

Greenock Creek

VINEYARD & CELLARS
Radford Road Seppeltsfield

WIN A MAGNUM!

Visit our cellar door to enter the draw to win a magnum of Alices Shiraz. Full details in newsletter, along with winners so far this year. You could be next!

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Magnums

After the great success of the magnums last year, we have again bottled a small number for this year. We couldn't do quite as many this time, so if you are interested you will need to be quick.

Dear Friends,

Last year we started our newsletter by paying our respects to our friend and colleague, Peter Lehmann, who passed away at the end of June 2013. Now, almost one year to the day, we are again offering our condolences to the Lehmann family on the passing of Peter's son Doug - another of the wine industry's favourite characters. Many of you will also know Doug for his Variety Bash involvements, so it is with much sadness that we acknowledge the passing of this all round great guy.

Corks

We know this will come as a surprise for some of you, make many people very happy, and perhaps disappoint a few, but this year we have decided to revert back to all cork closures. We have given the screw cap a run, but aren't convinced that it is for us. As our wines are produced to cellar over many years, we believe the use of cork is the best closure to allow the wine to breath and develop. Now that there are so many more rigorous tests available, we feel that in order to give our wines the best conditions for ageing, cork is the way to go. We hope you agree with us!

Staff Update

It just wouldn't be right if we didn't have a staff update to once again acknowledge our small band of dedicated workers, and also to let you know what's happening around the winery. Alicia, Kerry and Karen are still handling the office work, and Jarrod is now managing cellar door and sales to our retail and wholesale customers, as Robyn has decided to take a full-time position - but still in the wine industry. We wish her all the very best and thank her for her hard work in cellar door and sales during her time with us.

Debbie is still assisting Jarrod with cellar door, but we might need to give these two hard workers a day off occasionally, so we are just about to appoint a part-time cellar door person - more on that next time! However, do call in and say hello to the team when you are next around the Barossa as they would love to offer you a taste of the new releases.

You always leave the best to last, so we thank Peter and Josh for handling all the vineyard and winery duties - and they certainly deserve some praise just now with the morning temperatures below zero when they head out into the vineyard for pruning!



No, not a game of hide-and-seek, just cleaning the basket press after vintage!

2012 Vintage

Even though for us the 2011 vintage was very good, we know that many people have been waiting patiently for the release of the 2012 wines. Some critics are saying that this is one of the best vintages from the Barossa for many, many years. We are certainly very excited about the 2012 wines, so we hope you will enjoy them too - full of rich, intense fruit flavours, bold tannins and beautiful deep colours.

NEW RELEASES AVAILABLE

13 SEPTEMBER 2014

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

Cellar Door Magnum Winners!

Starting in March this year we decided to run a monthly competition for those people who visited our cellar door. The prize each month is a magnum of Alices Shiraz, and as much as we would love to give everyone who visited us a prize, we had to restrict it to one magnum per month! Below are the lucky people who have won so far this year:

March - Ben, from Clifton Hill, Victoria
April - Paul, from Flemington, Victoria
May - David, from Eastwood, South Australia
June - Rebecca, from Carina, Queensland
July - Jacqueline, from Magill, South Australia

We congratulate these lucky winners, and wish to thank everyone who has been in to visit cellar door during the past twelve months. The competition has been hugely successful, so we will continue to run it, so do call in when you are next in the area and make sure you enter the competition!



Miriam's Cottage, College Street, Tanunda

Miriam's Cottage

Great excitement this year at Miriam's Cottage! For those of you who watch House Rules on Channel 7, you may have noticed that contestants Mel and Bommer stayed at Miriam's Cottage! This certainly had everyone here at Greenock Creek Wines glued to the TV set on the night the Cottage was featured – no doubt this will only make Alicia busier in the coming months!! So keep the Cottage in mind if you are heading to the Barossa for a few days – just to keep Alicia on her toes!

It is always a pleasure to share our news with you, and we look forward to catching up on your news in the coming months.

Wishing you good health and happiness.

Kindest regards and best wishes,
Michael & Annabelle

2014 WINE RELEASES TASTING NOTES BY PHILIP WHITE

Once again our special thanks to Philip for his comments and tasting notes

Two big things.

First. Right at the time these new releases arrived on my back table, I was recuperating from a near-fatal bout of viral pneumonia. I needed some reassurance; some cheering up.

