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WIRRA WIRRA

Bell RINGERS



November 2007

From McLaren Vale Masters to the Maidens of Mumbai

Dear Bell Ringers,

As I write this I'm battling with the distraction that the blue sky and flourishing Scrubby Rise vineyard presents outside my window, on a Spring day that showcases McLaren Vale in all its glory.

And while our quest for rain continues unabated, the glorious vista symbolizes the mood and spirit that pervades the district at the moment. It seems that McLaren Vale wineries can do no wrong! In recent months Wirra Wirra, Scarpantoni, Gemtree, d'Arenberg and Chapel Hill have all been acknowledged either locally or overseas as the best of the best across a range of high profile competitions. (Apologies to any more of our local friends who make their mark before this goes to print!)

Right: Indian supermodel, Nina Manuel is hotter than tindaloo in her home country right now, where her TV show "After Hours" dictates what the gorgeous young things should be eating, drinking and wearing.

Photo courtesy Maxim Magazine India.



It now seems de rigueur that each new announcement of prominence is accompanied by the name of a McLaren Vale producer and with it, the eyes of the wine world focus on us (all too briefly) to consider how and why?

While like other regions we can lay claim to dedicated growers, smart viticulturists and talented winemakers, it has to be more than this that helps us make that incalculable leap from good to great.

Rich and diverse soil types, a myriad of micro-climates with an over-riding maritime influence, resistance to disease, drought and frost – all these

aspects combine to create what the French call "terroir" that makes McLaren Vale special as a region. And it's this idea of regionality that will become increasingly important for us as the local wine industry embarks on a drive to improve the perception of Australian wines internationally.

In order to move the international wine buying public beyond the notion that Australia just makes great low priced, value for money wines, we need to spread a different message about the diversity of style and varietals that our 60 plus wine regions can offer across a range of prices and drinking occasions.

It sounds simple enough, but when you are known for doing one thing well, changing entrenched perceptions is not all that easy.

At Wirra Wirra, we continue to invest in our future and that of the region with premium vineyard acquisitions, the introduction of new winery kit - such as our open fermenter project and the development of the great people that make up the Wirra Wirra tribe. It's all in an endeavour to make better quality wine and ensure that we have a lot of fun in the process. Trott's philosophy lives on...

So with regionality on the rise and our local producers delivering the goods, McLaren Vale is well placed to fly the Aussie flag in the export markets.

Then again, maybe we are just complicating things. As the picture shows, our importers in India suggest that Church Block drinkers in their country will respond to a far more primal persuasion.

Perhaps I should shift my attention to Scrubby Rise...

Cheers

Andrew Kay,

Caretaker in Residence



Above: Zach and Sam do their old loaves and fishes schtick to feed the hungry masses.



Above: Samantha prepares to consume her own body weight in Bollinger, assisted by Johnny Powell and Jane Cranston from our UK importers, Stevens Garnier.

Far Top Right: Ray Jordan gets set to crush another watermelon.

Far Bottom Right: “Harps” shows the form that led to his runaway Woodhenge Cup victory.

Were you There?

The June long weekend seems like eons ago now, but once again McLaren Vale played host to the incredibly popular Sea and Vines Festival. The crowds flocked to Wirra Wirra to bounce around to perennial favourites, Silverhair and graze on the delicious food served up by Adelaide’s hottest gourmet catering duo – Two Brothers. With a CV that reflects time spent in the kitchens of some of Adelaide’s finest restaurants, Zach and Sam Curnow are setting the benchmark for top-end catering in SA. We have called on their services since and we’re sure it won’t be the last time. Can we say we discovered them first?

And the Winner is...

For those Bell Ringers who may have missed the news, the Wirra Wirra tribe celebrated long and hard in September when our very own **Samantha Connew** was crowned “International Red Winemaker of the Year” as part of the London International Wine Challenge. Over 9300 wines were entered into this show with just 19 being judged worthy of international trophies – of which we were one!

