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WINE
BUSINESS
MAGAZINE

JANUARY / FEBRUARY 2017
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CRACKING IT
IN CHINA

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BACK TO BASICS
WITH JOE HOLYMAN

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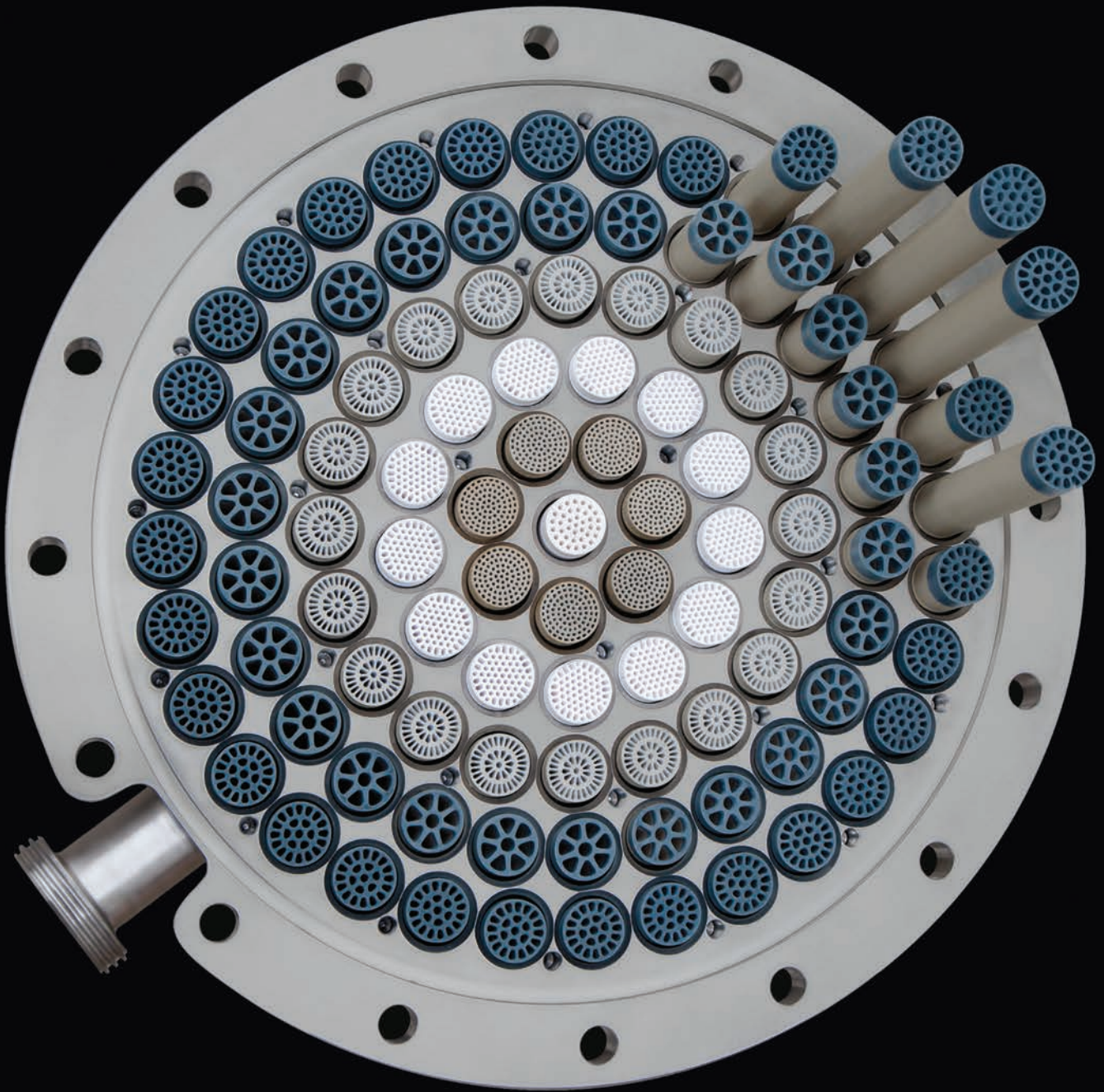
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Is wine just a clever mix of compounds? A couple of nerds in the US think it might be and are claiming they're very close to successfully producing the world's first artificial wine. But grapes aside, where's the blood, sweat and tears, asks Nick Ryan.



20 AN HOUR WITH: JOE HOLYMAN

Humour, honesty and grapes that sing. Joe Holyman keeps things simple at Stoney Rise winery in Tasmania, named after a favourite surfing spot in South Australia. But before finding a love of wine, Joe had a good run at professional cricket.



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A new generation of Chinese academics, consumers and winemakers are on a mission to bridge the cultural gap between Australian wines and their homeland. We explore the view on Chinese export and the opportunities for Aussie winemakers from across the pond.



39 WBM WINES OF THE YEAR 2016

They've tasted thousands of wines throughout the year to bring you their verdicts. Now, we reveal Mike Bennie and Tyson Stelzer's top picks for 2016.



76 THE OPTIMISTIC VIEW OF 2017

What's in store for the wine industry in the coming year? Richard Halstead looks beyond the troubling developments of 2016 to take us through some of the positive trends emerging that bring both challenges for wine producers and opportunities for those who get it right.



WORDS ANTHONY MADIGAN

@anthonyjmadigan

YALUMBA STANDS ABOVE IT

Robert Hill-Smith seems like a reasonable guy. I've only chatted to him briefly a few times over the years. I know he is very well respected in the wine community and beyond. My impression is he wouldn't take legal action unless he absolutely had to - and he definitely wouldn't take it against a competitor in the wine industry that he loves so dearly, unless he knew he had a case.

When Pernod Ricard released its Jacob's Creek Barossa Signature range last year, Hill-Smith took the French-based company to the Federal Court. In a decision that has baffled wine observers, he lost.

Nick Stock spoke for many in the wine community when he posted on Facebook: "At the very least it's poor form on the part of Jacob's Creek to try to appropriate 'Signature' in a Barossan context. At worst it is just plain old passing off. Fortunately history tells us that they will most likely stuff up the brand and shelve it in a handful of years when a new marketing regime rolls through, but for now it's an incredibly bad look whether arrogant or simply naïve."

Nick was inundated with support. I liked this comment by Steve Wemyss: "Many companies today fail the basic 'is it the right thing to do' test - exploiting legal loopholes with very marginal practices."

Pernod Ricard clearly did the wrong thing. Yalumba has produced The Signature since 1966. What was Pernod Ricard thinking? Was it just a brain fade or something more sinister?

Pernod Ricard is one of those big bad corporations we all love to hate, but it

employs some great people, some of whom I reckon would have cringed when their marketing colleagues came up with the idea of using Signature.

The Australian wine community is upset, but of course consumers won't care less and they'll buy plenty of Barossa Signature.

Having said all this, I don't think The Signature's reputation - or sales - will be affected at all because of Pernod Ricard's arrogance. The Signature is strong and constant with a reputation beyond reproach. There's no mistaking it for the interloper. It's awkward because Pernod Ricard staff sit with small producers and family businesses on numerous wine industry boards and committees. I hope they're reminded of their low act.

Yalumba is one of our most admired

wine businesses. When I think of Yalumba I think of integrity, trust, humour and a sense of fair play. It strikes me as one that would accept the umpire's decision and move on. As it seems to have done here.

I'd put three cases of Yalumba Octavius on two things happening: Jacob's Creek Barossa Signature (\$20) not seeing the decade out, and The Signature (\$60) living to a ripe old age with grace and dignity.

Yalumba has seen off numerous bad days including a near-death experience; Hill-Smith saved it. I think even Robert himself would acknowledge that as far as setbacks go, this bad day in court was merely a flesh wound compared with all the challenges that go with a company founded in 1849. ♦



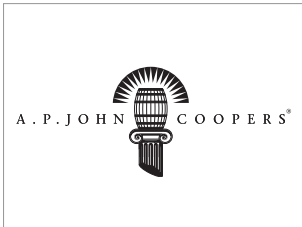
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NEWS



ENGLISH MOVE IN

UK sparkling wine producer Digby Fine English is claiming to be the first English fizz brand to achieve “a major presence in the Australian market”, securing a listing at Dan Murphy’s. Digby’s Non Vintage Brut (\$89.99) went on sale in 40 of their stores before Christmas. Michael Jackson, general manager of buying and marketing for Endeavour Drinks Group, which controls the Dan Murphy’s brand, said: “The growth of Champagne and sparkling wine over the past five years has really surprised. It has become a regular purchase for our customers, they are now more engaged with the category and are looking for new and interesting regions. We feel the quality now coming from England will add to the choice we currently have in our Dan Murphy’s stores.” Founded by Trevor Clough and Jason Humphreys, Digby Fine English uses grapes from Kent, Sussex, Hampshire and Dorset. Champagne exports to Australia increased by 24.3 percent last year. ♦

DE BORTOLI DELIGHTS

De Bortoli Wines celebrated long and hard over the Christmas break after winning 523 domestic and international wine awards in 2016 – one of its biggest ever medal hauls. The tally included 24 trophies across eight different wine brands, and De Bortoli was the ‘most successful winery’ at three shows. To complete a big year, senior winemaker Julie Mortlock was shortlisted for Sweet Winemaker of the Year at the International Wine Challenge in London, and Yarra Valley cellar door manager Kara Hood was a finalist in the Australian Women in Wine Awards. “These accolades show the depth we have across all brands, price points and sites,” managing director Darren De Bortoli said. De Bortoli Wines was established in 1928 and is a founding member of Australia’s First Families of Wine. ♦



KILLA ADDITION

Clonakilla Shiraz Viognier 2015 was the top wine addition to Wine Ark Cellars in 2016, edging out Lake’s Folly Cabernet 2014 (only 18 bottles behind first place) and Penfolds St Henri 2012. Wine Ark has started tracking movements of wine into and out of its managed cellars nationally. The top three producers added to the cellars were Penfolds (top three Penfolds wines added were Bin 389, St Henri and Grange, in that order), Tyrrell’s and Rockford. “Penfolds comprised more than 50 percent of the top three brands added to the cellars in 2016,” Wine Ark’s John Cuff said. “This confirms that this iconic brand isn’t showing any sign of slowing up its dominance in Australia’s most collected wines.” The top regions added to the cellars were Barossa Valley, Hunter Valley and Margaret River, in that order. The favourite varietals were shiraz (at double the volume of second place), pinot noir, cabernet sauvignon and chardonnay. John said he was surprised to see Clonakilla top the list. “It came as a surprise that the top wine entering the cellars in 2016 was the Clonakilla Shiraz Viognier 2015 – not due to the quality of this brilliant wine but due to its limited availability,” he said. “It shows that wine collectors know a good thing when they come across it and vote with their wallets.” ♦



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FRITZ BLITZ

Newstyle Media, which publishes *WBM – Australia's Wine Business Magazine*, has launched a new South Australian lifestyle magazine called *Fritz*. The 160-page magazine is named after a favourite sausage in South Australia called fritz (known as devon in the eastern states). Newstyle Media, proudly independent and family owned, has printed 100,000 copies of the free magazine, which is distributed through Foodland and other outlets. The quarterly printed magazine is supported by a colourful website covering the quirks of South Australia – fritzmag.com.au. More than 20 wineries advertised in the first issue of *Fritz*. For advertising enquiries email james.tindley@newstylemedia.com.au ♦

NEWS



ZSA ZSA DEBUT

Hahndorf Hill Winery in the Adelaide Hills – which has found a strong niche with Austrian varieties including grüner veltliner and blaufrankisch – has released Zsa Zsa Zweigelt Nouveau, made with zweigelt grapes, Austria's most widely planted red. "Since our zweigelt vineyard is now more mature, we have progressed from making a zweigelt rosé – which we have done for the past four vintages – to our intended nouveau-style red for light summer drinking," winemaker Larry Jacobs said. The hand-harvested grapes were transferred as whole bunches into a stainless steel tank, covered with a blanket of carbon dioxide, and carbonic maceration allowed to proceed. "A critical issue regarding time of harvest was to ensure adequate ripeness of the bunch stalks so as not to contribute any unripe stem-phenolics into the ferment," Larry said. The combination of fermented bunches and wine was then pressed, and the finished wine placed in old French barrels for 14 weeks prior to bottling. The alcohol content is 11.5 percent and it retails for \$33 a bottle. ♦

INDUSTRY WELCOMES NEW TAX RULES

After three years of bitter debate and delays, the Australian wine community finally found out what the new WET rebate rules are late last year. Small winemakers breathed a sigh of relief because at one stage it looked like producers would have to have assets to claim the rebate. Minister for revenue Kelly O'Dwyer and assistant minister for agriculture Anne Ruston issued a joint media release on 2 December, announcing that eligible producers must own 85 percent of the grapes at the crusher used to make the wine, and maintain ownership throughout the winemaking process. The rebate is also limited to branded packaged wine, in a container not exceeding five litres and branded with a registered trademark for domestic retail sale. The new eligibility criteria will apply from 1 July 2018. The rebate cap will be reduced from \$500,000 to \$350,000 effective 1 July 2018, which is a year later, and a higher cap than announced in the 2016 Budget. To encourage more wine tourism, up to a further \$100,000 per annum will be made available to producers who exceed the rebate cap through a new Wine Tourism and Cellar Door grant. ♦



MAX SIGNS OFF

Popular wine writer Max Allen has written his last column for *The Australian*. His first column for the newspaper was in 1997. "It has been a lot of fun," Max wrote in his last column. "Especially when readers have engaged with what I've written by sending in a nice handwritten letter in the old days, or making a comment online these days. Whether complimentary or critical, it has always added to the conversation. And I feel like I'm leaving on a high note: there really has never been a more exciting time to be an Australian wine drinker – or, for that matter, a young man starting work in a bottleshop." The last line refers to the fact that a year after he started writing for *The Australian*, his son was born. Just before Christmas, he started his first job, working in a bottle shop. ♦

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NEWS



CHINA SUDDENLY WORTH \$500M

Australian wine exports to China have increased more than 50 percent to just under \$500 million since the China-Australia Free Trade Agreement (ChAFTA) came into force on 20 December 2015. Just a decade ago, Australian wine exports to China were valued at \$27 million. Australian wine exports have had two tariff reductions since the entering of force of ChAFTA. For most wine, the rate has fallen from 14 percent to the current rate of 8.4 percent and dropped further to 5.6 percent on 1 January. “Australian wine exporters have made the most of the preferential tariff rates into China, which is now Australia’s most valuable wine export market,” Winemakers Federation of Australia chief executive Tony Battaglione said. “The trade benefits of the Free Trade Agreement, and the growing Chinese middle class’ increased interest in wine, have meant that more than a third of Australian wine exports priced \$10 and more per litre FOB, are now destined for China (valued at almost \$200 million and up over 60 percent). The demand for our premium wines in China shows no sign of abating and the next round of tariff cuts will give us a further advantage over our next biggest rivals in France.” ♦



MAKING AN IMPACT

The Impact Awards hosted by Wine Industry Suppliers Australia will move to a new venue this year to cope with increased interest. The gala awards night, on Thursday 19 October, will switch from the National Wine Centre to the Adelaide Town Hall. “Capacity will be 420,” WISA executive officer Matt Moate said. “That would be a 40 percent increase on last year’s event. From feedback from other partners, it was a goal to increase the size of the event but to also ensure it remained a somewhat intimate networking opportunity and not to make it a mass production that restricted attendee engagement.” *WBM – Australia’s Wine Business Magazine* has supported WISA’s annual awards night for all of the 10 years they’ve been going. Meanwhile, WISA has announced that the WineTech trade show and exhibition planned for July this year has been postponed. ♦



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NEWS



MCLAREN VALE'S LATEST

Doc Adams Wines officially launched its new cellar door in McLaren Vale late last year. Managing director Adam Jacobs said: "We are excited to now have a home in the heart of McLaren Vale where we can share and showcase our premium wines with local produce in a unique and engaging environment. It's another step in our developing engagement with international and local customers." Doc Adams Wines announced at the opening that it has entered into a long-term brand development and product supply agreement throughout the Indian subcontinent. "This agreement will see the launch of Doc Adams products through DFS stores, with the hope to continue on in to the retail market," Adam said. "It will provide huge growth for the company, regional employment, substantial promotion and international exposure of Doc Adams premium wines and vast international exposure for the McLaren Vale wine region." ♦

GEOFENCE LAUNCHED TO PROTECT \$1.78B INDUSTRY

A cutting-edge vineyard cyber monitoring system, designed to keep South Australia's \$1.78 billion wine industry free of pests and diseases such as phylloxera, has been launched. Funded by the State Government and Vinehealth Australia, Project Boundary Rider creates a virtual boundary – or geofence – around vineyards and uses smartphone app technology to monitor the movement of people entering vineyards. Vineyard owners are alerted when anyone crosses their property line. This is critical, as pests such as phylloxera can be spread by machinery or on shoes and clothing worn by people travelling between infected and non-infected areas. The Boundary Rider pilot project, initiated by Vinehealth Australia, is being rolled out to 30 of the state's winegrowers in McLaren Vale and the Barossa. In the event of a pest or disease outbreak, the technology provides instant data to enable a rapid response to contain the spread and minimise loss. Vinehealth Australia CEO Inca Pearce said the geofencing technology will enable growers to better integrate an important farmgate hygiene practice of recording visitor movements into daily operations. "It means growers can remotely record the arrival and departure of visitors as part of their day-to-day management, which is essential in preventing damaging pest and disease incursions in our vineyards," she said. ♦



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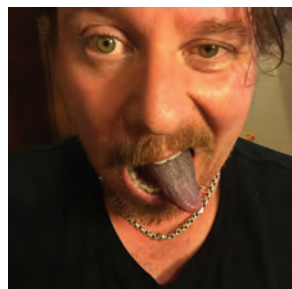
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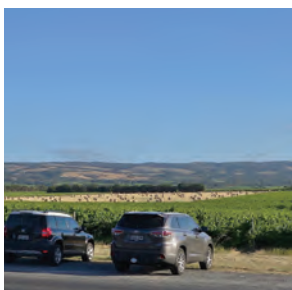


@mikebennie101
Reviewed/tasted a few red wines today.



@miltonwordleyphotographer
Shadows on one of AP John's barrels in the Barossa. AP John is Australia's oldest coooperage, they recently celebrated their 125th anniversary.

TWITTER



@whiteswine
After a seven hour discussion of the state of the Oz wine biz in the international frame, I walked out of the Salopian Inn and saw this.

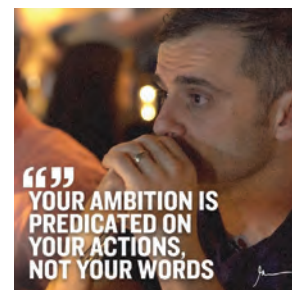


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Too many talking. Start doing more, starting tomorrow.

NICK RYAN

I CAN'T BELIEVE



IT'S NOT WINE...

IS WINE JUST A CLEVER MIX OF COMPOUNDS? A COUPLE OF NERDS IN THE US THINK IT CAN BE. BUT GRAPES ASIDE, WHERE'S THE BLOOD, SWEAT AND TEARS, ASKS NICK RYAN.

WORDS NICK RYAN

Somewhere in California's Silicon Valley – the northern one where information is binary, not the southern one where the name is a reference to the composition and contours of an actor's chest – a pair of nerds are working feverishly towards creating an existential crisis for those who love wine.

Mardonn Chua and Alec Lee are the whiz kids behind a biotech start-up that claims to be very close to successfully producing the world's first entirely artificial wine.

Their thinking is both sound and soul-destroying.

When looked at through a coldly analytical eye, a glass of wine is little more than a collection of something like 1000 different compounds that, in combination, create a particular manifestation of aromas, flavours and textures. Chua and Lee have set themselves the task of breaking down just what those compounds are, then combining their synthesised versions in a solution they theorise should pretty closely approximate the sensory impact of the liquid created when yeasts go to town on a load of squashed grapes.

They say the inspiration came from a visit to Chateau Montelana in the Napa Valley and the bottle of its 1973 chardonnay proudly displayed behind glass. It's a pretty famous wine; it's the wine that triumphed at the now legendary Judgement of Paris tasting Stephen Spurrier put on in 1976 that rivals the Last Supper as the most heavily mythologised piss up in history.

"I could never afford a bottle like this, I could never enjoy it," Chua told *New Scientist* magazine. "That got me thinking."

A lot of us come across bottles we'd love to try but can't afford and end up settling for the best our budget will allow, but Chua and Lee decided to go down the 'if you can't make, fake it' path instead.

Early attempts to recreate something approximating wine weren't promising. A dozen or more different formulations were produced using the more easily identified compounds one could expect to find in Napa chardonnay – tartaric acid, malic acid, powdered tannin, glycerine, ethanol, sucrose, ethyl hexanoate (pineapple aromas), butanoate (grapey aromas), limonene for citrus, and acetoin, which is the stuff they use to add a buttery flavour to the popcorn you get at the movies.

While admitting none of the early formulations came close to mimicking the flavours of even the most ordinary chardonnay, Chua did proclaim on news blogging site *Medium* the liquid was "acceptable enough to drink".

Clearly the man has a sharp brain and a blunt palate.

This was in March 2016 and much has happened since. Almost \$3M has been secured in seed funding and more sophisticated tools like gas chromatography and liquid chromatography have been deployed. Chua and Lee have even hired themselves a tame sommelier and cheekily named the venture AVA Winery, playing on the acronym the Americans use the same way we use GI.

They claim to be almost there on two fronts. The first is a facsimile of moscato d'Asti, which indicates sweetness and fruit forwardness are the easier nuts to crack and that there's an ocean of shitty imitators of the style out there already, so maybe a synthetic one couldn't be any worse.

They also claim to have produced nearly 500 bottles of an approximation of the 1992 Dom Perignon. You'd think this might be a trickier proposition and one can't help but wonder if the choice of what is arguably a lesser vintage of the cuvée speaks to a slightly easier cloning job or simply not knowing there would be far greater achievement in recreating the '96.

But these questions wither alongside one far more fundamental: why? Just why?

These guys argue that in a future where water and productive land become increasingly scarce, an allocation of these resources for the production of wine could

be seen as extravagant. But I'm just not buying it. The way I look after myself, I'd be lucky to see the next election let alone a dystopian future with no room on the planet for one of its greatest pleasures, but if I did, I'd have to favour abstinence over mawkish mimicry of the real thing.

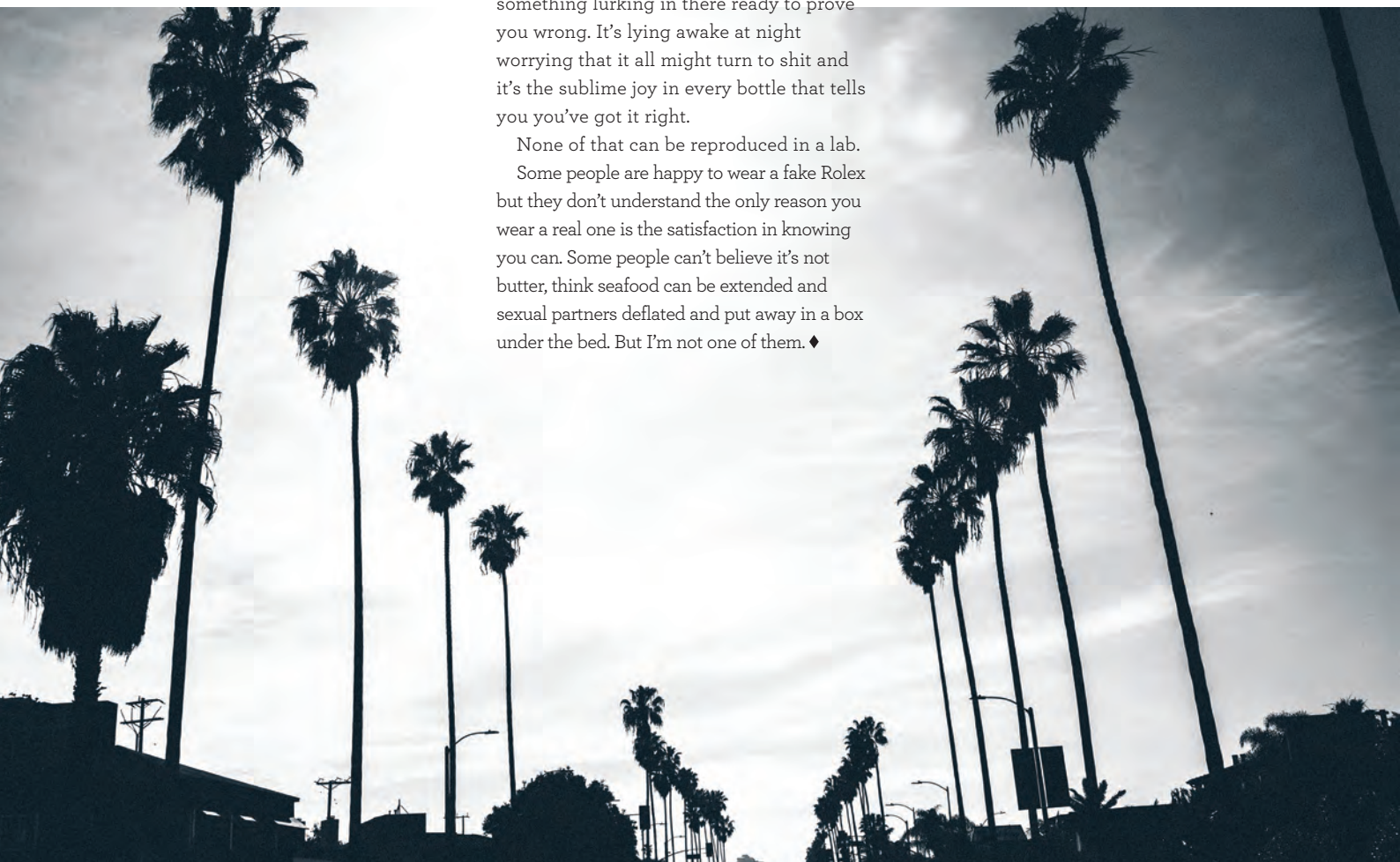
Wine can't just be broken down into its component elements. It's a jigsaw puzzle where the pieces are re-cut every time you attempt it and the last one always goes missing. It's not just an amalgam of acids and tannins, of compounds producing flavours and smells – it's pruning a vineyard in weather so bad your genitals retreat and use your spleen for a blanket. It's waking up at 4am when the frost alarm goes off, or getting home at the same hour after doing shots with your Korean distributors in a karaoke bar after your 13th wine dinner in 15 days.

