

March / April 1995

VOLUME 10 No.1



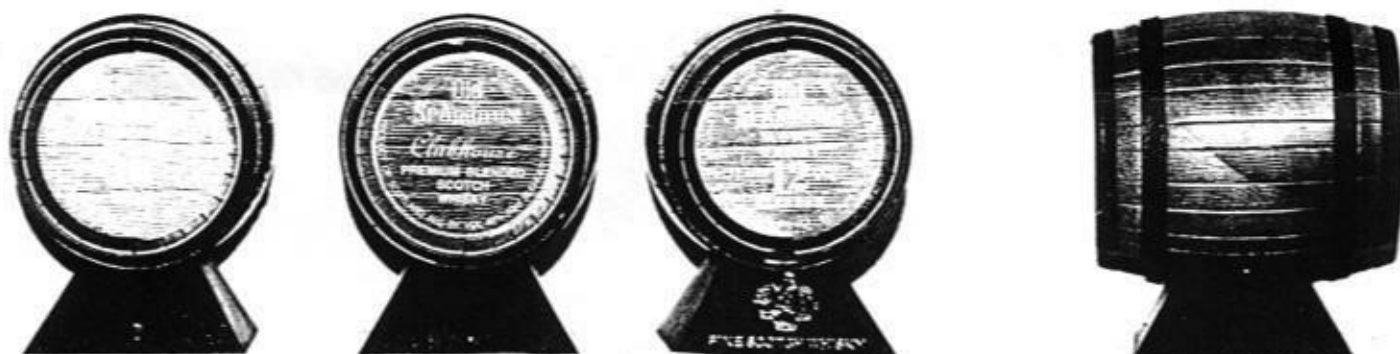
# MiNiZ

**THE NEWSLETTER OF PORT NICHOLSON MINIATURE BOTTLE CLUB**



*New Zealand's only Miniature Bottle Club*

# ❌ Cover Bottles ❌



Old St.Andrews: Set of 3

Sideview

Being in contact with such a large number of patients in my line of work, I come across many who travel overseas and the odd one who is most obliging. One in particular I managed to "con" to bringing me back ceramic Scotch Whiskies back Bonnie Scotland.

She said that they were not as available as I had led her believe and that she had to hunt around for them. In particular, she told me that the smaller places usually didn't have minis.

The ones on the cover are all ceramic and ranged in price from 8 - 12 pounds.

Last year was the official commemoration of 500 years of existence of Scotch Whisky and many brands have produced anniversary bottles.



Reverse



Glen Fiona

The set of 3 above are from Old St.Andrew and are made plastic outside encasing a glass mini. The set of three are very reasonably price at 10 pounds.

The jug on the left is from Glen Fiona and also contains blended whisky.

*Ken Chin: Editor*

# SOUTHERN USQUEBAUGH

NEW ZEALAND'S WATER OF LIFE

For exactly a quarter  
of a century, New  
Zealand has boasted its  
own whisky. Now it is  
producing an indigenous  
single malt which takes  
its place alongside those  
of Scottish origin.

The distillery manager pointed to a big willow tree outside his office and said: "We always know when spring has arrived: a wood pigeon crashes into the branches. You can hear it even through closed windows. The pigeons have been away all winter, fattening themselves in the forests."

There was not a single sign of a pigeon as we gazed at the tree. Nor were there leaves: just a few shy buds which the night before had been trapped in a thin layer of snow. Yet there was something in the manager's words that rang true because whisky making and nature go hand in hand. During the summer months there is a "silent season" when distilleries close down on account of their water supply becoming low. That period is used to make repairs on the equipment and buildings and for holidays to be taken. And in the fields grows the barley, which during autumn and winter will be turned to malt. In turn, that malt will be crushed and mixed with the waters taken from the under and over-ground streams which run fast again as snow lines expand and recede.

And as the winter takes a more rigid grip, the number of birds around the distillery increases. They are there to feed upon the barley spilled onto the ground during the unloading. For sparrows, finches, starlings, ducks and pigeons a distillery is a health-food mecca, and always on hand to wash their feast down will be plenty of water.

