



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

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DOMESTIC

HANNAH & HER SISTERS

Well, technically it's Hannah, her sister and cousins whose names adorn the labels of this harmonious quartet from Maryann and Reg Egan of Wantirna Estate. And she just happens to be the most elusive, fronting as she does something of a unicorn of Australian wine: the one-barrel Cabernet Franc / Merlot blend.

Alongside the 2017 Wantirna Estate Hannah, we have the release of the 2017 Amelia Cabernet / Merlot plus the Lily Pinot Noir and Isabella Chardonnay from 2018. The range is an exercise in concision – not just in comprising the same four wines, but also in the eloquent and to-the-point way in which they express the land and the Egans' warm, elegant sensibility. In fact, this enterprise is the very definition of “small and perfectly formed”.

Physically, perhaps, it's a tiny bit less small than it used to be. But



philosophically, and in feel, the Wantirna Estate experience remains as intimate and genuine as it gets in Australian wine.

2018 Wantirna Estate Isabella Chardonnay RRP \$87

Ripe peachy expression with butter menthol, mint, wheatgerm and spice. Juicy pear and peach, a certain citrus cut through the gloss and glide of this flavoursome little number, some flint, savoury umami character, juicy and chalky through a nice long finish. It's a proper Chardonnay, and feels pretty much ready, almost raring, to go. 94 points. Gary Walsh, The Wine Front October 2019

2018 Wantirna Estate Lily Pinot Noir RRP \$87

Maryann Egan, who I've met a few times now, is one of the better people in the world of wine. Not to say that makes a difference to what's in the bottle, though at times I like to dream that good character could perhaps be osmotic...

Cherry cola, creamy spicy oak, dried mint. Medium bodied, lovely fine silty tannin provides traction, even acidity, poached spiced strawberries, shines on the finish with a pretty perfume and dried herb, and carries long. It's a light wine of substance, if that makes sense. Easy to like. 93 points. Gary Walsh, The Wine Front October 2019

2017 Wantirna Estate Amelia Cabernet Sauvignon / Merlot RRP \$87

Cabernets and Merlot from the original 1963 plantings, with 5% Petit Verdot coming off the 1989 plantings. All dry grown. Yarra Valley Cabernet from 2017 strikes me as being a more dense, compact year, with fine bones and lithe structure, and I like that very much.

Glorious Cabernet perfume of violet and pencil shavings, mint, blackcurrant and boysenberry, with the theme being intense small black fruit, I guess. It's medium-bodied, dense and tightly knit, juiciness of blueberry and blackcurrant, layered in with more savoury tobacco flavour, graphite tannin, cool acidity, and a long, almost chocolaty finish. What a delight. Superb. 96 points. Gary Walsh, The Wine Front October 2019

2017 Wantirna Estate Hannah Cabernet Franc / Merlot RRP \$157

Plum and pencil shavings, flowers and raspberries, baking spices and sweet herbs. It's a beautiful thing, so supple and graceful, a smooth delivery of perfectly ripe fruit, melting high pixel tannin, cocoa and sweet herbal perfume, clear acidity, impeccable length. So you say you don't like Merlot? Poor little you! 96+ points. Gary Walsh, The Wine Front October 2019

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BLOCK PARTY

"Refined. Gorgeous," wrote Ned Goodwin MW in *Halliday Wine Companion 2020*. "These single-plot Pinots are among the finest of the country, demanding serious attention."

Refining nature is what it's all about at Stefano Lubiana. During the course of 30 years since setting themselves up on the banks of the Derwent River, Steve and Monique have never wavered in their quest for ever higher quality. They've continued to raise the bar through painstaking organic viticulture and cutting-edge cellar technology and practices.

These single-block Pinot Noir wines are the prime example of their microscopic attention in the vineyard; this is the culmination of three decades of devotion. The three plots – Ruscello, Il Giardino and La Roccia – have been singled out for their diverse soil and topography, and the nuances of shape, texture and structure that these give to these unique iterations of Pinot Noir.



All vineyard operations are carried out by hand, cane pruning, cane thinning, crop thinning and Harvest. Only a small amount of these wines is made each year - between three to five barrels depending on the vintage. Crop levels are kept low at 3 to 4 tonnes per hectare or 800g to 1kg per vine. Winemaking is very simple and relatively consistent between blocks, with the number of whole clusters in the ferment being the main difference. All are fermented with natural yeast in small, open fermenters with a total maceration of three weeks. All blocks are matured in French oak barriques (20% new) for 12 months.

2017 Stefano Lubiana Ruscello Pinot Noir RRP \$99

An extraordinary New World Pinot, built around a fine weave of tannin that elbows the juicy fruit into a savoury mould, while allowing it to flow over the seams. Just enough. Not too much. Plenty of cherry to red berry

crunch, nevertheless. Slight enough to coax one in for another glass, while building a strong case for the wine's ageability. A superb touch is manifest in the use of whole bunch, oak and extraction. This is thoroughly Burgundian. 96 points. Ned Goodwin, Halliday Wine Magazine 2020

2017 Stefano Lubiana Il Giardino Pinot Noir RRP \$99

A Pinot built around a twine of whole cluster clove and cardamom-clad tannin, racing along a verdant undercarriage of cool climate acidity and biodynamic energy. Spiky and refreshing. Shins and elbows, but boy will this grow. Just give it time! This is Pinot for those who appreciate texture, while dwelling on intrigue. Lots of stuffing, poise and immense potential. 96 points. Ned Goodwin, Halliday Wine Magazine 2020

2017 Stefano Lubiana La Roccia Pinot Noir RRP \$99

This is the diplomat of this triumvirate and damn, holy it is. Mid-weight, crunchy and melding the red berry sass of the Ruscello plot with the herbal spine of the Il Giardino and its whole-cluster drive. This is infinitely long, etched with tannin, extract and sex appeal. Refined. Gorgeous. Length pushes the score. These single-plot Pinots are among the finest of the country, demanding serious attention. 97 points. Ned Goodwin, Halliday Wine Magazine 2020

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YALLINGUP THUMBS-UP

Julian Langworthy's a very good Cabernet maker, but you've got to wonder whether the real money's in being Julian Langworthy's cabinet maker. So many trophies to house!

