



CELLARHAND NEWSLETTER August 2017

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

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THANK YOU

COME TO THIS

GAMAY GAME ON

Who doesn't love Beaujolais? Fresh, vivid and moreish, with wines from the pure and simple right up to complex beauties that are Gamay's answer to the Pinot of Burgundy. So please join us and a host of fellow importers for a public tasting of these wines at **Prince Wine Store** on **Monday, 14th August** from **6pm**.

This is the largest and most comprehensive Beaujolais tasting Prince Wine Store has ever put on, with some 16 importers and 50+ wines from great recent vintages. Tickets \$15 (refundable on purchase) available at <http://www.princewinestore.com.au/event/beaujolais-celebration/>

CellarHand will be pouring the following wines of Dominique Piron:

2014 Dominique Piron Beaujolais-Villages 'La Chanaise' RRP \$25

The cuvée is named after the house where Dominique Piron lives, and a bottling has been prepared for

CellarHand under screwcap. The vines for Piron's Beaujolais-Villages surround the crus on the hills of the northern half of Beaujolais. They mostly have an east-facing exposition and have sandy granitic soils comprising small stones that store the sun's heat and then release it gently during the night. This helps conserve the natural freshness of the fruit. These vines at 50 years old on average. 100% Gamay grapes are harvested by hand, selected on a sorting table, and given a very gentle, partial destemming before semi-carbonic fermentation takes place in cement and stainless steel. The fermentation never lasts longer than 8-10 days in order to preserve freshness.

2015 Dominique Piron Morgon Côte du Py RRP \$43

The big boy is in the kitchen. Dark cherries, raspberries, liquorice and sniff of spiced wood. Fleshy, open weave tannin, dark raspberry, cherry, depth and derring-do, crisp strawberry acidity, touch of meaty gamey stuff too. The finish is pretty long, closing with a satisfying chomp of tannin. Vigorous. 93 points. Gary Walsh, The Wine Front

2014 Piron-Lameloise Chénas 'Quartz' RRP \$43

From Dominique Piron. Very fresh red fruits nose with some peppery spiciness. Detailed and fresh with some raspberry too. Lovely elegance on the palate, which shows focused red cherry and raspberry fruit with some peppery detail. Floral, fresh and delicious. 95 points. Jamie Goode

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DOMESTIC

MIDDLETON MAJESTY



Congratulations to Mount Mary, the newly crowned **Winery of the Year** in the annual **Halliday Wine Companion Awards!** Mount Mary is a landmark estate not just of the Yarra Valley but of Australian wine history. In 1971 Dr John Middleton homed in on a site that could grow great wine, and identified a style that suited that site – and that people loved to drink, collect and share. The Middleton family has steadfastly stuck to its regimen of individuality and unimpeachable quality through decades of purposeful, visionary hard work. It's not right to say the reputation has endured; it has advanced. This isn't an estate of the past – it's one of the here and now, and of the future.

CellarHand has been privileged to work with Mount Mary since the turn of the millennium, and it's been a

pleasure to observe its progress.

We heartily encourage you to celebrate this magnificent family domain, and have a broad range of museum-release wines available. All these wines have perfect provenance, having been stored until now in the winery's underground cellars.

Please get in touch for information and reviews on the current and museum wines that you can track down – including these mini-vertical packs for people seeking a multi-vintage snapshot of this great estate.

Mount Mary white mini-vertical dozen pack RRP \$1400

Includes two bottles each of: 2013 Triolet; 2012 Triolet; 2011 Triolet; 2013 Chardonnay; 2012 Chardonnay; 2011 Chardonnay

Mount Mary Quintet mini-vertical dozen pack RRP \$1900

Includes three bottles each of: 2014 Quintet; 2013 Quintet; 2011 Quintet; 2010 Quintet

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RUN ON AIRLIE BANK

Brace yourselves for a three-pronged attack from dynamic Yarra Valley maestro, Tim Shand. Tim's Cabernet Franc became an instant classic when it first hit the shelves a couple of years back, and it's now onto its fourth vintage. It's joined by a textural, copper-tinged Pinot Gris fermented on skins, plus a juicy, stone-fruited Sauvignon Blanc, all from 2017.



