

Taupo Winetasters Club

PO Box 690 Taupo

President: Alex Harre: Phone: 07 377 0287, Email: taupo.harre@xtra.co.nz

Secretary: Betty Sowersby: Phone 376 7506, Fax: 376 7506, Email: rosby@e3.co.nz

Newsletter Editor: Colin Cockburn: Phone: 378 4873, Email: colin@reap.org.nz

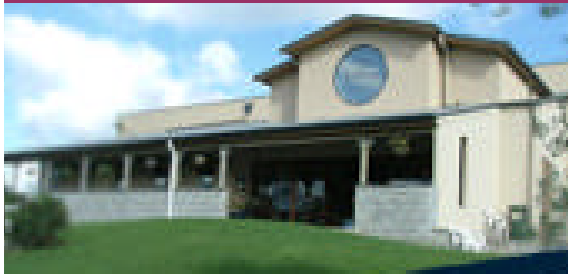
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The Official Newsletter of The Taupo Winetasters' Club
Warning: Contains scenes of serious wine tasting

July 2005 Issue

FOCUS ON WEST BROOK

*Discover the Treasures of
The West Brook Winery
With Winemaker Tony Ivceovich
This Friday*



The new West Brook Winery in the tranquil Ararimu Valley.

This Friday members and visitors to the monthly meeting of the Taupo Winetasters Club will meet winemaker, Anthony Ivceovich from the historical family owned West Brook winery in north-west Auckland.

West Brook is now tucked away in the beautifully tranquil Ararimu Valley, but this was not always so.

Founded in 1935 by **Mick Ivceovich**, the current generation, **Anthony and Sue Ivceovich** decided to relocate the once rural vineyard and winery away from the ever-growing urban sprawl of Henderson in 1998.

The new home turned out to be at Ararimu Valley Road in Waimauku, north west of Auckland city. 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 newly relocated **West Brook Winery** and vineyard duly 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, had moved the entire winemaking operation in the short space of four months.

The West Brook team is now set to carry on their passion for winemaking, thus allowing the fourth generation to continue 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.

Its premium range, **Blue Ridge**, takes its name from the nearby Waitakeres and features structured wines made to age.

To learn more about this interesting part of New Zealand's wine making history and sample the products of that history under the guidance of winemaker **Anthony Ivceovich** see the meeting details below.

NEXT MEETING THIS FRIDAY

WEST BROOK WINERY

With winemaker Anthony Ivceovich

7.30pm, Friday 22nd July

NOTE CHANGE OF VENUE

'INDULGENCE'

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

Members: \$20 Non Members: \$25

Includes \$2.00 Raffle and Supper

BOOK A SAFE DRIVER NOW

HAPPY ASSOCIATION RENEWED

Club members catch up with old friends at Mid Winter Luncheon



Brookfields Winemaker, Peter Robertson, and Club member, Tom Sando, opening the luncheon wine.

Over the years members of the Taupo Winetasters Club have enjoyed a long and happy association with Peter and Sharon Robertson of Brookfields Vineyards. They have also followed the career of chef Glen Sando from restaurant to restaurant as he climbed to ever increasing heights to occupy the challenging position of executive chef at Manuel's Taupo Millennium Hotel and Resort.

On Sunday 26th June both men re-cemented their strong association with the club when they combined talents to treat members to a memorable mid-winter luncheon and wine tasting experience in the *Edgewater Restaurant* at *Manuel's Taupo Millennium Hotel and Resort*.

Forty-two members and visitors attended including Hawkes Bay Wine and Food Society members, *John and Janet Cotteril*.

Visitors, *Ann Fechny* and *Wyn Bloomfield*, accompanied club member *Gillian Sutton* and visitors *Denis and Janis Drinkrow* accompanied *Alan and Merle Hamilton*. President *Alex Harré* also warmly welcomed our newest members, *Michael and Carol Johnstone*, *Wally and Shirley Gross*, and *Alex and Ann Brodie* during his introduction to the day.

Members were pleased too to welcome back *Oliver and Diana Nees* who have both been recovering

from surgical procedures during June. Oliver is breaking in a brand new knee while Diana is seeing things in a new light after her recent cataract operation.

And if you thought things had been a little quiet during June and that someone was missing, you were right as club member *Jo Bergman* managed to seize the spotlight momentarily to inform everyone that she has been travelling to Australia recently.

For the guest speaker *Peter Robertson* and wife *Sharon*, the luncheon was the last stage of a very busy weekend.

On Saturday night they had hosted 200 corporate guests under a very wet marquee at the Brookfields Winery. Despite ankle deep water running through the marquee they had a wonderful night that was tremendously buoyed by the *All Blacks* convincing defeat of the *Lions* in Christchurch.

