

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

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## DOMESTIC



## THEN THERE WERE THREE

DC, JC and GT. The Koomilya single-block 2018 wines are here, from the great Stephen Pannell's pride-and-joy site in McLaren Vale. They're grown on adjacent plots on dark-grey slaty siltstone soils thinly laminated with ironstone. The vines went in 46 years back (although the GT block was grafted over from Gewürztraminer 30 years ago). In 2018 they were picked within four days of each other and vinified pretty much identically.

The last time Steve released a JC and DC block Shiraz together was from vintage 2015. "A striking example of terroir at work," commented **James Halliday** on tasting the two. "This sets the rules of the game," wrote Halliday of the previous incarnation of DC.

**Nick Stock** called it "A captivating wine that

marries the best of the region's supple, approachable Shiraz style with a wealth of detail and astutely assembled tannin structure."

The last JC, also from '15, was "unabashedly Australian and grounded in the tradition of many of the great red wines produced in this country, from special sites," according to **Gary Walsh**. **Jancis Robinson** called it "Polished and seductive, sweet and salty... No copy of northern Rhône – Oz and McLaren Vale."

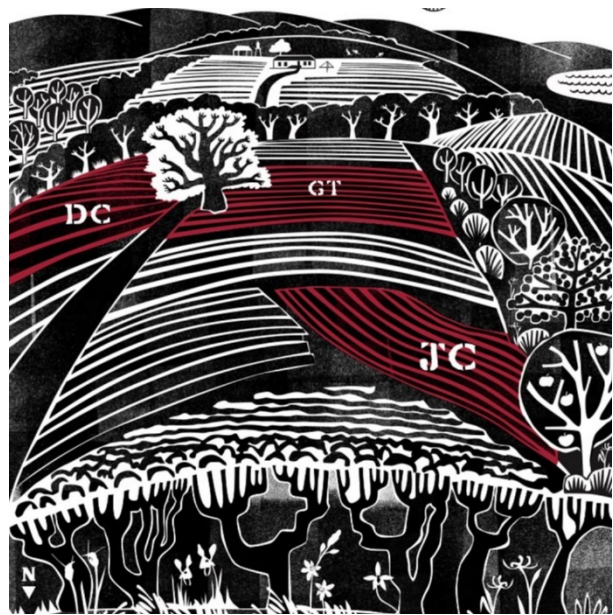
Joining them for the first time as a single-block red-label release is the GT. These were the vines that needed the most love to get back into shape when Steve and Fiona Pannell purchased the site in 2012.

Still, the 2017 Koomilya white-label release was 100% GT block - that's the #wine awarded 98 points by **Tony Love** in the latest **Halliday Wine Companion**. ("And with all that, there's still a medium-bodied flow through the mouth. Which should be open in awe at the exit because of how astoundingly good this wine is!" he mused.)

### 2018 Koomilya JC Block Shiraz RRP \$116

A single-block Shiraz from 46-year-old vines with a southwestern exposure at an altitude of 120m. Soils are dark-grey, slaty siltstone thinly laminated with ironstone. Hand harvested on 1st March at yields of 3.3 tonnes/hectare. The fruit underwent spontaneous fermentation with 20% whole clusters included, and the juice spent 14 days on skins. It was settled over 12 days. It was then moved to second- and third-use French oak puncheons for malolactic conversion and 20 months' maturation. It was racked once before being bottled without filtration on 11th December 2019. Alcohol 14%; pH 3.61; total acidity 6.4g/L. Total sulphur at bottling 64ppm.

*Earthy, saline, fragrant, deep, special. Liquorice, bramble fruit, walnut, spice, charcoal, dried flowers and herbs. Thick tanning rolling through the mouth, nori and lavender perfume, all the berries but not fruity, as such, powerful and stony, with chew and freshness on a superb long finish. And, indeed, it's the length of flavour and presence that marks this out as a special wine. Outstanding. An Australian classic. Very long term. 96+ points. Gary Walsh, The Wine Front October 2021*



### 2018 Koomilya GT Block Shiraz RRP \$116

A single-block Shiraz from vines aged 30 years old, grafted on 46-year-old roots. The block has a southern exposure and sits at an altitude of 116m. Soils are dark-grey, slaty siltstone thinly laminated with ironstone. Hand harvested on 1st March at yields of 3.9 tonnes/hectare. 100% destemmed fruit underwent spontaneous fermentation and the juice spent 12 days on skins. It was settled over 10 days. It was then moved to new French oak puncheons (20%) and a 2,800-litre vat for malolactic conversion and 20 months' maturation. It was racked once before being bottled without filtration on 11th December 2019. Alcohol 14%; pH 3.75; total acidity 5.9g/L. Total sulphur at bottling 55ppm.

