



OHAU GRAVELS

CELLAR CLUB NEWSLETTER SEPTEMBER 2009

Welcome to the Ohau Gravels Cellar Club and first newsletter of the pioneering vineyard of the Horowhenua, Bishops Vineyard. For those who have never visited the vineyard in Ohau, I'm sure you will be taken aback with scale and beauty of the vines set against the backdrop of the magnificent Totaras and the inspiring Tararua ranges.

When visiting the vineyard at this time, you are confronted with a quietness: bare vines having lain dormant through winter, neatly pruned. The new leaves are preparing to burst out of the vines and unfurl to greet the morning sun.



In stark contrast for those in the offices of MC² Group, there has been a buzz of activity and excitement. Label design, packaging, bottling, wine tasting, new office systems, marketing and of course the excitement of the Bragato Wine Awards.



Romeo Bragato

Bragato was born in Austria-Hungary and educated in Italy. He studied at Conegliano's Royal School of Viticulture and Oenology achieving a Diploma. He was appointed the Government Viticulturist for Victoria in Australia in 1889.

He arrived in 1895 to Bluff on loan from the Victoria Government to the Department of Agriculture. In 1902 he was offered a permanent position as Viticulturist and Head of the Viticultural Division of the Department of Agriculture. He imported disease resistant stocks, and among other things, wrote a handbook showing growers how to graft the European classical varieties which predominated in the country at that time. Demand for



Sauvignon Blanc

material by Bragato and grown at Waerenga exceeded supply and many did not bother to graft. While the work and recommendations of Romeo Bragato 1895 - 1912, lay forgotten for almost 60 years, the rebirth of the New Zealand wine industry later proved that

Bragato's recommendations were correct and are now part of our modern wine growing industry.

Romeo Bragato was a perfectionist who fully recognised that "good wines are grown in the vineyard". The Bragato Wine Awards salute that vision. The objective of the awards:

To give recognition to viticultural excellence and to recognise the influence of grape growers and their vineyards in creating the unique qualities of New Zealand wines by judging the wines made from grapes grown on such specified vineyards.

Fourteen champion awards were announced at the Bragato Wine Awards evening, in which, as most of you know, our own Ohau Gravels Pinot Gris, was awarded a gold medal, the Brother Cyprian Trophy and Champion Pinot Gris. This was out of 68 Pinot Gris entries nationwide in the competition. The Ohau Gravels Sauvignon achieved a bronze medal while our Woven Stone Sauvignon achieved a silver medal.



STOP PRESS:

International New Zealand Wine Awards!

MORE EXCITING NEWS!! As this newsletter is being created, the International NZ Wine Awards have been announced. We have just received news that our Ohau Gravels Sauvignon Blanc has been awarded a Silver medal, Pinot Gris Bronze; and Woven Stone Bronze also!

So, International NZ Wine Awards? Here's some info:

Formed in 2005, the New Zealand International Wine Show is firmly established as the largest wine competition held in New Zealand. In its inaugural year there were over 1900 entries rising to a record 2273 in 2008. Truly 'International' in nature, wines from any country and made from any variety can be entered so it is vitally important the judges have the experience to match the enormous range of wines that will

be submitted. The judges at the New Zealand International Wine Show have the experience; they know what is required.

About the Vineyard

The current wine production comes from Bishops Vineyard. At present the vineyard comprises 684 rows, with a total row length of 84200.9 metres. The total vines are:

Sauvignon Blanc	37,679	67%
Pinot Gris	12,995	23%
Pinot Noir	4,414	8%
St Laurent	1,377	2%

In addition, late last year an equivalent area of planting has been established at our Strathcarron Vineyard, across SH1 from Bishops.



We've met our aim of producing a premium quality wine and are presently building a strategic plan to establish a world-class brand. While initially the wine will be sold within New Zealand, eventually we plan to export 70% of the volume.

Who manages the vineyard?

They say great wine is made in the vineyard! Well here's thanks to Kate and Tim Gibbs of Stanmore Farm who provide the day to day management and staff for the vineyard. Their operation is located in Te Horo on the Kapiti Coast, at the base of the

Tararua foothills - a nursery providing quality grafted grapevine and olive trees. Kate is nationally recognised in the wine industry and provides advice to many winegrowers around New Zealand.



Who made the wine?

Jane Cooper, a renowned wine maker in New Zealand, undertook Postgraduate study at Lincoln University, five years at Seifried Estate in Nelson then proceeded with wine making stints in Australia's Hunter Valley, Chile and Italy. Returning to Nelson, she consulted and made wine for several companies while launching her own label, Alexia, named after her grandmother. Currently she makes wine for Matahiwi Estate in the Wairarapa.

Jane's Alexia Pinot Noir 2008 received Gold at the recent Bragato Wine Awards.



Harvest



It is very exciting over summer to see the lush vine growth and watch the grapes growing bigger and softer. As in all vineyards, viticulturists and wine makers need to work closely together tasting and testing sample grapes from each block before deciding when to harvest. It is an exacting time planning out what sugar levels you want the grapes to make, and when to harvest. As it happened, whilst a date was set aside for interested parties to assist in the first picking of the grapes, this had to be cancelled. Then, out of the blue, Dave Munro received a phone call at 4.00 pm on Saturday. Start picking tomorrow! After numerous phone calls, many helpers were able to pack a picnic lunch and enjoyed a warm, sunny, calm April day handpicking the grapes, with a contribution that day of 5 tonnes. The contract pickers spent the next two weeks harvesting 48 tonnes! The advantages of handpicking is that the ripest and healthiest bunches are picked and what a lovely crop it was!

We'll keep you informed of the next harvest if you are interested in joining in this fun occasion. Check out Millie on the left supervising Hallam Cresswell's efforts and Nikisha Munro on the right, with her mum Robin, dad Andrew, and three siblings Jack, Aroha and Kiana close by.



The Club



We'd love to hear from you! If you have any friends or family who might like to join our Cellar Club and receive their promotional six pack of wine, or, if you have any queries or feedback you'd like to have published, please don't hesitate to email us: destina@ohaugravel.co.nz

Of course, with summer coming on, don't forget to take a drive to Bishops, stroll through the vineyard, stop for a coffee and lunch at the Ohau Cafe or Stephans down the road.



Best wishes from the team at
MC² Group
PO Box 784
Level 1 Coastlands
Paraparaumu
0508 BISHOPS