That woeful joke prefaces yet more show success for the happy-go-lucky power couple behind Nocturne. We were delighted to launch their new sub-regional range in September, comprising an ultra-pourable rosé, Chardonnay and Cabernet.

Well, it was little over a month before Julian and Alana landed their first prize. The Yallingup Cabernets picked up the trophy for **Best Red Blend** at the **Wine Show of Western Australia**. It's sure to be the first of many accolades for the Margaret River 'SR' series, with all three of these looking ravishing right now.

2018 Nocturne SR Chardonnay *Treeton, Margaret River*
RRP \$35

Smoky cap gun, white flowers, mixed citrus and spice. It's juicy and lively, grapefruit with a little fresh apricot and creamy richness, good long smoky finish with a ring of acidity. 93 points. Gary Walsh, The Wine Front

2018 Nocturne SR Rosé *Carbunup, Margaret River* 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 SR Cabernets *Yallingup, Margaret River*
RRP \$35

Best Red Blend Trophy at the Wine Show of Western Australia



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. – **Julian & Alana Langworthy**



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TWO-TIME TIMMSY

Congratulations to Al Timms and the Shadowfax team for more show success, with their two 2018 Pinot Noir wines from the Macedon Ranges scoring gold medals at the **Royal Melbourne Wine Awards**. That meant back-to-back capital-city golds for the new-release 2018 Shadowfax Little Hampton Pinot Noir, having achieved the same accolade at the **Sydney Royal Wine Show** in August. The other wine given a 95-point score in Melbourne is the 2018 Shadowfax Macedon Ranges Pinot Noir, a blend from four of Shadowfax's elevated vineyards and – at RRP \$33 – a spectacular-value introduction to Australia's coolest mainland wine region.

And, of course, these high-altitude vineyards - and their high-flying custodian – also produce magnificent Chardonnay, as these latest reviews attest.

2017 Shadowfax Macedon Ranges Chardonnay RRP \$33

Ripper chardonnay. Powerful, textural and long. Essence of the variety. Stone fruit, meal, flint and spice, toasty/cedary oak as added emphasis. No questions here: this is a wine of outstanding quality. 95 points. Campbell Mattinson, The Wine Front

2018 Shadowfax Midhill Chardonnay RRP \$53

Fruit. Composure. Length. It's all here. It sits pretty, peach-driven and poised. Grilled/toasted aspects, a lick of oak spice, a line of citrus, perhaps melon. Quartz. Class written all over it. Will be better in another year or three. 94+ points. Campbell Mattinson, The Wine Front

2018 Shadowfax Macedon Ranges Pinot Noir RRP \$33

Served bright, played tight. This is a beautifully presented Pinot Noir. Light but forceful, both chalky and silken, savoury at heart but run with water-based fruit. So Macedon. Not big in any way but one of those wines that just doesn't need to be. Meaty aftertaste the icing. Impressive. Will mature very well. 93+ points. Campbell Mattinson, The Wine Front

2018 Shadowfax Little Hampton Pinot Noir RRP \$62

It's a cranberried wine. Washy. Spicy too, gently autumnal, smoky, fleshed with red cherries, just a little reductive. A pinch of this and a pinch of that. It carries dry, chalky tannin; it's strung on a taut line of acidity; it's measured out in coffee spoons. Both delicacy and perfume are evident. Time will be kind. 92+ points. Campbell Mattinson, The Wine Front

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COOL, CALM & COLLECTED

The relatively cool 2017 season was a wonderful one in the Yarra Valley – and one that played perfectly into the deft hands of the Middleton family, whose striving for supremely elegant wines of beguiling detail knows no bounds.

We've enjoyed a string of excellent vintages from this icon of the Yarra. It's possible that this is the most effortless the four famous wines have ever appeared. They will delight those fortunate enough to get their hands on them – either now or far into their bright future.

2017 Mount Mary Triolet RRP \$100

There are certain years when Triolet really sings, and it's probably the cooler ones, though I may be wrong. Anyway, they age beautifully, of that much I'm certain. A top-shelf Triolet. So discreet and stylish, yet flavoursome too. Lemon and lime, white pear, fennel and aromatic herbs, floral perfume too, some spiced vanilla biscuit. A subtle gloss to it, but all about line, length and flinty texture, there may be a little guava and apple, but citrus is the main player. Subtle grassy flavour, but nothing overt; it's a seasoning component here. Brine and crunch to the aftertaste. Impeccable. 96 points. Gary Walsh, The Wine Front September 2019

2017 Mount Mary Chardonnay RRP \$120

Clones 76, 277, P58, Mendoza, I10V1; the first two are the Bernard/Dijon clones, which are new additions to the vineyard. Hand-picked, destemmed direct to the press, specific yeast selection, fermented and matured in French oak (25-30% new) from various coopers for 11 months. The wine is positively electric/alive with pinpoint precision and length. Mouthwatering, glorious, and will live for decades. 98 points. James Halliday, Halliday Wine Companion 2020