*Spice, rose, lychee juiciness sitting over chocolate, iodine, dried herbs and red and black fruits. It's stony and thick in tannin, roast meat, sun-dried tomato, black olives, a bold volume of dark berries, but savoury and distinctly umami in flavour. Tannin rolls on the finish, with a tacky and tactile feel, and the length is top notch. Acidity is bright too, and almost juicy. Fascinating wine. Distinctive. 95 points. Gary Walsh, The Wine Front October 2021*

### 2018 Koomilya DC Block Shiraz RRP \$116

A single-block Shiraz from 46-year-old vines with a south-eastern exposure at an altitude of 108m. Soils are dark-grey, slaty siltstone thinly laminated with ironstone. Hand harvested on 4th March at yields of 3 tonnes/hectare. The fruit underwent spontaneous fermentation with 22% whole clusters included, and the juice spent 11 days on skins. It was settled over 8 days. It was then moved to second- and third-use French oak puncheons for malolactic conversion and 20 months' maturation. It was racked twice before



being bottled without filtration on 11th December 2019. Alcohol 13.5%; pH 3.61; total acidity 6.3g/L. Total sulphur at bottling 65ppm.

*Liquorice, the sort of brittle dark toffee my Mum used to make, blackberry and blackcurrant, sea spray and oyster shells, biscuit spices, and thyme. It's full of juicy and fresh small dark berried flavour, ferrous and deep, layers of pumice stone tannin, and for all the darkness, it's still so light on its feet. Finish is very long, with a spiced poached strawberry and rhubarb thing happening, and lavish stony tannin. Wonderful. 96 points. Gary Walsh, The Wine Front October 2021*

#### 2018 Koomilya Touriga Graciano Mataro RRP \$48

*Slicker than your average, this is the most innovative wine we have seen from Koomilya with Touriga holding purple and dark berry fruit aromas and flavours around which Graciano and Mataro layer*

*and build the wine on the palate. The smoothly honed finish is terrific. 94 points. Nick Stock, Gourmet Traveller WINE August 2021*

#### 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

#### 2017 Koomilya Tempranillo Touriga RRP \$53

*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*

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### OH SO TROUSSEAU

The annual spring release from Joe and Lou Holyman has become quite the smorgasbord these days. It's led by the Holyman range, of course, which is grown on their own little patch of dirt outside Launceston. That label is built on the classics of Chardonnay (minuscule 2020 production already gone!)

and Pinot Noir. The latter arrives in two guises: the traditional edition, plus the single-block, 100% whole-bunch, 100% new oak iteration known as Project X.

And the Burgundy varieties are also where the Stoney Rise label begins – though even this Pinot has proliferated to present two renditions. The ‘No Clothes’ wines – both from 2021 – are conceived for young, chilled consumption. The original versions of Chardonnay and Pinot Noir, from 2020, are Joe’s take on the Tamar Valley, with estate fruit complemented by grapes from grower mates.

And the offer is rounded out by the alternative varieties. Grüner Veltliner is no new kid on the block here – this is the 12<sup>th</sup> vintage! – and tricky Trousseau has carved out a tasty niche for itself on the Holymans’ vineyard. But making its debut in 2021 is a Stoney Rise Savagnin.

Like the No Clothes wines – and, in fact, the Holyman label itself – the alternatives are made in tiny quantities. In other words, there’s a little of a lot to sink your teeth into here – but it won’t hang around for long!



## STONEY RISE

### SULPHUR FREE

#### 2021 Stoney Rise 'No Clothes' Pinot Gris RRP \$37

Not much to say about this really; the Gris comes from our grower down the road. We fermented the fruit on skins, then left it for another two weeks on skins before pressing it straight to old 500-litre puncheons. Bottled unfinned and unfiltered, with no additions.

Strawberries and cream are the go. It's a bit darker in colour this year due to picking it a bit later because of weather. It's really juicy with hints of musk lollies and dried orange peel. Drink it cold... and fast! - Lou & Joe Holyman

#### 2021 Stoney Rise 'No Clothes' Pinot Noir RRP \$37



Our 2021 Stoney Rise No Clothes No SO2 Pinot Noir is made entirely from fruit on our young vineyard. The grapes were cold soaked for five days before undergoing a natural ferment. Once the ferment was finished the wine was basket-pressed into old French oak puncheons. The wine has not had any SO2 added to it.

