

Grapevine

JANUARY / FEBRUARY 2007

From the President

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Welcome back to all Guild members to the commencement of Guild events for 2007. I trust all members have enjoyed the festive season which now seems to be just a distant memory and that we are all looking forward to the prosperity of the New Year promised in all those Christmas greetings we have no doubt all received.

All Guild members should note carefully the details of Club nights listed on the back page of this Grapevine – a delightful collection of challenges to the taste buds during 2007. It is always heartening to note the speed with which the themes and commitments by hosts are completed in the last two meetings we have each year. Our first Club night – February – will be ably hosted by Wendy Harris, Bruce Humphery-Smith and John Gribble and the theme is Spanish wine or Spanish varieties. This first night of the year will be Friday 2 February – all members should note that we are going to commence these nights at 6.00pm not 5.30pm. This change is intended to make it easier for those who are rushing from work to attend.

The Tasting & Events Committee, together with Paula and Andrew Corrigan of E-

Wine fame, have already had their heads together planning our Masterclass programme for the year. Together with events proposed by Tasting & Events for the coming months, we are looking at a very interesting and tantalising schedule of events. Details for these events will be also found on the back page of this Grapevine. Our first function in February – Thursday 22 February – is a food and wine event at the interesting new restaurant Era in South Brisbane.

Grapevine Editor Peter Schofield keeps repeating his requests for contributions from Guild members. Any members who would like to record for posterity their festive season wine and food experiences should contact Peter by email... or indeed any experiences during the year. He would be delighted to hear from you.

Ian McLeod

President - Wine Guild



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Stop Press: For interesting topics and comments on Sparkling take some time to read the contribution sent to us by Andrew Corrigan and included on Page 4, 5 and 7. Great reading and many thanks to Andrew for the contribution to our newsletter.

Chasselas (*Chasselas Blanc, Chasselas Doré, Chasselas Croquant, Fendant, Valais, Gutedel, and more ...*)

Chasselas is most associated with Switzerland, where it is by far that country's most planted variety. Origins date back to ancient Egypt. A modest acreage is grown in North America.

In Switzerland, it has several other regional names, including Fendant, in the Vaud and Valais districts. Here it is usually vinified into technically clean, dry and mildly fruity white wines. In France, this variety is more often identified as a table grape. Although it is responsible for wine production of the lightly regarded 'Pouilly Sur Loire' appellation. It also maintains a small acreage under vine in France's northern region of Alsace.



Chasselas was common in Western Victoria, but in the face of falling sales it has been removed from most vineyards.

Early Notice– Club Nights

Dates for club nights in 2007 will be changed just a bit. These are the first changes we have made to the club night format in more than 20 years - we are very flexible.

April: The normal date in April would be Good Friday so we moved the April club night to 13 April.

June: The June club night was changed to 8 June because it clashed with something else (I've forgotten what!)

These dates have been confirmed with Black Pearl.

Quite a few regulars asked us to change the start time to give them a bit more time to get to Black Pearl. **We will try a starting time of 6pm (at least for the first few in 2007) to see how it goes.**

If this causes any problems please let me know.

Ken Lilley

Club Night 4 November 2006 – Any Pinot

Members attending the November Pinot night were a happy bunch indeed, with great wine and wonderful food the order of the night. Wendy Harris and John Gribble hosted the evening which was enjoyed by all.

Wines tasted during the evening included:

Wine	Year	Rating
Tamar Ridge Pinot Noir		3.2
Yarra Burn Pinot Chardonnay Sparkling		3.7
Gloire Du Rhone Pinot Noir		3.2
Te Kairanga Pinot Noir		3.8
Jacobs Creek Res. Sp. Chardonnay Pinot Noir	2004	2.9
Dalfarras Viognier /Pinot Gris	2005	3.6
Logan Weemala Pinot Gris	2006	3.1
Delle Venezi Pinot Gris	2005	3.3
Lark Hill Pinot Noir	2002	4
Ghost Rock Pinot Noir	2004	3
Yalumba D Pint Noir Chardonnay	2000	4
Innocent Bystander Pinot Gris		
Brown Brothers Pinot Gris	2001	2.6
Wignalls	2004	3.8
Diamond Valley Pinot	2004	3.5
Best Pinot Munier		2.7
Domaine A Pinot Noir	1999	3.4
Stonier Pinot Noir	2004	3.2
Brown Brothers Pinot Gris	2006	3.4
Yalumba Pinot Gris	2006	2.8
Vavasour Pinot Gris	2005	3.7
Logan Weemala Pinot	2005	2.8
Yarra Burn Pinot Noir	1999	3.5
New Zealand Kaitura Pinot Gris	2005	3

And the Mystery Wine was.....

