

Ten Minutes by Tractor Wine Co.

mornington peninsula

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The Pinot Celebration and our Pinot Noir style

The 2005 Mornington Peninsula Pinot Celebration was a huge success. Sessions included Exploring New World Pinot Noir, Exploring Mornington Peninsula Terroir and Influence of Clones & Terroir; attendees tasted wines from Burgundy, Oregon, California, New Zealand and other Australian regions.

We highly recommend the Pinot Celebration; watch for details of the next one in 2007.

Keynote speaker Matt Kramer (author and *Wine Spectator* columnist/critic) spoke at length, and created a lot of discussion, about Pinot Noir as a “*vin morale*”; he believes that, more than any other grape, when one grows Pinot Noir one is seeking to hear “the voice of the land” because Pinot Noir acts as a transmitter of that voice – the winemaker’s moral obligation is to amplify the voice without distorting it; Kramer believes the winemaker’s influence, or “signature”, should not intrude.

James Halliday agreed though pointed out that *terroir* is only revealed by the hand of man,

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Matt Kramer

referring to such decisions as clonal selection, row orientation, planting density and so on.

One of the more interesting tastings was Pinot Styles From Around The World. It demonstrated that there are many different valid styles and it prompted us to explain to you what

our style is and the qualities we are aiming to develop in our Pinots.

Patrick Iland and Denis Fetzmann¹ suggest a range of sensory characteristics for Pinot Noir (see table below); of course there are not just three styles, there is a continuum between the extremes.

We are aiming to produce Pinot that is the finest expression of our vineyards and which provides the most elegant example of Mornington Peninsula Pinot characters. We are targeting a flavour spectrum of cherry moving into black cherry, strawberry moving into raspberry; and we are certainly looking to develop those classic Burgundian secondary characteristics and the mouthfeel, length and complexity which we believe distinguish great Pinots. True Pinot is not about the Shiraz look-alikes at one extreme, nor the wishy-washy, sappy versions (usually the result of poor site selection, overcropping and young vines) at the other.

Pinot Noir Sensory Characteristics Spectrum

	Light	à	Medium to dark plum	à	Overly dark
Colour					
Primary aromas/flavours	Green sappy, cherry, strawberry	à	Mature sappy, black cherry, violets, perfumed, raspberry, rhubarb, prunes, blackcurrant	à	Stewed plums, jammy
Secondary aromas/flavours			Gamey, barnyard, earthy, truffle, forest floor, mushroom		
Mouthfeel	Light, thin, green/sappy, bitter	à	Velvet, soft, round, light-medium puckering, light graininess with age, mouthwatering, length, complexity	à	Overly tannic, medium puckering, dry red-like



Vineyards, terroir and vintage 2005

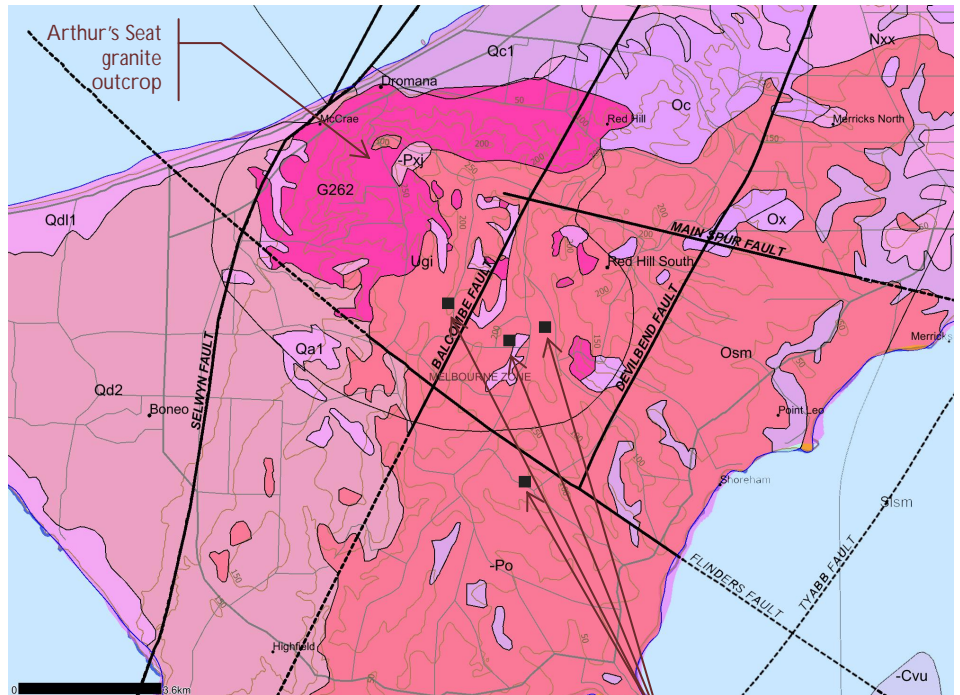
Our last newsletter came out during flowering and things were looking good; even growth and nice bunch development were promising signs for the coming vintage. However, since then we have had unseasonable humidity, extreme heat and cold and extreme rain to make this one of the most unpredictable and exciting vintages seen on the Mornington Peninsula.

