



Do the Mollydooker Shake

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By Tim Rutherford

Low cost Australian wines flooded the US markets few years ago. At first, consumers were enthralled by the big, fruit forward wines and their easy to digest price tags. Cute animals beamed back from many labels.

Today, the luster seems to be fading. And, according to wine industry insiders, those low cost, mass-produced wines may be at fault for distracting from the exceptional, premium priced wines from down under.

Wines from the likes of Torbreck, Rolf Binder and Robert Oatley are among higher end Aussie wines I've tasted this year. Sadly, they don't get much attention in Savannah, nor does another very limited availability South Australia label, Mollydooker.

Less than two dozen cases of Mollydooker's entry tiered wines came to Georgia with this new vintage - and we have about six cases (minus a few bottles) in Savannah.

Mollydooker, which means "left handed," is the solo project of the left-handed wine making couple Sarah and Sparky Marquis. The couple spent more than two decades working for other wineries. They married in the early '90s, but it wasn't until 2005 that their label went public. The first vintages were critical and commercial successes - which has led to exclusivity for some of their wines.

I've sampled 2007 Two Left Feet, a blend of 68 percent Shiraz, 17 percent Cabernet Sauvignon and 15 percent Merlot. It's a big, bold Australian wine -- but presents with much more balance than its bargain priced cousins. Spice is the key word with this wine -- on the nose, on the palate. A long, elegant finish makes it an enjoyable drinker -- and a beautiful wine for grilled meats or spicy foods.

The 2007 Boxer Shiraz teases you with aromas of smoke and pork, then bathes your taste buds with a velvety layer of bramble fruits, blueberry and opulent organic characteristics. Pair this big wine with a bold beef dish, braised lamb shank -- or enjoy it alone.

Wine Advocate scored both of these wines 93 -- if you're a score keeper.

The winemakers suggest doing "The Mollydooker Shake" before enjoying the wines. Here's how:

1. Open and pour about half a glass out of the bottle.
2. Put the cap back on and then invert and shake the bottle vigorously.
3. Remove the cap to let the pressure out of the bottle and then repeat step 2 again.
4. You will see a very fine bubble mousse develop on the top of the wine.
As soon as the mousse has dissipated, the wine is ready to drink. Why?

Mollydooker wines are bottled with a little extra inert nitrogen gas as a natural preservative to protect the wine from oxidation. The extra nitrogen also means fewer sulfites.

Here's where Sarah and Sparky tell the story best:

"Because the nitrogen is a preservative, it tends to suspend or flatten the flavor of the wine. If you think about the flavor of wine as a round ball, you can envision the presence of nitrogen affecting the ball by flattening the back side of the ball. By doing the Mollydooker Shake, you release the nitrogen gas and allow the flavor ball to become round again, allowing the wine to show its full flavor profile.

"So if you don't do the Mollydooker shake to release the nitrogen gas, you're actually drinking our wine before its time."

With limited availability, I'll save you time -- I found mine at Johnnie Ganem's Package Shop and Laurel Hill Beverage. About \$25.