



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.*

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**Happy
Easter!**



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Metropolitan Wine and Food Society of Sydney Inc
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Website: <http://mwfss.com/> Facebook: Metropolitan Wine and Food Society of Sydney Inc.

Society Program Functions and Meetings

Dates for your Diary 2024

Date	Event
Friday 12 th April	Lunch at “Strangers Restaurant” NSW Parliament House
Sunday 19 th May	AGM at Kerrie Sims home at 11.30am
Saturday 6 th July	Dinner at Saveur Restaurant, Roseville
Sunday 15 th September	Spring Lunch at Jim Roll’s

Office Bearers and Committee 2023— 2024

President and FWFSa Councilor:

Carol Leaver

Vice President Wine Master: **Trevor Gibson**

Vice President Food Master: **Jim Rolls**

Secretary: **David Yeomans**

Treasurer: **Carole Yeomans**

Committee Member Wine: **David Cameron**

Committee Member Food: **Carolyn Smalls**

Wine Scribe: **Graham Turner**

Food Scribe: **Kerrie Sims**

Cellar Master: **Trevor Gibson**

Federation of Wine and Food Societies of
Australia Councilor: **Trevor Gibson**

A Note from the Editor

My apologies for the late arrival of this March 2024 newsletter. After arriving home from an enjoyable trip to the US and the Caribbean, I contracted my 1st bout of Covid whilst preparing my house for sale. Just a little busier than usual!

We have reports of a successful Victor Gibson event, held in Mildura and news of the event in 2025 to be held in Bendigo. Congratulations to Trevor Gibson, Peggy Sanders and Steve Liebeskind who were elected to serve on the 2024/2025 Committee.

The ‘Dates for the Diary’ indicate that we have an active year planned for the society, and I’m sure we are looking forward to these events.

Kerrie Sims



The Federation of Wine & Food Societies of Australia

Federation News

The FWFSA Annual General Meeting

FWFSA AGM: was held at 10am on Sunday 17 March 2024, Don's Room, Grand Hotel, Mildura, Victoria

The following were elected or appointed as Executive and Committee for 2024 - 2025:

President: Janet Barton (WFS Victoria)

Vice Presidents (3): Trevor Gibson (Metropolitan WFS of Sydney); Robert John (WFS Ararat); Paul McGinn (WFS Geelong)

Secretary: Peggy Sanders (Metropolitan WFS of Sydney)

Treasurer: Steve Liebeskind (WFS of NSW and Metropolitan WFS of Sydney)

Cellar Master: Drew Hewson (WFS Victoria and WFS Geelong)

Committee Members (3): Christine Gora (WFS Hobart); John Peirce (WFS Yarra Valley); Bret Sonnberger (WFS Ararat)

The Federation thanks Joanna More (WFS Hobart) for her service to the Federation and the Committee since 2014 and as President from 2016 to 2018 and Mike Staniland (WFS NSW) for his service as Treasurer since 2020.

FWFSA Weekends:

FWFSA Victor Gibson Weekend 2024 'Murray Magic in Mildura' was held 15, 16 and 17 March, hosted by the Ladies Wine and Food Society of Mildura.

See Trevor Gibson's report on the weekend.

FWFSA Convention 2025 - planning for the 2025 Convention in Bendigo is underway by the Sandhurst Wine and Food Society as the host. The Convention dates will be Friday 28 to Sunday 30 March 2025; and the host committee is also considering the possibility of pre and post tours. Please mark these dates in your diary now, and look out for the Save the Date notice when it is distributed and the Expression of Interest when that is available.

Secretary: Peggy Sanders

FWFSA
Convention 2025 Bendigo Victoria



FWFSA
Convention 2025

Bendigo, VIC

Sandhurst Wine & Food Society takes pleasure in hosting the Federation's 2025 Convention.

Explore Bendigo:
bit.ly/bendigo-tour



SCAN ME

Organising Committee:
swfs.bendigo@gmail.com

Regional Inspiration



GOLDFIELDS GRANDEUR

Visit Bendigo and experience a vibrant regional city jam-packed with creativity, great food, happening festivals and happy-as locals, all thriving in a heritage setting that stacks up to the grand European cities that inspired it.



