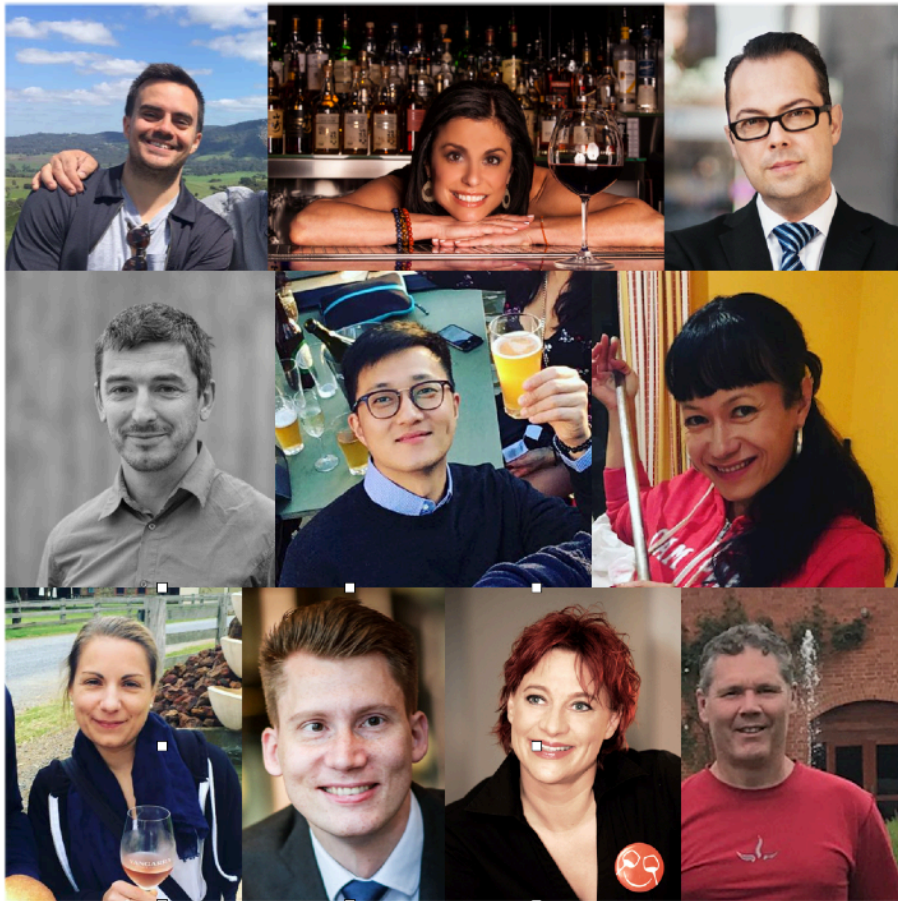


JAMES BUSBY TRAVEL - TOUR REPORT 2017

10 overseas wine buyers, 14 days, 2 States, 3 birthdays, 13 regions, 50 wineries, 484 wines, 2158km and 1 badass Wombat. Now, the Tour Report, 135 pages, 20,035 words, 201 photos...

"100% Whole Fun" - Ben Cheung, Hong Kong



Top left to bottom right

Andrew Stewart, Wine Director - Vino al Vino **Calgary, Alberta, Canada**

(was Wine Director, Model Milk/Anju/Pigeonhole, Calgary)

Kat Thomas, Wine Training Manager, Hakkasan **USA**

(was Sommelier, Hakkasan, Las Vegas).

Sören Polonius, Head Sommelier, Esperanto Group, Stockholm, **Sweden**

Pierre-Emmanuel Marchés, Product Manager, Fondberg, Oslo, **Norway**

(was Product Manager, Vinmonopolet, Oslo, Norway)

Ben Cheung, Buyer and Brand Manager, Watson's, **Hong Kong**

Chloe Helfand, Lead Sommelier, SLS Hotel and Casino, **Las Vegas**

Laure Patry, Executive Head Sommelier, Jason Atherton's The Social Company, **London.**

Stefan Neumann MS, Head Sommelier and Wine Buyer, Dinner by Heston Blumenthal, **London.**

Claudia Masüger, Founder and CEO, Cheers Wine, Beijing, **China**

Dave Smith, Director of Buying, Everything Wine, **Vancouver, BC, Canada**

The James Busby Trip 2017 was an amazing experience. The diversity of wine regions and wine producers that we visited has given me a great and detailed insight into the Australian wine industry. The contacts of suppliers are very exciting and we will increase our retail assortment with fantastic quality Australian wines. I am very grateful that I had a chance to bring back pictures, videos and impressions of a wonderful wine country so that I can educate and inspire our young Chinese consumers! A big thanks to Tim and all the wonderful wineries we were able to visit. Their hospitality and openness to show us their vineyards, wines and homes has deeply impressed me. Taking the inspiration from the trip my company is developing a new marketing campaign -> CHEERS goes to Australia!
- Claudia



This trip was just incredible. The amount of knowledge we gained is spectacular, in depth and updated, we saw the history, the legacy and the future of Australian wine. That was exceptional, and by far, the best wine trip ever.
- Pierre



A journey to a country we think is so far away....What an amazing trip, a great learning curve and an eye opening for me on the dynamic, passion and energy of the wine producers we met. From seeing some of the oldest vines in the world to meeting the new wave of producers. Each wineries, producers, growers and teams made it very special and it will be all unforgettable memories.

- Laure



The JBT17 has been, hands down one most most educational, entertaining, exciting and surely most fun trip I have down in my wine career. The perfect organisation of Tim Wildman MW and the generosity of each and every producer was only matched by the sheer beauty of Australia itself.

- Stefan

It's difficult to put into words the impact this trip had on me. I've had the very good fortune in my role to see much of the wine world over the last decade. I can think of no bad experiences while travelling in this industry but to say this particular experience was exceptional would still be underselling it. These two weeks have completely reinvigorated my view of the Australian wine industry. The innovation, the diversity, the history, the approach to food and wine, the freshness all speak to an industry re-defining itself and its deserved place among the great wine nations of the world.

- Dave



The James Busby tour had been built up to me as one of the best trips around for wine professionals. From the first night in Melbourne before the tour started, to my last night I can honestly say the myriad of high quality producers, insane views, and staggering history presented to us was impossible to not be impressed by, and certainly will rank as one of the most meaningful wine tours of my career. I promise to sing the gospel of true Australian terroir to any I come across, and try to translate all I have seen and fallen in love with into glass after glass.

- Andrew



The appreciation for the good humans of Australia has always been a part of my wavelength due to being in hospitality my whole existence. The distinction now after the James Busby Travel experience is that of the vines, their history, the values set upon the Land, and the very beautiful culture I was able to immerse myself into for two weeks. Not only did I confirm my notions of how "badass" people would be in Australia, I learned about how passionate and compassionate towards the Earth winemakers are and how courageous people are to be fabulous in a world set apart in many ways.

- Kat



Australia is not only a paradise but a wonderland to every single wine lover. The quality and choices of wine is beyond your imagination and keep improving every time you visit.

Before the trip I thought I already have a good understanding of Australian wines. After spending 14 days in the vineyards and speaking to the producers, I was completely freaked out because I know so little and the producers work so hard to keep thinking everyday how to make better wines! I am so honoured to be part of this trip which gave me an unforgettable memory that is full of love, sharing, inspiration and of course many beautiful wines! A first class wine tour! I must say I am loving Australian wine!

- Ben



James Busby Travel 2017 was the ultimate Australian wine submersion. This Australian wine experience was a thoughtful and creative illustration of the many styles of wine, regions, and winemaking integrity. I feel like the trip was a linear progression showcasing the best of the best of what has Australia has to offer in it's developing wine industry. I was impressed starting day one with the wines, the winemakers and the incredible landscape of Oz. The trip has completely changed my perception of Australian craftsmanship.

- Chloe



A pretty amazing journey. Not only to visit Australia, but also in a more personal plane. Landing in an Australia that i thought i knew, left an Australia that had opened my eyes. A lot of ideas, and prejudices were swept away. Sure i knew that things were moving and shaking in Australia, but what i experienced during these two weeks, far exceeded everything i expected. More people need to see this! However the one thing that hasn't changed, is the way that the people behind the labels acted and treated visitors. I have never felt so welcomed ever visiting wineries, everyone took you in, in a very honest and "hands down" way. May it never change!

- Soren

DAY 1 - WILLIAM DOWNIE, Gippsland by Kat Thomas

"look ma, no hands!"



Let us begin in the only place Bill Downie can be, Gippsland, Victoria, where the connection between mind, body and soil is expressed through pinot noir, and only pinot noir. The true "terroir" of Bill is found at William Downie Farm and in Gippsland, whether in the butter his wife Rachel makes, the lettuce gone wild they serve at lunches, or the sweet sounds of creative children playing in the fields around the house.

Gippsland is the most eastern wine growing region in Victoria as well as the smallest producing wine area in Victoria, though the largest area in the state. The red basalt soils and maritime climate help train the fickle pinot to be a badass in the hands of Bill and his small team.

As Bill looks out on Bawbaw Range which folds into the Great Dividing Range he pauses to find the words to describe his wine making style, and with a slight smile this former "Yeastie Boy" and DeBortoli alum tells us "everything happens by instinct" so he "puts the grapes in the tank and lets them be...because there is nothing else to do."

Monoculture = Bad so having the multi-culture of family, fruit, sense of place, and stability is great. This is the "multiculture" I found in the wines we tasted 10.15.17

Gippsland, Willlliam Downie Farm: "look ma, no hands!"

2017 Cathedral Rose 13.5% fresh red berries framed by a light pink and orange tinge; crisp acidity from cranberry, strawberry, white raspberry with sweet lemongrass.

2016 Mornington Peninsula 13% dried red fruits and rose tea leaf, lilac

2016 Gippsland 14% rhubarb, sage, spice, sweet black tea

*2016 Guendolyn Farm 13% glorious; "connection bottle, birth, & beauty"

2011 Gippsland 12.5% smoke, spice, meat, saline (Pommard)

*2006 Gippsland 12.5% dried tomato, meat, spice, red fruit (Chambolle)

2005 Yarra Valley 13% smoke, meat, perfume (Volnay)

2015 Guendolyn Farm 13% (1st vintage) tart cranberry, pomegranate, plum skin, dried herb



DAY 1 - OCEAN 8, Mornington Peninsula by Chloe Helfand

"this was such a fun day!"



Welcome to the Mornington Peninsula.... At first approach, The Ocean Eight property is somewhat glamorous in comparison to the more rustic farm feel we had earlier in the day at William Downie. The vineyards look pristine. The drive up to the winery was warm and welcoming. Our charismatic host, Michael Aylward is the son to the Aylward family that built the Kooyong winery in 1996. The Aylward family sold the Kooyong vineyard and winery in 2004. Ocean Eight is the second wine venture and refers to the 8th hole on a golf course that overlooks the ocean. The opening building, that is now the winery, was initially built as a stable for horses. At Ocean Eight, they make Pinot Gris, Chardonnay, and Pinot Noir. There are 15 acres of Pinot, in which they make 2,000 cases. They want it to be from Mornington Peninsula, as they feel the maritime climate is suitable to all three varietals. The Red Hill, red clay from ancient volcanic soils, is perfect for the Pinot Gris. The sandy soils are more fitting for the Chardonnay and Pinot Noir with a 20-year-old vine age. The difference between their classic and reserve Pinot Noir is the crop yields. At Ocean Eight, they believed it is important to manage your canopy in the vineyards, de-stem in the winery, let the wine go through a 25 day fermentation process, and let the wine undergo malolactic fermentation over the winter with sulphur. The 2008 Verve

Chardonnay was the wine that put Ocean Eight on the map, made them famous, and granted the family many awards.

Michael wanted the group #JBT17 to barrel taste. He wanted us to rank the barrels in terms of which barrels we liked, which barrels we thought were complete, which barrels would be good blending components, and why. We tasted 12 different barrel samples, spanning Pommard 114, 115, and Clos Vougeot clones NV6... the latter brought over to Australia by James Busby himself! The Barrel tasting was fun 100% whole fun.

The main event for this evening was a pizza connoisseur challenge... while tasting the Ocean Eight and Aylward wine lineup.

The Pizza's we made:

Ben – Triple B

Rocket, Fig, Prosciutto, and Honey

Claudia –

Tomato, Almond, Bacon, Mozzarella, Olives

Chloe – Savory & Sweet

Figs, Serrano Ham, Carmelized Onion, Fontina Cheese, Mozzarella

Kat – The Dominus Effect

Smoked Mozzarella, Preserved Lemon, Parmesan, Basil, and Chili's

Laure – second runner up!!!!

Prosciutto Parma, Stilton Cheese, Chestnut Mushrooms, Char-grilled baby Artichoke, and Rosemary

Stefan – BFG Big Friendly Giant

Prosciutto/Serrano, Mushrooms, Australian hard Cheese, Pineapple

Soren – Gambero Rosso.... And the winner is!!!!!!

Prawns, Olive Oil, Garlic, Lemon Zest, with Verve Chardonnay and Parmesan Cheese

Dave – The Stinky Canadian

Roasted Eggplant, Roasted Tomato, Blue Cheese, and Roasted Garlic

Pierre – Iberian

Chorizo, Ricotta Salad, Manchego, Green Bell Pepper, Sundried Tomatoes, and Chili's

Andrew – The Rick and Mortydella

Pistachios, Olives, Mortadella, sundried tomato, and fior della??? (Must have been the food coma... not sure what this last thing was)

This was such a fun day! A great wine exercise, and a fantastic learning experience, experimenting with clonal composition! What a blast, competing in make your own pizza competition! Once again, #JBT17 succeeds in 100% whole Fun!

The wines we tasted throughout the night were:

Ocean Eight Sparkling Cuvee	2008
Ocean Eight Pinot Gris	2017
Ocean Eight Verve Chardonnay	2015 – notable chablisienne in style
Ocean Eight Pinot Noir	2016
Aylward Pinot Noir	2013
Ocean Eight Grande Chardonnay	2013 –fuller bodied with oak

Loved this winery, loved this evening, and I think the wines are great!

DAY 2 - GARAGISTE and THE STORY, Mornington Peninsula by Claudia Masüger

“you really just have the stories”

We had an early start with a beautiful drive along the seaside to the beach. Barnaby Flanders from the Garagiste and Rory Lane from The Story Wines has welcomed us at the east restaurant for our morning coffee ritual with a stunning view over the ocean. We went to the beach for an unusual, informative and fun lesson in geography. Before the lesson started we realized being in Australia when seeing a hard-core Australian swimming by when temperature was still freezing in the background dolphins jumping out of the water. Rory spend the morning drawing a map of Victoria in the sand, using sticks to mark wineries and vineyards and a green tiny plastic tower to symbolize Melbourne as a reference point. Jumping through the sand like a kangaroo he explained the topography of the region and its influence in wine making, proudly announce that he manages the coldest vineyard in Victoria.



