



Curly Flat

VINE *To* WINE

February 2007

No. 12

Cool Wine for Hot Days

2006 Curly Flat Pinot Grigio

2006 Curly Flat Rosé

2006 Williams Crossing White Pinot

Is it Grigio or is it Gris?

Phillip first tasted Grigio in 1983, in a restaurant in Little Italy, New York City. He was very taken by the purity and freshness of the wine. That experience was instrumental in our decision to plant the variety, and we are delighted with the result.

Italian Pinot Grigio and French Pinot Gris are the same grape variety – a mutation of Pinot Noir that has a skin colour of grey, with hints of purple/pink. Grigio and Gris are simply made in different styles. Whereas the French style tends to be a riper, rich viscous style, Italian Grigio is leaner, steely, lower in alcohol (12.0% to 12.5%), usually dry with no residual sugar and with higher acidity. The Curly Flat style for this variety is definitely more in the Italian Grigio, rather than the French Gris style.

The 2006 Curly Flat Pinot Grigio is our third release. The prior releases were very well received – “absolutely gorgeous” according to Max Allen in The Australian. The wine is typically varietal – a perfumed and fresh bouquet of apple blossom, dry and chalky on the palate with tones of pear and green apple, with the finish elevated by the natural acid backbone. This is a wine to get the appetite going.

Why a White Pinot?

It was an experiment. Phillip did it because Jeni told him to. Jeni is not partial to white wine, but loves Pinot Noir – so she said let’s try making a white wine from Pinot Noir.

Inside the grape, the juice laden structure is colourless. With the exception of a variety called Alicante bouchet, all grape varieties from Shiraz to Pinot Noir have a white juice. The colour comes from the skins. If Pinot Noir is picked and whole bunch pressed, with little skin contact, you get a near colourless juice. This is how the base wine for sparkling wines (usually 50% Pinot Noir) is made.

We whole bunch pressed Pinot Noir fruit, fermented it in old oak, using natural yeasts and treated it as a white wine. The result is a fresh, fruity, summer wine with a bouquet of fresh cut firm strawberries and hints of red apple. The palate is vibrant and fruit driven with lively acidity. Delicious and refreshing.

Is Rosé a serious wine?

The answer is some are and some aren’t. The ones that aren’t, are usually made for those with a sweet tooth, from grapes of average (at best) quality. But those made from top quality grapes, with fresh natural acidity, fermented dry, with no residual sugar – such Rosés can be serious wines.

The 2006 Curly Flat Rosé is made from our trial plantings of Cabernet Franc, Shiraz and Merlot, together with some Pinot Noir. It has a bouquet of fresh berries that follows through on to the palate, where the texture from fermentation in old oak, coupled with bracing natural acidity results in a great summer food wine.

With small quantities of each of our summer wines, we have to limit the number of bottles per person.

*Cool climate viticulture
Snow at Curly Flat on 15 November 2006*



A look at Vintage 2006

In some ways a repeat of 2005, with a long, moderate autumn, and above average temperatures late in the ripening period. The challenge wasn't getting the grapes ripe enough, it was more a case of optimising the timing of picking – harvesting before the grapes got too ripe. Again it was a year of lower than average rainfall.

How are things shaping up for Vintage 2007?

Fortunately Curly Flat avoided the frosts and hail that devastated much of Victoria, Canberra and South Australia. We are looking at a normal harvest volume, which could come a little early. With our very deep basalt soils, and the vines now having their roots down several metres, the water reserves are better than most vineyards experience. The irony is that we have significant under ground water resources. Water of the finest quality, naturally filtered by the honey comb basalt through which it flows.

At this stage our biggest problem is the birds – with this being another drought year, the bird population has been swollen by birds coming from the dry outer lying areas. We do not net, but rely on cutting edge radar technology which detects the birds and fires gas guns and broadcast distress cries of the birds that most impact us. These are crows (very intelligent), starlings, asian minors and silver eyes. Hopefully we will win the aviarian struggles and have another good harvest.

Williams Crossing

Williams Crossing 2005 Chardonnay sold out within four months of its release and Williams Crossing 2004 Pinot is almost gone. The next vintages of Williams Crossing wines will be released in June.

History Packs and Large Bottles

A reminder that History Packs are available, for both Pinot Noir and for Chardonnay – History Packs contain three bottles; usually the current release plus a bottle from each of the two prior vintages. As stocks of 2002 Pinot and Chardonnay are exhausted Pinot History Packs currently include some earlier vintages and Chardonnay History Packs look to the future.

Magnums of Pinot and Chardonnay and a small number of Imperiales (6L) of Pinot are available. See our website for large format bottle vintages and prices.



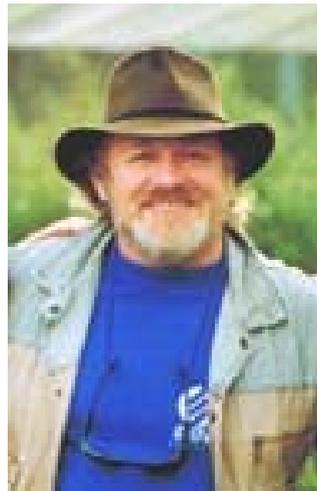
The Next Release – 2004 Curly Flat Pinot Noir

The next release, scheduled for mid March, will be the 2004 Curly Flat Pinot Noir. This is the wine that Jancis Robinson MW wrote up last year as the best of all the Australian Pinot Noirs that she tasted during her visit to Australia. We rate it as our best Pinot Noir to be released thus far.

While the official release is not until March, we have run out of stock of the 2003 Pinot Noir and have released the 2004 to our Select Restaurants. The 2004 is available at Cellar Door, and we have included it on the Order Form for the Summer Wines.

Eric Bogle and John Munro Dinner Concert March 17 at Curly Flat

Our friend, the renowned singer/songwriter Eric Bogle, accompanied by fellow former Scot and singer/songwriter John Munro will perform a dinner show at Curly Flat on Saturday March 17th. Eric and Phillip worked together many, many years ago; before Eric penned “And The Band Played Waltzing Matilda”, the first of numerous hit songs, performed by Eric and covered by many other performers including The Fureys, The Clancy Brothers, The Pogues, just to name a few.



This will be a very entertaining night, with Eric and John performing a range of Eric's songs – some co-written with John. They will range from the serious commentaries on The Great War (such as No Man's Land and Flowers of the Forest) to the witty words on Gomez, The Chihuahua and the in between; many insightful songs of life and the human condition, both in Australia and around the world.

The cost of the dinner and show is \$55. Book now as places are limited – phone us on 03 5429 1956. There are many B&B options, at various price points, for those wanting to stay over - ask us for details.

Vertical Tastings at Curly Flat in April

We are planning one or more vertical tastings for late April. We envisage the vertical tastings will be served with an informal lunch to be held in Vintage Hall, the 1880's homestead which is being restored.

Please let us know (phone 5429 1956 or email to mail@curlyflat.com) if you would interested in attending either a Pinot, Chardonnay or combined vertical tasting.

