



Curly Flat

May 2008

No. 18

VINE *To* WINE

*Time to release our 2 Pinot noirs ... ..*

## 2006 Curly Flat Pinot Noir & 2007 Williams Crossing Pinot Noir

*Apologies that we are a little late with this release – vintage came early and that was our top priority; more on that later. Firstly, we want to let you know about a rather special visitor to Curly Flat.*

### A Rather Special Visitor

In February we received a visit from the renowned UK wine writer Jancis Robinson MW OBE. Many of you will know of Jancis; if not, we recommend that you look at her website and some of her brilliant books – see below. One of these – The Oxford Companion To Wine – is one of the most important wine reference works. Jancis is one of a very small number of writers who enjoy a truly international reputation. She was the first person outside the wine trade to gain the Master of Wine (MW) qualification.



Jancis was particularly taken with the 2002 Chardonnay – “I tasted the single most exciting wine of my trip here, the 2002 Chardonnay”, and went on to say “Wonderfully developed buttery Meursault type nose. Absolute dead ringer for mature white burgundy – the French should be force fed with this!”. (Some magnums of 2002 Chardonnay are still available.)

Jancis reviewed 5 vintages of Pinot Noir and Chardonnay, plus the Grigio – here are her comments on the current releases:

Curly Flat first came to the attention of Jancis during her visit to Australia in 2006. In a subsequent article, Jancis rated our 2004 as the best of the 55 Australian Pinots she tasted – our 2003 was rated third, while the 2004 Williams Crossing Pinot was rated number seven.

Jancis journeyed to this side of the globe to attend International Pinot Noir Celebrations in New Zealand & Mornington Peninsula. Jancis then visited a small number of Victorian producers. We were fortunate to have Jancis with us for an extended visit, which included a wonderful lunch prepared by Alla Wolf-Tasker AO, of Lake House fame.

In summary, Jancis thought Curly Flat was up with the leading bunch of new world producers who are pushing Pinot Noir in the direction of the home of great Pinot – Burgundy. *She described Curly Flat as “the producer of some of the finest Australian Pinot Noir I have encountered”.*

But it was the Curly Flat Chardonnay that really stood out for Jancis. Not because it is better than the Pinot. With Pinot there is an expanding group of new world producers doing exceptional things, however there are very few making the same progress with Chardonnay.

**2006 Curly Flat Pinot Noir** – Current Release – 18 points – “Very exotic nose with immediate appeal. Already pretty complex. Lovely freshness and tension but strong mulberry flavours too. Real punchy racy stuff with lovely fruit and acidity.”

**2006 Curly Flat Chardonnay** – Current Release – 18 points – “Nutty, complex nose already. Then wonderful delicacy with floral notes.”

**2008 Curly Flat Pinot Grigio** – 17 points – “Lots of acidity. Masses of flavour – more than most Friuli Pinot Grigios! Very delicate texture but no shortage of personality”

Suggested Reading

Website: [www.jancisrobinson.com](http://www.jancisrobinson.com)

Books – there are many, but these 3 are a good start:

Oxford Companion To Wine – 3<sup>rd</sup> Edition (Oxford University Press)

How To Taste Wine – Revised Edition 2008 (Conran Octopus)

World Atlas of Wine – written with Hugh Johnson (Mitchell Beazley)



## Curly Flat 2006 Pinot Noir

This is among the best, if not, **the** best Curly Flat Pinot released to date. There are a number of reasons for that; the good growing season, the increasing vine age, our experience in the vineyard and winery. 2006 was our first year without herbicides and was the first year that we started to use a partial barrel ferment for Pinot Noir.

James Halliday in his Annual Wine Companion – “Dark brooding black cherry, dark plum and loads of spice; very concentrated on the palate, and the fruit holds on and opens up over an extraordinary long time. Rating 94”

Our recent tasting note for this wine reads: A graceful dance of strawberry, black cherry, dark ripe plum. Hints of forest floor and a little spice. Fine tannins encompassed by driving acid. A young wine that will age well and develop many secondary characters.



## Vintage 2009 – a season of many challenges.

As we go to print, we are still pressing. But there is not a lot to press – our crop volume is down 58% on normal. The good news is that quality is very high.

The reduction in crop is due to a number of factors. It started back in December 2007 with the hail storm that damaged some vines, and made pruning difficult. The canes snapped easily during pruning, and many buds were damaged to the point of not producing viable shoots.

Then followed a very dry winter and spring, which set up conditions for the damaging frost that came with budburst. When rain did eventually arrive, the vines were flowering and the wet, windy and cold conditions resulted in poor fruit set, with much hen and chicken (variation in the eventual size of the berries).

The cool dry conditions, then changed to the hot northerly winds of early February; fortunately these did not damage the bunches, but did burn some leaves. Overall a tough year, but at least we had a crop, and avoided the damaging smoke taint that affected so many of our fellow producers.

## Mr Curley comes to Curly Flat

Renowned chef, Ian Curley of The European is guest chef for a sumptuous lunch on Monday 8 June, Queen’s Birthday weekend. Current and older vintages of Curly Flat wines will be matched to a superb menu from Mr Curley and his team. \$140 all inclusive - bookings on 03 5429 1956 or to [georgia@curlyflat.com](mailto:georgia@curlyflat.com).

## Williams Crossing 2007 Pinot Noir

In March this was “Wine of the Week” in both The Sydney Morning Herald and The Age’s Epicure. Ralph Kyte-Powell said “This junior Pinot from Macedon’s Curly Flat is one of the best ... Meaty smells, plum and red berry fruit and threads of spice and undergrowth give it classical personality. It has plump mouth-feel, concentrated varietal flavour, medium body and fine tannins supporting a deliciously long finish.”

Many of you will know that Williams Crossing wines almost merit a Curly Flat label. All the grapes are grown here, and all are intended to go into Curly Flat. They come from our declassification (down grading) of some barrels which don’t quite make the benchmark score. These become Williams Crossing – our junior label – priced to deliver exceptional value.

## A big thank you to all who gave so generously to the various bushfire appeals

Curly Flat donated wines for many of the dinners and auctions for fund raising appeals. People gave very generously. A three litre bottle of Curly Flat Pinot sold for \$2,800 at Geoff Lindsay’s Pearl Restaurant luncheon auction, while a pair of magnums sold for \$1,400 at the Church Street Enoteca dinner auction. Such prices represent many multiples of the retail value of the wine – a reflection of the generosity of the buyers, and their desire to contribute to the reconstruction of the devastation. That we could contribute in this way was magnified by the generosity of those who purchased our wine. Thank you!

## Doing our bit to help the economy

Recent visitors to Curly Flat will have noticed a number of projects under way. Our new pumphouse is home to a new pump, fertigation and filtration systems. This project will assist the vineyard by improved timing and measurement of irrigation of the vines, improved ability to apply natural fertilisers (eg fish emulsion and sea weed), and spring frost control using water via overhead sprinklers.

We have also invested in a range of equipment to help in our move to biodynamic farming. A multi-tiered ‘flow form’ to energise the waters and biodynamic preparations, a new undervine mower that senses the vines and moves the mowing head around the vine, several new spray units to apply the biodynamic preparations and peppering sprays to naturally overcome problem weeds.

The new laboratory has been commissioned. The special tasting room devoted to Burgundy is nearing completion, as is the winery office area. New tanks and catwalks have been installed. All intended to improve the way in which we handle the fruits of the vineyard.

Continuous improvement + hard work = better wines.

