

## AUTUMN 2016

Dear "Pfriends" of Pfeiffer,

The 2016 harvest of our grapes and the vintage of turning those grapes into wine has just AND only just finished! It is amazingly early when I reflect back on vintages when we first came to Rutherglen, but seeing we start earlier now than we did 32 years ago, I guess it is only to be expected that we will finish earlier too. So as I write this letter to you I am reminded that I promised last time to tell you about **"The Life of a Winemaker"** as seen through my eyes, those of the wife of one winemaker, Chris and the mother of the other winemaker, Jen. Phew! What a mouthful.

The year for the winemaker is an ongoing programme, though not just for one year. Some wines take longer than the year of the vintage to be made, like red wines that mature in oak barrels for more than a year before being bottled. Then there are the "pfamous" fortified wines that mature forever in their special oak barrels and are being tended to all the time by the winemakers.

However, let's get back to the start of the year. As summer progresses during January and the grapes are ripening, developing lots of flavour and sweet fruit characters, Chris and Jen walk through the vines, plucking grapes from different parts of the bunches and different parts of the vine. They taste the juice, they crunch the seeds and discuss how close they think it will be till the grapes are ripe enough to harvest. Samples of grapes are also brought into the winery laboratory, to be manually crushed, juice extracted and tested for the scientific assessment as to when they are ready to harvest. Soon vintage will begin. At the start of February, the vintage crew arrive to join forces with Jen's permanent winery staff, Jamie and Steve. As Pfeiffer Wines are involved with an **International Exchange Programme** for winemakers throughout the world, each year we have many people apply to come to work and learn. Check out the inside of our Autumn newsletter to see the 3 "pfantastic" crew Jen had this year from 3 different countries, from France, from Portugal and from the Czech Republic.

**The first grapes to come in are the ones to make sparkling wine, followed by the white grape varieties, then red, then the jewels in the crown, with the fortifieds.** This year, with the dry conditions and the warmth, rather than heat during January, the various grape varieties got a bit confused and we had whites, reds and fortified varieties all being ready to harvest at about the same time. This meant the pressure was on...pressure on the winemaking team to crush, to press, to ferment into wine and to move into barrel all at the same time. The morning starts were early and the finish times at night were late. Jen staggered the times for her team but she was always first to arrive and last to leave. Chris was her "pfaithful" side kick doing the same.

Without going into the day by day work plan, the magic of turning grape juice into wine happens, the wines are cleaned up through racking, filtration and fining methods, are transferred into oak barrels if needing this type of time for maturation or into stainless steel tanks if they are to be bottled earlier. Jen's aromatic white wines, like our "pfamous" Riesling, are destined to be bottled as soon as possible after vintage to capture all those glorious aromas and flavours within the bottle.

Once the wines are in oak they need to be monitored closely to see how they are maturing. Samples are taken to be assessed in the laboratory. **Everyone thinks these tasting jobs are great fun** but it is really hard work concentrating on all the components of the wine while it is still 'a babe in arms'...or oak to be



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precise. To keep the wines in their best environment, the barrels have to be topped each week, the wines have to be stirred to keep the yeast lees in suspension and when the time is right, the barrels have to be emptied, wines prepared for bottling and then bottled. I wish it was as quick and as easy as it sounds on paper but for you, dear "pfriend", this is what you want...the finished product, in bottle ready to pour into your wine glass.

**Some wines are never completely finished, like the fortified wines I mentioned earlier.** These very special wines are a winemakers delight. The wines always need the winemakers influence, their skill, their love, their care and their nurturing. That is why Chris says they are like his children, his members of his family, loved, guided, nurtured and cherished. I call them the winemaker's gift to their appreciative public. Jen has embraced these wines as well and often delivers lectures to sommeliers and up and coming winemakers as part of their studies in wine science. She is happy to share the love.

**Winemakers also have to promote their wines,** to share their enthusiasm and their passion that keeps them making their delicious wines in every year, in every vintage. When you also look inside your newsletter, you will see the cities we are visiting in the second half of the year, at a venue hopefully near you. You too can come and share the passion that goes into each wine matched to the food that each restaurant will also passionately prepare to delight all our senses. Bookings are directly to the winery, so best to phone on 02 6033 2805 to reserve your place at the table.

Chris and I feel very fortunate that Jen has chosen the path of becoming a winemaker and will carry on our business, Pfeiffer Wines, that we started 32 years ago. It is a very busy life with lots of challenges but great rewards and at the end of each day, beautiful wine to drink.

Till next time,

Warmest regards,

*Robyn*

Robyn Pfeiffer.

Wife of one winemaker and Mother of the other!

PS Don't forget to be like us and hop on your hobby horse to one of our lunches and come along. You too can get an I ❤️ Pfeiffer Wines sticker...but I promise not to put it on your nose!