



# Eltham & District Winemakers Guild Inc.

Press Cuttings  
April 2007

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**The Guild encourages the responsible consumption of alcohol**

The Guild meets on the last Friday of each month  
at the Eltham Living & Learning Centre at 8 pm  
Next meeting: 27<sup>th</sup> April, 2007

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## Next Meeting

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This meeting will be a challenge. Mario has arranged for a country winemaker to arrive with his samples to lead us on a journey of discovery. As you have not met him before, you can't second guess the varieties he will offer, but if you want to cheat, read the past edition of the newsletter where Mario gave you a foretaste of the tastings.

In addition, you are asked to bring along bottles of your own country wines which we will blind-taste. Come prepared with the recipes and winemaking techniques so that we can all learn from your experience.

The Guild takes its country winemaking seriously. While grape wines are in demand commercially you can be assured that the winemaking techniques will be passed on to the next generation. It's only by continuing to make country wines that we will be able to play our role in the transfer of important information. We know there are recipes out there, but practical application is an important ingredient to the art. By tastings and discussions such as this we will all learn from each other and assist the Guild in its educational role.

All that may seem a little heavy. Actually it will be fun and informative. See you there.

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## Presidents Press

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*George Wright - President*

It's been another busy month for winemakers. Before vintage, I decided that I had too much wine in barrels and decided to limit my winemaking this year to winning the trophy at the wine show year with a superb bottle of Sauvignon Blanc. (It's no good being modest about aspirations). Circumstances also helped me limit my winemaking intentions, because the frost wiped out my grapes in spring so that the available supply was not a pressing issue, so to speak. Then all these good quality grapes came on offer. It's only today I bedded down some Merlot in glass and Cab.Sauv. in oak. I really should get serious about drinking my way through the cellar or more determined not to make any more wine for a while.

I must compliment Spencer once again for sourcing grapes that were in limited supply this year. From what I hear, most managed to get their quota of grapes and I look forward to hearing of who's doing what and where.

By the way I've also decided to win gold medals for my Merlot and Cab.Sauv. That gives me eight months of pleasant dreams before reality strikes home. But for now, most of the hard work is finished. It's a great feeling to ram that last stopper into the barrel, isn't it?

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## Rob Aitken's dribbles

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*Rob Aitken*

"I told my wife that a husband is like a fine wine; he gets better with age.  
The next day, she locked me in the cellar."  
(Unknown)

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## Simon Bell

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Next month I leave for Eindhoven, The Netherlands, to work on my PhD with collaborators for 6 months! So while I cannot enjoy making my own wine and socialising with and learning from the guild members, rest assured that I will take full educational advantage of the close proximity of the famous winery regions of France!

So please let the guild members know that I have not disappeared from the guild and that I will be thinking of them as I run around Burgundy and Bordeaux!

Email: [sbell@physics.unimelb.edu.au](mailto:sbell@physics.unimelb.edu.au)

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## What's behind Johnno's fridge?

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George Wright

If we asked for responses to this question it would reveal a multitude of answers, and each more preposterous than the last. But the reality is rather mundane because he moved his fridge recently and found a yellowing copy of The Sunday Age dated 27 Oct 1996.

The article on how to treat your 'handbag' was informative. A 'handbag' is a gentleman friend that single ladies ask out to accompany them to functions such as funerals and Christmas parties but never in for a drink afterwards. The relationship is strictly platonic and the manners demanded are equally strict (or they were in 1996).

However this is a wine magazine and I must instead focus on an article by Mark Shield on Bollinger. He traces the history of the Champagne-maker back to Germanic origins 1829 (not French - I didn't know that!). Madame Lily Bollinger inherited the mantle in 1941 on the death of her husband and doubled the production.

Lily was renowned as a tyrant when it came to quality and she didn't mess around with marketing either. She left a legacy when she died in 1977 and some of it was her quotations as well as her brand. Here's what she said about champagne:  
*'I drink it when I'm happy and sad. I drink it when I'm alone. When I have company I consider it obligatory. I trifle with it if I'm not hungry and drink it when I am. Otherwise I never touch it - unless I'm thirsty.'*

I bet Lily had a few 'handbags' hanging around to accompany her after hubby died.

There is also an advertisement for the Exhibition of Victorian Winemakers and the banner headline shouts out:

**Where** can you taste up to **200** of Australia's finest **Wines?**

Only 200? The Guild manages to drag in around 700 entries.

I think we can feel pretty pleased with ourselves.

## 2007 Weekender Proposals

### Spencer Field

Well, Spencer Field and Bill Loughlin have started to plan the Guild's 2007 winery weekend, with the great challenge to try to at least equal the 2006 weekender that 39 members and partners/friends participated in Oct 2006. The three preferred options suggested at the March Guild meeting are King Valley, Geelong or Rutherglen region during either the 6/7 or 13/14 October weekends this year. The table below sets out some comparative details for members to discuss and decide upon at the April meeting. So, please consider this information and your preferences in preparation for the meeting. If you can't come to the meeting, put forward your preferences to other that will be. If you can supply further information on any of the regions beyond that shown in the table, please raise at the meeting.

