

OFF THE PRESS

Briar Ridge
VINEYARD



ISSUE 59 - SPRING 2011

Welcome,

Once again its Club Pack time, to our Vintage Club members thank you for your ongoing support, and to our new Members a great big welcome to the Vintage Club's publication, "Off the Press"!

The seasons change so quickly here, I can hardly believe its spring already. The days are getting warmer, the nights less cool and Briar Ridge is looking its most beautiful for all our visitors. The bougainvilleas are in full bloom, the plumbago is a flourish of colour and the grounds in general invite you to pull out your picnic blanket and soak up the scenery. There's always that option to order your tasting platter or lunch from the Grillade, grab a bottle of your favourite Briar Ridge wine and settle down for the afternoon. We love seeing the lawns saturated with happy customers.

The last few months have seen a lot of activity, both in the Club [check out the events page] and in the vineyard. Our Vineyard Manager, Belinda, has been hard at work making sure all was ready for budburst..and now that it's here her efforts are paying off. There are little shoots of green everywhere, the leaves are unfolding and the tiny grapes are gently being nurtured by the warmer weather as they spring to life.

Spring is always a popular time for visiting the region, the concert season is getting underway and we love to welcome those who have made the journey to see one of the many stars who perform here every year.

Our feature wines for your October Club Pack are the Stockhausen series; with the Stockhausen Semillon, Chardonnay and Shiraz all on offer. You will also notice when the time comes for sampling, there's something quite unique about the Stockhausen wines. Karl's strong influence has maintained a refined elegance and slightly more traditional structure to his wines which, while drinking well as young styles, can develop some beautiful complexity as they age. Karl is one of our most treasured possessions here at Briar Ridge, his wealth of knowledge and natural charm has proven a great asset especially when he is able to spare time to attend our Member Functions. I do hope you have been able to enjoy Karl's company at one or another of our events. Read Karl's piece further on..

I have added a new segment to the newsletter this time around for the curious of mind with "Did you Know....?" Yes, for those of you who have recently attended our Member Dinners, we've had some great fun with a short Trivia Quiz (between courses naturally). So you can now check out Page 3 of each edition for a snippet of wine related trivia.

The Members Cellar is there for your enjoyment. When you next visit us make sure you call ahead to book the Cellar for your Member Tasting. It has a great atmosphere and if you order a cheese, dip or tasting platter from the Grillade, the experience is definitely enhanced.

Please read all of our emails; we've had some fantastic specials and functions promoted over the last few months and it's the quickest way to secure your spot to one of our dinners or functions, and with the Harbour Cruise coming up we don't want you missing out on any of the fun.

Facebook and Twitter are updated regularly and as the website continues with its face lift, we plan to keep you well informed with what's happening at Briar Ridge.

Now it's time to pour your favourite Briar Ridge wine, sit back, relax and enjoy the spring edition of "Off the Press".

Cheers Deb
Debbie Sullivan
Briar Ridge Vintage Club Co-ordinator

COMING EVENTS

October

16 - Crows Nest Wine Festival 2011

November

5, 6 - Tastes of the Bay, D'Albora Marina,
Nelson Bay

6 - Hunter Uncorked, Balmoral

**Fri 25, Sat 26 - Twilight Harbour
Cruises, Sydney Harbour**
Get your friends and family together
and be first on deck to join the Briar
Ridge team as we sail around Sydney
Harbour under the magical night
skies. Food and wine included along
with your special Members Gift;
bookings are being taken now!
\$100pp

To reserve your place call the Vintage
Club on 02 4990 3670 or email
indulge@briaridge.com.au





FROM THE CELLAR DOOR

Hi to all of our members,

I recently returned from a long overdue trip to the UK to visit family – it was great to catch up with everyone and very nostalgic visiting places that I'd holidayed during my childhood. I also had my first trip to Paris which was unbelievable and I loved every minute of it, however it is also wonderful to be back home in Australia. This trip has made me realise how lucky we are to live in such a wonderful country and in particular a beautiful region like the Hunter Valley. I can't wait to get out there with my friends again, sampling some of the regions finest on my next tasting experience. If you haven't been to visit us recently then why not come and spend a couple of days mid week discovering what the region has on offer.

