



## The Newsletter of the Metropolitan Wine and Food Society of Sydney Inc.

*Published for the information of the members and friends of the  
Metropolitan Wine and Food Society of Sydney Inc.*

**Vol 6 No 4 — March 2020**



**Leonie Newman**

**10/12/1940 - 26/01/2020**

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Metropolitan Wine and Food Society of Sydney Inc

Registered No. Y13780.23

Founded: 22 July 1977

Website: <http://mwffs.com/>

Facebook: Metropolitan Wine and Food Society of Sydney Inc.

# SOCIETY PROGRAMME FUNCTIONS AND MEETINGS

**March 2020**  
**Wednesday 11**  
**6pm for 6.30pm**

Dine Out — Pho Sam Vietnamese Noodle House Epping

**April 2020**  
**24—26**

Federation Convention in the Yarra Valley

**May 2020**  
**Sunday 17**

MWFSS Annual General Meeting held at the home of David and Carole Yeomans

**July 2020**  
**Saturday 11**

Ian Arnold Dinner Saveur Restaurant, Roseville

**August 2020**  
**TBA**

TAFE 3 course dinner

**September 2020**  
**25, 26, 27**

Weekend away in the Blue Mountains

**November 2020**  
**TBA**

Wine Tasting

**December 2020**

Christmas Function

## Office Bearers and Committee 2019—2020

President and FWFS A Councillor:

**Leonie Newman (to 26/1/20)**

**Jim Rolls (from 27/1/20)**

Vice President Wine Master: **Trevor Gibson**

Wine Scribe: **David Cameron**

Committee Member, Wine: **Jim Rolls**

Vice President Food Master: **Carolyn Smalls**

Food Scribe: **Kerrie Sims**

Committee Member, Food: **Carol Leaver**

Secretary: **David Yeomans**

Treasurer: **Carole Yeomans**

Cellar Master: **Trevor Gibson**

Federation of Wine and Food Societies of Australia

Councillor: **Trevor Gibson**

Public Officer: **Lorraine Plues**



Please submit contributions for future *MWFSS Newsletters* to the Editor, Kerrie Sims. All contributions and photographs, will be gratefully received. Items will be published over the name of the contributor, and references should be cited and acknowledged. [kerriesims24451@gmail.com](mailto:kerriesims24451@gmail.com)



## March 2020: Dine Out

*Pho Sam Vietnamese Noodle House, Epping*

The Society's first function for 2020 is being held at Pho Sam Vietnamese Noodle House 12 Oxford Street, Epping. Wednesday 11 March 6.00pm for 6.30pm

**PHO SAM**  
Vietnamese Noodle House



## May 2020:

### Annual General Meeting



The Annual General Meeting of the Metropolitan Wine and Food Society of Sydney Inc.

will be held at the home of David and Carole Yeomans

St Ives

on

Sunday 17 May, 2020 12.00 noon

To be followed by a Light Lunch provided by the Food Committee (BYO Wine)

**July 2020: Ian Arnold Dinner Restaurant Saveur, Roseville**

**Saveur**  
FINE EUROPEAN CUISINE

The Society will return to the popular venue Saveur, for the annual black tie dinner, on Saturday 11 July, 2020.

**Chef-owner**  
**Michael Chun**



## Vale Leonie Newman

**From Leonie:**

**Newsletter — August 2019:** 'Though I feel great trepidation at following Jim in this role (*as President*), I look forward to it immensely.' 'At our recent Ian Arnold Dinner I used a quotation which is repeated here – because it embodies much of the pleasure of our Society....

*"Drinking good wine with good food in good company is one of life's most civilized pleasures."* ~ Michael Broadbent.'



**Part of Leonie's email to Members —**

**2 January 2020:** It was SUCH a pleasure to me in July when I became your President for this year – and I still enjoy it!! Unfortunately some unlovely events have recently occurred to me, which are the subject of my note to you all. There is a history to it – so I will start with that: almost 50 years ago I was diagnosed with a rather serious muscle disease called Myasthenia Gravis ..... I "lost" about 5 years of my life at that time – it was not an easy time but with good medicine and an excellent physician, we eventually in 1980 began yet another drug called Imuran (an immuno-suppressive drug). I have been taking 150 mg per day of that ever since and it "gave" me my life back, together with rather a lot of other pills to deal with its side-effects. Imuran has a number of side-effects – some of which are potentially fatal ..... Many people "pay the price" on such a high dose of this drug much earlier, but it is my turn now. I will do so without regret. Imuran has given me a number of decades of wonderful life. Initially I went back to University and did a Masters Degree in Statistics. Then had another 25 years of a diverse and fascinating career, culminating in 10 years in the pharmaceutical industry developing new drugs for nasty diseases. In actual fact, I didn't do a great deal of real work myself – but managed a

lot of people – and when asked what I did, my reply was "Nothing really! I just smile and wave! – and look after our wine cellar." In fact there were 4 - 6 meetings per year in US, UK or Europe - travel was in business class and the hotels were very good. It really was a wonderfully stimulating and interesting time. My lovely late husband, Dennis, when asked what his wife did, jokingly said several times – Oh, Leonie works in Fairyland!! (And in many ways he wasn't incorrect with that joke!!)