2017 Airlie Bank Sauvignon Blanc RRP \$20

Harvested from Block 10 on Punt Road's Napoleone Vineyard. Barrel-fermented and bottled young for heightened freshness. Fruity Sauvignon Blanc notes on the nose - not that pinched, nettly sense you often get; does have a herbaceous

edge but this is almost stone-fruity with guava, giving expectations of fleshiness. Indeed, that's what you get in the mouth, where it's almost round and has a certain softness, with a nice zesty tingle through the finish. Plenty of flavour, easy to drink, and enough varietal character to tick that box. - Ed Merrison, CellarHand

2017 Airlie Bank Gris Fermented on Skins RRP \$23

Fermented on skins and bunches for two weeks. Pressed to old hogsheads; no fining or filtration. Pale copper colour. Enticing nose: bit of Campari, orange peel, clovey spice, apricot and perhaps strawberry. Impression is clean and fresh with fruit and savoury interest. Very recently bottled and still a touch washy on the palate, but the phenolic slipperiness works and there is flesh there - hints of pear, stone fruit, just-ripe strawberry - and it builds, with gingery spice coming in through the back with that nice amaro bitterness. - Ed Merrison, CellarHand

2017 Airlie Bank Franc RRP \$23

100% Cabernet Franc, with all the bunches going into the fermenter. Foot stomped once a day; pressed to large, neutral oak. Racked once by gravity; no finings. Very attractive bright ruby with a purple edge. Lifted raspberry, cherry, some bubblegum character; amaro notes too. Nice to sniff thanks to good lift to those red fruits. Entry has good, fresh fruit hit straight up front, a bit more tannin than in previous years but fruity and fine in nature. Nice bitter herb and pepperiness round the edges, and it's got a pulsing liveliness to it. Really satisfying, moreish drink - and there's finesse there, too. Raspberry fruit lingers on finish. - Ed Merrison, CellarHand

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CELEBRATING SANDRA

Another Yarra Valley icon, another bit of worthy recognition. Sandra de Pury of Yeringberg has been named a **Melbourne Food and Wine Festival Legend**, following in the footsteps of father Guill, who was accorded that same honour some years back. Since the Melbourne Food and Wine Festival began in 1993, a fresh batch of legends has been awarded each year, honouring chefs, restaurateurs, producers, innovators and culinary educators who've shaped Victoria's food and wine scene. Great to see this family of traditional Yarra Valley farmers recognised in this fashion.

2011 Yeringberg Chardonnay RRP \$79

Bright, pale straw-green; has embraced the move to earlier picking and less new oak; the structure, balance and length are all present, but the wine is still very closed and shy. The points are strictly for today, and until that unknowable date when it will open up. 93 points. James Halliday, Halliday Wine Companion January 2013

2014 Yeringberg Shiraz RRP \$85

Includes 2% marsanne and 1% viognier, 9% whole bunches, 9-12 days on skins, matured for 18 months in French oak (28% new). Bright crimson-purple; a superbly crafted wine with infinite attention to detail. Red and black cherry, with a faint touch of raspberry, balanced by a hint of bramble, make the task of deconstructing the palate nigh on impossible, simply because there will be so many different readings of its message - but with one exception: its undeniable quality. 96 points. James Halliday, Halliday Wine Companion 2018

2014 Yeringberg Cabernet RRP \$98

66% cabernet sauvignon, 11% cabernet franc, 10% merlot, 9% petit verdot and 4% malbec. Right in the mainstream of the Yeringberg style, refined but not apologetic. All the components make their mark, yet stay well within the cabernet family. Blackcurrant/cassis, cedar, olive and earth notes all combine, the tannins pitched to perfection. A long life ahead. Gold medal Yarra Valley Wine Show '16. 96 points. James Halliday, Halliday Wine Companion 2018

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NOCTURNE RETURN

They haven't been in the portfolio long, but Julian and Alana Langworthy have certainly made a splash. The suite of three wines from the Jimmy Watson winner and his multi-talented wine-/cheesemaker wife have gone through a vintage roll already. The new-release Cabernet is touted for an October unveiling, while the beautiful single-vineyard Chardonnay and rosé from Margaret River are out now.



