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VIGNERONS

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Dear Friends,

Well, here we are again sitting at the kitchen table writing to you. It is a blustery Sunday afternoon with a shower now and again.

Periodically we are asked "Who writes the newsletter?" So in case anyone else would like to know, we both do, and although it takes a bit to motivate us, once we begin we end up having lots of fun - until the end when editing can cause problems.

As we write this and mull over the previous year's happenings, we realise cellar door has now been open for fifteen years. We recall our first year conducting tastings on the back verandah, or if the weather was inclement moving into the kitchen and squeezing around the table. It's still enjoyable hearing from some of our customers about the earlier vintages they have tucked away in their cellars.

We will be opening the cellar door this year on Saturday September 7. Over the past few years we have sold out reasonably quickly and consequently cellar door has closed until the next release. So if you are travelling in the Barossa later this year it may pay you to ask at the other wineries or the Barossa Wine and Tourism Association if we are open. It may save you a trip.

The 2002 Vintage came and went without any major hitches or hang ups. Although Bacchus and Dionysus weren't overly generous, the gods were on our side. Rain, or lack of it, was a problem with the non irrigators like us. Winter rains are most important for vines to replenish the sub soil moisture and even though it was lush and green on top, half a metre down the soil was dry as a lime burner's boot. Still the vines prevailed and the crop was of excellent quality but a little below normal tonnages. The older vines weren't too worried although the younger ones complained a bit. The 2002 winter looks no better. Still not enough rainfall, but luckily it's not as bad as parts of the eastern states.

This year we picked the first fruit off a little patch of Mataro or Mourvedre as the purists know it. These young, extremely vigorous bush vines produced a rather "Rambo" style wine at first, but we will see how two and a half years in American oak soothes it. All of the 2002 wines will be the first installed in our new recently (and finally) finished barrel shed. Better lighting, insulation and abundant room for storage, it will be a pleasure to use for the latest vintage.

For those of you who can remember back to our 2000 newsletter, we informed you of our delight in releasing the first of our Roennfeldt Road Reds and also the first Apricot Block Shiraz. We were very pleased with the response to these wines, but that's all history now. We also mentioned in said newsletter that we had picked the first fruit from a 6.5 hectare vineyard that we have now called Alices Block. Well two years have passed and we are excited about the release of the first wine from that block. The wine was treated exactly the same as all of our shiraz (except the Roennfeldt Roads) and has finished up another fine example of what the western Barossa can produce from young vines. Enough said by us though, the proof will be in the tasting by our

fastidious and knowledgeable redaphiles. You may wonder why the name change when most of our wine names are geographical. This vineyard is named after a couple of ladies who are very special to both of us. Annabelles's mum who was born in 1907 and passed away in 1995, and my aunty who resides in Sydney and is in her ninety fourth year. God bless them both.

In the 2001 newsletter one of the subjects written about was the poor vintage, quantity wise for the year 2000. Due to the weather conditions at flowering time, lack of rain and extreme heat it did not make for a merry time at all. One of the major problems of small estate wineries like ours is that if conditions are bad we cannot supplement supply by buying in fruit. Hence some wines that are being released this September will be in even shorter supply than usual. One victim of this poor vintage is the Creek Block Shiraz. Sadly, after musing over it for weeks we have made the decision not to release the 2000 vintage. It was a hard decision to make mainly because this is the wine that launched Greenock Creek in 1988. We believe it's not up to its usual class and distinction.

On a different note we harvested the first olives from our small grove of Parragon trees in June of this year. Joe, Henry, Annabelle and I hand picked the fruit and after a simple procedure of separating the leaves from the olives with a household fan and a redesigned wine carton, we took them down to a plant on the outskirts of Adelaide run by a very happy and charming Italian chap. This industry makes the wine game look arduous. You simply tip the fruit in one end of the machine and 45 minutes later it emerges in the form of oil at the other, into twenty litre containers and home. We picked 200 kilos of olives and ended up with 48 litres of oil, a fairly good ratio so we have been told. Leave it for a month or two in the dark, pack it and 'Bobsyaunkel'

Following on from last year we have been asked by Mr. Dan Phillips of the "Grateful Palate" organisation in Los Angeles if we would participate in a tour he is conducting for a group of 25 American restaurateur and liquor outlet owners in late August. The tour last year proved to be very successful with all of the visitors more than generous with their praise for the various styles of food and wine they experienced at our and all the venues they visited. We are sure this year's group will be equally impressed and leave our shores with a little more knowledge of fare 'Down Under'.

