



The Bloodwood Bible

THE GOSSIP ACCORDING TO STEPHEN AND RHONDA DOYLE

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42 the answer to key water question

One of the common questions asked of us at the cellar door is: "How many bottles of wine can you make from each vine?"

This inquiry is analogist to the "how long is a piece of string" breed of query and the answer is usually just as informative.

There are so many variables in our circumstance that any reply is more a list of highly massaged qualifications than the definitive figure imagined.

And at Bloodwood the magic number is influenced by the environment; the amount and timing of rainfall; the soil type below each vine; the incidence of disease across the season; the insurgent tracks of explosive spring; summer and autumn hail storms; the timing of vintage; the dominant species of birds and the care of pickers at vintage.

And that's before the madness of King George takes over inside the winery itself.

However, in keeping with the universal response to such reductive (sic) probes, my usual response is '42'.

It's then that the eyes of the interrogator L.E.D. light up as the organic calculator inside their scones estimates our return on capital given current fiscal settings and the opportunity cost to capital of not buying that semi-detached unit in Maroubra Junction for \$19,500 in early '79.

It's all nonsense of course, but for the record and as it is now compulsory in our wonderful society for every Australian to be an accountant, at the press last vintage we produced 28,290 litres of wine from 21,274 vines grown on a little over eight hectares of vineyard; or a teaspoon over 1.7 bottles per vine.

By the standards of the Australian wine industry, that's a very ordinary result where the figure would typically be in the four bottles plus range.

But the real question at present and into the foreseeable future that we

should all be asking is how much water did it take to produce those 1.7 bottles.

The median rainfall at Bloodwood since the dry of 1998 has been a little over 820mm (see Table 1, P2).

This means that we have an even chance of receiving a volume of 8.2 Olympic swimming pools of water per hectare per year through rainfall.

With an average annual evaporation of around 14.5 Olympic pools, even in good rainfall years there is some need for supplemental irrigation at Bloodwood.

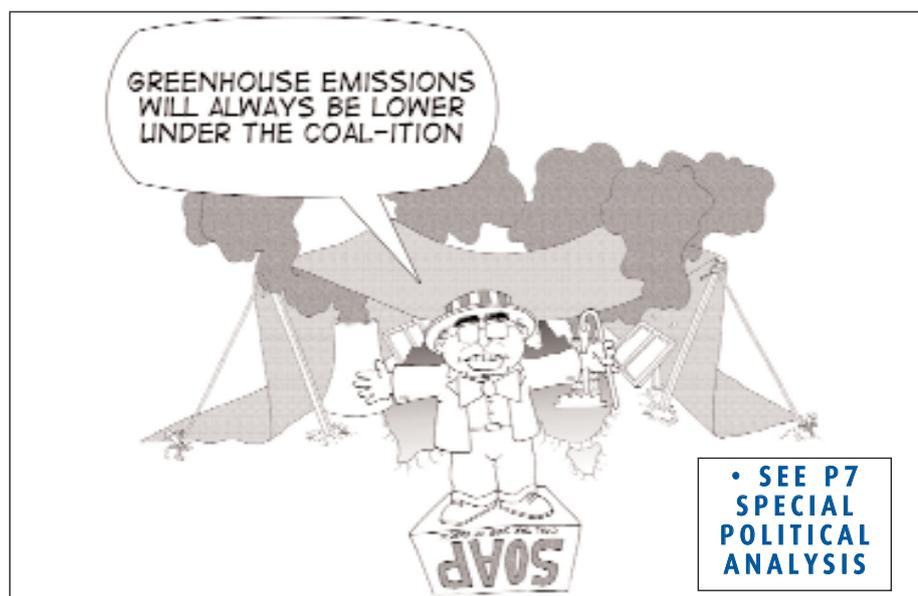
But the real question at present and into the foreseeable future that we should all be asking is how much water did it take to produce those 1.7 bottles.

Last vintage we began irrigating on 29/12/2005 and finished on 7/2/2006 having supplied the equivalent of a little over two Olympic pools of irrigation water to our eight hectares of vines.

