

JULY 2015

# Bruce Thiele Red Wine Club

## A Happy Birthday at St Hallett.

On arrival at St Hallett Wines we were welcomed by Cellar Door Manager Melissa who offered us a choice of three welcome wines; a sparkling shiraz (St Hallett Black NV Sparkling Shiraz), a Riesling (2017 St Hallett Eden Valley) and a Rosé (2017 St Hallett Dry Rosé).

Melissa introduced Stuart Blackwell, St Hallett's Senior wine-maker who started the evening with a short tour of the winery we could see through the windows of the tasting room, and told us some of his own and St Hallett's history. Stuart first joined St Hallett in 1972 with an agricultural qualification from Roseworthy but no formal winemaking education. He learned 'on the job' with Robert O'Callaghan. They worked in a leaky old shed and the business was mostly in fortified wines. Sometimes there was insufficient funds in the bank so they had to wait for their pay. Bob Lindner made up for it with the occasional bonus—even if he had to borrow to pay for the Christmas one.

These days there is little fortified made and while the winery looks big its capacity is there to enable them to process their many single vineyard wines at the optimum time. The family operation became a listed company to raise funds to improve the winery. Stuart became a shareholder. The company did not last long as it was taken over by a Lion Nathan and is now owned by Accolade.

Amongst the improvements made to the winery was to raise the fermenters so that most of the operations can be done using gravity. This means that the handling of the wine is so gentle that there is no need to use fining agents. These days everything is computer controlled and efficiently managed. Even though they are owned by a multinational company St Hallett strives to maintain the small 'family' mode of operation. They have a very stable staff—the longest having worked there for 48 years and many over twenty.

St Hallett likes to focus on what the Barossa does best, concen-



### *Coming Up*

**August: James Haselgrove (Home)**

**September : Kellermeister (Away)**

**October Bruce Commemoration (Home)**

**November Kalleske Wines (Away—3rd Tuesday)**

**Christmas at Lamberts with Wives & partners.**

### *BRING A FRIEND*

Remember, at home shows you can introduce a new guest for just \$25.

### **GUEST INVITATION**

You are invited to join a group of like minded men at a Bruce Thiele Red Wine Club dinner meeting to taste, talk about, learn and enjoy wine. Inquiries Peter Frick [btredwineclub@gmail.com](mailto:btredwineclub@gmail.com)

*Editor: Ian Cooper*

*Photos: Steve Blee*

## Birthday at St Hallett (Cont.)

trating on varietals rather than blends and single vineyard offerings where possible.

The winery puts through about 4000 tonnes of grapes. It has a larger capacity and initially did contract winemaking to pay down debt. Stuart and his team are happy they no longer have to do this.

Their main market is Australia with currently about 42% being exported—mostly to America with some to China.

We moved back to the tasting room to try the canapes provided by Handmade Catering.

They were fried pork and ginger dumplings and a tartlet of heirloom tomato, goat's cheese and basil. These were accompanied by the St Hallett 2017 Old Vine Grenache. St Hallett has been playing with Grenache for a while and will grow production with the expected growth in demand.



It is currently used for the Dry Rose as well as the Old Vine Grenache.

Rather than the old style high alcohol Grenache, the Old Vine Grenache is made more like a Pinot Noir. Only 70% of the grapes are crushed—the rest are added a whole bunches. The fermenter is sealed off and allowed to sit for 4 to 5 days. It is a wild ferment with the 'in berry' ferment imbuing the wine with soft fruity flavours.

We then moved on the entrée—Grilled Port Lincoln Sardines, tomato, confit garlic and grilled sourdough, accompanied by two single vineyard shirazes. They were the 2015 Mattschoss Single Vineyard Shiraz and the 2015 Dawkins Single Vineyard Shiraz.

Sixty five family vineyards supply St Hallett—and have for 30-40 years. In some cases the wines are made from grapes from the same rows every year. Generally every picking is treated separately and blind tasted to determine its future. Growers are paid a basic price plus a bonus depending on the final use of the grapes. It works on trust and the growers think it is fair, even with





their conservative German heritage and Stuart being an ‘outsider’.

The John Dawkins comes from a younger vineyard at Menglers Hill. It has won many trophies and is a crowd pleaser.

