

WBM

Australia's Wine Business Magazine

WBM: Wine Business Magazine
December 2013 / January 2014

WBM

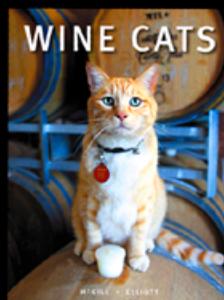
Australia's Wine Business Magazine

50 STARS OF 2013



CRAIG MCGILL & SUSAN ELLIOTT

The bruised and battered Australian wine community has needed some escapism over the past five years or so and Craig and Susan have provided a big dose of fun with their beautiful *Wine Dogs* books, which have been wildly successful because the industry has an amazing fascination with dogs. They threw a cat among the dogs this year by releasing *Wine Cats*. Congratulations to Chewie of Curley Flat Vineyard who is on the cover.



Cats Glee

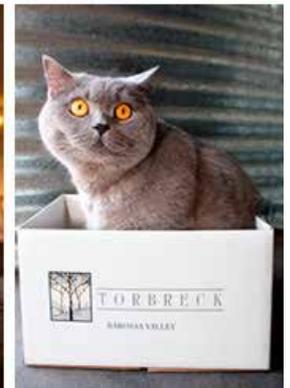
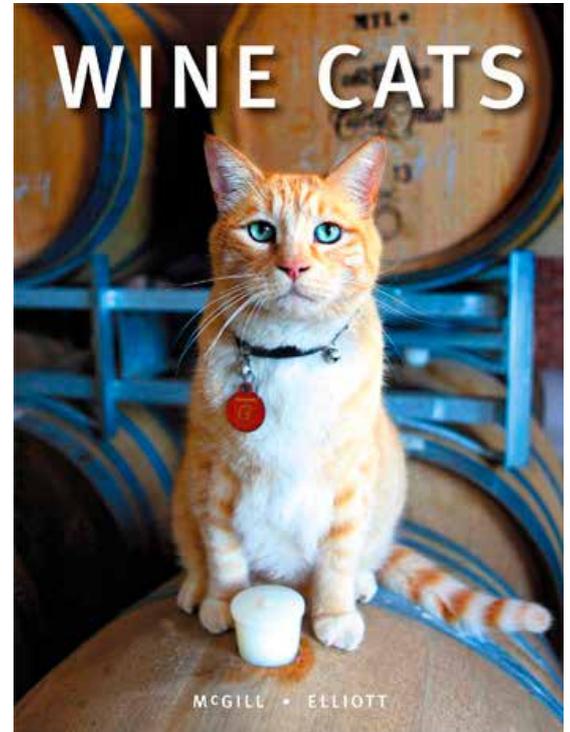
Every Australian cellar door worth its salt has a dog-eared copy of *Wine Dogs* – but now there's some competition from *Wine Cats*. "After years of pressure from wine cat owners and lovers alike, we are proud to announce the latest homage to the animals behind the wines we love: our very first *Wine Cats* book," says Craig McGill, who published the book with Susan Elliott.

"Wherever good wine is made, you're likely to find a cat snoozing in a sun-drenched tasting room or prowling around the winery. Cats are an integral part of a winery, whether they are 'employed' as rodent controllers, work the crowd as tasting room ambassadors or maybe they just showed up one day, liked the place and refused to leave. And just like their canine counterparts, they deserve to be celebrated."

Wine Cats is a large-format coffee table book and features more than 90 wineries from around the world with more than 100 photos of their resident moggies.

Available from winecats.com or participating bookstores.

Top: Chewie from Curley Flat Vineyard is on the cover of Wine Cats. From left: Snowball (Argyle Winery) and Mr Wombles (Torbreck).





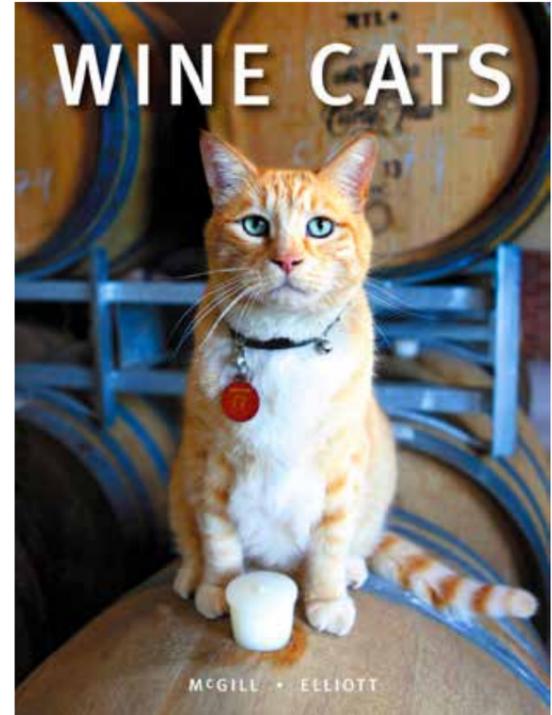
Gourmet Traveller WINE
December 2013 / January 2014

Puss in Paper

After 10 editions of the best-selling *Wine Dogs* books and eight calendars, *Wine Cats* has been released thanks to good old-fashioned peer pressure from those who love both cats and wine. It's full of gorgeous photographs of the felines that are lucky enough to live in some of the finest wineries and vineyard in the world.

