

grapevine



CLUB MEETING

Wednesday 3 October 2018

Commences 8pm (please be punctual)

Guest Presenter

MICHAEL TREMBATH

Italian Wine Importers Extraordinaire

Theme: "Vino Biologico"

Exploring Organics and Biodynamics

Self Explanatory really... given the full moon is upon us, this is timely! Once again much to get through starting with a suitably natural fizz

You need to be on time so the meeting can get underway promptly to enjoy everything he has to offer.

Guests are most welcome BUT this is usually very well attended so please ensure you contact James before arrival.

September Committee Meeting

The September Committee meeting was held at Brendon and Susan's residence.

The theme: Alcohol gets healthy.

The meeting was as usual, very active with the committee coming to terms with the theme and establishing the relative merits of organic, biodynamic and botanical wines.

The Winner: 2016 Inkwell Shiraz/Primitivo "road to joy" – 20 points – Brendon

Second place: 2016 Pig in the house – organic shiraz – 19 points Tony (who else!!)

Third place: No vintage, La Cantina Dry Red – King Valley – 12.5 points – Kaye

The "other" offering – 2010 No label, no chemicals, VINO Novello – James – 1 point

Valiant attempts by Graeme and Andrew to justify drinking aged wine failed to impress the judges in this instance – general opinion – "undrinkable"

To be fair to James, this example highlighted the perils of aged, corked wine in this category – consume sooner than later.

Winemakers using biodynamic methods maintain farming methods that use composted cow manure for soil and vine growth.

Biodynamics methods maintain better harmony with the soil and achieve a better balance between sugars, acids and tannins, without the use of pesticides and fertilisers resulting in vegan friendly wines.

Committee thanked Susan for the table setting and supper.

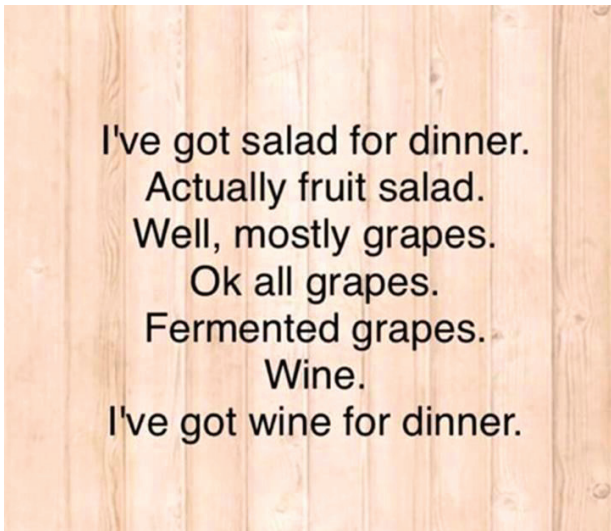
Purchases by guest/s

Note – members are responsible for payment for any wine purchased by their guests and for payment for other Club activities their guest signs up for.

Calendar of Events 2018

- Casual Dinner 17 October (see separate flyer)
- November – AGM
- 5 December – Christmas Dinner

Dates are to be advised.



The Shiraz Club of Victoria Inc.

President:	James Taylor	9528 2888
Secretary:	Janne Williams	9819 2373
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This is an interesting piece on wine additives from Mark Gifford at Blue Poles Vineyard (Margaret River), one of my favourite producers:

Additional Effect...

Now I am not keen on making this a topic which is a for or against, all guns blazing, upscale rant, or any such nonsense – we are much too civilized for that here in Blue Poles land. But, during a conversation with Clive Otto during a barrel tasting he did bring up some interesting points about “additions” to wine and how various groups add and subtract through permissible inputs during the wine making process. You get the feeling from the chitter chat out there in internet world that there are only two groups of wine makers:

1. Natural: Where nothing is added apart from perhaps some Sulphur to protect the wine from exploding.
2. Commercial: Where the white lab coats add everything under the sun to concoct a wine which starts with grape juice.

Now, yes there is the natural group which stick to their philosophies and bless them. But my interest is in the commercial area and how this subset accounts for about 99% of all wineries out there – from the largest to the smallest. And the spread of wine making philosophies is as wide as the range of wines produced.

What makes this discussion so interesting is that most people have absolutely no idea on what actually is permissible with regards to wine additions. Many have heard about adding “acid,” some have heard about the French “chaptalization” which is the addition of sugar in some European wine regions, and also many have heard about “egg whites” to fine the wines. But most would have no idea on how extensive the list of additions actually are, and as a true friend I offer you access into this murky world. If you follow this link here you get transported to the Wine Australia Wine Compliance guide – now skip down to pages 5-7 and there you will see an abbreviated list of all the “extras” you can put into (and take out of) a wine. The “extras” are broken down into two groupings – Additives and Processing Aids and I will discuss each separately.

Additives is the easiest group to understand. This is a list of mostly wine products that are present in most wines already – various acids, tannins, grape juice and extracts, with some ferment bi-products like yeast, carbon dioxide, and Sulphur. There is nothing really funky there – even the odd named ones (Dimethyl decarbonate, Sodium carboxymethylcellulose), are pretty benign and can be found naturally in a fermented must. The range of acids is huge and implies that you could skip one whole step of the wine making process by neutralizing the acetic acid and then adding the malic acid without having to wait for the malic fermentation process – kinda spooky.

Where the fun starts is in the next group – Processing Aids. This group of additions to a wine is used to complete specific tasks – with the big ones being making

the wine look good and to get rid of off-flavours. The “cleaning” ones are things like egg whites, isinglass, gelatin, even clays like perlite and bentonite. The “flavor altering” ones are a huge spectrum of alkalis (knocking out the acids), proteins, all types of oak products, and some that just appear nasty to neutralize the smell of rot and other rather off-putting aromas and tastes.

And this is the odd thing about these additions and processing aids – the cheaper your wine, the higher the inputs of these products. Well-tended clean grapes actually need very little in the way of additions and help – they “make themselves” (very much like Blue Poles!) is often the term used as these grapes are mostly picked with balanced acids levels, no rots or moulds, good strong skins and pips for tannins, and little delay between picking and processing. Many of these additions and processing aids are associated with cheap crappy grapes, or in some rare cases just simply overzealous wine making.

There has been a push in recent years to have all additives and processing aids listed on the wine label to inform the consumer. The list on many cheaper wines would be similar to that seen on the back of a pack of gummy bears – ridiculously long. And it harks back to the fact the grapes which make these wines are crappy, the wine making is over zealous, and the ambition is to produce “product.” This is but one of the many reasons why I always drink wines made from small producers, as who knows what has been added to the cheap goon bags and bottled dross that fills the liquor barns out there today? If you are thinking that having restrictions on these additions somehow protects the consumer, think again, within the list of processing aids everything except cyanide has NO limit – the term used to control their use is GMP (Good Manufacturing Practice) and this gives you a clue to the thinking here, it is a manufacturing process.

If you buy fresh foods, look at the back of your food products when shopping, get free range eggs or meats, buy good coffee and ethical chocolate, or any such concern on the products you put into your body – why on heaven’s earth would you buy cheap plonk? Yeah, it is cheap, but so is that Chinese garlic that you know contains bleach and gawd knows what. Your liver is busy enough processing the alcohol from your delicious wine, don’t distract it with various chemicals that are not adding to your health if you don’t need to.

To avoid this “additional effect,” drink less and drink better – works out the same cost wise in the long run and I guarantee you it is much more enjoyable and healthier than much of the swill filling the shelves of the liquor stores today.

Mark Gifford
Blue Poles Vineyard