

# EARLY MEMORIES OF THE MORNINGTON PENINSULA WINE INDUSTRY





*This book contains a significant collection of press clippings and other memorabilia about the establishment of vineyards and wineries on Victoria's Mornington Peninsula.*

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*Compiled by Margaret Crittenden between the years of 1984 and 2011 and published in December 2018 after 35 consecutive vintages under one family.*

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*It is worth noting that from its first vintage in 1984, the Crittenden family enterprise traded under the name Dromana Estate.*

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*From vintage 2002 it became Crittenden Estate under which name it continues to trade for all its related brands. The Crittenden family has no connection with Dromana Estate.*

• • •

*Margaret continues to take an active interest in all family matters.*





CRITTENDEN ESTATE®

CRITTENDEN ESTATE  
**BOOK ONE**  
1984 - 1987



3.

LIST OF REGISTERED VINEYARDS ON MORNINGTON PENINSULA  
MAY 1891

WM. BRUNNING	SOMERVILLE, HASTINGS	2 ACRES
GEO. CLARK	SOMERVILLE	1 "
JAS. GRANT	SOMERVILLE, HASTINGS	1 "
G. CASPARO	RINGWOOD, MORNINGTON	1 "
JAS. GRICE	MORNINGTON	1/4 "
ALFRED JONES	SOMERVILLE, HASTINGS	2 "
ALEX MCKIRDY	" "	1/2 "
E. J. MURRAY	" , FRANKSTON	3 "
C. MURRAY	SOMERVILLE	1 "
GEORGE THORNELL	SOMERVILLE, HASTINGS	1 "
HENRY THORNELL	" "	1 1/2 "
JOHN THORNELL	" "	3 "
J. JUN. THORNELL	" "	1 "
THOMAS THORNELL	" "	1 "
<hr/> 14 GROWERS		<hr/> 20 1/4 ACRES

WM BRUNNING WAS A MEMBER OF THE CENTRAL VINE GROWERS  
ASSOCIATION, MELBOURNE IN MAY 1891

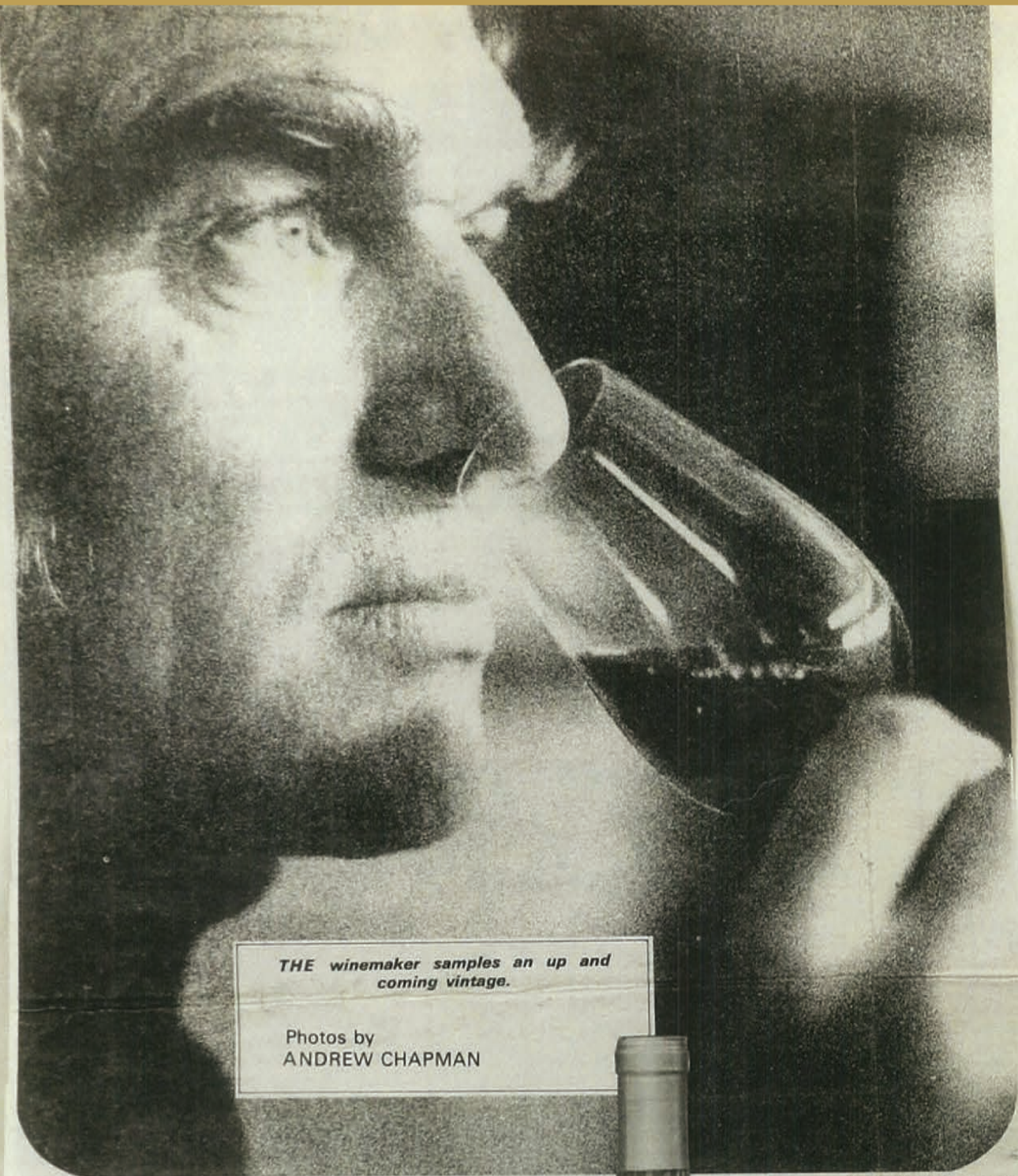
SOURCE : HANDBOOK ON VITICULTURE FOR VICTORIA. ROYAL COMMISSION  
ON FRUIT AND VEGETABLES, 1891. GOVT. PRINTER, MELBOURNE.





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# Crittenden Memories



*THE winemaker samples an up and coming vintage.*

Photos by  
ANDREW CHAPMAN



*NAT White prepares for the next crop of grapes pruning the willowy vines right back.*



*VATS and barrels in the Main Ridge Estate cellar — winemaker, Nat White, concentrating on producing quality wines rather than quantity.*

*NAT White samples some red wine in the chemist laboratory at Main Ridge Estate cellars. The wines need to be checked regularly to ensure acid and sugar levels are correct.*

*PINOT Noir and Cabernet Sauvignon — two of the varieties of quality wines produced at the Main Ridge Estate winery.*





— FRANKSTON/MORNINGTON NEWS, TUESDAY 17 MAY 1983



Among the vines at Main Ridge, from left, Mr White, Peninsula Cellar Club member John Buchanan, Mrs Rosalie White, and cellar club member Ken Stonehouse.

## High quality wine in making

**A MT. ELIZA public servant is doing his part to establish the Mornington Peninsula as one of Australia's newest wine growing districts.**

Mr Nat White, 43, a government engineer, owns a five acre vineyard at Main Ridge. It is currently the Peninsula's only commercial vineyard and winery but Mr White expects another two or three Peninsula wineries to be set up in the next few years. There are another dozen or so smaller vineyards also on the Peninsula.

Mr White believes the virtually unknown Peninsula wine industry is ready to come to terms with its potential and he is confident Peninsula wines will eventually become the equal of any in Australia.

He established the Main Ridge Estate in 1975 and had quietly begun to produce quality wines, mainly Cabernet Sauvignon, Pinot Noir and Chardonnay, as well as other lesser known varieties.

His vines grow on a hilly, north facing slope in red basalt soil. Mr White's father-in-law, a retired chemist who worked extensively in the South Australian wine industry, works in a laboratory at the estate, where the entire process from picking to bottling is closely monitored.

Mr White chose the Peninsula as the site for his vineyard after a couple of tours of European vineyards in the 60's inspired him to have a go at winemaking himself.

He says the climate here is characterised by a "maritime influence" whereby a land mass with a changing temperature is surrounded by a body of water with a generally unchanging temperature. This effect ensures a comfortable situation for the vines where there are no real extremes in temperature variation.

And most importantly, the Peninsula has a relatively cool climate, which is what Mr White was looking for when he began seeking out a location for his vineyard.

"The wine industry here will always be on a small scale because the Peninsula has a limited availability of suitable areas," he said.

"But there is no doubt that the climate will produce a high quality wine."

"It should be as good as the best in Australia."

"There are still a lot of things to learn but we aren't intending to try and make big returns."

"It is more a mixture of a challenge and an intense interest," Mr White said.

He currently has two hectares of vines. Production last year was four tonnes and sales volume about 130 dozen. With further plantings to bring the area of vines up to 3.5 hectares, production should rise to up to 20 tonnes.

Local winegrowers have formed the Mornington Peninsula Vignerons — an association to ensure local wines are labelled and recognised as having a guarantee of origin to protect the local quality.

26 THE AGE, Tuesday 7 February 1984

MELBOURNE LIVING 8

## Vines are flourishing on the Peninsula

**M**OST Melburnians driving down the Nepean Highway to Mt Eliza, Mornington, Dromana or Sorrento would be unaware of the burgeoning wine industry that has been evolving on the Mornington Peninsula.

Looking at the residential sprawl along the highway it seems unbelievable that the area could become a serious viticultural region, yet the Mornington Peninsula Vignerons' Association boasts 44 members.

No doubt many run their vineyards as hobby ventures, but 24 have vineyards of four acres or more, the amount prescribed by the Liquor Control Commission before the granting of a vigneron's licence.

The vineyards are scattered around the rolling hills in the east of the peninsula, in the Red Hill, Merricks and Main Ridge districts.

Among the apple orchards and grazing land, protected by sturdy pine plantations, the vines seem to be flourishing in the mild, maritime climate, bearing fruit in less than the usual five to seven years.

The first vineyard in the area was planted by the Seabrook family, the Melbourne wine merchants, in the late forties. Although several vintages were made from the vineyard near Dromana, the family's interest waned as it demanded more time and investment and the vineyard was soon phased out.

The real development did not take place for another two and a half decades when a handful of solicitors, businessmen and a civil engineer started planting vineyards.

Unlike some keen wine enthusiasts who have established other areas in recent years, the Mornington Peninsula vignerons have sought advice from professional or experienced wine people rather than muddle through on their own.

The Hickinbothams, Alex White from the Lilydale/Diamond Valley/St Huberts stable, and even Brian Croser and Oenotec all consult to different vignerons on the peninsula. And Nat White, owner/wine maker of the district's only commercial winery, Main Ridge, is completing the wine making course at Riverina College.

Chardonnay and cabernet sauvignon are the most widely planted varieties in the area. Although each individual wine maker has produced his own styled wines from these varieties, choosing



Sarah Gough

whether to give them wood treatment, all wines are similar in structure and varietal flavor.

The chardonnays are particularly exciting, reminiscent of chablis (true French chablis) in a warm year. They all have the lovely peachy nuances and rich flavors that one associates with variety and yet an austerity and acid backbone that keeps them refined and ensures they will be lovely drinking several years hence.

The 1983 Main Ridge chardonnay and Brian Stonier's Merricks chardonnay, produced and sold by the Hickinbothams and available at Gatehouse Cellars in South Melbourne, have both been given gentle oak treatment, which seems to fill out the varietal fruit and make the flavor richer. Lawyer/artist Brian Kewley keeps his chardonnay unwooded, preferring the fresh fruit characters.

The cabernets are also a delight. They have lovely berry fruit with hints of mint and eucalypt and the fine structure, soft tannin and clean fresh finish one associates with cool climate cabernet.

It seems unbelievable that one can drink and enjoy 1983 cabernets from the peninsula before they have celebrated their first birthday. Yet the soon-to-be bottled 1983 Main Ridge cabernet and just bottled 1983 Merricks cabernet can be drunk now.

It has well-integrated oak that nicely balances and enhances the soft berry fruit, and again the acid backbone that will allow the wine to mature and fill out in flavor over several years, if you can wait that long.

Main Ridge also produce a delightful spicy, fresh gewurtztraminer in the Alsatian mould, and a refreshing pinot meunier that they planted from cuttings taken from Best's Great Western vineyards.

Like the Best's pinot meunier it is light in structure, can be readily chilled and has delicate, soft, sweet fruit and a clean fresh finish. As Nat White suggests, it makes an ideal luncheon wine.

His 1982 cabernet has won Nat White and the Mornington Peninsula much acclaim and recognition, taking out the St Huberts Award and the Victorian Wine Centre Trophy at last year's Lilydale Show for the best dry red.

Nat's baby, the wine that demands so much of his care and attention, is his pinot noir.

He is the first to admit that it is much easier to grow good cabernet than good pinot on the peninsula. But he has persisted with pinot and in 1983, the drought year, produced a wine of which he is particularly proud. It has soft, delicate fruit and nicely integrated oak and has won a Gold medal in the pinot class at the same Lilydale Show last year.

Brian Stonier also has some pinot noir plantings, which he hopes will eventually go into a methode champenoise-styled wine in the years to come. There are also plans for some merlot, which would be put into a "Bordeaux blend" with the existing cabernet.

Brian Kewley has small plantings of shiraz and sylvaner. The shiraz shows the rich peppery spice and soft tannin associated with the variety in a cool climate and the sylvaner a spicy fruitiness and clean dry finish.

Fellow lawyer George Kefford has riesling as well as cabernet plantings at his Merricks Estate vineyard. And prominent Melbourne businessman Baillieu Myer, whose wines appeared under the Hickinbotham's Elgie Park label in years gone by, is building a winery and under the direction of Oenotec will soon produce wines under his own Elgie Park.

These are just a handful of the vignerons; there are many more. A map of the peninsula on the wall of the Main Ridge winery studded with red pins indicates just how prolific they are.

Although it is still early days, there is a tremendous spirit among the vignerons. They organise guest speakers to address association meetings and field days to different vineyards and viticultural areas. They are also trying to implement appellation controls to prevent any "sharks" coming into the area, setting up a shop front, planting a few token vines and bringing in wine from other regions to sell to the potentially lucrative tourist trade, as has happened in other regions.

We are going to hear a lot more about the wines from the Mornington Peninsula.



A glass of red, red wine to toast success — eight years in the making. (From left) Gwynn Jones and the makers, Nat and Rosalie White.

## A toast to maturity

**A good wine takes a little time to mature and so does a business.**

For Mr Nat White of Main Ridge his business is a good wine.

And it has matured so well, in fact, judges at the recent Lilydale Show awarded him with two gold and

two bronze medals as well as the Victorian Wine Centre's trophy for best dry red at the show.

It was the first time Mr White had exhibited his wines at a show and the success provided support for what he sees will eventually become "a significant new industry on the Peninsula".





FRANKSTON/MORNINGTON/NEWS, TUESDAY 7 AUGUST 1984

The Mornington Peninsula looks set to boast yet another tourist attraction to rival its claim to fame as a seaside holiday resort.

The Peninsula may, like the Rhine in Germany and Barossa Valley in South Australia, become known as the home of famous label wines.

One of those famous labels could be Main Ridge Estate which is already establishing itself as a producer of quality wines.

Nat White of Main Ridge Estate said the Mornington Peninsula is proving to be "one of the best if not the best wine areas in Australia".

Already 23 wineries have been established on the Peninsula and at least half are of commercial production size.

Main Ridge Estate covers five hectares. The vineyard is currently 2.5 hectares and will be increased to 3.5 hectares.



A VIEW across the Main Ridge Estate vineyard to the cellar - home of award-winning wines giving the Mornington Peninsula a new future.

## Nature's Nectar...

The Main Ridge Estate's first entry in the Lilydale Show last year rewarded the new winery with the Victorian Wine Centre's trophy for "Best Dry Red" as well as two gold and two bronze medals.

Nat White, who now works full-time at the winery, said Main Ridge Estate will remain a small scale producer of wines with the emphasis on quality rather than quantity.

To make an appointment to visit the winery or for further information contact Nat White on (059) 84 2686.





November 10-11 1984

THE WEEKEND AUSTRALIAN MAGAZINE 22

# Yarra Valley's good year

I WONDER if there is a square metre of land in southern and central Victoria which is unsuited to the production of high quality table wine. Marshes to one side and mountains to the other, the only barrier seems to be spring frosts.

The Yarra Valley is the most senior of the so-called new areas: in turn Mount Mary, Seville, Yeringberg and Yarra Yering wineries have made the four most wanted wines. With a mixture of astute marketing and genuine limitations on the quantity of wine produced, they have been extremely successful in creating an almost mystical aura of sophistication, scarcity and (of course) quality around the wines of the region.

Of the "gang of four", only Bailey Carrodus' Yarra Yering still opens its doors for cellar door sales. Only Guille de Pury of Yeringberg condescended to enter his wine in shows. And only Yarra Yering produced more than 1000 cases a year. All four winemakers were doctors, some of medicine, some of philosophy, elitism was alive and well.

Much of this is about to change, if it has not already done so. The Yarra Valley Vignerons Association has 26 grower-members, all with vineyards, and it is believed there are more than 40 vineyards in the region. Fifteen wineries are in operation and more are either planned or under construction.

The largest project is Mare Besen's Tarrawarra vineyard, which on completion is likely to rival any of the great showplaces of the Napa Valley. Even before the first vine was planted, it had a fully qualified winemaker, viticulturalist, David Wallan as a full-time employee to plan every aspect of the development. As far as I

## WINE



With James Halliday

know, Wallan still remains the only full-time, qualified winemaker in the valley, but it is not likely that situation will continue for much longer.

Not, mind you, that they have done so badly to date. While the entries in the Victorian Wines Show were limited to a handful of the wineries, the Yarra acquitted itself with distinction. The star of the show was Yeringberg: Guille de Pury entered three wines and also walked away with three gold medals and a trophy. Even a seasoned show specialist like Wolf Blass would be ecstatic about such a result.

His '84 chardonnay is a wine of classic proportion and style: the pungent bouquet is redolent with fruit and a haunting amalgam of honey and grapefruit aromas, while the structure of the palate, with a nice balance of smoky oak leaves me in no doubt the wine will repay cellaring.

The '83 pinot noir not only won the only gold medal in its class, but then proceeded to win the trophy for the best varietal red wine on show, displacing of the top cabernets

from a strong class of 26 wines and the top shiraz from yet another excellent class (of 16 wines). It is extremely rare for the softer, more subtle, pinot noir to show up so well against the strength of cabernet, and the spicy velvety richness of good shiraz.

The palate of the '83 Yeringberg pinot is quite outstanding, with the rich strawberry flavors one hopes to find in a good pinot but which are so seldom realised in practice.

The ability of Yeringberg (and the Yarra) to produce topflight pinot was underlined a few days after the show when, in the company of some distinguished French and American wine visitors, I drank an '80 Yeringberg pinot noir. The visitors thought it the best wine they had tasted during a two week visit to Australia.

The third gold medal went to another '83 wine, Yeringberg cabernet, which has a little merlot and malbec thrown in for good measure. This underlined the great capacity the Yarra Valley has to produce outstanding table wine from virtually any variety in virtually any style. Thus it came as no surprise to find Lilydale vineyard winning a gold medal in class 2 with its '84 chardonnay and St. Huberts a gold in class 5 with a marvellously spicy '83 shiraz.

On my personal score sheet Yarra burns '83 pinot noir (a supremely elegant wine with exceptional oak handling), and Jim Zitslaff's '84 Oak Ridge Estate cabernet (silky power and intensity) both scored gold medals, although they had to be content with consensus silver medals.

Perhaps the most surprising feature of the Yarra Valley is its ability to produce wines of great depth of flavor and richness which partially belies its very cool climatic classification. The Mornington Peninsula, by contrast, seems likely

to produce lighter and finer styles, with pronounced varietal characters but less body and richness. Four wineries from Mornington were represented.

Main Ridge Estate has released a number of chardonnays to date: its '84 just missed out on a medal in class 2, although once again my marks were higher than those of the other judges who found the chardonnay too austere and green. Main Ridge did win medals with two reds, including a fascinating light, fragrant spicy '83 pinot noir which it somewhat perversely entered in class 6, dry red medium to full bodied soft finish (rather than class 5, light bodied).

Dromana Estate received a bronze medal for an '84 cabernet sauvignon which showed intense cassis/berly flavors, but which had virtually no tannin. In the same class Elgee Park's '84 cabernet won a gold medal: it had some tannin to strengthen the finish, and showed fine, elegant berry flavor and aroma. Time alone will show whether the Mornington cabernets can develop more mid-palate flesh and weight: as the vines mature it is reasonable to expect they will do so. Elgee Park also received a silver medal for a full bodied '84 Rhine riesling, and deserved far better than a bronze medal for an intense, lingering grapefruit style chardonnay.

But the most striking wine from the Mornington Peninsula was the '84 Merricks Estate shiraz, which won a gold medal in the varietal shiraz class. The Peninsula seems particularly suited to shiraz.

I have also tasted a fine spicy pepper shiraz made for home consumption by Brian Kewley, and the Merricks Estate wine is simply a senior version of the Kewley wine. With it there can be no reservations about weight or mid-palate flavor:

the only other wines in the same style I have seen come from Knights Wines, and in particular the '80 vintage shiraz. The Merricks wine has all the riotous peppery spice one could wish for, yet magically retains the finesse and elegance which I think will be the distinguishing feature of the region.

Ken Eckersley's Nicholson River winery was the fourth winery in East Gippsland to gain a licence: his '83 cabernet sauvignon leaves no doubt that this very cool region will nonetheless produce strongly flavored and constructed red wines. That ever-so-Victorian camphor/mint character comes through in a well made wine.

The giant of the show was, without doubt, the massively constructed '84 cabernet sauvignon from Fratin's Mt. Langhi Ghiran winery on the eastern fringe of the great western area, near Ararat. Dense, rich in fruit and with gum gripping tannin it was nonetheless not heavy or extractive. A wine for heroes and the 21st century.

I could go on forever: the small wineries of Victoria are producing some superb red wines, although (so far) fewer whites. The white wines are pending to remain the preserve of the larger companies such as Seppelts, Tisdall and Mitchelton. The latter two provided some marvellous sauvignon blancs, which I will talk about at a later date.

But I should not close without an accolade for the St. Leonards '81 late harvest chenin blanc which won two trophies on the virtually unanimous vote of all the six judges and four associate judges. It is a great wine of immense character and flavor, a genuinely luscious dessert wine with marked botrytis character.

MELBOURNE LIVING 10 THE AGE, Tuesday 6 November 1984

## Seymour show recognised

FOR four years now, the tiny Agricultural and Pastoral Society in the small central Victorian town of Seymour has been organising a wine show.

It was a fairly audacious move to call the fledgling show the Victorian Wines Show, but from the outset the organisers limited entries to wines made and grown in Victoria and strove to fill the judging panel with respected wine makers and noted wine critics.

And each year, to their credit, the show has grown in size and stature and more and more companies of different sizes and regions within the State have participated.

Earlier this year, the show was given the ultimate recognition any small show could wish for, when the organisers of the National Show in Canberra agreed to accept medal-winning wines from Seymour into its competition.

Only wines winning medals in a show somewhere on the national show circuit are eligible for entry into the Canberra show. There are not many regional wine shows that enjoy such recognition and acclaim.

This year, once more, the show has been an unqualified success. There were a record 450 entries and wine makers, writers and judges were full of praise for its organisation.

James Halliday headed up the panel of judges, ably assisted by Colin Richardson performing his last official duty as head of the Victorian Wine and Brandy Producers Association, Vic Thompson of Best's wines, Tony Jordon of Oenotec consultants, Bill Cham-



Sarah Gough

bers of Chambers wines and chief judge at the Melbourne wine show and Geoff Kelly from the New Zealand equivalent of the CSIRO.

Last year's show was "the year of discovery" when some of the State's smallest wineries like Mt Ida and Walkershire wines at Heathcote made their debut and scooped the pools.

This year emerged as the year of the progressive northern Victorian companies with wineries like St Leonards and Mt Prior in the Rutherglen area, Woorinen at Swan Hill and Tisdall of Echuca taking out many of the important trophies.

Seppelts took out the Robert Bryce trophy for the Most Successful Exhibitor, after winning gold medals for its dry red and dry white wines in the premium section and its riesling and shiraz in the varietal classes, and dominating the fortified classes. It also produced the highest-scoring sparkling wine.

St Leonards was awarded the Cr N. Smyth trophy for the best white table wine in the show which it took out with a richly flavored 1981 late harvest chenin blanc. It also took out gold medals in several dry red classes with young cabernets.

Knights won the Cork and Seals trophy for the best red table wine in the show with its delightful 1983 shiraz. And Tisdall won the Liquid Air trophy for the best varietal white wine with its grassy and intense 1984 sauvignon blanc which has been very successful in the show ring since its introduction.

The small but impressive Yarra Valley wine company, Yeringberg, was awarded the Hicks and Hayes trophy for the best varietal red wine with its velvety and elegant 1983 pinot noir.

And the newly established, and impressive Rutherglen winery, Mt Prior, won the Victorian Department of Agriculture trophy for the best wood-matured white table wine two years of age or less with its 1983 chardonnay.

Although the longer established, innovative Victorian companies dominated the show there were flashes of brilliance from the small Mornington Peninsula wineries Main Ridge, Elgee Park and Merricks Estate, and from the tiny Fratin brothers winery at Ararat, Mt Duneed at Geelong and Walkershire wines again. Two new names, Oak Ridge and Longleaf, emerged to be watched in the future.

It is still sad to see that even the Seymour Show is not free of politics and infighting and that the bulk of the Rutherglen wine companies, for reasons of their own, are still boycotting the show. The premium fortified classes these companies would dominate if they entered are still very small and not as exciting as they could be.

### Silly season

The approach of the Christmas/New Year period has brought a



James Halliday: led judging panel.

spate of sparkling wine releases.

In recent weeks we have seen a handful of local companies launch a new quality sparkling wine and witnessed the arrival of some new cheaper French champagnes — the hangover surpluses of the bumper 1982 and 1983 harvests.

Yellowglen has launched a 1983 methode champenoise chardon-

nay. A delightful wine with a golden hue and delicate bead, it exudes lovely rich chardonnay fruit on the nose and a creamy, full palate with a long, firm, fresh finish.

This is Yellowglen's second straight chardonnay sparkling wine. Last year's release was an enormous success, the 1000 cases produced sold out in two weeks. Less than half this total was produced in the drought year of 1983 so keep your eyes peeled for it.

The tiny Yarra Valley wine company, Yarra Burn, launched a 1983 methode champenoise pinot noir. Also produced by Dominique Landragin at Yellowglen from fruit grown at Yarra Burn, it is an enticing golden color with pink tinges derived from the red pinot noir fruit.

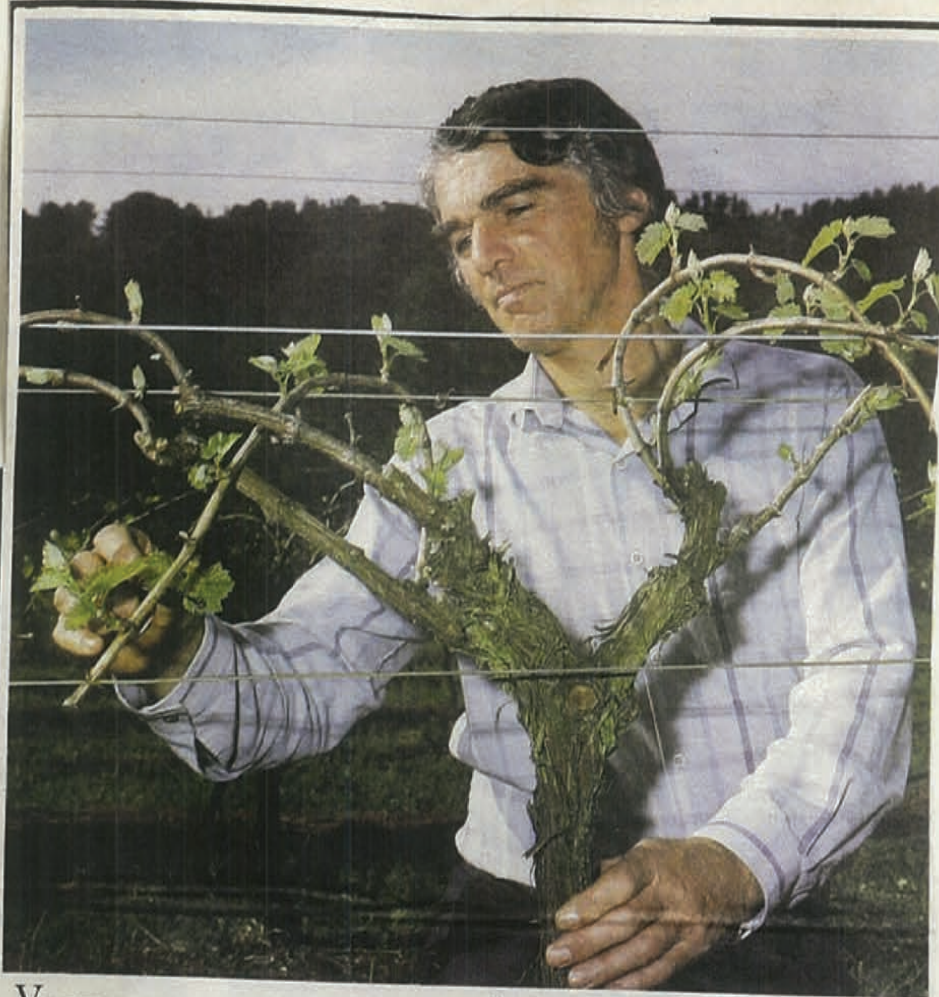
It is soft and delicate on the nose and fresh and austere on the palate. It has nice depth and flavor, but lacks a little of the complexity and character several months' further maturation on lees could have given it. At \$12 a bottle, however, it is well worth seeking out and trying.

And Nicks the wine merchants also launched a very good value, very drinkable French Champagne, the Albert Larive non-vintage. Albert Larive is the second label of the esteemed Champagne House, Deutz and Geldermann, and typical of the house, the wine has lovely complex, full flavor and firm finish. At \$9.98 per bottle it is particularly good value and well worth including in your picnic hamper over the Spring Racing Carnival or in your Christmas celebrations.





Page 2—Standard - Post, Wednesday, October 23, 1985



Nat White inspects spring growth on his vines.

**VIGNERON** Nat White admits he's too busy to worry about whether he made the right decision.

The decision — to give up engineering and run his tiny vineyard at Main Ridge full-time — was made last year.

Now, looking across the 2.5 hectares of vines surrounded by tall wind-breaking trees, he is looking forward to a "very good year" ahead.

His wines — like several others from Mornington Peninsula — are becoming well-known in the right circles. They are winning prizes at the prestige shows like Lilydale and Seymour and they are being served at the very best Melbourne restaurants — such as Stephanies, Fanny's and Glo-Glo's — in increasing quantities.

And now, six of the Peninsula's vigneronns have got together to hold the Peninsula's first wine festival.

Appropriately, it will be held at the place where some of the first vines were cultivated in the last century — at The Briars at Mount Martha.

It will be on November 9 and will be part of the Mornington Tea-Tree Festival program.

Of the six vigneronns whose wines will be tasted at the festival, only Nat White works full-time on his vineyard, called the Main Ridge Estate.

It was 10 years ago that Nat, his wife, Rosalie, and her father, Gwyn Jones, a retired chemist, began to plant vines on the old lemon orchard they had bought in a quiet Main Ridge lane.

Each year, they planted an acre of vines in the wonderful red soil on the north-facing slope — the ideal aspect for grapes.

"It's deep soil, well-drained basalt, good for allowing the vines roots to penetrate to great depth," said Nat.

This meant that there were few problems associated with drought or with a sudden heavy rain-fall near vintage time.

The rows of grapes flourished. Principal varieties were Cabernet Sauvignon, Pinot Noir and Chardonnay with smaller plantings of Gewurztraminer, Pinot Meunier, Cabernet, France, Merlot and Malbec.

Nat built his winery in 1980 and made his first commercial sales in 1981 — believed to be the first commercial sale of wine from the Peninsula.

His first wine to be entered in a show was a 1982 Cabernet Sauvignon which won the St Huberts Award and the Victorian Wine Centre Trophy for the Best Red Wine any Vintage entered in the 1983 Lilydale Show.

Since then, Main Ridge Estate wines have gained many more medals.

But Nat believes it's just a beginning.

"The Mornington Peninsula wines have great potential. At present few people know of us. Some of our best customers are local people who are proud to serve Peninsula wines at their dinner parties. We hope that the day has already come where they buy our wines because of their quality and not just because they're local and a good talking point," he said.

The other five vigneronns taking part in the festival are:

- George and Jacky Kefford, both lawyers, whose Merricks Estate in Thompsons Lane, Merricks, has already produced a prize-winning Shiraz and Cabernet.

Because of the cold winds which cross their property from the south, they have had to make extensive tree plantations.

But their original experimental area of Cabernet, Shiraz, Riesling and Pinot Noir grapes, planted in



1977, is producing well and they employ Alex White, a well-known winemaker from the Yarra Valley, as consultant in the wine-making process in their small winery.

Newer plantings include 3½ acres of Chardonnay in 1983 and 1½ acres of Cabernet.

- Garry and Margaret Crittenden, well-known Peninsula nursery owners, planted their first vines in 1982 on five acres at Dromana.

The first crop, harvested in April last year and vintaged by Nat White in his winery, became an instant winner for the Crittendens.

A "Dromana Estate 1984 Cabernet Sauvignon," it was a medal winner at the 1984 Victorian Wine Show — no mean feat for a wine off such young vines and up against strong opposition.

This wine was released for sale in July and sold out almost instantly — but a small quantity was reserved for the Peninsula Wine Fest.

- Brian Stonier, the publisher, and his wife, Noel, planted their first grapes at their Merricks Vineyard in 1978 and by 1984 had a total of 3.7 ha in — Chardonnay, Cabernet Sauvignon and Pinot Noir.

The first wines were made in 1982 by winemaker Stephen Hickinbotham at his Mount Anakie winery and the results were successful enough to encourage them to continue with further plantings.

Their Chardonnays have "high natural acid and full aromatic flinty fruit" while the 1984 Cabernet Sauvignon is known for its "pronounced dusty herbaceous character," says Brian Stonier.

- Sidney Myer jnr. is proud of the medals won last year at the Victorian Wine Show for the Cabernets, Rieslings and Chardonnays from the Myer family's Elgee Park Winery at Merricks.

The vineyard, planted in 1972, was the first hobby vineyard of this generation of vigneronns and there are about six acres of grapes planted. The winery was built last year. Before that the wines were made by the Hickinbotham family at Anakie. The 1984 and 1985 vintages were made by Hank Vandenharm with Dr Tony Jordan, of Enotech, as consultant.

- Bruce and Stan Paul, the Hastings councillor, have the newest vineyard — the Balnarring Vineyard. They picked the first crop from their 4 ha vineyard this autumn and the fruit was vintaged at Elgee Park Winery.

The two varieties produced are Rhine Riesling and a Pinot Noir — both show great promise, according to the Pauls.

Nat White, who is president of the Mornington Peninsula Vignerons' Association, believes the Peninsula Wine and Food Fest will be an ideal opportunity for local growers to promote their wines.

"We see it as our first public showcase," he said.

Tickets for the wine fest can be booked with Jenny Burrows, of Bittern Cottage, on (059) 83 9506.

— DINA MONKS





• Sampling the Main Ridge Estate Cabernet are winegrowers (from left) Garry Crittenden, George Kelford, Hank Vendenham, Nat White and Gwyn Jones.

## Compliments for Peninsula wines

THE wine buying public has paid the young peninsula wine industry the ultimate compliment.

Most of the wines ready to drink now have been sold out.

Secretary of the Mornington Vignerons Association, Mr. Denys McCullough said that there were 20 vineyards on the Peninsula, 16 are non-commercial.

Of the four commercial vineyards, each won medals at the Victorian Wine Show this year at Seymour.

Wine judge James Halliday said "The Mornington Peninsula seems likely to produce lighter and finer styles with pronounced varietal characters, but less body and richness."

Mr. McCullough said that some of the wine had received "unwelcome attention."

The first bottling of Pinot Noir from Dromana Estate was stolen and consumed by the thieves.

All the owner Mr. Garry Crittenden got back was the empty bottles.

"There were only 12 bottles from the first picking of the quarter acre of Pinot Noir grapes at Dromana Estate."

"They had been aged and just about ready for a taste when they were stolen."

The police apprehended the culprits and fortunately security has been tightened for later bottlings.

The commercial grow-

ers estimate 30ha. of vineyards have been planted across the peninsula.

About a third of this area is producing the commercial, award-winning reds and whites.

The growers estimate the area under vines will double in the next year.

Commercial production will increase from about 4000 bottles last year to more than 15,000 in 1985.

□□□

### Elgee Park

At Merricks North, Elgee Park is owned by Mr. and Mrs. Baillieu Myer.

Wine maker, Mr. Hank Vendenham said that the vineyard was started in 1972 with an experimental block containing 400 vines.

"It was found that we could produce excellent fruit, and in 1980 the vineyard was increased to six acres."

"This year we produced our first commercial wines."

Mr. Vendenham said that the new winery was completed during the vintage and has the best available equipment.

This year was the first time the winery has entered the Victorian wine show at Seymour.

The winery collected a gold medal for the '84 cabernet, silver for riesling and bronze for chardonnay.

"As the vines get older and we get more experi-

enced, we believe we can only improve."

Because the winery is producing on a limited amount of wine, sales are by mail order only. Enquiries phone (059) 89 7278 or 89 7338.

□□□

### Dromana Estate

Garry and Margaret Crittenden purchased 27 acres in Harrison's Road, Dromana in 1981 with the express intention of planting vines.

The first planting of 5 acres took place in spring 1982 and the first small crop was harvested in April this year and vintaged by Main Ridge Estate at their Main Ridge winery.

This wine, the "Dromana Estate 1984 Cabernet Sauvignon" won a bronze medal at the recent Seymour show.

Of the five acres planted at present the proportions by variety are: Cabernet Sauvignon 4 acres, Merlot 1/2 acre, Pinot Noir 1/4 acre, Chardonnay 1/4 acre.

As time goes by and funds permit it is hoped to increase the planted area to 10-12 acres of premium varieties.

Eventually, a winery will be built at the vineyard but not before 1986.

The 1984 Cabernet is undergoing maturation in new French Oak and should be available for purchase from Main Ridge Estate in winter 1985.

For enquiries phone (059) 89 2686.

□□□

### Main Ridge Estate

Nat and Rosalie White established the vineyard at Main Ridge Estate in

1975. The winery was built in 1980.

Nat was formerly an engineer with the Public Works Department and his methodical attitude evident at the property.

The Whites produced their first wine in 1980 and sales started in 1981.

This was the first commercial wine sold on the Mornington Peninsula. Gwyn Jones, Rosalie's father helps with the winemaking.

Mr. White said "the maritime climate will produce the fine, light style like those of Burgundy and Bordeaux in France."

"Because the altitude is higher here there is more radiation we are likely to ripen our crops successfully every year," he said.

"We've had no trouble ripening each of the five vintages and last summer was very cool."

Main Ridge Estate has plantings of Cabernet Sauvignon, Pinot Noir, Gewurztraminer, Pinot Meunier and Chardonnay.

Mr. White said the grapes were picked in April and the first bottling of white wine was done in November.

"Chardonnay takes a little longer — it's on the wood for five or six months."

"The Pinot varieties are aged on wood for months and the heavy Cabernet variety can be on wood for 12 months and bottled late the following year."

"The '83 reds are ready to drink now. They were released for sale in January this year and are nearly sold out."

"The next release of reds will be about a year from now."

Main Ridge Estate wines are excellent value.





• Mr Nat White examines the young fruit on the Pinot Meunier grape vines at his Main Ridge Estate vineyard.



• Red wines are aged in the oak casks for up to a year before bottling. Here Mr Nat White examines some 1984 vintage Cabernet Sauvignon

and sell for \$6 to \$10 a bottle.

Wine judge James Halliday says: "Main Ridge Estate has released a number of chardonnays to date: its '84 just missed out on a medal in class 2, although once again my marks were higher than those of the other judges who found the Chardonnay too austere and green."

"Main Ridge did win medals with two reds, including a fascinating light, fragrant spicy '83 Pinot Noir which it somewhat perversely entered in

class 6, dry red medium to full bodied soft finish (rather than class 5, light bodied)."

At Lilydale, the winery picked up silver medals for Cabernet and Pinot Noir; and three bronze medals at Seymour for the Cabernet Sauvignon and Pinot Noir.

Main Ridge wines are sold through restaurants in the city of Melbourne, retail outlets, mail order and cellar door.

Enquiries to (059) 892 686 or P.O. Box 40 Red Hill South, 3937.

### Merricks Estate

Merricks Estate is owned and operated by the Kefford family at Thompons Lane Merricks.

George and Jacky Kefford had an early interest in wine.

In the 1960's they toured vineyards in Victoria and beyond and laid the foundations of their cellar.

Having purchased 50 acres in Thompons Lane in 1977, it was a natural progression to make an experimental planting of vines.

The Keffords quickly became impressed by the potential of the region and were early enthusiastic members of the Mornington Peninsula Vignerons Association.

A Melbourne solicitor, George is President of the MPVA.

"We are planning a self-imposed appellation control system which will encourage high standards of production and a guarantee that the wine our clients are drinking is from grapes we produce ourselves."

"It's a first for Victoria. Wine producers in other areas have refused to take part in appellation control."

Merricks Estate produced small vintages in 1982 and 1983.

The six acre vineyard has plantings of Cabernet Sauvignon, Shiraz and Pinot Noir, Riesling and Chardonnay varieties.

1984 saw the first vintage of commercial quantity and the employment of Alex White from Yarra Valley as a consultant in winemaking and viticulture.

Merricks Estate exhibited the 1984 Cabernet and 1984 Shiraz at Seymour for a gold medal and a silver.

The same wines were exhibited at the Lilydale show with the Cabernet taking out a gold medal and the Shiraz a silver medal.

Wine expert James Halliday stated after the Seymour show: "... the most striking wine from the Mornington Peninsula was the '84 Merricks Estates shiraz. The peninsula seems particularly

MARK SHIELD  
AGE - TUES. 15/10/85

MANY readers will have heard rumblings about the new wine district on the Mornington Peninsula. This district is about to come of age by opening its doors and staging the Peninsula Wine and Food Fest.

The event kicks off at 7.30 pm on 9 November at The Briars, Nepean Highway, Mount Martha. Tickets are \$30 and guests will be treated to hors d'oeuvres and champagne in the central dining room, followed by a sitdown dinner in a "magnificently decorated marquee". The keynote speaker will be Ian Hickinbotham. The Occasional Quartet will fill in the gaps with chamber music.

It will surprise many people to know there are 31 growers on the Peninsula and nine of them are making wine commercially. Some of the early wines have shown great promise. Labels such as Main Ridge, Dromana Estates, Merricks Estate, Elgee Park and Balnarring are becoming familiar with the more adventurous consumer.

It seems certain we will be hearing more about this cool climate location, so the fest will be one of the best ways to get acquainted. The wine makers will be on hand to strut their stuff and an interesting time should be had by all. For details contact Jenny Burrows on (059) 83 9506.



Page 34—Standard - Post, Wednesday, November 28, 1984

# Peninsula's winning wines

LIKE the vigorous spring growth of their vines, the vineyards of the Mornington Peninsula are spreading across the hillsides.

Main Ridge, Red Hill and Merricks: the names already suggest an area of fine-style wines.

In the past few years our commercial wineries have been developing amid the wooded gullies and hills of the central peninsula.

And while they remain relatively unnoticed by the peninsula population, the wine-buying public of Australia is beginning to prick up a collective ear.

In the past month each of the four wineries — Main Ridge Estate, Merricks Estate, Dromana Estate and Elgee Park — have won awards in Victorian wine shows.

Wine experts have hailed the peninsula as an area that will produce lighter and finer styles.

Main Ridge Estate grower and winemaker Nat White is even more positive: "The cool maritime climate will produce the fine, light styles like those of Burgundy and Bordeaux in France."

The commercial growers estimate 30 ha. (about 70 acres) of vineyards have been planted across the peninsula.

About a third of this area is producing the commercial wine.

The growers estimate the area under vines will double in the next year.

Commercial production will increase from about 4000 bottles last year to more than 15,000 in 1985.

And, according to Nat White, the peninsula has an advantage over the famed French wine-producing areas.

"Because the sun altitude is higher here, there is more radiation so we are likely to ripen our crops successfully every year," he said.

"We've had no trouble ripening each of the five vintages and last summer was very cool."

A former civil engineer whose interest in wines took him on a camping holiday through France in the 60's, Nat White returned thinking Australia must be able to produce better wines.

The recent medals indicate he is on the right scent.

It seems an age ago when he vintaged his first wine in 44-gallon stainless steel drums. That was back in 1981, six years after the first plantings.

Today Mr White is 85 per cent through a correspondence wine science

course at Wagga's Riverina College.

He combines his talents with his father-in-law, Gwyn Jones, a chemist.

Nat White has plantings of pinot meunter, pinot noir, cabernet sauvignon, and chardonnay.

George Kefford's Merricks Estate has cabernet sauvignon, shiraz, pinot noir, riesling and chardonnay.

Garry Crittenden, as well as the common varieties, has added merlot to his vineyard while Elgee Park's Hank Vandenham has similar grapes to the others.

Nursing this active infant industry out of its cradle are a couple of lawyers, a former civil engineer, a nurseryman and a farmer.

They meet often and are keen to stick together and help each other develop what each believes can become one of the finest wine-producing areas in Australia.

Melbourne solicitor George Kefford, owner of Merricks Estate winery, is chairman of the Mornington Peninsula Vignerons' Association.

"We are planning a self-imposed appellation control system which will encourage high standards of production and a guarantee that the wine our clients are drinking is from the grapes we produce ourselves."

"It's a first for Victoria, other than the 1985 vintage."

Mr Kefford's wines, a part in appellation control.

shiraz, won awards at both the Seymour and Lilydale shows.

The shiraz won a gold at Seymour and a silver at Lilydale while the cabernet won gold in Lilydale and silver in Seymour.

Wine expert James Halliday stated after the Seymour show: "... the most striking wine from the Mornington Peninsula was the '84 Merricks Estates shiraz. The peninsula seems particularly suited to shiraz."

Nat White's Main Ridge Estate 1984 cabernet-sauvignon won a silver and '83 pinot noir won silver medals at Lilydale. His '83 and '82 cabernet-sauvignon and '83 pinot noir all won bronze medals at Seymour.

Elgee Park winemaker Hank Vandenham collected a gold for his '84 cabernet, a silver for riesling and a bronze for chardonnay.

Elgee Park, owned by Mr and Mrs Baillieu Myer, was first planted with experimental vines in 1972.

Hank Vandenham spent 12 years in the vineyards at Campbells, of Rutherglen, before joining Elgee Park as the winemaker and estate manager.

He struck gold with Elgee Park's first showing.

Dromana Estate, owned and operated by nurseryman Garry Crittenden and his wife Margaret, won a bronze medal at Seymour for its 1984 cabernet-sauvignon.

The wine, made at Main Ridge Estate, was from the Crittenden's first planting in Spring, 1982.

Garry Crittenden predicts that the Mornington Peninsula and Tasmania will soon produce the European-style wines in Australia.



SAMPLING the Main Ridge Estate cabernet are winegrowers (from left) Garry Crittenden, George Kefford, Hank Vandenham, Nat White and Gwyn Jones.

## Early wine

SIR — I was interested in the article on wine growing on the Peninsula.

The first Peninsula vineyard was probably that of the Grace family on the side of Arthur's Seat near their homestead "Gracefield".

Grace was an extensive landholder in the Dromana area in the mid 19th century.

The old home, made of local materials, has been demolished in recent years.

The other day when roaming the area I noticed the old home's walnut tree in the suburban yard of the housing development of latter years.

Members of the Storey family, early Peninsula pioneers, worked for Grace in his vineyard.

I think that in later years Grace was the Rye publican.

I fancy that the vineyard ultimately succumbed to the ravages of phylloxera.

COLIN McLEAR,  
Farrer, ACT.

Melbourne Winners Weekly, 18 November 1985



## Wine

PETER MITCHELL

## Powerful tastes of old chateau

CHATEAU Tahbilk, one of Australia's oldest wineries, last weekend celebrated its 125th anniversary.

It is a remarkable achievement, and one wonders how many of the 130 new Victorian vineyards will still be producing wine in 125 years hence.

The reds from Chateau Tahbilk have always had a capacity for ageing. One of the most memorable Australian wines I have drunk was a 1962 Chateau Tahbilk Cabernet Sauvignon.

It was 21 years old when I tasted it, and the freshness of its fruit suggested that it could easily last another 21 years.

Chateau Tahbilk have just released a 1981 Shiraz which should see out their next celebration, the 150th anniversary. It is a big gutsy powerful wine with heaps of fruit tannin and that unmistakable aniseed fruit flavor that a lot of central Victorian wines seem to have.

While it is a big wine (which does not necessarily ensure longevity) it is also well balanced, and that is most important for long-term ageing. At about \$6.45, it represents remarkable value for a cellaring wine of this quality.

LAST week I had dinner at Rogalsky's restaurant with a visiting French wine merchant. He was amazed at the improvement in our red wines since his last visit over 10 years ago.

Two reds in particular that impressed him were the 1981 Piper's Brook Cabernet Sauvignon from Tasmania and the 1983 Main Ridge Cabernet from the Mornington Peninsula.

He felt both wines could stand up against the best from Europe, and he has returned to France with a bottle of the current vintages from each of these vineyards to show to his friends.

Our chardonnays did not create such a favorable impression with him as he found them to be too heavy and concentrated lacking the finesse of French burgundies.

He told me of plans to return next year





PETER MITCHELL

## Winners, taxes and new tastes

FROM all reports, the recent Victorian Winemakers exhibition held at the Southern Cross, was extremely successful.

Lillydale Vineyards won the most popular white wine award for the fourth year in a row with a chardonnay and the most popular red wine award was won

by the exciting new Heathcote vineyard, Jasper Hill.

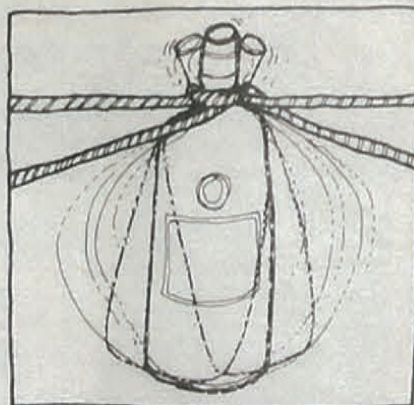
Yellowglen N/V Brut was voted the most popular sparkling wine and Bailey's won the fortified section.

Congratulations to the winners, for your wines are certainly some of Australia's most impressive wines.

WINE tax has once again reared its ugly head with talk in the industry of further taxes on wine in the next budget. If the rumors are correct, and the already high tax on wine is increased, a great number of small vineyards will be forced to close their doors.

This would be a tragedy for small vineyards have been the innovators, in an industry noted for its conservatism.

As a result of their experiments with new varieties, new viticulture and better fermentation methods, they have greatly improved the overall quality of Australian wine.



Continual taxing of wine, especially that made by the small vineyards, will price them beyond the pocket of the wine drinker and stifle the increase in consumption that has been mainly due to their efforts.

ON a happier note, I tasted a number of new releases, two of which were outstanding. The first was a rhine riesling from Bannockburn Vineyard near Geelong.

The Bannockburn 1983 rhine riesling is almost a blast from the past for it has that commodity rare in rhines today, varietal flavor. It doesn't require ageing as the fruit is quite developed, so drink it now and enjoy its rich toasty rhine flavor.

The second outstanding wine was a cabernet from a new vineyard on the Mornington Peninsula. Dromana Estate is another vineyard to add to the already impressive list of vineyards on the peninsula. Their 1984 cabernet sauvignon is a lively, fresh, delicate wine with lovely fruit flavors and while it is from two-year-old vines it has a touch of class that augurs well for the future.

Melbourne Winners Weekly, 12 August — Page 11

THE WEEKEND AUSTRALIAN MAGAZINE 21

October 26-27 1985

## Classic Reds



# Hoping to hit the spot with a constantly moving target

IT seemed inevitable to me that Len Evans would preface his list in the way he has — and equally inevitable that, if locked in separate rooms, we would come up with a similar Top 10, so I delayed choosing my wines until I could read the master's pearls of wisdom.

Having done that, I find myself in agreement with everything Len has written about the impossibility of the task.

In recognition of that impossibility, I have deliberately come up with a different Top 10.

However, I would be more than happy to put my name to his selection and suspect he would be no less happy with mine.

For the wonderful thing about wine is that it is a constantly moving target. There are no absolutes and there is endless scope for animated debate.

In my selection, I have deliberately chosen some wines which have not yet been released. There is nothing worse than to be told of wines which have long since become unobtainable.

I have also tended to select wines from makers with a consistent track record so, even if you miss one vintage, the next should provide a wine of comparable quality, even if vintage variation imposes its mark on style.

I have also dwelt a little more on shiraz and pinot noir, even though this has caused me to develop a distinct Victorian bias.

Oh, yes, I too absolutely shrink from anything other than an alphabetical listing; or, if you insist, all 10 wines came equal first.

Stuart Anderson at Balcownie has produced a wonderful 1984 Pinot Noir, which took a few months to get into stride after bottling, but gives every indication of proving to be an even greater wine than his superb 1980 Balcownie Pinot Noir ranks with that of Mosswood and Yarra Yering as Australia's greatest.

Tim Knappstein of Enterprise Winery has produced many very great white and red wines during the past decade. His 1984 Cabernet Sauvignon, with 10 per cent merlot and 10 per cent cabernet franc in the blend, is comprehensively the greatest red wine he has so far produced, setting a benchmark to which others in the Clare Valley can aspire. Due for release next year, it will be on my list of buys.

Do not be deceived into thinking that Ian Hollick's success in winning this year's Jimmy Watson Trophy with his 1984 Cabernet Sauvignon, also due for release next year, was a flash in the pan. 1984 was a very good vintage in Coonawarra and 1983 an extremely difficult one, particularly for red wines.

By JAMES HALLIDAY

Yet, even in 1983, Hollick produced a most beautiful cabernet sauvignon, reflecting his great skills as a vigneron and demonstrating once again that great wine is made in the vineyard.

I have every confidence we will see a continuing series of outstanding Coonawarra cabernet sauvignons from this small winery.

From small we go to doll's house size with Merricks Estate Shiraz of 1984. This wine starts where the marvellous 1982 Knight's Shiraz leaves off, and flavours are almost overwhelming in their intensity, yet the Merricks wine, from the Mornington Peninsula in Victoria, is almost ethereal in its delicacy. A glorious wine which, however, will be appreciated by all too few, partly because it has been produced in such tiny quantities, but also because it is one of those wines which is so particular in its style that not all will enjoy it.

## Rapt in vines

With wine tax a reality, there can be great satisfaction in avoiding this by growing your own grapes and making your own personal brand of wine.



This is great for adding a sparkle to the end of the day ... and the wine makes a great gift to donate to trusting friends on special occasions!

Property holders on the Peninsula are showing an increasing interest in viticulture and oenology.

Although never an active centre for viticulture, the Mornington Peninsula has none-the-less a long history in wine growing. The 'List of Registered Vineyards on the Mornington Peninsula, May 1871', shows 14 growers - who tended 20.25 acres between them.

In recent times 31 growers have established vineyards. All members of the Mornington Peninsula Vignerons Association (Nine of these are now producing wines commercially) look after 90 acres of

vines planted to premium varieties such as Chardonnay, Rhine Riesling, Cabernet Sauvignon, Shiraz and Pinot Noir.

A leading Australian winemaker recently described the Mornington Peninsula as potentially 'a new great wine region of the world'. The maritime and temperate climate of the area is claimed by local vignerons as one of the reasons for their wines of outstanding quality and great elegance of style.

At 3.30 pm on Sunday, November 24, at the Peninsula Field Days, Russell Sonderland from the Knoxfield Horticultural Research Institute will speak on grape growing for pleasure and profit in his lecture, titled Viticulture.

He will cover everything potential wine growers need to know including site and soil types, selecting varieties, layout, trellising and planting, pruning as well as general care and costs associated with establishing a vineyard.



with a contingent of wine makers from some of the smaller vineyards of Bordeaux and Burgundy for a series of tastings in Australia of their wines.

He also feels that they might benefit not only by experiencing our wines, but also that they can learn something from the presentation and labelling of our wines, which he thought was excellent.

★ ★ ★

LOTS of champagne was consumed over the cup week and plenty will be consumed between now and Christmas. But if, like me, you didn't back the winner, you will be needing a sparkly that's not going to break the bank.

Yalumba have just the thing, selling for about \$7.30. The 1982 Yalumba Brut de Brut is one of the most underrated sparkling wines produced in Australia.



## SUN leisure

The Sun  
Summer Wine  
TREK

## Where to find Victoria's great vineyards

## MURRAY VALLEY (1)

THIS region produces great quantities of table wine for the flagon and cask market. While some believe that is all it can produce, Lindeman's Karadoc Winery disproves this theory. **Bests St Andrews Vineyard.** Lake Boga. Cellar door Mon-Fri 9-5, Sat 9-4. **Fitzpatrick Wines.** Campbell Av., Irymple. Cellar door Mon-Sat 10-6. **Bullers Winery and Distillery.** Beverford. Murray Valley Highway. Cellar door Mon-Sat 9-5. **Capogreco Wines.** Riverside Av., Mildura. Cellar door Mon-Sat 10-6. **Lindemans Karadoc Cellars.** Redcliffs, Mildura. Cellar door Mon-Sat 9-6 and extensive tours of one of Australia's biggest wineries. **McWilliams Wines.** Moore St, Robinvale. Cellar door Mon-Fri 9-12 and 1-5. **Mildara Wines.** Merbein. Cellar door Mon-Fri 9-5, Sat 9-1. **Murray Valley Winery.** 15th St, Mildura. Cellar door Mon-Fri 9-6. **Robinvale Wines.** Sea Lake Rd, Robinvale. Cellar door Mon-Sat 9-6. **Shepparton-Echuca (2)** A THRIVING wine industry once flourished around Shepparton. Alas it has failed to regain those glory days, while at nearby Echuca, Dr Peter Tisdall has done his best to put his excellent range of table wines on the map. **Goulburn Valley Winery.** Vaughan St, Shepparton. Cellar door Mon-Sat 9-6. **Gr v-a Winery.** Old Lookie Rd, Shepparton. Cellar door Mon-Sat 9-6. **Monclino Wines.** Katunga on Goulburn Valley Highway. Cellar door Mon-Sat 10-6, Sun 12-6. **Tisdal Wines.** 14 Cornela

Creek Rd, Echuca. Mon-Sat 10-5, Sun 12-5.

## BENDIGO (3)

LIKE most of the Victorian industry at the end of the last century, the devastating disease, phylloxera, struck Bendigo. Chemist Stuart Anderson was the first to re-open the district in the late 60s and establish the premier role of cabernet sauvignon. **Balgownie Vineyard.** Hermitage Rd, Maiden Gully on Calder Highway. Cellar door Mon-Sat 10-5. **Chateau Dore Vineyard.** Mandurang. Cellar door Tues-Sat 10-30-4.30 Sun by appointment. **Chateau Le Amon.** Calder Highway, south of Bendigo. Cellar door Mon, Wed-Sat 9-5, Sun 1-6. **Harcourt Valley Vineyard.** Calder Highway, Harcourt. Cellar door Mon, Wed-Sat 10-6, Sun 2-6. **Heathcote Winery.** High St, Heathcote. Cellar door Sat & Sun 10-5. **Huntleigh Vineyard.** Tunnecliffs Lane, Heathcote. Cellar door Sat & Sun 10-5. **Jasper Hill Vineyard.** Heathcote. Cellar door Sat 9-6, Sun 12-6. **Water Wheel Vineyard.** Bridgewater-On-Loddon. Cellar door Mon-Fri 10-5, Sat 10-5. **Romany Rye Vineyard.** Redesdale. Cellar door Mon-Sat 9-6, Sun 12-6. **Zuber Estates.** Heathcote. Cellar door Mon, Wed-Sun 12-5.30. **PYRENEES (4)** ALTHOUGH the first vines were planted in the Avoca area in 1848, the district is still looked upon as a late bloomer. **Mount Avoca.** Moates Lane, Avoca. Cellar door Tues-Sat 9-5, Sun 12-5. **Redbank.** Redbank at 200 km

post on Sunraysia Highway. Cellar door Mon-Fri 9-6, Sat & Sun 12-5. **Summerfield.** Mountain Creek Rd, Moonambel. Cellar door Mon-Sat 9-6, Sun 1-6. **Taltarni.** Mountain Creek Rd, Moonambel. Cellar door Mon-Sat 9-4. **Warrenmang.** Mountain Creek Rd, Moonambel. Cellar door Mon-Sat 9-6.

## GREAT WESTERN (5)

GREAT Western became a wine growing region during the gold rushes. The Seppelt company made it the centre of another rush during the 1940s and 50s with its sparkling wines. **Bests Concongella Vineyard.** Western Highway. Great Western. Cellar door Mon-Fri 9-5, Sat 9-4. **Boroka Winery.** Promonal Rd, Halls Gap. Cellar door Mon-Sat 9-5, Sun 1-5. **Donoview Vineyard.** Stawell West. Cellar door Mon-Sat 10-5, Sun 1-5. **Montara Winery.** Chalambur Rd, Ararat. Cellar door Mon-Sat 9-5. **Seppelt Great Western.** Moyston Rd, Great Western. Cellar door Mon-Fri 9-6, Sat 9-1. Extensive tours through the underground champagne cellars.

## GEELONG (6)

THE Swiss are said to have settled in Geelong before the Germans in the Barossa Valley. Phylloxera devastated the vineyards but they have since bounced back. **Hickinbotham Winemakers.** Staughton Vale Rd, Anakie. Cellar door Tues-Sat 10-6, Sun 12-5. **Idyll Vineyard.** Ballan Rd, Moorabool. Cellar door Tues-Sat 10-5. **Rebenberg Vineyard.** Feehans Rd, Mt Duneed. Cellar door Wed-Sat 9-6.

**Tarcoola Vineyard.** Lethbridge. Cellar door Mon-Sat 10-5.

## Central &amp; Goulburn (7)

LOOK for the luscious reds of Knights, the sparkling wines of Yellowglen and the crisp whites of Delatite. **Craiglee Winery.** Sunbury. Cellar door Mon-Sat 9-5, Sun 12-5. **Knights Granite Hills.** Baynton. Cellar door Mon-Sat 9-6, Sun 130-6. **Romsey Vineyard.** Glenfern Rd, Romsey. Cellar door Mon-Sat 9-6, Sun 1-6. **Malmesbury Estate.** Malmesbury. Cellar door Fri and Sat 10-6. **Yellowglen Vineyard.** Whites Rd, Smythesdale. Cellar door Mon-Sat 10-5, Sun 12-5. **Delatite Winery.** Delatite via Mansfield. Cellar door Mon-Sat 10-6, Sun 12-6. **Chateau Tahbilk.** Tahbilk. Cellar door Mon-Sat 9-5, Sun 12-5. **Mitchellton Winery.** Mitchellstown. Cellar door Mon-Sat 9-5, Sun 12-5. **Osikas.** Graytown on Nagambie Rd. Cellar door Mon-Sat 9-6. **Seymour Vineyards.** Hume Highway, Seymour. Cellar door Mon-Sat 9-5.30, Sun 12-6. **Wilkenshire Wines.** Baileston on Nagambie. Rushworth Rd. Cellar door Mon-Sat 9-6.

## YARRA VALLEY (8)

THERE are more characters and strong-minded individuals here than in any other region. Their wines reflect this distinctiveness. **Fergussons Winery.** Wills Rd, Yarra Glen. Cellar door Tues-Sat 9-6, Sun 12-6. **Kellybrook Winery.** Dudley Rd, Wonga Park. Cellar door Mon-Sat 9-6, Sun 12-6. **Chateau Yarrinya Winery.**

Main Rd, Yarra Glen. Cellar door Mon-Sat 9-6, Sun 12-6. **Prigorie Winery.** Maddens Lane, Gruyere. Cellar door Mon-Sat 9-6, Sun 12-6. **St Huberts.**

St Huberts Rd, Coldstream. Cellar door Sat 10-6, Sun 12-5. **Warramate Vineyard.** Maddens Lane, Gruyere. Cellar door Sat and Sun 9-6. **Yarra Burn Vineyards.** Settlement Rd, Yarra Junction. Cellar door Mon-Sat 10-6, Sun 12-6. **Yarra Yering Vineyard.** Maddens Lane, Gruyere. Cellar door Sat 10-5, Sun 12-5.

## MORNINGTON (9)

One of the newest, the Mornington Peninsula has about five recognised vineyards. However, many are not ready for cellar door sales. A call to Main Ridge Estate at Main Ridge could be rewarding (787-3975).

## NORTH-EAST (10)

IT is no exaggeration to call the North-East the home of the best fortified wines in the world. Look out for the area's big reds and some experimental wines with new varieties to the region like pinot noir and merlot.

**All Saints.** Wahgunyah off Corowa Rd. Cellar door Mon-Sat 9-5. **Bailey's of Glenrowan.** Taminick. Glenrowan. Cellar door Mon-Fri 9-5, Sat 10-5. **Brown Brothers.** Myrtleford Rd, at Milawa. Cellar door Mon-Sat 9-5. **Bullers.** Three Chain Rd, Rutherglen. Cellar door Mon-Sat 9-5. Sun on long weekends only. **Campbells Winery.** Murray Valley Highway, Rutherglen. Cellar door Mon-Sat 9-5, Sun 12-5. **Chambers Rosewood Winery.** Rutherglen. Cellar door Mon-Sat 9-5.

**Fairfield.** Murray Valley Highway, Rutherglen. Cellar door Mon-Fri 9-5. **Gayfers Vineyard.** Hume Highway, Chiltern. Cellar door Mon-Sat 9-5.

**Gehrig Brothers.** Howlong Rd, Barnawartha. Cellar door Mon-Sat 9-5. **John Gehrig Wines.** Myrtleford Rd, at Oxley. Cellar door Mon-Sat 9-5, Sun 12-5.

**Jones Winery.** Rutherglen. Cellar door Mon-Fri 9.30-5, Sat 9-12. **Markwood Estate.** Myrtleford Rd, at Markwood. Cellar door Mon-Sat 9-5.

**Morris Wines.** Mia Mia Vineyard, Murray Valley Highway, Rutherglen. Cellar door Mon-Sat 9-5.

**Mt Prior Vineyard.** Howlong Rd, Rutherglen. Cellar door Mon-Sat 9-5, Sun 12-5.

**Pfeiffer Wines.** Distillery Rd, Wahgunyah. Cellar door Mon-Sat 9-5, Sun 12-5 long weekends and school holidays.

**St Leonards.** Wahgunyah. Cellar door Mon-Sat 9-5.

**Schmidt's Strawberry Wines.** Alan's Flat, Yackandandah. Cellar door Mon-Sat 9-6.

**Stanton and Killeen.** Murray Valley Highway, Rutherglen. Cellar door Mon-Sat 9-5, Sun, on long weekends.

**Taminick Cellars.** Taminick. Cellar door Mon-Sat 9-5.

## GIPPSLAND (11)

ANOTHER new region sporting almost a dozen vineyards. While they are not open to the public, mainly because they are hobby farms, others will provide a tasting if an appointment is made. Try Lulgra Vineyards at Lakes Entrance (051-55-1365) and McAllister Vineyards at Golden Beach Rd, Longford (051-49-7229).

**Golvinda Winery.** Princes Highway, 20 km west of Bairnsdale. Cellar door Mon-Sat 9-6.





20 Nov. 1985

THE WEEKEND AUSTRALIAN MAGAZINE 19

# A newcomer to watch

THE Mornington Peninsula is one of Australia's newest wine regions. Only tiny quantities of wine are made each year, and even less finds its way on to the retail market.

But it is an area to watch, one which will assume steadily increasing importance during the remainder of this decade.

Unlike so many other Victorian regions which have been revived over the past 15 years or so, the Peninsula has a negligible history of viticulture in the last century. In 1891 14 growers had eight hectares of vines under cultivation, but even these modest plantings disappeared soon after the turn of the century.

Vines returned in 1950, when a member of the Seppelt family planted a little over one hectare at Dromana. Eventually the vines passed into the care of the late Doug Seabrook, who made wine from them for a number of years. The vineyard was destroyed by the Dromana bushfire of 1967.

Although it has not been replanted, two vineyards have been established in the immediate vicinity, one by Garry Crittenden (Dromana Estate) and the other by Graeme Pinney. In all, there are 31 grower members of the Mornington Peninsula Vignerons Association, who between them have 35 hectares planted to all of the classic varieties.

Six producers are presently producing wine commercially, while several others make wine for private consumption. Those marketing wine are Baillieu Myer of Elgee Park, Garry Crittenden of Dromana Estate, Brian Stonier of Merricks, George Kefford of Merricks Estate, Nat White of Main Ridge and Bruce and Stan Paul of Balnarring Vineyard.

Elgee Park is the senior citizen. Its vineyard was commenced in 1972, and wine made on a largely experimental basis until 1981, when extensions to the plantings began which have now lifted the total to 2.5 hectares of cabernet sauvignon, merlot, rhine riesling and chardonnay.

Until 1984, the wines were made for Elgee Park in the Hickinbotham Winery at Geelong. A winery constructed prior to the 1984 vintage saw winemaking operations move back to Elgee under the control of Henk Vandenberg, with Oenotec providing consultancy services. Three wines (a 50/50 cabernet/merlot blend, a rhine riesling and a chardonnay) will be available for sale exclusively through the Elgee Park mailing list. Neither cellar door sales nor retail sales are presently in contemplation.

Nat and Rosalie White of Main Ridge Estate can very legitimately challenge the senior citizen status accorded Elgee Park. For while their vineyard was not started until 1977, the winery was constructed in 1980 and sales commenced in 1981, providing the first wines to be commercially offered from the Mornington Peninsula.

Since that time, the Whites — with assistance from Rosalie's father, Gwynn Jones, a retired chemist but a very active co-worker in the winery — have made every post a winner.

Main Ridge has not only produced excellent wine for Dromana Estate. The 2.5 hectare vineyard is a patchwork quilt of varieties, with cabernet sauvignon, pinot noir and chardonnay dominating, and with tiny plantings of gewurztraminer, pinot meunier, cabernet franc, merlot and milbec.

There are very few plantings

## WINE



With James Halliday

of pinot meunier in Australia: only Bests at Great Western has hitherto produced red wine from the variety (most of the other grapes are used in the production of sparkling wine), and the small quantities of still red wine made by Main Ridge from the variety are accordingly of great interest. I particularly admire the 1984 vintage of the wine, with its fragrant and slightly sappy pinot-family fruit aroma and flavour set against spicy oak.

The cabernet sauvignon (with a small addition of the other cabernet-related grapes) has been consistently good. The 1982 vintage won two trophies at the 1983 Lilydale Show, including best red wine of any vintage entered in that show.

Excellent though the cabernets of Elgee and Main Ridge are, that of Merricks is positively exhilarating. The 1984 vintage (made by Stephen Hickinbotham) literally dances in the glass, with intense and highly aromatic berry/herbaceous fruit aromas and flavours. The palate is further enlivened by some tastes of dark cherry and cassia.

Yet the hallmark of the Mornington cabernets is elegance and intensity rather than weight and power. Indeed, at one stage I began to wonder whether the undeniably cool climate might not produce wines which lacked that edge of structure and substance necessary to ensure both long life and final quality.

The 1985 cabernet sauvignon from Dromana Estate puts paid to that theory. So strong and robust is it that the panel which judged it at the 1985 Victorian Wines Show felt it was just too strong, too tannic and too extracted.

Garry Crittenden is confident that the vineyard will continue to provide grapes of similar quality, and is now seriously contemplating modifying the fermentation techniques to lessen the degree of extraction and lighten the weight and structure of the wine.

All of this points out the uncertainties which inevitably confront any new district as growers come to grips with their vineyards and the fruit crop. It also underlines the folly of making any broad judgment on the basis of only a few vintages.

Nonetheless, the quality of the Merricks Estate shiraz produced by George Kefford in 1984 and again in 1985 seems to put beyond doubt the proposition that this is a variety of outstanding promise in the Mornington area. Melbourne solicitor Brian Kewley provides further support with the tiny quantities of shiraz he makes for his own consumption from his vineyard in the district.

Both the Kewley and Merricks Estate wines have that intense crushed pepper/spice aroma and flavour which so distinguishes the great wines of the Rome Valley. I have previously talked about the Kefford wines (the '85 won a silver medal at the Victorian

Wines Show, coming second in a class of 23 entries. I should add that Main Ridge Estate also won a silver medal in the cabernet sauvignon varietal class with its 1985 cabernet.)

Pinot noir also shows great promise. The 1985 Main Ridge Estate Pinot Noir (missing out by half a point — although most certainly not on my score sheet — on a silver medal at the Victorian Wine Show) is the best so far made by Nat White, showing both the authority and the style so rarely encountered among Australian pinot noirs.

Bruce and Stan Paul at Balnarring Vineyard (the wines were vintage at Elgee Park) have also produced a quite lovely pinot noir, even if at this stage it lacks the complexity of style evident in the Main Ridge Estate. With four hectares of vineyard (planted to rhine riesling and pinot noir) Balnarring will, in the future, become an important producer of pinot noir. Their first release of this variety will be made in the autumn of 1986.

## Clarity of flavour

If, so far, I have concentrated on the red wines of Mornington, let no one doubt its suitability for white wines. Many first class chardonnays have been made, while Nat White's handling of that difficult variety gewurztraminer is nothing less than exemplary. The rhine rieslings of Elgee Park look set to continue in the tradition of the riesling made from that pioneer planting by Doug Seabrook: a bottle of 1962 Dromana Rhine Riesling opened in 1983 is said to have been in outstanding condition, still fragrant and full of fruit.

It is this clarity of fruit flavour, and of varietal character, which is the strength of the Mornington Peninsula. It is also at the heart of the claim of any district which aspires to greatness. There is no question the climate is right, and the soil is right: as everywhere, site selection and viticultural practices have to be carefully managed, but the base requirements are all there, and the quality of the fruit reflects this to the full.

There is every reason to suppose that in the years to come, the Mornington Peninsula will throw down the gauntlet to the Yarra Valley in competing for the affections of day-tripping wine lovers from Melbourne.

In the meantime, only Gatehouse Cellars and the Victorian Wine Centre receive small consignments of wine for sale from one or two of the vignerons. For the rest, it is necessary to join the mailing list or, in one or two instances, visit during the weekend.

The mailing list addresses are as follows: Dromana Estate, PO Box 332, Mornington, 3931; Elgee Park — Junction Road, Merricks North, 3926; Main Ridge Estate, PO Box 40, Red Hill South, 3937. Merricks is principally available through Gatehouse Cellars, but inquiries can be made to Merricks Winery, 62 Thompsons Lane, Merricks, and Merricks Estate — Thompsons Lane, Merricks, 3916. For inquiries regarding first releases at Balnarring Vineyards phone (059) 895 258.



AGE TUESDAY 12 NOVEMBER '85  
MELBOURNE LIVING 12

## Love and wine in a cool climate

STEPHEN HICKINBOTHAM speaks about cool climate wine making with the conviction of the convert, suggesting he had a transforming experience somewhere on the road between Bordeaux University, where he learnt the French art of wine making, and the Hickinbotham family winery at Anakie, where he now practises his art.

He has the convert's intolerance of the old values, and the open-armed embrace of the new gospel.

He had arranged for 'The Age' a tasting of experimental parcels of wine he had made from the cool climate areas of southern Victoria: cabernets from Merrick's vineyard and from Elgee Park, both on the Mornington Peninsula, from Meadowbank in Tasmania, and from Moe; and a straight merlot from Maffra. After drinking them, photographer David Johns and I were also believers.

They were all fine wines, but the Merrick's, from Brian Stonier's vineyard, was a wonder in its color, complexity and aroma. "That is what I would call the missing link in Australian wine making," Mr Hickinbotham said. "It has got that herbaceous, dusty character you only have in the very best French chateaux. It has what the French call 'breeding', and I have seen it consistently in that wine."

"That is what wine is all about, drinking it slowly and enjoying the content, not for the alcohol. That is what is so exciting about southern Victoria. People really have not seen what is possible here."

"To get the most out of wine you should know a bit about it. The great awakening will come when people realise wines can be drunk with different foods, and at different times. I would have the Merrick's with filet mignon, or rack of lamb, pink meat, goat's cheese, whereas the Elgee Park I would have with something with a bigger flavor, coq au vin, camembert, soft cheeses."

There is definitely something of the evangeliser in Stephen Hickinbotham, the man who wants to spread the good news that "wine in moderation enhances your life". In a sense he is evangelising with his Hickinbotham Selection, the marketing breakthrough which has brought the country's small wineries to the attention of passengers on Ansett, V Line, New South Wales Railways, and patrons of the Victorian and Queensland arts centres, and some of the better-known international hotels.

He is also a populariser of wine. "That's where the politicians in Canberra get it wrong. They are part of the narrow group who think wine is for silvertails, whereas in all the civilised countries it is a part of the staple diet."

He attacks the same politicians for levying the 10 per cent sales tax, which is in effect a tax on quality, because the people who suffer most are the wineries whose \$10 bottle becomes an \$11 bottle — and around that level you meet consumer resistance. "In Australia we have to produce twice the quality at half the price. Australian wine is unquestionably the best value in the world. Even though we are getting \$12.50 for our cabernets it is still not viable at that price. People do not realise how expensive it is to produce top quality premium wine. The best wine is made by hand, with human control."



### MASTERS OF WINE

By RICHARD YALLOP

THE WEEKEND AUSTRALIAN MAGAZINE

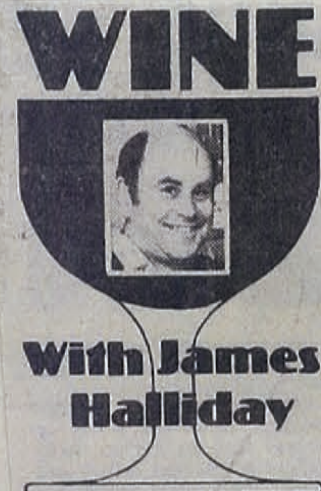
October 26-27 1985

## The Peninsula to celebrate its wares

VICTORIA'S Mornington Peninsula, Australia's newest wine region, undertakes its first district promotion on November 9. The 1985 Peninsula Wine and Food Fest will be held at the historic Briars Homestead, one of the oldest properties on the Peninsula.

A large marquee is to be erected in the ground, and a banquet featuring wine and food of the Peninsula will get underway at 7.30pm with the music of Bach, Mozart and others being played by the Peninsula-based Occasional Quartet.

I shall have more to say about Mornington Peninsula wines in an article in *The Australian* on November 9. For those who want to taste for themselves, tickets for the banquet, at \$30 each, are available by phoning Jenny Burroughs on (059) 839 506.



THE WEEKEND AUSTRALIAN MAG

## Classic Reds



## Hoping to hit the market a constantly moving target

IT seemed inevitable to me that Len Evans would preface his list in the way he has — and equally inevitable that, if locked in separate rooms, we would come up with a similar Top 10, so I delayed choosing my wines until I could read the master's pearls of wisdom.

Having done that, I find myself in agreement with everything Len has written about the impossibility of the task.

In recognition of that impossibility, I have deliberately come up with a different Top 10.

However, I would be more than happy to put my name to his selection and suspect he would be no less happy with mine.

For the wonderful thing about wine is that it is a constantly moving target. There are no absolutes and there is endless scope for animated debate.

In my selection, I have deliberately chosen some wines which have not yet been released. There is nothing worse than to be told of wines which have been released but which

By JAMES HALLIDAY

Yet, even in 1983, Hollick produced a most beautiful cabernet sauvignon, reflecting his great skills as a vigneron and demonstrating once again that great wine is made in the vineyard.

I have every confidence we will see a continuing series of outstanding Coonawarra cabernet sauvignons from this small winery.

From small we go to doll's house size with Merricks Estate Shiraz of 1984. This wine starts where the marvellous 1982 Knight's Shiraz leaves off, and flavours are almost overwhelming in their intensity, yet the Merricks wine, from the Mornington Peninsula in Victoria, is almost ethereal in its delicacy. A glorious wine which, however, will be appreciated by all too few, partly because it has been produced in such tiny quantities, but also because it is one of those wines which is so particular in its style that not all will enjoy it.



## First vineyard now the biggest

**THE first established vineyard on the Peninsula is now also the largest and planting of vines is still proceeding.**

*The Elgee Park vineyard of Mr S. Baillieu Myer is managed by Mr Hank Vandenharn.*

The winery at Merricks North started as a pilot plot of two acres in 1972, at a suggestion made by Geoff Wynne of the Wynne Estate.

Today 12 acres of the immaculate 800 acre estate are under vine to produce the cabernet sauvignon, merlot, cabernet franc, chardonnay, riesling and sauvignon blanc wines marketed by Elgee Park.

"Six thousand bottles were produced last year, and 8,000 are anticipated this year."

"We are building up to about 20,000."

"Already there has been a good response to the wine."

"The riesling, cabernet merlot and chardonnay have done well here."

"The new sauvignon blanc vines will take three years to produce a crop."

Mr Vandenharn, who has just returned from a trip to Bordeaux to study winemaking in France, said "the Mornington Peninsula could become the Bordeaux of Victoria."

"The weather is similar."

"The Peninsula has an almost ideal climate of maritime cool, and the low Ph factor of the soil produces fairly acid wines."

"Spring winds and birds are the problems."

Mr Vandenharn has also planted roses, Bordeaux style, throughout the vineyard.

Elgee Park wines, bottled from 1980-1983 by Ian Hickinbotham, are now produced on site at the state's spanking new winery.

The grapes pass through a 2500 litre wine

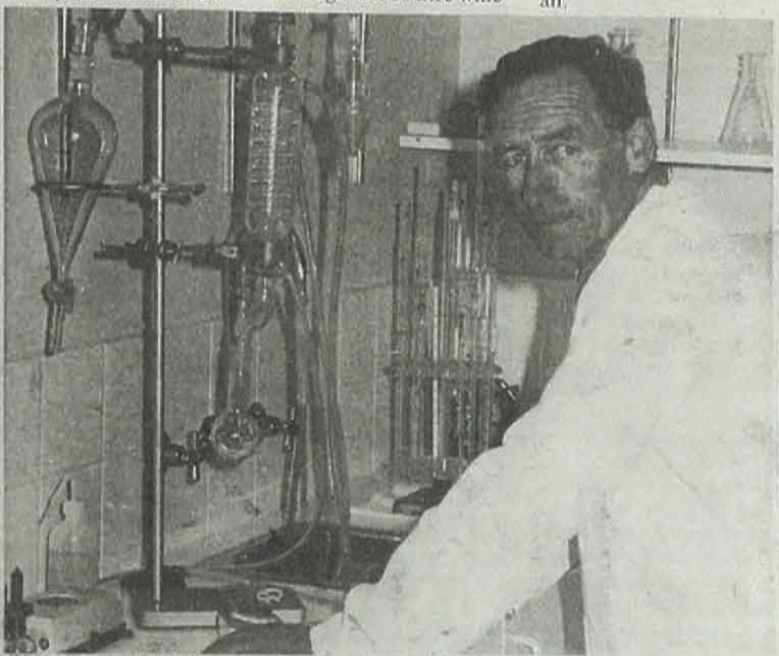
press prior to fermentation, "seven to 14 days for the reds, the whites anything up to two months."

"Cleanliness is the first priority in a winery."

Elgee Park wines are aimed as the local market, Melbourne and Sydney.

Three wines exhibited at the Seymour show last year collected gold, silver and bronze awards.

For orders or information contact the manager, Elgee Park Winery, Merricks North, phone 89 7338, 89 7278 ah.



• Manager Henk Vandenharn is pictured in the fully equipped laboratory of the new winery at Elgee Park estate.



## Wine fest popular

**THE first Peninsula Wine and Food Fest was held on Saturday, November 9.**

The St Paul's School Wine and Food Fest Committee organised the fest which was held with the Mornington Peninsula Vignerons Association.

Committee member Jenny Burrows said the fest was held as part of Mornington's Tea Tree Festival.

A wine festival was held at the historic Briars homestead in Mt Martha.

"We wanted to promote the Peninsula as an area of good food and good wine," said Jenny.

"The evening was highly successful."

Jenny said the evening catered for 310 people, but could have been double the size because of a heavy demand for tickets.

Well known wine and food connoisseur Ian Hickinbotham spoke at the wine festival.

Mornington Peninsula vignerons are uniting to sell their wines.

The wine growers bottles carry a seal saying "100 per cent Mornington Peninsula Wine".

Mornington Peninsula wine feature, pages 23-27.

NE 21

26th October 1985

## e spot with ing target



• Planting continues at Elgee Park estate.





• Stan Paul staples new vines to support wires at his Balnarring Vineyard.

## Balnarring Riesling 'wine of the night'

THE wine produced at Balnarring Estate is "too good to sell," according to owner Stan Paul.

*"The riesling was voted wine of the night at the recent festival."*

Mr Paul, a Hastings Shire councillor, stripped his orchard of apple trees and planted his first crop of vines in 1982.

"The first wine was made this year.

"The three varieties, riesling, gewurztraminer and pinot noir were made at Elgee Park under the Balnarring Vineyard label.

"The first crop last year produced 1000 bottles.

"We are still planting, and in five years will be producing 100,000 bottles."

Mr Paul said the traminer on the market was "not like a traminer".

"It is very floral and spicy.

"It was meant to be mixed with the riesling, but was too good on its own.

"With no history on the Peninsula of growing vines, I was loth to go into marketing.

"If I'd known it would be so successful, I would have accelerated planting.

"Growth is very soft at this time of year, and ultimately the plants will have to be nefted against birds.

"The fruit is tested regularly for sugar and acid content to ascertain the exact date of picking.

"This enables maximum flavor and maximum wine.

"The grapes are picked and put straight into a coolroom for a holding period of two-three days.

"The process of winemaking is very technical.

"We are right into the business of selling next year's wine, and have applied for a winery licence.

"The winery will be sited in the old shed, and the old vehicles, and equipment will add color to the atmosphere.



The Southern Peninsula Gazette, Wed., November 27, 1985



• Merricks wine grower George Kefford uses a bottler which is about 100 years old to put a cork in another bottle of his award winning wine.

## Gold medal from Merricks Estate

GEORGE Kefford, of the Merricks Estate, features a copy of a lithograph on his wine labels.

*The scene on Westernport Bay, was etched in 1826 by the French explorer de Sainson.*

George said seven and a half acres of the 100 acre property was "under grapes".

In 1983 the Keffords planted three and a half acres of Chardonnay, and expanded their range of wines further by planting one and a half acres of Cabernet in 1984.

Their initial planting in 1977 included Cabernet, Shiraz, Riesling and Pinot Noir.

George said wines grown on the Merricks Estate had already proved to be successful.

In the Victorian wine show at Seymour the Shiraz was awarded a gold medal and the Cabernet received a silver.

At the Yarra Valley Show the Cabernet received a gold medal and the Shiraz a silver medal.

His wines again received two gold medals and a silver medal recently at the Lilydale Wine Show.

George described the Shiraz as "much fuller and spicy".

His wife and three children assist in the wine making.

"I think we all get our boots into it.

"The little one, who is seven, helps put the corks in the bottles."

George said the family have been aiming to improve their viticultural techniques.

"We have to build up the viticulture and put some capital into the winery.

"To grow the wines you have to start off with good grapes.

"We can grow the grapes but we have to get our yields up."

George said the system of planting had been reduced from the original 12 by six ft rows sown to eight by five ft rows,



"Experimentation is underway with various methods of trellising to control the vigor of the vines and to obtain optimum quality and quantity."

Three tons of grapes were produced per acre last year, he said.

The Merricks Estate uses drip irrigation.

"Irrigation used to be a naughty word but it is now being used extensively in cool climate areas for growth control of plants.

"You don't have to pour it on - you have to fine tune."

George said the family was trying to use "modern techniques of viticulture and wine making".

"We have upset a few people by picking up a few medals.

"People have said 'where the hell is Merricks'."



The Southern Peninsula Gazette, Wed., November 27, 1985



• Gary Crittenden, of the Dromana Estate Vineyards in front of the stained glass window which is reproduced on the label of his wines.

The Southern Peninsula Gazette, Wed., November 27, 1985

## Fruity reds at Main Ridge

**NAT White, of the Main Ridge Estate, has six acres of his property under vines.**

*Cabernet, Pinot Noir, Chardonnay, Gewurztraminer and Pinot Meunier grape varieties are in production.*

Nat and his wife, Rosalie, with the assistance of Rosalie's father Gwyn Jones, a retired chemist, began establishing their vineyard in 1975.

Theirs was the first Peninsula wine available for sale.

Nat was formerly a civil engineer for 15 years.

"I became interested in drinking wines in the early 1960's.

"I travelled to Europe and saw various vineyards.

"I found the wines there to be very different from Australian wines."

