



Welcome to the CellarHand newsletter for June 2017. Here's a little taste of what's going on this month...

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DOMESTIC

IRREPLICABLE IRREWARRA

Irrewarra is one of Australia’s most brilliant winemakers pushing himself further, delving into new territory and giving voice to another captivating landscape. “It’s a site that demands attention,” says Nick Farr of this place in the heart of Western District farming country, approximately 150 kilometres south-west of Melbourne. The name Irrewarra is an Aboriginal term meaning “long spear throw”, and it’s partly the thrill of the hunt that drew Nick to this frontier.

Vineyard owners John and Bronwyn Calvert, of Irrewarra Sourdough Bakery, share with the Farr family an appreciation of honest, home-grown food and wine. Nick first started handling the fruit in 2012, and the Farris now have a long-term lease in place, giving Nick the freedom to explore a completely new challenge. The soils across the slope are a mixture of grey sandy clay loams at the south end, to dark brown loams with



fragments of buckshot and quartz gravels towards the north - all with underlying brown to yellow clays. Overall the soils remain very moist throughout the year thanks to the clay base and annual rainfall of 885mm. This gives a very attractive, damp-earth character to the fruit and wine. Harvest comes in April after a steady, drawn-out growing season, resulting in great fruit expression and a deceptively long, mineral palate.

Don't miss this chance to feel the thrill of the hunt, and share in its spoils.

2016 Irrewarra Chardonnay RRP \$66

30% new oak, full MLF. Pronounced, aromatic nose of white flowers, lemon zest and a suggestion of fresh pineapple, almond and clotted cream. A bit of rocky earthiness - but not funk. Looks really elegant, with no suggestion of heaviness. Nice piquancy and zest on entry before it goes to a smooth, mealy palate with lemon, lime and nectarine tones. Lovely length. The finish is delightfully buoyant, with a sense of citrus mist. **Ed Merrison, CellarHand**

2015 Irrewarra Pinot Noir RRP \$66

All MV6 clone. 30% new oak. A bit of garam masala-type spice on the nose, which is fruity (no whole bunch here) with raspberry and plum-like red fruit notes, plus an elegant lick of creamy oak. A sense of warm, damp earth, too. First impression in the mouth is round and juicy before a sharper sense of cranberry, cherry and peppery spice comes through. The depth is marked by earthiness and a cherry liqueur note, then light, clean, fresh and long through the end. "Almost white wine-like finish," someone said. **Ed Merrison, CellarHand**

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CULLEN DOUBLE

Congratulations to Vanya Cullen, who's pulled off a remarkable feat with not one but two best



whites in **Tyson Stelzer's** just-published **Australian & New Zealand Wines of the Year 2017**. Vanya's 2015 Cullen Kevin John was named best Chardonnay, and her 2014 Cullen Vineyard Sauvignon Blanc Semillon was no. 1 Sauvignon Blanc – as well as being Stelzer's top-scoring wine under RRP \$40.

2014 Cullen Cullen Vineyard Sauvignon Blanc Semillon RRP \$37

In the lineage of the great and long-enduring dry white wines of Bordeaux, this blend of 64% sauvignon blanc and 36% semillon captures an energy, tightly-coiled structure and intricately

*integrated fruit intensity that promises to outlive all other Australian takes on this blend. The sauvignon component spent six months in French oak (70% new) yet possesses the presence and confidence to effortlessly swallow its oak influence. A blend of fine texture, driving persistence, epic line and captivating appeal. 96 points. **Tyson Stelzer, Australian & New Zealand Wines of the Year 2017***

2015 Cullen Kevin John Chardonnay RRP \$125

To capture such character and presence and frame it breathtaking acid line, pure drive and persistence is

nothing short of astonishing. Vanya Cullen credits the vineyard, the fruit and the low-yielding vintage. It seems her stringent biodynamic regime has also contributed to building the minerality in her wines. From a hue of bright straw green, this wine projects glorious white peach purity and hints of anise. Five months in 73% new French oak puncheons and barriques has contributed impeccably and surprisingly subtle and perfectly integrated nuances of vanilla. Wisps of flintiness define a finish of outstanding drive, finesse and undeviating persistence. A thing of sheer beauty, it left me completely transfixed. 98 points. **Tyson Stelzer, Australian & New Zealand Wines of the Year 2017**

