



Eltham & District Winemakers Guild Inc.

Press Cuttings
October 2006

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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: 27th October 2006

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Next Meeting - Oktoberfest

George Wright - President

It is October so it's time to prepare for the hot days of summer. I know some of you will be slipping a bottle of Sauv. Blanc. into the fridge and we all know what to buy because Karen Coulson taught us the finer points of tasting it at the last meeting. After the October meeting, many may also be stocking up with six packs of ale. It won't be ordinary beer because after this meeting you will be able to discern the finer points of tasting. OK - so you swallow beer. This evening's activities may slow down your rate of consumption because you will be able to appreciate that bubbles can go up your nose as well as down the throat.

Yes, it's our Oktoberfest. Those of you who brew your own are asked to bring a bottle. Those of us who don't can substitute a bottle from a retail shop. Please select an unusual type you think few will have tasted before.

The proceedings will be run by John O'Callaghan. I'm told John is part owner of a boutique brewery at Healesville. He will lead us on a discovery tour of the finer points of beer appreciation. So come along and learn with the rest of us. As an added bonus, you too will be able to drop in a comment at the dinner party on Saturday night, *'Just smell those hops. As I was saying to Johnno last night, the owner of the brewery in Healesville.'* Golly-gosh, that's a rare opportunity.

Presidents Press

George Wright - President

Excellence should be celebrated. The weekend tour to the Pyrenees was a success due to the strategic planning and attention to detail in implementation. Spencer, ably assisted by David, did most of the hard yakka and we thank them for every drop of wine we tasted and the (many) bottles we will consume in future. It's a wonder the bus didn't sag in the middle with all that wine we brought home with us.

We tasted great reds, talked to winemakers - big and small, and were hosted by the CEO of a large corporation. There were sing-songs in the bus (thanks Roma), great food and the very best of company. I am still attempting to understand how an Argentinean winemaker ended up in the middle of Victoria making great wine and superb food. Congratulations to everyone involved.

The big event of the year is approaching and as I write this, I am mentally selecting the wines I will enter into the wine show. It's interesting to reflect that this is our 37th consecutive wine show. I bet Joe Ilian and his friends did not anticipate that their winemaking and tasting activities around the kitchen table would grow into the major celebration of our craft that John O'Callaghan and his show committee are arranging for the first weekend in December.

And if you don't win any medals, be thankful anyway. At least the event is the stimulus for you to bottle your wines. Another job finished and no more guilt.

The Pyrenees Trip – A Personal Account

George Wright - President

You learn something new every day, I suppose. Nevertheless I was a little surprised to find that even before the driver made the bus growl, Mirro started teaching me about the intricacies of financing the construction of homes, a subject that kept us busy as far as Melton, when the conversation was distracted by comments on the vegetation. That was the beginning to two days of wine and dine and talk and song. I noted on our return Spencer's vocal chords sounded as if they were past their use-by date. And after I dragged my bag up the stairs on returning home I remember thinking, *'this is the first time I have refused a glass of wine with my dinner'*. My palate was exhausted.

As on previous trips, Roma led rousing songs of the 1970's and 1980's, this time syncopated by Mirro's comments on erosion control works and goats. I think he may have been trained in jazz because his delivery always arrived on the off-beat.



We tasted many wines. Most were big and rounded. Shiraz was the theme and we embraced it in all its complexity.

John Harris is the winemaker from Eurabbie Estate Vineyard, Avoca. John mopped his brow as he poured wines from his plastic container (*'Is that the spittoon?'* somebody whispered?). I had started this stopover with some misgivings because I thought his Dingos may have something to do with the winemaking. When this was followed up by a cloudy glass of sulphur dioxide my uncertainty increased. But soon I began

to relax as I listened to his stories and began to understand that this winemaker was of the French school not much affected by new-world techniques of winemaking. A wine needed to be coaxed into transferring its qualities into the glass and when you had sampled its goodness you could always pour the remains of your glass back into the barrel. I had determined to be restrained in my wine purchases but relaxed my vows in this instance and purchased some of his wares. They were full of yum. You could taste the gum trees and a certain feral characteristic...perhaps the dingos were important. I figured *'what the hell,'* the high alcohol and low pH would keep my life intact.

My most frightening moment was the Taltarni bell clanging beside me at noon. I'd always thought Taltarni must be an Italian word. It comes from Aboriginal sources; meaning *red earth*. On some days you learn more than one thing.

Another highlight was Graham Jukes (Pyrenees Ridge Estate). He is a young enthusiast, keen to make a success of his venture into winemaking. I love hearing anybody who is passionate about his subject, and Graham loves his wines. You could see that his vineyard was suffering from drought but he was positive and involved and determined to make his venture succeed. He will.

His winery generated the best exchange of the trip. Somebody asked, *'Where is the best region for growing Pinot?'*. *'Yarra Valley or the Mornington Peninsula....'* started Graham. Somebody interjected: *'And Kinglake.'*

'Shut-up, Helmut,' said Kevin Furness. *'The man's a winemaker, not a cordial-maker.'*

The weekend was a pleasant haze of talking and sampling and getting into and out of the bus. I remain a bit worried about what happened to some bits. For example, Tim remembered that I had ordered breakfast but that moment of my life is lost to me forever. He must be right because I did eat on Sunday morning. I am particularly concerned that this lapse happened *before* I went out to an Argentine dinner at St Ignatius Winery for munching and more imbibing amongst the barrels.

