

# Yarrh! Yarrh! Yarrh!

The Monthly Newsletter from Yarrh Wines  
October 2009

## 'TAPAS AND TIPPLE'

Our next Tapas style food and wine matching lunch is Sunday 1st November. Hopefully the spring weather will allow us to dine al fresco for this one. We will be entertained by East Moon with their blend of jazz, blues and folk music and this would be a great opportunity to try our newly released 2009 Sauvignon Blanc if you didn't get a chance to try it over the long weekend.

The Cellar Door is open for tastings every weekend and we continue to have available antipasto platters, tea and coffee.

## BOOKINGS RECOMMENDED

Phone 02 6227 1474

## YARRH WINES AT OLD PARLIAMENT HOUSE

The recent Canberra Wines dinner held at Old Parliament House Member's Dining Room was attended by over 150 people. Ralph Kyte-Powell, a prominent wine writer, judge and critic, summed up the evening beautifully by saying that Canberra District is becoming one of the great premium regions in Australia. He singled out our 2006 Cabernet Sauvignon with Clonakilla and Collector wines – great company

We had the busiest time over the long weekend with the Murrumbateman Moving Feast and despite the weather keeping crowds down we had lots of new customers out trying (and buying) our range of cool climate wines. Word is definitely out about the quality and range available at Yarrh and across the district. Only one more Festival to round off the year, the Wine, Roses and all that Jazz Festival in November.

We are putting together our Wine Club Packs this month which will include pre-releases such as our award winning 2009 Riesling, some 2006 Cabernet Sauvignon (NSW Top 100) and our highly sought after 2008 Sangiovese. We will also include "Something from the Cellar", wines that we keep from back vintages, just for our Wine Club Members. There is more information about membership in this newsletter.

Also in this edition is information on upcoming events, the dinner at Old Parliament House and a story about our recent foray into large scale composting for 'Greening Yarrh'.

We look forward to seeing you soon.

– as amongst the highlights of the night. The dinner was also attended by the Minister for Tourism, Andrew Barr, the Swedish Ambassador and his wife, Mr & Mrs Petersson, a number of representatives from other diplomatic missions, and local media representatives Chris Shanahan, Peter Dietz and Kirsten Lawson.

## WINE, ROSES AND ALL THAT JAZZ

On Saturday 7th and Sunday 8th November, we will be participating in this District wide Festival with food and wine matching, music and "Rosés of the World". Take the opportunity to join Fiona and taste different varieties of Rosés at 11.30 and 3.00pm each day. Check the website later in the month for details on the menu and music (jazz of course).

## Greening Yarrh

See our story on controlled microbial composting at the end of the Newsletter or go to the website at [www.yarrhwines.com.au](http://www.yarrhwines.com.au) for the full story!

Take a look at our new website.  
You can now place your orders online  
at [www.yarrhwines.com.au](http://www.yarrhwines.com.au)

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## OUR NEXT ART EXHIBITION

The next exhibition will be by local Canberra artist, Andy Byer who produces a stunning range of turned wood pieces. These include bowls and platters as well as some other interesting objects. Andy has been creating works in wood for over 20 years using different types of native woods. All pieces undergo a careful finishing process using high quality selected oils or lacquer.

Wood is a wonderful medium with fascinating textures, colours and a lovely natural warm feel. It is a challenge for the wood-worker to bring out these features in the piece that is being created.

The exhibition is due to commence on Saturday October 31st and all pieces are for sale.

## CONTROLLED MICROBIAL COMPOSTING

Ever since the industrial revolution western agriculture has centred on the idea that you can feed plants directly through the addition of water soluble chemical fertilisers. While this approach helped feed Europe and the world through some very difficult times it is now clear that it has also dangerously depleted our soils, damaged our environment and is ultimately unsustainable.

Over the last 50 years or so, and with growing momentum, farmers and researchers are swinging back to the need to build healthy soils, which will in turn support healthy plants. So what does a healthy soil look like?

Soil health is based on:

- Sufficient and active carbon
- Aerobic conditions
- Microbial diversity
- High levels of living humus (ie integrated mineral/organic matter)

To rebuild healthy (and productive) soils many farmers are changing their practices, including reduced or eliminated use of chemical herbicides and pesticides, permanent soil coverage, replacing chemical plant fertilisers with natural soil fertilisers, and re-building organic matter and microbial life in soil.

After a long winter of research at Yarrh, we have adopted a process called Controlled Microbial Composting (CMC) as a key part of our improved soil building practices. CMC is a very specific approach to composting that creates a very high quality, humified compost full of stabilised minerals and microbial diversity. Integrated with the soil, it builds soil carbon, supplies natural plant foods, improves soil structure and increases water holding capacity, ie its bloody good for your soil! The approach was developed by the Luebke family in Austria and is promoted and supported in Australia by Break It Down Composting in Manilla, NSW.

We take a balanced range of organic materials, some of them by-products of grape growing and winemaking (eg prunings, grape skins, grape seeds, fermentation marc) and some brought in (eg straw and manure), form windrows, and use a compost turner to mix and maintain ideal water and oxygen levels, always maintaining an aerobic decomposition. This is the key to CMC – creating the right conditions for a range of different microbiology to efficiently break-down the materials into composite parts and then efficiently build-up a high quality crumb-structure humified compost. The entire process takes about 6-8 weeks with break-down phase taking 2-3 weeks and the build-up phase about 4-5 weeks. Most of the activity is in the break-down phase when temperatures can reach 60-70C and CO2 levels can get up to 20%.

When completed the compost is spread throughout the vineyard to be incorporated into the soil. It will provide both macro and micronutrients for the soil (and hence the vines), as well as provide live microbiology that continues to work within the soil.

Its early days for us, so time will tell if our investment in this approach, and other improved practices, pays dividends. If you would like to come and see our composting facility in action, please give us a call and we can arrange a time. Further information is also available at [www.breakitdown.com.au](http://www.breakitdown.com.au).