Most Melbournians will remember 2 February 2005 – not only was it Melbourne's coldest February day on record (13°C) but the 24 hours to 9:00am on 3 February were also the wettest on record (120mm).

We define terroir as the sum total of the natural features of a vineyard - topography, geology, soil and climate - that all influence the character of a wine.

Which brings us to soil. Two days after this deluge everything was green but we were back to dust again, at least on the surface. In our December newsletter we wrote about the ancient volcanic based soils on which all our vineyards (in fact almost all the higher vineyards on the Peninsula) are grown – one of the key attributes of this soil is that it drains well, particularly in summer when the water table drops, and yet retains moisture at depth. So what you ask? A few expert opinions...

- 4 "The terroir effect can largely be explained through its influence on vine water status."²
- 4 "It is likely that the effects of climate and soil on fruit quality are mediated through their influence on vine water status."³
- 4 "What does make a great terroir then? The answer is found in soil physical properties which regulate water supply to the vine."⁴
- 4 "High wine quality appears to require adequate, but not excessive, water supply early in the season to establish



Source: GeoVic (<http://nremap-sc.nre.viv.gov.au>)

a good canopy to support the crop, followed by moderate stress that limits further growth, but allows healthy leaves to fully ripen the fruit."⁵

It seems that, above all else, it is how soil manages water which influences grape quality – great wines can be produced on all sorts of soil: limestone in Champagne, Burgundy and parts of St Emilion, gravel in Bordeaux, rocks in Châteauneuf-du-Pape, slate in Mosel and so on.

A very simple example of the effect of terroir...

Pinot Noir ripens earliest on our Wallis vineyard, on average, 6 days before Judd which is, in turn, 7 days earlier than McCutcheon.

For Chardonnay, Wallis is also our earliest ripener, on average just 1 day ahead of McCutcheon which is 8 days earlier than Judd.

In the context of water management, vineyard age is a key factor with older vineyards having deeper root structures. Although our vineyards – now between 12 and 16 years old – are equipped for irrigation (with the exception of the

new organic Spedding vineyard), it has not been necessary to use it for several vintages.

The major challenge of these rich, basaltic soils is that their high fertility results in vigorous vine growth – one part of managing vigour is canopy management, essentially manipulating the canopy microclimate, which includes such practices as...

- 4 Shoot thinning – removing suckers and unwanted shoots to maintain a light penetrating canopy.
- 4 Shoot positioning – maintaining the desired shape of the trellis system (in our case Scott Henry and VSP) and positioning the fruit zone within that system.
- 4 Leaf plucking – opening up the area around the clusters for good airflow and sun penetration without excessive exposure which can lead to sunburn.
- 4 Hedging – trimming shoots to their maximum desired length.
- 4 Cluster or bunch thinning – prevents over cropping and eliminates under ripe clusters.

At this time of the year we are concentrating on leaf plucking and

References

- ¹ Iland & Fetzmann 2000, "Cool Climate Pinot Noir Wine Styles – What, Where And Why?", *5th International Symposium On Cool Climate Viticulture And Oenology*
- ² van Leeuwen 2004, "Effects Of Soil And Climate On Water Relations In Vines", *29th ASEV/ES Annual Technical Meeting & Symposium: Grapes, Wine And Environment*
- ³ van Leeuwen, Friant *et al* 2004, "Influence Of Climate, Soil And Cultivar On Terroir", *American Journal Of Enology And Viticulture*, 55(3): 207-217
- ⁴ Smart 2002, "New World Responses To Old World Terroir", *5th International Symposium Of The Institute Of Masters Of Wine: The Changing Face Of Wine*
- ⁵ Lakso & Pool 2000, "Drought Stress Effects On Vine Growth, Function Ripening And Implications For Wine Quality", *29th Annual New York Wine Industry Workshop*



bunch thinning. Vineyard manager Alan Murray explains, "Now is the time to focus on the fruit to turn all the hard work of growing into ripening. To ensure we achieve the best possible results this vintage, all care is being taken to increase the quality of our crops. This is done by extensive leaf plucking to expose bunches to light and reduce the risk of disease (by improving air flow) and, of course, by thinning fruit."

