



Eltham & District Winemakers Guild Inc.

Press Cuttings
February 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: 23rd February, 2007

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Next Meeting

On Friday 23rd February, we are in for a special treat; a taste-off between the Hotties and the Coolies. There is a deep cultural meaning lying behind this event which will become clearer after you read the Zen article below, but the depth of the cultural current will be experienced only by participating in the event. Suffice to say that Kevin Furness and Spencer Field have harnessed their teams of winemakers and the impartial Chris Ramsay will be Master of Ceremonies. Expect caustic comment from Kevin and repartee from Spencer with the smooth charms of Chris ensuring that the evening will progress as an educational exercise. An impartial evaluation of the wines will be announced as well as your contribution to the classification of the wines on offer. To top it off we have a special expert guest who will explain the viticultural influences on the making of wines.

As an educational exercise this evening is designed to expand our knowledge about selection of fruit for winemaking and the choices we have as winemakers after we have made that choice. We will experience the variability in wines that different winemakers exposed as they made wines from fruit grown in two vineyards from the same region, one hotter and one cooler. We will attempt to expose the contributions in the wines from the fruit and from the winemaking process.

Read more below. All in all, it sounds interesting and a lot of fun. You won't get all that in a visit to Dan Murphys!

Presidents Press

George Wright - President

Over the past month I have had the opportunity to taste some superb wines our members have made. The first opportunity came with the January meeting at the Guild when members who were awarded medals at our December Show contributed a sample for fellow members to taste.

John O'Callaghan, not retired from his efforts in arranging perhaps the most professional amateur show yet presented by the Guild, excelled himself by producing a feast of sausages concocted by Zacks Meats in Research (the dog with the snag). I have reliable information that suggests that John had forgotten that the day of the meeting was Australia Day when the butcher was closed, but John prevailed on him to provide his viands to the Guild for which the attending members were most appreciative. We can all attest to the scrumptious fare, especially when eaten with Roma's salad. Once again we pay tribute to the dedication of our members and once again we direct this to John and Roma.

At that meeting I was blown away by the Pinot Noir of Tim Kitching - how he crammed so many fruit flavours into a glass is beyond my comprehension! I needed another glass to verify my initial findings. The second was better than the first. That wine is dangerous!

Somewhere in the middle of February I pulled a cork from a bottle of Spencer Field's red. Spencer and I had exchanged some bottles of our wines, each fearing the dreaded onset of cellar palate. Once again I was transported. We amateurs can make really great wines and we should be proud when we excel. I can only suggest that we each exchange our wines with other winemakers to share our successes. Some may not be in the excellent class, but what the hell? Have you been transported by many commercial wines lately?

Australia Day BBQ

Neil Johannesen

The first meeting of the year was celebrated with a BBQ at the Living and Learning Centre on Friday 26th January. Members were pleased to catch up with each other after the long break since the Show.

After a very highly skilled sub-committee worked out how to turn on the gas for the BBQ, three different varieties of gourmet sausages were cooked to perfection, together with onions, corn and a dash of “red” added just for the ambience.

We enjoyed a palate freshener of a full-bodied ale from John O, and then proceeded to taste the medal winning wines from the Show. Harry G was pleased to learn that the 37th Show was a success in his absence for the first time.

Our President, George Wright, presented the WOTY trophy to David Hart, and we were able to appreciate and enjoy some of his award winning wines.

It was a good start to the year with good company, wine and food.

Stan's History Corner

Stan Gower

Scientific progress in the 1870's

Out in the countryside the outward trappings of "scientific progress" were less in evidence but the same mentality was discernible, especially in larger rural towns where scientific societies and field clubs were being established alongside artistic and literary societies, libraries and chambers of commerce. Field naturalist clubs and journals flourished, beginning with the foundation of the Field Naturalists Club of Victoria in 1880. It was applied science however, that offered the most in practical terms in rural Victoria, and by extension the whole of the colony since rural exports were fundamental to its prosperity. In the late 1870's the ravaging by phylloxera of the flourishing wine industry; a source of intense local pride and export potential, offered a dramatic lesson in those areas where science might usefully be applied in agriculture.