2016 Nocturne Chardonnay RRP \$43

2017 Nocturne Nebbiolo Rosé RRP \$35

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ONANNON ON A ROLL

The boys at Onannon have been busy, setting themselves up in a new winery during the year of their 10th vintage together. They launched a new pair of single-site Pinots in July, alongside an inaugural Mornington Peninsula Chardonnay. All these wines are totally on song, showing exceptionally well throughout the activity surrounding their release and our trade day. This has been followed up by a strong set of reviews in the latest edition of **Halliday Wine Companion**. A talented trio, this, and they've really taken things up a level.



2016 Onannon Chardonnay RRP \$39

*There's flavour, texture and length jam-packed into this. The oak adding spice, depth and some structure, a mere component though, the stone fruit is laced with citrusy notes and spice. Nothing else to add. Just drink it. 95 points. **Jane Faulkner, Halliday Wine Companion 2018***

2016 Onannon Single-Site Leongatha Pinot Noir RRP \$71

*As with its sibling, no information other than 50 dozen made and the single vineyard is somewhere in Leongatha. It's a shimmering bright garnet with a purple hue, a core of beautiful ripe fruit, subtle with fine tannins, refreshing acidity and a savoury overlay that keeps this in the moreish spectrum. 96 points. **Jane Faulkner, Halliday Wine Companion 2018***

2016 Onannon Single-Site Red Hill Pinot Noir RRP \$71

*No details proffered other than 50 dozen made. It's exquisitely tuned with a core of tangy-tart cherry fruit, judicious use of whole-bunches and oak, really earthy all damp autumn leaves and wood spices. Sapid with shapely, raw silk tannins and satisfying with a denser structure compared with the Gippsland single vineyard wine. 96 points. **Jane Faulkner, Halliday Wine Companion 2018***

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DASH OF SPICE TRADER

This crazy-value red blend from Heartland is justly popular – stylistically it would have to be one of the most reliably on-the-money wines in the portfolio. Wine should leave you satisfied, in the pocket and on the palate, and Spice Trader never lets you down.

2014 Heartland Spice Trader Shiraz Cabernet Sauvignon RRP \$18

You'd have to say that this hits the mark pretty well. It's not too heavy, not too light, not too simple and not too complex. It offers berried flavours with licks of toast and malt, sweet spice notes humming in the

background. It's ripe and easy-to-drink; in other words, all is as it should be. 89 points. *Campbell Mattinson, The Wine Front*

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GRAND CRU GRIS

It's not often Pinot Gris hogs a headline to itself round here, but clearly there's a great Australian thirst for this variety. It must be said, too, that the best in Alsace, Marlborough (think TWR and Huia) and coolest Australia are turning out the odd transcendental wine being from this variety. Here's one of them, an estate-grown biodynamic beauty from Tasmania's Steve and Monique Lubiana.

2016 Stefano Lubiana Pinot Gris RRP \$35

There's some good colour to this wine, a touch of sienna in the glossy yellow, it says something about the shift in winemaking/growing at Stefano Lubiana. Geez, there's been some wind in the sail on their estate in southern Tasmania. This is top notch stuff right here. Biodynamic farming underpins the winery stuff. Go Steve, go!

Texture, energy, freshness and detail. It's got everything any fine white wine lover could want. Green apple, nashi pear, musk and rose petal kick off the drinking – a vibrant, fragrant bouquet. The palate is a tight swoosh of firm-fleshed white pear hemmed in with powdery texture and a sluice of gentle spice. It's long as, fine as, imbued with layers. Sheesh, this sits you back. Grand cru feel to the wine, so to speak. Epic gris. 95 points. *Mike Bennie, The Wine Front*

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FRANKLAND FOLLOW-UPS

The hits keep coming from Frankland Estate's so-called 'Estate' range. The Riesling, Chardonnay and Cabernet Sauvignon have all galloped onto a new vintage, all on show on trade day and looking fantastic.