Michael from east served us a wonderful decorated breakfast with a smoky drink before we left to visit the Garagiste winery.



Garagiste

We had the honour to join Barnie's first official structured tasting within the newly bought building. A long table was prepared, surrounded by steel tanks. A beautiful range of Chardonnay followed by a fine selection of Pinot Noir was presented by Barnie from his Garagiste Selection, high quality wines with a small production.



"I spy with my little eye something beginning with T....no...no one?"

Le Stagiaire, Chardonnay, 2016, Mornington

Merricks/Balnarring/Tuerong, barrel ferment, native yeast, 9 months élevage, 13.0% alc

'Merricks' Chardonnay, 2016, Mornington

Brown loam/red ferrosols, native yeast, barrel ferment, 500L puncheons, 20% new, 9 months élevage, 13% alc

'Tuerong' Chardonnay, 2016, Mornington

Black sand/brown loam, native yeast, barrel ferment, 500L puncheons, 20% new, 9 months, 13% alc

Le Stagiaire Pinot Noir, 2016, Mornington

Blend of 4 sub regions, whole berry, native ferment, 10 months élevage, 15% new oak, 13.5% alc

'Merricks' Pinot Noir, 2016, Mornington

Brown loam/red ferrosols, whole berry and bunch, native ferment, 10 months élevage, 25% new oak 13.5% alc

'Balnarring' Pinot Noir, 2016, Mornington

Brown Loam, Whole berry and bunch, native ferment, 10 months elevage, 25% new oak, 15.5% alc

'Terre De Feu' Pinot Noir, 2015, Mornington

Red ferrosols, 100% whole bunch, native ferment, 10 months elevage, 4 barrels, 50% new, 13.5% alc

The Story

Rory Lane grew up in Melbourne and after university attended a wine making course and completely fell in love with this profession. After some learn and wonder years in US he returned at the age of 23 and decided to found The Story. The name has been suggested by a friend during a night of brainstorming. Having no family background nor any vineyards "you really just have the stories that go along with how you make it". Rory explained passionately "Being the first generation of wine makers the great advantage is that I can create my own style. There is no-one telling me what is wrong. It's all about creating The Story. The ultimate goal was it to make wines in the coldest regions of Australia and he succeeded. Yearly he holds a story writing competition where he selects the best out of 300 stories and prints it on its label.



The Story Whitlands Riesling, 2017

Vine age 30 yrs, 11.8% alc. 8g/l RS, Ferment in 60% stainless, 40% foudre

The Story 'Westgate Vineyards' Grampians Marsanne Roussanne Viognier, 2016
Vine age 9yrs, 13.5% alc., wild, old oak ferment, full malolactic

The Story 'Henty' Pinot Noir, 2016
Vine age 17 yrs, 13.0% alc, 100% whole bunches, Warmambool., Coastal/vocanic

The Story 'Port Campbell' Pinot Noir, 2016
Vine age 17 yrs, 13.0% alc, all destemmed, coastal, grey brown loam over limestone

The Story 'Grampians' Shiraz, 2015
Ave vine age 25 yrs., 14% alc. 3 vineyard blend

R. Lane Vintners, Westgate Vineyards, Grampians, Shiraz, 2014
Vine age 45 yrs, 14% alc, 60% whole bunches, 25% new oak, unfinned unfiltered

R. Lane Vintners, Westgate Vineyards, Grampians, Shiraz 2015
Vine age 46 yrs, 13.9% alc, 60% whole bunches, 20% new oak, unfinned unfiltered

To finalize this great visit after a delicious lunch we played the wine makers cricket (aka Bung Cricket - ed) , enjoyed the sun and nearby vineyards.



Concrete pad, check, plastic shovel, check, rubber bung, check, sandpaper in pocket, check - OK let's play Aussie cricket

DAY 2 - KOOYONG and PORT PHILIP ESTATE, Mornington Peninsula by Laure Patry

Welcomed at Kooyong and first tasting of the Pinot Noir Ferrous 2012 on top of the barrel room overlooking this single Vineyard of 1.2 Ha with the winemaker Glen Hayley and Stuart Marshall the vineyard manager. The wine was juicy and savoury with notes of tomato leaf. Structured and elegant with a spicy finish and fine tannins.

Glen and Stuart pointed out the water influence for them been based in the middle of the peninsula at 120m above sea level on a sandy, clay loam soil.



Kooyong estate of 40 Ha was purchased in 2004 and they make about 20,000 cases between the 2 labels, they also have a 3rd label for the range Quartier where they buy the fruits. Their vineyards were conventional until 2009 and from 2010 they are working on more sustainable, working on bringing life into the vineyards using their own compost like sea weed.

We then drove to Port Philip Estate on Red Hill where they have a beautiful setting of restaurant and a few rooms. The view also from the terrace of part of the 9 Ha Vineyards on a higher Altitude. 140-160m



Kooyong Estate:

Beurrot (Pinot Gris) 2016

Barrel Fermented for 6-7 months (old barrels).

Fresh, dry and aromatic with pear and lemongrass .

Textured on the palate due to the maritime climate.

Clonale Chardonnay 2016

Their entry level, spend 9 months in 5 to 10% new oak for fermentation then 10 months on the lies. Fruit driven, apples, peaches and some herbal notes.

An easy drinking style with the best of both world.

Kooyong Estate Chardonnay 2016

From the Farrago and Faultline vineyard.

More concentration, fuller style with citucy and long finish.

Farrago Chardonnay 2015

From 2.8 Ha, spend 11 months in barrel with 15% new.

One of my favourite wine from this white wine tasting.

Aromatic , grapefruits with mandarin and tension on the palate. Creamy finish.

Faultline Chardonnay 215

More classic mornington style with a well balanced acidity.

Massale Pinot Noir Kooyong 2016

From the newly planted PN vineyard.

Some whole bunch.

The use of Foudres and 12% new French barrels for 11 months.

Blueberries and cherries aromas . The palate is vibrant, juicy and meaty followed by silky tannins.

Kooyong Estate Pinot Noir 2015

Blend of 3 of their vineyards, use of large oak

Fragrant with autumn fruits, wild berries and spices. Delicate tannins

Kooyong Meres Pinot Noir 2015

Some whole bunch

My favourite red from this tasting.

Floral, rose petals, feminine style with elegant tannins.

Kooyong Haven Pinot Noir 2015

More clay in this vineyard.

Lots of structure and texture. Meaty, peppery, savoury with some bitterness on the finish. If the Meres is more the feminine this one is definitely the masculine style.

Kooyong Ferrous Pinot Noir 2015

More Iron soil.

30% whole bunch. 14 months in 25% new French barrique.

Powerful with ripe black fruits followed by spices and dry tannins.

Port Phillip Estate

Red Hill Chardonnay 2016

In French oak barrel 15% new for 11 months on the lees.

Pure with stone fruits and a citrusy acidity. Spicy finish.

Red Hill Pinot Noir 2015

Five different blocks and include the older vines planted in 1987

Fermented in foudre then matured 11 months in 20% new French barrique

Concentrated



DAY 2 - MELBOURNE GRAZING NIGHT by Pierre Emmanuel Marches

Grazing night? Grazing night! If you read this, you have already been there or you will. The concept is simple: the JBT group splits in two, one or two producers join each group and they head off to different bars and restaurants before reuniting at a rooftop bar for some drinks. Well, that is the plan, but it didn't go as planned, and we couldn't care less. No one joined us when we started, we did not split, but off we went, ready to have fun. After a couple of pitchers in the sunset at the Ponyfish Island on the Yarra river, we went to Embla, a wine bar serving plates to share and wines without additives or adjustments.



Every time I look at this photo I think Ben's beer is orange juice. I have no idea why



We drank Boobar Yarra Valley Chardonnay 2015 and Poolside Barossa Valley Syrah by Tommy Ruff, and though I forgot most of the details, I remember they were highly drinkable and perfectly suited to the small dishes we were served. Luke Lambert joined us then, and the group eventually did split. Mine went to Tonka, a fantastic restaurant with a very good wine list and super service. We were given two blind tastings, Dr. Mayer Rotwein 2015 and Domaine de la Pinte Arbois Savagnin 2007. Hoops, no notes again. The second group eventually joined us, with: name dropping time!!! Luke Lambert, Mike Bennie, one of Australia's most influential wine writers and co-founder of The Wine Front and Campbell Thompson from The Wine Republic. We finally went to a pub for a couple of beers. (Tim: do not remember the name of the pub?).



Stefan was dropped from the band shortly afterwards for smiling

DAY 3 - TIMO MAYER, MAC FORBES & LUKE LAMBERT, Yarra Valley by Ben Cheung

“It’s not about 100% whole bunch but 100% whole fun!”

After the wonderful Melbourne Grazing night, next day morning we drove 1.5 hours from Melbourne to Yarra Valley. That was a beautiful day, blue sky and cool breeze. Everyone was so excited because we were going to meet three of the hottest names in Australian wine, Timo Mayer, Mac Forbes and Luke Lambert.

Our first stop was Timo Mayer’s winery where we met all three winemakers to taste their white wines. They are very best friend but three very different people of completely different characters.



Timo and Mac hold invisible fish

Timo Mayer – A runaway German farmer who settled in Yarra Valley 20 years go and trained at De Bortoli with Steve Webber. The funkiest winemaker I have ever met. I met him one year ago and he asked me to call him Dr Mayer. I asked if he was a “real” doctor like Dr. Carrodus Bailey from Yarra Yering or Dr. John Middleton from Mount Mary. He said no but every German producer called themselves doctor when they tried to sell wines like Dr. Loosen!



Mac Forbes – Originally from Yarra Valley, trained at De Bortoli and Mount Mary after travelling overseas, a very calm charming young winemaker who is trying very hard with his small team to re-define the true expression and also the sub-regional styles of Yarra Valley wines. Apart from his single site range, he is not afraid of doing experiment, hence creating his EB (Experimental Batch) range which is a tiny production making different wines each year.



Luke Lambert – The quietest man among the three. His personality is reflected in his wines which is very delicate, pure, sophisticated and require you to think. The more you drink the more you will love his wines.



Although they are very different in personality, these three winemakers share one goal which is to make the best possible wines to truly express what Yarra Valley means to them. I have a very strongly feeling that they are the future for Yarra Valley.

By the way, Timo is a big fans of doing whole bunch fermentation and he has done a fabulous job to bring back this “old fashion” to the region and inspired many winemakers. This also inspired me to define my wine career as “It’s not about 100% whole bunch but 100% whole fun”!

Wines tasted:

2012 Luke Lambert Sparkling Chardonnay

2015 Luke Lambert Chardonnay

2016 Luke Lambert Chardonnay

2017 Luke Lambert Crudo Chardonnay

2017 Mac Forbes RS19 Riesling

2017 Mac Forbes RS28 Riesling

2016 Mac Forbes Hoodle Creek Chardonnay

2016 Mac Forbes Woori Yallock Chardonnay

2016 Mac Forbes Wesburn Chenin Blanc

2015 Dr Mayer Chardonnay

2004 Mayer Bloody Hill Chardonnay

DAY 3 - MAC FORBES, Yarra Valley by Stefan Neumann

“perspective is everything”

Facing Mac can be quite intimidating as he is a man of stature yet his warm and welcoming charm wins people easily over; similar to his stunning Pinot's

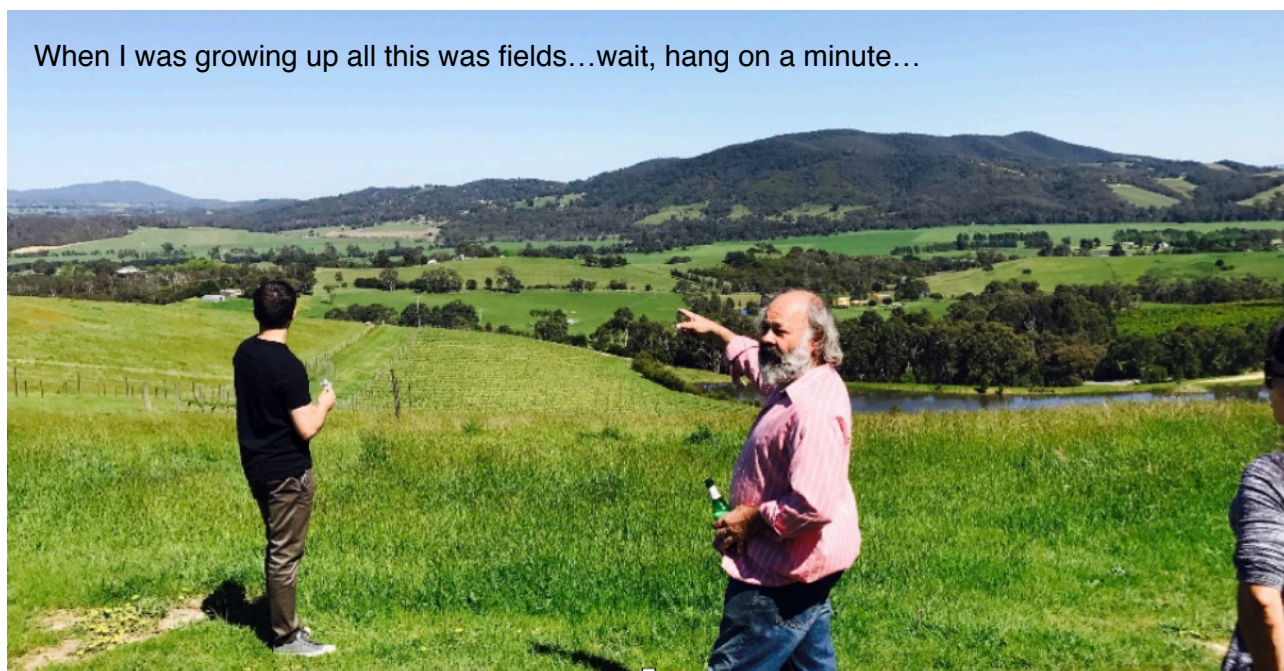


Starting off our tasting in Timo Mayers winery (what a great idea to start on the 'bloody hill') we enjoyed a flight of 2 Rieslings from the 2017 vintage and 3 Chardonnay's from 2016. The first thing which always strikes me with Mac's wines is the precision and delicacy without losing power or grip.

