



COFIELD WINES

• RUTHERGLEN •

CELLAR CIRCLE NEWS

VINTAGE 2006



MAX'S MESSAGE IN A BOTTLE

I am writing this on the Sunday morning after our Autumn Celebration of Wine dinner, an event we hold each year over Tastes of Rutherglen. Plenty of wine & great food, plus a few party tricks, made for a great night, the whole thing very capably organized by Jill. We have two of these dinners during the TOR festival, which goes over two weekends. It is such a great time, & it is lovely to be able to catch up with friends who regularly visit us over Tastes.

My new sheds are progressing nicely, with frames mostly erected & the roof of the barrel shed ready to be lifted into place. It's a bit messy & dusty now, but it will be wonderful when they are finished.



As we enter our 17th year of business I get a bit overawed by the growth of our little winery, our success certainly due in part to your continued loyalty & support. Thank you.

Karen continues her quiet counsel & is an immense inspiration in developing our Cofield Wines plan for the future.

As our wine styles continue to develop under Damien's guidance we are pleased to offer wines of appeal at the tasting bench. Just now, the 2000 Quartz Vein Shiraz & 2005 Sauvignon Blanc Semillon are creating a lot of interest.

Our Marketing Manager, Mell, is planning some more cellar circle "in the city" dinners, after the great success of the first Cellar Circle dinner in Melbourne. The aim of these is to keep in touch with as many of you as we can (because we understand that not everyone can get to Rutherglen to visit us) & hopefully be able to welcome new members to the Cofield Wines family.

We enjoy being able to share our love of wine with others & we are touched each time a member introduces their own friends & family to our Cellar Circle. Your ongoing support & the addition of new Cellar Circle members makes it possible for us to offer you more benefits & special offers.

Hope to see you soon at a dinner, or at our Cellar Door.

Stay well.

Max

Karen chats with Chris & Margaret Body in Canberra.



A FEW WORDS FROM KAREN

Dear friends

We have just finished the annual "Tastes" weekends (mid-March) & I don't remember such a lot of 38° plus days since childhood. One big electrical storm rolled overhead in January but the last real rain here was at the end of November. It makes keeping trees alive more difficult & I notice a lot of trees around Wahgunyah really struggling & some looking dead.

I have a small wading pool at the house & the grandchildren have loved playing with the hose to fill it up, squirting each other & shrieking with delight. The big white cedar tree which shades them appreciates the water too!

Andrew's daughters, Kristal & Jessica, now aged 9 & 7, helped out at our sister winery, drinkmoor wines, this Tastes of Rutherglen. They carried used plates, & kept the tables topped up with bottles of cold water from the fridge - & felt very important! One kind man gave them \$1 each for helping & they were thrilled.

Our new baby granddaughter has been named Isobel Julia Cofield, born 5th February. She is very well-behaved & gaining weight quickly. Although she lives three & a half hours away, we have been lucky enough to see her 3 times already.

Melanie, my daughter-in-law, is due in May & is keeping well. Modern mothers do a wonderful job - working, keeping house & child rearing.

Max & I spent a lovely few days in Canberra at the end of February, attending Rutherglen Wine Fest @ Canberra. There was a dinner on the Friday night & tastings on Saturday, held at the Press Club. We were really thrilled to catch up with 2 of our earliest Cellar Circle members there, Chris & Margaret Body - Membership # 11!

I hope you & yours are all well & happy.

Bye for now, Karen

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YUMMY RECIPE

Scott's Lamb Cutlets with Chilli & Coriander Butter

(Serves Four)

Ingredients

8 x double french cut Lamb cutlets
 Half a head of Iceberg lettuce, washed & torn
 1 x Spanish Onion thinly sliced
 2 x tablespoon good olive oil
 100gm butter
 1 tablespoon chopped fresh coriander
 1 x tablespoon dried chilli flakes
 8 x small Desiree or Pink Eye potatoes
 Garlic salt
 Salt

Method

Melt the butter & combine with the coriander & chilli flakes in a bowl. Mix well & return to fridge for approx. half an hour to set, mixing occasionally.

Quarter the potatoes & place in a large freezer bag with half the garlic salt, oil & salt to taste, seal the bag & shake till the potatoes are coated. Remove from bag & spread evenly in baking tray with a little more oil. Place in a 180°C preheated oven for 30-45 mins or until cooked & crunchy.