And despite his busy schedule, Peter had still managed to pursue one of his other great passions, horse riding, with a brisk early morning ride to clear his thoughts before navigating his trusty XJS V12 Jaguar over the hills to keep his lakeside rendezvous at midday in Taupo.

Peter opened his interesting and relaxed talk with the politically controversial fact that 80% of the New Zealand Wine industry is now owned by overseas interests.

But before you launch into a tirade against foreign ownership of our county's assets, Peter advised us to consider that these foreign owners are the people who have opened the doors for New Zealand wine in their home markets overseas.

The industry is now going through an inevitable process of consolidation and he noted several liquidations and more pending in the local wine industry.

However he noted that those who are dedicated to making top quality wine would survive these present upheavals. He takes this important cue from the fact that his own overseas distributors want more of his reserve label wines.

He was quite rightly proud that his highly awarded *1998 Brookfields Gold Label Reserve Merlot* is fetching £85.00 (NZ\$250.00) in the famous London restaurant of New Zealand celebratory chef *Peter Gordon*.

Peter was also proud to announce that Brookfields are the sponsors of the famous *Hawkes Bay Art Deco Weekend*. This celebration of all things Deco is traditionally held on the third weekend of February. To fully enter into the spirit of the weekend they have even invested in a 1936 Chrysler as a promotional tool and as their preferred method of transport during the celebrations.

Since speaking to us last, Peter has relinquished his strong stance in favour of traditional cork and has

adopted the Stelvin cap closure system across many lines in his range.

Syrah has been one of Peter's latest success stories, but Viogner is also in the ground. He is very excited about the potential for this grape after crushing enough juice for one barrel from the new vines this year.

This year they also made a sun dried Amarone but it will not be a commercial proposition. Amarone is a traditional Italian wine made from grapes that are dried in a cool, airy room for up to 4 months until semi-dry. This produces concentrated sugars and flavours. If fermentation continues until the wine is completely dry, then the term amarone, which means "strongly bitter," is applied to the resulting wine.

THE LUNCHEON MENU

Peter believes that wine should always enhance the food with which it's served. A point that was well proven as the day progressed.

Glen Sando and his team produced a menu that featured fine cuisine using only the finest seasonal produce.

The entrée consisted of a Chicken Mousseline served upon a salad of Shiitake mushrooms, smoked chicken, wilted watercress and finished with a Balsamic vinegar reduction drizzled around the edge of the plate.

Diners were given the option of two delightful main courses. Those hankering after a hearty red meat dish chose the roasted lamb rump which was imaginatively served upon a rosemary and feta potato rosti, finished with a lemon thyme infused jus and Pistachio nut oil. Those after lighter fare chose the grilled Snapper wrapped in streaky bacon, served with a sun dried tomato and spinach polenta and finished with a red wine reduction and a traditional Beurre Blanc.

To finish there was a superb selection of prime New Zealand cheeses that included the popular Whitestone Blue and an interesting tasty, smoke flavoured aged organic Sheep's cheese made from sheep's milk. The cheeses were accompanied by a selection of petite crackers of varying texture and taste and a fig and almond log.

Coffee followed.

A PREMIUM WINE LIST

The following premium quality Brookfield wine accompanied the specially prepared **Edgewater Restaurant** luncheon menu meal extremely well.

Brookfields Ohiti Estate Riesling 2004: This Ohiti Estate Riesling proved to be a charming starter that was served to welcome guests as they arrived. The bouquet was floral with unmistakable Riesling nuances. Tropical fruit and citrus elements provided an enriched mouth feel. Though it is made in an off dry style, the palate finished in a crisp manner. Those who managed to

save some enjoyed it with the freshly cooked snapper on Glen's menu. Normal retail is \$18.00

Brookfields Ohiti Estate Gewurztraminer 2004:

The Robertson's have now owned Ohiti Estate for the past two years since their original partners in the property sold out. It's a move they are very proud of as the estate produces a unique Gewurztraminer. Because of its situation on the northern side of Roys Hill adjacent the Ngaruroro River valley, much of the Ohiti vineyard is old riverbed and most of the vines grow in stones. Consequently it is a heat trap in which the fruit has no difficulty ripening to produce Gewurztraminer where the acidity is low and the flavour development is spectacular. The 2004 lived up to the reputation of its predecessor from Brookfields. It was spicy with lychee tones surfacing through a firm alcohol with just a hint of residual sweetness. Normal retail \$18.00

Brookfields Bergman Estate Chardonnay 2004:

The Bergman Vineyard is immediately in front of the winery. It is named after the Ingrid Bergman roses in the front garden of the Villa adjacent to the vineyard. The vineyard is totally planted in Chardonnay. The Bergman Chardonnay is handcrafted and has built a reputation for reliability. Barrel fermented, with partial malolactic fermentation, it was aged in a mixture of French and American oak. It has generous stone fruit flavours and has instant appeal. Normal retail is \$18.00.