But as *GT Wine's* Huon Hooke writes in the tome, "Try as I may, I cannot find much connection between wine and cats, except that they are great company while tasting or writing – even if they're asleep most of the time..." It matters not when you see these kitties sitting atop barrels, relaxing on cases of wine or batting corks with their paws, and read of the antics of the cats belonging to top wine writers and winemakers.

– KYLIE IMESON



Woof! The wine's Purr-fect

If you are a wine lover who also loves animals as do many winemakers, you're in good company. Ten years ago, illustrators Craig McGill and Susan Elliott, first published a book on dogs at wineries. So successful were they - with more than half a million copies sold - that they are back now with a book on cats in the wine trade. Kanika Dhawan got in touch to learn more. Here are excerpts from an e-mail interview.

How did you decide to write about wine dogs and cats?

We'd travel to wineries and be greeted by dogs. We'd take a picture with the dog, and we'd look back and every second photo was a dog photo. We said there was probably a book in this. We have now published 11 "Wine Dogs" books, showcasing winemaker's hounds from America, Australia, Italy and New Zealand. And after years of requests from cat lovers around the world, we have just released our first "Wine Cats" book this year.

Do dogs, cats and other animals in a vineyard help the winemakers in any way or are they just faithful companions?

We feel that wine dogs and cats make for a friendlier atmosphere when customers arrive. Going to a winery can be quite intimidating for first time visitors, and it's a big mystery for young people. Also, making wine is a lot of work and winemakers often work late at night. Dogs and cats provide great companionship and there's a strong bond between the owners and their animals. That really comes through in the books.

Can you share an interesting anecdote about a cat from a winery?

New Zealand Master of Wine and wine writer, Bob Campbell has a very large 8.5 kg orange cat called Mr Wu who sits with Bob during his wine tastings. Bob noticed that every now and again, when he pulled the cork out of a bottle, Mr Wu would make a strange sound but didn't make the sound when Bob opened a screw cap closure. Bob was amazed to discover that Mr Wu actually had a special talent that enables him to sniff out cork taint!



Bob Campbell's cat, Mr Wu

What's next on the agenda for you as a publisher?

We're working on a "Wine Dogs California" edition and "Wine Dogs South Africa." We look forward to visiting wine dogs and cats from all over the world - maybe even from India!

http://www.sommelierindia.com/blog/2013/11/woof_its_purr-fec.html

Hooked on Wine

HUON HOOKE'S
THOUGHTS
ON WINE

blog.huonhooke.com
November 2013

It's Wine-ing Cats and Dogs

First there was "*Wine Dogs*", now "*Wine Cats*". The creators of the successful *Wine Dogs: The Dogs of Australian Wineries* picture books have released a feline equivalent: a 128-page hardback featuring 92 cats attached to wineries in Australia, New Zealand and the US.

After 12 dog books that have taken their publishers, Sydney photographer Craig McGill and designer, Susan Elliott, many times around the wine regions of Australia and North America, as well as New Zealand and Italy, they've broken the mould.

The design has also changed, with a larger format, which better displays the pictures and has greater coffee-table appeal. There are essays by several scribes, including yours truly and Kiwi Bob Campbell – who claims his cat can detect cork taint. A useful creature, but most are just ratters and mousers.

<http://blog.huonhooke.com/post/67717107172/its-wine-ing-cats-and-dogs>



winesearcher.com
November 2013

A Master of Wine's Cork-Taint Detecting Cat

By Bob Campbell MW (an excerpt from the "Wine Cats" book, published 2013)

Mr Wu came into our lives about 12 years ago. We'd made the mistake of wandering into a pet shop. Our daughter, Lucy, fell in love with him. I must admit he looked pretty cute. He's a cross between a Rag Doll and a Persian. We've had plenty of cats, all moggies and all free. I'd certainly never had to pay \$600 for one.

We rapidly discovered that Mr Wu (named after the George Formby song *Chinese Laundry Blues* – 'Now Mr. Wu was a laundry man in a shop with an old green door...') was not really a cat. I suppose he looks sort of like a cat but he certainly doesn't act like one. He is not remotely interested in eating fish or meat of any sort. He loves papaya. He doesn't chase birds, mice or vermin.

He can, with difficulty, jump on the bed but is incapable of jumping onto a table or kitchen bench (which is not a bad thing). His favourite position is lying on his back with legs in the air looking as though he has just fallen from the ceiling. When he eats his cat biscuits he lies on the floor and rests his chin on his bowl. We don't refer to Mr Wu as a cat, we call him a 'woozle'. A wozzle is a fictional weasel-like character mentioned in Winnie the Pooh stories.