Questions

- * Northern hemisphere or Southern ?
- * Victorian ,Tasmanian or NZ ?
- * Yarra Valley ,Mornington Geelong ?

At this point Bob Henricks was the sole survivor.

- * Vintage 2002, 2003, 2004 ?

Bob's answer 2003

- * Mystery wine 2004 Kooyong Pinot Noir
- Great effort by Bob, and the wine was enjoyed by all.



Happy Members–
November club meeting



Club Night 2 December 2006 – Xmas Bubbles and Stickies (Michael and Madonna Flynn)

Christmas spirit and bubbles flowed freely at the ultimate club night for the guild . All members attending enjoyed the fine sparkling, stickies and food accompaniments. Wines included the following:

Wine	Year	Rating
Hollick Sparkling Merlot	2004	4
Seppelt Salinger	2002	4
Seppelt Original Sparkling Shiraz		4
Golden Grape Red Diamond		3
Leasingham Sparkling Shiraz		4
Greg Cooley Muscat		4
Moss Brothers Beana Vista Gold		2.8
Yarra Burn Sparkling		3.5
Chandon NV		2.8
Morris Sparkling Shiraz Durif		4
Peter Lehman Botrytis Semillon	2005	3.6
Mt Pleasant Bin 96 late Harvest		3.8
Stanton + Killeen Vintage Port	1997	4
Anderson Sparkling Shiraz	1999	3.8
Chandon Vintage Brut	2000	3.5
Meeting Place Pinot Chardonnay	2004	4
Tempus Two Botrytis Semillion		4.3
Taltarni Brut	2003	3.8
Grandin Brut NV		
Fleur de Le Vintage	2002	3.4
Seppelt Fleur de Le NV		3

It was great to see a 1997 Stanton & Killeen Vintage Port turn up at the December club night (refer table). The Rutherglen winemaker has been responsible for some great ports over the years and although 2 December is not a night in Queensland where you pull on winter woollies and snuggle in front of a fire, the durable Guild mark of 4 suggests that a few members were very keen on the drop.

Extract from Wine star:
 The 1999 Stanton & Killeen Vintage Port is but the latest in a string of wines that have far more in common with their Portuguese namesakes than any other Australian port. It is a blend of Durif, Touriga, Tinta Cao, Tinta Barocca, Shiraz and Cabernet Sauvignon welded in a seamless flow through to a long, virtually dry finish and aftertaste. 94 out of 100—Halliday

Rose Tasting at The Spanish Tapas Bar, Fortitude Valley, Sunday 19 November.

What better way to ease into summer styles of wine and food than a lazy Sunday afternoon at a Tapas bar with fine Rose? The wine for the function was organised Lyn Foran as distributor of Haviland Wines.

The food was a selection of fine Spanish Tapas: tortilla, salad, seafood and a particular favourite, chicken pieces in a full flavoured tomato sauce.

For more interesting topics and comments on Sparkling take some time to read the contribution sent to us by Andrew Corrigan and included on Page 4, 5 and 7. Great reading and many thanks to Andrew for the contribution to our newsletter.

The nature of Tapas is that dishes keep coming but there are no actual courses to match wines with. Instead the luncheon attendees were able to work their way, at their own pace, through:

- Rutherglen Rose 2005, Rutherglen
- Tavel Rose (Granache/Cinsault/Syrah/Carignan), Domaine Jean-Pierre Lafond, France
- Willow Bridge Rose 2006, Geographe, WA
- Miceli Rose (Pinot Noir) 2004, Mornington Peninsula VIC
- Shottesbrooke Merlette Rose 2004, McLaren Vale SA
- The Millton Vineyards Rose Merlot 2006, Gisborne NZ
- Pinocchio Rosato, Mornington Peninsula VIC
- Mount Majura Vineyard Rose 2006, Canberra District ACT
- Chateau Villerambert-Julian Rose (Syrah/Grenache/Carignan/Mourvedre) 2005, Minervois, France
- Bruno Paillard MV Brut Premier Rose NV, Champagne, France



All were replete and quite merry by the end of the afternoon. Often the week time is too busy for some to get to Masterclasses and Club Night so it is good to see long standing members make it to these leisurely Sunday lunches.



