

CHAMBERS

Chambers Rosewood Vineyard, Barkly Street, Rutherglen VIC 3685.

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Welcome to our first edition for 2002 and very special salutations to all our new subscribers. I hope that you will enjoy sharing our news and participate in some of the various competitions and events throughout the year.

We all know who said "Life wasn't meant to be easy" and "I have not had sexual relations with that woman" but who on earth came up with "time flies when you're having fun?" And what does it mean if time is whizzing by, but you don't seem to be having a great time? Two months of the new year gone already - it does makes you think doesn't it!

The holiday season has, as usual, been very busy with many familiar faces and lots of new friends calling at the cellar door. Many of our visitors came north to escape the unseasonable weather in Melbourne to join the amazingly broad range of visitors including cyclists, walking groups and the happy travellers who come on Ken Buscall's horse drawn carriage.

Canberran's are travelling west in even greater numbers with Sydneysiders and Kiwi's, as always, sharing the camaraderie.

It seems the Robert Parker Jr reviews are benefiting our whole region by tempting people to visit and explore all the attractions of the area.

A very friendly group came into the cellar just as Jenny Buckingham, one of our new staff members, was putting the finishing touches to a display of T-shirts hanging from the rafters. She asked for their opinion - were they too high and did they catch your eye but didn't understand when they fell about laughing...until they explained that they were blind!

Everything at the cellar is poised and ready for the onslaught of vintage, the name given to the time of the year when the grapes are picked. Anticipatory pallets of bottles, packaging materials and corks stand like silent sentinels around the buildings.

The cooler than usual weather and late rains have caused some anxious moments for our vineyard workers, as these are ideal conditions for mildew and botrytis problems. Ripening seems to be a good two or three weeks behind previous years.

Our vineyards cover approximately 50 hectares with a yield of about a tonne to the acre. Although we do use some more modern wine making processes, we continue to hand pick the grapes as it is much more gentle and yields better quality fruit.

After much watching of the heavens, the fruit reached the right sugar level and our team of pickers began on February 11, 2002. So started the 140th vintage for the Chambers family with our 6th generation winemaker, Stephen Chambers at the helm. Over the next three months he will invest many, many hard and often laborious hours nursing the wine to tease out the very best qualities in each style.

Our wonderful maintenance supervisor, Kevin St John, has recently built a very smart new ramp and pit in the grape receiving area. This will maximise the efficiency of our new crusher and pump by allowing easier passage of the fruit into the hopper and de-stemmer.

Let's hope we don't have to call on the services of our faithful old basket press if our expensive modern equipment fails!

*If the soup had been as warm as the wine
and the wine as old as the fish
and the fish as young as the maid
and the maid as willing as the hostess
it would have been a very good meal! - Anon.*

Something fishy in the state of NSW

Sydney 'foodies' will be happy to hear of our new association with the Sydney Seafood School. You can now learn how to cook and enjoy a glass of wine carefully matched with dishes to provide a total taste experience!

Classes cater for every level of expertise with a super range of national and ethnic dishes. More experienced cooks can even take advantage of weekend workshops hosted by leading chefs.

With Mother's Day just around the corner a gift certificate for one or two of these classes might make a wonderful gift for those special ladies in your life!

Please see 'Upcoming Events' opposite for further details.

Wine Profile: Cabernet Sauvignon

(Pronounced Cab-er-nay Sav-in-yon)

This variety originated in the Bordeaux region of France. It is a prominent variety in Chile, California, South Africa and of course Australia.

The vine has a vigorous nature and there are distinctive tufts of fine hair under the glossy green leaves. A variety well suited to mechanical harvesting due to the grapes easily detaching from the vines.

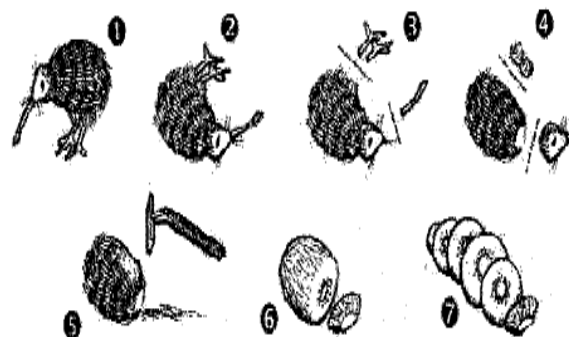
It is a variety acknowledged as producing quality fruit with good colour and unique varietal character, particularly when grown in cooler climates. The wine is usually aged and often blended with other varieties such as Merlot or Cabernet Franc (classical Bordeaux blend) to balance the high tannins.

The cloves and capsicum aromas and flavours of this variety are more prevalent in cooler climates whereas blackberries and blackcurrant are more characteristic of warmer areas. Should be served in a glass with broad, deep bowl at about 18° C and will complement heavier cuisine particularly red meat dishes. Has good cellaring potential.

Did you hear about...

The chap who was so pleased that someone has finally blended Cabernet with Sauvignon!

How to prepare a Kiwi



Up Coming Events

•Tastes of Rutherglen Festival Weekend of March 9-10 & Weekend of March 18-19, 2002

Enjoy the flavours of Rutherglen wine and food over two glorious weekends. Purchase your commemorative "Tastes" glass for \$5.50 at any participating winery. Then choose a plate of gourmet cuisine for just \$11 and receive a free glass of the winemaker's specially selected premium wine to accompany it.

