

# Greenock Creek

VINEYARD & CELLARS  
Radford Road Seppeltsfield

**MAGNUMS**

Having had numerous requests from customers, this year we are doing a small quantity of our wines in 1.5 litre magnums.

*Full details in newsletter.*

Established 1984  
PO Box 79, Greenock, South Australia 5360  
Telephone: (08) 8562 8103 Facsimile: (08) 8562 8259  
Email [greenockcreek@ozemail.com.au](mailto:greenockcreek@ozemail.com.au)  
ABN 97 007 797 757



New Release Magnums

Dear Friends,

We start our newsletter this year by paying our respects to our friend and colleague, Peter Lehmann, who sadly passed away in June. A man of vision and passion within the wine industry, he will be sadly missed by many. Our condolences to his family.

**New Website**

Last year we made mention that we were looking at establishing a website. Well, if any of you for whatever reason have gone down this road, you will know about the potholes and pitfalls associated with this task. Not only is it time consuming, but can cause significant health problems such as hair loss, ulcers and brain fatigue! And that was just deciding on which photographs to use! (A big thank you to Kerry for all her time and effort on this project!)

Nevertheless the first draft is ready, and you are invited to take a peek at [www.greenockcreekwines.com.au](http://www.greenockcreekwines.com.au) - if you haven't already Googled across it. As previously advised it is not a shopping site, but purely an information source. Anyone wishing to purchase is invited to make an enquiry on the availability of the wines, and we will personally respond as quickly as possible.

As you can see we are still sending our newsletters by post – and trust that you enjoy receiving something for a change that isn't 'window faced'! Should you wish to order, we encourage you to complete the enclosed order form and fax or email back to us. This system certainly spreads the workload in the office so that our computer doesn't go into meltdown in September!

**Staff Update**

Another year, another staff change – all good! Our wonderful team of Alicia, Kerry and Karen are still handling the office work, but Jarrod and Robyn have now been joined in cellar door by Debbie. With our cellar door open more regularly having Debbie on the team means that Robyn and Jarrod get an occasional day off – and we even let them spend the odd weekend with their families! Do call in and say hello to them some time when you are in the area.

This leaves Peter and Josh (and sometimes Jarrod) handling all the jobs in the vineyard and winery. They do a terrific job and we really appreciate the effort they put into their many tasks during the year.

**Magnums**

Over the years we have had many requests to purchase our wine in magnums. We usually do a handful each vintage for personal use, but this year have been persuaded to bottle a few extra for mail order.

There aren't a lot of the magnums available, so we will limit the quantity per person until the end of September. After that we will release them as requested.

**NEW RELEASES AVAILABLE**

**14 SEPTEMBER 2013**

Cellar Door open every day  
except Tuesdays from 11 am to 5 pm

**Corks**

The new magnums are sealed with corks (as are our Roennfeldt Road wines) and you will notice inside the lid of the carton that there is a sticker which says 'Sealed with an individually screened cork from Cork Supply Australia DS100, Individual Cork Inspection.' We make every effort to ensure that our wines come to you in the best possible condition, and that includes having every cork that we use tested individually. Of course this is still not 100% infallible, but it is the best possible method we have available to us to give you confidence in our wines. We were delighted when we approached Cork Supply Australia with our idea, that they were very enthusiastic to stand behind their product and provide the stickers for us.

**2011 Vintage**

As many of you are aware, the 2011 vintage was quite disastrous for many grape growers in the Barossa Valley, with some losing their entire crops to disease. We really feel for our colleagues who were placed in this position, as it meant an entire year's work for no return.

Thanks to the location of our vineyards on the western side of the Barossa, and the skills of our General Manager Peter, we were fortunate in having a very reasonable crop. This didn't mean it was an easy vintage, but because the western location is drier there was less disease, and because we hand pick our grapes, we were able to discard any spoilt bunches.

We can therefore assure you that our wines from the 2011 vintage are quite outstanding – at least in our opinion!