The first thing you notice about this wine is the vitality and freshness of the nose. There are red fruits with touches of cinnamon and herb. The palate is taut and structured but juicy enough to make you want to drink it. The wine finishes with power and length, driven by refreshing acidity. Best served chilled. - Lou & Joe Holyman

### THE OTHERS

#### 2021 Stoney Rise Grüner Veltliner RRP \$37

Our style of Grüner, like all our other wines, is one of structure. We pick the grapes early, then basket-press them and the juice goes into tank. We let the wine ferment naturally and at its own pace; the only thing we do is stir the wine every

couple of days to help build up mouthfeel and structure to balance the acidity. Once the ferment has finished we let the wine sit before we bottle it. It is bottled unfiltered and unfiltered.

The 2020 wine has aromas and flavours of almond, Granny Smith and white pepper. The palate has a mealy edge to it from the stirring of the lees, with the apple and hints of citrus showing through. Texture is the name of the game here, and this wine has plenty. Great with Patagonian tooth fish and abalone. - **Lou & Joe Holyman**

#### 2020 Stoney Rise Chardonnay RRP \$35

*Interesting Chardonnay in some respects, in that it put me in mind of a Grüner Veltliner. Green apple, some white pepper, daikon, citrus. Juicy and tangy green apple, plenty of crunch, good flavour, fine dusty texture, and green apple, lime and breakfast radish on a nice zesty finish. Good. Easy to smash through a few glasses. 92 points. Gary Walsh, The Wine Front August 2020*

#### 2021 Stoney Rise Savagnin RRP \$47

This is pretty exciting for us! We learned a couple of years ago of a former professional cyclist growing Savagnin just outside of Devonport on Tasmania's northwest coast. After a couple of calls and a few visits we convinced them to sell us some fruit from this vintage. The fruit was picked and chilled for three days. We then stomped the grapes in the bins and left them for another three days before pressing it to old oak for fermentation. We knew we were onto a good thing when our 15-year-old son told us that the grapes smelt like fish and taste a bit salty. Nashi pear and Kiwi fruit on the nose. There is a salty/saline mouthfeel, but there is also structure and texture to the wine. It hasn't been through malo so we have some biting acidity but the fruit on the palate carries it well. Great with potato cakes and sardines. - **Lou & Joe Holyman**



#### 2020 Stoney Rise Pinot Noir RRP \$35

This 2020 wine from Joe and Lou Holyman in the Tamar Valley comprises 90% estate-grown fruit with 10% Pinot Noir grapes from the vineyards of grower friends. 15% of the blend is old-vine fruit from unirrigated, 34-year-old plantings. The wine is matured in French oak (just 5% new) and is bottled unfiltered and unfiltered. - **Lou & Joe Holyman**



#### 2021 Stoney Rise Trousseau RRP \$47

One of the reasons we searched high and low around Australia to find this variety to plant was that it has a great structure and a savoury finish that we think makes it perfect to accompany food. It does have some cherry, almost Pinot Noir-like, aromas but there is an underlying clove-like flavour that sends it to food-match heaven!

The juice is on skins in a mix of clay and stainless for about eight days before being pressed to amphora for a short maturation. There is plenty of Turkish delight going on here, with some stewed raspberries on the palate. Fresh and juicy, great with lamb kofta. - **Lou & Joe Holyman**

#### HOLYMAN

#### 2019 Holyman Pinot Noir RRP \$57

*Red and black cherry, exotic spice, dried roses, and some sweet*

*damp earthiness. It's tight and quite tangy in acidity, with layers of graphite tannin, some pomegranate tartness here, but also has flavour and a long and firm finish. It's kind of old school Burgundy style in a way, just the essential bits and little excess, and quite demanding and uncompromising as a young wine. I like it, but it's not really a wine to drink now. I think it will be very good with quite a few years under its belt. 94+ points. Gary Walsh, The Wine Front September 2021*

### 2018 Holyman 'Project X' Pinot Noir RRP \$91

*Red fruit and cherry, heaps of spice and orange peel, toasty biscuit oak. Fresh and luminous style, crunchy cranberry acidity, a bit of amaro tang, plenty of emery board tannin, and a sappy finish of excellent length, and firm tannin. Distinctive style. Needs more time. 94 points. Gary Walsh, The Wine Front September 2021*

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## PRIMA FALANGHINA

Innovation. We tend to think of technology when we hear the word but you get it in nature, too. Evolution entails innovation for survival, and good farmers adapt to thrive in changing conditions. Again, technology can intervene to solve problems - but how much simpler to let the plant do the work?

