

KANGAROO ISLAND TOUR

As you would be aware, the Guild conducted a tour of Kangaroo Island from May 14 to May 17. There are, effectively, only four Cellar Doors on the Island so the Tour made good use of some of the many other attractions of the area. With a certain degree of military precision, members of the Guild flitted hither and thither fulfilling a solid two and a half day schedule of activities.

Friday

Having arrived at our base for the weekend, American River, the Tour commenced at Noon on the Friday when our coaches for the weekend picked us up (yes, coaches – apparently the large coach we would have had recently broke down and was replaced for this trip by two smaller coaches). Many of us had only just arrived, having taken the ferry at 10am that very morning. Others had taken advantage of the Tour to extend beyond the Guild's activities and arrived earlier. Still others were planning to extend their visit beyond the Tour's finish.

Anyway, as I said, the coaches arrived and took us to our first venue – the **Emu Bay Lavender Farm**. Here we were provided with an outline of lavender production and what products it could be used for. This was also our venue for lunch, where we enjoyed a wholesome and tasty light lunch. After browsing the lavender shop and mooching around the grounds amongst the derelict farm implements it was back on board for our next destination, the first of our wineries.

Arriving at **Bay of Shoals Winery** we were greeted by our hosts Sarah (Manager) and Kelvin (Winemaker) and shown into the winery. I have to admit that my first impression of this winery was coooold. Okay, this is KI, but it's still fortunate that we all seem to have brought our heavy coats. Kelvin gave us a brief description of the winemaking process and outlined the uniqueness of the KI operation, including the inherent difficulties on the Island from water to transportation. We also had the opportunity to sample some current vintage wines drawn directly from the tanks. There were a lot of questions so I guess that Kelvin was presenting some relatively thought provoking information. After sampling three wines in a structured tasting some of our members transferred to the Cellar Door to taste wine from the bottle whilst others remained in the winery and tried a few of the other wines in the vats.

Wines Tasted:

2021 Arinto

2021 Albarino

2021 Montepulciano

Back on the coach we returned to the Kangaroo Island Lodge, arriving in time to catch our breath and have a bit of a rest before heading off for dinner at The Shed. This is a rather amazing venue where local volunteers provide, several days a week, a selection of meals using local produce where possible. The venue seemed at first glance to be utter chaos with people darting hither and thither – some with meals some, some with drinks, some with no apparent purpose in mind. Out of this chaos, though, they managed to somehow feed us all with the correct meal and in efficient time. The meals

were delicious, too. I haven't had so much fun in ages – I do like a good show and this was definitely dinner and a cabaret! Finally, at this venue we were also welcomed to KI by noone less than the Mayor, Michael Pengilly, who also gave a speech on what the future might hold for the Island post bushfires. We were back at the accommodation a little later than scheduled but still quite early – a good thing as far as I was concerned after what had been a long but very interesting day.

Saturday

After a full buffet breakfast at the Lodge, Curly and Paul (our coach drivers) picked us up promptly at 10am for our first venue of the day, **False Cape Wines**. After 45min of partly reasonable but also partly challenging roads, we arrived at the Cellar Door on Dudley Peninsula. Here owner Julie welcomed us and invited us to take a seat in the recently built "heritage" Cellar Door building. When she told it later the story of this building is particularly fascinating, having been built from recycled building material from all over the Island. Anyway, Julie led us through the False Cape portfolio in an orderly progression, giving tasting notes and anecdotes along the way. Somewhere in amongst this tasting lunch appeared as if by magic – and damned tasty it was too. Around this point some of our members seemed to be doing some complex mathematics to calculate how much wine they'd be able to get into the relatively small coaches. The answer, it would appear, was quite a lot!

Wines Tasted:

2020 Montebello Pinot Grigio	2019 Ships Graveyard Shiraz
2020 Silver Mermaid Sauvignon Blanc	2019 Unknown Sailor Cabernet Sauvignon/Merlot
2020 Willson River Riesling	2018 The Captain Cabernet Sauvignon
2020 The Captain Chardonnay	
2020 Lady Ann Rosé (Merlot/Pinot Grigio)	

More challenging roads (the KI dirt roads are often quite bumpy) to our next destination of **Cape Willoughby Lighthouse**. Here we were treated to a brief but incredibly interesting (and, not to say, amusing) presentation on the historic lighthouse and associated buildings. Next the local guides led us off in two groups – those who were staying on terra firma and those who were planning to climb the 100 or so steps of the lighthouse tower. The climb was worth it as the view was great.

