

Miceli Newsletter

Spring 2009

Opening Times:

“Pinot Week”, from Sat 3 Oct to Sun 11 Oct we will be open each day (from 11.00 to 5.00). We will be presenting our **“Old and New World Comparative Tasting”** at 2.30 pm on Sat 3 Oct, to kick things off.

Following this we will be open for tastings **Cup Weekend** (Sat 31/10 - Tues 3/11), then the first weekend of each month (but available, for sales only, almost every day).

The Special Tasting promises to be a fascinating event, with our wines of current and older vintages tasted in tandem with representatives from Champagne, Chablis Burgundy, Rhone, and New Zealand. We have been able to manage this by teaming up with our new Melbourne distributors (Haviland wines) who have an amazing portfolio of **international** wines as well as boutique Australian super premium wines.

The format will be an intimate group tasting, led by myself, with plenty of opportunity for discussion (and even a fun prize for the most correct answers). As well as nibbles we will have cheese platters and Tony's (famous) Gourmet Terrines (ie. mine) available. The cost will be \$20 to cover the 16-18 wines in the tasting, numbers are limited and bookings are essential. Special 6 and 12 bottle mixed cases will be available, (**only if you come to the tasting**), with all the different wines included (and you can even repeat the tasting yourself at home and dazzle your friends!).

For the rest of Pinot Week we will be offering tastings of some older vintages of our Pinot Noirs, and a chance to buy some of these wines in mixed dozen packs. There are not many opportunities to taste and buy superb 10 year old Pinot Noirs, so don't miss out. **Cellar door only.**

Season Report:

Rainfall over Winter and the start of Spring has been bit better than predicted, though less than average, still quite reasonable. We are up to about 580 mm for the year which of course is double Melbourne's rainfall though only 75% of average. The pattern of lots of falls of 3-4 mm is nerve-wracking, each time it looks like raining properly it stops again! The result has been our soil is saturated to depth but runoff into our new dam is virtually nil (but it is still nearly full). Whilst the Pacific Ocean temperatures are much warmer than normal, the pattern is not yet typical for an El-Nino, and the Indian Ocean temperatures are neutral to favourable, so we may yet have a reasonably “normal” season. Anyway, we are well placed at this stage.

Vineyard:

Pruning is all finished now, of course, and the buds are just bursting. There are just a few unfolding leaves, in the Chardonnay. The Pinot Grigio is a bit behind as usual with only green tips on the buds. At this stage bud burst appears quite even. We would count budburst (green tips 50% on chardonnay) as 12 Sept this year, which is about a week behind average. This I think is due to the dull and intermittently (lightly) rainy conditions. We have really only had one warm day so far this Spring.

We are just in the process of (today we were interrupted by rain) planting another small section of Pinot Grigio. These vines are on a different rootstock (110R). This rootstock offers much greater drought tolerance than our other rootstocks (Schwartzman, Teleki 5C, 101-14, I didn't invent the names, don't blame me). The drawback is that all the drought tolerant stocks are more vigorous than “own-roots”. This stock is the least vigorous of the group, and we are trialling three rows to see if it will be a suitable stock if the climate continues dry.

Soil management:

As I discussed last time, good soil management is vital to the health and growth of a vineyard. Firstly, one of the major tasks at this time of the year is to control weeds.

Whilst the vines are similar to small trees with deep roots, the dense root structure of grasses and many other weeds, enables them to be very competitive with the vines. Uncontrolled, the weeds would reduce the vigour of the vines to the point where they would decline and be unfruitful. Not only that, the grass and weeds here can grow as tall as a person and this would be totally impractical to leave them.

There is a limit to mowing along the rows as the vines and posts are in the way! Certainly we mow in-between the rows. Traditionally, cultivation has been used to control weeds (ie. ploughing with “disc” or “tyne” type implements). There are devices that dodge the implement around the vine trunks. This is somewhat time (and fuel) consuming and can damage the vines (depending on how good the operator is), but the main disadvantage is that cultivation damages soil structure, and causes rapid breakdown of organic matter, returning CO₂ to the atmosphere. The surface vine roots are killed and their access to the surface nutrients is prevented. Then the soil under the vines becomes degraded with erosion risk, poor moisture penetration, and lack of worms.

