

With considerable reluctance by Michael, screwcaps will replace corks on all this year's release of Greenock Creek wines - except the flagship Roennfeldt Roads.

MJ & AB WAUGH
VIGNERONS

Greenock Creek

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Dear Friends,

Well I guess we all knew it would happen sometime, but we didn't think it would be quite this soon – but we are delighted to tell you that the wines this release will be under screwcap! Following our survey the other year, with an almost 50:50 response, the decision was made this bottling to move to screwcaps for all wines except the Roennfeldt Roads which of course were already bottled. Although our problems over the years with cork have been minimal, we decided this bottling was an opportunity to “move with the times”, especially now that screw caps have such wide acceptance. With any luck we will have more information on this radical change (at least for Greenock Creek Wines!) on our website in the coming months.

Now don't fall off your chairs and spill your wine – yes, we are looking at establishing a website. However as most of you will appreciate this won't be a conventional site offering shopping facilities, special offers or anything similar. It will be purely an information site. There will be details about current release wines, cellar door opening hours, some history and contact details and a location map should you be looking to find our cellar door. However, being a small, one computer office all orders will still need to be on the order form and will be processed as they are received so that we don't over-sell any of the wines. Emails are great, but an order form is much easier to work from as they contain all the information we need and can be passed on to other staff members to process. But more about the website next newsletter – it will probably take us that long to make up our mind on the content – and of course we have the opening of cellar door in the meantime! However, if you have any comments you would like to make on this big step that we are taking, we would love to hear from you.

Another change has been to our staff numbers. We are so fortunate to have our regular team of Alicia, Kerry and Karen handling the office work, Robyn in cellar door and Peter and Henry handling all the jobs in the vineyard and winery. However we have now been joined by Josh

and Jarrod, who will join the “boys” team, but Jarrod will also help Robyn in cellar door during the busy times. So if you are visiting cellar door in the coming weeks, do say hello to Jarrod.



Michael's award winning pumpkin

There was great excitement in the household in March. You will notice the big pumpkin photograph above. This was the Tanunda Show's award winner – lovingly grown and cared for by Michael for many weeks leading up to the big event. Alicia's boys (Luke and Adam) entered it and collected the prize (\$5.00!), but the real star was Michael – I guess if you can grow fantastic grapes you can also excel at pumpkins!

CELLAR DOOR OPENS
8 SEPTEMBER 2012

Then open every day except Tuesdays
from 11 am to 5 pm

Now for the important information. The 2012 vintage was a cracker! The wines are now all in barrel, but they are looking just terrific. We had a relatively mild summer, a few good hot days to ripen the fruit, no rain that caused any problems, and a lot of nice cool nights – just perfect for growing grapes here in the Barossa. Of course we still have to wait a few months before we will know for sure, but it looks like 2012 is going to be one of those beautiful even years that produce the most wonderful wines.

Mind you, the sampling that was done following the bottling of the 2010 wines again points to that rather strange even year phenomenon of producing outstanding wines. The ones being released this year are a little lower in alcohol (average 14%), are very full flavoured with big fruit. We have once again been fortunate to get a full assessment of the wines by Philip White, and his colourful and descriptive notes are attached - which we are sure you will enjoy reading!

Thank you once again to all the wonderful people who have contacted us and stayed at Miriam's Cottage during the year. Alicia has had a busy time managing the cottage, welcoming



Miriam's Cottage, College Street, Tanunda

new guests, but also having the pleasure of looking after those people who have enjoyed the cottage many times before. It seems there is always something happening in the Barossa that people are attending – conferences, festivals, weddings, etc, and find the central location of Miriam's Cottage to be ideal. So if you are coming to the Barossa and need accommodation, do give us a call to see if the cottage is available.

It is always a pleasure to share some of our yearly experiences with you, and we look forward to hearing some of yours if you are coming up to cellar door or speaking to us on the phone in the coming months. Wishing you good health and happiness.

Kindest regards and best wishes,
Michael & Annabelle

2012 WINE RELEASES
TASTING NOTES BY PHILIP WHITE

Our special thanks to Philip for his comments and tasting notes

One of the most fascinating wine experiences I've had in recent years has been this tasting of the first Greenock Creek wines to be screw-capped. For many years I've been eager to see how the fruits of these vineyards I've watched for so long and now know so well would appear without the interference of cork and the extra ingress of oxygen it provides.

Put simply, there were few surprises after all that anxiety. The wines are simply tighter, fresher, and at this very early stage, just after bottling, slightly more reluctant to put their big shoulders back and sing.

As usual, I examined these wines over several days, taking just a glass each day, watching for signs of the wines' decay. Rather than fall awkwardly to bits, they seemed rather to gradually release their intense vibrant flavours, like over a couple of days, and even more gradually withdraw them. It was all very genteel. I then opened a fresh set to remind myself of their primary characters.

If you don't have time to let them sit breathing, I recommend that you adjust your drinking ritual a little, and get used to double-decanting these brilliant reds. Pour them into a jug, then back into the bottle for serving, and you'll get double the volume. As in loudness.

