

Wantirna Estate

in the Yarra Valley (est 1963)

2016 newsletter

So the good news is that the season 2016 gave us lovely, and reasonably generous, crops. As the theme of low yields has dominated the opening paragraph of the past few newsletters, it's nice to be able to say that the winery is more than half full this year. Chardonnay is still tantalizing us in terms of low yield but we are resigned to 5 – 7 barrels being the new norm as it seems to be more susceptible to producing low crops in old age. Cabernet sauvignon too is starting to show its age so, as with the chardonnay, we are replanting patches as well as trying some regeneration for these varieties.

This season just past gave us a bit of everything. The Bureau of Meteorology promised the summer was going to be dry, hot and long. And so it seemed with December 2015 being the warmest on record. Dry too. Thankfully BOM was wrong and after that nasty start to summer the growing and ripening seasons only had the odd hot day and actually received some extremely useful rainfall.

On the vineyard front it seems as if the compost program we started last year may indeed be worth the effort. The rows that had compost spread certainly have soil that looks invigorated and lovely and moist underneath. A quick 'dig and look' inspection definitely demonstrated a large increase in earthworms as well as a more friable soil structure. That doesn't surprise us too much; the interesting thing will be the next season or two when we will actually be able to measure any improvement in cane health and bud fruitfulness. So whilst it is a significant amount of back breaking work to spread the many cubic metres of compost, we have doubled the order this year and will be focusing on the driest parts of the vineyard as well as the remaining old vines that might need a boost.

The winery focus during vintage continues to be on the quality of the fermentation – a fundamental step in turning those lovely grapes into wine. Our tasting and monitoring of the ferments each day using both scientific analysis and empiric gut feeling is probably the most critical part of the day. Getting the balance right between fruit flavours, tannins, acid and the 'rest' all comes down to this one time every year. And to keep us honest, every season is just that little bit different, which is the essence of single vineyard wines.

On release this year is the 2015 Isabella chardonnay, 2015 Lily pinot noir, 2014 Amelia cabernet sauvignon merlot and the 2014 Hannah cabernet franc merlot. All wines, except the 2014 Hannah are finished with a screw cap. From 2015 the Hannah will also have this seal. Unfortunately all the wines are in short supply, so limits per person will apply.

2015 Isabella Chardonnay



The grapes were lovely, but such a tease. Whilst some of the vines had a gorgeous fullish crop of plump berries, other vines had little fruit at all. Chardonnay berries are really rather lovely as they ripen, golden on the sunny side, and a crisp yellowy green on the southern side of the vine, actually making it quite difficult not to pop the occasional berry into your mouth whilst picking!

The total juice yield after pressing was only 430 litres per tonne, which is pretty low. We could crush and squeeze and squeeze the fruit more to get higher yields, but we just think that the level we go to – based on taste and visual examination – is about right. To chase quantity of juice does jeopardise the quality, as the skins begin to break down thus allowing more phenolic to be extracted. The longer pressing time that extra squeezing requires also oxidises the resultant juice and robs it of some of the delicate fruit flavours that we like to capture. So we simply abide by the quality not quantity mantra.

The 2015 Isabella is true to our style – fruit forward but with a richness and a background touch of toasty oak.

Just 1493 bottles made, limit 1 dozen

Price per bottle \$65

2015 Lily Pinot Noir



The 2015 vintage took us a little by surprise. Whilst it had been an early budburst and hence early season, it is fair to say that we didn't expect to be actually picking grapes on the 18th and 19th February. We weren't alone though as word from other vineyards in the Yarra came back of a record breaking early start to harvest. Part of the reason it

was early went back to spring and budburst. The other reason was the mildish January that we'd had. Instead of the vines shutting down their ripening process due to above 32 degrees Celsius temperatures, the milder December – January meant the ripening ticked along. So by mid February we had both the chardonnay and pinot noir all picked and tucked away in the winery.

The grapes were lovely, perfect. Picked, destemmed and into open fermenters before midday, ensuring that they were still cool from the low overnight temperatures.

The usual winemaking followed – hand plunging, some gentle pump overs and then into barrel for maturation.

The obvious difference you will see this year is the finish on the bottle – yes it's a screw cap. We had always thought we'd watch the progression of the Isabella under screw cap. And after 5 years we are happy with the wine's evolution. So after a few trials with the Lily, the change was made.

170 cases made, limit one dozen

Price per bottle \$65

2014 Amelia Cabernet Sauvignon Merlot



Ah, the fashions of the wine business. The current must-drink wines are natural wines or any obscure variety you have never heard of. However despite these changing trends the cabernet blends have maintained their spot with the purists and are even rising up the ranks of fashion again. Personally cabernet blends have never lost their charm but we understand and also share the wide interest in the world of wine.