Sam was present at the awards dinner, dubbed “the Oscars of the wine industry”, to receive the award as well as the three trophies which were awarded to our 2004 Dead Ringer Cabernet Sauvignon (sold in Australia as The Angelus). Hailed as the Best McLaren Vale Red Wine, the Best Australian Cabernet Sauvignon and the best International Cabernet Sauvignon, it is little wonder that the winery phone has been ringing off the hook with punters looking to secure a bottle or three. Unfortunately, the 2004 vintage sold out some time ago at Cellar Door, but the good news is the 2005 vintage has just been released!

The not so good news is that once again, the wine has been produced in a very small quantity so we have had to place limits on bottle purchases in the hope that we can let as many Bell Ringers enjoy the wine as possible before it is all snapped up. Last year’s wine was all but gone by Christmas, so get in quick!



Tony takes the Trottskies!

Every year in the last weekend in September we invite a bunch of guests from around the country to Wirra Wirra for 24 hours of controlled chaos, known as Trott’s Birthday/The Woodhenge Cup. The group is made up of wine scribes and trade from a nominated state. This year it was Queensland’s turn and the group – mainly from Brisvegas – did their people proud. It was also the first year that we have invited “international” guests, with a trio of Kiwis joining us for the special occasion.

The date is a chance to celebrate the life and times of Trott and also a good excuse to fire up the trebuchet and hurl a few watermelons into the vineyard. This activity signals the new vintage release of the Catapult Shiraz Viognier and seems to bring out the inner child in all of us.

Aside from various tastings and a delicious dinner in our old cellars, the other highlight of the occasion is the running of the Woodhenge Cup. This event involves using a cross-cut saw to rip through a rather large log with the assistance of an experienced woodsman on the other end of the saw. Guests plunder the unofficial bookmaker with unofficial cash (Trott money, or Trottskies as we call them) in a feverous round of betting before taking part and endeavouring to beat the clock. The participant with the fastest recorded time becomes the Woodhenge Cup Champion and their “winnings” are matched with real cash by Wirra Wirra and donated to the Flinders Medical Centre for research into bowel cancer, the disease that claimed Trotty.

This year, Queensland Restaurateur and Writer Tony Harper took the honours in an inspired performance.

For more pics of the Catapult Launch and the Woodhenge cup check out YouTube at www.youtube.com/watch?v=J6QPSnrC8Y and www.youtube.com/watch?v=xC7qioUAK8o.





Above: Amidst another day in paradise, Belinda and Bec contemplate why they waited so long to join Wirra Wirra.



Above: Mike's offer to personally accompany his first export order fell on deaf ears.



Above: Russ leaves under the condition that he takes his brown shirt with him, much to the delight of Matt, Luke and Brendan.



Above: Tristan is now available in Cellar Door.

The Magic Roundabout

We welcome a few new faces to the Wirra Wirra tribe since the last edition of Bell Ringers. **Rebecca Coombs** joins us as Marketing Manager since AK moved into TJ's old chair; **Mike House** as Sales Manager – International taking care the major chunk of our Export business; and **Belinda Godfrey** who has come on board as Assistant Accountant to rectify the testosterone imbalance in the bean counting department.

Another new face is **Matt Walker-Brown** who because of his two surnames, has been allocated two jobs – one behind the jump at Cellar Door where his energy and enthusiasm have been admired by all and secondly, as a cellar hand in the winery engine room. Joining Matt “out the back” are Sandgroper **Luke Growden** and **Brendan Findlay**. When not “racking and returning”, Luke can be found chasing waves along the South coast, while Brendan has had a stint with us once before and liked it so much he came back for more. It's taken all three of these lads to fill the mighty shoes of **Russell Desmond** who is heading off to the Canadian winter after 18 months in the winery. Russ's laid-back approach (horizontal – Ed.) to life and never – ending good humour will be greatly missed by all the crew. And finally, our most recent recruit is **Tristan Bryant** who has joined the Cellar Door crew and was the recipient of an unsolicited note of praise from some happy customers on his first weekend. Welcome one and all and travel safely, Russ!

