



# Eltham & District Winemakers Guild Inc.

Press Cuttings  
August 2007

President	George Wright	9712 0318	Treasurer	David Pryor	9439 4933
Past President	Mario Fantin	9846 7092	Communications	Marcel Theunissen	5962 5153
Secretary	Zenon Kolacz	9879 0379	Newsletter	Sue King	9712 0316

**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: 31<sup>st</sup> August 2007

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## Next Meeting

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Harry Gilham has offered to make a wine at our next meeting. Harry will make a fruit wine and divulge all his secrets on how to capture the flavours and aromas. Well, knowing Harry, he'll probably let you know enough to do it yourself and let you discover the joys of country winemaking.

This session is intended as a hands-on exercise, so don't be surprised if Harry gets you slicing up oranges or grating zest of cooking sultanas or something.

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## Presidents Press

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*George Wright*

It must be the cold wet weather. I have been putting off testing my red wines because had intended to bottle them soon. Somehow the days turned into weeks and the weeks into months and my barrels were in drastic need of topping-up. Also of concern was that the free sulphur levels were almost non-existent. My vinegar barrel is full and I don't need any more disasters. The wines seem to taste OK so I may have been lucky to address what should have been a routine maintenance problem in time, but it did give me a fright.

While playing with the wines I also experimented with adding tannings. I had done this once before with surprisingly good results and am cautiously optimistic of a similar result this year. The wines are not great but they are quite drinkable with the extra tannins. I intend to enter the unadulterated wines as well as the wines with added tannins in this year's wine show to see what the judges think.

This is a reminder to all members that it is time to start thinking about the wines you intend to enter into our wine show. Wines need a bit of time to settle down after bottling so you may consider it an appropriate time to bed down some of your wine into bottles in the next month or two. Of more importance is the need to keep your barrels topped up to avoid oxidation.

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## Presidents Report – AGM July 07

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*George Wright*

I am now at the end of my first year as President of the Eltham and District Amateur Wine Guild. When you appointed me I wrote down my aims for the next two years and this report is a good opportunity to review the success or otherwise of the achievements made over that period.

My comments in August 2006 were as follows:

*..... Of most importance, I have tasted some excellent amateur wines over the past few months so that I know there is a broad base of expertise available for us to assist each other when we strike problems. We must find some more structured ways to make this help more accessible without making it a chore for anyone.*

*A number of people who are not on the executive continue to make the Guild function smoothly and provide specialist advice and services. These people provide special events and tours, look after equipment, work in the background on computer programs, set-up*

*frameworks for the newsletter, and manage the web-site and so on. Some of them do massive amounts of drudge work without complaint. Their contribution is also recognised and we will need further assistance from them and others in the future as well.*

*My most important personal objective while president is to have a good time. While achieving my objective I will strive to create an environment where you can also. My ideal for the Guild is to make it fun in a bottle. I want all of us to make our wines good, better, best and I'd like to think that we can all improve and be stimulated to try new winemaking techniques or to tackle grape varieties, fruits or vegetables we haven't used before. I want to learn. I want to promote country winemaking because I think we have a responsibility to hand on this heritage to the next generation. As an aside, I'd like to ensure that we remain a winemaking guild and not a wine appreciation society. We should look for opportunities to make wine together and swap bottles. I'd also like to find ways of supporting the growing number of members who live outside metropolitan Melbourne. If at any time during my reign you see me doing things that stray from these ideals, please don't hesitate to remind me. (Are we having fun yet, George?)*

I can report that over the last year there is still a group of committed people out there who do massive amounts of work to make the Guild function. Some individuals keep contributing year after year and there is another loose collection of people who see a need and tackle it. This latter group includes people who may have sat in the background and only appear when the need arises. I think this is what I like about the Guild. The contributions are made and you can never predict with certainty from whom the offer of assistance will be made. It makes for a diverse and interesting experience.

The real strength of the Guild lies in the members who sit quietly in the background making significant contributions without fanfare. I will mention two, not so that they necessarily have done more than others, but what they have contributed has made a real difference. I also single them out because they have indicated that they wish to continue to be involved but in a lesser capacity. This is great because as a volunteer body, the interests and commitments of individual members will change over time. Our approach must embrace change and provide an environment where others feel encouraged to step up to take over. None of us is indispensable.

