

# Tête A Tête

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## Domaine A

Tasmania's First Growth

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The newsletter of Domaine A / Stoney Vineyard

Summer 2015 | Volume 19



### Vintage Report 2015

We enter another cycle in the life of Domaine A/ Stoney Vineyard and are able to observe the flowering and fruitset in what is shaping up to be a very particular vintage given the warmth and dryness we are experiencing. This is an ideal moment to reflect on the year that has passed, as well as to give thoughts on the beginning of wines we harvested in 2015.

The philosophy at Domaine A is to produce the highest quality grapes according to the climatic conditions that prevail in any one season. Then to turn this into a unique wine from a unique place. Some years produce large quantities, others less, what is important is how we manage the vineyard in accordance to give you the truest reflection of our location at a particular moment in time.



2015 in some ways gave with one hand and took back with the other. Winter and early spring rains were adequate to provide good reserves for our deep rooted, self-sufficient

vines. Ideally when flowering occurs we would like breezy, warm sunny days, however cooler damper weather meant we knew we were looking at a slightly decreased more sporadic yield. We avoided the always present risk of spring frosts and then the vines were managed on a block by block basis to meet their individual needs. In order to produce great wines the grapes need to be in balance; fruit, structure and concentration.

The rest of the year was relatively calm, intermittent but sufficient rains combined with good sunlight hours meant we enjoyed a gentle progression to ripening. This doesn't imply we sit back drinking past vintages (sadly) indeed the opposite. Attention to detail, much manual work with the canopy as well as intelligent observation of ongoing conditions to create a link between the terroir and the final product.



Apart from a period of very strong winds which had us fixing nets for a while, everything went gently until we began picking the Pinot Noir on the 21<sup>st</sup> of March. Early signs were for a vintage of moderate yields but high in quality and elegance, something to definitely look forward to!

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After a short break we progressed to the other varieties, picking in ideal conditions with a group that included people from Africa, Europe, Asia as well as Australia. The sound of many languages only enhanced the pleasure of realising the culmination of a years hard work. Through Sauvignon Blanc, Merlot, Cabernet, Petit Verdot we arrived at the final day of picking on the 21<sup>st</sup> of April. This was a small block of Semillon which after several months on lees is now available for those able to visit us at cellar door.

The harvest, fermentation, blending and early barrel tastings all indicate that 2015 will be a vintage of restraint, elegance and longevity.



## Bottle Ageing

All great things take time and patience and at Domaine A these are an essential part of our philosophy. Although 90% of wines are consumed within the first 12 months after bottling we situate ourselves in the 1% of wines that improve after 5 to 10 years. There are a number of reasons why we bottle age and what happens during that process;

Domaine A wines from the beginning in the vineyard until the moment when the cork is removed are continually evolving, improving and heading towards a meeting point of structure, expression of fruit and a reflection of that particular vintage. We start with concentrated fruit, their thick skins provide an abundance of flavours (polyphenols) and tannins which are then fermented and extracted in a meticulous manner so as to construct an ideal framework that will support the rich luscious fruit flavours.

Our blending process takes into account the strengths of each variety according to the vintage, in order to promote longevity whilst maintaining our individual style of wine. The wines then spend anywhere from 18 months to 3 years in French Oak barrels that have been toasted to our requirements. This process serves a number of functions; firstly it imparts the subtle flavours ranging from vanilla, chocolate, cedar and so on that are complimentary to the fruit itself. Secondly it reinforces the structure of the wine through the incorporation of oak tannins. So while the permeability of the barrel allows oxygen to interact with the wine, encouraging tannins and anthocyanins to combine thereby stabilising colour and structure, the tannins increase the resistance to oxidation.



Tree times a year we take the wine out of each barrel, remove the sediment that has formed, clean the interior of the barrel and replace the wine. This process means that we eliminate the need to fine or filter our wines, processes that shorten longevity by reducing essential solids.

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The fine sediment that remains (which may be seen at the end of a bottle) continues to impart flavours during the time in bottle.

The final essential ingredient to the ongoing development in bottle is the cork. We use only the very best single corks that originate in Spain. Again the interaction between the exterior and the wine continues highlighting the fruit aspect whilst letting the tannins soften to become more singular and subtle.

Once sealed it is important that the bottled wines are stored in ideal stable conditions. We undertake to do this ourselves at Domaine A. A constant temperature of 12/14 degrees and exclusion from light allow the wines to rest and evolve. We taste bottles on a regular basis and only decide to release a vintage when it is beginning its drinkable stage of life. Although this represents a significant cost we prefer to release the wines once they are ready for you to enjoy. That being said, it doesn't mean that the wines will not improve and change, we have crafted them from vineyard through ferment to barrel and into bottle so they constantly evolve for many years to come. This was notable in a recent tasting of 1995 Domaine A Cabernet Sauvignon where the presence of fine tannins was still there to carry the fragrant floral fruits, 20 years after the

grapes were snipped during harvest. Much work, much time and much patience, but all in the pursuit of excellence and memories that you are able to enjoy in your glass.



**Our quality and reputation can never be compromised.**

All Stoney Vineyard and Domaine A wines are entirely estate-bottled and packed, in order to guarantee their authenticity.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'H. Peter Althaus'.

H. Peter Althaus

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## Domaine A Cellar Guide 2015

VINTAGE	CABERNET SAUVIGNON	PINOT NOIR	Petit "a"	MERLOT	LADY A
1990	1998-2010	1995-1999	not made	not made	not made
1991	2000-2015	1998-2004	not made	not made	not made
1992	2002-2014	2000-2005	not made	not made	not made
1993	2001-2010	1999-2004	not made	not made	not made
1994	2004-2019	2002-2015	not made	2004-2015	not made
1995	2003-2010	2000-2013	not made	2000-2012	not made
1996	not made	not made	not made	not made	not made
1997	2005-2010	2002-2012	not made	2005-2012	not made
1998	2008-2018	2006-2016	not made	2008-2018	not made
1999	2008-2016	2005-2010	not made	not made	2002-2010
2000	2010-2020	2008-2018	not made	not made	not made
2001	2010-2020	2010-2020	not made	not made	2004-2011
2002	not made	2010-2015	not made	not made	2005-2013
2003	2012-2025	2010-2016	not made	2010-2020	2006-2013
2004	2012-2020	not made	not made	2009-2019	2007-2012
2005	2013-2021	2012-2020	not made	2011-2022	2008-2015
2006	2016-2022	2013-2020	not made	2013-2021	2009-2017
2007	not made	2013-2018	not made	2014-2024	2010-2019
2008	not yet released	2016-2022	2013-2022	not made	2011-2020
2009	not yet released	2015-2022	not made	not made	2012-2020
2010	not yet released	not yet released	2015-2025	not yet released	2013-2021
2011	not yet released	not yet released	not yet released	not yet released	2014-2023
2012	not yet released	not made	not yet released	not made	2015-2022
2013	not yet released	not yet released	not yet released	not yet released	not yet released
2014	not yet released	not yet released	not yet released	not yet released	not yet released
2015	not yet released	not yet released	not yet released	not yet released	not yet released

*Suggested optimum drinking time under ideal cellar conditions for Domaine A wines.*