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Merlot and its Blends

Monday, November 10, 6:30 pm

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The Faculty Club, University of Toronto

Merlot is a dark blue-coloured wine grape variety that is used as both a blending grape and for varietal wines. The name *merlot* is thought to be a diminutive of *merle*, the French name for the blackbird, probably a reference to the color of the grape. Its softness and "fleshiness", combined with its earlier ripening, makes merlot a popular grape for blending with the sterner, later-ripening cabernet sauvignon, which tends to be higher in tannin.

Along with cabernet sauvignon, cabernet franc, malbec and petit verdot, merlot is one of the primary grapes used in Bordeaux wine, and it is the most widely planted grape in the Bordeaux wine regions. Merlot is also one of the most popular red wine varieties in many markets. This flexibility has helped to make it one of the world's most planted grape varieties. As of 2004, merlot was estimated to be the third most grown variety at 260,000 hectares (640,000 acres) globally, with an increasing trend. This puts merlot just behind cabernet sauvignon's 262,000 hectares (650,000 acres). In South Africa, plantings of merlot have focused on cooler sites in the Stellenbosch region.

While merlot is made across the globe, there tends to be two main styles. The "International style" favored by many New World wine regions tends to emphasize late harvesting to gain physiological ripeness and produce inky, purple colored wines that are full in body with high alcohol and lush, velvety tannins with intense, plum and blackberry fruit. While this international style is practiced by many Bordeaux wine producers, the traditional "Bordeaux style" of merlot involves harvesting merlot earlier to maintain acidity and producing more medium-bodied wines with moderate alcohol levels that have fresh, red fruit flavors (raspberries, strawberries) and potentially leafy, vegetal notes.

Cellar master **Jon Whitteker** has gathered selections for our unique November tasting event. Come and test your taste buds. As usual, we will feature an appetizing tasting plate.

Where: University of Toronto Faculty Club, 41 Willcocks Street, Toronto, ON M5S 1C7
The Spadina streetcar stops at the corner of Willcocks and Spadina. Paid parking is available on the streets or in the underground parking garage of The Bahen Building, entrance located on Huron St., just north of College St.

When: 6:30 pm arrival, Monday, November 10.

Price: **\$60** members **\$70** non-members.
Non-members who join the club at the event will receive a credit of \$10.

Closing date: Your booking or cancellation must be **received** by **Monday, November 3**. If registering/paying by mail, please phone or email to let us know to expect your letter and to confirm your booking.

Your cheque payable to **South African Wine Society** or **Visa credit card** information will reserve your place at the event. If we have your credit card information on file, you may book by e-mail (without the form) to sawsinfo@rogers.com

* Visa charges will appear as Pushka Holdings.

The Wines

Note: As a courtesy to other members, please refrain from wearing any scented products, including perfumes, colognes, after shaves or hand lotions. These products interfere with enjoyment of the wines.

Bergwater Prince Albert Valley Merlot 2005 Great Karoo

Rich colour with intense Cherries and Plums on the nose. Smooth elegant fruit flavours with a hint of oak and a well-balanced ending.

Franschhoek Merlot 2004 Franschhoek

Very ripe & sweet blueberry fruit with a touch wildness about the nose; ripe balanced tannins.

Hartenberg Merlot 1997 Stellenbosch

Firmly built but fruitful wine; high-toned, savoury with chocolate whiffs, ripe damson palate and good follow through; succulent tannins.

Hartenberg Merlot 2004 Stellenbosch

Made in a sleek style .. classy, ripe, complex, roasted spice, whiffs of prosciutto, violets on a dark plum base; elegant, silky texture & ultra-long finish.

Kloovenberg Merlot 2006 Swartland

Dark-fruit richness with red berry lift.; shows good vinosity and surprising restraint.

Spice Route Merlot 2000 Swartland

Full-bodied, firmly structured; reflects Swartland warmth, generosity; distinctive fresh-red-earth nuances with brilliant ripe-ruby hues and spicy red-plum fragrance.

Steenberg Merlot 2003 Constantia

Soft red-berried, minty elegance with excellent concentration; cool, creamy with lovely back-palate richness; telling mineral thread.

Eagles Nest Verreux 2009 Constantia

Merlot-led Bordeaux blend from younger vineyards ... has lush berries, chocolate tone, curvaceous lines; complex & involving.

Event Registration

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When registering by mail, please confirm your registration by email or phone call.

Mail to:

SAWS

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WILLOWDALE ON M2M 4J0

Enclosed find our cheque payable to *South African Wine Society* or **Visa* credit card** information for:

_____ member(s) @ \$60 _____ non-member(s) @ \$70 = \$ _____

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Name(s) _____

Guest(s) _____

Phone _____

E-mail address _____

For future events, you will be able to book by e-mail if paying by credit card.

Visa Card Number _____ Expiry ____ / ____

Name on card _____

We will make every effort to accommodate your food allergies or special dietary needs if you let us know in advance.

WAIVER, RELEASE AND INDEMNITY

By attending a SAWS Event, you agree to the following WAIVER, Release and Indemnity.

The South African Wine Society will take pictures at events and post some on our web site, or use them in other Society promotional material. I consent to such use for my guests and myself.

Participation in any South African Wine Society (SAWS) event acknowledges that I, for myself, my heirs or assigns, and my guests for whom I accept complete responsibility, hereby release and forever discharge and indemnify The South African Wine Society, its executive, all members and their guests, from any and all damages, claims and actions relating to SAWS activities, at society functions or on society venue grounds. I also certify that I, and any guests that I bring to events, are 19 years of age or older.