



# Pickled & Pressed Winter 2009

Well the harvest is in for almost all of us and as usual there are the usual mixed stories for you to read. Thank you, David, Carl, Anthony and Rosie – we all love your tales.

We produced some excellent Manzanillo oil which the processor was very excited about and some fairly robust Frantoio that is still settling. The very excited and robust birds, especially the rosellas and currawongs were also delighted with our crop. About 100 currawongs descended from the high country on Anzac Day as uninvited guests and pigged out on our fruit. Next year we must produce more fruit so we have a half decent crop to take for processing. We then had 5 and then 6 stray cattle pee-ing and poo-ing on our pasture and then munching the younger trees, heart breaking and expensive as we have had to install an electric fence to keep them out and it will be another two years before they will fruit again. Next year Jerusalem!!

But it hasn't all been bad, we are now officially NASAA certified and the trees look pretty and healthy. Last year's oil all sold and most of this year's has been spoken for due to repeat orders. Following on from last year's AGM we have taken advice from David Arnold to have the strips between the rows ploughed, harrowed, fertilised and seeded with perennial grasses and clovers so that the whole grove is being actively managed and producing good ground cover that we can slash and throw under the trees as mulch.

Ceilidh Meo has offered to produce Pickled and Pressed in the future. Please continue to support the Association and send your tales to her.

Thank you for your support and good luck.

Irene Laing

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Link to our website: <http://www.goulburnstrathbogieolives.com.au>

## President's Report

### **Dear Members,**

Welcome to winter, the sound of rain on the roof, and some good excuses to sit by the fire!

Three themes for this President's Report – The Harvest; AOA Victoria; Bush Fire Safety

#### **The Harvest:**

Firstly, I hope you are all feeling reasonably good about your harvest; for us it has been a classic case of quality versus quantity and seeing the silver lining in some clouds. The quality was good, but the quantity was certainly down after problems with pollination in a wet and windy November, and a military style invasion by currawongs down from the high country. As for other growers, we found that our black scale had been thoroughly fried by the high temperatures in the summer – so that was one thing we could stop worrying about. But I am afraid that the olive lace bug proved tougher and more persistent – so the weaker trees were still showing lace bug effects at the end of the season.

#### **AOA Victoria – Subscriptions:**

Secondly, you will remember that the AOA has been revitalising itself over the last two years – and has started to take some significant action to support growers – including small growers. In particular it has launched the Australian Extra Virgin campaign and introduced the Code of Practice to support that campaign. To fit with that process, what used to be called the VOC has evolved into a branch of the AOA – becoming the AOA Victoria (AOAV). And the AOAV is now working on putting its finances back into order – after a couple of years in which it did not collect any subscriptions. We will soon be putting out a request to GSOGA members to pay the 2009-2010 subscriptions, and we will be asking you to pay the \$33 AOAV subscription at the same time.

So you will see at the bottom of this edition of Pickled and Pressed a flyer from the AOAV which explains the AOAV activities for which the \$33 will be used. Please read this flyer carefully – so that you have the background to the request for the subscription.

#### **Bush Fire Safety:**

Thirdly, we have spent significant energy thinking about fire safety. Happily GSOGA members did not suffer badly in the fires; Tom Stianos had a few singed trees, but there was no serious damage or threat to people. However, there was a strong sense of “That could have been me” as we looked at pictures of burnt-out cars and houses. For Irene and me it was a wake up call; we had always seen our house as defensible; but the only road out is through dense timber to the north, and the forest – with its threat of intense radiant heat – is only 200m away. So we decided we had to create another option for ourselves, and we have installed a concrete fire shelter.

Every grove is different, but we may not be so lucky next time. Please take ten minutes to think about what you can do to give yourself and your family a second chance if the worst happens. If you are interested in taking part in an informal discussion group about fire safety, please send me an email and we will set up a session.

