



Edition 7, Winter 2014

The Goss

from Samuel's Gorge...

*Être ici maintenant. Here it is now.
Samuel's Gorge, a place of magnificent
energy...*

Here and now more than ever we're feeling content with our focus and culture at Samuel's Gorge; glossing into a certain maturity with confidence. That's the gift of time: the glint in the eye of a wise old person who has experienced a great deal and the implicit knowledge in a cheeky, gummy smile. The rugged honesty of aging. In the spectrum of time we are but babes in the ancient trade of wine. We are blessed by the collection of knowledge gathered from our commune; McLaren Vale.

Despite my best endeavours a few seasons have passed since I last touched base with the epic tale that is The Goss. At least we have kept up the promise that The Goss would be a bit unpredictable, and occasionally

well down the track of the Easter release. A promise unbroken to never spam you. This year we have intentionally taken the time to study and savour the 2012 wines to allow them to evolve in bottle before crafting our notes and musings on the season.

At Samuel's Gorge we are committed to the idea of commune; a collective, a province without fences or boundaries where life becomes a shared endeavour. Kids roam freely in rat packs, traders gather at farm markets: we have a loose hold on the reins of ownership. We find satisfaction in this humble living – that is real freedom. It's a community where we gather to forage, cook, eat and drink. Idealistic I know; pretty damn lucky.

Within our barn we foster this time-honoured culture: where the freedom lies





in simplicity, we delight in our usefulness to others. Is there anything more soul warming than honest peasant cuisine? Or, is there anything more formidable and extraordinary than the Sicilian Nona who has shepherded a recipe for generations? At our place this is what we aspire to achieve.

A technique we have embraced at the Gorge whole bunch fermentation, officially tagged carbonic maceration. The technique utilises the weight of bunches on top to press the grapes underneath in a anaerobic environment. To be honest the ancients tossed whole bunches into a vessel and ultimately the wine made itself. As oenologists we know that

the anaerobic environment fosters a different, intracellular fermentation that enhances heady strawberry notes and liberates the aromatic rainbow. It's one of the many subtle traditional techniques we engage in our matrix of blending.

Distil the purity in the idea: the content peasant doesn't stray, doesn't want, doesn't covet. It's simplicity of life: the way we eat, the way we see, the way we love. A kitchen embedded with aromas of freshly picked lemons and jasmine. This is what is brilliant. Finding comfort with what you have access to and interpreting what is born of the landscape.

We too identify with the strengths in our

surroundings dictated by varieties that thrive in our ancient soils, variations in our warm climate and the influences of the Gulf of St Vincent: Grenache, Tempranillo, Mourvèdre and Shiraz.

Here is the backflip. Contrary to these ideals, in our arid backyard, I grow watermelons; purely for the pleasure. One of the greatest joys is watching a child pick a watermelon tossing it along the driveway just to watch it explode. Mischievous and gleeful indulgence I know. A paradox of our culture. I am also a junky for Champagne and melt at the thought of foie gras on brioche, I hate to break it to you but Arabica beans aren't grown here - although are blended and roasted by local craftsman. I'm as guilty as anyone else, I have to have vine-ripened tomatoes all year round, not just in Summer.



“Awesome folks, magnificent wines, spectacular location. Faultless all round.”

Facebook 5 star reviews



2012: the Mahjong summer. It opened with winds that prevailed from South to East. We had a season unaffected by droughts and dramatic temperature variations but awash in vivid light across our landscape. It's the glow that carries the lightness of heart and the blue skies that fuel our spontaneous frivolity in summer. Summers of laughter; there is no better feeling than when you find yourself laughing and you don't know why; except maybe for crying and you don't know why?

At the Gorge we've busied ourselves being human

because that is the honest charm of this place. We are not governed by the desire to court the intermediate industry nor are we motivated by commercial manipulation. Everyone has ego but our rhythms are unaltered by accolades or critique. Everyone is entitled to an opinion. Our pendulum swing is driven by gravity; harnessing the powerful energy of time... Don't get me wrong, I would hate to be thought of as isolated, anti-oenological establishment, but more and more we question the obsessive need to judge wine. It's a symptom of the problem of how we

over think a good drop. Keep it in perspective.

