

Wine of the Week

a Webzine for wine and food lovers

Wine, food, books, news and reviews with the emphasis on New Zealand

www.wineoftheweek.com
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Schubert Cabernet Merlot 2003

Wairarapa, New Zealand

Think red wine in the Wairarapa and Pinot Noir immediately springs to mind. That's because the most famed wine place in the Wairarapa is Martinborough. Think Martinborough and Cabernet Sauvignon, and the picture is hazy because Pinot Noir is the king and queen of grapes and very little Cabernet Sauvignon is produced. But what has been produced has occasionally been stunning. One of the best ever came from the late Stan Chifney - I remember drinking a 1994 Chifney Cabernet Sauvignon with friends three years ago. In fact it was so delicious, I made it my *'Most Surprising Wine Tasted During The Year'*.

This week my interest in Wairarapa Cabernet Sauvignon was rekindled after tasting the **Schubert Cabernet Merlot 2003** - although the ratio of Cabernet Sauvignon to Merlot is not mentioned, in the past it has been 50:50. Deep black red with a crimson hue, this wine is alluring in its appearance. The nose is quite different from anything else on the table because under the smoky vanillin oak and the scent that is reminiscent of a bowl of just picked blackberries with the ones on the bottom getting slightly crushed and oozing their juices, there something that's reminiscent of beef stock as well. Full-bodied and fine textured with flavours of blackberries, cassis, cherry jam, dried herbs, a suggestion of menthol and underlying tobacco - the fruit is lifted and the underlying acidity is in no way pointy - just smooth, rounded and totally delicious. Cedary oak lingers on the finish with chocolate and mocha making an appearance as well. A fascinating wine that has been lovingly made and after the initial shock of the unusual aroma, totally likeable.

With 14.5% alcohol and a cork closure, it comes from a vintage of tiny proportions due to late frosts in the spring however the long, dry summer and autumn ensured ideal ripening conditions. The fruit was hand-picked and 100% de-stemmed with fermentation in stainless steel vats and maceration for 3 weeks before aging in 75 % new and 25 % used French Oak barriques for 27 months. It costs \$40 a bottle.

Schubert Cabernet Merlot 2003 was an awesome match to a shank end of a leg of lamb that had been well seasoned, stuffed with garlic, smothered with red currant jelly and roasted in a juice of merlot laced with thyme.

Bottles of this were auctioned at the Te Omanga Hospice Charity Wine Auction last month. I have to say whoever picked up this lot got some very nice wine.

It's not the first time I've been smitten my Kai Schubert's Cabernet Merlot blend. Looking back at my notes, I found I was pretty star struck by the [2000 vintage of this wine](#).

Find out more about Schubert and this wine from www.schubert.co.nz.

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