

WINETALK

345

WINE CONNOISSEURS CLUB OF HAMILTON

March 2020

Coming Functions

April 19 Cellar – Sauvignon Blanc
May 17 AGM – date to be confirmed
June 14 Askerne
July 12
August 9 Georges Rd

LAST MONTH'S TASTING

What a superb tasting with Yvonne last month. She said it would be fast, furious and fun and that's just what it was. Quite different to our other tastings and what beautiful wines at reasonable prices. We had our biggest attendance at 32 and gained two new members with two other new attendees. Lot of energy and laughs there. Hope you are enjoying the wines - we certainly are, especially the Sangiovese (already going to have to order more of that) and the Zinfandel (also getting down a bit). Yvonne enjoyed the night and was impressed with our relaxed friendly feel and our wine knowledge (we were on our best behaviour). Apparently, we cleaned her out of some of the wines so well done us.

CALIFORNIA ZINFANDEL

The Hayes Ranch, California Zinfandel tasted at the last tasting was so juicy and delicious, I was surprised, it was so drinkable. In my ignorance I thought that Zinfandel was a white wine and had no idea it was a red as well and so seriously gorgeous.

Zinfandel is a black-skinned wine grape and is grown in over 10% of California's vineyards. DNA analysis has revealed it is genetically equivalent to certain famous Croatian grapes, as well as to the Primitivo variety, traditionally grown in Apulia, Italy where it was introduced from Croatia in the 18th century. It made its way to California in the Gold Rush days where it was planted all over but the Prohibition era in America and the Great Depression left vineyards virtually untended in many parts of California. It became known as the home-grown weed and what could be done with thousands of acres of vines left untended?

However, in the 1950's Italian immigrant Mario Trinchero left New York city in search of a better life in the Napa Valley, California and with unwavering fortitude, sheer hard work and good fortune produced the world's first white Zinfandel. It was an unprecedented success and Zinfandel became the most sought after for vineyards in Napa. Wine growers realised that Zinfandel can and should be a red wine and the Californian wine industry really took off. Vineyards were re-established on the previous



'home-grown weed' and the different areas of California now have billion-dollar businesses with the Zinfandel grape grown in over 10% of their vineyards. [The Trinchero family](#), descendants of Mario are still brilliantly successful wine producers and now have a portfolio of 50 global wine and spirit labels. Their story is a realisation of the 'American Dream' - check it out on their website www.trincheronapavalley.com

Zinfandel has two potential problems viticulturally. It is a high producing grape and unless severely pruned it tends to create too many grapes and uneven ripening which with being tightly packed means the grapes start to raisin. Being tightly packed it can also cause rotting of the grapes as well. It needs a lot more care in the vineyard than say a Cabernet, so is quite labour intensive. Good on the Trincheros and other Californian winemakers for reviving and persevering to produce great wines from what was virtually a wasteland.

With bay leaf, black pepper, cocoa and cherry by the bootful oozing out of every mouthful, the [Hayes Ranch](#) California 2015 Zinfandel is a seriously gorgeous wine. As their website says: "It's so gentle and juicy and dangerously easy on the oesophagus that you have got to simply taste this like a true Californian, with smoked salami, sunset skies, bonfire nights, dirt roads and live music." There's plenty of sunsets around, plenty of salami, we're not allowed a bonfire but hey, find a dirt road and give it a go.

WINESPEAK - YOU'LL NEED YOUR MOUTH

A couple of WINETALKs ago we discussed 'your nose' and the importance of smell when it comes to tasting wine. While what we taste usually qualifies what we smell, the one major advantage your mouth has over your nose is that it can feel texture as well as discern sugar, acidity and tannin.



Texture, or how a wine feels in your mouth, is really important. Wine can feel silky and fine, lean and austere, oily and round, or rough and aggressive. Beyond smell and taste, how a wine feels in your mouth will heavily influence your reaction to the overall package. You can divide your tongue into three parts: the front senses saltiness and sweetness, the sides and middle sense acidity, and the back senses alcohol and tannin.

Take a sip, about half a mouthful is perfect. Rather than swallowing it, give it a good swish around your mouth. Try to suck a bit of air in at the same time - without dribbling - it's a bit like whistling in reverse. Giving the wine a good swishing around your mouth will give you a good idea of the taste and feel of the wine, with the air helping to release more flavour.

