



MARGARET RIVER

Vineyard—Sustainable Farming for the Future

Owned by the Martin family since 1999, there have been many improvements and upgrades at Clairault over the last decade. In the Vineyard, which is managed by youngest son Brian Martin, this has involved the introduction of biological farming, a low intervention approach, investment into mature vine management and the development of the vineyard from 30 to 120 acres. These environmentally responsible vineyard management methods have enabled Clairault to practise Sustainable Farming for the Future and has led to the enhanced quality of fruit, this combined with the skills of our winemaker have enabled us to produce our award winning wines.



Brian Martin & Jack

Biological farming is a mix of organic and conventional farming techniques which places a strong emphasis on soil biology. As the wine starts in the vineyard, the soil has a big influence on the final quality of the wine. These techniques result in outstandingly high quality crops, while using only very minimal amounts of synthetic material.

Compost is made on the estate using natural organic matter and the marc (grape skins and seeds) from harvest, which is then spread under the vines. Compost teas are also brewed, filtered and then sprayed onto the vines and the canopy. The teas are custom made on the estate and replace the use of synthetic fertilisers. Basically this becomes a solution of beneficial soil micro-organisms (Yakult® for the soil) that will help ensure that the vine's roots can access all the necessary minerals from the soil and in turn produce great quality fruit.

Using cover crops in the vineyard is an integral part of sustainable farming. They are made up of several types of grasses, including perennial grasses, which provide numerous different benefits for the soil and the vineyard. After the crops have grown and flowered they are mown and the cuttings are left under the vines to provide a “Green Manure”. This practise assists in the increase of organic matter, improving the soil structure, suppressing weeds, retaining soil moisture and reducing erosion. The major benefit of growing cover crops is the elimination of the need to use herbicides in the vineyard.

Mulching with straw and the use of cover crops under the vines in other blocks creates a natural mulch layer, which will eventually break down and provide organic material for the soil, hence developing the soil structure. It also helps to retain moisture over the warmer months.

The low intervention approach is the practice that builds up the health and immune system of the whole vineyard, hence reducing the risks of pest and disease outbreaks.