

PIERRO WILLYABRUP WARBLER

WINE TIDINGS

AUTUMN 2011

No. 8

“Work like a slave, command like a king, create like a god.”

- C.Brancusi



PIERRO A Chardonnay 25th Party to Remember at Pierro

Perhaps we should throw a party when all our wines turn 25 - or, for that matter, turn 5, 10, 15 and 20!

We think it's fair to say that Friday 15th October, 2010 will go down as one of the more memorable days of festivity seen in Willyabrup for a while.

It was on that memorable mid-spring eve that we tipped our hats to 25 years of the Pierro Chardonnay, a wine that for much of its quarter century life-span has been rated among Australia's, and the world's, finest examples of the variety.

The old winery building was packed to the gunnels with friends, family and long-time fans of our iconic flagship white wine - and what a great night it turned out to be!

We were delighted to have 210 guests join us for an outstanding sitdown dinner matched with the Pierro and Fire Gully range of whites and reds.

What's more, the event raised over \$16,000 for the venerable *Hope for Children Foundation*, which focuses on empowering Ethiopian communities to best care for their vulnerable children and breaking the vicious cycle of poverty in that country. The Foundation particularly caters to the needs of children whose families are affected by AIDS and HIV, which remains one of Africa's most grave health issues.

Saluting an Extraordinary Wine

The release in 2010 of the 2008 vintage marked the 25th vintage of the Pierro Chardonnay. Created by Mike Peterkin, the wine has been perfected over the intervening years and is a shining example of the power, finesse and elegance achievable in Margaret River chardonnay. Hence, it was time to celebrate a great wine that has been very good to us over the years.

Pierro has never seen such a makeover! The 25th Anniversary saw our humble habitat on Caves Road dressed up to look positively resplendent. Marquees, candle light, wait-staff shimmering in and out, a band

playing, and a glamorous swirling sea of black tie and evening gowns filling the vista. Guests came from all over Australia and overseas to be with us on the big night.

The evening kicked off with canapes served as guests arrived. This was followed by a sitdown staged throughout the winery building and spilling out into a marquee. Though a tight fit - no one could say it wasn't intimate - everyone greatly enjoyed the company and food and wines matches. (The menu is on page three).

After the main course Mike Peterkin sprang onto a chair and addressed the many-headed with a highly entertaining speech, full of zesty anecdotes, about the history of his vinous brainchild.

The speech was followed by some wonderful cheeses and more excellent wine matches. Then to dessert and coffee and tea.

Post-prandial activity included circulating among friends old and new and/or hitting the dance floor for a bit of a jive, swing, waltz or stage dive - depending on cavorter vintage.

All in all, a great time was had by all. The evening saw some wonderful wines

tasted, but the star remains the Chardonnay. Twenty-five years later it has been one of our crowning achievements, making us very proud. Who knows: if we all drink enough of it we'll all be back for the Golden Anni in 2035!



25 Years of Chardonnay and a Pierro night to remember

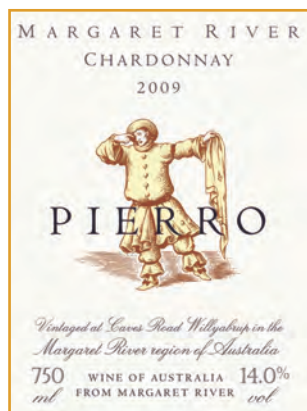
Congratulations on your 95th, Phyl!

A hearty congratulations to Phyl Peterkin on the advent of her 95th birthday. She celebrated her big day in December with friends and family at the Zamia Cafe in Kings Park. Phyl also enjoyed the 25th Anniversary of the Chardonnay party. Many happy returns, Phyl - we wouldn't be here without you!



Latest Pierro Releases

2009 Pierro Chardonnay



Year in, year out this is consistently one of Australia's finest Chardonnays. The 2009 is no exception - a rarified white of great style and elegance. Langtons rates the wine as "Outstanding" and describes it as "the ethereal, superbly consistent and utterly sublime Pierro Chardonnay." Bright straw green in the glass with beautiful clarity, there are distinct Burgundian characters here. It possesses deep generosity, complexity, freshness and concentration. The wine is fragrant and minerally with lemon curd/grapefruit/white peach/cashew nut aromas and flavours. There is pleasing mid-palate richness with underlying new oak; and a fresh acidity cuts across the palate giving further dimension. A tight structure opens the way to a taut, zesty, crisp finish. It will evolve greater complexity and a more opulent creamy texture. Very hard to resist either now or with cellaring. It is fabulously fresh, delicate and delicious.

