

NEW RELEASES

2006 Pikes 'Luccio' Sangiovese
\$18/bottle

2006 'The Hill Block' Cabernet
\$28/bottle

PIKES CELLAR DOOR DIRECT WINE CLUB MEMBER SPECIALS

*for existing members
or members who join today
(see order form for details)*

2003 Pikes 'Eastside' Shiraz
\$204/dozen

2000 Pikes Cabernet
\$300/doz
Limited stocks - 6 doz avail

2004 Pikes 'Damside' Chardonnay
\$180/doz
Limited stocks - 8 doz avail

AUTUMN PACK

Seasonal Packs will include...

2006 "Luccio" Sangiovese blend
2006 "Gills Farm" Viognier
2004 "Premio Sangiovese" (Reserve)

as well as recipe sheets and tasting notes

PIKES VINTNERS CELLAR DOOR DIRECT WINE CLUB NEWSLETTER

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A horse named Shiraz

Shiraz. I am not sure if there is another grape variety that has reached the highs and lows that this Aussie mainstay has.

You could hardly give the stuff away in the early 80's with Cabernet running first, second and third in the popularity stakes with wine drinkers. Some of you may even recall Shiraz muffins being marketed by a well known South Aussie bakery.

Come the mid 90's and early naughties, Aussie Shiraz was discovered by the rest of the world and was soon elevated to "new world classic" status, with some examples fetching US\$1,000 a bottle, and it has enjoyed mostly buoyant sales ever since.

However, Shiraz is widely recognized by our wine producers as the workhorse of the Australian wine industry. Over many decades the variety has been used for Australia's most expensive ultra premium table wines (such as Grange) as well as producing rosé, sparkling burgundy, tawny and vintage port styles and even at times white wine (ugh!). Quite a flexible grape it seems.

Originally coming to Australia from the Rhone Valley region in France, Shiraz, or Syrah as it is known over there, has its origins in ancient Iran. At Persepolis, founded in c.518BC, evidence has been found that suggests wine and vintners were around at that time.

Researchers believe that it is very likely that the variety came from the Iranian town of the same name - Shiraz. It is thought the ancient Greeks of Phocaea, who were noted travelers and founded the French city of Marseille, brought the vines with them to France in c.600BC from Iran while fleeing the army of King Cyrus of Persia. At least they didn't leave empty handed.

Shiraz found its way to Australia via France in the 1830's, brought in by Mr. James Busby. Emerging vigneron soon discovered it was well suited to our warmer conditions and was widely planted in the embryonic wine regions.

South Australia can rightfully lay claim that the home of Australian Shiraz lies here within our borders. With the Barossa Valley, McLaren Vale, Clare and Coonawarra all producing many examples of iconic Shiraz wines it would be difficult to argue otherwise.

Our 2005 "Eastside" Shiraz is a tremendous example of how good Shiraz can be from the Clare Valley. While perhaps not producing the monolithic wines of some of our neighbouring regions, Clare does produce wines of great purity, displaying finesse and longevity. Wines we have made dating back to 1987 are still drinking beautifully and we have no doubt the wines we make today will also age gracefully.

From the best vintage in recent years, the Pikes 2005 "Eastside" is crammed full of rich, dark berry fruits, chocolate and mocha. Back a winner: buy a case and put a bottle or three away for a decade. You won't be disappointed. NB: The 2005 Pikes "Eastside" is currently being poured in British Airways First Class cabins. Those poms know pedigree when they see it.



Neil Pike
Winemaker

MAILING LIST PRIZE DRAW WINNERS
December - Kelvin Shelton, VIC
January - Brett Anderson, SA
February - James Girdler, SA
*Winners receive a 6-pack of Pikes wines



AUTUMN 2008

PIKES VINTNERS NEWSLETTER

Canadian update

Following on from our Canadian report in the last newsletter, we have just received our first order from British Columbia. We will soon be shipping some Pikes 'Traditionale' Riesling and 'Eastside' Shiraz to the lovely city of Vancouver. Vancouver is a vibrant city with a fantastic restaurant culture, dominated by excellent pan-pacific cuisine. Another great place to enjoy a bottle of Pikes.

Pikes in Quarantine

There are many beautiful old historic sights in and around Sydney harbour. One is the old quarantine station at North Head, Manly. This heritage listed facility has undergone quite a transformation of late, and is about to become a tastefully designed resort, complete with conference facilities, restaurant and boutique accommodation. I had the pleasure of touring the sight last week and it reeks of history and anticipation. I have no doubt the restaurant, aptly named "Q Station", will become quite the dining destination. Another bonus is that Pikes "Traditionale" Riesling will be available by the glass from day one. Do yourself a favour and put this on the 'to do' list.

