

Clairault Estate, MOST OUTSTANDING VINEYARD in Western Australia!!



Left: Angela Gosden, Tim Quinlan, Adele Eggleton, Brian Martin, Conor Martin, Reid Henderson. Right: Adele Eggleton, Brian Martin

Dressed to impress, the Clairault crew attended the 2010 Western Australian Wine Industry Awards Gala Dinner held at the Parmelia Hilton last Friday the 12th November. With smiles all round, Clairault Estate was awarded the "Most Outstanding Vineyard" award, sponsored by the Commonwealth Bank.

In its ninth year, the Wine Industry Association of Western Australia [WIAWA] holds the awards annually to celebrate excellence within the Western Australian wine industry. Aymee Mastaglia, General Manager of the Wine Industry Association of WA said, *"The association puts a priority on coordinating these awards each year, because we feel strongly in the importance of not only recognising and encouraging excellence within our industry, but facilitating a state-wide benchmark. This is especially important for a state like Western Australia which predominantly consists of smaller boutique producers."*

Brian Martin, Owner and Vineyard Manager, said, *"This is a fantastic result for Clairault Wines and we are honoured and proud to receive such a prestigious award from the West Australian Wine Industry Association. The Clairault property is quite a unique property, it is 120 meters above sea level and is the start of 3 water catchments, the Gunyulgup, Quinninup and the Wilyabrup catchment. The property is one of the most beautiful properties in the area with its undulating landscape, plentiful natural bushland which has been graded recently for having one of the highest grades of biodiversity in the area. Since the implementation of biological sustainable farming practises were introduced into the vineyard 7 years ago, the health of the vineyard and quality of the fruit has improved dramatically. All of this has been achieved with the help of the Quinlan brothers, both Tim and Anthony. Acknowledgement also goes to the vineyard staff of Clairault Wines for their commitment and passion for maintaining the vineyard to very high standards and producing the highest quality fruit from the property."*



Clairault's "A Block" Cabernet Sauvignon planted in 1976

ABOUT CLAIRAULT

The Clairault Estate vineyard was the sixth property to plant vines and remains one of the oldest privately owned vineyard estates within the premier Wilyabrup sub-appellation of the Margaret River Wine Region. Situated less than four kilometres inland from the Cape Clairault peninsula and 120 meters above sea level, this pristine 570 acre undulated property with bountiful creek-lines, natural springs, and some of the oldest native forests in the south west, make it truly unique.

In 1976, Clairault vineyard was established by Ian and Ani Lewis, they made their first vintage in 1980 and in 1984 won the Canberra Times Trophy for Best Red Wine in Australia. The Lewis family applied a "philosophy of life" to the vineyard which involved causing as little disturbance to the natural environment as possible. They used little herbicide as possible, mulches of rye grass and clover, seaweed sprays instead of chemical fertilizers, seasonal analysis of soil and leaf to ascertain the needs of the vines, and guinea fowl and little quail to control pests.

Since 1999, Clairault has been owned and run by the Martin Family - Bill & Ena, and their three sons, Shane, Conor and Brian. Substantial changes and investments have been made over the last eleven years to improve the property - its vineyard, winery, and tourism facility, although the same "philosophy of life" toward the vineyard has been conserved and strengthened.

In the vineyard, that is managed by youngest son Brian Martin, these changes and improvements have involved; the deployment of biological farming, low intervention-high precision viticulture, and a selective expansion programme and investment into mature vine management. These environmentally responsible vineyard management practices will enable Clairault to practise Sustainable Farming for the Future and to create wines that are truly unique and distinctive to Clairault's vineyard.

Biological farming is a mix of organic and conventional farming techniques which places a strong emphasis on soil biology. These techniques result in high quality crops, while using significantly less herbicide, no insecticides and no synthetic fertilisers. The low intervention approach is the practice that builds up the health and immune system of the whole vineyard. This reduces the risks of pest and disease outbreaks.

Being that the Clairault Estate property is the start of three local water catchments [Gunyalgup, Quinninup & Wilyabrup] we feel it is a responsibility of ours to protect these waterways for the community and future



MARGARET RIVER

generations. Clairault's irrigation is matched to the crop demand and the moisture levels are monitored weekly to ensure no water wastage.

Compost is made on the estate using natural organic matter and the recycled marc (grape skins and seeds) from harvest, which is then spread under the vines. Compost teas are also brewed, filtered and then sprayed onto the vines and the canopy. The teas are custom made on the estate and replace the use of synthetic fertilisers. Basically this becomes a solution of beneficial soil micro-organisms (Yakult for the soil) that will help ensure that the vines roots can access all the necessary minerals from the soil and in turn produce great quality fruit.

Using cover crops in our vineyard is an integral part of sustainable farming. They are made up of several types of grasses, including perennial grasses, which provide numerous different benefits for the soil and the vineyard. After the crops have grown and flowered they are mown and the cuttings are left under the vines to provide a "Green Manure" for the vines to assist in the increase of organic matter, improving the soil structure, suppressing weeds, retaining soil moisture and reducing erosion. The major benefit of growing cover crops is the elimination of the need to use herbicides in the vineyard. Mulching with straw and the use of cover crops under the vines in other blocks creates a natural mulch layer, which will eventually break down and provide organic material for the soil, hence developing the soil structure. It also helps to retain moisture over the warmer months. Also the use of sheep in certain fenced areas of the vineyard reduces the need to mow in between the vines, therefore reducing tractor miles, i.e. energy and fuel.

Clairault's more recent initiatives have been achieving our Freshcare and Entwine [pending] Australia certification. This certification identifies wine producers who are committed to responsible environmental stewardship. Clairault, along with some third parties is currently researching a revolutionary new product that has the potential to replace all pesticides and fungicides used not only in viticulture, but all agricultural farming.

For more information, images or interview, please contact:

Belinda Hopkins

Sales & Marketing Assistant

E marketing@clairaultwines.com.au

T (08) 9755 6225 (ext 2)

W www.clairaultwines.com