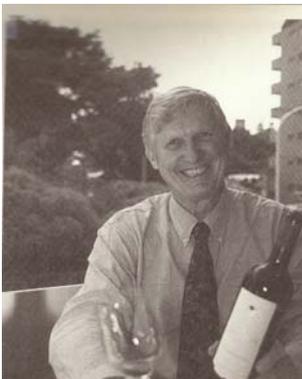




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## I am a gardener ! Interview with the wine producer Denis Vice

By Hiroshi Fukuno



For the Japanese tourist, Australia is that country where to go on holidays on the South Hemisphere. A country where the nature is splendid and any gourmet will be delighted by food. This is in such a place that some people are making wine in Bordeaux style. At the South of Australia, in Coonawarra area, is Denis Vice is running “Highbank Vineyards”.

“This is organic. With organic methods you respect the natural environment. I believe in producing good wines from the nature. I think of myself as a gardener. Because I don’t want to grow more than 8 tufts on each vine-plant. This is how I increase the fruit concentration of the grapes. You know, it takes us 3 months and a half only to cut branches and tufts.”

I wonder when Denis Vice started to think about organic cultivation.

“In any country, not only in wine, but also in food, chemicals are added to food. This is something I can’t accept. Until we obtained the approval for permanent residence in Australia, I practiced organic culture at my wife’s parents’ home in Hawaii where macadamia nuts are grown. ‘This is it’, is what I thought that time”.

What about the products on the market today?

“First ‘Basket Press’ and then ‘Limestone’. In Japan, you can only find these two wines. I am thinking about introducing Merlot and Pinot Noir in future. Because recently, I bought a new vineyard close to Adelaide, which has the same Terra Rossa soil. In that area, Chardonnay and Viognier are planted.”

Is Basket Press’ grape variety Cabernet only?

“No, it is blended with 20% of Merlot and 5% of Cabernet Franc. We are extracting only the best juice by pressing slowly the grapes with a basket press. We are using French oak barrels and do everything we can to preserve the original taste of the grapes”.

“When you come to Australia, you have to visit Highbank. I’m sure you won’t regret that trip!”

