

DRY RIVER

DR WINES LTD, MARTINBOROUGH WWW.DRYRIVER.CO.NZ VOLUME 6 | 2020



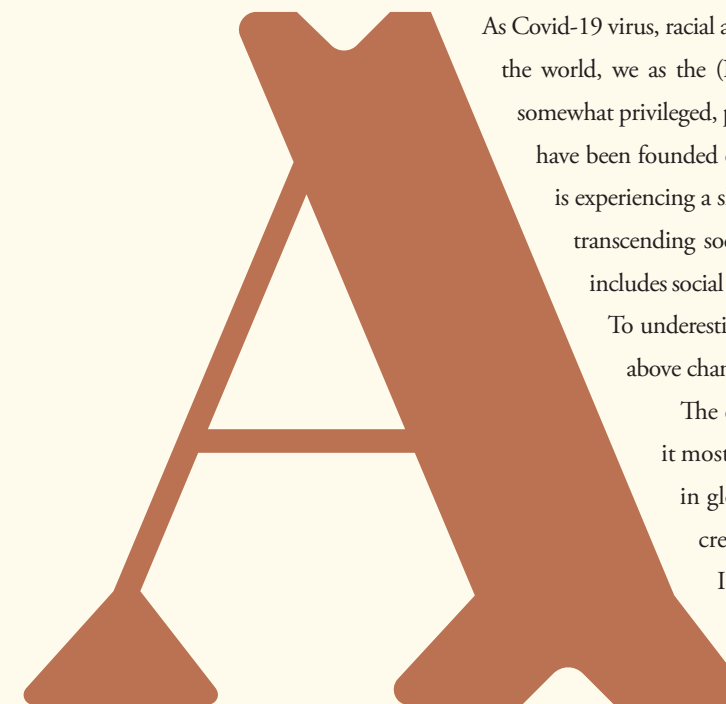
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As Covid-19 virus, racial and social injustice and climate change awareness spread around the world, we as the (New Zealand) wine industry are being confronted with our, somewhat privileged, position. The focus and language of (fine) wine, which seems to have been founded on customs and class divisions over the last say 150-200 years, is experiencing a shift simultaneously. The wine aficionado is becoming classless, transcending socio-demographics, with language that is accessible, visual and includes social values. The wine industry, like many, will have to adapt quickly. To underestimate the impact on our society, discourses and attitudes of the above changes can result in serious ramifications.

The evolution of societies is not only based on material grounds, it mostly focusses on the development of human values. The change in global psychic unity is breaking some of the existing customs, creating new divisions and redeveloping values in rapid fashion.

If we are open to it, we can learn from the evolving society and grow with it, likewise, society can also learn from our evolution, the agricultural industry, and grow around our values.

For New Zealand, the evolution and growth of society historically has come from the combination of first nations (Maori), colonialization and subsequent immigration of mostly Europeans. Therefore, if we are not Tangata Whenua, we are Tiriti o Waitangi. As the latter, towards living in New Zealand, Aotearoa, it demands obligation to respect and exercise the basic principles of the Treaty of Waitangi; Partnership, Participation and Protection. These three principles apply to and underpin every level of our society, including our workforce and the agricultural sector, but also the land we farm.

It is probably to no one's surprise that wine is the product of agriculture; a value addition to grapes grown and farmed for by "mining" the soils. One could therefore also argue that drinking wine is an agricultural act. This train of thought inextricably links the wine drinker, you, to our values and approach towards farming. One of the aims for us at Dry River, is that you can feel good about drinking our wine. That when you drink our wine, you know we actively honour the principles of Partnership, Participation and Protection and thereby attempt to positively impact our community, staff, the land we farm and the sustainability of our business as a whole.

Here is a toast to feeling good through positive actions!

Thank you for believing in what we love.

Wilco and the team at Dry RiverStigma agriculture






Vintage Preview
AND

TASTING NOTES

VINTAGE 2020



There were many happy faces amongst the wine producers in Martinborough, up until mid-March. Then Covid-19 reached New Zealand and forced the country, and world, into an unprecedented lockdown, shutting down most of our professional and social lives and releasing a serious dose of stress and anxiety. It was an experience that will surely be with us for many years to come.

Many were lucky, but some didn't escape so well. We were allowed to keep going, luckily, and able to finish the harvest. In any other year, the harvest is our time for celebration. The relief of harvesting many months of blood, sweat and stress. At picking time we have a community to help us, to share with us and to support us in this joyous occasion. Ordinarily we have a community to help us with harvest, but the lockdown meant the entire process was undertaken entirely by our small team. It was their determination, and the neighbourly camaraderie of others in our position, that got us through. A big thank you to all!!

Who will remember the 2020 harvest for anything else? Well, a brief reminder that the vintage was nothing but spectacular. After a frost affected the 2019 vintage, many vineyards this year seem to have recovered well. A cool spring was easily forgotten after the warm flowering conditions in December. This meant that the yields were healthy, combined with continued beautiful summer weather in January, February and March. So nothing was going to throw us out, nothing. Not even the rain event at the start of April, breaking the drought for most of the country south of Auckland.

2020 is promising to be a stellar year; one to remember, one for the books.

2018 Dry River Martinborough Pinot Noir

2018 was recorded as one of the warmest on record, very much like 1998, which is now praised as a high-quality vintage. We experienced a humid January and early February, with warm nights. With this in mind, we decided to commence picking early, with the Pinot Noir all picked within 6 days. The early harvest prevented the loss of acidity and too overt and dark characters; in other words, we were able to maintain fresh and pretty characters.

