



# GRAPEVINE

*Journal of the Wine Service Guild (Vic) Inc.*

*Celebrating 50 Years 1959 – 2009*

**Edition 1/09**

## *. Editorial*

We have had a busy start to the year. The committee met at Dianne and Graeme Lofts' home in January for a planning day, and the programme was set.

The first function was the Breakfast on the Yarra on the first Sunday in February. More than 100 members and guests attended and if one did not enjoy oneself, we do not know what more we could do. There was plenty of food, wine and good company. The weather was kind and we had no problems in securing our normal site on the riverbank. Terry has posted five pages of pix on the Guild website.

Our next function was the Taste n' Talk Night in early March. A report on the function appears later in this edition.

Forty one people had booked for the first tour of the year – the Seville Area – on Sunday 22 March. A report appears also in this *Grapevine*. Planning is well under way for the first dinner to be held on Wednesday 22 April and the two day tour of the Otway/Bellarine Peninsular Wine Areas on 23/24 May 2009.

We are also planning for a special dinner to celebrate our Golden Anniversary. Details will follow later in the year.

## **Taste 'n Talk**

**2 March 2009**

**Bob & Barbara Nixon, Gisborne Peak Wines**

*“only good grapes make good wine”*

Members who were unable to attend the first Taste 'n Talk function for this year missed an enjoyable night of socialising and learning, while experiencing some lovely wines – what else could you ask for? The answer to that, of course, is rain, and we provided that too. Bob Nixon is a former teacher who currently works as a financial advisor and is a very good vigneron.

Bob planted his first acre of vines, Riesling, in 1978. He told us of how he carefully examined another vineyard, paced out the distance between rows and plants and promptly planted his plot on an



East – West alignment instead of North – South. How this error affected the production of his first fruit, and how he overcame the problem made for very interesting hearing. Bob emphasised the theme that “it takes discipline and consistency in the vineyard to get it right – and one slip and you're gone”. Throughout the presentation Bob gave examples of how

adhering to the theme affected the production of his wine; eg failure to prepare for a frost led to \$50,000 loss in production in one night.

Climate change has affected Gisborne Peak and the normal growing cycle is now occurring earlier in the year than previously. Budburst normally occurs in late September and flower set traditionally happened in between Christmas and New Year but now occurs close to Cup Day.

While Bob did most of the talking, Barbara his wife operated the computer video presentation, and gave hints on which foods would be a good accompaniment to each wine.



Bob spoke on the elements of grape growing and gave examples of each element that affects good grape production:

- Site
- Soil
- Climate
- Trellis
- Canopy Management and Pruning

Gisborne Peak Wines is a cool climate vineyard that produces Riesling, Chardonnay, Semillon and Pinot Noir wines. Bob said they produce about two tonnes of grape to the acre. Gisborne Peak has 14 of its 18 acres under vines. It also has its own water supply from two dams.



We were served a delightful Sparkling Pinot Noir on arrival, and then shown how to really taste a wine to get a full appreciation

of the character of the wine. Bob explained that the sparkling wine was made in the traditional method, which means that it was kept on lees for a minimum of nine months and one day.



Semillon is a slower growing grape, normally found in the Hunter Valley and Margaret River areas. Barbara advised that the wine would go well with seafood, Thai foods, coriander, curries, chillies and the like.

The Chardonnay was tasted next and Barbara suggested that this wine would compliment creamy sauced dishes, particularly pasta, but not tomato sauce.

Riesling is another wine that would be a great accompaniment with seafood and very spicy foods.

Having the benefit of Bob's tutelage in wine tasting, it became evident, as we proceeded through the wines, how important it is to use all of the mouth to taste the wine – not just a sip to the tip of the tongue. Whoever thought that you could chew a liquid, much less chew it twice?

Bob explained that Rosé was traditionally a second press wine with sugar added to soften the tannins, (and consequently lessen the headache). However, Gisborne Peak uses grape juice that is drawn off after three days from the Pinot Noir, and does not have any added sugar.

The straight Pinot Noir was well received by all and combined the good elements that Bob and Barbara had been speaking about throughout the evening.

The last wine tasted for the night was a Shiraz from the Bendigo region, but as it was not a Gisborne Peak wine it will not be discussed now.

Summing up, the night was a great educational experience. We enjoyed some nice food, wine and company.

If you want to share in a similar experience, be sure to attend the next "Taste ' Talk" to be held on 16<sup>th</sup> June 2009, the dinner on the 22<sup>nd</sup> April and the two day tour to Port Campbell on 23<sup>rd</sup>/24<sup>th</sup> May.

Many thanks to all who helped present this function, especially those who prepared the hall, caterers Nola and Ros, and especially Bob and Barbara Nixon for their wonderful presentation.

