

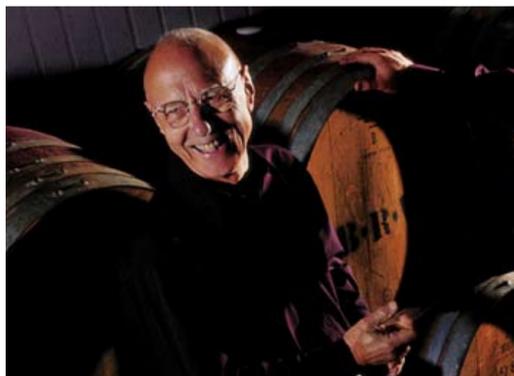
The Changing Face of Chardonnay Karl Stockhausen

Over the years, Chardonnay has become a widely debated variety in regards to its commercial acceptability, and the main reason for this is due to the change in the way the wine has been made. Over the years, winemakers have done the full circle on techniques to produce Chardonnay, and we, at Briar Ridge now find ourselves settling on the more traditional style of this variety.

I was one of the first pioneers of Chardonnay in Australia, and in 1968, I bottled the first 200 gallon batch of what was known as "White Pinot". The wine was unoaked, and was made in the true "Chablis style". Then, in the 1970's, we started to put the wine in oak barrels, but only for a few months.

Over time, winemakers then started to over-oak their Chardonnay, allowing too much Malolactic fermentation to take place, resulting in wines that were too complex, and so identifiable, that people became tired of drinking this style, hence the introduction of the term "ABC – Anything But Chardonnay!"

In the last few years, Briar Ridge has moved away from using too much oak, and we have concentrated on producing a more fruity style, that is not too sweet, and results in a more refined and elegant wine. By using a lower percentage of oak, we can produce a wine which is leaner, fresher, and easy to drink. This style of wine also cellars much better compared to the Chardonnays which may have seen much longer time in the barrel.



The 2006 Karl Stockhausen Chardonnay has been kept back for 2 years to develop, and is drinking beautifully now, so I hope you enjoy this wine in your current pack. In 2009, we will also be producing a single vineyard Chardonnay, which as this is being written, is fermenting in the barrel, and will hopefully be released in future Vintage Club packs for members to enjoy. Don't forget one of the all time favourites – the Rockpile Chardonnay, and the current 2007 vintage is a wonderful drink which suits many food styles and occasions.

Whilst our current winemaking practices are producing this more traditional "Chablis" style of Chardonnay for your enjoyment, we can't call it the "new style", as it is made in the same style that I started back in the 1960's & '70's!

Karl Stockhausen

Newsletter Specials

Don't miss out on the opportunity to grab the last remaining stocks of our two iconic reds from a great vintage:

"Red Classics" – from 2 great vintages

6 x 2006 Old Vines Shiraz + 6 x 2005 Cold Soaked Cabernet Sauvignon

Normal Members Price: \$216.00

Newsletter Price: \$175.00 + freight

Secure these great award winning whites to enjoy while we get ready to bottle the 2009 vintage:

2008 Whites – Your Favourite Varietal wines !

4 x 2008 Semillon Sauvignon Blanc + 4 x 2008 Verdelho + 4 x 2008 Gewurztraminer

Normal Members Price: \$212.00

Newsletter Price: \$175.00 + freight

For any orders, inquiries, or bookings please call us on (02) 4990 3670 or email indulge@briarridge.com.au

Club Pack 51



2008 Cellar Reserve Verduzzo

COLOUR: Straw

NOSE: Complex aroma of ripe pears, nougat and almonds

PALATE: This wine displays flavours of pears and stonefruit, while maintaining fresh acidity. The flavours are complimented by the trademark mineral characters of the variety.

FOOD: An excellent food wine well suited to hearty vegetarian dishes.

CELLARING: Drinking well now, but will develop honeyed flavours as the wine ages.

COMMENTS: Verduzzo is a grape variety common to northeast Italy, where it is used in both dry and sweet styles. This Verduzzo is grown in our high altitude vineyard in Orange to match the cool conditions of its native area.

2006 Karl Stockhausen Signature Chardonnay

COLOUR: Straw

NOSE: Subtle melon and tropical fruit aromas with a hint of butterscotch.