Sparkling story

The Wine Guild enjoyed the annual Master Class on Sparkling Wine and Champagne on 26 October 2006 conducted by Andrew Corrigan MW.

What a night!

The questions posed were:-

Is Champagne superior? What is special about it anyway?

Is it worth paying the big price for the prestige wines such as Dom Perignon?

Are Aussie sparkling wines competing?

“When people ask me what bliss is, I simply tell them this is!” The music hall song, set to a tune from The Merry Widow, celebrates Champagne and featured on English wine expert Hugh Johnson’s excellent TV and video called “Vintage”. Yes, great Champagne is absolute bliss! As a drink it is light and quite dry. Yet it has complexity of flavour and richness without being sweet. It has a great quality attribute called persistence – the ability to linger on your taste buds for some time after you have swallowed it.

Champagne is a region in France – a famous one known for the world’s best sparkling wines. There are other good sparkling wines around the world. Some follow the techniques and use the grape varieties of Champagne. Some such as Asti Spumante from north west Italy, and Cava from northern Spain are unique with their own grape varieties and production techniques. In Australia and NZ there are some wonderful sparkling wines where winemakers are generally following the techniques of Champagne. In past years you could say on the label of an Australian wine “Methode Champenoise” and other claims but laws have stopped that practice.

All good sparkling wine obtains its fizz naturally – from the fermentation process. Fermentation is where yeasts eat up sugar and create alcohol. Carbon dioxide gas is given off as a by-product. A normal table wine vat may be open and the escaping gas can be seen bubbling on the surface. However if the fermentation is done in a closed container, then the gas cannot escape and it dissolves in the wine, thus creating the fizz. Sparkling wine actually starts off as a still “base wine” – a non-fizzy wine. It is made from a first fermentation much the same as normal table wine. Champagne itself is a very cold region – in fact the coldest in the world for wine making. The grapes have high natural acidity as a result and the corresponding fresh taste gives the wine a distinctive style. Some producers judge their wines to be too acidic and they treat the base wines to a process called malo-lactic fermentation – where the harsh malic acid is converted to soft lactic acid and the wine tastes richer and creamier. Pol Roger is an example. In Champagne in good years there is great balance between high ripeness while maintaining high acidity. The wine making processes of sparkling wine, particularly Champagne, tend to build up lots of taste complexity and the high natural acidity gives a balancing freshness to the taste. In a masked tasting it is difficult to tell apart the top Aussie wines from Champagne – however I find that the acid taste test reveals inherently higher acid on Champagne. This balance is a key element to quality and where the cold climate of Champagne gives an edge over other regions. However, whilst top Aussie and NZ sparklers are becoming better and better, better Champagnes are unchallenged.

Champagne itself is a very cold region – in fact the coldest in the world for wine making.

Various base wines are blended in order to give complexity of flavour, such blending being a hallmark of great quality. Some has malo-lactic character, some has been aged in oak. Batches of wine are from various sub regions and from three varieties - Chardonnay, Pinot Noir and Pinot Meunier. The latter two are black skinned grapes but with care, a pale coloured juice is obtained though this juice still has some of the richness of flavour from dark grapes. The cold weather of Champagne meant that in many years, the crop was unable to ripen properly required the use of “reserve” wine - batches of wine from previous warmer vintages that have been kept back for future years. Hence most Champagne is made from multiple vintages and is called “Non Vintage”. A similar procedure is followed in Australia although the labelling laws allow a blend inclusion of up to 15% from other years and the wine can still be labelled as a certain vintage.

.....most Champagne is made from multiple vintages and is called “Non Vintage”.

Champagne laws require a minimum of two years of such ageing. Many producers take longer.

