



Welcome to the CellarHand newsletter for September 2016. Here's a little taste of what's going on this month...

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AUSTRALIA

STEVE'S SYRAH

Remember how **James Halliday** called the **Jimmy Watson**-winning 2013 S.C. Pannell Adelaide Hills Syrah the “poster child of savoury-accented Australian red wine”? Well - emblematic, charismatic and extremely addictive - the poster child is back.

We're really pleased to present the latest release of this modern classic from Stephen Pannell, from the exceptional 2015 vintage in the Adelaide Hills. “I think and hope this will turn out to be one of the best wines we've made,” says the man himself. It's got all the hallmarks of the Jimmy-winning 2013: the lovely lift, bright, transparent fruit and spicy depth, not to mention the freshness and texture that have become a synonymous with the Pannell reds. If anything, you might say this 2015 is a touch more “grown up” – but without losing any of the instant charm and youthful exuberance that made the '13 such a bloody pleasure to drink.

2015 S.C. Pannell Adelaide Hills Syrah RRP \$40

This single-vineyard, cool-climate Syrah was sourced from Echunga, 410 metres above sea level in the southern Adelaide Hills. The fruit is grown on well-drained, granitic soil - Steve's preference for Syrah. Hand-harvested and traditionally vinified in small open-top fermenters. Aged for 10 months in large-format French oak vats and puncheons. Fresh cranberry and cherry on the nose, with

oodles of spice and dried herbs, plus white pepper. There's a hint of mandarin-like citrus in the background. It's the silky, slippery medium-bodied palate that's most interesting with this wine, though. The aromatics and flavours lead you into thinking it's quite light but as you taste it, the power and intensity unfurl to reveal density and spine, carrying it long through the finish.

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DREAM WEAVER

Huge congratulations to Geoff Weaver! One of the nicest men in wine had his Sauvignon Blanc declared Australia's best when his 2014 Ferus took out the trophy at this year's **James Halliday Wine Companion Awards**. He's picked up more than his fair share of accolades in his 40-year winemaking career but that doesn't stop Geoff greeting the latest with characteristic humility. "I'm really delighted that James has picked out our more subtle, understated styles," he says. "I've always felt that as a small winemaker, you can't be all things to all people, and you've got to stand for something. We do what we do; we're not trying to match popular trends, we're just trying to do the best thing that we can do."

Geoff was chief white winemaker at Hardys when, in 1982, he chanced upon a rundown hobby farm in Lenswood in the as-yet unplanted Adelaide Hills. He had to fight tooth and nail to buy that farm, begging the bank for a tonne of money at astronomical interest, but he knew it was right. A year into hand-planting it, the Ash Wednesday bushfires ripped through and destroyed everything. But he got back up and proved that his gut instinct was spot-on: the Adelaide Hills is blessed with some world-class cool-climate terroir.

Halliday calls Geoff "a master of his art", and indeed he is - but you'll never meet a more humble gentleman. Here are some of his masterstrokes.

2014 Geoff Weaver Ferus Sauvignon Blanc RRP \$43

"Wild yeast-fermented in French barriques and aged on lees for 12 months. It offers a rare combination of elegance and complexity, the latter achieved without any funky/reductive characters, the former with a combination of citrus, white flower and tropical flavours. Still cruising. 97 points." Sauvignon Blanc of the Year, James Halliday Wine Companion Awards 2017

2014 Geoff Weaver Sauvignon Blanc RRP \$28

"Dry-grown 37-year-old vines give moderate yields at low pH levels; an aromatic, flowery bouquet leads into a crisp, juicy palate that continues to accelerate all the way through to the finish and aftertaste. Fastidious winemaking has thrown all the emphasis on varietal fruit. A master of his art. 96 points." James Halliday

2013 Geoff Weaver Riesling RRP \$28

"Pale straw-green, this is a first-class riesling with a highly fragrant, blossom-filled bouquet and chock-full of sweet lime juice fruit on the mid-palate before mineral acidity drives through on the long, lingering dry finish. 96 points." James Halliday

2012 Geoff Weaver Chardonnay RRP \$43

"Light straw-green; wild yeast barrel fermentation in French oak and full mlf has woven a complex tapestry of stone fruit aromas and flavours; despite the mlf, the natural acidity remains to tighten up the finish of the palate thanks to the early picking - the acidity ex the vine must have been formidable, but there is no





semblance of green/sauvignon blanc characters. 95 points." James Halliday

2012 Geoff Weaver Pinot Noir RRP \$43

"Most attractive and clear crimson-purple; as ever with Geoff Weaver, a wine of impeccable breed and elegance, aided further by the vintage; the red and black cherry fruit of the bouquet and palate has a gently savoury flourish, the finish long and well balanced. 94 points." James Halliday

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SPRING INTO SCORPO

Wine writers are vociferously unequivocal about the fact that Scordo sits comfortably in the highest rank of wines from the Mornington Peninsula – or any of Australia’s cool-climate regions, for that matter. The latest write-ups from **James Halliday** only serve to highlight this, so we thought we ought to speak up, too.

These aren’t just consistent across the range and through the years; they’re consistently imbued with nuance, depth and texture. They are wines that - without ever raising their voice - resonate equally with the mind and senses, as the words below attest.

