

**Volume 7 Round 3 August 2004**  
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The August 'Dozens' were just about together, all finalised, when I received a telephone call from Nicholas Gibson now working for a mob called "The Wine Partnership." He is the person who had sold me the Bidgeebong wines for May, and had moved on. I met Nick in the middle eighties, and he is well aware of the Dozens and focus on the smaller producers. Knowing this I was keen to hear what he had to say.

The Wine Partnership appears to be a pretty complex business with a healthy supply of smaller proprietor producers. I look forward to learning more about the operation in time. I met Nick in his kitchen on Monday 23/8, and as I say was pretty much set to get these notes off to the printer. But there was it seemed too much on offer in these samples on display, and a rethink was necessary, hence the delay.

The August wines are:

David Traeger Verdelho 2002	Lake Breeze Cabernet Sauvignon 2001
Gallagher Estate Shiraz 2002	Lenton Brae Semillon Sauvignon Blanc '03
Gibson's "Loose End" Shiraz Merlot 2002	Merricks Estate Chardonnay 2000
Gilbert's Siding Sangiovese / Shiraz 2001	Miceli Lucy's Choice Pinot Noir 2000
Helm Riesling Classic Dry 2004-08-28	Ross Estate Barossa Shiraz 2002
Ibis Cabernet Franc 1998	Trafford Hill Limited Release Red 2001

There's no doubt the whole Industry is not singing to the same tune it did during the nineties when sales, especially internationally grew with proverbial 'leaps and bounds.' There is a sorting out of things now that may go on for a while, and it gets down to who wants to invest in grape growing. The small proprietor makers will thankfully run on, and that's why I think getting on board with Nick as soon as possible is the wise thing to do.

He will it seems have a continuous supply of ever changing small parcels of wine. Other possibilities such as tastings is something I will talk to him about, keeping in mind this is his first week in the job.

Even their "cash cow" red lines are wonderful value. I plan to include some soon, before they take on the role that appears designated, and also before any perceptions are made. It's natural to do so, and for the fun of it I will try to sneak one or two in.

## **DAVID TRAEGER VERDELHO 2002:** Winemaker David Traeger

Winemaker's Notes: "A warm and dry vintage period allowed for excellent flavour development, and this is evident in the wine as mango and guava like tropical characters with a hint of citrus and spice. A long lingering mouthful of a wine with tangy crisp acid follows, being typical the style we have long been making." **Cellar:** "We know this wine will age gracefully if given an opportunity."

The 2000 version was in the February 2001 Dozen, and I well remember the reason for its inclusion. In fact it is exactly the same for this, the 2002 wine. While talking with Deane Adams from The Wine Company, the Traeger Verdelho came up, as did a few other wines. Deane was at a wine tasting with David Traeger where he made the comment that he thought his Verdelho was consistently of a very high quality. "I don't muck with it," was close to his answer. In 2001 Deane was very enthusiastic in his recommendation of the 2000 wine, and was similarly keen to promote the 2002 wine. Consistent high quality is evident in the wine, and this time Deane was able to add a little extra to the picture for us all to enjoy.

**AVAILABILITY:** Available to Retail. **E-mail:** [traeger@eck.net.au](mailto:traeger@eck.net.au)

**Winery Details:** **Phone:** 03 5794 2514 **Fax:** 03 5794 1776 **Open:** Daily 10 to 5.

**Address:** 139 High Street, Nagambie, Victoria, 3608

## **GALLAGHER ESTATE SHIRAZ 2002:** Winemaker Greg Gallagher

Winemaker's Notes: "Crushed and fermented on skins for 7 days, pressed and racked to barrels. After full Malo-Lactic fermentation, the wine was further aged in new and one year old French and American Oak for another 16 months, lightly filtered and bottled. The wine is rich garnet red. Red berry fruits with lifted herbs and pepper characters and a light vanilla note. The palate is very full, rich and soft flavours with rounded tannin structure. Clean and long finish on a medium-full bodied wine that will age well and develop more richness with time." **Cellar:** "Enjoy this as a fresh young wine but has the potential to age to a richer wine with four to five years in the bottle."

The first Gallagher Shiraz was in the May Dozen last year, and quite a few people made very positive comments about the wine, all of which were warranted. Last week, when I was nearly settled on the wines, I attended a tasting at one of the city Pubs that showcase only small producers. Greg's presence was felt, and after talking for a while I realized the Shiraz he was showing was in fact his new 2002, not actually in Sydney as yet. It is now, and what a terrific follow up wine the 2002 is. The message is clear. The vineyard planted in 1995 is showing signs of a wonderful future, and another feather in the Canberra Region's hat.

