
# April 2024

www.fawg.org.au

## In this issue



## President's Message

Hello All,

Well it feels like the grape season has come and gone with the membership having the opportunity this year to dabble with a range of different varieties and by all accounts some very good quality with the odd cane thrown in for good measure.

The Reds, Shiraz, CabSav, Petit Syrah, Sangiovese, Pinot Noir, Merlot, Cinsault, Tempranillo, lagrein. The Whites, Chardonnay, Sav Blanc, Reisling, Taminga, among others, I'm sure. The fact that the club is capable of getting its hands on such a range of varieties shines a light on the benefits of being a member. I hope everybody had fun with the season and got what they wanted from the experience, I certainly did with this year being my first crop from my vines. At our April meeting we will have a tasting of some unusual varieties found recently.

Cheers and hope your wines are developing well.

## Coming Up

Thursday April 4th- 14th various times
Merrick Watts at Melbourne Comedy Festival - An idiot's guide to wine Volume 2.
Arts Center Melbourne $60-70
https://grapesofmirth.com.au/events/merrick-watts-an-idiots-guide-to-wine-volume-2-melbourne-international-comedy-festival/

Saturday April 13th 1pm-5pm
Pyrenees Unearthed Food and Wine Festival
Avoca $50 early bird or $75
https://pyreneesunearthedfestival.com.au/

Saturday April 13th 11am-4pm
Strategem Bendigo Winemakers Festival
Bendigo $73 (early bird sold out)
https://www.bendigowine.org.au/2024-strategem-bendigo-winemakers-festival

Monday April 15th-19th
Intensive WSET level 3 Award course and test at Melbourne Wine School $1550.00
https://www.melbournewineschool.com.au/wine-school

Saturday April 20th 12 noon-5pm
St George's Day Celebration British inspired food, music and wine at King's Creek Vineyard Balnarring $5
https://www.trybooking.com/events/landing/1189962

# CORDON CORNER

**By Mike Payne**

By now most of us have finished harvest and time is taken up with winemaking.
The growing season has been pretty good in general with crops around 2 to 2.5 tons/acre which is above average for recent years. There were a number of reports of Downy Mildew outbreaks and a bit of Botrytis sighted particularly at the higher level sites at harvest, but not enough to much to affect crop quality.

There is not a lot to do in the vineyard but for those with young plants, once the crop is removed there is a flush of root growth, so a feed and water is a good thing to help them on their way to the next season. Also, while the weather is still good it's time for general maintenance such as checking drippers and drip lines, cutting grass and general machinery service.

So with the bird nets, clips, wires etc all packed away we now wait for leaf fall.

## SENTIA WINE TESTING

The guild has a Sentia wine analyser available to members to have wine samples analysed for FreeSO2 and Malic Acid.

The tests can be carried out prior to guild meetings, starting at 7pm. If you wish to have your wine analysed, please ensure you arrive early and advise Kevin Murphy that you require your wine analysed.

Samples should be kept away from air (ie in a sealed bottle, or sample vial with minimum air space). Only a very small sample is required for the tests.

Costs are: Members - Free SO2 $6.00 and Malic Acid $15.00  Non-members - $10 and $20
FAWG Calendar

## Sustainability

### Australia's first major cork recycling program is now active nationwide

March 13, 2024 By Cody Profaca in drinksTrade
Dan Murphy's has launched Australia's first large-scale natural cork stopper recycling program in partnership with cork distributor Amorim Australasia and recycling initiative Save Our Soles. The ReCORK program, now live across all stores nationwide, addresses the challenges traditionally faced when recycling natural cork stoppers by repurposing them into mats to be used in store by staff.

"Wine customers will now have the opportunity to contribute to a greener future by dropping off their used corks at Dan Murphy's," said Tim Stead, CEO at Amorim Australia.

“The corks will be collected, taken to the Save Our Soles factory, broken down into cork granulate, before being sent to be produced into anti-fatigue mats for team members at Dan Murphy’s.”

Despite not being recyclable using traditional methods, cork is still considered the most sustainable form of wine bottle stopper.

“It is natural, renewable, biodegradable and recyclable only through specialist recycling programs,” said Stead.