Peter Bentley
Sales Manager

2008 VINTAGE PREVIEW

Vintage is here again... and another record early start for us here at Pikes. A full week earlier than last year, which was in fact our previous earliest start to a vintage. So I guess we would have to say that climate change is fast becoming a reality for us here in the Clare Valley.



After another dry winter/spring period, the early summer period was warm but not over the top in comparison to average. All that changed after Christmas with very hot, dry weather experienced across the New Year and well into January. Fortunately since then however, conditions have moderated considerably and so far in February we have had quite mild weather with lovely cool nights and no rain, making for ideal ripening conditions.

Crop levels in the Clare Valley this vintage are estimated to be average to slightly above average in general terms, with Shiraz and Riesling looking very solid. After the poor year in 2007, and with irrigated regions generally on significant water restrictions due to the ongoing drought through the Murray Darling catchments, it was thought that wine grape supply could well be in deficit this year. It would appear however, that the cooler regions have rebounded strongly from the low yields in 2007 and overall, Australian wine grape supply looks to be in balance or even in slight oversupply in 2008.

Of significance this year in the vineyard has been the continuation of the development program, with another 10Ha being planted on our new property. This year we have planted more Riesling, Shiraz and a new variety for us, Albarino. This is a Spanish or Portuguese variety (Alvarinho) which is renowned for production of long lasting, aromatic white table wines, with full flavour and medium body. The grapes are mid season ripening and are relatively thick skinned, giving some insurance against possible botrytis. We have planted this new variety and some Riesling on rootstocks for the first time this year, once again with insurance in mind against the dreaded Phylloxera which still seems to be spreading in Victoria despite the best efforts of authorities and the industry.



Baby Albarino Vines

Well...back to the vintage, our first Riesling for 2008 was processed this morning and it looked pretty damned smart in the receival bin...so hopefully that's a good sign for another cracker Pikes Riesling out of '08. So let's keep everything crossed for the big dry to continue for at least another month while we bring in the harvest.

Andrew Pike
Viticulturalist

VINTAGE CREW 2008



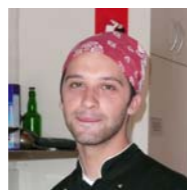
Laurens de Regt - Dronton, Holland
Laurens has a farm, growing vegies, wheat and breeds 70,000 ducks a year. He is also studying finance and is doing vintage for a new experience.



Steve Brown - Sydney, NSW
A vintage junkie, Steve goes from one vintage to the next- Margaret River, Nagambie Lakes, Hunter Valley, Marlborough, Otago Sonoma, Stellenbosch, Upper Duro, and Mosel just to name a few.



Mick O'Loughlin - Clare Valley
Mick works mostly cellar door sales, and does vintage in the region nearly every year. Micky-O is a repeat offender here at Pikes - this is his fourth vintage with us!



Daniele Cazzard - Vicenza, Italy
Daniele is a farmer in Italy - word around here is that he also makes the world's best risotto. He is doing vintage as he is keen for new experiences outside of Italy.



Rikki Lee Forrest - Clare Valley
Rikki has just finished year 12 at Clare High. She is doing vintage because she's interested in the job - & it's close to home.



Carolyn Mudge - Wirrulla, S Aust
Carolyn has a farm 600kms west of Clare. When asked why she chose to do vintage, she replied... I had a couple of spare months before seeding.



Paula Quirke - Adelaide, S Aust
Paula is studying at Uni & working part-time in hospitality. She is doing vintage to gain experience in a world-renowned wine region.



**Pikes winemakers:
Steve, John and Liz**

RECENT REVIEWS

Pikes "Traditionale" Riesling 2007

The Polish Hill's normal reserve was shown to advantage in the warm 2007 vintage and the Pike's "Traditionale" is fragrant of apple, lime blossom & a trace of spice. Quite full & intense but with racy acidity, it already show loads of charm.

Christopher Hayes - Eat & Drink Newsletter - November 07

Pikes "Traditionale" Riesling 2007

"A fresh, youthful Riesling with floral fragrances. Finely balanced, it offers great persistence with some zippy acidity to finish. Will cellar well over a decade."

Ken Gargett - Courier Mail, 15 December 07

Pikes "Traditionale" Riesling 2007

"One of the most consistent producers in the Clare, Pikes always over-delivers on Riesling quality. Pure, precise and perfectly ripe, this shows soft blossom aromas over a bed of muddled limes, and finishes fine and long. It's delicious with fish and chips."