2017 Frankland Estate Riesling RRP \$29

This wine was made from 100% Riesling grown according to certified organic principles in the family's estate vineyards. A selection of small ferments was made from parcels of fruit harvested in some younger vines planted in 2006 on a high ironstone rocky ridge in the ironstone "coffee rock" that is classic soil from the property at Frankland Estate. This combines with some of Frankland Estate's original parcels of riesling planted in 1988. Grapes are pressed immediately on arrival at the winery with the juice left to settle in tank over night before being racked. The wine was then fermented in stainless steel tanks at relatively low temperatures (less than 14 deg C) over 4-6 weeks with minimal intervention from our winemakers in order to obtain the purest expression of the pristine, organically grown fruit. The wine was then left on its fermentation lees prior to bottling.

2015 Frankland Estate Chardonnay RRP \$29

Frankland Estate has been working diligently on its chardonnay particularly in the vineyard and it's starting to show. Lemon-barley water, citrus zest with some ginger spice and daikon radish crunch to the mouthwatering acidity, linear and very refined. 94 points. *Jane Faulkner, Halliday Wine Companion 2018*

2015 Frankland Estate Cabernet Sauvignon RRP \$29

A blend of 95% Cabernet Sauvignon and 5% Malbec, organically grown. Hand-picked grapes from the Isolation Ridge vineyard were fermented as long and slowly as possible, at temperatures not exceeding 26°C in open-pot fermentation tanks that allowed the cap to be worked by plunging, and an extended maceration period allowed optimal colour, flavour and tannin extraction. It was aged in 500-litre French oak puncheons, this contributing textural complexity without compromising the opulent natural fruit flavours of the wine.

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RISING SON

2015 disappeared in a flash, but worry not – the wait is finally over with the arrival of Nick Farr’s 2016 Pinot Noir under the Farr Rising label. Nuff said.

2016 Farr Rising Pinot Noir RRP \$51

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CHALMERS CHANGES

The Chalmers family are enjoying a fine run at the moment, winning a couple of gongs on home turf at the Heathcote Wine Show, including the Chairman’s Trophy for their 2015 Greco. It comes as we have a spate of lip-smacking vintage rolls. The newest incarnation of Vermentino, Aglianico and Sagrantino all impressed on debut at trade day, and are now available for your love and enjoyment.



2015 Chalmers Greco RRP \$29

This is a super dry white of easy enjoyment, difference and some complexity. Apricot kernel, brine, almond and melon. Light bodied, but flavoursome, smooth glassy acidity, gentle powdery texture, clean finish perfumed with sweet herbs and ripe lemon. Very hard to stop drinking it. I don't know whether or not I'm rating it too highly, but gee it's good. 93 points. Gary Walsh, The Wine Front

2016 Chalmers Vermentino RRP \$27

This wine is made from our Heathcote Vineyard, which is planted on the rich red Cambrian earth of the famous Mt Camel Range. The 2016 Vermentino was hand harvested then whole bunch pressed 24 hours later and wild fermented on full solids in stainless steel tanks. The temperature of fermentation is limited to 14 degrees. It is bottled after about six months.

Textured and savoury, this medium weight vermentino shows aromas of hard Mediterranean herbs and golden fruits. The palate has fresh stonefruit and briny notes with a chalky mouthfeel and a lingering, pleasantly grippy finish of fresh acidity. - Kim Chalmers

2014 Chalmers Sagrantino RRP \$32

100% destemmed and fermented in open fermenters without a yeast addition. Fermentation typically goes for 20 days. The wine is then left on skins for a further 7 to 10 days before pressing into French barriques, 75% old and 25% new. Malolactic fermentation is natural. The wine is bottled without fining and with little or no filtration after about 12-18 months.

The 2014 Sagrantino is from our Heathcote vineyard where the vines are growing in a special site close to the top of the ridge in complex, rocky Cambrian earth. The wine is deep and robust with aromas of dark fruits, bitter chocolate, spice and tobacco. These characters are echoed on the generous yet elegant palate, supported by mouthfilling, yet fine-grain tannins and bramble accents. - *Kim Chalmers*

2013 Chalmers Aglianico RRP \$43

Deep crimson. Very pure, fresh raspberry and cherry, vibrant and succulent, and a little sleeker than the Italian pedant but with a vibrant finish. Really sleek and fine and linear. 17+/20 *Walter Speller, jancisrobinson.com*

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IMPORTS

LIGHTS! CAMERA! JACQUESSON!

