

My Vintage Year:

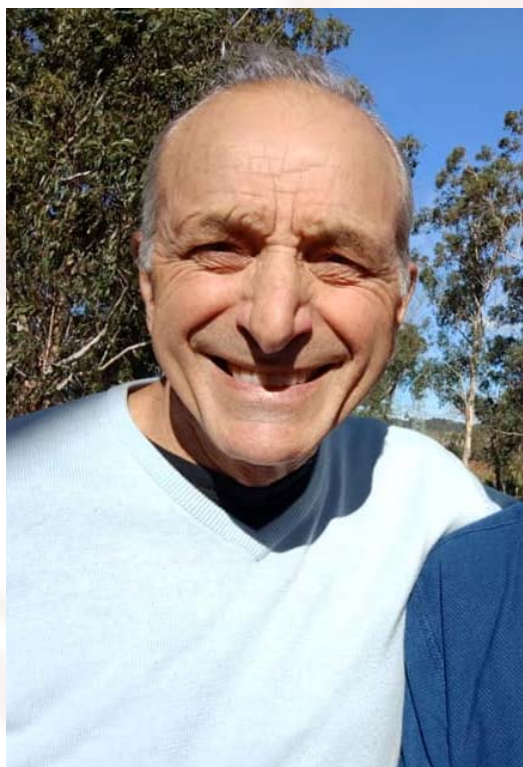
My Vintage Year:

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 **Rino Ballerini**.

Rino is a person you can easily like. That is rather clumsy English. But it gets the point across. Rino is affable, approachable and good humoured. All traits that will get you somewhere. In his case the wine guilds of both Eltham and Frankston. For he is well known at both. I like him as all do. He is a very fine wine maker. But why wouldn't he be, he is Italian of heritage and very proud of his culture. I like Italians, they are courteous, good natured, generous, and honest. Just like Rino. I was surprised to learn from the interview that a lot of his skills came after joining the Frankston Wine Guild. But that is what the Interview Series is about, discovering details about wine making you assumed but it turns out incorrectly. I hope after the reading below, you are a lot wiser to wine making. I was. Thank you Rino for taking the time to share your experiences and knowledge.

Dave Chambers



Dave: Why wine not beer

Rino: We (my family) arrived from Italy in 1950. I was 2 years old. When I was aged 8 years old, in the late 1950's, dad started making 'bad wine'. I can remember him saying 'you're best to mix it with water', but it was 'still terrible to drink'. This wine making went on until about 1966 and dad never made wine again. We never drank beer.

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.

Rino: 100% The Wine Guild came first. I couldn't believe how well the members made their wines. I didn't want to make bad wine. Nothing is easy when you try something new.

Dave: What is your first experience that you remember that led to an interest in wine, and did that immediately lead to your hobby of making wine.

Rino: In 2015 and being in the Wine Guild for a year, I was making my first attempt at strawberry wine. My friends in the Guild were very helpful to me. Without them, it would have been difficult and I still am asking questions today, and am still learning.

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

Rino: I played Victorian State league soccer and other sports, plus I owned a dairy farm and last and not least 46 years as an electrical contractor.

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

Rino: There are so many wines to choose from. For me, made by Alberto Antonini, 2016 Chianti Riserva and DOCG. He is one of the best five wine makers in the world.

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

Rino: At the beginning, my main interest was to make red wines, but since I've been making white wines, I've developed an equal interest in white wine making. The wine that has impressed me the most is the 2021 (grapes from my vineyard) Pinot Gris. It received 19 points. (Dave: And he neglected to point out a Gold Medal, and

coincidentally I am taking a bottle I brought from the Xmas Auction to my next U3A Class I run. Breakfast on the Yarra. Thanks for your generosity, Rino)

President Question from Glen Fortune:

Question: Since joining Frankston, your wine making has improved tenfold, and you are so passionate about getting it right and how you go about it. Really great to witness. Is there another part of your life where you have excelled. Because of this passion i.e. you have to do it right or not do it at all

Rino: Glen, you know me very well. In my younger days it was my family that gave me drive and motivation, and they still do. Later in life and discovering wine making is just another exciting passion.

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

Rino: I've got basic technical skills. You are right, you need to practice the skills to achieve the knowledge and experience.



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.

Rino: I like to keep the discussion simple. I like reading about the history of wine making which

has been around for thousands of years. We owe them credit for the knowledge that's been passed down to us over those years.

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

Rino: I like to be thorough right from the beginning. Picking the grapes, crushing, fermenting, bottling and measuring. You need to guide the wine and measure for PH and SO₂ as



you go.

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

Rino: Yes, wine and food are a consuming passion. We come from Tuscany with a large family and friends. You don't have food without wine. It doesn't work. It's like a marriage. If I make a bad wine, I'll hear about it from my friends and family. I've got to make a good wine to 'get them 'off my back' (joking).

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

Rino: Simple. We need younger people to join us and get involved in the club.

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

Rino: It takes years to understand how wine

works. It takes patience and skill. Medals are a bonus.

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

Rino: Everybody at the club has a lot of experience in wine making that can help people at any time. My individual influencers are Robert Chionna and David Hart.

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

Rino: I built a winery and a cellar under the house six years ago.

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

Rino: Helpful and friendly people.

Dave: What were you drinking in your 20's.

Rino: Cask wine or sometimes bottled wine.

Dave: If you could tell the young Rino, what advice would you give.

Rino: If you can't decide on specific career buy a vineyard and make wine.

Dave: What wine do you particularly enjoy making

Rino: Sangiovese blends.



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

Rino: When I have wines in demijohns and before bottling, I'll do bench trials to see what they're lacking in certain areas of the palate and

I'll blend or add what I feel is needed.

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

Rino: The biggest disaster is when I had just filled a 54 litre demijohn of chardonnay that evening and went down into my cellar the following morning to be confronted with the demijohn which had somehow cracked and leaked all over the floor.



Dave: I have asked this question of everyone. So far 100% have said making wine was never a financial consideration. What was the motivation and still is after so many years.

Rino: The challenge of making wine.

And Last Question:

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, that is 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 Bar Atoll.

Rino: My choice of meal would be a 'big' tray of Linda's lasagne and a bottle of Sangiovese. My choice of music would be Andrea Bocelli and my reading matter would be a wine making book by Antinori.