2017 Mount Mary Pinot Noir RRP \$160

Vines average age 27yo, hand-picked, bunch-sorted on vibrating tables, open-fermented with cultured yeast, 14 days on skins, matured in French barriques (25-30% new). Glorious colour; the bouquet has the complexity you expect from a 20+yo Burgundy with aromas of field and forest floor. The palate is utterly exceptional, with perfect balance and length. The multitude of flavours swirl and dance - red tree fruits, red cherry foremost, plums close behind, thence to field and forest floor, capturing wild raspberry and strawberry. Sam Middleton thinks this will be one of the all-time greats of Mount Mary, and I'm sure he is right. 99 points. James Halliday, Halliday Wine Companion 2020

2017 Mount Mary Quintet RRP \$165

Mount Mary has hit a purple patch with their Quintet over the past few vintages, and their Royal Purpleness continues in 2017. Such perfume. It's head spinningly fragrant. I'm thinking violet, cigar box, nougat, spicy biscuits, mint, chocolate and sweet wet earth, along with a core of intense raspberry, cherry and blackcurrant. It's medium bodied, lithe but dense, rich cherry chocolate sprinkled with baking spices, crisp cranberry acidity, high pixel tannin, sweetness of fruit with a savoury ferrous edge. The finish is supremely long, all graphite and perfume, crisp definition and aniseed trailing in the aftertaste. Fine and rare. 97 points. Gary Walsh, The Wine Front September 2019

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AIRLIE BANK MAKEOVER

At last, art imitates life. Some years ago, fiercely bright and defiant Tim Shand ripped up the rule book by pouring the concept of strait-laced, pedestrian second-label wines down the sink. With Airlie Bank, Punt Road's winemaker turned out wines that dared to combine edge, interest and deliciousness with ludicrous value. Modern classics like 100% whole-bunch Franc and Gris on Skins emerged alongside an utterly addictive spring Pinot. Well, all the ingenuity, creativity and originality inside the bottle will henceforth be mirrored by a bolder, contemporary label. "I love the fact that it reflects our newfound confidence as winemakers," Tim Shand told us. "The labels are inspired by Bauhaus design, a German art school (1919 to 1933) which encouraged artists and designers to collaborate with architects and builders to rebuild

Germany after WW1, using only the simplicity of triangles, circles and squares."

We've been massively behind the work that Shandy and the team have put into the wines of both Punt Road and Airlie Bank, turning both ranges into the kind of well-priced, sure-fire winners that we as diners love to unearth on a list. The lift this gives to the feel of Airlie Bank is timely and imaginative. We hope you too will embrace it.

The first bottle to wear the new look is the 2019 Airlie Bank Pinot Noir, a cracking little wine. We can't wait to see it out there!

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 Fermented on Skins RRP \$23

The 100% skins ferment is 30%, and we only kept this portion of the wine on skins for 48 hours. Conversely, we extended the 100% whole bunch ferments to 14 days as they were bright and robust. The increased intensity and fruit weight are 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

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

KARMA KOOMILYA

If what goes around, comes around, then Stephen Pannell must get to drink a lot of very soulful, thoughtful, delicious wine. Because that's what this bloke has given the world.

This is the third outing for this master in his element. Steve fell in love with the heavenly spot he calls Koomilya as a young winemaker, and realised a life's dream to purchase it in late 2012. This place always had a spiritual pull for Steve, and now he's enjoying inviting others to feel that ethereal timelessness as they taste these wines.

2019 marks the third set of annual releases under this label. This time we have two wines, the CP Block Cabernet Sauvignon from 2016, and



Tempranillo Touriga from the 2017 harvest. Both display the exotic aromas, sensual textures and deep, long draw of this mythical place.

2017 Koomilya Tempranillo Touriga RRP \$53

Upon purchasing the vineyard in 2012 I saw it as an ideal place to create a blend that included varieties I believe will see McLaren Vale into the future and, moreover, complement the traditional varieties of Cabernet Sauvignon and Shiraz. We grafted two contoured and terraced blocks on deep, red soil to Tempranillo and Touriga Nacional, planted Graciano and Mataro and restored to health a neglected row of Mataro planted in the mid-19th century.

The first wine to be released was the Touriga Cabernet Mataro released under S.C. Pannell, which went on to win Wine of Show at the 2016 McLaren Vale Wine Show. The blend may change vintage to vintage but the wine will always be unmistakably Koomilya. Alcohol 14%; pH 3.76; TA 5.5g/L. – **Stephen Pannell**

This is a very plush, rich and silky Touriga with a ripe red-plum nose and gently spiced complexity below. The palate has a super smooth, fine and silky texture and delivers long, fresh and elegant on the finish. Effortless. Drink or hold. Screw cap. 94 points. Nick Stock, JamesSuckling.com June 2019

2016 Koomilya CP Block Cabernet Sauvignon RRP \$115

Sourced from a block between the JC and DC blocks on Koomilya's southeast-facing slope. It was planted by Jill and Don Cant in 1975 and machine-pruned for more than 25 years. I've slowly worked the vines back from poor health since purchase in 2012. It's now one of the few cane-pruned Cabernet blocks in McLaren Vale. It's planted to the old McLaren Vale clone; an extremely low-yielding, small-bunched and small-berry clone producing extraordinary wines. The Cabernet Sauvignon from Koomilya has consistently contributed to many trophy-winning wines including two 'Bushing King' trophies since 2016. Hand-harvested on 12th March. 10 days on skins before a gentle press and sent to French oak puncheons for malolactic conversion and 19 months' maturation. Bottled 28th November 2017. Alcohol 14%; pH 3.54; TA 7.5g/L. – **Stephen Pannell**

