



International Showdown: South Africa vs. Rest of the World

Tuesday, January 17, 2012

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

Faculty Club, Univ of Toronto, 41 Willcocks Street, Toronto

Members' Fee: \$75; Guests'/Non-Members' Fee: \$85

In January, TVC and the South African Wine Society enthusiastically join forces for an exciting showdown of premium red wines with four of South Africa's finest in comparison to four international high-end reds from the rest of the world. South Africa's wine growing regions benefit from a Mediterranean-like climate with cold winters and dry summers. Winemaking in South Africa focuses on quality wine production and is characterized as a hybrid of both new and old world wine making. Many common international grape varieties, known locally as *cultivar*, are grown in South African vineyards. Since the 1990's the proportion of red grape varieties grown in South Africa has grown from 18% to 44% (Wikipedia.com). Traditionally, red wines from the area have had a reputation for their rustic flavours and blends are growing increasingly popular among local winemakers. As a part of our tasting in January, the South African Wine Society has selected four South African flagship reds including three blends and a Cabernet Sauvignon.

The SA flagship reds include a blend from Vilafonté, the first American-South African joint wine-making venture and the first winery to focus on wine production specifically for the US market. Zelma Long, one of America's best known winemakers, is the Winemaking Partner for the Vilafonté project, while Michael Ratcliffe and Phillip Freese are the Managing Partner and Winegrowing Partner, respectively. All three partners have long reputations in the global wine industry. We'll sample a 2006 Vilafonté Series M blend of Merlot-Melbec-Cab Sauvignon-Cab Franc. We will also taste the award-winning 2007 Syrah-Grenache blend from Ken Forrester Vineyards, grown in one of the oldest wine farms in the Cape, Scholtzenhof. The grapes for the wines are sourced from vineyards - some of them more than 30 years old - in the cool Helderberg region of Stellenbosch. Our other South African wines will come from Hartenberg Estate and Sadie Family. From the former, we will experience a 2006 Shiraz from a very specific area of the estate with near perfect clay rich red earth, while we will have a 2007 Bordeaux traditional Syrah-Mourvedre blend from the latter.

We will compare and contrast these South African gems with 4 flagship international, highly regarded and limited, red wines. These will feature Australian, French, Chilean and Californian reds: a Moritz Premier Cru Syrah from Clarendon Hills, Australia, grown on 30 year old vines and matured in oak barrels for 14-18 months; a 2006 Syrah from Ferraton Pere & Fils des Dionnieres, whose expansive vineyards are located along the famous terraced slopes of the Rhone Valley, and another from Montes Folly, Chile, sourced from a ridiculously steep vineyard in Apalta and aged for 18 months in new French oak. The final wine in the rivalry will be a 2007 Cabernet Sauvignon from Hewitt Vineyard, California, a single-vineyard, limited-edition wine, harvested at peak maturity, fermented for optimal extraction, aged in new French oak and bottled without filtration. There can only be one winner - which continent, which country and which wine will it be? You're the judge!

Our guest speaker will be none other than well known wine writer and TV/radio personality: **The Wine Doctor, Edward Finstein**. This international show-down is a great way to kick off 2012 and is not to be missed! Note: Light appetizers will be served with our wines.

REGISTER/ BUY TICKETS

Register/buy tickets online at <http://www.onlineregistrations.ca/tvcevent1>. You must register online and then can pay by credit card or by cheque. **ALL ticket sales/reservations are final**. Cheques must be received by Friday, January 13th. The cheque-payment option will be disabled at midnight Tuesday, January 10th after which only credit card sales will be accepted until midnight Sunday, January 15th or earlier if the event sells out. You will be sent an email confirmation after completing your registration. If you tried to register but did not receive your confirmation, please contact torontovintners@onlineregistrations.ca before trying to register again.