In total then, we needed about 8.5 Olympic pools of water available to grow 28,290 litres of wine. This doesn't mean that our vines used every drop of accessible water to produce that volume of wine, but at just over 225 litres of environmental water for every bottle of wine produced you can see the absolute need for water efficiency even in a normally soft viticultural climate like Orange. (And we haven't taken into account the considerable volumes of water used inside the winery).

So the next time you are offered a \$2.00 bottle of cleanskin wine from the wide dry Riverlands of south eastern Australia (where, by the way, that 225

Stop laughing, this is serious



• Continued Page 2

TABLE 1 Bloodwood rainfall registrations, January 1998 to October 2006

Year	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sept	Oct	Nov	Dec	Total
1998	59.80	66.30	25.50	102.50	41.20	205.90	155.00	138.50	117.50	88.90	112.00	96.80	1209.90
1999	51.60	10.20	108.00	55.20	26.40	65.70	65.40	101.10	51.60	247.10	48.20	139.00	969.50
2000	45.60	24.50	111.20	67.50	136.40	79.80	35.40	124.00	60.00	149.00	150.10	24.20	1007.70
2001	6.90	16.80	101.80	34.80	34.90	53.30	56.60	88.00	83.00	86.50	55.80	31.50	649.90
2002	78.00	157.60	48.70	14.70	56.80	40.00	43.00	31.00	54.10	0.20	13.10	43.60	580.80
2003	35.60	129.20	16.90	68.20	32.10	90.10	79.40	140.10	25.50	70.60	47.20	69.00	803.90
2004	77.50	57.00	31.00	9.50	70.50	130.30	65.80	83.10	49.50	58.60	68.50	123.00	824.30
2005	74.00	86.80	27.00	5.00	2.70	137.20	97.80	70.00	141.30	88.10	241.00	12.50	983.40
2006	131.70	30.60	41.70	21.60	15.60	29.30	66.20	5.70	18.70	5.10	17.40	0.00	383.60
Monthly total	560.70	579.00	511.80	379.00	416.60	831.60	664.60	781.50	601.20	794.10	753.30	539.60	7413.00
Average/month	62.30	64.33	56.87	42.11	46.29	92.40	73.84	86.83	66.80	88.23	83.70	59.96	823.67
Median/month	59.80	57.00	41.70	34.80	34.90	79.80	65.80	88.00	54.10	86.50	55.80	43.60	824.30

Source: Bloodwood Wines Meteorological Bureau.

• From Page 1

litre figure may be much higher), can we encourage you to be aware that it probably took around half a ton of flood irrigated snowy mountain water from the Murray Darling River Valley Catchment to grow it for you to enjoy

And, just for a laugh, ask Uncle Dan or Mr W. Worth how much precious water was used in producing the bargain you hold in your hand. I'll bet you they have no bloody idea!

About the drought, or turning water into wine at Bloodwood

As new and not so new converts to the mystical movement that is Bloodwood, you would all be more or less aware that we are ardent advocates of the primal perfection of "the market" in our society.

In other words, not only do we admire dogs for their ability to increase productivity and return on capital within the company (even though they leave a trail of excrement and destruction across the vineyard), we always cheer when we see strong dogs eat weak dogs. That is why we don't believe in drought subsidies for farmers.

However, being true economic rationalists, we do strongly endorse paying farmers a fair price for the food and fibre they produce on our behalf. For example, with wine, this price should reflect the real costs of production, distribution and disposal of wastes. It ought to cover things like dispossession of the original owners, clearing of their land with consequent erosion, salinity and loss of biodiversity, water use through both



12 months on: What a difference a year makes ... good spring rainfall during 2005 produced flooding at Bloodwood (above), a complete contrast to this year (below).



environmental and supplemental irrigation, infrastructure delivery and chemical inputs which take into account the true up stream and down stream costs of the supply of electricity, petroleum, fungicides and herbicides, and that's before we add the no small matters of glass bottles, aluminium

caps, sophisticated printed labels and cardboard packaging.

Oh yes, and then there are some incidental costs like labour and grapes which may be of some importance in

• Continued Page 3

the overall cost of a bottle of Aussie wine.

In terms of Australian agribusiness, wine production is the relatively rich cousin at present, but that is because many of us ignore the real costs of producing and supplying that bottle of booze into the ignorant hands of the sons of Uncle Dan. If you think about it, we are all getting more than the roo for under \$2. We're probably getting the echidna, the koala, the orange bellied parrot and our fair proportion of the Murray Darling valley catchment while we are about it.