2015 Scorpo Pinot Gris RRP \$36

"Very pale pink; Paul Scorpo has a well-deserved reputation for his Pinot Gris, and this isn't going to let him down. Clear pear/poached pear fruit provides excellent mouthfeel, and the finish is long and well structured. 14% alc. 95 points." Halliday Wine Companion 2017

2015 Scorpo Aubaine Chardonnay RRP \$32

"It has a come-hither aspect but the back half is elegant and long. A class act. Beautiful white peach, apple and pear with seamless integration of cedary/spicy oak. Delightful. 95 points." Halliday Wine Companion 2017

2012 Scorpo Estate Chardonnay RRP \$45

"It takes excellence and challenges it to reach higher. It's complex and flinty with grapefruit and white peach flavours running pure and bright from start to finish. Fennel and cream notes play throughout, as do struck match/sulphide characters. 4 years young. Brilliant. 97 points." Halliday Wine Companion 2017

2013 Scorpo Eocene Chardonnay RRP \$55

"Just beautiful Chardonnay – almost knocked me off my chair when I tried it. Paul Scorpo's top selection from his vineyard, made only in exceptional vintages." Patrick Walsh

2015 Scorpo Rosé RRP \$32

"I really, really like good rosé. Not a bad thing having Paul Scorpo at the helm of one. Pinot Noir is the grape used, but that is by-the-by. Pale garnet coloured, pretty to look at. Dive into watermelon and raspberry scents, whiffs of floral things, sniff of tobacco and spice. Light in red berry and spice flavour but has fullness of texture to back it up – indeed, delicacy is refreshing and an asset. Light chew of tannin seals the deal. Rosé lovers apply here. 93 points." Mike Bennie, The Wine Front

2015 Scorpo Noirien Pinot Noir RRP \$32

"The word integration springs to the front of your mind. This is meaty, spicy and complex but it carries the various facets easily along with it, the fruit flowing at a fair clip. It feels skilful. It tastes terrific. 95 points." Halliday Wine Companion 2017

2014 Scorpo Estate Pinot Noir RRP \$52

"This is taking the slow road to maturity, due to small bunches and berries, ex rain-ravaged flowering. The depth & balance to its black cherry & foresty tannins assure rewards to those who are patient. 95 points." Halliday Wine Companion 2017

2010 Scorpo Old Vine Shiraz RRP \$43

"In excellent form, as is the entire Scorpo range. White pepper melts into black cherry-plum and woodsmoke. Offers a good burst of ripe fruit but it's characterised by its pepperiness. Spicy tannin spins through the finish. I can't recall a better Scorpo Shiraz. 95 points." Halliday Wine Companion 2016

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FRANC & BLANC III

Another windfall for customers of Airlie Bank. Tim Shand & Co.'s Cabernet Franc has turned 3, with the 2016 vintage right in the slot again. On top of that, the third iteration of Blanc is here. You may recall (but will be forgiven for forgetting) that first in this series is a skinsy, goon-bag fermented Sauvignon Blanc, followed by a sequel: skins n' stalk fermented Chardonnay described by **The Wine Front's Gary Walsh** as: "So out there. So good. Compelling is a good word. Love it." And now we have the third instalment. True to the Airlie Bank ethos, experimentation does not come at the expense of integrity; these are first and foremost quality wines. "Smashability with interest" – that's how Shandy himself frames it, and we couldn't put it better ourselves.



2016 Airlie Bank Blanc III RRP \$22

A proportional blend of Gewürztraminer, Viognier, Sauvignon Blanc. All parcels were wild yeast-fermented separately on skins, hand plunged and then basket pressed. They spent months in big, old oak and were subsequently racked to tank. No fining, minimal filtration, no stabilisation. This is the richest and most aromatically expressive of the Blanc series to date.

2016 Airlie Bank Franc RRP \$22

100% whole bunch Cabernet Franc blended and bottled in its youth to capture its juvenile vibrancy. This is a rustic wine made in big, old oak, not fined or filtered. First contact is a web of tannin that surrenders to a sweet, gooey fruit at the centre. Juicy and seductive, with notes of fernet branca, earth and bramble fruit. Tonic, red licorice and clove.

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TOP OF THE PIPS

Blink and you miss Philippa Farr's Pinot Noir. Unfortunately quantities are tiny, and the quality – well, let's just say the apple never falls far from the tree. Pip's Pinot is everything you might expect from the daughter of Gary Farr and a great site in Gippsland. She's been making wine under her own name since 2012, and those in the know rush back for more. The wines have the wild, earthy depth of Gippsland but also exhibit a real brightness and clarity. Texture and



structure share a family likeness with those being made by brother Nick over Geelong way, which ain't a bad thing, either.

2015 Philippa Farr Gippsland Pinot Noir RRP \$52

Fruit for the 2015 Gippsland Pinot Noir comes from an almost 20-year-old vineyard of MV6, which is grown in a red soil over limestone soil structure. The 2015 growing season in Gippsland was another ideal year. With good spring rain, the vines thrived and flowered well. Due to the wet spring the vines were shoot thinned and leaf plucked. Summer was kind with warm days and cool nights allowing evening ripening. The grapes were

hand-picked in early March. The ideal growing conditions produced beautiful clean fruit, which allowed Philippa to continue using wild ferment techniques and 30% whole bunches to produce structure and complexity. The ferment took almost a week to take off, with a short cold soak to begin. The wine remained patiently on skins for close to three weeks. It then went into 30% new French oak. The wine was racked twice over 15 months before going to bottle, with no filtration, to retain all its flavour.