WINE REGIONS

Bendigo and its two adjacent wine regions—Heathcote and Pyrenees—have become known for bold and rich styles of Shiraz, with distinctive 'Aussie bush' character. Further south, and more elevated, Macedon Ranges has been described as the most 'thoughtful' wine region in Australia—fully confident in the quality of its grapes and letting its wine speak for itself.



GASTRONOMY

Recently designated a UNESCO Creative City and Region of Gastronomy, Bendigo celebrates its diverse food culture, and its commitment to local, sustainable, delicious and creative produce.

The Federation of Wine & Food Societies of Australia

Convention 2024 Mildura

Report by Trevor Gibson

Three intrepid members of the Metropolitan arrived in Mildura on Friday 15 March with high expectations for an enjoyable Victor Gibson Weekend hosted by the Mildura Ladies WFS. The program promised the opportunity to discover the region's culinary and oenological offerings and to experience some of its unusual and emerging food-related industries. In a sense, the weekend had an historical aspect to it. Mildura hosted the first Victor Gibson Dinner the year after Victor's death.

I met up with Metro WFS members Peggy Sanders and Steve Liebeskind to join other registrants for a casual welcome gathering within the historic Mildura Grand Hotel. Local wines accompanied generous finger food while old friends caught up and new ones were made. The atmosphere was relaxed and welcoming, with clues on what directions the local wine industry is heading – more on that later. Don Carrazza, owner of the Grand, spoke briefly of his personal friendship with Victor Gibson.



Early the next day we met at the local farmers' market (second and fourth Saturday of every month I believe) before heading off by bus for a local tour. The markets were wonderful and really showcased the quality produce from this irrigated, highly productive agricultural region (the average annual rainfall is only marginally higher than that of a desert – hence the reliance upon irrigation from the Murray). Our group enjoyed excellent oral presentations and offerings of olive oils, table grapes, dried fruit, tomatoes, vinegars, nuts, to name a few. The growers enthusiastically spoke about their industry to a receptive audience.

The bus tour included visits to one of the groundwater salt interception facilities that has contributed to the region avoiding serious salinity-related impacts on agriculture, and to the resultant Murray River salt industry. The industry harvests and dries on evaporation ponds. sodium chloride and other salts for industry and direct human consumption. We drove through the salt evaporation ponds with commentary on the processes involved in evaporation, harvesting and purification of the salt (Quiz question: how you purify salt by washing for human consumption without dissolving and losing it in the process?).



The bus tour also included Orange World for refreshing juice, Trentham Estate on the picturesque banks of the Murray for a wine tasting, and a visit to an orchard of Chinese dates (or jujubes), which can be eaten as a fresh fruit (flavour profile and texture similar to nashi pear) or dried (similar to dried dates), a tiny industry that offers something a bit different and my first experience. We also observed grape-drying tables in use and the practise of drying wine grapes on the vine through a “cane-cut” practice to concentrate flavours. A feature of the afternoon was a quick visit to the Mildura Botanical Gardens, with my first direct experience of South Australia’s State Flower, Sturt’s Desert Pea. The afternoon finished with a forty-minute return to Mildura with a late light lunch on a leisurely Murray cruise. Some of the riverside real estate on the NSW side were very impressive. Victorian regulations do not allow housing estates next to the river. A very enjoyable day and a credit to the organisers.

That night was the premium, formal event of the weekend, the Victor Gibson Dinner, held at Stefano’s Café (chef Ryan Chaffeys) located within the Grand Hotel. First impressions of the room were awesome, with huge vases of foliage overhanging each table. With one disappointment involving advanced oxidation of the champagne sourced from the Federation cellar, but replaced with a champagne from Stefano’s cellar, the evening was an outstanding success. The highlight for me was the yabbie ravioli, bathed in a delicate champagne sauce and bejewelled with salmon caviar, though the other courses did not disappoint. We were challenged with the pairing of Murray Cod, known for its delicate flavours, with two Shiraz. My view was that the match could have been better, but I was happy to experience the bold selection.



The replacement champagne was delicate and a lovely entry to the evening. Wines with each course except for the dessert were paired as New World and Old World, a good approach to understand the difference between the two styles and how they match the food. The wines presented well on the night with one disappointment. The Tyrrell's Hunter Shiraz was not what I would expect from the great 2014 vintage and perhaps a Vat 9 would have been a better choice.

