

PICKLED AND PRESSED late SPRING 2009

President's Report

Dear Members,

Welcome to the beginning of the 2010 Olive season. By now hopefully all your trees will have flowered (or be about to flower) and gentle zephyrs will be pollinating and setting fruit for a great 2010 harvest.



Since taking on the presidency at the last AGM there is much to report.

Upper Goulburn Food Wine and Culture Group - As part of GSOGA's continuing development I have taken on a committee position with UGFWCG and as such we have had access to a variety of opportunities. Several members took part in the "Taste of Melbourne" exhibition and also the "Worlds Shortest Lunch".

One of our members also took up the opportunity to take part in the IGA Supermarket promotion "Champions Fare" to showcase local food and has been shortlisted to have their olive oil marketed by IGA for several weeks across the 8 Regional and Metropolitan IGA stores.



Ian Towers and John Phillips wait for customers at the Food and Wine Expo.

GSOGA Committee – We are pleased to welcome two new members to our GSOGA committee. Peter and Kerry Tull, from Murrinstone Olives in Yea, have joined our group and are a welcome addition of new ideas and energy.

At our last meeting we also discussed a GSOGA Christmas dinner and decided that at this time of year, finding dates that people don't have something else on, related to Christmas, was just too difficult. Instead, thanks to Kevin Whithear ...

"I have been unable to discover any God or Goddess with the Olive Oil portfolio. In Ancient Greece Olive Oil was considered the 'Food of the Gods' so there was apparently no need to have any particular deity to look after it.



Perhaps we could have "Food of the Gods" as the theme? "...

So perhaps a "Post Harvest – Food of the Gods" celebration is in order for June or July 2010. We also thought to combine it with a new seasons GSOGA oil tasting competition.

Suppliers Guide – Due to much diligent work by Sam Hicks (UGFWCG secretary) we now have funding for a web site for an online Suppliers Guide for our region. This will be the first step in setting up a published version which will be distributed widely both in the region and in the metropolitan area. Sam is doing a photo shoot of several of GSOGA member's product as part of this development across 4 of our regional shires in the Upper Goulburn Area. A special thanks to those members who loaned their labeled produce for the shoot.



AOA & AOA V – you will have noticed in the photo of the Food and Wine Expo that the AOA "taste test" banners and promotional material were used – again as has been the case at the Royal Melbourne Show and other places where the taste test has been run, it was the children who were more able to discern the "fresh" Australian Extra Virgin Olive Oil as opposed to the imported 7 year old oil. Because this campaign has been so successful the AOA is about to move to the next phase of their "Education Program" to market to the public our own excellent Australian oils.

I would also like to recommend to you all, that if you have product (olives or oil), to sign up to the new AOA "Code of Practice" (all the information is on the AOA web site)– this will give you the right to incorporate the AOA promotion logo into your labels and thus be part of the Australia wide advertising campaign. *(For those of you who attended the GSOGA AGM, John's parting remarks at the meeting in Gooram were off the cuff and not correct. It IS required to join the AOA to sign up to the code of practice; AOA V membership on its own isn't enough. Ed.)*

New GSOGA Database – Kevin Whithear will be contacting all members shortly with a short questionnaire concerning areas of your grove operations which may help us to assist you in cutting various costs. "If we know where our product is we will be able to direct people to it If we know who does your processing we may be able to assist others in your area....etc, etc. So when you see this questionnaire please spend a few minutes filling in the details as it may be beneficial to you, as well as to others in the association.

Best wishes for the Yuletide Season and may all your Olive trees be bountiful with fruit. Stay Fire Safe for the Summer

Rob Mitchell.

