

Newsletter

WHAT'S BEEN HAPPENING IN AND OUT OF THE SHED.



WE BOUGHT A TANK!

Greetings,

We hope that all is going well for you. We're here again for a brief catch up on what's been happening and taking the opportunity to say thank you once again for your continued support during the year.

Back in 2004 we built our winery Shed only a stone's throw from our home up here on Gods Hill Road. Many of you have visited our Shed over the years and sampled some of what we do here, but many may not have known that directly behind our corrugated structure was a 1,000,000 litre concrete tank on a ½ acre of land owned and managed by SA Water.

This concrete water tank was built back in 1944 and had been used to supply water to the township of Lyndoch. These days Lyndoch water is piped directly into the township rather than gravity feeding it from this tank high on the hill. SA Water contacted us some time ago to ask us if

we would be interested in purchasing this patch of ground with the tank, as it was now surplus to their needs.

So out came our cheque book and Brenda and I are now proud owners of a Tank. Our alpacas Yogi and Boo Boo are quite pleased with our decision as they now have some extra territory to explore and play in.

The plan is now to firstly water the lawn and make use of the 1,000,000 litres of water. The next step is to slowly work on turning the concrete tank into a cellar and tasting room. Although Sami and Jackson have other plans for it and would like to turn it into a kid's retreat. Will keep you posted.

2015 Vintage

All Dutschke records were broken during the 2015 harvest and maybe even some new world records were created. We had the earliest and most rapid harvest for us in our 26 years of squashing grapes! Even our ferments (both primary and Malo lactic fermentations) had completed by mid-March!

A dry spring gave the vines a limited supply of water. An extremely mild January allowed the vines to photosynthesise and transpire happily as they are designed to do.

During January the vines were active and busy ripening their grape crop but had a moderate amount of ground water to play with. At the start of February, some warmer weather arrived and the vines were clever enough to quickly realise they needed to off load the fruit.

I had been sampling the grapes on a normal regular pattern of twice a week, as I do with the lead up to each Vintage. Being out in the vineyard on the 2nd of February and having tasted and measured the sugar it looked like we were on target to start harvest on around the 16th Feb. All looked to be pretty much on target for a normal start. I was amongst the vines on Friday the 6th February making another assessment on the grape's status. Flavour and sugars seemed to indicate that we could be picking a little earlier than first expected. We could now start by around the 13th Feb.

We woke early on Sunday 8th Feb and ran through each block of vineyard that we had planned to harvest from and did the usual tests. "Aye Aye!" I was shocked to find that both flavour and sugar had both increased rapidly. "What's going on?" Maybe my hydrometer that I used to measure the sugars wasn't working as it should. I'll get another. "Aye Aye Aye! This hydrometer reads the same as the last!" All sugars had risen drastically over the last 2 days. This couldn't be right? I sat down for 10-15 minutes in shock and started to think things through. I regained my strength and rang Cousin Jeff and asked if the machine harvester would be ready to go in the morning. Fortunately Jeff said yes and we hopped straight into it! Uncle Ken was ready to go with his bucket and snips as well, hand picking grapes missed by the harvester.



Uncle Ken



We filled the winery up in the first week with crushing the following

Monday 9th Feb

Shiraz

Tuesday 10th Feb

Merlot

Wednesday 11th Feb

Shiraz

Thursday 12th Feb

Merlot, Cabernet and Shiraz (including not being able to crush some GHR Shiraz and sending it to the local cold store to keep at -2C until a fermenter was available. These grapes sat for a few days in the cool room alongside of a number of different varieties of Adelaide Hills pears that too decided to all ripen all at the same time).

Tuesday 17th Feb

Shiraz

Friday 20th Feb

Cabernet and Shiraz

And presto! That was Vintage over for us! (Apart from our little bit of Muscat and Tokay, which followed.)



Nathan working on the crusher

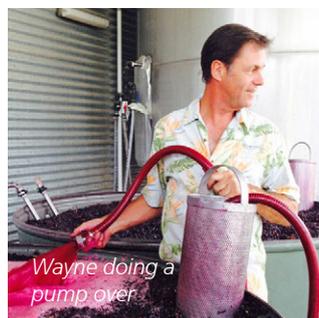
Despite having our crusher breakdown and parts needing to be shipped in from Italy (3 working days to receive parts from Europe) and then the machine harvester conking out (running on borrowed parts from a neighbour), everything ran like clockwork. Even the kids chipped in to help, with Sami numbering the barrels and Jackson driving the pallet truck.