A key aspect of quality sparkling wine is its maturing. Once the blending has been carried out, the wine is bottled with a little sugar and yeast and a second fermentation occurs inside the bottle. The gas produced then cannot escape and it makes the wine fizzy. The yeasts run out of sugar and die off. They create a sediment at the bottom of the bottle called lees. If the sparkling wine is then aged for a long period with the lees present, the wine takes on richness and complexity. Champagne laws require a minimum of two years of such ageing. Many producers take longer. In Australia premium wines may have 2 – 4 years of ageing on lees. Eventually the bottles are tipped up and shaken so that the lees rests against the cork – a process called riddling. The neck of the bottle is then dunked into a freezing liquid causing the wine in the neck of the bottle to freeze. If the seal is then removed, the internal pressure causes the frozen plug of wine to fly out, taking with it the trapped sediment, leaving a clear fizzy wine behind. The bottle can then be topped up, using more of the same wine though with a little flavour additive, called liqueur, incorporated, and then be finally sealed using a wire clip to hold the cork in place.

Sparkling story (continued)

High natural acidity in the base wines serves to balance the complex flavours that this wine making process creates. The higher the acid the more complex can be the wine. This is why Champagne (being so cold and having such high acidity) is unique!

In Australia the best sparkling wines tend to be blended from several regions. To be in balance, a rich complex sparkling wine needs high acidity in order to give freshness. Lesser sparkling wines tend to have the high acid but without the flavour complexity and hence they can taste thin and sharp. In Champagne, high acid is retained yet grapes can achieve high ripeness and flavour. In Australia the quest by quality sparkling producers is to use grapes from as cool as possible regions. The best wines include Bay of Fires from Tasmanian grapes, Hanging Rock Macedon from cold climates in the Macedon area to the north west of Melbourne (renowned for having a substantial reserve wine component), Hardys Arras, with a big component of Tasmanian wine, and Domaine Chandon is based in the Yarra Valley of Victoria but obtains grapes from Tasmania, Tumbarumba near the NSW ski fields, and the southern tip of WA. Hardys "Sir James" Vintage are excellent value. Yarra Burn is a Yarra Valley product, also made by Hardys, that is a fresher steelier style and hence known as an aperitif wine. Brown Brothers "Patricia" is excellent.

Our tasting on 26 October

Introduction

A1 Raymond Boulard Reserve Brut (grower's Champagne)

A2 Arras 2000 Chardonnay Pinot Noir

A3 Pol Roger Brut NV

A4 Dom Perignon 1998

B : The grapes, the regions

B1 Chandon Yarra Valley Brut 2002

B2 Dominique Portet Tasmania Cuvee 2002

B3 Brown Brothers Patricia Extended Lees, King Valley

B4 Jansz Premium 2002 Rose (Single Block 100% Pinot Noir barrel fermented)

C : The styles

C1 Hanging Rock Late Disgorged Cuvee VI

C2 Bollinger Special Cuvee Brut NV

C3 Arras 1998 LD Chardonnay Pinot Noir

C4 Chandon LD Rose 1998

D: House Styles

D1 Nicolas Feuillatte Reserve Particuliere Brut

D2 Jansz 1997 Late Disgorged (under cork for about 12 months)

D3 Hanging Rock Cuvee XI

D4 Jansz 1996 magnum (especially disgorged last week for this tasting)

Sequel

Chandon Extra Riche

All wines were served masked.

The growers Champagne was excellent. The Dom was wonderful and scored many votes without its identity being revealed. The Aussie Chandon wines were delicate and sophisticated. Arras was complex and full bodied. The Jansz wines were soft and complex. Hanging Rock Cuvee VI was a bit tired but Cuvee XI was a highlight standout.

Courtesy of Ewineconsult - wine business consultant, wine writer - Winestate, contributor to Brisbane Courier Mail, Cairns Post, presenter of "TableTalk" ABC radio
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Screw cap vs cork : Wine Experts prove that screw caps are better for wine than corks

PRESS RELEASE FROM WINE INTERNATIONAL / CORKWATCH.COM / MICHEL LAROCHE

At this year's International Wine Challenge, the world's biggest competition, the panel of expert tasters found that nearly one in 20 - 4.9% - of the 11,033 corks pulled from bottles had spoiled or flattened the flavour of the wine they were supposed to protect.

