

News from the Hen

No. 16 Spring 2014



Beware the trainee winery dog



Cup Weekend Music Picnic – Saturday 1st November

Music on the lawns from 4:30pm to 7:30pm.

A triple header, for this year's Cup Weekend Music.:

Sagamore - a souful pop four piece originally from the Surf Coast. According to Triple J, the band , “has its foundations set in pop sensibilities with the feel and energy of rhythm and blues”.

Big Smoke - country, folk, pop, rock – you pick the tags, but the sound is gorgeous and the songs beautifully crafted.

Cool Sounds – originally a four piece, the band's composition seems to vary by the track, but the sound remains consistently Melbourne Jangle. According to one review, “With overlaying guitars, melting sax and softly addictive tone, Cool sounds could be the perfect replacement for The Cure”.

Food – Bring your own picninc or buy something from the Purple Hen offering.

Wine – Our range will be available by the glass or bottle.

Beer – Rusty Waters Pilsner and Pale Ale will be available

(NO BYO Alcohol allowed)

Cover Charge – \$5 for adults (children free)

Glasses – If you are using our glasses they can be ‘rented’ for \$5, take them home or return them intact for refund of the \$5.

What if the weather is rubbish? This event is on – if the weather is OK. If it is in doubt we will put an update on the web site and on Facebook and you can phone us on the day (5956 9244)

Chip – trainee winery dog

The little fella on the front page is Chip. He is a Cairn Terrier (related to both the Scottish and the West Highland Terriers).

Our long serving winery dog, Taj, is still going but getting very slow and a bit wobbly these days. He is thirteen and a half, a pretty fair age for a dog his size.

We are looking to Taj to inculcate the key attributes of a good winery dog – a chilled/relaxed disposition and friendliness to people and dogs.

Being only five months old and a terrier, Chip is struggling a little with the concept of a chilled/relaxed disposition, but is excelling at the friendliness. Perhaps a little too excellent in this aspect of the job.

The 2014 crop

One advantage of our failure to produce a newsletter in the last year is that you have not had to endure bleatings about the last vintage.

Yes, it was poor. We ended up picking around 20% of our average crop. The problem was the wet windy spring – early summer. This resulted in a very poor fruit set.

Ironically, the rest of the season was good, but this was mostly academic as we had so little to benefit from the good conditions.

So the bottom line is that we did not produce a Pinot Gris or a Viognier in 2014 and the Riesling we made from grapes we purchased from near Geelong.

The rest of the varieties were well down on normal, but at least we have enough volume of each to justify bottling. We also put together the small amounts of Pinot Gris and Viognier

that we did pick to make a blend – see Comings & Goings

On the positive side, the wines made last year are looking very promising. This is particularly so for the reds.

In the vineyard



We are in that transition time at the moment. Bud burst is over and shoots are starting to get some bulk – but relatively slowly. Soon this early growth will be sufficiently large and mature to make more sugar than it uses, then the growth will really start to accelerate.

So now is a good time to get through the vineyard and “weed out” the shoots that are excess to requirements. The unwanted shoots can be flicked off with just finger and thumb – no snips required.

Spraying has also started, with the early bud burst varieties (Pinot Noir and Chardonnay) having their first spray of the season. So its back on the treadmill for Adam and Rick – spraying every couple of weeks through the peak fungal disease period.

It's too early yet to say how the next crop will look, but we expect it to be smaller than average. The poor weather around last year's fruit set is likely to have meant relatively low fruitfulness in the buds forming at that time. Bud differentiation (within the buds some tendrils differentiate into 'baby bunches') occurs at that time and cold wet conditions will likely

have meant less bunches and smaller bunches. Time will tell.

2014 Gippsland Wine Show

A few changes to this year's Gippsland Wine Show are worthy of mention.

- The RACV Inverloch Resort has become the naming sponsor for the event and it will be held at the Resort. So the show is now the RACV Gippsland Wine Show.
- The date has been pushed back - judging will take place on 21st October.
- The Awards Presentation Evening will be held the following Wednesday 29th of October. This will be held at the Resort.

The association with the RACV is a great step forward for the Show. The RACV have been very supportive of the local wine industry and will provide a wonderful venue for the Show.

This is particularly so for the Presentation Evening. This event will have a cocktail finger food style menu, using local produce and all the wines of the 2014 Show available for tasting. Tickets for this event are open to the public. They can be purchased by contacting the Show Coordinator, Lisa by email at: lisa@dirtythreewines.com.au

The evening is a great opportunity to taste wines from across Gippsland and to meet many of the vignerons.

Wine comings & goings

Given that the last Newsletter was 12 months ago, most things on the list have changed.

In summary:

- **Pinot Gris and Viognier** - none for the next 9 months.

- **Off Dry Riesling** – we are onto the 2014 vintage already. As noted above, this is from fruit purchased in, but the style is very consistent with earlier vintages.
- **Pinot Noir** – we are onto the 2012 vintage. In that year we made two Pinot Noir, our 'standard' and **The Rooster**. The 'standard' has our trade mark velvety tannins and 'sweet' fruit notes. **The Rooster** has been selected from within our various batches and barrels to make a slightly bigger style, firmer tannins and spicier notes on the palate - more a rooster than a hen.
- **Shiraz** – we are just about to switch from the 2012 to the 2013 vintage and what a difference a year makes. 2013 was hot vintage and this wine is considerably bigger than the 2011 and the 2012.
- **Cabernet Sauvignon** - the old 2009 Island Cabernet has gone and in the blink of an eye the 2010 was sold out. We are now onto the 2011. Being from a cold wet vintage it is a lighter style of Cabernet.
- **Merlot** – the straight Merlot is basically gone replaced by a **Cabernet Merlot** blend. Current release is the 2011.
- **Sparkling Shiraz** – Sparkling Shiraz is back on. We gave Mal the OK to begin disgorging the 2012 when he reported back that he had found a small parcel of the 2011 that had been missed. So we disgorged both. The little bit of 2011 will soon be gone and then we will go straight into the 2012. We didn't make a sparkling shiraz in 2013 or 2014 so we will have to see what can be done this coming vintage.

Cheers from Purple Hen