PALATE: This wine is rich and flavoursome displaying refreshing melon and citrus characters supported by vanillin oak. The pallet is soft and creamy with a lingering buttery finish.

FOOD: Rich white meat dishes and many styles of pasta

CELLARING: Drinking well now or will develop very rewarding toasty, nutty characters with careful medium term cellaring, 2-5 years.

COMMENTS: This chardonnay is from our Mount View vineyard and is an example of the changing 'renaissance' style of Hunter Valley grown Chardonnay.

2008 Cellar Reserve Orange Region Chardonnay

COLOUR: Straw

NOSE: Grapefruit and sweet nut aromas

PALATE: A long, well balanced and flavoursome sweet pear and citrus palate with great complexity.

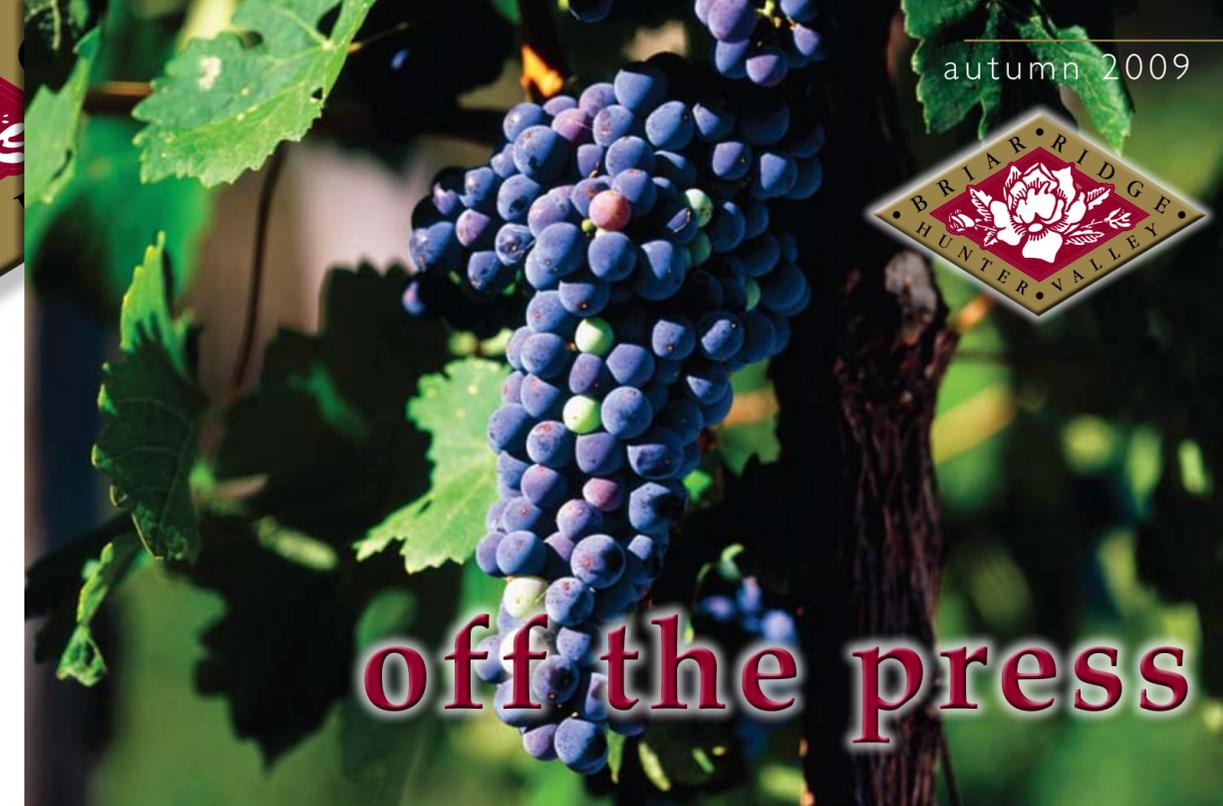
FOOD: Great to drink with poultry dishes.

CELLARING: Medium term, 3-5 years

COMMENTS: This chardonnay is from our high altitude vineyard in Orange. It was barrel fermented and matured in one year old French oak hogsheads with medium term lees contact.

