

## VINTAGE 2008 WRAP UP

As the winds of the global sharemarket meltdown continue to buffet their way around the world, it's interesting to consider how we will be looking at the year 2008 in five, ten or twenty years' time.

Often, a year is remembered through a handful of tragic events that commentators feel shaped our psyche or, when dramatic, caused us to lose our innocence.

But I think there's a much better way to remember a whole year. One of the wonders of wine is that every bottle is a piece of history, a true reflection of every day leading up to the grapes being picked, and 2008 was a year to remember for more than just the beginning of the current global economic woes.

It seems like a distant memory, one you might pull out to trump the grandkid's hard-luck stories, but we did endure 15 consecutive days of temperatures above 35°C over summer. It made for sensational headlines at the time and there were plenty of commentators foretelling vintage doom. But letting truth get in the way of this story means we need to remember that by the time the heat struck, all of our white grapes were already in the winery and a fair whack of the red varieties also.

I don't mean to trivialise the vintage; it was hardly idyllic, with the grapes being harvested over 6 weeks rather than the usual 12, and the heat certainly meant we needed to leave some grapes on the vine, but the wines we have in barrel are looking like some of the best we have ever produced.



As we watch the darling buds of November's grapevines grow, I'm still trying to reconcile a friend's accusation that as a grape grower, I am one of the most flagrant gamblers in society. Like most in Australia, I do enjoy a punt – and still feel I owe Iwata Yasunari a cold Asahi for his ride on Delta Blues in the 2006 Melbourne Cup – but I would prefer the epithets 'measured', 'thorough' and 'conservative' to be applied to my business behaviours.

However, I can't escape the fundamentals – each year, an entire year's salary comes down to the successful harvest of a product that is at the mercy of an unpredictable climate, targeted by a host of pests and diseases, hamstrung by uncertain international markets and built on the shifting sands of fickle consumer preferences. Sometimes, it seems just as logical to put it all on red at the roulette table.

But life in the wine industry is more than the pursuit of financial rewards: it is the rewards of being closer to nature and the change of seasons; the friendships built and the sharing of your passion; it is feasting for your senses and bringing joy to others. It is more than just a drink.

Thank you for taking the time to read a few of our words, and best wishes for a safe and enjoyable changing of the seasons.

## ALL THAT WINE

Sometimes it's easy to be staggered by a set of numbers, and the scale of the wine industry is no exception. The latest export figures show that Australia, which grows around two per cent of the world wine crop, exported 697 million litres of wine in the last year – if this were all bottled, it would equate to an average of 2.6 million bottles exported every day! – and that doesn't include the bottles drunk in Australia.

If you are ever wondering whether wine is a decent investment in this uncertain global environment, consider this: a friend's bottle of wine recently sold for \$160,000. (Admittedly, this was in Zimbabwe, where inflation is running at around two million per cent ...)



### TO RUSSIA WITH LOVE

It's not often that you'd describe someone as a giant of a man when they top out at five foot nine (1.75 metres), but whack ИГОРЬ ЛАРИОНОВ (that's Igor Larionov in his native Russian) on a pair of ice skates and he becomes not only a giant in the world of ice hockey, but a fearsome competitor.

Igor has just been inducted into the Ice Hockey Hall of Fame, in part in recognition of his two gold (1984, 1988) and one bronze (2002) Olympic medals, four world championships (1982, 1983, 1986 and 1989) and 26 years as a professional player. This achievement becomes even more impressive when you remember that ice hockey is the fastest game in the world and, looking at some of the footage of Igor on the web, one of the most brutal.

Igor now shares his time between the US and Russia and has spread his wings to embrace another long-time love – wine. We are delighted to welcome him as our new Russian importer; he's now helping us introduce Chalk Hill to the Moscow masses.

### VIVA LA REVOLUTION – DIAMONDS IN WINE

A quiet revolution has been taking place in many wineries, with clocks being wound back to the old ways of doing things. Of course, it has a spiffy new name: low-intervention winemaking.

It's really no different to the rise of organics and the real food movement that has seen the sprouting of farmers' markets stocked with fruit and vegies that may not look picture perfect, but are more flavoursome. In many ways, wine is just like fruit and vegies, with flavours and texture being lost every time the wine is processed to improve the visual presentation. Low-intervention winemaking has led to warnings like 'minimal' or 'no filtration' appearing on labels, to calm fears when a crust or sediment

appears in a bottle. But my favourite warning has to be that of 'wine diamonds'.

The diamonds also go by the name of tartaric acid (think cream of tartar) which is naturally present in wine, but forms as crystals when the wine is cooled. These crystals never revert back to a liquid in the bottle and instead form harmless sediment that will glisten and sparkle in a glass, like miniature diamonds.

Unfortunately, many drinkers have been returning such wine to shops, thinking there is something wrong and forcing winemakers to take preventative steps to keep everyone happy, except themselves. We have taken the path of returning to our natural roots and interfering with the winemaking process as little as possible.

### MATT AND BRIANNA'S WEDDING



At just faster than glacial speed, vineyard manager Matt got Brianna to the end of the aisle to begin a life of matrimonial bliss (her words, not his). Their wedding was held at the Chalk Hill vineyard and Brianna's great uncle Father Bob Wilkinson officiated.

### ALICE AND BRYAN'S WEDDING

Speaking of wedded bliss, cousin and niece Alice Harvey wed Bryan Both in a most beautiful and intimate ceremony enjoyed by friends and relatives from far and wide.



## LAUNCH OF 2007 BARBERA



The International Barbera Competition, held in Piedmont in Italy, enables the best producers of Barbera from around the globe to face off against each other. The Barbera grape is one of the heroes of Italy's grape production, with more than 500,000 tonnes produced each year.

