



2007 Command
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Elderton BUZZ

Celebrating 30 Vintages

IN 1982, NEIL AND LORRAINE ASHMEAD HAD A VERY TOUGH DECISION TO MAKE...

Three years earlier, they had come to the Barossa to make a new life for their young family in idyllic country surroundings. Having found an amazing house that was surrounded by 72 acres of derelict old vines in the heart of Nuriootpa, they decided to buck the trend of pulling out their newly acquired vines (like so many were doing around them), instead nurturing them back to health.

1982 was crunch time. It was the year that Neil and Lorraine believed they had

good quality grapes that they hoped they could sell to an existing Barossan winery. As fate would have it, this was not an option. The Ashmeads were again faced with the concept of pulling their old vine treasures from the ground. In 1982, Australia had less than 400 wineries and the international market for Australian wines was minimal (to put it lightly). The culture of wine had not yet truly been grasped by most Australians.

Having been through three years of toil to resurrect these old vines and holding optimism for the future, the Ashmeads made the decision to start making wine

under the Elderton banner, paying homage to the name of the property that they had bought three years prior.

2011 marks the 30th vintage for the Ashmeads at Elderton and boy have things changed. Today, there are over 2500 wineries in Australia, producing staggering amounts of wine. Many of the 300 or so from back in 1982 no longer exist, or have been bought out and / or corporatised. But the Ashmeads (now the second generation) keep on with the traditions set all those years ago and remain devoutly family owned and operated. continued page 3

07 Command release

ONE OF THE GREAT PLEASURES OF BEING THE CUSTODIANS OF THE ELDERTON ESTATE IS THE JOY OF TENDING TO SOME OF THE WORLD'S OLDEST VINES.

These old vines are a beautiful resource and it is amazing to think that it was only 30 years ago that vines like these were being torn from the ground.

Today it is widely understood that from these older vines, winemakers can craft some of the world's most unique wines, and also some of the best. The advantage of old vines that is less well known is that the extensive root systems, that delve far into the earth, allow the vines to excel in less than ideal vintage conditions.

2007 was indeed one of those tricky vintages. Faced with drought over many years, high winds at flowering and extreme heat at vintage time, the vineyards of the Barossa were generally under-nourished. Yields were cut by half or more, simply as



a result of these tough conditions. Younger vines struggled to give their grapes the nutrients they were so desperately craving.

The Command block handled these conditions with aplomb though. Whilst yields were greatly down, quality was absolutely where we expect it to be every year. It is Elderton's belief that the great wines of the world should all be equally judged not only by the calibre of their greatest vintage, but also by what happens when the chips are down (and we are more than happy for anyone to do this with Command).

The 2007 vintage has been compared by the Ashmead brothers to the vintages of 2000 and 1995, where each of these years had their challenges and the resultant wines both made it into Wine Spectator's Top 100 Wines of the World in the year of their release. These vintages truly show their best early in the drinking window, and as such do not require the cellaring that is beneficial to most vintages of Command.

The 2007 Command has already had some great accolades, with both the James Halliday Australian Wine Companion and Robert Parker's Wine Advocate rating the wine at 95 points (both one point higher than the exceptional 2006 vintage!). Of course, the wine is still in the Excellent category of Langton's Classification of Australian Wine, and we are hoping and expecting more big things to come.

As the yields were only around 20 percent of the average, we do not believe this wine will be available for very long. We hope that you will grab some today and drink and enjoy the wine over the next 7- 8 years or so.

It is with great pleasure that we announce the latest release of our flagship wine – the 2007 Command Shiraz.

Tribute to a Baron

On 20 February, at the Declaration of Vintage 2011, the Late Neil Ashmead was inducted into the Barossa Barons Walk of Fame. This tribute has been placed in the footpath at Keil Gardens in Tanunda and honours a past Baron.

Each plaque represents a story of achievement of a Baron who has made a major contribution to the Barossa in the areas of wine, viticulture, gastronomy, heritage, the arts or community service.

Neil's plaque will be alongside other Barossa luminaries such as Cyril Henschke, Sidney Gramp and Max Schubert.





30 Vintages cont...

It has been an amazing 30 years, filled with success, tragedy, booms and busts, and of course many good times. Today, Cameron and Allister understand the cyclical nature of the agricultural business that their parents began, and in the tough times do the same as their parents did 30 years ago; continue with an air of optimism, working hard in the vineyards and winery to ensure that the best possible wines are produced and trying to constantly show great value as well as great prestige in the wines that are made.

After 30 vintages, it is definitely time to raise a glass and say congratulations to our winery that has achieved so much in the world of wine, and celebrate the hard work that has gone into making Elderton what it is today.

