

January/February 2004

Editor: Lindsay Thomas (07) 3878 3574 email:lindsayt@mincom.com
Web Site:www.uq.net.au/wine/guild**PRESIDENT'S REPORT**

New Year greetings to all Guild members. I hope you all had a pleasant and safe Christmas New Year break and are now looking forward to getting back into an interesting array of Guild functions in 2004. Planning is already well underway for the usual stimulating collection of masterclasses lead by Andrew Corrigan. The first event I understand will be the Chardonnay masterclass in March.

A varied Club night programme has been devised by a range of hosts, many we've seen before and a few new ones. The first night on February 6 devised by flying winemaker Bruce Humphery-Smith will have a Spanish flavour. The program of Club night is detailed elsewhere in Grapevine.

Our February function will be the first of a number of lunches and dinners we plan for 2004 and will be held at Joseph Alexanders and feature a selection of wines from "GetWinesDirect.com". A function notice is enclosed. The function is being subsidised by the Guild. It is intended for members and a partner guest friend or whatever - two people at the low price. We will have a full price for those extras who might like to attend.

During 2004 some special events planned will include a visit from our friends in Noumea and a trip to the wine regions of the North and South islands of New Zealand. I look forward to your company again during this year and we hope that all events are as well patronised and enjoyed as they were last year.

Ian McLeod....January 2004

**SOUTH BURNETT,
QUEENSLAND**

G'day from Queensland.

Queensland seems to be ever-driven on quests for Holy Grails. Trophies for cricket and strange forms of football now regularly appear in our local cabinets. A Queenslander now even reigns as world darts champion. What's left unattained in the Holy Grail field?

Perhaps an Outstanding wine? Now that would be something to shock the cool climate southerners. Could it come from the well-established Granite Belt or the new Gold Coast hinterland wineries or maybe the fast-growing South Burnett which I visited recently with a group of Brisbane wine lovers?

The South Burnett region contains a number of small and large wineries in Kingaroy and the surrounding hills and further north in the rolling plains near Murgon. It is certainly a fertile verdant land and the commitment to winegrowing and marketing in the area is clearly evident.

The vigneron have put a tremendous effort into cellar-door tasting facilities, with several also providing pretty good food and other local products and entertainment. For example, the cellar door at Ziebarth, a beautiful old Queensland house high on a

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SOUTH BURNETT, QUEENSLAND

hill with breezy verandahs and views down green valleys, rivals the striking beauty of McLaren Vale icon Coriole. I could happily sit at the Ziebarth bar, newly crafted from one of the property's silky oaks, for some time. All the cellar doors we visited were well appointed and welcoming.

Strangely at odds with the excellent facilities was the meagre supply of tasting wine doled out at some establishments in vessels better suited to holding boiled eggs. I was half-expecting the imminent arrival of a busload of drunken footballers to plunder the wine stocks. That didn't happen though. Seriously folks, I think wine culture, even in Queensland, has progressed beyond that. While I appreciate that small wineries don't have excess to give away, a thimble of wine is not going to convince me to allocate part of my wine budget to it.

A number of the wineries also provide attractive B&B style accommodation. We stayed in affordable splendour in a wonderful renovated house full of antiques, in the extensive vineyards (175 hectares!) of Clovelly Estate. The attention to detail in this wine-stay is noteworthy.

A fridge chock-full of fresh steak, sausages, salads, cheese, fruit, bacon, eggs, etc is provided for cook-your-own dinner and breakfast. Just perfect after a hard day's wine tasting. Highly Recommended.

Another notable find in the area is the brand new Bell Tower Restaurant which is part of

the Booie Range Distillery complex, not far from Crane's winery (the multi-skilled John Crane is also the distiller), a short cab ride from Kingaroy. The restaurant looks like a magnificent bit of Tuscany in a somewhat unlikely place to find it - beautifully appointed with panoramic views and fabulous food presented by a well-credentialed chef ex-Raes-on-Watego (Byron Bay). The wine list showcases good local wines - this level of food should give them something to aspire to. Recommended.