Nat said he also "had a desire to have an outdoor life and do something of a rural nature".

He said the vineyard would grow about 10 ton of grapes a year.

"We don't use irrigation because we have these deep red soils and a high rainfall."

Nat said grass was grown between the rows

of vines to reduce the soil moisture.

Construction on the winery had begun in 1980 and would be completed next year, he said.

Nat said Gwyn Jones had been "assisting with the laboratory work".

"We check the grapes before harvest and test the wines during fermentation."

He is also nearing completion of a degree in wine science at the Riverina College in Wagga.

"I think it is essential to do a course like that."

Nat said the Main Ridge Estate was open "most Saturdays".

For information phone 89 2686.

He said his 1985 Pinot Noir was one of the best wines he had made.

"The Cabernet has won a gold medal three years out of four, and in the fourth year it won a silver."

Nat's Cabernet won a gold at a wine show in Seymour and a silver in Lilydale this year.

His Pinot Noir won bronze medals at each.

The fruity flavorsome wines of Main Ridge are popular and the Whites' biggest problem has been supply.

Orders come in from all over Victoria.



• Nat White, of the Main Ridge Estate, uses a "wine thief" to sample Pinot Noir ageing in oak casks.

## Cabernet tops at Dromana

**A COLORFUL stained glass window is the central design theme of the labels of Dromana Estate Vineyards.**

*The detailed design represents the fermenting of wines.*

"In this day and age anything you can do to have something to talk about when you are marketing is a great help," said Gary Crittenden, owner of the vineyard.

Gary said five acres of his 27-acre property was under grapes.

Four acres is trellised with Cabernet Sauvignon while the remainder is made up of Merlot, Chardonnay and Pinot Noir.

"We put these last two in really just to have a look at them."

"I think the area is suited for Cabernet."

Gary hopes to plant out another two acres.

"We have another five acres we can plant."

He said the ripening of the grapes was more gradual in the cool climate.

"The fruit ripens due to the accumulation of the sugar."

"The sugar content goes up while the acid declines."

"You tend to get a much more intense flavour in the wines."

"We believe they closely approximate wines in the premium French grape growing areas."

Gary said grapes were grown on the Southern Peninsula during the latter part of the last century.

Gary said he used irrigation to enhance the flavour of the wines.

"People argue that it dilutes the flavour. That's not true."

His interest in wines and grape growing has developed during the last 20 years.

"I guess I have been drinking wines since I was 18."

"I am fascinated with the grape growing side of it."

"I really get a lot of pleasure and find a lot of my expertise lies in growing grapes."

"This is a commercial venture."

Gary said the annual cost of production was "frightening".

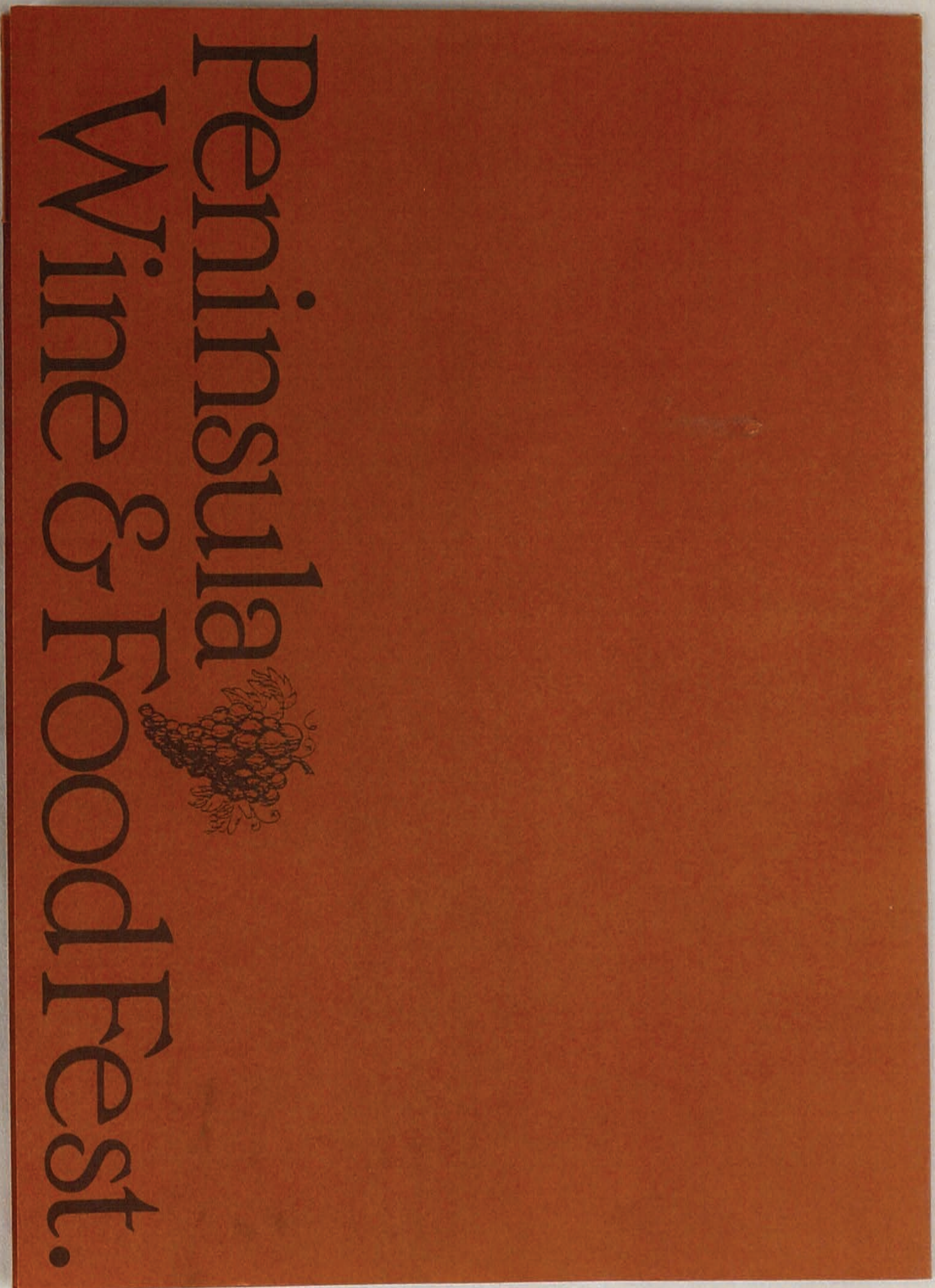
Gary's 1984 Cabernet Sauvignon has already proved to be successful after receiving a bronze medal at the Seymour Wine Show.

"The wines that we make this year are so much better again."

"They are much more rich and complex."

Gary said he would consider opening his vineyard to the public when he had built a winery.









Page 6—The Australian Grapegrower &amp; Winemaker

November 1985



• Members of the Mornington Peninsula Vignerons Association participating in the "Peninsula Wine and Food Fest" photographed at Main Ridge Estate. From left: Hank Vandenberg (Hillier Park Winery), Garry Crittenden (Dromana Estate Vineyards), George Kefford (Merricks Estate), Nat White (Main Ridge Estate), Brian Stonier (Stonier's Merricks Vineyard) and Stan Paul (Balnarring Vineyard).

## Mornington Peninsula winemen stage first big promotion

Mornington Peninsula winemakers staged their first big promotional venture — the 1985 Peninsula Wine & Food Fest at the historic Briars homestead on November 9.

The growers whose wines were presented at the Fest included Nat White, of Main Ridge Estate, George Kefford of Merricks Estate, Bruce

and Stan Paul of Balnarring Vineyard and Brian Stonier of Merricks Vineyard.

Presently 31 growers, all members of the Mornington Peninsula Vignerons Association, 9 of whom are producing commercially, look after 90 acres of vines planted to premium varieties such as Chardonnay, Rhine Riesling, Cabernet Sauvignon, Shiraz and Pinot Noir.

ANSETT FLIGHT MAGAZINE - FEB. 1986

# Wine tasting in the air

**Ansett's policy is to provide wines of quality and variety for their passengers' enjoyment, as Paddy Kendler reports**

## Wine tasting

CONT.

appreciation courses in Melbourne and has worked as a viticultural and winemaking consultant.

Given this family background it is no wonder that Ian and Judith's children should follow in their parents' footsteps. After graduating from Melbourne University, Stephen undertook post-graduate studies at Bordeaux and had some winemaking experience in France before returning to Australia in 1980.

By February, 1981, the family had taken over Tom Maltby's Anakie winery and vineyard, one of the more promising of the new wave of southern Victorian ventures. As winemaker he was quickly into stride with a succession of stunning table wines made according to modified European techniques which established him as both an individual and an innovator.

While Stephen and his parents were building the Anakie name, sister Jenny was completing a wine science

course at the Riverina CAE, returning during the holidays to begin a comprehensive grafting programme at the vineyard. Chardonnay and cabernet franc were grafted on to lesser varieties at the vineyard to enhance the range of quality grapes available for Stephen to work with.

And younger brother Andrew moved from La Trobe University to further studies in viticulture at Dijon University in Burgundy, probably the first Australian to have done so. Andrew is currently overseeing the development of eight new vineyards on the Mornington Peninsula south of Melbourne, a region which the family believes will produce some of the best wines Australia has ever seen.

In the light of this family background, the decision to retain the Hickinbothams as wine consultants seems something of a coup for Ansett. According to Stephen, "only reputable, bona fide winemakers, honest

labellers" are asked to submit samples for inclusion in the range.

His rapport with many winemakers throughout Australia enables him access to special batches of wine not otherwise available, as well as more familiar names. The Ansett plan is to offer at least one red and one white on every flight, with the wines changing every couple of weeks.

The Hickinbothams' brief is to provide not only quality control but also variety, and to this end more than 46 wine companies have been represented so far. Apart from established brands such as Seppelt, Yalumba and Quelltaler, smaller and newer wineries have been selected, among them Delatite, Balgownie, Hazelmere and Taltarni — not the sort of wines you will find on the discount circuit.

All wines come packaged in the handy 200 ml bottle, enough for two glasses with lunch or dinner and well priced at \$2. Using these bottles did



## Fare of the Country

Small Vineyards  
By the Barrel  
In Australia

By HAROLD C. SCHONBERG

**O**n the first night my wife and I were in Australia, we had dinner at the San Francisco Grill of the Sydney Hilton, and the wine list was proffered. There were, of course, French wines on it; one expected no less from an elegant, expense-account-oriented restaurant. But the majority of the entries were of Australian provenance.

Australian? We don't get much in the way of Australian wines in the United States. I had tasted Italian wines, Spanish wines, Portuguese wines, Austrian wines, German wines, Canadian wines, Chilean wines, Yugoslav wines, even Chinese wines. But never had an Australian wine passed my lips. So we ordered one of the more expensive ones at the equivalent of about \$18, a Tyrrell's cabernet merlot 1978, and were delighted. The wine was light, fruity, low in acid and quite different from the heavier, tannic cabernets of the Napa Valley.

That started us off. We began asking questions about Australian wines, tasting them at every opportunity, and quickly learned that the Australians are very proud of their vintners. And there are many vintners for a country with only 15 million inhabitants, although it is, of course, nearly as large in area as the United States. Most regions produce wines of one kind or another, and there is fierce partisanship about them.

Word got around about these two Yanks who were interested in tasting wines, and people rushed to help us. I was a judge at the Sydney International Piano Competition at the time, and for almost two weeks the jury was given a catered lunch at the Conservatorium of Music. Warren Thomson, coordinator of the competition, arranged for a different bottle of white and red wine to accompany every lunch that was catered for the

HAROLD C. SCHONBERG, the former senior music critic of *The New York Times*, is the author most recently of *"The Glorious Ones: Classical Music's Legendary Performers"* (Times Books).



Len Evans, an Australian wine expert, judging a competition, left; vineyards in the Barossa Valley north of Adelaide, above.

and taking pot luck. Had we felt so inclined, we could have taken one of the wine tours advertised in local newspapers and magazines.

In Melbourne Mr. John took us in hand. An outgoing young man who studies wine as avidly as Rudolf Serkin ever studied Beethoven, he was in the process of divesting himself of two liquor stores he owned and becoming the wine consultant for a restaurant named Mietta's. He took us to lunch there and outlined his plans for the following day's excursion.

**M**ietta's (7 Alfred Place; 654-2366) occupies a building that was formerly the Naval and Military Club, and a fine Victorian structure it is. Patrons walk up a grand staircase into several dining rooms filled with antique chairs, statues, sterling silverware and — thanks be — no music. The French-oriented menu, supervised by Jacques Reymond, the chef, contains such dishes as quail with its own nest of vegetables (\$8.50), printanière of veal with tarragon (\$12) and chicken breast en papillote (\$12.50). The wine list is stupendous, full of French, German and Australian classics. You can get a 1978 Romanée Conti for about \$250, or pay as little as \$10 for some Australian reds and whites.

During our stay in the Melbourne area, Mr. John showed us not the big wineries but several smaller operations in the Yarra Valley, which are generally not open to the public. Small they were, though one, the Yeringberg vineyard owned by the De Pury's, is situated

on a big spread. Guille De Pury, a microbiologist by training, and his wife, Katherine, have several thousand acres of rolling countryside populated mostly by cattle and sheep. Mr. De Pury restarted the family vineyard partly as a hobby, partly from a sense of duty; his forebears had an important vineyard on the property in the 1860's. We were especially impressed with the 1983 cabernet, which was big and full of promise.

Next on the agenda was the Wantirna Estate, run by Reg and Cristina Egan. A solicitor who no longer practices, he has been taken over by wine since his first vintage in 1969 on a few acres not far from Melbourne. He concentrates on chardonnay and pinot noir, producing only around 1,000 cases a year. The tasting was held in the garage. The wines were light and pleasant, and a fruity, velvety 1981 pinot noir was outstanding.

At Gary Crittenden's Dromana Estate, we tasted a lovely 1984 cabernet. Mr. Crittenden, by profession a horticulturist, is, like the De Pury's and the Egan's, a wine grower in it for love rather than money.

We asked Mr. John who, in his estimation, makes the best wines in Australia. He promptly rattled off some names. The Hunter Valley region, because of its warmer climate, is better for whites, he said, and named Tyrrell's and Rothbury as outstanding examples. For reds, he said, fine wines from the state of Victoria, where the Yarra Valley is located, include Anakie, Main Ridge and

Continued on Page 35



THE NEW YORK TIMES, SUNDAY, NOVEMBER 24, 1985

## Visiting Australian Vineyards

Continued From Page 6

Yeringberg, Bowen, a South Australian product, was recommended, as were the cabernets of Penfolds, which has several locations, and Morilla in Tasmania.

Despite the large number of vineyards in Australia, total production is not large, according to Mr. John. The E. & J. Gallo Winery alone in California makes more wine than all the Australian vineyards put together, he said.

"We have a different philosophy," he said. "We do not go in for the tannin and emphasis on big wines that Napa represents." The emphasis instead is on the subtle style of French wines.

Next we flew to Adelaide and rented a car for a trip to the Barossa Valley, about an hour's drive north — or, at least, an hour's drive for an Australian. For an American unused to right-hand drives and gearshifts, it can take longer.

It is a pleasant drive, with scenery that reminds one of England's Cotswolds. There also were constant reminders, on the road and in the vineyards' brochures, that wine tasting and driving do not go well together. It would be easy to get a bit tipsy while driving in the Australian wine districts. One can stop at any chateau and have a tasting. You won't sample the vintage reserves this way, but it is possible to get a very good idea of what a vineyard represents.

At Penfolds the counter was thronged with happy young travelers sampling everything in sight. We purchased a bottle not available for tasting, a 1980 cabernet from Bin 707. It cost about \$9, which made it one of the

Each of some 30 districts  
has its own soil and climate

Most Australian wines run between \$3 and \$4 a bottle locally. We tasted the cabernet a few days later back in Sydney, and it was a subtle, well-made, delicious wine.

At the Yalumba Estate in Barossa, six generations of Smiths have been running the winery since the first plantings of 1849, and it remains one of Australia's biggest family vineyards. Barossa, said Mark Smith, the proprietor, was first settled by Germans, and the emphasis is on dessert wines and rieslings. Many Barossa reds, however, have won awards.

**M**r. Smith said that delegations of European vintners visit his vineyard every year. Their reactions amuse him.

"The Germans, who specialize in whites, invariably say that our whites are so-so but that the reds are fine," he said. "The French say that our reds are so-so but our whites are fine. The Portuguese say everything is fine except our port."

We sampled a bottle of the 1976 cabernet shiraz and it was spectacular, rich and complex. American vintners seldom mix shiraz (called petite sirah in California and syrah in France) with the cabernet grape, but it is a commonplace in Australia.

Mr. Smith would like to introduce

sons was on the West Coast at the time assessing the territory. One of the problems about Yalumba, Mr. Smith said, is its unusual name. (Like so many Australian place names, it is derived from the aboriginal.) So Yalumba wines will be sold in the United States under a Smith-Hill label.

The best place to taste Australian wines, however, may be on their own turf. For enophiles, Australia is a sort of terra incognita that will send them away with happy memories. The wine regions are lovely and uncrowded by tourists. Accommodations in motels, we found, are quite satisfactory; often breakfast is included, and the owners are invariably courteous.

Some pubs in wine districts serve wonderful, hearty food. In the Hunter Valley an unforgettable lunch at one pub called Blaxlands, on Borke Road in Pokolbin, featured a venison pie, served piping hot by the proprietors, Chris and Linda Barnes. It might have evoked a century of sonnets from Shakespeare, and the recipe, for all we know, could well stem from Shakespeare's day.

Also in the Hunter Valley, about 100 miles north of Sydney, we met Len Evans, who is probably the best-known Australian writer on food and wine and an extroverted man who is constantly on the go all over the world. He talked with us about Aus-

tralian wines!

"We use traditional grapes," he said, "but there's a bewildering range of quality because we have so many districts, around 30, each with its own soils, climates, chemistry and so forth. Wine growing can be so unpredictable. Even in a single field there may be a patch that is no good, where a few feet away the vines flourish. In Hunter the vintage occurs in late January, but in Coonawarra in May."

"All of the wine areas produce a great deal of chardonnay. On the other hand, rieslings do not turn out too well in the Hunter." Mr. Evans called Hunter "the Burgundy of Australia," producing wines that are soft, fruity, lightish and low in acid. Coonawarra, southeast of Adelaide, he compared to Bordeaux.

"Some of our producers are starting to get their wines to America," Mr. Evans added. "Our wines are different from Napa's. Napa Valley makes a plummy cabernet, although in recent years their wines have been getting lighter and more elegant."

"Our pinots are generally better than the California pinots. So is our riesling. The semillons from Hunter rank among the best in the world. For some reason the United States produces very little semillon."

Mr. Evans was asked how he rated the best Australian wines against the best French. He chose his words very carefully.

"Dylan Thomas was once asked where he ranked himself as a poet. He said that he was not a great one, but the best of the second-rank poets. Australian wines as yet cannot come up to the greatest French vintages, but below that category they are the best of the second rank and will hold their own with wine anywhere."



MIETTA'S <sup>th</sup> 19 APRIL 1986

JULY 1986: 'The Mornington Peninsula' & 'The Grand Sauternes Dinner'

In the beginning of July we are back in Australia 150 Kilometres South of the Yarra Valley in the middle of the Mornington Peninsula.

The where?

Well for those of you don't know the Mornington Peninsula is going to one of our major quality wine producing areas. It's time you caught up with developments down there.

One familiar wine name with faith in the area is Hickinbotham. They have been making the wine at Brian Stonier's Merricks Vineyard for some time and they are looking at establishing stronger ties with the Mornington Peninsula.

These vineyards were planted over the last decade and the owners are as diverse as the Baillieu Myer's (Elgee Park), Brian Stonier, Managing Director of McMillan's the publishers (Stonier's Merrick's Vineyard), horticulturist Gary Crittenden (Dromana Estate), Nat White (Main Ridge) was an engineer and the Keffords at Merricks Estate are lawyers.

As with all new areas there is considerable experimentation with grape varieties and wine styles. The three Chardonnays show this. The Main Ridge wine has delicate wood treatment, the Elgee Park Chardonnay on the other hand was fermented in oak and displays strong wood characteristics while the Dromana Estate wine underwent a full malolactic fermentation, a rare thing in Australia but mandatory in France.

This dinner will give you an insight into the birth of a new and promising cool climate wine growing area. Something to look back on and tell the grandchildren.

The complete list of wines follows on the next page.

MORNINGTON PENINSULA DINNER  
7pm Wednesday 2nd July 1986

1985 Main Ridge Chardonnay  
1985 Dromana Estate Chardonnay  
1985 Elgee Park Chardonnay  
1985 Dromana Estate Pinot Noir  
1984 Merricks Estate Shiraz  
1985 Main Ridge Cab Sav  
1984 Merricks Estate Cab Sav  
1985 Stonier's Merricks Vineyard  
Cabernet Sauvignon

The Cost of the  
Mornington Peninsula Dinner  
is \$65.00 per person.

THE GREAT SAUTERNES DINNER  
7pm Wednesday 16th July, 1986

1970 Château Guiraud  
1970 Château Lafaurie-Peyraguey  
1970 Château Coutet  
1971 Château Y'Quem  
1970 Château Y'Quem  
1967 Château Y'Quem  
1945 Château Doisy-Daëne  
1943 Château Doisy-Daëne  
1942 Château Doisy-Daëne  
1970 Château Climens

Cost of 'The Grand Sauternes Dinner'  
is \$240.00 per person.

Following all this in the spring we will be providing a fantastic Krug Champagne Dinner, which will include Krug Rosé, Clos de Mesnil and some historic Krug vintages. There will also be a Tasmanian Dinner, a look at the fabulous 1983 German Rieslings and a series of Bordeaux Dinners covering all the major communes. Details of these will follow in our next letter.

406 Park St.,  
Sth. Melb. **VICTORIAN WINE CENTRE** 699 6082

**NEW RELEASES**  
Best's Great Western 1984 Chardonnay \$11.00  
Best's best Chardonnay released to date! Special price this week only!  
Dromana Estate 1984 Cabernet Sauvignon \$11.25  
Main Ridge 1984 Cabernet Sauvignon \$11.30  
EXCELLENT PENINSULA WINES — VERY LIMITED  
OPEN ALL DAY SATURDAY



## Epicure 4

## Tasters full of praise for Mornington reds

THIS week's tasting of wines from the Mornington Peninsula was held at the winery of Garry Crittenden (no relation to the retailer) at Dromana.

Three reds and three whites were tasted blind and the tasters had the panel searching for superlatives.

Crittenden, 43, and his wife Margaret started Dromana Estate on 25 acres in Harrison's Road about four years ago and, until now, have sold their fruit, mainly cabernet, chardonnay and pinot, to the Main Ridge Estate situated farther along the peninsula between Red Hill and Flinders.

They started picking this year's vintage last Sunday and will make their own wine, with the assistance of Tony Jordan of Oenotech, in a recently converted farm machinery shed.

Four years is not usually long enough for a vineyard to become established, but on the Mornington Peninsula it is a good start. Wine making in the area has a short history, which Crittenden tells in about two minutes.

"The present plantings began in the early 1970s when Baillieu Myer, at the suggestion of David Wynn, planted a small experimental vineyard. He has gradually progressed to the point where he has about 10 acres under cultivation. Apart from a few backyard enthusiasts and hobby farmers, he was followed by Nat White at Main Ridge Estate. He planted in the mid '70s and has about six acres in.

"Then came Brian Stonier, the managing director of the Macmillan publishing company, who now has 16 acres and is the biggest vineyard. George Kefford, a Melbourne solicitor, has eight acres over on the Western Port Bay side quite close to Brian Stonier, and Stan Paul has about 10 acres. Along with our five acres, that is about the lot on the peninsula.

"There were not any plantings here in the old days, unlike the Yarra Valley and Geelong. Vines were not planted until the 1950s.

"A couple of hundred yards up the road from here one of the Seppelts family, who had a holiday house at Mount Martha, bought about 100 acres and put in a three-acre vineyard. He must have got bored with going to the beach. He sold it in the mid-'50s, before taking any fruit off, to a brother-in-law of Doug Seabrook.

"Seabrook, for some years until the early 1960s, used to take the fruit home to Ivanhoe and make wine there. That, I suppose, was the beginning of the industry here. Unfortunately, in the 1967 bushfires, the vineyard was burnt out. It was only the current resurgence with Baillieu Myer, Nat White and the others that we got back into planting vines."

Although a horticulturalist, something reflected in the professionally laid out and beautifully maintained vineyard, Crittenden says his first love is wine.

"I have some theories and beliefs about how a vineyard should be cultivated and managed. They are very much unproved, but we'll work on them and hope for the best. I don't believe there is any money to be made in wine making. It is a sad fact but we'll keep going just for the enjoyment."

The wines:

## No. 1

Anne Taylor: This had a flowery bouquet which was a little dull but not unpleasant.

Garry Crittenden: Clean, fresh and clearly identifiable as rhine riesling. Very delicate flavors, very good wine.

Ken John: Clean, quite well made rhine riesling with a very good, clean, dry finish which set it apart from the normal rhines seen.

Steve Goodwin: Very pale, very understated rhine character. It was very young with yeasty overtones. Quite nice but lacking a bit of flavor. It also seemed to have a high SO<sub>2</sub> (sulphur dioxide) level which was probably added before bottling and possibly bleached the color a



## On Our Selection

'On Our Selection' is a regular feature of 'Epicure'. The panel is Steve Goodwin, a wine chemist and judge at the Melbourne Show; Ken John, a Melbourne wine merchant, and Anne Taylor who has worked in the wine trade in Britain and South Africa. The column is compiled by staff journalist BRENDAN MOLONEY. Wines are bought at normal retail outlets. Because of this the prices shown may vary slightly.

BELOW: Garry and Margaret Crittenden at their winery, Dromana Estate.



little, because it is very pale, and flattened the flavor. The SO<sub>2</sub> is added as a preservative and an anti-oxidant. After some time in the bottle perhaps the flavor level will come up and improve.

## No. 2

GC: This is clearly a chardonnay with good color and from the oak evident on the nose it seems it was barrel fermented. At the moment the oak is a bit strong, but this will improve with time. Very intense, lingering chardonnay flavor, long acid finish. A good wine, representative of what can be made in the area.

KJ: Compared to the first wine, the color is more intense and this is due to the wood effect. The nose is a nice mix of fruit and wood. The wood was a bit strong on the palate, but this should improve with time. The good thing about it was the strong acid finish that held everything together. In two or three years it will be a fine wine.

SG: Good color, good fruit, good wood with good balance between the fruit and the wood. With some bottle age it should be quite a nice wine. The finish has a

good acid which is aggressive at the moment.

AT: Good, deep, clean color and a dry, rather vegetative bouquet. Palate was also dry with quite a bit of acidity which masked some rather interesting fruit flavors. These should develop nicely in the next few years.

## No. 3

KJ: Very strong, complex nose that seems fairly developed. Good vinous flavor in the mouth which was quite soft with good acid length. The wine is quite young, so all these characteristics are unusual and suggest a different wine-making technique which has been used to advantage.

SG: Quite a complex nose. It is not dirty but it has some slight sulphide character. I didn't notice any strong varietal characters. The palate was nicely balanced with good acidity. A bit coarse but a pleasant wine with no real faults.

AT: A little cloudy with a sweet, heavy, honey bouquet. Pleasant, if a little flat, and no real varietal flavors.

GC: This is my wine. It interests me to

hear people say there are no varietal flavors. In some ways I see this as a compliment to the wine because it has had by design, and with some difficulties, a full malolactic fermentation. This was induced in the wine at my suggestion by Nat White, the wine maker. It made quite a difference to the wine. Prior to the malolactic it was intensely peachy in character and very identifiable as chardonnay. After the malolactic, and with subsequent development and a little oak treatment, it is really quite a different wine. It has far more complex characters, having gone away from that simple, intense fruit, chardonnay style.

Perhaps I shouldn't comment too much on my own wine, except to say that it is without blemish. I like the style. There aren't too many Australian chardonnays that have a malolactic that is full and successful. Maybe this is an indication of what will happen to wines from cooler areas if they have a malolactic induced.

## No. 4

SG: This is absolutely super wine. Great nose with really clean, intense cabernet characters and some nice wood. A very fine nose without being overpowering. The palate is beautifully balanced with nice soft tannin and a lot of acidity. The flavor just keeps going. A really excellent cabernet.

AT: Good, purple color and a very stalky, green bouquet. Very young and very raw at the moment. Needs bottle development and should soften nicely in a year or so.

GC: This is one of the best examples of cabernet we have seen on the peninsula. To me it is redolent of cherries — it has an intense cherry aroma and lovely long, lingering flavors. Just a first-class cabernet.

KJ: I think this is a marvellous wine. Excellent nose that is really elegant with a good mixture of cool climate cabernet fruit and well-handled wood. Those same characters come through on the palate. It is in the Bordeaux style and I would rather this to a lot of Bordeaux wines I have sampled.

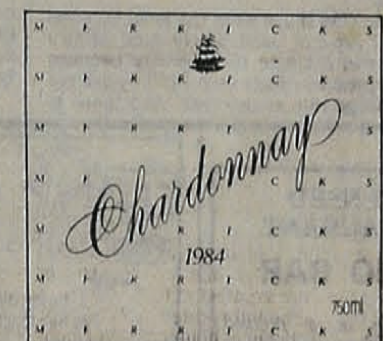
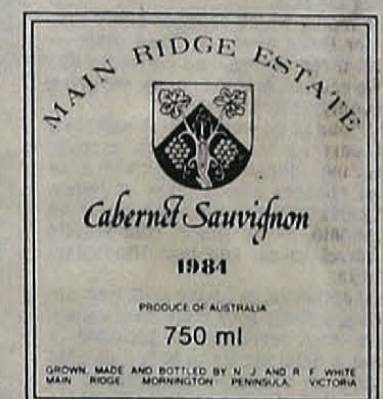
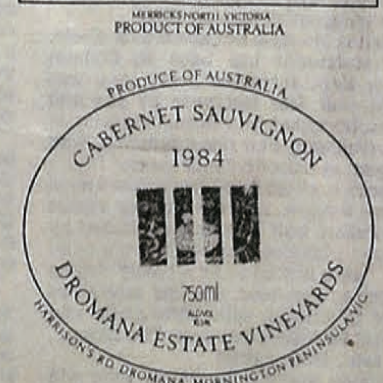
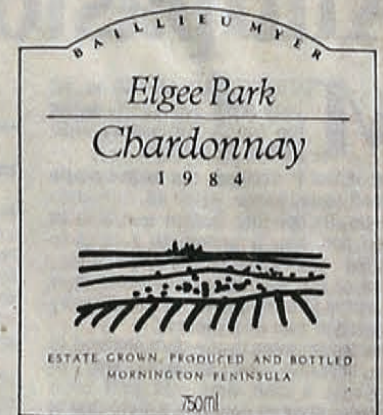
## No. 5

AT: Deep, purple color with a tinge of black and a very spicy, peppery nose which shouts that it is shiraz. The palate was fresh and quite light. Ready for quaffing now.

GC: There are some people who believe that the peninsula is one of the greatest areas in Australia for growing shiraz. This has all those intense, peppery, spicy flavors in the mouth. Good body and a really lovely wine. I don't agree that it is ready for drinking now. It needs just a little bottle age to soften it slightly. I find the acid marginally too high at present.

KJ: It has the dusty, varietal shiraz nose showing rich fruit. There is pepper evident on both the nose and palate. It is

Continued Epicure 5





## Tasters full of praise

from Epicure 4

similar to the great hermitage wines of the Rhone, stylish with a strong acid finish. A little bit of bottle age will sort it out. A really great wine.

**SG:** Shiraz as a variety has been much maligned and under-rated in Australia in the past 10 or 15 years. This wine shows what can be done. It reminds me of the great wines from the northern Rhone. It has a fabulous color, peppery nose, lovely body and is full of incredible flavor. If anything, it is better than the cabernet we have just seen, although that is not taking anything away from the cabernet. They are both great wines and two of the best I have seen for a long time.

In the last tasting session (11/3) we did six French wines from the Rhone Valley. All of them were excellent wines. This shiraz would stand up to any of the Rhones we tasted.

### No. 6

**GC:** This is a very stylish cabernet which is showing a little more age than the previous two reds. It is very elegant, lighter in body and flavor. Very

harmonious, fresh, lingering. Just a first-class cabernet.

**KJ:** Marvellous wine which for the next six months will be drinking at its best. It has the strong, cherry and cherry kernel characters which I enjoy enormously.

**SG:** A beautiful, light wine both in color and texture. Good balance and lovely cabernet varietal characters. Very elegant and lovely drinking.

**AT:** Very good, rather pretty color with soft cedar bouquet. Lots of tannin at the moment, but it is softening. Lots of almond flavor, good length of finish. A wine with some finesse.

### The wines

1 — 1985 Bannering Vineyard riesling (not yet released, inquiries to the vineyard).

2 — 1984 Elgee Park chardonnay, \$12.50 at cellar door.

3 — 1985 Dromana Estate chardonnay, \$11.50 from Main Ridge Estate.

4 — 1984 Main Ridge Estate cabernet sauvignon, \$12.

5 — 1984 Merricks Estate shiraz, \$10.

6 — Stonier's Merricks cabernet sauvignon, \$12.



**Wine**

PETER MITCHELL

## Tasty answer to age old problem

**McWILLIAMS**, a long established Hunter Valley wine company, has just released a 1979 semillon.

They should be congratulated by the consumer for providing this service as it is a very costly practice to age wine before releasing it

in the market place, and the accountants in most wine companies are very conscious of getting an immediate return on their investment.

Winedrinkers should also be thankful to McWilliams, for young semillons don't display the true nature of the variety in the first few years of their life, when they tend to be boring, straightforward wines.

After a few years' bottle age, semillons, like the ugly duckling, blossom into something quite different. The honeyed, nutty flavors start to develop, providing the rich complexity which makes aged semillons most appealing wines.

The McWilliams 1979 semillon has all the flavors that a great aged semillon should have and at the price of \$12.95 a bottle, it is outstanding value for a wine of this quality and age.

**MERRICK'S** Estate vineyard on the Mornington Peninsula, not to be confused with the neighboring Brian

Stonier's Merrick's vineyard, has just released their first vintage.

The two wines, a 1984 Shiraz and a 1984 cabernet sauvignon are certainly impressive wines and can only enhance the Mornington Peninsula's reputation as Australia's most exciting new cool climate wine area.

Both wines have had very successful showings at two of Victoria's leading country wine shows. The shiraz won a gold medal at the Victorian Wine Show at Seymour and the shiraz and the cabernet each won a gold medal at the Lilydale Wine Show.

Both wines are only available at specialist wine merchants.

When winemaker/manager of Taltarni, Dominique Portet first released the wines of Taltarni seven years ago they were among the higher priced current release wines on the market. Over the years as the size of the vineyard has grown and production has increased he has, due to the economies of scale, maintained a realistic pricing

structure.

The 1983 cabernet will retail for approximately \$9, and the 1983 shiraz for \$8. Both wines are in the big rich powerful Taltarni style, and are due for release next week.

**WIN  
SOUTHERN  
COOLER  
4 PACKS  
p. 21**

Melbourne Winners 24 March — Page 11

## Rose vine crop is just for the birds

**A**MATEUR wine grower Neil Lobley could have spit chips when the birds stripped his backyard vineyard at Sorrento.

Friends had gone into the city to buy protective netting for him because the fruit was ripening. When they returned the vines were bare.

Not wanting to disappoint his guests at a spit roast the following Saturday, he popped down to the greengrocers and bought a few bunches of grapes which were tied to the vines.

His helpers goofed. Could not tell their merlot from their emeraldas and in their enthusiasm tied grapes on to rose trees at the end of rows.

They also put up a notice informing all birds that no grapes were left and that the nearest vineyard was 25 km to the east as the blackbird flies.

The last I heard was that lawyer Brian Kewley was hiding among his vines at Flinders keeping a sharp lookout for birds which could read.

### Just desserts

Eric Page

**A**N East Melbourne restaurant is hardly playing its part in helping reduce the road toll.

One of a party dining there had elected to stay off the booze and drive the others home.

The waiters were quick to refill all the grog glasses, but her request for some water fell on cloth ears.

That party won't be going back.

**I**WOULD not have believed there are so many Dagwoods among us.

You should see some of the amazing ingredients entered for the Herald-Vogel sandwich competition!

One reader in Burnmyong got so excited in telling us about

his great sandwich idea that he forgot to put the recipe inside the envelope.

Probably became too hungry while writing it out and had to break off to make a sanger. Hope the piece of paper was not swept between the slices of bread by mistake.

He still has time to write it out again because entries don't close until next Tuesday.

**A**FRIEND brought along a dusty old bottle of wine to meal we had together at the Bay Brasserie at Hampton.

It carried the sort of wine merchant's label which hardly inspires confidence at the best of times and so expectations were not high for the quality of its contents.

Vintaged in 1964 and bottled three years later, the wine was a special put out for good customers of Connell's, who were once liquor distributors in City Rd., South Melbourne.

It was a cabernet sauvignon-shiraz blend and carried the description of SV Bin 19, Vat No. 7.

The waiter handled it with care.

While decanting he held the bottle against a candle to make sure no sediment slipped past the neck.

Strangely there was neither crust nor deposit and the wine poured clear.

It drank exceptionally well for a 22-year-old of indeterminate ancestry. Soft as a McLaren Vale red with just a little tannin to help it along.

Wine merchant Dan Murphy remembers Connell's as an old-fashioned firm selling wine and spirits from the turn of the century until about 1966.

"In the early days we used to buy hogsheads through them for putting into flagons," he said. "I believe their licence was eventually sold to one of the chain stores."

Gone but not entirely forgotten.

**A**NYONE reading the discount ads can't fail to have noticed the Leasingham Bin 5 Rhine Riesling going out for \$1.95 a bottle. Some of their

chablis is the same price.

These are bargains even for cask drinkers.

It is something of a marketing exercise (a bit hush-hush at the moment), so get in while it's on at Liquorland and Safeway.

**W**INE Press Club president Jeni Port has just shed a lot of weight. She is now the mother of a little bottler called Michael Thomas.

At 9lb. 2oz., we can only say, well done, Tawny.

**J**UST a reminder to restaurant owners who feel worthy of a tourism award.

The closing date for entries is April 30 and forms are available from the Victorian Tourism Commission, World Trade Centre, Flinders St.

**B**EST coffee of the week: From the Fifty-One Coffee Shop in the Great Space, Collins St.

Peter always remembers to hold the froth and the chocolate dust!



// JAMES HALLIDAY'S 1986  
AUSTRALIAN WINE GUIDE VICTORIA

## Mornington Peninsula

### 1985 Vintage

As with Macedon, wind and rain in late spring, and hence during flowering, are a major viticultural problem in the region, and they significantly reduced the 1985 harvest. An abnormally dry (and very cool) summer further reduced yields, although quality at no stage looked in doubt.

Vintage commenced in mid-April and continued, on and off, in very cool and showery weather. Apart from minor outbreaks of botrytis in rhine riesling, all of the grapes were harvested in very good condition.

White wines are uniformly regarded as outstanding, and potentially the best in the last five years. The red wines, like the whites, show outstanding varietal character; a few vigneronns still believe the '84s could prove superior, but most favour this vintage. Certainly it is an outstanding year.

### The Changes

There are still only five vineyards offering wine for sale on a commercial basis, with a sixth (Balnarring) due to come on stream in 1986. However, there are numerous plantings scattered throughout the district which will come into bearing over the next few years. Some of these enterprises inevitably will result in wineries; others will be content to sell their grapes for the undoubtedly high prices which the premium fruit of the region will command.

If adequate means can be found to protect its vineyards from wind-effect, Mornington looks certain to become an important quality-winegrowing area. Its proximity to the market of Melbourne must inevitably help this endeavour.

## MORNINGTON PENINSULA

### MERRICKS ESTATE

p. 199

#### Location:

Thompsons Lane, Merricks, 3916;  
(near Balnarring).  
(059) 89 8416.

#### Winemaker:

George Kefford.

#### 1985 Production:

150 cases.

#### Principal Wines:

Given tiny production, a wide range including Chardonnay, Rhine Riesling, Pinot Noir, Shiraz and Cabernet Sauvignon.

#### Distribution:

Principally mailing-list and cellar-door sales; cellar-door sales weekends by appointment; telephone first. Limited restaurant distribution.

#### Prices:

\$9.50 cellar door.

#### Overall Quality:

Very good; Shiraz exhilarating.

#### Vintage Rating 1983-85:

White: '85, '84, '83.

Red: '84, '85, '83.

#### Tasting Notes:



#### 1984 RHINE RIESLING [16.8]

Colour: light to medium yellow-green. Bouquet: a surprisingly full and broad wine with quite rich lime characters and just a touch of caramel, possibly due to oxidation. Palate: abundant flavour, again surprisingly rich for a very cool year. Clean fermentation characters, although again there is a trace of the oxidation

evident in the bouquet. Nonetheless, an impressive small winery white wine. Drink '86-'89.

1984 SHIRAZ [19] Colour: full, deep, purple-red. Bouquet: magnificently perfumed aromatic pepper spice varietal fruit, intense and lingering. Palate: outstanding, lively peppery/spice flavours, which literally dance in the mouth; of medium to full weight overall, and with a long finish. A superb Australian shiraz. Drink '86-'93.

1984 CABERNET SAUVIGNON [17.6] Colour: medium full purple-red. Bouquet: intense grassy/herbaceous aromas, slightly dusty. Palate: strong herbaceous/pepper/cigar flavours; clearly articulated varietal characters; overall of medium weight and soft tannin finish. A very good wine by any standards. Drink '87-'91.





## MORNINGTON PENINSULA

DROMANA ESTATE VINEYARDS

p. 197

*Location:*

Cnr Harrisons Road and Bittern Dromana Road,  
Dromana, 3936;  
3 km inland from Dromana.  
(059) 87 3275.

*Winemaker:*

Nat White (contract).

*1985 Production:*

Approximately 530 cases.

*Principal Wines:*

Chardonnay, Pinot Noir and Cabernet Sauvignon,  
all of which are made at Main Ridge Estate by Nat  
White.

*Distribution:*

Simply by mailing list, with limited fine wine retail  
and restaurant distribution. All wines sold through  
Main Ridge Estate under its vigneron's licence;  
mailing-list enquiries, however, to Dromana Estate  
Vineyards, PO Box 332, Mornington, 3931.

*Prices:*

\$9.50 per bottle mailing list.

*Overall Quality:*

Good to very good.

*Vintage Rating 1984-85:*

'85, '84.

*Tasting Notes:**1984 CABERNET SAUVIGNON [17]*

*Colour:* medium purple-red. *Bouquet:*  
intense cool climate, herbaceous/green  
capsicum aroma; spotlessly clean;  
reminiscent of some Tasmanian caber-  
nets, but with a little more weight.

*Palate:* light to medium weight, crystal-  
clear fruit flavours, with just a trace of tannin and marked,  
crisp acid on the finish. Simply lacks mid-palate flesh.  
Drink '87-'90.

ELGEE PARK

pp. 197-8

*Location:*

Wallaces Road, Merricks North, 3926.  
(059) 89 7338.

*Winemakers:*

Oenotec Pty Limited (consultant);  
Henk Vandenham (manager).

*1985 Production:*

600 cases.

*Principal Wines:*

Rhine Riesling, Chardonnay and Cabernet Sauvignon  
(the latter with cabernet franc and merlot in the  
blend).

*Distribution:*

Exclusively through mailing list. Postal address:  
Junction Road, Merricks North, 3926. No cellar-  
door sales.

*Prices:*

\$8.50 to \$12.50.

*Overall Quality:*

Very good.

*Vintage Rating 1982-85:*

White: '85, '84, '83, '82.

Red: '84, '85, '83, '82.

*Outstanding Prior Vintages:*

'80.

*Tasting Notes:*

*1985 RHINE RIESLING [18]* *Colour:* bright green-  
yellow. *Bouquet:* brilliantly clean, gently aromatic/floral  
riesling aroma without extraneous flavours. *Palate:* crisp  
and very clean, with excellent mid-palate weight and  
varietal definition; long, crisp finish again dominated by  
fruit, and without phenolics. Drink '86-'89.

*1984 CHARDONNAY [17.8]*

*Colour:* bright, light to medium yellow with  
just a touch of oak-derived straw. *Bouquet:* oak still to integrate fully,  
although it will undoubtedly do so as  
it is smooth rather than raw; good  
fruit-weight, with aromas in grapefruit  
spectrum. *Palate:* a stylish wine which

needs time; very good acid to "cool" fruit flavours and  
fairly firm oak. Drink '87-'90.

*1983 CABERNET SAUVIGNON [17.6]* *Colour:* vibrant  
crimson-purple of medium depth. *Bouquet:* clean, light  
cherry/berry aromas. *Palate:* most attractive, fresh cherry  
fruit with a touch of spice and very low tannin; good  
length even though, in typical regional style, the wine is  
only of light to medium body. Drink '87-'91.

93



## VICTORIA

### MAIN RIDGE ESTATE

p. 198

**Location:**

Lot 48, William Road, Red Hill, 3937;  
(Melway Map 190 C4).  
190 C4).  
(059) 89 2686.

**Winemaker:**

Nat White.

**1985 Production:**

225 cases.

**Principal Wines:**

An eclectic, if not esoteric, range of varietal table wines including Pinot Meunier, Gewurtztraminer, Chardonnay, Pinot Noir and Cabernet Sauvignon.

**Distribution:**

Mailing-list enquiries to PO Box 40, Red Hill South, 3937. Limited restaurant and fine wine retail distribution, chiefly in Melbourne.

**Prices:**

\$8 to \$12 recommended retail (mailing list \$6.50 to \$8.50).

**Overall Quality:**

Consistently very good, with high probability of some exceptional wines from time to time.

**Vintage Rating 1982-85:**

White: '85, '83, '82, '84.

Red: '85, '84, '83, '82.

**Outstanding Prior Vintages:**

'80.

**Tasting Notes:**

1984 GEWURTZTRAMINER [17] *Colour:* yellow with a few orange tints. *Bouquet:* soft lychee/pastille aromas; clean, with good fruit-weight, and not oily. *Palate:* round, soft and gently fruity; low tannin and good overall varietal character. Drink '86-'87.

1984 CHARDONNAY [17.6] *Colour:* bright light to medium yellow, with a few straw tinges. *Bouquet:* quite firm fruit-backed by spicy oak and a trace of volatile lift. *Palate:* very well-handled, spicy-clove oak is the initial impression; good mouth-feel and weight on the mid-palate, with a long, soft finish. Has fruit intensity, and again, very well-made. Drink '86-'89.



1984 PINOT MEUNIER [18] *Colour:* very light tawny-red. *Bouquet:* extremely light, but extraordinarily fragrant, sappy pinot and spicy oak aromas intermingling; very striking. *Palate:* similarly fragrant and fresh; light, but lively spicy/sappy fruit and oak flavours. To be drunk while the vibrant life is present. Drink '85-'86.

1983 PINOT NOIR [17.8] *Colour:* medium red, with a touch of purple. *Bouquet:* clean; of medium weight with some sweet strawberry fruit. *Palate:* follows on logically from the bouquet, with similar rich and sweet strawberry fruit flavours in a ripe pinot noir style; excellent weight and flavour, and very clear varietal definition. Drink '85-'89.

## MERRICKS

pp. 198-9

**Location:**

62 Thompsons Lane, Merricks, 3916;  
(near Balnarring).  
(059) 89 8352.

**Winemaker:**

Hickinbotham Winemakers (contract).

**1985 Production:**

150 cases.

**Principal Wines:**



Chardonnay and Cabernet Sauvignon. Principally through Gatehouse Cellars, Melbourne; for mailing-list enquiries, apply to Merricks Winery, 62 Thompsons Lane, Merricks.

**Prices:**

\$12 recommended retail.

**Overall Quality:**

On evidence of '84 Cabernet Sauvignon, exceptional.

**Vintage Rating 1982-85:**

White: '85, '83, '84, '82.

Red: '84, '85, '83, '82.

**Tasting Notes:**

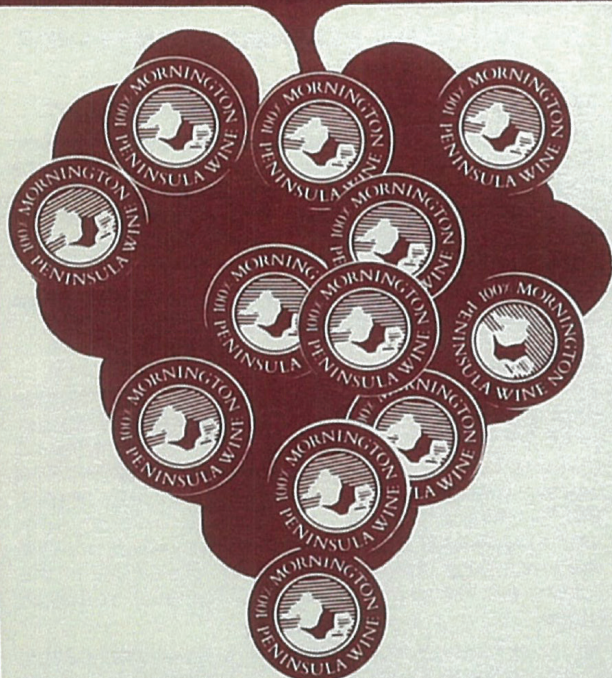
1984 CABERNET SAUVIGNON [18.4] *Colour:* vibrant cherry-purple. *Bouquet:* intense and highly aromatic berry/herbaceous fruit, fresh and clean. *Palate:* similar intense, fresh, capsicum/berry fruit flavours; good mid-palate flavours; crisp, low tannin finish. Drink '87-'92.





CRITTENDEN ESTATE®

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## THE MORNINGTON PENINSULA VINEYARDS

victoria

Mornington Peninsula vineyards are scattered around the rolling hills of the southern Peninsula region. The vines flourish in a cool, mild maritime climate, and produce fruit with intense varietal flavour.

Fine table wines are produced from quality grapes of the classic varieties. Estate wines are produced solely from grapes grown on the individual vineyards.

SYDNEY MORNING HERALD 17 June 1986

## A promising era dawns on the Mornington Peninsula

**WINE**

*John Beeston*

**P**SST! Have you tasted Mornington Peninsula lately? You might be forgiven if it has hitherto loomed rather small in the fullness of your vinous life, but a whole new vigorous viticultural area is growing there.

What's more, it is determined to maintain its identity: the Mornington Peninsula Vignerons Association is an enthusiastic participant in the Victorian Wine Authentication Scheme and has recently instituted its own logo.

The vineyard area is as yet small — only 36 hectares shared among 31 growers. The Peninsula, 80km south-east of Melbourne, is fashionably cool — cooler than Bordeaux, though slightly warmer than Burgundy. Like Bordeaux it is damp, rainy in winter and humid in summer.

Soil types, aspects and altitudes vary from site to site: there are vineyards at sea level and at 300 metres. The most commonly planted varieties are cabernet sauvignon and chardonnay, although riesling pinot noir, merlot, shiraz and minute amounts of cabernet franc are being evaluated.

Unlike the more trendy areas around Lilydale, Mornington has no famous history of the vine. There were about eight hectares of vineyards in the 1890s, but these died unlamented and it was not until the 1950s when a member of the Seppelt family planted a hectare of riesling at Mt Martha that the area saw the vine again. The Seppelt involvement with the area lasted only a few years and the property was sold to a relative of the late Doug Seabrook, a famous Melbourne wine merchant, who made several vintages. In 1967 that vineyard was incinerated by a bushfire and it was not until a decade later that the modern era began.

Of the present crop of 31 growers, there are eight vignerons whose vineyard size would make them commercial, albeit in a very small way. The names to look for are Balnarring Vineyard, Dromana Estate, Elgee Park, Kings Creek, Main Ridge Estate, The Merricks Estate of the Kefford Family, Stonier's Merricks Vineyards and Red Hill Estate. Only Kings Creek and Red Hill escaped my recent tasting net.

The Mornington chardonnays, coming as they do from an extremely cool area will, in normal years, require more bottle age than chardonnays from warmer areas. This is to allow the flavours of fruit and oak and the natural acidity of the wine to integrate. Just as retaining natural acidity in white wine is important in warmer areas, so ripeness is equally critical in cooler climes. Without sufficient natural fruit sugar to convert into alcohol, the white table wines of cool areas are often thin and lacking in varietal flavour. Such wines are never desirable, unless the winemaker wants to make a sparkling wine base.

There are certainly no problems of ripeness in the 1984 Elgee Park Chardonnay. The colour has developed into medium yellow and the nose has fascinating nuances of charred oak and apricots. The palate, too, shows full fruit, excellent wood and a zesty acidity which with further bottle age will develop great complexity.

A much more youthful chardonnay, and not only because it is one year younger, is Stonier's Merricks Chardonnay 1985. This wine is extremely pale in colour and has a very young slightly floral nose. On palate there is a noticeable acidity, which seems to be typical of the district. It is a wine that certainly should not be drunk for at least two more years.

Balnarring Vineyard, rhine riesling and pinot noir are grown. I did not taste the riesling but the pinot noir of 1985 is medium red in colour with purple tints. There is also a touch of carbon dioxide. A youthful light strawberry character dominates the nose and the palate, of good structure, is medium bodied with a soft finish. Though it is an attractive wine, it is not to be cellared for very long. I suggest that it be kept for a further year or so.

Pinot noir also figures prominently at Garry Crittenden's Dromana Estate, along with chardonnay and cabernet sauvignon. The 1985 Dromana Pinot is a lovely limpid red in colour, with some purple tints. Again, there is excellent strawberry fruit on nose and in the medium bodied palate a similar character persists. It is a young wine with a lot of style.

Shiraz promises well in Mornington, although I do not feel that it will ever express there the full spicy peppery characteristics, so superbly noticeable in central Victoria. Merricks Estate Shiraz 1984 (Kefford, not to be confused with Stonier) shows an elegant spicy nose and similar characters on palate. It is not a rich wine but it is already starting to drink very well.

Cabernet sauvignon shows no dislike of a maritime environment, as witness its affinity with the Medoc. Not that Mornington is set to be Australia's Medoc. More extract and tannin is required in the district's cabernets before that claim can be made. However the promise of excellent cabernet is certainly there. The Stonier's Merricks Cabernet Sauvignon 1985 has aromas of capsicum and light cassia and a medium bodied fruit palate with a fresh acid finish. This, too, is an attractive wine, which should mature very well for three to four years more.

So Mornington Peninsula has dawned as a promising wine area. However, there is a need in Mornington as in other small areas not only for promotion of regional identity but also for total dedication to technical quality.

The Mornington wines are not readily available in Sydney at the moment although you should see them on the shelves of quality retailers within the next six months. For further information contact the Mornington Peninsula Vignerons Association, P.O. Box 332, Mornington, Vic. 3931.

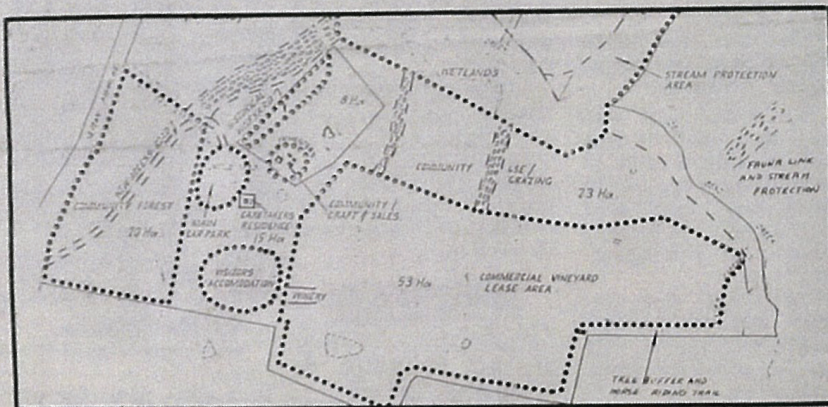


## by DINA MONKS

Cr Kelly said that the chairman of the Victorian Tourism Corporation, Mr Don Dunstan, had promised support for the project.

Mr White said that people wanting to become Friends of the Mornington Peninsula Vignerons' Association should write to Box 332, Mornington 3931.

"We believe The Briars' slopes, with their northerly aspect, will be ideal grape-growing



● ABOVE: This map shows where the commercial vineyard will be at The Briars.



## Epicure 4

THE AGE, Tuesday 22 July 1986

# Squire Belcombe's vines earn a niche in history

IT is not every day that a shire council zones an area for viticultural use. Usually the contrary happens and vineyards get subdivided into residential blocks. This is particularly so in Adelaide where the urban sprawl is munching into the vineyards at an alarming rate.

This turning of the tide can be attributed to the Shire of Mornington and the work it is undertaking on the historic Briars property which it acquired in 1973. The Briars is a magnificent 193-hectare property which was first settled by the Belcombe family.

As luck would have it Squire Belcombe was fond of the product of the vine and he planted his vineyard to the tune of 2.5 hectares and made wine for his own use. The local legend is rather rude about his efforts. They were known in the district as "Belcombe's vinegar".

The luck continued when the council found some of the original vines tangled in a thick hedge. These vines are at least 130 years old and cuttings have been taken and struck. These cuttings will be used to plant a historic vineyard near the Briars homestead which is jointly owned by the National Trust and the shire.

At the moment the grape variety of these original vines has not been identified but research continues and it should not be long before the secret of Belcombe's vinegar is known.

The land for the commercial vineyard will be some 53 hectares and tenders are currently being drawn up. It is expected that they will be advertised in about six weeks.

Mr Paul Kelly, the shire president, believes a commercial vineyard is in keeping with the flavor of this historic site. "Council be-



## Wine

By MARK SHIELD

believes that a vineyard is very sympathetic to the overall scheme. The problem is always how to open it up to the public without destroying the historic aspects," he said.

Mr Kelly said that the fledgling wine industry at Mornington was making wine of sufficient quality to warrant larger vineyards.

So here is your chance to lease some prime viticultural land, but make sure you wear elbow guards because there will be a quite a scramble to get at it.

One of the companies which is said to be looking hard at the proposal is Moet and Chandon, or to be more specific Dolamin Chandon Australia. It has long been known that this large French champagne house has been wanting to establish a winery and vineyard in Australia.

According to Dr Tony Jordan, the local consultant for Moet, there are three areas under consideration. They are Macedon, the Yarra Valley and the Mornington Peninsula. He said: "No decision has been made at this stage. Moet are keen for the site to be readily accessible to the public. They want a highly visible presence, so wherever the site is chosen, it will have good road access. When you look at the freeway development at both Macedon and Mornington,

you can see that they will be suitable."

It remains to be seen whether the conditions of the lease of the Briars will be acceptable to the French, but there is one emotional element which may sway the decision. The homestead houses Napoleon's bed!

According to Stephen Hickinbotham, one of the original proposers of the vineyard scheme, Napoleon's bed is "a little on the short side and quite narrow — just my size".

Again the conditions of the lease will be the factor governing whether the Hickinbothams offer a bid. There could be several companies interested when the details are made public. Many large South Australian-based companies have expressed a desire for a Victorian presence and this location has many attractive features.

Putting aside the romance and history, this is a very good place to plan vines. Obviously Mr Belcombe was doing something fundamentally wrong, because other makers in the area are making some very impressive wines. Labels like Main Ridge, Dromana Estate and Elgee Park are already attracting a keen following.

It will be interesting to see who steps into the breach at the Briars. Fifty-three hectares, possibly close planted, will hardly be a hobby farm.

It is in the big league and it will probably mean that large companies with sound financial backing only should apply. The average person with a few lazy dollars and a desire to sleep in Napoleon's bed is sure to have his or her hopes dashed.

This is an important development for Mornington and Victorian wine. It will be watched with interest.

30 THE AGE, Tuesday 19 August 1986

## Mornington Pen.

YET another new area awakes and what promise it shows! This area is also on the short list for Domain Chandon Australia's sparkling wine project and some think it has the edge because Napoleon's bed resides in the district. The cool temperate conditions moderated by the proximity of the sea make this an outstanding viticultural district. The vineyards here are in their infancy but early wines seem to confirm this is an area of potential greatness.

### Dromana Estate

This is an interesting, albeit radical, vineyard which is owned and maintained by Garry Crittenden (no relation to the retailers) and the wine is made by Dr Tony Jordan of Oenotec. Early wines have great character, the pinot noir and chardonnay being particularly exciting. Definitely one to watch, there is no cellar door sales, seek bottles out in specialist shops or join the mailing lists.

### Elgee Park

The manager here is Henk Vandenham and again Oenotec are consultants. There have been some very good wines made from comparatively young vines. The varieties planted include chardonnay, rhine riesling, cabernet franc, cabernet sauvignon and merlot so we can expect some classic table wines. Sales by mailing list only, no cellar door.

### Main Ridge Estate

Owner Nat White has an interesting line-up of varieties planted at Main Ridge. They include pinot noir, pinot meunier, cabernet sauvignon, chardonnay and gewurztraminer. There is already a feeling of consistency about the wines being made here. You can find examples in places like Gatehouse or Richmond Hill or you can join the mailing list.

Other vineyards include Merricks and Merricks Estate. The wines of the former are made by Hickinbotham Winemakers and the latter by George Kefford. If you find a bottle of either count your blessings because only minuscule amounts have been made to date. There are also several growers on the peninsula so there will be an increasing number of labels entering the market in the near future.

Page 2 — Standard - Post, Wednesday, August 6, 1986

WINING and dining on the Peninsula is taking on a whole new look and flavor with the increasing availability of our very own wines.

Far be it for me to dare to enter the wine critics' domain, but if the wines served at the annual dinner of the Mornington Peninsula Vignerons' Association are anything to go by, then they're (to my untutored palate) fantastic.

The dinner was at the historic homestead, "The Briars", at Mount Martha, and MPVA president Nat White noted it was an historic anniversary — 10 years since the first gathering of Mornington vignerons at Baillieu Myer's Elgee Park. Eight of the 12 people at that inaugural meeting were at "The Briars" dinner 10 years later.

The association now has 51 members and Nat said the wine industry on the Peninsula had now grown to the stage where it was of "commercial significance".

Certainly, the Merricks Estate Rhine riesling, the Elgee Park chardonnay, the Balmarr Estate pinot noir, the Dromana Estate cabernet sauvignon and the Main Ridge Estate cabernet sauvignon that night were superb.

So it seemed impish humor on the part of hosts Nat White, Gary Crittenden and the other vignerons to end the meal with a 1981 Chateau Guiteronde Sauterne — a delightful dessert wine all the way from France.

Only a day or two later, it was off to the Menzies-at-Rialto for yet another feast — this time to celebrate with the "Big Australian" — BHP — the two-millionth tonne of Colorbond. Much of this has come out of its Lysaght plant at Hastings, the rest from Port Kembla.

This year is the 20th anniversary of Colorbond as well, so it's good to know that Peninsula people have played such a big part in this successful Australian venture.

— DINA MONKS

As a prelude to the Victorian Wine Makers' Exhibition, Jeremy Oliver and Mark Shield take readers on a guided tour of Victoria's major wine districts. Over the past decade, wine in Victoria has been a considerable growth industry and many new areas have been opened up. But it does not stop there, because in the decade ahead even further expansion is planned.



Mark Shield



Jeremy Oliver





MONTHLY

# Personal Investment

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## Victoria

Boutique vineyards are widely spread throughout Victoria. This has produced a great diversity of styles within the geographic area of the state. They range from the warmer climate of north-eastern Victoria to the southern boundaries of the state — the Mornington Peninsula — and from east Gippsland to the Great Western area.

*Dromana Estate — Mornington Peninsula:* Garry and Margaret Crittenden bought their 11 hectare property 50 kilometres south of Melbourne in 1981. This vineyard is close to the sea which has a moderating influence on the climate. This results in a long gentle ripening period to give a classic cool climate red wine. They avoid the problem of becoming jammy and over-ripe and achieve a more desirable fruit-acid balance. Plantings include cabernet sauvignon, merlot, pinot noir and chardonnay. The sandy loam soil encourages the root growth of the vines, giving full-flavored grapes.

*1985 cabernet sauvignon:* This is a stunning wine with an intense black purple red color that is difficult to see through. The bouquet, although slightly restrained, shows a lovely combination of perfumed fruit and wood. There is a considerable amount of latent power in this wine which is well balanced with elegance and style. At this stage, the new wood tannin tends to be a little hard on the finish but this should soften out and become more integrated with further maturation. Definitely an exciting wine which should cellar well.





COVER: Plastic picking buckets are essential for correct handling of quality wine grapes. One of the most popular and cost-efficient is the Bryce Bucket available from Robert Bryco & Co. Ltd. branches in all states. Rhonda Boyle is shown harvesting Cabernet at Mainridge Estate, Mornington Peninsula, in this photo taken by David Lloyd of Hampton Estate, Highett.

January, 1986



MIETTA'S

MORNINGTON PENINSULA WINE DINNER

Wednesday 2nd July, 1986.

Scrambled eggs with tomato concassée  
1983 Saint Romain Blanc

\* \* \* \* \*

Flounder farcie à la crème de poivrons  
1985 Main Ridge Chardonnay  
1985 Dromana Estate Chardonnay  
1985 Elgee Park Chardonnay

\* \* \* \* \*

Petite marmite de cailles et ses abats  
1985 Dromana Estate Pinot Noir

\* \* \* \* \*

Gratin de lièvre aux champignons-  
1984 Merricks Estate Shiraz

\* \* \* \* \*

Aiguillette de boeuf aux carottes et canard braisé au jus  
1985 Main Ridge Cabernet Sauvignon  
1985 Stonier's Merricks Vineyard Cabernet Sauvignon  
1984 Merricks Estate Cabernet Sauvignon

\* \* \* \* \*

Crêpe fourrée de pommes au miel

\* \* \* \* \*

Espresso Coffee



Mode

m

August 1986

## A VINE ROMANCE

## MORNINGTON PENINSULA

Victoria's Mornington Peninsula, with its famous beach coastline, has long been considered a playground for pleasure-seeking Melburnians, but the determination and co-operation of a small group of vignerons is transforming the peninsula into a prolific wine-producing area

It is Red Hill Show Day, warm and hazy. The ABC is filming the gymkhana events and impressing the locals. But while recognizing that the Red Hill Show traditionally attracts some of the country's best equestrians to this sleepy little village on Victoria's Mornington Peninsula, the actual charm of the show lies in its bucolic nature.

Swarms of people come from all over the peninsula to admire the Muscovy ducks, the Sussex roosters and Jacobin pigeons in the poultry pavilion, to wander through the Ajax Davey display while the band plays "Waltzing Matilda", to pat the silky Angora goats lying in the cool of caravans and to buy armfuls of potted plants. The Red Hill Tennis Club raises money by selling gas-filled balloons, the Rosebud Lions Club runs the beer tent, local women serve Devonshire teas in the Red Hill Football Club rooms and, attracting considerable attention, the Mornington Peninsula Vignerons' Association holds wine-tastings in a small marquee.

We have travelled in cavalcade to the Red Hill Show with Melbourne lawyers George and Jacky Kefford, owners of the Merricks Estate vineyard. The Keffords take their turn at introducing the local ambrosia to the locals. All goes smoothly. The marquee is full of people, some tasting correctly with discretion, others positively gulping it down.

We are guests of the Keffords and before the show, we have lunch with them at their Merricks Estate property. It is a beautiful place. Rows of sun-filled vines cover the hillside between the dam, adrift with flocks of wild ducks,

and the house, which sits on a hill facing Point Leo on Westernport Bay.

When the Keffords, business and marriage partners, bought their 20-hectare property in 1976, they didn't intend starting a vineyard. It was to be a weekend retreat from the legal convolutions of the working week. But being interested in food and wine, and unable to idle the weekends away, they planted 50 vines in 1978, unaware that others had established vines in the area.

When nothing disastrous happened, they planted more, and today have about three hectares. Not only did nothing disastrous overtake them, but the Keffords' wines have taken off: both the Merricks Estate shiraz and cabernet have won awards at the Victorian Wine Show.

George Kefford learned his wine-making by trial and error. Doing it by the book, the reference book, that is, meant that some of the early Rhine riesling went down the drain, but the resolute Keffords are not easily thwarted.

They may well describe their house there as a weekend retreat but it would be the envy of any citysider.

"The house was designed to face south to Point Leo and to catch the winter sun at the back," George says. "It is made of cell-treated pine, the same that is used in the poles and supports in the vineyards. The interior is limed pine, treated with Estapol. Jacky and I designed the house the way we wanted, to a limited budget, and an architect drew up the plans."

Although the vines are now ostensibly the reason for the Kefford family's weekly flight from city to the penin-



sula, their house there represents much more. It is a place for their three young children to roam free, riding their ponies and tending a hothouse of seedlings, and, as well, a place for George and Jacky to mentally roam, free of work and city pressures.

While the house is often filled with city friends, the Keffords have created another life for themselves on the peninsula. They are friends with many of the other 31 or so wine-growers there. The vineyards flourish only with the help of neighbouring vignerons. The weekends are often spent from dawn till dusk planting and pruning, hoeing and harvesting. But the living is easy.

The Keffords' house is big and airy with polished timbers, Persian carpets and embroidered pillows scattered on

the floor. The furniture, most of it old and charming, has been stripped back to the timber and carefully restored by Jacky. The interior of the house has been designed for the pleasure of the family and its friends.

"We wanted to concentrate on the living areas," George Kefford says.

The central point of the house is the huge, open kitchen and living-room leading to a central gallery, which opens on to two decks. The "deck" rooms are enclosed with wire screening, so insects are kept at bay, while breezes from the bay carry through and around the house. There are quiet nooks, too, for children to do homework and parents to study legal briefs. But, generally, any serious weekend work done is totally devoted to the vineyards.



Left: The Keffords' "budget" home.  
Below: Garry and Margaret Crittenden.







Above: The colonial-style Dromana Estate homestead. Left: The estate's grape-pickers, mainly friends and family, celebrate the pinot noir harvest.



A leisurely lunch on the verandah at Dromana Estate, before work begins.

**T**he day after the Red Hill Show, it is all happening at Dromana Estate, the vineyard owned by Garry and Margaret Crittenden. The Crittendens are harvesting the pinot noir and every-  
Estate is flatter and more than the small hills around Merricks, and the 11-hectare property is centred on a lake in front of the house.

It is not for nothing that this peninsula, with one of the longest stretches of beach-holiday coastline in the world, is known as Melbourne's playground.

Harvest day at Dromana, though, has little to do with play. Black plastic buckets are lined up under the vines, and mounds of secateurs lie waiting at

the end of each row. The grapes hang heavy, full bunches of tiny black beads of amazing sweetness.

After lunch on the verandah, the gang is ready. There's Ken John, wine-master at Mietta's Restaurant, and his wife, Pat; Melbourne engineer Neil Lobley and Maree Lobley; Joe Vaughan, who works regularly at the Dromana Estate vineyard; Melbourne surgeon Rick McIntyre; and, of course, George and Jacky Kefford. This *Mode* writer and photographer, plus assorted children, took up secateurs, too.

The work is serious and back-breaking but the mood, carefree. In two hours, the vines are stripped and the wagon piled with brimming buckets. Harvest mood is high back on the verandah where the Crittendens serve a

celebratory glass or two of pinot noir.

While many of the Mornington vigneron operate their vineyards as weekend ventures, the Crittendens live and work on the peninsula. Garry runs two nurseries which help provide some of the wherewithal to keep Dromana Estate going. They bought the property, "an awful thicket of brambles and blackberries", four years ago. They planted their first two hectares in the spring of 1982 and harvested their first crop in 1984, the year they built their colonial-style homestead.

The Crittendens' first wine, a 1984 cabernet sauvignon, sold out within four weeks. Wine writers applauded this wine (made by a neighbouring vigneron, Nat White, of Main Ridge Estate) for its "lively fresh delicate fruit flavours", a characteristic which promises to be common to the wines in the area.

Sipping a glass of his rich, ruby red, Garry Crittenden dispels the notion that life is all Bacchanalia, just in case we were under that misapprehension.

"Today was relaxed, but in a couple of weeks when we pick the cabernet, there will be 40 adults working in the vineyard, and just as many children."

"We all help one another," Margaret Crittenden says.

**W**e first visited the Mornington Peninsula late last year for an introductory lunch at the Stoniers (lunch being the social occasion on the peninsula), followed by a sortie into the area. Over a lunch of barbecued continental sausages and fresh asparagus, Noel and Brian Stonier told us that they established their Stonier's Merricks vineyard in 1978 with a small planting of chardonnay and cabernet sauvignon. The first wines were made in 1982 by Stephen Hickinbotham at Mount An-

akie and were sufficiently successful to encourage further plantings.

Today, the vineyard has one of the largest plantings on the peninsula. The Stoniers have now retained Andrew Hickinbotham, brother of Stephen, as consulting viticulturist and have planted another two hectares of vines. One particular Merricks wine, a 1984 cabernet sauvignon, has drawn high praise. The wine writer James Halliday describes it as "absolutely stunning, with archetypal capsicum/bell pepper flavours and yet exhibiting berry sweetness on the mid-palate". Such is the distinction of Mornington wines.

Actually, many people are surprised that the peninsula is making a name for itself as a wine-growing area. Unlike other areas on the periphery of Melbourne — Lilydale, Coldstream, Sunbury and Geelong — Mornington hasn't had a history of grape growing and winemaking. The reason, says Garry Crittenden, is more likely cultural than accidental. Where the other areas attracted settlers whose origins were steeped in a tradition of wine-making, the peninsula was settled by Anglo-Saxon pioneers. But a few wine enthusiasts wandered into the area. In 1891, there were, in fact, 14 of them tending just nine hectares.

But it is only in the past 30 years that vineyards have become part of the landscape. The Seppelts started it all with a small vineyard at Dromana. The growth of the industry since is best represented by the stained-glass front door of Garry and Margaret Crittenden's house. Made on commission by Melbourne artist David Wright, the glass panels symbolize growth and the process of winemaking. This story in glass is, the Crittendens explain, an analogy of life. And it could, indeed, be seen as an analogy of a new life for the wine industry at Mornington.

Sandra Symons



Garry Crittenden supervises willing helpers at harvest time.



WINESTATE 1986

JULY/AUGUST 1986 No. 81

VICTORIA

# Victoria — South East of The Border

VIC LA SALLE

OVER THE PAST few weeks members of the Victorian Wine Industry association have been out celebrating an early milestone in the State's wine authentication scheme — the sale of the 500,000th bottle of authenticated wine.

More than half of the association's members are now taking part in the scheme, and its executive officer, Andrew Rodger, has been setting up meetings, lunches and dinners, in a renewed bid to sell the rest of the members on authentication. Also invited to these occasions have been the hotel and liquor trade, constantly being bombarded with the word that the authentication label, the ubiquitous 'penny black' head of Queen Victoria, is selling wine.

"Already it is demonstrating its effectiveness as a marketing tool among consumers," says Rodger. "People are recognising this, and we expect to have the great majority of Victoria's winemakers enrolled in the scheme within the next three months."

"There is no doubt that Victorian wines have already made significant incremental inroads into the total Australian wine market in the six months authentication has been in operation, and we are most encouraged. We now intend to look at the potential of wine sales overseas. Response to date encourages us to look to overseas markets sooner, rather than later."

Authentication is not the be all and end all of the wine scene in Victoria, but it is a watershed in the marketing of the product, and so this is an appropriate time to look at how the wine renaissance is progressing in what was once called "John Bull's Vineyard."

Development is continuing apace, to the extent that Victoria now has more than 100 registered vineyards, making it second only to South

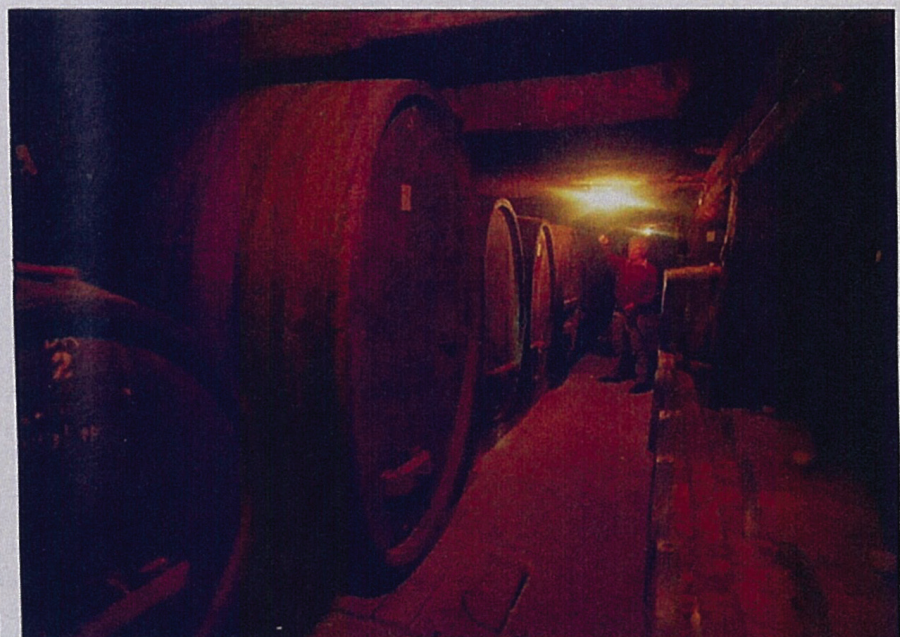
Australia. Many of these are small properties. This is the way it is going in Victoria, small, regional producers we might once have called "boutiques", with most of them concentrating on varietal table wines. In some areas there is a proliferation, almost at times instant, of "hobby" or "gentlemen" vigneron, planting premium varieties under the guidance of clever consultant vintners, assuring themselves of premium fruit in the years to come.

This is particularly noticeable on the Mornington Peninsula, the hitherto rich man's playground which extends between the shores of Port Phillip and Western Port Bays, the

Yarra Valley which was a prime production spot more than a century ago, and the Woodend-Macedon area west of the city. Here people such as radio supermouth Derryn Hinch are growing grapes which will be contracted to Moët et Chandon when it sets up its domain sparkling wine system for Asian export in several years time.

A couple of weeks ago, a group of English food and wine writers was visiting Melbourne, and over lunch at Mietta's they were treated to an array of Victorian wines which gave a tantalising and, in many ways, a graphic picture of where things are at the moment.

There were Langhi Ghiran cabernet sauvignon and 1983 Mount Langhi Ghiran shiraz, 1985 Mount Chalambar rhine riesling, 1985 Best's Great Western chardonnay, 1982 Blue Pyrenees Estate, 1985 Dromana Estates pinot



Viv Thompson, Best's Winery





## VICTORIA

noir, 1984 Merricks Estate shiraz, 1984 Main Ridge Estate cabernet sauvignon, 1984 Lillydale Vineyards rhine riesling, 1985 Yarra Burn chardonnay, 1984 Yarra Burn cabernet sauvignon, and to finish up with, Campbell's muscat and Bailey's HJT tokay. That lot covered the State pretty well geographically, and it revealed some interesting trends as well. When James Halliday tasted the Dromana pinot, he couldn't believe that he was drinking an Australian wine.

It really was quite superb, probably the best Australian pinot to date, the only problem with it being that production is tiny and will never grow larger. Dromana is a pretty beach town on the eastern shores of Port Phillip Bay, and land prices are governed by the considerable demand of holiday makers and rich weekend hobby farmers. Gary and Margaret Crittenden (no relation to the well-known Crittenden wine-selling family) planted five acres there in 1982, mainly with cabernet sauvignon, but they also had smaller plots of chardonnay, pinot noir and merlot.

The 1984 and 1985 Dromana wines were made by Nat White at his Main Ridge winery, a few kilometres away in the "highlands" of Mornington Peninsula, and in 1986, on the estate itself by Gary Crittenden with the help of Dr. Tony Jordan of Oenotec. The pinot is certainly a lovely wine, with an intense plummy character and a structure very much like the best of the modern Burgundies. Production is tiny, as mentioned, but Gary is hoping this quality is not a fluke.

Main Ridge Estate was established in 1975 by Nat and Rosalie White, and they had their first wine for sale in 1981. They are regarded as pioneers on the Mornington Peninsula, which is attracting more and more of the rich in search of the ultimate dinner party buzz — fine wine under their own labels. Among newer growers are former Liberal cabinet minister, Tony Staley, and the Baillieu Myer family of Myer emporium fame.

Away to the south-east on the edge of Western Port Bay is Merricks Estate, which was planted by George and Jacky Kefford in 1977. First commercial releases were cabernet sauvignon and shiraz in 1984. George makes the wines himself with the help of Alex White, one of the gurus

of the Yarra Valley, who makes his own Lillydale Wines, and the redoubtable St. Huberts wines as well. The 1984 Merricks shiraz we had at Mietta's had lovely cracked pepper varietal character, and it was an example of cool climate shiraz at its best.

There is no doubt at all that Mornington Peninsula has enormous potential as a premium wine area, but given the size of the vineyards and the cost of the land, you can expect to have to pay premium prices for its produce. But what the heck — it's only money.

To get back to the Mietta's lunch and to the Victorian wine scene in general, we may as well look for a start at Great Western, origin of the Mount Langhi Ghiran, Mount Chalambar and Best's wines, and a region which is also showing itself as one of enormous potential. It had its origins last century as a goldrush centre and vines sprang up, as they did in many other parts of Australia, as a means of supplying booze to thirsty miners.

Great Western is a little town on the Western Highway between Melbourne and Adelaide, and is the home, of course, of the Seppelt champagne house. Best's is nearly as old as Seppelt, and there some of Victoria's first major plantings of chardonnay were made by Viv Thomson almost a decade ago. Working with Viv has been Geisenheim-trained Trevor Mast, and together they have produced a beautiful line of commercial chardonnays which can hold their own anywhere in Australia. The 1985 wine we had at Mietta's is claimed by many to be the best of them all, a beautifully balanced wine more in the white burgundy style than the fat, wooded wines we are seeing elsewhere.

Trevor Mast is a magnificent winemaker, and he has spread his talents around the Great Western area in much the same way as Alex White has done in the Yarra Valley. Trevor's own vineyard is Mount Chalambar (remember the old Seppelt Chalambar burgundies?) near Ararat. It is in a region which can be devastated by frost, and did so to Trevor this year. His 1985 rhine riesling is a beautiful wine, a Victorian Export Award winner of just the kind to give the variety a new burst of popularity.

Trevor Mast also makes the wine

for the Fratin Brothers at Mount Langhi Ghiran. This Italian family bought land a decade ago on the highest part of the Great Western region, a great black bluff of a hill which takes its name from the Aboriginal words for "yellow crested black cockatoo." Or so Trevor Mast says. The altitude provides cool weather and a longer than normal ripening period, and the Langhi Ghiran reds, as a consequence, show remarkable varietal character. The cabernet is full of berry flavours, and the shiraz has rich peppery fruit.

As we travel towards Melbourne from Great Western we come to what is known as the Pyrenees wine region, named after the mountains which stretch around other old gold mining towns, Avoca and Maryborough. Grapes were grown there a century or more ago, but its rebirth came in 1963 when the French giant Remy Martin launched its foray into Australia with the establishment of a large vineyard designed to provide fruit for brandy distillation.

The experiment didn't work because the grapes didn't ripen sufficiently to give the sugar levels required, so the place was replanted with red varieties, and eventually with more white to form the basis of the Remy sparkling wine range. The reds are certainly developing plenty of regional character, and Remy winemaker Christian Morlaes, a Frenchman, of course, keeps particularly good batches of cabernet and shiraz. From time to time these batches go into the Blue Pyrenees Estate wine. Christian trained in Bordeaux and the wine is made in the Bordeaux fashion. The 1982 example we had at Mietta's was a generous wine, with fruit beautifully balanced with tannin and French oak.

A couple of hills away from Remy is Taltarni, run by another Frenchman, Dominique Portet. His wines are also extremely distinctive. His 1982 cabernet sauvignon recently won the coveted Critic's Choice Award at the second annual New York Wine Experience sponsored by the US Wine Spectator magazine. Taltarni was only one of three Australian wineries invited to take part in the competition.

Back down the road from Taltarni is Redbank, which is celebrating its 10th birthday this year. Neill Robb and his wife Sally established the place in 1976, and its



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Wines

December 1985

# Decanter

£1.60

## BEST WINES OF '85

### Alexander Findlater

Of Alex Findlater & Co., wine merchants, London NW8, first winner of the Young Wine Merchant of the Year award, jointly sponsored by the House of Pilsner Champagne and Decanter. Could be described as a mad enthusiast for wine.

On a recent trip to Bordeaux, we dined at a small restaurant off the Quai des Chartrons and began and finished the meal with a bottle of **Château Nairac 1979**. Made and matured in 100% new oak, it is quite lovely, tight, elegant and beautifully balanced, the oak still apparent and adding another dimension to the wine.

On the same trip we tasted a 1982 red Graves, **Domaine des Lucques**, with Thyl van der Linden, one of the band of young and serious Bordeaux négociants who ferret out really good little wines. We see far too few good petits Graves in the UK but this wine has real Graves character with lots of good fruit and flavour.

At another dinner, this time to discuss the new Australian Wine Club being launched just now, we drank the **Tyrrell's Vat 5 1976**. This is a Winemakers Selection from Hermitage grapes (Syrah to us Brits) from the NVC Vineyard. A ripe, spicy, mature and complete Hunter red, but not to everyone's taste — one Australian banker to whom I sold some didn't like it at all! Hunter reds do seem to be the most individual Australian reds and the most unlike European wines. When I do an Australian tasting for a wine society, the Hunter red is usually the one which is least appreciated.

Recently, I attended the London tasting of Laboure-Rot, the small but energetic Burgundy negociant. The star of the show was an **Auxey-Duresses 1983** white, which had classic style and real concentration of fruit and flavour. This just proves that good wines can be made in any year.

The last two wines I have selected we served at a small dinner arranged to examine a **Veve Clicquot Yellow Label**, bought by a friend for his daughter's wedding in the early 1970s. The wine was superb and showed how top champagne improves greatly with age.

But as I am only allowed six wines, it does not count. However, it provided the occasion to drink a **Chambertin 1953** from **Pierre Ponnelle** and a **Criots Batard Montrachet 1970** from **Domaine Delagrange-Bachelet**. The Chambertin was full of savour, still vigorous and beautifully mature, quite superb, so was the Criots, proving again that this tiny Grand Cru in the hands of a master can outclass many a Montrachet. 1970 was an off-year but this wine had more complexity, style and length than the 1971 from the same grower which was beginning to dry out. For days after I went around savouring the toasty nutty flavour of this superb

wine — is this what they mean by length?

### Patrick Grubb, MW

Former head of Sotherby's wine department and now managing director of the wine investment house, **Fine Vintage Wines plc**. Finds time to take sales for International Wine Auctions. Only known fault: is inclined to write verse after consuming good bottles, and differs with port shippers as to when vintage ports will be ready to drink.

Plucked from the wine bin at home recently, a 'forgotten' bottle of **Château Moulin-Pey-Labrie 1971**, Canon-Fronsac, turned several Classed Growth Médocs, it also had a lovely fragrant nose and a full gutsy flavour. Excellent.

Earlier this year, I attended a wonderful banquet in Boston at Anthony's Pier 4 Restaurant. Although I have never been a great fan of California Chardonnays the **Sonoma-Cutrer, Les Pierres Vineyards 1981 Chardonnay** was perfect with a fresh clean nose, lovely fullness perfectly balanced with acidity and a long finish. The varietal character was not over-played. Price I know not, but it tasted expensive!

Still in Sonoma County, where I consider some of the best white grapes are grown in California, I tasted **Preston Vineyards' Sauvignon Blanc**. This is a beautiful crisp wine with all the gooseberry freshness of a Sancerre.

Whoever decries 1962 claret, should taste again. In March I drank with some friends a bottle of **Gaffeliere-Naudes**. The colour was dark russet/ruby. The nose was very elegant and a scent of warm flower borders. Although just beginning to dry out, there is a lovely elegance and softness in this wine still. For sheer opulence and vivid sensual pleasure, a memorable wine was **Latour 1955**, provided by a very generous friend from his cellar near York. It was still almost black in colour with so much showing now, but only a hint of what will develop in another 20 years.

Finally, tasted in the Indian summer in London, was **Quinta do Nova 1967**, an undeclared vintage by da Silva, but nevertheless of outstanding quality and power. Very lovely and a memory to take me through the winter months.

### James Halliday

Leading Melbourne lawyer, wine writer, and now making wines once again, our Australian correspondent is his country's leading wine journalist. In between these activities, he also finds time to be a senior Australian wine show judge, one of the most prestigious roles in the country.

A brace of young Australian wines to start with, indicative of the direction we are headed in

this country — in more ways than one. If Orlando adopts the same ludicrous pricing strategy with its **R.F. Chardonnay 1985**, this marvellous wine will sell for as little as \$3.00 a bottle in the discount bazaars which pass as wine merchants in this country. A wine of voluptuous flavour and genuine texture, it will be at its best throughout 1986.

**Capel Vale Semillon Sauvignon Blanc 1985** is a razor sharp answer to the thrust of New Zealand Sauvignon Blanc, sharing the same pungent crispness which would surely satisfy the most ardent supporter of the Loire valley. Capel Vale is one of the rising stars of the Margaret River region of Western Australia.

