

# a sense of occasion

**A GREAT WINE EXPERIENCE RESULTS FROM THE 'OCCASION' — WHERE VARIABLE ELEMENTS COME TOGETHER TO CREATE A TRULY MEMORABLE EXPERIENCE** WORDS MISHA WILKINSON

**S**ome say a great wine is created by terroir, the inexplicable set of factors in the vineyard that come together perfectly. I believe a great wine experience results from an inexplicable set of factors, too. There are a number of things that come into play when you are drinking a glass of great wine. These elements can elevate the senses and bring about a sublime satisfaction and enjoyment. They may include your mood at the time, the ambience, the company, the time of day, or indeed, the time of year, and even the particular glass you're drinking from. And let's not forget one of the most important elements — the food that accompanies the wine in question.

Some of my best wine experiences are repeatable (thank goodness!) while

others were one-offs that have made a lasting impression. I hope you may be able to add to your repertoire of great wine experiences from my selection below.

### BALD HILLS 'LAST LIGHT' RIESLING

The first time I tried the 2006 'Last Light' Riesling, it had just been bottled. It was absolutely delicious — but then I was sitting in Hunt's award-winning garden in the late afternoon, catching the last rays of sunlight on an early winter's day. I've had this medium-dry, award-winning Riesling many times since. And here's the best news, their wines are now in Singapore and distributed by Le Vigne.

### LEEWIN ESTATE PRELUDE VINEYARDS CHARDONNAY

You probably wonder why I don't have the acclaimed Art Series Chardonnay here. It's acknowledged as one of the greatest wines Australia has ever produced, rates in the top 100 wines of the world, and regularly gets scores of 98/100! Well, the truth is that it was a Prelude Vineyards Chardonnay I had in my hand whilst sitting in Leeuwin Estate's wonderful outdoor amphitheatre listening to concerts.

Wine critic James Halliday thinks Prelude is possibly 'the best second label in the world' while others describe it as the 'poor man's Art Series'. With notes of grapefruit, melon and stone fruit, and seamless oak, I think it's the perfect accompaniment to good music.

### MARCHESI DI BAROLO — BAROLO CANNUBI DOCG

On a trip to the Piedmont region three years ago to celebrate our 10th wedding anniversary, we asked the owner of our charming villa to book some place special for our celebratory dinner. We ended up

in a private dining room at Marchesi di Barolo, with a two-star Michelin chef preparing a six-course dinner just for the two of us. The meal was accompanied by an amazing selection of Marchesi di Barolo wines, including several vintages of the Barolo Cannubi DOCG. As with all Barolos, this has 100 percent Nebbiolo grapes, with hints of roses, vanilla liquorice and spices, and a flavour that is full and elegant. Pair this wine with some red meat or game, or a selection of aged Italian cheeses and enjoy.

### MOUNT DIFFICULTY SINGLE VINEYARD PINOT NOIR

From Central Otago in New Zealand, the world's most southerly wine region, Mount Difficulty Pipeclay Terrace Pinot Noir 2005, displays classic cherry and blackberry flavours with some liquorice and spice with a rich and sensuous mid-palate. Pinot Noir is a perfect match for so many foods but is especially good with mushrooms, lamb and duck.

### SEPPELT ORIGINAL SPARKLING SHIRAZ

A few years ago, some close friends came to our house one evening with a couple of bottles of sparkling Shiraz. I was initially amazed that they chose this wine but I quickly became a convert. Seppelt Original Sparkling Shiraz has traditions that go back to the 1890s, which make it Australia's most famous and long-lived sparkling Shiraz.

It's a burst of sweet berry fruit characters that evolve into chocolate and warm spice flavours — like eating a bunch of Shiraz grapes directly off the vine! This is a wonderful accompaniment to turkey and duck, the sweeter styles of Chinese food, or even a rich chocolate pudding. ☺



Misha and her husband Andy loved wines and vineyards so much, they decided they should create their own. So Misha's Vineyard

was established on 140 acres of spectacular lakefront terraces near Queenstown, New Zealand. A resident of Singapore for the past 15 years, Misha runs the vineyard operations and divides her time between Singapore and New Zealand. The first harvest of Pinot Noir grapes from Misha's Vineyard is scheduled for 2008.