

Old Wine Guild - Club Night Programme 2003

Black Pearl Epicure
36 Baxter Street, Fortitude Valley

(Upstairs at side entrance door at the end of the driveway)

5:30pm to 7:30pm

Date - Friday	Theme	Hosts
Feb 7th	Any wine - not Oz	Peter Ryan (& it was his ideal)
March 7th	New Releases	Wines: Di Stark, Ian McLeod & Tim Rose. Food: Ken Lilley & Janette Bigg
April 11th	Any wine variety or winery name starting with an "S"	Lindsay & Margie Thomas and Bob Henricks
May 9th	McLaren Vale	Bruce Humphrey-Smith & Jenny Chadwick
June 6th	Clare Valley - Rieslings & Reds	Bruce & Julia Gardner
July 4th	Spanish & Italian or Australian equivalent	Bruce Humphrey-Smith & Rod Wellings
August 1st	Big Red Night	Jeff Channer & Wendy Harris
September 5th	New Releases & Annual General Meeting	Committee
October 3rd	WA - Anything other than Margaret River	John Tuttle
November 7th	French Wines	Bruce & Julia Gardner
December 5th	Xmas Bubbles & Stickers	Wendy Harris & Jeff Channer

Old Wine Guild - Tastings and Events Programme

July-December 2003

Date	Venue	Event	Presenter
July 14 th	Tower Mill	Winemaker's Tasting - Be Bortoli Wines	Darren Be Bortoli
August	Black Pearl	Fortifieds Tasting	Peter Ryan
September 11 th <small>Note change of date.</small>	Tower Mill	Cabernet Sauvignon Masterclass	Andrew Corrigan
October 16 th	Tower Mill	Sparkling Wines and Champagne	Andrew Corrigan
November 20 th	Tower Mill	Pinot Noir Masterclass	Andrew Corrigan

Last but not least is The Guild's Christmas Party on 16th December

Entry to the Masterclasses is \$40 for members and \$60 for non-members.

Joke

Clancy went into a pub and ordered a beer. He drank half, then threw the rest over the barman. He apologized, explaining it was a compulsion he'd had for years that embarrassed him terribly. The barman warned Clancy not to come back until he'd seen a psychiatrist. A few months later, Clancy again entered the bar, ordered a drink, drank half and threw the rest over the barman.

"I told you not to come back until you'd seen a shrink!" the barman yelled.

I have been seeing one," replied Clancy indignantly.

"Well, it hasn't done any good," roared the barman.

"Yes it has," Clancy insisted, "I'm not embarrassed about it any more"

From the President

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June/July 2003

For numerous reasons, I think, the Shiraz Masterclass was a resounding success. It was interesting and entertaining to hear from Andrew Corrigan upon his return from Europe. He did in fact arrive back at 2am the morning of the tasting. About 60 people attended and whilst the logistics of pouring each bracket of wines became somewhat more onerous, the Tasting & Events Committee members did a great job.

No more Masterclasses until September so we look forward to seeing members at other events including the De Bortoli tasting in July and Fortified tasting in August. By the time this goes to print, we will have had our Great Southern Region Tasting in June and I have no doubt that it will have been enjoyed by all – at the time I write this the tasting is booked out. The

The Italian Evening

The 23 members and their guests who attended the Italian Evening on the 9th April at Black Pearl were treated to a most enjoyable evening. Peter Ryan organized the Tasting, ably assisted by Joanna Faber and Laura McAdam, and David Scott of Bouchon Wines gave the presentation.

Everything about the night was excellent: David's vast knowledge, his concern for his audience, attractive placemats, informative handouts, a very useful relief map of Italy, Peter's Italian dishes and even the way the furniture was arranged for maximum effect. I would like to share a few of the many points David made, which as a complete novice I found fascinating.

In his introduction, David confided that no one can truthfully claim to be an expert on Italian wines, maybe on a region or a grape variety, but never the whole picture. The topic is so vast. A few years ago there

De Bortoli tasting in July – Monday 14th July – will be in the Brisbane Show judging week. We are most fortunate to have the pleasure of Darren De Bortoli who is CEO and Chief Winemaker of De Bortoli Wines to present this tasting for Guild members.

