

The Cockfighter

Linking the Communities of Broke Fordwich Bulga & Milbrodale

April 2021



BAREFOOT AT BROKE

**A QUALITY ADDITION TO
THE BROKE FORDWICH
ACCOMMODATION MENU**

BAREFOOT AT BROKE QUALITY RURAL COMFORT



OUR WILDLIFE



ANZAC DAY

**THE BULGA MILBRODALE PROGRESS
ASSOCIATION ANZAC DAY SERVICE TO BE
HELD AT 11.AM SUNDAY 25TH APRIL**



BROKE FORDWICH WINE PIONEER TO HAND OVER ICONIC VINEYARD



GROWERS BECOME OLIVE OIL 'SOMMELIERS'



FROM THE EDITOR

UPPER HUNTER UNTERGANG: HOW TO LOSE A NSW SEAT HELD FOR 90 YEARS

Forgive my use of that grimly German term ‘untergang’ (‘downfall’) for the sordid circumstances in Macquarie Street last month, but I couldn’t help myself nor my weakness for alliteration (maybe that should be ‘ill-iteration’). ‘UNTERGANG’ was, by the way, the title of a superb film about one of the most momentous declines in history—the story of Adolf Hitler’s last weeks as he crumbled physically and mentally under the collapse of the regime he swore would last a thousand years. At least with the Upper Hunter, we’re only talking of 90 years—the time the National Party has won and contested the seat. So a legacy that had its origins in 1931, and, generally, robustly rebuffed any political takeover attempt, is definitely up for grabs with the resignation of the former National Party member for Upper Hunter in the Legislative Assembly in the last week of March.

In its way, this egregious episode of inadvisable liaisons involving an MP who should have known better is a lesson for anybody who fails to understand one of the burdens of electoral office: namely, that even a backbencher’s role can come under the closest scrutiny if the media get a whiff of possibly scandalous conduct. And that whiff can come from sources that may well have been trusted confidants (or accomplices) in untoward behaviour. To hear the unsavoury details of email exchanges in the ABC coverage of this gathering storm—on the floor of State Parliament, no less—was something I can’t recall the likes of in, well, nearly 90 years.

The seat of Upper Hunter has become harder to retain by the National Party for some years—with the disgraced former member surviving a four per cent swing in the last State poll and fending off a very determined ALP female contender. But Labor has its own problems nowadays (just ask our Federal MP Joel Fitzgibbon), and, with the Gladys-Government in numerical paralysis, voters may be encouraged to join the Shooters and Hunters raiders who embarrassed the Coalition in the last poll; this seemingly renegade rabble of gunhappy bogans has more support in the Bush than those in the corridors of power in Sydney know. And after this latest sexpisode to hit the lofty haunts of our lawmakers, some traditionalists may well opt for the ‘anybody-but-them’ scenario. After the torrential rain of March this year, I expected the Pasha Bulker to sail up the Wollombi Brook—and, after the Macquarie Street maelstrom, I expect the call for an equally substantial newcomer to front up for Upper Hunter: are you listening, Clive Palmer?

To close, and apart from asking readers to forgive my lapsing into German for our heading this month, I have to excuse myself for waving *Continued next page*

the flag for all keen yachties and for my former countrymen over the ditch because of a significant sporting achievement. Not that our Australian media would have noticed, except for a very good preview in the SYDNEY MORNING HERALD in the middle of the contest, but New Zealand once again won..what?

No, not the netball or the T20 cricket against the Aussies (unbelievable, but true) but the America's Cup! Yes, the trophy that Australia's magnificent winged keel snatched from the USA 38 years ago. Am I the only Bob Hawke follower who remembers the great man's cry of triumph—"any boss who doesn't give staff a day off today is a bum!" The Americans had held the cup for something like 100-odd years, so it was probably Australia's most memorable achievement—so why aren't we challenging any more? Finance is the short answer—so, once again, dear brothers, into the breach, Clive Palmer!

(Tom Jackson)



Featured in our 2019 January edition, Winmark Wines, under the stewardship of owner Karin Adcock has flourished in many directions - not least has been the addition of an art gallery and sculpture walk.

The gallery, housed in the property's former winery farm shed, is immediately adjacent to the cellar door. It's more than a space to exhibit art by likes of Rebecca Piece, James Ainslie and Felicia Aroney, but a place Karin hopes guests can forge a connection to ideas as well as a sense of place.