The first one is Spencer Field. Besides being involved in all sorts of activities (wine show committee, Hotties vs. Coolies, etc) Spencer has organised trips away each year. He has indicated that he needs to focus on other things and has encouraged Bill Loughlin to take over that role. Similarly, Chris Ramsay has co-ordinated Communications and re-vitalised the public image of the Guild by re-structuring the newsletter and provided a corporate image which elevates the status of the Guild as well as managing the web site. When I was editor he also gave me invaluable assistance as I am digitally illiterate. He indicated his difficulty continuing with this role and Marcel Theunissen is now in the process of taking over this technical as well as strategic role. This ability of people to step up and do things when they see an opportunity is the reason why our organization is so strong. Sometimes it's emptying the spit buckets after a meeting. On other occasions it may require a longer commitment. If you think you can offer anything, don't hold back. We are looking for ideas. It's your organization. Be encouraged to be involved.

I have tried to promote Country winemaking and will continue to do so. I think there are heritage issues that we as a group can continue to promote. I also think we have taken steps to ensure we are winemakers as well as those who can appreciate a good bottle of wine. This has been achieved by the use of experts who can relate the quality of the wine and how this is obtained by winemaking techniques. A good example of this was the Hotties vs. Coolies competition and we intend to follow up this experience with another taste-off early next year.

I wanted to make the monthly meetings have a very practical flavour. I think we are getting there as demonstrated with the 'pH and Titratable Acidity' session, but we need to be even more 'hands-on' in my opinion. I'd like the talk be generated from a show-and-tells experience rather than a lecture. The next couple of meetings will test this theory, I hope.

The trip to the Pyrenees was a social success and provided a great opportunity for members to see local winemakers explain their techniques to produce wines with particular characteristics. I came away even more convinced of the importance of fruit quality.

I think the wine swap night was a success, but perhaps we need to be a bit more structured next time. I certainly have been enjoying the wines of other members although it does make me a little jealous at times. I wonder how they are enjoying my wines, but that is part of the process I guess.

The International Night was a great success and the team of Mario, Myrna and Zenon deserve a pat on the back. Nevertheless, we should not stay with one format. Just because it was a success does not mean there is no opportunity for improvement. Perhaps we need to think outside the square to introduce others to the process and this will give a different flavour to the proceedings. (I hope that does not sound like criticism because that is furthest from my intention.)

The role of President is a task that carries the reputation of the organization and this is one I take very seriously. In fact, it is the activities of the executive who make this possible. David Pryor as Treasurer keeps us on the straight and narrow path of financial security, Zenon as Secretary manages the records and ensures we don't do anything illegal and Mario Fantin as ex-President gives me support and assistance and carries out innumerable tasks with his impeccable administrative and project leadership skills. We are able to do this without too many meetings and I think it is a credit to all of them that we have managed without too much frustration. That's my interpretation, anyway.

The wine show proclaimed to the world that we amateurs can make good wine. This is the major activity of the Guild and the Wine show Committee works for twelve months to make it happen. I am continually impressed with the hard work and professionalism shown by this committee and I need to thank John O'Callaghan for leading this team, ably assisted by Roma.

The newsletter is now edited by Sue King and I congratulate her on the production. When Editor I occasionally missed an edition and this must be expected from time to time in an amateur organization. But Sue has cranked the handle each month and produced each edition on time. It's a demanding, constant task and I congratulate her for her effort and success.

Have we made it easier for amateur winemakers to make wine in provincial areas of Victoria? Here, I think I failed. We need help and ideas from country members. My modest attempts generated little. We had a visit or two but that was it. Perhaps we need to tweak the internet. Is that the direction to go? How can we help you?

Finally, I get back to my main objective. Did I have fun? Well, I must admit that I did. More importantly, did you as members enjoy the experience? It is your responsibility to tell me if we are not providing the experiences you want from the Guild. The executive is there to listen and respond.

Finally, I wish to thank all members for the support and assistance you have given me in this role over the past year.

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## 2007 AGM - Minutes

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*Zenon Kolacz*

Minutes of EDWG AGM 27<sup>th</sup> July 2007

1. Attendance : Only 13 members attended the AGM
2. Meeting commenced at 8.05pm
3. President's Report was read out by George Wright (incumbent President) and was accepted as read.

