



GOULBURN STRATHBOGRIE  
OLIVE GROWERS ASSOCIATION INC.

# Pickled & Pressed

## Goulburn Strathbogrie Olive Grower's Association Newsletter November 2005

### President's Report

#### Reflections After the Harvest: Picking & Processing - The Way Forward

Another harvest over and our product is highly acclaimed. So, all that hard work should be worth it!

However, I believe we have all identified issues from this harvest that need addressing for the future. Many groves have produced generous and encouraging yields of fruit - but yields which have exhausted friends and family as pickers. The high cost of paid labour just does not make economic sense, and we need to look seriously at mechanical methods.

And, processing is also an expensive and rather remote exercise for some of us. We don't have much say in or knowledge of the process - and we pay high prices for small batches of fruit.

#### Brainstorming on the 3rd October:

The Committee and a number of members therefore spent a morning on the 1st October pulling together ideas about harvesting and processing from our experience this year and then looking at some possibilities for a way forward. Iain Towers helped move the process along by providing the facilitation. We summarised the ideas onto a set of Powerpoint slides which are available from Andrew Laing ([andrewlaing@mac.com](mailto:andrewlaing@mac.com)) if you would like more detail.

In very simple terms, we believe:

1. Even a 1000 tree grove is going to need picking machinery
2. Access to cool storage helps manage the tension between picking and processing
3. Growers have to get more control over processing
4. Successful groves will combine to find solutions

Importantly, we have also held a discussion with the directors of the Food Company on the 7th November, and it is clear that they also see these issues as important and want to find a way forward based on a good understanding between GSOGA and the Food Company as far as it affects GSOGA members who are also members of the Food Company.

#### Working Groups:

We have to find a way of promoting action which is useful to our members - while not trying to turn GSOGA into a co-operative. The committee is therefore setting up working groups to investigate options for harvesting, processing and logistics. If you would like to be part of such a group we are eager to hear from you. Email: [andrewlaing@mac.com](mailto:andrewlaing@mac.com) or phone: 04186 18684

#### Contact Details for Committee members

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## Visit to Richglen – Rod Hoare

On 15th of October, 16 GOSOGA members took a day off from the pruning, spraying and slashing to visit RICHGLEN Olive Grove and All Saints winery in Rutherglen.

Phil Ward the manager of Richglen was on hand to welcome us and after a brief introduction took us on a tour through the grove and processing plant. There are approximately 33 000, five to seven year old trees planted at 8m x 5m .

QuickTime™ and a  
TIFF (Uncompressed) decompressor  
are needed to see this picture.

The trees have a cleared trunk of at least 800mm and are being shaped into 4m high hedgerows so that an overhead harvester can be used. Last season each tree produced around 9 kg, 15 kg per tree is forecast for this season. We talked about when to pick and Phil warned that colour is not a reliable indicator. His advice is find out what the customer wants and pick accordingly.

If fertigation is not possible, timing of the application of fertilizer is critical - dry conditions causes most of the fertiliser to be lost by evaporation. He applies a foliar spray of zinc and boron prior to flowering to aid fruit set.

### Weed & Pest Control

Phil applies up to 4 applications of paraffin oil

to control black scale when crawlers are active. Once the outer shell hardens oils have little effect. Natural predators such as parasitic wasps have been introduced in a controlled area.

### Processing

The processing plant is a hybrid Westphalia system designed for serious continuous production. The plant is run continuously for approximately 6 weeks.

### Cold Storage of fruit

Phil indicated that he had successfully held one batch of around 80t of fruit in cool storage for 10 days before processing.

### Pickling

Demand for pickled olives is increasing dramatically and there is a supply shortage.

Manzanilla

is the most sought after fruit. The olives are pickled in a brine solution in plastic barrels and left for about 10 months – there is no need for expensive processing equipment, no bruising or slitting the skins.

Iain Towers then 'navigated' us to Rutherglen where we had a substantial hamper lunch followed by a leisurely look around All Saints winery before being navigated back to Euroa, the pruning, spraying and slashing – brilliant day, great fun. Thank you to Phil Ward and the organizers.

### Ghin Ghin Farm Store & Café

Scott Lawrence, who is one of our members and designed the new Oi label has just opened an olive concept store in converted stables on his property at Yea. He sells his own label of oil and olives as well as olive related homewares and gifts (soaps and bath oils). The Ghin Ghin Farm Store and Café is licensed and will be serving simple food with an olive bias including Oi tapenade on an olive platter.

