



Autumn 2013

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*H*ello and welcome to the first Hilltops Harvest newsletter. This has been a project in thought for quite a few months now and we are glad to be able to take it to the next stage and present it to you in reality. The idea behind this newsletter is to attempt to keep all members informed about Hilltops Harvest and to keep you up to date with events that have been held or are being planned to be held within the region.

## *Hilltops*

*J*ust a few words on what and where the Hilltops region is. Parts of the Shires of Boorowa, Harden and Young make up the Hilltops region. The name was first coined quite some time ago by grape growers as Young was not considered a good name to associate with wine, not the town but the adjective. It was also felt the name described the areas in the hillsides where the grapes were grown. The Australian Wine and Brandy Corporation requested that all wine growing regions be named and registered with them by the year 2000. Our wine growing region was officially born in that year as the Hilltops region of NSW. Since then it has become more widely known and used by many as a promotional name for the regional produce in general.

*S*o let's begin by re-capping what the group have been up to since we commenced working towards promoting our region in 2011.

The group began by conducting 6 Agricultural Business Development workshops with the aid of a grant from the Australian Government 'Enterprise Connect' programme.



*The Hilltops Stand at the 100 mile dinner*

Then we planned the 'All Jazzed up in the Hilltops' event with James Morrison planned for April 2012 and to be held at the Young Town Hall. However, just prior to that we were asked by F.O.O.D. (Food of Orange and District) if we would attend as Hilltops and provide the entree at their Canowindra 100 mile three course dinner event. We accepted and went along to prepare and serve the entree for 300 people. Our region was represented by wines from Hilltops producers and food prepared and served by a number of our local chefs to very high acclaim.



*Laying up finger food for All Jazzed up in the Hilltops*

*All Jazzed up in the Hilltops* followed a couple of weeks after on April 28th. It was held at the Young Town Hall and was designed to be a showcase of local food and wine. The evening commenced with a wine tasting of all the local wines, with finger food served during the tasting. This was followed by main and dessert. The entertainment by James Morrison was spectacular and the crowd of around 200 people thoroughly enjoyed the night.



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## *NSW Tourism and the BBQ Challenge*

On top of the success of All Jazzed up in the Hilltops, NSW Tourism approached us and asked if we would like to be involved in the first of their BBQ challenges, of course we said yes.

They envisaged a dinner featuring local produce similar to the one we had just finished. It was planned for the weekend of the 31<sup>st</sup> of August. They requested a dinner on the Friday evening with the BBQ challenge to be held on the Saturday.

The dinner was titled 'Hungry for Hilltops' and was a little different with entree and dessert courses served on 'planks'. The image on the left shows the entree plank being assembled.

The celebrity Chef James Reeson from the television show 'Alive and Cooking' and Chef Kim Terakes were present as well as the well know wine writer and critic Peter Bourne.

The local produce presented was well received by the two Chefs, and the wines were highly commended by Peter Bourne

The BBQ challenge was held at the Old Railway Station at Young in conjunction with the Young Farmer's Market. There were to be three heats for the BBQ Challenge, the one at Young, another at Bowral and a third at Inverell. The winners were to meet in Sydney for a cook-off to decide the best BBQer. The Challenge was supported by many local cooks and BBQ enthusiasts with the winner being the chef from Mullino Bar and Grill in Young.

## *The Hilltops Seminar*

A seminar was held on 31<sup>st</sup> October 2012 in an effort to give local producers an insight into how to promote our region. The main speaker was Kim Curry of F.O.O.D. of Orange. The seminar was well attended by producers of many varied products; the three councils were also represented.

Kim was able to relate her experiences in Orange with what we are now experiencing with our own Hilltops region. A number of initiatives were presented to the group however one very interesting thing was the thought of getting in a paid coordinator to help promote the region, Kim thought we were much better off to handle things ourselves. Her reason being that it was expensive and also, we are the ones with the drive.

She also mentioned that many regions that decide to go with a paid coordinator generally revert to doing the job themselves.





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## *All Jazzed up in the Hilltops – Boorowa*

The Boorowa Community Bank's All Jazzed up in the Hilltops was held in Boorowa on the 23<sup>rd</sup> of February 2013. The evening was planned to be held in the park, however the weather was so bad that the event was moved into the Boorowa Recreation Club. The focus of the evening was twofold, great food and great Jazz. The crowd of around 200 was made up of locals from the three shires as well as many from further afield. The night was a Fantastic success. Thanks to the Boorowa Rec Club for all their help.



*Cutting and serving local beef for All Jazzed up at Boorowa*

Image by courtesy of Marie Myhill



The entertainment for the night was the Jeff Duff Trio and what an amazing group of performers, they were an inspiration whose music appealed to people of all ages. Many people were up dancing, strongly represented by Councils of the three shires, and kept them performing into the night. Everyone enjoyed the music and the gourmet picnic hampers provided a unique experience.

