



NEWSLETTER

First Event:

Welcome to the first Newsletter from our new Phoenix C.C. Wine Appreciation Club. If you attended our first tasting, you will know that we were very happy with our first event. Feedback has been good and several members commented on Rod's comprehensive presentation. You will find his Hand Outs and Tasting Notes, from the wines presented, attached to this Newsletter.



Rod making his presentation

Whilst attendance was quite small, it provided an intimate atmosphere and promises a bright future.

Our Venue:

We are aware that our venue, the Progress Hall at Kariong, is not as central as the old CCLCWAC venue. It is however, very comfortable, air-conditioned, has adequate parking and disabled access.

But most importantly, it is affordable – and at the moment, that is its most attractive quality.

Pricing:

Our Committee is working hard to bring you quality wines to taste and at the same time, contain our overheads to enable us to keep the cost of the tastings at \$15.00 for members and \$20.00 for non members. Please be aware though, that however hard we try, it may not always be possible. Quality wines are expensive, and to provide a higher standard of wine, we may need to increase the price accordingly from time to time. But for the moment, \$15.00 and \$20.00 remains.

Meeting Night:

One of the former members of the old club requested a return to the Second Wednesday of the month for our meetings. However, responses to an email survey have been very sparse. If the change of night is important to you, please let us know, otherwise the night will remain as it is – second Tuesday of the month.

We are, however, considering an occasional change if the second Tuesday clashes with an important event (the State of Origin has been mentioned, for example) that would likely impact upon



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attendance figures. So best keep an eye on our website for updates.

Membership:

Memberships are available for \$25.00 for the year ending June 2026. Bear in mind that it entitles you to a discounted admission price to the tastings. Membership money is vital to us if we are to incorporate and insure at a future time. To date, the money collected through memberships remains untouched. Do know that you will be very welcome as a Non-Member. It will just cost you more.

Raffle:

The response to the news of the state of our finances fell on receptive ears and attendees at our first tasting were very generous in their support of the raffle, which was won by David Mayhew, with Rosina Jantke taking out the Lucky Door Prize. Both recipients were able to choose from a selection of the wines tasted on the night. Both appeared very happy with their choice.

August Tasting:

Rod has assembled a collection of French wines, from the Loire Valley and Beaujolais areas, for our tasting pleasure.

**The date of the next tasting is Tuesday, August 12, at 7.30 p.m.
Please RSVP by Monday, August 4.**

An early RSVP is really helpful for us, as the number of attendees could well be, in some cases, the determining factor in which tasting we run – particularly if we opt for a Premium Tasting, an event that is also on Rod's radar. You will find the RSVP email address on our website, which is constantly being updated.

Pre-Payment:

We remind you that RSVP and pre-payment is vital for each event. Our Banking details are on our website

Survey:

Rod's Survey is almost complete. When it is available it will be linked to our website. Please take the time to fill it out. It will assist us to provide the type of events that are of the most interest to you - our Members and Friends of Phoenix.

Future Events:

While nothing is set in concrete at this stage, I understand several tastings are under consideration:

1. Classic Australian Wines, and
2. Adelaide Hills Gruner Veltliner.

Both sound very good to me.





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YOUNG vs AGED

"Age is just a number. It's totally irrelevant unless, of course, you happen to be a bottle of wine" – Joan Collins

Many things can affect the taste of a wine, including:

- the grape variety or blend of grape varieties
- the climate and microclimate (i.e. localised influences e.g. altitude, distance from large body of water, etc.)
- the weather during the growing season and during harvest
- the vineyard soil and topography (i.e. the lay of the land including its inclination towards or away from the sun)
- the viticulture (i.e. vineyard management including the approach to planting, training, pruning and pest control) and age of the vines
- the vinification (i.e. how winemakers produce wine from grapes)
- its maturation, both in the cellar and after release.

This tasting: 6 wines from 3 different grape varieties that are widely cultivated in Australia (Riesling, Semillon and Shiraz), a young one and an aged one. The goal is to gain some idea of the taste of Riesling, Semillon and Shiraz, and the effect of ageing on each of them. Then, we should each start to get an idea of the **styles** of wines that appeal to each of us.

Wine maturation. Some wines are:

- are ready on release (Sauvignon Blanc, Pinot Grigio, etc)
- need extended ageing (top red Bordeaux, etc), but aged wines should still taste fresh and enticing, not flat and dull
- are ready but can be aged (depending on your preference) – the wines we tasted fell into this category.

The maturation of wines typically passes through several phases:

- young / immature
- developing
- peak maturity (actually more like a plateau)
- decline and ultimately, spoilage.

Riesling

- originated around the Rhine River in Germany
- suited to cooler climates like Germany (Rhine and Mosel Valleys and their tributaries), France (Alsace), Austria (Wachau Valley)
- in the New World (i.e. countries colonised by western European powers), Riesling is cultivated in Australia, New Zealand, South Africa, northern USA, Canada and Chile
- the best regions in Australia for Riesling are: Clare and Eden Valleys (South Australia), Mount Barker and Frankland River (Western Australia), Coal River (Tasmania), and Strathbogie Ranges and Henty (Victoria)
- Clare Valley *should* be too warm, but its altitude and the cool breezes from Gulf of St Vincent allow Riesling to thrive; it is renowned for its dry, fresh, citrus flavours and it can be aged.