#### 4. Election of Office Bearers

a) Office of President  
Nominated: George Wright  
By: Neil Johannessen  
Sec: Tim Ross  
Carried unopposed

b) Office of Secretary  
Nom: Zenon Kolacz  
By: David Pryor  
Sec: Mario Fantin  
Carried unopposed

c) Office of Treasurer  
Nom: David Pryor  
By: Mario Fantin  
Sec: Tim Ross  
Carried unopposed

d) Communications  
Nom: Marcel Theunissen  
By : David Pryor  
Sec : Mario Fantin  
Carried unopposed

e) Newsletter Editor  
Nom: Sue King  
By: Zenon Kolacz  
Sec: Mario Fantin  
Carried unopposed

f) Weekend Away Organiser  
Nom: Bill Loughlin  
By: Spencer Field  
Sec: David Pryor  
Carried unopposed

5. Reconciliation of Accounts  
David Pryor detailed the financials for the year.  
Neil Johannessen moved to accept report.  
Mario Fantin seconded.  
Motion was carried.

AGM concluded at 8.45pm and the night moved onto a discussion and tasting of Sauvignon Blanc Wines presented by Karen Coulston... and a good night was had by all!

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## EDWG – Annual Accounts – AGM July 2007

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David Pryor

Eltham and District Winemakers Guild  
Inc.

Income and Expenditure Account for the Year ended 30th June 2007

<u>Income</u>	Members Annual Subscriptions		1295	
	Joining Fees		<u>90</u>	1385
	Sale of Wine Medals			111
	Interest received			563.17
	International night			120
	Profit on Wine Show	Income	7572	
		expenditure	<u>4992.25</u>	2579.75
	Crusher Hire			100
	Field Trip	Income	3257	
		Expenditure	<u>3776.25</u>	-519.25
	Pallet Refund			<u>85</u>
Total			<u>4424.67</u>	
<u>Expenditure</u>	Meeting expenses		684.65	
	Hall Rent and Insurance		398	
	Subscriptions to Plenty Valley fm		173	
	ASIC Lodgement fee		37.6	
	Medallions		319	
	Secretary's Expenses- postage		83.95	
	Refill gas bottle		17.93	
	Internet		159.96	
	Bank Fees		86.16	
	Stationery		28.4	

Depreciation crusher	<u>43.3</u>
Total	<u>2031.95</u>
Surplus for the year	<u>2392.72</u>

Eltham and District Winemakers Guild Inc.

Balance Sheet

As at 30<sup>th</sup>  
June 2007

Cash at Bank-Current Account	91.9	
-Deposit Account	<u>11910.79</u>	12002.69
Assets-Crusher		
Cost	866	
Depreciation	<u>43.3</u>	822.7
Hall rent paid in advance		200
Debtor-crusher hire		<u>20</u>
		13045.39
Less Subscription 2007/8 in advance		<u>395</u>
		<u>12650.39</u>
Members Funds		
Balance 1st July 2006	10257.67	
Surplus for the year	<u>2392.72</u>	<u>12650.39</u>

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## Australian National Amateur Wine & Beer Show

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*George Wright*

If you haven't entered the Frankston Amateur Wine Guild Show, it's too late. But you can still attend the tastings and review the wines. (See last month's newsletter).

Another opportunity to enter your wines for an independent testing is available with the Australian National Amateur Wine and Beer Show. Spencer entered last year I almost

imagined he was preening his feathers as he admitted to winning a swag of medals. He was most chuffed that some of them clank rather than rustle.

The show occurs in Adelaide on October 14. If you want details you can visit the site at [www.anawbs.org.au](http://www.anawbs.org.au). The handy thing is that Winequip will provide free transport (117-119 Sydney Rd Coburg 9383 4033).

Closing date for entries delivered to Winequip as at the close of business Monday 24 September.

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## Wal-Mart Wine

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*Spencer Field*

Wal-Mart announced that, sometime in 2007, it will begin offering customers a new discount item ---- Wal-Mart's own brand of wine. The world's largest retail chain is teaming up with Ernest & Julio Gallo Winery of California to produce the spirits at an affordable price, in the \$2.00 - \$5.00 range. Wine connoisseurs may not be inclined to put a bottle of Wal-Mart brand into their shopping carts, but "there is a market for inexpensive wine," said Kathy Micken professor of marketing at University of Arkansas. "But the right name is important."

Customer surveys were conducted to determine the most attractive name for the Wal-Mart wine brand. The top surveyed names in order of popularity were:

10. Chateau Traileur Parc
9. White Trashfindel
8. Big Red Gulp
7. World Championship Riesling
6. NASCARbernet
5. Chef Boyardeaux
4. Peanut Noir
3. I Can't Believe it's not Vinegar
2. Grape Expectations
1. Nasti Spumante

The beauty of Wal-Mart wine is that it can be served with either white meat (Possum) or red meat (Squirrel).