Bell Ringers Bonus

Just like last year, we contacted Bell Ringers in August with a series of Member's Reward offers on some interesting new and museum wines. As ever, the response was overwhelming! Apologies to those who had to wait a little longer than planned for their precious cargo. Our cellar door crew worked like Trojans for six weeks solid, busily processing orders while still looking after the friends of Wirra Wirra who drop by to taste a few wines and say hello. If we can find anymore interesting tidbits to offer, you can expect another great deal around the same time next year.



Dung and Dusted

Anyone who knows Wirra Wirra Vineyard Supervisor **Richard Wellsmore** will tell you that when he sets his mind on something there are no half measures. Whether it is spin cycling in his lounge room to make up for the kilometres he has missed on the road, or meticulously managing the vineyards at Wirra Wirra, Rich's work ethic dispels the myth about Kiwis and hard yakka (Not entirely – Ed).

Rich has been passionate for some time about biodynamic viticulture and he is on a mission to turn our vineyards into a natural wonderland. Having buried himself in literature and attended workshops and seminars on the topic Rich has started a few trials at Wirra Wirra including:

- Purchasing a mechanical undervine weeder to eliminate herbicide usage
- Lowering fungicide use in the vineyard
- Moving to “natural” fertilisers such as SeaMungus and Seasol, and away from synthetic based fertilisers
- And in his most notable work to date, Rich has constructed our own “cow pat pits” to allow us to produce BD preparations for the vineyard.

The main aim with all this is to improve our soil health and structure, which in turn should aid in better vine health. This should lead to better fruit quality and ultimately better wine. That's the theory, anyway.



Above: Richie's pretty pleased with his latest brew.

Rich's next proposal takes the whole idea of vertical integration one step further. He has requested that we purchase a couple of cows to roam around our new wastewater dam, so that we can cut out the middleman and provide our own cow pats. There is one slight problem.

Greg Trott's father had such an aversion to cows, that he named the vineyard adjacent the dam “Nocowie” – mostly for his own amusement as visitors were sure it had a deep indigenous significance akin to “Wirra Wirra”. Should a name change to “Twocowie” be required by the next edition of this newsletter, you will be the first to know and Bell Ringers can have the pleasure of christening the beautiful bovines.



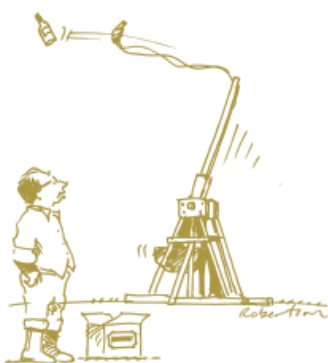
Lost Watch



Hiding Champion



The 12th Man



Catapult



Woodhenge

A Wine by any other name...

The release in September of the 2007 Lost Watch Riesling saw the completion (for now) of the RGT Collection, the range of wines that celebrates the life and times of the man who put Wirra Wirra on the map, Richard Gregory (Greg) Trott.

All the wine labels feature a story based on one of Trotty's more interesting past-times or traits and a cartoon by Ian Robertson, an old mate of Trott's who created the Trotty cartoon character for Wirra Wirra advertising many years ago.

Most of the wines in the range have lived before under other names, so to eliminate any confusion:

Lost Watch Riesling
formerly Hand Picked Riesling

Hiding Champion Sauvignon Blanc
formerly Adelaide Hills Sauvignon Blanc

The 12th Man Chardonnay
formerly Adelaide Hills Chardonnay

Catapult Shiraz Viognier – NEW!

Woodhenge Shiraz
formerly McLaren Vale Shiraz

We think the new names reflect more of the personality of Wirra Wirra and are a nice way to remember the spirit and passion of Richard Gregory Trott.

Time for a Stiff Drink

The Wirra Wirra crew love the work of English wine scribe Matthew Jukes and it would seem from Jukesy's latest effort with Aussie companion Tyson Stelzer, "Taste – Food and Wine 2008" that the feeling is mutual. Of the seven Wirra Wirra wines that received glowing endorsements from the pair, we felt that the review of the 2007 Scrubby Rise Sauvignon Blanc Semillon Viognier needed some clarification.

