

Make The Most of What You've Got – The Cleggett Wines Story

By Shelley Dunstone

At a wine tasting recently, the wine I enjoyed most was the white Cabernet Sauvignon. Your response is probably, "Yes, it's very trendy". But I'm not talking about Sauvignon Blanc (although I enjoy that, too). White Cabernet Sauvignon is produced *only* by Cleggett Wines* of Langhorne Creek, South Australia. They do a "bronze" Cabernet Sauvignon, too.

Both come from mutations of the normally red Cabernet Sauvignon grape, and are now formally registered to Cleggetts as new varieties.

How was this wine developed? In 1977, two bunches of grapes were found on the property that were bronze in colour. So Mac Cleggett took cuttings and propagated them. Some years later, two more bunches appeared that were golden-white in colour. So he propagated those as well. Cleggetts' vineyard is the only place in the world where these mutations have been documented.

When the grapes were tested by the CSIRO, both varieties were found to have the same DNA as the parent cabernet sauvignon, but there had been a genetic change in one layer of the skin.

What we can learn about innovation from this story?

- First, someone noticed the variations. Then they made the effort to show them to Mac. These changes were only small, and could easily have been ignored or overlooked. Breakthrough developments often start with small things that are noticed by observant people. Do your people pass on their little observations of things they see happening around them?
- Mac paid attention and took an interest in what his land was producing. What's happening in your business that is new and different? Do you take an interest in the small things that your people tell you?
- Mac saw the variations as something interesting and special, not as a defect to be ignored or disposed of. Do you accept different ways of doing things, or do you see differences as mistakes to be corrected?
- Mac experimented with propagation, whereas it would have been easier to focus on the grape varieties he already had. Are you willing to experiment; take the risk and put in the effort to develop something new?
- The Cleggetts persevered in seeking recognition for the new varieties – it took lots of time and effort to achieve this. It would have been much easier for them to ignore the mutations and continue with "business as

usual". Are you prepared to persevere in the face of set-backs, rather than give up and revert to the easy way of doing things?

- Their quest for recognition of the new varieties was fuelled by passion and belief – wine has been a tradition in their family for seven generations. Do you have a genuine enthusiasm for the business you're in, so that you really want to create and contribute something new?

Through their efforts, they have made history and created something that is unique in the world.

They just used what they had funny-coloured grapes.

What do *you* have, that you could build on to produce something new and unique?

*For more information, or to order Cleggett Wines, go to www.cleggettwin.com.au