So it has been for centuries in Scotland and Ireland. And so, too, it is again in New Zealand.

For exactly a quarter of a century, New Zealand has boasted its own blended whisky, although Wilson's whisky was hardly known outside the Southern Hemisphere. Things look set to change: Lammerlaw, a New Zealand malt whisky, is on sale in Britain — even in Aberdeen, that granite city just an hour's drive from the heart of the foremost Scottish distilling region, Speyside.

Lammerlaw has an age statement of 10, which means the youngest whisky used is at least 10 years old. It is also for sale throughout New Zealand, although few realise it. The locals drink Wilson's. In fact, they drink more of that than any other single Scottish, Irish or North American brand. It is blended whisky, a mixture of pure malt and a more neutral spirit made from barley. Both whiskies originate from the same distillery.

Some 4000 people make a pilgrimage to Wilson's distillery every year, an amalgamation of tourists drawn towards the unknown and unusual, and drinkers wanting to learn something about the making of their country's top-selling blend.

What they see at the distillery is something unlike anything in Scotland, Ireland, Kentucky, Tennessee, Canada or Japan, where other straight whiskies are made: stainless-steel pot stills. In Kentucky and Tennessee you will find at Wild Turkey and George Dickel, respectively, pot stills which are stainless steel on the outside but copper on the inside. Wilson's are steel clad inside and out, a practice which was experimented with in secret for a short time in Scotland before being discarded as a failure.

At Wilson's, not only have the stills been in commission for 25 years but there are no plans to alter them, for Seagram, the dis-

BY JIM MURRAY

PHOTOGRAPHY BY GISELLA VOLLMER

## It is only a matter of time before New Zealanders will embrace their own single malt whisky.

tilleries were tragically short, due it is believed to political wheeling and dealing. Legend has it that the New Zealand Government struck a deal with Scotland for the loan of money to build the country's railways, provided, in return, New Zealand's whisky industry was killed off. By 1875 not a single drop of whisky was being legally distilled.

Not until 1969 did the malt spirit tumble from New Zealand stills again, although the birth of Wilson's was no less a painful experience than the death of its two predecessors. When a group of businessmen decided to convert the one-time Dunedin Brewery into a distillery they had not counted on the Scotch whisky industry turning its back on all requests for help: hence the making of the stills from stainless steel. But the big mistake was making the condenser — the metal apparatus used in converting the vapour back to liquid — from that same, neutral compound. Until Seagram took over the ailing company in the early 80s, Wilson's had a reputation for producing poor whisky, the condenser being the reason why. Seagram immediately replaced it with a copper one and the malt produced there today is very good indeed, as I discovered when I tasted samples of it at almost every conceivable age.

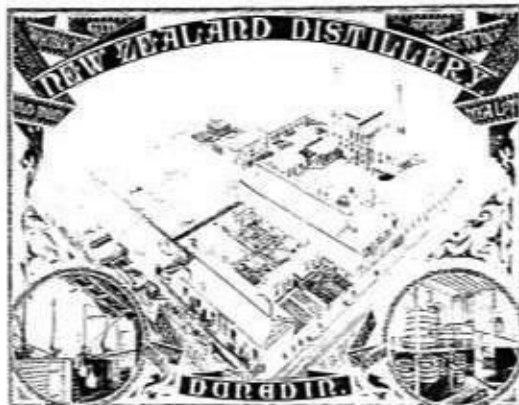
The Lammerlaw malt, named after the hills which run their excess water into Deep Creek, the source of the distillery's water, has a fizziness on the palate which surely comes from those strange stills. However, it means the single malt is alive and exuberant. Peated malt is used again as it was a century before, although it now hails from Australia, and a sweet undercurrent and richness allows the whisky to take its place alongside Scottish malts. And even if it could never seriously be regarded as being in the same classic league as a Glenlivet, Glenfarclas or Lagavulin, it retains a charisma all its own.

It has been accepted in Britain and there is further proof of the malt taking off: it is now available for the first time duty free on international Air New Zealand flights. A genuine confidence bubbles throughout the distillery that it is only a matter of time before New Zealanders will at last recognise and embrace their own, truly indigenous, single malt whisky.

