

**THE 29TH INTERNATIONAL BEEFSTEAK AND BURGUNDY CONVENTION
DARWIN, NORTHERN TERRITORY, AUSTRALIA
1ST to 3rd JUNE 2012**

GETTING THERE

Thirty one members from eight of clubs travelled from Adelaide to Darwin on the “Ghan”, one of the great railway journeys of the world, to attend the Convention. Travel arrangements had been coordinated and delegates were provided distinctive Burgundy coloured lanyards so that they could be easily recognised as B&B members.

A further 26 members, mainly from the Wellington Club in New Zealand, joined the Ghan at Alice Springs. Old friendships were renewed and new ones made in the very noisy and friendly club and dining carriages.



Departing Adelaide

The Ghan arrived in Katherine at nine o'clock on the Tuesday for three and three quarter hour stay. The local “Never Never Ladies B&B Club” members were at the station to greet delegates, complete with banner.



“The Never Never Ladies” welcome

Some delegates took up the offer of The “Never Never Ladies” to be shown around Katherine, visit some of the interesting sites and enjoy their hospitality. This included passing some of the interesting locations where that club has held their dinners that have featured on the News Page over the years.



At the Top Didj art gallery in Katherine

FRIDAY 1ST JUNE - THE CONVENTION BEGINS

Registration at the Holiday Inn began at 1pm. Delegates enjoyed cheese and fruit platters and a range of wines for tasting from Ad Hoc winery.

Wines included were:

- NV Sparkling The Riddler Pinot Noir/Chardonnay W.A.
- 2011 Straw Man Sauvignon Blanc Margaret River
- 2011 Nitty Gritty Pinot Grigio Pemberton
- 2011 Cruel Mistress Pinot Noir Great Southern
- 2010 Etcetera Cabernet Merlot and The Rest Margaret River
- 2010 Cherubino Shiraz

The registration packs and convention booklets provided included an interesting and helpful array of information including:

- Local tourist information and pamphlets
- One specially prepared convention stubby holder
- Booklets “The Wonders of The Top End” and “The Wonders of The Red Centre” by Sebina Lange donated by Jude and Tony Pickering
- Books (all signed by their authors): “Looking for the H Chord” by Monte Dwyer, “A War at Home” by Tom Lewis and “Top End” by David Hancock.

The Convention Handbook included a welcome from Darwin President and Convention Chairman Jason Schoolmeester, Convention Programme, places to visit, Restaurants, dress code, lists of delegates, useful telephone numbers and Convention Supporters: Rockbare Wines and Crocosaurus Cove.

OPENING PARTY - 6.30 TO 11.30 PM

The Friday welcome function was at Crocosaurus Cove, located in the heart of the city, an informal venue that reflected Darwin and the Top End. On arrival staff members cradled various reptiles including lizards, crocodiles and snakes for our inspection and even a gentle pat. During the evening delegates were able to also get closely acquainted with them as well and for the adventurous feed the crocodiles.



On arrival delegates enjoyed a glass of Mojo Chardonnay/Pinot Noir NV Brut Cuvee from Adelaide Hills.



IP Brian Lilley and Adelaide Club members

Food stations served an array of food including Australian prawn cutlets served with tropical mango and coconut salsa in a paper cone, sumptuous Coffin Bay oysters topped with lemon grass and coriander dressing served in their shell and bush tomato butter chicken. These were accompanied by 2011 Mojo Sauvignon Blanc and 2008 Coriole McLaren Vale Nebbiolo Rose.

Delegates were welcomed with speeches from Jason Schoolmeester, Darwin Mayor Katrina Fong Lim, who officially opened the convention, and International President Brian Lilley.

One of the highlights of the evening was the inclusion of examples of grain and grass fed Angus beef supplied by T&R Pastoral Pty Ltd, Murray Bridge South Australia. Both the grain and grass fed beef cuts were delicious.

The reds, 2011 Mojo Shiraz and 2008 Torpedo Rocks Cabernet Sauvignon from Margaret River drank well with the beef and the Torpedo Rocks was particularly suited to the savannah lamb which was also being served.

Tropical fruits and various cheese selections completed the meal and Vertigo 2008 Adelaide Hills Riesling and Bird in the Hand Clare Valley Honeysuckle Riesling had a touch of sweetness about them which complimented the cheese and fruits.

SATURDAY MORNING BUSINESS SESSION

The Business Session began at 9.30. For non-members there was an alternative activity of a bus trip to Parap Village Saturday Market. International President Brian Lilley opened proceedings by introducing General Secretary Craig Thornquest, Vice President Paul Kershaw and Past President Peter Johnston. There were 239 delegates at the convention representing 39 clubs.

Main points were:

- Website a work in progress being continually improved. Now the main source of information following the discontinuing of "B&Bulletin".
- Handbook now to be issued as Calendar Year. Still in hard copy owing to confidentiality.
- Branch Affiliation fees will see a nominal increase of \$10 and late fee \$50 for local clubs and half those figures for overseas clubs.
- There is a detailed explanation of Life Members procedures on website.
- New business tie embraced by members as sales brisk.
- 25th Anniversaries 2011/12 - Middleback, Beijing, Yarra Falls and Mackay.
- 50th Anniversaries 2011/12 - Port Phillip, Caxton, Somerton, Holdfast, The Rocks and Mirrabooka.
- During 2011/12 six new clubs have formed including three in China.

