



## What's on a label?

Wine labels can often seem confusing. If properly interpreted, what is not said can often have as much meaning as what is actually stated.

Over the last few years sweeping changes have tightened the amount of leeway Australian wine producers have traditionally been allowed and the changes have been designed to protect consumers from false claims that may have occurred in the past.

The Food Standards Code regulates country of origin, alcohol content, producers detail and additives.

The Geographical Indications

Committee is responsible for naming major and sub-regions of grape growing in Australia.

The Label Integrity Programme oversees wine companies' claims in respect to what they state on their labels.

Since December 1995, Standard Drinks Labelling is legally required. We all ask the question - "what is a standard drink?" A standard drink contains 10 grams of alcohol at 20c. It is calculated by taking the container size (usually 750ml), multiplying the alcohol content of the wine (say 12.5%) by the specific gravity of alco-

hol equalling 7.4 standard drinks in an average bottle of wine.

If the acid level of the wine has been adjusted this adjustment must be listed by its Food Additive Code number. Ascorbic acid (300) and Tartaric acid (334). Both occur naturally in grapes and are known as antioxidants. If sulphur dioxide is used during the winemaking process it is listed as "Preservative 220".

Country of origin must be stated. If a wine is a blend from Australia and any other country the other country's name and percentage must be listed.

If a wine label states that a wine is made from a single grape variety, from a particular year or from a specific region, it has to contain at least 85% of what is stated.

If a blend of up to three varieties is used and each form a minimum of 20% of the blend then their names can be used. Similar regulations are for regions. Many of these new regulations have been devised specifically to meet legal obligations set out under the EC/Australian Wine Agreement, and overseas wines for sale.

*Wayne Nicholls*

## Parliamentary Inquiry into the International Transfer of Prisoners

**The International Transfer of Prisoners Bill 1996 was introduced into the House of Representatives on 21 November 1996.** After second reading speech, the House referred the Bill to its Standing Committee on Legal and Constitutional Affairs for consideration and an advisory report to the House by 3 March.

This Bill provides a framework for Australia to participate in the

international transfer of prisoners. The purpose of the proposed legislation is to enable Australians imprisoned overseas to be returned to Australia to complete their sentences, and similarly, to enable foreign nationals imprisoned in Australia, to be returned to their home countries to complete their sentences.

The Committee invites any interested person or organisation to make a

written submission on the Bill by:

**Tuesday 7 January 1997.**

A copy of the inquiry booklet, which may assist those preparing the submission is available from the Law Society.

Anyone wishing to discuss any aspect of the inquiry is invited to contact the secretariat on telephone (06) 277 4642 or fax (06) 277 4773.