Like all our other 2018 wines, the vintage brought warmth, generosity and stamina. There is a lightly charred oak note present, easily confused with toasted almonds. Flowery scents like cherry blossom, violets and Christmas lilies are combined with plums, boysenberry and liquorice. Immediately the nose reveals this to be a serious wine: very coherent with rapidly expanding boundaries bringing aromatic volume. The palate, too, has an escalating horizon and an inflating edge; it's simply delicious, with well-rounded tannins.

Initially, there is a juicy, plush elegance, with the tannins claiming a more authoritative and luxurious presence, showing off its class and flamboyance. The mid-palate brings the wine back to earth with a grounding acidity that reigns the wine in again without overpowering the fruit weight. It is just enough to bring life again to the floral and lighter fruit aromatics, to highlight the central core and to show the length and smooth finish on the back palate. This is a thought-provoking wine that occupies all spaces and has aroused our excitement tremendously.

We expect this wine to gain further interest over the next ten years.

2017 Dry River Lovat Syrah

The heat summation and distribution for 2017 was similar to 2013, quite spectacular. However, the impact of the 2017 rain event in early April did not go unnoticed for wine lovers, mainly Pinot Noir aficionados. Lucky for our Syrah is that it is most often picked in early May, enough time to get back on track for ripening and avoid dilution. We, therefore, had plenty of confidence in a successful Syrah harvest with ample concentration and ripe tannins.

The wine shows primary dark fruits of the forest like boysenberry and black currants interlaced with violets and hints of black pepper. We decided to age the wine on oak for a little longer this time, 24 instead of 18 months. This brought out a certain maturity and subdued vibrancy in the form of dulce de leche, vanilla, nutmeg and allspice on the nose.

Another benefit of prolonged barrel ageing is that the tannins are allowed to soften a bit more, which helps the front palate and thus approachability of the wine. As a young wine, the fruit is expressive, almost brash, but respectful to the other components of the wine. Like the acidity, present and linear, not overpowering, the texture is all-encompassing and well proportioned. The wine is neither fined (clarified) nor filtered and might show a light deposit, especially after a few years of ageing. We see a good life ahead for this wine, with an optimal drinkability after approximately six to eight years.

2019 Dry River Twelve Spies

A frost in early October 2018, significantly lowered the yields for most varieties in Martinborough. The late bursting Syrah and Tempranillo, however, came largely unaffected out of this event. As a result, the 2019 blend has a low component of Pinot Noir and consists largely of Tempranillo and Syrah, no Viognier this time. As a result, this time we see a more serious wine, less playful.

The aromatics are intriguing with a humble fruitfulness, boysenberry and plum, but more secondary characters of almond paste and coffee and spices like cinnamon and five-spice. It is a ripe nose, intriguing, subtle and complex, with the tannins almost noticeable.

There is a juicy rim on the front palate followed by a filling dose of ripe purple fruit. The tannins spread out rapidly over the palate and move like gravitational waves to the back and the front again. All three varieties appear very integrated and non-specific or dominant, though the tannin profile might give it away. Further combined with delicate acidity, the wine already shows good balance and harmony and fluency.

Ready to drink now, or cellar for five to seven years.

2019 Dry River Martinborough Chardonnay

Five years ago, we planted a new block of Chardonnay where we used to grow our Gewurztraminer at the Dry River Estate vineyard. In 2019, we harvested the first crop, approx. 750 kg, of this new block. Already it is showing promise for coming years as a replacement for our ageing Dry River Estate Chardonnay, planted in 1984.

Though we had a fantastic summer and autumn, we experienced a little less heat compared to 2018. The 2019 wine is, therefore, more restrained, not so overt in the aromatics. Golden kiwi fruit and pineapple are toned back by chalk and wet stone with a cream-like edge. Lemon curd and lime sorbet keep the aromatics fresh and shy.

The palate mimics the nose, with a mineral focus and a tight acidity. This keeps the mouthfeel elongated, narrow and salivating. Twelve months in barrel and a further three months in tank, on lees, provides soft texture and movement filling out the mid-palate before the fresh acidity squeezes the wine in towards the back palate, making it long lingering.

Expect to cellar for approximately five to seven years before drinking.

2019 Dry River Craighall Riesling

I often look at our young Riesling to see a firm and apprehensive character. The 2019 is less so; the wine is looser and more forthcoming. The short heatwave in late January might have initiated a rapid onset of skin and tannin ripening to help the accessibility with the early harvest maintaining freshness.

The nose is open and soft natured, fresh and broad. The bright look is upheld by citrus flesh, lemon rind and white flowers. Granny Smith apple, mandarin juice and menthol spice make the nose seductive and inviting to continue the journey.

On the palate we see an equally gentle personality too. The friendly entrance builds rapidly with an effortless movement slowing down in the centre to add weight and focus through lemon flowers, lime juice and anise. The fruit intensifies towards the mid and finishes long with a precise and harmonious acidity, which gives the wine its “open” feel.

The wine is approachable now, but will reward cellaring for another seven to ten years.

2019 Dry River ‘Selection’ Craighall Riesling

The combination of three separate picks out of our two Craighall blocks made a delicious wine, even with the sweetness (55 grams per litre residual sugar). This is a little less than usual, mostly as a result of the dry and warm vintage.

