

Welcome to the CellarHand newsletter for July 2021. Here's a little taste of what's going on this month...

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DOMESTIC



OLD MAC'S BACK

“Truly great Grenache has aromatics and texture with vibrance and energy,” says Stephen Pannell, who knows a bit about the subject. “It unfurls gradually with air and, most importantly, speaks clearly of soil and season.”

The season we're talking about is 2019, and there are a couple of soils in play. First is the laminated dark grey and green siltstone of the Smart Vineyard, where bush vines planted in 1956 grow. The other is the Old McDonald site's glauconitic, fossiliferous, calcareous siltstone over limestone, home to bush vines dating back to 1943.

Pannell's dual Grenache release is a landmark event every year, and 2019 sees these two go neck-and-neck on quality again. They are also, once more, emphatically different in character and show just why terroir-loving drinkers are so excited about this variety's place in Australian dirt.

As **Ned Goodwin MW** wrote of this Smart release: “This is exceptional Grenache that, with a few others, sets the regional high tone.”

2019 S.C. Pannell Smart Vineyard Grenache RRP \$65

100% Grenache from the Smart Vineyard in Clarendon,

farmed by Bernie and Wayne Smart. It's a southeast-facing slope at 230m above sea level. Soils are up to 750 million years old, Saddleworth Formation - laminated dark grey and green siltstone. These dry-grown

bush vines were planted in 1956. Some 5.12 tonnes of fruit were harvested by hand on 16th March 2019.

Fermentation of 100% destemmed fruit took place in open-top stainless-steel pots. The fermenting must was pumped over three to six times per day. The wine spent a total of 12 days on skins. It was matured in a 2800-litre old French oak vat and puncheon. It was racked four times and the only addition was a pinch of sulphur at bottling, which took place on 22nd July 2020. pH 3.62; TA 7.2g/L; alcohol 14.5%; total SO₂: 46ppm.

The aromas are bold; there's no holding back: raspberry, strawberry and blackberry, beeswax, rose petals, citrus rind, mandarin and cumquat perfume. The palate introduces Turkish Delight, musk lollies, rosewater and exotic spice, including mace. It's exotic. Super-fine tannins make their presence immediately known and carry the amaro flavours on an astonishingly long finish. – **Stephen Pannell**

Elevated old-vine Clarendon sourcing. Intense aromas of molten cherry liqueur, orange amaro, bergamot and cranberry. A fine vinous pulse, drawing the fore with the aft. Long attenuated filigreed tannins, sandy to be sure, but very fine. This is exceptional Grenache that, with a few others, sets the regional high tone. 96 points. Ned Goodwin MW, Halliday Wine Companion May 2021

2019 S.C. Pannell Old McDonald Vineyard Grenache RRP \$65

100% Grenache from the Hatwell Vineyard in Blewitt Springs, farmed by Matt Hatwell. The southeast-facing slope sits at 80m above sea level. The soils are up to 56 million years old, Blanche Point Formation - glauconitic, fossiliferous, calcareous siltstone over limestone. The dry-grown, wire-trained bush vines were planted in 1943.

Some 5.6 tonnes of Grenache grapes were harvested by hand on 22nd February 2019. The fruit was fermented in open-top stainless-steel pots, with 20% whole clusters included. The fermenting must was pumped over three to six per day, and the wine spent a total of 13 days on skins. It was fermented in a 2800-litre old French oak vat and puncheon. It was racked four times and saw no additions bar a pinch of sulphur at bottling, which took place on 12th December 2020. pH 3.42; TA 7.8g/L; alcohol 14%; total SO₂: 38ppm

The aromas are brooding and slow to reveal themselves. You get the full whack of summer fruits including cherry and pomegranate. There's beeswax candles, orange zest and delicate spice. The palate has flavours of musk, raspberry compote, pomegranate, molasses, terracotta and nori. The texture is all about the bass notes. The soft entry is a ruse, belying the powerful and textured tannins that gradually unfold. The finish is a contradiction with delicate rosewater and salivating length. – **Stephen Pannell**



