

SILVERSTREAM WINES

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S I N G L E V I N E Y A R D

D E N M A R K W E S T E R N A U S T R A L I A

Welcome to the final edition of Silver Spiel for 2021. Tony has included his report for the year below that gives an insightful look into the workings of the vineyard.

Silverstream will be changing their opening times to - Appointment ONLY on Wednesday and Friday from 11am to 4pm. The upside of these changes is that our structured tasting will be conducted by two of our winemakers in Andrew Milbourne and Mike Garland who are both passionate about single vineyard and cool climate wines and moreover made the wines that are on tasting. If you are one of the ['Scotsdale'](#) (6-pack) or the ['Single Vineyard'](#) (12- pack) wine club member you will receive an email in coming days to choose your own pack or have the Summer pack that has been hand selected by the team at Silverstream.



Please read on and enjoy Tony's review of the year in the Silverstream vineyard

"Vintage 2021 to Bud Burst 2022"

At Silverstream Wines we respect and partner Nature in our viticulture practice. By building healthy soil, we build vine resilience. This allows us to embrace the natural biological processes leading to best practice non-interventionist viticulture.

VINTAGE 2021

Vintage 2021 commenced on 18 February with our early pick Chardonnay for our Blanc de Blanc Sparkling, concluding with the final pick of our weather-robust Cabernet Franc on 26 April.

With the Cab Franc fruit beginning to approach optimum ripening, with our estimate of two weeks to pick, we held our breath as autumn rain clouds brewed above the vines.

The decision to delay the hand pick of the Cab Franc for two weeks was bold, considering the effects rain can have on fruit sugar levels. It was a calculated risk. We needed that little bit of extra time on the vine to reach required ripeness. We banked on the robust nature of the variety to handle any possible continuation of adverse weather. Wine maker/ viticulturist Mike had closely assessed the fruit and vine health as clean (no signs of mildew or botrytis) & recommended the decision to defer picking.

It was the right call! We have been rewarded with a superb outcome. Fourteen Passionate Pickers completed the hand harvest by late morning and then progressed straight to the celebratory 2021 vendage lunch.



The 2021 Passionate Pickers winding it up after finishing the Cabernet Franc harvest

PRUNING

Pruning commenced on 14 June, considerably earlier than the usual start on 1 July. Always researching and investigating aspects of viticulture that will enhance our wine production, we discovered the Simonit and Sirch Guyot Soft pruning technique, with its focus on enhancing the health of the plant and high quality of production. This sounds like what all pruning aims for but the subtleties of the technique provide a significant shift. The technique minimises cuts while presenting changes in the positioning & number of cuts that aim to enhance the vine nutrient flow along the canes to the buds.

Callum Garland, son of our winemaker Mike, was visiting from Lethbridge Winery in Geelong and he took our pruning team through the Guyot soft pruning principles.

Each pruning cut results in a desiccation zone adjacent to the cut that is 1.5 times the diameter of the pruning cut. This 'dead wood' zone impedes the sap flow to the buds. As a result, the number and position of cuts becomes crucial to avoid impeding sap flow.

Another simple discovery and implementation was the importance of varietal pruning order. For the first time we pruned the last picked varieties first, rather than last, as in previous years. The first varietal pruned results in it being the first to commence budburst, and early to budburst results in earlier to ripening.

The risk we took in delaying this year's Cabernet Franc pick, will be mitigated by achieving two weeks extra ripening time in early April. This a significant bonus for a cool climate red looking for continuing sunlight in April.

SOIL STRUCTURE and WEED CONTROL

At Silverstream we are steadfast in our commitment to biological viticulture. Silverstream is chemical free, with no use of chemical herbicides or insecticides. We rely on non-interference, allowing the enhancing of Nature's processes.

Maintaining soil structure is one of the principles of biodynamic viticulture.

Healthy soil needs water and air, and at Silverstream we imagine the soil's micro-organisms burrowing along an intricate 'subterranean network', allowing them to navigate their hidden subsoil wonderland. Taking care of physical soil structure, home to the worms, fungi and friendly bacteria is fundamental in building healthy soil.

The perennial, aggressive kikuyu robs the soil of so much and slashing and mulching of the vine inter-row at numerous times during vintage contributes to its control.

More recently in use is our Italian Berti Slasher/Mulcher, a formidable warrior for this task even throwing up dirt from its flailing chains!

In the Pinot Noir block our vine surface roots were suffering, no match for the invasive kikuyu. We had to do something to arrest and lessen the nutrient 'stealing' taking place. This has been our first year using a Yeomans Plough and Power Harrows, both providing soil aeration and physical eradication of weeds. Followed by the dense planting of a multi-species cover crop to arrest the winter dormant kikuyu.



Interrow after first pass of Yeomans Plough, resulting in breaking of surface compaction allowing Power Harrows to aerate and weed



How thrilling to see the result!

Record rains preceded vineyard manager Cord battling boggy ground in the inter-row while working the new equipment. Results were quick to follow, with early germination. We had seeded the multi-species cover crop into wet soil and with a generous top-dressing of our first vineyard-made compost, the result was rewarding.

An unexpected bonus directly under the vines saw Nature's response dancing in front of us. A direct case of cause and effect with the wonderful emergence of native legumes – clovers and serradellas now vigorously growing under-vine. We have not seen these growing so vigorously for ten years.

The days of preventative chemical systemic spraying are long gone at Silverstream and as a result we have progressively built soil health, allowing the return of magnificent native legumes. Lying dormant as hard seed,

the natives had identified the change in the status quo and made their re-entry. That's so pleasing and vindicates our soil friendly processes.

As a natural source of nitrogen, these legumes are a very welcome bonus.



JUST A LITTLE BIT MORE

Reducing our footprint and fine tuning our approach has seen our first vineyard-made compost application. In previous years we have trucked in outside compost and now we have sourced most of our compost inputs locally – grape marc from the winery, woodchip mulch, cow manure and calf bedding straw, guano (rock phosphate), trace elements , lime sand - add clean Denmark rain – eh voila!

A recent supply of straw has been sourced locally, which guarantees a plentiful on-going supply of our own compost.

We thank you for the continued support over 2021 and wish all 'Friends of Silverstream' and their families a very happy Christmas and hope to see you down in the Denmark region very soon!

All the very best,

The Ruse Family

