

Bruce Thiele Red Wine Club



40th Birthday at Tschärke's



On arrival at Tschärke's, Kristen Meier welcomed us with a glass of their 2020 Eva Frizzante, Gewürztraminer. This wine, which many of us enjoyed outside in the fresh air, set the tone for an excellent evening.

Once we had all arrived we took our seats and Laurie welcomed us to our 40th birthday and Tschärke Wines. He also welcomed the twelve guests—Paul Drake, Wayne Farquhar, Justin Frick, Angus Kane, Scoff Lawson, Gerry Raggio, Greg Riechelt, James Rowe, Peter Tomlinson, Ross Van Enkevort and Travis Wright.

Laurie reminded us of our club motto from 40 years ago: "You not only drink the wine but you breathe it, you sip it...and then you speak about it". May we continue to explore and enjoy the vintages that the fruit of the vine can offer us.

He then invited our host Damien Tschärke to take us through the wines.

Damien told us that this year was his 20th vintage and he grateful for the support that our founder, Bruce Thiele, gave him when he was starting out. Bruce invited him to a club meeting at Richmond Grove and this was Damien's first presentation of wines to an audience. From humble beginnings making wine in a shed Damien has grown the business with 100 acres of vineyards. He has moved to become more sustainable by embracing organic and bio-dynamic

Coming up:

- ◆ November 17th: Remembering Bruce, Lyndoch Institute
- ◆ December 8th: Christmas at Chateau Yaldara

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 btredwine-club@gmail.com

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Birthday at Tscharke Wines

principles in growing his grapes.

He said that since graduating from university in 2000 things have changed with globalisation, climate change and water scarcity being important issues rather than the technical issues studied in his course. Another difference is that as well as quality customers are looking for authenticity and provenance in wine.

Damien then began to talk about the wines we were tasting with our entrée (Maple & Orange Salmon portions baked & served atop Mango / Avocado salsa and Tasmanian Scallops pan-fried with herb butter & served in a half shell). He began with the 2017 Project Albaniño. The Albaniño grape comes from Galicia (Spain) and Northwest Portugal. There has been some confusion in regard to this grape in Australia a many vines thought to be Albaniño were found to be Savagnin (in 2009). The other wine was their 2020 Estate Rose made from Grenache. Damien mentioned that some of the wines we were tasting tonight are yet to be released (and do not yet have tasting notes for your newsletter editor).



Our main Course was served as mini buffet at the table Kassler served over pickled Red cabbage, Chicken Tenderloins cooked Korean style to be crispy & hot Served with white rice roasted potato doused with chicken herb salt, roasted butter-nut, carrot & parsnip as friends drizzled with balsamic glaze, baked & grilled zucchini halves stuffed with porcini mushrooms and dinner rolls & butter. With this we tasted the 2019 Single Vineyard, Stonewell Grenache and the 2019 Classics Grenache/Mataro. These two grenache based wines are good examples of the product of a grape that is coming into favour. It is a resilient variety, and one that Damien feels will hold them in good stead into the future. It is less prone to wet

cooler vintages than shiraz, and is versatile in that it can be used on its own, blended or made into rosé or sparkling. It need different winemaking techniques to shiraz, but the Barossa can produce great wines from it. It does not need oak in the way shiraz does.

In line with Damien's philosophy of working with the environment rather than against it, he is trying concrete fermenters and clay amphorae for his ferments. He believes it provided a better environment for the yeast to work. In this he is returning to the way wine was made in past centuries.

He said barrels have an oxidative environment but the middle and bottom of the barrel can be stagnant. However his 'egg' amphorae have a slow turbulence and do not need to be touched. They also do not need as much sulphur. All in line with Damien's desire to reduce inputs.

The next pair of wines were the 2018 Stonewell Shiraz and the 2019 The Master Montepulciano. Montepulciano is another alternative variety that is suited to the Barossa in a warming environment. It is thick skinned with natural tannins and is made to be drunk young.



Birthday at Tscharke Wines

After our main was cleared it was time for our birthday cake. Peter, Rex Nipper and Rory as the longest standing members of the club gathered round the cake for its cutting and for Rory to say a few words. Rory said the beginnings of the club are a bit hazy as nobody can remember very well—but it doesn't matter—what matters it that we continue the tradition of enjoying wine.

Cake slices were served and we enjoyed Tscharke's 2018 Lumberjack Touriga Nacional (fortified) with them.

