



# K O O N G G A

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## Graham Timms Fortified Wine

### Fortified Wine

I was twenty when I was first introduced to wine by Bill Ryan. Bill was a wine judge at the Easter Show, part-owner of several Hunter Valley wineries and also owned the Britannia hotel just off City Road near Sydney University where a group of us used to drink.

In exchange for weekend labour to help him build a wine cellar under the pub Bill taught us about wine and introduced us to some of the well-known wine personalities of the time such as Len Evans, then writing a wine column as 'Cellarmaster' for the Bulletin Magazine, Max Lake, an E.N.T. surgeon with a passion for cabernet sauvignon and Jim Hardy.

Jim Hardy was an amazing man. He was the chairman of Hardy's Wines and an Americas Cup sailor, seriously old Adelaide money but who spent most of his time in Sydney promoting his wine.

Jim told us about hardy's 1943 show port. He said it was very good.

Back in 1966 Hardy's 1943 show port sold for \$12 a case at the Greengate hotel.

Mind you, in those days I could fill the tank of my FJ Holden for \$2.

Anyway, we used to drive to the Greengate, buy a case and drink it under the suspension bridge in Tunk's park or in the sand hills at Warriewood beach. There were no breathalysers back then and we were very young.

I didn't know at the time that I was drinking one of Australia's great icon wines but I did know that it was good and it set me off on a hunt for Australian fortified wines. In that hunt I have drunk brown Muscat with Murray Tyrrell (he called it "tuppy dark and hated it even though he made it.) I drank a horrible experimental sparkling port with Bill Chambers of Rutherglen and as compensation had an eye-dropper of 1872 Muscat essence dripped on to the back of my hand. Mick Morris let me taste from the port solera that he had just sold to Reckitt and Coleman and at Bullers, In exchange for my kids feeding the birds (they had a native bird aviary), they gave me a bottle of

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Madeira the like of which I have never seen since. I was fortunate enough to buy a share of the All Saints hundred year Muscat solera when All Saints went bankrupt. It is still the main component of my 50 litre Muscat barrel and finally I made my own port and that eight barrel port solera, started in the year 2000, is one of the few things remaining from Toms Waterhole Wines.

All of which is by way of introduction to my topic, fortified wine.

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The history of fortified wine goes back five hundred years but by wine standards that's actually quite recent.

As soon as people started looking for ways to keep this magical stuff called wine longer than a few months they started to experiment with it. Some of the experiments involved adding things. The Romans first added lead oxide which worked and even tasted nice but had the unfortunate side effect of killing the drinker. The Greeks added resin which didn't kill the drinker but didn't taste nice.

Then the Romans discovered that if you increased the sweetness, the sugar content, the wine didn't spoil so first they added honey then they worked out that by concentrating the grape juice by boiling before fermentation they could make the wine sweet enough so that it didn't go off.

Many years ago I tasted wines made in this way by a Doctor McManus in Griffith. They were very different – sweet with a kind of boiled lolly taste and, to my palate at least, not very nice.

It was the Dutch in the sixteenth century who finally cracked the problem and they did so in two ways.

The first way was theological. Being good Lutherans who believed in the devil they thought that introducing the devil into their wine casks might help preserve their wine. Everyone knew that the devil smelled of brimstone so they burned brimstone in their wine casks and it worked. The sulphur released from the burning brimstone killed the bacteria in the wine and preserved it, just as it does today. Some small wineries still use the technique of burning sulphur disks in their empty barrels. It's called 'Dutch match.'

The Dutch were also master distillers and they discovered that adding small amounts of alcohol (in the first instance actually gin) to their water casks on long ships voyages kept the water sound. The Spanish thought this was a filthy practice and refused to adopt it. Had they done so the result of the

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Spanish armada might have been very different but that's another story.

From the end of the seventeenth century to 1815 the English and the French were almost constantly at war so getting French wine to England was difficult. The Dutch became the carriers and for good quality French wines they used the Dutch match but for the easier and cheaper Spanish and Portuguese wines they just added alcohol.