Back at Mac's winery down the hill we are faced with a line up of PN from Coldstream to Yarra and Woory Yallock mainly from 2016 yet there was the stunning Woori Yallock 14 Black Label. Last but certainly not least we were treated with the EB 27 Lovechild Cabernet's 15. It shows one thing so clearly, where to find top Pinot Noir's next to excellent Cabernet's. It's like trying to find a Burgundy and Bordeaux hybrid. Yes, on the one hand that is the essence of Yarra Valley as a region but even more so the capable hands of a winemaker. Finding the right sights for Pinot and Cabernet within one region can be called a challenge yet to manage to vinify and create such diversity within one range is rather impressive.

At lunch / brunch time we were not only blessed with the weather but with the company of all three winemakers. Mac Forbes, Luke Lambert and Timo Mayer. Having all 3 of them in one spot felt not only to me very special the group was enthusiastic and over the moon. The sheer number of bottles on the table for us to try was beyond generous and led to a few more discoveries like Mac's EB 30.

I was lucky enough to spend my birthday with this fantastic group of people and winemakers and at night time we received our final treat in Luke Lambert's winery. Epic blind tastings were conducted and trying to eat the largest piece of Comte cheese was a true challenge yet managed.



Mac's Wine

2017 RS 19 Riesling Strathbogie Ranges

Second pick, noticeable sweetness with a bit of skin contact, very expressive in its youth, pure with still bracing acid. keep it for a few years

2017 RS28 Riesling

Great weight with more structure and nice youthful fruit expression, got a long future ahead.

2016 Hoddles Creek Chardonnay

Planted on red volcanic soil, good spicy and mineral expression with dried floral highlights and good kick to it. Young, but...

2016 Woori Yallock Chardonnay

South facing on sedimentary rocks, more lush and outgoing with quince and orange peel notes

2016 Chenin Blanc Westbury

Se end of the valley, nice crushed mint aroma with good and precise managed acid, great effort

2016 Yarra Valley Pinot

Nice easy fruit driven expression, simple and pure. Great slightly chilled.

2016 Yarra Junction Pinot

A tick heavier and denser with a great juicy character, initially a bit shy but once Tim was not looking a bit of swirl and voila...like the structure.

2016 Coldstream Pinot

Great perfume, a real charmer, so elegant but that silky power is slowly taking over. Always my favourite expression with an overall stunning balance considering being so young.

2016 Woori Yallock Pinot

Nicely perfumed with cherry highlights and rose blossom, got a bit more backbone to it and a more savoury expression.

2014 Woori Yallock Black Label Pinot

Clearly a different level of concentration but with the same DNA. Focused and precise yet still not giving everything.

2015 EB Love Child Cabernets

Nicy minty character with sweet liqorish and hints of chocolate, still a bit dense and several layers are slowly peeling away if you are patient enough to let it breath.

DAY 3 - LUKE LAMBERT, Yarra Valley by Andrew Stewart

This is one of my favourite nights from the trip to be sure. A simple but delicious meal of stew cooked under the setting sun. A ridiculous amount of wines from every corner of the planet, chosen for their ability to evoke something meaningful in each of the people whom selected them. A barrel room filled with disco lights, records, a disheveled drum kit, and a meat slicer complete with hanging meat. The Nebbiolo Man Cave, and our hosts, Timo, Mac, and Luc (Luke's French cousin? - ed) did a smash up job of this evening.



My personal favourite part of the evening of course was the blind tastings. A bring your own exercise with each guest presenting their selection and then explaining what it represented to them and why it was their pick. Of course, the wines were all fantastic, but the stories of the selections ranged from funny, to educational, emotionally charged and each illustrated a little more about the person who was presenting. Not to say presenting like this was particularly formal... but I truly love these sorts of evenings. Enlightening in more ways than one. I will always and forever be enamoured with the reasons people fell in love with wine, especially those of us that have chosen to chase the ever-expanding ocean of learning that it becomes. It inspires me and humbles me to see how people of such extraordinary talent, intelligence and heart give so much to pursuing this understanding and admiration of such a seemingly simple, yet infinitely complex industry.

Forgive my inability to recall who brought what, but a sincere and feeling thank you to all for the insane juice!



Wines Tasted (That I managed to document.. Apologies for those I missed!)

1998 Dunn Vineyards Howell Mountain Cabernet Sauvignon (Powerhouse of elegance. A treat!!)

2011 Keller "Abts E" GG

2012 Wöhlmuth Ried Gola (Brought by Stefan and BLINDED by the Sorcerer Sören!?!? Legendary!!)

2014 Jean Marc Grussaute Camin Larredya Jurançon Sec (Thank you Pierre)

2010 Chateau des Tours Cotes-du Rhone Reserve

2002 Mount Mary Vineyard Yarra Valley Pinot Noir (Mac's Selection I believe??)

2012 Mascarello Monprivato Barolo (Luc?)

2014 Hervé Souhat Syrah VDF (TIMO!)

2004 Niepoort Batuta Tinto Duoro

“brekky on the Hill”



Today is one of those days that took ‘site’ visit to another level. The first notes I wrote about today were ‘how do you describe this place to someone who’s never seen it.’

Our day begins with departure at 8:15 for a quick drive to the Sexton Vineyard. The owner of Giant Steps, Phil Sexton, joins us on the bus and provides a quick overview of his journey and how he arrived at this place. Clearly this is a man with a mind for business and a passion for wine which adds an interesting dynamic distinct from other tours. His path to this place has taken him in many directions. From microbrewery owner to Margaret River and Devil’s Lair to consultant in Portland to Giant Steps..and always with an acute sense of business.

The vineyard site, which is planted to chardonnay and pinot noir, was planted in 1996 but the story of the acquisition is the most interesting piece of the story.

After selling Devil’s Lair in Margaret River Phil moved to Portland Oregon to help a friend with a new brewery. This particular property popped up out of the blue as possibly for sale at which point he immediately flew back to the Yarra in an effort to pursue his interest in cool climate winemaking. A knock on the door of owners only made things more interesting. The property had been sold but financing hadn’t come together yet. An interesting offer was put forth....Phil provides a matching offer within 24 hours with a deposit and the site was his. It was bought essentially as is (a horse paddock) without any research about the viability of the property. A gamble that has absolutely paid off....and here we are heading to the vineyard!

It's not often you take a passenger bus on what seemed like an impossible off road hill climb but that's how you get yourself to the top of this incredible vineyard that spreads out across this beautiful 280 meter hill site. The silence of our group spoke volumes about the place we found ourselves that morning. 270 degree views of lush rolling hills in the morning sun spread out across the Yarra Valley. On top we were greeted by a mobile coffee truck and an amazing catered breakfast along with a glass of Champagne (Agrapart & Fils) to start the day! Along with Phil we are joined by Steve Flamsteed who is Giant Steps Winemaker. To describe our breakfast while sitting on hay bales looking over the valley is difficult to paint an accurate picture of but suffice to say it was one of the trip highlights.

For the second half of the tour we drive to the winery for a tasting in the barrel room. You get the sense with this winery and operation in general that they are meticulous and make an effort to do everything at a very high level.

Our tasting is led by Steve and for next hour we are treated to an exceptional line up of Chardonnay and Pinot Noir. There is certainly an element in these wines that would appeal to the wine geek but they have been able to find a balance that would appeal to a broad cross section of wine lover.

Wines Tasted:

(2016 was a warm vintage but they kept a good canopy in an effort to provide less sun exposure to the plants and retain freshness)

2016 Giant Steps Yarra Valley Chardonnay

2016 Giant Steps Sexton Vineyard Chardonnay

2016 Giant Steps Lusatia Park Vineyard Chardonnay

2016 Giant Steps Tarraford Vineyard Chardonnay

2013 Sexton Vineyard Chardonnay

2016 Giant Steps Yarra Valley Pinot Noir

2016 Giant Steps Applejack Vineyard Pinot Noir

2016 Giant Steps Primavera Vineyard Pinot Noir

2016 Giant Steps Sexton Vineyard Pinot Noir

2016 LDR Pinot Noir/Syrah

2016 Giant Steps Yarra Valley Syrah

2016 Giant Steps Tarraford Vineyard Syrah

Added tasting on way out:

Side Step Red

Side Step White

DAY 4 - YARRA YERING, Yarra Valley by Sören

“two Y’s on the label, yet not a single question mark.”

Got a sense of solemnity when waking up today.
We were going to visit YARRA YERING, sacred grounds!



As much as i love the wines from Timo Mayer, Luke Lambert and Mac Forbes. This is where it all started for me, when it comes to Australian wines. Thrilled to visit these "sacred" grounds. I don't remember the vintage, but i can still recall the first wine from Yarra Yering on the palate. Fruit driven, straight forward, but with a nerve. Lineyar wines with a depth, very different from the wines from Australia, which i encountered after that. This was around 25 years ago. The wine was the "Dry Red Wine 1".



Being one of the pioneers, there was quite a few expectations for this visit. Not only for the quality but also to see how the cab blends was holding up next to the Pinots. Yarra Valley being the place it is, defined as a Chardonnay/Pinot Noir terroir. Glad to say that the Cab's is up to the challenge, proving it's place among it's peers.

One other great aspect of this visit was to meet Sarah Crowe, appointed "The winemaker of the year" 2014 by James Halliday.

An incredible woman, that made her first vintage at Yarra Yering 2014 and dared to change the iconic Dry Red Wine 1, by reducing the amount of new oak, making it even more balanced.

As that wasn't enough, she manages to work with 23 different grape varieties, on 28 hectares, planted in small patches, spread all over the premises. Ad different clones that ripens at different time, located in the same parcel.

In my book thats a skilled juggler! Managing keeping so many details in the air at the same time. Sara is standing with one foot in the present and one in the future, and is coming out on top of the whole thing, and improving the results. Respect!

We got to taste a few back vintages of the reds. And of course, one get charmed by the treat of tasting the 1976 Dry Red Wine 1. Displaying a plethora of matured tertiary notes, such as leather, dark tobacco, dried black currants and that animalic nerve, which is so typical for an older wine. Framed by the acidity, and dried tannin structure.

But the 2015 Dry Red Wine 1 was the real epiphany. With it's intensity and depth The second vintage for Sara at YY, an a very good vintage at that as well. The 2015 Dry Red Wine 1 not only proved how good the vintage was, but also showed how good Sara managed the legacy of Dr Bailey Carrodus. We might have seen a "Unicorn wine" in it's birth. Only time will tell.



Tasted Wines:

2013 Sparkling Blanc de Noir (Pinot Meunier)

2017 Chardonnay (tank sample)

2016 Chardonnay

2011 Chardonnay

2016 Dry White Wine No1 (Chardonnay, Semillon)

2016 Pinot Noir

2015 Agincourt Cabernet Malbec

2014 Underhill Shiraz

2012 Underhill Shiraz

2004 Underhill Shiraz

2015 Dry Red Wine No 1 (Cabernet Sauvignon, Merlot, Malbec, Petit Verdot)

2014 Dry Red Wine No 1

2012 Dry Red Wine No 1

1978 Dry Red Wine No 1

2014 Dry Red Wine No 2 (Syrah, Viognier, Marsanne, Mourvedre)

2012 Dry Red Wine No 2

1976 Dry Red Wine No 2

2015 Dry Red Wine No 3 (various red Portugese varieties)

Two Y's on the label, yet not a single question mark.

Everything is cristal clear.

This is one of the "Grand Vins" of Australia.



“charm in on our radar”



“Charm in on our radar”, quoth the Webber evermore. As we arrive at DeBortoli Stephen Webber looms over me in his impressionable Yarra Valley estate. Charm was most definitely present in the wines he and winemaker Sarah Fagan presented during an intimate tasting in the wine shed. Charm perhaps has a different meaning Down Under, for it was under 6.47 minutes until the F-bombs flew as broadly as the bird Steve missed shooting with his rifle that morning. Traditional is the game for most of the wines tasted except for an unbelievably unique vermentino under flor Steve treated us to before taking us to enjoy dinner with his beautiful wife Leanne, granddaughter of founder Vittorio DeBortoli. Fresh vegetables and herbs accentuated the wines from Leanne’s Yarra Glen garden and the wines and laughter flowed.

Yarra Valley, DeBortoli:

“if I’ve got a little bit of hairy armpit I’m fine” SW (decided to let go of tracking all abv here to pay more attention to the “swear brother”)

2017 Bellariva, King Valley Pinot Bianco: high floral tones, savoury and textured with bright acid

2017 DeBortoli Estate, Yarra Valley Pinot Blanc: think Henri Gouges as lees, citrus and apple blossoms generously give way to a lean finish

2016 DeBortoli 'A5' Chardonnay, Yarra Valley 12.5% apple, pear, yellow peach, cream, toast and hazelnut; 100% malo

2017 Vinoque 'Same Same' 70% meunier/30% pinot noir: dried potpourri of purple rose, lilac, lavender, fun, fresh reds of strawberry and raspberry. The "Audrey Hepburn" wine (MammaKat)

2017 Riorret 'Lusatia Park' Single Vineyard Pinot Noir, (upper)Yarra Valley: strawberry fields forever, savoury, dried wheat, silky tannins

*2016 DeBortoli 'A8' Yarra Valley, Syrah: whole bunch of dark reds and purples, lingering dried meat, bitter chocolate, graphite, smoke and toast. Grainy and great!

2016 DeBortoli 'Villages' Heathcote Shiraz/Viognier: cherries and high floral tones

2017 DeBortoli Heathcote Grenache: crunchy and bright from 100% carbonic

2017 Vinoque 'Novo Tinto' King Valley Touriga: dense chocolate, dried meats, leather, tobacco leaf, balsamic, fig, big juicy tannins

10. 2016 Vinoque Heathcote Greco: fun and fresh with pear, apple and white florals 11. Vermentino "under flor": badass



DAY 5 - BROWN BROTHERS, King Valley by Chloe

“you feel the history in the air”

Driving up to this property, you feel the history in the air—the classic home, the ageing winery and, the new cellar door... each building showing a linear process of development and success. I felt pride for this family as I walked around the grounds. This winery had something for everyone and a history very few could compare. Brown Brothers is the largest family-owned winery and the largest vineyard holder, with 128 years of continued history. Brown Brothers is the core of five Brands.

In the last 12 months, Brown Brothers purchased Innocent Bystander, created by Phil Sexton of the Yarra Valley. Innocent Bystander represents the Yarra Valley region as a whole. It is a quality, great contemporary brand that is really approachable for consumers in palate and price-point. We tasted wine with Joel, the lead winemaker, and Jeff Alexander. It is a 50,000 case production of all varietals. These wines are supposed to be approachable, fresh, consumed young, and affordable, with potential btg placements.



