

Cabernet Sauvignon of Australia – A Regional Perspective

Tuesday, June 10, 2008

Reception Wine: 6:00 PM, Formal Tasting: 6:20 PM

[Toronto Board of Trade](#) (4th Floor), 1st Cdn Place,
(Entrance off Adelaide St. between Bay & York)

Members' Fee: \$53

Guests/Non-Members Fee: \$63



G'day mates! The barbie season is now here and its time to enjoy great Cabs from down under. The Cabernet Sauvignon grape which is turned into fine Bordeaux, has made a great name for itself in other parts of the world. While Cabernet Sauvignon has the potential to grow in a variety of climates, its suitability as a varietal wine or as a blend component is strongly influenced by the warmth of the climate. Today Cabernet Sauvignon is the second most widely planted red wine grape in Australia, following Shiraz with which it is often blended. In the 1980s, Australia followed California's contemporary trend in producing lighter, more "food friendly" wines with alcohol levels around 11-12% percent; by the early 1990s, the styles changed again to focus on balance and riper fruit flavors. Without a doubt, this grape is one of the world's finest and Australian winemakers have done an excellent job of vinifying Cabernet Sauvignon because of the country's temperate climate.

Very ripe Cabernets from warm climates as in Australia, tend to be *less* distinctively "Cabernet" i.e., tannic, cedar and cigar box aromas, and slow to develop in maturity. Instead, Australian Cabs develop chocolate and richer flavours, and are delicious young. The flavour profile in Cabernets tends to be black and red currant, blackberry, and cassis, with occasional hints of mint, chocolate and even regional earthiness.

We will explore and compare the regional variations of the major Cabernet growing areas of Australia. This will be a great opportunity to determine which style of Australian-made Cab Sauv you prefer. In the 1970s, the **Coonawarra** region first brought international attention to Australian Cabs with intense fruit flavors and subtle minty notes. The wines from here tend to be well balanced with a very good cellar potential and some of the country's best Cabs come from Coonawarra. The **Margaret River** region soon followed with wines that were tightly structured with pronounced black fruit notes, slight gravelly hints, and usually great length and cellaring ability. The warm climate in the **Barossa Valley** produces big, full bodied, richer, dark and fleshy wines with typical chocolate hints. Blackberry more than blackcurrant is often the dominant fruit flavour. As Australian wine regions go, the nearby but cooler **Clare Valley** is small, accounting for around 2.5 per cent of the nation's crush. But its boutique wines are select and they have more concentrated fruit.

Toronto Vintners is delighted to have **Monica Ralphs** as its guest speaker. Monica is the Regional Director of Wine Australia (Canada), and a well-known and very respected individual in the Canadian wine industry. She recently returned from a tour of Australia and will speak about our line-up of wines.

REGISTER / BUY TICKETS

Register for tickets online at <http://www.onlineregistrations.ca/tvcevent6/>. You have the choice of paying by credit card or mailing in a cheque after you complete the online registration form. Ticket sales with a credit card are guaranteed as soon as payment is processed; reservations by cheque are not final until your payment is actually received. Cheques must be received by June 6th. After June 1, the registration system will only accept credit card sales to ensure we receive payment in time. Please note that all ticket sales are final.

You will be sent an email confirmation once you have completed your registration. If you do not receive your confirmation, please contact torontovintners@onlineregistrations.ca. Please be careful not to register twice. Processing may take up to a minute or two; be patient.