Winning the hearts of people that love good booze that's what we're about. Our future at Samuel's Gorge lies in respecting those who connect with our space. At the end of the day it's the people that value our work and love to share in what we do that inspire us here. Preserving spirituality in our industry is the key. Bring the enjoyment of wine back to emotion: a context, honesty, a time or a place. Celebration, frivolity and friends.



The stunning view from our barn is irrelevant without the beat of our collective hearts. Our method isn't stagnant, nor is our learning. The barn now holds inherent micro-flora that have accumulated organically over time. We have never added yeast to our ferments; it's a natural indigenous population. It's all a part of our minimal handling winemaking philosophy.

We have to remember this is a working winery; the cellar door is the door to our cellar. We choose to ferment outside under the eaves and often under the stars. We find that the temperature regime of ferment, and therefore the slowing of yeast vigour retains subtlety and detail in aromatics. The lack of urgency and longer than common skin contact gives us the backbone and tannins for cellaring.

The privilege of this space and our landscape is definitely in the creative spectrum; that is the method of the master blender. The imagination is encouraged to wander without boundaries instilled by the distraction of pollutants. Take a breath and embrace the detail. Take the time to stop. Leave the pace of life behind and come share a drink with us.

It's that connection with us and our place that is paramount. We hope on some level you are transported back here with every glass you pour. Most importantly I hope you enjoy the wines. Looking forward to your thoughts. See you sometime soon on the hill.

All the best,

Justin McNamee
Winemaker, Samuel's Gorge



“McLaren Vale Grenache 2012 – The bright, clear crimson colour flags a first-class Grenache, awash with red fruits, superfine tannins and fresh acidity, attributes regularly dispensed by McLaren Vale, where Grenache has definitely found its piece of heaven.....Such a mysterious thing, wine.”

James Halliday 2015 Companion

TASTING NOTES

2012 Grenache

The primary focus of our Grenache hails from the North Easterly facing wing of the valley we call Blewitt Springs. It's a protected corner within our region that delights in the morning sun and is well protected from the extremes of summer. It's the subtle differences of aspect and elevation, harshness of the geology, the symbiotic relationship between aromas of flora on ancient soils and the brightness of the light. We are inspired by the unmistakable signature of our province and its unique expression in Grenache.

Without question, no two vintages in any cultivar are the same and that particularly applies when dealing with our old, gnarly bush-vine Grenache vineyards. Vintage 2012 was nearly perfect. A remarkably moderate summer in terms of temperature variability; idyllic really in our warm, coastal province. We didn't see a drop of rain on the horizon, but we've long wisened to that.

To keep us on our toes however the intangibles of the Vale came into play with unruly gully winds from the southwest and vivid light serving as signatures of this harvest season. Wind weary vines yielded tight bunches and small berries with restrained power, concentration and ripe tannins. With a nod to the 2011 vintage that will forevermore serve as our benchmark for this style, we are stoked that the grace and detail of the 2012 have not strayed too far from this standard.

The '12 is a little headier, with more generous aromas that entreat you to stop and savour: the warm flesh of a ripe raspberry and a touch more emphasis on a bouquet garni than its predecessor. Tantalisingly refreshing, prickly pear sorbet complimented with foraged wild tayberry and blackberries. Finish the thought with a nip of elegant; peppery Bianco Tequila.

Grace and beauty in the detail with commanding charisma. The flavours are strongly linked to the aromas: vibrant, bright red cherry, zesty twist of a tangelo rind and piquant quince paste shaded with dried oregano and wisps of white pepper. It embraces the rusticity of ancient earth and a signature Vale flint: subtle hints of the sea in delicate ribbons of nori, the savoury umami of white miso. Bright acids and texturally intriguing fine, chalky tannins give amazing line and length.

We have had quite a journey with the Old Vine Grenache in our region for well over a hundred years and for me more recently over the last fifteen or so. Every year it becomes more engaging to make and polarising to taste. Find yourself lost in the aromatic charm of Grenache – transported back to our vista on the hill.