Best wishes for a warm winter - and lots of water in your dam. And, to keep up the learning, you will see flyers at the bottom of the newsletter for a workshop on olive pests, and also a soil workshop run by Maarten Stapper

Andrew

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## Rosie Garner

We picked on Thursday 18th July after the rain and it took 4 of us dedicated people 10 hours to do 20 trees and mostly by hand. Leon had bought a pneumatic hand picker which worked pretty well and it did the job a bit faster than I could do it. We had 2 trees to do next morning in the freezing cold, literally they were frozen! But pick them we did and they all went over to Olive Processors Central Victoria that morning. I have to say we were very pleased with the outcome and although our weight was down on last year's total, we actually got a lot more oil back!! So I am happy! Just for interest, we had 394 kilos from 20 trees. And 70 litres of oil.

Not all the trees had fruit and the ones which did we netted because we had every parrot and currawong from Victoria at our place. The trees below the vineyard (40 new ones which went in 2 years ago) had a good crop on them but the birds got the lot! Rob Morphet has bottled it and we have 18 cases. Enough to be able to sell alongside our yummy shiraz!

Our cellar door is open and the sign at the gate will say "Open" when we are there so if any members are passing and would like to try a drop of the good stuff please pop in. You can always call us if it isn't the weekend and if we are home, you are welcome!

Hope everyone has had a good harvest despite the challenging growing conditions.  
Cheers Rosie

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## Pickling? Over It! – Amanda Mitchell

We picked 320 grams of olives from our 18 month old year trees 2 years ago, and after a lot of research, discussion and fun pickled them into one jar, tasted great! Last year 3.8 kilos was still fun, we pickled the olives into several plastic juice bottles then after 10 months transferred them into presentable glass jars with the final flavourings, the family enjoyed the resulting delights over the summer and we basked in their compliments.

This year we picked 230 kilos of mixed Kalamatas, Frantoios and Correggiolas, not enough to send for oil and far too many to comfortably pickle! However, after struggling with various quantities of "Butchers" salt and vinegar, six, 80 litre olive barrels now sit quietly fermenting in the back of the shed waiting to be unleashed in November on the unsuspecting family and friends in large quantities to pickle and bottle themselves!

Next year? OIL, no matter what.

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## Update Gang Gang Grove, Mansfield – Anthony Brown

Harvesting for Gang Gang was done by hand during the last weekend in May. This year around 240 trees yielded fruit (from 430) and the crop was moderate. We harvested 600 kgs and still have about 400 kgs left on the tress. Our lesson this year was that after 5 years of getting friends to pick the fruit, the appeal is waning and getting pickers is harder and harder. So we have made the decision to have the trees shaken next year having realised that feeding and drinking 10 people over 2 or 3 days costs not much less the the cost of auto harvesting!

The quality of our fruit was large, as was the size – beautiful, plump, shiny and well packed with oil having yielded around 18% from the pressing. So only around 90 litres this year. The fruit would have been better pickled this year due to the high quality however there seems to be no one doing commercial pickling anywhere. If you know of anyone, please contact me on 0417 882223.

Thanks to Rod Hoare for doing our pressing and assisting,

Our black scale has left an indelible mark on about 30% of our grove but the good news is the extreme summer heat killed the lot of them. Our lace bug problems from 3 years ago haven't returned and the affected trees have made a full recovery and fruited well this year.

Rainfall for the area has been patchy since April although the ground is still moist from the early June rain. Hoping other GSOGA members have had a successful harvest.



### Rivermist Organic Olive Grove Update – Carl Engel

Rivermist Organic Olive Grove have for several years now pressed our own oil. Being organic we had to have a certified processor or else our oil was not certified organic. By having our own press on the grove, it enables us to pick our olives at the stage of ripeness we want. 2009 has been our best oil yet, but the better quality oil had a drawback of waiting for riper olives also allowed birds to grow fat on the luxury of better food.

I do not know if our skill at operating the press was the reason we had an excellent yield or whether it was the ripeness of the olives but we are tickled pink this year with our produce. There is a lot of skill in pressing and each year we add a bit of information to the operation manual. Most of the extra information this season was on how to clean up more efficiently after pressing. We are also investigating drying the waste pumice and using it for fuel.