It was originally thought the vines in the Mattschoss were 70 years vines and the grapes could go into the Old Block Shiraz. However, it turned out that the vines had been top grafted (45 years ago) and grapes going into Old Block have to be on their own roots.

The wine stacks up well having recently won three trophies at the Sydney Wine show and was runner-up to the best in show wine.

The vineyard is on marble quarts and ironstone, the latter imbuing it with some ‘barnyard’ flavours.

Our main course was a deliciously tender lamb rump served on creamed parsnip, roasted fennel and a green olive and aged Barossa Shiraz jus. It was accompanied by roast potatoes and

steamed broccolini. Again we had two shiraz to accompany the course. They were the 2015 Blackwell Shiraz and the 2014 Old Block Shiraz. Both were excellent wines with the Old Block being “softer and more gentle”. Stuart was challenged to make a better shiraz than the Old Block—he failed, he doesn’t think it can be done by St Hallett.

The Blackwell Shiraz was named after Stuart. Bob McLean named it and took it to London. When Stuart demurred he was told “don’t be a princess, get over it”.

The Faith Shiraz is St Hallett’s number one earner, the Blackwell is second. The grapes for the Blackwell come from the north west corner of the Barossa, from vineyards surrounding the parishes of Ebenezer, Greenock and Seppeltsfield (home of Grange). The clay soils with a high field capacity



mean the grapes can generally be dry grown.

These wines need decanting and large glasses to allow them to ‘breathe’. The Blackwell is aged in American oak while the Old Block spends time in French oak. Stuart believes in a shorter time in the barrel to preserve the fruit flavours and time to bottle age under screw cap.

Dessert was ‘Birthday Cake’ - flourless chocolate cake served with fresh cream and fruit accompanied by a NV Lost Art Tawney. We sang happy birthday to ourselves!

The door prizes went to Allan Duthie, Ian Roark and David Jeffery with George Akkerman getting a cap.

# Photos



## More Photos



# And more photos



# And even more photos—thanks Steve



## The Wines

### St Hallett Black NV Sparkling Shiraz

Idiosyncratically Australian and proudly Barossan, this Sparkling Shiraz celebrates Australia's love affair with "red bubbles". St Hallett's The Black Sparkling NV is the culmination of years of determined viticulture and focused winemaking (with lots of taste testing too).

St Hallett sources the Shiraz fruit for this wine from throughout Barossa, from Shiraz vineyards ranging in age from 10 years to some that are at least 80 years of age. Vineyards are located from Lyndoch in the South to Nuriootpa in the North, as well as Eden Valley.

The core base of the wine is a blend of several vintages going back as far as 1987 through to 1998. Each year, new parcels of wine are selected to join the Solera System while barrel tasting for the Old Block and Blackwell Shiraz blends. These wines then become part of the blending process for the next bottling. Once blended the wine is placed on tirage for 18 months before disgorging.

pH: 3.2, Titratable Acidity: 7.2 g/L, Residual Sugar: 22 g/L, Alcohol: 14%, Cellar Door Price \$50



### 2017 St Hallett Eden Valley Riesling

Delicate and intriguing aromas of flint and spice intermingle with lemon flowers and lime peel. An explosive line of energy reveals flavours of ripe lemons, lime juice and mineral talc. Well supported by a vibrant backbone of acidity and an elegant, complex finish.

St Hallett Eden Valley Riesling encapsulates the classic definition of its origins. Perched 250 metres above the adjacent Barossa Valley, at approximately 550 metres above sea level, is the Eden Valley. This cooler climate Barossa sub-region is the historical home to some of Australia's finest Rieslings.

Optimum ripeness and acidity levels are critical to the delicate, fresh lively style that is synonymous with St Hallett Eden Valley Riesling. Gentle handling, minimal intervention, and keeping the fruit and juices as cool as possible promotes the fine pristine characters of Eden Valley Riesling.

pH: 3.10, Titratable Acidity: 7.31 g/L, Alcohol: 12.3% Cellar Door Price \$20

### 2017 St Hallett Dry Rosé

Fragrant bouquet filled with flowers, peaches and strawberries. A burst of strawberries, dried flowers and white peach opens the palate, with a lively backbone of acidity. A fine and elegant finish for this refreshing dry rosé.

