

# Puttin' on the Ritz

Text by Charles W. Borden

Photos by Alexey Zhukov



Grant Dodd was back in town, this time with a crew, packing Parker Ninety Pluses, some of the best wines that Australia has to offer. Grant is our friend, our buddy, our savior – he supplies some of the best wines to be found in Moscow, direct from Australia's distant shores. Fresh off a flight from Sydney, Grant and his boys met us in the Alma Ata room at Moscow's new, glitzy Ritz-Carlton, the replacement for the Soviet icon, the Intourist Hotel.



Alexander Ilyin (editor, *Gastronom*),  
Vladimir Kostenko (editor-in-chief, *Elite Life and Travel*)

If there is any sign that Russia has come to the Capitalist God, it is this hotel, with an opening room price of a mere \$750 per night and headed up.

Grant Dodd is one of the few importers who bring wines to Moscow because they are good or great, who love wine and want others to enjoy them. Grant is a PGA golf pro turned wine expert with a monthly newsletter, the *Wining Pro* – [www.thewiningpro.com](http://www.thewiningpro.com). A year back, Grant led one of *Passport's* best wine tastings at Corra's, an over-the-top-event that, given the 14% plus alcohol of Australian Shiraz wines and the 42 bottles we had for the event, left me with little memory from somewhere near the end of the tasting and waking up in the morning with an armful of Corra's pastries. This time Grant came back with two of Australia's top winemakers – Wayne Dutschke of Dutschke Wines and Reid Bosward from Kaesler Wines.

John Ortega negotiated a deal with the PR director at the Ritz. We got the Alma Ata room, and jointly, with the Ritz, invited a distinguished group of wine connoisseurs. The Ritz invited some wine journalists. Our honored guest was Preston Haskell, Grant's partner and chairman of *Colliers* in Moscow. Grant is working closely with Preston to develop his own South African wine venture, Haskell Vineyards.

Other *Passport* guests included Andre Kobouloff, founder of European Medical Centers, who joined our Knights of the Vine for

the first time. Veteran Moscow investor Bob Brown returned for this event. Shiraz Mamedov – yes, that is his first name, apropos for the evening's wines – one of Russia's leading chicken and meat importers, joined in. Ruslana Tsyuplyak, Sommelier at Bellezza, subject of last month's Passport restaurant review, added her expert opinions.

The evening was catered by the Ritz Carlton's Jeroboam Restaurant, which is under the tutelage of Chef Heinz Winkler, whose restaurant south of Munich has held three Michelin stars for eighteen years. Winkler's cuisine has been dubbed "cuisine vitale," uniting gastronomic pleasure with physical well-being. Passport is sure to soon return to render its judgment on Winkler's Moscow venture.

*Jeroboam provided us with a luxurious, elegant, and light repast as we ran through our wine selections:*

*Beef Tartar, Red Beet Root, Wasabi Mousse, Caviar  
Turbot, Red Butter, Lobster Spinach  
Pigeon "en Croute" and Parsley Mouseline  
Venison Souffle, Celery, Red Cabbage  
Variation of Chocolate, Red Wine Sorbet*

Grant, Reid, and Wayne provided a lucid commentary on our slate of wines as we ran through them. Grant introduced the crew. Kaesler's Reid Bosward is one of the most innovative and forward thinking winemakers in Australia. He worked at a number of well-known Australian producers, including Tyrrells and McGuigans, and later worked in countries as far a field as Moldova, France, Spain and South Africa. The Kaesler name is now one of the first on people's lips when the discussion of wine turns to the Barossa Valley.

Wayne Dutschke has wine in his blood. The Dutschke name has long been associated with the Barossa Valley, and Wayne's grandfather, Oscar Semmler, was a legendary figure in the South Australian wine industry. For many years, Wayne has been one of Australia's leading "flying" winemakers, working vintages in Australia's off-season in Spain, Napa Valley and Bordeaux before finally returning to start Dutschke Wines in the Barossa Valley in 1998.

As for the wines, we at Passport certainly cannot improve on Dodd's words:

#### **Tower Estate Hunter Valley Semillon 2006**

*A classic and unique style of Semillon from the Hunter Valley, which is generally regarded as the finest Semillon region in Australia. Picked early to retain acidity, it is only 10.5% alcohol but the high levels of natural acid allow the wine a great capacity to age. As it ages it will pick up palate weight and develop honeyed, nutty aromas, the hallmark of the very best Hunter Valley Semillons.*



#### **Dalwhinnie Chardonnay 2005**

*From the Pyrenees region of Central Victoria, the Dalwhinnie vineyards are located in a natural, frost free valley, 600 meters above sea level. The phrase, "Burgundian style," is one of the most misappropriated terms in the world of wine. Many like to claim the imprimatur, yet few Chardonnays actually embody the fineness and complexity that typifies the best White Burgundies. However, it is entirely justifiable to use such a description in relation to this wine. Elegant, with magnificent restraint and power, it is tight and youthful now but will develop beautifully with time in bottle. This may well be the finest Dalwhinnie Chardonnay ever made.*



#### **Tower Estate Yarra Valley Pinot Noir 2004**

*From one of Australia's best Pinot Noir regions (Yarra*



*John Ortega Publisher Passport magazine,  
Grant Dodd D&H Fine Wines Guest Speaker*