Two weeks ago after 5-6 weeks of awful, increasing pain and inability to eat, I was taken to RPAH by ambulance and diagnosed with cancer of the caecum, with lots of liver metastases and one small one in each lung..... This cancer has turned out to be quite a rare one (it is only 1% of the possible cancers) and it is related to the use of immuno-suppressive drugs like Imuran.....

Terry has been and remains really WONDERFUL in all this. He has truly astounded me – and it has made our relationship better than it has ever been.

## *Vale Leonie Newman continued*

### **From Penny Cameron:**

Leonie told us how she wanted to be remembered in the email she sent in January, so I am going to write about her as a friend of many years standing.

Leonie was kind. To quote her bridesmaid Marita Ranclaud (who spoke about Leonie at Roseville after her funeral) "I also came to understand what a good person she was. She believed it was her duty to do her best and she always consciously tried to do her best ... She believed in kindness and she practised it."

This practice included visiting sick friends. She and Terry took several people under their collective wing. Indeed, Leonie was not meant to be alone, which is why we were very happy to see Terry come into her life and be with her right to its end. As Leonie wrote in her email "He has truly astounded me – and it has made our relationship better than it has ever been".

Leonie was fair minded. This meant we could talk about issues and have a civil discussion, at the end of which we had each been offered another viewpoint. To quote Marita again, "She made every effort to see both sides of any argument and to be even handed and fair." This even applied when we were at college, where dinner conversation was conducted with all the wisdom and decorum seventeen year olds are famous for.

Leonie was justly proud of her children, Samantha and Alex. As Jon Leicester said (when he spoke at Roseville after her funeral) "Things went well. The children grew up, did well, and began their own families." She permitted herself an extra expression of pride in her grandchildren.

And finally, Leonie had great courage. She had survived a serious disease and was prepared to fight it again, although she was well aware of her chances. We are all going to miss a wise and extraordinarily clever woman who lived as well as she knew how. I keep seeing things which would amuse her and reaching for my phone to share. Unfortunately that can never happen again. Farewell Leonie!



### **From Terry Newman — 16 February 2020:**

This email is to thank all you incredibly kind, sympathetic and understanding people for the way that you have treated Leonie's family, including myself, at this sad and difficult time for all of us whose path she crossed. .... Those who sent emails, letters, cards, regardless of whether they attended the simple, secular celebration of Leonie's extraordinary life and/or the wake or not. For those who attended the celebration of her life, I quote the celebrant chose just one word to describe Leonie. She was a remarkable woman! Long may we all remember her!

**Marita Ranclaud and Jonathan Leicester (referred to by Penny above) long standing friends of Leonie Gloria Day (Newman) spoke at the after-funeral function about their friend, and referred to much of great interest in her life. They have kindly each shared their eulogy with us and I can send you a copy if you contact me. Peggy Sanders**



## Ryde TAFE Degustation Dinner – 23 August 2019

On 23rd August, 14 members of the Society, plus guests Bruce and Alison Pollard enjoyed a degustation dinner at the Ambassador Restaurant at Ryde TAFE.

In recent years, dinner at the Ambassador has featured regularly on the Society's calendar. As usual the meal prepared by the Cordon Bleu class was of the highest standard and

was served in a very professional manner. To encourage the students and support them in their chosen career the Society added a modest \$5 to the cost of the dinner as a donation towards their entry in the World Skills Contest. Interestingly, a team from the Ryde TAFE had left a few days earlier to enter the Skills Contest in Russia.

**Jim Rolls**

### DEGUSTATION MENU

*Artisan Breads & Butter*

*7 Grain Vienna, Stoneground Wholemeal & White Crusty Rolls*

*Buffalo Mozzarella, Smoked Eggplant Crisp Tortilla*

**Pierro Semillon Sauvignon Blanc LTC Margaret River WA**

*Cured Hiramasa Kingfish, Spanner Crab Pickled Kohlrabi, Buttermilk Gel, Beetroot Nori*

**KT Peglidis Watervale Riesling SA**

*Ocean Trout Confit*

*Cauliflower Cream, Puffed Quinoa & Curry Oil*

*Sweet Corn & Basil Soup*

*Slow Roasted Beef Tenderloin*

*Caramelised Onion Puree, Shimiji Mushrooms & Asparagus*  
**Penley Estate Phoenix Cab. Sauvignon Coonawarra SA**

