

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 Pierre Rault.

It is probably harder to get to know Pierre than most. He doesn't suffer fools very well, but you will be rewarded by seeking him out and making his acquaintance. He is very passionate about the Frankston Wine Guild and acknowledges their help in making him a better wine maker. His tiny boutique vineyard is the neatest vineyard I have ever seen, not a twig is out of place. It is a fortunate reciprocal relationship between Pierre and the guild. Pierre contributes mightily to the guild. He is across the mass of financial detail and cleverly doubles up with catering skills. We are lucky to have him. The French Wine Night is a recent example of his skills as a caterer. I'm sure by the time you have read Pierre's story you may well be a better wine maker yourself.



Dave: Why wine and not beer.

Pierre: Always been a wine drinker and probably sounds more of a romantic adventure.

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.

Pierre: Had an eatery in a local winery (Stumpy Gully) about a decade ago and was keen to learn how to make wine from then on. I did not find out about the guild for about another five years or so when a friend told me about One Stop Bar shop in Mornington and there was a flyer with David Hart's phone number. I had a couple of good results first off but had a few setbacks as well. This year's batches are looking good, so fingers crossed .

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

Pierre: My earliest memory is having a Wolf Blass yellow label at dinner forty or so years ago.

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

Pierre: Well, it started my interest in drinking wine regularly, which eventually led me to find the Guild and so on.

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

Pierre: I've had a tendency over the years to impulsively buy, or start, a business when it interested me. My first one was when I tasted and liked something at a food caravan in the Dandenong market and after a bit of a chat, bought the business without knowing a thing about the very complex food involved. My next one was a vegie stand at a market, then there was a venison distribution business. And finally I went to buy some wine at Stumpy Gully, asked to speak to the owner.

Me: Hi Frank I've never run a restaurant before, but I think I could run one here. So we did that for a couple of years.

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

Pierre: Have not bought an expensive wine for quite a while, so I guess I would have to take recommendations and try a few things. I understand the Leeuwin estate Chardonnay is a good drop and I would have to try a Penfolds, also enjoy A Warrabilla Durif. Don't necessarily associate price with drinkability though.

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

Pierre: The sparkling is definitely my best result and I must acknowledge the amazing quality of grapes from Mike Payne.



Glen Fortune has a Presidents Question for you:

Question: Pierre after the success of the French wine night, I saw that you were very proud of the achievement and I also get the feeling that you are proud of the good wines you have made as we all should be. So, is there a third string to your bow.

Pierre: I'm really happy with my vineyard and the fact that I had a hand in helping two new members to start making wine. .

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.

Pierre: Not sure that I have technical astuteness in wine making itself but some mechanical skills is certainly useful.

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.

Pierre: Not at all, I have the same criteria as I do with food. I like it or I don't. End of story.



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.

Pierre: Not as pedantic as I should be, although I am improving on that front. I make too many varieties and my space is too small to handle it.

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.

Pierre: Yes, it's definitely more than a hobby especially when you get a good result. I see it as an adventure just the same as my previous foray into different businesses.

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

Pierre: Hopefully become more better and consistently make great wines as I learn the new tricks.

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

Pierre: Definitely to enjoy drinking better wines. Winning medals is good for the ego though

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

Pierre: There have been many people who helped me with their knowledge of course David Hart is a master, but I'll name a few such as, Rob Chionna, Rino, John Utano and many more .

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

Pierre: Basically in an enclosed carport where Susan is not so keen on the mess I make. I also have a small temperature controlled shed where I store the wine.

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

Pierre: For me personally' it introduced me to the Briars group who take care of the vineyard there and in turn help me get the skills to plant my own small vineyard in the back yard. Have not got a good result from it yet, but it looks good .

Dave: What were you drinking in your twenties.

Pierre: Lindemans: Fruity Lexia .

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

Pierre: Listen to your father and buy a property as soon as possible.

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.

Pierre: I like the sparkling the best. It's a lot easier than most people think. The guild has been great for both wine making and socially. It's good to hang around with a few drunks.

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

Pierre: Can't think of any great tips

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.

Pierre: I have had a few disasters, over the last two years a few of my wines developed major faults and not sure if what caused it. Had a major cleanup of the storage area and paying more attention to details, hope this year is a good one.

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.

Pierre: The romantic adventure of making wine is a strong emotion that I try not to analyze too much but financial consideration is part of my motivation, I'm not so pure.

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.

Pierre: A chicken and pork biryani made by my wife. One of my sparkling wines (not matching), The song "Stairway to Heaven" sung by Heart at Kennedy center and a Biblical series by Jordan Peterson.

