

The Cockfighter

Linking the Communities of Broke Fordwich Bulga & Milbrodale

July/August 2021

**SERENITY GROVE
AND BROKE REGION
CAR HIRE**

**ACCOMMODATION AND
TOURS IN STYLE**



Broke Fordwich Wine and Tourism Association

THIS ISSUE:

**SERENITY GROVE AND
BROKE REGION CAR HIRE**
ACCOMMODATION AND TOURS IN STYLE



Barbera Uncorked - Italy's grape variety



OUR WILDLIFE

Speckled warbler *Pyrrholaemus sagittata* -
vulnerable species listing



LANDCARE: AUSTRALIA NEEDS A FEASIBLE INVESTMENT SYSTEM FOR FRONT-LINE RURAL STEWARDSHIP



SINGLETON TRACK AND FIELD'S LONG-AWAITED MOVE TO JAMES COOK PARK JUMPS AHEAD



CSIRO REPORT CONFIRMS RENEWABLES STILL CHEAPEST NEW-BUILD POWER IN AUSTRALIA



FROM THE EDITOR

OURCARE IS ALLCARE—AND CARCARE

As an appreciative client of OURCARE, the Government-administered volunteer organization which provides oldies like me with home aid and the like (don't dismiss their support workers as cleaners, although they do that magnificently), I was tickled to learn that they featured in Olympic style at the Local Business Awards with three podium finishes. OURCARE won gold with the tireless Lesleigh Adie, their Chief Executive Officer, notching the Outstanding Business Leader Award - and she did it for the fourth year in a row. Not only did her girls lead OURCARE to the Excellence in Medium/Large Business section, but they topped the field by winning the major prize of Excellence in Business for 2021. To figure like this in ordinary times would be remarkable—but to lead the way in this harrowing but necessary atmosphere of restrictive, and sometimes inconvenient measures, says a lot about the dedication of OURCARE staff. Remember that their aim is to sup-



port lucky people like you and me. And I don't reserve the 'lucky' tag solely for those of us who can welcome these willing and active support workers into our own homes. Of course, we're lucky enough, as well, to own those homes—and

the mission, if you like, of OURCARE is simple: to do everything they can to keep us living at home, surrounded by the welcome ghosts of lost spouses and dear friends, the laughter and love of babies and grandbabies, those awfully bad jokes at great dinner parties, and-for the most part- fun and games and song and dance, over the hills and dales of life. HOME is the essence of what OURCARE and their wonderful personnel are all about.

I have additional thanks to OURCARE for a fascinating –and somewhat frightening!—roundup of road rules we tend to overlook in the usually daily procedure of (in my case) transporting one’s self to Broke or Singleton for my regular shot of the SYDNEY MORNING HERALD, and/or THE AUSTRALIAN. Sorry, but I’m a print journalist to the end—and I can’t wrap up the kitchen scraps in my new computer. Back to the road rules—and be prepared to, well, be prepared.

How often do you leave the keys in the ignition and the motor running while you dash into the Bulga or Broke store for that loaf of milk or litre of bread (sorry, but I’m unnerved by the memory of the times I’ve done this)? And don’t even think of leaving the car door open or the window down: Rules 213 (4) and (5) hit you with a fine of \$108 for each transport transgression. If you think that’s tough, stick around but don’t mess around with your mobile while in the queue at Macca’s or Hungry Jack’s; the rules treat a drive-through as a road so it’s an offence to try and catch up on emails, etc., while you’re waiting for your Triple Whamburger with Semi-dried Roadkill entrails. And for a real party-pooper, get used to canning the klaxon, or the horn as we know it. No more cheerful toots to a neighbour as you pass their gate or front paddock—you’re up for inappropriate use of a warning device with a fine of \$325. Arm hanging out the window? That’s ‘part of the body’ outside your motor and also carries a \$325 slug. I could carry on, so I will. As one who undertakes the biennial drivers’ test for geriatrics, I knew that you must indicate LEFT when leaving a roundabout—to ensure that others know you are exiting forthwith. Doesn’t matter if you’re turning left/right, starting a U-turn or proceeding straight ahead—you have to flash left as you leave the roundabout: otherwise, not only a \$180 contribution to State coffers but two demerits.

