

Eltham & District Winemakers Guild Inc.

Press Cuttings May 2010

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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 7.45 pm

Next meeting: 28 May 2010

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Next Meeting

Next meeting 28 May - 7:45 pm start: Featuring:

TANNINS - FINISHING FINE REDS - presenter Andrew Watt from Winequip

At the March and April presentations by **Karen** and **Lindsay**, we were given some hints about the role of tannins in improving the structure and palate of red wines. At this meeting we will taste the impacts of tannins in sample and members wines, and learn when and how to use tannins to enhance both our drinking pleasure and Gold medal prospects. **Anyone wanting their wine assessed for tannin additions please bring a bottle.**

WOTY - Members wine brought in for Tannin assessment or adjustment

Gold certificate for the best wine in the Super Shiraz challenge

Harry's Corner: Master Country winemaker & Judge
The third of a regular 10 minute discussion focusing on Jo Illian
show entries (grain, flower, herb or vegetable wine) or other
country wines being made now. A question and answer session
led by Harry Gilham who will talk briefly on the subjects of colour
and tannins in country wine. We will also taste and assess a
prospective Jo Illian entry volunteered by a member who believes
this may be the ultimate winning entry! Hmmmmm well, we'll
see, maybe.

Members are invited to bring along small samples for private assessments by Harry and others.

<u>Please note a special award will be presented</u> to the member whose wine, as judged by popular acclamation of the meeting, is the best home brew tasted at the meeting.

Congratulations to **David Hart** for his Shiraz voted the best members tasting at the April meeting, and for <u>Neil Johannesen</u>, a special commendation. David receives a gold certificate for his fine win. (*Ed's note - the phantom certificate is expected to magically appear soon!!*)

President's Press

Spencer Field

April Meeting review: Harry's Country Corner:

Harry spoke about the importance of not removing the skins from root vegetables (carrots, potatoes, beetroot, etc) being used to make country wine. Because the skins impart an earthy character that forms part of the aroma and palate of the root vegetable wine, and since judges do look for this character. The exception where skins should be removed of course, is with green potatoes since the green in the skins is toxic to humans. There were plenty of questions and answers and this was a particularly good session.

April Meeting review: Making super shiraz - Lindsay Corby of Cosmo Wines:

A record 38.5 members (one left early) were spellbound for this session which covered some of the finer points of shiraz grape selection and winemaking necessary for making a top Shiraz. Lindsay's supreme skill, knowledge and wine palate were all clearly evident

and his 2008 shiraz was clearly the most super, super shiraz on the night, bettering a multi-award winning 2007 Barwang Hilltops Shiraz from the NSW cool climate Tumbarumba region.

I won't try to summarise Lindsay's presentation as his notes are included elsewhere in this newsletter. Amongst much more, he pointed out the great advantages of knowing and viewing the vineyard supplying grapes to members. What happens in the vineyard, how it's managed and the seasonal conditions all have a great impact on fruit quality. If you buy from the markets or otherwise do not study the vineyard, you will have no idea of the likely final flavour characteristics that will be delivered in the grapes.

In the winery, ongoing assessments and many corresponding adjustments are necessary. Adjustments include sulphur, enzyme, acid, tannins and more, and great skill is necessary to make the assessments, decide what additions, how much and measure them. Very clearly a skilled palate is required, we must know about the range of potential additives such as tannins, we must understand how to do fining trials to decide on how much to add, and we need the tools and equipment that enables us to carry out such tasks.

Sounds overwhelming?? No not really, judging by the very high standard of members wines. Taking members skills overall we have the capability to produce super shirazes and it's a matter of drawing out the best from skilled members. Nevertheless we all still have much to learn from the likes of Lindsay and Karen and from each other. Also the Guild has a big ongoing role in facilitating a good learning environment.

