

## Corkscrew: wine reviews

March 23, 2018

Walking through Convent Garden in London with my family a couple of years ago, I spotted a familiar face looking at a menu in the window of a restaurant. It was a friend I have known for more than 20 years, who works in the wine trade in Sydney as export manager for Taylors Wines.

Over a pint or two of Guinness (him, not me) we chatted and found we were flying home on the same flight and as a result met up again in the VIP Lounge (or IKEA lounge, as I nicknamed it) at Helsinki Airport.

A couple of months ago I found myself in the same lounge with my family. On looking at the wines on offer in the lounge I came across two Aussie wines flying the flag: Wakefield. Now to the uninitiated, Wakefield would not ring any bells and that's because the wines don't use the name in Australia. Here they are called Taylors Wines, a very familiar family and brand established in the Clare Valley in 1969.



The two wines in the Finnair lounge in Helsinki were the **2016 Taylors Chardonnay** (rrp \$20) and the **2016 Taylors Shiraz** (rrp \$20). Both wines are adorned with gold and trophy-winning medals galore. The chardonnay displayed a beautiful straw yellow colour with lifted ripe stone fruit and light French oak and vanilla characters. The stone fruits, apricots and mandarin flavours on the palate are silky and juicy with very good mouthfeel and palate length. The complexity on the palate with regard to the oak (French in this case) and lees characters add to the dry, medium-bodied finish and balanced acidity. A superb and well-balanced chardonnay made to last and as it should be made - not over-oaked - allowing the fruit to shine. It is a wine of sophistication and finesse.

The **2016 Taylors Shiraz** is crimson/purple in colour with a brilliant pink hue. The fruit on the nose is awash with blackcurrant and raspberry notes with a touch of cinnamon. The full-bodied wine is powerful and dense with red/black fruits dominating. It has another dimension of well-integrated, fruit-driven tannins and balanced oak. The wine is full of shiraz character with a Clare Valley definition: black peppery spice.

Now, you may be wondering why Taylors Wines are not allowed to use their name in Europe and the US, in particular. It's because Taylors Port Wines is a family and brand name of a port house established in 1692 in Oporto and Douro Valley, which has EU protection so as not to confuse European consumers. So the next time you find yourself overseas browsing through wine stores or enjoying the luxury of airport VIP lounges around the world, look out for Wakefield; try it and buy with gusto.

**Morambro Creek 2016 Chardonnay** is a bright lemon colour with an inviting green hue around the rim of the glass. The nose is intense with apricots, mandarin and citrus flavours jumping out of the glass. The palate offers layer upon layer of fruit and complexity with apricots, mandarin and citrus coming to the fore followed by other tropical fruit flavours such as pineapple and mango. The wine has a nice mouthfeel with lees yeast flavours adding to the complexity. The rounded mouthfeel has been enhanced by well-handled French oak adding a touch of vanilla and balanced acidity. The finish is satisfying, long and dry with fruit aplenty. (rrp \$35)

**Jip Jip Rocks 2016 Shiraz Cabernet** shows a deep red/purple colour with a lovely pink rim around the top of the glass. The fruit on the nose is dominated by blackcurrants and blueberry flavours that come with spicy nutmeg overtones. The wine is full-bodied with ripe plummy fruits combined with blackcurrant and blackberry with leafy, herbaceous flavours also showing through. The fruit finish is plentiful with oak/acid/tannins nicely balanced. (rrp \$21)

**Mount Monster 2017 Sauvignon Blanc Limestone Coast** is pale straw in colour with green highlights around the rim. Blackcurrant bud, grassy, gooseberry and citrus reach out on the nose. The palate is as crisp and fresh as a daisy with the same notes found on the nose flowing down onto the palate. Other added fruits that show through are passionfruit and grapefruit. In essence, it's like drinking a bowl of fruit salad. The finish is dry and crisp with mouth-watering acidity and grassy citrus flavours at its core. (rrp \$17)

**Gartelmann Diedrich Shiraz** is a blockbuster of a wine with fruit coming from the Hunter and Clare valleys. This wine is a deep inky black/purple with a fading pink hue around the rim. The nose offers depth and complexity with myriad red/black berry fruits and cinnamon spice. The full-bodied palate is powerful and dense with lots of dark berry and red cherry fruits such as raspberry and redcurrant. The French oak is nicely handled and adds body, flavour and structure. The finish is ongoing with a generosity of fruit and nicely balanced tannins. A wine of distinction. (rrp \$45)

I have got to say, fiano, and in particular the **Berton Vineyard 2017 Winemakers Reserve Fiano**, is truly something special if you haven't come across this style before. Riverina-based Berton Vineyards together with Witches Falls (Mount Tamborine in the Gold Coast hinterland) would lead the pack in producing this style. This grape variety originally hails from the Campania region of Italy in the south-western province of which Naples is the capital. Perfumed lemon and lime aromas are abundant and these same flavours come through on the palate as do hints of spice. The palate further exhibits a mineral backbone with firm acidity on a dry, lingering fruit-driven finish with an orange blossom twist. A wine that is capable of developing for up to five years (if cellared well) and will further develop from honeyed through to spicy and more complex flavours. Superb; a wine you simply must buy and try for yourself. (rrp \$14)

Staying with Berton Vineyards, also try their **2016 Reserve Shiraz**. Crimson purple in colour with a vibrant pink hue, it has a complex and fragrant bouquet of spicy, mulberry and plummy fruits. On the palate, its mixture of red/black fruits is soft and spicy with nicely rounded tannins. The subtleness and intensity of the fruit flavours draws you in rendering the wine dry, medium-bodied with ongoing fruit and balanced oak and tannins on a soft fruity finish. (rrp \$14)