



PLUMPJACK

WINES

WINE CLUB October 2006

To blend or not to blend? There is no question! Our two wines this month showcase the exceptional array of richness, balance, and complexity blended wines can offer. The similarities of these wines defy reason. What can a white wine from Australia have in common with a Bordeaux blend from Tuscany? To begin, both wines are a blend of three different varietals. Both wines utilize grapes that are not indigenous to their areas. (But then, what grapes are indigenous to Australia?) Both estates have historic significance. Both wines are tremendous values considering their price and the quality they offer. "People get ready, there's an (organoleptic) train a comin'." You don't need no ticket, you just need a wine glass, a cork screw, and a bottle of each of these wines!

*2004 YeringStation
M.V.R.*

Yarra Valley, Australia



*2002 Fattoria I Collazzi
Collazzi, IGT
Sieci, Italy*

There are over 50 wine regions and sub-regions spread throughout Australia. The state of Victoria, tucked into the southeastern corner of the Australian mainland, contains over 20 wine regions. The Yarra Valley region, which is half an hour's drive from Melbourne, is a cool climate district producing some of Australia's most elegant and delicate wines. The Yarra Valley region is in the Port Phillip Zone, which borders on the towns of Emerald and Cockatoo to the south. The Plenty River marks the western boundary and the Yarra River, which begins in the region's east, flows through its center on its way to Melbourne. Most properties are centered round the towns of Coldstream, Healesville, Yarra Glen, and the historic Lilydale. The valley is surrounded by the Great Dividing Range to the east, Plenty Ranges to the west and Dandenongs to the south. Yering Station is in the heart of the Yarra Valley. To fully appreciate the Yarra Valley, it helps to know something about its history and its pioneering winegrowers. The earliest of them were the Ryrie brothers, who planted vines at Yering in 1838, and made their first wine in 1845. In the 1850s, they sold their land to two Swiss families, the de Castellans and the de Purys. Paul de Castella had bought Yering, intending to run cattle there, but changed his mind when he tasted some wine from the original vineyard which was considered to be "better than Pommard." Later in the 19th century, circumstances, especially the change to fortified wines, led eventually to the demise of vineyards in the Yarra Valley. It was not until the early 1970's that, in response to the changing cultural demands of the new generation, coupled with the growing success of other Australian regions, the Yarra Valley vineyards began to thrive again. After changing hands several times throughout the early-to-mid 1900's, Yering Station was purchased by the Rathbone family in 1996. An additional 100 acres of vines were planted and winemaker Tom Carson was hired. Tom has been at Yering Station for ten vintages and won the highly acclaimed International Wine and Spirits Winemaker of the Year award in London, 2004. The majority of Yering Station's 5 vineyards and the winery sit in the cradle of the Yarra Valley, where the original vineyards of the region were planted. Yering Station also utilizes additional single-vineyard sites at higher elevations and with varying microclimates to achieve balance in their wines. The 2004 M.V.R. is a blend of 62% Marsanne, 29% Viognier, and 9% Rousanne. The grapes were both hand-picked and machine-harvested from vines that averaged 4- to 8-years-old. The wine was fermented in stainless-steel tanks for



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almost two weeks and then transferred to 228 ltr. French barrels, 2% new, 98% 5 years or older. It was then aged in barrel for 3 months before bottling. The blending of the 3 varietals makes the 2004 M.V.R. an impressive wine. Marsanne provides the white stone fruit fragrance and the acidity. Viognier brings a luxuriously silky and textural middle palate, and Roussanne provides the solid structure. There are notes of fresh peach, pear and oak in the nose. In the mouth, flavors of apricot and pears intermingle with oak, and while the fruit flavors linger, the palate is left fresh due to the integrated and balanced acidity. Try this wine with PlumpJack Café's white corn soup with fresh bay scallops in brown butter.

The 2004 Yering Station M.V.R. is \$15.99/bottle, \$172.70/case.



Tuscany is the most important region in central Italy. It is the area where the birth of Italy's language, literature, and art took place, and has therefore assumed a central role in the country's culture and self-image. Its landscapes have been immortalized in the works of great Italian artists over the centuries and remain largely unchanged today – comprising an endless succession of hills and valleys, studded with ancient red-roofed villages, cypress trees, olive groves and vineyards. Viticulture has flourished in the region since the middle ages, and today the region is best known for its youthful dry red table wines, typified best by Chianti. Tenuta Collazzi is located 5 miles south from the center of Florence, in the commune of Impruneta, in Tuscany. The Villa Collazzi that appears on the Collazzi label was originally designed and built by Michelangelo in 1560, as a favor to his friend Agostino Dini. Incomplete for centuries, the villa was purchased by the Marchi family in 1933, and completed in accordance with Michelangelo's plan. The estate is currently run by three siblings from the Marchi family: Carlo Marchi, Grazia Marchi Gazzoni Frascara and Bona Marchi Frescobaldi. The estate covers 964 acres, of which 45 are cultivated with vineyards. The vineyards are situated on hilly terrain with an altitude of 500 feet and southeast exposure. The soils are clay, sandy, calcareous, loose and rocky, and poor in organic matter. The vineyards are planted at a high density--2,490 vines per acre, keeping yields extremely low. The soils and microclimate of the estate were deemed perfect for growing Cabernet Sauvignon, Merlot, and Cabernet Franc, instead of the traditional Sangiovese. Our featured wine from this estate is its premier wine, Collazzi, and is a blend of 60% Cabernet Sauvignon, 30% Merlot, and 10% Cabernet Franc. The three varietals were harvested and vinified separately, then blended together before barrel aging. Fermentation took place in small stainless-steel vats for 25 days at temperatures below 86°F. The wine was then transferred to 70% French and 30% American oak barrels. The barrels used were 80% new, and the wine aged for 15 months prior to bottling. Less than 700 cases were produced. The 2002 Collazzi is a magnificent example of a "Super Tuscan." It is a gorgeous wine with complex layers of cedar-scented cassis and black cherry, warm spices, mineral and vanillin oak. It is a beautifully-knit, full-bodied wine with fine tannins and a long finish. Wines of comparable quality sell for well over \$50.00 a bottle, and when this wine was first released it also sold for close to that amount. It is exceptionally fortunate that PlumpJack was able to buy a large quantity at an unbelievable price. This wine will sell out quickly so don't delay. The pleasure of enjoying a grilled steak drizzled with Tuscan extra virgin olive oil, garnished with arugula and Parmesan, and a glass of 2002 Collazzi at home is almost as fine as doing the same in Tuscany.

The 2002 Collazzi is \$24.99/bottle, \$269.90/case