2015 Cullen Diana Madeline RRP \$135

Violet and subtle leafy perfume, pure black and red fruit, baking spices, aniseed and mocha. Medium bodied, the precision here, the generous delivery of flavour trimmed of excess, seems like the work of the truly gifted: how do you make it look so easy? Sculptured tannin, ribbons of clear acidity, and length that soars. Truly, a masterpiece of Australian Cabernet. 98 points. **Gary Walsh, The Wine Front March 2017**

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ONANNON ON A ROLL

Lots going on at Onannon. Watch this space for some big news in the offing about new wines, but now let's celebrate a couple of major accolades for this ensemble comprising Sam Middleton and Kaspar Hermann (also of Mount Mary) and Will Byron (also of Stonier). First up, Will has been unveiled as a finalist in **Gourmet Traveller WINE's Winemaker of the Year 2017** competition. And in the same month, the boys found out they're a debutant in **Matthew Jukes' 100 Best Australian Wines** list for 2017/18. Their 2015 Onannon Gippsland Chardonnay making the cut in this prestigious list from the UK wine writer. **James Halliday** once commented that "the world is their oyster". Good to see their string of pearls getting due recognition.



2015 Onannon Gippsland Chardonnay RRP \$43

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 Mornington Peninsula Pinot Noir RRP \$39

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**

2015 Onannon Gippsland Pinot Noir RRP \$43

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 March 2016

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SHADOWFAX CLOSE SHAVE

That was a close call. It was touching (if not surprising, given the popularity of Shadowfax as both destination and producer) that so many expressed their concern when a blaze broke out at the Werribee winery on 30th May. Thankfully, the admirable efforts of firefighters got everything under control in next to no time. No one got hurt and – as a secondary but important consideration – no wine was harmed.

“We're thankful no one was at the winery at the time and the fire teams contained the fire quickly,” said a relieved Matt Harrop. “While there’s damage to the kitchen and restaurant areas, none of the wine has been affected.” The cellar door and restaurant will be closed for the month of June for repairs and renovations.

In the meantime, if you'd like to drink in sigh of relief from grapes grown down at Werribee, here are a couple of options.



2016 Shadowfax Minnow Rosé RRP \$23

Salmon pink colour. It's piping in cherry, pomegranate, cranberry red fruit scents, dash of cinnamon, sniff of white pepper, some Turkish Delight sweetness too. The palate is juicy but holds some crispness too – it's right in that cranberry juice zone right down to those chalky, lightly chompy tannins you get from that drink. Really refreshing rose, lots of fun and interest. 92 points. Mike Bennie, The Wine Front April 2017

2015 Shadowfax Minnow RRP \$27

A blend of Grenache, Mataro, Roussanne and Mondeuse with splashes of Cinsault, seems quite exotic, but the sum of its parts works superbly. This is a pitch-perfect bistro wine that offers medium weight, juiciness and just a touch of crunchy acidity for freshness. It shows dark cherry, cola, green herbs and peppery spice character, with the mesh of those flavours and aromas completely seductive and moreish. A light chill wouldn't go astray, but it'll also warm the cockles in the colder weather. Mike Bennie, Gourmet Traveller WINE June 2017

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ALLAN KEY

It was great to have Claire Allan of Huia out to see us in Melbourne in the final week of May, sharing with members of the Melbourne wine trade the story of a thoughtful and enchanting biodynamic estate in Marlborough. Huia is a husband-and-wife operation run by Claire and Mike, who share a sensitive and cerebral approach to wine. They plough their own furrow, forthright and independent, but count as friends the likes of TWR and Seresin, who are fellow members of the Marlborough Natural Winegrowers (MANA) collective.

The range is fresh, layered, textured and – above all – subtle. Hard to pick a winner from them,

such is the coherence of philosophy and consistency of quality. The 2010 Blanc de Blancs - 100% Chardonnay, riddled by hand and with five years on lees under its belt – makes for an ultra-fine curtain-raiser. The Sauvignon Blanc, so much closer to Pouilly-Fumé than any notion of the Marlborough norm, sets the tone for the whites. Rounding out the range is red-fruited but decidedly savoury Pinot Noir.