It's understanding that no matter how much you think you've got your head around that bubbling, violent, primordial universe in your fermenter, there's always something lurking in there ready to prove you wrong. It's lying awake at night worrying that it all might turn to shit and it's the sublime joy in every bottle that tells you you've got it right.

None of that can be reproduced in a lab.

Some people are happy to wear a fake Rolex but they don't understand the only reason you wear a real one is the satisfaction in knowing you can. Some people can't believe it's not butter, think seafood can be extended and sexual partners deflated and put away in a box under the bed. But I'm not one of them. ♦

“IT’S LYING AWAKE AT NIGHT WORRYING THAT IT ALL MIGHT TURN TO SHIT AND IT’S THE SUBLIME JOY IN EVERY BOTTLE THAT TELLS YOU YOU’VE GOT IT RIGHT.”



LABEL OF THE WEEK!

Edition Feature



Shottesbrooke - Engine Room

McLaren Vale

The Engine Room wines are an innovative concept from winemaker, Hamish Maguire. Growing up amongst the vineyards in McLaren Vale, and spending a number of years abroad working across all aspects of the wine industry, Hamish decided it was time to come back home to McLaren Vale and create something that embodied all of these experiences.

Apart from his day job as winemaker for Shottesbrooke winery in McLaren Flat, Hamish now turns his attention to the Engine Room collection, which sits outside of his regular Shottesbrooke portfolio. The stand-alone nature of this range allows much broader scope to incorporate extra layers of innovation and creativity not otherwise achievable within the realm of 'mainstream' wine.

Each Engine Room wine is made up of an eclectic and edgy mix of grape varieties sourced from two premium wine regions - McLaren Vale and the Adelaide Hills - and they draw on all the experience gained throughout Hamish's career. Naturally, a new label was needed to reflect this unique concept and tell its story.

David Byerlee was a natural fit for this brief, with his strong track record working with wineries within McLaren Vale, and his inspired, contemporary perspective when rebranding existing products. Visual impact was imperative, and the ability to keep the range fresh as it expanded was paramount. It is a wine that tells a story, and as each wine is released, a new chapter unfolds.

Kylie Uptis - Brand Manager
www.shottesbrooke.com.au

Designer: David Byerlee

Creative Development

Shottesbrooke's head winemaker, Hamish Maguire felt the urge to produce a range of wines slightly left of field; somewhat of a creative outlet. It was only fitting that we ran with this notion and birthed a range of equally curious packaging.

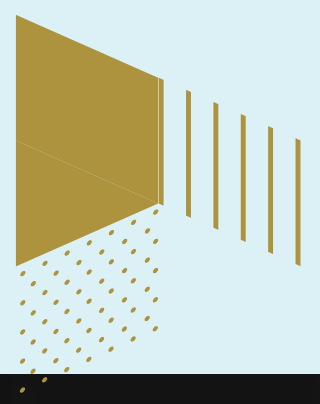
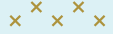
The Engine Room is a pure product of imagination and a willingness to be different; creations from pondered moments, pressing times and late nights. Based on the theory that great wine doesn't just create itself; it's the inspirations; the state of mind; the process. The branding's intention is to represent these notions - making you appreciate every single cog that turned in its process.

Each label features a different array of illustrations, abstractly representing the wine itself. The rest of the branding is quite understated to allow the illustrations to shine. The constant element within the brand's artwork is the gentleman at the top (Hamish) smoking his pipe - depicting his focused moments that bring the wine that is before you.

David Byerlee
www.davidbyerlee.com

The Edition Feature is determined by the Label of the Week featured in TWTW that receives the greatest number of "clicks and shares" by TWTW audience.





HUMOUR, HONESTY
AND GRAPES THAT
SING. JOE HOLYMAN
KEEPS THINGS SIMPLE
AT STONEY RISE.

WORDS KATIE SPAIN
PHOTOS WILL SWAN

back to

basics

The view from Joe Holyman's winery and cellar door is something special. At the end of the day, cold beer in hand, he looks out over 7.2 hectares of vineyards against a backdrop of north Tasmania's Tamar River, 25 minutes north of Launceston. The vines are his happy place.

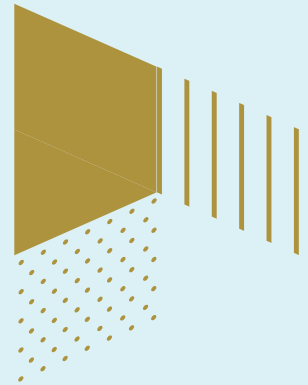
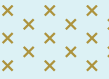
"It's what I enjoy doing," he says. "The whole process of making sure the fruit we pick is the best fruit we can. Our philosophy has changed a bit over the years: we're picking earlier and adding less, doing more in the vineyard so we have to add less to the wine. We don't use herbicides, we don't add anything other than sulphur. It's about reducing. I'm looking at the vineyard now from our lounge room and it's 15 metres away. Lou and I have three young kids - we don't need to be out there throwing chemicals around."

The winery has a five-star James Halliday rating but for Joe, it's not about accolades. "It's nice to have people recognise you but we're not in the business for that. We don't enter shows, we're more interested in the customers we have already and building more. I guess personal endorsements and all that sort of stuff helps build customers but it's really not why we're here. We're here to make the best wine we can."

Joe knows the area well. He grew up on a little farm near Launceston where his father planted .6 hectares of hobby vineyards. His mother had a catering business and by day, his dad worked for a family transport business, moving wine out of South Australia across the country. "He was a good, honest businessman and figured he might as well start supporting the people who were supporting him," Joe says. "So he started buying wine from the wineries he was working with. He developed quite an extensive array of Australian wine from the late sixties into the mid-eighties."

Back then, Joe enjoyed the occasional sip but it was baggy whites that had his heart. "I finished school and had an agreement with my father that if I achieved what is now the HSC, I could go to England to play cricket." The flipside was that, after a year, he had to return and go to university. "I started studying a business degree and didn't like that too much - I lasted about six weeks then moved back to play cricket."

During the nineties, Joe donned the whites for the Tassie Tigers in the Benson & Hedges Sheffield Shield. He's in the record books for collecting seven catches on his debut against Western Australia on 7 March 1991. "A lot of the Test players used to play in Shield cricket a lot, so at the time you got to play against the best cricketers around Australia."



"I used to tell people I got into the wine industry because it was the only job I could find where it was okay to go to work with a hangover."





EXPORT

Stoney Rise exports into Singapore and Japan. “We were in the UK. While the UK is interesting, I’d like to do a bit more around Asia, a bit closer to home. We don’t plan on exporting a lot.” China isn’t on the cards. “No real reason. I guess we all think that if you go into China you have to have heaps of wine. That’s probably not true. I’d like to sell wine in Hong Kong but not necessarily mainland China. There’s no real reason other than a fear of not having enough wine. I hate the idea of under-delivering.”

These days, Joe keeps his hand in at the Best Cellars v Five Way Cellars annual cricket match in Sydney (formerly the Laurent Perrier Cup).

He ended up taking a marketing course at Roseworthy, initially studying externally. Jeremy Holmes, who now runs Barossa-based international wine business d’Or to Door Wines Direct, was influential during those early marketing years. “He taught me a lot and was the first person to give me a job out of Roseworthy. We still remain close and talk about stuff.”

Joe cut his teeth working as a sales rep in Sydney and Melbourne for fine wine importer and distributor Negociants before taking a role with The Wine Society,

buying wine for its 50,000 members. He worked in wineries across the globe and met wife Lou while working at Cape Jaffa Wines in Robe, South Australia. Lou has experience in South Australian vineyards, winery offices and cellar doors. She looks after the business side of Stoney Rise.

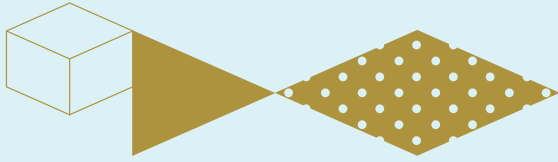
“I don’t think anyone would ever tell you it’s easy to run a vineyard and a family, living on the property and being here all the time with young kids. But it’s definitely great to have each other to talk to about the business. It’s a busy life we lead,” Joe says.

Their Tasmanian winery is named after a South Australian surf spot. “A friend of mine, who was also working at Cape Jaffa, and I decided we would buy a couple of

tonnes of fruit and make some wine, just for ourselves. We had a journalist visit one day and got an email from him about two weeks later saying, ‘I really like your shiraz, I’d like to put it in *Vogue Entertainment*, can you send me a bottle?’”

In a hurry, using Microsoft Clipart, they designed a label with a guy on a surf board. “We were buying fruit and using someone else’s winery and the only thing we could think of was that we were doing a lot of surfing in Robe at a place called Stoney Rise. That’s where it all came together.”

Joe and Lou found their Tassie property in 2004. They were looking for potential winery sites when the urge for a wee hit. “We dropped into the cellar door and while



Lou was on the toilet I was standing at the counter talking to the owner. He was commenting on what you could do to the place if you bought it. It never went on the market, so it was a bit serendipitous.”

They purchased the property (originally named Rotherhythe Heights) on 1 June 2004 and the Stoney Rise name came with them.

“We used Stoney Rise because we had some brand presence on the market and knew if people drove past and saw Stoney Rise they’d think, ‘I’ve heard of that’ and drive up the driveway.”

For the first three years they made wine offsite because they spent so much time in the vineyard. The original vines were planted in 1986, so they had vine age on their side but the property was in a state of disrepair. “The guy [we bought from] wasn’t from the industry and was the second owner, so I think he thought he was going to sit on the balcony, look at the river and drink chardonnay all day.”

Twelve years down the track, Joe is still chipping away. “We’re getting there slowly. When we first got here there was about .8 of a hectare of cabernet planted that we pulled with a 20 tonne excavator and replaced with pinot. We lost nearly a quarter of the vineyard in one fell swoop but that’s all up and running now. There’s just over three hectares of the original planting, the original 4.2 hectares (3800 vines per hectare) are 30 years old this year.”

In 2014 they planted three hectares at 4500 vines per hectare. “We are hoping to get some fruit off this vineyard this year. It is mainly a massale planting of pinot noir but we also have 1000 vines of trousseau in there.” Joe believes there is room for about another 2.5 hectares of expansion. “We’d like to become an estate-grown business – it will give us more control over fruit quality rather than buying some fruit in for the Stoney Rise brand.”

Joe’s approach to grape growing was

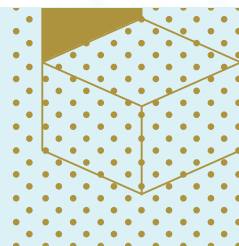
influenced by his father’s friend Graham Wiltshire, who planted the Jansz vineyard (originally named after Tasman’s ship, the *Heemskerck*). “When we bought this property, he helped me out for a few years until he got a bit too old. He believed it was all about the quality of the fruit rather than what you do in the winery. So we still follow that sense.”

Spur-pruned vines are treated individually in relation to the crop they carry (never have more than two bunches per shoot and any weaker vines have one bunch per shoot), averaging 4.5 tonnes per hectare. They don’t use herbicides, opting for minimal sprays and biodynamic preparations on the soil to increase vine health. The Stoney Rise range focuses on fruit and early drinkability, and the more structured range of Holyman wines have more potential for longevity.

“Winemaking to me is like cooking. If you start with nice ingredients, the food always tastes better. We are very honest in our appraisal here that we spend 95 percent of our time in the vineyard and five percent in the winery. In all honesty, part of me couldn’t care – I’d almost be happy to have a winemaker make the wine and do that process for me. We don’t add anything to the wine except sulphur so it’s a pure fermentation process.”

The construction of the winery in 2008 was relatively straight forward. “My father had most of the equipment we needed, so we had a de-stemmer, a press and a few little tanks. It’s a very basic Colorbond shed with a little bit of equipment in it. We’re very basic here. We don’t have heating or cooling in the winery, we don’t have a lab because I don’t understand science because I’m not a winemaker. Dad had .8 of a hectare and we’re still using that equipment. We buy fruit in as well so we’re doing a lot more. We were lucky to be in a position where he oversupplied on the equipment he purchased for the original bit of wine he was doing.”

What does Joe love most about the





DIRECT MARKETING

The Stoney Rise wine club – The Club – is exclusive to their most loyal customers. Membership is through commitment to an ongoing allocation of at least one dozen bottles of wine each year. “It works for us. I think people will always come and go a little bit because of circumstances changing. We don’t offer discounts because I don’t want people buying wine because they get a discount, I want them to buy it because they like it.”

industry? “I love that it’s a small industry. I like the camaraderie and people always being willing to help. We’re all good at recommending each other and working well together.” He pauses. “I used to tell people I got into the wine industry because it was the only job I could find where it was okay to go to work with a hangover.”

In 2015, Stoney Rise bagged *Gourmet Traveller’s* Best Small Cellar Door award. Joe believes a good cellar door needs honest people with knowledge and understanding of the products. Unusually, they charge for tastings. “If people aren’t willing to spend five dollars to taste seven wines, they’re not going to spend \$50 on a bottle of pinot. You can’t go to a restaurant and taste seven dishes before you decide if you want to buy any of them.”

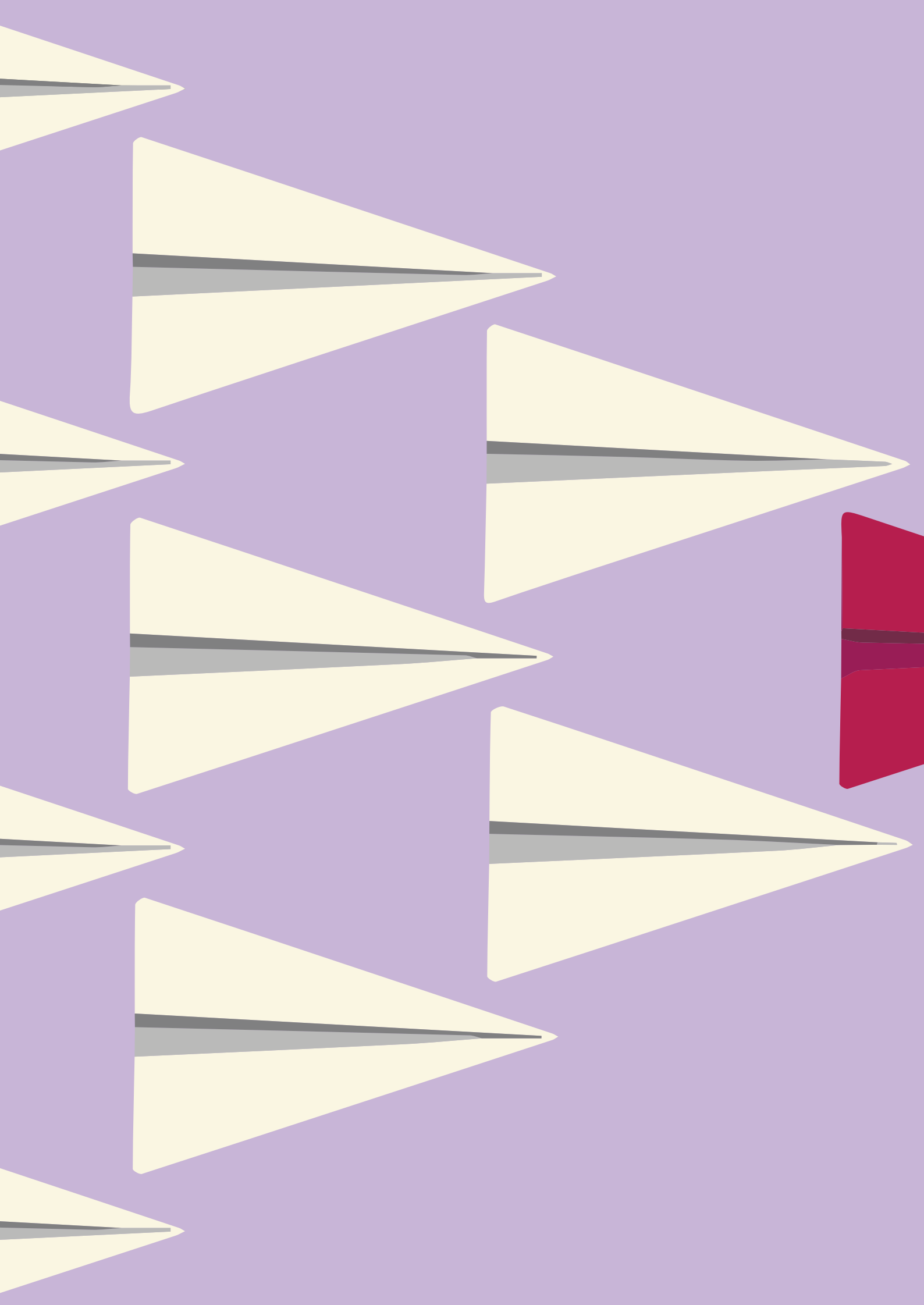
He says the response is mixed. “You get the people who drive up in fancy cars and scoff at paying five dollars for a tasting, then you get someone who doesn’t look like they’re going to buy a bottle but when you say there’s a tasting fee they say, ‘That’s so good because I don’t feel pressured to buy something.’ We’re not super strict on it. It’s a way of sorting out who is in your cellar door.”

When questioned about mistakes, Joe is thoughtful. “One of them was not being independently wealthy when I started working in the vineyard. The other was getting to know Mike Bennie and Nick Ryan. They’re terrible.” He laughs.

They are, in fact, mates. Joe recently joined forces with Mike and Peter Dredge for tongue-in-cheek wine label Brian. They keep it on the down-low but the Instagram account (@brian_wine) is a hoot. “That’s pretty much what Brian is about. I’ve known Mike since I was in Sydney. We came across some fruit a few years ago, when Mike was getting into skin contact winemaking, and we decided that’s what we’d do with this fruit.”

If he could change one thing about the Australian wine industry, Joe would make people more honest. “In terms of the stories they tell surrounding their vineyard practices. There’s plenty of people out there who don’t care about how grapes are grown and there are lots who do. It’s something people need to be honest about. We don’t use pesticides but I have a bank manager and a young family. If we have another 2011, then I’ll spray the vineyard with chemicals to make sure we can pick grapes. If I don’t have to spray, I won’t.”

The future is about consolidating what they do. “We’re trying to make less wines, not more. We make seven and could probably reduce that to six.” He pauses. “Everything I know about a vineyard is based on my vineyard, not anyone else’s. The objective for me is to make the best wine from my vineyard, not to make a wine that tastes like anyone else’s. It’s about doing what we do properly, rather than continually reinventing ourselves. I think sometimes if you reinvent yourself too often you forget where you started.” ♦
>> stoneyrise.com





CLONAL SHIRAZ

**ARE VARIETAL CLONES READY
TO STAND THEIR OWN GROUND?
NICK BULLEID INVESTIGATES.**

WORDS NICK BULLEID MW

In November, NSW Department of Primary Industries organised a pair of shiraz clonal workshops in Canberra and the Hunter. The organisers, Darren Fahey and Adrian Englefield, invited me to take part to comment on experimental wines and lead discussion on a selection of commercially available monoclonal shiraz.

Darren's introduction quoted Graham Gregory's 1966 report for the (then) NSW Department of Agriculture: "The most significant feature of grapevine research throughout Europe is the tremendous emphasis that has and is still being placed on clonal selection."

Little had been done in Australia at that time, but how things have changed!

Mike McCarthy from SARDI then gave an overview of the history and clonal development in shiraz and Mark Rowley of Wine Australia some statistics on global and domestic trends.

Nick Dry, the Yalumba Nursery viticulturist, gave detailed information on shiraz/syrah clones in Australia and France. He also threw light on the origins of the familiar Australian clones - the PT clones from Griffith, the R clones from Tahbilk's 1860 vines, the Bests material (strictly, a massale selection), Harry Tulloch's trials, probably of isolates from the Barossa that yielded 1654, 1125, 1127 and 2626, Hans Loder's Barossa selections, including the popular BVRC12 and BVRC30, and the recent SARDI clones one to 10.

However, it was Yalumba's own EV and BV selections that intrigued me, these selected from the Eden and Barossa valleys respectively. Yalumba winemakers have rated wines from the EV clones as more perfumed, 'cool climate' in style and 'like shiraz viognier', while the BV clones were mostly rich, with powerful tannins - this when grown on the same site.

Clones of shiraz have the same DNA, so how can this be? Do clones remember? A crazy thought, but perhaps not. Nick said the differences were probably maintained through RNA. This begs the question: How?

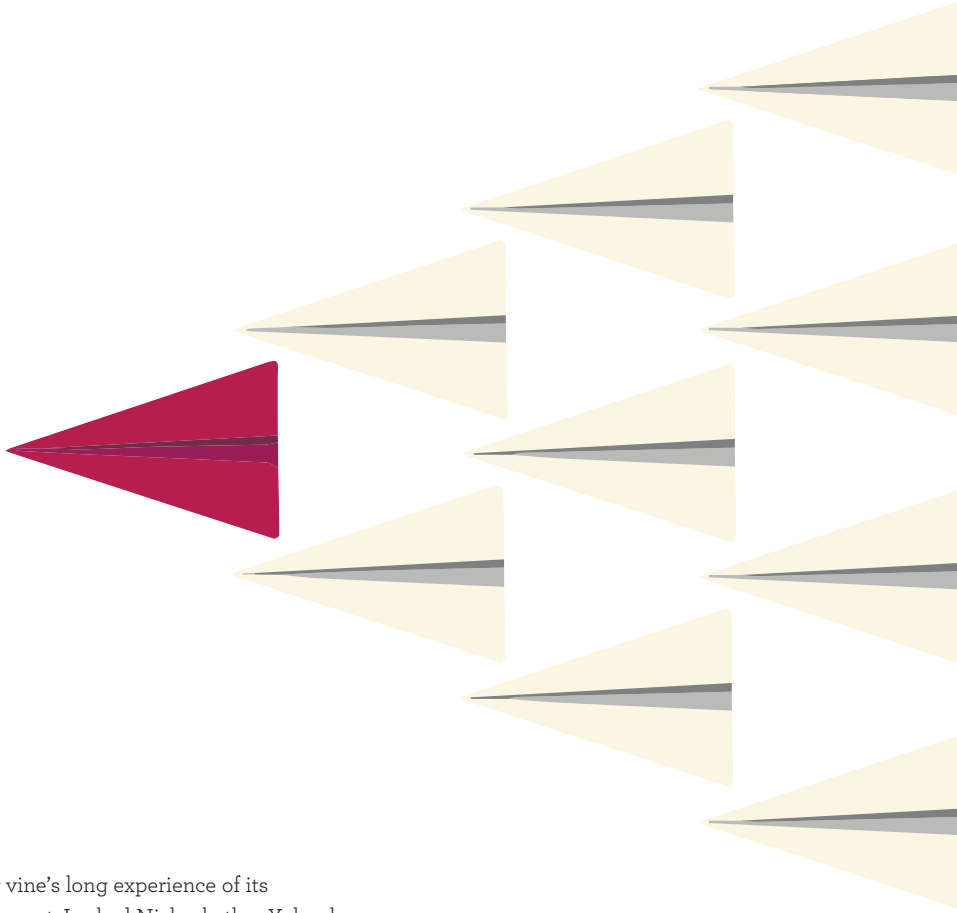
My guess is that switching genes could be involved, turned on or off over the

mother vine's long experience of its environment. I asked Nick whether Yalumba had found any regression. "Not yet," he replied - it is too soon to know.

Mike McCarthy then returned with a tasting of experimental wines made from four clones grown in Great Western, the Barossa and the Riverland in 2016. These were 1654, BVRC12, BVRC30 and R6WV28. The wines were masked within each region.

Most participants had no difficulty identifying the Great Western wines, but the other two brought some uncertainty. I had a strong preference for R6WV28 and then BVRC12 from Great Western, but thought the former suffered from being over-ripe and jammy at the other two locations. Overall, I thought BVRC12 performed well, with 1654 my least preferred.

Tracy Siebert from the AWRI gave a presentation, 'Black pepper flavour in shiraz: does the clone have an influence?' Her research has shown that the aroma detection threshold in red wine is 16ng/l - only about eight times that of TCA - although 20 to 25 percent of her panellists were unable to



“AT PRESENT IT’S NOT KNOWN WHETHER ROTUNDONE HAS A PURPOSE IN VINE PHYSIOLOGY OR IS RESIDUE OF ANOTHER PROCESS. ITS ROLE IN WINE QUALITY IS YET TO BE FULLY INVESTIGATED.”

detect it at all. Region, climate and clone are clearly all important. She found rotundone to be higher in Adelaide Hills, Grampians and Canberra-region wines than five other regions and it was particularly high in 1999, 2000 and 2001 Clonakilla shiraz viognier.

In 2008, 35 SARDI clones at the Nuriootpa Research Station showed concentrations of 6ng/kg of grapes or less while nine clones in the Canberra district had between six and 17ng/kg in 2009. Two BVRC clones and 1127 were the highest.

Across the Barossa Valley, Mount Langi Ghiran and the Riverland, rotundone was highest at Langi, with the Riverland ahead of the Barossa. Levels were higher in 2015 and 2014 than in 2016. Clones R6WV28 and BVRC30 tended to be higher than BVRC12 and 1654. Bramley et al (2104) found distinct variations in rotundone across a single-vineyard block over three seasons.