Back across the continent, Victoria's Mornington Peninsula provides a genuinely cool climate in which the dolls house vineyards are producing some wines with astonishing varietal clarity. **Merricks Estate Shiraz 1984** is a wondrously spicy/peppery wine which is, at the same time, hauntingly delicate. If the fallen idol of Shiraz is to be restored, this wine will do it.

Early next year, Tim Knappstein of Enterprise Winery will release the finest red he has yet made, a **Cabernet Sauvignon 1984** (with a little Merlot and Cabernet Franc added for good measure) which takes the state of the art of red winemaking in the Clare Valley of South Australia to its logical limit. If a better wine comes from this region in the future, I will be the first in the queue to buy it.

Five weeks in France and Italy in September and October of this year saw many familiar faces, and one or two outstanding surprises. These included a twin bon bouche of **Rayas 1969** (gloriously perfumed and meltingly seductive) preceded by **Fonsalette Blanc 1964**, disconcertingly like an aged Hunter Semillon at its peak.

In Italy, Tuscany is in turmoil as it confronts the challenge of the new so-called alternative wines, and one of the smaller houses which seems to me to be doing everything right is **Faltona di Ama**. If I had to choose a Chianti Classico to defend tradition, the **Castello di Ama 1983** with its fragrant cherry/spice aromas and flavours will do very nicely.

### Alexis Lichine

Owner of Château Prieuré in Bordeaux and writer of the indispensable Alexis Lichine's *Encyclopaedia of Wines & Spirits* (Cassell/Christies). Known as the Pope of Wine in the USA, such is his influence.

**Château Margaux 1900**: Superb. The quintessence of delicate flavours with a true synthesis of the finest nose that a great Bordeaux can have. Amazingly sturdy and young for its 85 years.

**Château Prieuré-Lichine 1952**, double magnum. The first

vintage I made at the Château Cantenac-Prieuré, which became Château Prieuré-Lichine in 1961. Amazingly flavoursome in character and very long on the palate with a sustained nose.

**Château Palmer 1961**, double magnum. Drunk at the Saintsbury Club. Highlight of deep, intense colour. Big fullness. Claret at its best.

**Clos des Lambray 1949**: I were to select a bottle which to wear Bordeaux love to Burgundies, this would be. Such a ramification of strong complexities, shades and varieties of subtle notes. May one of the best red Burgundies have ever tasted.

**Château d'Yquem 1928**: Intense, integrated, full, dry sweetness. The fruit was very present. The glass, once emptied, gave bouquet which couldn't have been matched by any perfume.

**Château Cheval Blanc 1961** magnum. This classic of class is a confirmed masterpiece proving how impressive the lasting ability of a great vintage can be. Intense, full, velvety texture with so many echoes of its qualifying this as the best of great vintage.

**Grande Fine Champagne Cognac 1895**: Although not wine, I cannot omit the mention of my experience in tasting a very great eau-de-vie from a mignon. Part of a very great collection in Châteauneuf-Charentes, I smell this ethereal long-lasting, eau-de-vie, with beautiful nose, last July in the cellars of cellars, containing the greatest galaxy of eaux-de-vie is from this Tesseron source. The great cognac houses obtain the best for their 'Paradis'.

### Simon Loftus

Enterprising director of Adm wine merchants in Southwold, Suffolk, and writer of the new published *Anatomy of the Wine Trade* (Sidgwick & Jackson). Viewed in Decanter last month. Writes as well as he chooses wines.

Not, for me, a year filled with classic wine but I recall two particularly splendid bottles. I offered at dinner by generous hosts Eddy Penning-Rowse produced the **Montrachet 1976** from **Baron Thenard** which epitomized everything you could hope for from such a wine (nutty, complexity, incredible length of flavour) and Graham Ly opened the **Beaulieu Vineyard Private Reserve Cabernet 1971**. Even better than when I tasted it, two or three years ago, this is the irrefutable answer to those lingering die-hards who doubt California's capacity to produce wines that will stand comparison with the great classic Bordeaux. I'd rather have any of this in my cellar than any other red wine I can think of.

Continued





GOVERNMENT HOUSE  
MELBOURNE 3004

*Original to Mr. Kefford*

Monday 19th December, 1983

*Dear Mr Kefford*

One of the highlights of our recent visit to the Shire of Flinders was our stopover at Main Ridge, where my wife and I were given an excellent briefing and tasting by Nat White's father-in-law, Mr. Gwynn Jones.

He presented us with a very fine selection of Peninsula wines and I should be most grateful if you would thank the Vignerons' Association for their extremely kind and thoughtful gift.

My wife and I have had the privilege of tasting some wines from Elgee Park and also a Merricks 1982 Chardonnay, all of which show excellent promise. So you can see we are looking forward to trying the 1983 Vintages.

I believe we were told that there are some twenty-four vineyards in Flinders Shire and one can see why the Shire Council is so excited at the great possibilities for the area.

*With all best wishes*

*Yours sincerely*

*Brian Murray*

George Kefford, Esquire,  
President,  
Peninsula Vignerons' Association,  
3 Plantation Avenue,  
BRIGHTON EAST. Vic. 3187



THE AGE, Tuesday 2 September 1986

## A precise flavor of the month

**T**HE Mornington Peninsula is going to be the next flavor of the month with wine buffs, and the cherry atop the pudding will most likely be Dromana Estate.

Dromana Estate is a project of precision vine engineering wrought under the stern hand of Garry Crittenden (no relation to the retail dynasty of the same name).

Words like vine engineering and stern hand are particularly apt because Garry Crittenden controls his vines with all the ramrod regimentation of a drill sergeant major. Garry is a horticulturalist by profession and his wholesale plant nursery produces potplants by the hundreds of thousands a year. Because Garry Crittenden feels in full control of the growth of a plant in a pot, he decided to apply the same conditions to a grape vine.

That is not to say the vines are in pots but the land has been worked so that the vine's roots are contained and controlled. This is achieved by steeping the rows with a fall in the centre of the row of about half a metre. This delving means the roots are contained in a ridge. The full explanation is better suited to a technical journal. Suffice it to say the end result is an unusual vineyard which finds the vines growing on the top of ridges.

The rows are gunbarrel straight. "I'm fond of straight lines," says Garry Crittenden. The vines are also closely spaced and the practice of hedging vertical training is used to produce a vertical canopy. It is very much the state of the art and if all the theories prove correct, superior fruit should result.

The system is designed to give total control over the grapes — more or less the same control that is applied to a potplant. This means watering and drainage can be regulated and, according to Garry Crittenden, this is one of the most important factors.

He sees his role as viticulturalist and he acknowledges that he is not a wine maker.



### Wine

By MARK SHIELD

That is why he uses the services of Dr Tony Jordan from Oenotec.

These days the tentacles of Oenotec seem to be everywhere. They consult to wine companies like Wirra Wirra, Capel Vale, Mitchelton, Amberton, Delatite, Heathcote and Moorilla to name but a few. There is a school of thought which would have all Oenotec's consultant wines tasting the same. This is unfair and untrue. Just consider the line-up and you will conclude there are vast differences between most of the wines.

The one thing that Oenotec wines do have in common is their cleanliness and lack of fault. This is why Dr Jordan and his crew are in such demand. In the case of Dromana Estate it is Garry Crittenden who sets the style and Dr Jordan makes sure he achieves it.

Such an arrangement makes good sense. It is a matter of realising personal limitations — all too frequently small vineyard owners fulfil multiple roles. They become viticulturalists, wine makers, accountants, marketing manager, salesman and public relations expert and it is a very talented person who can achieve success in all fields.

The wines of Dromana Estate are in short supply. If you are fortunate enough to taste one you will see that this is a significant new vineyard. These are early days, but already there is indications of an individual style being struck.

The varieties involved are as could be expected. The classic cabernet sauvignon, chardonnay and pinot noir form the major plantings. But before you start heading in the direction of Dromana with your taste buds a-tingle and your Bankcard rampant, be warned. There are no cellar door sales or tastings. To secure the wines you will have to visit the better outlets of restaurants.

You will notice when you obtain a bottle there is a mini authentication scheme in place at Mornington. The producers of Mornington have initiated a scheme whereby any wine wearing their logo is 100 per cent Mornington fruit. Geographically the Mornington Peninsula is easy to define. A felt pen line drawn on a map starting from Frankston and going to the opposite coast. Every vineyard to the south of the line is eligible for the Mornington logo.

The Mornington scheme is not an assessment of quality, rather it seeks to guarantee the origin of the fruit. Whether that is of any consequence depends on the efforts of the producers in the district. At the moment they are presenting a united front and there is a general air of harmony. What a profiteering buccaneer would do with a vineyard of sultanas and a Mornington chablis label remains to be seen. It is a remote possibility and it would sorely test the local authentication system.

The generic term chablis on a label might be the saving grace which could disqualify such a wine. Mornington is set to be a premium area, it does not need the stigma of inferior wines and shonky marketers. But this is the beginning and hopes are high and the future seems bright. Vineyards such as Main Ridge, Elgee Park, Merricks Estate, Merricks and Dromana Estate are making impressive debuts.

The Hickinbothams have turned their attention in the direction of Mornington and all eyes are focused on Moet and Chandon — will that maker choose Mornington to set up Domain Chandon Australia?

Page 22 — INDEPENDENT NEWS, Tuesday, October 14, 1986

## Luncheon highlights peninsula wines



• Robert Bailey, Garry Crittenden and Nick Walko examine the new vines at Crittenden's Dromana Estate vineyard.

WINING and dining was the order of the day for members of the Wine Service Guild of Australia on the final day of their 26th federal conference.

More than 80 members and guests enjoyed a luncheon accompanied by local wines at Garry and Margaret Crittenden's Dromana Estate Vineyards on Sunday, October 5.

Catered for by local vigneron and their families, the luncheon was a testament to the 'good life' the discerning winer/diner and wine connoisseur enjoys and

everyone else aspires to!

In brilliant sunshine overlooking a lake, diners feasted on succulent barbecued eye fillet with various sausages — including venison and chicken — and a selection of salads.

Local wines were available for tasting, including Balnarring Vineyard Gewurtz Traminer (by Stan and Bruce Paul) Elgee Park Chardonnay (Baillieu Myer — Hank Van Denham, winemaker), Dromana Estate Chardonnay (Garry and Margaret Crittenden), Stoniers Merricks Chardonnay (Brian and Noel Stonier), Main Ridge Estate Pinot Noir

(Nat and Rosalie White), Merricks Estate Shiraz (George and Jacqui Kefford) and Cabernet by Dromana Estate, Main Ridge Estate and Stoniers Merricks.

Cold poached pears in ginger/orange sabayon with apricot and ginger ice-cream was accompanied by a 'foreign ring-in' — a most magnificent sauterne Chateau Cou tet a Barsac.

"Just to show that not only the locals make good wines," said one of the winemakers.

Assorted pates, cheese platters and delicious filter coffee accompanied by equally delicious



homemade biscuits were also served.

Due for release shortly by the Wine Service Guild of Australia is Tom Hardy's Pictorial Atlas of Wine — with photographs by Milan Roden.





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HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

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TEL. (03) 781 2333

BOB CHYNOWETH, M.P.  
MEMBER FOR DUNKLEY

2nd July, 1986.

Mr. G. Crittendon,  
Harrisons Road,  
DROMANA, Vic., 3936.

Dear Mr. Crittendon,

Thank you for the selection of Peninsula wines. I presented them on your behalf to the Minister, Hon. J. Brown, at the Luncheon last Friday.

At least 50% of those present at the Luncheon were unaware of the fact that we produced wine on the Peninsula.

I think it is time for this product to be better promoted.

The Minister, when accepting your gift, asked me to pass on his gratitude.

Thank you once again for this kind thoughtful gesture.

Yours sincerely,

BOB CHYNOWETH, M.P.,  
FEDERAL MEMBER FOR DUNKLEY



SERVICE

## IN LOVING MEMORY OF

STEPHEN JOHN HICKINBOTHAM  
&  
JENNIFER JANE O'REGAN

St John's Anglican Church, Camberwell

Service Conducted by  
The Reverend Perce Rowlands

Lesson by Jenny Hickinbotham

Comments by Mark Shield and  
Chris Rowlands

Flautist : Pip Robinson

Page 10—The Sun Living Supplement, Tuesday, October 21, 1986

**SUN** Living

## A legacy set to conquer world

THERE are easier ways to find business success than taking people on at their own game.

If winemaker Ian Hickinbotham has found them, he isn't intending to stick to them.

The Hickinbotham family of winemakers and the companies associated with them, have found a winner with their light, fruity Beaujolais style wine, Cab Mac, and the innovative process by which that wine is made.

With the launching of the 1986 vintage at Ripponlea this week, they made it more than clear they are out to give the best of the French Beaujolais wines some stiff Aussie competition.

Not only are they taking on the French with their product, which was first released in 1982, but they have gone into partnership with Remy International to market the process used to create the wine.

It is expected it will be in use in nine of the major winemaking countries within two years, including the Beaujolais district.

The 1986 Cab Mac was vintaged at Mitchelton Winery by winemaker Don Lewis (Mitchelton Vintners have a joint venture agreement with the Hickinbotham's to market Cab Mac) and the late Stephen Hickinbotham.

Stephen, Ian Hickinbotham's son, died in a light plane crash near Cairns on September 2.

He was behind the winemaking process that his father says may one day have as much impact on the wine industry as the advent of

By JOANNE ANDERSON

the cask, something Ian developed more than two decades ago. That process, Carbonic Maceration, involves grapes being sealed into large plastic bags.

Fermentation takes place without the grapes being crushed and without yeast or other additives, producing a light red wine that can be served or chilled at room temperature and contains only a negligible amount of tannin.

The technique is based on ancient winemaking methods from France, but Stephen brought the process into the 20th century by making it suitable for use in large scale production.

The Hickinbotham family (the other members are Ian's wife Judy, son Andrew and daughter Jenny), has only been producing its wines for five years.

The family left a vineyard it ran at Anakie, 25 km north of Geelong, earlier this year, and is in the process of looking for another property.

Andrew, who studied viticulture at Dijon University, is working at vineyards on the Mornington Peninsula, a region from which Ian says there is the potential to produce world class wines.

It is in the production of world quality wines, that he sees the future as lying for a significant portion of the Australian wine industry.

And if Australians still see themselves as a nation of beer swillers content to leave wine to the "snobs" it is an image Ian is far

from happy with. He mentions a survey taken last year that said only four per cent of households in Australia are not wine consumers.

"Australians know as much on wine as the English, yet we don't see ourselves as great wine people," he said.

"We see those bloody platitudes about beer drinkers."

Stephen was closely involved in making Australians more wine-conscious through such ventures as selecting wines for Ansett Airlines flights.

A foundation set up in his memory to encourage the studies of young Australian winemakers, has already attracted more than \$23,000 in gifts.

Known for his innovative thinking, it is clear his efforts will continue to make an impact on the wine industry.

But his father says getting a hearing wasn't always easy.

If anything, coming up with an idea that was as simple as Carbonic Maceration made it harder to get people to be excited about it.

Ian says Stephen's education at Melbourne University and at Bordeaux University helped give him the confidence needed to achieve what he did.

"I think it was that background that gave him the cheek to launch out with the supreme self confidence he had," he says.

And the result he believes has been achieved is "an Australian invention which should be set to make its mark on the world."

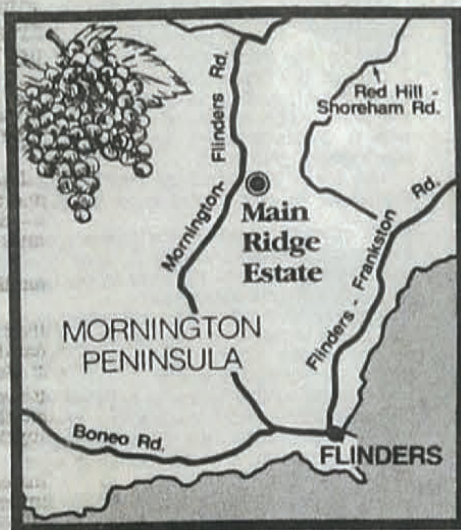


● Ian Hickinbotham samples the Cab Mac.



## Climate, soil and location . . .

# Nat's found the right recipe



Rosalie and Nat White . . . their vineyard became the first commercial winery on the Mornington Peninsula.

**N**AT WHITE has the kind of name and certainly the inclination and the means to be an investigator. Which, in a way, he is.

He enjoys probing, studying and getting completely involved with things so that he can come up with the right answers.

He has, for instance, an all-consuming fascination with wines and has done so since he and his wife, Rosalie, planted their first vines at the Main Ridge Estate on the Mornington Peninsula about 11 years ago.

It became the first commercial winery on the peninsula and now produces about 10 tonnes of grapes (or about 700 cases of wine) each year.

They include pinot noir, pinot meunier, cabernet sauvignon, chardonnay and gewurztraminer. Mr White plans to enlarge the range and increase production.

But, besides the financial investment and the hard work the couple has put in, they have from the beginning made a point of being as close and personally involved as possible with every facet of the industry.

Even before they started, the Whites studied such things as climates, soils, winds and locations.

The peninsula, they were warned, was not the place for a vineyard. It had

### Mornington Peninsula

#### Bill Hitchings

been tried — and had failed — around Hastings earlier this century.

The Whites, however, persevered. And they found that while conditions were unusual in Australian terms, they were similar to those in France's Burgundy region.

They adapted, using different planting methods, layouts and trellising patterns to optimise local conditions . . . while at the same time digging all the posts and running the wires themselves.

The disciplines and precisions of Mr White's years as a civil engineer also paid off not only with the planning and maturing of vineyard but also with the support equipment such as the tanks and other aspects of the winery, all of which he designed himself.

Still not content Mr White, 46, decided to learn as much as he could about the whole industry. He began a seven-year course at Wagga, fitting in travelling and studying with working the vineyard.

He finished this year and is now a qualified winemaker and viticulturist.



### THE INAUGURAL HERALD VICTORIAN WINE AWARDS 1986.

"I suppose we could have drawn on the expertise there is in the industry," he said this week.

"There are some excellent wine-makers around and many vineyards use them on a consultancy basis.

"That's fine and that sort of arrangement works perfectly well for many people.

**B**UT I became so fascinated with the whole thing that I felt I had to learn and do it myself."

The knowledge he has gained — through studying modern techniques as well as the history of wine — and the successes he has had at Main Ridge have convinced him he is on the right track.

"In many ways the Hunter and Barossa Valleys' vineyards were accidents," he said.

"People who knew about wines happened to move there and establish vineyards that have come good.

"Here, we have looked at the problems — such as the great vigor and the climate — and planned accordingly. And it's coming good."

Mr and Mrs White run Main Ridge virtually themselves, though Mrs White's father, Mr Gwynne Jones, a retired chemist, gave them a lot of advice and help when they were setting up.

Now living in Frankston, Mr Jones, who is 81, still travels to Main Ridge each week.

"His knowledge of chemistry and his ideas has been — and still is — an enormous help," Mr White said.

Otherwise, the couple call on some casual help as well as friends and neighbors who converge on the vineyard for the picking season.

The future, he says, looks bright.

"We are looking forward to next season and, of course, hoping our work and planning pays off."

And, such is the couple's confidence, that Mrs White will be leaving her teaching job at Mentone at the end of this year — to concentrate on the vineyard.

Page 12 — Standard - Post, Wednesday, October 29, 1986

## All set for the wine fest

THE Peninsula Wine and Food Fest is on again.

It will be held in a marquee in the grounds of the historic home, "The Briars," Mount Martha, on Saturday, November 8.

The evening will begin with aperitifs at 7.30 p.m. Peninsula wines will be served at the dinner, which will consist of fine food mostly grown and prepared on the Peninsula.

Tickets, at \$40 a person, are available by writing to the Peninsula Wine

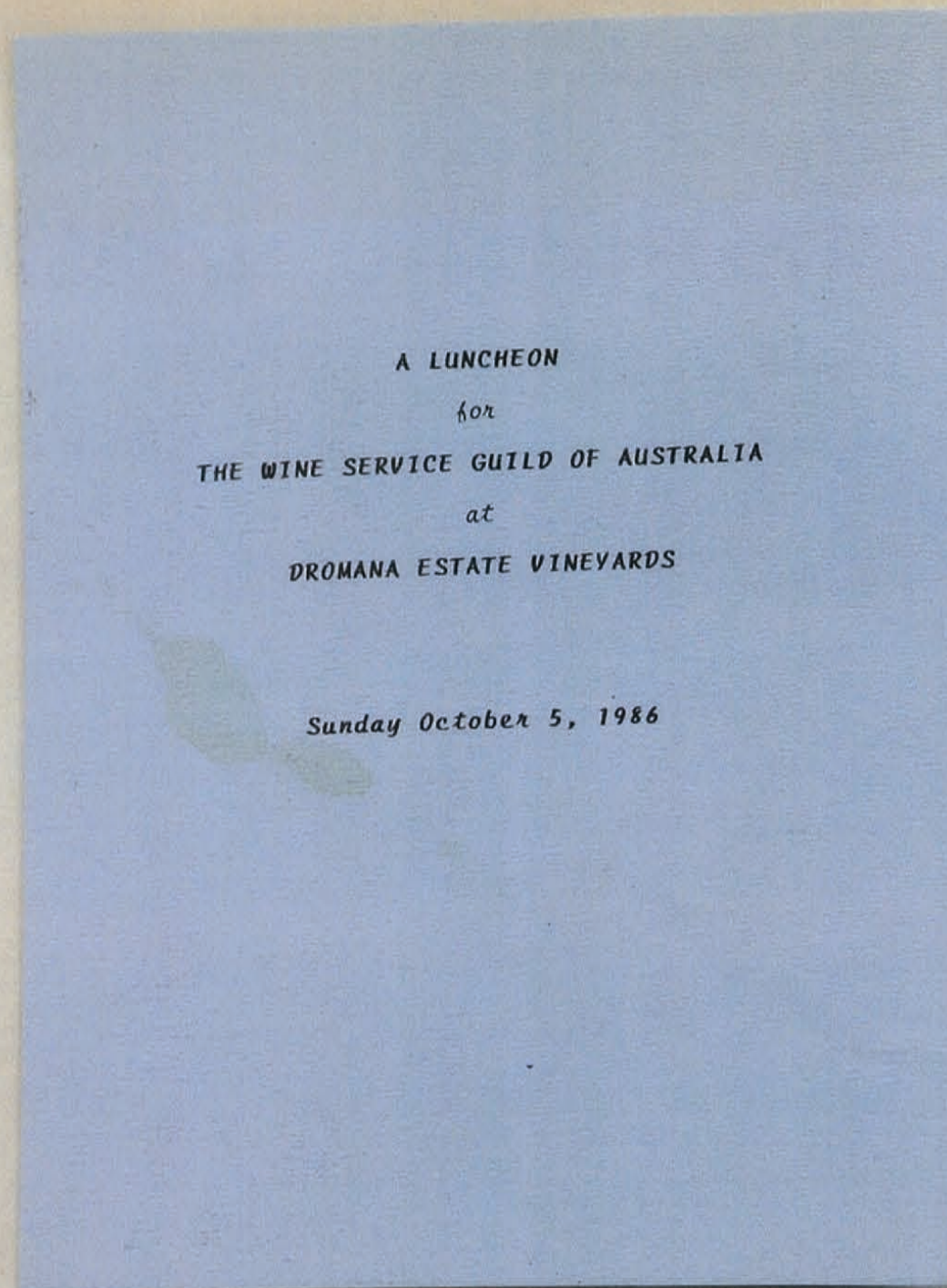
and Food Fest, C/- Post Office, Balnarring, or by phoning 789 7348 or 789 7936 between 4 p.m. and 8 p.m.

PENINSULA vigneron, right, discuss the wines to be presented at the Peninsula Wine and Food Fest.

They are (from left), George Kefford (Merricks Estate), Hank Vandenhorn (Elgee Park Winery), Gary Crittenden (Dromana Estate Vineyards), Nat White (Main Ridge Estate), Brian Stonier (Stonier's Merricks Vineyard) and Stan Paul (Balnarring Vineyard).







THE AGE, Tuesday 14 October 1986 39

## Peninsula vignerons are ready to put their wines to taste test

**I**T IS all happening on 8 November at the Mornington Peninsula Wine and Food Fest. Mark the event down in your "must" file because it is a very enjoyable bash.

The event will be held at the historic Briars property at Mt Martha. All the food will be local fresh produce and only wines of the Peninsula will be served.

The cost is \$40 per head and tickets can be secured by sending a cheque to Peninsula Wine and Food Fest, C/o Post Office, Balnarring, 3926.

Mornington seems set to be a premium wine producing district, with already some impressive wines to be had. The main problem with the area is the limited production and the difficulty in obtaining wines. That is why the Wine and Food Fest becomes a must visit. You can sample the delights of the likes of Main Ridge and Dromana Estate which is an opportunity too good to miss.

While on the subject of the Peninsula, I was given a couple of samples from Balnarring Vineyard. They are not available to the public, but for a first effort they are creditable and free from fault. Balnarring is the property of Bruce and Stan Paul and they are just one of the many small enterprises on the Peninsula.

That is the character of the district, small vineyards and limited production of quality wines. This means there are a lot of esoteric labels floating about and it is difficult to keep pace with developments.

As for the Briars, this historic property has the distinction of housing Napoleon's bed, a short, thin and uncomfortable looking affair. It was also the site of a historic vineyard and one of the original vines was recently discovered in a privet hedge. The vine has yet to be identified but cuttings have been struck and plans are afoot to replant the historic vine-



### The Doings

By MARK SHIELD

yard. The property has been zoned "viti-culture" and it is for lease.

One of the potential lessees is said to be Domain Chandon Australia, part of the Moet empire. No doubt the presence of Nap's bed has an influence.

I predict big things for this area and by attending the Fest you can monitor developments and get in on the ground

floor. Members of the Mornington Peninsula Vignerons Association will be on hand to discuss their wines and the food should be first class.

**I**F YOU are at a loss for something to do this weekend, one of the best wine events is yours for the asking. The Avoca Wool and Wine Festival will be held from 17-20 October.

Forget the wool, which doesn't gladden the heart of man; the wine is the thing. That and the race meeting on Saturday. Take it from a person who knows nothing about the sport of kings, this is a great event for the novice because of the picnic atmosphere. The main event is the Taltarn Cup which was won by a horse called Dry Wine a few years back, which only goes to prove you don't need to know anything about horses.

There are plenty of other attractions including the young farmers' and vigner-

ons' bush dance. It is unashamedly country and a great way to relax. If you require more details contact the committee secretary, Mrs D. Muir on (054) 65 3426.

**C**AMPBELLS of Rutherglen is very chuffed at winning the Muscat Trophy at the Rutherglen show.

It should be remembered that 1986 has been an outstanding year for fortified wines in the district. Most producers recorded the highest sugar levels in living memory. This makes the trophy all the more important.

Campbells' 1986 muscat is outstanding. It arrived on my doorstep in a small bottle which looked suspiciously like a specimen bottle. Forget the bottle — what a wine! For a baby it is already very impressive, so what will it be like in a few generations time? Fortunately, wine maker Colin Campbell has set aside a cask so that we can find out.





The magazine that helps you find the best value wines and spirits.

October 1986

# Decanter

£1.8



**Mietta's** is not an ethnic restaurant. It is named after co-owner, Mietta O'Donnell, who should be treasured by Melbourne. In a 100-year-old building, the beautiful main room was for 50 years the ballroom of the Naval and Military Club.

The luncheon given by our Melbourne press colleagues was *Galantine of duck* followed by *Venison with sauce poivrade*, both perfect in quality of

ingredients and cooking. Then, at last, we saw that Australia does make real cheese — a mild creamy goat from the Yea Valley, a decent Timboon Camembert, and Queensland Unity Blue.

The aperitifs were Victorian Rhine Rieslings and Chardonnays. With the duck galantine we drank three Shiraz, but the venison was rightly served with a single wine, a superb *Dromana Estate Pinot Noir 1985*. Purple-edged deep crimson, it had the freshness of good Beaujolais with the potential depth and subtlety of a big Côte de Beaune.

With the cheese came Cabernet Sauvignons while Tokay and Muscat accompanied coffee and chocolates.

Mietta's menu mouth-wateringly combines the classical with modern and local variations. *Warm autumn salad of the day* includes freshly cooked chicken fillet and livers, stuffed duck neck, prawn cutlet, mushroom and quail eggs. *Three home-made ravioli* contains lamb, duck and snails with tarragon cream sauce.

Traditional main dishes are *Coq au*

*vin* and *Salmis of guinea fowl*, with such imaginative touches as ginger and orange sauce with veal, and leek sauce with calves' liver.

The cheapest main dish at \$A17.50 is one for which I must return — *Compote of pork trotter and cheek with oxtail and vegetables*. 'a simply succulent dish for hearty eaters. Oxtail, trotters and cheeks are cooked slowly together then served in two ways. Oxtail and trotters boned, wrapped in cabbage leaves with peppercorn and mustard coating then braised on a bed of vegetables; the cheeks are warmed in the cooking juices; served with three mustards.'

A long reasonably priced list of classic French wines is matched by equally well chosen Australians. All are retailed in the next door shop. Impeccable professional service is another mark of a great restaurant.

The Park Royal Hotel offers a warm welcome, modern comfort, and fine views. I would have enjoyed eating in its palatial Chinese-style dining-room but had to be content with the Bistro, where









## WINE

eastern Victoria to the southern boundaries of the state — the Mornington Peninsula — and from east Gippsland to the Great Western area.

**Diamond Valley Vineyards:** David and Catherine Lance purchased their 10 hectare property on the north-facing slopes in the St Andrews area, some 40 kilometres north-east of Melbourne. David's reds reflect his admiration of the great wines of Bordeaux and Burgundy in France. His cabernet is a blend of the classic grape varieties used by generations of winemakers from the Bordeaux region. The blend consists of 50 per cent cabernet sauvignon, 30 per cent merlot, 15 per cent cabernet franc and 5 per cent malbec.

**1984 cabernet:** The color of this wine was light red and vibrant. The lightly structured fragrant fruit with considerable complexity gives this wine a most inviting bouquet. This wine is already very drinkable with balance and elegance. With age, this will develop into a fragrant seductive wine.

**Dromana Estate — Mornington Peninsula:** Garry and Margaret Crittenden bought their 11 hectare property 50 kilometres south of Melbourne in

1981. This vineyard is close to the sea which has a moderating influence on the climate. This results in a long gentle ripening period to give a classic cool climate red wine. They avoid the problem of becoming jammy and over-ripe and achieve a more desirable fruit-acid balance. Plantings include cabernet sauvignon, merlot, pinot noir and chardonnay. The sandy loam soil encourages the root growth of the vines, giving full-flavored grapes.

**1985 cabernet sauvignon:** This is a stunning wine with an intense black purple red color that is difficult to see through. The bouquet, although slightly restrained, shows a lovely combination of perfumed fruit and wood. There is a considerable amount of latent power in this wine which is well balanced with elegance and style. At this stage, the new wood tannin tends to be a little hard on the finish but this should soften out and become more integrated with further maturation. Definitely an exciting wine which should cellar well.

**Idyll Vineyard — Geelong:** The enthusiasm and drive of Daryl and Nini Selton have established them as pioneers in the rebirth of the Geelong wine-

growing area. They began plantings in 1966 when there was only a handful of small vineyards in Victoria. They are truly regional, creative and innovative in their winemaking philosophy. These qualities epitomise the small boutique winemaker of today. Idyll Vineyard produces only three wines, a cabernet shiraz, a highly individual, dry spicy gewurtztraminer, and a unique fresh dry rose called Idyll Blush.

**1984 gewurtztraminer:** Their four hectares of gewurtztraminer come from the only six cuttings they could obtain in 1966. Earlier wines were full, huge wines but they have given up this style and now make a gewurtztraminer that is picked early and any sweetness is fermented out.

The 1984 had a distinctive yellow gold color and was brilliantly clear. The bouquet had a distinctly intensive, spicy fruit nose. The palate was complete with a rich, dry exotic fruit finish. It was broad and would be a good accompaniment to food.

**1983 cabernet sauvignon shiraz — winemaker's special release:** The perfumed bouquet of this wine was completely arresting. It showed intense



THE WEEKEND AUSTRALIAN MAGAZINE 19

November 15-16 1986

## INDULGENCE

## Mornington: a taste of the future

## WINE

with JAMES HALLIDAY

It is widely supposed that the Mornington Peninsula did not exist in the 19th-century boom when it gave Victoria the title of the Bull's Vineyard.

It is not so. Robert Caldwell established Pharos Vineyard at Mornington near Arthur's Seat in the early 1880s and at the Melbourne Intercolonial Exhibition 1886 received a first prize for wine. Whether it was inconsistency or the part of the judges or inconsistency on the part of the judges is not clear, but in 1887 the result of the judges on the Mornington wines said: "These wines came before the judges as a certificate on the bottle they were made from the juice of the grape, brandy fermenting but not intoxicating. They were no doubt the juice of the grape, but could be praised for any distinctive taste. There appeared want of in the manipulation after wine had been fermented."

Robert Caldwell remained at Mornington until 1870, but the yards then went out of production as there was no market for the wines produced. Viticulture reappeared briefly at Arthur's Seat in the 1950s when Glas Seabrook planted vines, once again the venture was short-lived.

All intents and purposes the vineyard of today started in 1972. In Hallieu Myer planted the vines at Elgee Park, to be followed by Nat White at Main Ridge in 1975.

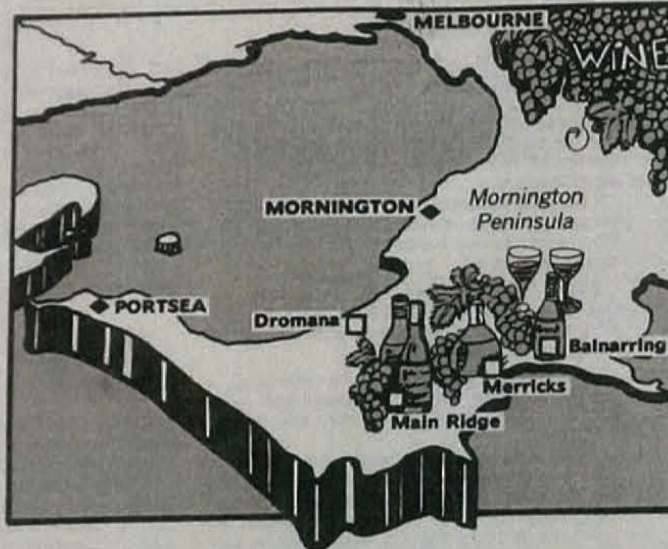
There are now a dozen or more growers, some licensed, some not, and the industry is rapidly growing out of the house scale of operations of a few years ago.

I recently attended a meeting of the Mornington Peninsula Vignerons Association at which 31 different wines from the 1986 vintage were tasted. In addition to the more familiar names there were a number of vineyards which are as yet unknown, but which may well become household names of tomorrow.

Graeme Pinney established his Karina Vineyard next door to Garry Crittenden's Dromana Estate in 1985, planting a little over 1ha of rhine riesling and sauvignon blanc. A similar quantity of cabernet sauvignon followed this year.

The rhine riesling produced a small crop this year and despite the extreme youth of the vines and the inevitable limitations of ultra small scale wine making, a very respectable wine resulted.

No doubt 70-year-old Phil Ayton took heart from Sydney Hamilton, who was 78 when he established Leconfield in Coonawarra, taking that winery to national prominence before retiring in October 1981, aged 84. Ayton's vineyard is at Red Hill and this year produced the first semillon to come from the peninsula. The wine was made for Ayton by Hickinbotham Winemakers, and showed all the intense grassyher-



baceous character which we now expect from cool-climate semillon and which - particularly in young wine - can be confusingly similar to sauvignon blanc.

Ayton has also planted the latter variety, and it may well be he will elect to blend the two in future years in the manner of some New Zealand and many Californian producers.

Devil Bend Creek is the arresting name of a vineyard owned by Melbourne surgeon Richard McIntyre; his first wines, from 1986, were made for him by Nat White at Main Ridge, but McIntyre hopes to have his own winery operating for the next vintage.

The 1986 chardonnay has abundant ripe fruit flavour, a characteristic which also appears in the

1986 pinot noir from the same vineyard. Here the tropical peach flavours are replaced by sweet plummy fruit, one of the classic manifestations of pinot noir and which seems to be a regional hallmark.

The last of the Devil Bend Creek wines, a cabernet sauvignon/cabernet franc blend, is in a distinctly different style, lively and astringent. It seems clear that McIntyre's wines will not be short of either fruit flavour or varietal character.

Red Hill Estate, owned by Roger and Judy Buckle, has about 2ha of chardonnay, merlot and cabernet sauvignon planted. The 1986 Red Hill Estate Cabernet Merlot was made at Elgee Park, and what a wine it is: the bouquet is redolent with cassis/bena aroma, and there are correspondingly fruit-sweet cassis/bena flavours on the lively palate.

Elgee Park has also made the wines from Stan Paul's Balnarring Vineyard for several years now, and the Balnarring label will be one of the next to appear on the commercial market.

Balnarring is a very interesting vineyard, for in 1985 and 1986 it produced red wines with an unusual depth of colour and flavour, and equally surprising concentration. If there has been a question mark over the Mornington Peninsula, it has related to concern that the reds might not have sufficient depth to develop into great wines with bottle maturation. As the vines become more mature, and as the effects of microclimate and microsite become more evident with more and more vineyards coming on-stream, that concern has disappeared.

The 1986 Balnarring Pinot Noir is a veritable monster, dense purple black in colour and with the sort of tannin level one might expect to encounter with a warm-area cabernet sauvignon made in the old style. It will, to put it mildly, be interesting to see how this wine develops.

A 1986 chardonnay from the same vineyard was one of the best whites in the tasting, with voluminous nectarine/passion-fruit fragrances which came through strongly on the palate as well, augmented by some sophisticated oak handling. The 1986 Balnarring Cabernet Merlot confirmed the vineyard's propensity to richness and depth, although

the tannin was, happily, well balanced.

There was also an interesting range of wines from Melbourne solicitor Brian Kewley, who has been making wine for a number of years from the small plantings on his weekend property. They are not intended for sale, but such is Kewley's expertise that most of them would be eagerly sought if available. A "Bordeaux-blend" of cabernet sauvignon, cabernet franc and merlot was the pick, an elegant but intense wine with a fine and long-flavoured palate.

The remaining wines came from the five vineyards which are in commercial production and offering wines for sale: Dromana Estate, Elgee Park, Main Ridge Estate, Merricks Estate and Stonier's Merricks.

One wine which will not be offered for sale is Elgee Park's 1986 Viognier, made from the exceedingly rare grape of the same name and which is sparingly grown at the top end of the Rhone Valley. Stuart Anderson, of Balgownie, also made an experimental viognier this year, and who knows - viognier may become the flavour of the month by 1990. Certainly the Elgee wine has the distinctive, slightly oily texture of the variety. Elgee Park's principal white wines are rhine riesling and chardonnay, both of which are available (exclusively by mailing list) at the present time, with the 1985 vintage on offer.

The rhine riesling is typical of the district, fine, delicately fragrant and bordering on the austere.

The chardonnay is another elegant wine, with pronounced barrel ferment characters in the bouquet, and fresh, spicy oak on the palate balanced against crisp fruit. Another two or three years should see the wine at its peak.

What is (once again) a very distinctive vineyard style appears in the presently available 1984 Elgee Park Cabernet Merlot. As befits a young wine made from these varieties, it is quite firm, yet not the least bit heavy. Clean berry fruit flavours and soft but persistent tannin carry through to a long finish.

Dromana Estate is enjoying a fairytale run of success. The 1985 vintage sold out in a matter of minutes and I have written elsewhere that I think the 1985 Dromana Estate Cabernet Sauvignon is the best red wine so far to come from the peninsula.

But winemaker Garry Crittenden seems set to produce even better wines in the future. His 1986 Chardonnay and 1986 Cabernet Sauvignon both received gold medals at the Victorian Wines Show and the 1986 Pinot Noir a strong bronze medal. The 1986 Pinot Noir was an outstanding wine at the Mornington tasting.

Nat White at Main Ridge Estate is the most experienced wine maker in the region, and invariably produces immaculately finished wines. His 1986 Gewurztraminer is one of the most interesting wines from this variety I have so far encountered in Australia. With aromas and tastes of lychee, frangipani and apricot, it also has unusual depth - almost viscosity - on the palate.

Another striking wine from Main Ridge is its Pinot Meunier. The only other pinot meunier to have been commercially sold in

Australia is a straight varietal red from Bests at Great Western. The 1985 Main Ridge Pinot Meunier was released not long ago, but I suspect may well be sold out by now. It has striking and unusual spice/pepper characteristics which are more akin to cool-climate shiraz, but is no less attractive for all that. The 1985 Main Ridge Pinot Meunier is my personal pick from that vintage and the 1986 looks every bit as promising.

Merricks Estate is the weekend refuge of another Melbourne solicitor, George Kefford, and the wines are made with consultancy help and advice from Alex White. That advice seems to be paying dividends; Merricks Estate has followed up an exhilarating 1984 Shiraz with a rich and complex 1986 Cabernet Sauvignon which topped the varietal cabernet sauvignon class at the Orford Victorian Wines Show, receiving a gold medal for so doing.

Stonier's Merricks has produced some wonderful cabernet sauvignon, far lighter in style than Merricks Estate, but with great intensity. At the Mornington tasting it was represented by the 1986 Chardonnay, with strong apricot peach characters of well-ripened fruit. Owner Brian Stonier must be very happy with his wines to date.

Stonier's Merricks is sold virtually exclusively through Gatehouse Cellars, Melbourne. Dromana Estate is distributed by I.H. Baker but both in its case and for the other wineries, the only sure way of finding the wine is through the mailing list which each operates.

Mailing addresses: Dromana Estate, PO Box 332, Mornington 3931; Elgee Park, Junction Road, Merricks North 3926; Main Ridge Estate, PO Box 40, Red Hill South 3937; Merricks Estate, Thompson's Lane, Merricks 3916.





# EPICUREAN

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## The New Viticulture. Part 2

Rules are meant to be broken, but David Paxton is quick to acknowledge the work of the French over centuries past. He also cites logic as a powerful tool. "It is clear that what works here is not necessarily right for another vineyard. It is a matter of modifying techniques to suit each vineyard. There are good models to start with, but then the modification must be considered."

He left us with the impression that this was a long term project, perhaps one which will never be finished. It is evolution in a very healthy form and in the meantime David Paxton is making a very good living from growing and selling his grapes.

In another state, and by way of contrast, Reg Egan at close-to-Melbourne Wantirna Estate is hardly the rural type. Even though he tries hard with his holey jumpers and gumboots, it somehow doesn't ring true. The cordless phone hanging from his belt gives him away.

These days, legal-eagle Reg describes himself as a full time viticulturalist/winemaker. He says he has turned his back on the law and it is all or nothing for Wantirna Estate. The transition from hobby farmer to serious producer is no more evident than in the state of the vineyard.

In summer the vines look like manicured hedges. The theory is to train a vertical canopy one metre high and three leaves thick. This narrow hedge of leaves means the bunches are exposed. The objective is to increase the Baumé by at least half a degree without the penalty of decreased acid.

To manage the canopies Reg and his daughter Maryann have strung out 40 kilometres of wire to force the canopy into a vertical shape. This means there is a

better target for spraying, heat is maximised and disease is easier to control. The 1986 vintage was the first where the technique was totally applied to the vineyard.

It would be nice to report that the results were on the board for all to see, but viticulture, or rather mother nature, isn't like that. The vintage was atypical so any results were meaningless. The readings of Baumé and acid were about the same as usual, but Reg is not discouraged.

"This is work for the future," he says. "The great wines will be made by the next generation. My generation will only make some memorable wines, but what we do

suburban Melbourne. Virgin Hills should be renamed Hard Times; it is a bitter plot bashed out of the middle of a particularly unruly tuft of mess mate scrub.

The winemaker at Virgin Hills, Mark Shepherd, admires Reg Egan and his vineyard with unconcealed envy. "Every time I see Wantirna Estate I want to spit, it looks so neat. Up here (Kyneton, north-west of Melbourne) it isn't a matter of controlling vigor it is a matter of promoting it. Up here is a matter of trying to ensure the survival of the vines from one season to the next."

Clearly there is no room for hedged vertical canopies at Virgin Hills, yet it is interesting to compare the styles of their wines with those of Wantirna Estate. It could be argued that the quality level is similar but the style is different. This difference is the key — both Egan and Shepherd have set about making distinctive style from their estates.

That is paramount in Reg's thinking. "People don't buy Mouton instead of Lafite because they think it is better. At that level they are buying a style. That's the way I want people to see my wines. I don't want to get caught up in a debate about the superiority or otherwise of my wines to those of Seville or Mount Mary. Such comparisons are false. I want people to buy my wine because of the style."

The Wantirna style is now being set in the vineyard. It remains to be seen what measurable difference the new viticulture makes to these already laudable wines, but one thing is certain — it will be interesting to monitor progress.

To brand new winemaking ground, on Victoria's Mornington Peninsula. At first glance there is little to distinguish Dro-

*"Good wines are made in the vineyard — by the vineyard. The winemaker is a caretaker to see things along."*

— Randy Weaver,  
award-winning American-born  
winemaker and the man behind  
the successful New Zealand label  
Coopers Creek.

now will have a lasting effect on the future of winemaking."

So he is looking 20 years ahead to a time when some of the answers become clear. Not everyone shares his theories and he admits he may well be wrong, but only time will tell.

It is clear that what works at Wantirna Estate doesn't work everywhere. Virgin Hills vineyard, also in Victoria, is the other side of the coin to Reg's lush plot in



mana Estate from Wantirna Estate but first impressions are misleading.

Dromana Estate is the pride of Gary Crittenden (no relation to the wine retailing dynasty) who is a very successful horticulturalist. His large wholesale business supplies hundreds of thousands of pot plants to the retail trade each year. So when he approached the problem of growing vines, he did so with the discipline of a pot foremost in his mind.

Gary Crittenden is a compact man with a direct way of speaking which conveys a sense of logic. His approach to viticulture appears novel at first, but it is abundantly clear he knows just what he is aiming for, "I think the ratio of tartaric acid and malic acid is critical, I think you should be looking at as low a malic acid reading as possible, but still with a low pH, as fruit comes off the vine." Having decided that he set about achieving this in the vineyard. "As you can see, I'm fond of straight lines." Indeed he is. Each row of vines is regimented like palace guards. There is not a frond out of place. It is almost as if they wouldn't dare.

Gary says that when he planted the vineyard he didn't use France as a model. "I looked at horticultural realities, using my background I sought knowledge about how grapes were grown everywhere, not only France. By taking only France it is not axiomatic that you will grow the best fruit here in Australia. I looked at the physiology of the grape and developed my system on the options that are open."

The system is by no means unique, but there is more emphasis on soil management. People tend to think of the grape vine as something that exists only from the ground up, Gary Crittenden believes that is a bit too simple an approach. "The French say that soil makes a great deal of difference to the quality of the fruit, I go along with that," says Gary. "I believe the key is the way in which the soil drains, I believe the French successes are largely

attributable to that. I've designed my vineyard around a system where I can dry the vines out if I want to and I can add water when necessary."

The canopy is put into a rigid vertical pattern which catch wires for a good balance of fruit exposure and protection (shades of Wantirna Estate), and this method seems to suit the cool climate. According to Gary you can manipulate fruit flavor quite dramatically simply by manipulating the canopy or controlling the vigor. Soil management can also have a dramatic effect. He believes that the totally nude vineyard is wrong. By keeping the ground bare there is a great risk of ruining the soil in the long term. "I'm

a container or pot. You add water, you add nutrients. I suppose it is a whole new way of thinking — in essence it is taking control of the plant."

Crittenden is delighted at the experimentation taking place in Australia. Close planting and the like he regards as particularly exciting. He freely admits that there are several ways to approach the problems of viticulture.

The wines from Dromana Estate are made by Dr Tony Jordan of Oenotec fame. Gary Crittenden is lavish in his praise of Tony Jordan. He realised that he was a horticulturalist and not a winemaker, so he values the guidance of a consultant like Tony. That's not to say he

doesn't have very definite ideas about style. It would be remarkable if it were otherwise, because above all Gary Crittenden is a man of firm ideas.

One of the most interesting things we discovered during our sleuthing was the fact that most of these pioneers — we use that word advisedly, and they all deserve it — are working in isolation. It seemed to come as a surprise when we told them others were doing similar things. It made us want to get them together so they could compare notes. It also became apparent that the decade of the viticulturalist is now with us. The winemaker is really secondary to the

grower and the old saying that the wine is made in the vineyard rings truer than ever.

Perhaps the most memorable quote comes from Peter Wall at S. Smith and Son. "All the vine wants to do is to form seeds, it's not worried about fruit quality, that's man's problem."

It seems that man is taking the first tentative step toward handling that problem. The most heartening aspect is the thought of the wonderful wines which should result in a decade's time. We can hardly wait. But in the meantime we will keep you posted on the saga of "The New Viticulture."



Virgin Hills . . . a bitter plot bashed out of the middle of a particularly unruly tuft of mess mate scrub. It should be re-named Hard Times.

going for sward management where we mow and put the mulchings back on to add to the organic content."

He believes that different techniques are required for specific vineyards. Perhaps the most controversial aspect of the Crittenden approach is in the root system he promotes in his vines. "I'm an ornamental grower and that requires some critical horticultural practices. What I've done here is to establish a control over watering spacing and disease management. It all revolves around me controlling the vines. I've delved my rows to hills around the vines and these hills contain the root system. The hill becomes



## BEHIND THE LABELS

*A continuing series where PAUL LLOYD meets two more of our better winemakers.*

market, just "goes from strength to strength to strength". "But," says Angove, "we have three key products which are in declining market segments. This is cause for concern although they are segments with international recognition and I don't ever see them dying. However, we have to be ultra careful and ultra determined to develop and promote other areas. We can't rest on our laurels." Angove's is into cask wines, of course. The irony of its going to the Paddle Wheel casks in 1984 was that it had pioneered the bag-in-the-box 19 years earlier but had quit because the state of technology then was inadequate. But casks, says Angove, are just "a means to an end. Our return per litre in bag wines is pretty much the same as our return per litre in flagons was eight years ago. That's just not on. Today we are just so far short of returning cost in that bulk area that it is just a joke. But we need to use that capital investment that we have got and need to continue to process the fruit."

Like other companies in the cask market, it would be losing more if it weren't in it. "But I believe that premium quality table wine, such as our white varietal range, is the way for us to go. There are refinements we can make to our production techniques to improve still further but I have a burning desire to get established in that market. In the long term I see premium wines as a pretty jolly important contributor to the well-being of the company."

Angove does not seem concerned about threats from cooler climates in the premium market. He argues that the Riverland has better yields, and hence price, and the secret weapon of drinkability.

"I'm a firm believer that the Riverland produces its own style. Better or worse, goodness knows. That's a subjective evaluation. Riverland wines are much more easy drinking wines than some of the cooler climate, high acid, low pH wines. So often a cooler climate wine I find is very good but I struggle to drink a lot of it."

Angove says that if he were wrecked on a desert island the one wine style he would want would be dry red. He sees a wide spectrum of wine in comparative tastings at work. "But oh gosh, I guess I've got to reflect some degree of parochialism and cellar palatism. I don't particularly favor the heavy, earthy Hunter Valley styles. I don't particularly favor the Coonawarra styles. Barossa, Clare and Riverland I

quite enjoy. If that goes against the trends, tough.

"I honestly think that some of the wines that have come from the Riverland, and I could perhaps cite Consolidated Co-op (Berri Estates) in years gone by, are the nicest reds I have had."

He is concerned about a tendency to overwooding wines, which he calls bad winemaking. "I can stick a chardonnay in a barrel and leave it for four or five months and whacko all the pundits will say fantastic; but I don't think it is. Where's the grape? Totally masked. I don't mind the flavor of oak but it's got to be balanced."

"Some white varieties are better not wood matured at all perhaps because of the more subtle flavors. The one we're having quite a bit of fun with at the moment is the French colombar as a flavorsome easy drinking dry white wine. To lose its character by mixing it up with a whole lot of oak I don't think would be progressive at all."

It is a bottled wine with which the company is already starting to have some success in the marketplace. Ah, the market. John Angove can breathe the word almost like a religious mantra.

He stresses again his long-term goals, for the company to grow and prosper, "and the way that that is achieved is brand building. You can't survive healthily on reliance on price just to quit a product. I see our future being much more heavily dependant on success in the market."

That way, he sees another Angove generation running the company. And another. And another.

### ANDREW HICKINBOTHAM

Viticulturist Andrew Hickinbotham is one of a new breed of wine people who say they know the changes needed in Australian winemaking, and how to effect them. He has seen the revolution of the 1960s and '70s in the technology of winemaking and says it is now the turn of the grapegrowers to have their revolution. His cry, one rather in tune with today's economic realities, is: "Viticulture must become efficient; the future for Australia is being able to get cheap, good quality grapes." Andrew Hickinbotham has radicalism in his blood, which is not surprising for one who is son of Ian — the innovator at Coonawarra Estates and Kaiser Stuhl and even now in his patriarchal writings



Andrew Hickinbotham — quantity and quality

on wine retaining a healthy progressiveness — and brother of Stephen, who has variously outraged and amazed the conservative wine industry with such radical and successful developments as Cab Mac. Sister Jenny is not without a few bright ideas on vineyards, too.

Andrew Hickinbotham has the easy and smiling charm that is a family characteristic, and a youthful zeal that would seem religious were he not able to have the occasional laugh at himself. He was born a Gemini of 1959 at Angaston in the Barossa Valley and did a science degree in biology ("because I like things that grow"). He then hinted at how much he was going to reject the mainstream by choosing Dijon University in the Burgundy region of France to take a post-graduate degree in viticulture. He also worked at the family winery of Anakie near Geelong which has now been sold, having served its purpose of giving the young Hickinbothams a practical if expensive training in such aspects of wine as farming.

Andrew chose the Mornington Peninsula of Victoria, that fashionable and leathery boot between Western Port and Melbourne's Port Phillip Bay, as the area in which to practise his craft as a freelance viticultural consultant and general mover of ideas.

This peninsula was one of the lesser but real wine producing regions of last cen-



tury and is not yet quite showing up again in wine literature. But already Andrew Hickinbotham has helped set up 11 vineyards there.

It is cool climate. But to Hickinbotham that is no mere buzz phrase. He is happy to buy into the divisive debate about what constitutes a cool climate and is prepared to rebut such authorities as Petaluma's Brian Croser by suggesting that theories about mean temperatures and so forth overlook the simple but dramatic effect that just one hot day can have. This, says Hickinbotham, can be to grape proteins like the hard-boiling of an egg, making coolness before or after rather irrelevant. "The future of grape growing in Australia is going to become oriented to genuine cool climates such as southern Victoria and Tasmania, which is largely unexploited," he says. "Even for vin ordinaire. With new viticultural practices we will be able to compete with the northern, irrigated vineyards along the Murray River."

Another reason for looking more to cool climates, according to Hickinbotham, is that "the future is going to entail the French, who are moving into Australia to plant champagne grapes. They will be able to use this as a spearhead for getting into south-east Asian markets and that's something we ought to be looking at." His viticultural principles for cool climate regions revolve around "using cheap, good quality grafted rootlings so that the price differential between a grafted and non-grafted vineyard won't be so staggering; to adopt high density of planting; and to prepare for complete mechanisation. "Mornington Peninsula, being so close to the sea, has the advantages of continentality, with few peaks of temperature; but it also has the disadvantage of salt blowing on to the land. By selecting root stocks I can ensure a resistance to salt. They also promote a better flowering and a more even yield to overcome such problems as the conventional wisdom of having one good year in three when you plant in cool climates. Today, you cannot afford that."

"High density plantings mean the vines can control each other through competition," he says, sounding like a Tory philosopher on the human condition. "It gives less vegetative growth and puts more vigor into the fruit."

Canopy management also plays a part in this style of vineyard and, as for mechanisation, Hickinbotham is in no doubt: "You can have good quality fruit from mechanised harvesting. The problem has been that vineyards were being forced to adapt to the machines whereas it should have been the other way around. Machines should be adapted to the vineyard."

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"In such areas as Coonawarra they had enormous horizontal canopies and American harvesters which bash the shit out of the vines. We are starting to see the effects of that." Hickinbotham, using higher density planting and smaller canopies, is looking more to the smaller Italian or French harvesters. He is also looking to new ideas in mechanical pruning.

The main effect of all this is to make viticulture more efficient. But quantity cannot be considered without quality and Hickinbotham says that "higher density of planting increases color, which is one index of quality. It also doubles or trebles crops, which is an index of economy, without losing quality. And there is the evidence of polyphenols, another index of quality, but that is too technical to go into now."

He chose to put his ideas into practice in Mornington because he sees it as one of the best areas of Australia. "Definitely. The wines will be world class. But only if they have high-tech, efficient, economical vineyards."

The Mornington style will be "large type

**"The future is going to entail the French, who are moving into Australia to plant champagne grapes, then using it to get in south-east Asia . . . something we ought to be looking at."**

— Andrew Hickinbotham

reds, full bodied and balanced, like Bordeaux, although I don't like using that word. They will be made from grapes that are so good that once delivered to the winery they shouldn't need any additions of acid. The wine should make itself. They will be based on cabernet, even more so on the better performing cabernet franc, and merlot, malbec and so on. My clients don't seem to want shiraz which is a pity because it makes a lovely wine.

"You've always got to look at it through the market eye, even though that is difficult when there are such long lead times and will become more difficult with the introduction of new German and French varieties. We are at the mercy to some extent of the dangerous American varietal craze. A blend of cabernet sauvignon, cabernet franc and merlot is likely to make a better wine than a straight varietal cabernet sauvignon, for example, but the consumer thinks that a blend must be inferior."

"In whites, a batch of sauvignon blanc made this year at Mornington looks stunning. Obviously chardonnay always has a place on the market. Riesling may have a place and pinot noir, too."

"I still don't think we've seen any quantity of good pinot in Australia. Some of the Tasmanian stuff is getting there.

But, then, it should not be thought of as a varietal wine. The French will say that their red burgundies are made only from pinot noir but in fact they are made from many clones of pinot noir and other pinots such as pinot meunière which have real varietal differences. Anyone here who plants a straight one-clone pinot vineyard is mad and that could be why so many of the pinot wines in Australia are thin and almost insipid. They have no finish."

In personal tastes, Hickinbotham likes drinking a fine wine as much he does a beer but says, "I don't think wine can be appreciated unless you're in the right environment. That probably means the tasting laboratory. Yet paradoxically this is so sterile and unenjoyable that it defeats the purpose. So when you're sitting down with a nice cheese it might not be strictly the ultimate wine tasting but it's when I enjoy drinking wine."

"Too much these days we're drinking young wines, seeing one-year-old cabernets so often that we come to accept them. But a '60s cabernet from Coonawarra can be a fantastic wine, even though in 20 years time these one-year-olds will be as good, if not better. We had a bit of a lull in the '70s; the wines were not as good." Andrew Hickinbotham is not particularly interested in making the wine, just growing it: "One day, 'me' will be expressed in my personal vineyard not my personal wine."

He is undaunted at any suggestion that his theories might not be the only ones. "What worries me is that somebody is going to let some nasty diseases into Mornington unless sound viticultural practices such as mine are followed. I am committed to finishing what I've begun there, which could be a couple of years away. A lot of people are critical of high density plantings and sometimes it's like fighting a brick wall trying to convince them to change their ways. But they might see some light when I prove that it will make better quality wines."

Such technocracy does not base itself in any pretensions, however, nor is there the arrogance usual in youth. Perhaps, while brother Stephen is like quicksilver, Andrew prefers something of a screen of smoke. Perhaps, also, as well as being the technocrat he has something of the humility of the farmer.

"Viticulture is essentially primary produce and I keep coming back to the whole theme of botany," he says. "You can guard against a cold summer by good viticultural management but you've also got to predict the season. For example, I suspected that this spring would be very early and I could adapt my pruning accordingly. These are things you can't learn from textbooks; you've got to feel them for yourself."

The Epicurean September-October 1986



December page 8

The Southern Farmer, 1986

## FARMER OF THE MONTH



# Nurseryman turns to wine

Above: Dromana winemaker Gary Crittenden inspects pinot noir vines — "The vineyard represents 70% of the quality of the wine."

A professional horticultural background and a "passionate interest and long-standing love of good wine" have provided a sound jumping-off point for one of the Mornington Peninsula's up-and-coming winemakers.

"I am fascinated by the growing side of wine-making and I believe that if you want to produce something, you must understand the plant."

"If you have quality fruit, healthy and unblemished, you are well on the track to making a top quality product," says Gary Crittenden.

His Dromana Estate

varietals have already

toasted success. A caber-

net sauvignon from his

very first vintage in 1982

scored a medal in the

current vintage varietal

section at the Orrefors

Victorian Wine Show,

Seymour.

The 1986 cabernet sauvignon and chardonnay both won gold medals at the same show last month.

And the elegant styles being produced under European-type conditions have met with favourable response from the industry, which is looking to high-class, smaller operations like Gary Crittenden's to fulfill growing consumer demand for premium-quality wines.

His total commitment to his new calling is demonstrated by the fact he is presently selling part of his retail and wholesale plant nursery business.

This move will enable him gain further experience and devote more time to making the transition to full-time grape-growing and wine-making.

"The learning process is an evolutionary thing,

but the reality is people who succeed in the future will be those who have a good understanding of the horticultural facts of life: what to do and why," says Gary.

In fact, he states quite firmly that "the vineyard represents 70 percent of the quality of the wine", a philosophy which is gaining world-wide recognition.

The vineyard at Dromana Estates, which was planted in "one hit" in 1982, comprising predominantly cabernet sauvignon, merlot and pinot noir, presently covers just five acres. This will be extended to 10 within the next two seasons.

With production at a comparatively low three to five tonnes an acre, costs of establishment and production are high, so sheer business sense dictates the need

for a quality end product.

The labour input is also heavy.

Gary, with help from his "forebearing wife" Margaret, restored the property from its run-down state and built the winery. He employs full-time help, "Joe Vaughan, my right-hand man".

However, it is the special Mornington Peninsula climate which has provided the critical underpinning for the production of fine wines.

"We have a temperate summer with good rainfall, high humidity and a cool, prolonged ripening period from late January to harvest (early April). This gives great potential for intense flavours and styles which emphasise the individual characteristics of the fruit," says Gary.

And it has taken a healthy measure of technical expertise to capitalise on this "great weather for grapes".

An unusual trellising system, "laborious" pruning techniques, a rigidly preventative spraying program and scientific measurement of water and nutrient requirements play important roles.

Gary adopted the vertical canopy trellising method after it became obvious techniques used further north were unsuitable.

Spacing at five feet between plants and 10 foot between rows, the system consists of two horizontal, parallel wires, which can be lifted up to gather and clamp the vines as they grow.

"This gives ideal fruit exposure for colour, flavour and acid balance. Cane exposure, and subsequent selection of outside fruiting canes at pruning time, also boosts fruitfulness

Good spray penetration also enhances disease control.

Quality does have a price, and establishment costs of the system were "horrendous". As well, the laborious task of winter cane pruning, "not for the unskilled", is essential to achieve maximum production.

Gary's solution for the purists who believe wine quality can be affected by overwatering has been to utilise scientific soil moisture measurement.

Daily readings of tensiometers enable soil moisture to be kept in a pre-determined range, with the aid of dripper/trickle irrigation, fed from the property's water supply, a very attractive 20-million litre capacity dam.

There's room for the professional horticulturalist's skills of observation though.

"It's still trial and error and we are constantly monitoring how the vine performs, whether it is stressed or vigorous," notes Gary.

Fertiliser applications are made on the basis of annual petiole analyses at flowering, with autumn additions if necessary.

Gary also notes he has seen "a dramatic improvement" in soil analyses and structure over the last four years. This he attributes partly to his sward culture system under the vines.

The pasture mixture is mown with a flail mower, producing a mulch which has helped to build up the grey duplex sandy loam soil.

Hilled-up rows enhance drainage and the sward culture under the vines also improves trafficability, ensuring critical sprays can be applied on time.

Disease management is aimed at producing 100 percent sound, clean, unspoiled fruit and so far Dromana Estate has

On the cellar side of things, Gary had no previous training or experience in wine-making, so he employed well-respected consultant Dr Tony Jordan, of Oenotech in South Australia.

"I have seen other people attempt to make their own wine and come unstuck," explains Gary.

"I do all the hands-on lab work, testing for sugars, acids and pH, and evaluating juice flavour. Then we consult and work out the best way to handle the fruit."

The winery is fully-insulated and air-conditioned to allow maturing wines to get maximum benefit from their French oak casks.

As to how important is the marketing of this carefully-conceived product, Gary says "Extremely!"

"A lot of people don't have a marketing strategy; but you must be aware of the market and target it. Exposure in the public eye is essential so your product is recognised by wine commentators and the consuming public."

Gary believes he and

his fellow small quality operators are now the "leading edge" of an industry which is facing a shake-out sooner or later.

He says the "boutique wineries" are reaping the benefits now of an education process over the last 10 years.

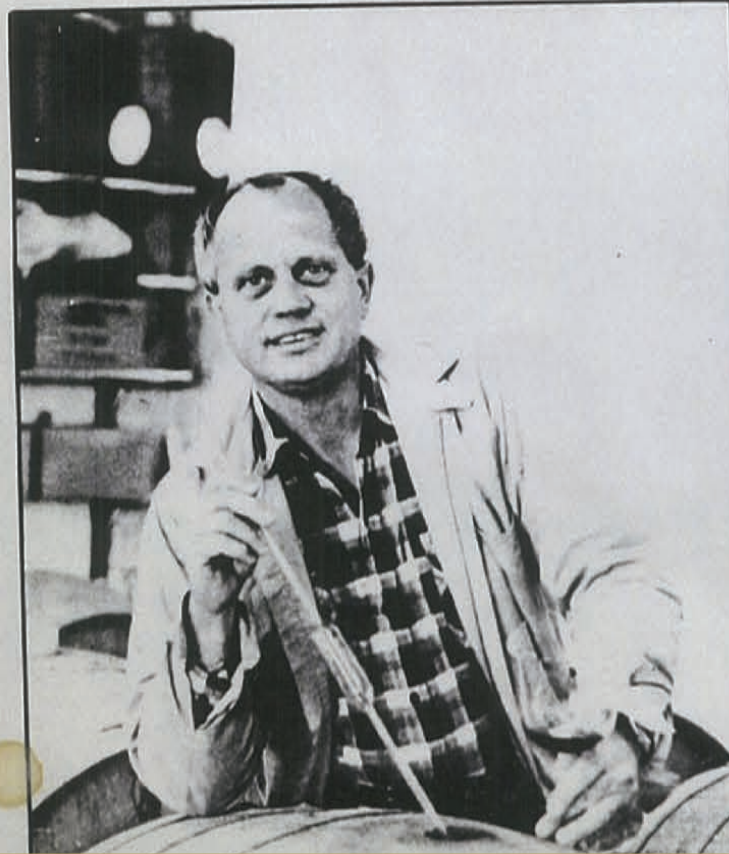
"We now have well-informed and well-heeled consumers who take their wine seriously and like to be involved in the mystique of wines," he says.

His own commitment illustrates his confidence in the future, but he has some words of caution for would-be wine-makers.

"To be competitive, the approach to growing, making and selling must be thoroughly professional. Many people underestimate the time and money involved to do a proper job," says Gary.

But there's still a drop of the romantic in the man.

"I'm a horticulturalist first and foremost, but I do get immense pleasure from the transition of a hands-on pursuit to a beautiful bottle of wine."





Standard - Post, Wednesday, November 26, 1986

## Our vin's a top bin

FIVE Peninsula winemakers have won major awards in two prestigious Victorian wine shows.

And one of them, Garry Crittenden, was within half a mark of nationally famous winemaker Wolf Blass in taking out the top trophy at the Lilydale Wine Show.

The winemakers, all members of the Mornington Peninsula Vignerons' Association (MPVA), won awards in both the Lilydale Wine Show and the Orrefors Victorian Wine Show at Seymour.

They are two of the state's most prestigious wine shows.

Nurseryman Garry Crittenden, whose winery at his Dromana Estate Vineyard is in its first year, won two gold awards for his 1986 chardonnay, one gold and a bronze for his 1986 cabernet, and a silver and a bronze for his 1986 pinot noir.

### Top award winners

Other top awards in the two shows went to:

- Baillieu Myer's Elgee Park vineyard at Merriicks North — silver for 1986 cabernet and bronze for 1986 chardonnay;

- Nat White's Main Ridge Estate — silver for 1986 cabernet and bronze for 1986 pinot noir;

- Roger Buckle's Red Hill Estate — gold for 1986 cabernet sauvignon (made at Elgee Park); and

- George Refford's Merricks Estate — gold medallion for 1986 cabernet, silver for 1985 pinot noir and two bronze for 1985 shiraz.

Mr Crittenden, vice-president of the MPVA, said the awards were a "tremendous boost" to winegrowers in the area.

"These shows are the prestigious ones for small to medium size growers so we are all pretty thrilled with the results," he said.

"If you look at the results from the point of view of the number of entrants and districts then the Peninsula growers came out very well indeed."

"Most of us are in our first year or two of winemaking and to get results like this is very encouraging."

The fledgling industry is attracting an increasing number of growers to the Peninsula.



● GARRY Crittenden... within half a mark of famous winemaker Wolf Blass.

There are now more than 35 vineyards on the Peninsula's north-facing slopes and eight growers will have wine for sale from the 1986 vintage.

Nearly 100 people attended this year's MPVA annual dinner and the recent Winefest at *The Briars*, a historic homestead at Mount Martha. Peninsula wines were savored at the dinner, which attracted more than 300 people.

Mr Crittenden himself is adding an extra hectare to his 2 ha vineyard and plans to add a further 2 ha of chardonnay grapes next year.

"We believe we're heading in the right direction for producing high-quality wines and that it won't be long before Mornington Peninsula wines are sought after throughout Australia," Mr Crittenden said.

The wines could be bought locally or at specialist wine cellars in Melbourne, he said.

A Friends of the Mornington Peninsula Vignerons' Association group has also been formed.

Membership inquiries should be made to P.O. Box 332, Mornington.

14 — GEELONG ADVERTISER, Thursday, October 2, 1986

## LIFESTYLE

### WINE

Frank Doherty

There can be no doubt that, viticulturally, Victoria is the fastest-expanding of the Australian states, though it may never regain the position it held before phylloxera when it towered over its neighbors on each side.

To my mind, belatedly, the Government has at last recognised the growth taking place before its eyes and has appointed a State viticulturalist after there not having been one for at least 15 years, during which time much of the expansion occurred.

For its own reasons which many find difficult to fathom, it has chosen to domicile him in Bendigo — which, one hastens to add, is no reflection on that city.

However, this snippet of information is parenthetical to my point.

Within the past two decades, we in Victoria have seen both the revival of former wine-producing regions — such as around Geelong, Bendigo, Sunbury and Avoca and in the Yarra valley — and the establishment of new ones such as at Macedon, Mount Ida, in the Strathbogie ranges and, to a limited degree, in Gippsland.

Recently, the first cabernet sauvignon in any reasonable commercial quantity made its debut from yet another burgeoning vineyard area — the Mornington Peninsula.

It is the 1985 Dromana Estate cabernet, a very young wine, admittedly, and as such one which, for those able to secure some of it, should be cellared for a few years yet.

I am not the only one to be impressed by it even in its youth, for that much more experienced writer and widely-known judge of

## An 'exceptional' offering from the Peninsula

wine, James Halliday, tells me that he regards it as "exceptional".

If it were entered now in a class for one-year-old reds, he said he would award it an incredible 19 points out of a possible 20 which must delight the heart of both the man who made it and the one who owns it.

Only 400 cases of it are available but later vintages, I am told, should produce 1000 cases.

Dromana Estate is owned by Garry Crittenden and his wife, Margaret — no relation to the Melbourne-based wine merchant family of the same name.

The Crittendens bought 11 hectares of land in the Dromana region in 1981 and have already under vine chardonnay, merlot, pinot noir and, of course, cabernet sauvignon. Further development is planned.

A full-time nurseryman with his own business on the peninsula, Garry speaks modestly but enthusiastically of his '85 cabernet, describing it as being "very typical of the style, with lovely fruit characters and soft tannins".

He conceded that, although it makes pleasant drinking now, it will reward the purchaser prepared to leave it undisturbed for a few years.

The grapes were picked in early April last year, qualifying the area for the appellation "cool climate" and the wine was made for the Crittendens by Nat White of the neighboring Main Ridge vineyard, though Garry Crittenden does plan to make his own wine later.

Although the Mornington Peninsula is considered one of the youngest of Victoria's vignobles, the vine is no stranger to it.

The late Douglas Seabrook, as knowledgeable a wine figure as could be found among his contemporaries, planted on the slopes of the hill known as Arthur's Seat more than 30 years ago but did not proceed to make wine, being thwarted by fierce and troublesome winds.

But, with assistance from man-made windbreaks, grape-growers and winemakers like Garry Crittenden are optimistic about its

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THE AGE, Tuesday 7 October 1986 39

## Epicure 7

## Frolicking with Padlock

**N**OT long after we had observed Count Fritz von Hurdle attached to a buoy, a speedboat skipped between us and the increasingly limp Prussian. Padlock Holmes fired a shot across the speedster's bow. It circled back, saw von Hurdle, took him on board, and powered into shore.

Von Hurdle's saviors were Sir Henley Shuttlecock and his wife, Dame Battledore. I had stayed once at their Portsea mansion. Since then I had spent years eluding them and their pitiless invitations to champagne breakfasts and luncheons under canvas. They invited me to dinner — smartly adding that the purpose of the evening was to examine several fine 1983 Bordeaux reds. I accepted.

Sir Henley wore an admiral's hat, an orange cravat, a mauve Maurice Chevalier shirt, Clive of India shorts, mustard socks, and black pinstripes. His wife wore the latest in bikinis. She laughed sonorously at her husband's every utterance. The blubber of Sir Henley's body seem to quiver sympathetically to the rippling of Dame Battledore's.

During our conversation, von Hurdle had been carried to the beach, where he was arrested by Holmes, and handcuffed. The latter I thought a trifle drastic — the count was moribund. Padlock strolled off to ring for an ambulance. We lit a fire by the shivering wretch. Skidmore Rowe tossed a couple of his dog pelts over him.

Sir Henley and Dame Battledore sped off to their private jetty. Von Hurdle's condition worsened. Joe Goanna pumped his chest, Skidmore bellowed his lungs. He responded. Just then an Alfa Romeo drew up. The cone of a megaphone appeared through a lowered black window, the barrel of a shotgun through another. We were ordered to take von Hurdle to the boot. We did so. The lid popped up. We put him in, as instructed, and closed the boot.

Instead of giving chase, Joe Goanna very sensibly decided to retrieve his grandmother from the cooler at the Flinders pub and despatch her remains with proper ceremony. Skidmore chose to accompany him. I waited for Padlock Holmes. We prevailed upon the ambulance chaps to whisk us to Portsea.

We entered the lounge of the Portsea Hotel and were immediately greeted by Google Fowler and Toothsie Sawe. They entreated us to join them, and introduced us to Penelope Thames, Miss England 1984, and Grubsie Street, a columnist. Grubsie saluted me as if he were in a brown study — so absorbed was he in the splendors of Penelope's bodice.

The barman suffered similar reverie. I snapped my fingers. I barked. He turned. It



## Grapeshots

By JACK HIBBERD

was Glen Waverley, whom I'd not seen since he had beaten the tripe out of me so comprehensively that I required admission to St Andrews. We shook hands. I hadn't recognised Glen at first owing to his modern coiffure in which all hair is assembled in the middle of the forehead and back along the crest of the cruet.

Glen had been working part-time at the hotel for some months. The rest of the time he surfed, fished, and hired himself out as a gigolo. He demanded and got payment in cash or wine. One substantial Portsea cellar had been sorely depleted of prime clarets and burgundies. I trusted it was not that of Sir Henley Shuttlecock.

At Glen's instigation, I returned to the table with three bottles of cabernet sauvignon, all peninsula produce: a Merricks Estate 1984, a Main Ridge Estate 1984, and a Dromana Estate 1985. Grubsie, who affected an affinity with the menial classes, spurned my offer and persisted with his Crown Lager.

The women needed no prodding, nor did Detective-Inspector Padlock Holmes. Wine cascaded into their glasses. Merriment ensued. Grubsie's eyes narrowed. He invited Penelope to dine with him that night at Fanny's. She told him to scarper. He branded Penelope a strumpet and frump. Padlock promptly arrested Grubsie and handcuffed him to a cactus.

Glen Waverley intimated that the chef was only too happy to roast us a whole fillet of beef and serve it on a bed of best prosciutto and snow peas. Furthermore, the chef would be glad to dribble over the fillet a sauce rendered from its juices, green peppercorns, and cognac. We did not reject the chef's proposition.

The wines were well received, attracting praise for their bold colors, their lightish structures but adamant flavors. Purples and reds dominated. The Dromana Estate however showed strong tints of blue — a harbinger of excellence in my experience. The odors were of paddocks of green grass and herb gardens, the Main Ridge adding whiffs of dust.

This dustiness became slightly more evident on drinking, prompting Padlock Holmes to speculate that Main Ridge and

Merricks might be using large old casks. Although ludicrously young, and thin in the midriff, the Dromana Estate was held the most likely — especially as it filled out with extended breathing. Glen produced a bottle that had been open for three days. We consumed it within three minutes.

The fillet of beef and its adjuncts proved scrumptious. The chef, Bunny Owens, emerged and was heaped with congratulations. She joined us at the table. I took pity on Grubsie and handed him a wafer of pink meat on a fork.

Not content with the snack, he requested a glass of wine. As I gave him some Merricks he confided that he was about to abandon journalism and write the GHAN — which I had always thought of as a train. He outlined in loving detail his plans to compose the Great Hip Australian Novel. It sounded quite appalling.

I excused myself and returned to where Padlock had an arm curled around Google, and Toothsie was nibbling into Glen Waverley's ear lobe. I fell into small talk with Penelope and learnt she would soon be a guest of the Shuttlecocks. It became obvious we should see one another at dinner.

As the platitude would have it, a lull descended upon proceedings. This awkward tranquillity was broken firstly by Grubsie's adenoidal voice inviting Penelope to dinner at Gio Gio's, secondly by the blasting into the room of Count Fritz von Hurdle.

He galloped straight at Padlock Holmes and proceeded to throttle him and curse recklessly. It required the not inconsiderable strength of Glen Waverley to loosen von Hurdle's grip. Once released, Padlock clipped his assailant under the button. He then raised the slack body and buried it against the base of the large cactus.

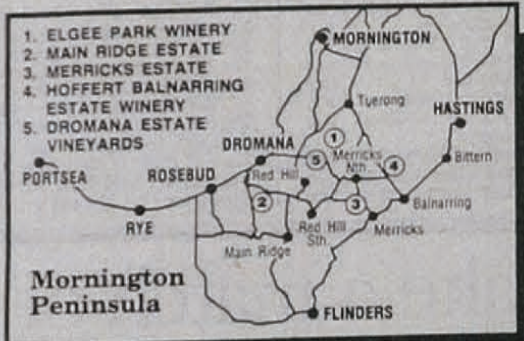
Von Hurdle still wore leopard skin briefs and an eyepatch. He had filed through the connecting chain of his handcuffs, most probably with those teeth, and subsequently contrived to escape from the boot of the Alfa Romeo and retrace his steps.

I winced as I imagined the agony the count would endure, when he regained consciousness, from the numerous long needles skewering his flesh. This rumination was stopped by the entry of Skidmore Rowe. He bore an exhausted Joe Goanna over a shoulder.

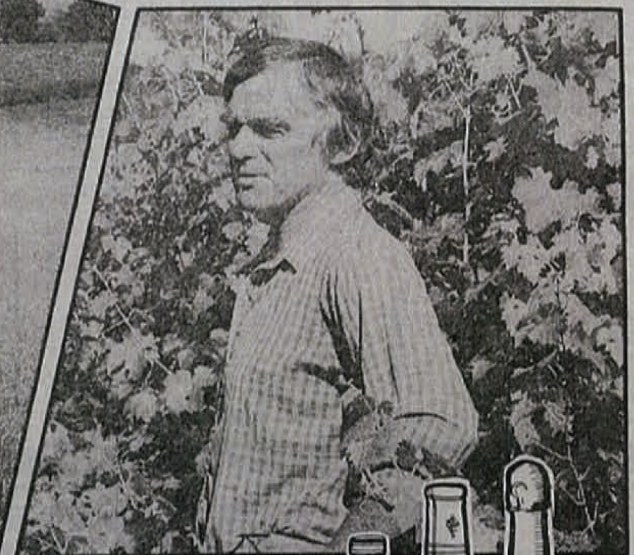
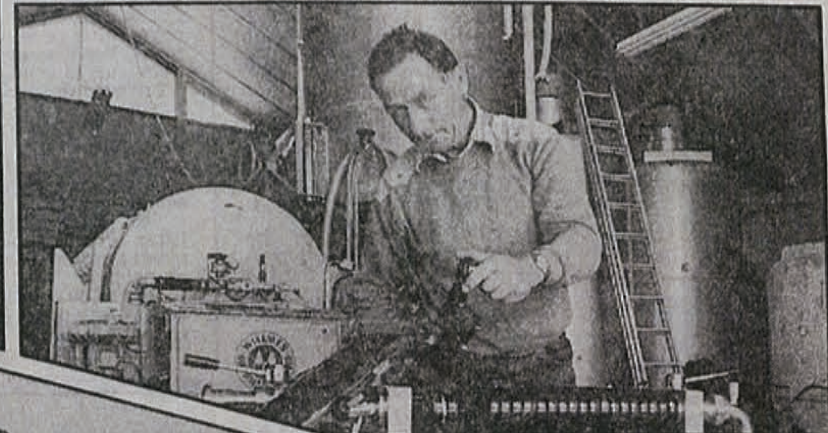
Wearing only a St Bernard pelt around his loins, Skidmore placed Joe gently on a chair, politely but firmly lifted Glen from his, and sat down. Toothsie Sawe hardly missed a beat. Skidmore poured himself a glass of Main Ridge. Penelope Thames declared fruitfully that this had been her first experience of ockers.



The Herald, Thurs., Jan. 29, 1987 — Page 17



Winmakers of the Peninsula, clockwise: It's a hobby for lawyer Brian Kewley. Garry Crittenden sold a successful nursery business to achieve his dream. At Elgee Park, home of Baillieu Myer, manager Henk Vandenberg checks over the filter plates. At Main Ridge, winemaker Nat White, a former civil engineer. Melbourne publisher Brian Stonier enjoys the spectacular view over Westernport Bay from his Balnarring vineyard.



# BAY BOTTLERS



THE soft hills of the Mornington Peninsula have seen the second coming of the grape.

And caressed by sunlight and sea air, the fine bunches of fruit are about to put this very desirable bit of real estate well and truly on the wine map of Australia.

Born-again pioneers with arms full of cuttings have already sought out the best areas. The roots have gone deep and wine drinkers are now beginning to sit up and take notice.

Red and white wine flows from Moorooduc right down to Sorrento. Not always in great quantity, but the tap has been turned on.

"Altogether we have 31 enthusiasts growing grapes and ten vineyards are of commercial significance," said Garry Crittenden, spokesman for the growers' association. So enthusiastic is he that the title of "Len Evans of

## The wines of the Peninsula come of age

### Sippings

Eric Page

the Peninsula" has already been bestowed on him.

History was not kind to the area. The first settlers were mainly Anglo-Saxon stock and not given to drinking much wine. Had they been southern Europeans, the story could have been different.

Even so there were reasonably

sized plantings on the peninsula and by 1869 about 35 hectares were producing grapes for wine. These vineyards were to disappear without trace, but some memories live on. One notorious drop called Balcombe Vinegar was thought to have been produced at The Briers, the historic homestead.

And Simon the Frenchman, a hermit living in a hollow tree on Arthur's Seat, cultivated vines just to quench his own Gallic thirst.

In more recent times Mick Seppelt, of the great winemaking family, bought a holiday home at Mt. Martha after World War 2 and put in vines on a hectare of land in Harrisons Rd., Dromana. Workers were

sent down from Great Western at pruning time.

When this property was sold, the new owner was the brother-in-law of Melbourne wine merchant Doug Seabrook and together they looked after the vineyard. At vintage time Doug would take the grapes to his Ivanhoe home and do the crushing there.

The Seppelt planting, however, was wiped out in the 1967 bushfire.

TODAY the winegrowers of the peninsula are a cross-section of city businessmen seeking a weekend escape, professional men wanting another interest and others eager to change their complete lifestyle.

Some have the ability to make

wine. Some don't and have to ask others to make it for them.

"Small growers are not permitted to sell wine," said Garry Crittenden. "They must cultivate at least four acres before they can be granted a licence."

The Elgee Park winery of Baillieu Myer at Merricks North is the best equipped and bright with stainless steel.

Vines were planted on the property in 1972 at the start of the renaissance. It happened after winemaker David Wynn had been to lunch and remarked that it looked the right spot to grow grapes. About 300 vines were put in.

● Continued Page 20.





# Bay bottlers

●From Page 17.

**E**LGEE Park is probably the best known of all the peninsula wineries by virtue of the glorious reds made in its early days by Ian Hickinbotham, who crushed the grapes in the old garage before the present winery was built. Later vintages were made at the Hickinbothams' former winery at Anakie.

Today Elgee Park has a full-time winemaker in Tod Dexter, working closely with the high priest of consultants, Tony Jordan, of Oenotec in Adelaide.

Unlike most crops, vines do not need rich soil and at Elgee Park the grapes are grown on poor sandy clay with some rock in it.

Estate manager Hank Vandenharm said: "We generally blend our cabernet sauvignon with cabernet franc and merlot. I know we can't produce a true Bordeaux style but that is what we are aiming for."

"This year we have so much merlot that we could put out a straight varietal."

"Our output last year was 600 cases of both red and white. It will be more next year when we have 1.5 hectares in full production."

"Our main bugbear here is wind and the rain. Any diseases we can control by spraying."

**W**IND damage can also be a problem for Brian Stonier at his picturesque vineyard on a hill top above Balnarring.

"We started planting here in 1978 with cabernet and chardonnay," said Brian, executive chairman of Macmillans publishers, whose life is divided between the city and his country property.

"We found out those varieties worked and then realised that if we planted more chardonnay and put in pinot, we could have some champagne. The vines were planted on a very wet spot not being used for cattle. At every stage we were learning as we went along."

Young winemaker Stephen Hickinbotham (Ian's son) made the Stonier vintages up to his death in an air crash last year and now his brother Andrew cares for the vines.

Next door to the Stoniers is the 2.5 hectare Merricks Estate vineyard of lawyer George Kefford, who has retained Lilydale winemaker Alex White as a consultant. His 1986 Cabernet picked up a gold at Seymour.

Tucked away in the bush near Flinders, at the end of a drive lined with blue and white agapanthus is the hideaway of another legal man, Brian Kewley. He is the true

## Wineries with wine for sale

1. — Elgee Park Winery: Wines available by mail order and through some shops. Not open to the public. Inquiries (059) 89-7338.
2. — Main Ridge Estate: Wines available at cellar door, by mail order and through retailers. Winery open to visitors. (059) 89-2686.
3. — Merricks Estate: Not open to public. Inquiries (059) 89-8416 or (03) 602-4444.
4. — Hoffert Balnarring Estate: Not open to visitors. Inquiries about wines for sale (059) 89-5330.
5. — Dromana Estate: Inspection by appointment only (059) 87-3275.

## Vineyards in production

Balnarring Vineyard (Bruce and Stan Paul), King's Creek Vineyard (Jim and Faye Temple and W. Glover), Red Hill Estate (Roger Buckle), Stonier's Merricks Vineyard (Brian and Noel Stonier), St. Neot's Estate, Red Hill South (Philip and Elvala Ayton).

amateur, but last year he made one of the best chardonnays I have ever tasted.

His small vineyard is a sun trap behind tall hedges and pine trees. When asked what area he has under grapes, he replies by telling you that he has 495 vines including the Bordeaux mix of cabernet sauvignon, cabernet franc and merlot. His longest row of whites is the chardonnay.

"I ferment my whites in Italian glass demijohns," he said. "My unwooded cabernets have lovely fresh characteristics. I don't enter any wines in shows because there is no point without a licence to sell."

Over among the pine trees of Main Ridge you find the winery of Nat White, the only vineyard on the peninsula with a tasting room that is open to the public without appointment.

Nat is a former civil engineer who in his travels in Europe enjoyed the wines and came to the conclusion that by comparison Australian wines were rich and coarse.

"The lighter and fruitier European styles attracted me and I thought it would be interesting to do something like that here," he said.

**I**T WAS important to choose the right variety for the various locations on the peninsula.

"All grapes will not do well in all areas. Merlot and malbec don't set in this climate (the vineyard is 210m above sea level). If I were starting again I would plant pinot noir and chardonnay only."

Nat does not blend his wines and sells straight varietals from the cellar door for \$8.50 for the pinot up to \$13 for the chardonnay. He produced 700 cases last year, but the 1987 crop will be down on that.

"There is no doubt that this is the most exciting wine area in Australia to be involved in," he said.

