

## *the winemaker's art*



Sarah and Sparky Marquis (pronounced MAR-kwiss) met in 1987 while working toward wine-making degrees at South Australia's Roseworthy College; they married in 1991. In 1994, the pair went to work for Jim and Helen Watts, Sarah's parents, at Fox Creek in McLaren Vale. Four years later, they formed Grapes Consulting, making award-winning wines for Henry's Drive, Parson's Flat, Shirvington, and Marquis Philips. Looking to build a brand of their own, in 2005, Sarah and Sparky founded the Mollydooker label (Aussie slang for "lefthander"; both are southpaws). In 2007, they bought a winery and 116-acre vineyard on the celebrated Seaview Ridge in McLaren Vale. The vineyard is planted 85% to Shiraz, with the rest to Cabernet Sauvignon and Merlot. The winery can process around 1,000 tons of grapes to produce an annual 70,000 cases.

Sommelier Journal asked Sarah and Sparky Marquis, "Why do you bottle with inert nitrogen gas, and what does it mean for the sommelier?"

We bottle our wines with nitrogen as a natural preservative, so that we can use fewer sulfites in the bottling process. When the wines are still young (less than 2 years old), the nitrogen has a tendency to flatten the roundness of the fruit flavor and shorten the length of the wine. We recommend that when opening one of our bottles, you do what we call the "Mollydooker Shake" to release the nitrogen, which allows our young wines to show their full flavor profile right away.

To do the shake, pour out half a glass of wine, then reinsert the cork or replace the screwcap. Invert the bottle and shake vigorously. You will see fine bubbles of nitrogen rise to the top of the wine; remove the closure to let the nitrogen out of the bottle. Repeat.

A lot of industry professionals, including great sommeliers around the country, are often a bit skeptical. After we do the shake and ask them to taste the "pre-shake" and "post-shake" wine, the difference is so profound that they actually get fired up about demonstrating the shake to their customers and guests. We get e-mails all the time now from top somms at great restaurants, sharing their experiences about doing the shake tableside for delighted guests. We love it.

If you decant your Mollydooker wines and let them sit for a few hours, the nitrogen gas will slowly release over time as the wine warms up to room temperature. We think the shake is easier and more fun—it's the fastest and most effective way to release the nitrogen. We suggest shaking all of our wines except Goosebumps Sparkling Shiraz (for obvious reasons), The Violinist Verdelho, and any wines more than 2 years old.

[Editor's Note: To see a video of the Sarah and Sparky demonstrating the Mollydooker Shake, click on the link in the online version of this article at [www.sommelierjournal.com](http://www.sommelierjournal.com).]

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