We tasted: Station 1
Brown Brothers Vintage release Prosecco

Innocent Bystander, Pinot Gris, 2017

Innocent Bystander, Chardonnay, 2016

Innocent Bystander, Pinot Noir, 2017 – (my notes say 2017, the spreadsheet says 2016)

Brown Brothers, Montepulciano, 2016 – (the spreadsheet says Gamay and does not list the Montepulciano, did I miss the Gamay? I definitely remember the Montepulciano)

Brown Brothers, Mystique, 2017 – Tank Sample

Brown Brothers, Cienna 2016/2017

The Brown Brothers family is originally from Scotland... in the mid-1800s, they immigrated for the gold rush. Rebecca Graham emigrated from Canada, also due to the Gold rush. The barn is the location where the Browns first started making wine. There is a natural aquifer on property. John Francis, the great-grandfather, started making wine. Brown Brothers is all about experimentation and innovation. Patricia Brown is the grandmother and matriarch. She worked for the winery for 60 years. Patricia Brown was the inspiration for the Patricia wine line of their top eschelon wines, launched in 2000. The winery only releases wines in good vintages. They have just completed their 14th release. They always release the Patricia wines on St. Patrick's Day – Leprechaun wines.

We tasted: Station 2
Patricia, Sparkling, Pinot Noir 80%/Chardonnay 20%, 2010

King Valley fruit, 7-8g/l dosage, 100% Malo of base wine, traditional method and stays on the lees for 5 years

Patricia, Chardonnay, 2015
100% Tasmanian fruit this vintage, 100% Barrel fermented, 100% Malolactic fermentation, wild yeast and natural fermentation, a little battonage, 25% new oak all french

Patricia, Shiraz, 2012
Higher concentration of purple, savory with intense purple floral, whole bunch fermented, 40% new oak added, 60% American/ 40% French, Larger American Oak works well with Heathcote component, French Oak works well with Henty Fruit (cool climate, coldest region), 18 months in oak, 2 years in a bottle before released

Patricia, Cabernet Sauvignon, 2012
Out of 14 releases, 11 vintages have had Cabernet Sauvignon from King Valley, from their top parcel, pronounced structure, chalky tannin, ripe black and red fruit with savory meaty notes, great potpourri of purple floral, violets, lilacs and lavender with a frame of Eucalyptus/mint
AWRI – Australian wine research institute, figured out the compound that has isolated the Eucalyptus character in Australian wine

Patricia, Noble Riesling, late harvest 2013

1962 – first botrytis affected wine, one block that has botrytis on Riesling in the King Valley, 170g/l Residual Sugar

We then went in to the cellar with the family history and old cellar wines...

In 1967 there was extreme frost

In 1968 they built the family cellar

We drank:

Patricia, Cabernet Sauvignon, 2000 - first release of this wine.

100% new oak, with 10% being American Oak.

Tasmania winery – Tamar Ridge

Andrew – has been an educator for 21 years

Tom – Winemaker for the Tasmanian winery

Tamar Ridge/Tasmania – first vintage is 1889, 1,800 hectares planted in Tasmania, Pinot Noir is the number one planted varietal

Climate is freezing, on north facing slopes for warmth, cool climate similar to Chablis and Champagne regions in France

They grow: Chardonnay, Pinot Grigio, Riesling, Sauvignon Blanc and Pinot Noir

Tasmania needs water as a mitigating factor to modify temperature. There is a lot of rain on the west of Tasmania.

What we tasted: Station 3

Devil's Corner Sparkling – 70% Chardonnay – Hazard's Vineyard (largest vineyard in Tasmania), 30% Pinot Noir – Kayena Vineyard (Tamar Valley), made by Charmat Method

Pirie Line – traditional method, more complexity

2016 Devil's Corner Pinot Noir – Large format fermentation, Machine Harvested, 60% East Coast and 40% Tamar Valley

2017 Pinot Noir Clone 115 – thin skinned, 3-5 ton oak, 36 different parcels, cold soak, basket press, malo in spring, VSP2/Spur Pruning, 100% Handpicked, 100% Whole Bunch, 100% Carbonic Maceration

2017 Pinot Noir Clone D4V2 – Pommard Clone, Machine Harvested, cold soak, fermented with 20% whole bunch offers a slight sappyiness, cold soak for 13-14 days on skins, 100% French oak 9 months in oak with 15%-20% New French

2017 Pinot Noir Clone MV6

2017 Pinot Noir Clone 777

2015 Tamar Ridge Pinot Noir – great vintage

2016 Devil's Corner Resolution PN

Lunch was served after the presentation on their Tasmania properties. The lunch wines were

Brown Brothers 1889 Pinot Grigio

Brown Brothers 1889 Shiraz

DAY 5 - ALL SAINTS, Rutherglen by Claudia

“like an angel crying on your tongue”

After an impressive visit at Brown Brothers winery we arrived at their cousins place All Saints Estate. Angela and Nick Brown two of the owners and Molly the dog welcomed us friendly. They introduced us to the long history of this impressive castle from 1860's which was hand build by two Scotsmen, who originally came to Australia because of the goldrush. No surprise to hear that many banquets and up to 80 weddings are taking place yearly in these historical surroundings. The architecture is a part of it's terroir said Angela laughing. The siblings explained that their family is in the wine business since 125 years. Their Dad, who started wine making in 1919, died 12 years ago. None of the three kids had a plan to enter the business but finally all of them decided to take on the challenge, with great success. Besides many activities they also run a wine club which makes 80% of their sales. Members receive every quarter 6 bottles of premium table wines of outstanding quality to their door.



Nic guided us through the building passing wooden barrels, the most awesome chandeliers hanging from the ceiling until we reached a dusty chamber which looks like no one has touch anything in there since centuries. “Now we will taste Australian History” said Nic when taking samples of the liquid gold the world-renowned fortified wines out of the Scotch barrels which were made in the 18th century. This part of the building has a roof made from tin sheets, which leads to extreme temperature changes from very cold to extreme hot. That makes it hard to replicate wines over the years.



After a master class with Campbell (report from Laure) we spend a lovely evening in the Brown families own wine bar which is at the main street of Rutherglen. Eliza the third of the siblings joined us. Lots of delicious food has been offered and great stories has been exchanged. At the end Nic offers us to try a Museum Rutherglen Muscat, a 1'000 AUD bottle. When he holds the glass, ready to taste, the room got quiet and in an emotional voice he talked about how proudly his passed away father used to explain "it's like an angel crying on your tongue".



I don't know why this dog's tail is so fluffy

Wines tasted in the evening

All Saints Estate Marsanne, 2016
All Saints Estate Family Cellar Marsanne, 2015
All Saints Estate Durif, 2015
All Saints Estate Family Cellar Durif, 2013
The Doctor Durif, 2013
Wahgunyah Shiraz, 2015

Very special treat

Museum Rutherglen Muscat

Master Class during visit with Campbells

Rutherglen Muscat
Rutherglen Muscadelle
Classic Muscat
Classic Muscadelle
Grand Rutherglen Muscat
Grand Rutherglen Muscadelle
Rare Rutherglen Muscat
Rare Rutherglen Muscadelle



DAY 5 - CAMPBELLS, Rutherglen by Laure

Welcomed at the winery by Colin Campbells, his daughter Susie that takes care of the marketing and Sales, Jane that oversees brand, public relations and events and Jules the winemaker.

Family owned, now 5th generation. The family originally came from Scotland for Gold then established in 1870. Vineyard of 70 hectares, making white, red and Rutherglen fortified wines.

We had some time to have a look at the cellar to see the solera system.

Susie explained the wine making in their winery.

A 5 different stage solera. They take 20% of the wine and move to the next stage and so on.

Susie and her father pointed out the climate that makes the wines unique, hot summers, cool nights, long Autumn warm and dry so the grapes can concentrate and shrivels.

All the wineries have a Tin roof where the barrels are kept and where they loose 8% (Angel share)

The barrels they used are 120 years old French and American.

Each vintage are assessed and a decision is then made regarding which classification they will join.



We proceed to a tasting of 8 flights, comparing the same classification wines from the 2 different winery from Topaque (Muscadelle) and Muscat grapes.

One difference to note is the different soils, All Saints is on sandy soil so they wines are more aromatic and Campbells on a richer red loam soil

We took note earlier at All Saints winery that they do not have a solera but do blending as doesn't want to risk if they have an issue with one barrel.

Masterclass on Rutherglen Muscat and Topaque, 4 different tiers classification.

We will go through the understanding of the classification, the blending and then a food matching.



Classified under four descriptions to indicate the level of quality.

The 4 level mark a progression in richness, complexity and intensity of flavour.

This system was developed more than 10 years ago.

All the producers seats and taste together then decide the quality and level of classification the wine should be under or if their blending should be adjusted.

Rutherglen: 3 to 5 years average. RS: 180-240 grams/L

Classic: 6 to 10 years average. RS: 200-280 grams/L

Grand: 11 to 19 years average. RS: 270-400 grams/L

Rare: Minimum 20 years age. 270-400 grams/L

We start with the Topaque

1st flight Rutherglen

All Saints: Aromatic with confit orange, herbal, textured on the palate and spices on the finish.

Campbells: Richer style, dried figs and a lot more texture.

2nd flight Classic

All Saints: Orange brown colour, seaweed and salty caramel.

Campbells: mouth filling, toffee, honey and citrus notes

3rd flight Grand

All Saints: Concentrated, nutty, Christmas cake, plums and marmalade.

Campbells: Depth of flavour, caramelised, butterscotch, spices and malty notes.

4th Flight Rare

All Saints: Viscous, smoky, sultanas and liquorice with an aromatic lift.

Campbells: Dark amber colour. Toasty, nutty, caramelised, long lasting spicy finish.

Then the Muscat

5th Flight Rutherglen Muscat

All Saints: Fresh and floral, elderflower, delicate and elegant.

Campbells: Confit fruits, orange zest and ripe apples, balanced and fresh.

6th Flight Classic

All Saints: Dark brown colour. Savoury, salted caramel, biscuits and a clean finish.

Campbells: Fresher than All Saints, rancio notes, brown sugar caramelised and overripe apples, lively acidity.

7TH Flight Grand

All Saints: Treacle, more oily, spices.

Campbells: Rich, Coffee, liquorice, dried raisins, dates, burnt sugar, spices with a clean finish.

8th Flight Rare

All Saints: Dried figs, candied orange, very rich and very sweet with a well balanced acidity.

Campbells: Intense and viscous, toasted and nutty, like an aged madeira, complex with a good freshness.

The oldest the wines are the most we could feel the acidity, which was very impressive to be able to see in this comparative tasting.

Food matching

Blue cheese was well paired with All Saints Classic Rutherglen Topaque and also the Grand Rutherglen Muscat.

The comte worked well with both producers Classic Muscat

Goat cheese with the Classic Topaque Campbells

The Goat cheese with herbs with the All Saint Rutherglen Topaque

And to finish the chocolate truffle paired with the Rare Rutherglen Muscat from All Saints.

Rare and Grand and be enjoyed as sipping by themselves.

DAY 6 -TAHBILK, Nagambie Lakes by Pierre

“like stepping in Australia’s wine history”

Down the memory lane! Visiting Tahbilk, and being welcomed by ALISTER JOHN PURBRICK, 4th generation owner, was literally like stepping in Australia’s wine history. The old buildings, the old machinery, the isolation, and on that day the strong cold dry wind made the whole experience nearly solemn. It seemed everyone felt it.



You want to get to Alister? You go through me

Speaking about old things, here comes the cellar. I asked if the old wooden fermenters were just for museum purpose. Stupid question, they are indeed still in use, and by the looks of it, have been ever since Alister's grandfather started making wine seriously in the 30's. It reminded me of Lopez de Heredia in Haro, where time has stood still for more than a hundred years, and where wine is still made today as it was then. Tahbilk wine is also still aged in the old cellar, in big very old barrels, some not perfectly tight.



During this trip, we met a lot of adventurous wine producers and a few custodians. Alistair and his team are custodians. But Alistair is a trained winemaker, and a very precise one too, with clear ideas about how to make rather pure wine with a strong sense of place, and as we were to taste, a sense of climate. Hmm, that did not sound good at all... What I mean is that each wine we tasted was true to the climatic conditions that defined its vintage, without adjustments, alterations or disguise. That is the same idea behind the rather modern techniques used to make the young whites, anaerobically in steel tanks at low temperature. Keeping pure and intact the qualities of the harvested grapes in bad years as in good ones. The clean and very clear juice is inoculated and spends just a brief period on fine lees. The Marsanne from the 1927 vines however is picked early and the must is oxidised, then fermented at 15 degrees. The result is a clean, water transparent young wine with rather neutral aromas, but enough concentration and substance from old vines, to develop flavours and much complexity through bottle maturation. The tasting was led by Alistair. It was highly professional, pedagogical, interesting and moving.



We tasted:

Marsanne 2002, 2007 and 2011

All three are very clean, focussed with high acidity and moderate alcohol (11,5 % to 12,5). The complexity and texture increasing during bottle maturation.

'1927 Vines' Marsanne 2000, 2004 and 2010

Very pure wines, nearly transparent, with a touch of lime peel in the young one evolving towards white truffle, wax and flint after long bottle maturation. All with high acidity and no more than 11,5 % alc.

Shiraz 1986 and 2015

The same pure, nearly transparent style, very moderate extraction, with herbal and smoky aromas, savoury back palate and firm good tannin. 1986 added some tertiary complexity to the clean, fruity and herbal aromas of the wilder young wine.

Cabernet Sauvignon 1991 and 2015

Tobacco leaf and tar, liquorice and mint on the younger wine, some black tea on the old one. Firm tannin on both but the lean fat-free 1991 is a strong contrast to the nearly opulent (let's say generous) style of the 2015 which packs 14,5 % alc. in a rich fruity and spicy wine.

'Eric Stevens Purbrick' Shiraz 1998, 2004 and 2013

A blend of juicy wild Shiraz with the Tahbilk low extraction transparent style. Not made to impress and yet it does. 1998 is not at its best though, but that is just a bottle problem. Still possible to pick up some tertiary complexity and savouriness. 2004 is just superb, with a core of perfectly ripe berries, wild herbs and pepper, savoury back palate and firm perfect tannin. 2013 is linear, displaying its pure aromas and flavours in a focused and detailed way.

'Eric Stevens Purbrick' Cabernet Sauvignon 1996, 2002 and 2013

Same style, pure, low extraction, quite high acidity, and length. A light VA on the complex 1996, but just a detail for a wine which grew and grew in intensity and complexity as long we could taste it, and that was long... the savoury rich 2002 was quite impressive, lots of top quality tannin, very savoury.

'1860 Vines' Shiraz 1994, 2004 and 2012

Intense wines, with a lot of high quality tannin, salty liquorice, savoury, very concentrated and very long with a detailed and complex display of aromas and flavours. Rich and firm wines, but with the Tahbilk linear transparent style.