Following this discovery, Wine International magazine, the organisers of the competition, held the world's first comparative tasting of wines sealed with natural corks, synthetic corks, screwcaps and even crown-caps similar to the one used for beer. The result was astonishing. Screwcaps were preferred in 21 out of 40 cases; corks only won once.

The Tasting

Nearly 50 wines from throughout the world were assembled in Bordeaux and set before 45 tasters, including leading authorities and winemakers, Michel Laroche of Chablis, Peter Gago of Penfolds, Jean-Marie Chadronnier of Dourthe in Bordeaux and Michel Rolland, the world's most famous wine consultant. The tasters were given examples of the same wines from different kinds of closure "blind" and asked to say which, if any, they preferred. In a few cases where no cork-sealed bottle was available, they were given asked for their opinion of single examples of wine with alternative closures

Corks Fail

Out of 40 wines where comparison was possible, cork only came out on top once – with a preference of 57% for the Esk Valley 2002 Sauvignon Blanc from New Zealand. Of the others, the tasters preferred the screwcap in 21 cases, and, in one case – the Kuehn Riesling from Germany - the crown-cap. Otherwise, no significant difference was found.

Wines age better with Screwcaps

Revealingly, some of the strongest preferences were for older wines with screwcaps. The experimental screwcap Henschke Keyneton 1995 and Penfolds Bin 389 1996 from Australia scored 70% and 77% respectively. (The screwcap 1995 Penfolds Bin 2 actually scored 100%, but that was because the natural-cork stopped bottle was one of the two obviously cork-tainted wines in the tasting). There was also high praise for the freshness of the screwcap 1980 Yalumba Riesling from Australia, 1983 Kanonkop Paul Sauer red from South Africa, 1992 Provins Swiss wines and a pair of 1996 synthetic cork St Francis Cabernets from California. Sadly no cork-stoppered examples of these wines were available for tasting, but Robert Hill Smith, Chief Executive of Yalumba was confident that the screwcap had kept his wine in far better condition than a cork would have done.

No need to breathe

As Robert Joseph points out in his report in the October issue of Wine International, the explanation for the success of the alternative

success of the alternative closures lies both in the fact that, unlike natural cork, they in no way flavour the wine and that they far more efficiently protect it from the air. The widely-held belief that wines need to "breathe" through the cork was, in fact dismissed by the leading Bordeaux authority Professor Pascal Ribereau-Gayon in 2000 when he wrote in the Handbook of Enology that "reactions that take place in bottled wine do not require oxygen". Proof of this is found in bottles of old port whose corks are dipped in sealing wax that presumably prevents the wine from breathing, and in the bottles that are occasionally rescued from the ocean floor.

Synthetic closures are currently used in 7-9% of bottles, a number that is growing due to the exasperation by producers and retailers with the unreliability of the corks they are able to buy. The pioneers of the recent use of screwcaps have been the winemakers of the New World. Among the Australian adopters are such well-known names as Yalumba, Penfolds, Jacobs Creek, Grosset and Henschke, as well as the vast majority of producers in the Clare Valley. In New Zealand a "screwcap initiative" was led by the world-famous Kumeu River and has been followed by a growing number of wineries including Jackson Estate, Felton Road and Cloudy Bay. In South Africa, Vergelegen – thought by many to be the best producer in the Cape – has introduced screwcaps, while Bonny Doon and Plumpjack whose wines sell for over £60 per bottle are the first of a number of Californian cult wineries to do so.

Europe – apart from Switzerland which has used screwcaps widely for decades – has been slower to introduce screwcaps, and even to experiment on alternatives. This is changing rapidly however. The Wine International tasting included screwcap Chablis and southern French Merlot from Laroche; Bordeaux from Dourthe and Chateau le Raz; Alsace from Paul Blanck; Vina Esmeralda from Torres in Spain and crown-cap Rieslings from Kuehn in Germany. Given the prestige of these producers and the success of their wines in this tasting, others are bound to follow their lead. They will be encouraged to do so by the biggest wine retailer in the UK, Tesco, which has had almost no customer-resistance to the introduction of large numbers of screwcap wines to its shelves. The chain is now selling up to a million bottles of high quality screwcap wine per week.