Barossa Valley Shiraz vineyards that produce bright aromas are earmarked for the Barossa Valley Rosé, where the focus is on vibrancy and fruit.

The Grenache for the Rosé was harvested cold and kept on skins for 12 hours before being drained off and treated in a similar way to a white wine. The ferments were kept between 12-14 degrees for 10 days to maintain the vibrant acid and fresh fruit characters. The wine received no oak contact.

pH: 3.06, Titratable Acidity: 6.5 g/L, Residual Sugar: 4.2 g/L, Alcohol: 12.9%  
Cellar Door Price \$18





## The Wines (Cont.)

### St Hallett 2017 Old Vine Grenache

This soft, delicate Grenache is hand picked from 87 year old vines early to retain vibrant fruit characters and natural sweetness. The result is a lively wine with cherry, spice and delicate dried flowers on the nose. The palate is full of fresh red fruit, spice and great flavour intensity. This medium bodied Grenache encompasses a linear acid structure, and soft fine tannins to finish.

Sourced from an 87 year old hand-picked vineyard that is dry grown and low yielding.

This Grenache is made in a very different fashion than most other St Hallett wines. The different treatment starts with an early picking to ensure that the more delicate flavours are retained and the natural sweetness is in check. Open fermenters with some whole bunches and hand plunging ensure the retention of vibrant fruit characters. After the 15 day ferment, the wine is pressed and placed in 1-3 year old French Oak for maturation time of 9 months.

The Old Vine Grenache will cellar well for up to 6 years, but is equally as good to consume on release.

Alcohol – 13.7%, Titratable Acidity – 5.97 g/L, pH – 3.58, Cellar Door Price \$30.00



### St Hallett 2015 Mattschoss Single Vineyard Shiraz

The Mattschoss vineyard is our highest Shiraz vineyard in Eden Valley. The wine reflects the cooler site through lifted floral aromas, beautiful mid-palate weight and incredible flavour persistence.

The Mattschoss vineyard is our highest Shiraz vineyard in Eden Valley at an elevation of 489m. The Shiraz block sits in a little amphitheatre which surrounds a rocky outcropping covered in distinctive native vegetation called yuccas. The soil type here consists of very little topsoil, incorporating meta-sandstone, marble and ironstone. The Mattschoss family have spent years focusing on quality in the vineyard and it is now realising it's true potential. We're thrilled to have the opportunity to showcase the fruits of this passion and labour.

Harvest: 25th February 2015 Vinification Fermentation: 5 days carbonic Maceration and 50% whole bunches, followed by 7 days on skins at a peak of 30°C Maceration regime: Large diameter open fermenters. Plunged or pumped over 2 -4 times daily.

Oak Selection: All French oak hogsheads: 25% new, 25% 1 year old and 50% older.

Maturation time: 10 months. Assemblage: No blending as it is a single vineyard. Only diligent barrel selection.

This wine will develop well in the bottle – with 8-10 years of positive bottle maturation to come.

Alcohol: 13.5 %, pH: 3.45, Titratable Acidity: 6.7 g/L, RS: 0.35 g/L, Cellar Door Price \$55.00

### St Hallett 2015 Dawkins Single Vineyard Shiraz.

Produced with fruit sourced from a John Dawkins vineyard in the far west of the Eden Valley the aromatics of this wine stand out year after year. The hallmark of the Shiraz from John Dawkins vineyards is highly aromatic sage, spearmint and red berry characters on the nose following on to a palate which has presence and majesty.

The Dawkins vineyard is tucked away in the eastern part of Eden Valley around 5 km from the Eden Valley township. There simply is no comparison or even simile that can be drawn for the character that this vineyard expresses each year. The wine is one of the recognisable personalities each year in our post vintage blind tasting.

Harvest: 5th March 2015 Vinification Fermentation: 2 ferments. Skin time 11 days and



## The Wines (Cont.)

15days respectively Maceration regime: 2- 8 short duration pump overs daily dependant on ferment stage Oak Selection: All French oak hogsheads: 20% new, 80% older Maturation time: 11 months. Assemblage: No blending as it is a single vineyard. Only diligent barrel selection.

We feel this wine will develop well in the bottle – with 8-10 years of positive bottle maturation to come.

