



AURIC PACIFIC

“selling wine with passion!”

Auric Pacific Fine Wines

Issue 23

Dated, August 28, 2006

Written by Andy Tan

I just read a shocking news that, **Len Evans**, known by many as the "godfather of Australian Wine" has died of heart attack on August 17, 2006 at the age of 75. Like Robert Mondavi of California, Evens vision and his tireless in promoting Australian wine around the World is highly regarded and respected by his peers and wine enthusiast around the World. His departure is clearly a great lost for the Australian wine industry and those who are inspired by his passion and love for Australian wine. He will be missed by those who fortunately to make acquaintance with this giant.

I meet Kevin Mitchell, winemaker & director of **Kilikanoon** early this week. This emerging star producer comes from Clare Valley, northern-most of South Australia, where previously, I had spent some wonderful time staying in the beautiful Clare Country Club.

Clare Valley is widely known for their outstanding dry Riesling made famous by producers such as Jeff Grosset -Polish Hill and Watervale, Petaluma - Hanlin Hill and Knapstein. Despite, equally, there are many red wine production coming from this supposedly cool zone (quite contrast on day and night temperature) of South Australia. Many are either struggle to get their fruit ripe, with its distinctive herbal, bell pepper or eucalyptus tone, or they simply lack concentration. Despite that, I continue to admire wine made by Tony Bradly of Wendouree, Tim Adams with its' The Aberfeldy, Jim Barry with its' The Armagh, however, those remained to be small minority.

The recent surfaced producers such as Stephanie Toole of Mount Horrocks, Lengs and Cooter and now, Kilikanoon, has begun to capture consumer attention that Clare Valley can also produce equally sounding reds.

Winemaker **Kevin Mitchell** purchased the Kilikanoon property in 1997 after leaving wine giant, Hardy. Mitchell's family members are all associated with wine production. Both of his parents are grape grower in Clare Valley; his uncle, Andrew Mitchell, owned the Mitchell Estate in Sevenhill; his brother-in-law make wine in Barossa Valley Estate. Mitchell's life is destined to be associated with wine. After his early apprenticeship at D'Arenberg in 1993, he worked for Kingston Estate, Orlando and others. He then left for California in 1996, and spent a year working in both Kendall Jackson in Sonoma and Willamette Valley vineyard in Oregon.

Mitchell's winemaking secret lies on his old vine and to his belief, Leasingham, where most of his Clare Valley vineyards are from, is amongst the finest site that enables thorough ripening of his reds. Besides his McLaren Vale fruit are out sourced. All his Barossa and Clare vineyards are estate own. He started off making only three wines - Riesling from Mort's Block, Grenache "Prodigal" and a Shiraz. Over the years, it has increase to more than dozen of different labels today. At the bottom value end, you have "**The Lackey**" shiraz, follow with a series of reds and whites under **Killermans Run** label. Above that, you have what he would consider a "regional varietal" label, with name such as "**Parable**" shiraz from McLaren Vale, "**Secret Places**" shiraz from Barossa Valley and "**Covenant**" from Clare Valley. He also make a Cabernet Sauvignon under "**Blocks Road**" and a Grenache called, "**Prodigal**" and a GSM blend, **Medley**. His reserve line consists **Shiraz "M"**, which symbolized fruit from McLaren Vale, "**Reserve Green**" from Barossa Valley and "**Oracle**" from Clare Valley. Those are highly individualistic wine that Mitchell decided to bottle them separately. Since it first appeared in 1998 vintage, it has consistently been rated among the very best shiraz from Australia. In 2002, Mitchell introduced his top of the pyramid cuvee, **Reserve Shiraz** and in the near future, a Crème de la Crème called, "**Attunga 1865**", which is a shiraz sourced primary from an old vineyard believed to be the very first planted shiraz in Clare Valley will be introduce. Don't miss the following great offers.