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autumn 2009



off the press

BULLETIN OF THE BRIAR RIDGE VINTAGE CLUB

Welcome to Autumn 2009.

As another vintage draws to a close, there are sighs of relief from our vineyard and winemaking team. After losing our Hunter Valley red grape harvest in 2008 from extended wet weather, we have seen a return to a normal season for the 2009 vintage, and good quality fruit has ensured our tanks and barrels are full again !

Our 2007 vintage reds are now in the bottle, and the much anticipated Karl Stockhausen Signature Shiraz is now available, and has been included in your April wine selection. In addition, we are now taking orders for the Trophy winning 2007 Single Vineyard Dairy Hill Shiraz made by Mark Woods – see inside for how to secure your allocation of this stunning wine.

We are also planning more events in 2009, both on and off site, and with the launch of our new food and wine venue (see inside for more details), we plan to hold more events at Briar Ridge – watch out for more announcements soon. We are also looking forward to visiting our Queensland members with our first wine dinner in Brisbane, taking place on the 19th June, 2009. More information of upcoming events will be sent to you soon, and will also be available on our web site.

Our wine selection for April has included a great comparison between warm and cool climate Shiraz and Chardonnay between our Hunter Valley and Orange vineyards, which demonstrates the regional influence that can be seen within a particular variety. A new variety to most is the Verduzzo, and this is a first for Vintage Club Members.

We hope you enjoy our latest wine selection, and we look forward to seeing you at one of the upcoming events, or at the cellar door.

Brooke Duffie

Vintage Club, Events & Marketing Co-ordinator

For any orders, inquiries, or bookings please call us on (02) 4990 3670 or email indulge@briarridge.com.au

Out & About

2008 Twilight Harbour Cruise

Back in November 2008, we held our annual Sydney Harbour Cruise which saw a fantastic night on the Commissioner II, and as always, a great selection of food and wines made sure that the evening was enjoyed by all.

We have secured the date for our 2009 Harbour Cruise, and given the increasing popularity of this great festive event, it is recommended that you book early to ensure your place. Lock in Friday, 27th November for the 2009 cruise. Book now!



Brisbane Wine Dinner – Friday, 19th June, 2009

For all our loyal Queensland members, we are bringing the Hunter Valley to you this June, with our first ever Member's Dinner at Brisbane. We have teamed up with era Bistro who offer contemporary Australian cuisine in magnificent retro chic surroundings. Era Bistro were awarded one chef's hat at the Brisbane Good Food & Wine awards in 2008, so we look forward to an evening of good food, great wine, and lots of fun! Guests are welcome, and this is a great way to catch up with friends and greet our winemaker and staff at Briar Ridge.

When: Friday, 19th June, 2009

Time: 6:30pm

Price: \$99.00 per person – includes a 3-course meal and wine!

Dress: Smart Casual

To book your place, call the cellar door on 02 4990 3670 or email: indulge@briarridge.com.au



Recent Awards for Briar Ridge Wines

After great success in the 2008 wine show circuit, we capped off the end of the year with a major award at the 2008 Hunter Valley Boutique Winemakers Show, and we are off to a great start in 2009 with success at the 2009 Sydney Royal Wine Show. Both of these wine shows are extremely tough and very competitive, and we have received the following accolades:

2008 Hunter Valley Boutique Winemakers Show

Trophy Gold	2007 Single Vineyard Dairy Hill Shiraz (soon to be released)
Silver Medal	2008 Cellar Reserve Semillon
Silver Medal	2008 Gewurztraminer
Silver Medal	2008 Merlot Rosé
Bronze Medal	2008 Homestead Verdelho

2009 Sydney Royal Wine Show

Gold Medal	2008 Karl Stockhausen Signature Semillon
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If you would like to place an order for these trophy and medal winners, please see our order form, or call us on 02 4990 3670 or email: indulge@briarridge.com.au



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Winemakers Report Mark Woods

The 2009 Hunter Valley harvest started with high temperatures and very little rain throughout January. Our main focus was to keep enough water up to the vines and protect the developing bunches from sun burn. By early February we had all of our white grape varieties in brilliant condition and ready for harvest.



