



Queensland Wine Guild visits Tastes of Rutherglen 2015.

Day 1

Our small group came together at Tullamarine on Wednesday morning and departed for Rutherglen. Our first stop was Mitchelton Wines on the banks of the Goulburn River. A trip up the lift to the observation tower is a must which we all undertook before, after or during tasting of the wines on offer.

Our next stop was Tahbilk which drips history at every turn. A walk through the underground cellars finds you coming up in the winery where vintage was in process. After tasting the wines including their signature Marsanne we proceeded to the Nagambie Bakery for lunch.

This is where James began his tasting of Victorian pies.

We left Nagambie and proceeded to Rutherglen via Congupna, Katamatite and Yarrawonga pausing at Warrabilla Wines.

Here we met up with John and Shirley who had driven down from Queensland.

Warrabilla Wines produce high alcohol wines with the Durif coming in at 17.5%. Although high in alcohol they are well balanced and everywhere we went people mentioned Warrabilla.

From Warrabilla we travelled the short distance to our digs at the Rutherglen Motor Inn on the western edge of Rutherglen.

After checking in we took the short walk into town for a group dinner at Taste @ Rutherglen.



Tasting at Warrabilla

Day 2

Nine o'clock, on the bus, drive away. We headed for the King Valley, stopping at Brown Brothers for a tasting.

We then went to the Milawa Cheese Shop for a cheese tasting and coffee for those so inclined.

We drove to the southern end of the valley for a tasting at Chrismont who still have the cellar door in the double garage attached to the house. A new cellar door could be seen under construction about 200 metres away, cut into the side of the hill looking over the vineyard. It will be nice to visit this cellar door on its completion.

Lunch was taken at Dal Zotto, where we had a tasting, post lunch.

We then moved on to a tasting at Sam Miranda where the wine list is extensive with many new varieties.

That evening we all went separate ways to sample the good establishments of Rutherglen.

Kathy and I dined at the Thousand Pound Wine Bar where we grazed on tapas style cold servings of smoked salmon, pate and cold meats and cheese. Peter and Carol dined at Tuileries, as did John and Shirley. James started his explorations of Corowa.



Peter and Shirley bookend the wines we tasted at Sam Miranda

Day 3

First stop was the Rutherglen Wine Experience and Visitors Information Centre where we were too early to pick up our tickets and bus passes for the Tastes of Rutherglen.

So it was on the bus and drive away to Morris Wines for a tasting. It's tough going when morning tea consists of delicious Topaques and Muscats. After our morning tea it was off to Mount Prior where our hostess engaged our crew in banter where the first quote of the trip emerged.

James, "I get paid to talk."

Our hostess, "Then someone is getting ripped off."

After our late morning entertainment and tasting it was off to The Pickled Sisters for lunch, followed by a tasting of Cofield Wines.

The bus then found its way to Renaissance Chocolates where we watched chocolates being hand-made, and had the opportunity to consume something other than alcohol for our afternoon tea.

Back to the Visitors Centre where we picked up our tickets for the next two days.

That night Kathy and I dined on Tapas at Tuileries Wine Bar.



Our hostess at Mt Prior

Day 4

With three bus routes to pick from we all went our own way at our own pace. Peter and Carol, and John and Shirley opted for Bus Route A.

Kathy and I took Bus Route C which dropped passengers off at Rutherglen Estates, Stanton & Killeen Wines, Campbells Wines, and we alighted at Buller Wines and undertook a tasting. As we were finalising our purchases we were offered places at the fortified master class, 'Sweet and Sticky in the Cellar' as several people had failed to turn up. For the price of a \$20 meal and wine ticket each, we sat down to Botrytis Gold (Botrytis Semillon 2006), Calliope Rare Rutherglen Tokay (A Robert Parker 100/100 "Perfect Wine") with a base from 1945, Calliope Rare Rutherglen Frontignac with a base from 1968, and Calliope Rare Rutherglen Muscat (another Robert Parker 100/100 "Perfect Wine"), all with matching desserts. What a way to have morning tea all while being entertained by the winemaker, David Whyte. There were five of us at this 11 o'clock Masterclass, which was a delight, and for the other seven who were booked in, their loss was our gain.



Morning Tea at Buller Wines

We left Buller Wines, seeing James briefly as we passed and caught the shuttle bus to Lake Moodemere Vineyard. By this time more people were getting about and we found a table overlooking the lake and sampled the lamb and a couple of glasses of wine. At this point I should explain that the \$50 ticket included your wine glass, a bottle of water, and two "meal and wine" tickets which could be exchanged at any participating winery for the meal on offer and a glass of matched wine. Additional glasses of wines could be purchased for \$6 to \$10 per glass. Additional meal and wine tickets could also be purchased at the wineries.

We enjoyed the ambiance of Lake Moodemere, sitting overlooking the lake with a jazz band entertaining us.