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www.torontovintners.org

THE WINES

- 1. Vasse Felix Heytesbury Red 2002**, Margaret River \$59 The impressive, dense ruby/purple-colored 2002 Heytesbury Proprietary Red, primarily Cabernet Sauvignon with tiny dollops of Merlot, Malbec, and Shiraz, offers up scents of cigar smoke, dried Provencal herbs, blackberries, and currants. It is the fullest-bodied, most concentrated and structured of the Vasse Felix offerings. Chocolate, cedar, and black currant characteristics appear in the flavor profile of this moderately tannic offering. Give it 1-2 more years of bottle age, and consume it over the following 10-12. Score - 91. (Robert Parker Jr., www.erobertparker.com, Oct. 2004).
- 2. Leasingham 'Classic Clare' Cabernet Sauvignon 2001**, Clare Valley \$48 Distinctive for its spicy, aromatic raspberry and cherry flavors, layered with white pepper, licorice and floral notes, mingling harmoniously on the velvety, generous finish. Has miles to go before it's at its very best. Best from 2008 through 2016. 4,000 cases imported. Highly Recommended. 93 Points - Harvey Steiman, Wine Spectator, June 15, 2005.
- 3. Penley Estate Cabernet Sauvignon Reserve 2002**, Coonawarra, \$53 More backward than the Shiraz Special Select, but equally superb is the Pauillac-like, dense ruby/purple-tinged 2002 Cabernet Sauvignon Reserve. Classic aromas of creme de cassis, charcoal, coffee, spice box, and toasty oak emerge from this tannic, backward, rich, layered, substantially flavored and endowed Cabernet Sauvignon. Give it 1-3 years of bottle age and drink it over the following 12-15 years. Score - 93 (Robert Parker Jr., www.erobertparker.com, Oct. 2005)
- 4. Cape Mentelle Cabernet Sauvignon 2002**, Margaret River, \$43 The style and character of Cape Mentelle cabernet is distinctive and distinctively different, showing subtle, complex European flavours. This dense red has a savoury and complex bouquet, even at this early stage. Violets, fresh garden herbs, blackcurrants and quince paste aromas are overlaid with the seaweed whiff of a top Islay malt. The palate is lean, tight and understated - at the moment. Given at least five years, it will evolve into a classic Mentelle cabernet. (Peter Bourne, Gourmet Traveller Wine, June/July 2006)
- 5. Elderton Cabernet Sauvignon Ashmead 2002**, Barossa Valley, \$69 Produced from a dry-farmed, 80-year-old vineyard, the 2002 Cabernet Sauvignon Ashmead is sensational. Its inky/purple color is followed by a big, sweet nose of vanillin, spice box, cedar, black currants, and flowers. Aged in a combination of 60% American and 40% French oak, it possesses supple tannin, concentrated fruit notes, and a well-delineated, pure, long finish. This young, promising Cabernet requires 2-3 more years of bottle age; it should last 15 or more. Score - 93-95. (Robert Parker Jr, www.erobertparker.com, Oct. 2005).
- 6. Grant Burge Shadrach Cabernet Sauvignon 2001**, Barossa Valley, \$44 The Shadrach is Grant Burge's flagship cabernet. Expect a nose chalk full of blackcurrant fruit and chocolate mint with notes of herbs, earth and smoke followed by a palate that has an elegant structure with flavours of dark plums and subtle mint. Aged for 20 months in French oak and three years in bottle, it will drink well now or can enjoyed over the next 12 to 15 years.
- 7. Leeuwin Estate Art Series Cabernet Sauvignon 2001**, Margaret River, \$50 International Wine Cellar awarded this wine a score of 92. (July/August 2005) The outstanding 2001 Cabernet Sauvignon Art Series boasts spicy, subtle French oak, cedar, spice box, black currant aromas and flavors gently touched by licorice and herbs. This attractive, medium-bodied Cabernet exhibits layers of richness, a graceful, restrained personality, decent acidity, noticeable but sweet tannin, and a long finish. Enjoy this beauty over the next decade. Drink 2005-2015. Score - 91. (Robert Parker Jr, www.erobertparker.com, Oct. 2005)
- 8. Katnook Estate Cabernet Sauvignon 1997**, Coonawarra \$40 Katnook Estate is one of the most esteemed domains in Australia's premier red wine district, Coonawarra. The wine is allowed to macerate on skins for approximately 14 days before transfer into, depending on vintage, approximately 45-60% new French oak (predominantly medium grained Nevers) for a period of around 24 months before bottling. Katnook Cabernet Sauvignon reflects its strong Coonawarra provenance with plenty of intense blackcurrant mulberry fruit definition, mid palate richness, finely grained tannins and excellent flavour length. The wines have medium to long term cellaring potential.