Dark cherry, raspberry, liquorice root, clay, and sweet spice. Firm, dried rose perfumed and packed with ripe red fruits and cherry, plenty of stony tannin here, with a sort of pumice stone feel, serious yet charming. a cranberry freshness to acidity, and a long fragrant finish. Quite a wine! 96 points. Gary Walsh, The Wine Front July 2021

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OH KOOMILYA

Touriga Nacional is a great grape, dabbing its powdery tannins and blue floral brushstrokes over everything it touches.

It plays a key role in both the 2018 red blends from Stephen Pannell's pride-and-joy Koomilya vineyard in

McLaren Vale.

These are a surprise in more ways than one. It's an early bonus ahead of the traditional Koomilya release, which will take place as usual in spring.

And then there's the fact that Cabernet Sauvignon and Touriga were never meant to end up together in a Koomilya wine. But as Stephen Pannell says, they're made for each other.



2018 Koomilya Touriga Graciano Mataro RRP \$48

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, furthermore, 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 the health of 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, that went on to win Wine of Show at the McLaren Vale Wine Show in 2016. The blend may change from vintage to vintage, but the wine will always be unmistakably Koomilya.

Touriga Nacional (78% of the blend), Graciano (11%) and Mataro (11%) were hand-harvested on 28th March 2018 and co-fermented, spending 10 days on skins. The wine was gently pressed and sent to old French oak puncheons to complete malolactic fermentation. It was later racked to a 2800-litre French oak vat for maturation, and bottled on 11th December 2019 without fining or

filtration.

The nose shows violets, ripe plum, woody spice, black grapes, molasses and 70% dark chocolate. The dark aromas and colour lead you to believe the palate will be heavy, but a surprise awaits. Touriga's typically savoury entry is followed by a gradual unfurling of dark fruits from the Mataro and Graciano. The tannins penetrate all corners but don't dominate nor distract from the freshness of the fruit. The finish is intensely long and moreish. – **Stephen Pannell**

2018 Koomilya Cabernet Touriga RRP \$71

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, furthermore, complement the traditional varieties of Cabernet Sauvignon and Shiraz. We grafted two contoured and terraced blocks on deep red soil closest to the scrub at the top of the east-facing slope to Touriga Nacional with the intention of blending with Tempranillo, Graciano and Mataro. Blending with Cabernet Sauvignon was never planned but as fate would have it there is magic between the two varieties that can't be ignored.

Block 1 Cabernet (76% of the blend) and Block 8 Touriga (24%) were hand-harvested on 15th March 2018 and sent to separate open-top fermenters. The Cabernet spent 12 days on skins before gentle pressing and the Touriga saw eight days' maceration before pressing. Both portions were sent to extra-large French oak puncheons (50% new) for malolactic fermentation and maturation. The wines were blended in mid-November 2019 and bottled on 10th December 2019.

The nose shows blackcurrant bon bons, cassis, black tea, mahogany and violet. The classic Cabernet leafiness is toned and buffed by Touriga's dark floral notes.

The dark, faintly sweet entry is delicious, the complexity immediately apparent. The tannins are taut and dusty, like splitting red gum for the combustion stove, and the finish has a precision, tension and length

that means this was no accident; these two varieties are meant for each other. Just ask the Bordelais.
– Stephen Pannell

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FRANKLAND FÊTED AGAIN

What a year it's been for Frankland Estate, with a flood of praise from all quarters covering the breadth and depth of this incredible portfolio. A family estate of unimpeachable integrity, it's quite breathtaking what brother-and-sister act Hunter and Elizabeth Smith, with Lizzie's winemaker husband Brian Kent, are managing to pull off. The latest praise came from one **James Halliday** in the **Weekend Australian**, lavishing praise on the single-vineyard Riesling, and also writing up one wine from the estate range. It's this latter – the Shiraz – we're choosing to focus on as it highlights once more the quality of this line-priced quartet of wines from the team.