*Hichem Benamor Manager Ritz Carlton*

*Valley), this cool climate wine is impressive for drinking right now. Showing some complex, forest floor characters underneath highly aromatic strawberry and raspberry fruit, it was a fine food match at the night.*

#### **Dalwhinnie Cabernet Sauvignon 2001**

*A new World wine in an Old World body. Very elegant, lovely focus and purity of blackcurrant fruit flavor. Definitive, stylish Cabernet Sauvignon.*



#### **Dutschke St Jakobi Shiraz 2004 (Magnum)**

*From the Lyndoch sub-region of the Barossa Valley, and from a 30-year old single vineyard. Effulgent, sexy aromas of black cherry fruit, spice and balanced oak. Powerful cherry and plum flavors of great persistence. Quite delicious in the time honored Barossa Valley style.*

#### **Kaesler Old Bastard Shiraz 2005**

*One of the iconic Shiraz wines of the world. Made from a single vineyard, planted in 1893. Concentrated, powerful and yet still composed, despite the opulent, rich fruit flavors. A wine of incredible length and precision that will develop greater complexity as it ages over the next 20 years.*





*Lubov Makhova Goldwell Russia,  
Shiraz Mamedov SJS Poultry Imports*

Wayne told the story of his Sun Dried Shiraz. A neighbor had machine harvested his Shiraz crop, which left grapes hanging at the end of every row. After a couple of weeks, when these grapes had dried down, Wayne had the idea, from his fortified wine experience, to see what kind of wine could be produced from them. The result was this deep, intense, sweet wine.

There is nothing to add and I am not ashamed to admit to being partial to Australia's wines, and particularly these. I bow down to Grant for bringing us these delights.

**Guest Speakers:**

- Grant Dodd, PGA Golf Pro and Wine Expert ([www.thewiningpro.com](http://www.thewiningpro.com))
- Reid Bosward, Kaesler Wines
- Wayne Dutschke, Dutschke Wines

**Passport Magazine Guests:**

- John Ortega, Publisher, Passport Magazine
- Charles Borden, Director, Meridian Capital
- Elena Serebryakova, Vice President, International Moscow Bank
- Shiraz Mamedov, Owner, SJS Poultry Imports
- Ruslana Tsyuplyak, Sommelier, Bellezza Restaurant
- Bob Brown, Chairman, Rambler and Lensmaster
- Preston Haskell, Colliers International and Steelcase Furniture
- Andre Kobouloff, Founder, European Medical and Dental



*Charles Borden Wine Editor Passport Magazine,  
Andrei Koboloff Founder European Medical Center*



*Bob Brown Chairman Rambler*

**Centers**

Alexis Kobernyk, Vice President, Rosinter Group

**Guests of Ritz Carlton Moscow:**

- Egor Apollonov, Editor-in-Chief, Cigar Gourmet
- Vladimir Kostenko, Editor-in-Chief, Elite Life and Travel
- Alexander Ilyin, Editor, Gastronom
- Sergey Logvinov, Director of PR, The Ritz-Carlton, Moscow

**Ortega Easy Rating System**

- I love this wine! 5 pts.
- I really like this wine! 4 pts.
- This wine is good! 3 pts.
- This wine is not that good! 2 pts.
- I don't really care for this wine! 1 pt.



*Elena Serebryakova International Moscow Bank*



Ruslana Petrovna Sommilier Bellazza  
Restaurant

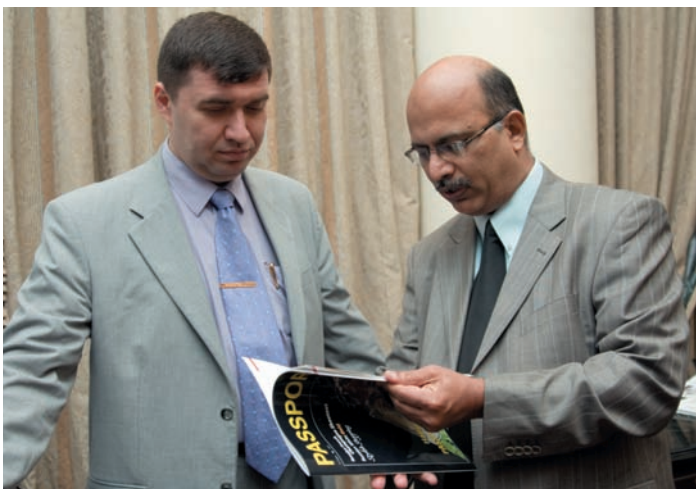


Reid Bosward- Kaesler Wines Guest Speaker,  
Sergey Logvinov Director of PR, The Ritz-Carlton

Wine	Rating	Ranking
Kaesler Old Bastard Shiraz 2005	4.42	1
Dalwhinnie Chardonnay 2005	4.19	2
Kaesler Old Bastard Shiraz 2005	4.17	2
Wild Duck Creek Estate Spring Flat 2004	3.91	4
Dalwhinnie Cabernet Sauvignon 2001	3.81	5
Tower Estate Yarra Valley Pinot Noir 2004	3.71	6
Tower Estate Hunter Valley Semillon 2006	3.48	7
Dutschke Sun Dried Shiraz (20% alcohol)	3.30	8



Egor Apollonov (editor-in-chief, Cigar Gourmet)



Alexis Kobernyk Rosinter Group,  
Ram Kumar Marketing Passport magazine



Preston Haskell Colliers International