

Through the Bottom of My Glass

Bellvale Wines Quarterly Newsletter April 2017

Sth Gippsland – and mother nature

Last newsletter, in November, we were just coming out of the big wet - and the coolest October on record. Now we are seeing the results of that unique weather pattern in this year's harvest – in how the fruit set was delivered and the timing of each yard of vines.

Harvest time

I mentioned on Facebook about our two helpers from Europe for this harvest. Luca is a winemaker from Abruzzo and Yannick hails from Marseilles. Their input has been invaluable. Just having fresh sets of eyes on the procedures is fascinating and refreshing, as sometimes winemaking can be a lonely game.

We've just brought in the last of the Pinot Noir (after the Pinot Grigio and then the Chardonnay). It's a long busy month, but I'm always so motivated at this time of year. Harvest was three weeks late due to the previous spring's weather conditions, although I'm pleased by what I'm seeing come in.

Exciting news about our wines overseas

Well we've had some accolades recently including Joel Robuchon's Michelin starred restaurant at the famed Hotel Metropole in Monte Carlo, now pouring our 2007 Pinot Noir, through to a sommelier's group in Milan including our 2013 Stony Block Pinot Noir, against six others in an Australian tasting, only to have it come up trumps!

What we've tasted and learned

We've had my French sommelier Friends Alex and John out from France and we've spent 2 weeks trying some wonderful wines. Here are two stand outs that come to mind. We had a brilliant 2014 Anjou blanc from Richard LeRoy with a king fish carpaccio, just with the lightest squeeze of lemon and interestingly a little passionfruit - just a delightful combination.

Another day we shared a huge platter of French cheeses with a beautiful 2014 Chardonnay from Ardeche in the Rhone-Alpes region, 'Le fruit de la Patience' by Bock.

And then there was a magnificent Barolo, that we had with a lovely roast beef meal, it was a 2006 Conterno Fantino – the flavour's been described as having an abundance of red fruits, brown spices, tobacco and lush texture. Search them out 'cause they're all great ones.

A few bits of news...

I'm heading to Italy and France next month. Italy mainly, to talk to some producers in Barolo about my few acres of Nebbiolo plantings. They're always so generous with their time and knowledge.

If you haven't experienced it yet, make sure you grab tickets for next year's Opera in the Market – we sponsored this year's event again and it just gets better and better, with superb baritones, sopranos and tenors in a truly unique setting at the Queen Vic Market every February.

And finally we're rolling over to the 2016 Estate Pinot Grigio and the 2014 Athena's Vineyard Chardonnay, just in time for winter.

Enjoy your wine. **John**