

SPRING RELEASE NEWSLETTER OCTOBER 2011

An explosion of beautiful bird-life is blanketing the paddocks after our wettest winter for more than a decade. The rains and all the goodness that they bear, have amply replenished food supplies and created perfect breeding conditions. It augurs well for a bountiful season, but already we can hear the sharpening of beaks as our avian friends prepare for the impending feast, culminating in *la pièce de résistance* in Autumn - the delectable fruit from the Crawford River vineyard.

Vintage this year produced some fluctuating weather patterns which were calmly and ably managed with aplomb by Belinda and John. Fruit was very pleasing with excellent flavours and superb acidity resulting in fine, elegant, nicely balanced wines, reminiscent of 2004. Not yet bottled, they are a treat in store! A "tough" vintage often produces some of our best wines and, although clouds threatened, we were lucky to escape much of the rain until the closing days of vintage when several downpours resulted in the last of the fruit not being picked. Unusually, even a Nektar wasn't possible, as post-vintage sunshine failed to emerge and work its magic by drying the botrytis-affected fruit.

TASTING NOTES – CURRENT RELEASES

WINEMAKERS: JOHN AND BELINDA THOMSON

2010 RIESLING

Bearing all the hallmarks of our very best Rieslings, this youthful wine is blossoming. A complex and tightly structured wine, chalky minerality pervades

the delicate, lifted bouquet with subtle hints of honeysuckle, lime and apple blossom. A soft and textured palate of great purity and elegance is underpinned by the typical stoney, chalky minerality derived from the basalt loam/ancient seabed in which our vines have their extensive root-systems. The persistent, even palate is poised and balanced with its many layers of flavours integrated throughout with the fruit's bright, natural acidity. Excellent cellaring potential. Screwcap.

2010 YOUNG VINES RIESLING

A vibrant, well-balanced wine from our ten-year-old vines, with a fragrant, fresh bouquet of apple blossom, white peach and chalky minerality. The delicious palate is a soft, mouth-watering amalgam of zesty sweet-fruit flavours together with hints of spice and fine, firm minerality, interwoven seamlessly throughout with lively, innate acidity. The finish is long and lingering. This is very much a Crawford River Riesling, although understandably not quite as complex nor quite as tightly structured as that from our thirty-five year old vines. Screwcap.

2010 SERENDIPITOUS SELECTION (Riesling)

We are delighted with the response this wine has received in the market place. In some years, the vineyard can produce some unexpected surprises and 2010 created one in particular. Upon deciding that a part of one of our Riesling blocks had reached optimum flavour-sugar balance, as is the norm, we picked it. We were ecstatic to taste the luscious, sweet-fruit palate of the free run juice, although more than a little surprised to discover its potential alcohol level! We decided to optimise

what the vineyard had given us and make a Select Riesling, with thoughts turning to the German Auslese style (literally meaning to select out of the harvest). Although we did not select bunch by bunch, we think the wine is a wonderful expression of our site and fermented to a balance between sugar, alcohol and acid we feel to be nothing short of sublime. We hope you'll agree!

The nose has fragrant scents of white peach, honeysuckle flowers and the spice of fresh lime peel. An intensely soft and persistent palate is a harmonious amalgam of profound, clean fruit flavours with nuances of quince and stoney minerals dancing in tune with a finely woven, unbroken thread of innate acidity. The finish is long, bright and very fresh. 50g/L Residual sugar. Only 200 cases made. Screwcap.

2008 SAUVIGNON SEMILLON

A stylish, elegant example of the Crawford River *terroir*, this blend of 50% Semillon and 50% Sauvignon Blanc is drinking superbly. As the Semillon shines and the Sauvignon dissipates, the two varieties have woven together as one to create a subtle, sophisticated and complex food wine. An intensely soft and textured palate is filled with subdued yet fresh fruit flavours and a fine backbone of chalky minerals. Fresh, natural acidity and firm minerality underpin the wine with its lingering, dry finish. Our best blend of this style for a few years, this finely structured wine may be cellared carefully for at least five to ten years, as the Semillon component matures gracefully. Screwcap

2010 ROSÉ

Elegant, multi-layered, savoury and dry, this is our fourth Rosé – and we think our finest. It has been made once again “from the ground up” with the fruit being crushed to the press and left on skins to macerate before gentle pressing. Delicate salmon pink in colour with a superb nose of spice, fresh berries and chalky minerals, the savoury yet sweet-fruit palate is textured and fleshy, with hints of watermelon, berries and allspice and balanced by natural acidity and lingering minerality. A beautiful food wine, the finish is clean, bone-dry and refreshing. 100% Cabernet Sauvignon. Screw cap.

