



WINTER  
2018



## GREETINGS FROM FEATHERTOP

*Kel Boynton*

Greetings from Porepukah where the autumn leaves are trying to hang on and are a blaze of colour. The mountains are that deeper blue that heralds the onset of winter and the grass is of that verdant lushness that is often found in these sub alpine valleys.

What a glorious place to live or to holiday. More and more young families are making the sea change and taking up residence in one of the several alpine villages around Bright. Of course, Porepukah is the leading go to destination with the Alpine Shire's work in a total street scape make over, and of course the renovated and reopened Punka Pub. Add to all of this, beautiful wines that are being grown by the half dozen small boutique wineries and the wonderful choices available for dining out and one can understand why so many are taking the sea change and making a new life up here in paradise.

The 2018 vintage was an absolute cracker. Apart from a touch of downy mildew which

was quickly bought under control without too much damage; and that belt of heat in early January that caused some sun burning on exposed grape branches, the season then steadied and gave us day after day of dry and warm weather (26 – 32 degrees). It was the perfect ripening conditions, and the vines responded like never before giving us the most highly flavoured and deeply coloured grapes we have ever had.

We started the vintage at the end of February and finished at the end of March without a wet day to speak of. For the first time in thirty years I went away in early March, leaving Nick in charge. He had "done" the previous three vintages working beside me and then under my tutelage so this year he was to be basically "on his own". How did he go? He excelled! Fermenting all the wonderful, best ever fruit into even more wonderful and best ever wine. Nick had the help of Riana, a keen wine enthusiast who was here to get some hands on experience before deciding on whether to change career from a practising engineer to winemaking. Riana is the daughter of close rowing friends of mine and is now enrolled to study wine making (see next page). Nick also had the help of a great hand harvesting team led by Evan, Jason and Michael along with half a dozen back packers from Canada and

## DATES FOR YOUR DIARY

### Queen's Birthday Weekend

Saturday June 9 – Monday June 11  
Open 11am-5pm

### Meet the Maker Dinner

Thursday June 21  
Elm Restaurant, Bright

### Ode to Bastille Day Dinner

Saturday July 14, 2018  
\$95 members/\$105 general

### Riedel Wine Tasting

Sunday August 5

### Save the date:

30th Birthday Celebrations  
Saturday November 24, 2018

Info and bookings go to

[www.feathertopwinery.com.au](http://www.feathertopwinery.com.au)

FEATHERTOP





the U.K who kept the grapes coming in at a good steady pace. Variety after variety came in at optimum ripeness of flavour and colour. By the time I got back from my "leave vintage to Nick" fishing trip to Darwin, it was all harvested and fermenting. You can read more about Nick's report on vintage in Getting To Know Our Vines and Wines on the next page.

The fishing was also amazing!

Now that autumn has almost gone we are busily preparing the soil between every second row to plant a special type of clover that will lay down organic nitrogen annually. The chemical analysis of our grape juice is near to perfect and if we can increase the nitrogen content by two to three percent, perfection will be achieved.

As you know Nick and I have always held the belief that zero or minimal intervention is the only way to go. We don't make chemical wines here. It's all about letting the climate, soils, varieties and the clones of varieties, the amount of leaf exposed to sunlight and the crop load produce grapes that need nothing other than some crushing, pressing and temperature control to deliver outstanding wines. They are wines that truly reflect the district, the vineyard site and more exactly the micro climate. Most vineyard managers (manipulators) add nitrogen from a bag or at best via bird or animal manure; while I am attempting to have it delivered for me. It was hard to find an annual clover that was winter and spring growing as most grow on well into the summer or are perennial which then competes aggressively for soil moisture with the vines. As we don't irrigate here, that's just not on! We shall see over the coming years if I have been successful. I have left the grass growing in the other second row so as not to have the vines growing potentially in too luxurious a level of nitrogen - I hope that all makes sense. My wines are good and if I can continue to improve them ever so slightly every year we will all benefit.

Every season I write another newsletter to keep you up to date with all the goings on of a small family business. And every time I write I wonder how I can convince more people to simply pick up the phone or iPad and order a case or two from us, or better still join our wonderful wine club. Family businesses

need grass roots support to survive, not like the big destructive liquor chains owned by global multinationals who don't even know the names of their staff.

My pick of our new release wine is the 2017 Vermentino and the 2015 Shiraz. But I must sing the praises of our 2015 Merlot. I have been watching this one develop and have repeatedly announced this wine to be of tremendous quality but still a tad young. Well last week I had a guest for dinner and of course we drank a few nice reds, but I have to tell you that at the end of the evening we were all looking for that one extra glass to complete an otherwise great night. Fortunately, I had an open bottle of 2015 Merlot sitting on the bench giving it the equivalent of 24 hours of decanting. WOW what a wine. It blew all the others out of the water and truly confirmed by belief in the variety. You must get some of this outstanding wine and age it for a few years or if you can't do that, then give it a very generous decanting.