After the tasting, we went for a boat trip, had lunch and a surprise birthday cake for our favourite birthday Kat.



DAY 6 - BINDI, Macedon Ranges by Ben

“simply sublime!”

When we arrived at Bindi, after introduction, the first thing we did was not walking the vineyard but chasing Kangaroo. After Kangaroo, Michael walked us through all of his vineyards and explained his philosophy. Bindi is a very small property but even so only 50-60% of the land is planted to vine, focusing only on Chardonnay and Pinot Noir.



Michael firmly believes that the best wines come from the vineyard. Thus he spends most of his time to look after his land and vines. Although Michael has already built his reputation as one of the finest Pinot Noir and Chardonnay producers in Australia, he still keeps pushing himself to grow better grapes. Thus he recently planted a new vineyard (named after his father) with very high-density (11,000 vines per hectare) and there will be another one to be planted in 4-5 years.

His vineyards and winery are run on minimal intervention lines. Because of his gentle approach, Bindi wines are so clean, transparent and complex with a wonderful balanced structure and elegance. His wines are on my MUST-BE COLLECTED list.



After the barrel tasting of his 2017 vintage, we went to Michael's newly renovated house for dinner. At the dinner, Michael was very kind and generous to share many of his older wines including the first vintage 1991 Chardonnay and a Magnum bottle of Sparkling wine (which is never released!). The wines of the night and my whole James Busby trip was 2012 Quartz Chardonnay which was simply sublime!

I could not wait to see how the new high-density planted vineyard will develop in next 15-20 years.



and this is my favourite post, I call him Pete



Wine tasted:

From Barrel

2017 Bindi Kosta Rind Chardonnay

2017 Bindi Quartz Chardonnay

2017 Bindi Dixon Pinot Noir

2017 Bindi Darshan Pinot Noir

2017 Bindi Original Vineyard Pinot Noir

2017 Bindi Block K Pinot Noir

2017 Bindi Block 5 Pinot Noir

2017 Binid Pyrette Shiraz

From bottle

NV Bindi Sparkling (Magnum)

2016 Bindi Kosta Rind Chardonnay

2006 Bindi Composition Chardonnay

1991 Bindi Chardonnay

2012 Bindi Quartz Chardonnay

2006 Bindi Quartz Chardonnay

2015 Bindi Dixon Pinot Noir

2014 Bindi Original Vineyard Pinot Noir

1998 Bindi Original Vineyard Pinot Noir

1994 Bindi Original Vineyard Pinot Noir

2005 Bindi Original Vineyard Pinot Noir

2004 Bindi Original Vineyard Pinot Noir

2009 Bindi Block 5 Pinot Noir

1998 Bindi Block 5 Pinot Noir





The term unicorn wine is overused, but is an apt description of the 1991 Bindi Chardonnay

DAY 7 - CHAPOUTIER, Heathcote by Stefan

"fac et spera"

We had the pleasure of meeting Marco Hall from Chapoutier 21st of October. After an early tasting in the Pleiade vineyard with Ron Laughton from Jasper Hill where we had the chance to sit down and be delighted with a serious flight of wines and learn more about the reason Chapoutier set up a winery in Heathcote. As a matter of fact, there were 3 strong reasons for that. 1st Phylloxera free, very ancient soils and outside of AOC / AOP regulations.



2017 Tournon 'Mathilda' Grenache Rose

Fresh, light and delicate style

2015 Tournon 'Mathilda' Viognier/Marsanne

85% Viognier with 15% Marsanne, sweet marzipan with fresh peach character, floral touch with good weight of Marsanne. Clearly Tim's favourite wine 😊

2016 Tournon Landsborough Vineyard Chardonnay

Single vineyard and wild fermented. French oak for 10m and originally certified. Less than a 2ha parcel, initially seems very floral with chamomile and straw with hay and vanilla notes. The 20% new oak are still noticeable, and the lee steering shows expressive fruit driven elements on the palate.

Tournon 'Mathilda' Shiraz

A wine not only served in the Emirates Economy class but it ticks all the boxes of what you expect from a Aussie Shiraz. Nice savoury finish

Tournon Shay's Flat Vineyard Shiraz

Full on dark sweet fruit nose, wild yeast, hands off approach which pays off in a delightful approachable yet serious style.

Tournon Landsborough Vineyard Grenache

No oak just cement tanks, nice fruit driven nose with minty notes. Easy but very enjoyable style.

Tournon Lady's Lane Vineyard Shiraz

Not only the Kangaroo's liked this vineyard in 2016 I think our group in 2017 did too. Very low yielding plot with no irrigation and a nicely perfumed style .

Terlato & Chapoutier Malakoff Shiraz

Spicy notes with dark chocolate and very fruit driven sweet style.

Terlato & Chapoutier L-Block Shiraz

'Heavenly' perfumed style with savoury notes really pushing through. Also called the survivor block after the drought. Nice wine with a future ahead.



DAY 8 - CLARE VALLEY RIESLING MASTERCLASS at KILIKANOON, Clare Valley by Andrew

A sommelier will always espouse their love of certain regions or varietals, special to them or a massive part of their day-to-day drinking regiment. That said, the one seemingly universal varietal to bind them all, it could be argued, is Riesling.

We rode up on the bus, coffee'd up, and palates prepped for what was sure to be a concise cross-section of the regions number one varietal from Jim Barry, Killikanoon, Taylors St. Andrews offerings, and Pikes, with a solid representation of Shiraz to boot. An illustration of the rapidly changing soil types, diurnal influences, and altitude ranges, which absolutely reinforced the formula required to deliver these high acid, linear and bracing examples of Riesling. Watervale with a slightly more generous palate due to limestone and touch more heat. Polish hill showing its cool pockets, and higher ph soil and clearly austere style defined by its area. All of these factors still yield a precise line that connects the overarching region to its highly personal sub-regions and vineyard sites.





After discussing the various virtues of Terra Rossa, Blue Slate, and the quality of the higher vineyard sites vs. lower altitude, we of course fell into the terribly polarizing and controversial topic of "petrol".... TDN... (Trimethyl Dihydronaphthalene)... and the discussion got a little more animated to be sure. While this one discussion did nothing to further the debate of TDN in quality wines, its legitimacy as a virtue or a fault, (depending on your drinker) it was extraordinarily helpful to understand how it happens, how it can be managed, and how it should be discussed. Although that being said, Clare as a group seems to be on the side of canopy management, avoiding damage to grapes from sun and excessive heat, (plays into maintaining acidity and freshness as well of course) and striving to maintain the clarity, precision, and age ability of Riesling from their terroir. The aromas, and flavours remain delicate, slow to reveal, with strong spines of acidity across all the examples we tasted. Slate soils clearly portrayed flinty, white stones, lifted, pithy lime, apple flesh, and salinity. And of course, legendary acidity. Truly a high point for me in terms of clear presentation of information, reinforced in the way the wines displayed themselves. Fantastic showings from Sam, Neil, Kevin and Emma.

The reds from these producers also showed the area true, with balanced ripeness and makers of somewhat cooler climate examples of their varietals, although the Armagh showed its relative might in my opinion, and at the age it is, made a strong argument for me to re-evaluate my past experiences with the line. Not to underplay the quality of the reds of course, but this session was all about the Riesling. Well delivered.

Wines Tasted

2017 Pikes The Merle Polish Hill Riesling

2016 Kilikanoon Mort's Block Watervale Riesling

2017 Jim Barry The Florita Riesling

2017 Taylors St. Andrews Riesling

2012 Pike The Merle Polish Hill Riesling

2010 Kilikanoon Mort's Reserve Watervale Riesling

2007 Jim Barry The Florita Cellar Release Riesling

2007 Taylors St. Andrews Single Vineyard Release Riesling

2014 Pike the EWP Shiraz

2013 Kilikanoon Oracle Shiraz

2010 Jim Barry The Armagh Shiraz

2014 Taylors St. Andrews Shiraz

Cycling the Riesling Trail by Andrew

This was a more difficult section to take notes on of course, having both hands on the bars, but the impressions were certainly easy to recall. Relaxed slopes, plenty of evidence of the famed blue slate to be viewed in the hillsides in your peripheral, a brief battle witnessed between a snake and two birds, the gorgeous church of Saint Aloysius, with vines producing wine for Catholics all over the world. You can feel yourself breathing better in the temperate air, warmed by the lovely wooded surroundings and just enough of a burn in your things to remind you of the exercise you've been neglecting.... A perfect break of physical activity followed by an incredibly ample lunch at Skilogalee, where I can say I had a particular highlight wine in the 1999 Jim Barry Lodge Hill Riesling... Wonderful. A perfect capper to the pedigree and reward of aging of these excellent wines.





DAY 8 - SKILOGALEE, Clare Valley by Dave

It's hard to beat a day riding through the rolling green hills of Clare Valley! After a gorgeous bicycle ride along the Riesling trail and back roads of Clare Valley we rolled up the Skillogallee winery to be greeted by Dave and Diana Palmer. This tour has been day after day of saying 'it will be hard to beat how beautiful this place is' and yet every day we say the same thing again. Skillogallee is no exception to the rule. The site is stunning.

First order of business is lunch on a gorgeous patio looking over some of the vineyards. The restaurant and tasting room are actually in an old cottage built in 1853 by a Cornish miner who had made his money in the 1851 gold rush and then retired to the area to farm. There were 17 children born on the site!

Lunch is with a collection of winemakers and their assorted wines. You get the sense that this area is working to promote as much their region as their own wineries. The whole day has been a group effort with tastings covering multiple wineries all working together in one session.

The afternoon continues with a vineyard/winery tour with Dave on a gorgeous sunny day. They purchased the winery in 1989 which had actually been planted in 1969 and at the time was one of the highest planted areas in Australia. The rolling hills and contours are absolutely beautiful.

All of their wines are single vineyard from an extremely contoured site. They are now able to do single contour site wines! The winery is not bio or organic but they make every effort to be as sustainable as possible right down to the 30kilowatt solar system on the roof. They do not irrigate nor do they use insecticides. Their yields only about 2.5 tons/acre.



What you get in Skillogalee is a passionate and dynamic tandem in Dave and Diane who are forging a new path in the Clare Valley. From the restaurant and accommodation to the vineyard and the winery they seem to be part of the reason the industry and consumer is turning its attention to region and its wines. My take away is that this family is a critical part in creating an emerging identity and driving interest in the region.

Wines Tasted

Lunch: (with Kevin, Sam, Dave, Warrick and Sherry

2015 Skillogalee Gewurztraminer

2013 Skillogalee Cabernet Franc

1999 Jim Barry Lodge Hill Riesling

2014 Killakanoon Covenant Shiraz

2012? Killakanoon Kelly 1932 Grenache

2006 Wakefield St Andrews Clare Valley Cabernet

Winery:

NV Sparkling Riesling – in vineyard

2017 Riesling

2015 Trevarrick Single Contour Riesling

2016 Chardonnay

2017 Rose Cabernet/Malbec

2016 Gewurztraminer

2015 Take Two shiraz/cabernet

2014 Malbec

2013 Shiraz

2014 The Cabernets

Liqueur Muscat



"true to his cause"



Throughout the night there's one sentence, that is on repeat on my head. Over and over again. "How could I have missed this?"

I knew that I might encounter something new, that I've never tasted before. But what happened on Sunday the 22nd, when I met Colin McBryde at Adelina in Clare, was an eye opener de-luxe. Sure I have tried a few Clare Valley Rieslings, but this was something else. Sleek wines with a tension, still with a fruit structure to keep it up on the right side.

This doesn't only apply to the Rieslings, but was a common denominator through out the entire range of wines that Adelina produces.

Colin McBryde and Jennie Gardner established the company in 2002, (although the vineyards have been in the family's possession since 1986). The winery is located in a simple shed, which makes the results even more impressive.

One of the neighbours to Adelina is the legendary winery, "Wendouree", and Colin did one of the more interesting comparison tastings under the whole trip. He put up a blind tasting of two vintages of Shiraz 2012 and 2014. Having balls enough to put them up against same vintages from Wendouree. The wines, of course in quite different styles, stood up against each other in a great way.

After job done, all wines tasted. He presented the Wendouree Tawny Port, pulled directly out of the barrel, given to him by Wendouree. Truly a grande finale!

One thing that shouldn't be overlooked is the labels. More often than not, when you see a cool label, it doesn't go further than that. A simple marketing tool, for a lesser wine. But I couldn't have been more wrong. Beautiful surrealistic labels, quite sensual. World class wine, with the coolest labels ever.

It strikes me, that everything is very precisely executed, regarding Adelina's wines. If Colin was to be compared with a rockstar, it would be Moby. An artist who understands the importance of being commercial, but never ever gives away to platitudes. True to his cause.



DAY 9 - SEPPELTSFIELD, Barossa Valley by Kat

“emotionally spiced”

As we made our way into the Barossa Valley we were told a tale of the one who “raised the Titanic”. As we raced through the valley Tim Wildman described the adventures of Warren Randall, the man some say single handedly raised the bar of wine tourism in South Australia. As the largest landowner in McLaren Vale and Barossa, Warren recreated the “living history” of the Seppeltsfield community and mixed farm with a modern twist.

Established in 1848 by Joseph and Johanna Seppelt the estate has had continuous wine production since 1851. In 1888 Joseph and Johanna’s oldest son, Benno, designed and created the first Gravity Cellar, which influenced winemaking in the Valley. This 3-tier, open fermentation center led to reduced amounts of pumping, less extraction, and thus lighter and softer styles. Amazing achievement that is still in use today!

In addition to wine there was a dining hall, vinegar factory, fresh water from Greenock Creek for the community, a smoke house, and a distillery, all still present and running today. There is also a cooperage to maintain the quality as custodians of the Centennial Collection. This is said to be the world's only consecutive lineage of single vintage wines spanning more than 130 vintages, each still in barrel.



We had the fortune of trying wines from this Centennial collection. I chose 1975, a superb year for 'Para' styles all over the world, and nothing changed with this particular region.

Barossa Valley, Seppeltsfield: "raising the titanic"

1. 1975 Seppeltsfield

Para Vintage Tawny: shiraz and grenache bring flavours of cocoa, caramel, and dried red fruits to a new level for me

2. 1917 Seppeltsfield 100 Year Old Para Vintage Tawny: emotionally spiced





“most quotable winemaker of the trip!”