We now have all the Hunter Valley grape varieties in the winery with Pinot Noir and Chardonnay for our sparkling wine being the first varieties hand picked for Vintage 2009.

Our top Single Vineyard Chardonnay off the Briar Hill block has wonderful fruit intensity displaying passionfruit and melon fruit characters with partial French oak barrel fermentation. I am very pleased with the development of this wine and look forward to sharing it with you once bottled. Semillons in the Hunter Valley are once again looking fantastic with ideal growing and ripening conditions experienced in 2009. Our Dairy Hill Semillon block has produced fruit with intense citrus flavours whilst maintaining an elegant mouth feel and a tangy persistent finish – "great cellaring potential". We are currently transferring the Shiraz and other red wines from this year's harvest into our small French oak barrels where they will mature for a further 12 months. This will allow the wine to soften and gain complexity from the oak, making the wine rich in flavour with a silky finish. Be patient, they will be worth the wait!!!!

With the Hunter harvest behind us, we now turn our focus towards our cool climate vineyard in Orange NSW. The Orange region with its higher altitude was able to avoid the temperature extremes that the majority of vineyard regions across Australia experienced this year. The resultant wines are displaying delicate and refined fruit flavours with lifted varietal expression. As I am writing this report we are hand picking the Sauvignon Blanc and Chardonnay, which will be transported to the winery here in the Hunter for crushing and fermentation. The Cabernet Sauvignon, Merlot and Shiraz are still ripening on the vine developing great colour with red berry and black berry fruit flavours becoming more pronounced. Let's not forget the very late ripening Northern Italian white variety called Verduzzo, my wife loves it and it's our secret. I'll keep you informed.

I thoroughly enjoy making Briar Ridge's wines from the two distinctively different growing regions within NSW. The warmer climate of the Hunter Valley as opposed to the cooler climate of Orange. The Hunter produces versatile wines that are forward in fruit and approachable whilst young, as well as producing excellent cellaring varieties such as Semillon and Shiraz. The Orange region produces a refined and elegant flavour profile showing true varietal and regional expression.

We have included wines from both Hunter Valley and Orange in this club pack. You may like to try a side by side tasting for your own experience and enjoyment. The only "problem" is you will have to drink two bottles instead of one!!!

Maybe share with friends.

Enjoy – Mark Woods.

For any orders, inquiries, or bookings please call us on (02) 4990 3670 or email indulge@briarridge.com.au

Cellar Door Secrets with Ady

With vintage well and truly over in the Hunter we are now looking forward to the arrival of the 2009 whites at cellar door a little later in the year, keep watching this space!



It has been really nice to meet so many of our vintage club members here at cellar door, and as you've probably worked out I love to have a chat!!!! So keep coming back so my vocal cords don't seize up!!!

I get asked lots of questions here at cellar door but one of the more recurring ones is about aging wines and what happens to it as it ages?

Older wines can offer an ethereal experience, developing complex, subtle and elusive flavours that can be almost impossible to describe. The flavour profile of wines you enjoy is a very personal thing. Older wines I find are an acquired taste, so don't go to the bother of aging a wine unless you actually like the result. One person's optimum drink window is another person's over the hill and a third person's still got some life in it. Most people keep wine for far too long, often in less than optimum storage conditions, and may be extremely disappointed once they actually open the wine. Not all wines have the ability to age, in fact most of the world's wines are specifically designed for early drinking; there's nothing wrong with enjoying wine for its unabashed fruit and youthfulness, and there's nothing wrong with wines that don't age. As wine ages it goes through a series of chemical changes, most of which science hasn't figured out yet. The rough edges are smoothed off, powerful oak integrates, tannins become silky smooth, but the original fruitiness fades.

Flavours and aromas also change; fruit gives way to earthiness, richness and complex characteristics that can be almost impossible to pin down. A young wine might scream plums and cherries, but the same wine ten years on might whisper of leather, barnyard, nutmeg, clove and earth. Colour is a good indicator of the age of wine as well as the condition of a wine. A young wine will be bright purple, and as it ages it becomes red, then brick-red, then orange then finally in old age, brown. The best way to work out when a wine is ready to drink is to lay down a case, sampling a bottle when you first buy it, and at regular intervals thereafter. When it reaches its peak for your palate and YOU think it is drinking nicely, consume the rest – leaving a bottle for prosperity if you so desire (or, if you are greedy like me drink the lot).....