Brookfields Marshall Bank Chardonnay 2004:

The Marshall Bank vineyard is next door to the winery property and is owned by the Robertson's. The soil type is free draining silty loam, with low fertility. Consequently clone 15 Chardonnay excels. Sugar levels of 24 Brix are achieved most years. The Marshall Bank Chardonnay is multifaceted. Bold stone fruit flavours, new oak, malolactic fermentation, and eight months maturation are the pieces. It has firm alcohol and long peachy flavours. The \$30.00 price tag reflects the quality and intensity.

Brookfields Back Block Syrah 2004: Pressed from Ohiti Estate fruit this is a very special wine that is just starting to free up. It follows the tradition set at the Sydney International Wine Competition 2004 by the gold/blue award winning **Hillside Syrah 2000**. Back Block is a new label designed for the restaurant trade who retails in the \$39 to \$40 bracket. It is very akin to northern Rhone Syrah. Pepper and spice mix with classic red fruit flavours to produce a concentrated red with appealing fruit sweetness balanced against strong, drying tannins.

Brookfields Ohiti Estate Cabernet Sauvignon 2004: Deep red in colour and the flavours were ripe. Cassis berry was integrated with a blend of French and American oak and the tannins were in

fine tune with a firm alcohol base. Cabernet Sauvignon drove this wine from the Ohiti Estate. Normal retail is a very reasonable \$18.00.

Brookfields Reserve Merlot Cabernet 2003: This is only the third time since 1989 that this blend has been made and it was sold out in one day. This 2003 Merlot Cabernet was suave and totally engaging. There was a visual attraction, yet simultaneously there was a concealed complexity. It was characterised by leather, plum and a splash of cigar box. Twenty months of the good life in new oak has moulded this Merlot Cabernet for a long future. Guaranteed to appeal to passionate vinophiles because the sensations linger and it is the ultimate charmer. Peter recommends that it be enjoyed with a cheeseboard and provocative discussion. The price reflects its ideals at \$40.00.

Brookfields Reserve Vintage Gold Label Cabernet Merlot 2002: Since its inception in 1986, the *Gold label* has signified Brookfield's flagship blend. "Some things you don't fiddle with" Peter said with a knowing wink. Peter maintains that red wine is bottled sunshine and this 2002 Gold Label Cabernet Merlot certainly promotes that philosophy extremely well. Very much a purist's wine and regarded by many as the top red in New Zealand, it has gone on to conquer Europe. Firm alcohol legs gripped the surface of the glass. Tones of blackberry, chocolate and new oak filled the bouquet. This wine was built around ripe fruit and athleticism. The colour was sharp and pristine. Cassis, toast, oak and scrumptious tannins provided a marathon of sensations. Although its approachable now, Peter recommends that it needs to be at least seven years old before it starts to hit its straps. You won't regret forgetting the budget to purchase a case at \$50.00 per 750ml copy.

Brookfields Optima 1999: This was a very special wine because the vines at Ohiti have been pulled out after an unsuccessful trial period. Optima is a German white wine variety created in the 1970s from crossing Muller-Thurgau and a Sylvaner-Riesling hybrid. It is an early ripening variety, which gets Botrytis easily and as a consequence Peter found he lost all the fruit so the vines have been pulled out and replaced with the highly successful Syrah. The six-year-old Brookfields Optima served with the cheeseboard came from the club cellar as not even the Robertson's have any left. With lovely honey and citrus orange flavours, it was still drinking very nicely as a luscious dessert wine that was not at all cloying.

THANKS EXTENDED TO PETER AND GLEN

The day concluded with a big vote of thanks to *Peter and Sharon Robertson* and Executive chef *Glen Sando*. Peter was presented with a pictorial book of Taupo as a memento.



Rising star apprentice chef, Kieran Hema, discussing his recent trip to Chicago with club member, Maureen Sando.

A RISING STAR IS INTRODUCED

Glen Sando presented his team and introduced one of his upcoming kitchen stars, apprentice chef, *Kieran Hema*, who has been in the news lately with his trip to Chicago where he worked in a world famous restaurant owned by *Charlie Trotter*. Charlie Trotter's is regarded as one of the finest restaurants in the world and for more than 17 years, it has led the world in excellence in culinary arts. Mr Trotter has written 10 cookbooks, two management books and hosts his own award winning cooking series called *The Kitchen Sessions with Charlie Trotter*.