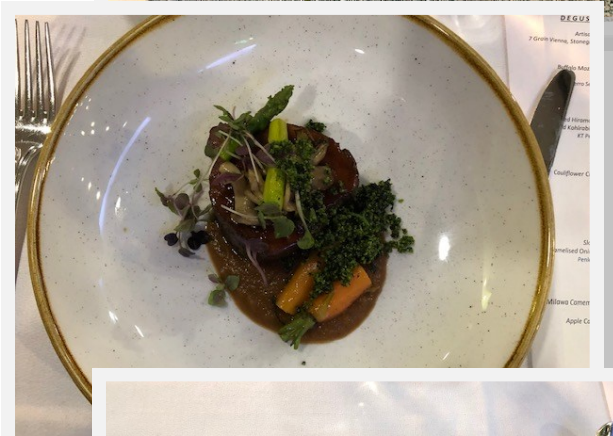
*Milawa Camembert Victoria, Pyengana Cheddar Tasmania, Fourm d'ambert France Apple Caviar, Roasted walnuts, Sesame Lavosh*

*Spiced Layer Cake Five Textures of Mandarin*

**Deen de Bortoli vat 5 Botrytis Semillon Riverina NSW**

*Mignardise*

*Dark Chocolate and Tonka Bean Mousse*



*Photos by Jim Rolls and Peggy Sanders*

## Spring Luncheon 22 September 2019



### Wine Report Spring Luncheon and Italian Tasting

*2016 San Vananzio Fortunato Prosecco Superiore* (Grape: Glera; Region: Veneto, NW Italy)

Crisp, clean and lean palate, with a slight residual sugar. Bottle fermented.

#### Antipasto

*2015 Santadi Vermentino Di Sardegna* (Grape: Vermentino, Region: SW Sardinia)

Aromatic, herbal notes with stonefruit evident on palate.

*2017 Pietradolce Etna Bianco* (Grape: Carricante; Region: Eastern Sicily, Etna)

Creamy, full fruit palate, evidence of malolactic fermentation. Good acid structure.



*2016 Lido 1932 Alto Adige*

*Sylvaner* (Grape: Sylvana; Region: Alto Adige, Italian Alps) White peach with crisp acid finish. Flavours quite neutral.

#### Prawn Ravioli with Prawn Bisque

*2017 Salvatore Molettieri Greco Di Tufo* (Grape: Greco di Tufo; Region: Campania (NE of Naples))

Lean and crisp, with minerals and salt on the palate. An alternative for a lean riesling. The grape is Greek in origin. Perfect match for oysters, but struggled with the prawn bisque.



*2017 Pieropan Soave Classico* (Grape: Garganega/Nebbiolo di Suave blend; Region: Veneto, NW Italy)

Good structure and balance with a good depth of ripe peach and honeydew on the palate. Chardonnay-like. Good wine.

#### Slow Roasted Lamb Shoulder

*2013 Piero di Benevelli Ravera di Montforte Barolo* (Grape: Nebbiolo; Region: Piedmont, NW Italy)

Mid-ruby colour. Firm tannins with a herbal, restrained fruit on the palate. A classic, textural wine that needs food and that improved in the glass.



*Photos by Carolyn Smalls, Trevor Gibson and Peggy Sanders*

## Spring Luncheon 22 September 2019 continued

**2016 Donnafugata Sherazade Nero D'Avola** (Grape: Nero D'Avola; Region: SW Sicily)

Lovely soft style of cherries and plums. Good palate depth that finished with medium acid. Excellent wine

**2017 Masso Antico Appassito Primitivo** (Grape: Primitivo; Region: Apulia)

Fruit driven, riper style of black fruits and some spices. The ripeness reflects the treatment of the grapes, which are partially dried on racks (appassito) prior to pressing. Good balance with acid and light tannin treatment.

**2014 Amaranta di Ulisse Montepulciano** (Grape: Montepulciano; Region: Abruzzo, mid-Adriatic coast)

Big, ripe, sweet fruit on the palate, with cherries and chocolate and a gripping vanillin tannin finish. A bit overwhelming.



### Flat White Tiramisu

**2009 Sensi Vin Santo Del Chianti** (Grape: Trebbiano/Malvasia blend; Region: Tuscany)

A ten year-old wine that showed deep gold in the glass.

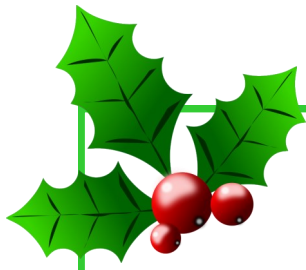
Palate of intense dried apricots with crisp acid to pick up the finish.

Grapes for these wines are rack-dried prior to pressing and exposed to oxidation during fermentation.