As always, the delivery was a moment of great excitement. It's one of the absolute highlights of every year. I'd dared to approach anything short of a wee dram of malt whisky for weeks. So imagining I'd find comfort and restorative cheer in the task at hand, I lined the wines up, polished some glasses, opened the bottles, and poured. It felt good to be back at work at the top end.

Nothing.

I'd lost my sense of smell. I struggled with those bottles for a week, scoured over my notes and rewrote them time after time, trying in vain to suck beauty and wonder from glasses that seemed to hold none.

Totally confused, I wrote on anyway. Then I chickened out.

Having begged Michael for another set after ten days - not a bad excuse, after all - I repeated the exercise, and found myself floundering even deeper in uncertainty and fear that I'd have to find myself another line of work. Senator Brandis had just announced that folks in such a situation would have to apply for two jobs a day; impossible torture for a person who writes as slowly as I do. I was doomed.

Driven as much by deadline as that fear, I made another set of notes, regardless of what I thought I was or was not smelling. These scribbles seemed even further off the track.

So I waited another week, when my organoleptics were seeping back - whew! - rang Michael and asked him to open another set to let them take overnight air, went to Greenock and tasted them again in the morning. I repeated the exercise that afternoon, then took the bottles home, and watched their ingredients bloom then gradually wane over seven days. For the third time.

When I compared those notes to the first lot, I was amazed to discover they were almost the same. Even the extravagant scores. The middle set of scribbles were way

off, but the first and the third matched up. So while I'm still confounded at those mysteries, I can say with certainty that no other set of Greenocks have undergone such a forensic examination. You'd be pretty much on the mark in thinking they've been tasted by both a novice and a very old hand.

The second thing is the matter of the closures. Regular readers will know of my thirty-year preference for screwcaps, and the delight I showed at seeing last year's release adopting them. I love those wines' pristine freshness, lack of oxidation and consistency. I know from experience that as the decades wind by, I shall delight in them most excitedly.

I found myself blaming this return to corks for my initial uncertainty about the first two sets I tasted this year. I know this choice had been made to please regular customers who preferred the traditional closure, regardless of its natural variation.

But now, after six weeks of worrying about it, I find some consolation in the wondrous nature of these wines, and the fact that Greenock Creek now sits with other beauties like Bass Phillip, Castagna and Penfolds Grange as the last few great houses to retain the Portuguese bark as a stopper.

Not to mention all of Champagne, Bordeaux and Burgundy.

Dammit!

I've resolved that this reversion is a bit like Michael and Annabelle enjoying the creamy fresh leather of their Volkswagen Passat wagon, which makes rapid progress with great efficiency and even parks itself. But there's no doubt, that in spite of its lack of power steering, silence, and fuel efficiency, they much prefer the walnut, old leather, and faintly oily reek of the old E-type.

So hush your mouth, Whitey, and consider yourself blessed.

Another point worth making is the amazing capacity of the 2012 wines to perform a trick I have rarely encountered in 35 years of tasting wine for a living. After opening, they release, if sluggishly, a wave of alluring primary fruit. Within a day or two, this wanes. It almost disappears.

Then, over the next days, the wines begrudgingly ooze out secondary characters of such convincing force that I'm sure this vintage will, corks willing, age for even longer than most of the Greenock Creeks yet released.

I've found the same thing with many of the Barossa twelves from other makers I revere. These are mighty wines. I only wish I could with confidence claim I'll live long enough to see them at their best.

THE WINES

Greenock Creek Cornerstone Grenache 2013

15.5% alcohol; cork; 94++ points

Typical of the ancient Grenache block on Roennfeldt Road, this vintage is really a very pretty thing to sniff. The topnotes are all cute baby flesh and lollyshop, with wafts of musk, raspberry, banana ester, and even eau-de-cologne mint after you've given it a jolly good airing. Fruits? Bittersweet morello cherry, raspberry and that comforting, creamy aroma of Lucas' pawpaw ointment. Along similar creamy lines, it also smells a bit like newly-painted leather, a character I suspect will turn a little harnessy with some proper age.

So. Good start. Roll it around the mouth. Fresh, it skips over the palate, just nicely viscous, but more slender and tight than that juvenile bouquet would suggest. It's racy and lithe and quite a lot more serious in intent than I expected. As it gets air, like over three or four days without decanting, the very fine-grained tannins take on the dusty nature of the old tea tin, a little like the white pepper canister character of the 2010. The alcohol isn't overt, but if you're not having it with the appropriate food - peking duck is just perfect - you'll notice a little sexy heat in your exhalation. A squish of soft ash-dipped goat cheese on rye toast will sort that out if a duck doesn't fly past while you're trying to shoot a cloud.

