

My Vintage Year:

Today it is Yas and Rod Beaumont.

For our bumper Xmas Newsletter we decided to do a Double Interview. Rod Beaumont is a considered and thoughtful Wine Maker and once again is thankful for people like David Hart. But David would be the first to say he is only one of the many wine gurus that help in the FAWG. How lucky are we to have this fraternity within the Guild. We hear this repeated often, someone steps up to help. I suspect that both Rod and Yas are at a level of expertise now where they can offer the same advice. After all they have been making wine now for around ten years. It is quite some journey, read on.

Rod Beaumont

Dave: Why wine and not beer.

Rod: Oh, this one is easy, I was making beer 10 to 15 years before I started making wine.

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.

Rod: 2011 wine show open day. Turned up, Yas saw Debbie Pratt who she knew from the McClelland Spinners and got talking. Before I knew it we were signed up for the February wine making course.

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

Rod: As a 19 year old, the sales rep at where I worked joked about my drinking escapades. Told me it would be cheaper to drink wine.

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

Rod: No, for years I was a beer drinker, although I had an Italian neighbour two doors down who each year had a delivery of boxes of grapes. Knew what he was doing but never got offered wine only espresso coffee.

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

Rod: I cannot eat sashimi squid. I found out on a trip to Japan. Found out when a group of Japanese hosts took me out for dinner and said try this. I immediately started dry retching. The next group of people took me out asked if there was anything I couldn't eat, so I told them. It was the first dish served up and yes, the same reaction.

Yas Beaumont

Dave: Why wine and not beer.

Yas: Beer was my first love, loved the froffy top, but as I matured, I started craving fruity wines and now I love full bodied bold reds.

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.

Yas: The wine guild came first, then we purchased grapes and went on the winemaking path, removed grapes by hand for the first three years and then splashed out and purchased a crusher destemmer.

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

Yas: I loved the various aromas that came from different wine varieties. From the dark chocolate notes to passionfruit and peaches.

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

Yas: My interest in creating my own wine came later on after Rod and I thought we would tackle the Morn Pen wineries doing three a weekend. As we feel it is only fair to buy a bottle if you are tasting wine, it was quite an expensive venture and sometimes once home the wines were pretty average, so we thought there must be somewhere you could learn to make it yourself and do a better job and there it was in the local newspaper.

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

Yas: In my younger days I was a State champion cross country runner



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

Rod: I don't have a deep enough knowledge of the wines that are considered the best, so I really don't have an answer for this. I do however enjoy going to cellar doors to evaluate the wines that each winery makes. With unlimited funds, I would just expand the search to all of the world's wine regions.

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

Rod: I have been making wine since 2012. The first was so good we drank all of it didn't even think of putting it in a show. Sad really. Since then I have increased the amount of wine I make each year looking for guidance each year. Some years ago my attitude was changed when Loic LeCalvez complained about the numbers of entries in the Eltham Show that had too much tannin. I adopted a lower tannin profile on subsequent wines. The high tannin wines are drinking very well now.

Time does a lot to help sort out wines.

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

Yas: Mc Williams Grandfather Port, that is absolutely delicious and decadent.

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

Yas: I really loved creating the champagne we made in the focus group. Amazing grapes from Mike Payne set us off for success and the group of people made the whole experience fun and it was always like being with friends whenever we had meetings to organise the next step. The end product a sparkling Chardonnay Pinot Noir was amazing and I had so many compliments from people.





Glen Fortune has a Guest Question for you:

Question:

Glen: 1. So, I know you are a beekeeper and a wine maker and yet I don't know of you ever making mead. Have you ever mixed the two hobbies.

2. Also, a further question. Which one is the more challenging and why!

Rod: 1st Question: I took up making wine before I started with the bees. I guess part of that decision was that "Yes, I can make mead". It is pretty obvious really.

That is until you get down to the gritty bits.