The Prizes were drawn by Damien and they were won by Steve Blee, Graham Jeffery and Dieter Beisiegel.

Laurie thanked Damien and Kristen for a great evening and also our caterer Malcolm Filsell of Barossa Country Kitchen for a magnificent meal.



Birthday at Tscharke Wines: Photos (Ian Cooper & Steve Blee)



Birthday at Tscharke Wines: Photos



Birthday at Tscharke Wines: Photos



Birthday at Tscharke Wines: Photos



Birthday at Tcharke Wines: The wines

2020 Eva Frizzante, Gewürztraminer

VINTAGE REPORT: The wines of 2020 vintage are proving to be of exceptional quality, despite the challenging growing season and very low yields. Winter rainfall was below average but a warm start to spring gave rise to even budburst and minimal frost events. The growing season was hampered by unseasonably high winds that delivered the biggest blow to the season, at flowering. Dry conditions, extremely high temperatures coupled with the strong winds destroyed up to 70% of flowers in some vineyards; Shiraz the worst affected.

The ripening conditions were ideal, moderate temperatures and minimal rain provided very low risk to disease pressures. Supplementary irrigation was critical in nurturing the health of the vineyards and encouraging favourable fruit ripening. The general quality of wines from 2020 has proven great to exceptional; rich in flavour, strong colour and ripe tannins. Many of the wines formed balance early during fermentation and those well-structured will age well. Standouts varieties include Grenache, Grenache Blanc, Shiraz and Montepulciano.



WINEMAKING: The fruit for this wine style is harvested very early to encourage great retention of natural acidity and moderate sugar levels. The fruit is pressed and the combined free run and pressings are lightly clarified in tank prior to inoculation for primary fermentation. The wine is fermented between 10 – 12°C prior to being arrested when the desired sugar, alcohol and acid balance is achieved. The stabilized wine is bottled with the addition of 3.5g/L of CO₂ to provide a fine effervescence.

TASTING NOTES: Pale yellow in colour with delicate, fine bubbles. The nose is like walking through a flower bed on a rainy day; freshly cut white flowers, rose petals, wet stone and chalk. The palate is carried by a bright acidity and enough sweetness to enhance the juicy lychee and passionfruit tones. Light in body, this wine drinks easily... too easily. A fine effervescence keeps it texturally intriguing and fun. Best served really cold.

Vineyard: Riverland, Variety: 100% Gewürztraminer

Alcohol 5.0% ABV, pH 3.03, Titratable Acidity 8.2 g/L, Residual Sugar 42 g/L Cellar Door Price \$12

2017 Project Albaniño.

New release no tasting notes available

Albaniño has been touted by many to be the premier white grape to come out of Spain (a country that is more renowned for its red wines than its whites). But having got off to a little false start here in Australia, it is less well known than varieties such as Fiano, Vermentino or even Grüner Veltliner. This anonymity gives it the advantage of causing a positive surprise when people try it for the first time, and believe me when I say, there is lots to like about this Spanish export!

IN AUSTRALIA: The relationship between Australia and Albaniño didn't start well. That false start I mentioned above was to do with the fact we planted the incorrect variety! In 2009, with the excitement around Albaniño growing, a visiting French ampelographer, Jean-Michel Boursiquot commented that he suspected our Albaniño vines were something else. Subsequent testing revealed that Australian vignerons had planted Savagnin, a grape most closely associated with the Jura region of France. The mix-up was caused when Spanish authorities supplied the wrong propagating material to the CSIRO. Currently less than 25 wineries around the country have Albaiño in the ground with regions as far stretched as the Barossa, Hunter and Adelaide having small plantings.

IN SPAIN: The home of Albaniño is Galicia in the north-west corner of the country. It is best known as being the key grape variety in the Rias Baixas DO, where it makes full-flavoured white wines with peach, citrus and mineral characters that pair perfectly with the local seafood. Albaniño constitutes more than 90 percent of the grapes planted in the Rias Baixas area, where the complex mesoclimates

'The wines cont.

within this DO signify the many different sub-regions and variations between vintages and vineyards.

Albariño is also planted across the border in the northern Portuguese region of Minho. There it is known as Alvarinho – a name many argue is the correct one for the variety. Alvarinho grapes are used to make the Portuguese wine Vinho Verde – a low alcohol, light and tart white wine that normally has a little spritz!

