Australian Government

Grape and Wine Research and Development Corporation

Pinot Gris Benchmarking – Christening Gris



FINAL REPORT to

GRAPE AND WINE RESEARCH & DEVELOPMENT CORPORATION

Project Number: **RT 05/01-3**

Principal Investigator: **Brian Freeman & Kathleen Quealy**

Research Organisation:
Mornington Peninsula Vignerons Association

Date: **28 June 2006**

Australian Government
Grape and Wine Research and Development Corporation

Project Title	Pinot Gris Benchmarking – Christening Gris

GWRDC Project Number	Project Start Date	Project End Date
RT 05/01-3	14 February 2006	28 June 2006

PROJECT SUPERVISOR CONTACT (PS) DETAILS:
The Project Supervisor is the person responsible for the overall project

Title: Ms	First name: Kathleen	Surname: Quealy
Research organisation and mailing address: T'Gallant Winemakers		
Phone: 03 5989 6565	Fax: 03 5989 6577	Mobile:
Email: Kathleen.quealy@fostersgroup.com		
Signature of PS: for Cheryl Lee		**Date:** 15/9/06

ADMINISTRATION CONTACT (AC) DETAILS:
The Administration Contact is the person responsible for all administrative matters relating to the project.

Title: Ms	First name: Cheryl	Surname: Lee
Research organisation and mailing address (if different from above): Mornington Peninsula Vignerons Association Inc		
Phone: 03 5989 2377	Fax: 03 5989 2387	Mobile: 0409 952 948
Email: cheryl@mpva.com.au		
Signature of AC: Cheryl Lee		**Date:** 15/9/06

AUTHORISATION

This Progress Report has been submitted with the approval of the authorised R & D Manager of the submitting agency

Signed for and on behalf of Mornington Peninsula Vignerons Ass

Signature Cheryl Lee *Title* Executive Officer *Date* 15 Sept 06

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1. Abstract

Pinot Gris producers from around Australia were invited to attend a workshop on the Mornington Peninsula titled *Christening Pinot Gris*. The objective was to benchmark quality, style and future market directions of Pinot Gris, as the variety develops a share of the wine market in Australia. One hundred and thirty producers attended and 40 wines were tasted and discussed, including one international styles bracket, one French, one Italian and 5 Australian regional groups. The regional and international representatives outlined methods of production and background to the variety in their region, prior to tasting. Flavour profiles were recorded by all participants and collated to provide an arbitrary summary of regional attributes.

2 Executive Summary

The aim of the workshop was to understand Pinot Gris in Australia – to benchmark quality, style and future market directions by liaising with other Australian and key European wine regions. It was also to encourage communication between growers and winemakers of Pinot Gris in Australia. The project was supported Mornington Peninsula Vignerons Association, Grape and Wine Research and Development Corporation, Regional Development Victoria and Fosters Group.

A selection of 40 wines was tasted by all delegates and each regional bracket was introduced by a regional representative. A score sheet for flavor profiles was provided to all delegates to complete during the sessions, and the results collated following the workshop. A greater understanding of the styles and associated issues are indicated in the following summary of presentations made:

Christian Maier, Sommelier Langton's Melbourne
Considered Pinot Gris from a consumers perspective and highlighted the difficulties experienced by consumers in selecting an appropriate style from current labeling, and suggested future labeling could include a level of sweetness. He indicated the styles of gris have sweetness and acid and showed wines ranging from acid and opulent to acid with sweetness and suggested complimentary food and where these wines could replace chardonnay and red wines.

Sally Gudgeon, journalist Sunday Life
Showed a range of Pinot Grigio Italian styles from different regions in Italy which highlighted the dry, mineral, flinty benchmark wines for the Grigio style and raised questions regarding an aromatic style of Pinot Gris. Concluded that a loss of primary fruit flavor can result in complexity from winemaking techniques of solids included in wild fermentations and lees aging. A commercial wine demonstrated the complexity obtained from lees.

