

BRICK KILN

The Mortar

Autumn Newsletter 2010



BK

The 2008 Brick Kiln Shiraz (the Shiraz and 'The Grove') come with a new look. We have been very happy with the old 'Brick Kiln' label, but thought as we were moving to a new level in winemaking and presentation of our wine(s) that the label should reflect the clean yet vigorous approach to capturing the Nine Gums Vineyard fruit in the bottle.

NEW WINEMAKERS

As we approach the release of our seventh vintage, those of you who have followed the progress of Brick Kiln over the years will know that the 2003 - 2005 Brick Kiln Shirazes were made at Branson Coach House winery at Greenock in the Barossa, and that the 2006 and 2007 Brick Kilns were made at McLaren Vintners. We struggled a bit with the 06 and 07, and decided to move to new winemaker(s) for the 2008 vintage. After much discussion we chose Linda Domas who vintages at Peter Dennis' Winery on Kangarilla Road in McLaren Vale, and Phil Christiansen who has Longwood Wines on Foggo Road at McLaren Flat.

They both have excellent credentials.

VINEYARD MANAGEMENT

Carlie Hayward, who managed the vineyard from the inception of Nine Gums in January 2001, headed off to the rather more lucrative Roxby Downs to work in the radiation lab at BHP.

Tim Hunt took over the vineyard management in 2008. Tim is a Fleurieu man born and bred, with his father's vineyard down the road from Nine Gums and his 40 acre shiraz vineyard just up the road. We are pleased to report that the vineyard is in very good hands.

PHIL CHRISTIANSEN

10 years at Hardy's Tintara with red winemaking including Eileen Hardy Shiraz, and since 2000 small batch winemaking at Chalk Hill and Longwood. Regular vintages in France. Takes a non-interventionist approach to winemaking and uses two tonne open fermenters before pressing to oak.

An artisan who believes in meticulous small batch winemaking.

Phil Christiansen



LINDA DOMAS

With her partner Markus, Linda uses facilities at both Peter Dennis' winery and Parri Estate. Linda graduated with a B. App. Sci (oenology) from Charles Sturt University and worked for some years in Europe where she was consultant winemaker for the large Bulgarian Wine Company Stork's Nest. She was winemaker at Beringer Blass, and now firmly back in South Australia she has her own labels (Linda Domas and Alchemy) and makes excellent wine under contract for Brick Kiln and others including her own label Linda Domas Wines / Alchemy.

A firm believer in letting the fruit speak for itself.

Linda Domas



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HARVEST 2008

What a difficult year 2008 was. The record 15 day heatwave with daily temperature above 38 degrees Celsius certainly made winemaking problematic. Luckily, the harvester was booked for the third day of the heatwave, and the fruit from the Nine Gums Vineyard was delivered to our new winemakers in excellent condition with a highish but not unreasonable baume and well balanced acid due to the cool early summer and large canopies. The district feeling was that the early picked shiraz would equal the best from McLaren Vale for a number of years. Indeed, the resultant wine from both our winemakers is beautifully balanced and fruit driven, with soft tannins and a mid palate delight.

HARVEST 2009 & 2010

We harvested the 2009 crop on the 21st and the 26th of February - much earlier than is usual in the Vales. The yield for the 20 acre Nine Gums vineyard was a mere one tonne to the acre, the result of a dry winter followed by a dry January and hot February with irregular fruit set in the vineyard. The bunches were loose and the grapes small. Overall, yields in the Vales were much lower than average in 2009. However, the wine when tasted in December 2009 was showing great promise, with a seductively opulent aroma and delicious front palate berries and plums with a hint of pepper going through to the mid palate with a lingering aftertaste.

The 2009 Brick Kiln, still in oak will be a beautiful fruit driven shiraz.

In contrast, the 2010 harvest yielded 3.5 tonnes to the acre at 14.5 baume and fruit with delicious berry/plum and pepper character, harvested on March 1st and March 6th.

All indications are that both the 2009 and 2010 Brick Kiln Shiraz will be superb fruit driven wines.

EXPORTS

We are currently exporting over 70% of our Brick Kiln. We have exported to the UK, Hong Kong and Canada for a number of years, and recently supplemented this with wine to Shanghai and Singapore.

Garry and Nancy Watson - partners in the vineyard - are excellent promoters of Brick Kiln in Toronto. Garry is a law professor at York University, and his former students and law colleagues are acquiring a taste for a particular McLaren Vale red. Indeed, recently a group of Toronto lawyers organised a vertical tasting of the 2003 to the 2008 Brick Kiln (report next newsletter) Nancy, an educational consultant, is an equally assiduous promoter of our wine.

For the last couple of years export to Shanghai has been a major outlet - an arrangement that arose from a serendipitous encounter on a golf course in Adelaide.

Recently, Singapore has presented as a Brick Kiln market - a connection forged at a cookery school at Hoi An in Vietnam some years ago.

Garry and Nancy Watson



Our friends from Shanghai



Nine Gums Vineyards



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