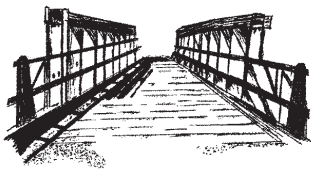


Monahan Estate



OLD BRIDGE BUGLE

AUTUMN 2007

www.monahanestate.com.au

CHEAP AS CHIPS!

Why the '02 Semillon's a bargain

THERE'S a story behind the super discounting of our 2002 Old Bridge semillon and it's typical of how John and I get things done around here.

It had been a long, exhausting and – believe it or not – wet harvest in February 2002. The grapes were still good, however, and the crop was large.

Bear in mind that we only have six hectares under grapes, we're quality minded rather than quantity oriented. Did you know that 5 per cent of wineries in Australia produce 95 per cent of the wine? That leaves 95 per cent of us filling the remaining 5 per cent of the market.

So, where was I? Oh, yes, the 2002 harvest, where John was in charge of tonnage. We'd decided on around 10 tonnes from the semillon would suit our purposes and we'd sell the rest as grapes.

The harvesters were picking through

**SUPER PRICED
SEMILLON
2002 Old Bridge
semillon just \$80 a
case while stocks
last!**

the cool of the night and I decided to grab some shut-eye back at the house.

When I woke and went back down to the shed there were 22 tonnes of grapes picked and no sign of John slowing down. He just hates to leave grapes on the vine, even if they are meant to be for other people. I threw my hands in the air in horror and said "No more!" Well, perhaps I yelled it.

Now, given that one tonne of grapes produces about 700 litres of wine, 22 tonnes is good for around 15,400 litres, or more than 20,530 bottles in more than 1700 cases.

In other words, we have a lot of this wine in stock. If we were millionaires we'd be cellaring it for another 10 years and then selling it for \$65 a bottle as a genuine classic Hunter Valley toasty semillon, which it's already showing signs of becoming.

The few wine shows we've entered with it have seen a bronze and a silver medal. James Halliday gave it three and a half stars. But it was made as a long-drinking, low alcohol wine that would be at its best 15 or 20 years after bottling.

Anyway, stock up while you can. At \$80 a case, that's only \$6.66 a bottle for a wine that deserves to be much more expensive.



FLASHING THE TROPHY

YOU may have read elsewhere about our 2005 Old Bridge semillon winning the top gold medal and the trophy at the Hunter Valley Boutique Winemakers' Show last November.

When the grandkids were up visiting recently we couldn't resist getting this photo of them with the trophy.

The 2005 semillon is now our most awarded wine with two gold medals and a trophy from just two wine shows. And I know I'll be accused of bias, but it represents probably the best value white table wine in the known universe at \$168 a case.

Pictured are Shiree's girls Ella, twins Bethaney and Hillary and me, Patricia, of course.



Wind shifts caught the balloon unawares and an emergency landing had to be made in our vineyard.



A load of hot air comes down

THIS was the sight that greeted us recently when the regular early-morning Balloon Aloft flight was caught out by a changing wind.

We were just having breakfast when the balloon started drifting toward the vineyard. I knew they were in trouble because they normally keep well away from the horse stud next door, where landings – even emergency ones – are banned.

So the pilot had no choice but to land at the back of the Monahan Estate vineyard.

This is the second time they have been caught short because of a wind change and had to land in our place. Last time the collapsed balloon and the basket had to be manhandled over our back gate.

This time the bloke who picks up the passengers was attempting to grab a rope from the balloon to help with a steady

landing. He ran down the entire length of a semillon row. Not a short distance, trust me. He must be fairly fit.

Anyway, John drove down to give them a hand and give the rope-grabber a lift back to his van. We could see he was grateful.

Some people object to the balloon flights in the Hunter Valley, but to us it's all part of the dynamic tourism industry that's generated by wine.

DATES TO REMEMBER

THE Terrigal Food and Wine Festival is being held on July 7 and 8 this year and we will be there giving tastings and taking orders.

It's a great location, close to other Central Coast attractions and the whale watching.

Also, don't forget you can catch me (Patricia) at the Farmers and Gourmet Food Markets at Castle Hill every second Saturday in the month. They start at 8am and entry is via Carrington Road.

We are only allowed to give tastings and can't sell wine here, so I can only take orders. However, if you have drunk all your supplies of Monahan Estate wine drop in and re-order and have a chat.

Finally, don't forget the fabulous Lovedale Long Lunch on May 19-20.

We are not an official part of the event, but we will be open on both days as per usual, so drop in with your picnic lunch or just sample some fine wine.

A WEALTH OF WATER

IT'S always interesting at the cellar door. You meet all kinds of people, most of them really nice. But it's amazing how many questions we get asked.

These days, with the whole world focused on climate change, a lot of them are about water. I have to explain how lucky we are to have a permanent creek as a boundary to the property with a licence to irrigate the vines. Incidentally, drip irrigation is one of the most economical and sustainable ways to use water.

We also get asked about the hot weather in summer and how it affects the grapes. I explain that irrigating at the right time and other commonsense viticultural practices plus hard work (sometimes even chatting to the vines) gives us healthy, high quality fruit.

In March we planted Dun peas between the rows. In spring we will plough the crop into the soil, which will provide nitrogen and organic compounds for the 2008 vintage.

So there are two questions answered. And all without even visiting the cellar door!

JOHN AND PATRICIA GRAHAM
MONAHAN ESTATE, 319 Wilderness Road,
Rothbury, NSW 2320
Ph: 02-4930 9070 Fax: 02-4930 7679
Mobile: 0427 307 679
Email: monahanestate@hunterlink.net.au

THE little piece of cuteness personified at right is our youngest grandchild, Isabella, now 21 months. What with the other grandchildren on the front we had to give Isabella a bit of a run of her own here on the back page. Anyway, you'd be proud, too, if she were yours.

