News round-up at the turn of the year

22 Nov 2004 by JR

A few brief follow-ups on previous stories.

- The giant French wine company Castel HAS finally acquired the quirky British off-licence chain Oddbins from Seagram to add to their much smaller chain of Nicolas wine shops in Britain. They stress that they will be operating the two independently. Nicolas will continue to be almost exclusively French (as it is in France) whereas Oddbins will continue to buy in all sorts of weird corners of the wine world. Castel's first priority *chez* Oddbins is to give the chain a good clean up, or what is described in the official press release as 'an extensive programme of refurbishment throughout the estate'. Will they impose a dress code on the staff, one wonders?

- After a few weeks of intensive gossiping around Adelaide, South Australia, following Asian brewer Lion Nathan's hostile takeover of the Petaluma group, Petaluma's creator Brian Croser has announced that oh all right then, I will stay on. He's agreed to be chairman of the Lion Nathan Wine Group. (This after Dominique Bach who arrived as managing director only in October agreed to scuttle off.) Lion Nathan also control a majority of the Banksia wine group which includes St Halletts.

- More American-Australian consolidation: Kendall Jackson have formalised their investment in South Australia with the purchase of a 172-hectare 'ranch' (probably the only estate to be so called in the whole of Australia) in McLaren Vale. Eringa Park is the name of the place, Yangarra Park the name of KJ's main brand down under, for the moment. The former is about to be renamed the latter.