**G**ARRY Crittenden's vineyard is only a stone's throw from where Mick Seppelt planted his vines near Moat's Corner.

For years it had been Garry's dream to be a winemaker and he sold a thriving business as a nurseryman to become just that.

"In my late teens I began drinking Lindeman's Cawarra until someone told me about Coonawarra. I finished up by drinking French wine and that was pretty spoiling."

"Then I went for a holiday to Tasmania and found that they were making some pretty astonishing wines with fruit flavors very different to other Australian wines."

"At first I toyed with the idea of going to Tasmania, but as it turned out I had to come only ten miles down the road to find the equivalent of what I had seen in Tasmania."

His soil is sandy loam, which helps to keep the vigor of his vines under control. He has 2.5 hectares planted to cabernet sauvignon, merlot (for blending), pinot noir and chardonnay. All his wines are priced at \$13.50 and visitors can look round if they phone first.

"Our release of wine in March will be the first to be grown, made and bottled on the property," said Garry. "Before that Nat White used to make our wines for us."

"In development we are about five years behind the Yarra Valley. We may never achieve their acreage, but we will probably surpass them in quality."

"I think our wines have a purity of fruit and intense flavor because of the influence of moisture-laden breezes off the sea."





## Early Drinking Reds

5 tasted – 4 reviewed

An excellent set of wines which offer fresh fruit, balance and drinkability.

### Mitchelton Cab Mac 1986 ★★★★★

Light-medium purple-red. Very impressive fruit on nose, showing spice and plum characters from carbonic maceration. The palate has plenty of soft, delicious flavour, good balance and an overall freshness and life which makes it very attractive drinking. Drink it while it's young. \$7.99

### Delatite New Shiraz 1986 ★★★★★

Light-medium red. Rich, soft fruit on nose with a slight Ribena overtone. The palate has very good depth of spicy fruit with a fullness and roundness that further promotes its drinkability. There is very little tannin, which further recommends the wine as an excellent early drinker. \$10.35

### St Huberts Carbonic Shiraz 1986 ★★★

Light-medium purple. Soft, youthful, grapey nose showing very pleasant fruit. The palate is light, soft and fruity, with negligible tannin, and finishes with firm, rather prominent acidity. Another young red which will provide plenty of pleasure as an early drinker. \$8.67

### Brown Brothers Victorian Tarrango 1986 ★★★

Vibrant light purple colour. Fragrant, grapey nose with some sweet-fruit, cordial overtones. The palate is very fresh and youthful with a light fruitiness, virtually no tannin and firm acidity. A fresh, light drinking red that will be at its best in the next six to nine months. \$6.58

## Pinot Noir

11 tasted – 6 reviewed

An uneven group, several showing very good varietal character, although some of these lacked depth. A few wines were too heavily extracted and lacked pinot charm.

### Dromana Estate Pinot Noir 1986 ★★★★★

Light-medium purple-red. Plum and cherry fruit characters on nose with spicy oak and, thought one taster, some carbonic maceration. The palate is beautifully structured with good balance, plumpness and soft tannins.

A very good young pinot that should improve with two years or so in bottle. \$13.50

### Prince Albert Pinot Noir 1985 ★★★★★

Light-medium red. Beautiful sappy, leafy pinot nose. The palate is soft, round and supple, very Burgundian in balance, with good varietal flavour. Although Chris Hayes questioned whether the wine was totally clean, all the panel supported it as a great example of the style and structure we should be looking for with pinot. \$19.95

### Diamond Valley St Andrews Pinot Noir 1985 ★★★★★

Light red colour. Fragrant, youthful nose showing classic 'strawberry' pinot fruit. The palate is light and delicate with very attractive flavour, although it does lack some depth. Soft tannins on the finish. John Ellis commented "on the right track", since what's there is very good indeed. If there had been more of it, the wine would have been superb. \$12.95

### St Huberts Pinot Noir 1985 ★★★

Light red, slight garnet. Strawberry, leafy pinot fruit on nose showing some sappy Burgundian overtones and a little bottle-development. The palate is light, well balanced and has beautiful pinot flavour with a very soft finish. Another classically flavoured pinot which lacks the depth to make it a really top wine. \$13.59

**WINE** March 7-8 1987  
**THE WEEKEND AUSTRALIAN MAGAZINE**  
**with JAMES HALLIDAY**

● **WINE OF THE WEEK:** Dromana Estate, on Victoria's Mornington Peninsula, was established by Margaret and Garry Crittenden in 1981. Crittenden was then a full-time wholesale and retail plant nurseryman, and the vineyard was a sideline.

The first release was a 1984 Cabernet Sauvignon, which although made in tiny quantities, created great interest and sold out overnight. The 1985s were even more successful, with the 1985 Cabernet Sauvignon considered by many to be one of the best cabernets made in Australia that year. So much so that Crittenden has now sold his nursery operation to concentrate on wine-making.

Dromana has just released its 1986 Pinot Noir and 1986 Chardonnay. Both are lovely wines, but the 1986 Pinot Noir is quite outstanding. It has vibrant spicy/cherry aroma and flavour, with an extremely long finish. It is the length of that finish which so distinguishes the wine and places it at the very forefront of the best pinots from southern Australia.

Both wines are on offer ex-vineyard at \$144 a dozen with freight at the rate of \$3 a carton for Melbourne, \$8 Victorian country and elsewhere \$10. There is a limit of one case of each wine per order. The address is PO Box 332, Mornington, Victoria 3931. Telephone: (059) 87 3275.



THE AGE, Tuesday 31 March 1987

## EPICURE 5

# Hold heads high for our pinot noir

**P**INOT NOIR, one of the world's classic grape types and the only variety permitted in the great red wines of Burgundy, is relatively new to Australia. It has been grown experimentally in most wine-growing areas of Australia over the past 15 years. Some of these experiments have not been particularly successful, but this week's tasting of six pinot noir examples from Victoria, South Australia and Tasmania proved that some excellent wines are being produced.

All three tasters were agreeably surprised and pleased by the overall high quality of the wines. The guest taster, Michael Trembath, who is sales manager of the wholesale wine merchants W. J. Seabrook and Son, said: "Given what people have said about pinot noir over the past year or so, I expected a lot less."

He liked the low alcohol content of some of the wines. "A couple of these would make excellent luncheon wines, and others would be very good as dinner wines. We are starting to develop styles of pinot noir in the country and we saw today that the Crittenden's Dromana Estate was a super lunch wine because it's a lighter wine, with good varietal character and lots of flavor."

Ken John felt the tasting had reinforced his personal attitude to Australian pinot noirs. "The Crittenden wine was flavoursome, elegant, delicate and low in alcohol. I've served the wine recently at dinner when to people who were used to drinking overseas wine. They were rapt, and said, 'Why bother drinking overseas wine when this is available?'"

Ken also said it was unfortunate that there is such a small quantity available. "The public will need to work hard to find the wine, but it is worth the chase."

Peter Weste, a noted wine judge, said: "Most of the wines in today's tasting would be able to hold their heads high anywhere in the world."

### The panel's comments

1. 1986 Dromana Estate pinot noir, \$15.

**Peter Weste:** Good medium red color. This has a good clean fruit, with some strawberry character on the nose. Very good flavor, soft middle and nice, clean, well-balanced finish. A good style of wine to drink now.

**Michael Trembath:** Attractive cherry red color. A strawberry, spicy nose, obviously pinot noir. Good varietal flavors on the palate. A medium-weight wine, propped up by judicious use of oak. Enjoy this wine in the medium term when the oak has settled down a bit.

**Ken John:** Beautiful deep cherry color. The wine was very clear and had been well handled. A really fine pinot noir nose, very clean with fresh berry and cherry fruit characters. The same characters on the palate, and the



### On Our Selection

'On Our Selection' is a regular feature of Epicure in which a panel of experts conducts a blind tasting of Australian and imported wines. This week's panel is Ken John, a Melbourne wine merchant; Peter Weste, chairman of the Victorian authentication panel of the Victorian Wine Industry Association and a wine maker, and Michael Trembath, sales manager of a large wholesale wine merchant. The column is compiled by staff journalist PAUL WATSON. The wines are bought at normal retail outlets and, because of this, the prices may vary slightly.

fruit came across as being really ripe, but elegant as well. Soft and delicious. I thought this was a marvellous wine for immediate and mid-term drinking.

2. 1985 Diamond Valley Vineyards pinot noir (St Andrews area), \$11.70.

**MT:** Light red colors, certainly not as vibrant as the former wine, nor as deep. A dumb nose, with little discernible varietal character, similarly on the palate. If any, a very lightweight pinot, certainly not in the class of the first wine.

**KJ:** I thought the wine had a quite attractive light cherry color. It maintained shades of red rather than turning to oranges, as some pinots do. The nose was almost medicinal and that character came through on the palate. But the most dominant aspect of the palate was the tannin, which subdued the fruit that was there. Not in the same class as the previous wine.



Guest taster Michael Trembath.

**PW:** A light red with a hint of amber. It has subdued fruit on the nose, but what there is is quite good. The palate's a little thin, with a touch of hardness on the finish. Drink now.

3. 1985 Heathcote Winery pinot noir, \$15.55.

**KJ:** Deep plum-red color, some varietal characters on the nose, but again, on the palate the wine's quite tannic, perhaps more so than the last, and it really is quite a powerful wine. Unfortunately, the astringency from that tannin dominates the palate, and the fruit should be evident to balance the wine.

**PW:** Medium dark cherry red, rather strong, aggressive fruit on the nose. A good full flavor, well balanced, but needs time to develop and lose a slightly hard tannin finish. It has a high alcohol character, so it's a touch over-ripe.

**MT:** Deep red color, showing some purples. Good pinot noir nose, very deep, and even some high alcohol character. A very good

wine on the palate. Lots of tannin — perhaps a trifle too much for the style.

4. 1985 Glengarry Tamar Valley pinot noir (Tasmania), \$14.99.

**PW:** A medium blackish-red color. The nose has more malo-lactic overtones than fruit initially, but the fruit eventually comes through. The palate is full-bodied, sweetish, alcoholic, as if from over-ripe grapes. I would expect this to be at its best in about three years.

**MT:** A very deep color and some slight mustiness when first poured masks excellent fruit character. This breathed off, the palate is great: good varietal character, a lot of depth, good tannin, well balanced: the wine comes alive on the palate. This wine has depth enough for cellaring for three to four years.

**KJ:** Rich, deep purple plum color, which is very attractive. The nose is strongly varietal, as is the palate. It's quite rich on the palate, with well handled wood on finish. I thought this was a really fine wine and I could happily drink it now or for the next couple of years.

5. 1984 Seville Estate Yarra Valley pinot noir (\$15.90).

**MT:** Medium-red color, with a forward strawberry varietal nose: a very good varietal character. The palate shows sweet, sappy fruit, with some spiciness, supported by vanillin oak flavors. An excellent medium-weight, drink-now style.

**KJ:** Attractive deep red with a little brownish at the miniscus. Good varietal fruit on nose and quite complex fruit on the palate, with good tannin. Considerable layers of flavor, providing a wine of depth and style. I thought it was very good for drinking now, or even in a couple of years.

**PW:** Medium-red, this has an excellent nose, with strong strawberry fruit. The palate is fine, well balanced, excellent fruit and very burgundian in style. Excellent to drink now, but indications are that it would age very gracefully.

6. 1984 Mount Adam pinot noir (Barossa Valley), \$17.99.

**KJ:** Cherry red color with scented perfume bouquet, not really varietal. Quite austere on the palate, but with unusual flavor. It's not really varietal. Certainly not my style of pinot noir.

**PW:** Medium red, trending to tawny. Strong vinous, non-varietal nose, indicating more age than the other wines. The flavor is up-front: there's not a lot in the middle. It lacks a bit of acid, so finish is a little soft and rather unbalanced.

*Seville Estate*  
YARRA VALLEY  
VICTORIA

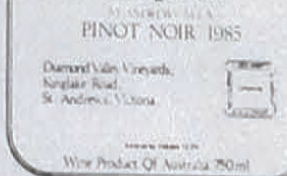
Pinot Noir

1984

Produced and bottled by  
P. G. & M. L. McMahon, Seville, Victoria  
750 ml AUSTRALIAN WINE 11.0% ALC/VOL  
PRESERVATIVE ADDED 200



*Diamond Valley Vineyards*  
MOUNT ADAM  
PINOT NOIR 1985



**MT:** The feature of the wine is its vinous character, definitely not varietal. The palate is dull, big and broad.

### Wine of the week

**PW:** No. 5, because of its overall excellence and similarity to burgundy in style.

**MT:** No. 4, because of its great depth and lively character on the palate.

**KJ:** Lineball between No. 4 because it was fresh, lively and complex, and No. 1, because of the purity of flavor and varietal character it displayed.



## A JAMES HALLIDAY TASTING

the '84 is any guide, the '85 should (deservedly) sweep all before it.

The next highest-pointed wine was the '86 Dromana Estate, slightly lighter than the Bannockburn but with crystal clear pinot aroma and flavor, once again in the spicy/plum spectrum.

It is clear Victoria's newly-developing wine area of the Mornington Peninsula is ideally suited to pinot noir, and Dromana's Garry Crittenden looks like throwing down the gauntlet to Bannockburn's Gary Farr (and to Tasmania and Moorilla's Julian Alcorso, not represented in this tasting but who would certainly have fared very well with the '86 Moorilla, from the banks of the Derwent).

The '86 Heathcote avoids altogether the mid-Victorian eucalypt-mint characters which sometimes obscure varietal flavor in the reds and this region. It scored well on both bouquet and palate; plums and cherries show in the aroma, while the wine has ample weight and length in the mouth.

The ultra-distinctive '85 St. Huberts was impossible not to recognise. (In a tasting such as this, I try not to think who might have made each wine, preferring to concentrate solely on the quality of the wine in the glass).

It is very stylish, with strong tobacco/sappy aroma and flavor which is so marked as to be almost a caricature; in the company of the wines which scored higher points, it lacked a little in fruit richness.

The surprise among the top 11 wines was the '84 Wyndham Estate. Just how Wyndham was able to make such a youthful and stylish wine in a medium Hunter year such as 1984 — indeed how it was able to make the wine at all — is a mystery to me, but then it is not the first time (nor will it be the last) that Wyndham has come up with

James Halliday's top six pinots headed by the 1985 Bannockburn which "literally comes alive on the palate."

a wine of altogether surprising quality and style. The other climatic aberration was the Normans wine. While it lacked complexity it was very clean, with clear strawberry flavor and adequate weight. The remainder of the top 11 was occupied by the Yarra Valley (with Lou Bianchet showing why his '85 pinot noir won the top gold at last November's Hobart Show, and Yarra Burn, with less weight than last year); Coonawarra (the '85 Rouge Homme has been very well made, with particularly successful oak handling); the Margaret River ('83 Leeuwin makes a bold bid to

justify its awesome price, with light but authentic sappy/tobacco flavor) and Geelong (the '85 Prince Albert is the best from that vineyard since the late '70s). The wines further down, and in the middle of the score range, either lacked varietal

character but had good vinosity, or had varietal flavor but were too light for top points.

Those at the bottom were either over-extracted and too aggressive or had a winemaking fault (mercaptan struck hard at several of the wines).

Eager analysts may note some discrepancies between these points and those appearing in my 1987 *Australian Wine Guide*: I make no apology, nor have I adjusted the marks, because this has been a deliberately critical assessment of pinots in their own right, and some have not fared so well under this microscope.

Overall, the tasting proved we have a considerable distance to go, but the top wines should give both winemaker and wine consumer enough heart to continue to search for the holy grail, a truly great Australian pinot noir.

### MY CHOICE

The full list of wines, together with their points and arranged in order of merit, was: 011985 Bannockburn (Geelong, Vic.) 18.8; '86 Dromana Estate (Mornington Peninsula, Vic.) 18.4; '86 Heathcote (Bendigo, Vic.) 18.2; '85 St. Huberts (Yarra Valley, Vic.) 17.6; '85 Rouge Homme (Coonawarra SA) 17.6; '84 Wyndham (Hunter Valley, NSW) 17.6; '85 Bianchet (Yarra Valley, Vic.) 17.4; '83 Leeuwin Estate (Margaret River, WA) 17.2; '85 Prince Albert (Geelong, Vic.) 17; '85 Normans (Adelaide Plains, SA) 17; '85 Yarra Burn (Yarra Valley, Vic.) 17; '84 Lindeman Padthaway (Padthaway, SA) 16.8; '85 Rothbury Estate White Label (Hunter Valley, NSW) 16.8; '84 Mountadam (Adelaide Hills, SA) 16.6; '86 Rothbury Black Label (Hunter Valley, NSW) 16.4; '85 Diamond Valley St. Andrews (Yarra Valley, Vic.) 16.2; '84 Balgownie Estate (Bendigo, Vic.) 16.2; '84 Yarra Yering (Yarra Valley, Vic.) 16.2; '85 Petersons (Hunter Valley, NSW) 16; '84 Rothbury Black Label (Hunter Valley, NSW) 16; '84 Moss Wood (Margaret River, WA) 16; 1986 Petersons (Hunter Valley, NSW) 15.8; Rosemount (Hunter Valley, NSW) 15.8; '85 Tyrrell Old Winery (Hunter Valley, NSW) 15.4; '86 Delatite (Mansfield, Vic.) 15.4; '83 HJT (North East, Vic.) 15.2; '85 Rothbury (Hunter Valley, NSW) 15; '85 Rosemount Show-Reserve (Hunter Valley, NSW) 14.8; '85 Tyrrells (Hunter Valley, NSW) 14.8; '85 Peter Lehmann (Barossa Valley, NSW) 14.6; '85 Balgownie (Bendigo, Vic.) 14.4; '86 Robson (Hunter Valley, NSW) 14.2; '85 Montrose (Mudgee, NSW) 14.2; '84 Marions (Tamar Valley, Tas.) 14; '84 Cullens (Margaret River, WA) 13.4.

West Australian wines supplied by Sutherland Cellars, Flinders St., Melbourne.

*Epicurean March-April 1987*

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## JEREMY SMITH

Cellar master Lynch's restaurant and buyer for Richmond Hill Cellars, Melbourne

Lynch's is a very successful Melbourne restaurant which has been lauded for the interesting wines on its list. Part of the interest is created by the list being considerably changed every two months. Jeremy Smith explains, "I like to stock the best new releases, but with places like Pipers Brook in Tasmania, and Victorians like Mount Mary in the Yarra Valley and Dromana Estate on the Mornington Peninsula you get only one chance to buy. And while I buy as much as possible, that's often so little they never last long; that's why I change the list."

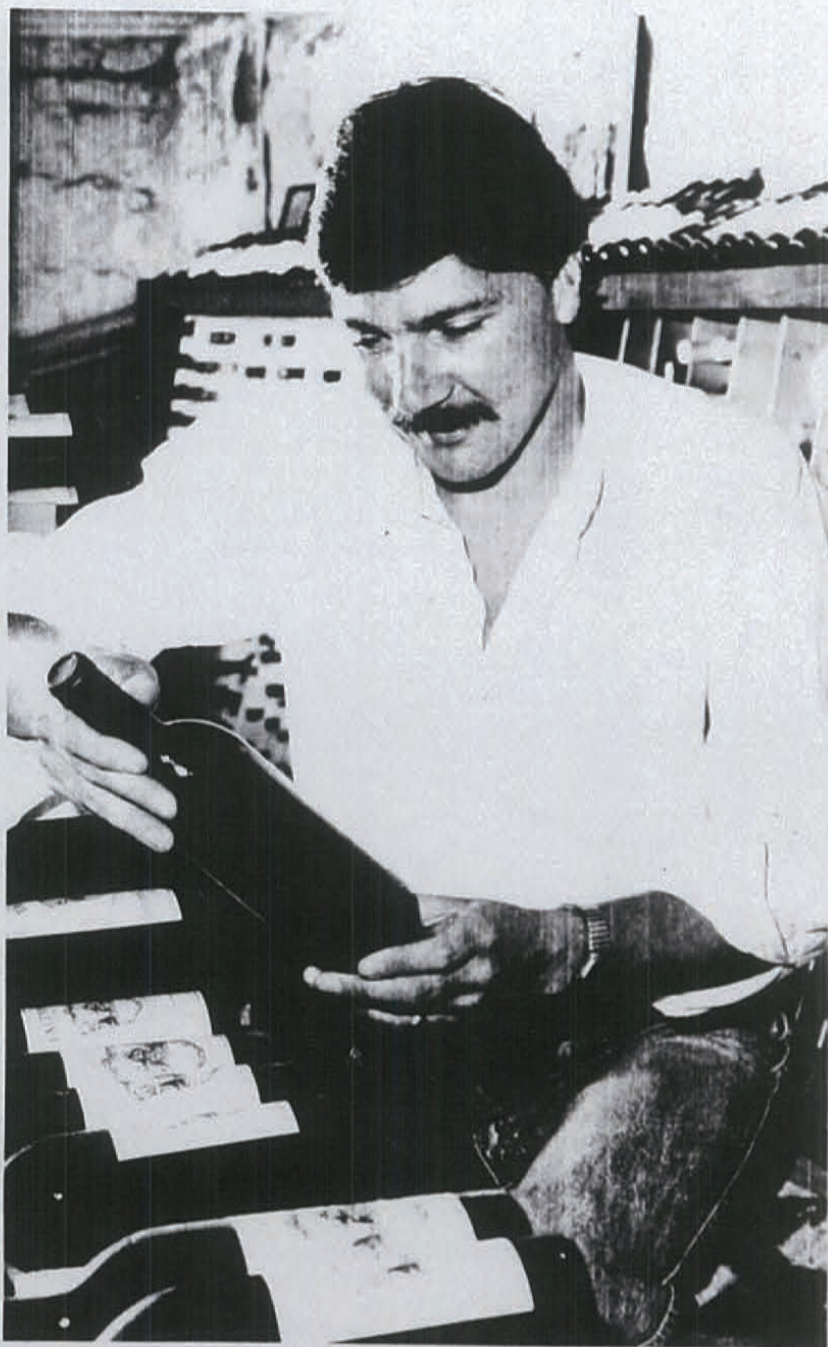
A sore disappointment to Jeremy is Australian pinot noir. "You don't get what you pay for, most of them just haven't got it. But I've seen at least one light at the end of the tunnel in the form of the Bannockburn 1984 pinot noir."

One of the most improved areas in his opinion is the Clare Valley. "Birks, Mitchell and Grosset are making some wonderful wines. They are reviving a traditional area and elevating it to new heights."

Changing into his retailing hat, Jeremy thinks one of the biggest bargains at the moment is the Barossa Valley Estates 1985 hermitage made by Colin Glaetzer (formerly of Seppelt, and twin brother of Wolf Blass's chief, John Glaetzer). "This is a brilliant wine which can shame wines of double the price. For \$6.50 it is outstanding value. And talking of value for money, I should mention the Seppelt 1986 chardonnay and the whites under the Lakewood label from Yaldara. They are very good wines, solid value," he said.

One sad observation is that long-term cellaring reds are becoming hard to find. "Unless they are in magnums or bigger, I find it difficult to confidently recommend a wine to cellar for, say, a 21st birthday party. There are few to be had, like the Birks pressings, but they are scarce. The trend is to lighter, more drinkable reds."

As for the future Jeremy sees the Yarra Valley and the Mornington Peninsula vying for the crown of the best area in Australia. "Just look at the quality of the Dromana Estate and the Mount Mary cabernets and you'll see what I mean, we can look forward to some exciting wines in future."





## AN EPICURIAN

**T**he taste buds gave a distinct twitch when I was invited to do this particular tasting. Not only was I to look at a large range of current release cabernet sauvignons, a variety recognised throughout the world as one of the pinnacle ingredients for top red wine production, but I was to be joined in the task by the experienced palate of Hermann Schneider of Melbourne's Two Faces restaurant fame. I must say, and I hope not presumptuously for the both of us, that our experience in wine has come from tasting wines from around the world. It's the merchant and the restaurateur point of view, and certainly not that of the technocrat or oenologist whose views I have noticed are sometimes at variance with the wine drinker's predilections.

But let's get on to cabernet sauvignon. This variety, which in historical terms is a fairly new one in Australia, has undergone a number of style changes since it literally started to take root on a large scale in the mid-'60s. Shiraz until that time had dominated red wine in Australia and historically in the 19th century had been identified as producing the best Australian wines. So it's no wonder, to me at least, that we have seen such a dramatic evolution in cabernet sauvignon, and a search for a particular style and character, perhaps the biggest dilemma that we as tasters faced in assessing the wines before us. For they tended to fall into categories:

- We had the well balanced, drink-now but flavorsome style cabernet, generally young, with moderate tannin and oak used to give some sweetness and forward flavor.
- Wines that were showing some maturity of development and complex aromas from aged cabernet fruit, the palate normally showing bigger structure, bigger tannin and long flavor.
- A new style cabernet, showing herbaceous character from critical vintage time selection with less emphasis on fruit flavor and tannin weight. And in this vast array of wines we found that under masked conditions we were not exactly comparing apples with apples.

With this in mind we recommend to you our selection. Of the 46 wines tasted, our top six (not in any order) were:

- 1983 Château Tahbilk cabernet sauvignon
- 1982 Seppelt Drumborg cabernet sauvignon
- 1983 Penfolds cabernet sauvignon Bin 707
- 1984 Lindemans Coonawarra St. George Vineyards cabernet sauvignon
- 1984 Sandalford Margaret River Estate cabernet sauvignon
- 1985 Dromana Estate cabernet sauvignon

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Tasters:  
Roy Moorfield and  
Hermann Schneider

## TASTING NOTES

### 1983 Château Tahbilk cabernet sauvignon

*Hermann Schneider:* Minty fruit on bouquet, still slightly closed, rich voluminous flavor. Very well structured with both wood and tannin to balance.

*Roy Moorfield:* Complex aroma, blackcurrant with some mint evident. Deep colored and big in tannin. A wine with rich fruit overpowering at the moment and needs many years to develop.

### 1982 Seppelt Drumborg cabernet sauvignon

*HS:* This should appeal immensely. Deep crimson color. Licorice fruit and bouquet. A strong sweetness on the palate. A well balanced soft wine making it easy drinking now.

*RM:* Closed smell on the nose, slightly sweet. Very good color. Balanced palate with wood and fruit combining well. Some savory, spicy qualities.





# CABERNET

## In search of a style



Unmasked . . . the top 13 from the original line-up of 46 wines.

### 1983 Penfolds cabernet sauvignon Bin 707

*HS:* Soft, spicy fruit on the palate. A sustained and well balanced fruit and tannin in middle flavor. Stylish, matured, advanced style.

*RM:* New oak, highly fragrant wine with excellent color. A real classy feel about it. Great flavor and tannin supported by the wood character. Complex wine that will age well.

### 1985 Crittendens Dromana Estate cabernet sauvignon

*HS:* Deep purple color, complex, peppery bouquet. Sherry, plummy fruit sustained on bouquet with obvious vanilla oak character. Very young, needs bottle age.

*RM:* Complex aroma with leafy, grassy characters combined. Excellent color, looks like a young Bordeaux. Mature fruit flavors on the palate, which is long with excellent textured tannin.

By ROY MOORFIELD

### 1984 Sandalford Margaret River Estate cabernet sauvignon

*HS:* Developed a soft crimson color. Peppery bouquet with complex fruit underlying. Sustained fruit on palate with some sweetness. Excellent drinking style with some development ahead. Nose slightly dull and closed.

*RM:* Good color though not showing much at the moment. Well presented wine with good flavor and young tannin qualities.

### 1984 Lindemans Coonawarra St. George Vineyard cabernet sauvignon

*HS:* Clear, crimson color. Vital plummy fruit on the bouquet. A concentrated ripe fruit flavor on the palate.

*RM:* A dusty sensation on the nose with crushed leaf character. Plenty of flavor with elegant tannins. Medium-bodied style. Good drinking now with somewhat juicy fruit characters.

The top six wines were picked out of a bracket of 13, which we re-tasted as the best wines of the group, the other seven being, in no particular order, 1982 Dalwhinnie Moonambel cabernet, 1983 Primo Estate cabernet sauvignon, 1984 Seppelt Black Label cabernet sauvignon, 1982 Château Tahbilk cabernet sauvignon, 1982 Leeuwin Estate Margaret River cabernet sauvignon, 1982 Bannockburn cabernet sauvignon, 1983 Taltarni cabernet sauvignon, the latter three being the best of the bracket.

### 1982 Leeuwin Estate River cabernet sauvignon

*HS:* Deep crimson, complex fruit, mint, elegance. Rich, soft body. A lovely rich wine. Cool climate style. Excellent.

*RM:* Dusty nose with closed fruit with firm follow-up of tannin. Needs a little age but a good drinking style. Perhaps a little unripe. At the taste-off of 13 wines the herbaceous character of this wine started to dominate, particularly after some breathing. If it wasn't for that it would have been included in our top six.

### 1983 Taltarni cabernet sauvignon

*HS:* Purple hue with rich mulberry fruit. Soft initially on the palate, but with spicy oak overtones. A stylish young wine.

*RM:* Closed nose with ripe fruit palate with some tannin characters evident. Tannin aggressive at this stage of its development.

### 1982 Bannockburn cabernet sauvignon

*RM:* Leafy, crushed vinous nose, subdued aroma. Good flavor with some sweetness of fruit. Also tannin evident. Quite long finish.

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# SUCCESSFUL Entertaining

1987 No. 1

\$4.00\*  
NZ\$5.85  
(incl. GST)\*



**T**he Mornington Peninsula is primarily known as "the place where Melbourne goes for Christmas". Its imposing homes are solid reminders of the area's history as a holiday-turned-fashionable-resort region — a pendulum move that is swinging back. Any area of such staggering beauty within an hour's drive of a major city, just has to come to public notice. Late last year The National Golf Club and Country Club at Cape Schanck, one of the most sophisticated golfing complexes in Australia, was opened by the Minister for Tourism. Revamped cuta boats, the distinctive Mornington speed sailers formerly used for barracouta fishing, are being moulded into a tourist attraction at Sorrento. And over the past three years, refurbished and spanking new guesthouses and resorts have come on stream. Here are just a few examples of what's available when it comes to eating, sleeping and having fun ...

## THE HOSPITALITY

In the town of Oban on the west coast of Scotland, John Stuart McCaig decided, in 1897, to erect a monument to this family and, at the same time, provide work for unemployed stonemasons. When Harold Armytage built **Delgany Castle** at Portsea, he did much the same thing. But unlike Mr McCaig, Mr Armytage actually managed to live in his feudal, Mount Gambier limestone landmark, if only for a few months.

Currently, Delgany Castle is undergoing a massive re-modelling programme to convert its now institutionalised interior into a plush country club. Two and a half years ago, the property was a seminary, prior to that a school for the deaf. The original part of the building dates back to the late 1920s, with another major segment being tacked on in the '30s. L-shaping along the side is a 1950s' utility building, which looks like the administration block it once was.

According to the March 1927 issue of *Australian Home Beautiful* — "Newspaper writers have placed the cost of building Delgany at anything

between £30,000 and £33,000, and for the purposes of a loose and general estimate that sum is near enough to the mark". Sixty years later, an enormous sum (as yet undisclosed) is again being spent to produce a 36-apartment guesthouse with numerous lounges, breakfast rooms and a restaurant capable of seating 100 diners. The 5.45-hectare grounds still approximate the rapturous prose of the '20s' magazine "great spreading lawns ... green trees set in emerald sward ... magnificent iron gates ... and a lodge of picturesque design". The last-mentioned lodge, which could have passed for a set in the David Niven version of *Bonnie Prince Charlie*, will be turned into a conference centre and gym. A large outdoor swimming pool and trellised barbeque area is planned. A formal English garden will surround the house, giving way to Australiana on the periphery.

At the top of the ramparts is a walkway with room for three abreast strolling. Again, to quote *Australian Home Beautiful*: "Here is a place for dreams. The lover of history, of romance, of sheer beauty, may revel here." In short, Delgany's position on the highest point overlooking Port Phillip Bay and Bass Straights affords a film camera's Technicolor pan of the bay on one side and the ocean on the other. The late Mr Armytage used to say that it was built on "the most beautiful spot on the most favoured peninsula in all Australia". How close to the truth he was.

The architects in charge of the project, Eggleston, MacDonald, Secombe, estimate that Delgany will open its doors in August of this year. Personally, I feel it's going to take a shade longer than that to eradicate the horrible lino, sludge green carpets and cheap wooden doors. That hiccup aside, I think I'd start making enquiries now. Right next to Portsea Golf Club, Delgany Country House is going to be an instant place to see and be seen.

**Brooklands Motor Inn** is a title with all the allure of a greasy hamburger. However, straight up Tanti Avenue in the town of Mornington, the reality is a blend of seamless modern and historic magic. Out front is a restaurant whose food was hailed by *The Age* as "close to being the best

- 1: Boats at Mornington Pier.
- 2: The impressive Delgany Castle is being converted to a luxury country club.
- 3: No massive agricultural machinery is needed to tend the vines of Main Ridge Estate, one of the "boutique" wineries of the Mornington Peninsula.
- 4: Fragrant flowers tumble over a gateway on Stonier's Merricks Vineyard.
- 5: Two interests combine on Dromana Estate: 34 varieties of roses are used to detect mildew before it can damage the vines.
- 6: Huge hedges shade Warrawee Homestead.







# Mornington glory

This lovely peninsula is enjoying a revival as a holiday centre — and, Elisabeth King discovers, is making its mark as a wine-producing region

PHOTOGRAPHY: EARL CARTER



**1 and 2:** The ultimate packaged deal, Whitecliffs has been designed to satisfy every holiday whim.  
**3 and 4:** Brian Stonier of Merricks Vineyard surveys, with understandable pleasure, the view across to the coast.



with 19th-Century facsimile tiles, an old pine dresser, a colonial hip bath and ultra-modern shower. December through May is the height of the season, keeping the two dining rooms packed out. Jane Burgess and her mother, Shelley Warburton, are in charge of the cooking. The inspirations are modern, the size of the servings hark back to the days when men were men and needed a lot of fuel to stay that way. In winter the restaurants are open for lunch and dinner on Saturdays and Sundays only. In summer, opening times extend from Monday to Saturday. The same fanatical attention to decoration detail present in the bedrooms appears again in the dining areas. The Georgian room is of a deep brick red, popular in the early 19th Century. On the Adams fireplace is an antique marble clock. In the Victorian room, the ceiling has been returned to its former curlicued beauty, each indent being picked out in a fashionable colour of the period. Intricate Austrian blinds keep out the light, lace covers the antique tables. Nearby, the original lounge-room floor of scrubbed Norwegian pine held down with handmade nails is the result of hours of tireless effort. Colette, the French writer, would have described the food as more raffinee than refined. The French adjective is not easily translated — perhaps here it conveys a dash of imagination mixed with a measure of sharpness, plus a healthy pinch of country-mother approach to helpings. First off you can have lamb cutlets in puff pastry with rosemary sauce, spinach fettuccine with creamy pecan sauce or kidney parcels in filo pastry. Main courses toe the line of chicken fillets on a bed of spinach with lemon mustard sauce, shellfish yakitori and baked rainbow trout. Only the voracious diner could possibly manage desserts like rich plum pudding, chilled chocolate orange souffle and King Island cheeses.

Whitecliffs is straight Malibu on the Portsea side of Rye, a 70km freeway cruise from Melbourne. None of your oldtime atmosphere here — no vaulted ceilings, hanging lanterns or last-century curios. The \$2 million, Bruce Allen-designed resort complex is sleek and well-lit, inside and out.



Hollywood pool, edged by Gosford sandstone and Cocos palms from northern Queensland. Latticed balconies round out the permanent vacation look and feel.

Whitecliffs offers wraparound holidays — on site is your own one or two bedroom apartment, whirlpool, spa, sauna, swimming pool and recreation room. Just across the road, a 50-metre meander, is the beach. In the immediate vicinity, there is golf, bowls, tennis, horse-riding and sailing. The target markets are honeymooners, business executives and families who want to have a home away from home. Considering what's on offer, prices for both one and two bedroom apartments are reasonable. Weekends throughout the year are peak times. Every Friday, a champagne cocktail party is held to welcome new arrivals. The large slate floor is illuminated by shafts of sunlight during the warm months; when the cold sweeps in, a huge stove takes over. Most of the clientele is in the 25 to 40 age group and in the first year, summer occupancy averaged at 95 per cent.

First-time visitors are welcomed with fresh flowers; a second booking produces a box of chocolates. If you can't be bothered cooking or going out, a local cook will deliver candlelight dinners to order. On warm evenings, you can dine on the balcony in the eucalyptus-scented air. Near the entrance is an old homestead, with a carefully restored verandah, iron lace and picket fence. At the moment, it houses the manager's office; in future it will be a top-class restaurant. Perhaps its greatest significance is as a genteel warning to the "cheap hotel crowd". Whitecliffs is determined to guard the illusion of exclusivity.

It's harder to write about atmosphere in a new development than in a gnarled old inn. In the latter you only have to mention lace tablecloths and brocade curtains and you're 90 per cent of the way there. Put simply, Whitecliffs is one of those places that has to be felt rather than described. In two minutes, the skylit apartments feel like home — really. The furnishings are exactly the same as the ensembles you'd choose yourself. Colour TV and air-conditioning are standards these days, not so the video,

dishwasher, microwave oven and second TV in the huge bedrooms. Five per cent of the apartments are part of a time-share scheme. If you want to buy in, you are accessed to use computerspeak to the Interval International exchange network. The two-year membership allows you to holiday in over 500 resorts in 34 countries.

## THE WINERIES

But it is not just tourism that has found new life on the Mornington Peninsula. Over the past few years, the Peninsula, as residents call it, has made small steps onto Australia's wine map. 1987 is the boom year for the crawling wine baby — seven vigneron will have products on the shelf, albeit still on a tiny scale. It was Robert Caldwell who planted the first vineyard near Arthur's Seat in 1860. He named the venture Pharos Vineyard and entered some of his efforts in the Intercolonial Exhibition of 1866. The judges pronounced that the wines "could not be praised for any distinctive merits". Mr Caldwell threw in the towel in 1870 — "when the vineyards failed owing to lack of a market for the wines produced".

In May 1891, 14 grapegrowers appeared on the "List of Registered Vineyards on the Mornington Peninsula". One vine must have got you listed — only 20 acres were under vine. A few colourful tales of a hermit named "Simon the Frenchman" with a cultural taste for wine and "Balcombe Vinegar", a notorious beverage made at The Briars Homestead, kept the flame flickering, but the death blow was finally delivered by phylloxera and the terrible economic conditions of the early 20th Century.

But then, in the '50s, a member of the Seppelt family bought a large property at Mount Martha and almost instinctively put in about one hectare of vines. The land was sold to Ken Broadhurst, brother-in-law of Doug Seabrook of the wine-merchant family — again it was habit and dabbling that kept the grapes growing. The vines were finally burnt out by a bushfire in 1967, after producing several vintages of toytown proportions.

The revival, if you can give the early

efforts that much credence, began in earnest in the mid '70s. The total Peninsula crush stands at 90 tonnes, but is totally comprised of premium varieties. The Mornington Peninsula wines to date have been of exceptional quality and have shown intense fruit. Only one or two vineyards invite visitors, but perhaps the area has more than enough tourist attractions already.

## Stonier's Merricks Vineyard

In the Australian Wine Compendium, James Halliday prefaces his entry of this vineyard — "One assumes that one of these days either Merricks or Merrick Estate will exchange its name". On the presumption that Mr Halliday is the "one", he's right. Brian Stonier has added his own name to the property's title, a rare act of pushing himself flagrantly forward (as head of Macmillan Publishing in Australia, he introduces himself as "someone in publishing"). Brian and Noel Stonier established the vineyard in 1978 with a tiny planting of 0.3 hectares. Nine years later, they have nearly six hectares under vine, the largest total on the Peninsula. Andrew Hickinbotham, as consulting viticulturalist, planted the top half of the vineyard in close-spaced French style. In the centre of the property is a dam, not unusual in the area, except that the tiny hillock in the centre has been designated Orgy Island. No one's talking.

Brian Stonier brought up two points not mooted by other vigneron. First, he believes that sparkling wines have a big future in the area because of the intensity of the Pinot Noir and Chardonnay fruit. He sees the present, largely "hobbyist" array of vigneron as pioneers proving the potential of the district before the big boys move in. "I prefer to say that we're not a boutique area, but a burgeoning one."

On a developmental level, Stonier equates the Peninsula with Tasmania. In 1985, Stonier's Merricks wines were only sold at Gatehouse Cellars and Fanny's Restaurant in Melbourne. With listings in several noted wine books, Brian now receives inquiries from all over Australia. The limited quantities available, however, make Mornington vigneron mention sending dozens interstate — of bottles





that is. Last year, Brian sent a dozen to Mitcham Cellars in South Australia. Still, it's a start. At Merricks, Chardonnays are fermented in Nevers oak and have a high natural acid and full, aromatic, flinty fruit. The 1984 Cabernet Sauvignon was nothing short of standout — a balance of sweet pepper and berry flavours. Picked at 12.8 Baume, Brian distinguishes the bottling as having a pronounced dusty herbaceous character.

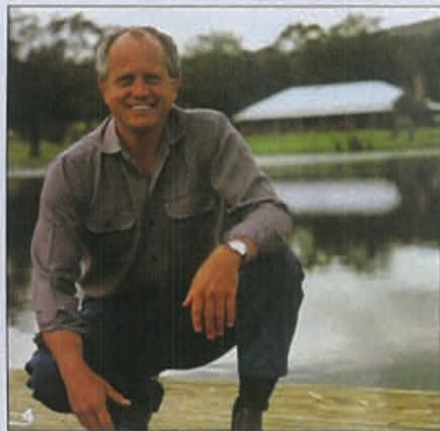
On the day we visited the vineyard, Noel Stonier was putting together tiny bouquets and decorations for the Peninsula Wine and Food Fest taking place that evening. "Herbs have taken over my life" is all she said as she put together 19th-century bundles of French and Italian lavenders, golden marjoram, eau de cologne mint and lemon balm.

#### **Dromana Estate**

In Victorian wine circles, Garry Crittenden is known as the "not related one". For non-Victorians, that means he is not connected with Crittenden Cellars, one of Melbourne's top-of-the-tree wine and spirit retailers. He is involved with I. H. Baker, another of Australia's finest liquor distributors, and that means Dromana Estate wines are more widely available in Sydney, Melbourne and Brisbane.

Garry and his wife Margaret bought their superb arc of land in 1981. The blackberries were three metres high and real estate agents tutted over its fag end of the Peninsula position. In five years, the Crittendens built a colonial facsimile house, created a pastoral lake and planted two hectares of vines (another 1.5 hectares of Pinot Noir went in last winter). Garry owns a nursery and the mildew-detecting roses at the ends of the neat rows are the standard kind, not the more usual bush types. In keeping with his boundless enthusiasm for everything, Garry planted 34 varieties.

With 20 years of horticultural experience behind him, Garry was more than ready for the viticultural side of wine-making — at least in the plant diseases category. With the aid of Nat White of Main Ridge Estate, the Crittendens 1984 Cabernet Sauvignon was among the medals at the 1984 Victorian Wines Show. As



the Dromana PR handout put it — "No mean feat for a wine off such young vines and up against very prominent opposition." Released for sale in July 1985, all stock vanished in four weeks.

Unlike Brian Stonier, Garry does not see a future for large holdings.

"Because the Peninsula is such a popular residential and holiday area, the land is too expensive to enable large vineyards to turn enough profit. Small exclusive four-to-five hectare properties will be the way. That's why we got into our own logo of 100 per cent Mornington Peninsula Wines so soon. We want to retain this feeling of something special, somewhere unique."

The 1985 vintage at Dromana was very promising (James Halliday singled out the Cabernet Sauvignon as exceptional); top quality fruit of great flavour and top-class acid were the results of a long cool summer. Elegance and finesse were the most tossed about adjectives, tasters looking forward to deepening complexity as the Crittenden vines age. Last autumn saw the release of the 1985 Pinot Noir and Chardonnay, both

excellent. The '86 Chardonnay got golds at both the Seymour and the Lilydale shows.

Before deciding on plantings, Garry did a climatic pattern fit of the Peninsula to Europe. "You compare all the climatic data — humidity, rain, cloudy days, everything. We matched most closely with Bordeaux, so I placed great emphasis on Cabernet varieties. I haven't been going long enough to define a typical year for all varieties, only the Cabernet has produced a string of reliable characteristics."

#### **Elgee Park**

If they ever want to do a remake of *National Velvet*, here is the perfect location. The rolling greenery is so perfect, you have to check whether the grass is Astroturf. Paddocks are divided by old post-and-rail fences, made entirely by hand for the Myer family by one of the last fence craftsmen in Australia. This lush 325-hectare property is the country estate of Mr and Mrs Baillieu Myer. The Myers planted the first vines (400) after David Wynn casually mentioned over lunch that the



1: Hank van Denham, winemaker of Elgee Park, with one of the property's quarter horses.  
2: The lush landscape of Elgee Park. 3 and 4: Dromana Estate and Garry Crittenden: his horticultural expertise has been invaluable.  
5 and 6: George Kefford and son Ben, of Merricks Estate: the vineyard is a family concern.



Seabrook family had fostered former Seppelt vines with good results. The notion took root and Baillieu (Baills to his friends) elicited the help of Allan Antcliff of the CSIRO and later Ian Hickinbotham. Two thirds of these experimental plantings were Cabernet Sauvignon, the remaining batch was Rhine Riesling. The total number of vines is now 13,000. The first fledgling wines were made in a garage, convincing Baillieu that Rhine Riesling was a no-go — a belief that went through a revision several years later. From 1980 to 1983, the wines were made at Anakie by the Hickinbotham family. The Myers maintain that they only want to make enough wine "to put their arms around"; nevertheless, they commissioned a \$250,000 winery in 1984. The next move was to engage the services of Dr Tony Jordan, one of Australia's leading wine consultants, leaving the winemaking to manager Henk Vandenham. In 1986, the crush was 17 tonnes of Elgee's own fruit, with additional fruit crushed for other wineries to utilise part of the facility's 50 tonne capacity. The vineyard's output is

about 2000 cases. The biggest success has been the 1984 gold-medal-winning Cabernet blend. At the same Victorian Wines Show, the once denigrated Rhine Riesling got a silver and the Chardonnay scored a bronze. The four-hectare stretch of vines is as picture perfect as the rest of the property. "Come to the temple," says Baillieu, indicating a fantasy pergola overlooking the "spread". Two gardeners keep everything completely in order for guests invited to drink Krug champagne there before dinner. Most people, including me, are very taken with the tiny green roses — the petals are exactly the same colour as the leaves.

Again, Elgee Park distributes mostly by mail order (the majority goes to Sydney), restaurants and one or two select outlets such as Camperdown Cellars.

#### Merricks Estate

George and Jacquelyn Kefford believe in keeping things totally en famille: when they take off for the vineyard at weekends (home is Brighton), not only their children Ben, Estelle and Mimi come along,

the cat and the canary take a holiday too. In 10 years, the Keffords have built themselves a designer backwoods house, planted vines and created a profuse garden — although George modestly claims it owes its beauty solely to chance.

In the same self-deprecating way, the Keffords put their wine-making success down to fate too. Initially the three-hectare vineyard was planted in the conventional way but the vines grew too vigorously. The system of planting has been reduced from the original 3.6 x 1.8 metre rows down to 2.4 by 1.5 metre rows. This see-how-she-goes approach was evident from day one — when they bought the property no one was sure if the area was really suited to viticulture. "I bought 10 Sauvignon Blanc vines the other year after people warned me the fruit wouldn't set. It didn't." No matter.

What *does* matter is that Merricks Estate produces one of the best Shiraz wines anywhere. In *Decanter* magazine, close to being the English speaking world's wine bible, the vineyard's 1984 vintage was singled out as "wondrously peppery and spicy".

The same wine went gold at the Victorian Wines Show, while the Cabernet Sauvignon picked up a silver. These results were reversed at the Yarra Valley wine show. The Keffords employ Alex White, a leading winemaker in the Yarra Valley, as wine-making consultant at their tiny winery.

Merricks Estate logo is the first wine label to be conceived via a photocopier. The lithograph on the label is an 1826 French depiction of a typical "Nouvelle Hollande" scene, *Habitation Pecheurs de Phoques*, showing an idealised Australian "fishing village". The homemade theme continues into the Lilliputian winery, where the tank insulator is a child's blanket.

The vineyard supports plantings of Cabernet Sauvignon, Shiraz, Pinot Noir, Riesling and Chardonnay. The Keffords bought an additional 20 hectares of land a few years ago, but have largely shelved plans for further plantings because both have busy careers. The crush is averaging about 15 tonnes and most of the wine is available at cellar door, Gatehouse Cellars, The Victorian Wine Centre





at Middle Park, and restaurants. The Shiraz, no surprise, is sought after keenly by the cognoscenti. The Cabernet Sauvignon disappears in a similar flash. The first Riesling went straight down the sink, but the first commercial release in 1985 conclusively proved that the Keffords were at least sensible to stick with it.

#### Main Ridge Estate

Nat and Rosalie White were the pioneers of the '70s' Mornington wine revival. From 1975 until they went "commercial" in 1981, plantings at the Red Hill vineyard increased to 2.5 hectares. The largest number of vines, by far, hanging over the large trellises are Cabernet Sauvignon, followed by Chardonnay Pinot Noir, Gewurztraminer and Pinot Meunier. This year, Nat is planting Cabernet Franc, but has largely given up on Merlot because — "it's a lot colder here than on other parts of the Peninsula".

Formerly a civil engineer, Nat became a full-time "one man wine band" in 1984. Seriously quiet, he also makes wine for several of the nearby vineyards and is judged to be the



Nat White of Main Ridge Estate.

local guru. He describes his property as a vintage barbie spot and visitors can fry up and wash it down with a Main Ridge Estate bottling. No need to beware of the dog here, the bouncy labradors are future guide dogs for the blind that Nat and Rosalie put through a preliminary 15 months training.

Nat showed his first wine at the 1983 Lilydale show. The 1982 Cabernet Sauvignon picked up the St Huberts Award and The Victorian Wine

Centre Trophy for the Best Red of Any Vintage. The 1983 Pinot Noir went gold, backing up Nat's belief that the variety will be the most interesting, and do the most good for the Peninsula's red reputation.

Thirty per cent of Main Ridge's sales are through the cellar door and mail order, the remainder goes to Melbourne restaurants, city and Peninsula outlets. All five varieties are available — the Cabernet Sauvignon receiving one year's aging in wood, the Pinot Noir six months', the Pinot Meunier four to five months' and the Chardonnay five months'. The Gewurztraminer is classically spicy and floral.

Nat is a chief mover and shaker behind the Peninsula's "night of wine criticism". "It's a serious evening with amateurs and professionals getting equal floor space (The Mornington Peninsula Vignerons Association has 50 members, but only eight growers sell wine). It's the only area in Australia that has this open free-for-all. We look at the young wines only. Because we're still experimenting, the evening is a valuable sounding board." The soil type at Main Ridge is a

deep, red, well-drained basalt, tops for letting the vine roots penetrate deeply, thus side-stepping problems connected with drought or a sudden deluge close to vintage. In spite of this, however, grape tonnage is not high. From a top 13 tonnes in 1984, the crush fell to three tonnes in 1985 because of an unpredicted blast of cold. At Christmas, the thermometer dropped to 5°C.

For further information about Main Ridge Estate's wines (rapidly becoming connoisseurs' collectables because of their first-rate quality) ring (059) 89 2686, or write to PO Box 40, Red Hill South, Victoria 3937.

#### Moorooduc Estate

This vineyard is so new, Richard McIntyre should consider "distressing" the gleaming brass sign to make it look historic. The McIntyres chose the Mornington Peninsula over the Yarra simply because they liked it. The current output? Twenty four cases. The vineyard came into being in 1983, the realisation of a dream conceived in Europe in the late '70s. The two hectares are planted to Pinot

Noir, Chardonnay, Cabernet Sauvignon, Cabernet Franc, Merlot and one row each Semillon, Sauvignon Blanc and Shiraz. The eight-hectare property could support up to 4.5 hectares of vines, but the McIntyres are hastening slowly. If he'll excuse the label — hobbyist — surgeon Richard seems to have found his weekend forte.

#### Balnarring Vineyard

Balnarring's first crop came in during the latter half of 1984. The fruit from the four-hectare vineyard was crushed at Elgee Park. Bruce and Stan Paul have only Riesling and Pinot Noir available as yet. Those interested should contact: (059) 89 5258.

#### Kings Creek Vineyard

Kings Creek is another newcomer that makes the 10-year-old properties look long in the tooth. The first commercial crop came in for the 1985 vintage. The three varieties grown are: Chardonnay, Pinot Noir and Cabernet Sauvignon. Vintaging is divided between Elgee Park and the Prince Albert facilities at Waurin Ponds.

#### Red Hill Estate

The Buckle family set up this vineyard with the help and advice of other, more established Mornington vignerons. Because of the at-one with Bordeaux leanings of the district, the plantings are predominantly Cabernet Sauvignon, Merlot and Cabernet Franc. Planting took place in the spring of 1983 and the first commercial crop was picked late last year. Those who want to be in first for the wine due for release later this year should write C/- Post Office, Red Hill South, Victoria, 3937. While we're on the subject of interest in tomorrow's wines, perhaps it's pertinent here to mention the Friends of the Mornington Peninsula Vignerons Association. The intention is to develop a group of people who are interested in being associated with the wine of the Mornington Peninsula, and who would like to attend special tastings, visit the vineyards and wineries and be kept up to date with the region's development. If you fit the profile, write to: The Secretary, Mornington Peninsula Vignerons Association, PO Box 332, Mornington, Victoria 3931.



## W I N E

## A CLIMATE OF FLAVOUR

*Conditions in the Mornington Peninsula favour quality over quantity. By Elisabeth King.*

The pioneer spirit is alive and well in the Mornington Peninsula. The wine industry in this part of Victoria grew from a grandiose setting: magnificent greenery, crisp sea air and spectacular coastline. The movement is very personal. "It was all theoretical when we started", admits one winemaker. "We are amazed at the acceptance we have received." But things remain very small, the total area crush of 90 tonnes makes Tasmania look big time.

The winemakers of Mornington can never aspire to bigness; the high cost of land in this fashionable holiday area only 70km from Melbourne nips "cowboy" ideas in the bud. What they do aim at, however, is greatness. The very cool climate and rich soil make for the late ripening conducive to depth of flavour.

Most Mornington wineries are run by avid hobbyists, many of whom have to balance running a winery with holding down a regular job. On their side is a Bordeaux-type climate favourable to such premium varieties as cabernet sauvignon, pinot noir, chardonnay, cabernet franc, shiraz and malbec. Although Mornington wines have yet to achieve the consistent results of more established areas, they have on occasion shown that they can be just as good — and sometimes better — than their NSW, WA and SA counterparts.

Some form of wine grape growing has been going on in Mornington since the 1860s. "Some form" is a polite way of saying that your local greengrocer probably carries more grapes than those early growers produced. In the 1950s, Doug Seabrook, scion of the Melbourne wine merchant family, persevered with experimental bottlings, but it wasn't until the mid-1970s that the modern industry got rolling. It began with Nat White at Main Ridge Estate and Baillieu Myer of Elgee Park and spread from there.

To the label formerly known as Merricks, Brian Stonier added his own name, to avoid confusion with his neighbour's vineyard — enter Stonier Merricks. Over the past nine years, Brian and his wife Noel have gone from a minuscule 0.3ha under vine to nearly six hectares — the largest "spread" in Mornington.

Andrew Hickinbotham is the consulting viticulturalist, and the top



Garry Crittenden: willing to experiment.

section of the vineyard is visibly planted in the close-spaced French style. Until his death last year, Stephen Hickinbotham made Merricks wines at Anakie.

The principal two wines from Stonier's Merricks are chardonnay and cabernet sauvignon. The 1984 cabernet sauvignon was a tremendous pointer to the potential of the vineyard. An intense, berry bouquet — good on the middle palate — crisp, tannin finish. The 1986 vintage at the winery produced only 150 cases which will be distributed, along with other vintages, through Gatehouse Cellars and mail order. Contact: Stonier's Merricks Vineyard, 62 Thompsons Lane, Merricks, Victoria 3916.

The only phrase to apply to Dromana Estate wines is — way above the ordinary. With a 1000 case production, Garry Crittenden has enlisted the help of national distributors I.H. Baker. No, he's not related to the Crittenden Cellars family.

The three stand-out varietals from Dromana are: chardonnay, pinot noir and cabernet sauvignon. After "fiddling around", Crittenden has produced a 1985 chardonnay with a complex, fruity bouquet and a buttery texture but with good acid structure. I fell completely for the 1985 pinot noir — a superb balance of plum and oak on the palate, strawberries on the nose and a long, long finish. The 1985 cabernet sauvignon showed exceptional colour, flavour and wood treatment. Write to: Dromana Estate Vineyards, cnr Harri-

sons and Bittern Dromana Rds, Dromana 3936.

Elgee Park is the showpiece country estate of millionaire Baillieu Myer. The winemaking is a three person operation, concerning Dr Tony Jordan of Oenotec as consultant, property manager Hank Vandenharm and guest winemaker Elaine Tudhope of Heathcote. Too many hands do not spoil the fermentation.

Three appears again in the number of wines on offer — rhine riesling, chardonnay and a cabernet blend of sauvignon, franc and merlot. The chardonnay exhibits a greenish tinge and a lively, almost spicy fruit/wood balance. But oh, the red! The 1984 cabernet sauvignon tastes of cherries touched with oak. Write: Elgee Park, Wallaces Rd, Merricks North 3926.

Main Ridge Estate is the accepted pioneer of Mornington. Nat White planted in 1975 and went full time in 1984. A very varied mix for only 650 cases of wine per year — pinot meunier, gewurztraminer, cabernet sauvignon and pinot noir.

Nat's stars are the 1985 cabernet sauvignon — intense nose, herbaceous and heavy on tannin — and the 1985 pinot noir — full of finesse, light but very flavoursome. Main Ridge Estate pinot meunier, the so-called third grape of champagne, is a fresh, spicy red of decided crispness. Write to: Lot 48, William Rd, Red Hill 3937.

George Kefford is a DIY enthusiast, cheerfully conceding that he doesn't know all the answers. Maybe, but he'll certainly get them if the vineyard's history is any indication. The shiraz is Merricks Estate's knockout, the 1984 vintage rating a mention in the prestigious *Decanter* magazine as "wondrously spicy and peppery".

The 1985 Shiraz holds true — magnificent. The 1984 rhine riesling and cabernet sauvignon are two more splendid wines. To get on Merricks Estate's mailing list, contact: Thompsons Lane, Merricks 3916.

Other names with even tinier production levels are: Moorooduc Estate, Balnarring Vineyard, Kings Creek Vineyard and Red Hill Estate. Currently Mornington Peninsula wines are mostly available in Melbourne. Outlets are: Gatehouse Cellars, the Victorian Wine Centre and selected restaurants. In Sydney, check Camperdown Cellars.



Page 32 — INDEPENDENT NEWS, Tuesday, May 26, 1987



## Peninsula wines for all seasons

MORNINGTON vignerons Hank Vandemham, left, of Elgee Park Winery and Nat White (far right), of Main Ridge Estate, were joined by Four Seasons Restaurant

staff, bar manager Tim Buckley, centre left, and restaurant manager Peter Buckland, centre right, at a wine tasting held at Four Seasons Restaurant.

### Wine



By  
**JAMES  
HALLIDAY**

THE WEEKEND AUSTRALIAN July 4-5 1987

### Wine of the week

THE Mornington Peninsula is an area of almost unlimited viticultural potential. Whether it realises that potential will depend on other wineries in the region following the lead of Dromana Estate by increasing production beyond their present doll's-house scale.

Thus it is that 1986 Dromana Estate Cabernet Sauvignon (due for release early next month) will be available nationally, distributed by I.H. Baker. Almost 1000 cases were made, significantly more than any prior Mornington regional release. Needless to say, it is one thing to achieve greater output but quality must be maintained. Garry Crittenden, Dromana Estate owner and winemaker, has achieved this handsomely.

This is, quite simply, the best Mornington Cabernet Sauvignon made to date, a wine to challenge the best of the '86s from around Australia. It has an intense, deep purple-red hue; the bouquet is high-toned, with fragrant cassis berry fruit set against charred oak aromas while the palate is the logical extension of the bouquet, with intense varietal flavour and a very long finish.

The wine will retail for about \$15.95. It is also available by mailing list order for \$168 per case, plus freight of \$4 for the Melbourne and Metropolitan area and \$10 for Victorian country and other States.

The address is Dromana Estate, Harrisons Road, Dromana, 3936.

THE AGE, Tuesday 12 May 1987

### MORNINGTON PENINSULA RELEASE STONIER'S MERRICKS WINES

At last, this long awaited release from the Mornington Peninsula, the outstanding and very limited wines from Stonier's Merricks vineyard. Be quick as many people were disappointed when they missed out on the last vintage.

1986 Merrick's Chardonnay	\$16.95
1986 Merrick's Cabernet Sauvignon	\$16.95
1986 Merrick's Pinot Noir	\$16.95

These wines will be available for tasting next Friday, May 15th, and Saturday, May 16th at

**GATEHOUSE CELLARS**

42 Victoria Avenue, Albert Park. Ph. 690 1277.



# Mornington Peninsula

by KEVIN O'BRIEN

The Mornington Peninsula is to Melbourne what Mandurah is to Perth, Victor Harbor to Adelaide, Gosford to Sydney, Surfers Paradise to Brisbane — a fashionable weekend retreat known as the place where Melbourne goes for the Christmas-New Year's break. The Mornington Peninsula is only a short drive from Melbourne, 60 km to the south. By Australian viticultural standards the Peninsula is a cool-climate region with climatic similarities to the world famous Bordeaux and Burgundy regions of France. Mornington's climate is moderated by the surrounding water giving a maritime influence that particularly favours the development of grapes with intense and well-defined varietal characters, resulting in outstanding wine styles.

The Mornington Peninsula has traditionally been devoted to apple and cherry orchards. Recently, an emphasis has been placed upon reviving the local wine industry and tourism.

Although it has only been in recent years that the Mornington Peninsula has become recognised for its wines, it has a winemaking history of over 100 years.

According to La Trobe Library records, in Melbourne during the 1860s a Mr Robert Caldwell had a vineyard near Arthur's Seat. Robert Caldwell gave up pastoral pursuits in Queensland to settle at Dromana, where in 1860 he planted a vineyard. So successful were his wines that in 1866 he won first prize for his 'colonial wines' at the Melbourne International Exhibition. Unfortunately, his success of 1866 failed to capture the imagination of the local market and in 1870 the vineyard was abandoned.

"Mornington Peninsula had its second chance to prove itself by one man's dislike for seaside fun."

It was not until 1950 that the Mornington Peninsula had its second chance to prove itself, an opportunity created by one man's dislike for seaside fun. In 1950 T.T. (Mick) Seppelt of the famous winemaking family had a small vineyard of about one hectare. His family owned Osborne House, a historic home at Mount Martha, which they used as a weekend retreat. Evidently, Mr Seppelt wasn't one for the beach, so he bought a 40 hectare farm as an adjunct to the holiday house. There he planted Rhine Riesling and Cabernet Sauvignon, and each year experienced pruners came down from the Great Western Winery — home of the famous Australian bubbly — to tend the vines.



From the winery at Dromana Estate Vineyards.

History doesn't report Mr Seppelt actually making wine from this vineyard, and probably no wine was made until 1955 when the new owner of the property, a dairy farmer, and his brother-in-law, Doug Seabrook, a Melbourne wine merchant, were the first to harvest grapes and make wine on the property. This continued from 1955 to 1962. Doug Seabrook would take the white Riesling grapes back to his house in Melbourne and crush them, making the wine in his cellar. I am told that the Cabernet Sauvignon and Rhine Riesling wines of this period were very elegant in style. The property was sold in the early 1960s and the current owner persevered with the vines until a bush fire in 1967 destroyed them.

Photography, Harold Scarff

In 1972 Baillieu Myer (of department store fame) planted an experimental plot of 400 vines, through the inspiration and advice of a personal friend, Mr David Wynn (from the pioneering Australian wine industry family), establishing Elgee Park. Three years later Nat and Rosalie White established their Main Ridge vineyard. During that same year Bud and Pat Hoffert developed the Hoffert Balnarring Estate vineyard and winery. Other pioneering vineyards of the late

1970s which have progressed to commercial production are George and Jacky Kefford's Merricks Estate and Brian and Noel Stonier's Merricks vineyard.

In the early 1980s, commercial vineyards have been established by Garry and Margaret Crittenden (Dromana Estate), Bruce and Stan Paul (Balnarring Vineyard), Jim and Faye Temple (Kings Creek Vineyard), Roger and Judy Buckle (Red Hill Estate) and Philip and Elvala Ayton (St Neot's Estate). Many other commercial vineyards are currently being established, and the Peninsula now has more than 30 vigneron.

The varieties planted are predominantly Cabernet Sauvignon and Chardonnay, with small plantings of Pinot Noir, Merlot, Rhine Riesling and Shiraz. These tend to produce wines of intense aroma and flavour with soft tannins and high acids, showing elegant structure with much reward to be gained by careful cellaring. This recent rebirth of winemaking activity is producing



Nat White of Main Ridge Estate

results as Mornington Peninsula wines begin to attract praise from wine critics and win their first show awards since those won back in 1866 by Robert Caldwell.

The Mornington Peninsula Vignerons Association (MPVA) has issued an authentication seal for use on bottles of wine produced solely within the Mornington Peninsula. They also invite people who are interested in the

Cont. on next page



Mornington has a winemaking history of over 100 years.

JUNE

1987

Forthcoming releases — July 1987 ✓

1986 Cabernet Sauvignon

1986 Merlot



Award winning Mornington Peninsula Wines  
National Distribution — I. H. Baker Wines and Spirits

Mailing list enquiries to:

P.O. Box 332, Mornington 3931

Phone (059) 87 3275

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# Mornington Peninsula

Cont. from previous page



Elgee Park

Peninsula's wines to become 'friends' of the MPVA.

The climatic and soil conditions of the Mornington Peninsula make it an extremely suitable area for viticulture. The soils range from sandy loam (a duplex soil) at Dromana, to chocolatey brown loams on the Westernport slopes. The bottom end of the Peninsula with deep sands is an important vegetable gardening area supplying much of Melbourne with its requirements. These sandy regions are ideal for the annually rotated vegetable crops but unsuitable for grape growing.

The Mornington Peninsula can be loosely categorized into warmer and cooler climate regions (viticulturally speaking) depending upon vineyard position and elevation. You can physically sense the change in elevation just by going from a vineyard at a lower elevation to one higher. In the Red Hill area, which is 200-300 m above sea level, it is not uncommon to see a band of cloud just above the vineyards while lower vineyards around Dromana are bathed in sunshine. There are quite dramatic changes in climate, and they tend to be altitude related.

"The wines of the Mornington Peninsula are certainly distinctive."

The wines of the Mornington Peninsula certainly are distinctive, producing light and flavoursome wine styles. The style of Chardonnay on the Peninsula is tending to a lighter, more elegant wine than many other areas of Australia. The style tends to have a lifted lemony grapefruit character, very similar to those of the Margaret River and Mt Barker districts in Western Australia.



Main Ridge Estate winery entrance

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WINE LIFE

The wines are usually quite high in natural acidity and quite austere in their early years. They mature well, developing honey characters after three or four years — a style which will be most attractive at between five and ten years of age.

The Main Ridge Estate 1986 Chardonnay was reviewed in the May issue of *Wine Life* and received a "Highly recommended" classification.

The Peninsula red wines are distinctive, with typically soft tannins. Their Cabernets also show intense varietal characters while retaining



Garry Crittenden of Dromana Estate Vineyards

pleasant soft tannins — this seems to be a distinction between Peninsula red wines and wines from other areas. The strongest influence here is the climate and the moderate day-night temperatures created by the surrounding mass of water.

"The effort spent in locating their wines should be amply rewarded."

The wines from Mornington Peninsula are not as yet easy to find; you would do best to consult specialist wine retailers or buy direct from the winery. However, the effort spent in locating them should be amply rewarded, especially if you enjoy cool-climate styles. The wines are distinctive and provide a change from the more typical Australian regional styles. They tend to be more light and elegant, and require some cellaring to begin to show their best. Very few of the wines fit into the 'drink now' category. Already Mornington Peninsula has produced some outstanding wines and there is

promise of more to come. Comparisons with Margaret River are hard to avoid, so if you are impressed by Margaret River wines don't miss an opportunity to discover the wines of one of Australia's exciting new areas.

Robert Hesketh, a leading Australian wine judge said, on a recent visit to Dromana Estate Vineyards, "their 1985 Cabernet is one of the finest young Cabernets I have ever seen in Australia."

#### Footnote:

For readers who would be interested in Friends of the Mornington Peninsula Vignerons Association send your name and address to:

The Secretary,  
Mornington Peninsula Vignerons  
Association,  
P.O. Box 332  
MORNINGTON 3931 Vic.



Stan Paul, Balnarring Vineyards

## Wineries offering wine for sale

### Dromana Estate Vineyards

Garry & Margaret Crittenden of Dromana Estate Vineyards were granted a vignerons licence in August 1986. The next release, in early 1987 will be the 1986 Chardonnay and 1986 Pinot Noir, with the 1986 Cabernet to follow in winter 1987. Inspection is strictly by appointment on (059) 87 3275. Order enquiries to P.O. Box 332, Mornington 3931. No wine available until early 1987.

### Elgee Park Winery

The first vines on the Merricks North property of the Myer family were planted in 1972. At present the vineyard covers 4.8 ha. Under the guidance of Dr T. Jordan high quality wines are being produced. The wines are available by mail order, and from local retailers and restaurants and some selected Melbourne outlets. Enquiries: (059) 89 7338, A.H. (059) 89 7278.

### Hoffert Balnarring Estate Winery

First vines planted by Bud & Pat Hoffert in 1975. Replanted by their son Patrick in 1981. Specializing in wines made from

non irrigated vines. Limited stocks of premier 1986 vintage Chardonnay and Sylvaner currently for sale. Enquiries: (059) 89 5330.

### Main Ridge Estate

Nat & Rosalie White began establishing the 2.4 ha vineyard in 1975. Varieties are: Chardonnay, Gewurztraminer, Pinot Noir, Pinot Meunier, Cabernet Sauvignon and Cabernet Franc. Winery was built in 1980 and sales commenced 1981. Wine available through restaurants, retailers, by mail order and at cellar door. Enquiries: (059) 89 2686, or to P.O. Box 40 Red Hill South 3937.

### Merricks Estate

The Kelford family's vineyard in Thompson's Lane, Merricks, grew from a small planting in 1977 to 2.5 ha. Wine consultant is Alex White. The 1984 Cabernet and 1984 Shiraz won gold and silver at Seymour and Lilydale. The 1986 Shiraz won silver at Seymour and Lilydale, and the 1986 Cabernet won a gold medallion at Seymour. Enquiries: (03) 602 4444 or (059) 89 8416.

## Vineyards in production

### Balnarring Vineyard

The vineyard of 4.5 ha is now in its 5th year. The second vintage (1986) of Pinot Noir, Cabernet/Merlot, Riesling, Chardonnay and Traminer is showing great fruit and flavour. Bruce & Stan Paul are about to commence the winery in readiness for the 1987 vintage. Enquiries: (059) 89 5258.

### Kings Creek Vineyard

The 2.4 ha vineyard was established by Jim & Faye Temple and W. Glover. The first commercial crop picked in 1985 was vintage at Elgee Park and Prince Albert, Waurin Ponds. Chardonnay, Pinot Noir and Cabernet Sauvignon are grown. Enquiries: (059) 82 1715 or at Lot 5 Myers Road, Bittern 3918.

### Stonier's Merricks Vineyard

This vineyard was established by Noel & Brian Stonier in 1978 and has gradually been extended to approximately 6 ha. Wines for the years 1982 to 1986 were made by the late Stephen Hickinbotham. Since 1985 Andrew Hickinbotham has been Consulting Viticulturalist. Enquiries: (059) 89 8352, or write to 62 Thompson's Lane, Merricks 3916.

### Red Hill Estate

The 6 acre vineyard has plantings predominantly of Cabernet Sauvignon, Merlot and Cabernet Franc. The first commercial crop was picked in the autumn of 1986 and will be made available for release in the autumn of 1987. Enquiries: Write c/- P.O., Red Hill South 3937.

### St. Neot's Estate

Established in 1980 by Philip & Elvala Ayton at Red Hill South. The first vintages of Semillon, Chardonnay and Riesling were made in 1986 by Stephen Hickinbotham. Andrew Hickinbotham was retained as Consultant in 1985. Enquiries: (03) 267 1515 or write to D/246 Domain Road, South Yarra 3141.

## Vineyards producing first crops in 1987

### ERINACEA

Ron & Carol Jones — 0.8 ha, Rye.

### KARINA VINEYARD

Jan & Graeme Pinney — 2 ha, Dromana.

### MOOROODUC ESTATE

Richard & Jill McIntyre — 2 ha, Moorooduc.

JUNE

1987



# Cheerful label, but there's more to the bouquet than meets the nose

THE HERALD WEDNESDAY JULY 15, 1986

BY MARK SHIELD  
WINE WRITER

The label says: "Victorian wine, bottled by Ryland River Pty Ltd, Mainridge, Mornington, Vic."

There is a vineyard on Main Creek Rd, Mainridge, Mornington. It appears to correspond to the address of Ryland River Pty Ltd, the holder of a vineyard licence in the state of Victoria.

Inspection reveals a concrete building and a vineyard which appears to be in the early stages of establishment. There are trellis posts but no vines and the vines are about 40 cm high. It is highly unlikely they could sustain a grape.

Yet there are vines bearing the Ryland River label on the label. They are widely distributed.

buted and staff at many stores believe the wines come from grapes grown at a vineyard on the Mornington Peninsula.

According to a source in the Liquor Control Commission, Ryland River buys wine from Tasdall Wines at Echuca. As far as Tasdall is concerned this is just one of its many transactions with other wine companies. It has no financial interest in Ryland River Pty Ltd.

Ryland River is distributed by Westwood Wine Agencies, a wine brokerage which handles several small producers. Representatives from Westwood Wine Agencies first thought Ryland River wines were made from grapes grown on the Mornington Peninsula. At the time they had no reason to believe otherwise because it appears to say so on the label.

Legal opinion differs on the term "bottled by". Is the company that bottles the wine, which commissions the bottling, or is the bottler, there is not enough weight of legal argument to take the director of Ryland River, Mr John Brae, to task.

When contacted, Mr Brae said the wine had never purchased to come from the Mornington Peninsula.

"When I realised the confusion I called a meeting with the Minister for Industry, Technology and Resources, Mr Fordham, who is widely regarded by the industry as a friend and supporter."

Ironically the label on the Ryland River range — which includes an eight-year-old law, vineyard — does not break the law. Because the label says "bottled by" instead of "grown and made by" it is perfectly legal.

Legal opinion differs on the term "bottled by". Is the company that bottles the wine, which commissions the bottling, or is the bottler, there is not enough weight of legal argument to take the director of Ryland River, Mr John Brae, to task.

When contacted, Mr Brae said the wine had never purchased to come from the Mornington Peninsula.

"When I realised the confusion I called a meeting with the Minister for Industry, Technology and Resources, Mr Fordham, who is widely regarded by the industry as a friend and supporter."

the representatives from Westwood Wine Agencies to set the matter straight," he said. "It is the laws that require me to have my name and address on the label."

Segments of the retail trade have reacted sharply to Ryland River wines, as did the Mornington Peninsula Vignerons Association. The manager of the Wine Spot in peritree Gully, Mr Ian Bird, refused to stock Ryland River wines while it canceled all orders with Westwood Wine Agencies.

Mr Terry Mulholland, Cellars, also had Ryland River wines in its portfolio. The manager of Armadale Cellars, Mr Terry Mulholland, also refused to stock the wines because he found them to be "ideologically unsound."

The Mornington Vignerons Association has contacted the Minister for Industry, Technology and Resources, Mr Fordham, who is widely regarded by the industry as a friend and supporter."

Label that poses questions.



He said he would "look into the matter." So far the results of Mr Fordham's investigations are unknown, but Ryland River Pty Ltd, placed an advertisement in The Age on June 16 under the headline "Ryland River — the facts."

Fact one was that Ryland River was 100 per cent Victorian wine. Well it might be, but they have vineyards in Victoria — kilometres from the Mornington Peninsula.

Another fact was "the wines were reasonably priced." That is open to interpretation. Grapes grown on non-irrigated vineyards in a cool climate have a yield possibly five times lower than that of an irrigated area. So the wines from Ryland River, at about \$9 a bottle, look cheap compared with the

average price of Mornington wines at \$14 a bottle. It should be emphasised that Ryland River Pty Ltd has broken no labelling law and the quality of the wine could be regarded as sound and commercial.

If the wine is erroneously viewed as coming from Mornington it appears to be great value for money. If considered as a wine from the irrigated wetlands the price is too high. It is not really Ryland River Pty Ltd or the distributor that should be taken to task, rather the labelling laws that allow this confusion.

Today's Taste lift-out in The Herald investigates the broader issues of Australian labelling and calls for sweeping reforms to tighten the laws governing wine labels.





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1987-1991





## Good Mornington

ALAN HILL

**T**he Mornington Peninsula is traditionally a weekend retreat for the city's fat cat and Collins Street farmers. Now, the natural beauty of the region is enhanced, in a few spots, by trim rows of trellised vines. Although there were some Peninsula vineyards last century, the first vines planted in recent times (1950's) belonged to Mick Seppelt. The property was sold to the brother-in-law of Melbourne wine merchant Doug Seabrook and a few experimental wines were made, until the vines were destroyed in the 1967 bushfire.

A renaissance started in 1972, when the Baillieu Myer family planted 400 vines on their lush 325 hectares country estate, Elgee Park. Now, almost five hectares of vines are producing quality wines which are available from specialist wine shops and a few restaurants. The Myers have built a \$250,000 winery and engaged the services of Dr. Tony Jordan, viticulture and winemaking consultant. Tod Dexter is full-time winemaker.

Main Ridge Estate is the only vineyard on the Peninsula offering cellar door sales. Nat and Rosalie White planted their vineyard at Red Hill in 1975, building a winery five years later.

Nat White is president of the 50 member strong Mornington Peninsula Vignerons' Association. Many see their vineyards as hobby ventures, although eight growers have wine for sale in reasonable quantities this year. The Association has a special capsule design which members may use on bottles containing wine grown entirely on the Peninsula. Records are kept and are available for checking under the Victorian Wine Authentication Scheme.

Garry Crittenden sold his wholesale nursery and planted his Dromana Estate vineyard in 1982. His 1986 wines are the first vintage grown, made and bottled on the estate.

George and Jacky Kefford are lawyers who work in Melbourne during the week, driving down to the Peninsula at the weekend, where their Merricks Estate property has three hectares planted to vines. With the help of Lilydale winemaker Alex White they are producing prizewinning wine — their Merricks Estate 1984 and 1986 reds won golds at Lilydale and Seymour shows.

Next door to the Keffords, Brian and Noel Stonier have the largest vineyard on the Peninsula, with almost six hectares under vine. Brian Stonier believes that sparkling wines have a big future in the region because of the quality of the pinot noir and chardonnay produced.

There are other wineries on the Peninsula, either producing small quantities of wine, or waiting patiently to release the first fruits of their labours. It is early days yet for the dedicated vignerons of the Mornington Peninsula.





## Wine makers should tread carefully on the peninsula

**I**F ANY grass is growing under Garry Crittenden's feet, it's only because he planted it there. In December last year he sold his remaining interest in the horticultural nurseries he had developed over the previous 20 years of his life to concentrate full-time on a hobby that has become a new way of life — wine.

He is positively reeling with the challenge of producing wine in the up-and-coming glamor region of Victoria, the Mornington Peninsula, under his Dromana Estate label. Moving from specialised horticultural nursery management to viticulture is a little like solving Rubik's Cube, only to buy Rubik's Rings the following day, but Garry Crittenden already seems to have it covered.

He has been a wine enthusiast since youth, firstly tackling the Australian end of the spectrum, before concentrating his attention on the wines of France. "I managed to drink myself into a corner," he begins, which sounds like a truly envious achievement. "I drank to the top there (in France) and found there wasn't much room to move to find new wines to try."

Tragedy was averted when, on a holiday in Tasmania about 10 years ago, Crittenden quite by accident came across some Moorilla Estate wine in a restaurant. He had no preconceived opinions of Tasmanian wine, and the quality came as a profound shock. "That began an ongoing love affair with Tasmanian wine, so after thoroughly investigating them, I found that they didn't offer a lot of 'Frenchness', but a freshness and intensity quite unique in Australia."

For quite a while Crittenden had every intention of starting a vineyard there, and investigated the available sites and climates accordingly.

"But it was put on the back-burner, as for one thing and another, including family ties, it became too difficult an idea. And then, quite by accident, I came across Peninsula wine. These were the days when it amounted to a bucketful or a thimbleful, depending on the year."

Crittenden noted that the two regions had quite a lot in common, in the intense perfume and fruit aromas and flavors of their wines. A study into the Peninsula revealed that it would probably be at least the equal of Tasmania anyway, so after a couple of years he chose a site there, three kilometres inland from Dromana.

He was keen to avoid the deep red loam typical of the district, believing that their extra vigor would encourage excessive vegetative growth in a vineyard. Instead he planted on a duplex sand — grey loam soil overlying clay, which grows vines of considerably less vigor and more potential to produce outstanding fruit.

"My vines are far less vigorous than many others on the peninsula, and even then I had to look at the block for a couple of years before I decided it was suitable."



### Wineries

By JEREMY OLIVER

Crittenden's choice of clonal material was made easier after studying the results of trials in Tasmania which he believes were a satisfactory indication of how they would perform in a similar situation on the Mornington Peninsula.

Planting commenced in 1982, with four acres of cabernet sauvignon, half an acre of merlot and a quarter each of pinot noir and chardonnay. "My belief was, and still is, that cabernet and its relatives (merlot, cabernet franc, malbec and petite verdot) will prove in the long term to be the most successful varieties on the peninsula, both climatically and empirically. They are certainly the most exciting and successful that I have seen so far."

Although he planted the merlot with every intention of blending it with cabernet, Crittenden kept the two apart for the 1986 vintage. "There was too little to blend, and the merlot would have just been washed away. I don't mind, for that gives me the chance to see how the merlot goes by itself in the marketplace. If the response is good maybe I will keep some aside each year. I have to add that the 1987 looks particularly exciting by itself."

As much as a concession to his marketing advice as for any other reason, Crittenden will have increased Dromana Estate's plantings of pinot noir and chardonnay to just over five acres (combined) by the end of this winter.

The first crop was in 1984, from a vineyard only two years of age. This is quite remarkable. "We weren't waiting around to get fruit, and we hurried it along a bit," says Crittenden, in a modest horticultural understatement.

"Our 1985 cabernet was well-received, and we're now releasing the 1986 reds." The 1986 cabernet sauvignon is an elegant, fragrant wine, of softness and considerable finesse. Lighter in color and body than the '85, it is nevertheless quite complete and perfectly balanced. However, I must confess to a preference for the merlot, with its layer upon layer of berry and tobacco-like flavors and excellent creamy oak integration. It has true richness and power, and I've already ordered my dozen.

Dromana Estate has yet to commercially release a white wine.

"The '87 reds are now in wood, and if anything, they're more exciting than anything we've made to date." Having just tried this year's release, I can't wait to see the next!

Fifty tonnes or so of maximum yield

will hardly keep his family like Bahrain royalty, but that isn't a consideration for Garry Crittenden, who is chasing the lifestyle before the dollar. He adds that he must still find customers for his wine, which will hardly be an issue, if his '85s and '86s are anything to go by.

The Crittendens' property is 27 acres, and the 10 he has planted to vines "is absolutely it, as far as I'm concerned". Much of the property (two-and-a-half acres, in fact) is devoted to an enormous dam, which apart from looking a million dollars could mean the difference between income and none in drought years.

Garry Crittenden also fills in much of his time by consulting to a number of vineyards, in the Yarra Valley, the Mornington Peninsula and Tasmania. It is clear that the Tasmanian consultancy really means a lot to him, especially when you consider how close he came to setting up there.

On trying a selection of its wine, anyone with the faintest wine knowledge can see that the Mornington Peninsula is potentially among the world's great viticultural regions. Unfortunately, factors like land prices, availability and suitability may hinder this development, almost to the extent that the region's real promise may never be fully realised.

"If you look closely at the peninsula, you can't just plant willy-nilly anywhere. You need a detailed site analysis, and already one fully planted five-acre vineyard (which isn't an insignificant size by Mornington standards) was recently sold, for it wouldn't grow. After five years of sweat and toil the owner could see that he had made a mistake in choosing that particular site. The vines were never going to do any good — they were windswept from the Bass Strait and would never develop."

"The peninsula is able to produce fruit which emphasises the incredible intensity of primary fruit flavors, and our wines seem to have a certain fineness. Our analysis at picking is different to the Yarra Valley, which is marginally warmer. We pick a little greener and a little later."

Like many others, Crittenden wonders when we are going to return to a normal climatic pattern in summer. "Over the past four years we have had cool to very cool summers. In the future when the climate comes back towards more of a long-term average we will see a slight change in our wines again."

The peninsula does have a great future. But with a ratio of plantable land on a property being somewhere around 50 per cent, it is hard to foresee the larger companies moving in. It would be difficult for them to justify spending \$8000 to \$10,000 an acre, without even planting half of it.

Tourism is sure to play an important role in its future, and the local enthusiasm for the product is not to be underestimated. From what I have seen, if given the chance, it could easily account for its entire consumption.

THE HERALD WEDNESDAY MAGAZINE

JULY 29, 1987

MARK SHIELD

FOR THE CELLAR

**Dromana Estate Cabernet Sauvignon 1986, \$15.95.**

This is the stuff of dreams. If you want to learn about the flavor of cool climate cabernet sauvignon, here is your role model. The nose shows tobacco/cigar box character with hints of chocolate. The color is an enchanting mix of magenta and ruby. It sparkles in the glass and shows wonderful highlights.

The palate is rich with a clean berry character and complex flavors of plums and cherries. The finish is balanced with fine tannin and lingering acid.

At present, it goes well with duck and game dishes. It would also match stilton and sharp cheeses.

After a decade in the cellar it should be a wonderfully complex wine with rich, concentrated fruit flavors and a soft tannin. That's not to say you can't enjoy it now. The bottle was purchased at Gatehouse Cellars, Albert Park.

THE AGE, Tuesday 21 July 1987

**Dromana Estate cabernet merlot 1987**  
\$18 (mailing list) ★★★★★

This year Garry Crittenden tossed his merlot in with his cabernet, and while the result is a fine one, I will miss the straight merlot wine. Enough sentimental stuff... what about this wine? It has a medium to full red color with purple tinges which suggest it is beginning to mature. It has a slightly closed nose of berry and tobacco fruit and sweet oak characters. The palate is elegant, rich in flavor but lighter in body. Well-integrated acids and soft tannins lend fine support.



Garry Crittenden: "If you look closely at the peninsula, you can't just plant willy nilly anywhere."



Standard Newspapers

# Peninsula Post

Phone 781 1155 : CLASSIFIEDS, 581 8511

WEDNESDAY, JULY 29, 1987

Rec. Price 20 cents

Picture: PHILIP ROWLEY

## Cheers! to a fine drop

AS a freezing wind comes across the valley from Dromana, Garry and Margaret Crittenden drink a toast — in Cabernet Sauvignon, of course.

The fruit from their four-year-old Cabernet Sauvignon vines at their Dromana Estate vineyard has produced a wine that has come up trumps.

Not only has it taken out a gold medal in the top-ranking Orrefors Victorian Wine Show, but it has been produced in quantities that make it the largest single release of any wine to date from a Mornington Peninsula winery.

Garry Crittenden, Peninsula nurseryman turned vigneron, reflects that this release of 1000 cases of Cabernet Sauvignon would have been twice as big if the weather had been kind in the summer of '86.

### Small stocks left

As a result of the reduced release, it has meant that there is virtually no Dromana Estate 1986 Cabernet Sauvignon to be obtained, except through selected outlets or at Melbourne's finest restaurants, who were quick to snap it up. Only a small amount remains available from the winery.

Garry will have four hectares under vines by the end of the year, most of it Cabernet Sauvignon and another fine red, Merlot, plus Pinot Noir and Chardonnay.

Garry chose the Dromana valley site with its grey loamy soil over clay only after years of looking around Tasmania and the Peninsula for the best spot.

He is now so confident of the future of the Peninsula's fledgling wine industry that he recently sold his nursery business in Mount Eliza to concentrate full time on winemaking.

He has just become president of the Mornington Peninsula Vignerons Association which links 30 growers.

**P**OSTSCRIPT to last week's front page photo of gold medal winning Peninsula vignerons, Garry and Margaret Crittenden: the magnificent silver trophy they were pictured serving wine from is the trophy they have just been awarded by the outgoing president of the Mornington Peninsula Vignerons' Association, Nat White.

The trophy, donated by the Baillieu Myer family of Elgee Park, Merricks North, is a new one and is to be awarded annually by the outgoing president to the person who has done most for the wine industry on the Peninsula in the preceding year. So it's congratulations, again, to the Crittendens.