As usual in our cool climate, and exacerbated by this vintage's strange weather, there has been considerable disease pressure; with careful canopy management we have not had any major problems.

We saw the first signs of veraison on 4 February and Alan started fine tuning the vineyards. Veraison (the process of fruit losing acidity, gaining tannin and sugar and turning from green to red or gold) is the time to thin fruit; Alan again, "At this point we can safely assess our yields and reduce our crop if necessary and by doing so cut out any 'green fruit' that will rob us of intensity and character. An added benefit is promoting synchronous ripening of blocks which ensures all fruit is picked at an optimum level rather than an average with some just right, some over, some under-ripe".

Our vineyard crew are, as we speak, meticulously, vine by vine, carrying out both these operations (this is the third pass this vintage for leaf plucking) to turn this extreme season into extreme wine! In our ultra premium blocks we are targeting very low yields of 2.5 tonne/ha (1 tonne/acre) for Pinot and about 7 (2.8) for Chardonnay.

Equally important at this time is putting nets on –veraison means the arrival of flocks of birds, attracted by the increasing sugars signalled by the changing colours. This would be a great challenge for Christo –he's just done Central Park in New York so one of our vineyards should be easy (our crew would be extremely grateful).

Restaurants news

Pello

Pello restaurant in Sydney is holding a Pinot Noir Journey dinner on 14 April to explore the versatility of various forms of the variety including our Rosé (served with an Amuse Bouche) and 10X 2001 (served with Roast Jewfish Fillet, Cinnamon Braised Baby Octopus, White Beans & Parsley Emulsion).

Pello was awarded 1 chef's hat in the Sydney Morning Herald Good

Food Guide. 71 Stanley Street, East Sydney, 02 9360 4640

Otto

Otto, one of Sydney's finest restaurants (2 chef's hat in the Good Food Guide), is pouring both our Reserve Pinot Noir and Reserve Chardonnay by the glass –6 Cowper Wharf Road, Woolloomooloo, 02 9368 7488.

Mrs Jones

One of our favourite restaurants is Mrs Jones at 312 Drummond Street, Carlton (03 9347 3312). They emphasise seasonal produce and regularly change their menu to reflect that. Award winning chef Andrew McConnell has developed a recipe specifically for us to match our Pinot Noir... Smoked and braised duck with mustard fruits and hazelnuts.

Smoked duck breast –Remove legs from whole bird and set aside. Leave breast plate on and cure with sea salt, thyme, bay, orange peel and black peppercorn for a few hours; wash cure off. Smoke with aromatics and wood chips until well smokey, about ½ an hour, but still rare.

Braised duck legs –Remove thigh bone and tie meat together, braise in chicken stock with *bouquet garni*, until tender, cool.

Some recent accolades for our wines...

2004 10X Sauvignon Blanc

4 November 2004 Federation Square Victorian Wine Awards voted "People's Choice"

4 "Intensely-flavoured, tropical fruit driven surprise package from the Mornington Peninsula that guarantees total enjoyment."
23 January 2005, John Fordham, *The Sunday Telegraph*

4 "Very pale gold. Nose of flowers and lychees. Very dry, clean crisp style, herbal edge adds to the fruit ripeness, zippy acid finish. Scores well as an aperitif."
31 January 2005, Martin Field, *e-vine*

2003 Pinot Gris

4 "Top Aussie White –A Mornington Peninsula wine made by Moorooduc Estate's Rick McIntyre, this has a spicy aroma coupled with honey,

peach and some bready yeast characters. It's soft and rich and easy to enjoy; a year's bottle-age contributes to its appeal."
15 March 2005, Huon Hooke, *Sydney Morning Herald Good Living*

2004 10X Rosé

4 "If you enjoy first class rosés try this. This is the first rosé made by this Mornington Peninsula winery and it's a cracker. Made from 100 per cent pinot noir, it's unusual as most pinot growers prefer to save fruit for more expensive reds than rosés. Fresh rose-petal nose, big fruit on long palate. Good acid balance. Perfect with antipasto, tapas or leftovers."
2 February 2005, Jeff Collerson, *The Daily Telegraph*

4 "Best Rosé –The colour and bouquet show some advanced development and perhaps a hint of wood age. That all makes it a complex, savoury style which has more depth of interest than many

rosés. It's clean and intense and the low sugar level means it has a clean, dry finish and is food friendly."
1 March 2005, Huon Hooke, *Sydney Morning Herald Good Living*