[Click here to view more](#)

BAREFOOT AT BROKE

QUALITY RURAL COMFORT

*“We love to travel to exotic places looking for new adventure, nice wine and food and of course beautiful accommodation.” Steve and Jen have transferred their love for travel to providing places for others to enjoy. They have created ‘**Barefoot Retreats**’ offering guests a choice of two Barefoot properties at Jervis Bay and Broke. Their first foray into becoming holiday hosts was to buy a place they themselves enjoyed holidaying in, a beautiful accommodation on the beachfront at Jervis Bay- ‘**Barefoot at Callala Beach**’.*

This gave them so much pleasure they decided to set up a second Barefoot property in Hunter Valley’s Broke Fordwich Wine Region reflecting their love for wines in the area, just outside the small village of Broke. Barefoot at Broke lives up to the expectations of those seeking luxury comfort, rural beauty and quietude.

‘Barefoot at Broke’ offers you a perfect Hunter Valley getaway in a unique blend of modern country home and can be rented as 2 or 3 bedrooms, huge open plan living, dining and gourmet kitchen and furnished with all the luxuries and modern touches and is pet friendly.

Set on 23 acres cradled by the Yengo Mountain range with a commanding position on top of a hill overlooking the tranquil surrounds, it offers guests some spectacular views of the pond, mountain ranges and neighbouring vineyards to completely



unwind, relax and rejuvenate whilst exploring the Hunter Valley. Without leaving the property, you can find your favourite picnic spots overlooking the pond with views of the neighbouring vineyards and Brokenback mountain ranges beyond with lots of wildlife including kangaroos, wombats and native birds.

The house caters for families, group of friends and couples (up to 6 guests) with plenty of spacious inviting indoor and outdoor areas to find your own space. The



main bedroom is luxuriously appointed with en-suite and walk in robe and has sliding doors opening to the expansive outdoor entertaining deck. The two other large bedrooms in opposite wings of the house ensure privacy and guests can come together in the centrally located spacious (high ceiling) living/dining/kitchen area adjoining an outdoor entertaining deck.

A spiral staircase leads to the large cosy sitting loft area with study desk and sofa you can use as a working space or reading/games area.

For lovers of good wine and food, the boutique cellar doors and restaurants of the Broke Fordwich area are just minutes away, as are some of the areas popular wedding venues.

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A gourmet kitchen adds to all of the other luxury elements in this rural retreat



Without leaving the property, you can find your favourite picnic spots overlooking the pond with views of the neighbouring vineyards and Brokenback mountain ranges beyond with lots of wildlife including kangaroos, wombats and native birds.

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Local wine tours and restaurant transfers are available to pick up and deliver from the front door.

Bedding Configuration

Bedroom 1 – King size 4 poster bed

Bedroom 2 – Queen bed

Bedroom 3 – Queen bed

BAREFOOT RETREATS

Email barefootatbroke@bigpond.com

Website www.barefootatbroke.com.au



Bring the treasures of the nearby cellar doors and gourmet outlets back to enjoy in the peace and tranquillity of this beautiful accommodation

OUR WILDLIFE



COMMON WALLAROO (EURO) (Macropus robustus)

Wallaroos are dark grey with coarse shaggy fur. Some females are bluish-grey and some males have a reddish band across the shoulders and neck. In central and western Australia they are known as Euros, have shorter reddish-brown fur and live in hot arid area. They rest and shelter among dense trees, in caves or under rock ledges and emerge in the late afternoons to graze. They are usually solitary and occupy small overlapping home ranges. Males establish dominance hierarchies marking low vegetation with secretions from a chest gland and fight over females, engaging in ritualised boxing matches. Females breed all year and give birth to a single young in about 34 days after mating, the joey suckles in the mothers pouch for about 35-38 weeks and then at foot until about 15 months old. Diet is grass and shrubs. Habitat is rocky sites from wet sclerophyll to arid tussock grasslands.

Elizabeth
Joeys Retreat



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Is This Jazz?

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BOOKINGS ESSENTIAL



arts **UPPER HUNTER**



Join us for

Festa de Maggio

at Catherine Vale

SATURDAY 1st & SUNDAY 2nd MAY 2021

Bring the family for a weekend of fun and activities!

Wine tasting, stalls, tasty food, Gnocchi making classes, live music, gelato, daily activities for young and old, Bocce, Cornhole and bubble making, face painting. Saturday night Dinner (bookings essential), Lotus and Ciao Car Clubs display and much more.

