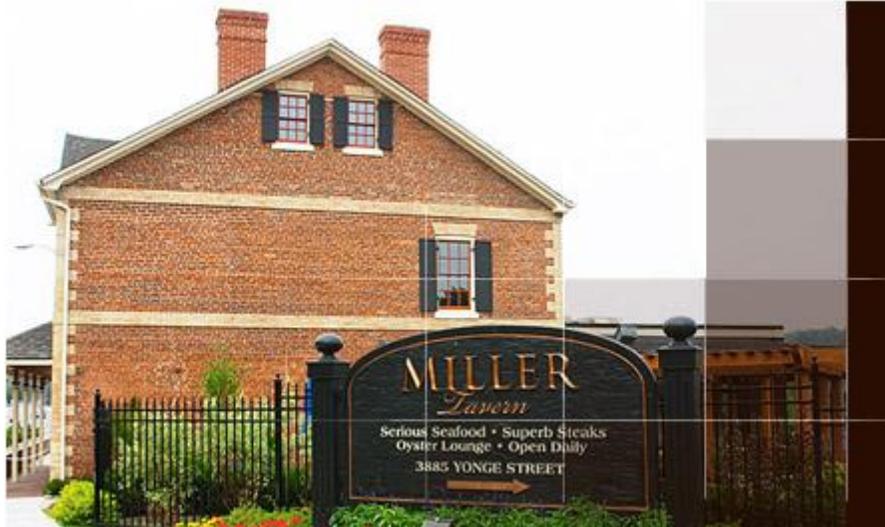




January, 2009

**Australia Day Celebration, Sunday, January 25, 2009
A Long Buffet Brunch at the Miller Tavern at 12:30 p.m.**



Originally known as the York Mills Hotel, the Miller Tavern dates back to the 1860's. Used as a resting spot for horses and carriages on their journey through Hogg's Hollow, the York Mills Hotel, played host to many a weary traveler looking to relax over a pint or two. After changing hands throughout the years, and renamed the Jolly Miller, the site has fond memories for many of us knocking back a few too many at the once famous watering hole. After a 10 month, \$3 million renovation, the landmark Hogg's Hollow destination, has become the very successful Miller Tavern, the location of choice for our 2009 **Australia Day** celebration.

Australia Day Menu

Pre- Dinner Hors d'Oeuvres

Chilled Shrimp Display

Served with lemon and cocktail sauce

Assorted Spring Rolls

Chicken, Vegetable, Shrimp & Mango

Spicy plum dipping sauce

Goat Cheese and Roast Pepper Quiche

Handmade in house with freshly chopped fine herbs

Truffled Mushroom Crostini

Garlic bread topped with truffled wild mushrooms, herbs, mozzarella, Swiss and parmesan cheese

The Australian Buffet

Hearts of Romaine Caesar Salad

Herbed croutons, reggiano cheese and garlic dressing

Mixed Organic Green Salad

With tomato, cucumber and a balsamic vinaigrette

Roast Australian Leg of Lamb *with rosemary and roast garlic jus
and homemade mint sauce.*

Grilled Atlantic Salmon *with a shellfish and dill bisque*

Portobello Mushroom Ravioli *in a rich Parmesan cheese and
truffle cream sauce*

Grilled Chicken Breast *with a mushroom tarragon and tomato jus*

Assorted Buttered Seasonal Vegetables

Sautéed Yukon Potatoes with Caramelized Onions

Herbed Basmati Rice

Desserts

Fresh Fruit Platters

**Chocolate Dipped Strawberries
Assorted Mini Squares and Pastries**

Coffee & Tea

The afternoon starts with reception wines at 12:30, followed by wines from the cellar selected by our Cellar Master, John Macdonald. The buffet opens at 1:15 p.m.

We are currently working on a major Prize with Down Under travel, and will announce the details very soon. In addition to this prize we have lined up other wonderful items in the draw. Tickets for the Draw will be available for purchase on the 25th. You have to attend the Brunch to participate and be in attendance to win. One ticket per person.

As in all past Australia Day events there will be song sheets provided to join in the singing of Australia Fair, and definitely a resounding Waltzing Matilda.

Please note that we are limited to 120 seats for this event, so reserve early. Tickets are \$90.00 for AWS Members and \$105.00 for Guests. It's a fun casual event with wines, prizes, an extensive buffet and fine friends, no tuxedos this year, just Sunday comfortable attire.

Past Events

Holiday Dinner, Dec 9 Prego della Piazza

A lovely warm ambiance greeted members & guests in our private room on this cold winter night. Well presented food and great wines helped to dispel the on coming winter for at least a few hours.

Future Events

Shiraz/ Viognier Tasting at the Faculty Club, February 24, 2009

Down-under Experience, Australia & New Zealand, at the Faculty Club, March 24, 2009

Agent's Night at Toronto Lawn Tennis Club, April 21, 2009

Cabs of Coonawarra, Regional Tasting, at the Faculty Club, May 19, 2009

Summer Solstice Dinner, Boulevard Club, June 18, 2009

Notes from the Cellar

Recent additions include:

2006 Langmeil, Hangin' Snakes, Shiraz/Viognier, Barossa Valley

2005 Elderton, Estate, Cabernet Sauvignon, Barossa Valley

2005 Elderton, The Ashmead family, Shiraz, Barossa Valley

2005 Wynns, Estate, Cabernet Sauvignon, Coonawarra

New members

Welcome to Ashley Balmain, Maggie Leighton Costelloe, Andrew & Renata McEwen, Trevor McEwen and Michelle Maccarone.