— DINA MONKS

Standard - Post, Wednesday, August 5, 1987

A TOUCH of class from Dromana Estate vineyard — owners Garry and Margaret Crittenden drink to the success of their Cabernet Sauvignon.



## Within these antipodean vineyards lurks a fine Bo

**T**O REAL devotees there are only two great red wine regions: Bordeaux and Burgundy. It was inevitable from the earliest times that Australian winemakers would seek to emulate these classic French styles.

That quest has been underway for more than 150 years now and, while we have produced some very good styles and many great wines, it has always seemed that these two poles represented another dimension again. Even patently indifferent wines from these regions seemed markedly different in style to our own.

In the quest for Bordeaux style, attention focused on the classic grape varieties of that region. The Cabernet Sauvignon grape has been in our vineyards since at least the middle of last century, and the other major Bordeaux varieties — Merlot, Malbec and Cabernet Franc — have all been



made widely available in recent times.

While the first generation of winemakers got away to a good start, our modern winemakers have been slower to extend their quest to regional climates more akin to those of the Bordeaux district.

One of the claims made for Bordeaux, in the south-west of France, is its generally cool and maritime climate. The name itself indicates the proximity of the district to the sea. Some of the greatest vineyards actually face the large estuary known as the Gironde.

It seems that the moderating character of the maritime climate of the district is one factor that contributes to the quality of the wine.

This factor may also be seen to be important in Australian contexts as well. In the Hunter Valley, traditional winemakers such as Murray Tyrell place great stock by the cloud cover that prevails in the Pokolbin district at certain times of the year. Also, the generally moderating influence of sea breezes. These drift up the old river valley which enters the sea at Newcastle and cuts a swathe into the Great Dividing Range.

How else does one explain successful wine-making in an area with a sub-tropical climate? An area that we might consider better suited to growing bananas than table wine grapes. The maritime influence may well help

explain why the red wines of the Hunter differ from those of Mudgee, which is cooler, but has a more continental climate.

Another area with a large body of water akin to the Gironde of Bordeaux is Southern Victoria with its Port Phillip and Westernport bays. This is wine-growing territory we may describe as genuinely cool, along with certain vineyards in Tasmania and New Zealand.

This district has witnessed some of the great modern experiment in cool-climate winemaking in Australia, and seen some outstanding results. Topographically, it is akin to the Hunter Valley in the manner we have described. The climatic conditions of vineyards as far inland as Lilydale are moderated by the effects of the sea and the City of Melbourne itself.

Maritime influences may be even more pronounced in the case of vineyards on the Mornington Peninsula, the narrow neck of land that curves around to form the eastern mouth of Port Phillip Bay, and which also provides part of the flank to Westernport Bay.

Only a handful of winemakers are currently active on the Mornington Peninsula, but already they have formed a regional association, and are actively promoting the district and its wines.

With red wine varieties such as Cabernet Sauvignon, Merlot and Cabernet Franc already among the most widely planted on the peninsula, it is clear that the quest for Bordeaux style is not over yet. Is it possible that we may yet discover in Australia equivalents to Bordeaux's great sub-



THE WEEKEND AUSTRALIAN August 1-2 1987

## Cheers, winemakers

IF some other segments of Australian industry had half the vitality of the wine business this country would be in much better shape.

I don't think I've ever met a winemaker I didn't like. The taxman does his best to screw them, the multinationals try and squeeze them out, the weather wrecks the best-laid plans — through all this the winemakers soldier on ever optimistic.

The other day there was a lunch to sample the 1986 Cabernet Sauvignon from Garry Crittenden's modest Dromana Estate. The wine is excellent and further proof of the glorious diversity in the Australian industry.

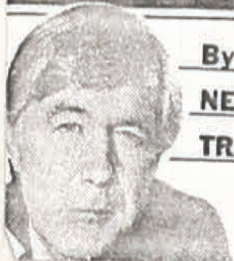
Dromana is one of the Mornington Peninsula's pioneers, where some very interesting cool climate wines are being made.

This Victorian region is getting a lot of attention even though the Crittenden release, a meagre 1000 cases, is the biggest to come out of the area so far.

Crittenden, a former nurseryman, has only 4ha under vine. He'll need to increase that by at least 50 per cent before he can make any kind of living from his efforts.

It was good to see the heavies of the wine trade assemble at the elegant Wentworth Antiques (Harry Douglas's former party pad) in Sydney to salute one more winemaker willing to gamble everything on his dream.

## Final Touch



By  
NEAL  
TRAVIS



THE Mornington Peninsula Vignerons Association recently held its sixth annual general meeting at The Briars, a historic homestead at Mt Eliza. As guest speaker, I was the target of an opportunity too good to miss — they were pouring infant wines from Schweppes bottles and hovering for comment.

I can happily say there are some great wines in the pipeline, and there is no doubt this will be an area of consequence in the next decade. But I must say my attention was diverted by The Briars, because it is not every night you get to sit on Napoleon's bed — and quite lumpy it is, too.

This was the bed from St Helena Island where Napoleon was imprisoned. I would have been much more impressed if Josephine had also been an inmate.

The Briars can also claim one of the first vineyards on the Peninsula, and by all accounts

the wine wasn't much good. It is a different matter these days and the Vignerons Association has planted a token 100-vine vineyard at the Briars to mark the place of its foundation.

Another exciting aspect of the property was the discovery of one of the original vines growing in a privet hedge. The vine is more than 100 years old and can't be identified. Cuttings have been struck and the plan is to plant them on the Briars vineyard, but, it is hoped, not to emulate the poor wine of the past.

The homestead is now the property of the Mornington Shire Council, which is about to lavish mega-dollars on a total restoration. It has also had the vision to zone part of the property for viticultural use and it is currently looking for a tenant.

There was considerable speculation that Moët and Chandon would bid for the lease because of the lure of Napoleon's furniture and the potential for great fruit, but at the 11th hour it opted for the Yarra Valley, leaving the council looking for a suitable tenant.

It would be a great site for a vineyard and the tourist potential of The Briars is beyond measure. The whole district has a bright future in the field of fine table wine, so stand by for some great drinks.

M S

MARK SHEILD HERALD WED. 29/7/87

SYDNEY MORNING HERALD THURSDAY 17/8/87

## NEW WINE GL

### BEST BUYS

Dromana Estate Cabernet Sauvignon — beautiful purple-red colour, extraordinary ripe cabernet fruit and stylish new look out of the glass. Very soft, supple palate with fruit, great balance and a silky texture — it's difficult to resist drinking immediately. Breathtakingly good wine.

## rdeaux

regions such as St Emilion and the Haut Medoc?

### WINES OF THE WEEK

Dromana Estate 1986 Cabernet Sauvignon or Merlot (approx \$16 a bottle).

Dromana Estate was established in 1981 by Margaret and Garry Crittenden. Garry was then a full-time nurseryman who has since devoted all his energies to grape growing and winemaking. These two wines reveal the distinctly different character of the two varieties. Both are wines of brilliant colour. The Cabernet is intensely flavoured and structured, with a pronounced herbaceous character. The Merlot is true to Bordeaux style as a rounder, "flesher" wine. Should the two be blended? Track down a bottle of each and try the exercise for yourself.

— DAVID FLINDERS

### FINE WINE

Huon Hooke

THE Mornington Peninsula is fast becoming the darling of Melbourne's trend-setters. It's arguably the most exciting new wine area in Australia. Established in the 1970s, it has at least 25 tiny, infant vineyards of which only five are actively selling wine.

It will always be a small region because the peninsula, between Port Phillip and Western Port Bays, is small and land is scarce (and expensive). The minuscule amount of high-priced wine is eagerly snapped up by those keen enough to hassle for it.

A 1984 Cabernet from Bryan Stonier's Merricks vineyard — shown to me by its maker, the late Stephen Hickinbotham, a couple of years ago — was very impressive and showed the potential of the district. The other key names are Main Ridge, Elgee Park, Merricks Estate and Dromana Estate.

The first to plug into the NSW market, albeit with tiny quantities, is Dromana Estate, named after a fashionable bayside suburb. I mentioned the lovely 1985 Dromana Estate Cabernet in this column earlier this year. Proprietor Garry Crittenden recently visited Sydney to kick off his 1986 wines.

The district has a very cool climate with all the benefits in terms of high acidity, low pH and intense fruit aroma and flavour. Crittenden is a former nurseryman whose viticultural skills have enabled him to obtain

MOORE Park Cellars would not be Moore Park Cellars without Peter Bourne. Appropriately, he has changed its name to The Peter Bourne Wine Emporium — a bit of a mouthful, but Peter's place is more than just another bottle shop, and the name now reflects that.

Peter has been a friend and adviser to thousands of fine wine lovers, not just from the Eastern Suburbs but from all over Australia for 12 years.

Moore Park's tastings are legendary, and the new, expanded tasting room will, no doubt, be the scene of more and better gatherings of those keen to expand their knowledge and enjoyment of wine. And there's a comprehensive range of wine from all over the world. The Peter Bourne Wine Emporium is at 510 Cleveland St, Surry Hills, (02) 699 7622.

excellent grapes with remarkably few "teething problems".

Proper trellising and vine canopy management have enabled him to avoid the herbaceous flavours often found in cool-climate Australian wines.

Crittenden is at pains to stress that all Dromana Estate wines are made from grapes grown only on the property. "We jealously guard the integrity of our label," he says.

The wine business is no different from any other in that it attracts people who capitalise on fashionable names. There's a new brand in Melbourne shops called Ryland River, with a fancy clear plastic

### CELLAR TALK

MOST wine is made with the help of sulphur dioxide, a chemical which suppresses the activities of undesirable moulds, yeasts and bacteria. It also protects against oxidation spoilage — air is the prime enemy of wine.

Some people cannot drink — or choose not to drink — anything containing sulphur dioxide, and there's one winery which produces wines made without sulphur especially for such people. Botobolar Vineyard at Mudgee has a 1986 shiraz and a 1983 Muscat Hamburg (sweet dessert fortified wine) made for those who are anti-sulphur. The shiraz is pasteurised to give it the protection sulphur dioxide would normally give.

For more information, telephone Gil or Vincie Wahlquist at the winery, (063) 73 3840.

TWO weeks ago the white ants got into Cellartalk and chewed up half my item on Seppelt's sparkling wines. What it should have said is that Seppelt won its fourth consecutive "best champagne of show" trophy at the recent Brisbane Show. Its Great Western Vintage Brut 1984 won the Brisbane Club trophy, taking that wine's show tally to one trophy and four golds. The '84 Fleur de Lys won gold as well.

Seppelt walked away with the top bubbly trophies at the last Melbourne, Canberra and Sydney shows. It also won the sparkling wine section of the Qantas Cup between Australia and the US earlier this year, and is now the indisputable leader in sparkling wine in this country.

label and a Mornington address. The trouble is, the grapes aren't grown on the Mornington Peninsula — the wine is bought as finished wine quite legitimately from another maker in the north of Victoria.

Ryland River does have a property on the peninsula, but there's only a handful of vines and they're a long way off bearing fruit.

The people behind Ryland River aren't breaking the law. The rules require them to put an address at the bottom of the label, and that address need not be the source of the grapes, as any Hunter Valley winemaker can tell you.

But the legitimate winemen of the

Mornington Peninsula are beside themselves. They are working hard at building up a reputation and sweating to make the outstanding quality wine of which they believe their area is capable. They are understandably upset that someone in their midst is exploiting a loophole in the labelling laws.

They have protested to the Trade Practices Commission and the Liquor Licensing Authority, but, it seems, in vain.

The episode highlights the inadequacies not only of the labelling laws but also the Victorian authentication scheme, which now seems to be flagging due to lack of interest.





## On Our Selection

On Our Selection is a regular feature of *Epicure* in which a panel of experts conducts a blind tasting of Australian and imported wines. This week's panel is Ken John, cellarmaster at Mietta's; Peter Weste, a wine and spirit consultant who was formerly chief wine maker of two of Australia's

largest wine companies, and Alex White, a partner in the Lillydale vineyard at Seville who doubles as winemaker for St Hubert's at Coldstream. The column is compiled by staff journalist PAUL WATSON. Because the wines are bought at normal retail outlets, prices may vary.

## EPICURE 4

THE AGE, Tuesday 28 July 1987

# King of the red grapes bestows amnesty to kind and hard soils

**C**ABERNET SAUVIGNON as a varietal wine usually has strong characteristics, which is why the Bordeaux French use other varieties to produce a harmonious blend.

In Australia, the fight against generic terms such as claret and burgundy led to a movement to straight varietal wines, rather than blends. Cabernet sauvignon, recognised worldwide as a classic grape type, was strongly identified as one of those primary varieties and became widely used on its own.

This week the panel chose to taste straight cabernets, as drunk by many Australian wine consumers.

Ken John said he believed that Australians had changed their concept of wines and could now accept the idea of cabernet having other varieties, such as merlot, blended with it.

Peter Weste: "To me, cabernet is the king of all red varieties and absolutely dominates them. But it's often much better when blended with something else than when used as a straight variety."

Alex White, who was also involved as guest taster with the Bordeaux mixtures reported in the previous On Our Selection column, said: "It's curious that if you look at the wines we've had today and contrast them with the cabernet merlot from the previous tasting, some of today's wines would vie with the mixtures for the best wine."

"They are magnificent, complex, rich, fully flavored wines."

Ken John agreed that the straight cabernets were on equal terms with the more modern style of the Bordeaux-style blends. "If you put the 12 together, one of these six would take the plum overall." He pointed out that he considered pinot noir, at its best, was impossible to beat. "But you see great cabernet far more often than you see great pinot noir."

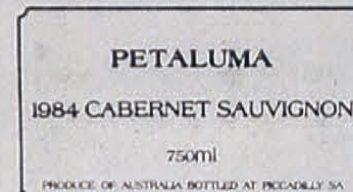
Peter Weste explained: "Cabernet is a very forgiving variety and you can grow it in all sorts of conditions and still make a very good wine from it. With pinot noir, unless you are in exactly the right set of circumstances, you don't make a good wine."

## The panel's comments

### 1. Orlando St Hugo 1983 (\$9.99)

**PETER WESTE:** Medium dark blackish-red color, good mature nose — fairly subdued with some roses in the background. Good varietal flavor, without being too intense. Some wood on the finish. Well balanced. Good drinking now.

**ALEX WHITE:** Medium ruby, not quite brilliant. I was slightly worried



by the nose at first. I got a very slight mustiness that faded in and out. It might have been slightly corked. Apart from that, the wine had nicely developed complex fruit. There was a quite a bit of sweet oak and vanilla profiles. On the palate it was full and soft and round, very well balanced. A medium length finish and a slight touch of prune flavor. Drink now.

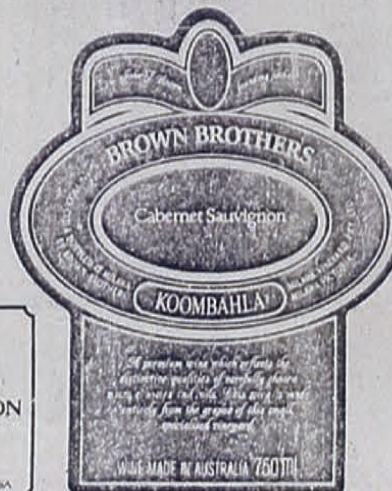
**KEN JOHN:** Deep mid-garnet color. The bouquet is redolent of cassis and hints of capsicum, also a touch of wood. The palate is generous in flavor with mature fruit character showing. Tannin is still quite evident on the finish. Quite nice drinking now, but another year won't hurt it.

### 2. Dromana Estate 1986 cabernet sauvignon (\$16.20)

**AW:** Brilliantly deep red-purple color. The wine has intense aroma of green beans, blackcurrants and beautiful new oak. The palate is very full with sweet fruit characters again: currants, cherries, rich oak. It drinks very well now, but will improve over the next two to three years.

**KJ:** The color is fabulous, it reminds me of really delicious cherries and could be described as brilliant deep crimson. The bouquet is also outstanding: fresh fruit character, a bit of capsicum, a bit of cherry fruit and new oak. I, too, found the cherry character on the palate, balanced by good acidity. I also found the wine delicious now, and two or three years won't hurt it either.

**PW:** A very dark, attractive, rich, purplish-red color. Very rich, strong, fruity nose with a slight tea-leaf character. The palate is full of flavor, fruit, cherries and plums. It's full, very young, and I'd like to see it in a couple of years.



### 3. Seppelt's Drumborg cabernet 1982 (\$15.36)

**KJ:** The color is attractive, a strong, deep ruby. The bouquet has a plummy touch about it, with nice oak showing through as well. The palate is complex, with good fruit and wood showing. I found the wine well balanced and good drinking now, or perhaps in a year or so.

**PW:** Dark garnet color with a very strong, fruity nose of roses, violets and some vanilla from the wood. Full mature palate, with good style and balance. A good lingering finish, and excellent drinking now.

**AW:** Deep garnet, absolutely brilliant. Very ripe prune-type flavors and fruit, coffee aromas, with rich oak. The palate has very full, soft tannin. Sweet, ripe fruit comes through with new oak again. It's very well balanced and has a fairly long finish. Drinking well now, and in the short term will probably mature.

### 4. Brown Bros Koombahla cabernet sauvignon 1984 (\$9.82)

**PW:** Medium dark garnet color. The nose is clean and pleasant, with a very slight jammy, or overripe character. Nice wood. The palate is better than the nose. Good fruit flavor, a lighter style on the tongue and very easy to drink now.

**AW:** Medium ruby color. On the nose I got cherries and a cigar box character. The palate was light, with nice sweet fruit, vanilla characters and an antiseptic finish.

**KJ:** Attractive mid-ruby color. Cool, herbaceous cabernet nose. The palate is quite elegant and restrained. It has a nice finish and I found the wine to be most enjoyable.

### 5. Petaluma cabernet sauvignon 1984 (\$23.25)

**AW:** Brilliant medium garnet color. On the nose, sweet ripe cherry and blackcurrant aromas are balanced with new oak. The palate's full flavored, with sweet red berry flavors coming through in perfect harmony with new French oak. It has a balanced astringency on the finish and I think it will be at its best in several years.

**KJ:** The color is soft cherry red. There is fresh, excellent soft cherry fruit on the nose and that character also comes through on the palate. The wood that is evident on both nose and palate is an excellent aspect of the wine. The palate is quite gentle, which is not to suggest that it lacks flavor. I quite like the wine now, but I can see it being better in perhaps three or four years.

**PW:** Medium ruby color. Cherry fruit dominates the nose. Good flavor and body. Well balanced, some wood and fruit, but neither dominates. Pleasant enough for drinking now.

### 6. Penfolds 1980 Bin 707 (\$19.25)

**KJ:** The color is very deep ruby, with a bit of purple evident. There is some oak on the nose, with some ripe cherry and fruit characters. The palate is full flavored and rich, with the oak again showing through. Quite a strong, substantial wine of generous flavor.

**PW:** Very good dark red color. Nice clean, mature nose of fruit, sweet oak and a touch of cold tea. Mature palate, good balance, but probably at its peak for drinking.

**AW:** Deep red, with just a trace of brown. Very ripe blackberry-plum characters. Spicy vanilla oak complexed by a little volatile acidity. Full, sweet ripe fruit on the palate. Strong new oak, well in balance, drinking OK now, but I think it will age well in the medium term.

## Wine of the week:

**PW:** It's quite clear. No. 3 has great style, tending towards Bordeaux in character and it is mature. But I must give special mention to No. 2, which is a very good young wine and I'd like to see it later on.

**AW:** I think No. 3 definitely drinks the best now, but No. 2 is close to it and should be so much better given a couple of years. It has the most flavor of all the wines tasted.

**KJ:** I also liked Nos. 2 and 3, but I preferred No. 2 now and I'm sure I'll prefer it in two or three years. It's a fabulous wine, with classic cabernet fruit flavor — my style of wine.



After dark 1

THE INDEPENDENT NEWS, Tuesday, November 17, 1987 — Page 37

## Support for wine fest

MORE than 350 guests dined out in style in an elegantly decorated marquee to celebrate the 1987 Peninsula Wine and Food Fest on

November 7. The festival, the third of its kind, was held at "The Briars" Homestead at Mornington. "The Briars" was the site of the peninsula's first

vineyard, and it is perhaps fitting that the resurgence of peninsula cuisine and winemaking should be celebrated here.

Aperitifs were served in the homestead at 7.30pm, before the guests moved into the marquee to be served with a well-planned menu of entree, main course, cheese and coffee, accompanied by a wine list of six different Mornington Peninsula wines specially selected for each course.

### Local support

The fest has enjoyed excellent support from local food producers over the past three years and 20 peninsula restaurants each supplied a plate of hors d'oeuvres which were served to the guests as they arrived at the homestead.

The Peninsula Wine and Food Fest is held to showcase peninsula wine and food and is organised by a committee from St Paul's School, "Woodleigh" and members of the Peninsula Vignerons Association.

Wines in this year's Fest in order of serving were a 1987 Bannering Vineyard Riesling Traminer before dinner, from Karina Vineyard, the 1987 Sauvignon Blanc; Merricks Estate provided a 1986 Chardonnay, as did Elgee Park Estate with their 1986 Chardonnay.

Main Ridge Estate was represented with the 1986 Pinot Noir, Red Hill Estate showed their 1986 Merlot Cabernet, and Moorooduc Estate came up with their 1986 Cabernet Sauvignon.

Hors d'oeuvres were provided by selected peninsula restaurants, followed by an entree of Red Hill chippolata sausages served with Bittern Cottage plum

sauce; Janet's wholemeal bread and King Island butter, followed by salmon and spinach roulade served with snow peas.

The main course comprised Peter's specially glazed and barbecued lamb served with green salad, potato salad with Leslie's sour cream and broccoli dressing, asparagus with freshly grated nutmeg and butter and glazed carrots.

Dessert was first of the season strawberries served with King Island cream.

Colin's walnuts, Nola's rum truffles and Bernie's chocolate prunes were served with coffee.

A special pressing of Delgrosso's apple juice was served throughout the

evening.

Special thanks is extended to the following restaurants which supplied hors d'oeuvres: Baydarra Restaurant, Mt Martha; Benton's of Mornington; Bortolotto's, Mornington; Checkers, Mt Martha; Gazebo, Dromana; Julius Caesars, Mornington; La Colombe, Mornington; Mangan's, Flinders; Maree's, Dromana; Megumi, Frankston; Peninsula Motor Inn, Tyabb; Pettifoggers, Frankston; Ranelagh's, Mt Eliza; Seafood Platters, Mornington; The Old Mornington, Mornington.

Spiced olives and prunes in port were provided with complements of Eureka Farm in Shoreham.

## Cold tested the winemaker's skills

THE Mornington Peninsula Vignerons Association last weekend held their annual tasting of new vintage wines. The 1987 vintage was a difficult year for cool climate vineyards because the year was so cold and many winemakers had difficulty ripening their grapes and therefore achieving the required sugar levels for winemaking.

This really tested the skills of the winemakers on the Mornington Peninsula, but was wonderful for winemakers in warmer areas.

Despite the difficulties the wines were breathtaking and there have been some outstanding wines made.

There were thirty one wines tasted and many were from new vineyards who have not yet released any previous wines.

Vineyards represented were Karina, Elgee Park, Bannering, St Neot's, Main Ridge, Dromana, Moorooduc, King's Creek, Stonier's Merricks, Red Hill Estate, Merricks Estate, and Kewley's.

Some of the outstanding Chardonnays were the Dromana Estate, Stonier's Merricks, Elgee Park, Moorooduc, and Main Ridge.

### THE GOOD DROP Meryl Paxton

The highlights of the Pinot Noirs was Brian Stonier's Merricks, very reminiscent of a Chambolle Musigny with its richness. Also outstanding were Main Ridge and Dromana Estate.

All the Cabernets and Cabernet blends were very impressive, with my top points going to Moorooduc Estate, followed very closely by Elgee Park, Main Ridge, Stonier's Merricks, Dromana Estate and Merricks Estate.

As a line up this was one of the most impressive tastings I have attended for a long time, and almost all of them would find a place in my cellar, ahead of most of the wines I have seen from other regions of Australia.

For some time I have been stating that the Mornington Peninsula is Australia's most promising wine region, and this tasting convinced me that it has come of age as the most outstanding wine district of Australia.



**The Doings**

Edited by IAN MACKAY

THE AGE, Tuesday 24 November 1987

## EPICURE 8

**L**IFE goes on, nevertheless. This week sees the first wines for sale from Jan and Graeme Pinney's Karina Vineyard at Dromana. They are 1987 rhine riesling and 1987 sauvignon blanc, the first commercial release of that variety, says Graeme, on the Mornington Peninsula.

About a hectare of riesling and sauvignon blanc were planted on gently sloping ground below Red Hill in 1984, followed by another hectare or so of cabernet sauvignon and merlot. Graeme says total plantings of four hectares will be rounded off by 1988 with chardonnay and pinot noir. This year John Ellis made the wines in the Pinneys' new winery, after a very late picking season in which starlings and rain were voracious enemies.

Both the new wines are in understandably short supply, but the winery, on Harrison's Road, Dromana (Melways P. 160, J7), will be open between 10 am-5 pm next Saturday and Sunday and the following weekend. Or you can write to the Pinneys there for a mail order form.

### Around the WINE glass By ALAN COOK

## Dromana is well worth hunting up

Crittenden's Dromana Estate is one of the most recent additions to the vineyards of the Mornington Peninsula in Victoria.

Bought in 1981 by Margaret and Garry Crittenden, then a full-time nurseryman with his own business on the peninsula, Dromana Estate is a small vineyard.

It comprises four hectares of vines — mainly cabernet sauvignon and merlot with one hectare each of pinot noir and chardonnay.

The first release of the 1984 Cabernet sold out immediately to wide acclaim from press and public alike.

The 1985 Pinot Noir Chardonnay and Cabernet were equally sought after.

Crittenden's horticultural training is evident in the vineyard and its impeccable condition is admired by other viticulturalists.

He is dedicated to producing the best quality fruit from a vineyard cropped at a reasonable level and the soundness of his fruit is renowned.

He recently sold his nursery interests to devote his energies to full-time grape growing and wine-making and a small number of viticultural consultancies.

At a showing of his latest releases at Michael's Riverside Restaurant, I was impressed with the quality of the 1986 vintage.

Dromana Estate 1986 Chardonnay had been matured in French

nevers and alliers oak and there was plenty of fruit. Flavor was fresh and with soft acid it made pleasant drinking with evidence of improving further.

The Dromana Estate Pinot Noir was excellent. It had top color and was bright and clear. The bouquet had beautiful fruit showing and the palate revealed skill in the marriage of fruit and French oak.

Crittenden's 1986 Merlot is marvellous and the color was impressive with strong fruit coming through on the bouquet. The palate had a lingering finish of fruit, oak, acid and soft tannin.

Dromana Estate Cabernet Sauvignon 1988 was huge in fruit on the nose with a hint of oak in the background. The palate reflected the bouquet with plenty of clean fruit and finishing strong.

A wine for the cellar for some five years.

These wines are from a small vineyard and naturally will be in limited supply. Ian Baker and Co in Brisbane could advise where they could be obtained.





JULY, 1987  
BRISBANE - Telegraph

### Quality of end product from top-class grape

Having a successful career as a nurseryman has greatly aided Garry Crittenden in his new role as grapegrower and winemaker on the Mornington Peninsula, south-east of Melbourne.

His horticultural training shows in the impeccable condition of his Dromana Estate vineyard and the resulting excellent quality and soundness of the fruit coming from the vineyard.

As so many winemakers have come to realise, it is in the vineyard that the ultimate quality of the end wine is determined — if you don't have top-class fruit to start with, you cannot reasonably expect to produce the very best wine.

Australia's winemakers generally have the technical knowhow and equipment to make good wines from average quality grapes, but in the search for the ultimate in wine quality, there still is nothing to beat starting with the best grapes.

Mind you, Garry Crittenden is never going to threaten the Penfolds, Seppelts and Lindemans of this world in quantity — his Dromana Estate vineyard is only 4ha, the majority planted to cabernet sauvignon and merlot, with about 1ha each of pinot noir and chardonnay — and that makes him one of the biggest vineyards of



By MIKE FROST

the Mornington Peninsula.

Indeed, his release of 1000 cases of 1986 Cabernet Sauvignon is by far the biggest "commercial" release from the district.

Queensland was lucky to get any of the wine at all — it is only that Garry is Brisbane-born and his family still live here that meant the local office of I.H. Baker received one pallet-load (64 cases).

The '86 cabernet shows lovely sweet berry fruit on both the nose and palate, with nicely-handled oak, good tannin and crisp acid. Already appealing drinking, it should mature very well.

Obviously this wine will not be readily available, and it will not be cheap at around \$19, but it is worth chasing up a bottle or two to see just what one of Australia's newer cool-climate areas can produce.

A B E R F E L D Y

Newsletter

AUGUST 1987

### BEN'S PRIVATE BIN

by Ben Vaughan



Dromana Estate winemaker Garry Crittenden

Tasmania. In fact, the 1986 Main Ridge Chardonnay and Pinot Noir are already on our price list.

1986 Dromana Estate Cabernet Sauvignon  
\$184.94 Club members dozen (= \$15.41)  
Single bottle \$16.51 Shelf price \$18.71

During a recent trip to Melbourne, I was fortunate enough to have a conducted tour of the vineyards of the Mornington Peninsula area, between Port Phillip Bay and Westport Bay, south-east of Melbourne. In years to come this area may vie with the Yarra Valley and parts of Tasmania for the position of premier red wine producing area of Australia.

Dromana Estate is owned by former horticulturalist and nursery owner, Gary Crittenden — no relation to the well-known Melbourne wine retailing family. It is one of the most immaculately tended vineyards I have ever had the fortune to enter. The vineyard, the Crittenden house and the winery are positioned around a very large pond on which masses of ducks were swimming at the time of our arrival. It was one of those rare, crystal-clear, still, sunny, June days and the late afternoon sun filtered magically through the multi-coloured, autumn leaves on the vines.

Earlier in the day we had visited Stoniers, Merricks Vineyard, Merricks Estate, Main Ridge and Elgee Park — all names we will hear more of as their production increases sufficiently for the wines to find their way to

The Mornington Peninsula is producing wines with body somewhere in the range between those of Tasmania and the Yarra Valley, but slightly closer to the Tasmanian style. Cabernet yields, of about four tonnes to the acre, are roughly double this state. Most of the vineyards are run on a part-time basis by professional people from Melbourne who have their weekend homes on the peninsula; so quantities will never be great, but quality, if sheer dedication is any guide, will be very high.

The 1986 Dromana Estate Cabernet is an extremely elegant and fairly delicate wine exhibiting that marvellous fine-grained tannin character which so compliments the cool-climate Cabernet fruit. It bears a brilliant, intense, purple-crimson colour. The nose shows a touch of vanillin French oak character which is also evident on the palate. The wine, whilst being extremely young, is mouth-filling in its richness, extremely long on the palate, and shows no evidence of the middle palate hole so often evident in 100% cool-climate Cabernets. The acid and tannin are balanced with the fruit and the wood. While absolutely delightful to drink now, the wine should develop for five to ten years. The 1984 and 1985 Cabernets which I have been fortunate enough to drink in the last few months, both still exhibit purple tinges of colour and indicate that the pedigree will have at least a ten-year cellar life.

THE INDEPENDENT NEWS, Tuesday, September 13, 1988

### Experts taste Dromana wine

IN what is regarded as one of the most prestigious wine industry events of the year, a local wine has beaten a strong and large field of contenders from all over Victoria.

Cabernet Merlot, by Dromana Estate, was chosen for service at a black tie dinner attended by hundreds to mark the opening of the Annual Victorian Winemakers Exhibition at the Hyatt Hotel.

The week long exhibition is open to the public from today to Friday September 16.

The exhibition began officially with the black tie dinner on Sunday.

Exhibiting Victorian winemakers invited to submit wines to a discriminating selection panel who then choose only one wine from each category for service at the dinner.

Garry Crittenden, owner-winemaker at Dromana Estate, said he saw the choice of his 1987 Cabernet-Merlot as further recognition of the pre-eminent role the peninsula was destined to play in the production of premium quality wine.

Mr Crittenden said this wine would be available for public tasting throughout the week along with a large range of wines from other peninsula winemakers.

THE WEEKEND AUSTRALIAN, September 24-25 1988

### HALLIDAY'S CHOICE



FEW wines from the Mornington Peninsula find their way outside the peninsula itself and the Melbourne metropolitan area. While the area has established an enviable reputation for quality over the past five years, it has had

to do so with wines made on a tiny production scale. Figures are not easy to come by, but I would suspect that more than 80 per cent of the output of all wineries except one is sold cellar door and by mailing list.

The one exception is Dromana Estate, previously distributed by I.H. Baker but now handled by Dorado Wines in Melbourne and Sydney. Dromana Estate has just released its 1987 Cabernet Merlot, a blend of 85 per cent cabernet sauvignon and 15 per cent merlot. In previous years, the two components were released separately, but in 1987 winemaker Garry Crittenden decided to adopt the classic approach of blending.

Dromana Estate typifies the best of the Mornington Peninsula characteristics: it is a wine with bell-clear varietal flavour, wonderful colour and seductive aroma. Skilful oak handling has given a warm, spicy overtone to both the bouquet and the palate, thanks to some high quality new French oak barriques. The

wine also shows the typical low tannin profile of the region and is of light to medium body. It relies on seduction rather than raw power for its appeal and should give of its best over the next few years.

It will retail for around \$20.52. Alternatively, you can join the mailing list by writing to PO Box 332, Mornington, Victoria, 3931. The cost is \$204 per dozen, with freight at \$5 per carton for the Melbourne metropolitan area and \$10 per carton for Victorian country and other States.

THE AGE, Tuesday 15-September 1987

### MORNINGTON PENINSULA VINGNERONS

The only things that may prevent the Mornington Peninsula from becoming one of the world's major quality wine regions is the price of its land and the very particular effort required in site location. To see for yourself why I speak so highly of the region, one only has to try the young pinots of Merricks Estate and Main Ridge, the cabernets of Dromana Estate and the chardonnay of Elgee Park. Each of these wines possess rare delicacy and elegance of structure with an intensity of flavor rarely seen in Australia. They will only improve as vines mature and wine makers become more accustomed to the region.

Wed 9 Sept 87  
THE AUSTRALIAN  
Cathay commercial

Wine growing on Victoria's Mornington Peninsula? Not only so, but wonderful. Garry Crittenden's Dromana Estate cabernet sauvignon has been acclaimed by wine writers as exceptional in quality. Garry Crittenden a Brisbane Gregory Terrace Boy (the old reds and blacks) flew to London from Melbourne by Cathay Pacific on Saturday. He will also visit Moët & Chandon (in Epernay) for whom he is consultant to their property in Victoria's Yarra Valley.



**A** FEW days ago I went to a dinner in Melbourne which reflected very accurately and with a great deal of enjoyment both the breadth and depth of winemaking expertise in Victoria. The wines served came from the west of the state and from the north-east, from nearby on the Mornington Peninsula and from the Yarra Valley. And to say that some of the overseas guests at the dinner were amazed at the quality of each and every one of the wines is to understate the case.

There was a choice of bubbles to start, Chateau Remy brut rose and Sepelt Great Western chardonnay champagne, and then there were three white wines, Mount Chalmers rhine riesling, Mitchelton marsanne and Coldstream Hills chardonnay. The reds began with Bannockburn pinot noir, then we had Coldstream Hills "new" pinot and Dromana Estate cabernet sauvignon, and to round things off we were indulged with Morris muscat and Campbell tokay.

Now, there is nothing particularly expensive or exotically unobtainable about any of these wines. Anybody with a good neighborhood wine shop would have been able to put on a dinner party list just like it without affecting the overdraft too drastically. But it is not something you could have done so easily 10 years ago or perhaps even only five, and that is the real story of the Victorian wine renaissance.

A little over a year ago there were celebrations of a kind when it was discovered that Victoria had reached the 100 registered vineyards mark. That figure is now about 135 and increasing fast. Driven on by good prices for premium fruit, generated in turn by the astonishing growth in export sales of quality wines, more and more people are turn-



THE AGE, Tuesday 15 September 1987

**THE** ninth annual Exhibition of Victorian Winemakers will be held at the Southern Cross Hotel this week. Chief wine writer IAN MACKAY looks at the remarkable growth of the industry in Victoria and at its achievements.

ing to wine grape production. Apple orchards, dairy farms and, more recently, tobacco farms are all being ploughed under to make way for cabernet, merlot, chardonnay and sauvignon blanc.

Only South Australia now has more vineyards, but, of course, they have vastly greater production overall because much of our new development is among small, regional producers we might once have called boutiques. The concentration is on premium varietal table wines, and there is a great proliferation of hobby or gentlemen vigners planting these top varieties under the direction of clever consultant wine makers assuring themselves of supplies of top fruit in years to come.

All of this is very pleasing to the Victorian Government, which is understandably delighted to have a sector of primary industry doing so well in raising export and tourism dollars, and there is no doubt it is something which would also have made Hubert de Castella proud. It was more than a century ago, you will doubtless remember from your history lessons, that de Castella established St Hubert's in the Yarra Val-

ley, thus beginning a winemaking revolution which led this industrious Swiss immigrant to label Victoria "John Bull's vineyard".

Today there are more than 40 vineyards in the valley, the number is increasing rapidly, and there are signs that large commercial expansion is on the way. Although land costs are relatively high the results seem able to sustain such values, and a number of major interstate companies are eyeing the valley with interest. The Cesters recently sold St Hubert's to a Perth-based consortium with other interests in Melbourne, and recent acquisitions by Moet et Chandon and de Bortoli suggest that a another new wave in the valley's history has just begun.

And the wines? Without trying to be trendy about what is a broad-based production scene it is interesting to see the quality of chardonnay and pinot noir being made there. Many of the chardonnays are very French in style, dry, not over-oaked, elegant, and there is probably not a better batch of pinots being made in the country.

The 1987 Coldstream Hills "new"

pinot we had at the dinner, for instance, is a brave and fascinating effort by James Halliday to produce a Beaujolais style wine without calling it beaujolais. It is a wine filled with cherries and plums, the very upfront fruit flavors accentuated by the carbonic maceration process. It has lots of style and complexity, and it is certainly a delicious drink.

**T**HE Mornington Peninsula, meanwhile, is also continuing the promise of the Elgee Park wines made by the Hickinbothams for the Myer family the best part of a decade ago. At our dinner party the 1986 Dromana Estate cabernet sauvignon presented very well, a most interesting wine from a region fascinating for reasons other than wine.

Dromana, of course, is prime bayside real estate, where land prices are governed by the considerable demands of holidaymakers and rich weekend hobby farmers. Gary and Margaret Crittenden planted two hectares there in 1982, mainly with cabernet sauvignon, but they also had smaller plots of chardonnay, pinot noir and merlot.

The 1984 and 1985 Dromana wines were made by Nat White at his Main Ridge winery a few kilometres away, and in 1986 by Gary Crittenden himself with the help of Dr Tony Jordan, then of Oenotec and now of Domain Chandon. Nat and Rosalie White established their Main Ridge Estate in 1975, and they are considered something of pioneers on the peninsula which is attracting more and more of the rich in search of the ultimate dinner party buzz — fine wine under their own labels.

On the Western Port side of the peninsula is Merricks Estate, planted by George and Jacky Kefford in 1977. George makes the wine with the help of Alex White, who used to be the wine maker at St Hubert's and who now has

his own splendid Lillydale Vineyard. There is no doubt that the Mornington Peninsula has enormous potential as a premium wine area, but given the price of land, production will doubtless remain small.

## GENERAL NEWS



Gerry Crittenden, owner/winemaker Dromana Estate Wines, Mornington Peninsula.

Crittenden's Dromana Estate is one of the most recent additions to the Mornington Peninsula.

Purchased in 1981 by Margaret and Garry Crittenden, then a full time nurseryman with his own business on the Peninsula, Dromana Estate comprises 4 hectares of vine — mainly Cabernet Sauvignon and Merlot with 1 hectare each of Pinot Noir and Chardonnay.

The first release of the 1984 Cabernet sold out immediately and received wide acclaim from press and public alike as did the equally sought after 1985 Pinot Noir, Chardonnay and Cabernet.

Garry Crittenden's horticultural training is evident in the vineyard and its impeccable condition is admired by other viticulturalists. He is dedicated to producing the best quality fruit from a vineyard cropped at a reasonable level

## What is Dromana Estate?

and the quality and soundness of his fruit is renowned.

He recently sold his nursery interests to devote his energies to full time grape growing and wine making and a small number of viticultural consultancies.

"At Dromana Estate we are dedicated to the idea of producing premium wines from only the best quality fruit available from our vineyards. As an expression of fruit intensity we believe we have the edge over many other areas because of our unique 'peninsula' micro climate and our scrupulous attention to vine care. Our customers can be confident that any wine under the Dromana label is absolutely 100% Dromana Estate grown, and that we jealously guard the integrity of our label," said Crittenden.

The Dromana Estate 1986 Cabernet Sauvignon was the largest single release of any wine from a Mornington Peninsula Winery, to date.

Made from the fruit of 4 year old vines, cropping at just under 4 tonnes per acre, a total of 1,000 cases were made.

The 1986 Cabernet Sauvignon shows intense, bright colours, which are the hallmark of Dromana Estate wines.

Garry Crittenden is delighted with his 1986 Cabernet Sauvignon and of it he says: "The Cabernet aroma is fragrant, fresh and berry-like, while the palate displays lively cherry, berry and subtle French oak characters tailing out to a long, soft, lingering finish."

Having spent 12 months in new French oak the wine is very enjoyable now, but the low pH and good acid suggest a long bottle life for those

wishing to cellar. The 1984 and 1985 Cabernets are showing no sign of ageing in the bottle, yet.

Along with the earlier released 1986 Pinot Noir and Chardonnay, the Cabernet Sauvignon and Merlot were the first to be made in the modest Dromana Estate winery, and Garry feels their success is due in no small measure to the involvement of Dr. Tony Jordan of Oenotec, whose guidance and encouragement throughout vintage was greatly appreciated. Credit must also go to Joe Vaughan, vineyard operator and cellarhand for his skill and experience in his range of horticultural endeavours.

Already this 1986 Cabernet Sauvignon has been awarded a gold medal in the prestigious Orrefors Victorian Wine Show, and no doubt many accolades are to come in the future.

In The Australian, 4th July, 1987 James Halliday commented: "This is simply the best Mornington Cabernet Sauvignon made to date, a wine to challenge the best of the '86s from around Australia."

Like the 1986 Cabernet Sauvignon, the 1986 Merlot is from 4-year-old vines,

cropping at optimum levels in terms of quality and quantity — just under 4 tonnes to the acre (10 tonnes per ha.)

The 1986 Merlot is an example of the fine true-to-type fruit characters obtainable on the cool and humid Mornington Peninsula.

Although the original intention was to blend the Cabernet and Merlot to a single wine, and this practice may be adhered to in the future, for this release at least it was decided to bottle the wines separately. Again, like the Cabernet, it displays the intense bright colours that seem to be the hallmark of Dromana Estate.

Garry Crittenden's comments on his first single release Merlot are that it is; "fragrantly redolent of rose-hips, and the palate a mixture of cherry, rose and oak, also with a soft, lingering finish."

Aged for 12 months in new French oak it is delightful drinking now, but will reward those who are willing to cellar it for a few years.

Unlike the Cabernet, the 1986 Dromana Estate Merlot is in limited supply and those wishing to try it will have to hurry to snap up a bottle of the total 100 cases made.



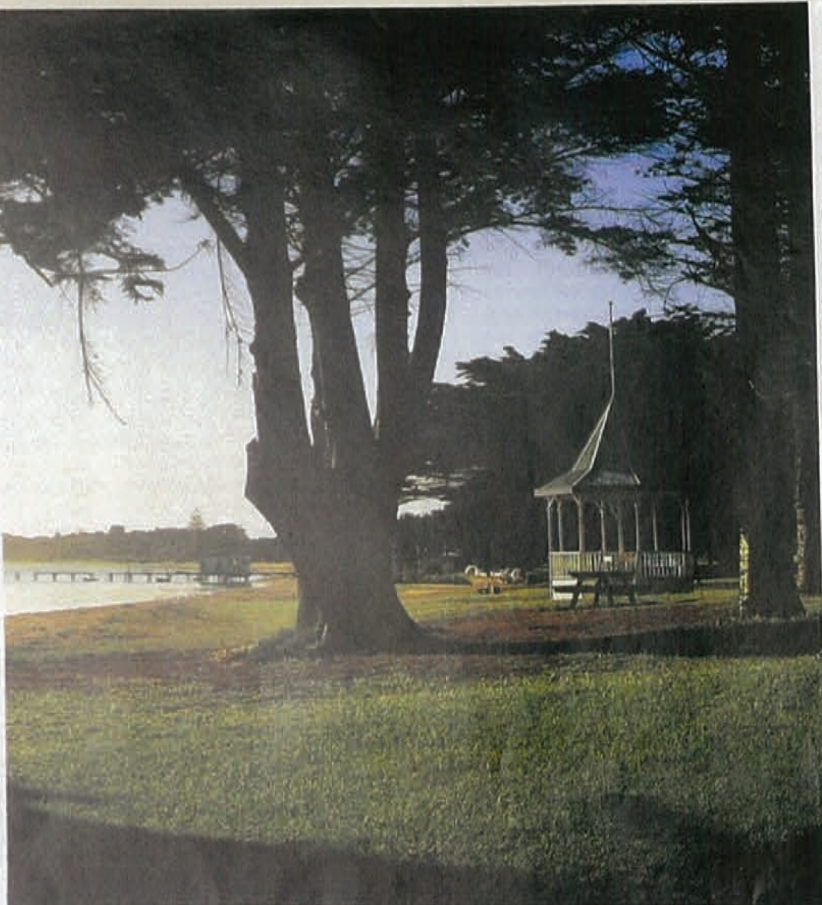
The menu at the second Annual Peninsula Wine and Food Fest dinner just about summed up the Mornington approach to winemaking. Personal. We arrived to see hunks of yearling beef being spit-roasted, courtesy of Malcolm's Meats of Mount Eliza. Oh, and there were Bernie's olives, Janet's wholemeal bread, turkeys from Paul's Poultry, Mick Gallace's strawberries and Lesley's special almond bread. A drink that looked suspiciously like Château d'Yquem turned out to be apple juice — "specially pressed for us by Delgrosso's of Red Hill".

Between each of the six mammoth courses, a winemaker discoursed on the accompanying wines, to murmurs of approval, jokes and catcalling. Most of them are so-called hobbyists (that is, they are doctors, surgeons or publishers during the week), or complete converts — former engineers or horticulturists. All of them are convinced that their fledgling industry (six years old, being kind) is on the brink of national fame. "Show results, critical acclaim and the public demand given these wines clearly demonstrate the great future for Peninsula wines," states the literature of the Mornington Peninsula Vignerons Association (MPVA). Few doubt that Mornington will gain a solid reputation for the quality of its wines — but never for large-scale production.

The Peninsula is Melbourne's summer holiday playground and site of splendid retirement and weekend homes at posh Portsea and Sorrento. The price of land is simply too high for a Texas-scale spread of viticulture. On the entire Peninsula, there are only 40ha under vine (total crush: 90 tonnes). There are more than 40 associates and non-commercial growers in the MPVA, but only nine producers of any quantity.

What makes the Mornington wine-makers attempt the Lilliputian task of trying to tie down Gulliver? The answer is an unwavering belief in the ability of their Bordeaux-clone climate and rich soil to produce deep-flavoured Cabernet Sauvignon, Pinot Noir, Chardonnay, Cabernet Franc, Shiraz and Malbec. The only drawback for the area is that the very cool conditions can suddenly turn into icy ones via withering winds from the Antarctic. One disastrous Christmas, temperatures sank to five degrees C.

The origins of Mornington Peninsula viticulture can be traced back 100 years. The *Handbook of Viticulture for Victoria* (Royal Commission on Fruit and Vegetables 1891) listed 14 registered growers, from Alex McKirdy with half an acre to John Thornell with three. But far from being the beginning of a ferment of brave experimentation and joyous discovery,



## Good Mornington

The output may be small, but the enthusiastic vignerons of Mornington Peninsula have big plans for the area, as Elisabeth King discovers

the development was pure dilettantism. The region's pioneers were solidly British and the Mornington Peninsula was devoid of the tenacity and cultural conditioning of the Swiss settlers of the Yarra Valley and Geelong.

Apart from a few sporadic plantings, nothing further happened until the 1950s. The first sign of a "revival" came when a member of the Seppelt family (a holiday-home owner) planted just three acres of mixed varieties at Dromana in a trial-and-error spirit. A few workers from Great Western came up every year for winter pruning, but no crop was har-

vested. The property was then sold to Ken Broadhurst, fortuitously linked by marriage to the famous Melbourne wine merchant family, the Seabrooks.

For nearly a decade, Broadhurst's brother-in-law, Doug Seabrook, made a tiny quantity of wines from the Dromana plantings. In 1983, one of his 1962 Rhine Riesling bottlings still displayed a fragrant bouquet and astonishing vigour. Ten years after this vintage, Baillieu Myer, of the Melbourne retailing family, authorized an experimental planting of 400 vines on his Elgee Park property.

Nat White began the planting of Main

## Good Mornington

timum time for the 1985 Chardonnay — spicy, fresh, and with good acid balance. Baillieu Myer regards winemaking as a pleasure as well as a business. He doesn't want to go past the 2000-case mark (current output is nearly 700 cases). The Rhine Riesling rows among the 13,000 vines have finally justified the long-held faith — recent vintages have been of the solid excellence you expect from a good boutique.

The output from the above Mornington wineries is small. There are five other recently established vineyards whose crops merit description — tiny. At one of them, Moorooduc Estate, Richard McIntyre, with just the hint of a smile, told me that last year's production had topped the 220-litre mark.

The McIntyres planted in 1983 (Cabernet Sauvignon, Cabernet Franc, Merlot, Chardonnay, Pinot Noir and one row each of Sauvignon Blanc, Shiraz and Semillon). Eventually, Richard would like to plant 4.5ha of the 8ha property. "Up until now," he says, "I've been delighted with the results." With the number of bottles so limited, opening one for a tasting was definitely not on. You and I will just have to take his word.

Other vineyards with early to mid-'80s founding dates are: Balnarring, Kings Creek, Red Hill Estate, and St Neot's Estate. At the moment, trying to locate a bottle bearing any of these labels would be like finding a real white elephant. But if you are in the Peninsula itself, by all means try the wineries.

The Mornington Peninsula vignerons have hitched their wagon to a star future. In preparation, they already have a logo for their wines, guaranteeing a 100-per-cent Mornington product. After an abortive start in the early '80s, the Mornington Peninsula Vignerons Association now possesses a solidarity and purpose that Lech Walesa might envy.

The Hickinbotham family is in the process of moving part of its operation to Mornington Peninsula, having surrendered the Anakie lease at Geelong, and this should give a major boost to the area. Andrew Hickinbotham is perhaps the leading cool-climate viticulture specialist in the country, having graduated from Dijon University and spent considerable time in Burgundy. He has acted as consultant in the planting of several vineyards on the Peninsula.

To keep in touch with future developments and the availability situation of Mornington wines, you can become a member of The Friends of the Mornington Peninsula Vignerons Association. Benefits include special tastings, visits to vineyards and wineries, and a newsletter. Write to: The Secretary, MPVA, PO Box 332, Mornington, Victoria 3931. □

Mornington Peninsula wines are mostly available at select retail stores in Melbourne or on the Peninsula. Major outlets in Melbourne are Gatehouse Cellars and the Victorian Wine Centre. In Sydney, Camperdown Cellars also handles the wines, but in limited quantities.

The names of Dromana Estate outlets in Melbourne, Sydney and Brisbane can be obtained by contacting I.H. Baker and Company in Sydney.

The bulk of Mornington sales are through mail order. To enquire about mailing lists, write to the following addresses: Stonier Merricks Vineyard, 62 Thompsons Lane, Merricks, Victoria 3916. Dromana Estate Vineyards, cnr Harrison and Bittern Dromana Rds, Dromana, Victoria 3936. Elgee Park, Wallaces Rd, Merricks North, Victoria 3937. Main Ridge Estate, Lot 48, William Rd, Red Hill, Victoria 3937. Merricks Estate, Thompsons Lane, Merricks, Victoria 3916. Red Hill Estate, c/o Post Office, Red Hill South, Victoria 3937. Balnarring Vineyard, telephone (059) 895258. □







After dark 4

Page 40 — THE INDEPENDENT NEWS, Tuesday, November 17, 1987

## Karina wine debut at Briars

THE Mornington Peninsula's first commercial release of a Sauvignon Blanc wine was sampled at the third annual Peninsula Food and Wine Fest at historic Briars Homestead.

A justifiably proud Jan and Graeme Pinney, of Karina Vineyard, Dromana,

joined with other peninsula vintners to provide a sampling of fine peninsula wines at the 'Fest'.

The '87 Sauvignon Blanc is a first for Karina Vineyard's short history, with the vines first being planted in 1984.

The initial plantings were slightly more than an acre each of Rhine Riesling and

Sauvignon Blanc. Later plantings included 3½ acres of Cabernet Sauvignon and Merlot, with Chardonnay and Pinot Noir to be added to the range in 1988. This will complete the planned vineyard area of about 10 acres.

Fruit for the '87 Sauvignon Blanc was picked when the optimum levels of sugar/acid balance and flavor had been attained. The bouquet reflects the intense fruit and varietal character of the grape. On the palate, it's a broad flavorsome wine with peach/passion-fruit flavor in abundance. A firm acid balance contributes to a lingering finish.

Because of the cool summer of 1986/87, it was necessary to defer picking until very late in the season to achieve satisfactory sugar levels.

Despite various difficulties, Jan and Graeme are more than delighted with their product.

Karina have produced an excellent '87 Rhine Riesling

to complement their Sauvignon Blanc.

This wine exhibits a fragrant floral aroma quite characteristic of the variety when grown in a cool climate.

Jan and Graeme have extended an invitation to peninsula wine lovers to

visit their vineyard at Harrison's Rd, Dromana, between 10am and 5pm on Saturday or Sunday, November 28 and 29, or on the weekend of December 5 and 6.

The property can be found at Melways reference 160/17.



• Vines such as these at Karina Vineyard are turning the Mornington Peninsula into the Bordeaux of Australia.

THE HERALD WEDNESDAY MAGAZINE OCTOBER 21, 1987

## Winemakers worth watching

FROM PAGE 2

**NAT WHITE,**  
Main Ridge Estate, Mornington Peninsula

**N**AT WHITE is a peninsula pioneer. A tall, spare good looking whose strict Methodist background had not allowed him a taste of wine until the compulsory sherry before dinner at Trinity College.

As long ago as 1975, he ignored the belief that Coonawarra and Rutherglen were the only places in Victoria to grow grapes and chose the Mornington Peninsula "for its similar maritime climate to Bordeaux". His tiny 2.5-hectare vineyard, about a kilometre east of Arthur's Seat in the central uplands, has produced limited quantities of some excellent chardonnay, and a cabernet sauvignon which took a gold medal at its first showing. But he has high hopes for his pinot noir, which he believes could become the distinctive wine of the area.

Although he took a punt on the peninsula, White is not one to take huge risks.

"I worked as a professional engineer for a long time so I could withstand bad times like the disastrous vintage this year," he says. "Otherwise I would be buying in grapes. Once you do that, you lose your reputation and I want to avoid that at all costs."

An individualist and innovator who is prepared to put a lot of hard work into projects such as adapting the French trellising system to control the peninsula problem of vine vigor, his challenge is "to be as technologically competent as the big companies".

"What keeps me going is that I am always working on something this year that will improve the wine for the next," he says.

■ Tomorrow sees the start of the *Orrefors Victorian Wines Show* in Seymour at the show grounds. The show will run until Saturday, when there will be a public wine tasting. The show, which is only for wines entirely grown and made within Victoria, has a reputation for attracting the smaller wine producers.

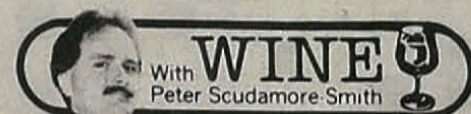


Nat White ... chose the Mornington Peninsula for its similar climate to Bordeaux.

BRISBANE DAILY SUN, Friday, November 6, 1987

LEISURE AND OUTDOOR GU

## New-style reds shatter some myths



**DROMANA Estate on the eastern Mornington Peninsula is spawning some new-style reds.**

Mornington is a recently-planted vineyard.

New directions for reds in the past eight years have allowed peninsula winemakers to try new approaches to their first vintage.

Garry and Margaret Crittenden own the four-hectare Dromana Estate, now drawing increasing interest from Victorian tourists.

Crittenden, an ex-nurseryman, ensconced winemaker and grower, has by sheer practical demonstration shattered a wine myth or two.

In the Dromana vineyards stand closely-planted vines that busily produce a great mass of grapes. The yields astonish many and the crop is top class.

The Dromana red wines have a generosity of taste, shattering the myth that high-yield vines make thin wines.

Perhaps the Lower Hunter crops should be doubled to supply some anticipated increase in grape needs as wine grapes will be scarce next year.

Varieties producing grapes are merlot, chardonnay, pinot noir and cabernet sauvignon. The latter, with 1000 cases made, was

the largest producer in 1986.

Garry Crittenden proudly states: "The 1986 wines were the first to be made in the modest Dromana Estate winery".

The winery is practical, of a cold-room design, and easily served to crush the 1987 grapes as well.

Earlier vintages, '84 and '85, were somewhat smaller and had been made at Nat White's nearby Main Ridge winery.

I recently tasted the new 1987 Dromana clutch.

### Intrigue

The chardonnay white was receiving the French workover, a shop term for the philosophies used by burgundy makers, which Crittenden is trying.

This year's Dromana Estate Chardonnay will merge as a wine of many tastes — all have intrigue.

There are only two 1987 reds — a black pepper-tasting pinot noir and the cabernet merlot blend.

● **Dromana Estate Merlot 1986, \$19.40:** An astonishing wine, for the color is so



Garry Crittenden: proud of his 1986 vintage.

red and dense, but not the grippy wine expected. A wine composed of bountiful grape flavors — cherry ripe and sugar apple appeal.

● **Dromana Estate Cabernet Sauvignon 1986, \$19.40:**

Another wine compacted with color, obviously a trait of this vineyard. The wine is pure fruit juice cabernet, all 100 per cent, a good swallow and a pleasurable wine to think about.



THE WEEKEND AUSTRALIAN, November 28-29, 1987

# A touch of vintage class

**T**HE Mornington Peninsula may still be in its winemaking adolescence, but it certainly has a sense of style. One only has to line up the labels on Dromana Estate, Elgee Park, Karina Vineyard, Moorooduc Estate, Red Hill Estate and Stonier's Merricks wines to see what I mean.

The typical Mornington Peninsula vigneron is not your Aussie battler. Not all are captains of industry, lawyers or doctors, but a good many are.

Now before the snide sniggers become too obvious, let me make the point quite forcefully: there is no cheap and easy way to make first-class wine. You require intelligence, dedication and above all else — adequate capital. Still more of these assets are required if you are to market the wines in such a way as to recoup more than a token amount of your outlay.

Consultants such as Dr Tony Jordan of Oenotec, Alex White of Lilldale Vineyards, the Hickinbotham family and John Ellis, have had a profound effect on both viticulture and winemaking standards on the Mornington Peninsula.

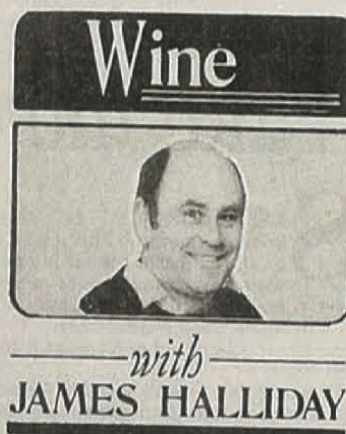
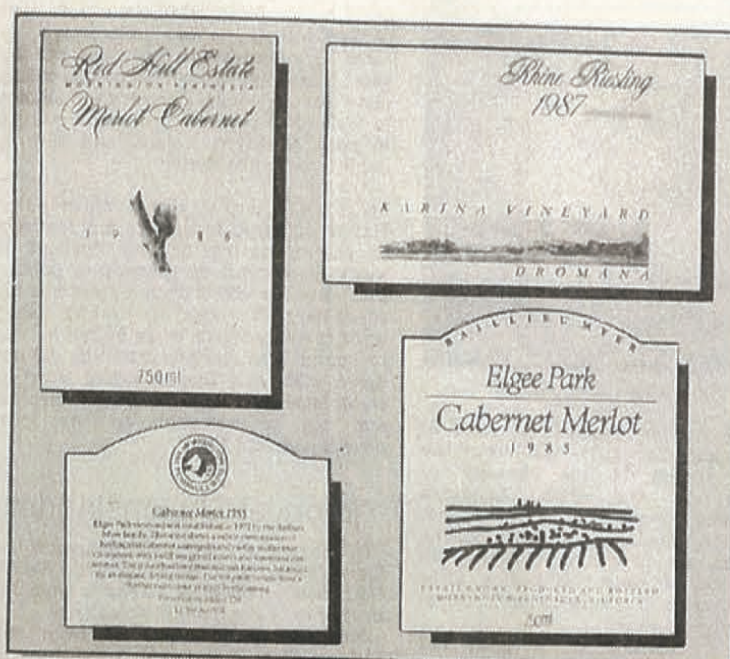
Their influence has been heightened by the way in which the newcomers have "piggy-backed" on to the best winemaking facilities at the already established vineyards. Thus Bannering Vineyards, Kings Creek, Merricks Estate, Red Hill Estate and Stonier's Merricks have had most or all of their wines made for them by qualified winemakers at other wineries.

One of the major catalysts in this respect has been Baillieu and Sarah Myer's Elgee Park, where Oenotec has guided winemaking over the past four vintages, taking over from the late Stephen Hickinbotham.

All of this is in marked contrast to so many other aspiring new regions in Australia. There amateur winemakers struggle to break free of the vicious circle of limited output, indifferent quality, modest pricing and restricted markets. Each feeds on the other, and there seems no way to break out.

If the momentum goes the other way — and this is precisely what is happening in the Mornington Peninsula — it suddenly all starts to look easy; the surprise comes not with the occasional good wine (these are par for the course) but with the occasional bad one.

For the past three years, I have chaired a Mornington Peninsula vignerons' tasting of all of the current



vintage wines made in the district. It is held in November, by which time the style and shape of the wines is more or less settled, although inevitably the occasional malolactic fermentation or other barrel-associated problem may be in evidence.

With the exception of the rhine rieslings, these are not finished and filtered wines safely in the bottle. In a sense, of course, this gives an even better insight into the fruit quality and technology of the region.

The 1985 and 1986 tastings left no doubt at all that the Mornington Peninsula is capable of producing grapes of the highest quality. They also made it clear that the majority

of the vignerons knew how to capitalise on that fruit in the winemaking phase.

The consistency of quality at the 1987 tasting was awesome: there were 32 wines in all, and had I been judging them at a show, 27 would have received medals, with at least half of those at silver medal standard, and more than a few shooting for gold.

The four major wines of the district are rhine riesling, chardonnay, pinot noir and cabernet sauvignon (the latter not infrequently married with small percentages of merlot and cabernet franc). Lesser quantities of semillon and sauvignon blanc are grown; there is a decreasing amount of traminer, and the proverbial handful of vignerons, shiraz and pinot meunier.

In a way that would have French vignerons staring in disbelief, all of these varieties do well. The main problem facing the Mornington Peninsula is that most of the vineyards are small and production is accordingly extremely limited. This prevents most of the wines ever appearing on retailers' shelves and even restaurant distribution is basically limited to Melbourne.

**S**o rather than describe wines it may be enormously difficult to track down, it would seem most sensible to give a quick rundown of each winery, and indicate where and how the wines will be available in the future.

Dromana Estate is the largest operation, producing a little over 1000 cases in 1987. Most of this (850 cases) is a cabernet-merlot blend, which will be released in the second half of next year and distributed by I.H. Baker. A little of the '86 (a straight cabernet) may still be found at the occasional fine wine outlet.

The Dromana Estate pinot noir and chardonnay are available by mailing list only, and invariably sell out within days of being offered, a testimony to the extremely high quality of the wines. The mailing-list address is Dromana Estate Vineyards, P.O. Box 332, Mornington, 3931.

Elgee Park this year produced 800 cases of rhine riesling, chardonnay and cabernet merlot (with a little cabernet franc thrown in for good measure), and is the longest established operation. The mailing-list (inquiries to Elgee Park, Wallace's Road, Merricks North, 3926) is the

chief way of procuring the wines which sell for between \$136 and \$180 a case.

In 1986 a little straight cabernet franc was made, and this was offered in the recent mailing-list at \$136. A little Elgee Park finds its way into restaurants, bottle shops and hotels on the Mornington Peninsula and even less into Sydney retail outlets. In these places it retails for between \$10 and \$15 a bottle.

Jan and Graeme Pinny launched the Karina Vineyard wines this year, with consulting winemaking supplied by John Ellis. Only about 200 cases were made, of which the rhine riesling (\$125 a dozen) and a sauvignon blanc (\$185 a dozen) are available, with the cabernet merlot due for release next year. The address is Harrison's Road, Dromana, 3936.

Nat White, of Main Ridge Estate, is one of the senior citizens of the district, and his wines have been long admired. However, a combination of grafting over gewurztraminer, and the very poor set which reduced cabernet sauvignon crops in particular through much of southern Australia in 1987, saw his production shrink from 650 cases to about 300 cases.

While the wines are available in one or two Melbourne specialist retailers, once again, the mailing-list, Lot 48 William Road, Red Hill, 3937 remains the best bet, also offering some saving on the \$16 to \$19 a bottle recommended retail.

Merricks Estate is owned by Melbourne solicitor George Kefferd; he, his family and Selma Lowther make the riesling and the red wines, while the chardonnay is made by Alex White, who also consults on the reds. The 1987 production of 400 dozen comprises chardonnay, rhine riesling, pinot noir, shiraz and cabernet sauvignon.

The '87 cabernet was the gold medal winner in the 'Varietal cabernet sauvignon' class at this year's Orrefors Victorian Wine Show, disposing of formidable opposition from the likes of Oakridge Estate. The mailing-list address is Thompsons Lane, Merricks, 3916.

Dr Richard McIntyre released his first wines from Moorooduc Estate Vineyard this year, with a tiny quantity of '86 cabernet sauvignon and pinot noir, and an equally small quantity of '87 chardonnay. Total production this year was only 200 cases; prices are within the normal peninsula range, and the mailing-list address is Derril Road, Moorooduc, 3933.

Dr Roger Buckle of Red Hill Estate produced 400 cases in 1987 of a cabernet sauvignon-merlot-cabernet franc blend and a chardonnay. The wines were made at Elgee Park with Oenotec Pty Ltd as consultant. There will be limited retail distribution through W.J. Seabrook and Son, with the wines selling at \$15 and \$16.50. For many, the mailing list will be the only viable means of access: the address is C/- Post Office, Red Hill South, 3937.

Finally, there is Stonier's Merricks vineyard, which produced 300 cases of chardonnay, cabernet sauvignon and pinot noir in 1987. Brian Stonier wines were made by the late Stephen Hickinbotham, and following Stephen's death, the wines were made at Elgee Park in 1987. The mailing-list address is 62 Thompsons Lane, Merricks, 3916; the prices range between \$16.95 and \$19.95.

Bannering and Kings Creek are yet to release their wines commercially, while St Neots' is marketed, but under the Hickinbotham Winemakers label.

Judging by the rate of growth during the past few years, the 1988 tasting will have to move to a larger venue.



the  
mornington  
peninsula **INDEPENDENT**



Phone (059) 79 3199; (03) 783 8122; FAX (059) 79 3579

Tuesday, December 15, 1987

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# Stan savors the fruits of his labor



• Hastings councillor and wine producer Stan Paul samples some of his own Balnarring Vineyard Rhine Riesling.

## Wine groups have eyes on peninsula

MAJOR winemakers have expressed interest in buying grapes from the Mornington Peninsula for quality wines for the New York and European markets.

Mr Peter Chaffey, executive director of the Western Port Development Council,

said the big producers were having trouble getting enough grapes to keep up with the demand for Australian wines.

Some of the producers have looked at the possibility of setting up large vineyards on the peninsula to secure a supply of quality

Mornington Peninsula fruit.

"They're looking at large, broad-acre vineyards in excess of 500 acres.

"That sort of land is difficult to find, and an alternative solution may be for individual farmers to supply peninsula grapes to the larger producers on a

contract basis," Mr Chaffey said.

The kind of grapes being sought by the large producers is for the manufacture of quality wines such as Chardonnay and Pinot Noir.

A Mornington Peninsula vintner and Hastings councillor, Cr Stan Paul, said

that the leading half dozen wine producers have been looking at the Western Port area in the past 12 months.

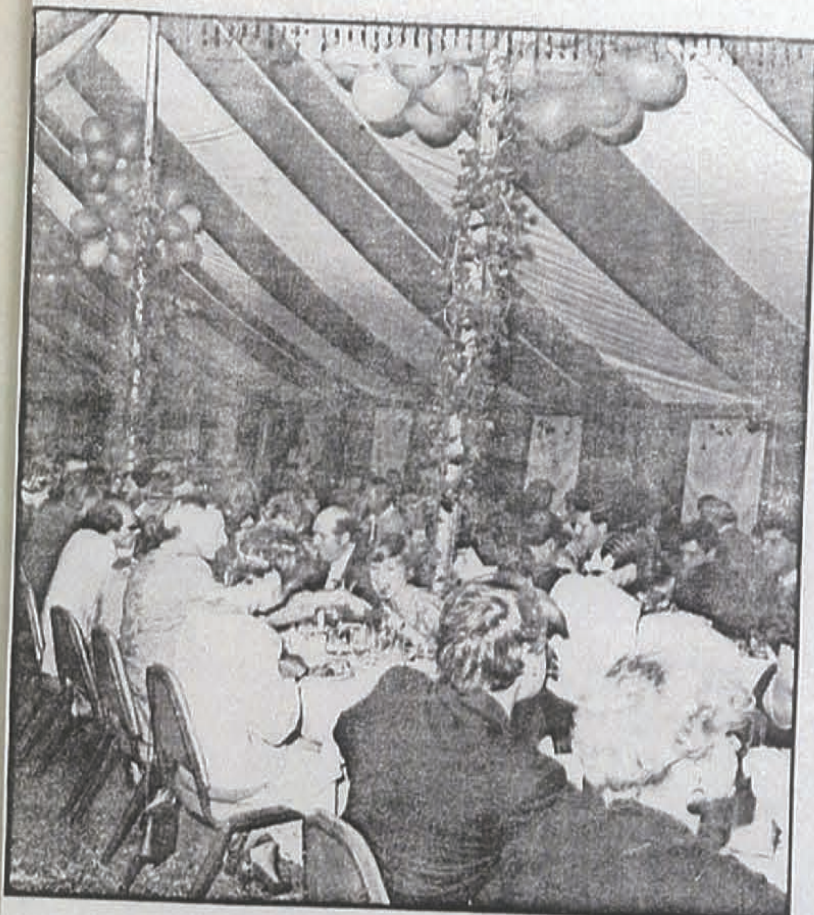
"However, they can't get suitable land in large tracts needed to run a viable operation.

• Cont. P.3

### MORNINGTON PENINSULA VINGNERONS

The only things that may prevent the Mornington Peninsula from becoming one of the world's major quality wine regions is the price of its land and the very particular effort required in site location. To see for yourself why I speak so highly of the region, one only has to try the young pinots of Merricks Estate and Main Ridge, the cabernets of Dromana Estate and the chardonnay of Elgee Park. Each of these wines possess rare delicacy and elegance of structure with an intensity of flavor rarely seen in Australia. They will only improve as vines mature and wine makers become more accustomed to the region.





ABOVE: The third annual Peninsula Wine and Food Fest gets under way.

RIGHT: MC for the evening, Peter Murray, left, with guest speaker, John Hepworth, Zsuzsi Korchman, and fest convenor Michael Green.



BL0710A-B

Standard - Post, Wednesday, December 2, 1987

# Wining and dining — a fest fantastic

Report: DINA MONKS  
Pictures: PHILIP ROWLEY

NEARLY 400 people wined and dined in a marquee at The Briars historic home-stead at the third Peninsula Wine and Food Fest.

Sold out within 48 hours of the opening of bookings, the Wine Fest is held each year to promote and introduce Peninsula wines.

"We were overwhelmed at the response," said the president of the Mornington Peninsula Vignerons Association, Garry Crittenden.

"It is clear the Wine Fest is now well established in the annual Peninsula social calendar. The 380 places available were oversubscribed almost overnight. We were delighted with the outstanding success of the evening."

Mr Crittenden said that diners enjoyed a

"splendid marriage" of Peninsula wines and food.

And he praised the teachers and parents from St. Paul's School who organised and prepared the food which, apart from cream and cheeses from King Island, was all produced on the Peninsula.

Guest speakers were former newspaper columnist and raconteur, John Hepworth, and columnist John Hindle.

Between courses, local vignerons described the wines served during the five-course banquet.

They included Hastings councillor, Stan Paul, whose 1987 Balmoring Vineyard Riesling/Traminer was served to guests in The Briars garden before dinner.

Then came Graeme and Jan Pinney's Sauvignon Blanc from their Karina Vineyard at Dromana, followed by George and Jaqui Kelford's Chardonnay from their Merricks Estate.

This was followed by Bails Myer talking about the Chardonnay he grows at Elgee Park at Merricks North; past president Nat White de-

scribing the Pinot Noir he and his wife, Rosalie, grow at their Main Ridge Estate; vice president Roger Buckle on his Merlot Cabernet he and his wife, Judy, grow at their Red Hill Estate, and finally, Rick McIntyre, speaking on the Cabernet Sauvignon he and his wife, Jill, grow at their Moorooduc Estate.

Apple juice supplied throughout the evening was specially pressed for the event by Deigrossos of Red Hill.

Said Mr Crittenden: "The function is now so well established that I believe the Wine and Food Fest will still be going strong and providing a focus for Peninsula wine and food in 20 years' time."



Mornington Peninsula Vignerons' Association vice president, Roger Buckle, left, his wife, Judy, and past president, Nat White.

BL0710C



HASTINGS councillor Stan Paul, a winegrower at Balmoring, serves wine to diners, Faye Paul, left, and Sue Cattermole.

BL0710D



## RESTAURANTS

JILL DUPEIX and TERRY DURACK put on their Sunday best and go to Stephanie's.

# THE WHINE LIST

At Lynch's, they pride themselves on a high level of professionalism. While not being as formal as Fleurie, Stephanie's and Two Faces, the wine list is one of the best in Melbourne. The list is the creation of Jeremy Smith, who has also performed yeoman's service on the floor. "It would make my night if someone left the wine selection to me. It really puts you on your mettle and you work really hard to get things right," says Smith.

**S**ELECTING wine to match food isn't always possible. "When a table of 12 orders 12 different entrees, some spicy, some robust and some delicate, and they want to match it with one wine it clearly isn't possible," says Smith.

"At best, you can suggest two different wines, because a table that size will need more than one bottle. Smaller tables are easier to advise and the thing I like best is when you introduce people to a new wine and they like it. I get a great buzz when they say something like 'thanks for suggesting the Dromana Estate; never heard of it, but isn't it great?'"

## Dina's DIARY

Page 2 THE LEADER, Wednesday February 8, 1987

**O**H dear! What a pity. But I suppose the outside world had to discover our secret that the Peninsula produces some of Australia's finest wine...

Those canny people from the Hong Kong Tourist Association served wine from Garry Crittenden's Dromana Estate vineyards at a slap-up luncheon for the travel trade in Melbourne last week.

To welcome in the auspicious Chinese Year of the Snake, the experts from Hong Kong chose Garry's '87 Cabernet Merlot (saddy, already listed as sold out by Dromana Estate), the '88 Pinot Noir, which won the gold at the Hobart wine show and has now sold out, and that most interesting '88 Schinus Molle Chardonnay, also fast disappearing.

On top of this news of the Hong Kong discovery of our finest wine, Garry's wine is on show this week at the Victorian Winemakers' Sydney exhibition.

It's another milestone for Peninsula wines, says Garry, as they have not been included before.

By the way, I'm assured that Garry's Chardonnay perfectly complemented the "special soup with chrysanthemum petals" at the Hong Kong banquet.



THE AGE, Tuesday 2 February 1988

## EPICURE 4

## Chardonnays travel well across oceans

On Our Selection is a regular feature of Epicure in which a panel of experts conduct a blind tasting of Australian and imported wines. This week's panel is Ken John, cellarmaster at Mietta's; Peter Weste, a wine and spirit consultant who was formerly chief wine maker of two of Australia's largest wine companies, and guest taster Jeni Port, who writes about wine for 'The Age'. The column is compiled by staff journalist PAUL WATSON. Because the wines are bought at normal retail outlets, prices may vary slightly.

AUSTRALIAN chardonnay drinkers seem to have the best of both worlds: quality wines at reasonable prices. But this could change soon.

With the variety enjoying universal popularity and the dollar in the doldrums, Australian manufacturers could soon be tempted to export more of their high quality chardonnays, leaving the Australian consumer with the wines from warmer regions, where bigger tonnage per hectare mean cheaper prices. So the message from the panel after this week's tasting of seven chardonnays from Australia, New Zealand, France and California is that we must be prepared to fork out for good chardonnays, or see them sold overseas.

Ken John said Australian producers of quality chardonnay could get as much for their product overseas as in Australia.

"They usually sell on the basis of their finished return being their wholesale return here," he said. "So there is no difference either way."

Guest taster Jeni Port said there were signs already that quality cool-climate chardonnays were being exported. "It's something that wine makers have to come to terms with," she said.

"Producers should put the Australian consumer first. Otherwise, we could become like France and Italy, where the best wine is exported and the domestic market never sees it."

And what of the variety itself? Ken John: "To me, chardonnay is the king of white wine varieties. At its best, wherever it is grown around the world, it produces wines of great quality, white wines for red wine drinkers."

"Australian chardonnay is constantly improving in terms of flavor and elegance, and the wines are more attuned to varietal flavor and definition, rather than the French characteristics of complexity and vinous strength overall."

Peter Weste: "Chardonnay can be different things to different people. Australian wine makers have found it a tremendous challenge, in that it can be so different, depending on how you treat it. Depending on where it is grown, it can be anything from light, delicate, acid wines to very full-flavored, full-bodied wines."

"It seems to be a very forgiving wine and one that can be grown in almost any area for a reasonable result. As with

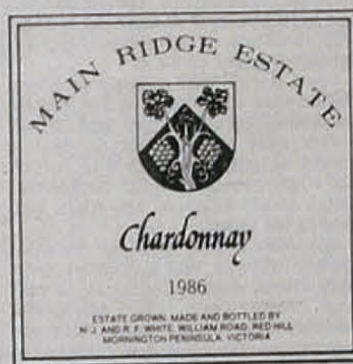


most wines, of course, it is best grown in cooler climates.

"We have seen here a good cross-section of chardonnays from different parts of the world. There is no wine that any of us would not drink, there are just degrees of excellence and differences in style."

"There's very much a drink-now style, wines that you can drink at one or two years, and there are wines that you could put away for quite a few years, that will go on improving."

Jeni Port: "I thought the most interesting thing about these wines was the use and control of wood. Gone are the days when wine makers got carried away with wood in chardonnay."



12.6% Alc. Vol. Produce of Australia 750 ml. PRESERVATIVE (SO2) ADDED

"Today we've seen wines with very good balance between wood and fruit, with complexity also coming in."

(For the information of readers, wines 1, 6 and 7 are Victorian, 2 and 5 are from Hawkes Bay in New Zealand, 3 is from California's Napa Valley and 4 is from Burgundy in France.)

## The panel's comments

## No. 1. Main Ridge Estate chardonnay 1986 (\$16.19)

**PETER WESTE:** Pale greenish-yellow color. Very clean, delicate herbaceous nose, with some lovely wood treatment. The palate is light, clean, crisp and well balanced. This wine has a youthful vitality that is very attractive to drink now, but would also age gracefully.

**KEN JOHN:** Pale green-gold color. The nose was rich, with wood and a slight apricot kernel character also. Very clean, showing nice young varietal style. The palate was fresh and lively, with attractive fruit and a nice limey character about it. The finish was clean, and overall the wine was well balanced, with good length and was very elegant.

**JENI PORT:** I found a kind of citrus character on the nose and I thought it was quite a developed style, even though it is obviously quite young. It showed signs of a complexity that should see it age quite well. I found what I would describe as a flinty taste, which was rather unusual.

## No. 2. Te Mata Estate Elston chardonnay 1986 (\$16.05)

**JP:** Light gold color. Tons of fruit on the nose, which was very appealing. Once you got into it, it was a rich, fuller style, almost luscious. But I found that it lacked the complexity of No. 1 and my one criticism would be that it was perhaps a little overpowering right now, and a little one-dimensional. There was no light and shade about it.

**KJ:** Mid-gold with a hint of green. The nose is very peachy and quite rich, with a touch of wood showing. Quite nice on the palate in that same style, with the fruit the dominant aspect. The wine was well balanced, but for me the acid on the finish was just a touch hard and it will be interesting to see how that sorts itself out with a bit of age.

**PW:** Attractive greenish-yellow color. I found more than a hint of sulphide character on the nose, which tends to mask the fruit. The palate is full bodied and tending to coarseness, with some lingering tannin bitterness on the finish. I think it lacks delicacy.

## No. 3. Robert Mondavi Napa Valley chardonnay 1983 (\$21.60)



Jeni Port: I like individual wines that really stand out ...

**KJ:** The color is quite strong mid-gold. Again peaches and chardonnay varietal character evident on the nose, but a bit less opulent than the previous wine. The fruit is quite strong on the palate, almost blousy. To me this wine needs food to be consumed at its best. It has too much power for consumption in its own right. Quite a good wine.

**JP:** I found a pleasant mixture of wood and fruit on the nose. However, overall I found it quite tight, or at least reserved at the moment and is yet to release some of the rich flavors which I think it is storing up. So it's definitely not a drink-now wine.

**PW:** Developed mid-greenish-gold color, very attractive. Strong, complex peachy fruit nose, with a hint of asparagus. Big, full palate. Plenty of fruit flavor, plus wood on the finish. Well balanced and starting to develop quite nicely. Will improve for a year or two yet.

## No. 4. Louis Latour Macon pinot chardonnay 1986 (\$19.50)

**PW:** This wine has a very faint pinkish tinge on top of the yellow. The nose is herbaceous, with green-leaf character upfront and some sweeter fruit behind that. Good fruit flavor and balance, but just a hint of wet cardboard character on the finish.

**KJ:** Pale gold color, and I also noticed that unusual edge that Peter mentioned. The nose was quite light and delicate, mostly varietal character showing, with a touch of herbaceousness evident also. The palate was light and quite fresh, and the wine seemed to have been made for immediate drinking. The only prob-

lem I found was on the finish. **JP:** I found what I would describe as lanolin on the nose, going to indicate style. But it did taste it. It was quite individual, one out of the wine maker speaks for itself.

## No. 5. Ngaiwi chardonnay 1986 (\$19.50)

**KJ:** Green-gold color, most cream nose and quite flavory that's full flavor with finely grainy style, and I can say like this. **JP:** I detected a fumed nose. It's chardonnay, with sweet fruit and complexity. Good. **PW:** Attractive. Very appealing. Very nice about the fresh flavor. A good mouth for drinking right well.

## No. 6. Colgin chardonnay 1986 (\$19.50)

**JP:** Medium color, seemed to be the previous wine found it quite alcohol, acid and a bit but whether it couldn't tell.

**KJ:** Mid-gold, heavy appearance is a complex and appeared. The palate was wood being a think there is as well. Quite bigger style. I also a bit of which could disjointedness. **PW:** Very nice strong peachy. Rich fruity. It has the full New Zealand



## for tasting

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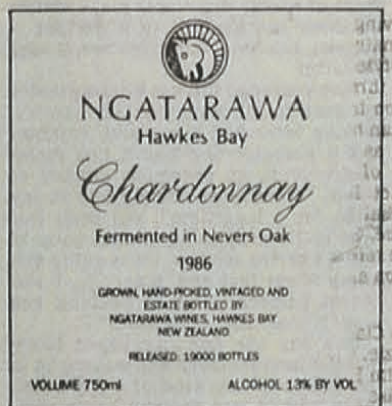
"everything in" character. Nothing  
subtle about it, and it would appeal to a  
lot of people.

No 7. Brown Brothers char-  
donnay 1986 (\$10.53)

**PW:** Pale greenish-yellow color. Beauti-  
ful peachy fruit on the nose. Lovely fla-  
vor and balance. An excellent example  
of chardonnay fruit character, and ex-  
tremely well made. Picked at the right  
time and handled with skill.

**KJ:** Pale golden-green color. Fresh nose  
with attractive varietal peachy flavors,  
in the lighter style. The palate is fruitful  
and elegant and balanced by nice crisp,  
clean acidity. A very attractive wine.

**JP:** I found a nice light, fruity nose and a  
strong steely acid backbone to it. But,  
overall, I thought it was either too deli-  
cate or too young to be drinking right  
now. Possibly the latter. It's not really  
saying anything about chardonnay or  
where it's from. I also thought that it  
would probably be best without food.



### Wine of the week

**KJ:** The seven wines are all eminently  
drinkable. My final preferences were  
for No. 1 and No. 5. Of those, I think I  
preferred No. 1.

**PW:** I agree with Ken's choices. No. 1  
and No. 5 were certainly the best wines.  
If I was looking for a wine to drink now,  
it would be No. 5, but for sheer style and  
elegance, and possibly to put down for a  
few years, it would be No. 1, because it  
has everything.

**JP:** I agree on No. 1 and No. 5, but I also  
include No. 4 because I like individual  
wines that really stand out as something  
quite different. Something that deserves  
the consumer's attention.

THE HERALD TUESDAY MARCH 1, 1988

## SMALL BUSINESS

# The hidden costs of your own bottle

Starting a vineyard  
might seem  
attractive and offer  
a relaxing lifestyle  
but ROD MYER  
reports there are  
substantial costs  
involved.



Tending the vines ... many hurdles for the newcomer.

Victoria now supports 140  
winegrowers and many more  
vineyards are planned.

Starting a vineyard may be the  
ideal small business venture but  
moves must be planned  
carefully.

A small winery can be an  
attractive investment returning  
more than Government bonds if  
well run. Indeed, some four-hec-  
tare vineyards can gross up to  
\$500,000 a year.

The boutique winery has come  
into its own with the real growth  
being in the top end of the  
market — wine selling at be-  
tween \$10 and \$20 a bottle.

There is a swing to bottles from  
casks and increased demand for  
both red and white table wines,  
according to Colin Richardson,  
wine director of Remy Martin  
Australia Pty Ltd.

Wine-making is a highly  
specialised process presenting  
the newcomer with many hur-  
dles.

## Top tips for would-be winemakers

Garry Crittenden is a recent  
convert to the wine industry.  
His Dromana Estate Vineyards  
on the Mornington Peninsula is  
six years old and is now a  
commercial success.

Mr Crittenden, with 20 years'  
experience in horticulture and a  
head for business, is now acting  
as a consultant to would-be  
grape growers.

The fall in the dollar has  
opened up markets for Australi-  
an wines in Europe, Asia and  
North America, he says.

As a result, grape prices are  
very strong and there is a re-  
newed interest in the industry.

He says that over the past five

years the industry has gone from  
being the pursuit of "dilettante"  
professionals and now attracts  
considerable investment from  
farmers, particularly in the Yar-  
ra Valley.

Rather than make their own  
wine, the farmers supply grapes  
on contract to larger boutique  
producers such as St Huberts  
and De Bortoli.

"Whereas five or 10 years ago  
people were planting four hec-  
tare vineyards, today to be vi-  
able as a grape grower rather  
than a winemaker you really  
need at least 10 hectares," he  
says.

Development of a vineyard to  
the production stage costs about

The first thing to do is buy the  
right land. The trend is towards  
cool-weather viticulture and the  
sought-after areas tend to be the  
Yarra Valley, the Western Dis-  
tricts and the area west of Wan-  
garatta close to the highlands.

The State Department of Agri-  
culture and Rural Affairs em-  
ploys a viticulturalist, Peter  
Hayes, and an oenologist  
(winemaker), Drew Noon, who  
act as advisers to the wine in-  
dustry from Bendigo (054 403  
777).

Mr Hayes says although he  
doesn't have the time to do a lot  
of one-to-one work with potential  
viticulturalists, he does offer gen-  
eral advice on land selection.

For more intensive work he  
recommends clients approach  
one of the State's 15 local viti-  
culturalist associations or one of  
the many consultants to the in-  
dustry.

Once the land is bought, the  
next step is planting the grapes.

Consultant Frank Dawson from  
Shepparton says the market is

fickle; planting what's fashion-  
able this year does not guarantee  
returns as market tastes change  
quickly.

"You have to know what sort of  
grapes grow well in your area," he  
says. "The same varieties pro-  
duce different wines in different  
climates."

