

# Grampians Estate News

Issue 2

August 2006

## Fantastic News

The 2004 Rutherford Sparkling Shiraz won GOLD at the recent Melbourne Wine Show

This follows the Top Gold at last month's Cowra Wine Show

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## Fire devastates Grampians Estate Vineyard

Sunday January 22nd 2006 will remain forever in the minds of local residents as the day the biggest fire in 100 years swept through 200,000 acres in half a day. 60,000 sheep perished, homes were destroyed, and farm assets burnt to the ground.

Thermopylae, the farm on which the vineyard is located was particularly hard hit, all bar the homestead, woolshed and immediate buildings burnt. Some 3700 sheep died.



Sadly, the vineyard was also badly affected, with all but one acre of vines cooked or burnt. The prized shiraz vines had recently been mulched with pea

straw, further exasperating the problem. The chardonnay vines were mostly "fried" and fortunately a large proportion have re-shot at the base, however most of the shiraz were also burnt around the trunk, thus resulting in 4 of the 5 acres of shiraz having to be replanted.



Special thanks to Bruce, Paul, Bill, Wayne and others who got together, sourced dripper tube, laid it out and got water onto the vines within 5 days of the fire, otherwise there may have been no re-shooting.



## Inaugural Sparkling Shiraz to be launched

Grampians Estate will officially launch the 2004 Rutherford Sparkling Shiraz at a special tasting at The Royal Mail Hotel in Dunkeld on Friday, September 8th. (See details p4)

Sourced exclusively from the Grampians Estate vineyard, it was matured for 12 months before being taken to Blue Pyrenees Estate near Avoca. There, the 12 month process saw it made by the traditional *Methodo Champenoise*, with

final disgorging and bottling in June.

The finished product is deep crimson-purple in colour and rich in berry flavours. It has been closed with a crown seal, the sparkling equivalent of the screw cap.

If you can't make the launch, make sure you buy some now before it is all sold out. As usual, purchases through the Wine Club contain **special prices**.

## More on the fire

Huon Hooke, Sydney Morning Herald 7/3/07:

*Then came January 22, 2006. A stinking hot, north-wind day of the type all people on the land dread in Western Victoria. A fire raged through the Grampians, which form part of the tail-end of the Great Dividing Range, charring the land, wrecking fences and out-buildings and killing 3500 head of the Guthries' sheep. It scorched 95% of their 1,300 hectares of land*



*and vineyard, mercifully sparing their house and as luck would have it, their new wine shed. The flames came within 10 metres of the shed.*



Photo: Shearers Quarters



Photo: Mafeking burning



As one can imagine there was a heavy toll on wildlife.



Photo: Thermopylae and Major Mitchell Plateau

## The recovery—what's happening?

Now over six months since the fire, the recovery continues. Volunteer groups and individuals alike have made a huge contribution across the district, particularly with the fencing. Thermopylae alone has 60km to rebuild or repair. Sheep have been replaced, sheds and cottages are being rebuilt and trees replanted.

The vineyard was watered throughout the autumn to maximize regeneration. With winter, the few sur-



living vines have been pruned, the rest have been lopped with the chainsaw just above the ground. Those which have reshot are pruned to two two-bud spurs from which a new trunk will be grown, those with no life have until the end of September to show

life or they will be extracted and replanted. Possibly 3500 shiraz vines (about 4 of the 5 acres) and 300 chardonnay vines will need to be replaced.

Then there is all the trellising to complete, connecting a training string to the wire, and training the new vines.

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Thanks to the generosity of fellow wine industry people, there will be a 2006 vintage after all.

Some 8 different wineries have contributed shiraz grapes or juice, from which interesting blends will evolve. Contributions came from Beechworth, King Valley, Macedon, Pyrenees (2), Grampians (2) and Henty wine regions. A fantastic gesture.

Similar devastating events have occurred before: Heathcote win-

## 2006 Vintage — what's happening?

ery Jasper Hill was burnt in 1987 and Geelong winery Bannockburn lost a crop to hail in 1997. On each occasion friends donated fruit or juice and on both occasions, they produced a 'Friends' Shiraz. Grampians Estate can now do likewise.

Various prefix's are being considered to put in front of 'Friends'

Shiraz on the possible 3 blends: Phoenix, "The Ashes" (it is an Ashes year), Black Sunday, Red Embers, Grapes of Wrath, Ring of Fire (Johnny Cash). I'm on Fire (Bruce S.), Flame Trees (Cold Chisel). Further suggestions?!

The chardonnay picking did proceed and about half a tonne was picked. The footy club has never had it so easy. It should make about 35 dozen bottles of slightly smokey flavoured wine to be labeled Charred-onnay.

## Streeton dinner at the Royal Mail Hotel in Dunkeld—Feb 2006

A very memorable dinner was held at the Royal Mail last February.

As a major sponsor of the inaugural Western Victoria Wine Challenge held in Ararat last October, the Royal Mail included as part of the Consumers Trophy for Best Wine of the Show (2003 Streeton), an offer to host a special dinner.

Despite the fire, the dinner went ahead. Over 80 people attended a magnificent night, giving Tom and Sarah great support just 5 weeks after the fire.

The food was simply delicious (thanks to chef Cameron) matching wines beautifully. A sneak preview of the sparkling went down well, but the pair of Streetons were

the stars of the evening.

Tom and Sarah are working on winning the trophy again...

