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It is now easier to order wine from Coriole. The web site incorporates an ordering facility; www.coriole.com

Flying High

Flying at 35,000 ft between Melbourne and Singapore turns out to be a good time to write this letter. I am fixed in position for 7 hours with not a lot of distraction. (Penelope Cruz could be a distraction but it is just another movie that is not good enough for her!)

Wine is a strange phenomenon at this height. I always find it hard to discriminate quality. Most wine tastes good. This is a bit disconcerting. Winemakers don't want all wine to taste good---only some wine and then preferably their own.

Italian Varieties

Italian varieties seem to continue to improve from my tastings around the country. These varieties are noted for their lightness, savouriness and dryness and lean cherry like fruit.

Interestingly the styles are changing. As Australian winemakers pursue this traditional European savoury ideal it seems from tasting many Italian examples (certainly \$30 and less) that winemakers in that country pursue the new world; a richer and sweeter fruit style!

I sense that a similar trend has started to happen with Shiraz in regions like McLaren Vale and Barossa with a move to more savoury styles.

The latest *Coriole Sangiovese* is 2008 only just released this month. This 2008 vintage is very typical of recent releases. It is exciting to see the first red wine of the 2008 vintage. Also available are very small bottlings of 2007 *Barbera*, and 2007 *Nebbiolo*.

Nick Stock writing in the penguin guide to Australian Wine 2009 ... "their 2007 *Sangiovese* is the wine that really had us all swivelling in our Hilton boardroom chairs."

More colourful writing from Mr Stock.

Who Wants "Typical" Wine?

Nicholas Joly is one of the most famous producers of Chenin Blanc in the Loire Valley in France. He says, "It is better to make a typical wine than a good wine" Or in other words it is better, or more important, to make a wine that is truly representative of your little plot of the earth than to necessarily make a good wine.

A bit extreme? Perhaps not a view that would suit the pragmatic Australian consumer, who would probably prefer a good wine! We seem quite happy with the idea that Grange, the most famous wine from this country, may come from different vineyards and wine regions every year.

As long as it is the best wine.

However many wine merchants and consumers around the world are a bit uneasy about this. They are happier with the idea that all the great wines of the world are from a single vineyard. There is though an increasing move in Australia to make wines that are more typical and a true expression of place of origin. Exports have suffered because Australian wine has become too dominated by cheap multi regional wines and not enough emphasis on regional names and characters. So we are probably happy to partly endorse the approach of Mr Joly.

The *Coriole Estate Shiraz* (produced since 1970) is made from all estate shiraz 15-40 year old vines on all similar terra rosa soils.

In some years a small bottling of "*The Soloist*" comes from the 40 year old vines on the "contour hill" with the bulk going to Coriole estate.

The *Lloyd Reserve Shiraz* is from just one small vineyard planted in 1919.

2006 Reserves

We have just released the two reserve wines from the wonderful 2006 vintage. These wines have all the freshness and bright fruit of that vintage. The Shiraz is deep and complex with leather and chocolate and spice. The *Mary Kathleen* shows some similar depth with a suggestion of tobacco leaf and mint. Both wines have great cellaring potential.

Vintage

The 2009 harvest started in February. As usual every vintage throws up unpredicted behaviour of grapes and weather. The summer was mild except for a heat wave in late January. There was some early panic as crops were reduced particularly in the shallow soils around the Seaview sub-region where Coriole is located. But the vintage continued slowly and sedately and finally finished in late April. It became one of those slow paced vintages with gentle ripening and time to pick and choose fruit when we wanted. Interestingly harvest of Kalamata Olives is also very late extending into July/August when often completed in May and June.

Around the district there seems to be almost a sigh of relief and some pleasure that the wines look exceedingly good.

If there is any talk of extreme weather I like to speak to near neighbour Colin Kay of Kay Bros. The Kays have daily diaries and records going back over 100 years.

According to Colin there have been days as hot and drier years or periods of years. I am not a climate change sceptic but it is good to have some facts in front of you.

The four driest years recorded in the McLaren Vale district in order are; 1914, 1959, 1994 and 1982.

Not to be out done Alex Johnston from another family with a long memory mentions the seasons that have been the most severe-----1892, 1908 and 1939!

Olive Oil 21st Birthday

We are in the middle of picking olives at Coriole and other groves in McLaren Vale. This release will be the 21st from Coriole.

The knowledge and interest in olive oil has changed and developed so much in that time. The quality of Australian oil has increased beyond recognition. Finally after exposure of many scandals in Europe we understand the poor quality of cheap imported oils.

Most olive oils have a use by date of 2 years. We of course date our oils on the front label. Visiting friends recently I admonished them for still having unopened 2005 Coriole Oil. The bottle proved to be incredibly fresh still after 4 years. But still not a practise to be recommended.

The List

We are in the midst of many new releases and other wines that have almost sold out.

2006 Shiraz Estate Grown

This Shiraz is typical of the distinctive 2006 vintage. The flavours are bright and texture is supple and smooth. The tannins are long, balance is elegant and there is high cellaring potential. Penguin Guide to Australian Wine. Nick Stock says, *"Their outstanding 2006 shiraz I describe as the quiet leader of the region, better balanced, more detailed and astutely pitched in style terms."*

2006 Cabernet Sauvignon Estate Grown

This is an intense, rich and ripe style with a strong association with traditional McLaren Vale.

2006 Shiraz Mouvedre Dancing Fig

Mouvedre is slowly having an impact at Coriole. This classic Southern Rhone variety is well suited to warmer summers and lightens and lengthens the Shiraz palate adding a cherry/strawberry influence. *94 Points in Hallidays 2009 Wine Guide*

2006 Redstone Shiraz

This is one of my favourites for current drinking. It is bright and full with soft tannins.

2007 Nebbiolo

Finally there is a new release available. The fruit for this wine is from Gumeracha in the Adelaide Hills. This wine is so typical of the variety with good concentration and gentle tannins.



'Food and gardening'? We found this quote in an obituary in THE AGE on Tuesday 5th May... *Her uninhibited culinary preferences, however, rarely matched the excesses of her mother, who fed lobster thermidor to her roses. "She would make fish stew and sometimes would forget that she was making it for the garden," de la Falaise revealed. "So she would add a bit of cognac, some garlic and spices. The roses would almost cry out with pleasure."*