





investment for those who wish to cellar wines for a few years before release on a wine list.

The Misha's Vineyard story began many miles away in Singapore where Misha and husband Andy lived and worked. They too, had wanted to find a dream-come-true vineyard and searched for many months until they found a stunning piece of land, part of the Bendigo Station, close to the shores of Lake Dunstan. With endorsement from Dr. Richard Smart (The Flying Vine Doctor) plans were made to plant the first vines. It wasn't just a case of dig a hole and plant grapes though – this is tough land and has required many years of preparation. It now hosts sauvignon blanc, riesling, gewurztraminer, pinot gris and pinot noir viticulture.

One of my favourite spots in the vineyard is where a single row of just eight vines are planted, each with a Chinese gold coin underneath, as a symbol of returning the 'old gold' to the land in recognition of the new gold (pinot noir). The view from this spot is particularly breathtaking.

Ultimately the wines must speak for themselves and with Ollie Masters at the helm there are already a bunch of noteworthy examples:

The Sauvignon Blanc '10 has a soft and gentle bouquet with a hint of barrel and reminds me of the Eastern reaches of the Loire Valley. The palate is full-throttle with high acidity yet balanced with soft, sweet fruits, and quartz soil notes intertwined with a hint of oak: a great addition to any wine list.

The Dress Circle Pinot Gris '10 displays Asian pear, white-fleshed fruits and apple skin bouquet. It's just off dry with a little residual sugar (12 grams) – the gingery, brown skin pear and juicy white flesh fruit flavours are delicious. A whisper of white pepper and persimmon on the finish and hint of oiliness in the texture adds to an already tasty wine.

My favourite of the white wine range is the Gewurztraminer '10: dense and structured, pink rose petals and quartz terroir voice: A solid core of fruit, weight and oiliness add to the already flavourful palate – a

'Metrosexual' wine.

There is no doubt winemaker Ollie Masters knows pinot noir and how temperamental it can be, yet the 'High Note' '08 with its soft fruits, elusive Burgundian side and fine tannins add up to a very fine wine indeed. The Verismo '08 is a barrel selection pinot noir with smoky, toasty darker cherry fruit aromas and flavours; firm youthful tannins suggest a wine still jostling for position with dense and bold structure and other complex elements. I expect this to be a five-star wine in about two years – it will outlive many from the same vintage.

The '09 High Note Pinot Noir is packed with red fruits, dried herbs, terroir flavours and non-invasive oak; young, vibrant and authoritative.

We finished our visit with a morning at the Clyde Food & Wine Festival – a chance to catch up with some wine friends, and a further reinforcement that Central Otago is developing diversity and quality in its winemaking and artisan foods. ■