



*35 years building  
Brokenwood, storey by storey.*

*23 years crafting Graveyard  
Shiraz, vintage by vintage.*

**BROKENWOOD**

AUSTRALIAN CRAFT AT ITS FINEST

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23 Years crafting Graveyard  
Shiraz, vintage by vintage

On behalf of the Shareholders and staff of Brokenwood welcome to the 2006 vertical tasting of Graveyard Vineyard Shiraz and Reserve Semillon. For today, no duck breast and chocolate or La Chapelles to get in the way!

There is always a degree of trepidation about this type of 'warts and all' tasting. As winemakers we can't hide the lesser years nor our lesser efforts. What is in the glass is there for all to taste. The previous full line-up was in 2000, for the 'Monumental' tasting, in all 17 vintages. Today we are up to 23 vintages, as there is no 1992.

In the introduction to the 2000 tasting we wrote, 'this tasting represents not only a glimpse at the evolution of a wine style but provides an insight to the joy of winemaking in the Hunter Valley.' The addition of another six vintages doesn't change this, as the past six vintages have been as diverse as ever. However what is reinforced is the 'stamp of terroir' - an imprint that encompasses all that is unique to the Hunter Valley and the Graveyard Vineyard.

Further on there is an update on this special 15 hectare vineyard.

Brokenwood has bottled well over 50 semillons since 1982. Of these more than 40 have been unwooded - not bad for a style that originally wasn't supposed to exist. Our original plans in 1982 were for only a wooded semillon, the idea being to keep the chardonnay oak barrels 'sweet' with semillon till the next vintage.

For the 1983 vintage, using production methods that Iain Riggs fine-tuned at Hazelmere Estate in 1981 and 1982, an unwooded semillon was bottled, released to the Sydney market and the rest, as they say, is history. The wines were met with critical acclaim, but there were rumblings within the Valley. Something about 'whitecoated' winemakers ruining the Hunter style.

Brokenwood pushed on, but by the end of the 1980s, with the first wines approaching five and six years of age, the semillons didn't stack up against the traditional versions. At this time the Lindemans 1970 Riesling Bin 3855 was king of the wine shows, soon to abdicate to its sibling, the 1970 Chablis Bin 3875, which reigned through to the mid 1990s. We decided to bottle a separate semillon capable of long term aging and the first Reserve Semillon was tucked away in 1992 to be released in 1997.

These wines are also here for evaluation and represent a 15 vintage span of a wine style that is unique to the Hunter Valley and irreproducible in all places beyond.

Cheers

# The Graveyard Shiraz

Australian winemakers and vineyard managers tend not to regard vineyards as a work in progress as do say the French. Our climate is very much on our side, as are soils, so productivity can remain high, even up to 100 years of age. European vineyards, all on rootstock, may have been replanted three times within 100 years.

The Graveyard vineyard is very much a work in progress. If not for the manic plantings through the late 60s and 70s, the Graveyard would not have seen grapes. The soil is less than satisfactory, the ground water is saline and this is the Hunter Valley after all. Thankfully Hungerford Hill was caught up in the boom and thankfully Halliday, Beeston and Albert had enough friends to chip in the dollars to buy the vineyard in 1978. The vineyard was largely shiraz at the time, with two blocks of cabernet sauvignon. Chardonnay and merlot soon replaced some shiraz.

Brokenwood recognised the Graveyard to be a unique site and this was first acknowledged with cabernet sauvignon and the 1983 vintage, the first to carry the Graveyard Vineyard designation. The 1983 hermitage was 100% shiraz from the Graveyard (as were the 1980 and 1981), but it wasn't until the 1984 wine that it was labelled Graveyard Vineyard.

Of the Graveyard Cabernets only the 1986 and 1989 are regarded as great wines. Formal recognition of the Graveyard Shiraz came about in 1991 with the inclusion of the wine in the Langton's Classification of Australian Wines. Four revisions later and it is still the only ranked Hunter Valley shiraz.

The last of the cabernet and merlot was pulled out in 1992. The decision to immediately replant these blocks with clonal shiraz (Australian clones PT23 and 1654) material and on rootstock (Schwarzmann) could, in another world, be viewed as inspired. Hindsight is a marvelous gift and, unfortunately, it is now more a case of "what were we thinking?" Nearly 12 vintages later, Brokenwood is yet to use any of the clonal grapes in the Graveyard Vineyard Shiraz. Whether it is a case of the rootstock being the problem, the clones, or a combination of both is a subject of debate. It doesn't really matter as it just didn't work. The excellent 2000 vintage did allow us to bottle a 'baby graveyard' using these grapes and wine from the original 1968 plantings excess to the main blend.

The next step was remove the last of a 'weed' commonly known as chardonnay, but this time the decision on shiraz planting material was an easy one-do what was done to plant the Graveyard and many other great vineyards and use original planting material. The Graveyard cuttings came from a mix of old vineyards around the Hunter and many of the Hunter selections are descendant from these colonial vineyards. Shiraz is named in the varieties of the First Fleet as well as in Busby's collection.

# Vineyards within a Vineyard

By 2005 the message had finally sunk in. The Graveyard Vineyard should be a repository of original vine shiraz grapes. By now Brokenwood had also been crushing shiraz from the Rayner Vineyard in McLaren Vale, planted in 1950, as well as shiraz from the 1972 plantings at Seville Estate in the Yarra Valley. The Wade Block 2, also in McLaren Vale, is only a young vineyard but sourced from vines originally planted using cuttings from the original Kay's Block 6 shiraz vineyard. These are now all represented in the Graveyard.

Now in 2006 the 15 hectare Graveyard Vineyard comprises three distinct sections. Of course it wouldn't be Brokenwood without the various blocks reflecting a bit of history and fun.