2008 Pierro Cabernet Sauvignon Merlot LTCF



This year we have decided to feature our 2008 Pierro Cabernet Sauvignon Merlot LTCF instead of the Pierro Reserve. We only make the Reserve wines in our very best years. While 2006 was an outstanding year for white varieties in the region, due to the coolest conditions in the West for 85 years, tannin ripeness and richness was harder to achieve in the reds. The next release of the Reserve will be the 2007 in 2012. While you wait for the Reserve Cabernet to be ready, the LTCf offers a soft, approachable red of great elegance and style. In November 2010 in his Top 100 of Australia's best wines James Halliday wrote "LTCf is code for 'a little touch of cabernet franc' to accompany 54% cabernet sauvignon, 33% merlot and 2% petit verdot. Crystal clear crimson-red; an elegant wine, no more than medium-bodied, but with excellent texture and structure to its panoply of blackcurrant fruit; quality French oak and fine tannins add to the appeal. 95 Points

2011 Pierro Semillon Sauvignon Blanc LTC

The Semillon Sauvignon Blanc LTC is one of our most popular wines and the 2011 (just off the vine!) will carry on this tradition. Margaret River has had an amazing string of white wine vintages and so, once again, there are no question marks about the quality of the harvest. Here is a scintillating white wine that seems to almost dance in the glass with superb clarity. The wine typically has restrained aromatics, some lemon citrus notes and dried herb complexities while the palate is subtle and delicate showing fruit purity and delicious tanginess. There is tight structure with power building before a finish featuring refreshing, zesty natural acidity. A delightful white, superb paired with fresh seafood.

Experts say that Margaret River is Good for Mind, Body & Soul

It should be common knowledge by now that drinking Margaret River wine is a great way to protect your health, well being, state of mind and maybe even your entry into Nirvana.

As if that isn't enough reason to stock your cellar with Pierro, it now appears the region itself is also beneficial to the psyche, well-being and bodily health.

It seems place matters a lot. There is increasing evidence that the inhabitants of cities and degraded country towns may feel a sense of grief and loss like that of war-torn communities.

Urban planner Roberta Ryan of planning agency Urbis is one of a growing number of experts bothered by impacted communities in Australia. Yet when asked which region in Australia best captures the qualities that please the human psyche she said Margaret River:

"It's the most extraordinary place," Ryan told the Financial Review, after visiting last year. "It's got the blue of the ocean, big blue sky,

the bush and the hills and it just feels like a fantastic place to be. It helps that it has an incredible level of investment by locals and so they feel as if it's owned by them.

"It's also big enough to incorporate visitors so it doesn't have the tensions of Byron Bay and Noosa that have been created by the feeling of being invaded by visitors."

Professor of Sustainability at Murdoch University, Dr. Glenn Albrecht agrees about the positives of Margaret River:

"I was looking at the Cape to Cape region to see how sustainable landscapes are held together by shared values," said Dr Albrecht. "These resilient and relatively pristine areas are providing a form of eco-cultural service. Ecologists have long said we need to protect ecosystems so they can provide food and water and now that the cities are incapable of providing eco-cultural services we need to go to these places so people can remain sane," he said. We totally agree.



Invitation to a Special Event

Over 200 guests attended the 25th Anniversary Pierro Chardonnay Gala Dinner at Pierro in October. The same day we also conducted a vertical tasting of Pierro wines for media and special guests. (See Peter Forrestal's story about this tasting on page four.) The dinner invitation below went out and received a tremendous response from friends, family and fans of our flagship white. The menu was fabulous and perfectly married with the Pierro and Fire Gully range.

25 YEARS OF PIERRO CHARDONNAY

You are cordially invited to join us at a celebration of the 25th anniversary of the Pierro Chardonnay. We look forward to your company for dinner at our Willyabrup winery in honour of this enduring Pierro white wine.