2010 Huia Blanc de Blancs RRP \$41

100% Chardonnay from Marlborough's excellent 2010 vintage. The grapes were handpicked and whole bunch-pressed. The juice was then racked off to barrels for fermentation. A warm, fast ferment was encouraged. The base wines underwent full malolactic fermentation and were aged on gross lees in old French oak. The secondary yeast fermentation was conducted in the bottle and the wine was aged on yeast lees for 65 months. The bottles were hand-riddled over a five-week period before disgorging at the winery on the 16th, 17th and 18th August 2016. The 2010 Huia Blanc de Blancs displays a super-fine bead and good bubble retention. The nose shows fresh citrus and lovely fresh baked bread characters. Light citrus and peach fruit are beautifully fresh on the palate and the finish is creamy, lively and dry. - Claire Allan, Huia



2016 Huia Sauvignon Blanc RRP \$28

Two estate vineyards provide grapes for the Huia Sauvignon Blanc. The stony sandy loam soils of the Huia vineyard offer a tropical fruit profile while the clay-based soils of the Winsome vineyard provide herbaceous notes, lime and minerality to the wine. Around 10% of the juice undergoes natural fermentation in a mix of neutral and new French oak. The wine is fermented through to a dry style. Elderflower, red bell pepper and nettles lift the nose; the palate is fine and balanced and shows classic minerality. - Claire Allan, Huia

2016 Huia Pinot Gris RRP \$30

The Pinot Gris is grown in both the clay soils of the estate Winsome vineyard and the stony soils of the estate's Huia vineyard. During the winter, vines are spur-pruned to reduce crop potential; through the growing season, bunches are thinned for even ripening. After hand harvesting, pressing and settling, the juice goes to tank for fermentation. Two thirds of the juice awaits natural fermentation before being moved to neutral French oak barrels for fermentation and maturation with lees stirring. The remainder is inoculated with wine yeast and fermented in tank. A mixture of honeysuckle, pear, apple and quince aromas abound on the nose, followed by white peach and some spice on the well-balanced and smooth, dry palate. - Claire Allan, Huia

2015 Huia Gewürztraminer RRP \$30

Grown on the clay soils of Winsome vineyard, Gewürztraminer vines are prolific growers through the season and managing the leaf growth can be a challenge. The vines are kept as compact as possible with inter-row close planting, leaf plucking and some bunch thinning. After harvest, the settled juice is naturally fermented in tank or oak vat, through to a dry, aromatic wine. Rose petal, lychee and Turkish delight aromas abound. The luscious, ripe tropical fruit fills the palate through to a spicy, persistent, dry finish. - Claire Allan, Huia

2013 Huia Pinot Noir RRP \$43

Most of the grapes for Huia Pinot Noir come from the Brancott Valley, the remainder from the stony loam of the Wairau Valley. It's a mixture of old and new vines; some older than 20 years, others just reaching their first decade in the soil. Perfect dark purple bunches are hand-picked and then de-stemmed into tank. After about four days the grapes are inoculated with specific wine yeast and the fermentation begins. After two weeks, the wine is pressed off the skins and settled, before being racked to barrel and puncheon for malolactic fermentation and maturation. Black red fruits and smoky, savoury characters show on the nose. The palate has dark cherry, hints of blackberry, spice, chocolate and vanilla pod filling out a savoury, earthy, well-balanced Pinot Noir. - **Claire Allan, Huia**

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PANNELL PANOPLY

Tyson Stelzer is busy boy. Since establishing himself as Australia's pre-eminent Champagne authority, he's produced back-to-back reports on domestic sparkling that are exhaustive guides to all things fizzy in this land. His latest exploit is to focus on the still wines of the antipodes, with his inaugural **Australian & New Zealand Wines of the Year 2017** report published this month. One of the biggest winners in this latest initiative is national treasure Stephen Pannell, who featured no fewer than six times in Tyson's rankings. Among those wines were the superb but sold-out 2013 S.C. Pannell Koomilya DC Block Shiraz and 2015 S.C. Pannell Tempranillo Touriga. The rest are still in stock and in fine fettle.

