

BROKENWOOD



WINTER 2007 ISSUE 28

ANOTHER VINTAGE ANYONE? #2

Iain Riggs

The previous issue of The Dirt closed with Graveyard Vineyard Shiraz being elevated to Outstanding in the 1996 review of the Langton's Classification. Before moving on, it's worth a quick dash back to 1990 and the first innings of Cricket Pitch.

The new decade and last of the millennium got off to an interesting start with a very wet vintage and everyone suffering under 25% interest rates. Wine sales started to level off and grapegrowers began to feel the turn of the wheel against them. One grapegrower from McLaren Vale contacted me in late 1989 to let me know that the Sauvignon Blanc grapes that I'd used in the 1981 and 82 Hazelmere Sauvignon Blanc, Semillon blend were available. He only had to ask once!

The old clone McLaren Vale sauvignon blanc and Hunter semillon were fermented here in 1990 and blended after vintage and the rest, as they say, is history. The 1991 red Cricket Pitch joined it in 1993 and was launched as the feature wine at the annual May lunch, as there was no Graveyard Shiraz from 1992. The white blend changed to carry the Cricket Pitch logo in 1994. Just as our Semillon had been taken up by the Sydney wine trade, the Cricket Pitch White was equally accepted. It is now Brokenwood's most popular wine.

Long-term Sydney retailer Mal Higgs (previously of Roseville Cellars and Porter's Liquor) points the finger of blame (or fame) at the Cricket Pitch Sauvignon Blanc, Semillon for the proliferation of this wine style.

The continuing support of the Brokenwood owners in everything from bottling, planting vineyards and cooking for the vintage crew, as well as pitching in the odd dollar when needed, kept the spirit well and truly alive. Part of that spirit included accepting a colorful collection of workers and winemakers passing through the university of wine life we know as Brokenwood.

Some of these people are now well established in the wine industry. Who would have thought that the tall skinny English lad who worked the 1984 vintage would end running the respected wine auction house Langton's. There's a photo here of a stainless steel tub about a metre deep with only a pair of feet visible and a beer can on the sole of one foot. How Andrew Caillard got out of the tub, let alone in, is amazing.

A young lad, Wayne Donaldson, from Melbourne was assistant winemaker from 1986 to 1988 and is now Director of Winemaking at E&J Gallo in California. Caroline Dunn helped out during the 1991 vintage, while restaurant manager at Bathers Pavilion. She is now Senior Red Winemaker for Wolf Blass and widely considered one of the best palates and most gifted winemakers in the country. We've had French, Italian, American and, yes, even New Zealanders wander through the place.

One particularly irritating French worker took great pleasure in elevating her country's wines and barely tolerating ours. At one point I was told that the French make wine with their heart whereas Australians make wine with their heads. She very nearly ended up having her noggin used for plunging the red ferments. Saverio from Tuscany was worried at the start of his time here that our vineyard manager KB didn't like him, as KB yelled at him every morning. We then explained that as KB didn't speak Italian he thought he'd be better understood if he just yelled "good morning" at the top of his voice.

Hatches, matches and dispatches have occurred aplenty, none more famous than Dan Dineen and Sarah-Kate Wilson. Matt Harrop - winemaker at Brokenwood from 1994 to 1996 - had already agreed to employ 'SK', a young NZ wine graduate, before he moved back over the ditch to Nautilus Estate. Dan, coming on-board as winemaker for the 1997 vintage, certainly agreed with Matt's choice. Dan and SK are now Mr & Mrs Dineen and expecting their first child. After very successful careers at not only Brokenwood but Tower Estate for Dan and McGuigan, Wandin Valley and Tempus Two for SK, they're now running their own winery Maude Wines in Central Otago. Our current winemaker PJ and ex Marketing Manager Christina are engaged. Something to do with the water?

The dispatches side is always more sombre to reflect on. The figure of Len Evans played an integral part in the lives of all of us here in the Hunter Valley. Mentor, father-figure, and often even school master, he's sorely missed. What he instilled in us all was the love of great wine and the need to drink as widely as possible. Through dinners, wine shows, monthly option games (there's an article on the 19 years of the Hunter options group appearing soon in Gourmet Traveller WINE magazine) or just a quiet drink on the verandah of Loggerheads, his knowledge and opinion was keenly sought and freely given. Following Len as Chairman of the Hunter Valley Wine Show was and still is a great honour for me. The passing of Brokenwood co-founder Tony Albert a few years before Len robbed us of another great character. The opening of the Albert Room, named after Tony, in April 2006 was a night full of stories and fun.

Now, more than half way through the decade, the Australian wine industry is feeling the squeeze of a low yielding 2007 vintage, and a high exchange rate, on top of increased competition. The good news is that the Hunter Valley has had an outstanding vintage, with no frost, not a whiff of bushfire smoke, no rain and healthy crops. Excellent Semillons and Shiraz abound.

