



Willow Creek News

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The Imported Wine Boom

Travelling around Melbourne, I've noticed an increasing number of wine retailers offering many more wines from France, Italy, Germany and Spain. Why is this?

Ignited by a favourable exchange rate, European wine imports have grown along with public interest. The price of European wine has dropped 20 percent in the past two years and an increasing number of bottle shops are featuring imported wines. Not only is the offer for less expensive imports, but also interesting and indigenous European wine varieties are starting to emerge.

There is also more top quality, traditional varieties of European wine available, again, due to the high Australian dollar and as a result of slow sales in America and England.

All these wines are cheaper than ever before. So how is this affecting the local

wine producers? It is a bit of a 'perfect storm' for small producers in the current market – there are thousands of premium wines no longer profitable as an export product due to the exchange rate, so they are competing in an already crowded domestic market, and despite all the recent bad weather the total grape harvest in 2011 was up on last year, putting more pressure on prices.

Our best option is to continue improving our own wines, and hope the greater range and accessibility of imported wines fuels the interest of wine consumers to enjoy both the local and imported product!

EMILY MAKIV - GENERAL MANAGER

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The Chardonnay Project

A quick update on the progress of The Chardonnay Project; the ultra competitive staff Chardonnay-making odyssey.

When first mooted, we were approaching the harvest with hope in our hearts that all picking and production options were open to us on the much-vaunted 'fruity-savoury Chardonnay continuum'.

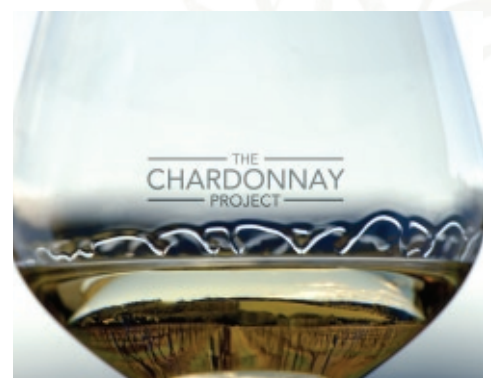
However, the notoriously wet weather took out some options, specifically harvest date alternatives. Once the fruit had got to a reasonable level of ripeness, and the sun temporarily appeared in late March, we picked the lot so everyone was pretty much starting with the same juice.

So the Chardonnay Project has morphed into four different maturation regimes, involving different iterations of lees contact, malolactic fermentation, and timing of additions of sulphur dioxide. Names have been written onto barrels now that everyone has claimed their favourite. Judging will take place in late October, and we plan to bottle a barrel of each of the contenders late this year. We will have all four wines available at the Cellar Door from early 2012, so you can judge for yourselves...

GERALDINE MCFAUL – WINEMAKER



European wine is getting cheaper...





Joe Turnaturi the Flying Wine Guy

The Flying Fish Restaurant wine list has been awarded two wine glasses in Australian Gourmet Traveller Wine Magazine. This stylish Sydney eatery, unsurprisingly specializing in seafood, is perched atop Jones Bay wharf and features stunning views across Darling Harbour. Head sommelier, Joe Turnaturi is an enthusiastic advocate for cool climate savoury style wines with restrained fruit and lingering flavours. He has assembled a pan-regional wine list with a heavy focus on Australian and New Zealand wines; emphasizing aromatic whites and cool climate, lighter style reds.

At the Flying Fish, Joe's mission is to encourage people to try something new. His time is spent constantly sorting through wines that will work well with the Flying Fish menu. The food comes first so he chooses wines that fit with the food philosophy of the restaurant.

We enjoy a chat about Joe's philosophy on wine and food. "I think that whenever you eat and drink you should always try to have the best possible wine and the best possible food at the moment. You do it with the intention of having the memory of what you ate and drank- an enduring impression. You don't want too much going on. My ideal meal is one or two courses with a couple of wines that really weld the food together."

He loves the Mornington Peninsula which he visited five years ago and believes the region has really made a name for itself with pinot noir. "My perfect wine and food match is a Murray Cod with Jerusalem artichokes, pencil legs, pearl onions and red wine consommé served with a bottle of Willow Creek Pinot Noir."

I ask Joe which person in history he would most like to share a bottle of wine with? "Maria Callas... and I would pour a magnificent Brezza Barolo while we enjoyed some Verdi together." Quite the opera buff, Joe says that if he wasn't a sommelier, he would have been a theatre critic.

ARTHUR O'BRYAN

Family Friendly Flavours Before Sunset at Salix Bistro



From October, every Friday Salix Bistro will be opening in the early evening with a food and wine experience tailored especially for young families. Parents are invited to unwind in our modern dining area where kids can choose from a \$10 children's menu.

After dinner, the children can go outdoors and run around our expansive lawn while parents can relax with a glass of wine and

enjoy the soft golden light across the vineyards. Just about the perfect way to indulge on a Friday night especially if you want to get the kids to bed, well fed and on time.

Salix Bistro will be open every Friday from 5pm from 7th October

Families can enjoy an early dinner

Kids Menu \$10 (main & dessert)

Bookings 5989 7640

BECOME A WINEMAKER FOR A DAY

Sunday 16th October
11am-4pm

Indulge your secret
winemaking ambitions!

Hosted by our winemaker Geraldine McFaul, this is your chance to blend your own pinot noir and get your hands dirty. Gumboots optional!

\$99 per person includes lunch at Salix Bistro with matching wines including Willow Creek Vineyard brut, pinot gris, rosé and pinot noir. See the full menu on our website.

