



NEWSLETTER JANUARY 2023

www.fawg.org.au

Happy New Year and Welcome to 2023

Hello members, I hope you all have had a wonderful Xmas and New Year and are ready to get stuck into the New year of winemaking.

In this issue the Calendar has updated for the whole year with some events tentatively scheduled - an example is the wine tour which I have put down in two months, but only one will be used.

When the committee gets back we will finalise these sort of events.

The tour will be down the Peninsula and we will be inviting the Eltham guild as well. So, if you want to be a part you will have to be quick in booking such an event.

As you can see June and November club night activities are still vacant, so if anybody has a thought of what they would like to discuss, drop me a line and we will see what we can do!

On a club running matter we are still looking for and need a Newsletter editor and a show director to help with the running of the guild, I have to be honest, I thought we would have had these positions filled by now especially when we have over 100 members who enjoy what the guild provides.

Cheers for now and welcome to 2023.

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Coming Up

Did you know—There is a calendar function in our FAWG forum. This can be used for members to check or list dates of functions or events.

- **10 January 2023** - Guild meeting
- **14 January 2023**- Museum Wine Night - Great Western, Port Arlington Mussel Festival
- **17 January 2023** - Committee meeting by Zoom 7.15pm
- **21-22 January 2023** - Great Australian Beer Festival Geelong
- **18 & 25 February** - **FAWG** Introduction to Winemaking Classes, Mt Martha
- **11-12 March 2023** - Tastes of Rutherglen

FAWG CALENDAR

Meeting Date	Club night Activity	Competition	Tasting Talk	Industry/Event	Committee Date
January 10 th 2023			Taylors 2020 Shiraz		Tues 17 th zoom 7:15pm
February 14 th 2023	Robin from Laffort to talk about yeast	Sparkling wine mini comp		Winemaking Classes at Eco Centre Mt Martha Sat 18 & 25 th	
March 14 th 2023	Alternative varieties with Ashly from Ricca Terra			Red Hill Mead show Judging 26 th Feb Public day 11 th March	
April 11 th 2023	John lee Trophy 2023 Talk on Ciders with Lisa Creswell				
May 9 th 2023	Sugars in country wines/ Tastings	Sheila Lee Liqueur & Fortified mini comp.		Possible wine tour with Eltham month TBA	
June 13 th 2023	TBA				
July 11 th 2023	AGM meeting/ Homemade night				Tues 15 th zoom 7:15 start
August 8 th 2023	Cellar dwellers Unusual, Old and mulled wines			Guild Show 26 and 27 th at Balnarring Hall	
September 12 th 2023	Discussion on Show results and Tastings	Gordon Evans white wine mini comp			Tues 5 th zoom 7:15 start
October 10 th 2023	Italian Wine night start time 7pm			Possible Wine Tour with Eltham month TBA	
November 14 th 2023	TBA	Chris Myers Red Wine Mini Comp			Tues 7 th zoom 7:15 start
December 3 rd 2023	No Tuesday meeting End of Year			Sunday 3 rd Xmas party at Balnarring Hall	

Please note that the FAWG forum also has a calendar function that can be used by members to list events, social items, etc.

CHRISTMAS PARTY

A great time was had by all at the Christmas party held in Balnarring Hall. This venue (where we hold our wineshow) has the best facilities of any venue used so far. It was great to sit inside in comfort ,on such a hot day!

Debbie Pratt won the Christmas hat competition with an 'enlightening entry'.

Food was great and the company excellent.

Noel did his usual entertaining job as auctioneer.

A number of awards won at the Eltham Wineshow were presented to the recipients by Wayne Harridge (President EDWG) and it was great to see Angela there as well.

David Hart was installed as a life member of FAWG, as well.



Wizard of Id by Parker and Hart



What's Happening at The Briars

Early in December we noticed that the vineyard had some evidence of powdery mildew present. We had been spraying the vines, but as we are not on site full time, fungal infections can develop while we are absent.

We had previously been spraying a Copper/ Sulphur combination, however this is a 'preventative' combination and will not kill off the mildew spores. So, we have applied an 'EcoCarb Plus' spray (Potassium Bicarbonate and Potassium Silicate) which is supposed to kill off mildew spores and leave a protective silicate residue on the vines. We followed up with another spray of the same, after approx. 10 days

As per the AWRI newsletter, it looks like we will need to keep up almost weekly sprays for the time being and ensure that the canes are thinned out on a regular basis to enable good spray penetration.



