

WINETALK

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WINE CONNOISSEURS CLUB OF HAMILTON

June 2020

Coming Functions

June 14 Askerne Tasting
July 12
August 9 Georges Rd
Sept 13 Stonecroft
Oct 11 Bushmere Estate

At last we are back in business with Askerne Winery eagerly looking forward to visiting on June 14. We are just as eager to get together again.



We will be having a very quick AGM before the tasting so will start at 4pm before Askerne start at 4.30.

JUST HAVE TO TRY THIS: GISBORNE MARSANNE AND VIOGNIER 2017 FROM THE HUNTING LODGE, WEST AUCKLAND

Going to a Thai restaurant with friends as soon as we could when we came out of level 4, the excitement was intense. So what to take for the wine? We had tried many, many, many wines during lockdown but found this in the cellar: The Hunting Lodge Gisborne Marsanne Viognier 2017, which was one of Yvonne Lorkin's wines from WineFriend that we tasted when she visited the club. It was a complex, smoky, toasty white wine made from Rhone varieties that are known to be difficult to balance out. The nose was wonderful with aromas of pine and smoked apricot followed by mandarin and lemony flavours. This is an unusual wine but The Hunting Lodge have got it just right. It was a real hit and went perfectly with the Thai Duck, pork belly and seafood. What a find, so I had to look up The Hunting Lodge and also learn about the Marsanne and Viognier grape.

THE HUNTING LODGE, WAIMAUKU, WEST AUCKLAND

West Auckland has some fine wineries and well worth a visit. [The Hunting Lodge](#) is a boutique winery, with Lawn Bar, Restaurant and events centre, perched on top of the rolling hills with beautiful rural views. It has boutique style wines like the Gisborne Marsanne Viognier and Albarino as well as their go-to wines in their Expressions wine range. They have group wine tastings and a comfortable tasting room at the Cellar Door

THE HUNTING LODGE



It has a rich heritage. Founded by the Spence Brothers, founders of Matua Wines, they created the first New Zealand Sauvignon Blanc vines. The winery gets its name from the historic building which was the country lodge of the Kerr-Taylor family from 1868. In the 1970's the country house was renovated as a fine dining restaurant and named The Hunting Lodge. Current owners Brent and Denise Sutton are keeping innovation alive - capturing the pioneering spirit of New Zealand winemaking with new and interesting wines. Their labels have an unconventional contemporary style in terms of packaging and design. Each illustration that makes up the label represents a certain aspect of their site and winemaking process.

Winemaker, Pete Turner has had 15 years in the industry fired with enthusiasm after trips around the vineyards of Europe. He believes winemaking is the most intriguing industry and should be expressive and interesting with a sense of terroir and believes in pushing the boundaries. "The Hunting Lodge winemaking philosophy is very much in keeping with the history of the land", says Pete. "We are big supporters of diversity

in New Zealand wine and besides, playing around with new things is where the fun in winemaking is. The Marsanne Viognier is one of the wines that has developed a cult following because it is different, delicious and diverse." Of course there are about 500 others involved he says - "anyone who can hold a pair of secateurs can help with harvesting and processing"!

MARSANNE is the most popular white wine grape in the Northern Rhone region and adds depth and texture to wines. It is a vigorous grape, not too compact on the vine therefore the air can penetrate the grape. It loves rocky, hillside soils and dry climates. Usually blended with Roussane in France it produces rich, deeply coloured wines with flavours of roasted nuts, pears, white peach and honeydew melon. It is a good food friendly wine pairing with shellfish and other seafood also Asian and spicy dishes.

VIOGNIER is another Rhone Valley grape but is also grown extensively in North and South America, Australia, Israel, South Africa and New Zealand. Perfumed aromas of peach, tangerine and honeysuckle. Can also be oak aged to add a rich creamy flavour and taste. Like Chardonnay, Viognier has the potential to produce full-bodied wines with a lush soft nature. In contrast to Chardonnay the Viognier varietal has more natural aromatics that include notes of peach, pears and violets, with minerality. It is often added to Syrah during fermentation stabilising the colour of the red wine. Do give it a go - you will love it.

VILAGRADS - WHAT'S GOING ON AT OUR LOCAL VINEYARD?

