
Manila Women's Forum

A Network of Women Professionals

March 2010

Wines with a Sense of Place

By Cheryl Engels

MWF members were treated to a wonderful talk last February 15 on understanding wines, what to buy, from where and if it's worth it. And thanks to our generous speaker, we were able to sample four different wines and discuss the differences between them.

Robert Gilliland is the Managing Director of Straits Wine Company and he just opened their new store on Pasing Tamo Extension. Robert took us on a journey to learn about different wine growing areas of the world, the differences in taste and price.

Wine is fermented grape juice, explained Robert, but of course the wine making process can be complicated. It all starts at the vineyards. Here is where you get the sense of place. Terroir is the French term explaining the interaction of soil, aspect and climate. The important role of the winemaker is to bring out the terroir of the wine. The harvesting (hand or machine), crushing (basket or bladder press) and fermentation process are key elements affecting the taste and price. The aging process is also important. Oak barrels are the most expensive option and add a distinct flavour to the wine over time.

The factors that contribute to the cost of wines are the age of the vines, vineyard management, and wine making techniques. There are over 1,000 grape varieties. The "New World" focuses on 7 Noble Varieties. These are Riesling, Sauvignon Blanc and Chardonnay – the white varieties. Pinot Noir, Cabernet Sauvignon, Merlot and Shiraz are the red varieties. The main wine producing countries are: Old world; German, Italy, France, Spain, Portugal, Austria. For the "New World" this is: Australia, New Zealand, America, South Africa, Chile and Argentina.

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Cheryl (left) and MWF speaker Robert Gilliland (right)

March MWF Meeting ■ **When:** Monday, March 22, 6:30 p.m. **Where:** Shyamala Abeyratne's home, 1373 Caballero, Dasmarias Village, Makati City. **What:** Kristine Braden, Global Banking Head of Citibank in the Philippines, will speak about Organizational Savvy and Executive Presence. Using materials developed for a Women's Leadership Development Program sponsored by Citi, she'll discuss what it takes to get into an executive-level position at a major corporation and how to stay there. **Bring:** Something to share for the potluck dinner. **April Meeting:** Monday, April 19.

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The group tasted the following four wines during the presentation:

1. Vina Ochigavia 2008 Semillon Sauvignon Blanc from Chile – This bright greenish-yellow Sauvignon Blanc/Semillon is seductively brilliant and boasts essentially fruity aromas of pineapple and passion fruit with soft floral notes of jasmine. On the palate surprisingly crisp, showing balanced acidity. P410.

“I am certain that the good Lord never intended grapes to be made into grape jelly.” –
Attributed to Fiorello La Guardia, former mayor of New York City

“Never buy the cheapest wine in any category, as its taste may discourage you from going on.

The glass, corks, cartons, and labor are about the same for any wine, as are the ocean freight and taxes for imported wines.

Consequently, if you spend a little more, you are likely to get a better wine, because the other costs remain fixed. Cheap wine will always be too expensive.”

– Alex Bespaloff, New Signet Book of Wine, 1986

“Clearly, the pleasures wines afford are transitory, but so are those of the ballet or of a musical performance. Wine is inspiring and adds greatly to the joy of living.” – Napoleon

2. Looking Glass Sauvignon Blanc 2008 from Marlborough, New Zealand – The nose is lifted with aromas of nettles, greengages and passionfruit, with these flavors through to the palate along with tropical and gooseberry notes. The wine finishes crisp and clean, with lovely length and lingering Sauvignon Blanc fruit characters. Winner of a Gold Medal at the International Cool Climate Wine Show 2009 and Wine of the Year Special Edition 2008. P750.

3. Chateau Cardboard 2008 Shiraz from South Eastern Australia – The palate is soft, displaying dark berry fruits and well-balanced oak. Attractive soft tannins. P650.

4. Kaesler “Bogan” 2006 Shiraz from Barossa Valley, Australia – Fruit is hand picked and hand pruned and water is kept to a minimum. Crop thinning is done in most years to reduce yields and maximize flavor. Dense, dark purple color with vibrant edge, nose is generous, with plums, blueberry and cola. The oak shows quite spicy with a bit of mocha and chocolate on the back palate. Full bodied and powerful, blackberries and cassis. Structure is plump with a good length of aftertaste. Oak is still dominant as a young wine but this will settle down with time and fruit will prevail. P2,013.

“Wine is bottled poetry.”

– Robert Louis Stevenson

We all thoroughly enjoyed the evening, and now feel a bit smarter when it comes to knowing what to buy. A few days after the presentation, Robert was asked to open more businesses in Australia. He will be leaving the Philippines next week. Of course he still invites everyone to visit the Straits Wine Company at 2289 UPRC Bldg., Pasong Tamo Extension, Tel. 757-1180.

Manila Women’s Forum

Manila Women’s Forum (MWF) is a cross-cultural network for women. It provides opportunities to build friendships, talk to women of various cultures, and share information about resources. Our meetings are intended to provide intellectual stimulation and lead to personal and professional development. All women are welcome to join.

The current officers are: **Amy Alexander**, Message Board. **Julia Holz**, Treasurer, Membership and Programs. **Cecilia Leung**, Programs. **Lisa Lumbao**, Chair. **Junie Navarro**, Message Board. **Lisa Stuart**, Message Board Moderator. **Beulah P. Taguiwalo**, Newsletter, Website. **Shari Virjee**, Programs, Message Board.

Cost of membership is P300 per year. Members receive a copy of the current mailing list in addition to the newsletter, which is also sent to non-members. A contribution is collected at each monthly meeting: P20 for members, and P40 for non-members. For more information about MWF, please contact Lisa Lumbao at Tel. 813-0168, or at lumbao@mozcom.com.

Visit our website – a work in progress
www.geocities.com/manilawomensforum

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