Picture above shows our new sprayer in action

FAWG WEBSITE

Each month one or two tabs of our website will be reviewed to give members an insight into what is available to them.

This month we look at the '**News**' tab.

There are 3 sub-tabs available, which are **Newsletter, FAWG Forum and Facebook**. Each of these sub-tabs give you links to their respective information.

If you click on the **newsletter tab** it will take you to the link for each month's newsletter for the current year, which can be downloaded, if you do not wish to read it on-line.

The **Fawg forum tab** provides you with a link to the discussion forum. Unfortunately the forum was required to be rebuilt after the last website upgrade. You will need to re-register, if you haven't already done this.

The **Facebook tab** also provides a link to our Facebook page, which is currently being maintained by Pierre Rault.

All links in these tabs open in new windows for your convenience.

These facilities will be progressively upgraded and any constructive suggestions will be incorporated into our website.

Frank and Ernest by Thaves



MEMBERS CONTRIBUTIONS

For Your Information this article is repeated this month as it is still relevant

BE VIGILANT FOR DOWNY AND POWDERY MILDEW THIS SEASON

The Bureau of Meteorology has indicated a wetter than normal lead up to Christmas this year, with higher overnight temperatures than normal overnight temperatures.

This means that the potential for fungal diseases will be high over the next few weeks.

So keep vigilant in the vineyard for any signs of downy or powdery mildew and keep up your spraying regime. AWRI has suggested that weekly sprays may need to be adopted, if the disease pressure builds up?



"Downy mildew on an inflorescence. They go brown and drop off." Pic/words: James Hook.

The following pictorial information is taken from the WineAustralia.com website and the Factsheet Managing Downy Mildew (Winning the War!)

See <https://www.wineaustralia.com/getmedia/15d2440f-12bc-40a0-94c6-4379d929844f/201003-Managing-downy-mildew?ext=.pdf>

For powdery Mildew see <https://www.wineaustralia.com/getmedia/c1d730e3-7a9a-4d43-b254-d271f1f24d2c/201003-Managing-powdery-mildew?ext=.pdf>



Figure 1: Typical symptoms of downy mildew on leaves:
1) oilspots are circular and light yellow when young;
2) older oilspots are dark yellow with or without the white down on the undersides;
3) & 4). close-up of the fresh down (sporulation) that provides inoculum (sporangia) for spread of disease.



Figure 2. Downy mildew rapidly kills highly susceptible young bunches (left), but berries are immune well before pea-size (E-L 31) (right). Downy is best controlled at or before primary infection because in suitably warm humid weather, the disease spreads rapidly in secondary infection.

There are more resources at AWRI
<https://awri.com>

DEMISE OF WINECHECK DROMANA



Unfortunately the former Vintessential Laboratory site at Dromana, taken over by Winecheck, has been closed as of 16 December 2022.

Wine and Vine Testing is now based at their Yarra Valley site in Lilydale.

For those on the Mornington Peninsula, or thereabouts, your nearest mainstream wine supplier is **HomeMakelt in Clayton**.

Some supplies may also be obtained from **One Stop Bar Shop in Mornington**, however some more specialised or larger quantities of winemaking supplies may have to be ordered in. If you are not in a hurry for supplies, this could be of advantage as it will save you the travel time to go elsewhere, or the postage costs, if you decide to get something mailed out.



My Vintage Year:

An interview series : Where we interview wine people. They may be your fellow guild members or significant others in the Wine Industry. Was this their vintage year: by Dave Chambers

Today it is Jodi Vermaas.

Jodi is another interviewee that has very kindly completed her interview within a day. Which I am ever so grateful for. Jodi is not only a very skilled Wine Maker. She is a good time manager as well. You don't enter three



wines only to the FAWG Wine Show and get a Gold and two Silver Medals at your first event. Not even when your name is David Hart are you getting such success. Remarkable. But as you will read further on Jodi is remarkable. She is the first to pitch in to help at a FAWG function. She likes animals, is great at preserving and tells a great story as you will see below. Looks like she will have to make available quite a bit of room in her home winery to display all the medals from Wine Show awards in the future.

Dave: Could it ever have been beer and not wine. funds.

Jodi: Yes, I was a co-brewer with my now husband for years before being a wine maker.