**Trevor Gibson**





## Christmas Lunch Reports Saturday 7 December 2019



*One Penny Red, 2 Moonbie Street, Summer Hill*

**Food Report - Christmas Lunch**

### **Charcuterie Board**

***Duck liver pate, Ruben's house made pistachio and orange mortadella, Pickles, percorino, toast.***

A lovely combination of ingredients, the duck pate with a rich flavor and creamy texture, complimented with the milder but beautiful orange flavoured mortadella. Caramelised onion was the perfect accompaniment, tying the ingredients together.



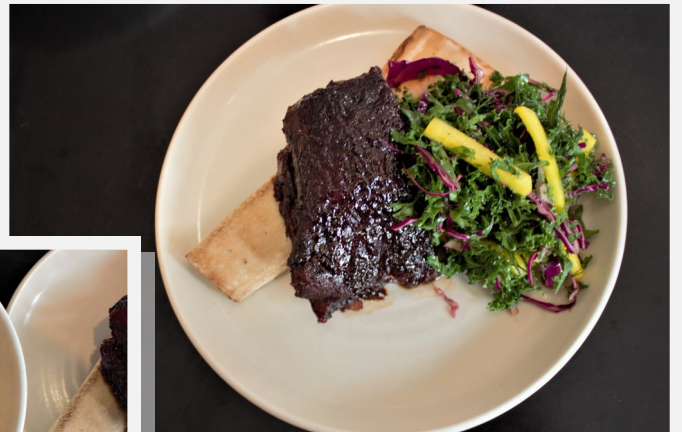
***Flash fried spencer gulf southern calamari, sumac, saffron mayo.***

Calamari dusted in tasty spices and accompanied by a rich, creamy mayo - just delicious.

***Plum and molasses beef short rib, cabbage, kale and kohlrabi. Crispy salt potatoes.***

I think this was the standout dish of the

meal. A wonderfully tender beef rib coated in sweet molasses – a mouthwatering delight. While cabbage, kale and kohlrabi might seem a bit confronting on paper; these ingredients were combined to produce a wonder salad rich in flavour and colour, with yellow kohlrabi and purple cabbage and deep green Kale – festive colours. A touch of dill and Italian parsley enhanced the flavor of the kale. Those fabulous crispy golden potatoes were to die for.



***Peach, amaretto and frangipane tart, almond ice cream***

I'm not sure why this delicious tart is called 'Frangipane' but it has been suggested that "the name Frangipane comes from a 16th century Italian Marquis called Muzio Frangipani". It had the beautiful richness of butter and almonds a lovely sweetness and the almond ice cream was a perfect accompaniment. ***Kerrie Sims, Food Scribe***

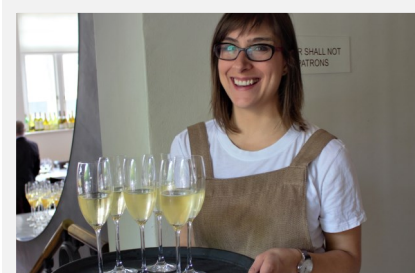


## Christmas Lunch Reports Saturday 7 December 2019

### Report on wines served at the MWFS Christmas Lunch December 2019

#### Wine Notes by Peter Bacon and Trevor Gibson

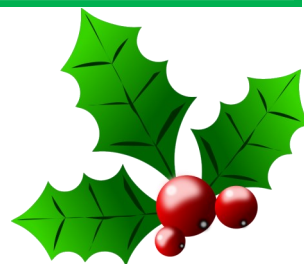
- NV Voirin Jumel Blanc de Blanc  
Light coloured sparkling wine, with a crisp lemon acid finish and lemon/peach on the back palate. Moderate bead. Low yeast flavours that develop in the glass. Refreshing.
- 2012 Tunkalilla Vineyard Riesling  
This was an off dry style. Beautiful aged Riesling colour, with an aged Riesling nose. The palate has surprising freshness, with palate length and dry finish, making this wine very suitable for oil rich foods.
- 2014 Albert Seltz Pinot Gris  
Golden hues and aromatics on the nose. A really interesting wine, slightly honeyed with a generous palate hinting of apricots, typical of Pinot Gris flavours. It complemented the food.
- 2014 Louis Michel et Fils Montee de Tonnerre  
This Chablis showed an interesting combination of generous white peach and dry minerality on the palate. Attractive acid and oak balance on the finish. Good colour and strong nose.
- 2013 McLeish Estate Reserve Shiraz  
A beautiful fruit driven Shiraz with soft and smooth berry flavours typical of Hunter valley Shiraz. Nicely aging nose and deep colours.
- 2013 Yalumba "The Signature" Cabernet Sauvignon  
Another great wine which is maturing well. Aged nose, very deep colours. Considerable fruit, with prominent tannins on the finish. Well balanced wine.
- 2013 Dr Loosen Riesling Beerenauslese  
A straw coloured wine. Great balance of restrained honeysuckle/summer fruit and delicate acidity, offering structure and balance.  
Excellent wine.