Sami



Jackson



Wayne doing a pump over

Crop levels were down a bit, but wines look fantastic. Colour, flavours and pH all wonderful because of a real cool January. We have never seen such low pH and high acidity with the ripe sugar levels in the grapes like this before. All going well we should have some of the best Dutschke wines ever. All varieties ripened together 2 weeks ahead of schedule. The reds were crushed in 12 days. If we could plan a Vintage like this every year, we'd jump at the opportunity to do so. That's the Vintage update from Dutschke.

People of the Vines coming to a TV near you in March 2016

Wine journalist and "People of the Vines" TV wine show host Tyson Stelzer contacted us prior to the 2015 Vintage to tell us of his plan to be in the Barossa to follow and film six Barossa winemakers and their families during the peak period of the Wine/Vineyard calendar for his second episode of the "People of the Vines" TV show. Tyson's idea was to include Wayne and Brenda Dutschke in his program.



People of the Vines Film Crew

Others on his list were

Toby Barlow	St Hallett Wines
Ian Hongell	Peter Lehmann Wines
Louisa Rose	Yalumba
Stephen Henschke	Henschke Wines
Bernard Hickin	Jacobs Creek Wines

Brenda and I were of course very happy to participate.

I suggested to Tyson and his camera crew that he could work on a start date for our harvest to be around the 20th February. With the high speed nature of this year's harvest our last day of crushing our red fruit was the 20th February. Tyson and Glenn the cameraman arrived on the 23rd.

Fortunately for us the cameras weren't rolling when the pressure of Vintage was on. Fortunately for them, Vintage is not just about crushing grapes, so there was plenty of ferment pump overs, pressing and barrel filling to film.

So most likely in March 2016, coming on free to air TV, you'll be able watch the days in the lives of a handful of Barossa Winemakers and their families during the 2015 Vintage. Stay tuned for more details as we get closer to the day.

And now for a few other celebrities in the local paper, The Leader.

Lexi's luck

A rescued magpie chick has now dined with death more than once after she swallowed a pair of tweezers while being hand fed.

Lyndoch siblings, Sami and Jackson Dutschke rescued the magpie chick, Lexi from the bottom of a palm tree last month.

Their instincts to care for the orphaned animal kicked in and they have been caring for Lexi since, including feeding her by hand.

Jackson was feeding her one Sunday night and Lexi was so keen to eat that she swallowed the meat and the tweezers.

Their mother, Brenda said it was a challenge to find someone to look at Lexi on a Sunday night.

"Lexi continued her ritual of pooping and eating and didn't notice the extra iron that she ingested," said Brenda.

"The amazing team at The Vet Clinic in Angaston came to the rescue and were able to extract them from her stomach."

The Vet Clinic's Sue Baxter said Lexi was very lucky with the tweezers already turning black from the stomach acid.

"Never have any of us seen such a case as this," said Sue.

"Lexi had to be fully anaesthetised to have the tweezers removed."

She said the vet, Chris van Tonder palpated the crop to try to feel where they were lying but was unable to pinpoint their exact location.

X-rays revealed the tweezers bypassed the crop and went into the stomach.

"Chris managed to locate the top of the tweezers and using alligator forceps, very carefully pulled them out," said Sue.

"The procedure itself only took roughly 15 minutes but we kept Lexi for a few hours after to make sure that she had fully recovered."

Sue said it's always a bit nerve wracking when anaesthetising a



An x-ray of the tweezers inside Lexi's stomach.

bird and staff wondered how on earth the tweezers could possibly be safely removed.

Tweezers removed, Lexi continues to grow and is none the wiser to her ordeal.

"She is too young to fly... her tail feathers are yet to grow fully," said Brenda.

While Lexi has become a member of the Dutschke family, Brenda said she will be released back into the wild and will be paired up with an orphaned magpie being cared for by Rose Brooks, a wildlife carer in Lyndoch.

"We really enjoy looking after her... she is so cute," said Brenda. "And both are very good looking after her, they are good caretakers."

Sami said it is a privilege to look after Lexi and together with Jackson, they are caring for a number of other native animals helping Rose one day a week.

It has become their after school task where they will tend to an array of rescued kangaroos, birdlife and possums.

Each animal has a story behind it - broken wings, orphaned, injured, but both Sami and Jackson enjoy tending to the wildlife.

Rose said she is very blessed to have a team of volunteers come and help her.

"I love my animals," said Rose.

"I am giving them a second life."

Rose doesn't do call outs but will take in rescued animals.



Jackson and Sami Dutschke with Lexi the rescued magpie chick.



Jackson and Sami Dutschke with Bunty, a grey western kangaroo and Naughty the galah and Noni, a grey western kangaroo.

The Leader, Angaston