In our May mailout Ross Muller, the convenor of the Tasting & Events Committee sought volunteers to join that Committee. We would still be pleased to enlist the aid of other members who could help with tastings and the preparation for tastings. There is always room for one more on this Committee.

Ian McLeod

were 1.3 million grape growers and 340,000 wineries. The scene is constantly changing. The range that is available is outstanding. One could try a new variety every day. This superabundance of choice is made even harder to navigate by the labeling. It goes something like this: Vintage, Variety, DOC, Producer in brackets, Region.

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Examples:

2001 Soave Classico Superiore DOC (Gini) Veneto

1999 Valtellina Superiore Sasella DOCG La Tense (Negeri) Lombardia

DOC and DOCG relate to a system introduced in the mid-1960's to impose some order to the labeling. DOC refers to Denominazione di Origine Controllata. These are approved zones, currently about 292. Wines bearing a specific DOC must satisfy criteria set for that zone, including geography, variety (ies), winemaking techniques, prescribed standards of colour, smell, taste etc. DOCG (Denominazione di Origine Controllata Garantita) should as well guarantee authenticity of wines of "particular esteem". They must meet standards of quality tested by panels of expert tasters, and are more expensive.

There are 21 of these zones. VDT (Vino Da Tavola) indicates table wines. However, the quality of some of these can be very good if made by individualists who will not conform to the DOC system. Could be confusing. But look at the court cases/strife encountered in zoning Coonawarra. What blew my mind was the cost of the land used for growing grapes in Italy. A tiny vineyard could be worth millions of dollars. Rarely is this land sold and is handed down from generation to generation.

After listening to David's presentation and tasting the wines he sourced, I came away with a healthy respect for Italian whites. The region that produces the best Italian Pinot Grigio is Friuli. Try one made by Collavini (\$23). Try Soave Classico Superiore DOC (Gini) Veneto for a new white sensation (\$35). Better still the 2001 La Frosca Soave by Gini (\$48).

A delight is the 1999 Lambrusco Grasparossa di Castelvetro DOC. The Medaglia (Cavicehioli) Emilia-Romagna (\$11.50). It is dry, fizzante and fragrant. I felt out of my depth when it came to serious reds. I need a few more presentations, for sure, and a new variety every night! The most expensive red wine we tasted was the 1998 Barolo DOCG La Morra (Alharc) Piedmont. It retails is \$165. David's tells that the Piedmontese defined Barolo as the "king of wine and wine of kings". All the reds were impressive.

A fascinating wine that followed the reds was a 2001 Passito di Pantelleria DOC Ben Rye (Domafugata) Sicily, made from sun-dried grapes (\$54). It had 14% alcohol with 11% of residual sugar. Sweet and rich. In contrast was another sweet wine with only 5 to 6 degrees of alcohol... Moscato d'Asi DOCG Scrapona (Marenco) Piedmont (\$24). David writes that the base wine is the same as for Asi Spumante, but the musts are usually only lightly filtered to retain greater aroma and flavour. This wine has a cult following and demand exceeds supply.

David called his handout "Exploring Italian Wines: a ten year revolution in quality". The wines we tasted certainly illustrated that. It reinforced the need to source the quality Italian wines now available. Often, the difference in price between mediocre and premium wines is not as large as one might expect. (The same can be said about Australian wines). If you should need advice about Italian wines, I'm sure David would be happy to help out.

The Tasting and Events Committee looks forward to inviting David next year to present a single Italian region and/or a French wines tasting. (He also has a considerable knowledge of the latter.)
Ross Muller

Visit to Queensland by New Caledonian Oenophile, Luic Doussal

Luic visited Brisbane and Stanthorpe for a brief Thursday night to Sunday afternoon visit 29 May - 1 June. Hard to imagine a person who doesn't drink water with wine and never eats breakfast. But wait, there's more. He swears to drinking only wine and get this; he cannot cope with coffee (too strong he believes). We did, during a very late night moment at Severn Brac, get him to sip a de-caf.