Traditional wine varieties dominate the region but there are new plantings of Italian and Rhône varieties which I await with much interest. My gut-feeling for the area is tempranillo, which I did not see on this visit but hope that someone may be trialling. The tastings showed a somewhat surprising regional affinity for merlot - distinctively dense, tannic and aromatic, albeit generally made in the firm cabernet style.

Across the board, most wines tasted on this recent visit would rate Agreeable, very few slipping to Unacceptable and some attaining Recommended. The overall impression is that of clean well made easy-drinking wines displaying strong fruit characteristics. Pretty good for a new region, I thought, giving high hopes for the future.

Most wines tasted were from the 1999 and 2000 vintages; 2000 appears to be much the stronger of the two.

It took Queensland 68 years to win the Sheffield Shield, now it's a regular event. It's early days for South Burnett wines, but one day, when the terroir is better understood, varieties and cropping levels perfected, they may well be worthy and consistent

champions.

I'll be taking a patriotic interest in this promising region.

The Wines

Recommended discoveries (all are from 2000)

Sunset Ridge Semillon. Early drinking style with plenty of varietal fruit flavour. Just the thing for the local yabbies.

Clovelly Estate Left Field Unwooded Chardonnay. Usually not my style of wine but they got this one pretty right. Abundant peach and nectarine flavours, nice early drinking.

Clovelly Estate Merlot. Full-bodied, elegant, rich and savoury.

Crane Merlot. Deft oak handling with good tannin structure. Rich plum flavours.

Stuart Range Goodger Shiraz. A remarkable musky nose, perhaps attributable to the Goodger soil. Medium-full bodied, great balance. (Goodger is a locale 14km south of Kingaroy, producing grapes with interesting sub-regional characteristics.)

Barambah Ridge Cabernet. Complex blend of tobacco through to blackcurrant flavours. Elegantly structured, strong tannins with good aging potential. A slight hollowness on the middle palate prevented a higher rating.

Bob Clancy

Bob is the Queensland correspondent at large for Winewise, and reports from time to time on wine, food and beer matters from the sunshine state.

Australian Wine Story in Denver, USA

(29th December 2003)

At the Heritage Discount Liquor store in Denver, there were over 200 Australian wines for sale, no bubbly and about 2/3rds were reds.

It's probably fair to say that they were mostly at the commercial end.

As you can see from the photo, the wines were arranged in country of origin order.

Two general things that I found of interest were:

1. The French champagnes on show ranged from \$38.65 for a Piper Heidsieck Brut to \$60.75 for a Veuve Clicquot-Ponsardin Brut, with Billecart-Salmon, Louis Roederer and other in between.

2. There's lots and lots of small liquor stores around but there's only three major outlets in the whole of Denver, which has about the same population as Brisbane. But they're all privately owned; that is, no major liquor chains like we're used to.

Back to the Australian wines. To give an

indication of the range of wines available, and their price, I wrote down all the Penfolds reds for sale, as follows.

Penfolds Koonunga Hill Cabernet Merlot 2001	\$12.15
Penfolds Koonunga Hill Shiraz Cabernet 2001	\$12.15
Penfolds Rawsons Retreat Merlot 2002	\$12.15
Penfolds Rawsons Retreat Shiraz Cabernet 2002	\$12.15
Penfolds Thomas Hyland Shiraz 2001	\$18.80
Penfolds Bin 28 Kalimna Shiraz 2000	\$27.70
Penfolds Bin 128 Grenache Shiraz 2000	\$29.70
Penfolds Bin 407 Cabernet Sauvignon 2000	\$31.05
Penfolds Bin 389 Cabernet Shiraz 2001	\$32.40

They also have a locked back room with all the "good stuff" and offered to take me there if I considered myself a "serious buyer" -

their words, not mine!

All prices above are retail (including local sales tax that varies significantly from State to State) and have been converted to Australian dollars. We're not doing too bad after all, are we?

Lindsay Thomas

PS At Birdland ("The Jazz Capital of the World" in New York), Margie and I passed up a bottle of Jacobs Creek Shiraz for \$49.20 to have with our supper and treated ourselves to a glass each of Rutherford Hill Merlot for \$15.85 each - at a bottle price of \$66.85!