The accompanying map, an aerial photograph from 2004, shows the layout of the vineyard: a gentle slope of east-facing vineyard, generally the cooler, made up principally of red clay/loam (with or without iron stone) over grey/white clay. The unplanted area is now under vine. The various blocks and the year of planting are:

- A. 1968 - Pa's. Originally Soper's and so named because of a never-repeated feat of bogging three tractors in one contour drain in one afternoon. We have photographic proof, too. This was the last block to get irrigation, although the Hunter Valley Gardens nursery provided more than enough subsoil moisture for many years. It is now named after the father of one of our staff who pruned the block for many years.
- B. 1968 - Middle. Originally named Albert's Rest. Whether Tony actually ever pruned his block is unknown. One of the great (true) Tony Albert stories involves Tony having to man cellar door on a weekend. He asked Iain Riggs what the usual taking was, was told 'about \$2000'. He then promptly wrote a cheque for that amount and closed cellar door for the weekend.
- C. 1968 - Quail. The original name. Haven't seen any of late, though.
- D. 1968 - 7 acre. The original name. Of the original block, 5 acres left. Only the top part, 3 acres, is from 1968. The bottom 2 is now State of Origin (J).
- E. 1993 - Bush. The first of the replants on rootstock. This vineyard was also reoriented from north/south to east/west.
- F. 1994 - Duck's. Two legged and feathered.
- G. 1995 - Road. Both these vineyards are PT23 and 1654 planted on rootstock.
- H. 1995 - Steel City. Clonal vines and an experiment with high galvanized posts.

# Vineyards within a Vineyard

- I. 2002 - Kat's and Dog's. An important block as it was the first to use cuttings from the 1968 vines. It is named after Katrina Barry, the daughter of our Vineyard Manager KB who helped plant the original vineyard in 1968. Kat has been an integral part of the vineyard team and at 12 years of age could out-work anyone at Brokenwood except her father.
- J. 2004 - State of Origin. Well what else could we call a block that is one third each New South Wales, South Australia and Victoria? All cuttings from old vineyards, on own roots.
- K. 2004 - Trees. The map shows a large area of bare ground. Brokenwood has spent in the vicinity of \$30,000 in laying underground drains through this area to combat the increasing level of the saline water table. This has been steadily rising due to the development of the area back towards the foothills of the Brokenback range and the increased availability of water in the Valley. This block leads down to the new arboretum designed to utilise some of this excess ground water. Cuttings are from the 1968 vines, on own roots. One of our stalwart shareholders, renowned for his love of all things tree-like and which often involved putting an auger through Telstra lines, just happens to be one Tony Rees.
- CP. The Cricket Pitch Vineyard seen at the top of the picture is also up for redevelopment over the next few years. This was in fact the first vineyard to be planted on rootstock. It is cabernet sauvignon and merlot on SO4 stock, planted in 1990. There is also 0.3 of a hectare of semillon. Being the same tough red clay as the Graveyard it is not surprising that, 1, the two red varieties are superfluous and, 2, the semillon is on completely the wrong soil.

# *Vineyards within a Vineyard*



# Vintages

It is always easy to describe the Hunter Valley in terms of a wet vintage or a dry vintage, but having tasted all 23 Graveyards and 15 semillons prior to this tasting it was obvious that another approach can be taken.

There is no English equivalent to the French term **terroir**. Brian Croser promotes **distinguished sites** while Brokenwood prefers the concept **GUTS** or **grapes unique to site**. Growing grapes and making wine in the Hunter, we think, **GUTS** suits better!!! In tasting these wines the idea of influence of macro, meso and micro climate as well as winemaker influence came up for discussion. This is perhaps more easily seen in Hunter shiraz, but semillon can also be rescued from a bad vintage by the winemaker.

There are a number of wines that defy the weather of that year - that is, a wet year can produce great wines. In this instance the role of the winemaker seemed to be more prominent. Whether this was trying to change the microclimate viticulture, eg discing, to reflect more heat or simply bunch sorting or juice run-off, the resultant wine, while still distinctly Hunter, is a step above the really difficult vintages.

We have identified the following wines to fit this category,

1984, 1985, 1988, 1995, 1999, 2002 and 2004

The latter three will mature into superb medium-bodied Hunter shiraz. The 1984 is surprisingly a great drink for such a horribly wet year. The story of the 1995 is an interesting one. Winemakers Matt Harrop and Iain Riggs were struggling with the final blend and showed it to Len Evans. His comment was, 'don't bottle it!' With no 1992, this would have been a tough decision to make, but a return to the bench and a severe barrel selection resulted in a small bottling of a useful Graveyard Shiraz.

In contrast, there are the years when the meso and micro climate simply cannot get the better of the macro climate even with winemaker input. Here the rain, humidity, and ultimately disease get the upper hand. Technical winemaking can help but cannot turn a sow's ear into a silk purse. These vintages are,

1987, 1997 and 2001.

The rest Brokenwood classifies as great examples of Graveyard Shiraz. They come from wet and dry vintages and show that special climate of the Graveyard can overcome the wettest of vintages. Think 1990 when 17.5 inches of rain fell in February. In other words the specific terroir of the 1968 plantings wins over Hunter terroir. In this group of 13 wines four are from wet vintages (W),

1983, 1986, 1989(W), 1990(W), 1991, 1993(W), 1994, 1996, 1998, 2000, 2003, 2005(W) and 2006.

# Brokenwood ILR Reserve Semillon

The decision to produce a style for longer-term aging was made in the early 1990s, with the first being the 1992 released in 1997. We weren't to know but it was also at a time when the curse of random or sporadic oxidation was significantly on the increase.

**No doubt the question on everyone's mind for this vertical tasting is, 'how many bottles have been checked/opened?' In all honesty, with hands on our hearts we can confidently say that a minimum of 48,000 bottles have been colour sorted to get 9 of these 15 bottles on the table.**

As our first Reserve Semillon release under screwcap is still two years off, we have released 9 vintages under cork. Before release every bottle is colour sorted and while Brokenwood started with smaller volumes - 200 to 300 dozen - the 2000 wine represented 1000 cases.

It is interesting to note an article, on 1996 White Burgundy in the April Decanter magazine, titled 'Worrying signs of age' by John Stimpfig. He quotes Charles Taylor at Burgundy specialists Montrachet:

"Certain wines seemed to be showing unusually early signs of oxidation. It began sporadically with the odd bottle. First it was one of two wines in a case. Then it could be three or four."

Australian winemakers might feel a bit smug about this but unfortunately the cost over the years doesn't allow any satisfaction. Sporadic oxidation has been on the increase over the past two decades, reaching epidemic proportions in the late 1990s.

