

Responsibility - Know your limit!

By Don Eastman

An essential part of our winemaking hobby is the consumption and enjoyment of the fruit of our labours, our friends' production, and commercial stuff to see how we (and they) stand. While the overwhelming majority of consumption is done in moderation, the nature of the beverage is that there is always the risk of excess.

Long term health issues are important, but the pressing concern relates to the consumption of alcohol prior to driving a vehicle. If you are lucky, the worst that may happen to you while "driving under the influence" will be the loss of your driver's license for an extended period of time. Driving while under the influence places other, innocent, people at risk.

You have a responsibility to ensure that you, personally, are legally fit to drive following a club meeting, or on other occasions when you may be consuming alcoholic beverages. More than that, your club has a responsibility to ensure that everyone leaving a club meeting, and driving, can do so safely. If you have a member, or members, who present a problem in this regard, deal with it!

Several years ago my winemaking club (Wentworth West Zymologists) acquired an alcohol breath tester. Based on our finding we found that we could have a good, enjoyable meeting, including the consumption of reasonable amounts of wine, and still blow comfortably under the legal threshold.

The key to responsibility was to exercise some caution during the evening, but with particular emphasis on eliminating consumption after snack time. Much as our host wants to be generous, we no longer tolerate "you just have to try some of this..." late in the evening. We have also seen a lot more car pooling and designated drivers for our meetings.

I strongly recommend that each club have in its possession an alcohol breath tester, and that you ensure that you are being a responsible organization.