



Welcome to the CellarHand newsletter for September 2019. Here's a little taste of what's going on this month...

DOMESTIC

[‘SR’ NOCTURNE SUITE – Brand-new sub-regional wines from Julian & Alana Langworthy](#)
[CLOS ZING TIME – Barry brothers’ clos Clare Watervale Riesling rolls to 2019](#)
[RED DEVIL – Stephen Pannell’s Nero Diavola takes out trophy at Sydney Royal Wine Show](#)
[MARLI HUSTLE – Mount Mary’s Rhône renditions garner rave reviews from Halliday](#)
[BRIGHT & AIRLIE – Super-fresh spring-drinking ‘19s released by Punt Road’s Tim Shand](#)
[ROBINSON REALLY REVIEWED – Huon Hooke & Bob Campbell MW praise Jancis glassware](#)

IMPORTS

[MATROT DE NOUVEAU – Star quality on show in ‘17s from Meursault sister act Elsa & Adèle](#)
[DIZY HEIGHTS – Writers pile the praise on Jacquesson’s Cuvée No. 741 Champagne](#)
[BLANCS DE BLANCK – Freddy & Philippe’s ‘18 Riesling and Pinot Blanc arrive fresh from Alsace](#)
[ACHTZEHN ACHTUNG – Get ready to pounce on first wines from Germany’s 2018 harvest](#)
[CHENIN AGAIN – Check out the latest edition of Frédéric Mabileau’s biodynamic Chenin Blanc](#)
[SO SOLID GRÜ – Fab everyday ‘18 Grüner from Wachau, Kremstal, Kamptal & Weinviertel](#)
[KOEHLER PEARLERS – Screwcap Pinot Blanc rounds out range from killer Kallstadt estate](#)
[ROLAND ROLLS – New-vintage Hausmarke and Reserve Blaufränkisch from Moric](#)

DOMESTIC

‘SR’ NOCTURNE SUITE

Margaret River is, in many senses, a blessed place. The wild yet implausibly perfect beauty of its Indian ocean coastline hints at effortless epicness. The nonchalance with which it seems to knock out immaculate, flavourful and aromatically beguiling fruit year in, year out similarly hints at a preternatural gift.

Charismatic, ebullient and virtuosic husband-and-wife team Julian and Alana Langworthy embody the magic of Margs. They’ve been making wine together for well over a decade, but it is Nocturne – which debuted with the 2015 vintage – that encapsulates their dreams. It is into these wines that they deposit the fruit from their own beloved Sheoak Cabernet vineyard, along with other prized sites they’ve unearthed plus all the care and flair they’ve mustered. The initial three releases of single-vineyard wines have won them a diehard following – so much so that their most recent incarnation’s listing in the portfolio spent some 10 months with the annotation ‘Sold out’ written in the ‘Comments’ column.

That people love the wines give CellarHand, and the Langworthys, tremendous pleasure. None of us takes this sort of thing for granted, and we never will. As a means of encouraging greater access to the



joys of Nocturne, Julian and Alana devised a plan – hatched with trademark consideration and verve – to extend the range to include a sub-regional exploration of their wines to sit beneath the enduringly peerless single-vineyard wines.

This ‘SR’ range is here now, an invitation to dive into the boundless pleasures that swirl about where the wellspring of Langworthy brilliance intersects with the easy-flowing charms of Margaret River.



2018 Nocturne SR Chardonnay *Treeton sub-region* RRP \$35

You're in Treeton now. It's a weird little area full of hillbillies, dairy cows and interestingly some great Chardonnay vineyards. It's cold at night and warm in the day, with deep silver/grey sands that we think produce lovely Chardonnay. This exciting new wine is grown on two Treeton vineyards: the original and favourite Tassell Park and a new vineyard called Victory Point.

It sounds a little trite but 2018 was yet another excellent Margaret River Chardonnay vintage (it's Gods own country after all!). It exhibits similarities to 2017 with great acid line and verve but with fuller, richer fruit weight. The season was early yet as usual these vineyards were some of the last picked on 21st and 24th February - some three weeks earlier than 2017.

The grapes were harvested by hand and whole bunch-pressed directly to new, one- and two-year-old puncheons with a smattering of barriques for good measure, with no

settling or fining processes. This juice was then very carefully neglected and allowed to undergo spontaneous fermentation which kicked off on day five after pressing. After a four-week ferment the wine remained on gross lees, unsulphured until August of that year. In November the wine was emptied from barrel, settled, filtered and bottled. – **Julian & Alana Langworthy**

2019 Nocturne SR Sangiovese Nebbiolo Rosé *Carbunup sub-region* RRP \$31

A new line from the Langworthys. SR is the subtitle, which stands for Sub-Regional. This from Carbunup. Slightly sweaty, some spice, red and white cherries. Pleasing fine chalky texture, a touch sour and savoury, tingle of acidity and a solid finish. All up, a good drink. 92 points. Gary Walsh, The Wine Front

2018 Nocturne Cabernets *Yallingup sub-region* RRP \$35

Yallingup is our stomping ground and where the world's greatest Cabernet and Cabernet blends are being grown! It's deliciously warm but never hot, with the amazing dual influence of the Indian Ocean and Geographe Bay. In our new 'Cabernets' we have used our own beloved Sheoak Cabernet and added some Merlot from the Simpson property belonging to our neighbours, with whom we're lucky enough to share the amazing valley.

Sometimes shit just goes right. The 2018 vintage is to high-end Margaret River Cabernet what peas are to carrots. It was that good - not too hot nor too cold, with moderately high growing-season rainfall and, most importantly, a long, dry, benign finish. We started picking on 29th March and from the moment the fruit hit the fermenter it was destined to be a classic.