ODE TO OLIVE OIL

Near the murmuring
In the grain fields, of the waves
Of wind in the oat-stalks
The olive tree
With its silver-covered mass
Severe in its lines
In its twisted
Heart in the earth:
The graceful
Olives
Polished
By the hands
Which made
The dove
And the oceanic
Snail:
Green,
Innumerable,
Immaculate
Nipples
Of nature
And there
In
The dry
Olive Groves
Where
Alone
The blue sky with cicadas
And the hard earth
Exist
There
The prodigy
The perfect
Capsules
Of the olives
Filling
With their constellations, the foliage
Then later,
The bowls,
The miracle,
The olive oil.
I love
The homelands of olive oil
The olive groves

Of Chacabuco, in Chile
In the morning
Feathers of platinum
Forests of them
Against the wrinkled
Mountain ranges.
In Anacapri, up above,
Over the light of the Italian sea
Is the despair of olive trees
And on the map of Europe
Spain
A black basketfull of olives
Dusted off by orange blossoms
As if by a sea breeze
Olive oil,
The internal supreme
Condition for the cooking pot
Pedestal for game birds
Heavenly key to mayonaise
Smooth and tasty
Over the lettuce
And supernatural in the hell
Of the king mackerals like archbishops
Our chorus
With
Intimate
Powerful smoothness
You sing:
You are the Spanish
Language
There are syllables of olive oil
There are words
Useful and rich-smelling
Like your fragrant material
It's not only wine that sings
Olive oil sings too
It lives in us with its ripe light
And among the good things of the earth
I set apart
Olive oil,
Your ever-flowing peace, your green essence
Your heaped-up treasure which descends
In streams from the olive tree.

– Pablo Neruda

Meet your Committee – President's profile

In light of the recent retirement of long-serving GSOGA President Andrew Liang, and the fact that some members were unable to attend the AGM held in September, Rob has been kind enough to introduce himself with the following profile:

Amanda and I live on a 320 acre farm outside Merton. In September 2005 with the help of some of our children and 2 German "WWOOFers" (Willing Workers on Organic Farms) we began the planting of 750 olive trees. We planted Frantoio, Corregiola, Kalamata and Jumbo Kalamata varieties. As we both came from a medical background in Melbourne we had little knowledge of the Olive industry. I thought the best way to get the most useful information was to join the GSOGA committee and meet people in the industry. This has proven to be a great thing to do and although the learning curve has been steep, we have made many new friends and consider we now have enough knowledge to convert the produce from these trees into either pickled fruit or into oil.

Over the next editions of Pickled and Pressed, we will be including a short profile of the other committee members.

Rosie Garner

Our roses have grown so tall we can barely see over them out into the vineyard and olive trees. This would be due to the ridiculous heat and the water they receive. Like the vines, the olive trees have masses of flowers and seem to be overloaded with potential fruit so if we can keep the water up to them it should be a good cropping year. During November the roses were stunning, covered in huge fragrant flowers but with the almost constant onslaught of Feb style heat they are now burnt to a crisp.

We did have a good lot of oil this year so looking forward to even more next year

Apulia Grove - Heathcote

There have been some fairly major works carried out at Apulia Grove over the past little while as we are heading towards the completion of our retrofitted portable classroom into salubrious accommodation (we're moving to the farm!). Unfortunately we didn't have the gutters and spouting fixed during the recent rain, but the olive trees have definitely benefited. From the modest 600kg we picked this year, we look to have an early estimate of 150% increase in yield for 2010! This is at Heathcote, without irrigation on the trees and will therefore depend greatly on the rainfall over the coming months.



Charles and I also attended the Royal Melbourne Show to assist with the AOV stand and taste testing. Charles spent most of the week interacting with the public either as a taste test "host" or promoting our own label. We were mostly interested in gathering consumer feedback on the product (very positive) as we had a total of 100L of oil from the 2009 harvest. It was also a great way to educate the public about the difference between Extra Virgin, Virgin and other grades of olive oil as most people still believe this has to do with the processing, not the oil itself. We feel that it was a successful week, and worthwhile for us to sublet the stand space from AOV for our stall as we managed to sell about 10% of our product and we were "discovered" by the owners of a boutique butcher shop who were so impressed with the oil that they now stock it for us!

*A sense of humour goes a long way
when you're undertaking the long
hours involved with the RMS!*



Charles in front of the business side of the AOAV stand. We “rented” the space from AOAV.



Kent Garland, GSOGA treasurer promoting his olive oil at the Royal Melbourne Show.



GSOGA members promoting the “Fresh is Best” message of the AOA educational campaign.

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