

Decanter Club

May 2001

Coming Events:

Chris Staynes: New World Vs Old World Thursday 10th May *cost: \$25.00*

A great opportunity to try wines from around the world. Chris runs the wine appreciation courses here at Munslow's so this will be a good update on the difference between various wine styles around the world.

Leigh Matheson: Gibbston Valley Thursday 17th May *cost: \$20.00*

Gibbston was the first commercial winery in Central Otago, and without doubt put Central Otago on the map as a wine-growing region with their Pinot Noir. Leigh Matheson has been with Gibbston for 10 years or more, which means that he has a comprehensible knowledge, of both inside and out on the area.

Joe McSherry: Aussie reds Thursday 24th May *cost: \$20.00*

Come and try an exciting new range of top boutique wines that Joe is importing from Australia. Punters Corner is a 4 _ star vineyard (James Halliday, 2001 edition) from the Coonawarra who produces some mighty fine wine, and unless you've been splashing out in Oz recently, you won't have seen them, as these are new to the NZ market.

Simon Nunns: Coopers Creek Thursday 31st May *cost: \$15.00*

Coopers Creek has been on the market since 1982, with the grape varieties grown being predominantly whites, although they produce pretty good Cabernet/Merlots. Their reputation has been based on Riesling and Chardonnay. Jolly good wines they are too.

Bill `Digger' Hennessy: Mt Riley wines Thursday 7th June *cost: \$15.00*

A relative newcomer to Dunedin (although their first crush was in 1996). The wines are based on full-flavoured and strong varietal wines that are consistently good. `Digger' is the wine-maker in this Marlborough joint venture with Allan Scott vineyard. Good wine, and should be a good tasting.

<p>Listened to Keith Stewart on radio recently? If so you may have heard him say, "If you want decent advice in Dunedin, go to Munslow's. They are the best wineshop in town, one of the best in the country, and all their staff know their stuff. You can always tell a good wineshop by the quality of their advice." Keith reported this on both National Radio and 4ZB. An endorsement we're proud of. Wines recently tasted</p>

Wines Recently Tasted:

Banrock Station Ball Island Shiraz '98 \$13.95

One of the best buys in Cuisine reds under \$15. Be in quick for the last of this lovely ripe vintage.

Basedows Shiraz 1998 \$19.95

Excellent Barossa Shiraz from a great vintage. Rich, ripe fruit with great length and persistence and a luxurious vanilla oak finish.

Collards Blakes Mill Chardonnay \$13.95

An oldie but a goodie. Great NZ Chardonnay at this price. Bruce Collard has been consistently making fantastic Chardonnays for years

Collards Chenin Blanc 1999 \$12.95

One of Michael Cooper's best ever buys. Rich, vibrantly fruity wine with great depth of tropical fruit, pineapple flavours and a long, slightly honeyed finish.

Collards Summerfields Dry White '00 \$9.95

A great quaffer. A blend of mainly Chardonnay and Chenin with a hint of Sauvignon Blanc. The grapes were just too good to sell.

Houghton's Wild flower Chardonnay 1998 \$12.95

Toasty oak with sweet melon and peach flavours. A great value wine from Western Australia

Leasingham Bastion Shiraz Cab 1998 \$14.95

Still haven't found anything better value at this price! Spicy nose, rich ripe persistent blackberry fruit on the palate with approachable fine tannins. Full bodied bold style wine.

Matariki Syrah 1999 \$31.95

Matariki is a small Hawkes Bay label that many of you will not have heard of before, yet a gold medal for this wine at the Easter Show suggests that they might be on the right formula! I'm hearing more and more positive mutterings about how good the '99 Syrahs are out of Hawkes Bay, so this is your opportunity to find out. Quite different from the Aussie Shiraz style, expect to find red berry fruit, spice and white pepper.

Matua Pinotage Cabernet 2000 \$11.95

VALUE PLUS. Ideal for those functions or as a quaffing house wine at home. Soft Pinotage fruit with some nice cabernet to add some fullness on the finish.

Mills Reef Reserve Chardonnay 1999 \$22.95

This Hawkes Bay label was also one of the Cuisine Top 10 picks, and gets my nod of approval on account of its price. Stylishly put together, with peach and tropical fruit nuances and a creamy texture, this wine gained good support from around the room at the Cuisine tasting last month.

Mission Hawkes Bay Chardonnay '00 \$14.95

Gold medal at this years Easter Show. Fruit driven style with citrus and peach flavours.