Dave: How did Wine Making as a hobby unfold. Has this been an easy path for you. What came first the Wine Guild or Wine Making.

Jodi: I had been brewing beer, then cider and then made an apple wine with a recipe from a

very old country wine making book and then a grape wine with a recipe from the internet. All of these attempts ended up drinkable, so I came to the guild to learn more.

Dave: What is your first experience that you remember that led to an interest in wine.

Jodi: Travelling in Europe and experiencing the wines of the various regions made me take an interest in wine.

Dave: Did that immediately lead to your hobby of making wine.

Jodi: No, a bumper crop of apples on my mother in law's tree followed by the same of grapes on a vine of unknown origin in my garden lead to my first wine making endeavours.

Dave: What is an interesting unknown fact about you that members of Frankston Guild may or may not find interesting.

Jodi: I could be a crazy cat lady if only my cat Hugo would let me bring more cats home.

Dave: If money was no object tell us what wine or beverage would you purchase with unlimited



Jodi: Pol Roger Sir Winston Churchill

Dave: What are you making now or have recently that you are most proud.

Jodi: I was obviously delighted to win a gold medal for my Riesling that I made with the guild's focus group this year.

Glen Fortune has a Presidents Question for you:

Question: After picking up 3 medals from 3 entries at this year's Eltham show and your first time entering a show what would you say to people thinking about entering next year's show?

Jodi: Just enter! You might also be surprised and delighted!

Dave: Does technical astuteness give you an edge in your wine making skills. Wine making is skill that unfolds with experience. Are you finding this to be true for you in your wine making.

Jodi: I have very limited equipment and like to keep it simple. I do have a science background and good knowledge of sterile procedure and I think that helps.

Dave: Are you into the intellectual part of the discussion about wine. Wine can be so many things to so many people. But what does it bring to you.

Jodi: I do like thinking about and discussing what it is that makes a wine taste good or bad, but mostly I enjoy the social side of sharing a nice wine with friends.

Dave: Are you a pedantic fussy wine maker or do you prefer to feel your way along steady as she goes. It will work out in the end.

Jodi: I have never made an amendment other than an acid adjustment. I have just followed what I thought I should do from reading and basic testing (pH and specific gravity) and so far it has worked out okay with the fruit and techniques that I have used.

Dave: What is wine making to you. I suspect it is not just a hobby. But a consuming passion that excites you. Is this true.

Jodi: Wine making to me is an extension of my passion for preserving harvests, especially those I have grown or taken part in growing.

Dave: What are you excited about for the future of home wine making. Where do you see it unfolding over the next ten years.

Jodi: For me, in the next 10 years I am looking forward to my apple orchard maturing, and getting my wine and cider making processes practiced enough so that it doesn't always seem like a

scramble against time. However, I think maybe that isn't realistic given the nature of dealing with fruit ripening all at once and on it's own time schedule.

Dave: What inspires you to make better wine. Is it the Gold medals or the knowledge that you are ever improving on your skill.

Jodi: I just want to be able to enjoy drinking the stuff I make and share it with friends without them spitting it out or making "a face".

Dave: Who or what has been your biggest influence in wine making.

Jodi: David Wood and Robert Lee have both been so helpful in my wine making journey.

Dave: Can you describe where you make your wine. Is it in your kitchen or do you have a dedicated area for wine making.



Jodi: Initially I made my wine in the laundry but now I have a large shed that is still a work in progress to get it where I want i.e. there is still no sink in there, but it's coming.

Dave: What have been the positive surprises of your membership of FAWG.

Jodi: I was surprised when I was encouraged and supported to participate in the judging which I have very much enjoyed. Also when David Hart called me during COVID to check I was okay and what was I up to, that was a really lovely surprise and totally unexpected.

Dave: What were you drinking in your twenties.

Jodi: Stongbow and vodka and raspberry.

Dave: If you could tell the young Jodi about life, what advice would you give.

Jodi: Ironically Don't drink so much, especially all at once. I used to get quite messy at times.

Dave: What wine do you particularly enjoy making. Has the Guild turned out to be an ideal group either socially, or for ideas for wine making.

Jodi: I enjoy making different types to keep learning. I loved being part of the Riesling focus group for all of the reasons above.

Dave: Enlighten us with a couple of your favourite wine tweaks.

Jodi: I only tweak the acid, so I have none. Though my husband made a temperature regula-



tor from a Jaycar kit for the fridge I fermented my Riesling in to keep it consistently at the desired temperature.

