



# THE END IS NIGH... OF WINTER THAT IS!

**Which means pruning is nearly completed and we are thinking about the new season.**

But before we get into that, we are very excited to be gearing up for the release of our 2014 pinots and chardonnays. As we continue to build on our understanding of these pretty amazing and certainly exciting sites, we can say that 2014 offered us a fresh perspective due to such a cool November. Not since the first vintage for MFW (2005) have

we had such a poor period of fruit set resulting in yields 65% down on normal. Obviously the normal assumption is that lower yields equates to higher quality, but this is a generality and does not hold true in all cases. We certainly don't have a perfect or ideal yield target but rather assess each vine and how it responds to the the season and the load it is carrying. Yields from one site can fluctuate from as little as 700Kg/acre up to 2700Kg/acre. In 2014 we had no choice - yields were typically around 700Kg/acre. With the reduced yields we were always going to witness a faster ripening window and fingers crossed, fruit with increased depth and weight.



# RELEASE WINES

The 2014's are reminiscent of a high definition image of our sites. The combination of the season and ongoing fine tuning across the vineyards all contributed to this increased detail. The differences from site to site stem from so many factors. Crucially, plant adaptation to site we see as key to site personality being transferred to the glass. We are firmly of the view that irrigation can and does dilute site expression so in the cases where irrigation has been used over the years, we are now weening those plants off the additional water. Vine age, soil and vine health not to mention the obvious climatic and soil influences all play a part. But at the end of the day, we hope that site and soils are the strongest trait with variety and winemaking being more secondary.

The 2014 wines are impressive. Not overdone but loaded with depth and purity. These wines are still settling down and need time. Some wines are looking very primary and a little awkward. They will all tell their story for some time.

## **2014 Hoddles Creek Chardonnay (139 cases)**

Our only vineyard on the prominent red soils of the upper Yarra. This wine continues to be the definition of purity and focus as the ripe beady thread of acidity carries the fruit impeccably.

## **2014 Woori Yallock Chardonnay (70 cases)**

Over the last years we have been busily reworking a small section of Chardonnay that now makes up this wine. This site has a following because it has a refreshing chalky savoury finish. Grown on deep siltstone, ultimately the structure and shape of this wine defines the site.

## **2014 Coldstream Pinot Noir (238 cases)**

Perhaps surprisingly, our only lower Yarra site is the lightest and most perfumed of all our pinots this year. Often the warmer sites result in lighter wines due to the faster ripening



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(meaning less days of tannin development). Also being a warmer site, this now incorporates more whole cluster adding increased freshness and perfume.

## **2014 Yarra Junction Pinot Noir (185 cases)**

Usually YJ is our last pinot pick located on in the upper eastern reaches of the valley just before Wesburn and Warburton. Being east facing it avoids warm afternoon sun. We have steadily been working on this vineyard with balance improving year on year. The soils here are a little deeper which offers a lovely supple fruit profile that carry the zingy acidity with ease.

## **2014 Woori Yallock Pinot Noir (156 cases)**

Much along the lines of the chardonnay, the deep siltstone soils provide structure and the southerly aspect offers fruit depth, freshness and perfume. Of all the 2014 wines, this is the wine needing the most time to settle and find its way with history showing this wine is never in a rush. Fruit for this wine is predominantly selected off the middle section of the three acre vineyard. This section shows the greatest balance and vitality.

## **2014 Wesburn Pinot Noir (46 cases)**

Although our oldest vineyard, this is only our third release of Wesburn Pinot. Amazingly we see all wines from this site look similar be they red or white. It is so exciting to know we are working with a place where personality is so dominant that variety and winemaking are secondary. All wines from here have a clarity and pronounced structure that result in these wines standing apart from all other sites.

# OTHER NEWS

Since last year's release we have taken on another vineyard in Woori Yallock just up the road from our long standing Ferguson vineyard which we took over a few years ago. This new vineyard (17 years old) is organic and whilst a little run down, is very exciting in terms of location and potential, showing many similar traits to the Ferguson property when we first started working there in 2005.

We enter another exciting phase with the recruitment of the internationally respected viticulturalist Richard Flatman from New Zealand's Neudorf Vineyards in Nelson. Richard arrives to take over the reins in early September. He brings a massive bag of skills consistent with our own values paving the way for an exciting few years ahead.

As far as the rest of the business, things are humming along in the winery with Austin tweaking and improving things. General gun Jeremy Natalier has joined the team running the Graceburn Wine Room and helping out in the cellar and vineyard. Shaun Thornton and Tony Chapman are looking after all

the detail in the vineyards until Richard arrives. On a side note we would like to congratulate Kirsikka (and Camm) who have just had a baby girl - Nell. Kirsikka has handed over the reins to the very capable Leah Keath. With such a strong team in place, things are looking really exciting.

We continue to enjoy our relationships in an increasing number of overseas markets, as Australian cool climate wines are gradually getting some international attention. It is a shame to note that in general, brand 'Australia' is still a tarnished badge. However, we are acutely aware that the only way for us to succeed long term is by continually striving to improve year on year and ensure the quality of juice we put to bottle is exciting and honest.

So on that note, we all hope you love the wines. We think that now more than ever, this release offers a great opportunity to engage with these sites via the wines. We all look forward to hearing your thoughts and impressions and hope to see you over the release weekends if you can make it.



# RELEASE WEEKEND'S

As part of this year's release, all wines will be open at the Graceburn Wine Room on the weekends of August 22/23 and 29/30. Friends and guests are welcome any time during opening hours. We have also arranged tutored tastings and a dinner on Saturday 22nd by Chef Matt Wilkinson of Pope Joan to increase the appeal of a weekend trip, rather than just a quick visit.



# OCTOBER RELEASE

Later in the year we will be releasing the 2015 Rieslings as well as a few summer drinking EB's (experimental wines). 2015 as time will show was a stunning year as far as being kind to the vines. I look forward to releasing all the wines from 15 in due course.

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