2003 Kilikanoon Shiraz "Reserve" Barossa Valley at 120.00 nett

The stunning 2003 Shiraz Reserve was fashioned from low yields of one ton of fruit per acre, and aged in 100% new French oak hogsheads. It boasts an inky/purple color, off the charts concentration, and a spectacular, full-bodied nose of blackberries, blueberries, graphite, and smoky espresso. Rich and intensely concentrated, with an inky taste as well as tremendous thickness, it's not for everybody, but it is neither over the top nor out of balance. Patience will be required.

Rated 96-98 points by Parker

2003 Kilikanoon Shiraz "Reserve Green's" Barossa Valley at 89.00 nett

A barrel sample of the spectacular 2003 Shiraz Greens Vineyard revealed great stuffing, intensity, and more alcohol, glycerin, texture, and persistence than its older sibling. It will be a classic Barossa Shiraz to drink over the next several decades.

Rated 95-97 points by Parker

2003 Kilikanoon Shiraz "M Reserve" Barossa Valley at 65.00 nett

A new offering from Kevin Mitchell is the 2003 Shiraz M Reserve, which is fashioned from a single vineyard in McLaren Vale. Aged 24 months in French and American oak hogsheads (40% new), this unfiltered blockbuster possesses fabulous stuffing along with sweet cassis and blackberry fruit, truffle, camphor, flower, and melted asphalt characteristics. With enormous flavor dimensions and a multi-layered texture, this is Australian Shiraz at its biggest, richest, and most intense.

Rated 95 points by Parker

2003 Kilikanoon Grenache "Prodigal" Clare Valley at 45.00 nett

Dark red. Elegant and restrained nose offers subtle red berry and cherry aromas and light herbal touches. Then positively explosive on the palate, with fresh raspberry, wild strawberry and blackberry jam flavors expanding through the lush, gently textured finish. Aged in neutral oak, this is all about fruit.

Rated 92 points by Tanzer

2004 Kilikanoon Shiraz "Oracle" Clare Valley at 71.00 nett

Saturated violet. Explosive, wild aromas of blackberry liqueur, cassis, licorice root and espresso. Boasts impressive weight and power on the palate, the dark berry flavors wonderfully sweet but also focused and firmed by solid tannins. Awfully primary right now but possesses superb concentration of fruit and fine-grained, well-managed tannins. Finishes long, on a note of sweet licorice.

Rated 93 points by Tanzer

2004 Kilikanoon Shiraz "Covenant" Clare Valley at 56.60 nett

Deep violet. Explosive, pungent blackberry and dried rose on the nose, with excellent focus and precision. Deep, concentrated, chewy and rich in cherry and dark fruit flavors, with bright, firming acidity giving shape to the wine and extending the finish. Energetic and fresh for a wine with such power and depth.

Rated 91 points by Tanzer

My Favorite Burgundian

Jean-Marie FOURRIER these days besides his day-to-day duty as the winemaker for the renowned, Domaine FOURRIER. He has an additional responsibility as the father of the newly birth FOURRIER junior.

Jean-Marie has a lot to be envied by others. First of all, his family is one of the most important grape grower in the famous Gevrey-Chambertin village. He is also amongst the few who was trained by the great, Henri Jayer - The true maestro of Burgundy. Despite Jean-Marie is highly fluent with all the modern winemaking gadget during his early apprenticeship in Domaine Drouhin of Oregon. He has however adopted the tradition winemaking when he returns to takeover the winemaking responsibility from his father, Jean-Claude FOURRIER.