With just one month of winter left to keep the home fires burning, here’s to what the weather boffins assert could be a wet Spring.. hopefully without the carryover of fuel and fire buildup to another midsummer murder. Thanks and, again, congratulations to OURCARE and their Golden Girls.

Tom Jackson

SERENITY GROVE AND BROKE REGION CAR HIRE ACCOMMODATION AND TOURS IN STYLE

Ken and Karren McCraw know what visitors to the Broke Fordwich region require and they work hard to provide it. In particular they know that people appreciate being able to book accommodation, wine tours, shuttles to weddings and events and other services and amenities all from one phone call.



Two cottages each able to sleep up to eight set on Ken and Karren's olive grove and cattle farm provide a rustic and comfortable experience.



The Broke Fordwich region is well known in the Hunter and is one of the best places to experience local wines. Ken and Karren have been associated with the area for many years and are the perfect hosts to have as drivers and guides. Whether it is with a large group in the bus or a more intimate tour or shuttle in the fully restored Bentley. For larger groups, Ken and Karren are able to supply several buses and drivers.



The large recreation room provides a comfortable gathering point for friends and family to enjoy a casual BBQ, a sit down meal or for corporate groups, a meeting place.



Each cottage has a large verandah area with BBQ facilities





The accommodation consists of two country style three bedrooms cottages that sleep up to 8 guests comfortably in each. The cottages can be rented individually or together for a larger group.

The cottages have two queen bedrooms, a twin single and a double sofa bed. Two additional single beds can be provided to accommodate 10 guests. There is a self contained kitchen, dining and lounge area in each cottage. Also there are BBQ facilities on the verandahs.

***BROKE REGION HIRE CAR and
SHUTTLE SERVICE
and SERENITY GROVE ACCOMMODATION***

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For more information click here

Barbera Uncorked

A refreshing burst of character



Margan Wines owner and chief winemaker Andrew Margan
“[There’s] no such thing as a ‘best’ region for me,” he said, “[Each region’s Barbera] is different and represents the individual regions’ particular growing characteristics.”

High natural acidity in wine is something typical of the Italian red powerhouses Barbera, Nero d’Avola, Nebbiolo and Sangiovese. Journalist Samuel Squire dives into some of the history of one of Italy’s most-planted wine-grape varieties, and speaks to Australian producers and an importer of Italian Barbera wine to find out where it stands in the local market.

In Italy’s Piedmont, Barbera is the most planted grape variety, accounting for three times the acreage planted to Nebbiolo. The variety is quite versatile and can be used in more than just single varietal wines, which is the reason it is so widely planted in its Italian homeland.

Ampelographers and historians who have written on the variety have largely determined its true origins, but nothing can definitively be said about its true age. Based

on 13th century scripture (Italian Wine Connection 2018), Barbera originates in the hills of Monferrato in central Piedmont.



Langhe-Roero and Monferrato form a vast hill area in Southern Piedmont

Before Italy's Renaissance, Barbera wine was known as the “people's wine” (Sweet 2018) and had been described as a commoner moving up in the ranks. It was known to be served at the tables of royals and curial in important cities.

According to University of California, Davis FPS historian Nancy L. Sweet, it was custom for Italian families in the Piedmont region to take their names from common or widely planted grapevines, botanical sources, or from different types of agricultural activities.

Sweet suggests there is also a historical connection between the Italian family names ‘Barbieri’, ‘Barbero’ and ‘Barberis’ to the vines of the region.

In 1909, French ampelographer Pierre Viala proposed the Oltrepò Pavese region as Barbera's original home in his work *Ampélographie* (Sweet 2018).

Sweet states the name Oltrepò Pavese means “Pavia across the Po [River]” and refers to an area bordering Piemonte in the Province of Pavia to the south of the Po River, which was once a part of Piedmont.

Barbera is a very adaptable variety, too. It can grow in many different climates and soil types. It grows nowadays in the US and Argentina due to large-scale Italian migration.

Barboursville Vineyards near Charlottesville in the American state of Virginia first planted its Barbera in 1976 and made its first Barbera varietal wine in 1991.

Barbera's name – or its origins – have yet to be fully agreed upon by today's ampelographers. Compared to the agricultural writers of old, today's ampelographers are more hyper-corrective about a grape variety's name and origins.

Agricultural writers were not known to record the individual names of winegrapes on a wide scale until the latter half of the 19th century.