This tasting therefore represents in one sense a passing of an era, but more importantly establishes the Brokenwood semillon style as quintessentially Hunter Valley. The wines are different from, say, a McWilliam's Lovedale or Tyrrell's HVD. Brokenwood draws fruit from many different vineyards within the Lower Hunter but the main (unofficial) sub regions are represented.

These are Pokolbin, Rothbury, Belford and the area north of the Branxton Rd, locally known by some as Lovedale, but not to imply or to support any legal right, to be called Lovedale.

The ability of Hunter semillon to age is well known and with this tasting the ability of Brokenwood to produce an age-worthy Semillon is (hopefully) confirmed. By taking up screwcap as a closure for semillon the need for colour sorting is consigned to history, along with the cork itself.

If the premise that a screwcap should be the same as the very best cork seal imaginable is correct and we believe it to be, then the aged wines in this tasting give the direction for all those coming through under screwcap.

# ILR Reserve Semillon

## 1992

A vintage more known for winemaker Iain Riggs nearly being run out of the Hunter Valley. An 'off the record' remark to a wine writer about the vintage being a disaster went into print and made for a very tense time down at the Tallawanta pub.

The 'disaster' for Brokenwood was real enough, with no grapes being picked off the Graveyard vineyard and the Hunter overall suffering a loss of at least 10,000 tonnes. As locals were keen to point out, quality of what was on the vine was generally good, especially the semillon.

A tasting of all the semillon tanks (there weren't many) post vintage identified one as having what Brokenwood deemed as the right stuff. Low alcohol, no grassy characters and it just happened to have about 5g/l residual sugar. Thoughts of the 1970 Lindeman's Riesling Bin 3855 came to mind.

Only a few bottles left and two magnums. The magnums, with the benefit of being recorked, are top class. 10.7% alc.

## 1993

The recovery vintage and one where the shiraz bettered the semillon. A wine very much affected by sporadic oxidation, with virtually all bottles now oxidized. 10.8% alc.

## 1994

A very good winter in 1993 enabled the vines to survive the extreme heat of the summer. The bushfires did not affect flavours in any way. Regarded in the Hunter as great semillon year. 11% alc.

## 1995

While the rain caught the shiraz at the back of the vintage, the semillons were all harvested in great condition. Fuller, generous-flavoured wines. 11.4% alc.

## 1996

Odd year/even year quality starting to emerge. A much higher crop than usual, but weather in favour of the winemaker. 67mm of rain 10-17 January, then 5mm in the most important time up to January 31. Outstanding semillons. 11.4% alc.

# ILR Reserve Semillon

## 1997

Difficult year even for semillon. Wet spring giving lots of foliage, then 100mm of rain over the last 4 days of January and another 90mm 10 days later. Some botrytis influence. More forward style. 11.6% alc.

## 1998

A very hot, dry summer led to an early start in mid January. Lower crops and lack of heavy rain put the quality high. This Reserve was actually rebottled after a protein was evident. Some S.O. but shows the double handling. 11.2% alc.

## 1999

The first of a single-vineyard wine, but due to Brokenwood's policy of just releasing the best, the ILR Reserve labelling continues. Sourced from the Drayton Oakey Creek Road. Picked mid February. A change in processing with zero sulphur through to the tank stage and then to fermentation, ie slightly oxidative. Held back and released in 2005, is quite restrained and the best bottles have 15 years in front of them. A great Hunter semillon vintage. 11.4% alc.

## 2000

Winter of 1999 provided an unusual amount of rain, so set up for an excellent vintage if no rain. Exactly what happened and surprisingly early as well. Most of the semillon off before the end of January. Once in tank very herbaceous characters which met with critical acclaim. Two reserves kept with the Drayton (Pokolbin) ahead of the McMillan (Lovedale). Riper and more grassy than Brokenwood would usually make and released ahead of the 1999 as such. 12% alc.

## 2001

Dry winter and then 130mm in November 2000. Very large crops evident but no rain between mid December and late January. Another January picking of semillon, which worked in Brokenwood's favour as the rain came down in the first 10 days of February. Lean but citrusy/lime flavours. The Maxwell vineyard (Pokolbin) well ahead of the others. To be released in late 2006. 11.3% alc.

# ILR Reserve Semillon

## 2002

The merry-go-round of picking dates continued in 2002. A very dry winter in 2001, bushfires and no January rain. But unlike the previous year ripening wasn't until early to mid February and so was the rain: 135mm by February 10. Lean and austere in style. Trials finally conducted on screwcap as Brokenwood debated over the bottle to use if the Georgian Green didn't become available in screw finish. The Drayton Vineyard the top wine. 10.3% alc.

## 2003

At last 100% under screwcap. Hot drought year, again bushfires, but the semillons held up and local winemakers still partying in Wanaka for Dan and Sarah-Kate's wedding had to pick slightly riper grapes on their return. All by the end of January. Fuller, hay/straw characters. A battle between Drayton and Maxwell. The Drayton perhaps better now. 11.7% alc.

## 2004

Quite a large crop. Ripening helped by heavy spring rain. A very hot summer interspersed with rain. The first use of semillon from the Belford area on Hermitage Road. At this stage the Belford/Lovedale (Brycefield vineyard) blend the pick. Classic citrus, 'Chablis'. 10.1% alc.

## 2005

Funny what makes a great vintage. The lead-up to picking had everything from hailstorms and rain to 40-degree heat. Considered one of the best vintages, equal to 1996 perhaps. All up three reserves put aside, all top class with the Belford/Lovedale blend a classic. 11.2% alc.

## 2006

This time a few too many days over 40C. Still all the Semillon picked between 10.3 and 11.2 with very good talc/lemongrass flavours.

# Graveyard Vineyard Shiraz

## 1983

This was the first vintage of the expanded and modernized Brokenwood. A new air-conditioned shed, press and refrigeration all had an immediate impact on wine style, both old and first vintage. It was the inaugural vintage of winemaker/manager Iain Riggs.

Budburst in September 1982 was helped by six inches of rain, but this was to be the last rain for some time. An extremely hot and dry six months followed. All varieties were severely stressed with low yield and high sugars the norm. Concentrated, full-bodied reds and rich, high-alcohol whites were produced. One period of five days saw the temperature over 40 degrees each day.