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MACEDON MARCHES ON

Matt Harrop's move to really focus on Chardonnay and Pinot Noir from the coolest region on Australia's mainland is really paying dividends to the drinker. The shift started with those delightful wines from 2013, through tricky, low-yielding 2014 and continues into the absolute cracker that is 2015. From the moment we sat down with Matt to try these, there was no question that they'd disappear in a blaze of glorious drinking. From the open, generous three-vineyard Chardonnay to the intriguingly individual Pinot Noir from the winery's exceptional new site at Little Hampton, these wines are pure class.

2015 Shadowfax Macedon Chardonnay RRP \$32

Hand-picked between 27 March and 8 April 2015 from the Midhill, Cleveland and Glenfern vineyards. All fruit was whole bunch-pressed then naturally fermented in new (23%) and used French oak hogsheads. The wine remained in contact with lees in barrel till February 2016, then rested in tank for four months before bottling in June 2016. Pale straw, youthful green edge. Lovely early stone fruits, grapefruit, some small white flowers and a touch of complex reduction on the nose. White stone fruits on the palate - nectarine, peach - and some pithy grapefruit character. Excellent concentration with typical Macedon tension, the mid-palate is rich and fleshy. Some extract adds structure to the finish, and bright mineral acidity frames the palate beautifully.

2015 Shadowfax Glenfern Chardonnay RRP \$52

Planted in 1986, the vines stand in deep volcanic soils. All fruit was hand-picked and whole bunch-pressed then naturally fermented in used French oak hogsheads. The wine remained in contact with lees for 10 months before bottling on 10th February, 2016. Pale straw, youthful green edges. A complex nose of citrus, white florals, pear, wheatmeal and a touch of complexing reduction. Pear, citrus and fig flavours follow on the palate. This is a very powerful wine, long and very intense. Acids frame the palate and add structure. The finish is long and harmonious, with some extract extending the flow.

2015 Shadowfax Macedon Pinot Noir RRP \$33

Fruit from Spring Hill, Midhill and Little Hampton vineyards. All fruit was hand-picked and naturally fermented in open vats. Up to 30% whole clusters were included in each ferment, adding aromatics and perfume. After 22 days on skins, the new wine was transferred to new (20%) and used French hogsheads for MLF and maturation. The wine was bottled in February 2016. Medium red, bright edge. The nose shows black and red plum, Chinese five spice, some Campari-like perfume. A complex and engaging bouquet that evolves in the glass. Blue fruits, spice and bunch-derived cherry pip flavours on the palate. Textural and bright, with fine tannins framing the palate from front to back. It is tense and nervy as a youngster, and will continue to grow with time in the bottle. A wonderful expression of Macedon; poised and delicious.



2015 Shadowfax Little Hampton Pinot Noir RRP \$52

The first Pinot Noir Shadowfax has released from its recently purchased Little Hampton Vineyard. At 700m above sea level, this is one of the highest and coolest vineyards in the Macedon Ranges. All fruit was hand-picked and naturally fermented in open vats. Half the fruit was added as whole bunches, the balance lightly destemmed. After 27 days on skins the new wine was transferred to new (35%) and used French hogsheads for MLF and maturation. The wine was bottled in February 2016. Medium red, with excellent clarity and a dense red edge. A complex nose of spicy Pinot fruit, some red cherries, bay leaf and a hint of forest undergrowth. A wonderful, complex palate. The wine is bright and dense but wonderfully light on its feet. Red cherries, some sappy spice, framed by very fine tannins.

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GUZZLABLE GAMAY

It feels like Gamay has the world at its feet right now. Hard to think of a variety that better suits the surging demand for light, refreshing reds – nor a black grape that is riper for springtime slurping. To find one at RRP \$22? Well, that'll do nicely. This is Punt Road's inaugural Gamay, made for immediate and unbridled drinking pleasure. It's a single-block wine from the Napoleone vineyard - the maiden crop from vines grafted over from Viognier back in 2014.

Tim Shand kept the winemaking basic and to the point. One ferment was 100% destemmed, with a three-day cold soak. The other ferment was 100% whole bunch-fermented, with plenty of carbonic maceration going on over 10 days. The ferments were pressed together, then racked to old hogsheads. The wine spent six months on lees in oak. It was racked once to tank, then racked once more to the bottling tank. No fining, no filtration, no need to think twice.

2016 Punt Road Gamay

On the nose this shows redskins, orange peel, angelica root and juniper berries. Then on the palate there's cherry and char, some graphite and iron, a bloody note - but oddly there's prettiness running right through it, too.

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ONANNON THEY GO

The new line-up of Onannon wines is as handsome as the lads themselves. No surprise that these smart, sensitive winemakers would have made hay while the sun shone on Victoria's Chardonnay and Pinot vines in 2015. The wines have met with fittingly high praise from **James Halliday** in his latest tome.

If you missed the memo, this supergroup comprises Sam Middleton, Kaspar Hermann

and Will Byron, and it's now eight years since they made their first wine together. A friendship forged in winemaking studies was cemented in Pinot Noir and Chardonnay, with each of them serving stints at Coldstream Hills in the Yarra Valley in the noughties. Sam and Kaspar are still based in the Yarra, making wine at Mount Mary, while Will works at Stonier on the Mornington Peninsula.

To their Pinot Noir and Chardonnay focus, they added Mornington Pinot Gris and a Yarra Rosé in 2015 – and these are back. All wines exude great confidence and deft touch. If you're not yet in on Onannon, now's your time.