The best comment of the trip was delivered by Richard Borko while we sat in the front seat beside our driver. No-one else could see. We saw ahead a farmhouse complete with chook scratching on the verge. As we approached, the chook wandered further and further towards the bitumen. The driver slowed a fraction and we all thought the chook would move back to safety. Unfortunately it decided to dart onto the road at the last moment ending up under the bus. There was nothing to be done and the driver did not divert his line of traverse. Richard said, *'That was foul.'*

On behalf of the participants, we offer our thanks to the organising team led by Spencer and ably assisted by David and Liz. Our enjoyment was directly proportional to the efforts they expended in organization and delivery. We had fun.

Volunteers Needed for Wine Show

Mario Fantin

I am currently preparing duty rosters for the Wine Show on behalf of the Committee. The Show requires a massive effort to run and we are looking for every member to contribute in whatever way they can. The more everybody gets involved, the less workload there is per person, and the better the chance that everybody can enjoy the event.

We require volunteers for each of the three days associated with the Wine Show as follow:

- **Friday 1 December 2006** - Help with setting up the venue from about 4pm onwards.
- **Saturday 2 December 2006** - Help from 8am onwards with stewarding, catering, data entry etc.
- **Sunday 3 December 2006** - Help with front door duty, stewarding etc (30 to 45 minute rosters only per person)

Note: Associate Judges are selected separately by the Wine Show Committee on the basis of a general assessment of a member's availability, experience and contribution to Guild activities.

You will have the opportunity to volunteer for Wine Show activities at the next meeting. However if you will not be attending the next meeting and wish to volunteer, please call or send me an email by the 5th of November 2006.

Phone: 9846 7092 or Email: mifantin@bigpond.net.au

The Sweet Smell of Creative Collaboration

Brendan O'Keefe - The Australian 11/10/06

(edited extract - Stan Gower)

HUMAN wine-sniffers may one day find their highly sensitive noses are redundant thanks to lab work now being done on the olfactory organs of bees, fruit flies and worms.

Scientists at Monash University and the Australian National University are testing the sense of smell of these creatures in a project that aims to mimic them and make a machine that can detect and discriminate chemicals and smells.

The first application planned is for the wine industry, where humans are employed to judge the quality of the drink during fermentation.

"That's very expensive so, the industry is looking for a machine they can use on a batch of wine as it's fermenting, that can tell that it's perfect or needs just a little bit added," Dr Warr said.

Red Wine, Resveratrol and Stroke Damage

George Wright - President

An article from Reuters suggested that the resveratrol in red wine may protect not only the heart but also brain damage from a stroke. The John Hopkins University team fed mice a moderate dose orally before inducing stroke-like damage. The mice suffered less damage than the control mice.

Resveratrol resulted in the increased levels of an enzyme in the brain that is already known to shield nerve cells from damage, so that specific mechanisms have been identified that support the results.

The amount of wine that must be consumed in order to reap the benefits of the compound will vary depending on a person's weight and the concentration of resveratrol in the wine; so I guess those of us that are overweight will just have to consume more wine, Heathcote reds at that. Damn.

I once found a rat in my vat, so I know that rodents like drinking reds, but I wonder whether they provided glass thimbles for the mice.

The world of science gets more like Alice in Wonderland every day.

Zen and the Art of Amateur Winemaking

Chris Ramsay

At the last Guild meeting, we were brainstorming ideas for the Guild calendar next year. In response to the words, “don’t forget the Coolies v Hotties Challenge” ... there were mostly blank looks around the room. Clearly, it is time to remind everyone of what is going on here ... The Challenge was originally documented by Spencer Field in the March 2006 Guild Newsletter, so don’t pretend I’m making this up - go look for yourself.

The Challenge is based around the fact that for vintage 2006, a number of different members sourced Shiraz grapes that were offered for sale by Peter Raeburn. Peter is already well known to Kevin Furness, as several of Kevin’s recent gold medal winning wines have been made from Raeburn fruit. This year, due to Peter having some contracts roll over or some such, he had fruit available for the rest of us to get in on the action.

Peter has two Shiraz vineyards - Redesdale at Heathcote and Two Creeks at Bendigo - given the locations, Heathcote being slightly cooler climate than Bendigo. Co-incidentally, the Guild members who purchased fruit ended up splitting 50 - 50 in their choice of vineyard.

Based on this, Spencer initially proposed and others chipped in with extra ideas, a “Challenge” between the “Coolies” - Heathcote and the “Hotties” - Bendigo, to see who could make the best wine. So the idea has extended from just being a challenge to also being an educational opportunity for other Guild members.

The idea is that all wines will be entered in the Show, then early next year at a Guild meeting where we will blind taste all the wines, make our own judgements on scores, and then compare this with how the wines were judged in the Show. So there will be the Coolies v Hotties Challenge itself, plus in parallel a member Challenge to compare your judging against the Show judges. As part of the education element, we will also look at whether there are clear differences between similar fruit from slightly different climates. Not exactly sure how this will work yet, but we’ll work something out ...

And as another reminder ... here again are the teams:-

Coolies Camp (grapes from Raeburn's Redesdale vineyard)

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)

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

So, we're just waiting for an allocation of a meeting date from our fearless Guild Calendar Manager (GCM) and we'll be furiously planning for a fun night ... that's just a hint there Mr Kolacz ... not subtle, but a hint nevertheless.

So, bring on the Wine Show and let the Challenge begin!

Trading Barrel

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.

Medal Stickers

If you would like self adhesive Gold, Silver or Bronze medal stickers for your wine show prize winning wines, you can purchase them from the Mario Fantin. Cost is 3 for \$1.

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