Bruce Chalmers is no Silicon Valley type. He's into plants - the ones that live and grow, not manufacture. But he's certainly an innovator, and his daughters Kim and Tennille have inherited the gene. As climate-change awareness grows and curiosity draws more and more people towards these lesser-known varieties, Chalmers becomes as important a name on the wine scene as it has long been in the realm of viticulture.

Thus the Chalmers range has evolved to focus on those varieties that grow most auspiciously in their Heathcote soils. Vermentino, Nero d'Avola and an excellent Rosato combining Aglianico, Sagrantino and Nero are the bedrock of the range. Greco and Fiano, the two Campanian white varieties, come next, with slow-ageing Aglianico the top red wine. Then you have a sweet wine from rack-dried Lambrusco grapes, as well as a white sparkling Fiano and red-fizz Lambrusco. When we say 'range', we mean it...

And now we're delighted to welcome back the second edition of the latest additions! Both of the varieties for the dry wines were first imported in 2015 and trialed to great acclaim under the Chalmers Project label. The varieties are Falanghina and Pecorino, the former another Campanian grape and the latter hailing from Le Marche, an eastern Italian region that sits between the Apennine Mountains and the Adriatic Sea.

These two newcomers make the Chalmers proposition even more compelling to open-minded wine-lovers, especially when preceded by a glass of 2021 Col Fondo, the slightly cloudy undisgorged sparkling made from the Aglianico grape. This, too, is making its second appearance after a blink-and-you'll-miss-it debut from 2020.

The great Bruce Chalmers provided a peerless palette, allowing Tennille and Kim - plus Kim's winemaker husband, Bart Van Olphen - to add an unrivalled splash of colour to the Australian wine and dining scene.





The sustainably grown grapes get to shine with vitality and personality. And we all get to bask in this thrilling diversity.

#### **2021 Chalmers Aglianico Col Fondo RRP \$36**

The Chalmers family imported the first Aglianico vines into Australia back in 2001, and produced a first Col Fondo wine in 2019. This 2021 is 100% Aglianico grown on the Chalmers vineyard's soils of basalt, shale, sandstone, dolerite, quartz and limestone at an elevation of 210-225m.

The grapes were handpicked on 9th and 10th March 2021. The must was fermented with indigenous yeast in old barriques. The wine was tiraged after five months and is not disgorged, meaning that the lees remain in the bottle. This vegan-friendly was made with no additions apart from a pinch of sulphur.

The wine is bright, creamy and chalky with a delicate fizz and notes of pollen, cassia and ruby grapefruit.

#### **2021 Chalmers Falanghina RRP \$32**

This is the second release of Chalmers Falanghina, a vine variety this visionary grape-growing family first imported in 2015 and vinified as a Project wine in 2018. The vines grow on the Chalmers vineyard's soils of basalt, shale, sandstone, dolerite, quartz and limestone at an elevation of 210-225m.

The grapes were handpicked and pressed as whole bunches on 9th March 2021. The must was fermented with indigenous yeast in stainless steel, where the wine spent six months on lees. This vegan-friendly wine was made with no additions apart from a pinch of sulphur.

It's an exotic, racy wine with notes of orchid, fresh lychee, lime and white stones and a persistent finish.

#### **2021 Chalmers Pecorino RRP \$32**

This is the second release of Chalmers Pecorino, a vine variety this visionary grape-growing family first imported in 2015 and vinified as a Project wine in 2018. The vines grow on the Chalmers vineyard's red Cambrian soils at an elevation of 150-170m.

The grapes were handpicked on 19th February 2021. The must was fermented with indigenous yeast in stainless steel, where the wine spent six months on lees. This vegan-friendly wine was made with no additions apart from a pinch of sulphur.

It's a distinctive and relatively powerful dry white wine with aromas and flavours of flint, nectar, white melon and beeswax.

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### **ASCENT OF MANN**

There's always been a whiff of class about this Cabernet that made its debut in 2018. Now in its third year, Rob and Gen's Calgardup Vineyard has established itself as new landmark in Australian wine.