We couldn’t get enough of the aromatics we were finding. Immensely floral with orange and lemon blossom. Fruitful with “Fruitburst” lollies, candied peach, citrus zest, limoncello and kaffir lime leaf. Complexity with honey rate, propolis and honeydew as if the wine has spent time in oak barrels.

Despite the weight and volume, the wine stands straight, shoulders back and chest forward. This self-confidence is thanks to a strong acidity that forms a spine over the whole palate, keeping the wine lively. This liveliness can be seen in the continuous shift of focus between sweetness and acidity, fluency and astringency, tension and ease.

The ‘Selection’ Riesling can be enjoyed as a young wine, but with the sugar and Botrytis characters, it rewards long cellaring too.

2019 Dry River Martinborough Pinot Gris

Let this pear flesh-coloured wine take you on a journey. If you are not familiar with Pinot Gris, be surprised and open minded, and hopefully rewarded. All grapes are sourced from our Dry River Estate vineyard with the majority from our first planted vines in 1979. It is our rootstock, clone and late maturity that sets this wine

style apart from many others as a rich and luscious wine without compromise.

Beautiful complex aromas greet the nose with brioche, crème brûlée, rock melon and honeycomb, followed by stone fruit, ripe pears, mango and quince. The palate is classic Dry River Pinot Gris, transparent, dense with a broad ‘gourmand’ mouthfeel and a light acidity to balance out some sweetness. The wine spreads fast through the mouth, coating the palate with high impact and finely textured tannins.

The wine can be enjoyed now, but will improve over the next five years.

2019 Dry River Lovat Gewürztraminer

Our summer and autumn in 2019 was nothing shy of spectacular. Combined with the low yields due to the spring frost and poor flowering conditions, we see a lucid and concentrated Gewürztraminer.

The nose is unmistakable and quintessential of its variety; highly perfumed with hints of ginger and lychee, apricot jam, nectarine and orange marmalade. But also stone fruit compote, fruit chutney and bee pollen. The array of aromatics is present and can be overwhelming.

The fruit impact is immediate with orange marmalade, lemon and ginger mixed with rumtopf-style preserved fruit on show on the palate. All revolves around the middle of the palate with this wine, where it has a gorgeous and sumptuous mouthfeel with a silken and oily texture. The sparkle of acidity attempts to draw the wine back out from the mid-palate, where it remains in tension with the buoyancy of the fruit weight, stretching the palate in a dough like fashion. The wine appears dynamic and in constant motion, a great treat for Gewürztraminer lovers.

Contrary to general belief, Gewürztraminer is a perfect cellaring wine for five to ten years or longer.





AIR NEW ZEALAND

FINE WINE PROGRAMME

Rugby, kiwifruit, dairy, meat and Lord of the Rings are all great examples of products through which New Zealand has been able to proliferate itself around the world.

Air New Zealand has been a great supporter and champion of many New Zealand industries over the years. Countless travellers have been welcomed with a warm dose of Kiwi culture from the moment they board their plane to New Zealand.

Wine is another product for which New Zealand is becoming globally recognised. Recognising the growth of wine tourism for both national and international travellers, Air New Zealand developed the Fine Wines of New Zealand programme to showcase the best that this country has to offer.

The programme recognises that New Zealand produces a range of world-class wines renowned for their purity, vibrancy and unique characteristics.

The aim, via an annual New Zealand-wide search, is to find “world-class quality and consistency – a high barrier to inclusion consisting of wine quality, wine pedigree and consistency”. It is a search for wines that can stand the test of time as world-class examples of New Zealand’s best.

We are thankful and proud that Dry River wines have featured every year since the programme’s inception in 2015. Our Pinot Noir, Pinot Gris, and Gewürztraminer are currently on the list of Fine Wines of New Zealand.

The list of wines is curated by seven of New Zealand’s leading wine experts — Masters of Wine Alastair Maling, Emma Jenkins, Michael Brajkovich, Sam Harrop, Simon Nash and Steve Smith, along with Master Sommelier Cameron Douglas. Their insight and long involvement in the New Zealand wine industry is paramount to recognising individuality on a world stage level.



MUSING

FASHION, FLAVOUR

and Phenomenology

We are seeing new challenges to wine archetypes from a new generation of wine drinkers and the growing "natural wine" movement. Language and attitudes are becoming less formal, a change that is accelerating each year. Here, we have decided to re-publish an abridged version of a 2006 musing by Neil McCallum about the role of cultural perspectives in how wine is experienced. It is a topic that finds new resonance in this changing landscape.

The results of wine-shows and reviews by wine-writers are read by some aficionados as avidly as they would savour a bottle of wine. However, research indicates it is not physiologically possible to evaluate 100 or even 30 wines in a row for their purely aesthetic value and personality.

Two issues are involved; the first is palate fatigue, where the more wines that are tasted during an evaluation, the more influential the obvious features of a wine become – hence high alcohol and lots of new wood become common features of successful show wines even though this style of wine may be rather less welcome at the dinner table.

The second is that they are evaluated relative to an accepted judging norm and/or relative to the other members of the whole group of wines.

Nevertheless, wine commentaries and shows do have a well-earned and useful place. But if we take them to be definitive rather than as opinion, as we seem to be predisposed to do¹, we demean our distinctive ability to discriminate and assess according to our unique palate and to the culture in which it is educated. Slavishly following judging paradigms is likely to result in a fashion judgment rather than discernment and from the perspective of a grumpy old man, it is my perception that society has become much more fashion-conscious over the last two decades: in its clothes, its cars, the way it talks and behaves, the food it eats and now, even in the wine it drinks.