Even with a recorded history spanning back to 13th century Italy, Barbera's written name wasn't really used until the 18th century, according to one of the world's leading experts in Italian wine, Ian D'Agata, author of *Native Wine Grapes of Italy*, published in 2014.

In his book, D'Agata stated, "The origin of its name is unclear; Pietro Ratti of Renato Ratti feels it's a derivation of barbaro (barbarian) due to its deep red colour, while others believe the origin is vinum berberis, an astringent, acidic, and deeply hued medieval drink. Vinum berberis is different from the vitibus berbexinis referred to in a 1249 document located in the archives of Casale Monferrato, which was most likely another variety, Barbesino or Berbesino, better known today as Grignolino".

Barbera is one of Italy's top five most-planted native winegrape varieties, the third most common red grape and it is also one of the 15 most-planted grape varieties in the world, according to D'Agata's 2014 research.

D'Agata also mentioned that Barbera has no long or distinguished history, continuing that most Italian wine exports believe it to be originally from Monferrato, and



Barbera harvest underway at Margan Wines, Broke Fordwich, Hunter Valley

not from the neighbouring regions of Alba or Asti. Many others believe the grape was known centuries before as Uva Grisa or Grisola and was the result of the domestication of local wild vines.

Wine writer Jancis Robinson in 2014 said, “The man who first put Barbera on a pedestal, or at least demonstrated that it was capable of making serious wine rather than local mouthwash, was the late Giacomo Bologna of the Braida estate whose Bricco dell’Uccellone was the first internationally marketed Barbera. The wine, which has since been followed by hundreds of increasingly expensive imitators, owed its distinction to two factors, much lower-than-usual yields and ageing in French oak barriques”.

It is believed by Australian growers of Barbera that the variety first landed on Australian shores in the 1950s and ‘60s.

Wine Australia’s 2019 varietal snapshot report accounted for roughly 110 hectares of land under vine to Barbera, based on 2015 figures.

Over 600 tonnes were crushed in 2019, 69 percent of which was crushed in the Riverina, 9% in the King Valley and 4% in McLaren Vale.

Barbera is a vigorous variety and capable of producing high yield figures if not managed appropriately. Its excessive yields can weaken fruit quality and accent the variety’s natural acidity and sharp character profile.

The variety tends to ripen about two weeks ahead of another Italian wine staple, Nebbiolo, in Piedmont, and two weeks after Dolcetto – a rich, round yet soft fruit which crafts wines with distinct aromatics of blackberry and plum with a bitter almond after taste on the palate.

Barbera tends to be quite versatile in the soils it can grow well on, but will thrive most in less fertile calcareous soils and clay loam (Italian Wine Connection 2018).

The variety isn’t too widely planted in Australia, but those who grow the variety may have some viticultural challenges, according to one McLaren Vale winemaker.

Hunter Valley producer Margan Wines was the first in the region to adopt the variety into its own vineyard in Broke Fordwich at its Ceres Hill property.

Margan Wines has just completed its 20th vintage with Barbera, having first planted the variety in 1998 using cuttings taken from the original Montrose Mudgee vineyard planted by Carlo Corino back in the 1950s.

Andrew Margan, owner and chief winemaker of Margan Wines in the Hunter, says the variety takes some time to acclimatise to Australian conditions, in his experi-

ence.

“As a young vine, it used to defoliate with extreme heat conditions,” he said, “However, as it has aged, it is now appearing to cope much better”

He says Barbera is generally quite disease resistant and “our clone tends to distribute fruit so that bunches don’t sit one on top of the other, and the berries are quite loose”, making bunch rot rare.

“It doesn’t seem to mind wet weather and continues to ripen under waterlogged conditions.”

Margan has worked with Barbera across the Hunter Valley, Mudgee, Orange, the Barossa Valley and McLaren Vale. He says that, in Australia, the variety isn’t necessarily suited to one particular region over another, but that each region shows its character in the wines produced.

However, he says the characteristics the Hunter Valley brings out in the variety are quite unique.

“[There’s] no such thing as a ‘best’ region for me,” he said, “[Each region’s Barbera] is different and represents the individual regions’ particular growing characteristics. I have good and bad grapes from all the areas I worked with it.”