Lindsay's and Karen's sessions both had much to offer in improving member skills and facilitating more member gold medals. I am very grateful for their ongoing very educational contributions to the Guild membership. Should you be interested in the following:

- Buying Lindsay's top shiraz or other Cosmo wines Phone him on 0408 519 461
- Buying Karen's range of red and white wines or seeking her advice or assessment of your wines in the making - see http://www.hillsofplenty.com.au/

2010 Winery and Food/craft Weekender - Three options

Our Weekender Co-ordinator, **Bill Loughlin**, led discussion on options for this year, a weekender likely to be held in the first or second weekend of October. We will hire a bus leaving Saturday morning, returning Sunday eve about 6-7pm. Costs are normally of around \$180 per person for bus, accommodation and Saturday night dinner at a chosen eatery.

Bill appears to have done some homework and is recommending a winery and food/craft tour starting near Sunbury and ending around Benalla. There's clearly a lot in this elongated region and we may perhaps be able to draw on local assistance from members Brian at Heathcote and Brian and at Violet Town. The two other options Bill will investigate and report on at our May meeting are:

- Grampians wine region in the Western district
- Henty Region in the South West (West of Hamilton)

Wine show Committee 2010 - 1st meeting very soon

Notice for the first Show Committee meeting to be held on 25th May (18th as a backup) has being emailed to members, who are John and Roma O'Callaghan (Show Directors), Greg Martin, Michael Scott, Darko, Mario Fantin, Andrew Gillam, Tim Ross, George, David Pryor, Gary Campanella, Spencer, Chris Kearney, Con Prousalis and Vinko Eterovic - a high powered group indeed! More volunteers are welcome and may be called. One more member with IT skills is needed in the 4-6 weeks leading up to the show to assist Tim and Andrew.

The Show Committee is a working committee meeting held once monthly from May and members will have work allocated.

Notes by Lindsay Corby
Cosmo Wines
Lecturer in Viticulture & Wine, La Trobe University
lindsay@cosmowines.com.au

Shiraz - Lindsay Corby

The vineyard

- 1. Vine vigour/health, stress
- 2. Shading
- 3. Ripeness
- 4. Crop level
- 5. Balance

Winemaking

- 1. Additions
 - a. Sulphur dioxide, in the bin at harvest, 60ppm?
 - b. Tartaric acid, ideal pH level below 3.5, about 1g/L HTa per 0.15 pH unit. Major additions prior to ferment, minor adjustments later
 - c. Tannins, mixed tannins before ferment, I trial skin, seed, oak, and quebracho
 - d. Colour enzymes
 - e. Yeast, or not??
- 2. Ferment management
 - a. Plunging, keeping the cap wet, ensure air contact, twice daily or more preferable
 - b. Temperature, >25-30C is OK > 35 is probably not, <20C will give tuti-fruiti simple fruit characters
 - c. DAP and/or yeast nutrient, add once the ferment is active but before H_2S is evident
 - d. If sulphides become evident consider draining out the wine and splashing it back over the skins to allow oxygen to dissolve and stimulate the yeast or go to e.
 - e. Press decisions, press at 0-1 Baume to keep some protection from yeast activity
 - f. Let the wine settle for a day or 2 after pressing then rack off pressing lees into barrel
 - g. Be very careful with pre-ferment cold soak, and post ferment skin contact to avoid oxidation and aceto-bacter activity
- 3. Malo-lactic fermentation (most sensitive time for the wine)
 - a. Inoculate at around pressing while the wine is still warm, consider bacteria nutrients
 - b. Keep the wine warm >19C
 - c. Keep the air out, gas cover, keep containers full with minimal temperature fluctuation
 - d. Too much SO_2 at the start of ferment may cause a problem with MLF, if it doesn't get going check the SO_2 levels, should be less than 50ppm
 - e. If all things are good MLF can complete in 2-3 weeks, if not good then 4-5 months... This is where problems can occur with Brett infections
 - f. Once certain MLF is complete add SO₂ to give about 80ppm Total, 100ppm if you are only in glass or stainless steel containers
- 4. Oak

- a. Definitely
- b. Medium toast French oak sticks or blocks if you don't have enough wine to fill a barrel, 20-25% barrel equivalent. Around 2g/L

5. Racking

- a. If in barrel then the wine should be racked following MLF to clean out sludge, taste the wine, add acid and/or tannins to taste (6-8 weeks?), copper trial for sulphides
- b. Then rack again after a further 6-8 weeks, with trials for adjustments
- c. Rack again after 2-3 months

