

WINETALK

351

WINE CONNOISSEURS CLUB OF HAMILTON

September 2020

Coming Functions

Sept 13	Stonecroft
Oct 11	Bushmere Estate
Nov 8	
Dec ?	Xmas Function
Jan ?	New Year BBQ

IT WAS JUST A DRINK

In the beginning, all wine was created equal. It was just a drink. Grapes were grown, harvested, crushed, fermented, bottled and drunk. There was no wine culture to tangle yourself up in, no pretty labels to be puzzled by, no fancy wine-speak to learn and

no tricks to make choosing a wine any easier. There was no choice. There was just wine. You drank it.

Then something happened. Wine became a saleable commodity - a popular one too - a product with real value. It became clear that particular countries were better at producing wine than others - but it didn't stop there. Particular areas within particular countries were better than others. Particular producers within particular areas were better than others. Particular wines from particular producers were better than others!

It became clear that there were a lot of 'particulars' and just as many 'others', and that's when wine stopped being simply a drink and became something more complex. The more you learn about wine the more you realise how much you don't know, although along the way you pick up endless bits of good advice, great tips and genuine pearls of wisdom that have helped fill in the gaps - the kind of practical information that anyone can use to help them get more from wine. Which of course is why we are in our Wine Club. Without spending a fortune or years of study, the Club can help you get more from your wine. That's what we are all about. Wine is an amazing drink made better by the tiniest of efforts and we hope that is what you get out of the Club. Better understanding of this glorious drink along with like-minded people.

GEORGES ROAD WINERY

What a fabulous tasting from Kirk and his 'PA'. Every one of the wines was just beautiful. Certainly, quite different to the Hawkes Bay Wines we have had from other visitors. They were quite Germanic in style, mainly because Kirk had spent years working in Germany in the Vineyards up near the Alsace area of France. This was reflected in his wines and shows the different wine styles, terroir and flavours he has furnished for his wines. What a treat they were. Judging by the number of wine boxes on the pallet in Kathy's garage, everyone else enjoyed them as well! Kirk had a very good night at the Morrinsville Wine Club (I have contacts there) and also made contact with Chris Barclay at Hamilton Beer and Wine. So a very successful visit from down South for him.



WINERIES OUT WEST

What an adventure out West many of the Wine Club members had when they toured and tasted at 6 wineries. And what great timing as it happened before Auckland went into Level 3. Some of the wines were excellent, especially the Kumeu River Chardonnays which were just superb. Soljans Winery, with the lovely owner Tony Soljan presenting, were very friendly and welcoming and their wines delicious. There were some

stunning locations with views across the hills. The Hunting Lodge and Westbrook were in a beautiful rural setting while in comparison, Babich was in Henderson high on a hill with views across the city. It is a shame the vineyards are being taken over by urbanisation. The committee are looking at more day trips to wineries as they are very popular with members, especially those working, as they don't have to take time off work. So watch this space. We hope 'the bug' doesn't interfere with our trips.

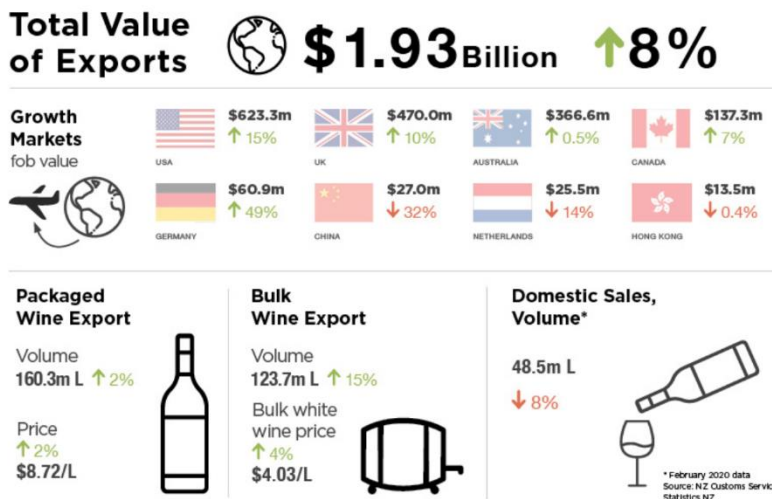


WINE EXPORTS AND LOCAL MARKETS CONTINUE TO RISE DEPITE COVID

The latest data from New Zealand Wine Growers shows wine exports have reached a record \$1.92 billion for the year ended June 30, 2020, a 6% increase on 2019.