On day 9, we arrive in Barossa Valley at Cirillo Estate Wines ... we pull up to the 1848 Cirillo Estate Vineyard that has the oldest continuously harvested Grenache Vines. Marco is standing next to his truck with glasses of the 1850 Cirillo Estate (because 1848 was taken) – old vine Grenache. Marco Cirillo and his father Vincent are of Calabrian ancestry in Southern Italy. Marco married Annie Lehman, (the daughter of Peter Lehman, the great Riesling producer). Vincent started purchasing wine in Barossa in the 1960s, and the vineyard was purchased in 1969. 10 Acres of Grenache, 2.5 Acres of Semillon, and 1 Acre of Shiraz are planted. The Grenache is a gnarly, old vine, of ancestor classification, and is managed in a basket-weave pruning method similar to that of wine from their Calabrian ancestry. This Grenache produces a lighter style with great layered depth. They fell in love with the style of Grenache from the South of France. New World Grenache made in an old world style is like a clash of cultures, yet this style is what sets the wines apart and is why I loved this representation of this mighty, elegant varietal. Both Grenache and Semillon are of ancestry classification as they are both over 150 years of age... history in a glass.

“Grenache delivers what Pinot promises” Marco Cirillo

There is no summertime watering, wintertime watering only, due to having to purchase and pay town water pricing. To water the vineyard, it would cost \$9,500. They use no insecticide, no fungicide, native yeast, and no filtration...

“It’s good because it is good and not because it is natural.”

The pizzas were made by Lena, Marco’s Mother; the delicious pork sausage was homemade. Marco was brilliant and brought in a brand new pizza oven to make his mother’s specialty for us to

enjoy side-by-side with his wines. Each pizza was executed to perfection; I kept saying "yes" when offered another slice. Vincent took a walk on the property in front of his house and greeted some of our group. Mamma Kat and Vincent instantly hit it off as his charming disposition and stunning blue eyes captivated all of us upon meeting him. What a delightful visit!
"Everybody likes a little bit of dirty" – Marco Cirillo wins most quotable #JBT17
This guy is so cool, history in the making...most quotable winemaker of the trip!



The wines we tasted:

1850 Ancient Vine Grenache, 2012 is current release – Ancestor Vines, 10 months in tank, combination of 1/3 stainless, 1/3 10% French Hogshead, 1/3 60-80 year old vats, 2 years in storage & tank, 6 months in the bottle, touch of sulphur

1850 Ancestor Vine Semillon, 2012 - It always spends 5 years on the lees, no oak, natural yeast, 12 months in tank, 10% Alcohol and Ancestor Vines

1850 Ancestor Vine Rosato – Grenache, 2016 – Old Vine, on the skins for 5 days, "Calabrese style", no oak, 12.5% alc

The Vincent Grenache, Survivor, 2016 – Survivor vines, named after his father, 1901 & 1906 vineyards (manages the vineyards for an elderly couple) – declassified out of 1850, picks 3 times

Bush Vine Mataro, 2015 – planted in 2005, 9 Mataro vines, makes 500 Liters (mostly for himself); 14% alc

Single Vineyard Shiraz, 2015 – The Steingarden vineyard (means stoney garden) relationship started in 2009. The vineyard is on the border between Barossa and Eden Valley, 410 meters above sea level. The vines are 27-28 years old.

Thank you to the Cirillo family!!!

DAY 9 - SPINIFEX, Barossa Valley by Claudia

Pete Schell comes from New Zealand and found here his place where he wants to grow old. He mentioned that he likes to live relaxed and enjoys life a lot. He married Magali who's family comes from South of France and that's where an important link to the wine making comes from. During his first 5-10 years as a wine maker he also travelled often too South of France as a flying winemaker. He started Spinifex in 2001 and makes wines from Barossa and Eden Valley.



Some of the wines tasted.

Esprit, 2014, Barossa

La Maline, 2015, Barossa

Papillon, 2017, Barossa

Lola, 2016, Barossa

Rose, 2017, Barossa

Bete Noir, 2014, Barossa



DAY 9 - LANGMEIL, Barossa Valley by Laure

“oldest shiraz in the world”

A warm welcome from the team at the winery in Tanunda with their Sparkling Shiraz NV (18 months on the lies and 8-10g Dosage) and some nibbles.

A short walk to the freedom vineyard, 1 Ha planted in 1843 with Shiraz vines (220m altitude).

Pre phylloxera, the oldest vineyard of Shiraz in the world on red clay, gravel and red sand.



We tasted the 2015 which will only be released in April 2018.

Hand picked, de-stemmed, open fermented, basket press, aged for 24 months in 70% new French 300L oak barrels, unfiltered and unfiltered.

A combination of concentration and elegance, the oak is still standing out with some blackberries, spices, cedar and silky tannins.

We followed by a tasting in different locations, starting in the garden, going through the Cobbler room and finishing in an underground circular cellar with the owner winemaker Paul Lindner (5h generation), Leigh Woodrow and Matthew McCulloch.

Village Range:

Chardonnay High Road, Eden Valley 2016

Bella Rouge Cabernet Sauvignon 2017

3 Gardens SWG (Syrah, Mourvedre, Grenache) 2016

Valley Floor Shiraz 2015

Blacksmith Cabernet Sauvignon 2015

Old Vines Garden Range:

Wattle Brae Riesling, Eden Valley 2017

The Fifth Wave Grenache 2015

Jackman's Cabernet Sauvignon 2015

Ophan Bank Shiraz 2015

And with the dinner the following:

Grenache Fifth Wave 2006

Freedom Shiraz 2012

Structured and dense with notes of smoky bacon, black cherries and spice box.

Well balanced with acidity, round tannins and a long finish.

Freedom Shiraz 2006

Get more the ageing coming through. Earthy, ripe blackberry and plums.

Freedom Shiraz 1999 from Magnum

Complex with sous bois and cedar wood aromas. Savory, dried berbs, tabacoo and fine tannins

Kegel bowling competition





1st Place - Ben - WINNER!



2nd Place - Pierre - WINNER!



3rd Place - Kat - YAY LIFE!

DAY 10 - HENSCHKE, Eden Valley by Pierre

“a living legend”



Henschke is an Australian icon, a living legend and a testimony to what can be achieved through vision, dedication, hard work, resilience and hope. It is the story of Johann Christian Henschke who 160 years ago, on a continent far away from the birthplace of vine, turned a bare plot of land into a legend. Hill of Grace's vineyard has since 1950 constantly delivered top quality grapes to his descendants who ferment them into one of the few iconic wines of the world.

We met Prue and Johann Henschke, mother and son, viticulturist and winemaker. For six generations, the Henschke have been custodians of this vineyard. They care for the land, care for the vines, they protect and nurture them for the next generations. Time has not stood still though,

and Prue has been innovative. For more than twenty years, she has used natural method to grow the vines, and she uses biodynamic preparations and principles. She has a soft voice, speaks slowly, smiles often, and seems so modest you could forget the determination it takes to achieve what she has. Johann is as nice, modest and kind. He is a trained and talented winemaker (and a viticulturist too) committed to the Hill of Grace's legacy. When you meet them, and since you are reading this you probably will (or have), you will surely feel as I did, privileged to meet them in this vineyard, and moved by their modesty. It felt as though they were standing behind the mighty Hill of Grace.



The tasting:

Julius Riesling 2004

Clean, complex and evolved, candied orange peel, lemongrass, jasmine and a touch of kerosene, still very vibrant, high acidity, texture, toasty notes in the back palate, long and dry, very good

Julius Riesling 2017

Intense, fresh, lime peel, floral notes and a touch of cassis leave, racy high acidity, lightly textured, dry

Louis Semillon 2015

Moderate intensity, celeriac, lemongrass, very good textural palate, quite rich mid palate, fresh high acidity, very dry

Croft Chardonnay 2016

Clean, focussed, rich palate, textural, high acidity, green apples, sweet spices, some buttery/ crême brûlée from lees stirring and MLF, concentrated and long

Giles Pinot Noir 2015

10-15 % whole bunch, perfumed, fragrant, violets, floral, very intense Pinot, liquorice, firm palate, low extraction, velvety texture, high acidity, long, very linear

Johann's Garden 2015

Very fragrant, rich raspberry, intense dark liquorice, powerful yet seamless, low extraction, deep and long

Cyril Henschke Cabernet Sauvignon 2012

Intense capsicum, blackcurrant, blackcurrant leaf, tobacco, cedar tree, rich core of sweet fruit, lots of good tannin, some oak, very fine grained tannin, high acidity, focused, savoury, great wine, grows and grows in intensity

Mount Edelstone Shiraz 2014

Very intense, rich, focused, smoky, tary, lots of dark berries, mouthcoating firm tannin, savoury liquorice, pepper, sage...complex, it never ends, powerful but quite linear, very long

Hill of Grace Shiraz 1993

Very intense, some evolution, marmite, cedar tree, nutmeg, tobacco leaves, liquorice, very powerful, very firm tannin, deep and persistent flavours, dark cherry, very concentrated, persistent and long, could have been overpowering but is not, linear, displays and delivers aromas and flavours in a perfect way

Hill of Grace Shiraz 2012

The same as above, minus the bottle age complexity, but do I miss it? Mouthcoating, intense, powerful but perfectly focused... a bomb!



DAY 10 - YALUMBA, Barossa Valley by Ben

“the DNA of Australian wine”

Robert Hill Smith and his team kindly hosted us in the Pewsey Vale Riesling Vineyard for a beautiful lunch and tasting masterclass of the Pewsey Vale Riesling including some older vintages to show its ageability.

The Pewsey Vale Riesling is one of the most famous Riesling in Australia. The vineyard has been farmed biodynamically since 2011 and certified in 2015. The Riesling cutting is from Rheingau. The wine is made in a dry style with a touch of sugar (around 2-3 grams residual sugar). This is a very clean, transparent and balanced Riesling with a purity of citrusy fruit and beautiful acidity running through the palate.



After the lunch, we went to Yalumba winery and visited their own cooperage. Then Robert took us to his underground cellar which has an amazing collection of wines from around the world including a 1899 Chateau Lafite under screwcap!



Then Natalie from the winemaking team guided us a tasting of their premium red wines including the latest addition – The super icon wines “The Caley” which is a blend of their best Cabernet from Coonawarra and their best Shiraz from Barossa. When you tasted the wines, you could feel strongly about the DNA of Australian Wines – made of superb fruit quality, rich in flavours, ripe tannin structure but not overt at all, very balanced and elegant. You can definitely enjoy them young but can age easily for another 10-20 years.



Wine tasted:

2017 Pewsey Vale Riesling

2017 Pewsey Vale 1961 Block Riesling

2012 Pewsey Vale Contours Riesling

2007 Pewsey Vale Contours Riesling

2013 Yalumba The Signature Cabernet Shiraz

2006 Yalumba The Signature Cabernet Shiraz

1999 Yalumba The Signature Cabernet Shiraz

2013 Yalumba FDR1A Cabernet Shiraz

2012 Yalumba The Caley

DAY 10 - TEUSNER and HUTTON VALE, Barossa and Eden Valleys by Stefan

"fashion changes but style endures"

That's what you call off the beaten track. When we arrived at around 6pm at Hutton Vale Farm it was getting dark and we discovered the possible most 'cool' outside toilet ever. Having said Soren had some 8-legged friend joining him late at night of reasonable size. Great fun. On the more important side the friendliness we encountered was not short of spectacular; besides of the fact that this farm is in so many way eco friendly and not only trying to give something back to nature the family is trying very hard to work sustainable in harmony with mother nature. That reflects in the present livestock and their own herb and vegetable garden and needless to say the good wine.

The range included the following and I must enforce the great overall quality in both estates. They are bright, honest and pure expressions.



Riesling Empress 2017 Teusner

Initially quiet shy but with a bit of swirl the fresh lime juice and citric elements literally leaped out the glass and with a firm texture and good grip with a well-managed acidity; this just needs time.

Semillon Gabrielle Old Vines 2011 Teusner

Nice showy, expressive style with bright yellow plums and green figs. The 8months of oak have nicely tighten it without being to be compressed and I like the weight which comes with it. Kept 5 years before release. Oh yes.

GMS Joshua 2016 Teusner

Fresh and fruit driven style with a nice drinkability or to say it in an Aussie way 'smashability'. Not trying to hard and let the purity of a wine speak is a tricky thing to do.

Shiraz Righteous FG 2014 Teusner

Nice dense nose with big fruit sweetness coming through, full of chocolate and sweet liquorish. Very concentrated style but remains nice acid to back it up.

Mourvedre Dog Strangler Teusner 2016

Great impression, first herbaceous than meaty and there is some dark black fruit hidden too. Nicely balanced with a future ahead.

Shiraz Eden Valley Hutton Vale 2013

Initially very floral style yet this layer of blue fruits keeps on pushing through, liquorish and sweet spice. Great intensity and perfume. Eden valley in a very pure form. Worth every penny.

Grenache / Mataro Hutton Vale 2012

Co planted in the vineyard with 40% French oak, beefy & meaty style with good freshness and clean fruit spectrum..

Riesling Eden 2017 Hutton Vale

Nice bright citrusy sight, seems surprisingly broad in terms of the style and clean with peachy highlights. Would be a great BTG pour.

The Shiraz 2005 by Hutton Vale served during the diner showed so clearly again how beautiful these wines can age. For me personally on the sweet spot where I still get a lovely fruit but a good earthy character too.



DAY 11 - SQUID FISHING, McLaren Vale





It doesn't take long for the Bundy & coke sugar rush to kick in





Laure casting a lure



All together now....O Canadaaaaaa!



So how many black rats have you drunk? Claudia 2, Soren...oh dear!



DAY 11 - d'ARENBERG, McLaren Vale by Stefan

“the Willy Wonker of the southern hemisphere



What can you say about a company which is producing not less than 71 different wines and building a glass cube in the vineyard. A lot. Restless, passionate and committed may be some but once you had a chance to experience the hospitality of Chester Osborn your life changes.

We were lucky enough to try 'just' 12 wines in the tasting in 3 different flights. Not to bore anyone with my extensive tasting notes I highlighted my favourites. All Shiraz and all 2011 vintage with the exception of Dead Arm Shiraz 2014

Flight 1

The Fruit Bat 2011

The Little Venice 2011

The Sardanapalian 2011

The Swinging Malaysian 2011

Flight 2

The Vociferate Dipsomaniac 2011

Shipster's Rapture 2011

The Eight Iron 2011

For me the dark beauty with a great floral lift and a fantastic brightness with fine grained tannins. Just lovely. Produces from 8 acres only.





The Piceous Lodestar 2011

Flight 3

Tyche's Mustard 2011

The Other Side 2011

The Blind Tiger 2011

Deep sand on hard clay, planted in 1926, a great savoury style with dark stewed fruit. Apparently too much makes you blind; I disagree - just very happy!

The Amaranthine 2011

Dead Arm Shiraz 2014





DAY 11 - WIRRA WIRRA, McLaren Vale by Dave

“competitive watermelon hurling!”

