

VINE To WINE



SEPT 2001

No. 01



Curly Flat

VINEYARD

The Curly Flat Dream

When Phillip Moraghan ventured to study in Switzerland in the late 1980s his imagination was fired when he had the opportunity to see first-hand many wine regions in Switzerland and France. And the pinnacle was Burgundy and its Pinot Noir. Fortunately, Jeni Moraghan shared Phillip's dream. Together with a wonderful team they have built Curly Flat from the romantic idea to a romantic reality.

Curly Flat is 1 Hour from Melbourne

Curly Flat is 550 m above sea level in the Macedon Ranges at Collivers Road Lancefield. The crisp clean air and rolling open countryside of Curly Flat is only 75 km north of Melbourne, an easy drive one hour along sealed roads from the city centre. Follow our map (on back page) to leave Melbourne behind and be with us at Curly Flat.



Hello Friend of Curly Flat



We are excited to be able to show our Friends in this first formal Curly Flat story how Curly Flat has blossomed from the wild dream we had fourteen years ago to the reality that we share today.

Curly Flat has arrived!

The vineyard is flourishing, there are a number of projects under construction and soon we will be preparing for our fifth vintage. As we announce the release of our first wines – the 1998 Pinot Noir and the 1998 Chardonnay – we thought it was timely to bring together the Curly Flat story so far, in this our first Vine To Wine.

Phillip & Jeni

Phillip & Jeni Moraghan
Curly Flat

The Curly Flat Story so far

The drive to fix the dream firmly onto the earth started with a search for a cool climate region suited to Pinot Noir. Phillip and Jeni chose Lancefield in the Macedon Ranges because of its well-drained volcanic soils, moderate rainfall and high altitude. The first vines were planted in 1992 and with progressive plantings the vineyard is now 14 hectares – principally Pinot Noir with some Chardonnay and Pinot Gris.

There are several building projects underway – the main ones being Vintage Hall which is nearing completion while the new Winery has just commenced construction.

After four vintages the time has come to release the wines from 1998 – the first vintage. Curly Flat has deliberately concentrated on quality and not quantity. The results have been impressive. A decision was made to bring the fruit from the vine to the tables of the Friends of Curly Flat. To achieve this Curly Flat has a direct relationship with the consumers of its products – these are the Friends of Curly Flat.

In Vine to Wine we review the Curly Flat approach including:

- Vineyard culture
- Winery culture
- Product & Pricing
- The Curly Flat team, and the concept of
- Friends of Curly Flat

Also included:

Review of the First Release
Order form for the First Release

Our Vineyard Culture

The central focus of the entire operation is the vineyard. The fundamental belief is that good (and great) wine is primarily a product of the vineyard – the site, the soil and how the viticulturalist manages all the components of the vineyard. One of the shortfalls of attributing the success of wine to Terroir (the French term to describe the combination of soil, site and other immediate environment of the vineyard), is that it underplays the people involvement – the annual and long-term management practices and all decisions on variety, clones, rootstocks, trellis systems to name a few.

It is in the choice of trellis systems that Curly Flat is so noticeably different to most vineyards. Our trellis is the horizontally divided Lyre trellis (shaped like a Lyre bird's tail). This system whilst more costly and rarely used, has two walls of foliage and allows sunshine inside those trellis walls – this maximises interception of sunlight thus facilitating better ripening, improved wine colour, increased intensity of flavour and lower plant disease risks.

Curly Flat follows the European approach of multiple clones of each variety to gain increased complexity; Curly Flat has five clones of Pinot Noir and four of Chardonnay.

Product and Pricing

The intention is to have a benchmark price for wines of the quality standard that is expected of Curly Flat – a price that is affordable and presents value to Friends relative to the market place. There will be vintage variation – always more evident in a true cool climate. Accordingly, we shall price to vintage – if the finished wine is down on the benchmark standard then the price will reflect this.

The 1998 wines featured in this release equal the quality standard, hence they carry the benchmark price of \$35 for the Chardonnay and \$44 for the Pinot Noir.

Our Winery Culture

It starts with vineyard culture – get it right in the vineyard and there is little to do in the winery. In essence, good wine comes from good fruit – and the better the fruit, the less the role of the winery and the winemaker.

