

Cellar Notes *By Jordan*

Turkey Flat reflects Barossa heritage

Tradition lives on in this part of the world

There's Barossa and there's Barossa. And then there's Turkey Flat. There are few places more synonymous with the earliest days of this wine region and only a handful where winemaking and grapes stretch back quite as far. It was here in South Australia that grapes were first planted in 1847 and where one Gottlieb Schulz, a successful butcher bought land in 1865. Schulz's butchers are still on the main street of Angaston and as important a destination for the tourist as any of the area's cellar doors.

Although butchering and dairying formed most of the income for the Schulz family the vines were kept until fourth-generation Peter Schulz and his wife, Christie, made the transition from grape growing to winemaking.

The old bluestone butcher shop was transformed into a cellar and old vines planted all those years ago maintained to be a key part of the wines of the modern Turkey Flat.

Turkey Flat now owns five vineyards covering four different Barossa sub-regions, providing a range of blending options. Largely traditional techniques are followed, with open fermentation a key part of the winemaking process contributing to capturing the essence of the vineyard in the wines.

There is a wide range of wines from traditional Barossa styles to newer expressions with a number of alternative varieties. Grenache is a cornerstone of the portfolio, making straight varietal and blended wines together with an outstanding rose which consistently is one of the best released in Australia.

The wines are worth checking out in retail but better still call into the old cellars for the traditional Barossa experience.

And now for something a little more recent. Jason Brown has brought his lifetime involvement in the wine industry to Moppity Vineyards in the Hilltops region of NSW. His venture into the industry was not without problems, including being landed in receivership because of an unpaid debt for fruit he sold.

In a desperate bid to remain afloat, he reacquired the bulk wine from the receivers in a debt-offset arrangement and bottled it under the new Lock & Key brand, from which I have chosen two nice early-drinking wines for this week's column. I will look at the Moppity premium wines in more detail in future.

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The wines

Turkey Flat Barossa Valley shiraz grenache mourvedre 2008 (\$22)

From the first sniff you get a nose full of ripe fruit laced with spices, dried herbs and stacks of black-currant richness. The palate is loaded with sweet, ripe fruit and has a soft suppleness to complete a nice medium to long-term cellaring wine. 89/100

Turkey Flat Barossa Valley grenache 2007 (\$25)

In what was a tough year, the fruit has been left to fully ripen and hence the alcohol is high. Yet the wine is balanced and poised, with a soft, medium-weight generosity. Smell the bed of roses with some freshly turned earth while on the palate the silky fine tannins and sweet fruit intensity are terrific. 90/100

Turkey Flat rose 2009 (\$21)

This has been one of the benchmark roses in Australia each year. It comes from one vineyard specially set aside for rose. The acid is crisp and there is good structure which provides something more substantial. It is a good food wine and will handle some cellaring. Needs to be served quite chilled. 92/100

Lock & Key Tumberumba chardonnay 2008 (\$13)

A strikingly fruit-driven wine with just a smidgeon of oak, it has a flinty, mineraly aroma with a touch of French lees influence. It has an almost Burgundian thread to it. Lovely texture and mouth feel with that fine, long sustaining acid. Terrific. Has a little bit of sweetness. 90/100

Lock & Key Single Vineyard cabernet sauvignon 2008 (\$20)

Distinctive cabernet with stacks of redcurrant and mint jelly. A little residual sugar in here which provides some decent palate weight. Nice, easy-drinking wine for current drinking. 87/100

Juniper Crossing Margaret River shiraz 2007 (\$20)

Lots of warm, ripe fruit displaying earthy, savoury nuances with a dusty, spicy overlay. An easy-drinking wine that sits somewhere between the 05 and 06 vintages in terms of palate weight and body. 89/100

Jacob's Creek Reserve sauvignon blanc 2009 (\$18.50)

This opens with beautiful citrus and tropical notes on the nose. The palate has surprising texture and appealing mouth-feel. The tropical flavours are restrained yet carry to a long finish. Very easy-drinking wine. 89/100

Fox Creek Shadow's Run shiraz cabernet sauvignon 2008 (\$12)

Damned decent wine for \$12. It's from that very hot vintage and there is a lot of ripe fruit intensity in here. At the same time it has a softness and subtlety which will appeal. Best drunk in the short term while those lush fruit characters are to the fore. 86/100



BUBBLY AWARDS

It's official: Australians love their bubbles. Now champagne connoisseurs from around the country can put their palates to the test in this year's Vin de Champagne Awards. Organised on behalf of French organisation Comite Champagne, the awards seek both to educate as well as celebrate the wonderful allure of bona fide champagne.

Entrants have to answer essay questions on Champagne viticulture, terroir and history and are expected to have some knowledge of the marketing structure of the industry.

Entry forms are available at www.champagne-cic.com.au and entries close on July 23. The winners will be announced at an invitation-only dinner in Sydney on September 27.

A grower champagne tasting will also be held at UWA at 7:30pm on June 9, featuring former Vin de Champagne winner Steve Leslie. Tickets are \$45. For more information contact lexie.thompson@bigpond.com.



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 Ray Jordan's WA Wine Guide 2009

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 Shiraz Cabernet
 95 Points, Ray Jordan

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 Reserve Shiraz
 94 Points, James Halliday
 93 Points, Ray Jordan

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