2020 Frankland Estate Riesling RRP \$30

*The overwhelming purity and generosity of fruit in Frankland Estate's organically farmed Riesling make it a smart pick if you're looking to respect the unadulterated flavours of sashimi and nigiri, or a creamy laksa with firm-fleshed white fish. Honeysuckle, lime leaf, green mango, mandarin peel and wet slate leap from the glass, and it gently tugs on the tongue with succulent acidity. There's no mistaking the raciness and intensity here, but brightness and juiciness carry it through to a snappy, almost tonic-like finish that leaves you wanting more. It's a gem. **Matthew Hirsch, Delicious Magazine** July 2021*

2019 Frankland Estate Chardonnay RRP \$30

*Light to mid, bright yellow hue. The bouquet has grapefruit, passionfruit and fresh garden herb aromas. Clean, fresh and vibrant. Good intensity and refinement; direct, incisive flavours, with decent persistence. Fruit drives the wine, ably assisted by lively acidity. A fine wine. 90 points. **Huon Hooke, The Real Review** December 2020*

2018 Frankland Estate Shiraz RRP \$30

*Open-fermented, extended maceration, 14 months' maturation in French puncheons. The deep purple colour sets the scene for a powerful, fragrant wine with poached spiced plum and ripe tannins, the French oak beating a delicate tattoo on the finish. 95 points. **James Halliday, The Australian** June 2021*

2018 Frankland Estate Cabernet Sauvignon RRP \$30

*Loads of charm to the bouquet, cinnamon and mixed red berries, raspberry coulis and toasty, cedary oak. It's silken and beautifully balanced - ripe fruit allowed to sing without the heavy hand of oak. Exceptional value. 94 points. **Nick Butler, The Real Review** February 2020*

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ROCCIA & RUSCELLO

"How good is Tasmanian Pinot Noir!" asks **Jeni Port**, clearly rhetorically, in the face of compelling evidence of its wondrousness from Stefano Lubiana.



If you missed the memo about these bottlings, then we'll fill you in with the help of Jeni's **Halliday Wine Companion** colleague **Ned Goodwin MW**, who wrote of the previous release: "These single-plot Pinots are among the finest of the country, demanding serious attention."

There are three blocks singled out for special attention on account of their special terroir and the way the fruit's striking definition stood out to Steve Lubiana. One of them, Il Giardino, wasn't made in 2018. (Its soil is kind of an amalgam of the other two, so I suppose it's there in spirit.)

So it is that we offer Ruscello and La Roccia, a couple of shining examples of an organic winemaker at the top of his game, who knows his vineyard intimately.

2018 Stefano Lubiana Ruscello Pinot Noir RRP \$100

Ruscello translates to 'small mountain stream'. The Ruscello block is located near a little creek that runs mostly in winter through the middle of the property. This block has a very gentle north-facing slope. The soil consists of grey gravelly silt over gravelly clay. It is light and full of silica crystals that warm up quickly and release heat to the vines overnight. The gravel also provides good drainage. This block is situated on the mid slope in our vineyard, it avoids the cooler breeze felt by the blocks nearer to the Derwent River that flows 24/7. Soil fertility is low providing well-balanced open vines, with good sunlight exposure. It is planted to a number of Pinot Noir clones, some of which we can't remember. The average vine age is 24 years. This block produces very generous and feminine fruit, everything that is exquisite, attractive and lovely about Pinot Noir. Here the soil transfers good aromatics, softer structure and power to the wine.

