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# Elderton BUZZ

**WITH THE 2012 ASHMEAD BEING THE ONLY FLAGSHIP ELDERTON RELEASE THIS YEAR, WE ARE THANKFUL THAT WE HAVE A WINE OF THIS CALIBRE TO MAKE UP FOR SOME PEOPLE'S CLEAR DISAPPOINTMENT OF NOT HAVING A NEW COMMAND!**

The 2012 vintage of our Ashmead Cabernet Sauvignon is an absolute stunner and is definitely a wine that is going to turn heads, whether enjoyed this weekend or long into the future. First released from the much vaunted 1998 vintage, this very small batch wine is produced from some of the oldest surviving Cabernet vineyards in the Barossa and the world (between 70 and 80 years of age to our best estimates). The Ashmead has really challenged people's

notion that Elderton and the Barossa Valley are all/about Australia's best Shiraz.

Cabernet Sauvignon flourishes here, especially in cooler vintages such as 2010 and 2012. With alluvial, river silt soils over red and brown clays, the Ashmead Cabernet vines have been able to sustain a long life through the moisture retaining properties of the soils. This said, looking at the block today will break any viticulturist or wine lover's heart. It is a vineyard clinging to life, with many dead and evidently suffering vines dotting the landscape mainly due to a disease called Eutypa Dieback or more commonly Deadarm disease.

We will continue to nurture and love this block, being thankful for the fact that we are the lucky custodians of the vines, and for the small amounts of absolutely exceptional

fruit that they give us most years.

The 2012 won't be around for long as production is miniscule, but it is a delicious example of a perfectly ripe Cabernet Sauvignon, showing plushness, structure and a silkiness that is hopefully worthy of taking up some space in your cellar. Get in quickly.

*"It's elegant. It's fresh. It's lengthy. It just does its thing and remarkably well at that. It's as much boysenberry as blackcurrant, comes with more influence from fresh garden herbs than it does toasty oak, and shows no sign of alcohol warmth. It drinks very well, thank you very much, right now but under screwcap, with such good balance and understatement of tannin, it will live for a long time..."*

**95+ points**

**Campbell Mattinson, The Wine Front**



## A year without Command

Avid Buzz readers, Elderton drinkers and lovers of fine Australian wine will be sad to hear that March 2015 will be the first March in exactly 20 years that we will not be celebrating a new release of Command. The 1991 vintage was the last Command not to be released. Back then it wasn't because the fruit was not good enough, but was due to the ravages of a fierce economic recession that left Lorraine and Neil Ashmead with scarce resources, choosing the education of their children as a better investment than making Command that year.

Scroll forward 20 years and we get to 2011. A vintage that was tough. Very tough. Whilst we were praying for rain, after years of drought had threatened to take their toll on the century old vines at Elderton, we saw a vintage where it simply did not stop raining! Even reverse rain dances did not help us and the wines did not reach a standard that the Ashmead family were happy with. So the Command Shiraz, along with the bulk of the Elderton range, was declassified with many to never even see an Elderton label put on them.

This type of news is sad. It reaffirms that we are still farmers who must take the ample amounts of good results along with the

odd amount of bad, tough luck stories that forever keep you grounded as a primary producer. In the end, the decision to not release these wines was an easy one to make. Our reputation, that has been hard earned over 35-odd years of winemaking on the Elderton Estate, is simply too important to risk for short term financial windfall.

Whilst we love receiving great third party endorsement from wine shows and scribes, the best endorsement we believe we can offer is that if we don't think the wine is good enough then you will not see it in bottle with an Elderton Label.

In an ideal world, we would hope the trust that we have worked upon for such a very long time is your cue to continue supporting our humble family business and it is a trust that you know we will never take lightly. "Look after your customers and they will look after you,"

was advice given to young Allister and Cameron Ashmead from their father Neil in the mid-1990s. It is advice that has served the Ashmead family well through troughs and booms, and will hopefully continue for generations to come.

The good news for those that are devastated about the impending year ahead without Command stocks in your cellar, is that we have been squirrelling small amounts of the 2010 away to hopefully get us through the next 12 months. And for those brave enough to wait, the 2012 vintage release due next March is another absolute cracker.



## Vineyard and winery update

After a winter that started with much promising rain, it all seemed to come to a sudden halt. This left the vines a little dry, affecting the possible yield for the season ahead. Worry among the Elderton team set in that we would see our third very small vintage in a row (and 4 of the past 5).

This worry has abated mildly with the fact that we have just been through one of the mildest and nicest summers in recent memory. With temperatures not getting out of control the vines needed less water. Thus, we are a little happier with the quantity on the vines, and extremely happy with the quality hanging out in our three vineyards. Things look very promising for all varieties.

At the time of writing we have picked some Chardonnay and the reds will be picked early, coming in around mid-February through to mid-March. Richard has again assembled a team of internationals to help with the harvest and is very excited by the prospect of great vintage 2015 wines. He is also excited by the prospect of being all wrapped up for Easter and the Vintage Festival in April.



## Upcoming events

### **Lowdown Hokum Orchestra & Burlesque Revue Saturday 7 March 2014 @ Nuriootpa Town Hall**

Elderton hosts it's second event as part of 'Barossa Fringe' during the Adelaide Fringe Festival! "A wonderfully unique show that marries story-telling, hot hokum jazz and blues with burlesque for a one of a kind theatrical experience." Tickets through Fringetix.