Heat a non stick fry-pan or BBQ plate on high, sear & seal the cutlets on high for approx. 2-3 mins each side then transfer to oven to finish cooking (approx. 10mins for rare, 15mins for med etc.) Scott recommends Rare.

Place lettuce on plates with onions then layer potatoes, finishing with lamb cutlets. Spoon butter on cutlets & add extra chilli flakes & Coriander as garnish if desired.

Scott suggests enjoying this with the T-XIV Sparkling Shiraz.

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

Is there a difference between Shiraz & Syrah?

The quick & easy answer is 'No'. To be slightly more detailed, though...

Shiraz & Syrah are the same grape variety, although different countries have tended to use one or the other name for it. Australia, New Zealand & South Africa have generally used "Shiraz", as have some parts of Canada, whereas the USA & most Old World producers have called it "Syrah".

Whether the label on your wine says Shiraz, Syrah, Grosse Syrah, Syracuse, Sirrah, Hermitage, Marsanne Noir or even Argentinian Balsamina, the main thing to remember is ENJOY IT!

And of course, you can't go past our very own current release wines: T-XIV Sparkling Shiraz, 2003 Shiraz, 2000 & 2001 Quartz Vein Shiraz & 2005 QVP fortified Shiraz.

If you have a question you think might interest others, email it to topdrop@cofieldwines.com.au.

REGIONAL PARTNERS

Just a quick reminder about who our Regional Partners are, so if you are in the area make sure you take advantage of the discounts and/or benefits they offer our Cellar Circle Members. Also, we are in the process of working with our Partners to bring an exclusive quarterly offer to our Cellar Circle members, so look out for them in future newsletters.

Our current Regional Partners are:

Pickled Sisters
Drinkmoor CD Café
Café @ RWE
Wine de Tour
Motel Woongarra
Aviné Bed & Breakfast
Esca on Argyle
Passion Flora
Blackdog Bakery
Kelly's Sweet Shop
Moods Boutique
Hairstyles
Rutherglen Forge & Anvil
Corowa Golf Club

TASTES OF RUTHERGLEN 2006

A few pics for those of you who couldn't make it to Tastes of Rutherglen this year...



A regular at our CofieldWines dinners, Neil Clark generously shared his musical talents with us this year.

Pre-dinner drinks on the winery lawns.



Cofield's own Mell Millgate & Damien Cofield, with drinkmoor wines manager, Joel Speers, go international! Can you guess their nationalities?

COMING EVENTS

Winery Walkabout 2006 Rutherglen, 10th - 12th June

There'll be plenty to do at CofieldWines on Saturday & Sunday, kicking off with our famous Sparkling Burgundy Breakfasts (details on right). There'll be a market on the lawn both days & entertainment provided by Paul Hicks & supporting artists. Paul is a locally based singer-songwriter-guitarist, with a unique style that's a blend of roots, country & folk.



Sparkling Burgundy Breakfasts Saturday 10th & Sunday 11th June

Come & experience one of our legendary Sparkling Burgundy Breakfasts. The cellar will be warm, the bubbles will be flowing, & The Pickled Sisters Café will serve up a superb three course breakfast.

Commences 9.00am. Cost: \$55pp (\$50 for CC members).

Cellar Circle Dinner

We are researching venues & dates to hold another dinner away from the winery. Although Broome is high on the list we probably won't be going there (darn it!). When we have details finalised, we will let you all know.

Hope to see you all at an event soon, Jill.

Bookings essential. Phone: 02 6033 3798 Email: topdrop@cofieldwines.com.au
 *I will contact those who have already booked to attend in early May.

SWIRL, SNIFF, SIP & SPIT

Hi Sippers!

Following on from previous articles it is time to start looking at some of the varieties themselves, & I can think of no better place to start than with one of my favourites, Durif. This is also timely, as it coincides with the release of our new vintage Cofield Wines Durif, available at the winery & also included in the May Cellar Circle selections.



Durif is a rare variety, propagated & released in 1880 by Dr. Francois Durif, a grape nurseryman with an experimental vineyard in southern France. It is a cross pollination of Shiraz & the little known French variety, Peloursin.