The opportunity to go and work there arose after 19-year-old Kieran attended an apprentice competition in Auckland where Mr Trotter was the guest speaker. Mr Trotter chose five top New Zealand apprentices to go and work in his kitchen and Kieran was one of the first to go. Kieran has almost finished his apprenticeship at the Millennium Hotel's Edgewater and Peppers restaurant under Glen Sando and is looking forward to putting some of his newly acquired ideas into practise.

BIG TIME WINNER

The club cellar hides some enriching rewards as *Tom Sando* found out. D43 was the winning raffle number for Tom who went home with the club cellared prize, a very valuable *1998 Brookfields Gold Label Reserve Merlot*, which is now worth approximately NZ\$250.00 in one of London's leading restaurants. The club paid about \$45.00 from the winery when it was originally released.

Federation of NZ Wine and Food Societies
27th ANNUAL CONVENTION
In TAUPO 5th to 7th May 2006

THE WAIHEKE CALIFORNIAN

An Enjoyable Saratoga Estate Winery Tasting and Light Lunch



At midday on a cold wet Sunday on July 10th, just over twenty members of the Taupo Winetasters Club gathered in warmth of the home of Ley Lewis to taste a selection of wine from Waiheke Island's.

Although there was no charge for the function, a contribution to lunch and a bottle to share during lunch was expected. As a result those who attended enjoyed a light but delightfully varied lunch consisting of finger food such as club sandwiches, cold meats, savouries and cheeses.

A warm welcome was extended to visitor **Margaret Mathieson** as it was her daughter in law, **Kathy McCabe**, who made the tasting possible by providing the wine. Kathy is the New Zealand Marketing and Sales Manager for Saratoga Estate, which is owned by her parents, American **Dave McCabe** and his New Zealand wife Pamela.

Both are former Taupo residents who now own a string of restaurants, bars and the **Saratoga Estate Winery** where they now produce an extensive range of wines consisting of reds from the Waiheke Island vineyard and whites from other regions. Their winery is located in Onetangi Road on Waiheke Island and is set on a 10-acre site planted with Cabernet Sauvignon, Merlot, Malbec, Cabernet Franc, Syrah, Sangiovese, and Chardonnay.

Saratoga was originally known as the **Thabo Vineyard and Winery** until the McCabe's, bought the unfinished property in July 2002.

To reflect his American heritage Dave changed the name to Saratoga, which is the North American Indian word for 'swift water'. The name is borrowed from Saratoga in California, which is a boutique wine community, located just south of San Francisco.

The McCabe's string of restaurants and bars include the **Waterfront Bar and Brassiere** in the

Maritime Museum complex at Auckland's Viaduct Basin, (I can recommend this restaurant personally after enjoying brunch there recently.), **Provedore**, **Margaritas Auckland**, **Birdcage Tavern**, **Onetangi Beach Restaurant** on Waiheke Island and **Margaritas and Hot Lava Night Club** in Ohakune. They have now developed a restaurant at the Winery making it an idyllic Waiheke Island venue to host private functions or weddings.

The family has a strong desire to break new ground with wine styles that combine Californian and European influences with the unique growing conditions on Waiheke Island.

The winemaker and viticulturist is **Luc Dubbonet**, whose aim is to produce premium wines through meticulous care and passionate winemaking.

Since purchasing the winery in 2002 the McCabe's have tripled production to 3000 cases a year and doubled the number of vines in the vineyard to nearly 9000.

Better known for its Rose and reds, Saratoga Estate branched out into hotter waters in June 2003 when the company barrelled its first batch of the well-known Italian firewater grappa.

A HOT DIVERSION TO ITALY

Grappa: To initially warm things up a hot tot of 42% alcohol grape distilled spirit called Grappa, was sampled. Grappa is a traditional Italian aperitif, which is distilled from grape skins. Often served after meals, sometimes in coffee, or on it's own, it is deemed to be a digestive aid and has been sipped in varying quantities by the Europeans for many years. This is the first time this powerful schnapps-related clear spirit has been made in New Zealand for sale. It's musky aroma hinted at canned pears and golden apples skins. While it was certainly hot in the mouth but surprisingly smooth. The McCabe's became interested in making Grappa partly through their Norwegian daughter-in-law who missed the warming drink on cold nights, and partly through daughter, Kathy, who worked in a Sydney restaurant where the Italian owner would treat his guests to a glass of grappa after a meal. This concept kept the guests coming back for more so the McCabe's are hoping the same philosophy will work in New Zealand restaurants. The company produced 450 bottles in 2003 and retailed the 375ml bottles for about \$40.

