



Curly Flat

October 2009

No. 19

VINE To WINE

Time to release ...

2007 Curly Flat Chardonnay

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It's getting a bit repetitive, but this could be the best Curly Flat Chardonnay released so far. A big call after some of the recent publicity, particularly the Jancis Robinson MW critique of the 2002 Curly Flat Chardonnay which Jancis described as "the single most exciting wine" of her trip to Australia, and went on to say "an absolute dead ringer for mature white burgundy".

In his recently released annual Wine Companion, Australia's leading wine writer James Halliday had this to say of the 2007 Curly Flat Chardonnay "Bright straw-green; a high-quality wine that is at peace with its maker – and itself; the components are harmoniously balanced, yet are quite vocal, notably the white peach, grapefruit and nectarine flavours on the long palate. Rating 96. Only three other Chardonnays received a higher rating. This is the highest score we have received from James. Perhaps it is the best we have released so far. More important will be how you rate the wine; we are confident that it will not disappoint. Comments on the vintage conditions are shown over.



Our tasting note on 2007 Curly Flat Chardonnay

Tasted Thursday, 17 September 2009

Tasting: Phillip, Matt and Ben

Colour: Bright, light gold with tinge of green

Bouquet: Generous and complex, with ripe stone fruit (white peach), fresh straw/grass, cashews, oatmeal, ripe lime, floral hints (apple blossom), honey, hint of ocean/oyster and some fresh toasty oak in the background.

Palate: Medium plus weight and complex with a backbone of bright crisp acidity and ripe fruit – the citrus tones showing more than the stone fruits. Textured, with an integrated oak underlay and consistent palate line that extends to a long finish.

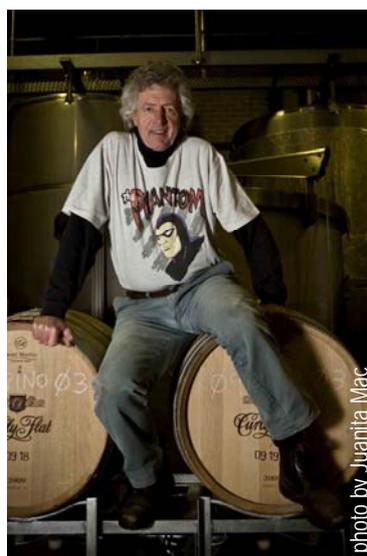


photo by Juanita Mac

Finalist - Winemaker of the Year

It was with great surprise we were notified that Phillip is one of the eight finalists in Gourmet Traveller WINE's Winemaker of the Year '09. The finalists and award are decided by a panel of six Australia's leading wine writers – Peter Forrestal, Peter Bourne, Nick Bulleid MW, Andrew Caillard MW, Huon Hooke and Sophie Otton. "The Awards focus attention on

the pursuit of excellence in winemaking – with the key criteria ... being the wine released by the finalists in the immediate past". Phillip considers this nomination is recognition of the whole team at Curly Flat, and the very place itself, which is so well suited to Pinot Noir and Chardonnay. The winner of the 2009 Award will be announced in the October issue of GTW.

Are you collecting Curly Flat Pinot Noir?

In the current issue of *Gourmet Traveller WINE*, Nick Ryan examines what wines Australian wine buyers are collecting. The article highlights the publication of Wine Ark's *Australia's 50 Most-Collected Wines*. Wine Ark is Australia's leading provider of managed cellaring solutions, holding millions of bottles. No surprise that Penfolds Bin 95 Grange is the most collected wine. What was a surprise was that Curly Flat is the second most collected Pinot Noir in Australia; the most collected being Mount Mary. Many of our clients are buying and cellaring – for which we are delighted as our Pinot develops in bottle and has more layers and complexity as it ages.

Wine Dogs

Three Curly Flat pooches, Curly, Musti and Woody, feature in the just released *Wine Dogs Australia 2*. This book by Craig McGill and Susan Elliott is "a photographic journal of stunning pictures and great stories - created all for the love of dogs and wine." (www.winedogs.com)



Weather Conditions of Vintage 2007

Most Victorian wine producers suffered significant losses to spring frosts. Fortunately, and inexplicably, the frosts did not descend on Curly Flat. The soils were suffering from lack of rainfall; August was appalling with only 27mm (versus a long term average [LTA] of 81mm, our wettest month, usually). September was slightly down, followed by October with only 7mm, yes, only 7mm (versus the LTA of 69mm). All six months of the growing season were down on LTA. The visually most spectacular deviation to average conditions was on 14 November when we had 150mm of snow, with a maximum temperature of 6°C. Now that is truly cool climate viticulture. Average temperatures were above normal as were evaporation and wind run. Thus a very warm, very dry year. Despite these conditions, the '07 wines have focus and constraint – in part, a result of us using acidity as the main determinant of harvest timing.