Miriam's Cottage, College Street, Tanunda

Alicia has had another busy time managing Miriam's Cottage, so we thank all the wonderful people who have stayed at the cottage during the past year. With so much happening around the Barossa these days it is sometimes difficult to get accommodation so close to the main street of Tanunda, so give us a call if you are heading this way and need a convenient place to stay.

Thank you once again for taking the time to read our newsletter. We love sharing our annual experiences with you, and look forward to catching up on your news if we are coming to visit cellar door or we get to speak to you on the phone in the coming months.

Wishing you good health and happiness.

Kindest regards and best wishes,  
**Michael & Annabelle**

## 2013 WINE RELEASES

### TASTING NOTES BY PHILIP WHITE

Our special thanks to Philip for his comments and tasting notes

**2011:**

#### **On genius, botrytis, and our wettest vintage yet**

People use the word genius far too readily these days. It's like excellent. Or awesome. The people who use these words most are the least likely to know what they actually mean. Like you pay somebody for your hamburger and they say "Awesome," which indicates something which fills one with terror and dread. I would think most folks live their entire lives without ever meeting a true genius. So I don't use this descriptor readily. But I've been very lucky to have met a few in my day.

Cheong Liew, the great Adelaide chef, is someone I consider to be a gastronomic genius. Ray Beckwith was a shy genius of wine science. And so was my dear friend and mentor Stephen Hickinbotham. During his years studying and winemaking in France, Stephen realised that many of the famous red wines there were usually infected with a small amount of *Botrytis cinerea*; the damp and humid European climate encouraged this Noble Rot on vines, whatever the colour of their grapes, however famous or unlikely the appellation. Over the centuries, winemakers there had learnt to make good dry red with a little botrytis, because they had no other choice.

Botrytis is rare in Australian vineyards. Lucky for most grapegrowers and winemakers, it's too dry here, so they have little experience with it. When it occurs, most blast it with fungicide. But when he came back to Australia, Stephen deliberately encouraged some botrytis to develop in certain patches of his red vineyards, and made stunning wines from this fruit that every other Australian winemaker would call irreparably diseased. After winning much acclaim for these wines, he bravely revealed his secret, and was ridiculed.

In 1984 we sent some of his reds to Professor Terry Lee at the Australian Wine Research Institute. He tested them and certified that they contained certain unlikely amounts of botrytis-affected fruit. This was obviously not to make sweet wines, Lee asserted, but to impart complexity, silkier texture and finesse. So we arranged a tasting for some of the great wine brains of the day. Most of the white coat brigade and sanitationists pooh-poohed the whole notion, even while begrudgingly enjoying the wines.

The most open enthusiast, however, was Max Schubert, the creator of Grange. Max loved the wines and the audacity of their making. They reminded him, he said, of the days when he used flor yeast on red juice to make "nice complex mother wines" for his famous red blends. "Nobody really believed I did that either", he chuckled. "I had to get used to keeping my mouth shut."

Perhaps more than any other in Australia's winemaking history, 2011 was a year of botrytis. We now know that it was the wettest vintage since the white man first planted grapes here. Amongst other much less noble moulds, botrytis flourished in the persistent vintage rains. Many crops were never picked; picking early saved some winemakers; astute bunch selection and hand-sorting helped others. But whether they could see it or not, many made wines that contained a little of the misunderstood mould.

And what happened? In the best wineries, with the best vineyard managers and the most enlightened winemakers, the wines tasted more like the great wines of France. I'm no biochemist, but it's something about the glyconic acid that botrytis makes the grape produce, and the higher natural glycerols that occur, giving the wine a more slippery and unctuous texture, which draws together aspects of fragrance and flavour that are normally disconnected and angular.

So in this 2013 release, we have a stunning Grenache from 2012, a very fine year with flavours concentrated via lower than normal yields, and lower than normal juice-to-weight ratios, meaning the lignins and pulp in the juice was higher than usual.

Then we have the 2008 Roennfeldt Road wines. This was a vintage pretty much the opposite of 2011. "2008 will be known as a bastard of a vintage, especially for those who picked during the heat wave period," said Andrew Caillard MW of Langton's wine auctioneers. After the grapes turned red, the heat gradually, determinedly wound up until the harvest fried during fifteen consecutive days above 35° C. Michael picked Roennfeldt's in the heat that was building even before this record-breaking blitz. Those who waited for respite watched their crops wither.