Frederic Blanck, Domaine Paul Blanck, Alsace
Described the making Pinot Gris in Alsace with minimal intervention in the vineyard and winery. He acknowledged the role played by botrytis in the Alsace wines, although this is not a preferred characteristic with the less sweet, modern style Pinot Gris.

Michael Paxton, Nepenthe, Adelaide Hills
Showed a range of styles of Gris with and without wood and solids, which highlighted different winemaking techniques for producing different wine styles.

Mark Walpole, Brown Brothers, Victoria
Pinot Prigio was first developed by Brown Brothers in 1993 and more recently a Pinot Gris style was produced. The Pinot Gris was developed to have more primary fruit flavors and the importance of reducing fruit exposure was highlighted.

Andrew Pirie, Tamar Ridge Tasmania
The Tasmanian wines ranged from the aromatic to herbaceous, Sauvignon Blanc style. The wines were influenced by climate and winemaking techniques.

Steve Warne, Casella Wines NSW
Demonstrated a style considered by some to be the future in Australia, following the successful launch of Casella Yellowtail Pinot Grigio to US markets, as a consumer friendly, introductory level wine. Casella Wines process half of the 9000 tonnes of grapes produced in Australia. The suggestion of trading up potential and progression on styles will be dictated by the future trends.

Kevin McCarthy and Kathleen Quealy T Gallant Mornington Peninsula
Discussed the history of Pinot Gris in the Mornington Peninsula and the range of wines showed the versatility of the variety, which could be considered a advantage but could also confuse the consumer.

The knowledge gained by tracking viticultural practices to wine style and quality, along with market perceptions resulted in a greater understanding of best practice for both growers and winemakers. Further collaboration could produce a more formal benchmarking project to promote quality and consistent product to the market thereby increasing sales and economic benefit to the wine industry.

The knowledge adoption by industry attending the workshop was high as the knowledge gathered was considered and presented professionally with an in house appraisal an important aspect. Facilitation by an educational peer, with communication between regional, inter regional, national producers, an expert producer from Alsace and a wine buyer from an important international market created this forum for greater understanding. As the variety has been grown only since 1989, any similar learning experiences have been fragmented and isolated. Knowledge gained by growers and winemakers was presented as inter regional as well as intra regional.

3 Background

Mornington Peninsula is Australia's key Pinot Gris producing region – Pinot Gris was first planted on the Mornington Peninsula in 1989 to three vineyards. T'Gallant's premiere vintage was 2003, followed quickly by other producers on the Mornington Peninsula and then in other regions. Pinot Gris production has continued to grow as the market demand has expanded. The numbers of growers of the variety in the MP region is becoming increasingly significant as the market is rewarding them with strong sales. A need to investigate regional styles and connect quality and style with viticultural practices has been indicated by informal industry tastings held in the region during the past two years as well as general increased interest has demanded.

The growing and production of Pinot Gris is relatively recent in Australia and has become a significant and growing variety in many regions, particularly the Mornington Peninsula – 11% pf plantings in 2005. To maximise the existing and potential markets, the variety needs to be better understood and further developed within the Australian context.

Kathleen Quealy has been instrumental in the initial development of the variety in Australia and consulted with other regional Pinot Gris growers to support this project. The Mornington Peninsula Vignerons Association has also conducted tastings and an analysis of the variety within the region and support from membership to further understand and develop style and quality is acknowledged

4 Project Aims and Performance targets

Outputs and Performance Targets 2005-06
Approval from GWRDC was granted 23 January 2006 and the project was postponed until February – June 2006

- **Distribution of information to growers/winemakers, to register**

The promotion of the event was by a general wine industry Media Release by the Mornington Peninsula Vignerons Association (MPVA) in February 2006, and an advertisement placed in the Grapegrower & Winemaker industry magazine in March 2006. Many trade & industry publications supported the event by exposing to their audience without charge – for example, Daily Wine News, an online daily newsletter, carried details of the event daily for several months in the lead up to it. Email distribution to other regional associations nationally by the MPVA, Department Primary Industry Grapecheque newsletters and exposure via the MPVA website ensured widespread promotion.

