

Miceli Newsletter

Autumn 2008

Opening Times:

**We will be open for Easter Fri -Tues
12.00 - 5.00 21-25 March.**

**Following this we will continue to be
open the first weekend of each month.**

Season Report:

After a relatively dry start to Spring, (which was fortunate as our sprayer was broken and couldn't be fixed for about a month!) There were big falls of rain in November (115 mm) and in December (116mm), bringing our yearly total to 930 mm, close to average. Although there was a lot of rain it was mainly in a few heavy falls and both these months were still overall quite warm, with vine growth similar to or ahead of our previous hottest year (2006-7 vintage).

Chardonnay is a lot more delicate than our other varieties, with thinner leaves, easily torn and burnt by the wind and buds that then fail to progress. It was knocked around by the cold windy weather in October. However it is a slow and steady achiever, and by December was suddenly catching up and surprising us again.

The Pinot Noir showed a lot of vigour initially, but since then, of course, January, February, March have been totally dry, which then stopped shoot growth from becoming excessive, and prevented any disease taking hold. The Pinot Grigio is continuing its consistent pattern of moderate growth and good crops with fantastic canopies.

Temperatures have been well above (the old) average with exceptional heat in January followed by a cooler February, but a return to heat for March. Lucky we are in a cool climate! Even luckier that we have not had the sort of rain that Queensland has had. Nevertheless, in our temperate climate we aren't supposed to get much rain in Summer, it will come to us late Autumn and Winter and Spring no doubt.

Vineyard:

As a result of the warm, humid, and calm weather in Late November and early December fruit set was excellent, as was the fruitfulness (number of flower bunches per shoot) as a result of the previous warm season.

This year on the Pinot Noir we did a combination of shoot thinning, and bunch thinning. In sections removing 1/3 of the shoots, covering the ground with leaves (perhaps not even enough), and removing 1/2 of the bunches in other sections (also not sure this was even enough!). But so much fruit on the ground! Overall the bunch thinning appears to have been the more effective (and more ruthless). It is easier (psychologically easier, still physically a lot of work) to cut off bunches when you can see a lot there, than shoots before they have even flowered.

Chardonnay was not thinned because of its poor growth, but it seems that the bunches that did grow have been bigger than average, and they are still holding a normal crop.

Pinot Grigio has produced a lot of bunches, but with smaller than usual berries, it is also in natural balance.

Winery:

We have started picking for sparkling wine, with Pinot Grigio, followed by 4 separate batches of Pinot Noir, and the Chardonnay is soon to start. As mentioned before, I think a range of ripenesses, including some very low ripeness (but not low flavour) Pinot Noir, is essential to the style, but my obsessive approach is providing a lot of extra work I'm afraid. The flavours have been fine and intense and the natural acidities amazingly high (a good thing in Champagne).

It is likely that visitors at Easter will see us working and the wines fermenting. Please excuse the mess, however. I would say it adds to the excitement!

Phylloxera: (Again, sorry)

More bad news with outbreaks of Phylloxera in the Macedon Region. This follows outbreaks in the Strathbogies and Yarra Valley in 2006. None of these outbreaks have been traced, a classic case of "not me" or "nobody" did it, as in "who ate all the biscuits?" Of course the phylloxera cannot move in such a way by itself.

Even worse, a contractor has just been convicted for moving his mechanical harvester from North East Victoria to both Mornington Peninsula (4 vineyards) and Yarra Valley without proper disinfestation of his machine.

DPI (Dept. Primary Industry) think that a \$7000 fine is a huge success, but nearly 2 years after the offence, a fine that would barely be fees for 3-4 days work is paltry to the offender and

microscopic compared to potential losses to the industry. For the last nearly 2 years the industry has not known about this risk and has not been able to take any action. Also it is rather strange why DPI won't name the contractor (eventhough named in court) or the identity of the vineyards or details of any of the circumstances. Meanwhile unknowing people may be spreading it further.

Dam News:

After 1.5 years of red tape and aborted efforts with unreliable contractors, we have eventually built our new dam. We used to think that our rainfall was the most reliable in Australia, but I guess that doesn't mean much.

There is a lot more to dam building than meets the eye. First there has to be a site with suitable shape, slope, size, and catchment (and rainfall!). Then the clay has to be suitable to hold water, or else it may just leak all the water out. Then the water content of the clay has to be just right to be worked and compacted or again it may leak, or worse, give way. The dam wall has to be 3 m wide (both for the strength and for the machinery) at the top, and slope no more than 1:2 downstream and 1:3 upstream. A trench is constructed first before the core of the wall is compacted in 100 mm layers. It only takes a few mm of rain to turn an excavation in to a slush pile in the middle of a construction (it is supposed to be a dam after all). Much worse than making hay! But thankfully we were eventually lucky, finding really top notch grey clay (like potters clay), and getting it done just when the moisture was at the right level, and not having rain, and finding a skilled operator that turned up as promised.

Anyway, the dam looks great, and the natural springs have already filled it a metre deep with perfectly clear, blue, beautiful, water. Just wait till it actually rains!

Newsletter Special:

For Easter Week ONLY (actually till 31/3) we are offering 30% off both the Dry Pinot Rose 2006 and the Olivia's Chardonnay 2004 for straight case purchases. Plenty of Summery weather yet to come!

Tasting Notes:

Iolanda Pinot Grigio 2007

A distinctive, dry, flavoursome white wine with fresh acidity.

Pale greenish yellow. Full-bodied, but fine, with typical Pinot Grigio characters- mineral/flinty, lemon, brown pear, honey and spice. Alc 13.5%

Olivia's Chardonnay 2004 *special**

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 Trophy 4 Gold 2 Silver 4 Bronze

Dry Pinot Rose 2006 * special**

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%

Miceli Pinot Noir 2006

This fruit-driven light red shows all the flavours of the noble pinot noir grape.

Brilliant medium red. Fruity and flavoursome, with black cherry, strawberry, and some earthiness. Palate structure is linear and well balanced, with good palate weight, soft tannin, and great length of flavour. Drinking well now! Alc 13.5 %

Lucy's Choice Pinot Noir 2001

Medium red and brilliantly clear. Delicate and complex - gamey, spicy, and earthy with cedary oak. The palate is soft and well balanced, dry, and complex with great length. Alc 13.0%

1 bronze, 4* 88 Points Halliday Wine Companion.

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 Methode Champenoise 2003

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

The flavours are delicate and fine, with toasty yeast and hints of melon, pear and strawberry. The palate is very creamy, long, with cleansing acid and a fresh dry finish. 11.5% alc. 3 Bronze

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 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