

WINETALK

340

WINE CONNOISSEURS CLUB OF HAMILTON

September 2019

Coming Functions

Sept 8	Pask tasting
Oct 13	Cellar wines tasting - TBC
Nov 10	Maison Noire tasting
Dec xx	Xmas – date to be confirmed
Jan xx	January BBQ

PINOT NOIR - ELEGANT, DIVINE, COMPLEX

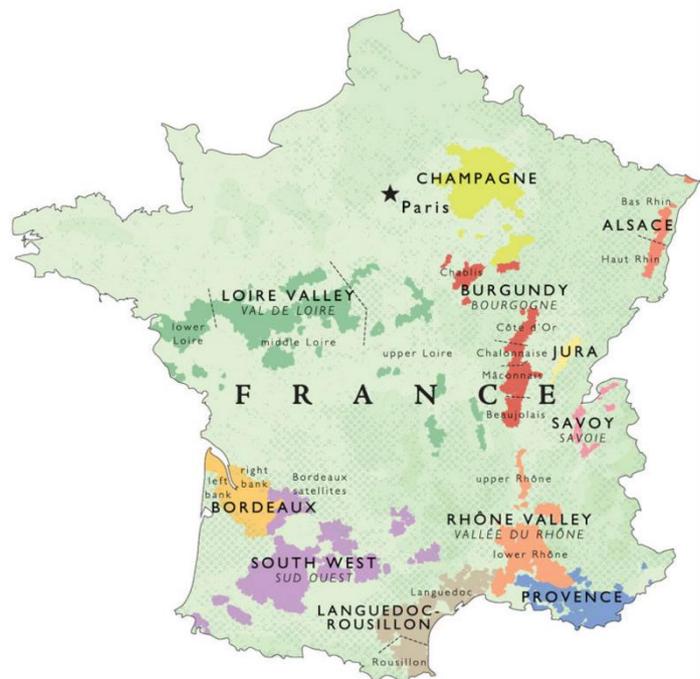
International Pinot Noir Day was recently held on August 18th. This stunning grape was celebrated around the world with tastings, banquets and festivals and was a chance to admire and taste this classic grape. So, where did the grape variety come from and why is it so revered? Burgundy in France is the home of Pinot Noir and is still the basis of their red wine making in this iconic region.

Pinot Noir is the oldest grape variety in the world. The Romans loved wine so much that they are thought to have drunk 180 million litres a year, the equivalent of one bottle of wine per citizen per day! But until now it has been unclear as to what they were quaffing. Researchers at the Universities of York and Copenhagen have analysed grape seeds discovered at classical sites in France from the Iron Age, Roman Era and Medieval Times and found they were close relatives of the modern Syrah and Pinot Noir varieties. Identical seeds have been found at two Roman sites 600km apart and dating back 2000 years.

Researchers also found writings by Roman authors and naturalists who discovered the Romans had advanced knowledge of winemaking and designated specific names to wine varieties. Through genetics today, we know exactly what the Romans were growing and what they were drinking in great quantities. Mainly Pinot Noir. Who knows if they were as complex and elegant as they are today. But they certainly loved it!

This Burgundian grape has now found a home away from home in New Zealand where New Zealand winemakers have teased an array of distinct regional and terroir driven Pinot Noir styles from the land. Pinot Noir is predominantly grown in the cooler regions - the Wairarapa, Marlborough, Nelson, Canterbury and Waipara, and Central Otago. Because of the huge diversity in climates and soils from these main Pinot Noir producing regions, common to all is structure and elegance overlaid by power and fruit driven intensity. Old World structure and elegance overlaying New World power and fruit driven intensity. With the Pinots from Burgundy reaching astronomical prices for what some wine critics say have been disappointing vintages, the eyes of the old world are turning to the new world Pinot Noirs with Australia, New Zealand and surprisingly Canada producing stunning vintages of Pinot Noirs.

James Busby, French Missionaries and Samuel Marsden all established vines for British soldiers and church



communion wine. French Miners and Dalmatian gum diggers also brought their own cuttings and vines, but in 1863, William Beetham was recognised as being the first pioneer to plant Pinot Noir grapes in New Zealand at his Landsdowne Vineyard in Masterton in the Wairarapa. Beetham (having the good luck to have a French wife Hermance who was well versed in wine) were the innovators of the development of Pinot Noir recognising the terroir to be similar to Burgundy. Their partnership enthusiastically pursued winemaking and helped form the basis for modern New Zealand viticulture practices.

New Zealand has impressive growth in export sales of Pinot Noir in the last five year with 1.5 million cases exported in 12 months to June 2018. It is now second only to Sauvignon Blanc in production volume.

BOB CAMPBELL has recommended a 'Brilliant' [Dashwood](#) 2018 Pinot Noir from Marlborough which is due for release. It was the overall top wine at the NZ Wine Awards and he describes it as 'delicious, cherry flavours, a tangy liveliness -but actually it has 'real drinkability'. The best thing is it is \$18, which is an incredible price for a wine of this quality. He said Dashwood seem to be putting excellent wines out year after year and with the average price of Pinot in New Zealand being \$40, this is incredible value. At the moment at the supermarket the 2017 Dashwood which is about to run out, is \$16.99. "This is a trans-season wine to ease yourself into spring and it puts a smile on your face".