### Australian Olive Association

We have had a request from the Australian Olive Association to encourage GSOGA members to join the AOA. Members might like to join at the 50% reduced price of \$121 for members of a regional association such as GSOGA. The site is [www.australianolives.com.au](http://www.australianolives.com.au)

### Golden Olive Award

Ron Turner, a founding member of GSOGA has been awarded a silver medal for his pickled olives and a bronze medal for his extra virgin olive at the Olive Producers (NE Vic) Inc. Golden Olive Awards. Ron processed 200 kgs of

pickled olives last year and produced 600 litres of oil. Ron and fellow GSOGA member Ern Hunt have developed a method of pickling their olives that enables his organically grown fruit to be processed on the farm, without chemicals.

### Advertising in Pickled & Pressed

Are you interested in advertising in future editions of Pickled and Pressed for a nominal charge. If so, please send expressions of interest to Irene Laing: e-mail: irenelaing@mac.com

### Around the Grove

Peter Hanlon - Escarpment House, Mansfield, Olive Crop 2005

My crop this year was picked 14/15 May 2005, off approximately 200 trees from a grove of 500 Correggiola that are 6/7 years old. Irrigation was stopped a fortnight before picking.

235kg of olives were picked by hand (mainly on the 15<sup>th</sup>), using aprons, and then dumped into olive crates. Picking took 80 man hours using friends. A meeting of the GSOGA suggested that \$18 an hour was the rate of pay for picking olives, this equates to \$1440. Fortunately friends do not charge.

Olives were delivered to Markwood for processing on 16<sup>th</sup> May. After processing about 55 litres of oil was obtained, taken home and stored all on the same day. Acid level of oil was 0.3%. Extra, extra virgin olive oil.

The oil was allowed to settle for 35 days and then racked off into 110 x 500ml bottles

unfiltered, sealed with a tamper proof cap incorporating a pourer insert.

Home made labels were produced on my computer and glued to the bottles; the bottles were then retailed for \$10 each. I am directing my oil to the gourmet food market.

Processor: EV Olives, Markwood.  
Bottles: 500ml Dorica  
Enclosure: 31mm screw cap with integrated pourer.

### Comments

- a. It is intended to again pick by hand in 2006. In 2007/8 rakes will be used and the olives dropped into nets on a frame. From 2009 it is hoped to have sufficient olives to employ a picking contractor.
- b. Can anyone suggest a cheap oil filtration technique?

Peter Hanlon

### The Birds

Many of us lost a lot of our crop to birds last year. Does anyone have any 'successful show and tell' deterrent tips they are able to share?

### **Education Day Conference**

Iain Towers, Rod Hoare and Andrew Laing will be organizing an Education Day/Conference in the New Year. More on this later but the day will focus on quality, marketing, processing and harvesting.

### **25kg crates for olives**

Last year we tried to purchase 25 kg crates for olives but the supply ran out before we got our order in. If you would like us to try again to purchase in bulk please contact Ron Turner so we can gauge the interest and get our order in early and avoid disappointment.

Ron Turner 5790 5217 e-mail:  
[rtberry@pacific.net.au](mailto:rtberry@pacific.net.au)

### **Pruning and harvesting equipment hire**

To help with harvesting and pruning and hopefully to reduce the need for members to buy expensive equipment the committee will be purchasing a trailer and mounting on it a compressor, pneumatic harvesting rakes and pruners. The trailer and equipment will be available for hire by GSOGA members.

### **2006 GSOGA Food Co. Pty Ltd Upcoming Events & Festivals**

12 March	Mansfield Harvest Festival
18 March	Yea Autumn Festival
August	Goulburn Valley Wine Expo, Alexandra
October(TBC)	Euroa Show and Shine
October(TBC)	Taste of Goulburn Seymour
11 November	Alexandra Show

If you are willing and able to help out on a stall then please get in contact with Denise Pavic: e-mail [pavic@netlink.net.au](mailto:pavic@netlink.net.au)

Elizabeth Spanjer who has been an Association member and Shareholder for 5 years died on 16<sup>th</sup> November in the Warringal hospital after complications that lead to pneumonia. She was 74 and will be buried in Yea on Monday 11am at the Yea cemetery following a service at Scotts church.

### **Feedback and Contact Details**

I will be pleased to receive feedback and look forward to hearing from you if there are any items you wish to include in future issues.

Please advise Kaye Ashton of any change of address or e-mail so that we can keep you informed of what's going on. Corresponding via e-mail is preferred.

Irene Laing