Her analyses have also detected rotundone in grüner veltliner, a variety known to show white-pepper character, which I confess I've never found.

At present it's not known whether rotundone has a purpose in vine physiology or is residue of another process. Its role in wine quality is yet to be fully investigated, too. Plenty of opportunities for research.

Tim Kirk from Clonakilla and Frank van de Loo from Mount Majura described their experience with clones in the Canberra region. The consensus seemed to be that 1127 performed well, BVRC30 didn't and that Bests varied between sites.

Results from the final tasting proved elusive, as the characteristics of most wines were confounded by regional or winemaking styles, and worse by heavy-handed oak. The three Clonakilla barrel samples did show clear differences, however. The 1127 had the deepest colour and sweet raspberry and blackberry fruit, SAV19 (Tahbilk) showed the most pepper and black cherry while Bests was more evolved, with red fruit, purity and silky balance.

My overall conclusion was that, while there are consistent differences between the performances of many clones, fine tuning the ideal choice will take many years, as site will be the final arbiter. ♦
Bramley et al. AJGWR 2016.



MORE ON SICILY

Following the fragmentation of my earlier parcel, Australia Post was kind enough to deliver my second delivery of Sicilian wines intact. And how good the wines were! Brief comments follow:

Pietrodolce Etna Bianco 2015 comes from Carricante grapes grown at 800-metres altitude on the northern slope of Mt Etna. It combines intense lemon and grassy flavours with a full, round palate and fresh acidity. Delicious and intriguing.

Pietrodolce Etna Rosso 2015 is grown at 600 metres. Don't be fooled by the pale garnet red colour. It has a beautiful perfume of strawberry and other berries. After a soft, supple start to the palate, distinctly dry tannins take over, although the fruit lasts well beyond the dryness. No wonder nerello mascalese has been likened to nebbiolo. It would be perfect with pasta or veal.

Hauner Salina Bianco 2015, while grown on an island to the north of Sicily, is also high in origin – about 400 metres. It combines cataratto and inzolia grapes, and shows citrus characters on the nose. The palate is crisp, with a light texture and hints of pineapple appearing.

Morgante Nero d'Avola 2014 comes from around 500m in Agrigento, in western Sicily. I was so impressed by earlier vintages that I used the wine as a varietal example in my lectures at Charles Sturt Uni. It has rich, dark-berry fruit and tannins that, while soft, finish with a distinct south Italian bite. It hides its 14.5 percent alcohol well.

All four wines further demonstrate my comments on Sicilian wines in the Nov/Dec issue and are great examples. They're imported by Trembath and Taylor. ♦



A NEW GENERATION OF CHINESE ACADEMICS, CONSUMERS AND WINEMAKERS ARE ON A MISSION TO BRIDGE THE CULTURAL GAP BETWEEN AUSTRALIAN WINES AND THEIR HOMELAND. WE EXPLORE THE VIEW ON CHINESE EXPORT FROM ACROSS THE POND.

The figures are promising. Staggering, even. The annual growth rate in Australian wine exports to China have increased by 51 percent in the last 12 months. Overall, 75 percent of exporters into China are experiencing growth in that market.

“It’s obviously going to be calibrated in different levels of where they’re at in terms of brand presence and investment into the market,” Wine Australia CEO Andreas Clark says. “The FTA cuts have given it increased impetus and we’ve got no reason to think that strong growth won’t continue into the medium-to-long term. Everything is pointing in that direction.”

So what is the view like from across the pond? Where Penfolds is a household name, small boutique wineries are attempting to claim their slice of the pie, and academics and increasingly savvy wine consumers are looking to Oz as a place to learn, drink, invest and make some serious moolah.

“Wine is not like Coca-Cola,” Fei Zheng says. “The diversity of wine is a very important part of its charm, so the domination of large Aussie wine companies will not be a good thing for a maturing market.”

Fei has worked as sales manager for wine companies in Beijing, including DongDingHe, Oenophile, and Swan Wine Group. He is currently studying a master’s of biology tech at Adelaide University and recalls the rise of Aussie wines well.

“At the beginning, the demand was driven by Penfolds because large importer and educator ASC was representing them,” he says. Later, lower priced wines such as Yellow Tail moved in. “This started in 2007 and 2008, which were quite good vintages. So the Chinese consumers have a very good impression of Aussie wines.”

He says Chinese wine consumers can be divided into two segments. Firstly, wine enthusiasts with indepth knowledge about wines who tend to consume more sophisticated wines. “Mainly from old world, but some new world as well. The other part is group purchase (wholesale) by corporations and groups, who tend to use wines as gifts and benefits for employees and in business. This part of the market is dominated by big Aussie wine brands, but small wineries are benefitting as well, mainly due to the trust of Aussie wine regions built upon the publicity of the bigger brands.”

Chao Dang was 17 when he started drinking wine at home with his parents in Baoding, 150 kilometres south of Beijing.

“I started drinking wine quite early. This is typical because in China the wine thing started around 2006 to 2007. Mum was part of that wave and started drinking it every night.”

Back then, they drank locally produced Chinese wines. “I can still remember what it tasted like. It was so juicy and fake. But still, she was drinking it and asked me to drink one glass per night with her.” It wasn’t exactly an exercise in wine appreciation.

CULTURE SHOCK

WORDS KATIE SPAIN PHOTOS RYAN MURPHY

EXPORT TIPS FROM WINE AUSTRALIA CEO ANDREAS CLARK

Understand the market

Do your homework and due diligence. Tap in to us. This is what we're here for. We've got a lot of information, we're rich in data and we analyse market opportunities in China. We put on a sweep of events there to enable people to get into the market and pour their wine. Look at how to take advantage of that and our annual calendar of events, whether it's a multi-city roadshow or stands at some of the major trade shows.

Understand the regulatory maze

We publish detailed guides on how to comply with Chinese standards. Wine being an alcoholic beverage is always highly regulated in each market. People need to understand how they're meant to comply. The mere fact they comply with Australian laws doesn't mean they comply with overseas laws.

Put in the time

Get into the market. Don't rush any arrangements, go in there and understand the market, and meet with potential partners.

Protect your IP

Before you do anything, make sure you register your IP. The Chinese have a system where you stop usage of your trademark if it's not registered. It may be early days for a brand but you never know how valuable that IP might be further down the track if you have some success.

"People started drinking wine because they believe in the health benefit of wines. Ninety percent of the wine sold in China was red and it's still like that."

He likens wine to olive oil, which became popular around 10 years ago when people began to purchase it as gifts. "They think olive oil is healthier than peanut and sunflower oil, which we usually used. Now every household has a lot of olive oil. They started cooking with it and searching for uses for it, then it became part of people's lives. Same with wine. People started giving wine as gifts because they believed it was a gesture to wish you good health."

Chao was 21 when the wine bug really hit. He was offered an opportunity to study his masters at Lincoln University in Christchurch, New Zealand, and a wine course was suggested. He was researching the industry when he stumbled upon 13-part *National Geographic* documentary *Exploring the Vine*. The 2010 doco follows three young winemakers on a discovery of the South African wine industry. Chao watched it twice – consecutively. "At 4am I went to my dad, woke him up and told him I'd decided what to do with my life."

He's been dedicated to the good stuff ever since. When not studying a PhD in wine science with ARC's training centre for innovative wine production and the University of Adelaide, Chao can be found analysing the cultural challenges between Australian wine and his homeland. "Traditionally, wine is not part of China's culture but traditionally we have a lot of alcoholic drinks. We have Chinese wine (Yellow Jiu) made from grains. People in China drink a lot of spirits and beer. Beer is number one, so for wine as a foreign product, to go into that you need to be part of that culture."

Chao set up a company called Second Round Australia Pty Ltd as a way to bridge that gap, based on the concept of one wine for one moment. It's about matching varieties to occasions such as birthdays,

the zodiac calendar, special events and Chinese dishes. "Basically the idea is to attach an identity of a wine in that market so that identity is part of people's lives. In Italy, when you eat pizza they give you chianti in a traditional carafe in a basket. You don't have to ask for the brand, it just comes. You drink it as a pizza wine. It's the same thing in several countries. When you think of Champagne you think of celebration. That's a cultural link."

On the production side, Chao works with boutique growers who can invest into the brand to take advantage of sales in the form of bonus share. "There is a lot of optimism, and from what I see the market is far from saturated. Very few companies have tried to approach everyday consumers. This is the gap. ASC spends a lot of money to establish training and wine education in China. I think that's what we need to do. Try to teach them how to describe wines and how to appreciate wines."

Education is important both in Oz and on Chao and Fei's home turf. "It is hard for the consumers to know how to buy wines, how

"PEOPLE STARTED DRINKING WINE BECAUSE THEY BELIEVE IN THE HEALTH BENEFIT OF WINES. NINETY PERCENT OF THE WINE SOLD IN CHINA WAS RED AND IT'S STILL LIKE THAT."

to choose wines or how to drink wines," Fei says. "They need basic knowledge of wine, foreign language and foreign wine regions. This gap is very hard to overcome for the general population, so at this stage, wine is consumed more by people with an affinity with western culture."

Wine Australia is trying to bridge that gap. "I'm always surprised by the turnout of people who are champing at the bit to come to our events," Andreas says.



“Our China Wine Awards are the big one. It’s an opportunity for us to acknowledge everyone who is helping to drive the Australian category, whether they’re retailers online, traditional, educators or distributors.”

The most recent awards night was held in August. “It was a great night. There was a great buzz in the room and atmosphere. We built some masterclasses around that. They were packed. People were soaking up as much knowledge as they can.”

Info sessions were run by James Halliday, a Chinese sommelier and The Australian Wine Research Institute. “We had a couple of scientists talking around the peppery components of shiraz and the science that sits behind what they taste like. The room was full. It was a relatively young crowd and they want to learn.”

It’s something LAS Vino winemaker Nic Peterkin noticed during multiple trips to Shanghai. He found cross-cultural flavour descriptions important, too.

“A lot of people previously bagged out consumers in China but when you go there they are actually genuinely interested and sophisticated with their palate. I think a lot of it comes down to finding out what that market

wants and needs from Australian wine.”

The *Gourmet Traveller* 2016 Young Winemaker of the Year is based at Margaret River and comes from strong winemaking stock. His mother Shelley is the daughter of Di and Kevin Cullen and his father Mike founded Pierro. Nic grew up among the vines and has precious childhood memories of mateship and the great outdoors but the challenges involved in starting his own brand (LAS stands for ‘luck, art, science’) were a shock.

“I think the biggest hindrance I have is government. If you look at all those guys at Sidewinder [an Adelaide wine-tasting event showcasing boutique interstate winemakers] they are so small. Most of them are one or two person operations. To have the same administration burdens as a business with 100 staff that exports all around the world and has a \$100 million budget... it’s pretty much, as far as government is concerned, the same administration burden.”

His own export journey kicked off in London – something he puts down to luck. “I went over there and my cousin was working for a company called Liberty, which is a very good distributor in the UK.

I went with wines to show her because she’s into wine and she said, ‘Why don’t you show my boss? Have a chat with him and show him the wines – he’d be interested in seeing them’. He imports Shaw and Smith, and Cullen. I went in, we didn’t even taste the wines – just had a chat and I left him the wines. He emailed me and said, ‘How much can I have?’”

This was before Nic had his liquor licence in Australia. “I said ‘Cool...’ and made it all up. I had to make up a price because I hadn’t priced it.”

It was a nod of confidence from afar. “No one wanted to take this random wine that nobody knew about from a guy nobody had heard of who was making weird wines. But maybe the wines were okay.”

Production is around 200 cases per wine (800 in total), half of which is exported. The wines are available in London, Tokyo, Australia and Shanghai through Pran Cellar. The Shanghai connection came from multiple trips to China and a hell of a lot of trust. “I’ve been to Shanghai four or five times now – for a holiday once and also to work with Pierra. On the last trip [last year in November], I had a chat with the lady distributing the wine there, just a conversation over dinner. She said, ‘Why don’t you send us the wines and we’ll see how they go.’”

Nic sent his wine across before a big consumer trade event in July 2016. “I think they were trying to see what the public’s reaction to them was. It went really well and they said, ‘Yep, we’d love to take it.’”

The distributor trust building came up trumps. “I’ve met them four times, we know how each other works so there’s trust in how that’s happening.”

Chinese distributor Jassie Dong studied in Australia and helped Nic bridge cultural gaps. “She was part of the wine business studies at the University of Adelaide and had that insight,” Nic says.

SELLING THE NATION

“When you’re visiting China, you’re not really selling your own product, you’re selling wine in general. When I go there you’re first selling the concept of wine – why wine is good, why you should drink it. Selling the concept of worldwide wine, this is what France does, this is what the US does, then you go, ‘This is what Australia does and this is what makes Australia special.’ Then you might have to go through a few regions in Australia and then go, ‘Okay, this is what Margaret River does and this is why Margaret River is special’. Maybe if you get time you can talk about your wine. A process that takes maybe 15 minutes in Perth, Adelaide or Sydney will take an hour or two in China. They want to know that you’re not just a brand that has put a label on a bottle and mass produced stuff you’re trying to scam off for a huge amount of money. They want to know that you’re authentic and you are who you say you are.” – Nic Peterkin, LAS Vino

THE FUTURE

Where Chinese sales manager Fei Zheng sees the industry heading.

- The rise of big brands, pioneers in a maturing wine market.
- Upgrade of Chinese consumerism, mainly due to the rise of mid-class. This consumer group is getting younger, more prone to non-traditional distribution channels, and is in favour of unique/boutique brands.
- The rise of Chinese boutique wineries. The higher quality of these wineries, combined with their knowledge of Chinese culture, will bring challenges to all foreign wine producers.
- The quantity of high-end wine consumption will grow, but the price will lower.

The latest was Peking duck. “I choose about a dozen wine styles, including some cliché styles [as recommended by people doing sales in China],” Chao says. “They said pinot matches with Peking duck. We did some trials, not scientific trials but over dinner – with different wine styles – and found pinot doesn’t work.” Neither did Premier Krug, dry riesling or grenache. “When you eat Peking duck, which is sweet, savoury and heavy flavoured, and you drink pinot, it’s like bitter water. It doesn’t work at all. The same applies to grenache which is also a sort of light variety.”

He says red tape poses its own set of challenges. “I spend a lot of time on that stuff ... It’s hard. The other thing with China is the challenge of administration.” As a solo operator, Nic does it all. The mountain of paperwork involved in getting his wine through customs was hard to scale. “That was a big hindrance.”

Fei says it is important for smaller wineries not to be too ambitious. “If they are too ambitious for market share, they will drift away from their core value and neglect their best position in the market. What they should do is focus on one spot of the market with their strengths and cultivate this with proper branding work. Smaller wineries should make adjustments on their products when necessary, such as flavour profile and packaging. Learning about the trends of aesthetics in China is very important.”

Nic had to re-label some of his wines. “I can’t export Portuguese Pirate Blend because it has the word ‘Portuguese’ in it. I can’t export the pinot [2015 Albino Pinot] because it has the word ‘pinot’ in it. Little things like that.”

He found that flavour descriptions are also important. “It goes well with King

“THERE’S A BILLION PEOPLE THAT DRINK TWO-TO-THREE LITRES OF WINE PER PERSON, PER CAPITA EVERY YEAR... YOU’VE GOT TO FIND OUT WHAT THEY WANT, NOT THEM HAVE TO FIND OUT THAT YOU’RE MAKING WINE.”

George whiting? Nobody knows what that is in China so you’ve got to make that relatable. It’s marketing 101: find out what people want and supply them with that.”

It all hails back to taste and Chao’s mission to match wine with Chinese culture and tastebuds, and is the reason he meets regularly with peers (gastronomy and sensory experts, winemakers, and academics) to dissect traditional dishes.

What did work was a good combination of fruit and oak. “Something with a bit of sweetness: an oaky chardonnay which gives you some sweetness, vanilla and some ice-cream from the oak, or a good, complex shiraz.”

It’s not just a matter of taste, though. According to Fei, cross-cultural personality traits are also a factor. “Western culture values exploration, so Westerners are more

likely to explore different wines more often. However, a lot of Chinese tend to be more conservative and buy things they know. This may create a big challenge for Australian wine brands. On one side, you have the sophisticated wine drinkers who tend to explore everything in China, and on the other side, you have conservative wine drinkers who want to drink the same thing every day. Catering to the needs of more conservative wine consumers is very important.”

And what of language barriers? “It’s the hard thing about China as a market... in London I kind of know where the wine is being sold and it works well with branding because the wine goes into Gordon Ramsay’s restaurant or Heston Blumenthal’s. You know those restaurants and how they work, whereas China is still a little bit embryonic in terms of the market.”

When it comes to China, there’s no doubt Aussie winemakers are in confusing but exciting times. “If you look at Australia or parts of Europe, there are ways things are done; everyone buys their wine from bottleshops, everyone goes to a restaurant, there’s always a distributor involved in each state. Whereas in China, they’re saying, ‘Well, I’m the distributor, maybe we can set up an online sales system that goes straight to the consumer. Or maybe we could sell the wine exclusively to hotel chains.’ They’re still figuring out what works and making their own rules.”

The exciting part is that, in a technologically advanced country comprising 1.35 billion people, the possibilities are endless.

“Broadly speaking, the e-commerce monopoly in China is huge,” Andreas says. “It is a country built on e-commerce. The analogy I draw is, on the way home you might think, ‘I need some milk’ – [in China] they won’t go past the store, they’ll just tap a button and it’ll be done online and delivered.”



In the wine space, retail companies such as Sichuan 1919 (1919.cn) are amping up delivery. “1919 is built around the delivery of wine in 19 minutes,” Andreas says. “If you’re at a restaurant and want a bottle of wine, they’ll deliver it there. They’ve got about 1000 stores and are looking to significantly ramp that up. They have a retail presence but it’s almost like that’s their distribution hub for online sales.”

It’s big business – in September 2016, online marketplace Alibaba.com launched a wine lovers’ version of Singles’ Day – an online sale of pretty much anything you can imagine – which racked up 120.7 billion CNY (17.79 billion USD) in November 2016. The Online Wine Festival, held on 9 September, is part of online store Tmall and features Australian wine. It is supported by Wine Australia.

“We’ve facilitated an opportunity for Australian exporters who have a product in market. It’s an Australian wine store on Alibaba’s platform. It’s massive. I went to their headquarters earlier this year in Hangzhou – they’re like Google – it’s that kind of level,” Andreas says.

“It was the first time we did the wine sale. I think it might get bigger and better. What we did was set up an opportunity for some brands to work with Alibaba and another company involved [vinehoo.com, the operator behind the online platform]. Our role is to connect them, then exporters and producers decide if it’s a channel they want to pursue and if so, what skews and channels they want.

“Ultimately, it’s their commercial decision to work out but they need to make sure it marries up with their other distribution models in the market, so that

they’re sympathetic to each other and they don’t end up cannibalising what they’re doing in a more traditional sense.”

Andreas believes big-name online businesses such as Alibaba can act as a confidence builder for consumers concerned about the black market.

“It’s getting better but the concerns are broader – it’s not just wine. Alibaba instigated the Singles’ Day sales, which has ridiculous numbers in terms of dollars and transactions. There was some commentary around ‘counterfeit products sold here’ but Alibaba has responded well. They are insidious in terms of brand

“IT’S NOT THIS HOMOGENOUS, UNIFORM STORY OUT THERE. IT IS HUGE AND EVOLVING QUICKLY.”

protection and if there’s any questioning, they’re vigilant on it. It’s an issue but I think some of these platforms can help resolve some of these issues. Their credibility depends on it.”

Again, it’s all about trust, as Nic points out. “My advice is to build trust and build your relationships and brand. Have a good-quality product, build that and make the time to visit. Every time we go to China, sales actually increase,” he says.

“In a very backwards way, you’re providing what has always been done. If the market doesn’t understand that, you can’t say, ‘Well they’re unsophisticated’. That’s such a bad way to look at it. They’re in the power position. There’s a billion people that drink two-to-three litres of wine per person, per capita every year... you’ve

got to find out what they want, not them have to find out that you’re making wine.”

Each case is unique. “I could line up 10 exporters in a row and get 10 totally different experiences,” Andreas says. “It’s not this homogenous, uniform story out there. It is huge and evolving quickly.” He pauses. “The headline numbers are really positive and that’s real. Like anything, these things aren’t uniform. Some have a stronger brand and are undoubtedly well known.”

Asked to cite an example, he mentions Treasury. “They’ve invested heavily in their operations there and their marketing spend, and that’s delivering results – we’ve seen that come through in their public announcements and their share price etc. That’s acting as a real positive path finder. Penfolds as a brand is a positive story – not only for them but for the Australian category.”

But it’s not a bonanza. “It’s not like you just make the wine and ship it. Wine-makers know that. I’m not telling exporters to suck eggs. Those who have had success there have been there for the long term. It hasn’t just happened overnight. They’ve been in the market for nearly 15 years and worked the market like any other export market. They’re up there regularly, cultivating relationships, which is important with all business but particularly important in China,” he says.

“There are still some who go to China and haven’t had the results they’ve seen others get, so there is a real mixed story there. Fundamentally, it’s a very positive story but it’s incumbent on everyone thinking beyond headlines and understanding the market, who you’re working with and what opportunities you’re trying to pursue.” ♦

MAINLAND CHINA

WITH MAINLAND CHINA TIPPING THE US OFF THE TOP SPOT FOR AUSTRALIAN WINE EXPORTS, THERE'S NEVER BEEN A BETTER TIME TO PUSH INTO THE MARKET.

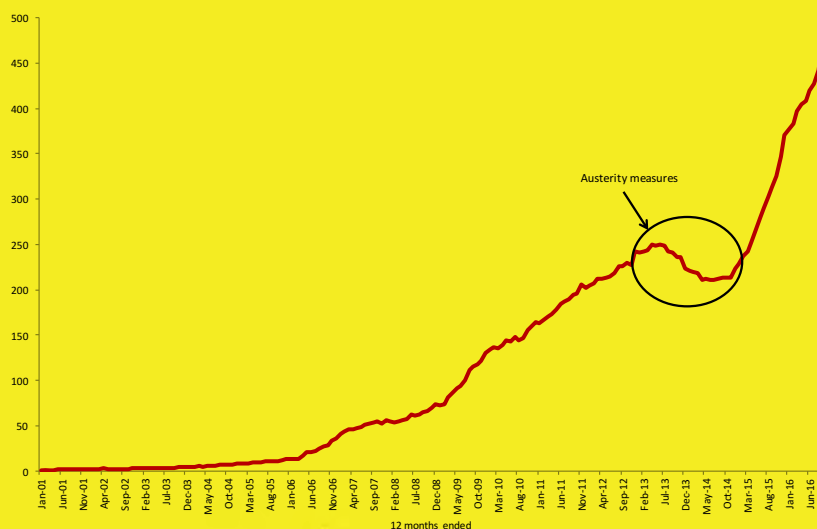
For the first time, mainland China is now the number one destination for Australian wine exports by value. Export figures released by Wine Australia show that the value of exports to China hit a record \$474 million in the 12 months ended September 2016 (see figure, opposite). This means that China pushed the United States into second place in value terms, after being top of the perch for the previous seven years.

The annual growth rate in Australian exports to China has averaged 20 percent per annum over the last five years. Exports increased by an extraordinary 51 percent in the last 12 months. It's expected that strong growth will continue in Australian exports to China but perhaps not at rates of this magnitude over the medium to longer term.

The fundamentals in China remain strong and there are no compelling reasons to suggest that the growth in the wine market will slow dramatically over the period. There remains significant upside in wine consumption, with the urban middle class continuing to grow in both number and wealth.

The urban middle class population in China has an increasing appetite for premium Australian wine at high prices.

WORDS PETER BAILEY



Australian wine exports to China over time (A\$ million FOB). Source: Wine Australia



Research from Wine Intelligence suggests there are now 48 million upper-middle class imported-wine drinkers in mainland China, up from 19 million in 2010. Wine Intelligence projects that this figure will grow to 160 million people by 2025. Wine is becoming more of an everyday premium drink for imported wine consumers rather than an ultra-luxury product. The China Wine Barometer report prepared by the University of South Australia and funded by Wine Australia supports this trend. Furthermore, it suggests that consumption occasions are moving more into the informal and 'at home' locations, which means that sales are growing faster in the off-premise than on-premise channels.

However, there remain non-tariff-related risks and uncertainties in the market such as regulations and government policy that can change with little notice. A recent example was the austerity measures introduced by the Chinese Government in 2012, which had an immediate but short-term negative impact on wine imports.

With the China-Australia Free Trade Agreement to reduce tariffs to zero by 2019 and Australia already ranked second

behind France in imports, Australia is well-placed to gain a fair share of the future growth in wine consumption.

Notably, among the top eight importing countries, Australia has the highest average value per litre for bottled wine.

Wine Intelligence research commissioned by Wine Australia shows, in consumers' minds, France leads in the perceptions of wine quality but Australia is narrowing the gap. Australian wine is most strongly perceived as food friendly and good value for money. Perception as a fine-wine producer is on the rise and we need to build on this position.

Despite the quality perceptions lead, France has a much greater share of sales at the low-end of the market compared to Australia. Australia has a greater share of its sales in price points above RMB60 per bottle. There is an opportunity for Australia to drive the fine wine message at RMB200 to 500 per bottle, which equates to A\$150 to A\$400 per case FOB (A\$15 to A\$45 per litre).

Australia is also well-placed to take advantage of Chinese consumers' variety preferences. Cabernet sauvignon is clearly

the number one red variety consumed in China. There is a more even split in white varieties, with chardonnay, riesling and sauvignon blanc the top three.

While shiraz is not in the top five reds, it is the number one variety for Australian export value (37 percent share) and growth for Australia.

