

MOUNT MAJURA VINEYARD

CANBERRA DISTRICT

WINTER NEWSLETTER

2003

PRUNING TIME

Welcome to the first newsletter from the first vineyard in the ACT!

We're very excited to be able to tell you about our new releases and lots of things happening at Mount Majura Vineyard. We aim to make this a regular newsletter to keep in touch with you, and offer you our wines. You'll find stories on who we are, what's special about Mount Majura Vineyard, tasting notes, and perhaps even the odd burst of

opinion. And just how a boutique winery with its first vintage in 1991, comes to print its first newsletter in 2003, is one of the stories you'll find in this edition.

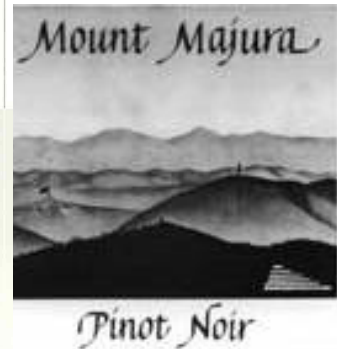
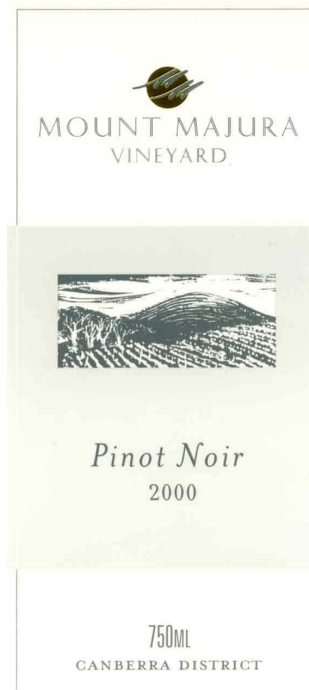
However, we prefer not to send unsolicited mail. If you have not already specifically requested to join our mailing list, you must do so on the accompanying form (or just call us) in order to receive future newsletters. We hope you will!

NEW LIFE IN AN OLD LABEL

In 1988, Dinny Killen planted the first vineyard in the ACT (there are older vineyards in nearby NSW but that's another story...) with the encouragement of her friend and local viticultural pioneer, Dr Edgar Riek. Edgar had identified a unique patch of red limestone-containing soil on Dinny's property on the lower slopes of Mount Majura, an 888 metre peak of volcanic rock bounding Canberra's north-eastern suburbs. He reasoned that this unique soil, combined with a perfect easterly aspect on the side of Majura Valley, could be an especially good site for production of quality wines.

'Dinny's Block' as we call it today produced its first crop in 1991, with Edgar Riek making wine from the three parcels it contains (Pinot noir, Chardonnay and Merlot) at his Lake George winery. Dinny continued to have wine made under contract over the ensuing years, but in tiny quantities, as she also sold some of the grapes. It gradually became apparent as the vines matured and the wines improved, that the choice of vineyard site had been an inspired one.

Not many people had a chance to taste these wines, but one group of friends in Sydney were so enthused by them that they talked



Dinny into selling the vineyard, in time for the 1999 vintage. They then persuaded a local CSIRO plant biologist, Frank van de Loo, to swap the laboratory bench for the tractor seat, taking on the task of expanding

and improving the vineyard. And then disaster struck! No, their scientist didn't prune all the new growth off by mistake, but a freak frost did.

The 2000 and 2001 vintages were much more satisfactory, Frank had taken over the winemaking role, and found a young Frenchman, Thomas Lefebvre to help manage the vineyard. The 2000 vintage wines were nearly ready for release, the partners still didn't have a liquor license, and then it became apparent that the veil of bureaucracy has infinitely more wrinkles than one might suspect...

A couple more years later and you'll understand why we're so excited about the release of our wines! Dinny's 'Mount Majura' label has been updated to 'Mount Majura Vineyard', emphasising our goal: to bring you some very special wines that reflect the character of this unique site.

'It gradually became apparent as the vines matured and the wines improved, that the choice of vineyard site had been an inspired one.'

mountmajura.com.au

NEW RELEASES

Three Chardonnays released in the same newsletter! I don't think we'll ever be able to offer such a selection again. Clearly we've had to store the 2000 and 2001 vintages while we've waited for our license, good news for those who appreciate the complexity that a little bottle age brings! Our Chardonnay is consciously made in a style that suits ageing, and these wines are lovely drinking right now.

2000 CHARDONNAY

The Mount Majura Vineyard 2000 Chardonnay is a silky, rich and complex wine. The creamy palate has a procession of fresh citrus, pear, fig and cashew flavours. Intriguing and satisfying.

The 2000 Chardonnay is rich and round, all about texture. It envelops the senses in folds of cream and silk, flavours of melon and pear and caramel coming increasingly to the fore. Sourced entirely from the original block, stocks are limited.