As with all small businesses paper work, computer work and keeping in touch with clientele and trends seems never ending and must be attended to punctually and efficiently. That's where we owe a debt of gratitude to two ladies in particular for their great attention to detail. As was the case last year retailers and restaurateurs please contact Amanda regarding your requirements and Kerry is the ever efficient lady you may liaise with on the phone at Greenock Creek.

In these newsletters we usually mention Miriam's, the bed and breakfast cottage we have been operating for ten years in College Street, Tanunda. Although it is only a two bedroom cottage it keeps us very busy servicing it after patrons move out at 10.00am and the next move in at 1.00pm. That's where Helen Filsell, our hard working friend and neighbour makes life a lot easier for us, cleaning and stocking the fridge with supplies etc. (Although sometimes it sounds more like the comedy hour than a house cleaning trio!) Enquiries about Miriam's can be made via the winery phone, fax and email (miriamsbb@ozemail.com.au), or the Bed and Breakfast Booking Association - free call 1800 227 677. Also on this number you can arrange a chauffeur driven tour around the valley if required. Ring and ask for Kim.

Well folks, we think that's about all we have to say, winery wise, about the last twelve months. Some new info and some not so new. We are pleased about how the 2000's have turned out except for the Creek Block which is rather disappointing. But hopefully the new release of the 'Alices' shiraz will make amends.

Phillip White the wine writer for the Adelaide Advertiser has been kind enough to run these wines over his critical palate, and his preliminary tasting notes are included, along with the mail order form. Once again cellar door will open on Saturday September 7 and we hope to see you sometime.

Trusting the last twelve months have been happy and healthy.

Yours sincerely,

Michael and Annabelle Waugh

The 2002 Releases

Tasting notes and discussion by Philip White

Greenock Creek Cornerstone Grenache 2001 - 15.5% a/v

You rarely smell the aroma of blackberry in grenache, but here it is from our old block on Roennfeldt's, sweet and enticing, entwined with stewed prune, and wrapped in fine dark chocolate. The wine also has sweet chardonnay-like hints of creamy acids, like custard apple and chocolate creme caramel, from the malo-lactic fermentation. The palate's svelte, yet intense, with a slick, polished middle and harmonious fine-grained tannins. It's much more dense than the 2000 ever was, but it still holds amazing elegance and poise for grenache. As the wine breathes, whiffs of caster sugar and licorice begin to emerge: it's extremely complex, and sets a new bench mark. It has really good acid, too. Eventually, after more air than anybody'll ever give it, it comes back to your standard blood and boiled roses Roennfeldt's grenache, with bootpolish and black tea tannins. It's utterly delicious and remarkable wine! 94++; now 2012+

Greenock Creek Cabernet Sauvignon 2000 - 13.4% a/v

Sharp hints of eau-de-cologne mint, wintergreen, and briary hedgerow berries give this wine the perfect varietal nose. There are deep Barossa chocolate smells and hints of aniseed and licorice, dense and compact. The palate's immediately full of delicious sweet berries. It's clean and slick, with a husky anise afterbreath. There's typical cabernet leafy tightening in the finish, and those dry, black tea tannins make it a serious claret for the cellar. It sets the gums working, salivating and preparing for food. While it's packed with these indicators of the edgy brashness of youth, it will settle down, assimilate and harmonise, and develop that Greenock Creek hallmark of opulent, smooth, luxury. It's already showing its tendency to be all elegance and stylish poise, and it's already finer and more intense than the '99. Roennfeldt's aside, it might well become the best GC cabernet yet. 93++; now - 15