Yep, it's here. The fruit is mainly from Jacquesson's 2012 harvest from Ay, Dizy, Hautvillers, Avize and Oiry. Winter was long and cold; spring and early summer were very wet and there were severe attacks of mildew. However, a superb end to the growing season gave the Chiquets a small crop of remarkable quality. The cuvée is completed with several reserve wines from previous 700-series wines.

"Cuvée 740 represents on average 95+% of the Jacquesson production," explains Jean-Hervé Chiquet. "It's really the wine of the domaine so the percentage of grape varieties does not vary a lot: 50% + Chardonnay; 50% or less Pinots, half of each. Plus or minus a few percent every year. We have replaced the percentage of each grape variety by the name of the villages from where we source those grape varieties, because the blend does not vary a lot and also everybody uses Chardonnay, Pinot Noir and Meunier, but only Jacquesson sources its grapes from Aÿ, Dizy, Hautvillers, Avize & Oiry." Premier and grand cru fruit only; a true grand vin de Champagne.

Jacquesson Cuvée No. 740 RRP \$115

From the 2012 harvest and five locations in Champagne. The farming is now biological/organic, the winemaking decidedly low intervention. Indeed, the wines sit on lees in barrel for their life outside bottle, unfinned and unfiltered. Sulphur addition would be on the very lower side for Champagne at 20ppm added and less than 40ppm total. Effectively, as natural-leaning as Champagne gets these days. All the info is on the label too. This is a super-doooper release too.

It's a marriage of toasty-richness and bristling freshness here. Compact in the palate with undertones of brioche, marzipan, ginger biscuit, with a coursing vein of green apply, tangy fruit character and lively oyster-shell-like minerality. The bouquet is attractive, a mesh of patisserie, honey and apple/citrus character. It pulses through the mouth with refreshment factor and light, palate sticking fruit-yeast

sweetness. It's gulpable and yet fine. It's stunning stuff. 94 points. *Mike Bennie, The Wine Front*

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PFALZ FRIEND

Dominik Sona is a seriously gifted, thoughtful individual who's doing great things at Koehler-Ruprecht. He came over for Riesling Downunder in 2015 and was just back here, grinning throughout, for a whistle-stop tour that took in Sydney, Adelaide and our annual trade day in Melbourne. Gradually these wines, revered in Germany and the US, are building a following in Australia as we learn about the traditional style of the estate and the role of time in shaping the wines.

There are two instructive quotes from commentators who've been following Koehler-Ruprecht for many years. **David Schildknecht** of **Vinous Media** says, "To my palate, there are scarcely any more profound dry Rieslings than the best Koehler-Ruprecht reserves." And of the estate's flagship site, **Best White Wine on Earth** author **Stuart Pigott** writes: "Kallstadt is home to one of the greatest dry white wines in the world. Yes, I'm talking about the dry Saumagen Riesling from Koehler-Ruprecht." We're really pleased that Dominik, cheerfully and patiently, came to remind everyone what all the fuss is about.



2013 Koehler-Ruprecht Steinacker Riesling Kabinett RRP \$32

The Steinacker vineyard has sandy soils with a pebbly surface. Winemaking is similar across the range. Grapes are harvested with up to five selective pickings by hand. They're crushed and then macerated between 12 to 24 hours before undergoing spontaneous fermentation. The wines are aged in traditional oval-shaped oak or chestnut barrels ranging from 300 to 2400 litres, with up to nine months on the lees. They are lightly filtered and bottled just before next harvest.

2014 Koehler-Ruprecht Kallstadter Riesling Kabinett Trocken RRP \$32

*The 2014 Kallstadter Riesling Kabinett Trocken represents the clear, fresh, lovely, precise, chalky, spicy-mineral world of the Koehler-Ruprecht Riesling world. Picked in the Annaberg and Steinacker, this is a clear and linear, very elegant and well balanced Riesling with a stimulatingly piquant and salty, stony finish. The wine has grip and structure, a crispy freshness and can age for ten and more years. There are white peach and mango flavors in the finish and aftertaste. 89+ points. **Stephan Reinhardt, Wine Advocate***

