

# Taupo Winetasters Club

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The Official Newsletter of The Taupo Winetasters' Club  
Warning: Contains scenes of serious wine tasting

August 2005 Issue

## GORDON GUARANTEED A WARM WELCOME



Esk Valley Estate winemaker Gordon Russell.

*On Wednesday 17<sup>th</sup> August members and visitors to the monthly meeting of the Taupo Winetasters' Club at Indulgence in Horomatangi Street Taupo will extend a warm welcome to the well known Esk Valley Estate Winemaker, Gordon Russell.*

Those who have been fortunate enough to meet Gordon during his reign at Esk Valley Estate know that he exudes a passionate personality that comes out strongly in his wines.

He is now regarded as one of New Zealand's leading winemaking identities because of his passionate approach to winemaking and his wines have achieved enormous success in tastings and competitions.

Gordon believes that the concept of texture in a wine

is as important as the aromas and flavours of the wine and he has built a fine reputation for producing premium hand-crafted wines that are both elegant and sophisticated.

Gordon was born in New Plymouth and after attending university his desire to travel took him to England and Europe for three years. Gordon had always been interested in different flavours and trying new foods and during his time abroad he also developed an appreciation of wine.

In 1986 Gordon returned to New Zealand, just at a time when the wine styles for which New Zealand has become highly regarded were beginning to emerge. An opportunity to be involved in the wine industry arose at a small winery in West Auckland, where he learnt both cellar and lab skills. A move to the Villa Maria winery, in 1988, led to him becoming Cellar Foreman.

In 1990 Gordon moved to Hawke's Bay as Assistant Winemaker to Grant Edmonds at Esk Valley Estate. In 1993, Gordon took over the reigns as Esk Valley Estate Winemaker.

*So forget the tele and disconnect the Internet next Wednesday evening because it's warm and cosy at Indulgence and we can guarantee that Gordon's passionate personality and the flavoursome textures of his wine will linger in your mind long after the meeting concludes.*

## NEXT MEETING

**ESK VALLEY ESTATE**  
*With winemaker Gordon Russell*  
**7.30pm Wednesday 17th August**  
**at 'INDULGENCE'**

*The Café at 47 Horomatangi Street · Taupo*  
*(Opposite the NZ Post Shop)*

**Members: \$20 Non Members: \$25**

Includes Supper

**BOOK A SAFE DRIVER NOW**

## WEST BROOK TREASURES UNCOVERED



The Liquid Gold in his glass yields a heady aroma for West Brook winemaker Anthony Ivceovich.

### **Winemaker Anthony Ivceovich Reveals the Secrets of the Tranquil Ararimu Valley**

*Quite a few previously unknown treasures were uncovered amongst the wines of the West Brook Winery when members of the Taupo Winetasters' Club met the winery's personable winemaker, Anthony Ivceovich, during their July meeting on Friday the 22<sup>nd</sup> in Taupo.*

Anthony spoke to the club about himself and his family owned winery nestled in the tranquil Ararimu Valley northwest of Auckland City and conducted a long leisurely and highly entertaining tasting of the latest West Brook wines.

The meeting began at 7.30pm in a different venue than usual for the club, the Indulgence café at 47 Horomatangi Street, Taupo. This proved to be a promising choice of venue for future functions. Unfortunately the numbers able to attend were down to 21 members with several regular attendees being unable to be present because of previously arranged commitments on the night and over the impending weekend.

As I was amongst the 'regulars' in absence, you have Ray Toms and Peter Potter to thank for saving the West Brook tasting notes and adding their own impressions for me to be able to write my usual complete meeting report. Ray being the ever-thoughtful sort of chap he is, even saved me the smart soft grip West Brook inscribed pen that went with the notes and glossy brochure.

It seemed to be a unanimous opinion that Anthony treated those lucky enough to be able to attend to a highly enjoyable evening that didn't conclude until

around the 11pm mark.

West Brook was founded in 1935 by Anthony's grandfather, Mick, in what was then a very rural Henderson. Under the reign of his grandfather, and his father Tony, West Brook was known as the Panorama Vineyards until 1985.

In 1998, the ever-growing urban sprawl of Henderson forced Anthony and his wife Sue, to relocate the vineyard and winery to its current home on Ararimu Valley Road in Waimauku, north west of Henderson.

The name West Brook had originally been partly derived from a west Auckland rail stop of the same name and the Oratia stream, which once had a water wheel driven mill on it. The new site aptly has a stream and a pond on it, which played some part in the Ivceovich's decision to purchase the property. The relocated West Brook Winery and vineyard opened its doors to the public on December 27, 1999.