A beautiful array of fresh, ripe blackcurrants and dark cherries with subtle wood spices and a liquorice thread. The palate has such smoothly rendered tannins and a very juicy core of fresh, dark plums and blackcurrants. Really impressive, velvety tannins. Drink or hold. Screw cap. 96 points. Nick Stock, JamesSuckling.com June 2019

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THE ASCENT OF MANN

Is there no stopping the rise of Corymbia's Rob and Genevieve Mann? They deserve massive congratulations for taking out inaugural **Wine of the Year** at the **Western Australian Good Food Guide awards** with their Corymbia

Tempranillo/Malbec/Cabernet blend.

There's a lot of fantastic wine grown in WA, and it's a huge credit to the Mann family to snag this prize. It's hardly come out of the blue, though. The Mann name has long been tied to pioneering brilliance out west, with Rob's grandfather Jack famously working 51 consecutive vintages at Houghton. Rob's dad Tony planted the Swan Valley vineyard where this wine and

its super Chenin Blanc sibling were grown, and Rob himself made a name for himself leading Cape Mentelle to glorious heights from the mid-noughties.

Now side-by-side with his wife and former Howard Park winemaker Gen, they're shaping their own dream. Alongside the organically dry-grown duo from the Swan Valley, the Corymbia range includes a divine single-vineyard Cabernet Sauvignon from Rob & Gen's site in Calgardup. So, you see, they're as WA as the Marri bloom that adorns the label – and Corymbia is blossoming as beautifully as the indigenous tree, with a reputation set to soar as high.

That win was for the '17 red blend – which subsequently disappeared in a flash. But fret not; we have the equally brilliant '18 edition out now. Just look at **Mike Bennie** of **Wine Front** raving about it below! Plus, **Jancis Robinson** was bowled over by the Manns' Margaret River Cabernet while she was visiting – and if you haven't tried that, you simply must.

2018 Corymbia Chenin Blanc RRP \$32

This is bloody marvellous Chenin Blanc. It was made by Rob and Genevieve Mann from fruit grown on Tony Mann's property. Sure, it was a very good year, but it has been handled deftly to capture all those essential goodies from a variety that sings from the Swan. Controlled tropical fruits, with minerally citrus character and a lively fine acidity, are in perfect balance. Just love the palate. 95 points. Ray Jordan, The West Australian

2018 Corymbia Tempranillo/Malbec/Cabernet RRP \$43

Meanwhile Rob Mann and family (as this comes from the now organic-farmed family vineyard 'out the back of Swan') are speeding ahead with fine wine paradigm wines from the region. Kudos. The bold marriage of Tempranillo with Malbec and Cabernet finds itself a medium-bodied, perfumed, svelte and tannin-hewn guise that many wines from the region miss in boldness and oomph. This is 58% Tempranillo, 38% Malbec, 12% Cabernet. It's sort of a vineyard proportion thing. Some co-fermentation here. Highly perfumed, pretty almost floral scents, violets come to mind, whiffs of blueberry/mulberry, green olive, a touch of clove woody spice, sarsaparilla and anise. Just lovely. Medium weight, sinewy feel, succulent and beautiful, fine web of clove-licked tannins, great energy here, bright and lengthy, fine, tight finish here. Has a 'serious' feel but also deliciousness. 95 points. Mike Bennie, The Wine Front

2018 Corymbia Cabernet Sauvignon RRP \$46

Mid crimson. Creamy texture. Fruit that manages to be both fresh and opulent. Approachable and appetising. Fully ripe Cabernet with a fresh, marine overlay and Margaret River's balance and rigour. Not the most complex wine but beautifully balanced. Hint of black olives. 13.5%. 17.5/20 Jancis Robinson, jancisrobinson.com October 2019

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ISOLATION JUBILATION

Congratulations to the Smith Cullam family of Frankland Estate. This organic pioneer – long celebrated as one of Australia's finest Riesling producers – took out three trophies at the **2019 Royal Melbourne Wine Awards**, including highly prestigious **Trevor Mast Trophy** for **Best Shiraz**.

The win, taking in trophies for **Best Organic Wine** and **Best WA Shiraz**, is the culmination of 30 years of devoted work here, first by Barrie Smith and Judi Cullam in planting the vineyard and setting a determined course towards elegance and depth in the wines. Their children Hunter and Elizabeth Smith –

together with Lizzie's winemaker husband Brian Kent – have built on this platform with tremendous dedication and clear-sightedness. They've weaved greater detail and texture into the reds, and this beautifully fragrant, flowing and seamless Shiraz is truly a new landmark for the variety in Australia. The bad news is the win turned this into a blink-and-you'll-miss-it release; the wine sold out in less than two weeks. The good news is that you can still tuck into the silky, spicy seamlessness of Frankland River Shiraz, with a limited quantity of both the '16 estate and Isolation Ridge edition available. See for yourselves what all the fuss is about!

