



March 2016 Newsletter

Shiraz Brown Bag Tasting & Steak Frites Dinner

At the Faculty Club, April 5, 2016



There is no wine line-up for this evening, no advance information, as all eight wines will be poured from brown bags, with no information about them. Just your nose and mouth will be working here, a true blind tasting. All will be revealed at the end, and we assure you all the wines are indeed Shiraz. It is up to you to decide what you like best, and maybe take a stab at the region, or vintage.

Here are some hints, Barossa Valley Shiraz considered richer and more concentrated than the other three. Central and Southern Victorian varieties most closely resemble the Syrah wines of France, tending as they do to the more peppery side of the flavor palate. McLaren Vale wines are distinguished by their ripeness, elegance, structure, power and complexity. So noses into glasses, sip, really slosh around in your mouth to open the wine up and then swallow, easy peasy mate.

Following the tasting, we will be served the always popular Faculty Steak Frites dinner. The evening will start at 6:30 with a reception wine, then the tasting starts at 7:00 p.m.

The Faculty Club is at 41 Willcocks Street, Toronto, 416-978-6325, one block south of Harbord, and east of Spadina Avenue. Metered parking on the surrounding streets, and TTC stops at Willcocks on Spadina.

Price for this event, all inclusive with the Steak Frites dinner, Members \$69.00 Guests \$76.00. Seating is limited to 60, so book early.

You can register on-line at <http://shirazbrownbagtasting.eventbrite.ca> or mail the attached Registration Form to Bernard Nottage to the address as noted on the Form.

Past Event

Tuesday March 1st, 53 members and guests, sat down to sample a fine array of d'Arenberg wines, with Mark Donaldson of Churchill Cellars leading us through the tasting, that featured four Dead Arm Shiraz, from 2001 to 2004, preceded by four other d'Arenberg wines. The evening kicked off with a video review by Chester Osborn recorded at the winery in the McLaren Vale. In his inimitable style Chester reviewed the vintage years of the wines, and apologized that he could not join us via Skype, as it was the height of crush and he was up to his wellies in juice. Mark conformed this as the staff do leap into the concrete vats to punch down the cap. A super evening all around.

Added news, Mark reported our event in the current issue of the Imbibers Report.

Link is www.churchillcellars.com/imbibers-report/consumeredition

Future Events

The May 3rd event will be a white wine dinner at Vertical, with our host Joe Alberti who has prepared a fine matching for our whites. Vertical is conveniently located in First Canadian Place at King and Bay. All the details and menu will be in the next newsletter.

June 16th, we celebrate the Summer Solstice with our dinner on the patio at the Faculty Club. We truly hope for good weather this year, as you may recall last year's downpour had us inside the Club for our dinner.

No event in July, however we are returning to the Toronto Lawn Tennis Club for our AGM and Aussie barbeque on the deck. This year all the tables will be in the shade, as last year a number were baked in the hot August sun. Mark the date, Sunday August 21st for the AGM and Aussie barbeque.

Australian Wine Industry News

Sidewood Estate has commenced an expansion of its winery business in the Adelaide Hills with plans to increase cider and wine production capabilities. A South Australian State Government Regional Development Fund grant is covering \$856,319 of the \$3.5 million expansion, which will see Sidewood Estate's wine production increase from 500 to 2,000 tonnes per annum. The expansion also includes new bottling and canning facilities expected to produce more than 400,000 bottles of wine and cider each year by 2017.

Wine Australia will be celebrating the storied history of Australian wines at its largest showcase yet at ProWein this month. Some 46 winemakers will be showcasing more than 500 wines from 21 distinct wine-producing regions to illuminate the diversity and depth of Australian viticulture. Australian wine expert Thomas Curtius will partner with a number of exhibitors throughout the day.

The news is all good from around South Australia for vintage 2016, now progressing from the early harvests of white wine grapes into the state's more famous Shiraz variety and other reds soon to follow. Yields are reportedly higher than expected after a prolonged dry season leading into harvest, with good rains in late January and early February helping both quality and quantity in most areas, according to industry experts in the regions.

Picking is underway at vineyards across the peninsula with winemakers tipping "something extra special" for the 2016 vintage. David Lloyd, the Mornington Peninsula Vignerons Association president, said the harvest began seven to 10 days early across southeast Australia. He said optimum conditions across the summer had produced a good crop with potential to make exceptional wine.

The hot, dry hot summer has been brutal for many Tasmanian farmers but a blessing for those growing grapes with some yields up 50 per cent this year. The state's 2015 vintage was moderate, yielding the equivalent of about 620,000 cases realising a farmgate value of more than \$65 million. However, Paul Williams from Wobbly Boot vineyard in the Coal River Valley told the Mercury that this season his grapes were in weighty bunches with uniform growth and he expected to yield 50 per cent more than last year.

Wolf Blass Winery is celebrating four decades since the inception of its iconic Black Label – the only wine in history to win four prestigious Jimmy Watson trophies. This year marks the 40th vintage of the estate's Black Label Cabernet Shiraz Malbec 2012, which won the Jimmy Watson Trophy for three consecutive years at the Royal Melbourne Wine Show.