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## Bargain with a conscience?

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*John O'Callaghan*

When asked to relate windfall purchases to Red Symons last week one listener told of his bargain in a mid Victorian wine shop odds bin. The "bargains" included a 1992 bottle of Chateau D'Yquem Sauterne for \$20. The lucky punter knew the wine was worth at least US\$600 and was keen to boast of his good fortune. Red asked him what Jesus would have done in such a situation. The responding quip from the redoubtable Hilary Harper was "He would have turned it into water!"

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## Geelong & District Wine Tour – 6/7 October 2007

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*Bill Loughlin*

Arrangements for the wine tour are almost finalised. We have been able to secure a good deal with Chifley Hotels situated on The Esplanade Geelong. Cost for a single or double room is \$90 and a 3 course dinner on Saturday 6 October at the Chifley is \$48 per head. Costs for the bus works out at \$40 per head as we have to pay for the driver's accommodation and meals.

Further details re time and place of departure, including wineries to be visited, will be sent - and discussed at the August meeting.

We require a deposit of \$100 from members who intend to do the tour. The bus capacity is 46 seats, so your deposit will secure you a spot. First in will secure your booking. We would like to finalise the numbers by the next meeting on 31 August.

Payment can be made direct to the Guild's account: BSB 033091 Account No: 283851 Please ensure to include your name when paying by the internet, alternatively payment can be made via cheque.

Any questions prior to the meeting can be directed to Bill Laughlin.  
Tel; 5786 5047 or by email: [bill.loughlin@westnet.com.au](mailto:bill.loughlin@westnet.com.au)

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## Wine Show Media Promotion

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*Tim Kitching*

In an effort to generate some media interest in the upcoming wine show I'm planning to write an article for the Guild that focuses on the community/human interest angle of our activities. I'd like some input from members, in particular those who join forces each year for their winemaking. The idea is to ask members who combine resources each year at vintage to take time to write a few lines in response to the following questions. Responses can either be emailed to me directly or sent by snail mail for those not electronically inclined - see below for all details. I am hoping that the responses will provide the necessary anecdotal substance that will give the article credibility

The questions for are as follows:

- How did you start out together in winemaking?
- How long have you been interested in making wine?
- Does your family have a history of winemaking?
- Where do you source your fruit?
- What equipment is needed? Do you have everything you need?
- Where do you make your wine? Does it take up a lot of space?
- How much wine do you make?
- Do you enter your wine in competitions? Have you ever won any awards or medals?
- How much work is involved in making wine?

- Do you work in the wine industry? Do your work skills help you in making good wine?
- What kind of wine do you make? Have you ever made country wines? What kinds?
- Do you use preservatives in your wine?
- Do you grow your own grapes? Have you ever worked in a vineyard or winery?
- Do your families and friends help out? (making/drinking!)
- Do you label your bottles?
- Has the knowledge you've gained from other club members helped your own winemaking? How?
- What is it about the winemaking process that appeals to you?

If you have any questions on this don't hesitate to ask!

I look forward to receiving your responses...

Tim Kitching  
 6 Coolac Street  
 Chadstone 3148  
[tkitch@bigpond.net.au](mailto:tkitch@bigpond.net.au)  
 +61 3 9807 5457  
 0412 201 443

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## Memories of Bill Christopherson Esq.

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*Graham Scott*

*[Note: Bill Christopherson has been associated with the Guild (and the wider wine industry) for many years. During this time which time he made and judged many vintages with many varieties, both country and grape and has provided valuable feedback to members of the Guild. He has recently been diagnosed with a serious illness and has found it necessary to sell his vineyard and will be unable to judge at our annual wine show.]*

### Bill - Where are you when we need you?

Right.

Gather round all you young whippersnapper winemakers. I'm going to tell you about the guy who gave the Eltham Wine Guild its first real taste of standards. I'm talking about Bill Christopherson, who has just announced that he is taking down his shingle at Strathewen Hills after setting up a vineyard known across the globe.

Bill's influence has been profound but it was a cultural shock to us of the old bucolic school of winemaking. Bill would have none of our 'bucket chemistry' or 'dash of that' in our winemaking. Why the man even wanted us to *WRITE DOWN* what we did! I tell you, oh liquor loving late-comers, we were shocked when Bill descended on us.

