

# The 2003 Capital Times

Wairarapa

# Spring

## Wine Report

It's back... and is even bigger than last year. For our 2003 Wairarapa Spring Wine Report we've tasted close to 100 new wines, a reflection of the ever-expanding vineyard that exists on the other side of the great gorse-clad Rimutaka wall.

HAVING said that, this year's report isn't a definitive round up of all the Wairarapa's spring releases. Some well-known names are missing, for various reasons. For many of them the tasting occurs a little too early; they feel no pressure to release their wines before they think they are ready.

What's healthy though, is that for that for every no-show by an established winery, a new name has, bounced into the frame. Such is the dynamism and growth of the region. And this year, some of these little-known labels have done very well.

There's no doubt the results of blind panel tasting can, for some punters, carry the weight of the Magna Carta. This is when all logic suggests they shouldn't. As I said in my intro last year, "all we can ever hope to provide is a snapshot-drawn from some personal viewpoints-of a certain wine at a certain time."

There was a slight change to the tasting panel this year. Andrew Parkinson's oenological tour of Europe unfortunately coincided with tasting week. Former Sommelier of the Year Stephen Morris of Copita ably stepped in to the breach. The panel's female palate (a very important balance to have, in my view) was again provided by the charming and experienced Christine Comertord of Eurowine. The panel was once more well assisted by James McMenamin.

The wines were tasted blind.

We endeavored not to taste more than 25 wines a day to avoid palate fatigue. There has also been a slight change to the presentation of our ratings. Each judge's individual score (out of 20) has been published so where a panel the story. The star ratings were the result of panel consensus.

I'd like to thank all the producers who sent in wines, my tasting panel and the good helpers at *Capital Times*. The tasting sessions were spirited, with the right mix of levity and serieux.

We all hope the report provides you with something useful, and prompts you to go out and try something new.

Cheers, John Saker *Capital Times* wine columnist and convener of the tasting panel.

### 2002 Schubert Tribianci

Very floral, fruity bouquet. nice spread in the mouth, off-dry, citrusy with good acid structure. Very quaffable, I thought. (It is a blend of Muller Thurgau, Chardonnay and Pinot Gris).

JS	CC	SM	***1/2
16	13	12	

### 2002 Schubert 'Marion's Vineyard' Pinot No

Strong vegemite and milk chocolate characters on the nose. Very savoury, rich and weighty in the mouth, with vegetal hints and sweet cherry brandy flavours. "A drinker's pinot," noted Stephen.

JS	CC	SM	***1/2
14.5	14.5	16.5	

### 2001 Schubert Cabernet Meric

Intriguing wine. The nose is so "ruruss" and perverse that we decided to taste another bottle. This only made it seem more pronounced. An interesting, bold, fleshy, ripe palate is not done justice by a bouquet reminiscent of stewed grass.

JS	CC	SM	****
14	16.5	15	