

of Red Hill Victoria  
Mornington Peninsula  
of Australia

ELDRIDGE ESTATE

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Product of Australia



## SPRING NEWSLETTER 2005



# ELDRIDGE ESTATE TURNS 10

June 2005 marked ten years since we began our quest to produce cool climate Pinot Noir and Chardonnay. In 1995, the vineyard was 60% Mornington Peninsula weed (aka Cab Sav) and relatively unknown. Now, with much hard work, multiple vintages and many medals and trophies behind us, Eldridge Estate (EE) has become a respected producer of cool climate wines of quality and consistency.

But we still consider ourselves to be relatively 'undiscovered'. Part of this maybe our decision to stop entering wine shows in 2002. However, we do send our wines to most wine media and, although we have never had a feature article about EE, our wines do gain regular reviews in Australia and the USA (the latest for our Gamay in the Weekend Sunday Life Magazine in October).

As part of our celebrations we spruced the place up and applied a new coat of paint. A stylish new tasting room was completed in February, just in time for vintage and a new label was developed. If you haven't visited for a while, it's worth a look (and a taste) with new growth for our next vintage on the vines.

The 10 year celebrations were completed over the Queen's Birthday weekend with a magnificent Anniversary Dinner at Poffs' Restaurant – great food, loyal friends, quite a few customers and some vertical tastings from our past ten years.

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# THE SYNERGY OF OAK & FRUIT

The use of oak in Pinot Noir has been an area of some discussion amongst those who make and drink the variety. Why?

## From toast to terroir

Pinot Noir tends to produce a low tannin wine so tannin from aging in oak can add lovely body along with improved texture and mouth feel to the wine. Furthermore, the flavour from the toasting process used in making the barrel and the type of forest that the wood was sourced from can add a real flavour synergy to that of the grape. In addition the oak flavours can hide some undesired flavours such as the tomato leaf flavour seen if the season is cool or the grapes are heavily shaded. The synergy of oak and fruit depends also on the flavour that is typical of the region and the type of Pinot Noir (clones) used.

## NZ flavours

The New Zealand clones especially one known as 10/5 have a distinct berry flavour that has a real raspberry/blackberry based, intense fruit edge. Central Otago in particular has a strong regional flavour along the lines of beetroot and red berries which goes very well with high toast, new oak.

## US Flavours

The Russian River region in California tends to get a level of ripe and juicy cherry flavour that shows great synergy with high toast new oak.

Oregon Pinot Noirs have the closest fruit flavour profile and balance to those from the Mornington Peninsula although Oregon winemakers tend to like a high toast oak. The reason behind the Oregonians use of oak is quite complex but I believe that the main consumers of Oregon Pinot Noir, the Americans, like the rich smokey flavours associated with high toast new oak barrels.



## Barrel toasting

The toasting process is where the incomplete barrel sits over a small fire for a period of time. A short toast time produces a light toast and a long toast time produces a heavy toast.

At the risk of over simplifying the process there are three flavours that develop: smokey, vanilla and coconut. High toast produces a high smoke/char flavour that can be a great companion to Pinot Noir or it can overwhelm it.

## EE Flavours

It is our experience that although the high toast may look great with our fruit in the short term, the flavour development in the longer term is better without it. The flavours from our vineyard are at the cherry end of the Pinot Noir flavour spectrum but tending to be soft, light and very elegant.

We have been exploring the use of lower toast oak to let the pure fruit flavour shine through. The tricky part of this is to still gain the tannin input from the oak without the char flavour. We believe that our wines made this way will have soft mouth feel and bright red berry flavours that will age well under screw caps.

## Cap vs Cork?

The leading question is now one of the most frequently asked questions that we encounter at cellar door.

How do red wines age under screw cap Vs cork closure?

The observations to date are that the same wine aged under cork and screw cap will develop differently. Some people prefer the flavour development under cork BUT there is indeed flavour development under screw cap and the wine is always pristine.

# EE GOES TO GAMAY



In June this year Wendy and I spent a few weeks exploring Gamay and Pinot Noir in France. The experience was an absolute highlight for our year and we gained new insights into the production of Gamay.

The vine is believed to originate from the Burgundian town of the same name, which is about 20km South of Beaune, and from there was widely planted across Burgundy. Back in 1395, the Gamay grape was banned in Burgundy but, fortunately for us, it survived in the region of Beaujolais.

Beaujolais is roughly 45km long and 12km wide, has 22,000 Ha under vine producing 15 million cases of wine across three styles:

- 5m cases are Beaujolais Nouveau
- 6m cases are Beaujolais Villages
- 4m cases of Crus du Beaujolais

## Gimme Gimme Gamay!

Beaujolais is one of the rare red wines that still has flavor when chilled and is best at about 15C.

