



NEWSLETTER MARCH 2023

www.fawg.org.au

March on, its Grape time

Hi all and welcome to Autumn,

Well we had our wine classes at the ECO display centre at the Briars with our students and they all came away with a very good smelling Raspberry wine.

And by all accounts they enjoyed the experience.

Lovely people and they all said that they would like to come to the club meetings and see what the guild is all about. I would like to thank for their help during the classes David Wood, Peter Enness and David Hart and also Steve and Debbie Pratt, Jodi Vermaas and Pierre Rault for flying the flag for our classes as all the students came from these members recommending the guild. Great work!!! And hopefully they will become wonderful members into the future.

On another just as important note grape season is here and now is the time to get your orders in, please keep an eye out for my emails ASAP

Cheers for now, Glen

In this Issue

FAWG Calendar	2
FAWG Website	3
Sentia Wine Testing	4
What's Happening at the Briars	5
Members Contributions	6
My Vintage Year	8
Sponsors Page	13

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.

- **11 March 2023** - Red Hill Mead Show Awards presentations
- **11-12 March 2023** - Tastes of Rutherglen
- **11-12 March 2023** - Por Phillip Mussel & Jazz Festival
- **14 March** - **Guild Meeting**
- **17 March** - Melbourne Gin Festival, Port Melbourne
- **18 March** - Bendigo Craft Beer & Cider Fest
- **25 March** - Melbourne Food & Wine Festival, Queen Victoria Market
- **25 March** - The Peninsula Picnic, Mornington Racecourse

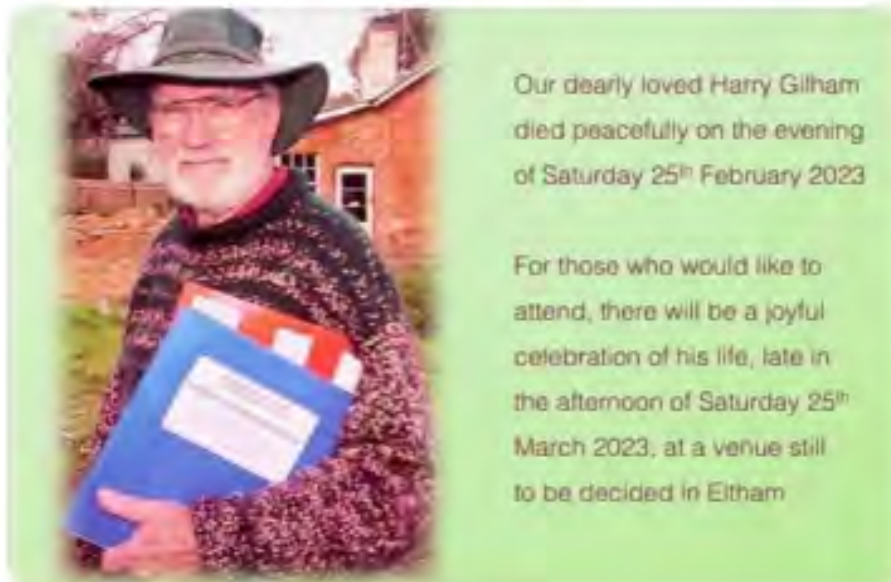
FAWG CALENDAR

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		Sparkling wine mini comp		Winemaking Classes at Eco Centre Mt Martha Sat 18/25 th	
March 14 th 2023	Robin from Laffort to talk about yeast			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				
<u>May 9th</u> 2023	Sugars in country wines/ Tastings	Sheila Lee Liqueur & Fortifieds 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.

VALE HARRY GILHAM
Eltham & District Amateur Winemakers Guild

Harry Gilham a
foundation member of
the Guild, died peacefully
on Saturday 25th
February 2023 (edited)



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 at the meeting early and advise Kevin Murphy that you require your wine analysed.

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

**Costs are: FreeSO₂ \$5.00 and Malic Acid \$10.00
(compare to \$25 to \$30 at a wine testing laboratory)**



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 '**Events**' and '**Wineshows**' tabs.