Instantly perfumed and richly coloured, the wine spent 12 days on skins with a peak fermentation temperature of around 28°C. The wine was pressed to tank and settled briefly, before being transferred to a combination of new (25%), two- and three-year-old barrels to undergo malolactic conversion. The wine was racked only once in this time and, after 15 months in oak, was emptied from barrel. At this juncture we decided the final make-up of 87% Cabernet Sauvignon with 13% Merlot. These wines were

then settled together, clarified and bottled.

Cabernet is king, and long will it reign in our eyes. If this modern new blend doesn't resonate hugely with you all then there's something amiss in the realm. It's expressive, medium-bodied and smells of hope wrapped in pure emotion. – **Alana & Julian Langworthy**

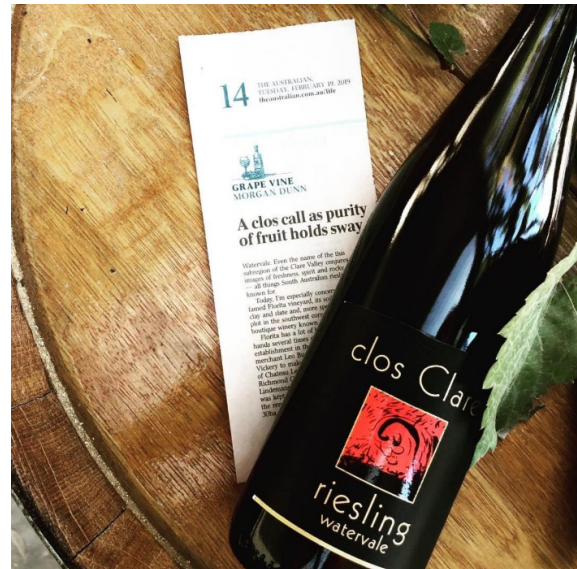
[Back to headlines...](#)

CLOSING TIME

The vines on clos Clare's section of the famed Florita vineyards in Watervale are closing in on 50 years old. They've been in the form of their lives under the guiding hand of Tom and Sam Barry, for whom this is the 12th rendition of this special single-block Riesling. Lemon and lime blossom, purity and balance, mineral drive - all these are givens for this wine, which often bears a beguiling echo of blood orange and curry leaf into the mix.

As is customary, this wine appears at the same time as a museum release from the harvest five years prior – a great way to show the vineyard characteristics, and to enjoy a first-rate mature Aussie Riesling. 2014 saw a hot January in Clare, followed by early February rainfall that freshened up the vines and allowed for slow flavour development over the ensuing three weeks.

One site, two harvests and a five-year age gap – it all goes to show it's always a winner.



2019 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 12th vintage from clos Clare's Riesling patch, adjoining the historic 'Florita' vineyard in Watervale. The 49-year-old dry grown vines were hand-harvested and taken to The Wilson Vineyard at Polish Hill River, where they were chilled for 24 hours prior to whole bunch pressing and vinification. - **Tom & Sam Barry**

2014 clos Clare Riesling RRP \$41

*From a 44-year-old dry-grown vineyard, hand-picked, chilled overnight, then whole bunch pressed. Apple and lemon blossom fragrance sets the scene for a particularly elegant and focused palate; while still in a primary phase, and very delicate, it has utterly perfect line, length and balance. 95 points. **James Halliday, Halliday Wine Companion***

[Back to headlines...](#)

RED DEVIL

Former Winemaker of the Year and two-time Jimmy Watson winner Stephen Pannell is no stranger to the trophy game. What's remarkable, though, is the range of his wines that have taken out trophies in major wine shows: Shiraz, Grenache, Nebbiolo, Cabernet Malbec, three different blends involving Touriga... the list goes on.

At **Sydney Royal Wine Show** last month, he did it again. This time it was Nero d'Avola that took out the honours – or to be more precise, the cheekily named Nero Diavola. "The 2018 Nero Diavola is clearly at home in McLaren Vale's coastal soils and Mediterranean climate, and expresses its trademark dark

cherry and terracotta-tile aromas, along with a touch of bitter chocolate and dried, hard-herb spiciness,” said Steve as he scooped up the **Wine Communicators’ Trophy**. “It’s a devil of a thing!”



2018 S.C. Pannell Nero Diavola RRP \$28

Nutty, like hazelnuts or pecan, blue fruit and cherry, aniseed and spices, a little saline and warm bricks kind of thing happening. Medium-bodied, cranberry acidity, light in frame, fine chalk dust tannin, drags on finish. Very bright, fresh, with enough flavour to charm, but not so much that it overwhelms. Stylish. 92 points. Gary Walsh, The Wine Front

2017 S.C. Pannell Old McDonald McLaren Vale Grenache RRP \$62

A beautiful grenache, clarity its watchword: colour, aroma, varietal expression and aftertaste. Perfumed red berries of every description flow through the light to medium-bodied palate where pomegranate is foremost in shaping mouthfeel and flavour.

Irresistible now or in 10 years hence. 96 points. James Halliday, Halliday Wine Companion 2020

2017 S.C. Pannell Smart Clarendon Grenache RRP \$62

From 62yo vines on the Smart Vineyard in Clarendon, small batch-open fermented, no whole bunches, 10 days on skins, 11 months in French oak. This is the bees knees, the bouquet surging from the glass before you have had time to collect your wits, gathering pace on the vibrant palate and lingering aftertaste, the sultry perfume with exotic spices is initially brushed aside by the intensity of the palate where fine but persistent tannins sweep up pomegranate, cherry and wild strawberry as they pass through. 97 points.