Fashion has several functions: it can be worn as a badge to denote your outlook, views or position in society. It can even reflect insecurity and prejudice or it can be just fun. It may also be regarded as a display of taste and discernment and it is here that we have the contradiction. Fashion is after all about national and even international conformity,

and apart from the few who set the fashion, the danger in following other's views is that of ignoring, repressing or even denigrating one's own good taste and discernment as predetermined by our own culture and physiology. In this sense, fashion-following is a denial of self, whereas an individual's holistic discernment is the core of civilised life and culture.

It is acceptable to claim that an objective discussion about objective discussions (about taking pleasure in wine) is a reasonable thing to do, but if we return to the situation that persists with wine commentators offering objective analysis of personal, subjective sensations of pleasure the situation looks intellectually rather more dodgy.

I have covered this subject in some detail in the article "The brain is a blunt instrument", which includes quotes from Robert Dassaix, talking about the appreciation of beauty as the facility for "wonder" and that "we've been spiritually de-schooled by the kind of world we live in and the kind of values now dominant ... this schooling is about efficiency, power ... it's important not to know everything if you want to have wonder ..."

In the ancient world, this conflict between knowledge and subjective experience did not seem to be a problem. God(s) and religion were also entangled with the world view but the difference between Kerygma (Greek: message or teaching) and Dogma (hidden tradition or experienced truth) was clearly understood and accepted.

In the religious sense, they were both described by Bishop Basil (329-379 AD) as being essential: he described Kerygma as the public teaching of the early church and Dogma representing the deeper meaning of (biblical) truth which can only be apprehended through experience and expressed in symbolic form.

In plain language, this is the difference between the intellectual attempts at the objective description and confronting the subjective experience first-hand. The first is something to read, even discuss and has the potential of being a guide. The second is direct and finally unfettered by knowledge, concepts or prejudice.

The world changed with Isaac Newton in the 1670s. He believed all things followed a natural physical order and could be described objectively and completely in a mechanistic understanding. He succeeded magnificently in the physical sciences on this basis, and

in doing so ushered in the Age of Reason with the assumptions that underpin rationalist argument even today. This is the logical source of the 19th century Industrial Revolution, and the incredible material sophistication of the 20th and 21st centuries

But it has had little relevance to the individual's experience and appreciation of the arts and aesthetics. Seeds of the counter to this movement can be found before Bishop Basil, where the early mystics claimed the primacy of subjective experience (in God) mysteriously experienced in the "the ground of being":

"[This] is to be approached through the imagination and can be seen as a kind of art form, akin to the other great artistic symbols that have expressed the ineffable mystery, beauty and value of life. Mystics have used music, dancing, poetry, fiction, stories, painting, sculpture and architecture to express this Reality that goes beyond concepts."

- *A Short History of God*, Karen Armstrong, 1993.

Obviously, mysticism cannot be claimed to be "mainstream" today, but meditation, the route used by mystics for approaching the "ground of our being" has become so – be it acknowledged or otherwise. We now commonly talk about "grounded" individuals, the need to "let it go" and other concepts which clearly point to the adoption and secularisation of meditative tools and understanding in modern living.

All this is a philosophical partial retreat from objectivity. It is about finding a 'new balance' between the modern understanding of kerygma and dogma and how to achieve the frame of mind best suited to acquire the necessary 'subjectivity' for aesthetic experience. It is an acknowledgement of the need for a "phenomenological" view of life – I am referring to the philosophical tradition which started with Edmund Husserl (1859-1938) and which includes Heidegger, Merleau-Ponty and Jean-Paul Sartre. According to this view² it is the unique relationship between the taster and the wine which is tasted which sums up the experience and it is not possible to separate the two poles of the experience if it is to be truly represented. We owe it to ourselves to approach the pleasurable experience from beautiful wine with wonder and anticipation, without too much knowledge and definitely without prejudice.

¹In some interesting work done by the Virtual Reality Research Group at Oxford University a virtual reality room was designed that could grow or shrink as volunteers walked through it. It was found that even if they enlarged the room by up to four times its original size, subjects failed to notice. They faithfully reproduced all the visual cues that we normally use to judge size and distance – including binocular disparity and motion parallax – yet the volunteers disregarded them in the light of their knowledge based on previous experience that rooms just don't do that. Conclusion: "If your sensory information is very specific, you'll go with that ... but if it's poor or confusing, you'll go with your prior assumption". ²As Merleau-Ponty writes: The world is not problematical. The problem lies in our own inability to see what is there. The attitude of the phenomenologist, therefore, is not the attitude of the technician, with a bag of tools and methods ... etc ... Rather it is an attitude of wonder, of quiet inquisitive respect as one attempts to meet the world, to open a dialogue, to put himself in a position where the world will disclose itself to him in all its mystery and complexity.



