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## FROM SOMEWHERE IN THE MESS THAT IS A WINEMAKER'S DESK!

# Ageing Wine

SCOTT ZRNA  
Winemaker

### Why would you want to age wine in the first place?

Older wines can offer an ethereal experience, developing complex, subtle and elusive flavours that can be almost impossible to describe. In an all too obvious metaphor for life, the most age-worthy examples of youthful promise gain richness and complexity with age, but then they turn frail and weak and eventually die.

The flavour profile of the wines you enjoy is a very personal thing. Older wines are an acquired taste, so don't go to the trouble of ageing 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 left in it. Aged wine is not necessarily better; it just has a whole different flavour and structure profile to young wine.

Most people keep wine for far too long, often in less than optimum storage conditions, and may be extremely disappointed once they pluck up the courage to actually open the bottle. It seems that the years of anticipation builds an expectation that the wine, however good it is for its age, cannot hope to live up to.

Not all wines have the ability to age; in fact most of the world's wines are specifically designed for early drinking. It's important to remember that this isn't a bad thing; there's nothing wrong with enjoying wine for its unabashed fruit and youthfulness, and there's nothing wrong with wines that don't age. There are also wines that age but do not improve, as they lose their fruit without gaining the complex secondary and tertiary qualities that make well aged wine worth waiting for.

As wine ages, it goes through a series of chemical changes, most of which science hasn't yet figured out. The rough edges are smoothed off, powerful oak integrates, tannins become silky smooth, but alas 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 as well as condition of a wine, more specifically its physiological and not its chronological age. This can be seen by tilting the glass over a white background and looking down

where the wine and glass meet. A young wine will be bright purple, and as it ages it becomes red, then brick-red, then orange and; finally, in decrepit old age, brown.

The best way to work out when a wine is ready to drink is to lay down a case or part case, sampling a bottle when you purchased 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 posterity if you so desire (or, if you are greedy like me - drink the lot)...

*to be continued in the Spring Newsletter.*





**Take note all you sedentary folk – use it or lose it!** When Jim Watts retired from his position as General Manager of Fox Creek Wines we assumed he would kick back and relax! We were wrong – very wrong... Jim has been visiting personal trainer Brian Maples at Aldinga Beach three times a week! Jim tells us that he is trying to get some colour back in his hair!

## GOAT STUFFED WITH MOROCCAN COUS COUS

This delicious dish (pictured) was designed and cooked by Maurice Maffei, head chef at The Adelaide Oval Function Centre for the recent Meat and Livestock Dinner.

### Ingredients:

One Goat Completely Boned, Cous Cous, Toasted Flaked Almonds, Raisins, Coriander, Mint, Dukkah, Cumin, Chopped Garlic, Chopped Ginger, Honey, Oranges, Leek, Celery, Carrots, Star Anise.

### Goat Stock:

Red Wine, Sea Salt, Pepper

### Method:

To make stock place the bones into the oven to roast along with celery carrot and leek. Brown the bones and vegetables; don't burn the bones as they will taste bitter. Add red wine, salt and pepper, cover with water, bring to the boil, then simmer for about two hours.

Lay the goat flat on the bench and lightly bang with meat hammer (you are trying to flatten not tenderise). Put it back in the fridge until you are ready to use.

To make cous cous, put butter into saucepan and fry off the garlic, ginger and dukkah spice. Add the water and simmer. Add the cous cous and take off the heat. Cover the pot and let it sit until all the liquid has absorbed. While still hot, add the rest of the ingredients (except the goat) and stir through. Season.

When cool, take goat out of fridge and lay on the bench. Put a ridge of cous cous into the middle of the goat, roll the goat up like a roulade, tie with butchers twine and lay on a bed of celery, carrots, leeks, oranges and star anise. Add red wine and goat stock and cover the whole tray with foil and braise in oven for one and a half hours or until tender.

Once tender take the foil off and cook for another 20 minutes to brown the meat. Drain the braising liquid and reduce the stock for a sauce.

