



All things infield

20 November 2009



Choose well this vintage

This coming vintage may be an unpredictable one as far as volume and fruit quality if the current weather pattern continues.

Being the busiest time of the annual cycle, preparation is essential. We recommend that you should not only focus on the condition of your vineyard, but early communication with your winery representative and developing a good working relationship with your harvest contractors, is a must. Infield is proactive in this area.

Each year before Christmas, we mail out an information pack which captures all the historical information about your vineyard from previous vintages. This is designed not only to give you peace of mind that we can meet your harvesting requirements, but gives you the opportunity to inform us about any changes of requirements for the forthcoming vintage. Appointments can also be arranged and if needed, a price for your harvesting can be negotiated.

Leading up to vintage it is important to ensure that all areas of your vineyard are able to accommodate large machinery. While this is particularly important for the operation of over-the-row harvesters, tractors and bin trailers also have to find their way onto your vineyard even if you are hand picking. Loading areas should also be accessible.

Sound trellis structure is essential: broken posts and wire can contaminate fruit, contribute to further trellis damage and cause machinery to breakdown, ultimately leading to delays in your fruit reaching the winery. Broken posts should be replaced and items such as weather stations removed to avoid being damaged.

There are a number of other time saving factors to consider:

- > Skirting vigorous vines will increase harvester efficiency
- > Ensuring that washdown facilities are adequate for pest and disease prevention
- > Crop protection sprays need to be applied with consideration of the potential harvest date
- > Find out from your winery any changes from the previous season that may need to be factored in to the management of your pre-harvesting and harvesting operations.



Supplier of the Year for 2009

Managing Director
Tom Ayers

Operations Manager
Sarah Paschke

Senior Viticulture Manager
Michael MacPherson

Viticulture Manager
Tim Bartsch

Irrigation Manager
Steve Fiebiger



Tipping Pinot in the Adelaide Hills

In-Field Ag Pty Ltd
10/24 Bridge St
Balhannah
SA 5242

tel +61 8 8388 4948
fax +61 8 8388 4984



Hidden treasure

Much has already been written about Jeff Gower’s legendary vineyard “Yandra”, famously located in what could be regarded as the backblocks of Balhannah, in the Adelaide Hills.

This steeply sloping property with a south-easterly aspect possessed the remnants of an old apple orchard, so typical of this area, and the ruins of a burnt out house. It wouldn’t have been an inspiring sight for most, but in 1969 city medico, Jeff Gower, saw the property as an opportunity to turn his hand to agriculture. Cattle-rearing was the obvious choice but the property was soon turned over to horticulture after Jeff discovered his green thumb and the delights of the cut flower industry with his wife Anne.

In 1998 Jeff commissioned a 10 hectare vineyard on the property constructed by Infield, at that time trading as Adelaide Hills Vineyard Contractors. The vineyard was expanded in 2005 after it was recognised that the site boasted unique soils and could proudly claim that it was among the earliest cool climate site in the Adelaide Hills Wine Region.

From 1998, until Jeff’s retirement in 2003, the vineyard was fully managed by Infield, carrying out all the routine seasonal tasks and lovingly hand picking the resulting crop. While Jeff now likes to do most of the work himself he is still happy to rely on Infield’s advice concerning pest control, spraying and general management practices.

The vineyard grows quality chardonnay, merlot and sauvignon blanc grapes and is fully contracted to Wirra Wirra. Jeff’s grapes find their way into the prize-winning “Greg Trott” series of wines, all of which are legendary in their own right. Wines from this vineyard have been listed in James Halliday’s list of top Australian Wines.

In 2009 Jeff was happy to recommend Infield’s contracting and management services to the judges for the WISA Supplier of the Year Awards. In a word, Jeff said he regarded our services to be “excellent”.