Tier one cities (Beijing, Guangzhou, Shanghai, Hangzhou, Shenzhen, Tianjin and Suzhou) offer the largest consumer base for imported wine and the most mature on-premise and off-premise environment in China. Compared to lower-tier cities, distribution players in higher-tier cities are more professionally advanced. Imported wine is priced more reasonably than in lower-tier cities. However, there is greater competition and higher saturation levels, with increased consumer awareness and consumption of Australian wine.

Tier two cities (Wuhan, Chengdu, Shenyang, Chongqing, Changsha, Zhengzhou, Guiyang) are attracting more investment and the economic growth of some of these cities is even higher than that of some tier one cities. With continued income growth, consumers in these cities are starting to purchase more imported wine. However, the market development is still immature and pricing is less transparent than in tier one cities, but there is more growth potential in tier two cities as consumers have lower levels of awareness and consume less Australian wine than in tier one cities. ♦

*For more information contact
Wine Australia's China office at
china@wineaustralia.com*

“Australian wine is most strongly perceived as food friendly and good value for money. Perception as a fine-wine producer is on the rise and we need to build on this position.”



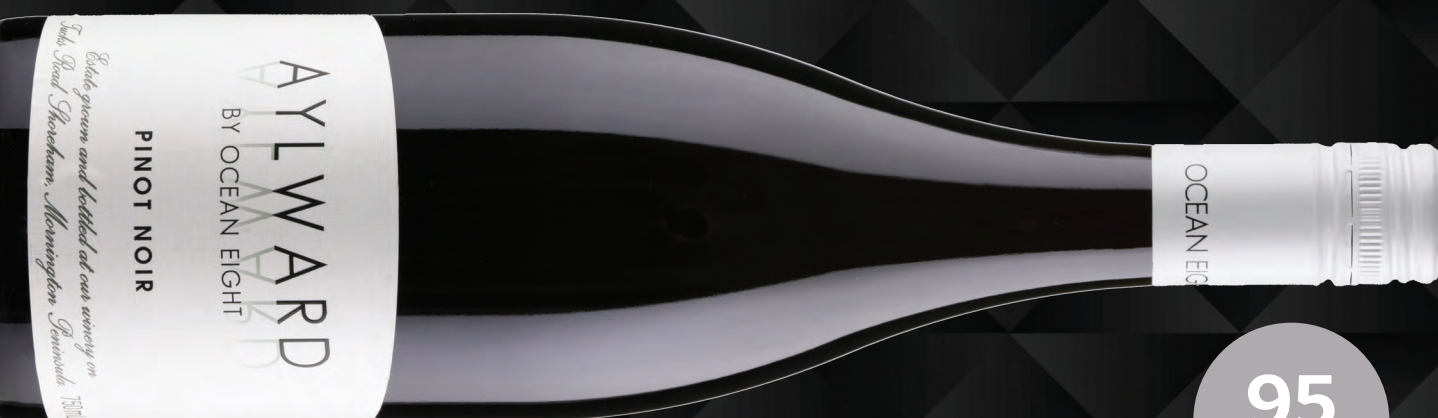
WBM

WINES OF THE YEAR

2016



DRUM ROLL, PLEASE!
HERE'S THE BEST WINES MIKE
BENNIE AND TYSON STELZER
TASTED IN 2016.



ALYWARD BY OCEAN EIGHT

Mornington Peninsula Pinot Noir 2012

🐦@oceaneight

Tangy red cherries, strawberry hull, pink pepper and even a suggestion of fennel denote an elegantly refined pinot noir of graceful, lingering persistence. It builds on the finish, with pinot noir's classic peacock's tail displaying a flourish of understated fruit presence. Tannins are finely structured and impeccably composed, promising great things in a decade. *13.2% Reviewed by Tyson Stelzer*



XANADU

**Reserve Margaret River
Cabernet Sauvignon 2013**
🐦@xanaduwine

A blend of pristine fragrance and blackcurrant fruit depth, with a dash of petit verdot to emphasise fragrance and malbec to build savoury complexity. It rises magnificently on the finish, with fruit depth and drive of awesome presence, yet with restraint and poise at every moment, immaculately scaffolded with beautifully fine yet well poised tannins. *14% Reviewed by Tyson Stelzer*



YERINGBERG

Yarra Valley 2013
🐦@Yeringberg

A wonderful contrast of incredible violet perfume and the dark fruit depth of blackcurrants and cassis, this is a blend of monumental varietal precision and alluring fruit clarity, impeccably structured by finely textured French oak tannins and a memory of cedar. In line and sheer, fragrant fruit persistence, this is a Yeringberg of the highest order. *13.5%*

Reviewed by Tyson Stelzer

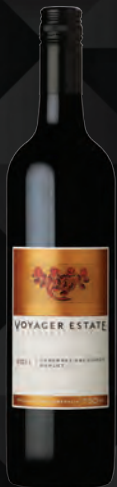


DE BORTOLI

**Yarra Valley Section A5
Chardonnay 2014**
🐦@DeBortoliWines

A pretty and pristine chardonnay that captures the fragrant lift of lemon blossom and unites it with crunchy grapefruit, elegant white peach and hints of vanilla. It's finely textured, with all the layered mouth feel of natural ferment, energised by a taut line of elevated Yarra Valley acidity. *12.5%*

Reviewed by Tyson Stelzer



96
\$70.00

VOYAGER ESTATE
Cabernet Sauvignon Merlot 2011
@voyagerestate

Exactly varietal, profoundly fragrant and lacking nothing in presence, concentration and structure. Voyager has captured the outstanding 2011 vintage with astonishing clarity. Red and blackcurrants unite with tomato, leaf, cedar and cigar box, lingering very long on a finish defined by medium-grained, mouthfilling tannins that promise a grand future. 14%
Reviewed by Tyson Stelzer



96
\$45.00

VOYAGER ESTATE
Margaret River Chardonnay 2012
@voyagerestate

A chardonnay of magnificent, commanding presence, delivering grand cru concentration and stature, cunningly pulled into line with tightly focused, energising acidity. Classy cashew nut French oak gently unites a very long and linear finish. One of the great vintages for Voyager Estate Chardonnay. 13%
Reviewed by Tyson Stelzer



96
\$85.00

XANADU
Reserve Margaret River Chardonnay 2014
@xanaduwine

At once pretty and fragrant with lemon blossom aromatics and at the same time beautifully poised and intense, with a core of white peach and lemon fruit and a magnificent line of pristine, tense malic acidity, this is a chardonnay of breathtaking line and length. 13%
Reviewed by Tyson Stelzer



96
\$70.00

XANADU
Steven's Road Margaret River Cabernet Sauvignon 2013
@xanaduwine

A cabernet of effortless and unadulterated fruit purity and poise, framed in gentle and integrated tannins, well poised acidity and nicely judged oak. Beautiful purity and definition of black and redcurrant fruit is nuanced with hints of leaf, framed in elegant structure of finely poised tannins. It finishes with outstanding line and length. 14%
Reviewed by Tyson Stelzer



95
\$45.00

ASHTON HILLS
Adelaide Hills Pinot Noir 2014

Fragrant rose hip with a core of red cherry and strawberry fruit are overlaid with beetroot savoury complexity. Excellent acid line is balanced with fleshy red fruits and beautifully textured mouth feel, setting off a very complete and beautifully balanced wine, a classic expression of a unique site. 14.5%
Reviewed by Tyson Stelzer



95
\$50.00

BROKENWOOD
Hunter Valley Shiraz 2014
@Brokenwood

From young vine Graveyard vineyard and other declassified parcels, this is a Hunter shiraz of structure, restraint and finely coiled tension, the antithesis of a showstopper, but with a classic definition and focus that make for great potential. It's very long, even and structured with finely poised tannins of mineral finesse. One of the more restrained of the season, and classic Brokenwood. 13.5%
Reviewed by Tyson Stelzer



95
\$30.00

CHAPEL HILL
McLaren Vale
Cabernet Sauvignon 2014
@chapelhillwine

One of the most precise cabernets under this label yet; this is exact, benchmark McLaren Vale cabernet of textbook blackcurrant, cassis, capsicum, cedar and cigar box. Impeccable precision carries with outstanding line and length. *14.5%*

Reviewed by Tyson Stelzer



95
\$100.00

HENSCHKE
Barossa Valley Marble Angel Vineyard
Cabernet Sauvignon 2012
@henschkewine

Single-vineyard wine to sit towards the top of the Henschke heirarchy of wines. It smells like spice cupboard, black olives, blackberries, sits at medium weight with a seamless flow, yet offers depth of flavour and then still manages to hold brightness and levity. Beautiful feel. *14.5%*

Reviewed by Mike Bennie



95
\$33.00

MOUNT HORROCKS
Clare Valley Semillon 2015
@MtHorrocksWines

You'd never guess the oak or maturation regime from its pale straw hue or its fragrant apple and lemon blossom bouquet. Even the palate possesses a tension and purity that belie its structural complexity. This is the classiest, purest and most thrilling semillon from Mount Horrocks yet, with an endurance to rival the great whites of Bordeaux. *13%*

Reviewed by Tyson Stelzer



95
\$65.00

STELLA BELLA
Margaret River Serie Luminosa
Chardonnay 2013
@StellaBellaWine

It's a chardonnay in the leaner, more 'mineral-driven' ilk of chardonnay wines, with green apple, slate, flint and lemony tang to the fore. Bouquet and palate match well in this regard, and the wine holds a compact, racy shape as it races through the mouth. It's austere, but grape flavour peers through. Impressive wine. *12.5%*

Reviewed by Mike Bennie

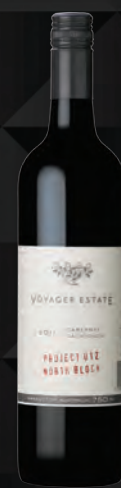


95
\$39.00

TERRE A TERRE
Wrattonbully Crayeres Vineyard
Cabernet Franc 2014
@TerreaTerre

Seriously good wine, this - DNA of great cabernet franc wines with briar, saltbush, dark berries, pepper and clove spice, whiffs of seaspray in the bouquet. The palate is succulent, long, medium weight. There's a sheath of fine, graphite-like tannin. It's a rare beauty. *14.5%*

Reviewed by Mike Bennie



95
\$90.00

VOYAGER ESTATE
Margaret River Project U12
North Block Cabernet Sauvignon 2011
@voyagerestate

Power, finesse, finely wrought wine of impressive dark fruit, bay leaf, smoke and tar character. Shows even and medium weight in palate with ripples of lean, chewy tannin. Deserves a decant. A keeper. *14%*

Reviewed by Mike Bennie

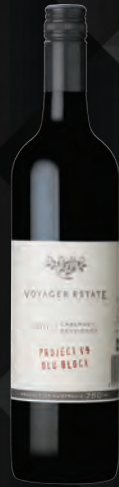


95
\$90.00

VOYAGER ESTATE
Margaret River Project U12
North Block Cabernet Sauvignon 2012
@voyagerestate

The Block wines from Voyager dial down the expressiveness of the standard cabernet (blend) and show a sleeker, leaner, quietly powerful side to their winemaking and grape capabilities. This is wonderfully perfumed, trimmed by taut tannins, yet intense cabernet sauvignon of great structure and length. 14%

Reviewed by Mike Bennie



95
\$90.00

VOYAGER ESTATE
Project V9 Old Block
Cabernet Sauvignon 2011
@voyagerestate

Leaner, elegant wine with blue fruits, gum leaf, bay leaf and more herbal personality, with trimming web of tannins and impossibly long finish. Reserved feel, but impressive for architecture. You'd start drinking in five years to 15. 13.5%

Reviewed by Mike Bennie



95
\$70.00

WIRRA WIRRA
McLaren Vale The Angelus
Cabernet Sauvignon 2014
@wirrawirrawines

Exacting varietal integrity of understated blackcurrant, fragrant violets and cedar define accurate cabernet, focused, structured with confident, surging, superfine tannins. Outstanding line and length complete a restrained vintage of tremendous endurance. 13.5%

Reviewed by Tyson Stelzer



95
\$70.00

XANADU
Margaret River Steven's Road
Margaret River Chardonnay 2014
@xanaduwine

A powerful and intense vintage for Xanadu, packed with white peach and fig, underlined by well-integrated, cashew nut French oak. It's textured and fleshy, with bright malic acidity driving a finish of outstanding presence, culminating in a persistent finale of grand cru magnitude. 13.5%

Reviewed by Tyson Stelzer



95
\$70.00

XANADU
Margaret River Stevens Road
Malbec 2013
@xanaduwine

Just 50 dozen bottles showcase for the first time Glenn Goodall's love for Margaret River malbec. It's one of the best I've tasted, with a beautiful core of cassis, blackcurrant and liquorice, overlaid with an impressively fragrant violet perfume and signature varietal dried sage aromatics, all laced together with fine, confident, well poised tannins. 13.5%

Reviewed by Tyson Stelzer



95
\$66.00

YERINGBERG
Yarra Valley Chardonnay 2013
@Yeringberg

Yeringberg has struck a jubilant accord between the succulence of white peach and the tension of grapefruit, bathed in the cashew nut notes of oak fermentation. Partial malolactic fermentation keeps its acidity dynamic, making for a finish of drive and line. Characterful and crafted, this is a Yeringberg chardonnay of exceptional length and seamless line. 13%

Reviewed by Tyson Stelzer

98

Brokenwood Graveyard Vineyard Hunter Valley Shiraz 2014	\$250.00
McWilliams Mount Pleasant Rosehill Vineyard 1965 Vines Hunter Valley Shiraz 2014	\$50.00
Penfolds South Australia 50 Year Old Tawny Series 3 NV	\$3,550.00
Penfolds South Australia Bin 707 Cabernet Sauvignon 2014	\$500.00
Penfolds South Australia Grange 2012	\$850.00

97

Cullen Margaret River Diana Madeline 2014	\$125.00
Diana Madeline 2013	\$115.00
Grosset Gaia Clare Valley Cabernet Sauvignon Cabernet Franc 2013	\$84.00
McWilliams Mount Pleasant Old Paddock 1921 Vines Hunter Valley Shiraz 2014	\$125.00
McWilliams Mount Pleasant Rosehill Vineyard 1946 Vines Hunter Valley Shiraz 2014	\$125.00
Penfolds Adelaide Hills Reserve Bin A Chardonnay 2015	\$100.00
Penfolds South Australia Bin 707 Cabernet Sauvignon 2013	\$500.00
Penfolds South Australia St Henri Shiraz 2012	\$100.00
Xanadu Reserve Margaret River Cabernet Sauvignon 2013	\$85.00
Yeringberg Yarra Valley 2013	\$98.00

96

20th Anniversary Late Disgorged 1998	\$350.00
Andrew Thomas Kiss Shiraz Hunter Valley Limited Release 2014	\$70.00
Ashton Hills Clare Valley Sparkling Shiraz 2009	\$40.00
Brokenwood Hunter Valley Kat's Block Shiraz 2014	\$75.00
Brokenwood Hunter Valley Mistress Block Shiraz 2014	\$110.00
Cullen Margaret River Vanya 2012	\$350.00
De Bortoli Yarra Valley Section A5 Chardonnay 2014	\$50.00
Houghton Margaret River Gladstones Cabernet Sauvignon 2013	\$85.00
House of Arras Tasmania Blanc de Blancs 2006	\$80.00
House of Arras Tasmania EJ Carr Late Disgorged 2003	\$150.00
House Of Arras Tasmania Grand Vintage Sparkling 2006	\$70.00
Kevin John Margaret River Chardonnay 2013	\$105.00
Kooyong Farrago Single Vineyard Selection Mornington Peninsula Chardonnay 2013	\$60.00
Kooyong Mornington Peninsula Ferrous Single Vineyard Selection Pinot Noir 2013	\$75.00
Kooyong Mornington Peninsula Meres Single Vineyard Selection Pinot Noir 2013	\$75.00
Margaret River Cabernet Sauvignon 2013	\$95.00
McWilliams Mount Pleasant Medium Bodied Dry Red Mountain A Hunter Valley Shiraz 2014	\$75.00
McWilliams Mount Pleasant Old Hill 1880 Vines Hunter Valley Shiraz 2014	\$125.00
Penfolds Bin 169 Coonawarra Cabernet Sauvignon 2013	\$350.00
Penfolds Reserve Bin A Adelaide Hills Chardonnay 2014	\$100.00
Penfolds South Australia Bin 389 Cabernet Shiraz 2013	\$80.00
Penfolds South Australia Bin 389 Cabernet Shiraz 2014	\$90.00
Penfolds South-eastern Australia Yattarna Chardonnay 2013	\$150.00
Penfolds Tasmania Yattarna Chardonnay 2014	\$150.00
Penfolds the Max Schubert Barossa Valley Coonawarra Cabernet Shiraz 2012	\$450.00
S.C. Pannell Koomilya DC Block McLaren Vale Shiraz 2013	\$95.00
The Merle Riesling 2015	\$45.00
Tiers Vineyard Piccadilly Valley Chardonnay 2014	\$79.00



Tyrrell's Wines Hunter Valley Vat 9 Hunter Shiraz 2014	\$85.00
Voyager Estate Cabernet Sauvignon Merlot 2011	\$70.00
Voyager Estate Margaret River Chardonnay 2012	\$45.00
Wallcliffe Sauvignon Blanc Semillon 2013	\$45.00
Wynns Michael Limited Release Coonawarra Shiraz 2012	\$150.00
Wynns V&A Lane Coonawarra Cabernet Shiraz 2013	\$60.00
Xanadu Reserve Margaret River Chardonnay 2014	\$85.00
Xanadu Steven's Road Margaret River Cabernet Sauvignon 2013	\$70.00

95

Alyward by Ocean Eight Mornington Peninsula Pinot Noir 2012	\$80.00
Andrew Thomas Hunter Valley Barrel Selection Elenay Shiraz 2014	\$45.00
Ashton Hills Adelaide Hills Pinot Noir 2014	\$45.00
Ashton Hills Adelaide Hills Riesling 2015	\$30.00
Bindi Macedon Kostas Rind Chardonnay 2014	\$55.00
Brokenwood Hunter Valley Holly's Block Semillon 2015	\$55.00
Brokenwood Hunter Valley Shiraz 2014	\$50.00
Brokenwood Hunter Valley Verona Vineyard Shiraz 2014	\$90.00
Cape Mentelle Chardonnay 2014	\$46.00
Chapel Hill McLaren Vale Cabernet Sauvignon 2014	\$30.00
Chapel Hill McLaren Vale The Vicar Shiraz 2013	\$75.00
Chapel Hill McLaren Vale The Vicar Shiraz 2014	\$75.00
Clonakilla Canberra District Viognier 2015	\$50.00
Coldstream Hills Yarra Valley Deer Farm Pinot Noir 2015	\$50.00
Coldstream Hills Yarra Valley Reserve Chardonnay 2014	\$60.00
Cullen Kevin John Margaret River Chardonnay 2014	\$105.00
Cullen Margaret River Kevin John Chardonnay 2014	\$105.00
Curly Flat Macedon Ranges The Curly Pinot Noir 2013	\$64.00
De Iuliis Steven Vineyard Hunter Valley Shiraz 2014	\$40.00
Deviation Road Adelaide Hills Beltana Blanc de Blancs 2011	\$85.00
Dexter Mornington Peninsula Chardonnay 2014	\$40.00
First Creek Wines Hunter Valley WMR Shiraz 2014	\$80.00
Frankland Estate SmithCullam Riesling 2015	\$55.00
Glaetzer Wines Barossa Valley Amon-Ra Shiraz 2014	\$100.00
Henschke Barossa Valley Marble Angel Vineyard Cabernet Sauvignon 2012	\$100.00
Hentley Farm Barossa Valley The Old Legend Grenache 2015	\$62.00
Hoddles Creek Yarra Valley 1ER Pinot Noir 2014	\$45.00
Hoddles Creek Yarra Valley Syberia Chardonnay 2013	\$60.00
House of Arras Tasmania Grand Vintage 2007	\$70.00
Howard Park Western Australia Abercrombie Cabernet Sauvignon 2013	\$125.00
Jansz Tasmania Single Vineyard Chardonnay 2010	\$65.00
Kay Brothers Cuthbert McLaren Vale Cabernet Sauvignon 2012	\$45.00
Kay Brothers Griffon's McLaren Vale Key Grenache 2015	\$45.00
Kreglinger Tasmania Brut de Blancs Vintage 2003	\$65.00
Late Disgorged Vintage 2007	\$53.00
Leeuwin Estate Art Series Margaret River Chardonnay 2013	\$96.00
Levantine Hill Samantha's Paddock 2013	\$125.00
Majella Coonawarra Cabernet Sauvignon 2013	\$35.00
Mayford Porepunkah Shiraz 2013	\$40.00



WINES OF THE YEAR

McWilliams Mount Pleasant Light Bodied Dry Red Mountain C Hunter Valley Shiraz 2014	\$75.00
Meerea Park Wines Hell Hole Hunter Valley Shiraz 2014	\$60.00
Mount Horrocks Clare Valley Semillon 2015	\$33.00
Mount Langi Grampians Ghiran Langi Shiraz 2013	\$95.00
Oakridge Local Vineyard Series Barkala Ridge Vineyard Yarra Valley Chardonnay 2015	\$38.00
Paringa Estate Mornington Peninsula The Paringa Pinot Noir 2012	\$90.00
Paringa Estate Mornington Peninsula The Paringa Shiraz 2012	\$80.00
Penfolds Barossa Valley Bin 150 Marananga Shiraz 2014	\$90.00
Penfolds Barossa Valley RWT Bin 798 Shiraz 2014	\$200.00
Penfolds Bin 311 Tumberumba Chardonnay 2014	\$40.00
Penfolds South Australia Bin 407 Cabernet Sauvignon 2013	\$80.00
Penfolds South Australia Grange 2011	\$785.00
Pepper Tree Limited Release CF Block Hunter Valley Shiraz 2014	\$50.00
Pooley Tasmania Butcher's Hill Pinot Noir 2014	\$50.00
Porongurup Riesling 2015	\$40.00
Primo Estate McLaren Vale Cabernet Sauvignon Merlot Moda 2014	\$80.00
Primo Estate McLaren Vale Joseph Angel Gully Shiraz 2014	\$90.00
Project Gin Gin Chardonnay 2012	\$55.00
Reserve Yarra Valley Pinot Noir 2013	\$120.00
Reynella Basket Pressed McLaren Vale Shiraz 2013	\$65.00
S.C. Pannell Adelaide Hills Nebbiolo 2013	\$55.00
Saltram Barossa Valley The Journal Shiraz 2010	\$175.00
Scorpo Mornington Peninsula Chardonnay 2012	\$45.00
Seppelt St Peters Grampians Shiraz 2013	\$80.00
Sevenhill Clare Valley St Francis Xavier Single Vineyard Riesling 2016	\$35.00
Shaw + Smith Adelaide Hills Balhannah Vineyard Shiraz 2013	\$85.00
Stefano Lubiana Tasmania Late Disgorged 1996	\$45.00
Stella Bella Margaret River Serie Luminosa Chardonnay 2013	\$65.00
Stonier Mornington Peninsula W-WB Pinot Noir 2013	\$85.00
Syberia Chardonnay 2013	\$60.00
Tapanappa Adelaide Hills Piccadilly Valley Vineyard Chardonnay 2013	\$75.00
Terre a Terre Wrattonbully Crayeres Vineyard Cabernet Franc 2014	\$39.00
Toby Bekkers Syrah Grenache 2014	\$80.00
Ulithorne McLaren Vale Flamma NV	\$65.00
Ulithorne McLaren Vale Paternus 2013	\$85.00
Voyager Estate Margaret River Project U12 North Block Cabernet Sauvignon 2011	\$90.00
Voyager Estate Margaret River Project U12 North Block Cabernet Sauvignon 2012	\$90.00
Voyager Estate Project V9 Old Block Cabernet Sauvignon 2011	\$90.00
Wines by KT Clare Valley Peglidis Watervale Riesling 2015	\$35.00
Wirra Wirra McLaren Vale The Angelus Cabernet Sauvignon 2014	\$70.00
Wolf Blass Grey Label Langhorne Creek Cabernet Shiraz 2013	\$45.00
Wolf Blass Langhorne Creek Black Label Cabernet Sauvignon Shiraz Malbec 2012	\$130.00
Wynns Coonawarra Estate Black Label Coonawarra Shiraz 2013	\$45.00
Xanadu Margaret River Steven's Road Margaret River Chardonnay 2014	\$70.00
Xanadu Margaret River Stevens Road Malbec 2013	\$70.00
Yering Station Yarra Valley Reserve Chardonnay 2013	\$120.00
Yeringberg Yarra Valley Chardonnay 2013	\$66.00
Zinfandel 2013	\$50.00



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WINE ADVENTURING

I'm just back from another one of my winecations. Seven weeks covering seven wine regions and 95 wineries across the US and Canada, taking in Napa, Sonoma, Mendocino,

Willamette, Okanagan, Prince Edward County and Niagara. That's pretty epic, even by my standards. You may think all I did was visit wineries. Not true. I checked out the local bar scene, too!

Visiting so many wine regions in a short period, you get to compare and contrast. It was fascinating moving between mature regions such as Napa to Ontario's Prince Edward County, which is in its infancy.

Apart from a stressed liver, I've come back with observations from a consumer perspective about what's happening there and how it compares to here.

THE CATCH 22 OF SUCCESS

Napa is quite something. Adult Disneyland, just like they say - not my gig but I'm glad I've ticked it off my list. Napa's big challenge is that their wine style is old school. Chardies that need a knife and fork and big overripe alcoholic cabs, and they have a loyal customer base who like it that way. Their wine sells, demand largely outstrips supply and they charge like a wounded bull. Even as wine styles have moved on, there is no impetus to change and if they did, they'd have to be careful

JUST HOW DO AUSTRALIAN CELLAR DOOR EXPERIENCES COMPARE WITH THOSE IN THE US AND CANADA? CATHY GADD SPENT SEVEN WEEKS SAMPLING THE GOODS TO FIND OUT.

not to disenfranchise existing customers. Commercial success can breed complacency and stifle innovation - there were some seriously ordinary and expensive wines poorly made. I suppose it's a matter of taste and, just like how we're brought up on Vegemite (which every other part of the world finds disgusting), maybe their palates are aligned to this or they follow the crowd/critics.

