

Singapore gives to Room to Read

6 May 2010 by Jancis Robinson

Pausing only to mail our postal votes for today's election, Nick and I flew to Singapore last Monday night. Last night we had the huge pleasure of seeing a gala wine dinner at the St Regis in Singapore raise almost £1 million, or \$1.5 million, for [Room to Read](#), the brilliantly run charity that brings education to those who need it most in the developing world.

South African wine came to our aid again (see this report of our [London event](#) last November which raised a very similar sum) - and seemed especially appropriate now that Room to Read has moved into southern Africa. The following wines were generously donated by their producers and shipped by Wines of South Africa, with such precise timing that half of them were still in customs yesterday afternoon.

Serving four wines at a time to almost 400 people without confusion was quite a challenge but one to which the St Regis staff responded with grace and efficiency. Run by dynamos Ann Burgraff Rowell and Anna-Carin Hart, the Singapore chapter was already Room to Read's fourth most successful, after Hong Kong, Tokyo and Sydney. The crowd took particular delight in bidding for more girls' scholarships than the HK chapter ever had - with the final tally totalling the equivalent of a thousand years of education. (Part of Room to Read's philosophy is actively to promote girls' education, not just because they are often discriminated against in the developing world, but also on the basis that literate mothers will be able to educate their children.)

Room to Read is celebrating its 10th anniversary this year and has just opened its 10,000th library on a trek in Nepal on which founder John Wood, pictured here with book delivery truck, included his parents.

APERITIF

Pierre Jourdan Brut NV Cap Classique

All from handsome magnums, though opened in the regular way rather than with sabre as at Haute Cabrière. Very full and fruity but very well made and well balanced.

CHARDONNAYS

Bouchard Finlayson, Kaaimansgat/Crocodile's Lair Chardonnay 2008

Cool and clean and lean. Great food wine and should have a beautiful future.

Glen Carlou Chardonnay Quartz Stone 2008 Paarl

Relatively full and very flattering and gorgeous but not heavy. Already quite easy to appreciate but I know from experience it's likely to age well.

Springfield Estate, Wild Yeast Chardonnay 2006 Robertson

Funky nose and masses of personality. Still youthful. Mineral streak.

BORDEAUX BLENDS

Cederberg, Private Cellar Cabernet Sauvignon 2007 Cederberg

Herby and distinctive with very fine acid and tannins. Sinewy.

Dornier, Donatus Red 2006 Stellenbosch

Pure Cabernet juice at the moment, with an ambitiously dry finish. Hold for a year or more.

Jordan, Cobblers Hill 2005 Stellenbosch

Lovely complexity but warm and welcoming. Lovely already. Warm, flattering finish.

Morgenhof Estate 2004 Simonsberg-Stellenbosch

Very complete and subtle with a dry finish but lots of refined fruit too. Definite French influence perceptible here. To be drunk with food.

RHÔNE(ISH) REDS

Creation Wines, Syrah/Grenache 2008 Walker Bay

Rich and warm and really very reminiscent of the southern Rhône indeed. Some rich complexity and persistence.

Stellenzicht, Golden Triangle Pinotage 2007 Stellenbosch

Sweet and jewellic. Lots of fruit and not a hint of paint, varnish or drains. A fine Pinotage.

Company of Wine People, Kumkani Shiraz 2006 Stellenbosch

Easy, sweetish modern Shiraz.

Yarra Yering Underhill Shiraz 2006 Yarra Valley

Not South African but Australian... Single vineyard Shiraz from flatter land on this famous Yarra Valley estate, now part-owned by Ed Peter, who was our auctioneer. Bloody, rich, refined, polished. Very distinctive. Older vines than the South African ones presumably.

BONNE BOUCHE

Henri Giraud, Ratafia de Champagne

Not South African but French... Delicately tawny vin doux naturel. Good with the cheese.