Let me have my family brag. My eldest daughter Mieke who has returned to the valley, her "home country", to take up photography as a full time occupation and financial earner, has had an incredible success at her first Victorian showing at the Australian Institute Of Professional Photographers. She presented twelve photos winning awards with eleven of them. Overall, she won best travel photographer and was runner up on best landscape photographer and what she is most proud of, the award for best print.

You can find it and even purchase her photography through:

[www.miekeboynton.com](http://www.miekeboynton.com)

Mieke, not only can you row fast and push a bob sled at Olympic levels you are now hitting the heights in photography. Another small business relying on grass roots support. Well done, we at Feathertop are all proud of you, especially me.

Pruning starts as soon as the leaves fall off the vines usually at the end of May start of June, and continues right through the winter until the end of August. Basically, we cut off eighty five to ninety percent of the last seasons' growth and leave the mature frame and one or two one year old canes

that are arched over and attached to wire. In the spring the buds on this or these canes burst and the whole cycle starts again. Pruning is very exacting if you want to achieve high quality grapes for the next season and harvest. We prune to eight to ten buds per meter of row depending on variety. Those that have big branches like Vermentino have fewer buds retained and those with very small bunches like Pinot Noir have more buds retained. From healthy canes and buds we will get two bunches per shoot and we know the desired yield for each variety. We will also know from past vintages the average bunch weight. So prior to beginning pruning you do a simple calculation to get the correct number of buds that in turn give you the right number of shoots carrying the right number of bunches. Then if the season is normal your bunch weights will be close to average and hey presto! You have the correct yield to give the best possible fruit!

However, it is easy to get it wrong. If there is too much fruit there is very little flavour and the vine will struggle to ripen the grapes. Too little and the cost of production sky rockets.

I love pruning. I love being outdoors without any noise pollution. I listen to the birds, the cows, the breeze and the mountains. That's my music. Even though it's winter it is warm enough most days, unless of course the wind gets up or it rains. Those days are the ones you go find another "inside" job like maintenance or office work. Right now the sun is shining and I have spent the cold part of the morning writing this newsletter so now I'd better put the pen down, get outside and get to it.

Hope to see you soon, and buy some Feathertop Wine.

Cheers, Kel

### Coming soon! Feathertop's 30th Anniversary Celebrations!

That's right – it has been 30 years since Kel Boynton established his winery in Porepunkah!

To celebrate this incredible milestone, we have invited back some special guest chefs from years gone by who, along with our super star Alfresco Restaurant chefs Simon, Robbie and Caroline, will work together to create a magnificent 6 course dinner matched to Feathertop's Estate grown cool climate wines.

Tickets and more information will be released soon, so save this date in your diary now!

**Date:** Saturday November 24  
**Time:** 6:30pm



### Vintage 2018 Report

As harvest 2018 comes to an end, the vineyard and winery crew can finally lift their heads from the sea of grapes and revel in what has been some of the finest vintage conditions we have seen in the last 30 years. Hearts were in our mouths in early-to-mid summer as unseasonal humid conditions continued unabated. This dramatically increased the risk of disease and moulds in our precious grapes and expectations of a good vintage were put on hold. But come late January, the weather changed and started an ideal run of dry, stable weather that continued for the entire harvest. Perfect temperatures that hovered in the high 20's to low 30's coupled with earlier than normal cooling of nights, allowed for a long, even accumulation of sugars, the preservation of

natural acidity and steady tannin and colour development in the grapes. With 22 varieties in the vineyard ripening at slightly different times, picking logistics can be a nightmare. But this year they all lined up like ducks in a row with the majority of varieties being picked on flavour and not purely on sugar ripeness. First out of the blocks was an early pick of Savagnin on February 21st and the last parcel of fruit was Shiraz from the hill, delivered into the winery on March 23rd, just as the first drops of rain since January started to fall. The wines are obviously still a work in

progress but the early signs are pointing to this being one of our greatest vintages across all red and white varieties. Complexity and depth of flavour and amazing acid and tannin structures look like being hallmarks of this vintage. We look forward to watching these wines develop over the coming months and years and will keep you informed of their progress.

As Kel mentioned earlier, Riana Mollard, daughter of Summit Cru member Shani Mollard, joined the Feathertop team for some vintage experience during the recent 2018 harvest. Working across the winery, lab and vineyard, Riana excelled in all facets of vintage operation and showed she had a natural flair for winemaking. She has since enrolled in the Winemaking course at CSU. Thanks for all your hard work Riana, we're keeping your seat warm for your return next vintage !!