2012 Koehler-Ruprecht Kallstadter Saumagen Riesling Kabinett Trocken RRP \$43

*Citrus bonbon and catmint as well as other herbal and floral aromas on the nose of the 2012 Kallstadter Saumagen Riesling Kabinett trocken lead to a juicy and quite round palate that reveals a certain power and a good structure. The wine might currently be in a little valley and does not fly like the 2013 does at moment, but this might (hopefully) change again next year. However, there is grip and vitality and no reason to be sceptical about its return. 88 points. **Stephan Reinhardt, Wine Advocate***

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FRITZ BLITZ

With its neon green cap and cartoon label, Fritz has to be one of the more recognisable Rieslings going around. The familiarity extends to the wine in the bottle, too – that peachy Rheinhessen fruit with a citrus kick and whisper of slate. Slips down easily – so much so that Australia has swallowed all the 2015 we had, moving us at a rapid pace to the 2016 rendition.

It's too early to tell you, boy-who-cried-wolf style, what a fantastic harvest 2016 turned out to be in Germany, on the heels of the previous year's "vintage of the century". So we'll keep that quiet for now, and let you get on and greet your old friend Fritz as though that's all there is to it.

2016 Gunderloch Fritz's Riesling RRP \$23

Fritz's Riesling grows in a very small, special part of Rheinhessen called the Roter Hang. The name ("red hill") refers to the red slate soils. The Roter Hang is located between the villages of Nackenheim and Nierstein, 20 kilometres south of the city of Mainz. The red colour comes from a high proportion of minerals and iron in the soil. The vineyards are close to the Rhine, face south-east and have steep slopes. The combination of those four factors - the red slate soil, the proximity to the river, the exposure to the sun and the steepness of the vineyards - produces wonderful ripeness, lovely stone fruit characters, spice, freshness and aromatic lift. Dry, fresh and full of character.

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HATS OFF, HATTINGEY

What a delight it's been to have the nattily dressed Gareth Maxwell over in Australia, visiting from Hampshire and spreading the word about these fantastic sparkling wines from Hattingley Valley. We're so pleased we took the plunge with this estate; it's well and truly warranted the step. The confidence, ambition and skill of Hattingley Valley culminates in truly world-class wines, and the 2014 English vintage is said to be even better. Looking at these fabulous 2013s, that's really quite a prospect.

2013 Hattingley Valley Classic Cuvée RRP \$80

Chardonnay 48%, Pinot Noir 33%, Pinot Meunier 17%, Pinot Gris 2%. Acidity 8.3g/L and residual sugar 9g/L. 25% of the total blend was barrel-fermented in three- and four-year-old white Burgundy and Bordeaux barrels. The wine spent eight months on its fermentation lees, then 12 months on lees after secondary fermentation.



2013 Hattingley Valley Rosé RRP \$90

*This wine has some bite, in the best possible sense. Acidity is ultra perky, it's all red apple and white strawberry in the palate with a toothsome chomp that sits amongst the vibrant fizz of the wine. Fragrance is on point; red berries, vanilla, smoke. The wine is powerful, racy and very refreshing. The finish is so good – like a sip of fresh grapefruit juice. Those who like labels would call it 'an excellent aperitif style'. And it is. 94+ points. *Mike Bennie, The Wine Front**

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GOLDEN YQUEM

"I wish more German Pinot Noir (Spätburgunder) would come to Australia," wrote **Andrew Graham** of **Australian Wine Review** the other day. "We get the odd sniff – a wine here and there – but little more. That's why it was bloody exciting to try some of these wines from Bernhard Huber last week."

Andrew's sense of anticipation - and subsequent satisfaction - was evidently shared by a huge number of winelovers in Melbourne and Sydney who turned out to see Yquem Viehhauser. Yquem started making wine alongside the late Bernhard Huber a decade ago, and now assists Bernhard's son Julian in putting out Germany's best Pinots. "The other secret here is yields that can only be described as Grand Cru Burgundy-esque," Graham concluded. "When combined with ideal vineyard sites, the result is supremely concentrated wines that, in my opinion, are just as good (though very different) as Burgundy's finest." Indeed both Yquem - who more than lived up to her sweet, first-growth name - and these wines are pure class.



