

UPCOMING EVENTS



TUESDAY, FEBRUARY 21

Wine 101--A Seminar

In the Leathers Building--meet in Shiraz

6:30 P.M. \$20

You asked for it, you got it! This will be the first in a series of wine classes hosted by Emily Poole, due to customer requests. In this segment, we will be covering the bare basics, such as how wine is made, a primer on food and wine pairing, and how to read wine labels. We will also have a small tasting for those of you who participate, to illustrate some of the points made in the class.

SUNDAY, FEBRUARY 26

A TASTE OF ATHENS

THE CLASSIC CENTER

6-9 P.M.

We will be featuring the wide variety of foods available here at the store, including some brand new ones we are just starting to bring in! We'll also have some great ideas of how you can incorporate the foods we have here into your own recipes for your family or for entertaining.

Tickets available at www.tasteofathens.com

TUESDAY, MARCH 7

TANTARA WINE DINNER

AT THE BASIL PRESS

6:30 Reception; 7:00 Dinner

\$65 per person, all-inclusive

6 wines and 4 courses

Tantara Winery is located on the pristine terroir of Bien Nacido Vineyard in Santa Barbara County and dedicated to producing the ultimate vineyard designated Chardonnay and Pinot Noir from Central Coast growers. Join us as we taste the brand new 2004 releases, including our state exclusives on their Pinot Blanc and Hank's Faultline Red.

Call us for reservations at 208-0010.

And drop in any Saturday between

1:00 and 5:00 p.m. for our theme tastings.*

**Our tastings are for educational purposes only. All wine must be poured by Shiraz staff, with no more than 2 oz. per wine per person.*

Shiraz

675 PULASKI ST
SUITE 400
ATHENS GA 30601

JOIN OUR WINE CLUB!

Each month, Emily and the staff here at Shiraz select 3 wines we think are special and that you are sure to enjoy. All wines that we pick come complete with tasting notes and serving suggestions. Though all of the wines may be purchased separately, members receive a substantial discount on their package every month. This package consists of the three wine picks and one of our gourmet items selected for your sampling pleasure. The cost of the wine club package each month is \$45 (the cost separately is \$50-60; this month the value is \$54--save \$9.00 just this month!) If you are a member of our wine club, you'll also get the first peek at special items here in the store, as well as a guarantee that you'll receive the 3 wines each month (sometimes they do run out!) Also, each month we will draw a name of a wine club member, and that person will receive his package free that month! Please ask us if you'd like more information or to join--it's the best deal in town! This month, the featured gourmet item is Cuisine Perel Coffee Merlot Chocolate Sauce. Try it on ice cream, chocolate cake--or just on your spoon!

Shiraz

FINE WINE & GOURMET

On open container laws:
"Of course we don't have this problem in Australia- no-one leaves a bottle half-empty!"

It all started on a drive through Barossa Valley's vineyards with my guide from Grant Burge. "Yeah, yeah," he says in his thick accent, "all these fields used to be Columbard...all this vineyard used to be blended into jug port..." He explained to me that up until fairly recent history, the local tastes dictated fortified wines for the table, and that not only was the success of the Shiraz grape a recent one, but dry table wines a new flavor for the country. A trip to Kilikanoon in the Clare Valley also proved enlightening, where I learned of the "great vine pull scheme," when the Australian government actually paid farmers to rip up their grapevines because they were not the cash cow they are today. But this must have been ages ago, I thought. Wines from Down Under have been enjoying success in the states for quite a few years. But the simple fact is, the farmers were urged to tear out Grenache as late as the 1980's! I decided to look a little deeper.

The biggest success, of course, has been the Shiraz grape. Now up to a quarter of the total output of the industry, it is one of the most popular grapes in the world, and has become a word synonymous with Australia in many people's minds. Once called the "Sultana of the Barossa" (Sultana is another name for Thompson seedless grapes), it's now more of a sultan. There is no denying the popularity, the sales, or even the ratings given to these new darlings of the consumer base in the world market. In a market of their peers, however, those poor Aussies just can't bloody win. One minute the rest of the wine world criticizes their style, calling it overblown, overripe, and overexposed, and the next, they're copying them. With the Australians being the youngest child in a family of world wine regions, you would hope that they wouldn't get bullied quite so much, but when you're tops at your game you're bound to have some detractors.

It's quite a paradox. The French are some of the worst critics of the Australian style, yet winemakers in the South of France applied for the right to call their wine Shiraz just two years ago. The first two winemakers in Oz were actually French prisoners of war; Apparently it was believed that all Frenchmen knew how to make wine. But one made only cider, and the other's wine was so bad he was shipped back to England! Californian producers waffle back and forth between the two names until wine drinkers have started to think Syrah and Shiraz are two different grapes. Then there are the snide comments, calling it "dead" fruit--with high alcohol levels and bigger sugar content. Where's the restraint? They ask. But what about grapes that are picked early just because they are ripe if they have not had time to develop their flavors?