**AVAILABILITY:** Available to Retail. **E-mail:** [info@gallagherwines.com.au](mailto:info@gallagherwines.com.au)

**Winery Details:** **Phone:** 02 6227 0555 **Fax:** 02 6227 0666 **Open:** Weekends 10 to 5.

**Address:** 2770 Dog Trap Road, Murrumbateman, NSW, 2582

**GIBSON'S LOOSE END SHIRAZ MERLOT 2002:** Winemaker Rob Gibson

Winemaker's Notes: "Barossa Valley Shiraz and Merlot with Adelaide Hills Merlot. Here is a wonderful easy drinking Barossa red for everyday. From the outstanding 2002 vintage this medium bodied wine offers loads of dark plums, black fruits and supple tannins with complex oak." **Cellar:** Made for current drinking, but will keep a few years or more, but why wait?

"Rob Gibson is a noted winemaker and viticulturist extraordinaire. He was Penfolds Barossa Valley 'Viticultural Liaison Manager' (fruit negotiator, quality grader and buyer) from 1983 to 1997. He owns fifteen hectares of vines in the Barossa Valley, mostly planted from 1969 to 1979. He also has fruit coming from three vineyards planted in the 1850s around Tanunda which make up the bulk of the Old Vines Collection label." From the Notes Sheet. I had a phone call from an old acquaintance recently, who, after an illness is back working, selling fairly exclusive small Barossa producer's wines. He knows all about the Dozens and wondered if I'd be interested. I was soon in his kitchen going through some exciting, and some stunning wines. Many are too expensive for this format, but I can pick and choose with a degree of freedom from what appears to be a constantly changing list of wines. I'm always looking around, but I haven't seen what appears to be so many riches, although limited, from one wholesale source. There's another one in this Dozen with a promise for more.

**AVAILABILITY:** Available to Retail. [www.barossavale.com](http://www.barossavale.com)

**Winery Details:** **Phone:** 08 8562 3193 **Fax:** 08 8562 4490 **Open:** The 2003 Wine Industry Directory simply says "Cellar Door Sales."

**Address:** Willows Road, Light Pass, South Australia, 5355.

**GILBERTS SIDING McLAREN VALE SANDIOVESE SHIRAZ 2001:**

Winemaker John Gilbert

Winemaker's Notes: "Medium bodied, ripe and complex, this classy, savoury dry red is an equal blend of the two varieties. Oak is subtle and the tannins are fine and dusty allowing the silky fruit to glide over the tongue and down your throat. Again representing sensational value." **Cellar:** Early to medium term. Very much now and over the next couple of years.

"John Gilbert has a decade of McLaren Vale experience including five vintages at Kangarilla Road and shorter stints at Serafino and Dean Hewitson. He has also worked in Italy, from Alto Adige in the north to Sicily in the south, and now indulges his passion for indigenous Italian grape varieties with micro-makes (200 dozen or less) of Sangiovese and Primitivo (Zinfandel) at the Redhead Studio Winery." From the Notes Sheet. This is another of the wines seen at a recent impromptu tasting. I was immediately interested in the blend, and then saw the publicity line: "*The red bargain of the year so far*" attributed to Geoff Wood, a Sydney Wine Show Judge. At this stage I am unable to find more details about Gilberts Siding, other than a connection with Mike Farmilo at Boers Rock, and a wine called "The Poem," another of the wonderful wines seen in Nick's kitchen. 27/8 I found out that this wine was made at Coriole.

**AVAILABILITY:** Available to Retail through "The Wine Partnership." There is web page which at this stage concentrates on other things. [www.winepartnership.com.au](http://www.winepartnership.com.au)

**Fax:** 02 9973 3586 **Postal Address:** PO Box 343, Mona Vale, NSW, 1660.

## **HELM RIESLING CLASSIC DRY 2004:** Winemaker Ken Helm

Winemaker's Notes: "Made from grapes which were painstakingly sampled for perfect ripeness and flavour. Then carefully hand-picked, cooled before crushing and draining, followed by a temperature controlled fermentation, designed to retain the flavours and freshness of the grape. It is green with a hint of yellow with a nose of grapefruit and restrained floral notes. The palate shows fresh citrus, with a delicate middle fruit richness of good length and zingy acidity." **Cellar:** Now and over the next five or so years.

