

# MiniZ

XXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXX THE NEWSLETTER OF PORT NICHOLSON MINIATURE BOTTLE CLUB XXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXX



THE ONLY MINIATURE BOTTLE CLUB IN AUSTRALASIA  
WITH A NATIONWIDE AND INTERNATIONAL MEMBERSHIP



## COVER BOTTLES

Our cover bottles this month will be very familiar to all New Zealand collectors. They were all bottled by Gilbey's Limited about 5 or 6 years ago - or were they?

I was visiting Nobilo's winery at Huapai a few weeks ago and spotted the 750ml bottles with identical labels except that they said bottled by Nobilo's. It turns out that Nobilo's used to make and bottle these for Gilbeys and when Gilbeys wanted to quit Nobilo's decided to carry on in their own right. I spoke to the person who used to bottle the miniatures who told me "I bottled thousands of them, all by hand; no I am glad to say we have no plans to bottle in miniature again."

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## PRESIDENT'S REPORT

I am happy to report another excellent year for us. Membership has increased to 47 up by about 20 on this time last year. Our finances are also strong (see facing page). All of the meetings have been worthwhile although the majority have been poorly attended - local members please note. After an excellent turn out for the 1984 A.G.M. the 1985 one was a real disappointment with only 5 attending. However, I am pleased to report that we had no difficulty finding a committee.

Officers for the next twelve months are:

President : Russell Thomson, 47 Collier Avenue, Karori  
Phone 769 616

Vice President : Colin Kilpatrick, 6 St. Edmund Crescent,  
Tawa, Phone 32 6230

Secretary : Janne Matthews, 4a Kinloch Place, Papakowhai  
Phone 378 221

Treasurer : Steuart Goodman, 22 Anne Street, Wadestown,  
Wellington Phone 727 596

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Phone 378 221

Editor : David Smith, 86 Rawhiti Road, Pukerua Bay,  
Phone 399 536

## PORT NICHOLSON MINIATURE BOTTLE CLUB

STATEMENT OF RECEIPTS AND PAYMENTS FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31st. JANUARY 1985

BALANCE	31.1.84 at P.O.S.B. Petone		NZ\$ 284.22
PLUS RECEIPTS			
	Subscriptions	552.59	
	Sale of Bottles	374.00	
	Donations	18.78	
	Sale of Newsletters	4.50	
	Miscellaneous Income	2.00	
	Interest Credited 31.3.84	5.80	
			957.67
			NZ\$ 1241.89
LESS			
	Purchase of 19doz. Club Bottles	363.36	
	Newsletter - Photocopying & Postage	383.88	
	Imprest - Hon. Secretary	10.00	
	Publicity Cards	10.00	
	Miscellaneous - Photocopying etc.	10.15	
	Stationery	3.65	
	Postage, Miscellaneous Subs etc.	18.66	
			NZ\$ 799.70
BALANCE	31.1.85 at P.O.S.B. Petone		NZ\$ 442.19

### NOTES

- 1 Stock of bottles on hand valued at cost, 40 bottles @ \$1.59 each = \$63.60
- 2 Accrued interest to 31.1.85 is \$7.01
- 3 No allowance has been made for subscriptions paid in advance.

SIGNED S. C. GOODMAN (Hon. Treasurer) 11.2.85

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### THE MINIATURE BOTTLE COLLECTOR

We highly recommend this, the only publication of it's type, to all our members. For those of you who wish to subscribe the address of the Miniature Bottle Collector Magazine is:

Brisco Publications, P.O. Box 2161, Palos Verdes Peninsula, California 90274, USA

Annual Subscription (6 issues) is US\$20.00. Arrangements have been made to pay for subscriptions in NZ at no extra cost. Please write to the club at P.O.Box 384, Wellington if you wish to subscribe this way.