“Cork forests capture millions of tonnes of CO2 annually, and because the cork trees are not harmed by the harvesting process, this carbon retention activity will benefit many future generations.”

The ReCORK program will repurpose the received corks into cork-composite foot mats made by Save Our Soles that will be distributed among Dan Murphy’s team members.

“The mats produced from the corks we collect will give our team members a new level of comfort while they serve our customers,” said Agi Pfeiffer-Smith, Managing Director at Dan Murphy’s.

“We are focused on reducing our carbon footprint, and finding a way to reuse cork is a no-brainer for us given the role we play in the wine industry, and the sheer number of corks that come through our stores every day.

“Cork is an exceptional product, not only for the crucial role it plays in protecting and preserving many of the wines we drink, but also its unique attributes, which allow it to absorb shocks and impacts, effectively protecting any surface it comes into contact with.”

The ReCORK project is also being supported by the South Australian Government through Green Industries SA’s Circular Economy Market Development grant program. Currently, Australia is responsible for importing approximately 1% of the world’s cork stoppers, or approximately 120 million units.

“This is a great opportunity to support the development of a circular economy that extends the sustainability benefits of natural cork,” said Tim Stead.

# FAWG Calendar

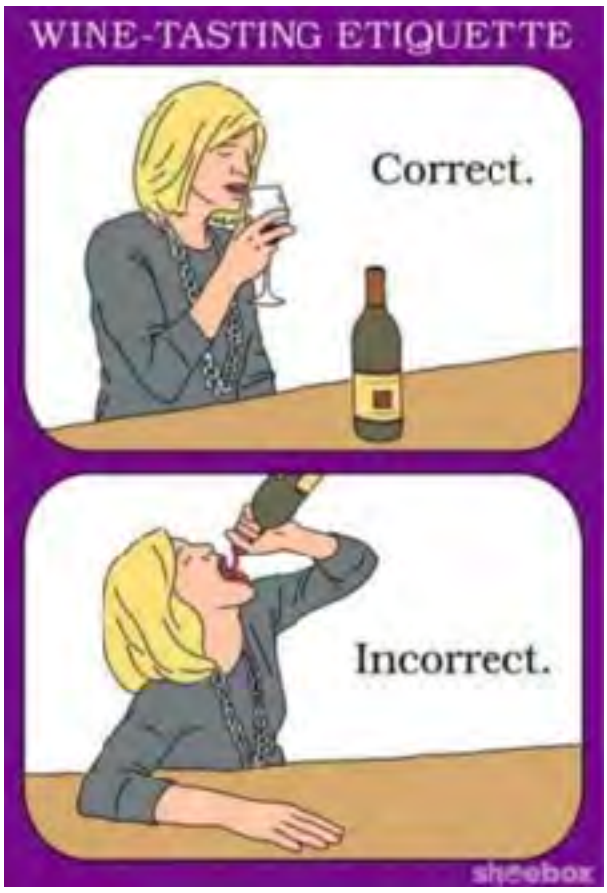
| Meeting Date | Club night Activity | Competition | Tasting Talk | Industry/Event | Committee Date |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| April 9th 2024 | | Sheila Lee Liqueur & Fortified mini comp | | | Wed 3rd Zoom 7pm |
| May 14th 2024 | Find out how good is your palate | | | wine tour with Eltham | Tues 7th zoom 7pm |
| June 11th 2024 | | Gordon Evans white wine mini comp | | Winters winemakers Lunch | Tues 4th Zoom 7pm |
| July 9th 2024 | AGM meeting Homemade night | | | | Tues 2nd zoom 7pm |
| August 13th 2024 | Cellar dwellers Unusual, Old and mulled wines | | | 2024 Guild Show at Balnarring hall 30th Judging day Sat 31st public day | Tues 6th Zoom 7pm |
| Sept 10th | | | | Spring Winemakers Lunch | Tues 3rd Zoom 7pm |
| Oct 8th | Spanish Night Food & Wine | | | | Tues 1st Zoom 7pm |

## Apology and Correction-Ed

In the March 2024 edition of this newsletter I thanked the Henry's for their dedication and generosity in providing supper at the monthly FAWG meetings, however I must apologise to Pam, who I misnamed. Thanks again to all of those providing supper and a big Pat on the back to Pam!

