

Decanter Club

March 2004

Coming Events:

Suzanne Sinclair: William Hill Winery Thursday 18th March *cost: \$15.00*

The first of the Alexandra wineries to hold a tasting with us. Alexandra is becoming a force in itself on the grape-growing scene, producing some superb Pinots. The climate is slightly warmer than that of the Wakatipu Basin and Wanaka, and so is able to produce wines with that little bit more ripeness. William Hill was the first vineyard to be planted in this area, going back to the mid 70's, and with the first commercial wines produced in the late eighties. These days, William Hill is setting the bench-mark for wines in this area. Please book early for this tasting, as I'm sure it will have a huge following.

Ted Money: Spanish Armada Thursday 25th March *cost: \$15.00*

Ted held a tasting with us this time last year, and as I recall the tasting showed just how much people enjoy the Coto de Hayas and Castano range of wines. We have introduced many of our customers to this range of wines with many satisfied wine drinkers. The range for this tasting goes from the Tinto right through to the Fagas – every one of which is exceptional value for money.

Fiona McLeod: BRL Hardy wines Thursday 1st April *cost: \$15.00*

BRL Hardy holds an impressive portfolio of both New Zealand and Australian wines including Selaks and Nobilo, and the Hardy wines. Fiona has been the local representative for BRL Hardy for many years now, and has an extensive knowledge of the portfolio. At this stage, we are unsure as to what Fiona will show at this tasting, but because this company doesn't produce bad wine, I'm sure it will be an interesting tasting with the lure of a few prizes!

Wines Recently Tasted:

Lots of new releases this month including the fantastic Penfolds wines range, which is the best vintage in South Australia since 1998. The 2001 vintage is making big, ripe, well-structured wines. We have not written any notes about these wines as I have not tried them yet, but they get high praise from the Australian wine press. Available in-store are Penfolds Bin 389, Bin 28 and Bin 128.

Amisfield Noble Riesling 2003 (375 ml) 38.65

There is only a small quantity of this sticky available as there was very little of it made. Taken from specially selected Riesling grapes grown on the Amisfield estate, it is both powerful and elegant, showing wonderful botrytis characters with sufficient acidity to balance the sweetness. Long term cellaring will be rewarded, and it also comes in a very stylish box. So, go on, treat yourself!!

Banrock Station White Shiraz 2003 10.75

A lovely summer wine which reminds me of rosehips. Anytime wine with a touch of sweetness. Take it to your favourite curry restaurant.

Beresford Beacon Hill Shiraz 2002 10.75

I cannot say too much about this Aussi shiraz at the special price 10.75. This offers a serious mouthful of red at a great price. We have supplied this wine to several high profile functions in the last month, and guests have loved it and thought it was expensive – about \$20!! Big 14% alc and choc full of plum and spice flavours and a great finish. Buy a case.

Buckleys Shiraz 2001 15.25

A big, grunty South Australian shiraz. Buckets of plums, blackberries and chocolate. If you don't like them big, DON'T buy this. It's a monster.

Cairnbrae Pinot Noir 2002 17.95

This is an absolute bargain. Gold medal winning NZ Pinot at this price don't come around very often! I really enjoy this lovely wine with its intense cherry flavours. Try!

Camino Real Carmenere 2002 20.65

From the Cachapoal Valley in Chile, just south of Santiago. Carmenere is a very old French grape variety which has enjoyed resurgence in Chile in recent times. It is a full bodied red with rich berry fruit flavours and good tannin structure. An excellent food wine.

Clifford Bay Sauvignon Blanc 2003 17.95

This is a very impressive single vineyard wine with classic capsicum gooseberry aromas and a very smooth intense finish. Great with fish. Fiddlers Green Riesling 2003 18.85 Top gold medal winner from the Waipara area in Canterbury. I enjoy medium style rielings more than the dry styles, especially in their youth and this wine is made in that style. It has lots of peach and nectarine flavours with overtones of lime. It has lots of elegance and balance and will cellar for 3 years, but is lovely now.

Forrest Sauvignon Blanc 2003 15.25

As good as it gets. Classic Marlborough sav blanc from a great vintage. Heaps of gooseberry, quince and capsicum flavours with huge mouth–feel and a huge finish. If you like sauvignon blanc, you'll love this.

