

# WINETALK

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WINE CONNOISSEURS CLUB OF HAMILTON

Jan 2019

## Coming Functions

Jan 19	BBQ
Feb 10	Summer Wines
Mar 10	
Apr 14	
May 12	AGM

## Summer drinking

New Year and Summer drinking - it's got to be bubbles and there's plenty of quality, delicious New Zealand sparkling wines around to enjoy for the next few weeks. I have been out in the wine aisles of the supermarkets (my favourite pastime) and drinking quite a

lot (a lot) of different sparklings over the Christmas and New Year period. So we will mention New Zealand favourites later for you to try and will look at the regions we drink them from.

Irish Sommelier Julie du Pouy who incidentally is the world's top woman sommelier and a wine writer for **The Taste**, when visiting our wine regions and tasting our wines had this to say about us and our wines:

"For anybody who visited New Zealand, you will understand what I mean when I say the colours there seem brighter, the personalities bigger and the energy for life so great. I finally understood this 'dialled up' expression I perceived in their wines was merely a beautiful translation of life in this truly beautiful place."

This of course is indeed high praise, and we accept our wines are bold, 'out there' and affordable and the sparklings we put out have the hallmark characters we expect from New Zealand sparklings - nutty, biscuity aromas, balanced with fresh acidity and fruit.

Good wines of course all start in the vineyard. Then there is the plant science, vine technology, soil, chemistry, weather, sugar reactions, marketing, sales and relationships.

When all of these come together you have our great 'dialled up' wines.

Looking at our sparklings, therefore, where did they originate from?

How did the 'sparkle' get into the wines? Who thought of putting a bubble in wine in the past?

Actually a happy accident discovered them!

## HISTORY

Sparkling wines are older even than the Benedictine Monk we celebrate as the person who discovered and created sparkling wines.

In the 1600's a new wine emerged in France. Called Vin Gris, it was shipped and when it arrived at its destination it had undergone a second fermentation. It was bottled straight away and retained some



unplanned bubbles. From this pleasant accident the history of sparkling wine began. English Scientist and Physician Christopher Merrett documented the addition of sugar to a finished wine to create a second fermentation several years before Dom Perignon arrived at the Abbey of Hautvillers. It is however, credited to our intrepid monk making wine for the abbey who, frustrated with his efforts to get the bubbles out, tasted his accidental creation and famously exclaimed "Come quickly, I am tasting the stars". This time in 1693 is considered the date fine sparkling wine was invented. Thank goodness for that and we are eternally grateful.

## LABELLING

If you look at the labels on sparkling wine there are several methods of producing the bubbles:

**Methode Traditionelle** - the second fermentation takes place in the bottle after the addition of yeast, nutrients and sugar.

**Charmat** - the second fermentation takes place in the tank.

There are other methods but these are the most popular.

Other terms on a bottle are **Cuvee** - which means tank in French - in Champagne, the very best first pressing or more usually a special blend of the house.

**Brut** - dry.

**Sec** - in French this means dry but when referring to champagne its sweeter than brut.

Our New Zealand sparklings are high quality palate pleasers and fantastically affordable. Marlborough produces a significant portion of the wines where the cool climate encourages elegance and structure with natural acidity. Weightier and richer wines are produced in Hawkes Bay and Gisborne

A great little reference to terms relating to champagne can be found in the glossary of this web site :

<http://richardgpeterson.com/champagne-glossary/> ( access is a little slow but it will work )

## FOOD MATCHES

The ideal way to kick off any special occasion is (drool) fresh oysters that taste of nothing but the sea and a glass of bubbly. Nothing added to the oysters except a little squeeze of lemon if you must.

Fish and Chips? Surely not, but it is an all-time favourite ever since sitting on the beach in Oriental Bay with friends on a glorious Wellington day with a bottle of Champagne and fresh fish and chips. There's something very liberating about sitting, wriggling your toes in the sand, the sun about to go down, great company and a good bottle of bubbles within arm's reach. We envied no one.

## FAVOURITES FOR THE SUMMER

Let's look at our favourites and it has to be Lindauer who since 1980 has produced wonderful wines from Hawkes Bay but mainly Gisborne Chardonnay grapes. It is now sold in over 20 countries and has a diverse range. Since its release it has achieved international awards and critical acclaim. We have been drinking their Lindauer Special Reserve over the Christmas period. Their Blanc de Blancs has delicious citrus notes and a creamy lingering finish.



LINDAUER has become a tradition we associate with family and friends and the quintessential Kiwi tradition which impressed Julie De Pouy so much. Incredible to think it is on special for \$11.95 most of the summer at Countdown.

Deutz Marlborough Cuvée is the result of an historic partnership with the prestigious House of Deutz in Champagne. This exquisite methode traditionnelle marries the best of Marlborough grapes with traditional French winemaking techniques.

This delicious wine which we have consumed in large quantities with friends and family lately is only \$20 in the supermarkets. In fact before Christmas it was 6 for \$100 which we snapped up. The Deutz Cuvée Blanc de Blancs is \$32.99.

Another great find has been the Alan Scott 'Cecilia' Methode Traditionelle Brut. This is a beautiful Marlborough wine with Chardonnay grapes blended with Pinot Noir. It has citrus aromas and sells for \$22.99 at Countdown.

Recommended by Cuisine Magazine is the Ha Ha Brut Cuvée. Hawkes Bay, creamy, peach brioche and hints of lemon. Well balanced wine for only \$19 on special at Countdown.

So enjoy the plentiful supply of 'bubbles' available to us over the hot summer and enjoy the 'dialled up' expression in our wines in New Zealand. We are truly lucky to have so many quality 'stars' to taste and drink.

## Gay Main