And of course we have a quartet of brilliant wines from 2011, giving us an artist's palette splattered with colour from three very different paintings.

They are widely varied, and wildly beautiful.

So go ahead, remembering to enjoy your moderation in moderation.

Ka-chink!

## THE WINES

### **Greenock Creek Cornerstone Grenache 2012**

*15.5% alcohol; tasted 14-18<sup>th</sup> June 2013*

Just between you and me, Michael thinks this is a good Grenache. He doesn't say stuff like this very often. I think it's a freakishly stunning quite ripe Grenache, but I'm prone to saying things like that a lot. It has a deep, transfixing uncton about it, right from the first sniff. Raspberries, like you expect of ripe Grenache. Really rosy Turkish delight with plenty of confectioner's sugar. Maraschino cocktail cherries. The faintest hint of acrid summer dust – just enough to prickle the nostrils, and set the salivaries dribbling. It's one of those fragrances you can smell for days, imagining the woman you'd love to wear it. I'm not apologizing for being so gender specific. It IS feminine in the traditional manner. Much more Elizabeth Taylor than Gertrude Stein, if you get my perversely hetero drift. So let's drink some of it. Even after four days, it's still glowing with some sort of inner radiance that fills its cheery, glowing flesh. It's creamy as much syrupy. Soft and curvy on the outside, but severely determined and directed within. It does have appropriate acidity, but it's not something you'd mention early in the piece. And there's very finely ground bone china tannin, but that's worth mentioning only the sense that if it wasn't there I'd be talking about Elizabeth Taylor for another six pages and that tannin manages to very gradually put the brakes on. That's its job now. In the long term, it'll assure the wine lives a delicious decade in your cellar, maybe two. Or more. In the meantime wallow in those fleshy curves and all that salmonberry/cranberry/salmon roe delicacy as the fruits gradually give way to the wine's more savoury lines and that tannin which is still trying after four days to bring the whole wonderful thing to an end. No chance. 94++ points. If you love delicacies like Turkish delight or salmon roe you'll think I should have awarded two points more. If you try it with smoked salmon and capers you'll think I should have given it the perfect hundred.

### **Greenock Creek Cabernet Sauvignon 2011**

*13% alcohol; tasted 14-18<sup>th</sup> June 2013*

I reckon this will become one of the very best Barossa Cabernets of my lifetime. It's not as intense as, say, the best of the Penfolds Block 42 Kalimna, but then it's a different style completely. It's an elegant, but utterly focused wine of surprising force and potential. It has classic Cabernet leafiness in its fragrance – and a fragrance it most certainly is – but none of the overt methoxypyrazine greenness Australians seem to expect of

Cabernet below 15% alcohol, which is stone dumb, but you can't really blame them. That's what's been thrust at them since the refineries and the ridiculous trellises went up. Here the leaf is somewhere between dry black Russian Caravan tea and the nightshades, with a touch of extinguished Cohiba cigar and grilled turnip greens. The odd juniper berry pokes its head up. The fruits are never overt or obvious, but they're there in a sort of elegantly slender syrup, and they bring blackcurrant and baby beetroot to mind. There's a line of 6B Städtler pencil carbon straight up the middle. And now, after four days with my nose in it, I know this is the sort of Cabernet most winemakers would love to make, if only they could. I know it's most certainly the sort of Cabernet I want to drink. So, I tip some in. To me. The lissome finesse of this wine is really something to behold. It has a brightness of attitude and a spriteliness of form that makes me want to take all my clothes off and run around like a little kid; like David Helfgott does when he's pleased with things. (He's the character played by Geoffrey Rush, who won an Oscar for it in *Shine*.) One glass would probably get me all the way down to the shops and back before the cops got me. And if they came knocking at my door I'd give them a glass and they'd probably nude up and do the same damn thing. Under that beautiful preserving screw cap, I'd give it twenty or thirty years, which would give me a very good reason to try a bit harder to stay alive. A new high point in the Barossa's gastronomic intelligence. Greenock Creek does Bordeaux? You betcha! Stunning. 96+++ points

