TRANQUIL VALE

Autumn 2024 Club Run

Vintage Variation & the Alchemy of Aging

Welcome to your 2024 Autumn Wine Club delivery. First and foremost thank you for your membership and ongoing support of Tranquil Vale.

This send out we have selected some vertical vintages of our Shiraz and Semillon. This little booklet will give you some information about the wines, how they age and what makes them unique. Comparing vintages is particularly fascinating when looking at single vineyard wines as we can really see the effect that the weather has on the fruit.

Aging is of course another factor to consider – is it worthwhile aging wines? Which wines should you age and under which conditions?

How do wines "age"?

To really understand this question we need to zoom in for a moment and have a look at the chemistry. Flavour and aroma compounds in wines are made up of chains of carbon molecules. Carbon is really good at creating long chains and binding things together. As the wine ages these carbon chains get longer and bind up hydrogen ions. What does that mean for us drinking the wine? Well, hydrogen ions equal acidity so as they get bound up the wine tastes less acidic. Moreover, the binding together of multiple shorter flavour and aroma compounds into longer molecular carbon chains will result in complexity and the softening of tannins in red wines. This process is called polymerisation and is also responsible for the sediment present in older wines (specifically reds) as the molecules can get so large that they become a solid and fall out of solution.

TRANQUIL VALE

How should you store wines long term? Does it really matter?

Wine should ideally be stored at a cool temperature (15-20°C) and away from direct sunlight.

Temperature fluctuations should be avoided as much as possible.

This is because higher temperatures and fluctuations dramatically increase the flocculation of the flavour and aroma compounds – meaning that the wine ages prematurely thus shortening its life, but more importantly the aging is uneven as the deacidifying effect does not speed up at the same rate. Therefore, you could end up with a wine that has lost its flavour but not the acid, leading to a sour and dull drink – not ideal!

Corks also don't like heat and need to be kept moist so if you have a wine with a cork please lie it down for storage.

How do I know if it is a Wine I should Age?

Acid and tannin both help to preserve and stabilise the wine. If you find a wine with well-balanced flavours that you like and it has naturally high acidity and tannin (if red) are ideal.

For the Hunter Classics that we grow and produce at Tranquil Vale I would suggest:

Semillon = up to 20 years Shiraz = up to 15 years

Chardonnay = up to 10 years

However, that is not to say that they are not delicious when younger and indeed some people may prefer a younger wine for its freshness (caused by higher acidity) and juicy fruit. So trust you palate and enjoy tasting these examples.

Connie Griffiths

Winemaker

2023 Semillon

2023 was a wonderful year. It started off a little shaky with a cool, wet spring and early summer, but then it was dry and warm from January through to March. This meant a long, slow ripening period, which is ideal for developing flavour in the grapes.

This wine is light and bright in the glass. The nose displays aromas of fresh citrus, melon and pear with notes of minerality. This wine is elegantly structured with a solid acid backbone and will develop complexity with age.

When enjoyed young it is so refreshing and easy drinking. Paring perfectly with seafood, Japanese tempura or a Thai green curry.

2018 Semillon

2018 was a fantastic vintage across the Hunter region. It was very dry, which prevented any disease or mould. The quality of the fruit was exceptional. Our 2018 Semillon won a trophy for best in show at the Hunter Valley Boutique Wine Show that year, as well as two more gold medals at the Hunter Valley Wine Show and NSW Small Winemakers Show. It is a fantastic example of what Hunter Valley Semillon should be.

Now at 6 years old it is beginning its aging journey and starting to become so interesting.

The acid creates a beautiful structure and freshness to the wine. The nose captivates with notes of lime, melon, hay honeysuckle and beeswax. The palate displays fresh lime and white peach up front and then finishes with honey, toast and lemon peel. It is a fascinating wine, which will continue to develop over the coming years.

This complexity of flavour is what makes aged Semillon so special and such a wonderful wine to enjoy with food. Try it with grilled seafood, goat's cheese or risotto.

Enjoy it now, or cellar for another 3-5 years.