I want to drink this in five years, but it's a knockout now, especially if you give it a proper decanting.

Greenock Creek Cabernet Sauvignon 2012

13.5% alcohol; cork; 94+++ points

Here's the blueberries and that Clare Valley kalamata juice back again, serpentine and shiny. To sniff, it seems more like 14.5 or 15.5% - much riper than that real alcohol number would indicate - with jellied fruits like the Apricot Block. But typical of Greenock Cabernet, it then throws out a handful of juniper berries to tighten and pucker and add tannin and turn it back toward the real number. Not many vineyards can do that.

With lots of air, you might begin to see blackberries. Mulberries. Ripe blackcurrants. After a day or two, it takes on a hearty suet-rich fruitcake/nutty panforte complexity. As the primary fruits subside with the passage of the days, the intense turnip greens and reduced spinach characters we find in other vintages begin to emerge - the fruits had covered them.

The palate is lithe and sinuous at times; at others it's more fleshy and powdered with gentle tannins.

And now, after seven days, it's a gentle, smooth, blessing of a drink, with the sort of calmly caressing unctious you'll find only in wines with an extra zero on the end of the price.

Away back at the beginning, I thought this was a 92+ sort of a Cabernet. Wrong again.

Greenock Creek Alices Shiraz 2012

14.5% alcohol; cork; 91++ points

Blueberries smell meaty when you closely study their miasma. The great Brian Barry taught me decades ago that if you're sufficiently clever and/or lucky to get that smell in red grapes, and you manage to entrap it right through ferment into bottle, you're off to a brilliant start. Freshly opened, this is very much blueberry. There's also plenty of that nose-tickling quarry dust the ancient underlying rocks of Alices seem to impart. But back to meat, and flesh. This bouquet also insinuates a contrasting textural sensation, like face cream. Think a very posh Guerlain moisturising cream, with the caress of vegetable glycerol. But as it soaks up the air, the meaty bit takes over, and you get a rise of pale charcuterie produce, like kassler fat, capocollo, and mortadella. Maybe even fritz, which would befit the Barossa.

The oak is also quite evident, its cedary, smoky reek taking me straight to Linke's Butcher Shop.

Have a schlück, and before the flavours really hit, the wine gives that sinuous sensation which distinguishes the best of Clare Valley's reds: it's more like the pickling juice in a jar of kalamata olives than anything like primary fruits or berries. I can even imagine the odd olive leaf in there as a garnish.

As the dusty tannins and the oak take over the finish, the wine seems to lose its puppy fat to lemony acids and sap, and all that pale chubby stuff you first smelled gradually wanes, leaving you reaching for any of the abovementioned meats.

All of which adds up to a typical Alices, come to think of it.

I'm amused that when Michael planted this vineyard, he intended it to provide a higher-yielding, earlier-drinking product than his other niggardly vineyards. But look at this: a tricky juvenile puzzle that really needs five years to even begin revealing its long-term possibilities. Leave it alone!

One for hard-core traditional Penfolds addicts.

Greenock Creek Apricot Block Shiraz 2012

16% alcohol; cork; 94-95+++ points

As the years wind by, the Apricot Block seems more and more determined to offer a very feminine counterpoint to the stoic and tough indifference that underlies the initial chub of Alice's. In 2012 that contrast is even more overt than usual. But it's more complex and tricky than that.

There's no pork fat in this bouquet. This is all patisserie. Lamingtons and Paris Creek blueberry yoghurt. It's creamy and smooth: more confection than primary fruit. Icing sugar. Chocolate-flavoured crème caramel. The very finest milk chocolate. But the wine's made from grapes; it's gotta have some fruit, and with all those alcohols, you might be forgiven for expecting jam when the berries eventually awaken. Nope. Here you get jelly. In fact, the damn thing smells like a well-soused trifle, but all jelly, no jam. Blackcurrant and blueberry jelly, sponge cake, real whipped cream and some chocolate sauce. I can even see the well-

powdered aunt triumphantly carrying it to the table, just to show Mum how to make a trifle and how much sherry, even kirsch, you need to rattle a teetotal household.

After all that show, the oak kicks in with that alcohol to tell you it's a wine you're drinking, not a cake.