Last year, our Chalk Hill 2006 Barbera was judged the best Barbera produced outside Italy and was placed second overall. It was a stunning result and the wine also won five trophies at the 2007 McLaren Vale Wine Show. This follows on from the success of our 2005 Barbera, which was awarded third place against all non-Italian made Barberas.

We have just released the 2007 vintage of the Barbera and it is showing all the beautiful hallmarks of the previous vintages, so don't miss out...

## LAUNCH OF 2008 MOSCATO



In a handy 500 ml bottle, the 2008 Moscato will be just what's needed to get inside your significant other's Christmas stockings. Famed wine writer Tyson Stelzer put it better than we could have when he said, 'There are a lot more Moscatos materialising on wine shelves these days, and you might not expect a red wine expert from McLaren Vale to produce one of the best of them. Taste this beautiful, grapey sparkler and you'll be convinced otherwise in just one sip.'

## LAUNCH OF OXYTOCIN



Just in time for some summer loving is the new addition to the family – Oxytocin Rosé. Granted, it's a strange name but anyone familiar with endocrinology will know that oxytocin (oxy-tow-sin) is often called the love drug, being responsible for the bonding between mother and child, friends and lovers. Our version is made from Grenache and it's the perfect drink for a summer's day or to match a seafood dish.



## WRAPPING YOUR TONGUE AROUND

Few things are as confusing as the correct pronunciation of certain grape varieties, and who but the most courageous would order a Gewürztraminer when you could have a simple Chardonnay instead? Well be warned, as we have planted some Albariño (ahl-ba-ree-nyoh) and Muscat Blanc à Petits Grains (go your hardest!). These varieties have their origins in northwest Spain and France, respectively, and make super wines. Albariño is similar to Viognier and has great citrus and peach aromas. We are expecting our first crop next vintage, and we are busy finding every excuse to 'research' the wine from other producers.

Fortunately, we are pretty good at mashing our consonants and vowels, so we will be more understanding than most if you make the odd slip when ordering them.

## WITS END IN AUSTRALIA

Amazingly complex wine label laws in the US mean we have to print the name and address of our importer on the wine label, which is fine, until you change importers.

The very same Chalk Hill wine that is sold in Australia is sold in the US and Canada under our Wits End label to avoid confusion with another Chalk Hill winery in Sonoma, California. Now that we have changed to a new importer, we are faced with either the onerous task of relabelling every bottle in every box or the somewhat easier option of selling it to our mailing list customers. It's the same wine, just with a different label – see the enclosed mailing list for more details.

## MEET YOUR MAKER VISIT TO McLAREN VALE

Every year, we join a dozen other wineries to host the best and brightest of the East Coast's restaurant and fine wine scene on a two-day tour and taste of all things McLaren Vale. We call it Meet Your Maker, and everyone has a swirl, slurp and spit through the best McLaren Vale has to offer. So keep an eye out for Chalk Hill on more wine lists.

## SIX BOTTLES = ONE TREE

As you may know, Chalk Hill donates 25 cents from every bottle sold to Greening Australia for native revegetation and habitat restoration. This equates to a tree being planted for every six bottles sold, and is the largest per-bottle donation in the Australian wine industry going to environmental conservation.

We started working with Greening Australia five years ago, before carbon footprints and offsets were a common talking point, and we remain convinced that a focus on building native biodiversity is the best way we can help our local environment. Soon, we will have more information on our website regarding the revegetation projects, which have seen more than 50 hectares being planted with native shrubs and trees at the Fisheries Beach site.

## FOR ART'S SAKE

This one's worth a look...



VINTAGE is a collaborative exhibition by South Australian photographers Andrew Dunbar and Emily Shepherd. This unique exhibition showcases the South Australian Wine Industry in 50 outstanding photographs.



Captured in colour and black and white, the photographs serve beautifully to remind us that while wine can be interpreted through facts and figures, the production of fine wine is also reliant upon the successful teaming of hard work, ingenuity, creativity and science. Dunbar and Shepherd have attempted to capture these elements of the wine industry in a way that required minimal orchestration.

Fittingly, these photographs pay homage to the unsung heroes of the wine industry and are intended to provide an insight into the winemaking process, and to recognise the efforts, endeavours and creativity in producing something that so many of us enjoy immensely, yet often take for granted.

VINTAGE can be viewed in the Rosemount Winery Cellar Door (Chaffey's Rd, McLaren Vale) 7–30th November 2008. Gallery hours: 10am–5pm Monday to Saturday, 11am–4pm Sunday.



## YOU SAY TOMATO

The words of wine writers are akin to gospel to us, bringing independent endorsement and credibility. Here are the comments of two of Australia's most respected wine scribes talking about the same wine – the Chalk Hill 2004 Shiraz ...

*Given a good swirl, this great-value, fleshy shiraz shows ripe plummy flavours, soft, velvety texture and a gently grippy finish. Deep and approachable.*

Peter Forrestal, *Sunday Times Magazine*

*Deep colour; dark fruits with a slight green edge which adds to the aromatics; a hint of sulphide, but good fruit flavour on the finish; good development potential. 91 points.*

James Halliday, *Australian Wine Companion*

## DISTRIBUTORS

Remember, no matter where you are in Australia, we can get wine to your door (or that lucky someone for Christmas) with Australia Post.

Just contact us on (08) 85 562 121 or [wine@chalkhill.com.au](mailto:wine@chalkhill.com.au)

For restaurants and trade you can contact:

SA: Options & O2 Wines 8363 5400

NSW & ACT: Winestock 9331 3671

QLD: Bouchon Wines 0407 0707 54

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