If we acknowledge the true costs of agricultural production in this dry wide brown land, we'd all be directly paying much more at the cellar door and the supermarket check-out than we do now.

I say "directly" as we all pay some of the difference through interest subsidies, drought relief, rural reconstruction payments, fodder and agistment transport bounties and so on when rural types fall on hard times. In effect, instead of the user paying at the check-out, every taxpayer eventually subsidises the real cost of food and fibre in Australia. If farmers received a fair return for their production during good times, they would not have to have their hands out during tough times.

So when this one ends, let's give the farmers and graziers of Australia a fair suck of the sauce bottle, get rid of all drought relief and provide a bit of dignity for all Australians.

For sale



Going cheap: One rain gauge, only one owner, low millimetres, excellent condition, now surplus to requirements because of a general failure to recognise global warming.

Murray Darling Basin needs a name change

And while I'm on the topic of the hippopotamus in the kitchen sink, isn't it about time that the term Murray Darling Basin was changed to Murray and Darling River Valley Catchments?

A "basin" is something attached to the top of a drain or the bottom of a sink, which although is a fairly apposite current description of the parlous state of the system, we may all develop more respect for this artery of prosperity through the heartland of Australia if its description was more than hydraulic.

We'll all be rooned, possibly

"We'll all be rooned," said Hanrahan,
In accents most forlorn,
Outside the church, ere Mass began,
One frosty Sunday morn.

The congregation stood about,
Coat-collars to the ears,
And talked of stock, and crops, and
drought,
As it had done for years.

"It's looking crook," said Daniel Croke;
"Bedad, it's cruke, me lad,
For never since the banks went broke
Has seasons been so bad."

"It's dry, all right," said young O'Neil,
With which astute remark
He squatted down upon his heel
And chewed a piece of bark.

And so around the chorus ran
"It's keepin' dry, no doubt."
"We'll all be rooned," said Hanrahan,
"Before the year is out."

"The crops are done; ye'll have your
work
To save one bag of grain;
From here way out to Back-o'-Bourke
They're singin' out for rain.

"They're singin' out for rain," he said,
"And all the tanks are dry."
The congregation scratched its head,
And gazed around the sky.

"There won't be grass, in any case,
Enough to feed an ass;
There's not a blade on Casey's place
As I came down to Mass."

"If rain don't come this month," said
Dan,
And cleared his throat to speak —
"We'll all be rooned," said Hanrahan,
"If rain don't come this week."

A heavy silence seemed to steal
On all at this remark;
And each man squatted on his heel,
And chewed a piece of bark.

"We want an inch of rain, we do,"
O'Neil observed at last;
But Croke "maintained" we wanted two
To put the danger past.

"If we don't get three inches, man,
Or four to break this drought,
We'll all be rooned," said Hanrahan,
"Before the year is out."

In God's good time down came the
rain;
And all the afternoon
On iron roof and window-pane
It drummed a homely tune.

And through the night it pattered still,
And lightsome, gladsome elves
On dripping spout and window-sill
Kept talking to themselves.

It pelted, pelted all day long,
A-singing at its work,
Till every heart took up the song
Way out to Back-o'-Bourke.

And every creek a banker ran,
And dams filled overtop;
"We'll all be rooned," said Hanrahan,
"If this rain doesn't stop."

And stop it did, in God's good time;
And spring came in to fold
A mantle o'er the hills sublime
Of green and pink and gold.

And days went by on dancing feet,
With harvest-hopes immense,
And laughing eyes beheld the wheat
Nid-nodding o'er the fence.

And, oh, the smiles on every face,
As happy lad and lass
Through grass knee-deep on Casey's
place
Went riding down to Mass.

While round the church in clothes
genteel
Discoursed the men of mark,
And each man squatted on his heel,
And chewed his piece of bark.

"There'll be bush-fires for sure, me
man,
There will, without a doubt;
We'll all be rooned," said Hanrahan,
"Before the year is out."

Around the Boree Log and Other Verses,
1921, John O'Brien



Cellar door wars: *Your bakery products are weak old man.*

Cellar door wine tasting

It seems to us that anyone who visits a typical cellar door to taste and buy wine needs a medal.