2013 Huber Baden Pinot Noir RRP \$49

As a bit of funk and smokiness, spice and cherries, autumn leaves and that kind of thing. Medium bodied, sappy and nervous, crisp and full of sour cherry and spice, light rasp of peppery tannin, and a brisk cranberry juice finish. Good stuff. Great wine for the table. 90 points. Gary Walsh, The Wine Front



2013 Huber Malterdinger Pinot Noir *MAGNUM* RRP \$124

Spicy and sappy, smoky cherry and plum with oak well in the background. Light to medium bodied, spicy and undergrowthy, with crunch of acidity and a fine dusting of tannin. A bit minerally and has precision, without being too strict. Finish is good too. Likely better with a couple of years on it too, though attractive now. 92 points. Gary Walsh, The Wine Front

2013 Huber Alte Reben Pinot Noir RRP \$96

Plenty of smoky whole bunch spice here, along with a fair amount of toasted hazelnut oak, dark cherry and dark chocolate. Lively and spicy in the mouth, a medium-bodied frame, cherries, sausage and roast nuts again, with a pulsating acidity, grainy tannin, and a long tangy finish, a mineral feel, closing with a distinctly umami aftertaste. Different expression of Pinot Noir, but so worthy. 94 points. Gary Walsh, The Wine Front

2013 Huber Pinot Noir Grosses Gewächs Sommerhalde RRP \$132

The Sommerhalde charms with a seductive perfume of exotic spices, orchard blossom and fine cigar smoke. On the palate things get a little more intense with lashings of fleshy plums and juicy morello cherries making the early running, only to be reined in by flavours of dark chocolate, dust from the grindstone, roasted hazelnuts and a subtle mix of herbs and spices. Still youthful, but already very elegant. 18/20. Michael Schmidt, jancisrobinson.com

2013 Huber Pinot Noir Grosses Gewächs Bienenberg RRP \$132

One of Huber's grand cru vineyards, with vines planted in the 50s and 60s. Finer, and more 'minerally'

than the Alte Reben 2013, though quite similar. Smoky whole bunch spice, dark cherry and chocolate, with raspberry filling, hazelnut and stony mineral stuff. Medium bodied, distinct 'minerality' here with pure acidity, an almost volcanic rock character, with brisk and bright flavour, raspberry packed with spice and a very long detailed finish. Crisp. Energetic. So expressive. You can almost taste the earth. Great expression of Pinot Noir. 95 points. *Gary Walsh, The Wine Front*

2013 Huber Pinot Noir Grosses Gewächs Schlossberg RRP \$164

None of Huber's Grosse Gewächse are short of fruit, but although the Schlossberg exhibits its fair fragrance of plums and blackberries, they merely act in support of a darker and deeper minerally expression. Shaved pencil, graphite and forest undergrowth represent a most intriguing and almost mysterious composition of aromas. On the palate the fruit of dark berries insists on its juicy ways, supported by fine spices, but then a cool stony notion takes command. Compact structure, full body and firm grip demand to be given time to agree on harmony. 18/20. *Michael Schmidt, jancisrobinson.com*

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ZORAH ZENITH

Funny how quickly you get used to stuff, especially when you love the taste of it. Seems like only yesterday we were scratching our heads looking for Yeghegnadzor on a map, and scouring Jancis Robinson's *Wine Grapes* for info on Arenì Noir. And here we are, on our third vintage of Zorah's Karasi, the Armenian wine that's found a burgeoning fan base here in Australia. For anyone who hasn't tried it, it's helpfully, tantalisingly evoked as Pinot-meets-Nebbiolo (or perhaps Sangiovese), and the man who conjures it into being is none other than the great Alberto Antonini.

2015 Zorah Karasi RRP \$64

Mid bluish crimson. Lovely small-wild-berry aroma. Spicy and darker fruited. 'Amphora adds more funk', says winemaker Alberto Antonini. Spicy and a little savoury too but the fruit is so expressive. Tannins are present but so fine and have the spice woven into them. A little saliva-inducing. Spice has infiltrated the tannin like the fat marbled through the most flavourful beef. Peppery and mineral, and complex and persistent. Refined but has a wildness and energy to it. 17.5/20 *Julia Harding MW, jancisrobinson.com*



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