William Wordsworth

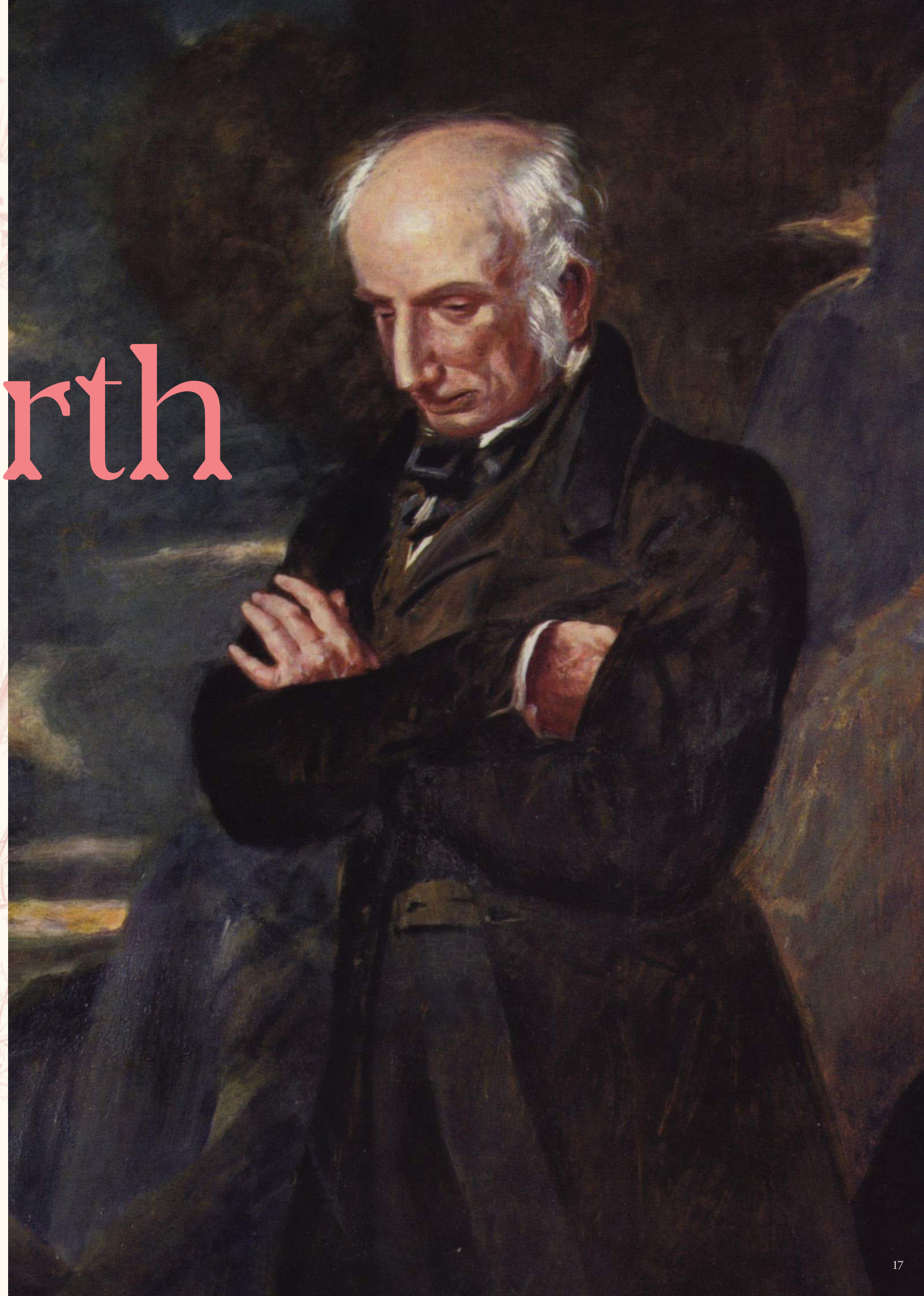
William Wordsworth (1770 – 1850) was an English poet at the start of the Romantic Age in English literature. This year, 2020, marks the 250th anniversary of his birth.

This anniversary is something we want to highlight because, in 2019, several bottles of Dry River wines made their way into the Wordsworth Room at St. John's College, Cambridge University. It was a tasting that was organised in association with the Cambridge University Wine Society and our UK distributor David Harvey.

Of particular interest to us is that, in his poems, Wordsworth lauded places and people usually not heard. In the cacophony of the wine world, this seems apt as a metaphor, where Burgundy, Bordeaux, Barolo and Champagne dominate the discourse. We are grateful to have had the opportunity to show our wines to the Society in collaboration under David Harvey's guidance.

Together with Samuel Coleridge Taylor, William Wordsworth co-authored "The Lyrical Ballads". According to David, the poem is a fitting reference to all of our wines, and he adds that "Wordsworth's definition of poetry as 'the spontaneous overflow of powerful feelings' is the kind of sensory overload experience you breed into your wines."

This praise and connection prompted me to further research the works of Wordsworth. I discovered his rich collection of profound poems, and below we have re-published one depicting Wordsworth's fondness of being moved by the beauty of nature, by the structure of things, of giving time to observation, and acknowledging the effects of human greed and neglect that destroy the natural world to which Wordsworth was so devoted in his work. It is a poem I, and the spirit of Dry River, can identify with.





Lines written in early spring

I heard a thousand blended notes,
While in a grove I sate reclined,
In that sweet mood when pleasant thoughts
Bring sad thoughts to the mind.

To her fair works did nature link
The human soul that through me ran;
And much it griev'd my heart to think
What man has made of man.

Through primrose-tufts, in that sweet bower,
The periwinkle trail'd its wreathes;
And 'tis my faith that every flower
Enjoys the air it breathes.