"You must clearly establish  
your market and attention to  
detail in the early stages will pay  
off."

Another prerequisite for suc-  
cess is having adequate capital  
and choosing suitable finance  
arrangements.

You need enough capital to get  
the venture off the ground and  
the ability to service debt and  
keep yourself for between three  
and seven years until profits are  
being made.

Forgetting about the purchase  
price of the land, a four-hectare  
vineyard would require an in-  
vestment of \$185,000 to get into  
production (see table).

Mr Richardson says the mini-  
mum cash requirement would be

### Start-up costs

Approximate costs for a 4ha vineyard in  
Victoria (\$)

Vineyard establishment.....	20,000
Plant and equipment.....	55,000
Operating costs.....	20,000
Winery establishment.....	75,000
Winemaking costs.....	5,000
Business overheads.....	10,000
<b>TOTAL.....</b>	<b>185,000</b>

### Man hours required

(Unpaid minimum)

<b>Vineyard establishment:</b>	
First year.....	200
Second year.....	500
Third year.....	800
<b>Capital equipment:</b>	
First year.....	500
<b>Vineyard management:</b>	
Second year.....	80
Third year.....	400
Fourth year.....	50
Fifth year.....	700
Sixth year.....	600
<b>Overhead costs:</b>	
Winemaking.....	\$3000
Conducting business.....	\$3100

\$50,000 after the purchase of the  
land plus income for debt servic-  
ing and living. He suggests  
\$20,000 a year as an absolute  
minimum.

The next thing to be consi-  
dered is the labor involved. In the  
first year of establishment at  
least 700 hours of labor is re-  
quired. The load doesn't really  
lighten in later years.

But, of course, there are many  
people who have taken the risk  
and ended up making good re-  
turns from an enjoyable lifestyle.

While grape growing and  
winemaking may attract the  
romantic and the visionary, Mr  
Crittenden says basic farming  
tenets apply.

"The bottom line is the crop.  
The production costs are the  
same on a poor yield and a good  
yield," he says.

There are a number of consult-  
ants available to advise on start-  
ing in the industry.

Along with Garry Crittenden  
they include Ballarat's Max Loder,  
Alex White from Lillydale  
Vineyards, Chris Priffer of Pfeif-  
er Wines at Whagunyah and  
David Traeger of Invitus Pty Ltd  
at Nagambie.

ROD MYER



DECANTER MAGAZINE'S GUIDE TO

# THE WINES OF Australia & New Zealand

Profiles of 150 leading wineries Eight hundred wines reviewed

VICTORIA

## Premium wines from John Bull's vineyard

*Victoria, despite the modest volume of wine it produces, looks set to play an important role in the future of premium wine. James Halliday, himself a Victorian winemaker, reports*

There is no question that this season's designer wines will come from the ever-so-fashionable addresses of the Yarra Valley and the Mornington Peninsula. The only danger foreseen for these areas is in a typically Australian tall-poppy attack (cutting them down to size), spurred by an unacceptable degree of achievement. Success is tolerable in Australia

if you are a battler in the Paul Hogan mould, but there are all too many silvertails in the Yarra and on the Peninsula.

Mornington is in every way the junior partner. Vines were grown and wine made on the Peninsula in the nineteenth century, but on an infinitely smaller scale than in the Yarra. Likewise, the renaissance has so far been far smaller and rather later than that of the Yarra. However, the potential is virtually limitless, with Elgee Park, Main Ridge, Stonier's Merricks, Merricks Estate and Dromana Estate all having produced some brilliant wines.

While Pinot Noir and Chardonnay hold out particular promise in this uncompromisingly cool area, Elgee Park has made Riesling, Gewürztraminer, Viognier and Cabernet/Merlot with great distinction. Merricks Estate has a wonderfully peppery Shiraz. Main Ridge has a vibrant and tangy Pinot Meunier, and Stonier's Merricks an elegantly intense Cabernet Sauvignon.

Dromana Estate is, however, the brightest star in the sky at the moment, producing Chardonnay, Pinot Noir and Cabernet Sauvignon with a glittering purity of varietal character which seems peculiar to the Peninsula.

The vines of the Mornington area are still largely immature, and the winemakers have only a few vintages under their belt. One can only speculate how far quality (and style) will progress by the year 2000.



THE AGE, Tuesday 12 April 1988

## EPICURE 5

# Good things can come from the small boutique wineries



### On Our Selection

On Our Selection is a regular feature of Epicure in which a panel of experts conduct a tasting of Australian and imported wines. This week's panel is Ken John, a Melbourne wine consultant; Peter Weste, a wine and spirit consultant who was formerly chief wine maker of two of Australia's largest wine companies, and guest taster Ian Mackay, who writes on wine for 'The Age'. The column is compiled by staff journalist PAUL WATSON. Because the wines are bought at normal retail outlets, prices may vary slightly.

**O**NCE again the panel has tasted boutique wines: the products of small operators, whose output is tiny but who have much greater individual control over the wines they produce.

By their nature, boutique wines are not cheap, and this week's selection of reds ranged from about \$12 to \$18.

As Ken John said, these were predominantly wines in the modern style. But he had a reservation. "I think it's a fact of life that the whites being made these days are more approachable than the reds. Tasting reds is much harder work than tasting whites."

Peter Weste agreed: "It's a shame, but some have been released a bit too early. They are not really ready to drink, but that's the economics of the situation. Back when I was first making wine, we didn't bottle any red wine until it was at least two years old. Now they are bottling it at six months."

Ken John had other ideas about releasing young wines, for sale rather than for drinking. "I don't see any sense in keeping wine for two years before releasing it, as long as it's marketable." Because of the nature of the tasting, the bottles were not masked and there is no wine of the week.

### The panel's comments

#### 1. St Matthias Pinot Noir 1987 (\$17.95)

**PETER WESTE:** A rich, dark plum color and very full ripe strawberries nose. Full flavor of ripe fruit, with a warm middle palate. It has a soft finish and would be very suitable for early drinking.

**KEN JOHN:** Deep, dense plum-red color. The bouquet shows pinot fruit that has a slightly strawberry character but is a touch tart. The palate is similar,

and my overall impression is that the wine lacks freshness.

**IAN MACKAY:** Dense, plummy purple color. The plummy character also comes through on the nose, which smells nicely of sweet, ripe fruit. But I found it had a rather extracted and slightly bitter fruit on the palate. It may be coming from the oak, but probably not. Soft, rather stalky tannins and quite a long finish. Perhaps it just needs some time to settle.

#### 2. Moorooduc Estate Pinot Noir 1987 (\$17)

**IM:** Bright cherry color. Distinct and very attractive cherry-plummy nose. Plums and cherries fill up the flavor as well. A delicious fruity young wine nicely balanced. No outstanding facets, but drinking beautifully. A nice wine.

**KJ:** Attractive mid-cherry red color. Fresh cherry pinot flavors on the bouquet. The palate is fresh and alive, with excellent fruit showing. A very appealing wine in proper balance.

**PW:** Medium cherry color. Excellent fruit and wood integration on the nose. Light fruit on the palate, with clean, fresh acid. Clean and harmonious and has very good potential.

#### 3. Wantirna Estate Cabernet Sauvignon & Merlot 1985 (\$16.50)

**KJ:** Deep plum red color, showing maturity on the meniscus. Attractive minty cabernet nose. Soft, mature fruit on the palate, with the merlot assisting in pro-

viding the softness. The wine has nice mouth feel and appealing tannin on the finish. Ready to drink now.

**PW:** Medium red color with slightly amber edges. Very rich, full fruity nose, with a slight minty character. Full flavorsome palate, with lots to think about. Drink now, or within the next two years or so.

**IM:** Crimson color with some slight browning. Grassy cabernet nose with some slightly spicy overtones. A full-bodied cabernet fleshed out by what seems to be a sweeter merlot fruit. Quite a long, full palate. I found it quite an old-fashioned wine in a way: full and soft and satisfying.

#### 4. Red Hill Estate Merlot Cabernet 1986 (\$16.50)

**PW:** Very dark plum color. Rich, spicy, fresh fruit nose with a touch of wood. Full, soft palate with very good, lingering fruit flavor. This wine is very drinkable right now.

**KJ:** Deep crimson color that's very attractive. The bouquet has delicious, almost dusty, cherry nose, with rich cabernet there also. The palate follows through in a similar vein, delicious cabernet and merlot fruit flavor, with a nice dab of oak. Overall, the wine is most harmonious, with a good acid finish sorting things out properly.

**IM:** Dense crimson color. Lifted nose with some nice spicy blackcurrant overtones. Good berry fruit flavor. This time the cabernet seems to be giving the merlot a bit of backbone by way of soft tannin finish. Good fruit, good flavor, good wine.

#### 5. Forest Hill Cabernet Sauvignon 1986 (\$11.95)

**PW:** Dark plum color. Clean, scented roses nose tending to tea leaf character. Good fresh flavor, plus a nice tannin and acid balance on the finish. A wine to drink now or within the next two or three years.

**KJ:** Deep plum red color. The bouquet has a strong, ripe, cabernet flavor. The palate is rich and generous with substantial tannin evident. A short-term drinking proposition.

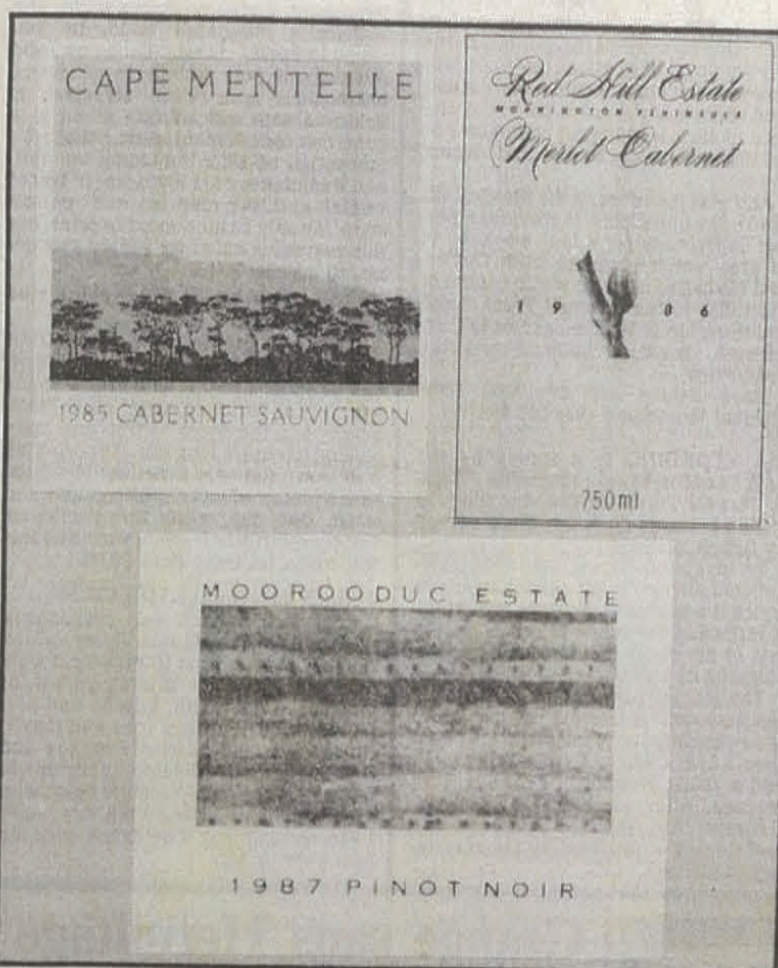
**IM:** Deep crimson color. Rather unusual nose, showing ripe fruit and quite spicy. Ripe fruit also comes through on the palate, with a slightly bitter tannin towards the finish. But the oak is nicely handled and it's drinking quite well at the moment.

#### 6. Cape Mentelle Cabernet Sauvignon 1985 (\$14.95)

**KJ:** Deep and dense purple color. The bouquet is redolent of blackcurrants, with a dash of oak. The palate is quite rich, with ripe fruit showing, backed by substantial tannins. A powerful wine that needs two or three years to be at its best.

**IM:** Deep plummy crimson color. Intense chocolate cabernet nose. A characteristically heroic full-bodied wine. Lots of ripe fruit and complex tannins. Good oak. Obviously a long-living wine that probably won't be showing its best for three or four years at least.

**PW:** Rich plum color. Intense cabernet roses-type fruit on the nose. Lovely clean green-leafy palate, with plenty of acid and tannin to balance. Tending to Bordeaux in style, this has the potential to be a really great wine because of its finesse, balance and harmony.





## Elegant red from cool climate

Main Ridge Estate cabernet sauvignon 1987 \$17.50 (cellar door)

A fine, elegant, cool-area wine from a very cool year, this new Main Ridge wine is very special. Its color is a crimson-purple, of medium depth. The nose is elegant, restrained, yet generous. Red berry and herbaceous fruit combine with dusty, hessian new oak on the nose. Very supple and delicate, yet intensely flavored, the palate shows penetrative ripe fruit, balanced oak and soft tannins. I would like to have tried my bottle in four to six years' time.



Nouveau

JEREMY OLIVER evaluates the latest releases to reach the bottle shops.

THE AGE, Tuesday 26 April 1988

## Pinot noir worthy of cellar space

Main Ridge pinot noir 1987, cellar door only, \$17.50

Nat White must be getting closer to the mark with every pinot noir he releases, for to my mind this is his best yet. It is a delicate, complex wine that will develop and add structure to its impressive flavors. It is a medium red color with a faint purple tinge. The nose combines well-knit new wood characters with classic pinot fruit of cherries and stewed plums. It has volume and flavor. Light and elegant, the palate is supple and fresh, with fruity softness and hints of tobacco and spice. The soft tannins give firmness and balance. With time it should develop well and fill out.

Nouveau

By JEREMY OLIVER

Mitchelton chardonnay 1987 \$13.85

Here is an excellent full-bodied chardonnay which is by far the best yet seen from Mitchelton. The color is big and brassy. The nose combines huge peachy, nutty fruit with spicy vanilla oak. Again big in structure, the palate is rich, voluptuous and long in flavor. Round and soft, with smooth texture and mouthfeel, it again shows a fine harmony of fruit and wood. It makes an excellent accompaniment to fuller food dishes and will

doubtless improve in the bottle for at least five years.

THE AGE, Tuesday 3 May 1988



Nouveau

JEREMY OLIVER looks at the latest wine releases.

Stonier's Merricks pinot noir 1987 \$19.95

I wonder where it will stop. Already the Mornington Peninsula is beginning to rival the Yarra Valley as a producer of fine, modern pinot noirs, and Brian Stonier grows a pretty fine patch of them. Here is a full-flavored, but light-bodied red, that is well on the way to answering the critics of 'thin' pinot noir. Thin this wine is not, enjoyable, light and vibrant it most certainly is. Stonier is achieving more color with each vintage, and the classic varietal flavors of strawberries and black cherries are easy to spot. Buy now to drink in about two years.

THE AGE, Tuesday 26 July 1988

## EPICURE 5

# Growers learn that quality starts in the v

VITICULTURE has never been a strong feature of the wine industry in Australia, and it is only in the past few years that things have begun to improve. Grapes were grown by farmers, often as an adjunct to other crops, and yield was regarded as far more important in the vineyard than either the quality or suitability of the grapes for making wine.

The phylloxera plague last century resulted in a ban on the importing of new and better grape varieties, and it was not until ways were found of frustrating this tenacious mite that our vignerons were able to indulge themselves with such things as chardonnay, pinot noir, cabernet franc, merlot and so on. Change was on the way, but its speed was less than revolutionary.

The spread of new varieties involved the need for better methods of propagation and better vineyard care in general, and the good news is that we have a new generation of viticulturists steeped in the European concept that the quality of wine begins in the vineyard. They understand better than before the adage that you can't make good wine from poor grapes.

In Victoria, these people have helped the industry emerge from the economic doldrums in which it wallowed for nearly half a century. They echo the days when Francis de Castella referred to our green and pleasant land as John Bull's vineyard, and they are playing an important role in the steady growth of quality vineyards and new wineries.

At Dromana, for instance, Garry Crittenden has not only created a vineyard and winery of his own but a consultancy which takes him all over Australia in the pursuit of better grape growing. At Hoddles Creek and nearby Beenak, on the fringe of the Dandenongs, David Paxton is in the process of planting the two biggest vineyards in the Yarra Valley.

"If I have a vision," says the otherwise pragmatic Paxton, "it is that one day the Yarra Valley will be to the people of Melbourne what the Barossa Valley is to Adelaide. Development here so far has barely scratched the surface. But for all kinds of reasons, the price of land among them, I think you



Wine

By IAN MACKAY

will see much more happening here than on the Mornington Peninsula."

Garry Crittenden tends to agree. His Dromana Estate is the biggest producer on the peninsula, but with only four hectares under vine and a crush of 60 tonnes, he's among the smallest of the small in the Australian scheme of things. He is impressed as much as anyone that up in the Yarra Valley his friend David Paxton is on the brink of setting the industry on its ear.

Paxton is a remarkable man. He is not interested in making wine, although his name appears on the labels of at least

four wines whose vignerons are proud to be associated with the quality of his fruit. Saltram's Pinnacle selection chardonnay is one of them, and Garry Crittenden's new personal selection label chardonnay is another, both of them using grapes from Paxton's Hillstowe vineyard in McLaren Vale.

In days gone by, the so-called southern vales of the Adelaide Hills were as well known for their almond plantations as for their vineyards, and in fact David Paxton began his horticultural life as an almond grower. He was introduced to the vine by Greg Trott, who talked him into buying land adjacent to his own vineyards and winery at Wirra Wirra.

"Trotty is my friend and my mentor," agrees Paxton cheerfully. "He's also a visionary. He told me I had to plant chardonnay because it was the grape of the future. He also introduced me to a bloke called Brian Croser, because he thought he was going to be a wine maker of the future. Trotty doesn't always follow his own vision, but he gets a lot right."

After establishing Hillstowe, Paxton helped Croser plant his Petaluma vineyards in the Adelaide Hills, and his more recent involvement in the Yarra Valley stems from an association with Croser's former partner and viticulturist, Dr Tony Jordan. Jordan is now employed by the Champagne giant Moët et Chandon to establish its Domaine Chandon in Australia, and he will be a big customer of the vineyards now taking shape.

Paxton was attracted to the Hoddles Creek area two years ago by the red volcanic soil and the availability of water. The first vineyard is planted on what was grazing land and a cherry orchard on a steep hill between Hoddles and Wombat creeks, and at Beenak, land originally cleared for a hazelnut plantation overlooks a beautiful 60-million-litre dam fed by natural springs and Tomahawk Creek.

Sixteen hectares have been planted at Hoddles Creek and half of that will be in production by vintage next year. At Beenak, 20 hectares have been cleared for planting this year and eventually 83 hectares will be planted, by far the biggest vineyard in the Yarra Valley.



David Paxton: now in the process of planting the two biggest vine

The bulk of production will be chardonnay and pinot noir, perfect for sparkling wine as well as for highly desirable varietals, but there will also be semillon, pinot meunier and the cabernets, sauvignon and franc. As well as Domaine Chandon, big customers will be Saltrams and James Halliday, taking juice from a crusher that will probably be sited at Hoddles Creek.

Exciting stuff to be sure, and very generous affirmation of the faith many smaller producers in the Yarra Valley have in its quality wine producing potential. Down on the Mornington Peninsula, says Garry Crittenden, land is so expensive that development will by definition be in small blocks, but he's confident that the quality will be there also.

He began planting his four-hectare Dromana Estate in 1982, coming to viticulture from horticulture and a successful family business in plant nurseries. In 1986 the nurseries were sold and he set up Vitinational, a viticultural consultancy which now has clients in Western Australia, Tasmania, NSW and Victoria. He's helped many of his neighbors plant

grapes on the Mornington Peninsula, but has clients in the Yarra Valley and elsewhere.

His Dromana Estate wines so far have been chardonnay and pinot noir, both very fine varietals that have attracted a lot of attention. To begin with, says Garry, he was content to put out a wine that was free of faults, but now he has grown in experience and confidence he is looking for more variety and complexity, and a few days ago we were able to taste a range of 1988 wines which show that things are on the up and up.

There was a range of different chardonnays, for instance, all wood fermented but some now in new oak and some in stainless steel, some that have undergone malo-lactic fermentation, some left longer on their lees and some made from fruit from elsewhere. All Dromana Estate wines are from his own vines, but this year Garry is introducing a second label, Garry Crittenden Selection, and the 1988s will include chardonnay from other Mornington Peninsula



Garry Crittenden: looking for more variety and complexity.



EXHIBITION OF  
VICTORIAN WINEMAKERS  
THE AGE, Tuesday 13 September 1988

### Dromana Estate

Dromana Estate is Garry Crittenden's conversion from horticultural nurseries to vineyards, and judging by the quality of his wine the transition has been an easy one. Dromana Estate was launched just a few years ago with the release of the 1984 cabernet sauvignon, a remarkable wine which disappeared instantly. The '85 did likewise and in 1986 Crittenden released two reds — a cabernet sauvignon and a merlot. Both were fine examples of each variety's capabilities in a cool climate.

The 1987 red is a blend of the two, and is a direct continuation of the lineage. A pinot noir is now being produced in (barely) enough quantity to be enjoyed by more than a few, and the Dromana Estate chardonnays have all been excellent since the first in 1986.

### Elgee Park

Owned by the Myer family, Elgee Park is another Mornington Peninsula winery, found at Merricks North, hardly guilty for releasing anything but fine wine. My favorite is the chardonnay (1986 especially) — a richly flavored and textured wine for a climate as cool as this, with marvellous complex peachy/tropical fruit characters and wood integration.

Elgee Park also release a cabernet merlot, cabernet franc and rhine riesling. Like every other wine made on the peninsula, quantities made make hens' teeth look like cornflakes.

### Balnarring Vineyard

Bruce and Stan Paul are going about the business of making some fine wine at their newly completed winery on-site at Balnarring, on the Mornington Peninsula. My favorite to date is their chardonnay — a delightfully complex and well-integrated cool-climate wine with strong peach/quince flavors and an excellent acid balance. Balnarring also releases a pinot noir, cabernet merlot blend and a riesling-traminer with a touch of sugar.

### Karina Vineyard

Graeme and Jan Pinney planted their sauvignon blanc and rhine riesling in 1984, and in 1987 the first vintage of just five tonnes was made using the consultancy services of John Ellis, but at the new winery on site at Karina, on the Mornington Peninsula. Clearly it is difficult to say much more about such a young company, but to wish them well.

### Main Ridge Estate

When you visit the breathtakingly picturesque site chosen by Nat and Rosalie White for their vineyard and winery you could be forgiven for wondering how anything but premium wine could ever emerge under their label. They haven't let me down.

The major three wines from Main Ridge are cabernet sauvignon, pinot noir and chardonnay. All show characteristic complexity of flavor, restraint and elegance. Like other Mornington Peninsula pinot noirs, the Main Ridge is quite spicy and intensely fruity, with strawberry and cherry flavors. The chardonnay is complex and nutty, and the cabernet sauvignon is a stylish marriage of fruit and wood.

### Merricks Estate

Yet another story of a hobby growing out of control, Merricks Estate is the property of George and Jacquelyn Kefford. Since the first vines went in in 1978 a little has been added each year, and the present size is around three hectares.

My favorite of the wines is their remarkable gutsy but very stylish shiraz, which is almost a model of the best this variety can produce. Rich, dark and intensely peppery, it drinks well young, but will live for many years. A Merricks Estate chardonnay is also available.

### Moorooduc Estate

Moorooduc Estate is another of the very new Mornington Peninsula developments. Like most of the others it is small in size and planted to premium Bordeaux and Burgundy varieties — in this case cabernet sauvignon, cabernet franc, chardonnay and pinot noir. Their first release of chardonnay was a 1987 wine.

The red I have tried was the 1986 cabernet, made with a quarter cabernet franc. It is an intensely fruity wine with an excellent backbone, and in all is a remarkably fine debut.

### Stonier's Merricks Vineyard

Brian and Noel Stonier have one of the larger Mornington Peninsula vineyards, extending to all of six hectares. Their name as one of the best Victorian vineyards has much to do with the Hickinbotham family, for Andrew Hickinbotham is their vineyard consultant and the late Stephen Hickinbotham made their wine from 1982 until 1986.

The Stonier wines to watch are the elegant, complex chardonnay and the delightfully fresh pinot noir, with its remarkable intensity of ripe fruit. A stylish cabernet-based blend is also available, but quantities still just disappear on sight.

## neyard



the Yarra Valley.

ards and one also from David Pax McLaren Vale. Two 1988 pinots, estate and select, were delightful wines, high color, full spicy fruit, and they will stay good for another couple of years. The cabernet sauvignon, which will usually be bottled with about seven percent merlot, is also showing great with plenty of local "winter green" character, and for the first time Garry made a straight merlot, although in limited quantities. Merlot, he says, is proving to be an asset on the Mornington Peninsula. Vines are sparse and very straggly, but it were not for the fact that it is so well with cabernet it would be economic to grow. On the other Garry Crittenden is sure that his are merlot. He suspects a lot of other plantings in the country are not merlot but cabernet, a very similar native of Bordeaux. He knows his is merlot; it was

THE INDEPENDENT NEWS, Tuesday, September 13, 1988

## Experts taste Dromana wine

IN what is regarded as one of the most prestigious wine industry events of the year, a local wine has beaten a strong and large field of contenders from all over Victoria.

Cabernet Merlot, by Dromana Estate, was chosen for service at a black tie dinner attended by hundreds to mark the opening of the Annual Victorian Winemakers Exhibition at the Hyatt Hotel.

The week long exhibition is open to the public from today to Friday September 16.

The exhibition began officially with the black tie dinner on Sunday.

Exhibiting Victorian winemakers invited to submit wines to a discriminating selection panel who then choose only one wine from each category for service at the dinner.

Garry Crittenden, owner-winemaker at Dromana Estate, said he saw the choice of his 1987 Cabernet-Merlot as further recognition of the pre-eminent role the peninsula was destined to play in the production of premium quality wine.

Mr Crittenden said this wine would be available for public tasting throughout the week along with a large range of wines from other peninsula winemakers.

### Mornington Peninsula Region

In a true classless wine society like that developing on the Mornington Peninsula, mega-bucks mingle with loose change, their owners all hoping for something good to come from their hard work in the future.

Elgee Park and Stonier's Merricks Vineyard are not open to the public. Dromana Estate: Patiently unraveling the mysteries of pinot noir, merlot, cabernet sauvignon and chardonnay in a new climate, new soil and distinctive maritime climate is Garry Crittenden. He gets a 10 for effort, as does his cabernet sauvignon/merlot.

Location: Harrison's Road, Dromana. Phone (059) 87 3275.

Hours: By appointment only. Main Ridge Estate: The maker of one of the finest chardonnays in the state, Nat White was an early pioneer in the district, establishing vines in 1975. Make sure you get on his mailing list for this little beauty and others.

Location: Lot 48 William Road, Red Hill. Phone (059) 89 2686.

Hours: Sat. 10 am to 5 pm. Otherwise by appointment.

Merrick's Estate: Another early visionary, George Kefford, founded Merrick's in 1978 and now has 2.8 hectares.

He has had great success with shiraz and cabernet sauvignon in shows, and oh yes! there is the obligatory pinot noir.

Location: Thompson's Lane, Merricks. Phone (059) 89 8416.

Hours: By appointment only.

THE WEEKEND AUSTRALIAN, September 24-25 1988

### HALLIDAY'S CHOICE



FEW wines from the Mornington Peninsula find their way outside the peninsula itself and the Melbourne metropolitan area. While the area has established an enviable reputation for quality over the past five years, it has had to do so with wines made on a tiny production scale. Figures are not easy to come by, but I would suspect that more than 80 per cent of the output of all wineries except one is sold cellar door and by mailing list.

The one exception is Dromana Estate, previously distributed by I.H. Baker but now handled by Dorado Wines in Melbourne and Sydney. Dromana Estate has just released its 1987 Cabernet Merlot, a blend of 85 per cent cabernet sauvignon and 15 per cent merlot. In previous years, the two components were released separately, but in 1987 winemaker Garry Crittenden decided to adopt the classic approach of blending.

Dromana Estate typifies the best of the Mornington Peninsula characteristics: it is a wine with bell-clear varietal flavour, wonderful colour and seductive aroma. Skilful oak handling has given a warm, spicy overtone to both the bouquet and the palate, thanks to some high quality new French oak barriques. The

wine also shows the typical low tannin profile of the region and is of light to medium body. It relies on seduction rather than raw power for its appeal and should give of its best over the next few years.

It will retail for around \$20.52. Alternatively, you can join the mailing list by writing to PO Box 332, Mornington, Victoria, 3931. The cost is \$204 per dozen, with freight at \$5 per carton for the Melbourne metropolitan area and \$10 per carton for Victorian



# The premium path of pinot

**T**HE pinot noir grape variety has had a somewhat difficult time in trying to establish itself as a premium grape variety in Australia over the years.

It would be very difficult to pinpoint why; suffice to say that today we seem to have a good crop of pinot noir coming on to the market.

Australia's red wine heritage has rather stoically backed the red varieties cabernet sauvignon and shiraz; perhaps a reflection of the Australian palate rather than the lack of interest in pinot noir as an Australian premium variety.

Maybe the thinking in Australia has reflected the general opinion of English and European wine observers that pinot noir has and will be unsuitable for premium production outside of Burgundy and Champagne.

Although this argument has had some sway in the past, pinot noir has become an established varietal in California. And if recent tastings of the variety in Australia are any judge then it is well on the way to becoming a major quality force here in our country.

The undoubted clonal work and refined wine-making techniques available to Australia's wine producers now far surpass those that were available to the industry even five years ago.

The variety either from France or Australia has an appeal that the traditional Bordeaux varieties cannot offer.

There are many palates that find the strong power and tannic characters of claret style wines far too overpowering while softer, full, alcoholic and almost velvety characters of pinot noir are far more satisfying to their palates.

Normally its bouquet has a sweetness and richness that other red varieties seem to lack. Its soft,

## WINE

By DAVID JOHNSTONE HOBART

well-weighted palate adds to the reasons why people have pursued pinots and in particular burgundies for generations.

In Hobart recently a very interesting tasting of pinot noir was conducted by Ben Vaughan of Aberfeldy Cellars.

Fifteen pinot noirs were assembled, five from Victorian growing districts, three from Burgundy, one from South Australia, one from New South Wales and five from Tasmania.

The wines were tasted blind so that no one could prejudice their comments and at the end of the tasting the marks were submitted for averaging out and overall marking of the wines. (Results as per table).

It was interesting to note that the first wine was clearly marked higher than the next three with another tight bracket from 16.6 points down to 16 points.

It was also interesting to note how well the Victorian wines scored with probably one of Australia's most exciting new vineyards leading the way.

The Dromana Estate vineyard is owned by Garry Crittenden who was obviously delighted with the result of the tasting.

**H**e commented that he always had a lot of faith in the sophisticated palates of Tasmanian wine enthusiasts and would like enthusiasts to comment on his 1986 cabernet sauvignon which is due for release soon.

Another wine he is obviously pleased with.

The Dromana Estate Vineyard lies about 70 kilometres from Melbourne just a couple of kilometres from Port Phillip Bay on the western side of the Mornington Peninsula.

There are 2½ hectares acres of vines planted, with 2 hectares of bearing vines. Another 1½ hectares will be planted this winter.

The anticipated yield will be 2,500-3,000 cases of wine.

Currently the bulk of the bearing vineyard is plantings of cabernet sauvignon, 1.7 hectares, with Merlot, 2 hectare, pinot noir, .1 hectare, and

Chardonnay, .1 hectare. Unfortunately that means only around 100 cases of the 1986 pinot noir was available commercially; similarly with the 1987 vintage only around 100 cases will be available.

New plantings will be fairly evenly divided between pinot noir and chardonnay which should please those who follow the wine.

As the leading Tasmanian pinot noir on the averaged table, Moorilla has shown that its commitment to the variety has been justified.

Although the wines from Moorilla Estate and Dromana Estate are different in style, it does show that we can produce excellent pinot noir in the southern States, whether of European style as in the Moorilla wines or the fresh fruit distinctive Australian style as demonstrated by the Dromana wine.

I suppose that does in the end bring us to the point of the style of pinot noirs being produced in this country.

At the stage of the development of the variety in Australia it is probably best that we the consumers sit back and just wait for the industry to come forth with its own ideas of where it should go.

To emulate the French and in particular the Burgundians may well be the way pinot develops. But I for one would hope we develop a pinot noir style that becomes as famous and as satisfying to drink as good Burgundy but with a definite Australian regional style.

## PINOT: Tasmania v The World

1986 Dromana Estate (Mornington)	1	17.1
1985 Bannockburn (Geelong, Vic)	2	16.7
1986 Coldstream Hills (Yarra Valley, Vic)	3	16.7
1986 Heathcote (Bendigo Vic)	4	16.7
1983 Morey Saint Denis — Domaine Dujac (France)	5	16.6
1983 Bonnes Mares — Drouhin — Larose (France)	6	16.5
1986 Moorilla Estate (Berriedale, Tas)	7	16.2
1985 St. Huberts (Yarra Valley, Vic)	8	16.2
1986 Delamere (Pipers River, Tas)	9	16.1
1986 Pipers Brook Vineyard (Pipers River, Tas)	10	16.1
1985 Normans (Evanston, S.A.)	11	16.0
1985 Glengarry (Tamar Valley, Tas)	12	15.9
1983 Savigny-Les-Beaune — Simon Bize (France)	13	15.8
1985 Marlon Vineyard (Tamar Valley, Tas)	14	15.7
1984 Wyndham Estate (Hunter Valley, NSW)	15	15.4

THE WEEKEND AUSTRALIAN, March 11-12, 1989

## ON THE GRAPEVINE

hence avoiding the loss of natural areas.

"It also avoids the fragmentation of agricultural land, thus reducing the creep of great ugliness and deterioration which has accompanied so much of the smallholding hobby-farm development on the surrounds of Australian towns and cities."

One can also assume that for Cassegrain it is highly efficient from the tax and capital-raising viewpoint. The small existing winery on the property will be revamped and a modern cellar door sales outlet will be in operation by next vintage.



**THE** Tuerong Estate Vineyard is the latest addition to the wineries of the Mornington Peninsula. It is, however, somewhat different from the others in being as much a restaurant as it is a wine producer. It is owned and run by Gennaro Mazzella, who was born on Ischia, a small island in the Bay of Naples.

Mazzella came to Australia many years ago, and became an integral part of the Camperdown Cellars team in Sydney during the time Camperdown Cellars was owned by Andrew and Hady Simon.

He moved to the Mornington Peninsula and established Tuerong Estate Vineyard in 1984, with initial plantings of chardonnay. The vineyard has been progressively extended since, and further plantings are scheduled for this year, but production will always be modest. The now-available 1988 Chardonnay, sold only through the Tuerong Estate restaurant, was made by Hickinbotham Winemakers.

The restaurant is strictly Italian in its ambience and its food. It has the capacity for only 30 guests, and all are seated at one long table. There is a set menu for each meal, which varies according to the seasonal produce available on the day; it may indeed change between lunch and dinner. The price varies a little according to the dishes featured, but is about \$35 a person for food.

The walk-in cellar is a major attraction, featuring not only Tuerong Estate wines and other Mornington Peninsula wines but a collection of fine vintage wines going back to the early 1960s.

Tuerong Estate Vineyard and the restaurant are open on Friday, Saturday and Sunday and most public holidays for lunch and dinner. There are fixed times: lunch at 12.30 for 1pm and dinner, 7.30 for 8pm. The Melway Map reference is map 190 D8 on the Mornington-Flinders road. The restaurant

THE AGE, Tuesday 11 April 1989

## EPICURE 5

6. Karina Vineyards  
Dromana Rhine riesling 1988  
(\$13.50)

**PW:** Greenish-lemon color. Fresh, up-front spicy nose. Excellent, light delicate fruit flavor. The retained CO<sub>2</sub> gives a spritz effect and is quite attractive.

**CR:** I found a little SO<sub>2</sub> on the nose, just a hint of sulphur. A very broad wine, with plenty of fruit and flavor, certainly, but lacks a little freshness and lift. A good fine wine.

**KJ:** Pale green-gold. I thought the bouquet was typical of riesling, with a dash of sulphur, which will dissipate. The palate has fresh fruit flavor, of medium weight, balanced by crisp acidity that made it a very approachable wine.

## Wine of the week

The panellists were unanimous in choosing No. 4, from the Western Australian Castle Rock vineyard, as the best of the bunch.

**KJ:** No. 4 seemed head and shoulders above the rest in structure, style and balance.

**CR:** No. 4 showed the best fruit and the best wine making. Well put together and very stylish.

**PW:** No argument from me. No. 4 is clearly the best.

## Value for money

Again, Castle Rock took out the honors, despite being one of the most expensive wines tasted.

**PW:** No. 4, because I would rather pay extra for that wine than buy any of the others. Second best is No. 6.

**KJ:** My preference is No. 4, but a case could be made for No. 1 and No. 6.

**CR:** For the quality, No. 4 does offer value for money. No. 6 also appealed to me.





# Frankston Standard

100 YEARS  
1889-1989  
A LEADER NEWSPAPER GROUP PUBLICATION

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TUESDAY, APRIL 11, 1989

Young

## Great drop, Garry

By DINA MONKS

AUTUMN storm clouds were gathering, but Peninsula vigneron Garry Crittenden was beating the rain and bringing in part of a record harvest of grapes at his Dromana Estate vineyard last week.

Soon, Garry's Merlot grapes were in a gleaming stainless steel vat, bubbling away as the long process of transformation into award-winning wine began.

Crittenden friends and family have been out early many days lately, carefully picking the sweet red grapes on Garry's long and perfectly pruned rows of vines at the foot of Red Hill.

### Biggest

A delighted Garry said: "It's a record crop — our biggest by far. And it looks like being the same all over the Peninsula."

Seven kilometres of green netting, put up in an attempt to keep the birds at bay, cover the lines of red Merlot grapes and the other red grapes, the Cabernet variety. Dromana Estate is quietly making its presence felt in the competitive world of wine making, taking out many awards and even attracting international attention.

Garry is immediate past president of the Mornington Peninsula Vignerons Association, which has 70 members.

This year is a bumper crop — and a bumper year for Garry and the other Peninsula vignerons, who only five years ago were just starting out on the great adventure of wine making.

And everyone will be able to have a taste of the "nectar of the gods" when the Peninsula vignerons hold public wine tastings and "open house" on the Queen's Birthday weekend in June.



GARRY Crittenden and the bumper crop of Merlot grapes at his Dromana Estate vineyard.

● Picture: VALERIU CAMPAN

## Wine tasting: vineyard tour

By DINA MONKS

PENINSULA wines will be the star attraction at the inaugural Queen's Birthday Weekend wine exhibition.

With support from Flinders Council, the Mornington Peninsula Vignerons Association has organised a weekend of wine tastings and tours of vineyards.

Ten local vignerons will have more than 30 of their wines available for tasting at The Atrium Restaurant, Mount Martha Valley Country Club Estate, on Saturday, June 10, from 11 am to 4 pm.

On Sunday, June 11, eight vineyards will be open for inspection and tastings.

And the Red Hill Fire Brigade will benefit from the opening of Elgee Park. Baillieu Myer's property in Wallaces Rd, Merricks North.

At Elgee Park, the admission fee of \$5 a car will go to the brigade's building fund.

As well as a walk and talk through the vineyard, Elgee Park quarter horses and Santa Gertrudis cattle will be shown.

### Enthusiasm

Exhibition co-ordinator Garry Crittenden said the MPVA was indebted to Flinders Shire Council — and especially to Steve Robin, assistant to the chief executive officer — for their enthusiasm and promotion of the wine celebration.

At Dromana Estate, visitors will have the chance to sneak preview the 1988 Dromana Estate Cabernet Merlot.

As well as tasting other wines, they will also be able to have a reasonably-priced lunch prepared by Mary McCarthy, of McCarthy's Restaurant in Sorrento.

Pony rides will also be available for children.

The winery-vineyards,



NAT White, left, and Garry Crittenden, both past presidents of the Mornington Peninsula Vignerons Association, taste the vineyard's newly-fermented 1989 Dromana Estate Cabernet.

open from late morning until 4 pm on Sunday, are:

Hickinbotham Winemakers, Moorooduc Rd, Dromana; Karina Vineyard and Dromana Estate, both in Harrisons Rd, Dromana; Balnarring Vineyard in Bit-

tern-Dromana Rd, Main Ridge Estate, William Rd, Red Hill; Tuerong estate, Vineyard, Mornington-Flinders Rd, Red Hill; Elgee Park, Wallaces Rd, Merricks, and King Creek Vineyard, 237 Myers Rd, Bittern.



SEMI PORT

THE AGE, Tuesday 23 May 1989

## EPICURE 6

THE Mornington Peninsula wine makers are either gluttons for punishment or supreme optimists in choosing the Queen's Birthday long weekend to stage their mini wine festival.

The opening of the ski season and the popular North-East Winery Walkabout have long established themselves as big drawcards, but the Peninsula vignerons' association is obviously hoping its main attraction will be in visiting wineries that are normally closed to the public. I hope they are proved right. On Saturday 10 June a public tasting of Peninsula wine will be held in the foyer of the Atrium Restaurant, Mount Martha Valley Country Club at Safety Beach. Ten wineries and 30 wines will be on show — Dromana Estate, Main Ridge Estate, Balmarring Vineyard, Karina Vineyard, Stonier's Merricks, Purings Estate, Moorooduc Estate and Hickinbotham Winemakers.

Admission is by pre-paid ticket (\$12.50) or by payment at the door (\$15) and includes a souvenir glass. Times are 11 am to 4 pm. On Sunday six winery-vineyards will be open for inspection — Hickinbotham Winemakers (Dromana), Karina Vineyards (Dromana), Dromana Estate (Dromana), Elgee Park (Merricks North), Balmarring Vineyards (Balmarring) and Main Ridge Estate (Red Hill). Dromana Estate will provide a catered lunch while Elgee Park plans to charge \$5 a car entry fee with all proceeds going to the Red Hill Fire Brigade.

For information contact Garry Crittenden on (059) 87 3275.

Page 4 — THE LEADER, Wednesday, May 17, 1989

## Here's to the weather!

By DINA MONKS

LIKE other vineyards on the Peninsula, Elgee Park at Merricks North has had a bumper year.

The prolonged mild weather was the vinticulturist's delight — as it enabled the grapes to be picked late in the season.

Daniel Green, Elgee Park's new winemaker, explains that the vineyard has had "huge crops" — about 35 tonnes which is double last year's crop.

"The Peninsula is, I be-

lieve, one of the best grape growing areas of Australia with its relatively cool climate.

"This year we have been able to have a long slow ripening and this leads to fruit with a better flavor," said Daniel.

Elgee Park is owned by Baillieu Myer.

The vineyard was planted in 1972 after a visit by famous vigneron David Wynn.

This planting re-established the Peninsula's wine industry after almost a century.

### 'Hobby' farm

Although the vineyard was originally established as a hobby to provide fine wines for the Myer family and friends, it is now also a flourishing commercial enterprise.

Five hectares of the property's picturesque slopes are planted out with 12,000 vines which include Cabernet Sauvignon, Cabernet Franc, Merlot, Pinot Noir, Chardonnay and Rhine Riesling.

And there is also a small planting of Viognier, believed to be one of only two in Australia, which this year will produce perhaps just two barrels of this fine rare wine for Mr Myer's own table.

Daniel Green, who has taken over as winemaker from Henk Van Denham who died earlier this year, studied wine making as part of a Bachelor of Applied Science degree at Roseworthy Agricultural College in South Australia.

After graduating he worked in the Hunter Valley and also at Hickinbotham's at Anakie.

All picking at Elgee Park is done by members and friends of the Red Hill Fire Brigade with the money raised going to the brigade building appeal.

Elgee Park, which is also a Santa Gertrudis and Quarter Horse stud property, will be open to the public on the Queen's Birthday weekend as part of the Mornington Peninsula Vignerons Association celebration of wine.

The MPVA, with the backing of Flinders Council, has organised a wine tasting on June 10 at The Atrium Restaurant, Mount Martha Valley Country Club Estate, from 11 am to 4 pm. Tickets can be pre-



WINEMAKER Daniel Green checks the Cabernet Merlot.

booked by filling out the coupon at left.

On June 11, seven vineyards will be open for public inspection.

They are: Hickinbotham Winemakers, Moorooduc Rd, Dromana; Karina Vineyard and Dromana Estate, both in Harrisons Rd, Dromana; Balmarring Vineyard in Bittern-Dromana Rd; Main Ridge Estate, William Rd., Red Hill; Tuerong Estate Vineyard, Mornington-Flinders Rd, Red Hill, and Elgee Park, Wallaces Rd, Merricks North.

Visitors to Elgee Park will be welcome to join guided tours beginning at 2 pm, 3 pm and 4 pm.

THE HERALD WEDNESDAY MAGAZINE MAY 24, 1989

## Winemakers' open weekend

THE Queen's Birthday weekend, June 10, 11, 12, is a major event on the wine lovers' calendar with showcase tastings at both the Mornington Peninsula Wine Exhibition and the Rutherglen Walkabout.

The 12 members of the Mornington Peninsula Vignerons Association who will be providing tastings include well known names such as Dromana Estate, Main Ridge and Stonier's Merricks.

Tastings will be held on Saturday June 10 from 11 am to 4 pm at The Atrium, Mount Martha Country Club, Safety Beach and admission is by pre-paid ticket (\$12.50) per person or \$15 at the door. For tickets write to the MPVA, P.O. Box 1100, City Rd Post Office, 3205, or call Lyn Journeaux on (03) 699-8922.

On Sunday, June 11, for the first time eight vineyards on the Peninsula will be open for public

inspection: Kings Creek, 237 Myers Rd, Bittern; Hickinbotham Winemakers, Moorooduc Rd, Dromana; Karina Vineyard and Dromana Estate both in Harrisons Rd, Dromana; Balmarring Vineyard in Bittern-Dromana Rd, Balmarring; Main Ridge Estate, William Rd, Red Hill; Tuerong Estate Vineyard, Mornington-Flinders Rd, Red Hill and Elgee Park, Wallaces Rd, Merricks North. Stonier's Merricks will release its 1988 chardonnay.

THE WEEKEND AUSTRALIAN, May 27-28, 1989

### ON THE GRAPEVINE

## Tasting fit for royalty



THE Mornington Peninsula Vignerons Association has organised several activities over the Queen's Birthday long weekend of June 10-12.

On the Saturday, a public tasting at Peninsula Wines will be held in the foyer of the Atrium Restaurant at the Mt Martha Valley Country Club at Safety Beach (Melway reference map 160, Nepean Highway, C5).

Ten local wineries will have 30 wines available for tasting, and admission will be by pre-paid tickets available from the honorary secretary of the Mornington Peninsular Vignerons Association, PO Box 1100, City Rd Post Office 3205, at \$12.50 a person (please include a stamped addressed envelope) or by paying \$15 a person at the door. The admission fee includes a souvenir tasting glass. Tasting will be continuous between 11am and 4pm.

On the Sunday, five wineries will be open for public inspection: Hickinbotham Winemakers, Moorooduc Rd, Dromana; Karina Vineyards, Harrisons Rd, Dromana; Dromana Estate, Harrisons Rd, Dromana; Balmarring Vineyard, Bittern-Dromana Rd, Balmarring; and Main Ridge Estate, William Rd, Red Hill.

### Dromana Estate Vineyards

#### OPEN DAY

You are cordially invited to visit our vineyard and winery on Sunday, June 11 between the hours 11 am and 4 pm.

We are delighted to team up with the incomparable Mary McCarthy of McCarthy's at Sorrento to present a choice of two entree size dishes for \$8.50 per serve including a glass of wine. (Food available until sold out)

Wine will also be available for purchase by the glass and the bottle.

No entry charge! Pony rides for children weather permitting.

Harrisons Rd, Dromana. Second entrance L.H.S. from Bittern-Dromana Rd. Melway ref. 160 J6

THE HERALD WEDNESDAY MAGAZINE MAY 24, 1989

MORNINGTON PENINSULA VIGNERONS ASSOCIATION

MORNINGTON PENINSULA

### QUEEN'S BIRTHDAY WEEKEND WINE EXHIBITION

SATURDAY JUNE 10, 11 am to 4 pm

Venue: The Atrium, Mount Martha Valley Country Club, Safety Beach. (Melway 160 C5)

ADMISSION: By pre-paid ticket \$12.50/person (or \$15 on the day)

SEND TO THE SECRETARY, MPVA, PO BOX 1100, CITY ROAD P.O. 3205 Enclose S.A.E. for return of tickets

NAME ..... ADDRESS ..... POSTCODE ..... PHONE ..... NO OF TICKETS REQUIRED ..... PAYMENT ENCLOSED \$ .....



## Helping the balance of payments

**W**ITH just a fortnight to go to the Peninsula's first "wine celebration", it's interesting to learn that one of the main vigneron taking part, Garry Crittenden, has spent the past week or two in London judging UK and European wines at the International Wine Challenge.

Garry was invited to join the judging panel of this renowned show by representatives of *Wine Magazine* who visited his Dromana Estate Vineyard in January.

It was a complete surprise, said Garry, when they contacted him a month or two later to go to London to help with the judging.

"I couldn't pack my bags quickly enough," he said.

The trip has also been an opportunity to renew contact with another English pair who visited

## Dina's DIARY

the vineyard last summer. Garry thought they were just another couple of tourists strolling among the vines, but they turned out to be representatives of the English wine merchants Houghton Fine Wines.

The upshot of this visit was a "significant" export order to provide Dromana Estate wines exclusively to them in the UK over the next 12 months.

Said Garry: "I am naturally delighted to receive recognition of our wines in such a discerning market as the UK. But I'm also delighted that in our small way we're bringing export dollars back into the country and at the same time creating work on the Peninsula."

And the good news from London is that Garry's had such a successful visit to both the London Wine Trade Fair and the International Wine Challenge that he had to cancel all his other arrangements. He's due back today.

For more news of the Mornington Peninsula Vignerons Association wine weekend, see page 10.



GARRY Crittenden and son Rollo, 11, inspect the grapes in the Dromana Estate winery, just before Garry left for London.



BRIAN Stonier — "future bright for Peninsula wines".

## Brian's merry Merricks plan

FRENCH Island merges with Phillip Island in the distance while in the foreground the rows of vines make a criss-cross pattern in the autumn sun.

Brian Stonier has good reason to be happy with the view he sees before him across his vineyard to Western Port Bay.

Head of the Australian publishing firm of Macmillan in South Melbourne, at weekends he

By DINA MONKS

becomes one of the Peninsula's growing number of vignerons.

He was among the first of the 20th Century Peninsula planters.

"My wife and I thought an acre of vines near the house would be romantic," he recalls.

That was just over 10 years ago.

Today, Stonier's Mer-

Continued on Page 16

## Merry Merricks venture

Continued from Page 10

ricks Vineyard is one of the Peninsula's largest — with 14 hectares now planted with Chardonnay, Cabernet Sauvignon, and Pinot Noir.

But Brian Stonier admits the early planters made many mistakes.

"We were not viticulturists and in those days we knew only what people growing grapes in a hot climate knew," he said.

"Growing grapes in a cool climate, like the Peninsula's, was quite different and we had to learn by trial and error as we went along."

"But it was fun to start

something new and I suppose along with Baillieu Myer, Nat White and my neighbor, George Kefford, we were pioneers on the Peninsula."

One of the basic problems was learning how to cope with the tremendously vigorous growth of the vines due to the rich soil combined with the ideal maritime climate on the Peninsula.

Today, Stonier and other properties use lyre-shaped trellising which splits the thick canopy and allows light and warmth into the fruit.

Growers from other vineyards visit Stonier's to inspect this unusual trellising which has paid

off with fruit yields now double what they were in the early years.

Brian Stonier is enthusiastic when he speaks of the future for the Peninsula wine industry.

"I believe this will become known as a great district, equal to Bordeaux and Burgundy," he said.

"We have everything in our favor with ideal climate and soil and people are now recognising that we are producing some of the finest quality wines in Australia."

"Peninsula wines are already winning wide respect internationally and the demand for them in the UK, New York and Toronto is impossible to satisfy."

### Best use

"And Australians are moving up from the cask and flagon. They don't want to drink lots of ordinary wine any more. The trend is definitely towards high quality bottled wine — with the emphasis on quality not quantity," he added.

Even the high price of Peninsula land will act in the industry's favor, he believes.

"People are beginning to realise that there is no better use of farming land on the Peninsula than to grow grapes. Certainly, the returns are far higher than with the more conventional use of the land for orchards, sheep or cattle," he said.

He added that many landowners were using

Peninsula consultants to develop wineries.

As secretary of the very active Mornington Peninsula Vignerons Association, Brian is keen to help any local landowners who want to know more about the potential for grapes on the Peninsula.

Stonier's will be one of the Peninsula vineyards taking part in an MPVA celebration of wine over the Queen's Birthday weekend.

And Brian Stonier is planning to release his '88 Chardonnay at the wine tasting on the Saturday — "It should be just about spot on by then so that will be its first public tasting."

With the backing of Flinders Council, the MPVA has organised a wine tasting on June 10 at The Atrium Restaurant, Mount Martha Valley country Club Estate, from 11 am to 4 pm.

Tickets can be pre-booked by filling out the coupon on Page 10.

On June 11, eight vineyards will be open.

They are Hickinbotham Winemakers, Moorooduc Rd., Dromana; Karina Vineyard and Dromana Estate, both in Harrisons Rd, Dromana; Balmarring Vineyard in Bittern-Dromana Rd; Main Ridge Estate, William Rd, Red Hill; Tuerong Estate Vineyard, Mornington-Flinders Rd, Red Hill; Elgee Park, Wallaces Rd, Merricks North, and Kings Creek Vineyard, 237 Myers Rd, Bittern.



THE AGE, Tuesday 6 June 1989

# EPICURE

WINING & DINING

## Daydreams

## become realities

By JENI PORT

A MODERN optional extra to the holiday house, the expensive car and the Collins Street address is a vineyard to call one's own on the Mornington Peninsula.

This curious phenomenon dates back to the 1950's when a member of the Seppelt family had a holiday house at Mount Martha and bought 40 hectares in Harrison's Road, Dromana.

As an experiment, 1.2 hectares of vines were planted and each year workers came from Seppelt Great Western to prune, but before a crop could be harvested, the property was sold. As fate tends to do, the new owner had Melbourne wine merchant Doug Seabrook as a brother-in-law and so the vines finally got to produce wine and the track was laid for that special breed of animal peculiar to the '70s and '80s, the entrepreneurial professional.

I should imagine many a day-dream of becoming a vigneron has found substance over a glass of wine on a typical Peninsula summer's evening.

Certainly, after the early Seppelt connection the next major catalyst for expansion came at the luncheon table at the country property of Baillieu Myer in 1971 when his guest David Wynn sowed the cerebral seeds and Elgee Park was born.

Apart from being the first of the new free-wheeling entrepreneurial pioneers, Elgee Park's owners were also responsible for the Peninsula's other great boom industry, wine consultancy.

The Myers enlisted the wine-making Hickinbotham family and then Oenotec to make its wines. From there, the Hickinbothams went to Stonier's Merricks Vineyard; John Ellis, ex-Rosemount and Tisdall, helped out Karina Vineyard and Alex White of Lillydale Vineyard lent a hand at Merricks Estate.

Peninsula pioneers like Garry Crittenden and Nat White in turn started their own consultancy businesses for fellow wine travellers new to the area.

All of this has added grist to the usual back-biting which is such a part of the wine industry, but the truth is the wealth and the knowledge it has bought has propelled the area into the industry limelight, probably years ahead of what would normally be considered a polite and proper time for a new viticultural area.

This, of course, is in conjunction with perhaps a region's greatest asset (marketing wise) today - a cool climate.

The maritime breezes off Port Phillip Bay provide a brisk and stimulating air and while it is not cold in the bone-chilling way Ballarat and Macedon are, the Peninsula is definitely cool and most definitely windy. In fact, wind would have to be the number one enemy of the vineyards there, hence the almost manic desire to plant trees everywhere.

Jeni Port assesses the vineyards on the Peninsula: Epicure 4.

## Vines flourish

JENI PORT continues her assessment on the vineyards thriving on the Peninsula.

### Dromana Estate Vineyards

A HORTICULTURIST by training, Garry Crittenden's Dromana Estate reflects the beauty and tranquillity of a classic French vineyard with its manicured lawns and ornamental lake set against the vineyard backdrop. The sense of order and discipline is extended to the wines, although Garry's concentration on the vineyard side (which includes some pretty controversial work on reducing the establishment time for young vineyards by forcing vines to produce earlier) means the wines all but make themselves.

The hardest work appears to be done in the vineyard rather than the winery which, in this case, means protecting the vines from the damaging winds roaring off the bay.

Dromana Estate is the largest operation on the peninsula, but is still comparatively small by most accounts, with a little more than 1000 cases being produced annually. Garry concentrates on cabernet sauvignon, pinot noir and chardonnay, three excellent wines with perhaps the cabernet/merlot blend proving the exceptional member of the trio.

Inquiries telephone (059) 87 3275.

### Elgee Park Winery

THE Peninsula's oldest vineyard, Elgee Park was established in 1972 by Baillieu Myer after a particularly fortuitous lunch with David Wynn. Yet, for all its seniority, Elgee Park remains something of a mystery. A request for an interview two years ago was turned down because the owner had "no need" for publicity.

However, the facts are that the Hickinbotham family made the wines up to and including the 1983 vintage, whereafter a winery was built and the '84 and '85 vintages were made with Dr Tony Jordan as consultant. The Elgee Park 1986 cabernet sauvignon/merlot (made by Elaine Tudhope) is a nice enough young red showing some fresh and lively fruit but a little light on complexity and weight.

Inquiries telephone (059) 89 7338.

### Main Ridge Estate

ONE of the early "new wave" pioneers of the area was Nat White, a civil engineer, who first planted in 1975 and was so enthused he kept planting 0.4 hectares of vines each year. By 1981 he had 2.5 hectares.

Nat's Red Hill vineyard has the distinction of recording the first sales of wines from the Mornington Peninsula in 1981 and is the unsung hero of chardonnay in the area producing arguably one of Australia's best.

Inquiries telephone (059) 89 2686.

### Merrick's Estate

MELBOURNE solicitor George Kefford was another far sighted wine drinker who saw great potential in his chosen vineyard site back in the early '70s, even though at the time it was a dairy farm. George needed to plant whole plantations of trees first before planting vines, windbreaks being very much a fact of life for peninsula vignerons.

"It might be easier  
To fail with land in sight,  
Than gain my blue peninsula  
To perish of delight."

— Emily Dickinson

THE Mornington Peninsula has always been a sparkling green and blue place, beckoning day-trippers and holiday-makers from Melbourne to paddle in the waters of its two bays, or dle among the orchards and bushland in the hills

at its popularity in the early days, when paddle mers would bring guests to stay in grand seaside it-houses and hotels, gradually waned, and even the insula in its heyday as a giant camping ground, n the humbler delights of fish and chips on ebud beach were many a city family's idea of a ect summer holiday, eventually bowed to more ic locations at the end of an ever-shortening plane flight.

y the time the Peninsula's beauty was rediscovered, hastily protected, by a new generation of people in ch of a more pleasant life within striking distance e city, there was very little left of the gourmet ptations which presumably once kept finicky aradian diners happy on their seaside holidays. n the good fish and simple pub meals that made the insula a favorite with campers and day-trippers e to be hard to find amid a welter of hamburger ts and pizza shops.

ne Peninsula's new arrivals, tucked away in their cedar homes among the rows of eucalypts and

emerald green pastures of Red Hill, or enjoying the spectacular, changing moods of Port Phillip Bay from the heights of Mount Martha, found the views were great but the food was lousy. Local wine was not even a consideration.

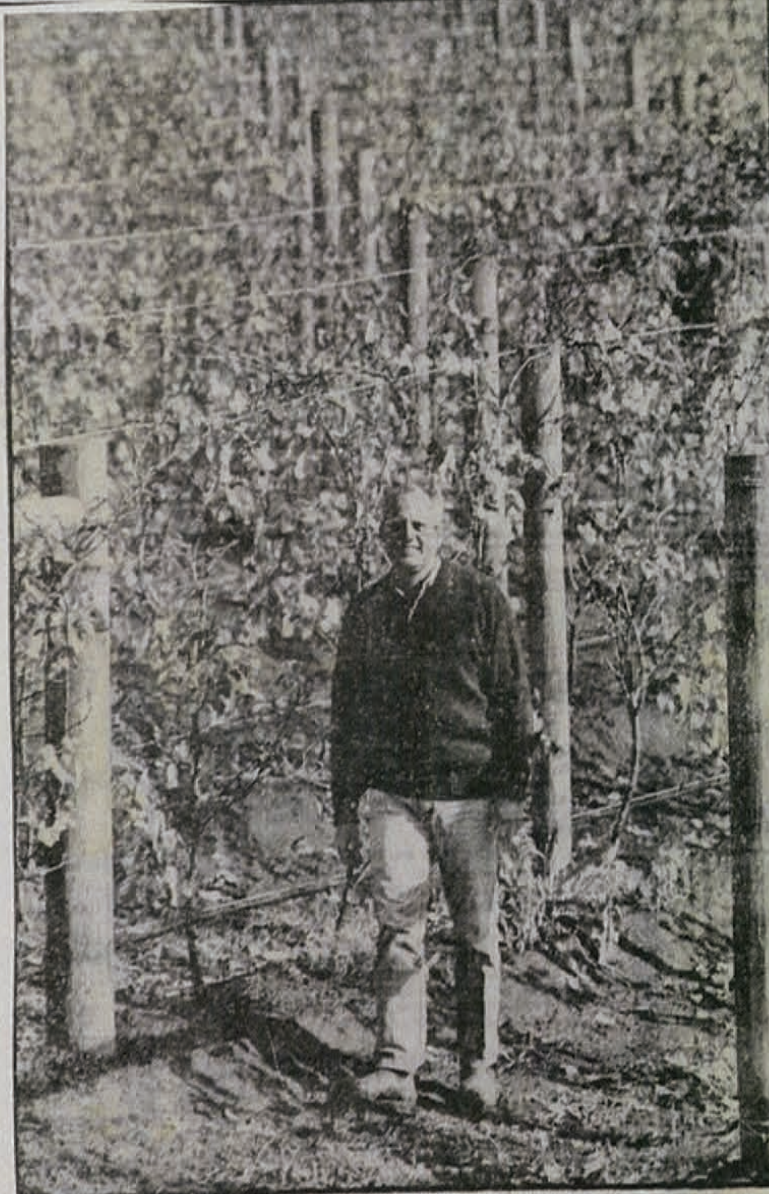
Change is a slow process, but delightfully inevitable. Perhaps it was the desperation of the local diners, or perhaps it was simply the dedication of the lovers of fine food and wines who brought their expertise with them to new homes and new lives on the Peninsula — but things are improving. The arrival of Two Faces at Delgany, an elegant gourmet retreat at Portsea, and the listfuls of medals which adorn the innovative local wines are shining symbols of better times for the Peninsula.

But as Keith Dunstan, a veteran among the many frustrated gourmands of the Peninsula, and Epicure wine writer Jeni Port reveal, there are new restaurants and new wines breathing new life into this beautiful area. Perhaps the "blue peninsula" is about to be as delightful to sample as to see.

There will be a rare opportunity to sample some of Mornington's fine wines, and see the vineyards, next weekend. On Saturday, there will be a public tasting at The Atrium restaurant, Mount Martha Country Club, Safety Beach. Thirty wines can be tasted, from 11 am to 4 pm, for an admission fee.

On Sunday, six winery-vineyards will be open for inspection — Hickinbotham, Karina, Dromana, Elgee Park, Balnarring, Main Ridge and Tuerong. Information, contact Garry Crittenden on (059) 87 3275.

— GAYLE AUSTEN



Garry Crittenden: amid his vines of two years.

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## Close to city

Picture: ANDREW DE LA RU



about a serious business: Nat White assesses his produce at Main Ridge Estate.

the famous three — pinot, sauvignon and chardonnay — and his consultant Alex some success with shi- but this does not appear taken up by too many district. Merrick's is a proponent of chardonnay, vintage is highly

telephone (03) 602 4444.

### Estate

NG the wine industry's ico association, Dr Ric is one of a growing dical men becoming in- Mornington Peninsula. ate was planted in 1983 res of vines overlooking

teran Nat White oversaw in the McIntyre's new winery and later that vines were released — a d pinot and '87 chardon- are extremely small. ephone (03) 699 3191.

### eyard

sula is pitted with small s such as Karina, run xtremely professional n '84 at Dromana to sau- and rhine riesling, the to produce five tonnes of ilent achievement in a owners Graeme and Jan out early the assistance John Ellis. New releases specialist wine shops are ic riesling and a particu- uignon blanc. ephone (059) 81 0137.

### state

criticise the involvement onals and doctors in par- h as Dr Roger Buckle as s, but the truth is they are w able to buy and hence close to Melbourne for rposes rather than hous- ents. And that can only be

(in conjunction with con- es a pretty good wine, his : sauvignon/merlot being out friendly herbaceous

c/o PO, Red Hill South

### Stonier's Merricks Vineyard

IT is not surprising to hear wine drinkers confused over the existence of two vineyards with the Merricks name, especially as both were planted about the same time, '77-'78, to predominantly chardonnay and cabernet sauvignon. Brian Stonier's wines were closely associated with the Hickinbotham family early on with Stephen making the first wine in '82 and his brother Andrew supervising subsequent annual plantings of cabernet, cabernet franc and merlot.

Inquiries telephone (059) 89 8352.

### Balnarring Vineyard

NOW in its seventh year, Balnarring Vineyard has yet to release its wines commercially, although its pinot noir, cabernet/merlot, chardonnay and riesling/traminer are said to be very promising.

Inquiries telephone (059) 89 5258.

### St Neot's Vineyard

ESTABLISHED in 1980 by Elvala and Philip Ayton at Red Hill South, St Neot's is marketed under the Hickinbotham wine makers label. The second 1987 vintage of semillon, chardonnay, riesling and cabernet sauvignon were made by Hickinbotham's Peter Cumming and Adam Wynn (Mountadam). A particularly appealing 1988 pinot noir has been bottled exclusively for the Staley restaurants, including Fanny's.

Inquiries telephone (03) 267 1515.

### Warren Estate

ANOTHER new and still largely unknown quantity, Warren Estate at Red Hill was planted in 1984 with 2500 chardonnay vines. Max and Joan Warren's wines have been made by their son-in-law, the talented Pat Carmody of Craiglee Vineyard.

Inquiries telephone (03) 744 4489 or (059) 89 2060.

### King's Creek Vineyard

LOCATED in Myers Road, Bittern, King's Creek is new to the peninsula wine scene and hence has taken advantage of the kind of early groundwork done by the Stoniers and the Keffords and planted exclusively to chardonnay, pinot noir and cabernet. The first commercial crop was made in 1985 at Elgee Park and Prince Albert.

Inquiries telephone (059) 82 1715.

## From garage to vineyard

GRAEME Pinney says his vineyard is a prime example of "a hobby that got out of hand".

By DINA MONKS

"It all started when I began making wine at home about 12 years ago. I bought the grapes and made wine in the garage," the former Mount Martha real estate agent said.

"I found it so interesting and enjoyable that when I began to think of changing direction a few years ago, I decided to buy land at Dromana and try my hand at growing my own grapes."

The venture, which saw 2.5 hectares being

planted with vines in 1983-84, has been such a success that Mr Pinney has now opened a winery on the property, known as Karina Vineyard Dromana.

Until then, Graeme and his wife, Jan, yet again had to use their garage as a winery, "so it's great to be able to get the cars back to where they belong," Graeme said.

Last year, their Sauvignon Blanc and Rhine Riesling were especially successful in the Victorian Wine Show, winning bronze and silver medals.

Hopes are again high for another successful vintage following an excellent harvest in which more than 20 tonnes of grapes were gathered.



FORMER real estate agent Graeme Pinney, surrounded by his all-consuming 'hobby'.

"Normally, we pick up to four tonnes to the acre, but with our Sauvignon Blanc, for instance, we have picked close to six tonnes," Graeme said.

He attributes the good

harvest not so much to the weather, but to the spacing of the vines.

There was also less severe pruning, which resulted in more buds a vine.

"Wide spacing allows room for easy access for the machines, of course, but also allows good light penetration," Graeme said.

### Grape range

His crops include Cabernet Sauvignon, Rhine Riesling, Sauvignon Blanc and Merlot, but later this year he will put in a further half a hectare of grapes, this time of Chardonnay.

All vines are fully netted against birds and Graeme estimates this has probably saved as much as 20 per cent of the crop this year.

The Pinneys' four children have all grown up and left home, but return to help with the harvest. Caroline, a

graphic artist, designed the Karina Vineyard label.

Why the name Karina? Well, for almost 20 years, the Pinneys lived in Karina St, Frankston, and they were such happy times that it seemed appropriate to use the name for their new venture.

Karina Vineyard will be one of 10 local wineries taking part in a celebration of Peninsula wines on the Queen's Birthday weekend.

With the backing of Flinders Council, the Mornington Peninsula Vignerons Association has organised a weekend of wine tastings and vineyard tours.

On June 10, a tasting of wines from 10 local wineries will be held at The Atrium Restaurant, Mount Martha Valley Country Club Estate from 11 am to 4 pm.

Tickets can be pre-booked by filling out the coupon at left.

On June 11, seven vineyards will be open for public inspection.

They are Hickinbotham Winemakers, Moorooduc Rd, Dromana; Karina Vineyard and Dromana Estate, both in Harrisons Rd, Dromana; Balnarring Vineyard in Bittern-Dromana Rd, Main Ridge Estate, William Rd; Red Hill, Tuerong Estate Vineyard, Mornington-Flinders Rd, Red Hill, and Elgee Park, Wallaces Rd, Merricks North.

## Elgee Park Wines



### TASTING 1986 CABERNET MERLOT

Mount Martha Valley Club

Saturday, June 10-11.00 to 4.00 pm  
\$12.50 per person (prepaid) — \$15 on the day

### WINERY & VINEYARD TOURS

Sunday, June 11-2.00 to 4.00 pm only  
Entry to Elgee Park via Wallaces Rd only (Melways P.161, G3). Admission \$5 per car  
Proceeds to Red Hill Fire Brigade Building Appeal

Visitors welcome for tours and tasting  
A'noon Tea available. For information  
Ph: Daniel Greene (059) 897 338



JUNE 10<sup>th</sup> 1989  
OPEN DAY.  
ATRIUM RESTAURANT.









THE AGE, Tuesday 4 July 1989

## EPICURE 7

## mbine complexity and

gers on and on. Don't drink this now; two or three years will improve it immensely.

**BK:** Good cassis-cherry nose. Has plenty of time to build into a big, Burgundy-style wine. Plenty of stalks, oak and tannin. I would put this away and serve it with food in two or three years.

**KJ:** Deep crimson red. Sappy complex nose. The palate is firm, with particularly demanding tannin. This wine certainly needs to be served with food to be shown at its best.

## 3. Bannockburn pinot noir 1987 (\$26.49)

**PW:** Very full nose showing good cherry fruit and oak. The initial flavor is quite good, but it lacks something on the finish. May not keep for very long, but OK for current drinking.

**BK:** A good nose. It's a lighter style. It's very young and good for drinking now. I wouldn't consider buying it for putting away.

**KJ:** Deepish crimson color. Cherry bouquet, showing quite appealing fruit. It sometimes has the appearance of being a touch musty, but that comes and goes. The palate has fresh, stylish fruit, with nice wood and fresh acidity. I thought it was quite attractive in the mouth as well.

## 4. Dromana Estate pinot noir 1988 (\$19.99)

**PW:** Very young, fresh grapey nose. Light cherry flavor with excellent style



Picture: MIKE MARTIN

Guest taster Beverly Knight: "You are not going to get a cheap, good pinot."

and balance. Far too young to drink now, but it should develop into a very fine wine in the Burgundy style; flavor and balance, all in harmony.

**BK:** Excellent cassis and cherry nose. Good, clean Burgundy color. Beautifully perfumed bouquet. Good to drink now.

A very pleasurable wine.

**KJ:** Attractive deep cherry color. Again, that beautiful cherry bouquet, with excellent oak showing as well. The palate is stylish and rich, with nice middle-palate mouth feel. A very approachable and appealing wine.

THE AGE, Tuesday 22 August 1989

## EPICURE 6

## New stars adorn wine lists

**S**TARGAZERS have a new array of fresh galaxies to ponder over in the latest edition of 'Australian and New Zealand Wine Vintages'. Some 30 odd new vineyard listings appear in Robin Bradley's best-selling guide — most of them small in size and many doing very well in their first appearance, like The McAlister (East Gippsland), Long Gully (Yarra Valley), de Redcliffe Estates (NZ), St Matthias (Tas) and the Wilson Vineyard (SA).

Happily, there have been fewer demotions than last year to make way for the newcomers, although it is hard to understand why they should include Hickinbotham Winemakers and Fareham Estate.

Perhaps in anticipation of any criticism Mr Bradley, somewhat self-consciously, defends what he says "to some may appear to be a disproportionately high" number of four and five-star wines from the Mornington Peninsula (of which Dromana Estate and Stonier's Merricks do particularly well). "This may perhaps be interpreted as an example of prejudice, and in a way this is right — I am prejudiced towards good wines."

Now an annual publishing event, the guide is in its seventh edition, which probably means little until it is realised that it was first published 10 years ago, and is soon to hit sales of 300,000! Who said people don't like being told what to think? Actually, Mr Bradley, to be fair, encourages his readers to award their own stars for the 7000 wines listed, which is just as well for there is no star rating given at all for at least one wine — Cloudy Bay's sauvignon blanc.

The guide is about more than stars though. It also features ratings of wines given by the wine maker with his or her quality aspirations for various wines in different years (out of seven points). Stuart Anderson of Balgownie wins the award for the greatest humility, while Cooks of New Zealand and Hill-Smith Estate in South



Edited by JENI PORT

Australia are fully contented with their lot (although it is pointed out that a rating of seven does not mean a perfect wine). Nor does it necessarily hold true that that which rates highest lasts longest, which is why we are given an idea of the best year in which to drink the rated wines — perhaps the guide's most useful contribution.

'Australian and New Zealand Wine Vintages', seventh edition, by Robin Bradley (Statesman Publications; \$19.95). Available book stores and wine retailers from 1 September.

## MORNINGTON PENINSULA

## Karina Vineyards

Two of the new wave of converts to the Mornington Peninsula are Jan and Graeme Pinney, of Karina Vineyards at Dromana. It is probably too early to make any sweeping forecasts, but it can be said that a 1988 rhine riesling and sauvignon blanc were most promising, no doubt the result of professional guidance from wine maker John Ellis.

## Dromana Estate

Garry Crittenden (no relation to those other Crittendens in the wine game) had sure that his early days on the Mornington Peninsula were not wasted. Today he is looked upon as something of a godfather/adviser to those starting out. Certainly you have to be strong, viticulturally speaking, in gusty, cool condi-

## RICHMOND HILL CELLARS Sept. 89

'88 STONIER'S MERRICK CABERNET, \$22.50. (5% Merlot, 3% Cab Franc). Medium deep crimson, slight herbaceousness but delightful nose with leafy/berry Cabernet notes. The palate is very elegant with excellent use of wood, a feature of all wines from this maker. Whilst it may appear a touch light to some, the flavours are quite intense and the wine has excellent length on the palate. A very good Peninsula style. M.M.

THE AGE, Tuesday 5 September 1989

## EPICURE

## Taster's guide to the pick of the crop

tions to make wines of the calibre of Garry's elegant cabernet sauvignon, pinot noir and chardonnay.

## Merrick's Estate

A truly memorable occasion to be savored is your first taste of a Merrick's chardonnay. All the ballyhoo surrounding cool-climate wine making somehow seems to fall into place with your first glass (or two), or could it be that good wine is good wine is good wine? Melbourne solicitor George Kefferd and his family would undoubtedly also like you to try their riesling, cabernet and shiraz.

for some indication of what grows well in the area. The verdict is cabernet sauvignon, merlot, chardonnay, riesling and sauvignon blanc. Pinot noir is obviously another story, especially when the cabernet is so enticing.

## Balnarring Vineyard

Bruce and Stan Paul picked the first crop from their 4.5 hectare vineyard in 1985 using the facilities of the Elgee Park Winery. Today, they have their own winery and appear to be at the stage, as are so many Mornington Peninsula vineyards, at which commercial qualities are set to make their name better known.

## Kings Creek

Yet another small vineyard (2.4 hectares) largely unknown and untried. Planted to the modern-day triumvirate of chardonnay, pinot noir and cabernet sauvignon, the Bittern vineyard had its first vintage in 1985, made at Elgee Park and Prince Albert.

## Main Ridge Estate

Small but beautiful, Main Ridge Estate at Red Hill South just cannot seem to put a foot wrong with its chardonnay, pinot noir and cabernet sauvignon. Perhaps it is the deep red, well-drained basalt soil or the man behind the name who has come to earn an enviable reputation among his peers, Nat White. Never one to rush things, he established the vineyard in 1975, planting an acre of new vines each year until it reached six acres (2.5 hectares) in 1981!



## Moorooduc Estate

Dr Ric McIntyre's vineyard has a quiet but growing reputation, something that time and a corresponding increase in quantities can only improve. At present mailing-list customers seem to be receiving most of the spoils of the two-hectare vineyard overlooking Devil Bend Creek. It is planted to chardonnay, pinot noir and cabernet sauvignon ... what else?

## Stonier's Merricks

Where confusion once reigned with two neighboring vineyards using the name "Merricks" prominently, we now have a greater semblance of order with Brian Stonier lending his surname to clear up the problem. Quantities of chardonnay, pinot noir and cabernet sauvignon, while substantial by Mornington Peninsula standards, are still sometimes hard to buy unless you are on the mailing list.

## Elgee Park

As pioneers of the Mornington Peninsula, the Myer family and their various advisers since 1972 have become the oracles to whom most newcomers look



**MORNINGTON** *Late harvest*

## A Garden of Eden

■ Victoria's Mornington Peninsula is one of Australia's up-and-coming winemaking Gardens of Eden. Up-market vineyards, restaurants, pubs and bars, interesting delicatessens and fresh food shops, new resort-cum-golf course complexes, fashionable property developments and new roads (that almost make it possible to get there from Melbourne without losing your cool) are appearing from nowhere.

Wine is integral to the peninsula's change of image. It has brought new life and many more people to the area.

The Mornington Peninsula is perhaps the only one of the major Victorian wine regions (major in terms of vineyard number, not their area or output) not to have a winemaking history last century. About eight hectares of vines were planted before 1900 near Hastings, but little remains of them. In the late forties and fifties, Douglas Seabrook made several vintages from a vineyard planted at the base of Arthur's Seat, but with the inherent viticultural difficulties of a cool, windy region, interest waned and the vineyard was phased out.

The real wine development began in the early seventies when Baillieu Myer was persuaded by David Wynn to convert part of his family's Santa Gertrudis and quarter horse stud to a hobby vineyard, in order to meet the vinous requirements of family and friends. In 1972 a plot of 400 vines was planted on a trial basis. Now with five hectares under vine, it is one of the principal vineyards of the Mornington Peninsula. Its production has increased beyond the Myers' own limits of consumption and as a consequence, Elgee Park wines are now available in restaurants and from the mailing list. But you've got to be quick; their small quantities of Rhine riesling, chardonnay and cabernet merlot are highly prized.

Baillieu Myer's first wines were made in fairly primitive conditions in an old shed on his property by Ian Hickinbotham, whose family has been involved in winemaking in the region from the earliest days. The first rieslings showed only small promise

and the vines were grafted to cabernet sauvignon.

If Elgee Park developed the first vineyard, the credit for the first winery built on the Peninsula goes to Nat and Rosalie White, who began to plant Main Ridge Estate the year they bought it, 1975. Today almost two-and-a-half hectares of cabernet sauvignon, chardonnay and pinot noir are making solid progress beneath the cold winter skies and warm but never excessively hot summer spells of the Peninsula. The first Main Ridge Estate wines were sold in 1981.

Nat White left a career in the Public Works Department to become a full-time vintner. That was in 1983. But the seed for this move was sown in 1965, when a holiday in Europe with Rosalie introduced him to the great wine regions and their generally desirable products.

The Main Ridge wines are a chardonnay, cabernet sauvignon and a pinot noir. The cabernet is particularly elegant and complex with herbaceous and berry-like fruit cleverly balanced with oak and tannin. Main Ridge Pinot Noir is among the best of this variety in Australia, and from what I have seen of the forthcoming vintage, Nat White is getting closer to the mark of a truly great wine.

Garry Crittenden, no relation to the retailers of the same name, is another of the Mornington Peninsula vigneron, although he began later than Elgee Park and Main Ridge. Like a bull at a gate he has made up for lost time, and his label, Dromana Estate, has perhaps become the best-known of the local wineries.

After sampling a Mornington Peninsula wine, quite likely either a Main Ridge Estate or an Elgee Park, and discovering a "freshness and intensity unique in Australia", Garry studied the Peninsula and began planting on his present site, three kilometres from Dromana. Like others, he has opted for chardonnay, pinot noir and a cabernet merlot blend. Occasionally small parcels of merlot are kept separate, and from those I have tried, they are worth hunting out.



*This Victorian peninsula is thriving due mainly to its vineyards; they've fought a cold, windy climate and have won*

Dromana Estate Pinot Noir, like most others of the region, is only made in minute quantities, and like the other Peninsula pinots, it is elegant, supple and spicy, with complex strawberry/cherry characteristics.

Graeme and Jan Pinney planted Rhine riesling and sauvignon blanc at their Karina vineyard, not far from Dromana Estate. The quality of both the wines has surprised several of the region's vigneron, who were more than a little sceptical when the Pinneys first put them into Mornington ground.

The Hickinbotham family has also released a Peninsula Rhine Riesling, grown at St Neot's Estate. The more exciting of the two St Neot's-Hickinbotham wines available is the pinot noir. And another pinot noir to watch is the remarkable Hickinbotham Geelong Pinot Noir.

The Hickinbothams have had much to do with Brian Stonier's Merricks Vineyard, from which I have a soft spot for the Burgundian varieties of pinot noir and chardonnay.

Other exciting wines to watch are the Balnarring Chardonnay — rich and ripe, and the Merricks Estate Shiraz, which approaches the definitive black peppery and spicy style for which Victoria is famous.

With more vineyard development and with Mildara's recent entry into the peninsula, the future looks optimistic. However, there won't exactly be a glut of Mornington wines on the open market, for the stratospheric land prices there and the boutique nature of its operations will always keep quantities small and prices not so small.

Jeremy Oliver



THE AGE, Tuesday 12 September 1989

## EPICURE 5

# Vignerons' guide to food around Victoria

Visiting Victoria's wine-producing regions provides the enthusiast with plenty to taste, sample and buy. But what about food? PAUL TAYLOR toured the regions to discover where the vignerons dine.

### Mornington Peninsula

One of the new breed of vineyard owner and wine maker on the Mornington Peninsula is Brian Stonier, of Stoniers Merrick Vineyard. Brian humbly suggested that he was not really qualified to judge the restaurants in the area, but did recommend Tuerong Estate Vineyard's restaurant.

Gennaro Mazella is the host at Tuerong Estate and his menu is decided by what is fresh and available. The menu is fixed price and the friendly atmosphere combines with the good food and the vineyard's fine wines to provide a memorable time.

The restaurant is licensed and the price is \$70 for two.

**Tuerong Estate Vineyard, Mornington-Flinders Road, Red Hill (059 89 2129).**

★ ★ ★

Nat White is the man behind the exciting wines that are coming from Main Ridge Estate on the peninsula.

He felt the best local eating spots included Bittern Cottage, where Jenny and Noel Burrows both cook in the open kitchen that is so much a part of their cottage-style restaurant. Jenny advises that there is no specific style to their cuisine, but perhaps it is best described as cottage fare.

Homemade soups, smoked trout, casseroles, crepes, etc are examples. The restaurant is BYO and a three-course meal is about \$26 per head.

**Bittern Cottage, Frankston-Flinders Road, Bittern (059 83 9506).**

## GATEHOUSE CELLARS

FINE WINE MERCHANTS

SEPTEMBER, 1989

### THE MORNINGTON PENINSULA 's 1988 VINTAGE

The 1988 vintage on the Mornington Peninsula was close to perfection, with grapes coming in at optimum ripeness and perfect acid levels. The resulting wines are some of the most exciting we have seen from anywhere in Australia, and are a must for your cellar.

#### 1988 MOOROODUC ESTATE CABERNET SAUVIGNON \$18.95

This supple elegant wine is not unlike the Stoniers in structure and flavours. Cherries and mulberries are the pronounced fruit flavours, along with a slight spiciness and herbaceousness that is present on the aroma and on the palate. The tannin is a shade softer which enables it to be drunk now but the acid will ensure its longevity.

#### 1988 MOOROODUC CHARDONNAY \$18.95

An outstanding Chardonnay and easily one of the best we have tasted. The complex flavours on citrus, nuts and figs explode on the palate and, with the subtle oak and lees character an almost Burgundian Chardonnay is the result. Don't miss out on the majestic wine as production from Moorooduc is small and its sells out quickly.

#### 1988 DROMANA ESTATE CABERNET \$20.60

The 1988 Dromana Estate Cabernet Merlot is the most approachable of the 1988 Peninsula Cabernets. It has a soft round delicate structure that enables it to be drunk now. The sweet ripe berry fruit flavours are most appealing and it almost seems a shame to cellar when it is so drinkable.

#### 1988 STONIER'S CABERNET SAUVIGNON \$22.50

The first thing that strikes you is the wonderful aromas of cherry mulberry and tea leaf which literally leap out of the glass. The flavours in the mouth live up to the initial impressions created by the aroma, flavours of berry fruits like cherry and raspberry that linger right to the back of the palate. The acid is well defined, and along with the very fine tannin structure provides the perfect contrast to the fruit.

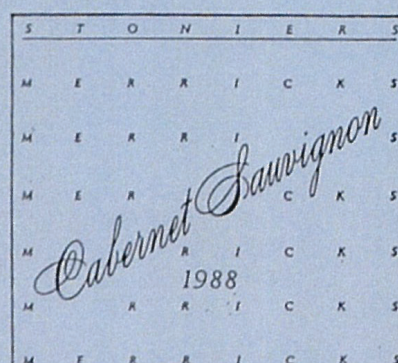
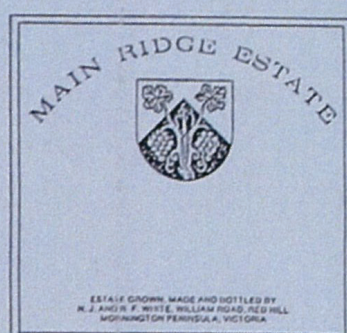
It is an elegant wine with deceptive power that will continue to develop over the next 5 to 8 years.

#### 1988 MAIN RIDGE CABERNET SAUVIGNON \$20.80

Main Ridge has quietly gone along producing excellent wines each year with very little fanfare. The Chardonnay and Pinot Noir released earlier in the year sold out in a few days. The Cabernet which has just been released is outstanding, showing some berry and herbaceous dusty Cabernet fruit flavours. The palate structure is elegant with a fine grained tannin which gives it a firm finish.

#### 1988 MERRICKS ESTATE CHARDONNAY \$21.00

George Kefford's Merricks Estate vineyard adjacent to Brian Stoniers highly acclaimed vineyard produces some very impressive wines. The latest release, the 1988 Chardonnay, has a richness of fruit which reflects the outstanding vintage. Its flavours range from the buttery to tropical fruit and citrus. A powerful full bodied Chardonnay with firm acidity.







# Richmond Hill Pressings



August 89

'88 MAIN RIDGE CABERNET, \$20.70. Main Ridge wines are getting better and better as the vintages progress and the '88 Cabernet is placed firmly in this trend. The wine is not as tight and closed as previous vintages; the fruit was picked at full ripeness and in excellent condition after a terrific summer. The colour is a deep clear ruby with the nose showing more fruit than earlier vintages. Perhaps a combination of the optimum fruit condition and the influence of a significant proportion (for the first time) of a newly planted clone gives softer, fruitier characters to the wine. The structure of the wine stands out on the palate; strong fruit with hints of cool climate greenness overlaid with tannin and acid from the middle onwards. New oak is evident without dominating and the overall wood treatment is good. As with all the reds from the recent vintages here, the wine will not just keep for 5 years, it will develop complexity and improve greatly, at least over that period. This capacity to develop, which is made into these wines, is now starting to show in the '85 and '86 Pinots and the '84 and '85 Cabernets which were tasted recently. If you can lay your hands on one or more, and, had a chance to see them at release, you will know what I mean. Overall, a top quality cool climate Cabernet with many years ahead of it.

*These notes come from a customer who wishes to remain anonymous, whose opinion*

## RICHMOND HILL CELLARS J.F.

'88 DROMANA ESTATE CABERNET MERLOT, \$20.55. Brilliant dark purple colour (which is typical of the area in a good year) - complex aromas of Cassis, blackberry and excellent oak. A long, elegant palate with great depth of flavour and nice tannins on finish. Delightful drinking now but would benefit from 2-3 years in the cellar. It got 5 stars in the recent Small Winemakers Exhibition.

J.F.

## The Doings

By JENI PORT

THE AGE, Tuesday 10 October 1989

## EPICURE 5

**I**F you have a taste for the wines of the Mornington Peninsula at the recent Exhibition of Victorian Winemakers (or if you missed out with the three-deep queues), here is another opportunity to savor their delights.

The fifth annual Peninsula Wine and Food Festival dinner will be held at The

Briars, Mount Martha, on Saturday 11 November at 7.30 pm.

Channel 2 newsreader/weatherman/personality Edwin Maher will be this year's guest speaker. Wines featured will be mostly from the excellent '88 vintage — Elgee Park chardonnay, Dromana Estate cabernet/merlot, Moorooduc Estate cabernet, Main Ridge cabernet sauvignon and Balnarring Vineyard 1985 rhine riesling, Kings Creek 1987 chardonnay and Hickinbotham St Neots 1989 semillon. A selection well worth the cost of \$60 a head (plus some "delicious" food).

Tickets are available individually or in tables of eight and can be ordered by sending a cheque to the Peninsula Wine and Food Festival c/o Post Office, Balnarring, 3926. For further information contact (059) 71 1108.

**A**MONG Elgee Park Wines' new releases is a 1989 viognier, one of the world's rarest grape varieties and a white wine of considerable charm. Baillieu Myer is rightly proud of the first release of his "exclusive" varietal (well, almost since I know of at least one other who planted it only to see it fail) with its enticing bouquet of spring flowers and stone fruits.

A wine of deceptively simple qualities right now, I feel it probably has the capacity of "doing" a marsanne, gaining complexity with age although unlike marsanne's aggressive young nature, viognier has a delicate structure.

A quick reference to Jancis Robinson's 'Vines, Grapes and Wines' (Mitchell Beazley) indicates this could be the case. "Viognier produces full-bodied, golden wines with a haunting and tantalisingly elusive bouquet," she writes. "Soft yet strong — it sounds dangerously like a brand of toilet paper — (her words not mine) viognier works a magic of its own."

The grape is by and large limited to the northern end of the Rhone Valley in France and its minute yields produce depressingly small quantities. Something obviously shared by its Australian counterpart planted at Merricks North since Elgee Park has decided to release the wine in half bottles. A gift pack of two half bottles of '89 viognier is given with the purchase of two packs of 12 wines or more. Not an entirely horrible thought given the quality of the new release '88 chardonnay, '89 rhine riesling and '87 cabernet/merlot.

THE AGE, Tuesday 24 October 1989

## EPICURE 7



Nouveau

By MARK SHIELD

Elgee Park chardonnay 1988

★★★★POA

I've just had a glimpse at the fifth dimension! What a wine! About 20 years from reaching its full potential, 14 per cent alcohol by volume, assertive new

oak, a depth of fruit like the Marais trench and rush of acid like the Mistral. The wine transcends food, expect it to gain a star in a decade's time. For information regarding supplies contact, the manager, Elgee Park, Merricks North 3926 (059) 89 7338.



THE FLYER, November 1989 - PAGE 3

## Vineyard wins state award

When former nurseryman Garry Crittenden decided to change jobs and become a viticulturist little did he realise that within seven years he would win one of Victoria's most prestigious awards.

"I'd always been a wine connoisseur so in 1982 I took the plunge and planted 10 acres in grapes along Harrison's road, Dromana," said Mr. Crittenden.

Mr. Crittenden's gamble has certainly paid off and he was thrilled to win the "Victorian Vineyard of the Year" award at the Victorian wine show held at Seymour last week.

His Dromana Estate winery, thus became only the second recipient of the award, which was introduced by the Department of Agriculture and Rural Affairs last year. The inaugural winner was Tisdalls of Swan Hill.

"The award, sponsored by Australian Airlines is decided by the government," said Mr. Crittenden.

Judging is based on productivity, business planning, marketing planning and image.

It is not necessary for the vineyard to be associated with a winery but much to Mr. Crittenden's delight his skills as a vintner were also well rewarded.

The Dromana Estate won a gold medal for its 1989 Sauvignon Blanc; two silvers for its 1988 & 1989 Cabernet and a bronze for its 1989 Pinot Noir at the show.

"For a small vineyard we are very proud of our results," said Mr. Crittenden. The Dromana Estate is a two man affair with Scott Ireland assisting Mr. Crittenden. There are about 15 Vineyards on the Peninsula now with the numbers growing every year.

"The climate and soil are perfect for the grape growing and I'm sure our success will act as a spur to the area," said Mr. Crittenden.

Dromana Estate bottles



2000 boxes of wine a year but hopes to increase to 3000 within a couple of years when it will be at peak capacity.

There are a dozen bottles to a box, mainly Cabernet with a small amount of Chardonnay.

Unfortunately the Es-

tate is not open to the public. "We are only a small operation and cannot afford the time. However we do have a mailing list which potential customers can inquire about by writing to us," said Mr. Crittenden. Dromana Es-

tate wines are sold through bottle shops and are available in restaurants. "It has been a real challenge moving into a new industry but with winning the award and also exporting to England as well as

all over Australia, it's been very rewarding. "We plan to keep our operation small so we can concentrate on quality," he concluded. To get on the mailing list, write to Dromana Estate, P.O. Box 332, Mornington, 3931.

THE INDEPENDENT, Tuesday, December 5, 1989

## Top wine awards to the peninsula

VIGNERONS on the Mornington Peninsula are currently celebrating the winning of several trophies and gold medals awarded at recent wine shows.

The awards were made at the Orrefors/Australian Airlines Victorian Wine Show at Seymour and the Lilydale Agricultural & Horticultural Society Wine Show conducted early in November.

Both functions are highly regarded wine shows with awards being keenly sought by many Victorian vineyards. This year the Mornington Peninsula vigneron cap-

tured a disproportionately high percentage of the spoils with two-thirds of all local wines entered receiving either gold, silver or bronze medal awards.

Two trophies for the best red table wine and the best varietal red wine at Seymour went to Merricks Estate with their '88 Shiraz.

This outstanding wine was also awarded the Gwyn Jones trophy for the best Mornington Peninsula wine at Lilydale.

Another top trophy award at Lilydale for the best Chardonnay of the

show was won by R. Creek Vineyard of Tern for their superb made '89 Chardonnay.

Dromana Estate took out the highly prestigious Australian Airlines 'Vineyard of the Year' award as well as winning gold for their current vintage Pinot Noir.

Other gold medal awards went to Elgee Park of Merricks North for their '88 Chardonnay and Karina Vineyard Dromana for their current vintage Cabernet Sauvignon. Moorooduc Estate scooped the pool by winning two golds at both shows with their 1988 and current vintage Cabernet Sauvignon wines.

With consistently strong results every year there would seem to be little doubt that given the climate and soils we possess combined with the local vigneron's dedication to quality that the Mornington Peninsula area is capable of producing wines rating second to none on the Australian and International wine scene.

THE AGE, Tuesday 7 November 1989

The Ninth Orrefors-Australian Airlines Victorian Wine Show was conducted at Seymour from the 26th to 28th of October.

### AWARDS:

Orrefors Aust. Ltd.

Best Sparkling Wines.

Goulburn Valley Wine Association

Best Fortified Dessert Wine

Harvest Products

Best Pinot Noir Wine

Glass Pak

Best Varietal White

Corks & Seals

Best Varietal Red

Liquid Air Australia

Best Table Wine — White

Victorian Wine Centre

Best Table Wine — Red

Australian Airlines

Vineyard of the Year

Tisdalls Wines

Goulburn Region — Strathbogie

All Saints Estate

Wahgunyah Region — Rutherglen

Yarra Ridge Vineyards

Yarra Glen Region — Yarra

Best Wines Pty. Ltd.

Great Western Region — Great Western

Merricks Estate

Merricks Region — Peninsula

Mitchelton Vintners

Mitchellstown Region — Goulburn

Merricks Estate

Merricks Region — Peninsula

Dromana Estate Vineyards

Dromana Region — Peninsula

Also sponsored by Flag International

## VICTORIAN WINES SHOW



### JUDGING AWARDS

SATURDAY 28th OCTOBER 1989

Committees of the Orrefors Australian Airlines Victorian Wine Show are grateful to sponsors and trophy donors and wish to thank the exhibitors for their continued support.



Page 8 - The Mornington Mail, Thursday, November 24, 1988

# Wine makers get the taste of gold medals

WINES from Mornington Peninsula have defeated wines from all over Australia to win three of the seven gold medal awards at this year's Royal Hobart Wine Show.

The Peninsula wines dominated the 1988 Vintage Pinot Noir classes against some of the finest reds produced in Australia.

Two of the three gold medals went to wines from Garry Crittenden's Dromana Estate.

The third was won by Nat White's 1988 Pinot Noir from his Main Ridge Estate - a wine which had already won gold at the Lilydale Show the previous week.

Said Garry Crittenden, who founded Crittenden's Nursery in Mt Eliza 20 years ago: "I see the Hobart result as clear evidence of the judges' endorsement of the quality and stylishness of Peninsula wines."

"The Mornington Peninsula Pinot are adding lustre to the increasingly high regard in which Peninsula wines are held," he said.

Mr Crittenden described the Peninsula's domination of the Pinot classes as "overwhelming" considering that only seven gold medals were awarded from more than 60 entries - from all wine growing regions around Australia.

The Dromana Estate 1988 Pinot Noir will be released next March while his other winning Pinot, Schinus Molle, made at Dromana Estate from fruit grown at two other Peninsula vineyards, is already available at selected stockists.

"We believe Peninsula people are getting right behind their local product. Certainly these wines are something in which all Peninsula residents should feel a sense of pride," said an obviously delighted Mr Crittenden.

• Garry Crittenden tests his latest vintage in the laboratory of his peninsula winery.



THE AGE, Tuesday 21 November 1989

**I**t is fitting that former nurseryman Garry Crittenden, a man blessed with 10 green fingers (not including his toes!), should take out this year's Victorian Vineyard of the Year Award.

His Dromana Estate property on the Mornington Peninsula is a picture-postcard example of beauty and functional design, and, as the judges at the recent Orrefors Victorian Wine Show discovered, he also knows how to run a business.

The judges found Garry "demonstrated clear mastery of both technical and management aspects. He has a thorough control of planning and operation of his business, an aspect extremely critical for on-going success in this industry".

## AMATEUR SECTION

Most Successful Exhibitor  
Mac Stewart Memorial

Des Blackman

Tom Tehan Trophy  
Best Grape Wine White  
Harry Friend

Directors Trophy

Best Non Grape Wine

Angus Harding

Dara/Seymour Agricultural and  
Pastoral Society

Best Grape Wine Red

David Anderson

## VINEYARD OF THE YEAR.

An increased entry for this award highlights a greater recognition of the vineyard as the foundation for great wines.

The top entries demonstrated a clear commitment to excellence in quality and productivity. A common feature of these entrants was their clear understanding of market requirements, a well developed business plan and superior resource management.

Dromana Estate, the winning entrant, was considered to be the hallmark for excellence in smaller vineyards.

Garry Crittenden, its proprietor, demonstrated clear mastery of both technical and management aspects. He has a thorough control of planning and operation of his business, an aspect extremely critical for ongoing success in this industry.

The Committee of the Victorian Wines Show are grateful to the sponsors and trophy donors and wish to thank the exhibitors for their continued support.

THE LEADER, Wednesday November 1, 1989 - Page 5

# Winning with wining ways

By DINA MONKS

GARRY Crittenden's Dromana Estate winery has been named Victorian Vineyard of the Year.

The award was made at the Orrefors Victorian Wine Show last week.

A delighted Mr Crittenden said this week that the award, announced at a dinner at Mitchelton Winery to mark the end of the wine show, topped off a very successful year for Dromana Estate.

"To add the prestigious Vineyard of the Year Award to our credentials is something very special for us," Mr Crittenden said.

## Multiple winner

Dromana Estate was also the winner of one gold, two silver and one bronze awards at the show.

Garry Crittenden established the Dromana Estate vineyard only seven years ago. Its first vintage was in 1984.

He attributes the vineyard's swift rise to success partly to his 25 years' experience in horticulture and viticulture.

In 1968, he established Crittenden's Nursery on the Mornington Peninsula and it quickly developed a reputation for innovation in plant production techniques and plant hygiene.



AWARD winner Garry Crittenden brings in the harvest early this year at his Dromana Estate vineyard.

His vineyard is renowned for neatness and the pristine condition of the winery.

Dromana Estate produces about 2000 cases a year, made up mainly of a blend of Cabernet and Merlot grapes. Small amounts of Chardonnay and Pinot Noir are also made.

Next year, production should reach 3000 cases.

Mr Crittenden also runs a viticultural consultancy with Ian Macrae, called Vitinational Pty Ltd, and they provide professional services to the grape-growing industry all over Australia, and especially in Tasmania.

On a trip to the earlier this year, he saw there was great interest in Australian wines, especially the "small quantity, high quality" boutique wines.

The Vineyard of the Year Award is sponsored by Australian Airline and the Orrefors Victorian Wine Show.



THE HERALD WEDNESDAY MAGAZINE OCTOBER 25, 1989

## Mornington's grape promise



**CAMPBELL THOMSON** looks at the offerings of the Mornington Peninsula

**G**RAPES were planted in the Mornington Peninsula last century when wine from the Yarra Valley was winning prizes in Europe.

Since the first new plantings in 1972, the area has attracted attention as a premium "cool-climate" wine-making area.

According to Nat White, of Main Ridge Estate, the area is yet to realise its full potential. "Grapes have been picked early to avoid losing too much of the crop to birds. With increased use of netting, this won't be necessary," he said.

White thinks that the Yarra Valley is producing lots of good cabernet, so that the Mornington winemakers should try to produce distinctive chardonnays and pinots. Time will tell.

Karina Estate's Graham Pinney left the real estate world and planted his vines next door to Dromana Estate in 1984. With John Ellis as consultant, he makes riesling, sauvignon blanc and a cabernet merlot blend. Both the newly bottled '89 whites tasted a little unripe and lacked varietal character. Pinney says he would prune more vigorously this year to achieve more concentration.

The red (95 per cent cabernet) is still in new Nevers oak. It exhibits ripe cherry-purple color with berry and eucalypt aromas and well-rounded flavors on the front of the palate. It has 11.7 per cent alcohol by volume and will stay in wood until the middle of next year, eventually retailing for about \$17. It shows that Karina Estate may eventually attain the standards of its better-known neighbor.

Gary Crittenden, at Dromana Estate, is a fanatical viticulturalist, adamant that good wine is made in the vineyard. Walking among the vines in the shallow sandy loam over clay soil, we examine the different pruning techniques employed.

The split-canopy style, pioneered by Carbonnieux in the Entre-deux-Mers area in Bordeaux, is used with the chardonnay to give the fruit more exposure to sunlight. It is a labor-intensive and costly method but produces bigger flavors. With red grapes, the extra sunlight produces more anthocyanins, which provide the intense bright red-purple colors. Sunlight also helps decrease the proportion of undesirable malic acid.

As well as making wine from grapes grown at Dromana, Crittenden blends fruit from different areas under the Schinus Mollie label. The 1989 Schinus Mollie Sauvignon Blanc comes from a

tank just sparged, or sprayed, with nitrogen to remove any carbon dioxide. Consequently, the palate is a bit flat, but he assures us that the gooseberry and passionfruit aromas will follow through on the palate in a month or so.

The 1989 Dromana Chardonnay, out of a Dargaud and Jaegle barrel, is fresh, clean and lean in style but as yet ungenerous to my palate, which prefers bigger flavors. The 1988 Dromana Pinot Noir is pale cherry in color with a sappy tobacco nose. It does not have the Bannockburn farmyard character and tends towards a light aromatic style.

The 1989 merlot out of the cask is rich in color, which Crittenden attributes to the split canopy pruning, plum and mulberry aromas and a soft ripe palate. It will be blended with the cabernet, which is even more brilliant in color with a cassis, herbaceous nose and a gentle, complex palate. A wine to look forward to in a few years.

Dan Greene took over as winemaker at Elgee Park before the 1989 vintage. He has the robust attitude to wine he used to show in rugby rucks as a schoolboy but acknowledges that the 1989 vintage was a difficult one, with rain during ripening and picking.

The riesling is pale and floral, light with a little residual sugar. Not a bad wine for the vintage. The wood-fermented chardonnay is in a mixture of Alliers, Vosges and Nevers oak barrels, sitting on yeast lees which are stirred once a week. Greene thinks that the grapes, picked at 12.9 deg. Baume, were not quite ripe enough compared with the 1988. The first sample we taste is from two-year-old oak. Still cloudy in appearance, without much on the nose as yet, it is still full, rich and long on the palate. The second sample, from new Nevers oak from Seguin-Moreau, is more aggressive and leesy in flavor. A third, from new Allier oak, is more austere and very leesy.

**T**HE 1988 chardonnay, on current release at \$19 a bottle, is a lovely toasty wine with lots of nuts and butter and glycerol on the nose. The wood and fruit are in good balance on the palate. A big-hearted complex wine.

The 1989 merlot is good blending material: extracted and stalky with up-front berry fruit. The cabernet franc, also for blending, is lighter in color and grassy in flavor. The first tank sample of the cabernet sauvignon is medium light with some good fruit flavor. It will be lifted by the year it spends in oak, but probably not to the level of the Dromana cabernet.

A second tank sample, which had spent three months on the skins, was picked a week later. It has riper fruit and some good soft tannins. It will not be as good as the 1988 red, which is 90 per cent cabernet sauvignon.

The current release 1987 blend of 70 per cent cabernet sauvignon, 16 per cent merlot and 14 per cent cabernet franc is a lesser wine from a wet year. Quite a big wine at 14 per cent alcohol by volume, it is ready to drink now. There is some sweet fruit and tobacco on the nose and more astringency on the palate than the '88.

15 November 1989

THE AGE

## Casked out on peninsula

**A**S if there weren't enough pests: bunch mite, black spot, apple moth, long-tailed mealy bug, downy mildew, powdery mildew, botrytis cinerea, birds of every description. We heard the most horrid of them all this week. Australian wine consumption down 7.3 per cent.

One can only hope that the dampening of enthusiasm is for low-quality cask wines, and that those who love the grape still have their noses quivering, looking for the finest quality.

We live on the Mornington Peninsula, and out our way the vignerons have few self-doubts. In the old days, peninsula simply meant holiday, camping at Rosebud, or, for the nice people in Toorak and South Yarra, come December the entire population moved to their houses in Portsea and Sorrento.

The high slopes were good for apples and raising chooks. Later there was a switch to Herefords. Not so any more. The peninsula is gaining a new reputation. If you don't have rows of pinot, chardonnay or cabernet in the bottom paddock, you are nowhere.

What is happening is nigh unbelievable. The secretary of the Mornington Peninsula Vignerons Association, Mr Brian Stonier, tells us that five years ago there were less than 20 vineyards on the peninsula, three years ago it was creeping up to 40 and now it is about 90, with an expansion rate around 50 per cent in the past year.

If you travel along such roads as Ocean View Road or Red Hill and cast an eye out yonder, it looks like Burgundy. Sir Peter Derham, for example, is putting in eight hectares. Mostly they are boutique vineyards, a grand total of around 80 hectares. There are maybe half-a-dozen full-time professional growers, the rest are school teachers, engineers, dentists, doctors and lots of solicitors.

The theory used to be that after a busy week at the office one would retire to the peninsula for relaxation, a little boating and fishing. Now the citizens work at peasant labor from dawn to dark wine producing, ultimately to return to the office on Monday for sleep.

The dream is that on the peninsula, with its good soil and cool climate, they can create a mini-Bordeaux. But it is extraordinary that the boom is taking place in what is a luxury area and establishment costs start at more than \$20,000 a hectare.

Ah, but the vines are pretty to see and what people don't realise is this. Melbourne is becoming a wine city, ringed by three wine areas all producing wine of outstanding quality, the Yarra Valley, Geelong and the Mornington Peninsula.

On Saturday was the fifth annual Peninsula Wine and Food Fest, an event that has become so popular you have to book months ahead, and the organisation for which is the equivalent to planning the launch of a space shuttle.

The dinner raises money for St Paul's School, Frankston, and it takes place in a huge marquee at the old Briars Homestead. The guests have to work their way gently through seven local peninsula wines. On Saturday they started with Stan Paul's superb Bannockburn Vineyard 1985 Rhine Riesling. They then moved through a range of lovely chardonnays, including Baillieu Myer's rich Elgee Park wine, to Garry Crittenden's Dromana cabernet merlot and Rick McIntyre's Moorooduc cabernet. They

Keith

Dunstan



finished triumphantly with Nat White's Main Ridge Estate cabernet.

It is always tricky working out how much wine you need for 350 people. The rule of thumb is one bottle a head. Rosalie White recalls that one year they were in terrible danger of running out of wine. But, there was an easy solution. The master of ceremonies announced that there was a rumor afoot that the booze bus was waiting at the front gate. It solved the problem immediately.

There are 90 parents and teachers involved in the organisation. The school principal, Mr Ian McMillan, as a humble waiter, works non-stop all night carting dishes. Diana, his wife, is a kitchen maid.

The headmaster of the junior school, Mr Peter Wilson, cooks all the meat with the assistance of the head of the senior school, Mr



Brian Henderson. On Saturday they barbecued gigantic slabs of locally grown porterhouse. Last year it was lamb, and Peter Wilson's recipe for 350 serves of marinade is famous on the peninsula — take three kilos of butter, 100 cloves of garlic, four litres of orange juice, six kilos of marmalade, 200 teaspoons of mint and 100 teaspoons of oregano. Stir well.

**T**HE strawberries came from Sunnyridge Farm and Jenny Burrows, of Bittern Cottage, made the strawberry ice cream. Lesley Lovell, another St Paul's mother, made the chocolates, 720 of them, taking her entire mini-series of 'Bangkok Hilton' to do so. She couldn't look at the screen, but had the volume turned up.

The balloons were a serious matter. It is a terrible thing to be confronted with 850 party balloons that have to be inflated. Mike Green, another parent, said they first used a compressor that would not blow hard enough, and then another that blew too hard. Eventually, it took 12 boys six hours to get all those balloons inflated.

Yes, we mentioned that there were few self-doubts on the peninsula. We were told that at the recent Lilydale and Seymour shows, peninsula wines picked up five of the 11 trophies for which they were eligible.

Indeed Herman Schneider, of Delgany's Two Faces restaurant at Portsea, has donated the Delgany Cup. He is keen to organise a competition, a taste off, to see which local area is producing the finest wine. So far the response from Lilydale has been slow, so there may be a battle sip for sip against Geelong.



THE AGE, Tuesday 21 November 1989

EPICURE 2

# Taste of Italy on the Peninsula

Picture: MICHAEL CLAYTON-JONES



## Dining

By RITA ERLICH

**T**HERE is wine in the cellar, and food on the table, and the table is in the barn, and the barn is in the vineyard, and the vineyard is in the bush, and the bush is on a hill. The restaurant that is part of the Tuerong Estate vineyard has an ancient simplicity about it.

This is the sort of eating place that causes too many Australian food writers abroad to wax lyrical for feature after feature. They recall magical meals in Tuscany or in Normandy or in Provence, and the sub-text of all their praise is a complaint that such places do not exist in Australia.

But they do. Late last year Genaro Mazella and Gwen Riggs set up a restaurant that was based on all Genaro's experiences of Italian Sunday family meals, the meals where everyone sits around the same table and eats whatever produce the land and the sea have provided that day, that week, that season. Genaro Mazella is the host and chef here, and he cooks a different menu for each sitting. There is one menu for all, devised according to what is available and according to the food preferences of the guests.

When you ring to book places at the single rectangular table in the barn that is also the kitchen, you will be asked if there is anything you do not or cannot eat. When you arrive, you are shown the handwritten menu and asked if the choice of food suits you.

On the wall of the barn hang some stone plaques which Genaro found in Italy. Four of the plaques depict the four seasons, and the fifth shows the Last Supper, and all those carvings provide a kind of model for what he has set up. The message is about a shared table and food in season, but the Last Supper carries a hidden warning. Shared tables — if you will forgive the mixed metaphor — make for strange bedfellows.

We were asked, as everyone is, to arrive half-an-hour before the meal. "Come at 7.30, we eat at 8." The idea is that people arrive, have a chance to enjoy a drink, wander around through the vines, choose their wines from the cellar, and admire (perhaps even buy) some of the excellent preserves and jams that Genaro makes and stores in the cellar. The earlier arrival gives diners a chance to become acquainted before they sit down together at the table together, and it gives everyone the opportunity to consider what wines to order.

Tuerong Estate is at Red Hill on the Mornington Peninsula, and in addition to the bottles of wine available from the cellar, there is a selection of half a dozen Mornington Peninsula wines available by the glass. The wines are excellent, and the range enables diners to choose wines suitable for each course.



Genaro Mazella who brings a regional style from Italy, but it's best to BYO (bring your own friends).

When the vineyard starts producing its own wine, there will be house wines as well.

This was the menu for our Saturday night meal: antipasto, followed by steamed artichoke hearts, followed by spaghetti with calamari and sand crab. Then there was an asparagus salad, followed by Butterfields cheddar and newly picked strawberries, and there were stuffed figs served with coffee. It was a meal entirely in the Italian style, and in the style of the Mazella family's home province of Ischia.

With the sherry that was served as an aperitif, we were offered bowls of mixed nuts and seeds, some olives, and little squares of newly baked pizza. The antipasto platters consisted of eggplant, home-preserved in two ways, grilled red peppers, olives, home-pickled artichoke hearts, fat slices of salami and fresh broad beans to be shelled and eaten with the salami. Baskets of freshly baked bread were set on the table for all of us to help ourselves.

Here beginneth the first lesson. The first lesson was that approach to food does not suit everyone, and that not everyone will answer a direct question about what foods they do not eat, and that not everyone will read a menu set for them. There were seven of us at the table that night, and there would be at least six different accounts of the meal; some of them would be so different that it would be hard to believe we all shared the same meal and table.

The woman seated opposite me was very unhappy about it all. She complained that the antipasto was full of salty things, and she scarcely ate salt at home. She took a slice of bread, looked around, nudged her husband, and asked for butter. He asked Genaro for butter, in a little pastiche of the A. A. Milne poem about the King's Breakfast (The

King asked the Queen, and the Queen asked the dairymaid, "Could we have some butter for the Royal slice of bread?"). The answer was "No". This was an Italian meal, said Genaro, and it was not the Italian habit to serve butter with bread at meal-times. There was no butter. The woman thrust her slice of bread at her husband, saying that he knew she could not eat bread without butter. Then she had a bright idea, went to get the jar of marmalade she had bought earlier, and settled down to bread and marmalade after her scraps from the antipasto platter.

Mark my words. Butter is going to replace well-done steak as an issue between diners and chefs, and will become a symbol of a restaurant's alleged inhospitality.

Two big white bowls filled with artichokes cooked with garlic, wine and olive oil were then set on the table. The woman shook her head, and said that she could not abide artichokes. "Artichokes and figs, I just can't eat them." I thought gloomily of the menu.

The artichokes were wonderful, for those who liked them. Genaro Mazella had warned us against drinking red wine with artichokes, and advised a glass of sauvignon blanc, which is the only wine I have ever encountered that can stand up to that vegetable.

We ate, we drank, we talked of this and that, and the woman who did not eat salt or artichokes or figs said that she liked Italian food, "spaghetti and all that". Well, the spaghetti that followed had a rich tomato sauce with rings of tender calamari and half a sandcrab that a local fisherman had brought to the restaurant earlier in the day. The crab was exquisite, although it was an extraordinarily messy dish to eat — it was coated with the sauce that covered

the spaghetti, and our faces and hands were as messy as if we had been sucking at a mango stone. (There were big bowls of water on the table in which to rinse our hands.) The woman was saved the trouble, because she did not like crab. I did not notice if she liked pouring olive oil and vinegar from jugs to dress the cooked asparagus.

The cheddar was served on wooden boards, and the strawberries, unhulled, in big glass footed bowls. It all looked lovely, and tasted marvellous. So did the stuffed figs that came with coffee. They had been briefly macerated in marsala, and were stuffed with a roasted hazelnut and some orange rind. The woman who could not bear artichokes or figs fell asleep at the table.

The Tuerong Estate restaurant is an ideal place for those who really like their food, and it is an ideal place for strangers to become friends for a few hours, bonded by the pleasures of a good meal. But the model of a family table also has its drawbacks, as all family tables do. Which of us has a family, extended or nuclear, where everyone eats everything, and where everyone is delighted by the company? We cannot choose our families, and neither can we always choose our company. At its best, a meal at Tuerong Estate would be a shining example of the shared pleasures of the table. Perhaps, to ensure that it is at its best, diners should think of it as a BYO. Bring Your Own Friends, that is.

**TUERONG ESTATE VINEYARD AND RESTAURANT**, Mornington-Flinders Road, Red Hill. Tel. (059) 89 2129. Licensed. Open: Friday-Sunday for lunch at 12.30pm, Friday-Sunday for dinner at 7.30pm. Cards: AE BC DC MC V. Seats: 30. Owners: Genaro Mazella & Gwen Riggs. Chef: Genaro Mazella. Cost: \$74 for two, plus drinks.





## CHARDONNAY

Schinus Moll, 1988,  
(Note: 20% Peninsula,  
80% McLaren Vale:  
Domana Estate Winery.)

Average score out of 10 points: 7.7

"Colour — Good light gold and pale straw, clear and bright and deep. Bouquet — fresh oak very evident, fruit somewhat subdued. Taste — youthful prickly acidity, a fresh firm chardonnay, lovely fleshy mouthfeel — a good ager."

— Christoph Zleinhenz (8.3)

"A pale, slight green caste, very bright colour, a very good intensity of fruit on bouquet — buttery style. Some development already, a bit forward, but well supported with wood. The bouquet isn't let down on the palate. Fruit maybe not as buttery as one would expect from the nose, but finer and a long flavour completes a very attractive wine."

— Norman Tranter (6.3)

"Still pale, but good colour for the age, good bouquet; elegant and

fragrant, soft and nutty (perhaps cashews) — on the palate the best so far — a lot of flavour and complexity and weight. Most varietal so far — more like a French Burgundy; elegant yet intense. Would buy this one. Some excitement about it — it's alive."

— Walter Solowiej (7.3)

"Good exciting chardonnay nose — I do enjoy such a welcome to a wine. (Why is there no such chardonnay on the market?) Best bouquet to date. Heaps of fruit here. HOORAY! Nice fine acid giving wine fruit excellent lift and complimented with intelligent use of wood. I enjoy this style. Will improve with some ageing — say one to two years."

— Nick Galante (8.0)

Hickinbotham, Cotton  
Springs, 1988,  
Mornington Peninsula.

Average Score out of 10 points: 6.7

"The best of the chardonnays in my opinion — volume and strength of bouquet both good, excellent impact on entry, very even flavour right through middle palate to firm dry finish with a

touch of astringency . . . very stylish."

— Frank Wilden (8.8)

"A young, crisp nose, very clean — some good fruit. Cool climate 'style' once again. Good oak and fruit and spicy — Portuguese oak perhaps? Lacking integration at this stage, fuller in style than some of the Yarra wines. Needs time to integrate and will develop."

— Rodney Garnham (6.0)

St. Huberts, 1986,  
Yarra Valley

Average Score out of 10 points: 6.7

"Bright, deeper gold colour than the others, bouquet not intense (somewhat closed), a light fruitiness. A well-made wine, fruitiness right there at front to finish, lovely clean acid and oak . . . quite a delicious wine."

— Christoph Kleinhenz (7.8)

"Some development evident in the fruit. Wood adds to the complexity and results in a rather attractive nose. Richer flavour than most others, the flavour is

long with good acid. Still room for more development."

— Norman Tranter (6.0)

"Wine shows complexity on the nose — sweetly and finely scented — I like it! Fruit is high class; full-bodied without being robust. Wine is in balance and I am impressed with obvious fruit character. My style of chardonnay with good fruit and complexity as a result of sensible use of wood. Elegant wine."

— Nick Galante (7.3)

Main Ridge Estate, 1986,  
Mornington Peninsula

Average Score out of 10 points: 6.3

"This is my favourite of all the chardonnays — a real balance at initial impression, to a very pleasing (dry) finish."

— Jan Rogers (9.0)

"Quite natural bouquet: light melon fruit, a little oak revealed — slightly yeasty, barrel fermented character. A rich middle palate showing some complexity and a very good finish."

— Phillip Barker (8.2)

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**CABERNET SAUVIGNON**

Oakridge Estate, 1986.  
Yarra Valley

Average score out of 10 points: 8.7  
"Very intense black/red, slight hint of development. Excellent complex bouquet of ripe, leafy cabernet 'fruit currants' with lovely new oak. Excellent attack on entry, beautiful middle palate, very even long flavour with beautifully rounded ripe tannin finish.

— Frank Wilden (9.5)

"Deep red — shows little bottle age development. Appealing bouquet. Lovely sweet ripe fruit. Would like just a little more acidity. Drinking very well now with good depth of fruit. Good medium-bodied cabernet. Drink now or put away. Outstanding fruit — excellent balance — finishes very well. Best cabernet to date."

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— Nick Galante (8.7)

"Crimson/purple, slight browning. Perfumed black cherry, leafy nose. Complex. Superb blackcurrant, small fruits flavour. Beautifully balanced and integrated. Very very good . . . a great wine."

— Rodney Garnham (8.7)

Main Ridge, 1986,  
Mornington Peninsula

Average score out of 10 points: 7.9

"Good depth of colour, pleasing cabernet berry fruit nose, delicious fruity wine with good acidity and balance. Nice warm mouth feel."

— Christoph Kleinhenz (8.1)

"Medium weight colour, some development obvious. Lovely nose, obvious ripe fruit, good oak, excellent volume/intensity. Lovely wine, good attack, even plush. Ripe fruit ending with a crisp dry

soft tannin, not very complex but delicious to drink."

— Frank Wilden (8.7)

"Deep red. Bouquet ripe and rich, herbaceous. Outstanding rich, ripe, delicious cabernet. Enjoy level of tannin in this wine. Soft. Drink Now! and will keep. Speaks heaps for this region's future. Queue up!!"

— Nick Galante (8.7)

St. Huberts, 1985,  
Yarra Valley

Average score out of 10 points: 7.2

"Ruby red. Good nose; leafy, fairly complex. Good depth, nice fruit and well balanced. A good to very good wine requiring more time to gain complexity."

— Rodney Garnham (6.2)

"Oak and acid harmony on nose — spicy wood. Very good fruit

flavours on middle palate and length. Acid/fruit/oak/tannin balance. I like this wine very much. Well done."

— Phillip Barker (8.4)

Yeringberg, 1987,  
Yarra Valley

Average score out of 10 points: 7.0

"Deep purple, alive, very good colour. Strongly varietal, stalky but very pleasant on the nose. Elegant and intense. Too stalky at this stage but will develop well. Nice wine — I like it."

— Walter Solowiej (7.5)

"Medium to dense, purple at the rim of the glass. A herbaceous cabernet on nose, perhaps simple. Good cabernet flavours, lots of fine wood tannin should come together well. Medium length, fresh flavours. A very good wine."

— Norman Tranter (7.3)



### PINOT NOIR

**Coldstream Hills, 1988, Yarra Valley**

Average score out of 10 points: 7.4

"Brilliant dark cherry red of very good weight. A very lifted aroma redolent of red stone-fruits and new oak. Excellent strength and impact; clearly defined flavours, good texture, a lovely wine."

— Frank Wilden (8.7)

"Deep cherry purple, somewhat opaque. Big, bouncy fruity nose — extremely pleasing. Delicious fruitiness, well-balanced and clean wine. This is an excellent example of what can be done with good pinot fruit. Should develop well."

— Christoph Kleinhenz (8.5)

**Hickinbotham, St. Neots, 1988, Mornington Peninsula**

Average score out of 10 points: 7.0

"A very good example of a young pinot. Sweet spicy fruit on the nose, very attractive sweet fruit on the middle palate which is sustained in length and good acid/tannin balance. Very good ageing possibilities."

— Phillip Barker (7.7)

"Rich bouquet, on palate needs a little more time to come together, but will be an excellent wine. Wood dominating at present but will integrate in due course. Nice fine acidity. Yes — I do like! The ripe fruit is there."

— Nick Galante (8.2)

"Dense black-red colour, excellent intensity. Some open-knit fruit characters (partial carbonic maceration?) Big chewy style, deeply flavoured plummy style of wine. Plenty of depth and length with a very firm dry tannin finish. Very unevolved and difficult to assess now. Hickinbotham?"

**Yarrinya Estate, 1986, Yarra Valley**

Average score out of 10 points: 6.8

"Typical pinot bouquet after short time in the glass. Nicely developed and integrated with a good length. Finely balanced acidity. I enjoy the tannins (soft) and dry finish of the wine. Would love to drink it with a meal: full-flavoured and bodied wine with excellent wood treatment."

— Nick Galante (7.7)

"Light brick-red, developed colour although somewhat closed on the nose still — light and bready. On the palate a delicious pinot noir showing good development of the fresh fruity nature of the grapes, good structure and finish."

— Christoph Kleinhenz (8.5)

**Main Ridge Estate, 1988, Yarra Valley**

Average score out of 10 points: 6.7

"Soft tannin detectable, I prefer it to those tasted in group — a good balance with dryness."

— Jan Rogers (8.5)

"Deep cherry red — good colour holds all the way to the rim of the glass. Lovely cherry, good definite varietal nose. Palate also true to variety and style. Can call a definite pinot; good weight and quite a lot of flavour. Good acidity and although a little short, perhaps, definitely a good buy; a good wine."

— Walter Solowiej (6.7)

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# Out of hours

## IMBIBING

### PENINSULA WINES SHOW THEIR CLASS

THE cool-climate wines of southern Victoria are among Australia's best: evidence the rebirth of the Yarra Valley and Geelong areas and their superb chardonnays, cabernets and pinot noirs.

Not resting on their laurels, the canny Victorians have extended their quest for the finest quality varietal wines on to the hitherto undiscovered Mornington Peninsula.

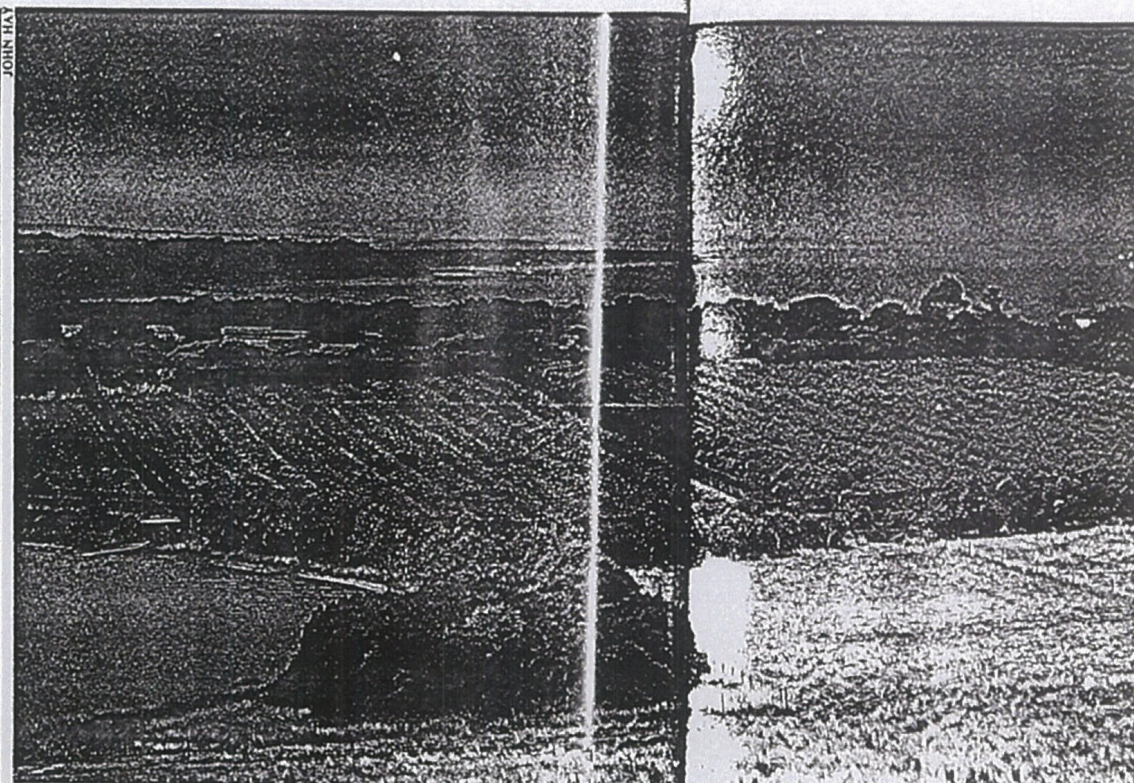
The peninsula, long Melbourne's seaside playground, is a veritable hedonist's paradise. It boasts magnificent bay and ocean beaches, an abundance of fine

seafood and produce, and restaurants such as the incomparable Two Faces at Delgany Country House Hotel, Portsea.

However, the peninsula's treasure is its wines which, for such a young vignoble, are of outstanding finesse and promise. Although its wine styles are still experimental and evolving, the peninsula produces fine chardonnays, cabernets, cabernet blends and, of late, pinot noirs.

Brian Stonier of Stonier's Merricks Vineyard, Nat White of Main Ridge Estate, George Kefford of Merricks Estate and Baillieu Myer of Elgee Park were among the

JOHN HAY



#### A SELECTION OF MORNINGTON'S BEST

<b>DROMANA ESTATE</b> , Dromana (Garry Crittenden, [059] 87 3275)	
1988 Chardonnay	\$20.50
1988 Cabernet-Merlot	\$20.50
1988 Pinot Noir	\$20.50
<b>ELGEE PARK WINERY</b> , Merricks North (Daniel Green, [059] 89 7338)	
1988 Rhine Riesling	\$12.00
1988 Chardonnay	\$19.00
1987 Cabernet Sauvignon-Merlot	\$19.00
<b>KARINA VINEYARD</b> , Dromana (Graeme Pinney, [059] 81 0137)	
1988 Rhine Riesling	\$13.50
1988 Sauvignon Blanc	\$17.00
<b>KINGS CREEK VINEYARD</b> , Bittern (Kathy Quealy, [059] 83 2102)	
1989 Chardonnay	\$19.00
<b>MAIN RIDGE ESTATE</b> , Red Hill (Nat White, [059] 89 2686)	
1988 Chardonnay	\$20.00
1988 Cabernet Sauvignon	\$21.00
1988 Pinot Noir	\$22.00
<b>MERRICKS ESTATE</b> , Merricks (George Kefford, [059] 89 8416)	
1988 Chardonnay	\$21.95
1987 Cabernet Sauvignon	\$21.95
1988 Shiraz	\$21.95
<b>MOOROODUC ESTATE</b> , Moorooduc (Richard McIntyre, [059] 78 8585)	
1988 Cabernet Sauvignon	\$18.95
1988 Pinot Noir	\$19.00
1989 Cabernet Sauvignon	about \$20.00
<b>STONIER'S MERRICKS VINEYARD</b> , Merricks (Todd Dexter, [059] 89 8352)	
1988 Chardonnay	\$22.50
1988 Cabernet Sauvignon	\$22.50
1988 Pinot Noir	\$22.50

NB: All prices are recommended retail

first to recognise the area's potential in the 1970s. Others soon followed, notably the entrepreneurial Garry Crittenden of Dromana Estate (Victorian vineyard of the year), Stan and Bruce Paul of Balnarring Vineyard, Bill and Sara Glover of Kings Creek and Graeme and Jan Pinney of Karina Vineyard.

Dromana Estate, Main Ridge and Stonier's Merricks Vineyard produce the area's benchmark wines. Merricks Estate, Moorooduc Estate and Elgee Park are worth a look.

Newcomers include the Hickinbothams, Leon and Vivienne Massoni at Red Hill and the peripatetic Keith Dunstan with his small planting of pinot noir at Red Hill.

As it is an emerging region, or what Stonier aptly describes as "an alternative area for innovative drinkers", Mornington Peninsula wines

are hard to come by: they are available through mailing lists and at a smattering of retail and restaurant outlets, mainly in Melbourne.

Therein lies the Mornington Peninsula's appeal. Although its wines remain difficult to acquire commercially (of the 80 or so members of

Producing benchmark wines: Stonier's Merricks Vineyard, above, and Dromana Estate

the local vignerons' association about eight are commercial), the area is made for exploring and your effort is well rewarded.

HUGO McNEILL





24 December 1989

# WINE AS HARD

Last year Richard McIntyre, a surgeon and part-time vigneron, lost \$48,000 producing 500 cases of wine. But establishing a vineyard and winery takes more than just dollars, as **Teresa Poole** reports.

**B**Y the imported French oak casks in the middle of the winery building stands a table-tennis table. The home laboratory next door, with test-tubes, glass flasks, and a pH meter standing by the sink opposite the coffee machine, has to double as a kitchen. By the open staircase there is a mattress on the floor and a pot-belly stove for cold winter pruning days.

This is the Moorooduc Estate winery, about an hour's drive out of Melbourne down the Mornington Peninsula. At the moment there are 19 casks at the winery holding about 700 cases of wine, potentially worth about \$70,000, made from the grapes harvested in March and April this year by Mr Richard McIntyre, his family and friends. The sporting facilities — there is a tennis court outdoors — are to persuade the four children that starting and running a winery can be fun.

Mr McIntyre, 43, a Melbourne surgeon, intends to be able to give up surgery in the year 2001. By then, the eight-hectare Moorooduc Estate should be producing 3000 cases of wine a year — and be profitable.

For the past seven years, his leisure time — and that of his wife, Jill, and four children — has been devoted to setting up Moorooduc Estate. "A lot of friends think we have become very anti-social," she says. "I guess there is a degree of self-indulgence," says Mr McIntyre. But the aim is to make a small profit in the 1992-93 financial year, and to have a viable second career by the end of the century.

The part-time vigneron — often a doctor, lawyer, businessman, teacher or other professional — is now fairly easy to find among the Victorian vineyards, encouraged by the growing popularity of Australian wines and the opportunity of offsetting start-up losses against other income.

Mr Peter Hayes, the state's viticulturist at the Department of Agriculture and Rural Affairs, estimates that more than 100 new wineries have been set up in the past 10 years, but that it takes about nine years to recoup the investment. How many of the new



## NEW VENTURES

crop will be successful? "It is too early to say. But a lot are already for sale."

Mr McIntyre started collecting wine in the early seventies, but it was during a stint at Oxford University that he thought of starting his own vineyard.

On his return to Australia in 1980, aged 34, the plan was to develop his surgical practice while at the same time preparing for a second career. The first 10 years would be spent "re-searching the whole thing", and the next decade setting it up. So far the plan is ahead of schedule.

The initial phase of developing the vineyard — when there is high expenditure and no income — coincided with a growth period at his surgical practice, just the time when the tax break advantages were useful.

The first step was to decide where to site the vineyard. In 1982, after a year spent looking for land, he bought eight hectares of farming land near the Moorooduc village for \$68,000. There was nothing on the land apart from one dead tree.

He decided on two wines, a chardonnay and cabernet sauvignon blend, and planted most of the original five acres with these varieties.

Cuttings of recommended clones were obtained for about \$2000 through the Victorian Department of Agriculture — and had to be collected by Mr McIntyre himself from designated vineyards. "I stood for two whole days in the freezing cold wind."

Planting started in July 1983, by which time the dam on the property had been built (costing around \$12,000), windbreaks planted, and the irrigation system installed (at about \$14,000).

"It was a huge job, much bigger than



**Quality control:** Mr Richard McIntyre tastes his 1989 Moorooduc Estate chardonnay, still maturing in the cask.

I thought it would be." Friends, wife and the four children (the eldest just 10 years old) were all commandeered to help every weekend, planting a total of 4000 cuttings. It took until September. On day trips the family lived out of the tin shed housing the irrigation pump, cooking on a barbeque.

From the start, the financial outlay was substantial. Mr McIntyre did not have to borrow for the initial cost of the land. But he raised \$50,000 from the bank to fund the development stage. That meant an annual interest bill of about \$5500 in the first year — which could be offset against tax. By the time the vineyard was planted, the Moorooduc Estate had cost about

\$30,000 on top of the cost of the land.

The next year there were further outlays on trellising, a tractor, mower and spraying unit. The interest bill rose to \$10,500 in 1984-85.

"It took us quite a long time to get a good crop. But you should not underestimate the learning process — it is useful to have that time."

"You've got more than 4000 individual plants, and you have got to visit each one. An enormous amount of work involved. And backache."

Did any doubts set in? "I don't think he ever had any," says Mrs McIntyre.

The first harvest, on Good Friday in March 1986, coincided with Mr McIntyre's 40th birthday. Friends on a

"picking list" came to pick in return for a great lunch and a discount on the wine, a tradition now established in McIntyre social circles. "It's a good party if the weather is fine," says Mr McIntyre.

The first crop was not large enough to be released but produced three wines, cabernet sauvignon (20 cases) chardonnay (six cases), and pinot noir (four cases).

By this stage the estate also boasted its own rammed-earth 225-square metre winery where the wine is produced. In the first year the wine from the Moorooduc grapes was actually made for them by Mr Nat White, fellow vigneron who owns the Mai





The Sunday Age MONEY 3

# WORK



Picture: TERESA POOLE

So how do the economics of the estate stand so far? In fiscal 1988-1989, the interest bill has gone up to \$26,000, total running costs were \$72,000, and income from wine sales was \$24,000 — giving a net loss of \$48,000.

Two years ago, Mr McIntyre planted a further half hectare and will plant another two hectares at the end of 1990. The aim is to produce 3000 cases of wine from the extended acreage in 1993. "We should break even or make a small profit in the 1992-93 financial year," he says.

"What I do find a bit disturbing is that this will mean a further major expansion in the winery." This will push up borrowings. "The figure that horrifies me is the annual interest bill. About \$72,000 from 1992 onwards."

The most difficult aspect of the venture has been marketing and selling the wine, particularly with a view to the increased output. "First of all, it is essential to produce wine of exceptional quality," says Mr McIntyre.

Moorooduc Estate wines are now entered in local shows. The 1988 and 1989 cabernets have done well, with gold medals in the Victorian Wine Show at Seymour and the Lilydale show. "Until that happened, I was one of the great sceptics about wine shows," Mr McIntyre laughs.

The Mornington Peninsula Vignerons Association works to promote the whole region as a wine-producing area. As Moorooduc Estate expands, the business will also need a distributor — for Victoria and beyond, and possibly exports.

The Moorooduc wines retail for just under \$19 a bottle, of which Mr McIntyre receives \$10.50 from the retailer. Selling to a wholesaler he would get just \$8 a bottle.

"There is a tremendous amount of satisfaction, but the amount of money and work and commitment has been far greater than we expected," he says.

But the smile is still there. "I am basically optimistic. I don't regret all this at all."

■ The Department of Agriculture and Rural Affairs may be running an introductory course on setting up a vineyard. Expressions of interest to Mr Peter Hayes, phone 054-403777. Its booklet 'The Profitability of Investing in a Small Vineyard and Winery' is available for \$12 from the department, PO Box 125, Bendigo 3554.

Ridge Estate. Since then Moorooduc has used its own wine-making facilities, with Mr White as a consultant.

The first commercial crop came in 1987, when a total of 200 cases of wine were produced, half sold to people on the mailing list and half to restaurants.

The 1988 vintage produced 500 cases and 1989 should reach 700 cases. This year should have been much higher, but for the first serious weather damage at the estate. Storms in October 1988 wiped out much of the chardonnay crop. "We picked 800 kilograms. It should have been six to eight tonnes. It was really devastating." That meant only 60 cases of the white wine.

MORNINGTON PENINSULA AND WESTERNPORT HOLIDAY HAPPENINGS, Wednesday, December 27, 1989

## Dromana Estate is Vineyard of Year

DROMANA Estate Vineyards on the Mornington Peninsula has been named Victorian Vineyard of the year.

The award was announced at a wine industry dinner at the Mitchelton Winery on Saturday, October 28, and marked the culmination of the Orrefors Victorian Wine Show.

For Dromana Estate the Vineyard of the Year award tops a highly successful show, their entries taking out one gold, two silver and one bronze during the week's judging.

Dromana Estate's rise to be among the leading wine producers has been swift, the vineyard having only been established in 1982 with its first vintage in 1984.

It's success is based on owner Garry Crittenden's more than 25 years' experience in horticulture and viticulture.

Dromana Estate already has a bevy of medals to its credit, but to add the prestigious Vineyard of the Year Award to its credentials was something special, Garry Crittenden said.

### Reputation

In 1968 he established the highly successful Crittenden's Nursery Pty Ltd on the Mornington Peninsula. The nursery developed a reputation for innovation in plant production techniques and plant hygiene.

Garry sold the nursery business in 1986 and set up a viticultural consultancy which today has grown to the extent that last year he formed Vitinational Pty Ltd in conjunction with his partner, Ian Macrae, to provide professional services to the grapegrowing industry.

Current production at the Dromana Estate is around 2000 cases a year, made up mainly of a blend of Cabernet and Merlot grapes. Small amounts of



GARRY Crittenden rolls out another barrel of premium wine.

The Dromana Estate Winery has succeeded in having three of its wines selected among the UK *Wine* magazine's top 250 value-for-money wines of 1989. They won selection from thousands of wines.

Dromana Estate only recently began exporting to the UK and proprietor Garry Crittenden says he is amazed at the immediate impact his two brands, Dromana Estate and Shinus Molle, have had in England.

Chardonnay and Pinot Noir are also made.

The 1990 vintage production is expected to be approximately 3000 cases.

Dromana Estate has recently introduced a new label, the Shinus Molle range of wines which is made from grapes grown in some of Australia's leading wine regions.

The Vineyard of the Year Award is sponsored by Australian Airlines and the Orrefors Victorian Wine Show.

the inaugural Friends function - Sunday 10 December 1989.





## The Dromana theory: great wine is made in the vineyard

*Dromana Estate and Schinus Molle wines have caused a sensation and quickly established Garry Crittenden as a major player in the Victorian wine industry. A former nurseryman, he is proving that the key to wine quality is in the vineyard, as Huon Hooke discovered.*

When the time came to sample the 1989 pinot noir, the tasters rinsed their glasses with the same few mls of precious wine. They didn't need to be asked not to waste this brilliant ruby coloured, perfumed liquid. They tipped the same few drops from glass to glass, swirling and passing it on.

These Sydney retailers and restaurateurs didn't seem to perceive the significance of this act. But it spoke volumes about respect — the respect of those participating in the ritual for the wine and its maker. I've seen similar reverence shown in the cellars of Domaine de la Romanée Conti and Château Lafite, but rarely in Australia.

We were standing in the chilly,



Beneath the up-trained canopy, bunches of cabernet grapes hang exposed to the sun

rudimentary alloy-clad winery at Dromana Estate. Garry Crittenden was holding court. "There's only 400 cases of this," he said; "But at least that's a bit more than previous vintages."

The colour was medium depth, brilliant ruby-purple. What arose from the glass can only be described as sensational. Although cold, the wine gave off a fabulous intensity of dark cherry aromas and just a whiff, a lacing of cedar — the aroma of spanking new Dargaud & Jaegle barriques. On the tongue an explosion of flavour: spices and pepper joining the cherry and sappy pinot varietal features. It was aromatic and delicate, but at the same time structured and powerful for a light bodied wine. "The grapes were about 22 degrees Brix," said Crittenden; "We rarely get them riper than that here."

Silence reigned. Sometimes silence means the wine is no good and people would rather shut up than criticise. In this case the silence was a respectful one, like in a church. Here and there a groan of ecstasy, or a private grin shared with a neighbour. There was a spit bucket on the floor but not much of the '89 Dromana Estate Pinot Noir went into it.

A few minutes earlier we'd stood in the vineyard, hearing the Crittenden philosophy of viticulture, and although most of the group wouldn't have known a node from a noodle, they could tell there was something special happening here.

"If there's any clue to the quality

and character of our wine it's 80 per cent in the vineyard and only 20 in the winery," he said.

The vines looked funny, for sure, some rows they were split into two canopies, separated by a horizontal bar or T-piece. Crittenden explained that the two cordons were far enough apart to allow sunlight to strike either side of the canopy, depending on where the sun was positioned. This was called a 'modified Carbonneau lyre' system. In most of the rows the trellis was a flat, vertical trellis about two metres high.

With both single and double canopy systems, the foliage is trained upwards at flowering time by manually lifting two foliage wires, one on either side of the canopy, to position to shoot directly upwards. This leaves the bunches hanging exposed below the greenery. Grape exposure is further enhanced by mechanical trimming leaf-plucking which enables sunlight to shine unimpeded on the grapes themselves.

Garry, who is not related to the well-known Crittenden family of retailers, also mentioned a third double-canopy system called Scott Henry, which sounded more like an Antarctic explorer.

Why all this fancy vine management? What's wrong with traditional Aussie jungle, with masses of leaves and shoots falling all over the ground? It's worked for generations, hasn't it?

"These flat, thin canopies are fundamental to the success of our wine," said Crittenden, bringing us back from the Scott glacier with a cruel jolt. "If you look at a range of Mornington Peninsula cabernets you find mine have cherry, berry and cassis flavours and a lot of others bell pepper, or capsicum, herbaceous flavours. You see them in Tasmania and New Zealand at their worst."

"It's not ripeness that does that light exposure. These foliage wires on the ground at the beginning of growing season. At flowering time lift them up. When the canopy of foliage is fully developed the wires keep the shoots pointing upwards leaving the bunches beneath them fully exposed to the light. We were among the first in Australia to do this. In cool climatic areas it's absolutely essential to get maximum fruit exposure. We get a band of that's fully visible right from the start."

Okay, but how does that help make better wine?

Crittenden continued. "Colour grapes and wine is due to develop

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Clockwise from top left: Hand-picking at Dromana Estate; Garry Crittenden in his winery; before pruning in winter the upward shoot positioning can be clearly seen

Wine & Spirit October '89

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of anthocyanin — the grape's colour pigment. And that's a direct consequence of the amount of sunlight that hits the berry. Herbaceous wines tend to be brown, as well as thin in flavour and high in acid, with a high pH. The problem is that shaded fruit has a high pH and the way to correct high pH is to add acid. High pH in turn gives poor colour."

He took this one step further by explaining that a common problem with red wines made from shaded grapes was high malic acid content. Malic acid is used up during malolactic fermentation. A lot of malic acid means a big acid loss during the malolactic fermentation, resulting in big slip in total acidity and an upward lurch in pH.

"We want a high tartaric acid and low malic, so that after the malolactic the pH shift is small. A typical set of figures would be pH 3.3 before and 3.5 afterwards."

Crittenden said the side benefits of exposed fruit were that it was easy to apply sprays against mould attack and moulds were less of a threat because the air movement was better. As well,

harvesting by hand was easier because pickers didn't have to hunt around in the vine.

"People said that this wouldn't work because the grapes would get sunburnt, but they don't — it's not that hot here."

He said blind tastings had been organised by the viticultural researcher Peter Cingleffer as a result of pruning

and trellising trials. Tasters who expected to prefer wines from low-yielding vines actually preferred the wines from high-yield vines, because it was now possible to make top quality red wine from yields that had hitherto been thought excessive. The important thing was to have well-balanced vines with exposed fruit. The tasters were shocked to find they had preferred fruit that yielded 8 tonnes per acre, Crittenden said. "Our chardonnay yielded 6 tonnes an acre in 1988. Our pinot yields 5 to 6 tonnes and our cabernet gave us 5 tonnes in 1989."

One of the most interesting results of these CSIRO trials had been the minimal pruning experiment, one of 14 different treatments on the Dromana Estate vineyard, each of which was made into a separate wine by CSIRO's George Kerridge at Merbein. All were cabernet sauvignon of the same clone, same vineyard, picked on the same day, made in the same way, yet the differences were amazing. The Coonawarra-style minimal pruning yielded a very tannic wine, which astonished Garry because Dromana wines are normally notable for their low tannin levels despite great flavour intensity.

"Minimal pruning produces lots of small bunches with small berries, and small berries have a bigger ratio of skin to juice, hence more tannin," he said. "If I wanted to make a more tannic wine, I'd just switch all the cabernet to minimal pruning, but I don't!"

He said one row of each of his varieties, cabernet, merlot, chardonnay and pinot, had been changed to the Carboneau split trellis, and cabernet quality, already high, had improved. "We made the wine separately and it had richer, riper fruit character and the chemical analysis was even better than the rest of our cabernet. In the Entre-Deux-Mers area of Bordeaux, Professor Carboneau says he can bring the wines up to Medoc third growth standard using this system," enthused Crittenden.

"It's tempting to convert all my cabernet to this trellis, but I'd prefer to test it over a number of years. A good result from one year doesn't mean it's the right thing to do."

It certainly does pay dividends to grow grapes the Crittenden way. I have tasted quite a lot of thin, hollow reds with rank, herbaceous vegetative characters produced in southern Victoria, New Zealand and Tasmania and there's no doubt in my mind that Crittenden, and the many others who

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## Think before you plant!

Romantics fantasising about starting their own vineyards should heed Garry Crittenden's advice. As a consultant hired by aspiring vignerons, he is horrified at the blindness of such people. Many refuse to listen to advice from experts such as himself who have learnt from experience that all that glisters is not gold. Perhaps they are intoxicated with the prospect of the prestige they expect vineyard ownership to confer.

Crittenden recently sold his nursery to devote himself full-time to consulting and running Dromana Estate.

"I earn \$50,000 a year as a viticultural consultant to make a living," he said. "But it costs \$100,000 a year to

service my million-dollar debt to the bank."

Between the two labels Dromana Estate and Schinus Molle he processes 70 tonnes of grapes — not a large quantity, and the economics are very tight. On the latter he only makes \$5 a case over the production costs.

Worried about the future of the economy and the prospects for this luxury item, high-quality wine, he's shelved plans to buy a new press and tractor. He spent \$100,000 on oak barrels last year; \$60,000 this year; a necessary expense to make top wine.

He says many of the people for whom he plants vineyards on the peninsula don't appreciate the work, time and money they will have to put in just in order to make a go of it.

"It seems like an idyllic lifestyle and an attractive hobby, but they pretty soon tire of spending all their weekends and spare time working at the

vineyard and pouring money endlessly into it," he says.

Even allowing for his obvious talent for what he does, and his 'green fingers' gained as a nurseryman, Crittenden is a pragmatic fellow who has no time for the traditional she'll be right of some winepeople. "I don't subscribe to the view that you have to wait seven years till you get a full crop and then you put up with a yield of one tonne to the acre," he says, pointing out the high vigour and rapid rate of development of his Dromana Estate vines. "My accountant wouldn't countenance that. He'd suggest I try something else for a living."

"I don't know how some of these small vineyards exist on 50 tonnes, selling it from the winery and through a mailing list. We sell entirely to the trade. We have a modest winery, but the investment is big."

### Dromana Estate pinot noir, 1985 to '89

**1985**  
Medium-light red, still with a trace of purple but of slightly thin appearance. Stewed cherry and vegetative nose, fading. Not a very attractive drink at this point, with a light, soft, rather nondescript taste and lacking weight and depth of flavour. Past its best. **14.5**

**1986**  
Light to medium red-purple. Attractive, complex and aromatic nose showing pepper, spices and cherry overlaid by some capsicum. Much more strongly-built than '85, still light-bodied but flavoursome, fine, gentle and quite complex. Good now, but drink up before it starts to fade. **17.5**

**1987**  
Medium purple-red. Rather subdued, lightly spicy and plummy nose. Also closed and tight on the palate; firm, with some tannin grip, solid and undeveloped. Has depth and seems to need time, but will it blossom? Only the future will tell. **16.5**

**1988**  
A total change from '87: very up-front and instantly charming. Medium purple-red, slightly lighter colour than '87. Very aromatic, expressive nose of captivating dark cherry, smoky oak, a touch of pepper (not capsicum) and on the tongue, very fresh and lively with intense flavour, open, very fruity with

lovely depth and length. Difficult to imagine it improving from here. Drink now! **18.5**

**1989**  
From the barrel. Medium purple. Superb smoky, cherry, sappy, spicy and again peppery characters, on nose. Enormous depth of ripe fruit, a little drying tannin and slightly rough around the edges yet, but still unfinished and won't be released for about six months. Looked at least as good as the '88 in July.

### Some other future releases

**1989 Dromana Estate Chardonnay**  
Barrel sample. Oaky nose at this point; rich, very fine, quite delicate - austere even - at this stage. Tight structure. Melon fruit. Should be very good; in the fine style of previous vintages.

**1989 Schinus Molle Chardonnay**  
Cloudy ex-oak. Top quality smoky oak dominates nose. More aromatic and forward than the Dromana, because McLaren Vale fruit is more up-front. Dry, savoury, bacony, fine but fuller than the Dromana.

**1989 Schinus Molle Sauvignon Blanc**  
Lovely lifted gooseberry, passionfruit, distinctly sauvignon nose without 'green' herbaceousness. Delicate, fine, quite dry. 20% barrel fermentation but oak not obvious.

are now using the same theory, are on the right track.

No better proof could be found than the 1988 Schinus Molle Cabernet to be released this month. It's a truly superb red wine; deep red-purple, with a complex, ripe cassis/spicy nose and sweet tobacco leaf and cinnamon among the flavours on a deep, rich, intensely-flavoured and firmly-structured palate. It's the best Schinus cabernet yet.

Ten of the 12 tonnes of Mornington Peninsula grapes in the wine came off the Red Hill vineyard, where the high vigour and deep, rich, red soils had produced high vine vigour. Fruit shading had yielded very herbaceous reds until Crittenden was hired to help. After he'd put two years work into the vineyard, the difference in the grapes was extraordinary.

Crittenden was very disappointed when the owner suddenly sold it to interests associated with Mildara (a syndicate including Ian Home and Bob Hollick). But Crittenden will have little difficulty sourcing good grapes for future Schinus Molle production. The impressive David Paxton developments in the Yarra Valley and Tony Jordan's new Yarra vineyard will be among them.

There are no geographic limits to the raw material, nor quantity limits to the output, of Schinus Molle (the botanical name of the pepper tree), but Dromana Estate wines will always be produced only from that vineyard, and thus be limited by its size.

The '88 Schinus Molle Cabernet will sell for about \$17 from October and is highly recommended.

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Wine & Spirit October '89



THE AGE, Tuesday 2 January 1990

There is more to the Mornington Peninsula than sun and sand as RITA ERLICH, the editor of 'The Age Good Food Guide', and JENI PORT, a wine writer for Epicure, discovered.

# PENINSULA PLEASURES

## Vignerons throw open doors to wine loving holiday-makers

By JENI PORT

THERE will be something strangely uninhabiting about touring the vineyards of the Mornington Peninsula this summer with suntan oil, surfboard and sunnies.

Here is one of the newest, supposedly most promising wine regions in Australia today, with people tasting wine in between sets at Rye, wearing funny hats and with pink zinc on their snouts. I mean, how serious is this?

As it turns out, the vignerons of the Mornington Peninsula are very serious indeed about this new "openness" to the public. During January, when the peninsula population doubles, vineyards that have normally been accessible only by appointment will fling open their doors for tastings and sales.

"It's very much a toe-in-the-water exercise to get a feel for the response," says Garry Crittenden of Dromana Estate. "As marketing gets harder and harder, the importance of the cellar door is obvious."

Like its sister peninsula across the bay, Mornington is putting in a strong claim as a future producer of some of this country's best pinot noir, with Main Ridge and St Neots showing great promise.

Chardonnay is another matter, with a number of producers releasing fine examples of superior chardonnay styling — Elgee Park, Main Ridge, Dromana Estate and Merricks Estate.

Cabernet sauvignon continues to build a reputation for elegance and, perhaps more importantly, consistency.

### VINEYARDS OF THE MORNINGTON PENINSULA

**Balnarring Vineyard**  
Bittern-Dromana Road, Balnarring.  
Tel: (059) 89 5258

Balnarring has followed a classic path, establishing first the vines, then the winery, then a successful showing of wines on the show circuit to whet people's appetites, and now full cellar-door sales. It has been a long passage since Bruce and Stan Paul planted their five-hectare vineyard in 1982. Cabernet sauvignon, pinot noir and chardonnay dominate the plantings, accompanied by a sprinkling of gewurztraminer. The 1987 chardonnay and 1987 cabernet sauvignon have been the best performers in recent shows.

OPEN: Every day 10 am to 4 pm. It is advisable to ring first during the week.

**Dromana Estate Vineyard**  
Harrisons Road, Dromana.  
Tel: (059) 87 3275

One of the new-style self-starters who have made the peninsula their home is Garry Crittenden, a soft-spoken but determined man of many talents. The beauty of his expansive vineyard, nestled around his house and the nearby lake, attest to his horticultural background. His wines show a similar elegance, with the cabernet sauvignon-merlot blend and chardonnay providing the most promise. Pinot noir remains shy about revealing its secrets, but given time...

OPEN: Saturday 6 January, Saturday 13 January, Saturday 3 February. At other times, a call first would be appreciated.

**Karina Vineyard**  
Harrisons Road, Dromana.  
Tel: (059) 81 0137

Shunning the peninsula's obsession with pinot noir and chardonnay, Graeme and Jan Pinney have boldly chosen to concentrate on sauvignon blanc and riesling. The wisdom of that decision, when planting in 1984, has already been proven, with highly successful inaugural releases of both, the riesling in particular doing well at the 1988 Victorian Wine Show.

OPEN: Daily until the end of January from 11 am to 5 pm.

**Kings Creek Vineyard**  
237 Myers Road, Bittern.  
Tel: (059) 83 2102

These days it pays to be in a hurry. So it is with Kings Creek. It was planted in 1982, produced its first crop in 1985 and was taking out gold in 1988. The enthusiasts are Bill and Sara Glover; the driving force, a fierce individualist called Kathleen Quealy. The combination makes for a very interesting line-up of wines (you guessed it) pinot noir, cabernet sauvignon and chardonnay.

OPEN: Saturday, Sunday and public holidays 10 am to 4 pm.

**Main Ridge Estate**  
William Road, Red Hill.  
Tel: (059) 892 686

Main Ridge has passed that awkward stage of development and, along with Elgee Park, is one of the few peninsula vineyards capable of revealing the area's true potential. Owner-winemaker Nat White must be very excited at the prospects of a new decade, the start of his second in the area. Chardonnay, his only white, is this writer's favorite from the region and clearly deserves a much higher profile. Main Ridge pinot noir is undoubtedly the most promising from the area so far.

OPEN: Saturdays and Sundays from noon to 5 pm. Other days by appointment.

**Tuerong Estate Vineyard and Restaurant**  
Mornington-Flinders Road, Red Hill (Melway 190 D8).  
Tel: (059) 892 129

The garrulous Gennaro Mazzella has combined his talents in food and wine to produce a kind of unofficial wine centre for the district. A large range of peninsula wines are served by the glass as well as the bottle with his traditional Italian fare in the restaurant. The vineyard, established in 1984 with additional plantings in 1986, has now produced its first chardonnay made by the Hickinbothams and available through the restaurant.

OPEN: Lunch and dinner Friday, Saturday and Sunday and most public holidays. Bookings advisable.

Some of the better-known vineyards on the peninsula remain closed to the public, including its oldest, Elgee Park, at Merricks North and Stonier's Merricks Vineyard. Others can be found exclusive to restaurant wine lists such as St Neot's Estate at Fanny's, Allens Vineyards at the Fringe Benefits Restaurant.

Wednesday, January 3, 1990

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## Choicest wines in great variety

MORNINGTON Peninsula vineyards are scattered around the rolling hills of the southern Peninsula region, particularly in Red Hill and Main Ridge.

The vines flourish in a cool, mild climate and fine table wines are produced from quality grapes of the classic varieties. Estate wines are produced solely from grapes grown on the individual vineyards.

History research shows records of a few small plantings totalling some eight hectares in the Hastings area before the turn of the century.

More recently, in the late '40s, the Seabrook family made several vineyards from a vineyard near Dromana, but interest waned and the vineyard was phased out.

The real development began in the '70s when several of the present day vineyards began.

The Peninsula's climate has remarkably similar characteristics to that of the great wine-growing districts of France, indeed, it is cooler than Bordeaux and warmer than Burgundy.

During the growing season the Peninsula has the same average monthly sunshine as Burgundy and in the summer months the average temperatures are similar to the equivalent summer months of Bordeaux and Burgundy.

Chardonnay and Cabernet Sauvignon are the most widely planted varieties. Pinot Noir, Merlot, Reisling and Shiraz are now well established.

Although each individual wine maker has produced his own styled wines from these varieties, all wines show outstanding fruit flavors, fine structure, soft tannins and an aus-

terity and acid backbone that keeps the wines refined and ensures they can be drunk early, or will be lovely drinking several years hence.

These fine light styles are already being recognised in Australian Wine Shows, winning gold, silver and bronze medals at Lilydale and Seymour.

The success ratio of Peninsula wines at these shows is believed to exceed that of any district and all this in a very short time.

The Mornington Peninsula Vignerons Association which has been established to promote winemaking on the Peninsula has over 50 members.

While many run their vineyards as a hobby venture, 13 growers will have commercial releases from their 1987 vintage.

The association has its own logo and trademark and its use is only permitted on bottles of wine which are 100% made from grapes grown on the Peninsula.

"It guarantees the wine bought as Peninsula produce is genuine," says Garry Crittenden, president of the association.

The association is looking for "friends" and intends to develop a group of people interested in supporting and promoting Peninsula wines.

"Friends" would be those people interested in attending special tastings and in visiting the boutique wineries and being closely associated with the activities of the vignerons of the Peninsula.

Those wishing to indicate such an interest should contact the secretary of the Mornington Peninsula Vignerons Association at PO Box 332, Mornington, 3931. They will then be included on a mailing list for wine tastings and special events.

# Reap grapes

The Mornington Peninsula playground, it is gaining sought-after, cool

ALTHOUGH a relatively new and experimental wine-growing area, the Mornington Peninsula is rapidly gaining a name for producing quality chardonnays, cabernets, cabernet blends and, of late, pinot noirs.

Publisher-cum-vigneron Brian Stonier aptly describes the peninsula as "an alternative area for innovative drinkers".

Unlike its southern Victorian, cool-climate cousins, Geelong and the Yarra Valley, the Mornington Peninsula does not have the same viticultural (grape-growing) lineage. However, its wines are of such inestimable finesse and promise that it is destined to take its place as the third member of this formidable triumvirate — joining two regions renowned for the best Australian cool-climate wines.

As far as climate goes, the Mornington Peninsula is a little cooler than Bordeaux and marginally warmer than Burgundy. The surrounding waters provide unique conditions: a relatively high summer humidity and rainfall... factors believed to contribute to the great wines of France.

Cool-climate wines are especially sought after for their elegance, intense yet delicate fruit flavors, fine structure and subtle complexities — usually derived from top quality, slow-ripening fruit with average exposure to the sun and altitude above sea level.

Two distinct micro-climates exist on the peninsula: a maritime coastal climate of relatively stable temperatures and soil of shallow, sandy loam on a clay base; and the greater rain-

fall and fluctuations in altitude (up to 100m above sea level) and vigorous, not

Peninsula's climatic subtleties produce and diverge. Stonier argues that the Mornington Peninsula is an area of considerable richness and the coastal Dromana Estate, for example, is a matter of course. Mornington are of considerable interest. There is already be

'As a cool-climate apple and the vine

Geelong and — both the growing have undergone a reducing super delicate 1988 nockburn pl of noble Yarr

The cond Yering and good example Middletons Mount M Diamond V Halliday's 1988 Gold These are colored, rather they structure



# TASTE

THE HERALD WEDNESDAY JANUARY 31, 1990 PAGE 11

Edited by MICHAEL CAVE

## ing a e harvest



is more than just Melbourne's favorite summer  
g credibility as a wine-growing area offering  
climate wines. HUGO McNEILL reports

temperature  
the higher alti-  
0 metres above  
with their rich,  
volcanic soil.  
nes reflect these  
eties. Each cli-  
s a distinctive  
wine style. Some  
best wine comes  
ly rooted vines  
ll and Merricks;  
the intensity,  
reater alcohol of  
ine such as the  
te Cabernet. No  
s subjective. All  
peninsula wines  
rable quality.  
le that has not  
n said about

balanced, Burgundian-style  
pinots.

Burgundy is the undisputed  
home of pinot noir and hence  
the benchmark against which  
all such wines are judged. Of  
course, there are many fine  
chardonnays and cabernets  
from southern Victoria, but the  
vagaries and inherent chal-  
lenge of pinot noir make it an  
appropriate example.

I recommend the 1988 pinot  
noirs from Dromana Estate,  
Main Ridge Estate and Sto-  
nier's Merricks Vineyard — all  
display good burgundian traits  
including richness, texture and  
firmness.

Kings Creek winemaker  
Kathy Quealy says: "Pinot

mate wines grew, grazing land,  
apple and cherry orchards  
gave way to the vine and the  
peninsula developed as a wine  
area.

Brian Stonier (Stonier's Mer-  
ricks Vineyard), Nat White  
(Main Ridge Estate), George  
Kefford (Merricks Estate) and  
Baillieu Myer (Elgee Park)  
were among the first to recog-  
nise the area's potential.

Others soon followed, not-  
ably the energetic and en-  
trepreneurial Garry Crittenden  
(no relation to the mer-  
chants of the same name) of  
Dromana Estate (Victorian  
Vineyard of the Year 1989),  
Stan and Bruce Paull of Bal-  
narring Vineyard, Bill and  
Sara Glover of Kings Creek at  
Bittern and Graeme and Jan  
Pinney of Karina Vineyard.

Newcomers include the  
Hickinbothams, who expect  
the first offering from their  
Dromana vines in 1991 and  
Leon and Vivienne Massoni at  
Red Hill. Keith Dunstan has  
less than half a hectare of pinot  
under vine and is busy  
concocting new recipes for  
starling pie — birds are the  
viticulturalist's main enemy!

Over lunch at the  
incomparable Two Faces at  
Delgany (which was an ideal  
opportunity to sample an ex-  
cellent selection of peninsula  
wines), a 1987 Kings Creek  
Chardonnay stood up well  
against a Seville Estate Char-  
donnay of the same year.

Both were excellent with the  
former displaying an outstand-  
ing structure and delicacy.

The 1988 and 1989 Main  
Ridge Chardonnays were also  
impressive, displaying a  
beautiful, delicate fruit, a lu-  
scious grapefruit character.



With the breathtaking scene of Westernport Bay in the background, Noel Stonier contemplates the  
fruits of her labor at Stonier's Merricks Vineyard, near Balnarring.

light wood and an excellent  
finish. Peninsula wines have  
enjoyed success at the recent  
Lillydale and Seymour wine  
shows, with the 1989 Kings  
Creek Chardonnay winning  
the best chardonnay award at  
Lillydale, and the 1988 Merricks  
Estate Shiraz capturing a tro-  
phy for the best shiraz and best  
red at Seymour. Of the eight  
peninsula wines submitted at

Seymour, all won medals, in-  
cluding a gold to the 1989  
Mooroeduc Estate Cabernet.

Aside from its fine wines, one  
of the Mornington Peninsula's  
greatest attractions is its prox-  
imity to Melbourne. A visit to  
the popular Red Hill market  
(first Saturday of each month)  
is a must. You would be wise to  
include Dromana Estate, Main  
Ridge, Stonier's Merricks,

Karina, Kings Creek and Bal-  
narring vineyards on your itin-  
erary.

A meal at Two Faces at  
Delgany (Portsea), McCarthy's  
BYO at Sorrento, Johnnie  
Come Lately's (Red Hill  
South), Mangan's Bakery  
(Flinders) or the Tuerong  
Estate restaurant at Red Hill  
will allow you to marry local  
wines with exceptional penin-  
sula food.

## Peninsula wines at a glance

A selection of the Mornington  
Peninsula's best wines

**Dromana Estate, Dromana**

Winemaker: Garry Crittenden, phone (059) 87-3800.  
1988 Chardonnay. rrp \$20.50.  
1988 Cabernet-Merlot 1988. rrp \$20.50.  
1988 Pinot Noir. rrp \$20.50.

**Elgee Park Winery, Merricks North**

Winemaker: Daniel Green, phone (059) 89-7338  
1988 Rhine Riesling. rrp \$12.  
1988 Chardonnay. rrp \$19.  
1987 Cabernet Sauvignon-Merlot. rrp \$19.

**Karina Vineyard, Dromana**

Winemaker: Graeme Pinney, phone (059) 81-0137.  
1988 Rhine Riesling. rrp \$13.50.  
1988 Sauvignon Blanc. rrp \$17.

**Kings Creek Vineyard, Bittern**

Winemaker: Kathy Quealy, phone (059) 83-2102.  
1989 Chardonnay. rrp \$19.

**Main Ridge Estate, Red Hill**

Winemaker: Nat White, phone (059) 89-2686.  
1988 Chardonnay. rrp \$20.  
1988 Cabernet Sauvignon. rrp \$21.  
1988 Pinot Noir. rrp \$22.

**Merricks Estate, Merricks**

Winemaker: George Kefford, phone (059) 89-8416.  
1988 Chardonnay. rrp \$21.95.  
1987 Cabernet Sauvignon. rrp \$21.95.  
1988 Shiraz. rrp \$21.95.

**Mooroeduc Estate, Mooroeduc**

Winemaker: Richard McIntyre, phone (059) 78-8585.  
1988 Cabernet Sauvignon. rrp \$18.95.  
1988 Pinot Noir. rrp \$19.  
1989 Cabernet Sauvignon. About \$20.

**Stonier's Merricks Vineyard, Merricks**

Winemaker: Todd Dexter, phone (059) 89-8352.  
1988 Chardonnay. rrp \$22.50.  
1988 Cabernet Sauvignon. rrp \$22.50.  
1988 Pinot Noir. rrp \$22.50.

### Availability:

Peter Mitchell of Gatehouse Cellars, Albert Park, stocks a good selection of Mornington Peninsula wines. Other retailers worth trying are Crittendens, Nick's, Dan Murphy, the Victorian Wine Centre and the Wine Safe (Toorak). Before visiting wineries, ring to check if they have cellar door sales. About half are open for weekend sales and many will open by appointment.

demand for premium-quality,  
ite wines grew, grazing land and  
d cherry orchards gave way to  
e and the peninsula developed  
as a wine area'

he Yarra Valley  
e a fine wine-  
y and both have  
renaissance pro-  
varietal wines.  
ple the rich and  
and 1986 Ban-  
pts and the host  
Valley pinots.

ently fine Yarra  
Yeringberg are  
s, as are John  
splendid 1980  
ry, the 1985  
lley pinot and  
cellent 1987 and  
am Hills' pinots.  
no strawberry-  
y-water wines,  
are beautifully  
firm, well-

noir is particularly suited to  
small vineyards because it  
suits the small wine-maker  
mentality." Pinot is very much  
a hand-crafted wine made in  
small quantities — not another  
of the mass-produced, quality  
varietal wines made in large  
vineyards with the aid of  
sophisticated technology.

Of the 200 ha or so under  
vine on the peninsula, many a  
vineyard is under two hectares  
or smaller with the predomi-  
nant plantings being chardon-  
nay (by 1984, 90 of the 100  
peninsula vigneronns had  
planted chardonnay), caber-  
net, cabernet blends and, re-  
cently, pinot noir. As demand  
for premium-quality, cool-cli-



THE AGE, Tuesday 6 February 1990

## EPICURE 5

## Happiness in zeal for pinot gris

**I**F FERVOR and missionary zeal could be distilled into money, Kathleen Quealey and Kevin McCarthy would be well on the way to achieving their burning ambition. They want to plant the grape variety pinot gris on the Mornington Peninsula.

The natural reaction to this ambition is why pinot gris? Why not chardonnay? By asking such a question you'll see Kathleen Quealey's hackles rise and you'll be flooded by a torrent of cogent reasons plus a vilification of chardonnay.

"There is nothing worse than a badly made chardonnay! Why chardonnay in the first place? Pinot gris is a beautiful variety. It makes wines with great flavor and you don't need to use wood. It's suited to the peninsula, the wines go with food..." The words come tumbling out and it is difficult to swim against the torrent. Partner Kevin McCarthy is quieter, less abrasive but no less obsessed.

Both are wine makers currently consulting to a number of vineyards on the Mornington Peninsula and in the Yarra Valley. Both are young, impatient, brash and not afraid to tilt at the status quo. Their arguments make a lot of sense and the great frustration is not having the funds to carry them out.

Calmly put, Kathleen Quealey's argument is for regional wines — the wines of the district should mirror the produce of the district and suit the needs of the area. "People should also be able to afford them," she says. "I can't understand this drive to make wines that are beyond the reach of most people. I can't see the point in making the greatest chardonnay in the world if people can't afford to drink it."

The duo claim they can make wine from pinot gris which will have flavor and fatness without wood and they should be able to sell it for around \$12 a bottle. They believe it won't be a second-rate wine.

So what is pinot gris? First the rather unfortunate name from a marketing point of view — grey pinot. It has other equally unattractive synonyms like



## Wine

By MARK SHIELD

rulander in Germany or pinot beurot, gris cordelier, auvernat gris, malvoise, fromentot and tokay d'Alsace. With the possible exception of the last, they are enough to make a marketing man knot the cord of his PC round his neck and jump out the window.

It's clear another name such as Mornington Glory, Portsea Pink or Dromana Gold would be a necessary tool. But name aside it does produce a fine wine. The characteristics are full-bodied, fruity and well-balanced wines with a deep gold color. At first sight the color may suggest the wine is oxidised, but it is characteristic to the variety. Sometimes the young wines can have a pink tinge.

The wine is fragrant and aromatic but it's usually less restrained than gewurztraminer and has more body than riesling. It is ideal for seafood and oriental fare. It leaves the drinker with the memory of its discreet fruity flavor. The duo hope it can find a niche in the market-place.

Being an early ripening variety it is suited to a climate such as Mornington's. It grows well in districts such as Alsace, but unfortunately there has been little promotion of these worthy wines on the Australian market. A wine like the Jostmeyer Tokay pinot gris 1986 is quite a treat, being full-bodied and balanced by acid. It's just the thing to take to your favorite Asian restaurant.

Speaking of restaurants, they have persuaded a restaurant on the Peninsula, the Pig and Whistle, to plant a small vineyard for its house wines. They will



Kathleen Quealey and Kevin McCarthy: producing a fine wine from a grape variety that obsesses them.

be making a red from nebbiolo and a white from pinot gris. There is also some merlot for blending. The resultant wines will be served in-house and won't find their way into the retail market.

Apart from this small planting the duo have had little success and plenty of frustration. "As soon as you mention pinot gris you can see the shutters come down," says Kathleen Quealey relating the reaction of wine scribes and the like. "They pat you on the head like a silly little girl and say forget it, chardonnay is the great white wine."

It may well be, but with adroit marketing and curiosity on the part of the consumer they could find a niche for pinot gris. We could be washing down

Keefer's mussels at the Beaumauris Hotel with Portsea Pink. To that end the pair have a scheme. They are wanting to find an adventurous spirit with the cash to fund a vineyard. The deal will be a contract to purchase the fruit from the vineyard at the chardonnay prices at the time.

They will make and market the wine. Should anyone be interested, they can be contacted by writing to PO Box 358 Dromana. It would be an exciting and challenging project and although not without risk, pinot gris has enough distinction in its flavor it could possibly become a fad wine like Cloudy Bay. Pinot gris could be the wine discovery of the '80s — pity about the name.

## Garry's big switch to grapes pays off

**A** 25-YEAR back-ground as a horticulturalist planted a seed in Garry Crittenden's mind that one day he could make a successful switch to growing grapes for table wine production.

He made the big break three years ago, selling his nursery on Victoria's Mornington Peninsula to pursue a new career as the name behind his Dromana Estate label.

So instantly successful was the move Garry last year introduced a second label, Schinus Molle, a botanic name for the peppercorn trees which used to flourish in the Crittenden nursery.

A few months ago Dromana Estate was named Victorian Vineyard of the Year, testimony to Crittenden's meticulous approach to vineyard management and maintenance.

Garry planted the Dromana Estate vineyard in 1982, the first grapes for production were picked two years later and success has more or less been the order of the day for the man considered one of the wine industry's top viticulturalists.

## WINE

JOHN FORDHAM

The Dromana Estate label represents only wines made from grapes grown on the property and, as annual volume hasn't yet exceeded 2000 cases, the operation fits snugly into the boutique category.

Schinus Molle is a different proposition altogether, drawing great supplies from any number of premium growers elsewhere in Victoria and in South Australia.

Crittenden recently released his 1988 Dromana Estate Cabernet Merlot (\$20.50), a wine he rates his best to date, an assessment with which few would disagree.

Cabernet (92 per cent) is the dominant variety in the blend, with the merlot providing rich, wholesome flavors that plug any gaps.

Next week's Victorian Wine Exhibition at the Sydney Hilton will mark the eagerly awaited release of Dromana Estate's pinot noir and chardonnay, both from the 1989 vintage and also priced at \$20.50 a bottle.

The second release of the Schinus Molle wines capture the excellence that accompa-

nied Crittenden's debut chardonnay and cabernet.

Appearing for the first time are the 1989 Sauvignon Blanc and 1988 Shiraz (both \$14.99), while the 1989 Chardonnay (\$14.99) and 1988 Cabernet (\$16.50) are every bit as good as the winemaker's initial efforts.

