



Celebrating cabernet

Cabernet Sauvignon lovers will find it hard to resist the pull of corks and festivity at this year's Coonawarra Cabernet Celebrations.

The celebrations present all the anticipation and complexity of one of Australia's favourite wines when the region salutes the varietal that has made Coonawarra a name of global repute.

The Coonawarra Cabernet Celebration, to be held on October 17 – 19 this year, has grown into a world-class wine event where like-minded individuals can get together to taste and toast both old and new vintages, discover its renowned characters and find the perfect food match.

Coonawarra is a cool climate region on the Limestone Coast in the south east of South Australia that, after Bordeaux in France, is one of the oldest Cabernet Sauvignon producing regions in the world. The region's highly-prized terra rossa soil and long growing season, marked by sunny, dry days and cool evenings, provides the ideal growing environment for producing the intense characteristics for which the variety is famous.

Cabernet Sauvignon is typically a rich red wine with layers of ripe berries, currants and vanilla oak, but regional, seasonal and winemaking influences all have a profound influence on the flavour, aroma and texture of individual wines.

This year's rousing Coonawarra Cabernet Celebration program promises opportunities to learn about or further acquaint yourself with the diversity of the variety with a full weekend of entertaining events.

This year the Coonawarra Cabernet Celebration is anchored by four major events with many cellar doors teaming up with musicians and chefs to provide ongoing entertainment over the weekend.

The inaugural Retrospective Barrel Series Tasting at Zema Estate, held on Friday, October 17, from 4 – 6pm, provides participants with the opportunity to taste and compare exclusive Barrel Series wines from the 1996 and 1998 vintages to appreciate how well Coonawarra wines cellar.

The Coonawarra Cabernet Master Class at Wynns Coonawarra Estate, from 10am-12pm on the Saturday, is titled 'The Best of Both Worlds' and celebrates the sensational 2005 Cabernet vintages from Coonawarra and Bordeaux. Limited to 50 participants only, you will taste six each of the best 2005 Cabernets from Bordeaux and Coonawarra alongside wine aficionados Michael Schuster, Sue Bell and Greg Tilbrook.

On Saturday afternoon, from 2 – 3pm, The Poplars winery is hosting a discussion on the 'Different Faces of Coonawarra Cabernet Sauvignon'. French winemaker Sandrine Gimon (Rymill Coonawarra) and Australian Paul Kernich (Stonehaven), joined by Michael Schuster (Winewise, UK), will guide an interactive and informal tasting and discussion on the qualities of Coonawarra Cabernet Sauvignon that is ideal for newcomers to the varietal.

Paul Kernich says winemaker choices and seasonal variations mean there is a broad spectrum of flavour profiles in the Coonawarra cab savs.

"Winemaking influences such as skin contact, maceration regime and temperature of ferment all can have a profound influence on the extract, texture and aroma profile of Cabernet Sauvignon wines," he says.

"The type of oak matched with the fruit adds complexity, different flavours and textural properties to the wine, and there are myriad of choices for the winemaker in this regard. Length of maturation and age of oak provide further permutations.

"The vintage conditions stamp their influence on every wine, putting the ceiling on the quality potential and often supplying the vines with a common character. For example warmer vintages produce wines with less acid and riper flavours and tannins, compared to cooler vintages with more spice and acid minerality. Spikes in hot weather and rain events can also make their mark on the vintage."

The celebration will culminate in the famous Coonawarra Cabernet Sparkling Brunch and Barrel Series Auction, to be held on Sunday from 10.30am to 3.30pm at DiGiorgio Family Wines. As the Barrel Series 12 Auction has been deferred until 2009, in its place is a 'Uniquely Coonawarra Auction' with exclusive items going under the hammer as well as a silent auction throughout the day as you enjoy the live music and local cuisine.

For more information about these events and others held over the Coonawarra Cabernet Celebration weekend phone the Coonawarra Visitor Information Centre on 08 8737 2855 or visit www.coonawarra.org

Coonawarra

Coonawarra is renowned as one of Australia's finest wine regions, world-famous for fantastic red wines, particularly Cabernet Sauvignon. Its secret lies in a magical marriage of rich red terra rossa soil, limestone, pure underground water and a long cool ripening season for the grapes.

These outstanding wines are the product of the artistic skill of Coonawarra winemakers. Year after year accolades of excellence are awarded to Coonawarra wines acknowledging their character, elegance, strength, colour and richness of flavour.



COONAWARRA

Australia's *Other* Red Centre