



Catherine Vale Newsletter
February 2010 Vol 6 No 4

Catherine Vale Wines

Greetings from Bill and Wendy

Our harvest is almost complete with some exciting results and the usual frustrations with the Hunter weather. Most exciting has been the quality of the first crop of Arneis which has so motivated our winemaker John Hordern that there is a strong possibility it will be bottled early enough to be available at the launch on March 28th. The first pick of our Semillon (the TO Clone) this vintage is also giving us cause to be extremely excited and it too, may be bottled early. Such early release would be a real coup for Catherine Vale and we will have to make some important decisions in the next week or so.

Our second pick of Semillon (the DA Clone) our Chardonnay and Verdelho also came off extremely well. Overall we have had the best numbers in terms of sugar, acid and pH balance for the whites that we have ever had. Wendy's well researched efforts to make new moves this season towards a more environmentally friendly and sustainable spray regime for Catherine Vale have certainly paid off.

The reds have battled the enormous hail and rain events of the past few weeks and our Dolcetto is safe and sound in the winery with only the Barbera and the Late Harvest Verdelho (Madeira) left on the vine at this stage. The Barbera is a notoriously high acid variety and although now ripe sugar wise will need to stay out there for another week or so till a better balance is achieved. Let's hope for some good sunshine!

After 11 years of committed service to the wine and tourism industry in the Broke Fordwich area, Wendy has stood down from her position as President of the Broke Fordwich Wine & Tourism Association and it's committee. She is now concentrating on taking Catherine Vale forward into the uncertain future.

Family news has seen Belinda, Vince and Alice visit NZ to catch up with Vince's family. It was an enjoyable time with Alice even recognizing some family from photographs shown to her before they left. Vince also attended a conference of fellow astronomers in Wellington. We look forward to their next visit here with the walking talking dictionary.

Kerry and Stephen have finally located the house they want at Eagle Vail and are hoping all goes well with the final negotiations.

Jodie, Berten and Timo are all well with Timo on the verge of walking. We have been able to see him through the marvel of newly acquired skype and will be able to follow his progress. They will visit us in July and we are looking forward to their arrival.

Gavin and Bec continue to carry out improvements on their home in Newcastle. Overseas ski friends are starting to visit them and they enjoy renewing these associations. Bec has secured a new job as an air hostess with Virgin Airlines in very competitive circumstances. She is looking forward to the new challenges.

We have just booked to visit Wendy's Mother in California in May and will go on to visit Kerry and Stephen in Colorado. We may even get to stay in their new house! We also hope to attend some wine events in California.

Vineyard News

Prior to the picking we were pestered by birds in numbers not previously encountered in our time here. They had a particular liking for our Chardonnay nearest to the bush (they obviously haven't read wine reviews ridiculously uncomplimentary to this variety of grape in Australia!) and caused enough damage for us to be unable to pick the first 3 rows at the top on the vineyard. Main culprits were crows by the hundred not seen here in these numbers before and the usual suspects the Minahs and Friar birds. You will be aware there are only 2 kinds of birds in Australia - those that eat grapes and those that don't!

Our team of pickers assembled by Wendy included friends and locals some of whom have been with us for years and overseas backpackers from all parts of the world. They worked extremely well in what were often very hot conditions.

Our fruit was spectacularly disease free and it was exhilarating to see it filling the buckets and bins before being transferred to the winery.

It won't be long before it will be pruning time again and meantime we will have to keep the weeds at bay, keep the grass cut and attend to the annual maintenance and development projects.

Launch of 2009 Wines

An invitation is enclosed for you to attend our 13th Annual Wine Launch. This is our main cellar door event each year and is an opportunity to be first to taste the new release wines and meet winemaker John Hordern and enjoy his comments on the vintage. Wendy is planning another of her eagerly anticipated lunches to tempt your taste buds and is always looking for that special dish to bring something new to the day.

The first release of our Arneis will be a very special event and release of the 3 year specially matured 2007 Barbera will also be a highlight.

The day provides an opportunity to buy at not to be repeated prices and it is a not to be missed occasion.

Coming Events

1. Launch of 2009 Wine- March 28th 2010- Bookings Essential

We do look forward to hearing music by the "Mothers of Intention" - Music of OZ Best World Folk Group 2007

- 2. A Little Bit of Italy in Broke April 10th and 11th** - We have extensive plans to progress this event at Catherine Vale where it was pioneered 5 years ago and it is planned as a regional feature. Although not fully embraced by all in the area you won't need to go any further than here to enjoy a truly Italian experience. We will have all kinds of activities and an inexpensive lunch available for your enjoyment - Italian tournament bocce teams, strolling Italian musicians (The Caballeros) to encourage singing and dancing, market stalls with olives and gelato. The event will again be sponsored by Barilla pasta and we are honoured to be promoting their products.

A highlight will be our Italian Dinner on the Saturday evening catered for by award winning Hunter restaurant Il Cacciatore for the all inclusive price of \$95.00 Bookings are

essential for the dinner . We can promise another great experience.

- 3. Denman Wine and Food Affair** – Saturday May 1st at Denman 11 a.m. to 4 p.m. We will have a stall at this event with our Upper Hunter Winemakers' Association colleagues. This is a day of music, wine and food with the main street of Denman closed to create a true festival atmosphere. Take the opportunity to visit the Upper Hunter and enjoy it's food and wine. Denman is a great little town.
- 4. Hunter Valley Wine and Food Month.** Catherine Vale is working on an event for the last weekend in June yet to be organized but will probably be centered around Semillon. We have vintages from 1999, 2002, 2005, 2006, 2007, 2008 and the soon to be released 2009 & 2010.
- 5. Jazz at Catherine Vale July 4th US Independence Day** will see the Preservation Jazz Band again present us with an afternoon of Dixieland New Orleans style Jazz. Don't miss this.

Wine Orders

We have been heartened by your interest in and loyalty to our wine offerings and again attach an order form for our current releases. Stock up with these wines prior to our coming new release as they are all drinking exceptionally well at this stage. For any 2 case orders received by the 5th of March you will be able to purchase a case of unlabeled 2008 Chardonnay for an additional \$60.00 Remember we continue to deliver freight free. We look forward to hearing from you.

Yours in wine,

Bill and Wendy