The history of Australian wine is full of paradoxes itself. This glorious grape that enjoys so much international success couldn't be given away just a few years ago, and was actually used to make "Shiraz Berry Muffins." No wonder the government wanted to rip it up! Grenache was stripped of its color to make cheap, fortified dessert wine. Even though the first vines were planted in 1788, they were in Sydney. Phylloxera forced the vines south, where the wines didn't become the dry, quality-conscious stuff we can buy today. Since the industry as it exists today is so new, the Australians have the most modern technology in both winemaking and equipment available in the world market today. Mechanized harvesting and drip irrigation are two examples of ways they are ahead of most. But they're stepping on toes once again--the irreverence for the old, the traditional does not sit well with their peers. But they lead the way when it comes to new innovations. 52% of the wine sold in Oz comes in a box--and it's not the cheap swill we package that way. Along with New Zealand, they are converting to stelvins (screwcaps), to a huge sigh of relief from those who see all the waste from cork-tainted bottles.

They also put more emphasis on their winemakers than other areas, focusing on the prowess of the men behind the casks than the terroir. In fact, the Australians are known for their blending among different areas. Even now, when they have established geographical areas to include on the bottles, they've added larger grids to the smaller appellations to allow for the cross-state blends. So even with their kind nod to the tradition in the industry, they have added their own twist and made it an entirely different system. But that's why we love them, isn't it? Sometimes it is a good thing to turn even the best practices into something new. Otherwise I'd have a store with 5 bottles in it.

FEBRUARY 2006

EMILY'S WINE CLUB
SELECTIONS FOR
FEBRUARY

**The Gatekeeper Shiraz 2003
South Australia**

**Made by Simon Hackett
89, Best Buy = Robert Parker**

Simon Hackett is very well known in McLaren Vale, and is most famous for intensely flavored red wines. Full of chocolate and licorice, a spiced, heavy and full aroma greets you with this delicious crowd-pleaser. It is softly floral as well, with notes of rose petals and dried mint to go along with the full, rich, stewed fruit. Ripe raspberry jam and hints of tar flesh it out. On the palate, it is full, rich and ripe, with spice, dark fruit, blueberry, and smoke. Cooking spice, lavender, and red fruit are in abundance. It is obvious right away that this is unfiltered, with its mouthcoating, velvety texture. As it opens up further, more flavors of soft, rich, black fruit and vanilla evolve and soften even more, with rose, violet, and cocoa. The finish is full, smoky and lingering, with a light char to it but more of a crisp finish than a heavy one. This is a full but very approachable red, perfect for almost anyone. And I'm amazed at the price on this one as well. Try it with grilled foods or satay, or just have it by itself.

\$11.99

**Four Sisters Merlot 2002
South Eastern Australia
Made by Trevor Mast**

The winemaker from Mt. Langi Ghiran's oldest daughter designed the label for this wine for his birthday, and it originally was comprised of grapes grown in his own backyard. (Don't let us fool you, it's not a normal backyard!) From this small production wine in the vineyard behind his farmhouse, the wines grew in popularity, and today Trevor makes 4 different wines with his daughters' pictures on them. His goal is to make classic Australian wines, but we agree that this one is much more similar to right bank Bordeaux. Think of the St. Emilion, with its powerful tannin and earth, and you're on the right track. It is extremely herbaceous on the nose--we beg of you, let this one breathe! It may start out tough but it opens up very nicely. Intense notes of coffee, oak, and vanilla bean are accompanied by creamy raspberry and heavy blackberry, cherry, and cocoa. It is actually extremely food-friendly, and could go nicely with a variety of heavier foods like steak, game, or roasted vegetables. With time, the herbs and gentle, integrated flavors make it a great match for stews, cassoulet, or a mushroom lasagna. The finish is subtle but tannic with round, deep fruit accentuated by eucalyptus and hints of cocoa powder.

Normally \$12.99

This Month Only \$11.99

**Kalleske Clarry's Barossa White 2005
Barossa Valley**

70% Semillon; 30% Chenin Blanc

Troy Kalleske, who has been called a "rising star," makes cult wine from the most famous region in the country. A great example of his initiative to make unique wine is this white blend using Chenin Blanc, all but unknown in his part of the world. Its lifted aromatics and fresh flavors are a great alternative to standard Sauvignon Blanc and the like. Floral notes and melons and even pumpkin are mouthwatering, and have some lovely spice to them. There is great harmony here between the waxy, grassy character of the Semillon and the ripe citrus and stone fruit of the Chenin, with its pear, lemon, and honeydew. While aging on the lees gives it a rich texture, grapes were picked ripe and bottled early for a vibrant, fresh flavor. The flavors manage to be full and juicy, yet fresh and clean. The dry finish almost has a sea air note to it. Tasting this wine made me crave oysters, but I think that it will pair well with just about anything you throw at it, especially things that pair seafood or chicken with fresh fruits and herbs.