As I left the distillery for the last time I heard a whooping crashing noise. I looked up into the highest branches of the willow tree to see them bowing under the weight of a pigeon, barrel-chested and resplendent in its unique, bottle-green livery. Spring had arrived at Wilson's distillery, in more senses than one.

*Jim Murray is a full-time writer on whisky and the Glenfiddich Whisky Writer Of The Year.*

One of two funnel-shaped spirit stills in which Wilson's whisky is made. Stills with stainless-steel cladding both inside and out are rare in other parts of the world.



An artist's impression of the distillery in 19th-century Dunedin. Note the Irish spelling "whiskey" — curious in this very Scottish city.

(Reprinted from Pacific Way 1994)



# VARIATIONS LOVE 'EM OR HATE 'EM



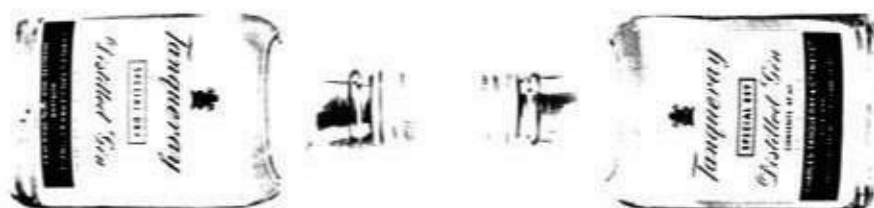
For reasons unknown there are lots of variations in New Zealand Gins and Vodkas. In this issue of miNiZ we have two Gins and in the next I will show you two Vodkas.

Above are 6 of the 9 known variations of Gordons Dry Gin. Missing from the photos, and my collection (all donations gratefully received), are two bottles simply described as Gordons Distilled Dry CLR/FLASK and a plastic bottle, Gordons Distilled Dry 50ml 40% CLR/FLASK.

Below are shown 10 of the 11 known variations of Tanqueray Special Dry Gin. The only one not shown has the same description as one that is, Tanqueray Special Dry Distilled 47ml CLR/FLASK.

Gin can be made from alcohol distilled from almost any source. It is then flavoured using Juniper berries, although the Dutch also produce gins flavoured with lemon and orange. New Zealand bottled gins (and Vodkas) are made from alcohol distilled from whey. Whey is a by-product of cheese making so we have plenty of it. I am told that the first drink to be made using whey alcohol was Baileys Irish Cream. It took years for the big distillers to agree to use alcohol from whey rather than the more traditional processes in their products. In the end money talked, whey alcohol is very cheap to produce.

David Smith



# NEW ZEALAND WINES

Until the last 15 years or so New Zealand Wines have been HO - HUM. We turned out mainly fortified wines for a very non-discerning palate. Those who knew something about wine avoided New Zealand wine, with a **very** few exceptions, like the plague. The first bottle of New Zealand Wine I ever bought, on my first trip here in 1977, I poured down the sink. To be fair the industry was just embarking on major changes at that time. The first vines were just being planted in Marlborough an area now acknowledged by most experts **world wide** as producing the **worlds** best Sauvignon Blanc.

By 1986 things had changed considerably. We had large plantings of premium varieties but we still had vast quantities of plonk vinis vinifera and even worse, large acreages of American Hybrid grapes. In a move, much criticised at the time, the government paid growers to pull vines out. Any vine could be pulled out but only the hybrids and poorer varieties were. Most growers simply turned round and re-planted with premium varieties. Few governments have had the foresight, or luck, to do such a thing. The result being that we now probably have the highest **average** standard of locally produced wine anywhere in the world.

The New Zealand Miniatures list (up-to-date list available on request) shows 60 wines. Some are imports with NZ importers names on but many are sherries and ports from the bad old days of New Zealand wine making. Unfortunately no New Zealand winery has produced miniature bottles in recent years. In France three years ago we noticed that many wineries, including some quite famous ones, were now producing miniature wines. Let us hope that some of our wineries take note and copy the practice.