Tim Adams Riesling 2024

- dry (i.e. no obvious sweetness)
- 11.5% abv (i.e. alcohol by volume)
- fresh acidity (makes the mouth salivate)
- light-bodied (i.e. its weight in the mouth is more like skim milk than full cream milk)
- citrus flavours, especially lemon and lime with a delicate hint of scented talcum powder.

Source: Dan Murphy's (\$19; RRP: \$24)

Tim Adams Riesling 2018

- dry
- 11% abv
- the acidity seemed less obvious than the previous wine
- more body than the previous wine
- it still has citrus flavours, but it also tastes like the smell of petrol – a common in feature of aged Riesling: due to the development of TDN (1,1,6-trimethyl,1,2-dihydronaphthalene).

Source: Dan Murphy's (\$23; RRP: \$25.99)

wrap up – both were good examples of the style; there was a fairly even split in preference for the young and aged Riesling, and some liked both (like me!).

Semillon

- originated in the Bordeaux region of France
- cultivated mainly in southwest France (sweet wine or blended with Sauvignon Blanc and sometimes aged in oak barrels) and in Australia
- Australian styles:
 - Hunter Valley – harvested early; unoaked, dry wines to be drunk young or aged 10+ years
 - Barossa & Clare Valleys – sometimes unoaked, sometimes oaked; dry wines to be drunk young or aged
 - Riverina – quality sweet wines that can age well
 - Margaret River – blended with Sauvignon Blanc; sometimes unoaked, sometimes oaked; some age well.

Tyrrell's Brookdale Semillon 2024

- no ageing in oak barrels
- dry
- 11.5% abv
- quite light-bodied
- fresh acidity
- citrus flavour, mainly lemon, but also a hint that reminded me of the smell of straw.

Source: Dan Murphy's (\$20)

First Creek Museum Release Semillon 2016

- “museum release” means that it stored in ideal conditions in the winery for several years before it was released for sale
- no ageing in oak barrels
- dry
- 11.5% abv
- the acidity seemed less obvious
- more body than the previous wine
- still had citrus flavour, but “rounder” (perhaps like lemon butter) and there was a flavour like a wine that had been aged in oak barrels (woody / honey / nutty / toasty?).

Source: Oldfield Cellars (Central Coast Hwy, West Gosford) (\$21.99)

wrap up – both were good examples of the style, but there seemed to be a slight preference for the younger wine.

Shiraz (in Australia and South Africa; called Syrah elsewhere)

- probably originated in the northern Rhône Valley in France, which is still its “spiritual home”; usually blended with other grape varieties across much of southern France
- in the New World, it is cultivated in mainland Australia, South Africa, Argentina, Chile, United States (especially California) and the north island of New Zealand
- many winegrowing areas in mainland Australia produce high quality Shiraz including Hunter Valley, Orange, Canberra and Hilltops (in New South Wales), Heathcote, Beechworth, Grampians, Great Western and Pyrenees (in Victoria), Barossa Valley, Eden Valley, McLaren Vale, Clare Valley and Adelaide Hills (in South Australia) and Great Southern (in Western Australia); there is also a tradition in Australia for Shiraz (even top-class examples) to be produced by blending the fruit from more than one region
- recently, some Australian producers have started labelling Shiraz as Syrah: “Syrah is often associated with a more elegant, savoury, and structured style, while Shiraz is typically linked to a bolder, fruit-forward, and sometimes spicier profile” ... but don’t count on the labelling to indicate style.

Jacob’s Creek Reserve Shiraz 2022

- Jacob’s Creek Reserve wines are sourced from specific, quality-conscious areas and more involved winemaking techniques are adopted
- this Shiraz was sourced from unspecified vineyard areas in South Australia and was aged in oak barrels
- dry
- 14% abv
- medium- to full-bodied
- medium acidity
- quite mild tannin (feature that is more common in red wine which can be bitter like strong, cold black tea and leave the mouth feeling dry)
- not strongly flavoured; perhaps a hint of plums and no apparent flavours associated with barrel maturation – quite disappointing.

Source: Cellarbrations (\$16.99)

Jacob's Creek Reserve Shiraz 2016

- this Shiraz was sourced from unspecified vineyard areas in the Limestone Coast region of South Australia (which includes the famous areas of Coonawarra and Padthaway, but also some newer areas like Robe, Mount Benson, Wrattenbully and Mount Gambier) and was aged in oak barrels
- dry
- 14.3% abv
- medium- to full-bodied
- medium acidity
- medium intensity flavours that included plums and spices with a hint of smokiness (probably from having been aged in oak barrels) – it was still in good condition, but a general agreement that it was time to drink it before the “decline” stage of maturation sets in.

Source: Dan Murphy's (\$17; RRP: \$18.99)

wrap up – there seemed to be a broad consensus that Jacob's Creek Reserve Shiraz 2016 was much superior to the Jacob's Creek Reserve Shiraz 2022. I suspect that this is not due solely to the additional age of the 2016 wine, but it also reflects the likelihood that its fruit came from a superior source and that it received more attention from the winemakers in the winery. In short, I don't think that the Jacob's Creek Reserve Shiraz 2022 will ever be as good as the Jacob's Creek Reserve Shiraz 2016 that we tasted. My personal recommendation for a well-priced current release Aussie Shiraz is the Taylors Special Release Shiraz 2022, available in Aldi (they're probably selling the 2023 vintage now).

ROD KINMOND