THE WAIHEKE EXPERIENCE

Saratoga Estate Conors Block Gisborne

Chardonnay 2004: The name **Conor** is taken from one of Dave and Pam's grandchildren. A light golden colour, this wine exudes light subtle aromas and flavours of tropical fruits, pears and custard apple pie. The creamy influence of malolactic fermentation combined with a mix of French oak and stainless influences has created a smooth wine with a lingering finish. Normal retail is \$25.00.

Saratoga Estate Waiheke Island Rose 2003: This Rose won the *Liquorland Top 100 Bronze Award in 2003*. It is a dry rosé with notes of ripe strawberries, vanilla and toffee apples and is made from a marriage of premium Waiheke Merlot, Cabernet Sauvignon, Cabernet Franc, and Sangiovese. A lovely, light midday or lazy afternoon, delicately structured Waiheke indulgence that should be enjoyed now.

Unfortunately it is out of stock at the winery.

Saratoga Estate Sequoia Grove Rose 2004: This Rose won a *Bronze Medal at the 2004 Air New Zealand Wine Awards*. Named after another McCabe grandchild, *Sequoia*. This wine exhibited the aromas and flavours of apricots, watermelons and marmalade fruits. The wonderful combination of Cabernet Sauvignon, Merlot, Cabernet Franc and Sangiovese has created a refreshing and balanced wine. This wine is best drunk whilst youthful and vibrant. Normal retail price is \$25.00.

Thabo Cabernet Sauvignon 2000 : The *Thabo* label was inherited when the McCabe's purchased the unfinished Thabo Winery in 2002. It's a Waiheke Island Estate Bottled red with rich fruit aromatic characters of plums, cassis and raspberries. This wine is a delicate, mouth filling Cabernet with tannins that are showing the potential to allow for good drinking over a period of 4 to 5 years. The winery has no more stock but you may get some around Taupo for \$19.95.

Thabo Cabernet Sauvignon Merlot 2001: This is also a Waiheke Island Estate Bottled wine. With aromatics of anise, wild berries, nutmeg and spicy white pepper, this wine has soft lingering tannins with subtle oak integration. It's a well-rounded wine that should continue to improve over time. Again, the winery has sold out but you may find some around Taupo for a value packed \$19.95.

Saratoga Estate Molly's Paddock Waiheke Island Merlot 2002: *Molly* is the third McCabe grandchild to be honoured with a wine named after her. With delicate aromas of anise, forest fruits, pepper and nutmeg spices there is a light burst of ripe varietal flavours with persistent length and subtle oak. Was retailing for \$25 but is sold out at the winery.

Saratoga Estate Molly's Paddock Waiheke Island Merlot 2003: This Molly's Paddock Merlot won a Bronze Medal in the 2004 Air New Zealand Wine Awards.

It's a fruit driven wine with an abundance of wild berry and plum layered with fruitcake spices, cherry chocolate and a hint of currants in the fruit filled palate. Smokey and savoury oak flavours join the vibrant, well-textured tannins with a blackberry and liquorice lingering finish. It's a very approachable lunchtime red.

Still available at the retail price of \$30.00.

Saratoga Estate Waiheke Island Reserve

Veritas 2002: This is Saratoga's flagship wine. With a powerful alcohol volume of 14%, the marriage of Cabernet Sauvignon, Merlot, Cabernet Franc, Malbec and Syrah has produced a wine with rich velvet tannins that lingered on the palate. This wine was created through hand harvesting and gentle basket pressing followed by 18 months oak maturation. The result is a wine that is deep in colour, with a nice depth of flavour teeming with blackcurrants, chocolate and coffee. Unfortunately for the connoisseur this wine is out of stock at the winery where it was retailing for \$35.00.

DIARY DATES

Wednesday 17th August

Esk Valley Estate

Presented by wine maker Gordon Russell

Wednesday 21st September

Matawhero Wines

Presented by winemaker Denis Irwin

DATE CHANGE:

Wednesday 5th October

Ngatarawa Wines

Presented by winemaker Alwyn Corban

DATE CHANGE:

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 December 4

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 7th August 2005

6pm at the home of Colin Cockburn

12 Ngauruhoe Street, Taupo.

Bring pot luck food and a bottle of wine.

Masked Wine: Maureen Sando

Contributions Welcome

Contact Colin Cockburn: colin@reap.org.nz

Deadline for next issue: Sunday 7th August