

wine

DECANTING



Serving wine is part of the magic associated with wine tasting.

A long time and humorous colleague of mine once quipped after opening a fine old expensive bottle of wine that the wine needed to breathe so he gave it 'mouth to mouth' and began drinking it immediately.

There are several factors worth exploring to make sure you get the most out of your special bottle. One of the most important is 'decanting wine', followed by the serving temperature, and choice of wine glass. All of these have a major impact on how a wine appears and tastes.

There are two reasons to decant a wine: to separate the wine from any sediment it may have deposited, and to expose the wine to more oxygen in order to get it to "open up" or become more expressive. Assuming that we are decanting a wine in order to remove it from its sediment, there is a simple procedure to follow. If decanting a wine simply to aerate it and perhaps liven it up a little, this procedure doesn't really matter. Simply pour the wine into any suitable receptacle with minimal fuss.

With older wines that have thrown significant sediment it is a good idea to decant the wine. I also 'double decant' which simply means pouring the wine off the sediment, then rinsing the bottle clean before returning the wine to its original bottle so you know what you are tasting.

By returning the wine to its original bottle, it limits the amount of air a wine encounters. While allowing a wine to breathe can greatly enhance its perfumes, regulating the rate at which the wine breathes helps to make sure that the wine doesn't lose its fragrance.

Many tasters allow a wine to breathe for hours in the bottle without decanting it and this is quite acceptable. Avoid shaking the bottle too much during the cork opening process. Once decanted, wine will actually improve as part of the pleasure of drinking wine is observing how the wine opens up in the glass.

The basic steps are to stand the bottle upright for a day or so before opening, remove the entire capsule from around the neck of the bottle, using a knife or other

implement, hold the receptacle (decanter) in one hand and the bottle in the other, and with a smooth and steady action, pour the wine into the decanter. Don't rush when decanting, rather use a gentle, steady movement, to avoid disturbing the sediment in the wine. Keep the neck of the bottle over a light source (some people use candles), so that you can observe for an arrowhead of sediment moving into the neck of the bottle. This is your cue to stop pouring. Don't worry too much if you haven't achieved a crystal clear pour, as a small amount of very fine sediment is not a great concern as long as the large, unpalatable pieces have been removed.

Greg Bondar

Food and Wine Editor

WINE OF THE MONTH



Peter and Diana Daly run a family owned vineyard in the NSW Southern Highlands district, at an altitude of 700m, where they specialise in cool-climate grape varieties grown over 10 acres.

Pinot Noir 2009

A Bronze Medal Winner awarded by the Southern Highlands Vintners Association in February 2010, this wine is worth tracking down as it shows

what a family run vineyard can do with a bit TLC. I was part of the harvest and all pinot grapes were hand picked from the Berrima vineyard. It is a medium bodied pinot with light strawberry flavoured overtones. Careful maturation in new French oak barriques has resulted in excellent oak integration and balance. The wine was made by Dominic Bosch at Southern Highlands Wines. Alcohol content is 12.5%.

courtney's

BRASSERIE ELEGANCE WITH **FLARE**

I recently again dined at Courtney's Brasserie after my last visit a year or so ago and I can truly say I was not disappointed. Owner and chef Paul Kuipers, started at Courtney's Brasserie as a work experience student back in 1988 where his raw talent and flare for food naturally led him to creating one of, if not the most, prestigious restaurant in Parramatta.



There is a lot of debate these days around sustainability and despite the constraints Paul has managed to create a menu defined by fresh, seasonal, and locally produced produce sourced from within a 200km radius. By supporting the local producers, buying direct from the farmers, growers and producers in the region, they are assured of better quality produce (fresher and riper) than from any other source, as it is selected by Paul at the farm.

Diners benefit from local produce sourced from the region and the following sample shows the impressive range and variety:

- Limes, lemons, Bayleaf and Quince from Oakdale.
- Olives, oil & olive blossom honey from Silverdale
- Lettuce, celery, herbs, cauliflower, broccoli & pumpkin from Werombi
- Free range eggs farm, Quakers Hill
- Organic ducks, duck liver & chickens from Poultry of Burrawong
- Lemons, oranges, mandarins & herbs from Chef's Backyard Blue Mountains
- Baby Vegetables, fennel, leeks, turnips & carrots from Grima's Farm, Wetherille Park
- Jerusalem artichokes, pine mushrooms, baby rocket from Lins Organic Produce, Londonderry

I am continually impressed by the fact that the restaurant itself is housed in one of two beautifully restored Phillip Street historic cottages, the second cottage houses a splendid function room.

Catering for the corporate and leisure market and situated in the heart of the Parramatta, CBD Courtney's Restaurant

offers a unique space to hold functions and working luncheons either in the restaurant itself or in their dedicated function room.

The menu is based on simple, fresh flavors and boasts an impressive wine list. Throughout the month of October Paul is offering a 2 course lunch special for \$30 and I am recommending for the entrée the Duck Sausage with Gnocchi and Sage Nut Butter followed by Pan Fried Ocean Trout with fennel, Portobello Mushroom and Tarragon Butter.

For dinner the Duck Croquette with Celeriac Remoulade and Beetroot Puree is must for entrée whilst the Marion Plains Lamb Rack with Baby Onions, Carrots, Parsnip Puree & Red Wine Sauce is also a must try for the main meal. For the truly adventurous the 7 course degustation menu for just \$79 is an exciting experience.

70 Phillip Street, Parramatta Phone: 9635 3288
Open Tue-Fri 12pm-3pm, 6pm-10pm; Sat 6pm-10pm



Courtney's Pudding (top) & Courtney's Strawberry Shortcake (above)