### **Greenock Creek Alice's Block Shiraz 2011**

*15% alcohol; tasted 14-18<sup>th</sup> June 2013*

As the maturing vines of Alice's reach into their moisture-retentive slaty siltstone (about 700 million years of age), we see different aspects in the glass each year, even without the intrusion of climate and weather. In 2009, the wine reminded me of the Mataro of Bandol, in Provence. It was meaty. The 2011 Alice's is not meaty. It's all fruit. Given the abundant 2011 rain, and the tiniest bit of botrytis, this one's much more like the very slick, black, fruity new Carignan-Shiraz blends we see coming from where the glittery schist hits the siltstone shales of Minervois, near Carcassonne and the Black Mountains on the north-west Mediterranean coast. It has little of the olive and tomato leaf greens of some of its ancestors, and even less of the breadly dough aroma that reoccurred in them. Instead, it's a heady, healthy, ultra-silky bowl of berries (blackcurrant, mulberry and blackberry) with a touch of soft prune and an ooze of quince paste. It smells sweetly fleshy and pulpy and a little like milk chocolate, which often contains grape pulp anyway, as it's cheaper than cocoa. This wine's a deadly seductive syrup to sniff. If there's anything other than pure fruit, it's an acrid topnote reflective of the stones below. Take a healthy mouthful of it, and you're up a few more levels immediately. That chocolate's much stronger, like real cocoa, and there's the faintest, most alluring hint of mint, so we'll call it a chocmint stick. The tannins are fine, persistent and appetizing; the acid just right for all that flashy character. Oh yes. About ten minutes after I put the glass down, I do finally get some olive. It's like a droplet of essence of olive leaf, and it seems to fit perfectly amongst the tannins and fruits in that very long finish. Truly beautiful wine. Twenty years. 94-95++ points

### **Greenock Creek Apricot Block Shiraz 2011**

*14.5% alcohol; tasted 14-18<sup>th</sup> June 2013*

Apricot Block straddles the boundary where very recent alluviums (about 10,000 years) have washed down to cover the foot of the fractured 750+ million year old Upper Burra Group's schists, metasilstones and quartzites (which are good for reflection of light under the leaves) of Roennfeldt's. The apricot's back! I mean the aroma, not the name. Having been a very rich component of the perfume of this vineyard's earliest vintages, it disappeared during the dry 2006-2010 years. But it made those earliest wines smell as if they had a little Viognier, which of course they never did. Imagine Michael John Waugh growing Viognier. Ha! Hardly. He doesn't have to. Here, there's just the slightest, most appropriate hint of it. It smells like somebody tipped a little apricot syrup onto their crêpes suzettes before setting fire to the pan with the Cognac. Much more noticeable is that dusty topnote which is becoming another classic sign of this vineyard. But those two aromas aside, the rest of it, like the Alice's, is all dense fresh fruit syrup. Prune, fig, blackberry, mulberry, maybe red currant, Morello cherry, ripe raspberry, juniper berry: they're all here in rude youthful freshness, yet show rare harmony and assimilation for anything of this junior age and such intensity and compression. Take a schlück, and it's pure silk, gradually joined in perfect balance with those very fine, slightly olive-leafy tannins that this little patch of the Barossa seems to impart. It's a lush, totally seductive wine of great intensity and finesse: probably the most harmonious of all the Apricot Block wines. Twenty years. 94+++ points