2016 Frankland Estate Shiraz RRP \$29

Retains its good colour; the bouquet and palate alike have started to develop the complex spicy, savoury forest floor characters that are the mark of topflight pinot noir. The length of the palate is of itself a measure of the quality of this wine, and the great vintage promises even more down the track. 95 points. James Halliday, Halliday Wine Companion 2020

2016 Frankland Estate Isolation Ridge Shiraz RRP \$43

I love everything about this wine. It is beautifully medium-bodied, with focused cherry and mulberry flavours; there is a very faint and gorgeous thread of spice running through the palate; the fruit has a coolness to it, which I always love, and the price is excellent for a wine of this quality. Balance, composure and deliciousness. 95 points. Toni Paterson MW, The Real Review

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NEAR & FARR

"This complex geology imparts a depth and multitude of textures to the resultant wine, a delicious and sumptuous potpourri of sour cherry, strawberry, damson plum, five-spice and lilac," **Ned Goodwin MW** wrote of the '16 RP Pinot "Delicious. Balletic and verging on effortless." Now, all of us who've penned a tasting note in our time will have gone OTT at some point, hosing the purple prose over a bottle worthy of a more sober conclusion. But great growers on great sites – and Australia for sure has its fair share – drive wines into a realm where sensations are magnified, multiplied and commingled. The aroma, taste and tactile dials flicker and throb. And if the wine ends up pulling the whole thing off – coursing to a resolution that is calm, coherent and compelling – you're onto something you can't let go of.

Nick Farr's close-planted coterie catapults you into that zone. Ned's assessment above of last year's RP– the second rendition from the Côte Vineyard – contains no hyperbole. The same reviewer also captures the apparent contradictions in the GC Chardonnay in his appraisal of the '17: "Dense and intense of flavour on one hand; stealth and an uncanny cool, on the

other.” Then in its third incarnation, the GC was declared “among the finest Chardonnays in this country... A meld of synergistic sites, rootstock, clone, vineyard management and a deft, soothing hand in the winery.”

So Nick hit the target with his tributes to mother, Robyn Pamela (RP) and father Gary Charles (GC) Farr. These two formed something of a holy trinity with the original high-density deity, Tout Près. As with the other wines in this offer, the 2017 edition is yet to be reviewed. But run a quick eye over various expert impressions of the '16 Tout Près and you're left in no doubt that the irresistible paradox is strikingly evident. “Power and poise,” as **The Wine Front's Mike Bennie** put it. “Ripe yet fresh and tangy. Intense and almost decadent.”. That was **Nick Stock**. And, from Goodwin again: “This is a wine of a spicy, root spice-chinotto astringency meshed to a chiaroscuro of lighter, darker and exotic fruit references. Edgy, spiky and of compelling depth.”

So, you can well imagine: With these '17s, epic poetry awaits...

2018 GC Chardonnay by Farr RRP \$125

The fruit is hand-picked then whole bunch-pressed in the winery. All the solids are collected and chilled before being put to barrel (35% new French oak). A natural fermentation will occur at cool temperatures over the next one to two months, and then a small amount of stirring helps start malolactic fermentation. The wine is then raked, fined and lightly filtered before bottling 11 months after picking.

A wine with great fruit presence and varietal character at the front of the palate, the power of this site then takes over and it finishes with a very assertive line of acidity. We love everything about this 2018 Chardonnay. It is a vintage of great balance and completeness. As our greatest expression of Chardonnay, this wine has very quickly commanded a strong following around the world. – **Nick Farr**

2017 RP Pinot Noir by Farr RRP \$125

The fruit is handpicked and sorted in the vineyard, then fermented in an open-top fermenter. Between 40 to 50% of the fruit will be destemmed and then cold soaked for four days. We use only natural yeast for the fermentation process, which takes roughly 19 days. Grape-stomping (known as pigeage) will occur two to three times a day depending on the amount of extraction required, and the wine is then placed in 50 to 60% new Allier barrels by gravity. It's raked by gas after secondary fermentation, then again at 18 months to be bottled.

A bouquet of absolute intrigue and undergrowth from an extremely fresh and high natural acidity vintage. The elegant yet savoury power that we're growing to love from the Côte Vineyard wines is showing once again from both the Pinot and the GC Chardonnay. The palate is lengthy and layered. It is a Pinot that keeps giving with every minute in the glass. This is one of the great Pinots we have made, with fantastic ageing potential. - **Nick Farr**

2017 Tout Près Pinot Noir by Farr RRP \$125

Only a touch over 2.5 acres, it has three individual soil types across a three-sided cirque (an amphitheatre-like valley head) that rises above the other vineyards. Each slope consists of a soil type. The largest slope is black volcanic soil of limestone, the second is quartz gravel mixed with red ironstone soil and the third, an iron strand in grey sandy loam. The clones that will acclimatise and mutate over time are currently 113, 114, 115, 667, 777 and MV6 to become the Tout Près clone. At 7,300 vines per hectare, Tout Près is the most densely planted vineyard on the estate (hence the name, meaning "very cosy"). The soils and intense competition force the vines to work hard, resulting in fruit that is lush but masculine and provides the coveted structure found only in the most ageworthy wines.

Tout Près is fermented with 100% whole bunches in a five-tonne oak fermenter. This wine has the flavour profile and intensity to absorb 100% new Allier French barrels.

