



'08 vintage shaping up to be a wet one

The rain continues—not that I am begrudging it to those who need it, but grape growers in the New England have had plenty!



Grace, Ava, Aisha & Stephanie doing some bunch thinning & leaf plucking in the Tannat (grafted Oct '06) (photo—Mark Kirkby)

The statistics for Topper's Mountain vineyard this vintage (1/9/07 to 31/1/08 with long term average in brackets) are;

- ◆ Rain—610mm or 24" (494mm or 19.4")

- ◆ Rainy days—50 (37.3)
- ◆ Days > 30°C—5 (18.8)
- ◆ Days > 35°C—nil (1.0)

So as you can see, the vintage to end of January has been much wetter with more rainy days and much cooler than the long term average.

This means that there have been much better conditions for the main fungus infections of Powdery & Downy mildew and

Botrytis bunch rot. The mildews have been kept pretty well under control but there is some Botrytis infection. How big a problem this will be de-

pends on how much more rain we get between now and harvest.

One small upside of the wet year is that the grafted vines are doing fantastically well, as the picture below shows!



Vines grafted in Oct last year loving the wet conditions (Sauv Blanc grafted on to Verdelho rootstock). (photo—Mark Kirkby)

3rd quarterly draw of 1/2 doz for Wine Club members!

This time around, the lucky winner is

Stan Ciura of Narremburn in Sydney. Stan works for the Navy in the Mine Warfare & Clearance Diving SPO.

Good on you Stan, I'm

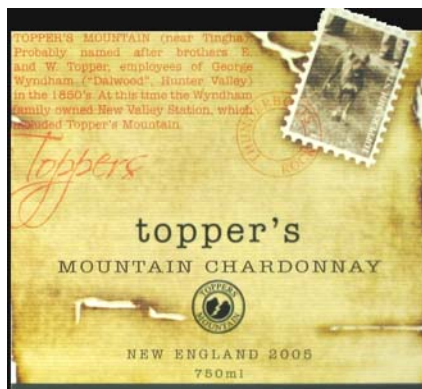
sure that you will thoroughly enjoy your win with family, friends & assorted Navy salts!

Stan's win has broken the **Grafton Wine Society's** stranglehold on the draw!

Tell your friends of our

draw and ask them to email me their details if they would like to join our Wine Club and become eligible for the quarterly draw.

Next draw— end April '08 after the '08 harvest.



James Halliday's

Australian Wine Companion 2008

Topper's Mountain Wines has been rated in the latest Australian Wine Companion. Our '05 Topper's Mountain Chardonnay was scored at 92 points (4 1/2 glasses) - "highly recommended".

This is the highest scoring New England wine in Halliday's '08 guide (and we still have a few cases left!).



New Releases

TOPPER'S MOUNTAIN WINES

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Single Estate wines from
close to Heaven

Our '07 topper's Mountain Tempranillo, '06 Vintage Fortified Touriga and our '07 thunderbolt's "Combo" Dry Red are our latest offerings, having been released in mid-February.



Topper's Mountain Vineyard in late January
(photo—Mark Kirkby)

The Vintage Fortified Touriga will be our first venture into fortified wine (we are no longer allowed to call it "Port" because of a Geographic Indicators naming agreement with the European Union). Touriga (Touriga Nacional to use its full name), is a grape variety from Portugal, particularly the Douro (River) Region and it is used extensively in super-premium Ports from this world famous Port producing area.

The '07 Tempranillo is our third release of a 100% Tempranillo and it has become one of our flagship wines, along with our Gewurztraminer. The '07 Tempranillo is a blend of wine aged in old French oak for 7 months and a portion aged in stainless steel with some light oak chip addition. I think you will like the result!

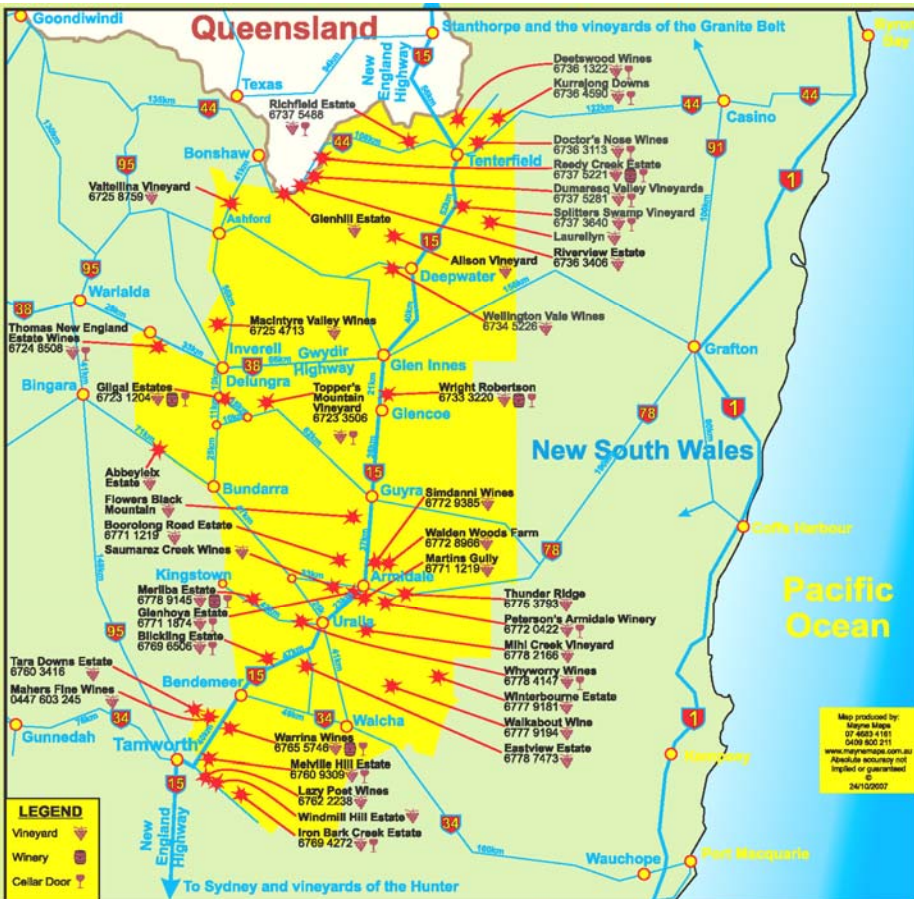
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Finally, our '07 thunderbolt's "Combo" Dry Red was released as well. This wine is an unusual blend of Petit Verdot & Tannat (blended in the field at picking time) and a portion of un-oaked Tempranillo to round out the palate. You'll like this one too, I think!

We're on the web;
www.toppers.com.au

New England declared Australia's newest Wine Region



"New England Australia" has been declared Australia's newest wine region. The name of the new GI (Geographic Indicator) was entered into the Register of Protected Names by the Aust. Wine & Brandy Corp on 23rd Jan. 2008. The name includes "Australia" to differentiate us from the American Viticultural Area named "Southeastern New England" which includes grape-growing areas of Connecticut, Massachusetts & Maine in America.

James Halliday, as Chairman of Judges at the last New England Wine Show, said "*There is no other region which has come on-stream with so much to offer as New England*".

Hopefully this is the phoenix rising from the ashes of the very successful, but unsustainable at the time, wine industry that existed around Inverell from the 1850s to about 1920!

Hoping to hear from you soon,
Mark Kirkby ☺