A website presentation was made offering support to clubs considering setting up their own website.

It is pleasing to see that there are clubs keen to host conventions and entertaining presentations were made, firstly by Yarrawonga Mulwala complete with the haunting song "I'm going back to Yarrawonga" and an animated drinking bull taking a sip from its wine glass - 22nd to 24th March 2013 with a trip to Rutherglen on the Monday.

Presentations were also made by Brighton, Lockleys and Burnside jointly for 2014, probably 10th to 12th October and John Bowen, Hobart, for 2016, probably 22nd to 24th May, their 50th anniversary.

During General Business the possibility of having a convention overseas was raised. A brief account from Past President Phil Kleinig about his visit to China, along with some other members of the Adelaide Club, for the 25th Anniversary of the Beijing Club highlighted the abundant attractions of China, the fine food and French inspired

wines were of great interest to those present. It was quite clear that a convention in China would be strongly supported by those present.

There was some confusion among delegates about the origins of “The Duck” that has been turning up at conventions since 2000 in Alice Springs. It is hoped that a video of the explanation of the origins of The Duck can be found and made available. This was of the late Rod Beaumont, Convention Chairman of Launceston Club, for the 1999 Convention explaining its origins.

A link to the Minutes of the Business Session is on this page – 2012 Convention.

SATURDAY GALA DINNER 6.30 To 11.30PM

The venue was the Star City Casino, outdoors on the lawn with the sea lapping near our tables, beautiful calm palm trees, spectacular sunset – a magnificent open air venue.

Delegates were welcomed with a glass of sparkling – either 2008 Blue Pyrenees Methode Traditionelle Midnight Cuvee Chardonnay or Clare Valley Mitchell Peppertree Shiraz. It was the only Convention function where menus were provided, a copy of which is included below.

There was an outstanding blend of delicious food and fine wines served. The food and wines were introduced by the head chef and the Winemaster which added to the appreciation and understanding. Pleasant background music was provided by “Take 2”.

It was an outstanding dinner topped off by the silent ritual of “passing the port”, a Grant Burge 20 year old Tawny. The tradition is to pass the port to the left and it must not touch the table. Some regretted that many of our past traditions have “withered on the vine”. Speaking of which, delegates were invited to sample some of the grapes from bunches decorating the perimeter of our dining area.

What an excellent dinner it was. Long will it live in our memory.



The setting



A happy table of ten.



Entrée

CHILLED CROCODILE TERRINE WITH
BLOOD ORANGE MARMALADE AND PASPALEY PEARL MEAT
CEVICHE WITH LOCAL MUD CRAB IN APPLE CIDER JELLY
ACCOMPANIED WITH MICRO HERBS AND WASABI MAYO

ROCKBARE McLAREN VALE CHARDONNAY 2009

Main Course

SEARED AGED BEEF FILLET WITH KING OYSTER MUSHROOM,
BLACK FOREST SPECK SHAVINGS, GREEN PEA PUREE,
SMOKED KIPFLER POTATO AND PORCINI JUS

ROCKBARE BURVILL SHIRAZ 2006

BAROSSA BABE SHIRAZ 2008

Dessert

BITTER VALRHONA CHOCOLATE MOUSSE TART
WITH STRAWBERRY DISCS, BLUEBERRY MERINGUE TOWER,
WHITE CHOCOLATE JELLY AND SAFFRON DOLLOPS

ROCKBARE CANE CUT VIOGNIER

Cheese

TASMANIAN HERITAGE SIGNATURE BLUE AND CRACKER BARREL
GOLD RELEASE VINTAGE CHEDDAR SERVED WITH WATERMELON
RIND PICKLE AND WALNUT CRISP BREAD.

BAROSSA BABE MOURVEDRE 2006

COFFEE, TEA AND PETIT FOURS

SUNDAY LUNCH 12.30 TO 3.30PM

Our venue was “Il Lido” on the Darwin Waterfront Precinct overlooking the Darwin Harbour, a great location to finish the Convention.

The smoked salmon and pitta bread course was enjoyed with a 2003 Latache Rose Sparkling wine, 60% Margaret River Pinot Noir, 30% Manjimup Pinot Noir and 10% Manjimup Chardonnay.

Other wines served with the Aricini balls, mushroom risotto, rocket salad, char grilled steak and fruit salad were Alta Vineyards 2011 Sauvignon Blanc, 2011 Alta Pinot Grigio and 2011 Alta “For Elsie” Pinot Noir Rose, all Adelaide Hills. The reds were Rockbare 2010 McLaren Vale Shiraz and 2008 Mount Langi Ghiran Cliff Edge Shiraz.

There were closing speeches with special thanks to the Convention Committee: Jason Schoolmeester, John Bayliss, Darryl Thomas, Michael Scott, Wayne Nicholls and David Wallach.



The General Secretary and the Conference Chair

The convention closed after what has become traditional passing of The Duck mascot to the next host club, Yarrowonga Mulwala, and expressions of thanks from President Brian Lilley.



Darwin's Jason Schoolmeester and Yarrowonga Mulwala's Peter Bennett

SUNDAY EVENING

After the Convention some delegates chose a sunset cruise on Darwin Harbour, others a visit to Mindil Beach Market while others just kept on going at the waterfront! Thus another enjoyable Convention ended.

Many delegates then took the opportunity of spending some time in the Top End.



Thanks to Jim Freebairn and Phil Kleining.