The birds around me hopp'd and play'd:
Their thoughts I cannot measure,
But the least motion which they made,
It seem'd a thrill of pleasure.

The budding twigs spread out their fan,
To catch the breezy air;
And I must think, do all I can,
That there was pleasure there.

If I these thoughts may not prevent,
If such be of my creed the plan,
Have I not reason to lament
What man has made of man?



EL MOLINO WINES ST. HELENA, CALIFORNIA, UNITED STATES

Like for many of you, wine is our passion, one that we like to share with other wine aficionados. This platform gives us another opportunity to share our passion with you by highlighting a producer whose wines, practices and philosophies lie close to our hearts.

The first producer we would like to highlight is obvious to us. As we moved into the 21st century, Neil was looking to secure Dry River's future. This future, and the potential of Dry River Wines today, was greatly influenced by the vision of one man: Reginald Oliver.

Reg, a close business associate of our owner Julian Robertson, travelled through New Zealand in 2003 with his daughter Lily. During the trip, they stumbled upon Dry River after hearing a rumour it was for sale. They discovered that Dry River Wines was almost an exact copy of their family vineyard & winery, El Molino Wines in California's Napa Valley, reflecting similar values. Shortly after, Julian and Reg decided to partner up and acquire the estate.

To discover Reg's passion and motivation, we have to rewind the clock almost 150 years and move to the United States. In 1871 El Molino Wines was founded as one of

the first wineries in Napa, and it remains family-owned and operated to date. In its long history, El Molino produced a plethora of wines from different varieties, but from the early 1980s, Reg Oliver settled on producing Chardonnay and Pinot Noir. This was a decision against the odds but, like for many visionaries, one that paid its dividend over time.

Nowadays, the fresh eyes and hands of Reg's daughter Lily and partner John Berlin are at the helm of the business, further developing his vision. They have renewed the family's love affair with the estate and through their devotion and tenacity continue to produce incredibly gorgeous Chardonnay and Pinot Noir, reaching unexpected heights of finesse and tension in their wines. Their passion and affection for their vineyards, wine and the business permeate each bottle. You drink their time, without a doubt.

It is through this historical connection that a small collection of their wines is still hidden away in our cellar, ageing gracefully, and enjoyed when their time is right.

We admire you, Lily and John, for living on your legacy!



ARENTZ WINES NIJMEGEN, THE NETHERLANDS

Nijmegen is probably (and unrightfully) an unlikely place to visit during your travels in Europe. It is one of the four oldest cities in the Netherlands, indeed older than Amsterdam, with Roman settlement records dating back to 1st century BC.

Strategically situated between the rivers Mosel and Rhine, Nijmegen gained power through trade, and the Romans used Nijmegen as a tactical settlement for nearly 500 years until the Frankish Empire gained power. The flipside of this meant it also has been a victim of numerous battles, including during the Spanish war, the Franco-Prussian war, and it was the end station of World War II's "Operation Market Garden" (as depicted in the movie A Bridge Too Far).

Nowadays Nijmegen and its surroundings are a fantastic "off the beaten track" destination to discover. There are beautiful treasures everywhere in and around Nijmegen, including a treasure for wine lovers: Marcel Arentz Wines.

Inspiration and motivation are two important traits a mentor may represent, either deliberately or unconsciously, to their mentee. Furthermore, a mentor may also act as a role model thanks to their personality, social and professional position.

Marcel Arentz has had this influence on me. He infected me (wittingly) with his wine bug. His love for wine and profuse passion for German Riesling and Burgundy are contagious to anyone entering his domain. Marcel certainly has had a lasting impact on me, especially his appreciation for the significance of history and relationships, important aspects of the wine trade.

Perhaps more significantly, he knows that wine is for everybody, that there is a wine for everyone. In my brief time working in his wine business - his world - he showed that this passion is rooted deeply. It's his passion that has helped keep people connected and valued as customers, who subsequently return to him and keep him in business.

Bravo, Marcel, for your endless positivity!

Cellaring guide

Be aware that our wines can ‘go into a tunnel’ somewhere between six months and two years after release. During this time the wine can be quite unrewarding, but be patient because it can blossom later and confound earlier impressions and predictions. A second dip can occur between 4 & 6 years when the wine can start to look tired then may well emerge looking refreshed and in an interesting new phase for the next few years. It can be worth opening and even decanting them a few hours before serving – particularly the reds.

	Chardonnay	Gewurz (Lovat)	Pinot gris	Pinot noir	Riesling (Craig)	Syrah	Viognier	Tempranillo/Blend	Late harvest/ Bunch selection	
									Gewurz	Riesling
2019	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
2018	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
2017	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
2016	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
2015	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
2014	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
2013	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
2012	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
2011	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
2010	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
2009	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—

This table is only a guide for a standard cellar at 12°C – see Cellaring Notes

KEY	
—	not made/to be released
—	hold
—	worth trying but conserve your stocks.
—	drink from now on if from a good cellar; warmer cellars reach this point earlier.
—	there is little to be gained from further cellaring. The effect of differing cellaring conditions will be obvious – wines in warmer cellars should be checked for premature ageing.
+	dead, dying or thinking about it, in our cellaring conditions. Warmer cellars will approach this point sooner.