Mitchell Growers Grenache 1998 \$21.95

A favourite of Lyn's! Concentrated spicy raspberry fruit with some interesting Rhone-like complexity. Hard pruning has resulted in low yielding vines resulting in incredibly intense flavours.

Remarkable No 1 Syrah 1999 \$34.95

Perhaps the most remarkable thing about this wine (yes the pun was intended) is that it hailed from Central Otago! '99 provided excellent ripening conditions in Central Otago leading to a couple of the Merlot and Syrah wines from the region hitting the market. The grapes for this wine were purchased by this negociant label from a well-respected Central label. It has a ripeness level that an Australian would be proud of. This one could really fool a few of the wine options set!

Roberts Estate Chardonnay 1999 \$13.95

One of Charmian Smith's choices for best buys, and we agree. Fresh melon and citrus enhanced with gentle oak maturation. Ideal with fish and white meats.

Salisbury Cabernet 1999 \$11.95

A few years ago a group of us visited the Salisbury vineyards in the heavily irrigated area of Riverlands in North Eastern Victoria. This area produces something like 70% of all grapes grown in Australia. Astonishing really. Ripe rounded berryfruit with gentle tannins. Outstanding value. How do they do it at this price—with irrigation!

Salisbury Cabernet Merlot 2000 \$11.95

The other thing that Salisbury were doing, which was a first, was using wood staves in their wines (this was light-years ahead of NZ) and this gave the wines the depth and texture of more expensive grapes. The Cabernet merlot has rich, cherry, berry and blackcurrant flavours with a hint of the old eucalyptus (mint). Great price.

Tatachilla Breakneck Merlot 1999 \$14.95

Delightfully soft and smooth with rich raspberry and plum fruit flavours and a hint of oak.

Tatachilla Breakneck Shiraz 1999 \$14.95

Spicy Shiraz fruit with rich berry and pepper flavours and subtle oak treatment.

Taylors Cabernet Sauvignon 1999 \$17.95

Distinctive Cabernet berryfruit. Full flavoured and matured in oak barrels resulting in a well-balanced wine.

Terrace View Cabernet Merlot 1998 \$16.95

The best value NZ red in the shop from the ripe '98 vintage. Rich and full of plum and currant flavours with a nice touch of oak. None of those nasty green herbal flavours. Rated an impressive 86/100 in the American Wine Spectator magazine.

Trinity Hill Chardonnay 1999 \$34.95

For those of you who don't already know, this is the label of John Hancock, who for many, many years crafted the wines of Morton Estate, including their wonderful Black Label Chardonnays. Fresh from topping the Cuisine Chardonnay tasting, this is a sophisticated wine. More Burgundian than Kiwi. The aromatic hints of citrus, nuts and matchstick lead on to a powerful palate; mealy and textured with a long finish. Will also be well worth a run in the cellar.

Waimea Chardonnay 2000 \$19.95

We've tried this 2 or 3 times now and absolutely loved it. Creamy oaky fig and tropical fruit underlain with nuances of butterscotch and mealiness.

Wines of the Month

Lyn's choice:

Rosemount Hill of Gold Shiraz 1999 \$24.95

Trophy and gold medal winner. Limited quantities of this delicious Shiraz, but I will leave some to buy this year. Superb concentrated spicy rich berry fruit with delicious oak maturation. Velvety smooth wine to enjoy now. Will cellar well for at least 5 to 8 years (if you can resist).

Mark's choices:

Montrose Poet's Corner 1999 \$11.95

This is an outstanding value for money wine. Montrose is a New South Wales based winery that fashion this wine from a blend of Shiraz, Cabernet Sauvignon and Cabernet Franc as they have done for many years. Fragrant with a generous dollop of fruit, and a grip on the finish, this wine certainly out-performs its price point. Kind on the wallet and tasty on the palate.

Torbreck 'the Steading' 1999 \$46.95

Huon Hook, a fine Australian wine judge and critic writes from the Sydney Morning Herald, and recently reviewed 'The Steading' in a manner that I can not improve on, so I reproduce his notes here. "A superb red from Dave Powell, one of the Barossa's newest stars. Mainly Grenache with Shiraz and Mouvedre, it has a subtle and complex bouquet and flavour which keeps unfolding as you go. Rich fruit, sweet and profound, with abundant supple tannins, great balance and delicious Rhone like characters." Incidentally I shared a bottle of the '97 with friends a couple of weekends ago, and it was drinking beautifully now.