2016 Onannon Mornington Peninsula Pinot Gris RRP \$31

The vineyard Onannon manages in Red Hill has two acres of Pinot Gris. Handpicked and pressed immediately, settled overnight, then racked to a 50/50 mix of old barrels and tank. Seeded immediately. No MLF. The wine saw only minimal SO2 just prior to bottling in August.

2016 Onannon Yarra Valley Rosé RRP \$27

Made from Yarra Valley Merlot and Cabernet Sauvignon in equal proportions. The fruit was pressed to tank, settled, then racked to barrel and tank for fermentation. The wine was kept cold to prevent MLF and was then racked to tank, filtered and bottled in July with minimal SO2.

2015 Onannon Gippsland Chardonnay RRP \$41

*"A stylish Chardonnay with the abundant flavour East Gippsland can provide, protected in this instance by the exclusion of mlf. As it is, the flavour spectrum is firmly stone fruit/melon/fig, acidity the key in keeping the fruit under control, and simultaneously providing length. 95 points." **James Halliday, Halliday Wine Companion 2017***

2015 Onannon Gippsland Pinot Noir RRP \$41

*"From two vineyards, 6 days cold soak, open-fermented, matured in French oak. The light, but bright, colour gives no hint of the intensity and length of the savoury/forestry base to the red fruits of the long, finely structured palate. A wine of considerable finesse. 95 points." **James Halliday, Halliday Wine Companion 2017***

2015 Onannon Mornington Peninsula Pinot Noir RRP \$41

*"Good colour; has the power, line and length of its sibling, and adds a dimension from its plummy fruit. This has all the requisites for a 10+-year future. 96 points." **James Halliday, Halliday Wine Companion 2017***

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FRANKLAND REAFFIRMED

Just a quick one to tell you what we already know: Frankland Estate is emphatically at the top of the tree when it comes to beautiful, world-class, distinctive Riesling. **James Halliday** awarded both of the Frankland Estate single-estate dry rizzas 97 points in the **Halliday Wine Companion 2017**, while the off-dry Smith Cullam Riesling from the Isolation Ridge vineyard came within a point of matching them.

2015 Frankland Estate Isolation Ridge Riesling RRP \$41

"Detailed is the single word essence of Isolation Ridge Riesling with its citrus and wild flower blossom aromas and its compelling, perfectly balanced, ballerina-light imprint on the mouth. Is its own style. 97 points." **James Halliday, Halliday Wine Companion 2017**

2015 Frankland Estate Poison Hill Riesling RRP \$41

"There is always (of course) a difference between the Poison Hill and Isolation Ridge, but seldom is it more obvious than this year. This is immediate and naked power, with a cascade of lime and grapefruit flavours rushing through the palate, finish and aftertaste. Ripe, to be sure, but how enjoyable. It's an orange and apples comparison, yet with the same outcome. 97 points." **James Halliday, Halliday Wine Companion 2017**

2015 Frankland Estate Smith Cullam Riesling RRP \$52

"Has well and truly established itself in the wine community; the finish is a magical blend of flint and fruit, the residual sugar perfectly balanced by titratable acidity; great length. 96 points." **James Halliday, Halliday Wine Companion 2017**

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HEATHCOTE HEROES

These drinks make so much sense in the Australian summer. The Chalmers sisters have nailed it with their new releases. Kim and Tennille's 2015 Vermentino, 2016 Rosato and 2015 Nero d'Avola are now all line-priced at RRP \$27 - and each is clearly the best release yet. The Nero has been re-imagined. Tennille Chalmers experimented with four iterations of Nero for the 2015 Chalmers Project, and also travelled to Sicily - the home of Nero d'Avola - to learn from the best: Arianna Occhipinti of the eponymous winery. The 2015 Nero d'Avola is a pure joy to drink.

When it comes to rosé, Chalmers have always over-delivered, with every release of their textural, full-flavoured Rosato improving on the last. Using the best Aglianico and Sagrantino grapes from their most-prized Heathcote block, they produce a style that is dry, quenching and with a depth and intensity that belie its pale colour. With wild fermentation and zero additions, the all-natural acidity carries the fruit across the palate and the incredibly fine, discreet tannins implore another glass.

Vermentino has such lively citrus and wild herb characters, making it one of the most versatile white wines going. You can pour this for lovers of Riesling, Chablis, Pinot Grigio - even Sancerre - and all would enjoy it. Crisp, refreshing and an absolute star when it comes to food pairing. The hardest thing



about the '15 Vermentino is keeping enough in the fridge; once people are hooked, the bottles fly.

2015 Chalmers Vermentino RRP \$27

"These Italian varieties need acidity to keep their line and focus, and Chalmers knows that better than most. Lemon drop/zest, apple and citrus with a savoury nuance keeps this in the money. 93 points." James Halliday, Halliday Wine Companion 2017

2016 Chalmers Rosato RRP \$27

A unique blend from two savoury and tannic varieties; Sagrantino (70%) and Aglianico (30%). Both parcels of fruit were hand-picked, whole bunch-pressed, and vinified separately, with the Sagrantino parcel fermented in stainless steel tank and the Aglianico parcel fermented in old French barriques. This has a vibrant, pomegranate hue, with pretty aromas of red fruit. The palate is generous yet dry and textured, with notes of spice and candied peel. A balanced and complete wine, and a perfect summer drink.