James Halliday, Halliday Wine Companion 2020

[Back to headlines...](#)

MARLI HUSTLE

For many it was weird enough that you could ripen Grenache in the Yarra Valley, let alone that you could make a splendid wine from it. Thus Mount Mary confounded many with the first releases from their Marli Russell Rhône project from the 2014 vintage.

It'll make heads spin again that in 2017 – a lovely, cool Yarra Valley vintage for Chardonnay and Pinot Noir – that this vineyard should have nailed Burgundy, Bordeaux and Rhône varieties with equal aplomb. The proof of the Mount Mary pudding will be in the tasting this October. Before that, we have the verdict from **James Halliday** that the sun-worshipping late-ripeners flourished in '17.

Come hither, go figure...

2017 Marli Russell by Mount Mary RP1 RRP \$53

An estate-grown hand-picked trio of 40% each Marsanne and Roussanne and 20% Clairette. Destemmed/crushed, a span of different yeasts used, 100% fermented in French barriques (5% new), matured for 11 months. Has considerable length and intensity, with complexity and depth certain to grow as the wine ages in bottle. 95 points. James Halliday, Halliday Wine Companion 2020



2017 Marli Russell by Mount Mary RP2 RRP \$66

55% Grenache, 20% each of Shiraz and Mourvèdre, 5% Cinsault, each vinified separately. Hand-picked, bunch-sorted on vibrating tables, open-fermented, 10-14 days on skins, matured in large format French oak (1575-2500l). Tangy, zesty, supple red and black fruits, slinky tannins just so. 95 points. James Halliday, Halliday Wine Companion 2020

[Back to headlines...](#)



BRIGHT & AIRLIE

The arrival of spring brings another batch of bright young things from Tim Shand of Punt Road. The Airlie Bank wines are perennial overachievers in terms of texture, interest and vibrant expression of Yarra Valley fruit from the estate vineyard in Coldstream. "I love a wine that's made for drinking pleasure first and foremost, and these Airlie Bank wines have that goal set firmly in their sights, or more specifically, perky-faced winemaker Tim Shand does," was Gary Walsh's ringing endorsement of this range on **The Wine Front**.

Oh, and did anyone mention 'value'?

NV Airlie Bank Cuvée Sparkling RRP \$21

This is a blend of 90% Chardonnay and 10% Pinot Noir fruit sourced entirely from the Napoleone Vineyard in the Yarra Valley. Each bottling represents a blend, being one part from the grandfather base tank (the oldest element being 2010) along with one part from the current vintage. The wine sees full MLF, as well as small injections of new oak and brandy spirit. – **Tim Shand, Punt Road**

2019 Airlie Bank Sauvignon Blanc RRP \$21

Passionfruit, thistle, fennel, bright and cool line, frisky and crunchy, juicy tinned grapefruit segments and passionfruit tingle on a nice long finish. Goes down a treat. Fresh! 92 points. Gary Walsh, The Wine Front

2019 Airlie Bank Gris on Skins RRP \$23

Pinot Gris carried low crops in 2019, so there is more intensity and weight of flavour this year. The warm conditions contributed to this as well. To maintain the fresh but savoury house style we kept the canopies well-watered and lush, and changed our maceration approach in the winery. The 100% skins ferment is a smaller proportion of the finished blend (30%), and we only kept this portion of the wine on skins for 48 hours. There was no shortage of colour in Gris (or Pinot Noir) this year, so needed to be watchful on this. Conversely, we extended the 100% whole bunch ferments to 14 days as they were bright and robust. Because of this, we picked up the delicate and subtle flavours we really look for in Gris on Skins. As always, the wine went to old oak hogsheads for three months, unsulphured. Bottled 24th July 2019. The wine seems to me more serious than previous instalments. The increased intensity and fruit weight is fortunate, because it is required to match the texture and funk. All in all, it's like the 2018 was dialled up a few notches. So less 'wet' than the 2018, but pound-for-pound a better wine; there's much more to chew on here. Lovely aromatics – musk, ripe strawberries, vanilla. – **Tim Shand, Punt Road**

2019 Airlie Bank Pinot Noir RRP \$23

I love a wine that's made for drinking pleasure first and foremost, and these Airlie Bank wines have that goal set firmly in their sights, or more specifically, perky-faced winemaker Tim Shand does. Nuts, cherry, raspberry, a little spice and sap. Fresh, bright, straight-down-the-line and juicy, some fresh strawberry acidity flavour and brightness on the finish, along with a gentle rasp of tannin. In some respects, has the

easy drinking appeal of a bigger rosé, if you take my meaning. Regardless, it's fun and very good to drink. And it's nearly springtime, as I write. Spot on. 92 points. Gary Walsh, The Wine Front

2018 Airlie Bank Franc RRP \$23

So good to see more than a few of these crunchy fresh styles being made locally these days. Perky wines a specialty from old perky-faced Tim Shand. Blackcurrant, ripe raspberry, ash and lots of spice, sweet capsicum. Light bodied, but good intensity of small berried fruits, sappy green and spicy things are punctuation marks here, rather than text, acidity is fresh and slaty, tannin forms a fine dust, and the finish is cool and fresh. Great thing to drink. 92 points. Gary Walsh, The Wine Front

[Back to headlines...](#)

ROBINSON REALLY REVIEWED

“Feather-light and delicate, beautiful to handle and exquisite to drink from.” This was **Huon Hooke’s** verdict on the Jancis Robinson Collection, the glassware range that the world’s most-respected wine authority co-created with British product designer Richard Brendon. CellarHand began importing this superb collection – which comprises a universal wine glass, a stemless version of the same, plus an aged-wine decanter and a young-wine sibling that also fits a magnum – back in June. Hooke himself has been in possession of the glasses for some time, but wanted to conduct a hardcore road-test with all kinds of wines before coming to any conclusion. ““Reds, whites and sparklings all tasted at least as good, often better, than they did from other glasses I tested,” was what he found.



Huon’s Kiwi **Real Review** sidekick **Bob Campbell MW** also has a set of glasses, and ran similar but independent experiments at home. “I was impressed,” he reported. “The glass was great to use – more silk pyjamas than business suit. Wine in the Jancis Robinson glass tasted as good or better than the range of wines tasted in alternative glasses, although my judgement may have been influenced by the glasses’ lightness and almost sensual delicacy.”

The glasses are sensational to look at, handle and sip from – and make an elegant and worthy universal alternative to our beloved Gabriel-Glas stemware from Swiss wine scribe René Gabriel.

The Wine Glass

Gift Twin-Pack RRP \$130

Gift Six-Pack RRP \$366

12-pack RRP \$677

Precision-engineered to be the only stemmed glass you need to enjoy every wine at its best. Use this glass for every wine, whatever its colour, including sparkling wine, port, sherry, sweet wines and anything else you want to savour and enjoy to the fullest. This shape has been specially designed to maximise your enjoyment of all wines’ aromas, flavours and textures in the most practical way possible. Dimensions: 9cm diameter; height 22.4cm.

The Stemless Glass

Gift Twin-Pack RRP \$99

Gift Six-Pack RRP \$297

This as versatile as it gets. As a water glass, it fits perfectly with the wine glass to create a beautiful table

setting. The shape of the bowl mimics the exact curvature of the wine glass, meaning this stemless version may be used as a wine glass if desired, retaining all the tasting benefits of the generous tulip shape. And then again, it's the elegant solution for your G&T, Negroni, straight whiskey or whatever floats your boat. Dimensions: 9cm diameter; height 11.5cm.



The Young Wine/Magnum Decanter RRP \$185

This is a generous and bold decanter for young wines needing aeration and maximum surface area for the wine. The long neck allows for a strong grip that will allow you to swirl the wine energetically, allowing oxygen to encourage and hasten a young wine's evolution and mellow the flavours. As an important bonus, the bowl is also large enough to accommodate a magnum. Dimensions: 17cm diameter; height 23cm.

The Aged Wine Decanter RRP \$230

This bottle-shaped decanter allows you to decant a mature wine off its sediment whilst ensuring that it is not exposed to too much harmful oxygen.

The refined shape follows the form of the Wine Glass and the beautiful mouth-blown stopper adds an element of contemporary design to your table. Dimensions: 9cm diameter; height 27.2cm.

[Back to headlines...](#)

IMPORTS

MATROT DE NOUVEAU

"The style here is pure and understated, minimal wood influence meaning that it is the grapes — and the climats that shape them — that are front and centre at all times." This was the summary from **Wine Advocate's William Kelley** in delivering his latest report from the Matrot family. It's right on the money and points to the no-nonsense common sense of Elsa and Adèle Matrot: When you're lucky enough to have old vines sitting in the best sites of Meursault and Puligny, why let anything get in the way?

2017 Matrot Bourgogne Blanc RRP \$53

Vines with an average age of 30 years.

A whiff of wood surrounds the fresh aromas of straw and pear scents. There is both good volume and intensity to the delicious middle weight flavours that terminate in a bitter lemon-inflected and slightly rustic finish. This could use a bit more depth but this is by no means simple. 86 points. Allen Meadows, Burghound

2017 Matrot Meursault RRP \$140

Vines with an average age of 40 years (11 parcels)

Pungent aromas feature notes of gunflint, citrus & hazelnut. The delicious, detailed & attractively vibrant medium-bodied flavours possess an appealing texture before concluding in a clean and dry finish that offers a bit more depth if not quite the same refinement. 88 points. Allen Meadows, Burghound



2017 Matrot Meursault 1er Cru Blagny RRP \$206

Vines with an average age of 35 years.

The 2017 Meursault-Blagny 1er Cru unfurls in the glass with a vivid bouquet of crisp green apple, pear, Meyer lemon and oyster shell. On the palate, it's medium to full-bodied, fleshy but cool and controlled, with bright acids and a mineral finish. The high-altitude site tempers the sun kissed charm of the vintage. 90 points. William Kelley, Wine Advocate

2017 Matrot Meursault 1er Cru Charmes RRP \$206

Vines with an average age of 37 years.

Matrot's 2017 Meursault 1er Cru Les Charmes was still a little shut down, having been bottled last week, but with coaxing it offers up a textbook nose of dried white flowers, fresh pears, buttered apples and mint. On the palate, it's medium to full-bodied, satiny textured and pure with brisk acids and a deep, tight-knit core. 92+ points. William Kelley, Wine Advocate

2017 Matrot Meursault 1er Cru Les Perrières RRP \$272

Vines with an average age of 56 years.

The 2017 Meursault 1er Cru Les Perrières is excellent, offering up notes of lemon oil, white flowers, crushed oyster shell and wet stones. On the palate, it's medium to full-bodied, ample and layered with tangy acids, a tensile and tight-knit core, excellent mid-palate amplitude and a long, mineral finish. This is one of the most promising young white Burgundies I've tasted from Matrot. 94 points. William Kelley, Wine Advocate



2017 Matrot Puligny-Montrachet 1er Cru Les Chalumeaux RRP \$206

Vines with an average age of 30 years.

The 2017 Puligny-Montrachet 1er Cru Les Chalumeaux is a promising bottle in the making, unfurling in the glass with a youthfully reserved bouquet of mandarin oil, crisp peach and green orchard fruit. On the palate, the wine is medium to full-bodied, satiny and layered, with a more delicate and less fleshy profile than the Meursault Charmes, concluding with a pure and chalky finish. It's a lovely rendition of Les Chalumeaux. 92 points. William Kelley, Wine Advocate

2017 Matrot Puligny-Montrachet 1er Cru Combettes RRP \$272

Vines with an average age of 40 years.

Aromas of fresh pear, yellow orchard fruit, honeycomb and subtle hints of toasted nuts introduce the 2017 Puligny-Montrachet 1er Cru Les Combettes, a medium to full-bodied, ample and elegantly textural wine with a layered mid-palate, succulent acids and attractive purity. It's a classy, understated wine that exemplifies the contemporary Matrot style. 93 points. William Kelley, Wine Advocate

2017 Matrot Bourgogne Rouge RRP \$58

A fruity and bright nose reflects notes of mostly red berries along with a whiff of earth. The light weight and delicious flavours are built on their fruit but even so, there is reasonably good depth and persistence on the rustic finale. This should drink well immediately. 86 points. Allen Meadows, Burghound

2017 Matrot Maranges Rouge Vieilles Vignes RRP \$66

Vines aged between 50 and 80 years.

*A slightly more elegant and fresh nose combines notes of equally bright red cherry, currant and pungent earth nuances. There is both good energy and detail to the slightly denser flavours that culminate in a rustic bitter cherry pit-inflected finish. This should also drink well shortly after release. 87 points. **Allen Meadows, Burghound***

2017 Matrot Volnay 1er Cru Les Santenots RRP \$163

Vines with an average age of 32 years. 10-20% new oak.

*Notes of smoky cherries and cassis mingle with hints of rich soil and new oak, introducing the 2017 Volnay 1er Cru Les Santenots, a medium to full-bodied, satiny and layered wine with melting tannins and a juicy core of fruit. This is a decidedly open-knit, charming interpretation of Santenots. 90 points. **William Kelley, Wine Advocate***

2017 Matrot Blagny 1er Cru La Pièce Sous Les Bois RRP \$163

Vines with an average age of 30 years. 10-20% new oak.

*Notes of sweet red cherries, herbs and dried flowers introduce the 2017 Blagny 1er Cru La Pièce Sous Le Bois, a medium-bodied, succulent wine with a tangy core of fruit, light but chalky tannins and a mouthwatering finish. From a high altitude, stony site, this is a singular Côte de Beaune bottling that will appeal to purists who love tensile, precise reds. 90 points. **William Kelley, Wine Advocate***

[Back to headlines...](#)



DIZY HEIGHTS

I guess it's because we're cruising into sparkling season that we've seen a flood of coverage of the great Champagne being produced by Jean-Hervé and Laurent Chiquet of Jacquesson. **Nick Stock** published his latest review of Cuvée No. 741 ("a very complex and interesting NV style... with a fullish texture and super fresh finish") at the same time as both **Jancis Robinson** and **Wine Advocate's William Kelley** published updates on the estate's exceptional progress. "I am a long-standing admirer of the distinctive Champagnes of this small house," wrote Jancis, before rattling off all the innovations and sacrifices that have taken this house to the top of the tree: Cutting output to 250,000 bottles a year; eschewing house style in favour of making the

best wine each year; selling off pressings and lesser wines; swapping nothing with other producers and so as not to dilute quality and character; ageing in large, old foudres; never adding sulphur; allowing malolactic conversion; and late-bottling their unfiltered, unfiltered wines.

William Kelley likewise went through all these details that culminate in such wonderfully nuanced and exciting wines. "Based on the latest 700-series wines, the future will be very exciting indeed," he concluded. "I hadn't seen Jean-Hervé Chiquet for a number of years, so this visit was a great occasion to catch up and to remind myself of the many reasons there are to admire this exemplary Maison."

NV Jacquesson Cuvée No. 741 RRP \$124

Disgorged in June 2018 with 2.5 grams per litre dosage, the NV Extra Brut Cuvée No. 741 is based on the 2013 vintage. Unfurling in the glass with aromas of white flowers, fresh nectarine and peach,

complemented by hints of warm biscuits and walnut oil, it's medium to full-bodied, vinous and concentrated, with a textural attack that gives way to a lively, focused core that's underpinned by a bright spine of acidity, concluding with a long and sapid finish. Complex, expressive and beautifully balanced, this is a superb wine from Jacquesson. 93 points. William Kelley, Wine Advocate

[Back to headlines...](#)

BLANCS DE BLANCK

Paul Blanck Pinot Blanc has a certain ring to it, wouldn't you say? It certainly seems to have chimed with an Aussie audience, with every vintage lapped up in next to no time. Just as the name trips off the tongue, the wine glides across it with ease – an array of citrus and stone fruits, soft and silky but with a minerally flourish.

The 2018 edition of this wine lands alongside the '18 Riesling, while the Patergarten fulfils a (theoretical) premier-cru role on the way up to the great Schlossberg.

2018 Paul Blanck Pinot Blanc d'Alsace RRP \$28

From soils of gravel, sand and south-facing clay and limestone. The juice is extracted with infinite care in our air-bag press. The slow, gentle pressing avoids crushing the stalks and pips. This is followed by slow, natural fermentation in temperature-controlled stainless-steel vats, generally lasting from four to 10 weeks. The nose

shows apricot, brioche and a touch of fresh lemon. On the palate it shows pleasant acidity with apricot, honeysuckle and mineral tones, then a nice, long, stony finish. – **Frédéric Blanck**



2017 Paul Blanck Pinot Gris RRP \$32

Gentle and mellow notes of pear crumble on the nose of this wine attain lovely definition on the dry, concentrated palate. An earthy, pithy edge on the midpalate brings great mouthfeel, while pear notes remain juicy and fresh. 92 points. Anne Krebiehl MW, Wine Enthusiast

2018 Paul Blanck Riesling RRP \$32

The fruit comes from vineyards with sand and gravel soils around the village of Kientzheim. Pale yellow in colour, the nose shows light floral and citrus notes. The palate has pineapple, lemon and mineral notes, as well as an evocation of sweet-scented flowers. – **Frédéric Blanck**

2017 Paul Blanck Riesling Patergarten RRP \$53

The 2017 Riesling Patergarten comes from a very warm and early-ripening potential premier cru in Kientzheim, facing south and featuring gravelly alluvial soils. Airbag-pressed for natural, slow fermented over 4 to 10 weeks before the wines are matured on their lees in large barrels for 6 to 9 months. It offers a very clear, intense and aromatic as well as flinty bouquet. On the palate this is a fresh, mineral/fat textured and highly finessed Riesling with mouth-watering saltiness and a piquant, very promising finish. – **Frédéric Blanck**

2015 Paul Blanck Riesling Schlossberg Grand Cru RRP \$70

Honey, brioche, halva scents with some fresh floral notes and citrus backing it up. Palate has generosity and good flow, rich honey on apple flavours, tart acidity underlying, concentration, a sweet tonic water

tang to close. Good flavours. Good power. Good example. 94 points. **Mike Bennie, The Wine Front April 2019**

[Back to headlines...](#)

ACHTZEHN ACHTUNG



“There is a problem with Germany’s most widespread grape, Riesling,” lamented **Jancis Robinson**

recently. “For some it simply has too much flavour and character. I love it. I love its raciness, its breezy refreshment, its ability to go with so many foods, its crystalline precision, its stately progress to an even more complex old age, and am thrilled that there are now so many great dry Rieslings in Germany as well as the sweeter, fruitier sort I was brought up on.”

Right, so the problem is that it’s too good? Good problem to have.

Jancis’s lament appeared in a **Financial Times** article entitled “Now is the time to buy German.” The lead-in line that followed? “The 2018 vintage provides the perfect excuse...”

Indeed it does, and we now have the first few wines trickling onto these shores – and what a pretty introduction they represent.

Oh, and before anyone points out that Eva Clüsserath’s wine is not even from 2018 – well, you’re right. But it’s

just arrived and is always a) coolly invigorating and b) hotly anticipated.

2017 Ansgar Clüsserath Vom Schiefer RRP \$39

*The 2017 Riesling Vom Schiefer trocken offers a clear, intense and slate-scented nose with refreshing lemon and lime zest aromas. On the palate, this is a charmingly round, intense, well-textured dry Riesling with good concentration and mineral grip. An excellent effort at this price level. 89 points. **Stephan Reinhardt, Wine Advocate***

2018 Dönnhoff Estate Riesling RRP \$40

Older family vineyards (15 to 30 years) plus some young vines from top vineyards. Mostly volcanic soils of porphyry and melaphyr. Stone fruit spectrum dominates on a slightly reticent nose. Very dry (less than 4g/L residual sugar) on a palate of lemon and spice. Pure and linear, soothed by ripe acidity. More aromatic complexity to come in time, no doubt, but a typically crystalline and appealing release. – **Ed Merrison, CellarHand**

2018 Gunderloch Als Wär’s Ein Stück Von Mir Riesling RRP \$43

*Delicate fummy notes of spontaneous fermentation but not too much, enhancing the stony mineral first impression. Both tight and juicy on the palate, crisp, sharply defined but with silky citrus fruit. 16/20 **Julia Harding MW, jancisrobinson.com***

2018 Gunderloch Jean-Baptiste Kabinett RRP \$35

*TA 8 g/L, RS 23 g/L. Light lemon and lime nose and nicely dusty. Plenty of sweetness and really juicy from the acidity. Perfectly balanced, dancing and long. 16.5/20 **Julia Harding MW, jancisrobinson.com***

2018 Wittmann Estate Riesling RRP \$39

Delicate fummy notes of spontaneous fermentation but not too much, enhancing the stony mineral first impression. Both tight and juicy on the palate, crisp, sharply defined but with silky citrus fruit. 16/20 Julia Harding MW, jancisrobinson.com

[Back to headlines...](#)

CHENIN AGAINS

The wines of Frédéric and Nathalie Mabileau were a new discovery of ours during a visit to Europe in autumn 2019. Since then, we've flown through a vintage of their Chenin Blanc and Pineau d'Aunis, found many new fans of the Cab Franc and welcomed Nathalie and son Rémy to Australia for the CellarHand 20th Anniversary tastings. The Racines rendition of Bourgueil is an entrancing expression of Cabernet Franc – from 46-year-old vines on small clay and gravel plot, and something you shouldn't miss – while the estate's signature Rouillères Cab Franc (from its home appellation of Saint-Nicolas-de-Bourgueil) is purity personified. These are joined by a new vintage of the Rouillères Chenin.



2018 Frédéric Mabileau Rouillères Chenin Blanc RRP \$46

Chenin Blanc from a 0.53-hectare plot of sand and gravel over a layer of white clay. The 10-year-old, single guyot-trellised vines are harvested by hand, with a yield of 25hl/ha. The bunches are slowly pressed and the must fermented in stainless steel with indigenous yeasts at low temperatures. This sees no oak, lees stirring or fining, for a wine of energy, tension and purity.

2016 Frédéric Mabileau Rouillères Cabernet Franc RRP \$46

Vivid bright purple colour. Cherry, raspberry, subtle leaf and herb perfume, clay, pencils, but almost a liquorice richness. It's light to medium-bodied, impressive depth of flavour, tight graphite tannin, crisp cranberry acidity, satisfying length. Wonderful energy and high drinking appeal. I was tasting, but then decided to drink a glass of this. 93 points. Gary Walsh, The Wine Front

2015 Frédéric Mabileau Racines Cabernet Franc RRP \$59

Richly structured, this dense wine has firm tannins as well as ripe black-currant fruits. A smoky, perfumed character shows well against the smooth texture. It is just now ready to drink, still fresh and structured. 93 points. Roger Voss, Wine Enthusiast

[Back to headlines...](#)

SO SOLID GRÜ

With its crisp fruit and whisper of things young, green and zesty, a light, young Grüner Veltliner can deliver spring in a glass. A range of our Austrian classics from four different regions is now in play from the 2018 harvest, offering a great set of options at pourable, quaffable prices.

2018 Domäne Wachau Grüner Veltliner Terrassen Federspiel RRP \$28

Green apple, a little white pepper and herb, sour mango. Juicy, big burst of green apple and spice, fine powdery texture, light acid crunch with a yeasty weightiness, good finish. Wholly satisfying and classic expression of Grüner. I'm having a nice little glass of it now. 92 points. Gary Walsh, The Wine Front

2018 Stadt Krems Grüner Veltliner Lössterrassen RRP \$23

With more than 550 years of history, Weingut Stadt Krems is one of the oldest wine producers in Austria. Terraced slopes of loess soil and the ideal climate make this typical Veltliner tangy and light. In the first weeks of October the grapes were handpicked with strict selection. After they were destemmed and pressed carefully, the must was fermented under controlled temperature in a stainless-steel tank. The wine has fresh, fruity aromas of rosy apple, pineapple and grapefruit that stream through a fresh shapely, taut palate with a dash of white pepper spice chiming in towards the finish. Alcohol 12%; RS 2g/L; acidity 5.5g/L.

2018 Stift Göttweig Grüner Veltliner Messwein RRP \$26

Subtle notes of green pear have an appetizing, creamy edge on the nose. The palate is marked by a wonderful lemon zestiness and a light juicy and fruity, but dry body – very moreish indeed. 89 points. Anne Krebiehl MW, Wine Enthusiast



2018 Bründlmayer Grüner Veltliner Kamptal Terrassen RRP \$39

White pepper, pear and apple, hay and caramel. Juicy and full of flavour, spicy and chalky, kind of savoury too with chicken and herbs in the mix. Finish is umami and spicy, and fairly long. Tickle of spritz here too. 92 points. Gary Walsh, The Wine Front

2018 Groiss Grüner Veltliner RRP \$29

White pepper, crushed sage and a touch of citrus promise savouriness. The palate delivers with full-on white pepper spiciness, slender freshness and lovely, pithy, salty, yeasty texture. This is a little pepper bomb full of life and verve. The finish is dry and

appetizing. 92 points. Anne Krebiehl MW, Wine Enthusiast

[Back to headlines...](#)

KOEHLER PEARLERS

A new screw-capped Pinot Blanc is a handy addition to a fullish and utterly idiosyncratic range from the brilliant Dominik Sona of Koehler-Ruprecht. This is joined by a new vintage of the village Riesling, while the inclusion of our first Spätlese Trocken from Saumagen means we now have four 'tiers' of Riesling from this phenomenal limestone-dominant vineyard. The vintage depth is pretty cool, too; these wines are exceptionally long-lived, with mind-boggling complexity building over time.

2017 Koehler-Ruprecht Pinot Blanc RRP \$32

Some fresh-nut character, as well as a wide range of white-fruit aromas, making this a rather elegant,

medium-bodied pinot blanc that gives a lot of pleasure right now. 91 points. Stuart Pigott, jamessuckling.com

**2018 Koehler-Ruprecht Riesling Kabinett Trocken RRP \$32
MAGNUM RRP \$74**

Honey, pineapple and lemon balm on a typical Koehler-Ruprecht Kallstadter nose. This relatively warm harvest for the Pfalz has produced a wine with a fairly round and soft attack. The fruit is ripe with a herbal inflection offsetting its sweet juiciness nicely. This is an easy-going version, and the convincing, textured finish brings it to a satisfying conclusion. **Ed Merrison, CellarHand**



**2017 Koehler-Ruprecht Riesling Kallstadter Saumagen Spätlese
Trocken RRP \$74**

Sweet corn, grapefruit and unusual hints of carnations and geraniums greet the nose. The palate reflects palpably high extract as well as body born of 13.5% alcohol, yet without heaviness; it feels silken, but there is juicy abundance of white peach, while sizzle of corn shoot and grapefruit zest lend invigorating counterpoint that follows into the persistently juicy finish. A sense of chalk and mineral salt suffusion heightens the wine's intrigue as well as its sheer sensual appeal. 92 points. David Schildknecht, Vinous Media

2016 Koehler-Ruprecht Riesling Kallstadter Saumagen Auslese Trocken RRP \$114

This wine's 12.5% alcohol (at analytically nearly complete dryness) reflects virtually the highest achievable must weights for Koehler-Ruprecht in this vintage – barely crossing the legal threshold for



Auslese – and very little fruit reached that point. Alkaline and saline sea breeze, smoky marjoram, pungent lemon zest and corn shoots with high-toned evocations of sour mash, gentian distillate and mothball make for a head-turning aromatic display. The silken, almost custardy palate brims with bright fresh lemon, sweet corn and white peach while perpetuating haunting florality. But the overwhelming and striking palate impression is of a multifaceted mineral suffusion and protein-rich savour, featuring Chablis-like suggestions of sweat, oyster liquor, chicken stock, chalk dust, and invigorating piquancy of lemon seed. This shakes up your entire mouth and milks your salivary glands. Good luck resisting the next sip, or indeed cellaring and then trying to keep your corkscrew away from sufficient bottles to ensure that you enjoy at least some of them in what is sure to be an even more glorious maturity. This bottling is set to go on sale in