More pix can be seen on the Guild's website – [www.wineguild.com.au](http://www.wineguild.com.au)

Article by Adrian – Pix by Terry

### *Cuttings n'Crushings*

*Ben Frankfin once said, "In wine there is wisdom, in beer there is freedom, in water there is bacteria."*

*In a number of carefully controlled trials, scientists have demonstrated that if we drink 1 litre of water each day, at the end of the year we would have absorbed more than 1 kilo of Escherichia coli (E coli); ie the bacteria found in faeces. In other words we are consuming 1 kilo of poop.*

*However, we do not run that risk when drinking wine and beer, (or tequila, rum whisky or other liquor) because alcohol has to go through a purification process of boiling, filtering and/or fermenting.*

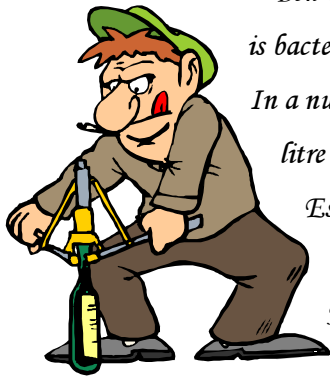
*Remember:*

*Water = Poop*

*Wine = Health*

*Therefore it is better to drink wine and talk stupid than to drink water and be full of \*\*\*\**

Our thanks to an anonymous member for this piece.



## Industry Fact (and Fiction?)

*Did you know that South Australian wineries are prevented by law from purchasing grapes from growers while owing growers money for grapes already purchased but not paid for. This is not the case in Vic and NSW and there are calls for this anomaly to be rectified to stop wineries from dodging debts.*



### WINE AND GRAPE INDUSTRY - 2007-08

---

Area of bearing vines (ha)	166 197	
Total grape production (t)	1 956 794	
Fresh grapes crushed (t)	1 831 523	
Beverage wine production (million L)	1 257.4	
Domestic sales of Australian wine (million L)	426.4	
Domestic sales value of Australian wine (\$m)	2 096.2	
Exports of Australian wine (million L)	714.7	
Exports of Australian wine (\$m)	2 680.4	Roughly \$3.75 per litre
Imports of wine (million L)	53.3	
Imports of wine (\$m)	431.4	Roughly \$8.00 per litre

---

Source: Sales of Australian Wine and Brandy by Winemakers (cat. no. 8504.0), ABS data available on request, Wine Statistics Survey, Wine and Spirit Production Survey, Inventories of Australian Wine and Brandy, Vineyards Survey.

**Comment:** Is imported wine worth \$4.25 per litre more than Australian wine?

A member contributed this snippet – if you can guess the name of the contributor, and its gender feel free to collect your prize of a free roll with paté at the next Guild tour.

(Note the incorrect English – finishing a sentence with a preposition!)

*Men are like fine wine. They all start out like grapes, and it's a woman's job to stomp on them and keep them in the dark until they mature into something you'd want to have dinner with.*



**Smoke taint**, fire damage, heat affected vines and the global financial crisis are more problems to be faced by many wine growers in Southern Australia this year. In order to support our local wine growers, ensure that you purchase Australian wines and look after your health - wine is healthy for you (see page 3). Also – Australian wine is less expensive than imported wine. Should we contact Kachie at Sunrise to run a campaign that drinking imported wine is unAustralian?

## **VINEYARD IRRIGATION (2007 – 2008)**

There were seven thousand vineyards that irrigated this season, 88.3% of the eight thousand vineyards in Australia. The area of grapevines irrigated was 162 thousand hectares, with South Australia's seventy thousand hectares accounting for 43.2%. Along with New South Wales (41 thousand hectares) and Victoria (35 thousand hectares) the three main grape growing states have 90% of vineyards using irrigation.

The average usage of water was 3.2 megalitres per hectare. South Australia's average was 2.7 megalitres per hectare, with New South Wales having an average of 3.8 megalitres per hectare and Victoria averaging the highest level at 4.1 megalitres per hectare.

The most common watering method continues to be drip or micro spray with 131 thousand hectares, or 81.0% of the total irrigated area watered using this method. In all States the predominant watering method is drip or micro spray. However, the proportion of area irrigated by spray excluding micro spray methods in Victoria (25.4%) and the use of watering by furrow or flood in New South Wales (16.8%) is still significant.

(From Aust Bureau of Statistics)

## **SEVILLE WINE AREA TOUR and TASTING REPORT**

On Sunday 22<sup>nd</sup> March 2009 forty members and guests visited the Seville Area for a wine tasting tour. It was a big day, because we visited five wineries, presented the Guild's perpetual trophy to the winner of the 2008 Lilydale Wine Show's Best Chardonnay, had morning and afternoon tea and lunch, all within approximately eleven hours!

