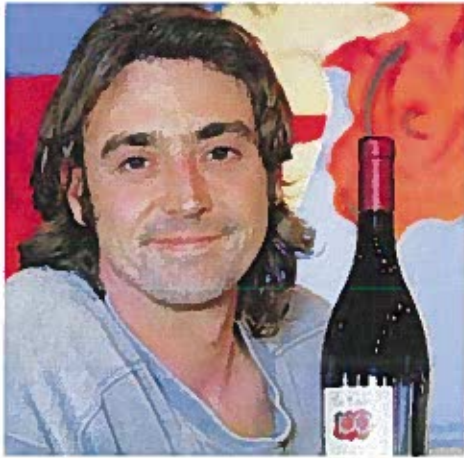


2007 La Curio Reserve Shiraz by La Curio Pty. Ltd - McLaren Vale Australia

2007 La Curio Reserve Shiraz Item no. 0204007. 91 points in Robert Parker's Wine



Name: Elena Golakova & Adam Hooper

Adam Hooper and Elena Golakova, La Curio, SA

Stylistic interpretation is prominent for a group of young winemakers making their mark in South Australia's McLaren Vale. The world of the 21st century wine industry can be one of high-tech, computerized oenology. But at Redheads Studio about an hour south of Adelaide, the philosophy is Artisanship. Redheads is a place where winemakers can go and experiment with their own ideas and make small batches of wine. The winemakers involved usually have a day job and go to Redheads to be free of their own winery's restrictions.

'Winemaking is art,' said La Curio winemaker Elena Golakova, who with partner Adam Hooper, make their wines at Redheads. Golakova and Hooper have just walked away with a Decanter World Wine Award trophy for their Grenache Shiraz blend, The Nubile. To describe their reaction to winning the award as one of happiness doesn't seem to do it justice. The two young producers are passionate about the wine they make, the region they live in and the lifestyle it provides.

Garagiste is a French term for wine made in the garage and it seems to fit at Redheads. Wine is fermented in rain water tanks cut in half to allow open fermentation. Relationships are fostered with the regions' best growers and fruit is crushed and fermented in small batches. Experimentation seems the norm, wild yeasts are trialled and Hooper says one of his La Curio ferments was on skins this past vintage for two months.

'Taking risks can be scary but ultimately rewarding,' Hooper said.

One of his techniques involves freezing fermenting fruit with dry ice (a lot of it) to drop the temperature of the must. This smashes the cell walls in the skins and facilitates the

extraction of colour and a subtle tannin profile. But Hooper says while this method is labour intensive, not to mention all the plunging involved with the open fermenters, the results are worth it.

'It is hard to get consistency but getting the desired outcome is fantastic,' he said.

Redheads is not the only group of young winemakers making the shift to more hands on winemaking. In Bordeaux Garagiste winemakers take to their sheds to rebel against Bordeaux's appellation controls. In the Barossa Valley 34 producers have come together and formed the Barossa Small Winemaker's Centre. They source fruit from quality parcels around the valley and produce more than 90 hand made wines.

With all of these groups it seems the motivation is the same - to stick it to the corporates, create regional branding and to try and enhance their own region's, and Australia's, reputation as a premier wine producer.

'When you work for a large company you can not express yourself,' Golakova said.

'The biggest joy for me is to define my own stylistic interpretation of what I believe a blend of McLaren Vale's two icons should be (Shiraz and Grenache).'

2007 Pinot Gris Reserve by Pierre Sparr – Alsace

Pear honey and pine apple notes on the nose give way to more melon flavors on the palate. Mouth feel has a hint of glycerin leaving behind suggestions of quince and honey on the finish. Not complex but mouth filling and well balanced. 85 WE

This wine was selected because of its ability to go with pickled flavors and lemon. As a dry white starter wine it is meant to be complimentary with the foods and full in the mouth.

The wine maker

Established in 1680 with the grand house built in 1861. It was essentially destroyed during the war and an even larger Chateau was built in its place. They are one of the oldest negociants and wine makers in the entire Alsace region and have a reputation for making an honest and refreshing dry white wine at very reasonable prices (\$25).

The following article was written by a regional wine writer

Pierre Sparr Alsace is much lighter in style than the over-oaked and heavy chardonnays from California, and should delight at all levels. And you can still find it for less than \$10 from the fantastic 2005 vintage.

In the glass, Pierre Sparr Alsace is a pale citrine yellow color with a brilliant, clean, clear appearance going out into a faint glass-clear rim definition and high viscosity.