On Thursday night, Tony Stolar (Wine Judge and sort-of Guild member) and

Luic's friend Karl met Luic and we went to GPO for a quick couple of bottles (South Australian reds) and a couple of glasses of Chardonnay, oh, and a cheese platter. That was before a great dinner at Isis Restaurant and a few more great Oz bottles.

Friday was very peaceful except for lunch at the Norman and then before dinner at Cafe Deli 'Ugo, where 14 Guild members had a great night of fine food and quite a few great wines and some really superb wines. Many other photos are still circulating with President Ian. Someone said Ian took his shirt off? Not a regular Guild dinner!

After Luic tried his luck with the opposite sex at the Press Club late on Friday night we had an early trek to Severnlea and Luic was a great help to catering for a group lunch. He still wasn't drinking anything but wine even at 6:00am on Saturday morning.



The Gribbles, Jenny and Luic, with a glass of Yalumba Old Show Amontillado Sherry 35 Years of Age. A good start to the night at Deli 'Ugos!!

After a big day of working the Cellar Door, we had an excellent dinner with Karl and Christa, Luic, Tony Stolar and Jenny Chadwick. After a number of many fine Bordeaux wines from Luic and a few fine Ports, Luic commented that he still preferred French wines..... always!
Luic travels with Senez Champagne at all times. Saluté!
Bruce Humphrey-Smith



All of us a little later on Friday night. Is that Luic hiding behind a bottle?

Brass Monkey

How the saying came about

In the heyday of sailing ships, all war ships and many freighters carried iron cannons. Those cannons fired round iron cannon balls. It was necessary to keep a good supply near the cannon. But how to prevent them from rolling about the deck? The best storage method devised was a square based pyramid with one ball on top, resting on four resting on nine, which rested on sixteen. Thus, a supply of 30 cannon balls could be stacked in a small area right next to the cannon.

There was only one problem — how to prevent the bottom layer from sliding/rolling from under the others. The solution was a metal plate called a "Monkey" with 16 round indentations. But if this plate was made of iron, the iron balls would quickly rust to it.

The solution to the rusting problem was to make "Brass Monkeys." Few landlubbers realise that brass contracts much more and much faster than iron when chilled.

Consequently, when the temperature dropped too far, the brass indentations would shrink so much that the iron cannon balls would come right off the monkey. Thus, it was quite literally, "Cold enough to freeze the balls off a brass monkey!" And all this time, you thought that was an improper expression, didn't you?

Briar Ridge Vineyard

Briar Ridge is a boutique winery situated at Mount View, 300 feet above the valley floor — the "dress circle" of the Hunter Valley.

The vineyard is blessed with iron-red soil over a limestone base, which produces exceptional fruit.

Our philosophy is "less is more" and we keep the grape yields down to 2-3 tonnes an acre to intensify the fruit flavours. This produces superb, full bodied wines with distinctive Hunter character.

The Premium range is made in the contemporary style designed for our alfresco way of dining and includes examples of all varieties for which the Hunter is famous.

The cellar Reserve and Signature wines are made from selected varieties of ultra premium fruit. These wines being made in a traditional style are designed to age gracefully.

Briar Ridge is dedicated to the



Hunter Valley and will always produce superior quality wines that are "distinctively Hunter" in character.

A Soorley subject

PETER Beattie is never backward in promoting his state — or in sinking the slipper into his foes. So *Strenth* wonders whether the crack former Brisbane Lord mayor Jim Soorley made in his Sunday newspaper column about tony Queensland wines had any bearing on the latest nominees for the list of "great Queenslanders". Beattie released yesterday, it's no secret that Beattie and Soorley get on about as well as Tweedie and Sylvester, so you can imagine what Big Pete thought when he read Soorley's words. "We have the best of many things — fruit, seafood, beer, beeches, climate... but we have not made it to the wine stakes yet." In the middle of Roma Street yesterday, Beattie announced five new great Queenslanders: Nobel prize-winner Peter Doherty, novelist David Malouf, indigenous rights campaigner Evelyn Scott, bushie R. M. Williams... and pioneering Granite Belt winemaker Angelo Puglisi.

LINKS
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5/6/03

Our congratulations to Angelo Puglisi

And.....

Who noticed President Ian and Rhyl on Monday Extra on Channel 9 on Queensland Day, the 9th June?