Anyway, we are pleased that we did the trial of delaying the harvest until the olives were at optimum ripeness. One thing which hurt us in general last year was that the bottles went dramatically up in price. This forced us to look for a cheaper bottle. There are several requirements in sourcing a bottle. The main two being cleanliness and quality of glass. After several attempts my son who has a business in China found a reputable manufacturer and has received the first shipment of bottles and also ships bottles to Europe. He has imported 250ml, 500ml and 1 litre Marasca type bottles in antique green glass and at a very competitive price which includes the cap and built in pourer. If you want a quote from him. His name is Alex Engel and his email address is [alexe@laserlife.com.au](mailto:alexe@laserlife.com.au). Give him your email address and the quantities needed and he will email you a good price. Alex has information of a briquette making machine that makes briquettes from the waste left after pressing.

We now also pickle our own olives and are very pleased at how well they are received by the public. I hope Pickled and Press continues to inform members about changes in the industry and thank Irene for her keenness in promoting the Association.



## Update from David and Marion Carmichael, Thornton

Two years ago we reported, (Pickled and Pressed Winter 2007), about our dramas with deer defoliating our trees. Well with the addition of a deer fence and the passing of two years we have just had our first modest crop from our larger trees.

To the right is one of the sorry trees and below our \$10,000 worth of deer fence.



We had never harvested before, so were quite raw. We worked in with the Ogilvie's whose property is near ours and they and some of our friends picked with us and we went and helped them and some of their friends pick their crop. Our harvesting for oil was with rakes and a portable net. With 4-5 people around the net we quickly stripped a tree and moved on. This should be OK for the smaller trees for a few years, but the larger trees this year were quite a reach and I'm sure that as others have found out, friends and nets can only work for a year or two. We finished up with about 270 kg of olives which made us some 75 l of oil and further 60 kg which we are pickling. Not exactly a paying proposition, but experience for what hopefully will be a bigger harvest in the future. We probably picked a bit early, getting 18.5%, but the oil was a beautiful green oil with a strong taste. Some of the team in action are shown below.





## Australian Olive Association Victoria

President: Dr Gwynedd Hunter-Payne

Secretary: Anne Rathjen

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Pakenham

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### **THE GOOD OIL ON RENEWING YOUR AOAV SUBSCRIPTION**

#### **What the AOAV achieved in 2008:**

The AOAV Sensory Panel was set up with training and testing of volunteer members taking place at the NMIT Epping campus Sensory Laboratory. The panel meets monthly.

The AOAV attended the 2008 Royal Melbourne Show and represented the Victorian industry under the Australian Extra Virgin (AEV) brand. This provided opportunities for boutique growers to attend as exhibitors to promote and sell their produce at a subsidised rate. Filmed as part of the 7:30 report it was important in the exposure of imported oils. This led to an additional set of actions on a national level to tackle cheap, imported oils that do not comply to truth in labelling criteria.

#### **What the AOAV is setting out to achieve in 2009 and beyond:**

The AOAV Sensory Panel (under the leadership of Claudia Guillaume Modern Olives, and working in conjunction with the Modern Olives Sensory Panel and invited experts) has been invited to judge the 2009 Extra Virgin Olive Oil component of the Fine Food Awards at the Royal Melbourne Show. This is recognition of the standard achieved by the AOAV panel.

The AOAV has applied for two substantial grants from the Victorian Government. The first grant has been secured from the Department of Primary Industries (DPI) to develop a database of all Victorian olive growers. The DPI is seeking state industry peak body participation to establish horticultural and agricultural databases designed to allow effective communication with growers in Victoria. The catalyst for the DPI funding was the difficulty that the government had contacting horse owners following the equine influenza outbreak. Knowing who the growers are in Victoria can only help us grow the industry and communicate effectively in the instance of a bio-security issue.

The second opportunity for funding has been made to Regional Development Victoria (RDV) for the promotion of AEO. This grant is still pending final approval, but would see \$10,000 for promotion of the national AEO campaign to take place at the Royal Melbourne Show and their pre-show promotion in Federation Square and again provide the opportunity for potentially 10-20 boutique groves to promote and sell their produce at the Show, with preference being given to Victorian groves that have signed up to the Code of Practice. This promotion is being undertaken with the support of the AEO's consumer marketing campaign.