### **Greenock Creek Seven Acre Shiraz 2011**

*14% alcohol; tasted 14-18<sup>th</sup> June 2013*

Much more compressed and less forthcoming than the Alice's or Apricot Blocks, this Seven Acre is not giving anything away yet. After days of sniffing, I can isolate aniseed, rocks, dust and stewed quince. I mean it's all been blacksmithed into an impenetrable ingot. Oh hang on, there's mint and prune. And oily old railway sleepers instead of oak. But ... well, there's black tea in an old tea tin, too. Hot rusty galvo. And that can't be confectioner's sugar, can it? It's almost like musk fairy floss. Black currant, blueberry, mulberry and blackberry? Maybe. Well, yes. But now, after three sleeps, I'm pouring it into me and its flavours are probably all of the above but even more hammered into something much longer, much more harmoniously beautiful and even less believable. For a while it's svelte and shiny and as slippery and polished and quick through the air as a 1949 Timbs Special Roadster, which was shaped a bit like a teardrop cut lengthwise with a twin carb straight-eight Buick donk smack in the middle and only two impossibly curvaceous hand-hammered aluminium panels joined by one solitary seam behind the driver and in front of the engine. Google it. Sorry, but that's the kind of dream this damned wondrous thing triggers. And I'm not sorry at all if the truth be known. I like dreams like this. Once it's gone past it leaves tannin like the wisps of smoke from that long old engine and fruit drawn out with rapier acid like that Timbs's impossibly

long, sensually tapered tail. And then you can't help being annoyed that it's gone. Check a bottle in twelve years. 93+++ points

### **Greenock Creek Roennfeldt's Road Cabernet Sauvignon 2008**

*14% alcohol; tasted 14-20<sup>th</sup> June 2013*

If you took four or five bottles of the standard 2011 Cabernet, and concentrated them down to one bottle's worth, you'd be getting close to the intensity of this hairy brute. But then, it seems to think it's capable of being combed and coiffed like Ulysses Everett McGill, George Clooney's character in *O Brother Where Art Thou*, so sometimes it doesn't seem so hairy at all. At first, like five days back, it seemed abrupt and short. While it still does in a way, I'm realizing that that's because it's just so dense that its width and intensity makes it look even shorter. And that'll tend to confuse the novice. It's all the results of real old vines living in 750+ million year old rocks with bugger-all dirt in a drought. It tastes like a lozenge somebody dropped in the dust, in flavour as much as shape, as if there wasn't enough water to afford it to linger on the drinker's tongue. In other words, you'd have to go a long way to find a wine that reflects its terroir with more honesty, intensity and determination. So what'll it do? I reckon that about ten years after I'm in the cold hard ground there'll be really rich people somewhere with Christofle silver and a starched linen tablecloth toasting each other in candlelight with this wine, and it'll be just bloody perfection. Now I've written all that, I realize it's still parked in my mouth, and I haven't had a sip for twenty minutes. So I can't complain. Like many Roennfeldt's, it's totally unlike anything else. All other winemakers would have attempted to change it by dilution. Thirty, forty years? Probably. Points? I don't know to score it. But I reckon Ulysses Everett McGill would comb his hair with a perfect part and give it the full hundred.

### **Greenock Creek Roennfeldt's Road Shiraz 2008**

*16.5% alcohol; tasted 14-20<sup>th</sup> June 2013*

A really brave example of what very good new American oak can do when it dances with the one who brung it, this wine is probably even more otherly abled than the Cabernet. It's not quite as compressed as its brother, mind you, and does fall on the side of being quite a lot more wine-like. But like the Cabernet, it really does need several decades. After four days of air, it only began to show signs of having breathed oxygen. Even now, on day six, its fruit is snoring way down below that *Quercus alba* resin like a great beast that few would be stupid enough to wake. It's a black critter with hair shaggier than a South Island boar, and while it's keeper's done something along the lines of a Ulysses Everett McGill as far as coiffure goes, you won't be able to see how good it looks til it wakes up and gets it all combed again. It smells like Worcestershire Sauce, very old soy sauce, and eighty-year-old balsamic. You cannot smell grapes. You may rightly allege I'm speaking of it with the same sanctimonious ridicule Max Schubert's detractors did when they tried to scuttle his Grange. So why confess? Because having tasted those wines of Max's at maturity, I know that in the case of honest wine grown and made by the right determined people, with absolute faith in their source and their capacity to let it run its own life, nearly every critic, like me, can be wrong. In the meantime, I'll give this 96+++ points and suggest you start liberating it sometime between 2030 and 2050, if you're lucky enough to afford some. Praise Bacchus!



