

# FERMENTATIONS

Newsletter # 20

Spring 2006

Newsletter of Canobolas-Smith Wines

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Welcome to the Spring edition of Fermentations. After a dry winter, and what looks like being a dry spring we are shoot thinning across all varieties to help keep the vines in balance and bracing ourselves for late spring frosts – never a dull moment in the wine industry!

## 2002 SHINE Reserve Chardonnay cracks fifth gold

The Annual Small Vignerons Awards 2006, announced in August, gave the 2002 Canobolas-Smith SHINE Reserve Chardonnay its fourth Gold Medal. More recently, the wine took its fifth Gold at the 2006 Orange Wine Show. Chairman of the judges, James Halliday made a point of singling out the Chardonnay class as one of the major strengths of the Show (and the region). Murray was particularly pleased with this effort - winning Gold at each of the last three Orange Wine Shows gives us confidence that the '02 SHINE is maturing well. It is also significant that a range of different judging panels have recognized the quality of the wine. The Show has been Chaired by James Halliday (2006), Huon Hooke (2005) and Tim Kirk (2004).  
Last orders please.

## A RECIPE FOR SUSTAINABILITY

Take six parts clean air, two parts good soil... Yes, but seriously, when thinking about sustainability in growing grapes, and making and selling wine, what is sustainability? And where should any theory of sustainability be applied? And where is the effort to change management practice likely to pay off?

### In the Vineyard

Our sustainable approach began with choosing a vineyard site that had the right combination of soil, rainfall and climate to allow unirrigated viticulture. It continues with low impact management techniques - minimal herbicides and no pesticides. Fewer tractor movements mean less compaction and in turn means less fuel.

### In the Marketing

Many of you who consume fine wine regularly will have noticed the trend towards heavier and heavier bottles. Some expensive wines (and some pretenders) are dressed in extremely heavy glassware, which in many cases is imported. This has evolved from a need to differentiate wine brands in the market. Labels

have become very diverse and overall packaging has become more important over the past twenty years. From a small player perspective we see this as something which we need not contribute to - there is no need to use heavy imported bottles - which not only take more energy to produce but also more energy to move from place to place. Simple, ordinary weight glass bottles have been our approach and a small contribution to a sustainable business.

## New Release Strawhouse for Summer

### 2006 Strawhouse Sauvignon Blanc Blend (\$18)

The wine has a very pale colour and the lifted grassy, passionfruit aromatics of the Sauvignon Blanc are very clear. The palate has more richness than is typical in a Sauvignon Blanc blend. This is deliberate - we are looking for the crisp, fruity character of Sauvignon Blanc, the lemony zestiness of Semillon and the mid-palate texture of top quality Chardonnay. The blend is 40% Sauvignon Blanc, 30% Semillon and 30% Chardonnay. We think this wine will be delightful this summer with a few prawns on the BBQ. The wine will

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work well with Chinese or Thai foods with moderate amounts of chili and spice as it has a small amount of sweetness that will balance Asian spices.

### **2005 Melliodora**

(late harvest, lightly fortified Chardonnay, 375ml, \$18)

Named after the local yellow box tree (Eucalyptus Melliodora), this is a delightful, honeyed sweet wine; it has a rich, smooth and balanced palate ideal for dessert or cheese. A blend of barrel-fermented late harvest Chardonnay and fortified Chardonnay, it has sweetness and texture and a lovely finish of cleansing acidity. This wine has been very popular at Cellar Door. We would recommend you put a bottle or two in your next mixed case. At Restaurant Pepper it was served with strawberries millefeuille, poached cumquats and yellow box honey frozen yoghurt (yum).

### **2004 Cabernet Sauvignon** (375ml, \$10)

A delicious half bottle of ripe, fruity Cabernet Sauvignon. It includes a small amount of the 2004 Alchemy (10%) which adds sophistication to this quality little beauty. From the very good 2004 vintage, this is the wine for those occasions when a full bottle is just too much. Half bottles only.

## **Alchemy magnum goes to good home**

In August we had our annual Cellar Door Clearing Sale and offered a selection of the wines via email release. We do this from time to time as we know that many

of you may not be able to get here as often as you would like. Part of the deal was the first twenty to buy a case had a chance to win a magnum of 2003 Alchemy. It is our pleasure to announce that the winner is Janine Harkness of Camperdown, NSW. Janine has been a customer of Canobolas-Smith for quite a few years. When told of her win, Janine, who was very pleased, said that we must have known she was moving and this was her going away present. She had only one question: "How long can I keep it?" And the answer is as long as you can!

**NEW Alchemy Six Pack**  
now available. See order form.

## **Coming up**

### **NEXT RELEASES**

April 2007 will see the release of the 2004 Chardonnay, 2004 Pinot Noir and 2004 Alchemy. We are continuing to work hard at giving our wines time in barrel and bottle before release. At three years of age, each of these wines will be drinking well but will offer scope for development. The 2005 Strawhouse Sauvignon Blanc Semillon will also be released although we will be showing it at Cellar Door in summer.