Playing God with Wine

George Wright

Jeni Port (The Age 30 Jan) reports on an Oakleigh inventor who is marketing a machine to alter the alcohol content of wine. It can also affect the concentrations of other things such as water, carbon dioxide, acetaldehyde, and acetic acid. It works by using the principles of reverse osmosis where small particles pass through a membrane while larger ones don't. Pressure is a major controlling factor. Most wine components associated with flavour don't pass through. Many units have already been sold to Australia, South Africa, Chile, Argentina, Canada and New Zealand.

The inventor, David Wollan says that ultra filtration will deal with the bigger molecules.

In effect the wine is pulled apart, some of the parts are changed and the wine is put together again with the required changes.

One Kiwi wine lover has written suggesting that '*David should go back to making wine with his hands and nose rather than machines...*'

Where do we go next? Is winemaking science or nature....or both?

What do you think?

Wine Articles

George Wright

Over the past few years I have written several articles for various magazines and newsletters, including *Press Cuttings*. I have collected some that I have written and suggested that we should start a web page on the Guild site dealing with winemaking techniques and review articles. This may take some time to accomplish. If you have articles you have written yourself that deserve wider publication, email Chris Ramsay.

In the meantime, I have created a web page of my own to celebrate my interests. It can't compete with Chris' professional layout but it's the best I can manage. If you want to refer to my articles from past *Press Cuttings* you may find them at:

www.members.westnet.com.au/georgewri.

Look under *Winemaking*. I know I've lost track of some. If you find others I have written that you think should be there, please email me.

In the meantime, I know Sue is always looking for articles. The wineshow has demonstrated that we have lots of expertise in the Guild. A few articles on how you managed to get those medals (or why you missed out) would be of interest to all.

Zen and the Art of Amateur Winemaking

Chris Ramsay

Yes, Zen is back this month as I have returned from conquering the wilds of Egypt and Eastern Africa ... we have something like 4,300 digital photos if anyone wants to see them sometime ... for the record, here I am on my trusty steed lost somewhere in the middle of the Sahara (well, sort of) - I'm the one with the black cap ...



Enough frivolity - it's February - there's important business to take care of, specifically the **Coolies versus Hotshots Raeburn Shiraz Challenge**.

After much hyping up of the challenge by Spencer and others (err, me), it's now time for the challenge to be realised. You all will remember (of course) the challenge we entered into last year to see which winemaker(s) made the best wines from Peter Raeburn's Shiraz grapes - to which we were fortunate enough to have access - and to share our winemaking experiences. The first stage was the judging of all wines in the Guild's 2006 Wine Show. That is now completed and the second stage is set for the February Guild meeting.

Firstly a reminder of the two camps:

Coolies Camp (grapes from Raeburn's Redesdale vineyard - Heathcote)

- Chris Ramsay, Tim Ross, Andrew Gillam
- Vinko Eterovic and friends
- Con Prousallis and Edwin McCallef
- Spencer Field, Damien Markwell and Peter Cassell

Hotshots Camp (grapes from Raeburn's Two Creeks Vineyard - Bendigo)

- Kevin Furness and friends
- Mario Fantin and friends
- Rob Aitken, John Gaffney and Richard Bortko
- John Alexopoulos and friends

At the February meeting, Peter Raeburn will be our special guest and will speak about his two vineyards and the different contributions that those two sites contribute to wine quality. Then we will run a blind tasting of one Shiraz from each of the above eight camps. To add to the interest, Peter will also bring a couple of wines he has made from his own grapes.

The idea is to give members an opportunity to judge each wine, then the winemaker(s) will be invited to reveal what techniques were applied in the winemaking (i.e. how long on skins, what yeasts, use of temp control and enzymes, what oak, blending, etc).

After each tasting we will reveal the judges scores and comments on each wine from the Wine Show, ultimately revealing the overall challenge winner based on the total Wine Show scores from each camp.

While the challenge itself is a bit of fun, there is a great opportunity to learn and understand a bit more about what effect a slightly different climate has on the same grape variety, and in turn what effect winemaking techniques can have when using the same fruit.

It should be a great meeting, don't miss this one !!

Trading Barrel

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