PINOT NOIR MASTER CLASS

With Andrew Corrigan MW, 19 November 2003

The wines chosen for this Tasting are listed below. A full description of the flow chart Andrew presented for identifying Pinot Noirs by region will appear in the next edition of GrapeVine. There will also be a section on how different winemaking techniques used during the pre-ferment, ferment and post-ferment stages can affect Pinot Noir wines. After reading Andrew's material you should be more confident (unlike me) in identifying a Pinot's origin and using such descriptions to identify styles as ...extensive cold soak, cold climate, firm oak and natural yeast or cool climate, intense clean fruit and firm oak.

Introduction

By Farr 2002
Clos des Lambrays 2000
Stefano Lubiana 2001
Felton Road 2002

Terroir Taste

Panorama 2001
Nepenthe 2001
Diamond Valley Close Planted 2001

Identify the Origin

Scotchman's Hill Norfolk Vineyard 2000
Chambolle Musigny 2000, Herve Signaut
Picardy 2001
Ata Rangi 2001

Identify the Style

Lenswood 2000
Dromana Estate Reserve 2001
Penfolds Cellar Reserve 2001
Bannockburn 2001

Between you and my credit card, I confess all were superior wines; those in the last bracket were superb. (Scotchman's if you are a bit short of cash.)

Ross Muller

A few wine quotes

"Before Noah, men having only water to drink, could not find the truth. Accordingly...they became abominably wicked, and they were justly exterminated by the water they loved to drink. This good man, Noah, having seen that all his contemporaries had perished by this unpleasant drink, took a dislike to it; and God, to relieve his dryness, created the vine and revealed to him the art of making le vin. By the aid of this liquid he unveiled more and more truth."

Benjamin Franklin (1706-1790)

"the road to great wine is littered with beer bottles"

Unknown

"Wine is sunlight, held together by water."

Galileo Galilei (1564-1642)

"Wine is the most healthful and most hygienic of beverages."

Louis Pasteur (1822-1895)

"Wine is a precarious aphrodisiac, and its fumes have blighted many a mating."

Norman Douglas, English writer (1868-1952)

"Wine gives a man nothing. It neither gives him knowledge nor wit; it only animates a man, and enables him to bring out what a dread of the company has repressed. This is one of the disadvantages of wine: it makes a man mistake words for thoughts."

Samuel Johnson, English writer, lexicographer, critic and conversationalist (1709-1784)

ANDREW CORRIGAN'S MASTERCLASS SPARKLING WHITES & CHAMPAGNE

The Tower Mill, 16 October 2003

This was the first time that Andrew presented a Masterclass on Sparkling Whites for the Wine Guild. Almost 40 members and their guests attended the evening.

The brackets were:

A: Introduction

1. NV Freixenet Cava
2. 1999 Domaine Chandon Vintage
3. 1998 Arras
4. NV Pol Roger Champagne

B: Styles 1

1. NV Grandin Sparkling Wine
2. 1998 Bay of Fires
3. VIII Hanging Rock Macedon Cuvée

4. NV Bollinger Non Vintage

C: Styles 2

1. 1999 Chandon Tasmanian Cuvée
2. 1998 Yarrabank Brut Cuvée
3. 1998 Pelorus Vintage
4. 1996 Moet Vintage Rosé

D: After

NV Asti Riccadonna Non Vintage

Wines sourced by Janenne Page of Mr Corks, Jindalee

The 1996 M&C Rose is the most costly at \$120. It is a superb wine. The NV Grandin Brut in contrast retails at \$ 13. With this range of wines, Andrew showed that as prices increase so too does balance, complexity and creaminess. These come with expert blending, lees ageing (three years at least) and the right level of acid.

Yeast flavours are very important. The flavours result from yeast splitting open in the ageing process and the interior of each cell dissolving in the wine. However, keeping wines on lees for up to four years is only successful if acid levels are high enough to ensure that when that sparkling wine is finally poured into its fluted glass, there is balance.

