



Issue 4

Vintage View 2006

- in the Vineyard (beep beep)

Another vintage is upon us and the growing season has seen it all - we've had rain, heat waves, humidity AND of course - birds!

With good rainfall so far this season, the vines are going well - almost too well! While bunch numbers were controlled by selective pruning and shoot thinning, actual bunch weights are up by as much as 50% on last year because of the rain. In short - another bumper crop this year.

Unfortunately, with veraison this year about a week early, the birds had an early start too - our priority therefore was to get the nets on! With the help of the Minister for Fun and two of his Cabinet members (Linda and Morrie who thought they came up from Melbourne for a holiday), the nets were on in record time. Fortunately, they fell in love with our Rosé and could be bribed back into the fields for a second day's toil.

A heat wave hit the Granite Belt in early December - the likes of which have not been seen for some time. With the mercury nudging 40°, the challenge was to keep the new vines alive and in good health until temperatures dropped - thank Bacchus they did!

The next challenge was the humidity - by itself not so bad; however, it provides ideal conditions for the scourge of the vineyard - mildew. However, Chevy (the vine whisperer) was up to the task, ready and waiting with regular monitoring and spraying.

We have so far remained clean and with the good grace of Bacchus, our 2006 wines will be fantastic!

Vintage with a View

If you are thinking of visiting the winery/cellar door in the next couple of months, the time is ideal as this is the time for crushing, fermenting, pressing, plunging and racking the grapes or wine for the 2006 vintage.

The 'goings on' can all be seen from our Winery viewing window in the Cellar Door - watch the fun whilst sipping on one of our medal winning wines. Early March brings the double benefit of Stanthorpe's APPLE & GRAPE FESTIVAL on 3rd, 4th and 5th March - we'll see you in the park for good times and fine wines!

Who let the Dogs Out?

The first release of our white port is due February 2006 under the label of **ridgemill estate SLY DOG**. We can hear you ask - why Sly Dog? One of the Minister for Finance's war cabinet members was undertaking serious quality assurance and product awareness and on tasting the white port was heard to exclaim *drinks like a wine and kicks like a port, very sly!* Hence, the **Sly Dog** legend was born....

Keep a close eye on the kennel tho' because **ridgemill estate's Howling Dog Port** is also due out soon. A friendly piece of advice on this one - not for drinking during a full moon or you'll find out why it's called **Howling Dog Port!**

Our Happy Place

We'd like to make *our happy place* - your happy place! Visit **ridgemill estate** and you'll be greeted with a warm smile and a friendly welcome, you'll enjoy a personalised tasting of our wines and if that doesn't put a smile on your face, then our fantastic prices will do the trick. And if this still isn't enough, we have a great range of funky gifts for all occasions - not the usual run of trinkets or souvenirs.

Escape!

Our big news is that now, once you're tired out from a busy day tasting wine in the Granite Belt, we have just what the Minister ordered - **ridgemill ESCAPE** - funky corrugated **Cabins in the Vineyard** - individual and luxurious studio style (and not a doily in sight). By morning, you'll see why we call **ridgemill estate - ridgemill escape - our happy place**.

Check it all out via our new web address www.ridgemillestate.com

Bin End Sale

Our 2005 vintages are now available and we need to clear some wine - a great buying opportunity for our customers

2003 Cabernet Sauvignon \$6/bottle
or \$60/dozen plus \$10 freight/dozen
2003 Chardonnay \$8/bottle
or \$80/dozen plus \$10 freight/dozen

Another opportunity to put a smile on your face

Q&A with the Minister for Fun

Andrew asks *What is fining and what products do you use?*

- Fining is the clarification and removal of any harsh characteristics from the wine to give it a smooth and rounded mouth feel. Many products are used for fining wine, each with its own purpose - such as egg whites, bentonite, fish products and other man-made additives - all of which (by law) are listed on wine labels.

Retail Therapy at ridgemill estate's Cellar Door and Gift Shop

The cellar door and gift shop offers a wide range of gift ideas - from themed cotton wine bags and embroidered silk wine bags to your special wine glass requirements. **Ridgemill estate** now stocks Riedel wine glasses in both the stemmed and non-stemmed varieties. These very special glasses (perfect for birthdays and wedding presents) do actually enhance the flavours of your wine and should be tried to be believed. We also stock **ridgemill estate** bottle openers (the better double action type) tasting glasses, funky coasters, a range of 'beaten' stainless steel items (jugs, pepper/salts, cheese/ paté knives), picnic sets (take a look at our wheelie picnic set - perfect for the long distance lunch). We also stock New England Larder preserves and relishes (locally produced) and a great range of local Pesto.

We have also gift wrapped a selection of our 375ml wines - a great present for the wine buff!



We look forward to seeing you at **ridgemill estate** for an **ESCAPE** visit soon!