



Catherine Vale Wines

Catherine Vale Newsletter December, 2007

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Greetings from Bill & Wendy

Spring has passed and summer is upon us. The rains have come and growth has been phenomenal. On the downside two hailstorms on successive days Dec. 3rd and 4th have damaged some of the fruit and the fungus disease pressure is very high. Storms almost daily make our spray programme somewhat of a nightmare but like all good people on the land we press on towards harvest regardless.

Bill quietly reached a milestone last week passing his 70th birthday. He and Wendy were taken to dinner by Belinda and Vince and then on to see "Keating" the musical which was a most enjoyable experience. Belinda and Vince will visit Vince's family in NZ for Christmas while Kerry and Stephen will enjoy their usual White Christmas at Vail. Gavin and Bec have arrived in Vail and begin work as snowboard instructors for another season. Jodie and Berten have bought a house in Duisberg (Germany) and after some alterations and renovations have moved in and are enjoying their independence. They will likely spend Christmas in Belgium with Berten's family. With all 4 of our children overseas this Christmas it looks like a small turkey for Bill and Wendy this year!

The search for Excellence

Throughout the year Wendy (She never has enough to do) has been attending Kurri Kurri TAFE for the first year of their Winemaking course. She elected to enroll so she could learn more about the process undertaken for us by our winemaker John Hordern. Part of the course involved study tours of vineyards and wineries on the Mornington Peninsula in Victoria and in Tasmania. These took place in November and early December and Bill was able to "tag along" to observe how vignerons in these areas carried out their operations. There is always something to learn in our constant attempt to make our product better. Next year Wendy can use the facilities at TAFE to make a small quantity of her own wine and is currently trying to decide how she would like to proceed in this aspect of the course.

Wendy has just returned from a 4 day

AUSTRALIA Trade Mission to Japan where she provided tastings of our wines to potential customers in that country. She found a great deal of interest and we hope some orders will follow.

WINE NEWS

Our 2006 Winifred Barbera was top of its class i.e. Best Barbera at the Alternative Varieties Wine show in Mildura (one of the very few wine shows we currently enter) and is proving very popular. Judges described it as "snappy, bright, vibrant fruit."

Education Magazine wine writer and international wine show judge Jim McMahon recently reviewed our wines and some of his comments on the Barbera were "The palate is light bodied with generous dark berry fruits such as raspberry and blackberry. Tannins and oak are nicely woven into the fruit and the finish is firm and dry. An easy going style..."

Our 2006 Chardonnay was described by Jim as "A lively green/straw colour the wine has peach/apricot flavours on the nose with hints of vanilla which are appealing. The palate is fruit driven with melon and nectarine flavours. There are also hints of cashew and fig, but overall the fruit flavours dominate this wine. The acidity is clean and fresh with nicely interwoven oak on a dry finish.

Our 2006 Buzz's Verdelho has also had excellent reviews Jim McMahon says it is "vibrant green/straw/yellow in colour. The nose is awash with a fruit salad plate. The palate is a follow on from the nose which is awash with lemon/lime, apricots, pineapple and passionfruit with slight hints of guava and tropical fruit flavours" Just what you would hope for in a good table verdelho!

Respected Newcastle Herald wine writer John Lewis featured the verdelho on November 14th giving it 4 ½ out of 5 and writing a most interesting review. He said "Buzz who gets his name on this easy drinking Hunter verdelho was the much-loved now deceased family dog of Catherine Vale's owners Wendy and Bill Lawson. He is so honoured because he warded off the kangaroos that threatened to destroy the Milbrodale Road, Bulga, vineyard's verdelho grapes. The wine is green-tinged straw and has passion fruit and

mixed peel scents. Ripe citrus flavour shows on the front of the palate and tropical fruit salad and hazelnut characters chime in on the middle palate. Soft flinty acid comes through at the finish. Try it with a ham salad spinach and fetta quiche or fish and chips with a sprinkling of vinegar” Just the thing for your Christmas holidays!

Our 2006 Gabrielle Dolcetto was also reviewed by John Lewis in last week’s Good Taste section of the Newcastle Herald. As yet we have been unable to procure a copy but will advise you of his comments next time. We have been advised they are very favourable.

HOW DO WE RATE ?

James Halliday’s 2008 Australian Wine Companion rates over 7200 wines and is our country’s most comprehensive and authoritative wine guide by our most acclaimed wine writer.

Catherine Vale features with a four star rating (very good producer of wines with class and character) Five of our wines scored over 87 points with one at 90 and one at 91 .

This kind of recognition is very satisfying but the final decision on our worth rests with you the friends of Catherine Vale and your continued support of our wines. Based on the comments of James Halliday you can be proud to enjoy Catherine Vale wines and serve them to your friends. Thank you.

2007 Vintage

Bottling arrangements will be made shortly and these wines should be released early next year at our annual launch. The wines continue to develop well under John Hordern’s watchful eye and he will shortly conduct final tastings with us.

WINE EVENTS

The Catherine Vale Spring Affair took place under ideal conditions with the music of Sax Blue being quite a revelation and greatly enjoyed by all those present. The programme of events for 2008 is currently being decided and will be advised in our next newsletter.

NEW LIQUOR LAWS

The State Government passed new liquor laws through the parliament last week – the first since 1983. These have limited application for small wine producers like ourselves but do loosen the availability of wine.

Under the new laws wineries will be able to charge for tastings (not something we would

currently contemplate), sell wine at approved wine shows and farmers markets, operate a restaurant and motel and license a number of wineries in the same region – all under one liquor licence.

Restaurants will be able to serve alcohol without a meal and get a liquor licence for \$500 rather than \$15000 and there will be greater flexibility for a variety of businesses wishing to serve alcohol. The main benefit for us should be that at the trade fairs we attend (if approved) we will be able to make sales on the day rather than just tasting, with wine orders to be sent at a later date.

AGED SPECIAL RELEASE

We are pleased to make available our first aged release of mature Semillon from 2002. This wine has developed into a classic Hunter Semillon in the tradition of this variety in our region. This is available at the 2002 price and can be ordered on the form enclosed with this newsletter.

REPEAT SPECIAL OPPORTUNITY

Our shiraz giveaway advised last newsletter will continue with only 15 cases still available for the first 15 ordering 2 cases of current release wines from the order form with this newsletter.

There is still some cleanskin 2006 Verdelho and 2006 chardonnay available with price on request.

CURRENT RELEASE WINES AND WINE ORDERS

Our full range of 2006 wines is currently available for your selection and our order form is enclosed. We are at your service so do replenish your stocks for the coming holiday season. We continue to deliver freight free.

We wish you a joyous Christmas and a happy and successful New Year. Do call in if you are in the area over the holiday season.

Yours in wine

Bill and Wendy