

WINETALK

341

WINE CONNOISSEURS CLUB OF HAMILTON

October 2019

Coming Functions

Oct 13 Cellar wines tasting - TBC
Nov 10 Maison Noire tasting
Dec 07 Xmas Function
Jan xx January BBQ – date TBC
Feb xx TBC

200 YEARS OF NEW ZEALAND WINE

September 25, 2019 was a momentous day for the New Zealand Wine Industry as it celebrated 200 years since the first vines were planted in front of the Stone Store at Kerikeri in the Bay of Islands. Several members of the New Zealand Winegrowers Institute, local

dignitaries and winemakers re-enacted the plantings by Samuel Marsden 200 years ago at Kerikeri.

Several different types of vines were planted by the Reverend Samuel Marsden, who was sent to establish Anglican Mission Stations in New Zealand. On 25 September, 1819, he recorded in his diary "Should the vines succeed, it will prove of vast importance in this part of the world." Little did he know but he was planting the seeds of what is now a \$1.83 billion a year export earner.



However, he was better at keeping a diary than looking after his vines. Most of the vines were eaten by goats before they had a chance to get established. A rather inauspicious start to our wine industry.

"I think this is a hard case story," says Peter Jones, General Manager of The Landing Wines in Northland. "It almost symbolises New Zealand - bringing in some grapes and bringing in some goats!" The story also reflects New Zealand's pioneering spirit, Jones says. "Somebody came in and had a go, it didn't work - so somebody else had a go - and it did work."



Fortunately New Zealand's next attempt at winemaking was a success. The country's first British Resident, James Busby, started a small vineyard at Waitangi, near what is now known as the Treaty House. Busby was an enthusiastic supporter of wine production and when he was eventually sent to NSW in Australia, he helped establish vineyards in the Hunter Valley. The wine produced by Busby received what was arguably New Zealand's first wine review, when French explorer Dumont d'Urville described it in 1840 as ".....light white wine, bright and intense, which I found to have an excellent taste and which I drank with pleasure." So even though the goats attacked, it hasn't stopped the wine industry from flourishing, showing the resilience of the industry.

MISSION ESTATE IS ESTABLISHED

The establishment of New Zealand's oldest still running winery, Mission Estate in Hawkes Bay, was not far behind the country's first recorded wine. French Marist brothers established the Mission in 1851, planting vines from France to produce wine for both religious use as well as enjoyment. Mission Estate recorded its first commercial sale in 1870.

Winemaker Paul Mooney says it is important to reflect on the industry's unique 200 year history. "The industry should be very proud of its wine-making history." The Estate's history plays a vital role in the wine story today with Mooney having been taught his craft by the French Marists. "It is the people in the wine industry, great people who have shown leadership and innovation, collaboration and determination to produce the very best wines in New Zealand and lead the way for others to follow." And follow they did.....

MARLBOROUGH SAUVIGNON BLANC

Love it or hate it, Sauvignon Blanc is our most famous wine. New Zealand's prosperity in exporting wines starts with one variety in one place - Sauvignon Blanc grown in Marlborough.



The South Island was initially considered too cold to grow grapes, but then Montana Managing Director, Frank Yukich, descendant of Croatian winemakers who established themselves in West Auckland, decided to go against the grain on a Marlborough Farm, forming in the process what is now Brancott Estate.

The first vines were planted on August 28, 1973 to much fanfare with the Auckland Star recording the historic planting. The fanfare was justified with Sauvignon Blanc becoming a virtual overnight success after the first vintage was made in 1979, catapulting New Zealand

wines onto the world stage. US wine writer Matt Kramer recently said Marlborough's Sauvignon Blancs success stood out internationally. "No one anywhere has achieved what has been achieved in Marlborough. It is an international success story." The rest as they say, is history.

Brian Main and I have been tasting some Brancott Estate Sav Blancs to celebrate Frank Yukich's taking a massive gamble and also celebrating our greatest success in our 200 year history.

Brancott have released three Special Limited Edition 2018 wines to celebrate being chosen as the exclusive supplier of wine to Team New Zealand for the 36th Americas Cup, 2021 in Auckland. They have different brightly coloured labels with nautical flags. It is an interesting story.