Friday 15th October 2010
+
7.00pm

at

PIERRO

Caves Road, Willyabrup
Western Australia 6280

Please RSVP by 17 September 2010
Helen Gaunt
Phone: (08) 9755 6220
Email: info@pierro.com.au

There is no such thing as a free dinner, but living well is our only revenge. Cost will be a \$100 per person tax deductible donation to *Hope for Children*. See over for details.

Dress: Black Tie

Please inform us at the time of your RSVP if you have any specific dietary requirements.

The Cullen Great International Chardonnay Tasting will be held on Saturday 16th October.

MENU

25 YEARS OF CHARDONNAY DINNER PIERRO - 15 OCTOBER, 2010

Canapes

South West marron, tomato jelly, lime mayonnaise
Roast pumpkin, basil & tomato suppli, rocket aioli
Goat curd tart, shallot & raisin relish, roast red pepper
Smoked lamb, spiced tomato marmalade, mini pitta breads

2008 Pierro L.T.C. & 2008 Fire Gully Chardonnay

Main Course

Chicken Veronica. Mount Barker slow-cooked chicken, pancetta leek & thyme.
Rice Pilaf
Green salad-rocket, spinach, endive, avocado, cucumber, sherry vinegar and olive oil dressing
Selection of home made breads

2008 Pierro Chardonnay

Cheese

Guilloteau Buche d'Affinois
Region: Lyon France Cows Milk
Papillon Roquefort Blacklabel AOC
Region: Roquefort-sur-Soulzon France Raw Ewe's Milk
Pecorino Romano DOC Rome Italy Ewe's Milk

*2005 Pierro Cabernet Sauvignon Merlot Reserve
2005 Fire Gully Shiraz Reserve Blend 2*

Dessert

Mini bitter couverture chocolate tart
Mini chocolate mouse
Mini flourless chocolate cake
Mini lemon curd tart Italian meringue

Tea and Coffee



Peter Forrestal Assesses a Select Pierro Line-Up

While many viticultural regions or wine families can boast longer histories or celebrate more substantial anniversaries than Pierro, few will have packed more into the past 30 years than Mike Peterkin.

Thirty years represents a sizeable chunk out of anyone's working life and so it's a time to look back on what has been achieved, and to look forward. One of the things that makes the period 1979 to 2010 special for Pierro is that it straddles two important phases in the history of Margaret River – the pioneering viticultural years and the developmental decades during which, in a remarkably short time, it earned its mantle as one of the world's finest wine regions.

The tasting which coincided with the celebration for 25 vintages of Pierro Chardonnay focused on the last decade. It showed enough to suggest that the winery's position is secure among the nation's finest producers of chardonnay and enough to speculate on a likely upgrade of critical opinion on the quality of its reds.

The chardonnay vineyard was first planted on the rocky slopes above the Willyabrup Brook in 1980, with blocks added in 1988, 1996 and 1998. Its fully mature vines are close by, planted and trellised to maximise exposure to sunlight and minimise wind damage. The building of the new winery in 2000 has had a significant influence on the chardonnay: better control of temperature during the winemaking process, and the use of whole bunch pressing has made the wine fresher with brighter green tints. All this has given the Pierro Chardonnay greater delicacy and length, and helped it become a more age worthy white. Key elements of the winemaking process since the mid-1980s – the use of battonage and allowing 100% of the wine to go through the malolactic fermentation – contribute to its depth of flavour and textural qualities.

In the tasting, the 2002 Pierro Chardonnay showed great intensity of grapefruity flavours, finesse and a pleasing juiciness while the 2003 had more developed ripe, melony flavours yet with purity and liveliness. The 2004 is very much in the modern Australian mode with minerally oyster shell complexity, restrained melon and grapefruit flavours: a seamless, vibrant chardonnay finishing with mouth-watering slatey, minerally acidity. The 2005 was complex, more mineral and shale rather than oyster shell: juicy, fresh and lively while the cool 2006 harvest showed white peach, grapefruit and honeydew melon characters and minerally complexity, wonderful viscosity, tight structure and restrained power.