I did make a mead and submitted it into Eltham wine show once. I was indignant when told it was infected. I said I had had one infection somewhere, this was it. It turns out with mead you need to sterilize the ingredients as well. That is heat the honey and pasteurize the must, is it called a "must" in mead? Any way I didn't do that and had the infection. Found out by pouring a sample ant painting the back of my hand. The smell told me instantly. Brettanomyces. 30 litres of mead wasted.

Strange how Eltham put infected wines out for tasting. It didn't finish there however. Having learned of my mistake I was ready to have another go. I am getting to an age where calories are important. Somewhere in my teens I think. Looking at how many calories I was consuming I did a comparison of mead to wine. In calories every bottle of mead is worth over 1.5 bottles of wine. Who would have thought that wine is a good slimming option? Since then I have stuck to making and drinking wine.

2nd Question: As for which is the more challenging, they both have their dangers. Keep your head high above the fermentation vat. Bees are more obvious with the danger, although I have spent an hour or so in the hive only to realise that I hadn't zipped up my suit. Both hobbies are relaxing just with Bees they remind you that you aren't relaxed. Ouch!

Glen Fortune has a Guest Question for you:

Question:

Glen: I have known you for quite a while now and you have always shown to be organised and responsible, but if you were to compare yourself to a wine, would it be a still, fortified or sparkling and why.

Yas: I view myself to be more like a fortified as it has such complexity and uniqueness. It starts off as something gentle and sweet, with fruit in abundance, as it ages things begin to change, the alcohol is predominant and the bouquet has become jammy, a perfect explosion of such intense flavours. There is mystery in all fortifieds!



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

Rod: I don't think it is technical astuteness, I think it is curiosity and having the right mentors near by that make the difference. Yes it really does come down to experience, but the journey is quicker when you have someone beside you pointing out the right direction. That is the strength of the Guild.

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 both of you.

Rod: I may not have the best palate in the guild, but I can definitely tell a good wine from a bad one. Who doesn't want to drink good wine? As for having the vocabulary to explain what I am experiencing, not a chance. The discussion stops at "Hey this is good".

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

Rod: I am definitely not a pedant. I feel my way, learning by experience asking questions when I get desperate. What I have learned is that the only wine that can't be rescued is infected. Keep you hygene good and you will have a drink at the end of the year. Of course that says nothing about the quality, but that is a different issue.

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.

Rod: Before making wine I was a historian (unpublished). Party conversations stopped almost as soon as they started. Then I started making wine, to the jibes of many friends. The friends have now changes their tune, and party conversations can become extended. Wine did that.

I make more than I can drink, but still want to make more. I still haven't had a friend turn down a gift of wine.

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

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.

Yas: I often do things by the book, as I fear failure, but I have learnt that wine can have it's own style and difference, no fun if everything looks and tastes the same, be adventurous and let the wine take you on a journey. I do like to make wine to my tastes, as I am the one who will be drinking it.

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 both of you.

Yas: We have learnt so much about wine from making it and sharing it with others, who will give us honest feedback. It brings people together, but it enhances your knowledge of what creating a good wine is all about. A great icebreaker at a party, people are very interested in wine.

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

Yas: At first I wanted to keep referring to our notes from the wine classes, but in the end you have to realise, this is "your" wine, change it up, experiment, if it is not to your liking there is always next year.

Rod:

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.

Yas: I loved wine and have enjoyed it from a young age, I enjoy them all even now, but I do have favourites. Yes it was a big passion for me, until I decided to give it up totally for health reasons, I miss it immensely

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



Rod: I can't understand why there aren't more people doing it. Given that, I think they will. Supply and demand suggests that grapes will increase in price and become harder to source. We have it really good withing the 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.

Rod: It is the knowledge that I am getting better, and the comments from the friends that I drink with or give wine to. It is a real buzz to have someone openly appreciate your wine. There is also a buzz when one of the sceptics thinks you aren't watching them go back for a second glass.

