



I love Christmas. The lead up to Christmas often leaves me tired, cranky and hung over (yes, entirely my fault!) but I still hold on to a sense of excitement and goodwill that stems from my childhood.

It's not that I get a lot of presents, because I don't, and the few I do get are often ones I had to buy myself or just stuff we needed for the house like the replacement microwave I have been needing all year. It's more about spending time with friends and family and just letting go and relaxing after the mad rush leading up to it.

Christmas Day is usually lovely but too soon over, as are the parties in the weeks beforehand – but I look forward to each one throughout the year all the same. Sure I am strapped for cash before, during and after. I laugh when I hear someone say “just put it on credit” – we definitely have no space on that little black hole of a card! The same people seem to have bottomless bank balances and don't appear to hesitate over the smallest expense – but then perhaps they have bottomless debt too!

I'm definitely a party girl, I love to get glammed up, put on sky-high stilettos and some bodgey makeup and pretend I am pretty for the night. The support undies & super lift bra suck everything in that should be sucked in and hold everything up that desperately needs to be held up—with the exception of my tuck shop arms which you would think would be sleekly muscular with all the heavy lifting of books and boxes I do all day at work.

Generally getting ready to go out means trying on ten different dresses that expose my arms to different degrees and ripping them off again and settling for the same old little black dress with short sleeves to hide my worst feature and a plunging neckline to highlight my best! By the time I have done this I am all hot and sweaty and pissed off and feel like I need another shower! Invariably this well rehearsed performance of stripping and settling winds up with me only having 5 minutes to slap on the spak-filler to smooth over the laugh-lines. Lines—more like gorges—it's clearly laughing hysterically too often that causes the damage. I should

try a more feminine brief giggle instead of my evil cackles perhaps... nah...laughing till you wet yourself is way more fun.

Our whole day is flat out from beginning to end trying to get all the boxes of stock out and help customers with their reading choices and shopping lists—it only gets crazier at Christmas with everyone wanting everything yesterday and not understanding why the book they saw in the shop 3 months ago isn't on the shelf anymore. Customers and staff alike are cranky and worried about how they are going to get everything done (and afford it) in time for Christmas and we often have to take deep breaths to clear our heads while working on ten different tasks at 500 miles an hour.

Still some customers who have been forced to wait a whole minute at the counter while you serve someone else will look at you like you have been sitting down reading—because apparently that is all we do in a book store! Most though are wonderful, our regulars know us well and that we will be able to help them find lots of great presents and some absorbing holiday reading but they may have to stand in line a little to get what they want. If only we had oompah loompahs unpacking the books and getting them on the shelves so we could just concentrate on good service.

I thrive in the Christmas season though, through all the long hours and mad dashing, I have this strange full feeling in my heart that makes me feel like a child all wide eyed and excited about Santa. I feel like hugging everyone and want to believe that some Christmas bank miracle will pay all my bills and leave some left over for presents for everyone I love. The problem

with working in such a great store is that every day I see books my kids, family and friends would love, and I just want to give give give.

We can all be jaded and cynical about Christmas, about how commercial it has all become and how we give too many things to our kids who don't appreciate them as much as we seem to remember doing when we were young. We can often feel sick inside because we don't know where the money is coming from to pay the electricity let alone buy as few small presents.

Hopefully, what we don't stop doing is making an effort to spend time with people whose company we enjoy.

And that we make some room in our hearts and schedules for those we don't spare much time for—from our kids to our parents and grandparents, and to complete strangers who need a helping hand. We are more likely to remember the people who made our lives memorable rather than the gifts they gave us.

And if you are unable to give time or help (clean out your closets and toy-boxes and donate the stuff you don't need anymore!) then think about donating blood; blood donations are always urgently needed to save lives every day of the week, and the need for it only increases every holiday period as people take to the nation's

roads in droves to visit family or take holidays. If you hesitate at the idea of a needle or giving blood think about this for a moment—what would you do to save the lives of people you love? Your blood donation saves lives. Real people every day. And it won't cost you a cent to give that gift of life.

Wishing you all a Merry Christmas—personally the past year has been very tough but has had its wonderful moments as well,. In 2012 I hope things will get easier and that there are many many good times ahead for us all.

Whian Whian Wine Society



The Whian Whian Wine Society met on Saturday evening—as they have each month for the past four and a half years. The society was formed from a group of locals with a common interest in wine and a desire to learn and share. Each member or couple take turns to host the evening—choosing the wines to be tasted and providing interesting dishes to accompany the wines. Most evenings these wines are presented “blind”, and members attempt to identify the wine through grape variety, age, origin, and “desireability”. One would think that after 4 ½ years the members would be showing expertise in this test —unfortunately this is not often the case!

At our most recent gathering, five wines were presented; three whites and two red wines. Our hosts disguised the whites by decanting them into other bottles thus

preventing the taster to recognize the Reislung by the normal long necked bottle shape. Some of the members were able to see through this disguise and select

the grape and its wine-making origin. Much earnest discussion followed each tasting as to its desirability—varying between each member.

The wines tasted in the order of presentation were:

Cookoothama Riesling – 2009, from Victoria's cool climate, King Valley
Painted Wings Riesling – 2009, bottled by Waipara Vintners, Sth. Island, New Zealand.

Jacobs Creek Reserve Riesling – 2010, South Australia.

And the Reds :

Benchmark - 2010, Grant Burge Cabernet Shiraz, South Australia

Benchmark – 2009, Grant Burge Shiraz, Sth. Australia.

A Trivia Quiz accompanied the tasting—some of the questions below with

answers following.

1. Approx. how many hours of sunshine are required to ripen grapes?

A.900 B.1300 C.1800 D.2200

2. What percentage of wine is comprised of water?

A.75-80% B.80-85% C.85-90% or D.90-95%.

3. When was the corkscrew invented?

A. mid 1600's B. mid 1700's C. mid 1800's or D. mid 1900's

Altogether, another most enjoyable tasting, with everyone looking forward to a “merry” Yuletide season.

(Answers to Quiz: 1B 2B and 3C)

Enjoy wine in moderation.

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