Wine journalist Jane Faulkner as the Victor Gibson Orator, presented spirited challenges to all on seeking out new wine experiences beyond the usual varieties, perhaps with a nod towards regional trends in winemaking in the Mildura region.

Following the AGM on Sunday morning, we herded into buses and headed off to Chalmer's Wines for lunch and wine tasting. Chalmer's is regarded as one of the more innovative wineries in the region and typifies the direction of the local industry towards Italian varieties that offer an alternative to the usual varieties that we know. These varieties suit the area and offer clean, flavoursome wines with short to medium term cellaring potential. Typical wines tasted over the weekend were prosecco, rose, white Italian varietals and medium body reds.

Chef Stefano (yes, that Stefano) prepared three enjoyable courses for the day that included yabbies on stacked potato salad and rotisserie cooked chicken and we were given the opportunity to taste the full range of Chalmer's wines. An excellent finish to the weekend.



The Mildura Ladies did not disappoint and should be congratulated on their considered and successful program for the weekend. Look for early information on the Federation Convention hosted by The Sandhurst WF Society in Bendigo late in March 2025.

While in Mildura, I took the opportunity to extend my stay for a day to visit Mungo National Park, about 90 minutes' drive. What a fascinating landscape, with a rich indigenous peoples' history (site of the discovery of Mungo Man and Mungo Woman some years ago, which reset the timeframe for human habitation in Australia). The area had been inhabited for tens of thousands of years before the lake dried up and transformed to its present dry state. Well worth the experience. The unsealed roads into the park can be tricky after rain, and consequently are closed at times.



Restaurant recommendations, from my recent travels: Thai-riffic, Mildura, Pastorale, Wagga Wagga.

Trevor Gibson

MWFSS Functions Picnic at Elkington Park Balmain January 2024

The annual late afternoon picnic in the rotunda at Elkington Park at Balmain is a welcome and relaxing regathering of the MWFSS members after the hectic Christmas and New Year period.

This year it was well attended and when I arrived members had already set up picnic tables and comfortable chairs; and were busily undertaking last minute preparations to their picnic platters. It is a BYO occasion and as such a wide variety of wines and food platters are brought along and shared. There is a convivial atmosphere, with chatter and laughter emanating from the rotunda into the beautiful shady park.

As usual, without any form of organisation or collaboration, a splendid spread of food was produced by the many talented members of the society



MWFSS Functions Picnic at Elkington Park Balmain



Our relaxing afternoon was interrupted by a few canines who were excited to join our picnic; and the West Highland Terriers, once again took their Sunday stroll through the park. A strong breeze blew in later in the afternoon, so we hastily packed up the leftovers and made our ways home.

**MWFSS Functions
Soya Café Restaurant & Bar,
374 Darling St Balmain
28th February 2024**

Named after the humble soy bean, a quintessential ingredient in Asian cuisine; Soya is Sydney's new Asian fusion street brunch and dinner destination.

Offering a refined, modern Asian dining experience, Soya serves a unique fusion of street brunch and contemporary Asian fare, and this is what makes Soya an exciting culinary destination.

CO-owner and Head Chef Tor, who has a host of experience working in some of Sydney's most celebrated restaurants, such as Blue Ginger, serves his food with passion, featuring the signature Soya sauce.

Soya has an extensive menu including 'Soya Bites, Spring Roll and Rice Paper roll, medium and larger options (which include Meat and Seafood) and Vegetables and Sides. It offers online ordering and takeaway services. We chose, a Soya Tasting Menu at \$65 per person



PEKING DUCK PANCAKE W/HOUSE
MADE HOI SIN SAUCE

STEAMED DUMPLING OF PRAWN WITH
SHIITAKE
MUSHROOM & WATER CHESTNUTS
(SOYA SIGNATURE)



FRIED EGGPLANT STUFFED WITH PRAWN
& PORK
SERVED WITH BLACK VINEGAR, GARLIC &
SOY SAUCE
(SOYA SIGNATURE)

SALT & PEPPER SQUID W/TOM YUM
AIOLI (GF)
(SOYA SIGNATURE)



