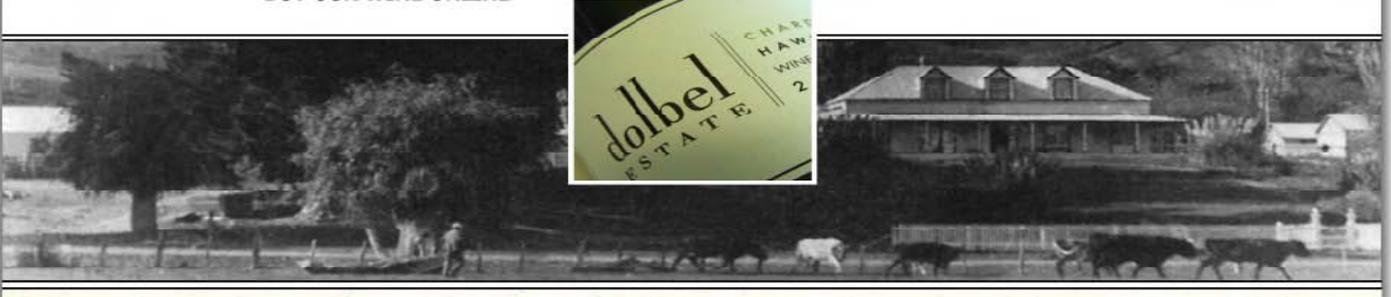




“HEARD IT THROUGH THE GRAPEVINES” – Summer 2008



We're pleased to be able to bring you this Summer 08 issue of news about Dolbel Wines. Since the launch of our 2007 range of white wines in October this year (and a fresh look at the 2006 Sauvignon Blanc!) we have been busy spreading the word about Dolbel and our evolving range of wines.

Among the ramblings in this newsletter you will find reports on our activities, information about our range of wines and forthcoming releases, comments from those who have tasted our wines and an update on restaurants and shops that have taken us into stock. We also intend to keep you in touch with the progress of the 2009 vintage as it is developing for us in our Taradale vineyard.

Buying Dolbel wines can require a bit of a hunt right now while we are developing a network of stockists. The easiest way to buy is to relax behind the keyboard of your computer, armed with your credit card, and surf through our website. You'll find us at www.dolbelestate.co.nz. The website is new and contains a thorough explanation of us and our wines. The purchase process is simple and the wines are delivered to your appointed address, usually within two working days from order. We guarantee to continually update our website, especially as new releases become available and intend to provide tasting notes to assist with the choice decision.

Don't forget that Dolbel wines are intended to be a bit different from the norm. Our wines are produced from the very best grapes we hand pick from our vineyard and as a result will only be available in small quantities. There is a deliberate elegance in our wine style and they are intended to work well with food. Our '06 Sauvignon Blanc, having gained some additional complexity with a little bottle age, has gradually become a bit of a "blockbuster". We would be delighted if subsequent vintages of Sauvignon Blanc were to develop the same way, and the 07 does look like it is following in the path of it's "older brother".

Dolbel goes public!

During September and October we held informal functions for journalists and friends. The aim was to show the range of white wines and to enable as many as possible to meet the Dolbel team. The events were a great success with a good turn out in both Wellington and Auckland.

Comments on the wines were hugely positive and extremely encouraging for the team. Our thanks to those of you who attended the tasting. Be warned – new releases are always in the system and we will be inviting you to join with us again in the future.

Our wine maker, Tony Prichard, attended with us and was inundated with questions and discussion. If repeat requests for a tasting sample are a measure of preference, then the 07 Barrique Fermented Chardonnay had to be the wine of the show. But it is interesting that the wine to cause the most question and comment was always the Sauvignon Blanc, especially the 06 with its extra bottle age. "I've got tired of the grassy nature of New Zealand Sauvignon but your wine doesn't have any of that flavour – what have you done?" was the usual question. The fact is that the Dolbel Sauvignon Blanc is made from very ripe grapes to avoid the "grassy" style. The wine is fermented in old oak barrels for temperature control and left for an extended period on lees. That's why our Sauvignon Blanc is always released a year behind most others. Our wine is elegant French "Graves" style with soft tropical fruit characters and a very long finish. Enough of the publicity!



Winemaker, Tony Prichard with Katrina Todd

Managing Director Andy Nurse (in apron) with Warwick Steele



Auckland Function at Two Rooms Gallery

Our Auckland friends' function was held at Two Rooms art gallery in Grey Lynn. A note of thanks here to the gallery not only for the venue but also to Jenny, Chantelle and Lucy for their support in helping with the great turn out of tasters.

What are they saying about Dolbel wines?

As a result of showing our wines in September we have received a lot of positive feedback. Obviously we are delighted with the comments that have been made and felt we should share some of them with you here.

John Hawkesby – Auckland Herald:

2007 Dolbel Estate Unoaked Chardonnay: "Unbelievable value for money. Ripe bouquet, fruit characters with a good dash of minerality. Crisp and clean."

2007 Dolbel Estate Sauvignon Blanc: "...Graves style character. Powerful, concentrated and different. Sauvignon for those over Sauvignon".

Peter Shaw – Waikato Times

2007 Dolbel Estate Sauvignon Blanc: "...aromas and flavours are not those we are used to from Marlborough... It is yeasty, oaky and the finish is crisp"

2007 Dolbel Estate Chardonnay: "...oaky characters on the nose and palate. The fruit is fresh and clearly Chardonnay. It has oak and a buttery mouth feel but it finishes clean and crisp"

Michael Cooper – Listener

2007 Dolbel Estate Sauvignon Blanc: "...from Hawkes Bay grapes and modeled on the famous dry whites of Graves, in Bordeaux, swings the spotlight on our alternative sauvignons."