Obviously such conditions produced a very small crop, the cabernet sauvignon resembling currants more than a wine grape variety. The shiraz produced small berries with concentrated characteristics. The wine when young was deep black and now still displays a vibrant, deep colour with red cherry edges. Muscly, drought-year aromas of tar, smoky briar and dry leather. The fruit sweetness is giving way to complex aged characters.

The wine shows integrated flavours on a reasonably high alcohol backbone. Not really 'hot' but firm structure with licorice/tar and dark chocolate. Slight varnish, tobacco probably from a combination of the hot year and bottle age. May soften with air and decanting. The dry tannins with 'lemon twist' American oak carry the flavours to give reasonable balance and length.

The first of new-style Brokenwood - picked later and riper than previous vintages with less extraction and added sweetness of American oak.

At 23 years of age this wine could have another 5-7 years if well cellared.

Alcohol :	12.6%
T/A :	6.7g/l
pH:	3.21

# Graveyard Vineyard Shiraz

## 1984

Recovery from the 1983 summer started post vintage and good rains continued through the year. A very hot (40 degrees) 1983 Christmas and the rain on Boxing Day continued virtually unabated through the 1984 vintage. This resulted in low sugars and difficult working conditions.

The conditions weren't helped by a large amount of fowl manure added to the vineyard the previous spring. Just add a lot of rain and the result was one- to two-metre high weed growth completely swamping the vines.

Now a mid-weight Graveyard Vineyard Shiraz that at 22 years has cedar, earthy Hunter Valley characters. Brownish, red rim colour and aged earth/leather aromas. Surprisingly elegant, not unlike a lesser year Bordeaux (could be the background brett).

The palate opens up after some air and while 'lighter' still has persistent flavours which are best described as savoury, cherry cedar. May hold it for another 5 to 10 years.

Alc:	12.5%
T/A:	5.8g/l
pH:	3.38

# Graveyard Vineyard Shiraz

## 1985

Rain continued through 1984 with the resultant budburst and growth being very strong.

Hunter Valley soils are not known for their deep root zone and high water retention and a dry December/January saw some vines under stress. A very good red year with good body and tannin.

Best described as a robust wine, with the colour still quite dense and no sign of 'fading'. Rural/Rhone-like characters on the bouquet. Earth spice with some cedar and leather lift. Solid warm year flavours and tannin. The fruit appears to be slipping into the background with the wine finishing slightly dry. However, the savoury, coffee flavours are enjoyable and backed by tobacco oak/tarry edges. Herbal/dry leaf aged flavours. Oxidation showing plus background V.A.

Not a wine of finesse but has generous mouthfeel and a good drink. Will be interesting to watch over the next few years to see if further age softens the robust edge.

Drink up!

Alc:	13.1%
T/A:	6.24g/l
pH:	3.39

# Graveyard Vineyard Shiraz

## 1986

The excellent but wet spring of 1985 laid a great foundation for the 1986 vintage.

This was Iain Riggs's fourth vintage. He was joined by Roseworthy graduate Wayne Donaldson at the end of 1985, and a welcoming hailstorm prior to the 1985 Christmas (cricket ball size at Wollombi!) did not deter him from staying.

The last three months saw 415mm (nearly 17 inches) of rain and a further 128mm (5 inches) in January 1986. The vine growth and canopy meant that if rain continued a disaster loomed, but dry conditions in February and March meant a perfect vintage. A good indicator is the ability of the semillon to ripen (usually picked at 10.5-11.0 Baume). In 1986 Brokenwood had three pickings of the Latara semillon block with the last dessert style being picked at nearly 18 Baume.

By now the handling of the grapes/ferment was gaining consistency using the two-tonne open fermenters, cap plunging and ferment finished in new American oak. As a young wine the 1986 impressed all who tasted it. Like the 1983 Brokenwood Semillon, a wine style became entrenched.

At 20 years of age the wine is holding remarkable colour. While the brick red hues are evident the wine is still quite dense. Classic Hunter Valley aromas are forthcoming with rich 'old couch' leather and mocha characters being the feature. These change with air to give more cedar edges. Certainly regional in character but harmoniously so. The powerhouse palate highlights red cherry, earth and polished leather. The initial mouthfeel has fruit and oak sweetness and is carried to the finish by developed, textured tannins. The middle palate has spice and clove flavours. Great length.

Good bottles, well cellared, will continue to evolve and develop over the next 10-20 years. The lasting impression is of the intense 'terroir' stamp the wine carries.

Alc:	13.5%
T/A:	6.70g/l
pH:	3.26

# Graveyard Vineyard Shiraz

## 1987

The 1986/1987 vintage debate can get vigorous, with the final result being that Hunter wineries made great wines in both years (and some surprisingly poor wines considering the perfect weather). Brokenwood favours the former across the board. Vintage 1987 produced firmer wines, a bit like 1996 versus 1997. The 1987 Brokenwood Hermitage, Cabernet Sauvignon blend (100% Hunter Valley) is an outstanding wine. The 1987 Graveyard Shiraz has softened due to poor corks.

A dry mid-year 1986 leading up to flowering and causing some early stress in dry land vines. An uneven set in cabernet sauvignon. Good November rain - six inches followed by a further dry spell and then follow-up rain in January (three inches). Vintage conditions were excellent with long periods of cloud cover. Two wet days towards the end but no disease, no damage caused.

Colour has deep reds but starting to show maturity. Lifted developed shiraz, charcoal, smoky briar aromas with bottle age varnish edge. Rich coffee mocha flavours on a full-bodied palate. Still drinking well with more robust tannins and sweet oak/fruit evident on the finish. The determining factor on longevity will unfortunately be the cork.

Drink up!

Alc:	13.8%
T/A:	5.88g/l
pH:	3.37

# Graveyard Vineyard Shiraz

## 1988

Budburst got under way with reasonably hot 1987 September/October weather. A good boost with rain starting in mid November. Over the two months to mid-January 125mm (5 inches) had fallen. The weekend of 16/17 January produced an 80mm downpour. Quite heavy but sporadic rain continued until February 14. The dry end of February and all of March meant that shiraz and chardonnay were not affected.