6. Prep for bottling

- a. Blend barrels or batches for bottling about a month before bottling to allow the parts to come together
- b. Check for minor acid adjustments, final copper trial, and fine with protein. I like skim milk and casein products, but will also trial PVPP, egg white, and gelatine. You can strip the guts out of the wine if you over-fine, but leave the wine bitter and unpleasant if under-fined. Tannins (oak or seed/skin) should be fine grained and mouth filling, and balance with the sweet/spicy fruit, and mouth cleaning tart acidity. Sourness is evidence of spoilage and acetic acid production (vinegar).
- c. Filter to at least 0.6 micron if possible, I do 5 micron, 1 micron then 0.6 micron. If racking has been done properly then there should be minimal solids, but air exposure can lead to a precipitate forming after filtering.
- d. The wine should be cold stable if it has been through the winter.

Update on Guild's Crusher in 2010

During the recent grape crushing season the guild's crusher was used on approximately 12 occasions to crush a total of 3.3 tonnes of grapes. At \$20 per use, the crusher is proving an excellent investment by the Guild to enable the amateur wine maker to economically make wine.

This is our 5th season of use of the crusher which was purchased in 2005. I haven't worked out the total income to date from use of the crusher but I think it has probably already paid back its original purchase price - with many more seasons to go.

All the best for your winemaking activities and please remember, if using Guild equipment, let me know when possession of any items of equipment change hands.

Cheers,

Rob Aitken Guild Asset Manager

Rain Plum Liqueur

Endangered Ooray Rain Plum liqueur goes on sale (from Australian Food News - May 4, 2010 by Nicole Eckersley)



A liqueur made from the endangered fruit Davidsonia jerseyana, or Oooray Rain Plum, is now commercially available.

The liqueur is a collaborative project between Noosa-based AuraGold Farms and Stanthorpe company Castle Glen Liqueurs.

The plum is a seasonal staple food of the New South Wales Widjabul people, who traditionally reside in the plum's growth area.

Master Liqueur Maker Cedric Millar, owner and Director of Castle Glen, is ecstatic about the outcome of the experiment in liqueur making.

"This is the first time we have used a pure Australian indigenous fruit to produce a liqueur and the result is truly amazing," said Mr Millar.

"When we received the fresh fruit late last year, direct from a combination of wild harvest and plantation picking, we honestly didn't know what to expect and how it would turn out. The result is beyond expectations."

Described as tasting "somewhere between a Campari and a tarty Drambuie", the Ooray Rain Plum Liqueur is "bound to raise a few eyebrows", according to AuraGold Farms and Australian Superfood owner Scott Mathias.

"The Ooray Plum's antioxidant qualities are very pronounced - 8220mg/100g of red anthocyanins," he said.

"Our goal is to open up new applications and uses for the NSW Ooray Rain Plum and we have succeeded beyond our wildest dreams."

The liqueur is presently available from the Noosa Farmers Market and the Jan Powers Farmers Market in Brisbane's CBD.

Spencer Field AgriVision Consulting PO Box 291 Hurstbridge 3099 0408 300523

Wine Quotes and News

Living Will

Last night, my adult kids and I were sitting in the living room and I said to them, 'I never want to live in a vegetative state, dependent on some machine and fluids from a bottle. If that ever happens, just pull the plug.'

They got up, unplugged the Computer, and threw out my wine.

They are such jerks.

.....

Rob Aitken

"The art of tasting wine is the performance of a sacred rite, which deserves to be carried out with the utmost grave and serious attention"

- French National Committee for Wine Publicity.

But, more to my (male) liking is the following Lord Byron view:

"Let us have wine and women, mirth and laughter. Sermons and soda water the day after."

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Articles wanted

Articles of interest, whether they are quotes or newsworthy, are requested from members. If you have a draft version or need some assistance, I'm happy to assist for its inclusion. (Ed.)

Early Global Warning System

The delicate wine grape has become our best early warning system for the effects of global warming.