Later this year, an intensive sensory course is being organised at the NMIT Epping campus, which will take growers through a range of topics such as identifying defects and evaluating good oils. Places in this course will be limited and members of the AEO will be given priority. This will be a great opportunity for growers, processors and anyone with an interest in understanding the sensory component of assessing olive oil. Once details have been finalised all regional associations will be notified.

#### **How grower subscription supports the AEO activities.**

The AEO can only work successfully if it is supported and funded by the growers that it represents.

The AEO is the peak olive industry body for Victoria and whenever the AEO applies for government assistance or grants they expect the industry (that is all Victorian growers) to put in matching funds. The AEO can often do so in part by showing in-kind contribution by volunteers (members of the sensory panel at the RMS and the councillors on the AEO for the database, etc) but the AEO is also required to provide cash contributions. In other words the olive industry can only source funds from government if the industry is prepared to contribute.

After years of not doing much the AEO is suddenly doing a lot all at once in 2008 and 2009 and the aim is to continue promoting and working for the Victorian olive industry. However, the only income (other than government grants) that the AEO receives is from member subscriptions. The AEO will not be able to source any additional government funds without money raised from grower subscriptions.

Thank you for considering AEO membership for the 2009-2010 year.



**Federation of  
Biological Farmers Inc.**

*"Our group aims to bring together farmers who believe in biological farming, whether they are already biologically farming, certified organic, biodynamic or just wanting to know more about soil health and sustainable biological farming for the future"*

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*FBF Inc. present 'Healthy soils through communication'*

## Dr Maarten Stapper

As featured on the ABC Television Australian Story "Back to Earth" June 1 2009



*"A man with some fascinating ideas on how to manage our land better."*

"As an advocate for biological farming, Dr Stapper has paid a high price for promoting a greener, cleaner way to grow food. Originally a CSIRO scientist, he left when it became clear his views on biological farming were incompatible with his employer. Today, he travels the country to educate farmers on how to use less chemicals in their soil and on their crops." *Back to Earth, Australian Story ABC Television*

Dr Stapper began a career in science and agriculture forty years ago, has international experiences on four continents and is a former senior scientist with CSIRO. He is an expert across a wide spectrum of agricultural areas including wheat agronomy, farming systems, participatory research and agricultural information technology. Dr Stapper says biological farming is not just about soil health through improved biology and carbon – it is also about profitable farming by lowering inputs and associated costs, making plants, animals and land more resilient in variable climate, and utilising natural resources for increased productivity – and is thus ecosystem based. His focus is on biological farming that helps farmers improve the profitability of their operations by harnessing the power of natural soil processes with practices creating healthy soils while reducing heavy reliance on fertilisers and chemicals.

Cost per day including morning tea on arrival, lunch and handout notes:  
\$50.00 Non FBF Inc Member  
\$40.00 FBF Inc Member and Early bird registration (prior to 20 July 2009)  
Note: all prices are quoted without GST as FBF is not GST registered.

### Dates and time

**9.30 morning tea for 10 am start 3pm finish.**

**September 1, 10:00am - 3:00pm - Glenormiston**

**September 2, 10:00am - 3:00pm - Warragul**

**September 3, 10:00am - 3:00pm - Nagambie (FBF Inc. AGM)**



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29 June 2009

### OLIVE PESTS AND DISEASES WORKSHOP

Robert Spooner-Hart will be conducting a workshop on pests and diseases of olives, together with Leandro Ravetti at TimberCorp, Boort, on Saturday 25 July 2009.

The workshop will focus on findings from their current HAL-funded project on olive fruit diseases and disorders, but will also cover our previous work and new RIRDC project to evaluate new chemicals for key pests in olives. Leandro Ravetti will also talk about their recent experiences of IPM of black scale.

The workshop will commence at 11am and conclude by 4pm. Lunch will be provided.

The workshop is on the Events section of the AOA website, [www.australianolives.com.au](http://www.australianolives.com.au) and people wishing to participate or seek further information can contact him directly through the website.

Prospective participants should contact Robert Spooner-Hart for catering purposes.