On the nose, there are warm, ripe, floral white fruit notes, with pear sparkler, apples, mango, peach, apricots, along with hints of crushed almonds, white cranberry juice and fine minerals.

In the mouth, the wine is rich with balmy fruit flavors, including sweetish pears, apricots and white cranberries. It has nicely layered and balanced texture through the midpalate, showing decent acidity levels, red apples and sweetish minerals. The finish is a smooth and soft one, with yet more pears and hints of citrus, still retaining a good "bite" through to the end with a touch of lemon drop.

Pierre Sparr Alsace is a well-made, medium bodied and refreshing wine, perfectly suited for this time of the year. It should get a little air on it, to let some of that "heat" burn off initially, but then enjoy it chilled to 58 degrees Fahrenheit, and serve it by the glass as an aperitif or with fresh oysters.

2008 Cheverny from Domaine du Salvard - Loire Valley

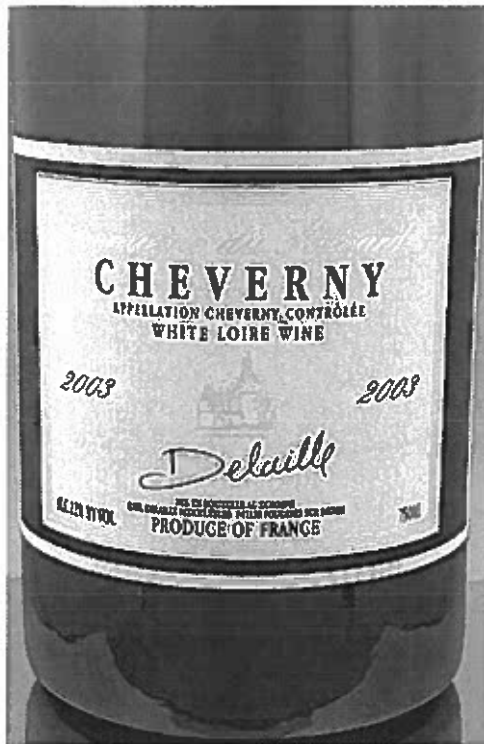
However, I decided to follow my heart and go with a Sauvignon Blanc. I did shake it up a bit by choosing a blend though. My choice was the Domaine du Salvard Cheverny, which comes from the Cherverny AOC (in Touraine, and just down the river from Sancerre). It's a blend of Sauvignon Blanc (85%) and Chardonnay (15%), which was aged on its lees. I found it at the MLCC (the Madison Square location – I haven't seen it anywhere else) for \$15.38 before taxes.

So far so good. A nice Loire Valley wine for around \$15. When I poured the wine, it showed a very light golden colour, with just a hint of green around the edges. The nose was nothing special. Lots of minerals and flint with a hint of something grassy. It didn't smell like a traditional Loire Sauvignon Blanc, but I wasn't picking up much Chardonnay on the nose either.

Things got much better once I actually tasted it. In the mouth, it showed off lots of Sancerre-esque crispness and zippy mineral flavours, but with a bit of a softer feel to it. The flavours continued to develop, with tangy apples and more grass following the minerals. And the finish was amazing – very long and dry. In short, it was really good, and a great value. I plan to enjoy more of it this summer.

The winemakers suggest serving it up with spicy food. That could work, but I'd probably be happier pairing it with one of the old standbys for Sauvignon Blanc. So be conservative and serve it up with lighter fish dishes (including Manitoba pickerel), lighter food with lots of herbal flavours or anything with goat cheese. With the presence of Chardonnay, even a lighter cream sauce might work. Try this little treat for a good match.

Made from 90% Sauvignon and 10% Chardonnay the Cheverny Blanc is junior Sancerre with intense gooseberry crispness. The nose is full and fruity with elderflower and blackcurrant bud aromas and the creaminess of the Chardonnay fills out the palate providing weight...



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2006 Chateau Roumieu – Sauternes about \$20.00 per 750 ml

The great sweet wines of Bordeaux, Sauternes, are among the most decadent, complex and simply enjoyable wines. Based on a blend of Semillon and Sauvignon Blanc that has been infected with the "noble rot", Botrytis Cinerea, Sauternes are rich, honied wines bursting with notes of vanilla, coconut, dried apricots and subtle spice tones. They are usually very sweet and rich with a soft quality to them that makes them appealing in their youth yet they can age and improve for decades. The neighboring village of Barsac frequently makes wines comparable to those of Sauternes.

