

# FUNCTION REPORT - KYNETON DISTRICT EDUCATIONAL TOUR

## 16th August 2003

It was nice to be going on a wine tour and being able to sleep in until about 6.30 am. Normally we would have had at least one phone call from President Bob checking whether we were up and ready to greet the members who would be departing from the first pick up point. I must say an 8.00 o'clock start is most agreeable time to commence socialising: particularly as even now the temperature is only 20 C and there is ice on the grass. The water troughs had a film of ice on them and the only way to get warm was to shiver oneself into a sweat. No matter – Coach Captain Peter had the heaters on in the coach, and the clear blue sky gave a hint that the weather was to be conducive to relaxing and enjoying wines from wineries that we had not visited previously.

Because of the later start, and the fact that the tour was conducted on a Saturday, our Coach Captain decided not to attempt to drive into Doncaster Shopping Town. This did cause too many hassles – but it was interesting to see the committee members carrying our luncheon across Williamsons Road

When all were on board we headed off to Malmsbury where we met up with our guide for the day, Tom Gyorffy, had the customary bread rolls, pâté and coffee, before a brisk stroll through the Botanic Gardens – the gardens had been laid out by Baron Ferdinand von Mueller, the designer of the Royal Botanic Gardens in Melbourne.

We left in good time and headed off to Zig Zag Rd Winery where most of the members (except your correspondent) tasted the wines from the vineyard, and the neighbouring vineyard, Basalt Ridge Vineyard. Zig Zag Rd Wines is located about 5 km from Malmsbury and is one of the earliest vineyards in the Macedon region, having been planted in 1972. We were also pleased to taste wines from Basalt Ridge Winery, which was officially opened for the first time today.

Unfortunately, I was unable to taste the wines offered, as we, for the first time that I can remember, had difficulties entering and leaving the winery. The entry was too narrow for a 46 seater coach, and there was insufficient room to turn the vehicle around. Accordingly, Peter had to reverse the length of the driveway.

Zig Zag Rd winery produces Cabernet Sauvignon/Merlot, Cabernet Sauvignon, Shiraz and Pinot Noir from non-irrigated vines. Basalt Ridge produces Cabernet Sauvignon, Merlot, Shiraz and Chardonnay. I believe that both vineyards produce very good varietal wines. However, if vehicles larger than a 20 seat bus are to enter the vineyard, the entry needs to be widened, and a sufficient turning area needs to be provided. Lesson One!!

And so, we travelled to Fryerstown Road Vineyard, Taradale for lunch. Our host, David Brown, took us on a tour of the winery, followed by a tasting while lunch was served. Lunch was a nice, thick soup followed by a barbeque; all prepared by Barbara Cecchi.

The property consists of thirty three acres with nine acres of vines. The present owners established the vineyard on the property in 1988.

David showed us his wine press, which is locally made in Kyneton by Vintec. Fryerstown Road produces between 30 and 50 tonnes per year, most of which is processed on the property.

The vineyard is located at the northern end of the Macedon Ranges Wine Region and produces a

typical range of cool climate red and white table wines. The main white variety is Chardonnay and the main red variety is Cabernet Sauvignon. Shiraz, Merlot and Malbec are also offered. Fryerstown Road net all the vines to protect the fruit from bird predation.

A cottage is available on the property as bed and breakfast accommodation.

After lunch we travelled to Tom Gyorffy's property, Tarrangower Estate for a tasting of his wines, and wines from Blackgum Estate, and Hawksmoor Winery. It says a lot for the wine growers in this district that they were keen to join together to give us the maximum exposure to wines of the district. So far, in three wineries we have tasted wines from six separate producers. However, once more we had difficulty (and time wasted) entering the property. We did get three views of the Youth Training facility at Malmsbury as we drove past it on two occasions. I hope that the gripe re vineyard entrances is taken in a positive light – coach tours by people who have a serious interest in wine can be a boon for small wineries with good quality wines to offer. And the wineries we visited today certainly offered a lot.

