



Wine Service Guild (Vic) (Inc)

Newsletter 2/08

Editorial

A lot of water has passed under the bridge since the previous newsletter – and a modicum of wine has passed over the lips!

March and April were busy months for the Guild: a tour of the Nagambie Area, a magnificent dinner and tasting of Chambers Rosewood wines at Klauss Lemm's Frenchy's bistro; and an interesting education experience of various whiskeys. The next few months are going to be just as interesting – see the "Future Functions" area, and also keep up to date by regularly checking the Guild web site, www.wineguild.com.au

In the next few months there is to be another Education Night, a coach tour of the Balnarring area, a Winemaker's Dinner and Quiz Night, and the Annual General Meeting in July. The committee is certainly trying to make sure that there is something for everyone.

My appeal for an editor of the Newsletter

was answered by a new member, who will look into taking over the Newsletter when she returns from overseas. She may also contribute an article on the more exotic wines and locations she experienced in her European trip.

Of course we are always looking for interesting articles on members' experiences with wines and wine - related experiences they have encountered. Give your article to any committee member, or (preferably) e-mail your article to corkeron@melbpc.org.au.

As long as your article is not illegal, immoral or fattening, it has a good chance of being published.

A little reminder that we have a few cases of the Guild bottled red still available. Let Brian Fogarty know you are interested and we will arrange for the wine to be available for collection.

Our thanks go to the members who responded to the questionnaire we distributed in February. Results are still being looked at, but generally members are mostly satisfied with the way the

Guild is progressing. Fortunately all the critical comments have been constructive, and the committee is actively working towards providing a better service for you.



Around the Barrel

The Weekly Times recently (19 Mar 08) reported that scientists have identified the bacteria responsible for causing frost on vines. Believe it or not, frost costs the Victorian and South Australian grape industries about \$33 million annually. Apparently *Pseudomonas syringae* bacteria is the main bacterium in Australia that causes frost damage to vines.

The report goes on to reveal that protein produced by the bacteria caused dew to freeze at much higher temperatures than it would otherwise. Grapevines can withstand temperatures of minus 12 degrees without damage. But when the bacteria is present it triggers frost formation at temperatures as high as minus 1.8C.

Cheap imported wine is flooding Australia as major wineries attempt to continue to protect their low end casket market share.

It seems incongruous that one winery representative stated that "it would have been unconscionable to expect Australian growers to accept \$300 a tonne when they had paid \$1000 a megalitre for water to irrigate their wines." So instead of raising the price paid to growers, they brought cheap bulk wine from Argentina. (At I believe approximately \$300 a tonne. Australian growers got nothing!)

Lesson is, ensure that you buy Australian wine from Australian producers.



Future Functions

Education Night

Tuesday 13th May 2008.
Guest Bob Nixon
Subject The Effect of
Agriculture and
Viticulture on the making
of Wine

See function notice
already distributed

Balnarring Tour

Sunday 25th May
See function notice
already distributed

Quiz Night.

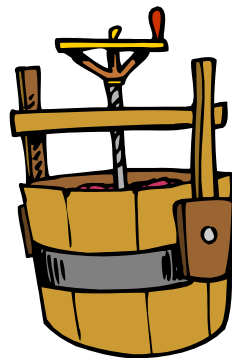
Tuesday 17th June 2008.
Henry's Restaurant.
1/63 Stud Road,
Bayswater
Guest Winemakers, Bill
and Sandra Blamires of
Blamires Butterfly
Crossing Wines
Sutton Grange

Annual General Meeting.

Tuesday 15th July 2008.
Herritage Room
Hotel Bruce County.
445 Blackburn Road,
Mount Waverley

Guest Winemakers
Murray and Marie Lyons
Whispering Hills
Vineyard, Seville

TWO DAY Coach Tour.
16th & 17th August 2008.
Ballarat / Moorabool
Valley including
Sovereign Hill "Blood on
the Southern Cross."



Function Report – Nagambie Wine Area

16 March 2008

34 members and 11 guests took the opportunity to travel to the Nagambie Wine Area on Sunday 16th March 2008. As we needed to be at Tahbilk by 09.00 am we did not stop for the customary paté etc after our last pickup, but drove straight to the winery. Geoff Dennehy provided some crackers to munch on as we travelled, and they were a nice accompaniment to the chilled fruit juices served by the committee. It is pleasing to report that we had a near full coach with only one vacant seat available (due to minor, late accident of a member which precluded attendance on the tour).

Unfortunately, Barbara Cecchi, who normally prepares a quiz, trivial pursuit or some other way to pass the time away, was unable to come on the trip, and so the committee decided to test the tourists' spelling and grammar abilities by distributing flyers about the next two Guild functions, one of which had a deliberate mistake. One by product of this was that members and guests had to read the notice completely if they wanted a chance to win the prize. Committee may do more of this so that we ensure notices are read in future!! Many picked up the accidental mistake, but Liz Scott, who may have had an advantage in that she worked for a number of years with your correspondent, and who is aware of his pedantry, picked up the incorrect use of an apostrophe. Betty Layton correctly answered when Tahbilk dropped "Chateau" from its brand name. Both winners won a bottle of the

Guild bottled red wine (which is available from committee members and is drinking very well at the moment).