On the other hand, they'll live much longer in your cellar. How best to gauge and plan their progress? Open one of each in a couple of years, and they'll then be at about the same stage of advancement as they'd be upon release had they been under cork. It'll be much easier to make a prediction then.

You now have better control over your wines: if you want them without air, you have them. If you want them with more, you can apply it as required.

THE WINES

Three vintages. The difficult 2007. The damn fine 2010. And the very tricky, wet and French 2011. Going backwards, the 2011, with its tiny botrytis influence, is amongst the best Greenock Grenaches ever. The four 2010s, with their bold new screwcaps, are astounding in their intensity and range of flavours: it's very hard to imagine that they grew so close to each other. And then the Roennfeldts: once again, totally disarming, dead honest reflections of their stony source, both needing a few more years to settle after this their juvenile adolescence.

Proceed with great confidence.

Greenock Creek Cornerstone Grenache 2011

15% alcohol tasted 17-22 July 2012

Grenache, and blends including it, surprised many of the better South Australian winemakers in 2011. If they managed the rife mildews and botrytis well, and spent much more than usual care on bunch selection, the wines suddenly seemed a lot more French in style; the cold wet year that made the botrytis possible in most parts also provided great natural acidity. This Cornerstone is certainly exotic, but there's not much France about it. I can't recall a French Grenache so cheeky and open-faced: it's a disarmingly honest essence of Grenache; a perfume you can drink. But neither does it smell much of Australia. It smells like the spicegrinders in a dusty Persian market: mace drying, bayleaf, cracked white pepper, hessian in the

summer sun. The fruits – pomegranate, redcurrants, blood orange, Curaçao orange – seem to swim in the juice from my Mum’s preserved cherries in the ’fifties. And then there’s the rose-petal soap and the Turkish delight. At which point, everytime, I just gotta take a big gulp of it. It has the form of a very fine syrup of redcurrant and salmon roe, sinuous and silky, and perfectly balanced and structured. Extremely fine tannins, barely velvety but gently drying, slow down an already languorous finish of fresh fruit and its acidity. Put your glass down, leave the table, and count the minutes it takes for that sweet and sour redcurrant pastille flavour to even begin fading. This burster’s certainly amongst the best of the Grenache releases yet, and guaranteed to outlive most with that snappy screw cap. 94+++ points

Greenock Creek Alices Shiraz 2010

15% alcohol tasted 17-22 July 2012

Beetroot. Licorice. Fresh juniper berries. Currants. Aniseed. Coconut husk. Hessian. Australia summer dust when you get out of the car. Cheeky and over the top in audacious freshness, and then moody and deep, with olive leaf greens. The palate is doughy and thick. It’s syrupy. It tastes of a reduction of all the above. A dumpling drowned in a wild crème de cassis and raspberry sauce with a splash of framboise stirred in at the end. It’s not stewed, but it’s simmered. Conserve rather than jam – the fruit’s lost none of its acidity. Its tannin is persistent but no harder than dusty velvet, and the whole thing’s so intense it’s like a bright young vintage port of illegally low alcohol and stern acid. Reminds me a little of the moody, muddy, swampy Langhorne Creek reds, with snaky Ry Cooder bottleneck comin’ through the smoke. Then, each year at least one of these wines evokes spooky Cooder slide. Poor thing’s quite awkward in this its infancy – more so than most. I’d give it three years to chill, and then plan ahead. 92++ points

Greenock Creek Apricot Block Shiraz 2010

14% alcohol tasted 17-22 July 2012

You need the Joel Grey character from *Cabaret* introducing this brazen, delicious thriller: “Hullo hullo – it’ssss ... The Critter from Licorice Lagoon – The Musical Of The Sensories!” It’s full-bore hard-core theatrical gastronomy. The teaser’s a whiff of

musk sugar; like fairyfloss. Then there might be a trace of satsuma, blueberry, and fresh juniper, but as far as fruits go this is more like solid dried fig and prune, fruitcake and panforte. 85% cooking chocolate. It’s so intense it has as an Amarone della Valpolicella nature, as if it was made partly from dried Corvina. Then, once the hooter’s got through all that, the more sinister characters ooze from the wings. Gunblue. Blackpowder. Fireworks. The forge. Blackwood heart, fresh-chopped. It has star anise. The ghost train of dark, sparky perfumes. Like an aromatic Blade Runner, it bounces around the sensories in a sinister, daring manner. Sometimes it could be the Devil – I smell pitch and his scratchy, leathery wings. It’s sinuous, intense, velvety, and incredibly loooooong. It’s strapping – it draws all the saliva through your cheeks. After nearly a week, it’s not giving up. A wicked slither of blackness. Check it in eight years. 94+++ points

Greenock Creek Seven Acre Shiraz 2010

14% alcohol tasted 17-22 July 2012

From the minute you snap the cap and let this baby free, this is obviously a beautiful, feminine wine, as pretty and perfumed as the very first Seven Acre crop was, all those years ago. But this wine emerges with the quiet authority now of a living thing with roots that get right down amongst the chaotic old rocks, drawing every atom of water and flavour from them. Not that the vines should demand much: they are pruned to be meager. As Michael says before vintage, “you’ve got to be able to see right through to the other side of the vineyard.” Sometimes the Seven Acre vines are so scant they remind me of something from the side of a Phoenecian jug; sometimes they’re so skimpy they’re more like a g-string plantation. This wine from the very old stones has most of the characters of the wines from the more generous alluvial loams of Alice’s and Apricot, but with less of their mudcake swampiness. And this one’s even more intense. Old five spice tins, star anise, generous blackcurrant and prune be here, with humourless Dutch licorice.