**Gary Walsh** was the first to review the 2020, lavishing it with 95 points. "Quite different, but so very good," he declared.

Different how? Well perhaps it's the proximity to the ocean, but this is mineral and maritime as all get out. But there's also the sheer purity. It resonates with Cabernet typicity, purrs with energy and soars with naked abandon. Luxurious viticulture and a lack of winemaking (it's all whole berries and no new oak) allow it to shine.

**Nick Stock** is the latest critic to take a look, and he loved it. We're now onto a trio of 2020s from Rob and Gen, with both the Swan Valley wines in scintillating form, too.

**2020 Corymbia Cabernet Sauvignon RRP \$64**

*A very pure Cabernet with attractive blackcurrants, as well as violets, fresh herbs, brick-dust nuances and background oak spice. Very well crafted tannins are a highlight, carrying lively red and dark berries. More medium than full body. Drink over the next eight years. Screw cap. 95 points.*

*Nick Stock, [jamesuckling.com](http://jamesuckling.com) September 2021*



**2020 Corymbia Rocket's Vineyard Chenin Blanc RRP \$32**

*Fruit from Rocket's vineyard. This is pure, pristine, texturally edgy, and layered with all the good things: sheepy lanolin, beeswax, apricots at the height of summer, green apple, crushed limestone and saline acidity. It has rivulets of flavour that course over the tongue ... it's brilliant. Finesse and poise from such a warm part of town, very impressive. 95 points. *Erin Larkin, Halliday Wine Companion 2022**

**2020 Corymbia Tempranillo / Malbec RRP \$43**

*So distinctive. So of a place. I'm thinking fresh blackberry, rain on a hot road, star anise, leather, pepper and rosemary. Black fruit, coffee, black olives, earthy and saline, boysenberry and tar, and yet spicy and vigorous, with a dirty come-hither chew and sooty tannin, and a long umami finish. Wonderful wine. Charismatic. Love this. 95 points. *Gary Walsh, The Wine Front August 2021**



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**LUCILLE APPEAL**

Marco Lubiana is a chip off the old block. It's wonderful to witness the blend of tradition-backed diligence and easy-going confidence as he goes about furthering the reputation that parents Steve and Monique have worked so hard to forge.

And he's making his own name, too. With this second vintage under his own label, Marco landed the title of **Best New Act** in the **Young Gun of Wine** awards.

As seasons go, it was far from straightforward. But marginality and tension are what we love about Tasmanian wines, especially when you have a tenacious and sensitive grower who can navigate the rapids and guide you to a calm, composed port.

Tenacity is a quality the Lubiana family has shown in spades since striking out for Tasmania in 1990.

And Marco's wines, equal parts flair and composure, are



once more wowing the crowds, with **Nick Stock** of [jamesuckling.com](http://jamesuckling.com) joining the chorus.

### 2020 Marco Lubiana Lucille Vineyard Pinot Noir RRP \$56

*This is a complex pinot with aromas of spicy red cherry, pomegranate and blood orange with forest leaves and violet-like florals. The palate delivers freshness and drive and there's sleek crispness to the tannins here. Balances neatly. Drink or hold. 95 points. Nick Stock, jamesuckling.com September 2021*

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## IMPORTS

### JEAN BAPTISTE TURNS 30

Happy 30th birthday, Jean Baptiste!

The first edition of the Hasselbachs' delicious Kabinett Riesling was grown in 1991. Since then this wine is the heart of the family's winery. It is the perfect ambassador of their origin in Rheinhessen's mighty "Roter Hang".

Sporting celebratory 30th-anniversary livery, this 2020 edition is, as always, the delicious embodiment of a traditional yet contemporary #wine style. It deservedly carries the name of the estate's founder Jean Baptiste Gunderloch, for whom the renowned poet Carl Zuckmayer created a literary monument with his piece "Der Fröhliche Weinberg" ("The Jolly Vineyard").

Jean-Baptiste was born and raised exclusively on classified VDP.Grand Cru und VDP.Premier Cru vineyards. The 2020 arrives alongside the dry Als wär's ein Stück von mir Riesling - grown on Hipping and Rothenberg - and the premier-cru designated Nackenheim Riesling, whose fruit comes solely from the great Rothenberg Grosse Lage.

In addition, we have the last few bottles of Johannes Hasselbach's GGs floating around. These lovely Rieslings are in a fantastic drinking zone right now.



