



My Vintage Year:

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 Noel Legg

Noel is both a man of simple pleasures and yet deep down is more complex. Doesn't that probably apply to all of us of us. He is a considered and talented wine maker. We are very lucky to have him in our guild as we are for the many people that make up this wonderful group of wine makers. And thanks come from me Noel for stepping up so quickly and doing this Interview. Much appreciated.

He uses wine making as an escape from the day-to-day pressures of the modern world. When I think about my own wine making, I see where quite a few hours pass by seemingly in a blink. I am as surprised as Noel at the interest wine making can generate in your life.

Noel is an interesting person; he is helpful and dedicated. I can't wait to taste some of his country wine.

Dave: Why wine and not beer.

Noel: For some reason I have always thought of wine as an elegant drink. Something to savour - not just swallow.

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.

Noel: My interest has always been in country wines. Back when I was 39, I seriously started looking for information on fruit wine making and bought my first book on the subject. Meanwhile, Joanne did some inves-

tigating for wine making courses. The closest she could find was in the northern suburbs, a little far but worth looking in to. When she mentioned I was more interested in fruit wine than grape wine, they suggested I should contact a wine guild in Melbourne - Eltham or Frankston.

I started my first wine (plum) and two weeks later went to my first meeting at Frankston.

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

Noel: My first memory of fruit wine was when I was quite young and was allowed to taste some Blackberry Nip. That fruity flavour has stayed with me.

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

Noel: No, quite the opposite. It was almost a quarter of a century later that I developed my desire to make wine.

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

Noel: I am not sure I consider myself interesting. My natural instinct was to hide away from people and I think my involvement with the guild and winemaking process has made me a better person.

Dave: If money was no object what

wine or beverage would you buy with these unlimited funds.

Noel: I don't have a favourite. I enjoy a good coffee (well, all coffee) and I do like the variety and characteristics of fruit wine. As an example, when I drink a shiraz, I don't think about eating a bowl of grapes. But when I drink a plum wine, my thoughts go to the biting of a fresh plum, and the juice squirting and running down my chin.

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

Noel: I am making a Duriff, and I feel it is the best grape wine I have ever made. Bearing in mind I have only EVER made three grape wines. Of course, there is always plum and feijoa on the go.

Glen Fortune has a Guest Question for you:

Question: In your opinion, Noel, your winemaking/work/marathons/family - if you were to describe your life as a wine, would it be still/sparkling/fortified, and why?

Noel: I would be a still wine. I don't consider myself to have a sparkling attitude (although, like my plum wine, I can turn on the bubbles sometimes!)



Dave: Does technical astuteness can 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.

Noel: The technical side of wine making can be quite confusing. I try and focus on those things I know, and can control. I can adjust acids, tannins, alcohol and sweetness to my taste. Most of the time I keep very basic notes on pH and SG and then loose them on my desk somewhere.

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.

Noel: I enjoy talking about all aspects of wine. I have gleaned a little knowledge (which can be a dangerous thing) about what it should smell, look and taste like. I personally enjoy talking to the intellectual wine maker and the novice. There is something in the learning and the teaching.

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.

Noel: Definitely not pedantic, although I do realise that some of the steps are far more important than others.

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.

Noel: I use my wine making as an escape from a busy world. Wine making gives me structure and helps me focus.

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

Noel: I am excited to work and connect with the next generation of wine makers. I feel the challenge of this will define the future of our Guild.

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

Noel: I start every wine with the hope that it will turn out good enough to share. Then life happens. Sometimes it becomes Gold, sometimes not. I always enjoy the journey.

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

Noel: Joanne - her support and knowledge are invaluable.

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

Noel: It started in the kitchen and bathroom. Now I have a 3m x 6m shed out the back of the house, which one day will be set up properly.

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

Noel: Friendship and support.

Dave: What were you drinking in your twenties.

Noel: A lot of beer.

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

Noel: Always look on the bright side, and #42.

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.

Noel: My two favourite wines to make are plum and feijoa.

The guild has several niche groups which all over-lap in some way. This makes for stimulating conversation and great wine making ideas.

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

Noel: Start with good fruit - you can't make good wine with bad fruit.

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.

Noel: Carrot wine takes time to develop. I threw out 25lts once as I thought it was off and had not been patient enough.

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.

Noel: I love fruit wine! I enjoy the process of making the wine and the fellowship and friendship when tasting (and enjoying) the wine.

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.

Noel: Vivaldi - Four Seasons / Feijoa Wine / The Way of the Samurai / Extra-large pot of macaroni and cheese.