Napa was just a small part of our experience and we found some stunning wines elsewhere, but still, the level of innovation in wine varieties, styles and winemaking were limited.

CUSTOMER EXPERIENCES

They burn serious dough on creating some wonderland wineries, particularly in the US. I was like a country kid in the big smoke for the first time. Bigger seems to imply better, however, dropping cash on massive buildings, fit-outs, swimming pools, art galleries doesn't maketh the wine. Perhaps



WORDS CATHY GADD



“MY FAVOURITE MOMENT WAS WHEN WE DROVE UP TO ONE OF THESE ‘SUPER WINERIES’ AND WATCHED THE GATES GET CLOSED IN FRONT OF US. WE WERE CLEARLY NOT WELCOME.”

it's the Aussie ethos that ostentatious demonstrations of wealth make you a wanker, but clearly not for the Yanks.

Many Napa – and some other – wineries only take bookings. It can be daunting when you arrive in a region of 400 wineries and try to navigate a workable itinerary. Many did accept walk-ins for a basic counter tasting, which is similar to the standard tasting here.

My favourite moment was when we drove up to one of these ‘super wineries’ and watched the gates get closed in front of us. We were clearly not welcome – maybe it was our rental car...

We had some outstanding experiences, particularly in Sonoma and Willamette, where they can do it so very well. A concierge meeting you in the carpark with a glass of wine, personal wine host, tour through the vineyards/facilities, personalised tasting notes and materials, nibbles and a private table. Yes please!

Wine regions like Okanagan, Prince Edward County and Niagara had mixed experiences depending on their size – from upmarket to my favourite at micro-winereries around a barrel with the winemaker.

DO YOU GET WHAT YOU PAY FOR?

You pay to taste in every winery. I have no problem with this, particularly when it's for the premium wines and refunded when you buy. However, there is a limit to what I'm prepared to pay and many didn't offset the costs when buying. There was a fair smattering of wineries in Napa where the cost was US\$75. That's \$120 Oz to try say, five wines. The cheapest in Napa was US\$30 but in other regions that was closer to the average cost. In the emerging regions it was down to US\$10. I suppose it's a way of segmenting your customers – if

you're not prepared to pay for a tasting, then you probably won't buy the wine. It's a lot of loot when you visit 95 wineries and tempted me to drink every last drop. We were, however, spitting, which they weren't used to (and struggled to come up with spittoons). Personally, I think it encourages people to drink to get their value for money.

The wines in the established regions like Napa and Willamette are bloody expensive. With local demand and a well-established global market, why not? Some of the other regions were more similar to Oz. And don't get me started on regressing to corks and cork taint. I was surprised to find cellar door staff serving us clearly corked wine on more than a few occasions.

HOW DID IT COMPARE?

It's such an exciting time in the Australian wine industry, with a significant level of innovation and experimentation. This covers new wine varieties, growing philosophies – organic/biodynamic – styles – lighter bodied – and winemaking techniques – skin contact, natural or lo-fi. We just didn't see that in the US or Canada. The point is, innovation is healthy and positive and we are on a roll.

Overall, wine is more expensive in the US and Canada than here – we have a good price range and fair price points. I support wineries charging tasting fees provided they don't get too greedy and offset the costs against purchases.

We could definitely up our game on customer experience options beyond the standard cellar door tasting. Having tiered options (at a price) for immersive wine experiences of blending, masterclasses or experiences paired with winery visits or food creates great memories and loyalty. It's positive to see a number of wineries starting to do this.

As a consumer, the trip made me appreciate Australia and our wine culture even more. I love the accessibility and casual friendliness accessing wines and wineries. While the bar for customer experience could be raised, the main message is, there is a lot we are doing well, so keep up the good work.

Your happy consumer. ♦

Cathy Gadd runs Liquidity wine club and lives in the Hunter Valley.

Let your wine shine.



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**MAKING THE LAWS OF
MARKETING WORK FOR
YOU IS THE BEST WAY TO
GROW YOUR BRAND.**

WORDS PROF. LARRY LOCKSHIN

**YOU
CAN'T
BREAK
THE LAW,
EVEN IN
MARKETING**

Grape growers and winemakers operate under the known laws of science and use this knowledge to improve their grape growing and winemaking, but marketing is different. Or is it?

Companies waste valuable resources, time and money trying to achieve goals that 'break' the marketing laws. It just doesn't work. Even though some of these findings may seem counterintuitive, your time is better spent trying to creatively use this knowledge to better build your brand and communicate with your market.

Over the past 20 years, I have reported and discussed my research and that of the Ehrenberg Bass Institute for Marketing Science, which focuses specifically on understanding generalisable patterns in marketing. Our research, which started back in the 1950s with Andrew Ehrenberg and then Frank Bass in the 1960s, has shown there are unchangeable patterns in buyer behaviour. We call them laws.

Our institute is supported by more than 60 of the top marketing companies in the world, including Mars, P&G, Coca-Cola, Pepsi, Facebook, Airbnb, Bulla, Carlton United Brewers, Lion Drinks, and Treasury Wine Estates. Their sponsorship provides funding for the largest research group into marketing in the world. We don't work for any of these companies, but pool their funds to identify, measure, and test laws of marketing across the globe.

Our initial seminar to these sponsors on the laws of (brand) growth starts by asking some true/false questions. Some of these are reproduced over the next page. Take a couple minutes to read through and answer true or false for yourself.

The research in wine is less developed due mainly to the lack of multi-year household panel (repurchase) data that includes wine. However, with the three to four datasets we have from different countries, we have found exactly the same patterns in wine buying as in other product categories.

Rather than making this article seem like an advertisement for our institute, let me say a few words about a few of the most counterintuitive laws of marketing.

The vast majority of any brand's customers buy a number of different brands in the category. Overall, the customers of any single brand buy in total more other brands than the focal brand in a category. The more brands there are and the more frequent the repurchase cycle, the greater the range of brands bought by a typical customer. Heavy buyers – those who purchase the brand and the category more often – also buy the widest range of brands from the category, so loyalty in the sense of buying mainly one brand is very rare. These laws set limits to any programs designed to increase loyalty.

The heaviest 20 percent of the buyers of a brand (also erroneously called 'brand loyalists') account for between 55 and 60 percent (not 80 percent) of that brand's sales. That is important, but it also shows that 40 to 45 percent of sales come from light – irregular or even once a year – buyers. It is nearly impossible to get heavy buyers to buy more; it is much easier to get light, infrequent or even non-buyers (who drink wine) to increase their purchasing.

The other pattern we find across dozens of categories and countries is that about half of a brand's heavy buyers in one year are not heavy buyers the following year. Other lighter buyers take their spot, while half of the heavy buyers become light infrequent buyers, so the ratio stays the same. Wineries that use mailing lists and loyalty programs are probably aware of this

movement by heavy buyers, which is called 'churn'. The antidote to churn is to continually recruit new customers into your club or mailing list to replace those dropping out or reducing their buying.

There are several ancillary laws around heavy buyers. Those heavy buyers in the 20:60 Pareto share are not more prone to word of mouth than lighter buyers. And heavy buyers don't become light or non-buyers due to dissatisfaction. Defection is mainly due to changes in personal circumstances (moving away, having children, retiring etc.) or often just a need for a change of wines (variety seeking). Along with this, we know that gaining new customers is easier and often cheaper than trying to change the number of defections (heavy buyers buying little or no wines). Defection rates are related to the size of the brand (number of customers) and unless there is a massive defection signalling a major issue, these rates are impossible to reduce below a certain amount.

The main implication is, just like the laws of chemistry and physics, these laws of marketing are based on nature (human behaviour) and cannot be changed or overcome. It is best to understand them and use human ingenuity and creativity to make the laws work for you, not against you. Be careful and sceptical with any marketing consultant, marketing software vendor, or other 'expert' claiming to be able to supersede the laws of marketing. Have a great and 'lawful' year! ♦

Further reading: I have written about many of the laws of marketing in previous articles and many of them are in my book, *This Little Pinot Went to Market*.

Professor Larry Lockshin is from the Ehrenberg Bass Institute for Marketing Science, University of South Australia.

TRUE OR FALSE? TAKE OUR TEST TO SEE YOUR BELIEFS ABOUT MARKETING LAWS.

- Marketing needs to work at overcoming non-buyers' rejection of our brand.
- Differentiating our brand is vital.
- The Pareto Law means the marketing department should focus on our heavy 20 percent of customers.
- In-store activity gives a higher return than advertising.
- The longer we can keep people in-store the more they spend.
- A key marketing goal is to increase buyer loyalty (more 100 percent loyals).
- Small brands are small mainly because they have fewer buyers, not less loyal buyers.
- It is important to appeal to a particular market segment (positioning is vital).
- Loyalty varies between rival brands depending on their strategy, history, positioning and image.
- Apple and Harley Davidson are examples of brands that enjoy extraordinary loyalty.
- Our most loyal buyers buy us more often, recommend us more often.
- It is cheaper to retain (stop a customer leaving) than it is to win a new customer.
- Growth initiatives should target the brand's and the category's heaviest buyers.
- A brand's 'lovers' are near exclusively loyal.
- Loyalty requires careful nurturing; dissatisfaction is the major cause of customer defection.
- High engagement marketing activities should be prioritised over mass media for brand conversion (switching buyers to your brand).
- Advertising should provide a reason(s) to buy.
- Price promotions help bring in new buyers to the brand.

If you want to test your answers, take the test online:
www.marketingscience.info/wine/true-false-test

NOTE: There isn't enough space in this article to discuss the answers and the reasons for them; those interested in understanding the basic laws of marketing might consider the book: *How Brands Grow* by Byron Sharp, Oxford University Press 2010. There is also *How Brands Grow Part 2* that extends these laws and shows how they work in developing markets like China, Russia, Brazil and Indonesia. The new book has a chapter on luxury products as well, which shows these categories also 'obey' the laws of marketing.

BRAUD SKILLS

Braud Australia is proud of its customer training record. The company began distributing the New Holland-Braud grape harvester from Adelaide in 1999. However, back then the dealers had little experience in the Braud. Kubpower/Braud Australia managing director Angelo DiCesare explains they gave basic training to the operator and mechanic on site, and in most cases, while the machine was picking grapes. but as most overseas-built machines land in Australia in late December or January (just before harvest) the window to train the new operators/mechanics was very short." As the number of harvesters grew, mechanics were spending more time travelling all over South Australia. The solution? Formal



training for operators and mechanics well before vintage in premises in Adelaide. The courses are theoretical and practical – operators drive around a makeshift vineyard, and technicians pull aspects of the machine apart and reassemble it. "Initially, New Holland sent its very experienced French factory personnel to support us in conducting the training, and this continues, especially with new models,"

Angelo says. "We have had a simulator for some years." The courses are well represented each year by customers' operators and technicians and importantly, also, by the selected New Holland dealers' technicians in the various Australian wine regions. The result? Great operator/technical familiarity and confidence when they receive their \$500,000 Braud grape harvester." ♦

Memstar pioneers new ultra-filtration service

Ultra-filtration is a new field that has been developed for winemakers by South Australian company, Memstar. The Barossa-based leader in membrane filtration technology has completed an extensive R&D program, resulting in membranes designed to remove phenolic compounds and to improve both colour and mouthfeel in wine. The new technology removes bitter tannins to ensure that white wine has substantially improved clarity and freshness, and that red wine has the softness and desired expression of fruit. The process also is quick and cost effective. Matthew Hooper, managing director of Memstar and parent-company VA Filtration, says: "Everything we work on is designed to improve the consumers' experience of any given wine. The intention is to improve the chances of the winemaker being able to deliver the result that he or she originally intended. Winemaking is subject to the uncertainties of nature, and Memstar is committed to solutions that support the winemaker and deliver a better wine experience for the consumer." Memstar (08) 8562 1139. ♦

The driving forces behind rising contract prices

Retail contract prices generally rise when the market views increased risks with wholesale electricity prices. As the national electricity market is interconnected, the entire market can be affected by rising prices in individual states. However, wholesale prices tend to reduce soon after high price periods. This correction is not always reflected where fixed-rate contracts are concerned. So why have wholesale prices been increasing in recent months? **Non-firm generation such as wind and solar** – especially in SA. These sources offer advantages (eg, zero emissions, no fuel or resource cost) but their supply is intermittent. This causes challenges where customers require continuous supply. **Gas-fired generation** – Australia has cheap base-load coal generation but gas-fired generation is playing a bigger role. With rising gas prices, the flow-on effect is significant as they aim to recover their increasing input costs through higher electricity prices. **Coal is the cheap form of base-load power in Australia – but for how much longer?** The questionable future of coal-fired generation plus the forthcoming closure of Hazelwood in Victoria (from 1 April 2017) has added a bullish sentiment to the retail contract market. So why lock your business into a high-priced fixed-rate contract when you can purchase directly from the wholesale market and access the low prices at opportune times? 1300 08 06 08, pgenergy.com.au/save. ♦



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• IN THE MAKING •

While single varietal, site and vintage wines continue to lead the charge in Australian

winemaking, Slain Giant Wines is focusing its efforts on making multi-regional, multi-varietal and both vintage and multi-vintage wines from the premier vineyards of South Australia's oldest and most defined agrarian landscape, the Mount Lofty Ranges.

The striking labels feature beautiful illustrations – of a slain giant, of course.

For winemaker Tyson Bitter, Slain Giant started with the end in mind, concentrating on individual wine styles with no preconceived philosophies to achieve them.

“My early winemaking was influenced by a traditional Barossa upbringing where a focus on single varietal wines was the way to go,” Tyson says. “Apparently only grenache and mataro could be blended with shiraz.”

Over time Tyson developed a desire to make practical wine styles to go with the foods he enjoyed. “I put to paper the flavours, body and texture I wanted for each style and gave myself no firm rules to get there.”

Fortunately many of the state's wine regions are rooted into the ancient terrain of the Mount Lofty Ranges most notably the Barossa, Eden and Clare Valley's, as well as the Adelaide Hills, McLaren Vale and Langhorne Creek.

Tyson's first releases, launched as a collection of three wines, are:

1. **Slain Giant Medium Bodied Dry White** - RRP \$20: Barossa Valley Semillon, Adelaide Hills Sauvignon Blanc, Eden Valley Chardonnay (2016);
2. **Slain Giant Medium Bodied Dry Red** - RRP \$28: Barossa Valley and McLaren Vale Shiraz, Adelaide Hills Barbera, Barossa Valley Malbec (2015 and 2016); and
3. **Slain Giant Full Bodied Dry Red** - RRP \$28: Clare Valley and Langhorne Creek Cabernet



Sauvignon, Langhorne Creek Petit Verdot, Barossa Valley Tannat (2015 and 2016).

“When you have access to multiple sites and multiple varieties across South Australia's best growing regions, you have a larger palette from which to blend a wine,” Tyson says.

“I've also chosen, in some cases, to use multi-vintages, the younger portion of these blends containing more intense and vibrant aromatic, pigmented and phenolic compounds than that of mature wine.”

Tyson has nearly two decades of experience in the wine industry, from vineyards to the cellar, to assistant winemaker and cellar manager. It is now after finishing a wine science degree at Charles Sturt University that Tyson has decided to pursue what inspired him most about winemaking.

Slain Giant Wines takes its name from the story of the Kurna people who named

South Australia's vast mountain range Yurrebilla after a giant ancestral being that travelled from the east to attack its tribes throughout the plains. Yurrebilla was slain, with his fallen body forming the now ancient valleys, vales, hills and flats of today's premier South Australian wine growing regions and the Mount Lofty Ranges, with soils varying between 780 million and 540 million years in age.

Tyson looks towards these territories and the varieties that thrive there to craft his style-inspired wines.

“I believe that by adopting a practical rather than conventional approach to winemaking, more opportunities for producing exciting and enjoyable wines can be created.” ♦

Check out the Slain Giant video on YouTube: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=f1bK6ySMi8o>



THERE'S SOMETHING CURIOUS ABOUT ARCHIE

WITH SO MANY AUSTRALIAN WINERIES ALSO PRODUCING GIN AND WHISKY NOW, HOW ARCHIE ROSE DISTILLING CO. WENT ABOUT ITS LATEST PRODUCT RELEASES MAY INTEREST YOU.

Archie Rose Distilling Co. is the first independent distillery of craft spirits in the City of Sydney in more than 160 years. Located in a previously vacant warehouse less than five kilometres from the city centre and currently distilling gin, vodka, rye whiskey and single malt whisky.

The ambition of any spirit brand is to offer something identifiably unique to the consumer while maintaining the integrity and quality of their product. Archie Rose, with its impressive distillery and cocktail bar, make it unique in its own right but the Tailored Spirits range takes the consumer experience to new heights.

Creative agency Squad Ink worked with the team at Archie Rose to create a world-first digital platform and product range where curious spirit lovers can customise their own single bottle of vodka or gin or cask of whisky from their phone or tablet. This innovative offering bridges the gap between the distiller and its consumers by empowering them with more choice and greater accessibility than ever seen before.

The digital print solutions offered by Multi-Color Australia bridged the dynamic and variable aspects of the consumer engagement with premium labels consistent with the Archie Rose brand cues.

Currently, the spirits available to be tailored are gin, vodka and whisky. After choosing three to five of Archie Rose's unique botanicals for your Signature Dry Gin or Original Vodka, you can customise the intensity of each flavour and personalise the bottle with your name. If you're gifting these, you can add your lucky mate's name to the label.

Archie Rose's Tailored Whisky, on the other hand, is not for the faint-hearted. You can customise everything from the type of wood used to the level of smoke influence and ABV. You'll receive a 200ml sample annually to check how your creation is maturing, or you can visit on appointment.

There's even an option for you and four friends to assist in the actual making of your whisky. Once your chosen spirit is matured and bottled, you'll receive a handmade crate with full brewing and distillation notes. Archie Rose offers a 20L, 50L and 100L cask.

The result - an entirely bespoke product, accessible to anyone, anytime, anywhere. Tailor your own spirit at archierose.com.au/tailored-spirits ♦



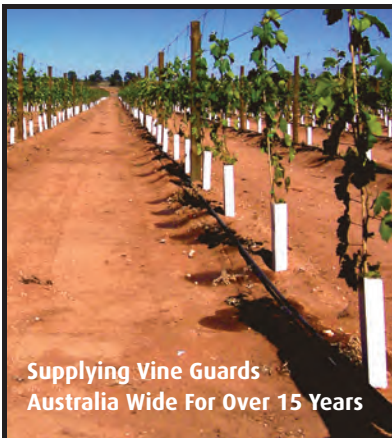
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THE AUSTRALIAN WINE YEAST STORY

Wine is a result of yeast's natural ability to undergo the biochemical process of fermentation of grape juice by yeasts. Without yeast, there is no wine. In addition to wine yeasts being able to convert sugar to alcohol, yeast also has unique attributes that can shape the flavour profile of the finished wine.

As a consequence, technologies were developed to manufacture Active dried yeast (ADY) to make the key ingredient in winemaking practicable and accessible.

Mauri Yeast Australia Pty Ltd was one of the first companies in the world to achieve this, developing the Maurivin wine yeast brand. As depicted in the iconic Australian kangaroo logo, Maurivin is proudly the only Australian-made wine yeast manufacturer located in Toowoomba, Queensland.

The Australian wine yeast story begins in the early 1990s, when researchers at the Australian Wine Research Institute (AWRI) partnered with the Mauri factory team in Toowoomba and the technical team in Sydney. In unison, the teams led the technological development project to

WORDS TINA TRAN

successfully produce AWRI 796 as an ADY. AWRI 796 was at the time widely used throughout industry and is one of the pioneering wine yeast strains of the Australian wine industry. It was a reliable, robust fermenter and allowed for the qualities of the fruit to shine through.

The partnership continues to this day, now with seven yeast strains commercially produced that scientists at the AWRI have isolated or developed, including the Maurivin Class range that offers robust, reliable fermentations. In the case of AWRI 796, it has the advantage of reduced ethanol yield, which is of particular importance in the current challenge of high-alcohol wines.

More recently, the novel and innovative Next Generation range has been developed, which includes the non-GMO yeasts Maurivin Platinum and Maurivin Distinction, which produce no detectable hydrogen sulphide (developed by Dr Antonio Garcia Cordente), as well as the AWRI hybrid yeast range (developed by Dr

Jenny Bellon) including AWRI 1503 and AWRI fusion yeast strains – hybrids that add mouthfeel and aroma complexity to wine.

To complete the Australian story, Mauri Yeast Australia partnered with family-owned Redox in the early 2000s to become their distributor. In addition, Mauri Yeast Australia's sister company, AB Enzymes, has now joined with Redox to offer wine enzymes to the Australian wine industry. This new union will provide local service, technical support and R&D to the Australian wine industry. ♦

Visit maurivin.com or email tina.tran@abmauri.com.au

Tina Tran was a PhD student/research scientist at the AWRI and is now technical sales manager for Mauri Yeast Australia (AB Mauri). Tina and the Mauri Yeast Australia team continue to collaborate with AWRI to provide innovation and technical support to industry in partnership with Redox.

“WINE IS ONE OF THE MOST CIVILISED THINGS IN THE WORLD AND ONE OF THE MOST NATURAL THINGS OF THE WORLD.”

– ERNEST HEMINGWAY

Raise a glass to
the future

Redox is pleased to announce that it now has enzymes available to the Australian wine industry.

AB Enzymes is part of the Associated British Foods group and sister business to AB Mauri who currently offer the maurivin™ wine yeast range. AB Enzymes superior range will be available for the 2017 vintage, with technical support provided by AB Mauri.

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HERE WE GO AGAIN



ON YOUR MARKS, AUSTRALIA, ANOTHER VINTAGE IS BEARING DOWN ON US. AND IF IT'S ANYTHING LIKE THE PAST COUPLE OF HARVESTS, IT WILL BE FAST AND FURIOUS WITH EVERYTHING RIPENING AT ONCE, STRETCHING TANK AND PRODUCTION CAPACITY.

Many wine suppliers are reporting positive signs in terms of demand for big-ticket items like presses and tanks. One inland tank manufacturer told *WBM* that they had received so many orders for large stainless steel tanks this year, they have stopped taking orders to clear the backlog. Some of that is related to demand in China, as well as making room for a bottleneck of activity.

Having said that, things are a bit behind in vineyards in South Australia and Victoria after a cold, wet spring.

Tank capacity was a big issue during that mad vintage. Writing about the 2016 harvest in the AWRI's Annual Report, managing director Dan Johnson said: "It was another rapid and compressed vintage across many wine regions... Above-average yields due to higher bunch numbers and the compressed vintage again placed stress on harvest and processing infrastructure. There was a delay in harvesting some blocks which resulted in high baume fruit and higher alcohol wines.

"Ferment speeds tended to be fast, either to turn tanks over quickly to be prepared for the next batch of fruit or because of insufficient refrigeration capacity to cool both grapes and fermenters. Some fermentation problems were also seen, with winemakers having little time or spare tank space to deal with stuck or sluggish ferments promptly."

Robert Haywood, chief winemaker and chief operating officer at Clover Hill and Taltarni at Moonambel in Victoria, says it's been the perfect build-up for a great year, and the recent run of compressed vintages hadn't affected the business too much. "Our infrastructure at the winery is set up so that a majority of tanks are ferment-capable for both red and white. It just means longer days with more fruit loading in a shorter period."

In terms of managing a compressed vintage, Robert says: "You can try to manage watering in the vineyard to prolong ripening, but if water's in short supply, it's a tough one. A majority of our fruit is estate grown so if there is space in the winery then the fruit just keeps coming. Altering your peak fermentation times on skins might be required, but I can't see it this year."

Meanwhile, Australian winemakers are scrutinising the way wine is transported like never before. "The quality of both vehicular and personnel are critical," says Michael Matthews, Victoria state manager of Parton Wine Distribution. "The wine industry works extremely hard to build their brand equity and the final link in the chain is the physical distribution. If the quality of that step is not consistent with the brand values of the stock delivered, then that value of all that work is at best eroded or at worst destroyed. The driver and the vehicle become de facto representatives of the brand."

Michael says his customers are

demanding more time-critical deliveries – not just for restaurants where 'not during service' has always been standard – but for venues with trading hours outside the norm. "Trying to meet every time slot is a significant challenge both from a logistics and cost perspective. There has been a move to wanting better quality logistics support rather than the cheapest option. A valid desire to ensure that brand building extends throughout the entire process for the vineyard to the final point of delivery."

Michael says warehouse and transport management systems have to be more capable of providing real-time information that extends to proof of delivery and vehicle ETAs (tracking). "Warehouse personnel need to have an understanding of what they are picking and ensuring it is picked, packed and presented in the best way possible. Having pickers to whom a box is just a box is a thing of the past."

Fingers crossed for a nice, steady vintage for all concerned and we'll watch the #V17 hashtag online with interest. ♦



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WORDS ERIC WILKES



BEYOND CORK

NEW TECHNOLOGIES ARE TAKING THE CHOICE IN WINE CLOSURES INTO NEW PLACES.

The recent history of wine closures in Australia is well known. After years of dealing with taint and oxidation issues related to corks, a major shift towards screwcaps occurred in the late 1990s and early 2000s, led by the Clare Valley riesling producers and backed up by the AWRI closure trial. The Australian wine market is now dominated by screw-cap-sealed wines, although some concerns remain about the development of reductive characters under low oxygen ingress closures.