We had morning tea at a pleasant little park in Yarra Glen, where President Bob ensured that the appropriate additive was available for the coffee. Once again we had our normal, and much loved, morning tea; and if you don't know what that means, you should come along on one of our tours.



## Yering Station Winery

Our first stop was at Yering Station where Peter Shorfis on behalf of the staff, accepted the Perpetual Trophy for the Best Chardonnay at the 2008 Lilydale Wine Show. Incidentally, this wine was judged to be the best wine in the show. It is fitting that this trophy, in the Guild's 50<sup>th</sup> year, is in the custody of Victoria's oldest vineyard.

Peter also led us in a tasting of Chardonnay wines. We tasted the 2006 Chardonnay, and then a 2005 Reserve Chardonnay. Peter explained that the normal yield at Yering Station is about 2.5 – 3 tonnes per acre, but with reserve wines they normally only get about 1 tonne per acre.



*Peter Shorfis of Yering Station receiving the Wine Service Guild Perpetual Trophy for the Best Chardonnay, 2008 Lilydale Wine Show, from Guild President, Bob Bailey*

Peter introduced us to a 2006 Shiraz Viognier. This wine is a blend of 95% Shiraz and 5% Viognier and is a lovely light red wine. Yering Station believes this wine will last for about 8 years in the bottle, and is an interesting aromatic wine.



It was interesting seeing the blackened earth surrounding the vineyard. The bushfires of 7 February 2009 reached the boundary of the estate, but did not burn the vines – but we wonder about the damage from the heat of the fires and the weather in the past few days. Our second point was the fact that many of the vines had the netting removed – was this for harvesting or because of smoke taint?

## Wild Cattle Creek Winery

From Yering Station we had a pleasant, meandering trip through the backblocks of Gruyere and Wandin to Wild Cattle Creek Winery, where Graham Smith told us about his wines.

Wild Cattle Creek Cellar Door opened its 200 year old doors in February 2005. The vineyard at Wild Cattle Creek was established a little earlier, in the year of 2002. Much of the fruit for the range of Wild Cattle Creek wines comes from the Langbrook Estate vineyard in the Upper Yarra Valley, which was established in the 1980's and is one of the largest vineyards in the region.

Graham explained that he uses screw caps to bottle his wine, as they seal the bottle well, and are more than half the cost of corks. It is simple economics to use the screw caps now.



Wild Cattle Creek has a range of wines available including Pinot Gris, Sauvignon Blanc, Chardonnay, Rosé, Pinot Noir, Merlot, Cabernet Sauvignon, and Shiraz.

From Wild Cattle Creek it was a short journey to Seville Hill Winery

### Seville Hill Winery

The involvement of John and Josie D'Aloisio in the agricultural industry began over 30 years ago culminating with the establishment of Seville Hill Vineyard and Winery in 1991.

Located in the picturesque country town of Seville in the heart of the Yarra Valley, John and Josie have produced quality fruit from 43 acres of deep rich volcanic soil which has been the foundation and has led to the development of Seville Hill Wines.

Early planting of wine varieties include Cabernet Sauvignon, Chardonnay, Shiraz and more recently Merlot. Seville Hill Wines retain a personal touch in wine making techniques and are typically true to the lingering intensity of fruit characterised by the cooler climatic region of the Yarra Valley.



We arrived to the sounds of some nice mainstream jazz from a 3 piece jazz band. This set the scene for a tasting of John's array of wines, and Josie's delightful lunch.

John took us through a tasting of Seville Hill's wines. Currently they have about a dozen wines on offer, including a sparkling pinot chardonnay, chardonnay, sauvignon blanc, rosé, merlot, shiraz, cabernet sauvignon, tempranillo, and a cabernet shiraz merlot blend.

Suffice to say the two course luncheon was on a par with the excellent wines tasted, and then sadly we had to move on to our next winery.

### Seville Estate

Dr Peter Mc Mahon planted the first vines at Seville Estate in 1972, it marked the rebirth of the Yarra Valley as a premium wine region. By the end of the decade Dr McMahon and his wife Margaret, along with producers such as Mount Mary, Yeringberg, Yarra Yering, St Huberts and the like were fashioning wines that served to re-establish the lofty reputation the Yarra Valley had enjoyed in the 19th century.

Graham and Margaret Van Der Meulen purchased the property in December 2005. They are fully hands-on in the vineyard, winery, and cellar door and plan to continue Seville's long-established record of producing consistently high quality wines.



A new generation of the McMahon family has also become involved in Seville Estate. Peter and Margaret's grandson, Dylan McMahon is now the winemaker, following the passion ignited a generation before. Dylan took us on a tour of the winery and then introduced us to the Seville Estate range.