Three team members chose each wine, 2 Sauvignon Blancs and a Pinot Noir and have signed the labels. They visited the winery and talked to the winemakers and owners before making their choices. The labels are a standout on the shelves so I thought I would taste one of these 2018 wines and also a very new release of a 2019 Sav Blanc from Brancott.

The 2018 Americas Cup Sav Blanc was fresh, fruity with all the characteristics of a Marlborough grown wine. Brian preferred this to the newer 2019 (more guts according to him). The 2019 early release was the one I liked the most as it was fresh, light, typical fruit driven with hints of passionfruit, lime and grasses. Beautiful and refreshing. The beauty of this is it is on special at Countdown for \$11. What a bargain. There are of course different levels of their wines, but for those Sauvignon lovers, this was a beauty. If this 2019 is typical of what we can expect from the 2019 Marlborough vintage, I am very excited.



Great wine to celebrate the 200 year history of our winemaking industry and our biggest star.

SPRING IS HERE

At this stage you know that spring is just around the corner - chilly nights, cold mornings, sunny/rainy days, big winds, the return of green to the garden and short sleeves for the enthusiastic.



The weather does affect people's mood. As Mother Nature's mood changes for the better so does your food and wine outlook.

Asparagus, broad beans, avocados and great lamb and fish - your wine drinking turns to fresh whites, delicate pinks and soft reds, the colours of the season.

Sauvignon Blanc with goat's cheese, broad beans, basil lemon and mint; Rose'

with the new season's sweetest tomatoes; Cabernet Sauvignon with sweet spring lamb. When spring finally arrives, fresh young wines create some of the



best wine and food combinations. We no longer need stews, thick soups, comfort food and heavy red wines. Let's enjoy the change of season and look forward to some lighter wines and fresh seasonal food. And then before you know it summer, sandals and salads are here.....then there are the gorgeous sparklings..... and then there are all the whites and pinks with the prawns from the barbie.....then there is the Pinot Noir with the steak from the barbie.....so much to look forward to.



WINE AND CHOCOLATE

Some say it can't be done, pairing wine with chocolate but if you choose the right wine to complement the right chocolate, it can be a remarkable pairing. Perhaps this is because the process of chocolate making is very



similar to winemaking - both cocoa beans and grapes are fermented with the same yeast. No wonder there are so many wine and chocolate lovers. As far as I am concerned, as soon as I have a glass of Aussie Shiraz, I am searching for the dark chocolate. Here's a helping hand for those difficult choices and pairings. Mainly taken from Wine Folly and The Real Review.

WHITE CHOCOLATE: Isn't really chocolate because it doesn't include cocoa, just chocolate fat. This little known fact makes it one of the most versatile pairings with wine. Have it with a slightly sweet sparkling Italian white, Riesling or a Noble wine.

MILK CHOCOLATE: Pair with a rich, sweet fortified wine, Sherry, Port or Asti. Macadamia nuts are suggested to be excellent with this pairing.

DARK CHOCOLATE: (decadence) - now you're talking. Dense, full flavoured chocolate with an Aussie Shiraz from the Barossa or McLaren Vale, and a Cabernet Sauvignon. Dark chocolate makes red wines taste softer and slightly mellower. Not good with sweet or white wines. Chilli Chocolate is also excellent with these reds and a Pinot Noir.



Apparently the best way to eat chocolate is break it up into small pieces and let it melt on your tongue - do not chew. Hope this all helps and you enjoy the pairings.

WINESPEAK

LEES: Sediment at the bottom of a barrel, tank or vat consisting of yeast or other solids.

NOBLE ROT: A rot that shrivels and concentrates sugar in grapes, producing lusciously sweet wines.

WEIGHT: Related to BODY; both red and white wine can range from light to heavy in weight.

WINEMAKING IN A NUTSHELL:



Pick 'em,



Crush 'em,



Ferment 'em



Bottle 'em



Drink 'em

Happy Spring drinking and happy 200th birthday of the NZ Wine Industry.

Gay Main