My visit to Domaine FOURRIER has always prove to be particularly fruitful, especially in the context of learning more about winemaking and *terroir* of Burgundy. Jean-Marie loves to share his winemaking philosophy and is among the few I have known who can convey the message well (not entirely too technical yet still detailed). I started sharing my enthusiasm of 1998 Red burgundy, which has finally gotten over the cloud of the past formidable personality. Jean-Marie agreed with my observation and is glad that, this vintage finally reclaimed its status. 1998 vintage was particularly marked by trouble - frost, hail (some area), oidium, rot (grey rot) were threatening the vintage quality. However, the extended harvest enables the grape to reach its full maturity. In the cellar, it was equally challenging. The "must" appeared to consume the sulphur rapidly during the *élevage*. Many panic *vignerons* in fear of their wine without adequate SO₂ to protect against oxygen judiciously added more sulphur. It was believed through such act, the 1998 reds remained at "reductive" stage for many years. Adding to this belief, Jean-Marie also told me that, he began to question that, besides occasionally the OD (overdosed of sulphur) situation in the *cuvée*, the early sulphur treatment carry-out in the vineyard to treat oidium where the same sulphur can be inherited by the grape and later causes the wines to become reductive. The same happened with some of the 2004s, according to FOURRIER. To prevent such problem, early sulphur combating against oidium is essential to avoid where the situation escalates and more sulphur are needed to control the spread.

FOURRIER is meticulous about every stages of *élevage*. When I ask him what causes the random oxidation, his view was, careless *élevage*. He quoted that, "you never find a bottle of Jayer's wine of such problem". In fact, one of my personal clues to taste Jayer's

wine in blind is their impeccable, bright and healthy color (often shown more youthfulness than the age suggest) combined lively palate and the unmistakable new wood component. "One should never rush their *élevage*", said FOURRIER. Besides, all our wines are aged under the atmosphere of carbon dioxide, which naturally protect against oxygen (no addition of sulphur is required), we also carry two set of barrels (only 20% new) to enable us to have the leisure to lengthen the ageing if required. After a full 18 months in barrel, we often bottle them late in April (when the weather turning warm), which FOURRIER stressed that, "it is through my experience that, the aromatic quality in wine is better preserve under warmer atmosphere during bottling. In the contrary, when wine is bottled under cool environment, very often, the wine aromatic is being trapped". He also chose to rack his wine (only once, prior to bottling) in the similar warm atmosphere to give a slight oxidation, to prevent the wine being too reductive due to the early aging in CO2.

Besides his highly accomplished cellar work, to him "quality, is 80% from the vineyard", said FOURRIER. To any, who has the issue of what Burgundy called, *terroir*, or what Matt Kramer would called the "somewhere-ness" in wine. FOURRIER's wines could well demonstrate this phenomenon. All his wines are very distinctive, despite a certain uniform style of FOURRIER could be trace. You can often expect that almost Vosne-Romanée like spices, with telltale Gevrey's earth. Firm and often quite reserve (which decanting is highly recommended), however, once you passed that, the intensity will begin to build on your palate. His wine is both detail and linear, and very stylish. Once you have tasted his vineyard from *Combe-de-Lavaux* sector, an additional mineral component will set in. His Gevery 1er Cru *Les Goulots*, *Combe Aux Moines* and *Clos St.-Jacques* generally tasted cooler, better sap and more pronounce of minerality, compared to his *Les Cherbaudes* (underneath Mazis Chambertin) and village *lieu-dit, Aux Echézeaux*. Don't miss the following offers, where they are all available in very small quantity (prices are subjected to 5% GST charges).

2004 Chambolle-Musigny (S\$68): Elegant and very pure red raspberry, cherry and hints of redcurrants give way to sweet, racy and exceptionally transparent light to barely middle weight flavors wrapped in a wonderfully precise and persistent finish. This is elegance personified and very Chambolle in character. A lovely wine crafted in a lighter style. **Burghound's 87-89 points**

2004 Chambolle-Musigny 1er Cru "Les Gruenchers" (S\$95): Earthy and subtly spicy crushed red berry fruit aromas complement perfectly the sweet, delicious and denser medium weight flavors that possess a bit more complexity and certainly more mid-palate sap. I very much like the balance here and like the Chambolle villages, this is wonderfully transparent **Burghound's 88-91 points**

2004 Gevrey-Chambertin Vieilles Vignes (S\$65): Earthy, serious and completely different with a much more game and soil-driven character to the nose though the flavors are similar in that they're delicious, sweet, and supple with a layered and textured quality to the dusty, firm and persistent finish. This is pretty as well if not quite as well balanced. **Burghound's 87-90 points**