Now we certainly don't want to discourage any of you from the happy habit, especially if you have Bloodwood on your itinerary, however we really don't know how you cope.

Having been let loose on the odd wine show as a judge, I can tell you that wine show judging is a doddle compared to what you lot put up with during a standard cellar door tasting.

First of all, at a wine show, the wines are presented under pretty good conditions, although the subtle appreciation of the lifted lanolin characters of a young Hunter Semillon are only enhanced when your wine show is being conducted in the wool pavilion of the local Agricultural Society; but that is another story from another galaxy.

Even at your garden variety wine show, the glass ware is standard, or at least adequate and increasingly, with the introduction of flash brands like Reidel, is rapidly improving.

The wines are thoughtfully arranged in numerical order on a white backdrop and they are usually of one variety, a single vintage, presented at a reasonable temperature and adequate candle power. If you suspect a wine has become quaintly Quercus or accidentally enhanced micro biologically, a raised eyebrow in the direction of any of a number of attentive stewards briskly sees a new glass from a new bottle of the doubtful beverage decidedly float into position awaiting your renewed attention or confirmed rejection.

And at least until the judging of the

fortified class late in the day, there is little noise to distract your consideration of the bold and the brave before you.

Contrast the cellar door. Typically, after you have fought your way through the bold and the beautiful to claim your square foot of shoulder space at the bar between the pristine spittoon and the obscene convenience, you will be loudly encouraged to nimbly referee the relative appeal (above a cacophony of appealing relatives) of a large number of vintages from a dumbfounding number of styles at a speed which would shock Brock.

And if you find a hint of Portuguese present in a sample you really want to look at more closely and you actually have the hide to shout above the roar to the pimply one on the craftwood side of the bar for a new sample, you'd better have your exit strategy well mapped out. You do get some help though ... there is the uncertain assurance of the label and a price to guide you to a decision.

Perhaps that is why, according to the everyday cellar door visitor, the wine judges get it so wrong so often. For the Australian wine show system to go boldly forward towards its glorious and uncertain future, all wines should henceforth be judged hot and unmasked in the middle of the Saturday afternoon rush hour at the local cellar door ... and to really capture the prevailing ambience of the experience, served in cracked Vegemite jars to the accompaniment of a mega base reggae version of Edith Piaf's Non, je ne regrette rein.

For your information, Bloodwood cellar door is open by appointment, and the CD player is busted!



You've probably heard of F.O.O.D. (Food Of Orange District) and if you were not quick enough to get out of the way, you'd have recently been run over by Slow Food. But are you aware of Bloodwood's illustrious new world renown movement, Know Food?

At Bloodwood we pride ourselves in the provenance of our wines. If you have a bottle of Bloodwood 2003 Shiraz in your collection as you read this, you can be assured it came from the 714 Shiraz vines in the small vineyard to the left of the magnificent new front gate.

The soils in this vineyard are largely derived from laminated siltstone parent material and they result in a low fertility site with good moisture drainage. Slightly in excess of 0.6 megalitres of water was drip irrigated on to this vineyard during the growing season and only bio-safe copper and sulfur were used to control disease.

Sod culture was used to prevent erosion and all slashings were delivered into the vine rows to act as organic mulches. The tree shelter belt to the east and south as well as the low ring of hills to the west create a heat trap on this vineyard, which aids in the ripening of the beautiful fruit.

After being grown gently and hand picked, it was de-stemmed and fermented in open fermenters with all organic waste (stalks, skins and tank washes) being returned to the vine rows to minimise extractions from the environment.