Thus the winery culture at Curly Flat is to put the finishing touches to the product of the vineyard and to do so with minimal intervention. Nothing integrates the constituent parts of wine as well as Mother Nature. Every attempt is made to grow the fruit that will naturally convert to very good (sometimes great) wine.

The wines are made in association with Llew Knight of Knight Granite Hills. Llew, a graduate of Charles Sturt University, is well known for his fine cool climate wines.

Our Friends of Curly Flat Approach

In Australia, Curly Flat wines are only available direct from the vineyard and then only to Friends – Curly Flat is not open to the general public. Friends originate from other Friends – in much the same way as club membership is obtained through nomination by another member.

The wines are not available to the wine trade so you will not find Curly Flat in wine stores, restaurants and other outlets. There may be the rare exception to this where a person uses their personal allocation in their restaurant.

Even before GST and before the insidious WET (Wine Equalisation Tax), it was decided to know our customer and to sell directly to Friends of Curly Flat. It is intended to develop a relationship between Curly Flat and its Friends. Every sale is tracked and all allocations are based on Friends' prior allocations. It is not a matter of 'first come first served' – orders are not processed until the closing date – then allocations are made in accordance with established preferences of Friends' prior purchases and length of association.

You will not see Curly Flat wines in the show ring – the most important judges to us are Friends. Our role is to provide the very best wines we can grow here and do so at a price that represents value to Friends of Curly Flat.

The Curly Flat Team

The Curly Flat Team is a group of nine talented people who cover a broad range of skills including viticulture, mechanics, carpentry, chemistry and more. Two of the team are brothers of Jeni – Robert, a qualified carpenter, and Peter, a qualified mechanic. The vineyard manager, Tom Belford, is studying viticulture at Charles Sturt University, as is Phillip.

There will be a section (including photos) featuring the team in the next issue.



Future Developments at Curly Flat



There are a number of projects underway and several at concept plan stage.

Those underway include the restoration and extension of the original 1890 homestead to become Vintage Hall, where Friends will be entertained in three rooms (two Victorian sitting rooms and a conservatory) for tasting, and a large central hall for functions, a commercial kitchen and associated facilities. The works are proceeding well and the original charm and integrity of the building has been preserved. Vintage Hall should be finished early next year.

The new winery project has just commenced with the earth works

finished and the main slabs about to be poured. While it will include many of the so-called state of the art features, it will not change the fundamental way we do things – Curly Flat will remain a ‘winery minimalist’. The project will be finished at the end of next year, ready for the 2003 vintage.

Web Site Development

Our website is being developed. It is expected to have it up and running in a limited format by mid October – the address will be www.curlyflat.com.

The Curly Flat Artwork

The label design and all other artworks are the creation of our friend, William Hughes. William is a Sydney based artist of renown whose artistic pursuits cover a number of mediums. William has created a label that recognises the traditional forms and adds a layer of artistry and flair – his talents are being brought to bear on many aspects of the Curly Flat visuals. Unfortunately, there is none of William’s art on exhibition in Melbourne – however it will be featured in Curly Flat Vintage Hall.

New Winery project



REVIEW OF OUR FIRST RELEASE

The 1998 growing season was exceptional – a long, warm, dry summer followed by ideal ripening conditions in autumn. These conditions, coupled with the very light crop load, resulted in an early harvest and wines of surprising intensity and depth of flavours. Both wines were aged in all new French oak barriques from Seguin Moreau.

1998 Pinot Noir

– 250 dozen produced – maximum allocation of 6 bottles.

This is a very big Pinot – for those who consider Pinot a wine for whimps, this will present a different perspective. A wine with power and depth, it is more in a ‘dry red’ dimension, rather than the usual lighter, more floral, fruit lifted style. The wine shows a very good fruit foundation, well integrated and balanced with the oak. Drinking well already, it will develop further in the bottle for many years. Unfortunately quantities are very limited.