Since the time of the shift to screwcaps, developments in closure technology have continued, bringing the closure discussion a long way past a simple cork vs screwcap debate. Researchers also now have a much better understanding of how wine develops in bottle, with recent work showing that wine composition and production history have a large influence on in-bottle development, particularly in relation to reductive characters. This is backed up by data from a review of wines rejected for reductive characters over the last 10 years of the London-based International Wine Challenge, which found that the occurrence of this fault was identical in screw-cap and cork-closed wines.

New technologies and new knowledge of wine development have combined to bring a wide range of new closures to the market. One major area of focus is in designing closures that allow a defined amount of

oxygen to reach the wine in the bottle, to more closely emulate the maturation process under cork without cork's natural variability. This segment of the market includes new-generation synthetic closures and a range of different liners for screwcaps, where the oxygen transmission rate of the closure can be tailored to a specific wine style or shelf life.

Glass stoppers are another closure type generating significant interest. Technically, they have similar performance characteristics to the tailored synthetic closures and screwcap liners, but they offer a new dimension in terms of their appearance and appeal to the consumer. Currently in these closures, a plastic gasket between the stopper and the bottle acts as the seal and determines the amount of oxygen that can enter the bottle. There are also several groups working on 'glass-on-glass' seals, but these have yet to see significant commercial application and it is not yet clear how much, if any, oxygen they will allow into the wine.

One of the more interesting recent appearances in closures has been the development of a liner for screwcaps to actively scavenge the chemical compounds responsible for reductive odours in wine, removing them as the wine matures. This technology, which is about to be trialled in industry, has the potential to give winemakers more latitude in how they approach making wine.

“ONE MAJOR AREA OF FOCUS IS IN DESIGNING CLOSURES THAT ALLOW A DEFINED AMOUNT OF OXYGEN TO REACH THE WINE IN THE BOTTLE, TO MORE CLOSELY EMULATE THE MATURATION PROCESS UNDER CORK WITHOUT CORK'S NATURAL VARIABILITY.”

Cork has also been evolving to meet the needs of the market. Closures made from ground cork granules held together with a binding agent have been available for many years. While they have always offered advantages in consistency over traditional cork, in more recent times processes have been introduced by some producers to remove possible taint compounds and ensure consistency in performance.

Some traditional cork suppliers have also introduced processes to test every single cork for the main compound responsible for cork taint (TCA). While these corks are sold at a premium, many would argue that it is worth it to remove all possibility of cork taint.

Closure technology is evolving quickly, giving winemakers unprecedented choices in terms of both aesthetics and technical performance. This opens up exciting opportunities to incorporate closures into new forms of packaging, designed to appeal to specific consumer segments or differentiate products in the market while maintaining the wine in optimum condition. ♦

VS SCREWCAP



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TASMANIAN SPARKLING WINES ARE UP THERE WITH THE BEST
IN THE WORLD, AS DAN TRAUCKI FOUND AT THE
EFFERVESCENCE SPARKLING WINE FESTIVAL.

WORDS DAN TRAUCKI



With its native forests, wild flowing rivers, rolling green hills and unpolluted beauty, Tasmania is considered 'clean and green'. I saw this firsthand the first weekend in November at the third annual Effervescence Sparkling Wine Festival held in Launceston. As the name implies, this festival is all about celebrating Tasmania's world-class sparkling wines.

For me, the event kicked off on the Thursday night at Me Wah restaurant with a six-course dinner showcasing local produce matched with five Champagnes - including the stunning Pol Roger Sir Winston Churchill 2002 - along with five Tasmanian sparkling wines: Apogee Deluxe Vintage Brut 2013, Stefano Lubiana Grand Vintage 2007, Jansz Single Vineyard Chardonnay 2010, Kreglinger Brut Rosé 2006 and the House of Arras EJ Carr Late Disgorged 2003. Each was an ambassador for the sensational quality of sparkling wines being produced in Tasmania.

On the Friday morning there was a Tamar regional tasting conducted at the beautiful Moores Hill winery, where the winemakers from five other wineries presented their wines. (This was another indication of how closely the Tasmanian wine industry work together, that they would allow other wineries to showcase wines at their winery.)

The wineries present were: Moores Hill with a blanc de blanc N/V sparkling that was damn fine and a riesling that had crunchy, green-apple flavours on the palate. Their 2015 chardonnay had citrus aromas with hints of toasty butteryness and nuts. On the palate it was ever-so-moreish with a long, lingering finish.

Next came the guys from Grey Sands, who showed us four wines, culminating in their 2008 merlot (current release) which, at eight years old, is still quite tight and reserved despite the fact that they use Diam corks to aid in the softer development of the wine. This is a pretty big merlot that demands to be accompanied by food to show at its best (which is bloody good).





They also showed their 2013 The Mattock (current release), a merlot malbec cabernet franc blend – a big-structured wine in which the cabernet franc softens the merlot. The blend works a treat and at five years old, is just starting to soften off and open up.

Then, Dalrymple Wines showed their Cave Block 2013 Chardonnay, which is made to represent the site and viticulture as much as possible. Thus while there was oak fermentation, there was no lees stirring (battonage) – they gently roll the barrels instead. These guys make five different pinot noirs, of which they showed the Cottage Block 2013 and Bicheno 2013 Single Site, which comes from one of only two vineyards on dark clay soil around Bicheno on the east coast. The aromas from this wine were more reminiscent of an elegant nebbiolo, with smoky, tarry characters rather than normal pinot red-fruit aromas.

Marion's Vineyard has one of the earliest planted vineyards in the area. They grow 17 grape varieties, including the increasingly rare müller-thurgau and the Greek red, mavrodaphne, which is grown in Australia by only one other winery. Marion Vineyards showed two pinot noirs: their traditional 2013 from the oldest commercial vineyard in the region and their new label, Beautiful Isle 2015, which is a bright, contemporary, classy wine.

by the 2015 pinot noir, which was rather tight, grippy and meaty, with greater structure and firmer tannins to go with the long, lingering flavours.

Then came Eddystone Point showing their 2015 pinot noir. Incidentally, the 2014 vintage of this has a chest full of medals (literally) and the 2015 has already won two trophies so far this year. It is drinking beautifully now thanks to great fruit selection, of which 20 percent was whole-bunch fermented and the wine has only seen 20 percent new oak. It is so approachable now and yet will reward some further cellaring. Great stuff.

That night at the Josef Chromy Winery cellar door/restaurant, the Effervescence Tasmania Degustation Dinner was held. Tetsuya Wakuda presented a dinner accompanied by sensational wines. A winemaker was at each table and presented some of his own wines. The table I was on was hosted by Dr Andrew Pirie AM, who treated us to his Apogee Sparkling Brut 2012, Rosé 2012 and Apogee Alto Pinot Gris 2016 (the best pinot gris I have tasted this year), the Pipers Brook 1986 Riesling and Pipers Brook The Lyre Single Site 2000 Pinot Noir from the cellar. Both of the older vintages were delectable.

On Saturday morning there were two masterclasses held in the barrel room of

“WHILE AUSTRALIA IS CURRENTLY THE FASTEST GROWING MARKET IN THE WORLD FOR CHAMPAGNE, SALES OF AUSTRALIAN SPARKLING WINES ARE ON THE DECLINE. HOW CAN THIS BE HAPPENING AT A TIME WHEN TASMANIAN SPARKLING WINE IS SETTING NEW BENCHMARKS FOR EXCELLENCE?”

However, their most interesting wine was the Marion 2014 Syrah, which is a svelte wine made from vines planted in the 1980s. This was a very classy, cool-climate shiraz with hints of spice and white pepper.

The next presenter was Bay of Fires Wines, starting with the 2015 riesling made mainly from Coal River fruit. This was a very elegant, complex riesling due to the lees being worked in tank and a hint of residual sugar, just enough to help soften off the acid backbone. This was followed

the Josef Chromy Winery, the first of which was all about sparkling wine. Sixteen awesome sparkling wines were tasted, including two Champagnes for reference, and discussed by a salubrious panel led by Tyson Stelzer and including Louisa Rose, Dr Andrew Pirie AM and Ed Carr – basically an honour roll of the ‘who’s who’ of sparkling winemakers.

Two main points came out of this class. Firstly, the capacity of Tasmanian sparkling wine to age, with the oldest wine there being



the Stefano Lubiana Late Disgorged (the French call it RD) 1996, with nine of the 16 wines having being made last decade or earlier. And secondly, the sheer quality of the rosé sparkling wines, which most of the winemakers consider to be the most age-worthy of their sparklers.

The second masterclass, Bruny Island Cheeses and Sparkling Wine, involved tasting four of their cheeses with six sparkling wines, including two rosé, to find the best match. The cheeses started with a surface-ripened, washed-in-whey stout, white mould, soft-cooked curd cheese – similar to, but completely different from brie. Next, there was a cheese made from spring milk, washed in metric stout, then a hard, natural-rind, raw-milk cheese, and finally a semi-hard, natural-rind cheese called George (believe it or not). It was interesting to hear that one should not match great cheese with big red wines as the salt and fat in the cheese will clash with the tannins and acids in the wine and diminish the experience. Another interesting fact is that true artisan cheesemaking allows for the seasonal variation in the cheese, so that it tastes a bit different at different times of the year – just as it works with boutique wines versus mass-produced commercial wines. These cheeses were very well matched by each of the sparkling wines and while some matches stood out more than others, there wasn't sufficient difference to warrant individual comment. (By the way, if you are into cheeses, these can be sourced on www.brunyislandcheese.com.au)

After the masterclasses, there was a four-course lunch by Tetsuya of all local produce matched with five Josef Chromy

wines, culminating in the über-decadent Josef Chromy Botrytis Riesling. At the same time, the Effervescence Tasmania Grand Fair on the lawns of the Josef Chromy Winery saw 13 wineries that make sparkling showcase these wines.

A large number of people worked very hard to make the whole event a success. One person who deserves a special mention is 85-year-old Josef Chromy, the generous man whose winery was the centre of most of the activity. Josef arrived in Tasmania from Czechoslovakia in 1950 without any money, having survived both the Nazi and the Soviet occupations of his native land. Through hard work, he built up a very successful business in Blue Ribbon Meat Products, which was publicly floated late last century. More recently, Josef started to invest in the Tasmanian wine industry. He became involved with several different wineries before Josef Chromy Wines was launched in late 2007. The brand has since amassed 23 trophies and 340 medals. There are no indications that he will be slowing down any time soon.

It has to be said that now is the time for Tasmanian wines, proven by the sheer quality of the wines that are being produced, from sauvignon blanc, chardonnay, pinot noir and syrah (cool-climate shiraz) to especially the sparkling wines. They are comparable in quality to Champagne, although different in style as they are an expression of Tasmanian 'place' (terroir), and at a significantly lower cost to the consumer. Their achievements are all the more impressive for the fact that the Tasmanian wine industry, after a false start in the 1800s, did not really kick off again until 1956. What a way to celebrate

SHOWING OFF

Did you know that in 2015, a sparkling wine was selected as the Best Wine of the Show at the National Wine Show of Australia? It was the Arras Blanc de Blanc 2006, which not only won the Top Sparkling trophy but also the Len Evans Memorial Trophy for Champion Wine of the Show. While the Arras Grand Vintage 2007 won The KPMG Best Wine of the Show trophy in this year's Sydney Royal Wine Show. In the Royal Brisbane Wine Show, the Arras Grand Vintage 2007 won trophy for the Best Sparkling and also *The Courier Mail* Grand Champion Wine Best Wine of the Show trophy. So, for the very first time in Australian wine history, in three of the seven top wine shows, a Tasmanian sparkling wine was declared as the best wine of the show, beating the traditional reds or chardonnay as the top wine. That is an awesome achievement.

their 60th anniversary! Yet, while Australia is currently the fastest growing market in the world for Champagne, sales of Australian sparkling wines are on the decline. How can this be happening at a time when Tasmanian sparkling wine is setting new benchmarks for excellence, and is producing world-class sparkling wines? It is incomprehensible.

Tasmanian wines aren't always easy to find on the big island to the north (Australian mainland) and there is a very good reason for that. Tasmania is a small boutique producer, kind of like the little winery that makes gorgeous, individualistic wines in your local region, rather than the big guys churning out mega-litres. To put it into perspective, Tasmania produces only 0.3 percent of Australia's wine at just over 10,000 tonnes from 160 licenced producers. There are a number of individual wineries on the big island that each on their own process more tonnage than Tasmania does as a whole.

It was also noted that Tasmania does not have any wines at under the \$15 per bottle price point as they only produce premium wines. This is mainly because the average cost per tonne of grapes in their cool climate is around \$2575 as opposed to \$445 on the big island. Having a cool climate, just over 40 percent of Tasmanian wine is made from pinot noir as opposed to a mere two percent on the mainland.

This was an amazing trip. All the wines were excellent, with some of the sparkling wines being mind-bendingly good, and the local produce is world-class. The Effervescence Sparkling Wine Festival is brilliant, the people are warm and friendly and the place so beautiful, that Tasmania really deserves another visit - very soon! ♦

*Dan Traucki is a wine journalist and a wine industry consultant specialising in assisting with exports to Asian markets.
Email: dan@wineassist.com.au*





Photo courtesy of Agriculture Victoria (Rutherglen).

HIDDEN SPREAD

AN ILLEGAL HARVESTER MOVEMENT HIGHLIGHTS PHYLLOXERA RISKS.

WORDS ANTHONY MADIGAN

Just before last vintage, a grape harvester was being moved from Victoria to South Australia, when it was stopped and inspected on the SA border.

The inspection revealed the machinery – which was coming from a phylloxera-infested zone – had not been appropriately cleaned and sterilised. And the South Australian vineyard owner responsible for the harvester did not have the appropriate documentation.

The owner of the machinery was instructed to return to the original location and have the equipment heat treated.

“This illegal movement of agricultural machinery can attract a \$20,000 fine, but that’s not the biggest issue here,” Vinehealth Australia CEO Inca Pearce says. “The machinery could have been carrying

phylloxera. The vineyard owner could have unwittingly introduced phylloxera into South Australia for the first time.”

Grape harvesters are a major risk vector for transporting phylloxera because they often harbour grapevine material or soil and are especially hard to clean. As a result, strict legislative requirements must be met before harvesters can be moved legally between states and also between phylloxera management zones within states.

Vintage sees much inter and intra-state movement of many other potential vectors for phylloxera and others pests, diseases and weeds. These include grapes and grape products, tractors, grape bins, picking snips and other handheld tools, picking buckets, netting, footwear, clothing and people. Strict quarantine regulations also apply for moving equipment between states and within states.

The harvester scenario highlighted issues – and opportunities – within the wine industry’s biosecurity program. Inca Pearce says questions have been raised about vineyard owners’ knowledge of pest and disease spread, particularly in relation to the movement of machinery, equipment and people between phylloxera-infested zones and phylloxera exclusion zones. “It’s clear we need to do a better job of

communicating with vineyard owners, wineries, contractors and everyone moving between regions about pest and disease risks and prevention,” Inca says. “We need to make sure we clearly present the rules around moving machinery, equipment and all other vectors between phylloxera zones and between states, and we need to make sure vineyard owners and others know where to go for information about this.

“The vineyard owner who was bringing the machinery to South Australia was unaware that the behaviour was illegal. This person wasn’t trying to break the rules; they didn’t know the rules. It’s our job to fix that.”

Vinehealth Australia, formerly the Phylloxera and Grape Industry Board of SA, has developed a program of activities to improve knowledge and communication. This year, the Vinehealth team, led by Inca

“THE VINEYARD OWNER COULD HAVE UNWITTINGLY INTRODUCED PHYLLOXERA INTO SOUTH AUSTRALIA FOR THE FIRST TIME.”

Pearce, will visit every South Australian wine region to share information about biosecurity, to talk to vineyard owners about their concerns, and to spread the word about pest and disease prevention best practice with local media, tourism operators and other agricultural operators.

“There was a ‘keep our vineyards phylloxera free’ sticker on the back of every ute 15-plus years ago, but as an industry we’ve become a little complacent,” Inca says.

“I’ve worked in the viticulture industry for the past 19 years and I’ve seen the devastation that pests such as phylloxera can cause. I know how dangerous complacency can be.

“Biosecurity and farmgate hygiene may not be the most exciting things, but if we get those fundamental things wrong, then our industry will suffer.” ♦

For information about pest and disease prevention as well as tools to help clarify state quarantine requirements, visit vinehealth.com.au

GEOFENCES BEING TRIALED IN SA

Vinehealth Australia is running a trial of a cyber monitoring program designed to keep vineyards free of pests and diseases such as phylloxera.

Launched in December and funded by the State Government and Vinehealth Australia, Project Boundary Rider creates a virtual boundary – or geofence – around vineyards and uses smartphone app technology to monitor the movement of people entering vineyards. Vineyard owners are alerted when anyone crosses their property line.

The Boundary Rider pilot project is being trialed with 30 businesses across 85 vineyards in McLaren Vale and the Barossa. Those taking part include Chapel Hill Winery, Charles Melton Wines, d’Arenberg, Dorrien Winemaking, Gemtree Wines, Henschke Cellars, Noon Winery, Scholz Estate, St Hallett Wines, Torbreck Vintners, Wirra Vineyards and Wright Vineyard Trust.

“We view this groundbreaking project with much anticipation and excitement because the health of our vines is paramount and we are always looking for new and improved ways of ensuring their longevity,” Prue Henschke, Henschke Cellars’ viticulturist, said.

For more information visit vinehealth.com.au/projects/project-boundary-rider





THE OPTIMISTIC VIEW OF 2017

WORDS RICHARD HALSTEAD

WHAT'S IN STORE FOR THE WINE INDUSTRY IN 2017? RICHARD HALSTEAD OF WINE INTELLIGENCE SEES SOME POSITIVE TRENDS EMERGING.


You may be one of those people, like me, who generally takes an optimistic worldview. If you are, 2016 has not been a vintage year. When some suggested at the beginning of 2016 that the UK would, within months, vote to walk out on the EU, perhaps the most economically beneficial multistate cooperative ever invented, I scoffed. Similarly, I would (I think I did) snort with derision at the possibility of The Donald becoming America's next president. Suffice to say, my licence from the Ministry of Predictions is currently under review.

Despite these and other adverse developments this past year, I remain optimistic for 2017 and beyond. The reason is that, by most other measures we can see, the world is indeed becoming a better place in which to live and work. At the most basic level, people are living longer, healthier and wealthier lives. The 2016 *World Health Organisation Annual Report* notes that global life expectancy gains in the 15 years since 2000 outweigh the gains for the entire 20th century, and expects this momentum to continue over the next

15 years. Related to this is the dramatic decline in severe poverty: more than one billion people have been lifted out of poverty since 1990, according to the World Bank. Between 2010 and 2020, nearly one billion people globally will enter the middle class, defined as those earning more than US\$6000 per year, according to analysis by Goldman Sachs.

True, the changes in wealth and opportunity in much of the emerging world are contrasted with the tougher times in more developed world markets, where the effects of globalisation and the 2008 financial crisis have caused wages of the middle classes to stagnate in real terms over the past 20 years, giving rise to the phenomena of Brexit and Trump. Despite the aggressive prognostications of both of these political movements, this reality is unlikely to change in 2017 – if ever.

If we zoom in from the macro to the specific, it's clear that 2017 and beyond will see opportunities in the wine category opening up all over the world. China is the obvious focus for most international wine businesses already, particularly as, at the moment, gaining an effective route to market appears to be causing plenty of



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management headaches. However, wine chances are improving rapidly in more far-flung and unusual spots – sub-Saharan Africa, southeast Asia and central and South America, among others.

In this context, I thought it would be useful to note three (mostly positive) themes that are going to affect our industry in 2017.

1. Post-1980 generation starts to take control. A statement of the obvious, perhaps, but I believe we are only starting to see the impact of these consumers on our industry, and 2017 will bring more spectacular changes. The influence of millennials is most prominent right now in the USA, where they are starting to dominate in on-premise settings and grow in importance in the off-trade; and in China, where their sheer numbers and love of mobile commerce and WeChat is rapidly reshaping the wine supply chain. Wine Intelligence estimates that China will add 40 million imported wine drinkers in the next four years – nearly doubling the size of a market which is already double what it was four years ago – most of whom will be under 35. Anyone selling in China, or thinking of doing so, needs to align their business to this new reality. What's less widely understood is how influential this same generation is becoming in many other wine markets. Similar shifts in behaviour are afoot in markets as diverse as the UK, Japan, Poland, Mexico and Germany.

2. Traditional retail boundaries dissolve. Again, one might say this is already well advanced. In the retail world, the division between shops that exist in bricks and mortar and online is becoming less clear, and in many ways irrelevant. As a consumer, I don't view a retailer in a different context whether I'm dealing with their online self or in person. Sure, I have differing expectations of the experience, and I might prefer an in-person interaction to an online one, depending on my needs at the time. However, I clearly expect them

to know me in both contexts, and therefore have a joined-up view of my behaviour so that I don't have to fill in the gaps when I deal with them. Despite the head-slapping obviousness of this, it's amazing how many retailers and service businesses fail on this simple point. Specific to the wine category, we have seen the erosion of the boundaries between the wine shop and the wine bar, as well as the migration (in both directions) of on and off-line retailing. There is plenty of room for more integration; in 2017 we will see some more of it.

3. Sweet becomes legit. When I joined the wine industry some 15 years ago, I was let in on the secret well known to many industry veterans: sweet sells, but only if you don't call it by its real name. In the intervening decade or so I have

“SWEET WILL COME OUT FROM BEHIND ITS VEIL, WINES WILL PARADE THEIR CREDENTIALS WITHOUT SHAME, AND THE POST-1980 GENERATION WILL BUY THESE WINES WITHOUT GUILT.”

observed the exponential growth of wines described using shadow-sweet euphemisms: rounded, smooth, fruit-forward, off-dry and so on. One might even argue that much of the prosecco sales phenomenon is built around the fact that it comes across as sweeter than the dry cava and Champagne styles that have dominated the mainstream of sparkling wine for years. Finally, in the second decade of the 21st century, sweet will come out from behind its veil, wines (both still and sparkling) will parade their credentials without shame, and the post-1980 generation will buy these wines without guilt.

I won't argue that these themes are radically new; in fact, all are present, and all are already bringing problems to the supply chain of which wine is a part. In bricks and mortar retail, footfall and spend is down everywhere, while costs (rents, labour costs, taxes etc) are going up. The

arrival of omni-channel retailing has meant that it's harder, and more expensive, to keep accurate tabs on your customer (though your customer now expects this as standard). How to bring customers into your brand, and keep them there, physically as well as metaphorically, has become the two major headaches for retailers.

In the on-premise channel, hotels and restaurants are struggling to retain customers when the competition is a cheaper Airbnb rental, which often comes with access to a serviceable kitchen. When those consumers do venture into the on-premise, they expect far better than what they could get at home – not just good wine, but a transformative experience. If you can get a great bottle of wine in the bottleshop for \$n, you need to

be really convinced that the bottle of wine in the bar for \$n*3, is going to be worth it – or at least the entire experience will be worth it (wine + service + sommelier's interesting fact + setting + socialising + people watching).

How can the wine industry benefit in this world? A good place to start would be to understand more deeply the kind of problems and opportunities your customers in the supply chain are facing, in whatever market they operate. What problems are keeping hoteliers, restaurateurs, bar owners and retailers awake at night? How can you help? By listening to your customers' feedback, observing the behaviours of their customers, and adapting your products and services to support their efforts, perhaps both you and your supply chain can benefit from the fascinating and frightening changes that are occurring in our markets. Best wishes for 2017. ♦

THE BURNING QUESTIONS

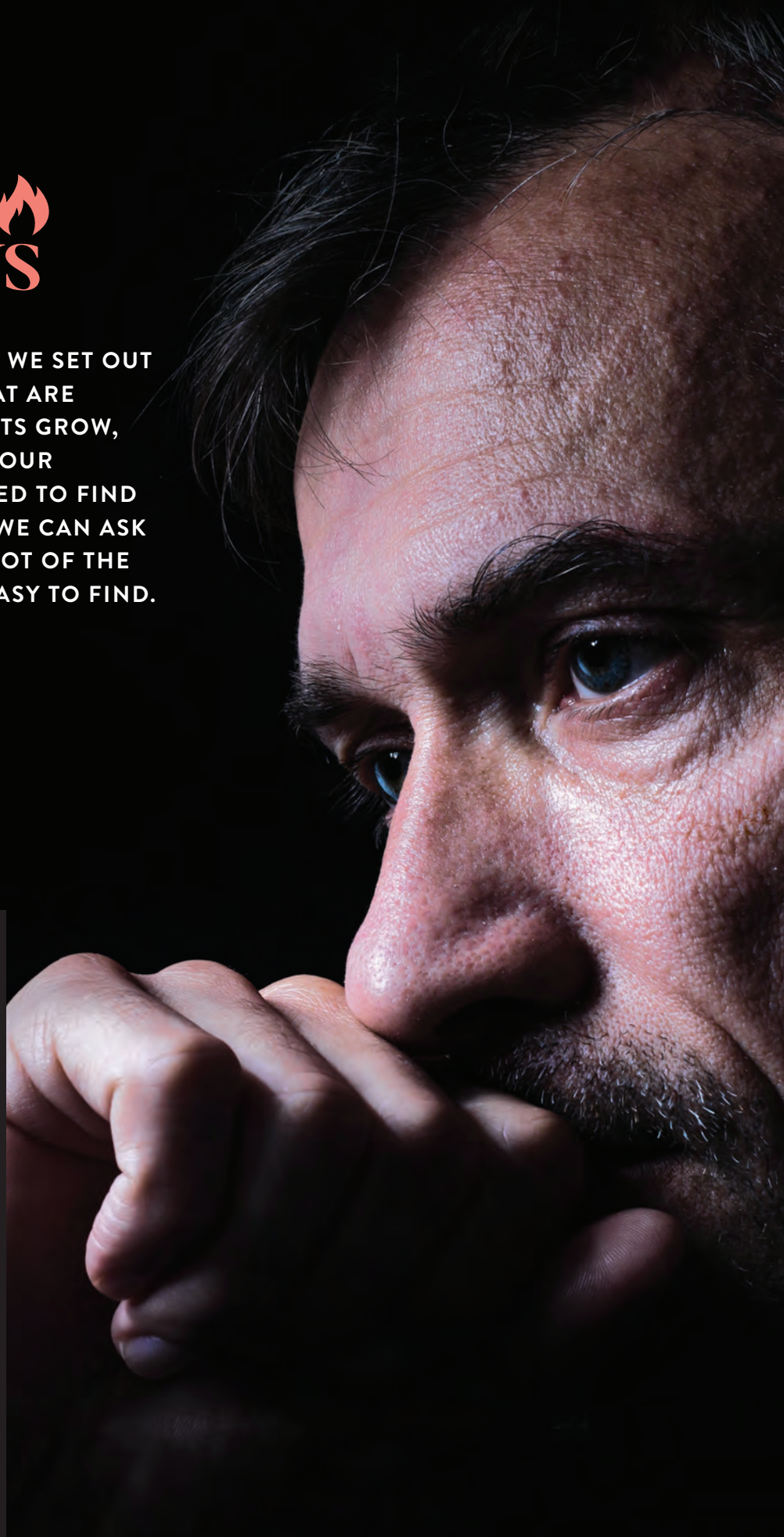
AS WE ENTER 2017, BEFORE WE SET OUT TO FIND THE ANSWERS THAT ARE GOING TO SEE OUR MARKETS GROW, OUR BRANDS THRIVE AND OUR BUSINESSES EXCEL, WE NEED TO FIND THE RIGHT QUESTIONS. IF WE CAN ASK THE RIGHT QUESTIONS, A LOT OF THE ANSWERS WILL BE QUITE EASY TO FIND.