*A few more of the cooks after assembling the Gourmet Hampers*

Image by courtesy of Marie Myhill

## *The Hills are alive – What's happening around the region now*

### *The Orchard Industry*



The season is drawing to a close and the cooler weather is really setting in. When I spoke to Rob Fitzpatrick of petal falls he said that overall he had been happy with the season and that some fruit was still coming off. There is a bit of variability over the region and of course there is varietal differences, but at the time of writing Rob thought plums will be around for another 2 to 3 weeks. Peaches are pretty much finished along with nectarines and table grapes, and if you love prickly pears you still have around 2 weeks to enjoy them.

Pears still have a little time to go before the season finishes and you can expect to see them around for about another 2 weeks, while Apples will stay on for some time yet, possibly up to 2 more months with the later varieties like Pink Lady and Sundowner.

Quinces will start picking in about a week and continue for 5 to 6 weeks. Persimmons will begin picking in about 3 weeks and look beautiful on the tree when all the leaves have all dropped, something to look forward to in May. Feijoas did not get a start this year as the hot weather causes them to drop their blossom.



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### *The Wine Grape Industry*

It's that time of year, harvest. As I write it's a case of what's off and what's not.

The harvest around the Hilltops region is now almost finished with only a few later varieties or styles to be dealt with. All the white varieties are off, Riesling, Sauvignon Blanc, and Semillon. Pinot Noir is off as is the Shiraz and some Italian varieties like Barbera and Nebbiolo.

Cabernet is just about finishing and again due to slight regional variations some may be closer to finishing than others.

So what's to come? Well there's Rondinalla and Corvina as well as Zinfandel and that's about it as far as the most common varieties in our region go. However, if growers are planning on making a dessert style wine, they are still waiting for the grapes to come off.



Image by courtesy of Laura Scriven



*Hilltops Harvest*

Image by courtesy of Laura Scriven

I spoke to Brian Mullany of Grove Estate, he said he thought it was a good harvest this year, although some may have been rain affected, overall it was the best harvest since 2009. Most of the fruit has come off in beautiful condition, however he did seem to be particularly happy with the Shiraz.

### *The Regional Food Industry*

Hilltops has again been invited to present one of the courses at the 100 mile dinner event to be held at Molong this year. This is a great venue to show what we have here in the Hilltops region. Bookings for this dinner are online and last year the website had so many hits it locked up after the first 2 hours. Seven groups will be present this year, those from Orange, Mudgee, Bathurst, Canowindra, Cowra, Molong and Hilltops. Groups are tasked with presenting a course, Hilltops has been allotted the Antipasto Platter using ingredients specified by the event organisers.

The dinner is set for Monday the 15<sup>th</sup> of April, it's always a Monday as it's mostly when chef's have a day off work and can attend an event like this to showcase their region. This year there were 350 tickets and the event is sold out.



Setting up for the 200 mile dinner at Canowindra





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### *Our next Regional Promotion*



## HILLTOPS ANNUAL WINE DINNER 2013

HOSTED BY LINDEY MILAN, TIM KIRK AND TYSON STELZER

JOIN LINDEY MILAN, TIM KIRK AND TYSON STELZER TO CELEBRATE COOL CLIMATE WINES AND GREAT LOCAL PRODUCE AT THE HILLTOPS ANNUAL WINE DINNER 2013!

**Where:**

Young Town Hall  
Boorowa Street  
Young, NSW 2594

**When:**

Saturday 24th August  
Start time: 6pm for wine  
tasting followed by dinner at  
7pm

**Menu:**

Prepared by  
Lindey Milan

**Contact:**

Phone 02 6382 6999  
[www.visityoung.com.au](http://www.visityoung.com.au)

For ticket purchases  
[www.trybooking.com.au/CPOR](http://www.trybooking.com.au/CPOR)



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*Sheep grazing in a Hilltops Orchard*

This Hilltops Inc. Newsletter will go out on a quarterly basis and is intended to keep the group members informed as to what is going on in the region. If you would like to share anything of interest, please contact the group and let us know what you have in mind.

It is also hoped that we can increase the number of members, membership price is only \$25.00.

The group is happy if you would like to join, you can join as a Hilltops producer, a retailer, value adder or someone who just interested in the promotion of your regions food and wine.

### *Coming Events*

- The 100 mile dinner at Molong on the 15<sup>th</sup> of April
- The Gold Trail Festival at Harden 20<sup>th</sup> and 21<sup>st</sup> April
- Hilltops Dinner at the Young Town Hall 24<sup>th</sup> August
- The Running of the Sheep at Boorowa 6<sup>th</sup> October
- Young Farmer's Market at the Old Railway Station Young, the first and third Saturday of each month
- The Murrumburrah Harden Rotary Grower's Market at the Old Court House Murrumburrah, the second Saturday of each month



The next newsletter will come out in July as the Winter 2013 issue. If you have questions or something of interest for the newsletter contact Rob Provan before the end of June on [provan.rob@gmail.com](mailto:provan.rob@gmail.com)