Environmental Issues

The popularity of alternative closures raises environmental issues, but as Robert Joseph points out, scare stories about the imminent disappearance of Portugal's cork forests may have more to do with the 6.5m Euro being spent by the cork manufacturers on PR and advertising than with reality. There is little publicity being given to the fact that the cork forests are expanding by 4% - and that numbers of animals like the Iberian lynx that are supposedly threatened by the recent success of the alternatives have in fact been declining for a century.

Champagne Controversy

Just before Christmas 2002, the news was widely reported that “Which” Magazine in the UK, a consumer test guide similar to “Choice” in Australia, had conducted a judging of Champagne and that famous brands Bollinger and Moët et Chandon had performed badly. So what is the story on these expensive sparkling wines? As usual in Australia in the run up to Christmas, there were plenty of articles in food and wine sections by writers reviewing the range of sparkling wines and Champagnes, all praising the tastes and nobody sounding any sounds of caution.

In my own tastings of Champagne (that are unfortunately too rare!) I have always been impressed with Bollinger. It has a particular creamy richness and a complex aroma of citrus peel and sherry although can show volatile acidity fault in low amounts as well. So I explored the comments on Champagne by an English wine expert and Master of Wine Jancis Robinson – see her web site www.jancisrobinson.com. She writes “When researching my annual Christmas wine features for the Financial Times, I was struck by how stable prices of most wines at the bottom and in the middle price brackets have been over the past few years. Even Champagne prices have remained pretty steady overall but choosing the right one is a minefield. Firstly, champagne is used as a major commodity for price promotions by many retailers, certainly all the major British ones, with prices changing quite dramatically from one week to the next. Secondly, different champagnes have vastly different images - not always concordant with the inherent quality of the wine. Thirdly, the best price available varies enormously according to how many bottles you buy at a time. All in the course of research I have recently tasted a great deal of champagne and have been poring over current special offers in Britain.” Jancis offers the following guide to buying wisely.

Guiding Rules

Rule 1. Quite a number of champagnes have much higher prices and smarter profiles than the quality of the wine would suggest.” Jancis goes on to state that Bollinger and Veuve Clicquot are disappointing for their high price. “Bollinger in particular has a distinctly superior image, yet in my experience bottles of the regular non vintage blend need to be aged a further year or two after plucking them from a shelf before the wine is really pleasing.” This last comment is perhaps the key to why I find the wines looking great here in Australia – the bottles have aged for almost a year due to their shipping.

Rule 2. Some brand owners work extremely hard to keep the price of their champagne unrealistically high. Moët & Chandon, for example, is the biggest-selling champagne of all and its owners LVMH wield considerable muscle. This means that although Moët is far from the most exciting champagne on the shelf, it is usually impossible to find it on that shelf for a discounted price. The distributor of the excellent champagnes of Billecart-Salmon has spent quite a bit of effort this autumn ensuring that no retailer discounts Billecart too dramatically. At least two to my knowledge have been prevailed upon to increase rather than reduce their prices. This is the luxury goods business after all - albeit at the cheaper end of it.

Rule 3. Cheap champagne varies just as much in quality as more expensive bubbles. Jancis lists inexpensive Champagnes such as Tesco’s own label, “the respectably sturdy Besserat de Bellefont”, the “light and frothy Oudinot”, and the “serviceable Canard Duchêne”. These are rare in Australia but if traveling to the UK, they are available in supermarkets.

Rule 4. De luxe champagne is overpriced as a matter of policy but you can find deals here too. Jancis lists Taittinger’s absolutely delicious Comtes de Champagne Blanc de Blancs 1995, the intriguingly nutty Dom Pérignon 1995 and the connoisseur’s champagne Krug Grande Cuvée.

Rule 5. Best value in champagne is in superior non vintage blends and vintage, but not de luxe, wines on special offer. For Jancis the most reliable non vintage blends are Charles Heidsieck Mis en Cave 1997 a wine, based on the excellent 1996 vintage, showed extremely well when tasted blind alongside many much more expensive champagnes, Laurent Perrier, Louis Roederer, Pol Roger, Vilmart

Rule 6. Champagne vintages vary enormously. This is because Champagne is so far from the equator. The grapes grown there are particularly suitable for fizzy wine because they are naturally high in acidity but in some years, 2001 for example, the grapes just do not ripen sufficiently at all and/or suffer terribly from rot and mildew. The 1996 vintage, just appearing on our shelves, was superlative but will need time to show its best. H Blin 1996 is a particularly good buy. There are some attractive 1995 wines already showing well. The magnificent 1990s (of which Pol Roger’s Cuvée Sir Winston Churchill is magisterial) need quite a bit more time than the 1989s at this exalted level of quality. In recent tastings of de luxe champagnes, the 1979 vintage has shown itself to be a very fine vintage that has lasted well and can provide particularly elegant drinking now. The once rather austere 1988s are starting to open out..

