



press clip

Nothing wrong with being an Optimiste

If you were searching for a name for your newly acquired interest in grape-growing and wine-making you could hardly do better than "optimist".

There are many positive thinkers out there among the more than 2300 Australian wine producers. That's more than were there a year ago, despite water-shortages and over-supply issues.

Adelaide-based company Winetitles has reported the increase in the 27th edition of the Australian and New Zealand Wine Industry Directory.

The 2009 directory showed a net gain of 21 wine producers, a 0.9 per cent increase from the previous edition.

The greatest number of producers (512) crush between 20 and 49 tonnes, down from 528 in the 2008 Directory (down three per cent).

"This would either seem to indicate a reduction in small producers due to failure of the business, or acquisition of the business by another producer shifting the business into a higher tonnage category," said Winetitles editor-in-chief Anita Donaldson.

Enough dry statistics.

Consider the case of Optimiste. This is the label on a new range of single-vineyard wines from Mudgee, an area that has been producing good wine for a just on 150 years. Your reporter first discovered it in the 1960s, enjoyed visits there over the decades, then rather lost touch as new names surfaced.

Optimiste is owned and run by the Dadd family who have been growing high quality grapes for more than 10 years. The grapes have been sold and made into award-winning wines by some of the best known wineries in NSW.

Now the Dadds have followed the path of so many enthusiasts and launched their own wines. The name on the label is inspired by their son's struggle with deafness and a quote by Helen Keller: "Optimism is the faith that leads to achievement.

Nothing can be done without hope and confidence".

Cabernet sauvignon was what really got them going, typically big, with complex flavours. I have always loved Mudgee's shiraz and I like the

Optimiste.2006. The Dadds are particularly keen on petit verdot and happily report that their vines "are flourishing in their surroundings and producing fruit with wonderfully true varietal characters – vibrant perfume of blueberry and violets, firm tannins with intense black fruit medley flavours and attractive herbaceous and spice element, giving complexity".

There's no need to go for the long quotation, because I saw the Optimiste range when Sharlene Dadd brought them up to Brisbane Fine Wine Festival. The words are true. There's also a firm-flavoured chardonnay there and the standard-bearer, Marquis, a splendid blend of cabernet, merlot and petit verdot.

Optimiste prices are sensible at \$18, except the Marquis, which rates \$24.

Well worth asking for at the restaurants and bottle-shops stocking them up here, or talk to Sharlene at info@optimiste.com.au

Good value, latest installment. Trying to bring you the good news of good-value wines we record the most recent information: Tim Adams 2008 Riesling has taken out the Clare Valley White Wine Trophy and the Australian Riesling Trophy at London's 2009 International Wine Challenge, the world's largest wine competition. It then went on to win the Great Value White Wine Award in the £5-to-£10 category.

Earlier, it was announced that Tim Adams Wines had won two gold medals and five silver medals at the 2009 IWC.

The gold medals were won by the Clare Valley winery's 2008 Riesling and just-released 2008 Semillon. Silver medals went to the 2007 Riesling, 2006 The Fergus, 2006 The Aberfeldy Shiraz, 2005 Cabernet and 2006 Reserve Tempranillo.

Except for the 2007 Riesling, all of the wines are currently available in Australia.

The Coonawarra winemakers are coming to Brisbane for the ninth year next month. With 20 different wineries represented, the Coonawarra Wine Tasting Roadshow offers the chance talk to the owners and winemakers behind some well-known brands, "an experience which is often not available in cellar door". – they say.

Among them Balnaves of Coonawarra, Zema Estate, Majella Wines, and Bowen Estate. The organisers suggest you give some attention to the white wines, including Rymill sauvignon blanc, Brand's Laira chardonnay and Hollick's semillon





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sauvignon blanc.

It's at Vino's, Eagle Street Pier, on Monday, August 17, 5.30pm to 8.30. It's \$25 at the door or contact the Coonawarra Vignerons Association on 08 8737 2392 or via email at enquiries@coonawarra.org to pre-purchase tickets.