By the onset of the 2000 vintage, the small staff of five, including one of Anthony and Sue's sons, Linton, had moved the entire winemaking operation in the short space of four months.

The West Brook team is now set to carry on the Ivceovich passion for winemaking with the fourth generation already involved in continuing the winemaking tradition. West Brook produces Pinot Noir, Chardonnay, Merlot and Malbec off an eight-hectare vineyard. It also makes well regarded Chardonnay, Sauvignon Blanc and Riesling from Marlborough fruit as well as Merlot, Cabernet Sauvignon and Malbec from Hawke's Bay.

Although West Brook is best known as a white-wine producer, this year it also produced a Marlborough Pinot Noir.

West Brook wines are marketed under two labels, West Brook and Blue Ridge.

The wines marketed under the West Brook label are produced to reflect their true varietal character and their unique regional origins. They are wines that can be enjoyed early but can be cellared confidently.

They are of a premium quality and have won numerous awards. All agreed that they represent superb value-for-money.

The premium range, Blue Ridge, takes its name from the nearby Waitakeres that dominate the West Auckland skyline and the series features structured wines made to age. These wines are produced from selected parcels of the best grapes of the vintage. They are handcrafted with the focus on attention to detail and they are matured to display complexity and character.

### **West Brook Unscrewed**

As West Brook seems to be a willing disciple of the modern Stelvin capping system, it is apt to say that the following is a list of the West Brook wines that Ray Toms, Peter Potter, and the other lucky club members unscrewed and discovered.

#### **West Brook Marlborough Sauvignon Blanc 2004:**

A classic Marlborough Sauvignon Blanc with lifted

gooseberry and herbaceous characters with underlying nuances of honeydew melon on the palate and hints of passion fruit and citrus blossom on the nose. With a balanced, powerful and complex palate this Sauvignon Blanc was long and flavoursome with the firm acid backbone assisting the lovely, refreshing, zesty and powerful finish.

**West Brook Unoaked Chardonnay 2004:** Lime straw in colour, this unoaked chardonnay revealed lifted floral and citrus notes on the nose. A fulsome and soft texture was balanced with hints of fleshy nectarine, peaches and dried apricots. Subtle hazelnut nuances added to the appeal of this refreshingly fruit driven style of wine.

**West Brook Marlborough Riesling 2003:** Ray Toms noted that this Riesling was already developing classic aged Germanic style kerosene characters. It was delightfully off-dry wine with citrus, Granny Smith apple and honeysuckle aromas. The fresh, lively palate showed citrus and stone fruit flavours alongside hints of honey and ginger and there was a lovely refreshing acidity to balance the sweet fruit characters. Already hugely enjoyable, this wine will continue to develop over the next few years.

**Blue Ridge Chardonnay 2003:** A barrique-fermented style that exhibited ripe varietal characters complemented by subtle oak nuances with a lengthy citrus note on the finish. An elegant, complex and well structured wine. Enjoyable now but will develop with cellaring.

**West Brook Marlborough Pinot Noir 2004:** A vibrant and delicately perfumed wine. The nose and palate were layered with ripe stone fruits such as black cherry and plum, combined with rose blossom and dark chocolate. The texture was supple and persistent with a rich mid-palate.

**West Brook Estate Range Malbec 2002:** A lovely wine that held everyone's attention with its difference. Dense dark colours and full juicy and spicy flavours mingled with subtle oak to end in a well-balanced, soft finish. Produced from the first harvest grown at the Waimauku vineyard, which is reserved for the estate range, the wine should cellar well and retain its many fruit flavours.

**West Brook Merlot Malbec Cabernet 2004:** A great value wine that blends Merlot and Malbec from the Waimaukau Estate, and Cabernet Sauvignon from Hawkes Bay to produce a deep, vibrant coloured wine. The nose was greeted by a mass of dark stone fruits, perfumed berry fruits and exotic florals. The palate was abundant with fleshy ripe fruits with hints of liquorice, dark chocolate and spice, whilst the finish was graced with fine tannins.

**Blue Ridge Merlot 2003:** This fine example of hand harvested Marlborough Merlot was a rich full flavoured style with a bouquet and palate dominated by ripe plum and blackberry aromas and flavours, complimented by spicy oak and mellow tannins on the finish.

## CONVENTION 2006 PROGRAM FINALISED



The Convention Organising Committee Clockwise from Top left: Alex Harre, Paul Sanderson, Oliver Nees, Maureen Sando and Ray Toms.