With the wine in your mouth think about body: is it light like water or heavy like a malty Speights? Is the flavour sweet, sour, bitter, salty, dry or hot? Is the texture like minerality, like water or oily like olive oil? Is there balance in the wine like a finely tuned and organised orchestra all playing from the same page at the same time or is it a messy jigsaw puzzle? Think of the length and how long the taste of the wine lingers after swallowing. By now you will have fully realised everything about the wine and can make a decision on whether it is a great wine - or not. And almost like an echo, great wine will often resonate, going on and on long after you have swallowed it.

VINTAGE - VILLA MARIA DOCUMENTARY NOT TO BE MISSED

If you have ever wondered what goes into making our wines, from grape to glass, this doco takes a peek behind the curtain of a modern winery from the moment the grapes arrive at the height of harvest. Very rarely do you get to see the hard graft that goes into every bottle and meet the down-to-earth people whose year's work is determined by mother nature.



A feature length documentary aptly named VINTAGE tells the story of winemaking in New Zealand filmed during the harvest of March 2019 over 40 action packed days. Set in the vineyards of Marlborough and Hawkes Bay, VINTAGE follows Chief Winemaker Nich Peconi, Marlborough Viticulturist Stuart Dudley, Jess Marston, a young Viticulturist Cadet experiencing her first ever vintage and Chief Viticulturist Ollie Powrie throwing everything they have to give into their work, ensuring nature, science and a little bit of magic come



together to produce exceptional wines that set New Zealand apart on the world stage. Told through the eyes of these four everyday kiwis, VINTAGE captures how the team copes with unforeseen challenges, vastly varying climates, frost-filled mornings and sleepless nights. You are taken on a journey featuring the wind-swept coastal vineyards of Marlborough where the vines produce world-famous Sauvignon Blanc and the sun-soaked landscape of Hawkes Bay. Their passion, expertise and quest for perfection is unparalleled as the four share their individual journeys. It gives you an authentic taste of the all-consuming harvest period known as vintage and the passion and hard work behind this quest for perfection. Anyone who is in awe of great wine should watch this documentary. And isn't that all of us?

It has been on TV3 and it is on 3 on demand and you can find out where to stream at www.villamaria.co.nz/about/vintage-by-villa-maria/

Responsible hosts

The Wine Club believes in being a responsible host and we try to bring this accountability along to all our functions by providing food to go with the wines and by considering the wines, their alcohol levels and quantities of each wine we provide.

Recently we were offered a tasting which would have consisted of 9 wines, which after reflection we considered it a little excessive. Before making this decision we did a little research on the subject of wine, drinking and driving using this website as a reference -

<https://www.newzealandnow.govt.nz/resources/alcohol-and-driving-not-worth-the-risks>

The research showed that we are potentially getting up to around 2+ glasses of wine if we taste 9 wines so is that a little excessive? This is based on the "two fingers" of each wine we try to pour which is around 50ml so 9 wines tasted would be approximately 450ml (at our regular tasting we would be consuming about 6 x 50ml or 300ml)

From the above-mentioned web site :

Staying within the limit

Many factors affect how quickly your body takes up alcohol. These include your body type, whether you are a man or woman, your weight, how much alcohol you have consumed and how quickly, and how much and how recently you have eaten.



A simple measure you can use to help you work out how much alcohol you have been drinking is the 'standard drink'.

A standard drink is the equivalent of 10g of alcohol. Bottles, cans and casks carry labels that will tell you how many standard drinks they contain, but as a general rule a standard drink is 330ml of beer, 100ml of wine or 30ml of straight spirits.

Often a drink will have more alcohol than you think.

The Institute of Environmental Science and Research (ESR) has estimated that at most, adults may be able to drink two standard drinks in the first hour, and then a single drink each hour and are likely to remain under the drink-driving limits for adults over the age of 20.

A single drink affects your ability to drive safely; there is no 'safe' level. The New Zealand Police point out it is safest not to drink and drive at all.

So using this as a guide the 9 wines would likely put us over the recommended consumption for a 2hr function which would be around 200ml in 2hrs.

As we were looking at something around 450ml in 2hrs we think this would exceed good practice and as our tastings run usually closer to 1.5hrs the level consumed is probably a lot worse than the above numbers.

So we made the decision to limit the number of wines tasted so we can all enjoy good wines and good company in the future.

MESSAGE FROM GRUMPY

Please can you let David know by the Friday night before at the latest if you are coming to Wine Club (or not). If you find you have said you are coming and life intervenes and you cannot come (now that's a mouthful), please let him know by lunchtime Sunday. We need to know how much wine is needed, how much food to buy, how many tables to set up, number of glasses and platters etc.

Thank you.

Love Grumpy.



Really looking forward to the Clearview Estate Tasting as following medical advice, I have to drink wine because the doctor told me I shouldn't keep things bottled up.

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