2013 Tempranillo

Tempranillo - the precarious co-mingling of good and evil both on a vine and its personality in the glass akin to Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde. On heavy ground it can behave like a feral triffid yet on the right plot this infinitely low yielding, Iberian icon is an interpretation of a landscape more than most. Our Tempranillo vineyard is set amongst the clutches of a rocky, windswept ridge exposed to the Gulf. 2013 harvest offered up a nearly unviable yield, at most 1.1 tonne to the acre: temperamental and seemingly miserly. Look past the gruff it will charm you with its generosity, depth and concentration.

A dry winter and warm spring set the stage for the 2013 harvest seemingly as perfect as 2012. While we don't expect much rain over summer, 2013 didn't yield a drop. These warm, dry conditions stunted vigour and yield more so than usual: stellar for concentration of flavour and tannin but not so for quantity of stock in the cellar. Vintage 2013 came and went in a furious blur.

The 2013 has perhaps a darker and more sinister side than any Tempranillo we have released. All of this in a clever kind of way; the early transformation stage to Edward Hyde... The brooding blood plum, tart red currant, sundried strawberry. Characteristic savoury over sweet. The richness of a composting forest floor with a multitude of wild fungi, throw in crushed fresh herbs and a liberal dash of volcanic ash.

With ball-bearings for berries amidst very tight bunches, this wine has amplified masculinity, ripe flavours and great presence well after the last drop leaves the palate. Warm flavours of black cherry compote with splash of kirsch, tart blood orange, toasted dried spices and fresh tobacco leaf. Vibrant pomegranate toned acidity gives the wine a racing pulse – it feels deliciously fresh – though at the same time, the complex blend of components feel well integrated along Tempranillo's signature gravelly tannin.

The juxtaposition of dark and light keep on going: stepping into a Moorish palace garden from the parched sundried landscape. A refreshing cooling effect of the water feature set among ancient olive, fig and bay trees, cascading jasmine, intricate design woven into the interior mosaics. Our Tempranillo: at the heart of the delights of the sultans. Aromas of jamon Serrano, lavender, dried sage, sun worn dusty limestone walls infiltrate the senses. Be prepared for an extended journey in the cellar with this one; it's a stayer and may take a while to settle into its stride.

“One has to remember that this is a working winery. The sense of place is fantastic as are the wines. We have been at the winery when the workers have been preparing for bottling, with the associated staff preparing pasta on an outdoor cooker for the hard workers...”

Trip Advisor 5 star reviews

2012 Mourvèdre

It is understood that Mourvèdre originates from the coastal city of Mataro in Catalonia. It's appropriate then that Mourvèdre shines in our warm windswept Vale where the nuance of colours and the rhythm of the landscape are reminiscent of the Iberian peninsula. The vineyard for this variety of intrigue sits in an idyllic position; a North facing slope near Sellicks Hill where the consistent maritime breezes of St. Vincent's Gulf cool and ventilate the bunches.

Mourvèdre has long been relegated across the world as a blending component. Our Mourvèdre now in its third vintage standing rightfully confident among the Samuel's Gorge original trio owning its place within our core range for its spice, finesse and natural rusticity.

The 2012 is veiled in a velvet cloak of dark violet, purple and ruby. Expect something extraordinary and this wine delivers: an aromatic explosion of intriguing dark brambly forest fruits, blood plums, Provencal herbs, a patina of dark chocolate and the unmistakable minerality of an ancient landscape.

Find a substantial balloon glass for this one; it has so much depth it warrants good crystal and a solid swirl to loosen the extraordinary detail. The aromatics thunder with liquorice allsorts, star anise, a red delicious toffee apple with oh so much more...

It has all the intensity and energy of an Asian night market. A sensorial feast. A hedonistic journey of aromas and flavours: mountains of freshly ground spices: cinnamon, cloves, cumin, coriander. Smoke rising from char-grilled meats, stalls piled high with exotic fruits. A mouth-watering blend of the known and the mysterious. Wild aromas leading you among the bustle of humanity. You wander through every avenue with willing anticipation.

