

Frankston Amateur Wine Guild

March 2017

Next Meeting: 14 March 2017

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This month:

Julianna of Hanna Instruments will be talking about pH in wine. At the same time, she will be providing an opportunity to get your wine tested. If your wine is still fermenting at the time, please put it through a coffee filter before bringing it.

Chardonnay Focus Group

We have 11 members in the group including some new members which is really great, we have been informed our grapes should be ready mid March. So like everyone else we are just eagerly awaiting the arrival of the grapes. Can't wait to get started.

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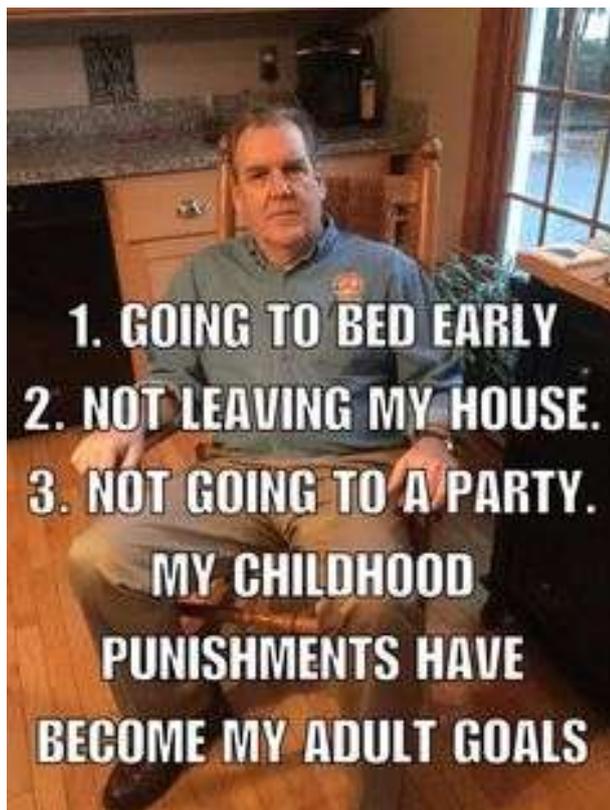
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Special points of interest:

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Flute glasses are pretty, but they're ruining your Champagne

FAWG Web Page

Don't forget the FAWG website:

<http://www.fawg.org.au>

Or the "Facebook" page:

<https://www.facebook.com/TheFAWG>

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Cordon Corner

March is here yet again and that means harvest time for a lot of us. There have been a few reports of crop level issues this season caused by poor fruit set in spring but hopefully there will be enough to go around and quality won't be affected. The forecast is for fine warm days throughout March which is great news for growers so this means you will need to be right on top of monitoring ripeness. With cool nights and warm days sugars can increase very quickly and don't forget to keep a close eye on the acid levels which can also fall away rapidly. Hopefully all this hard work will pay off and I am sure there will be some really good wines made in 2017.

Mike Payne

Member Survey—Rod Beaumont

Why do you make wine?

Let's face it I am cheap. The ability to make wine at home reduces expenses, and at the same time I get a better wine than I would have bought at the shop. Although not always, there have been a number of mistakes on the way.

How does the Guild help you with your winemaking?

Through the guild I have learned about winemaking. As with most members I have completed the wine classes, but these really only generate the interest in the craft. To understand I talk to other members and listen at guild meetings. You never know when someone will give you the clue you were looking for.

The guild also provides an avenue to purchase good grapes. To make good wine first you need good grapes. I have, over the last few years met winemakers that tried to go it alone. Their failure was probably because of the grapes they started with.

The guild increases your chances of making good wine.

How and when did you start making wine?

In 2011, I saw an advertisement for the wine show. At the wine show the discussions I had lead to the wine classes. I had already been making home brew beer for about 10 years and so didn't think it was such a jump.

How much wine do you make each year?

As with many other members, I make more than I can drink in one year. When I started, I was firm that 75 bottles would be enough. I have since changed my thoughts, as that means I would always be drinking young wine. I want to "cellar" some of my wine to try it in 3 or 5 years. So now, I am making about 150 bottles a year.

What types or styles of wine do you make?

My primary emphasis is on red wine. Whether that be Shiraz or Cabernet Sauvignon. I also indulge in some country wines, mainly Plum wine, but if I get offered fruit I will try making wine from it.

I have also had some tries at fortified wine.

In your view what is good winemaking?