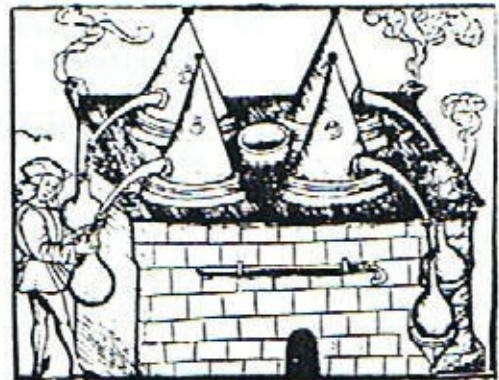
## The World of Brandy

It surprises many people that Brandy begins its life as wine. Considering the quality of some Brandies, it is even more surprising to learn that the wine used to make it is of poor quality, being thin and acidic. The Charente vineyards, which now exclusively grow grapes to make Cognac, were originally the poor pedlars of very inferior wine to seamen from Britain and the Low Countries (Holland & Belgium).

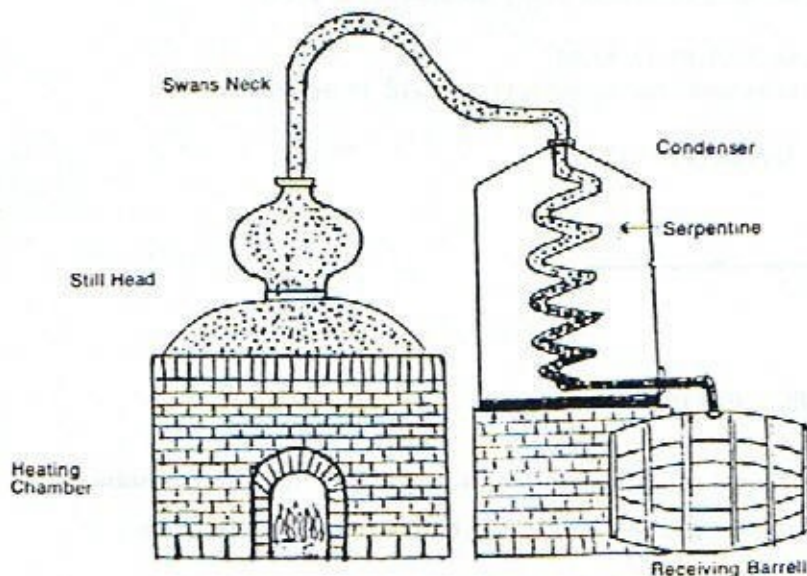
The word Brandy is actually derived from the Dutch word Brandewijn, which means 'burnt wine'. The Dutch were the main shippers at one time of wine in many parts of France.

As is the case with many discoveries, it was probably by accident that it was found that heating a barrel of poor wine increased its palatability. In the 17th. century the practice grew up of 'burning' the wine in the Charente region of France. Word began to spread that the area was producing a very powerful 'wine'. A Mr. Martel came to the area from the Channel Islands, a Mr. Hine from Dorset in England and a Mr. Hennessy from Ireland, and so were founded the great shipping houses of Cognac. Nowadays Brandy is made in most wine producing countries from Israel to Chile, and Australia to the U.S.S.R. New Zealand would be one of only a handful of wine producers that do not also produce Brandy.

There is however, much more to producing a good, or even not so good, Brandy than simply putting a flame underneath and catching the vapours. The wine (preferably white) is turned into Brandy by heating it in a Still. There are basically two types of stills used. The original, and still recognised as the best, is the Pot Still. Most 'inferior' Brandy is today made in the more modern Continuous or Coffey Still. (Named after the Irish exciseman who invented it).



Above: the art of distilling arrived in Europe late in the Middle Ages. This engraving of 1519 from Strasbourg is one of the earliest illustrations of a still



The wine in either Still is heated, causing the volatile elements to vapourise. These are then condensed in a copper coil. These volatile elements include the alcohol and flavour essences of the wine. They leave behind the less volatile water. The copper coil is cooled by immersing it in water, so the vapours condense to a liquid. It is at this stage that the skill of the distiller comes into play.