They pulled up in their blue MG for a "bit of pampering" (said Rhyl) at one of the few garages about that offer full driveway service.

I must admit when I caught a glimpse of Ian on a Channel 9 promo on the previous night I thought that we might have had another great Queenslander in our midst.

Maybe next year.

.....The Editor

KWIZ KORNER - Answers

1. ALP leader Arthur Calwell
2. Cheviot Beach, Portsea (No points just for Portsea)
3. Angie Dickenson
4. Adelaide
5. Surfboard riding. He was better known as Midge Farrelly

6th June 2003 Club Night - 34 present

Theme: Clare Valley Rieslings and Reds

Wine	Rating (*)	
	Range	Average
The one that was corked	0	0
Stephen John Shiraz 1999		
Annie's Lane Shiraz 1995		
Jeanneret Cabernet Sauvignon 2000		
Taylor's Shiraz 2001		
Knappstein Riesling 1999		
Jim Barry Watervale Riesling 1999		
Jim Barry Watervale Riesling 2002		
Neagles Rock Riesling 2002		
Annie's Lane Cabernet Merlot 2001	2 - 2.5	2.1
Coolley Riesling	2 - 3	2.7
Galah Cabernet Malbec Shiraz 1998	2 - 3.5	2.8
Taylor's Cabernet Sauvignon 2001	2 - 4	3.0
Annie's Lane Shiraz 2001	3	3.0
Leasingham Bin 56 Cabernet Malbec 1998	2.5 - 3.5	3.0
Brian Barry Juds Hill Cabernet Sauv 1995	2.5 - 4	3.0
Knappstein Riesling 1997	2.5 - 4	3.0
Yalumba Cabernet Sauvignon 1997	2.5 - 4	3.5
Jim Barry Shiraz Cabernet Sauvignon 2000	3 - 4	3.5
Leasingham Riesling 2000	3.5 - 4	3.8
Pauletts Polish River Shiraz 1998	3 - 4	3.8
Tim Adams Shiraz 2001	3 - 4.5	3.8
Mitchell Watervale Riesling 2003	4	4.0
Leasingham Bin 61 Shiraz 1999	3 - 4.5	4.0
Clos Clare Riesling 2001	3.5 - 4.5	4.0
Pikes Riesling 2002	4 - 5	4.2
Mitchell Watervale Riesling 2002	3 - 5	4.3
Knappstein Riesling 2002	4 - 5	4.3
Seven Hills Cabernet Sauvignon	3 - 5	4.4
Pikes Shiraz 2000	4 - 5	4.4
Leasingham Bin 61 Shiraz 1998	3.5 - 5	4.4
Stephen John Shiraz 1998	4 - 5	4.5

Editor's Notes:

- The wines without ratings didn't have scores entered against them - they were probably tasted and forgotten before the person who put up the scoring sheet (moi) arrived.
- Note the ratings this month compared to last months. Were the wines generally better overall, or were we all just feeling a bit more magnanimous in June?
- Somebody with an obsession for accuracy asked me why there's generally less wines listed than there are attendees. Well, it's not the obvious reason, it's because there's sometimes duplicates, that is, more than one person brings the same wine. Actually, it's surprising to me that there's not more duplicates.

The Mystery Wine!

Options Master Bruce had a little bit of trouble being heard, but the mystery wine was finally revealed with Bob Henricks not only being the last left 'standing' but he also got all the supplementary questions right as well, including the price range and the winery.

It was a Taylor's Cabernet Sauvignon 2001 that won a Silver Medal at the International Wine Challenge in London in 2002.

Alcohol 14% and a \$19.95 price tag.

The scoring system used highly technical tasting terms and was completely objective. Members were asked to enter their ratings on a flip chart on the wall with a scoring system of:

1 = Yuck! 2 = Okay 3 = Quite good 4 = Very good 5 = Wow!