2015 Chalmers Nero d'Avola RRP \$27

Nero at its juicy, approachable best, with lovely, long flow to the raspberry and red-plum palate. Undertow of tar and graphite minerality and a dusting of dry herbs. Smooth and satisfying persistence, and mouth-wateringly moreish.

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GLAETZER IN THE GROOVE

These two wines really need no introduction. Suffice to say that the 2014s were excellent and hugely popular - but are no more. Now we're onto 2015. They're excellent again and already pleasing the crowds.

2015 Glaetzer Wallace Shiraz Grenache RRP \$23

78% Shiraz (50 -80 years old) and 22% Grenache (50-110 years old) sourced from the famed Ebenezer sub-district at the northern tip of the Barossa Valley. Yields are 3.5 tonnes per hectare. Old-vine Barossa Grenache has a liveliness and structure that does not benefit from oak maturation; oak contact was thus minimised for the Grenache component to preserve the purity of the fruit. The Shiraz was matured for 16 months in 2- to 3-year-old oak hogshead barrels (80% French/20% American). Medium to deep garnet, a flash of purple on the rim. An enticing nose of dark plum, raspberry and lavender with hints of anise and ground spice. Black fruits prevail with touches of pepper and blackcurrant. Firm, savoury yet rounded tannins balance with brightness and lift.

2015 Glaetzer Bishop Shiraz RRP \$35

Exceptional old-vine fruit was sourced from the famed Ebenezer sub district at the northern tip of the Barossa Valley. Vine age 35-120 years old. Yield 3 tonnes per hectare. Fermented in 1 and 2 tonne open fermenters. Extended maceration was employed to enable good tannin development so the wine is soft and approachable early. Matured for 16 months in a mix of 40% new oak and 60% 2- and 3-year-old oak hogshead barrels (90% French, 10% American). Deep purple in colour, with layers of violets and cloves on the nose plus hints of mulberry and dark chocolate. Purity of dark fruits and cut plums on the palate with firm, savoury tannins, impressive depth and harmony.

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UN PEU BONHOMME

Hooray! The Mâconnais is on the way. The wines of André Bonhomme were a happy discovery during our scouting expedition for affordable burgundy at ProWein this year. The estate was founded by André and wife Gisèle in 1956, making it the first domaine of what is now the Viré-Clessé appellation. Back then they just had four hectares of vines which they'd inherited from André's father Joseph, who grew grapes for the co-operative in the village of Viré. The wines have always been bottled at the domaine, which now extends to 12 hectares of vineyards. These have been organically farmed since 2001 and certified from vintage 2014. Aurélien Palthey, the grandson of André Bonhomme,

has taken charge of the winemaking since 2008, following formal and practical training in Alsace and Meursault. He's supported by his mother Jacqueline (daughter of André), father Eric and brother Johan. Their focus is firmly on white wines (99% of production, all of it Chardonnay), built on minerality and firm acidity.

The vines have an average age of 55 years. Handpicking, gentle whole bunch-pressing and long, wild ferments are the go here. Both stainless steel and oak barrels are used in winemaking, with the duration of élevage also varying according to the specific cuvée. Bâtonnage is usually avoided in order to retain freshness and acidity.

Aurélien justly sees 2014 as a great vintage for the family, with favourable weather yielding wines with ideal balance of ripeness and acidity. We're really excited to present these wines – it's good white burgundy at a steal, so how else would we feel?

2014 André Bonhomme Mâcon-Villages Vieilles Vignes RRP \$38

*"(from 60-year-old vines; done in stainless steel and bottled in July): Bright yellow. With its bright lime aroma and calcaire lift, this reminded me a bit of pungent Sauvignon Blanc. Juicy, ripe and dense, with enough sweet fruit to avoid coming off as austere. Finishes with a bracing grapefruit note and a lightly metallic quality. A serious, stony, soil-driven Mâcon-Villages with good acid cut and perfume. 88 points." **Stephen Tanzer, Vinous Media***

2014 André Bonhomme Viré-Clessé Pierres Blanches RRP \$45

*"(these vines, which average 30 years of age, are planted at 380 metres on shallow stony calcaire; made in stainless steel): Reduced aromas of citrus peel and crushed stone. Salty, tactile and quite dry; denser than the Mâcon-Villages and also showing more acid energy from the active calcaire. Finishes with lovely lingering perfume and a late note of yellow grapefruit. Excellent potential here. 90-92 points." **Stephen Tanzer, Vinous Media***

2014 André Bonhomme Viré-Clessé Vieilles Vignes RRP \$52

*"(from vines between 75 and 95 years of age; spent its first 12 months in 25% new oak before being racked into tank for another 12 months): Pale, bright yellow. Pure peach and spicy oak on the nose. Juicy, lean and quite tight, with grapefruit and white peach flavors kept under wraps by rather sharp acidity. This very young wine, made from ten parcels on argilo-calcaire soil, will need at least a year or two in bottle to begin to express itself. Winemaker Aurélien Palthey told me the estate usually holds its bottled wines for a year but that this one will be released in January. 88+? points." **Stephen Tanzer, Vinous Media***

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ROMAN EMPIRE

Veltliner Doux Naturel? Read on - because this is your passport to venerable Wachau and beyond. “One of the world’s finest co-operatives, with some superb vineyard sites,” is how **Jancis Robinson**’s offsider **Julia Harding MW** sums up Domäne Wachau. Here in Australia its Federspiel Grüner Veltliner and Riesling have established themselves as go-to Austrian whites. That’s understandable – the quality and value is incredible – but you might just as easily say that this producer is sorely underrated, remaining in the shadows of the Wachau aristocracy. Perhaps that stems from a time when its chief feat, and one not to be underestimated, was marshalling a multitude of growers and turning their fruit into good, approachable wine at the everyday end of the scale. It’s time to update that perception. It’s seven years since **Jancis Robinson** credited Roman Horvath MW as being “responsible for the successful quality-oriented restructuring of the winery”. Roman’s still in charge, still only in his mid-40s, bristling with intelligence, energy and ambition. It shows in the wines.