It was the seamless character on the 2007 which showed its lineage: a hint of grapefruit, some savoury minerality, powerful, vibrant and satisfying. The trend towards a more minerally style continued with the 2008 which I found complex, quartz, slatey and intense, having great depth weight, length and power. There's no doubt that these are fresher, more vibrant whites than the previous vintages of Pierro Chardonnay and they will age better. There's greater complexity, now, and more minerally

Peter Forrestal is a Perth-based wine writer who has a weekly wine column in the Sunday Times Magazine and contributes regularly to national and international publications including Gourmet Traveller Wine, the Qantas Magazine and Money Magazine. He is chairman of judges of Fine Wine Partners/GT Wine Australia's Wine List of the Year Awards and Gourmet Traveller Wine's Winemaker of the Year. He has written 15 books on wine. In 2009, he was named WCA's Australian Wine Communicator of the Year.

characters – without losing anything of the fruit purity, power and finesse which are hallmarks of Margaret River.

It has been the whites – the Chardonnay and the LTC Semillon Sauvignon Blanc – that established Pierro as one of the region's finest family wineries. As the innovator who introduced the fresh, fruit-driven style of Margaret River semillon sauvignon blanc to the marketplace, Mike Peterkin has always been keen to explore the possibilities with this blend. At present, he makes a fruit-driven, unoaked Fire Gully Sauvignon Blanc Semillon and the more complex Pierro LTC. The latter gains that complexity from the mix of about ten components (including some oak portions). Like the Chardonnay, the LTC has benefitted from the influence of the new winery and today appears fresher, livelier and better integrated than before. There is restraint still, and finesse, and it still benefits from a few years of bottle age.

Having lavished praise on the quality of the whites, I can't help feeling that the reds are underrated. They've been pretty impressive for quite some time (the 1994 Pierro Cabernet Merlot won a gold medal at a Wine Show in London) but have been in the shadow of the whites. The red blocks on the vineyard are now 25 years old and show this maturity in increased concentration of flavour. More importantly, in recent years Mike Peterkin and the team at Pierro have been monitoring the grapes in order to get fully ripe tannins without excessive alcohols.

The line up of Pierro Reserve Cabernet Merlots at the 25th anniversary tasting suggests that the reds will soon attract increased attention. The components of the wine – about 66% cabernet sauvignon, 24% merlot, 6% cabernet franc, and 2% (each) malbec and petit verdot – are identified in the vineyard and monitored in the barrel store. The 2004 is soft, round and generous, with blackcurrant, dark plum and briar flavours, velvety texture and substantial though well-integrated tannins while the 2005 has amazing power, richness and concentration and brambly, briary, cassis flavours. Good though these are, the 2007 is a step up – the best red from the property: opulent, lush and seductive with ripe rich redcurrant, blackberry and bramble flavours, seamlessly integrating fruit, oak and tannin, wonderful velvety texture and a long lingering finish. Power with finesse.

Further evidence of how far the reds have come can be seen in the quality of the LTCf – a similar cabernet sauvignon dominant blend (55%) with merlot (31%), a little touch of cabernet franc (10%) and 4% petit verdot and malbec. This has the power and concentration of fruit flavour of a classy Margaret River red with softness and fleshiness that makes it approachable on release. There's also the Shiraz Viognier from Fire Gully that also emphasises approachability.

At a time like a 25th anniversary, it's not unreasonable to pay tribute to Mike Peterkin's work both as a pioneer and as one whose attention to detail in the vineyard and winery and a willingness to research and experiment has enabled Pierro to produce world class wines – both white and red.



25th Anniversary Chardonnay Party Social Page



Mike Peterkin delivers this quarter century Chardonnay address

Party Reviews

Congratulations on 25 years and on the results you have achieved that have added in no small way to Margaret River's growing national and international reputation.

- Dr John Gladstones

Thank you, very much for inviting me to the celebrations. The tasting was impressive. It really showed the quality and consistency of the Pierro wines. I was intrigued and impressed by the youthfulness of the older chardonnay vintages in particular, as well as the complexity and balance achieved no matter the vintage variations. Thanks for a wonderful, memorable and enjoyable celebration.

- Kate Porter, Porter and Co Wine and Spirits, South Australia

Congratulations on your big bash! It was a wonderful night, a benchmark and a very happy party. Pierro is surrounded by many very nice people and it was all displayed. Thanks for including us.