– **Steve & Monique Lubiana**

How good is Tasmanian Pinot Noir! A wine rich in a profound complexity, seamless and dark. It moves, it glides with fruit intensity deep in dark fruits and savoury spice, bitter chocolate, pomegranate. Smooth across the middle with beautifully crafted tannins. The next step up in Australian Pinot Noir terms is here. 96 points. Jeni Port, Halliday Wine Companion 2021

2018 Stefano Lubiana La Roccia Pinot Noir RRP \$100

La Roccia: the rock. This block is 1.5ha in size and is located on a beautiful north-eastern hillside, overlooking the Derwent River at an elevation of 80m. This block is mostly terra rossa soil, deep red clay-marl over clay, with limestone bedrock. Free, draining, high-pH soil. The Pinot clones consist of 667 and 115, and are on their own roots. This block is always the first to be harvested and consistently provides the most structure and tannin of the three sites, needing longer ageing in bottle to come into full balance. The vines grown in this parcel have the lowest vigour and therefore the most exposure to the sun. There's a big rock shelf in the middle of the block, whence it derives its name. – **Steve & Monique Lubiana**

Another in the single block series of pinots, and this time drinkers are in for a spice-fuelled treat. What an exhilarating wine with energy to burn. The scent of licorice, nutmeg, musk and pepper are joined in the glass by black fruits, forest floor. Smooth and even with nicely defined tannins, the middle palate lift and long goodbye provides a starring role for dark spices. 96 points. Jeni Port, Halliday Wine Companion 2021

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MORNINGTON GLORY



“Invariably lovely wines from Onannon,” wrote **Gary Walsh** in the intro to his review of the newly rolled Chardonnay. Fair comment; there’s something about the way Will Byron, Kaspar Hermann and Sam Middleton put these wines together that expresses the joy of this three-way friendship.

It’s not surprising, of course, given the winemaking chops of these three men. But there’s something about the confidence and composition of these wines that evokes the spirit of simply enjoying good wines in good company. The fruit is always impeccable, and the presentation just so.

The classic Mornington Peninsula pairing of just-in Chardonnay from 2020 and recently rolled Pinot from 2019 tell you what it’s all about!

2020 Onannon Mornington Peninsula Chardonnay RRP \$40

Invariably lovely wines from Onannon. Nectarine, ripe grapefruit, vanilla wafer biscuit, a little spice and flint. Smooth and even delivery of ripe Chardonnay flavour, a creamy gloss with a ripe citrus tang, a little bit savoury, a little bit fruity, but finds ideal balance for pleasurable drinking. Finish offers watermelon rind and lime zest, and goes pretty long. 94 points. Gary Walsh, The Wine Front June 2021

2019 Onannon Mornington Peninsula Pinot Noir RRP \$40

Onannon Mornington Peninsula Pinot Noir is grown on three vineyards: Onannon’s original Red Hill site (23-year-old vines, MV6, 777), a site in Shoreham (20-year-old vines, MV6) and another in Balnarring. 10% whole bunches, no new oak. Unfined. In 2019 the fruit really sits in the front seat. It’s darker than the previous couple of releases, blue moving into black fruits with some cardamom/star anise spice notes from the bunches. On the palate the fruit really attacks, again led primarily by darker fruits that at the moment seem to swallow the bunch spices. The wine finishes with sour-cherry echoes and fine tannins.

– Will Byron, Onannon

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TORU ON TOP

There more to biodynamic duo Anna and Jason Flowerday than aromatic white wines. But boy, do they excel in this area!

2020 was a smashing season for these. After a challengingly dry harvest the previous year, the juicy, crystalline vibrancy of these wines really stands out. The Sauvignon Blanc is, of course, a must-have; the Pinot Gris is the unsung hero; and Toru is pretty much a national monument these days.

