

Miceli Newsletter

Autumn 2009

Opening Times:

We will be open for Easter- Good Friday, Saturday, Sunday, Monday Tuesday 12.00 - 5.00. Following this we will continue to be open for tastings the first weekend of each month (but available for sales only almost every day).

Season Report:

The growing season has been a mixed bag here with late Spring/early Summer cold weather and good rain in December, followed by unprecedented heatwaves late Jan to early Feb, and extreme lack of rain up to early March.

Of course the heatwaves are the feature in everyone's thoughts, and thankfully our vineyard survived this with only mild damage. Of course we were a couple of degrees cooler than Melbourne (43.5 here when Melbourne was 46.4) but this is still way higher than any heat we have had here before.

The first long heatwave caused some burning of fruit, mainly in the Pinot Grigio, the West facing edge of the bunches on the West side of the rows were all burnt. About 50% of the bunches on the one side were damaged, ie 25% damaged, of which about 1/3 were burnt brown and dropped off, and 1/3 discoloured only and 1/3 undamaged. Thus in round figures we would have lost 10% of the Pinot Grigio. The discoloured berries survived and went on to ripen normally. In the Chardonnay and Pinot Noir the damage was minimal, I think owing to their just slightly denser canopies. Some vineyards in the lower areas on the Peninsula had much more damage due to a more advanced stage (we were still well before veraison) and slightly higher temperatures on the day.

However, our crop levels are very low this year due to the cold in late November and early December which is our flowering time.

Flowering and Fruitset:

Flowering and fruit set is the most problematical time of the year in our climate. Flowering is a delicate process, and then early

growth of the berries can go wrong for many complex reasons.

The cold windy weather suppresses fertilisation of the berries. Normally the pollen grain is received by the stigma of the flower (in grapevines it gets there by wind and gravity, not bees). The pollen tube then grows down to the ovary to fertilise the ovules which turn into the seeds. Growth of the pollen tube ceases at temperatures below 13 deg C, and is also inhibited by temperatures that are too high, or by desiccation. The transfer of the male gametes and fertilisation also requires suitable conditions of the health and nutrition of the plant. For example, boron is critical for fertilisation and is deficient in our red soils.

Normally winemaking grapes have 3 seeds, and the plant hormones released by the seeds at least partly determine the growth of the berries. Most non-fertilised berries will not grow, but some can, and produce tiny berries "chickens" which sometimes ripen but often raisin and fall off before the rest are ripened. Berries which have less than 3 seeds are likely to be small but persist to ripeness.

Even after the seeds are fertilised the bunches may not grow properly, and sections or whole bunches dry up and drop off- this is called early bunch necrosis. This situation tends to result from imbalances of nutrients in the vines, in particular excess nitrogen (overly vigorous vines) and imbalances of potassium, calcium and magnesium. These problems also tend to result from cold, wet, and cloudy weather, and the way it affects root and leaf function.

Thus the bunch sizes are very small with fewer berries, widely spaced, and loose, which at least, is favourable to prevent disease.

The near-total lack of rain from just before Christmas until early March has further reduced the berry growth, preventing any compensation by increased berry size, and resulting in a really quite small crop.

The best performing section was again the Pinot Grigio, and the rootstock (Schwartzmann) is known for its beneficial effect on fruit set (but also its susceptibility to drought).

Once again the seasonality, terroir and connection to the land is highlighted in our small scale farming and winemaking enterprise.

Awards:

Since the last Newsletter we won two GOLD medals for the **2004 Michael Brut** (top of

category- "sparkling wine aperitif style") and the **2001 Rose Method Champenoise**. The Michael Brut 2004 was in direct contention for the Trophy which went however to the wine which came top of category "sparkling wine fuller bodied style".

When you consider that only 5 GOLD medals were awarded for sparkling wines with about 400 entries across all the classes we feel pretty chuffed about this. There were also no other silver or gold medals awarded to any other small winery, all the others taken by big companies (Hardys Seppelt etc). In fact, we beat nearly all the big companies too!