This is where the region of Champagne comes into its own. It is the coldest wine growing region in the world at latitude 50 degrees north. (The southern tip of Tasmania is about 42 degrees south.) If it were not for the forests and more importantly the chalky sub soils, the grapes would rarely ripen. These soils provide excellent drainage and heat retention, absorbing heat during the day and slowly releasing it at night, thereby warming the vines at the coldest part of the daily cycle. It is mostly these conditions that produce such high levels of acidity in the grapes. What distinguish Champagnes from other sparkling whites are higher levels of acid.

It was a night of remarkable flavours, grape varieties, fascinating styles, intriguing chemistry and geology. The Wine Guild has much to thank Andrew for.

Ross Muller

Australian Wine Industry

..... at a glance

	1998-99	1999-00	2000-01	2001-02	2002-03
Wineries (number of)	1,115	1,197	118	1,465	1,625
Area under vine (hectares) 1	122,915	139,861	148,258	158,594	n/a
Winegrape crush ('000 tonnes)	1,126	1,145	1,424	1,606	1,360
Wine production (million litres) 2	793	806	1,035	1,174	n/a
Wine consumption (million litres)	373	389	398	401	420
Wine exports (million litres)	216	287	339	416	508
Wine exports (\$A million)	991	1,347	1,614	2,008	2,386
Wine imports (million litres)	24	20	13	14	17
Wine imports (\$A Million)	101	111	91	116	139

1. Vines yielding grapes for all purposes

2. Beverage wine

3. Aust wine sales plus import clearances

n/a Not available

Sources: ABS Vineyard Survy and Cat. No. 1329.0, Australian Wine and Grape Industry Cat No. 8504.0, AWBC/AWEC Export Approval database, Aust and NZ Wine Directory 2003, WFA Vintage Report 2003.

Ah, the effect and stimulation of a good minimally preserved French wine.

For us it means less of the dreaded day-after post-alcoholic depression when we've consumed too much during the previous night's dissipation.

'Twas one such night a while ago at an international dinner dance we

attended in the company of a tall one-legged rogue who'd long since mastered the art of dancing on his excellent articulating above-the knee prosthesis.

He'd lost his leg in Adelaide in a motor accident at age eight and had been inspired by the WobblyWobbly Two RAF hero Douglas Bader who'd visited the children's ward in the 1960s to talk with the junior amputees.

In adulthood, our man disguised his disability well, showing only a faint limp, and seemed able to blend with the crowd at dance parties, especially when good wine was abundant.

As it was this night.

Our man had also been waiting years for the chance to dance the 'Hokey Pokey'.

It happened this night that as we were on the floor. The band changed tempo, the compere introduced the 'Hokey Pokey' in an Amsterdam accent, we formed a circle and proceeded with the fun.

In less than a minute as the words, "You throw your left leg in....", a neatly socked, gartered and expensive booted 'skin-tone' artificial leg was skidding across the dance floor toward the singer who had taken up central station. To her credit, the singer faltered only momentarily as she collected the prodigal leg and tossed it back into the line of dancers.

And so it went for the remainder of the bracket: our man's leg was variously tossed in and tossed out of the circling dancers as our man continued dancing in a sort of hopping fashion, his empty left trouser flapping in crazy rhythm to the beat.

A great combination: the sparkling French, the dancing Dutch, and the Aussie amputee!

proves to us that cork is a great product and our membrane makes it even better."

Results of other testing by ProCork were unveiled last month (July 30, 2003) at a Winemakers Forum held by the Victorian Government's Department of Innovation, Industry and Regional Development.

Dr Christie, a former CSIRO scientist, told the forum ProCork had the simple goal of being the preferred closure for wine makers and wine drinkers. "We want the people who make wine to be confident their hard work is rewarded when consumers open their wine and taste it as it was made to taste," he said. "We also want consumer's to purchase wine confident the product will taste just as the wine maker intended."

While synthetic and screw-cap closures continue to make inroads into the market Dr Christie told the Forum wine drinkers and producers still overwhelmingly preferred cork.

"Cork is a wonderful product, it has been an integral part of the winemaking process for 400 years and will always be the preferred choice of both wine makers and wine consumers," he said.

"But as with all elements of the wine making process, from growing to crushing to barreling, it is not good enough to accept that because that is the way it has always been done that is the way it should always be. The evolution of cork, through the adoption of new technology to create a better product is what ProCork is all about."