I feel like Wirra Wirra is one of those places that you're not sure what to expect. You're familiar with the name and some of the wines but at the same time feel like you should know a lot more about it for some reason. Given the history, significance and status of the winery the tour was to say the least enlightening and should be a stop on anyone's agenda but... on top of that it was wildly different and not a tour we'll soon forget.

We were greeted by Sam Temme and Paul Smith (winemaker) in front of the massive Church Block bottle at the entrance to the grounds. While the grounds and winery have a larger scale feel to them there's still a distinct small town/region sense here. The wineries of McLaren Vale seem to share more than a passing interest in sustainability and environmentally friendly practices. They're focus as a region on this way of approaching winemaking I would say is at the forefront of the wine world and Wirra Wirra is definitely a part of this but again...somewhat under the radar. All of the vineyards on the site visit are biodynamic and yet that's not something I can admit to knowing even though the product is fairly well represented in my market. When they buy fruit they make efforts to find biodynamic.



The name's Cheung...Ben Cheung

As we move through the tour you get the sense that they're very serious about the wines but they also seem to inject a bit of fun in everything they do and I think that's an attitude that's existed for decades. A bit of history....In 1894 Robert Strangway founded the winery. It was common at the time that German settlers went to Barossa and English found their way to McLaren. Originally most of the production was sweet wine being exported to the UK. Robert passed away in 1926 at which point the winery fell into disrepair. In 1969 Greg Trott purchased the winery and rebuilt it in the 70's. 1972 was his first vintage with Churchblock, a red blend sourced from a vineyard near the Bethany Church just across the road from Wirra Wirra. One of his visions as he rebuilt was to have a bell tower to ring and bring people to the area to talk about and taste wine. Oddly the bell itself was found at a wrecker in Adelaide! Now the Bushing King or Queen (winemaker of the best rated wine from the region) ring the bell each year to welcome the new vintage at which point winemakers and growers bring a bottle and gather for a 'lunch'! It's essentially one giant party and chance to get together before the rigours of vintage take over and they don't see each other for months. At last count 650 people 'lunched'!

On occasion someone other than the Bushing King and Queen will ring the bell and on this day that honour went to Claudia and Kat (If you can find it the video of Kat hanging from the bell rope it's a must watch!)



Not to lose sight of how serious they take their winemaking though..in 2004 their Angelus Cabernet won the best cabernet in the world at the London Wine Show...followed quickly by a letter from the famous Angelus in Bordeaux to cease and desist with the name. What to do? From that point on call it the Deadringer on the export market...need to make things fun! From the bell tower through the winery to the 'lab' which is actually a beautiful old room of brick and beam! Why not spend an afternoon in a competitive blending session. Closest to the Churchblock blend wins! 3 teams of 3 fiercely fought it out for wine blending bragging rights with honours going to team LCB...which for the life of me I can't remember what that stands for! (Chloe, Laure, Ben?)



Our tasting session followed and I think there was that moment of realization that we should be paying much more attention to this winery from this point on. The freshness and vibrancy showed in all of the offerings but what struck me about a number of them is how young yet serious they were. The intensity of fruit and structure demanded time to evolve and I'd love to see how they develop.

Wines Tasted:

2016 Original Blend Grenache/Shiraz

2016 Absconder Grenache

2015 Dead Ringer Cabernet Sauvignon

2010 Dead Ringer Cabernet Sauvignon

2016 Catapult Shiraz

2015 Woodhenge Shiraz

2015 Patritti Scarce Earth Shiraz

2015 RSW Shiraz

The essence of their belief at this winery about throwing a bit of fun into everything can be distilled into one word though...watermelons. Because every winery needs a trebuchet (a medieval siege machine...look it up!) to hurl giant fruit across the grounds. I can't even remember which team won the 'competition' but suffice to say everyone comes to a standstill watching this giant beast of a machine chuck a basketball size piece of fruit hundreds of meters just to see it explode on impact!

All in all not a day any of us will soon forget!







DAY 11 - RUSSELL'S PIZZA NIGHT, McLaren Vale by Sören

"Who doesn't like pizza, accompanied with a lot of wines?"

Entering the sparse furnished schack at Russels Pizzeria, gave a sence of nervousness. A long table lined with people You never met before, standing there, just awaiting you to approach them. The word, "speed dating" struck my mind. Every person had at least three wines in front of them. Well, no time to loose, time to put on the charm, and show the best side.



Started of with three wines from S.C. Pannell.

First encounter

- Tempranillo/Touriga -16
- The "Vale" Shiraz/Grenache -16
- Koomilya Shiraz -14

Well made wines, with a cooler fruit, without getting poor. Still had the structure to impress.

Second "date".

Noon Winery, with Drew Noon him self

- Reserve Cabernet -16
- Reserve Shiraz -16
- Noon Eclipse -16

Up a few weight classes. Lot's of everything, however quite symetric structured.

Third meeting.

Olivers Tarranga, great to meet Corrina Wright. A woman with a deep knowledge of her job.

- Fiano -17
- Grenache -15
- Mencia -16
- Shiraz -16

Modern wines, both in style and packaging. Fruit forward and very well made wines in a pure style.

Fourth session.

Hickingbotham.

- Brooks Road Shiraz -15
- Trueman Cabernet Sauvignon -15
- The Peak Cabernet Sauvignon/Shiraz -15
- Revivalist Merlot -15

You can tell it's blockbuster wines, but with a charm. Bigger fruit structure, tannins to match, still keeping some kind of freshness.

Fifth gathering:

Inkwell.

- Blonde on Blonde Viognier -16
- Primitivo -16
- Shiraz -12
- No.1 Shiraz Dub Style PF -17

Funny wines, but well made. The primitivo and the Viognier, surprisingly good.

Sixth tête-à-tête.

Gemtree Wines

- Luna de Fresa Tempranillo Rosé -17
- Luna Temprana Tempranillo -17
- Mataro -17

Balance in every aspect. The mataro was one of the most elegant tasted during this trip.

Seventh Get-together

Brash Higgins (Brad Hickey)

- R/SM -16 (Riesling/Semillon)
- CHN -16 (Chenin)
- FRNC -16 (Cabernet Franc)
- GR/M -16 (Grenache/Mataro)
- NDV -16 (Nero D'Avola)

New School wines with a sommelier behind the rodder. What could possible go wrong?
Consistant line of wines. Good and quaffable stuff.

Eighth Rendezvous

Samuel's Gorge

- Grenache -15
- Mosaic of Dreams GMS -15
- Shiraz -15

Not the most beautiful labels, but hey, dont judge the dog after it's hair. Wellmade wines that invites You for a second glass. Sweeter fruit but very focused. Never ever gets silly. Beauties!

It turned out to be one of the better date nights. Great pizzas and wines to accompany them, and everything by the bonfire. Doesn't get any more romantic than that in my opinion.



DAY 12 - YANGARRA, McLaren Vale by Kat

“this is us...this is grenache”

Our next adventure awaits in the Vale, land of the ‘Grenache King’. Peter Fraser has taken the wines of Jackson Estate to their highest potential at Yangarra Estate. Not only is he rocking a 20-year partnership and friendship with vineyard manager Mike Lane, he’s converted the entire estate to certified biodynamic and organic as of 2012. That is commitment to Mamma Earth and humanity and it ends up showing in the wines.

But let me begin with the most fun start to the day...Petting my Natty. As we were served brekkie sandos on the barbie with house-made chutneys, there was caffeine to order and the Pét-Nat flowed. We toasted to another day of surviving the JBT but little did we know what we were about to experience in the vineyards.





We all made our way up the hill to a covered table in the middle of the vines. What was inside the tent was the love of the gods, both male and female of course.

McLaren Vale, Yangarra 'High Sands' Grenache Vertical: Magic Mike and the Fraser BioDynamics Tour

"This is Us...This is Grenache" Pete Fraser





2015: fresh red berries, sweet herb, savoury meats, red tea leaf, cocoa, toast, vanilla and smoke

2014: herbs first, dried meats, dark red cherry, raspberry, cherry tobacco

2013: ripe and juicy cherry, strawberry, mint, sweet tobacco and white pepper, cocoa

2012: sweet black cherry, clove, gingerbread

2011: (50% lost) winemaker's vintage, one of my favourites. Cranberry and strawberry fields, garrigue, sweet herb and smoke. Delicate.

2010: classic grenache with red cherry, red plum skin, tea leaf, herb, meat and spice



DAY 12 - GEMTREE, McLaren Vale by Chloe

We were introduced to Big Mike the night before at a local pizza/social meeting place/art studio, Russell's Pizza. Today, we are visiting with Mike and his wife Melissa at their winery Gemtree. What a dynamic duo these two are! The grandfather, Ernest Allan Rivers planted the first vineyard. Melissa's parents moved from Adelaide, her father becoming a contractor to grow and manage vineyards. Her father was a trader of wine, he was involved with Rosemount and Pernod Ricard. They originally started with 35 Acres, and her father set up the property for an investment group. The original vineyard was 100 Acres, and, gradually, her father purchased adjoining acres. In 1992, Gemtree was purchased, and in 1998, Mike and Melissa started making wine. Up until that point, all grapes were sold. 128 hectares were planted; 70% Brand/30% Similar Ideology. Melissa said that, originally, there were a lot of chemicals and herbicides being used on the property. Melissa wanted to change that, so in 2005, she started playing around with organic materials. She changed the way the family ate and planted organic food. Mike attended a Biodynamic conference in Barossa that changed his world. Gemtree has been Biodynamic since 2007. It hadn't been until 2016-2017 that they had seen a difference in the wines. It took 8-9 years for the vineyards to settle. In the past two years, they have seen the philosophy, and the results come through to the glass.



Two most important things about Biodynamics – Holistic Approach

Soil fertility

Recognition that there is a relationship with the earth and lunar cycle

Organics is all about taking away things.

They have explored sustainability, but due to the size of their property, it would be hard to maintain at the moment.

Mike and Melissa started to describe what they do to create a biodynamic environment. Farmers are caretakers of the land. Mike and Melissa make their own compost. They make their own 500 – cow manure from a lactating cow that is inserted into an empty cow horn, for burial in the earth, during the winter solstice. This process signifies regeneration and recuperation. Mike and Melissa make sure the cow horns are then removed from the soil before the summer solstice. They have saved and obtained 50 cow horns stored in glass jars.

They have a spray that stimulates all of the microbes, which creates a healthy hummus/humeric? It is very beneficial to vineyards following a biodynamic calendar to spray when the moon is opposite the sun. The land is sprayed in spring and autumn, 34g/ha. It is not about the quantity, it is about the concentration.

501 – is all about what happens above the earth: photosynthesis, set flow, sugar accumulation, fungal disease. They spray 2g/ha.

Flow form – Melissa described how they mix-up the preparation for about a half hour before spraying. They use tepid temperature water and rainwater that they collect. The flow of water is in the shape of a figure eight, which is a symbol of life.

502 – In the Cow pit... Steiner thought cows possess astral energy.

502-507 – Chamomile in the Cow

505 – Oak bark ground up and put in the cow's skull

Melissa talked about how they use cover crop under the vine to control weeds. Weed control is very important to increasing yield



The wines we tasted:

2017 Gemtree, Moonstone, Savagnin

2016 Gemtree, Cinnabar, GSM

2017 Gemtree, Grenache

2017 Gemtree, Mataro

2015 Gemtree, Phantom, Red Blend – (the label changes every year)

2015 Gemtree, Ernest Allan Shiraz

2016 Gemtree, Sub Terra

2004 Gemtree, Obsidian, Shiraz (big brother to Ernest Allan Shiraz)

The first four wines of the lineup were about the variety. The 2015 wines were about expression of the vintage. With regards to the 2016, Sub terra, this was an experiment. Mike talked about how they hand pick the grapes off the foothills, and submerge the barrel under the earth for 3-4 months.

Mike proceeded to explain why there is sometimes a “funk,” or bad smell to organic/biodynamic wine. The smell of hydrogen sulfide comes from stress during fermentation. If there is not enough Nitrogen, then you get the production of hydrogen sulfide. If you are not organic, then you can add copper. If you are organic and biodynamic, remove the wine off the lees immediately to remove hydrogen sulfide.

65% of the growers are part of the SAW program.

Mike and Melissa delivered a very detailed and intense education as to how they work with organic and biodynamics to improve the soil health. It was a privilege to be a student learning how they make wine. For anyone else who would like to learn more about the details of Biodynamic viticulture (and to cover anything I missed, because I could not write fast enough please reference).

<http://biodynamics.net.au/resources/biodynamics-viticulture/>

This is a fitting link because it is a perspective from Australia 😊





Lunch at The Star of Greece by Chloe

That afternoon #JBT17 dined at Star of the Sea. What a beautiful lunch, surrounded by the most incredible view of the beach below. Mike from Gemtree, Peter from Yangarra, and Louise from Battle of Bosworth/ Spring seed wine co. hosted the most lovely lunch before a fun game of cricket on the beach.





The menu was the following:

Shared Entrée -

Kangaroo Island squid, lemon aioli, lime

Choice of Main –

Kangaroo Island King George Whiting (beer batter, crumbled or grilled), mixed green leaf salad, hand cut chips, tartare sauce

Local celeriac, pumpkin and green pea sour cream pastry pie, pea puree, curry oil, onion jam

Chargrilled Wagyu beef fillet, potato galette, parsnip puree, broccolini, porcini butter, crème fraiche, jus

The wines at lunch were:

2016 Battle of Bosworth, Chardonnay

2015 Spring Seed Wine Co., Cockscomb

2016 Spring Seed Wine Co., Morning Bride rose

2017 Gemtree, Grenache

2017 Yangarra, Shiraz



DAY 12 - BATTLE OF BOSWORTH, McLaren Vale by Claudia

We met Louise already at Star of Greece, a fantastic restaurant where we enjoyed a wonderful lunch together. Louise told me that she came over from UK to Australia when she was 27. She originally visited a cousin in McLaren and loved the place so much! In a local pub, watching the Simpsons, her eyes met those from Joch. They fall in love, married, got two kids and since then make wines together. Joch comes from a wine maker family and he changed to organic viticulture in 1995.





During a fun tractor ride through their vineyards we started to taste some of their great wines.