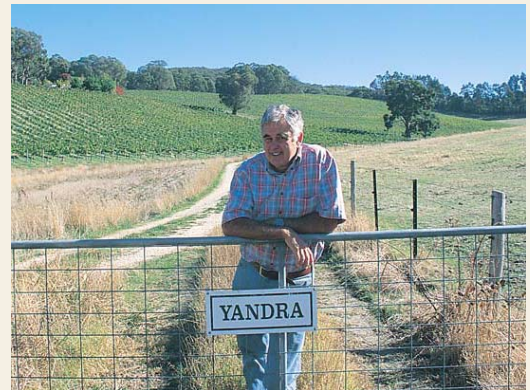


Photo: Courtesy Jeff Gower

PHOTOGRAPHS: TOP TO BOTTOM

1. Jeff Gower looks forward to a bright future at his “Yandra” vineyard in the Adelaide Hills
2. Second-stage vineyard development underway
3. Looking east from the top of the hill over recently pruned vines



Riverland Field Days 2009

Staff from Infield attended the Riverland Field Days in September this year. Leaving on Wednesday morning, Charles said he was able to compare the difference in growth stage between the Hills and the Riverland, the Hills at that time being at bud burst and the Riverland vines with shoots of up to 15cm. He noted that one of the most striking differences was how many vineyards were not pruned and were not being watered. This was a noticeable increase on what was apparent last year.

Field days were down in both exhibitors and attendance, with the Wednesday being the better weather it was also the biggest crowd. On arrival, a plan was set to see most of the exhibits in the first day with the intention of focusing in on the more technical displays and revisit points of interest on the second day.

As expected, casual interaction resulted in conversation on how things currently are on an individual and industry basis. By way of example, one local ag contractor has changed the direction of his business and now specialises in “clay spading” mixing clay into sandy soils to a depth of 300mm, digressing somewhat from his traditional base in fencing and hay contracting.

Talking with a representative from Constellation gave Charles a better picture of the Riverland and Sunraysia, offering some personal opinions of the state of the industry and expected recovery time. Sadly for many growers in the Riverland they will never return to primary production as known in the past. Berri Estate will continue to see a reduction in grape intakes over the next three years.

The cold reality of this is that some Riverland growers will decide to leave the industry, sell off their water allocations and take the government exit package.



Michael MacPherson
Senior Viticulture Manager

Staff profile: Michael MacPherson

Having begun his career in the viticulture industry as a vineyard labourer and machinery operator, Michael has accumulated a wealth of practical experience. Michael took the opportunity to advance his career by undertaking tertiary study and graduated from the Charles Sturt University with a Bachelor of Applied Science in 2006. He proved himself not only to be a high achiever, but demonstrated an outstanding ability to apply his knowledge to his chosen field.

Michael's current role is to oversee the day-to-day running of Infield's viticulture department and co-ordinate the company's management services to wine grape growers in the Adelaide Hills, McLaren Vale and the Adelaide Plains. His experience includes the provision of monitoring services, spraying programs, seasonal vine management work and assessing trellis and irrigation infrastructure maintenance. Michael provides technical support and consulting services to a range of clients and has experience in growing fruit to a wide range of quality grades according to winery specifications. He has a common sense approach to his work which is appreciated by all who deal with him.



Outside of work, Michael's personal interests include farm management techniques that encourage biodiversity, and the economic potential and viability of native species, as associated with climate change. This interest is clearly demonstrated in the management his own rural property in the Adelaide Hills.

Setting the limits on salt

In a recent round of Salt Update seminars growers were warned of the threat to exports and the image of wine from Australia could be very significant if salt levels, mainly sodium, continue to rise in grapes and wine. Tom Ayers attended the Fosters seminar in McLaren Vale and provides this update:

Fosters are obviously taking the rising salt levels in wine seriously with Fosters growers receiving test results showing sodium levels in batches of fruit delivered last vintage. The benchmark of 60 mg/l is set by the Swedish import MRL (Maximum Residual Limit). Some growers delivered grapes above this level last vintage.

Tom believes that A and B grade growers should be particularly concerned if their sodium level is above or near 60 mg/l because the volume of their blends is much smaller and therefore harder to dilute a high sodium batch in the winery.

Salt is building up in vineyard soils from irrigation with saline water (even slightly saline), and sustained drought. Reduced rainfall means less salt is naturally leached from the soil and for many growers water restrictions mean the capacity to include a leaching fraction with irrigation is very limited.

While the Adelaide Hills wine region is blessed with higher rainfall and a magnificent spring rainfall this year, the problem of salt accumulation in irrigated soils is real for every wine region. Just because you can't see the problem does not mean it is not there.

There are some simple management strategies to monitor and manage salt levels in the soil solution.

