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MiNiZ

THE NEWSLETTER OF PORT NICHOLSON MINIATURE BOTTLE CLUB



New Zealand's only Miniature Bottle Club

EDITORIAL.

To all club members, a belated greetings to you for the New Year.

Firstly a profuse apology for not been able to produce another issue of MiNiZ since August 1993. Due to bussiness and family commitments, I've had very little spare time.

You may recall in MiNiZ vol.8 no.3 or 4 that you were sent a comprehensive list of Scotch minis which were available from Meenan Wine & Spirits of Dunedin. Those of you who wrote to me with orders are going to be disappointed as there were not enough bottles ordered for Meenan to put in a large bulk order. We had to order at least one dozen of each mini and the best we could do was 6-7 of each. In future, to be able to make an order with Meenan, we would need all Scotch mini collectors in the club to put in an order.

At present, the club is in the process of producing a set of four minis containing NZ ports to commemorate the 13th anniversary of the club. Hopefully they will be available tosell to club members in the next 6-8 weeks at approximately \$4 - \$5 per mini.

The next club meeting will be at Shirley Stocker's in Masterston. Please confirm a.s.a.p. with either Jackie Smith or Shirley if you are coming as it a pot luck lunch.

I am pleased to announce that the first draught copy of the Club's Scotch Whisky directory list has been put together. We are still putting finishing touches ot it but we hope to have it ready for publication/distribution soon. Many thanks to Errol Brassett for the long hours spent on his computer.

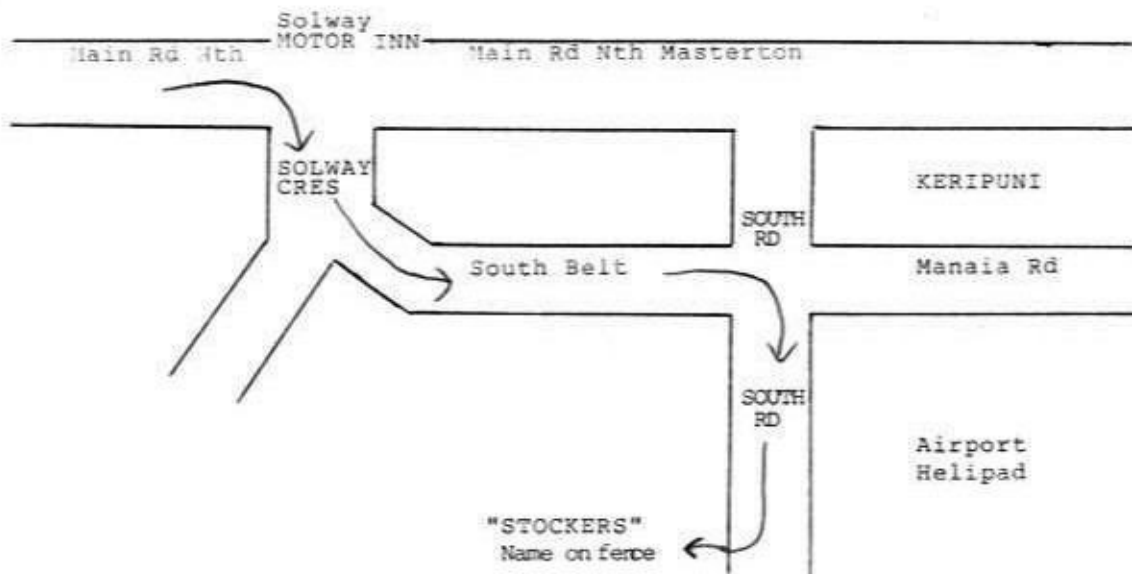
Finally I would like to thank John Lawrence of South Africa for his exellent articles on South African moonshine which are published in this magazine. Please keep those contributions coming in.

Happy mini collecting.

KEN CHIN
EDITOR.

D. T. P. NEXT MEETINGS

- 20th March 1994: **SHIRLEY STOCKER:** Rd 5, Masterton. ph.06-3789959
Barbeque Lunch 11.30am. Swap meet.
- 17th April 1994: **ERROL & KAREN BRASSETT:** 33 Findlay St, Tawa 2pm.
- 21st May 1994: **DAVID & JACKIE SMITH:** 86 Rawhiti St, Pukerua Bay
Pot Luck Dinner 6.30pm Swap meet.