- Mark Fesq, Fesq & Co. NSW

25 Years of Pierro Chardonnay

Sung to the tune of Shirley Bassey's Big Spender

The minute you walked into Willyabrup
We could see you were a wine of distinction
A cool-warm climate
Good-lookin', so refined
Wouldn't you like to know...?

- Professor John E. J. Rasko, RPA Hospital & Centenary Institute

Stop Press! Pierro On-Line Shopping Cart

After nine months of trials and tribulations Pierro has burst forth into the cyber shopping world with our new on-line shopping cart. We encourage you to make your orders from our website (www.pierro.com.au). We'd appreciate your feedback on the new web-based facility.



Table settings for the gala dinner in the winery



Friends of Pierro enjoyed great food and wine

Nic's Doorways of Perception



Recent visitors to Pierro cellar sales will have noticed our walls adorned with a wonderful array of vibrant photographs.

The captivating images are part of Nic Peterkin's first professional photographic exhibition, *Doorways*, and depict doors and people

from exotic locations across the world. Nic's recent travels to Cuba, Iran, Nicaragua, Italy, Russia, Nepal and Mongolia have provided a rich tapestry of images for the exhibition.

Nic, who has been a keen photographer most of his life, has been showcasing 13 of his favourite images from his collection, chosen by he and his friends studying photography at university.

The exhibition opened at Little Creatures in Fremantle

back in November receiving very good reviews.

Nic says he chose the Doorways theme out of convenience and insight.

"Photographically, doorways are a perfect way to frame a person or a subject," said Nic. "They're also representative of the choices people make or the choices they are about to make."

Funds from sales at the exhibition will be donated to the *Hope for Children* charity.

The charity, which was founded in Western Australia, promotes sexual education in the poverty stricken nation of Ethiopia in a effort to reduce the spread of AIDS, which affects a large percentage of the population.

Well done, Nic! We look forward to more great imagery.



The SSB Imbroglia Laid to Rest

After seeing recent publicity last year about Bruce Tomlinson having produced the first Semillon Sauvignon Blanc at Lenton Brae, it's time to set the record straight.

I produced the first Semillon Sauvignon Blanc in Margaret River in 1979 when I was making wine for Kevin and Di Cullen. That wine was labelled Semillon Sauvignon Blanc and sold as such.

I have never claimed any originality for the idea as I simply borrowed it from the French. What I did do was create a new style which emphasized aroma, freshness and fruit character. I believe that this was the first Semillon Sauvignon Blanc produced in Australia.

That first Semillon Sauvignon Blanc produced in 1979 went on to win the trophy at the Perth Royal Show for the best full bodied dry white wine, and so is on the public record. It also clearly established the potential that a blend of these two varieties had in Margaret River. The grapevines for this 1979 wine would have been planted in 1975 or 1976.

When I planted Pierro in 1980 the potential was obvious and I devoted a third of the total plantings at that time to these two varieties. Some of the people who played a major role in the development of this style of wine are:

- Myself for starting the blend in 1979 and repeating it in 1980 and 1981 vintages and for establishing the style.
- Kevin and Di Cullen for continuing the SSB wine I had established, in subsequent vintages.
- David Hohnen at Cape Mentelle who started in the

early to mid-1980's, and helped popularize the Semillon Sauvignon Blanc name.

- David Gregg of Vasse Felix and later Frank Tate of Evans and Tate who greatly popularized the Classic Dry White form of this wine.
- Kate Mackillop and Mark Fesq, both Sydney wine distributors, who both got this unique Margaret River style well established in what was then the most important market place in Australia at that time.

Bruce Tomlinson at Lenton Brae did not plant his vineyard until 1982 or 1983 and did not produce his first Semillon Sauvignon Blanc wine until 1987. Bruce was late on the scene and played no major role in the development of this great Margaret River wine style.

Margaret River 10-Year Vintage Rating Chart

Year	Rating Out of 10	White	Red
2000		7	6
2001		7	9
2002		9	6
2003		7	7
2004		7	8
2005		9	9
2006		9	6
2007		6	8
2008		8.5	8.5
2009		8	8
2010		7.5	7.5

