



PHOENIX C.C. WINE APPRECIATION CLUB

NEWSLETTER

September Meeting:

Happily our numbers are beginning to return to normal following the return of the majority of our globe trotters. Claude & Jerome just missed out, returning from Europe on the day of the tasting. Linda, while back from Borneo was not back with us yet and Julie was still "on safari" in Africa. What an adventurous group!

Orange Mountain Wines

Another top night of top wine tasting, this time brought to us by Orange Mountain Wines.



Julie and Terry Dolle arrived with a delightful array of their wines. 2023 Pinot Gris, 2022 Viognier, 2026 Rose, 2023 Pinot Noir, 2025 Shiraz/Viognier and a very yummy 2023 "1397" Shiraz/Viognier. Crowd favourites, judging by the orders, were the Viognier and the 2025 Shiraz/Viognier. But every wine was outstanding.

The two dessert wines which followed, the Mountain Ice 2025 Viognier and particularly the 2023 Cherry Liqueur also proved very popular. See below for Rod's info on Ice Wine (and the like).

The evening followed our usual format, with the opened bottles being raffled. I must have been dozing when the lucky door prize was awarded, but I did notice that Fraser took out the "Orange Mountain Wines Tasting Experience", donated by the winery. I

can see a trip to the Orange wineries coming up soonish for someone.

Ice Wine and the Like:

Ice wine is a type of dessert wine produced from grapes that have been frozen while *still on the vine*. The sugars and other dissolved solids do not freeze, but the water in the grape does, concentrating the unfrozen grape juice constituents. In German villages where winemakers planned to produce "Eiswein", the harvest of selected vineyards would be postponed until the right conditions were realised. So, when the temperature in the vineyards fell to -8°C or lower (typically in the early hours of the morning), church bells would be rung, advising the grape pickers to congregate for the harvest. Heavy gloves would be worn to prevent the conduction of the warmth of their hands to the grapes. The harvested grapes would be rushed to the winery and gently pressed to extract a small amount of concentrated, very sweet juice, leaving the ice in the press.

Fermentation of this concentrated juice is slow due to its high sugar level and is halted when the alcohol content is still quite low (sometimes as low as 6% alcohol by volume, and rarely above 11%), creating a very sweet wine. It is only palatable because of the balance achieved by the high level of acidity in the concentrated juice. Historically, eiswein production occurred very rarely (apparently, only six 19th-century vintages were documented as having produced eiswein in Germany). Modern inventions have allowed the frequency and volume of ice wine production to increase substantially. Nevertheless, ice wine production is a risky business (the right

conditions may not be realised before the grapes spoil or fall from the vine) and it requires an available work force large enough to pick the whole crop within a few hours and at a moment's notice, on the first morning that is cold enough (frozen grapes will spoil if they are allowed to thaw).

Wikipedia records a source that reports that ice wine is produced in a surprisingly large number of European countries (Austria, Croatia, Czech Republic, Denmark, France, Georgia, Germany, Hungary, Italy, Lithuania, Luxembourg, Liechtenstein, Moldova, Poland, Romania, Slovakia, Slovenia, Spain, Sweden and Switzerland), as well as Canada (the world's largest producer of ice wine), China (the second largest producer), Japan and the United States. Canada uses the hybrid grape variety, Vidal, for much of its ice wine production, whereas Germany has always primarily used Riesling. I have had the opportunity to taste Canadian ice wines (using Vidal, Cabernet Franc and Cabernet Sauvignon), German eiswein's (using Riesling, Muscat, Pinot Blanc and Sylvaner), a "vin de glace" from Luxembourg (using Riesling) and a Spanish ice wine (using Petit Manseng) and generally have been impressed by them, but they the type of wine that a little is enough and they need to be paired with full-flavoured food items. Jancis Robinson described their taste in this way: "A really good icewine / Eiswein tastes like a

cross between the purest form of grape juice and a slap in the face, so vibrant is the acidity."

I'm not aware of any ice wine production in England, but I have tasted a simulated ice wine from Nottinghamshire: Eglantine Vineyard North Star. The best Madeleine Angevine grapes are selected in the best vintages (less than every second vintage) and are refrigerated until the grapes are sufficiently frozen, then the usual ice wine production methods are applied. The producer refers to the product as a "technical ice wine".

I have tasted two Australian wines that use cryoextraction to simulate ice wine production: Mountain Ice Viognier from Orange Mountain and Iced Riesling from Frogmore Creek. In this case, the extracted juice is frozen rather than the grapes, then the handling of the concentrated juice follows the production methods adopted for traditional ice wines.