Jancis goes on to discuss other sparkling non-Champagne wines. Top English producers are Nyetimber and Ridgeview of Sussex where the subsoil is remarkably like the Champagne region’s. The finest Italian cuvées are Ca del Bosco’s Annamaria Clementi, Uberti’s Comari del Salem and Bellavista’s Gran Cuvée made in Franciacorta in Lombardy. Australia and NZ don’t get a mention but would be in any discussion of great sparkling wines around the world.

Since 2002 when this article appeared, another new development has appeared – the grower or “domaine” Champagne. This is where a grower arranges for the House to return a small portion of the grapes in the form of a finished wine. They are much less expensive than House wines; they are often a vintage wine; they are not especially complex or delicate because the blending bases are few; but they are full and forward in flavour. In Australia, Ross duke is the main importer (see www.frenchwinecentre.com).

CLUB NIGHT PROGRAM – 2007

VENUE: BLACK PEARL EPICURE, 36 BAXTER STREET, FORTITUDE VALLEY
(UPSTAIRS AT SIDE ENTRANCE DOOR AT THE END OF THE DRIVEWAY 6:00PM)

Date	Theme	Hosts
2-Feb	Spanish wines or varieties	Wendy Harris, Bruce Humphery-Smith & John Gribble
2-Mar	French Wines	Peter Ryan
13-Apr	Big Reds 14%+++	John Gribble & Bruce Humphery-Smith
4-May	Wine without oak	Rod Wellings & Sue Henderson
8-Jun	Italian wines or varieties	Jenny Chadwick, Mike Hope, Stephen Norris & John Tuttle
6-Jul	Christmas in July	John Tuttle, Jennifer Chadwick & Lyn Foran
3-Aug	Barossa Wines	John Nenke & Ken Lilley
7-Sep	New Releases AGM	Committee
5-Oct	Riesling, Gewurztraminer, Sauvignon Blanc, Semillon	T&E Nominees
2-Nov	NZ Wines	Wendy Harris & Elaine Harrington
7-Dec	Xmas Bubbles, Stickies, Fortifieds	Michael & Madonna Flynn

ENTRY EACH PERSON PER NIGHT:

EXCEPT WHERE SHOWN OTHERWISE, ENTRY IS \$5.00 EACH PLUS A BOTTLE OF THE THEME EACH. (VISITORS ARE \$10.00 EACH PLUS A BOTTLE EACH)

Note to Grapevine Readers

Closing date for you to send in your contribution to the **March/April** edition of the Grapevine is close-of-business **Ides of March**. Wine trivia, a short story about your last wine-related holiday or experience, by email! Remember, contributions from all members are welcome, whether you come to the Club nights or not!

WINE GUILD FUNCTIONS— 2007

Wine and Food at Era : Thursday 22 February
Chardonnay Masterclass : Thursday 15 March
All things Italian – Viale Carnove : Sunday 13 May
Rhone Varieties, White and Red : Thursday 14 June
Sirromet Winery lunch: Sunday 19 August
Sparkling Wine & Champagne : Thursday 11 October
Small Winemakers weekend Stanthorpe: October (tba)

Contact John Tuttle on 326259376 for enquiries.

MASTERCLASSES—2007

Guild

15th March -- Chardonnay, White Burgundy & Chablis
14th June -- Rhone Varieties, White and Red, Viognier, Marsanne, Grenache & Syrah
11th Oct -- Sparkling Wine & Champagne

Ewine

1st Feb -- Cabernet Sauvignon, Bordeaux Blends & Merlot
26th April -- Italian Wines and Varietals Red & White
16th Aug -- Pinot Noir & Burgundy

Contact Paula Tewksbury on 38702555 or 0412158425.