The United States and Britain continue to be the top export markets. The impact of Covid-19 varied significantly between our export markets depending on the local government's response to the health crisis. Some countries such as India and Thailand were subject to temporary alcohol sale bans. On the other hand, there was a noticeable sales boost in key European markets fueled by increased home consumption. However, in some countries where our wine is sold through restaurants and hotels, sales have been slower as the hospitality industry has slowed down.

YEALANDS wine group CEO Tiffani Graydon said the first few weeks of lockdown had its challenges for wine growers. "People's habits changed dramatically with lockdown and presented new challenges. There was



April 2020

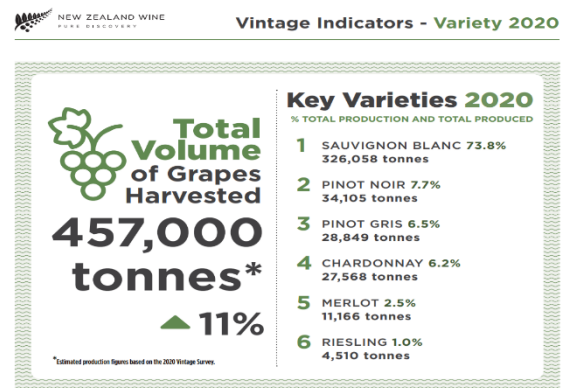
an enormous surge in online sales which allowed us to secure a lot more business opportunities. Because of their affordable price range and reputation, New Zealand wines were able to negotiate these changes and take advantage of them."

New Zealand Winegrowers Chair, John Clarke, said wineries had responded 'dramatically' to the marketplace challenges of Covid-19 and changes in consumer behaviour. "Wineries have seen sales increase with an increased focus on direct to consumer sales and online marketing, while the larger wineries, whose focus is on big retail channels, have also seen their sales increase."

So, I am very proud that we have contributed to the rise in wine sales and all done our bit for the economy in these trying economic times. I know I have done more than my bit for the good of the country.

NEW ZEALAND VINTAGE 2020

New Zealand's vintage was undertaken primarily during Lockdown Level 4 which was the most crucial time of Harvest. Despite the challenges the industry had an "incredible harvest." The Marlborough grape harvest this year pulled in 343,036 tonnes, nearly 40,000 more tonnes than last year. A total of 457,000 tonnes of grapes were harvested across New Zealand. The 2020 harvest reflected the near perfect growing conditions experienced throughout most of the country and a 2% increase in planted areas to 39,935 hectares, said John Clarke New Zealand Winegrowers' Chair. "While it will be forever remembered as the Covid-19 harvest, the wonderful summer conditions throughout the country has contributed to the outstanding vintage for our wine regions."



LAST OF THE WINTER WINE?

Had a big gutsy red this week, a wine with weight and stuffing - a Cabernet Sauvignon- which was a prize for the win on the Options Quiz Night held recently at the club. Usually a Cab Sav is too heavy, in my opinion, but this was big, gutsy and went down well with a slow roasted meal on a cold night. It was a George Wyndham, Bin 444 Cabernet Sauvignon 2018 from the Barossa. Big red drinkers will love it with its rich generous flavours of blackcurrant, plums and berry fruits. It also had a subtle use of French Oak, adding to its deliciousness.

Of course, the next day the first signs of Spring turned up - chilly morning, warm day and I did not want a heavy red again. Yeah for return of the lovely weather, the lovely Rosés and Whites, salads, asparagus, broad beans with a Chardonnay on the deck (maybe). So much to look forward to.

WINESPEAK:

GRIP: A wine that has firm structure from tannin. More commonly found in red wine.

RIFE - RIPENESS: A wine that tastes rich and naturally sweet thanks to fully ripe grapes.

ROUND; Related to balance. When a wine is smooth with no hard edges.

This month we have organic wines from Stonecroft in the Gimblett Gravels region of Hawkes Bay. Should be interesting and we will be able to compare the terroir with the Waipara Valley wines we tasted last month.

Look forward to October as we are arranging a 'bit of a do'. Cellarmaster Dave Edson said we HAVE to drink some of our cellar wines. We have had so many wonderful wineries coming to visit us we have not been able to use our collection for a while, plus these wineries usually leave a couple of bottles for us to use in raffles. We are discussing this and may incorporate a pot-luck dinner so we can taste and drink these wines. Also, a famous Marlborough winery wishes to come and present their wines to us in October. So, we will sort that out as well - prepare for a busy October - you may have a double dose of tastings.

Cheers,
Gay Main



Stonecroft Tasting - September 13th

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