WORDS DAVID LEMIRE MW

Over the last few weeks I've been exposed to some deep thinkers in the wine business: Steve Pannell talking about making drinkable wines that taste like they're made from grapes and that suit our climate. About Apple and customer habits and behaviour with Jeffrey Grosset. About vineyards with a host of people, including Samantha Connew, Sandro Mosele, Gerald Ellis from Meadowbank, and Gilli Lipscombe from Sailor Seeks Horse. I've also spent more time than I normally do walking in vineyards, talking to growers, and understanding what makes them and their vines tick. I've come up with a list. Here are the questions I'm asking myself as 2017 gets underway, ready or not.

IS THE VINEYARD (OR VINEYARDS) AT THE CENTRE OF WHAT WE DO, AND IS THAT REFLECTED IN HOW WE TALK ABOUT THE WINES?

While presenting two Tasmanian wines at the Sidewineder tasting in Adelaide recently, I took the viti challenge – to only talk about viticulture and not about winemaking – this is where it's grown, this is what the ground is like, the season gave us this, we look after it like this, we pick it then, and that's why it tastes like it does. Give it a try. If our sales



people and distributors can't do that, get them to the point where they can. To paraphrase Sandro Mosele, improving viticulture is the great opportunity for any of us wanting to make and sell better wine. The emphasis on winemaking over viticulture in Australia has taken us to a point where very few wineries try to plant and run truly great vineyards.

DOES WHAT WE ARE TALKING MATCH WHAT WE ARE DOING?

Pannell is a key example of this. Finding varieties that work with his climate, and making them to maximise drinkability, he's practising what he's preaching. Are the things we're doing in the vineyard, in the winery, in the market, aligning with what's important to us? Or are we letting those principles – the ones that we ourselves determine that are not imposed by anyone else – get lost because of competing priorities? What is sacrosanct to us? It will be different for each wine business. If one goal – be it sustainable viticulture, hands-off winemaking, reflecting a site, being a leader with a particular variety, raising our price points, selling more on premise, or retaining key staff – is our key goal, are we making progress or are we hitting other goals and letting the key one fall down the list?

ARE WE EVOLVING OUR SALES FOOTPRINT?

How many wineries wanted to sell exactly the same proportion of each wine through the same channels in 2016 as they did in 2015? If they were growing, were they aiming for the growth to be in all channels or only some? I reckon for most of us we're looking to manage channel growth – to grow some products in some channels and some in others. If we are not planning by market, by product and by channel, we're likely going to lose control of what's selling where, and that can mean a less than ideal mix of sales.

The cleverest (and luckiest) wineries choose who they sell to, some down to the individual account, but for most, if we're choosing what channel we're focusing on for each product, that's a great start. If we're thinking about our target market for a wine as being cellar door sales, a certain country/city, on or off premise, chain or independent, by the glass or bottle, floor stacked or fine-wine section, and so on,

those thoughts inform every element of packaging, price and promotion.

ARE WE IMPROVING THE QUALITY OF OUR DISTRIBUTION?

This is not necessarily about changing distribution. Improving the quality of distribution could mean the sales team having a better understanding of our wines, or our wines being a notch or two higher on their list of priorities. When was the last time one of the sales team did vintage at our winery? Have all the sales team visited? Have we been on the road with each one? Do we know them well enough to pick up the phone to pass on a tip, to check on an account, to get them to make a booking at one of their accounts for us, to congratulate them on a new listing?

IS OUR BRAND EQUITY GROWING?

How do we measure that? Sales growth? Channel splits? Net promoter score? Wine show medals? Cellar door visitation? All of the above? Depending on the business, they might all be important. Don't forget the number of cases sold per listing, which is a crucial indication of the strength of the sku and associated depletion rates. And we also need to accept that brand equity is a nebulous thing to quantify. Another way to consider the question is: "What have I done in the last year to increase the brand equity?" It may be some of the actions listed above under improving distribution, or improving the channel split. It could be a new website. It could be connecting with consumers at consumer tastings and wine fairs and building the mailing list. We need to be brutally honest, and also acknowledge when brand equity is being eroded, for whatever reason, but especially through visible discounting.

IS OUR P&L AND OUR BALANCE SHEET IMPROVING?

Is all the hard work paying off? If not, why are we doing this again? One wise head told me about a chat with some experienced wine industry execs, where the topic of returns on capital and EBIT ratios came up. One commented that we have to accept that it's the wine industry, that low returns are part of the territory. Most people around the table agreed. Wise head didn't. Nor should we. ♦

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THE GRAND Gelinaz shuffle

A SECRETIVE INTERNATIONAL CHEF SWAP TAKES AUSSIE FOOD AND WINE GLOBAL.

WORDS AND PHOTOS KATIE SPAIN

What do you get when you take a world-renowned London chef with a penchant for Burgundy wines and plunk him in the middle of Adelaide? Some pretty solid, pre-conceived ideas about Australian wines. "I'm expecting to drink heavy wines that are high in alcohol," Mikael Jonsson said when he touched down in November.

The straight-talking Swede runs Hedone restaurant in London, a Michelin Star joint and one of the world's top 50 restaurants in 2016. He was one of 40 high-profile chefs who took part in Gelinaz, a global chef swap where head chefs from 16 countries swap lives for a week. Mikael came to Adelaide to live the life of Orana's Jock Zonfrillo (who went to Blanca in New York). The swap culminated in a dinner by each chef in their host restaurant, their identity a secret until diners arrived.

Jonsson was on a mission to explore the tastes of Australia, one glass at a time. The Orana team took him to Osteria Oggi for piles of slow-cooked meat, pasta and local drops. "His initial perception of Australian wines was that typical eighties/nineties big blend, big whites, big reds, lots of tannin, fruit bomb sort of styles," Orana sommelier Jonathan Brook says. "As soon as we started tasting wines like James Erskine's Jauma grenache, things changed. He also really enjoyed SC Pannell's grenache shiraz."

Mikael familiarised himself with the Orana menu and wine list in preparation for his own degustation dinner at the restaurant. "There's a lot of new smells and flavours I'm not used to," he said. "It's all a big discovery for me."

It was a learning experience for the Orana team, too. "Grower Champagne is the only Champagne he will pour, in

particular zero dosage, which is pretty interesting here in Australia because we see a little bit of it but we don't see a lot," Jonathan says.

For Mikael, the wine is as important as the food. "There was something for everyone: from The Other Right's Pet Nat to the aligoté we did by de Villaine," Jonathan says. "It was like, 'You don't have to go down one style of wine pairing, you can do what you want so long as the wine is delicious.'" Jonathan likens Mikael's approach to Charlie Trotter's wine-centric Charlie Trotter's Restaurant in Chicago during the nineties. "He was quite interested in changing dishes at the last minute for an expensive bottle of wine. It was more about showcasing the wine, and the food was just an accompaniment. I think that was Mikael's view as well. I'd never really seen that."

The final wine list included a last-minute addition. "He wanted wines that would really make people go 'Wow'. We had the Hentley Farm '13 Clos Otto - he tasted it an hour and a half before we started serving and said, 'That's got a lot of complexity and depth... I can do a lot more with the beef.'"

A visit to Louis and Sholto Broderick at Basket Range Wine also changed mindsets. "When they said they mainly do Bordeaux varieties Mikael was like, 'This is exactly what Australian wines were going to be'. Then when they said 'We make a single-vineyard petit verdot', he tasted it out of the barrel and went 'Wow, this is really delicious and really lovely.'"

A saperavi field blend surprised, too. "The guys took us through their vineyard. His perception of Australia had changed but he was also kind of like 'Wow, this is real frontier kind of stuff.'" ♦
Gelinaz! is an annual, national event. Anyone can attend but tickets are coveted. See website for updates. gelinaz.com



"HIS INITIAL PERCEPTION OF AUSTRALIAN WINES WAS BIG BLEND, BIG WHITES, BIG REDS, LOTS OF TANNIN, FRUIT BOMB SORT OF STYLES."





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96

\$110.00

BEKKERS

McLaren Vale Syrah 2014

@TBekkers

The pursuit of elegance isn't necessarily every winemaker's agenda, but some seem to make it their metier. Toby Bekkers, with his diligent approach to viticulture and sensitive winemaking, seems to have made a significant approach at this ephemeral idea of elegance. Pure, luxurious in texture, epic in length, deep in flavour, swirls reveal more and more about this wine. Stunning. 14.5%

Reviewed by Mike Bennie



96

\$78.00

OAKRIDGE

Yarra Valley 864 Winery Block

Cabernet Sauvignon 2014

@OakridgeWines1

I love the fragrant restraint of the greatest Yarra Valley cabernets, declaring their greatness more in their elegant allure than in bold presence. This is a gorgeous accord of rose petals, roast capsicum, cedar and tobacco, with graceful, fine tannins and bright fruit outlining a long and finely crafted finish. 13.7%

Reviewed by Tyson Stelzer



96

\$65.00

THE LANE VINEYARD

Adelaide Hills Reunion

Single Vineyard Shiraz 2014

@thelanevineyard

This is an Adelaide Hills shiraz that juxtaposes fragrance, restraint and space with power and characterful presence. Depth and length of expansive black plum and blackberry fruit are admirable, infused with the black pepper of this cool, high site, and laced with the charcuterie complexity of fermentation. Super-fine, granitic tannins coast through an epic finish. 13.5%

Reviewed by Tyson Stelzer



95

\$45.00

CLOVER HILL

Tasmania Vintage Brut 2012

@CloverHillWines

Australian sparkling wine is really at the forte of fizzy stuff from around the world. The French wine region starting with C must come across wines like this from time to time and wonder how they'll keep up pace. It's decadent in patisserie and baked-apple scents, but has a floral, citrusy freshness alongside. The bead is tight, vigorous, and texture is just a touch creamy. So classy. 12.5%

Reviewed by Mike Bennie



95

\$39.00

THE LANE VINEYARD

Adelaide Hills Block 1

Cabernet Merlot 2015

@thelanevineyard

Magnificent purity and precision of exact red and blackcurrant fruit, lifted rose-petal fragrance and nuances of sweet red capsicum denote an exactingly varietal cabernet merlot of impeccable allure, exacting line and enduring persistence. Finely structured mineral tannins promise great things in the cellar. 13.5%

Reviewed by Tyson Stelzer



95

\$70.00

WIRRA WIRRA

McLaren Vale

The Absconder Grenache 2015

@wirrawirrawines

From a 1920s block, particularly old for McLaren Vale, this is a delightfully enticing grenache that captures rose-petal fragrance and understated strawberry/raspberry fruits, while upholding an elegant and savoury mouth feel, accented with firm, fine tannins. Quintessential McLaren Vale grenache of the highest order. 14.5%

Reviewed by Tyson Stelzer



94

\$60.00

CAPE JAFFA

Mt Benson La Lune by Cape Jaffa Shiraz 2014

🐦@CapeJaffaWines

Biodynamic farming and less-is-more winemaking characterise the work of Cape Jaffa. This wine is wonderful in its concentration, but feels unadorned, pure, suede in texture, deep in its savoury expression. Herbs, earth, briar and dried leaves play a hand in the jolly flow of forest berry fruit. Intrigue and elegance, hand in hand. 14.5%

Reviewed by Mike Bennie



94

\$50.00

HOWARD VINEYARD

Adelaide Hills Cabernet Sauvignon Cabernet Franc 2014

🐦@howardvineyard

An understated yet utterly charming wine from Howard Vineyard in the Adelaide Hills. They have a deft touch with the fickle variety cabernet franc, and it's wonderful to see its gentle influence in this wine. Blue fruits, mulberry, green herbs, white pepper and eucalyptus make easy bedfellows in this velvety textured wine. 13.2%

Reviewed by Mike Bennie



94

\$30.00

MASSENA

Barossa Valley The Twilight Path 2015

Blend of primitivo, mataro, graciano, which is probably a world first, but who's counting? The idea here, it seems, is to build early complexity in layers of perfume and flavour, which certainly has been done. It's heady in its mix of pot pourri, spice, dark curranty fruit aromas, supple in texture yet shows concentration and depth. Really quite excellent. 13.5%

Reviewed by Mike Bennie



94

\$28.00

MITOLO

McLaren Vale Small Batch Series Grenache Rosé 2016

🐦@MitoloWines

A tight, bone dry and refreshing rosé with a pretty accord between crunchy, tangy red-berry fruits and savoury tomato notes and dried herbs. It culminates in a long and tangy finish of restraint, energy, and yet depth and character. 12.5%

Reviewed by Tyson Stelzer



94

\$40.00

OAKRIDGE

Yarra Valley Hazeldene Vineyard Botrytis Gris 2016

🐦@OakridgeWines1

Capturing all the intensity and exoticism of gris is no challenge with 100 percent botrytis on board, but upholding fresh definition, drive and acid line are where this wine truly comes into its own, even at a decadent 240g/L of sugar. It's potent yet refreshing, exciting and moreish. 10%

Reviewed by Tyson Stelzer



94

\$55.00

TAPANAPPA

Adelaide Hills Tiers Vineyard 1.5m Piccadilly Valley Chardonnay 2015

🐦@Tapanappa

A new member of the Tapanappa chardonnay family, from the 2003 Tiers plantings at 1.5m spacing, producing an earlier ripening, softer and more generous style. The result is delightfully fragrant, packed with white peach and lemon fruit of impressive concentration, defining a well-rounded and juicy palate, yet beautifully honed with finely mineral acidity and finely structured mouth feel. 13.7%

Reviewed by Tyson Stelzer



93

\$44.00

ANGOVE

McLaren Vale Warboys Vineyard Shiraz 2015

🐦@AngoveWine

A deep, dark, brooding wine of concentrated aromas and flavours. It's all inky fruit, palate-staining sweetness and spice. The perfume shows sweet earth, cedary oak, bourbon-soaked dark berries, and Christmas cake spice. The flavours find balance, and though bold in its punch of flavour, it's well balanced, satisfying and very good in its ilk. 14.5%

Reviewed by Mike Bennie



93

\$42.00

BLUE PYRENEES ESTATE

Pyrenees 2013

🐦@bluepyrenees

A blend of cabernet sauvignon, merlot with splash of shiraz and malbec, this is a beautifully poised, elegant red that offers drinkers deep, blue and black-fruit aromas and flavours with a hint of regional herbal character and a wish of fine, grainy tannins. Drinking now is great, but I wager this will mature superbly. 14.5%

Reviewed by Mike Bennie



93

\$32.00

HALLS GAP ESTATE

Grampians Fallen Giants Shiraz 2015

Loads of regional personality here, most importantly the character of white and black pepper that feels dusted over the ripe red and black fruits that make up most of this medium-to-full-bodied wine. Beautiful fragrance, chock full of flavour, dense and yet compact. It's generous, spicy shiraz with superb balance. 14%

Reviewed by Mike Bennie



93

\$27.00

MAIN & CHERRY

Adelaide Hills Grüner Veltliner 2016

🐦@MainandCherry

Year on year, the grüners of the Adelaide Hills are showing their mettle. Another great release that packs in classic 'cucumber in tonic water' character with just a suggestion of savoury, pleasing, root-vegetable aroma. The palate runs a similar course with great freshness a feature, as with the persistence of flavour. 12.5%

Reviewed by Mike Bennie



93

\$40.00

NICK HASELGROVE WINES

McLaren Vale James Haselgrove Futures Shiraz 2014

🐦@HaselgroveWines

This is a full-figured wine that finds neat balance between its ripe fruit and subtle oak components, all the while delivering a lip-smacking meatiness and generosity that will warm the cockles (or do nicely with charred meats). It's all dark fruits, nougat, cedar and choc-mintiness. The big frame squeezes stacks in. Nicely done. 14.5%

Reviewed by Mike Bennie



93

\$32.00

TERRE A TERRE

Wrattontully Sauvignon Blanc 2015

🐦@TerreaTerre

Beautiful wine this, offering drinkers the chance to see sauvignon blanc of delicacy, purity and restraint, yet it has all the hallmarks of freshness and vitality expected from the variety. It's imbued with fresh stonefruit, green herb, ginger spice character. It's just a touch chalky in texture which lends complexity and interest. Bravo. 13.9%

Reviewed by Mike Bennie



93

\$29.00

VANGUARDIST**McLaren Vale C'est Facile Grenache 2016**

[@vanguardwines](#)

So much perfume, bright flavour, fine tannins, smooth ride to texture. It's got some funk to it, meatiness, rose water and floral characters, but the DNA of jubey, raspberry jelly grenache is writ large throughout. Great length of flavour and even flow. Super likeable. 13.8%

Reviewed by Mike Bennie



92

\$22.00

HENRY HILL**Adelaide Hills Pinot Noir 2015**

Mellow, even, long in flavour. A medium-weight pinot noir of cherry and faint truffle-mushroom character, meshed to fine clove spice and held together with soft, powdery tannins. Nicely balanced, feels elegant and very easy to drink. Very. 12.5%

Reviewed by Mike Bennie



92

\$20.00

KANGARILLA ROAD**McLaren Vale The Monty 2016**

[@kangarilla](#)

It's a rosé made from a blend of montepulciano and nero d'Avola. Well, there you go. It has a sweetness to scent, somewhere between watermelon, Turkish Delight and cotton candy. Flavours are drier and spicier, though the wine holds a delicacy and purity through and through. It's one of those rosé wines that over-delivers for its drinkability, but also its touch of class. 12.5%

Reviewed by Mike Bennie



92

\$23.00

OAKRIDGE**Yarra Valley Over the Shoulder Rosé 2016**

[@OakridgeWines1](#)

A blend of pinots (mostly noir, with some meunier and gris), contrasting savoury complexity with ripe generosity, fine and elegant from the outset, with presence and character to the back palate, with an attractive struck flint twist lending subtle complexity. 14.0%

Reviewed by Tyson Stelzer



92

\$23.00

ROGERS & RUFUS**Barossa Grenache of Barossa Rosé 2016**

[@RogersandRufus](#)

Straight up, really well done rosé. It's fragrant in red berries, Turkish delight, candy cane, vanilla notes. The palate has a crispness and vibrancy but also a gentle slick sweetness that should tickle the fancy of many. Length is good, too. Ticks many boxes. 11.5%

Reviewed by Mike Bennie



92

\$24.00

TALTARNI**Pyrenees Fumé Blanc 2015**

[@Taltarni](#)

This is a reliably complex, interesting wine that dials in just enough smoky, spicy oak nuance to lend a hand to the bright fruitiness that sits among these characters. It's a step up in the white wine game, showing that layering judicious winemaking influence into aromatic white varieties can lead to more serious expressions. It's also very delicious to drink. 13.5%

Reviewed by Mike Bennie

**PACHA MAMA****Victoria Pinot Gris 2016**

🐦 @pachamamawines

Well, hello there! Loads of fun with just a touch of class. It's dressed up for the prom and looks a million bucks, even if its youthful and gangly underneath the finery. Scents of white pear, apricot, honeysuckle. Slipperiness in the palate with light pear nectar concentration and a faint savoury nuttiness. Great drinking right now. 13%

Reviewed by Mike Bennie

TAPANAPPA**Adelaide Hills Tiers Vineyard Piccadilly Valley Chardonnay 2015**

The first vineyard planted in the modern era of the Adelaide Hills remains one of the greatest, producing chardonnay of great generosity, exactly honed with focused acidity and finely structured mineral texture. In length, line and sheer, undeviating precision, this is one of the greats. 13.6% TS

96 \$79.00

JUNIPER ESTATE**Margaret River Cabernet Sauvignon 2012**

Built for the long haul, this Margaret River cabernet upholds the integrity of primary red and blackcurrant fruit while beginning to evolve into an enticing spectrum of roast capsicum, cedar and tobacco. Super fine yet confident tannins hold a finish of great endurance, promising a grand future. 14% TS

95 \$70.00

CLONAKILLA**Canberra District Riesling 2016**

A pure and pristine Clonakilla riesling that contrasts the delicacy of lime blossom with the palate depth of kaffir lime spice, Granny Smith apple and even a hint of guava. There's acid line and precision to tone its intensity, carrying with outstanding line and length. Tense acidity is well integrated and toned by mouth filling texture. 12% TS

95 \$38.00

MOUNT HORROCKS**Clare Valley Riesling 2016**

Scintillating, pure, vibrant riesling. An epee thrust of citrus, green apple, crushed slate-like minerality. It's got so much energy, feels so pent up, tight, squeaky, impressively long. It's for drinking now with vigour, or lazing over after a couple of decades in a cellar. Just unreal. 12.7% MB

95 \$35.00

BEKKERS**McLaren Vale Syrah Grenache 2015**

Pure class here. Complexity is the byword, as is inherent drinkability, and the wine is a triumph in its restraint. It shows heady scents of sweet fruit, sweet spice, savoury characters, elemental earthiness but works as a sum of parts. The palate is a triumph of texture. Sits so beautifully in the mouth. Modern classic. 14.5% MB

96 \$80.00

GROSSET**Clare Valley Polish Hill Riesling 2016**

Polish Hill is infused with a purity and drive that elevate it above the Clare Valley riesling plateau, and the 2016 season delivers it in tightly coiled lime and lemon, crunchy Granny Smith apple and a quintessential backbone of fine, slate-infused minerality. This is a vintage of precision and stamina, with a long future before it. 12.7% TS

96 \$55.00

DOMAINE**Margaret River Naturaliste Morus Cabernet Sauvignon 2013**

Epic cabernet from one of the region's most compelling winemakers, Bruce Dukes. A slick and elegant homage to great clarets with its own regional flair. It's medium weight, judicious in savoury oak, blue fruited and lifted with bay leaf and pepper spice. Tannins are coils of fine dustiness that draw it out exceptionally long. 13.5% MB

95 \$85.00

SC PANNELL**McLaren Vale Koomilya DC Block Shiraz 2013**

Power and grace. An iron bar draped in velvet. It's courageous in its deep, brooding perfume, offering forest berry compote, cedary spice, mellow briar and undergrowth characters. The palate is full, ample, yet weighted beautifully. Rustic charm through bold primary fruit. Formidable. 14% MB

95 \$110.00

GROSSET**Adelaide Hills Piccadilly Chardonnay 2015**

In fragrance, precision, drive and sheer, jubilant appeal, Grosset's chardonnay sits confidently among the benchmarks of the Adelaide Hills. Grapefruit, white peach, anise and fennel define a style that unites crunch with presence and expansive generosity, impeccably poised and magnificently persistent. 13.5% TS

96 \$65.00

MITOLO**McLaren Vale Marsican Shiraz 2014**

A brand new release that instantly joins the top tier of McLaren Vale shiraz. It's restrained, fragrant and fine-boned, yet characterful and driving, with a beautifully refined white-pepper finish of delightfully finely textured tannins of magnificent poise and effortless restraint. Very classy. 14.8% TS

96 \$200.00

GROSSET**Clare Valley Springvale Riesling 2016**

Another standout vintage for Grosset, this is a riesling that seamlessly unites the purity of lemon, lime and Granny Smith apple with the ripe and generous edge of guava. Magnificently floral lemon-blossom aromas introduce a style of signature Grosset purity, riding a very long finish of fine acidity and chalky, slately mineral texture. 12.7% TS

95 \$40.00

ADELINA**Clare Valley Mataro 2015**

Neutral oak and extended maceration on skins creates a wine of great intensity and concentration of fruit flavour, with a bounty of fine tannin and a generous basting in spice and herbs. Power packed, medium weight, structured, long in flavour, perfumed and fine. Possibly one of Australia's greatest examples of this variety in single form. A belter. 14.5% MB

94 \$40.00

D'ARENBERG**McLaren Vale The Ironstone Pressings Grenache Shiraz Mourvedre 2013**

Ironstone finds great form from 2013 – the wine shows complex aromas of dark fruit, sweet earth, undergrowth and cedar, while flavours settle among juicy texture with more dark fruit and spice. Subtle oak guides to its lengthy finish. Feels tight enough that cellaring will work in its favour, too. *14.3% MB*

