



Come visit us...

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2013 Vintage Wrap Up, by Kathleen...

Sulking ferments fizz inside a house made of hay. The house of hay idea, whilst first mentioned in the three little pigs, is a design from our neighbours at Hurley (Balnarring) we took home after visiting them last week to taste their vintage. So the slowly fermenting barrels of wine caught in the now winter chilly cellar are enveloped in hay bales warmed with a column heater.

Most of our Pinot Noir is actually sulphured with the bung knocked in hard or waiting for transfer out of a vat. There is still $\frac{1}{4}$ of our 2011 Nebbiolo and most of our 2012 Pinot Noirs in barrel. They will be swapped out of barrel into bottle in the next month and the 2013 vintage straight into their barrels. This timetable keeps the barrels sweet for many years as well as ensuring the prior vintage is languid, perfumed and edges softened with the air in the barrels, thus bottle ready.

Our desired order is yeast fermenting all the grape sugar to alcohol and Co_2 (as a gas); followed on the heels by a malolactic fermentation converting malic acid to lactic acid and more of the Co_2 (again dissipated as gas).

Whilst we see no reason for this order to be jumbled often a power struggle stalls the ferment, the yeast and the bacteria marshal their cells against each other. We follow their battles crudely by measuring the diminishing sugar and/or malic acid; fending off the spoilage effects of war – vinegar, coarseness, mousiness, band aid, and oxidation.

Hence the straw house – it's important to drive all the sugar and then the malic from the ferment, or later when bottled, the wines lose condition; brown, frothy, maybe spoilt with an oxidative yeast or the dreaded *Brettanomyces* that smells of Band-Aid or fowl yard.

Musk Creek Pinot Gris only finished fermenting on Thursday, a flank attack of malolactic bacteria stalling the ferment, opening the newly born wine to the dangers of oxidation. We do not sulphur our musts or juices, I think the lower total sulphur enhances the paradox of ethereal aroma and powerful juicy palate. The wild yeast ferment was out maneuvered by the wild malic fermentation. I'm guessing – even making it up – I think the yeast and the bacteria both fight for diminishing nutrient and the yeast are weakened with the increasing levels of alcohol (their metabolic waste product) and diminishing concentrations of sugar whilst the bacteria are the new kids in the tank or barrel, tucking into the freshly discovered store of malic acid, having suitably prepared themselves for a high alcohol medium and jubilant about the no sulphur regime in the winery. We have a few tricks up our sleeve including warming the ferment to favour the yeast not the bacteria, we stir the lees but I do not think that helps the ferment, however addresses reduction issues and ultimately assists in creating a perfumed vibrant powerful wine.



We became pickier this year, and it was easy because there was no harvest rain to complex the timetable. We picked our Pinot Noirs and Pinot Gris in two stages, the first pick focused on the acid dimension, the second pick or rump was pure flavour and sugar and extract.

The more acid rich Pinot Noir allowing a longer time on skins and lees without the danger of deleterious microbial power games (see above paragraph).

Pendulous, fleshy Friulano deserved four picking days to select their perfect tawny golden ripeness. The grapes were stomped, left to soak in their own juices attracting all types of buccaneer yeast to multiply, the juice expressed the next day coloured as deep a brown as a peeled banana left long on the bench, however not actually fermenting – as measured by using the crude indicator of no bubbles forming on the surface of the juice, then settled at very cold temperatures to keep the ugly wild spoiling yeast at bay and then another day passes and then racked off the sediment and then wham we hit the juice with a jumping ferment of our own picking and poured immediately into the freshly honey waxed amphora. Our yeast explodes in this pristine fresh juice, immediately consuming all the dissolved oxygen and within 12 hours the ugly brown Friulano juice transforms to fizzing luminescent lime green.



Featured Wine

Quealy 2011 Pyrenees Nebbiolo

Warming and generous, this just what you need on a cold winters night

Often referred to as an Italian Pinot Noir, Nebbiolo is all about Kathleen & Kevin's love for Italian wine.

The grapes are destemmed and macerated on skins for 5 months to gently extract the tannins. Maturation is 18 months in a mixture of oak and terra cotta amphora.

Aromatics of tar, rose and earth, the tannins are rich and ripe and gritty.

Food pairing: Nebbiolo needs food with a lot of juice to balance the rich tannins. Think rich meats in slow braises, Chicken Cacciatore & mushroom ragu.

For information about where to find our Nebbiolo call us in the cellar door, (03) 5983 2483

[CLICK HERE TO VIEW ALL OUR TASTING NOTES](#)

Something to hang our hat on...

2012 Quealy Amphora Friulano was included in the Epicures 'The Ten Best Wines You've Never Heard Of' story; where Kathleen was also named one of Australia's most innovative winemakers! **To read the full story click here...**

The Pobblebonk was made 'Wine of the Week' by the Sydney Morning Herald's, Good Food on the 20th of May, "a very smart wine indeed", **click here for the review...**

Finally, Stephanie Alexander mentions our Merricks General Wine Store in her 'Spotted by Locals' column in the Age, Life and Style. She covers a lot of wonderful, local delights including the Tussie Mussie Vineyard Lodge; we have just taken over the management of the vineyard & can vouch for what a beautiful property this is!

Click here for Stephanie Alexander's full run down of the Peninsula...

Upcoming Events

Sunday Roast at Merricks: Sundays in June

As part of the Melbourne Food and Wine initiative, *Put Victoria on your Table*, we're running a special Sunday Lunch menu, with a focus on Victorian Produce.

What better way to spend a Sunday than enjoying a traditional lunch with all the trimmings, finished with a winter warming pudding? Sit with your family in front of a roaring fire, or rug up to enjoy our vine-covered balcony.

Let our knowledgeable cellar staff take you through a tasting of the finest Peninsula wines - from Peninsula Pinots, to cool climate Shiraz, distinctive Pinot Gris, and sweet Muscats, so you can find the perfect drop to stash away for a cold winter night.

Vegetarians and children catered for.
Full A La Carte menu available every day. Bookings essential.

Phone the store for bookings & enquiries
(03) 5989 8088



Winter Wine Weekend: 8th – 10th June



Over Queens Birthday long weekend immerse yourself in the many offerings of the Mornington Peninsula.

We'll be here at Balnarring Vineyard, ready to show visitors a real working winery. Wander around the cellar door filled with barrels and amphora, taste the vintage ferments and try the Balnarring Vineyard range, with select Quealy Wines. As is our tradition there is an opportunity to buy very smart, naked wines. That is small batches of wine we make that don't have a label.

Over at the Merricks General Wine Store you'll be able to try all the Quealy Wines in the cellar door. We will be very busy so please book a table early for lunch and breakfast, or perhaps drop in late afternoon for a platter and glass of wine.

If you want the full experience you should get tickets to the Winter Wine Fest, where you can try over 200 wines from 50 local wineries.