(Who noticed the highly contentious change of the meaning of Rating 5 from **Terrific!** last month, to this month's **Wow!**)

9th May Club Night - 33 present

Theme: McLaren Vale

Wine	Rating (*)	
	Range	Average
Maglieri Cabernet Sauvignon 1998	4 - 5	4.4
Cape Barron Shiraz 2001	3 - 5	4.2
Fox Creek JSM Shiraz Cabernet Franc	3 - 5	4.0
d'Arenberg The Footbolt Shiraz 1998	All 4's	4.0
Wirra Wirra Scrubby Rise Shiraz Cabernet Petit Verdot 2001	All 4's	4.0
Tapestry Cabernet Sauvignon 2000	3 - 4.5	3.8
Hardy's Sauvignon Blanc Liqueur	3 - 5	3.8
Pirramimma Cabernet Sauvignon 1999	3 - 4	3.8
Hazelgrove Shiraz 1998	3 - 5	3.7
Wirra Wirra Church Block Cab Sauv Shiraz Merlot 2001	3 - 4	3.7
Shottesbrooke Merlot 2001	3 - 4	3.7
d'Arenberg d'Arrys Shiraz	3 - 5	3.6
d'Arenberg Footbolt Shiraz 2000	3 - 4	3.5
Ingoldby Shiraz 2000	3 - 4	3.5
Edwards and Chaffey Selection 353 Unfiltered Chardonnay 1997	3 - 4	3.5
Ingoldby Cabernet Sauvignon 2001	3 - 4	3.4
Edwards and Chaffey Shiraz 1999	3 - 4	3.3
Richard Hamilton Shiraz 1999	3 - 4	3.3
d'Arenberg The High Trellis Cab Sauv 2001	3 - 4	3.3
Maxwell Four Roads Shiraz 2001	3 - 3.5	3.3
Dowie Doole Cabernet Sauvignon 1997	2 - 3.5	3.1
Tatachilla Chardonnay 2001	2 - 4	3.0
d'Arenberg d'Arry Sparkling Chabourcin	2 - 4	3.0
Tirilins Winery Cabernet Sauvignon Merlot 2002 (Cleaskin)	All 3's	3.0
d'Arenberg The Peppermint Paddock Chabourcin	2 - 4	3.0
Ingoldby Shiraz 1995	1 - 5	2.8
Wirra Wirra Scrubby Rise Shiraz Cab Sauv 2001	2 - 4	2.6
Dennis of McLaren Vale Cab Sauv 2002 (Cleaskin)	2.5	2.5
Woodstock Cabernet Sauvignon 1998	2 - 3	2.3
Cavaliers Piroth Shiraz 2000	1 - 3	2.0
Hardys St James Brut	All 2's	2.0
Pirramimma Chardonnay 1998	All 2's	2.0
Vaserelli Cab Sauv Cab Franc Shiraz 2000	1 - 2	1.7
McLarens on the Lake White Shiraz 1999	1 - 2	1.7
Pirramimma Cabernet Sauvignon 1997	Corked	

Editor's Note:

I've had a repeat request from a number of people who want to go out and buy a wine that they've enjoyed on Club Night but the description I've included is sometimes a bit sketchy and sometimes without the year.

I can only include what you guys write on the sheet when you come in.

Over to you!

=====

In all the merriment and mayhem, I missed getting the details of the mystery wine, which was a Tatachilla Patners Cabernet Sauvignon Shiraz 1998.

All I can remember is that at least 80% of the members present lost out on the vintage question, they went for 1996.

So instead, here's some info about Tatachilla's history.

For most of the time between 1901 and 1961 it was owned by Pentolds and was closed then re-opened in 1965 as Southern Vales Co-operative. In the late 1980's it was purchased and re-named The Vales but did not flourish and in 1993 was purchased by local grower Vic Zerella and former Kaiser Stuhl CEO Keith Smith. After extensive renovations it was officially re-opened in 1995 and has won a number of tourist awards.

The scoring system used highly technical tasting terms and was completely objective. Members were asked to enter their ratings on a flip chart on the wall with a scoring system of:

1 = Yuck! 2 = Okay
3 = Good 4 = Very good
5 = Terrific!

Note where ratings of the wines were the same, the ones with the most scores were listed first.

