



A supple Shiraz special

Braydun Hill Premium Handpicked Shiraz 2004, \$58

Jenny Tan
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A FEW days ago, I received an e-mail from a well-meaning and enthusiastic public relations executive who was handling a major wine account.

'The wines have won some accolades in the wine shows, and received favourable ratings from wine critics... would you like me to get the information from my client so you can consider the feature in the wine column?' she said.

I sighed, and just typed: which competition, and what ratings? I have come to regard wine competitions with the same measure of caution and cynicism as I have towards blogs. There are just too many out there, and searching for credible ones - where wines are judged by a credible panel, organised wisely, and with wines served and treated properly - is too much work.

And part of the fun of tasting wines widely is really to discover the hidden gems before they get onto the international media's radar, or before they slap on those gold medal stickers onto their bottles.

I met Tony Dunn and Carol Bradley, owners of Braydun Hill winery in South Australia, when they were in town for the Wine For Asia exhibition recently. As the good-humoured Dunn - who was seated in a wheelchair, the result of a horse-riding accident a few years ago - poured me wine after wine, I couldn't help but notice they were different vintages of the same wine.

'Is that the only wine you make?' I asked, surprised.

It turns out that the answer is yes, and the reason is that the owners of the six-year-old winery in the McLaren Vale region pride themselves on being specialists of Shiraz.

Ironically, the couple had not intended to bottle their wine and had planted 4ha of vines in 1998, with the intention of selling the grapes.

Grape-growing, it turns out, was not a walk in the park. Dunn met with his accident subsequently, and when their first batch of grapes was sold in 2001, the buyers could not pay them at the end of the year.

But this, as he admitted, proved to be the turning point for them. They took the wine from the buyers, employed their winemaker and subsequently started Braydun Hill.

'The good response has been overwhelming,' Dunn said, pleased. And it won't be long before they get more awards on the international stand.

TASTE TEST

Black cherries and mint on the nose, followed through by good concentration of more black berries, a touch of spiciness, chocolate and backed by good oak. A supple wine with finesse.

PAIR WITH

Red meats such as roast beef or lamb stews.

AVAILABILITY

Vindulgence (www.vindulgence.com.sg, E-mail: enquiry@vindulgence.com.sg, tel: 9859-0431)