

Miceli Newsletter

Winter 2008

Opening Times:

We will be open for Queens Birthday Weekend Sat -Mon 12.00 - 5.00 7-9

June. Following this we will continue to be open the first weekend of each month (check school hols).

Season Report:

Vintage has been a contradiction with hot weather, an early start, followed by a lot of cold weather and a final finish later than any other since 2001.

Almost all of Victoria, SA, and NSW complained of the excessive heat in March, which caused a compressed, early vintage, with, in particular, a reduced period from veraison to harvest (ie. the ripening time). Problems were experienced with grapes going from under-ripe to over-ripe in a matter of days, and the issue of flavour ripeness being very problematical. Even the Tasmanian report in the "Grapegrower and Winemaker" talked about sparkling wine harvest being in February and vintage finished by April. A couple of degrees of latitude do not equal our altitude and maritime situation!

We had only picked sparkling ripeness grapes by the time the heatwave came to an end, and thus the rest of our (table wines) were picked in the cooler (though still relatively dry) weather that followed. Our altitude (the highest on the Peninsula at 250m) placed us, virtually on our own, in the cool ripening time of late Autumn, after the frantic heat. The desired balance of acid, flavour, and sugar/alcohol comes together naturally at this time, and we think that time will show our wines ahead of many picked more than a month earlier.

This year has also been one of our most productive (along with the whole Peninsula), showing as we have often found, that a good season often gives both a higher crop and great quality.

This has been a very long and difficult vintage, but of course a lot of the trouble is caused by my obsessive and painstaking approach, with a multitude of small batches of each variety, giving material of different

ripenesses for blending into the final complex wine. Our 2008 Pinot Grigio, for example consists of 7 picking dates, from 7/3 to 12/5, from 9 baume (really) to 15 baume. Even the low ripeness material (with high acid, mineral and musky characters) was harvested after most had finished in the warmer parts of the Peninsula, (let alone the Yarra) which is why we can achieve great flavour and crisp acid at low(ish) alcohol. The latest picked parcels add richness, honey and pear characters (but that would be not much good in itself if you had to cope with 15% alcohol to get to enough flavour).

Winery:

One of these days (in my dreams) I will have enough space to do more than crawl between tanks to get to the barrels and not do everything outside mostly at the mercy of the elements (apart from the partial barrier of a tarpaulin/tent which has been ripped to shred twice by the wind storms this year).

But as it is I do not have to amortise the financing of a million dollar (and the rest) facility to show off to the world, and thus be forced to inflate our prices to double what they are now. The quality of the shed does not determine the quality of the wine, rather the terroir, the work in the vineyard, the skill and the philosophy of the winemaking.

I'm also inclined to believe that we have the lowest energy consumption of any winery, without the need for expensive refrigeration, (due to both climate and philosophy) and with only very low powered machinery (but strong muscles) we have a very modest carbon footprint. And without relying on bogus "offsets", crediting carbon sequestration in 40 years for trees only just planted and 6" high.

For example, most wineries chill the grapes or the juice to a low temperature (eg. 5 deg) to settle out the lees, then warm it up to 15 degrees to start fermentation, then cool it during fermentation to 15-17-20 degrees max, often heating it up again at the end of ferment, before chilling it again at the end to terminate fermentation with residual sugar remaining.

We settle the juice at ambient temperature (12-20 deg), then rack and inoculate, or allow natural yeasts to ferment (most). We are not afraid to allow our ferments, even whites, to reach high 20s temperatures, the small volumes in our tanks and barrels preventing levels getting out of control. Very occasionally we use

(naturally) cool dam water (through the cooling jackets) to moderate fermentation temperatures. (which then goes onto the garden)

I believe many/most Australian wineries are carried away with using energy intensive processes only because they have been taught this way, where the application of technology is assumed. (Amazingly enough, even in universities, scientifically largely unproven). In the hot areas, highly mechanised, large (tens of thousands of tonnes) wineries, such procedures may possibly be the only way to maintain some control. In our small, personal scale operation, this need not apply, and our sustained success has proven this. Our wines have consistently taken out top awards, against all the largest and smallest wineries in Australia.

Our entire energy (electricity) consumption for winery + house is less than a large percentage of households consume for domestic purposes only.

Our heat pump solar hot water means our hot water costs us about \$110 a year, and almost all our heating is directly from wood grown on our own property and not even transported. Our double glazed, highly insulated, passive solar designed and appropriately sized house means we do not even need much heating (or cooling).

Phylloxera: (Again, sorry)

No more news, but I don't think this is necessarily good, more likely just "head in the sand" approach. Apparently the four vineyards visited by Steve Richardson in 2006 have "tested clean". As mentioned before though, finding phylloxera in a vineyard before it is symptomatic (at 2-4 years after infestation) is like looking for a 0.1 mm needle in a 30 Ha haystack, and such surveys are not reassuring. We can only protect ourselves, and at least be the last rather than the second, infested.

Newsletter Special:

For Winter we are offering 30% off our 2005 Lucys and 2006 Miceli label Pinot Noirs for straight dozens. Sophisticated wines that are drinking fantastically now, and with plenty still to show.

Tasting Notes:

Iolanda Pinot Grigio 2007

Sorry, sold out again. Expect the 2008 in September but don't wait too long.

Olivia's Chardonnay 2004

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

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