

Silver Wings Newsletter No. 14. Aug 2015

Dreaming of a White Xmas?

Go no further than crisp clean Riesling! Yes my first release of the Whitlands 'Croucher' vineyard wine is a cracker! From the highest altitude vineyard in Victoria with 7" of snow on the ground as I write this, it has a lovely fresh lime bouquet and tantalising backbone of acidity holding it's line through wonderfully delicate fruit flavours that linger long after your first mouthful.

The perfect accompaniment for fresh oysters, prawns and all sorts of seafood or simply by itself as an aperitif whilst watching T.V. sports or reading or a hot afternoon over your Xmas holidays. And at a low alcohol of 11.5% you can both enjoy and remember it, without risk of hangover!

Our last open weekend featured the Big Bottles in my collection and quite a number are now in other collectors cellars! It was great fun and there a few remaining from excellent vintages so come along on the Fri. 11th through til Sun. 13th Sept. and taste all the wines before you buy and this time, unlike some of my previous Riesling releases, I have enough quantity to last more than a few weeks! As always there will be the specials bin with fabulous bargains as I clear various lines to your benefit.

Cheers, Keith

The White Xmas Sale

Open Week-end at 28 Munster Terrace.

Fri. 11th, Sat. 12th and Sun. 13th Sept. 2015

10 a.m til 5 p.m.

Taste the exciting new release of Whitlands Riesling plus the last of the lost wine, the '97 Brut, my outstanding Old Vines selection and some 'Big Bottle' wines all aged to perfection in my cellar, plus clearance sale wines make a weekend not to miss!

Cheese and bread will be available with tastings and your friends are welcome.

Melways 2A. E10 - Ph: 9329 8161— M: 0407 291 449

New Horizons Beckon!

Yes, looks like we are on the move again. Not totally convinced yet, however regional living has again presented a very appealing option to remove ourselves from the hustle and bustle of city life without loosing the ability to enjoy a fulfilling lifestyle – and great coffee of course!

Cheryl and I have been discussing in general terms how the pressure of getting around Melbourne has built significantly since our move here over 8 years ago and that traffic considerations now dominate our choices of how, where and when we go out, in both business and pleasure. We really enjoy our life in Nth Melbourne but sense we are becoming insulated from the ‘other side’ - south and east of the river where we now rarely venture. Living in a divided city was never in my concept of Melbourne for the past 45 years but the city growth has become so massive, it now dominates life choices.

Well, maybe not for this little black duck for much longer! Our Warehouse/ apartment will be offered for auction at midday this September 26th and we shall see where that leads us. The one thing for certain is that much of my wine stocks will have to go, so look out for some spectacular sales clearances of my quality wines starting Fri, Sat and Sunday 11th—13th September so don't miss this Open Weekend.

Keith & Cheryl



Our latest model Tassie Hire car Just kidding!

Tasmanian Adventures.

Years ago and in another life, I spent quite a lot of time in Tassie. Holidaying there with my young children was the highlight and I recently wondered whether development may have changed both the landscape and people. So in Feb this year we booked some accommodation and a car, joining my Brother and his wife on another card playing wine and food adventure 'The Tassie Test'. Arriving in Hobart we were met with very unkind weather that persisted for over a week until we reached the east coast.

Undaunted, we explored the offerings of the town including the unusual MONA. What a fascinating agglomeration of art and eccentricity, with visitors reacting differently depending on taste and view points, understandably seeing people both shocked and occasionally offended. But well worth the visit and their wines are good!

In this most southern city the wine and food scene is flourishing and there is a real sense of new discoveries everywhere, we settled into regular sight seeing and lunches enjoying all we encountered.



I didn't think it snowed here in February!!

Our most impressive discovery was unexpectedly on Maria Island. Departing from the tiny fishing village of Triabunna equipped with our cut lunch, wine and bicycles the boat journey across the strait to the Island was a wild and wet adventure with seas breaking regularly over the entire boat, so we were pleased to arrive an hour later in a protected and safe inlet. The initial interest bringing us here was to explore the early convict ruins however this rapidly altered to one of the most amazing tales of pioneering entrepreneurship I've encountered.

