



TIP OF THE TONGUE with PETER SCUDAMORE-SMITH, www.uncorkedandcultivated.com.au

QUEENSLAND'S first wine grapes were planted on the western Darling Downs during the 1860s. But that piece of history pales against the original lands where wine grapes were growing in the 8th century BC in Georgia. That meant Georgian winemaking predated the influence of the Greeks.

Now a little bit of Georgia has made it to Queensland with the planting of the principal red grape of this central European country bordering the Black Sea.

It is saperavi, distinctive due to its deep

red pulp (varieties such as cabernet and shiraz are clear-fleshed) and easy way of growing.

Some of the largest Australian plantings of this variety occur in the South Burnett.

The wines are richly coloured, the taste long-flavoured and very memorable. Three companies grow it – Ballandean Estate, Clovely Estate and Ridgemill Estate.

It is no secret that the Georgian dictator Joseph Stalin who once ruled Russia exclusively drank wine of the saperavi grape. Now here is a chance for Queensland drinkers, too.

Clovely Artisan Kartlis Deda Saperavi 2012, 93 Bottle 460

Alcohol 14.5%

South Burnett (\$90)

MAKER Luke Fitzpatrick has enjoyed a wonderful ride of discovery and surprise in making this select parcel of mouth-filling saperavi.

Like the Ballandean Estate, it received careful barrel ageing, though smaller in quantity as it is a very select parcel. Clovely is



clearly aspirational about the potential for this grape in the Moffatdale region, with its grape history. Kartlis Deda was a Georgian wine god which Clovely has borrowed!

● www.clovely.com.au

Clovely Artisan Polyphemus Passito Shiraz, 91 Bottle 768

Alcohol 15%

South Burnett (\$90)

THIS is a new style of wine to this country, though ancient to Italy where it is practised widely in Veneto, Tuscany and southern Italy. Portion of the grapes are dried by various methods – this one shiraz – then combined with normally harvested fruit. The result, as in this wine, is flavour



intensity, bitter-sweet, sour chocolate taste concentration, as well as great ageing capability. This is inexpensive red in comparison with the Amarone wines of Valpolicella.

THE WINE THAT STALIN LOVED NOW AVAILABLE IN QLD

Ballandean Estate Messing About Saperavi 2012, 96

Alcohol 15%

Granite Belt (\$42)

NOW a highly decorated wine and champion wine of the Queensland Wine Awards 2013.

The judges chose this to be acclaimed last September for drinkability at the time.

That still applies.

Ageing in 100 per cent new barrels, mainly French, this wine was chosen by maker



Dylan Rhymer because of its colour, depth and flavour power.

It is a deep, deep purple red, and it is definitely rich, yet it gently fills every taste bud in your mouth.

● www.ballandeanestate.com

Sirromet Seven Scenes Signature Collection Pinot Noir Chardonnay 2008, 92

Alcohol 11.6%

Granite Belt (\$35)

THIS is very good vintage bubbles made from almost equal quantities of the two grapes.

The blend shows great flavour elegance, yeast understatement and creamy subtlety in the final flavours in the mouth.

It is a very reliable wine, lovely mousse



from the bubbles and overall restraint which indicates great quality.

Quite long yeast lees ageing, too – over three years.

● www.sirromet.com