DASHWOOD

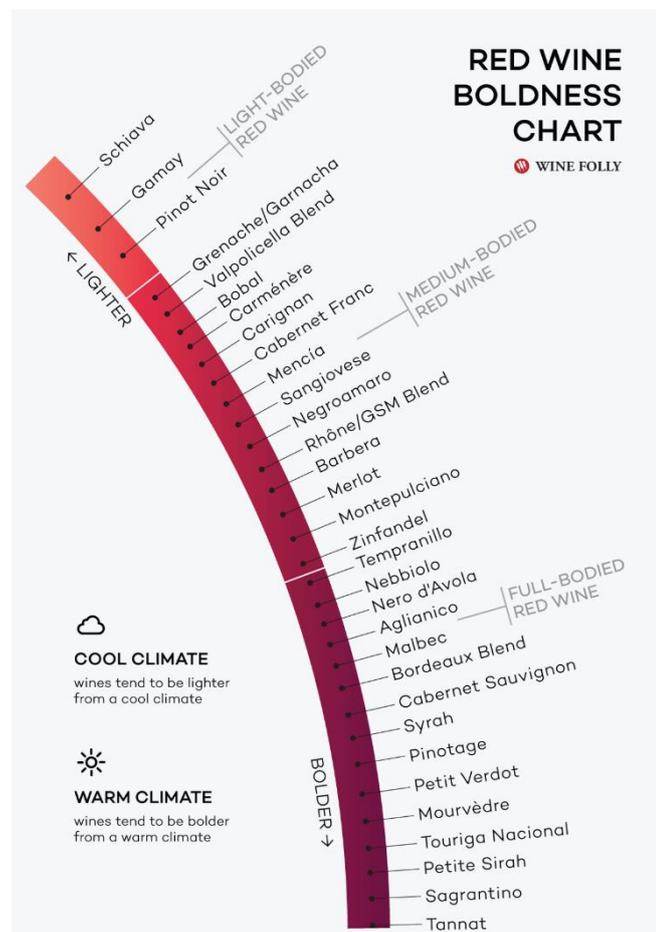
Drink Pinots with robust red meats, lamb, veal or a pasta with a rich meat tomato sauce or it goes well with duck. Just drink and enjoy our elegant, beautiful Pinot Noirs - I think that with Pinot you don't need food to get the best out of them. You need time to enjoy them slowly.

HOW IMPORTANT IS THE COLOUR OF RED WINE?

Australian Master of Wine, Toni Paterson in The Real Review, debates the importance of the colour of red wine and says colour can be an indicator of many things about wine, though it needs to be considered with other things to draw conclusions about wine quality. " For example, a red/brown tinge is to be expected with a very old red wine, though it could be a sign of oxidation in a young, new release. People often use colour as a sign of quality, however, it is important to view colour in the context of the grape variety, age and style of the wine. In high coloured varieties like Shiraz and Cabernet Sauvignon, there should be good colour depth and intensity. In a young wine, purple hues are generally a good sign. Although the darkest wines are not necessarily the highest quality."

Fashion also plays a part in what we consider an acceptable wine colour. Take Rosés. What we once loved was its bright crimson hue, but today the fashion for rosés is pink and pale - even rosés/gold shades are acceptable and 'fashionable'. We are tending to shie away from the darker rosés now.

"So, when assessing red wine, do look at the colour, however, let your palate determine your overall view of the wine, rather than making a decision based only on colour".



WHAT MAKES A 'GOOD YEAR' FOR WINE

Essentially the difference between good and bad years comes down to Mother Nature. For starters we should clarify what we mean by 'year'. The year for vintage (as it's known in the wine world) that appears on the bottle of wine refers to the year in which the grapes were harvested. Few wines appear without a vintage on the label. Exceptions to the rule include Champagne, Port and Sherry, where, even though single vintage examples are produced, often wines are created by blending a number of different years in order to maintain a consistent house style, year in, year out.

Climate is the real key. Grapes are delicate creatures - they like long, dry growing seasons. They like sun; and a little bit of water, although not too much; and they like it warm. Apart from a lack of warmth, or too much warmth, the real threat to vineyards comes during Springtime, when frosts are prone to literally freezing new growth from vines. Assuming the vines make it through the spring, summer also brings with it the threat of rain and hail - both of which can completely ruin a crop of grapes.

Beyond that, other factors that help to determine a good year may include vineyard management and/or how the wine was handled in the winery. To this end, the appearance of a vintage also acts as a valuable reference point for knowing when the perfect time to drink your wine is. Look online for the years considered to be 'good years'.

WINESPEAK: PALATE, FINISH AND LENGTH

PALATE is wine tasting jargon for the mouth.

FINISH is what you can taste and sense after swallowing a wine.

LENGTH is the length of time you can taste and sense the wine after swallowing. The longer the taste and sense, the better the wine.

WHAT ARE WE DRINKING?

Kathy Buchanan, the Club's Treasurer and storer of pallets of members ordered wine in her garage, is drinking an [Amisfield](#) Chenin Blanc from Central Otago "It is a 2015 so been resting in the cellar for a while. Apricot and apple flavours and tastes delicious." Makes me want to get into some lovely whites.



Brian Main (who has been confined to the house after a knee operation!!!!) was visited by friend and Wine Club member Peter Shaw armed with a 1996 [Wolf Blass](#) President's Selection South Australian Shiraz The President's Selection is produced from premium fruit selected from vineyards in the Barossa, McLaren Vale and Langhorne Creek in South Australia and was matured in French and American Oak for twenty-eight months. The bouquet is intense, peppery and full of spiced fruit and chocolate characters. Rich and full bodied and a WOW Shiraz. I was allowed a small taste and it was delicious and perfect for a winter's day with friends. I could have drunk a bottle myself and not shared really. Was a power of good for Brian's knee...

Spring is in the air and so are the refreshing whites we can look to on the warmer days. Those refreshing Sav Blancs, Chenin Blancs and Pinot Gris are calling so will look at our spring drinking next month.

Don't forget the movie '**A Seat at the Table**' Saturday 7th September, Lido Cinema, 6pm.

Gay Main