of the Mark v Peter phenomena. At 5gm/l sugar and noticeably dry this is a style which Peter will enjoy with food, but I love anytime, anywhere. The rep and I polished off the bottle in no time, and who wouldn't when the aromatics just leap out the glass, the wine is long and intense on the palate, and the whole palate is bright and fresh as a summer's day. Love it now, or luxuriate in it in five years.

Wines of the Month

Laurie's choices:

Etchart Rio de Plata Malbec 2000 11.65

Peter tried this on me blind one evening recently, knowing that I wouldn't have a clue what it was. My first guess was that it was a wee Tuscan number and valued around \$18-20. Wrong on all accounts. The only thing that I got right was that it wasn't a New World wine. It is in fact a wee Malbec from Argentina. Not to be

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outdone however I did some reading about Argentinean wines, and find they are heavily influenced by the Italians (compared to Chilean wines being influenced by the French), not that Malbec is a commonly grown grape varietal in Italy. This wine has some very good fruit in it and is well balanced with gentle oak and in a typically dry Italian style! It was perfect with our Italian meal!!!

Eileen Hardy 1999 78.25

I have to be honest and say that I have not tried this vintage yet, however I can honestly confirm that this is MY FAVORITE wine of all time (from Australia anyway). I have lots of other favourites, and these include anything made by Cape Mentelle, Maxwell's and other smallish boutique wineries that are too numerous to mention. The Hardy's range of wines is consistently good and like Penfold's and Lindeman's is incredibly consistent. That consistency is one of the things that make me buy the Eileen vintage after vintage. I first fell in love with this wine with the 1983 vintage. And have never looked back. You only have to try this once to recognise that it has to be one of THE BEST AUSSI SHIRAZ around. At \$78 it doesn't come cheap, but for a lifetime experience, it does. And if the bank calls in your mortgage, you can always sell it and make money on it. Because we love this so much, we have received a further tiny allocation of this wine, so first in, first served.

Martijn's choice:

William Hill Gewurztraminer 2002 20.65

This Gewurzt displays all those lovely characteristics of gewurz that we all love; Rose petals and turkish delight. A softer style than the Marlborough styles, due to the cooler climate in Central Otago. A definite wine to enjoy over those lingering sunny days and evenings.

Alastair's choice:

Felton Road Block 1 Riesling 2002 28.75

My favorite Riesling from the 2002 vintage. A weighty sweet style Riesling (50g/litre) with a touch of acidity to balance the sweetness. Strong citrus flavours predominate backed up with a luscious honeyed character. Not an out and out pudding wine, but would go nicely with fruit salads, cheesecake and other lighter sweets.

Marks choice:

Coto de Hayas Fagus 1999 49.95

There's a long story behind this wine; involving the Swiss, a dry river bed, chorizo sausage, and a dachshund called Colin, but I won't go into it here. If you do want to know more, Go to the Spanish tasting later this month! Ted Money is both irrepressible and utterly passionate about his range of wines, and it would be worth the price of the tasting just to try this stunning wine! 100% Grenache (Garnacha) and rated by the major Spanish wine mag Penin as the finest Grenache wine EVER to be made in Spain. Impenetrable colour, fantastic perfume, stunning purity of fruit, amazing complexity and length, and yet finely balanced and dances on the palate. A serious wine, and a serious proposition for the cellar. PS: The wine is actually a blend of the 98\99\00 vintages.

Peter's choice:

Henry Lawson Shiraz 1998 17.95

Mudgee wine from the wonderful '98 vintage. Very generous palate with blackberry, cherry and lovely toasty spicy oak. It's beautifully developed now, but still has plenty of time to go. A real bargain. This wine really rocks and rolls for me As a food wine it is divine, and would match Laurie's Italian roast lamb just fine indeed. Must admit that you just have to buy lamb from a reputable butcher, and NOT from the supermarket if you want to make this dish, because going to that little more trouble to get the best cut, is worth it...just like going to a reputable wine merchant.

...and you thought you'd seen the last of Mark...well maybe, but you haven't HEARD the last of him...

Mutterings from Mark.

Hello dear readers. With this newsletter comes a departure of sorts, and a new beginning (in more ways than one). In what we believe is a first (at Munslovs we like to be leaders rather than followers!) for NZ wine stores, I have moved to Melbourne to become a roving wine reporter, and will write a regular newsletter from here; a Wine Foreign Correspondent, or if you will, a vinous Alistair Cooke with a regular "Letter from Australia". Mind you, depending on work prospects it could be something as banal as what I did over the weekend, so don't get your hopes up too much just yet! Perhaps I can become part of the Kiwi Wine "Fifth Column", infiltrating the Melbourne wine industry and selling lots of Central Otago Pinot, and Marlborough Savvies? Whatever the case, I hope to bring a degree of "foreign" objectivity to a view of the Australian wine scene, and pass on what I have seen. Knowing the degree of interest in travel to Australia, I hope down the line to be able to give a bit of a rundown on some of the wine regions (outstanding cellar doors, good cafes, and the like), and for the similarly wine obsessed, an update on the good wine stores in Melbourne.

Having just moved here, exchanged money (and now spending it faster than you can say destitute), the issue of comparative prices seems like a good starter for ten. Customers who have travelled across the Tasman frequently draw a comparison between what they paid in Oz versus what they pay at home, yet there are really two totally different aspects to the market. An article in a recent wine magazine explored the price comparison ten years ago to today over a raft of Australian wines. Industry heavyweights like Jim Barry Armagh, Hardy's Eileen, Henschke Hill of Grace and so on had risen by between 500 and 1000%. Mid tier wines like Wynns Cabernet, Peter Lehmann Shiraz and so on had seen rises of 40–100%. However, the amazing statistic was that of the "volume" wines like Lindeman's Bin 65 Chard, Jacobs Creek and the like. They had remained stable over that time, and in some cases gone DOWN in price! Certainly, the volume/budget end of the market in Australia sees fierce competition, and prices can be sharp (and will be markedly cheaper than in NZ, so day to day drinking wines are excellent value. The middle tier (the sort of wines that one might buy to take back to NZ) is rather a different story, with wines in the \$15–\$50 category being remarkably similar dollar for dollar to NZ; at \$25–\$35 often two to three dollars cheaper in Melbourne which is the level of the exchange rate. There are some notable exceptions where wines are imported into NZ by small distributors, and exceptions in the other direction such as the Morris Durif which I recently saw in one of Melbourne's largest budget wine stores at A\$21.95 v a paltry NZ\$19.95 (less disc) at Munslovs. The top end/cult wine end of the trade often sees prices considerably higher than in NZ, however, these sorts of wines are often difficult to source, so are probably easier to access in Australia if you are interested in them.

I am reminded strongly about the need for knowledge and advice, so if you are travelling do ask Peter or Alistair first. Something that you are keen to buy may already be available through a NZ distributor at a cheaper price. Alternatively, if you have specific enquiries, they can be forwarded to me from Munslovs, and I'll help where I can. Cheers Cobber!

2003 subscription

The majority of decanter Club members are now on email, which for us is great. It's so fast, and accessible, and we can contact you and let you know about tastings and deals that crop up from time to time. Because the cost of emailing to clients is minimal, there will not be a charge for the newsletter. However we do need to cover the cost of postage for those on snail mail...sorry. Therefore for postal clients, a charge of \$15 will be incurred.

Cheers, Peter, Alistair, Chris and the crew at Munslow's (and from further afield).