



Guests at Mercure Brisbane, Townsville and Cairns

Mercure Hotels Launches Grands Vins Mercure

Mercure gives visitors to Queensland a true taste of the 'Sunshine State'

Mercure Hotels is the first major hotel group in Queensland to take the State's local wines seriously, with the launch of the 2010 "Grands Vins Mercure", a wine list dedicated to showcasing Queensland's increasingly attractive wines.

The new Queensland Grands Vins selection is available at Mercure hotels in Brisbane, Townsville and Cairns, giving visitors a true taste of the Sunshine State. The wine list is changed twice yearly.

Accor regional general manager Queensland, Neil Scanlan, said that the launch of the new Queensland wine list was not only a vote of confidence in the Queensland wine industry, but also for Queensland tourism.

"Queensland wines have improved dramatically in recent years – and we have had a great reaction from guests since introducing the Queensland Grands Vins wine list a few years ago," he said.

"When visitors come to Queensland they want to get an appreciation of the destination in many ways, and wine and food is very much part of the travel experience. While Queensland doesn't have the size of wine industry as its southern counterparts, it is really working hard to bring the wine and tourism experience together, as can be seen by the creation of the Strange Bird wine trail up to the Granite Belt. Even if visitors can't get to these wine areas, they can at least try them at a Mercure hotel."

The Grands Vins wine list is designed to make wine selection easier, grouping wines in four particular styles – fresh and tasty; fruity and light; balanced & elegant and spicy and full bodies – to help guests choose the most suitable wine for every occasion and for every dish, while introducing wines from a range of distinctive wineries that guests might not otherwise have a chance to experience.

The launch of the Queensland Grands Vins list is part of a national roll-out of the concept, with State-based lists prepared for NSW, Victoria, Tasmania, South Australia and Western Australia. Internationally, Mercure has been offering Grands Vins selections in Europe since 1983.

Is Team Cooking still hot?

The concept of cooking as a team building activity isn't new. But with the proliferation of cooking shows such as MasterChef and My Kitchen Rules, the interest level and variations have certainly been on the increase.

Cheeky Food Group, who launched team cooking in Australia over 8 years ago has had nearly 35,000 colleagues cooking and bonding together, and is now seeing the concept more widely accepted and used beyond traditional team building.

Cheeky's managing director, Leona Watson, commented "When Cheeky first started, Jamie had only just hit our TV screens. But with his and Ramsay's popularity, it's now 'cool' for both men and women to be in the kitchen. In the last 8 years we've held over 1,500 events, with many being predominantly male, even senior executive teams."

Watson says their events have also seen a increase in the 'mystery box' style of ingredients for competitive cooking between teams, adding that while not everyone has the Masterchef flair, the idea of team cooking is to make everyone feel like a winner.

"We've found a balance between the TV show and ensuring the cooking and the event is a huge success. And teams just love winning our Master Cheeky Chef trophy – especially sales and marketing teams."

Also on the rise, says Watson, is the area of healthier food options. "Corporates are taking the social responsibility of their staff's health more seriously. Cheeky has been getting involved in cooking presentations and wellbeing programs to entice staff to cook more regularly at home, and

Programs like Masterchef and My Kitchen Rules are creating huge demand for team cooking events.



minimise take away food, which is often high in salt and fat. We take the serious topic of cooking for health, and make it appealing and engaging. Cheeky takes the view that if you make cooking fun, easy and not too tricky people are more likely to repeat the cooking experience in their own home."

Christmas cooking parties are already being booked for December for groups as large as several hundred. For more information: www.cheekyfoodgroup.com

Adelaide's National Wine Centre Upgrades

The National Wine Centre of Australia in Adelaide has upgraded two of its function/meeting rooms and has recently been named 'Best Function Venue' and 'Best Caterer' at the 2009 Restaurant & Catering Awards.

Perfect for groups of 20-100, the venue has spent more than \$100k on both the Ferguson and Broughton rooms with each now featuring new ceilings, polished concrete floors, the latest in Audio Visual and floor to ceiling

bi-fold doors opening out to the concourse overlooking the largest open air cellar in the southern hemisphere. The rooms may be hired individually or as a one large room.

Both with all the technology bells and whistles an event organiser could want, organisers are invited to visit the venue's website to take a virtual tour of the newly refurbished rooms and additional rooms at the centre.

www.wineaustralia.com.au/WineCentreMaster/Tour.htm



Adelaide's National Wine Centre's has undergone an upgrade.

