



Catherine Vale Wines

## Catherine Vale Newsletter June 2008 Vol 5 No 2

### Greetings from Bill & Wendy

Apologies for the mis-print in our February 2008 Newsletter which indicated it was December 2007. Sometimes we do feel several months behind but the error was a failure in our system and it was not picked up at the proof reading- definitely not intended to confuse!

We have only been back a week from our trip overseas where we spent quality time in California with Wendy's Mother and sister. We were also joined there by Kerry and Stephen as well as Gavin and Bec. It was a most enjoyable time and very pleasing for us to see them all again. From there we flew to Florida for the wedding of two long time friends who have visited Catherine Vale on several occasions. The wedding was beachside at Islamorada in the Florida Keys and was a wonderful celebration lasting 3 days. Sunsets over the Keys were memorable as was the traffic in Miami on the morning of our departure! Our lack of Spanish was keenly felt as it also was in some parts of California.

Our next stop was Dusseldorf Germany via Zurich where we were met by Jodie and Berten and driven to Duisberg for our introduction to their recently purchased first home. We were most impressed and astonished at the restoration work they had carried out in the months before our arrival.

We attended concerts by both their orchestras and toured the length and breadth of Germany and even enjoyed a brief excursion into Holland. A visit from Berten's Parents from Belgium was a warm re-reunion and greatly enjoyed. Jodie and Berten had planned their orchestral commitments to spend the maximum time with us and they were happy days indeed. Much German beer was enjoyed as were some fine Rhine and Mosel Rieslings. We did not find a bad version of either!

Our return trip home was broken by a couple of days in Singapore to rest up for our return to work. We were met at the airport by Belinda and we can now tell you that she and Vince are expecting their first baby ( and our first grandchild) in August. All is going well so

far and Wendy's painting skills will shortly be called on for nursery preparation.

As we write our daughter Kerry is once again riding in the cycle race across America RAAM. She is part of a four person women's team called Team Inspiration. Their progress can be followed on [raceacrossamerica.org](http://raceacrossamerica.org) and they are currently well on the way to the finish. One of the team who is an epileptic has had a seizure and is unable to continue riding so Kerry and the other two are endeavouring to finish the race one rider down.

### Launch of 2007 Wines

This took place on April 6<sup>th</sup> in near perfect weather conditions with over 120 of you in attendance. Wendy's culinary skills were on show at a most enjoyable lunch and Winemaker John Hordern introduced the new wines which were of his usual high standard and very well received by those in attendance. Music by Catherine Vale first timers the Funky Do Da's was of the highest quality and greatly enjoyed. If you have not attended our launch before do try to fit it in next year and we will advise you of the date ( late March or early April) as soon as possible.

### A Little Bit of Italy in Broke

This Catherine Vale inspired event has now become a regional affair and took place a week after the launch and was a huge success. Our Bocce tournament featuring Italian and Croatian teams was well attended and hotly contested. Breakfast and Lunch were available courtesy of our guest chefs as well as market stalls, wine tasting and music which gave the day a wonderful atmosphere. Climax of the day was an Italian Feast of 6 courses with wines to match (mostly Catherine Vale of course) brilliantly prepared by our Italophile friends from Uralla. This was a dinner of monumental skills and flavours and Catherine Vale may not see it's like again. Thanks Kim, John, Sue, Ross and friends.

### Coming Event

**Catherine Vale Jazz Day - Sunday** 6<sup>th</sup> of July will again feature the popular and accomplished Newcastle based **PRESERVATION JAZZ BAND**. They will play from 12 noon to 3 p.m. and we will offer a barbecue lunch with all funds raised on the day going to Diabetes Research. We have plenty of chairs so bring a few nibbles, buy a bottle of Catherine Vale wine, purchase some lunch and enjoy the music.

We would love to see many of you at this event. If you are going to be in the valley please let us know and we can put on a BBQ on the Saturday night and even a game of Bocce.

### **Release of 2007 Wines**

The order form enclosed contains your first opportunity to purchase the wines from the 2007 vintage launched on April 6<sup>th</sup> and not yet released for Cellar Door sales. These wines are available at the same prices as previous vintages and we can recommend them most highly. This is a vintage as good as any we have produced and we are sure they will meet with your approval. You can proudly offer these wines to guests or use them as gifts with full confidence in their exclusivity and quality.

Our oaked wines are fermented in or stored in American oak barrels as our preferred product. John has always felt this provided our wines with a consistent and complementary flavour for our grapes. Our Verdelho has a very small percentage stored in oak whilst the chardonnay is fermented in the barrels. The Italian varieties are stored in the older barrels which at this stage are numbering in excess of 60!

**2007 Semillon** - Again John has produced a Semillon that is very flavoursome and may be as good as, if not better, than the last 3 vintages. The 2006 seems to be selling better in the cellar door than previously as people warm to this Hunter iconic variety.

**2007 Verdelho** - The 4<sup>th</sup> vintage of this variety seems to have a more delicate finish and as in the previous year was our best seller at the launch

**2007 Chardonnay** - another well balanced Chardonnay, possibly more delicate than in previous vintages as the age of the vines is starting to come into play with this variety. Our main goal with our "flagship" wine is to produce a consistent style which allows the terroir to express itself.

**2007 Semillon Chardonnay** is an enjoyable refreshing wine which features good depth of colour and rich spicy aromas. Racy citrus flavours enter the palate and combine well with our flagship Chardonnay giving good length of flavour and a fine dry finish.

**2007 Dolcetto** - We only have a small quantity of this wine available from 2007 due to a large order (over 500 cases) which we received. We still have a quantity of 2006 available which will be available to you at a reduced price by mail order.

**2006 Barbera** - We made the decision in 2006 to allow this variety to achieve optimum potential with further ageing in barrels. We bottled half of the vintage in 2007 leaving the rest in wood for an additional year which has increased the complexity and palate weight of the wine. This variety will from now on be released at 2 years of age. (Better put your order in for 2008 now as we will have only about 100 cases! John is of the opinion that it has great flavours and potential)

We also have the NV Late Harvest Semillon and Madeira but due to past bad experiences with shipping these bottles suggest these are best picked up from the Cellar Door.

### **Vintage 2008**

You have no doubt read of the challenges of the 2008 Hunter Vintage. Rain at harvest wreaked havoc at many vineyards. Through good management and our meticulous hand picking regime we were able to pick portions of all our varieties. We were able to harvest almost all of our Semillon and Verdelho but the previous hail damage and the harvest rainfall saw us have to drop a portion of our Chardonnay. The reds did not fare so well with about 50% of our Dolcetto and 70% of our Barbera having to be dropped to ground. Many in the Hunter picked no reds at all and some experienced problems even with their whites. Our 200 Verdelho vines for the Madeira were not able to be picked but our stocks remain sound and continuing to age in barrel. We will not bottle any more until next year. Wendy's sparkling chardonnay is in fine shape at the TAFE winery and gives every indication of being a real triumph.

### **Pruning**

We have tentatively begun the huge task of pruning our 9000 vines and hope to work faster and longer as we warm to the task. We are looking to finally embrace modern technology as we have a demonstration of battery operated secateurs in the next few days.

### **Wine Orders**

We look forward to your consideration of our order form for both the new release wines and other available vintages. In these tough times of rising fuel costs we continue to offer you free delivery and the best possible service. Your continued support is the best encouragement we can receive.

Yours in Wine

*Bill and Wendy*