Adding alcohol wasn't an immediate success because at first they simply added it to normally fermented wines. The poet Richard Ames wrote in 1693:

*Mark how it smells, methinks a real pain  
Is by its odour thrown upon my brain  
Fetch us a pint of any sort  
Bordeaux or burgundy; anything but port*

But it was soon worked out that to make the alcohol addition palatable the base wine had to have a certain amount of sweetness. What's more, given the wars of the time drinking port became an English man's patriotic duty:

*Be sometimes to your country true  
Have once the public good in view  
Bravely despise champagne at court  
And choose to dine at home with port*

Still, as that rhyme suggests, port was considered second rate. Then a funny thing happened. Some barrels of port were sent to the British East India company and reports coming back raved about the wine. So some barrels were returned and they raved about it in England too. It appeared that travelling in the hold of a ship across the equator and back actually improved the wine and so a wine trade developed that gave a premium to port barrels that had "crossed the line."

Naturally enough the English attempted to establish a monopoly so the Americans, shut out by trade treaties from Portugal, found that wine from the island of Madeira did just as well provided that it travelled in the hold of a ship and the Dutch, not to be outdone, imported from South Africa the greatest fortified wine of them all – Constantia – which, as far as we can tell was a kind of Muscat. We don't know for sure because in 1799 the British invaded and occupied the Cape Colony and British trade policies of giving preference to Portuguese wines effectively put Constantia of business.

Don't, by the way be confused by 'Groot Constantia' which was made from

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the nineteenth century onwards, samples of which are still available. While excellent, Groot Constantia was, and still is, a red wine made from Pinotage in the normal way.

This brings us to Australia.

How the fortified wine trade started here is open to debate. We know that Elizabeth MacArthur made a fortified wine at Camden park as early as 1815 because there are still some bottles in existence and we know that fortified wine – port – was shipped from Geelong to England as early as the 1850s and well received.

In 1978 Bill Chambers' mother told me that she remembered her grandfather and other winemakers of Rutherglen first making port and Muscat because the distilleries had reached capacity and they had to keep the wine sound somehow while it waited for its turn to be distilled. According to her Rutherglen port and Muscat was just a lucky accident.

But whatever the reason, by sheer luck it turned out that Rutherglen was the perfect place to make fortified wine and to explain why I now need to tell you how it's made.

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Port from Portugal is made largely from Touriga grapes. It makes a very harsh, very tannic dry red wine and because it's a late flowering variety although it's drought resistant it doesn't actually get very ripe before the Portuguese winter comes. What the Portuguese winemakers do is pick the grapes as late as they can, ferment the juice for a few days and then stop the fermentation with alcohol leaving a lot of sugar in the wine and as much fruit character as possible.

In Rutherglen (and Angaston and Griffith) it's done differently. Rutherglen is blessed with an Indian summer which means that in most years the grapes, mostly Shiraz, just keep ripening and getting sweeter. When they are finally picked they often have as much as 20% sugar content. The yeast ferments the juice up to around 14% to 15% alcohol then dies leaving a sweet natural wine that the winemaker then takes up to 18-20% by adding either brandy or grape spirit (a kind of grappa). The end result is a wine that is very different from its Portuguese parent. It's darker, thicker and richer but, according to Europeans, much less subtle – very Australian.

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As you all probably know there are three types of port – ruby, tawny and vintage and it's after the wine making is finished that these three types are separated.

In an average year some of the fortified wine is immediately bottled and sold as Ruby Port, often in flagons and casks – cash flow is king, whether in Portugal or Australia – and the rest goes into the winemaker's Solera to make tawny. In an exceptional year some of the wine is bottled like ruby but then cellared for at least a decade and released with the vintage date on the bottle. This is vintage Port and it's purely winemaking vanity. You can't make money from vintage port.

I don't have a sample of ruby port here tonight but if you want to try some I suggest that you go to Dan Murphy's and buy a flagon of Penfolds V.O. invalid port. That will give you an idea of the quality and taste.