All Christmas Lunch  
Photos by Kerrie Sims

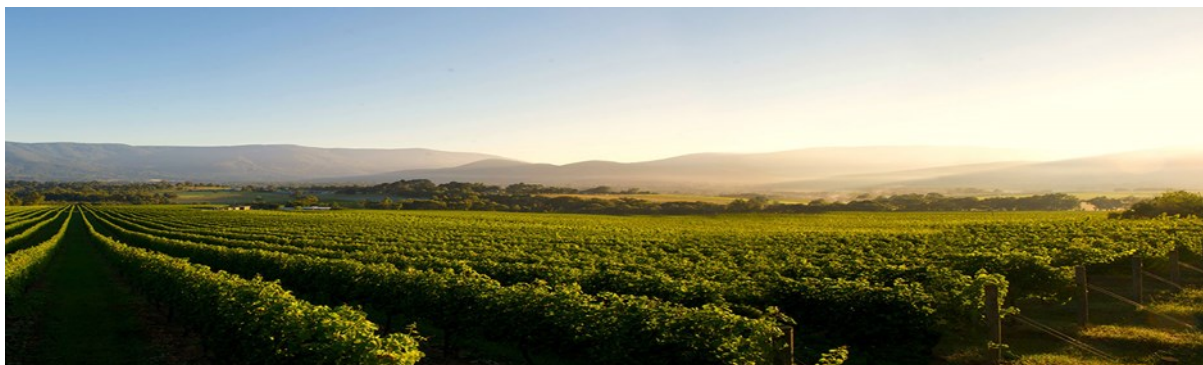


## *Christmas Lunch Pictorial: Saturday 7 December 2019*





## *Federation of Wine and Food Societies of Australia*



### **Federation Convention 2020 — ‘Autumn in the Yarra Valley’**

**Friday 24, Saturday 25 and Sunday 26 April, 2020**

*Late Autumn is perhaps the finest season in the Yarra Valley - vintage is just finished, the vines are changing colour, contrasting with green paddocks and blue mountain ranges.  
Local pears, apples, quinces, mushrooms and nuts are abundant.*

Hosted by the Ladies Wine and Food Society Melbourne, on behalf of the Federation of Wine and Food Societies of Australia, the Federation Convention Weekend 2020 will be held in the Yarra Valley, with accommodation at the RACV Healesville Country Club or in Healesville, just over an hour from Melbourne.

The programme includes dinner on Friday evening, winery tour on Saturday, a black tie dinner on Saturday evening, the FWFSAGM and a Sunday luncheon.



### **25th Victor Gibson Weekend 2021 ‘Autumn in the Goldfields’**

**Saturday 27 and Sunday 28 March, 2021**

Hosted by the Wine and Food Society of Ballarat, on behalf of the Federation of Wine and Food Societies of Australia, the 25<sup>th</sup> Victor Gibson Commemorative Dinner and Weekend 2021 will be held in Ballarat, with events hosted within in short walk or taxi from a variety of excellent accommodation.

***Expression of Interest will be available from April 2020.***

***Email: [fwfsa.inc@gmail.com](mailto:fwfsa.inc@gmail.com)***

***Website: <https://www.wineandfood.org.au/>***

***Members Log In: FWFSAmember Password: Member\$01***

***Peggy Sanders, Secretary FWFSa***

## *From the Editor – Welcoming a New Editor*

Over the life of the Metropolitan Wine and Food Society of Sydney, founded on 22 July 1977, there have been a number of versions of 'Newsletters' for members, and a number of editors.

David Flanagan presented a fine series of newsletters that had been very well received and were being missed when his commitments had become heavier and work took him away from Sydney.

Following the Annual General Meeting 2013 I took on the editorship of the *MWFSS Newsletter* in this format, and I have produced fifteen of varying lengths intermittently since then.

As Trevor Gibson wrote in his 'President's Report' in the first of these in August 2013 *"While these newsletters are intended to provide information on upcoming functions and Committee decisions, they are also intended as a more broad two-way communication vehicle. Members are encouraged to submit comments/photos on past functions and to contribute wine/food-related articles of interest to the members, wine tasting notes, recipes, restaurant recommendations and experiences, food and wine events. I look forward your active participation."*

We have from time to time had items of interest from members, in addition to publicising upcoming events, and publishing the 'Food Report' and 'Wine Report' for each of the Society functions which the Committee decided should appear as a record in the *MWFSS Newsletter* rather than the Society's *Annual Report* as they had done previously. I thank those who have contributed items to share, the presidents, the wine and the food scribes and the photographers — it's impossible to put together a newsletter without 'news'!

