

The beginning of 2009 has been very busy.

Wineries are preparing for harvest, making sure tanks and barrels are empty and ready to be filled with the 2009 vintage. At the same time bottling is taking place for the 2008 Chardonnays and Pinot Noirs and these will be ready for release later in the year.

In the vineyard: all nets are on and bird control well underway. To date the up coming crops are looking really well and some of the varieties are having more fruit dropped off to ensure good quality.

I spent the past week in Melbourne and Brisbane at New Zealand Winegrowers trade shows. Managed to have a couple of hours driving around the Mornington Peninsular looking at vineyards. The entire Victoria vintage will be at about 25% of normal this year and probably for a few years to come. A lot of vineyards have been lost in the terrible fires, north of Melbourne and those that haven't been burnt have been cooked. Grapes have shriveled in the endless 45 degree days and vines have gone into early autumn state. I was lucky enough to have a look in on a judging panel for a wine show and a local Victorian 2006 Pinot Noir which was structurally really good was totally infused with smoke from fires in 2006. The long term damage to the Victorian wine industry could really be 'long term'. I have also seen reports in the media saying that the cheap Aussie wines are coming to an end due to fires and drought and changing weather patterns. This will of course create an upside for New Zealand wines but we must always continue to work at maintaining our quality. At the wine shows without exception the wines were well received and enjoyed. Australians are under no illusion that New Zealand grows great aromatic wines and are looking for diversity.

Tip of the month:

You don't need an expensive decanter for your red wines. Simply pouring the wine into a milk jug and back into the bottle will give the desired result. Decanting allows the wine to 'open' up by adding air to it. Even if you don't wish to decanter the wine simply pouring into a nice rounded glass and swirling the glass a few times and taking your time to enjoy it is also helpful.

Recipe:

A RECIPE EVERYONE SHOULD KNOW

The most dangerous cake recipe

5 MINUTE CHOCOLATE MUG CAKE

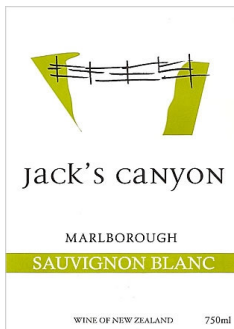
4 tablespoons flour	4 tablespoons sugar
2 tablespoons cocoa	1 egg
3 tablespoons milk	3 tablespoons oil
3 tablespoons chocolate chips (optional)	splash of vanilla essence
1 large coffee mug	

Add dry ingredients to mug, and mix well. Add the egg and mix thoroughly. Pour in the milk and oil and mix well, use a fork. Add the chocolate chips (if using) and vanilla and mix again. Put your mug in the microwave and cook for 3 minutes at 1000 watts (high). The cake will rise over the top of the mug, but don't be alarmed!

Allow to cool a little, and tip out onto a plate if desired.
EAT! (this can serve 2 if you want to feel slightly more virtuous).

And why is this the most dangerous cake recipe in the world?

Because now we are all only 5 minutes away from chocolate cake at any time of the day or night!



Wines of the month: Jacks Canyon range

A natural waterway was diverted 50 years ago to prevent flooding of farmland. That small diversion is now a 60 metre canyon known as Jacks Canyon. A fence still spans the divide today. This regional range selects wine from New Zealands premium wine growing regions and includes Marlborough Sauvignon Blanc, Waipara Riesling, Hawkes Bay Merlot, Waipara Pinot Gris and soon to be released Waipara Pinot Noir. A great value wine for every day drinking.

Have a great month and enjoy the last rays of summer.

Pip Sutherland

Waipara Wine Cellars

Wine – a serving of fruit