### **FOOD Week 2007 Event** **The Vintage Experience**

Friday April 20, 2.30pm - 9pm, \$88 (incl GST) per person. This is the Canobolas-Smith Winery get down and dirty vintage experience. Covering all the elements of vintage from picking and crushing to plunging the fermenting vats, pressing, fruit and juice analysis. The experience will

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finish with a relaxed vintage barbeque matched with some older wines from the Cellar. We offered this in vintage '05 to very good feedback so we thought we would do it again! Limited numbers. Book with Justin or Murray on 02 6365 6113.

## **The Taste of PEPPER**

One of the best events of recent weeks was the Canobolas-Smith wine dinner held in September at Restaurant Pepper in Balmain.

Young couple Cameron and Tara run a very good suburban dining room. Cameron apprenticed with Michael Manners in Orange and it was there that he became familiar with Canobolas-Smith wines. Given it is the 20th Anniversary year of the first planting at Canobolas-Smith, we decided to pull out a few favourites to match Cameron's excellent cooking. The meal opened with the newly released 2006 Strawhouse Sauvignon Blanc blend - an admirable off-dry aperitif. The 2001 & 2002 Chardonnays followed, both drinking extremely well; a little of the trophy winning 2002 Pinot Noir before the 1997 & 1998 Alchemy's were served with a delicious boned rack of lamb. A relaxed and enjoyable evening among friends, new and old.

Restaurant Pepper, 390 Darling St., Balmain, 9555 1466

## **Special Tastings**

In Wine Week we had a very successful Pinot Noir tasting. We would like to offer this Special Tasting service to you and your friends. We can tailor a tasting focussing on your interests. So call Justin or Murray to arrange your special tasting.

## ANECDOTALLY SPEAKING

This issue of Fermentations sees the first in an occasional series of stories by friends of Canobolas-Smith. LINDSAY BARRETT teaches media and communications at the University of Western Sydney. He is the author of *The Prime Minister's Christmas Card*, *Blue Poles and Cultural Politics in the Whitlam Era*. The book traces the events surrounding the purchase of Jackson Pollock's *Blue Poles* and the life of the Whitlam Government. Lindsay also enjoys the occasional glass of Canobolas-Smith wine.

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### The best glass of wine I ever had

Wine, like all great pleasures, is ephemeral. The pleasure it gives us is something more or less intangible: a momentary exciting of the senses that we can never really hold on to, for, even as we try to savour it, its gone. We can have another glass, but eventually we'll get to the end of the bottle. Like the other great pleasures of this life, wine too is limited.

Sure, we can hold the bottle in our hands, and it's a real, material thing. We could hold onto it all our lives if we wanted, and never open it, but ultimately this would be a folly, as after all, wine exists in order to be drunk. But its precisely because it is such a fleeting experience, that the savouring of a glass of wine is as much about memory as it is about the here and now of drinking. As we taste it we remember other wines like it, or not like it, while as soon as our glass is empty, its contents too have become yet another memory.

The best glass of wine I've ever had was one (or two to be honest) I had one afternoon at Canobolas Smith in the late summer of 1992. This particular day I was helping out in the vineyard when I looked up and saw Murray racing up the hill towards the house. 'Quick,' he called to me, 'we've got an emergency wine tasting'. This was welcome news. I went into the house and said hello to the electrician who was in the lounge room working on the wiring. It really was an emergency. Earlier in the day Murray had given a local friend a bottle of 1973 Wendouree Shiraz, and he'd driven into town and left the bottle on the back seat of his car while he went to attend to some business. When he got back to the car the cork had popped, and so he'd phoned up and asked what should he do. 'Bring it back and we'll drink it straight away', had been Murray's pragmatic response.

The electrician and I sat down on the lounge while Murray paced around the kitchen. The electrician was a nice bloke, though he had no interest in wine, so the extent of the emergency was pretty well lost on him. I, on the other hand, couldn't believe my luck, because there is nothing I care for more (with the exception perhaps of a good Cote du Rhone) than a moody, inky Clare Valley shiraz. So, we sat on the lounge and chatted, and Murray continued pacing around, and we waited for the man with the uncorked bottle to turn up. Presently he did.

Murray put four glasses on the table, and poured each one in turn. Then we went through the tasting ritual, apart from the electrician of course, who simply picked up his glass and took a sip. 'Well' he

said, 'I don't know much about wine, but this tastes pretty good to me.' And he was right. It was a beautiful wine.

Its one of the great paradoxes of drinking wine, that while it is most often a shared experience, its simultaneously intensely personal. We can talk about it all we like, but ultimately, we have no real idea of the experiential details of what anyone other than ourselves actually tastes. We can't share sensory pleasures, they remain strictly our own, and all we can do is draw on a shared jargon to try to explain just what it is we're feeling and thinking as we taste. So I've really got no idea what the '73 Wendouree Shiraz actually tasted like to the amiable electrician. Did he realise it was probably the best glass of wine he'd ever drink? I don't know. All I know is that he liked it, and in the end, that's all that matters I suppose.

So we stood around and chatted as we finished our glasses, and then Murray poured us another small glass each and we chatted some more and drank those and then that was it, the bottle was finished. The electrician went back to his wiring, Murray went back to the winery, his friend departed, and I went back to the vineyard. By the time I finished, later that afternoon, the electrician had gone, so I sat on my own in the lounge room and drank a long cold glass of water and looked out at the hills. That night we had another bottle of wine with dinner, but I can't remember what it was.

*Lindsay Barrett*