Normally \$21.99

This Month Only \$19.99

THIS MONTH'S FEATURED WINE:

**Wits End Shiraz 2003
McLaren Vale**

Jock Harvey, who some of you were lucky enough to meet in November, is a brilliant vineyard manager, working hard not only to make great wine but preserve and restore McLaren Vale's prized plots of vine-growing land. Every case we sell of his wine helps fight the extinction of South Australia's most endangered bird. And the wine is fantastic to boot. Hints of gingerbread spice and a very meaty, masculine tone are the main focus of the nose on this monstrous wine. It is extremely earthy and full as well, with a velvety, floral undertone. The muscular tone it takes is full of spices and charred earth with a little oak to round out the flavor. The midpalate is full and rich, which after it opens up becomes much more creamy, though still full and meaty. It still has its very firm structure, however. Red lace licorice comes to mind while sipping the opulent, fruit-laced, delicious wine. The fleshy (after some careful decanting) and forward finish has notes of vanilla custard on it. This is serious Shiraz, not your spiced blueberry pie. It is perfect, of course, with the classic meat pie recipe offered here, as well as a steak--the bigger the better--or roast anything.

Normally \$26.99

While it Lasts Only \$21.99

**TASTE WHAT THE WINE CLUB ALREADY
KNOWS--OUR PICKS ARE DELICIOUS!**

**THE FIRST SATURDAY OF EACH MONTH, THE
WINE TASTING WILL STAR THE WINE CLUB
PICKS!**

JOIN US ANYTIME BETWEEN 1 AND 5 P.M.

SHIRAZ'S RECIPES FOR
FEBRUARY

Meat pies are a staple in the Aussie diet. We don't quite have anything like these, and they are perfect for an easy meal with a glass of Shiraz. My favorites come from the Australian Bakery & Cafe in Marietta, the only authentic Aussie bakery in the U.S. (call 404-653-0100 to have some goodies shipped), but you can try it at home with this simple recipe:

MUM'S MEAT PIE

1/2 lb. high quality minced meat or chopped steak
1 onion, diced
2 beef boullion cubes
1/2 cup tomato sauce (ketchup)
1 square puff pastry (sheets), thawed

Cook the onion, steak, and ketchup, and crumble the boullion cubes into the mixture, cooking until melted. Let cool until the filling is room temperature or colder. Roll out the pastry sheet with the nice side face down, and put filling in the center of the dough. Fold the pastry until it forms a rectangle, and cut 3 slits for steam in the top. Bake at 400 degrees in a preheated oven for 40 minutes, or until golden brown.

This dish is recommended by our friends in Melbourne with cabbage, carrots, and mashed potatoes, or served alone with chutney.

ANZAC BISCUITS (COOKIES)

2 cups all-purpose flour
1 3/4 cups rolled oats
1 1/2 cups sugar
1 cup unsweetened shredded dessicated coconut
Pinch of table salt
12 tablespoons(1 1/2 sticks) unsalted butter
2 tablespoons Lyle's Golden Syrup
3/4 teaspoon baking soda
6 tablespoons boiling water

Preheat oven to 350 degrees. Line two baking sheets with parchment paper. In a large bowl, combine flour, oats, sugar, and salt; set aside.

In small saucepan over medium heat, melt butter with Golden Syrup. Dissolve baking soda in boiling water, and add to butter mixture. Be careful, the mixture can bubble up considerably.

Add butter mixture to dry ingredients and stir to combine. Drop rounded tablespoons onto prepared baking sheets, about 2 inches apart. Flatten cookies with the heel of your hand.

Bake until golden brown and firm, about 15 minutes, rotating pans halfway through. Transfer to wire racks to cool.

Makes about 30.

Think of Shiraz (and your Sweetie) on February 14!

Personalized Gift Baskets, Including:

- * Coffee Mug, Hot Chocolate, and Tea Tagalongs
- * Honey, Truffles, and Chocolate Sauce
- * Cheese, Crackers, and Brachetto d'Aqui

Or Prepackaged Treats Like:

- * Chocolates in Heart Box
- * 2 Piece Truffle Boxes
- * Flowering Teas

And Don't Forget the Bubbly!

- * Champagne
- * Moscato
- * Sparkling Shiraz