Luigi Bernacchi an Italian Silk merchant arrived in Melbourne from London in the 1870's.

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He quickly established his contacts and leased the then abandoned Maria Island from the Govt. for 30 years. His story is one of remarkable courage and business enterprise including a substantial vineyard, olive groves, livestock, brick and cement making evolving over several decades to lay the foundation of the Portland Cement Company still in existence today. We were amazed to not have heard his story before this.



Cycling on Maria Island.

“Surely you can tow me up the hill?”

Exploring the Fossil Cliffs, the site of Bernacchi's cement venture in 1880.



See, I'm very good down Hill!

OPPOSITE:
C.1890
Photo of Bernacchi's remarkable venture.

He virtually created his own fiefdom.

.Heading further along the East Coast we settled into a lovely beach house at Bicheno. Next morning our stroll into the small shopping strip we stumbled into ‘Sir Loins’ Butcher shop, cheered by the name we were overawed by the food. Some of the best charcuterie outside of France left us drooling with choice! Needless to say we enjoyed our stay here and the coastal scenery is amongst the best you will encounter. Wineries in that area are also establishing great and consistent wines and are a pleasure to visit.



Roadside
Blackberry bounty

Onwards toward Launceston we stayed in the delightful town of Evandale and immersed ourselves in touring the remarkable historic houses and gardens as well as vineyards, now prominent venues. One highlight was the Saturday Launceston market, the fresh food, pastries and atmosphere were sensational—not to mention the best Hazelnuts we’ve ever eaten, roasted and vacuum packed with explosive flavours that are a must to buy. In all it is a fascinating part of our great country and will be our destination again soon, to discover even more of it’s wonders.



Croucher Vineyard 2015 RIESLING

Origin: Whitlands, high above the King Valley

Total vine area: 1 Hectare with Nth. Western aspect.

Yield: Unirrigated, 4 ton/ acre / 60 hectolitres/ hectare

Trellis: Hand pruned bi-lateral canes with vertical shoots, positioned with four moveable foliage wires.

Soil type: Deep red volcanic loam.

Altitude: approx. 780m above mean sea level.

These vines are the highest Riesling plantings in Victoria and part of the Alpine Ranges.

Harvest: 16th March 2015, refrigerated overnight, pressed out to tank then racked and transported to my winery, then inoculated and controlled temperature fermented to dryness by 18th April. Racked, filtered and bottled 7th July 2015.

Analysis:- Alc.11.5% vol., pH 2.97, T/a 10.2 g/l., nil residual sugar, screw cap seal.

Colour: Clear, Bright Straw with Green hue.

Bouquet: Elegant yet intense Lime & herbaceous melon fruit characters.

Palate: A zesty, intense fruit impacts the initial palate leading to a tightly structured, delicate wine showing finely balanced acidity with a lingering mouth-watering elegance, like 'Pixie Dust' on your tongue. This graceful wine is a classic cold climate style from an excellent season.

Cellaring:

This is a cold climate Riesling, offering fresh zesty quality whilst young but promising great development for longer term cellaring. Delightful with fresh oysters, seafood and oriental dishes at bottling, it will gain great complexity to fill out the palate, continuing to improve for 2-3 decades if stored correctly.

Enjoy, Keith

BIG BOTTLES

Many vintages from my winemaking past, stored in underground cellars since bottling starting from 1990 are available in magnum and jeroboam formats. Some of Australia's great cool climate wines with too many to list separately, so please email or call to purchase a special bottle for your 'BIG' celebration.