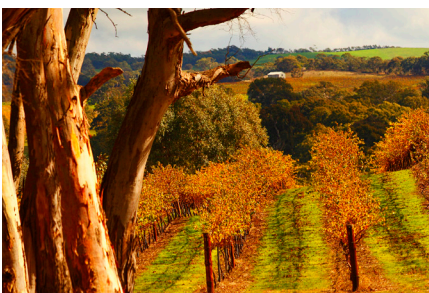
Everyone at Elderton certainly hopes you will celebrate with us!

Eden Valley New Releases

It is frankly astounding how well the wines from our Eden Valley vineyards have been received, and as such we are happy to announce the release of the 2010 vintage for all four wines in the range (Riesling, Chardonnay, Cabernet and Shiraz).

The 2010 Riesling has hit the ground running by already being judged as one of the Top 5 Rieslings in the country and was a finalist in the recently released Winestate Annual.

Richard Langford, our winemaker, believes that all four of these wines are much better than their 2009 predecessors and believes them to be astounding value for money.



Vintage Report



Since the last instalment of the Buzz, we are happy to report that it has rained – a lot. Whilst this has placed a lot of viticultural areas in hazard, with risks of mildew, Elderton looks to be sailing through reasonably unscathed. Peter Wild, our viticulturalist, is elated with the rains, believing the vines having had a great soak will be primed to produce some great fruit over the coming vintages.

... cooler temperatures, and the longer hang time will allow much of the fruit to develop amazing flavours ...

Winemaker Richard is also quite excited by the rains, meaning the onset of vintage has been delayed remarkably from the previous few seasons. It is his belief that the cooler temperatures, and the longer hang time will allow much of the fruit to develop amazing flavours before being picked in late March / early April.

The first white grapes were crushed on 7 March. Above photos show the first red crush and open ferment (17 March) - won't be long now til the winery is in full swing...

Six of the Best

WE HAVE BEEN ELATED OVER THE PAST FEW MONTHS TO SEE THE WORLDS' WINE SCRIBES WAXING LYRICAL ABOUT OUR LATEST RELEASE OF WINES.

It seems that the amount of 90+ scores we have been receiving has been bigger and better than ever before. Here is a list of our current release Estate and Elite reds and their accolades:

2007 **Command** Shiraz

95 points from Halliday and Parker

94 points from Tanzer

2008 **Ashmead** Cabernet

95 points Halliday

93 points Tanzer

2009 **Neil Ashmead GTS** Shiraz

93 points Nick Stock (Penguin Good Wine Guide)

92 points Parker, The Wine Front and Tony Keys

94 points Halliday

93 points Nick Stock (Penguin Good Wine Guide)

92 points Parker, The Wine Front and Tony Keys

92 points Tony Keys

91 points Ray Jordan

90 points Parker

2008 **Estate** Cabernet

90 points Parker

The amazing thing for us is the width and varied nature of these top wine reviewers and their preferences, yet they all seem to agree that the reds of Elderton are indeed a top drop.

Gallery



Above: Cate and Cap (loyal Elderton customers) hosting an amazing dinner and Command vertical tasting at their home - lucky guests!

Below: Cameron with Francois Chartier, Chris Fleming and crew at dinner recently in Canada.



Above left: Craig enjoying a 1996 Estate Shiraz.
Above right: Dave Humphreys - winner of the Command Magnum competition, "Elderton wines rock, awesome product, one of my favourite wines when entertaining".



Above left: some history recently passed on from David Obst, son of the Vineyard Manager prior to the Ashmeads owning the Estate - vintage workers from the early 1960s.



Above right: the Command block with wet feet, after 82mm in 24 hours in December.



Celebrating 30 Vintages of Elderton in Sydney in March.
From top left: Paul and Michelle Bressington; Alan and Margaret Griffin; Cameron with Steve Nelson; Jane, Neville, Bruce, Jill, Ian, John, Lyn, Jeffrey and Shirley; Bill King and Greg Miller; Brian Roberts and Di Jolly.

To share photos of you and your friends enjoying Elderton,
email jess@eldertonwines.com.au

New Additions

December was a busy month at Elderton, with the birth of two more Ashmeads bolstering the next generation of the family company. Cameron and Julie were first off the ranks, with Julie giving birth to William Neil Campbell Ashmead on 3 December (coinciding with the first day of the Adelaide test match versus the English, which as fate had it was not a bad day for Cam to miss!), giving a little brother to Angus. Rebecca and Allister then followed this miraculous feat with their own, a third daughter on the 15th, with the birth of Annabel Lucy Ashmead giving Charlotte and Sophie another sister.

These new additions to the family mean a couple of things. Firstly, the 2010 vintage of the Ashmead Cabernet Sauvignon will be dedicated to two new Ashmeads, and although it is a very small vintage, it is looking very polished at this early stage. Secondly, Elderton should be in very good hands when we are celebrating our 60th vintage in 30 years time, when these five children of the third generation are in charge.