Mr Wu has an embarrassing body mass index. A high intake of cat biscuits and low output of energy means he weighs in at 8.5 kg. I call him 'a larger gentleman', the vet calls him 'obese'. We put him onto weight-watchers biscuits but it made no difference because he ate twice as many. The closest he gets to exercise is sitting in a dolls pram while the grand-children wheel him around the house.

Mr Wu craves company. I work at home so he spends much of his time blobbing out in my office. At first he was happy to sleep on the rug then around ten years ago he graduated to my desk. The desk is large enough to accommodate a keyboard, a couple of screens, up to 100 bottles of wine... and Mr Wu's large reclining form.

Every morning between 9:00am and 11:00am I taste around 30 bottles of wine. Mr Wu lies with his head close to my right hand which he nuzzles when he wants me to tickle him behind the ears. The very first time he slept on my desk I noticed how he would make a strange noise when I uncorked some bottles. It was something between a short meow and grunt. I'd never heard him do it before.



*Bob Campbell, MW with star wine cat, Mr Wu.
Photo © Bob Campbell*

Perhaps the noise of the cork coming out of the bottle unsettled him? And yet when I soundlessly uncorked several bottles he'd grunt with some and not others.

As the weeks ticked by the grunting continued but I couldn't find a pattern except that he'd never grunted when I'd opened a bottle sealed with a screwcap. Wineries had only just started to switch from cork to screwcaps – only about 10% of bottles sported the new closure. I assumed that it was something to do with the noise I made when I uncorked some bottles and left it at that.

The penny finally dropped when a winery sent me three cases of the same Chardonnay for evaluation. They had complained to their cork supplier about an unusually high level of cork taint in the closures used on their Chardonnay. They needed an independent person to measure the level of cork taint in their wine. Nearly half the bottles were well off the pace.

Most showed the telltale wet cardboard character that pointed to cork taint while a few had suppressed aromatics that I guessed might be due to lower levels of the contaminant 246 trichloranisole (tca), the chemical that causes most cork taint.

Continued overleaf

Continued from previous page

The interesting thing is that while I was doing the tasting Mr Wu was grunting like a sow in heat. I'd picked out 16 bottles that appeared to be corked. Mr Wu grunted as I uncorked every one of those bottles plus another six bottles. On a hunch I had every one of the 22 bottles analysed for the presence of tca. Every bottle tested positive. The six bottles that I thought were OK but hadn't passed the grunt test had low levels of tca that were 'unlikely to be picked up through sensory evaluation' according to the chemist who'd tested them. Mr Wu was a feline gas chromatograph (the machine used to detect tca).

I considered using Mr Wu's skill for commercial gain but it didn't seem right. He only grunted while sleeping on my desk while his clever nostrils inches from the bottle as I uncorked it. I put him to the test with corked wine in other situations but he just seemed slightly puzzled with the fuss and certainly didn't grunt. He would have made a great party trick if he were able to pick out corked wine in a crowded room.

Thanks to Mr Wu's skill I have earned a valuable reputation as someone who can detect very low levels of tca. I am careful to explain that I can only detect tca when I use my own glasses, in my own tasting room between 9:00 and 11:00am each morning. I don't reveal that I also need a large ginger woozle nearby.

Mr Wu has even detected cork taint in a few bottles that were sealed with a screwcap. In each case my suggestion that the winemaker should check the winery for a source of tca has been met with scorn. Those that have followed my suggestion have found TCA in their wine barrels or, in one case, in the winery's timber framing.

Age doesn't seem to have dulled Mr Wu's perception although tainted bottles are now few and far between thanks to a takeover by screwcaps. He still sleeps on my desk and gives a tiny wheezy grunt whenever a wine has tca which, as my daughter pointed out, is an anagram for 'cat'."

<http://www.wine-searcher.com/m/2013/11/a-master-of-wines-cork-taint-detecting-cat>

goodfood

Sydney Morning Herald:
GOOD FOOD
Tastings by Huon Hooke
November 2013

Cat in the book

First there was "*Wine Dogs*", now "*Wine Cats*". The creators of the successful *Wine Dogs: The Dogs of Australian Wineries* picture books have released a feline equivalent: a 128-page hardback featuring 92 cats attached to wineries in Australia, New Zealand and the US. After 12 dog books that have taken their publishers, Sydney photographer Craig McGill and designer, Susan Elliott, many times around the wine regions of Australia and North America, as well as New Zealand and Italy, they've broken the mould. The design has also changed, with a larger format, which better displays the pictures and has greater coffee-table appeal. There are essays by several scribes, including yours truly and Kiwi Bob Campbell – who claims his cat can detect cork taint. A useful creature, but most are just ratters and mousers.