Another facet of winemaking that seems to be trending is the desirability of 'single vineyard' wines – with the individual expressions of the place and soil being lauded. So we find ourselves amongst the fashionable types for once, having always made wines that only use grapes that come from this place, this unique plot of 12 acres, with its equally unique climate that is tucked away in Wantirna South.

The 2014 Amelia is an expression of that year, here at our vineyard. In fact it was a year when the merlot and cab franc component equaled the cabernet sauvignon in terms of proportions, with the petit verdot playing its 8% support act. All the grapes in this blend gave us tiny berries, so the result is some fabulous fruit flavours supported by fine

tannins.

The 2014 is somewhere between the richness of the much lauded 2010 and the elegance of the 2013.

This wine too is finished with a screw cap.

170 cases made, limit one dozen

Price per bottle \$65

2014 Hannah Cabernet Franc Merlot



Many years ago when Reg spent time wandering the vineyards of France and Italy, he saw the wineries making use of concrete fermenters that had been given either a wax or epoxy layer. Others used stainless steel, some wood. Here at Wantirna we use both concrete and stainless and can now look back and understand the popularity of the concrete. (By the way, it's another very fashionable material being lauded by winemakers at the moment – again by accident we are on trend!). Every year our small concrete open fermenter gives us a gentle, reliable ferment, with little fiddling needed. And it does give the wine something intangible; the ferments from this vessel are always just special.

In the low crop year of 2014, the entire merlot and cabernet franc crop was fermented in this vat. The ferment barely needed any attention apart from the usual gentle pump over and monitoring of sugars. The wine is just lovely and one of our favourite Hannahs yet.

As the 2014 Hannah was bottled last year (we bottle age it for a year before it is released) it has a diam cork to seal the bottle. Future releases of Hannah will have a screw cap finish.

Of course it is only just that one barrel – under 300 bottles. And it does sell out quickly....

Limit 3 bottles

Price per bottle \$125

Please be aware that orders are filled in the order of receipt, as production is very limited.

Unfortunately many of you missed out on wine last year, so please bear in mind that even if you are visiting us on the open days, it's best to order first.

Orders will be dispatched from early October onwards.

The Essential Details

Wine order days:

Pick up and open days

For those who are new to the list, we set aside 2 days in October for our annual open days. On these days you are invited to Wantirna Estate to pick up your wine and to taste the current release wines.

Dates this year are Saturday October 15th and 22nd, 10am to 4pm.

Prices:

Isabella chardonnay \$65

Lily pinot noir \$65

Amelia cabernet merlot \$65

Hannah cabernet franc merlot \$125

Order and payment methods:

Online orders:

You are able to order online via our website.

Please go to **www.wantirnaestate.com.au** and the order tab.

You will need a mail order customer password to enter the sales page.

The password is news2013

You will be able to pay using Visa, MasterCard or PayPal.

The order you make here will act as our tax invoice, so there is no need for you to return your order slip in this instance.

Post or scanned orders

Please return your filled in order form via post or scanned email.

Half cases

Yes, minimum order is 6 bottles – this can be mixed

Freight

We use Fastway couriers and your wine is insured by us. The freight cost is the same for a half case as a full case.

Pick-ups

We look forward to you picking up your wine and visiting the vineyard. The two dates are **October 15th and October 22nd between 10am and 4pm.**

Website and email:

Please browse our website in a spare moment. We have had many lovely reviews and we endeavor to update the website. If you haven't received the occasional email from us during the year, we don't have your current email address. This is handy for letting you know about any special events that we might be part of.

So if you could either write your email address on your return order form or go to our website and fill out the 'join the maillist' option on the [contact us](#) tab. This will automatically update you within our system.

And for those who are into social media you will find us on Instagram wantirna_estate Facebook and Twitter on @wantirnaestate.

Record of my order

_____ Bottles 2015 Isabella Chardonnay

_____ Bottles 2015 Lily Pinot Noir

_____ Bottles 2014 Amelia Cabernet Sauvignon Merlot

_____ Bottles 2014 Hannah Cabernet Franc Merlot

Our Terms

1. Terms are payment with order form.
2. Order are filled in order of receipt, production is very limited this year.
3. Mixed cases - Yes, but minimum order is 6 bottles.
4. Freight - Melbourne Metro is \$10 per carton and all other capital cities and country Victoria is \$15 per carton.
5. Insurance - We insure.

Telephone	03 9801 2367
Email	wantirnaestate@bigpond.com
Maryann mobile	0412 589 490
Reg mobile	0409 505 763

Postal Address for orders:

PO Box 231, Glen Waverley, 3150

Address for collection of orders:

Wantirna Estate, 10 Bushy Park Lane, Wantirna South 3152.
Entry to Bushy Park Lane is only possible from High Street Road