

July 24 2010 Wine

Happy hour has kept the drinks trade going in the last six months. The January sale of wines at half price in numerous bars has extended ever since, and certainly the tills of wine bars are ringing well. £7.50 for a bottle of decent Montgras Rose in Babble on Berkeley Square can't be bad. There are similar deals throughout Soho and Theatreland from 5 to 8 pm. So if having a summer trip to the metropolis do check out these places.

Where ever you go modern pub chains present a wine list with names most will not have heard of. New brands come onto the market every week, mostly from the new world countries. It's not difficult to find the bargains and the wines you like if you just consider how the traditional grapes have travelled the World and how they shine in different countries.

Chardonnay, the white grape of Burgundy is the widest spread. It is the grape that made many Australian fortunes, and it does perform very well there, particularly the fresh un-oaked styles. Sauvignon Blanc of the Loire valley and Bordeaux is the second favourite and is successful in South Africa and Chile, but truly exceptional from New Zealand where some delicious complex melanges of fruit flavours explode on the palate.

Chenin Blanc has been grown in South Africa for centuries where it's known as Steen. Some truly delicious summery wines have freshness and fruit in great harmony, and also some luscious dessert wines. Argentina has the aromatic and fruity Torrontes, an indigenous grape that has probable origins in Alsace. But the wine is eminently quaffable. Riesling, a truly noble variety native to Germany and Alsace does come around exceptionally well in Australia. Look for Jim Barry Dry Riesling, or indeed Jacob's Creek Riesling and you will see what I mean.

Match the grape varieties with these new world countries and many of the wine lists (and indeed supermarket shelves) will become far less confusing, and numerous delicious wines can be found.