Tawny port moves gradually through the Solera until it is bottled.

A solera is simply several layers of barrels one on top of the other, the youngest at the top, oldest at the bottom. New wine is added to the top barrels and old wine bottled from the bottom. When the wine is bottled the old barrels are topped up from the ones above and so on.

Most soleras take about ten years or more to reach maturity – ours has been going for seventeen years – and the wine that emerges from the bottom barrel is tawny in colour (hence its name, tawny) and because the barrels are exposed to changing temperatures (most of the Rutherglen soleras are stored in disused shearing sheds) the solera mimics the effect of a ship 'crossing the line.'

What about vintage port?

Well, if the winemaker gets it right, over many years the vintage port will duplicate in the bottle what happens in the Solera but it takes much, much longer. To show you what I mean I have brought along a sample from our solera and a bottle of our 2010 vintage. In another ten years or so we expect that the vintage will be much better than our solera but it's a long time to wait. We originally made the vintage for our grandchildren's 21<sup>st</sup> birthdays.

By the way, that Hardy's 1943 show port was a vintage port cellared for twenty-three years by Hardy's before release ... and sold for \$1 a bottle. As I said, there's no money in vintage port.

Now we come to Australia's true classic, Rutherglen Muscat.

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Back in the 1860s when they were planting grapes in Rutherglen they were only worried about what would grow to make the source stock for distilling. So they planted a mixed bag; Shiraz of course but also two types of Muscat and a Muscat look-alike called Muscadelle. (For those who know Rutherglen, Durif was planted much later.)

Over time the winemakers discovered that the best type of Muscat grape, officially Muscat blanc but what they called brown Muscat, made a luscious fortified wine provided that you did what the Portuguese did with port – stopped the fermentation after two or three days. The other, lesser, Muscat, Muscat of Alexandria they made into a slightly sweet white wine called “fruity Lexia” and is now being made into Moscata. The Muscadelle they made into something they called after the Hungarian Tokay (it was actually nothing like it) and we now call Topaque and into an Australian version of Madiera.

They then set up soleras for their brown Muscat, just like their port solera and the rest is history.

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We're now going to do a little tasting and believe me it's going to be very little because the wines all come from my cellar and from my barrels.

And yes, if you love port and Muscat it's worth setting up a ten or twenty litre barrel in your home. These barrels work a bit like a solera. you keep topping them up (but make sure you leave a bit of air at the top, they mustn't be completely full) as you drink and provided that you don't drink faster than you top the wine will get better and better. And the truly magical thing is that after a couple of years you can put really cheap wine in the top – even that Penfolds V.O. invalid port if you like – and wonderful stuff comes out of the tap.

I'm not going to give you detailed tasting notes. I love all three wines in different ways. The vintage port is still a baby. It's quite tannic and with that characteristic 'dead ant' and cough syrup quality that young ports made from Shiraz always have. It's going to be great in twenty years.

The tawny is developing lovely, what we call rancio, characters. it's a kind of rasping vinegary quality overlaying dark chocolate that just makes you want to have glass after glass; sweet, but somehow not sweet.

The Muscat is grapes in a glass with a hint of toffee. I prefer my Muscat to be a little fresher than some of the great Rutherglen versions so I keep the

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barrel a little more topped than I probably should. If I let more oxygen in I'd get more of the bitter toffee character.

But it's all a matter of taste. My recommendation is to just enjoy what we have. Rutherglen fortifieds and their cousins from Angaston and Griffith are absolutely unique. If this was France you'd pay \$500 a bottle.

## Securing Rotary's future

### **2017-18 RI President Ian H.S. Riseley announces his presidential theme, *Rotary: Making a Difference***

In his address to the 2017-18 class of district governors, Riseley also urged clubs to improve their gender balance and lower the average age of their members.

Only 22 percent of Rotary's members are women, up from 13 percent 10 years ago. At that rate, Riseley said, it will take another three decades for Rotary to achieve gender parity.

We know that we can do more together than we could ever hope to do alone.