Soon we were on our way again, this time to **Dudley Wines**. With a history going back to 1883 the Dudley family has seen many changes on the Island, however, their winery history is somewhat more recent – having planted their first vines in 1994. They have a very modern Cellar Door perched on a cliff face with a stunning view overlooking the straight and the mainland beyond (known locally as "the North Island"). Cellar Door Manager Darren showed us a brief video presentation on the Dudley history and winemaking philosophy and a tasting of some of their portfolio followed this, including a vertical tasting of The Stud Shiraz. I could have stayed admiring the view for longer but our next activity called.

Wines Tasted:

2020 Grassy Flat Sauvignon Blanc
2018 Porky Flat Shiraz

2018 The Stud Shiraz
2013 The Stud Shiraz

Arriving at Christmas Cove at Penneshaw most of us embarked upon the brand new 36 seat vessel operated by **KI Ocean Safari Cruises**. Departing on our Sunset Cruise charter we were shown, in turn, dolphins, seals, unique rock formations, a pile of rocks and, finally, a de-sal plant. Despite arriving back at Christmas Cove some 15 or 20 minutes late, when we did so the sun had still not set! Either way, it had been a fascinating, interesting and, at times, cold cruise. Still, we can warm up on the coach on the way back to American River.

It having been a few hours since we'd last eaten or drunk anything then it wasn't long before we headed off for dinner at **Kingsgate Haven Riverview Restaurant**. Here we were treated to another excellent meal accompanied by some great local wine bringing another great day to an appropriate close.

Sunday

With another full buffet breakfast under the belt the coaches departed for **The Islander Estate**. Manager Yale is a familiar figure to most of us, having addressed us at Goodwood for our February 2020 function. This time Yale hosted us at his winery and vineyards, much of which had been destroyed in the devastating December 2019 bushfires. Fortifying us with a glass of sparkling, Yale took us amongst the vines to see the damage first hand. Here he gave us a fascinating insight into the re-generation of the vines after the fires. Our members were showing lots of interest too and there were questions galore! Returning to the partially damaged winery building we embarked on a structured tasting of some of his 2019 vintage – 2020 having been almost non-existent. At this venue we also enjoyed a light lunch catered by Exceptional KI.

Wines Tasted:

NV Pétiyante (Chardonnay/Pinot Noir)
2019 Semillon Sauvignon Blanc
2019 Wally White (Semillon)

2019 Bark Hut Road 'Reserve'
(Cabernet Franc/Shiraz)
2019 Old Rowley (Shiraz Grenache)
2015 The Independence (Malbec)

All too soon we were back in the coaches to arrive at **Raptor Domain** in time for their 2.30 show. Here we saw birds that had been rescued from the wild showing off their skills in return for treats from their handlers. A great one-hour show. Moving on from there for our final venue of the tour, **Clifford Honey Farm**. Here we learned a bit about the unique KI Ligurian bees and even got to see a hive in operation – up close and personal. What a big finish.

Of course, not having eaten for an hour or two (unless you'd had the honey ice cream at Clifford's) then we needed a dinner venue. This was supplied by, for me, the absolute surprise of the trip, **KI Tru Thai**. I genuinely thought that this venue was a "regular" restaurant, which is why I'd always been surprised to see on the map that it seemed to

be in the middle of nowhere and to find that it usually only opened on a Thursday evening. It turns out that it's basically a food truck, in a very large tin shed, with fairly authentic Thai street food. In fact, you could have fooled yourself into really believing you were in Thailand. Well, except for the cold, that is – I don't think it ever really gets down to "single figures" anywhere in Thailand. Still, the patio heaters dotted around the place took the edge off the chill and the food, in my view, was excellent.

So that was the tour! Interesting wine, great food, passionate locals (not just regarding wine) and fascinating venues. We'd learned lots – again, not just regarding wine – and had lots and lots of fun. Perhaps, in one or two aspects, it was a little rushed – but nothing that we weren't able to overcome. In all, I think, another triumph for the Guild. Thank you to our lead organiser, Tom Olthoff.