Dave: I have heard in my short time with the guild some complete disasters while making wine. What is your biggest disaster you can share with us.

Jodi: I put some baby's bottle sterilising tablets into a batch of cider thinking they were campden tablets. They weren't, the ferment didn't happen and there was an awful smell and taste, so down the drain it went.

Dave: I have asked this question of everyone. So far, a hundred percent have said making wine was never a financial consideration. What was the motivation and still is for you after so many years.

Jodi: Making wine is part of my passion to produce most things I eat and drink as part of trying to live sustainably and self-sufficiently.

And Finally

Dave: You are visiting a desert island to spend some chill time. You are taking with you one piece of music, one bottle of wine, a book and food. To be clear, that is a choice of one bottle of wine, one meal and so on. What will be placed in your suitcase and declared at immigration when you enter the Republic of Maldives on your way to the Baa Atoll.

Jodi: Billecart - Salmon brut de bruts, the soundtrack to the movie "Into the Wild" by Eddie Ved-



der, The Lord of the Rings trilogy and a salad chèvre chaud.

My Vintage Year:

An interview series : Where we interview wine people. They may be your fellow guild members or significant others in the Wine Industry. Was this their vintage year: by Dave Chambers

Today it is Rob Gherardi. Rob is the Wine Maker and owner of Mr Barval Fine Wines in Margaret River. You may ask why we are doing an interview with a wine maker. Yes, we have done this before with some notables, but Rob as you will see is different to your usual wine maker. He is our first from WA and consequently our first from Margaret River, or Margs as pronounced by the locals. He has a focus on tradition while at the same time encompassing those variables that make fine wine. Those are time, both at picking and in the winery, terroir, climate, and grape varieties suited to your area. Climate change features in this and Rob is excited about the prospect and challenge of new grape varieties that will benefit his unique location on Caves Road in Margaret River.

But spare a thought for him, he is doing it tough. Rob is doing what he loves in gods own country on the coast of WA, in Margaret River, and as if this wasn't enough fun he then leads his wine tour business, called 'Taste of Life Tours' which takes him yearly to North West Italy, to tour the famed wine country of Barolo and Barbaresco in Piemonte. The tour takes in the rolling, vine clad slopes and picturesque hilltop towns of the Langhe that is home to the two most sought after of Italian fine wines and the centre of one of Europe's most renowned wine and food cultures. It is a true eno-

gastronomic paradise set amongst centuries old cobble-stoned villages. Booked out yearly be quick for the next one.

I spent an entertaining hour or so listening to Rob's story. He is much more than a wine maker of note and that part of his character is very interesting indeed. But it is about the wine for you and me. So do yourself a real favour by ordering from Mr Barval Wines and trying for yourself one of Marg's best boutique wineries.



And what about the name, Mr Barval Fine Wines. The name, Margaret River, is the Mr, part, then add Bar for Barolo and val for Valtellina, together they become Mr Barval, clever huh.

Dave: Could it ever have been beer and not wine.

Rob: Yes, it could easily have been beer making, especially here in Australia. A favourite saying, of mine I can share with you is. 'It takes a lot of beer to make good wine.' Every winery I have ever worked in Australia has a beer frig, some even have them in the bottling room as well as the office.

Dave: How did Wine Making unfold for you. Has this been an easy path for you.

Rob: I was doing a degree in Biotechnology and Marine Science and thinking perhaps this is not for me. Continued with it for a while girlfriends happened, suddenly a career became more important. A girlfriend became a wife, then it became even more important. We visited some friends in Margaret River in my early 20's this was a real treat. Because I then enrolled in Curtin University for Bachelor of Wine Science

Dave: What is your first experience that you remember that led to an interest in wine.

Rob: Wine and its traditions have always been part of my family having both an Italian and an Australian heritage

Dave: Did that immediately lead to your career of making wine

Rob: No but it was not long before it became clear to me that after working with Cullen's Winery and Moss Wood that it may be possible to carve out something in life that may be rewarding financially and spiritually.

Dave: What is an interesting unknown fact about you that readers may or may not find interesting.

Rob: I almost became a Chef and still now really enjoy tossing pans around the kitchen.

Dave: If money was no object tell us what wine or beverage you would purchase with unlimited funds.

Rob: My absolute favourite wines come from Borololo. Anything from there is superb.

Dave: What are you making now, or have recently, that you are most proud.