With summer just around the corner it's time to start enjoying some fresh and fruity young whites. The 2011 semillons in this pack are just perfect for the warmer weather – they are packed full of zesty citrus flavours and both match back perfectly with fresh seafood.

Peter, our Head chef, has created the perfect summer BBQ seafood dish to enjoy with either of our semillons (see recipe). The 2011 Cellar Reserve Sauvignon Blanc is also a real standout with lots of grassy tropical flavours.

I'd like to introduce the Grillade's new Head Chef, Peter Edmunds. Peter brings with him a wealth of talent and some great new signature dishes which are now featuring on our new spring menu. The relaxed alfresco setting at Briar Grillade is truly magical allowing you to enjoy a long lunch and a glass or two of your favourite Briar Ridge wine – we hope you'll drop by soon to welcome Peter on board.

I don't know about anyone else but this year has flown by – and Christmas is just around the corner! We have some great gift ideas at the Cellar Door, a good bottle of wine is always a winner, in addition we have some 3 bottle presentation boxes that look fabulous.

The whole team is looking forward to catching up with those members coming on our Sydney Harbour cruises – if you haven't already secured your spot give Debbie a call for the last few remaining tickets – it's such a fun night with food and wine being the main event.

To all of our members that I won't get to see beforehand, I wish you all a Merry Christmas and a safe and happy holiday throughout the festive season; I look forward to seeing you in 2012.

Cheers
Ady Lind

Cellar Door & Restaurant Manager



FROM THE VINEYARD

Spring has sprung in the Hunter Valley and the grape vines are now well into the growing season.

Budburst was earlier this year with Chardonnay the first of our varieties to bloom; around 3 weeks earlier than last year.

The Hunter experienced a wet and mild winter with good rainfall continuing into spring; this has provided plenty of soil moisture for the start of the growing season.

Most of the white varieties are now at the flowering stage which is quickly followed by berry formation. The berries start at around 1 or 2mm in diameter and continue to grow and change colour, producing sugars and flavours right through until harvest.

As you enjoy your latest selection of Briar Ridge wines the vineyard staff are being kept very busy. With spraying, vine training, slashing and weed control; we monitor the crops to keep the vines and fruit in the best condition possible ready for harvest in late January 2012 when we pass the fruit over to the winery team...and the winemaking process begins again.

Cheers
Belinda Kelly

Briar Cottage

Briar Cottage is only minutes from the heart of Pokolbin, and a few metres from our cellar door. Relax on the verandah with a glass of our award winning wines, or in the cooler months enjoy the open fire.

WEEKEND BOOKINGS

(Fri PM - Mon AM)
\$400 - 2 people
\$550 - 4 people
\$650 - 6 people

MIDWEEK BOOKINGS

(Mon PM - Fri AM)
\$150/couple/night
\$75/couple/night for additional guests

**10% discount for all
Vintage Club Members**



To book phone 02 4990 3670 or email indulge@briaridge.com.au
Mount View Rd, Mount View www.briaridge.com.au



Char Grilled Swordfish on Mediterranean Vegetable Caponata with Semi Dried Tomato Pesto

With summer just ahead and seafood always the popular choice, I have prepared this dish to match back with our 2010 Signature Karl Stockhausen Chardonnay. Swordfish has a mildly sweet flavour with a moist meaty texture, add the full flavours of the Caponata combined with the Pesto; the Stockhausen Chardonnay with it's lifted melon/citrus fruits and creamy palate, complements this dish perfectly.

Serves 4

8 x 100g Swordfish steaks
500g multi colour capsicums
1 red onion
1 eggplant
1 zucchini
100G wild rocket
50ml olive oil

For the pesto
100g semi dried tomato
30g pine nuts
½ bunch of parsley
1 garlic clove
30g grated parmesan

To make the pesto use a food processor to blend all ingredients until smooth, adding the oil from the semi dried tomatoes too.

Remove the seeds from the capsicums and dice into 1cm cubes, along with the onion, eggplant and zucchini. Combine in a large bowl and seasoned with salt and pepper. Roast in the oven for approximately 10 minutes at 180 degrees or until soft and then keep warm.

Coat the swordfish with oil, season and grill both sides on the barbeque until cooked through. Place the rocket on the plate, followed by a large spoon of caponata, the swordfish steaks and dress with the pesto sauce.



