



PLUMPJACK

WINES

WINE CLUB

August 2005

I love drinking wine in the summer! (Of course I love drinking wine in the fall, winter and spring as well.) What could be better than a crisp, unoaked, intensely flavored white wine on a hot summer's day with salads and chilled fresh shellfish? When the sun goes down and dinnertime approaches, I love drinking a rich, spicy, full-flavored red to accompany the *BSOM* (big slab of meat) cooking on the grill. I am still on a campaign to convince the doubtful that Riesling, when made well, can be one

of the most enjoyable white wines with its exhilarating range of fruit flavors. This month's Riesling from New Zealand can hold its own when compared to the great Rieslings of France and Germany. The Paso Robles Syrah from Pey Vineyards should once again remind us why Syrah has become so popular. Luscious, rich flavors at an affordable price are hard qualities not to like. So, before the days get too short, and the stress of the holiday season grabs hold, shuck some fresh oysters, marinate a flank steak and fire up the grill. Invite some friends over, and enjoy the summertime organoleptic extravaganza our August wines provide.

Marlborough is the largest of New Zealand's big three wine regions. It is located at the northeastern tip of New Zealand's South Island, and consists of a large, flat, river valley with deep deposits of silt and gravel. It is a relatively new wine region, with the first commercial vineyards planted in 1973. Marlborough gained international recognition when Cloudy Bay released their Sauvignon Blanc in 1985. Huia (pronounced hoo-yah) Vineyards was established in 1996 by Claire and Mike Allan. After studying wine at Roseworthy College, they were drawn to Marlborough by the intense fruit flavors of the wines from the region. Upon completing their studies, they worked in wineries in Champagne, France, Australia, and New Zealand to gain additional experience before starting their own venture. In 1990, they purchased their river terrace Rapaura Road property. Different soil profiles, rainfall patterns and orientation of vineyards were the guiding factors in determining what grape varieties would be planted where. Huia's viticultural practices maximize grape quality in every vintage, and they have become a member of the New Zealand Sustainable Winegrowers Association to help protect New Zealand's environment. The 2004 Riesling was sourced from two different vineyards: the Two Ponds Vineyard in the Wairau Valley, which grows on a deep silt loam soil providing grapes with exceptional balance and finesse, and the Rapaura Fairhall Vineyard, which has 24-year-old Riesling vines that supply grapes with intense flavor concentration. The 2004 growing season was ideal for Riesling. The grapes were harvested at optimum ripeness both by hand and machine. The wine went through a long, cool fermentation in stainless steel and was bottled in August 2004. Only 2,150 cases were produced. Huia's Riesling marries the best qualities of the wines of California, Australia, and Europe. It has opulent fruit flavors, is clean and modern due to the latest winemaking and vineyard techniques, and has a crisp, refreshing zing that is reminiscent of France's and Germany's great Rieslings. The wine has heady aromas of apples, pears and spice with hints of white pepper and minerals. The fruit flavors are intense with lemon citrus and honeysuckle, and the finish is long and dry. It is the perfect wine to have with fresh oysters and scallops, sushi,

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2004 Huia
Marlborough Riesling
Blenheim, New Zealand
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2003 Pey Vineyards
"The Spicerack"
Syrah
Paso Robles, California



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Asian food, or firm fruity cheeses. It would pair nicely with PlumpJack Café's Maine lobster and shrimp risotto with fine herbs, summer truffles, and lobster butter.

The 2004 Huia Marlborough Riesling is \$15.99/bottle, \$172.70/case.



Pey Vineyards is the joint venture of husband and wife Jonathan and Susan Pey. They live in Marin County and have extensive, but rather different, experience in several aspects of the premium wine business in Northern California, Europe & Australia. In 1998, Susan and Jonathan both read a book called "*Early Marin*" which chronicled the history of Marin County and touched upon its dormant but once vibrant winegrowing heritage, which surprisingly predates Napa Valley's by almost twenty years. Upon further research into local history, climate, soils and vineyards, they developed a firm belief that with some hard work and considerable patience, Marin County could produce very high quality wines, especially those varieties that would thrive along Marin's frigid coast - Pinot Noir, Merlot and Riesling. In 1999, they took the plunge with their first vintage of Merlot and set about trying to change the face of Marin County winegrowing. Until recently all of the Pey wines were from hand-harvested grapes grown in the cool, coastal hills of western Marin County under their two labels, *Pey-Marin Vineyards* and *Mount Tamalpais Vineyards*. The 2003 Paso Robles Syrah is their first departure from their Marin vineyards. "Spicerack" Syrah comes from a very special single vineyard site located in the hills of Paso Robles whose "exemplary" sustainable viticultural practices have been officially recognized by the State of California. Vineyard terrain is characterized by dry, gently rolling, western sloping hills. A foot or so of loose, gravelly loam covers almost 15 feet of "Camatta Series" chalky-white substrate, making the vineyard quite infertile and very well drained. The warmth of the site and regulated "deficit" irrigation practices result in extremely small and concentrated berries, which have quite high "skin to juice" ratios, leading to a deeply-colored wine with a broad aromatic spectrum and rich texture. Yields are less than 2.5 tons/acre. Smaller plantings of Mourvèdre are also grown nearby on the estate. Grapes for this wine were hand-sorted, destemmed and crushed (5% whole berry), and "cold soaked" for 4 days in 3-ton open-top temperature-controlled fermenters. The "cold soak" technique helps extract vibrant color and rich flavor, but not alcohol. On Day 5 fermentation began naturally with native yeasts and was later inoculated with cultured yeast. A rather warm fermentation temperature (85°F) got things going and multiple pump-overs were the rule of the road. Syrah *loves* oxygen! On Day 12 the Syrah was gently pressed into 59-gallon French (70%) and American (30%) oak barriques where it slowly completed primary and secondary fermentations. Fifteen months in barrel with multiple hand rackings contributed exotic spiciness and wonderful mouth-feel. Before bottling two "press" barrels of Syrah were blended with one barrel of Mourvèdre, which toned down the exuberant qualities of the Syrah while building overall complexity and palate grip. Only 16 barrels (387 cases) were produced. The 2003 Pey Syrah delivers just what the "Spicerack" name infers. It has a rich complex nose with hints of chocolate, black fruits, vanilla, oak and spice. In the mouth, the wine is full, intense and chewy, but the supple tannins and acidity provide ample structure and great balance. I can't think of any grilled meat that wouldn't be the perfect dish to accompany a glass of this Syrah. Imagine how good it would be with The Carneros Inn Boonfly Café's Painted Hills flat iron steak with Parmesan fries, watercress and salsa verde.

The 2003 Pey Vineyards "Spicerack" Syrah is \$19.99/bottle, \$215.90/case