The 2005 Olivia's Chardonnay won a creditable Bronze to start its career.

New Releases:

The 2005 Olivia's Chardonnay and the 2004 Michael Brut (renamed since our cowardly foreign minister Stephen Smith signed a new agreement with the E.U).

Vineyard:

The planting of the new vineyard was delayed by the late arrival of our new tractor (+sprayer + implements). This was ordered in June and promised for 6-8 week delivery (it comes from Italy). It did not arrive however until the very last week of November. Thus the ground preparation and terracing were not ready until 2 weeks into December. Then we had 101 mm of rain which delayed things another week, and the vines were planted on 22-23 Dec. (yes, 2 days before Christmas!!). The 260 vines Pinot Grigio/101-14 rootstock have grown fantastically, with all of them over 1.2m and a large number above trellis height (1.8m) by end of March. The vines on the Teleki 5C rootstock have been much slower to start and had many losses (130 out of 990 vines), due mainly to their general spindly weak nature (though to the credit of the nursery they agreed to replace these, and vines still in cold storage were provided, and have been (re-)planted and are growing well)

Newsletter Special:

For Easter Season we are offering 35% off our 2005 Lucy's Choice Pinot Noir 2005, in preparation for release of the 2006 vintage heading into Winter. A lovely soft, yet full and complex wine that is drinking beautifully now, though still has a long way to go.

Tasting Notes:

Iolanda Pinot Grigio 2008

A distinctive, dry, flavoursome white wine with clean acid finish.

Pale greenish yellow. Full-bodied, but fine, with typical Pinot Grigio characters- mineral/flinty, brown pear, lemon, honey and floral. The palate is fresh and clean, and it has great persistence of flavour.

Alc13.5%

Iolanda Pinot Grigio 2001:

Pale golden yellow. Rich, toasty and honey and apricot kernel. Fine acid well balanced and no tannin harshness. This wine won a couple of Silver medals way back then, and its balance and depth of flavour continue to amaze. It shows development in a way not dissimilar to Hunter Semillons. Strict limits on numbers per customer. Breathe 30 min. Alc13.0%

Olivia's Chardonnay 2005

An elegant wine with depth and power.

Brilliant pale greenish yellow. Peach, cashew, citrus, and superbly integrated vanillan oak.. Smooth mouthfeel and fine acid balance, with great intensity and length of flavour. Alc 13.5%

1 Bronze

Dry Pinot Rose 2006

This is a serious rose, totally dry, with great depth of fruit and a clean acid finish.

Brilliant strawberry pink, with plum, strawberry and a hint of vanillan oak. Intense and full bodied with palate freshness, smooth mouthfeel, good acid and great length of flavour. Wine Wise Highly Recommended (Best of Category) Alc 13.5%

Lucy's Choice Pinot Noir 2005

Serious pinot noir, a medium bodied red with elegance, richness, and complexity

Brilliant medium red. Rich, complex and gamey with coffee, black cherry, plum, spice and superbly integrated oak. The palate is soft with fine tannins, is well balanced and dry, with very long persistence of flavour. Alc 13.5%

Michael Brut 2004

Aperitif style- dry, fine, flavoursome, complex with refreshing acid finish.

The flavours are "fine" and intense, with toasty/vegemite yeast, strawberry and hints of melon, pear and honey. The palate is very creamy, long, with cleansing acid and a fresh dry finish. AL 11.0% 1 Gold

Rose Methode Champenoise 2001

A flavoursome, delicate, and complex dry sparkling rose, with a fine bead.

Brilliant pale salmon pink. The palate is rich and flavoursome, with creamy and toasty yeast, strawberry pinot noir fruit, great length, and a clean dry finish. 12.5 % alc./vol 1 Gold 2 Silver 4* Halliday

Guarantee:

Any wine that is spoiled will be credited or replaced. Any wine that you wish to return that has been well looked after and still in saleable condition will be refunded.

Pauline & Anthony Miceli