Gold medal, Cowra Wine Show.

Robert Walters (Australian Review of Wines) gave it 91% and said:

The vibrant, beautifully textured Mount Majura Vineyard Chardonnay 2000 offers oak-rich aromas of roasted nuts and linseed leading to a luscious texture in the mouth, with nectarine and fig fruit characters to balance out the oak. A highly complex, rich white wine that will cellar. Drink it now to 2006.

James Halliday (Wine Companion 2003) rated it 88 out of 100, writing:

Light to medium yellow-green; complex barrel fermentation and malolactic fermentation characters provide a mix of nectarine and cashew on the bouquet; the winemaker's thumbprints are also very evident on the figgy/cashew/creamy palate, all in all bundled up in a sophisticated package.

2001 CHARDONNAY

The warm 2001 season and low yields produced this stylish and complex wine. Ripe melon, fig and oatmeal aromas lead to a creamy, silky-textured palate and a clean citrus finish.

Very much in the same vein as the 2000, the 2001 Chardonnay has the silky richness and concentration that comes with low yields from mature vines. Why not try a few bottles of each vintage and see how the site expresses itself through the changing seasons?

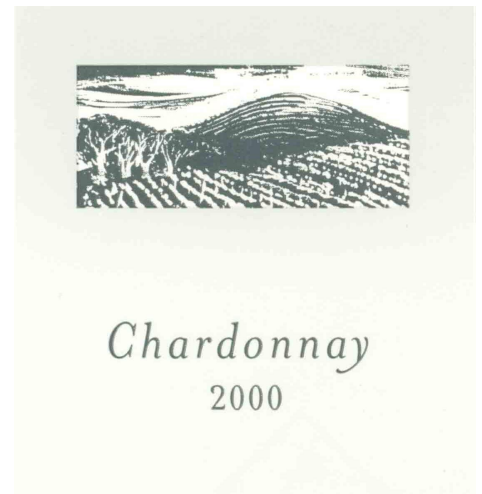
2002 CHARDONNAY

Power and finesse characterise this wine, with aromas of melon, lemon and fig, and hints of smoke and herbs. The palate is round but fresh, crisp and long. Likely to gain further complexity with several years careful cellaring.

2002 was simply a brilliant vintage, and this is our best Chardonnay yet. Fresh and vibrant fruit flavours are to the fore, like new growth in spring. If you pause, there are all sorts of nuances to discover on the round, creamy palate, but it is always the fruit that keeps popping up again. Natural acid has been retained by restricting malolactic fermentation, giving the wine a mineral purity and great length. A more pure, fruit-driven style than the preceding vintages.



Why not try a few bottles of each vintage and see how the site expresses itself through the changing seasons?



NEW RELEASES

2000 PINOT NOIR

A complex nose of sweet spice and cherry interwoven with a distinctive floral character consistently seen in Mount Majura Pinot Noir. The palate shows intense varietal character and a seamless transition from silky fullness to fine lingering tannins.

2000 was a distinctly cool year that suited Pinot very well. This wine has now had two years in bottle and just keeps getting better – more complex, more refined, and just screamingly Pinot. Only 170 cases were made, and we haven't exactly been able to resist temptation, so please don't dally.

James Halliday tasted it in February 2002 and rated it 87 out of 100, writing:

Light to medium red-purple; foresty, savoury, spicy aromas carry through to the entry of the palate before plum and dark fruit flavours take over, finishing with the barest suggestion of vanilla oak.

2000 CABERNET FRANC MERLOT

The spicy and fragrant characters of Cabernet Franc are supported by Merlot's rich mulberry and chocolate mid-palate, with extra structure from a small proportion of Cabernet Sauvignon. Will develop further complexity over the medium-term.

It turns out that in the original 'Merlot' planting the majority of vines are actually Cabernet franc, and so this wine has now been renamed. In fact we are so impressed with the succulence and fragrance that Cabernet franc brings to the blend that we have included some of this variety in our newer plantings. Actual composition of this wine is Cabernet franc 55%, Merlot 31% and Cabernet sauvignon 14%. Like the Pinot, this wine has benefited from a couple of years in bottle and is lovely drinking: fragrant, juicy and fine-boned.

Frank van de Loo
Viticulturist & Winemaker



Thomas pruning vines in "Dinny's Block". Pruning by hand allows each vine to be treated individually, and this is a key to growing 'balanced vines'.

ABOUT MOUNT MAJURA VINEYARD

Mount Majura Vineyard's hand-crafted wines benefit from the unique combination of red volcanic limestone-containing soils, an easterly aspect and a cool climate. These features are consistently expressed in intense, elegant and complex wines. Grapes are sourced only from the Mount Majura Vineyard.