A Traditional Pot Still

There are three classes of vapour, two of which are undesirable. These are the 'Heads', which liquify first, and the 'Tails', which liquify last. The skill is in knowing the exact time to start the flow of the middle section to a separate vessel and when to stop the flow in that direction and divert the tails into the same vessel as the heads. The more of the heads and tails you get into the middle 'Brandy' section, the lower will be the eventual Brandy quality. At this stage the spirit is colourless and very volatile. The volatility is reduced by ageing the spirit in oak barrels for a minimum of two years, but often considerably more. The Brandy also gains some of its flavour from the wood of the barrel. The better Brandies are all aged in new oak barrels. Used barrels usually are sold to vineyards for ageing wine in.

The Brandy drinker expects the present bottle of his favourite Brandy to look and taste the same as its predecessors. The look alike effect is done by the addition of caramel, which is only burnt sugar and is completely tasteless. The amount of caramel which is added depends on whether the company wishes to produce a light or dark coloured Brandy. The taste - the - same effect is more difficult. Each bottle contains a blend of Brandies of different ages. One Brandy may have more body, another more flavour. It is the head tasters job to select the different constituent Brandies to go in each blend and ensure the consistency of taste for that particular blend. Some of the top Brandies may consist of a blend of as many as 80 basic Brandies.

Some of the names you will find on Brandy bottles are:

#### Armagnac

This is a brandy from a region of Western France about 50km or so South East of Bordeaux. It is the only Brandy distilled that uses neither the pot or continuous still. It has one of its own that is sort of a cross between the two.

#### Australian Brandies

These are amongst the purest brandies, as by law only wines from fresh grapes can be distilled. Most countries can, and do, use "Grappa" or "Marc" wines, i.e. wines pressed from skins and seeds after the fresh wine has been run off. St. Agnes Old Brandy and Mildara Pot Still Extra Reserve are both top quality brandies.

#### Asbach Uralt

This is the brandy of Germany. It is in the lighter style and has a good reputation.

#### Cognac

This, the most famous of brandies, comes from Western France. The area is centred on the town of Cognac.

#### Inca Pisco

This is Peruvian Brandy and is easily recognisable as it comes in black bottles shaped like Aztec statues. It is a very pale brandy having had no oak treatment. The wax of wild bees is used to seal the inside surface and adds a flavour found in no other brandy.



### Metaxa

Greek Brandies are of the heavier type and have a distinctive oily fruit taste.

### Napoleon

This does not mean the wine was made in Napoleonic times. Brandy does not improve after about 50 years in wood and not at all in the bottle. It is the name usually given to the company's top brand. The minimum age of any of the blends must be five years, but in practice it is often more. Hennessy Napoleon has an average of 20 years.

### Spain

Most Spanish Brandies are made in the sherry district. In fact, some brandies are made from spoiled or failed Flor Sherry wines. Spanish brandies tend to have an oaky flavour and are fairly fiery.

### Three Star

This is the lowest grade of brandy. By French law the youngest blend must be one year old. British law states it must be at least three years. In practice the average age will be between five and ten years.

### V.S.O.P.

This stands for very superior old pale. The youngest blend must be at least four years old (British law). In practice, it is likely to be between twelve and twenty years.

### V.S.

This stands for very special and is a fairly recent classification. It is in the same category as V.S.O.P.

### X.O., Vieille Reserve, Extra

These are the very top brandies with top prices. You will not get much change from \$90 for a bottle of X.O. Brandy. Some of the blends can be 100 years old.

**FRANK WYNN**

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## **BUY SELL & SWAP**

Jose E. Solaesa, c/- Ancora N. 96-60 B, Madrid, Spain  
Wants to swap Spanish minis with collectors from N.Z. and other countries. Jose is a collector of all types of minis.

