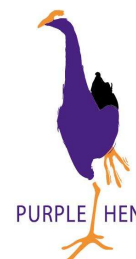


News from the Hen

No. 11 Summer 2012



Betting our hedges



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Music in January

Music has been on again each **Friday in January. Music starts at 6 to 6:30pm and goes for a couple of hours.**

Given the good feedback from the Cup Weekend Music Day – we are running with the bring your own food format. We will still do platters etc. for those who can not or do not wish to bring their own nibbles. In addition it always worth bringing your own rug or chairs as our seating will run out fairly early on.

We are half way through the 'season'. **The line up to come is:**

Friday 20th January – Bernadette Carroll – blues, folk, and much more, Bernadette does it all in her own inimitable style. This year with violinist, Louise Woodward.

Friday 27th January – Vampire Boogie – a trio from Gippsland hooked on 1950's and generally good fun rock 'n' roll.

What if the weather is rubbish? If it is raining or a blowing a gale phone us on the day (5956 9244).

Bring your own food or buy a platter here – its up to you.

Bring a rug/chair and mossie repellent.

Betting our hedges

The photo on the first page shows the vines after the trimmer has been through. We have a rather fierce looking bit of French technology with high speed spinning stainless steel blades to give the vines a short top and sides hair cut.

The aim is to keep the vigour of the vines in check and ensure good light and air flow in the canopy.

This year, in addition to hedging, we have put extra effort into leaf plucking and shoot thinning the reds straight after fruit set. The risk is that we get some stinking hot days and a heap of sun-burnt fruit to throw away. The bet is that the weather stays coolish and cloudy and we get better tannin development.

As an old lecturer and friend used to say, “Who bets?”

Here we go for 2012



The photo shows the Pinot Noir at our original vineyard. As you can see, quite a bit of colour. The clock has started to tick for Vintage 2012 – our ninth.

This colour is attracting a fair bit of attention from the birds. Nets will start going on this week and we will have half the vineyard netted by the end of January. The later varieties will be netted in the first week of February.

Once the nets are on we will start preparing in the winery. Going on the timing of first colour and temperatures so far in the season, we are likely to start harvesting Chardonnay for sparkling base very early in March.

2011 Vintage wrap up

As we indicated in the last newsletter, 2011 was a difficult vintage – because of all the rain and cool weather. But, it wasn't without its positives and the best of these were in the white wines. We think the 2011 whites were the best overall quality of white we have produced to date. Real stand-outs were:

- 2011 Chardonnay, which we are bottling in early February. At this stage of its development this is looking the best of any we have produced. It will spend about a year in the bottle before release – can't wait to see how it develops.
- 2011 Sauvignon Blanc – this has been on sale since August and your feedback has been very positive.
- Botrytised Riesling – don't have much and won't bottle for a while yet. Just a cracking good dessert wine.

We hope the 2011 Viognier will join this list of highlights, it looked fantastic in barrel – but at the moment its got a fair amount of bottle shock and is not coming out of its shell. We'll see how it looks in autumn.

The reds have come on better than we thought they would when sulphured. The 2011 Shiraz is looking particularly interesting – it is very lively and savoury in the mouth. Not as much tannin/structure as the 2010, but a lovely 'zesty' flavour and palate.

The Pinot Noir has benefited from our disposal of the weak and the final blend is looking pretty attractive. Again, not as big as its 2010 sibling, but clearly varietal and very engaging on the palate.

We will bottle the Shiraz and the Pinot Noir in February. The Cabernet and the Merlot will stay in barrel until Spring.

Wine comings & goings

Wines to finish since the last newsletter were:

- **2010 Rosé** there is no 2011 so that's it for Rosé for the time being.
- **2010 Off Dry Riesling** – we have replaced this with the 2011 Off Dry Sauvignon Blanc.
- **2008 Sparkling Shiraz** – fondly remembered, the 2011 version will not be ready till about 2013.
- **2009 Pinot Noir** – we now have the 2010 on tasting. Won the Trophy for best Pinot Noir at the Gippsland Wine Show – will keep on improving for at least a couple of years.
- **2009 Shiraz** – one trophy winning shiraz replaced with another – the 2010 winning Best Shiraz and Best Red Wine at the Gippsland Wine Show (and a Gold Medal at the Victorian Wines Show)
- **2009 Cabernet Sauvignon** – we have moved into the 2009 Island Cabernet. This is a one off wine, made from a mix of fruit for our vineyard and from the Berry's Beach Vineyard (Phillip Island Wines).

The **2009 Blanc de Blanc** is nearing the end of its run – only about 30 cases left. We have disgorged a parcel of the 2010 Blanc de Blanc and this will be right to go when the 2009 is finished. As with the 2009, we will disgorge small parcels to allow more time on lees.

New website

We are well under way in the re-development of the web site. The new site should come on line in March.

The redeveloped system will include on-line trading to make it easier and more secure to purchase over the net.

It will also have better content management – so we will have no excuse for not keeping things more up to date than with the current site.

As we get things bedded down we will update our emailing capability through the new site, to improve delivery of newsletters and to allow on-line subscribing or un-subscribing.

Order form

The old web site Order Form has been updated.

Cheers from all at Purple Hen