The more you gaze, the more dumbly you founder. It has all the blackest aromas from all the above reviews and then more, but here they seem even more serpentine, slender and slithery. It’s Carmen Miranda/Eartha Kitt territory. Imagine the perfumes those lasses would wear, mingling on the one stage. But there’s no milliner: here, the fruity dancin’ hats

were made by a confectioner working with a parfumeur. Stunning. It needs five years minimum, or lots of decanter. Then I reckon it'll go for another fifteen. 95+++ points

Greenock Creek Cabernet Sauvignon 2010

13.5% alcohol tasted 17-24 July 12

Wow. As pretty as the very best Cabernet franc to sniff, with all its lavender and freesia and musk, this sweetheart straightforwardly rivets one. After that perfectly natural aromatic decoy-oration, the squashed berries seem to ooze up through some real gentle woodsmoke-and-ginger oak. It's pretty as a picture. Blueberry. Nightshades. Eau-de-cologne mint. Olive leaf. Fresh-ground white pepper all sit in there quite comfortably. But while this is only a beautiful drink, this is no still life, and it'll never understand how many creases it etches in your face and your wallet, just protecting it from your mates. You know there's gonna be trouble. So at the risk of sounding like John Mellion selling beer (bring up the trumpets and strings), if you can't resist drinking one straight away, at least you'll have the luxury, (louder VO) once you're both a decade older, (much louder VO and ORCH) of remembering what life was like away back on the other side of this troubled adolescence. (BASS CH) It's slender, silky-then-velvety, whimsical, impossible ... as elegant as all get out ... and Cabernet like only the old north-west Barossa can grow (CYMBALS) ... Ka-boom! Just sit down for a while son. I reckon this'll really rock around 2020. Start making plans. 94++ points

Greenock Creek Roennfeldt Road Shiraz 2007

14% alcohol; tasted 17-25 July 12

The RRs are always a formidable challenge to approach. Always mighty, regardless of wide fluctuations in alcohol, they push the nature of variety, clone, vine age, terroir, place, and winemaking honesty to the extreme. Blackberries and mulberries, figs and dates are the fruits abundant in this offering; fresh-hewn and just aflame is the oak. Then there's the smell of hundreds of millions of years of history compacted and dried in the hard stones below. So that makes only three parts at this infant stage, and they're standing well apart. Like many of these scarce Roennfeldt Shiraz wines, this is not particularly complex, but it's intense, and beautifully, openly, honestly hearty and

giving. I think this is sometimes the character of ancient vines in tough places in difficult years like '07: in their venerable gentility, they become more simple, yet determined and rewarding. To keep their brights up, they turn their energy down. It's not porty or syrupy, but squishy. With good acid. A comforting liquor which could also brace one. A pre-battle tonic; an extravagant after-dinner confection.

Made the same way these old Barossa vines wines were made when the vines were babies and your Sunday School teacher's great grandmother played the organ, a perverse magician's alchemy has turned gold, and ploughshares and gunbarrels, and many other metals and minerals, into an intoxicating elixir as black as the Bible. And as soft and secretly supportive as that favourite grandmother. By the time you reach the very end of the last aftertaste of the bottle you feel like resting on her ample bosom and sucking your thumb to unconsciousness. Sleep for eight years, then try again. 94++ points.

Greenock Creek Roennfeldt Road Cabernet Sauvignon 2007

14% alcohol tasted 17-25 July 12

Three years older as a wine, and many years older as a vineyard, Roennfeldt's Cabernet shares much of its perky personality with the home block Cabernet this release, in spite of the ease of 2010 compared to the ornery 2007. But take all those pretties in the 2010 Cabernet review above, and add mint and more lavender, a lot more blueberries – dig 'em out of a Lindt chocolate – and you get something approxi-mating this. It has a little extra coffee and cedary lignite, and some pretty mocha dusting, and then you can't work out whether it's a lighter wine, or a denser one. I think it's much lighter. More willowy and slender.

I know that doesn't make sense, but this wine does seem to have all that wonder entrapped in the 2010 Cabernet above but less of it stretched over a much lighter, more open frame. It reminds me of Ben Lexcen's mantra: "If it won't break, it's too heavy." It's like comparing the railway lines of the 6.5 litre 1927 Bentley chassis to the delicate but taut D-Type Jag spaceframe 27 years later. Well, not quite. The '10 Cabernet's not 6.5 litres. Cut it back to the 3 litre Bentley. You get my drift. Start looking in five years. Don't get your scarf tangled in the spokes. 94+++ points