

HONEY MOON VINEYARD

CHRISTMAS NEWSLETTER 2017

Some Especially Good News re Shiraz and Chardonnay

The vintage of 2018 will be our twelfth. By now our vines are well established plus we can look back on the impact of the weather and other factors over 14 growing seasons, since planting in early 2004. The biggest lesson? Keep an open mind! Each new vintage is a unique combination of climatic, viticultural and other factors. Each new vintage inspires us to think about what we are doing in the vineyard, what we can do with our winemaking and what our peers are doing in their vineyards/with their winemaking ... and how all this can help us to provide delicious, refreshing, vibrant and palate-provoking (as well as thought-provoking!) wines for people who enjoy wine in its youth and wine that has been able to age gracefully.

This is how we started writing this newsletter and then... whammo...



Honey Moon Vineyard was awarded the inaugural **Trophy for the Best Wine of Provenance** at the 2017 Adelaide Hills Wine Show – for wines showing excellence and consistency in expression over a period of at least 8 vintages. (The 2007, 2012 and 2015 vintages of our Shiraz were judged for this award). A wonderful award to win!

Further especially good news:

Yes: We have **Chardonnay!** At last. Ready to be enjoyed in time for Christmas!

The Honey Moon Chardonnay 2017 is made from beautiful Adelaide Hills chardonnay grapes sourced from the Chapel Valley Vineyard in Piccadilly and the Anderson Vineyard in Charleston. The grapes were hand harvested at ideal sugar levels and with lovely delicate fruit flavours and high acid levels; whole bunch pressed; and then transferred with minimal clarification to old French oak barrels for fermentation, malo-lactic fermentation and maturation on yeast lees (for 7 months). The result is a Chardonnay with a distinctly creamy texture and refined varietal flavour, with refreshing acid providing definition. Plus it is only 12%alc/vol.

Our weather observations / obsessions

The 2016-17 growing season and vintage was one of great contrasts; however, it has given rise to wines that will be celebrated as classic Adelaide Hills wines in years to come. The growing season was the wettest since 1992, with 30% of the annual rainfall falling in July and September. The wet soils and cold weather in spring delayed budburst, flowering and veraison and thus the 2017 vintage was one of the latest in many years

(3-5 weeks late). Some experienced grape growers in the Hills noted that this was typical of vintages in the early 1990s, when a lot of the Adelaide Hills was being planted to new vineyards. As the season went on we had the benefit of a lovely warm dry autumn that allowed grapes to ripen slowly and develop delicate flavours and retain ideal acid levels.

So excited by these conditions were we that “we went to town” with regard to chardonnay – making a table wine (as mentioned above) and a blanc de blancs sparkling (which won’t be released for another three years or so). We also “went to town” in making our beloved Fancy Rosé – as mentioned below.

For this year, leading into the 2018 vintage, the cool and wet conditions during August, September and October meant a slow start to the season for vines. However, during that period a good time was had by a “woolly crew” of sheep who spent some time in vineyard munching away on under-vine weeds – leaving the vineyard looking very neat and dotted with pellets of “fertilizer”!



The woolly crew at work. Winter 2017.

By now the vineyard is a celebration of vibrant green. One can only imagine what the subterranean vineyard of vine roots looks like. It must be “all systems go!” down there as the vineyard is absolutely bursting with new life.

New releases - rosé, sparkling, reds and fortifieds

Honey Moon Vineyard Fancy Rosé 2017

45% pinot noir and 30% shiraz from our vineyard and 25% chardonnay from Piccadilly. Like the Chardonnay, it was fermented and matured in old French oak – and it is similarly textural and refreshing, with the added dimension of red fruit aroma and flavours.

Honey Moon Vineyard Brut Rosé Sparkling 2013

Similar to the 2011: cuvée is 80% pinot noir from our vineyard and 20% Adelaide Hills chardonnay; hand harvesting; whole bunch pressing; fermentation and malo-lactic fermentation in old French oak barriques; 11 months on yeast lees in barrel to make the “base wine”; then the rest of the process is Méthode Traditionnelle, by hand; secondary

fermentation in the same bottle that you purchase the final wine in; ageing on yeast lees in that bottle for many years; then many subsequent steps (hand riddling, hand disgorgement, expedition liqueuring, labelling etc.). After 46 months on lees (as at November 2017), we are seeing lovely secondary flavours of baked bread and sweet nutty notes, as well as fresh red currant and citrus characters. Combined with a creamy texture and crisp acid finish, this is a refreshing and complex sparkling wine.

Honey Moon Vineyard Pinot Noir ~ Extra 2016

Comprises the 5 different clones that we grow (777, 114, 115, MV6 and GM18); hand harvested; lots of whole berries and whole bunches in the ferments with some wild ferments; hand plunged; basket-pressed into new (20%) and old French oak; bottled in March 2017 after 12 months in oak. This is a more “feminine” expression of pinot from our vineyard – aromas of violet, rose and iris; a fruity and textural palate (reminiscent of those wonderful summer puddings, bursting with red and purple berries); the tannin and acid are subtly in the background, contributing length and freshness.

Honey Moon Vineyard Adelaide Hills Shiraz 2015

When this was a brand new wine coming off our basket press, it reminded us of our 2012, thus inspiring us to put 40% of into new French oak. Bottled in March 2017, after 22 months in oak. At this early stage, this wine is intensely perfumed and flavoured – raspberry, cherry, blackberry, spice and cedary notes. Coupled with fine-grained tannins and refreshing acidity, this wine has a long and beautifully perfumed finish. Will age very gracefully, we think.

EBVS (Early bottled Vintage Shiraz) 2017

We selected a small parcel of shiraz from the top of the vineyard, where the shiraz crop is always the ripest. After hand harvesting and de-stemming the grapes were fermented in a small stainless steel vat. About half way through, wood-aged Brandy spirit was added to elevate the alcohol level to about 20% v/v, thus shutting down the yeast and leaving some unfermented sugar in the wine. A lid was then placed on the fermenter and the Brandy spirit was allowed to soak into the cap of skins and seeds extracting more colour tannin and flavour. After about two weeks the wine was pressed off and transferred to an old French oak barrique.

The wine has: a deep, dark, ruby colour; notes of raspberry, spice, chocolate, licorice and vanilla; medium sweetness; and a velvety tannin profile. It is lovely to experience this as a young fortified wine and fascinating to experience how such wines evolve over time, as all the flavours and textures integrate. As it has not been filtered, we recommend decanting before serving.

We are bottling this wine at the time of writing, in traditional squat bottles (750ml). This wine is the only product where we use a cork closure. However, the DIAM™ corks we use have been specifically developed to avoid cork taint.



Other fortified wines

We continue to nurture and monitor a small range of barrel-aged fortified wines, which we commenced making in 2009. In 2016 we added a barrel-aged fortified chardonnay to this range (like the old fashioned cream sherry of decades past!). We hope that this latter wine will be ready for release in the first half of 2018. We will be in touch!



Thank you very much for your support throughout the year.
Best wishes for a happy Christmas and a great New Year.

Jane and Hylton
November 2017