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Do You Get Value at Fox Creek?

JIM WATTS *Director*

We believe you do, but what about the experts? Wine show results are very useful to maintain standards as judged by other winemakers. But many wines you enjoy are not awarded show medals or even entered into shows.

Another measure of quality is what wine journalists think. These experts would not survive long if they were out of tune with public perceptions of particular wines. Therefore, you can argue that their views are far more relevant to what people want to drink than wine show results.

Can I direct you to the 2003/2004 Penguin Wine Guide written by two prominent newspaper wine journalists Huon Hooke and Ralph Kyte-Powell. In this particular edition, they have tasted and reviewed over 1,000 wines sent to them by wine companies as the pick of their products.

Of all the red wines tasted by them for this edition nine were selected as being both of the very highest quality and the very best value. Two of these nine wines were the Fox Creek **2001 JSM Shiraz-Cabernet Franc** and the **2001 Short Row Shiraz**. We are extremely proud about such extraordinary recognition!

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Whilst the Short Row Shiraz is already sold out here, look for it in shops or restaurants. The JSM is made in much larger quantities and is still available by mail order.

New Releases

2001 RESERVE CABERNET SAUVIGNON

This is a stunning wine that will improve in bottle for many years, but is ready to drink now. For full enjoyment of this wine now we would suggest decanting first (see article on page 2). It is now two and a half years since the grapes used in the wine were harvested. This wine's quality has already been recognized in three separate national wine shows at which it was awarded Silver Medals.

2003 VERDELHO

Verdelho is becoming a very popular variety these days and I hope we have played our part in that. This wine smells and tastes of pineapple and lime and is very zesty on the palate.

Detailed tasting notes for our wines are available from us or on our website.

Stop Press

Our 2002 Semillon-Sauvignon Blanc has just won the Consumer's Trophy for the Best Semillon at the Advertiser / Hyatt SA Wine of the Year Awards. We are delighted to pick up the Consumer's Trophy as the 2001 vintage of this wine won the Judges Trophy last year! This wine also picked up Silver at the Hong Kong International Wine Challenge recently.



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Decanting Wine ~ A User's Guide DAN HILLS Winemaker



The age old question of "to decant or not to decant" is discussed by David & Christine Lynch and Annette & John Minehan and Shadow.

People often talk about opening a bottle of red wine before drinking in order to let the wine "breathe". Whilst this may be a suitable "pre-dinner" preparation in some people's minds, from experience I can tell you that it is far from effective unless you decant the wine.

Oxygen in the air is the main factor that is adding "quality" when wine is decanted. However, too much oxygen can be detrimental. How much is too much you ask? It depends upon the wine style and age. Tannin is a natural anti-oxidant and so too is sulphur dioxide (preservative 220). These factors are present in red wines to a greater or lesser extent. A youthful Cabernet Sauvignon (less than two or three years from vintage) will greatly benefit from decanting due

to these two substances being present at reasonable levels. As a wine ages the tannins will soften and the level of sulphur dioxide will diminish, rendering the wine more susceptible to the effects of oxygen. That doesn't

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mean you shouldn't decant it. When the wine is young you can be fairly exuberant in the decanting. I would happily use a clean glass jug, pour the wine into the jug roughly, just taking care to watch for sediment, clean the bottle with a little water and then pour the wine back into the bottle. This is called double decanting. When the wine is older I would decant it more

carefully down the side of a glass or crystal decanter. A specialised wine funnel makes the job of straining any sediment quite easy.

The timing of decanting is open to debate. If a wine is young and robust, I usually decant it several hours before drinking. When a wine is much older and more fragile I would consider letting the wine reach room temperature before pulling the cork and then decant it, maybe 30 minutes, before drinking. And always, always check for cork taint. You want the experience to be memorable for the right reasons. Cork taint will just spoil the party. Just before decanting any wine, pour a little into a clean glass, swirl, sniff, sip and of course drink. If the wine tastes good before decanting, it should taste even better afterwards.

Why decant red wine and not white wine? Well you can decant white wine, but temperature is an issue and if you have had the white in the fridge for a few hours and then pour it into another vessel, you'll probably end up raising the temperature by 4 or 5° C quite quickly and that's not a good idea. Added to this white wines do not generally have the same level of natural protection (in the form of tannins) as red wines and are therefore unlikely to benefit from the process of decanting.

Special Limited Release Fox Creek Poster KRISTIN McLARTY

We have a special limited release Fox Creek poster that has been created just for you. The artist is Jean-Pierre Got and he was born in 1951 in Bergerac, in Southwest France. A commercial wine exporter by trade, Jean-Pierre began designing posters in 1992. The underlying theme throughout all his designs is one of *joie de vivre* (love of life). He has received numerous commissions from vintners and restaurateurs from various countries.

Always in a limited edition of 500 signed and numbered prints, the

creations of this "artist for pleasure" are printed in Bordeaux, a city where the strong ancient tradition of commercial poster production still lives on.

These posters cost \$25 each which includes postage.





A New Look for Fox Creek

PAUL ROGERS

For those of you who have already purchased the 2003 Verdelho, you would probably have noticed a few changes to the closure and label of this lovely wine.

