

Dear "Pfriends" of Pfeiffers,

In our last commemorative issue to celebrate 30 years of being us, we focused on the '80's. **It is now time to move through to the '90's and BOY! how quickly we moved.** For the wine industry, it was a decade of buoyancy. Everyone seemed to be out there planting vines, establishing wineries, as if the wine industry was "the goose that laid the golden egg". We were very glad that we were already established with a loyal and devoted following of Pfeiffer "Pfriends". However, we did continue to expand, but our decision to expand, came out of disaster.

DISASTER struck in September 1996, when the waters from the Hume Dam were released overnight. How well I remember that

time. Chris was away judging wines at the Griffith Wine Show and ringing me often asking questions like..."Do you think we will get a flood?" "Has the pump been lifted?" "How much rain have we had?" "Have they finished pruning?" "How high is the river?" etc, etc.

On the Friday evening, I walked over our bridge, through the Sunday Creek Vineyard to the Murray River which was about 12 feet below the bank. It seemed a long way down or a long way to rise. I then walked through to Lake Moodemere, which was always where the previous floodwaters had come from. The ground was damp and mushy but was nothing unusual at that time of year. I was confident we would escape the flood that we had been warned about and told Chris not to worry. Little did I realise, that all the rain that filled the Hume Dam (usually a good thing) had caused the dam wall to move sufficiently enough to raise alarm bells that the dam wall might collapse. The Hume Dam engineers decided water **MUST** be released to take the pressure off the dam wall. **So, overnight, water 3 times the volume of Sydney Harbour (a third of the total water of the Hume Dam) was released.** As you can imagine, the Murray River level rose dramatically and drastically overnight. The rain also continued. Saturday morning saw me donning my raincoat and gumboots only to find I could no longer walk through the vineyard to the Murray River, let alone Lake Moodemere. We were flooded with the waters almost lapping at the bridge...not quite over the bridge but far too close. **DISASTER** had struck! The entire Sunday Creek Vineyard was under water. This truly is disastrous in Spring, as this is when the vines flower and form the next years vintage. Under water, this is impossible. And it was more complicated than a natural flood, as the water from the dam kept on being released, so the vines were flooded for 6 weeks.

But wait! Out of disaster opportunity arose. Our near neighbours were selling their cattle property, just up the road and next to the Carlyle Cemetery. (As a little aside, Rutherglen and Wahgunyah are in the Parish of Carlyle). We took the opportunity to ensure our future against floods and purchased this land and began to plant vines in what is now our Carlyle Vineyard. I



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call it our insurance policy against flood...and guess what...we haven't had a flood in our Sunday Creek Vineyard ever since!

It was heartbreaking at the time. Lots of vines died from being submerged for such a long time, lots of rubbish washed into the vineyard and got trapped. Lots of soil and vines got washed away from the rapid flow of flood waters. I remember I cried a lot **but there is nothing like "toiling the soil" to restore ones faith in the land and the future.**

We have planted our **Carlyle Vineyard** with mainstream varieties which means we will always have a crop of grapes in the future even if we do get floods ever again. In fact, as we were going through the 10 year drought of the '00's, I suggested to Chris that we pull out the Carlyle Vineyard, as our insurance policy against flood had been so successful it had caused the drought!!! Needless to say, Chris just rolled his eyes...several times!

That is enough about the past for this issue. Now, time to look to the future. Chris and I are very much looking forward to all the **lunches and dinners where we come to you**, or as close as we can come to you. These are beginning with our dinner in Brisbane this June and finishing with our dinner in Hobart in November. In between times we are covering most of our capital cities. Sorry we can't make it to Perth and Darwin to visit our Pfeiffer "Pfriends" there in our 30th year. Maybe when we celebrate 40 years, we will make it to you too.

The future is also looking bright with our **2012 Pfeiffer Cabernet Sauvignon** being released in this newsletter. 2012 was a great vintage and it is wonderful to know that this variety was our very first straight varietal red wine in 1985 and has been made every year since then. We had a Shiraz Cabernet blend from 1984 and NOW look at all the reds we make. When we began, Cabernet Sauvignon was the King of red wines. Jen's "pfavourite", Shiraz, has now become King and Cabernet is the Prince. However, Chris and I still love our Cabernet and we are very proud of its pedigree and heritage amongst our Pfeiffer reds.

There I go, reflecting about old times again, so I will close now with a huge thank you to all of you reading this, my personal letter to you all with each newsletter. Thank you all for sharing the journey with us and for continuing to do so.

Till next time, my very best regards,



Robyn Pfeiffer