We are being urged to shop local so was talking to Jacob Nooyen out at Vilagrads and he is very excited about a new initiative they are starting in August. They will be opening a day cafe with Pizza and Platters. What a great idea. They are of course like a lot of businesses missing the bus loads of tourists who used to visit and taste their wines daily so this is a way of encouraging locals and visitors to the city to come out: simple choice of a pizza or platter, glass of wine, have a tasting of their wines if you wish and enjoy the beautiful surrounds of the vineyard. Friends I've told are excited to have a pleasant, rural place to go to and relax for lunch. Their famous Sunday roast lunches are back and popular as before - they have organised the social distancing, (although this won't be a problem next week we hope) and are taking bookings. Jacob also mentioned that they have had a very busy, good harvest, with the brilliant weather and his Pinot Gris, he said is stunning. So as Jacinda says - shop local!

INTERNATIONAL CHARDONNAY DAY

Last week was International Chardonnay Day so I bought 4 bottles of different Hawkes Bay Chardonnay, all around \$20 and had my own personal tasting. Any excuse.

The four I tasted were, Clearview Estate, Coastal 2018, Esk Valley 2017, Church Road 2018 and Sacred Hill Reserve 2018.

The **CLEARVIEW ESTATE** Coastal 2018 was oyster shell aromatic with white peach stone fruit and pear flavors. Soft, oak, smooth and buttery. There are six Chardonnays in their range with prices from \$22-\$175. This is the lowest priced Chardonnay and delicious. For \$20 wonderful value.

The **ESK VALLEY** 2017. Unique wine with a selection of grapes grown in the stony alluvial soils of Hawkes Bay. Fermented in both tank and French Oak barriques the flavours are influenced by stone fruit and grapefruit and a subtle oak (too subtle for me) and was a much sharper Chardonnay.



The **CHURCH ROAD** 2018 Chardonnay was recommended by Bob Campbell. After a warm summer the stone fruit, ripe Chardonnay flavours have produced a complex, soft, finely textured peach flavoured wine. Citrus enhanced by barrel fermentation with wild and selected yeast strains. There are four layers of Church Road Chardonnay from this up to TOM. Can Church Road do anything wrong? Still not enough of the oak for my liking but those who do not like a stronger oak, this is for you. Great value for money. Usually around \$21, it was on special at Pak 'n Save for \$16.99.

The **SACRED HILL** Reserve Chardonnay 2018. Had a wonderful nose and is a rich layered wine with a good balance of stone fruit and nutty oak. Select fruit from Estate vineyards carefully nurtured and a classic Hawkes Bay Chardonnay. This wine was recommended by Cuisine Magazine Best Buy, and I loved it. Like Goldilocks it was just right.

So what did I think of the four? I think the Clearview Chardonnays are wonderful and suit my palate the most. The Sacred Hill was equally beautiful and well worth a re-visit. Church Road was 3rd as not enough butter for me and I think the Esk Valley may have been past its best but of course is all down to palate with Chardonnay.

They are all worth a try and they are all enjoyable but like most wines, some are more enjoyable than others. Depending on palate. Chardonnay is still a top drop in all forms.

WINESPEAK:

BARREL-FERMENTATION: When the fermentation of alcohol takes place in wood rather than in a tank or vat.

MAGNUM: A large 1.5 litre bottle containing two 750 ml bottles of wine. (Remember this as David's very hard quizzes may test you on this topic).

HOLLOW: A wine that lacks balance of fruit, when length of flavour is short.

R.I.P. MARY MORRIN

Sorry to have to report that our friend and very long - time club member and all-round lovely lady Mary Morrin has passed away in Napier. Her son in Napier let us know she had passed. Mary was in her late 80's and along with her husband Peter were enthusiastic club members for over 20 years. Peter kept coming to the club with Mary almost up until his death even though he was extremely ill and in a wheelchair. They always joined in Christmas parties, dress up nights with French wine tastings and I remember them in togas for an Italian wine tasting many years ago. Mary's 80th birthday was a Wine Club classic with dancing, drinking and laughter. Mary went to live in Napier near her son when Peter died, and we missed her lovely smile and personality.



RIP Mary and cheers.

Look forward to seeing you all on June 14th. And remember what the great Karl Marx said, "Be careful to trust a man who does not like wine".

Cheers,
Gay Main

P.S. Clicking on some of the images and text will via a prompt open a new tab in your browser to take you to the original article