2002 10X Pinot Noir

4 <<<<<

"Definitely a pinot! Quite spicy and earthy on the nose, following through on to the palate. Olive and cherry flavours, well-handled oak. A tad feral but this gives it character."
Winestate Annual 2005 :: Best Wines of 2004 (first in the \$30-35 class)

2002 Reserve Pinot Noir

4 <<<<<

"Intense and complex cola, peat, earthy nose with a perfumed lift. Long, rich and fleshy in the mouth. Very ripe, almost raisined, fruit flavours. Good drinking now."
Winestate Annual 2005 :: Best Wines of 2004 (equal first in \$40-45 range)



Salad – Toast and peel hazelnuts, lightly crush,
Mustard fruits - chopped,
Shallots - grilled with skin on, then peeled,
Baby beetroot - washed and roasted, peeled and splashed with vinaigrette while still warm,
Beetroot leaves - washed,
Mustard cress and wild rocket leaves - washed,
Fresh shallots - finely sliced,
Chervil sprigs

Red wine vinaigrette finished with hazelnut oil to dress salad, season.

Serve and wash down with a glass of Ten Minutes By Tractor Pinot Noir.

Some other restaurants serving our wines

In and around Melbourne...

Ambrosia
Bacash

Bellzain
Bistro Thierry
Blue Tongue Wine Bar
Bottega
Donovan's
France-Soir
Café d'Orsay
Glaze
Hairy Canary
Langton's
Lantana
Mrs Jones
Number 8 @ Crown
Pearl
The Great Provider
The Healesville Hotel
The Lake House
The Melbourne Wine Room
Vue du Monde
Waterfront @ Station Pier

Melbourne retailers include...

Armada Cellars
Boccaccio Cellars

Cloudwine
Randalls

In and around Sydney...

Catalina Rose Bay
Eastbank
Flying Fish
Ocean Room
Opera Bar
Otto
Pello
Wildfire
Yoshi

Sydney retailers include...

Australian Wine Centre
Avalon Fine Wines
Best Cellars
Cabarita Cellars
Five Way Cellars

The cellar door and the Tractor Club

New releases

Our 2003 10X Pinot Gris, 2002 Reserve Chardonnay, 2001 Reserve Pinot Noir and 2003 10X Tempranillo are now sold out.

The good news –our 2004 10X Pinot Gris, the 2003 Reserve Chardonnay and the 2002 10X and Reserve Pinot Noirs will be released at the cellar door during Easter. The 2004 10X Tempranillo will not be released until the Winter Wine Weekend (11-13 June).

The 2004 10X Pinot Gris has the wonderful savoury characteristics reminiscent of fine Alsace wines which we prefer to the lighter Pinot Grigio styles; Huon Hooke describes our style as "soft, and rich and easy to enjoy".

Our 2003 Reserve Chardonnay continues the style of the highly rated 2002 while the 2002 Reserve and 10X Pinots were both awarded 4 stars in the Winestate Annual (see reviews previous page).

The 2004 10X Tempranillo is a blockbuster, a wonderfully rich, full bodied version of this grape from our Wallis vineyard.

Special Chardonnay offer to Tractor Club members

We have decided to release a very limited amount of our 2000 10X Chardonnay which we have been keeping aside with our library wines. This wine, rated 92 by Halliday, is looking superb with some bottle age. We also have small amounts of the wonderful 2001 Judd Chardonnay and, of course, our current release, the 2002 10X.

As a special offer to our Tractor Club members we are putting together a mixed case of 3 bottles of the 2000 10X, 3 bottles of the 2001 Judd and 6 bottles of the 2002 10X at a case price of \$285.60 (\$23.80 per bottle – a 15% discount on the 2002 10X price) and will include free delivery Australia wide until the end of April.

This offer is extremely limited due to the very small amount of 2000 10X available. Wines will be strictly allocated on a first come, first served basis.

Winter wine weekend

A date for your diary – 11-13 June 2005. On Saturday 11 June, all

Mornington Peninsula wineries are showcasing their wines at the Red Hill Showgrounds along with food, music and wine related seminars.

Our cellar door will be open each of these days with some great entertainment planned (more details next newsletter) plus you will have the opportunity of tasting the new 2004 Tempranillo and our full range of wines.

Opening times

Our cellar door is open for tastings and light lunches every weekend and all public holidays (other than Good Friday) from 11:00am-5:00pm. Please call in, Julie would love to see you.

Important! Email Addresses...

In future we will be making some of our special offers to Tractor Club members direct via email. If you would like to receive these offers please make certain that we have your email address – just email us at info@tenminutesbytractor.com.au with "Tractor Club" and your name as the subject line and we will ensure you are on our email distribution list.