Like many in Austria, Domäne Wachau had a very successful time in the propitious 2013 vintage, hailed as a once-in-a-decade harvest for the quality it produced. Now we’re looking at 2015, a year poised to match ’13 based on our tastings there this European spring. The go-to wines are back (they never really go away, thank goodness) and have been joined by a handy Zweigelt rosé, also in the “Terrassen” range. Another sign of the estate’s confidence is its decision in 2015 to go a little off-piste with a decidedly cool Vin Doux Naturel-style Grüner Veltliner. Stick that on the table and see if it doesn’t raise an eyebrow – or a smile. Smart wine, too. But really, this is the time to thank your lucky stars that the co-operative has a young maestro at the helm and access to sacred sites such as Achleiten, Kellerberg and Singerriedel.



2015 Domäne Wachau Grüner Veltliner Terrassen Federspiel RRP \$26

The grapes were carefully hand-picked from steep, terraced vineyards throughout the Wachau valley with its specific microclimate and meagre primary rock soils. A very typical, consistent Wachau Grüner Veltliner with plenty of fruit and a pronounced mineral character.

Bright greenish yellow; offering distinctive aromas on the nose of golden delicious apple, white pepper, some lychee and delicate herbal notes, hints of exotic fruits; juicy and medium bodied with crisp acidity, harmonious and spicy through the finish.

2015 Domäne Wachau Zweigelt Rosé Terrassen Federspiel RRP \$26

Most of the fruit is Zweigelt from Weissenkirchen, Wösendorf and Joching. The sandy loess soils in some parts of these villages yield particularly fruit-driven and elegant wines. Bright, vibrant pink; open and playful on the nose, with delicate aromas of redcurrant, ripe bramble fruit, wild strawberries and a little spice. It's fruity and medium-bodied on the palate, well balanced with refreshing acidity.

2015 Domäne Wachau Grüner Veltliner Achleiten Smaragd RRP \$64

Achleiten is a legendary vineyard in the Wachau village of Weissenkirchen. It's famous for wines with an inimitable mineral character. Dry stone walls dating back to the 12th century, which mount the steep slopes with their silicate-rich soil, dominate this vineyard's landscape. In the upper terraces, gneiss is the prevailing subsoil, the lower terraces are dominated by dark, schistous amphibolites. Bright golden yellow with shimmering reflections; expressive on the nose with intense floral notes, white peach, fresh herbs and spices, white pepper and a dark and smoky



minerality; the body is juicy and concentrated; a delicate density of extract and well balanced due to its refreshing acidity; tantalising vibrancy; long mineral and spicy finish.

2015 Domäne Wachau Grüner Veltliner Kellerberg Smaragd RRP \$64

The Kellerberg is Dürnstein's steep landmark mountain, rising up right behind the Kellerschlüssel (Domäne Wachau's baroque cellar castle). The vines root deep into the light-coloured "Gföhler Gneiss" which consists mainly of feldspar and quartz, covered by sandy loess soil in some parts. The strong Pannonian climate influence on Kellerberg yields full-bodied and complex, yet impressively mineral wines. Medium green-yellow with golden reflections; open and expressive on the nose, with dark and smoky spices, delicious stone fruit, white peach, some grapefruit and yellow apple. On the palate it's very distinctive, structured

and powerful with an enjoyable, crisp acidity. It's multi-layered and long with subtle spice and salty minerality.

2015 Domäne Wachau Riesling Singerriedel Smaragd RRP \$64

Singerriedel is a wind-sheltered, steep-terraced vineyard at the eastern end of Spitz, and is considered to be among the best sites in the Wachau. The stony soil accumulates autumn warmth until late in the evening. The old, weathered gneiss soil is covered by a thin layer of silicate-rich brown earth. Singerriedel is famous for ripe, concentrated Rieslings with typical stone-fruit aromas and a pronounced mineral character. Bright golden yellow with subtle silver highlights, this offers elegant aromas of white peach, melon, pineapple, yellow apple, acacia and wild herbs. On the palate it shows lots of cool fruits with delicate citrus. It's juicy but tight, with an expressive structure and a vibrant mineral character. It's long and full of finesse.

2015 Domäne Wachau Grüner Veltliner V.D.N. 500ml RRP \$62

Grüner Veltliner as you've never seen it before. This is Domäne Wachau's homage to the versatility of the grape variety: Grüner Veltliner fortified with Grüner Veltliner brandy from the Wachau. V.D.N. stands for "Veltliner Doux Naturel" in the style of the southern French Vin Doux Naturel. The grapes for vintage 2015 were hand-picked from the single-vineyard Kirnberg in Rossatz, on the Danube's dynamic south bank. The grapes for Grüner Veltliner V.D.N. were hand-picked in mid-October at Smaragd-quality and fermented in stainless steel tanks. The fermentation was stopped by the brandy addition at a final residual sugar level of about 85g/L. This gives the wine a wonderful sweetness, but still with powerful body and elegantly spicy aromas. The wine was matured in wooden casks on its fine lees until the end of April 2016 in order to gain additional complexity. Medium green-yellow with high viscosity. On the nose it's very open and accessible, with warm fruit aromas; stewed apple, hints of exotic fruit, dried herbs, intense dark spices, smoky tobacco notes, dark chocolate. Punchy and tight on the palate, full-bodied and elegant with lots of spice, balanced sweetness and refreshing acidity. Long and very typical of the grape variety.

