



March, 2009

**March 24th Wines of Down Under Tasting
Faculty Club University of Toronto.**



Sam Neill, Two Paddocks, Central Otago

In the past 30 years, Australian wines have developed a reputation for quality – especially in certain wine grape varieties. Part of the “New World” of wine producers, Australians have a reputation for being able to blend traditional wine-making processes with grape breeding and growing technologies including vine canopies.

New Zealand wine has a similar success story. It is one of the premier “New World” wine-growing nations. Its temperate maritime climate and diverse growing regions have allowed a great range of grape varieties to thrive. Their Sauvignon Blanc, for example is thought by many to set the benchmark for this varietal. New Zealand has found success with many of the same grapes for which Australia has become known such as Chardonnay, Riesling, Cabernet Sauvignon, Pinot Noir and Merlot blends.

While Australia’s wine regions span the country from New South Wales to Margaret River, in the west, New Zealand regions run north to south. We will have a very unique experience in March to examine four Australian and four New Zealand wines.

Note in your calendars for **The Wines of Down Under** tasting event on Tuesday March 24th at the University of Toronto Faculty Club. The event will be led by Monica Ralphs, our Past Cellar master, who now runs her own company, Wine Speak. Cost is \$49 for members and \$64 for non-members.

Past Events

February 24th Shiraz Viognier Tasting

A disappointing turn out but for those who attended, great wines with an excellent commentary by John Paul Potters. The 2004 Yalumba Hand-Picked was voted the best example of this blend.

Future Events

Agent's Night in April and the Cabs of Coonawarra, Regional Tasting in May. These events may be switched around with new dates, which will be advised as soon as possible.

Summer Solstice Dinner, Boulevard Club, June 18, 2009

BBQ & AGM, Sunday, August 16 at Toronto Lawn Tennis Club

News from Down Under

Constellation puts Goundrey on the market

Constellation Wines is selling Goundrey Wines in Western Australia's Great Southern region for almost AUS\$9m. The sale compares with the AUS\$62.5m Canada's Vincor paid for the winery, four vineyards and the brand in 2002.

This deal does not include the Goundrey brand name; Constellation is selling the vineyards and winery only.

Constellation acquired Goundrey when it took over Vincor in 2004. 'Vincor paid a huge price,' a source close to the latest sale transaction said today, 'and times are tougher now.'

West Cape Howe, at Denmark, also in the Great Southern region of Western Australia, has bought the 7,000 tonne winery and vineyards, having outgrown its 1,000-tonne winery.

Goundrey was founded in 1971 by the Goundrey Family, later being bought by Perth businessman Jack Bendat.

West Cape Howe was founded in 1996 by former Goundrey winemaker Brendan Smith and his wife, Kylie, and is now owned and managed by Gavin Berry, two Perth businessmen and viticulturalist Rob Quenby.

Selling agent, Gaetjens Langley, is also marketing two other Constellation-owned wineries, the 115-year-old, 4,500-tonne Leasingham winery at Clare and the 10-year-old, 12,000-tonne Stonehaven winery at Padthaway.

Yarra Valley: 5% vineyards destroyed

About 5% of the Yarra Valley's vineyards were destroyed or damaged by the recent Victoria bushfires, but good quality wines will still be made in 2009, according to the Australian Wine and Brandy Corporation (AWBC).

Quoting estimates from the Yarra Valley Wine Growers Association, the AWBC said the devastating fires in early February had damaged or destroyed 29 vineyards in the area – a total area of about 140 hectares.

'A full assessment of the impact on the wine sector will not be made for some weeks, but the majority of wineries in Victoria are operating normally, with grapes being crushed and visitors welcome,' said the AWBC.

More than 200 people have now been confirmed dead as a result of the fires, which destroyed the Roundstone winery and restaurant, as well as damaging wineries belonging to Domaine Chandon, Lance Family Vineyards and Punt Road.

The main areas affected in Victoria beyond the Yarra Valley included Beechworth, Bendigo, Gippsland and Heathcote.