Floral, almost tropical nose with apple/baked apple, honey, and apricot. More white fruit and honey on the palate. Good acidity and crisp finish balance the fruit flavors well. Forty kilometres south of Bordeaux, **Sauternes** is an AOC that includes together 5 communes, including Barsac.

For centuries, humans have been patiently learning to master this region's climate, soils and grape varieties. But Mother Nature did a good job laying the foundation.

The Sauternes terroir is distinguished by a geological predisposition to gravel and pebbles that cover limestone streaked with veins of clay.

In the communes of Fargues and Sauternes, a layer of hardpan (iron-oxide cemented sand) in which vines flourish can be found.

The vineyards at the highest elevations and farthest from the river have the best terroirs and produce the majority of the Crus Classés, including the monumental Château Yquem. Sauternes wines are made from Sémillon (80% of vines planted) and Sauvignon (15%) grapes. A bit of Muscadelle occasionally is used to give the wines an untamed touch.

Sauternes have an "aged gold" colour that is denser and darker than other dessert wines. When they age, they develop a stunning amber colour.

The nose has aromas of flowers and fruit that melt together to create a bouquet of remarkable complexity and balance. The primary aromas include almond, quince, mango, pineapple, stewed peach, dried apricot and passion fruit.

There are also floral notes, with touches of linden, acacia, mimosa and honeysuckle. And as is typical with Sémillon, there are also notes of beeswax, almond and hazelnut.

In the mouth, Sauternes wines have a powerful style that is viscous but extremely elegant. Its strong sweetness is captivating.

Finally, its aromatic finish is something that simply must be experienced.

Licor de Tannat by Pisani - Uruguay

Located between Brazil and Argentina, Uruguay is more than twice the size of Ireland with a population of 3.5 million.

On the same latitude as the wine regions of South Africa, New Zealand and parts of Australia, its climate is similar to New Zealand's and, in look and feel, it resembles the low undulating Medoc in Bordeaux.

It comes as no surprise, therefore, that the national grape of Uruguay is French.

What is surprising is that it is tannat, not cabernet sauvignon.

Tannat is found in the wines of Cahors and in parts of the Dordogne, Bergerac and the Armagnac region south of Bordeaux. Above all, it is found in the wines of south-west France, namely AC Madiran red wine and Irouleguy's rose wines.

It is not a grape or wine that many outside these regions overly value. It was often regarded as a crude, country wine, suitable for the carafe in the local roadside cafe.

However, it is reasonably easy to grow, produces large volumes and reacts with a Gallic shrug to rugged variable weather as long as the predominant seasonal warmth is present.

When Pascal Harriague, a Basque of French origin, arrived in Uruguay in 1875, he brought with him considerable quantities of tannat vines from the Madiran region in southwest France. He planted 200 hectares and became the father of modern commercial Uruguayan wine.

Even though Harriague struck gold with the right varietal for Uruguay, the presence of well-established ranching and other agriculture meant that the wine business stayed mainly a boutique affair, with no industrial-scale production as in Chile or Argentina - this is partly the secret of tannat's success in Uruguay.

In France, particularly as the co-op era took off, the emphasis was on volume, not quality.

All around Montus in the AC Madiran and in neighbouring appellations, bad tannat wines continue to be made.

Money from ranching and lucrative local demand for decent wine meant that, in Uruguay, a careful labour and finance-intensive approach to tannat growth was quickly adopted.

Leading boutique wineries like Pisano, just north of the capital Montevideo, are typical of the 250 wineries throughout Uruguay.

BODEGA PISANO

Pisano was founded in 1914 with the arrival of the second generation of the Pisano

family from Italy. Unlike the under-resourced and frequently unambitious vigneron of south-west France, Pisano treats his tannat like a top Burgundian producer. The vineyards are manicured, no chemical fertilisers or herbicides are used and grapes are hand-picked before being fermented in barrels of new French oak from Burgundy.

They make several classes of tannat, a fine cabernet sauvignon and a surprisingly muscular and complex white wine from usually merely fragrant torrantes.

The stars of their wines are a Bordelais-style blend called Arretxea and a unique construction of their own called Etxe Oneko, which honours their Basque heritage.

Etxe Oneko 2004 (90)

An outrageously gorgeous fortified wine made from old vine tannat, in this case from a vineyard planted in 1942. The wine is made in a complicated fashion that includes an Amarone-type ripasso phase and port techniques.

The result is a liquid treacle-like confection with the cut and heft of a vintage port, followed by the cool savoury finish of an Amarone.

This is not a well known wine and is a pleasant little secret for that hard to find dessert wine that goes well with Chocolate.