Making a wine that I feel proud to offer to my friends. If there is a positive comment in return, then I feel I have made a good wine. It doesn't happen every time.

What is your best experience/ result in making wine?

It was purely accidental. I made a fortified wine with one of the guild's focus groups. When I sampled it I thought it needed to be sweeter, so I modified it and it won a gold medal. I was stoked.

What advice would you give to a starting winemaker?

For those who have just completed their winemaking classes, make some more. It is too easy to start that first batch, and then forget about it. Do it again, now, and this will help you to remember to finish your first batch.

Come to the meetings. It may be daunting to walk in on a crowd of strangers, but they will become friends.

Enjoy what you do, and have fun. It can make you really proud when in a group of your friends, someone comments on how good your wine is.

How do you cellar your wine?

This is my biggest problem. I have wine racks for 180 bottles in my house—not temperature controlled. I tried under the house, but it was just too hard to get a drink.

I have placed bottles in wardrobes, under furniture, and in unused corners. Still looking for the final answer.

How many bottles do you have in your cellar currently, and do you cellar different wine varieties differently?

Without counting I am probably just under the 180, as my racks aren't quite full. The problem is that the next vintage is due, and the demijohns still hold about 85 litres of Cabernet.

Fortifieds are cellared in the shed. If they get heat affected they turn to Madiera—please let it happen. Although it probably won't.

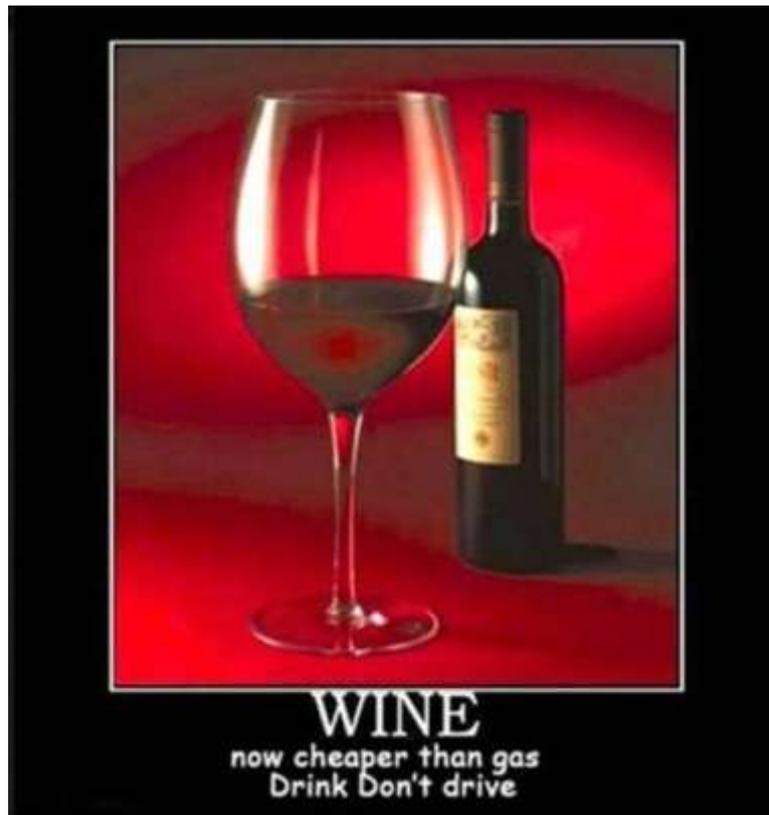
How do you label your wine? Do you label all of your wine?

I label just about everything I make. It makes it easier if a friend drops in and you want to give them a bottle. Just grab it off the rack. I have learned a few things along the way. I just print four labels onto an A4 sheet then cut them out. I have tried milk as an

adhesive, but all the labels went mouldy, so now just use a glue stick.

What do you age wine in glass stainless steel or wood? and why?

I age my wine in glass demijohns. Steel tanks and barrels would require me to increase my wine quantities. I already have a problem with storage. The demijohns allow me to add oak chips, so the only real disadvantage is that I don't lose the angel's share. It would be good to concentrate the flavours of the wine just a little.



Flute glasses are pretty, but they're ruining your Champagne

I gave up the flute years ago. It was a pretty easy decision to make, since I was seeing so many other people giving it up. They were drinking sparkling wine from — brace yourself — regular wine glasses. And it was awesome.