SHIRAZ TASTING WITH ANDREW CORRIGAN

15 MAY 2003

Torrential rain did not deter our fifty-nine attendees for the Guild's Shiraz tasting at the Tower Mill on 15 May. As the Guild's largest tasting in many years, the night was an enormous success. Andrew Corrigan had arrived on a flight from London the morning of the tasting, however his enthusiasm for one of his favourite subjects kept his energy levels high.

Special guests included Steve Thimios from Tyrells and Janenne Page from Mr Corks at Jindalee. Janenne had helped us enormously in sourcing the wines for the tasting.

Andrew conducted the tasting in four brackets, and his comments (very abbreviated) on each of the wines are as follows:

Bracket 1: Introduction
1999 Henschke Mt Edelstone:the nose was of berries, vanilla, plums; there was skilful use of oak, nice tannin, maybe a little too high in alcohol; overall a good wine
1999 E Guigal Crozes-Hermitage: on the nose: prunes, dried plums; quite a simple, syrupy wine, not much tannin, very little oak. After flavour not great.
1999 Houghton Frankland River: Sweet oak, chocolate, black cherries on the nose. Palate finished a little syrupy. Both nose and palate were a little simple.
1999 Eileen Hardy: A nose of after-dinner mints and eucalypt, sweet berry fruits, confectionery, chocolate box. The palate had great balance, nice drying tannins.

It was generally felt that wines 1 and 4 were the pick of the first bracket.

Bracket 2: Terroir
1998 Tyrells Vat 9: Nose of black cherries, red fleshy plums, spice.
Palate: not too much oak, high acid,

light bodied but lingered, lean style.

1997 Orlando Lawsons: Nose of mint and eucalypt, green tea. Palate chocolaty, syrupy and intense, quite a big style.

2000 Penfolds Bin 128: Nose of light raspberry, cherry, not too much oak, emphasis on fruit. On the palate: rich, not syrupy, nice tannins and underlying acidity, demonstrating a cold climate.

2000 De Bortoli Yarra Valley: The nose had an emphasis on oak, ripe raspberries, cedar. Palate not syrupy, plenty of depth, clean finish with good acidity.

Bracket 3: The Rhone Style

2000 Chapoutier Mt Benson: Aromas of forest floor, compost heap. The palate was a drier style.

2001 Jasper Hill Georgia's Paddock: On this wine from the Bendigo/Heathcote region, the nose was rich, succulent, round and chocolaty. Palate was generous, less of a Rhone style than the others in the bracket.

Cote Rotie 'Brune et Blonde': The nose was of prunes, light spiciness, pepper. An elegant wine full of flavour. Nice drying tannins, good length.

1999 Mt Langi Ghiran: Very peppery nose, raspberry, brambles. Palate of berry cordial, quite a fleshy wine.

Bracket 4: Mixed Bag:

1998 Mitchelton Art Series: Peppery on the nose with a little volatile acidity, this wine was a big, chocolaty intense style.

1998 Seppelt Great Western 'St Peters': A bit of pepper on the nose, vibrant raspberry flavours, quite tannic and with high alcohol, this was one of the better wines of the night.

2000 Jimbour Station: This wine from the Dalby region had aromas of forest floor and leaves. A definite Rhone style, it had nice drying tannins.

2000 Wolf Blass Brown Label: Aromas of vanilla, custard powder, quite an oaky style.

Generally, the wines chosen by Andrew for the night were a more elegant style than some of the 'big, syrupy' examples of Australian Shiraz we are accustomed to. I can speak on behalf of everyone there in saying that the wines and Andrew's commentary were quite amazing. A great night was had by all.

Laura McAdam

A Handy Hint

Q. After a recent dinner party there were wine-glass rings on my teak side-table.

How can I remove the marks without damaging the table surface?

A. In the direction of the timber grain, try rubbing the marks gently with a little toothpaste or toothpaste mixed with a little linseed oil on a damp clean cloth. Wipe off the toothpaste with plain linseed oil and, if necessary, repeat the treatment until surface is cleaned. Apply a furniture polish recommended for teak surfaces to give the surface a protective coating in readiness for your next dinner party.

Henri Chombeau, Champagne Senez and More

Last month we had an article

about our trip to New Caledonia visiting the

Association des Oenophiles Caledoniens

from a social perspective and we promised

another article from a more technical (wine)

perspective. Well here it is!