## 2006 Vintage Report

CHRIS DIX  
Head Winemaker

The 2006 growing season commenced with regular Spring rains which caused the vines to become 'jungle' like. To ensure the vines channelled their energies into the grapes rather than the 'jungle', we restricted and in some cases were able to stop irrigation. This and a four day heat wave, just at the right time, held back the growing tips and the grapes began to develop.

A dry warm summer ensured the large leaf area created high levels of flavour in the grapes. As vintage approached the warm February days further developed the flavours and sugars in the berries. Harvest began on the 9th February with some very delicate Verdelho grapes.

Throughout the rest of February we harvested the Verdelho, Sauvignon Blanc and the Chardonnay.

We thinned many of the crops to control the 'jungle' in February resulting in average red yields which ensured concentrated, flavoursome

super-premium wines. The first of the reds to be picked was Shiraz from our Malpas Ridge vineyard; these grapes were crushed on the 6th March. This led to three weeks of very busy red grape crushing, fermenting and pressing with the best parcels going into new French and American oak for barrel fermentation.

The Shiraz wines will be powerful, our Cabernet Sauvignon, Grenache and Mourvedre are showing great flavours and the Cabernet Franc is the 'dark horse', showing both aromatics and great intensity of flavour.

Our efforts in the vineyards and the winery, coupled with another generous vintage have created excellent wines that will develop and evolve into great drinking blends sometime in 2007. Please be patient!

Many thanks to the winery team – Danny, Glenn, Dave, Steve, Justin, Ben and my fellow Winemaker Scott Zrna for all their efforts in the 2006 vintage.

## The Fox and the Goat

PAUL ROGERS  
General Manager

The organization, Meat and Livestock Australia (MLA), spends an enormous amount of energy promoting Australian meat throughout the world. Some of our readers may recall that

last year I, together with Stephen Edwards, Program Coordinator SA, ran some dinners promoting both Australian meat and Australian wine in China. A few months ago we held a dinner in the Langley Room at the Royal Adelaide Oval. This dinner gave me the opportunity to bring together two of my passions; goat meat and Fox Creek wine as I have been breeding Boer goats, a breed of goat used specifically for the meat market, since 2001.

The Dinner promoted a partnership between MLA and some of the top chefs and restaurant owners in Adelaide. It showcased "what can be possible with some of the best goat meat in South Australia" (their words not mine).

As you can see, the food looked fantastic and tasted just as good, especially when combined with our 2004 Shiraz Grenache – what more could you ask for?





## New Releases



### 2004 Reserve Cabernet Sauvignon

Like the Reserve Shiraz we did not produce a 2003 vintage due to the strict quality selection used by our winemakers. With the 2004 vintage the winemakers selected a small number of barrels to be classified "Reserve" quality. We have only 50 cases of this wine available and it isn't expected to last very long.

*Awards: Gold Medal 2005 McLaren Vale Wine Show and a Silver Medal 2006 Sydney Royal Wine Show.*

Enjoy lifted complex fruit aromas of cassis, varietal cabernet lift and subtle spicy oak. The palate displays rich cassis and blackcurrant flavours with leafy complexity. This is a well structured wine with concentrated integrated fruit and oak and sweet ripe tannins giving texture and full length. Drink now until 2010.



### 2004 Shiraz-Grenache

The 2004 vintage is a worthy successor to the highly awarded 2003 vintage having recently been given four stars by Winestate Magazine. They noted that it has "pretty raspberry aromas with mint and vanilla-accented oak for company. Loads of fruit sweetness on the palate, with good depth and weight of red fruit, spice and confection flavour."

According to our winemakers the bouquet has lifted rich aromas of blueberry and blackberry with dark cherry and vanillin spice from subtle oak maturation. The palate has a generous soft and rich entry of complex berry fruits that lead to a full, spicy palate of dark berries, a soft tannin structure with excellent length of flavour. While crafted for immediate appeal, this wine will benefit from up to two years cellaring before drinking.