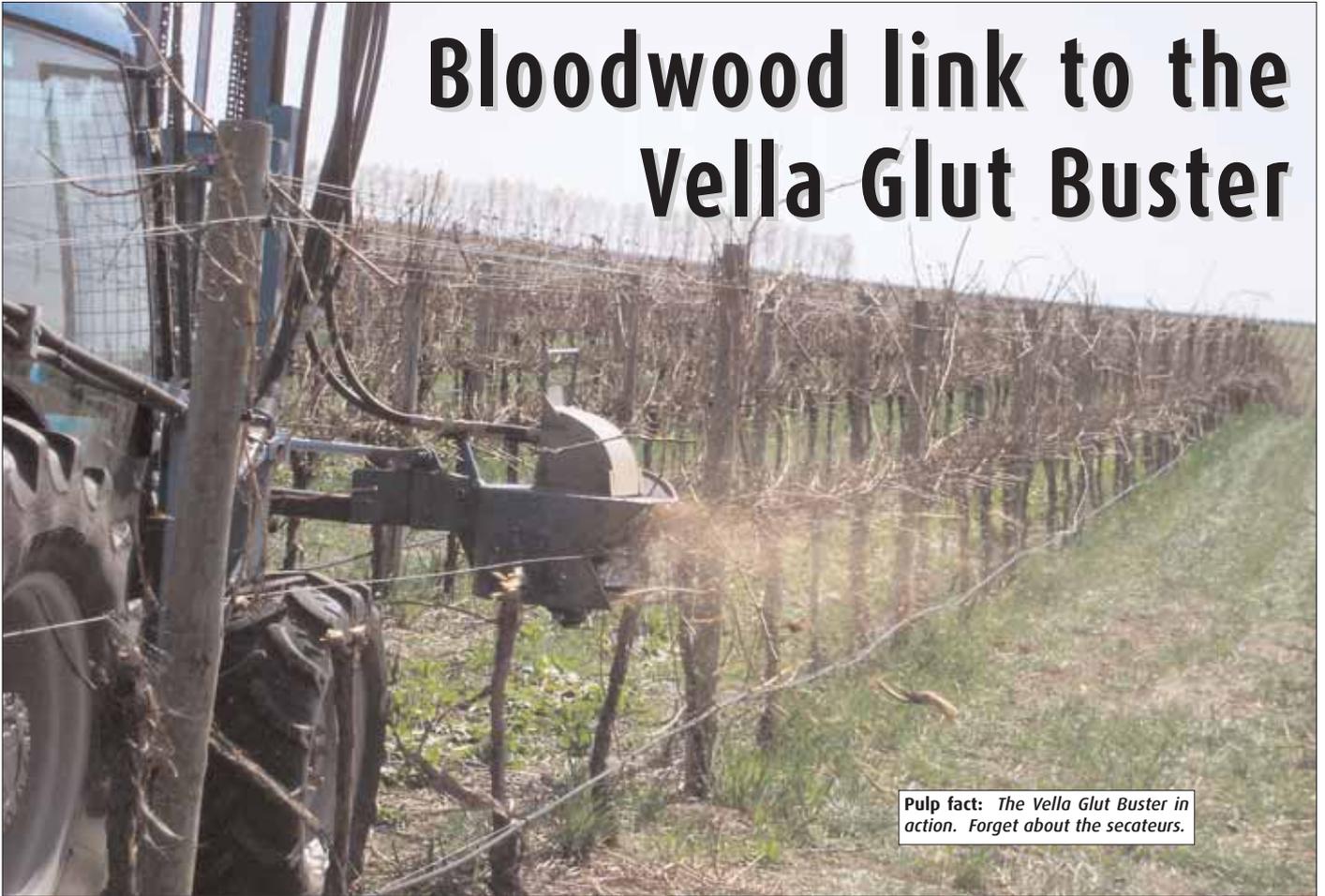
The wine spent more than two years in good quality French oak hogsheads (see photo below) on its journey to being transformed into healthy wine in the Bloodwood winery. Later vintages have also been bottled, packaged and cellared on site.

Know Food ... know what we mean.



Quality control: *Of course our oak is French.*

Bloodwood link to the Vella Glut Buster



Pulp fact: *The Vella Glut Buster in action. Forget about the secateurs.*

Within the contemporary Australian wine scene, there is an enormous area of Cabernet (and Merlot and Shiraz) currently pencilled in for the chop.

Although this unhappy circumstance is largely the result of the interplay of greed, ignorance and fashion, it nevertheless is not unusual in the Australian wine scene. It has become necessary (this week) to reduce the output of the red vineyard, and increase the volume of whites produced, particularly Pinot Gris and Sauvignon Blanc.

The traditional approach has been to turn a higher percentage of your reds into Rose styles or through colour stripping and various other techniques into “whites” and pretend that white Shiraz is a new and fashionable response to the challenge of overproduction.

