



Vintage Report

HARVEST 2008

As the strong southerly wind chills our bones and freezes over the Swan River for the first time in a long time, we may be inclined to ask ourselves, "Why do we live here?" Then we crack open some of our new wines and the answer is obvious - the grapes love it. Sure it's cold at the moment, but it's the dead middle of winter. If it wasn't cold now, we'd be blaming global warming and wondering what was wrong with the world. So, yes, it's cold, but if it means we can grow wines of intensity and elegance like the wines we have just bottled, then it's a small price to pay. Cool climate winegrowing demands some sacrifices, and woolly hats are easy to come by.

The 2008 vintage was a friendly one. We had above average yields, coupled with excellent quality. Vintages like 2008 make the skinny years all worthwhile, and show us what our vineyards can achieve under favourable conditions. In June 2007, Spring Vale purchased a neighbouring farm, "Melrose", which lies just a few kilometres to the north of the winery, on the other side of the Swan River. The reason for the purchase was that there were 5.5 hectares of vineyards on the farm that had been established in 1998. We believe that our area has a unique combination of factors - temperature and sunlight being the critical ones - and so we would much rather expand our production locally than buy in fruit from elsewhere. With that in mind, we were faced with the decision of either planting more on Spring Vale or buying an established vineyard, the obvious advantage of the latter choice being that there is no lag time between establishment and production.

The fruit off the "Melrose" vineyard in 2008 has exceeded our expectations and

also brought a new variety to the line-up - Sauvignon Blanc. The inaugural Spring Vale Sauvignon Blanc is the result of every effort being made to create an unusual Sauv Blanc that appeals to a wider audience than the simple fruit bombs for which the variety is notorious. Only pristine fruit was selected in the vineyard, with anything showing disease being left on the vineyard floor. Half of the juice was fermented in oak, and then the unoaked portion was put to barrel once dry, so that all of it was stirred in barrel for a few months prior to bottling. It's a classy drop - savoury, dry and long.

The Pinot Noir fruit from Melrose was also very good quality, most of it going into another new wine, the "Melrose" Pinot Noir. This wine replaces the Pinot Junior from last year, with the general consensus being that the previous name was confusing. The "Melrose" Pinot also features a splash of Pinot Meunier (5%), but we aim to greatly increase the contribution that this underrated variety makes to this wine.

The "Melrose" Pinot is light, fleshy and very drinkable. A nice example of Pinot made in the lighter style. 2008 also sees a return to the wine list of "Louisa". In 2003 and 2004, "Louisa" was made from botrytis-affected Chardonnay grapes. Since then, we have found more productive uses for our Chardonnay fruit and have decided to make "Louisa" from late harvested Gewürztraminer grapes.

The grapes were picked very ripe, then the ferment was stopped at about 9% alcohol, leaving about 120g/L of residual sugar. The wine is delicate and balanced, not cloying at all. A great way to finish a meal (or start one, if you want to do it the French way with *foie gras*.)

As we go to press, the 2007 Pinot Noir is still in barrel, waiting for its palate to soften with time and harmonise. It's certainly getting there and we are looking at bottling it perhaps in October.

“Trellis”

After much to-ing and fro-ing, we finally arrived at “Trellis” as the name for the new SpringVale wine bar. Trellis Cafe Bar Lounge is set to open its doors mid-August (don't hold us to it, though!) amid much excitement in Swansea and among the family at SpringVale. This project has seen the return to SpringVale of the only one of Rodney and Lyn Lyne's kids who wasn't already involved in the business - the eldest son, Matthew, and his partner, Renae. These two will be the dynamic duo that will run Trellis for the first 12 months or so, with Renae out the front and Matt floating between the kitchen and the coffee machine. Kris will continue her role as SpringVale's Chief Winemaker whilst being on hand for advice and support to the kitchen at Trellis. Kris, Matt and Renae have come up with a menu that provides simple, seasonal food that meshes well with the wine bar feel.

Trellis may prove to mean big things for SpringVale, acting as a cellar door outlet right in the heart of Swansea. The bar, though, is by no means exclusively SpringVale. The basic wine list contains over 50 wines (local, Tasmanian, mainland and international) and the cellar list will carry over into the hundreds. If the wine is good, it will get a showing. We aim to have an educational angle at the bar, as well, so depending on demand, we will host themed tastings. In a seasonal town like ours, we will just have to wait and see how it goes.



Lewis James Lyne

The 13th of May, 2008, saw the safe arrival of Lewis James Lyne to proud parents Tim and Kellie Lyne. As Tim and Kellie enter the ether-world of prolonged sleep deprivation, Lewis is growing at a great rate of knots, and will soon be off the charts.

Tasting Notes

2008 Gewürztraminer

Aromas of lychee, guava and paw-paw follow through onto the palate. Tight and balanced in typical SpringVale style.

2008 Pinot Gris

Intense pear aromas on a chalky/talcy background. Soft and mouth-filling with good balance and greath length of flavour. Drier than previous years, the 2008 sits nicely in between the Gris and Grigio styles.

2007 Reserve Chardonnay

Formerly known as just “Chardonnay”, this wine is well-deserving of a “Reserve” tag. Complex, nutty, creamy, a hint of butter and a full, voluptuous palate. Fine acid and powerful fruit. A real gem.

2008 Sauvignon Blanc

Subtle passionfruit and slate on the nose. A dry, balanced palate with a plump middle and a tight finish. There is something oldy worldy about this Sauv Blanc.

2008 “Louisa” Sticky Gewürztraminer

We may be onto something here. Delicate, balanced, long. A delicious dessert wine that is dangerously drinkable. Lucky it's only 9% alcohol!

2008 Chardonnay

We didn't make an Unwooded Chardonnay this year, so this wine replaces it on the list. A touch of oak, a lovely mouthfeel and a lingering finish. Too cheap.

2008 “Melrose” Pinot Noir

Strawberries and red cherries flow onto a soft, plump palate. A lighter style Pinot that makes a great, inexpensive light red for all occasions.

2006 Pinot Noir

Our flagship Pinot has just brought up twelve months in bottle, and what a difference it makes. It has finally returned to its pre-bottling glory, with rich fruit, a soft palate and velvety tannins. James Halliday doesn't think it's too shabby either - he gave it 94 points in the recent edition of his Australian Wine Companion.