Margan says his Barbera block (planted in Broke Fordwich) is managed using VSP with permanent mid row sward and is managed using an undervine cultivation machine.

Margan spur prunes his Barbera to 16-20 buds per arm, however he is currently in the process of cutting the vines back to canes.

FOR THE FULL STORY FROM **Winetitles Media** [CLICK HERE](#)

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OUR WILDLIFE

Speckled warbler *Pyrrholaemus sagittata* - vulnerable species listing

The Speckled Warbler is distributed from south-eastern Queensland, through central and eastern NSW to Victoria. In NSW, Speckled Warblers occupy eucalypt and cypress woodlands on the slopes west of the Great Dividing Range. They inhabit woodlands with a grassy understorey, often on ridges or gullies. The species is sedentary, living in pairs or trios and nests on the ground in grass tussocks, dense litter and fallen branches. They forage on the ground and in the understorey for arthropods and seeds. Home ranges vary from 6-12 hectares.

The Speckled Warbler has declined in numbers from large parts of its range. Declines have been

reported. Speckled Warblers would become extinct if current land management practices were not reversed.

The Speckled Warbler is threatened by clearance and fragmentation of habitat including removal of dead timber. The species decreased in abundance as woodland area decreased, and it appears to be extinct in districts where no fragments larger than 100ha remain. Isolation of Speckled Warbler populations in small remnants increases their vulnerability to local extinction as a result of stochastic events and decreases their genetic viability in the long term. Low population densities and relatively large home range requirements also would exacerbate their vulnerability to habitat loss.

The preferred foraging habitat of Speckled Warbler is areas with a combination of open grassy patches, leaf litter and shrub cover. This habitat is susceptible to degradation by stock and weed invasion. Nesting on the ground also makes them vulnerable to predators such as foxes and cats.

In view of the above points, the Speckled Warbler *Pyrrholaemus sagittata*, is likely to become endangered unless the circumstances and factors threatening its survival or evolutionary development cease to operate, and is therefore eligible for listing as a vulnerable species.

We are so lucky to have these handsome little birds still thriving at Bulga. This photo was taken near the NSW National Parks and Wildlife Service Bulga Office.

Elizabeth

Joey's Retreat.



AUSTRALIA NEEDS A FEASIBLE INVESTMENT SYSTEM FOR FRONTLINE RURAL STEWARDSHIP

Australia needs a feasible investment system for frontline rural stewardship, to achieve our desire for sustainable primary production and protection of biodiversity.

Landcare NSW, the Great Eastern Ranges Initiative, Gondwana Link, and The Nature Conservancy have worked with the Australian Centre for Agriculture & Law at the University of New England, to explore how Australia should pay for frontline protection or restoration of rural environments.



A significant and timely report focused on addressing the rural stewardship funding gap has been developed that will help guide future pathways for Australia.

Funding Rural Stewardship: The case for meaningful reform



An evidence-based report by the Australian Centre for Agriculture and Law on funding and incentives required for land stewards and volunteers to carry out effective rural environmental conservation and restoration.

[Download the report](#)

For more information and reports visit the Landcare site [Click here](#)

SINGLETON TRACK AND FIELD'S LONG-AWAITED MOVE TO JAMES COOK PARK JUMPS AHEAD



Singleton Track and Field Club President Hilary Kennedy + Secretary Sarah Speechly, Singleton Council's Coordinator Recreation + Facilities Amanda McMahon and Singleton Track and Field Club Publicity & Social Media Officer / Championships Officer Angela Penton

A new era for athletics in Singleton has taken a giant leap with work officially underway on a long jump track and pit at James Cook Park.

Funded by Singleton Sports Council's dollar-for-dollar sport infrastructure grant, Singleton Track and Field Club and a \$50,000 donation through Bridgestone Mining Solutions Australia's Tokyo 2020 Olympics program, athletes are expected to be using the new facility this coming season.

Justin Fitzpatrick-Barr, Singleton Council's Director Infrastructure and Planning said the works formed stage one of the club's masterplan for the new track and field facility, positioning James Cook Park as the preeminent athletics sporting location in the Upper Hunter.

"We are really excited to partner with the Singleton Track and Field Club to start delivering on our mutual vision for this complex," he said.

"The \$122,000 long jump project includes a three lane, 60 metre track and nine

metre pit, meeting International Amateur Athletic Federation (IAAF) standards, plus a new storage facility.

