



Letter from Tasmania

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Hazel & Mike McLoughlin
840 Sheffield Road
Lower Barrington
Tasmania 7306

Tel: +61 3 6492 3034

The McLoughlins are proud to announce the arrival of their first olive oil!

It took us about three weeks in June to pick around 800kg of olives, from which we got about 90 litres of oil and filled 300+ bottles (250ml). That's a yield of over 10%, which we were very happy with. We've had it analysed and it appears to be a drop of really good stuff— extremely virgin olive-oil!



Happy harvesters: Mike and Richard

The next trick is to sell it. We don't have enough to go global yet, but hope to sell some through local shops, and through the restaurant. We've entered it for some fine food awards, to be judged in Hobart later this month. If we could get a gong, it would be a good selling point, but we don't expect to do too much at the first attempt.

Hazel filling the bottles



Our crop was limited this year by the heavy pruning we did last year. Olives don't fruit on new growth for the first year, but we hope for a better yield next year.

It's been an exciting process. Most of the picking was done in glorious late-autumn sunshine, and it was a pleasure to be in the grove among the trees we'd worked so hard to revive after a lengthy period of neglect before we took over. The rain set in right at the end, but we managed to finish before the olives got spoiled.



Quin the transport manager

Pruning is now in progress - just a light one this time to keep the trees trim and tidy. Then we'll fertilise and let them do their own thing for a while. They flower in December, then we wait anxiously for the fruit to start to set.

Our livestock are somewhat depleted since our last missive. We have three surviving chooks, which usually manage to produce an egg each every day. Our sheep are now suitably packaged in the freezer, and should keep us in lamb chops and Sunday roasts for the foreseeable future! Quin's career as a sheepdog never took off! He compensates by chasing the odd wallaby when he gets the chance!

The restaurant is quiet at this time of year. The locals seem to go into hibernation and there aren't many tourists about. The Bistro has received a lot of positive comment since we opened it, and will hopefully come into its own when the weather gets warmer. We recently hosted a dinner for some local politicians, where the Australian deputy opposition leader, Julia Gillard, was the guest speaker.



Mike and Phil (our chef) with Deputy Opposition Leader, Julia Gillard

We have our annual closure for two weeks during the school holidays in September, and we're going to see Ruth and Neil in Auckland for a few days. We haven't been there before and are looking forward to them showing us around. It will be early spring then, which should be a nice time to go.

Winter this year has been colder than average apparently. We've had some heavy frosts and snow on the tops of the mountains we can see in far distance - even on the top of Mount Roland on one occasion - but then the days have been crisp and sunny, with temperatures in double figures (centigrade). We've had some much-needed rain too, which has filled our dams (ponds) and turned the countryside a beautiful green again. Apparently we still need above-average rainfall for the next couple of months to fully restore the status quo. If you're reading this in the UK, you'll be wishing you could send us some of yours! We've seen pictures of the awful floods you've been having and hope you haven't been too badly affected yourselves.

On the 'home' front, John and Ruth both seem to be doing fine. John's just had a



holiday in New York with a mate - had a great time, saw all the sights and bought a whole new wardrobe! Ruth and Neil are counting down to their wedding on May 24, 2009. Seems a long way off still but, knowing how time flies, it will be here in no time. To see more of them, you can visit their website : www.ruthandneiladventures.com



We're all hoping to be back in the UK next May for our niece, Nicola's wedding. Meantime, we're looking forward to seeing those of you who have already made your plans to visit us, and if you haven't, we hope you will soon.

Hope all is well with you and yours. Much love ,

Hazel & Mike