Article from Slade by Mark Hertsgarrd - Posted Monday, April 26, 2010, at 11:01 AM ET

John Williams has been making wine in California's Napa Valley for nearly 30 years, and he farms so ecologically that his peers call him Mr. Green. But if you ask him how climate change will affect Napa's world-famous wines, he gets irritated, almost insulted. "You know, I've been getting that question a lot recently, and I feel we need to keep this issue in perspective," he told me. "When I hear about global warming in the news, I hear that it's going to melt the Arctic, inundate coastal cities, displace millions and millions of people, spread tropical diseases and bring lots of other

horrible effects. Then I get calls from wine writers and all they want to know is, 'How is the character of cabernet sauvignon going to change under global warming?' I worry about global warming, but I worry about it at the humanity scale, not the vineyard scale."

Williams is the founder of Frog's Leap, one of the most ecologically minded wineries in Napa and, for that matter, the world. Electricity for the operation comes from 1,000 solar panels erected along the merlot vines; the heating and cooling are supplied by a geothermal system that taps into the Earth's heat. The vineyards are 100 percent organic and—most radical of all, considering Napa's dry summers—there is no irrigation.

Yet despite his environmental fervor, Williams dismisses questions about preparing Frog's Leap for the impacts of climate change. "We have no idea what effects global warming will have on the conditions that affect Napa Valley wines, so to prepare for those changes seems to me to be whistling past the cemetery," he says, a note of irritation in his voice. "All I know is, there are things I can do to stop, or at least slow down, global warming, and those are things I should do." Williams has a point about keeping things in perspective. At a time when climate change is already making it harder for people in Bangladesh to find enough drinking water, it seems callous to fret about what might happen to premium wines. But there is much more to the question of wine and climate change than the character of pinot noir. Because wine grapes are extraordinarily sensitive to temperature, the industry amounts to an early-warning system for problems that all food crops—and all industries—will confront as global warming intensifies. *In vino veritas*, the Romans said: *In wine there is truth*. The truth now is that the Earth's climate is changing much faster than the wine business, and virtually every other business on Earth, is preparing for.

All crops need favorable climates, but few are as vulnerable to temperature and other extremes as wine grapes. "There is a fifteenfold difference in the price of cabernet sauvignon grapes that are grown in Napa Valley and cabernet sauvignon grapes grown in Fresno," in California's hot Central Valley, says Kim Cahill, a consultant to the Napa Valley Vintners' Association. "Cab grapes grown in Napa sold [in 2006] for \$4,100 a ton. In Fresno the price was \$260 a ton. The difference in average temperature between Napa and Fresno was 5 degrees Fahrenheit."

Numbers like that help explain why climate change is poised to clobber the global wine industry, a multibillion-dollar business whose decline would also damage the much larger industries of food, restaurants, and tourism. Every business on Earth will feel the effects of global warming, but only the ski industry—which appears doomed in its current form—is more visibly targeted by the hot, erratic weather that lies in store over the next 50 years. In France, the rise in temperatures may render the Champagne region too hot to produce fine champagne. The same is true for the legendary reds of Châteauneuf du Pape, where the stony white soil's ability to retain heat, once considered a virtue, may now become a curse. The world's other major wine-producing regions—California, Italy, Spain, Australia—are also at risk.

If current trends continue, the "premium wine grape production area [in the United States] ... could decline by up to 81 percent by the late 21st century," a team of scientists wrote in a study published in the *Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences* in 2006. The culprit was not so much the rise in *average* temperatures but an increased frequency of extremely hot days, defined as above 35 degrees Celsius (95 degrees Fahrenheit). If no adaptation measures were taken, these increased heat spikes would "eliminate wine grape production in many areas of the United States," the scientists wrote.

In theory, winemakers can defuse the threat by simply shifting production to more congenial locations. Indeed, Champagne grapes have already been planted in England and some respectable vintages harvested. But there are limits to this strategy. After all, temperature is not the sole determinant of a wine's taste. What the French call *terroir*—a term that refers to the soil of a given region but also includes the cultural knowledge of the people who grow and process grapes—is crucial. "Wine is tied to place more than any other form of agriculture, in the sense that the names of the place are on the bottle," says David Graves, the co-founder of the Saintsbury wine company in the Napa Valley. "If traditional sugar-beet growing regions in eastern Colorado had to move north, nobody would care. But if wine grapes can't grow in the Napa Valley anymore—which is an extreme statement, but let's say so for the sake of argument—suddenly you have a global warming poster child right up there with the polar bears."

