



Curly Flat

February 2009

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VINE *To* WINE

*Now that summer is well and truly upon us it's
time to release our summer wines*

2008 Curly Flat Pinot Grigio

2008 Curly Flat Rosé

2007 Williams Crossing Chardonnay

2008 Curly Flat Pinot Grigio & Rosé

These are the best we have produced of these two wines. This may come as a surprise given the extreme heat experienced in March 2008. Remember Adelaide's sixteen consecutive days above 35°C? Again we escaped that here in the Macedon Ranges. One characteristic of our region is the big diurnal swing i.e. the difference between day and night temperatures. In cool years, cold nights can make ripening difficult, but in the hot years the cool nights provide relief for the vines, slowing the ripening process and building flavor. Both these wines are of moderately low alcohol – the Grigio is 11.7%, while the Rosé is only 10.8% - impressive because both wines are fermented to dry. We use natural yeasts – that is, the yeasts that naturally occur in the vineyard and on the skin of the berries. Each berry has approximately one million yeast cells on its skin. Our native yeasts are inefficient in converting sugar to alcohol. Some of the sugar is probably converted to higher order alcohols, such as glycerol – this could explain the smooth 'mouth feel' of our wines.

These wines have high acidity by Australian standards and this acidity comes naturally from the vineyard. Both are food wines. The Grigio matches well to seafood, even oysters. The Rosé matches well to fresh antipasto and summer soups.

Some comments by leading wine writers ...

James Halliday in his 2009 Australian Wine Companion lifted the Curly Flat rating to his highest, 5 Red Stars, reserved for "Outstanding winery regularly producing wines of exemplary quality and typicity."

Campbell Mattinson of Wine Front, on the 2007 Grigio "a very good one ... heaps of flavour, bordering on richness. The reason that it's very good is that it comes sans alcohol heat. That allows the flavours to shine, as indeed they do. It's nicely textural, but finishes dry and straight.

Jeni Port in The Age, on 2006 Williams Crossing Pinot Noir: "A second-string pinot noir from Curly Flat that sings with good, strong fruit and vibrancy".

2007 Williams Crossing Chardonnay

The 2007 Williams Crossing Chardonnay continues our practice of declassifying some barrels, that were intended to be Curly Flat Chardonnay, but just don't quite make the benchmark score. Williams Crossing wines, are almost Curly Flat, yet are priced to deliver exceptional value. The value delivered is being recognised by a number of leading wine writers – see the next section. For some time it has been recognised by our direct clients, hence the Williams Crossing wines sell out quickly.

Please note, these three summer wines are only available for purchase direct from Curly Flat. All three are produced in small volumes, hence there is insufficient to provide stock for our Specialised Retailers. You will however, see all three wines on the lists of our Select Restaurants.



photo: Franz Scheurer

Gourmet Traveller Wine – Best Buy Wines – on the Williams Crossing Pinot Noir: "The Williams Crossing has excellent varietal character, savoury dark cherries, silky smooth texture, incredible depth, more complexity than you would expect and a long dry finish that lingers."

Melbourne's The Age in Epicure - **Ralph Kyte-Powell** - Curly Flat 2005 Pinot Noir: "Curly Flat 2005 is a complex, sensuous essay in pinot with spice, undergrowth, plum and earthy aromas touched by a sexy, slightly feral, gamey thread. The palate is silky and superfine, seamless and lingering. It captures pinot mystery beautifully and the incredibly long finish grows in the mouth like the best of them."

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Comments by wine writers *continued* ...

Campbell Mattinson of Wine Front on the Williams 2006 Crossing Pinot Noir: "This is made by Curly Flat in the cool Macedon Ranges region of Victoria. It's another excellent release. It tastes of stalks and dark cherries, cedarsmoke and mint, the aftertaste a touch bitter but the overall flavour of it deliciously appealing."

Max Allen in The Weekend Australian on the 2006 Williams Crossing Pinot Noir: "Curly Flat vineyard has a great reputation for brooding, autumnal pinot and refined chardonnay – and terrific value wines under the Williams Crossing label. This is full of generous, fleshy pinot fruit."



Summer has hit hard, devastatingly hard ...

Some thoughts on the summer we are now experiencing. Put mildly, this summer is turning into a 'horror show' for much of the grape growing areas of South Australia, Victoria and southern NSW.

For many producers, particularly in the dryer regions, with heavy reliance on irrigation, they simply don't have access to sufficient water to keep their vines in healthy condition. But the real problem has only emerged in the past week, with ambient air temperatures rising to extremes not seen before; and definitely not seen day after day.

Fortunately, here in the Macedon Ranges, we have [so far] escaped significant damage. This is because our berries are still developing, and are yet to soften and change colour [verasion]. We are still eight weeks, or so, to go before harvest. Most other regions are soon to start, or have started harvest. In those areas, the berries are soft and full of juice. In the extreme heat, the juice can reach excessive temperatures, much higher than the ambient air temperature. With those ambient air temperatures rising to 45°C, the juice in the berries can be stewed, with a loss of moisture. The end result is, at best, jam. It can be a total loss of fruit.

In the nineteen years we have been keeping daily weather records here at Curly Flat, we have never experienced such extremes of high temperatures; both maximums and minimums. Also, the daily evaporation readings are of similar extremes, and are also occurring day after day.

We keep trying ...

Remembering that our first release was only 8 years ago, we are pleased with the progress of our wines. However, we recognise [and rejoice] that we are on a continuous learning curve; in both the vineyard and the winery. The move to biodynamic farming is an exciting journey. Anecdotal evidence suggests that biodynamic vineyards have weathered the recent hot spell much better than their chemically farmed counterparts.

In the winery, we continue to seek ways to minimize any detrimental impact on the fruit the vineyard delivers. Our 'Rule One of Winemaking' is 'cleanliness cannot be overdone'. The basic fact is that it's about the quality of the fruit and then winemaking is about cleaning, cleaning and more cleaning - "nothing succeeds like excess".

That is why we have had the winery floors treated with epoxy coatings to food processing standards. This preserves the concrete, reduces dust levels and minimises the likelihood of unwanted bacterial growth.



photo: David Hannah

Older Vintages available in Large Bottles

Older vintages are available in large format bottles - 1.5 litre up to 6 litre. In Chardonnay there are magnums (1.5 litre), back to the 2002 vintage, while in Pinot there are magnums, 3 litre, 5 litre and 6 litre back to the 2000 vintage.

These large bottles come in timber cases, branded with the Curly Flat livery. Being of larger format, they should age for longer, provided cellaring conditions are suitable.

In the past we have offered History Packs - the current plus two prior vintages of Pinot or Chardonnay. Demand has been so strong that stocks of prior vintages are depleted. For now, History Packs are history but we hope to offer them again in future years.



photo: Lisa Kimmorley

Olivia and Coco arguing over the last Nice biscuit. Zanz (left) & Barry (behind) adjudicate.

Visiting Curly Flat

Our cellar door is open for tastings between 1 pm and 5 pm on weekends and public holidays. To visit at other times, phone 03 5429 1956 for an appointment - there is often someone to show you wines at Curly Flat outside cellar door hours.

We aim to provide a wine tasting experience that is quite different to other cellar doors. So that we can try to have sufficient staff on hand, groups of 10 or more people are requested to make an appointment even if you plan to visit during cellar door hours.

during cellar door hours.