2023 Chardonnay

We have only included one vintage of our Chardonnay in this send out, but you may be surprised to know that it also a wine that you can age. Chardonnay is a grape variety that will continue to delight throughout the years. Cellaring for up to 10 years is a good guide, but we have had some of our 20 year old Chardonnay and been blown away by its complexity & balance.

2023 was a fantastic vintage for us and this young Chardonnay is showing plenty of promise. The nose displays overtones of toasted hazelnuts and chestnuts, with notes of apple, pear and lemon curd. The palate is juicy and beautifully balanced with flavours of toasted brioche, apple, white peach and hint of vanilla on the finish.

This wine is delicious now but will continue to age elegantly for years to come.

Does my wine need to breathe?

People often say that you should let your wine "breathe" before drinking. This could mean decanting, using an aerator or just opening the bottle at least half an hour before you intend to drink it. The reason for this "breathing" is to let oxygen into the wine, which helps to release flavour & aroma compounds. After breathing, wines open up and display much more complexity and depth. This is more needed for reds due to the tannin structures, but can also be beneficial for white wines.

However, the oxygen also makes the wine *oxidise* faster. So if you are going to finish the bottle then definitely decant or open it early to release those flavours. If you are only intending to drink one glass then we would suggest using an aerator instead.

2022 Shiraz

This Shiraz is so classically Hunter Valley. It is savoury, earthy and has a real depth of flavour.

The nose enchants with cherry, plum, raspberry, mushroom, earth, cocoa, leather, anise and black pepper. This menagerie of deliciousness continues on the palate with juicy red fruit notes at the front, spice and cocoa on the mid palate & sumptuous vanilla & cherry on the finish.

Hunter Valley Shirazes are endlessly fascinating. Even after years of making them these are wines that spark our curiosity and imagination with their complexity and flavours which range from acid to umami to bitter to sweet. Vintage also plays a big part with our Shiraz. For this reason we have included 3 vintages of Shiraz in your pack this time so that you can see how the weather conditions and winemaking decisions can really shape the end product.

2021 Shiraz

While only one year apart from the 2022 vintage it is quite a different wine. 2021 and 2022 were both wet years, however, in 2021 the timing of the rain meant that we were able to get the fruit a little bit riper, this has resulted in some really juicy red fruit notes.

A beautifully balanced, medium bodied Shiraz, this wine is both subtle and complex. The palate is bursting with juicy cherry, raspberry and plum, which give way to notes of leather, black pepper and vanilla.

The earthiness in this vintage is almost smoky and therefore pairs beautifully with smoked or chargrilled foods.

2019 Shiraz

2019 was warm and dry and the 3rd drought effected vintage in a row. This meant that humidity was low and there was no disease or mould at all. The ongoing lack of water availability led to lower yields, but a real concentration of flavour. So, while we had less fruit, the quality was outstanding and we were able to produce a pretty special wine.

Owing to the quality we decided to cold soak the fruit, giving it extended skin contact. This process gave added complexity and tannin to the wine.

This wine is rich, delicious and pairs beautifully with a wide range of foods. The nose entices with plum, strawberry, violets, died fruit, cinnamon and hints of coco and earth. The plate is full and rounded with notes of cherry, pepper and spice.

Try it with mushrooms, game or beef brisket

TRANQUIL VALE

Tasting Notes

2023 Semillon	
2018 Semillon	
2023 Chardonnay	
2022 Shiraz	
2021 Shiraz	
2019 Shiraz	

Thank you for your support of our family business. At Tranquil Vale we work tirelessly to produce exceptional wines that truly represent the land on which we are so blessed to grow our grapes.

We would like to acknowledge the Wonnarua people as the traditional owners of the lands on which we work.

It is truly a piece of paradise and we look forward to welcoming you back to Tranquil Vale soon.

Tranquil Vale Vineyard
325 Pywells Road, Luskintyre
Hunter Valley NSW 2321
Ph: 02-4930 6100 / wine@tranquilvale.com.au
www.tranquilvale.com.au