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Review



Sensational wines

By guest reviewer Mark Hamilton, managing partner of Grope Hamilton Lawyers

It is a while since I wrote a wine column for like-minded lawyers, however, two sensational value wines I am drinking at present motivated me to do so.

There is plenty of well-made wine around to the point where it is inescapable that the traditional art of winemaking, with its nuances and uncertainties, has been replaced by a different blend of technology, formula and chemistry. Wine is made to order. If wine errs from the chosen path, science and chemistry step in to adjust the result.

It is possible to make "wine" out of very poor grape material by adding things like tannin, acid, colour and flavour (from grape concentrate) and even sweetener, resulting in pseudo sunlight characters, from natural plant extract. The wine can bear very little

relationship to the original ferment. Look no further than the cleanskin market to see this type of wine in abundance. This wine is generally not great to drink.

Rather than merely hankering after well-made wine, I look for wine with "Moorish" characters in the \$20 to \$25 range. My current favourites are the 2009 Torbreck Barossa Valley Woodcutters shiraz which is available in some retail stores for around \$20 a bottle and the 2010 Wither Hills Marlborough sauvignon blanc, hailing from New Zealand, retailing for around \$16 a bottle at Dan Murphy stores. Both are exceptionally "tasty", extraordinary value, wines which will not disappoint a wide variety of drinkers.



The Wither Hills wine, part of the New Zealand sauvignon blanc onslaught, has terrific sunlight varietal characters with great fruitfulness and an off dry finish. It is an aromatic wine with zesty, citrus and grapefruit flavours and a smoky finish. Great to drink at any time – and would be sensational with prawns, trout and salmon.

The Torbreck shiraz is Barossa Valley shiraz as it should be. It is not over the top in terms of fruit weight or alcohol. It has a complex array of fruit characters on the palate, with great pepper and oak flavours and also has some level of residual sugar giving the wine a lift. It has excellent structure and hits the mark in that it appeals to all red wine drinkers. I would drink the red with any food but it goes very well with lamb, or it is great to drink by itself. **B**