The first of three consecutive wet years, but the Graveyard showed its ability to withstand the effects of rain. The 1988 has always been a favourite of the Brokenwood team. The colour is reasonably dense with vibrant red hues on the rim. The bouquet shows a concentrated leather/char character typical of Hunter Valley shiraz, occasionally leading to marmite, licorice aromas. The palate has these plus a fleshy fruit weight. A vanillin oak background backs the hallmark of leather/earth Hunter Valley characteristics, almost 'ethereal' in true Hunter Valley burgundy sense. Excellent finish. This wine has plenty of life but at 18 years is a great example of a mature Graveyard Vineyard Shiraz.

Alc:	13.5%
T/A:	5.64g/l
pH:	3.51

# Graveyard Vineyard Shiraz

## 1989

The middle of three very wet vintages had winemaker/manager Iain Riggs in the winery full-time as Wayne Donaldson was not replaced until mid 1989. Kevin Ingle, still here and now our Production Manager, played an integral part and kept our vintage casuals in check.

The growing season started in spectacular fashion with 100mm of rain in September. What appeared to be becoming the norm followed with a very hot, dry October including fierce westerly winds. The cabernet sauvignon flowering was completely ruined with a resultant low crop picked. Three inches of rain fell in November and December and then a very wet (nearly 150mm or six inches) January 1989.

The Hunter Valley dried out enough to ensure clean ripe grapes late in the harvest. This was always an appealing wine when young with the perfect amount of oak backing up the mid-weight fruit palate. A decade on and the wine is distinctly Hunter Valley with lifted leather and briar wood characters like the 1986. It was a museum dry red trophy winner at the Hunter Valley Wine Show, an entry that has to be eight years of age.

Colour is starting to show a slight reddish brown rim but is still dense. Mature leather shiraz with earth and cedar characters. The palate is mid-weight and has developed flavours of tobacco and bitter chocolate with gamey overtones. Mid-palate shows softening tannins and flavours that carry to the end.

Will still hold, especially if well cellared, at least 10, if not 15 years.

Alc:	14.0%
T/A:	6.33g/l
pH:	3.44

# Graveyard Vineyard Shiraz

## 1990

The low yields from the Graveyard have to reward occasionally and 1990 repaid tenfold. All appeared lost under the volume of rain but the shiraz hung on to ripen and be disease free resulting in a rich shiraz dry red.

The rain of vintage 1989 continued up till June 1989 with a total of 843mm or 33 inches falling. In a land of contrasts, it probably should have not been a surprise that the next six months were virtual drought with only 155mm (six inches) of rain being recorded. The dry land grapes were showing signs of stress and the dams coped with the very necessary irrigation. Hunter Valley appeared to be heading into a vintage similar to 1981 and 1983 until January 8, 1990 when the rain started. When it stopped on February 12, a total of 435mm (17.5 inches) had fallen. All semillon and heavy foliage shiraz and chardonnay was picked immediately. The Graveyard Shiraz achieved high sugars in the dry weeks following.

The aromas show lifted coffee, with vanillin character probably from the American oak of that year plus a sweet edge similar to the 1986. The colour is surprisingly youthful, with deep red tints.

Dark cherry flavours with chocolate/mocha overtones. Flavours are upfront, leading to a soft middle palate. The vanillin flavours persist with supple grape and oak tannin mouthfeel. Not a 'weighty' or solid wine but a great example of low yields enabling the stamp of the Hunter - lower alcohols supporting distinct earth leather flavours - to be displayed.

Will hold for another 10 years at least.

Alc:	12.8%
T/A:	6.45g/l
pH:	3.29

# Graveyard Vineyard Shiraz

## 1991

The second half of 1990 was the exact opposite to the first. Virtually no rain was recorded from May to September with only 87mm (3.5 inches) in the period October to December. We weren't to know it but no serious rain was to fall until February 1992. January 1991 remained dry and the harvest was much reduced, but excitement was building in anticipation of high-quality wines.

With the vines under stress from lack of water it is not surprising that the alcohol in this Graveyard is only 13%, not super ripe as could be expected. The drought has given a 'tougher' wine but one that will continue to reward. The colour is quite dense and still has red hues on the rim. Licorice/iodine leather aromas dominate the nose. This really is a 'muscly' Hunter Valley red.

The wine has easily handled the new oak, still at this point 100% American. The palate has an earth (savoury) start with cedar/dark cherry flavours on the mid-palate. The structure is typical dry-year with firm (not hard) tannins. Polished leather overtones carry throughout the flavour profile with a firm finish to the wine. Not as supple as other Graveyard Shiraz but a wine that will keep on developing for a least another 20 years.

This wine hasn't appeared to change over the last 5-6 years.

Alc:	12.9%
T/A:	6.45g/l
pH:	3.29

# Graveyard Vineyard Shiraz

## 1993

No 1992 Graveyard Vineyard Shiraz was produced as the two years of drought leading up to the vintage meant not a grape was picked off the five hectares (12 acres) of old vines. The 1993 crop hardly bounced back with a plentiful yield. Only 2.5 tonnes was picked - less than a quarter of a tonne per acre!

Sub-soil moisture and enough irrigation ensured a good budburst, although growth was slow until a very wet December (178mm or 7 inches). Very much a recovery vintage following 1991 and 1992. February rain did not cause too much trouble.

The 1993 is, as expected, fairly concentrated. As a young wine, it caused some debate as to the nature of the aromas. Len Evans always liked the wine, winemaker Iain Riggs expressed reservations. True to form the wine with age has blossomed - Evans 1, Riggs 0. After its museum trophy win in 2001, Riggs wrote the following to Len Evans, "you win". Mid-density in colour with red/purple edges, which is a good sign at seven years of age.

Ripe, slightly old-fashioned aromas on the nose. This means the typical polished leather with slight tomato bush, but also a 'barnyard' rustic edge that is very appealing. The oak is almost non-detectable. At an early 2000 tasting in London the wine as described by Steven Spurnier as "a Chateau Rayas of the Hunter".

Very good palate weight, with ripe berry/mocha flavours to the fore. Mid-range alcohol at 13.5%; the mouthfeel has soft grape and oak tannins. The oak is more evident on the palate with vanillin and slight char characteristics. A very distinctive Graveyard Shiraz that shows Hunter Valley as well as vintage idiosyncrasies. Will continue to age well, developing even greater complexity over the next 15 years at least.

The following page is the handwritten cellar notes from 93/94. Minimalist winemaking at its best, with 15 months of work represented in just 21 lines.