When I recommenced the *MWFSS Newsletter* I felt that an organisation's newsletter is a good way to keep those who don't get to all the functions or participate in all the activities informed, and most importantly remind them that they are part of a still lively functioning body. I also felt that a newsletter should also be a good way for any prospective members to get a feel for our Wine and Food Society through reading the recent newsletters as well. The newsletter is sent to all members by email, and is also published on the MWFSS website: <https://mwfss.com/home/news/>

I have decided that it's time for a change of editor and **I am delighted to let you know that Kerrie Sims has agreed to take on the editorship of the *MWFSS Newsletter*** commencing following this edition. I'm sure you will all agree that Kerrie will be bring a welcome fresh perspective to the Newsletter. So please support Kerrie with your contributions ([kerriesims24451@gmail.com](mailto:kerriesims24451@gmail.com)).

Thank you for all your support over these years.  
**Peggy Sanders**

## *Ian and Mary Arnold Memorial Fund*



Together we can beat  
childhood diseases

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***The MWFSS supports the  
Children's Medical Research  
Institute (CMRI) through the  
Ian and Mary Arnold Memorial Fund.***

*Member's Contribution*  
*David and Carole Yeomans*  
*Travel to the Cook Island June 2019*

David and Carole Yeomans travelled in June 2019 to the Cook Islands staying at the Nautilus Resort at Muri beach Rarotonga.

Dinner in the Nautilus Restaurant we enjoyed the flavours of their new menu.

Commencing with the entrée of Saffron Arancini balls infused with Saffron served with Coriander and eggplant rollups on a smoked tomato coulis and a sprinkle of cashews and Nam Jim



Palmerston Island Parrott Fish

Pan seared fillet of Parrott Fish served with grilled shaved fennel, slow roasted peppers and finished with a Pernod butter



Toffee flavoured icecream, sprinkled with toffee flakes and a chocolate lattice



IKI MATA  
Freshly sliced line fish marinated in lime and finished with coconut, red onion, capsicum and coriander and a dipping sauce

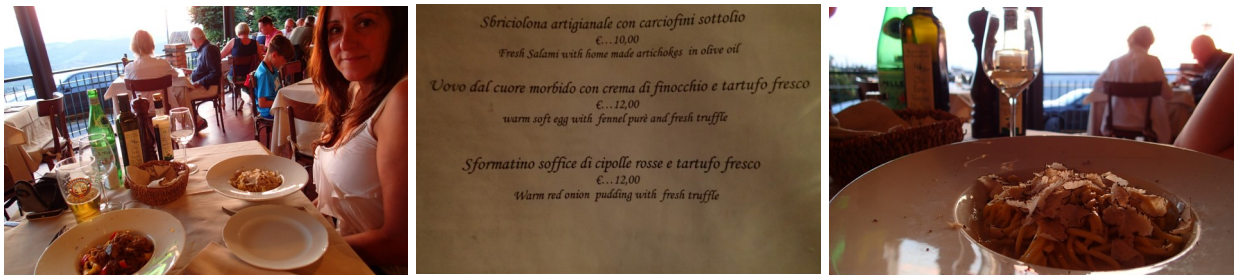


The wine was a 2016 Nautilus Pino Gris from the Marlborough district of New Zealand

## *Member's Contribution*

### *A Trifle Truffling by Christine and Graham Turner*

Mid 2019 saw the Turners meandering within the Mediterranean confines of central Italy and Greece. Two standout experiences during that time was an expose on truffles in Italy, and the discovery of little known wines in Nemea in central Peloponnese of Greece, possibly a later Newsletter report). The humble truffle endures a heated debate, not unlike the posturing emanating on the virtues, or otherwise, of coriander... some describe truffle as the epicurean golden nugget, while others ascribe its palate as, well, earthy, possibly bordering yellow podsolic to humic peat. Folks, as with coriander and oysters, seem to either detest it grossly or crave it with passion. For us, we openly admit to being trufflaholics and, central Italy was truffle heaven, specifically Tuscany and Umbria.



On the truffle trail, we started in Greve in Chianti, where the menu became problematical between choosing between truffle inspired dishes or the local specialty of wild boar. In Australia we had experienced truffle infused oil dishes or, at best, grated truffle. However, in Italy the minimum is shaved truffle.

We then stayed at a Medici castle, an experience in itself, and when the manager left us the keys while he absconded to town, Graham decided to concoct his own truffle degustation, washed down with a rare sparkling Mueller-Thurgau the first night, and a local chianti (sangiovese) the next. Mueller-Thurgau is a beautiful aromatic varietal rarely seen in Australia although it was popular for a brief time in Tasmania. We were the only ones staying in the castle so had the run of the place, well, besides whoever it was rattling and dragging chains in the dungeon through the night?