2020 TWR Sauvignon Blanc RRP \$30

A complex, familiar bouquet of SB with aromas of ripe citrus and tropical fruits, soft sage-like herb layer and fruit spices. There’s power and intensity with a precise and enticing complexity. On the palate - equally complex with flavours and textures of crushed stones, pith and ripe



orchard fruits then herbs and spice. The tropical fruits layers in reflecting variety with a vibrato and finesse reflecting site and winemaking. A delicious wine with power and drive - a limousine style. Well made and ready to drink from purchase and through 2025+. 95 points. **Cameron Douglas MS**, camdouglasms.com June 2021

2020 TWR Pinot Gris SV 5182 RRP \$33

Ripe, fruity, varietal, floral and gently spicy bouquet. Aromas and flavours of white nectarine and Asian pear, yellow apple and lychee nut. A fine complex layer of tangerine and lemon peel, blossoms and white pepper add complexity and depth. Silky texture with plenty of acidity to contrast a core of fruit flavours. A gentle warming alcohol carries the flavours and textures through a lengthy finish. Excellent example in a drier style, balanced and well made. Drink now and through 2024+. 94 points. **Cameron Douglas MS**, camdouglasms.com June 2021

2020 TWR Toru SV 5182 RRP \$32

Made with Gewürztraminer, Riesling & Pinot Gris – this is an exemplary wine and master class in co-fermentation, style and balance. Aromas and flavours of exotic tropical fruits, fresh citrus and apple, white flowers and spice. Equally intense and fruity on the palate with myriad flavours of fresh white fleshed fruits, citrus and tropical. Refreshing acid line carries flavours and a firm youthful mouthfeel through to a lengthy finish. Best drinking from purchase and through 2025. 96 points. **Cameron Douglas MS**, camdouglasms.com June 2021

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IMPORTS

RÜDESHEIM RETURN

“Yields were a disaster, but the way the wines turned out healed us!” jokes Theresa Breuer. “We are super happy with the vintage, which shows a lot of tension and inner density.”

Like the vintage that preceded it, 2019 was warm in the Rheingau. However, the vegetative cycle didn’t kick off crazily early and it wasn’t sweltering hot during harvest. The dry conditions caused the vines to produce tiny grapes that were full of concentration with pretty tight acidity. A happy combination.

This estate is the very model of focus and consistency – Theresa been the spearhead alongside faithful vineyard

manager Hermann Schmoranz and cellar master Markus Lundén for 17 years now – and the perfectionism continues.

Organic viticulture on these beautiful Rheingau slopes has yielded pure deliciousness once more.

2019 Georg Breuer Rüdesheim Estate Riesling RRP \$49

At once generous, yet fine and polished, this is a pretty serious wine for the village-wine category with a lot of depth at the finish, where positive tannins and a slate-like quality add some real complexity. From organically grown grapes with Fair’n Green certification. Drink or hold. Screw cap. 93 points. **Stuart Pigott**, jamessuckling.com August 2020

2019 Georg Breuer Terra Montosa Riesling RRP \$75

This is a bit closed and, therefore, not one of the 2019s that leap into your face. Yet, it has really

impressive depth, is precisely proportioned and has a lot of finesse at the very long finish. Try to be patient, if you want the best from this delicate masterpiece. From organically grown grapes with Fair'n Green certification. Drink or hold. 95 points. Stuart Pigott, jamesuckling.com August 2020

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NEW FROM DR LOOSEN

As befits a busy man with multiple projects on the go, the latest shipment from the great Erni Loosen spans four vintages and dry, sweet and sparkling wines from every German Prädikat bar Trockenbeerenauslese.

The youngest wines here are the Kabinetts from 2020, while we're delighted to welcome a restock of the superb Wehlener Sonnenuhr Riesling Spätlese from 2019. That same year produced excellent botrytis wines, as a pair of Auslesen attest. And for those with an even sweeter tooth, we have the amazing-value estate Beerenauslese and Eiswein from '17 and '16 respectively.