~ORDER FORM ~

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Keith Brien Premium Wines

Dozen (mixed or straight) lots only delivered

(Price: single bottle/dozen) Bottles Dozens Total \$

2015 <i>Whitlands Riesling</i> 'Croucher' v'yard (\$22/*\$240)/...../.....
2006 <i>Vincenzo's Old Vines Mataro/ Shiraz</i> (\$25/*\$265)/...../.....
2008 <i>Old Vines Mataro</i> \$22/*\$240)/...../.....
2008 <i>Old Vines Shiraz</i> (\$22/*\$240)/...../.....
1999 Pinot Noir <i>The Winemakers Alms</i> (\$30/*\$300)/...../.....
1998 Cab. /Merlot <i>Minus Five</i> (\$23/*\$240)/...../.....
N.V. '99 Brut Rose <i>Macedon Noir</i> (\$22/ *\$240)/...../.....
97 Brut <i>Macedon cleanskin</i> (\$20/ *\$216)/...../.....

Plus delivery cost (see window) \$.....

Optional insurance (see window) \$.....

Total \$.....

PAYMENT ENCLOSED: CHQ//MC/VISA

Credit Card No

exp.date...../.....

NAME.....

Address.....

..... Postcode.....

Phone (BH).....(AH).....

Email:.....

Special Delivery Instructions:

.....

Mail to: Silver Wings 28 Munster Tce Nth Melb. 3051

Tel: (03) 9329 8161 or M: 040729 1449 Fax: (03) 9329 6879

e-mail : keith@siverwingswines.com

FREIGHT RATES (Free for 2+ cases to same address Victoria)

MELBOURNE \$7.00 per case VIC COUNTRY \$14.00 per case

INTERSTATE \$17.00 per case PERTH, WA \$30.00 per case

***INSURANCE:** Victoria \$7.00 All other States \$10.00

(Covers any breakages during transit. Silver Wings takes no responsibility for breakages during transit of uninsured wine)

Tasmanian Adventures Cont.



The Launceston 'Fresh Food' Saturday market.



Clarendon House, just one of Tassies great Estates.

The ‘Artful Dodger’ and the Tax Man.

Being audited by any division of the taxation commission is rarely pleasant, but in the course of my life I have managed to often find mirth in the humourless. Many years ago the Levies Revenue Dept. regularly sent field officers around the country emanating from Canberra and visiting almost all of Australia’s wine regions. This was in response to the growth in small wineries at that time and the collapse in the Fortified wine Industry (caused directly by crippling taxation levels) and their need to assess cropping levels in new regions without a recorded history on which to base the tax.

Macedon was a fledgling area at that time with new vineyards barely productive and weather patterns not conducive to the higher crop loads of warmer areas, so their visits were more regular to ensure compliance was achieved. One particular vigneron nearby, possessed a near pathological hatred of inspectors of any kind, let alone tax inspectors and he also ran a cash-based business without meaningful bookwork. Over time he earned the nickname of ‘the artful dodger’.

This combination of circumstances led to many confrontations over his assessments and much acrimony at each visit, so the inspectors were always reluctant to venture there without some fortification beforehand. As I was always the last winery inspected before his, it led me to some very pleasant exchanges over a glass of wine with the tax men as they steeled themselves for the gauntlet they were about to face.

Enter Mohamed, employed under the Govt migrant employment policy, Muslim and never having so much as tasted wine, he was the inspector chosen by regulators to audit the ‘artful dodger’ and I’m not sure which of them suffered most, but certainly it must have been a trial of attrition for them both.

Someone in Canberra has a very cynical sense of humour.

Interesting Trivia for the ‘Wine Buff’

The media trumpets a great deal about “Cool Climate” viticulture and most are imaginary marketing claims—here is the method of calculation and most of Australia’s vineyards don’t make the cut for a cold climate.

*Heat degree-days are calculated by taking the mean temperature of the month, subtracting the value of 10 and multiplying by the number of days in the month. The mean temperature is calculated by taking the mean of the mean maximum and mean minimum daily temperatures. Seasonal degree days (or heat degree days) are the total for the seven months of the growing season (October-April). Temperatures for your site can either be gathered from the closest Bureau of Meteorology Agriculture station or from your own vineyard provided you have continuous temperatures for at least the last 7 years.