"Eiswein" is a category in the German wine classification system (Prädikatswein) and the German authorities have prohibited the production of any German simulated ice wines. Other countries have restricted the use of the terms "ice wine", "eiswein" and "vin de glace" to wines produced using the traditional ice wine cultivation and production methods. Germany, Austria, Luxembourg and Canada also impose ripeness qualifications on the grapes used for ice wine production. Canada had to tighten their regulations in 2000 after an enterprising producer trucked his grapes up into the mountains in search of temperatures that would allow ice wine to be legally produced.

- Rod

Christmas Party

We were delighted with the response to suggestions for our Christmas Party. Almost EVERYONE responded, which was fabulous. The material has been collated and the result will be circulated to the Membership. Some good suggestions, to enhance



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the Christmas Party, also came out of the responses. It looks like being a beauty!

We have decided, on the strength of the result, to re-run our Christmas in July format in December, hopefully with an earlier start and later finish. We will retain our Thursday evening slot. Rod is already laying in **premium wines** to support the fabulous food we have come to expect, courtesy of our membership, and our venue is affordable, adaptable air conditioned and, above all, exclusively ours for the evening. A recent personal experience in a favourite restaurant with a group of 20 plus exuberant, noisy male diners only served to reinforced that decision.

For those who enjoy the luxury of a restaurant meal, we heard you. We are constantly on the lookout for BYO restaurants, like the Thai earlier in the year, where we might be able to arrange an event. If you have a suggestion to throw into the ring, please let me know. It needs to be affordable, have a private, or semi-private area where we won't disturb or be disturbed too much by other diners, allow us to bring all our own wines and not overcharge on corkage. And, of course, the food must be good. Piece of cake, really. We are hopeful of investigating a Vietnamese restaurant, so will keep you posted.

Degustation Dinner:

Ten of us are off to another Degustation Dinner at the TAFE at Ourimbah, later in September. Sadly, our allocation is becoming smaller and smaller (20 last time, 10 this time) and the places are taken within minutes. I responded immediately the email arrived to secure our 10 spots.

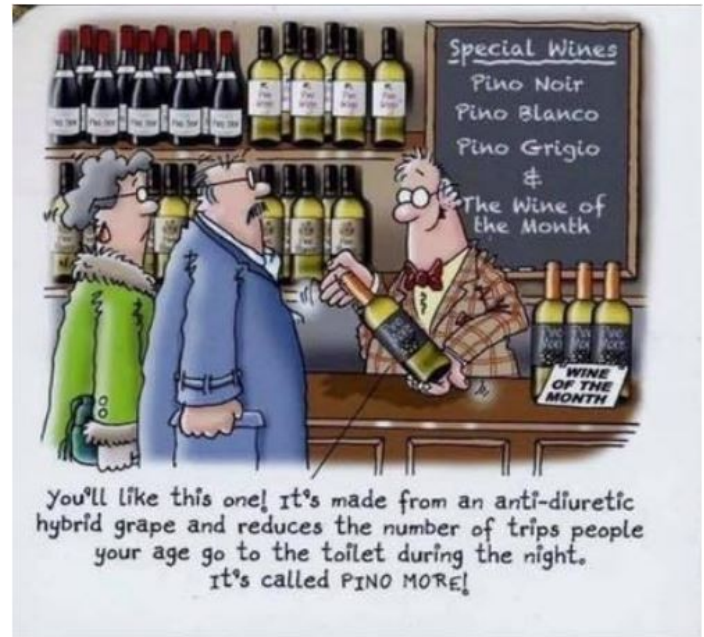
I would be interested to know how many people are interested in future dinners there, or whether they are losing their allure. I will email shortly and ask your opinion. If people are still keen we will need to investigate ways and means of securing more places.

New Year Picnic:

Do you fancy a BYO Everything picnic in January? It needed to be aborted last year, firstly because of the January heatwave conditions then secondly because

of heavy and persistent rain and we all ended up at Karin & Chris's place instead. It was certainly a fun event - very social. Should we try again? We will be seeking a show of hands sometime, so have a think about it.

Also, we wonder how many people will be around for our January Meeting on the 14th? Or should be cancel it and come back in February?



October Event:

Nathan will be taking the floor for our October tasting, with Australian Wines from Italian Varietal grapes. This is a follow up to his previous presentation of fully imported Italian wines.

Rod will be back with us in November with the top varietals from Austria (Grüner Veltliner) and Spain (Tempranillo), to discuss how these two grapes are adapting to Australian conditions.

We have some interesting wineries in mind for presentations next year. Fingers crossed they come to fruition. We received only positive feedback following Capercaillie and Orange Mountain Wines, so assume that everyone enjoyed them.

Our aim is to stagger winery visitors throughout the year and not run them on consecutive months - but sometimes, these things just happen. R.E.N.