



October 2009

Syrah / Shiraz, Joint Tasting with Society for American Wines,

Albany Club, Thursday, October 15, 2009

In California it is Syrah, in Australia, Shiraz. Syrah. The Australians planted Syrah in the mid-1800's, when it was deemed a worker grape, used to produce in-expensive, every-day drinking wines, with body and flavour. As Australia took on the challenge of producing world-class wines, Shiraz became the country's greatest expression of wine-making in the form of such wines as Penfold's Grange.

A newcomer to the California wine scene, Syrah has gained in popularity only in the last decade with the state's wineries shipping 1.8 million cases to the U.S. in 2006. Syrah is a noble grape variety that can produce some serious, long-lived red wines. The usual aroma and flavor descriptors include blackberry, cassis, black pepper, smoke, as well as dry, dark and tannic.

Through DNA testing, Syrah has shown to be a cross of a black variety, Dureza, and a white variety, Mondeuse, both with origins in France's Rhône region and earlier fabled origins in the Middle East. The grape is also known as Sirah, and in Australia and South Africa, it is called Shiraz.

We'll examine, sip and savour eight wines; four from Australia and four from California. Here's the line-up that John Macdonald and Chris Bee have selected for us to taste. They are in random order.

- 1999 Leasingham Classic Clare, Clare Valley, South Australia
- 2000 Henry's Drive, Padthaway, South Australia
- 2001 Charles Melton, Barossa Valley, South Australia
- 2002 Rosemount Hill of Gold, Mudgee, New South Wales
- 2001 Macrostie Wildcat Mountain, Sonoma County
- 2002 Arrowood, Sonoma County
- 2002 Zacca Mesa, Foxen Canyon, Los Olivos
- 2003 Silver Stone, Paso Robles

We are returning to the Albany Club and with members from two wine groups, there is an expectation of a sell-out event. We recommend reserving early. Two fine Chardonnays will be served at the

reception starting at 6:30 p.m. There will be crackers, cheese and breads to accompany the tasting, followed by a small personal plate of *Amuses*.

Please note that we are limited to 90 seats for this event, so reserve early. Tickets are \$58.00 for AWS Members and \$68.00 for Guests.

You can register online at <http://shirazsyrah.eventbrite.com> or mail in the registration form

Future Events

The Melbourne Cup, the Turf Lounge, Monday, November 2, 2009.

The horses will be on the track and ready to run when we return to the Turf Lounge on Bay Street, where the main lounge area is reserved for AWS Members. Details to follow in the next Newsletter.

AWS Holiday Dinner, December date t.b.a.

Full details of our kick-off to the Christmas Season with a fine wine dinner will be announced shortly.

News from Downunder

Twelve family wineries have joined forces to launch Australia's First Families of Wine.

The collective 12 represent Australian regions across four states, together they own more than 5,500 hectares of vineyards.

The inaugural members of the AFFW are: Brown Brothers (Victoria); Campbells (Victoria); d'Arenberg (South Australia); De Bortoli (NSW); Henschke (South Australia); Howard Park (Western Australia); Jim Barry (South Australia); McWilliam's (NSW); Tahbilk (Victoria); Taylors (South Australia); Tyrrell's (NSW); Yalumba (South Australia).

The AFFW will work to engage consumers, retailers, restaurateurs and industry members across the globe about the real character and characters of Australian wine. The inaugural Chairman of the AFFW is Alister Purbrick of Victorian winery Tahbilk.

Purbrick and his colleagues have been working behind the scenes on the creation of the AFFW for more than three years.

He said: "Although the Australian wine industry has achieved great success over many years and continues to dominate the UK wine market as the number one wine importer, the AFFW recognises the need to continually evolve and keep ahead of our competitors.

"The wine industry's exports to the UK and US are declining in overall value and price per litre. Competing purely on price is not sustainable and is not a long-term competitive advantage."

Paul Henry, general manager market development, AWBC, believes the initiative is positive for the wineries involved and for the category.

"These companies can tell a compelling and authentic story which can only be derived as uniquely Australian," Henry said.

The AFFW will pursue their individual business goals with the shared purpose of being a part of a strong collective. The group will gather together on occasions throughout the world to show the spirit of Australian winemaking.

The new AFFW logo will adorn selected bottles of each winery's best known wines and the group plans to launch into the European market in May 2010.