For those of you who were lucky enough to visit New Caledonia in March under the imprimatur of the Association des Oenophiles Caledoniens it was an experience that will most probably never be repeated. Under the watchful eye of the President, Henri Chombeau, members of the Queensland Wine Guild and the Granite Belt Wine Association and their friends were treated to a spontaneous bonanza of wonderful food, magnificent wines and life lasting camaraderie.

A standout in the wines tasted was a champagne – Champagne Senez. OK, so none of you have heard about it? But it is a classic story of a wonderful product and strategic marketing.

New Caledonia is a French Colony and the French culture and everything that goes with it is there. Most food and beverages are imported and if it is not French, massive duties apply (hence the cost of everything).

Our host, Henri Chombeau 8 years ago opened a retail liquor store in opposition to his previous employer. Henri mostly imports French wines. Because Henri was precluded from importing the Grandes Marques (Moet, Veuve Clicquot, Bollinger etc.) – he set on a journey to acquire a style of champagne suited to New Caledonia. Henri and his team, members of the Wine Society tasted many, many champagnes before coming up with Champagne Senez.

What makes this interesting is that the champagne is from the village Fontfette

in the Aube district. Senez is all Pinot Noir and Chardonnay (no Pinot Meunier).

To obtain the appellation Champagne, the wines must be made from Pinot Noir, Pinot Meunier or Chardonnay. All the vineyards in Champagne are ranked on a 100 point scale; vineyards rated 100% are grands crus while those rated 90 – 100% are premiers crus.

The Aube district has vineyards of approximately 7,000 hectares most of which are in the Cote des Bar, with others at Montagneux, around Troyes and at Villenauxe-la-Grande. The Aube produces nearly one quarter of the champagne produced in Champagne.

Back to Senez!

Christian Senez produced his first cuvees from his father's vineyards in 1973. (Remember in 1956, winter temperature in Paris was – 30 degrees centigrade, which was disastrous for the French wine industry). The exceptional 1976 vintage placed Senez on the world map with exports to UK, Holland, Japan, US, Australia and of course New Caledonia.

Christian Senez from his 80% rated vineyards produces over 40 types of champagne but only from Pinot Noir and Chardonnay. What we tried in ample quantities was Senez Carte Verte (Brut) released in 1999 and a 50/50 blend of Pinot and Chardonnay (non-vintage). Obviously we are not the only people drinking it.

In New Caledonia, the market for champagne last year was 400,000 bottles a year, with 230,000 being Senez.

Senez is made from a combination of traditional and new methods (stainless steel fermentation but traditional vertical presses) and includes malolactic

fermentation. There are 800,000 bottles of non-vintage and 130,000 bottles of vintage Senez in stock. Annual production is 400,000 bottles with a split of around 50/50 for domestic and export consumption.

Not bad for the son of an assistant-postman, Andre Senez who cleared 80 acres of land to plant his own champagne grapes in 1952.

For those of you who were lucky enough to have a sip at Henry's bar there was a superb white (normally not my favourite) – 1998 Chateau de Chategrève from Graves. What a classic sauvignon blanc. If you can get your hands on one it will definitely change your mind about sauvignon blanc. Just superb.

Tony Stolar

Some quotes

The leader of genius must have the ability to make different opponents appear to belong to one category.

Adolf Hitler in his Mein Kampf

It's very rare that you find a remake as good as the original. Or vice-versa.

Film critic John-Michael Howson

Training is for cats and dogs. People learn.

Dick Dusseldorp, founder of Lend Lease

How come when I want a pair of hands, I get a human being as well?

Henry Ford

KWIZ KORNER – Questions about the 60's

1. Name the federal politician wounded in an assassination attempt in Sydney in 1966.
2. At what beach, specifically, was Prime Minister Harold Holt swimming when he disappeared in 1967?
3. Who played the female lead in the 1960 movie Oceans

Eleven, starring Frank. Dean and Sammy Davis Jr?

4. An estimated 300,000 people turned out to welcome the Beatles in which Australian city?

5. In which sport did Bernard Farnelly win a world title in 1964?

Answers on Page 7