Another technique, which has the added benefit of taking an unwanted vineyard out of production for a couple of seasons while converting it to a hopefully more desirable variety, is to graft an existing rootstock of, for example, Cabernet Sauvignon over to Sauvignon Blanc.

While there are any number of physiological hurdles to overcome during the process and the high risk of

taking a punt on where the demand will be in the Australian wine industry in six months let alone a couple of years remains, the cost of physically removing the dormant canopy of the vine and bud grafting it to the favoured variety is a real challenge.

Enter Mark Vella, ex Bloodwood Wines via Reynolds and currently at Nepenthe in SA. When Mark worked for us it was obvious he was destined for higher things in the firmament of Australian viticulture.

He had a visceral abhorrence of weeds about the landscape and his odium towards Odium or any of the other mildews was palpable. Although he originally came from the “if it moves, shoot it and if it doesn’t, chop it down school of Australian agriculture” his understanding of what makes the vineyard tick is now extraordinary.

In fact, at Bloodwood we even have a block of Pinot Noir (The Dead Vella Block) named in his honour, but that is another story from that other galaxy far, far away.

What Mark and his workshop colleagues at Nepenthe have invented is a machine capable of shredding a totally mature and productive vineyard to pulp at a rate which is astounding and depressing to watch.

The Vella Glut Buster will cut and mulch your canopy to a neat stump waiting for the graft, whilst leaving the infrastructure of your vineyard intact at around six kilometres per hour. With a clear run, he is strangely pleased to report to us that he could atomize Bloodwood in time for lunch. Now that’s what we call progress.

Competition

A case of Big Men In Tights to the first person to identify who wrote the following and when it was published:

“Wine speculators are likely to meet the same fate as their brethren in other fields: a few could make it into the big time, many will get their fingers burnt. If there is going to be a slowing down of the boom, or a frank depression, the quality growers with guts, capital reserves and a true respect for wine are the only ones likely to survive.”

And you thought Mandarin Chinese was difficult!

- The bandage was wound around the wound.
- The farm was used to produce produce.
- The dump was so full that it had to refuse more refuse.

A close shave with history, in a barber shop

As a winemaker with an enormous amount of free time, one of my many stranger hobbies involves the art of the impromptu hair cut.

Now not just any clip joint will do you understand. To tempt me inside, it has to be a dinkum emporium de whisker with a red and white barber pole out the front, and a widely-read barber inside.

He will be studiously ignoring the crested cockatoos amongst the passing bristle of hair fashion through a multi-coloured plastic striped fly screen doorway whilst gently radiating the reassuring aromas of Bay Rum and talcum powder.

And he won't be short of a story. In fact he will as often as not be the story.

There's Cracker the ex-bikie and father of eight at North Tamborine who has replaced the traditional flight of china ducks up the salon wall with a violent spray of severed ears, and "the lady barber!" of Mudgee who, having spent all day being totally ignored by her constant stream of speechless customers worries herself to sleep each night deeply convinced that her clientele doesn't like her. (Dear Cynthia, for we blokes, silence is the selling point of your show!)

Closer to home is Canobolas Hotel Lindsay who can cut any style you like as long as it can be achieved with a fractured wrist and prior to lunch.

But the closest cut of all in my recent hirsute expeditions is Russell from the sleepy town of Home Hill in North Queensland.

Besides the fact that he is next door to the amazing Musumeci's deli with its wonderful range of fresh cheese and smallgoods, he has a lot going for him. For a start he is late middle aged and pencil thin. For some reason I find this comforting in a barber.

I hadn't had a hair cut in the Burdekin since the late sixties, however a generation or two back as a kid in nearby Ayr, the barber who cut my hair against my will was a similar style of bloke ... no nonsense, thin and almost radiant in his synthetic whites.

Likewise, Russell's white shoes matched his long white socks which harmonized with his white polyester shorts and, yes, his white shirt.



The name's Todd ... Sweeney Todd ... No it isn't. It's Russell from Home Hill and, carefully massaging the shape of my skull under his long attenuated fingers, he asks me if I know Harry Miller.

As it turns out I do. My maternal Grandfather was named Harry Miller, but he lived 25 kilometres away out the back of Airville on the other side of the Burdekin River. And anyway, he finished up in 1974 ... a short silence and another closer exploration of my cranium followed.