A handful of climate-savvy winemakers such as Graves are trying to rouse their colleagues to action before it is too late, but to little avail. Indeed, some winemakers are actually rejoicing in the higher temperatures of recent years. "Some of the most expensive wines in Spain come from the Rioja Alta and Rioja Alavesa regions," Pancho Campo, the founder and president of the Wine Academy of Spain, says. "They are getting almost perfect ripeness every year now for Tempranillo. This makes the winemakers say, 'Who cares about climate change? We are getting perfect vintages.' The same thing has happened in Bordeaux. It is very difficult to tell someone, 'This is only going to be the case for another few years.' "

The irony is, the wine business is better situated than most to adapt to global warming. Many of the people in the industry followed in their parents' footsteps and hope to pass the business on to their kids and grandkids someday. This should lead them to think further ahead than the average corporation, with its obsessive focus on this quarter's financial results. But I found little evidence this is happening.

The exception: Alois Lageder's family has made wine in Alto Adige, the northernmost province in Italy, since 1855. The setting, at the foot of the Alps, is majestic. Looming over the vines are massive outcroppings of black and gray granite interspersed with flower-strewn meadows and wooded hills that inevitably call to mind *The Sound of Music*. Locals admire Lageder for having led

Alto Adige's evolution from producing jug wine to boasting some of the best whites in Italy. In October 2005, Lageder hosted the world's first conference on the future of wine under climate change. "We must recognize that climate change is not a problem of the future," Lageder told his colleagues. "It is here today and we must adapt now."

As it happens, Alto Adige is the location of one of the most dramatic expressions of modern global warming: the discovery of the so-called Iceman—the frozen remains of a herder who lived in the region 5,300 years ago. The corpse was found in 1991 in a mountain gully, almost perfectly preserved—even the skin was intact—because it had lain beneath mounds of snow and ice since shortly after his death (a murder, forensic investigators later concluded from studying the trajectory of an arrowhead lodged in his left shoulder). He would not have been found were it not for global warming, says Hans Glauber, the director of the Alto Adige Ecological Institute: "Temperatures have been rising in the Alps about twice as fast as in the rest of the world," he notes.

Lageder heard about global warming in the early 1990s and felt compelled to take action. It wasn't easy—"I had incredible fights with my architect about wanting good insulation," he says—but by 1996 he had installed the first completely privately financed solar-energy system in Italy. He added a geothermal energy system as well. Care was taken to integrate these cutting-edge technologies into the existing site; during a tour, I emerged from a dark fermentation cellar with its own wind turbine into the bright sunlight of a gorgeous courtyard dating to the 15th century. Going green did make the renovation cost 30 percent more, Lageder says, "but that just means there is a slightly longer amortization period. In fact, we made up the cost difference through increased revenue, because when people heard about what we were doing, they came to see it and they ended up buying our wines."

The record summer heat that struck Italy and the rest of Europe in 2003, killing tens of thousands, made Lageder even more alarmed. "When I was a kid, the harvest was always after Nov. 1, which was a cardinal date," he told me. "Nowadays, we start between the 5th and 10th of September and finish in October." Excess heat raises the sugar level of grapes to potentially ruinous levels. Too much sugar can result in wine that is unbalanced and too alcoholic—wine known as "cooked" or "jammy." Higher temperatures may also increase the risk of pests and parasites, because fewer will die off during the winter. White wines, whose skins are less tolerant of heat, face particular difficulties as global warming intensifies. "In 2003, we ended up with wines that had between 14 and 16 percent alcohol," Lageder recalled, "whereas normally they are between 12 and 14 percent. The character of our wine was changing."