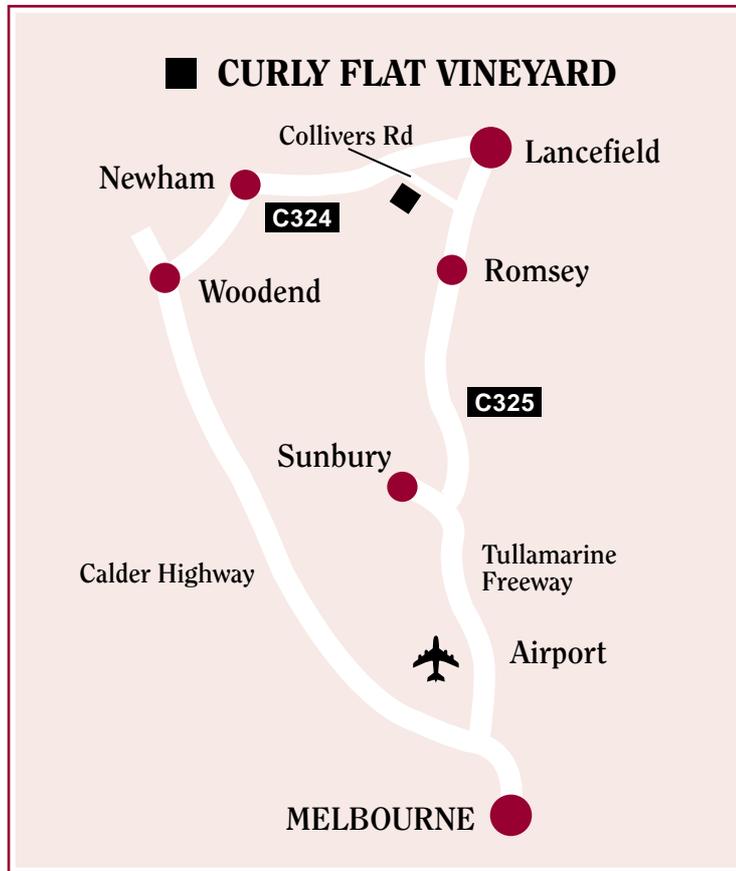
1998 Chardonnay

– 420 dozen produced – maximum allocation of 12 bottles.

Again a big wine, very luscious and belying its cool climate origin. A broad and complex flavour spectrum with rich texture and mouth feel. The wine exhibits very good fruit depth enhanced with yeast lees contact, malolactic ferment characters and well integrated oak. This wine is drinking well now and will continue to improve for the next two to three years. Again limited quantities.



DIRECTIONS / HOW TO GET TO CURLY FLAT VINEYARD



From Melbourne – take the Tullamarine Freeway and proceed past the Airport.

Before Sunbury, turn right onto C325 to Romsey/Lancefield.

After Romsey and when entering Lancefield, turn left onto C324 towards Woodend.

Travel 4 km, and just before Glen Erin Vineyard Retreat turn left into Collivers Road.

Curly Flat Vineyard is 600 metres along on the right.

Visiting Arrangements

Curly Flat is only open to Friends, and then only by appointment. It is not open to the public. An appointment is necessary to ensure we can give you our full attention. You can decide what your visit will encompass – tasting the current release and yet to be released wines, trying barrel samples of wines in progress, looking over the vineyard, getting to know the property – you can do so at your own pace and at whatever level of detail you choose. Your visit can be more than simply tasting the wines – there are sheep, horses and other farm animals as well as Lake Lacuna with native ducks and swans and a 3 km tree lined perimeter walk.

Please remember to make an appointment by phoning on 03-5429 1956 or email us on mail@curlyflat.com.

We look forward to your visit.

Some Accommodation Options

There is a broad range of options – two to consider are:

Glen Erin Vineyard Retreat & Conference Centre which is within easy walking distance of Curly Flat. Brian & Kim offer deluxe accommodation with all facilities and superb dining in the Grange Restaurant 03-5429 1041 and sales@glenerinretreat.com.au.

Fairways Guesthouse & Champion's Restaurant overlooking the Lancefield golf course. Lynne & Nick have established one of the finest B&Bs in Victoria. A highlight is the food – Chef Lynne has just returned after thirteen years in the U.S. where she was a regular guest chef on many television food programs (03-5429 1903 and fairwaysguest@ozemail.com.au).

Order Arrangements

You can become a Friend of Curly Flat by placing an order – for either a half dozen or a full dozen (subject to availability) – this can be for both releases (Pinot Noir and Chardonnay) or for either variety separately, or a mixed case. You can also make a Permanent Order – under this arrangement, we will contact you at the time of each release, to confirm continuance of the order and arrange a time for delivery.