Durif was brought to Rutherglen from France in 1908 by the Victorian State viticulturalist Francois de Castella as one of the possible replacements for vineyards devastated by phylloxera. This turned out to be a masterstroke, as the terroir of the region & the skills of the wine makers was a combination that ensured the variety flourished in its new home.



Rutherglen was one of the few wine districts - perhaps the only one - to so enthusiastically

embrace the unknown variety & is probably the only region to have plantings from the original French clones imported by de Castella. Now, after 100 years handling Durif, it is arguably the district's iconic red wine.

The grapes grow in tight bunches with small berries, so there is a greater percentage of skin surface in relation to the overall mass of the berry (skin - juice ratio) compared with other red varieties.



The preferred ripeness at vintage for optimum flavour & palate weight is between 14 & 16° Be. An early break in the autumn weather can be challenging, as the dense bunches make the grapes susceptible to splitting if there is excessive rain or mildew late in the ripening season.

Durif is predominantly made in open fermenters using either a submerged cap approach or regular hand plunging to extract colour & tannin from the skins. After spending up to 14 days in the fermenters the wine is divided into two parts - the free run juice & the must. The must, a mixture of grape skins, seeds & juice, is pressed to extract the remaining wine which is then blended into the free run wine. From here the wine is sent off to barrels for maturing.

Mixtures of French & American barrels are used, with the selection varying each vintage according to the wine's fruit intensity & desired structure. The wood maturation period is anywhere from 10-20 months, with older hogsheads (270L) or puncheons (450L) generally used so that oak characteristics remain in the background of the resulting wine.

Cofield's Durif is typical of Rutherglen Durif & can be characterised as having a deep, almost impenetrable colour, with dense earthy & spiced aromatics, a full rich palate displaying ripe red to black fruit flavours & a firm tannic finish. In short, Durif displays massive power & opulence. Young Rutherglen Durif wines are an ideal choice for cellaring, displaying all the attributes necessary for successful ageing: a balanced structure of fruit flavours, fruit & oak tannins, natural acidity plus excellent palate weight.

The optimum age to enjoy Durif is when the wines are showing some complexity from bottle ageing but while there is still some primary fruit vibrancy. Naturally, cellaring potential varies between vintages however, as a guide, wines with five years careful maturation can be opened & enjoyed with confidence, while bottle ageing of 15 - 20 years is not unusual.

Next time you savour a Rutherglen Durif (Cofields of course!), take a moment to appreciate how these big, bold & high alcohol wines have contributed to Rutherglen's wine making, history, heritage & future.

Hope to see you soon at the Cellar Door.

Cheers & happy sipping,

Scott



The work of Kevin Bascomb & the Durif Network of Rutherglen is gratefully acknowledged in the preparation of this article.

VIEW FROM THE VINEYARD



Our 2006 fruit has benefited from a great growing season. Lots of early spring rain with timely showers throughout the season, stopping just prior to Christmas.

We did lose some of the Quartz Vein Shiraz through extreme heat & wind, but overall the vines & young fruit held up well.

Harvest actually kicked in a week or two earlier than usual this year, so vintage is half over already, phew!!

One of my most UNfavourite jobs at harvest is removing the bird net from the vines so we can get at the grapes. 100's of metres of bird net -

rows & rows of it; & I can assure you that the net gets stuck on everything! Protecting the fruit from bird attack is important though, because some varieties are particularly susceptible to volatile acidity (or VA), a dastardly affliction that can occur when the berries are split & fermentation starts inside the skins.

We have used a mechanical harvester again this year to bring in some of the fruit, because it is much more cost effective than hand picking. However, we prefer to hand pick the fruit that is destined for the premium Quartz Vein wines because this enables us to be selective, avoiding unsuitable bunches that might have an impact on the finished wine. More delicate varieties are also hand picked, because hand picking is more

gentle on the bunches, reducing the incidence of split berries & hence, oxidation & VA.

Just goes to show that there really is a lot of science & work behind a good wine & not just plain dumb luck (although a bit of luck goes a long way too).

Cheers

Andrew





STAFF PROFILE

Scott Howard

A lot of you will probably recognise this face, especially if you have popped into our cellar door in the last four & a half years. Yes, Scott is one of our longest serving staff members, having joined Cofields way back in November 01.