"I used to cut him too," says Russell. "How did you get to know Harry," I asked nervously.

"Through Tom Kelly who had the dairy up river at Home Hill," says Russell. (Tom was one of my Grandmother's brothers.) "Tom taught me to ride and gave me a job as a young fella with the cows. Matter of fact, I've got the dray."

"Tom's dray?" I inquire.

"No the old fellow's dray ... I had my eye on it all the while I was working at the farm, and when things ended with the cows it just sat there in the shed till I gave a few bob to one of the grand kids for it a few years back. The locals use it as a wedding photo back drop now. Would you like to see it?"

"Would I what!"

It turns out Russell has possession of the original dray used by my great

grandfather James Kelly and his parents as heavy transport into the Burdekin when it was first opened up to white fellas in the late 1850s. And it is parked in the front of Russell's yard.

So off I went to touch the hand sawn timbers and black smithed bolts of the old family dray and wonder at the stories it had been witness to over its 150 years of tropical existence.

And as for Russell's similarity to my childhood barber ... it turns out he was Russell's father.

So I had unconsciously recognised Russell's genetics and he had discovered mine through the shape of my skull. Now that's what I call eight bucks worth.

Definitions

BEAUTY PARLOR: A place where women curl up and dye.

DUST: Mud with the juice squeezed out.

EGOTIST: Someone who is usually me-deep in conversation.

HANDKERCHIEF: Cold storage.

INFLATION: Cutting money in half without damaging the paper.

SECRET: Something you tell to one person at a time.

TOMORROW: One of the greatest labour saving devices of today.

Study: wine 'experts' not really so expert

From Adam Sage in Paris

Drinkers have long suspected it, but now French researchers have finally proved it: wine 'experts' know no more than the rest of us. Their rituals as they pronounce judgment have been revealed as little more than self delusion by a French study.

'Experts' base their views as much on colour and labels as upon a wine's bouquet and flavour. The truth is that you cannot define taste objectively, said Frederic Brochet, a researcher from Bordeaux whose study won an award from the Amorim wine academy in France.

The opinions of the so-called connoisseurs are no better and perhaps worse than that of the occasional drinker, he said. The greater the expertise, the greater the cultural baggage that prevents you from perceiving the actual taste in your mouth.

Brochet carried out two studies. In the first, he invited 54 of Bordeaux's eminent wine experts to sample different bottles, including a white wine to which he had added a flavourless substance giving it a red colour. Not a single expert noticed.

It is a well known psychological phenomenon — you taste what you are expecting to taste, Brochet said. They were expecting to taste a red wine, and

so they did. Similar experiments elsewhere had come up with similar results. About 2–3 per cent of people detect the white wine flavour, but invariably they have little experience of wine culture. Connoisseurs tend to fail to do so. The more training they have, the more mistakes they make because they are influenced by the wine's colour.

In the second test, 57 experts tasted the same average bottle of Bordeaux wine on two occasions. The first time it was labelled as a high-prestige grand cru, and the second time it was labelled as a cheap vin de table.

When they thought it was a grand cru, the experts described it as agreeable, woody, complex, balanced and rounded. When they thought it was a vin de table, they said it was weak, short, light, flat, faulty and with a sting. Forty said the wine was good when they thought it was expensive, but only 12 when it was cheap.

This is why wine frauds are virtually never detected on taste alone, but because someone tips off the police who look at the paperwork, Brochet said.

He has studied the brain activity of wine tasters and found that those sections handling information relating to colour and knowledge operate alongside those which deal with flavour and smell. What we perceive is a mixture of thought, vision and taste.

Indeed, the brain receives more information more quickly from the eyes than from the mouth or nose. Brochet also points out that the molecule that gives what is described as the taste of blackcurrants, redcurrants or raspberries in red wine is identical to that which gives an apricot or peach taste to white wine. The description of the connoisseurs changes because the colour is different.

Events blog

Slow Summer (Slow Food Orange) is planning an especially slow event in Orange from Friday to Sunday February 9–11. For more information email info@winesoforange.com.au or phone Sophie on (02) 6360 0495.