Ken's notes go on to say the wine is "ideal with any lighter food styles, especially seafood such as shellfish or whiting, salads and moderately spicy dishes." The February 2003 Dozen had the 2002 Riesling in the mix, and unfortunately I missed the 2003 wine which had all the praises of the of its predecessor. The good news in all of this is, as people reconnect with or discover this style, Canberra 'generally' is becoming recognised more broadly as a high quality region for premium Riesling winemaking. Ken's 2004, again on the pace, underlines the consistency element so necessary to the whole regional theory. We will all have to wait to see how they and others age under screw cap.

**AVAILABILITY:** Available to Retail, **E-mail:** [kenfhelm@aol.com](mailto:kenfhelm@aol.com)

**Winery Details:** **Phone:** 02 6227 5953 **Fax:** 02 6227 0207 **Open:** Thursday to Monday 10 to 5. [www.helmwines.com.au](http://www.helmwines.com.au)

**Address:** Butt's Road, Murrumbateman, NSW, 2582.

## **IBIS CABERNET FRANC 1998:** Winemaker Phil Stevenson

Winemaker's Notes: "The nose is rich and warm with elements of leather, tobacco and mint. The palate has a good intensity, soft fruit with nicely balanced acidity and fine grained tannins giving a long finish. Well suited to medium weight meat or wholesome vegetarian dishes." **Cellar:** "Best now to 2007."

"1998 was an exceptional year with picking a full month ahead of normal following a hot summer. The wines showed fuller, softer fruit with less herbaceousness in the Cabernet and Cabernet Franc. The 1998 Cabernet Franc was picked in mid March at 13.4 deg baume crushed and inoculated E118 yeast. The ferment was warm to hot (32 deg C) and rapid with pressing taking place after ten days. The wine was matured in French and American Barriques and bottled after 16 months." Originally, I intended to include this wine in the red mix for May. It was 'included' in an on-spec way with the lovely Sauvignon Blanc '03 at the time. Being reasonably familiar with previous vintages, the 1996 was in the February 2001 Dozen, it seemed like a good idea. When the wines arrived at the warehouse I decided to take a bottle home 'to be sure to be sure.' Part of the choice is the fact that it was from the quality 1998 vintage. It's such an interesting wine, so idiosyncratic, I decided to keep it back for August for the red / white mix.

**AVAILABILITY:** Cellar Door or please contact me. **E-mail:** [ibiswines@bigpond.com](mailto:ibiswines@bigpond.com)

**Winery Details:** **Phone:** 02 6362 3257 **Fax:** 02 6362 5779 **Open:** Weekends and Public Holidays 11 to 5.

**Address:** 239 Kearneys Drive, Orange, 2800.

**LAKE BREEZE Langhorne Creek CAB. SAUVIGNON 2001:** Winemaker Greg Follett

Winemaker's Notes: "The 2001 Cabernet Sauvignon is a full bodied style, using fruit produced from 35 year old vines on the Follett family vineyard. Traditional open fermentation was employed with maceration times varying between 7 - 21 days. The wine was matured in French and American oak barriques for 20 months, prior to bottling with minimal filtration. It displays a complex array of mint, blackcurrant and cedary oak aromas. These characters are also reflected on the palate, which has silky texture and a wonderfully soft tannin finish." **Cellar:** "This wine has a cellaring potential of 8-10 years."

The Lake Breeze wines received a welcome return in the February Dozen. They were also at a recent tasting with a number of other small producers. I had in mind to keep an eye out for their 2002 wines when they are released, but looking at the line-up in the tasting, this Cabernet Sauvignon is easily included, for no other reason than its pure classic qualities and Langhorne Creek origin.

**AVAILABILITY:** Available to Retail.

**Winery Details: Phone:** 08 8537 3017 **Fax:** 08 8587 3267 **Open:** Daily 10 to 5.

**Address:** Step Road, Langhorne Creek, South Australia, 5255.

**LENTON BRAE SEMILLON SAUVIGNON BLANC 2003:** Winemaker

Edward Tomlinson

Winemaker's Notes: "As with previous releases, the majority was fermented in stainless steel tanks so as to retain freshness and vitality and at cool temperatures facilitating a gradual conversion of sugar into alcohol by selected yeasts while 5% of the Semillon was barrel fermented in new and one year old French oak. This year's blend is 70% Semillon and 30% Sauvignon Blanc, with the Sauvignon Blanc contributing aromatic elements and the Semillon providing the weight and depth of flavour on the palate. We aim for a lighter style of wine with the tropical and citrus notes rather than herbaceous 'green bean', vegetative characters." **Cellar:** "We encourage consumption within the first two years of vintage, though under appropriate cellaring conditions, the wine will soften and develop the honeyed, toasty characters of bottle age. The screw cap closure guarantees that, when served, the wine will taste as it did when entering the bottle, and not of the cork."

