

Wine Club/Jenny Tan

Pighin Collio Sauvignon Blanc 2008, \$53

The lean Italian

Singapore became a Little London over the last few weeks, at least where the wine scene was concerned.

First, it was the visit of the Grand Jury Europeen during the World Gourmet Summit, then Robert Parker Jr – the world's most influential wine critic – dropped by Singapore to conduct a weekend of wine tasting that included his 100-pointer wines.

Then, my all-time favourite wine writer, Jancis Robinson, also flew into Singapore for a charity event.

As if that is not enough to stir the wine scene into a flurry, Singapore was subsequently graced by an avalanche of wine producers who were passing through to the Vinexpo wine exhibition in Hong Kong, seizing the opportunity to visit neighbouring Asian markets.

This was the reason it was possible to get five producers from the Grandi Vini, a consortium of eight Italian family-run wineries, together here at the same time.

This, according to Asia representative Giovanni Oliva, was "a very rare sight".

While I have visited some of the producers before and know their wines, it was the Pighin Sauvignon Blanc which turned out to be a surprise for me during lunch at The Lighthouse restaurant.

Sauvignon Blanc tends to lean towards the opulent, round easy-drinking types with heady gooseberry notes. Consider it in-your-face Sauvignon Blanc.

Pighin's, however, was a brisk, leaner version with light, perfumed aromas. This, says owner Roberto Pighin, is one of the characteristics that set wines from Friuli in north-eastern Italy apart.

A parcel of land next to Austria and Slovenia and surrounded by the Adriatic Sea and mountains on respective sides, Friuli has a unique climate that has proven ideal for grapes such as Pinot Grigio and Sauvignon Blanc over generations.

Although Mr Pighin produces two Sauvignon Blancs from the areas of Graves and



Collio, it is evident that he is very proud of the latter, regarded as a sort of Grand Cru for Friuli. And with ownership of 30ha of vineyards in Collio, Mr Pighin counts himself as one of the top three biggest owners of these highly respected vineyards.

To fly the banner of the high quality of Friuli wines is what Mr Pighin hopes to advocate. After all, Friuli is a small part of Italy. "Our area can produce only 2 per cent of the wine in Italy, so it is only natural that we produce quality wine," he said.

Let's just hope there is enough stock to go around.

Taste test: A delicate and lean style of Sauvignon Blanc that can be served as an aperitif. Perfumed on the nose, with green pepper, thyme and herbs on the palate. Slightly creamy texture, good balance.

Pair with: Sashimi, sushi, seafood tempura, nicoise salad.

Available at: Pinnacle Wine & Spirits, tel: 6266-1068, e-mail: roel@pinnaclewinespirits.com

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