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

Rod: Another easy question: David Hart. His enthusiasm for wine making is infectious.

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

Rod: My wine cellar has been on a journey. It started in the kids bathroom, but then I increased my volume and moved outside. I now have built a dedicated shed for the making of wine. Who said winemaking is cheap. But then don't ask a fisherman how much he spent to catch that fish.

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

Rod: Getting in with the other members and sharing the journey. The feedback from all, not all positive, providing better direction for future efforts.

Dave: What were you both drinking in your twenties.

Rod: Beer

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

Rod: There is not a person on this earth that you can't learn something from, you just need to work out what lessons they are giving.

Yas: Equipment has become more accessible and affordable to the home winemaker and I can see more younger people becoming involved.

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

Yas: I like the fact that my skills have improved since 2012, winning awards is pretty good too, I made a lemon wine that I received a bronze for and was quite excited, it makes you want to improve to the next level.

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

Yas: Rod has been my sounding board, I rely on his input a great deal, so he is my go to person if I am stumped. Probably good as we have similar tastes, but he is the better winemaker and the more consistent.

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

Yas: At first it was in our area between the house and the garage, but in 2015 we built a shed, so all winemaking is done in there.

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

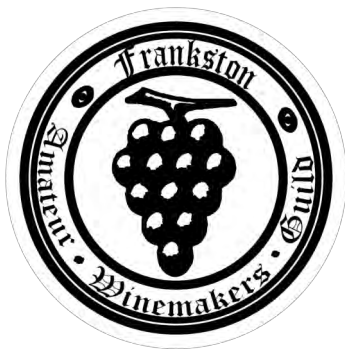
Yas: The friendships we have made and the wonderful winery experiences courtesy of the wine outings.

Dave: What were you both drinking in your twenties.

Yas: I wasn't drinking in my twenties as I had two small children. A glass of white on Christmas day lunch was all I would have had, wasn't really paying attention then.

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

Yas: Don't be complacent and safe, a little risk will set you in good stead. Jump in with both feet, remember life is short and you should have no regrets about your path in life, you cannot erase it and start again.



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.

Rod: I have changed over the journey. I started wanting to make Shiraz, my preference now is Cab Sav.

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

Rod: Everyone will always gravitate to a higher alcohol wine. So 14% is preferred to 13%. A little blend into the wine. Below 5% and keep it a secret.

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.

Rod: There is only one disaster – an infection – *Bretanomyces*. Only once, but a good lesson learned. As I said before, if it isn't infected it can be recovered.

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.

Rod: In 2012, yes saving money was a consideration. Now through the purchase of a shed, 6m x 14m, and the equipment I have bought it might have been cheaper to buy the wine. It wouldn't have been anywhere near as much fun though. I grew up with an appreciation for alcohol, but now I get more enjoyment from making 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.

Rod: Yas makes a sensational Stroganoff, with a good Cab Sav. I have recently been introduced to Saint Saens – Symphony No 3 in C minor Opus 78 but only with a really good sub woofer. As for the book, *The wanderer* by Ian Elliot and Rod Beaumont (yet to be published).

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.

Yas: I quite enjoy country wines, a little temperamental and giving. Focus groups are fun and you all learn and feed off each other and at the end you get to take your spoils home.

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

Yas: Sadly I have not been brave enough to make any undocumented changes.

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.

Yas: I was making a spiced orangello and decided 3 cardamon pods wasn't really enough so I added 8 more, suffice to say, it overpowered everything else, it also brought out the clove flavour too. Used it in my Christmas cakes instead!

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.

Yas: Love creating something to share with people, knowing I have made it and not purchased 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.

Yas: "The Verve" – Bittersweet Symphony, a Sparking Chardonnay Pinot Noir 2017 FAWG focus group, a good read, "The Shadow of the Wind," by Carlos Ruiz Zafon and a Thai Green Curry, which will go perfectly with everything.