Bloodwood fundraiser for Darling House Aged Persons Home, The Rocks Sydney. This will be held in early March 2007 and details are available from Rhonda soon on (02) 6362 5631. The amazingly talented Bloodwood Quartet (*pictured below*) will be playing and we will be providing the lubrication for this important community event. Please join us.



F.O.O.D. Week 2007 will be held from Friday April 13 to Sunday April 22. You will shortly be able to find details of this wonderful event by visiting www.orangefoodweek.com.au.

To celebrate the breaking of the drought, we will be holding our usual evening of erudition and re-hydration entitled Bloodwood KNOW F.O.O.D. on Saturday April 14 at 7.30pm for the amazingly low consideration of \$88. For further information, visit us.

To celebrate the breaking of the drought, we will be holding another evening of erudition and re-hydration entitled Bloodwood Bonfire Happening on Saturday June 9 at 7.30pm for the amazingly low consideration of \$88. For further information, visit us.

Southern Oscillation Index predicts Labor win

The Southern Oscillation Index, the real world's equivalent of the All Ordinaries, indicates that the Howard Government could be in bother electorally if it doesn't make it rain before the next Federal election. (When it's been as dry as this between drinks, the non Howardistas out there will clutch at straws!)

Take a look Table 2 below: On every occasion since 1940 where the Tories have lost control of government, the SOI has been hugely negative in the previous 12 months leading up to the election/coup.

TABLE 2 Southern Oscillation Index applied to election results

Election/coup	SOI cumulative value previous 12 months
1941 Curtin replaces McFadden	-170.3
1949 Menzies wins	-13.3
1972 McMahon booted out	-109.4
1975 Fraser knighted	+163.2
1983 Fraser blames the drought	-230.4
1996 Keating loses	+4.8
2006 Last six months under Howard	-60.5

Source: Bloodwood Wines Political Library.

So unless Mr Howard can end this drought well before he calls the next election, SOI statistics and history will see him joining the rest of us in the Long Paddock.



Quick: Mick claims unofficial picking buckets speed record.

Quick Mick sets picking buckets speed record

We hand pick at Bloodwood. That means we employ human beings.

Homo sapiens locate each bunch stem using a highly specialized sense organ called the eye and via little understood pathways through the brain, direct a lever like reflex motion to the muscles of the hand.

This neurological impulse encourages the manipulation of the fingers against the oppositional thumb generally present, which closes along the benign end of a pair of highly specialised snips resulting in a severing of the stem supporting each bunch to its cane.

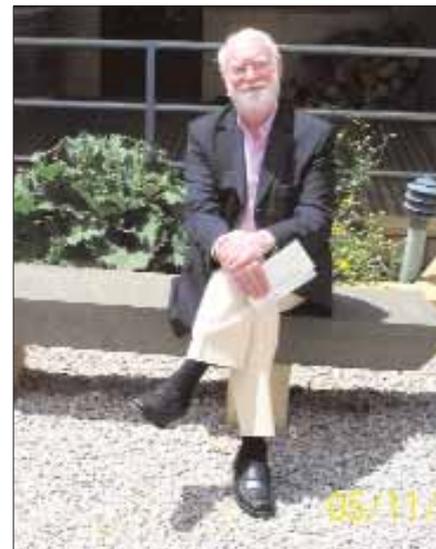
Gravity then takes over and in a fairly high percentage of occasions, delivers the cut bunch into the 10 kilo Bryce picking pail positioned below the vine. That's the easy part.

All we have to do then is find the wage plus the worker's compensation insurance to cover the \$480/tonne needed to pay these amazing mortals and stand back while the bucket monkey and tractor gorilla empty each container into a half tonne picking bin for transport to the crusher.

While this ancient harvest practice is pretty straightforward, gathering up the buckets at the end of the day and transporting them to the winery for washing is a tricky business ... particularly in the hilly country of Bloodwood. That's where Mick comes in.

We haven't notified The Guinness Book of Records yet, but we are claiming a world speed transport record of 108 Bryce picking buckets over 800 metres in six minutes and 10 seconds flat.

Everybody eventually comes to Bloodwood



★ ★ ★ ★ ★



Disclaimer

The purpose of this newsletter is not utter delight and hilarity; humiliation of our foes; nor is it the creation of a space to vent our hyper-inflated sense of self importance and propagation of the Bloodwood myth.

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