

Strong news and views on Oz wine

6 Jul 2009 by Jancis Robinson

Two (more) recent articles are worth reading if you're interested in the Australian wine business.

The Business section of the *New York Times* weighed in on Friday with this little reminder just before Independence Day of how much better American wine is doing than Australian:

[For Australian Winemakers, More Turns Out to Be Less](#)

And, even gloomier, from yesterday's *Sunday Mail* in Australia comes news of [Wine prices driven lower than water](#).

Meanwhile, US importer of Australian wines Chuck Hayward tries to redress the balance in his blog [She'll Be Right, Mate - But It'll Be Hard Yards Getting There](#).

The generic body Wine Australia is doing its best to concentrate on the undoubted positives on the Australian winescape, all those hand-crafted wines expressing a regional message to which I referred in [How Australia went down under](#). But Felicity Carter, the new (Australian) editor-in-chief of *Meininger's Wine Business International*, who took over from [Joel Payne](#) last year, is to give a lecture in her homeland to the Wine Communicators of Australia later this month arguing, that 'it's time for Australia to think big'. At the WCA July 2009 Lecture, the organisers promise that 'she will tell us that it's time to focus on the big picture - and that the current regionality strategy is too narrow to solve the many problems facing Australia. "As the export markets get more competitive, almost every other major wine industry is pursuing a similar strategy," says Carter.

"Although regionality is important, Australia urgently needs new ways to connect - in ways that can't be copied."

"A good start, she suggests, is less geography and more personality. "We need to get rid of the PR flaks and the men in suits and put some winemakers on planes," she says.

"And then let's ask Cate Blanchett to be our wine ambassador."

"But more important, she says, is the fact that export markets will never believe that Australia is a producer of fine wines for as long as Brand Australia stands for nothing but sunshine, beaches and wet T-shirt competitions.

"People simply don't believe that 'Australia' and 'fine wine' go together," she says. "It's urgent that the wine industry get involved with the discussions going on at the national level about new directions for Tourism Australia."

More details on those lectures in Sydney and Melbourne from www.winecommunicators.com.au

This, incidentally, was the outfit to which I delivered my lecture in February on [Wine journalists - an endangered species?](#) I ruefully but strongly suggest to Felicity that, unlike me, she writes her speech in advance. It will save her HOURS of going through a rambling transcription.