“Singleton’s Rose Point and James Cook parks are unique in that they play host to so many sports including netball, AFL, cricket and junior rugby league, connected by the award-winning Rose Point Park all abilities playground, and the addition of athletics facilities will further cement this precinct as a mecca for recreation.

“That being said, we are playing the long game when it comes to the new athletics centre. With a strategic vision and masterplan now in place and fantastic grant funding opportunities available to us, this will become a multi-million dollar facility to help develop future athletes not only in Singleton, but the wider Hunter Region and beyond.”

Mr Fitzpatrick-Barr said Singleton Track and Field Club’s move to James Cook Park would also correspond with the redevelopment of their current home, Alroy Oval.

Endorsed by Council earlier this year, the Masterplan for Alroy Oval outlines a range of upgrades including three full-sized football pitches with warm up area, a multiuse futsal/ basketball/netball court, upgraded amenities building and car park, new playground, shelters and footpaths.

“Council has made a considerable investment in recreation facilities in this past few years, and we’re excited to continue to deliver state-of-the-art infrastructure to help support the physical and social benefits of organised sport and recreation, encourage high level competitions and events to come to Singleton, and develop future sporting stars.”

To view the Cook Park, Rose Point Park and Alroy Oval masterplans, ***Click here***





News Release

Australia's National Science Agency

CSIRO REPORT CONFIRMS RENEWABLES STILL CHEAPEST NEW-BUILD POWER IN AUSTRALIA

Solar photovoltaics (PV) and wind continue to be the cheapest sources of new electricity generation capacity in Australia, even when the integration costs of renewables are included, according to the final 2020-21 GenCost Report, released last month.



Each year Australia's national science agency, CSIRO, and the Australian Energy Market Operator (AEMO) consult with industry stakeholders to estimate the cost to generate electricity for new power plants in Australia through their GenCost report. This year's report used a new, more accurate approach for analysing the cost of renewables like solar and wind, to include additional 'integration' costs such as storage and new transmission infrastructure, and still found solar and wind con-

tinue to be the cheapest sources of new-build electricity generation.

CSIRO Chief Energy Economist Paul Graham said an early draft of the report, released to stakeholders in December 2020, had been improved to reflect feedback about the impact of weather variability on driving up these integration costs.

“The final report addresses this feedback: our analysis of renewable integration costs now includes greater recognition of this year to year weather variability and the impact it has on electricity demand and supply,” Mr Graham said.

“We took the integration costs from the highest of nine historical weather years.”

Stakeholders asked that the analysis recognise batteries are achieving longer lives before they need to be replaced and costing less, meaning the costs of storage from batteries is lower than previously thought.

This report concludes that:

- Solar and wind continue to be the cheapest sources of new-build electricity.
- Battery costs fell the most in 2020-21 compared to any other generation or storage technology and are projected to continue to fall. Lower battery storage costs underpin the long-term competitiveness of renewables.
- Pumped hydro is also important and is more competitive when longer durations of storage (above eight hours) are required.
- The new approach is a model of the electricity system that optimises the amount of storage needed, and also includes additional transmission expenditure. Previous reports added arbitrary amounts of storage costs and did not include transmission or other costs.

This report includes hydrogen electrolysers for the first time and finds that hydrogen is following a similar trajectory to more established renewables. With increased interest in global deployment, and many demonstration projects worldwide, substantial cost reductions in hydrogen technologies are expected over the next decades.

Today’s report is the third GenCost report, following the inaugural report in 2018. Read the final report ***click here*** and an accessible version is available ***click here***

Falling Leaves

Leaves fell off the tree, the day you said goodbye to me.

With no harsh words, or tears, or sorrow, regrets would wait until tomorrow.

So true the adage, "You don't know what you had, till it's gone.", comes back to haunt me, those words from the song.

Maybe I didn't know what I had, standing too close to the fire. But now my life seems cold..... and I have to wait for the leaves to return for warmth.

Cycles are everywhere, in nature and in human understanding. I don't think the tree feels remorse or shame as humans do, Spring will bring to them new leaves.

Sad though the human cycle where age, time and regrets, all live only on a one way street, the path of memories, so bittersweet, yet defines us, as who we were.

Steve Mushenko

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