

## Vinotology Wine Blog

The musings and tastings of a wine enthusiast

### Reserving Judgment on Yellow Tail Reserve

# winetwits™



If you've read much of my previous work on this blog, you know that I am probably as likely to use **Yellow Tail** as the punchline of a joke as I am to actually drink it. I, like most people my age, spent my time drinking the kangaroo labeled wine during my poor college years and early twenties. I was recently approached about hosting a local tasting for a national online Shiraz tasting event featuring **Yellow Tail Reserve**, I decided that I would suspend my previous opinions of YT and give it a shot. The event was organized by the good folks at [WineTwits](#), and was a blind tasting of four different Shiraz wines, one of which was **Yellow Tail Reserve**, the rest of the wines were a mystery.

**WineTwits** is an online wine community site that revolves around Twitter. One aspect of the site revolves around events, giving event organizers a place to organize tweets surrounding the event. This event stepped that up a notch, with a live video feed of **Doug Frost**, a Master Sommelier and Master of Wine, and **Yellow Tail** owner **John Casella** at the live event in Boston. The event was by invitation only, and featured groups across the country, including Austin, Los Angeles, Seattle, Boston, and of course my event in Prosser, Washington.

The format of the event was very interesting, with each group able to autonomously go through the tasting and talk amongst themselves, and then tweet their impressions of each wine. The video feed offered some additional input about what was being said at the different locations, as well as some informative comments from [Mr. Frost](#). My one complaint about the video feed was that it felt a little like "Wine Tasting For Dummies", with a full crash course in

beginning tasting, as well as what we should be experiencing in the wines. Maybe that was the intent, as this group was somewhat mixed regarding their background. I'm sure the information was very useful for those who were not experienced as tasters, but our group was primarily made up of experienced wine people, and it felt a bit like we were back in kindergarten. Despite that complaint, I enjoyed having the video feel to go along with the event, and not just because my good friend [Amanda Maynard](#) of [Wineing Woman](#) fame was on the feed of the live event in Boston, and it felt like we were hanging out again.

## The Wines



The real focus of the event was the wines, which varied greatly in price, and in drinkability. I have rarely been at a tasting where a wine was as universally panned and slammed as the first wine in the blind tasting was.

**Wine No. 1 - 2007 Archetype Shiraz - Barossa, Australia - \$15**

Descriptions of this wine seemed to center around burned coffee, with an acrid coffee smell

jumping out on the nose. Also hints of brine, a little meaty aroma, and some earth. The palate was thin, with some bramble fruits. Not much going on with this one, and our panel, and most of the other comments I saw on Twitter, were almost totally negative. The wine also seemed to get worse the longer we had it open, as every time I went back to the wine I was more put off by it.

**Wine No. 2 - 2008 Marquis Philips Shiraz - McLaren Vale, Australia - \$13**

The nose on this wine was very hot, with dried fruit aromas, especially cranberry. I also got a touch of barnyard with this wine. More heat on the palate, jammy dark fruits, decent acid, and some detectable residual sugar. I didn't like this wine, as it represents everything that has turned me off to Aussie Shiraz in the past, but I am sure that there are some who would enjoy the semi-sweet jammy flavors of the wine. The alcohol, not surprisingly, came in at 16% on this one.

**Wine No. 3 - 2006 D' Areberg The Dead Arm Shiraz - McLaren Vale, Australia - \$60**

This one was the first wine to really stand out to me. None of us were surprised to learn that it was the most expensive wine that we tasted, as it was pretty easily the group favorite. Anise, menthol, red fruit and a little tar made appearances on the nose, with some bright dark fruit notes and nice acid filling out the palate. The wine was balanced and drank well. I enjoyed this wine, although there are wines that I would rather spend \$60 on, so I probably wouldn't purchase it in the future. Still, I think this is definitely a nice wine, and worth a try.

**Wine No. 4 - 2008 Yellow Tail Reserve Shiraz - Southeastern Australia - \$11**

This wine performed very well at our tasting. It seemed like we had a consensus among our tasting group that this was the second favorite among the wines that we tried, and at \$11 it was a much better value than The Dead Arm. The nose was dominated by dark fruits and oaky vanilla notes, with some nice spicy components. The palate was pleasantly drinkable, with a full body and more dark fruit and pepper coming through. There wasn't much to the wine in the way of acidity. At \$11 this wine is definitely worth taking a shot on as a Tuesday night wine.

## The Finish

I think that the organizers of the event did a great job of putting everything together. The **WineTwits** folks, **David Frost**, and **John Casella** all made this a very enjoyable event. The event was fun, and generated a lot of great conversation. I really preferred this format to the typical global Twitter tasting, where everyone madly tweets back and forth about the wines in completely isolated environments. Wine is a social beverage, and this event really gave the participants the ability to combine real personal interaction with the Twitter tasting aspect.



For **Yellow Tail**, I think the event was a home run. They got exactly what they wanted out of the event. They stood their wine up against more expensive wines, and the wine performed pretty well. They showed that their reserve wines are a good value, and they had the opportunity to demonstrate this to at least some people who have not typically been fans of their wines.

I look forward to seeing more of this type of event in the future. I think that on a longer timeline, this type of tasting will replace the more free-for-all style of Twitter events, as the social aspects are so much more enjoyable, and the interaction more valuable.

Thanks to **WineTwits** and **Yellow Tail** for organizing the event and supplying the wines, and to **[Mercer Estates Winery](#)** for hosting our local gathering.