Freight Arrangements

We are still negotiating freight arrangements – interim arrangements are in place for Melbourne, regional and interstate deliveries

Another option for Melbourne clients is to pick-up their wine orders from our South Yarra collection point.

Phone 03 5429 1956 for details.



THE 1998 VINTAGE IS DEDICATED TO LAURIE WILLIAMS

Our friend Laurie Williams laid the cornerstones for our understanding of, and passion for, growing wine. He crafted many fine vintages of Cabernet in his minimalist winery but he was more at home in the vineyard – he was a shepherd to his vines and to many aspiring winegrowers.

In the 1960s Laurie and wife Nola were farming near Kyneton when Melbourne restaurateur Tom Lazar purchased the adjoining land and commenced setting up what was to become one of Victoria's prominent small wineries, Virgin Hills. Laurie, who did not drink wine at that time, was somewhat puzzled by his new neighbour. He spent increasing periods of time leaning over the fence watching progress. Slowly but surely it got the better of him and he started lending a hand – this progressed to his taking a part-time job in the vineyard.

Never one to do things in half measure, Laurie started reading and attending courses in viticulture and winemaking. Soon there was not enough time for his farm and it was sold and he worked full-time at Virgin Hills. His time was divided between the vineyard and winery and he went on to be responsible for several vintages in the mid and late '70s.

In the early '80s Laurie, together with silversmith John Flynn, established a small winery at Kyneton to process Cabernet grapes Laurie grew at Heathcote – thus began Flynn & Williams. Laurie and



Nola then established their own four acre vineyard near Kyneton. This impeccably managed vineyard, in which Laurie seemed to know every vine, produced exceptional cool climate Cabernet.

We were fortunate to come under Laurie's influence during our search for the vineyard site for Curly Flat. Phillip spent much time in the Flynn & Williams vineyard learning the fundamentals. Being coached during the day on winter pruning or

summer canopy management and going home with several of the essential textbooks to read. Laurie was particularly strong in his view that great fruit was necessary to make great wine and that great fruit could only come with a lot of hard work.

Laurie guided us in all the initial decisions for the vineyard – site, varieties, clones, rootstocks, trellis system – and then helped setup the vineyard. After the somewhat shattering setback caused by poor planting material for the first planting in 1991, Laurie encouraged our decision to start again. Delighted with our pursuit of getting it right, he threw himself into helping replant what is now known as the '92 Pinot block and then the first Chardonnay block the following year. The wines of the first release come from those two blocks.

The last vintage of Flynn & Williams was 1993 after which the vineyard was leased for five years before being purchased by Essendon football legend, Alec Epis. Alec and Phillip are Laurie's strongest devotees and among his most dedicated protégés. Wine from Laurie's vineyard is now released under the label Epis & Williams – another fitting tribute to Laurie.

Phillip and Jeni reviewed the draft of this dedication with Laurie the week before Laurie's unexpected passing. It saddens us that our friend and mentor will not walk the vineyard with us anymore, giving comments and advice. We find comfort knowing that his presence will always be evident in the vineyard of Curly Flat.



Curly Flat

VINEYARD

ORDER FORM – RELEASE 1 – SEPTEMBER 2001

*Maximum allocations for Release 1 ■ 6 bottles of 1998 Pinot Noir ■ 12 bottles of 1998 Chardonnay
 Closing date for PRIORITY ALLOCATION: Friday 21st September

WINE	Price per Bottle	Price per Case of 6	Order *Number	\$
6 Bottles of 1998 Pinot Noir	\$44	\$264		
6 Bottles of 1998 Chardonnay	\$35	\$210		
Mixed Case				
3 Bottles of 1998 Pinot Noir	\$44	\$237		
3 Bottles of 1998 Chardonnay	\$35			

Freight	First Case	Additional Cases
Victoria	\$ 6.00	\$3.00
NSW	\$ 8.00	\$4.00
Other States	\$10.00	\$5.00

Wine	\$
Freight	\$
Total cost of order	\$

Please find enclosed cheque or Credit/Debit card details

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Type of card Expiry

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(only Visa / MasterCard / BankCard or Debit Card)

Signature

Ordered by

Mailing Address

Delivery Address

Special Delivery Instructions

Telephone Fax Email

Please return in Prepaid envelope or Fax to 03 5429 2256