Buds are bursting, frost risk is high but we have a new defence !

The season is off to an early start with budburst starting in the higher blocks. We did not face as much frost risk in the early years but the



continuing drought has changed that. After several years of losses, we decided something had to be done. We have installed a frost protection system using overhead sprinklers. As the temperature drops toward that which would damage the new green shoots (1 °C), the system automatically starts up and the rotating sprinkler heads (1,400 of them) ensure all new growth is coated in water, which freezes as the temperature drops further. The freezing of water is an exothermic reaction that releases energy (heat). This heat is released into the green tissue zone, and remains there, encapsulated in the igloo that has formed. The system continues to spray water, that continues to freeze, until the temperature rises and the ice igloos melt. It is an intriguing sight as the photo shows.

Media Snippet

In an interview by Wine Selector, renowned UK wine writer, Jancis Robinson MW was asked “what was the most exciting things you’ve recently discovered about Australian wine?” Jancis replied “my first visits to Curly Flat and Jasper Hill”. We are delighted, not just to have that recognition from a most important wine critic, but also to be adjoined with one of Australia’s icon producers who is ‘on the other side of the hill’ (Great Dividing Range).

Coming events ...

Friday 16 October Curly Flat and The Old World Wine Dinner at the Royal George Hotel (One Hat) in Kyneton. Back vintages of Curly Flat Pinot Noir and Chardonnay together with wines from Burgundy, the home of Pinot Noir and Chardonnay, will be served with a five course dinner prepared by Chris Wade and his team. A great excuse to escape the city, and what a way to start a weekend in the countryside! Bookings on 03 5422 1390.

Thursday 29 October **Steven Snow** of “Fins” restaurant at South Kingscliff along with chefs Tiffany Richards and Shunichi Tanabe will create a dinner matched to back and current vintages of Curly Flat. Steven is renowned for his casual fine dining. Reservations on 02 6674 4833.

Evening, Tuesday 10 November – Matthew Hansen of Fine Wine Appreciation, together with Phillip, will conduct a Curly Flat Chardonnay Vertical Tasting of the “odd years” – 1999 through to 2009 – at Tre Bicchieri in Rathdown Street, Carlton – cost \$120 including some food to sustain us during the tasting. See Matthew’s website www.finewineappreciation.com.au and phone Matthew on 0410 451 932 to secure a place.

Weekend of 14 & 15 November Budburst ~ Macedon Ranges Wine & Food Festival

with 30 vignerons showing their wines. Some producers rarely open their cellar doors so this is an opportunity to find some hidden gems.

Curly Flat’s Vintage Hall becomes a restaurant for Budburst with chef Mark James, formerly of the Healesville Hotel and Langtons. Listen to soulful singer/guitarists Brent Parlane & Howard Malkin and enjoy café tucker in the winery.



On Saturday evening, 14 November Mark James serves his a-la-carte menu in Vintage Hall. Curly Flat Pinot from 2000 to 2006 vintages will be available along with current releases. Bookings for dinner are essential, bookings for lunch are recommended (03 5429 1956).

For details of Budburst see www.budburst.com.

Sunday 22 November will see Andrew McConnell and his team return to Curly Flat – this time under the banner of his new restaurant, Cutler & Co. Andrew was awarded Best Chef and Cutler & Co Best New Restaurant in The Age Good Food Guide 2010. Cutler & Co was awarded Two Hats and Andrew’s other new casual dining restaurant Cumulus was awarded One Hat. The cost for the lunch will be \$160 (food and wine) and bookings should be made by ringing Curly Flat on 03 5429 1956. If you are interested, we recommend early action as this annual event books out quickly.

AMEX blues

Merchant fees on AMEX are multiples of those charged by Visa and MasterCard. We try to minimize price increases on our wine and can no longer absorb the higher costs of AMEX. From now we will impose a fee of 4% on purchases using AMEX.