Independent testing commissioned by ProCork has also highlighted the company's outperformance in the area of sulphide taint when put into direct comparison with screw-cap closures.

"The question we are always asked is – How good is it compared to screw-cap?" Dr Christie said.

"From our very first experiments right up to commercial trials conducted by some of the largest wineries in the world, ProCork has outperformed all closures, including screw-caps, in the areas of freshness, flavour, consistency and sulphide taint. In testing of ProCork by Vintessential Laboratories using a screw-cap control group we were very surprised at the incidence of sulphide taint under the screw caps in a relatively short period of time."

ProCork is currently undertaking further testing, while the first release of wine under a ProCork closure will be released this month through Victoria's Mount Avoca label.

AWRI sensory testing gives Procork top marks

The first product by Australian wine closure company ProCork has been given a clean bill of health after a new round of testing at the Australian Wine Research Institute (AWRI). Sensory testing by eight AWRI sensory panel members found no bottle variation or any perceptible level of taint or other off flavour irregularities in the 24 samples tested after nine months cellaring. An extract of the results is attached and a full copy of the AWRI report is available upon request.

ProCork chief executive officer Gregor Christie said the results of the AWRI testing had given the company the confidence to push forward with plans to have its closure commercially available within 6-12 months.

"These results have been a real shot in the arm for us and prove we have a product which has the potential to be a major player in the global market for wine closures," Dr Christie said.

"Our own testing has been extremely positive and to have those results reinforced by testing at AWRI gives us a tremendous amount of confidence to continue with our plans."

The team of scientists, engineers and industry professionals at ProCork have spent more than three years developing technology that reduces the fear of "cork taint" enabling natural cork to be used with confidence in wine and other beverages.

The technology revolves around a series of membranes that are applied to each end of the cork that significantly reduces flavour modification and reduces chemicals entering the wine, regulates the passage of oxygen through the cork and retains cork moisture resulting in less cork breakage.

The new technology will enable natural cork to be used by winemakers with high certainty that the membrane will reduce any off character imparted by the cork.

The primary taints/off flavours that were tested by AWRI included TCA (trichloroanisole), oxidation, volatile acidity, sulphide and cork wood.

Dr Christie said the sensory panel provided a rigorous benchmark and to have all scores below the barely perceptible level was a tremendous result. "The consistency from bottle to bottle was also very good," Dr Christie said. "This

New Pinot Areas

Everyone knows that Burgundy is the spiritual home of Pinot Noir, but outside France there are several regions competing on the quality issue.

In the USA the Willamette Valley in Oregon and Russia Valley in California can both produce exceptional wines, and in Australia we've got a number of great regions centred around Melbourne (Yarra Valley, Macedon, Geelong, Mornington Peninsula and Gippsland) not to mention Tasmania.

Even in New Zealand, where fantastic Pinot Noirs have been created from Martinborough for many years, they have a serious contender to the title – Central Otago

Eeeemail!

Grrrrrrrr! I just turned on my computer to get my email after a long and relaxing three-day weekend and was greeted by a deluge. Some of it was actually addressed to me, although there were the usual offers to make my you-know-what much larger and guarantees that if I only hit "reply," the sender would sell me (cheap!) a surefire method of making a million dollars a day from home using just my computer that at the moment happened to be immobilized by his long and windy message. But it's not just spam that annoys me when I harvest this crop of weeds.

Even personal and business email can be overwhelming when it mounts up and stares me in the face. And I know from speaking to friends that I'm not the only one who has suffered from email immobilization.

If you have this problem -- and I bet you do at least sometimes -- I have what could be the cure, and it's absolutely free! It's a program called POPfile that you can easily download from the URL below. POPfile eases email congestion by automatically classifying each message and moving automatically it to the appropriate folder that you set up -- spam, mail from your boss, your spouse, your secret lover, whatever.

How does it do this? By a "naïve Bayes algorithm."

In plain English, statistics. You train it and after a while, it automatically recognizes what each message is by its contents. Try it:

<http://fun.whambamfreestuff.com/redir.cfm/2764/16119/2395/5612744>

Wine industry facing profit squeeze

The Age November 4, 2003 - 8:05PM

The Australian wine industry has undergone a major squeeze with winery profitability slashed and smaller operations going out of business, a new report has found.