Alcohol: 13.5%, pH: 3.57, Titratable Acidity: 7.2 g/L, RS 0.05 g/L, Cellar Door Price \$55.00

### 2015 St Hallett Blackwell Shiraz

Lively dark cherry aromas overlaid with oak nuances of mocha and vanilla bean. A slight brooding ferrous element to the aroma provides complexity. The rich and generous dark fruit spectrum on the front and mid palate is classic Blackwell. Taut tannins, subtle spice and mineral influence. These factors extend the persistence and complexity of the wine.

Grapes for Blackwell are sourced from the north-west corner of the Barossa Valley, from vineyards surrounding the parishes of Ebenezer, Greenock and Seppeltsfield.

Each vineyard destined for Blackwell was vinified separately and had skin contact for between six and eight days. The pump over regime was tailored to the individual vineyard parcel. Post-pressing, the wine spent 24 hours in stainless steel before going to barrel for malo-lactic fermentation. Barrels were matched to each parcel to promote harmony and balance during maturation. American Oak was used with a mixture of one to three year old barrels to ensure seamless integration. Blackwell ages well over 10-15 years.

pH: 3.49, Titratable Acidity: 7.1 g/L, Alcohol: 14.5%, Cellar Door Price \$38.00



### 2014 St Hallett Old Block Shiraz.



An acknowledged icon of the Barossa, St Hallett Old Block is an elegant and seamless Shiraz. Derived from old vine Shiraz at least 80 years of age, it is widely recognised as world class. A wine to cellar and savour.

To qualify for Old Block, fruit must come from vineyards planted on their own rootstock and in 2014 there was not a vineyard younger than 80 years of age included in the blend. Unique sites in the warmer Barossa Valley contribute a rich foundation while the adjacent higher altitude and cooler Eden Valley provides seamless tannins and lifted aromatics.

The intensive selection process for final Old Block parcels begins in the vineyards through to regular individual barrel tasting throughout its maturation. Each batch is kept separately in stainless steel fermenters and managed by a variety of techniques, including "pumping over" and "drain and return" to enhance colour, flavour and tannin extraction from the skins.

Will evolve beautifully up to 30 years with correct cellaring.

Alcohol : 13.7%, pH: 3.49, Titratable acidity: 6.7 g/L, Cellar Door Price \$95.00

### St Hallett NV Lost Art Tawney

Fortified wines were the lifeblood for St Hallett from its foundation in 1944 until fortified wines were almost quelled in the late 1900's. The finesse required to produce a fine tawny was in danger of becoming a LOST ART. Fortunately for St Hallett, winemaker Stuart Blackwell spent the first 20 years of his distinguished career perfecting his skills and has passed this knowledge onto the next generation of winemaker in Toby Barlow. This act of mentoring has ensured that the art

## The Wines (Cont.)

of Tawny winemaking remains alive at St Hallett.

A blend of Tokay, Muscat Blanc a Petits Grains, Pedro Ximenez and Touriga Nacional. All parcels are sourced from the Barossa Valley from vineyards of great age, many greater than 80 years old. These prized old vines produce highly concentrated ripe fruit that is essential in the production of this Barossian fortified wine.

After partial fermentation the wine has been fortified with brandy spirit then matured in small oak barrels for 18 to 33 years. Then once the required level of maturity has been achieved the wine is drawn from the barrels, filtered and bottled.

Alcohol – 20%, RS - 200 g/L, TA - 6.8 g/L , Cellar Door Price \$50.00



## Vineyards

The Barossa consists of two distinct regions, Barossa Valley and Eden Valley. These two Valleys provide our team with a wonderful tapestry of vineyards to create great wine.

## Special Sites, Unique Wines



Interesting blocks make interesting wines. Our team has scoured the Barossa, hand chosen the very best sites and worked with growers to source vines with the right characteristics. By meticulously keeping our parcels separate we have the opportunity to consistently craft fantastic wines as well as to deliver unique wines that represent particular areas of the Barossa. The Barossa has a diverse topography of valleys and slopes with elevations ranging from 130 metres in the southern Barossa Valley through to 550 metres on the cool elevated ridges of the Eden Valley.

With ancient landscapes dating back 200 million years, the Barossa is covered by a patchwork of soil types ranging from deep red and brown clay loams on the valley floor through to shallow and rocky sandy loams on the eastern and western ridges. Source: