



Welcome to the CellarHand newsletter for April 2018. Here's a little taste of what's going on this month...

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DOMESTIC

YERINGBERG'S FLAWLESS '15s

Sandra de Pury describes it as a “near faultless” season on the hallowed hill that is Yeringberg. “At Yeringberg we make elegant single-vineyard wines with remarkable longevity, such as the wines made in 1915 by Guill's father George, which were still drinking well at 80 years old.”

Remember 1915? Well, Yeringberg does. Its incredible history is well documented, and the way it continues to forge ahead as a standard bearer for the Yarra Valley is really something to celebrate. We tasted these wines in that gorgeous, atmospheric shed earlier this year and were truly moved.

The release comes when the quality of 2015 has been confirmed several times over, yet these will likely stop you in your tracks. Right across the board they exude the pedigree of season and site, as well as the judgment that only a few have had the wisdom and good fortune to accrue. “2015 will long be remembered as one of the great Yarra Valley vintages,” says Sandra.

Refresh your memory – and your senses – at every opportunity.

2015 Yeringberg Marsanne/Roussanne RRP \$66

A 59/41% blend, crushed and destemmed with some skin contact, matured for 10 months in used oak. Slightly brassy colour; a powerful, full-bodied and complex wine. Its track record of development in bottle - and the vintage - underwrites its future. 95 points. *James Halliday, Halliday Wine Companion*

2015 Yeringberg Viognier RRP \$45

Scented of ripe apricots, honey-coated toast and ginger with a yeast extract and roasted nut undercurrent, the 2015 Viognier has a pleasantly oily texture and a medium body, with a lively backbone carrying the spicy and savoury flavors to a long finish. 90 points. *Lisa Perrotti-Brown, Wine Advocate*

2015 Yeringberg Chardonnay RRP \$66

Scented of warm peaches, spiced apples and honeydew melon with compelling hints of honeysuckle, baking bread and marzipan, the 2015 Chardonnay has a beautiful satiny texture with an elegant, medium body and seamless line of refreshing acidity, finishing long with savoury yeasty/toasty layers. 94+ points. *Lisa Perrotti-Brown, Wine Advocate*

2015 Yeringberg Pinot Noir RRP \$98

Beautiful and pure right from the start, this is Pinot, if you know what I mean. It's both pretty and powerful, delicate and muscular, and most definitely a serious wine. The aroma is laden with notes of raspberry, cherry & spice, all layered with earthy, sappy, charcuterie complexity, and wrapped up in an intense and neatly savoury package. Old vines produce a palate that opens with depth and power, developing with air to display considerable elegance and refinement. There's a supple, red-fruit quality to



the mid-palate, plenty of spice and sappy complexity, and fine but powerful structure that promises a great future. With more time, the ripeness and richness of the fruit builds, as does the spice and rose-laden perfume on the long, enticing palate. In need of either a decant or 5-6 years in a cellar, this is lovely, serious Pinot. – *Sandra de Pury*

2015 Yeringberg Shiraz RRP \$85

97% Shiraz, 3% Viognier. All three 2015 reds have a sense of controlled power and depth, from the almost faultless vintage, with the Shiraz continuing to justify our decision to replant it in 1999. Beautifully controlled, quite pure and pretty, the new vintage is laden with aromas of blueberry, cherry, white pepper and Moroccan spice. Hints of liquorice, treacle, salumi and graphite add further interest to a suave and energetic nose. On the palate, it's all supple spice and savoury generosity to start with; then the mid-palate builds – serious, but in perfect

proportion, framing the deep, cool, sappy and savoury fruit as it flows confidently through this fresh and vibrant shiraz. A wine of real presence and a fitting testament to both site and vintage. Drink for 8-10 years, or more. – *Sandra de Pury*

2015 Yeringberg Cabernet RRP \$98

66% Cabernet Sauvignon, 13% Cabernet Franc, 8% Merlot, 8% Petit Verdot, 5% Malbec. Once again, the 2015 vintage demonstrates its quality in a wine that has always been a product of both site and the classic Yarra blend of Bordeaux varieties. Too many superlatives can always seem a bit crass, but in this vintage there's an almost majestic quality to the elegance, depth and structure of this wine – certainly in tasting it demands time and patience to give any sense of what's in store over what will potentially be a very long life. A reserved nose of cassis, blood plum, pastille and violets gives way to a cool, complex and restrained layer of cigar box, graphite, tapenade and Christmas cake. It's almost primal on the one hand,

yet manages to retain a sense of elegance and finesse. The palate is clear, deep and resonant; seriously yet seamlessly structured; pure, plush and generous; effortlessly restrained. Open well in advance if drinking soon, and certainly a wine to continue enjoying over the next 15-20 years. – *Sandra de Pury*

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BOOMTIME FOR BEN

Ben Glaetzer called it early. The fruit had barely come off the vine when he raved about one of the best harvests he'd ever seen – and this Baron of the Barossa has seen a few. When we visited Ben last summer, he was the cat that got the cream. He was in the midst of vintage on a baking hot day in the valley, and yet was fair dancing around the tanks as he reflected on the wines we're now presenting, a huge smile on that unmistakable Glaetzer dial.

The big boys are getting their day in the sun now, and they more than deliver on the promise of this wonderful harvest. Anaperenna: here's a blend borne of what might modestly be called "good vine material". Shiraz vines with a lazy 30 to 100 years under their belt, plus whipper-snapper Cabernet with 130 years on the clock. The wine wears all the concentration and depth you'd expect, but again with extraordinary cohesion and finesse. As for the Amon-Ra, UK critic **Matthew Jukes** – always a fan – gave it his highest ever score, marvelling at how it seemed "cooler and longer with beautiful balance" and "shimmers with refinement in the glass". "Elegant, svelte, long in flavour," is how **Mike Bennie** of **The Wine Front** described it. "Like this, even though reserved – beautiful." Hear that? "Beautiful".

2016 Glaetzer Anaperenna RRP \$55

84% Shiraz and 16% Cabernet Sauvignon. The Shiraz vines are between 30 and 100 years old, the Cabernet between 30 and 130. Yields are 2.5 tonnes per hectare. Fermented in 1- and 2-tonne open fermenters, hand-plunged 3 times daily. Matured for 16 months in 100% new oak hogshead barrels (92% French and 8% American, on lees to maintain fruit profile and animation. Bottled unfiltered to ensure minimal interference with the wine's natural characteristics. Deep garnet with bright purple hues. Lovely herbal lift with notes of blackberry, anise and spice box. Tightly wound, layered spice complements deep, dark fruit elements. Supple tannins contribute to palate length with well integrated seamless acidity. A wine that will mature extremely well with long term cellaring up to 20 years. – *Ben Glaetzer*

2016 Glaetzer Shiraz Amon-Ra RRP \$100

This is a wine of outstanding refinement. Ben readily admits that the early vintages of Amon-Ra were supposed to shock international wine commentators with their scale and impact. They certainly achieved their aim, but Ben knew that Amon-Ra really needed ratcheting back and this vintage shows the results of his gradual finessing and adding of detail. Cooler and longer with beautiful balance, this is a wine which will be sure to impress all-comers as opposed to just lovers of massive Barroisan reds. Using 95% new French and 5% new American oak hogsheads this wine has swallowed this carpentry whole and it shimmers with refinement in the glass. It justifiably gains my highest ever score for this label. 19/20 **Matthew Jukes**, matthewjukes.com



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MUM'S THE WORD

It was a big thank you – well, Nick Farr knew he had a lot to be grateful for. His father, Gary Charles (GC) Farr, had the foresight, skill and sheer bloodymindedness to plant and nurture these vineyards into some of the finest in all Australia. All the while his mother, Robyn Pamela (RP) Farr, played an exceptional supporting role (and she'd have put up with a fair bit!), which has continued with Nick at the helm. And so the close-planted project on the Farr's Côte Vineyard had to produce wines that were nothing short of great, as a tribute to Robyn and Gary.

It worked. The 2015 GC Chardonnay by Farr was, for many here at CellarHand and elsewhere, Australia's best Chardonnay of that auspicious harvest. The follow up is a belter, too. And here we have the first review of the inaugural Pinot Noir, a monument to the matriarch, and a wine that had **Campbell Mattinson** of **The Wine Front** "mesmerised". "Talk about good," he added. Well, don't just talk about it. Get it here!

2016 GC Chardonnay by Farr RRP \$115

*Medium yellow colour, with a slightly forward bouquet of toast, butterscotch, herbs and flowers. The palate is likewise slightly forward and open-knit, rich and generous, readily accessible and savoury with a long, drying warmth to its finish. The balance is good. There's lots happening here. A generous mouthful of classical chardonnay. Wonderfully detailed bouquet and flavour: a superb wine. 97 points. **Huon Hooke**, *The Real Review**

2015 RP Pinot Noir by Farr RRP \$115

*Funny thing is that this didn't grab me at first. I mean, I liked it, just not as much as you'd hope to like a wine priced at this level. I really had just pulled the cork and poured though; and this turned out to be important. This needs some air. Not a lot but give it 30 minutes or so. It seemed sweet and fleshy at first, because it is, but given time to breathe it turned drier and more sinewy, which isn't overly unusual but is kind of the opposite way around to what we're programmed to expect with Australian wine. The fruit doesn't open up; the structure does. Once this wine is in full flight we see incredible structure, balance, texture and length, and given that it's a By Farr wine complexity is a given. And so we march straight into elite territory. By the second glass I was mesmerised. Talk about good. It cost me \$100 to take the family to a movie, choc tops included, with water. The choc tops were kind of flavourless, I'd forgotten the movie by the time the credits started rolling, the water tasted of plastic. Know a better way I could have spent that money. 96 points. **Campbell Mattinson**, *The Wine Front**

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NEWER HUJA

It's a moving experience, seeing Claire and Mike Allan at the estate in Marlborough. You have the familiar backdrop – tranquil blue skies and mountain peaks – and there's you nestled in a little farm teeming with life. The buzzing, whistling, clucking nature of a biodynamic vineyard in rude health. Everything in the modest winery – the wine and the décor – done by hand, by the Allans themselves. You'd be hard pressed to find more personal, at-ease-with-itself space.

That balance of care and ease is to be found in these wines, too. As it happens, a whole bunch of them rolling vintage at once. The Allans' sparkler is always fabulous – they love fizz and had a heap of experience with it before starting out on their own – and the Sauvignon Blanc and Pinot Gris always exhibit lovely purity, detail and texture. And then we have - very handy - a delicious sticky rizza.

2011 Huia Brut Blanc de Blancs RRP \$41

*The grapes were handpicked and whole bunch pressed. Then the juice was 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 the yeast lees for sixty five months. The bottles were hand riddled over a five-week period before half the vintage was disgorged on 9th & 10th October 2017. The remainder was disgorged in March 2018. – **Claire Allan***

2017 Huia Sauvignon Blanc RRP \$28

*The Sauvignon Blanc 2017 was harvested from two BioGro-certified organic estate vineyards. The grapes were pressed, with the different vineyards kept in separate vessels. The Huia home block has well-draining alluvial river-run soils. The sandy silts and stones supply excellent drainage and retain the sun's heat overnight which contributes to the grape's ripe tropical characters. The Winsome vineyard soil is clay base mixed with black sand. Hotter days and cooler nights in this location create floral elderflower aromas along with red bell pepper and lime-based mineral flavours. A 30% portion was fermented in neutral French oak to add further richness and complexity to the wine. Most of the wine was fermented using one yeast that is accepted as organic and non-GMO and the only other fermentation yeast used are wild yeasts that live in the winery. The wines are not fined for clarity before bottling. Vegan and vegetarian friendly. – **Claire Allan***



2017 Huia Pinot Gris RRP \$30

*The 2017 Pinot Gris was harvested from the two estate vineyards which are certified organic through BioGro. The Huia vineyard soil is river-run made up of sandy silts and stones which retain heat overnight. The grapes from this vineyard display lifted floral and fruit-based aromatics. The Winsome vineyard soils are clay mixed with black sand. The nights are colder but the days are hotter and in this extreme climate the grapes show more weight and richness on the palate. The grapes were harvested on 4th April and 11th April. Both vineyards developed ripe flavours early in the season with grapes being fully flavour ripe at harvest. A mixture of wild yeasts resident in the winery and our non GMO organic wine yeast were used to take the wine through ferment. This wine was bottled in October 2017 with no clarification fining. This wine is vegetarian and vegan friendly. – **Claire Allan***

2017 Huia Botrytis Riesling 375ml RRP \$26

It's not every year that Mother Nature creates the perfect season for a lusciously sweet wine. 2017 saw a stunning example of botrytis (also known as noble rot) in our Riesling vines. Unlike the rest of the Huia

portfolio, the Huia Botrytis Riesling 2017 sure is sweet but has a lovely acid drive through the finish to ensure the palate is refreshed. Drink very chilled. - *Claire Allan*

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WINTER WONDERLAND

Tousle-haired winelover PJ Charteris just adores his Winter vineyard, the site off the hallowed Felton Road in Bannockburn, Central Otago. As the address would suggest, it's a heck of a site and makes a heck of a Pinot. With some time to really settle in, this museum-release Pinot Noir is – like the vineyard itself – in pretty much a perfect place.

2013 Charteris Winter Vineyard Pinot Noir RRP \$74

Hand-picked, 20% whole bunches, 6 days cold soak until wild yeast fermentation initiated, then inoculated with

*cultured yeast, 10-14 days post-ferment maceration, matured in French barriques (25% new) for 14 months. Red and black cherries; spice and fine-grained, but persistent, tannins give the wine excellent drive and length without compromising its finesse. 95 points. **James Halliday, Halliday Magazine***

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SÍ, PABLO

Shadowfax winemaker Al Timms is enjoying himself. These vineyards have been his home for a long time, during many a fun year alongside Matt Harrop. Now Al has the keys to the winery, and he's making the most of it. This duo made tremendous strides together in identifying cool, high-altitude sites in the Macedon Ranges that make the Pinot and Chardonnay that are the beating heart of Shadowfax. At the same time, they've coaxed out the charms of the highly individual home vineyard in Werribee, home to a range of southern French varieties.

The Pablo Escobar-fronted skin-contact Roussanne has worked up some delicious notoriety for itself, and the wafts of herbs, flowers and forest berries that drift from the '16 Minnow herald a delightful release of this Aussie original.

2017 Shadowfax Roussanne RRP \$27

Biggie Smalls finds his way onto the Shadowfax Mondeuse label, and Pablo Escobar is here on the roussanne. This wine sees some skin contact during fermentation then time on lees in barrel. There's lots of personality here. And great personality. Very savoury, all nuts and oatmeal, toast and halva, nougat and honey-laced-apples. Bouquet and palate. Has a richness, indeed this is at the fuller, bolder end of the white wine personality zone, but the gist is great, it drinks a charm, refreshment is there, texture holier than thou. Think nuts and ginger, ripe lemons and bitter green apple. Absolutely love this. Complex, personality dense wine of



high drinkability. Bring it on. 94 points. *Mike Bennie, The Wine Front*

2016 Shadowfax Minnow RRP \$26

From the Shadowfax vineyard at Werribee. It's a co-fermented blend of Grenache, Mourvèdre, Cinsault and Roussanne. Highly expressive red. Velvety but tannic. Light. Florals galore, blue- and red-berries, woody spices, animale, I'm sure there's more. In some ways it feels natural and free-flowing; in others it feels dry and tight. There's a great deal going on, and yet it holds your hand throughout. So very entertaining. 90 points. *Campbell Mattinson, The Wine Front*

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ISOLATION ITERATIONS

Frankland Estate was, predictably enough, a shining star at Riesling Downunder, the event it founded almost 20 years ago and has since turned into the world's biggest celebration of Riesling. But as you know, there's so much more to the story than that. In 2018 the domain turns 30 years old – much more to come on that – and by now the fabled Isolation Ridge has well and truly proven its chops with varieties other than Riesling. Chardonnay here ripens with great flavour, and still with the purity, texture and freshness of the Riesling. Shiraz, meanwhile, is ideally suited



to this climate. It has fragrance, silkiness and spice, as well as carrying that ironstone minerality that is a hallmark of Isolation Ridge.

2016 Frankland Estate Chardonnay RRP \$29

Organically-certified fruit for this wine was sourced from three different locations in the Isolation Ridge vineyard. The fruit is lightly pressed into stainless steel tanks and allowed to settle for 24 hours. The juice is then racked off its heavy lees to 500-litre French barrels for wild yeast fermentation.

Some barrel stirring through fermentation and post fermentation give it added complexity. The wine spends 10 months on lees before being bottled. Minimal sulphur additions made prior to bottling. – *Hunter Smith, Frankland Estate*

2015 Frankland Estate Isolation Ridge Shiraz RRP \$43

This will morph into something rather special - it's too youthful now but already it has the hallmarks of a finely-tuned, expressive Frankland River shiraz. Heady aromatics of florals, dark fruit, licorice, pepper and wood spices with chiselled tannins and clearly defined oak. Some creaminess on the palate adds another layer of complexity. 95 points. *Jane Faulkner, Halliday Wine Companion*

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MÉTHODE VANCESTRALE

Vanya Cullen has, fair to say, nailed the living daylights out of this estate's staples: red and white Bordeaux blends and Chardonnay. But even so, she's still restless in raising the stratospheric bar of wines like Kevin John, Diana Madeline and Vanya. And, of course, you want to see winemakers with such virtuosity, conviction and individuality push themselves. Who knows where they'll take you?

And hence it's great to present Vanya's pétillant naturel – a fresh and engaging interpretation of these immaculately tended vineyards. And for something a little more traditional, the '16 Diana Madeline is an absolute tour de force.



2017 Cullen Rose Moon Pétillant Naturel RRP \$53

This sparkling rosé is from the 2017 harvest and made of Merlot, Malbec, Cabernet Sauvignon and Petit Verdot. Some of the fruit was picked on a full moon and the wine is a 'rosé' hence the name Rose Moon fitting our biodynamic philosophy. It is a "pétillant naturel" based on the méthode ancestrale. The wine is bottled before the first fermentation is finished. This approach gives a vibrant, fun and utterly drinkable sparkling wine. It's 60% Cullen Vineyard and 40% Mangan Vineyard fruit, a blend of 37% Merlot, 27% Malbec, 27% Cabernet Sauvignon, 9% Petit Verdot. It's bright strawberry in colour, with a nose of guava, strawberry with some cherry undertones. The palate has

a creamy bead with strawberries dominating and some watermelon notes. Some lovely mid-palate sweetness adds depth to the wine. Cleansing and refreshing finish. – Vanya Cullen

2016 Cullen Diana Madeline RRP \$140

Here's a sleek wine of exquisite perfume and balance that treads lightly, but surely through the palate. Dances, even. There's a quiet storm of graphite tannin, red and black fruits, a distinct pencil and mineral thing going on, clean fresh acidity, and a wonderfully long finish. It's painting with water colours, to borrow a phrase, but gee it makes a beautiful picture. It's rare to find a Cabernet with this level of poise and control. Yet again, Cullen is leading the pack. 96 points. Gary Walsh, The Wine Front

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CLOS NOUVEAU

There has been a fair bit of conjecture about 2017 in the Clare Valley, and whether it might hit the heights of the fabled 2002 and '12 harvests. Certainly, it was a bit of a pearler for the noble grape, and clos Clare – sitting in the sweet spot, nestled there in the Florita vineyard in the heart of Watervale – is in prime position to reap the reward.

A lot of these wines hit the shelves very early on, sometimes before they mellow a touch and the acidity settles to heighten the charm of the fruit. Sam and Tom Barry wait a bit longer with clos Clare - and as this '17 shows, it's a blessing.

2017 clos Clare Riesling RRP \$32

As the third generation of the Barry winemaking family, we now hold the keys to this boutique winery. Riesling is the Clare Valley's signature variety and this is our ninth vintage from clos Clare's Riesling patch, adjoining the historic 'Florita' vineyard in Watervale. The 46-year-old dry grown vines were hand-harvested on



21st of February and taken to The Wilson Vineyard at Polish Hill River, where they were chilled for 24 hours prior to whole bunch pressing and vinification. The 2017 Watervale Riesling has beautifully lifted aromatics of apple, grapefruit and lemon. The palate has great drive and generosity of flavour, grapefruit, lemon and citrus peel, with a soft, chalky texture and a juicy line of acid. - *Tom & Sam Barry*

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PUNT PINOT PERFECTION

Anyone who's dabbled with the Gamay from Punt Road's 2017 harvest will have a foretaste of what got Tim Shand so shaken up about this vintage. The inherent detail, the beguiling purity and – here's the clincher – the most divine fine acid line, showcase a special year for some in the Yarra.



Tim dropped by the CellarHand office with the Pinot quite early on in the piece, grinning like a Cheshire cat. Easy to see why; this is an absolute beaut.

2017 Punt Road Pinot Noir RRP \$29

2017 is a very promising vintage, that may prove to be one of the best seen in the Yarra Valley in recent memory. Healthy Pinot Noir grapes were handpicked and given a five-day cold soak in two- and five-tonne stainless steel open fermenters. 20% whole bunches went in, with all fruit going through indigenous primary and malolactic fermentation, before being left on skins for four days post ferment. After fermentation the parcels were lightly pressed and racked to a variety of French oak barrels (20% new)

where the wine was matured for 10 months. Minimally filtered and fined.

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PANNELL SHOW

Stephen Pannell loves to reminisce on his vintage cameo at GD Vajra of Barolo and makes no secret of his infatuation with Nebbiolo. He's also adamant that if he's going to put his name to a wine, it'll be better than good from any which way you look at it. And if it doesn't leave you wanting another glass – and another several after that – then he's failed in his task.

No variety or blend is spared the Pannell perfectionism. Rosé, little more than a frippery for many a producer, is no exception. And ain't no way this man would ever be frivolous with the merest drop of precious Nebbiolo.

2017 S.C. Pannell Nebbiolo Rosé RRP \$35

Grabbed a bottle of this at cellar door on Monday, smashed it a couple of hours later. Pretty, fragrant, fennel, tangerine and white cherry. Gentle glycerol feel, balanced unobtrusive acidity, almost peachy, barely ripe strawberry and raspberry, with a fresh tang to the long finish. Dry. Yum.



There's a very slight warmth to the wine, very minor, but detracts from an even higher score. 93 points.
Gary Walsh, The Wine Front April 2018

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TASSIE DAZZLERS

Have you checked out **Tyson Stelzer's Australian Sparkling Report**? It's actually a pretty fine, committed piece of work, with a great deal of context on sparkling wines in general, plus specific detail on Australian production. Now in its third year, the report celebrates an area of domestic production that doesn't get the love it deserves on its home turf. It also can't help but shine a light on those estates that really put their heart and soul into growing, and crafting, fizz of distinction here in Australia.

One of those year in, year out is Stefano Lubiana of Tasmania. When Steve and Monique Lubiana snapped up their slice of biodynamic heaven on the Derwent River back in the '90s, the prospect of making world-class bubbles was foremost in their minds. Even as they've converted the site into the organic masterpiece it is now, with Chardonnay, Pinot Noir and Riesling achieving breathtaking expression, they've kept crystal-clear focus on making ever better sparkling wines, and it really shows.



NV Stefano Lubiana Brut Reserve RRP \$43

RUNNER-UP, SPARKLING WINE OF THE YEAR UNDER \$50

65% Chardonnay, 35% Pinot Noir; 100% estate vineyard Derwent Valley; 2014 base vintage with 10% 2012 reserves; no oak; méthode traditionnelle; disgorged September 2016; 8g/L dosage. Steve Lubiana's NV is layered with class and complexity, accurately conveying the pretty red cherry fruits of pinot noir and the lemon zing of chardonnay. Lees age has added toasty, biscuity complexity, while well-balanced dosage lends a subtle honeyed note to the finish. Cool Tasmanian acidity lingers long on the finish amidst the dry extract phenolic grip inherent to the rain shadow of the Derwent Valley. This is a benchmark style for southern Tasmania, and like House of Arras it achieves wonderful finesse in spite of low yields in this dry part of Tasmania. 90 points. *Tyson Stelzer, Australian Sparkling Report 2018*

2008 Stefano Lubiana Grande Vintage RRP \$63

RUNNER-UP, SPARKLING WINE OF THE YEAR OVER \$50

78% chardonnay, 22% pinot noir, 100% estate vineyard Derwent Valley, no oak, disgorged May 2016, 5g/L dosage. A year on from its release, the electric energy and youthful purity of one of my favourite vintages in Tasmania look set to sustain this cuvée for many years to come. Primary lemon, apple and white peach fruit of great purity and structure are sensitively massaged by the almond meal, nougat and brioche of maturity. One of the highlights of my Tasmanian Sparkling Showcase in New York City in late 2017, it's my go-to order whenever I spot it on a wine list. Every bottle I've tasted has been stunning, charged with a dynamism that looks nothing like a decade of age, yet with a silky texture that can only come from long lees age. Steve Lubiana has captured this elegant and enduring season with a grace rarely achieved in southern Tasmania. 95 points. *Tyson Stelzer, Australian Sparkling Report 2018*

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IMPORTS

THE CONSTANT GARDENER

It was, naturally, great to be in France in spring. Among myriad highlights, it was a reminder just how revered André Ostertag is in his homeland, the full charms of the estate gracing every great wine list in Paris and Beaune, and across the border in neighbouring Germany.

André is a treasure, and he's a man who treasures nature as highly as any other being on planet wine. It's apt, then, this reimagining of the so-called vins de fruit of his range, now known as Les Jardins du Domaine Ostertag. As André explains: "For the winegrower who is dedicated to his land and proud of his roots, it's a precious advantage to be able to harvest the fruit of multiple and all different terroirs, exploring the full potential of each plot, catching the expression of a place in



a wine, allowing each and every small garden of vines to show its real personality."

In this context indeed, a winegrower is just like a gardener. Each vine with its soil, sub-soil, microclimate, plant, endemic flora and fauna has its own expression, needs and cycle that growers need to take into account whenever they act.

"At Domaine Ostertag, our winegrowing reality is based entirely on this diversity," he continues. "We grow vines on 88 different plots that gather 172 actual cadastral parcels, all of that from five villages; 88 small gardens of vines that we look after with a constant care to highlight each place's own identity.

Just like in gardening, the work is strenuous but

always driven by a strong sense of aesthetics, harmony and balance that are inseparable from the notion of great wine."

The Pinot Blanc and Pinot Gris have lost their *barriques* moniker, and appear alongside the Riesling that, once composed solely of Epfig fruit, now brings together Ostertag's gardens in Epfig, Itterswiller and Nothalten. Also on this shipment is the Riesling from André's outstanding Muenchberg grand cru.

2016 Ostertag Pinot Blanc Les Jardins RRP \$43

Six gardens of vines in Epfig, in the domaine garden and the Fronholz, on two natures of soil: clay and silt; marl and sandstone.

2016 Ostertag Riesling Les Jardins RRP \$49

13 gardens of vines in Epfig, Itterswiller and Nothalten, on three natures of soil based on Vosges red sandstone: sand and sandstone; clay and sandstone; sandstone and volcanic.

2016 Ostertag Pinot Gris Les Jardins RRP \$62

Four gardens of vines in Epfig, Itterswiller and Albé, on three natures of soil: clay and sandstone; loess; schist.

2016 Ostertag Riesling Muenchberg Grand Cru RRP \$107

Muenchberg means the "mountain of the monks" and was first planted in the 12th century by the Cistercian monks. We own 2.05Ha of which 1.65Ha are planted with Riesling. Muenchberg is one of the

most unique grands crus of Alsace because of its very particular soil of red sandstone and volcanic sediments. It's a wonderful south-facing amphitheatre of vines in a closed valley, in the Vosges foothills, protected to the west by the 901m Ungersberg peak. The altitude ranges between 250 and 300m which prevents excessive heat and helps to keep complexity in the wines. Like all the domaine's vineyard the Riesling vines are farmed using biodynamic principles, and certified organic. We pay particular attention to manual tasks on the vines, because machines may be sometimes necessary but they will never have "man's hand's intelligent sensitivity". – *André Ostertag*

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MÂCON MARVEL

Bonhomme has proved a blessing on multiple fronts. Let's start with the one that really counts: This certified-organic family estate, the first domaine of Viré-Clessé – arguably the finest appellation of the Mâconnais – makes beltingly good white burgundy that is a respectful, enthralling expression of its myriad terroirs.

The indirect – but significant – advantages of these wines are that they are available at a time when great white burgundy options are scarce and spiralling in cost. The value here, as well as the definition and quality, is quite breathtaking, and we're really pleased to see this family's star rise here in Australia.

2016 Bonhomme Viré-Clessé Pierres Blanches RRP \$43

(bottled three weeks prior to my October visit; also made in stainless steel; the main portion of this cuvée is from vines between 10 and 45 years of age on thin soil on the top of the hillside; Palthey noted that he had to break the limestone to plant these vines): Light-medium yellow. Distinctly smokier on the nose than the Mâcon-Villages Vieilles Vignes, offering aromas of yellow fruits and minerals. A very rich, savoury wine with an almost dusty texture and captivating pungent minerality. Finishes very long and dry, with a touch of bitterness. This youthfully austere wine will show spice and toasted bread notes six or seven years from now but it will also make delicious early drinking for its fresh fruit and adamant minerality. 90 points. *Stephen Tanzer, Vinous Media* November 2017



2016 Bonhomme Viré-Clessé Vieilles Vignes RRP \$53

375ml RRP \$32

MAGNUM RRP \$115

(bottled in August; Bonhomme made 60 hectolitres per hectare): Bright, green-tinged yellow. Musky, mellow aromas of peach and flowers, plus a hint of honey. Fat, fine-grained and silky, offering a touch of sweetness to its peach and floral flavors buffered by edgy citrusy acidity. Doesn't have the cut and grip of a more concentrated vintage but does not lack for energy. 88 points. *Stephen Tanzer, Vinous Media* November 2017

2015 Bonhomme Viré-Clessé Les Prêtres de Quintaine RRP \$81

(bottled three weeks ago; from 100+-year-old vines that produced 30 hectolitres per hectare in 2015; 25% new oak; from marl and white clay soil): Medium yellow. Captivating nose offers yellow and white stone fruits, quince, white pepper, spices, white flowers, menthol and smoky minerality. Densely packed and fairly full but conveys a lighter touch and sharper definition than the Vieilles Vignes bottling, with an impression of higher acidity. But this salty, chewy wine is quite backward and tight. Palthey notes that Quintaine normally produces a rounder style of wine, while Viré is more powerful, but this 2015 hardly lacks for structure or strength. 92 points. *Stephen Tanzer, Vinous Media* November 2017

2015 Bonhomme Viré-Clessé Le Côteau de l'Épinet RRP \$91

(bottled in mid-September; from 95-year-old vines in the northern part of Viré; made in the same age and toast of barrels as the Prêtres de Quintaine and Hauts de Menard; the only difference is the soil, which here is rich in red clay and limestone): Medium yellow. Very expressive aromas of peach, smoke and iodine; more refined and more minerally than the Quintaine. Then seriously smooth and fine-grained on the palate, displaying perfectly integrated acidity and enticing lemony firmness. Quite dry and classic, with a fresh, spreading finish that conveys rare minty lift for this very ripe year. Palthey noted that his Quintaine wine is normally easy to drink young while this one is typically longer-lived. 93 points. *Stephen Tanzer, Vinous Media* November 2017

2015 Bonhomme Hommage à Gisèle RRP \$135

(from a blend of vines planted before and during the 1930s; 16% new oak; bottled three weeks before my visit to the estate): Medium yellow with gold highlights. Ripe, nutty aromas of yellow fruits, hazelnut and marzipan; the extra year of aging has brought greater elegance. Then surprisingly tight, backward and penetrating in the mid-palate, with firm acidity framing and extending the flavors of spices, mint and white pepper (this is actually carrying 4.1 grams per liter of acidity, about the same as the other Bonhomme 2015s). This salty, tactile, very long wine still needs to absorb more of its oak element but should gain in complexity for at least a decade. 93 points. *Stephen Tanzer, Vinous Media* November 2017

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HATTINGLEY VALLEY VICTORIOUS

Hats off, Hattingley Valley! This English estate has enjoyed more than its fair share of spoils in its



relatively short life to date, with two world-champion wines to its name in the **Champagne & Sparkling Wine World Championships**, as well as two Winemaker of the Year trophies for Emma Rice.

This time the estate is celebrating winning the **Winemaker of the Year 2018** award from **Luxury Travel Guide**. The award comes at the time when we have a new shipment arriving from the Old Dart. The 2013 Rosé sold out twice over, and this 2014 iteration is even better. We still have some

of the vintaged white blend from 2013, which is now joined by Hattingley Valley's first NV, incorporating reserve stocks that are steadily building up in the Hampshire cellars. This latter wine, too, is based on the 2014 harvest - a cracker for the Poms in terms of quality and quantity.

2013 Hattingley Valley Classic Cuvée RRP \$80

48% Chardonnay, 33% Pinot Noir, 17% Pinot Meunier, 2% Pinot Gris. 25% barrel fermented in four-year-old white burgundy barrels, 21 months on lees. Fruity, apples and peaches nose. Fruity, frothy, friendly. Straightforward and a good, tight, pointed finish. Bit of chalkiness. 16.5/20 *Tamlyn Currin, jancisrobinson.com*

NV Hattingley Valley Classic Reserve RRP \$80

Very delicate with some light smokiness on the finish, Good balance. 16.5/20 *Jancis Robinson, jancisrobinson.com*

NV Classic Reserve is the workhorse wine at Hattingley but it lacks nothing in terms of class and elegance. *Matthew Jukes, Daily Mail*

2014 Hattingley Valley Rosé RRP \$90

The 2014 Rosé is a blend of 60% Pinot Noir, 40% Pinot Meunier and 20% Pinot Noir Précoce. Now this is a very impressive sparkling Rosé. It has a succinct bouquet of freshly picked strawberry, red cherry and a touch of green apple, all precise and quite mineral-driven. The palate is fresh on the entry with a slight waxiness to the texture. It has more complexity than its peers and it fans out gloriously with hints of praline and strawberry towards the vivacious finish. This is one to serve to the next person that refutes the idea of great English sparkling wine. 92 points. *The Wine Advocate*

The 2014 Rosé is another great wine that can take on any rival on the planet with the utmost confidence. *Matthew Jukes, Daily Mail*

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HARE TODAY, GONE TOMORROW

It sports such a pretty label, Ingrid Groiss's rosé, and the initial name – Sommerwein – was really quite gorgeous, too. She was worried, this soft-hearted superstar of the Weinviertel, that the reference to a single season might work against the idea of year-round quaffing. (Didn't stop us in Australia – the first vintage arrived at the start of winter 2017 and disappeared in a heartbeat!)

Anyway, this is the same wine, same label (sans mention of summer), new vintage – and with an equally evocative moniker. “Haisenhaide” means “garden of the hares” and is the name of the site where the rosé grapes are grown. We tasted it at ProWein, and it's a charmer.



It comes as we spring forth from Ingrid's 2016 Grüner Veltliner to '17, another wine with the juicy, lip-smacking loveliness that is her trademark.

2017 Groiss Haisenhaide Rosé RRP \$26

70% Pinot Noir and 30% Zweigelt from gravel soils with limestone. Selectively hand-harvested over multiple passes. Seven hours' skin contact and gentle pressing. Full lees contact until the end of January; raised in stainless steel. 12.5% alcohol; RS 2.2g/L; acidity 5.7g/L. Lovely delicate pale pink in colour. Quite crunchy strawberry and cherry fruit on the palate; gentle and fresh with an even flow, a touch of creaminess and faint hint of spritz. Spice and chalky minerality round it out nicely. – *Ed Merrison, CellarHand*

2017 Groiss Grüner Veltliner RRP \$32

Ingrid's northernmost vineyards are located at the foothills of the Bohemian Massif. The base of this is granite and gneiss. Over thousands of years winds have built up iron and calcareous loess deposits. Topsoils feature clay and crystalline quartz. Selective hand harvest over various passes. Eight hours' skin contact. Fermented in stainless steel with neutral yeasts. Three months on lees. 12.5% alcohol; RS 2.1g/L; acidity 5.9 g/L. Highly aromatic with apple blossom, pear and quince. Juicy, open and very pure on the palate, with piquancy and citrus twist. Good volume of flavour but with good shape, and an attractive fragrant finish. – *Ed Merrison, CellarHand*

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KIENTZHEIM KILLER RIZZA

Freddy Blanck is a committed Aussieophile, pouncing on any opportunity to pay us a visit. He was here for Riesling Downunder, where his 2014 Riesling Schlossberg Grand Cru looked mighty fine in the masterclasses, and where the crowds were wowed by the intense minerality and youthful fruit of a 2010 Riesling from the Rosenbourg lieu-dit.

In true Alsatian style, this domaine works wonders with a host of white varieties, and has justly become famous for its Pinot Gris and Blanc here in Australia. But it's great to see, slowly but



surely, a deep appreciation of these Rieslings take root. We've bounded this past year from the 2014 through '15 and onto '16 vintage of the estate wine, which is always bolstered with a good whack of grand cru fruit from the Schlossberg site. If you've come at Blanck from another angle, please don't miss the rizz. And there's no better time than '16, a harvest that Freddy and cousin Philippe hold particularly dear.