Australian Table, March 08

Pikes "Luccio" Red 2006

"A Sangiovese (approx. 80 per cent) which really sings its display of cherry fruits, beautifully backed by slightly savoury tannins of the other blend components; a bargain which should be on every Italian restaurant wine list in Australia." **94 Points**

James Halliday - Wine Companion Newsletter - February 08

Pikes "Eastside" Shiraz 2005

"Shiraz can be a real charmer in the Clare Valley: the fruit flavours get ripe without being heavy and hot with alcohol. The Eastside shows this quality: ripe dark fruits, hints of chocolate and liquorice and some spice from oak. Even over 14% alcohol there is balance and early charm and the palate is soft with a backbone of dusty tannins. It's already drinking well but will gain from a couple of years cellaring."

Christopher Hayes - Eat & Drink Newsletter - November 07

Pikes "Eastside" Shiraz 2005

"I thoroughly enjoyed this Clare Valley red for its warm and generous flavour, well-integrated oak, smooth, soft tannins and its satisfying, comforting effect." **5/5 points**

Paddy Kendler - Herald Sun, 18 December 07

PG2 - Autumn 08

Know your sommelier

interview by Peter Bentley

Dining out is something that wine lovers love doing. Grabbing a bite to eat at your favourite local restaurant is fun, casual and hopefully an all round pleasant experience. Heading to a foreign city, or country, and dining at a high end restaurant can be somewhat daunting, especially when it comes to wine selection. My advice - get to know the sommelier. You may not recognize this person on sight. They could be waiting tables with the other staff, or they could be out the back decanting an older vintage of something special. You can ask to have a talk with the sommelier (some restaurants may use a different term), and you should receive some relevant advice on the wine list and menu. I caught up with Jeff Salt, sommelier at the highly regarded Courthouse Hotel in North Melbourne, to get an insight into what his role is.

PB: What was it that got you into the wine industry?

JS: I'm originally from SA, and my uncle was the general manager of a resort. I went to work for him as a waiter. I quickly discovered that I had a passion for wine and food.

PB: Any formal training?

JS: With some experience under my belt I decided that I wanted to make a career out of it, so I enrolled in a course at Charles Sturt University in Wagga. I studied wine making and marketing, mostly by correspondence. The course took me 3 years to complete.

PB: Can you tell me about your role as a sommelier?

JS: There are different aspects of being a sommelier. I manage the wine list, which involves sourcing wines from all over the globe to produce a balanced list. So I deal with wineries and distributors on a regular basis. I train the staff to understand the wines which are on the list, so that they can assist the customer. Plus I'm on hand most nights to offer advice to customers about wine selection, and information about the background of the winery, history and story.

PB: What makes a balanced list?

JS: There are many things to take into consideration. You must know your venue, your clientele, and most importantly your menu. At the Courthouse we offer a French inspired menu, so I often source imported wines which suit our food style. European wines tend to be extremely good food wines, lower in alcohol and higher in acid. I'm also on the look out for interesting small producers, so that we can offer our customers a point of difference from other restaurants.

PB: Do you work closely with the chef?

JS: Definitely. It really starts with the chef. The menu is designed by him and I work around that. We also offer a tasting menu which matches certain dishes with particular wines. This is a very popular dining option here at the Courthouse. Chef and I work very closely on this part of the menu. It's so important to create harmony between the wine list and the menu. It's all about palate weight, flavour profile and texture.

PB: What's hot at the moment?

JS: Now that it's summer we're moving a lot of Rose, and Pinot Gris/Grigio. Also Rhone style Grenache blends, and lighter reds like Beaujolais.

PB: Screw-cap or cork?

JS: Definitely screw-cap.

PB: What's your perception of Pikes?

JS: I see Pikes as being in the top couple of Riesling producers in the country. Pikes reds are also consistently good, and I love the move into Italian varieties like Sangiovese and Pinot Grigio. It's a good selling point that Pikes is family owned and run.

PB: Thanks for your time Jeff.

The Courthouse Hotel is on the corner of Errol and Queensbury streets in North Melbourne. Don't be fooled by the hotel exterior - this is fine dining at its best! Jeff was previously sommelier at Cecconi's and Vue De Monde, both Melbourne icons.



TREMENDOUS TALEGGIO

I thought I would pay tribute to Taleggio, the fillet steak of the cheese world. Production of this washed rind cheese dates back to the 10th century in the caves of Val Taleggio, in Bergamo in the northern regions of Italy. This soft cheese is washed with a brine solution once a week during maturation, resulting in the lovely rosy complexion of the rind. When young, Taleggio is a mild, slightly acidic and creamy young thing. As it ages it become meaty, buttery, complex and positively beefy - and when perfect, has just a whiff of truffles. All it needs is a chunk of crusty bread and a glass of our "Luccio" Sangiovese blend, and you are instantly transported to the home of cool cars, carbonara, Campari and cappuccino. Buon appetito!

*Colleen Cherry
(Sales/Marketing and cheese wiz!)*



PG3 - Autumn 08