But time to move on as we caught the bus to Warrabilla Wines where we had the leg and thigh of duck served by Taste @ Rutherglen with the Warrabilla Durif. The music here was a little louder and we sat off to the side in the winery where it was a bit quieter. The music had people up dancing and Warrabilla got our award for atmosphere.

That night Bruce and Kathy, and Carol and Peter dined at Jones Wines and Vineyard for a Producers Dinner where all the produce came from within 30 kilometres of the winery. Each table was hosted by a farmer who later spoke about his produce. The food and the matched wines were excellent.



Warrabilla Wines

Day 5

Sunday we caught the Route A Bus, bypassing Chambers Rosewood, but stopping off at Pfeiffer Wines where we had a tasting as it was quiet, being early in the day.

After Pfeiffers, we stopped at Cofield Wines where we had Beef Bourguignon Tart with the matched 2013 Sparkling Shiraz. What a beautiful tart, flaky pastry with beef bourguignon assembled to order.

We resumed our tour and the next stop was Valhalla Wines for a goat dish with a matched 2013 Durif. John and Shirley had been there the day before and they got wonderful service in the winery but missed out on the food. We had the opposite!

Back on the bus we bypassed All Saints Estate (On Saturday John and Shirley found it understaffed for the event!) to go to St. Leonards Vineyard for our final stop of the day.

James managed to get to almost all the vineyards on all 3 bus routes during the 2 days of the Tastes of Rutherglen Festival. The rest of us only managed those vineyards on Bus Routes A and C. James also managed to taste a few of Poacher's Pies of Rutherglen for breakfast! They were pretty good! And were often sold out by lunchtime.

That night we had pizza in the courtyard adjacent to Taste with a balladeer playing acoustic guitar to entertain us.

Day 6

Once again, it's 9 o'clock on the bus and drive away to Beechworth where we stopped at the Beechworth Bakery for coffee, and James consumed another pie. At the time of writing I am still waiting for the pie report. James had organized for us to go to Giaconda. We were treated to a tour of the winery and tasting of the 2012 Chardonnay in the tunnel. In 2008 Giaconda had crew of miners come in and use 2.5 tonnes of explosives to dig a tunnel under the winery, which is now used to store the barrels. The wine is left in barrels at a steady 16 degrees in the tunnel for two years before bottling.



Giaconda's tunnel makes an excellent cellar

For lunch it was back into Beechworth to the Beechworth Brewery for pizza and beer sampling. Yes, this is a wine trip, but most of us are versatile. Carol and Kathy tried the Beechworth Sparkling Honey and Ginger, and the Beechworth Sparkling Honey and Lemon – both non-alcoholic!

After lunch we went out to Pennyweight Winery for a tasting, where there was robust discussion about the merits or otherwise cork. Pennyweight wines are still bottled under cork. The discussion was concluded by our hostess who stated "There is no romance in a screw." Pennyweight is owned by another branch of the Morris family of Rutherglen.



Back in Rutherglen we concluded the tour with a group dinner at Tuileries Restaurant, where there is a wine buffet. For \$23.50, you could taste all ten wines on offer in buffet style and return for as many glasses as you pleased. During the Tastes of Rutherglen Festival, they had been serving only wines from Rutherglen Estates, but on this night we enjoyed wines from several vineyards from around the area.

Day 7

Move out day. 9.00am, on the bus drive away, first stop the post office for those with surplus bottles to post them home for the exorbitant sum of \$46 per case.

Off down the highway to a tasting at Maygars Hill Vineyard, which is just off the Hume Highway, and on the edge of the Strathbogie Ranges.

Lunch at a bakery in Seymour, James tasted another pie, and then we proceeded to Tullamarine Airport for our trip conclusion.

Favourite wines,

Peter: Hanging Rock Macedon NV Brut Rose (tasted prior to joining the tour)

Cofield Wines 2012 Pinot Noir Chardonnay Sparkling

Mitchelton 2012 Marsanne

Carol: Stanton & Killeen NV Reserve Sparkling Tempranillo

Buller Wines Calliope Durif 2010

Campbells Bobbie Burns Shiraz 2006

James: Warrabilla 2012 Durif

Buller Wines Calliope 1940 Rare Tokay (100pts Robert Parker Jnr)

Scion 'After Dinner' Vintage Port.

Shirley: Buller Wines Calliope Rare Tokay

Stanton and Killeen 2013 Durif

Morris Old Premium Rare Muscat

John: Buller Wines Calliope Rare Tokay

Stanton & Killeen 2013 Durif

Brown Brothers 2009 Patricia Shiraz

Bruce: Warrabilla 2013 Parola's Limited Release Durif

Buller Wines Botrytis Gold 2006 (Botrytis Semillon)

Buller Wines Calliope Durif 2010

Kathy: Buller Wines Botrytis Gold 2006 (Botrytis Semillon)

Campbells 2012 Bobbie Burns Shiraz

Mitchelton 2011 Airstrip Marsanne Roussanne Viognier

Best Cellar Door Experience by unanimous decision.

Mt Prior Vineyard near Rutherglen, and Giaconda near Beechworth.