Tasting Notes and Information

2006 Vilafonte Series M \$40 (S. Africa)

Cabernet Sauvignon 44%, Merlot 39% Malbec 14%, Cab Franc 3%

"The larger grapes lend to more fruit forward characters and silky tannins and add to the lushness of this blend. The wine is rich and accessible, but has a deep backbone and core. Characteristically shows black cherry jelly, dried flowers, hints of almonds and pine nuts. M has a silky entrance on the palate, very even weight for its whole length, and some "fruit sweetness" in its middle and finish; even some chewy milk chocolate notes. It is the perfect combination of elegance, supple fruitfulness and hidden concentration." Vilafonte website, www.vilafonte.com

2007 Ken Forrester "The Gypsy" \$59 (S. Africa)

Syrah, Grenache

"A further selection takes place before blending and the final blend goes back to new barrels to marry and harmonize over the following 12 months. Gypsy is stable with the oak and intense fruit totally harmonized. A very concentrated, focused blend, with layers of deep fruit. The character is somewhat wild, a little brambly with hints of nutmeg, cinnamon, dark spices, with vanilla scents and a distinct, concentrated red-fruit focus." Ken Forrester website, <http://www.kenforresterwines.com/> "From 50-year old Grenache and 30-year old Syrah vines matured for 24 months in barrel, the marvellous 2007 The Gypsy has a rustic, natural, earthy bouquet with touches of mulberry and white pepper. The palate is medium-bodied with fine tannins. It is still a little tight considering its age, but very focused and utterly fresh and elegant. Drink now-2020." 93 pts. Neal Martin, www.erobertparker.com, August 2011.

2006 Hartenberg Estate The Stork Shiraz \$92 (S. Africa)

Rated 5 Stars in Decanter and Platter's South African Wine Guide (2009) and produced on the estate now ranked third in the world for Shiraz (Syrah du Monde), this is Hartenberg at its best. 90 points - Wine Enthusiast June - 2011 "Rich black fruit flavours dominated by cherries, white pepper, and fragrant violets on the nose. Soft ripe tannins with a creamy long finish." 90pts. Platter's & Decanter 5*.

2007 Sadie Family Columella \$95 (S. Africa)

80% Syrah and 20% Mourvedre "Very complex aromatic line ranging from some very earthy and graphite aromas to almost anise; a very black fruit

appearance combined with some nutty, almond flavours. On the pallet, it is a wine with a character; the wine has an amazing tannin and acidity structure." Ewine, www.ewine.co.za

2006 Clarendon Hills Moritz Syrah - \$57 (Australia)

"Deep, spicy dark fruits line this earthy and liquorice basement. Upstairs, there is tobacco and boot leather. Roofed with lavender and coffee, this is the house that cornas built. Layered and with a velvety texture, the palate is luxurious and the nose is liqueur-like smooth. It has depth and balance to warrant 25 years, or 25 minutes." Vintages website.

2006 Ferraton Père & Fils Les Dionnières Ermitage \$95 (France)

Syrah "Dense purple-colored, offers aromas of road tar, burning embers, crème de cassis, and blackberries. Thick and rich with sweet noble tannin as well as a large-scaled, expansive mouthfeel and finish, it will last for 20-25 years." 93pts. Robert Parker, www.erobertparker.com, April 2009.

2006 Montes Folly Syrah, \$79 (Chile)

"Inky black in colour, it reveals a super-expressive nose of toasty new oak, pepper, lavender, game, incense, and blueberry. Voluptuous on the palate but not heavy, it has gobs of sweet fruit, layers of flavour, a firm structure, and 5-7 years of aging potential. Impeccably balanced, lengthy effort." 94 pts. Jay Miller, www.erobertparker.com, June 2009.

2007 Hewitt Vineyard Cabernet Sauvignon \$69 (US - California)

Hewitt Vineyard Cabernet Sauvignon is a single-vineyard, limited-edition wine. "The 2007 Cabernet Sauvignon is a slightly softer, more forward wine, but it should last just as long. It is more typically Californian in its opulent black currant fruit intermixed with notes of chocolate, crushed rocks, vanilla, and black fruits. The tannins are sweeter than in the 2006, and the wine is full-bodied with a layered texture, admirable purity and depth, and a blockbuster finish with no shortage of tannin. Approachable now, it will be better in 2-3 years, and should last for 20-25 years." 93pts. Robert Parker, www.erobertparker.com, December 2009.