### **Taupo Organisers are Working Hard To Prepare a Memorable Weekend**

*Plans are well advanced for the 27<sup>th</sup> Annual Convention of the Federation of Wine and Food Societies of New Zealand Inc, which is being held in Taupo over the weekend of May 5 to May 7 next year.*

The plans began early last year when a local steering committee was formed to organise the Convention. That committee consists of Taupo Winetasters' Club members, **Ray Toms**, **Maureen Sando**, **Oliver Nees** (Convention Treasurer), **Paul Sanderson** (Convention Wine Cellar master) and **Alex Harre** (Taupo Winetasters' Club representative). After settling in to their respective roles, they have completed several exhaustive "Tiki Tours" to choose venues capable of hosting the discerning group of delegates from New Zealand and Australia who are expected to attend the three-day convention. After preparing and releasing a convention brochure to delegates at the April 2005 Convention in Wellington, the committee is now busy building up a wine cellar for the weekend's various functions, organising transport arrangements, and working with chefs and appointing caterers capable of meeting the high standards required for preparing an exciting mixture of avant-garde and traditional themed menus to match the extensive wine list.

All the while they are also keeping a firm grip on the costing process and an announcement about the cost of the weekend will be the next major episode to this story.



### **Convention Headquarters Carefully Chosen**

The convention headquarters will be the lakeside Millennium Hotel and Resort in Taupo, which is a boutique Mediterranean style hotel with magnificent views across Lake Taupo to the mountains to the south.

### **Program Highlights the Best**

Here is an outline of the weekend's programme to wet your appetite for a terrifically hedonistic weekend.

### **Friday May 5: A Night in the Cellar**

Check in day is on Friday 5<sup>th</sup> May ready for a Night in The Cellar. This will be a fitting introduction to the weekend's activities and a chance to mix and mingle with fellow convention goers deep in the famous underground cellar of local wine and spirit merchant, Scenic Cellars. Their state of the art wine cellar will seat up to eighty convention delegates for a dinner surrounded by hundreds of thousands worth of wine including case lots of many famous en primeur first growths. The dinner will be catered by one of Taupo's finest catering companies.

### **Saturday May 6: Assado Luncheon**

Saturday May 6<sup>th</sup> will see delegates arrive by midday at the Acacia Bay Hall for an Argentinean Assado themed luncheon. Perched on a steep slope amidst the hillside settlement of Acacia Bay, the modern community hall boasts panoramic views overlooking the lake towards the northeast and the town of Taupo and its imposing guardian, Mount Tauhara. Stretching around to the southeast is the mountainous vista of the craggy Kaimanawa range, which rises above the shores of the lake. Prime New Zealand Lamb will be spit roasted, Argentinean style, outdoors by a colourful group of local Italian expatriates who learnt the Argentinean Assado cooking style while living in Argentina. They will wear traditional Argentinean costume. While the lamb is being prepared there will be a tasting of local wines and olive products conducted by the newly formed Lake Taupo Wine and Olive Producers Association Inc. The Taupo Floral Art Society will decorate the venue and local artists will have their artwork on display.

### **Saturday Evening: Black Tie Dinner**

Saturday evening unfolds the main event, the Black Tie Dinner. The venue is the Millennium Hotel and Resort in Taupo, and the resort's executive

chef, Glen Sando, will prepare the dinner in the hotel's multi award winning Edgewater Restaurant. Glen has an excellent record of providing excellent fresh seasonal food with flavours that will match the wine selection perfectly. He has a special talent for food presentation, which ensures that his meals always look immaculate and taste superb.

### **Sunday May 7: Luncheon in Historical Hotel**

Not too early the next morning, Sunday 7<sup>th</sup> May, delegates will re-assemble after the night before, for luncheon at Taupo's recently renovated Terraces Hotel. Over the past couple of years a group of local businessmen have poured a large seven-figure sum of money into renovating this historic hostelry, which is situated at the start of the Napier Taupo Highway. No expense was spared to create a comfortable and luxurious hotel while maintaining and enhancing the classical early New Zealand colonial style of the two-storied façade and the luxurious ambience of the gracious rooms of the interior. Large south facing windows and a new outdoor deck area open up spectacular views of Lake Taupo and the mountains to the south. Now managed by the international Outrigger Hotel management chain and renamed the Outrigger Terraces Resort in Lake Taupo, the hotel boasts a long history dating back to the pioneering days of the Cobb and Co stage coaches when a steam powered ferry was the only means of travel from the southern end of the lake to the fledgling Taupo township. Rapidly gaining international recognition, the venue, and the luncheon, will be sure to impress even the most jaded delegate.

