



ALDGATE RIDGE



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NEWSLETTER: SPRING 2003

Pruning for the season through a wet, cold winter



At work in the vineyard: Jill and Chris Whisson.

This winter started out dryer than usual but we can report that our dams are filled and the ground spongy after the generous rainfall since.

Spring also has been quite cool, with October recording the coldest morning since 1953!

We have filled the daylight hours of our spare days through the three months of winter with pruning the vines and repairing the trellising in preparation for the growing season.

The Pinot Noir has been pruned to our usual low yield.

Bud analysis on the Sauvignon Blanc suggested good bud fruitfulness however we have cane pruned the

young vines, and are expecting an increase over last season's inaugural harvest.

We are running a few rows using spur pruning to compare the fruitfulness and quality using the two techniques.

Bud burst was earlier for the pinot than the Sauvignon Blanc by around three weeks.

Woolly buds were seen on the Pinot by early September progressing to around three inch shoots by the beginning of October.

The sauvignon blanc vines showed woolly buds in the first week of October. No frost or hail damage to date!!

To screwcap or not to screwcap

Winemakers throughout New Zealand and Australia have been moving to screwcap closures much faster than was predicted.

Riesling, sauvignon blanc and semillon are rapidly being made available with screwcap closures and cork is becoming the exception.

Reds, while slower in the change over, are increasingly being sealed this way. Some of the leaders in red winemaking have demonstrated their faith in the screwcap closure by adopting it for their top end reds.

Jeffrey Grossett considers that "the introduction of screwcaps on premium wine represents the most significant qualitative gain the wine industry has experienced in recent times."*

Others have also predicted that the superior quality of red wine under screwcap will become even more obvious after cellaring for two-to-three years.

There will certainly be a reduction in trips to the wine cellar to replace that opened bottle of tainted, oxidised or corked wine and in the disappointment that goes with the experience.

It is felt that the older the wine, the more obvious the advantage of the screwcap closures will be.

There have been reports of highly regarded 15-year-old cork-sealed reds showing remarkable bottle variation and an incidence of cork taint approaching 20 per cent.

* *Good Drinking, Huon Hooke, Sydney Morning Herald, 23/09/03*

INTO THE EAST!

We are pleased to have new distributors working with us in Victoria (Todd Lichti from the J. Harvey Long Wine Company) and in NSW, QLD and the ACT (Jonathan Sayer from Bacchant Wines).

Both are experienced in the wine market and have access to the best restaurants in these states where are wines are beginning to make some great impressions.

Inaugural Sauvignon Blanc sells out in six weeks

We released the Aldgate Ridge 2003 Sauvignon Blanc two months ago amid great delight with our vineyard's product.

It was so well received, in fact, that we had it all sold out within six weeks! Needless to say we will be making more next vintage.

It is still available in a few Melbourne and Sydney restaurants which bought

several cases in anticipation of the response.

The writers, too, have been busy with the reviews and we received high praise from, among others, Ralph Kyte Powell in the Epicure Section of The Age.

He was particularly impressed with the "piercing" varietal character of this wine.