"Three decades is far too long to wait to achieve a Rotary that reflects the world in which we live. We need to make it a priority now," he said.

Noting that 103 of the 539 incoming governors are women, Riseley said they are the type of women we need in Rotary, "leaders who will help Rotary connect with, and represent, and better serve, all of the members of all our communities."

Riseley also believes it is imperative that clubs find ways to attract and engage younger members. Today only 5 percent of reported members are under 40, and a majority of members are over 60, Riseley told the audience.

"Consider what Rotary stands to look like 10 or 20 years from now if we don't get very serious, very soon, about bringing in younger members," Riseley said.

Clubs will make a difference this year through their own decisions, said Riseley, but it will take teamwork on a global scale to move Rotary forward and secure its future.

"We know that we can do more together than we could ever hope to do alone," he told incoming governors. "I ask you to keep that spirit of teamwork and cooperation always in your minds and to take it back with you to your districts."

## Our Bob—TUMUT CYCLE CLASSIC

Last weekend Bob Ivey was invited to visit the Tumut Cycle Classic and travelled the 100km route in the support vehicle (and distributed a few Bob-bo leaflets). It is a fundraising event for Tumut Hospital and while this was only its 2nd year, it doubled the number of riders from the first event, to about 200. The 20Km and 40km routes are relatively flat across the Tumut Plains and beside the picturesque Tumut River, while the 75 and 100km include some challenging climbs to the top of Blowering Dam. This event's aim was to raise \$20,000 to purchase special 'electric chairs' for the hospital

Tumut is a most scenic area and the very positive feedback from riders about the 'fantastic scenery' and 'well organised' will no doubt ensure the event will grow in popularity. More info at: <http://www.tumutclassic.com.au/>



## Our Contribution to Bobbo

Our club contribution includes

**Peter Kipps** with

a major input with designing upgrades to our fundraising system  
assistance with electronic and social media marketing  
designing a process for an improved management of teams

**Kenny Aitken** who always makes a major contribution to the many aspects of Karua Oval on ride day. This involves months of planning and action

**Ross Egan** another significant contributor – to Logistics

**Frank White** assists Kenny Aitken and Ross Egan

**Jack McCartney** who has produced significant results with major sponsors.

**Anil Fulwaria** who in the process of learning the Bobbo WEB system and taking over from Bob Ivey

**Geoff Hungerford** is assisting with organising and placing advertising car trailers

**Gary Keating** who is taking up the new role of team manager

**Graham Timms** managing hospitality for the team and sponsor marquee

**Chris Hoch** leaflet distribution

**Bob Elsworth** team recruiter and leaflets

**Lindsay Forrest, Greg Newling** volunteers and Bike shop promotion

**17 Envelope inserters** – This year Stage 1 I plan to fully populate the envelopes and paste the BIB number on the front. Stage 2 will be easy and will only require pasting the name and address label over the BIB No on the envelope. This will make stage 3 easier during the last week for a single person to paste labels to the envelopes

## **DICK SMITH DONATES \$1 MILLION TO ROTARY TO ALLEVIATE SUFFERING**

Well-known philanthropist Dick Smith has today announced his donation of \$1 million towards alleviating the suffering of Australians in need. The funds will be distributed via a specific Rotary program developed for this cause, which includes eligibility criteria determined by Dick and Pip Smith.

The program will provide support for individuals suffering personal hardship. It will be up to Rotary Clubs to identify those recognised by the local community who need support, and be willing to match the requested grant on a 50/50 basis.

This donation continues Dick and Pip's ongoing relationship with Rotary. Dick has previously given a significant amount through Rotary towards the eradication of the once widespread disease polio. This project has run for thirty years and is nearing completion, polio is now isolated to a few small enclaves in remote regions. Dick joins the likes of world-renowned philanthropist Bill Gates as a major supporter of Rotary and its various programs worldwide.

On this occasion, the donation by Dick and Pip will be administered by the Rotary Australia Benevolent Society, for the benefit of local individuals and communities. Dick highlighted the fact many Australians suffer personal hardship, whether through accident, illness or misadventure. He considers Rotary one of the most trusted and respected charities in the world.