"The 2003 vintage came after successive dry winters, followed by a warm summer providing perfect conditions for the early-ripening varieties of Semillon and Sauvignon Blanc. With this release, Lenton Brae celebrates 17 vintages of Semillon Sauvignon Blanc and can justifiably claim to be one of the Margaret River's leading exponents of this popular style." From their Notes Sheet. There's nothing like a bit of self promotion, especially when it is essentially true. This wine, along with the David Traeger Verdelho were spontaneous recommendations from Deane Adams of the Wine Company. Thanks.

**AVAILABILITY:** Available to Retail. **E-mail:** [info@lentonbrae.com](mailto:info@lentonbrae.com)

**Winery Details: Phone** 08 9755 6255 **Fax:** 08 9755 6268 **Open:** Daily 10 to 6.

**Address:** Willyabrup Road, Margaret River, Western Australia, 6285.

## **MERRICKS ESTATE CHARDONAY 2000:** Winemaker Paul Evans

Winemaker's Notes: "Our 2000 Chardonnay was handpicked before fermentation in stainless steel. The wine underwent partial malolactic fermentation and maturation in French Oak barriques, 40% of which were new. This wine exhibits the aromas of ripe fruit, honey, butter and spicy wood, offering a complex and fascinating bouquet. The palate is rich, soft and finely textured. Malolactic fermentation adds richness and depth to the palate." **Cellar:** Drinking very well now, with a few more years to enjoy at its best.

I've been 'going easy' on Chardonnay wines for some time now, in response to trying to get as much variety in the Dozens as possible, especially the All-white lot. Naturally you try any wine when offered, and Chardonnays particularly this time of year, when cooler, seem to have a warm glow about them that I am very happy to absorb. It must be cyclical as there seem to have been a lot lately, and I thought this one was very interesting. Cool climate fruit and winemaking come together here offering a powerful message. A substantial wine with plenty of fruit to carry it through the journey. "Merricks Estate is on the eastern side of Victoria's Mornington Peninsula, facing Western Port Bay. Planted by the Keffords in 1978 it was one of the first of the Peninsula's first commercial vineyards." And Proprietor, George Kefford pours his wine with a wicked grin. No wonder.

**AVAILABILITY:** Available to Retail. **E-mail:** [gkefford@vic.dbglaw.com.au](mailto:gkefford@vic.dbglaw.com.au)

**Winery Details:** **Phone:** 03 5989 8416 **Fax:** 03 9613 4242 **Open:** First weekend of each month. After that, it gets complicated. Telephone beforehand.

**Address:** Thompson's Lane, Merricks, Victoria, 3916.

## **MICELI LUCY'S CHOICE PINOT NOIR 2000:** Winemaker Anthony Miceli

Winemaker's Notes: "Hand picked and crushed into open fermenters in small batches, fermented relatively warm (max 30-32 degrees) in with: par wild yeast ferment, part extended maceration prior to ferment, part extended maceration after ferment, par barrel fermentation, par cool ferment. The wine was matured in barrels (50% new and 50% 2-4 year old, half French, half American Oak), for nearly two years with prolonged contact on fermentation lees and minimal racking. Brilliant medium red. Rich and complex aromas with spicy plum, coffee, black cherry, earthiness and vanillin oak. The palate is soft with great depth, complexity of flavour and length. Perfect balance is achieved between the fine tannins, fruit and mouth feel; multi flavours are set in a silky texture. Not made in the typical Australian mould; do not underestimate this variety, when grown in the cool even conditions, and given time to show the hidden depth it can produce." **Cellar:** "Drinking beautifully now, with barrel and bottle ageing this wine will continue to improve with a further 4-7 years of ageing."

Miceli is both a labour of love and a serious venture for local Mornington GP Dr Tony Miceli. Situated on the eastern slopes of Arthur's Seat, the prominent landmark on the Mornington Peninsula, 80km SSE of Melbourne. Plantings commenced in 1991 and now embrace nearly three hectares of Pinot Noir, Pinot Grigio and Chardonnay.