### **Sunday Evening: A Wind Down Function**

Its back to the very edge of the lake again at the convention base in the Millennium Hotel and Resort in Taupo for the Wind Down Function on Sunday evening where delegates will assemble in the Regency room to say goodbye and reminisce about a memorable weekend. It will be a relaxing evening featuring a wine tasting presented by Hawkes Bay winemakers and high quality finger food catered by the resort's executive chef Glen Sando and his team as the sun sets over the over the lake and mountains in the background.

### **Next Episode: The Cost**

So start saving now for an unforgettable wine and food experience on your own doorstep. As a dedicated wine and food connoisseur and loyal Taupo Winetasters' Club member, this is your chance to attend this annual Federation of Wine and Food Societies of New Zealand celebration of food and wine without any of the accommodation and travel costs normally associated with this Convention when it is hosted in other parts of the country. Individual function costs will be released when they are finalised.

## The Lonely Wine Taster's Guide to Cellaring

### *Choosing what to cellar and how long to cellar it for is a dilemma facing many wine enthusiasts.*

If in doubt here are some basic varietal guidelines to follow. These apply primarily to New Zealand wines and a rough rule of thumb is that if the wine cost less than \$18 it is probably only a short-term cellar prospect anyway.

#### **Chardonnay Oaked**

**Optimum cellar life: 2 to 3 years**

Look for richer gold colour, rounder more harmonised flavours and softer acid structure. Good examples will retain citrus finish.

#### **Chardonnay Unoaked**

**Optimum cellar life: 0 to 1 year**

These are unlikely to benefit from cellaring. Drink them while they are young and juicy.

Sauvignon Blanc

Optimum cellar life: 0 to 1 year

Often preferred immediately after bottling, this varietals natural acid ity will soften after a year.

Further time will see canned pea and asparagus flavours emerge.

#### **Riesling**

**Optimum cellar life: 3 ye ars**

One of the best value cellar options and even sub \$15 wines will improve greatly. These will develop luscious honey and or lime characters after a couple of years. Drier styles will show the most significant change.

#### **Pinot Gris**

**Optimum cellar life: 2 ye ars**

A delicate varietal that will show subtle changes with age. Look for enhanced tropical fruit characters and a drop in fresh acids.

#### **Merlot and Merlot dominant blends**

**Optimum cellar life: 3 to 5 years**

Oak and fruit character will integrate over time. Look for softer tannins and a more textural palate feel.

#### **Cabernet Sauvignon and Cabernet dominant blends**

**Optimum cellar life: 3 to 5 years**

Good examples will benefit significantly with cellaring. Look for a more accessible tannin structure, better fruit and oak balance and rounder berry fruit characters.

#### **Pinot Noir**

**Optimum cellar life: 3 to 5 years**

This is a variety that can benefit enormously from time in the cellar. Expect developed complex savoury and or game characters and a silkier textural mouth feel.

#### **Syrah**

**Optimum cellar life: 3 to 5 years**

Age will reduce this varietals acidity, fatten out the middle palate, and take some harshness off younger examples. It's a prime cellar option.

*So there you have it. Generally if you think something is worth cellaring make sure you put at least four away so you can open one now and again to see how it is developing and remember the golden rule, drink your cellared wines while they are in peak condition. Cellaring is not a contest to see how long you can keep bottles of wine.*



Look Who Had a  
Birthday  
On July 7  
Taupo Winetasters' Club Member  
*Janet Shrive*

## DIARY DATES

**Wednesday 17th August**  
**Esk Valley Estate**

*Presented by wine maker Gordon Russell*

**Wednesday 21st September**  
**Matawhero Wines**

*Presented by winemaker Denis Irwin*

**Wednesday 5th October**  
**Ngatarawa Wines**

*Presented by winemaker Alwyn Corban*

**Wednesday 26th October**  
**Verticals From The Cellar**

*A Vertical Tasting from the Club Cellar*

**Wednesday 23rd November**  
**A Knees Up at the Nees**

*Early Summer Fun and Games in the garden of Diana and Oliver Nees*

**Sunday 4th December**  
**AGM & Christmas Luncheon**

*The shortest AGM you've ever attended followed by a traditional Christmas Lunch with a selection of aged wine from the Club Cellar*

## NEXT COMMITTEE MEETING

**Sunday 4th September 2005**

**6pm at the home of Rosalea & Paul Sanderson**  
51 Kaihua Road, Taupo.

Bring pot luck food and a bottle of wine.  
Masked Wine: Colin Cockburn & Rob Sowersby

### **Contributions Welcome**

Contact Colin Cockburn: colin@reap.org.nz  
Deadline for next issue: Sunday 4th September