

Great Wine on a Great Wall

By Jennifer Joslin

It all started a year ago when John and I on our first visit to Beijing went on a day trip out to The Great Wall at Simatai. Apart from the terrifying three hour taxi ride with a Kamikaze Chinaman which ended with a rush to the toilets (which was another story)! a most magical & mystical day was unfolding in front of our eyes. We made the ascent via a chair lift, and shank's pony to The Wall.

It was a very exhilarating experience but not for the faint hearted. Built during The Ming Dynasty this 19 km section is punctuated with watchtowers, steep plunges and scrambling ascents.

Finally reaching the highest watchtower we rested awhile, munched on our sandwiches and quenched our thirst on water - oh for a bottle of Chilled Champagne to celebrate this momentous occasion, sitting on one of The Seven Wonders of The World. Silly me to think it would end there, John's mind was ticking over like mad formulating a true celebration!

"Why not hold a winemakers dinner on The Wall," he said. "It would be a landmark for MudHouse and next year (2005) would be our tenth vintage. What a way to celebrate it."

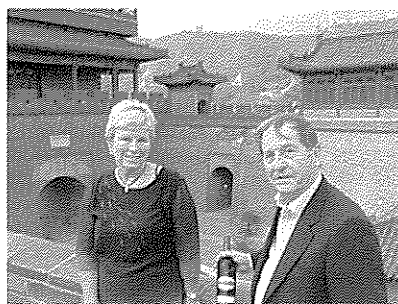
Here we go again I thought as John, posed the question to our China Agents, "would it be possible to hold a winemakers Dinner on The Great Wall?"

"Anything's possible," they said. "Leave it with us and we will find out the chances." Well, to cut a long story short - it was and we did.

May 28th. 2005:

Mud House Wines in conjunction with our Chinese Importers held the first single winery Winemakers Dinner on The Great Wall of China at Badaling.

We had 160 guests (and a waiting list of about 30 more) consisting of senior F&B staff from the major hotel groups, Chinese officials and NZ and Chinese Embassy staff. As well we had



Jennifer and John Joslin, on the Great Wall of China

key account customers of Montrose and enthusiastic wine drinkers from Beijing.

The Radisson Hotel did a magnificent job providing delicious Canapés and a four course meal including Yellow Fin Tuna with MH Riesling, Chinese Spiced Chicken Broth with fried Wontons complemented our Reserve Chardonnay, Char grilled Beef and Tiger prawns with The Black Swan Pinot Noir teemed up beautifully and to finish, a scrumptious Fresh Apricot Cheesecake with our Late Harvest Riesling. Superb matches and all prepared up at The Wall in a makeshift kitchen. Every single thing had to be hauled up there, and there was not even any electricity available.

The setting was 1,000m high up on The Wall, the weather, warm and sultry. The tables were dressed with lemon tablecloths and the Red Chinese lanterns with candles were the only lighting.

With the backdrop of The Wall disappearing into the misty heights of the surrounding mountains it was, for John and myself, the culmination of ten amazing years.

The Great Wall is the greatest man-made creation and is a symbol of the wisdom and diligence of the Chinese nation.

There is an old saying in China:

"One can be called a true man only after he has reached the Great Wall."

For us, reaching The Great Wall was a milestone in our lives and the MudHouse Dinner a culmination and celebration of ten years of hardship, dreams, disappointments, excitement and achievement.

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