



Red Rogues 4th Quarter 2005 (oops!)

A man cannot make him laugh - but that's no marvel; he drinks no wine.

SHAKESPEARE Henry IV Part 2

Happy New Year from all of us at PlumpJack Wines! What a great way to start off 2006 with our 4th Quarter selections from 2005. The selections were well worth the wait because we discovered a relatively new producer whose wines fit our parameters of having a common theme exhibiting extraordinary quality.

Our theme for this quarter is *terroir*. *Terroir* is a term which refers to the natural environment of any viticultural site. According to the Oxford Companion to Wine: “Major components of *terroir* are soil and local topography, together with their interactions with each other and with microclimate. Thus, every small plot and ultimately region may have distinctive wine-style characteristics which cannot be precisely duplicated elsewhere.”

We have three impressive Shiraz from an exciting producer, Peter Howland, whose winery is located in the Hunter Valley area (Eastern side) of Australia. Peter Howland, who started out as a professional musician playing the trumpet and the saxophone for a funk band in the early nineties, decided to use some of his other senses and enrolled at Adelaide University studying winemaking. After completing his coursework he then worked for such notable wineries as Cassegrain in Hastings Valley as well as Cape Mentelle.

Throughout his travels, which included 6 months in Puglia working with 29 different varieties of grapes, he came to the conclusion that *terroir* is the key component to expressing how a wine will taste. To demonstrate the effect of *terroir* Peter chose three distinctively different vineyards and vinified the three wines identically. The three Shiraz come from vineyards in Western Australia: Langley Vineyard in Donnybrook; Parsons Vineyard in Frankland River; and Pine Lodge Vineyard in Mt. Barker.

The interesting dilemma for Peter was how to get the grapes from the Western region of Australia to the winery in Eastern Australia. He solved this situation with refrigerated tankers. After the grapes were hand-harvested, they were crushed, chilled, and loaded into a refrigerated tanker, where they were transported from Western Australia across the country – a five day journey – to the Hunter Valley where Peter makes the wine. The five days in cold soak allowed the must to extract color from the skins in a very gentle way before it started to ferment. Once the fruit arrived, Peter was able to manage the fermenting process because the wine had already derived the color, the tannin, and the fruit from the soaking.

We recommend that you taste these wines side by side to experience the actual differences that *terroir* makes in expressing the flavor and taste of hand-crafted wines.

Common descriptors of Shiraz: Cherry aromas, plum, coffee, spice, herbal, blackberry, black pepper, blueberry, cassis, espresso, fresh tobacco, new leather aromas, smoky, anise, clove, thyme.

Five Reasons Why PlumpJack Likes Peter Howland Shiraz:

1. After tasting these three wines we think that *terroir* is very cool.
2. Peter Howland is committed to making small lots of high-quality wines.
3. Shiraz is very food versatile.
4. All three wines are priced the same—very affordable.
5. How many winemakers do you know who were musicians in a funk band?

2002 Pine Lodge Vineyard, Mount Barker, Western Australia

\$25.99

Pine Lodge Vineyard is one of the oldest vineyards in the Great Southern. The unique soils are gravelly loam over a white alabaster. The region is very cool which keeps the yields low and also keeps the flavors intense.

Cases Produced: 700

Aging potential: 6-9 years

Oak program: 100% French oak—Demptos Bordeaux, Sirugue, and Seguin Moreau Chassagne Montrachet

Barrel Aging: Aged up to 16 months, and racked 3-4 times

Filtration: Lightly filtered

Tasting Notes: The wine is an intense purple color with a black pepper nose, with flavors of blueberry and ripe blackberry, black tea, and anise. The mid-palate is smoky, slight worn leather. It is medium- to full-bodied with a crisp toasty finish.

Food Pairings: Lasagna with a Béchamel sauce

Interesting Fact: The wine won a Double Gold Medal at the San Francisco Wine Competition.

2002 Parsons Vineyard, Frankland River, Western Australia

\$25.99

According to Peter, this vineyard block is straight out of a viticulture textbook. The area has cold summer nights, but mild summer days. The soils are very gravelly and well drained—similar to those in Bordeaux. The vineyard has a steep, northerly slope which ripens the fruit slowly.

Cases Produced: 800

Aging Potential: 10-12 years

Oak Program: Missouri American oak is 60%, and Nevers, Allier and Tronçais—French—is 40%

Barrel Aging: Aged up to 16 months and racked 3-4 times

Filtration: Lightly filtered

Tasting Notes: The color is vibrant, purple, with lilac aroma, bright sweet blueberry and blackberry. It is elegant, medium- to full-bodied, with long legs, slight licorice flavors. There are complex layers with strong tannins on the back palate.

Food Pairings: Lamb chops with pesto pasta

Interesting Fact: Peter Howland was listed in James Halliday's Top Ten New Wineries in the 2005 Wine Companion. The Parsons Vineyard also won a Gold Medal at the Adelaide Wine Show and Silver at the National Wine Show.

2002 Langley Vineyard, Donnybrook, Western Australia

\$25.99

The vineyard is on a gradually sloping north-facing hill, with gravelly iron stone soil. The Donnybrook area is known as the orchard district of South West Western Australia featuring long, warm summer days with cool nights.

Cases Produced: 1200

Aging Potential: 8-11 years

Oak Program: American, tight-grained barrels are 80% of this while only 20% French barrels are used from Allier and Nevers

Oak Aging: Aged up to 16 months before bottling

Filtration: Lightly filtered

Tasting Notes: Deep inky rich color, with coffee aromas and orchard flavors of apple, cherry, and plum, it is medium to full-bodied, and the fruit is well-integrated with oak and acidity. The wine is young and tightly wound, with strong tannins, a touch of chocolate and mocha on the finish. Should be decanted if consumed early.

Food Pairing: Think rib eye steak.

Interesting Fact: At one point in time the town of Donnybrook was named by an infamous consultant as the ugliest town in Southern Western Australia. This wine was awarded a Gold Medal at the Small Winemakers' Show.