Peter's choices:

Dennis Shiraz 1998 \$24.95

McLaren Vale makes some stunning wines and this is one of them. Rich and elegant, packed with cassis, spice, liquorice and plums. Very highly rated in Australia; 5 stars Cuisine (next issue); 5 stars Peter! BUY

Maxwell Four Roads Shiraz 2000 \$24.95

The USA can not get enough Maxwell wines after Robert Parker (aka wine-guru) raved about them last year. If you've tried the Lime Cave you'll know why it was awarded 96/100. Try this while you can. Big,

concentrated wine full of powerful fruit and a long finish. 15% grenache makes it very drinkable now, but will cellar. PS Lime Cave stocks are low (also gets 5 stars in next Cuisine).

Mark's Mutterings: THE SPANISH ARMADA!

- Firstly, a geography lesson. Look at a map of Europe and you'll find that Spain is the large chunky bit that hangs off the bottom left of France (it comes with Portugal attached).
- Secondly, Spain is the third largest producer of wine in the world (after France and Italy).
- Thirdly, they do use some grape varieties that we are a little less used to seeing.
- Fourthly, they have remained a supplier of some very good wines at very reasonable prices.
- Fifthly, I'm miffed that I never managed to get there during my European travels; something I do plan to put right in the future.
- Sixthly, they make Sherry (and very good it is too!).

Perhaps it's because they produce Sherry, and Sherry is decidedly 'unfashionable' that Spanish wines seem...well...'unfashionable'. Other than the wines of Rioja, and to a lesser extent Ribera del Duero, awareness of Spanish wines in this country is negligible, which is a shame as Spanish wines do seem to be reinventing themselves. New co-operatives and bright young winemakers are crafting more fruit driven styles of wine; often from regions that we have not heard of before, and at very user friendly prices.

Grape varieties

Garnacha:

Known as Grenache in Australia, and of course in France (where it provides a major component in the wines of the Southern Rhone and the South of France). This is the most widely planted variety in Spain. With its strong wood, and upright growth, it is well suited to the traditional bushvine viticulture method common in hot, dry, windy vineyards as is regularly found in Spain. Ripening to high alcohol levels these lighter coloured reds have sweet fruit with raspberry and earthy hints.

Tempranillo:

thought of as somewhat of the Spanish Cabernet Sauvignon, this thick skinned grape produces deeply coloured, long lasting wines which are often blended with Garnacha to provide extra backbone. Grape flavours vary from tobacco to spice and leather.

Monastrell:

Known as Mourvedre in France (where it is an important part of Chateaufort de Papes, and is also of Bandol...Southern France), and further afield; old plantings in both Australia and USA are sometimes known as Mataro. The second most widely planted red grape variety in Spain and due to its later ripening characteristics definitely a vine that requires a hot climate. The grape produces wines with good colour, tannin and flavour with blackberry and spice nuances and often a savoury gamey influence.

The Wines

Carchelo 1999 \$13.95

A blend of Monastrell, Tempranillo and Merlot. This has been a regular on our shelves for many years with Michael Cooper visited this label as one of the best value imported wines on the market. The

spice and savoury hints of Monastrell come through on this wine which offers great fruit and fantastic drinking at the price.

Bodegas Castano Dominio Espinal '99 \$13.95

A blend of Monastrell and Tempranillo, and very similar in style to the Carchelo. Again great drinking for the money.

Bodegas Castano Pozuelo 1999 \$19.95

This is the big brother to the Domino Espinal, but in this case Monastrell blended with Cabernet and Merlot. Sharing some of the gamey qualities, but with hints of plum and blackcurrant. An altogether more powerful wine, with more intensity, tannin structure and length.

Onix 1999 \$19.95

A label that we have run with very successfully in the past. Onix hails from a co-operative in Priorat, one of the most fashionable regions in Spain today. Priorat is bakingly hot, and this Garnacha dominant wine has an almost burnt character on top of the sweet fruit. Another powerfully flavoured wine.

Coto De Hayas Garnacha Centenaria 1999 \$19.95

I featured the baby brother of this wine (the Tinto Joven) in the last newsletter. This is the big fella, one hundred years old plus and their low yields give a wine of great concentration with (like the Onix) a hint of the burnt/baked character from the hot climate. Probably needing food, and something a little robust than tapas.

Corporate special: buy 5 cases of Deutz Marlborough Cuvee and receive 10% discount PLUS 3 Marie Clare Cooking Books valued at approximately \$100.00.

HOT SPECIAL!!! We have 2 bottles of 6 LITRE Deutz sparkling left and we would like to clear them, as we did not sell them at Christmas. Were \$449.95, now \$350.00

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