News from Down Under

Consuming and celebrating our gnarled centenarians

THE OLD centenarian vineyards of Australia have had a torturous journey through the decades, akin to a character in an Alexandre Dumas novel. Surviving phylloxera, that rascal aphid which attacks and eventually kills the roots of the vine, was their first hurdle to overcome. Fortunately South Australia, Western Australia, Tasmania and the majority of NSW escaped the major outbreak in Australia that occurred in Victoria from the mid-1870s onwards. It still continues to be a threat, as vignerons in the Yarra Valley have witnessed only recently.

Fungal disease is another perilous adversary to the maturing vines. Eutypa dieback causes stunted shoots, small bunches and a wedge of discoloured dead wood in the trunks or arms of the vine. It contributes to the decline of vineyards by reducing growth and yield by up to 90 per cent and eventually will kill it the vine. Grenache is particularly susceptible. Then there was the government vine-pull scheme in the late 1980s which actually paid growers to rip out vineyards, often the old, unproductive vineyards - the likes of which we are so preciously preserving now. Urban sprawl, droughts and changes in demand for wine over the century have also taken their toll; it's no wonder they appear tattered, knotted and gnarled.

Fortunately for Australia, you can still find old vines, especially shiraz, across the country. Australia is in fact one of only a few countries in the world to have extensive amounts of old vines planted pre-phylloxera and on its own rootstock. Bruce Tyrrell, from Tyrrell's in the Hunter Valley, reckons there should be an official register

of 100-year-old vines. Perhaps the Queen or Kevin Rudd, depending on your political persuasion, could send a telegram to the vineyard when it turns 100!

Langmeil claim to have the oldest shiraz vines in the country, planted around 1843 by Christian Auricht. Henschke have the renowned Hill of Grace vineyard in the Eden Valley; the 'Grandfathers', as the oldest block is called, was planted by Nicolaus Stanitzki around the 1860s. The sturdy, gnarled vines are dry-grown and yield an average one tonne per acre. Similarly in Victoria, Tahbilk have a small vineyard of vines planted in 1860 that survived on soils that were uninhabitable to phylloxera. Not to be outdone, Bruce Tyrrell sources fruit from the Stevens vineyard, which has a patch of shiraz planted in 1867, as well as his own block dating from 1879 and semillon planted in 1908.

But it is the Barossa Valley that has a wealth of ancient vines in what is poetically called their 'Old Vine Gardens'. These vines are planted on their own roots from pre-phylloxera material, often brought from Europe by the early settlers. Penfolds Block 42 in the Kalimna vineyard has the oldest cabernet sauvignon vines in the world, first planted in the mid-1880s. The grapes from these rare old vines go into making the winery's premium brand and are sold for top dollar. Other companies have built an entire portfolio of wines sourced from old vines; Torbreck Vintners is one such producer.

Vines generally take seven to 10 years to mature, by which age they have developed full root systems and have some capacity to withstand seasonal variations. By the time a vineyard is 50 years old it may have become uneconomical to tend, due to the vines losing their vigour. There are many factors that determine vigour and ultimately whether the vineyard is worth saving, such as the sustainability of nutrients in the soil, the effects of droughts, the presence of root pests and diseases and whether newer clones can actually produce better wines. Newly planted vines sometime surprise the critics by making astonishingly good wines. They seem to go through a honeymoon period, possibly because the yields are still low and the vine has not cranked up its production of grapes.

Alister Purbrick, the custodian of Tahbilk's vines, reckons the best wines are from middle-aged vines. "In my mind no doubt the best fruit comes from middle-aged vines - around the 50-to-100-year-old vines. That is when you compare 'apples with apples' - in other words, when the viticulture, clone, soils and climate are the same."

But old vineyards are not all paddocks of gold for growers. As vines age they become less vigorous and one of the problems is whether they have enough vigour to deliver fully ripe grapes. In some vintages they can struggle. But on the upside, a less vigorous vine has less foliage and allows good sunlight penetration and air flow, which can reduce the risk of disease. The vines do not need crop thinning and their well-established root system means they withstand droughts when younger vines suffer.

Lower yield is one of the key quality outcomes of older vines, yet unless a premium price is reached these can become uneconomical and commercially unviable. At Tahbilk the 1860 vines often crop at around half to 1½ tonnes per acre, while the middle-aged vines planted in the 1930s and 1940s yield around two to three tonnes per acre. Shiraz is naturally vigorous and younger vines on the property are restricted by crop thinning to yield 4½ or five tonnes per acre.

The wine industry has recently looked at standardising and recognizing these old vines. Robert Hill-Smith and Brian Walsh from Yalumba have established an old vine charter dedicated to the 'recognition, preservation and promotion of old vines'. They have chosen an age range of 35 to 69 years to describe an 'old vine'. At 70 the vine is classed as an 'antique'. A centenarian, as the name suggests, is 100 years old and a tri-centenary describes one whose life has spanned three centuries.

What is in store for the consumer of these wines and why should we take note of the age of a vine? Well, according to Alister Purbrick, the real benefit of old vines is on the palate. "It's all about the intensity of flavour and an increase in complexity; there are more nuances with aged vines." Bruce Tyrrell agrees: "There are extra layers of flavour and lightness which you don't see from fruit off younger vines, and with lower alcohol they match excellently with an array of foods."