Soya Café Restaurant & Bar, Balmain



FRIED SALMON SALAD W/ GREEN PAPAYA,
VIETNAMESE MINT, FRIED GARLIC &
CASHEW NUTS (GF)

SHAKING ANGUS BEEF FILLET W/ GARLIC,
ONION
BLACK PEPPER SAUCE, ICEBERG LETTUCE
SALAD
(SOYA SIGNATURE)



STEAMED WILD BARRAMUNDI FILLETS W/
GINGER, SOY SAUCE & STEAMED WOMBOK
(GFO) (SOYA SIGNATURE)

WOK-TOSSED WATER SPINACH W/ OYSTER
SAUCE,
SOYBEAN (GFO)



BLACK STICKY RICE PUDDING W/ GROUND PEANUT,
COCONUT SAUCE SERVED WITH COCONUT ICE CREAM



Soya Café Restaurant & Bar, Balmain

Wine Report

By Graham Turner

2022 Tattoni La Tordera Rive di Vidore Prosecco



Immediately on the palate there was some inferred residual sweetness although the bottle is labelled dry. General comment that possibly needed more acid. The wine hails from Valdobbiadene, a region to the north of Venice. It is the home of Prosecco and has its own “appellation” accreditation via the Italian DOCG classification. The wine presented as lean and gently lemony, with hints of white flower. Some slight woft of balsamic, so characteristic of true Italian prosecco. The effervescence was quite bubbly for a prosecco and in contrast to many Australian Prosecco which can lack backbone and fizz retention. Several observations were made of the long persistence of bead ‘perlage’ in the glass against the pale straw background. Overall quite pleasant and a great lunch aperitif.

Trivia Tidbit: Prosecco has its own ‘appellation’ or regional integrity (protected designation of origin), declaring global acknowledgement in 2010 (or within Europe at least) similar to Champagne in France. The production method is dry

Charmat style (secondary fermentation is in stainless steel tank unlike in bottle for champagne) and like other ‘appellation’ there is permitted up to 15% addition of varietals outside the mandatory grape variety of Glera for true Prosecco. In our Tattoni there is some Perera juice (common varietal added) together with the dominant Glera.

2019 Albert Seltz Reserve Pinot Gris

Perhaps the most popular wine of the day, especially perfectly paired with the sweeter (Hoisin) duck pancake and dumplings. The French style pinot gris differs from its Italian-style twin, pinot grigio, in being, somewhat counter-intuitively for the French, fruitier with some residual sugar. This style is well suited to spicier Asian cuisines, just like its regional (Alsace) white partner, Gewurztraminer. Typical honey nose, possibly nutmeg or spice? No oak and, as under cork, there was some bottle variation suspected, based on varied table comments. Some table comments mentioned salt and smoke but were inconclusive.

2017 Domaine Road The Water Race Reserve Riesling

This Kiwi wine (Central Otago) proved to be a little bit of a sleeper. Initial views were mixed with regard to upfront tasting. Some detected a subtle early kerosene nose, reminiscent of Australian Rieslings, but all agreed this had dissipated with time in the glass. A prevalence of green acid was noted (pH 2.88; residual sugar 5.5g/L). Indeed, there were many comments about improvements in the glass. However, the greatest accolades came for the pairing with the eggplant dish. The Riesling evolved a drier palate which partnered the vinegar & soy food.



Full stone fruit tastes and no oak lent itself well to the Asian richness. Some mentions of apple and flintiness, but not universal. Overall, a surprise package from a region that exploded onto the wine maps with their Pinot Noir.

2018 Caves D'Esclans Whispering Angel Rose (under cork)

A representative Cotes de Provence rose, with a dominance of Grenache but also dashes of Cinsault, Vermentino (Rolle), Syrah and Tibouren, as is common in these regional blends. A subdued translucent salmon hue, raspberry was immediately presented on the nose. There were some initial hesitations, similar to the Riesling, but again the pairing with the fish was superb and the flavour was elicited in companion with the Asian fare. Peach and nectarine dominated responses, while a few detected nuances of almond and unidentified spice. Overall, an excellent choice for a summer lunch or as a 'terrace' rose.