Above are pictured probably the most common set of New Zealand wines. Any NZ collector who has not seen them should see an optometrist immediately. Any of our

# KEN'S KOLUMN



100 ml in volume

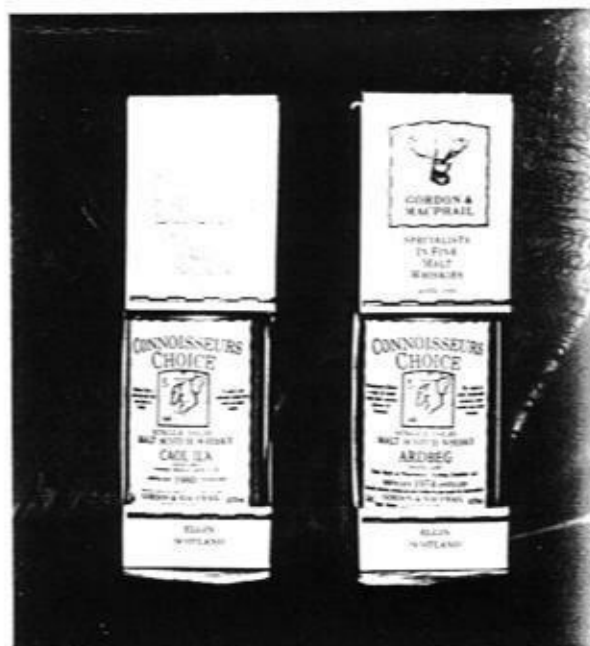
What's new in the way of minis one may ask? I've managed to spot a few tasty items that should get your mouth watering,

Directly above is the gift set consisting of Bushmill's Malt & Standard whisky. They are accompanied by a ceramic model of the Bushmill's distillery. The ceramic does not contain whisky. I purchased this for \$39.00 at Haywards International in Paraparaumu.

The Johnny Walker Pewter flask is part of a gift set accompanied by a 375ml bottle of Johnny Walker Red label. It was bought out for Xmas and if you enquire at your local bottle store, they may still be able to get it for you. Cost of the gift pack is approximately \$60 - \$64.

The two Connoisseurs Choice Scotch Malt whiskies were a Xmas present from my brother in Dunedin. They were purchased from Meenan Wine & Spirits of Dunedin for around \$6 - \$7. Excellent value! Please see the Dealer Directory if you are interested. They will deliver.

*Ken Chin M.D.*



## JEAN GARDNER

It is our sad duty to report the death of member Jean Gardner. Jean was a member of the club for about nine years. Prior to that she was well known to many of the members as the lady who ran the bottle store in The Square in Palmerston North.

Jean collected for over 20 years and had a small but select collection. Meetings at her house were always well attended, the most memorable part being the sagging table of delicious food. Literally, we could all have lived for a week on what Jean provided for an afternoon tea.

Jean nursed her husband John for many years whilst he coped with cancer. It is ironic that less than a year after John's death Jean herself was diagnosed with cancer. Jean's illness was relatively short and our sadness is tinged with relief that she went quickly in the end and did not unduly suffer. She was in fact both cheerful and her usual talkative (she never stopped) self right up to the end.

Jean asked us to take some photos of the recent Patea weekend as it was the first one she would miss. She got to see both the photos and a video taken of the weekend. The club received a note of thanks from her only a couple of days before her death. In the note she reiterated her personal philosophy of smiling and carrying on regardless and that's how most of us will remember her.

We will miss you Jean.



# Snippets

## 'Mr Beam' a'gunnin' for markets

WHEN he's not at the distillery, bottling the world's number one bourbon, Booker Noe, the grandson of liquor legend Jim Beam, can be found fishing the lakes of Alaska or stalking game with the 12-gauge Winchester shotgun given to him by his grandfather the day before he died.

"I was 17 when old Jim died. We went over on Christmas Day as was tradition and I took him some fresh quail I had just hunted," said Booker, who was on the Gold Coast yesterday to launch his signature drop of 63 per cent proof, "pure uncut, unfiltered, straight-from-the-barrel bourbon" at the Marriott Resort.

"He called my grandmother in and asked her if she thought I was old enough to have the shotgun — it was one of his favourites, a collector's item," he said.