September 2018. It's hardly a coincidence that few dry Pfalz Rieslings today quite measure up to either the best of those being rendered by Sona and Schmitt, or the minuscule quantities of Riesling from this same site being bottled by

2009 Koehler-Ruprecht Riesling Kallstadter Saumagen Auslese Trocken 'R' RRP \$163

This bottling has been out for nearly two years but I have noticed some still on the market, and it is

*showing too impressively today not to advertise its virtues with an updated tasting note. A high-toned nose mingles corn shoot, sour mash, kirsch, mothball, fresh ginger and distilled floral essences. The silky palate displays a subtly sweet sense of sheer ripeness despite analytical dryness, with hauntingly floral inner-mouth perfume and forest floor undertones that act like a plush carpet of moss over which plays a kaleidoscopic display of floral, fruity, spicy, subtly peaty and otherwise multifacetedly mineral elements. Incidentally, the starting point here was not significantly higher in must weight than were the grapes for two dry 2009 Spätlesen, so the designation “Auslese” was chosen entirely based on the wine’s personality and its (correctly!) perceived aging potential. 95 points. **David Schildknecht, Vinous Media***

2008 Koehler-Ruprecht Riesling Kallstadter Saumagen Auslese Trocken ‘R’ RRP \$149

*Matured, but also stunningly reductive on the nose, the intense, dense and elegant flavoured 2008 Saumagen Riesling Auslese trocken R definitely needs a decanter or 30 minutes in the glass to reveal its talents. Bottled with 12.5% alcohol it has a chalky, elegant and well-balanced palate but nothing here was prepared to be tasted almost seven years after the harvest! This is a firm, lively, mineral and straight Saumagen that is still young and discreet but should be a great wine in a couple of years. 93 points. **Stephan Reinhardt, Wine Advocate***

2007 Koehler-Ruprecht Riesling Kallstadter Saumagen Auslese Trocken ‘RR’ RRP \$182

*The 2007 Kallstadter Saumagen Riesling Auslese trocken RR is a huge, powerful and - still -promising wine! Bottled with 13.5% alcohol it is bulging-full of tension, very chalky, extremely mineral but still elegant, fresh, piquant and expressive. This is a truly great dry Riesling with lemon-fresh flavours, although flavours do not matter here. It is the tension and the complexity that makes this a great wine. The finish is Stephan Reinhardt, Wine Advocate still slightly drying but there is enough electricity to set your palate under fire in a couple of years. Nota bene: Riesling is not just an amazing grape for sweet wines. 95 points. **Stephan Reinhardt, Wine Advocate***

2016 Koehler-Ruprecht Pinot Noir RRP \$35

*Along with smoky, resinous and toasty notes from cask come fresh dark berries and a mouthwatering suggestion of beef marrow. The feel is firm but there is welcome mid-palate tang and juiciness to complement the wine’s low-toned meatiness. The finish is nicely sustained, and introduces saliva-liberating salinity, albeit also a slight rasp of tannin. 88 points. **David Schildknecht, Vinous Media***

[Back to headlines...](#)



ROLAND ROLLS

When Roland Velich came to Australia in February, he wowed crowds with his calm authority and sensual, intellectual wines. While he wasn't speaking in a gently engaged fashion, he was apparently hooning around the Aussie roads, amassing a small tome of speeding tickets as he went. That's the thing about Roland – behind that Zen-like veneer and the easy flow of the wines lie a sense of striving and sheer exhilaration. In the realm of great wines, you find a tension bordering on contradiction. Moric exists in this realm.

The 2016 Reserve Blaufränkisch has just arrived, and it's a wine that beautifully illustrates the light-and-shade artistry of Burgenland Blaufränkisch at the hands of a total master. Alongside this is the 2018

Hausmarke Weiss – a highly individual wine where precise fruit is there but playing second fiddle to savoury and mineral shades. Ample texture, limestone drive and briny echoes round it out.

2016 Moric Hausmarke Rot RRP \$39

Cherries, smoke and peat, spice, dried flowers. Medium-bodied, fleshy with fine silty tannin, smoky cherry and raspberry flavour, a gentle sourness and tang to the acidity, and a ripe finish of fine length. Intellectual fun times here, and I'd say that's more PC than suggesting 'sexy librarian'. Well, anyway, stamp my card. 92 points. Gary Walsh, The Wine Front

2018 Moric Hausmarke Weiss RRP \$46

Blend of Grüner Veltliner (the largest portion) with Chardonnay and Riesling, these last two harvested together. Very slow pressing, but that's the only skin contact. Partly fermented in stainless steel.

2017 Moric Burgenland Blaufränkisch RRP \$46

Smoky, sarsaparilla notes, slightly game meaty characters, liquorice. Juicy in the palate, crunchy as can be, almost sour cherry fruit flavours, really tart and dry finish. Tangy, summery red of intense crispness and vitality. Probably best with a chill, but I dig it anyway. 91 points. Mike Bennie, The Wine Front

2016 Moric Reserve Blaufränkisch RRP \$89

This wine marries the great heritage of Neckenmarkt and Lutzmannsburg, and embodies Moric's concept of 'reserve' quality: selection in distinct vineyards with specific attributes regarding vine age, site and soil – just the best barrels coming out of these vineyards find their way into the Reserve blend. Mainly based on limestone origins, the elegance and distinctive spice of the Neckenmarkter component and the earthy floral aromas of Lutzmannsburg combine to show a unity of great structure and finesse. – **Roland Velich**

[Back to headlines...](#)



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