2016 S.C. Pannell Nebbiolo Rosé RRP \$35

A beautifully focused and textured rose of delightfully pales salmon hue, elegant rose hip and violet aromas and understated wild strawberry fruit. It is bone dry and savoury, nuanced with understated tamarillo fruit. The real secret here is its texture, masterfully fine and beautifully refined, with tannin, acid and phenolics melding seamlessly into one on a very long finish, never bitter nor coarse. Masterful. 94 points. **Tyson Stelzer, Australian & New Zealand Wines of the Year 2017**



2015 S.C. Pannell Dead End Tempranillo RRP \$31

A delightfully spice first release from the oldest tempranillo vines in McLaren Vale, layered with sarsaparilla, bright berry fruits and notes of exotic rose bud. It culminates in a finely textured tannin structure of masterful poise and integration, testimony to Steve's deft hand in massaging tannins. Impressive. 93 points. **Tyson Stelzer, Australian & New Zealand Wines of the Year 2017**

2015 S.C. Pannell Touriga Cabernet Mataro RRP \$39

The fruit mince nuances of 50% touriga are scaffolded with the structure of 44% cabernet and the savoury twist of 6% mataro. The resulting combination of lifted, exotic perfume with deep, fine tannin texture is enticing, and this wine delivers it all with excellent, bright red berry fruits and outstanding length, laced together with Steve Pannell's magically textured tannin structure. 94 points. **Tyson Stelzer, Australian & New Zealand Wines of the Year 2017**

2013 S.C. Pannell Adelaide Hills Nebbiolo RRP \$62

Stephen Pannell is a master of tannin structure, and his Adelaide Hills Nebbiolo is testimony to his touch. Elegant and focused red cherry fruits and lifted rose hip perfume overlay a firm, finely structured palate of tannins at once intricately integrated and at the same time confident and enduring. This is a fragrant and lifted style of wonderfully ethereal texture and a persistent finish that promises great longevity. 95 points. Tyson Stelzer, Australian & New Zealand Wines of the Year 2017

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ANAPERENNIAL FAVOURITE

The first reviews have come in for the Ben Glaetzer's 2015 flagships, along with the news that Anaperenna has once again been selected among **Matthew Jukes' 100 Best Australian Wines** for 2017/18. This Shiraz/Cabernet blend – perhaps the pick of the pack in 2015 – is a favourite among those with a soft spot for classy full-bodied reds, having twice taken out a trophy at **The Great Australian Red**. In the same month, both this and its pure Shiraz stablemate, Amon-Ra, received their first critical write-ups. Glaetzer is always in the groove.



2015 Glaetzer Anaperenna RRP \$55

Robust, with gravelly tannins in the background and plum and mineral notes at the core. Espresso and cigar box details linger. The tannins firm up on the finish. Shiraz and Cabernet. Drink now through 2026. 91 points. MaryAnn Worobiec, Wine Spectator June 2017

2015 Glaetzer Amon-Ra RRP \$100

Rich, velvety blackberry and plum flavors show toasted walnut and sandalwood accents in this rich and generous red, which is spicy and detailed on the long, lingering finish. Drink now through 2030. 3,000 cases made. 93 points. MaryAnn Worobiec, Wine Spectator June 2017

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BALNAVES BONANZA

Seasonal drinking is a bit of a woolly concept – I mean, when isn't it a good time to drink great Riesling? – but there is a certain sense that these Balnaves reds really come into their own in the winter.

For the Cab fanciers out there – and we know there's a heap of you – check out the latest word from **Tony Love**. This is a wine writer on the lookout for great-value great drinking, for ordinary people. And he's found it, alright.

2013 Balnaves Cabernet Merlot RRP \$32

Cabernet in many guises is a Balnaves gift that keeps on giving, this classic duet has been berry-sorted and matured in 50 per cent new French oak for 16 months, revealing consummate regional characters such as black berry and currant, cassis, dark chocolate and subtle mint. It's plump, rich and rising mid

palate, with bright, lively fruit tang and some tannin tartness, the palate engaged and energetic. Try also a new "Entav" Cabernet/Petit Verdot blend as well. 4 stars. **Tony Love, The Advertiser** May 2017

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FLOWERDAYS' FAB 5182

Anna Flowerday of TWR really is one in a million. Following her star turn at Pinot Noir NZ this year, Anna has been invited to speak at the Terroir Conference in Shanghai in mid-December 2017. Sharing the bill with Anna will be luminaries such as Aubert de Villaine of Domaine de la Romanée-Conti, legendary consultant Stéphane Derenoncourt, Château Ausone owner Pauline Vauthier, and Rhône royalty Philippe Guigal.