THE EFFECT OF CELLARING CONDITIONS ON YOUR WINE

Warmer and fluctuating temperatures will age wine more rapidly and may not be as beneficial to the less robust wines and varieties. In our experience the ‘robustness’ of wines is likely to be in the order: Cabernet and blends > Sauvignon blanc > Syrah > Riesling > Pinot gris and Chardonnay > Pinot noir and Gewurztraminer. Wines high in extract will tend to mature rather more slowly than the ‘average’ same varietal on this list. If you have a number of our wines and your cellar conditions are not similar to our ‘standard cellar’, you will no doubt learn how to interpret the chart in relation to your own conditions. However, a more active approach to evaluating your cellar is to note temperatures for the range of the days, between weeks and between seasons, by leaving a thermometer in a large jar of water in your cellar. It is not sufficient to observe that the cellar ‘always feels cool’ – such feelings are relative only to outside conditions. Significant fluctuations in daily or weekly temperatures tend to add to the speed of ageing commented

on below, and may also increase the incidence of leakers and seepers, occasionally give examples of ATA (atypical ageing – see Aromas) and disproportionately fast ageing for laccase-containing wines (i.e. those with potential or actual botrytis). Vibration and direct light on the wine are damaging influences which should also be avoided.

General Notes Relating to Cellared Wines

Wine maturation is an organic process which is very dependent on the conditions of cellaring. Wines do not inevitably end up at a predictable quality and style, hence André Simone’s famous quote ‘there are no great wines, only great bottles.’ Nevertheless, cellars with the best possible conditions are the most likely to produce the best possible end results.



If your storage has temperature maximums of no more than...	Then your storage conditions are...
10–15°C	good, and your wines will be at a similar stage of development to that indicated in the table on page 16. Burgundians say that for proper cellaring Pinot noir must be kept in this temperature range (cf. the book Pinot noir, by A. Barr, p33)
15–18°C	at these temperatures your wine could be maturing
20–25%	faster than above. Nevertheless, for quality the conditions are adequate, unless you would like to pamper your wines or your cellar is large and/or valuable. The chart should still be very useful, but bear in mind that your wines will develop faster. The results may be less fine.
18–24°C	this includes quite a few Auckland cellars. It is not ideal; differences in speed of development will be evident even with storage over 2–3 years. Plan for holding less robust wines (discussed above) no more than 3 years. Be aware that a mature wine from this cellar is likely to be not quite as good as one aged at lower temperatures.
25+°C	not very good, but do note that most good wines may still benefit for up to 2 or 3 years in this cellar. Less robust wines probably should not be held beyond 2 years. Cabernet and blends, Sauvignon blanc, Fumé blanc, Riesling could benefit from longer periods, depending on the actual conditions. Avoid cellaring Pinot noir.

Ageing – premature A wine can show maturity beyond its years, but this tends not to be such a cause for concern until the wine is past its peak – as evidenced by loss of fruit, oxidation and possible browning. If a number of wines in your cellar show such symptoms and these are in advance of expectations, a careful evaluation of your cellar conditions is necessary. If you do not wish to or cannot improve these conditions, be aware that all your wines should be drunk somewhat earlier than may be generally recommended. Wines from high-laccase vintages, e.g. ’95 and ’97, will be disproportionately affected. Premature ageing does sacrifice some potential quality. Refer to CELLARING GUIDE or consult us if you have queries.

Aromas – unpleasant If you know that a wine had good typical smells when first purchased but it has developed unpleasant (sulphide) smells as it has aged, there can be several possible explanations. These include **ATA (atypical ageing)** which is brought on by heat – either a short period at high temperatures or warmish cellaring. ATA may affect an occasional bottle within that batch of wine, and the only way of avoiding it is to improve the cellar or storage conditions to less than 14°C. Leaving a bottle out in bright light can also cause sulphides (“light struck”), and wines stored under screwcaps can also generate this type of smell when stored for a few years.

Bottle Shock Shortly after a wine is bottled it can appear atypical, lacking fruit,

becoming rather hard and angular and even tasting aldehydic. This is from the effects of filtration and possible oxidation at the time of bottling and it should recover in a few months.

Breathing wines This is the practice of decorking a wine or even decanting several hours before drinking. It can help very young wines (particularly reds), more mature wines which may have developed less than pleasant smells, or slightly sprizig reds.

Buying cellared wines This can be a risky proposition. It is unwise to accept an auctioneer’s assurance that they have been cellared well. Risks can be reduced by buying only the ‘robust varieties’ (see Cellaring Guide) but unless you know that the cellar was temperature controlled, purpose-built or situated within a cool even-temperated climate, be prepared for surprises. Check the cork and ullage.

Capsules Capsules may be made from many materials including plastic, metals or sealing wax. Capsules can protect the cork against cork borer but tend to have little other than a decorative function, unless they are made of wax, which probably slightly slows down the access of oxygen and is therefore an alternative for wines to be cellared for a long time, or for half bottles.

Clarity/brilliance Cloudiness in a white wine can be unattractive but need not affect the flavour. In these instances it can arise from a protein instability or some other causes. Other forms of hazes in both whites and reds can arise from microbiological in-

stability or the effects of trace metals such as iron or copper and may indicate a damaged wine. (See also Sediment/deposits.)

Colour/hue This should be appropriate for the type and age of the wine. Excessive brown tints immediately call the condition of the wine to question – oxidation and premature ageing are possible. (See also Oxidation.)

Cork borers These are probably similar to wood borer. Cork dust is seen on the outer surface of the cork and small holes will have been eaten into the cork. I suggest spraying a pyrethroid fly spray on the surface of the cork and then sealing it with sealing wax. If a number of bottles are affected, fumigating your cellar may be a good idea.

