

Miceli Newsletter

Spring 2013

Opening Times:

We will be open for Cup Weekend Sat, Sun, Mon, Tues Nov 2-5 11.00 - 5.00.

We will be serving great wines and rather special local cheese platters.

Following this we will be open for tastings every weekend 12.00 to 5.00 pm. (And available, for sales only, every day).

Season Report:

Since Late May the rain has continued unabated with 872 mm since vintage, 183 mm (May) 186 mm (June) 154 mm (July) 138 mm (Aug) 122 mm (Sept), and 89 mm so far in October.

This is enough to fill our soil and our dams many times over, but just soaks in and runs away while the vines are asleep.

This appears related to the recent negative “Indian Ocean Dipole” The “Southern Oscillation Index” is neutral (not actually a “La Nina” but definitely not “El Nino”). We obviously do not have the full story yet, or else why is NSW and Qld so dry when none of these climatic indicators point that way for them?

One speculation is that the relative lack of strong cold fronts this Winter is what you might expect as the world warms, and the climate zones move towards the poles. We (the southern 1/3 of Australia) are at the edge of the subtropical high pressure belt and movements of that edge can leave us further from the influence of the “roaring forties” frontal weather systems.

Temperatures, despite this rain, have remained well above average, with no really cold days, and a (few) amazingly warm days.

Nevertheless, we are managing to demonstrate again how we have the lushest and mildest corner of the continent, and we will be the last area to become too hot for fine wine!

Winery Report:

The relatively early finish to Vintage should have left me with plenty of time? No way! Checking, measuring, pumping, and blending tanks, so that all of each wine could naturally cold stabilise over Winter is a big task.

Cleaning is also the other major activity. In fact, finally cleaning tartrate etc. from all our 20+ plastic tanks was only finished off last week.

Lets hope vintage is still some time off so I can rest a little.

The wines are looking great at this stage, and the barrels will be sulphured soon, making sure that every last vestige of MLF has finished.

Sparkling Wine:

This is a perfect time of year for sparkling wine, and of course we have some of the best sparkling wines in Australia!

More than any other wine, “champagne” is about perception. It is a product that has been developed much more recently than many other wine styles and is surrounded by more mystique and also more myth than nearly any other wine. A lot more is hype and branding and historical luck, being near the centres of power, rather than a special magical suitability of the region.

One myth is that the ancient viticultural skill of Champagne goes back to the 4th century when there were thriving vineyards around the city of Reims, an important city in Roman times, and the traditional place of coronation of the French Kings.

But the wine in those days was still, pinkish “gris de perle” and usually drunk early, in the cafes of Paris, from oak casks. Certainly it was a light, flavoursome, “drinking” wine, but only lightly fizzy or flat.

It was Dom Perignon in the 1660s who brought the quality of the wine up to a reasonable standard, by improved winemaking techniques of gentle pressing (not with feet), and encouraging the use of the higher quality pinot noir variety, hard pruning and low crops, to give the best chance of ripening in this borderline cold area at 49 deg latitude.

He did not aim to produce sparkling wine and indeed spent most of his winemaking career trying to prevent the bubbles that could ruin the taste of the wine as well as burst the bottles (which weren’t as strong then), causing total havoc in the cellars.

An interesting factor to note is that at Dom Perignon’s time this problem was at its peak, not due to him, but because of the “Little Ice Age” that chilled Europe for several centuries. The cold meant the wines did not finish fermenting in Autumn, and so finished fermenting in Spring.

It was in fact the English scientist Christopher Merrett who devised the method where the “flat” wine in casks that arrived in England had sugar added and then bottled to re-ferment and so be fully sparkling. This was

taken up on the small scale in Champagne, and was very popular at Louis IV's court.

In 1720 the city of Reims was granted the exclusive royal right to sell its wine in bottles!

But these wines were still harsh and cloudy, and production was still haphazard, and following a glut of wine Champagne went into a severe decline.

Champagne's fortunes were revived after the destruction during the French Revolution by Napoleon (who was from Champagne). But it all would still have come to nil, without the entrepreneurship of a few influential people, in particular Nicole-Barbe Cliquot-Ponsardin "la veuve" (the widow). Her family fortune came from wool trading (actually the main industry in the region), and her interest in wine resulted from her marriage to Francois Cliquot. By the way, she was the great niece of the same Dom Perignon!

Apart from being an amazing figure as a woman in a man's world, she changed the industrial scale and financial basis of production by vertically integrating her business. She also, in particular, introduced the technology of "remuage" (riddling) to remove the yeast, in the 1820s. This meant for the first time that champagne could be clear, and also that it could be re-sweetened (doseage) with sugar, reliably, and without the bottles exploding, which made these high acid low alcohol wines palatable.

But these wines were all really sweet, up to 200 g/l (like a heavy dessert wine). Even "Dry" (sec) wines were still really sweet. The first actually dry or nearly dry wines weren't made until 1846- (by Perrier) and they were thought of as "brute-like" or decades later just "brut".

We ripen our grapes from low cropped Pinot noir, Chardonnay, and Pinot Gris, at the same sugars and equivalent dates to Champagne. The area defined as "Champagne" has been arbitrarily more than doubled in the past 2 decades, and allowable yields per Ha. also doubled to well above what we can achieve. The only thing that we cannot match, apart from the enormous prices of the elite brands is their 11/2 centuries of marketing and fame!

Newsletter Special:

We always offer great specials with each newsletter, so if you want to receive it about 3 times a year please email us with your (postal) address, and don't miss out with our strict expiry dates (in case I don't get to the website in time)

website: www.miceli.com.au.

Email: sales@miceli.com.au.

Tasting Notes:

Iolanda Pinot Grigio 2010

Distinctive, dry, flavoursome and refreshing, with a crisp finish.

Very pale straw colour. Lively and fresh, with typical Pinot Grigio characters- mineral, pear, lemon, honey and spice. The palate is crisp, dry, has perfectly balanced structure, and great persistence of flavour. Alc 13.5%

Olivia's Chardonnay 2009

An elegant and flavoursome wine with complexity and depth.

This wine is fermented in oak and remains in contact with its yeast lees for a full year. It shows citrus, white peach, minerality, restrained oak, with crisp acid balance and creamy mouthfeel. Alc 13.5%

D clone Pinot Rose (dry) NV

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

The colour is brilliant salmon pink. Delicious strawberry pinot fruit, with complexity, gaminess, and freshness. The palate shows great length and balance. Alc 13.0%

Lucy's Choice Pinot Noir 2009

Delicious Pinot with richness, depth and complexity.

Brilliant deep red. Dark cherry, spice, violets and vanilla. The 20 year old vines give richness and depth, the wine is full bodied but with typical pinot softness, complex and has perfect balance. Alc 13.5%

Michael Brut 2006

Aperitif style- Crisp, refreshing, and dry, this is a wine with great subtlety and length.

Beautifully pale with persistent fine bead, it has lovely yeastiness, lemon, honey and toast, this wine is savoury and elegant. Recently disgorged. Alc 11.0%

4 stars winestate

Rose Brut 2004

Elegant, sophisticated, and amazingly pretty, dry, with intense and lingering flavour and a creamy palate.

Aristocratic pale pink. The palate is rich and flavoursome, with creamy and toasty yeast, and delicious strawberry pinot noir fruit. It has great length, persistent fine bead and a clean dry finish.

3 stars winestate

Satisfaction 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. Specials and museum releases excepted.

Pauline & Anthony Miceli