**AVAILABILITY:** Available to Retail. **E-mail:** [miceli@alphalink.com.au](mailto:miceli@alphalink.com.au)

**Winery Details:** **Phone / Fax:** 03 5989 2755 **Open:** First weekend of the month 12 to 5.

**Address:** 60 Main Creek Road, Arthurs Seat, Victoria, 3936.



## **ROSS ESTATE BAROSSA VALLEY SHIRAZ 2002:** Winemaker Rod Chapman

Winemaker's Notes: "Traditional fermentation took place in open fermenters and the wine was pumped over the cap during the eight day on-skin fermentation. The free-run and pressings were immediately blended together and transferred into 15% new and 85% old, seasoned American Oak hogsheads to complete fermentation. The wine was racked after two months on lees. Further maturation took place in oak for twelve months. The wine shows a dark brick-red colour with a vibrant purple tinge. A raspberry / plummy nose is displayed which is typical of the 2002 vintage. There is also some obvious smoky American Oak aroma. Rich, ripe blackcurrant / blackberry flavours abound on the palate, which are enhanced by a slight touch of pepper. These flavours will further complex with additional bottle age. This is truly a rich wine style, indicative of the cooler 2002 vintage. A traditional Barossa Valley Shiraz – warm and round with some softening tannins and a long lifted palate." **Cellar:** "Best drinking 2004 to 2010.'

*"Here's a funky, muggy, almost surly Barossa from a great year. It reminds me of a dark bar in the morning, with the charcoal smells of ancient oak fireplaces lying below a cooling iron pot of blackberry conserve. The flavours are soft and ever so gentle, yet still intense. It's one of those reds that needs no excuse, and just slides away with the day. Mettwurst quince and cheddar please."* Philip White, The Advertiser, 7-7-2004. "The major component of this award winning Shiraz was sourced from our Ironstone block on Ross Estate at Lyndoch. These wines were dry-grown and hence produced very low yields of 1.5 tonnes per acre. The cooler than average Spring and Summer conditions prior to the 2002 Vintage ensured slow even ripening of the grapes. Consequentially the Shiraz vines yielded grapes with intense and quite concentrated fruit flavours."

**AVAILABILITY:** Available to Retail. **E-mail:** [rossestate@rossestate.com.au](mailto:rossestate@rossestate.com.au)

**Winery Details:** **Phone:** 08 8524 4033 **Fax:** 08 8524 4533 **Open:** Monday to Saturday 10 to 5, Sunday 1 to 5.

**Address:** Barossa Valley Way, Lyndoch, South Australia, 5351.

## **TRAFFORD HILL LIMITED RELEASE 2001 RED:** Winemaker John Sanderson

Winemaker's Notes: "Trafford Hill Limited Release 2001 red is fulfilment of a promise made eight years ago to make a wine using the finest selection of the estate's three red varietals. The grapes were hand picked, chilled prior to crushing and then open fermented, the wine staying on skins for twelve days to extract optimum colour. This was followed by light basket pressing which by contemporary standards results in virtually free run juice. After settling and racking off twice the wine was consigned to new French oak barriques (Troncais). Maturation was extended to three years, malolactic fermentation occurring naturally in the first twelve months. Bottling took place in late May 2004, filtering was very light and consequently a crust will be thrown very early, decanting recommended. Bouquet gives an immediate vanillin oak aroma and classic blackcurrant fruit. The palate reveals silky smooth tannins, French oak and berry / chocolate flavours." **Cellar:** "Limited Release 2001 can be enjoyed now (due to extended barrel maturation) or cellared with confidence for up to five years."

Indeed this wine speaks for itself. Bursting with personality, an attribute that seems to be found more and more in smaller proprietor producers as they "do" their thing. As they keep doing it, we will all have nice things to look forward to.

**AVAILABILITY:** Cellar Door or please contact me. **E-mail:** [traffordhill@ozemail.com.au](mailto:traffordhill@ozemail.com.au)

**Winery Details:** **Phone:** 08 8558 3595 **Open:** Daily 10 to 5.

**Address:** Lot 1, Bower Road, Normanville, South Australia, 5204.

## ***Notice Board***

After the heavy representation of NSW wines in the May Dozen, I consciously tried to bypass them as much as possible for August.

And just when you think your thoughts are 'organised,' I was talking to Phill Lindsay at Woodonga Hill which is always informative and always a pleasure, which if you know him, you would no doubt agree.

He got around to the subject of their 2003 wines and mentioned how people are comparing that vintage to the acclaimed 1990. He reckons that their wines are very good but continues: "I don't know, but I think the 2004s are even better, at least at least at this stage." What a problem you have is all I could say to him.

And then he starts talking about a Merlot they made, again, I think in 2004, and that he has never seen a wine from the variety that is so dense in colour.

It seems there will be more NSW wines sometime in the future, and that is something, as a drinker of 'anything vinous,' there really should be no apology.

Cheers, Mark Crombie