NV Dr Loosen Riesling Sekt RRP \$47

Dr Loosen Sekt Extra Dry is produced with fruit from estate vineyards in the Middle Mosel. The Riesling grapes are selectively handpicked for optimally ripe, healthy fruit. The wine undergoes traditional fermentation in bottle ("Flaschengärung" in German) and is matured on the lees, in bottle, for 15 months. It is clarified through the transfer method and given its dosage at re-bottling.

2019 Dr L Dry Riesling RRP \$25

Pristine, fragrant white peach and chalky mineral tones collide in this dry, fresh-fruited Riesling. Steely on the finish, it's a remarkable value for a sophisticated yet easy-drinking wine that's likely to please many. Best enjoyed young. 90 points. Anna Lee C. Iijima, Wine Enthusiast January 2021

2020 Dr Loosen Wehlener Sonnenuhr Riesling Kabinett RRP \$44

MAGNUM RRP \$107

The Sonnenuhr Kabinett entices the nose with a cool fragrance of green fruit and just a hint of apple blossom. On the palate it's one of the freshest Kabinetts you are likely to come across, as crisp fruit and animating acidity are supported by sherbety zest, residual sugar merely teasing the taste buds. 16/20 Michael Schmidt, jancisrobinson.com May 2021

2020 Dr Loosen Graacher Himmelreich Riesling Kabinett RRP \$44

The small village of Graach lies between two more-famous neighbours: Bernkastel and Wehlen. This vineyard's steep, southwest-facing slopes and deep soils produce wines that combine the elegance of Wehlen with the rustic strength of Bernkastel. Because of the forceful minerality from the abundant blue slate in the soil, wines from Graach have excellent aging potential and will improve in the bottle for many decades.

2019 Dr Loosen Wehlener Sonnenuhr Riesling Spätlese RRP \$66

Very pretty, and very fine. Sweet green apple and melon, white flowers, almost vanilla I'd say, and a



dusting of spice and crushed rocky things and salt. It's all juicy white fruit with a charming mouth-perfume, spicy and slightly cheesy/savoury, fine chalky texture and sherbety acidity (and flavour). Slightly creamy feel too. Finish is all spiced sweet apple, and long with it. Ever so tasty. 94 points. Gary Walsh, The Wine Front December 2020

2019 Dr Loosen Ürziger Würzgarten Auslese 375ml RRP \$64

A really beautiful, concentrated Auslese that combines a lot of citrus character with complex, spicy notes. The long finish is super fresh and very mineral. Drink or hold. 95 points. Stuart Pigott,

jamesuckling.com March 2021

2019 Dr Loosen Erdener Prälat Auslese Goldkapsel 375ml RRP \$96

Forget dessert and substitute it for this much more delicious and healthy option! The wonderfully fragrant mango, papaya and mangosteen nose pulls you deep into this concentrated but super elegant Auslese with a very long, powerful finish. The sweetness is already beautifully integrated. Drink or hold. 98 points. Stuart Pigott, jamesuckling.com March 2021

2017 Dr Loosen Riesling Beerenauslese 375ml RRP \$71

Sourced in several vineyards except the grand crus, the 2017 Riesling Beerenauslese offers a concentrated bouquet with discreet botrytis and refreshing citrus fruit aromas. Sweet, fresh and piquant on the palate, this is a digestible, racy-piquant and stimulating BA with transparent fruit. Tasted as a sample in April 2019. 90-92 points. Stephan Reinhardt, Wine Advocate July 2019

2016 Dr Loosen Riesling Eiswein 375ml RRP \$141

Eiswein ("ice wine") is another of nature's rare and wonderful gifts from the Mosel to the wine world. Dr Loosen holds aside certain plots of vines, hoping for a freeze deep enough (minimum -8° C) to harvest frozen grapes. These grapes are picked in the small hours of the morning and pressed while still frozen, to slowly squeeze out a few drops of precious nectar while leaving the water behind as ice. The result is a vibrant, racy dessert wine that is strikingly different from the rounder, more honeyed style of the wines concentrated by botrytis. This estate-grown Dr. Loosen Riesling Eiswein comes from special parcels in the Erdener Treppchen and Ürziger Würzgarten grand-cru sites. The vines are aged 60 years on average and are farmed sustainably, according to strict German environmental regulations. These grapes were picked on 30th November 2016 and fermented in stainless steel. Alcohol 7%; RS 143 g/L; TA 9.8g/L.