## *A Truffle Truffling by the Turners continued*

Tuscany and Chianti were just the entrée, however, as, having gained our stripes in the truffle regiment, we moved onto the more serious Umbria region..... cliff top towns, hidden cellar doors, ancient Roman ruins, monasteries and?..... truffles!! We find ourselves in Trevi, a magical cliff-top medieval town, perched with commanding 360 degree views over the surrounding vineyards, groves and orchards. These towns exude ambience, towers and turrets, tunnels and terrain, alcoves and alleyways, palisades and parapets, ...with a restaurant on each!

We find.. well, tripadvisor finds for us, .. a delightful trattoria on the main plaza, bespoke in sublime truffle dishes. Every dish bar one is laced in truffle.... If you don't like truffle, you are having the soup!



If stuck for a souvenir for the 'person who has everything', then you can't go past getting a truffle. The truffle in the photo attests to the analogy of truffle being the gold nugget of the fungi world... this huge specimen is for sale at a cool 300,000 Euro. Christine and Graham couldn't decide whether the term 'Tuscan Gold' refers to the truly delectable morsel that is the truffle, or the classic sunsets that presented on queue, when sipping sundowners on the patios of the numerous Tuscan villas that dot the countryside.



## *Member's Contribution*

### *Mallacoota New Year's Eve, a personal story – Val Gibson*

**Boxing Day 2019:** We arrived on Boxing Day later joined by Ron and Margaret and later Sam, so 7 adults and 6 dogs. Relaxed for a few days. Boating on the Lake, BBQ, swimming and each afternoon we took all the dogs to the beach, the dogs wore themselves out. Karen is amazing in the kitchen, great breakfasts and dinners and of course there is a wide selection alcohol.

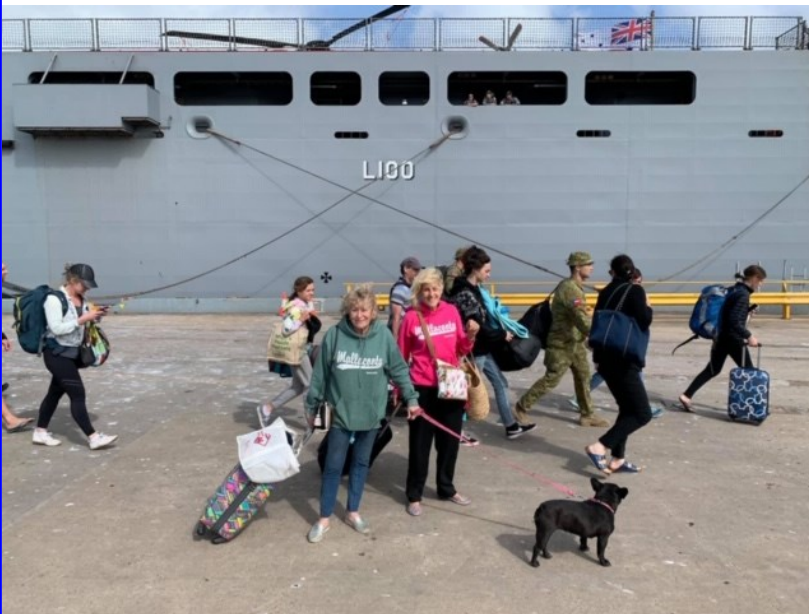
**30th December 2019:** The fires are burning around Victoria and we thought we were safe. Sam arrived and had no problems so we decided to stay. Not too much later we had to evacuate to the caravan park and boat launching area, an adventure.....NO Sleeping arrangements were made, in cars and in chairs, not ideal. The dogs slept like logs. Its now 10.15am the sky is bright red at the moment, weird, its dark like midnight on the other side of the grounds. I was covered in what seemed like wood chips and my face grimy, its hard to breathe and eyes watering. Not much fun at all. The time now is nearly noon, Andrew, Samantha and Tony have walked back to the house to put out spot fires!!!

Incredible. They managed to save a house in the cul de sac that was owned by a man fighting the fires. They're exhausted and shattered at the destruction. The Shoreline all around us is on fire with gas bottles exploding and houses burning to the ground, its quite cold with wind making matters worse, still no electricity and no phone coverage, a very scary and sad place to be.....we may be able to leave tonight and if so we will head for home.

Penrose where my sister Pat lives with her alpacas is also under threat and she hasn't yet been evacuated. The firemen have drilled holes everywhere and are using dam water to keep the property safe, fingers crossed. There are 3 houses gone in Karen and Tony's street. Karen and Tony have a house on the property at Penrose as well it would be horrific if they lost both.

**New Years Eve:** At last we are safe back at the house, opposite 2 houses have been totally destroyed, fire is so selective, happy to report the Koala and her baby are safe and so is another youngster who came down for a drink of water. We have now found out the roads are impassable and will be for a few weeks to come, the trees that are burned have to be cleared so now we have a new plan. They have sent a navy ship HMAS Choules to take us back to Western Port Bay near Melbourne.