The Australian Wine and Brandy Corporation annual report, released on Tuesday, said the annual return on winery assets fell to 4.2 per cent last financial year from 30 per cent in 2001/02.

Even though Australia is now the world's fifth largest wine exporter, pressures on domestic production plus the stronger Australian dollar could make conditions difficult in the coming year.

Australian wineries produced 1.4 million tonnes of grapes in 2002/03, the first fall in production since 1997. The fall was largely due to the drought, with tonnes-per-hectare yield well down in most growing regions.

Australians consumed 420 million litres of wine last financial year, an increase of 4.7 per cent, while exports reached 508 million litres, an increase of 22 per cent.

The corporation said global over-production, the competitiveness of new wine countries and the increasing power of the retail sector was hurting Australian wine prices.

It said the stronger dollar was also hampering exporters. "A strong Australian dollar will reduce the flexibility that a more favourable rate would provide for managing profit margins," it said.

The corporation said although the UK was still Australia's major export market, the United States would become the nation's biggest overseas market in value terms by year's end. The large surpluses of shiraz and cabernet sauvignon wine are starting to

KWIZ KORNER – Questions

1. What is the last letter of the Greek alphabet?
2. Nino Culotto was his pen-name. What was his real name?
3. Do polar bears eat penguins?
4. Who was the first New Australian to become Miss Australia? In what year?
5. What was the name of the car that won the 3010 km 2003 World Solar Challenge race between Darwin and Adelaide?
6. What is the name given to the conical indentation at the bottom of a wine bottle?

Answers on Page 5

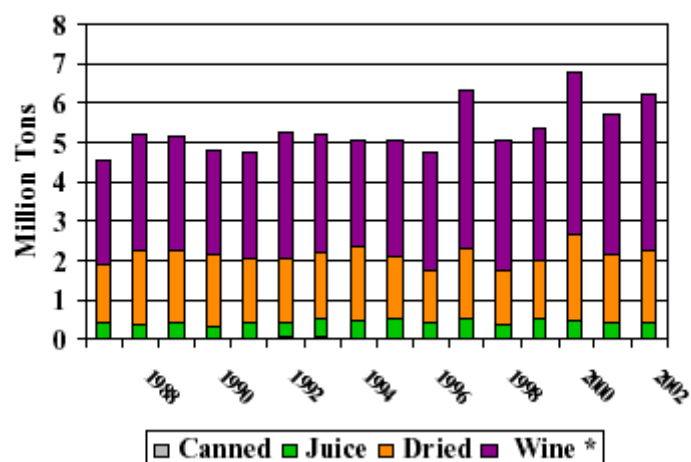
diminish. But the corporation warned of shortages among white wines, particularly chardonnay, riesling and sauvignon blanc.

Wine imports grew 38 per cent in 2002/03, largely due to a shortage of Australian white wines.

The corporation said although the wine sector was facing tough conditions, there were signs of continuing growth. "In key markets, Australia remains in the front ranks of consumer acceptance as a significant player on the world wine stage, with strong brands, consumer-friendly labelling and a growing strategic presence in key overseas markets," it said.

This story was found at: <http://www.theage.com.au/articles/2003/11/04/1067708207657.html>

U.S. Grapes: Processed Utilization



And just to get Australia's grapegrowing and wine production into perspective (as shown elsewhere in this edition of the Grapevine), here's a graph from the States, a 'minor' player on the world stage.