This wasn't happening in restaurants, where some traditions of dining are slow to change, even amid the culinary experimentation of recent years. The broad-sweeping flute kiss-off was occurring at wineries. In visit after visit, sparkling wine was being handed to me in a regular wine glass.

The "regular" wine glass we're talking about is what would technically be referred to as a Bordeaux glass — straight-sided and tapering slightly to the rim. This is the glass you would use to serve sauvignon blanc or cabernet sauvignon. It's the glass you would have in your cabinet if you chose to own only one style of wine glass.

Quite often, the people serving bubbles in regular glasses were the very people who had made the wine. They all basically said that a regular glass lets the wines' aromas run free. And we all know how connected and important our sense of smell is to our sense of taste. If winemakers thought their wine was not as good in a flute as it was in a regular glass, there must be something to it, right? Who would know better than they did?

I still have a few flutes, but they have not seen any action in years — except for one recent night in late December, when I pulled them down from a shelf for some side-by-side blind-sniffing. A small group of willing participants — each of them a casual wine drinker with no formal training — tied cloth napkins around their heads to cover their eyes and promised to do their best to describe what they were about to smell. I poured five sparkling wines into flutes, poured the same wines into regular glasses, and asked my guests for their impressions of each. With their hands on the table and their nostrils hovering just above the glasses, they offered descriptive words about two different Champagnes, a Cava, a bottle of English fizz and a California sparkler.

Pretty much across the board they picked the regular glass.

Or rather, their comments picked the regular glass. The words they used to describe the wines in the regular glasses were often more pleasant; they were also more abundant than the words they used to describe the wines in the flutes. They had more and better things to say about the wines in the regular glasses.

On top of that, the initial aromas wafting from the flutes vanished much earlier. The sniffers said things like "fading" and "weak" and "It's like ... where'd it go?" when their noses were over the flutes, and things like "ocean," "grapefruit," "peach," "anise," "apple," "strawberry" and "citrusy" when their noses were over the regular glasses.

The flutes did have one advantage, however. At times they gave off the impression of freshness. The sniffers could sense the wines' effervescence and brightness, and that is pretty much the main selling point of the wine flute — to highlight a sparkling wine's sparkle. The idea is that the long, thin cylinder helps keep the bubbles bubbly. And looking pretty.

The flute was certainly an improvement over the glass style that preceded it historically: the wide and flat coupe. The glass that screams "Puttin' on the Ritz." You know the one. It looks kind of like a pudding dish on a stem, and when it's full of bubbly, the best technique is to sort of cup it from underneath with your whole hand, to stabilize it. I can't think of any reason to use that kind of a glass for liquid unless you're doing it at a costume party and you're surrounded by flappers and guys dressed like the Monopoly Man. Still, I also can't think of much reason to drink from a flute, unless the aesthetics are *that* important to you. The amped-up bubble action is fun, but to me it's not worth cutting off your ability to swirl and sip with relative ease.

If my little experiment and the preferences of scores of winemakers matter in your decision-making process, the clear choice is to pour bubbles into regular old wine glasses and give them a gentle swirl and sniff before you drink, much as you'd do with a still wine.

Reprinted from the Chicago Tribune

4 January 2017



Monthly Activity Calendar 2016/17

Meeting Date	Proposed Activity	Competitions/ Other
14 March 2017	Talk on pH by Julianna from Hanna Instruments. pH testing of your wine samples	Wodonga Wine Show Red Hill Wine Show (Refer links below)
11 April 2017	Steve from Vintessentials to talk on his wine experience and Vintessential Services	Gordon Evans White Wine Mini Comp
9 May 2017		Sparkling wine mini comp
13 June 2017		
11 July 2017		Homemade night
8 August 2017	Old, unusual and mulled wine night	Frankston & South eastern Wine-show Open day Sunday 28th August
12 September 2017	Chris Myers talk regarding specific wine for John Lee Trophy	Wineshow debrief demonstration & discussion of wine faults from show

Social Events and links

[Sunday 2 October: Australian National Wine and Beer Show](#)

[11– 14 October: National Cool Climate Wine Show](#)

[Sunday 13 November: Eltham District Wine Guild Show](#)

[Friday 18 November: Mansfield Wine Show](#)

[March: Wodonga Wine Show](#)

March: Red Hill Wine Show

Control click on the above links to go to the associated website.....

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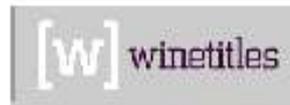
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