STOP PRESS....STOP PRESS....STOP PRESS.... STOP PRESS....STOP PRESS.....

.....a message from our President.....

....will the person or persons who took the 2 new Wilsons' minis off the counter at Patea **WITHOUT PAYING** me for them please return them immediately.....

DAVID SMITH.

JIM BEAM



BOTTLED FOR NZ



BOURBON

JIM BEAM have produced literally thousands of personalised minis over the years. Having the Havill's Mead Christchurch Antarctic Centre bottle on the cover a couple of issues ago got me thinking about my other Antarctic bottle.

Shown on the previous page are both the front and rear views of this bottle. The front says "U.S. Antarctic Research Programme Silver Jubilee 1955-1980." Note the British rather than the American spelling for PROGRAMME (PROGRAM) and the words "by The International Btlg Co. Ltd." This bottle was made in Christchurch which, in case you don't know, is the home base for the U.S. Antarctic Survey. The International Bottling Co. is no longer around. It was a subsidiary of Liquor Merchant Quill-Morris, which later became Quill-Humphreys and which a year or two ago lost it's identity when swallowed up by Magnum Corporation.

Has any other collector out there got one of these? I know of no other. Quill-Humphreys were a client of mine and I was just lucky to be in the right place at the right time.

As can be seen, New Zealand Rail have had made for them three Jim Beam bottles. The first simply says "Railways" and has the NZR logo on in red and black. The other two celebrate the centenaries in 1979 and 1980 of two of NZR's workshops, Addington (Christchurch) and Eastown (Wanganui). A few collectors have these but they are not easy to come by.

Only three clubs in NZ have had Jim Beam bottles made for them and yours truly can claim responsibility for two of them, Port Nicholson Miniature Bottle Club (wonder whatever happened to them?) and the Northern Alcophialist Club. This latter was a mini bottle club based in Auckland. It staggered on for many years then finally called it a day 3 or 4 years ago. Not to be outdone by us mini bottle collectors the Jim Beam collectors later had a personalised mini made "Jim Beam Bottle Clubs of N.Z."

The Jim Beam Clubs hold an annual national convention. Nobody thought to produce a commemorative for the first two of these but they did manage it for the third, fourth, fifth and sixth. Apparently the left hand did not know what the right was doing when it came to the seventh convention. Two lots of bottles were ordered. Note that one says Seventh and the other 7th.

All went smoothly the following year for the Eighth convention but on the ninth the gremlins got into the works again. This time no bottles were produced. The last bottle shown, and so far as we are aware the last of the convention bottles, is the Tenth.

None of the convention bottles is particularly rare, in fact you will see that the club have some of the 7th (but not the Seventh) on our stock list.

David Smith

WITBLITZ AND MAMPOER.

In America it is known as moonshine. In the Transvaal it is mampoer and in the Cape province it is witblitz (white lightning). Mampoer is believed to be named after a chief of the Pedi tribe, one Mampuru. The voortrekkers (pioneers) on their travels from the Cape to the interior were given this drink which was distilled from the maroela fruit which grew abundantly in that area.

Viticulture is one of the oldest farming practices in the South West Cape and has been practised since the 17th century. The first brandy was distilled in 1672 and in due course, home distilled brandy became known as witblitz. It's an old tradition in South Africa to christen any kind of distillation by the name brandy. Irrespective of whether it's made from grapes, peaches, maroela fruit, plums or anything else. South African law however determines that only the product of the grape may truly be called brandy.

Well ripened fruit is crushed and left in vats, to ferment for 8-10 days. During the fermentation process the fructose converts to alcohol. Distillation is an art as much as a science. Knowing when the must (fermented fruit) is ready to be distilled is of vital importance. There are three main methods to determine when.

- 1) When fermentation begins the must bubbles continuously, like jam being cooked. When the amount of bubbles rising is reduced to just a couple, the must is ready.
- 2) The distiller tastes the must regularly. As it starts to change from sweet to sour it is ready. If left too long and it goes sour, you have vinegar.
- 3) Observe Mother nature. When fermentation begins many flying insects come to drink the sweet must. When the number of "visitors" is drastically reduced the must is changing from sweet to sour. Time to distil.