The first change is the use of a Stelvin screw cap on all the 2003 white wines. We made a decision earlier in the year that we could not afford to put our top quality white wine into bottle with a closure that could not guarantee that the wine would stay free from any cork taint. I cannot believe that we will ever use cork again for the white wines – the jury is still out on premium reds, but my prediction is that cork will become obsolete for them as well.

Another difference is the label; there is an old adage that goes "if it's not broken don't fix it" which in general is a good rule of thumb. However, after nine vintages we felt it was probably time to give all our labels a modified "face lift" and we look forward to your comments when you see them.

Bren's Perfect Match

This lamb dish is surprisingly easy to prepare and is the perfect food to have with our soft and luscious 2001 'Duet'.

STUFFED RACK OF LAMB

2 racks of Lamb (*approx 6 chops per rack*)
 1/3 cup of balsamic vinegar
 1/3 cup of olive oil
 2 brown onions, sliced
 fresh basil
 fresh oregano (optional)
 semi sundried tomatoes
 pitted / sliced olives (optional)
 one sliced mushroom
 freshly ground pepper

Marinate lamb and onion in balsamic vinegar and olive oil for at least 20 minutes. Remove from marinade and make a 'pocket' in lamb by slicing along the side of the bones but do not cut right through. (reserve marinade for basting)

Stuff the pocket with some basil, oregano, sun dried tomatoes, olives and sliced mushrooms and secure opening with either kitchen string or skewers. Drizzle a little olive oil in the middle of a roasting dish and place onions on top. Place lamb on the onions, season with black pepper and cook in a preheated oven at 180°C for around 30 minutes (longer if you want well done), basting once with left over marinade.

Take lamb out of oven, cover with foil and rest meat for 5 minutes before slicing. Serve on a bed of cous cous (seasoned with chopped chives and a little cumin) or alternatively creamy mashed potato. Drizzle any juices left in the baking dish over the lamb. Other suitable accompaniments are steamed baby carrots and flat beans and of course a glass of 2001 'Duet' Cabernet Sauvignon-Merlot!



Welcome to Sarah Boerth, our new Cellar Door Supervisor. Sarah has replaced the effervescent Alison Jansson who has moved to Melbourne.

New Website

We now have a more user-friendly website www.foxcreekwines.com There is information about our wines, up to date news and competitions for you to enter. Please let us know what you think.

You can also order online whenever you are parched for a drop of Fox Creek. Our secure payment server is run by one of the top Internet server companies in the world so it is extremely safe.

Keep it in Perspective

MARK DIMBERLINE

Having recently returned from a four weeks tour of the USA promoting Fox Creek Wines, I thought it best to give some balance to the reports that say exports of Australian wines to the USA are now in excess of 110 million litres (equivalent to 12 million cases) per annum. While these reports are true, it is important to keep things in perspective.

Total wine sales in the USA are in excess of 235 million cases per year but, as I visited numerous bottle shops, I found it interesting that only a very small amount of space was allocated to Australian wines. The average shop carries approximately 50 Australian wines from their portfolio of around 800 wines from around the world.

There are now over 1,600 wineries in Australia, collectively making about 12,000 wines, most of which are competing to get a spot on that retail shelf of fifty wines.

Winery Tours

Those of you who watched the segment about Fox Creek on 'The Great Outdoors' recently will have seen that we are offering winery tours by appointment. Over the summer months we hope to run these tours up to three times a week. So, if you are coming to visit and are interested in a behind the scenes look at how our wines are made please ring 08 8556 2403 or email us at sales@foxcreekwines.com to come and join the fun.



SEE YOU AT THE CELLAR DOOR SOON!

Cellar Door open for tastings between 10am and 5pm seven days a week.

Snapshot of the Winery

AUGUST 2003 DAN HILLS Winemaker

We are now in the middle of August and the most important job for Tony and I right now is to ensure that we spend a good deal of time tasting and blending the red wines from 2002. These wines have spent the last 12 to 15 months in oak and we have of course tasted them many times during the year. We see many of them evolve into much better wines than when we first looked at them and this is mainly due to the influence of oak maturation. The wines will be bottled shortly (a stressful time for winemakers). However, we think that some of these wines from 2002 will astound you with their very high quality. Our tasting sessions are translated into winery work for our cellar staff Brent, Rowley and Chris. It is some of the most important work we do. The 2003 vintage



Winemakers Dan Hills and Tony Walker preparing for bottling.

reds are all in oak now and looking good. In a few weeks time some of them will be tasted, come out of oak briefly and then go back to oak after we have made any necessary adjustments and washed the barrels.

Of course another job we have at this time of the year is promotion. Tony is off to Canada and The States at the start of September so I will have to hold the fort and start the preparations for next vintage. Yes, it comes around fast. I also have a couple of promotional commitments, but these are in Australia and nowhere near the duration of Tony's trip.

As to the vineyards, pruning finished a while ago and there has already been some budburst on certain patches of Chardonnay. The majority of the vines will now start to come out of dormancy and in a few more weeks everything will start to look very green.

That's it in a nutshell. Look out for the 2002 Short Row Shiraz & JSM on your bottle shop shelves in November and by then they may have already notched up a couple of wine show medals and reviews.