And if you are really keen you could look up **Bob Campbell's** website for his comments www.bobswinereviews.com.

Where can Dolbel wines be found?

The easiest place to buy Dolbel Estate wines right now is directly from us via our website. The requirements of storage and transport mean that the smallest pack we were able to handle efficiently is a box containing six bottles. We had this box specially designed to protect the wines for shipping, realizing that the usual wine box containing a dozen bottles was perhaps more than an individual buyer might wish to cope with. But obviously some people would just like to buy a bottle or two at a time especially to sample the wines. It is taking a while but our wines are gradually getting out there to specialty wine shops and restaurants and we are very grateful to those "early adopters" who have taken a chance to include Dolbel with their other offerings.

Of special note must be Paul's Restaurant and Café at Lindale near Paraparaumu who have had us on their wine list for about a year now and have enjoyed plugging us a bit especially with a copy of Michael Cooper's Wine Guide at hand.

Since October we have been delighted to be included in the wine lists of Café Bastille in Wellington City, Magnum Restaurant in Ponsonby Road, Auckland and Delicious Restaurant in Grey Lynn also in Auckland. A couple of retail wine outlets have taken us into stock recently. Cooks Beach Liquor Store in Whitianga chased us after reading the Auckland Herald article and the Wine Vault in Grey Lynn has two of the wines in stock.

If you can't find our wines near you then feel free to call Carole on 0800 DOLBEL (365 235) it's a free call! – and she will do her best to help you out.

What's the word from the Vineyard?



Cameron Roucher pictured at Dolbel Estate

The report from Cameron in the vineyard is that he is delighted with progress so far this year. The mild spring has meant that we have not had to fight as many frost events as last year, but after the experiences of last vintage when we flew helicopters on numerous occasions we finally dug deep and installed frost fighting windmill machines in the vineyard. Already they have kept us secure from three frosts and we are thoroughly enjoying extra piece of mind during the vulnerable early part of the season.

Lately the weather has been fantastic for the vintage. We have been carefully monitoring soil moisture levels to ensure that the season's full potential is captured and the warm weather with breezes has given excellent flowering and fruitset. The great growing season has meant that debudding, trimming and tucking in have all occurred earlier than usual, and the weather man suggests that we will have a long and dry summer - here's hoping!

In recent years a very small section of the vineyard has been planted in Syrah. This was really as an experiment to see what calibre of this grape could be produced from our site. We are located close to, and have developed a relationship with, the local Institute of Technology, and as well as providing a couple of scholarships for outstanding students, we also like to assist with making parts of the vineyard available at different times of the year for field classes. Last year the small harvest of the Syrah grapes was given to the EIT students who took it through the practical experience of producing and bottling wine. Straight from the laboratory the resulting wine was fantastic! Not enough of it to sell commercially, but certainly a great indicator of the potential for the future – and a Christmas treat for the shareholders!

In the initial years of our vineyard nearly half of it was planted in Cabernet Sauvignon and the best of those grapes supplied to Church Road Winery. Over time it became obvious with only one vintage in three being satisfactory, that the terroir of our vineyard did not suit Cabernet and persisting with that variety was not economic. Today, the only red variety - except for the Syrah - is a small parcel of Merlot growing on our harder ground reserved for Dolbel use. The coming release of the 07 Merlot is featured in this newsletter, but we will soon have to make the important decision about the future of the Syrah and perhaps even a special Dolbel blended red.

What's new from Dolbel Wines?

At the time of writing this newsletter we have just bottled the **07 Dolbel Estate Merlot Cabernet**.

The wine is fermented in tanks and then racked to barrels after draining and pressing off skins. It shows good concentration with fruit hints of cherries and plums and of course subtle flavours from the oak contact. The tannins are fine and held in check with good acid balance. We have fined but not filtered this wine so you can expect that over time it may produce some sediment in the bottle. We resisted filtering to preserve both the tannin qualities and concentration. The wine will be ready for drinking upon release and will also benefit from a short cellaring time, but most of the aging has been done in the barrel. The Merlot comes from our vineyard from the small parcel of grapes that grow on the leaner, shingle based part of the land. The Cabernet Sauvignon used for the blend comes from friends in the Gimlett Gravels area. Both the Merlot and the Cabernet are hand harvested only when fully ripe and this ripeness shows through to the flavours of the wine. Parceled up in our "six pack" box the 07 Dolbel

Estate Merlot Cabernet will be available in February 09. We hope you will try it.

The other wine soon to join the Dolbel ranks is the **08 Dolbel Estate Rose**.

Made from free run Merlot juice and fermented fully dry, this Rose is a pale ruby colour, has hints of fresh strawberries to the nose and palate and a crisp finish. A refreshing wine to be served slightly chilled; it will be great with dessert (chocolate?) or served as an aperitif. Along with the new Merlot, the new Rose will also be available in February 09.

Tasting notes, more comprehensive information on the winemaking techniques, order form and pricing of these new wines will all be available on the website or mailed out early in the New Year.

So that's it from us for this summer newsletter. We hope that you take the time to follow the development of the Dolbel range of wines and that we can entice you to try them. We have certainly been encouraged by the feedback we have received from both our customers and the members of the press and this feedback has hardened our resolve to adhere to our goal of elegant wines of high quality, but always with a "twist"! The Dolbel range of wines is gradually developing and we are looking forward to the exciting additions set for release in the coming year. Sorry our Methode is not available yet for your New Year's toast, but it will be next year...! We will keep in touch and look forward to seeing you at future tastings as the range unfolds.

By the time you get this newsletter Christmas will be virtually upon us. All of us here at Dolbel Wines wish you good cheer and a happy and relaxed festive season. Merry Christmas!

All the best.

Andy Nurse and the Dolbel Team.

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