



March 12 & 13, 2005

Washington Convention Center

Guest Speaker: Michele Anderson
'What's Hot In Australian Wine'

What did Michele think was hot? The cool climate wines from the more southerly regions of Australia. These wines are only just finding their way to the United States and they offer a significant departure from the Australian stereotype. Unwooded white wines are also hot at the moment because consumers have had bad experiences with overly oaked whites from both Australian and California. She also thought that the time was right to start adventuring beyond shiraz to some of the grape varieties that offer something distinct in Australia, such as semillon and muscat. There was also some discussion about screwcaps being hot, which she agreed with. In Australia right now, at least 50% of wine is now bottled under screwcap and this includes red wines too.

And What's Not So Hot? What Michele calls the *Underbelly of the Australian Wine Industry...* which is the speculative sea of bulk wine brands that are made solely for export to the U.S. market. The unfortunate thing is that Americans assume this is what we drink back in Australia when in fact we don't even know about these wines. And if we did, we certainly wouldn't drink them! Americans are flabbergasted when they discover that half the Australian wines on supermarket shelves are taken up by these bulk brands with animals all over the labels that don't even exist in Australia. The other thing nobody wants to know is that these cheap export-only wines are usually made from bulk grapes that come from high yielding irrigated sites in Australia's semi-desert areas where the grapes ripen so quickly that there is not enough time for any complexity to develop ... just over-ripe fruit. This ripe fruit is then 'enhanced' by stirring in some oak shavings and adding sugar.

The Audience Asked About Organic Wines...Are They Hot? Michele thought not.... She has found some terrific wines from all over the world that are made with grapes that are grown organically, but she is yet to find a wine that is made organically that isn't flabby. This is because sulfur dioxide is an important tool across many steps in the winemaking process as it helps to retain freshness as it stops the grapes and wine from oxidizing.