# Funnies


I used to think drinking was bad for me...
so I gave up thinking.


WINE-TASTING ETIQUETTE
Correct.
Incorrect.
sheebox


I DON'T ALWAYS DRINK WINE
WAIT, YES I DO!


I enjoy the Wine Regions of my House


Why worry about it when you can wine about it?
#WordsOfAWineO


I still don't understand what a wine stopper is for.
someWine

# Australia Wine Tour with WineMaker Magazine

March 6 - 14, 2025

***Brad Ring, Publisher of WineMaker Magazine, personally invites you to join him on this exclusive wine vacation.***
Join WineMaker Magazine on a wine and culture-rich 9-day expedition through Australia's sun-kissed landscapes and revered vineyards. Our journey commences in Adelaide, a gateway to the country's viticultural wonders, including the Barossa Valley, McLaren Vale, and Adelaide Hills, internationally known for some of the best wine sun-drenched valleys and rugged coastal cliffs. As we venture deeper into the heart of wine country where the rolling hills of the valleys unfold before us, we'll delve into the essence of Australian winemaking, comparing the bold flavors of Barossa and Eden Valley vintages, indulging in a wine and chocolate pairing, enjoying the perfumed, floral, and spicy mix of riesling and red-fruited, layered shiraz. We'll explore boutique wineries and intimate family-owned vineyards in the Clare Valley and small artisanal producers to larger, well-established estates in the Adelaide Hills celebrating the diverse grape varieties, from classic cool-climate favorites like Chardonnay, Sauvignon Blanc, and Pinot Noir to intriguing alternatives such as Grüner Veltliner and the Spanish varietal, Tempranillo. Continuing, we'll explore McLaren Vale, a coastal paradise where vineyards meet the sea, partaking in cellar door experiences geared towards our group of at-home winemakers where we can sample a selection of the finest wines on private insider tours, meeting and learning from the winemakers while asking them questions as we sample some of the best vintages in the world right where they are made.
Join us as we raise a glass to adventure, discovery, and the timeless magic of wine. Cheers to an unforgettable Australian journey with WineMaker Magazine!

https://www.tastevacations.com/australia-wine-tour-with-winemaker-magazine-2025/?utm_source=WineMaker+Newsletters+and+Events&utm_campaign=eb2f2f3f8f-EMAIL_CAMPAIGN_5_30_2019_14_35_COPY_01&utm_medium=email&utm_term=0_89ca148646-eb2f2f3f8f-66060217&mc_cid=eb2f2f3f8f&mc_eid=5324cc1152

# Indigenous-led wines take centre stage at Uluru venue

**Wine Titles March 26th, 2024**

*Pauly Vandenbergh, co-owner of Munda Wines*

Munda Wines grows its varieties on Indigenous countries including Kaurna Country (McLaren Vale), Ngadjuri and Peramangk Country (Barossa Valley), and Walgalu Country (Tumbarumba, NSW). The word 'munda' means land in the Wirangu and Kokatha language and is akin to terroir, with the company focussing on varieties that are ideally suited to each munda.

Mt Yengo is Indigenous-led, sourcing wines from across Australia; particularly Peramangk Country. It gives a portion of its profits to the Indigenous artists who design its wine labels and donates to NICI, the National Indigenous Culinary Institute, to assist young Indigenous chefs.

Indigenous wines now on offer at Ayers Rock Resort include the Munda Walgalu Country Chardonnay, Munda Kaurna Country Syrah, Mt Yengo Adelaide Hills Shiraz, and Mt Yengo Sparkling, Riverina.

Ayers Rock Resort is operated by Voyages Indigenous tourism Australia and located in the spiritual heart of Australia — has also expanded its biodynamic, vegan and organic wine offerings across its range of dining experiences with the likes of Dalrymple Pinot Noir, from a sustainable venture in Tasmania, and the biodynamic, organic Yangarra Shiraz from Blewitt Springs, McLaren Vale.

“From earthy Australian wines to signature cocktails infused with native ingredients, our refreshed menu advances our commitment to offering authentic cultural experiences and supporting indigenous and sustainable operators,” says Matt Cameron-Smith, CEO of Voyages Indigenous Tourism Australia.