Then, with a day or two of clean country air, like the other 2012s, the wine seems to tighten and stiffen. The oak intensifies, the acid loses its rapier whip and goes brittle and the Apricot takes on a sinister turn. It changes colour, jumps the fence or has a sex change or something and even starts letting off scary blacknesses, like licorice and aniseed. Holy hell.

By this stage the drinker really starts to think there's a decade more than first thought in these twelves. Whatever their gender, these are all serious dungeon brutes when the make-up wears off.

Greenock Creek Seven Acre Shiraz 2012
15.5% alcohol; cork; 95+++ points

It's a silly thing to say while the wine's still in nappies, but I think this is perhaps the pick of this year's releases, and only after I'm falling to bits in the cold hard ground maybe somebody who's still alive might be able to tell whether this theory was correct.

In 2012, Seven Acre seems to combine the extremes of Alice's and the Apricot without so much as a blink. It has just enough icing and confection and the gentlest blackberry juice to attract your focus, then it takes you through the mint and basil patch and the stables with their horses and harness, straight across the dusty bull ring past all the blokes dressed up funny, under Hemingway's cigar, through the little joint where they eat black Iberico ham and warm olives and argue about their winnings after the bullfight, out the back door and straight over a cliff into a quarry.

If that little aromatic movie's not enough, you're welcome to taste it. It's ravishing. It slinks across the tongue like an asp. It leaves bits of chocolaty custard, crème de cassis, framboise, dessicated coconut, enoki mushrooms and maybe shiitake in oyster sauce.

Confused? Me too.

After a few days, your dainty asp turns into a twelve foot black African cobra. And now, as it finally rears up before my trusty steed, flicking that treacherous tongue about, I'm gonna have to dismount and treat the bastard rough.

Just as well the bottle comes with its own solid plank of American oak.

After you've whacked it once or twice, this wine deserves decades in The Hole.

Scary.

Greenock Creek Roennfeldt Road Shiraz 2009
14% alcohol; cork; 94++++ points

I don't reckon anybody's really gonna fully understand this wine until about 2030.

Now that's said, it's got more primary fruit than any of the other wines in this year's release.

That brand new *Quercus alba* barrel's both lemony and dusty. It's all over intense blackberry and mulberry that

seems to have been hammered into a lozenge. Make that an ingot. Give it a few days and you'll find cherries, raspberries, sun-dried black russian tomatoes, and blood pudding. It completely invades the mouth after brutalising and battering the nose. It'll fool you into thinking it's soft and fluffy one minute, and then dumbfound you with its compression and blacksmithed heart. It's at once homogenised, shiny and smooth, but cranky and surly; dumbfoundingly complex yet somehow assimilated and trying to convince you it's best left alone.

For a day or two I thought it was more or less along the lines of a mid-nineties Magill Estate, needing only the years, but then it turned into a sweaty black panther that's just rolled in sawdust and the big purr turned into a snarl.

It ate me.

Greenock Creek Roennfeldt Road
Cabernet Sauvignon 2009
13% alcohol; cork; 95++++ points

Now I reckon I know it, pretty much inside-out, I can recommend this majestic wonder as a perfect wine to drink alone, especially if you have a good window to gaze through. Treat yourself to a bottle, pick the right time of day, and savour one slow glass per day until the job is done. It's transporting, but also capable of great reassurance and contentment in where you already sit.

Away back at the beginning, I thought it was one of the most approachable Roennfeldts ever. It was stunning from the start. It was never hot, but it had the tantalising warmth of the steaming Christmas pudding in its linen sack, coming out of the wood-fired oven.

Sometimes it seemed a bit short. But its viscous syrup grew in a slow wave. It gradually grew more Cabernet-like, with tweaks of black tea and roast basil leaves. It also grew more fruitcake than pudding, with raisins, fruit mince, soft-soaked brazil nuts and walnuts. Ginger. It was doughy, like almond meal.

It always seemed riper than that alcohol number indicated.

And now the bottle's done, it leaves me teased about whether or not it would have been better with company.

I'm not fretting, mind you.

Permit me an indulgence. I wrote this for one of the writers I respect the most, having found again a book he'd done that I'd lost for years in storage. It had been a gift from that most erudite of readers, Tony Brady of Wendouree. I can think of no better summary of how this past week, in the company of this bottle, has made me feel.

For Elias Canetti
On re-reading The Secret Heart Of The Clock

I was thinking of growing older.
As I did, the ground grew colder.

Which flipped me back to getting younger.
Then, I couldn't stand the hunger.

So there I was with my warm night,
Already in the past: replete; just right.

