

SPRING VALE

FREYCINET COAST, TASMANIA

A family passion.

HARVEST 2007



The rain is coming down at SpringVale, and the weatherman on the radio says tomorrow it's turning southerly. Not welcome news for the pruners. We could have used this rain last summer, when the whole state (and the rest of the country) was being parched and burnt as never before. You may have seen the bush fires up and down the East Coast of Tasmania in the press, with the area around St Helens being ravaged and the whole state being blanketed in plumes of smoke. The smoke didn't affect our grapes as it did in north-east Victoria (they were like little green peas at the time) but the fire did threaten to beat its way to our doorstep. Fortunately, the wind changed direction, turning the fire back on itself just in the nick of time. The record drought led to the lowest yields we have experienced since 2002, and judging by the wines just bottled it seems that quality has also followed the 2002 vintage, with great intensity being the consistent thread between the wines.



Vintage Report

One word was on the lips of most cool climate winegrowers during the 2006–7 season: FROST. (Actually it was probably preceded by at least one expletive.) Spring Vale was not immune from the intense frost pressure during October, having experienced about ten frost events requiring protection measures. Overhead sprinklers keep the frost at bay, but are very costly in terms of water consumption. The amount of water that had to be applied to the vineyard meant that the lucerne paddock had to be cut off from irrigation earlier than was hoped, and it was very touch-and-go with water for the vineyard later in the season. Rain in early March got us over the line, and we started harvest with Sparkling base (Chardonnay, Pinot Noir and Pinot Meunier) on March 20th.

The yields from the 2007 vintage were ridiculously low. Take the Gewürztraminer for example. Normally we would expect 3–4 tonnes of fruit. This year it was a bit over 800kg! Gewürz isn't the only sad story. Our Pinot Noir crop was down to 40%. Pinot Gris was down to 60%. Chardonnay was, strangely, almost unaffected, giving us more or less normal yields. The light crop loads had the effect of compressing harvest substantially. All varieties came in on top of each other, so it was pretty crazy around the winery for a few weeks there. The upside of a lower overall crop is that winery space is relatively easy to come by, and with our total crush slipping from 60 tonnes to 28, there were plenty of vacant tanks and barrels. However, it takes as much work to get 1000 litres ready to bottle as 10,000 litres, so the winemaking team have still been busy. The wines we have to show for our work are truly impressive.

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New Releases

2007 Gewürztraminer

A product of obscenely low-yielding vines. Intense, with heady aromas of musk, guava and roses. A delicate, finely-structured palate with great length of flavour. Extremely limited.

2007 Pinot Gris

The 2006 Pinot Gris was a bit of an oddity for us. Sweeter than our typical style of Gris, big, rich and fat. It was probably our most popular Pinot Gris ever at the cellar door, but some of our hardcore Gris fans were somewhat taken aback by the level of sweetness. The 2007 vintage is a return to the drier style. Aromas of pear and banana, with some grip on the palate and a very persistent finish. Raises the bar for Pinot Gris at Spring Vale.

2007 Chardonnay Junior

Previously known as the Unwooded Chardonnay, this vintage fits the mould of previous years, being made in a style that is ready to drink, with or without food. This wine is known for being gluggable, and the 2007 has the extra bonus of having quite a complex palate. A talc, chalky texture with a smooth finish. Packed with melon and pineapple flavours, this wine is certain to be a crowd-pleaser, at a crowd-pleasing price.

2007 Pinot Junior

Talk about value for money. This little beauty is 55% Pinot Meunier and 45% Pinot Noir, so it's complex and very interesting. Typical Pinot Noir aromas of strawberry and spice, with an underlying leathery, earthy character thanks to the Pinot Meunier. Soft tannins and generous flavours make this a great everyday Pinot. To our knowledge, a one-of-a-kind wine.