“Our dedicated team has scoured the country for the best quality and freshest new flavours because we know just how important food and wine is for today’s traveller. We’re thrilled to have Munda and Mt Yengo’s quality wines onboard,” he concluded.

Pauly Vandenbergh and Damien Smith, co-owners of Munda Wines said their focus was on fine wines from selected First Nations Countries.

“We are sharing stories one glass at a time from the world’s oldest living culture. Nowhere is this more prevalent than the heart of Australia on Anangu Country at Uluru, where we are proud to share our stories with the guests of Voyages, and we thank the community for their support.”

*Wayne Quilliam, artist and co-owner of Mt Yengo*

“We are so delighted to partner with Voyages to share this captivating fusion of culture and wine,” said artist and co-owner of Mt Yengo, Wayne Quilliam.

“Our wines are not just beverages; they encapsulate the essence of our stories, traditions, and deep-rooted connection to this land”.

# Brettanomyces Character in Wine

©Richard Gawel

The desirability or otherwise of the wine character known as "Brett" is one of the most controversial issues of recent times. Arguments have been made for Brett character being a complexing and a legitimate expression of natural, uncomplicated winemaking, while others view it simply as an unattractive wine fault that results from poor winery hygiene and sloppy winemaking.


Figure 1: Brettanomyces bruxellensis forming pseudomycelium


## The Aroma and Flavour of Brett Character

But what is Brett character and how and why does it appear in some wines? The wine character described as "Bretty" comes in various forms. It is the combined result of the creation of a number of compounds by the yeast *Brettanomyces bruxellensis*, and its close relative, *Dekkera bruxulensis*. The three most important known aroma active compounds are 1) 4-ethyl phenol (4-ep), which has been variously described as having the aromas of Band-aids®, antiseptic and horse stable 2) 4-ethyl guaiacol (4-eg) which has a rather pleasant aroma of smoked bacon, spice or cloves and 3) isovaleric acid which has an unpleasant smell of sweaty animals, cheese and rancidity. Other characters associated with Brett include wet dog, creosote, burnt beans, rotting vegetation, plastic and (but not exclusively caused by Brett) mouse cage aroma and vinegar.

## The Formation of Brett Character in Wine

*Brettanomyces* has been isolated from the outside of grapes and from winery equipment. However its, favoured winery haunt is the oak barrel as it often provides for conditions that strongly favours its growth.

Certain conditions are known to favour the growth of *Brettanomyces* during winemaking. If low free sulfur dioxide levels are coupled with high wine pH and warm temperatures during barrel maturation, then issues may arise. If older oak is used and

the wine has a reasonable amount of dissolved oxygen, …. look out! Furthermore it is thought that Brett can also multiply after bottling if the wine contains residual fermentable sugars, a situation made more likely if the wine was minimally filtered. Lets look at the why's of these factors.

*Brettanomyces* proliferates under warm cellaring conditions. Twenty degrees C is an ideal temperature, with even small reductions in temperature seriously hamper its growth. Sulfur dioxide is an anti-microbial agent that is added by winemakers throughout the winemaking process. If it is added in sufficient amounts, and the pH of the wine is reasonably high (SO2 is more effective at higher acidity levels), then the growth of Brett will be retarded. On the other hand, high alcohol levels and the existence of even small amounts of fermentable sugars such as glucose suit the growth of Brett, as they are its preferred source of energy for growth. Some recent research under laboratory conditions suggest that Brett does not grow at alcohol levels above 13%. However, this result is not consistent with the observation that many wines with alcohols far in excess of this have gone bretty under winery conditions.

Filtering the wine before bottling can reduce the numbers of Brett cells, and hence the incidence of Brett character that develops in the bottle. However, there is anecdotal evidence that filtered wines that are sound at the time of bottling can randomly become infected with *Brettanomyces* after a period of time, probably as a result of the bottled wine containing residual sugar and being stored in warm conditions.