2018 Lethbridge Wines Between Five Bells Pinot Noir

A rich bright red colour that heralded a soft Pinot Noir from this Victorian Strathbogie Ranges winemaker. Selecting an appropriate red for spicy Asian fusion cuisine was always going to be challenging. Our Wine Master conceded that this wine gave him the most consternation for the lunch. All agreed the wine itself was outstanding but how it married with the main courses was the subject of conjecture. This wine certainly proved the most divisive of the range and prompted lingering discourse amongst members. Where consensus was reached was that the wine paired the best with the beef in pepper sauce. Certainly, the cherry and plum richness in the wine promoted synergies with the dish's rich sauce. A silky mouth feel also lent itself to complimenting both the pepper beef and the oyster sauce spinach plates. The light tannins permitted the food flavours to show through. Overall, an excellent choice with the beef, as it stimulated a diversity of reactions amongst members and reminded us that wine appreciation is a personal preference and the cosmopolitan viewpoints keep the Society a treasured forum for healthy food and wine debate.

Trivia Tidbit: *'Between Two Bells' are the last words in the first stanza of Kenneth Slessor's famous poem, Five Bells. The poem is understood to tell the tale of the death of Joe Lynch, a friend of the poets, and is set around Sydney Harbour. A beautiful lyrical poem that is open to mixed interpretations... very much like this wine it seems.*

2018 Bastor-Lamontagne Les Ramparts (under cork)

A French Bordeaux sauterne blended from Semillon, Muscadelle and Sauvignon Blanc. Smoother and lighter than, say, the Australian Botrytis dessert wines, this sauterne gave away the typical honey and orange clues on both nose and palate. Perfect with the rice, coconut and peanut dessert, as neither the wine nor food were overtly sweet. The wine had a freshness about it that hints at an emerging new take on more traditional

heavier French sauterne. Overall, general comments reinforced that the wine had a delicious lightness and vitality that harmoniously teamed well with the relatively subdued sweetness of the Asian dessert.



Member's Contribution

Prosecco Country and 'The Inn without the Innkeeper'

By Dan and Nadia Pegolo

Prosecco is now the most popular sparkling wine in the world. And we have enjoyed some at our recent dine outs. So let us explore and share some experiences.

The ancient Glera grape used to make Prosecco, is believed to have originated in the Istrian area of northern Croatia, just a short distance from the Italian City of Trieste, and is where you also find a town called "Prosecco" hence the "sneaky" reason to push the exclusive use of the name by the Italians and Europeans as part of trade deals.

Today, the Italian Prosecco is a DOC (Denominazione di Origine Controllata or Controlled Designation of Origin) white wine produced in a large area spanning nine provinces of Italy North East, mostly of Veneto and Friuli Venezia Giulia regions. It is most commonly associated with an area north of Treviso, 50 plus kilometres north of Venice. And the most famous is the DOCG (Controlled and Guaranteed Denomination of Origin) from the Conegliano Valdobbiadine area, which was also declared UNESCO World Heritage Site in 2019 in recognition of the landscapes steeped in centuries of viticulture and share cropping, and what a site.



One also travels the Strada di Prosecco (not to be confused with the Prosecco Road of the King Valley) And one must have the Prosecco Superiore, which is guaranteed with a strict winemaking process and strict set of rules, including hand picked grapes from 15 communes in the region, and is made with the Charmat Method, of refermenting in large tanks rather than bottles to produce the silky bubbles.

Prosecco Country and 'The Inn without the Innkeeper'

Amidst the hills, one discovers the "Inn without the Innkeeper" All welcomed with three bottles of Cartizze (the Apex of Prosecco making from tiny vineyards within 107 Hectares of land near Valdobbiadine) with six glasses next to them, and a note " Bottle value of 10 Euros , serve yourself and enjoy the tasting " . And a piggy bank to leave the money and no one checking. Hence the " Osteria senz'Oste or Inn without the Innkeeper. One way to get around not paying taxes. Today still no waiters or staff, you can enjoy the local Proseccos and cheeses, cold cuts, pickles and of course " pan de vin " . Check it out.

And today visitors come from all parts of the world to enjoy the views and the offerings, and honour the experiences by leaving monies, and your memories. And here we are with our youngest son and family.