We are featuring Bill's award winning '97 Riesling each Saturday and divine cake and chilled Muscat on the Sundays.

• Chambers Annual Art Exhibition & Competition March 9-19, 2002

Our theme this year is "Life, Love & Leaves" Open to all, this is our second exhibition. We hope you will dazzle us with your talents next year!

• Winery Walkabout June 7-10, 2002

• Sydney Seafood School Cooking Classes

- 10/4/02: Chilli Crab with Chambers
2000 Botrytis Tokay
- 8/5/02: Tempura & Teppan-yaki with
Chambers 1998 Riesling
- 29/5/02: Paella with Chambers 1999
Cabernet Sauvignon

For bookings and full details please contact the school on 02 9552 2180 or www.sydneyfishmarket.com.au

People Profile - Stephen Chambers

Bill's youngest child, Stephen is the sixth generation of his family to make wine at Rosewood. During the last couple of vintages Stephen has played an integral part in the production of our large product range. Naturally, Bill is always there for reference but this year sees Stephen taking on more and more responsibility.

He graduated from Adelaide University and went on to work vintages in the Barossa, Great Southern (W.A.) and France to gain and broaden his experience.

Stephen and his brother and two sisters often feature in long time visitors recollections of Rosewood. The most often related story is of tasting wine out on the verandah and being greeted by a bunch of dogs and served by children.

Speaking of dogs, cellar door visitors will notice a new dog running with Spot and Whiskey. After being found on the Freeway and spending some anxious days on death row at the local pound he luckily won Stephen's heart. We reckon he should call him 'Dodge.' What do you think?

Stephen is also a passionate hockey player – and just as well as the killer hours over vintage would see a less fit person struggle. Hard to escape an industry that is so deeply ingrained in your life!

RAVE-ON-REDS

Every now and again the gods give us an outstanding vintage. 1998 was one of these years with the reds, in particular, being very good. The 4½ stars awarded to the Cabernet Sauvignon by WineState magazine reflecting the quality.

Both the Cabernet and the Shiraz are drinking well now and have good cellaring potential. Being slightly more robust, the Cabernet with its well structured palate and good aromatic bouquet should, over time, soften while retaining good length and character.

A strictly limited allocation of the 1998 Cabernet Sauvignon and Shiraz has been made for Club Members only. Purchase up to a dozen of each but please.... get in early to avoid disappointment.

Price: \$180 per dozen

SPECIAL OFFERS

Expires 30/ 05/02
unless sold out beforehand

• Recreational Red

26lt of Dry Red
\$143 plus freight &
\$10 Container Deposit

(This equals \$5.50/litre or \$4.33/bottle!)

• Weekender White

26lt of Dry White
\$91 plus freight
& \$10 Container Deposit

(This equals \$3.50/litre or \$2.75/bottle!)

• Beaut Bulk 'n Barell

26lt Ruby Port (Only \$8.50/litre)
\$221 plus freight
& \$10 Container Deposit

26lt Tawny Port (Only \$6.50/litre)
\$169 plus freight
& \$10 Container Deposit

• All Things White & Wonderful

2 x '00 Gouais
2 x '97 Riesling
2 x '97 Chardonnay
2 x '99 Lakeside Late Harvest
2 x 2001 Light Muscat
2 x '00 Botrytis Tokay
\$125 plus freight

• Reds Under the Beds

2 x '99 Shiraz & Blue Imperial
2 x '99 Shiraz
2 x '97 Cabernet Sauvignon
2 x '97 Blue Imperial
2 x '00 Rosewood Red
2 x N/V Rutherglen Red
\$100 plus freight

• How Sweet It Is

2 x '96 Botrytis Tokay (375ml)
2 x '00 Botrytis Tokay (375ml)
1 x Old Vine Muscadelle (375ml)
1 x Olvol (375ml)
\$95 plus freight

WATCH THIS SPACE

After a long absence, a certain fortified wine which enjoys quite a cult following is on its way back onto the shelves!

As someone who could easily drink it every hour on the hour, yours truly has her taste buds ready too. Ask about it after April.

W _ _ _ U T _ USC _ T

Oak Barrels

As we get quite a few queries about setting up an oak barrel, we thought it timely to give a few pointers. When looking to purchase a barrel it is recommended that you buy a new one so that you know exactly what has been in it.

Mates from my younger days always bought a low priced bottle of whiskey to season their barrels. A full bottle was emptied in then the barrel rotated until all the spirit had evaporated or been taken up by the wood. If you choose to let the wine season the barrel, the early wine will, of course, be heavily oaked. Once you pass that stage though you shouldn't look back.

Ruby or Tawny Ports are the normal choice but other fortified wines such as Sherry, Muscat and Tokay are also very popular.

Avoid bacterial spoilage by adding Potassium Metabisulphite (available from the home brewing section in most supermarkets) to your barrel either when topping up or once a year. It should be added at a rate of 150mg per litre.

Follow these steps and you may find, like a number of our regulars, your barrel being handed down through the generations. A very nice family tradition and a lovely way to be remembered!