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RHÔNE RETURN

This Côtes du Rhône red has become such an essential to so many – we thought it'd be remiss not to reassure you that the new vintage is here and in plentiful supply. As **Wine Advocate's** resident Rhône man said of the 2013 wines: "Readers looking for solid value, as well as good typicity, from the Southern Rhône should check out the releases from Pierre Amadiéu." Listen to the man.

2013 Pierre Amadieu Côtes du Rhône Roulepieerre Rouge RRP \$24

*"Offering lots of peppery herbs, forest floors and assorted cherry and currant-like fruit, the 2013 Côtes du Rhône Roulepieerre is medium-bodied, easy drinking and well made, with plenty of charm. A blend of 75% Grenache and 25% Syrah, it's a good mid-week drinker to enjoy over the coming handful of years. 87 points." **Jeb Dunnuck, Wine Advocate***

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'L' OF A VINTAGE

"Rarely have we seen so much anticipative raving from winemakers, grower associations and merchants alike than for the 2015 vintage," bark the acid hounds of **Moselfinewines.com**. "Comparisons were made with some of the greatest vintages ever, including with the magical 1971." Dr. Loosen's 'Dr L' Riesling is often the canary in the coal mine, so when it comes to deciphering what is hyperbole and what is truth, the good doctor speaks only the gospel. The new vintage always meets with eager anticipation and the 2015 'Dr L' more than delivers on all fronts. "After very challenging vintages in 2013 and 2014, this was a much more pleasant year... balm for the winemaker's soul!" enthuses Erni Loosen. "Under close to perfect conditions, we were able to harvest grapes with optimal must weights and acidity levels, producing wines in all quality levels." Price unchanged at **RRP \$24**, this is an icon of Riesling and first glimpse of the quality making its way to our land down under from this great estate. Why wait for the main course when you can tuck into this tasty starter now?

2015 Dr. Loosen 'Dr L' Dry Riesling RRP \$24

This crisp, refreshing Riesling captures the elegant and racy characteristics of steep, slate-soil Mosel vineyards at a very reasonable price. It's produced with grapes from contracted growers throughout the Mosel River valley who work closely with the Loosens to achieve excellent quality and superb concentration.

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MATROT OF MEURSAULT

"Excellent example of generic burgundy - has lively fruit, fine tannins and unexpected length, all at a good price." That kind of note from **Jancis Robinson's** faithful sidekick **Julia Harding MW** explains why we were so happy to find Matrot at ProWein this year. We were unashamedly, and somewhat unhelpfully, searching for the essence of Meursault - in an affordable guise.

Domaine Matrot is a sixth-generation family estate with exceptional holdings in the Côte de Beaune, notably six hectares of village-designated plots in their home commune, plus four hectares of premier cru vineyards in Meursault and Puligny-Montrachet.

Thierry Matrot observes the mantra that a wine should reflect its terroir and its vintage, and since 2000 has observed organic viticulture across all the vineyards in this quest. No effort is spared in the quest for a balanced, healthy, ripe crop. The Matrots exercise extreme care with barrel hygiene and temperature control during vinification, enjoying long and uneventful ferments for eight to ten weeks. They also check the quality of the lees



during the maturation process and adjust bâtonnage to the need of each parcel and vintage. Most of the whites disappeared in a flash, but we still have the very good Aligoté, a limited amount of Charmes and two vintages of the aforementioned rouge.

2014 Matrot Bourgogne Aligoté RRP \$34 screwcap

100% Aligoté from vines with an average age of 50 years. Pressed as whole bunches in a pneumatic press. Fermentation with indigenous yeasts in tanks over eight to 10 weeks at temperatures of 16-18°C. Undergoes complete MLF and is matured on lees for eight months. Racked once before bottling.

2014 Matrot Meursault 1er Cru Charmes RRP \$200

"This is sufficiently reduced that I would strongly recommend 30 minutes or so of aeration if you're going to crack a bottle anytime soon. Otherwise there is both excellent volume and intensity to the lightly mineral-inflected and solidly well-concentrated flavors that coat the palate with sap, all wrapped in a notably firm and built-to-age finale where a hint of bitter lemon appears. This lovely effort is definitely going to require patience. 92 points." Allen Meadows, Burghound

2013 Matrot Bourgogne Rouge RRP \$56 screwcap

"The expressive nose is very pinot in character with its almost entirely red berry fruit aromas that reveal hints of spice and earth. The delicious, textured, vibrant and detailed flavors exude a slight salinity on the clean, fruity and linear finish. This is clearly intended to be enjoyed young. 86 points." Allen Meadows, Burghound

2014 Matrot Bourgogne Rouge RRP \$56 screwcap

"Lightish cherry red. Juicy and with that tightness that I like from this combination of closure and wine style. Excellent example of generic burgundy – has lively fruit, fine tannins and unexpected length, all at a good price. Fine tannins are just right with the lightish body. 15.5/20" Julia Harding MW, jancisrobinson.com January 2016

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CHABLIS CHAHUT!