"Oooh, yes! Trust Wirra to have pioneered and now perfected the funky white blend thing. Scrubby has been around for a few years, and fine-tuning has always been top of the agenda. Why this wine's name hasn't been updated to "Perfectly Shiny" Rise is beyond us. The difference between it and other SSBs is the addition of a small amount of Viagra, which injects a welcome boost to the palate (and mood) meaning that Wirra Wirra Scrubby Rise will enliven parts that no other wine will reach."

Mmm. While we can be accused of messing around with Arneis, Mourvedre, Tempranillo and Pinot Gris in the last 12 months, Viagra is something that has not yet made its way into the bottle at Wirra Wirra. And if you knew our Cellar Hands you would understand that this is probably a good thing too.

Sam's Mailbag

Dear Sam,

I had just worked out the difference between Riesling and Sauvignon Blanc (about \$5 a bottle – Ed) when along comes Pinot Gris. Not only does the name frighten me, but I have been told it is also known as Pinot Grigio. And anyway, it's a white wine – I thought all Pinots were red?

Yours truly,

High in the Hills.

Dear HHH,

Aah yes! The more you uncover, the more there is to know.

Pinot Grigio and Pinot Gris may seem like different wines, but it's more a matter of language and style. The grape -- the pinot gris -- is the same in each case. Gris, which is French for grey, refers to the grayish skin color of this aromatic white wine grape, which is a variant of Pinot Noir.

The French refer to it as Pinot Gris. Generally made in Alsace, a French Pinot Gris can be quite full bodied, with floral and mineral characters.

Pinot Grigio, on the other hand, is the Italian style, grigio being the Italian word for grey. Typically it is lighter bodied, fresh and crisp and would be described in winespeak as "fruit forward". The Italians harvest their grapes sooner than the French, which means they aren't as ripe, and this accounts for the difference in flavour.

In Australia there seems to be more interest in the Pinot Gris – or maybe it's just the one we prefer to drink at Wirra Wirra? We have just made a wine in this style for our Cellar Door customers. It is only a small run, just enough to keep the winemakers happy and our accountant stressed.

Which is how we like it.

Samantha.

thisistakinglonger thanexpected.com

It's getting closer! We have been meaning to update our rather antiquated website for some time now and it's fair to say that the transformation is occurring in "Wirra Wirra Time". However, the new look, all singing, all dancing Wirra Wirra website is nearly with us. It will contain all the usual stuff, plus regularly updated news for Bell Ringers and simple to operate online means for you to order your wine direct from Cellar Door. Keep an eye out at www.wirrawirra.com from January next year!



Above: The winning dish.



Above: The Greater Melbourne team look decidedly animated about their victory.

McLaren Vale Maestro leads Victorian Raiders

In October, Adelaide played host to Tasting Australia, the nation's favourite foodie event. Ex-Fleurieu lad and gun chef, Duncan White-Robertson, brought a team over from Victoria to compete in the LifeStyle FOOD Channel Australian Regional Culinary Competition. Over four days of competition, 17 teams of the nation's best regional chefs did battle to win one of Australia's top culinary honours. Teams of trained chefs and apprentices from across Australia competed for the culinary honour of the Gold Award for Best Region. As well as gold, silver and bronze awards for Best Region, there were a number of individual awards including Best Apprentice, Best Food and Wine Matching, Best Entree, Best Main Course, and Best Dessert.

Duncan has a strong link to Wirra Wirra as his father Ian Robertson is the man behind the famous Trott cartoons that over the years have adorned our advertising, cellar door, W.Cs. and most recently the labels for the RGT Collection of wines. For this reason he approached us to ask if the Greater Melbourne entry could actually use a McLaren Vale wine, the 2002 Wirra Wirra RSW Shiraz to partner their main course entry.