We arrived at Tahbilk slightly before we were due at 09.00 am and stretched legs for a couple of minutes before entering the tasting area. I do not think that the people attending to us realised that the tourists were there to learn about the winery and wines as well as taste and purchase. We were invited to take ourselves on a tour of the cellars and look round the tasting room, but were not given a presentation about the rich history of Tahbilk. Many of our members are not connected to the internet, and even though we all have heard about "Tahbilk" or "Chateau Tahbilk" over many years, it is nice to receive an insight to the environment of the establishment that we are visiting.

I have taken the liberty of plagiarising from Tahbilk's brochures and website to give members a small insight into this important part of Victoria's heritage.



Tahbilk was established in 1860, and is one of Victoria's oldest wineries. The property comprises some 1,214 hectares and has 200 hectares of vines. Tahbilk has 11 kms of river frontage to the Goulburn River and eight kms of permanent backwaters and creeks.

Grape varieties grown at Tahbilk include the Rhone Whites, Marsanne, Viognier and Roussanne; the Rhone Reds, Shiraz, Grenache and Mouvedre; as well as traditional varieties such as Cabernet Sauvignon, Merlot, Cabernet Franc, Chardonnay, Riesling, Semillon, Sauvignon Blanc and Verdelho.

Harvest is conducted in March and April, and approximately 1,600 tonnes of grapes are processed. This translates into about 100,000 cases

with just over 20% being exported to USA, United Kingdom, Canada, Singapore, Ireland and Scandinavian countries.

The cellars Tahbilk are most intriguing. The original cellars were dug in 1860, and the "New Cellar" was built in 12 weeks in 1875. The brochure states that the "New Cellar" was constructed by James Purbrick, an antecedent of the current owners, and that 16,200 cubic metres of soil was removed by barrow and horse drawn cart. (It would be interesting to find out the strength of the actual construction team.) The bricks for the cellar were burnt on the property, and the arched roof was laid without a keystone. There is storage in both cellars for 365,000 litres of wine in century old American, French and Polish oak casks varying in capacity from 1,137 to 6365 litres. Each of the bins (see pic – is Joyce counting the bottles?) contains approximately 8,000 bottles. Unfortunately we did not have time to take either the walk or boat tour of the wetlands. I think it would be interesting to have the time to explore wetlands and the complete Tahbilk establishment including museum, and other historic buildings on this unique site.



popular solution to our current water shortage. Many members agreed with her.

After an hour at Tahbilk we boarded M.V. Major Mitchell and steamed, leisurely, to Mitchelton Winery. It was really a great change to idle down the river, looking at the scenery and having our coffee, rolls, cheese, etc. Pat, our hostess, let us all know that she thought the new pipeline taking water from the Goulburn to Melbourne was not a



In 1967 Colin Preece was commissioned by Ross Shelmerdine to find the best site for premium wine grape growing in South Eastern Australia. The first vines were planted in 1969 and the first vintage

was in 1973. In the same year, the spectacular winery, cellar door complex and 55 metre tower was opened.

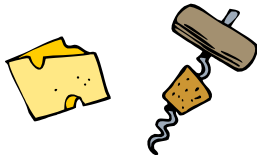
We were welcomed into the cellar door and allowed to wander, enjoy the art gallery and taste as we wished. As at Tahbilk, it would have been nice to have been given some information about the wines and processing at Mitchellton, but that was not to be. Suffice to say it was interesting, particularly if you took the opportunity to take the lift up the tower and view the vineyard.

The difference between those vines at Tahbilk and Mitchellton that were still receiving water, and those that were not being irrigated at this time is quite marked. The irrigated vines have plenty of leaf cover and are a lovely, deep green, but the non-irrigated vines are well on the way to becoming brown.

And then it was time to go to Plunkett Fowles. Here we were welcomed and given a short history of how the Plunkett and Fowles families came to marry their respective skills into the current company. After the introduction we commenced our lunch: 50/50 chicken or beef – but that belies the lovely taste and presentation of the meals, accompanied by Plunkett Fowles wines. The wines were a reflection of the welcome we were given – absolutely delightful, and the service in the restaurant was friendly and efficient.

Finally we travelled, and travelled and travelled and travelled to the Brave Goose Vineyard. Our guide and also the driver missed the entrance sign (which was not particularly prominent), and then we had a drive of more than a kilometre to the actual cellar door. The driveway was built for cars, not a 46 passenger coach. Peter, the coach captain, did very well to squeeze into this particular winery. Because of the delay in arriving at Brave Goose, our hosts were disadvantaged in that it was a hot day, they had the wines and glasses ready for us when we were expected, but we were some 30 or minutes later. The wines were not presented well because of the heat. We all felt sorry for John and Jo Stocker who made us welcome, but could not control the heat, and its effect on their wines.

