

Decanter Club

Christmas 2001

Coming Events:

Cuisine Sauvignon Blanc Thursday 5th December *cost: \$20.00*

One of the more popular Cuisine tastings of the year with the new vintage recently being released. Some of the wines for tasting have received gold medal awards at last weeks Air New Zealand Show. Book early.

Simon Waghorn: Whitehaven Thursday 13th December *cost: \$15.00*

Simon like many of NZ top wine makers worked at Corbans Wines. Must be a very good training as some of the best winemakers have trained there (a bit like the Army and chefs). Whitehaven is a small winery in Blenheim and is making very good white wines in particular.

Christmas is almost upon us again. I don't know about you, but everyone's complaining that this year has gone so fast, and I agree whole-heartedly.

This year has seen many new labels on the shelf. I have been most impressed with the new wines from Central Otago, for instance Carrick and the new single vineyard wines from Mt Difficulty. 2001 has turned out to be an excellent one for white wines, and although the reds won't be released until Easter (for some, and another 12 months for others), there is no reason to expect anything other than very good wines with full flavours. I hope the rain lets up soon, otherwise we may be looking at reduced crop levels for the 2002 vintage.

The other thing of note this year has been price increases for imported wines, in particular Australian Shiraz. In general, this is as a result of the rest of the world finding out about the good value warm full-bodied Aussie reds. As a result of increased prices for international wines, we have also seen a marked increase in wines from Europe that have not been seen before. Don't overlook wines because you don't recognise the label, because there really are some good bargains around, let alone the opportunity to expand your wine knowledge and palate. An excellent example would be the L.A. Cetto from Mexico.

Top 27 wines for Christmas

SPARKLING

DRY WHITES

Angoves Bear Crossing Chardonnay '00 \$11.65

If you get past the 'cute' koala bear on the label, you will find a great little wine at a great price. Excellent complexity and length of finish for the money

Collards Rothesay Chardonnay 2000 \$20.65

Collards flagship white wine is a powerful, generous wine with strong, ripe grapefruit and peach flavours with a hint of nutty oak. This is a substantial wine and will keep for 2–3 years, no problem

Collards Sauvignon Blanc 2000 \$11.65

There isn't a lot around in under \$15.00 let alone under \$13 for a top flight Sauvignon. Real passionfruit flavours with this wine.

Corbans Private Bin Chardonnay 1999 \$20.65

Trophy winner and 'Wine of The Show' at the recent Air New Zealand Show. This like many of its predecessors is a stunner much like the classic 1991 and 1994. Buy now and put in the cellar for a year or so. It won't disappoint.

Gibbston Valley Sauvignon Blanc 2001 \$20.65

This is very typical of a cool climate style Sauvignon Blanc. Lemon and lime flavours predominate with hints of tangy, herbaceous notes on the finish. Very invigorating and refreshing.

Giesen Riesling 2001 \$13.45

Gold medal winner and deservedly so. A wonderful combination of citrus and honey, with a hint of botrytis adding extra complexity. Gorgeous.

Peter Mertes Riesling Auslese 1999 \$14.35

Absolutely perfect to go with poached peaches. A delicate, yet robust wine. Great vintage in the Mosel area of Germany.

Selaks Drylands Riesling 2000 \$17.05

Lovely citrus blossom aromatics are a great introduction to this fabulous Riesling. A hint of honey adds to the long, long finish. Drink now, or cellar with confidence.

Selaks Drylands Sauvignon Blanc 2001 \$17.05

Another gold medal in marvellous form for summer drinking. Fresh, crisp and zesty. Magic stuff.

REDS

Basedows Barossa Shiraz 1998 \$17.95

One of my favourite reds in the \$20 range. An intense bouquet of sweet berry and spice complemented by vanilla oak. Supple sweet berry fruit dominate the palate combining soft fruit tannins and oak to give perfect balance and structure

Bovlet Cabernet Sauvignon 1999 \$17.05

One of the few South African wines in at the moment from Wellington in the Cape (really). Elegant, refined 100% Cabernet with fragrant fruit and soft tannins, good length and well-balanced oak.

Breakneck Creek Shiraz 1999 \$13.45

Great for the bbq cos it'll go with anything at any time. One of those wines that even if your guests aren't into reds, they'll still like this one.

Castano Domino Espinal Selection 1998 \$13.45

A standout Spaniard that we have run much of the year. Predominantly Monastrell (mouvedre) giving a spicy, savoury gamy red wine.

LA Cetto Petite Syrah 1999 \$22.45

A favourite of ours over the last couple of years, and one for the jaded palate. Inky coloured, powerful and meaty; this is a 'no holds barred' wine.

Moculta Shiraz 2000 \$16.15

A perpetual Munslow's favourite. Big, ripe and cuddly (just like Peter), generously flavoured. Classic Barossa Shiraz.