Did You Know....?

As a bit of sport at our recent Member Dinners we put together a short quiz with some interesting wine facts. Test out your Wine knowledge on these snippets of information. In each subsequent Newsletter I will present you with a little more trivia, I hope you enjoy the challenge.

1. Australia's first wine book was written in 1825 by.....; known as the father of Australian Viticulture.
2. In 1967, Thomas Angove, from Australia came up with an alternative to the wine bottle. What was it?
3. What term describes the study of wine or viticulture from the grape to the bottle?
4. A village in the Piedmont region of Italy lends its name to the wine know as "the king of wines and the wine of Kings" ..what is the wine?
5. Where does the greatest majority of Cork come from?

For answers to these refer to the back page.

MEMBERS FUNCTIONS

Since we last caught up it has been an action packed few months for all of us here in the Vintage Club. Linda and I have had our skates on sourcing venues, scouring menus and making sure each event has something memorable to offer our very valued members. Following the Big Bully Campaign in June, I was very fortunate to have a wonderful vacation in south eastern France. Visiting villages in the Vallee du Lot such as Estaing, Bazouls, Espalion, Entraygue and Conque were reminiscent of scenes from a Grimm's Bros fairytale, and quite often left me speechless. I enjoyed some amazing regional food as well as the gastronomic experience of a lifetime with a 15 course degustation at Michel Bras near the town Laguiole, famous for its superbly crafted knives. A week in Paris topped off the experience and like Ady I have returned both rejuvenated and ever so appreciative of our own wonderful country. Being away for a whole month was indeed a special treat and I can say without hesitation it was the most fantastic holiday I have ever had; but its back on track for me and our focus is now on you, our much valued members.

In August we travelled to Brisbane, where our Members Dinner was held at Liquorish Bistro + Bar in Bulimba. Fifty eight of our Queensland members joined us for some fabulous food and Briar Ridge Wines. Karl joined Linda and I in Brisbane and was a real hit with the members.

Hot on the heels of Brisbane, we visited Chatswood and Rocket Restaurant with Luke, our resident winemaker; again a great evening enjoyed by all.

As a bit of fun I decided to run a short Trivia Quiz during the evenings; some easy and some more difficult questions were posed to the members, but everyone had a good laugh. I have started in this issue our "Did you know....?" segment, so you will all be well versed in some of the more intriguing and interesting facts related to this wonderful industry of ours. Hope you enjoy it!

Not to be outshone by our off site events, those Members who made the journey to Briar Grillade were delighted on all levels at our "Spring Indulgence Dinner". Karl was present and enthralled everyone again with his amazing knowledge. We were entertained by the smooth jazz sound of Gary Honor and his saxophone, where guests received the second in our series of "Seasonal Plates", a great keepsake which doubles as the perfect platter. Peter, our new Chef, showed us his creative side with some amazing dishes matched to the recently released Stockhausen Series of wines. Sunday saw a few of the members return for a bit of fun for the first of our Food & Wine Master Classes; our Vigneron, accompanied us on a stroll around the vineyards checking on the progress of the vines. Peter and I then took members through a fun few hours as we experimented with some very new and more mature standards from the Hunter; Semillon, Chardonnay and Shiraz; and how to best pitch them against the modern flavours of today's cuisine.

Next on the agenda is our annual Harbour Cruise. This year, due to its growing popularity, we have booked the boat for 2 consecutive nights; 25th & 26th November; so it's now time to reserve your spot as it is always the sell out event for us. Bookings are already being taken and I will be sending out a more detailed notice in an email very shortly as a reminder.

For now it's all about getting ready for the summer and planning ahead for our 2012 events. We are all looking forward to meeting as many members as possible in the coming months.



INSIDE THE WINERY

with Winemaker Luke Watson



As we wave goodbye to winter in the winery, we reach the ebb of our yearly work cycle. The majority of the 2011 whites and all of the 2010 Hunter Valley reds are securely in the bottle.

The 2011 vintage proved interesting, and for the winery staff provided some exciting challenges. As I mentioned previously, the Hunter Valley was the standout region, with flavoursome and approachable whites whilst the reds have proven very elegant and restrained.