And so ended another successful Wine Guild Tour. Our thanks go to the staff at Tahbilk, Mitchellton, Plunkett Fowles and Brave Goose wineries. Patrons of the Guild are urged to show their support for these wineries who made us welcome, and gave us an insight to their wonderful wines. We hope to see you at the next Guild function – remember to book early to secure place, and try some of the Guild red with your meal – it really is quite nice.



Function Report – Chambers Rosewood Wines @ Frenchy's Bistro

16 April 2008

Every now and again the Guild presents a function that really stands out because of a great marriage of wine and food: the dinner at *Frenchy's bistro* on 16th April 2008 was such an occasion. The combination of Chef Klauss Lemm's fine cuisine with the wines from Chambers Rosewood Winery from Rutherglen was a treat to be remembered.



Chambers Rosewood Winery is a very relaxed family owned winery established in 1858 and operated by the legendary Bill Chambers and his son Stephen, the 6th generation of this family to make wine at Rosewood. Bill and Wendy Chambers were our guests for the evening, and both provided some wonderful commentary on the history of Rutherglen, and also the wines to accompany our meal.

Internationally acclaimed for Muscats, Tokays and other fortified wines, Chambers' have a comprehensive range of wines to suit every palate and budget. Muscat from one of the country's smallest wineries is featured as the only Australian offering on an innovative wine list aboard a major American airline. Delta Air Line's globe-trotting customers can now enjoy the labours of the

Chambers family who have been producing wine at their rustic Chambers Rosewood cellars in Rutherglen for the past 150 years.

On arrival we were presented with a dry flor sherry and an oloroso sherry. A sparkling white wine from the Guild's cellar was also available.

The three course a la carte menu was very well received and complemented the wines. A choice of "Herb crumbed deep-fried mushrooms", "Classic French onion soup" or "Salt and pepper calamari" was served for entrée. Guests were offered the oloroso sherry, a 2003 Gouais or a 2005 Rosewood Riesling to accompany the entrees.

"Gouais blanc is a white grape variety that is seldom grown but is important as the ancestor of many French and German wine varieties. It is believed to originate in Croatia; in Central Europe it is known as Heunisch Weiss. The name Gouais derives from the old French adjective 'gou', a term of derision befitting its traditional status as the grape of the peasants. Gouais blanc may have been the grape given to the Gauls by [Probus](#) (Roman Emperor 276–282), who was from Pannonia and overturned Domitian's decree banning grape growing north of the Alps.^[2] By the Middle Ages it was the most widely grown white grape in northeast France and in Central Europe. Gouais blanc was the grape of the peasantry, growing on the flat land next to the better slopes where the nobility grew Pinot." From Wikipedia, the free encyclopedia

Main courses were a choice of :

Twice cooked crispy skin duck; or

Frenchy's pepper steak; or

Pink roasted lamb rump; or

Crispy skin salmon steak

all accompanied by the appropriate vegetables or salads.

Accompanying the main course was a selection of red wines including 2004 Anton Ruche (Mondeuse Shiraz), 2004 Cabernet Merlot or 2002 Blue Imperial.

Blue Imperial is made from the Cinsault grape. Again I had to Google and plagiarise from Wikipedia to learn about this variety.

Cinsault or Cinsaut (pronounced "san – so") is a red wine grape, whose heat tolerance and productivity make it important in Languedoc-Roussillon and the former French colonies of Algeria and Morocco. It is often blended with grapes such as Grenache and Carignane to add softness and bouquet.

It has many synonym, of which perhaps the most confusing is its sale as a table grape called "Oeillade", although it is different from the "true" Oeillade which is no longer cultivated. In South Africa, it was known as "Hermitage", hence the name of its most famous cross Pinotage". From Wikipedia, the free encyclopedia

All in all it was a great night of fine wine, food and fellowship. It certainly whetted the appetite for our next functions, the Education Night on 13 May and the tour of the Balnarring Area on 25 May 2008.





Education

Whiskey Night Report

35 members and guests booked in to the International Whiskey Experience conducted by Matt Morris.

On arrival members were greeted with a glass of Yellowglenn Bubbles and a wonderful array of casseroles, pasta, quiche and gourmet sausages, with buttered bread sticks provided by our Secretary, Barbara Cecchi, ably assisted by her very good friend and neighbour Shirley Thomas.

7.30pm sees a very intent group sitting 4 to a table with tasting glasses containing a nip of the international whiskeys.

Bob introduced Matt Morris who led us through a slide presentation while explaining in a very jovial way the differences in the whiskeys.

At the end of the evening the questionnaire previously handed out were collected to select a winner of the gift box of 3 whiskeys.

The winner was Guild Member, Elizabeth Scott.

Bob thanked Matt on behalf of all attendees, then all enjoyed a cuppa with some lovely Humming Bird and Chocolate cake.

A most enjoyable evening had by all and concluded at 9.00pm.

Now log on to www.wineguild.com.au and view the photos Terry Coles has taken on the night.