

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 Glen Fortune.

Glen Fortune is a fine wine maker. He has a Gold Medal from the Eltham Wine Show, if any proof was needed. People like Glen are gold to the FAWG. I hope to get to know Glen more over this coming year. I suggest you would improve your life by getting more involved in the FAWG, as Glen has discovered over the years.

I have had a number of conversations with Glen over the last year or two; he is smart and interesting. He and I share ideas of where the Frankston Club should expand socially. David Wood expands on Glen's contribution in his own words below.

Glen has been a significant contributor to FAWG and has been guild secretary for a number of years now. He also filled in compiling the newsletter, organising grape sourcing and delivery and generally volunteering for any duty that other members did not put their hand up for. This interview may give other guild members an insight into Glen's generous nature and an appreciation of Glen's contributions to the guild. Get to know Glen - you will be rewarded for doing so.



Dave: Why wine and not beer.

Don't say that I started off with Beer, then simple spirits and then wine you never know I might go back to beer!!!

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

My wife organised me to do the wine making course with the guild way back in 2011 at the Briars Barn, wine how hard can it be, get grapes stand on them in a bucket put in some yeast I have lying around and presto.

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

Tasting at the wine classes an orange wine by Chris Myers and I think a port, I remember saying to myself what the hell I never thought to make a wine out of anything but grapes.

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

Yes I guess so, I was so impressed and the fact that a lot of the other members show up to let us students taste their wines they really had a passion

Dave: What is an interesting unknown fact about you that members of Frankston Guild may find interesting.

Gee I dont know, if this is interesting we don't want people to fall asleep while reading this, but I love learning, I love inventing (things) to make things better and I am not afraid to try something (what ever) to see if its an improvement, that includes my winemaking!!! Ha Ha.

Dave: Can you tell us about the wildest party you attended. Probably in your youth but maybe not.

Sorry Dave, the only one I can remember and that's because I saw a photo, was me jammed in a 44 gallon drum legs and head out, 19 at that stage may be that was my first foray into winemaking, trying to stop the wine from oxidising.

Dave: What are you making now.

OOH very busy shiraz, mataro, merlot, Durif, lemon

David Wood has a Guest Question for you:

Question: Glen, you run a thriving business, which has become busier over recent months. How do you manage to fit in guild secretarial duties and winemaking into your hectic schedule?

I don't know !! I have not really slowed down since starting the business back in the eighties and at home we were always renovating the house which the one we are in now is No4 but I must say that I have had a very understanding family which has helped a lot and I have really never had any hobbies in the past the guild just struck gold i guess I find it hard to say no to a good cause!!!

Dave: Where did you pick up your wine making skills. Or have you educated yourself to making wine.

Self taught, probably why I have a few 'issues'.

Dave: Are you in to 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.

No I'm not that clever. I find it a real challenge to make a good wine grape or country And the satisfaction when I do.

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

A little bit but there is always the still unless I have spent a lot on grapes. Losing money hurts

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

Don't know to be truthful, the guild has sort of consumed me a little, all the different characters of the club. The success of the club being able to help out in everybody, being able to make a good wine, whether it be grape or country.

Dave: What are you excited about for the future of home wine making.

I think country winemaking could be in for a bright future as more people find out that it can be done and done well - that's the trick

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

Skills skills skills

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

The members of the guild and their partners, the passion is fantastic when we have a speaker they all listen intently. When I taste a gold medal country wine I'm blown away. When somebody gets a bad score they let you know about it. I see it as truly a craft and with all crafts it takes skill and knowledge and that eventually comes from the experience of making wine.

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

I have now a shed which we have set up with a sink, bench and shelving and room for the press and crusher, our last place well lets just say had its flaws when it came to being clean although in saying that, I never had a wine with mouse as a fault.

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

Definitely getting better at making better wine, again the characters of the guild and the growth in membership during covid.

Dave: What were you drinking in your twenties.

Box stuff started sweet then dry oh yes Mateus rose, then spirits with of course coke. Oh yes champagne (sorry cant say that) sparkling wine with chicken kindly supplied by the student union at Swinburne uni for what ever reason they could think of. Ah fun times.

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

Believe in Karma. Have a go, if it doesn't work out change your direction and look for the joyful things in life there's plenty of them.

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.

I like them all but have not made a great country wine yet, or a sparkling. But I will !!, can't wait either.!

Yeh the guild has a wealth of knowledge in its members but they don't hand it out on a plate for you until you ask which is OK, because the best way to learn I have found is your mistakes.

I would like to see the guild do more interactive stuff, but we need more members to help out in the running of the place. Same story in every club I guess.

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

It's not a tweak as much as a tool. Paraffin Oil floating on top of the wine to stop it from oxidising. I am a big oxidiser. I found it works, Got a gold medal from Eltham using it. When bottling, the trick is to get it off the wine, I used a syringe and then a paper wick to soak the rest off. The paraffin takes on the smell of the wine, so I wouldn't keep it..

Dave: What is your favourite tool in your winery.

My most useful tool in making wine
The humble milk crate
A seat at the bench
A set of steps to get 54lts on the bench



And a great way to clean out the 54lt demijohn without braking your back or the bottle what an invention
...And it even holds milk, if only the Romans had known about Mike Crates.

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.

Making a CabSav with my new VC 90 . Lt's gone. I couldn't get the seal to perform on account of a leak/ great oxidation/ massive learning curve/ have not used the VC since but I will soon.

A bad craftsmen always blames his tools.

Dave: I have asked this question of everyone and 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.

True but I have only been making for 10 years/ I hope ramp up my making in small 5lts demi I am not a big drinker, but I love the experimentation.

And Finally

Dave: You are going to 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.

This is a hard question, I suppose you're saying my last rights and wishes before death (gruesome).

It's gotta be comfort food - a great Lasagne.

Song Bird by Fleetwood Mac. I don't why, but it always pops into my head when I want to chill out

A good vintage port to sip on while reading a book on philosophical phrases and sayings and let the wisdom and my thoughts wash over me.

.....Do I get off the Island???