Just about everything goes with Gamay. Try Thai and Malaysian dishes and of course Peking duck ... and even stinky washed rind cheese!!

## Gamay dreaming?

Have a virtual tour by visiting: [www.beaujolais.com](http://www.beaujolais.com) or better still visit: [www.gites-de-france.fr/eng/](http://www.gites-de-france.fr/eng/) ... and then hunt down cottages to rent in the Rhone-Alpes area, in particular the Rhone area and then the Beaujolais viticole.

It is easy to enjoy a week in this pretty part of France and the wines are affordable. Concentrate on the best, known as the Cru, of which there are 10 eg. Fleurie, Moulin a Vent, Saint Amour etc. No visit would be complete without a visit to the amazing Georges Duboeuf complex in Romaneche Thorins.

To sample the flavours in Australia, search out Beaujolais Villages and Domaine Quatre Vents, both imported by Negotiants Australia. A personal favourite is La Roche 2003 by Louis Jadot available from: [www.princewinestore.com.au](http://www.princewinestore.com.au)

## AT THE CELLAR DOOR

### Cloning around

As mentioned earlier, the various clones of Pinot Noir can have a significant influence on the flavour, along with the vineyard flavour (its terroir) and the way in which oak is allowed to exert its presence. EE has five clones of Pinot Noir planted.

In 2004 we released 100 Magnums of our favourite blend of the clones (a small number are still available at \$95 each).

### Clonal Six Packs

In 2005 we have taken our clonal experiment to a higher level as part of our celebrations of 10 years of EE by releasing a clonal six pack.

It contains one bottle per clone plus a bottle that contains a proportionate blend of the five clones. A key feature to this pack is the lack of oak flavour in the five bottles because we used older barrels that were the same brand and age.

Thirty-six packs were produced in total, and although some have been sold to other winemakers and a few shown to media they are available at \$300 a pack. The packs come complete with extensive production notes and custom printed labels.

The clonal pack supports our belief that clone 777 is vastly superior to the others and we are continuing to increase its percentage by grafting onto clone MV6 each year.

The six pack is the ideal way to explore the influence of the clones on flavour.

### Sales special TASTING PACK

A pack containing one bottle of each of:

- Sauvignon Blanc Semillon 2005
- Chardonnay 2003
- Gamay 2004
- Pinot Noir 2003
- Euroa Creeks Shiraz 2004
- and a bonus bottle of Chardonnay 2003

The pack is enormous value at \$155 including freight to either Sydney, Melbourne or the Adelaide metropolitan area. Subsequent case or mixed orders of any of the wines will receive free freight to Sydney, Melbourne or the Adelaide metropolitan area. Contact us for quotes to other areas.

### Barrel tastings

Mail order clients should book in a special barrel tasting to explore the effect of clones and oak. The tasting room uses Riedel varietal glasses exclusively so come in and taste the difference!

### Current releases

#### 2005 Sauvignon Blanc, \$20

Gooseberry and grapefruit flavours with crisp acid finish.

#### 2003 Chardonnay, \$35

Complex aromas. A hint of melon and citrus gives way to funky nuances. The palate has great length and concentration. Nuts and stone fruit kernel flavours are backed by a core of citrus and fig. The palate has a subtle creamy texture that finishes with a crisp, lemon acid finish.

#### 2004 Gamay, \$28

Flavours of spiced plums with cherry and a little white pepper.

#### 2003 Pinot Noir, \$35

Bright with intense red hues, this wine reveals an intense garnet edge. The nose opens with restrained red fruits. The next phase reveals dark cherry and a little spice. On the palate, the wine shows cherry flavours with an elegant oak influence that combines to give a long palate.

#### 2004 Merlot, \$35

Soft, plum fruits and elegant texture.

#### 2002 Clonal Selection Magnum, \$95

Deep garnet colour with a nose redolent of black cherries and a little raspberry. The palate is long and soft showing classic Pinot Noir structure with the cherry flavour dominant to the end.

### Wine racks for sale

We are reorganising our cellar and now have some wine racks we no longer need. We are selling them at a bargain price in the hope that they will find good homes.

The racks include a style made by *modularack* that sell new for \$26 per layer. Ours (pictured) are in excellent condition and are for sale at \$10 per layer.



### Summer on the deck

Come and enjoy the view from the deck of the new tasting room with a glass of EE wine (wine sold by the glass, but you'll want to stay for a bottle!).