We're just as happy with Tout Près 2017 as we are the RP Pinot. Tout Près has shown its credentials for a number of years, with its understated presence. A vintage with amazing appeal and balance because of the high-toned acid. Tout Près vineyard in the past has generally been tight and structured at the time of

release, but in more recent years the palate is finer and more delicate from the outset. The layers of flavour, tannin, and acidity morph into an extremely long back palate. Great cellaring potential. - Nick Farr

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IMPORTS

SWISH FAMILY ROBINSON

"I think people who've tried them really do appreciate how they look, and I feel very confident that they look great in any setting, whether it's a classical or modern setting," Jancis Robinson MW told us after we tried out her glasses with an array of wines in a variety of places. "I would say, to have a wine glass designed by a wine professional really does make a difference. The whole point of

our glass is, it is for wine lovers. It's for people who want to get the most out of every glass."

Well, you can't argue with that. These glasses weren't designed by just any wine professional. They were dreamed up by the wine writer many of us look up to more than any other.

Her whistle-stop visit to Australia was unforgettable for those of us fortunate enough to taste with Jancis and listen to her lucid, open-minded musings on wine and geography. And the glasses and decanters – elegant, beautiful to handle and offering a crystal clear impression of every wine – truly shone.

Heading towards gifting season, it's a great time to consider getting into these, both for yourself and for those you'll be showing hospitality to in the coming weeks, months and years.

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 \$185.00

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 Old 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.

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BARON VON MUENCHBERG

André Ostertag loves all his vines. The way he describes the “gardens” of vines he biodynamically farms around his home in Epfig leaves you in no doubt about that devotion. But the nigh on monastic way he worships Muenchberg - the “mountain of the monks” - is something else.

The site was first planted in the 12th century by the Cistercian monks. Ostertag owns 2.05Ha, of which 1.65Ha are planted with Riesling. This is one of unique grands crus of Alsace because of its 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.

This is one of those wines that has disciples; those initiated in the ways of Muenchberg follow it year on year and know it's like nothing else. We have two outstanding vintages currently available - see the light and join the flock!

2017 Ostertag Clos Mathis Riesling RRP \$81

Flint on green apple on mixed nuts on apple.

Interesting mix of scents. Very perfumed. Appealing

loose knit texture and flavours, green apple, green melon flavours, light minerally chalky feel, soft limey acidity in the mix. Easy flow. Refreshing style with good charisma and transparency in feel. 93 points.

Mike Bennie, The Wine Front

2017 Ostertag Muenchberg Grand Cru Riesling RRP \$124

This promises some really spicy peaches and apricots, though held in in reserve for now. Some wonderful citrus and flinty accents come through. Medium-bodied, but very mineral indeed; this is like licking white stones. The centre palate is ever so precise and the finish is long and complex. Drink or hold. 95 points. Nick Stock, JamesSuckling.com

This beautiful south-facing amphitheatre has been planted since the 12th century. André Ostertag's 1.65ha are vinified to produce a wine blending intensity and elegance, the Riesling's tension expressed with great purity that will reward the patient. 94 points. Stephen Spurrier, Decanter Magazine October 2019

2016 Ostertag Muenchberg Grand Cru Riesling RRP \$107

From vines ranging from 30 to 75+ years old and planted on red sandstone and volcanic sediments, Ostertag's 2016 Grand Cru Muenchberg Riesling is intense and concentrated on the deep, clear and elegant nose, with perfectly ripe (mirabelle) fruit aromas that are perfectly mixed with the spicy-warm terroir notes. Round, juicy, very compact and tensioned but highly elegant and deep on the palate, the 2016 reveals great density and complexity and indicates lots of mysteries that will be revealed over the years in the bottle or with more aeration. A fascinating Muenchberg, it is intense and dense but highly finessed and with lingering salinity. 95 points. Stephan Reinhardt, Wine Advocate

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NEIVE SAY NEIVE AGAIN

Avid readers of this newsletter (anyone out there?) will know that there's a soundbite that **Vinous Media's Antonio Galloni** brings out every year when reviewing the wines of Cigliuti. It should be said that the reviews themselves – the tasting notes on these honest, characterful, true-to-vintage wines – are specific and nuanced. It's the characterisation of the estate, now run by sisters Claudia and Silvia Cigliuti, that remains constant. And that's what you'd expect; these are humble, dedicated farmers who are not interested in grand statements or showing off. The wines are discreet and transparent – and given that we're playing with Nebbiolo on the great Serraboella hill in Neive, it's a great thing to see the grape and land shine. Anyway, that overarching comment is back – this time with an acknowledgement that it's an enduring truth: "I have said this now for many years. Cigliuti remains one of Piedmont's truly under-the-radar estates."

2018 Cigliuti Langhe Nebbiolo RRP \$64

100% Nebbiolo from 20-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.



2016 Cigliuti Barbaresco Vie Erte RRP \$107

Cigliuti's 2016 Barbaresco Vie Erte is absolutely gorgeous. In 2016, the Vie Erte stands out for its distinctive spiced profile and that extra kick of mid-palate richness the wine has acquired now that the

vines are nearly twenty years old. Vibrant and energetic, the 2016 has enough pedigree to age well for a number of years, although, quite frankly, it is very delicious right now. The sweet floral, minty and spiced notes that are so typical of this site really come to life with a bit of time in the glass. Although it was only bottled recently, the 2016 is quite expressive. Naturally, it will be even more so in a few years' time. 94 points. Antonio Galloni, Vinous Media

2016 Cigliuti Barbaresco Serraboella RRP \$140

The 2016 Barbaresco Serraboella is rich, powerful and explosive, with tremendous depth. A Barbaresco of structure and intensity. Just as it showed from barrel, the 2016 is powerful and imposing, with layers of deeply pitched, balsamic aromas and flavours woven into its virile, tannic frame. Readers will have to be patient with the 2016, as it is nowhere near ready. Once again, the Cigliuti Barbaresco Serraboella is one of the stand outs of the year. 95 points. Antonio Galloni, Vinous Media

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PY SUPER

“Enjoy how much better value it is than so many red burgundies.” That’s what **Jancis Robinson** wrote about the 2017 edition of Dominique Piron’s top cuvée. Morgon is Piron’s patch, and the president of Inter-Beaujolais – the body tasked with extolling the virtues of Gamay in its homeland – expresses it to the max.