Allow yourself to be drawn into its depths. It's the generosity of Mourvèdre's expression that charms without it ever overstepping the bounds. The palate delivers ingredients of Christmas cake: the intensity of rum over raisins, dried sour cherries and tangerine peel enveloped with cinnamon, clove and vanilla. Embrace the warmth, this wine carries weight with grace through an extraordinary line of proud, firm tannins that build over time. That's what makes it exciting.

2012 Shiraz

We have turned our hands at more Shiraz than any other single grape variety. It is a variety that reins over our province and for that matter, most regions in South Australia. Its magnitude in accessibility ought not to be confused with magnitude of fruit flavour. It has charmed the world because it delivers concentration but concentration on a multitude of levels.

Take the time to discern between regions and more so between the many interpretations producer to producer. In my mind, there isn't one classic regional style but perhaps a regional signature. In McLaren Vale we see the overriding relationship with the gulf and the endless blue ocean and sky. If one could dial up an out of body experience and witness our province from elevation you will see extraordinary intricacy, diversity in personality and application to landscape. That is why this great grape is endlessly fascinating and never monolithic or generic here; Leave those ideas in the 80's.

It may be true that in our place we talk less about Shiraz; we ought to give it more air time. It seems that it has charm without embellishment. This 2012 gives us so much pleasure. We find ourselves gathering to talk about life's subjects while we savour this wine. Its bloody good booze and that's just a given but here is some detail...

The 'Holly Nelly' factor: the nose has a potent lift of liquorice and blackberry fruits. We embrace the mulberries that continue to be a signature of our own estate block and then we build from there. In order to balance the natural sweetness of these berry fruits the wine weaves in savoury of black olives and bacalao with ancient sticky balsamic. Our rustic house style always comfortably returning to a savoury spectrum. The '12 shows some engaging twists and turns; the swirl of smoke from a campfire in winter; the smouldering red gum and the dark smells of black coal. We sustain ourselves from our farm grown offerings; we are in the realm of the hunter/gatherer. Recently our Irish friends used the resources from a sow to deliver breakfast blood sausage. A dark sausage with clove and cinnamon; this 2012 shiraz is a perfect match for such fare, but perhaps not at breakfast...? Leave that for Grenache.

Imagine an artisan, small batch coffee bean roast house: a mixture of freshly roasted beans, dusty hessian bags, hints of the darkest chocolate and the pull of the espresso shot that simultaneously entrances and enlivens the mind. Then the intrigue of the animal: blinding herds of bison migrating between foraging sites across the Midwestern plains, a rising sea of dust, sweat and bravado. Detailed and layered with cascades of flavour that mirror the aromatics. So much mid-palate weight and mouth-filling tannins with an emphasis on texture and freshness over fullness. It refuses to fade.

“If you go to McLaren Vale and don’t visit Samuel’s Gorge you’re a bloody idiot.

Seriously.

I’m not inclined to ever accuse anyone of idiocy but this may just be the exception. The experience you will have at Samuel’s Gorge is different to cellar doors you have visited in the past. Stroll on in, grab a glass from the old olive oil press and then look around for someone holding a bottle of wine. Introduce yourself, shakes hands even, and then start drinking wine. By the end of the tasting you’ll have some new friends - of both the human and grape variety...

A must visit.”

Yelp 5 star reviews



I treasure the personal contact with all those who enjoy hearing updates from Samuel’s Gorge.
Please let me know if it’s been a while since you’ve heard from us - we may need to update your details.
P: 08 8323 8651 | F: 0883238673 | E: info@gorge.com.au | www.gorge.com.au

Rolling Credits:

The court gestures - Hilly, Sydney, Gedde’s, Brunello, the O’s
Our local Italians - and the Many Mills

Mrs T

Georgio Armani and the fashion line from the Harris Hotel
Neighbours on the hill

Newcastle, Lincoln, Kosciusko, Bendigo - the forgotten cities

Banjo Ben with Saige

Kerries Cherries

Our boys in Sydney

Air

The boullibaise traders

The new, old plots

Our smiley hosts

Those peddling our goods and chattels

Our family friends and benevolent dreamers

Chiz Z

The weller teller and the voices of happiness A and K