From Hay Flat Road to the High Seas - Parawa Wines Aboard Eclipse 2

Southern Fleurieu has just scored a marketing coup with our local Parawa Estate and Fleurieu Leafy Sea Dragon wines selected to go on board Scenic Travel's Eclipse 2 Superyacht. Local entrepeneur, Peter Simic, is delighted to have his wines displayed in this prestigious venue. Selected for the Chairman's lounge it included the two black label, Parawa Comte de Fleurieu Cabernets and Garden of Josephine Syrah wines and the Fleurieu non vintage Pinot Noir.





Well known to locals, his family retreat is situated on Hay Flat road set back from the "Red Shed" which has either received gasps of admiration or shocks of disapproval. Peter says he likes the fact that it draws attention to the nearby Ingalalla waterfall (the name also used on one of his wines). A small vineyard is located next to the shed but the main vineyard is below in the Ingalalla Valley off Hamlyn Road.



"We purchased the property back in 1999 and the first plantings were in 2001 with 35 prestige clones from the French Dijon nursery to go into eight acres. My winemaker friends told me I was nuts and should have kept it below five, but as I explained this was an experimental vineyard for me to learn more about vine growing and winemaking in my role as the leading editor/publisher of South Australia's Winestate magazine," he said.

"Funnily enough over many years of publishing Winestate I swore I would never make my own wine and would happily sit on other winemaker's balconies, drink their wines and listen to their problems."

"Although living in Adelaide I had long wanted a family retreat in the country where we could get away from the big smoke and gather together as often as possible. After extensive research around South Australia and a demand from my daughters that it not be more than an hours drive from home, for various reasons we settled on the Yankalilla/ Normanville region. One reason was that famous viticulturalist, John Gladstone, had held out high hopes for this cool climate region. I am ashamed to admit that just in case I weakened it would be a suitable place to make great wine. And it turned out to be true.

What was the nail in the coffin was when I wanted to do a viticultural story that "wine is made in the vineyard" and ended up at the South Australian Wine Improvement Nursery in the Barossa where I was met astonishingly by the chief viticulturalist of Penfolds, of Yalumba and of the Nursery. It seems no one had done a story on them before. After overlooking 4,000 clones I made the mistake of asking the question "so you supply nurseries but not the public but because I have taken an interest in what you are doing you would supply me, yes?" The answer was "yes we would and you would have a Source Vineyard that could supply other wineries". Bugger!

Then as you can imagine I was like a kid in a candy store, choosing far too many clones from too many varieties. But what a hell of an experiment! The result of high quality wines turned out just as I expected. The Parawa wines have been purchased by rock stars, high wealth individuals, Chairman of the Hong Kong Jockey Club and the Hong Kong Embassy to mention a few. The Fleurieu Leafy Sea Dragon wines have offered me a premium economy option that I love to showcase in the region and show outside also as a small contribution to the great lifestyle and community spirit that this region shows off to the world."



Paul Stanley of KISS was impressed on a visit a few years ago.

Mr Simic apologised for telling such a long story but it is interesting to hear how a local success story evolved.

Peter Simic was Manager of the South Australian Wine Information Bureau before launching Winestate in 1978 and later Wine&Spirit (US). After 45 years he closed Winestate, but the website has been kept open as a resource for the many thousands of wines reviewed. He is currently enjoying his work with his family estate wines.