2004 Gevrey-Chambertin 1er Cru "Les Goulots" (S\$100): This too offers lower register aromas, indeed much lower than it usually does which is surprising in the context of what is really an upper register vintage. Notes of violet and dark berry fruit aromas combine with delicious, fat and complex flavors that are firm and stylishly modulated, particularly on the dusty yet suave finish. I very much like the detail here and the overall effect is elegant but entirely serious. **Burghound's 89-91 points**

2004 Gevrey-Chambertin 1er Cru "Combe Aux Moines" (S\$105): An exceptionally fresh but much deeper-toned nose of earth and crushed dark berry aromas precede vibrant, intense and much more full-bodied flavors that do a slow build from the mid-palate to a driving and admirably persistent finish. This has impressive grip yet there is nothing ham-fisted or inelegant about it and the obvious underlying tension only adds to the appeal. **Burghound's 89-92 points**

2004 Gevrey-Chambertin 1er Cru "Clos St.-Jacques" (S\$125): As it always is, this is the class of the cellar save for the Griotte with its gorgeously pure and dusty red pinot nose nuanced with spice, vegetal and a hint of smokiness that leads to incredibly delineated, supple and wonderfully complex flavors that explode on the strikingly long finish. This is a seriously good effort sporting impeccable balance and while 8 to 10 years will see it at its best, it should drink well for 2 decades. **Burghound's 91-93 points**

2004 Morey St.-Denis "Clos Solon" (S\$65): Strikingly pretty and ultra elegant red cherry and pinot fruit aromas nuanced with spice and underbrush hints highlight forward, supple, rich, sweet and generous middle weight flavors that are only moderately complex yet seductively textured and mouth coating as well as beautiful length. A lovely and understated effort that offers unusually good finesse for a villages level wine. Recommended. **Burghound's 88-90 points**

2004 Vougeot 1er Cru "Les Petits Vougeots" (S\$90):

Older Vintages

2002 Gevrey-Chambertin "Aux Exchézeaux" (S\$78): Good deep red-ruby. Spicy aromas of redcurrant and plum. Fat, supple, sweet and ripe; full for this cuvee Notes of smoke and earth. Finishes with fine, nicely buffered tannins and good length.

Tanzer's 87-90 points

2002 Gevrey-Chambertin 1er Cru "Les Goulots" (S\$115): As it usually is, there is a strong mineral streak here with elegant, very fine, slightly gamy aromas and medium weight, focused and superbly intense flavors plus more *sauvage* character on the finish. There is no rusticity here at all and the overall effect is one of earthy refinement.

Burghound's 89-91 points

2002 Gevrey-Chambertin 1er Cru "Les Cherbaudes" (S\$100): Fairly strong reduction makes the nose very difficult to read. The flavors though are considerably finer than the previous Gevrey villages wines with excellent precision and impressive complexity, sappiness and a dusty, mouth coating, palate staining finish. Given how fleshy and generous the flavors are, it's remarkable how precise this is.

Burghound's 88-91 points

2002 Gevrey-Chambertin 1er Cru "Combe Aux Moines" (S\$118): A fascinating mix of vibrant, indeed even racy red fruit aromas and pungent wet earth notes lead to linear, frank and direct flavors that are fuller, richer and denser than those of the Champeaux but ultimately less complex and not quite as deep on the backend. Still, this is delicious and striking in its way.

Burghound's 89-91 points

All prices quoted for per bottle in Singapore dollar. Prices indicated "in red" are inclusive of 5% GST.

Free delivery for purchases of S\$350 and above, otherwise S\$15 per delivery will apply.

50 Kallang Avenue, #06-06 Noel Corporate Building, Singapore 339505,

Tel: 65-6291 1947 Fax: 65-6294 1947, Email: andytan@auric.com.sg Website: www.apfw.com.sg