“They seem to have had a string of good vintages in Beaujolais, and I think I like the playful and fruity 2018s quite a lot,” wrote **The Wine Front’s Gary Walsh** about the vintage that’s just landed in Australia. And as is always the case, there’s no time

like spring for digging into these fresh, zesty mid-weight reds that express fruit and mineral with such character.

2018 Dominique Piron Beaujolais-Villages RRP \$27

They seem to have had a string of good vintages in Beaujolais, and I think I like the playful and fruity 2018s quite a lot.

Fresh, raspberry and cherry, floral perfume. It’s light and juicy but sports a bit of ‘mineral’ stuff and fine dusty tannin to keep it on the straight and narrow. Finish is fresh. It’s easy to like. 90 points. Gary Walsh, The Wine Front

2018 Dominique Piron Brouilly RRP \$35

Brouilly is the largest and furthest south of the Beaujolais crus. It has a good south-east exposure, at the bottom of the Saône Valley at an altitude of 200 to 300 metres. The subsoil consists of granite debris and blue-tinged schist.

2018 Dominique Piron Fleurie RRP \$41

The cru is situated in the north of Beaujolais. The pink granite of the soils of steep Fleurie vineyards are more acid and produce lighter, more delicate wines than, say, Morgon, and can be some of the most charming of all Beaujolais. This wine from 50-year-old vines is perhaps a bit more mineral than the supple Brouilly, a slightly more ‘serious’ affair.

2018 Dominique Piron Morgon Côte du Py RRP \$46

375ml RRP \$29

MAGNUM RRP \$92

Standing on the top of the blue schist terroir that is Morgon Côte du Py on a wonderfully sunny but utterly freezing morning is something that will live long in the memory. Côte du Py has upwards of 100 growers sharing it, Piron being well placed with 7ha, all planted at 10,000 vines per ha.

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KING LOUIS

Look, there's no *wrong* time to drink Chablis. But it's around this time that Insta-inclined bars tend to start serving up snaps of oysters and flinty French Chardonnay. And what happens is your mouth starts to water and your brain starts to think: THAT is what I want.

Louis Michel's '18 village wine is so right, it's wrong. Wrong not to order it, that is. As always from this grower with exceptional holdings – two-thirds of production is designated premier cru – we have a range of higher wines, too. The '16 Vaudésir grand cru looked smoking during our recent masterclasses with **Jancis Robinson MW**.



2018 Louis Michel Chablis RRP \$53

*Bright, fresh, peachy, flinty, and raring to go. Cool flavour, but good ripeness, brine and green olive, some savoury yoghurt sort of stuff in there too. Like this. Going glass to glass is effortless. 93 points. **Gary Walsh, The Wine Front***

2017 Louis Michel Chablis 1er Cru Butteaux Vieilles Vignes RRP \$89

*A formidable rendition of this reliably superb cuvée, Michel's 2017 Chablis 1er Cru Butteaux Vieilles Vignes wafts from the glass with a complex but reserved bouquet of fresh peach, crisp yellow apple, iodine, mandarin oil and paraffin wax. On the palate, it's medium to full-bodied, deep, dense and concentrated, with a racy spine of acidity cloaked in vibrant fruit, concluding with a long, searingly saline finish. This is well worth seeking out. 94 points. **William Kelley, Wine Advocate***

2016 Louis Michel Chablis 1er Cru Montée de Tonnerre RRP \$89

*This is a wine of power, energy and breadth, made from 3ha of vines in this fine right bank site just south of the grands crus. Like Michel's village Chablis it's still an infant, but you can sense its density and power quietly building like water behind a dam. Elemental, brooding notes reminiscent of plant sap and ground stone lurk in that resonant, aromatic inarticulacy, yet its mute force succeeds in seeming concentrated, close-grained and sheer in the mouth. 95 points. **Andrew Jefford, Decanter Magazine***

2016 Louis Michel Chablis Grand Cru Vaudésir RRP \$155

100% on the north-facing side. A fresher wine from this warm Grand Cru site. Very attractive gently reductive nectarines and mangoes. Sweetly perfumed and full of energy. Mouthwatering. The palate has a

very powerful, very composed and concentrated core of exotic fruits. Succulent. A joyride! Drink now. 93 points. Nick Stock, jamesuckling.com



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MOULIN ROUGES

November is, of course, the month that sees the release of Beaujolais Nouveau. It's a custom many blame for undermining this region, painting it simplistically as home to structureless strawberry-and-banana wines. Thankfully that image has long faded, leaving the nouveau thing to become what it always should have been – a bit of harmless frivolity – while people have come to know the subtler charms of granite-grown Gamay where

terroir definition and joy go hand-in-hand.

Domaine Labruyère's Moulin-à-Vent wines never put frivolity first. Like Piron's Morgon, this is one of the most profound crus, and the Labruyère family has always tackled Beaujolais in a burgundian fashion. These are mineral, textural wines that embrace mystery and unfurl beautifully. These new reviews from Vinous Media's Josh Raynolds capture them remarkably well.

