

Wine Connoisseur

Bobby Lee Lawrence

Photography by Russell Bamert



What's been happening in the wine industry over the last decade is nothing short of amazing! As the demand for higher quality wine increased, supply was out-paced, making it difficult to obtain. Now, more vineyards are breaking from traditional winemaking techniques, and using new methods are producing wines that are drinkable when released. These changes came about through information sharing by notable winemakers. A good example of that exchange is winemaker Daryl Groom of the Groom family winery in Australia's

Enthusiast have sent notice to all that it's a new world.

Now is the time to put your taste buds in overdrive! Never in all the years of wine-making has fine quality wine been so affordable and available. So what are some of these excellent buys? Glad you asked! Wines coming out of Australia, New Zealand, California and, happily, New Mexico are on the list - and the New Mexico Wine Association is fostering these emerging local vineyards.



Herve Lescombes

Barossa Valley, who was responsible for creating the 1988 & 1990 Grange, Australia's most awarded wine. He subsequently spent two years in California at Geysler Peak Winery sharing information, resulting in improved wines by both vineyards.

The days of snobbery by Sommeliers and the use of secret techniques by winemakers are past history. Wine consumers are more educated, and the availability of information about wine from sources such as *Wine Spectator* and *Wine*

My intentions in this column are to make some wine recommendations that will delight your taste buds and pair with foods you consume on a regular basis. I will also make recommendations on wines for those special occasions in your life.

I am often asked to compare wines - how I feel a wine stacks up to a particular rating, or what I feel is the best wine to buy. I don't have a prepared answer for that particular question, but I do know that what is important is to know individual

"Santé!"

(what you say when offering a toast in French)



Emmanuel Lescombes



Florent Lescombes



D.H. Lescombes 2002 Fume Blanc

preferences, as each person has a unique palate. In addition, it's important to know the conditions under which the wine will be consumed. Keep in mind that the only standard of taste in wine is your own preference.

Recently, I had the great pleasure of spending time with one of New Mexico's most well known wine families. In 1983, Herve Lescomes founded the family owned Blue Teal Vineyards. As a fifth generation winemaker, Mr. Lescombes operated the famous Domaine de Perignon in Burgundy, France. A native of Algeria, seeking new opportunities, Mr. Lescombes decided to move to New Mexico because the hot desert days, cool nights and sandy soil was similar to his native Algeria.

Currently, Blue Teal produces seven white wines and three reds. In keeping with the good quality and fair price recommendations, I will focus on their premium line, the D.H. Lescombes label.



Danielle Lescombes

In our next issue I will profile more New Mexico wine producers and add a few recipes for you to try, as well as a section on "Selecting a Wine for your Meal" and how to choose a wine that fits your taste. Remember, there is a reason why wine is called the "Nectar of the Gods"!

Special thanks to Mme. Danielle Lescombes for sharing the history of the Blue Teal Winery.

Bobby Lee Lawrence recently retired to Las Cruces after a long career with NBC News in New York. Mr. Lawrence attended the Culinary Institute of America and also studied at the Cordon Bleu in Paris.

"Wine is bottled poetry"

Robert Louis Stevenson

The red wine I sampled was the D.H. Lescombes 1999 Cabernet Sauvignon. Aged for 18 months in French Oak, it has good balance. This wine imparted subtle roasted coffee, black current, and black cherry aromas with a hint of chocolate, which is very typical of Cabernet. The tannins are firm but pleasant. (Tannin comes from the grape skins and the oak barrel ageing is what gives the wine a dry taste.) As wine ages, the tannins will soften. On a scale of 100, I would rate this wine an 87.



D.H. Lescombes 1999 Cabernet Sauvignon

Cabernet Sauvignon is known as "The King of Red Wines". My recommendation would be to pair this with a good steak or prime rib. For a more casual meal, serve with pasta and a spicy red sauce. For those lovers of New Mexico cuisine, try this wine with green or red chile sauce over grilled halibut served on a bed of Mexican rice.

Not everyone has the palate for red wine, so here is a recommendation for a white wine. It is the 2002 D.H. Lescombes Fume Blanc, which recently won a medal in *Wine Spectator* magazine. Aged in French Oak, this release has overtones of melon, vanilla, and citrus. The complex finish leaves a lingering taste of citrus with a hint of smoky oak (this variety is really Sauvignon Blanc, which was renamed by Robert Mondavi in the 1970's.) I would rate this wine an 85. Serve chilled with your favorite fish, chicken or salad. Avoid strong dressings on the salad, as this will upset the excellent flavors of the wine.

Purveyors of Fine Wines & Spirits



Southern New Mexico's Most Diverse Selection of Foreign & Domestic Wines

- Special Tequilas, Scotches and Vodkas
- Gift Baskets
- Large Selection of Liqueurs
- Catering for Groups & Parties

Celebrating our 10th Anniversary

Open Daily
 Mon-Thurs 8am - 9pm
 Fri & Sat 8am - 10pm
 Sun 12 noon - 9pm

3995 W. Picacho
 505-524-9503