Mrs. Burton, 102 Cambridge Terrace, Lower Hutt.  
Wants to sell 180 minis (in one lot). The bottles are generally in good condition. Phone Wellington 695 389

All of you will have had a copy of the catalogue for an auction of miniatures on 2nd March by Manawatu Auctions of Palmerston North. The auction was very well attended - standing room only for latecomers. There were over 60 buyers, including postal bidders both from New Zealand and overseas. I especially hope that our overseas members who purchased bottles are satisfied. There was certainly plenty for everyone and the only person in the room dissatisfied was Mr. MacKay the vendor. Prices were all over the place, some surprising items being bid very high and other lots you would have expected to be very much sought after going for next to nothing. On average, however, prices were generally lower than usual for Palmerston North Auctions.

For the technically minded total realisation was \$9,657 with the minis fetching \$6,530.

DAVID SMITH

## Enter a miniature world

by John Morrell

**Specialist drinks** customers at Harrods are making their way past the bottles of claret and burgundy to the alcove where once a charming fountain glistened and gurgled while visitors enjoyed free tasting of selected wines. Today the alcove has been turned into an Aladdin's Cave and you are invited to 'Enter a Miniature World' sited on the famous Harrods Wine Patio.

The eager entrants come from all parts of the world, particularly the United States but also Canada, Australia and European countries, for the word has gone round that in the Knightsbridge store is to be found the largest collection of wine and spirit miniatures in London. Harrods is selling them by the thousand every week.

Well-designed shelves and oval-shaped corner stalls are now displaying some 600 miniatures at prices from £115 for five centilitre sizes to wildlife ceramics filled with Scotch Whisky at £3.25. There is a Loch Ness Monster and a Highland Bull. Also on sale is a 20cl Peregrine Falcon or Kestrel and a 75cl Golden Eagle seems good value.

All the great malt whisky names are here in five centilitre bottles from 12-year-old Glenlivet to Glen Grant, Tamdhu, Strathisla and Glenmor in 40% strength. For 57% in Glen Grant and Glenlivet you pay a little more and there are examples made up of a vatting of whiskies distilled in 1948 and 1961, the birth years of Prince Charles and Lady Diana to commemorate their marriage. Older Highland malts are 25-year-old Linkwood and Braid of Glenrobert at £1.66.

As you go round the shelves you see Macallan, Harrods own excellent de luxe and 12 year old Scotch.

The customers are in many ways as interesting as the drinks. They bend close to the shelves to read the small print - you can't get large type on a miniature label - and hold the bottles up to the light as if to make sure they are properly filled. Some you see weighing up their choice, comparing a Laphroaig or Bowmore from Islay with a Glenfiddich, while others with a transatlantic air about them are piling up a large assortment to take away.

One man I spoke to seemed to have difficulty in his final choice. 'I'm sorry to say my wife doesn't understand the appeal of this wonderful hobby of collecting miniatures,' he said. 'I'm just trying to decide if I should take her a Dallas Dhu of 1979 to arouse her interest. She's a great TV follower of Dallas. We had an ancestor came from Orkney so maybe Highland Park would attract her more.'

The new idea received impetus when the Miniature Bottles Club circularised its members with details of the Harrods offerings, and requests for lists flowed in followed by orders. One from Japan asked for a large order of miniatures which the sender listed. The United States and West Germany were two other countries showing strong interest straight away. You cannot send liqueurs etc. by post to the USA however as one customer there had to be

He had sent an order for some 200 miniatures and replied that he would arrange for a friend who was visiting England to collect the bottles. The friend duly called, paid £235, and took away a very large parcel for his air journey back to the States.

On another recent occasion an American and his wife arrived in the wine department and the husband was immediately fascinated by the sight of the miniatures. His wife went off to shop in other departments and by the time she returned a couple of hours later he had over 120 bottles lined up for packing. There was an immediate altercation, the wife protesting. 'It's not the money you've spent but I've got to dust the things.'

Specialist collectors arrive with typed lists of the miniatures they have got at home and search for new acquisitions. One connoisseur told Mr. Furnival Jones, the Department Sales Manager, that he had over 2,000 miniatures in a specially built cabinet in his study.