Alc:	13.6%
T/A:	6.1g/l
pH:	3.42

# Graveyard Vineyard Shiraz

## 1994

A welcome return to a good volume of wine after the troublesome two previous vintages. July 1993 was unusual with four inches of rain. Spring rain was even over the last four months. Christmas and New Year saw extreme heat and bushfires surrounding the Hunter Valley, the closest fires being at Broke. The vines appeared to survive okay, although with little growth after the rain in the back half of January. The rain was on time at the end of the second week of February. Generally regarded as a high-quality vintage, with semillon and shiraz being the highlights.

Hardly the lead-up to make a great wine, but something worked as the wine went on to clean up in the 1995 Hunter Valley Wine Show, with three trophies including Best Red Wine of Show.

The colour is a very appealing deep red, although not dense as in the sense of impenetrable. The aromas are starting to lose the primary fruit overtones. Blackberry/plum fruit characters marry with smoky burnt briarwood. Perhaps a slightly higher char level than previous years. The oak regime included French oak, introduced by new winemaker Matt Harop, which increases over the ensuing vintages.

This is not in the blockbuster category, with the body and weight of the wine being rich but not 'fat'. Intensity of flavour is more a hallmark than opulence. For this wine the flavour profile includes dark chocolate and berries to coffee/tobacco oak influences. It is a complete wine that integrates the stamp of the 'terroir' and modern winemaking. Good alcohol (13.4%).

At 12 years, developed characters starting to show through the primary fruit. Long, Rhone-like tannins and medium bodied weight will help this wine to develop over the next 20 years.

Alc:	13.4%
T/A:	6.14g/l
pH:	3.32

# Graveyard Vineyard Shiraz

## 1995

This was a remarkable year for our Graveyard Vineyard Shiraz.

The previous release was awarded three trophies at the Hunter Valley Wine Show, including Best Dry Red of Show and Best 100% Hunter Valley Dry Red. This was followed with the wine being elevated to "Outstanding" rating in the Langton's Classification of Distinguished Australian Wine.

In writing the climate details for each vintage the rainfall records make for fascinating reading. Everyone remembers the weather on Christmas Day, New Year's Day and vintage, but ask about the rest and the answer is often 'normal'. If climate change is a reality, should the Hunter Valley, being sub-tropical, be getting wetter or drier? Traditionally winter is dry with warm clear days and cold nights. January/February are the wet months, so should we be seeing more rain in winter?

If the winter of 1994 is anything to go by, the Hunter Valley has by no means heard of climate change!!! The last of the summer autumn rain was on April 13, with 304mm from January 1. There was then no significant rain (21mm) until November 17 - over seven months or 217 days during which time there was only 27mm over three rain days.

November and December revived the vines with the Hunter having a wet Christmas. January 1995 remained wet and 48mm in the middle of February caused a few problems.

The 1995 Shiraz is an excellent follow-up to the 1994, although perhaps more typically Hunter Valley. Of our previous releases it compares with the 1987 - rich and solid. The colour is deep hue and quite dense. The aromas are earthy, leather shiraz with a subdued oak background. Excellent flavours abound on the palate. Initially sweet chocolate fruit and char spice oak. This leads to a dry, slightly firm earthy sweet/char finish. The tannins are evident now but the wine will age and the fruit will fill out the palate, giving an excellent mature Hunter Valley shiraz.

At 11 years of age there is the smallest hint of developed character starting on the aroma and palate. Shouldn't have any problem reaching 20 years.

Alc:	13.2%
T/A:	6.47g/l
pH:	3.35

# Graveyard Vineyard Shiraz

## 1996

Another dry/cold winter in 1995, but early irrigation saw a good budburst, with follow-up spring rain. Fruit set was excellent, enabling a good yield. No downpours at harvest, although some rain meant the usual early picking. For the Graveyard Shiraz there were at least 10 separate treatments including run-off trials for an honours thesis by Caroline Dunn, a fourth-year Adelaide University student and now well known for winning the Jimmy Watson Trophy. Post-vintage tasting leant heavily in favour of the run-off wines and extended maceration.

A slightly higher crop than usual at five tonne/hectare (two tonne/acre), with the resultant alcohol at 12.8%. A youthful-looking wine with crimson red hues. French and American oak was used (still favouring the latter in percentage), giving a briar wood/vanillin lift. It is important to avoid the overt American oak 'coconut' characters. Ripe fruit aromas and flavours abound as plum/dark berry and dried fruit nuances.

A mid-weight palate that shows the trademark earth/licorice flavours built on dry savoury tannins. The palate structure is often referred to as Rhone/Italian-like because of the intense flavours, lower alcohol and dry finish. A wine destined to be a great Hunter Valley dry red as the primary fruit characters are transformed to polished leather and earthy Hunter Shiraz flavours.

Has at least 20 years in front of it!

Alc:	12.8%
T/A:	6.19g/l
pH:	3.39

# Graveyard Vineyard Shiraz

## 1997

A new winemaker was in charge of operations, with Dan Dineen joining Brokenwood from McWilliam's Mount Pleasant.

Excellent spring rain got the 1996/1997 growing season off to a great start. The last four months' rainfall was 300mm (12 inches) which meant a tempering of the summer heat. Only four wet days in January 1997 - the last four with a total of 100mm and then another 90mm 10 days later.

The Graveyard Shiraz was picked in drizzle and cold conditions in early March. Lower sugars and careful barrel selection was essential.

Good deep colour. The wet-year versus dry-year characters are quite different and the aromas for this wine are briar, polished leather/varnish. These are quite lifted and combine with wood char to give a tighter 'chunkier' edge as opposed to sweet and round. The palate continues this theme with a dryness/tight tannin structure. Flavours are earth, bramble wood, and 'pizza biscuit' savoury with underlying brett. Good tannins carrying the fruit, slightly grippy, but enough alcohol and oak sweetness to cope. Different in style to the ripe soft years but close to the 1991, 1995 and 1987.

Will age into a more leathery Hunter Shiraz, not for the long haul.

Alc:	12.7%
T/A:	6.56g/l
pH:	3.36

# Graveyard Vineyard Shiraz

## 1998

The start of vintage 1998 saw a rush back to the records to see how many vintages had started in January. They revealed a few more than first thought, with the drought years of 1992 and 1983 and the wet vintage of 1989 starting in January. The hot, dry conditions that the Hunter Valley experienced (in 1998) meant low crops and in some vineyards early ripening. For Brokenwood most of the semillon and chardonnay was in before we had even got under way in 1997.

