



# 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 Arthur Stone**

Arthur as you know has had significant input in the Frankston Amateur Wine Guild. He is old school. He recalls fondly the early days and the camaraderie with the members. He revealed often during the interview, which incidentally is the first live by phone interview I have done in this series of My Vintage Year, that overwhelmingly the social days were almost the reason for belonging to the Frankston Guild. That's not to say wine making was not important. But almost all holiday weekends were spent together away on camps doing all things wine. Arthur is a not so active member now. But he recalls vividly those times gone by.

The reason he made Country Wine is he couldn't see why you would make grape wine that was already available commercially. I get what he is saying here. He wanted a challenge and as he points to in the text below, he wasn't a Wine maker at the start. In his words that grapes he processed at his first effort were weed killer liquid. It may be an indication as to his persistence and skill that eventually he did become a very fine Wine Maker. He is a very interesting individual, how lucky are we in the FAWG the quantity of skilled Wine makers in our club.

**Dave: Why wine and not beer.**

Arthur: Never been a beer drinker.

**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.**

Arthur: Way, way back, I was given a box of red grapes, and I thought why not try and make some wine. I did. And it was a complete disaster.

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

Arthur: I was a teetotaler and my inner self asked what went wrong. How can I improve.



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

**Arthur:** Absolutely it did, and I have never looked back it has changed my life.

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

**Arthur:** I have in the recent year's past been a very successful Basketball Coach of Under 10's to Under 14's and I coached successive teams to region beating level championships, regularly. I was very good at it for some reason. Even more remarkable, considering I have never played the game ever.

**Dave:** If money was no object what wine or beverage would, you, buy with these unlimited funds.

**Arthur:** Sparkling and fortified wine.

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

**Arthur:** My Sparkling Nectarine Wine that won the Best in Comp at the FAWG approx. 2012

### **Glen Fortune has a Guest Question for you:**

**Question:** Arthur out of all the country wines you have tried made by other winemakers. Is there one that stands out above all others.

**Arthur:** A still wine from Chris Myers some twenty years ago made from Elderberries. The wine was entered in a interstate comp won Gold. I can

still remember the taste, sublime.

**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.

**Arthur:** It is a matter of learning and constantly improving your skill. Read as much as you can and you will still make mistakes but persevere and you will out in the end. This has been my skill.

**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 for you.

**Arthur:** I am not into the intellectual discussion as such, I much prefer to enjoy the wine making and the companionship that ensues from this.

**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.

**Arthur:** I try not to be fussy, but as

you get more proficient you get to learn the techniques and the fussiness disappears.

**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.

**Arthur:** Absolutely it is a hobby and I am excited by the notion of making good wine and everything this entails.

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

**Arthur:** Frankston Guild has so many members now and this indicates to me the future of Wine Making in the area is in good stead. Wine Making has evolved in FAWG to make commercial style grape wine and this is not a criticism. In the early history of the guild we originally made many more country wines from all types of fruit, vegetables and less from wine grapes. It excites me to see so many more people giving Wine Making a go. It has been for me a wonderful hobby where I have made many friends.

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

**Arthur:** A little of both, but, making wine that my peers approve of is most important to me.

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

**Arthur:** Chris Myers has been huge influence. He is a font of knowledge and ever passing on help that is freely given. And still does to many.





Arthur: I originally started in the laundry and then eventually ejected to the garage. As the hobby grew it got too big for the garage. Arthur goes on to describe in detail the process for “making the dungeon” according to his kids. He was on a steep block where the underside of the house had a gradual space that he dug out by hand installed a door and fitted out the space for Wine Making.

His kids tell the story that one of them at “Show and Tell” told everyone that his dad had made a dungeon where his mother was locked up in chains under the house. The joke then became the Wine Label and known as Dungeon Wines. A quite sophisticated area was constructed for wine, with sinks and drains serviced with power tiled floor and all mod cons..

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

Arthur: Total friendship from top to bottom amongst all the membership

**Dave: What were you drinking in your twenties.**

Arthur: I was a strict teetotaller.

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

Arthur: Learn better from the experience's life throws at you.

**Dave: What wine do you particularly enjoy making. Has the Guild turned out to be an ideal group either so-**



**cially or for ideas for wine making.**

Arthur: Yes fantastic loved every minute of it.

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

Arthur: No favourite tweaks but if I could say passion in wine making, if that is a tweak.

**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.**

Arthur: The first grape wine killed weeds. Is that a sufficient disaster.

**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.**

Arthur: The joy of making it.

### **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.**

Arthur: The music would be Bohemian Rhapsody by Queen, the book would be ??? and a country roast chicken made the old fashioned enjoyed with one of my sparkling wines, country style of course.