### 2020 Gunderloch Jean Baptiste Riesling Kabinett RRP \$36

*Jolly indeed. Sweet apple and lime with floral notes thereabouts. Juicy as all get up. Soft in the mouth, grapey, long-enough through the finish. The pleasure is ours. It drinks a treat, in an easy-but-persistent way. 91 points. Campbell Mattinson, The Wine Front*

### 2020 Gunderloch Als wär's ein Stück von mir Riesling RRP \$43

For Johannes Hasselbach's "A piece of me", he decided to push an imaginary reset-button and look back at how his grandparents made wine. The focus is on the grapes and he wants to use every part of them (e.g. long maceration time on fully crushed grapes up to 72 hours; minimal clarification; natural yeast fermentation; long time on lees) but he also wants to make sure not to lose or alter anything (no artificial yeasts; no fining; no aromatisation of any kind). 100% healthy fruit comes from young vines in the top site Nackenheimer Rothenberg, blended with grapes from a parcel of 35-year-old vines from Hipping in Nierstein to create a tautly strung wine with extraordinary aromatic expression.

### 2020 Gunderloch Nackenheim Riesling Aus Ersten Lagen RRP \$54

*The power of the palate. You don't see this kind of presence in Riesling all that often. The palate has a*

weight to it. Grapefruit and lime, stone and mineral, creamed honey and florals. Reduction adds to this impression. So too chalk, dry chalk, and lots of it. I couldn't quite see the length for higher points but even so, this is mightily impressive. 93 points. **Campbell Mattinson, The Wine Front**

#### 2017 Gunderloch Pettenthal Riesling Grosses Gewächs RRP \$108

Still closed, though there's plenty of smoke and fresh parsley on the nose. This sleek beauty has wonderful elegance on the palate and a long, racy finish with a ton of herbs and wild berries. Try in 2019. Screw cap. 95 points. **Stuart Pigott, jameessuckling.com** September 2018

#### 2016 Gunderloch Rothenberg Riesling Grosses Gewächs RRP \$108

A super-elegant and filigree wine that is both deep and finely-etched with a very long pure finish that's as straight as a laser beam! Best from 2018. 95 points. **Stuart Pigott, jameessuckling.com** September 2017

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#### OSHIN'S '19

It's nice to have some good news from Armenia, where last year's harvest took place against a backdrop of war.

We have to be grateful that no harm came to our friends there, even if the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict with neighbouring Azerbaijan wrought pain and destruction and its outcome was ultimately unfavourable to them.

One of the uplifting developments is the increasing involvement at Zorah of Zorik Gharibian's son, Oshin. He's loving getting stuck in, up in the mountain vineyards and down in the cellar. He's also this year passed his WSET Level 3 with distinction and is now getting ready to do his Masters in Italy on vineyard management and organic/biodynamic farming. Exciting times to come!

And on top of that we have the fruits of another vintage arriving in Australia. The new edition of the Zorah's Karasi Areni Noir is from 2019. A mild winter with a lot of snow was followed by an early start to the season at the beginning of March. Spring was unusually cool with a lot of rain, but then July turned on the warmth. There was no rain during the summer months, and August and September were unusually cool, especially during the evenings. Harvest kicked off in mid-October, when Zorik and the team selected only the very best bunches for this wine.

This latest arrival is offered alongside the Voski white blend from 2018, and a tiny (12 bottles!) parcel of the sensational Yeraz bottling of Areni Noir from 2016.

#### 2018 Zorah Voski (Voskeat/Garandmak) RRP \$64

Ancient indigenous varieties, archaeological evidence suggests that both Voskèat and Garandmak have been present in Armenia for millennia. Voskèat translates as "golden seed" and is considered queen of Armenia's grapes. It's a delicate, gold-coloured grape with small, compact, relatively thin-skinned berries and bunches in the shape of a cross. Garandmak means "fat tail" and is one of the most popular grapes. It's a much hardier variety, greenish yellow in colour, with larger, thicker-skinned berries and compact bunches.

Although both varieties are present throughout Armenia's territory, the exceptional terroir of Vayots

Dzor - with its high-altitude, low-vigour, phylloxera-free, rocky, sandy soils coupled with wide diurnal temperature range - yields distinctively balanced fruit. The grapes for Voski are sourced from old vineyards at altitudes of 1400m from vines grown on original, ungrafted roots.