Greenock Creek Alices Block Shiraz 2000 - 14.3% a/v

We've been waiting anxiously to taste the first fruit of this new vineyard for years, and what does it give us? Pure Mississippi mud cake! Spongy chocolate aromas ooze from this glass, threatening to present you with a wine that's too sloppy and rich to contain. Earthy, moody, beetroot and swamp aromas begin to rise next, providing a fascinating reference to some of the Creek Block shiraz wines of the past. Which is no great surprise, given that Alices is just across the creek from the Creek Block, although Alices does have a different soil type and rises quite steadily from the waterline to the top of its slope. The trademark black tea tin tannins of the vintage are here, giving that velvety, dry textured character, and there's enough spicy, cedary oak to wrap the whole bundle up quite neatly with time. But the palate's really sloppy and lovely, thick with that big boozy all-over-the-plate, your face and your shirt mudcake mania. Then, as if to hint at more refined opportunities to come, it leaves a particularly tantalising whiff of musk hanging in your breath. 89+; now - 7

Greenock Creek Seven Acre Shiraz 2000 - 12.5% a/v

Almost the direct opposite of sloppy Alice, this wine's tight with mint and wintergreen, enhanced by spicy, gingery oak. It reminds me of athlete's herbal bath salts: sharp and acrid to begin. But then the more moderate bass tones begin to vibrate: mannered and mellow. Mulberry, beetroot and chocolate swirl about, stylish and clean, harmonious and neat, with very fine but forceful tannins, guaranteeing a superb future in the cellar. In fact it needs more cellaring than most of the Seven Acres have required: as the vineyard's another year older, the wine's another step up the complexity ladder. And yet, perhaps because of its more modest alcohol level, it seems likely to become more elegant and stylish than its predecessors. It will certainly grow into a perfectly fragrant, tantalising tincture. 91++; now - 2015

Greenock Creek Apricot Block Shiraz 2000 - 14.4% a/v

The chocolate truck's crashed into the plum liqueur factory while the driver ate an apricot! This wine has a prominent velvety chocolate aroma, and I swear I smell the apricots there again, which always brings to mind the aromas of Cote-Rotie in the Rhone, where shiraz now grows where apricots once grew, and the wines often have a mysterious apricotty whiff. This one's immediately a big, cuddly wine, full of sweet berries, prunes and stewed satsuma, but it's also mannered, linear and predictable, tapering to serious, sinuous palate with overtly lemony acidity. It reflects last year's release, which was like a bowl of red berries, plums, and white stone fruits soured in lemon juice and kirsch. If you needed another word for the Apricot Block, try velvet - this wine's as velvety as the blume on, well, apricot skin. Characterful, entertaining and delightful stuff! 91++; now - 10

Greenock Creek Roennfeldt Road Cabernet Sauvignon 1997

Bordeaux will need a dose of smelling salts for the sulks it develops when it first noses this glass! This huge, mighty leviathan is obvious, rich, meaty, opulent, grand, authoritative - you get the drift - but it's still in smooth, level balance, and its vast array of components are in perfectly mannered harmony. Roses, beautiful sweet prunes, all the glories are here in abundance, in a polished symphony of palate: slick and cushy, with a sheen of fine acidity and invisible drying tannins. It shows perfect assimilation; long, lush and delicious. No further message, other than the brute continued to grow and seduce over three days in the open bottle. There is no other wine even vaguely like this. People will still be talking about its memory, hushed tones and all, in fifty years time. 95+; now - 25

Greenock Creek Roennfeldt Road Shiraz 1997

This smells like the most highly concentrated, intense and smooth compote of prune and plum. There are slightly clubby hints of peaty soil, coal fire and old leather couches. Then, it's also sweet and creamy - impossibly so on the palate. On the first day - these Roennfeldt's deserve examination over at least three days - it's plush, harmonious wine, with a long, sinuous finish with extremely fine tannins and even finer lemony acidity giving the tail some crunch. But those tannins take some time to unveil their true force: they were still rising in the wine after 24 hours of airing, making the drink almost devastatingly tight and grippy, and at which point it finally began to smell of typical Barossa chocolate. While it'll probably last longer than the previous release, it's nowhere near as disorganised and awkward as that behemoth, but it still needs at least a decade to properly ring all the right bells. 94++; now - 20

Note: Plus signs (++) indicate wines that will earn higher points as they mature.

Important

To maintain your place on our mailing list, please fill out and return the below slip - even if you do not wish to purchase on this occasion. Please also advise of change of address.

(Please tear off and return to Greenock Creek Vineyards and Cellars, PO Box 79, Greenock SA 5360)

Name _____

Address _____

Postcode _____ Telephone _____