- > Install *solusamplers* to measure EC in the soil solution regularly or take soil samples to monitor salinity.
- > Calculate the timing and quantity of the leaching fraction if it is required. As usual, timing is everything.
- > Reduce irrigation
- > Use suitable mulching products
- > Consider sub-surface irrigation

No one wants to see their fruit rejected due to high salt levels but according to Tom the biggest problem related to this whole issue is that of increasing soil sodicity and the associated decline of your soil structure. This is particularly relevant in dominantly clay soils. A soil test, including a dispersion test is the best way to understand the status of your soil. This is where Infield can help.

It was a pleasure

"Thanks to you and your team on the great work with our vineyard.

The bonus payment was nice to receive and certainly unexpected, even thought the Pinot Noir took the trophy at the Royal Adelaide Show"

Dot O'Connor

11/11/09





Spreading the word about fire season preparation

Soaking winter rains have been a bonus this year filling dams in the Adelaide Hills and promoting lush growth in vineyard mid rows and headlands. 2009/10 is already shaping up to be a long hot summer and it is important to ensure that all open spaces are appropriately cleared of tall grasses and fallen debris.

Danger can arise with the use of vehicles and machinery in cropped areas, with 25 fires each year in South Australia being caused by radiant heat and flammable vegetation being caught in exhaust systems.

The CFS advises landowners to:

- > Check the exhaust systems of vehicles and remove build up of flammable material caught in the exhaust pipe.
- > Restrict off-road driving to tracks where grass is low, and park only in cleared areas.
- > Always carry a knapsack spray or fire extinguisher on the vehicle.
- > Do not carry drums of fuel on tractors.
- > Never refuel any machine while the engine is running.
- > Maintain a farm firefighting unit to use when conducting farm operations.

The CFS also advises that mowers should not be used in dry grass, stubble or crops on days where there is a chance of fires starting and spreading and gives specific precautions about the maintenance of farm machinery

For more information please visit the CFS website www.cfs.sa.gov.au



Soaking winter rains have filled dams and promoted lush spring growth in the Adelaide Hills Wine Region

**CFS Bushfire
Information Hotline**

1300 362 361

In brief . . . The WET debate and who's really to blame?

“The reference to the rebate in our industry statement relates to addressing some practices that we believe are contrary to the spirit of the scheme and undermine its credibility.

The two key areas are double counting of the rebate on blended wine and a retailer-driven strategy to engage grape growers to sell directly to retailers. The latter exacerbates the oversupply, undermines brands and gives even more power to retailers.”

Nick Carne, Winemakers' Federation of Australia
13 November 2009



Roll out those hazy lazy crazy days of summer . . .

Many among us mourn the halcyon days of the wine grape growing industry and wonder what went wrong. Generally speaking, the industry has put itself in a situation of over supply which like the world economy, has proven to be unsustainable. Many factors are currently exacerbating the industry's recovery and those looking for an easy fix, will be disappointed. Water shortages, salinity and carbon emissions are not for the faint-hearted and those "home brand" bulk wines have been a major concern for many at the small end of the industry.

This past year has seen Infield venture into new areas. Of note are our hay contracting services, fencing projects and involvement with the Lower Lakes bio-remediation. That is not to say we have turned our back on our established clients. Diversification simply means we are able to help you take your businesses to the next level with fresh ideas and clearer understanding.

It has been a busy twelve months since the inception of the idea of producing an "in-house" newsletter, this being our sixth. I have received encouragement for my efforts, and perhaps stolen a little along the way. Anthony Madigan (The Week That Was), you've come up with some great song lyrics and I've also been known to have the odd Phillip Adams moments. None of this would have been possible without some great team work.

Here's looking forward to 2010.

Ed

All things infield



Scene in a shed near Lobethal . . .

November 2009

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STOP PRE\$\$

This vintage Infield is offering you a 3% early payment discount for invoices paid within a 10 day period (hourly rate machine harvesting only).

For vineyard owners who rely on hand picking, we continue to offer very low margins on our hand picking rates.

Researched, written and compiled by Wanda Hopkins, except where otherwise acknowledged.

Contributors: Tom Ayers, Michael MacPherson and Charles Rosback.

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IN-FIELD AG PTY LTD BALHANNAH SA

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Proud to be part of the
Adelaide Hills Wine Region