



International Wine Dinner, T'ang Court
The Langham, Hong Kong 5th November 2009
Notes by **Nick Bulleid MW**

Baked avocado filled with sliced lobster

- ***Tyrrell's Vat 47 Hunter Valley Chardonnay 2005***
- ***Leeuwin Estate Art Series Margaret River Chardonnay 2005***

I thought the richness and smooth texture of the avocado was matched beautifully by the full, stonefruit flavours of the Chardonnays. The delicacy of the lobster was a good foil. The Tyrrells was the more refined, with subtle complexity, while the Leeuwin impressed with its power and depth of flavour. Both wines will develop beautifully in bottle and were equally enjoyed by most diners.



Sautéed prawns and crab roe accompanied with golden-fried pork and crab meat puffs

- ***Penfolds Yattarna Chardonnay 1999***
- ***Louis Latour Corton Charlemagne Grand Cru 2003***

This outstanding dish was one of the most exciting of the night, but would have been more closely complemented by younger vintages of both wines. These both showed their qualities, but the complex, nutty Yattarna is now fully developed and suited to richly sauced dishes. The Corton showed the very ripe, forward flavours typical of this unusually hot vintage, although the power for which the vineyard's famous was still there.

Both wines were enjoyed by the diners, with favourites equally split.



(Centre-Australian Consul General in Hong Kong – Hon. Les Luck with Ms. Deborah Biber CEO Australian Chamber of Commerce in Hong Kong)

Sautéed fresh mushrooms, Chinese kale, red and yellow bell peppers

- *Tyrrell's Vat 1 Hunter Valley Semillon 2003*
- *Brokenwood ILR Reserve Hunter Valley Semillon 2003*

This was an excellent combination, the delicacy and relative simplicity of the dish matched by the light body and finesse of the Semillons. I thought the Brokenwood, with its rich lemon and toast flavours, was the better wine and match on the night – and many diners agreed - but the more youthful Tyrrells is an outstanding wine which will show its greater qualities in future.



(Vat 47, Leeuwin Estate, Corton & Yattarna – blind tasting by Ella Lister – The World of Fine Wine (UK Magazine))



Sliced Smoked Duck Breast

- ***Greenock Creek Cornerstone Barossa Valley Grenache 2004***

This was an inspired combination. While I often think Pinot noir is the ideal choice for duck, the savoury, spicy overtones of this Grenache reflected the subtle smoke of this dish and the super-ripe sweetness of the grapes beautifully matched the succulence of the duck. I adore duck and this was a simply brilliant dish.



Golden-fried 'T'ang Court' Crispy Chicken

- ***Bass Phillip 21 Gippsland Pinot Noir 2006***
- ***Louis Jadot Clos Vougeot 2004***

This course would have presented a problem, as it might have anticipated white wines, which would have been difficult to return to after the huge flavours of the Greenock Creek. In the event, the richness and texture of the chicken skin handled the wines with ease. The wines were a complete contrast and deceived most diners, principally because the sumptuous flavours and lush texture of the Bass Phillip had them thinking "Burgundy". This wine showed Bass Phillip's customary depth of plum and savoury flavours and extraordinary richness. The Vougeot, an excellent wine from this difficult vintage, was still tight and undeveloped with mostly savoury flavours and still needed ten years to show its best.



***Pan-fried sliced Japanese A5 Wagyu Beef served with shallots
Stewed noodles with Japanese mushrooms***

- ***Two Hands Zippy's Block Barossa Shiraz 2007***
- ***Kay Brothers Amery Block 6 McLaren Vale Shiraz 2004***
- ***Wild Duck Creek Duck Muck Heathcote 2007***
- ***Penfolds St. Henri Shiraz 1994 (from Magnums)***
- ***Ch. Cos d'Estournel, St. Estephe 1996***

As you'd expect, this bracket prompted considerable discussion and eventually surprises. Some tasters, unfamiliar with such wines when young, were taken aback by the power and exuberance of the two 2007s. Both showed extreme ripeness, the Zippy's Block lush, sweet-fruited and fat, the Duck Muck relatively tighter with good acidity and fine tannins to match its opulence and overall beautifully balanced. Both will age for many years. Kay's Block 6 impressed us all for its rich flavour and full body, while being balanced and



showing nicely developing complexity. I thought the two oldest wines were best with the succulent beef, which made an excellent dish. They also caused the most confusion. All diners loved the elegance and complex, developed cedary flavours of the St Henri, which took many of them to Bordeaux, while they found the comparatively funkier, yet controlled farmyard overtones of the Cos d'Estournel difficult to understand. I loved them both and thought them excellent examples of their genre.

A selection of Three Australian Cheeses

- ***Buller's Calliope Rare Tokay NV***

Soft and blue cheeses are simply delicious alongside a dessert wine of such high calibre. This showed the luscious, concentrated malt and honey flavour that comes from blending wood-aged wines of over 30 years age. Following the demands on their concentration over the red wines, the diners were happy to relax and enjoy this combination.

Baked Sago Pudding – a T'ang Court signature dish

- ***De Bortoli Noble One Botrytis Semillon 2006***
- ***Chateau d'Yquem Sauternes 1999***

This comparison is often made, and the wines showed why. Many diners preferred the De Bortoli for its lush, apricot flavours and seductive balance, and thought it the Sauternes. It is an extraordinarily beautiful wine with an excellent line through the mouth and great depth of flavour. The d'Yquem showed outstanding power and breeding, with greater weight from its concentration, extract and beautifully matched alcohol and acidity. The De Bortoli will show its best within five years, while the d'Yquem will develop complexity over decades. The texture of the two wines beautifully suited the delicious pudding, although I thought its subtle flavours were close to overwhelmed by the strength of the wines.

I thought this was an exceptional menu, with classic Cantonese cuisine gaining further inspiration from Japan and even Mexico and Australia. Choosing my favourite courses was difficult - almost impossible - but I marginally selected the Sautéed Prawns and Crab Roe, the Smoked Duck and the Wagyu Beef. Similarly the wines were hard to single out, but my top five were eventually Tyrrells Semillon, Bass Phillip Pinot noir, Ch. Cos d'Estournel, Penfolds St Henri and Ch. d'Yquem.



Nick Bulleid MW



(Winemaker – David Anderson (Wild Duck Creek) with Thomas Chung – ‘ Wine Now Monthly’ /Cathay Pacific In-flight Magazine in Hong Kong)



(Eamonn Egan – Managing Director of Cellar Link with Peter Simic – Editor – Winestate Magazine – Australia)

More coverage details on:

http://www.cellarlink.hk/comersus/store/media_centre/press_release.html

http://www.cellarlink.hk/comersus/store/media_centre/events_tastings.html

Acknowledgements

Wines on the night were provided by the following vineyards:

- Kay Brothers
- Wild Duck Creek
- Penfolds (St. Henri)
- Tyrrell's
- Leeuwin
- Brokenwood
- Buller's
- De Bortoli
- Two Hands

Wines on the night were provided by Cellar Link from its cellar museum stock:

- Louis Latour Corton Charlemagne
- Ch. Cos d'Estournel
- Penfolds (Yattarna)
- Bass Philip
- Louis Jadot Clos Vougeot
- Greenock Creek
- Chateau d'Yquem

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