Suffice to say, the wine – well ok, the food – bowled the judges over and Duncan and his team from the Holmesglen Institute picked up Gold for the Best Main Course. To see their recipe for the dish - Mount Duneed produced "Country Tender" MSA eye of rump medallion with oyster blade rillette, bobby veal sausage, CERES organic shitake mushroom and spring vegetables – go to www.wirrawirra.com/bellringers and look under the newsletter links to find a copy of the menu.

As ever, Ian has committed their victory to ink.

Viva Espagna!

Why do winemakers grizzle all through vintage about how tough their lot is, then first chance they have, jump on a plane to head overseas and sneak another one in during the "off season"? While we mere mortals were left to ponder this question, Winemaker Sam jetted off to Spain to share a bit of New World wine knowledge with the crew at Telmo Rodriguez. Based in Rioja, they actually make wine in eight regions across Spain, giving Sam a great perspective on styles and varieties across the country.

While Telmo Rodriguez is well known for their verdejo from Rueda, Sam was particularly taken with other white varieties such as albarinho and godello from Galicia on the north coast of Spain. How will this translate to Wirra Wirra? We sense another "Cellar Door exclusive" on the horizon. In the interim, you can try Sam's first Spanish foray, the 2006 Sparrow's Lodge Tempranillo available now at Cellar Door.

Wirra Wirra & Wagyu

Thanks to those Bell Ringers who joined us at Gianni's in Brisbane, Becasse in Sydney, Taxi Dining Room in Melbourne and Augé in Adelaide for the Wirra Wirra and Wagyu dinners. The dinners sold out quickly and judging by the reluctance with which the guests left the restaurants a good time was had by all. Winemaker Sam and AK were genuinely humbled by the wonderful stories and memories Bell Ringers from all over the country shared about their visits to the winery or meetings with Trott at previous Wirra Wirra gatherings. One such Bell Ringer told us of her gymnastic exploits over Woodhenge, then sent the following as evidence:

Hi Andrew,

I do not know if you remember me as there were many people at the Wirra Wirra Wine evening in Sydney at Becasse.

I was the one right at the end of the night who told you about the passion and love affair I have with not only your wines, for many years now, but your gorgeous, divine fence.

I not only come to the cellar door for the wines but just to be able to run along your fence, it makes my trip to Adelaide all the more fun.

The photos I have attached are a sample of the many I have taken over the years of coming to Wirra Wirra.

My husband is quite embarrassed at times by my antics on the fence. I was an Australian Gymnast and elite athlete in my younger days and I just love the freedom of running across it as if it were a giant gym beam.

Anyway, I do apologise. I get carried away not only by your wines but the beauty of the place.

We had a great night at the Wirra Wirra wines launch and met some great like minded Wirra Wirra devotees.

Hopefully we make it to SA again this year. You may get to see me run along the fence again, and it ain't a possum but me!!!!

Kind regards to all at Wirra Wirra,

Kate Csardas-Kyriacou

Everyday's a Halliday

The esteemed Australian wine writer James Halliday releases his eagerly awaited "bible" each Spring – *The Australian Wine Companion* – where he performs the Herculean task of reviewing just about every significant winery in the country and a fair selection of their range while he is at it. This year for the sixth consecutive year, James gave Wirra Wirra his maximum score of 5 stars, stating that Wirra Wirra is an "outstanding winery, regularly producing wines of exemplary quality and typicity." As always the book is a comprehensive guide to buying wines in Australia and never fails to produce a raft of new discoveries or perhaps a considered revision of old favourites.





Above: Emily Trott continues her family's tradition of supporting the arts, presenting David Mercer with his award.



Above: Legendary playwright David Williamson and his wife Kirstin, turn this festival poster into a collector's item.

Cash for Comment

A collection of wordsmiths and their learned followers totaling around 700, descended upon Wirra Wirra in September for the 2007 Writer's Festival and the announcement of the prizes for the Wirra Wirra Short Story Award. The deserved winners were David Mercer (Open) for "The Adventures of Loganberry Fin" and Alexander Weaver (Youth) for her story, "Alone Together". They each collected \$1000 for their efforts which will be included in the 2007 Wirra Wirra Short Story Anthology, available from SA Writers' Centre (08) 8223 7662. Literary giant, David Williamson was on hand to present the award and declared himself a fan of Wirra Wirra's famous reds.