A personal favourite of mine is the 2010 Dairy Hill Shiraz. Recently bottled, and due for release early in 2012; the wine literally jumps out of the glass. With a very lifted and perfumed nose that is really quite striking, the palate backs that up with sweet fruit, great depth of flavour and good length. As with most great young reds it is quite approachable now, but will definitely improve in the bottle.

A must for all lovers of Shiraz and a wine not to be missed.

Once again Briar Ridge has retained its 5 Star Rating in the James Halliday 2012 Wine Companion. Two current releases that scored very well were of the same vineyard block; the 2010 Dairy Hill Semillon (94 pts) and the 2009 Dairy Hill Shiraz (95 pts). These achievements only go to reinforce the quality and consistency of this tremendous parcel of vineyard.

On the horizon we have the 2011 Hunter Chardonnays going to bottle in October along with our 2010 reds from our Orange Vineyard. Both groups of wines are well above average and display excellent varietal character and definition. All in all the future looks rosy for the lovers of Briar Ridge wines.

Cheers
Luke

ABOUT THIS WINE

by Karl Stockhausen

With all three of the Stockhausen series wines on offer this time around, it's given me a great opportunity to review them all together.

While everyone has their own thoughts on what varietal wines should smell, taste and feel like; I would like to share with you my ideas of what are good or desirable characters on these three.

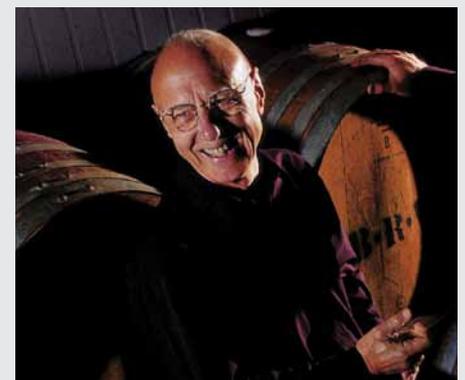
Semillon - As with all of my wines I have relied heavily on good fruit flavours in the grapes; this being achieved by allowing the vines to ripen the grapes properly. With ripeness comes a higher sugar content thus accompanied by more obvious flavour. The 2011 Semillon has an 11.5 % alcohol level which is slightly higher than many Hunter Semillons available. In other words the grapes were harvested just a little later. In processing we use free run and light pressings juice, which is clarified by settling. This makes for a delicate wine with clean fruit flavours often showing green apple and citrus characters. The mouth feel should be light and refreshing with crisp finish.

Chardonnay - Here we have a variety which easily produces somewhat higher sugar content in its grapes. With that comes a fuller structure in the wine and permits extra flavour to be introduced, such as gentle oak tannin. The important element I see in this is that the oak must not dominate and cover fine varietal fruit characters which are often said to be melon, peaches and again a little citrus. In the current Chardonnay you will just notice a hint of Vanillin oak providing an elegant texture.

Shiraz - My idea about red wine and particularly Hunter Shiraz is that it should be full and soft which makes it easy to drink and enjoyable. By removing the stalks from the grapes at intake we avoid extraction of harsh tannins which could be aggressively astringent and unpleasantly bitter. The use of fine oak for maturation is desirable to further soften tannins extracted from the grape skins; but again the oak should not dominate the taste. Shiraz like the 2010 is full bodied yet quite soft with a velvety tannin structure and showing white pepper and spice with just a little regional character.

Please take the time to reflect on these notes when you try your Signature wines this month... I'm confident you will enjoy each one.

Regards Karl



FUNCTIONS AT BRIAR GRILLADE

Looking for a venue for a birthday party, engagement or wedding?

Briar Grillade is the ideal venue for your next function, with its private garden alfresco setting. We can cater for private parties, corporate dinners, product launches, weddings and more...

Sit down lunches and dinners for 50 people or cocktail style for up to 100 people. As Vintage Club Members you will also receive all your member benefits on wine purchases. We can tailor a menu to suit your budget and needs.

For further enquires please contact
Adrienne Lind on 02 4990 3670
or briargrillade@briarridge.com.au

Answers: 1. James Busby at age 24 2. Wine Cask... plastic bag in a card board box with a tap on it so you no longer needed a cork screw to open it. 3. Oenology 4. Barolo 5. Portugal