So if you haven't tried this wine before, now would be a good time, it is really excellent.

*Award: Silver Medal 2005 Royal Queensland Wine Show.*



### 2004 Shadow's run Shiraz-Cabernet Sauvignon

Just like our Shadow (the dog), this wine has great strength but is 'easy going' and the 2004 vintage really over-delivers. Winestate Magazine (May/June 2006) rated it as one of the 'Top 40 Best Buys'. The bouquet has lifted spice with a hint of leaf, dark berry, savoury spices and sweet vanillin oak from barrel maturation. The palate starts rich and spicy with ripe raspberry and dark chocolate flavours on the smooth mid palate, leading to a soft luscious finish of good length. It is full, rich, ripe and spicy from a great vintage. This full bodied red is suitable for a barbecue, roast dinner or any occasion with good friends. This wine has been crafted for enjoyment now and will also improve over the next two years under good cellaring conditions.

## Visitors to Fox Creek

**Harvest time at Fox Creek is always exciting but was made even more so in March by visits from Jane Reilly, the Channel 10 weather presenter, and from the 2006 English Commonwealth Games Diving team.**

Jane swooped in by helicopter in great style and filmed a segment at the winery which was shown on the Channel 10 news that night. Jane and her crew were just charming and seemed to enjoy themselves. They learnt a bit about how we harvest and crush the grapes.

On another sunny Autumn afternoon our Cellar Door was invaded by a group of very fit and healthy looking members

of the English Commonwealth Games Diving team. They had come from "arctic" conditions back in their homeland to the glorious sunshine and surroundings of McLaren Vale to enjoy the local produce, including our wines of course! Shadow graced them with his presence and performed his famous "running the vines" routine, much to their amusement. They spent many an hour absorbing the ambience at our Cellar Door and recharging their batteries in preparation for the Games.

BRENDA GRATTON  
Customer Service Officer



Jane Reilly with Jim and Paul.



2006 Commonwealth Games  
English Diving Team

## Winter 2006 Mixed Dozens

The composition of the Fox Creek Circle Mixed Dozens for Winter 2006 are listed below. **If you require any changes to your mix or would like to add to your order please contact us by Monday 31st May as invoicing and despatch will start on the 5th June.** *Those who have ordered Single Variety Dozens for Winter will receive them at the same time.*

### WHITE DOZEN

- 2005 Verdelho
- 2005 Chardonnay
- 2005 Sauvignon Blanc
- 2003 Semillon-Sauvignon Blanc

Mail Order Price **\$186.00**  
Fox Creek Circle Price **\$156.00** delivered



### RED DOZEN

- 2004 Shiraz-Grenache
- Vixen Sparkling Shiraz-Cabernet Franc
- 2004 Duet Cabernet Sauvignon-Merlot
- 2004 Short Row Shiraz
- 2003 Fox & Hounds Shiraz-Cabernet Sauvignon

Mail Order Price **\$260.00**  
Fox Creek Circle Price **\$222.50** delivered



### MIXED DOZEN

- 2005 Verdelho
- 2005 Sauvignon Blanc
- 2005 Chardonnay
- 2003 Semillon-Sauvignon Blanc
- Vixen Sparkling Shiraz-Cabernet Franc
- 2004 Shadow's run Shiraz-Cabernet Sauvignon
- 2004 Shiraz-Grenache
- 2003 JSM Shiraz-Cabernet Franc
- 2004 Short Row Shiraz
- 2003 Fox & Hounds Shiraz-Cabernet Sauvignon

Mail Order Price **\$228.00**  
Fox Creek Circle Price **\$195.00** delivered



## Vixen Sparkling Shiraz-Cabernet Franc

MARK  
DIMBERLINE  
Sales Manager

First released in 1996, Vixen has become one of our most popular wines. Although in the past, most of this wine was sold in Australia, now many overseas markets, in particular the U.S.A., are showing a great deal of interest in this "different" style of red wine.