** Re: Jackson D. & Schuster D., The Production of Grapes & Wine in Cool Climates, Nelson Publishers, Melbourne 1987

Winter Blues

This winter has been a reminder of what one expected in Melbourne at this time of year, it's just that the great drought from 1996 til 2011 lulled us into believing it had gone away. Yes, it's been grey and bloody cold occasionally and I'm so glad for red gum, it has made our lives both comfortable and fun to sit in front of our wood fired heaters drinking good wines – we'll just call it 'wineter' instead!

I've been flu free for some years, but after a short holiday away with friends, one of whom thought she was over the infectious stage, brought me undone. Boy it was solid, leaving me exhausted for days on end whilst my body fought it and then gave up. It seems every year brings another different virus and I have a theory that it's actually the same one that lives in aeroplanes and just morphs into various forms to infect the passengers as it goes around the world in each machine, a perfect, mobile breeding mechanism. Right at the onset of my illness an old flying friend returned from overseas to stay with us a while. I have stored his private cellar in my warehouse for many years and he, now living in Thailand was thirsty for quality wine and decided to drink some of his best morsels. Out came the Granges 1986, '87 and '90 plus many other famous wines from that era that he willingly shared with us at the dinner table. My prime loss caused by this strain of the flu was my smell and taste! So I sat night after night attempting to smell and enjoy these wonderful wines without a hint of aroma or flavour penetrating my congested brain. What a disaster! Winter blues truly set in.

Anyway, I'm over it now and despite the frustration of that week I'm back firing on all six, so come and join the festivities at the open weekend and I promise I'm not infectious!
Cheers, Keith



I'm a fortunate person when I look at the lunches I attend and the great wines I have the privilege to taste, with great food and in great company.

Chapel News

For my readers who are also our guests having stayed at our little holiday chapel in Newstead, you may notice some changes should you book again.

First will be our own little Veggie garden and newly paved area to the right hand side as you enter. Any fresh ripe produce can be picked by our guests for their use whilst they stay. Also in the kitchen you will notice an extra bin along side the recyclable and rubbish bins. It's our veggie compost bin for you to put non meat vegetable waste so we can recycle it into the newly installed rotating compost creator in the BBQ courtyard.

All good news for the environmentally conscious, and finally I have managed to fix the chapel floor that had become quite springy as you walked in the centre of the room. My goodness what a job! Not knowing what lay beneath the boards, I lifted one & peeked under—oops, what a shocker! So the centre of the floor had to come up and the dodgy job exposed, sand packed directly under the floor joists!



After much digging to remove the sand and new joists throughout, the floor is now good again and should last another lifetime at least and you'd never know what had occurred.

Cheers, Keith

STOP PRESS

I have not entered my current release Old Vines Wines in the show circuit for many years however I did recently with some quite flattering results. Huon Hooke, the Sydney based wine writer and judge, rated them all at Silver medal standard at least and the Adelaide based Master of Wine Peter Musket and his 'Wine Showcase' panel issued a Gold Medal for the 2008 Mataro as did the National 'Wine Genius' tasting panel, plus 93 points from James Hallidays latest Companion —exceptional results for nicely aged wine at these price points !

PERPLEXING QUESTIONS

WHY DO YOU HAVE TO "PUT YOUR TWO CENTS IN"... BUT IT'S ONLY A "PENNY FOR YOUR THOUGHTS"?
WHERE'S THAT EXTRA PENNY GOING TO?

HOW IS IT THAT WE PUT MAN ON THE MOON BEFORE WE FIGURED OUT IT WOULD BE A GOOD IDEA TO PUT WHEELS ON LUGGAGE?

WHY IS "BRA" SINGULAR AND "PANTIES" PLURAL?

IF ELECTRICITY COMES FROM ELECTRONS, DOES MORALITY COME FROM MORONS?

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