A great wine to try this example on is our 2007 Karl Stockhausen Shiraz... give it a go!

Ady Lind

Cellar Door Manager

Cellar Door Managers Case Special

2007 Hunter Gold Semillon \$120.00 case

This wine is drinking excellent right now, with lots of citrus flavours and fruit complexity. It's fantastic with all types of seafood and also really great on its own.

It's selling fast so call us to secure a case or two.

New Restaurant to Open at Briar Ridge

Late in 2008, we witnessed the demolition of the original Stockhausen Cellar, which many of you may have tasted wine in over the years. With the building not being suitable for the growing visitation of people to Briar Ridge, we decided to make way for an exciting new concept of food and wine matching, and hence, construction commenced, and is now nearing completion, for what will be a fantastic experience of food and wine amongst our beautiful gardens.

To be operated by renowned Hunter Valley chef, Robert Molines (see Restaurant Feature), visitors to Briar Ridge will be treated to seasonal cuisine that will be matched to our range of Hunter Valley and Orange region wines.

For members visiting Briar Ridge, this new restaurant offers a unique concept of food and wine matching, -and you will receive benefits which you will be notified about in the next newsletter.

Remember, if you are visiting the winery, or have a function you would like catered for, please call us to discuss your requirements, and plan to entertain your guests on site, or in the Members Cellar.

Single Vineyard 2007 Dairy Hill Shiraz Launch

For those members lucky enough to attend the 2008 Harbour Cruise in November, we launched the first of our new Single Vineyard Range of wines. As mentioned in the last newsletter, these wines will be our "best of the best", and will only be made in years where the vintage and fruit quality is exceptional, and when our tasting panel agree that the wine truly exceeds expectations. When Mark Woods stated that the 2007 Dairy Hill Shiraz was one of the best wines he had made, he was not joking, and this was backed up by a Trophy Gold as mentioned in our awards section.

Whilst this wine is still yet to be released, and only a very limited quantity is available, Vintage Club members will be given first preference, and we are now taking pre-release orders, which can be expected in the second half of 2009. Quantities are limited to 6 bottles per person

2007 Single Vineyard Dairy Hill Shiraz

Cellar Door Price (not yet released):
\$48.00 per bottle

Vintage Club Members Price: \$40.00
per bottle

Quantities limited to 6 bottles per person

Please contact the cellar door to guarantee your order before being released to the public.



For any orders, inquiries, or bookings please call us on (02) 4990 3670 or email indulge@briarridge.com.au

Feature Restaurant Bistro Molines



For one of the best food and wine experiences, at arguably, the most stunning location in the Hunter Valley, visitors to the newly opened Bistro Molines at Tallavera Grove Vineyard, will be treated to traditional French cuisine, prepared by iconic chef, Robert Molines. Robert and his wife, Sally, have been in the hospitality business in the Hunter Valley since 1973, and their latest venture will provide you with an experience that you will never forget. A must to visit on your next trip to the Hunter Valley.

Open for Lunch Thursday – Monday. Dinner Friday & Saturday. Bookings recommended.

Ph: (02) 4990 9553

Robert has kindly shared one of his classic Autumn recipes for us, and noted that both the Chardonnay's included in the April pack are perfect accompaniments to this gamey white meat dish!

Feature Recipe

Civet of Farmed Rabbitt in Dijon Mustard and Baby Carrots

- 1 chopped up farmed rabbit
- ½ litre of Briar Ridge Chardonnay
- 1 cup of dijon mustard
- ½ cup flour
- ½ cup chicken stock
- ½ cup chopped lardons
- 2 diced white onions
- 8 baby carrots
- 2 bay leaves
- 1 parsnip peeled, diced
- ½ cup olive oil
- 2 garlic cloves



Roll the rabbit pieces in flour, then fry until golden in the olive oil. Discard most of the fat. Add the onions and speck. Add the diced parsnips, garlic, mustard, and bay leaves. Deglaze with white wine. Add the chicken stock. Cover and bake for 60 minutes in the oven at 180°C. Serve with steamed baby carrots, and a glass of Briar Ridge Chardonnay.