Of course, she's totally modest about the whole thing, but why shouldn't Anna find herself in such company? The Flowerdays are people of intuition and conviction, full of humility yet able to articulate their story with crystal clarity.

And then there's the wine. Our feature drop this month is the Pinot Noir from the old vines on the Flowerdays' treasured home block, which carries the SV 5182 designation - the vineyard number given by BioGro New Zealand following its organic certification. This divine Pinot has had praise heaped upon from all quarters, with Tyson Stelzer the latest to chime in.

2013 TWR Pinot Noir SV 5182 RRP \$91

A mood of savoury complexity of beetroot and dried spice provides an alluring backdrop to dark berry/cherry fruit of well-toned refinement and fine-tuned, intricately ground, mineral-fine, silky tannin structure. It's tightly wound yet expressively characterful, very long, masterfully crafted and poised for a confident future. 95 points. Tyson Stelzer, Australian & New Zealand Wines of the Year 2017

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HEARTLAND HARMONY

A new look for Heartland's groundbreaking blend that is, for the second year running, supporting the campaign for marriage equality, with \$1 from every bottle donated to the official campaign. Sposa e Sposa is in fact the 11th vintage of Heartland Dolcetto & Lagrein. Under Italian D.O.C. rules it's not possible for grapes from different regions to marry. But in Langhorne Creek, where Ben Glaetzer works his deep-fruited magic with the Heartland wines, they believe in the freedom of grapes to choose their own relationship.

This is a match that will earn the blessing of anyone looking for a versatile, gluggable red with character. Lagrein actually dominates in 2014, with 54% of the blend.

The Dolcetto was cool fermented on skins for seven days before being crushed and matured in stainless steel in order to preserve the fresh, floral notes of the variety. The Lagrein was matured new French oak barrels after fermentation to create a rounder, softer texture.



2014 Heartland 'Sposa e Sposa' Lagrein Dolcetto RRP \$22

"Under Italian DOC rules, it is not possible for grapes from different regions to marry," reads the back label. This is a blend of Lagrein and Dolcetto, which would never be allowed in Italy. A dollar from every bottle goes to support the campaign for marriage equality. This is quite the marriage - blackberry and plum aromas are supported by oak and spice. 90 points. **Ben Thomas, The Weekly Review** May 2017

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CHRISSI'S QUARRY

PJ Charteris likes to quip that he conceived of this regional blend in order to keep wife Chrissi's hands off the single-vineyard stash. It's not even a joke; Chrissi would make short work of PJ's Winter Vineyard Pinot Noir given half a chance. And she's got taste (evidently - she's married to PJ after all), which means that this Central Otago substitute has to be up to scratch. The 2014 is the new vintage of a Pinot that's been a hugely popular part of our portfolio since we starting bringing in the 2012 iteration. For the verdict, let's go back to the expert. "Cracking Pinot; great value," Chrissi enthuses.

2014 Charteris Central Otago Pinot Noir RRP \$44

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THE NERO'S RETURN

We're rolling to the 2016 Chalmers Nero d'Avola, the second vintage with the white-capped burgundy bottle that signposts a slinky n' drinkable style that works so well. The grapes are sourced from Chalmers' top block at Heathcote, which gives a more elegant and perfumed character. It's 100% de-stemmed and wild fermented in open fermenters, then pressed into stainless steel tank where it undergoes natural malolactic fermentation. It's bottled without fining and with little or no filtration after about 6 months to retain freshness.

On the subject of Chalmers, Tennille and Kim were rightly rapt with the recognition their wines won in the UK's recent **Sommelier Wine Awards**, where the 2012 Sagrantino shone with a gold medal.

