

# A passion for port

By Jackie Shervington - September 5, 2013



Trevor Wallis of Kyotmunga Estate, Lower Chittering, has a love of wine making with an old world charm of improvisation and resourcefulness that is sadly often lost in today's commercial world.

Trevor and wife Lynette Chester purchased Kyotmunga Estate 17 years ago as a place for Trevor to escape the city; grow a few things and relish some of the childhood pursuits he enjoyed

growing up on a farm in Katanning. Largely a blank canvas, they were quick to plant six acres of vines, the first planting was in 1997, with progressive planting over the next three years including 200 olive trees.

With wine and olive oil for sale they were inspired to undertake major renovations to the property, providing a venue for cellar door. Lynette and Trevor also played a key role with other winemakers to establish the Chittering Valley Wine trail.

Although his profession is a librarianship, Trevor has always dabbled in wine making, including experiments such as mulberry wine. His grandfather made wine in Katanning which was once an award winning wine making area.

Trevor makes all his wine on the premises, a rarity these days, as most vineyards tend to send their grapes off-site to a wine-maker. The process takes place in what looks like a typical farm shed, but inside he has added a false ceiling and insulation to reduce temperature variation.

His wife Lynette fondly shares, "Trevor has the kind of survival skills that if ever the world should go pear shaped he is someone you want to know."

Testament to his creative self sufficiency is his latest project, a home-cured side of Prosciutto, hanging in the coolroom.

However Trevor's real passion is fortified wine, "I'm into port, if I had my time again I'd be making fortifieds as they are more interesting. Red wine is basically chemistry, a job of refining. Whereas, with port you have to know when to stop fermentation to ensure you get the requisite level of sweetness left in the port."

I enjoyed one of his latest creations – a port made solely from the Grenache grape. Trevor shares, "I had an excess of Grenache grapes and thought I'm not going to waste it."

Guests at my recent dinner party were certainly glad that Trevor had gone to the trouble – it made a wonderfully decadent alternative to sweets.

Port wine begins life in much the same way as other wines, the grapes are de-stemmed and placed into a large vat. Once about half of the natural sugar of the grape juice has been turned into alcohol by the fermentation, the wine maker gives the signal for the fortification process to start. The treading stops and the skins are allowed to rise to the surface of the lagar where they form a solid layer. The wine fermenting under this cap of skins is then run out of the lagar into a vat.

Trevor explains how he then adds a neutral brandy spirit to fortify. "There is a complex formula that can be used to determine when to add the brandy spirit to kill off the yeast so that there is residual sweetness left in the port. The trick is to ensure that when you add

the brandy spirit you make sure that the wine is stirred long enough to ensure that the alcohol kills off all of the yeast, so it is still an art.”

This art is rewarding to the palate. Don't take my word for it, why not seize a spring day and enjoy a drop of Trevor's Grenache Liqueur Port followed by a walk in the Kyotmunga walk trail which will be bursting with wildflower colour. Just go easy on the port or you might get lost on the trail.

### **History Note**

*Kyotmunga in Lower Chittering, was the first recorded place name in the shire of Chittering. The location of Kyotmunga had been on the maps of the area since 1836 and was named by George Fletcher Moore, who was the lieutenant-governor of Western Australia at the time and owned a property near the present day Brigadoon.*

*On one of his explorations through the Chittering Valley, he found water in two small wells which his Aboriginal companions had named Kyotmunga, meaning place of water.*



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