Tarrangower Estate is located on the north eastern side of the town of Malmsbury. Tom and Nea Gyorffy established the property in 1993 with the intention of producing premium cool climate grapes. The property has clay loam soils and a perfect temperature range for cool climate wines. Tom and Nea presented us with a 2000 Cabernet – Shiraz, a 2001 Shiraz – Cabernet and the 2001 "The Revolutionary's" Chardonnay to taste. The chardonnay is to be released in September and I believe the two red wines are available now from the cellar door.

I did not obtain information regarding Hawksmoor Winery – in the hustle and bustle of tasting the wines I neglected to obtain information regarding the winery. However, I did purchase some of their Chardonnay and Pinot Noir. I am sure if you contacted the winery at 1060 Kyneton – Metcalfe Road, Green Hill via Kyneton, they will provide you with more information.

Blackgum Estate is a small vineyard of about six acres situated at Metcalfe. Simonette Sherman is the winemaker at Blackgum, and her aim is to produce the purest and highest quality wine at a realistic price for the consumer. Simonette provided us with a 1999 and a 2000 Riesling, a 1999 Chardonnay and a 2000 Cabernet Sauvignon to try.

And then we travelled to Coliban Valley Vineyard and Wines, where the winemaker, Helen Miles told us that the day was typical for Metcalfe – blue skies and a delightfully warm afternoon. However, methinks she exaggerated because the sides of the road showed evidence of recent heavy rainfalls. But then, perhaps it only rains at night time in Metcalfe!

At Coliban Valley we tasted cabernet sauvignon, merlot and shiraz wines from the property, and a range of wines from Grace Devlin Wines.

Once more we had difficulties gaining entrance to the winery, and at one stage the coach slipped on the grassed turning area.

A visit to Kyneton Oil Olive Products gave us the opportunity to learn about the production of olive oil, and to purchase product. There are about 7000 trees planted here, and most are harvested by hand. Our host, Sam Trovatello (pictured), told us that they are experimenting with mechanical harvesting of 200 trees. If the production equates to the trees that are hand harvested, they will may use more mechanical harvesting in future.

The olive trees are quite young and produce about 5 kg of fruit per tree. When they are fully matured, they will produce about 50 kg per tree. The fruit produces about 20% oil, so a fully mature tree should

produce about 10 kg of oil per year.

We then split the tour, and while some of the group went to Meskills Woodworks, the rest of the tour continued to Roseberry Hill Winery, where Barry Murphy hosted a vertical tasting of vintages of three or four years to barrel samples of the current vintage. Roseberry Hill was established in 1984 and has 20 acres of vines.

A tour of the woodworks was quite interesting, and we were shown the process of spinning wool. Naturally, there were opportunities to purchase some of their products.

And finally, the tour joined together again for dinner at Gonnella's Restaurant in Kyneton. This was another highlight – the food was magnificent, and members and guests were joined by a number of the winemakers we had visited earlier in the day. As one would expect, the wines complimented the food. The 50/50 serving of the meal worked well. Many guest remarked about the dinner as being a highlight of the tour.

By 9.30 pm we were all on the coach and travelling back to Melbourne.

This was a day not to be missed. Tom Gyorffy had arranged a great tour for us that encompassed the boutique wineries in the Kyneton and Malmsbury district. We all felt extremely welcome at each winery, and enjoyed the tastings and wine talk. We are grateful to Tom for arranging the tour, and all the winemakers for their hospitality. Perhaps it was not wise to split the group for the woodworks tour. I understand that Barry Murphy had arranged a great tasting, but on the other hand, the woodworks was an interesting sidelight to the tour.

Is Saturday a good day to conduct a tour such as this? Certainly, being able to sleep in and not go to work on the following day was a bonus; but whether sufficient members would prefer Saturdays to Sundays may need to be further investigated. We certainly need to be aware of the dimensions of our coach when planning tours of this type.

This was one tour when Peter Henderson displayed his skill as a vehicle operator. Normally, it is a trip without any problems – we sit, Peter drives. On this tour we had more difficult entrances than we have had in total than in the past seven years – thank you Peter.

This tour was organised by Brian Fogarty and John Gillies – our thanks to them for arranging the tour, and also to Barbara Cecchi for providing the barbeque luncheon that we all enjoyed, and to Bob Bailey for leading us on the tour.