I was growing grapes in the back yard in Eltham and happy to work with Joe Ilian in our slovenly ways. We were artists. No, we were *artistes* and here was Bill muttering about the *amount* of what we added. He didn't seem to cotton on to our idea of flair.

But he made good wine. Bloody good wine. So we began listening to him and that led us into another world.

Where I was growing backyard grapes, so was Bill, but his backyard seemed to be half of Panton Hill at that time. And where we simply went 'Shoo Shoo' to birds and ran around flapping our arms, Bill quietly went about enclosing his whole vineyard in netting. It looked impressive and what is more it did what he wanted - saving his grapes for him. And that let us to another of his secrets; he didn't have many grapes on each vine. Where we pruned for quantity - lots of grapes please! - Bill savaged his vines to keep the crop down. We thought he was crazy, but he made bloody good wine from those grapes.

We held some memorable meetings and we even ran the Wine Show up there at Bill's Panton Hill property. They were happy gatherings and family events and Bill and Joan were so caring for everyone who came. The happy inclusiveness of the Eltham Wine Guild owes a lot to those gatherings. Bill and Joan helped set the tone of the Guild and we thank them for that. And so should you, oh keepers of the EWG flame. Guard that tenderly.

I remember watching him make a batch of sparkling base wine one day from a crop of Semillon. First the crushing was little more than scratching as far as I could see, and the pressing was simple twist of the lever. One drop of the piston and it was done. Where was the juice? Well most of it remained in the berries and they were slopping around like so many green sheep's eyes on the floor of the basket, not squeezed so tight they were embedded into each other like I did it. But that base wine was a pure drop of elixir and he made good wine from it. Bloody good wine.

We learnt a lot from Bill, mostly that less is more and always better and that it all started in the vineyard. But getting such information was a tad difficult because Bill was such a nice quiet guy. He kind of slips under the radar, always ready with a smile and a droll quip. Bill is one of the people whose judgements on wine are clear, direct and supportive. Whatever you did wrong - and in his eyes I'm sure I was a retard - he had a way of using that to build on. If you had the privilege of getting Bill as a wine judge you will know how carefully he responded to the good things in your wine and led you to understand what you could do to improve it.

The best way to find out what Bill was doing was to get hold of a bottle of his Tribal Elder. The wine is just as you would expect from such a perfectionist, concentrated, redolent of the grape and with layer upon layer of flavours and aromas that sing like sirens in the mind.

Did I tell you, thou of the new tribe, that he makes bloody good wine?

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## To sweeten a musty cask

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*Mario Fantin*

Reference: The Butler's Guide to the making of Wines, Beers & Liquors in a Gentleman's Cellar (First Printed 1808)

Take some cow dung of a milking cow when it is fresh and mix it with a quantity of warm water, so as to make it sufficiently liquid to pass readily through a large funnel; but previously dissolve in this water two pounds of bay salt and one pound of allum, then put the whole in a pot on the fire, stirring it with a stick, when near boiling, pour it into your cask, then bung it tight and shake it well about for five or six minutes, as if rinsing it and let it remain in for two hours, then take out the bung to let the vapour out, after which put in your bung again and give it another stirring, in the end of two hours or more, you may rinse it out with cold water, till it comes out perfectly clear. Then have in readiness one pound of bay salt and a quarter of a pound of allum boiled in a little water. Repeat this as you did the former and when emptied it will be fit for use, or you may bung it up for keeping.

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## FAWG – Amateur Wine Show

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*David Wood*

The Frankston Amateur Wine Guild is holding their 36<sup>th</sup> Annual Amateur Wine Show on the 2<sup>nd</sup> of September 2007. If you are interested in exhibiting your wine, please download the application form, entries close on the 3<sup>rd</sup> of August. The files are included as separate attachments within the newsletter email. The flier for the wine show is also attached. If all else fails, please contact David Wood directly on [5975 5757](tel:59755757), [0407 183 728](tel:0407183728) or [mpserv@satlink.com.au](mailto:mpserv@satlink.com.au)

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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:**

2<sup>nd</sup> Hand Press: 21in x 30 in (suitable for a barrel of wine) \$250

Please contact **David Hart** on 5983 9082 if interested.

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## Wineshow Major Sponsors

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Tel: 9432 0283

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Enquiries welcome

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