

NEPENTHE

unforgettable



At a recent tasting, I came across two very interesting and well worth searching for wines from the Nepenthe stable of wines, namely the Tryst, Classic and Pinnacle range.

For the classical mind, the word Nepenthe is mentioned in ancient Greek literature and Greek

mythology and depicted as originating in Egypt meaning a 'drug of forgetfulness'. Homer also described it in the poem Odyssey as an herbal drink so powerful that it eases grief and banishes sorrow from the mind. Any wonder since the poem centers on the Greek hero Odysseus (or Ulysses, as he was known in Roman myths) and his journey home after the fall of Troy.

In 1994, the Tweddell family purchased a premium property in the sub-region of Lenswood in the Adelaide Hills where the proven varieties such as Pinot Noir, Chardonnay and Sauvignon Blanc were planted along with varieties such as Zinfandel and Pinot Gris. Situated in the Adelaide Hills the region is one of Australia's premier cool climate wine regions. It has been defined as that part of the Mount Lofty Ranges which has an altitude of 400 metres or more and abuts the Barossa region to the North and the McLaren Vale region to the south. The region is undoubtedly "cool climate" with the folds and undulations of the hills creating a wide range of microclimates. My tasting revealed two well-suited varieties to the Adelaide Hills and these were the Pinot Noir and the Pinot Gris (if you are French or Pinot Grigio for the Italians).

Pinot Gris 2011

This wine is perfectly suited to the Adelaide Hills, where the altitude of the vineyards moderates the climate, giving us cool conditions during the growing and ripening season. This maximises fruit character and ensures the retention of natural acidity in the grapes. The 2011 vintage was one of ideal ripening conditions for cool climate grapes. These ideal conditions resulted in early flavour development that allowed the harvest of fruit at optimal ripeness with excellent natural acid. It also allowed for the development of powerful varietal flavours. All Nepenthe Pinot Gris is exclusively handpicked and after the rapid transfer to the

winery, the grapes are whole bunch pressed to minimise phenolic extraction. Fermented in one to two year old French oak barriques, to add an additional element of complexity and creaminess to the palate this wine is a real treat summer or winter. Alex Trescowthick the winemaker has made a very pleasant varietal with a nice pale straw colour and bouquets of blossom and white flowers with pear and white peach fruit. A real complex, creamy and well balanced by a crisp, clean finish. Alcohol: 13%.

Pinot Noir 2011

Pinot Noir is known to be a fickle and difficult grape, in both growing and winemaking yet the variety is well suited to the cool slopes and ancient soils of the Adelaide Hills. Fruit for this Classic Pinot Noir was sourced from high altitude sites in the central Adelaide Hills, mainly from two estate vineyards at Charleston and Lenswood. The grapes are rapidly transported to the winery and destemmed without crushing. After pressing, the wine is racked to French oak barriques of various ages; new to five years old. Following the completion of malolactic fermentation, each barrel is racked. Light crimson red with a touch of purple hues the bouquet shows lifted red berry fruit aromas of raspberries and cherries with subtle spice and herbaceous overtones. The palate exhibits fruit flavours that are complemented by subtle spice notes from the oak. There is lovely firm structure and long, savoury finish. Alcohol: 14 %.

Greg Bondar
Food and Wine Editor



peacock TRATTORIA - TRUST THE CHEF

No matter where you live - north, east or west you must come south for what is indeed a rare find in the suburbs. Peacock Trattoria can be found in southern Sydney and around the sleepy part of Kyle Bay alongside four retail shops so it is well located away from any competition.

For the curious, I must point out that a peacock is also known as a male peafowl, which is a species of flying birds in the genus *Pavo* of the pheasant family. The male is called a peacock, the female a peahen, and the offspring peachicks. That said, a 'trattoria' (Italian pronunciation 'tratto \square ria') is an Italian-style eating establishment, less formal than a ristorante, but more formal than an osteria. In this sense, Peacock Trattoria is aptly named as it is casual yet displays touches of upmarket qualities as evidenced by the extensive menu.

I have come to know Chef James quite well and we often exchange our views on the latest bottle of red that we have respectively tasted. A true BYO, Peacock Trattoria is a must for the culinary enthusiast wishing to experience a great night of dining in what is a unique décor - the table numbers are actual playing cards so you have the 9 of hearts or the 7 of diamonds and so on.

Now let me alert you up front - it is Cash Only but given the state of the economy under our "smoke and mirrors surplus budget architect Mr Swan" the cash economy makes a lot of sense so come prepared otherwise the nearest ATM is about 5 minutes' drive.

At our regular monthly visit, I decided to try the 'Trust



the Chef' option, which is offered for bookings of six or more guests. The menu varies but can include the crispy duck salad, white anchovy pizza, salmon crab cakes with fennel salad, baked figs with gorgonzola, roast pork with potato mash and capsicum and a chocolate brownie and banana mousse desert that is topped off with, on this night, a little doughnut. You get all this for just \$60 per person or with matching wines for \$100.

But wait. If you have nothing else on the night but a main course then please try the crispy duck, pear, watercress, hazelnut and witlof salad with vino cotto dressing - wow! This dish can be ordered as an entrée or as a main but note that it is quite a generous serving and if I had to nominate a signature dish for James then this would probably be my choice.

My ever supportive wife Lynne helps me with the food reviews so we always enjoy our visit to Peacock Trattoria as the food is unique, the ambience fun, and whilst the service is casual it is nonetheless warm and friendly. James is a great host, albeit at times 'overworked' in the kitchen, but that said he has found that elusive magical formula which makes the dining experience truly memorable in a casual yet warm and inviting environment.

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