Konrad and Konrad Noble Riesling '02 (375 ml) 23.35

Ravishingly beautiful and intense wine with an oily richness, lovely ripe nectarine flavours. It is superbly balanced with crisp acidity. Top gold medal standard.

Leasingham Bastion Riesling 2002 13.45

This is the first release of this wine under the Bastion label. Using Riesling grapes sourced entirely from the Clare Valley, it has fresh citrus aromas. The palate is intense with concentrated flavours of lemon and lime, with a crisp mineral finish.

Lurton GSC 2001 17.95

I really love this highly original blend of grenache, shiraz and cabernet from the south of France. Lots of spicy pepper flavours from the shiraz, sweet berry flavours from the grenache and hints of eucalyptus and

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blackcurrants from the cabernet which all adds up to make this a supple, rich and well balanced mouthful. A lovely change.

Matua Valley Matheson Cabernet Merlot 2001 20.65

Rich, full bodied style red blend from the Hawkes Bay. It displays lifted berry/cassis aromas and ripe berry fruit flavours and a smooth finish. Drinking very nicely at present. Nga Waka Chardonnay 2001 19.75 A lovely rich, weighty Chardonnay with a good balance of tropical fruit and butterscotch flavours with a dollop of toasty oak. A serious Chardonnay at an affordable price.

Nga Waka Pinot Noir 2001 29.65

This small family owned vineyard in Martinborough established back in 1988. They have produced a Pinot Noir that displays all the characteristic qualities of wines from this area, with hints of wild mushroom and gamey, savoury flavours. Classy stuff.

Omrah Shiraz 2001 16.15

This Western Australian Shiraz wonderful drinking now, however the current levels of tannin and acidity indicate it will continue to develop with further cellaring. A nose of berry fruit, spices and caramel, and a full, long mouth feel of raspberries and white pepper. A great value shiraz!

Penfolds 128 2001 29.65

A definite 5 star wine from one of the best vintages ever. Utterly magic, all you could ask from a Coonawarra shiraz. Profound red, purple colour with ripe chocolate aromas. The palate is of blackberry, raspberry and cherry which makes a fruit cocktail which explodes in the mouth and a palate that goes on and on. It is finely balanced between fruit and complexity. I loved it!

Richmond Grove LR Cab Sauvignon '00 17.95

From the prestigious Coonawarra, area in South Australia, this cabernet is beautifully balanced wine. It has firm tannins, ripe fruit, balanced by hints of vanilla from the American oak. You would be hard pressed to find a better cabernet for under \$20.

Sacred Hill Riesling 2002 18.95

A solid style of off-dry riesling. Very classic Marlborough wine with prominent lemon, lime and most other citrus fruit flavours. Will cellar well.

Saddlers Creek Watermark Shiraz 2001 18.85

A classy fruit driven style of shiraz. The hints of oak compliment the white pepper and blackberry beautifully. Drinks well now, however if put it in the cellar and happen to stumble upon it in a few years, you wouldn't regret it.

Saltram Mamre Brook Shiraz 2000 22.45

Always a good wine with lots of fruit, cherry, mint and white pepper overtones. Rich with good structure. Will cellar well.

Seresin Pinot Noir 2002 38.65

This wine recently was awarded 5 stars by Michael Cooper. It is a very sophisticated, multi-faceted wine with flavours of cherries, raspberries and smoky oak and a rich chocolaty finish. Cellar for 2 years with comfort and see how it develops.

Te Kairanga Gisborne Chardonnay 2002 17.05

From the makers of fine Martinborough Pinot Noir comes this excellent Chardonnay. Using grapes sourced from Gisborne, they have produced a refreshing, full flavoured Chardonnay with peach and melon characters balanced nicely by subtle oak treatment. This was over \$20, but we have done a deal!

Vavasour Reserve Riesling 2001 18.85

Hand picked and whole bunch pressed, then fermented with wild yeasts. This is a lovely lemon lime style of riesling with hints of stonefruit and a very long finish, made in a medium dry style. Will cellar well.