2016 Chalmers Nero d'Avola RRP \$27

Very vibrant ruby in colour, with wafts of raspberry and plum rising from the glass. Some red jube and cherry cola notes join the crunchy, pippy red fruit on the fresh and juicy palate. A little chewy tannin adds substance with nice, tangy acidity moving things along. Refreshing and easygoing. **Ed Merrison, CellarHand**

2012 Chalmers Sagrantino RRP \$43

This Aussie Gold medal winner was 'quite savoury on the nose with fresh cherry notes, and good structure on the palate, with dry tannins', said team leader Sam Caporn MW, adding: 'Feels very classically Italian.' Fellow team leader Simon Woods thought it 'supple and lush, plus some floral notes,

with a dry finish, but lots of red fruit, too'. A partner for 'rack of lamb with red wine jus', concluded Hakkasan Group's Olivier Gasselien. **Sommelier Wine Awards** May 2017

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IMPORTS

TIME FOR TAUPENOT

"The 2015 Red Burgundies: You Are So Going To Want Them" was how **Stephen Tanzer** of **Vinous Media** entitled his vintage overview, leaving no doubt as to what he reckons you should do with these wines. That report included the work of the dynamic brother-and-sister duo of Domaine Taupenot-Merme. **Neal Martin** of **Wine Advocate** liked what he saw at the estate in Morey-Saint-Denis. "I really admired these wines from Romain and Virginie Taupenot," he wrote. Romain Taupenot himself was upbeat with **Allen Meadows** of **Burghound**: "I think that they're going to please everyone from Burgundy neophytes to purists, as there are good ripeness and concentration levels combined with vibrancy and excellent terroir transparency," he said. "It's just about an ideal vintage." **Meadows** wasn't only moved by the words; he was persuaded by what he tasted. "I, too, liked Taupenot's 2015s as there are a number of lovely wines," he wrote in his report.



Neal Martin went on to evoke a suite of wines, from this warm Burgundy vintage, that were pure, focused and fresh across the board. "In some ways, they represent the kind of wines, the level of quality, that they have been threatening to do in recent vintages," he reported. "What I loved was the purity of fruit, the way that any over-exuberance of over-ripeness was mastered, even though relative to other growers, they were exactly the earliest to go out and pick. What marks the 2015s is a consistency across the board."

2015 Taupenot-Merme Bourgogne Rouge RRP \$64

2015 Taupenot-Merme Saint-Romain Rouge RRP \$80

2015 Taupenot-Merme Gevrey-Chambertin RRP \$149

*Good medium red. Pure, high-pitched scents of raspberry, pomegranate and blood orange. Juicy flavors of tart red berries and spices are a bit youthfully ungiving for village wine but convey excellent definition and lift. Tannins are firm but nicely supported by the wine's material. Plenty of energy here, along with attractive floral lift. 89-91 points. **Stephen Tanzer, Vinous Media** January 2017*

2015 Taupenot-Merme Chambolle-Musigny RRP \$163

*The 2015 Chambolle Musigny has a fragrant bouquet with raspberry, wild strawberry and rose petal aromas that are very well defined. The palate is medium-bodied with succulent ripe tannin, a keen thread of acidity, energetic and very fresh with a lively, vibrant finish. I doubt whether the domaine has ever made a village cru as good as this. 90-92 points. **Neal Martin, Wine Advocate** December 2016*

2015 Taupenot-Merme Chambolle-Musigny 1er Cru "La Combe d'Orveau" RRP \$297
MAGNUM RRP \$660

A cool, pure and elegant nose combines aromas of essence of red cherry, lilac, violet, lavender and plenty of spice components. The sense of refinement continues on the sleek, mineral-driven and wonderfully textured medium weight flavors that deliver fine persistence on the firm, complex, classy and well-balanced finale This is lovely juice. 90-92 points. Allen Meadows, Burghound January 2017

2015 Taupenot-Merme Mazoyères-Chambertin RRP \$495
MAGNUM RRP \$1072

The 2015 Mazoyères-Chambertin Grand Cru has a very intense bouquet with lifted redcurrant, raspberry, spice box and quite a noticeable marine influence coming through with time. The palate is medium-bodied with tensile tannin. This is very focused, almost athletic in terms of tension and somehow "nimble" in the mouth, no heaviness here (a great attribute in such a warm growing season). This is one of the best Mazoyères-Chambertin that I have tasted. 94-96 points. Neal Martin, Wine Advocate December 2016

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BIZE KNEES

These two Bourgognes, a red and a white, are a pathway to grace and inner beauty. They come from Lalou Bize-Leroy, a lady who doesn't do things by the book. She is, commented **Neal Martin** of **Wine Advocate** following his last visit chez Lalou, "a one-off who truly deserves the title of 'legend'". She's unique and elusive in much the same way as her wines are difficult to snap up or pin down.