### GET IN EARLY FOR OUR EOFYS! STAY 2 NIGHTS, GET 1 FREE

It's back! The ever popular Feathertop Accommodation End of Financial Year Sale. Indulge with a mid-week escape in either our Peggy Adelaide Suite or the Mt Buffalo Apartment and you will receive one night FREE\*! Or pay for 4 nights for the price of 3! You choose! Your package includes:

- Local produce from our Providore on arrival
- A bottle of Feathertop Wine
- Continental Breakfast items
- Valid for 12 months on any midweek stay\* (Monday-Thursday).
- Pay now, choose your travel dates later,
- Save up to \$325 per night

So whether you choose to visit for that next snow holiday or for a relaxing city escape in the summer time, Feathertop is the perfect Alpine Valleys base to explore - any season, any reason!

\*Excludes public holidays and subject to availability.

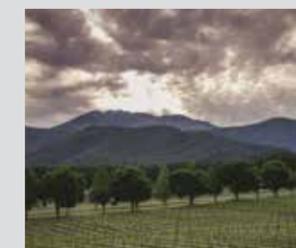
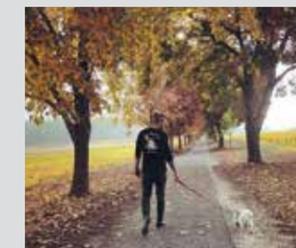
Deal ends 5pm 30th June 2018.  
Available online or phone us.



### Our favourite Insta moments!

Share your experiences with us

@feathertop\_wine  
#feathertopmoment





FEATHERTOP

Summit Cru

WINE CLUB  
NEWS

Join today at [feathertopwinery.com.au](http://feathertopwinery.com.au)

## FEATHERTOP MEMBER EXPERIENCE – VINEYARD PEDAL AND PICNIC TOUR



Members Gavan and Donna Keenan from Melbourne always like to do a bit of cycling on their visits to Bright, so doing our new experience tour Pedal and Picnic in the Vines enabled them to combine the best of both worlds – their love of Feathertop Wine and cycling!

Their experience included a personal meet and greet and wine tasting in cellar door and the chance to explore some of the most secluded and breathtaking parts of our vineyard. Whilst they were enjoying their ride, their "vineyard service angel" Eliza set up a private picnic spot under a shady red gum tree amongst the vines for them to enjoy a sumptuous lunch with Prosecco – heaven!

If you would like to do the Pedal To Picnic Tour for your next visit to Feathertop (or something else unique!), visit our Experiences section on our website to book online and for more info.



## Your Member Bonus Case Offer has just got even better!

One of the benefits of being a Summit Cru Wine Club member is the flexibility to choose extra cases of wine at the same quarterly membership prices (mixed \$177, reds \$190 and \$165 whites), up to four times a year.



We value your support and loyalty and we want to make it easier for you to be able to enjoy Feathertop Wines more often, so we've now lifted this four case restriction - you can now order unlimited additional bonus cases whenever you want!

This offer is valid on any of our standard release white and red wines only. (For sparkling, reserve and fortified wines, members can enjoy 15% off any dozen.)

To place an order for additional wines anytime, simply log in as a member on to our website (straight case sales only), or phone us on 03 5756 2356 or email [summitcru@boynton.com.au](mailto:summitcru@boynton.com.au).

## Sneak preview of the June Summit Cru Wine Club Case

*Dont forget, if you need more of these fantastic wines, you can order at your member prices anytime and as much as you like!*

### 2017 Vermentino

The highly anticipated new vintage of the Vermentino is here! A fabulous food wine that will continue to blossom in the years to come.

Member Price  
\$165 per straight dozen/ \$177 mixed case

### 2017 Friulano

It has quite a different character to most other whites which makes it most interesting. Its dryness from its natural phenolics is very appealing.

Member Price  
\$165 per straight dozen/ \$177 mixed case

### 2015 Shiraz

The last of our varietal wines to be released from the famed 2015 vintage, which was one of the greatest we have experienced in the Feathertop vineyard since it was established over 30 years ago.

Member Price  
\$190 per straight dozen/ \$177 mixed case

### 2015 Cabernet Sangiovese **\*\*NEW RELEASE\*\***

This blend is a once off from Feathertop. Both varieties can hold their own and will do so for many years to come, so get some extra cases of this once off wine. You won't be disappointed.

Member Price  
\$190 per straight dozen/ \$177 mixed case

**Feathertop**  
PO Box 296, Porepunkah VIC 3740  
6619 Great Alpine Road, Porepunkah,  
VIC 3740

**Open for Summit Cru Wine Club Members  
7 days a week.**

**Open for the general public Friday-Sunday  
from 11am. Closed Christmas Day.  
Alfresco Restaurant open for lunch:  
Friday – Sunday 12-3pm.**

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