

SPECTATOR Business

Website: www.spectator.co.uk

Date: 13/03/09

The Songlines Estate - where Old World tradition meets New World personality

The respected wine critic Steven Spurrier christened the Songlines Estate the 'Latour of Australia' - and, in spite of its youth, the estate has already produced wines of international acclaim.

The respected wine critic Steven Spurrier christened the Songlines Estate the 'Latour of Australia' - and, in spite of its youth, the estate has already produced wines of international acclaim. The partners are all wine men: Martin Krajewski owns Château de Sours in Bordeaux, David Fatches honed his winemaking craft at the Wyndham Estate in Hunter Valley and John Duval was the chief winemaker at Penfolds from 1986 (working with Max Schubert making the legendary Penfolds Grange, as Will Lyons mentions in his column).

Songlines takes its name from the ancient pathways which traverse Australia, carrying in their tracks the history and stories of this extraordinary country. It's also a very appropriate name to mirror the winemaking history of the partners, whose experience crosses the Australian winemaking regions and indeed the world. Their vision for the Songlines Estate is to create a range of wines from quality grapes, imbued with terroir characteristics - from McLaren Vale for their Shiraz and the cooler Hunter Valley for their whites. The combination of respect for the winemaking traditions of the Old World, established over many centuries, together with a desire to harness all the vibrant and expressive characteristics of the best fruit in the New World, makes these wines some of the most characterful and exciting in Australia today. For the March Wine Club, we are delighted to be offering Spectator Business readers a selection of their latest vintage releases, available for the first time in the UK.

The fruit for the first wine, (1) Bylines Chardonnay, Hunter Valley 2008 at £17.95 per bottle (or £15.26*), is separated and vinified using three different techniques, the result of which is a fine, textured wine, with flavours of peach and yellow plum, notes of tropical fruit and layers of citrus acidity. This is drinking now but will continue to be delicious until 2012.

Their second white, (2) Bylines Semillon, Hunter Valley 2008 at £17.95 per bottle (or £15.26*), has restrained, honeyed green fruits on the nose and grassy, green citrus fruit on the palate - it's light and supple, very subtle and stylish. Decant before drinking whilst it is still young to fully appreciate everything that is going on in the glass!

The trio of reds start with (3) Leylines Shiraz, McLaren Vale 2004 at £12.40 (or £10.54*). The fruit for Leylines comes from blocks of old vines, between 40 and 100 years of age, situated next to the top-of-the-range Songlines vineyards and is handled in such a way as to soften the fruit and make it easier to drink when young. Principally Shiraz with some Cabernet Sauvignon seasoning, it is classic McLaren Vale, with hints of plum and vanilla overlaid with spice and mulberry, soft yet present tannins and a lovely broad finish.

Wine critic Simon Woods writes: 'This, their entry-level wine, is packed with spicy blueberry and blackberry fruit, while the chocolate-coated finish is velvety smooth.'

(4) Bylines Shiraz, McLaren Vale 2007 at £23.50 per bottle (or £19.95*) has a deep, dense colour, with a richly spiced nose of red fruits and some grilled notes. It is intense on the palate; spicy, mocha, with amazing concentration and a light bite of tannin and acidity to balance it, leading to a lingering finish. It is just starting to drink but will continue to develop.

Finally, the (5) Songlines Shiraz, McLaren Vale 2005 at £49.00 per bottle (or £41.65*) is a dense, opaque, black-red colour. Incredibly tight on the nose, giving little away in its youth, with some red berry fruit in the distance, it has tarry, stinky black fruits on the palate. It is very intense with a fine tannic structure, and again a spiced, mocha note going to a gorgeous, long finish. Drinking now, if you decant it, but it will improve over the next decade. Given 17+ out of 20 on Jancis Robinson's Purple Pages, it is described as: 'Complex herbal, black fruit and leathery aromas, with a sweet note of vanilla and liquorice. Very rich and dense with rounded deep-pile tannins that still have just enough grip to embrace the fruit. Already quite meaty, though there is some pure dark fruit in there too, and spice. More spice and coffee from the oak. Finishes long and spicy.'

To place your order for the Spectator Business March 2009 Wine Offer
Telephone: 01353 721 608 • Fax: 01353 724 074 • Email: spectator@privatecellar.co.uk
Address: Private Cellar Ltd, 51 High Street, Wicken, Ely, Cambridgeshire CB7 5XR

1. Bylines Chardonnay, Hunter Valley 2008 £215.40 per case of 12 bottles inc (or £183.12*)
2. Bylines Semillon, Hunter Valley 2008 £215.40 per case of 12 bottles inc (or £183.12*)
3. Leylines Shiraz, McLaren Vale 2004 £148.80 per case of 12 bottles inc (or £126.48*)
4. Bylines Shiraz, McLaren Vale 2007 £282.00 per case of 12 bottles inc (or £239.40*)
5. Songlines Shiraz, McLaren Vale 2005 £588.00 per case of 12 bottles inc (or £499.80*)

*15% off all orders of 2 cases (24 bottles) or more, mixed as you wish and FREE delivery in England and Wales (delivery is £14.50 on orders of less than 24 bottles. We will quote on an individual basis for all deliveries to Scotland). The new vintage releases are in shipment from Australia. Delivery will be made in April 2009.

Prices include VAT. Payment should be made either by cheque with the order, payable to Private Cellar Ltd, or by debit or credit card, details of which may be telephoned or faxed. This offer, which is subject to availability, closes on Tuesday 31 March, 2009. To find out more about any of these wines, the Private Cellar en primeur offers or Fine Wine List, packed with the world's most exciting and sought-after wines, please call Amanda Skinner, James Naylor or Andrew Gordon at Private Cellar on 01353 721 608 for advice and assistance.

www.privatecellar.co.uk