For more information and bookings please contact: Wendy Lawson
02 6579 1334

www.catherinevalewines.com.au

wine@catherinevale.com.au

656 Milbrodale Road,
Broke 2330



Festa
de Maggio
at Catherine Vale



ANZAC DAY

**THE BULGA MILBRODALE PROGRESS
ASSOCIATION INVITES YOU TO OUR
ANZAC DAY SERVICE TO BE HELD AT
11.AM SUNDAY 25TH APRIL AT THE
BULGA RECREATION GROUND.**

**LIGHT REFRESHMENTS INCLUDING TEA
AND COFFEE WILL BE PROVIDED. THESE
WILL BE LIMITED BECAUSE OF COVID19
AWARENESS AND RESTRICTIONS**

For more information regarding Anzac Day ceremonies near you and current NSW Health advice and Controlled Outdoor Event guidelines [click here](#)



ONE OF BROKE FORDWICH WINE PIONEERS TO HAND OVER ICONIC VINEYARD

One of Broke Fordwich wine region's wine pioneers is due to hand over her iconic vineyard to new owners later in May. After launching the first wines in 1998 Catherine Vale Vineyard, under the stewardship of Bill and Wendy Lawson remained a stalwart of viticulture and wine production in the region, building a large client base and providing a centre for events and activities. In 2016, with the passing of her husband Bill, Wendy continued to work the vineyard and business with much of her time among the grapes as well as manning the cellar door and running the business.

"Since arriving in Australia in 1967 from Salinas, California I have 2 very different



The Lawson family: Bec and son Gavin with Havana and Piper on left of picture Vince in middle with daughter Alice and daughter Belinda and Wendy.

memories . One being that of a devoted wife to Bill who was committed to working with students in helping them achieve a goal, whether it be in swimming, athletics or rugby while gathering a greater understanding of self in the process.”

We moved permanently to Broke at the end of 1994 after 36 years at Knox Grammar School. I had been in Australia for 27 years when we moved to Broke. I then and with Bills support involved myself in many facets of community life and will leave the region with many fond memories of the people

Continued next page

and the place. My next adventure is summed up by one of Catherine Vale customer's from Horsham Victoria who first ordered Catherine Vale 1999 Semillon and after a wonderful review by James Halliday in 2010, sent this lovely poem:

Life is

An Adventure -- dare to do it!

Beautiful -- admire it.

A Challenge -- accept it.

A Dream -- realize it.

Love -- treasure it.

An opportunity -- don't miss it.

Precious -- guard it.

A Puzzle -- solve it.

A song -- sing with it.

All in all

Life is Life live it.

Wendy's daughter, Belinda addressed attendees at the recent Catherine Vale wine launch and here, in part, is what she said.

"Today I wanted to say a few words on the occasion of the final Catherine Vale Wine Launch. The first wine launch was in 1998 and 2021 will be the last one. That makes 24 years of this event. 2020 was the only year this event didn't happen and that was due to a global pandemic. That is probably the only thing that could stop Wendy Lawson from doing this. Not much can!

In 2021, this event isn't really a launch because the grapes were damaged by smoke taint last year, so no new wines were made. But it is still a special occasion where Wendy invites Friends of Catherine Vale for an afternoon of great food, wines and music. There will be some special wines on offer today, if not 2020 wines! You can see that the menu has another new theme this year for Harmony Day and as usual Wendy has gone to a lot of trouble to plan the menu, source all kinds of interesting and tasty ingredients and prepare a delicious meal for you all. Thank you all for being here and especially to those of you who have continued to support my parents, my Mum and Catherine Vale for many years. I hope you enjoy the afternoon and especially the wine and the food that Wendy and her helpers have prepared for you.

The idea of Catherine Vale started in 1979 when my parents and their friends started coming to the Hunter Valley for wine tastings. Their love of tasting, drinking and philosophising about wine turned into an idea that **Continued next page**

maybe they should buy a property and grow grapes in their retirement. This great idea became a reality in 1988, when they purchased 656 Milbrodale Road, Broke. In 1988 Catherine Vale was nothing but a small house and some land. Bill and Wendy planted grapes in 1993 and have lovingly tended to them for the past 28 years. The varieties grown here now are Chardonnay, Semillon, Barbera, Dolcetto, Arneis, Verdelho and Shiraz. Since 1988, the property has been transformed into a thriving vineyard with a passionate Vigneron at the helm. There is a lovingly restored Edwardian home, a beautiful cellar door, loyal staff, three dams, sheds, fences, bocce courts, picnic areas, accommodation for tourists, another house and much more.

My Mother Wendy has always been the driving force of this place and at 78 she



is still as passionate and driven as ever. It will be difficult for her to leave all of the special memories here, but I know that whatever she chooses to do in her next phase of life, she will do it with the same amount of passion, energy, drive and commitment that she has put into Catherine Vale. My Dad would also be proud of what Wendy has achieved on her own. Since we lost my Dad 5 years ago, my Mum has continued to work hard and pour all of her energy into this place. She loves everything about this property, from the house and cellar door, to the grape vines, trees, wildlife and land. She has dedicated herself to the community – in Singleton, Broke and Bulga. She was awarded an Order of Australia Medal for her services to tourism, viticulture and the environment and recently was nominated for the Singleton Council Citizen of the Year. She is the most community-minded, hardworking, determined person I know.

I think we should all raise our glass of Catherine Vale wine for a toast to Wendy and to her upcoming retirement. We wish her good health and a long and happy life. May she find happiness and satisfaction from whatever she does. May she never run out of wine, but may she sell as much of it today as she can!