2005 CABERNET SAUVIGNON

A worthy follow-up to the 2004, this wine is drinking superbly. John’s wealth of experience and Belinda’s deft hand have combined to produce a well structured and finely crafted wine with style and finesse. The warmer year has produced a wine which is more richly textured and generous on the palate, whilst remaining intensely soft, multi-layered and elegant. The delicately perfumed nose has hints of cedar, chocolate and liquorice which follow through to the beautifully defined palate. Generous overtones of dark berry fruits mingle with bitter chocolate notes and savoury nuances, and the finely integrated French oak provides elegant structure and a firm backbone to the palate, together with our vineyard’s hallmark minerality. Fine, dry, powdery tannins finish this well-balanced wine – a stylish expression of the variety and its wonderful site. Cabernet Sauvignon 90%, Cabernet Franc, Merlot.

2006 CABERNET MERLOT

A delicious blend of Cabernet Sauvignon (50%), Cabernet Franc and Merlot, this appealing wine is multi-layered, supple and elegant with plenty of fresh ripe fruit flavours, subtle French oak and silky tannins. Fragrant, spicy aromas of ripe red fruits mingling with hints of licorice are evident on the nose of this lively, well-structured wine. The palate is a fresh amalgam of mulberries and ripe plums together with hints of spice and fine, soft tannins. It has been aged in new and old French oak barriques for 12 months.

Both of our red wines are handled in a similar manner. The fruit is hand-picked and de-stemmed and fermented in small parcels with the must left to cold soak in order to allow fermentation to begin naturally. A proportion of the wine is given extended maceration in small sealed vats and a further portion barrel-fermented, before being gently pressed and aged in a variety of new and old French oak barriques. After twelve months the two wines are blended, the Cabernet Merlot being bottled and the Cabernet Sauvignon returned to French oak barriques for another twelve months in wood. The wine is coarse-filtered immediately prior to bottling.

2006 NEKTAR – RIESLING – 375ML

Our first release of this superb Riesling “sticky”, following in the footsteps of our Semillon Sauvignon Nektar from the same year. Delicate aromas of orange blossom and minerals greet the nose with delicious hints of cumquat and baked quince overtones. The cumquat proceeds through to the palate as a somewhat ‘candied’ quality, creating an

alluring juxtaposition of sweet and savoury characters. Poised and elegant, the depth of fruit is balanced by an innate minerality woven throughout, together with a fine, linear acidity.

The combination of a tightly structured palate, together with an ideal balance of sugar, acid and alcohol is, in our minds, imperative to the length, persistence and potential longevity of the wine. An elegant wine that is not at all cloying, it is a superb accompaniment for both sweet and savoury dishes. Excellent cellaring potential. Screwcap.

2004 RIESLING – MUSEUM RELEASE

At seven years of age this elegant gem is amazingly youthful, fresh and bright. A tightly structured wine, the colour is very pale green/gold and the nose is intensely minerally and subtly aromatic. Poised and restrained, the palate is beautifully fine with steely, racy acidity seamlessly in tune with its soft, round mouthful of stoney minerality, spice – and a whiff of fresh lime. It will continue to mature gracefully, with careful cellaring, for many years. Screwcap.

2000 CABERNET SAUVIGNON – MUSEUM RELEASE

Included in Halliday’s annual TOP 100 as a new release, this superb wine has stood the test of time and belies its age. Beautifully balanced with a lifted, perfumed nose, it is a mellow, harmonious amalgam of delicious dark fruits, savoury characters and dry, dusty tannins which linger forever. A wonderful food wine, it will benefit from careful decanting.