

Following its successful exploration of Queensland wines in February, the Sunshine Coast Wine Guild turned its attention southward, to the Hunter Valley, for its April gathering.

Thirteen members and guests turned out to sample a broad range of offerings representing the styles of the region.

Jancis Robinson describes Hunter Valley Semillon as “*Australia’s unique gift to the wine world*”. Wine Spectator’s Matt Kramer agrees, writing “*Hunter Valley Semillon is Australia’s greatest white wine*”.

Members had three Semillons to try. Highlights included from a dark corner of a private cellar, a 1999 Tyrrell’s HVD Reserve Semillon. And from a popular bottle shop, a 2007 Tyrrell’s Stevens Vineyard Semillon. Both were glorious examples of the variety, with the HVD still having plenty of bottle time ahead of it, and the Stevens still readily available and attractively priced, and showing great cellaring potential.

Also well regarded from the Hunter is the Shiraz – represented on this occasion by a McWilliam’s Mt Pleasant OP&OH Shiraz 2006, and a Tyrrell’s Shiraz 2006 - a Wine of the Year finalist. Both delicious.

Talking of Wine of the Year finalists, a 1991 Lake’s Folly Cabernet Sauvignon also attracted appreciative comments, and second tastes all round. The wine blog Adegga writes of it:

*“...elegant palate with ripe mellowing fruit, lovely oak, integrated still closely-knit tannins, excellent acidity and very good length ..... one of the stars of the Hunter.”*

No wonder it attracted such enthusiastic interest.

The evening’s offerings covered the breadth of Hunter Valley wines. The full list, in no particular order, was:

- Tyrrell’s Stevens Vineyard Semillon 2007. Alcohol 12.2%
- Tyrrell’s HVD Reserve Semillon 1999. Alcohol 10.5%
- Tamburlaine Semillon 2008. Alcohol 10.5%
- Tyrrell’s Old Winery Chardonnay 2010. Alcohol 12.3%
- David Hook Barbera 2007. Alcohol 13.2%
- McWilliam’s Mt Pleasant OP&OH Shiraz 2006. Alcohol 14.5%
- Lake’s Folly Cabernet Sauvignon 1991. Finalist in Wine Of The Year
- Tyrrell’s Shiraz 2006. Alcohol 12.9% Finalist in Wine Of The Year
- Wyndham Estate Bin 444 Cabernet Sauvignon 2004. Alcohol 14.5%

Clearly something there for everyone!

The mystery wine hailed from the Hunter, but was neither Semillon nor Shiraz. When the questions stopped, John Gribble was the winner. The wine in the brown paper bag was a Meerea Park Verdelho 2010.

Our thanks to Paul Speedy and Douwe Hoeksma for a great job of organisation, and as always to the Body Corporate of Melrose on Fifth for making their ground floor function room available to the Guild.