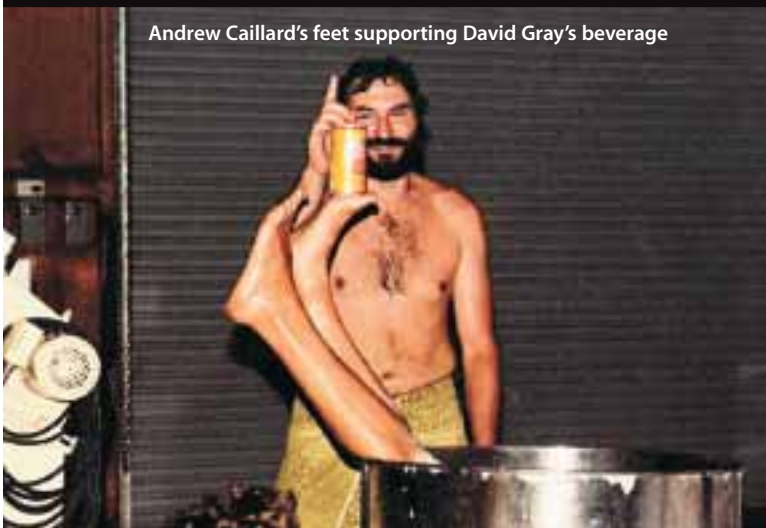
Couldn't ask for a better 25th vintage really. Cheers!



Photo courtesy of Andrew Watson



Single Vineyard Club Members John and Cath enjoying the 2005 Graveyard Shiraz



Andrew Caillard's feet supporting David Gray's beverage



Iain Riggs presents Joan Millyard with the Options Prize



Single Vineyard Club Members Andrew and Danielle at the Graveyard Launch

2005 Graveyard Vineyard Shiraz Launch, 26th May 2007

The Graveyard Launch has become the biggest annual event on the Brokenwood calendar and this year's lunch marked the release of the 2005 Graveyard Vineyard Shiraz. The 2005 vintage is one of our finest and, as always, Brokenwood is incredibly proud of the result.

Guests met and mingled with a glass of wine to the sounds of Vince Martinelli's classical guitar before entering the barrel hall where Brokenwood's adopted son, Robert Molines, provided a delectable menu which was matched with a great selection of wines.

As in every other year, the Brokenwood partners and staff

served, waited on, poured, cleared and washed up.

A terrific day was enjoyed by all.

Our very special and entertaining guest speaker, Kerry O'Keefe, received more than a few laughs. Once again the Options game was hotly contested and this year Joan Millyard took home the prize for correctly identifying the 2003 Guigal Côtes du Rhône.

We now look forward to 2008 when the 2006 Graveyard Shiraz will be the star of our 25th anniversary Graveyard Launch event. See you there!

What's On

THREDBO ALPINE WINEMAKERS DINNER AT SEGRETO RESTAURANT - WEDNESDAY 1ST AUGUST

2007 is shaping up as a fantastic snow season! For après ski, we invite you to join Chief Winemaker Iain Riggs for a night of fine food matched with Brokenwood wines. For bookings and further details please call (02) 6459 4200.

ACCOUTREMENT COOKING SCHOOLS

Accoutrement Cooking School, situated in Sydney, has a regular program of cooking classes with celebrity chefs and cookbook authors. Join Brokenwood's Grant Radford at the following classes to match our wines with the guest chef's food.

Serge Dansereau from Bathers' Pavilion

Monday 27th August 6:30pm
Tuesday 28th August 10:30am

Kylie Kwong from Billy Kwong

Tuesday 25th September 10:30am
For bookings and further details, please call (02) 9969 4911

SPRING DEGUSTATION DINNER AT BATHERS' PAVILION THURSDAY 20TH SEPTEMBER 6:30PM

Each year Serge Dansereau (of Bathers' Pavilion) and Sue Jenkins (of Accoutrement Cooking School) join forces to present a dinner at Bathers' Pavilion. This year it will be a five-course degustation menu matched with Brokenwood wines.

Tickets are \$135 per person.

For bookings and further details please call (02) 9969 4911.

HUNTER UNCORKED - "GOLD COAST STYLE" SATURDAY AUGUST 18 AND SUNDAY AUGUST 19, 2007.

Hunter Uncorked comes to the parklands at Broadwater on the Gold Coast. Brokenwood and other Hunter wineries will be offering some of their finest wines alongside a variety of food and produce stalls. Wine master-classes and cooking demonstrations will be held with live entertainment throughout the day. The Brokenwood Cru looks forward to welcoming you over this weekend and sharing a glass of something special.