A toast to Wendy!”



VICTORIAN GROWERS BECOME OLIVE OIL 'SOMMELIERS' AFTER TRIP ABROAD TO CONSULT THE EXPERTS

By Eden Hynninen ABC Rural

The word sommelier is often associated with fine wine, but did you know that it can also be used when talking about olive oil?



Central Victorian olive growers Milly Byrne and Julie Howard are olive oil sommeliers. (Supplied)

Central Victorian growers Milly Byrne and Julie Howard are olive oil sommeliers and just like their counterparts in wine they can assess its quality, chemistry and flavour.

After receiving a Young Farmers Scholarship from the Victorian Government in 2018, Ms Byrne, along with Mrs Howard, travelled to Europe to learn the art.

“We decided we would either going to go to Greece or Spain because they’re the experts — they’ve had olives since before 800BC,” Ms Byrne said.

The trip didn’t disappoint.

“When we did our research, we discovered that yes, there was an equivalent reality with olive oil as there is with wine,” Mrs Howard said.

Continued next page

Over the course of a week the pair learnt to identify the characteristics and types of olive oil, its flavours and what kinds of food you can pair it with.

“We learnt when to identify that olive oil is off and what they call ‘lampante’, which means the oil is only fit for lighting a lamp, not for eating,” Mrs Howard said.

She said extra virgin was pressed, plain olive juice, whereas virgin was mixed or slightly damaged.

Mrs Howard said the flavour of olive oil depends on where and when the fruit was harvested.

“A lot of growers pick them very green and so you’ll get very pungent, spicy flavours, which can also indicate polyphenol, that can show health benefits,” she said.

“They can also take on fruity flavours — it could smell like apricots, it could smell like bananas or green tomatoes.

“The whole idea is to taste the freshest olive oil and to know how to identify it with your nose, using your sensory responses.

“And then your palate, which includes your tongue, your taste buds, the side of your tongue and the retro nasal down the back — you need lots of practice.”

When it comes to food, Mrs Howard said certain oils best suited certain meals.

“One of the qualities of olive oil is its texture — the arbequina olive is a very creamy buttery texture, so that can be used for an appetiser and I would use it as a dessert oil,” she said.

But she said that everyone’s taste buds were different.

“People should find some samples for tastings and discern what flavours there are, and the differences — someone else’s palate may not be the same as ours,” she said.



*Ms Byrne received a Young Farmers Scholarship from the Victorian Government in 2018.
(Supplied)*

BROKE/ BULGA LANDCARE GROUP NOMINATED FOR HUNTER REGION LANDCARE AWARDS

The Broke/Bulga Landcare Group has been nominated for the Hunter Region Landcare Awards.

Formed in 1996 the group has been working over multiple sites including McNamara, Stewart McTaggart and Herbert Parks in Broke and the Fordwich Crossing Reserve. The group has reduced or eliminated woody weeds such as African olive, camphor laurel and broad-leafed privet, along with cactus and tradescantia. It has achieved this through working-bees over 15 years before it was given financial and personnel assistance from Bulga Coal and Local Land Services. This assistance came in various forms but mostly contractors to do the heavy work needed. Over time the group has staged and hosted information days on the life cycle and feeding regimes of wombats, plus several days on wild dog and fox control methods. In addition to this, it continues to work on the cactus problem due to re-infestation from periodic floods.

The benefits of being a Landcare group are meeting local residents with a common interest in the bush, streams and animals, as well as the opportunity to learn



Members of Broke Bulga Landcare and onlookers watch cultural fire practitioners Koori Country Firesticks begin the process of an Aboriginal 'cool' burn

new skills like Indigenous cool-burning techniques, controlling feral animals, using chainsaws, brush-cutters and more.

The first president was Roy Palmer, who handed the role to Wendy Lawson who continues as president.

For more information or requests to join contact Wendy Lawson

0417 657 915

wine@catherinevale.com.au



COMMUNITY GROUPS AND ORGANISATIONS

Broke Bulga Landcare Group Inc.

C/o President, Wendy Lawson
PO Box 120, Broke
NSW 2330

Broke Fair Committee

Secretary, Maxine Alexander
alexandermaxine6@gmail.com

Broke Fordwich Wine & Tourism

President Jody Derrick
Secretary, Mike Wilson
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NSW Rural Fire Service Hunter Valley District

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Broke Rural Fire Brigade

Captain: Paul Myers
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Broke NSW 2330

Bulga Rural Fire Brigade

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Milbrodale Public School

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Palliative Care Volunteers for Singleton & Cessnock

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The Immaculate Conception Catholic Church Broke

Paul O'Toole
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Wildlife Rescue, Rehabilitation and Release

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