Mt. Edward Pinot Noir 2000 \$35.05

One of the best from Central Otago. Made by Alan Brady the 'godfather' of Central Otago (only joking Alan!). Rich, plum and cherry flavours. It has gold written all over it.

Temple Bruer Shiraz Malbec 1998 \$17.95

Rich, complex flavours from this wonderful South Australian wine. Definitely one to share on Christmas Day with turkey, or in our case duck.

The Stump Jump Shiraz Grenache 1999 \$13.45

This wine is about as subtle as a brick. Huge fruit well balanced by silky oak. Best kept for the rave at New Years Eve.

Vieux Clocher Cotes du Rhone 1999 \$17.05

A worthy follow up to the '98 we stocked earlier in the year. Lovely grenache and syrah fruit with a classic hint of French barnyard. Very definitely European.

OTHERS

Bombay Sapphire Gin 1 Litre \$41.95

Just add Schweppes tonic and a twist of lemon on top of the ice and gin. A perfect way to end a lovely hot summers day especially if you're not into beer.

Chambers Muscat/Tokay \$25.15

Only thing to match Christmas pudding and Mark Scorgie's Gourmet Ice Cream Christmas Pudding

ice-cream! Parker Jr scored these at 96/1000 and writes "these are some of the world's greatest wines". Life is too short not to drink these over Christmas

Christmas Special on Veuve Clicquot: buy 12 and get a free bottle free. Le Grand Dame (the most special of Champagnes) is \$233.95 and if you buy 5 bottles get one free. This believe it or not IS a fantastic price. See Peter or Mark.

Wines of the Month

Mark's choice:

Ata Rangi Pinot Noir 2000 \$58.95

Benchmark Pinot Noir, and a personal favourite of mine for many years. The '99 vintage of this wine cleaned up recently at the International Wine Challenge in London, and got the nod as the No 1 in the competition. The 2000 is still rather young but already shows the same smoky bacon notes on the nose which is a Martinborough signature. More savoury and gamey than Central Otago versions, this wine has many splendid years ahead of it.

Peter's choice:

Antinori Peppoli 1998 \$35.95

Last year when we were in Italy, I purchased several bottles of this wine to consume with our pasta in the evenings. Wow this is a simply gorgeous wine, full of fruit, olives and Italy! Stunning wine one of the best in the shop and totally reliable. Why not try something different.

Favorite Recipe

Here is Laurie's famous Christmas cake recipe. It will impress, and it is well worth getting good quality liqueur like Grand Marnier for the fruit to marinate in. If time is short, marinate the fruit for about a week (but not less).

Grand Marnier Fruit Cake

Ingredients:

500g sultanas
250g mixed peel
125g raisins
125g prunes
125g apricots
125g dates
125g glaze pineapple
60g blanched slivered almonds
60g walnut pieces
grated rind/zest of 1 orange
1 cup grand marnier
1 cup castor sugar

1 cup orange juice
250 g butter
5 eggs
1 cup brown sugar firmly packed
2 cups plain flour

Method:

Put fruit/nuts in an airtight container. Sprinkle castor sugar evenly into a heavy-based pan, on a medium heat, cook until completely melted and golden brown. Remove from heat, add orange juice and return to heat, stir constantly until toffee is dissolved. Do not boil mixture as this will evaporate too much of the liquid. Add grand marnier. Cool. Add to the fruit. Every 12 hours or so turn the fruit mixture so all the fruit has the chance of absorbing the fluid. Do this for about 10 days or so depending on how much time you have. Add more brandy or whatever takes your fancy if you think the fruit has absorbed all the mixture. After the requisite time for soaking the fruit. Beat butter until soft. Add brown sugar, beat until combined. Add eggs one at a time beat only until combined before adding the next egg. Pour fruit mixture in a large bowl, add creamed mixture, mix well. Add sifted flour mix well. Prepare a deep 20cm tin by lining sides and base with three thickness of greaseproof paper. Spread evenly into tin, bake in a slow oven for about 3 – 3 1/2 hours. Cool. Brush top with about 2 tbs of extra grand marnier. Cover with tin foil until you are ready to ice or eat. I like the Edmonds Brandy Butter Icing with this cake. If kept in a dark airtight container it will last for about a year.

Christmas Hours

Sundays 16th and 23rd 11 am – 4 pm

December 25 and 26th closed

December 27th – 29th 10am – 8 pm

December 30th (Sunday) closed

December 31st (Monday) 10am – 9 pm (or thereabouts)

January 1st and 2nd closed

January 3rd onwards normal trading hours

Wherever you are on holiday, and if you unfortunately run out of wine supplies (perhaps you get word that you are to be inundated with hordes) give us a call and we will deliver boxes (6 or 12 bottles) to you. Please give us a couple of days notice as couriers may need extra time to find these hidden hideouts of yours. Of course that depends on car access!! Phone us at the shop or at home after hours if you have any queries. 03 467 9233.

Have a fantastic Christmas and a safe New Year. Cheers, Peter, Mark, Alister and the crew at Munslow's