The must is poured into the still. The dome of the still is replaced and sealed with clay where it fits into the neck of the still and where it joins the snake (condensation pipe).

The fire under the still must be kept constant at about 80°C as alcohol boils at 78°C, when evaporation takes place. The alcohol vapour rises into the dome from where it is conducted through a spiralled condensation tank which rests in a tank of cold water. As the vapour passes through the cooled pipe it condenses into a liquid and trickles from the snake into a pail.

The first flow is called the "heads" followed by the heart - the genuine witblitz, followed by the "tails". The heads are discarded, the heart is bottled as witblitz and the tails are retained for use as a linament.

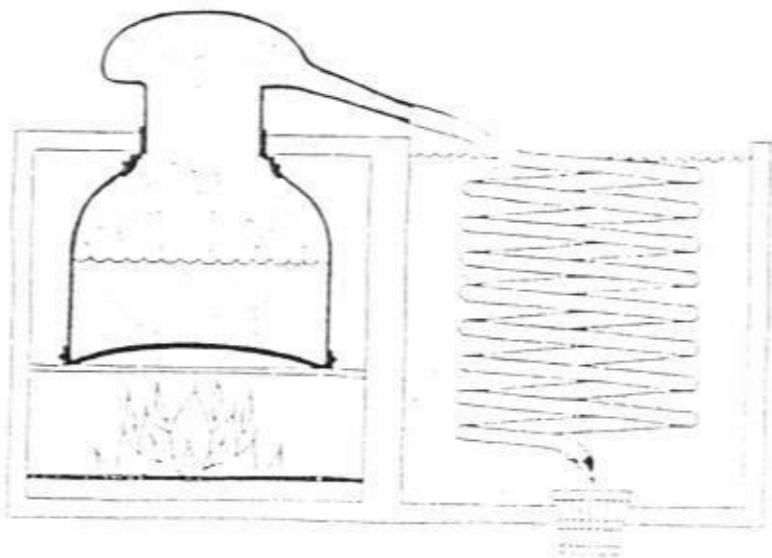
In 1924 General Jan Smuts saw to it that one company, the Kooperatiewe Wynbouwers Vereniging (K.W.V.) received legal status. This effectively put an end to private distillation, except for a couple of special licences that were issued. Farmers that could produce thus had to pay excise duty to the K.W.V.

The law requires that all stills be marked and registered with the excise department. Any vessel used to prepare the fruit must also be similarly marked and registered. Records must be kept of all quantities of the product distilled together with the amount and strength of liquor produced. The records are to be sent to the excise department within 14 days of each distillation. No liquor may be removed from the place where it is produced unless excise duty has been paid. Nobody may distil spirits from any produce that is not grown on land that he owns or occupies. Regulations 4.10.01 states that nobody except a museum or agricultural college may possess a still of less than 680 litres. - No portable stills! The still must also be built into a brick, clay or cement foundation.

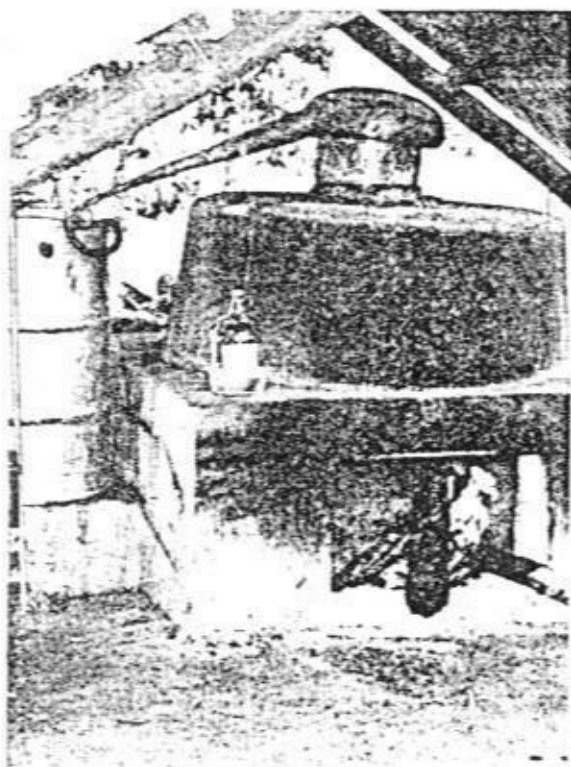
In 1980 approval was given for agricultural museums and colleges to obtain licences. They were forbidden from selling their produce until the law changed in 1983. Currently only two

