

# @ THE WINERY

## AN APERA AT SUNSET

Isn't an Apera some sort of small Toyota? Actually no, it's the new name for Sherry!

A little background will help explain. Back in the 1990's Australia signed an agreement with the European Union (EU) to phase out the use of European terms for our wines. Terms like Champagne, Claret, Burgundy, Chablis and the like were replaced quite a few years back, but there have been a few names still hanging around till now, particularly for fortified wines.

As at September 2011, Australian 'Port', 'Sherry' and 'Tokay' have gone as well. But you can't make them disappear just like that - people still drink these sweeties - so the challenge was to come up with some new names for them.

(You may think it's very one-sided that we can no longer use these traditional terms, but think about it - we would be really upset if a French producer called their wine 'Barossa' or their beer 'XXXX').

The Australian Winemakers Federation got a Rutherglen committee (the home of fortifieds) to research with producers, survey 4000 people, develop and then choose the names from 200 suggestions. And the winners are:

### PORT

Tawny Port is now called just 'Tawny'; Ruby Port becomes 'Ruby'; and Vintage

Port is 'Vintage Fortified' (personally I think this one needs some more work).

### SHERRY

Sherry becomes 'Apera' (a play on the word 'aperitif'). The new Apera descriptors replacing Fino, Amontillado and Oloroso styles are Dry, Medium Dry, Medium Sweet, Sweet and Cream (certainly no mystique in those).

### TOKAY

Tokay will become 'Topaque', which was considered sophisticated and refined.

The renaming was also an opportunity to reposition fortified wines, which account for just 5% of the market at present (and declining). For example Sherry is associated 'with just cooking and grandma's tippie in the cupboard'. Along with the new name, Apera will now be relaunched as a 'trendy, fun wine to drink when the sun goes down - a sundowner', and it will even be packaged in a more modern style of bottle. (Similarly Port was 'Well known and respected, but the association is a little stuffy, masculine and dated')

But what about 'Muscat' - isn't that name being phased out as well? No, Muscat is a grape variety as well as a style of wine, so it can stay.

*Warwick Adams*  
Winemaker

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