There are 2 sub-tabs available in **Events**, which are **Calendar** and **Christmas Party**

Calendar tab - basically shows you the latest version of our events calendar.. It lists all guild meeting dates, and proposed guest speakers or topics for the meeting. Other scheduled events are listed, e.g. Annual Wineshows, outings, mini-comps, etc.

Christmas Party tab - will advise the date and venue for the Christmas Party and possibly some photos of the last party.

In the **Wineshows** tab there are three sub-tabs, **FAWG Wineshow**, **Eltham Wineshow** and **FAWG Show info**

For both the **FAWG** and **Eltham Wineshow tabs**, the important dates are listed when they are available and a summary of FAWG members awards for the last shows are listed. If available, some photos may also be available

The **FAWG Show Info tab**, provides the **Show Rules** which are updated each year and **Entry Information** for our show, including the Entry forms, Entry Classes. Etc.,

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



What's Happening at The Briars

Nets have been placed on the vines, as veraison commenced properly in the first week of February.

We use a netting method not normally adopted by other vineyards. As our vineyard is located within a Council owned property, which also contains a wildlife sanctuary, we cannot use normal methods of feral bird control, or deterrents.

We found that the 'bird pressure' on the vines was so high that we had to find a way of excluding them from the vines and also stop them 'swinging in' on the nets.

So, we devised a means of using metal rod 'stand-offs' at the fruiting wire level and we then completely seal off the nets from underneath, 'rather than using 'drape netting'.

This method is time consuming, but very effective. Over the next week or so we will complete the clipping process. Then we wait for the fruit to ripen.

This year we are able to scarry out a spray while the nets are on the vines, as the new sprayer unit is narrow enough to fit between the rows with the nets installed. So we should be able to minimise any late season mildew problems. As we now have 'EcoCarb plus' in our anti fungal arsenal, which kills mildew spores and does not have a withholding period (based on food grade potassium bicarbonate), we should be able to spray fairly late into the season if necessary

The photo below shows the metal outstands that we made and the one below that shows how we seal off the nets from underneath using netting clips.. The secret is to place the netting clips so that the nets have minimum gap around the vine trunks and trellis poles



MEMBERS CONTRIBUTIONS

In Wine Business magazine last month

- Making the big call in the vineyard... [3 Rings Wine](#) in the Barossa says on Instagram, "20 hectares of Eutypa-riddled Shiraz and Cabernet being grubbed today. Thanks to Brock for helping out with the big job (bull dozer driver)." Who else out there is making the big call? "
- It's been bloody cold in the Adelaide Hills and other parts of South Australia these past few days. Vintage is going to be late. Very, very late at this stage.

From Daily Wine News

This year has been challenging in regard to the mildews (downy and powdery). The website below was mentioned in DWN and has some interesting information presented. Sprays include

Miravis – PowderY Mildew protection for up to 21 days

<https://www.syngenta.com.au/crops/grapes>

Blind-tasted competition surveys the Riesling market, with Australia the big winner

A recent blind-tasting competition in London evaluated Rieslings from all over the world, highlighting high quality production and trends in the market. From the 12 nations represented, Australia and Germany came home with the bulk of top medals – 60 per cent of Gold and Master medals between them. The Global Riesling Masters 2022 was the final competition of the year in the Global Wine Masters series, run by industry-leading publication *the drinks business*. **Source: Winetitles**

[Blind-tasted competition surveys the Riesling market, with Australia the big winner](#)



[NOW THAT'S OUR SORT OF ICECREAM!](#)



From Zenon Kolacz,

**Sourced from Vino Diversity
Link Update on the Adelaide Hills Wine Region**

<https://www.vinodiversity.com/Adelaide-Hills.html>

Members' Contributions

From Winetitles newsletter

Winemakers On Australia Rose

Rosé styles can span from crisp and bone-dry to wines with fruity notes and a sweet influence. The main varietal will also have a significant impact on the style of rosé. Popular varietals used to make rosé include Grenache, Pinot Noir, Cabernet Sauvignon, Shiraz, Sangiovese and Nebbiolo. While rosé can sometimes be made as an afterthought, these **seven winemakers** produce considered rosé wines that are made with intention. **Halliday Wine Companion asked them what makes a great rosé. Source: Halliday Wine Companion**

See https://winecompanion.com.au/articles/meet-the-winemaker/rose-meet-the-winemaker?utm_campaign=Weekend+Reading+Ros%C3%A9+A9%3A+February+25+%E2%80%93+C2%A0Non-member&utm_content=Weekend+Reading+Ros%C3%A9+A9%3A+February+25+%E2%80%93+C2%A0Member&utm_medium=email_action&utm_source=customer.io



Tod Dexter – Pt Leo Estate, Mornington Peninsula VIC

H. What makes your rosé unique?

TD. This rosé is textural yet refreshing, and is 95 per cent pinot noir and 5 per cent pinot gris.