agricultural museums in the country avail themselves of this concession. In the Cape province the Kleinplaspie farm museum produce a range of 6 Witblitz miniatures comprising: apple, apricot, grapes, peach, pear and plum. In the Transvaal the Willem Prinsloo agricultural museum produces a few mampoer miniatures of which peach and grapes are usually available. The Witblitz minis are in 50ml bottles with a gold screw cap. The label is white with the writing in black except for the picture of the fruit and it's description which are coloured. The descriptions on the labels are bilingual in Afrikaans/English. The strength is 65% which is not shown on the label. From June of this year the law changed and it is now compulsory to show the alcohol strength. I am waiting to see the label. The Mampoer bottles are 50ml with a gold screw cap. The label is a cream background with a brown border. The descriptions also bilingual. The strength - again not shown is traditionally a little weaker than Witblitz at 61% alcohol. The flavour of the drink is printed on the back of the label, read through the bottle.





Left:- A schematic diagram showing the still in it's concrete surround. The dome on top of the still where the vapours collect to be conducted through the "snake" to the waiting pail.



Middle:- Picture of the actual still used at the Willem Prinsloo Agricultural museum. The "snake" coils through an old oil drum filled with water which serves to condense the vapour.



Bottom:-A good example of an illegal still made from an old milk churn. The "snake" again going through an old oil drum. The churn is standing on a skottle braai (barbeque) under which the fire is lit. This type of equipment is normally used on the dam wall at the farm. At the first sign of unexpected visitors the whole thing can be pushed off the wall into the dam.

Junk Shop Shoppin

The two bottles shown were both found in junk shops on a recent visit to Hawkes Bay. Over the years many an hour has been spent in junk and antique shops looking for minis. Many shops, especially those pretending to be antique shops, will tell you they never touch miniature bottles but if you look around you often discover ceramic bottles. Often the owner does not recognise them as bottles, as was the case with the Drioli Jug shown here. This jug was bought from a junk shop in Woodville that usually has minis in but this was away with the general bric-a-brac. For that reason I also got it cheap, \$4.00. It is empty and has no label but it is still a mini.



The second bottle is a piece of Delft. I found this in a shop in Napier that has the pretence of being an antique shop. It is full and labelled B.A.J. Wittkamp, Schiedam, Holland. Unfortunately the bottom of the label is torn so that the contents are almost unreadable but I believe it contains Creme De Bananne. This one cost \$16 and well worth it in my opinion.

Over the years I have picked up dozens of bottles whilst **Junk Shop Shoppin**, many of which have ended up in other peoples collections. If the price is right and you know someone would like it, grab it. It may not be there next time.

David Smith

A 'B' Line in Wine

by Clement Freud

Of all the sciences that have progressed in the second half of the century, none has galloped forward like the understanding of wine.

The Second World War had not only killed off most of those who knew a claret from a burgundy; it provided nearly a decade of such astonishingly mediocre tipples that anything tasting even slightly better than liquid boot-polish was greeted with joy and imbibed with pleasure.

In 1947 when I came back from five years of fighting - much of it behind public houses in the Glasgow area - I managed a London Club. There was not a great deal of choice in the way of wine: we listed a Chilean Chateaufort, some Italian Chiantis, popular because one could make bed-side lumps out of the bottles, and Beaujolais which came from Algeria. (The French variety, by virtue of its scarcity, was not for export.) There was also that well-known German wine called Liebfraumilch - the criterion for which was that it had to come in a brown bottle. It was usually spelt 'Leibfraumilch'...but then Riesling is still spelt 'Reisling' on half the lists in London. I think the nastiest wine of that period was Tavel Rosé: there were three ways of producing this - mixing red and white, bleaching red or darkening white. Post-war Tavel put many people off wine for months.