A vintage without rain has to put us ahead in quality. Probably an all-round, high-quality vintage similar to 1986, 1994 and 1996. Seventy-five mm (three inches) of rain in September 1997 ensured a good budburst, although we commenced irrigation much earlier. Sporadic rain in January 1998 and then excellent weather through harvest. Rain in May totalling four inches led us into winter. A moderate yield off the old vines at approximately 1.5 tonnes/acre (3.7 tonnes/ha) or, as the Europeans record it, about 23 hectolitres/ha.

This wine was awarded the Len Evans Trophy for the Best Individual Vineyard Wine at the 1999 Hunter Valley Wine Show.

Youthful colour and reasonably dense with purple hues. The terroir characters of the Graveyard for both aromas and palate are quite distinctive. Fruit descriptives for the nose are dark chocolate/dark cherry with some earthy edges. Oak maturation now features about 25% French oak and the balance French-made American oak barriques.

As usual the oak is integrated even as a young wine; bramble, char and savoury flavours are part-oak and part-fruit derived. The mid palate has, surprisingly, a rich plumcake fullness. Slightly higher in alcohol than usual and this (plus glycerol) gives the softness. Excellent tannin structure with long 'polished leather' flavours to the back palate. One of the most impressive of our Graveyards, that will age extremely well.

No sign of development, still closed and primary in nature. Will see another 20 years from 2006.

Alc:	14.2%
T/A:	6.38g/l
pH:	3.41

# Graveyard Vineyard Shiraz

## 1999

With only 7.5 acres of the 1968 plantings left, Brokenwood often pushes its luck in terms of the timing of picking.

This can mean getting caught if the rain arrives later in the vintage. Such was the case in 1999, with 32mm of rain at the end of February. A straw poll of local winemakers has 1999 wines on par with or ahead of 2000. The 1999 Graveyard Shiraz has the frame of the 1988 and 1995 briar and savoury tannin.

There was very good rain just before budburst (120mm in August) and follow-up through the spring of 1998. One of the certainties of Hunter Valley weather is rain around January 18-24. In fact, of the past nine years, seven have had heavy rain in that period. In 1999 there was 25mm on the 21st and 25mm on the 23rd!

Excellent good colour, dense and youthful purple hues the feature. Aromas include dusty earth, clove and red cherry fruit character with spicy and some vanillin oak. The initial mouthfeel is of drying tannins, but this gives way to plums/cherry fruit. The oak is integrated with some obvious char, briar and toasted almonds. Long, almost elegant palate and great carry of after palate. Distinctive Hunter characters and will develop to a classic dry leather, cedar Shiraz.

Needs 10 to 15 years.

Alc:	12.9%
T/A:	6.49g/l
pH:	3.36

# Graveyard Vineyard Shiraz

## 2000

The rotation of winemakers continues, with Dan Dineen leaving to head up the new enterprise of Len Evans - Tower Wines - and Peter-James Charteris stepping in to run the winery. PJ, a Kiwi, was previously at Southcorp in Nuriootpa.

The 1999 year was the wettest in the Hunter Valley since the torrential early start to 1990. It just beat 1992 by 40mm. An unusually wet winter led to excellent spring growth, and continued rain. The new Millennium (?) favoured the Hunter Valley with one of the best vintages on record, with excellent yields, sugars and fruit flavours. The previous high-quality years of 1998, 1996, 1994, 1991 and 1987/1986 will be hard pressed to challenge 2000.

A very good crop of Graveyard shiraz at nearly 4.5t/ha (1.75t/ac). Sugars were high, giving 14-14.7% alcohol.

Very dense, purple colour. The aromas are an amalgam of fruit, region and oak. Black fruit aromas - blackberry, dark cherry and plum - combine with briar, earth characters. A solid oak level (to match the unusually robust structure/alcohol) that shows dark chocolate and mocha. Long, excellent finish to the palate with firm but balanced tannins. A great Hunter Valley Shiraz from an excellent vintage.

Quite closed at this stage.

Alc:	14.7%
T/A:	6.31g/l
pH:	3.55

# Graveyard Vineyard Shiraz

## 2001

One of the all-time great Hunter Valley vintages, 2000 finished and led into a typical dry winter. No heavy rain until November, 130mm (5 inches). Excellent vine growth and fruit set.

No rain between mid-December and late January 2001 (38 days) enabled timely spraying and vine training. Ominous clouds built up over the last days of January and by February 10 135mm (5.5 inches) had fallen. Semillons were harvested over that time and the wait was on for the shiraz.

More rain through February with another 91mm and into early March, with 82mm falling over seven rain days in the first two weeks. Careful bunch selection in picking the Graveyard shiraz was the order of the day. We had to go back to 1992 to find a wetter February. Then 257mm of rain was recorded, but as it came after two years of drought it didn't really matter.

No doubt a wine that will create much discussion due to the obvious (to some) regional/wet year characters on the nose. In some years the brettanomyces character is part of the overall Hunter terroir: briar, earth and leather.

Mid-density colour with young wine edges still evident. Mention has been made of the Hunter aromas, which come through as earthy, farmyard; but there are also red fruits - red cherry and red currant. Surprisingly subdued oak as we used nearly 90% new barriques and majority French. Herbal, polished leather characters on the palate along with sweet vanillin oak. The tannins aren't too obvious and not out of balance. Earthy, red cherry flavours through to the end.

An interesting wine to watch over the next 5 to 10 years as developed flavours take over from the primary fruit.

Alc:	13.5%
T/A:	6.2g/l
pH:	3.55

# Graveyard Vineyard Shiraz

## 2002

The 2001 calendar year was one of the Hunter Valley's driest (although not quite 1991), with a total of only 21 rain days in the latter seven months, for a total of 230mm. As usual, winter irrigation was essential and the vines got away to a great budburst. Spring was dry and mild to hot. The summer really kicked in during December, with several 40oC-plus days and fierce winds. Bushfires surrounded the valley but there was no damage in the vineyard area. January continued hot and dry with some rain at the end of the month. The vines were coping well and good quality appeared certain, with a return to normal-ripening picking in the first week of February. Of course this is the Hunter Valley and by February 10 135mm (5.5 inches) had fallen. The Graveyard produced some great shiraz for such a year, backed up with hand sorting at the winery.