- **Inter regional workshop May 2006**

130 Australian growers & makers attended the event – 30 more than originally planned for. Timing did accommodate most grape growers, as it was post vintage, although some minor communication lapses were experienced prior to the event during vintage, particularly with presenters.

- **Evaluation and final report March 2006**

A delay in preparation of the final report was experienced due to some difficulty in confirming interstate communications, some overseas travel being taken unexpectantly and a change in work situation for one participant. The Final Report will be distributed to all delegates in September 2006 and placed on the MPVA website.

5 Method

Representative Grower/winemakers from Pinot Gris growing regions – including Sunraysia, Tasmania, Adelaide Hills & Mornington Peninsula were invited to participate by selecting wines to express their region, present an overview of viticulture in the region and to lead discussion of the tasting of wines. Brian Freeman, previously Professor of Wine Science at Charles Sturt University,

facilitated the program and implemented the collection and the collation of flavour profiles

A presentation made by guest speakers of three key Australian vineyard regions was followed by the European Guest Speaker, Frederic Blanck of Paul Blanck Wines in Alsace, comparing & contrasting with their other regions.

6 Results/Discussion

Flavour profiles

A flavour and palate profile score sheet was developed and each of the 130 participants was asked to score the intensity of each attribute out of 5 points, with 5 being the most intense and 1 the least intense. The aroma or flavour attributes were pear, honey, musk, rose petal, gooseberry, stone fruit, berry fruit, marmalade and wood. The palate attribute were acidity, richness and savouriness.

There were 58 score sheets that were completed for every wine and these were summarized to develop the flavour profiles for each region. There were 8 wines from Mornington Peninsula, 5 each from Italy, King Valley and Adelaide Hills and 4 each from Tasmania and Alsace.

The raw data is presented in Appendix 4.

Results

The highest scoring aroma was pear, followed by honey, the least significant aroma was berry fruit. Acidity and richness were the dominant palate characteristics.

There are distinctive regional or terroir differences between the regions or countries. The data is not statistically analysed and although there is a large (58) number of scores, the results must be considered trends for this particular set of wines.

Summary of terroir differences

1. Both Italian and Alsatian wine were very high in savouriness. This was not due to acidity as these wines were rated average for acidity.

2. Italian wines are low in pear aroma, high in musk and relatively high in berry fruit and highest in savouriness.

3. The Alsatian wines were average in pear aroma but relatively high in honey and stone fruit. These wines were highest in marmalade indicating a high level of botrytris influence. The Alsatian wines were highest in richness due to the relatively high concentration of residual sugar but also scored high for savouriness.

4. The Mornington Peninsula wines had the highest overall pear aroma and lowest rose petal and marmalade aromas and of the Australian wines showed the highest savouriness.

5. The Tasmanian wines had high pear and gooseberry aroma and the highest wood influence and the palate had the highest acidity and lowest savouriness.

6. The King Valley wines had low pear but high rose petal aromas and the lowest wood. The palate was acid and lowest in richness but moderate in savouriness.

7. The Adelaide Hills wines rated average on most variables, but a moderate pear aroma and marmalade.

7 Outcome/Conclusion

This first collective look at Pinot Gris styles in Australia was accepted with considerable enthusiasm from producers from all over Australia. It clearly demonstrated the growing interest in commitment of a relatively new variety for Australia.

8 Recommendations

Due to overwhelming interest it is clear that further research and/or benchmarking and programs of this type need to be continued to ensure the quality and style of this variety is consistent with consumer expectations. With continued research support Pinot Gris will become an important variety in the Australian market.