### **Dinner @ Nomad in Sydney, 23 March 2015**

SOLD OUT - Four course dinner with Cameron and Allister in Sydney.

### **2012 Ashmead Cabernet Sauvignon launch @ Cellar Door, 28 March 2015**

Join Allister to celebrate the launch of the 2012 Ashmead with a Masterclass of back vintages followed by lovely lunch including lamb on the spit. To book contact Jodhi on 08 8568 7878 or jodhi@eldertonwines.com.au.

### **Vintage Festival in the Barossa, 15 - 19 April 2015**

Elderton will feature in the **Barossa Wine Chapters Auction and Lunch, 17 April** and at **The Feast @ Tanunda Showhall, 17 April**. For full details on the Vintage Festival visit [barossavintagefestival.com.au](http://barossavintagefestival.com.au)

### **Dinner @ Punch Lane in Melbourne, 30 April 2015**

Join Cameron and Allister for a four course dinner in Melbourne. \$130 per person. Very limited seats available. To book contact Karli on 08 8568 7878 or [karli@eldertonwines.com.au](mailto:karli@eldertonwines.com.au).

### **Ribs & Red @ Cellar Door, 5 June 2015**

After a sellout event last year, join us again for a true Barossan lunch. More details to come. Register your interest with Jodhi.

### **Dinner in Brisbane, 21 July 2015**

Register your interest with [karli@eldertonwines.com.au](mailto:karli@eldertonwines.com.au).

### **Barossa Gourmet Weekend, 14 - 16 August 2015**

### **Dinner in Perth, 27 August 2015**

Register your interest with [karli@eldertonwines.com.au](mailto:karli@eldertonwines.com.au).

### **Masters & Commanders weekend, 21 & 22 November 2015**

*For further details or to book your spot at any of these events contact Cellar Door via [elderton@eldertonwines.com.au](mailto:elderton@eldertonwines.com.au) or 08 8568 7878. See you there!*

## A tribute that tastes so good

The 2010 Ode to Lorraine seemed to just fly out the door and unfortunately has sold out. We have released the 2012 which is equally as delicious and ridiculously moreish!

Named after the matriarch (and Chairman of the board) of Elderton, the Ode to Lorraine is a dedication by her two sons to recognise the efforts and successes of Lorraine Ashmead.

Now, 10 years since the Ode to Lorraine superseded the CSM in our range, this is a wine that showcases the great Aussie blend of Cabernet and Shiraz (with a touch of Merlot).



Again though, we fear if you blink you may miss it as everyone at Elderton thinks this is the hidden gem in our range – just like Lorraine.

## In memoriam

Sadly, for the extended Ashmead family, Winifred Ashmead, Neil's mother and grandmother to Cameron and Allister, passed away late last year a week before her 98th birthday. Winifred was one of Elderton's greatest supporters and lead a life of adventure and fun, fortified by many bottles of Elderton. She will be missed by her loving family and all who met her.

## Fifteen

It is probably fitting that we will be releasing a wine called Fifteen, from a vineyard planted in 1915, in the year 2015. Confusing, but kind of cool as well!

This wine is sourced from our vineyard in the North east of Greenock in the Western Ranges of the Barossa. Planted 100 years ago by the Helbig family, this vineyard is a site from which the elite of the Barossan winemaking fraternity have fought to get the fruit for three generations. The fact is, the fight is now over - we own it!

This wine is made in minuscule amounts and will be released later in the year to the most loyal of Elderton supporters. This will begin a new era of impressive and extraordinary winemaking from the Ashmead family at Elderton.

It is a wine that will be sought after, owing to its quality and rarity, and is destined to become known alongside Command Shiraz as one of the Barossa's, and Australia's, greatest wines. Watch this space...



# Gallery



Clockwise from above: 1. Richard and Allister leading the Masterclass held at Cellar Door in December as part the Masters & Commanders weekend; 2. Allister at a Wine Australia tasting in San Francisco for Australia Day; 3. Cameron rode 120km in this year's Bupa Challenge during the Tour Down Under; 4. Joel and Lisa, from our US distributor Broadbent, enjoying a Masterclass in our Private Tasting Room; 5. Elderton truly is a family business - Annabel, Charlotte and Allister stuffed envelopes with the November Buzz; 6. Jess and Tush with Bish and Scott at the Masters & Commanders Cup in December.



Elderton's team enjoyed a Christmas Party at the Nuriootpa Bowling Club, where little skill was on display. Above: Jules Ashmead and Peter Wild (Vineyard Manager). Below: Jodhi and Tush ready to take Santa's order from Cellar Door.

Above left: Allister celebrating with the Pipeclay Beefsteak and Burgandy Club on their 50th anniversary. Above: The tennis rivalry continues... Allister and Cameron (in white) defeated Dan and Fraser from Standish Wines to retain the cup! Below: The 2015 vintage crew enjoying a well earned lunch break. Left: Marcus Huber and Cameron at a Zweifel portfolio tasting in Zurich.



If you are on our mailing list, but do not currently receive our email updates and occasional special offers, we would love to hear from you. Contact Cellar Door via 08 8568 7878 or email [elderton@eldertonwines.com.au](mailto:elderton@eldertonwines.com.au)

To share photos of you and your friends enjoying Elderton, email [jess@eldertonwines.com.au](mailto:jess@eldertonwines.com.au)