Fermentation with indigenous yeasts occurs in large, temperature-controlled concrete vats which are left rough deliberately to favour micro-oxygenation. Ageing then continues in concrete vats for eleven months with a further six months in bottle. Concrete is preferred to stainless steel as it allows the wine to breathe over the maturation period. - **Zorik Gharibian**

### 2019 Zorah 'Karasi' Areni Noir RRP \$64

*Such an interesting wine. It tastes of berries, olives and herbs soaked in brine. There's a licorice-like note, and a sweet-berried-kirsch-like-note, but that briny aspect is defining. It's a wine of considerable depth and yet, thanks to refreshing acidity, it feels fresh, almost zippy. Tannin, fine but assertive, picks it all out nicely, a fitting complement, like a sunrise over a pool of cocoa. Or a sunset, rather. It's all terribly engaging. 93 points. **Campbell Mattinson, The Wine Front September 2021***

### 2016 Zorah Yeraz Areni Noir RRP \$275

Zorah's Yeraz is a natural field blend. Much like colourful threads in a tapestry, the grapes come from small vineyard parcels which encompass a vibrant mosaic of varying strains within the ancient Areni grape variety which have survived and evolved through the ages. These individual vines create a multiplicity within this variety which cannot be seen as anything other than the whole of the vineyard.

This is extreme, high-altitude viticulture with ancient ultra-centennial bush vineyards at 1600m above sea level. It's a phylloxera-free terroir with a combination of volcanic, sedimentary and limestone soils with no irrigation.

2016 was a year characterised by initial frost and a rainy spring followed by a long, hot summer with high



day-time temperatures and strong sunlight balanced with fresh cool nights. Day/night temperature differences averaged 20°C during harvest. Conditions were dry until the end of September when picking started. We harvested the grapes by hand, with meticulous selection, at the end of September.

Fermentation took place in rough, temperature-controlled concrete tanks using only natural yeast. The wine was matured in traditional amphorae of varying sizes for almost 24 months, with short passages in large, untoasted cask to soften the tannins. The wine was further aged for 12 months in bottle.

The nose shows black pepper, cherry, cedar and earth. Soft and silky on the palate, leading to a seamlessly long and spicy finish. A medium-bodied wine with intense punch of flavour and remarkable finesse.

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## ACID KLAUS PARTY

It seems like you're as pleased as we are to see a good range of Prager back in Australia, judging by the take-up of these recently landed 2020s.

The Smaragd wines are in particularly short supply, and since they made a splash in our September newsletter, fresh reviews have been published on [jamesuckling.com](http://jamesuckling.com) to complete the picture.

Even among the hardcore terroirists of the Wachau, Toni Bodenstein stands out as a fiendishly dogged distiller of detail from these amazing vineyards.

**2020 Prager Grüner Veltliner Hinter der Burg Federspiel RRP \$71**

*Electric Grüner. Flinty, smoky, all the crushed rock and mouth-watering citrus acidity. Tight and bony, radish spiciness, grapefruit and lime zest, crunch and energy on a long and cool finish. Pure, driven, with a Riesling-like intensity, but the pleasing vegetal varietal spicy and bitter bits of this variety. 94 points. Gary Walsh, The Wine Front August 2021*

**2020 Prager Grüner Veltliner Achleiten Smaragd RRP \$150**

*Delicate nose of tart apricot, lemon zest, sage and sushi ginger leads you into a cool, compact and very well structured palate. Mineral power builds on the bold finish, where the wine seems a lot bigger than on the front palate. Drink or hold. 94 points. Stuart Pigott, jamessuckling.com September 2021*

**2020 Prager Grüner Veltliner Wachstum Bodenstein Smaragd RRP \$150**

*An extremely subtle Grüner Veltliner with so much herbal complexity and mountain freshness. Ripe and racy, with so much mineral energy. Very long and precise finish that's neatly supported by the very fine tannins. From a high-altitude vineyard planted in 1979 with more than 100 clones. Drink or hold. 95 points. Stuart Pigott, jamessuckling.com September 2021*

**2020 Prager Riesling Steinriegl Federspiel RRP \$71**

*Powerful dry Riesling here. Stone dust, mineral feel, grapefruit and lime, green herb and spice, subtle kiwifruit and guava character, citrus zest and layers of flavour and firm dusty texture, a bit juicy, but so controlled. And very long, with a cinch of quinine to close. Magnificent. 95+ points. Gary Walsh, The Wine Front August 2021*