We are often asked why we make a red wine with bubbles, how do you serve it and what food do you serve it with? We make it because people love it! The best way to serve it is slightly chilled but not too cold (around 7-9 C). Two to three hours in the fridge before pouring should be sufficient. If the wine is too cold, it will dull the aroma and fail to show the complexity of fruit

flavours. Serve it in a champagne flute, glasses with wider bodies enable the bubbles to rapidly disperse and the wine will quickly lose its bead. Ensure you rinse the glass well as detergents leave a residue in the glass which reacts with the wine, causing it to be less effervescent.

You may not have tried Vixen with food, but it is certainly worthwhile enjoyed with smoked meats and game, duck, pheasant or kangaroo. Try it with Thai or Mexican food or a mild curry. For dessert, it complements a rich chocolate cake or a good cheese. We would like to hear from you about foods you have found that combine well with Vixen.

## WIN A VERTICAL PACK OF JSM

Most of you will be familiar with our red wine JSM named in recognition of Captain James Stanley Malpas MC, who lived in the stone cottage we now use as our Cellar Door. In his youth James carved the inscription 'JSM 1891' into the stone lintel above the front door of the cottage.

This wine is a great example of the benefits of combining Shiraz and Cabernet varieties. Over the years we have lost count of the number of times that we have been asked what grape variety the "J" stands for and so, have decided to confront the confusion in the market place and use it to help promote the wine.

Consequently we are now running a competition on what the three letters J, S & M might stand for. We want you to have fun with this.

**Email your entries to [marketing@foxcreekwines.com](mailto:marketing@foxcreekwines.com) or mail to Kristin McLarty, PO Box 321, McLaren Vale SA 5171 by Monday 5th June 2006.**

The entries will be judged by a committee of the "intelligent" members of our staff and the winner will receive a vertical six pack of JSM (with 1 bottle of the 1997, 1998, 2000, 2001, 2002 & 2003 vintages) freighted free of charge to your door.

## OUR PERMANENT CELLAR HANDS GLENN REYNOLDS, DAVID STEEPLE & DANNY FILMER.



As an integral part of the team, our Cellar Hands are the ones that really make the wine (don't tell the winemakers!). Back to a 'normal' routine now that vintage 2006 is complete, they've spent tireless hours over the months crushing, pressing, filtering, pumping over wine and moving, cleaning and topping up the barrels. While the vines may be dormant over Winter our winemaking team are still hard at work on what promise to be fantastic 2006 vintage wines!

## Expect the Unexpected at Cellar Door

HELEN HUNTER  
Cellar Door Manager

In the first week of April some visitors to Fox Creek and I were gazing out the Cellar Door window watching the harvesting of the Cabernet Franc grapes. Something drew my attention towards the grass below the window and what did I see? "Oh look" I said to the people in Cellar Door, "It's a baby tortoise". Sure enough here was a little Long Neck Tortoise moving quite fast toward the hills in the opposite direction to the lake.

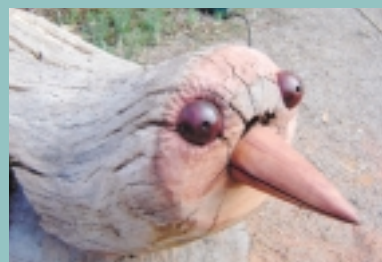


Well, I thought, he won't find any H<sub>2</sub>O in that direction, in fact he is heading for certain doom that way!

So I rang Brenda our friendly customer/animal liaison officer who promptly arrived with camera in hand. His shell was very dry and dusty. So we headed to the lake. I removed my shoes and socks and entered the sludgy mud with tortoise in hand.

News Flash... Baby tortoise was last seen swimming off merrily to the middle of the lake... Now isn't that a nice story! Raise a glass of Fox Creek and celebrate the little things in life.