BRISBANE GOOD FOOD AND WINE SHOW NOVEMBER 9-11TH

With more than 300 exhibitors, the Good Food & Wine Show is the ultimate place to explore new tastes and discover the latest culinary trends from around the world. Gain a deeper understanding and appreciation of wine at the Riedel Wine Theatre. Browse the World of Wine, home to over 100 wineries and breweries from across the country and abroad. Most importantly, come and visit Brokenwood at the Hunter Valley stand when you get there for a glass of something special! For more details www.goodfoodshow.com.au or 13 61 00

OTHER DATES FOR YOUR DIARY

Hunter Valley Wine Show Dinner - Thursday August 16th
Red White & Blues @ Bimbadgen - Saturday September 1st
Day on the Green featuring Steely Dan @ Bimbadgen - Saturday September 15th
Opera in the Vines @ Wyndham Estate - Saturday October 20th
Jazz in the Vines @ Tyrrell's - Saturday October 27th

New Releases

Varietal Range

2006 UNWOODED CHARDONNAY



The colour is a vibrant yellow/green with tropical fruit Chardonnay aromas. Delicious characters of mango and peach abound, with citrus from a balanced acid finish. There are softer, cashew edges but this wine has definitely not seen any oak. Just a great lazy afternoon wine!

2004 CRICKET PITCH RED



Aromas of red cherry, spice and earthy edges with some Cabernet Sauvignon cedar up front and soft richness from Shiraz to follow. The oak has limited impact although there's some vanilla on both nose and palate with a long, sweet finish. A drink-now style with excellent fruit flavours and balance that will soften further with medium term bottle maturation.

2005 HUNTER VALLEY SHIRAZ



Medium density in colour, with bright youthful tints and aromas of mocha and charry bramble from the oak. These are integrated with the blackberry, savoury Hunter Shiraz fruit. Good alcohol weight carries the rich flavours. The palate has vanilla and dark cherry. Soft tannins and a dry finish round it out. Under screw cap, this wine will stay fresh and youthful for some time, with developed characters evolving more slowly than under cork.

Single Vineyard Range

INTRODUCING...

2002 MCMILLAN VINEYARD SEMILLON



This is Brokenwood's first release of a Single Vineyard Semillon. Pale green/yellow in colour with lifted lemongrass aromas. On release at 5 years of age this wine is just starting to show traditional Hunter Valley Semillon toast and lanolin. Hunter Semillon is traditionally low in alcohol, but the palate takes on a richness and depth that is unique to the region's premier white style. Drink now or allow more time for development. A perfect accompaniment to richer seafood dishes and white meats.

2005 GRAVEYARD VINEYARD SHIRAZ



Medium density in colour with crimson hues. These almost iridescent young colours are rarely seen in Hunter reds. Lifted aromas of dark cherry, clove and 'sweet' earth. These are complemented by soft mocha oak. Initial flavours of dark chocolate and plums are well supported by the ripe tannins. Some spice/pepper characters on the finish. There is a perfect balance of fruit, alcohol and tannin. A wine with great 'line' - a Len Evans expression used to convey structure, balance and length.

2006 UMPIRE'S VINEYARD SEMILLON CHARDONNAY SAUVIGNON BLANC



The raisined grapes give a glacé fruit richness to the aroma. Ripe fig/peel aromas surround a palate that has length and complexity, and carry right to the end, supported by a zesty acid balance. Although low alcohol, the mouth-feel is very luscious from the retained sugar. A great dessert style giving richness without any cloying characters. Drink now.

Guest Chef....

Chris Woodyard

THREE CLICKS WEST

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Roast Brined Pork Belly

2005 BROKENWOOD HUNTER VALLEY SHIRAZ

Brine:

3 litres of water
400g sea salt
300g caster sugar
4 bay leaves
10 cloves
10 juniper berries
20 white peppercorns

2kg pork belly with skin and on the bone

Bring all the above brine ingredients to a gentle boil, take off the heat and allow to cool.

Soak pork belly in the brine mixture for three days prior to cooking.

2 whole white onions
10g sea salt
30ml oil

Peel and quarter the onions and place into a roasting tray.

Heat oven to 160°C (low heat).

Remove the pork belly and discard brine. Rinse the pork belly in water and score the skin with a sharp knife. Rub the salt and oil into the skin and place on top of onions. Roast the pork for two hours turning up the oven to 180°C (medium heat) for an additional 30 minutes. This will give you crisp crackling and moist tender meat. Slice and serve pork with roasted onions.

Serve this dish with your usual roast pork accompaniments. My suggestions are Jerusalem artichokes - these are a must-have when they are in season! - Dutch or baby carrots, Granny Smith apples, Dutch cream potatoes, a side salad or even corn on the cob.

If you are serving additional roast vegetables, place these under the pork for the last 45 minutes of cooking to gain flavour from the meat and onions.

The Brokenwood Hunter Valley Shiraz will compliment the saltiness of the pork and sweetness of onions.

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