It was interesting to see the way a small winery operates, and utilises the space available to maximum effect.

There are three labels in the Seville Estate range: "The Barber" range

(Chardonnay, Pinot Gris, Rosé, Riesling and Shiraz) are great introductory wines. The "Estate" range, (Shiraz, Pinot Noir and Chardonnay) are estate grown with the addition of the new vineyard plantings, being a blend of old and new vines. The Reserve range includes the Old Vine Shiraz and Cabernet Sauvignon, drawn exclusively from the small planting of the original 34 year old vines while the Reserve Pinot Noir and Chardonnay are selected from the best parcels.

The soils at Seville Estate are extremely fertile red to grey volcanic, over a clay base. The vines are substantially dry grown, as irrigation is only used when the vines are under extreme stress.

Currently standing at approximately 20 - 21 acres under vine, the varietal breakdown is as follows:

Riesling	1 acre
Old Vine Cabernet Sauvignon	1 acre
Old Vine Shiraz	1 acre
Shiraz	6 acres
Pinot Noir	6 acres
Chardonnay	6 acres

And so after a most pleasant time talking and tasting, (and in some cases, resting) it was time to move on once more.

### **Five Oaks Winery**

The Five Oaks winery and vineyard is only 50 kilometres north-east of the centre of Melbourne. It is located among the lush, rolling hills on the southern side of the Yarra Valley. The vineyard slopes gently westward, overlooking cherry and stone fruit orchards, with Mt Dandenong in the background.

The three-hectare vineyard was established in 1978 and, over the years, wines produced from the vineyard have won many awards.

Judy and Wally Zuk bought the vineyard and winery in 1995 and renamed it Five Oaks, after the five magnificent oak trees that grace the property.

The deep, rich red volcanic soil in the vineyard produces extraordinary depth and complexity of flavour in the wines. This is further



accentuated by viticulture practices that maintain low yields.

Five Oaks specialises in Cabernet Sauvignon, Merlot, Cabernet Sauvignon-Merlot and Riesling wines. These wines are made in the winery from fruit grown in the vineyard.

Wally gave us an short history of the winery and spoke of some of their successes in wine shows. We then proceeded to taste their wines in a relaxed atmosphere.

After a short time tasting the wines, we then had coffee and cake for afternoon tea.

You would be hard pressed to find a more enjoyable site for relaxing with a coffee, cake or wine – (under spreading oak (not chestnut) trees, and no village smithy,) but a lovely congregation of wine lovers enjoying the peace and tranquillity of a quiet vineyard.

And so concluded another Guild tour and tasting. Perhaps it was being ambitious going to five wineries, as we were a bit “wined out” by the time we got to Five Oaks. However, it was an enjoyable day and maintained the Guild’s standards of tours of this type.

Our thanks go to the hosts at all the wineries:

Peter Shoftis of Yering Station;

Graham Smith at Wild Cattle Creek;

John and Josie D’Aloisio of Seville Hill;

Dylan McMahon of Seville Estate ; and

Judy and Wally Zuk of Five Oaks Winery.

We hope that Guild members and friends will continue to support these wineries who gave their time most generously. We also acknowledge them for allowing us to quote from their websites in the preparation of this article.



## Functions - 2009

<b>APRIL 2009</b>	Wednesday 22nd April - Restaurant Dinner Zest at Holmesglen
<b>MAY 2009</b>	Sat/Sun 23rd/24th May - Two Day Coach Tour - Bellarine/Otway Area
<b>JUNE 2009</b>	Tuesday 16th June - Taste n Talk Night
<b>JULY 2009</b>	Tuesday 14th July – AGM
<b>AUGUST 2009</b>	Sunday 16th August - Coach Tour - Mornington Area
<b>SEPTEMBER 2009</b>	Wednesday 16th September - 50th Anniversary Dinner
<b>OCTOBER 2009</b>	Tuesday 13th October - Taste n Talk Night
<b>NOVEMBER 2009</b>	Sunday 15th November – Bottling
<b>DECEMBER 2009</b>	Sunday 6th December - Restaurant Luncheon



**Are you aware that this is the Golden Anniversary Year of the Wine Service Guild (Vic Inc)?**

50 years of service to the wine industry is something to be proud of.

How can YOU help us to celebrate in the manner that is worthy of this great achievement?

Some of you may like to put pen to paper to relate your experiences in the Guild for others to enjoy over the next few Grapevine editions.

I am sure that there are many interesting/humorous tales to be told – the more scandalous (but non libelous) the better. And what about those old pix and characters that have made this Guild the organization it is today?

Please submit them to Adrian & Barbara Corkeron at [jinchillapacas@optusnet.com.au](mailto:jinchillapacas@optusnet.com.au)