Rob: The Cabernet Sauvignon's and Chardonnay's have a style from Margs that I love and we are really proud of what we have achieved so far with these varieties. We are also developing an interesting Rhone White style using Viognier and Marsanne that we will be releasing soon.

Dave: Does technical astuteness give you an edge in your wine making skills. Wine making is skill that unfolds with experience. Are you finding this to be true for you in your wine making.

Rob: It's a fine balance of getting both right the wine science and training. There is a bit of a vibe about changing the right grapes for the right growing areas and calling it out with the knowledge that your wine career training and experience learnt in the vineyard.

Dave: Are you into the intellectual part of the discussion about wine. Wine can be so many

things to so many people. But what does it bring to you.

Rob: I know what I like and pursue that with a passion and I can be as technical as the next wine maker about all things wine.

Dave: Are you a pedantic fussy wine maker or do you prefer to feel your way along steady as she goes. It will work out in the end.

Rob: As I said earlier it is about timing. Both in the vineyard and in winery. Being a relatively small winery, we have the advantage of a hands-on approach that larger wineries aren't able to achieve with their economies of scale.

Dave: What is wine making to you. I suspect it is not just a living. But a consuming passion that excites you. Is this true.

Rob: I am really lucky, I pinch myself sometimes, when I think that I am doing something I love in an area of the world that excites me daily in a country I love. The fact that I can share this with my family motivates me always.



Dave: What are you excited about for the future of wine making. Where do you see it unfolding over the next ten years.

Rob: Climate change has had an impact on growing conditions throughout the world and I am excited that this presents us with a lot of opportunities to plant new varieties. But having said that we are in an area where it is considered may not be so impacted by weather patterns. But I can't wait to plant new varieties that will thrive in this climate at Margs.

Dave: What inspires you to make better wine. Is it the medals or the knowledge that you are ever improving on your skill.

Rob: We don't enter wine shows. We have presented wines to reviewers with considerable success. But we are lucky to sell out regularly. And that is all the proof I need of improving my skills as a wine maker.

Dave: Who or what has been your biggest influence in wine making.

Rob: Vanya Cullen at Cullen Wines and Keith Mugford at Moss Wood Wines. But I must preface this with my number one influence in Italy. I spent a number of years in Barolo making wine with Elio Altare. There is a documentary called the 'Barolo Boys' that I recommend people watch. This



experience in Barolo motivates me to make better wine in Margs.

Dave: What were you drinking in your twenties.

Rob: Happs, Fuchsia Rosé a slightly sweet style of wine when I lived in Exmouth, WA. I was also into Cabernet's and big bold Shiraz.

Dave: If you could tell the young Rob about life, what advice would you give.

Rob: Use your head more and follow your heart.

Dave: Enlighten us with a couple of your favourite wine tweaks.

Rob: I don't really have any tweaks as such. But for me timing is so important through every stage.

Temperature during the ferment. Positioning the right buds on the vine for growth. Something for us as a boutique winery we find produces great results.

Dave: I have heard in my short time with the guild some complete disasters while making wine. What is your biggest disaster you can share with us.

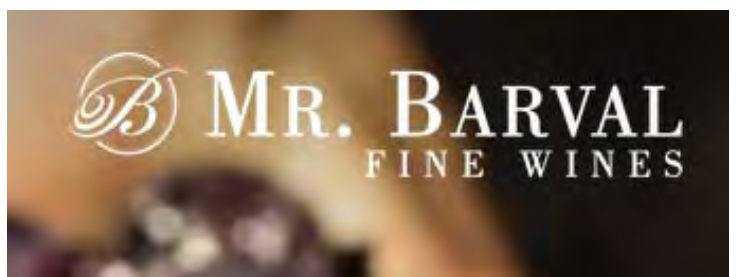
Rob: I have been lucky so far, touch wood. No disasters yet.



And Finally

Dave: You are visiting a desert island to spend some chill time. You are taking with you one piece of music, one bottle of wine, a book and food. To be clear, that is a choice of one bottle of wine, one meal and so on. What will be placed in your suitcase and declared at immigration when you enter the Republic of Maldives on your way to the Baa Atoll.

Rob: Easy the books are 'The Hobbit', 'Lord of the Rings' Tolkien is a hero of mine. The music is anything by the 'Violent Femmes', a Barolo to drink and Pasta would fix me up nicely.



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