CHARACTERS: Albariño is a quick ripening variety, but one that offers great flavour weight and refreshing acidity off a lighter frame. The wines can be on a scale anywhere from light and zippy to fuller bodied and with a creamy texture if winemaking artefact like oak and lees aging is used. Peach, citrus fruits and a slight saline note are classic characters. (<https://www.wineselectors.com.au/selector-magazine/wine/facts-on-albarino>)

2020 Estate Rose

VINEYARD: Gnadenfrei North and South is a geological haven, featuring rocky outcrops, undulating terrain and untouched, pristine native scrub flourishing with flora and fauna. Gnadenfrei presents a number of aspects at elevations ranging from 250 – 300m above sea level. The exposed sites reveal soils, fragile, weathered and some of the oldest found in the Barossa grape growing region. The soils are largely clay loam over red medium clay. Topsoil is shallow to moderate, which coupled with exposed aspects limits vigorous canopy growth and gives rise to lower yielding vineyards. Gnadenfrei is certified for organic and biodynamic grape growing. Planted to the popular grape varieties of southern Rhone, Grenache, Shiraz, Mouvedre and Grenache Blanc.



WINEMAKING: The fruit was hand-picked at sunrise, then immediately destemmed and pressed lightly to minimize colour and phenolic extraction. After 2 days settling at cold temperature the juice was racked and inoculated; it was a cold and long fermentation to maintain fresh and lifted aromatics, with occasional pump-overs under inert gas to maximise contact with the lees for increased complexity and mouthfeel. When dry the wine was filtered prior to bottling.

TASTING NOTES: Pale, almost clear Salmon colour. A delicate nose offers notes of apricot, peach skin, white and yellow flowers and crushed leaves, with a chalky minerality. The palate is juicy: citrus, nectarine, apricot and rock melon; the fruit characters and the weight typical of Grenache are counter balanced by a savoury edge and the bright acidity that keeps the wine fresh and sharp. Being unfinned the wine shows a great texture that adds complexity. Extremely versatile, this Rosé will pair with a vast variety of foods: from appetizers to salads, veggies, seafood and white meat; or you could simply chill it right down and enjoy it paired only with the company of friends.

Vineyard Gnadenfrei North, Variety 100% Grenache

Alcohol 13.5% ABV, pH 2.95, Titratable Acidity 7.7 g/L, Residual Sugar 2.8g/L, Cellar Door Price \$15

2019 Single Vineyard, Stonewell Grenache

New release no tasting notes available

2019 Classics Grenache/Mataro

New release no tasting notes available

2018 Stonewell Shiraz

VINTAGE REPORT: The 2018 growing season had a reasonable start with adequate rainfall through winter and early spring. Healthy canopies were established across all sites and the dry and warm conditions of late January and February kept weeds and disease pressures to a low. February proved to be a very warm month which stalled ripening and it wasn't until the relief of a mild March that the outlook for a great harvest looked imminent. 2018 came off the



↳ The wines cont.

back of two big vintages so it was no surprise this harvest was likely to be down on average with most crops down by 20-25%. The wines produced were very balanced, had ripe phenolics and display vibrant mid palate weight, a spectacular vintage for good structure and elegance.

VINEYARD: Planting of Shiraz on our Stone Well property began in 2001. With careful selection of clone, aspect and soil the Shiraz has an opportunity to express purity of varietal characters but also the “terroir” of this site. Trained onto a single cordon wire, the rows run East-West, which aids in protecting the fruiting zone from the late afternoon sun. The North Westerly facing aspect has moderately deep red/brown clay soils with underlying calcareous chalk. The late ripening vineyard is well suited to these soils retaining fresh canopies by harvest that deliver well balanced fruit unharmed by excessive heat exposure.

WINEMAKING: Once harvested, the fruit is destemmed to an open top fermenter. The must is inoculated and allowed to ferment between 22-25C until dry. The cap is managed by twice daily pump overs without splashing, and the occasional pigeage. Once primary fermentation had been completed it was bag-pressed and racked to 33% new and 67% seasoned French hogsheads. The wine was bottled 18 months after harvest to ensure the style displays both primary fruit freshness and elegant secondary characters.

TASTING NOTES: An intense and broody nose of white pepper, baking spices, licorice, fresh blueberries and blackberries, complemented by an elegant background of toasted hints and graphite. The palate is surprisingly fresh with vibrant dark fruit tones and a good acidity to sustain the mid-palate, fading into a persistent spicy finish with fine yet powerful tannins. Careful cellaring will only unravel the full extent of this wine’s offering.