"Jim died in his sleep the night after Christmas — I don't know if he ever got to enjoy those quail I gave him. I get to thinking sometimes, maybe it was the quail that did him in."

A connoisseur's sipping bourbon in a distinctive round bottle, Booker's will be available at selected outlets in a couple of weeks and will retail for about \$70.

● Beaming over bourbon, Page 34



BOOKER'S CHOICE: Booker Noe, grandson of Jim Beam, with his new line bourbon

## There's more to Spain than sherry

SPAIN'S vineyards have been seen internationally more than ever in recent weeks as Olympic cyclists and distant runners race through olive orchards and vines. For many people, Spain in wine terms is the country which produces sherry. Indeed it does. The social life of Britain would surely come close to falling apart if sherry supplies were cut off, especially in the over 50 age group. But sherry is only a tiny part of the country's wine production. Spain has many of its own grape varieties, indigenous vines which have grown locally for hundreds, probably thousands of years.

Italy has a similar situation to Spain. Both countries have varieties not seen or known outside of their home country. Spain has tempranillo for example, and parellada, plus many more.

There are some "French" varieties like grenache, and the more recent additions of chardonnay and cabernet sauvignon are growing in their usage and plantings. But the country wines, the true regional wines, are still based around the local grapes which have adjusted to their regions over many years.

### WINE

PETER SAUNDERS

The famous region of Rioja gives us most of the Spanish red wines in New Zealand.

The district is inland, to the north of Spain up towards France. It is best known for red wines and is the largest of the production areas or Denominacion de Origen — like a French appellation.

Most Rioja are regional wines from grapes drawn all over the recognised area. There are few single-estate wines but Reserva indicates wines with at least 12 months in cask, while Gran Reserva labels reds with 14 months in cask and the potential to bottle-age well. The Penedes region is close to Barcelona. It produces a little more than half the volume of Rioja and is dominated by the growing and progressive company of Torres. This company's vineyards pioneered the extensive use of better known grapes than indigenous varieties.

In the Torres range, a hierarchy of labels exists, most of them seen in New Zealand. The reds run from Sangre de Toro (bull's blood) to Coronas and Gran Coronas with the top label (\$59) Gran Coronas Reserva. The lower levels (\$12 to \$22 in New Zealand) carry mainly local varieties but more and more are carrying cabernet sauvignon and merlot is also making its mark. Gran Magdaia is a pinot noir. The white Torres labels also go through their ranking, from Vina Sol (local grapes) to Gran Vina Sol (chardonnay blended in). A green label includes sauvignon blanc.

Torres makes clean wines, away from the old-style slightly musty character from well used wooden tanks and casks, a style slowly being reduced in France as well. Torres has also set out to make user-friendly styles, commercial in volume and price but with drinker appeal. It has worked well.

Marketing may be a problem however, for the growers of Jerez the sherry district in the south of Spain.

Here the old industry still makes its magical styles, from the dry aperitif Fino through the nutty and tangy Amontillado, the smoother, more fruit-oriented Oloroso to the sweet Cream styles, East India and the rich and intense Pedro Ximenez.

These are styles of a generation ago, and what frightens the producers is that their regular drinkers, especially the volume market of England, is dying of old age. Younger drinkers don't find sherry as appealing, choosing light dry whites instead.

Sherry prices have come down, some vineyards torn out, some short-cuts taken to help price. But it hasn't worked.

For those keen on wine, however, sherry is a classical style. Its wines are unique, and they have tremendous appeal and interest. The light, dry styles are very elegant while the broader sherries are wonderful in the afternoon, the sweeter ones a magnificent drink after a meal.

All styles are available here, the most expensive are barely \$40, and each has its place whether as a pre-dinner aperitif, beside a slice of fruit cake or as an alternative to port after dinner.

Spanish sparkling wine has little of the sherry problem. Cava means bottle-fermented sparkling wine from defined regions, the majority coming from Catalonia, near Barcelona.

Famous names like Cordonius, Freixenet and Paredada have been well used by New Zealanders for decades. Only recently with Spain joining the EC, has the term Methode Champenoise finally dropped from labels, some now exchanging the term Methode Traditionelle.