2016 Domaine Labruyère Moulin-à-Vent Coeur de Terroirs Vieilles Vignes **MAGNUM RRP \$107**

Deep violet. Vibrant red berry, cherry preserve and floral pastille scents, along with suggestions of liquorice and allspice. In an energetic, well-balanced style, offering juicy raspberry and bitter cherry flavours that show excellent back-end lift and building spiciness. The floral note repeats strongly on the very long, mineral-tinged finish, which is shaped by pliant tannins that fold smoothly into the wine's sappy red fruit. 92 points. Josh Raynolds, Vinous Media

2016 Domaine Labruyère Moulin-à-Vent Le Carquelin RRP \$69 **MAGNUM RRP \$156**

Glistening ruby. Fresh dark fruits, candied flowers and smoky minerals on the highly perfumed nose, along with an exotic spice nuance that builds in the background. Juicy and impressively concentrated, offering appealingly sweet black raspberry, boysenberry and cherry compote flavours that show unlikely energy for their power. Finishes sweet and very long, with dusty tannins sneaking in late to add shape to the wine's ample fruit. 92 points. Josh Raynolds, Vinous Media

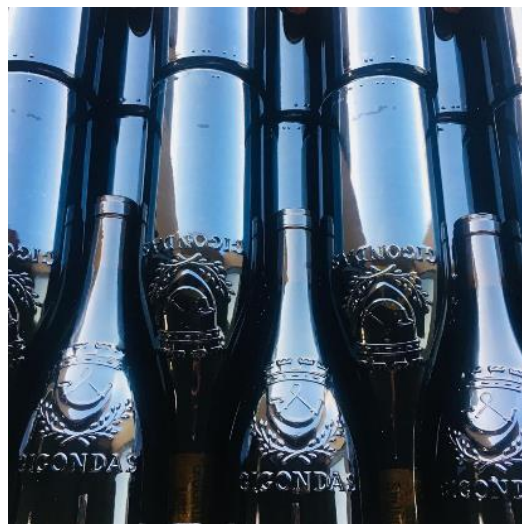
2016 Domaine Labruyère Le Clos du Moulin-à-Vent RRP \$99 **MAGNUM RRP \$221**

Opaque violet colour. Potent, mineral-accented cherry, black raspberry and fruitcake aromas, with a sexy floral nuance adding complexity. Offers juicy, impressively concentrated black/blue fruit, violet pastille and dark chocolate flavours that convey both power and delicacy. Chewy and penetrating on the youthfully tannic, spice-tinged finish, which shows excellent clarity and strong, mineral-driven persistence. 93 points. Josh Raynolds, Vinous Media

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YOUR RHÔNE BEST FRIEND

Affable, good-natured, honest and reliable, Pierre Amadiou is that estate that's like a great mate. It's an important employer in Gigondas in the southern Rhône, it's every bit a champion of, and cheerleader for, its community. The wines, fittingly, display the warmth and welcome of this sunny region, while the high-altitude sites keep things fresh and lively. The latest shipment means we now have the united colours of Roulepierre – screw-capped, great-value white, pink and red Côtes-du-Rhône – alongside a new vintage of the Cairanne and Gigondas. Across the board these are fragrant, streamlined wines with fruit purity and the warm, garrigue-inflected stamp of the Rhône valley.



2018 Pierre Amadiou 'Roulepierre' Côtes-du-Rhône Blanc RRP \$25

This fragrant and fruity wine is made from 100% Clairette grapes and offers aromas of peach and floral notes on the nose, with good weight and a lingering, lively finish.

2018 Pierre Amadiou 'Roulepierre' Côtes-du-Rhône Rosé RRP \$23

This wine is vinified in stainless steel tanks at low temperature to preserve the freshness and fruit of the Grenache and Cinsault grapes. Raspberry and redcurrant flavours with floral notes are followed by a pleasantly full-bodied mouthfeel.

2017 Pierre Amadiou 'Roulepierre' Côtes-du-Rhône Rouge RRP \$25

Bunches of Grenache and Syrah grown on chalk and clay soils are strictly sorted to produce this cuvée. Hand harvests and traditional winemaking processes give a wine with red and black fruits aromas (blackberry and plum). A sweet touch of liquorice plus spice add layers to the sumptuous palate. A mouth filling wine in a pure Rhône style.

2016 Pierre Amadiou Cairanne 'Les Hauts Rives' RRP \$37

The Hautes Rives vineyards are located on the hillside slopes above the village of Cairanne, and are bordered by cliffs overlooking the Aygues River. Grenache, Mourvèdre and Syrah are naturally a perfect combination on marl soils covered with pebble stones. In order to keep all its original fruit and elegance, the Amadiou family crafts this cuvée focusing on simplicity. Charming and full-flavored, this red Cairanne offers a suave combination of balance and freshness.

2017 Pierre Amadiou Gigondas 'Romane Machotte' RRP \$53

The old Grenache and Syrah vines that produce this Gigondas are deeply rooted in the chalk and clay slopes of the family estate, where the scent of the "garrigue" that grew there for centuries still perfumes the vines that have replaced it. Early in October, the hand picking starts under the warm autumn sun, the moment when the grapes are just starting to be perfectly ripe. The "cuvaison" is long (about 30 days) in order to extract only the best from each grape variety – and to allow the spirit and the traditions of our family terroir to be expressed. A traditional ageing of 12 months, partly in two-year-old barrels and partly in oak casks, allows a blending of the delicate oak flavours with the subtle natural micro-oxygenation of the wine.

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