This, though, is an opportunity to savour a drop of her enigmatic genius. The vintage in Burgundy was warm and dry overall, yielding whites that are "clean, pure and rich, favouring ripe orchard and soft citrus fruits over minerality," according to **Stephen Tanzer** of **Vinous Media**. "The 2015 reds are seriously impressive," was **Jancis**

Robinson's impression from tasting a broad assortment of négociant wines. **Decanter Magazine's** verdict was similar: "The red wines are truly great: rich, powerful and statuesque but almost always underpinned by juicy acidity."

The wines of the elusory Lalou were not, of course, included in those tastings. But whatever the norm is, she always soars high above it – even when the bar is as high as in the universally lauded 2014 vintage. From that year, Lalou assembled "remarkably good wines that without question transcend the general quality of the vintage," according to **Allen Meadows** of **Burghound**.

In fact, Meadows' comments on those Domaine Leroy 2014s goes to the heart of why she's so special - and cannot but whet the appetite of anyone who hankers to experience greatness in wine. "It's not so much that the wines are powerhouses of exceptional concentration," wrote Meadows, "so much as they are just so harmonious and seamless that you can't help but admire their grace and inner beauty."

2015 Leroy Bourgogne Blanc RRP \$140

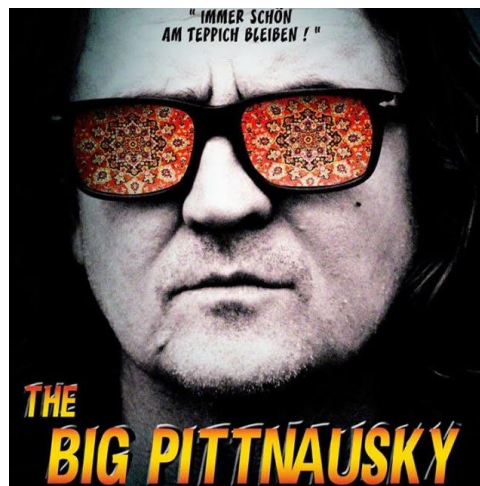
2015 Leroy Bourgogne Rouge RRP \$140

GOLS GOLDEN COUPLE

Please raise a glass – a Pitt Nat would be fitting – to our great friends Gerhard and Brigitte Pittnauer. The husband-and-wife team have just been awarded the coveted **Trophée Gourmet** for their outstanding wines and biodynamic farming practices by Austria's **A la Carte** magazine.

“Gerhard Pittnauer’s wines are as unmistakable as he is – unmistakable characters, memorable and marked with perceptible star appeal,” said A la Carte editor Christian Grünwald in awarding the prize. “What Pittnauer does with a regional grape variety such as St. Laurent, or with his Mash Pitt white wine cuvée, is a model for contemporary winemaking on a world-class level.”

The Trophée Gourmet A la Carte is known as Austria’s wine and gastronomy Oscar. This trophy recognises extraordinary achievements in viticulture, and the Pittnauers – founder members of Austria’s respekt-BIODYN group - biodynamically manage their 18 hectares of vineyards around Gols with total conviction. This accolade comes hot on the heels of Gerhard’s triumph as 2014 **Falstaff Winemaker of the Year** - and he’s won a legion of Aussie fans in the meantime.