We use herbicide to manage our vine row weeds for this reason, as the weeds can be killed without disturbance to the soil or worms or vine roots. We use Roundup and rotate this with Basta, to prevent resistant weed buildup, as both of these herbicides are both of very low toxicity to animals (us) and also soil organisms, and then break down very rapidly to leave harmless residues. Basta is a “natural” product in the sense that it was discovered as a product of a soil bacteria that lives in swampy soils. Roundup is an analogue of the amino acid glycine, but with a phosphorus atom instead of a nitrogen. Soil bacteria break it down into plant nutrients.

The hazards of herbicides are the same as anything else, if used unwisely to “nuke” all vegetation great destruction will occur. When used judiciously, they enable us to grow a natural cover of weeds along the row in Winter, and kill them in Spring while retaining the benefits of the organic matter they have produced. Even a casual inspection will demonstrate that our surface soils are covered in trash/mulch, rich in organic matter and worm casts, yabbies and crabs produce their holes as do ants, and a wide range of beneficial insects over-Winter on the weeds. By the way, I am not a fan of bringing in straw mulch, apart from stealing carbon and nutrients from other sites, the fuel (carbon) cost for production and transportation is very high.

Newsletter Special:

We always have great specials for our newsletter customers so please check the most recent newsletter for this.

P.S. We are currently working on our web site which if everything goes well should be done before

Christmas. When it is up you will get us at www.miceli.com.au.

Tasting Notes:

Iolanda Pinot Grigio 2008

A distinctive, dry, flavoursome white wine with clean acid finish.

Pale greenish yellow. Full-bodied, but fine, with typical Pinot Grigio characters- mineral/flinty, brown pear, lemon, honey and floral. The palate is fresh and clean, and it has great persistence of flavour.

Alc 13.5%

Olivia's Chardonnay 2005

An elegant wine with depth and power.

Brilliant pale greenish yellow. Peach, cashew, citrus, “struck match” and superbly integrated vanillan oak..

Smooth mouthfeel and fine acid balance, with great intensity and length of flavour. Alc 13.5%

6 Bronze

Dry Pinot Rose 2006

This is a serious rose, totally dry, with great depth of fruit and a clean acid finish.

Brilliant strawberry pink, with plum, strawberry and a hint of vanillan oak. Intense and full bodied with

palate freshness, smooth mouthfeel, good acid and great length of flavour. Wine Wise Highly

Recommended (Best of Category) Alc 13.5%

Lucy's Choice Pinot Noir 2006

Serious pinot noir, a medium bodied red with elegance, richness, and complexity

Brilliant deep red. Rich dark cherries, coffee, spice, and fragrant oak. Savoury, with great length and silky tannins, a wine with body, complexity, and depth. Alc

14.0 %

Michael Brut 2004

Aperitif style- dry, fine, flavoursome, complex with refreshing acid finish.

The flavours are “fine” and intense, with toasty/vegemite yeast, strawberry and hints of melon, pear and honey. The palate is very creamy, long, with cleansing acid and a fresh dry finish. AL 11.0% 1 Gold

Rose Methode Champenoise 2001

A flavoursome, delicate, and complex dry sparkling rose, with a fine bead.

Brilliant pale salmon pink. The palate is rich and flavoursome, with creamy and toasty yeast, strawberry pinot noir fruit, great length, and a clean dry finish. 12.5 % alc./vol 1 Gold 2 Silver 4 Halliday*

Satisfaction Guarantee:

Any wine that is spoiled will be credited or replaced. Any wine that you wish to return that has been well looked after and still in saleable condition will be refunded. Special museum release wines excepted.

Pauline & Anthony Miceli