Glass Bottle Shortage Major Concern for French Wine Producers

From The Drinks Business

Among the challenges facing French wine producers right now is finding enough glass to bottle their 2022 vintage – and it's becoming so bad that some want the government to step in.



See <https://www.thedrinksbusiness.com/2023/02/glass-bottle-shortage-major-concern-for-french-wine-producers/>

Sacre Bleu! Aussies may be laughing up their sleeves after all the 'naming issues' with wine varieties/styles of late.

Heaven forbid, they may have to resort to 'Chateau Cardboard' or 'bag in a box' methodology or the equivalent in French? (sac dans une boîte???)



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 Mike Payne:

I first met Mike Payne at Dave Hart's place at a BBQ. On the day I was excited to meet up with David & Kerrie again and visit their new home in



Hastings. I was very impressed with what a lovely home it is. David has set up for wine making in a smaller way with a cool room and room to process a vintage or three. He has an alfresco area including bbq and outdoor kitchen. Perfect for entertaining his many friends. I must ask him if we can do a small guild function there before the weather gets cold.

But today is about Mike and not David. However not knowing Mike, I asked David to give me some stuff about him. Relax Mike it's all good. David has known Mike for about 15 years. He finds his company engaging and they are good friends. Sharing the winemakers cunning and wit as they share barbs about each other's skill in the vineyard and all things wine. Mike, David tells me, originally set up for sparkling wine. Although he believes nowadays he makes a barrel to Pinot every couple of years and apparently Chardonnay every two or three years using a contract winemaker named Ewan, at Phaedrus Estate here on the peninsula. Mike has qualifications in Viticulture and was

involved in setting up another Vineyard before his current one. Mike as everyone knows, has a quality product. Mike takes great care and attention to provide the best grapes he can. The following interview will give an insight as to why.

Dave: Why wine and not beer.

Mike: As a young adult experimenting with different drinks, as we all did, there were only a handful of beers around and wine offered much more scope, so that's the way I went.

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

Mike: It was very much a progression. Firstly, learning about wine in general and then moved on to wine making as a hobby to see how the stuff was made. Finally, it became obvious that wine was only as good as the base product, so there was much more to learn about grapes and grape growing.

Dave: What is your first experience that you remember that led to an interest in wine and did that immediately lead to your hobby/business of growing grapes.

Mike: I was in my early 20's and was trying to impress a particular young lady and was absolutely terrified that a wine menu may be thrust upon me in a restaurant and I would be asked to select the appropriate wine. This was the beginning of the thirst for knowledge!

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

Mike: I arrived with my family from the UK in 1960 and not knowing what I wanted to do with my life, I set about learning as many skills and trades as possible, which eventually held me in good stead for managing a small property, without too much input from others.



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

Mike: A bunch of fine French Burgundy's come to mind but, as my wife does not drink red wine, I would tend towards purchasing some fine wine from my next best favourite using Chardonnay and Pinot, Champagne of course. Maybe some Bollinger RD, Perrier Jouet or Crystal.

Dave: What are you making now or made in the distant past, that you are most proud.

Mike: Over the last 20 odd years I have become more involved in grape growing and less involved with making wine, but I do remember making some pretty good sparkling whites that I was happy with.

Glen Fortune has a Presidents Question for

you:

Mike with the set up you have in Hastings. You grow your grapes and are organised better than anybody I know. What is your history, and why grow Pinot and Chardonnay Grapes.

Mike: A bit like the duck swimming upstream Glen, all calm and collected above water and going like hell in total disarray underneath.