It is widely acknowledged that the majority of wines with Brett character, became that way during the period of barrel maturation, particularly if second use (or older) oak barrels were used. Brett can colonise a barrel between fills, and can begin to reproduce when the barrel is refilled with new wine. Figure 1 shows Brett extending pseudomycilium into the surface of an oak stave. Topping up barrels with a wine which contains Brett cells, may also contribute to those barrels 'going Bretty'. Shaving and re-toasting the inside of re-used barrels significantly reduces the incidence of Brett growth. However, it is also worth noting that the use of new barrels does not guarantee that Brett will not appear. Recent work in California has shown that new barrels filled with sterilised wine can still sustain populations of Brett high enough to produce above threshold levels of 4-ep.

But why does oak maturation particularly favour Brett growth? Firstly, Brett is a slow growing yeast that does not compete well against other micro-organisms. During alcoholic fermentation the wine yeast Saccharomyces out easily out-competes it. Two possible reasons are that it naturally grows slower than Saccharomyces, and that it prefers aerobic conditions for growth. During primary ferment, the wine is saturated with carbon dioxide which makes for a hostile environment for *Brettanomyces*. On the other hand, barrel maturation is a step in conventional winemaking that provides both the time and the lack of competition needed for Brett to successfully grow to levels which results in sensory modification to the wine. Wines stored in barrel are usually lower in SO2 and are kept warmer than at any other time (other than during ferment of course). This is necessary so as to encourage malolactic fermentation (MLF). Lastly, the necessary processes of racking off lees and regularly topping up barrels ensures that there are always reasonable levels of dissolved oxygen in the wine. For all these reasons, it is thought that the time between the completion of primary fermentation and the start of MLF this is the most likely time that Brett multiplies and produces brettiness in wine.

## Brettanomyces Character is Seen Primarily in Red Wine. Why?

One final matter concerning Brett is rarely mentioned. It occurs almost exclusively in red wines. Why is this so? Red wines have a much higher level of tannin like substances called coumaric and ferulic acid than do white wines as they are extracted from the skins of grapes during red wine fermentation. The wine yeast *Saccharomyces* and some lactic acid bacteria such as *Lactobacillis* have enzymes which degrade these acids to weakly smelling intermediates called 4-vinyl phenol and 4-vinyl guaiacol (Step 1 of Figure 2). These compounds are then enzymatically degraded over a period of months by *Brettanomyces* to the strong smelling 4-ethyl phenol and 4-ethyl guaiacol respectively (Step 2 of Figure 2). Incidentally *Brettanomyces* is the only major micro-organism in wine that has the ability to transform 4-vinyl-phenol into the potent band-aid® smelling, 4-ethyl phenol. Hence 4-ethyl phenol is rightly considered to be the "trademark" aroma of *Brettanomyces* growth in wine. Where you find 4-ethyl phenol you will invariably find Brett, and vice versa.

Surveys of Australian wines have shown that detectable levels of 4-ethyl phenol is more likely to be seen in darker coloured wines, with Shiraz and Cabernet wines than wines made from either Pinot noir and Grenache. The reason for this is unclear, but may involve the coumarates which are a form of coloured anthocyanins found in red wines.

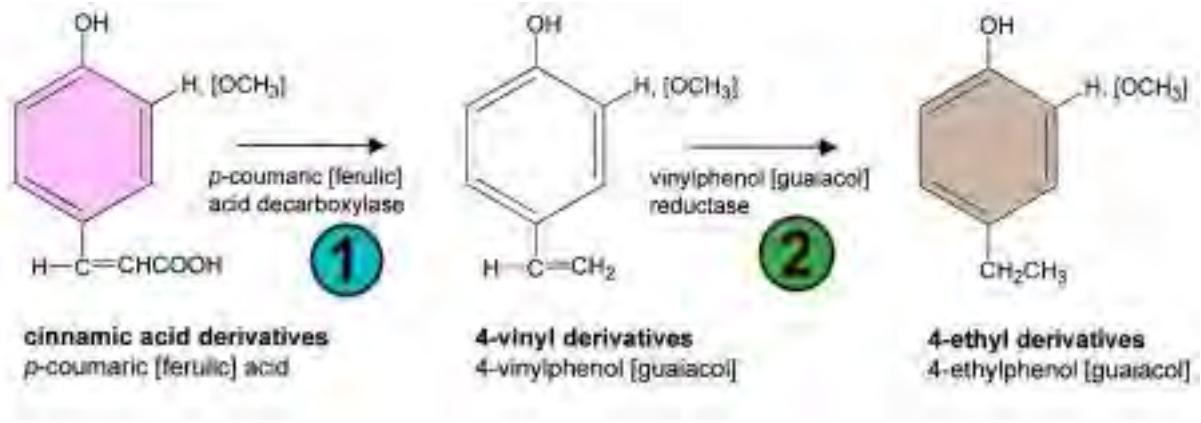



Figure 2: Pathway to the formation of 4-ethyl phenol and 4-ethyl guaiacol in wine