Excellent colour, not overly deep but with youthful tints. Hunter Valley aromas!! Charry briar wood, clove and red cherry. Background oak - some vanillin evident. Good weight to the palate, initially soft-to-mid tannins but then red berry and spice flavours. Excellent structure that has earthy, briary, savoury characters and grape/oak tannins. Tastings of previous similar vintages '95, '97, '99 have shown classic Hunter Valley characters developing at five to six years.

The first to be 100% sealed by screwcap.

Needs 15 years

Alc:	13.3%
T/A:	6.8g/l
pH:	3.56

# Graveyard Vineyard Shiraz

## 2003

Winter of 2002 mirrored that of 2001 with only 18 days of rain, bringing a miserly 121mm of rain (compared to 230mm in 2001). It is somewhat of a contradiction that our main irrigation period is in winter to build up the subsoil moisture before budburst. The spring and early summer stayed hot and dry, with extensive bushfires through early December. At one stage the entire Brokenback Range was alight, forming an impressive, if eerie, backdrop. January and February continued dry, resulting in one of the smallest Hunter Valley yields in a long time. With further barrel selection, there was a very small 2003 production of the Graveyard Shiraz, but it was a wine of great concentration.

Excellent colour with youthful tints. First impression is of a muscly/brawny Hunter Shiraz. For those who follow the Graveyards, 1991 springs immediately to mind, the difference being that wine was predominantly American oak to the 2003's French. Charry briar wood, clove and red cherry. Background oak - some vanillin evident. Good weight to the palate, initially firm tannins but then red berry and spice flavours. Excellent structure that has earthy, briary, savoury characters and grape/oak tannins. Developed characters should start to appear around the seven-year mark.

Alc:	13.7%
T/A:	6.7g/l
pH:	3.47

# Graveyard Vineyard Shiraz

## 2004

In the Hunter Valley a glorious but dry winter followed the excellent 2003 vintage. With only five days of rain from June to September, irrigation was essential during this time. A very good budburst and fruit set with a bit much fruit on some blocks. Spring was mainly fine, with one heavy downpour in late November.

Christmas Day was a scorcher at 40oC-plus, and plenty more followed over the next few weeks. Some blocks of shiraz were fruit thinned in early January to help the vines cope with the heat and lack of rain.

Mid January rain (22mm) on time on the 17th, followed by 40oC, then 54mm a few days later, followed by 40oC then another 19mm!!! If the vines weren't baffled and knocked around, the staff certainly were.

The waiting game for the reds didn't go our way, with 123mm of rain following on February 25 and 26. Further rain in early March meant lower than desired sugars, but at least no mould problems. The Graveyard Vineyard Shiraz was all picked by March 9. Medium-bodied reds and certainly not out of the norm for the Hunter Valley.

Excellent medium depth of colour with youthful tints. A very fragrant Graveyard Shiraz with red cherry, black pepper/nutmeg fruit aromas. These are complemented by the pristine cedar/mocha oak characters. The early youthful tannins give the initial impression of a full-bodied red but the 12.7% alcohol comes into play across the palate with soft earthy, bramble flavours and sweet oak.

The tannins are ripe and dry, carrying the spicy medium-bodied weight with ease. A long and even finish, very much in the mould of the 1996 (12.8% alc). A wine regarded as one of our top Graveyards.

Alc:	12.7%
T/A:	6.9g/l
pH:	3.32

# Graveyard Vineyard Shiraz

## 2005

Another miserly winter in terms of rainfall for 2004 with the middle six months recording 126mm over 16 rain days. In fact rainfall didn't reach double figures between 25th May and 18th August. Some would say that 3mm in one shower is hardly worth noting. Spring was better with October and early November rain.

'Character building', a term we use a lot in the Hunter Valley. Our vineyard guys estimate four separate hail storms across the Graveyard, plus four days over 40oC and 50mm of rain in January 2005 plus another 132mm up to 20th February. Tough fruit grapes! Between the 20th and 3rd March all the old vine shiraz was picked.

Not dissimilar in style (fruit weight) to 2004 although a bit higher in alcohol. Very deep crimson colour, with lifted bramble, dark cherry aromas. Very good entry with sweet earthy fruit, vanillin oak a little forward at this stage. Long spice/raspberry fruit on the finish.

A 20 year proposition.

Alc.	13.4%
T/A	6.5 g/l
pH	3.45

# Graveyard Vineyard Shiraz

## 2006

Looking back at the previous vintages, the lead up to 2006 mirrored that of 2003, except for a mere 60mm of rain in one downpour right in the middle of winter. The actual vintage conditions were very similar from the heat through to the low crops.

If the Hunter didn't get that 60mm the rain would have matched winter 2002, with 120mm over six months. For July and August 2005 there was only two rains days, both in July for 7mm. Again the district pipeline scheme paid its way with extensive winter irrigation. Spring/summer saw good rain to lead into what was to be one of the hottest summers on record.

Christmas Day 2005 and then New Years Day 2006 were both 45 degrees Celsius. By late January the Hunter had had another 7 -10 days of plus 40C weather. What was looking like a normal start, after Australia Day, became a 14th January start for many. The vineyards did vary depending on the soil and water.

The shiraz was certainly early by at least 2 to 3 weeks. Again low yields, some down as much as 30%. Ripening was not a problem with some blocks getting quite high sugar. The last of the old vine shiraz was picked on the 20th February. In some years we haven't started till the 1st March!! Fruit weight will be interesting to monitor after the reds finish malolactic ferment. In looking for a comparative style 2006 will be close to 1991, 1995 and 2003. Muscley tannins, deep coloured and long lived.

The four blocks still as separate parcels. Alcohol's vary from 13 to 13.8%.

# Other Wines

1983 Semillon

From the second bottling, as it has the new label. Last bottle at Brokenwood

1985 Semillon - from magnum

1973 Hermitage/Cabernet Sauvignon - from magnum

1970 Moet - from magnum

Disgorged in mid 1990 and the last of the magnums used at Brokenwood's 20-year party, October 1990 and a fitting wine to toast the Graveyard's and Tony Albert.

Heineken