Success, it must be remembered, is not absolute: in the wine trade it meant being slightly better than your competitors...and mine was better. My wine merchant allocated me a case of hard-to-get proprietary whisky for every five cases of runcible wine that I bought from him. They were called Botticino and Barolo, Barbera and Barbaresco and they all tasted the same, had probably come out of the same tin bath.

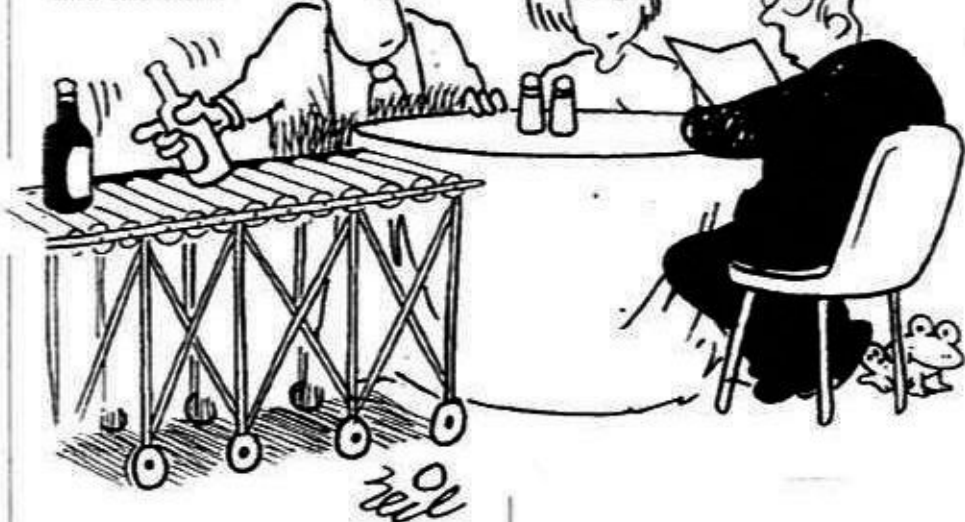
Nevertheless, we went through the formalities: he sent me a catalogue; I sent him an order. The merchant knew hardly anything about wine, we restaurateurs knew less but glory-be, our customers knew nothing at all.

To give an instance of the state of the industry, I recall that in 1949 I ordered some 1945 Chianti...and was sent 1948 Chianti. I telephoned my merchant and told him he had made a mistake. "Soak off the 1948 labels," he said, "and I'll send over some 1945's."

This was the time when customers drank wine as a statement rather than for pleasure. You took a girl out to dinner and ordered a bottle to show you were that sort of man. The waiter brought it, showed you the label, opened it, poured a sip...and if you had any pride, you went into the routine:

Swirl the wine around your six-and-two-third ounce Paris goblet, sniff it, look puzzled, ask whether this is a new

shipment, sip again, wait, nod. As you had nothing with which to compare it - other than the hog-wash you had the night before, you sent every tenth bottle back. "No," you would say, "this is definitely not as it should be," and your woman gasped in admiration at your daring. (Wine butlers in those early post-war days had frequently held higher ranks than their customers.)



I had this theory, which I could not put to the test while I was working for others: I did not believe that anyone had the courage to send back TWO bottles... (Twenty years later I went out to dinner with Joseph Berkman and he sent back three.) When I acquired my own establishment, I practised it. I would watch someone prepare to complain, race over and say: "Sir, I can see you are less than happy with this wine and realise that you are a person of perspicacity; will you permit me to remove this bottle and bring you in its place one of my own choosing?"

"Soak off the 1948 labels... and I'll send over some 1945's."

The offer was steadily met with gratitude...and I replaced every bottle about which people complained with one I had taken from the last dissatisfied client. Sometimes when I replaced a Bardolino with a Boxbeutel (most of my wines began with 'B') people looked perplexed - especially when they noticed that the bottle I had brought was not full.

"I have taken the liberty of tasting a glass," I would say, adding that we would not want anyone to be unhappy twice in an evening.