## EXHIBITION BY LOCAL ARTIST ROBIN TURNER AT FOX CREEK CELLAR DOOR



It all began 30 years ago for Robin when he discovered wood. He wandered the land enjoying the trees of Australia and began creating furniture from their natural forms and utilising the magic grain in them. With a background in Interior Design Robin took on this new challenge which led him to create sculpture, building structures, furniture, jewellery, functional art pieces and all manner of creations.

Come and experience some of Robin's works on exhibition at our Cellar Door from 19th May to 17th July. There will be a range of works from outdoor sculptures, small tables made from our used wine barrels, Robin's legendary foxy noworrybeads key rings and some other surprises.



# Fox Creek Reserve Cabernet Vertical Tasting '96-'04

For those of you who have cellared our Reserve Cabernet Sauvignon here is a vertical tasting of each by our winemakers to give you an idea of how they are drinking now.

## 1996

A deep and vibrant cherry colour with an amazing youthful red rim, lifted fruit aromas of complex menthol, mature blackberry and cigarbox. The palate has rich sweet fruit on entry, powerful mid palate flavours of blackcurrant, mocha and dusty fine tannin leading to a long rich finish. Drinking extremely well now.

## 1997

The '97 is brick red in colour showing some development and mature savoury and gamey aromas. The palate shows developed berry flavours with olive and leather complexity. Probably past its peak; if you have any, drink it now.

## 1998

Cherry red with a light rim in colour. The nose shows ripe fruit characters of chocolate, mocha and spicy cinnamon oak. The palate is big and soft with spice and toasty chocolate mocha notes with the finish long. While solid, this wine should be consumed in 2006.

## 1999

Red cherry colour and brick red rim. The aroma shows spicy stir fry with some cherry fruits and savoury smoked meat elements. The palate is medium weight showing lighter red fruits. Drinking very well now.

## 2000

Medium red with a light crimson rim and the nose offers herbal coffee and black olives with a hint of cigarbox and leafiness. The palate is full and is one of the softest and more elegant wines in the line up with edgy fruit. Drink now.

## 2001

The colour is intensely deep plum red with a crimson rim. The '01 is quite vibrant and young with spicy plummy fruit aromas. On the palate there are concentrated layers of sweet berry fruits, chocolate and mocha notes similar to the '98. There is good structure with mid palate weight and length. The '01 will peak from 2007 onwards.

## 2002

Rich dark cherry in colour with a violet rim. Lifted varietal cassis and blackcurrant fruit, tobacco and cinnamon oak spice. The palate is big

showing intense black fruit and berry flavours with olives and chocolate. It has a solid and soft palate showing ripe integrated tannin and oak with finesse, sweet fruit weight. The excellent balance of fruit and tannin travels right through to the very long finish. Will drink well from 2008 onwards.

## 2004

Vibrant deep red with intense cherry rim. The nose shows ripe cassis, blackberry and subtle spicy oak. The palate is big showing rich blackcurrant with red fruits and hints of leafy complexity. Fruit dominates integrated oak, with solid seamless palate, ripe sweet tannins and length. Drinking well now, but needs a year for the tannins to soften and become silky smooth.

**All of these wines are suitable for drinking now, but the 2001, 2002 and 2004 vintage will improve with further cellaring. Earlier vintages, even the 1998 may not improve and should be enjoyed now or in the near future.**



One of our Cellar hands, Dave Steeple and his wife Sal, own the Blushing Grape bed and breakfast in the historic village of Willunga. Their guests are always supplied with a superb complimentary bottle of Fox Creek wine to help them wind down into Willunga time! Members of the Fox Creek Circle & Wine Club who mention this newsletter story will receive 10% discount on their accommodation. Telephone: 08 8556 2997 Website: [www.blushinggrape.com](http://www.blushinggrape.com)



At Fox Creek we support and are supported by many accommodation providers in our area and from time to time we feature these in this newsletter. If you are heading our way make sure you see the 'Visit Us' page of our website [www.foxcreekwines.com](http://www.foxcreekwines.com)



SEE YOU AT THE CELLAR DOOR SOON!

Cellar Door open for tastings between 10am and 5pm seven days a week.