'The true collector is very particular about what he buys,' said Mr. Furnival Jones. 'I've seen them look at half a dozen examples of the same bottle before they selected one. Presumably they think one label is more perfect than the others without any marks on it. And of course they don't drink them. Then we get youngsters in who want to buy a present for father's birthday or Christmas but we have to disappoint them as we cannot sell to anyone under 18.'

Harrods have special boxes designed to hold four miniatures which you can select for yourself and your choice can include Harrods own whisky, brandy, gin and vodka in miniatures. There are a number of unusual miniatures such as Mango Liqueur from India at £3.50 and Tequila Mezcal in a clear bottle that shows it contains an agave worm, a supposed delicacy found in the plant from which it is made. This is not, perhaps, for the squeamish. There is, however, a Tequila without the worm and more normal delights like Royal Mint Chocolate and Royal Ginger Chocolate, inventions of Dr. Peter Hallgarten.

The miniatures make useful Christmas presents and stocking fillers. Each year Harrods sell crackers - carefully labelled 'Adults' - packed with a selection of miniatures from their range. This year the crackers will contain six different liqueur miniatures, with a hat and appropriate recipe at £17.50 for the set.

Harrods are always looking for new sources for miniatures and hope eventually to include Champagne. One of the problems which raises the cost is filling the tiny bottles, a slow hand process.

The best seller is a golf ball filled with Old St. Andrews blended Scotch at £175. It comes in a neat box with a red lion and thistle crest and the motto 'Dum Spiro Spero' and many buyers come and say they saw the golf ball in a golfing friend's house. Buying the most expensive miniature would cost you £40.50 for a specially made 5cl. Baccarat crystal bottle holding Rémy Martin Louis XIII cognac. To buy a full bottle size of this particular Rémy Martin offering would set you back £385.

Altogether anyone who follows the Harrods slogan to 'Enter a Miniature World' will find it difficult to leave themselves open to temptation.









is that they produce bright fluorescent orange bumper stickers, "Support Your Local Hooker."

Shown on the left are both the front and back views of Fran's Ranch. Dug claims that his are the only Decanters in the world with a map on. I'm afraid that I must disagree Dug. Several companies have put out decanters depicting the U.S. or various states. Those that I could find with a quick flick through Montagues include Jim Beam, Old Mr. Boston, Michters, Alpha and Hawaiian Distillers. I also seem to recall having seen a map of Argentina. However, no other decanter map that I know of actually shows you how to get somewhere.



Number 7 in Dug's series is La Belle. This is situated in what was once a boarding house for Chinese labourers in the appropriately named town of Lovelock. The area is famed for it's gold and silver mining, La Belle being, I would guess, a small goldmine with a difference!

Like La Belle, The Hacienda or Patricia's Hacienda was used as a boarding house in days gone by. This time for Mexican labourers - don't the Yanks do any of their own work? It is situated in the N.E. of Nevada in the town of Wells.

We continue in the next edition with the biggest of the lot, Mustang Ranch.





## Cocktail of the Month



### TARANAKI I

1 measure Tequila  
1 measure Rum  
1 measure Gin  
1 measure Bacardi  
1 measure Kaluha  
Top up a long glass with Lemon & Paeroa

Our cocktail this month comes from member Dianne Opie of Patea, Taranaki. It is a local brew (witches brew?) as you can see.



Lemon and Paeroa is a New Zealand fizzy drink. I would suggest U.S. members try substituting 7 UP.  
(Besides, I had a mini of that!)

Dianne makes one comment "tastes Bloody Terrible!" Frankly it doesn't surprise me. The mixture of spirits reminds me of the time I orders a gin, whisky, rum and brandy all in one glass, on a friends stag night. He downed it in one.



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## NEXT MEETINGS

- |             |  |
|-------------|--|
| March 17th  | Dave & Jackie Smith's,<br>86 Rawhiti Road, Pukerua Bay   |
| April 21st. | Colin Kilpatrick's<br>6 St. Edmund Crescent, Tawa  |
| May 19th    | Does any member outside Wellington<br>(Palmerston North etc.) feel like<br>volunteering to have a Meeting? |

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