

Tuesday August 21, 2012



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2012 Hot 100 SA Wines

August, 2012

Tapping into South Australia's terroir

The Adelaide Review Hot 100 South Australian Wines is not just a wine show but a celebration of South Australia's culture surrounding and supporting the search for the most drinkable and exciting South Australian wine. My aim is to expose our 16 judges, who will taste a capped 1200 wines over three days, to some of the most creative, iconic and innovative South Australian producers, cultural institutions, musicians and eateries. Why? We taste wines not knowing their variety or brand. We have no emotional connection to what we taste, so we as judges are confronted with only the wine. As a wine drinker the label, stories, history and the emotional connections of each wine provide much of the drinking experience. I want to provide an environment which forces the judges, wherever they are from, to think, feel and taste in a South Australian mindset to better understand the emotional, or non-geophysical, terroir of South Australia that influences the wine styles we are tasting. My aim here is to find the wines which shine under these external influences or reflect the feel of these South Australian influences.

Cultural Partners

The individuals and teams we are delighted to partner with this year for dining experience and satiation include Bistro Dom's Duncan Welgemoed, Chef Jock Zonfrillo (Magill Estate), Amanda Daniel from Adelaide Farmers Market, Burger Theory, the Exeter and the Apothecary 1878.

To provide a deeper level of connectedness to the essence of South Australia we will join the expert staff of the South Australian Museum's mineral gallery for a back-of-house tour of the underworld, and finally there's the music with an original composition by Speak Percussions' Eugene Ughetti for Soundstream Collective's Gabriella Smart.

The music

Traditionally we have inherited an inert wine show environment to minimise distractions for the tasters. A traditional wine shows tastes under bright, white lights, on a bright white table, in a quiet, non-aromatically influenced room and there is silence. As a wine drinker I can't think of the last time I enjoyed wine on my own or in the company of others in such a clinical environment. Having personally conducted projects looking at the interactive effect of different music environments on the taste of wines, I have become a strong believer in the role music and other sensory stimuli have on how we perceive and experience taste. I believe the environment, which includes how we feel at the time, changes our drinking experience. If we taste in an inert, clinical environment to which I have previously described, which wines are likely to stand out? The inert and clinical wines. There is actually no such thing as an inert environment, so why don't we actually confront the elephant in the room and create an environment, which heightens the sensual and emotive environment for the whole group of tasters. I love this idea and this is where Speak Percussions' Eugene Ughetti and Soundstream Collective's Gabriella Smart come in. I have asked Eugene to create an upright piano composition, which we will listen to a recording of while we taste off the top 40 wines of the show to find the winning wines. I have given Eugene a totally blank scope to work with but have asked specifically for him to capture, through his composition, the feel and vibrancy of South Australia through the virtuosity of Gabriella Smart.

New prize category




Natural wine class: The most drinkable and exciting white or red wine produced from South Australian grapes vinified without the addition of commercial yeasts or acids. The prize is a glass wine decanter blown by the JamFactory and sponsored by the global culinary institution Le Cordon Bleu. Natural wine is a topical international debate. The term in itself has no meaning and frustrates many, as all wines are produced from living grapes and living yeast and bacteria. However, 'natural' has come to be the term coined to describe the wine making process where wines are produced without the introduction of commercial yeast, bacteria, fining agents, enzymes and often filtration. The addition of the preservative sulphur in minimal additions is often accepted under the term 'natural'. Some people prefer to use the term 'authentic' but whatever the term preferred there is growing interest from both producers of wines and lovers of wines for wines produced without additives from packets. In a recent *Decanter* article, wine journalist and academic Andrew Jefford celebrated the fun nature and curiosity of the Australian natural wine producers and offered a 'hurrah' in his writings celebrating that the Hot 100 had instigated a natural wines class, the first of its kind internationally.



In 2011 we ran the wines produced without the addition of commercial yeasts or acids class and received 16 entries. In 2012 we expect many more wines to be entered into this class. I asked Derek Casey, Chief Operating Officer of Le Cordon Bleu (LCB), why they wished to sponsor this class specifically? Casey replied that LCB is about learning to understand and implement classic French culinary techniques, as well as hospitality skills, but at the same time LCB has always been a supporter of local ingredients or styles and most of all, innovation. Natural wine is nothing new. Its practioner's respect, seek out and utilise the science of wine in their own way to create wines which do not carry the artificial flavours and mouthfeels of wines produced utilising commercially produced yeasts and acids.


– James Erskine

2012 Hot 100 judges

- James Erskine**, Coordinator of Judges (Jauma Wines, SA)
- Hwee Peng Lim** (International wine specialist, Singapore)
- David Brookes** (Freelance wine writer, vinofreakism.com, SA)
- Jeremy Prideaux** (Press* Food and Wine, SA)
- Alex MacKenzie** (Annie's Lane winemaker, SA)
- Vanessa Altman** (Switch and Temple Bruer winemaker, SA)
- Sharon Romeo** (Fino co-owner, SA)
- Banjo Harris** (Attica restaurant manager, Vic)
- Mike Bennie** (Wine writer and judge, NSW)
- Daniel Parrott** (Senior wine buyer for Laithwaites Wine Group, Vic)
- Jennifer and Eric Semmler** (919 Wines, SA)
- Travis Tausend** (Cork Wine Cafe, SA)
- Sam Hughes** (Wine merchant and winemaker, NSW)
- Gill Gordon Smith** (Fall From Grace owner, Heart and Soul distributor, SA)
- Justin Lane** (Alpha Box and Wine, SA)
- Sue Bell** (Bellwether Wines, SA)

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