



Peter's Winemaking Approach

"I suppose you'd call my approach traditional," Fraser continues, "but I can only confidently do it this way after learning all the white coat stuff. You know, understanding how it all works and why this old way is the better technique. You've gotta be spot on to get the kinds of flavours we want in the Yangarra Estate bottle. So you need a scientific background, then a fair bit of intelligence, experience, and bravery to let nature have her way."

So once those flavours please Peter's fussy palate, the grapes are picked, gently crushed, and pumped into traditional open fermenters with their skins.

"I often let some of the free run juice out of the tanks at this stage", he says. "It makes a great rosé, and what's left in the fermenter is even more concentrated."

He lets wild yeasts from the vineyard and the winery air conduct the fermentation, avoiding, as he generally does, anything that comes in a scientific looking packet. And he lets things take their own sweet time, never pushing ferments simply to clear the tank for another batch, which is a common practise in industrial Australian wine-making.

Once the dance of the yeast and sugar is complete, and the wines are pressed off their skins, Peter's oaking regime is about as scientific as his decision of when to pick.

"We can get as much new French or American oak we like," he says, "but I prefer the best aged barrels. The trick is to train up your new barrels on wines which will not be too overwhelmed by those fresh oak flavours, then blend that with the better wines from the older, more seasoned barrels so you get a more wholesome, less sappy wine."

After a pause, he adds "and you keep the best of your used barrels for your very best wine."

"A little oxidation never goes astray", he continues, "so I'm not as rigorous as most at keeping all my barrels brimming and free of oxygen."

All this is very simple. The complex, and the clever bit kicks in when you get down to Peter's batch management.

Right from the start, in the vineyard, with viticulturer Michael Lane, Peter was tastetasted those grapes according to the age of the vines and the tiniest variance in the soil types. Together, they have learned the flavours of the soils, and are constantly searching for new clues as to how certain soils of certain flavours impart their characteristics to the finished wines.

The fruit from the grey to white sands at the very crest of the dune, for example, is always the very best. From there down through the rest of the vineyard, it's a matter of keeping the batches discrete until they've revealed their true nature with fermentation and barrel maturation, then blending these batches to harmonise and reinforce, or to counteract and contrast each other to the greatest gastronomic advantage.