5th December 2003 Club Night - 55 present

Theme: Bubbles and stickies

Wines tasted

Hardys Padthaway Noble Riesling 2001	Seaview Pinot Chardonnay 1998
Louis Roederer Brut Premier	Mount Cotton Reserve Finito 2000
Seppelts Sparkling Shiraz 1999	Saint Allouarn Stone Bridge 1999
Lindsay Hill Victorian Semillon 1999	Rothvale Late Picked Botrytis Semillon Muscat 2002
Chatsfield Indulge 2001	Lindsay Botrytis Semillon
Coldstream Hills Pinot Chardonnay	Jansz NV (2x)
De Bortoli Noble One 1992	Banrock Sparkling Shiraz
Killawarra Reserve Pinot Noir Chardonnay	Sir James Pinot Noir Brut de Brut
Casella Carrama Estate Botrytis Semillon 2000 (2x)	Andrew Garrett Sparkling Burgundy
Hollick Sparkling Merlot 1993	Hugh Hamilton Sparkling Merlot 2002
Stefan Zubiana NV	Jansz Vintage 1997
Sir James Pinot Noir Chardonnay	Yalumba Botrytis Riesling
Yalumba D 1998	Morris Durif Shiraz
Jacob Creek Pinot Chardonnay	Seppelt Chardonnay Pinot
Rumball Sparkling Shiraz	Wyndham Estate S555 Shiraz
Brown Brothers Pinot Noir Chardonnay	John Keats "HippoGrene" ???
Seppelts Sparkling Shiraz 1996	Grant Burge Pinot Chardonnay
Croser Vintage 1999	Botrytis Riesling
Banrock Station ??	McLaren Vale ???
Croser Petaluma 2000	Yalumba Botryti Riesling 2001
Seaview Pinot	Sir James Sparkling Shiraz
Vasse Felix Botrytis 2000	Yarra Burn Sparkling White 2000
Tempus Two ???	??? 2001
Miranda (?) Noble ? 2001	

And three others that were **completely** uninterpretable from the list

Editor's Note: The Editor was asked to tender apologies from the person who brought the Jacob Creek Pinot Chardonnay – "I rushed out and picked up the wrong one!"

And, at the Club night, which doubled as the Christmas party, were:



Bob, Cherry Cathy and Neil, enjoying themselves in the corner. And, did you notice, near to both the food and the air-conditioning unit.



Kate and Elaine obviously having a lousy time – with their red and green hair!

7th November 2003 Club Night - 35 present

Theme: French

Win	
Le Hauts de Trintaudon 1998	Chateau Franc de Maine St Emilion 1998
E. Guigal Cotes de Rhone 2000 (4x)	Michel Laroche Syrah 2000
Chateau Brun Labrie Bordeaux 1996	Georges Du Boeuf Beaujolais-Villages 2002
San Cerre 2000	Nicolas Feuillatte NV
Santenay Chassagne Montrachet 1997	Laroche Petit Chablis 2001
Les Serines Beaujolais Villages Mommessin 2002	E. Guigal Cotes de Rhone 1998
Laroche Petit Chablis 2000	Pfaffenheim Riesling Vin de Alsace 2001
Pfaffenheim Tokay Pinot Gris Vin de Alsace 1999	Hugel Pinot Blanc 1998
Chateau Bellegrave Saint Emilion 1994	Nobles Rives Syrah 2000
La Foret Grenache Merlot 1999	E. Guigal Cotes de Rhone 1999
JK Coche-Dury Bourgogne Pinot Noir 2000	Domaine de la Renjarde Cote de Rhone 1999
Pfaffenheim Pinot Blanc Vin de Alsace 1999	Joseph Druin La Foret Pinot Noir 2000
Vasse Felix Chardonnay 2000	Reserve Ives – Lutie Chalet 1996
Chateau d'Say Viognier 2000	Le Freres Scaramouche Chardonnay 2000
Les Traverses Cotes de Ventoux Paul Jaboulet Aine 1999	

Editor's Note: *Excusee la bad spelling; and the lousy French!*

Chardonnay - The New Sultana?

Has chardonnay become the 'new sultana'? For decades sultana has provided considerable bulk and little flavour for the Australian wine industry. Packed in bag-in-box with a little added sweetness, sultana assumed the role of an alcoholic balm for the populace - a beer substitute if you like - albeit at three times the alcohol strength.

Twenty years ago, during a significant growth phase for casks, chardonnay fruit was extremely hard to come by. Even in 1992, chardonnay represented 9% of wine grapes grown, and 'multi-purpose' varieties (sultana, muscat gordo blanco and Waltham cross) were at 24%. In 2002 the figures were chardonnay 15%, multi-purpose 8%. Does that tell you something?