**January 3rd:** We had to register yesterday (2nd January), dogs as well. However vulnerable people will be evacuated first, some will be taken by helicopter, so that's the next adventure, we are waiting for a call to see just when we might go!!! Well that didn't happen and fortunately we had gone into town just after 12 and I called in to the Community Centre to see when we might be called. Well the next drama, Andrew, Margaret and I had to go like mad things back to the house and be back within 30 minutes, OMG. Rushed back we were sort of packed, grabbed everything and the dogs and in 2 cars Tony and Karen drove us to the embarkation point, we were loaded on buses, dogs on seats and off to the wharf area. A great big troop carrier arrived from the HMAS Choules and after being sorted out by the Navy we were put on the boat in groups, about 40 of us plus dogs and the crew and we headed off to the ship, all standing or crouching, it was smooth, when we arrived they lowered the front end and we drove/sailed right into the Mother



## *Mallacoota New Year's Eve continued*

Ship. As we unloaded we had give our dogs into "Doggy Day Care" I must say they were reluctant but obedient. We took our bags upstairs to Deck 3, had to leave everything in the passageway and we went for a wander, nothing like a Celebrity Cruise, however they made us most welcome, we had tea and home made biscuits. We were told they would find a spot for us but I think we slipped through the cracks. We took the dogs for a walk around the lower, they were handling it all well, later gave them some dinner then we went to find some as well, not gourmet but it was better than the loaves and fishes!!!! Went on deck to watch the Chinook helicopter take some sick passengers to Melbourne 90 min flight, our War Ship will get us in about 4.30 tomorrow afternoon. As we were not able to get



a bed we came down to the cargo bay where we landed and were able to get a stretcher each and a blanket, no pillow surrounded by others all with their dogs also on their camp stretchers. The crew are amazing and friendly, handed ear plugs as it is very noisy down with barking dogs and machinery!! Just another Adventure. 8pm and goodnight will see what tomorrow brings.

**Saturday 4 January:** Morning has broken not to the sound of chirping birds but the cacophony of dogs barking in several keys, unfortunately some barked all night as their owners slept elsewhere, ours were snuggled on our lovely camp beds. Breakfast a bit chaotic but had a nice cup of tea and a vegemite sandwich then a walk up on the top deck and look at Bass Strait. I did a bit of retail therapy, bought us all HMAS Choules T shirts and a towel, now sitting with the puppies arrival time about 4pm. Actually close to 5.30, escorted off the boat, not easy but with lots of help, were loaded onto buses and taken to a large warehouse (Exhibition Centre) building where we were met and welcomed by the Mayor of Melbourne and she stayed around and was lovely. At the centre they had set up every kind of help we might need. We were unsure about the drive, the Hume highway was also closed so the decision was made that we all fly. We were booked into the Crown Plaza with our dogs — amazing, the help and advice we

received was overwhelming, the kindness of everyone we have met has brought tears to our eyes. The advice was to book flights with Virgin, the dog friendly Airline which we did and they are. The Crown made us more than welcome, beautiful King sized rooms for us and our dogs, fortunately there was a park opposite so the puppies wouldn't disgrace themselves and there was a little relapse but Andrew took care of that. The hotel only charged \$99 including dogs and breakfast. When we settled the dogs we went down for a DRINK and a light dinner, welcomed again and had a lovely experience when we tried to pay, there was no charge thanks to the chef who doubled our order and the supervisor. Got to bed late but everyone of us slept like the dead, met up for dog walking then breakfast and our last challenge to get our dogs on the same flight. A big van (taxi) took us to the airport, again welcomed with open arms, escorted down to where we had to take the dogs. The boys walked them to the cargo Pet service to get the dogs booked in again no charge, its amazing. Ron, Margaret and I are now on the plane with Zeph and Mille, Andrew is leaving with Lumi about 5pm. It's been a frightening experience one hopefully not repeated, but the help we have received from people in all walks of life has been incredible. The Hotel staff were wonderful, nothing was too much trouble, Airport and the people in the cargo section. At some stage when Australia stops burning, the cars have to be retrieved from Mallacoota, but that's another story! PS: not sure where the story of the ship not taking children under five, we had several under five, a couple of babies and pregnant ladies, as Mr Trump would say 'FALSE NEWS'. New Year 2020 will be remembered.



## *Member's Contribution*

### *Val Gibson from the fire to the snow*



Val at a German restaurant called Almresi, Colorado. Denniston had a schnitzel, Petra a salad, looked amazing and Val had a pork hock.



Extraordinarily expensive, the food was great and so was the company.



## *Val Gibson in the snow*

Brunch high on the mountain at Gwynn's High Alpine Restaurant, Aspen Snowmass

Eggs Benedict and bubbles.

The last visit as the Mountain Conglomerate won't renew the lease after 49 years.

