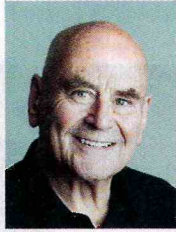


WINE



JAMES HALLIDAY

In 1982 nurseryman turned vigneron Garry Crittenden planted two hectares of vines, and in so doing doubled the size of overall plantings on the Mornington Peninsula. It has been suggested he also introduced barbera, nebbiolo, dolcetto and sangiovese to Victoria and Australia. Victoria may be correct, but not Australia: wealthy Italian construction engineers Carlo Salteri and Franco Belgiorno-Nettis built a 1000-tonne winery in Mudgee, NSW in 1974, planting 1.5ha of barbera, 1ha of nebbiolo and 0.65ha of sangiovese.

All of which shouldn't obscure Crittenden's 40-year contribution to the cause of Australia's wine, especially through the lens of viticulture. He introduced a vine training system designed to maximise the interception of sunlight, and brought expertise on soil composition (trace elements, good or bad). His energy spilled over from making to marketing and sales.

Winemaker son Rollo and marketer daughter Zoe became joint managing directors four years ago. With their father's encouragement, they have embarked on the grand ship sustainability in no uncertain fashion. In 2017 they converted the cellar door, office and winery to solar; prior to the 2018 vintage they invested \$50,000 to install a waste water treatment plant that permits the discharge of the treated water into the town sewerage system. Previously they tapped into a nearby recycled water outfall for irrigation of the vineyard and the landscaped lawns and gardens.

From the big (a 500-cubic-metre compost heap) to the small (three beehives improving the pollination and fruitset on the fruit trees in the gardens, and providing cold-pressed raw honey for sale at the Crittenden Estate Wine Centre). And what a wine centre it is. For \$15 per head visitors are seated to taste eight wines from more than 20 wines on release at any one time.

2020 CRITTENDEN ESTATE CRI DE COEUR PINOT NOIR

Hand-picked, 60% destemmed, 40% whole bunch, separately fermented, 14 days on skins. Matured in French barriques and puncheons (60% new) for 11 months. The perfumed and spicy bouquet is spotlessly clean, as is the light-bodied yet intense palate. Red and blue fruits hold sway, the oak integrated. 12.8% alc, Diam **96 points, drink to 2030, \$90**

2021 CRITTENDEN ESTATE KANGERONG ROSÉ

This is a Rolls-Royce rosé: 100% Home Vineyard pinot noir grapes, whole bunch-pressed then fermented and matured for 8 months in used French barriques, mlf blocked. The great '21 vintage results in a delicious pomegranate-infused wine replete with a touch of citrus, the finish dry. 13% alc, screwcap **95 points, drink to 2026, \$45**

2021 CRITTENDEN ESTATE PENINSULA CHARDONNAY

Hand-picked, whole bunch-pressed, wild fermented in French oak (5% new), matured for 9 months. 30% mlf gives a creamy cashew nuance to the fig and stone fruit palate; grapefruit makes a final curtain call. Overall, a wine with good line, length and balance. 12.5% alc, screwcap **94 points, drink to 2027, \$37**