The recent bottling also included 2006 Chardonnay and 2006 Pinot Noir, neither of which are due for release until further down the track. The current vintages of these wines are looking smart at the moment. The 2005 Chardonnay has really benefited from more time in bottle. It is still Kris and Dave's favourite wine, being funky and savoury – Chardonnay outside of the norm. It is best served at room temperature after decanting. It will remain at its current price of \$23 per bottle for the time being, even though it is constantly out-performing other, far more expensive Chards in our benchmarking tastings. The 2005 Pinot Noir has received much attention in the last twelve months, having been reviewed in several publications with national distribution. We have enough stock to get us through to just this side of Christmas.

We do have a handful of cases of the 2006 vintages of Unwooded Chardonnay and Pinot Gris still available at the time of printing, but running out fast. These will be sold on a first come, first serve basis.

News



Labels

The new wines are sporting a minor facelift. For practical purposes, our label needed a bit of a makeover – it was simply too large, giving us problems with keeping it straight when it came to applying it onto the bottles. The label is now split into a front and back label, with the back one featuring a barcode and text and the front one featuring the old map with which everyone is familiar. We also have a new sparkling label, which, in a break from tradition, is completely different from all the other labels. It has the Lyne family seal as its sole imagery, continuing the theme of that particular wine being a “Salute” to Jack Lyne (Rodney’s father who died the year before the vineyard was planted.) The first vintage of Salute to have this new label will be the 2005, which is due for release around Christmas time.

Half-bottles

For the first time, we are offering almost all of our wines for sale in half-bottles. Last year, we put some of the 2006 early whites into half-bottles for the purpose of sampling in the cellar door. When we open a bottle in the cellar door for tasting, we know that by the end of the next day, the wine is not looking at its best, and so must be discarded. Having the wines in half-bottles has saved us a huge amount of wine, because we are tipping out half as much. People started noticing the little bottles we were using and wanted to buy them, and there has also been a great deal of interest in them from the wholesale market. So in 2007 we decided to put a significant quantity of every wine into a half-bottle and just see how they go. They make cute little packages and are also convenient for when you don’t want to (or know you shouldn’t) drink a whole bottle. It also means you can change wines when you change courses – start with a Gris and then go on to a Chard or a Pinot with the main meal. Unfortunately, we didn’t have enough 2007 Gewürz to put any into half-bottles, and Sparkling goes in the “too hard” basket. We have put quite a bit of the 2006 Pinot Noir into very sexy Italian half-bottles, but they won’t be for sale until that wine is released later in the year.

The Swansea Barrel

This summer will see work commencing on our very own wine bar and café in Swansea. Swansea is fast developing a reputation as a “foodie” destination, with two new fantastic fine dining restaurants both receiving rave reviews over the last twelve months, namely “The Banc” and “Ebb”. Our wine bar (The Swansea Barrel) will provide a groovy atmosphere for people who want a casual bite to eat and a glass of wine. It will also operate as a bar, with a full bottleshop out the back. The Swansea Barrel has been operating as a bottleshop in different premises in Swansea since 2003, and it has always been an aspiration to take this business one step further to a wine bar. One of the aims is to have a strong focus on wine education, so there will hopefully be enough local interest to hold wine education events. The food will be designed by Kris, and it really is a very exciting project for the whole team. We hope to be open by Easter 2008.

Other News

Rodney and Lyn’s youngest son, Tim, and his wife, Kellie have settled in to life at Spring Vale nicely since their arrival in September 2006. Tim has taken over Rodney’s duties as General Manager, while Kellie has been doing a bit of admin work and also brainstorming with Kris on functions. We have nearly all the facilities already at Spring Vale to host functions, so we are kicking off that side of the business with a wedding in March 2008. Kellie and Kris are both very excited about the prospect of designing functions and coming up with food ideas to suit. Their flair in these departments is obvious.

We hope you have enjoyed reading about the latest from Spring Vale, and we trust you will enjoy drinking our wines as much as we enjoy producing them.

The Core Spring Vale Team

Rodney and Lyn Lyne
Owners. The Spring Vale Patriarch
and Matriarch.

Tim Lyne General Manager and Viticulturist.
Kellie Lyne Functions Coordinator.
Kris Cush Winemaker and Food Nut.
Dave Cush Winemaker.