Now and then I meet people who used to come to my night-club, who ask why I don't do it all over again. I tell them things have changed.

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NORFOLK ISLAND BOUNTY DESCENDANTS



After the well documented Bounty Mutiny and the setting adrift of Captain Bligh in 1789 the mutineers sailed to Tahiti. Some of the original mutineers decided to remain on Tahiti and history shows that they were captured by the British Naval Authority and returned to England. The remainder under the command of Fletcher Christian sailed off on the Bounty, accompanied by native Tahitian men and women, to make their escape. This group finally settled on the then uncharted Pitcairn Island in the South Pacific and after destroying the Bounty they thought they were safe.

These men were Christian, McCoy, Chinnel, Adams and Young and after a particularly blood thirsty period their families were discovered on Pitcairn in 1808 with John Adams the only mutineer still alive.

Queen Victoria ceded Norfolk Island to the Pitcairn people and 194 (40 adult males, 47 adult females, 54 boys and 53 girls) arrived to settle on Norfolk Island on 8th June, 1856. As it turned out, some of this group did not settle happily and by 1863, 42 people had returned to their homes on Pitcairn Island where their descendants still live to this day.

Today a perusal of the Norfolk Island Directory will show many of the five original mutineers names. Only Young does not appear due probably to a family trait of daughter production and of course marriage.



Norfolk Island is now a beautiful tourist destination steeped in history, where you are made welcome by direct descendants of the Bounty Mutineers.

David Smith

VARIATIONS LOVE 'EM OR HATE 'EM



Let's face it, some collectors love collecting different variations of the same bottle and some hate the practice. For those of you who are into variations I am happy to show you most of the known variations of two New Zealand bottles.

Above you will see 8 Seagers Dry Gins. There are 11 "Standard" variations plus one special advertising bottle, Dr. Hearall's Invisible Business Tonic radio. The 3 not shown are Seagers Distilled Dry 40% 50ml CLR/RD, Seagers of London Distilled Dry CLR/6 SIDE and Seagers of London Dry 83 proof CLR/6 SIDE.

Below are 8 out of 10 known variations of Cossack Vodka. The label that is completely different from the others is the latest version so expect to see more variations on this theme. Not shown are Cossack Vodka 47ml 42.8% CLR/RD and Cossack Vodka 75 proof CLR/FLASK. Note that this last one has exactly the same description as one shown but put the two bottles together and you will see the difference.

Collecting variations entirely from memory is not to be recommended. Been there, done that and I can safely say that you end up with lots of duplicates. If you do wish to collect variations why not photograph your collection. I have done this very successfully with my New Zealand collection. Given a reasonable quality camera it is not difficult. Put the bottles on a table covered with a white cloth or some paper, sellotape a piece of paper to a box and stand that on the table. Now simply line up the minis against the box, about 4 or 5 at a time, and click away. For best results the table should be a few feet into the room and you should have your back to the window. Choose a bright day but do not take photos of the bottles with the sun directly shining on to them as this causes shadows. Good luck.

David Smith



NEW MEMBERS

HOLGER BUCK	Niederrader Alle 4, 30853 Langenhagen, Germany
DON MURDOCK	6776 Arlington Street, Vancouver, B.C. Canada
SHARYN CUMMINGS	P.O. BOX 336, Taihape, NZ.
ROBIN RACKLIFF	18 Tableau Place, Sunnynook, Auckland, NZ.

CHANGE OF ADDRESS

SHIRLEY STOCKER	South Rd R.D.5, Masterton.
CHRIS MATTHEWS	37 Nimmo Avenue West, Paraparaumu.
BOB FERGUSON	??? Chelmsford St, Ngaio. Wellington.

SNIPPETS



A
new nip,
I just got it
from the Republic
of Malawi in Southeast
Africa. Independent since
1964, formerly the British Pro-
tectorate of Nyasaland. Population
3.9 million. Capital ZOMBA. Regards. Dick Cotton U.S.A.

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PORT NICHOLSON MINIATURE BOTTLE CLUB

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NAME _____ TELEPHONE No. _____

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THE MINIATURE BOTTLE COLLECTOR

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