The Cava style varies widely, from light and crisp to quite broad and meaty, some seeming almost too heavy for sparkling wine. At their best, however, Cava, gives us an excellent aperitif, a good summer sipper and a well-priced wine for all those celebrations where sound, sensibly priced sparkling is required. □

• FIND THE BRAND NAMES • COMPETITION

M D Y A I D E E V C K O D R I O L I C T S P E V A C G  
 Y O B L N M K U T R Y Z W O R T X A P R Y Q I T O M N  
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 R E F Z U L K G T M P T K B K S U N T O R Y G E F U S  
 Q V R O D M D A L Z C O R U B A E B Y C X K G N F T E  
 A A A P T V X D W E A E V D C U E N T Z B T T E I O C  
 G Y N A T B C G S H S O P S E W O R I I Q F A D G T M  
 H G G X A T I F L C D D H A R V E Y S E J V P I N A E  
 Y A O C Y D N A P K O D Z A Y A F K L N R O L C A R R  
 N L S R L V Z V C W O L F S C H M I D T W K O T C A I  
 A L V A O B A E M F I L P K I N W M N E L T W I U F T  
 P I S S R W N L O Z P T C W A A L Q Q B Y E S N G V O  
 O A V S S O O L F A Y Z B Q R H X B S G W C H E H V Y  
 L N T O K Z T S U U T F V L W S L W A X R K A S I M E  
 E O W R K T Y E Q Z P A Y A I O B U N I A F R E B A U  
 O V A P F A L S T A F F C M D T L E A K T I V P I R W  
 N H E R O W U T Z H X D F J P G S H F H G Z D P C T I  
 E I M E T A X A I S A B R A O R B O R Z O I Y E T E L  
 J D B T H R A P F C J E K D A X U Y V B N N H L I L S  
 C W O M C A R Y N B E N D E C D B N N C N N O T A L O  
 D V L E E Z D D A H R S S U Z T B K I I T U R S S W N  
 U F S W H F O X G B A I L E Y S F V T E H I S D U E S  
 Y C P C O M B I E R X B E Q P I M M S K R A P M G T A

In this maze of letters are 48 Brand-names of alcoholic beverages found in miniature bottles. As our last competition entirely dealt with Scotches, only one answer out of 48 in this competition is a Scotch.

Please use the actual maze to circle your answers and return entry to: Ken Chin, 29 Norton Park Ave, Fairfield, Lower Hutt, New Zealand.

Competition closes 31 May 1995.

## NEW MEMBERS

DONNA PENWARDEN

Flat 6/57 Tawa St, Mt. Maunganui  
ph: 07-5744305  
Collects mainly Whiskies.

A warm welcome to the club.

\* \* \* \* \*

# D.T.P. NEXT MEETINGS

MARCH 19th 1995  
Sunday

Jackie & David Smith's, Barbeque Lunch, 11.30am  
86 Rawhiti St, Pukerua Bay, Wellington.

APRIL 23rd 1995  
Sunday

Errol & Karen Brassetts, 33 Findlay St, Tawa. 2pm

MAY 20th 1995  
Saturday

Ken & Malee Chin's. Pot Luck Dinner & Swap Meet. 6.30pm  
29 Norton Park Ave, Fairfield, Lower Hutt.

JUNE 18th 1995  
Sunday

Colin & Rae Kilpatrick's, 6 St. Edmunds St, Tawa. 2pm





# Membership Application Form

NAME.....

TELEPHONE Nos. (Home)..... (Work).....

ADDRESS.....

.....

Do you specialise in any particular area of miniature bottle collecting?

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.....

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## CURRENT MEMBERSHIP FEES ARE:

New Zealand NZ\$12 or NZ\$18 for a family membership

Overseas:	USA & Canada	US\$12 or equivalent	Foreign currency accepted but no overseas cheques due to the cost of cashing
	Australia	A\$15 or equivalent	
	Europe/Asia/Africa	£10 or equivalent	

ALL MEMBERSHIPS RUN FOR A FULL YEAR FROM YOUR DATE OF JOINING.

## Port Nicholson Miniature Bottle Club

P.O. Box 384 Wellington New Zealand