



BANNOCKBURN
VINEYARDS

Over a barrel...

newsletter of Bannockburn Vineyards

As I type this note I am relishing a much needed 15 ml of rainfall that has just fallen. Nice, steady and penetrating rain too. It has certainly helped the vineyard, not to mention our mental state as we prepare for what many believe will be a very hot and dry season. Fingers crossed that the coming summer is not too harsh!

This newsletter has an abundance of outstanding Bannockburn wines that are mostly in short supply due to low yields and limited production.

2014 Sauvignon Blanc: Less than 500 dozen of this wine was produced due to poor flowering in spring that resulted in our overall 2014 yields being down by 50%. Great quality though! This 2014 Sauvignon Blanc continues the style evolution (...revolution?) that I began

way back in 2006. This version still explores the role of Italian coopered acacia puncheons but this time we have used whole bunches to explore carbonic maceration on the white Sauvignon Blanc variety, a totally unheard of thing to do with whites. I have named this unique winemaking direction 'carbo-blanc' and, believe me, it has opened doorways to previously unseen textures and flavours. It is tremendously exciting! Release date for this wine is December 11.

2010 SRH: This wine was released a few months ago. It continues the extended 3 years on lees approach that started with the 2009 release. The 2010 growing season really was splendid for the Pinot Noir and Chardonnay varieties. Despite it only being about 12.8% alcohol the wine is incredibly



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rich, powerful and complex. It ignores the current vogue for anaemic Chardonnays that our wine show system is supporting and proudly reminds us that a wine can have great bones but it is the flesh that we buy (...and bite?) into. It is the most complex Chardonnay that I have made and demands roast chicken at the very least...or drink it whilst eating roast show judge.

2012 Chardonnay: With the final amount of the enigmatic 2011 Chardonnay about to leave the warehouse and with the above sentiments concerning “new wave” anaemic Chardonnay ringing in my ears, it is time to release the 2012 Bannockburn Chardonnay. This wine is quite hard to pin down. I suspect that it is very “classic” Bannockburn. It is structured, tight, powerful and full of soil-derived crustacean characters. It will benefit greatly from further cellaring. It has come on in leaps and bounds since I bottled it almost a year ago after two years on lees. Initially, I thought it quite restrained and shy. It is still

restrained but is having more and more to say as it evolves.

2011 Serré: Also released a few months back with the SRH. This wine shows what a mockery the negative reaction was by many wine scribes to the 2011 vintage. This wine is the most elegant and fine Serré that has ever been made. We are very close to retiring it to the warehouse to become a future ‘museum release’. It will age and evolve for decades. I’ll leave it to Francois Labet (Chateau de la Tour) to describe this wine “...pure Chambolle!” It is getting better and better.

2009 Shiraz: At long last we are releasing this wine which is the first Shiraz that I have made that utilises 100% whole bunches. The effect of whole bunches on Shiraz seems to contribute savoury elements to the wine – black olive and pastrami characters abound. Whole bunches also bring a structural ‘seriousness’ to the normally gregarious and easy going Shiraz variety. The 2009 season was a drought season but the average temperatures were very cool meaning we got



flavour ripeness very early. The wines from 2009 are the most 'Euro- structured' wines that we have made. Although this wine is now almost 6 years old it is still in its infancy. Great texture and great structure...but does require a steak. Released October 2014.

2006 Range: A very rare release from our oldest vineyard established by Stuart Hooper on Range Road, Bannockburn back in 1974. This wine has only been made and released a handful of times when it is clearly outstanding and just too good to blend into the standard Bannockburn Shiraz. There has been a 1995, 1996, 2001 and 2005 release. It is an aged 'museum release'. It seems hard to believe that 2006 was my very first harvest here at Bannockburn almost 10 years ago. The 2006 Range has aged much better than me I suspect and doesn't look very different from when I pulled it out of barrique for bottling about 8 years ago. "Age will not weary them..." The wine has a strong mocha/coffee note that is totally vineyard derived. It is a powerful and rich wine but still retains a heady

perfume. Needs food, time, an open fire and preferably a snow storm outside.

2012 Pinot Noir: The 2012 season marks the beginning of a slight evolution in style for the Bannockburn Pinot Noirs. They have all been picked slightly riper and pressed a little earlier in order to fill out the middle palate and bring some generosity to the wines without compromising on our 100% whole bunch approach. Thanks to the excellent 2012 season and the advent of our second label 1314 a.d. this Bannockburn Pinot Noir is very strong indeed. It is made from a blend of fruit, primarily Olive Tree Hill and our other Pinot vineyard sites but also includes a few barrels of close planted gear from Serré and De La Terre. This wine is really an all-round expression of Bannockburn Pinot Noir as a whole rather than the single vineyard expressions.

2012 Stuart: An excellent showing of our oldest Pinot Noir vineyard at Olive Tree Hill planted in 1976. Stuart is always quite pretty



and relatively accessible upon release. It is also one of the most stylistically consistent Pinot Noirs that we make. Since 2006 it has always been made using 100% whole bunches. The 2012 is very youthful and quite classic. Looking at a line-up of Stuart since 2006 shows that this 2012 is right up there as one of the best....but they are all quite lovely in their own way. The Stuart Pinot is a lovely wine that is often overshadowed by our close planted vineyard wines.

2012 De La Terre: Without a doubt this is the best De La Terre that I have made in this vineyard's very young life. It is perfumed with a lovely mint character and has great opulence and balance. It drives through the palate with verve and energy. I am overjoyed that this 10000 vine / ha vineyard cropping at 500 g / vine is showing it's class at only 5 years of age! I can only guess at what the future holds. Extraordinary value.

2012 De La Roche: Whilst the de-stemmed 2011 release was a beautifully elegant example of cool climate 'Syrah' which I love, it still is not the supreme 100% whole bunch expression that the site is capable of. This 2012 is! It reminds me of tasting my first ever Guigal single vineyard Cote Rotie whilst at University. I was spell bound by the savoury, meaty decadence! This wine is what cool climate Shiraz is capable of if you are brave enough to abandon the simple sweet fruit Australian template and travel to the dark shadowlands of wild savoury madness. Drink this with venison and wearing a bear skin. Long hair and beard for extra insight. Beret essential.

So there you have the latest releases. It is probably one of the strongest line-ups we have ever released. All the wines in this newsletter are expressive and full of character. All require a big glass, a good meal and thought.

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