Scott is renowned for his ability to “talk under water” & for his extensive vocabulary. His descriptions of our wines elicit oohs, & aaahs from many visitors at cellar door, & “oh, that

sounds wonderful - can I try it please?” is commonly heard.

If you’ve been reading Swirl, Sniff, Sip & Spit, you’ll know that Scott’s wine knowledge is even more diverse than his vocabulary. We doubt there is anything about wine he doesn’t know!

Scott is happily married to the lovely Janine & they live locally in Rutherglen, having made the decision to move across to the “right side” of the river from Albury a couple of years ago. He is an animal lover & spoils Plonk (the winery cat) & his own two moggies, Harry & Sassy, rotten.

More than just a wine connoisseur, Scott is also a lover of food & his understanding of both makes him a great source for dinner party suggestions. He regularly regales us with tales of fabulous dishes he has cooked & the wonderful wines that matched perfectly. (Check out one of his favourite recipes in this newsletter.)

Getting Scott to name his favourite wine is always difficult as he enjoys them all & is constantly discovering new wines & wineries. However, he always loves our own Cofield wines & his current favourites are the new T-XIV Sparkling Shiraz & 2004 Durif.

NEW RELEASES...

2004 Red Label Durif

Now available at Cellar Door for \$19.50 per bottle (or \$17.55 for Cellar Circle members). In the glass it is deep



purple to black with raspberry edges & a dense black-red core. The nose displays lifted sweet lavender floral notes with cherries & raspberries & a subtle leafy complexity. The palate is full bodied with excellent raspberry, cherry & funky clove spice characters balanced by a warm mouth feel & a long finish.

impenetrable black-red in colour with a lively bead & a dense, long lasting raspberry mousse. It has an intense nose of blackberry jam & vanilla-spiced stewed raspberries. The palate is dense & luxurious with up front sweet red berry fruits countered by drying tannins & an elegant mousse.

2006 Sweet Ava

The Winery Walkabout weekend has many attractions, not the least of which is the release of our popular rose, Sweet Ava. This year’s vintage is looking like another winner so keep an eye & ear out for more news on this one.



T-XIV Sparkling Shiraz

Still a bargain at \$28.00 per bottle (\$25.20 for CC members), our fourteenth Sparkling Shiraz is no exception to the Cofield Wines heritage of first class sparkling wines. Visually, it is



The first reds of the 2006 season coming into the winery.



WHAT’S NEW IN WINE MAKING?

Vintage is in full swing & there is action aplenty out in the cellar. This year we have had to endure not only the space & dust issue that the erection of Max’s new sheds has created, but also the workmen borrowing the all-important forklift!

I am wrapped with the white juices we’ve processed. We had a January heat wave which I thought would zap out all of their natural acids, however they have come in nicely balanced. In particular, keep your eye out for the 2006 Sauv Blanc Semillon.

Right now the winery is full up with fermenting reds & WOW – the colours are amazing. I always love these heady aromas that fill the cellar.

All in all, things are progressing nicely in the cellar, which makes for a happy wine maker!

Cheers,
Damien

HOW IT HAPPENS

Pressing (Part 1)

As I sit here in my chair beside the press, under the large umbrella Max has put here for me, it occurs to me that it would be timely to talk a little about **pressing** in this issue. After all, I seem to spend quite a bit of time here, especially during the early part of harvest, watching the press & tasting the white juices as they emerge.

Pressing is how the juice, or raw wine, is liberated from the skins. There are all sorts of different ways to extract the juices, & different types of pressing equipment (that thankfully don’t involve my bare feet & a lot of exercise!).

At Cofields, we use a tank press (right) which has an airbag inside a horizontal cylinder. As the airbag is inflated it compresses the fruit & the liquid runs into a series of internal drains, is



collected on the other side & then pumped away for fermentation or maturation. The harder we press, the more juice comes out, & the dryer the skins that are left. As the cylinder turns, the grape skin “cake” is

broken up & we have another chance to extract yet more juice.

Using the fully enclosed press means there’s less oxidation of the raw wine than would occur with the traditional open-air basket press. Yep,

everything we do from the vineyard to the bottle affects the wine at the end!

Well, that’s the introduction to pressing. I’ll talk more about it in the next issue, so stay tuned!

Cheers,
Damien

Grapes going into the tank for whole-bunch pressing.