Reservations – Salix Restaurant 5989 7640

For more information about Pinot Week visit www.mpva.com.au



OCTOBER PINOT WEEK
8 – 16 OCTOBER 2011



Willow Creek Vineyard at the Portsea Polo

We are very excited to announce we are the Official Wine Partner of the Mornington Peninsula's Portsea Polo again in 2012.

This spectacular event will be held at Point Nepean National Park on Saturday 14th January 2012. Join us for a fabulous day out.

For more info or to purchase tickets visit www.portseapolo.com.au



Spring Celebration at Gill's Nursery

Our friends at Gill's Nursery in Cheltenham (266 Bay Rd) have invited us to be a part of their annual Spring Celebration. Held on Saturday 8th October the nursery will come alive with free activities for all the family.

- Garden Workshops on edible gardening & companion planting, pruning for beginners and more
- Face painting, jumping castle and potting up for kids
- Meet landscape designers
- Bring in problem plants and questions and talk to the experts
- And of course free wine tasting with Willow Creek Vineyard

For more information visit www.gillsnursery.com.au

New Releases

With the weather mercifully warming up we will be releasing the early-drinking wines, bottled in late July, the first of the 2011 vintage – likely to be a memorable one for aromatic whites.



The 2011 Willow Creek Vineyard Sauvignon Blanc continues in the style of the past couple of vintages, but is slightly crisper in acidity due to the very cool vintage. With flavours of blackcurrant and aniseed and with length and intensity and greater textural complexity from barrel fermentation, it is the perfect foil for lighter Spring food. \$35



The 2011 Willow Creek Vineyard Pinot Gris was harvested in mid-April to allow the full flavour to develop, even in such a cool year. It was barrel-fermented in older oak to gain complexity and texture, but bottled early to keep the freshness of the fruit characters. The resulting wine has aromas and flavours of ripe pear and honey, and has a generous soft structure well-balanced by fresh acidity and slight grip on the finish. \$35



The 2011 Willow Creek Vineyard Rosé is made from pinot noir grapes, simply destemmed into the press overnight to extract colour from the skins without too much tannin, then the juice is pressed out and fermented in tank. The wine is a pale ruby, with beguiling strawberry and cream fruit aromas and a crisp, dry palate, complementing a wide variety of food. \$25

 **FREE SHIPPING IN AUSTRALIA**
when purchasing from our new online store

6 x 750ml BOTTLES
FRAGILE THIS WAY UP

Willow Creek Wine Club

We are delighted to launch the Willow Creek Wine Club - a new initiative that delivers real benefits to those of you who support us year round. If you are a fan of our wines this is by far the easiest and cheapest way to get your hands on our product.

HERE'S THE DEAL:

- Sign up to receive a dozen Willow Creek wines every 6 months and receive a massive 20% discount
- Choose our winemaker's selection or make up your very own pack
- Enjoy free delivery to anywhere in Australia

ADDITIONAL BENEFITS OF MEMBERSHIP:

- Experience personalised service. Talk direct to our winemaker and cellar door staff. We'd love to hear from you! We are happy to provide you with information about cellaring, food matching and anything else you'd like to know about our wines and how we make them.
- When you visit us always enjoy free tastings at Cellar Door
- Invitation to exclusive WCWC events in your capital city
- Priority offers of limited release and back vintages
- Enjoy a complimentary bottle of your favourite Willow Creek wine when you dine at Salix Restaurant (one per year)
- 15% discount on any additional wine purchased.



HOW TO JOIN:

Phone or email the vineyard direct if you are interested in becoming a foundation member of this new Wine Club. We will forward you a form, or complete your details with you over the phone.

Call us on 03 5989 7448 or
email cellardoor@willow-creek.com.au

Wine Show Theory 101

What does Gold, Silver or Bronze really tell us about wine quality and about the show system?

Well, looking at the results for wine shows held around Australia, a typical outcome sees almost fifty percent of wines entered receive medals. In 2011, the QANTAS Wine Show of West Australia saw 1,080 wines vie for seventeen trophies and a total of 492 medals including 53 gold, 114 silver and 325 bronze.

In at least one sense, the competitions have integrity: all wines are examined blind, and entries are discussed, scored, tasted and re-tasted by some of the finest palates in the business. Typically, in Australian shows, a trophy would only be awarded to a wine that had achieved a gold medal score:

a score over 18.5 points out of twenty. Points are given for appearance (3), bouquet (7) and palate (10).

Like most agricultural shows, wine shows were conceived as a way of improving the product – so comparing with other similar wines in terms of age and style, gaining feedback and tasting the medal-winning wines. A criticism of the system is that it has now become solely a tool for selling wine and a proliferation of medal stickers on bottles is confusing the consumer. Another criticism is there are far too many shows which have made the awards meaningless as the quality of some shows is not apparent to the wine consumer.

Some national wine bodies are pushing for a hierarchy of shows to make the system more relevant to both producers and

consumers. A recommendation is for a regional, state or capital show, and national show, and that medal winners proceed through the lower levels to finally be judged at the national show.

For some regions, like the Mornington Peninsula, there is no dedicated regional show and this dissuades many producers from entering the system. The cost of entering shows is also very high, and minimum quantities of the wine must be in stock at the time of judging. So whilst the principle of showing one's wines at a regional, state and finally national level and benefiting from the comparison and the success, if achieved, is attractive, there are still significant impediments to the small vigneron getting the best out of the system.

ARTHUR O'BRYAN



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