94**\$65.00****DOMAINE****Margaret River Naturaliste Purus Chardonnay 2014**

A compelling chardonnay of peach and nectarine scents, fine slate-like mineral scents, a lift of faint honey and lemon blossom. Smooth palate of lemon oil-meets-stone fruit flavours, with supple characters from nougat-rich oak. Very impressive length and a generosity of flavour. A foot in both old and new school camps. *13% MB*

94**\$45.00****GROSSET****Clare Valley Alea Riesling 2016**

A delightfully fragrant and pristine alea that celebrates the purity of pink lady apple perfume over a core of lemon and lime. A touch of sweetness elevates its fragrance, while upholding a long finish defined by tension of acidity and structure of slate-infused minerality. *12% TS*

94**\$36.00****GROSSET****South Australia Semillon Sauvignon Blanc 2016**

Equal proportions Clare Valley semillon and Adelaide Hills sauvignon blanc. Character and complexity, toning the guava and lantana generosity of sauvignon blanc with the structure and drive of semillon. The result encapsulates exuberance, structure and engaging appeal, defined by exceptional line and length. *13.5% TS*

94**\$35.00****OAKRIDGE****Yarra Valley Local Vineyard Series Lusatia Park Vineyard Chardonnay 2015**

The cool heights of Lusatia Park Vineyard in the Upper Yarra Valley infuse chardonnay with tension and cut, framed beautifully by Dave Bicknell's touch in struck-flint complexity, finishing with great line, length and considerable endurance. *13% TS*

94**\$38.00****OAKRIDGE****Yarra Valley Local Vineyard Series Willowlake Vineyard Chardonnay 2015**

From a north-facing vineyard in the red volcanic soils of Gladysdale, this is an impeccably crafted chardonnay that seamlessly delivers the understated white peach and tangy lemon definition of perfectly ripe chardonnay, framed in finely textured structure that draws out a long and enduring finish. *13% TS*

94**\$38.00****OAKRIDGE****Yarra Valley Lusatia Park Vineyard Pinot Noir 2015**

The cool Upper Yarra site of Lusatia Park produces a fragrant and elegant pinot, here expressive of rose petals, red cherries and dried herbs, accented with exotic spice. It's supple and finely structured, with silky tannins and tangy acidity. *13.5% TS*

94**\$38.00****TAPANAPPA****Adelaide Hills Piccadilly Valley Chardonnay 2015**

Striking an exacting balance between complexity and depth tang and refreshing elegance, this is a chardonnay that sings the virtues of vineyards around the Piccadilly Valley in fragrant white peach and lemon tones. It's tangy, persistent, finely textured and delicious. *13.5% TS*

94**\$39.00****TAPANAPPA****Wrattonbully Whalebone Vineyard Cabernet Shiraz 2013**

Serious wine, this. Ripples with fine, firm tannins, offers a deep core of blue and blackberry fruit, shows some of the noted regional herbal/mint character. Packs lots into its slender frame and draws out the wine through to a long, elegant point. This should cellar exceptionally. *14% MB*

94**\$55.00****THE LANE VINEYARD****Adelaide Hills Block 14 Single Vineyard Basket Press Shiraz 2015**

Pepper, game, blueberries and black plums define a savoury and complex shiraz that captures the cool climate elegance of its high vineyard with depth and character. A long and full finish is accurately directed by firm, fine tannins. *13.5% TS*

94**\$39.00****WIRRA WIRRA****McLaren Vale RSW Shiraz 2014**

It's a testimony to great fruit and judicious winemaking that a wine as bold and full of flavour as this finds such fine balance. Yes, it's heady in dark fruit, nougat sweetness, cedary spice, and the palate floods the senses and offers flesh and texture, but it all stacks up so well. Bold and beautiful. *14.5% MB*

94**\$70.00****AT RICHARDSON****Great Western Hard Hill Road Durif 2013**

Lovers of fuller bodied red wines already know that durif tends to scratch an itch, but it's got to be done well, in balance, just right. Here's one that does. It's Xmas pudding and plum fruit to sniff on, choc-berry and sweet spice to taste. Rich, hearty flavours and a flood of deep, dark wine. Yep. *14% MB*

93**\$50.00****DE BORTOLI****Griffith Noble One Botrytis Semillon 2014**

Viscous and unctuous, layered with golden syrup and marmalade, this is a Noble One layered with toasty complexity that celebrates 12 months barrel age. It culminates in outstanding line and length. *10% TS*

93**\$33.00****DE BORTOLI****Mornington Peninsula Riorret Balnarring Pinot Noir 2015**

There's an appealing restraint to this vintage, subtly revealing its gentle berry fruits and spice, with 20 percent whole bunch offering an enticingly subtle exotic twist. It's finely poised, supported by nicely integrated acidity and fine, supple tannins. *13.5% TS*

93**\$45.00****DE BORTOLI****Yarra Valley Estate Grown Chardonnay 2015**

A mild season has given birth to an elegant chardonnay that unites the restrained white peach and grapefruit of the variety with subtle struck-flint complexity of natural fermentation and lees age in older oak casks. Value. *12.5% TS*

93**\$30.00****FLAMETREE****Margaret River Shiraz 2015**

Most people don't rush at Margaret River shiraz, but when done well, they have great merit. They're typically medium bodied, gritty in tannin, show dried berry and cherry character, fill the palate then ebb away in tale-puffs of tannin. That's pretty much the wine here; and it's all very well balanced. *14% MB*

93**\$27.00**

**FRASER GALLOP****Margaret River Miscéo 2015**

This is a finely wrought blend of cabernet franc, merlot, malbec and petit verdot. It glides on blue and black berry fruits and rails of fine, silty tannins. There's a whiff of bay leaf, mint and pepper. There's great extension to the wines flavours. It's even, mild, medium weight and very tasty. *14% MB*

93**\$30.00****GUTHRIE****Adelaide Hills The Snape Syrah 2015**

Guthrie wines come with a volume of perfume that nearly sets you back in your seat. It's all sweet-cherry fruit and herbal undergrowth and peppery spice here. Loads of it. The palate is slinky, silky, bright in cherry-berry fruitiness, packed with herbal complexity and finishes with a mezc-al-like zest. Elegant, cool-climate expression. *13.4% MB*

93**\$32.00****JERICHO****Adelaide Hills GSM 2015**

Has a slinky, slurpy, vibrant feel, with red currant and berry aromas meshed to anise and sarsaparilla scents. Raspberry jelly and darker fruit flavours stain the palate, but that succulence to tannin keeps the wine fresh, bright and long. Indeed, this tiptoes that line between wild drinkability and finesse so well. *14% MB*

93**\$25.00****KALLESKE****Barossa Valley Old Vine Grenache 2015**

A powerful style defined by bold perfume of Cherry Ripe, mocha, sweet clove oak, game meat and macerated berry fruits. The palate is a wall of generous fruit, supple, yet mouthcoating, showing depth, but surprisingly not overbearing. It dances in its heftier frame, and is all better for that finesse. Super drinking for its fuller expression of the variety. *15.5% MB*

93**\$45.00****KOOYONG ESTATE****Mornington Peninsula Haven Pinot Noir 2014**

The highlight of Kooyong's 2014 pinots is a savoury and understated style of fine, mineral tannins, dried herb complexity and a subtle undercurrent of red fruit persistence. Tannins are finely structured and well balanced. *13% TS*

93**\$75.00****LA PROVA****Barossa Valley Nero d'Avola 2015**

Lively, fresh-feeling red of cherry pip, pomegranate and peppery spice. There's a splash of herbs in the medium-weight core of the wine, but the overall motif is pretty fruit, slender frame, fine tannins and brisk acidity. Super drinkability and interest here. *13.7% MB*

93**\$25.00****MITOLO****GRENACHE ROSÉ****2016****McLAREN VALE***small batch series***750mL****LENTON BRAE****Margaret River Southside Chardonnay 2015**

An elegant chardonnay from a thoughtful Margaret River producer. Shows classic white-flesh stonefruit and green-apple fruit scents with attractive honeycomb and struck-flint detail. Palate is fine, glassy in texture, long, tight and finishes with another lick of flintiness. Fine feeling. *13.5% MB*

93**\$26.00****MOPPITY VINEYARDS****Hilltops Cabernet Sauvignon 2014**

Cracking wine, here. Delivers lashings of blue and blackberry fruit aromas and flavours, judicious herbal/capsicum character, a swish of dried twig/cedary oak spice. The wine sits at medium weight despite the fullness of flavour, and finishes with a good smudge of peppery tannin. Kudos. *14% MB*

93**\$32.00****MURRAY STREET VINEYARDS****Barossa Mataro Black Label 2015**

Fire up the BBQ, this one is coming in hot. It's a boldly perfumed red that shows currants, choc-liqourice, dried-fruits and rose-petal fragrance, while the palate is soupy in the totally satisfying, generous way of Barossa reds. Lashings of dark fruit, gentle nougat seasoning, good extension of flavour. *14.5% MB*

93**\$25.00****PORT PHILLIP ESTATE****Mornington Peninsula Red Hill Chardonnay 2015**

The subtle generosity of ripe white-peach fruit is evenly harmonised with the tang of lemon and the gunflint reductive complexity of wild fermentation in 20 percent new French oak barriques. It's finely structured and long. *13% TS*

93**\$34.00****SHAW + SMITH****Adelaide Hills Lenswood Vineyard Chardonnay 2014**

At an altitude of 500m, these vines capture the elegance and cool tension of Lenswood. Toasty French oak defines the finish and will appreciate another year to integrate. It has the stamina and drive to go the distance. *12% TS*

93**\$85.00****SOUL GROWERS****Eden Valley Single Vineyard Riesling 2016**

Bring on the sunshine and lightly charred seafood, says this wine. It's lime juice squeezed in tonic water in perfume and flavour, but the main deal is blistering freshness provided by zingy acidity that starts front palate and finishes way long and mouthwatering. Almost eye-wateringly fresh. Done so well. *12% MB*

93**\$25.00**

TAPANAPPA

Fleurieu Peninsula Pinot Noir 2015
From vines now 12 years old, this is a particularly elegant pinot, true to the cool 2015 season. A pale style of graceful red cherry and strawberry fruits. Brian Croser admits he slightly overcropped it and hence declassified it. It's none the less for it and quite a bargain, with 30 percent whole bunch complexity supportive but not dominating. 13.4% TS

93**\$39.00****VINDEN ESTATE**

Hunter Valley The Vinden Headcase Semillon 2016
A wilder, flavoursome expression of Hunter Valley semillon, a gentle departure from more line and length deliveries. Whiffs of savoury nuttiness in bouquet, with a wealth of expected lemon-lime citrus going on. Brilliant acidity lifts and provides high refreshment factor. Really digging on this. 10% MB

93**\$30.00****CASTLE ROCK ESTATE**

Porongurup Sauvignon Blanc 2016
Perky little number. Gives you a mainline to passionfruit, grassy herbal things, faint pepper. The perfume is evocative and pretty. Palate is crisp, clean, clear and fresh as you like. Touch of chalkiness through the finish for additional interest. So fresh and so clean. 13% MB

92**\$20.00****DE BORTOLI**

Yarra Valley Estate Grown Pinot Noir 2015
Juicy, plump strawberry and red-cherry fruits well contrast the exotic allure, fragrant lift and savoury complexity of whole-bunch fermentation, producing a style at once fruity and complex, backed with fine, supple tannins. 13.5% TS

92**\$30.00****THE LANE VINEYARD**

Adelaide Hills Block 5 Shiraz 2015
A luminous purple Block 5, infused with crunchy black plum and blueberry fruit, laced with white pepper and structured with finely textural tannins. It unites depth with elegance, and does so with dignified line and length rarely bottled at this price. 13.5% TS

93**\$25.00****BROKENWOOD**

Beechworth Sangiovese 2015
A neat and tidy sangiovese with just enough tannin drawl and sweet spice to have you casting an eye towards Chianti, but with a sweetness and generosity of fruit that is wholly Australian. Fuller than medium weight, slashes in the palate with authentic ripe-cherry and dusty character, finishing with a gentle herbal, tangy twist. 13% MB

92**\$35.00****CHAPEL HILL**

McLaren Vale McLaren Vale Sangiovese Rosé 2016
A beautiful expression of pink pepper, guava and pomegranate, with an air of fragrant rosewater lift defining a long and refreshing palate of pink grapefruit tang and wild strawberry allure. 13% TS

92**\$18.00****HEMERA ESTATE**

Barossa Valley Tier 1 Shiraz Cabernet Sauvignon 2010
Formerly Ross Estate. Hemera's top wine turns the volume up on ripe fruit, bathed in 24 months of 100 percent new French oak barrels. The result is a generous and cedary style of warm alcohol and finely structured tannins. 14.5% TS

92**\$125.00****THE LANE VINEYARD**

Adelaide Hills Block 8 Merlot 2015
If only more merlots were like this. Fragrant, crunchy, tangy and deep, with a core of red and blackcurrant fruit, laced with violets, cassis and capsicum, underlined by firm, finely textured, cool-climate tannins. If you love the cabernet family, this is a merlot you must try. 13.5% TS

93**\$39.00****BROMLEY**

Geelong Pinot Noir 2015
Plenty to enjoy here. First up, that silkiness of texture. A smooth glide of dark-cherry and truffley fruit character, imbued with herbs and gentle spice. The length is also notable, as is fragrance. Indeed, it ticks many boxes for quality pinot noir and feels effortless and pure to drink. Lovely. 13.2% MB

92**\$30.00****CHAPEL HILL**

McLaren Vale McLaren Vale Verdelho 2016
A crunchy and refreshing verdelho of nashi pear and grapefruit flavours, built around a tangy acid backbone. It's pristine, fresh, packed with both character and elegance and it has length, too. Great value. 13% TS

92**\$16.00****INGRAM ROAD**

Yarra Valley Pinot Grigio 2016
Single vineyard pinot grigio from the Yarra Valley here. It's definitively grigio with its grassy, herbal, green-pear spectrum scents and flavours but it feels like there's more to it. Subtle hints of savouriness settle under the fresh-fruit profile of the wine, and in being there, make the wine that much more interesting and satisfying. 12.9% MB

92**\$20.00**

**JUNIPER**

Margaret River Margaret River Small Batch Fiano 2016

A compellingly bright and crunchy fiano that captures a cooler, more tangy and more inviting mood than this variety usually expresses. It's all about grapefruit, fennel, lime and starfruit, with just the right amount of texture and depth for an exceptionally versatile style at the table. 12.5% TS

92 \$25.00

LITTLE BRAMPTON

Clare Valley Gateway Shiraz 2013

Great drink here. It's satisfying for its lip-smacking, bright fruit flavours yet shows there's plenty of richness and concentration on its side. Indeed, the wine is fleshy and full to taste, departing from the more fragrant perfume. Harmonious, even with its generosity. Yes thanks to that.

14.5% MB

92 \$30.00

MITOLO

McLaren Vale Angela Shiraz 2014

Successfully meets its brief of a mid-palate plummy style in excellent black-plum-fruit definition with body and presence yet focus. Well defined and finely structured, its tannins are accented with tangy acidity, concluding in earthy beetroot notes.

14.5% TS

92 \$35.00

PIZZINI

King Valley Verduzzo 2015

The Pizzini's have a knack for releasing very refreshing, food-friendly, perky white wines produced from Italian grape varieties. They've knocked one out of the park here. Verduzzo has a typically tropical fruity feel, but there's some faint nuttiness and a dusting of fine spice, too. It's got complexity, but never forgets to be brisk in texture and bright in fruit flavour. 13.5% MB

92 \$24.00

KARRAWATTA

Adelaide Hills Sophie's Hill Pinot Grigio 2016

Just a ripper drink here. It does great service to the oft-maligned grigio variety, elevating it with fine texture and a flourish of floral-citrus-pear aromatics. It's long in flavour, bright in acidity, delicious through and through. Kudos for purity and evergy in this wine. 13.4% MB

92 \$26.00

MAIN & CHERRY

Adelaide Hills Pinot Grigio 2016

Good times drinking here. Not reinventing the wheel, but certainly comes with some fluffy dice on the dashboard. The chassis of flavours are built around grassiness, green pear and faint peppery spice, with the aromas set to pear drop and green herbs. Drinkability is sky high. 13.3% MB

92 \$27.00

OAKRIDGE

Yarra Valley Meunier 2016

Meunier is the backbone of Champagne, but rarely seen as a standalone red. This tiny production (280 dozen) wine captures the red-cherry, wild-strawberry and raspberry fruit appeal of the varietal, in a soft and engaging style. 13.5% TS

92 \$28.00

HIGHER

Plane Margaret River Fiano 2016

A refreshingly crunchy fiano, striking a compelling balance between citrus tang, grapefruit pith bite and the starfruit and paw paw exotic notes of the variety. It's well composed and immediately appealing. 12.5% TS

91 \$25.00

KOORYONG ESTATE

Mornington Peninsula Chardonnay 2015

This is a generous vintage for Kooyong Chardonnay, with rich white peach and grapefruit framed in toasty French oak and subtle charcuterie complexity. The finish is well toned with tangy acidity, concluding focused and long. 13% TS

92 \$42.00

MIKE PRESS

Adelaide Hills Single Vineyard Shiraz 2015

2015 was great for the region. This captures the black-fruit depth of 19-year-old-shiraz vines, within elegant mould and refreshing acid balance. Oak pokes out a little at this age, and it appreciates a vigorous decant - or some years in the cellar. Celebrates the pepper and spice of Hills shiraz. 14.4% TS

92 \$15.00

PIKES

Clare Valley Traditionale Riesling 2016

Pikes has captured all the slatey minerality, the crunchy Granny Smith apple and the tangy lemon and lime of Clare Valley riesling, framing it in ripe, exotic notes of guava and mandarin. 11.5% TS

92 \$25.00

IVYBROOK FARM

McLaren Vale Tempranillo 2015

Tempranillo's fortune in Australia waxes and wanes in a myriad of styles, but here, a medium-weight, spicy and fruity red emerges, with high drinkability and a trail of gently puckering tannins destined for outdoor dining. It's a well judged, well made wine that offers plummy fruit and pepperiness in spades. 14% MB

91 \$25.00

KOOYONG ESTATE**Mornington Peninsula Massalle Pinot Noir 2015**

2015 represents a spicy and savoury vintage for Massalle, defined by pink pepper and dried herbs over a core of strawberry and raspberry fruit, structured with fine tannins. *13% TS*

91**\$32.00****MITOLO****McLaren Vale 7th Son Grenache Shiraz Sagrantino 2014**

A fruity and spicy style, layered with wild strawberry, rhubarb and black cherry fruits, with a core of anise and sarsaparilla, held true with well-structured tannins. This juicy fruit core and finely structured tannin finish sit a little disjointed, emphasised by seven percent sagrantino. *14.5% TS*

91**\$35.00****PORT PHILLIP ESTATE****Mornington Peninsula Quartier Pinot Noir 2015**

An unashamedly elegant, soft and approachable pinot of primary red-berried fruit character, hints of anise and sarsaparilla, structured with very fine fruit tannins. An engaging and immediate style. *13% TS*

91**\$24.00****MOUNT LANGI****Grampians Ghiran Cliff Edge Viognier 2015**

This is a curious and delightful wine, born from the grape viognier, perhaps unexpected from the Mount Langi Ghiran winery. It's in that great zone between slippery and dry, shows apricot and coconut scents and flavours, feels vibrant and crisp through its finish. Great drink. *12.5% MB*

90**\$20.00****MARGAN****Hunter Valley Verdelho 2016**

Throwing stones at verdelho seems to be a national sport, but when done well, it's an exceptional drink, food friendly, and, surprisingly, can mature a couple of years with interest. This example flows long with tropical fruit character, exotic guava notes, a slickness to texture, a bitey, pleasing finish. It's done really well. *13% MB*

91**\$18.00****MOORILLA****Tasmania Extra Brut Rosé Methode Traditionnelle Tasmania 2011**

Moorilla heightens the tension of early picked fruit by blocking malolactic fermentation, though has more recently introduced wild-yeast fermentation. A pale salmon hue, precise pink pepper and strawberry hull, with tense malic acidity holding a taut line on a long and focused finish. Age-worthy. *12.5% TS*

91**\$49.00****JIM BARRY****Clare Valley Assyrtiko 2016**

The first release of the Greek white variety staple from the stalwart Barry family who had a vision splendid. It's light, bright, flavoursome and tangy. Shows lime juice in mineral water character, a puff of talc, a juiciness and then gone in a mouthwatering drizzle. It's a touch underpowered but that vitality is all there. *12.5% MB*

90**\$35.00****CHAPEL HILL****McLaren Vale The Parson Cabernet Sauvignon 2015**

A tangy and crunchy cabernet in a lunchtime claret style, capturing the fragrance and tang of the variety, with redcurrant and capsicum flavours, and grainy tannins. *14.5% TS*

89**\$16.00****MIKE PRESS****Adelaide Hills Single Vineyard Pinot Noir Rosé 2016**

An enticingly fragrant and floral release for Mike Press, with an air of rose petals and a core of juicy, succulent, generous, ripe strawberries and raspberries. A lick of sweetness neatly counters the tension of refreshing Adelaide Hills acidity. *13.9% TS*

91**\$13.00****OAKRIDGE****Yarra Valley Over the Shoulder Chardonnay 2015**

A compelling introduction to the celebrated Oakridge chardonnay portfolio, this is a friendly and engaging blend of Yarra vineyards that captures white-peach generosity, grapefruit tang and subtle toasty oak complexity in a finely structured style. *13% TS*

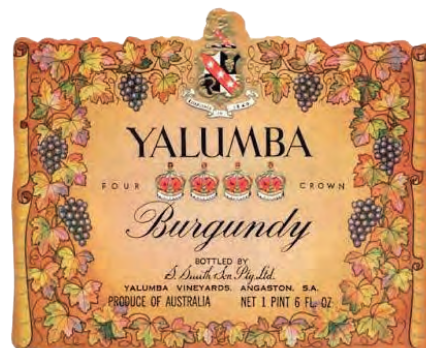
91**\$23.00****MIKE PRESS****Adelaide Hills Single Vineyard Chardonnay 2016**

This is an especially fragrant and pristine Mike Press chardonnay, alive with fragrant mandarin blossom, pink lady apple, even kaffir lime. The palate is impeccably ripe yet pristinely structured, celebrating the tension of high-altitude Adelaide Hills acidity. A tightly structured aperitif style. *14% TS*

90**\$13.00****CHAPEL HILL****McLaren Vale The Parson Shiraz 2015**

Black fruits, spice and dark chocolate unite in a particularly accurate expression of McLaren Vale shiraz for this price point, making for an appealing barbecue quaffer. *14.5% TS*

89**\$19.00**



The root of all good

Rootstock continues on its winning way. Tim Wildman MW spent some time there last year as both a volunteer behind the scenes and as a taster. He writes: “A weekend of inspiring friendships, generosity, fun and great wines. If you didn’t go this year, try and make it next year, either as producer, volunteer or taster. It’s also great to see Stuart Barclay and his team at Wine Australia taking a leadership role and lending a helping hand (and dollar) this year. It makes wine look good, fun and accessible to the consumer. It makes us look relevant to those international winemakers who visit. And at the same time it challenges us to be a wine community not a wine industry. And that’s got to be a good thing. Rootstock is the most important event in the Australian wine calendar. I can’t wait for next year. I just need to get some sleep first. Peace out.” Mike Bennie and friends should be applauded for having the vision to pull this event off. Sort of can’t imagine the Australian wine community without it, can you? ♦



Commonsense prevails

Wise heads have prevailed. WineTech 2017, set down for Adelaide this year, has been postponed by Wine Industry Supplies Australia (WISA). It would have made it three wine trade exhibitions in three years, following events at the Australian Wine Industry Technical Conference last year, and WineTech 2015. That’s too much for the wine industry to sustain – both for exhibitors and visitors. We hope WISA and the Tech Conference can come to an agreement surrounding exhibitions for the good of the industry. The same situation arose about 10 years ago and the various parties came together to sort it out. Let’s see the same occur. ♦

Peter’s pearl of wisdom

Legendary former BRL Hardy boss Stephen Millar made some interesting comments about Accolade Wines before Christmas. The company is at an interesting stage, having snapped up Lion’s premium wine portfolio. Private equity firm Champ is exiting the company and it will be listed on the ASX early this year. Stephen told *The Financial Review* that whoever ends up owning Accolade “will need to ensure a large chunk of sales still come from the mid-market commercial brands”. He said that while luxury wine brands bring extra prestige to a company, the engine room of profits is still the middle market. “Exchange rates change, trends change, markets change,” Millar said. A solid premium-end business in combination with a high-volume mid-market operation was the ideal mix, he said. “It’s got to be a combination of both.” No one told Penfolds, which is motoring along on the back of a surge in Penfolds premium wine sales. ♦

Yalumba persistence

We thought Yalumba had a good case taking Pernod Ricard to court over its Jacob’s Creek Barossa Signature range. We were wrong: Yalumba, which brought out The Signature, in 1966 got rolled. Nick Stock started a conversation on Facebook, having a crack at Pernod Ricard. His post got 239 likes. An unhappy Robert-Hill Smith had his say. That prompted Alexandre Rougeot to post this photo of an old Yalumba label with these words: “Trademarks are always challenging to defend as well as area of production. I remember some Yalumba wines called Burgundy and others called Champagne. Acting in good faith?” RHS shot back: “Alexandre, we do not deny, but this was a label from maybe 1964. A few things have changed in the Empire since then! We now have screw caps and viognier as well.” Still on RHS, something special is happening at Yalumba in February – so special that they have invited selected media to “the compound” to check it out. The invitation was in the form of a full-page handwritten letter by the man himself. “I don’t want to spoil the punchline too much, but it is about a wine that could only be made in Australia... and at Yalumba,” he writes. “After all the planning and thinking, winegrowing and winemaking and patient cellaring, we’d like to think that this wine will come to symbolise both our persistence and our track record of innovation as a company.” Impressive stuff. Watch this space. ♦