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GOING BLANCK AGAIN

By the time the Blanck family's '19s arrived in February, our well of whites from Kientzheim cousins Freddy and Philippe Blanck had run dry.

Then all those '19s were inhaled in no time.

Thankfully we have reinforcements of all three. It's been observed that 2019, so notably good in neighbouring Germany, seemed to spill a good dose of its magic across the border in Alsace.

This trio - always easy-going, classic and characterful - have a mite more detail and length. No wonder they disappeared so fast!

**2019 Paul Blanck Pinot Blanc d'Alsace
RRP \$32**

An interesting and richer style of Alsatian Pinot Blanc, with ripe and exotic upfront fruit characters; aromatic custard apple and pear with a strong chalky/mineral undertow provide some aromatic backbone. It's then dry and full flavoured with an almost creamy texture that makes it approachable, supple and delicious. It's big and seductive for this variety, and probably best enjoyed young. 93 points. Angus Hughson, Gourmet Traveller WINE



2019 Paul Blanck Riesling RRP \$36

Pushing towards mango and pineapple, but not overt, also some honey and flowers. Offers a gently chalky texture in with citrus and tropical flavours – the taste is very pleasant – and there's a slippery glide adding appeal. Good finish. A strong release in 2019, I think. 91 points. Gary Walsh, The Wine Front

2019 Paul Blanck Pinot Gris RRP \$36

This wine sits in a range the Blancks call “Les Classiques”. These are easy, accessible wines made from the traditional Alsatian grape varieties. They are fruit-driven, aromatic, dry wines that give the best of themselves within the first five to seven years, if you wish to retain their primary fruit-driven personality. The screw cap closure enhances this profile and helps the wines keep both freshness and liveliness far

longer. They generally come from light soils with sand and gravel as well as sandstone or clay.

Fruit for the Blanck Pinot Gris was sourced from gravel, sand and south-facing clay and limestone.

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WALHALLA HITHER

The Clare Valley-grown Wolta Wolta from this collaboration between Erni Loosen and Jim Barry was released to much fanfare back in February. That second release, from the 2018 harvest, is now reunited with its Mosel-born sibling, the 2017 Walhalla.

This excellent '17 is a step up from the inaugural release, perhaps informed by that initial experience in raising a German wine in the Aussie style. As is customary, the fruit comes from the Treppchen grand-cru site in Erden. The vineyard was chosen for its especially mineral acidity on red slate, a steep, sunny spot which produces relatively powerful and spicy Riesling. It spent two years in stainless steel on yeast lees (no stirring, ever) with another year's rest in barrel.



2017 Loosen Barry Walhalla Riesling RRP \$51

The wine is made from Mosel Riesling grapes grown on the Erdener Treppchen vineyard, raised in the Australian style. By this we mean it's bone dry, with long aging on the fine lees in stainless steel tanks. Walhalla is German for "Garden of the Gods" where the souls of heroes slain in battle were received by Odin and where they celebrated with all-day feasts and drinking sprees.