	Geelong Region	King Valley	Rutherglen
Grape varietal strengths	Pinot, Shiraz, Chardonnay, but other whites & reds also produced	Many varieties but none known to stand out	Durifs, big reds, World renowned fortified - tokays, ports muscats;
National profile wineries	Scotchman's Hill; Bannockburn	Brown Bros	Chambers; Stanton & Killeen, Campbells, Morris,
Regional profile wineries	Pettavel Winery, Lethbridge Wines, Curlewis Winery	Boyntons Feathertop, Pizzani Wines (Italian varieties), John Gehrig Wines, Ciavarella Wines	Pfeiffer Wines, G Sutherland Smith, Bullers, Jones Winery & others
Good Sat dinner options	Bellarine Estate, Pettavel (top hat awards), Kilgour Estate & others; Geelong	Milawa Cheese Factory Café, Restaurant Merlot at Lindenwarrah; Boytons; others	Rutherglen is well set up for wine tourists including food and accommodation
Winery lunch options	Several, & Geoff Anson has kindly offered a BBQ lunch at his vineyard	As per dinner options above & others	See above
Other regional features	Three distinct wine growing sub regions - Moorabool Valley & Anakie to the north, Bellarine Peninsula & Waurin Ponds, on the Princes Highway, west of Geelong	Milawa Wine & Cheese trail; Very scenic region.	Victoria's oldest wine region
Scenic wineries	Bellarine Estate, Pettavel, Kilgour Estate, The Minya & Waybourne Winery	Boyntons and likely several others	There are some old cellars to explore - eg Campbells
Accomm. options	Many in Geelong	Many motels catering for tourists	Many motels catering for tourists
Clashes?	None found	None found	None found
General comments	A region dominated by many family owned boutique operators. <a href="http://www.winegeelong.com.au">www.winegeelong.com.au</a> is very informative on top regional wines & can be used as a guide to the wineries to see.	Planted in the 1970s with real growth spurt in the 1990's when many local Italian farmers switched from tobacco growing to vines. Much is produced for sale to large wineries as blending material. Profile for quality not known. Highly variable seasons likely producing some variations in quality. Much of 2003 & 2007 vintages were bush fire smoke affected.	Bigger producers and well established and reputable, some still owned by families but others (eg Morris) that have sold to big companies. <a href="http://northeastvalleys.com.au/">http://northeastvalleys.com.au/</a> details wine, food and accommodation options covering all NE Victoria.

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## Zen and the Art of Amateur Winemaking

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*Chris Ramsay*

Sometimes, you hear little winemaking stories that very much fall into the class of “it happens to us all at some point”.

I shall recount such a story that I heard about recently ... it involves certain sensitivities so of course we must conceal identities to protect the guilty. About all I can say is that the party involved here may involve a certain past president of the Guild now very busy with other activities including commercial wine making. Let's call him “Mr X” shall we?

The initial part of this story is that a couple of years ago Mr X himself recounted an event to me where an amateur winemaker was crushing a small batch of Shiraz on the premises of said Mr X and made a small error in calculating the amount of PMS to add at crush. The small error was a matter of a factor of 10 in the amount of PMS to use - I cannot remember the exact numbers but it was something like 200L of must, so should have required 20g of PMS for 50 ppm (at 1g/10l) ... unfortunately, 200g of PMS was added (i.e. 500 ppm), resulting in a somewhat yellow and quite sterile must ... I believe the whole batch had to be discarded.

At the time, Mr X was very polite to the amateur winemaker (it wasn't me!) ... but reading between the lines a little I perceived a smidge of the sentiment “but that would never happen to me”.

Fast forward to 2007, a couple of weeks back, and Mr X was recounting events of the vintage to me and the very poor final yields that had arisen from a couple of vineyards around the Valley that would normally supply him a good quantity of fruit.

He referred to a small quantity of Cabernet that had been picked recently and indirectly referred to potential problems with the ferment completing. When I enquired as to why this might be the case, he somewhat sheepishly indicated a small “problem” with the Tartaric Acid addition ... yes, you guessed it - when pressed the confession emerged that for 300L of must, rather than adding 450g at 1.5 g/l, Mr X managed to add 4.5kg of TA to the must - that's 15g/l of acid folks ...

Not surprisingly, the must has a somewhat bright pink sparkle to it! I was allowed a taste of the must, not quite finished fermenting but getting there - wow, that really redefines the term “sherbet bomb”!!

Of course, with due respect to Mr X, we really shouldn't drag out this sad little tale too much, but there is a salient lesson for us all again here ...

Always, always, always be sure of the quantities of additives going into your wine - as my old maths teacher used to say to me a long time ago “check and recheck your work”.

It's all too easy for that pesky extra zero to attach itself to a calculation in your brain and then it's all over ...

p.s. Thanks to Mr X for allowing me to tell this little story, albeit in a very thin cloak of identity disguise ... you can all commiserate when you next say hello !

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## Trading Barrel

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**BUY / SELL SERVICE FOR MEMBERS** - Ads need to be lodged with the editor by the 15th of the month to be included in the next Newsletter.

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**For Sale:**

3 x 54ltr Demijohn @ \$35.00 each  
1 x 82ltr Stainless Steel Keg @ \$70.00

Please contact **Russ Henry** on 9439 4479 if interested.

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As I have no plans to use it in within the next two years, I offer for sale a high quality 225 litre barrique - Seguin Moreau oak, bought new and used in 2006 only. I have just bottled from it some of my 2006 Redesdale Shiraz which prospective owners may taste in assessing the barrel. Available at 50% of the new price: \$340. Seguin Moreau oak can be checked out at <http://www.seguin-moreau.fr> Ring me on 0408 300 523, or email me at [spencerf@bigpond.com](mailto:spencerf@bigpond.com). Spencer Field.

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