Corked wines This does not refer to wines with fragments of cork in the bottle. The fault arises from trace flavours within the cork which result in wines with mouldy or ‘wet sack flavours’ and a loss of fruit. In borderline cases, a loss of fruit might still be evident, but the extraneous flavours will be too difficult for most to detect. Although the fault arises from the cork manufacture, most winemakers will replace the bottle. It is worth noting that we have strict Quality Assurance checks on all our corks. If it appears that two of our wines in a row show cork taint, check that the problem does not in fact arise from cellaring conditions.

Corked Wines – return of If one of our wines is affected, we will provide a credit for the mail order purchase of the same wine from the current vintage. We do like

to confirm the cause of the problem so, if at all possible, top up the bottle with boiled and cooled water, stopper it with the original cork in the same orientation as it was originally, and return it to us ASAP (preferably within 24 hours) with a note indicating the date of opening, for forwarding to the cork supplier. Expect no more than around 1 in 50 of recent vintages to be affected.

Decanting Essential with all wines which throw a sediment, otherwise the flavours will be impaired. (See also Sediments/deposits.) Wines made for cellaring (i.e. rich in antioxidants) can look lean and hard when first opened, but access by air softens and improves the texture. Even our older white and red wines (after good cellaring) are likely to benefit from decanting a few hours in advance and our young reds in particular, can even benefit from being left to cool or in the fridge overnight.

Half bottles These have the same size cork for half the volume of wine. Oxidation and ageing therefore proceed significantly faster than with larger bottles. Given the choice, buy the larger bottles for long-term cellaring. Dessert wines of very high must weight can last a long time even in half bottles.

Lead residues Older wine bottles with lead capsules tend to accumulate traces of lead acetate around the mouth, and theoretically these residues may be partly dissolved when pouring the wine. Wipe the top of the bottle clean before pouring such wines. Lead capsules are now phased out worldwide and Dry River has used alternative materials since 1992.

Leakers If a new wine is leaking badly, return it. If it is a particularly good wine, it can be recorked. (see also Seeping Corks.) If your older wines have a tendency to leak, check your storage conditions.

Loss of, or unusual flavours Had you

cleaned your teeth or sucked peppermints within a few hours of tasting the wine? This can markedly alter your perception of flavours. Alternatively the wine may be ‘corked’ (see above), suffering from premature ageing (see below) or oxidation. Storing bottles of wine in sunlight (particularly in clear or lighter coloured glass) can cause flavour loss in a matter of weeks.

Oxidation This can cause a drying sensation – more in the front of the mouth – which can be reminiscent of the flavour of sherry, or smell toffee-like, or cause dulled fruit on the palate. It can arise because of excessive ullage, poor cellaring, or because the wine is simply too old. Dull colour or excessive brown tints can be telltales, but don’t be confused by the effect of fluorescent light on reds, particularly lighter coloured ones. (See also Random Oxidation.)

Random Oxidation Occasionally one can encounter oxidized wines which are unlike the rest of the batch from which they came. There are several possible explanations for this problem which can be found under all types of closures. If the wine is one of ours, treat it as described in Corked Wines – return of so that we can confirm the problem and replace the bottle.

Sediment/deposits Most sediment which settles easily is harmless and the wine should be decanted off it before serving. Allowing the sediment to mix into the wine can make a dramatic difference to the perception of quality – particularly in reds. (See also Wine crystals and Decanting.)

Seeping corks If the top of the cork is damp, the wine should be drunk soon – even if there is no obvious increase in ullage. Seepage is an indication that air has had at least some access to the wine, and although such bottles are unlikely to be spoiled, this low-level oxidation will progressively dull the fruit as time goes on. If you are getting a significant number of these wines,

check the temperatures and temperature fluctuations in your cellar – it may need to be improved.

Temperature of serving Generally red wines are served warmer than whites. However, there are no simple rules, so be prepared to experiment or consult a good wine text. Remember that your perception of many flavours can change considerably with a change of only a few degrees celsius.

Travel Shock Vibration during transport can make wine appear atypical – hard or angular and lacking fruit. It can take up to two months to recover – less if stored at low temperatures. Transporting wine at low temperatures (5–10°C) reduces the problem. Exposure of the bottle to vibration during storage (e.g. under stairs) can have a similar effect.

Ullage The ullage is the gap between the cork and the level of the wine when the bottle is vertical. As the wine grows older the ullage will increase depending on the cork and storage conditions. If the cork is actually leaking and has an excessive ullage it should be drunk as soon as possible. Older wines with excessive ullage and sound corks will tend to oxidise or deteriorate more quickly, but robust examples can still be sound with 4.5–7cm ullage. More delicate wines and most whites will show deterioration well before this. Always check the ullage of a wine and the condition of the cork before opening the bottle to determine whether it may be atypical in terms of its ageing.

Wine crystals With time, some wines may deposit crystals in the bottle and on the inside of the cork. In a white wine these crystals tend to be white and in a red wine they may be affected by the colour of the wine. This is a natural deposit reflecting a lack of processing in the wine. It can be found in the most expensive hand-made wines and should not be considered a fault. It does not necessitate decanting.





Left to right: James Pittard, Ethan Pittard, Michelle Mills, Wilco Lam, Sam Rouse, Sarah Bartlett.