**2020 Prager Riesling Wachstum Bodenstein Smaragd RRP \$150**

*Kiwifruit, pink grapefruit, spice and green herbs. It's powerful, and also quite exotic, juicy and chalky, a subtle savoury cheese twist character, slightly bitter quinine flavour, waxy but tight, with a very long*



*finish laden with pith, lime zest and grip, and tingly acidity, and a celery crunch. X-Factor here. A little something that lifts it up and above. 96 points. Gary Walsh, The Wine Front August 2021*

**2020 Prager Riesling Klaus Smaragd RRP \$150**

*Superbly cool, restrained and refined, this austere, beautiful dry Riesling is a slow-burn masterpiece that's only just*

*beginning to reveal its complex white-peach, white-tea, wild-herb and dark-berry character. Super-long and mineral finish. Drink or hold. 97 points. Stuart Pigott, jamessuckling.com September 2021*

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**EVERYDAY PIEDMONT**

“After going through dozens of frankly innocuous Dolcettos, Barbera and Langhe Nebbiolos I was thrilled to taste a wine of true distinction.”

That was **Antonio Galloni**'s delighted response to a Barbera from Cigliuti as he tasted wines for a **Vinous Media** article entitled **Everyday Piedmont**. He was similarly smitten by the Langhe Nebbiolo. “Cigliuti's

Langhe Nebbiolo outperforms pretty much most of its peer group, showing notable depth as well as pedigree,” he wrote. “This is a very serious wine.”

None of this is a surprise; Claudia and Silvia Cigliuti give us loads to wax lyrical about, and Galloni has long been a fan. But still, this is something of an underdog grower, not a big name with a marketing budget to match. Honest, humble and utterly true to themselves and their Barbaresco home, the Cigliuti family is the kind we should hold up for admiration. “Ya know... I think Cigliuti might very well be the most overlooked winery in Piedmont when it comes to quality (across the entire range) and price,” Galloni wrote on Instagram not long ago. “These wines are criminally under-appreciated... well, not by me.” Well said, Antonio! And not by us, either.



#### **2019 Cigliuti Langhe Nebbiolo RRP \$64**

*The 2019 Langhe Nebbiolo is an absolute delight. Aromatic, nuanced and fleshy, Cigliuti's Langhe Nebbiolo outperforms pretty much most of its peer group, showing notable depth as well as pedigree. This is a very serious wine. Then again, the Langhe Nebbiolo is a cask of Barbaresco Via Erte that simply sees a shorter aging regime than the Barbaresco itself. It is one of the hidden gems in Piedmont. 93 points. Antonio Galloni, Vinous Media September 2021*

#### **2018 Cigliuti Barbera Serraboella RRP \$54**

*The 2018 Barbera d'Alba Vigna Serraboella is a real standout. After going through dozens of frankly innocuous Dolcettos, Barbera and Langhe Nebbiolos I was thrilled to taste a wine of true distinction. Rich, ample and generous, the 2018 possesses superb depth and complexity. A rush of black cherry, plum, mocha, spice and licorice lead into the sumptuous finish. What a wine! 93 points. Antonio Galloni, Vinous Media September 2021*

#### **2018 Cigliuti Barbera Campass RRP \$58**

*The 2018 Barbera d'Alba Campass is a soft, easy-going Barbera to drink now and over the next handful of years. Smooth contours, plush fruit and mid-weight structure make for an appealing tasty Barbera. Succulent dark cherry, spices and new leather make themselves known in the glass. Today the Campass feels a bit compact and closed in on itself, the result of a growing season that yielded mostly mid-weight wines. Dark blue, purplish fruit, lavender spice and mocha linger. 90 points. Antonio Galloni, Vinous Media September 2021*

#### **2017 Cigliuti Barbaresco Serraboella RRP \$141**

*The 2017 Barbaresco Serraboella captures all the best the vintage has to offer. Floral and lifted, the 2017 is a bit more red-fruited and lighter in body than most vintages, but it has plenty of depth as well. A more gracious, finessed side of this Neive cru emerges over time. The 2017 is a sensual, arrestingly beautiful Barbaresco from Cigliuti, although it has plenty of tannic grip. In 2017, the Serraboella doesn't have the heft and darkness of most years, but at the same time, it reveals a different facet of this site, which is quite intriguing. Sadly, yields are down 80%. The Serraboella is typically done in a combination of cask and smaller barrels, but yields were tiny, only enough to fill a single cask. My impression is that the Serraboella could turn out to be one of the hidden gems of 2017. 93+ points. Antonio Galloni, Vinous Media October 2020*

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