



### **Stuart Dudine – DE student to Burgundy, France in 2009**

Having studied at CSU and worked in the wine industry for 5 years now, I have always wanted to travel abroad to see the world and winemaking from a different perspective. As it was, I had the chance to go Europe in September and August 2009 and work a wine harvest in Piedmont, Italy's north-west.

I flew to Europe early and visited some beautiful places on my trip. My first two stops were London and Paris, these two cities are beautiful in their own respect, and I quickly learnt of the beauty and rich history that surrounds Europe.

After my time in Paris, I travelled south to a famous French wine region, Burgundy. Having heard and tasted the charms of the Burgundy region in Australia, I had no choice but to visit and live the wines in their natural surroundings. I was not disappointed!

Arriving in Burgundy by train, you are able to see the Grand Cru and Premier Cru vineyards to the West, and village cru vineyards to the East, this perspective gave me the ability to wet my appetite to what beauty was to be discovered on my trip. The region, like so many in France, is regulated by strict quality controlling regulations called Appellation d'origine contrôlée (AOC's). This means the Premier Cru wines, which are the best wines, are made from the best soils and geographical aspects, followed by the Grand Cru, and lastly the village cru.

The red burgundy wine is made from the Pinot Noir grape, and the name of the wine alone can attract a tidy price tag. The vineyards are passed through families from generation to generation, they are neat, tidy and in perfect proportion with the surroundings.

The local produce such as meats and cheeses make Burgundy a Gastronomist's dream, the wines and foods can all be sampled at Beaune, the capital of the region. Beaune is a small city that is surrounded by a fortified wall, inside the city is the regions rich history, cultures and beauty. Beaune was so beautiful and it is a must-see if you are in the region.

After Burgundy, I travelled to my workplace in North West Italy. Piedmont is traditionally translated as "the foot of the mountain". It was at the tail-end of summer when I arrived. Temperatures would reach average maximums around 34 degrees, cool nights allow ideal grape growing conditions. The harvest went for around four weeks and during that time I was involved with all the aspects of their wine production. My work was a lot smaller than my previous work in Australia and I learnt so much.

I was pleased to discover not only how Italians made wine, but also how they lived. Spending time working and talking with the people gave me an insight into what it was to be Italian and how they live. I am very fortunate my father's family is Italian and I was able to speak a reasonable amount of Italian to communicate with the people. Seeing the communities in Italy

reminded me of my upbringing at home, and also made me realise when the Italians' migrated to Australia, they also brought their cultures with them.

After the harvest finished, I said goodbye and headed around 150kms southwest, and visited Asti and the Langhe region. Of the many wines grown in these regions, Barolo and Barbaresco are two of the more famous wines. These two wines, although made from the same grape variety (Nebbiolo) and the areas are only 15 kilometres apart, they produce distinct flavours and aromas that are different in their own respect. Barolo is known as the "king" of Nebbiolo is very structured, with high tannins and aroma of red berries, tar and roses. These wines have the ability to age gracefully for over 20 years.

Barbaresco is known as the "queen" of Nebbiolo and is lighter in colour and more aromatics. Barbaresco traditionally will drink extremely well after 10 -15 years as the strong tannins from the grape, tend to soften out sooner than Barolo.

I discovered the differences in the wine regions I visited, and it was something that I could not be read in a book. For me it had to be lived, and I discovered how alive these regions are and I now have a new found appreciation for viticulture and winemaking in the global scale. I will take these experiences with me for the rest of my life.

My time overseas was amazing and I could not have embraced my travels without the support from CSU Global. To travel around the world was something I will never forget. Although it can be daunting to leave home and go to places you know little about, it is important to remember that so many people have stood there before. The ability to consult the CSU Global community is an essential tool to ensure that the daunting prospects of going overseas is turned into the anticipation of having a whole world at your feet to enjoy and experience.