Twilight Happy Hours

The incredibly popular Twilight Happy Hours are on again over the Christmas – New Year period. Hosted by our friends at Leconfield Winery and featuring wines by the glass from a number of McLaren Vale's finest, the events will be held between 5pm and 9pm on Friday 28th and Saturday 29th December. Entry is \$5 for adults which gets you a coffee or glass, while children can come along for free.

Friday night features the Chris Finnen Band; and Saturday showcases Wirra Wirra Sea and Vines favourites, Silverhair. Ozzie Gozleme will barbecue delicious Turkish pastries and other delights before your very eyes using the finest local produce, while there will also be food and entertainment for the kids. See www.leconfieldwines.com/twighlighthappyhours for more details or call Rina at Leconfield on (08) 8323 8830.

Miss March



Above: Miss March, Murphy Brown, in a more demure pose.

Eyebrows were raised recently when one of Wirra Wirra's most admired females found herself provocatively posing as Miss March in a national calendar being proffered at cellar doors around the country. Fortunately, for **Murphy Brown**, Winemaker Sam's beloved companion, she was simply keeping up a Wirra Wirra tradition of appearing in the Winery Dogs calendar. Trott's faithful pooch, Jessie was the inspiration for the first calendar many years ago. Cute winery woofers from across Australia are captured in all their glory in the 2008 calendar which is on sale at Cellar Door for just \$15.00.

FREE CALENDAR OFFER: Be one of the first 100 Bell Ringers to order a case of our Summer Lovin' Dozen and we'll send you one of these cute canine calendars FREE. Order now while stocks last.

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Printed on 100% recycled, Australian made paper using soy based 'Eco' inks.

Mike vs "Magilla"

Cricket tragic Trott would have been smiling down upon us on Father's Day when we played host to Australian Test leg spinner Stuart MacGill and a crew from the Foxtel Lifestyle Channel who were filming for a new series on food and wine, hosted by the wine loving cricketer. Stu bowled a few balls on the lawns out the front of the Cellars and reminisced with Wirra Wirra Sales Manager, - International, **Michael House** about the days when they played club cricket together in Perth. Stu, if you're reading this, Mike says you were no more than an average net bowler whose bowling he treated with the contempt it deserved!

Still Got the Blues

When we introduced the 2005 Sparrow's Lodge Cabernet Sauvignon earlier this year, people told us "Great wine! Er, interesting label..." So with the introduction of two more "blue wines", the Sparrow's Lodge Tempranillo and Sparrow's Lodge Pinot Gris, we felt we should explain.

Any wine sold under the Sparrow's Lodge label will only be found at our cellar door – that is of course unless one of our favourite local restaurant begs us for a couple of bottles. These wines will be made in small parcels of between 100 – 200 dozen. It gives winemakers Samantha and Lexi the chance to have a bit of fun and experiment with a few different varietals while contributing to an increase in Moneyman Dan's blood pressure.

So what's with the blue? When Greg Trott first released the famous Church Block back in 1972, the label was blue. It remained that way for a few vintages before various experiments led to the buff colour that is now synonymous with Wirra Wirra. The blue of the Sparrow's Lodge label is our best effort to recapture that original colour, given changes in printing technology and paper stocks over the years.

Nostalgic? Retrospective? Lazy? Possibly.

And the name Sparrow's Lodge? You'll have to read the back of the label or ask one of the friendly Wirra Wirra tribe on that one.



2005 Sparrow's Lodge
McLaren Vale
Cabernet Sauvignon
\$30.00

2006 Sparrow's Lodge
Langhorne Creek
Tempranillo \$22.50

2007 Sparrow's Lodge
Adelaide Hills
Pinot Gris \$20.00

Limited stocks, exclusive to Cellar Door.