### MENU

#### Canapes

*2004 Grampians Estate Rutherford Sparkling Shiraz*

Tasmanian scallop ceviche, green papaya and mint salad with nahm jim dressing

*2005 Garden Gully Riesling*

Wild rabbit and confit shallot pithivier with a parsnip and basil puree and Canded walnut gorgonzola salad and baby mache and a warmed apple vinaigrette

*2004 Grampians Estate Mafeking Unwooded Chardonnay*

*2004 Grampians Estate Mafeking Gold Chardonnay*

Lamb two ways, braised shank and spiced blood plum tortellini with a Frenched, rare baked rack, green lentil de puy and natural jus

*2003 Grampians Estate Streeton Reserve Shiraz*

*2001 Grampians Estate Streeton Reserve Shiraz*

French Raclette, Fromage d'Affinois, Reggiano Parmigiano served with quince paste and muscatels

*Garden Gully Tokay*

## Garden Gully News

*Garden Gully Grampians Wine and Produce*, our 7 day a week cellar door has been open a year and a half now and business is good, despite the post fire impacts of lower tourists in the region.

We now have a greater range of wines between our three wineries with Garden Gully additions being its long awaited return of sparkling shiraz and a rose. Spring will see the release of a reserve shiraz

and an estate shiraz from its 60 year old vines, the first under our management.

A visit during winter sees hot soup and muffins on the menu, together with the usual cheese platter. The coffee machine continues to get a good workout.

Last month, Garden

Gully celebrated the return of its sparkling shiraz at the Red Banquet at Garden Gully. 85 guests dined on beautiful food prepared

by Gillys of Hamilton, each of the 7 courses being matched by one of the groups wines.

Very friendly staff so call in!



## Grampians Estate Wines—new releases

The much acclaimed 2003 Streeton Reserve Shiraz has SOLD OUT, so we've brought forward the release of the **2004 Streeton Reserve Shiraz**. A very elegant wine, smooth and silky with a fine peppery nose. Similar style to the 2003. Limited supply, don't miss out.

The **2004 Rutherford Sparkling**

**Shiraz** is packed in 6 bottle cartons. \$150 per 6 bottle pack, delivery free. Stock up for the Spring racing season. Take my word on it, its superb!

The **2004 Mafeking Shiraz** comes in a screw cap, so no more corked wines. A powerful wine it too needs a little more time but still great to attack now. A real bargain

at \$18/bottle.

The **2005 Mafeking Chardonnay** is lightly oaked, well-balanced and exhibits good fruit favour.

The **2005 Mafeking Unwooded Chardonnay** should prove as popular as the 2004, fruity, straightforward, easy to drink, good value.



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*Grampians Estate is a boutique winery selling premium shiraz and chardonnay wines. The grapes are all hand-picked and Estate grown.*

*Availability is primarily through mail order (Wine Club and Web) and our cellar door at Garden Gully in Great Western, however the wines are available at many local Western District restaurants, cafes and pubs..*



*Garden Gully Cellar Door on the Western Hwy near Great Western.*

*Look for red flags.*

## Some fire heroes

### Couchie



- Legend
- Brownlow winner
- Saved 1700 sheep

### Jonty Rhodes



- Legend
- Speed machine
- Saved 1700 sheep

### Billy Brownless



- Legend
- Overweight
- Saved no sheep

## EVENTS

The Royal Mail and Grampians Estate invite you to

### The New Release Tasting

Friday 8th September 2006

6pm—8pm

Canapes and wines \$30

- 2004 Rutherford Sparkling Shiraz
- 2004 Streeton Reserve Shiraz
- 2004 Mafeking Shiraz
- 2005 Mafeking Chardonnay

Join us for dinner after the tasting and/or stay the night.

RSVP: Restaurant or Bistro reservations will be available to guests attending the launch. Please reserve your table when purchasing tickets. 0355772241 or [reservations@royalmail.com.au](mailto:reservations@royalmail.com.au)

The Ballarat Wine Show awards night comes up on Saturday 9th September at the Mining Exchange in Ballarat. All of the entries to the show are available for tasting prior to the dinner, enabling wine connoisseurs and the like to see for themselves the difference between award winning wines and the also-rans

The Western Victoria Wine Challenge will be held in Ararat on October 7th, with a black tie dinner to announce the awards. Guest speaker is Jamie Oliver and the trophy wines are served with the meal. Approx cost is \$85.

Unlike traditional wine shows, 8 of the 9 Challenge trophies are awarded by a panel of 30 'consumers' from various wine and food groups across western Victoria. The area includes the Ballarat, Pyrenees, Grampians and Henty wine regions. Last year it was the 2003 Streeton which scooped the pool, who will it be this year?

## Other News

Grampians Estate has received its first export orders. This year wine will be going to Sweden, Norway and Holland.

The Unkles and Sinclair families very generously held a Phoenix evening in Melbourne last month to help with the fire recovery effort. A fantastic night, thanks.

Ford turned 8 on Aug 7th. He now has a 50cc motorbike as his preferred mode of transport. He also leads the Rural Finance Footy Tipping as 'Ford Falcon'.

Polly enjoys an active life, this year doing Auskick, swimming, netball. The highlight of the year will be running out on the MCG on Aug 13 with the Auskick team.

***Don't forget the WEB site...***

For all the news and views got to [www.grampiansestate.com.au](http://www.grampiansestate.com.au)