Alcohol 15% / vol., pH 3.60, Titratable Acidity 6.26 g/L, Cellar Door Price \$24



2019 The Master Montepulciano

VINTAGE REPORT: The 2019 vintage was one of elation as years of sustainable agricultural practice was rewarded with Organic certification by NASAA. The challenging growing season demanded careful vineyard management, with the implementation of under-vine mulching and increased irrigation ensuring the maintenance of healthy canopies, and even ripening throughout. The extreme heat of both January and February saw early ripening varieties picked in quick succession, before some relief from the heat was offered in March. The bright sunny days and cool nights enhanced flavour development of our Mataro, Grenache and Montepulciano, emphasising motivation to invest into more of these heartier, later ripening varieties in future vineyard developments.

VINEYARD: The Montepulciano vineyard is located on our Stonewell Estate. Planted in 2001, this was Australia’s first vineyard planted to this variety indigenous to Italy. Trained onto a single cordon wire, the canopies produced from the well-established bilateral cordons are managed using a VSP [vertical shoot positioning] trellising system. This variety is very fruitful and assists with growing intensely flavoured, yet balanced fruit. Bunch thinning is carried out post véraison. The brown clay soils have shallow underlying sedimentary bedrock. Montepulciano is a late ripening grape variety but despite the longer ripening period it has an exceptional ability to retain great acidity levels in warm growing conditions.

WINEMAKING: The hand-harvested fruit is destemmed to open top fermenters. The leftover skins from the pressing of the Monte Rosé are added to the ferment for extra structure. The must is inoculated and allowed to ferment between 22 - 25°C until dry. The cap is managed by twice-daily pump overs. Once primary fermentation has been completed the wine is bag pressed and racked to new and seasoned French oak with a small portion aged in stainless steel. The wine is bottled 12 months

↳ The wines cont.

after harvest to ensure the style retains its vibrancy and primary fruit freshness.

TASTING NOTES: If only we could get these aromatics every year... This wine jumps out of the glass with the most beautiful bouquet: vibrant, fruit forward and uncomplicated. The flavours are those of the forest: wild berries, herbs and soft oaky notes. The palate is lively and fresh with crunchy fruit flavours and a nice savoury finish, with persistent velvety tannins. This wine calls for flavourful Italian food, pizza and red sauce pasta dishes above all.

Vineyard Stone Well, Variety 100% Montepulciano

Alcohol 14.5% / vol., pH 3.44, Titratable Acidity 6.3g / L, Cellar Door Price \$15

2018 Lumberjack, Touriga Nacional

VINEYARD: The Touriga vineyard is located on our Gnadenfrei Estate. Planted in 1985, this is the Nacional selection [as opposed to Francesa]. The vineyard aspect is east facing and assists with shelter from the afternoon heat and direct sunlight. The soils are weathered brown clay with shallow pink quartzite forming many of the conglomerates scattered along the vineyard floor.

WINEMAKING: The technique to ferment and fortify this wine is derived largely from traditional Portuguese methods. Following harvest the fruit is destemmed into an open top fermenter with a very shallow depth of must. Immediately the must is gently macerated by foot [10 hours/day]. Once fermentation has commenced the rate of fermentation is monitored until the point of fortification is reached. The ferment is then fortified with a locally produced Brandy spirit [grape derived]. The must is immediately pressed and racked to old French oak puncheons. Following 12 month of light lees maturation the wine is bottled.

TASTING NOTES: A beautiful scent of wood on the nose with toasted and spicy qualities to balance a raisin and cocoa-like sweetness. This fortified wine calls for a cheese board or a cold Winter's night in front of the fireplace. On the palate it surprises with mouth filling texture, richness and roundness. The palate, whilst young, is fruit forward with notes of prunes, raisins and secondary characters that give elegance and complexity, but already showing a caramel undertone that is only going to develop with years of cellaring.

Vintage 2018, Vineyard Greenock Creek, Variety 100% Touriga

Alcohol 18% / vol., pH 3.59, Titratable Acidity 5.2g/ L, Residual Sugar 75g/ L, Cellar Door Price \$30



BEST OF WINE TOURISM AWARDS 2021

SUSTAINABLE WINE TOURISM PRACTICES

The Sustainable Wine Tourism Practices category celebrates the champions of sustainability and our environment. It is awarded to a winery or vineyard that has implemented environmental practices and sustainable innovations and developments, both in the vineyards, or the winery that enhance the visitor experience.

Winner: Tschärke Wines - Barossa