The Chairman of the Rotary Australia Benevolent Society, Mr Michael Perkins, thanked Dick and Pip Smith for their generous donation and looks forward to seeing how Rotary volunteers throughout Australia will turn their project vision into a reality.

"For more than 100 years Rotary has worked with communities, corporates and philanthropists to make a difference throughout the world. We now have an extra \$1 million to help those in need in our own backyard and with the famous Australian ingenuity I can't wait to see how far we can make it reach," said Michael.

The program will be launched in February 2017 and full details will be made available then.

**Enquiries:** please contact [rotaryaustraliacommunitycompassionprogram@rawcs.org.au](mailto:rotaryaustraliacommunitycompassionprogram@rawcs.org.au)

## Coming Guest Speakers

23-Jan	23 Jan Adiranne Brown from the Ku Ring Gai will be speaking on modern community libraries and how they have changed to cope with modern requirements
30-Jan	30 Jan Dr Rachel Mende will report on her recent trip to Nepal that we contributed toward. She will talk about how the 'Days for Girls' project is working, as well as the general state of the medical system in Nepal. Lindfield also contributed to her trip, so this will be a

## Door Team

Jan	Feb	March	April	May	June
Roger	Elsworth	Forsythe	Hungerford	Kenyon	Manning
Egan	Forrest	Hall	Hoch	Ivey	Lewis

<b>President</b>	Michael Midlam
<b>Vice President</b>	John Aitken
<b>Immediate Past President</b>	Graham Timms
<b>President Elect</b>	Malcolm Braid
<b>Secretary</b>	Lindsay Forrest
<b>Treasurer</b>	Chris Lewis
<b>Director</b>	Greg Newling
<b>Director</b>	Linda Lam Rolfs
<b>Service committee chairpersons and committees</b>	
<b>Administration (Club Service)</b>	Gary Keating
<b>Vocational Service</b>	Lou Coenen
<b>Community Service</b>	Roger Desmarchelier
<b>International Service</b>	Georgina Manning
<b>Youth Service</b>	Linda Lam-Rohlfs
<b>Social events</b>	Joy Newling
<b>Bobbin Head Cycle Classic</b>	Tony McClelland
<b>Sergeant-at-Arms</b>	Graham Timms
<b>Club committees</b>	
<p><b>Administration:</b> Gary Keating, Geoff Hungerford, Rob Hall (Program), Bob Ivey (Web and social media), Graham Maslen, Tony McClelland (Koongga)</p> <p><b>Bobbin Head Cycle Classic:</b> Tony McClelland, John Aitken, Ross Egan, Bob Elsworth, Peter Kipps, Michael Midlam, Gary Keating</p> <p><b>Club History:</b> Malcolm Braid, Tom Jackson</p> <p><b>Community:</b> Roger Desmarchelier, Gary Dawson Rob Hall Geoff Hungerford (Gordon Markets) Gary Keating Ross Egan (Daffodil Day) Chris Hoch (Red Shield) Anil Fulwaria Nick Kenyon Ted Price Cathy Jackson</p> <p><b>International:</b> Georgina Manning, Rob Hall, Graham Timms, Graham Maslen, Greg Newling, Anil Fulwaria, Emyr Evans</p> <p><b>Membership:</b> Tony McClelland,</p> <p><b>Public Relations:</b> Emyr Evans, Georgina Manning,</p> <p><b>Rotary Foundation:</b> Chris Hoch, Peter Tang, Lindsay Forrest, , Greg Newling</p> <p><b>Social Events:</b> Joy Newling, Ross Egan, Georgina Manning,</p> <p><b>Vocational:</b> LOU Coenen, David Forsythe, Peter Kipps, M Tyler</p> <p><b>Youth:</b> Linda Lam-Rohlfs, , Cathy Jackson, Gary Keating, Chris Lewis, Matt Mahjoub, Andrew Marselos, Joy Newling, Don Riddell</p>	