Perfumed with a juicy burst of flavour. I'm thinking sweet and sour green apple, fresh mint, green mango tang, tight feel to it too, slight cheesy savoury edge, with fetching stony and chalky grip, and a quinine-like bitterness to the finish, with a good squeeze of fresh lime and stony dryness. Great drink. Refreshing and complex. 94 points. Gary Walsh, The Wine Front July 2021

2018 Loosen Barry Wolta Wolta Riesling RRP \$120

Very light, bright colour, with a reductive aroma at first with lemon-citrus peeping through underneath, detailed and aromatic, the palate intense and rich, as well as very lively and almost racy at the same time, with a faint patina of nuttiness over the top. The palate is dry and concentrated, and it has gorgeous texture, tremendous length and a winning combination of delicacy and richness. Most impressive. Dare we say, almost Germanic! 97 points. Huon Hooke, The Real Review

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NOUVEAU BEAUJOLAIS

"I hope you will enjoy our 2020 (for me one of the greatest vintages we have produced)," Julien Revillon of Maison Piron wrote to us this week. "Fleurie and Beaujolais Villages are certainly the best ever made." By now it's pretty well understood that 2020 produced some gems in France, though it was far from assured as that weird year rolled on.

It was a particularly warm season and early harvest, with Piron's picking beginning on 25th August. (To put that into context, the date set for this year's vintage kick-off is 15th September.) Flavour ripeness lagged behind sugar-acid balance in some areas, which needed some navigation, and Julien tolerated a little more oxygen in the winery to allow for the round, velvety mouthfeel the domaine is known for. The result, though, is a set of wines that are full and generous, juicy and silky.

2020 Dominique Piron Beaujolais-Villages RRP \$27

The vines for Piron's Beaujolais-Villages surround the crus on the hills of the northern half of Beaujolais. They mostly have an east-facing exposition and have sandy granitic soils comprising small stones that store the sun's heat and then release it gently during the night. This helps conserve the natural freshness of the fruit. These vines at 50 years old on average. 100% Gamay grapes are harvested by hand, selected on a sorting table, and given a very gentle destemming (80% of the bunches) before fermentation takes place in cement and stainless steel. The fermentation never lasts longer than 8-10 days in order to preserve freshness. When the cuvées are chosen for the final blend, wines with juicy fruit, complexity and fine structure go to the Beaujolais-Villages as opposed to the simpler straight Beaujolais.



2020 Dominique Piron Fleurie RRP \$43

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.

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DÖNNHOFF DROUGHT ENDS

The 2019s from the Nahe legend lasted five minutes, so it's nice to have some more juice in the shed from Cornelius Dönnhoff.

It was the third year in a row that the family had to contend with a warm, dry summer. Like their counterparts across Germany's best estates, they've adapted their viticulture to these conditions, and are grateful for the resilience of old, deep-rooted vines.

The weather conditions meant the golden-yellow grapes were small, healthy and of high quality. The

harvest continued through until mid-October, when the team tucked what they termed "a dream vintage" away in the cellar.

"The wines are powerful yet delicate, spicy yet fruity, coupled with a moderate alcohol content," says Cornelius. "We personally like them extraordinarily well and we think the wines will more than compensate us all for the challenges and unpleasantness of the last year."



2020 Dönnhoff Nahe Riesling RRP \$36

Cornelius Dönnhoff's off-dry Riesling is a great introduction to the Nahe and the estate's pure, racy style.

2020 Dönnhoff Estate Riesling RRP \$43

Characterful dry Riesling from vines aged 15 to 30 years old on the steeply sloping vineyards of the middle Nahe region. The vines grow in stony, weathered volcanic soils of porphyry and

melaphyr in particular, with certain amounts of slate and quartzite. Fermented and matured in stainless steel vats and large oak barrels. Wonderfully fresh and well defined, elegant with a tingling minerality. A delicious wine for every day with moderate alcohol and very soothing acidity.

2020 Dönnhoff Oberhäuser Leistenberg Riesling Kabinett RRP \$54

Steep, southeast-facing slope with grey clay slate soil. The morning sun dries the grapes, keeping them healthy; while the afternoon sun is not so direct, allowing the grapes to ripen for a very long time without becoming overripe. A perfect vineyard for Kabinett wines! The vines are 25 to 30 years old and yield about 50hl/ha. 100% selective hand harvest. Fermented and matured in stainless steel vats and large oak barrels.

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