2016 Pittnauer Pitt Nat RRP \$48

Delicious pétillant naturel rosé, where the fermentation is finished off in bottle. It has scents of candy floss, wild strawberry and cranberry with notes of dried herbs. The palate is creamy and textural with racy acidity bringing it to a super-refreshing perfumed, red-berried finish. Ed Merrison, CellarHand

2015 Pittnauer Dogma Rosé RRP \$35

Leering, lurid garnet colour. Lively with cherry pip, maraschino cherry aromas. Shows some spice and ruby grapefruit lift in perfume too. Palate is crunchy, tangy, more of the bright cherry kind of feel, so refreshing, so thirst crushing, feels just so darn good to drink. A little rub of tannin and extra tang to finish. Stacks to like here. 93 points. Mike Bennie, The Wine Front December 2016

2015 Pittnauer Dorflagen St Laurent RRP \$35

Almost too light, but you forgive the wine for its bright, frisky, gulpable feel. Scents of red cherry, sweaty herbs (in a positive sense), game meat, white pepper, amaro. Palate is in the cranberry spectrum with the same chalky feel. It dances on the tongue with perky red cherry fruits, savoury-meaty stuff, herbal character, a pleasing sour-bitter twist to finish. I absolutely wanted to nail my glass. And another. 91 points. Mike Bennie, The Wine Front April 2017

2014 Pittnauer Pannobile RRP \$64

A blend of Blaufränkisch, Zweigelt and St. Laurent from Altenberg, Ungerberg, Rosenberg and Goldberg. Spontaneous fermentation and matured for 20 months in used barriques. Unfined and only coarsely filtered. Vibrant purple in the glass with ruby tints. Earth, rhubarb, raspberry and a suggestion of firm cherry. In the mouth it's immediately so clean and fresh with fruit acids and flavours. A sense of the wild, too, with tarragon, pepper and a gravelly mineral feel. Tangy cherry and cranberry run right through. Tannin is really fine and fresh, and the length is good. Ed Merrison, CellarHand

2012 Pittnauer St Laurent Altenberg RRP \$85

There's a certain charm with Gerhard Pittnauer's St Laurent wines and he produces several off different sites, this planted on the Altenberg vineyard's slopes, opposite the Rosenberg. The fruit is just lovely, bound by savouriness though and an amazing aroma profile bordering on Middle Eastern and Asian spices. Sweet round tannins, textural, alluring, full-bodied, balanced with a mineral acid thread driving this to a persistent finish. 95 points. Jane Faulkner, Halliday Magazine May 2016

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TONI'S THEME

"In fact there are so many wines to buy from Prager this year that you need a big wallet and a great heart for Grüner Veltliner and Austrian Riesling." So wrote **Stephan Reinhardt**, almost wistfully, following his tasting of the 2015 wines from Toni Bodenstein. Such is the way with Prager, the guru of Wachau purity. You're left with a sense of yearning.

Yearn no longer. We have a pair of 2016s here, and – even better – you won't need a particularly big wallet to get in on the action. The wines we have are the single-vineyard Federspiels from Hinter der Burg and Steinriegl. They give just what you'd expect: sophistication and pleasure, pure fruit and inflections of minerals and spice.

If you have a heart for Grüner Veltliner and Austrian Riesling, then fill it with happiness.

2016 Prager Grüner Veltliner Hinter der Burg Federspiel RRP \$58

2016 Prager Riesling Steinriegl Federspiel RRP \$64

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NEGRONI AL NATURALE

If cocktails were saints, then the Negroni would be the patron one of the wine industry. A weeklong celebration of this exquisitely balanced aperitif kicked off on Monday, 5th June, so we thought we'd get in the spirit (sorry) of things by putting forward a way to mix it up naturally. Contratto Bitter was born in Canelli, Piedmont way back in 1933, and comprises 100% natural colours & flavours. The recipe uses a traditional process of slow, cold maceration and a combination of Italian brandy with 24 delicately infused herbs, spices, roots & seeds.

It looks cool, tastes awesome and is an enticing option for giving that old fave an original twist.

Contratto Bitter (1 litre) RRP \$47

A complex and balanced aperitif based on a combination of Italian brandy and 24 delicately infused natural herbs, spices roots and seeds. These include: aloe, wormwood, bitter and sweet orange peel, cloves, cardamom, gentian, hibiscus, enula bell, juniper berries, mint, rhubarb, sage, swertia, nettle, ginger and many more.

Contratto Vermouth Rosso RRP \$47

The herbal combination is based on the original Contratto recipe from 1910. Based on white wine (Cortese) with pure and caramelised cane sugar, Italian brandy, water and more than 30 different herbs and spices. These include: laurel, wormwood, sage, cardamom, lemon peel, clover, nutmeg, cinnamon, sandal wood, liquorice, angelica, rhubarb roots, pimento seeds.

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