Wines tasted

Spring Seed Wine Co 'Sweet Pea' Moscato, 2017, McLaren Vale

Battle of Bosworth Graciano, 2016, McLaren Vale

Battle of Bosworth Touriga Nacional, 2016, McLaren Vale

Battle of Bosworth 'Chanticleer' Shiraz, 2015, McLaren Vale

Battle of Bosworth 'Puritan' Shiraz, 2017, McLaren Vale

Battle of Bosworth Shiraz, 2015, McLaren Vale

Battle of Bosworth Cabernet Sauvignon, 2015, McLaren Vale

Battle of Bosworth 'Best of Vintage' Sh/ CS, 2012, McLaren Vale

Spring Seed Wine Co 'Scarlet Runner' Shiraz, 2016, McLaren Vale

Spring Seed Wine Co 'Forget-me-not' SB/S, 2017, McLaren Vale





DAY 13 - SHAW & SMITH, Adelaide Hills by Laure

We were greeted at the Lenswood vineyard planted in 1999 with chardonnay and Pinot Noir (20ha that they own) by Dave (David Lemire) the global sales and marketing manager that is also part owner of the wine bar we went to in Adelaide 'Mother Vine' and the winemaker Adam Wadewitz.

We tasted the 2017 Chardonnay from that block on a stony and iron soil and the Pinot Noir across the road block 2 from 17 vintage, clone 115 they both expressed the lightness and freshness of the Adelaide Hills. They also own another vineyard of 35 Ha Balhannah just at the back of the winery.



We then drove to the winery, about 10km from the vineyards we tasted and learnt about the history of the estate.

S&S is owned by 2 cousins: Michael Hill Smith MW that is more famous in the sommelier world as he judges internationally and in London one of the Chairman for Decanter World Wine Award and Martin Shaw that greeted us at their tasting room and winery.

They started in 1989 with the first vintage been 1990. They own in total 55 Ha and also purchase grapes in Adelaide Hills. They have also a site in Tasmania of 20ha purchased in 2011 that was planted in 1988. They do not have a winery in Tasmania so they bring the grapes back to Adelaide Hills winery to make the wine.



Tasting at the winery:

Shaw + Smith Sauvignon 2017

Herbaceous and aromatic with exotic fruits, fresh on the palate with a high acidity.

Shaw and Smith Riesling 2017

Very light style, floral, fresh and dry on the palate.

Shaw and Smith Chardonnay M3 2015

Goes through Malo, some fruits comes from Lenswood, use of 500L barrels.

Rich, nutty and toasty. Medium acidity and length with a spicy finish.

Shaw and Smith Lenswood Vineyard Chardonnay 2015

More intensity than the M3, also more elegant style, dried almonds notes and a well balanced acidity.

Shaw and Smith Chardonnay M3 2006

Noted that 2006 was a cool year.

We tried 2 different closure

-one under cork bottled as a magnum:

Golden colour, honeysuckle, aging coming through as earthy notes, and mushrooms aromas. The palate is full and ripe with a creamy finish.

-one under screwcap bottled as 75cl bt :

Fresher style, toasty and nutty aromas. Well balanced on the palate with a long and spicy finish.

The one showing the best.

Shaw and Smith Pinot Noir 2016

Bright with wild berries and strawberries aromas. Light and savoury with some spices on the finish.

Shaw and Smith Pinot Noir 2010

Tertiary aromas, earthy and rustic.

Five spices on the palate with a medium acidity, silky tannins and a long finish.

Shaw and Smith Shiraz 2015

Blackberry juice, meaty, smoky bacon aromas. Powerfull on the palate with morello cherries, chewy tannins and a long finish with a medium plus acidity.

Shaw and Smith Shiraz Balhannah 2014

70% Whole bunch

Perfumed, herbal and earthy. Medium bodied with a ripness mid palate, vegetal notes, black pepper and dry tannins.

Shaw and Smith Shiraz 2006

Black olives, sous bois and coffee aromas.

Full on the palate with rustic notes, fine tannins and a long finish.

Tolpuddle Vineyard Chardonnay 2015 Tasmania

The 1st vintage was 2012

100% Malo

Aromatic, toasty showing a lot the oak. Lean on the palate, white pepper and a long finish.

Tolpuddle Vineyard Pinot Noir 2016 Tasmania

2016 was a good vintage in Tasmania

Ripe raspberries aromas. Thin on the palate with a medium acidity.



DAY 13 - OCHOTA BARRELS with JAUMA and GENTLE FOLK, Basket Range, Adelaide Hills
by Pierre

We arrived at Tara's cellar on a sunny and very windy morning. I was so excited being there, and happy to be the reporter of the day, though after five minutes with these guys, I wished I could just relax and enjoy the rest of the day, chilling, listening to them and tasting their wines without writing notes about acidity and texture, aromas and flavours... There was a feeling of friendship, of old mates you haven't seen for a while, mate whose choices and achievements make yours pale and pointless. You could feel the adventure, the risks taken, the commitment to a life off the beaten path, and still there was fun, family, love, there are kids running and playing, caring fathers, a mother, and a grandfather just as good, there was music, the smell of burning wood, barbecue, gum trees, the wind blowing hard through the gully, there was friendship, and there are the wines, raw, fresh, unpolished, never intended to pretend, but they seduce, on their own terms, on their own uncompromising terms.

The guys say they make natural wine, but really, they make wine, unveiled, without additions, without adjustments, with care and attention, with lots of skills.

The tasting went on, high tempo, and it was hard to keep up writing complete wine notes, but I have some, disjointed, and they will not make much sense to anyone but me. It doesn't matter, I remember these wines like I would a kiss, a hug, a caress or a punch, a walk in an orchard in bloom, a walk on a hill, like I would remember a piece of music or a face.









cat scarf



Mr Johnson finds a new owner. Kat = gutted

Ochota Barrels

Wild berries in the woods, Gewurztraminer 2017

Spicy, textural wine, very moderate alcohol, fresh acid, dry, persistent, some phenolics

+5V OV Chardonnay 2017

2 days on skin, wild ferment in puncheons, lots of stirring,
Some reduction, spicy, ginger, phenolics, texture

Hello morning Rosé 2017

Grenache ,savoury, fresh, texture, fresh acidity

The Fugazzi 2017

Fresh, light, highly drinkable, light structure, clean

186 Grenache 2017

Full whole bunch, spicy, floral, herbal, clean, light structure, fresh, liquorice, savoury

Home Pinot Noir 2017

Whole bunch, low extract, light structure, clean, more like a rosé but with depth, dried flowers, dried berries, liquorice

From the north Mourvèdre 2017

Whole bunch, perfumed, no extract, rich liquorice, herbs, dried flowers, blueberry, fresh acidity, moderate tannin, but firm, herbal

I am The owl Shiraz 2017

Whole bunch, fragrant, quite rich but moderate extraction, fresh acidity, herbal, minty, focussed and clean

Gentle Folk

Ashton Pinot Noir Tansley vineyard 2016

Whole bunch perfume and light structure, juicy, raw, floral, fresh cloudberries, fresh acidity, perfumed and light

Vin de Sofa 2017

A little prickle from CO2, herbal, perfumed, quite acidic, light, juicy

Village Pinot 2016

Whole bunch for a bit, perfume and light extraction, fresh high acidity, easy drinking, light, a touch of greenness in the tannin but fine, point is drinkability and it delivers

Forest Range 2016 PN

Some new oak?, light extraction, perfumed and juicy, detailed, light tannin structure though some from oak in the back palate



Weird bottles in the woods

Jauma

Sand on schist chenin Blanc 2015

oh schist I forgot to spit! Very chenin blanc, very good, intense, baked apples, ginger, deep, spicy, stony, light body, fresh high acid, soft velvety texture, focussed and very very good, the saline finish makes you want to drink, I do (actually everybody does...)

Seaview Cabernet Franc 2016

Tells us CF is the easiest variety to grow, that's a new one, delicious red berries, firm green tannin, a touch of reduction but really, fine, blows away with a little swirling, savoury liquorice, firm, raw, focussed, fresh

Ralph's dry grown Grenache 2016

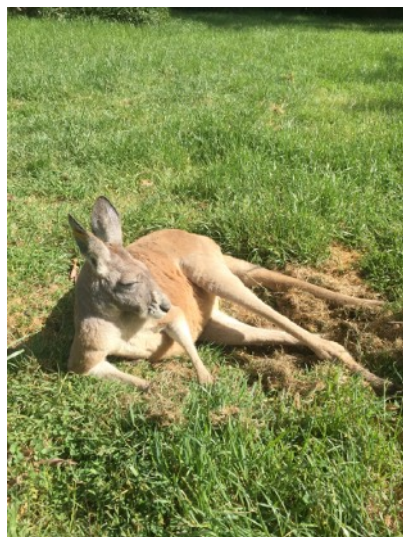
rich, juicy, no extract, red berries, herbs, soft generous palate sustained or lifted by acid, really good!

DAY 14 - CLELAND WILDLIFE PARK, Adelaide Hills by Stefan

Possibly the coolest not wine activity we have done on the trip but that's a close call considering my morning runs, beach cricket, squid fishing, pizza baking, cycling and firing a trebuchet...

God, how much I hated myself finding out its already Day 14 and this amazing trip is almost over. Well, on the other hand Tim gave us the chance to feed a few kangaroos and wallabies. I have to admit they can be frightening animals considering the size of some but who's talking I am 6 feet and 3 inches. I was more worried about our not so tall girls. 😊 Having said that I had so much fun feeding this truly welcoming animals. They spotted us from far and as it was early in the morning we were almost alone, and they were although a bit sleepy so gentle. It shows for me again that it is the simple things in life that make you happy and clearly the entire group enjoyed it to the last minute.

Felt fulfilling yet we were about to meet a real hero at the Lane in form of Marty Edwards. What a guy.





Lunch at The Summertown Aristologist home to Lucy Margaux and Commune of Buttons by Sören

Light lunch at the Summertown Aristologist. Time up for tasting the New Australias, slightly wild side of the wine industry.

It's not about choosing sides, for either the old style of Australia, or the new progressive Australia that is emerging.

It's a question to see in which context the wines is suitable for.

This is amongst the most "hippest" wines tasted during the trip.

To understand what's happening at the moment in this part of the world, we have to taste it all, in order to get a clear 360° view of Australia

Well thought through "packaging" and a very conscious stylistic choice of vinification, and with a clear philosophy.

This is the way how these young guns rides.

With that said, it's important to emphasize that these wines are serious stuff for the trendy wine scene drinkers, and of good quality.

Wines are made in a natural way, with a low sulphur vinification. Some better than others, as is the case for every wine producer in the world.

It was great to taste the wines from Lucy Margaux, made by Anton van Klopper, and Commune of Buttons, by Jasper Button.

Clearly two of the frontline poster boys of the Australian natural wine scene.



Nice one Wayne

Tasted:

Lucy Margaux Wines

NV Frizzante Rosé de Noir

2016 Gris de Florette Pinot Gris

2017 Gamay

Commune of Buttons

2016 Bibi Chardonnay

2016 Bonython Pinot Noir



DAY 14 - THE LANE, Adelaide Hills by Sören

"a sense of somewhere"

Pond golf driving range, in the middle of the vineyards.

I haven't tasted the Lane wines before, only heard about them. So i had an idea how they would perform.

Glad to say, that quite a few of them over-performed this day.

We were lucky enough to be guided in the Lane experience by Marty Edwards. The person that knows every inch of the vineyards.

There's a lucky few persons in the world that have tasted a wine in the middle of the vineyard where it's actually is grown. Sure! It's not the first time for people like us that are active in the business, but we only make up for a very small fraction, of the vast wine drinking world. These moments enables us to gain a deeper understanding of "somewhere" in the wine.



The last part of the tasting in the vineyard, knocked every one of their feet. In the top of one of the sights there was a small shed, where we found a small tasting room with a photo wall of the vineyard outside. Suddenly the wall was lowered slowly and the vineyard on the photo revealed itself, once the wall was down. Everyone in the group went wild and started to cheer. By far one of the coolest tasting rooms ever.

Tasted wines:

2017 Block 10 Sauvignon Blanc
2017 Gathering Sauvignon/Semillon
2016 Beginnings Chardonnay
2014 Reginald Germain Chardonnay
2016 Adelaide Hills Single Vineyard Pinot Noir
2012 Block 14 Basket Press Shiraz
2016 Block 8 Shiraz
2014 Reunion Shiraz
2013 The 19th Meeting Cabernet Sauvignon
2010 John Crighton Shiraz/Cabernet Sauvignon
2016 Nebbiolo Gathering Club

Curiosa about Marty:

- Firmest hand shake in the southern hemisphere.
- Ex Royal Australian navy , elite clearance diving force.







DAY 14 - BK WINES with MURDOCH HILL and NGERINGA, Adelaide Hills by Sören

Last event and tasting.

Basket Range and hip wineries, add skateboards to the experience, and You get the idea. "Well finishing up in a wild natural way". "The wilder the better", were the thoughts going through the head.

Or so i thought. Couldn't be more wrong than that.

Judgemental anyone?!





This was the day when i met Brendon and Kirstyn Keys of BK Wines, Erinn Klein of Ngeringa and Michael Downer of Murdoch Hill.

Already in the first glass it stood clear. These guys had another take on the new Australian wines. Very precise wines with a keen eye on minute details, and above all, balance!

I love to see that the new wave doesn't have to be extreme, it can be a more moderate way to approach the future. I think that this could be the right path, if one would like to have a lasting enterprise.

Sure it's hip, very hip. But in a more restrained way. This is three wineries that doesn't have to re-invent the wheel every morning they wake up.

This was also the moment that i tasted the best Pet Nat ever, (sorry Tim). ;-)

The tasting were conducted, in a way that made the "house styles" very clear.

Tasted wines:

BK Wines

2017 Chardonnay Pet Nat

2017 Rosé Saignée

2016 Skin n´Bones Savagnin

2016 One Ball Chardonnay

2016 Swaby Chardonnay

2016 Skin n´Bones Pinot Noir

2016 Gower Pinot Noir

2015 Mazi Syrah

Murdoch Hill

2016 Adelaide Hills Sauvignon

2016 Chardonnay

2016 Tillbury Chardonnay

2017 Ridley Pinot X3

2016 Phaeton Pinot Noir

2017 Sulky Red

2016 Cronberry Syrah

2016 Landau Syrah

Ngeringa

NV Éclat

NV Uncultured Pet Nat

2016 Elliptic Chardonnay

2015 Chardonnay Mt Barker Summit

2015 Pinot Noir Mt Barker Summit

2017 Uncultured Syrah Nouveau

2013 JE Syrah

2015 Syrah Mt Barker Summit

After the tasting the evening continued in the best way ever. Hanging out with the families, eatin and drinking wines in large amounts. And skateboarding of course. (I have never left a tasting event so bruised, battered and beaten, ever. Looking forward til´ the next time.)





A bonus day's wine visit the day after the tour ends to Flaxmans Valley, Eden Valley to see Tom Shobbrook and Abel Gibson

See you in 2018

Same time, same place, new vintages, new faces, same old bad wombats...

