



*Diggers Bluff Wines*

*Digger's Note Book*

*Issue# 2*

*Autumn 2007*

I am sitting on an 8-ball table in the middle of the Digger's cellar. It is a cool night, but it has been a dry and warm winter which makes for comfortable pruning conditions, but extreme grape growing!

*The Vintage*

This resembles last year, but two dry years in a row is like a snow ball effect. Last year (06') has produced fantastic wine with intensity, but as a result we are pruning the vines back hard in preparation for what seems certain to be another dry year. This is a hard thing for grape growers, but a good thing for wine lovers!

As you know growers get paid by the tonne, but you guys pay by the litre and the drier it is the more intense the flavour. PS; I love that too!

The 2007 Vintage has brought highs and lows like any vintage does. As usual I have been surrounded by great people and I guess this is a big part of what drives the Barossa Small Wine Industry. There is no substitute for the real deal, if you want to check out what really goes on, check out the Barossa at 2.00am Feb through to March!

Anyway nice to drop a note to you all, I guess I'm sending a letter to say G'Day and to let you know we have a couple of new releases, in true Diggers style we've done the waiting for you. We make and age our wine so when you receive it, the wine is ready to drink, so don't be shy, it is ready!

### *New Releases*

The Barossa is in hard times, we are tested and there is no better time to decide what you want and support it. We need each other because any way you look at it, good wine, is the best path!

About the new releases, well;

#### *2000 Watch Dog – Cabernet Shiraz*

2000 Watch Dog is always a true traditional Barossan wine. The original Shiraz component has been changed over the last two vintages, with what I feel are very positive results. But as usual, I need to stress this wine is 7 years old and is ready to drink!

I think this brings us to the other new release which is called the Stray Dog, I don't need to let ya' all know we are going for a Dog Theme Here!

This Stray Dog is a corka, a winner and bargain; did I forget to tell it is good as well?

#### *2004 Stray Dog – GSM*

This wine is a majority of one of my favourite varieties; Grenache. In the past, this variety has been picked ripe for Port or Dry Red and in other eras, picked almost green for Sparkling Base.

I pick some young and green and then some old & rich for a full, but low alcohol wine. We can't give away too many secrets though; with a little Mataro and Shiraz we get the Stray Dog!

#### *2004 Top Dog – Shiraz*

I love Grenache in the Barossa for its ability to survive in hard conditions. Another great survivor is Shiraz and is equally natural to the Barossa's harsh conditions. This gave me the desire to put out a straight Shiraz. So here is the Top Dog, it is wine from Old Shiraz, dry grown, I guess you have heard this before, but this is a special section of vineyard.

Made in a slightly different style, it is reasonably high in alcohol, but the alcohol is disguised with huge fruit flavours and some of the best oak characteristics available.

GENERAL NOTES;

Many people ask about the Diggers Label. My family crest is an Irish Hound standing under an oak tree. This is the Aussie version, my faithful Hound, Digger, under a Mallee tree.

This year the season is early and dry, this could be the vintage we needed to have! A low yielding, logistically difficult vintage. Handled correctly as always we will reach our goals.

I have often been asked why I rarely wear shoes. I have many answers! The main reason, I have feet like a duck and how many ducks wear shoes. But seriously folks, when I walk my vineyard barefoot I know if I have thistle or if it's wet or dry, a simple but effective method. Just like all good things in life.

It is a point of interest what I and a select group of winemakers do so differently. It starts from the roots. There are friends who were born from many generations in the Barossa, and others like myself, a newcomer that was welcomed, we melded together and rose above our differences, realising our goals. I think we all agree on one thing, that quality beats quantity. Back to the roots, you can not beat a good root because that's where the flavour comes from, out of the soil, the longer the root stays in the soil the more it picks up minerals and characteristics of it's environment. This is why we must fight to preserve our older vineyards. Not to forget the longer the roots are in the soil the deeper the roots go. Similar to the depth of true camaraderie.

I have been making wine for some time, one thing I have found to be true is that good vineyards make good wine. Like anything that tastes good you need good ingredients. That is why a good friend of mine, Dan Rowe and I have spent years re-building old vines. In the extreme cases chainsaw art is paramount. Dan is a master of the art, negotiating the intricacy of a "knar lie" old jungle vine with a chain saw is not for the faint hearted and the knowledge of the vine is crucial. The right application of this process can rejuvenate vineyards and create higher quality wine.

I hope this small read has not bored you too much, if you wish to talk some more, we are not hard to find.

Best Wishes  
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