A 2 percent increase in alcohol may sound like a tiny difference, but the effect on a wine's character and potency is considerable. "In California, your style of wine is bigger, with alcohol levels of 14 and 15, even 16 percent," Lageder continued. "I like some of those wines a lot. But

the alcohol level is so high that you have one glass and then"—he slashed his hand across his throat—"you're done; any more and you will be drunk. In Europe, we prefer to drink wine throughout the evening, so we favor wines with less alcohol. Very hot weather makes that harder to achieve."

There are tricks grape growers and winemakers can use to lower alcohol levels. The leaves surrounding the grapes can be allowed to grow bushier, providing more shade. Vines can be replaced with different clones or rootstocks. Growing grapes at higher altitudes, where the air is cooler, is another option. So is changing the type of grapes being grown.

But laws and cultural traditions currently stand in the way of such adaptations. So-called AOC laws (*Appellation d'Origine Côntrollée*) govern wine-grape production throughout France, and in parts of Italy and Spain, as well. As temperatures rise further, these AOC laws and kindred regulations are certain to face increased challenge. "I was just in Burgundy," Pancho Campo told me in March 2008, "and producers there are *very* concerned, because they know that chardonnay and pinot noir are cool-weather wines, and climate change is bringing totally the contrary. Some of the producers were even considering starting to study Syrah and other varieties. At the moment, they are not allowed to plant other grapes, but these are questions people are asking."

The greatest resistance, however, may come from the industry itself. "Some of my colleagues may admire my views on this subject, but few have done much," says Lageder. "People are trying to push the problem away, saying, 'Let's do our job today and wait and see in the future if climate change becomes a real problem.' But by then it will be too late to save ourselves."

If the wine industry does not adapt to climate change, life will go on—with less conviviality and pleasure, perhaps, but it will go on. Fine wine will still be produced, most likely by early adapters such as Lageder, but there will be less of it. By the law of supply and demand, that suggests the best wines of tomorrow will cost even more than the ridiculous amounts they fetch today. White wine may well disappear from some regions. Climate-sensitive reds such as pinot noir are also in trouble. It's not too late for winemakers to save themselves through adaptation. But it's disconcerting to see so much dawdling in an industry with so much incentive to act. If winemakers aren't motivated to adapt to climate change, what businesses will be?

The answer seems to be very few. Even in Britain, where the government is vigorously championing adaptation, the private sector lags in understanding the adaptation imperative, much less implementing it. "I bet if I rang up 100 small businesses in the U.K. and mentioned adaptation, 90 of them wouldn't know what I was talking about," says Gareth Williams, who works with the organization Business in the Community, helping firms in northeast England prepare for the storms and other extreme weather events that scientists project for the region. "When I started this job, I gave a presentation to heads of businesses," said Williams, who spent most of his career in the private sector. "I presented the case for adaptation, and in the question-and-

answer period, one executive said, 'We're doing quite a lot on adaptation already.' I said, 'Oh, what's that?' He said, 'We're recycling, and we're looking at improving our energy efficiency.' I thought to myself, 'Oh, my, he really didn't get it at all. This is going to be a struggle.' "

"Most of us are not very good at recognizing our risks until we are hit by them," explains Chris West, the director of the U.K. government's Climate Impact Program. "People who run companies are no different." Before joining UKCIP in 1999, West had spent most of his career working to protect endangered species. Now, the species he is trying to save is his own, and the insights of a zoologist turn out to be quite useful. Adapting to changing circumstances is, after all, the essence of evolution—and of success in the modern economic marketplace. West is fond of quoting Darwin: "It is not the strongest of the species that survives ... nor the most intelligent that survives. It is the one that is the most adaptable to change."

This story comes from the Climate Desk collaboration.

Trading Barrel

BUY / SELL SERVICE FOR MEMBERS - Ads need to be lodged with the editor by the 14th of the month to be included in the next Newsletter.

FOR SALE - GLASS FLAGONS

For sale pairs of clear glass flagons, one 5 litre and one 2 litre.

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- Re-conditioned (completely re-coopered) barrels from 50-150 litres
- Shaving and toasting

For all your cooperage needs contact Neil on 9438 1790 or 0402 015 138 Enquiries welcome