Given the bountiful quantity of chardonnay, it's obvious that much of it will be destined for 'workhorse' duty. That being the case, for chardonnay to sell at price points well under \$20.00,

the grapes have to be cropped at "commercial" levels, and the use of oak in the form of quality French barriques is out of the question.

Most of the chardonnay made in Australia is made from grapes, which are deficient in flavour. For the same reasons as sweetness was deemed essential for wimpy sultana, so it is for skeletal chardonnay - not to mention 'oak' in its chippy, planky, powder or liquid forms. It's little wonder that some diabolical potions are produced. Add to the list of Australia's most unwanted chardonnays fermented in third rate or hand-me-down barrels and put through malolactic whether they need it or not, often acquiring unpalatable buttery flavours and associated fatness.

Winemakers who start with inadequate fruit can do little to retrieve the situation. Their only recourse is to add flavour by whatever means. Much of the insipid fruit is coming from very young vineyards planted in the boom of the nineties. We suspect that even though young vines are part of the dilute flavour problem, overcropping is just as

evil a villain. It's all about bottom line, not intensity of fruit.

We enjoy good chardonnay and recommend several in this issue but, as we've said before, you can buy plenty of honest, excellent riesling and semillon for the price of many an artificially propped-up chardonnay. We strongly suggest you consider the choices.

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KWIZ KORNER - Answers

1. Omega
2. John O'Grady
3. No, polar bears live in the Arctic, while penguins inhabit the Antarctic and other southern areas.
4. Tania Verstak, in 1961
5. Nuna II. The Dutch solar car Nuna II, using ESA space technology, set off from Darwin on Sunday 19 October and arrived in Adelaide 30 hours 54 minutes later, averaging 97 kms/hour. It set two solar car world records of 110 kms / hour top speed and 830 kms as the greatest distance travelled in one racing day.
6. Punt

Club Night Program 2004

Venue: Black Pearl Epicure, 36 Baxter Street, Fortitude Valley

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

5:30pm to 7:30pm)

Month	Day / Date	Hosts	Theme
February	Friday 6 February	Bruce Humphery-Smith & Jenny Chadwick	Quality Spanish Wines & Australian Spanish Varietals
March	Saturday 6 March	Paula & Sebastian Tewksbury Venue to be advised	Riesling or Grenache
April	Friday 2 April	Peter Ryan	Imported Wines - not NZ or Tasmanian
May	Friday 7 May	Lindsay & Margie Thomas with Bob Hendricks	Red Varietals - no blends and no Cabernet or Shiraz
June	Friday 4 June	Jeff Channer & Wendy Harris	Big and/or Old Reds
July	Friday 2 July	Ken Lilley & Janette Bigg	Cool Climate Wines
August	Friday 6 August	Bruce & Julia Gardner	Barossa Wines
September	Friday 3 September	Guild Committee	New Releases (Also the AGM)
October	Friday 1 October	Kate O'Regan with Brian & Paula Madden	Italian Wines or Australian Italian Varieties
November	Friday 5 November	Harold & Di Haydon	Clare Valley Wines
December	Friday 3 December	Jeff Channer & Wendy Harris	Xmas Bubbles, Stickies & Fortifieds

Entry Each Person per Night:: \$5.00 plus a bottle of the theme.

(Except September 3rd when it's \$15 with the wine provided)

What Your T & E Committee is Nutting out for 2004

You'll be pleased to know that after the successful tastings in 2003, Andrew Corrigan MW is planning to hold Masterclasses on Emerging Whites, Chardonnay, Sparkling Wines, Pinot Noir and Shiraz in 2004.

The stores are brimming with excellent Spanish wines, so much so that we have hopes of enticing Peter Ryan from the long paddock to present his favourite collection at a Spanish Night

Any one for Wine Guild Lunches/ Dinners? These were well received in the past and with an anticipated much lower cost per member in the future, they are sure to regain their popularity.

Let's hope one can be held on the Gold Coast and maybe there can be a Christmas in July, in July!

The Tasting & Events Committee are even more democratic than President George Bush, meaning that we would like lots of members to give us the thumbs up or thumbs down to these nascent plans. Have you other events you would like to support?

Ross Muller