## The Prevalence of Brett Character

Has Brett character become apparently more prevalent in recent years? Some commentators believe that we have simply become more aware of it and that it has always been around. I am sure that there is some truth in this. Upon personal reflection, I feel that classic Hunter Shiraz with its 'sweaty saddle' aroma and flavour is a very likely case in point. However, in my opinion, the overpowering, fruit destroying, antiseptic like aromas and flavours that are now occasionally encountered in wines sourced from every winemaking region of Australia is a relatively new phenomenon. The trend in this country today is to produce red wines picked from riper grapes. In addition to maximizing flavour development in some varieties, this also results in wines that are on average higher in pH and alcohol. Furthermore, residual sweetness is being retained in some commercial red wines in an attempt to fill out the palate and to give it greater apparent fruitiness. These trends together with

the use of minimal SO2 and filtration, has enhanced the conditions under which Brett is retained and thrives.

## The Desirability or Otherwise of Brett Character in Wine

But is the action of Brett desirable? In my humble opinion, the answer depends on degree. As well as producing a band-aid aroma, Brett can create an array of 'interesting' smells that can excite those that are inclined to be excited by them. Furthermore, the ratio of the rather unattractive 4-ethyl phenol to the rather pleasant smelling 4-ethyl guaiacol varies substantially from wine to wine, with reports varying from 3:1 to over 40:1. In the latter case, it is highly likely that the wine would smell like the inside of a band-aid box, while in the former, the aroma would in all likelihood be far more spicy and savoury like. The reason for these differences between wines are not completely understood but are likely to be either due to differing ratios between wines coumaric and ferulic acids (the respective precursors of 4-ep and 4-eg), or to different strains of Brettanomyces being more effective in producing one compound relative to the other. Very recent research with five different strains of Brettanomyces has not lent much support to the latter possibility. Under laboratory conditions the different strains produced roughly equal proportions of 4-ep to 4-eg in the same red wine. But the search for strains of Brett which may be low 4-ep producers will no doubt continue.

In some wine growing regions such as Bordeaux, the Rhone and, dare I say it, the Hunter Valley, it is now acknowledged that some wine producers have developed 'house styles' over time that have actually been defined by some form of Brett character. Many of these producers, or the media, or both, have naively attributed these unusual and sometimes complexing characters to being 'an expression of the soil'. However, overwhelming scientific evidence in the form of elevated 4-ethyl phenol levels in their wines have forced them to admit to the less romantic notions of the microbiological origin of these characters. This is not to say that they necessarily will, or indeed should, do anything different in the future, as many Bretty house styles have become widely accepted and in some cases revered by the wine tasting public. But in the cases where a wine smells more of a hospital ward than it does wine, surely the wine-maker should begin to reflect on what wine drinkers seriously value. That is, real fruit and real complexity. Unfortunately some winemakers (possibly in an attempt to save their career), have attributed the accidental making of overtly Bretty wines as a serious attempt at making something different and complex. Wine diversity is a wonderful thing and should be encouraged in the face of continued 'internationalisation' of wines. But as Pascal Chattonet once argued. Brettyiness has nothing to do with a wines 'typicity' as claimed by some French wine producers. His counterclaim is that wines that are overly Bretty do indeed smell and taste much the same, so overt Brettyness mitigates against 'typicity' and diversity. I'm in Pascal's camp. Real 'typicity' and 'expression' indeed come from the fruit. A message that I hope is not lost on the winemaking fraternity.

This work was presented at the Australian Society of Wine Education National Convention. Hunter Valley, Australia. 4th-6th of June 2004.
www.aswe.org.au

# SPONSORS AND SUPPORTERS

https://homemakeit.com.au/