With regards to the grape varieties, I had seen many others around the area growing varieties, not particularly suited to their site and so, tried to choose specific clones of Pinot, Chardonnay and Pinot Gris that would hopefully provide us with the best quality fruit possible.

Dave: Does technical astuteness give you an edge in your grape growing skills. Growing grapes is a skill that unfolds, however it is fraught with variables like the weather. How are you able to navigate all the problems that can befall a vigneron.

Mike: It's all about learning and experimentation and can be very site specific. Lots of research, hands on wine growing courses and trying all sorts of different things to sort out what works for you. The weather is always going to be a variable that you cannot control, so being on

guard and having the appropriate materials on hand and an action plan is very important.

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.

Mike: I certainly don't consider myself a wine snob and as long as a wine is not full of faults, it will always bring me pleasure no matter what it is.

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

Mike: I may be considered pedantic by many, (this may be an understatement), but my aim is simple and is to do whatever is required to ensure the best fruit possible is produced from whatever conditions and situations are thrown my way.

Dave: What is being a vigneron to you. Is it a consuming passion that excites you, daily

Mike: Sometimes during the busy periods, I think the vineyard is consuming me but, for most of the time it is the one thing that keeps me going and all I want to do is constantly make adjustments and improvements that will result in better fruit.

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

Mike: I find the fact that we are now beginning to use a little bit of science to match site selection with grape varieties and clonal selection it is becoming exciting. Also, not being afraid to experiment with different varieties has to be a plus.

Dave: Who or what has been your biggest influence in grape growing.

Mike: I have been influenced by many people along the journey but the stand outs would have to be spending time with Dr Richard Smart, (viticultural consultant and educator) and also a couple of lecturers from the Charles Sturt Uni

course.

Dave: I understand you have someone make your wine now. Have you been tempted to try it again yourself.

Mike: Yes, I certainly hope to get back to it. It's just a time thing to do both growing and making properly. I originally planted just two rows of Pinot Gris for that very reason but am still trying to get back to it, (for 20 years now those wine guild members keep taking it and it's hard to say no).

Dave: Where in the world is your favourite grape growing area. And what do they grow.

Mike: This is a difficult question as there are so many fantastic and challenging grape growing areas. Apart from the obvious, Mornington Peninsula, it would have to be a cool climate site and most likely in Australia, as we have so much freedom with what we can grow. Versatile varieties such as Chardonnay are always going to be a winner.

Dave: What were you drinking in your twenties.

Mike: Anything and everything. Mainly sweet stuff due to the untrained palate.

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

Mike: You shouldn't always wait until its safe before you make a big change. Sometimes you should bite the bullet and go for it while you are still young.

Dave: What wine grapes would you plant given your time again twenty years ago.

Mike: Probably the same ones we are currently growing but with much more thought and planning with regards to clonal selection and the proportions of each.

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

Mike: Firstly, **don't be afraid to experiment**, be it pruning, trellising, soil and site care, or disease prevention. Secondly, **don't be afraid to experiment**, particularly with the way that you go about completing the tasks in the vineyard by trying to make it easier on yourself.

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 that involved growing grapes.

Mike: Two disasters come to mind. The first was the best wine I have ever made, which was a fortified port style made from Mataro. I pushed the bung in to the glass demijohn way too hard and as it warmed up, it cracked of course and left a stream of red wine all the way down the driveway.

The second, was in the vineyard when my dear neighbour decided to spray the fence line with Glyphosate herbicide and quite a few vines took on rather a strange appearance before losing their leaves prematurely.

Dave: I have asked this question of everyone. So far, a hundred percent have said that growing grapes and making wine was never a financial

consideration. What was the motivation and still is for you after so many years.

Mike: Hobbies seldom pay for themselves and this is no different. We try to manage every task in the vineyard without external help and sometimes this requires some creative engineering, procurement of equipment or just finding better ways of doing things. This in itself is motivating.

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.

Mike: The old desert island question! The wine, preferably a magnum, would have to be a fortified like a port in the warm climate to reduce the chance of spoilage and allow me a wee sip every day. Maybe some reggae music to suit the atmosphere and of course some fine cheese to go with the port.



FUNNIES PAGE



"And don't try to pull the old 'good wine steward, bad wine steward' routine."



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