

Miceli Newsletter

Winter 2012

Opening Times:

We will be open for the Queen's Birthday Weekend- Sat, Sun, Mon, June 9-11 11.00 - 5.00.

On Sunday and Monday we will be serving food- Home made gourmet soups with sourdough rolls, and cheese platters.

We will also be at the Red Hill Showgrounds on Saturday, along with all the other wineries.

Following this we will open for tastings every weekend, and available, for sales only, almost every day.

Season Report:

After a consistently warm and humid growing season vintage started early, at the end of March. Weather through the harvest was cooler and variable, and although we did finish in April it was only by a whisker (Sat 28/4), which is still the second earliest finish yet (the earliest was 17/4 in 2005). This was 2 weeks earlier than last year and at higher levels of ripeness.

New Releases

We are releasing the **2008 Lucy's Choice Pinot Noir**, the **2006 Michael Brut**, and **Rose Brut (NV)**

The Lucy's Choice Pinot Noir shows the benefit of the warm 2008 summer and early Autumn, followed by a long slow ripening phase, with picking extending into May. The tannin and colour are intense, full bodied, and soft. Indeed, this wine has both the delicacy, softness and tannin sweetness (but no sugar) we love in pinot, and enough body to hold its own with rich foods including red meats

The 2006 Michael Brut shows the type of savoury characters and complexity I admire in the more premium single vineyard champagnes. Our sparkling wine style continues to diverge further from the standard Australian pattern, with very low sugar at picking, oxidative juice handling, warm fermentation, full malolactic fermentation, and long aging in the bottle added to our very special fruit.

The Rose Brut continues the same pattern as the "Michael" with additional richness from a higher percentage of pinot noir.

Vineyard Report:

A few episodes of heavy rain in March and April gave us a bit of anxiety, but the vineyard sailed through without damage due to the impeccable canopy management and attention to detailed fruit thinning as mentioned in the last report. This is where all out obsessive and difficult work pays off!

Unfortunately we had a major tractor breakdown just after putting the first nets on- the brakes- and getting the parts relied on clearing the container (from Italy) through customs, which took unusually long (though we weren't importing any drugs or anything). Thus we were 3 weeks without the tractor and after we got it back there was another week of solid rain before we could get out in the vineyard again.

Thankfully we had netted all the Pinot Noir (which shows up red immediately at veraison), and amazingly the birds did not seem to notice the other (pale) grapes were ripening too, right up until the last few days before the nets went on, so the damage they did was very slight. It was only a couple of weeks more before we were taking the nets off again to start picking!

Crop levels were down this year as expected, due to the coolness of 2011 which reduced the flower number for this season. strange ways, for example the chardonnay ripened a lot slower than the pinot noir, which is usually the opposite way round. Also the vines dropped their leaves very sharply at the end of harvest, several weeks before most years.

New Vineyard Report:

The Pinot Grigio on 110R rootstock planted in 2009 produced a 3 kg per vine crop of beautiful clean fruit in small loose bunches. These vines at 2 years 4 months of age showed amazing strength and fruitfulness, but also balance, with flavours the equal of the original vineyard.

The Pinot Grigio planted in 2008 on Teleki 5C and 101-14 rootstocks both showed some hen and chicken but produced a good crop of really flavoursome fruit also.

Again, the purported differences in ripening and vigour attributable to the different rootstocks were not apparent to us, obviously swamped by the seasonal conditions and soil and management etc.

The Vineyard in Winter:

For the casual observer the vineyard might look inactive, and more or less "dead" in Winter, but even apart from the pruning this is far from the case.

Of course, getting the nets off and put away is no small task. We try to do this a bit as we go but this year it all ended up at the end.

Adding wires to the trellis for the new vines, and making repairs, is also a job for this time of the year.

Damaged areas of grass from vintage work are re-seeded at this time so it can be re-grown before Spring.

Next all the long grass along the rows and headlands has to be mowed, but this has to be managed along with the weather to avoid damaging the soil by wheel compaction which can affect both drainage and water penetration, as well as root growth.

Flushing out salinity (which the winds bring to us from the sea spray) depends on the free penetration of the rain and drainage of the soil.

To be truly successful in the long term, farming has to be not so much about farming plants as the soil, but this does not mean tillage, disturbing the soil damages texture, and rapidly releases carbon from the surface.

Whilst we do not subscribe to the list of rules called "organic" we see retaining and increasing the carbon in the soil, along with nitrogen and other nutrients as critical, and the leaves of the vines, which can so easily be blown completely away is one important factor. Thus we try to time the mowing, in two passes, to leave the grass long enough to catch the leaves before we can mulch them under the rows with the mower as soon as they fall. Of course it doesn't help when the mower breaks during the process.

We don't believe in transporting carbon sources from other farms because there is no overall net gain and a cost to transport and spread such materials. So we produce huge amounts of organic matter by managing the midrow with lightly mowed deep rooted (>1m deep) tall fescue, mulch the leaves and branches (canes) from our deep rooted small trees (vines), and in Autumn and Winter the grass and weeds which grow along the rows under the vines. And lots of worms dig it all in for us!

The other main soil factor is moisture, which with 221 mm in May and 118 mm in April is enough already to set up the vines for a good start to Spring.

Newsletter Special:

We always offer great specials with each newsletter, so if you want to receive it about 3 times a year please email us with your (postal) address, and don't miss out with our strict expiry dates (in case I don't get to the website in time)

website: www.miceli.com.au.

Email: sales@miceli.com.au.

Tasting Notes:

Iolanda Pinot Grigio 2009

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

Pale greenish yellow. Full-bodied, but fine, with typical Pinot Grigio characters- mineral/flinty, brown pear, honey and lemon. The palate is fresh and clean, and it has great persistence of flavour. 2 silver Halliday

89 pts, top of category Royal Melbourne

Olivia's Chardonnay 2008 *special**

An elegant and delicate wine with complexity and subtlety.

Brilliant pale greenish yellow. Citrus, nectarine, butterscotch, vanilla and struck match. Seamless mouthfeel with perfectly integrated oak, restrained and yet powerful, with fine acid balance and no residual sugar. Alc 13.5% 2 bronze

D clone Pinot Rose (dry) NV

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

The colour is an aristocratic pale salmon pink. Delicious strawberry pinot fruit, with complexity, gaminess, and freshness. The palate shows great length and balance. Wine Wise Highly

Recommended (Best of Category) Alc 13.0%

Lucy's Choice Pinot Noir 2008 *new release**

Pinot Noir with richness, depth and complexity.

The colour is a brilliant deep red. Black cherry, dark chocolate, and earthy, with some spice, and subtle oak. Lively and complex with delicious pinot fruit, full palate weight, and balance. Alc 13.5%

Michael Brut 2006 *new release**

Aperitif style- Crisp, refreshing, and dry, this is an aperitif style wine with great subtlety and length.

Beautifully pale with persistent fine bead, it has lovely yeastiness, lemon, honey and toast, this wine is savoury and elegant. Recently disgorged. Alc 11.0 %

Rose Brut (NV)

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. Recently disgorged with more than 3 years on lees. 11.5 % alc./vol 1 Gold 2 Silver 4 Halliday 92 pts*

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. Specials and museum releases excepted. **Pauline & Anthony Miceli**