Villa Maria 2 Vineyards Cab Merlot '00 26.05

Keith Stewart wine of the week in the Listener magazine. It is complex, savoury with great depth and firm tannins and packed with blackcurrant and plum flavours. It has generous fruit and promises to mature well. Better value for quality than the Reserve range which tend to be a touch expensive. Whitehaven Reserve Gewurztraminer '01 22.45 Mouth filling, rich and dry which is everything a good gewurt should be. It has lychees and spice flavours on the palate. 3 years in the bottle has made this a very seductive wine; lovely and lingering.

Something special

Elderton Shiraz 2002 26.05

Trophy winner at the Top 100 last year. We enjoyed this Barossa valley wine with Steve Moffat from Rock and Pillar and Leaning Rock wineries and I loved his description so much that I just had to quote him. "The nose is one of nasturtiums, ying-yangy, violets, magnolia and peach fruit. It is very floral which means an excellent vintage. The palate has very nice saddle and leather flavours with creamy boysenberries. It has everything there with lovely old vines and nice dry tannins. The small berries gives it an intense flavours. It's just a baby! A dream wine which will cellar confidently for 5 years and then will blow your guests away. It and will integrate beautifully over time". This wine has come down in price which makes an extraordinary value for money.

Vasse Felix Shiraz 2001 34.15

We had a bottle of this last Friday night with pizza after a very long week. We had attended a wedding the night before and were quite frankly exhausted from a very late night, and not enough sleep (that happens too often these days when I've had too much the night before). I hadn't intended drinking at all that night, but was soon persuaded by the waft of violets and berries coming from the glass strategically placed in front of me. What's a girl to do!! Vasse is an old vineyard (established in 1967) from Western Australia and has made some of the best shiraz's from the region rating 5 stars consistently. The palate was sublime, full and spicy, smooth and elegant at the same time. It's made in a Rhone style typical of Margaret River area as compared to the 'in your face' Barossa style, It has that 'x-factor' that makes your palate waken up and take notice of what you're drinking. I seriously rate this wine, especially at

this price and if it works with pizza, then what the hell.

Winery Visitation Survey

Back in November 2003 you would have received an email inviting you to complete my Winery Visitation Survey. I want to take a few minutes now firstly to sincerely thank the 181 of you who responded to my plea, and secondly to briefly outline some of my findings. However, before I do that, I guess you will want to know who won the two half cases of wine. Congratulations, along with delivery of the said wine went out to David Thomson and Chris Thomsen.

How do you measure up when comparing yourself with the average Decanter Club member?

- 58% of attendees are male
- The 40–44 age bracket is the most represented age group attending
- The majority (57%) attend 2–4 times a year, while a core group of 16% attend more than 12 times per year.

In order of importance, the main reasons Decanter Club members choose to attend are:

1. To taste wines that you wouldn't normally taste
2. To compare a range of wines in a single sitting and
3. To expand wine knowledge

While less important reasons for attending included:

- To socialise with persons who have similar interests
- To meet winery owners/ reps
- To purchase at a discounted price and
- To catch up with friends

The most commonly sighted reasons for non-attendance included:

- Lack of leisure time
- Work commitments
- Family commitments

Forty percent of people stated they were either 'interested' or 'very interested' in attending tastings based on rare and or expensive Old and New World wines, however, the number of persons prepared to pay \$60+ to do so were few and far between.

Ninety percent of respondents had visited one or more wineries in the 12 months prior to the survey, with 1–4 visits per annum being the average. 59 percent of these peoples' visits included one or more repeat visits. 83 percent purchased wine (other than tasting) during the visit, with 37 percent indicating this was the first time they had purchased that particular wineries wines.

Finally, it is worth noting that there were no statistically significant relationships between any of the abovementioned results and Decanter Club members age, gender, wine cellar size, wine club attendance, monthly spend on wine, wine knowledge, or even levels of interest shown toward winery visitation, wine drinking or wine club participation.

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Should you wish to know any more, feel free to email me on Dchristensen@business.otago.ac.nz.
Thanks again, David Christensen.

Cheers, Peter, Alistair, Martijn and the crew at Munslow's.