2016 Paul Blanck Riesling RRP \$33

Fruit from sand and gravel soils around Kientzheim. Slow, gentle airbag pressing avoids crushing stalks and pips. Indigenous fermentation lasting from four to 10 weeks in stainless-steel, temperature-controlled vats. Textbook Alsace, with flashes of flint and smoke across ripe orchard fruits. Textured and flavourful, with presence and limey punch through the finish. – *Ed Merrison, CellarHand*

2010 Paul Blanck Riesling Rosenbourg RRP \$49

A bright, svelte white, with a streak of minerality driving the subtle mesh of crunchy white peach, Meyer lemon, smoke and salted almond notes. A lacy texture shows on the finish. Drink now through 2020. 90 points. *Alison Napjus, Wine Spectator*

2011 Paul Blanck Riesling Schlossberg Grand Cru RRP \$64

Granite. RS 13.7 g/l, TA 4.06 g/l. Terrific lime-zest freshness on the nose. Rich and marked sweetness on the palate, and just enough acidity to balance. Full and rounded and caressingly long. 17/20 *Julia Harding MW, jancisrobinson.com*

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TAUPENOT TAKE TWO

The meteorological misfortunes of Burgundy over recent vintages were both widespread and well documented. These hail- and frost-induced crop losses have in general been accepted with



admirable equanimity by growers – it's nature after all – but they are disheartening at best, and sometimes devastating.

We are especially fortunate, then, to have wine. And from Domaine Taupenot-Merme, we're doubly lucky to have another bite of the cherry from both 2014 and 2015 – superb vintages for Côte d'Or reds.

2015 Domaine 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*

2014 Domaine Taupenot-Merme Chambolle-Musigny RRP \$163

Two parcels. Mainly Bussières and also La Taupe. Vines over 40 years old. Broad and quite rich. Could taste quite like a spicy Morey. Very good for a village wine. 17/20 *Jancis Robinson, jancisrobinson.com*

2015 Domaine 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 ungriving 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*

2014 Domaine Taupenot-Merme Gevrey-Chambertin RRP \$149

Broad and purple perfumed. Very fresh and pure. Fluid and expressive. Very Gevrey. Precise. 17/20 *Jancis Robinson, jancisrobinson.com*

2014 Domaine Taupenot-Merme Morey-Saint-Denis 1er Cru La Riotte RRP \$248

Good bright red. Pretty, floral nose combines raspberry, rose petal and saline minerality. A silky, savoury midweight given definition and lift by tart red berry, violet and spice flavors. The wine's sweetness is nicely countered by its penetrating character. A classically dry 2014 with terrific energy, this has turned out very well. Romain Taupenot considers La Riotte to be an underrated premier cru. 92 points. *Stephen Tanzer, Vinous Media*

2015 Domaine Taupenot-Merme Morey-Saint-Denis 1er Cru La Riotte RRP \$266

Good dark red. Expressive aromas and flavors of cherry, brown spices and smoky underbrush. Fat, silky and moderately sweet; broader and more powerful in the early going than the Combe d'Orveau but without that wine's finesse. Delivers impressive volume and saline minerality, finishing with big, dusty tannins and classic dryness. 91 points. *Stephen Tanzer, Vinous Media*

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FANASTISCH FEDERSPIEL

It's very Wachau, isn't it, naming a wine style after the noble art of falconry. And it's a noble style, too - graceful, poised and precise. Midweight and just 12% alcohol or thereabouts, these are high in aromatics, deep in flavour and long in drive and penetration.

These Grüners from the best in the business highlight all that's fab about Federspiel.

2017 Prager Grüner Veltliner Hinter der Burg Federspiel RRP \$58

The Hinter der Burg ("behind the mountain") vineyard, overlooking the Danube river west of Vienna is rich in 'primary rock' such as schist, gneiss and granite. It produces a delightfully powerful Grüner, all grapefruit, lime and spices, with a soaring mineral backbone.

2016 Emmerich Knoll Grüner Veltliner Kreutles Federspiel RRP \$53

The 2016 Loibner Grüner Veltliner Ried Kreutles Federspiel has the typical clear, ripe and elegant fruit aromas you can expect from wines with this iconic label. The 2016 Kreutles is bright, fresh and spicy on the nose but also seductive. A classic! Medium-bodied, pure and fresh on the palate, with juicy fruit and



the typical bitter lemon, lime and green apple flavors on the finish, this is a very elegant and refreshing picture book Grüner Veltliner with lingering salinity. Straight, pure, fresh, highly digestible as well as reliable year after year. One of the finest Federspiel bottlings I have tasted from the 2016 vintage. 12% alcohol. 90 points. *Stephan Reinhardt, Wine Advocate*

2016 F.X. Pichler Loibner Grüner Veltliner Federspiel RRP \$53

Attractive ripe apple, white pepper and fresh herbs character. Juicy, but only medium-bodied with a finish that's fresh and elegant. Drink or hold. Screwcap. 91 points. *James Suckling, jamesuckling.com*

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NEBB & FLOW

Cigliuti is the embodiment of the modest but proud Piedmont grower, quietly and meticulously busying itself with the superbly sited vines growing around the winery in its corner of Barbaresco. Fittingly it's been a slow burner in the portfolio - so it's hugely gratifying to note, with the passing of years and a steady flow of high and rising quality, that the work of Renato, Dina, Claudia and Silvia Cigliuti has built such a loyal fan base here in Australia.

The cornerstone of the range is the Langhe Nebbiolo – a baby Barbaresco that never strays from the bullseye.

2016 Cigliuti Langhe Nebbiolo RRP \$59

100% Nebbiolo from 15-year old vines growing on the Bricco di Neive cru Barbaresco site. The vineyard has a southwestern aspect and sits on calcareous, sandy soils at 350m above sea level. The must is fermented in steel vats at controlled temperatures and aged for five months in steel and another five months in Slavonian oak barrels.



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