9 Appendix 1: Communication

An Evaluation and Final Report of the Workshop with the feedback obtained by the flavour profile analysis will be communicated to participants and placed on the MPVA website. A Media Release informing industry of this information will be distributed in October 2006 by the MPVA

Appendix 2

Wines included in the Christening Gris Benchmarking Tasting

christian maeir		
2004	Elk Cove Vineyards	Willamette Valley
2005	Rimu Grove	Nelson
2005	Carrick	Central Otago
2004	Domaine Marc Kreydenweiss	les alouettes Lerchenberg Alsace
2004	Moorooduc Estate	Mornington Peninsula
sally gudgeon		
2005	Bollini Trentino	
2004	Jermann	Venezia Giulia
2004	Dorigati	Trentino
2004	Hofstatter	Alto Adige
2004	Livio Felluga Colli	Orientali del Friuli
2005	Holly's Garden	Whitlands
frederick blanck		
2002	Domaine Paul Blanck	Furstentum
2004	Domaine Paul Blanck	Patergarten
2002	Domaine Paul Blanck	Commercial blend
*	* *	
*	* *	
michael paxton		
2005	Pewsey Vale	Eden Valley
2005	Henschke	Adelaide Hills
2004	Nepenthe	Adelaide Hills
2005	Nepenthe	Adelaide Hills
2005	Starvedog Lane	Adelaide Hills
mark walpole		
2005	Redbank	King Valley
2005	Brown Bros	Pinot Grigio
2006	Brown Bros	Whitlands
2006	Brown Bros	Heathcote
2006	Brown Bros	King Valley
andrew pirie		
2005	Bay of Fires	Tasmania
2005	Barringwood Park	Tasmania
2005	Chartley Estate	Tasmania
2005	Pipers Brook	Tasmania
steve warne		
2006	Casella	Mornington Peninsula
2006	Casella	Yarra Valley
2006	Casella	Adelaide Hiills
2006	Casella	Henty
2005	Casella	Yellow Tail
kevin mc carthy		
2005	Scorpo	Merricks North
2005	Foxeys Hangout	Mornington Peninsula
2004	Elgee Park	Merricks North
2005	Pinot Grigio	Mornington Peninsula
2005	T'Gallant Tribute	Main Ridge
2004	T'Gallant Tribute	Main Ridge

Appendix 3: Budget Reconciliation

Australian Government
Grape and Wine Research and Development Corporation

REGIONAL INNOVATION & TECHNOLOGY ADOPTION (RITA) RECONCILIATION

Project No. RT 05/01-3

Project Title

Pinot Gris Benchmarking – Christening Gris

- **Please ensure that all figures are inclusive of GST (if applicable).**
- The figures in the following table should reflect the approved GWRDC funding amount and any approved Variation after Project commencement.

Budget item	Approved Budget (current year)	Expenditure (current year)
Registration & promotion by MPVA	4400	4280
Operating costs – venue, hire, lunch	5500	5500
Product costs – printing & pouring costs	1100	1240
TOTALS (incl. GST)	**(a) $11000**	**(b) $11020**
Balance* (a) minus (b)	**$-20**	
Total GWRDC funding (whole project)	**$11000**	

***Notes:**

- Approval must be requested from GWRDC to carry over funds to the following year.
- A full financial Reconciliation is required at the end of the project (to accompany the Final Report). Any unspent funds must be returned to the Corporation

I hereby certify that this Statement of Expenditure is true and correct.

Signature	Printed Name	Date
Cheryl Lee	CHERYL LEE	15/9/06

Appendix 4

Pinot Gris flavour profile
Score each attribute out of 5 points, 5 being most intense and 1 least intense

	Aroma									Palate		
Wine region	pear	honey	musk	rose petal	goosberry	stone fruit	bery fruit	marmalade	wood	acidity	richness	savouriness
Italy	0.62	1.56	1.30	0.98	0.66	1.02	0.36	0.70	0.68	2.98	2.52	2.36
Alsace	1.70	2.48	1.08	0.95	0.43	1.23	0.25	1.56	0.35	2.88	3.75	2.00
Adelaide Hills	1.66	1.50	0.88	1.82	0.54	0.90	0.28	0.68	0.78	2.62	2.34	1.46
Tasmania	1.83	1.50	1.00	0.85	1.23	0.90	0.45	0.48	1.25	3.15	2.68	1.35
King Valley	1.56	1.02	0.88	1.00	0.52	0.92	0.22	0.52	0.36	3.00	2.14	1.60
Mornington Peninsula	1.75	1.30	0.98	0.65	0.58	0.89	0.21	0.39	0.79	2.75	2.53	1.73