"I like Chablis to be clean, fresh, precise and go straight to the point, so we make our wines in exactly the same way, with no discrimination between the Petit Chablis to the grands crus." So said Guillaume Gicqueau-Michel when he was here for trade day, showcasing his sensational 2014s. It's exactly what he achieves, and what's won the domaine longstanding international acclaim. He's a relaxed chap, a self-confessed lazy winemaker who likes to confine the hard work to the vineyard. The winery is for cleanly, precisely finishing off the job.

The wines undergo long, temperature-regulated fermentation using natural yeast. This is followed by spontaneous malolactic fermentation. They then spend time in tank on fine lees, with as little manipulation as possible. The Chablis gets six to eight months, premiers crus 12 months and grands crus 16.

2014 Louis Michel Petit Chablis RRP \$41 screwcap

Portlandian soils on the right bank plateaux. Very stony topsoil, rich in organic matter. Fine limestone earth. Vines with an average age of 15 years.

**2015 Louis Michel Chablis RRP \$45 screwcap
375ml RRP \$29 / MAGNUM RRP \$96**

These vines are situated in the heart of the historic vineyard. The various soils date back to the Kimmeridgian period, with relatively deep clay loam, containing marl and marine fossils. Quite rich in limestone. The vines have an average age of more than 35 years.

2014 Louis Michel Chablis 1er Cru Vaillons RRP \$62

*“(a blend of very old vines and another parcel replanted in 1985): Very shy nose hints at stone fruits. Round and mouthfilling, with ripe stone fruit flavours complicated by a saline edge. In a sunny style, as usual, but from vines picked early. 88-90 points.” **Stephen Tanzer, Vinous Media***

2014 Louis Michel Chablis 1er Cru Butteaux RRP \$62

*“Here too there is an abundance of Chablis character present on the citrus and cool floral aromas that include notes of tidal pool, shellfish and algae. There is a bit more volume and concentration to the medium-bodied flavours that possess a refreshing salinity and driving minerality on the muscular, balanced and long finish. This won't win any awards for refinement but I really like the bold flavour authority. 90-92 points.” **Allen Meadows, Burghound***

2014 Louis Michel Chablis 1er Cru Butteaux Vieilles Vignes RRP \$72

*“Not surprisingly the nose is quite similar to that of the regular cuvée though the fruit seems ever-so-slightly riper. By contrast there is definitely more size, weight, volume and mid-palate concentration to the big-bodied and equally muscular flavours that deliver excellent power, punch and complexity on the impressively long finish. This is a classic Butteaux of power and muscle. 90-93 points.” **Allen Meadows, Burghound***

2014 Louis Michel Chablis 1er Cru Séchets RRP \$62

*“(from 45-year-old vines): Bright, pale yellow. Lovely lift to the aromas of lime zest, white peach and minerals. A step up in concentration of flavour from the Vaillons but also boasts lovely delicacy to its intense flavours of stone fruits, flowers and chalk. Fine-grained, smooth wine with solid spine; this will need a few years of cellaring upon release. More Kimmeridgian in its minerality than the Vaillons. 89-91 points.” **Stephen Tanzer, Vinous Media***

2014 Louis Michel Chablis 1er Cru Montmain RRP \$62

*“Here too there is good Chablis typicity on the citrus, floral and mineral reduction inflected green fruit nose. There is good richness to the sappy middle weight flavours that possess solid amounts of dry extract that also serves to buffer the moderately firm acid spine on the dry, clean and persistent finale. 88-91 points.” **Allen Meadows, Burghound***

2014 Louis Michel Chablis 1er Cru Vaurorent RRP \$72

*“A notably floral nose enjoys excellent breadth with its nuances of citrus, algae, pear and ocean breeze. This is notably richer than the Séchets with more volume as well to the mineral-inflected flavours that terminate in a clean, dry and beautifully complex finale. This is really quite pretty and should drink well both young and with 5 to 7 years of age. 90-93 points.” **Allen Meadows, Burghound***

2014 Louis Michel Chablis Grand Cru Vaudésir RRP \$136

*“A notably ripe yet cool array is composed of citrus, orange peel, sea breeze and floral scents. There is excellent cut and delineation to the mouth coating and terrifically intense middle weight plus flavours that possess an incredibly fine mouth feel on the almost pungently mineral-driven finish. This explosive effort will need a few years but the potential is clearly present. Worth considering. 92-94 points.” **Allen Meadows, Burghound***

2014 Louis Michel Chablis Grand Cru Grenouilles RRP \$144

*"Superb satsuma and apricot fruit with subtle iodine notes, a chiselled texture and floral finish. This parcel high on the hill often sees a gentle breeze which helps to protect the vines from fungal disease. 96 points." **Gérard Basset, Decanter***

2014 Louis Michel Chablis Grand Cru Les Clos RRP \$144

*"A fresh, cool and highly reserved nose offers up notes of white flowers, citrus elements, pear, green apple and a plethora of Chablis character. The mouth feel of the substantially-scaled flavours is really quite fine with lovely delineation and verve adding to that impression, all wrapped in an intensely mineral-driven finish that is clean, dry, balanced and notably complex. This classically styled beauty should amply reward up to a decade of cellaring. 92-94 points." **Allen Meadows, Burghound***



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