- Mount Majura Vineyard wines are made from grapes grown only on this single vineyard site, in the Australian Capital Territory, in the wine region known as 'Canberra District'.
- Unfortunately we don't have a cellar door facility yet. We are working on it, and hope to be able to welcome you for tastings before too long!
- We don't presently have our own winery building either, so we are leasing space in another local winery. Our wines are made by our own winemaker, Frank van de Loo, to our own standards, not under contract. Frank's winemaking qualifications are from Charles Sturt University.
- We do not wish to send unsolicited mail or email, so if you have not already requested to receive our newsletter, please do so on the accompanying form (or just call or email). Otherwise this may be the last you hear from us.

2003 VINTAGE

The 2002-2003 season was unusually warm and dry, with vintage being both early and compressed as a result. The weather moderated in late February, with a return to more normal temperatures, but we still haven't really had much rain. Picking started on the 6th of March and finished on the 30th – our earliest vintage since 1998.

Low rainfall meant that vine growth could be regulated with careful irrigation, resulting in small berries and intense colour in the reds. There was also virtually no disease pressure. Unfortunately drought has the opposite affect on kangaroos, so some of our younger vines have had a bit of a hammering! Mostly the roos go down to the flats and eat (scant) grass, but young Pinot gris shoots seem to be

the ideal condiment. Despite their overly keen interest in viticulture, it still remains a joy to watch the kangaroos hop about the vineyard each evening as dusk settles.

At this early stage, the 2003 wines appear very good, and it has been exciting to harvest several of our newest blocks for the first time. Look out for releases of several new varieties in future editions of this newsletter.

The star of the vintage at this stage may well be our first crop of Tempranillo, which is absolutely stunning – intense, exotic, and quite unlike anything we've come across before, including both Australian and Spanish examples!

IN THE VINEYARD

Frosty mornings and sunny days – Canberra really does have a brilliant climate! The changing seasons regulate our work during the year, and this close connection to nature's cycles is one of the pleasures of working in the vineyard.

With the onset of frosts we've started on our pruning, which is all done by hand, and first thing in the morning can be a bit nippy. The easterly aspect of the vineyard means that it soon warms up with the morning sun, and the rest of the day is spent in the peace of currawong and black cockatoo calls. The black cockies are especially prevalent this winter, as the Majura Pines across the fence are some of the only plantations in the ACT not lost to the January bushfires.

Pruning by hand allows each vine to be treated individually, and this is a key to growing 'balanced vines'. It is only when each vine has a good balance between growth and crop level that quality of the whole harvest can be maximised.

When the pruning is finally finished, we will rake the prunings into the middle of the rows and mulch them, allowing organic matter to return to the soil. The bare soil under the vines will be important in spring for absorbing the day's heat and keeping the new growth protected from frost. And so, we're always thinking ahead to the next season.



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MOUNT MAJURA VINEYARD

MAILING LIST

We would like to send our quarterly newsletter to you, our friends and customers.

Your name will only be retained on our mailing list if you return this form, send us an email to request it, or have previously completed a similar form. Or just give us a call on (02) 6262 3070.

Your details will never be passed on to any third party.

Yes, please send me your newsletter,

by email Name:
 email:

by mail Name:
 Address:

No, please remove my name from your mailing list:
 Name:

ORDER FORM

Please order in multiples of 6 or 12 bottles, straight or mixed.

Just phone us on (02) 6262 3070 (8:00 - 8:00 Eastern time), or complete the form and return to:

Mount Majura Vineyard,
 RMB 314 Majura Road,
 Majura, ACT 2609

Fax: (02) 6262 4288

Email: sales@mountmajura.com.au

Name:
 as above Daytime phone:

Delivery address:
 as above

WINE	PRICE	NUMBER OF BOTTLES	TOTAL PRICE
2000 Chardonnay	\$20.00		
2001 Chardonnay	\$20.00		
2002 Chardonnay	\$20.00		
2000 Cabernet Franc Merlot	\$17.00		
2000 Pinot Noir	\$25.00		
Tax Invoice		WINE TOTAL	
Prices include GST		FREIGHT	
ABN 42 973 992 490		TOTAL	
Minimum order is six bottles.			

Please find enclosed my cheque/money order payable to **Mount Majura Wines (ACT) Pty Ltd**

Please debit my Bankcard Visa Mastercard. Expiry date

Card number

Signature:

Office Use Trans. date Despatch date Label No.

INTRODUCTORY OFFER: \$10 OFF FREIGHT!		
TO:	each 6 bottle carton	each 12 bottle carton
ACT	free!	free!
NSW	free!	free!
VIC	free!	free!
Brisbane, Gold Coast	free!	free!
QLD Country	free!	\$5.00
Adelaide	free!	free!
SA Country	free!	\$4.00
Perth	\$3.00	\$10.00
WA Country	\$5.00	\$15.00
NT	\$6.00	\$17.00
Tasmania	\$2.00	\$9.00