To demonstrate the extent to which Crittenden will go to secure top quality grapes, take note that the sauvignon blanc came from the Yarra Valley, shiraz from Great Western, chardonnay from McLaren Vale, Yarra Valley and the Mornington Peninsula and cabernet sauvignon from Coonawarra and the Mornington Peninsula.

I'm sure we'll continue to hear exciting things about Mornington Peninsula winemaking with people like Garry Crittenden showing the way.

NOT since Murray Tyrrell produced a world-rated pinot noir back in the mid-70s — 1976 to be precise — has the Hunter Valley paraded a pinot as good as the 1987 Rosemount Estate Giant's Creek.

The wine had its first public airing at last year's NSW Government-endorsed Hunter Valley accreditation

tasting at Parliament House when it emerged as one of the star turns.

Made from grapes grown on the Giant's Creek vineyard in the Upper Hunter, this deep red wine offers rich, complex flavors that stand it apart from run-of-the-mill pinots.

Placing it in the same category as Tyrrell's barnstorming effort might raise a few eyebrows but I believe the wrap is totally deserved.

The only disappointing aspect is the price. It's \$26 a bottle, which is a big "ask" in anyone's books but believe me the wine is certainly in the ultra-premium class.

Accompanying the pinot in the latest batch of upmarket releases from its Denman winery are 1987 Giant's Creek Chardonnay, 1986 White's Creek Semillon, 1986 Kirri Billi Cabernet Sauvignon and 1986 Kirri Billi Merlot.

All are priced around \$26 and with the exception of the Kirri Billi wines, which are made from Coonawarra fruit, are products of the Hunter Valley.

Winemaker Phillip Shaw, the first Aussie to win International Winemaker of the Year a few years back, has done it again.

**WANT** to update your wine knowledge? Well, The Wine Society, Australia's oldest and most respected wine club, is about to begin its latest series of wine appreciation classes.

They will cater for basic and advanced enthusiasts at the society's cellars at 177 Cathedral St, Woolloomooloo. The first course gets under way on February 12.

Organiser Deeta Colvin has recruited top-flight winemakers Karl Stockhausen (Lindemans), Peter Lehmann, Patrick Auld (Tullochs) and Tony Jordan (Domaine Chandon) to share their knowledge.

Seeing that everything you've ever wanted to know about wine will be covered, the \$85 per head enrolment looks a neat investment, especially when a dozen wines will be available for tasting each evening of the four-week course.

Bookings can be directed to Deeta Colvin on (02)908-3900.

**TWO** of Australia's most regular and best respected communicators on wine, Robert Mayne and James Halliday, recently hit the

shelves with their latest efforts.

Former News Ltd journalist Mayne, who writes concisely, informatively and simply on the subject, projects such qualities in Choosing and Enjoying Australian Wines (Reed Books) \$6.95. For the beginner, the information is worth bottling.

Successful Yarra Valley winemaker, widely read author and show judge Halliday's 1990 Australian Wine Guide, Angus & Robertson (\$24.95), covers every Australian winery with impeccable detail, although some may not agree with his findings.

This annual 400 page-plus update must burn up the midnight oil but the result makes it all worth worthwhile.

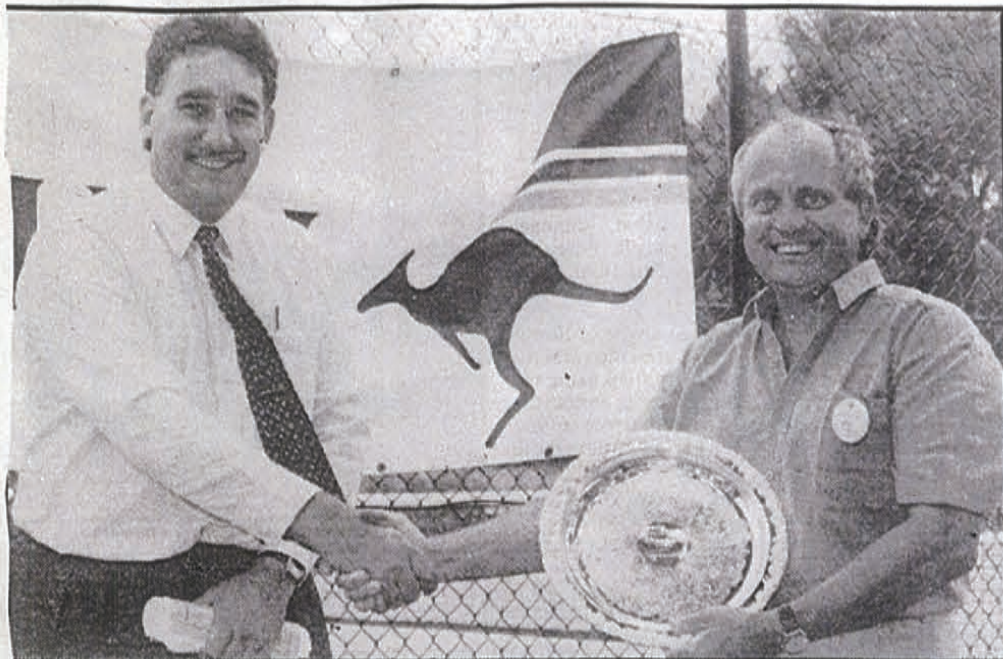
## PICK OF THE WEEK

**1988 DROMANA ESTATE CABERNET MERLOT (\$20.50).** Winemaker Garry Crittenden says this is the best red he's made to date and few could disagree. The Mornington Peninsula cabernet, which dominates the blend, provides beautifully smooth, rich, elegant berry flavors, the foundations of which are bolstered by the merlot.



Southern Farmer, April, 1990—Page 5

## The state's top winery



Australian Airlines Grant Pearse (left) presents Garry Crittenden with the award for state vineyard of the year.

More than 60 wine producers, DARA representatives and other interested people attended a recent open day at Garry Crittenden's Dromana Estate Vineyard.

The guests travelled from all across the state to inspect the vineyard which was named Australian Airlines Vineyard of the Year 1989.

Competition for the award was conducted

by the Victorian Wine Show and sponsored by Australian Airlines to recognise the contribution of viticulture to the success of the wine industry.

Its objectives are to recognise the important role of the vineyard operator and the vineyard in the wine industry.

Garry was very pleased in accepting the award and said that although he was fairly new in the viticulture

field, the award told him that he had made some contribution to it.

After outlining his business and management approach to Dromana Estate, Garry handed over to a number of guest speakers including DARA viticulturist Peter Hayes who discussed the running of a small vineyard.

Ian Goodwin, an irrigation specialist from DARA's Tatura office,

talked about soil and management at the vineyard while Ian Macrae, Garry's partner in Vitinational, spoke of canopy management.

After the talks were finished, guests were taken through the vineyard to see these practices in action.

Peter said that competition for the second year of this award had been tight but that Dromana Estate had proved to be a worthy winner.

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**M**erlot, one of the most aristocratic of red grapes, is also one of the least appreciated. In Bordeaux its plantings are double those of cabernet sauvignon, and in blends it enriches and softens the mid-palate of cabernet wines. But in cooler regions it gives wildly fluctuating yields.

Dromana Estate, Garry Crittenden's model vineyard and winery on Victoria's Mornington Peninsula, recently released a 1988 Cabernet Merlot which has wonderfully concentrated flavours of blackcurrant and cherry, integrated with sweet vanilla oak. The wine could be reliably cellared for five years.

"We think this is our best wine to date," says Garry Crittenden. "It reinforces our confidence in these two varieties for the Mornington Peninsula." Dromana Estate received the Victorian Vineyard of the Year Award for 1989.

ALAN HILL;

THE WEEKEND AUSTRALIAN, March 17-19, 1990

WEEKEND 15

## ON THE GRAPEVINE

### Having a field day at Dromana

**L**AST Wednesday, between 1pm and 5pm, the Victorian Department of Agriculture and Rural Affairs joined Crittenden's Dromana Estate Vineyard to conduct an open field day directed at the efficient operation (both in terms of economics and technical management) of the small vineyard.

Crittenden's Dromana Estate was the winner of the Australian Airlines Vineyard of the Year Award for technical and business excellence.

Several papers were delivered by various speakers from the department and the estate, followed by afternoon tea and a vineyard inspection and demonstration.

# Frankston Standard

A LEADER NEWSPAPER GROUP PUBLICATION

TUESDAY, MARCH 13, 1990

Young Arcade



GARRY Crittenden and grapes: his best year for cabernet-sauvignon, capping his award. • Picture: CHRISTINE FLEMING

## Garry's grapes make glorious sweet pickings

By TED SAUNDERS

**T**HE award of 1989 Vineyard of the Year is all the sweeter for Garry Crittenden because of his best crop of cabernet-sauvignon awaiting picking at the end of the month.

The vines are heavy with bunches of the black grapes in the final stage of ripening as the vineyard workers busily cover the vines with mesh to thwart the starlings' voracious appetites.

Now the Dromana Estate vineyard is in perfect condition for the open day for the public, trade and industry to see how it won the award, sponsored by Australian Airlines.

A condition of the award is that the winner must throw open his vineyard for interested parties to inspect.

The award is organised by the Orrefors-Victoria wine show and criteria include perfor-

mance, yield and management.

All vineyards in Victoria are entitled to nominate and Garry Crittenden believes he was the only Peninsula winemaker to enter for the 1989 award.

Vineyards are inspected by a panel of Department of Agriculture experts who visit each one nominated and make their selection based on the vineyard, not the winery.

Dromana Estate in Harrisons Rd, Dromana, will be open between 1pm and 5pm today. There will be an official presentation and the day will end with an inspection.

Last year Dromana Estate had three wines selected among the UK Wine Magazine's top 250 value-for-money wines of 1989.



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## FARMER OF THE MONTH

### 'A very good year' for Dromana Estate

By Colin Newell

Choosing the Australian Vineyard of the Year award was not easy for the judges attending the DARA vineyard competition at Peter Hayes.

There was a diversity of vineyard styles and all were impressive.

When it finally came down to the finish there was one that was clearly ahead.

The Dromana Estate Vineyard, owned and operated by Garry and Margaret Crittenden.

The award was developed by DARA, who were interested in ways of recognising excellence in viticulture and is as much for the owner-manager of the vineyard as for the vineyard itself.

Garry came from a horticultural background and it was only after successfully starting both a plant nursery and production nursery that he turned to wine production, partly encouraged by the romantic dream of one day seeing a bottle of wine with his name on it.

While in horticulture Garry developed a keen enthusiasm for marketing.

Following market trends was the trick, you

had to be alert and grasp ideas as they came. I like to be at the cutting edge of any business, Garry explained.

When I made the transition to viticulture I wanted to pursue the same business attitudes I had already established.

The change to wine production came fairly early because Garry was now dealing with a basically monocultural field rather than the variety of plants and species that existed in the broader horticultural field.

With no background in grapes Garry adopted a research approach to the vineyard, going for all the literature that he could get his hands on and reading it over the next couple of years. Armed with this knowledge he then decided where to plant.

Although the thought of Tasmania appealed, and still does, family and business reasons kept him in Victoria and it was the budding wine industry and potential that took him to Mornington, specifically Dromana.

After doing all of the research Garry decided that the viticulture trends of the time were not especially appropriate.

He then set about adopting a veritable style that was considered radical at the time but is almost considered passé now, he says.

The canopy was lifted up and leaves were picked off to give maximum exposure of the growing grapes to the sun. Critics said that the grapes would suffer sun burn and there would be complete crop failure.

Garry believes that on the contrary this exposure contributes beneficially to his wine.

The soil on Dromana Estate is made up of 20 to 30 cm of sandy loam topsoil above a clay soil. To give the vines the maximum amount of ground for the roots to grow, Garry killed up under his vines.

A permanent strip of ground, which did not require cultivation to protect from weeds, was left between the vine rows.

The area underneath the vines is kept free of weeds using herbicides because cultivation would only reduce the soil levels.

Irrigation was another important feature and it was monitored closely in the first year. It was important that it be timed right and that the correct balance between too dry and too wet be kept up.

Using readings from gypsum blocks placed at 20 cm and at 40 cm beneath the vines, Garry was able to come up with a system that allows him to apply water just when it is needed and in the right quantities.

These features have helped Garry mechanise procedures on the farm as much as possible. A lot of his work is done with a tractor, leaf pluckers and trimmers. He has recently incorporated a small mechanical harvester, which is suited to the veritable canopies.

Garry's partner in the viticultural company, Ian Macrae, said that although the parties might 'graze' on the thought of a mechanical harvester, it was a reality that could not be denied.

Whatever the arguments against these procedures it is obvious that in this case they worked, helping Dromana Estate to become the State Vineyard of the Year.



Pictured left to right are DARA's Ian Goodwin, estate owner Garry Crittenden, and Ian Macrae, Vitinational's Ian Macrae and DARA's Ian Goodwin at Dromana Estate's open day.



DARA's irrigation specialist Ian Goodwin tests moisture levels in Dromana Estate.



Winestate, March/April 1990

Mornington Peninsula wines are having an impact on the Victorian show circuit.

Garry Crittenden's Dromana Estate starred at the Orrefors Australian Airlines Victorian Wines Show. Dromana was awarded Vineyard of the year for 1989.

Other Mornington Peninsula wines scored successes, both at the Orrefors and at the Lilydale show. Merricks Estate Shiraz 1988 won two trophies at Orrefors, one for the best red table wine in show, and the Mornington Peninsula Vignerons Association trophy for best Mornington wine in show at Lilydale. Moorooduc Cabernet vintages 1988 and 1989 won gold medals at both shows.

Dromana Estate Pinot Noir 1989, Karina Vineyard Cabernet and Elgee Park Chardonnay 1988 all collected gold medals at Lilydale.

GRAPEGROWER & WINE MAKER - MAY 1990

## NEWS

### Field day and presentation at Dromana

Garry Crittenden, of Dromana Estate Vineyard, recently hosted an open day/field day for growers, marketers and winemakers from across Victoria.

The occasion was conducted to allow presentation of the Australian Airlines' Vineyard of the Year Award.

In accepting the award from Australian Airlines' market development manager, Grant Pearce, Crittenden highlighted attention to business planning and technical innovation as key ingredients for success.

Seminar presentations were made by Ian Goodwin, DARA - Tatura, relating to irrigation scheduling trials at Dromana Estate, and by Ian Macrae, Vitinational, on canopy management at this vineyard.

Participants at the open day were conducted through the variations in canopy management on site, and also were shown techniques for irrigation scheduling using gypsum blocks as soil water tension sensors.

The Australian Airlines Vineyard of the Year Award is conducted by the Victorian Wine Show.



• Ian Goodwin, of the Institute for Irrigation and Salinity Research, Tatura, Victoria, demonstrates gypsum blocks for use in irrigation to interested grapegrowers at the Dromana Estate field day.





APRIL 1990  
THE TEAM WHO HELPED WITH ROSIE IRELAND'S  
VINTAGE

Page 8 — THE LEADER, Wednesday May 23, 1990

## Leader Page

**F**ROM the earliest times, the growing of grapes and the making of wine have fascinated succeeding generations and have led to the establishment of important and lucrative industries.

Although youthful in the overall time scale, the Mornington Peninsula has become the centre of an expanding wine production area, already earning a place with the better known regions of Yarra Valley, Rutherglen, central Victoria and Geelong.

It is a burgeoning and thriving

### EDITORIAL Comment

ing local industry, producing superb, elegant wines with intense, varietal flavors reflecting the Peninsula's cool maritime climate and rich soils.

Some of these wines, which compare more than favorably with their French, German and Italian counterparts, have taken out prestigious awards at trade fairs in the UK and have won valuable export contracts.

All this in about 10 years when winemaking started on a commercial basis.

That the Peninsula has become known as a producer of quality red and white wines is a tribute to the commitment to excellence in viticulture and winemaking of its dedicated growers.

There are 30 growers making up the Mornington Peninsula Vignerons Association, and while many run their vineyards as hobby ventures, a hard core of producers is working hard to expand and improve its com-

mercial undertakings, establishing themselves as an important local industry.

**A**LTHOUGH the Peninsula has not previously loomed large as a wine-producing area, nine growers have laid the foundations of a successful and viable industry as well as earning an enviable reputation among their peers and the wine-buying public.

They are producing premium quality wines from 90 ha under cultivation.

Results from agricultural

shows, critical acclaim from the judges and public demand clearly demonstrate the assured future for Peninsula wines, the availability of which add to the richness and diversity of the Peninsula.

It is a far cry from the 1800s when the A'Beckett family tended vines at The Briars homestead, Balcombe, where two of the original vines exist today. The homestead vineyards are being re-established, and it could well be that they will complete the circle of wine-making on the Peninsula.



BUSINESS DIRECTIONS - 1990

## WINE'D UP WITH NICK SKINNER

## A Taste Of Success

Garry Crittenden's approach to grape growing and wine making has paid dividends, both in excellent quality of wines, and more recently with Dromana Estate being named 'Victorian Vineyard of the Year'.



Nick Skinner

DROMANA ESTATE is a small family owned vineyard planted in 1982 on Victoria's Mornington Peninsula, approx 60km south east of Melbourne.

On a recent visit to the winery, the most noticeable first impression was the neatness of the property, the well groomed vines and not a wild oat or weed in sight.

"One thing I see that is disappointing is vineyards where the weeds have won the battle in the first few years of the vineyard's life. This sets the vines back tremendously. Weed control is very important", Garry explained.

Garry believes that whilst the great advances made in the wine industry in the 70s and 80s were in the winery, the advances that will benefit the industry in the increased and greater production of premium wine in the 90s will come from the vineyard.

Everything is done at Dromana Estate to ensure that fruit arrives at the winery in perfect condition.

## The Range

The Dromana Estate range consists of just 3 wines, all estate grown on the 27 acre property at Dromana. Cabernet Merlot, Pinot Noir and Chardonnay make up the range. These wines have a guaranteed origin, being produced from only grapes grown on the property.

A second label has been introduced, named 'Schinus Molle'. This range of wines is given the same winemaking care as the Dromana range but is made from grapes sourced from outside the district. Garry spends much of his time consulting on vineyard practices Australia-wide which

allows him source top quality fruit for the Schinus Molle label.

## The Chardonnay

The Dromana Chardonnay displays luscious rich warm fruit character with lingering oak flavours. The wine is in brilliant condition, medium straw in colour with mid level acidity and a fresh clean bouquet. It is a complex wine that will develop and soften over the next 2 to 3 years.

Dromana Chardonnay is barrel fermented on a combination of new and 1 year old french barriques. It is a versatile wine and all but the most delicate fish and shellfish and heavy red meat dishes would be suitable accompaniments.

## The Pinot Noir

In the main Australian Pinot Noirs have not reached the heights obtained with Cabernet, Chardonnay and Rhine Riesling. The wines are often too fresh and fruity without structure and backbone.

The 1989 Dromana Estate Pinot Noir is a welcome addition to a small group of wines that have developed burgundian characteristics. The wine displays rich cherry, spice and pepper traits. It is soft and light without being thin. The acid is in balance with the body of the wine and whilst it is drinking beautifully now, it should gain more complexity and reward mid term (3 to 5 years) cellaring.

## The Cabernet Merlot

The 1988 Cabernet Merlot is considered by Garry to be the best red wine he has made to date. Cabernet dominates the blend around 90/10, but the addition of the Merlot fills out the wine and produces a wine that is wonderfully rich and concentrated.

It has lovely berry flavours with hints of mint and plums. The wines were aged separately in French oak barriques. Garry suggests the wine could be reliably cellared for at least 6 years. It's ideal with dishes like new season lamb and rich meat and tomato based pasta dishes.

## Cost

The Dromana Estate wines retail at around \$20 per bottle and represent superb value at the price. The one common characteristic of the wines is their outstanding fruit flavour.

The wines made under the Schinus Molle

label are the 1989 Sauvignon Blanc made from fruit grown on the Yarra Valley, 1989 Chardonnay mostly from McLaren Vale, 1988 Shiraz from the Great Western Districts and a 1988 Cabernet Sauvignon made from fruit sourced from other vineyards on the Peninsula and the Coonawarra. All these wines display the same full fruit flavour as the Dromana Wines and are priced at around \$15.

Garry Crittenden's wines, in their short history, have won a string of Gold and Silver medals on the show circuit and in 1990 he was rewarded in winning the 'Victorian Winery of the Year Award'.

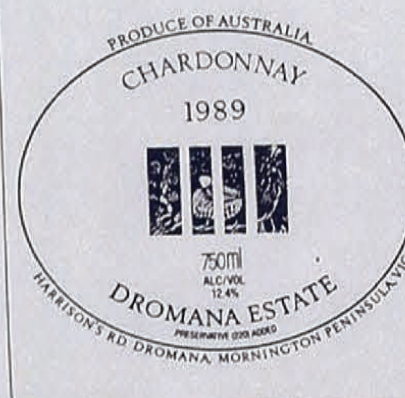
Due to the size of the Vineyard Dromana Estate, labelled wines will always be in short supply.

Readers wishing to receive regular release advice can enquire about Dromana's mailing list by writing to Dromana Estate, PO Box 332, Mornington VIC 3931.

By Nicholas Skinner. Nicholas Skinner is the President of the Restaurant Division of the Australian Hotel Association (AHA). He is also a lecturer in Wine Service and the Training Development Officer of the AHA and was selected as the WA Sommelier of the Year in 1988.

Nick is the proprietor of Picnicks Restaurant in Mt. Hawthorn where his enthusiasm and vast knowledge of the Australian Wine Industry makes dining a treat for wine buffs.

In Perth, the Dromana Estate wines are available at the Hermitage Cellars, McHenry Dunstan and Hurley outlets and the Como Hotel. They may also be purchased when dining at Stephanies in Nedlands, Pierres in West Perth, the Garden at the Hilton and at Picnicks in Mt Hawthorn. The Schinus Molle wines should be much easier to find.







Page 2 — THE LEADER, Wednesday, May 16, 1990



SAMPLING one of the wines are Ritchies' manager, David Hornbuckle, left, and Garry Crittenden of Dromana Estate.

## Wine tastings

WINEMAKERS from nine Peninsula wineries will be on hand to extol the virtues of their products at tastings on May 18 and 19 at Ritchies, Mount Eliza.

The tastings will be from 2 pm to 6 pm on Friday, May 18, and between 10 am and 2 pm on Saturday the 19th.

For Queen's Birthday

weekend, Peninsula winemakers will hold samplings at the Atrium Restaurant at the Mount Martha Valley Country Club between 11 am and 4 pm on Saturday, June 10, and Sunday the 11th.

Application forms for tickets will be published in local papers within the next few weeks.

**DINA Monks has been on leave. Dina's Diary will return next week.**

## Boom grape crops

THE Peninsula's 30 or more wineries have produced bumper crops and the quality and quantity are the best yet, according to Garry Crittenden.

"The 1990 vintage is one out of the box," he said.

Garry, who is co-ordinator for the Mornington Peninsula Winemakers Association, said there was a growing market for local wines and increasing support from restaurants.

His own winery, Dromana Estate, won the 1989 Vineyard of the Year award and had three of its wines selected among the UK Wine Magazine's top 250 for value for money.

Garry Crittenden leaves shortly for the UK and Europe on a marketing tour to reinforce support for Peninsula wines.

— TED SAUNDERS



ANN Van Loon harvests some of the season's grapes. ● Picture: VALERIU CAMPAN

● RIGHT: Liquor controller James Cameron holds a bottle of locally-made wine.



FRANKSTON STANDARD, Tuesday, May 15, 1990

## PENINSULA WINE TASTING EXTRAVAGANZA

Friday 18th May 2pm-6 pm and Saturday 19th May 10 am-2 pm our store at Mt Eliza (Mt Eliza Village Centre) will host a wine tasting 'Extravaganza' of the Mornington Peninsula's best vignerons will be in attendance to sample their new & current wine releases. In all 19 wines will be available for tasting. Never before have so many Peninsula vineyards got together in one place at one time for a public wine tasting.

Mark your diary now and be a part of a tasting extravaganza and try some peninsula wines some of which are not available for wide retail release.

<b>oniers Merricks Vineyard</b>	<b>Main Ridge Estate</b>	<b>Karina Vineyard</b>	<b>Kings Creek Vineyard</b>
— 1989 Chardonnay	— 1989 Pinot Noir	— 1989 Rhine Riesling	— 1989 Chardonnay
<b>omana Estate</b>	<b>Balnarring Vineyard</b>	— 1989 Sauvignon Blanc	<b>Moorooduc Estate</b>
— 1988 Cabernet Merlot	— 1988 Chardonnay	— 1989 Cabernet Sauvignon	— 1988 Cabernet Sauvignon
— 1989 Pinot Noir	— 1988 Rhine Riesling	<b>Merricks Estate</b>	<b>Hickinbotham</b>
<b>gee Park Winery</b>	— 1987 Pinot Noir	— 1988 Cabernet Sauvignon	— 1989 Paul's Vineyard Chardonnay
— 1988 Cabernet Merlot	— 1987 Cabernet Sauvignon	— 1988 Shiraz	— 1989 Cotton Springs Cabernet
— 1989 Chardonnay			

PHONE (783 2255) OR FAX (781 4937) ORDERS WELCOME  
FREE DELIVERY TO THE PENINSULA. \$5 DELIVERY FEE MELBOURNE SUBURBS  
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MT ELIZA Village Centre	787 4322	SOMERVILLE Eramosa Road	(059) 77 5260	NARRE WARREN Webb Street	704 6290
RANKSTON 457 Nepean Hwy	783 2255	HASTINGS High Street	(059) 79 2695	WONTHAGGI Graham Street	(056) 72 1776
RANKSTON Bayside Shopping Centre	783 1494	BALNARRING Village Shopping Centre	(059) 89 5210	NEW STORE OPENING	
		LANGWARRIN Village Shopping Centre	789 8981	FRANKSTON Tower Hill Shopping Centre	770 1643

**RITCHIES**

THE AGE, Tuesday 15 May 1990

## Local wines are winners

FOR the first time outside the private precincts of the peninsula's vineyards, the public will have a chance to sample the best of our local, award-winning wines.

All bon vivants take note that on Friday, May 18, 2 pm-6 pm and Saturday, May 19, 10 am-2 pm, Ritchies SSW store Mount Eliza will be celebrating 'A Wine Tasting Extravaganza'.

Ten peninsula winemakers, including Gary Crittenden (winner of winemaker of the year award '89) of Dromana Estate, Nat White of Main Ridge Estate, Stan Paul of Balnarring Vineyards, Graham Pini of Karina Estate, plus representatives from Hickinbotham Estate, Stoniers Merrick's Vineyards, Elgee Park Winery, Kings Creek

Vineyard, Moorooduc Estate, will be present to promote new and current releases.

The wines, which include the award-winning '88 Merrick's Estate Shiraz and '89 Karina Estate Cabernet Sauvignon, can be sampled with imported cheeses for \$3 deposit on a glass. The amount is totally refundable on return of the glass.

Ritchie's will be setting up tables and displaying the wines in the arcade of the Mount Eliza Village Centre.

Winemakers will advise serious imbibers on the special qualities of Peninsula-grown grapes and introduce all interested novices to the local product. All of the wines will be available for sale at Ritchie's SSW store at special discount prices.





'DRINK BETTER — drink less' may well be the maxim for the nineties. More Australians are buying quality reds, wines with personality, warming wines for contemplation and reflection. Australia has more than 550 wineries and an estimated 10,000 different labels. Here tasters **Michael Hill Smith** and **Brett Crittenden** narrow down the field in a guide to our best reds.

A few 'home truths' emerged as the tasting progressed. The overall quality of wines submitted was very high and there were bargains, but price was a fairly reliable indicator of quality. Many of the best wines also were the most expensive. Small companies do not necessarily make better wine. Some of the best wines came from large companies. Coonawarra is still king for cabernet and Victoria makes the best pinot noir.

## CABERNET SAUVIGNON

The aristocrat of red grapes and an important ingredient of the famed reds of Bordeaux. Performs well throughout the world and, in particular, Australia and California. Cabernet sauvignon often has a deep colour and concentrated berry, almost blackcurrant aromas that can develop into cedarwood-chocolatey characters with bottle-age. As expected, many of the top wines in this category hailed from Coonawarra.

### 1988 Schinus Molle Cabernet Sauvignon

\$15.50

The Schinus Molle label is used for the non-estate wines made by Gary Crittenden (no relation to Brett) at Dromana Estate. This wine is an interstate blend of Mornington Peninsula and Coonawarra and has distinctive cooler cabernet characters and a lovely soft textured palate. A stunning wine, well priced for this quality.

## PINOT NOIR

Pinot noir, the grape from which the celebrated reds of Burgundy in France are made, is a relatively new arrival to Australia. The variety is capricious, difficult to make well and prone to poor colour and premature browning. "Why bother," asks English wine critic Auberon Waugh "when Australia makes such good wines from shiraz and cabernet?"

The answer is simple. Pinot, despite its inherent problems, can produce heavenly wines of near transcendental quality. Silky-textured wines with ethereal aromas that vary from simple strawberry-raspberry fruit through to more rustic smells of game and truffles. Nor is pinot noir always light-bodied and wishy-washy; its best wines are likened to "a steel fist in a velvet glove".

Unfortunately there are few good pinots in Australia, although quality is improving all the time. The best invariably come from cooler climates and are made by winemakers following the specialised production techniques of Burgundy. Of the 27 tasted, six are worthy of review, and five of these were Victorian.

### 1989 Dromana Estate Pinot Noir

\$22.50

Made by Gary Crittenden at Dromana Estate on the Mornington Peninsula. Youthful wine with no browning, pristine pinot fruit and soft sophisticated palate. Will probably age well, but at its current age very seductive.

SUNDAY HERALD - MAY 1990





12 AGENDA The Sunday Age

# Victorian wine's new frontier

Next weekend's Mornington Peninsula wine exhibition is a chance to get in early on one of the state's newest quality wine regions — and enjoy the peninsula's other subtleties. **Hugo McNeill** reports.

**Q**UIETLY, the Mornington Peninsula is emerging as one of Victoria's premium cool-climate wine-growing areas, gaining an appreciative following among wine lovers for its fine chardonnays, cabernets, cabernet blends, and of late, pinot noirs.

To give potential fans a chance to taste a representative sample of Peninsula wines side by side, local winemakers last year held their first Queen's Birthday Wine Weekend. It proved an instant success, with 11 vineyards presenting 25 wines for tasting and eight wineries opening their cellar doors for inspection and sales. Fifteen hundred people attended. The event will be repeated next Saturday and Sunday and is set to become an annual one.

As always, there are plenty of attractions on the Mornington Peninsula to justify a family weekend even without a wine festival; the magnificent spectacle of the bay and ocean beaches, coastal walks, links golf courses par excellence, galleries, markets (especially Red Hill) and cornucopia of produce and restaurants.

While the viticultural and vinicultural spotlight has been focused on the Yarra Valley and to a lesser extent Geelong, and deservedly so; the Mornington Peninsula now warrants attention in its own right as a vignoble of exceptional promise and repute.

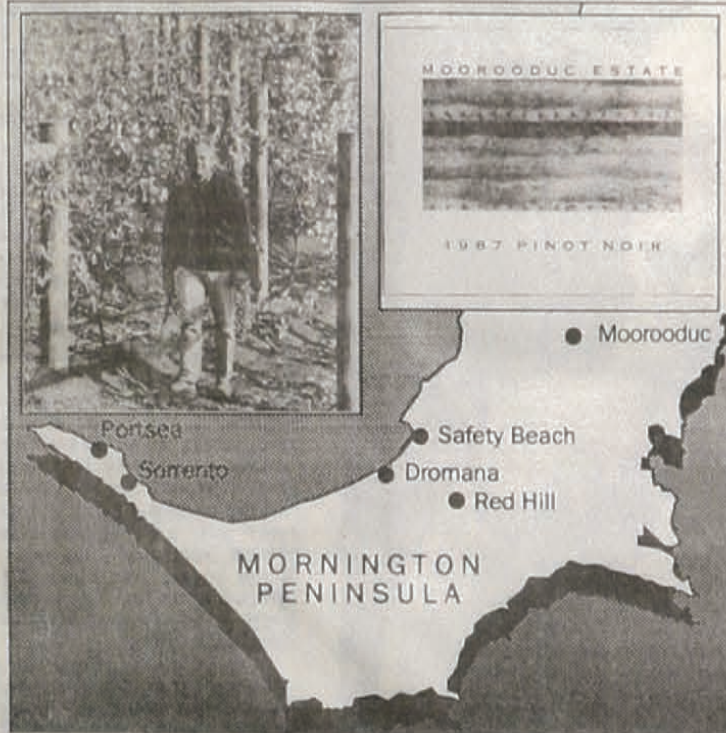
From small beginnings in the mid-1970s, when the likes of Beillieu Myer (Elgee Park Winery), Brian Stonier (Stonier's Merricks Vineyard), Nat White (Main Ridge Estate) and George Kefferd (Merricks Estate) cannily converted pasture and orchards to vine — the Peninsula has flourished.

The local Vignerons Association now boasts 100 members, a quarter of which collectively crush 500 tonnes of grapes from over 60 hectares of plantings.

Of these there are a dozen or so winemakers producing consistently well-made, well-structured varietal wines of character and finesse; all of which are commercially available, albeit in small quantities. Invariably, the wines are much sought after, hence often difficult to acquire.

The Mornington Peninsula dominated the 1989 Lilydale wine show in the current vintage cabernet class.

If you can lay your hands on a bottle or two of any vintage or varietal from any of the above, do so. Add to these a selection from Gary



Crittendens's Dromana Estate, Graeme Pinney's Karina Vineyard, Kings Creek Vineyard and Moorooduc Estate, to name but a few. Leon Massoni's (Massoni Main Creek Vineyard) 1989 Chardonnay is also worth a try. Likewise watch out for future first releases later this year or early next, from Tim and Jamie Sutcliffe's Peninsula Estate Winery and Andrew Hickinbotham at Hickinbothams.

Next weekend's event is divided into two components: From 11 am to 4 pm on Saturday, there is an exhibition and tasting of 42 wines (as listed) from 15 vineyards at the Atrium, Mount Martha Valley Country Club, Safety Beach (Melway 160, C5). Admission is by pre-paid ticket (\$15) or \$20 per person on the day. This provides an excellent chance for a

relaxed tasting in the company of the winemakers.

Alternatively, you may prefer to explore the region by visiting some of the 12 vineyards that will be opening for tasting and sales on Sunday. Many will serve light refreshments.

The attraction of the Peninsula Wine Weekend is that it is free from, and hopefully will remain so, the blatant commercialism that often attends such festivals.

Vineyards open to the public on Sunday are: Bannarring Estate, Bannarring; Coolart Valley Vineyard, Red Hill; Dromana Estate, Dromana; Elgee Park Winery, Merricks North; Hickinbotham Vineyard, Dromana; Karina Vineyard, Dromana; Kings Creek Vineyard, Bittern; Main Ridge Estate, Red Hill; Moorooduc Estate, Moorooduc; Paringa Estate, Red Hill South; Tuerong Estate Vineyard,

Red Hill; Vintina Estate, Mount Eliza.

The local vignerons are a hospitable lot; there's the urbane Brian Stonier, affable Nat White, the ebullient Gary Crittenden, the enthusiastic Pinney and the bubbly Kathleen Quealy of Kings Creek Vineyard.

The Peninsula produces wines from top quality fruit in a climate best summed up as being, "cooler than Bordeaux and marginally warmer than Burgundy".

Two distinct micro-climates exist, ranging between maritime sites at or near sea level with soil of shallow sandy loam on a clay base; to the elevated (up to 300 metres above sea level) vineyards of the central Peninsula with their deep, well-drained red volcanic soils, cooler temperatures and slightly higher rainfall.

These climatic subtleties are evident in the local wines. Dromana Estate and Karina Vineyard at Dromana are maritime; Main Ridge, Massoni Main Creek and Tuerong Estate — all at Red Hill, are more elevated.

A culinary tour is a must as there are some fine licensed and BYO restaurants on the Peninsula at which you may sample the local wine. Lunch at the incomparable Two Faces at Delgany (Portsea) is not as expensive as you may think (about \$80 for two), and Two Faces has an extensive regional wine list.

Then there's the more rustic but equally as welcoming Tuerong Estate Vineyard Restaurant at Red Hill, or Johnnie Come Lately's (Red Hill South), Mangan's Bakery at Flinders or McCarthy's BYO at Sorrento. Also worth a visit is Arthurs Bar & Bistro at Arthurs Seat.

Weather permitting, a picnic overlooking the cliffs that abound along the many panoramic coastal walks at either the Cape Schanck Coastal Park or the recently opened Point Nepean National Park, is hard to beat.

One of my favorite cliff-top walks is from Sorrento back beach toward Diamond Bay and St Paul's beach.

The area has a diverse range of accommodation from homely and inexpensive bed and breakfasts such as the Red Hill Retreat at Red Hill and the Outlook at Shoreham. The Gazebo Motel and Licensed Restaurant at Arthurs Seat is home to some fine fare, wine, and live jazz from Freddy Parks on Saturday evenings. For luxury, Delgany can't be beaten, while Red Hill will soon be home to a luxury retreat — Osprey Estate Guest House.

Therein lies the Peninsula's charm, you can make of it what you want, no matter your budget. True, small vineyard wines are not cheap, but they are value for money. Make sure you leave some room in the car boot, for once you have discovered Peninsula wines, you will want to add them to your cellar.

For further Wine Weekend information, phone Graeme Pinney (059) 81 0137.

For tourist and accommodation information, phone Barbara Murphy on (03) 783 3222.

## Peninsula art and craft guide

Aside from wineries, the peninsula has a range of art and craft galleries.

At Red Hill there is an excellent selection of watercolors, distinctive jewellery, pottery and handcrafted toys at The Post Office Gallery. Nearby, set in beautiful gardens, is the popular Noel's Gallery. James Walduck invariably displays fine ceramics, jewellery, glassware and paintings. Lynne and Mark Heggles' Working Pottery is a must if you appreciate creative combinations of semi-precious metals and ceramics.

Christine and Gavin Byrt's Giddy Bullfrog Gallery and Tearoom at Red Hill South is a delight. The views to Westernport Bay are spectacular, there's a diverse array of unusual decorative and domestic pottery, some fine textiles and the tearoom is a gem.

Other galleries worth a visit are The Barn Arts and Crafts Centre at Merricks North (especially noted for

decoupage patchwork and needlework), Portsea Gallery, for jewellery, glassware and decorative ceramics, and the Garth Gallery at Blairgowrie, for wooden clocks and leather.

For further information:

**RED HILL:** The Post Office Gallery, Mornington-Flinders Road, Red Hill, ph: 059 892245. Noel's Gallery, Mornington-Flinders Road, Red Hill, ph: 059 892538. Heggles Pottery, Mornington-Flinders Road, Red Hill, ph: 059 892661.

**RED HILL SOUTH:** Giddy Bullfrog Gallery and Tearoom, 38 Oceanview Avenue, Red Hill South, ph: 059 892224.

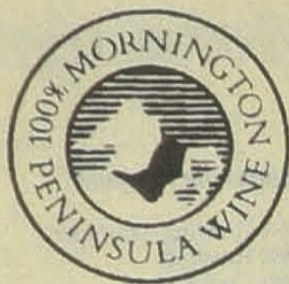
**MERRICKS NORTH:** The Barn Arts and Crafts Centre, 49 Old Dromana-Bittern Road, Merricks North, phone 059 897482.

**PORTSEA:** Portsea Galleries, 3745 Nepean Highway, Portsea, ph: 059 842994.

**BLAIRGOWRIE:** The Garth Gallery, 28-43 Nepean Highway, Blairgowrie, ph: 059 888876.



**MORNINGTON  
PENINSULA  
VIGNERONS  
ASSOCIATION  
INC.**



## QUEENS BIRTHDAY WEEKEND

### *Wine Exhibition*

**SATURDAY 9TH JUNE**

*The Atrium*

*Mount Martha Valley Country Club*

*Dromana*

*11 am - 4 pm*

*Tasting notes. Pages 2 & 3*

### *Open Vineyards Day*

**SUNDAY 10TH JUNE**

*Your opportunity to visit the vineyards and wineries  
of the Mornington Peninsula.*

*For information on participating vineyards  
refer Page 4.*

THE LEADER, Wednesday, May 30, 1990 — Page 13



LOCAL winemaker Kathleen Quealy tops up the wine in a French oak cask at Kings Creek.  
● Picture: VALERIU CAMPAN

## Corks drawn on latest vintages

By TED SAUNDERS

THE largest tastings of Peninsula wines will take place over the Queen's Birthday weekend when local winemakers will draw the corks from their latest vintages.

The wine exhibition is the second to be held over the Queen's birthday weekend and is becoming a popular annual event.

Eleven vineyards will be open for public inspection, most of these only for this one special occasion each year.

On Saturday, June 9, 15 vineyards producing commercial quantities will show a total of 45 wines at a tasting at the Atrium Restaurant, Mount Martha Valley Country Club, Safety Beach, from 11 am to 4 pm.

Included will be wines from five of the Peninsula's newest vineyards: Coolart Valley, Massoni's Main Creek, Tanglewood Downs Estate, Paringa Estate and Vintina Estate.

Several new wines will be released during the weekend, which is expected to attract wine writers from interstate taking the opportunity to see many vintages from the Peninsula.

Vineyards will be open for inspection on Sunday, June 10, between 11 am and 4 pm with some serving food and providing entertainment.

Charges may be made by some wineries for tastings.

Vineyards open to the public include Balnarring Winery, Dromana Estate, Elgee Park, Hickinbotham Wines, Karina Vineyard, Kings Creek Vineyard, Main Ridge Estate, Moorooduc Estate, Paringa Estate, Tuerong Estate Vineyard and Restaurant and Vintina Estate.

Full details of the weekend and a map of location of the wineries are available from the MPVA.



Mornington Peninsula Vignerons Association

## WINE EXHIBITION

QUEENS BIRTHDAY WEEKEND

Saturday June 9, 1990

The wines of The Mornington Peninsula have earned an enviable reputation over recent years.

On the Saturday of the Queens Birthday long weekend, June 9, an invitation to try 45 Mornington Peninsula wines from 15 vineyards will provide an excellent tasting experience.

Make your way to: The Atrium,  
Mount Martha Valley Country Club  
Safety Beach (Melway 160 C5)

Admission: by pre-paid ticket \$15 / person  
Send cheque with S.A.E. to: The Secretary,  
MPVA PO Box 1100 City Road PO 3205  
(or \$20 on the day)  
Saturday June 9 - 11.00am to 4.00pm





# 'New' vineyard is licensed to sell



• AND the 'net result' is: "a good drop". Don and Betty Curry sample their vino grown on their Red Hill property.

A NEW wine label appeared among the exhibitors' products featured at the successful promotion of Mornington Peninsula wines at The Atrium at Mt Martha on Saturday, June 9.

And the hundreds who flocked to taste the fruits of the local vintners' efforts pronounced the newcomer as a worthy addition to the impressive peninsula range.

Coolart Valley Vineyard is the latest on the Peninsula to have gained a licence to sell wines.

In 1981 Don and Betty Currie planted their first vines, Cabernet Sauvignon for red wines, and in

1982 planted their first white wines (Chardonnay and Riesling).

Those were drought years and the vines struggled until a bore was put down and a drip system installed. Now they are flourishing and this year looks to be a good one, free of disease caused by too much moisture in the atmosphere, but again rather a dry season by normal standards.

In 1986 the first wine was made by Don himself. Since then the wines have been made by Peter Cummings, winemaker for Mickinbotham Winemakers who are establishing their own vineyard at Dromana. Currently the 1988 Cabernet

Sauvignon is available together with 1989 white wines.

Semillon/Chardonnay and a Riesling.

Don Currie is a chemist at Rosebud and has had a keen interest in operating a vineyard of his own for many years. Setting up at Red Hill has been a labor of love due to having to run a pharmacy full time as well as spending every spare moment in the vineyard pruning, hoeing, spraying and tossing nets over the vines to keep the birds at bay.

He and Betty work long hours, especially during daylight saving time, out in the paddock.

"It keeps us young and healthy," says Don.

"With so much to do we don't have time to worry about much. It is very pleasing to finally see our efforts come to fruition and have our wine on the market."

Mornington Peninsula wines are gaining recognition all over Australia and even overseas. They are proving to be of the highest standard. Red Hill in particular is proving to be one of the best areas with several vineyards developing and producing excellent wines.

If you want to sample Coolart Valley wines, inspect the vineyard or place an order you can talk to Don and Betty on (059) 89 2087.



— FRANKSTON STANDARD, Tuesday, June 19, 1990



LOCAL wine grower Garry Crittenden, of Dromana Estates, with wine critic James Halliday at the wine festival in Mount Martha.

## Wine weekend a big success

"ONE of the best" is how Peninsula vignerons described the Queen's Birthday wine festival with encouraging cellar door sales being recorded.

About 500 people attended the wine tasting at the Atrium Restaurant, Mount Martha, on the Saturday, making the rounds of the display stands of the 15 participating winemakers.

Mr Ken Bilham, of Tan- glewood Downs Estate and a member of Mornington Peninsula Vignerons Association, said a pleasing number of orders were written for all wines "on tasting".

### Enthusiasts

On the Sunday all wineries reported a good public response

for the open day and again many cellar door sales were made. Mr Bilham said the association targeted the wine enthusiast and this resulted in brisk buying.

Public interest and response made it easy to understand the growing popularity of Peninsula wines.

— TED SAUNDERS











THE AGE, Tuesday 26 June 1990

## EPICURE 5

## A life's experience in making wine

**O**LD viticulturists never retire, they simply settle down to grow a few grapes. That will be the case with Bob Hollick, MBE, who has just retired from the board of Mildara and is now growing grapes on the Mornington Peninsula.

Bob Hollick can be credited with the invention of the mechanical pruning machine, which hardly sounds exciting but in reality is the source of controversy and debate. Pruning is a very labor-intensive process and is usually done in the middle of winter come rain or shine. Those made redundant by the mechanical pruner probably aren't sorry.

There is no doubt that Mr Hollick's machine saves the wine companies money, but its detractors regard it as a retrograde step. Pruning by hand allows choice about which canes to save and which to discard. The mechanical pruner with its two whirling discs mows down the lot.

What it lacks in romance is made up for in efficiency, but it is not the sort of invention that is particularly applicable to a small vineyard. Many of the boutique makers look upon such practices as heresy. Some have even gone to the lengths of printing "hand pruned" on their labels.

The detractors also point out that the method causes problems with disease, overcropping and disparity of ripening. But according to trials at Mildara Coonawarra over the past eight years, these drawbacks are not worth considering. They have tested mechanical pruning against spur, minimal, hedging and nearly every other system and found the grapes from mechanical pruning as good as if not superior to the others. They use mechanical pruning for 95 per cent of their vineyards and recent show and market success seems to vindicate the system.



## Wine

By MARK SHIELD

All of this debate is the source of much mirth for the sprightly Mr Hollick, who usually wears an amused expression as if he's just been told a naughty joke. There is a perpetual twinkle in his eye that 72 years have not dulled, and it wouldn't surprise if he were found actually talking to his vines. If so, it would probably seem natural. You can't spend that much time in vineyards without developing a deep affinity with the vine.

He can also claim to be the person to have introduced merlot to Coonawarra. This claim is not without an air of controversy. It jumped the gun somewhat where the quarantine regulations were concerned. Nobody seemed to mind and the faith in merlot as a component part of a superior blend has already been justified. It's part of the Hollick character to be a man of action.

He's always been interested in vines and had an inquiring mind. At the age of five his father gave him a vine to grow. It flourished, but one day the family was dismayed to find the treasure had been uprooted. The culprit was the young Hollick. When asked for an explanation he replied that he "wanted to see what was going on under the ground".

His inquiring disposition continues after 72 years. He is now starting a new venture on the Mornington Peninsula, an area he believes is very exciting. In company with Ian Home, the founder of Yellowglen, he is pioneering a substantial vineyard.

Mornington is a close-knit wine community, so Bob Hollick's project is under close scrutiny. His viticultural techniques don't necessarily sit well with some of the producers in the district. Although too polite to cause a confrontation, some voiced concern about "broad-acre blockie techniques more suited to Mildara".

Their concern is directed at the high yields and consequent ripening problems. The late Stephen Hickinbotham's dictum for Mornington about no fruit being useful when the sugar reading is below 23 Brix, has been adopted by most of the producers in the district, so they prune to lower the yields to ensure obtaining such a reading.

Mornington Peninsula has been a model for viticultural experimentation. Detailed canopy management has been practised and many of the vineyards look like regimented soldiers on parade. It is an expensive process but the locals believe it is the only way to grow grapes successfully.

These methods are far removed from the broad-acre approach in districts like Coonawarra, and it is only natural for each area to believe it is unique or in some way special. Ask any small producer anywhere and they will quickly tell you their area has no peer anywhere else. This is particularly true of the Yarra Valley and the Mornington Peninsula.

In steps Bob Hollick with a life's experience in several types of climate. Ever used to controversy, he seems undisturbed by the discreet rumblings and is getting on with the



Bob Hollick: ever used to controversy.

business of growing vines. The proof of who is right or wrong is a couple of years off. He is undoubtedly open-minded enough to modify his thinking if necessary.

Once again he is daring to be different, which is the Hollick way of things. The first grapes from his vineyard will probably find their way into the Mildara group and may not be marketed as discrete entities. It remains to be seen whether there is a Mornington label to be produced from the vineyard, but the arrival of this veteran in this burgeoning area is interesting to say the least.

Page 6 — SOUTHERN PENINSULA GAZETTE, Tuesday, July 24, 1990

## Cheers from Down Under

By TED SAUNDERS

**B**Y the turn of the century, Mornington Peninsula wines could be earning millions of export dollars for Australia.

This is no pie in the sky dream, according to winemaker Garry Crittenden, of Dromana Estate vineyard.

Mr Crittenden has just returned from three weeks in Britain spent reinforcing his winery's presence.

While there, he visited the London Wine Trade Fair, possibly the most prestigious of them all, where his wines were tasted by top wine producers from France, Spain and Italy.

Australian wines were, generally, "the real buzz" of the fair, he said, with buffs queuing to taste the products from Down Under. "Our wines are the best in the world for freshness and cleanliness of taste and our production technology has no peer," he said.

"If we on the peninsula had the production capacity, we could double the quantity we export."

He said that in one month this year, 1.6 million litres of Australian wine were sold in the UK. It is only in the past six or seven years that Australian wines have made such a strong impression on the UK and European markets.

The International Wine Challenge, Britain's most influential wine competition, awarded three of its six top trophies, five gold medals and 25 silver medals to Australian wines after five days of "blind" tastings.

In a competition renowned as "the meanest event of its kind in the world", Australian Bordeaux-style wines and chardonnays compared favorably with their French counterparts.



Toasting the success of Australia at the London Wine Trade Fair (from left): Bill Stevens from Mildara Wines, Scott Collett, Woodstock Winery, Garry Crittenden, Dromana Estate, and Adam Wynn, Mount Adam.

"Our wines are a force to be reckoned with. Consumers are looking for value for money and our products sell for a price equivalent to that in Australian bottle shops and restaurants," said Mr Crittenden.

**"T**HERE is an immense potential for our wines overseas and it is not inconceivable that by the year 2000, the industry could be earning millions of dollars in export sales."

This year's trade fair was the second Mr Crittenden has attended.

Dromana Estate has shipped 2000 cases to the UK this year and Mr Crittenden predicts that the

winery will eventually be sending 6000 cases to discerning British drinkers.

His Pinot Noir generated "immense interest", even French producers were coming to his stand, tasting and asking about Australian production methods.

"They couldn't get over how good our wines are," he said.

Apart from Dromana Estate, eight or nine other Peninsula wineries have shipped between 300 and 400 cases to the UK, not a huge amount, but it does get them "a foot in the door" for future sales and gets their names before importers and the buying public. Mr Crittenden and his wife Margaret planted their first vines in 1982. Since then, the vineyard has

established a reputation as one of the region's leading producers. It has expanded to four hectares, with Cabernet Sauvignon, Merlot, Pinot Noir and Chardonnay.

As well as attending to Dromana Estate, Mr Crittenden and his partner, Ian Macrae, are viticulture consultants to The Briars Homestead vineyard, which is operated by the Shire of Mornington and looking forward to its first pickings next year.

**T**HE Peninsula is a new and expanding wine growing area, where the vineyards are located on a narrow strip of land between Port Phillip and Western Port.

It is an area of small producers

whose commitment, combined with the cool maritime climate, have resulted in superb wines.

Although the individual winemakers have produced their own unique wines from Cabernet Sauvignon, Pinot, Merlot and Chardonnay grapes, all Peninsula wines show outstanding fruit flavors, a fine structure and soft tannings.

All this is a far cry from the post-war years, when Australian wines were shipped in bulk to the UK and dubbed "strine wine" or "emu plonk".

It is the winemakers of the peninsula who are doing their best to rectify this situation, and overseas sales reflect their success.



### Fruit of the vine

Victorian Garry Crittenden's carefully planned approach to the making and marketing of wines, backed by 25 years' experience as a horticulturist, is reaping rich dividends.

Since selling his nursery nearly four years ago to concentrate on developing a fledgling vineyard on the Mornington Peninsula, he has made remarkable progress in a competitive industry.

Crittenden firstly established his Dromana Estate label for wines made only from grapes grown on the property, where the first vines were planted less than eight years ago. In the face of some scepticism he established a second line, Schinus Molle, using quality grapes bought from a number of different regions in Victoria and South Australia. Both labels have become firmly established at the premium end of the Australian market.

Not only that, but Crittenden has also made inroads into the export market, with sales of 1500 cases last year, outstripping not only his most optimistic expectations but those of his agent in the United Kingdom.

"We thought that if we managed about a 10th of that in the first year, we'd be doing well," he says. "I hope we're doing our bit to offset some of the trade imbalance."

Crittenden's success, however, comes from meticulous research, knowledge and the application required to achieve his goals. His search for the "right" soil began in the 1970s,



Priewinner Garry Crittenden.

when he made a climatic study of the Mornington Peninsula. This was followed by a two-year search, which led him to the 12ha of land now known as the Dromana Estate.

The grapes he chose to plant there were cabernet sauvignon, merlot, pinot noir and chardonnay. The last of the plantings will boost production of the estate wines from 2000 cases last year to 3000 in 1990. In addition, he will increase the output under the Schinus Molle label this year by 2000, to 5000.

Crittenden's efforts were rewarded in another way last year, when the estate was judged the Victorian Vineyard of the Year. Australian Airlines

sponsored the award, which is conducted by the Victorian Department of Agriculture and Rural Affairs in conjunction with the Orrefors Victorian Wine Show.

A government viticulturalist and an economist assess the entrants on aspects of their operations, including vine yields, production, profitability and marketing strategy.

Crittenden, 47, says that winning the award boosted the profile of Dromana Estate around Australia. He believes it justified his decision to change careers — for the second time — when he became a winemaker. The former Department of Agriculture researcher had operated a nursery on the peninsula since 1968, earning a reputation for innovation in plant production techniques and plant hygiene. He currently acts as a consultant to vineyards as far apart as Tasmania, Western Australia and southern Victoria.

"I'd always been a wine connoisseur, so in 1982 I took the plunge and planted 4ha to grapes along Harrison's Road, Dromana," he recalls. Crittenden lives on the estate with his wife and two children, plus dogs and cats.

Last year, the vineyard won four medals, a gold for its 1989 Sauvignon Blanc, silvers for both the 1988 and 1989 Cabernet and a bronze for the 1989 Pinot Noir at the Victorian Wine Show.

With a staff of two full-timers, plus casuals, it is the largest commercial operation of its kind in the area and serves as a research and development centre.

Crittenden recalls that when he established the estate, it was one of only a handful of vineyards on the peninsula. There are now more than 20 between Moorooduc and Mainridge. Although further expansion is planned, the winegrower does have one short-term ambition:

By JENI PORT

THE AGE, Tuesday 21 August 1990

Of the trophy-winning wines (listed below) mention must be made of the pinot noirs that made it through this year, including a Kings Creek 1988 pinot from the Mornington Peninsula that won the trophy for the best dry red made for early consumption.

to use his award prize — a return trip for two to Sydney — as soon as he can find the time.

WINTER 1990 • BELLE ENTERTAINING

### 1988 Dromana Estate Cabernet Merlot

In recent years this has consistently been one of the handful of outstanding cabernet-family blends. Beautiful blackcurrant and plum aromas are apparent, but softness and elegance, impeccable harmony and balance are the key essences of the wine. It's rich and gentle, soft and graceful, without notable tannin astringency, and therefore lovely to drink right away despite its youth. Time has yet to hand down a verdict on whether these wines age well; it's hard to believe age could improve on what's in the bottle today. Costs around \$22.35.

**HOON HOOKE**

Page 30 — Peninsula Towards 2000, Friday, August 10, 1990



BRIAN Stonier: the Peninsula is producing some of the finest quality wines in Australia.

## Cultivating a heritage in fine wine

**MORE** landowners on the Mornington Peninsula are turning to the cultivation of grapes for wine-making, and by the turn of the century the number of wineries in production could increase fivefold.

By TED SAUNDERS

100, of which some 40 have more than four acres under cultivation, will be close to the 500 mark by the year 2000.

By then the Peninsula will look like the Bordeaux and Burgundy regions of France, the most prestigious wine areas in the world, he says.

"It is more than likely that viticulture will be the most profitable use of agricultural land on the Peninsula," Mr Stonier said.

"We have everything in our favor: a rich soil and an ideal maritime climate, both of which give tremendously vigorous growth to the vines."

Mr Stonier said the high price of agricultural land on the Peninsula would preclude many "would be" vignerons from establishing vineyards but future vineyards would be planted on land already family owned where the trend was away from orchards, sheep and cattle.

He is enthusiastic when he speaks of the future.

"Our wines are the flavor of the month overseas and they are already winning wide respect internationally," he said. "The demand for them in the UK, New York and Toronto is difficult to satisfy."

"And Australian wine drinkers are moving away from the cask and flagon.

The trend is definitely towards high quality bottled wine."

The continuing success of Peninsula wines stems not only from the climate and soil but from the dedication of the vignerons to produce fine table wines from quality grapes of the classic varieties.

Chardonnay and Cabernet-Sauvignon are the most widely planted varieties with Pinot Noir, Merlot, Riesling and Shiraz now well established.

The success ratio of Peninsula wines at Australian wine shows, where they have won gold, silver and bronze medals, is believed to exceed that of any district — and all this in a very short time.



# Small, but perfectly formed...



By JAMES HALLIDAY

**D**oll's house viticulture it may be, but as each year goes by the house has ever more dolls in it. The last time I counted, the ever Hunter Valley had 45 wineries; the house of the Mornington Peninsula has 28, and it doesn't look like stopping there.

However, I must speedily admit the comparison of those two figures is of doubtful validity. In 1990 the peninsula's wineries produced around 600 tonnes of grapes (harvested around 500), while the ever Hunter Valley comfortably exceeded 10,000 tonnes. What is more, the size of the Mornington vineyards (19 of them fewer than 3ha) means that red winemaking facilities and/or red winemakers are common.

But the fact remains that there are 28 different producers. A few weekends ago a section of these presented more than 40 different wines, almost all from 1989 (predominantly) and 1988 (predominantly) and 1988 (predominantly) and 1988 (predominantly).

At a mini-exhibition on the Peninsula to which the public was invited, I found it turned up in droves. In another plane, in the 1989 southern torian wine show circuit (notably the Lyllydale Show) the Mornington Peninsula upstaged its friendly rival, the Yarra Valley. In yet a further demonstration of the size of the bark is more important in the size of the dog, Dromana Estate admitted by far the largest producer — exporting more wine to the United Kingdom than any other Australian winery of comparable size.

Dromana Estate has bypassed most of the restrictions inherent in the peninsula developing a second label, with the glorious name of Schinus Mollie, which I confidently predicted would be a disaster when it was introduced. It has been an unqualified success, partially using grapes won by others in the peninsula and partly sourced from areas as diverse as the Yarra Valley, Coonawarra and McLaren. If others have the same ambitions as Dromana Estate — and this does not seem likely, given the cessation of wine-making by Hickinbotham Winemakers — external sourcing of grapes is the obvious route to take.

It is in a small and closely knit wine community such as Mornington it can cause a deal of anxiety, even when the perceived has the trust and respect

which his fellow vigneron accord Garry Crittenden (owner of Dromana Estate).

It may appear to run counter to the burgeoning thrust for appellation control, exemplified by other developing wine regions such as Tasmania, the vigneron of which reacted with extreme vigour when grapes (or bulk wine) came across from the mainland. It is partly an issue of labelling integrity, partly a marketing issue: how can we promote our areas as better than any other (or as in some way unique) if we buy grapes from other regions?

There are three answers. First, ensure absolute clarity and integrity in labelling to distinguish district from foreign wines (Dromana Estate does this handsomely, reserving its own label for not only 100 per cent district but estate-grown grapes). Second, very high land costs, alternative land use pressures and the relative scarcity of large properties suited to grape growing all mean the size of most of the peninsula vineyards must necessarily be small.

Third, not only in Australia but in many parts of the world, some of the greatest wines are blends. The blends may be of grape varieties, they may be from different sites within a region (or both, as with champagne) or they may be regional blends. In all these cases the logic of the winemaker is that the sum of the total will be greater than the number of the parts.

It has to be admitted this is not the logic of the public, for which romance plays a large part in shaping perceptions of wine quality. There is a special mystique in the concept of wine grown, made and bottled on the estate — especially when you can talk to the winemaker in his winery, see his vines growing outside, and somehow feel part of the whole operation.

In some small measure it is on this perception that the Mornington Peninsula feeds, even if more of the wineries presently sell only by mailing list, but the Mornington Peninsula has a great deal more than sheer perception (or fantasy or romance) going for it.

**R**IGHT from the outset it has produced wines with exceptional clarity of varietal fruit flavour, thanks in part to a climate that varies to a surprising degree across relatively small distances but which (by Australian standards) is very cool, and in part to the consistently skilled standard of winemaking that has prevailed.

There have been times when I have wondered whether that clarity compensated for the delicacy of many of the wines, but as each vintage has passed they seem to have gained in stature and complexity. In a sense this is not so surprising. Most of the vineyards have come into commercial production in the second half of the 1980s with Baillieu Myer's Elgee Park the senior citizen, producing its first wine in 1975.

So the winemakers have all had to contend with young vines, with an absence of inherited or passed-on wisdom from

predecessors or neighbours, and with the sheer uncertainty of viticulture in a climate that vintages such as 1989 show to be as marginal as that of many of the prime European regions.

Most importantly, there has been and still is a steep learning curve about growing wines — yes, growing wines rather than growing vines. Dromana Estate, which deservedly won the Australian Airlines Award as Victorian vineyard of the year in 1989, is at once a commercial vineyard and a research station. Garry Crittenden partners Ian MacRae in one of Victoria's most active viticultural consultancies, and he is the first to say that the Mornington Peninsula — and southern Victoria in general — still has more questions than answers when it comes to optimising grape (and hence wine) quality.

The potential is, to put it mildly, impressive given the array of wines I tasted the other day. Six of the chardonnays were outstanding — Massoni, King's Creek, Stonier's Merricks, Elgee Park Moorooduc Estate and Dromana Estate. Leon Massoni, a father-figure in Melbourne restaurant lore, rightly runs his small, chardonnay only vineyard as a personal indulgence. But he has had the great good sense to have former Hickinbotham executive winemaker Peter Cumming make his wine... and a wondrously soft, fleshy and mouth-filling 1989 chardonnay is his reward. It is distributed by Flinders Wholesale Wines (phone 03 854 5233) to a number of small specialist retailers (and restaurants).

Both the King's Creek and the Dromana Estate show excellent barrel ferment characters; the King's Creek richer and more pungent overall, the Dromana Estate more elegant and restrained.

The 1989 vintage was not one to conjure with, but Tod Dexter, winemaker for the impish Brian Stonier of Stonier's Merricks, went perilously close. In a year that produced either light, rather frail wines on the one hand or soft, slightly fat wines on the other, he has spirited up a wine with tightness and concentration, showing tangy grapefruit-melon fruit flavours and length to the finish. The pinot noirs were less convincing (and far less numerous), but by consensus across wine magazines, newspaper wine columns and competitions and wine shows, Dromana Estate did best. I would simply like a little

more bite and structure, but the year may well have prevented that.

There was a full house of cabernets (many acknowledging the presence of merlot on either front or back label, and some adding cabernet franc to the melange) from the 1988 and 1989 vintages. In common with the Yarra Valley the cabernet family seems to have fared better overall (relatively speaking) in 1989 than the other varieties. Among many most attractive wines, 1989 Karina Vineyard cabernet sauvignon, 1989 Stonier's Merricks cabernet sauvignon, 1989 Dromana Estate cabernet merlot and 1988 Hickinbotham St Neot's cabernet sauvignon stood out. All share vibrant — English wine-writers use the term juicy — fresh red berry-cherry, redcurrant-blackcurrant fruit flavours with a lesser or greater edge of herbaceous capsicum to remind one that these wines are cabernets and from a cool climate.

There were also two great shirazes — 1988 Merrick's Estate (multi-trophy and gold medal winner) and 1988 Paringa Estate shiraz, both redolent of crushed black pepper and exotic spices but both with the fruit to carry that wonderfully extravagant seasoning.

Because the peninsula is such a new area and because of the arrival of so many dolls, this week I am giving an instant mini-guide to its wineries and labels. The following abbreviations have been used: rr — rhine riesling; tr — traminer; ch — chardonnay; semi — semillon; sb — sauvignon blanc; pn — pinot noir; cs — cabernet sauvignon; cf — cabernet franc; m — merlot; sh — shiraz; g — good; vg — very good; ha — hectare.

**Allen's Vineyards:** 0.5ha, ch, cs. Mail order through PO Box 115, Red Hill 3937.

**Balnarring Vineyard:** 5ha, rr, tr, ch, pn, cs with some older vintages; now contract made by Tarrawarra (Yarra Valley). Cellar

door open 10am to 4pm, also mail order and restaurants. Bittern-Dromana Rd, Balnarring 3926. Melway ref 163 B11; (059) 89 5258.

**Coolart Valley:** Newly licensed; 1.8ha, rr, semi-ch, cs. Contract made by Peter Cumming. Mail order: Thomas Rd, Red Hill South 3937. Melway ref 191 G6; (059) 89 2067.

**Cotton Springs:** New label, though the vineyard planted 1973 to sb, ch, cs. Contract made and marketed by Kathleen Quealy and Kevin McCarthy through mail order, 9B Musk Creek Rd, Flinders 3929. Melway ref 197 G1; (059) 89 6193.

**Craig Avon Vineyard:** 2.2ha, ch, pn, cs, cf, m. Consultant winemaker Nat White; first release late 1990. Craig Avon Lane, Merricks North 3926. Melway ref 161 J11; (059) 89 7465.

**Darling Park Vineyards:** 2.5ha, ch, pn, cs, cf, m. Contract made wines marketed through Peninsula Estate, Browne Lane and Red Hill Rd, Red Hill 3937. Melway ref 161 B10, 191 F2; (059) 89 2732.

**Dromana Estate:** 4ha, ch, pn, cs, m. Top producer, opens some weekends over summer. Harrison's Rd, Dromana 3936. Melway ref 160 J6; (059) 87 3800.

**Elgee Park:** approx 5ha, ch, rr, viognier, cs, cf, m. Long established; vg wines available through restaurants, fine wine retailers and mail order. Junction Rd, Merricks North 3926. Melway ref 161 G3; (059) 89 7338.

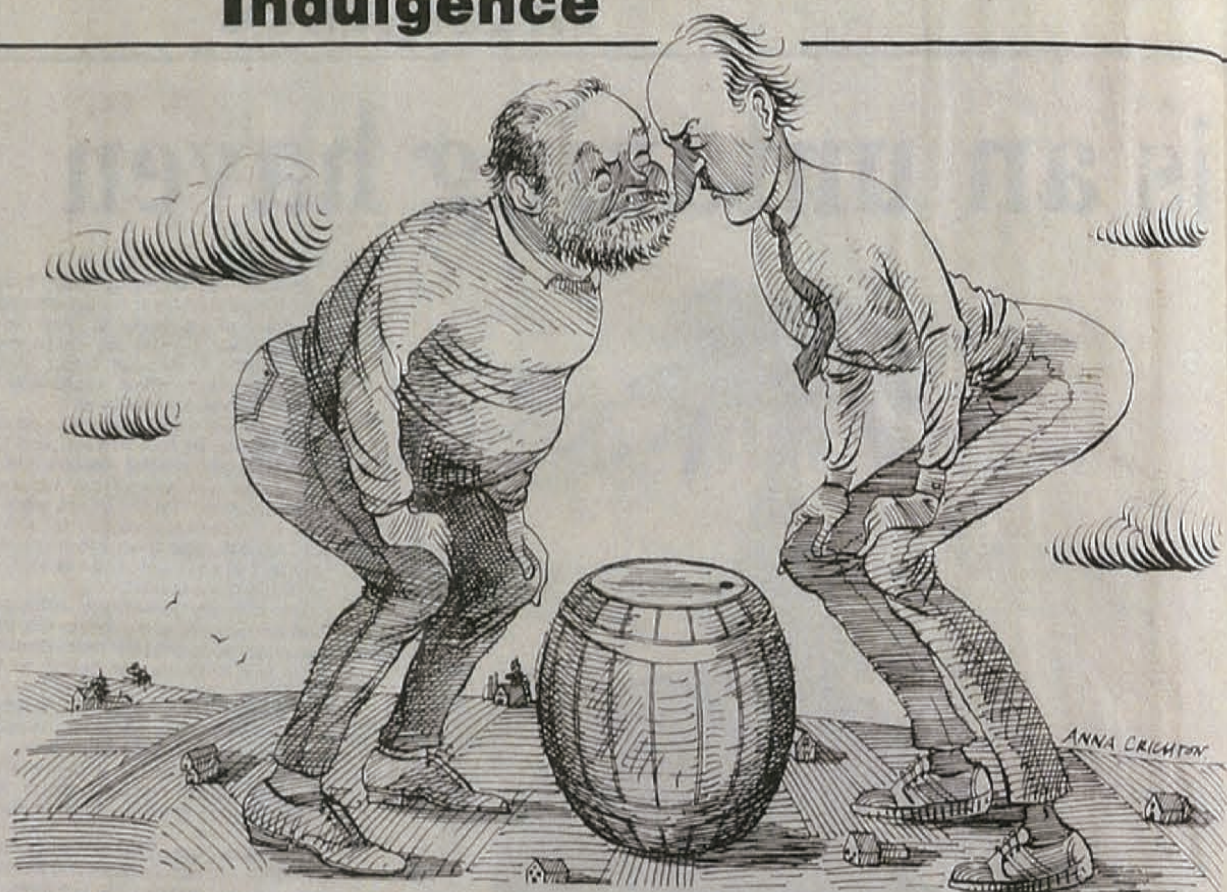
**Erinacea:** 8ha, cf, cs, m. First release later this year. Devonport Drive, Rye 3941. Melway ref 169 A11; (059) 88 6336.

**Hickinbotham:** 2.4ha, ch, cs, m, cf. Wide range of wines available through retailers, restaurants and mailing list. Cnr Nepean Highway and Wallaces Rd, Dromana 3936. Melway ref 160 J3; (059) 81 0355.

**Hoffert Balnarring Estate Vineyard:** 2ha, ch, tr, sylvaner, cs. Limited retail and restaurant distribution. Cellar door sales late 1990, 87 Bittern-Dromana Rd, Balnarring 3926. Melway ref 163 B11; (059) 89 5330.

**R.R. Hollick Vignerons:** 2ha extending to 8.5ha; at present cs, m, cf, ch. First release 1991; (059) 89 8660.

## Indulgence





THE WEEKEND AUSTRALIAN, JULY 7-JULY 8, 1990

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**Karina Vineyard:** 3ha. rr. sb. ch. cs. m; Vg contract made wines available through local retailers, restaurants, mailing list and weekend cellar door sales, 11am to 4pm or by appointment. Harrison's Rd. Dromana 3936. Melway ref 160 J6; (059) 81 0137.

**Kings Creek:** 3ha. ch. pn. cs; Vg wines contract made by Kevin McCarthy and Kathleen Quealy; available from cellar door, mail order and restaurants. 237 Myer's Rd. Bittern 3918. Melway ref 163 F8; (059) 83 2102.

**Main Ridge Estate:** 2.7ha. ch. pn. cs. Established 1975. Owner-winemaker Nat White is extremely experienced. Very good wines have won many awards. Limited availability through fine wine retailers, restaurants, mailing list and cellar door sales Saturday 12-5pm. William Rd. Red Hill 3937. Melway ref 190 C4; (059) 89 2686.

**Massoni Main Creek Vineyard:** ch. Rich. complex chardonnay made in limited quantities for famous Melbourne restaurateur Leon Massoni. Retail restaurant distribution: (059) 89 2060.

**Merricks Estate:** 3ha. ch. cs. sh; vg wines with shiraz outstanding. Available through mailing list, fine wine retailers and cellar door sales by appointment. Thompsons Lane. Merricks 3916. Melway ref 192 B9; (059) 89 8416.

**Moorooduc Estate:** 2.5ha. ch. pn. cs. m. cf; vg wines sometimes outstanding. Principally available through mailing list. Derril Rd. Moorooduc 3933. Melway ref 152 H2; (059) 78 8585 or (03) 699 3191.

**Mornington Vineyards:** 2.4ha. ch. pn. First wines late 1990. Melway ref 151 G7; (059) 74 2095 or (03) 817 3156.

**Paringa Estate:** 3.2ha. cs. cf. sh. ch. pn; vg shiraz (cabernet and chardonnay g). Available through restaurants, mail order and cellar door by appointment. 44 Paringa Rd. Red Hill South 3937. Melway ref 191 D9; (059) 89 2669.

**Peninsula Estate Winery:** Contract makes and markets (in the fashion of Hickinbotham) for Allen's, Darling Park, St Neot's, Ocean View and Keeley's vineyards; also estate-grown wines available through mail order (cellar door sales late 1990). Red Hill Rd. Red Hill 3937. Melway ref 190 K4; (059) 89 2866.

**Peninsula Hills Vineyard:** 1ha. cs. sh. rr. m. Established but little known. Buddina, Shoreham Rd. Red Hill South 3937. Melway ref 190 K10; (059) 89 2532.

**Shoreham Vale:** 2ha. ch. rr. cs. sh. Red Hill-Shoreham Rd. Red Hill South 3937. Melway ref 196 B4; (03) 822 6624.

**St Neot's Estate:** 1.8ha. sem. ch. rr. cs. pn. m. Available by mail order and through Peninsula Estate Winery. 63 Red Hill-Shoreham Rd. Red Hill South 3937. Melway ref 196 B4; (03) 822 6624.

**Stonier's Merricks Vineyard:** 15ha (largest vineyard, though not largest production, in the peninsula). Outstanding wines available through mail order and from a limited number of fine wine retailers. Winery due for completion December 1990. Thompsons Lane, Merricks 3916. Melway ref 192 B9; (059) 89 8352.

**Tanglewood Downs Estate:** 2ha. ch. tr. pn. cs. m. Cellar door sales by appointment; also by mail order and from selected local outlets. Bulldog Creek Road, Mornington Rural 3931. Melway ref 151 K12; (059) 74 3325.

**Teurong Estate Vineyard and Restaurant:** 2.8ha. ch. cs. m. malbec. Wines available only through restaurant - open Friday, weekends and public holidays. Mornington-Flinders Rd. Red Hill 3937. Melway ref 190 D8; (059) 89 2129.

**Vintina Estate:** 1.5ha. ch. sem. pn. cs. Cellar door sales weekends and public holidays 9am to 4pm. by appointment. 1282 Nepean Hwy. Mount Eliza 3930. Melway ref 105 C7; (03) 787 8166.

*rural Australia. Garry Crittenden's Dromana Estate (centre) at least has its own emergency water supply; the vines are to the left of the picture.*



### AUSTRALIAN WINES

# How does your vineyard grow

WINE REGIONS DON'T JUST APPEAR, READY MADE. SOMEBODY HAS TO PLANT THE FIRST VINE, AND STAKE THEIR REPUTATION AND THE BANK'S MONEY ON AN UNKNOWN PATCH OF LAND. IN EUROPE IT ALL HAPPENED AEONS AGO. IN AUSTRALIA IT'S HAPPENING BEFORE MARGARET RAND'S EYES

*Vines in the Mornington Peninsula (opposite). The nets are to keep the birds off; other pests may not be too much of a problem here, but the local birdlife can strip a vineyard in no time*

DO YOU REMEMBER BLUE PETER? IF YOU DO YOU WILL RECALL HOW, WHEN THEY WERE DEMONSTRATING HOW TO MAKE A GUIDE dog out of Fairy Liquid bottles, they would stop at crucial moments (before the difficult bits) and produce a more advanced version that they had done earlier.

Touring Australian vineyards is a little like that. One doesn't see things actually changing (one isn't there for long enough); one moves between vineyards and regions that are at different stages of development, piecing together the process of change from future plans and historical accounts.

Of course, there are the well-established regions, the ones that everyone knows, like the Hunter Valley and the Barossa Valley. But they are not the only ones. A little while ago the Yarra Valley was a novelty, but then wine writer James Halliday set himself up as a winemaker there, and has made a thorough job of putting himself and it on the map. It is still a region of small growers, but Moët & Chandon have moved in, attracted at least partly by the proximity of Melbourne, and built a huge sparkling wine plant. The Clare Valley, which used to be dominated by independent growers, is now about 60% owned by large companies, and Coonawarra is so securely established that mutterings about delimitation of the area can be heard.

It is not just a story, though, of how small companies are swallowed by large ones. Large companies have employees, and those employees have ambitions. What they want to do, when they leave the company winery at the end of the week, is to make their own wine, and bottle it themselves with their own name on the label. And come the weekend, that's exactly what they do - until one day they find that they are big enough to forget about the salary and the pension, and make their own wine full time. And the wheel has come full circle.

In the beginning there was the Mornington Peninsula. To get there, you fly to

Melbourne and drive south; it is, as you will have guessed, a cool area. It is also a wealthy area, too heavily populated to be completely rural in Australian terms, but much too rural to be called suburban. It is the sort of area where the houses have swimming pools and tennis courts in the gardens, and four-wheel-drive vehicles in the garages. And, surprisingly often, 20 acres of vineyard down the road.

Twenty acres of vines is a hobby, not a career. The people who grow vines in the Mornington Peninsula keep their expensive roofs over their heads by means of banking, or medicine, or law. But they are amateurs of winemaking in the best sense: they take it seriously, and they take advice. There are few hobby winemakers here who don't employ a consultant.

Garry Crittenden is one such consultant. He is also one of the biggest players in the Mornington Peninsula wine industry, with ten acres of his own land planted (the vines are just beyond the swimming pool and the tennis court) and enough new techniques on trial (in conjunction with CSIRO) to keep him well ahead of those for whom he consults. If they ask questions, be it about pruning or training or clones or whatever, he's supposed to know the answer.

Crittenden came to wine from horticulture. For 20 years he ran a wholesale nursery where he instituted new handling and nutritional practices, and got as far as he could go. He then gave himself five years to move from one industry to another. Now he says: 'Before I started growing grapes, I saw them as a horticultural crop. But with wine grapes, you're growing a crop which translates into something else. So I started looking at the things that alter quality in wine grapes.'

'I started, too, from love of wine: I had a romantic idea, a desire to make great wine. You need a cooler climate for that, which gives you a longer ripening period, and greater flavour development.'

That means that the Mornington Pen-

insula is ideal, he believes, for Cab Sauvignon, but it is Pinot Noir that suspects, is closest to his heart. He isn't satisfied with his Dromana Estate Noir, but it's possible to see where going, and he's certainly getting there: essence of Pinot Noir, he points out, is just flavour and structure, but a delicate silkiness and seductiveness. There's silkiness there already, but it wants weight to back it up.

If his Pinot Noir is one to watch Sauvignon Blanc (under the Schinus A label) is one to drink, preferably chilled warm day, and preferably, as we drank with crayfish in the garden. It's a beautifully structured, elegant, delicate with herbaceous fruit that never becomes over-assertive. This delicacy of touch characteristic of Crittenden's wines comes, he says, from very good grapes are not mucked up in the winery.

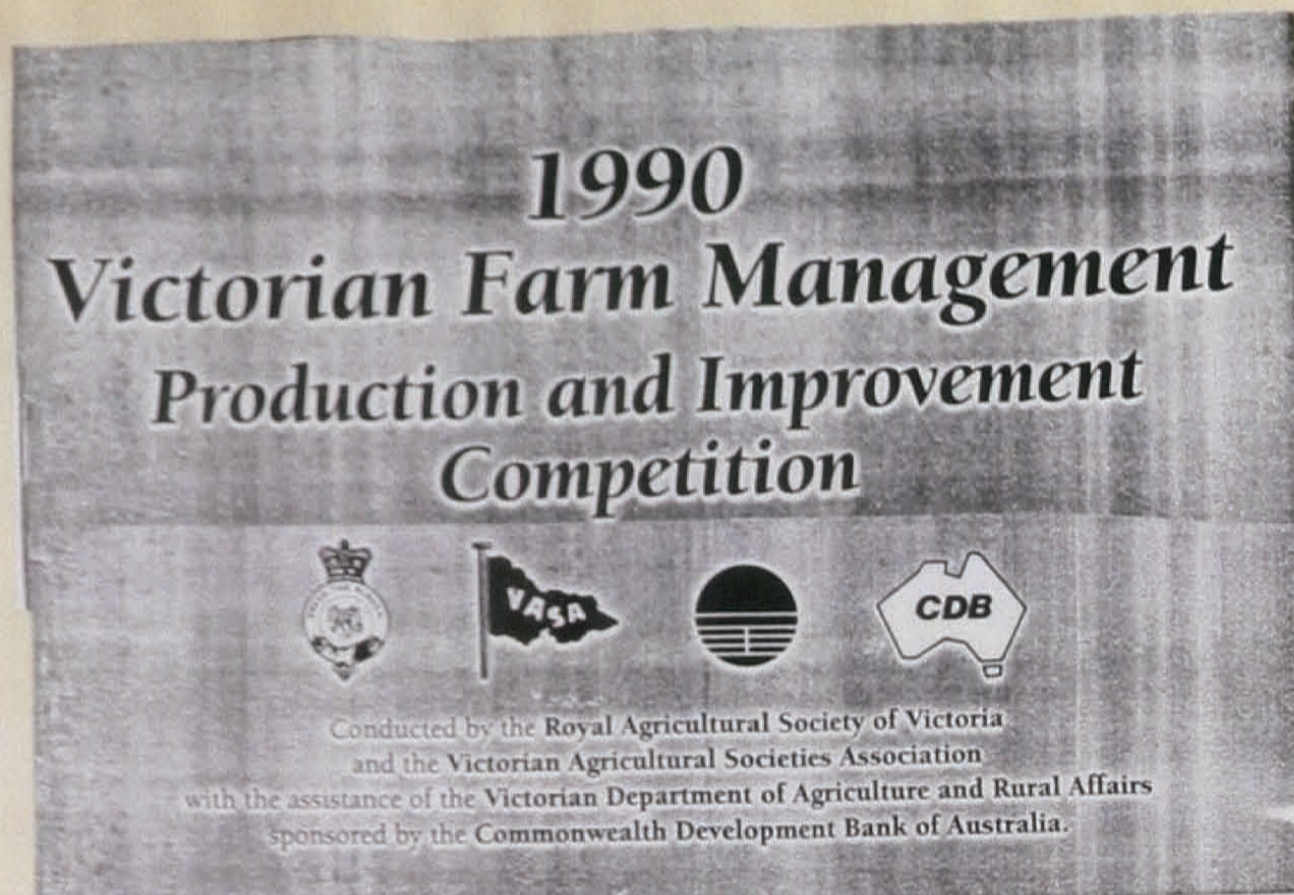
With just ten acres of vines at Dromana Estate he can't, and doesn't want to supply both the Dromana Estate label and his second label, Schinus Molle, from the same grapes. So the Schinus Molle grapes come partly from elsewhere in the Mornington Peninsula and partly from other regions: together, the 1988 Cabernet Sauvignon, for example, is 55% Mornington Peninsula and 45% Coonawarra. It's a lovely, spicy wine, with piercing Coonawarra fruit made more subtle by the blend of very classy stuff.

This trend for even relatively small wineries to have a main, expensive label, a cheaper second label, presumably to the cash flow, is widespread. Mount Eliza has two labels as well, although with acres under vine it is a somewhat big operation than Dromana Estate. It is, however, family-owned and run, a family in question being the Wynns, who sold their winery in Coonawarra 50 years ago, and set about starting again, this time by searching the whole of Australia and Tasmania for the ideal site.



*Not a car to drive if you're frightened of the breathalyser. The number plate was a present to Garry Crittenden from his wife Margaret*





## Section B

### Second

#### Garry Crittenden - Dromana Estate Vineyards

In 1981 Mr Crittenden purchased an 11 hectare property near Dromana on the Mornington Peninsula for development as a vineyard and winery. Prior to this he had many years experience as a practical horticulturalist, establishing a highly successful nursery noted for innovative techniques of plant production and hygiene.

Planting of vines commenced in spring 1982 when 1.6 ha of Cabernet Sauvignon and 0.2 ha of Merlot were established on formed banks with 3m x 1.5m spacing. At this time a small area of Pinot and Chardonnay were planted for observation. Planting continued in 1986 and 1987 when 1 ha each of Pinot and Chardonnay were established on closer spacing of 2.5 x 1m. Standard drip irrigation of 4 litres per hour was installed, the water being supplied from a 20 megalitre dam built on the property.

On Australian standards, a relatively elaborate trellising system was installed to provide for a vertically managed canopy with 2 sets of lift and gathered wire. Conventional head and cane pruning is done on the original planting, but spur pruning, with a substantial cost saving, is applied to the vines planted in 1986 and 1987. From trial work on the property, it is interesting to note that the annual production cost for spur pruning is approximately \$400 per tonne, compared with \$800 per tonne for conventionally pruned vines.



• Left to right: Garry Crittenden, John Robb, Andy Finnin RASV Councillors, Banjo Patterson DARA.

Soil analysis in the autumn and tissue analysis in the late spring as an annual routine, gives a continual monitoring of nitrogen, potassium and phosphorus requirements. There is a preference for environmentally safe sprays, using sulphur and copper based materials where possible.

A 200 tonne capacity winery has been developed on the property and production is in the modern style, with emphasis on fruit flavour in wines suitable for early consumption. Considerable effort is put into marketing, with success on the domestic and export markets.

Mr Crittenden gives considerable amount of his time to research work. With DARA he is engaged in clonal comparison trials with Merlot vines and work on deficit scheduling irrigation. With CSIRO, trials on nitrogen nutrition and pruning are being carried out. Most of this work studies the total plant behaviour right through to wine comparison.

Mr Crittenden is a skilled viticulturalist and wine maker who has a property showing an excellent standard of development and production. He is awarded second prize in a very closely contested Section B.



• Left to right: Garry Crittenden with RASV Councillors John Robb and Andy Finnin.



Page 6 - The Australian Grapegrower & Winemaker

October, 1990

**NEWS**

## Mornington Peninsula vineyard runner-up for Farm of the Year award

**I**n an effort hailed by the judges as little short of remarkable, Dromana Estate has been named runner-up in the Royal Agricultural Society of Victoria's 1990 farm management competition - the farm of the year award.

Accepting his award after it was announced at the Royal Melbourne Show, Dromana owner Garry Crittenden said he was "overjoyed to accept" as he felt the recognition had a special significance in these difficult times.

The judges commented that Dromana Estate showed an excellent standard of development and production.

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Garry Crittenden, left, with RASV councillors, John Robb and Andy Finnis.

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Crittenden gives a considerable amount of this time to research work. With DARA he is engaged in clonal comparison trials with Merlot vines and work on deficit scheduling irrigation. With CSIRO, trials on nitrogen nutrition and pruning are being carried out. Most of this work studies the total plant behaviour right through to wine comparison.

Crittenden is a skilled viticulturalist and winemaker.

SOUTHERN PENINSULA GAZETTE, Tuesday October 23, 1990

## Winery owner takes award

GARRY Crittenden, of Dromana Estate Vineyards, won second prize in Section B of the 1990 Victorian Farm Management Production and Improvement Competition.

Section B was for farms with a total capital investment of more than \$600,000.

Judges of the competition noted Mr Crittenden as "a skilled viticulturalist and winemaker who has a property showing an excellent standard of development and production".

"This is the most prestigious farm award in Victoria," said Mr Crittenden.

"Last year I won the Victorian vineyard of the year award, and thought maybe I would have a chance in the Victorian farm of the year competitions."

Mr Crittenden said Dromana Estate was "fully on stream" with 70 tonnes of fruit on the vine.

He said he would re-enter the competition next year - hopefully to take out first prize.



GARRY Crittenden at Dromana Estate ... runner-up in the 1990 Victorian Farm Management Production and Improvement competition.

Picture: TOM DANDY.



SUMMER UPDATE 1991

PENINSULA  
VISITOR A

# MORNINGTON PENINSULA WINE

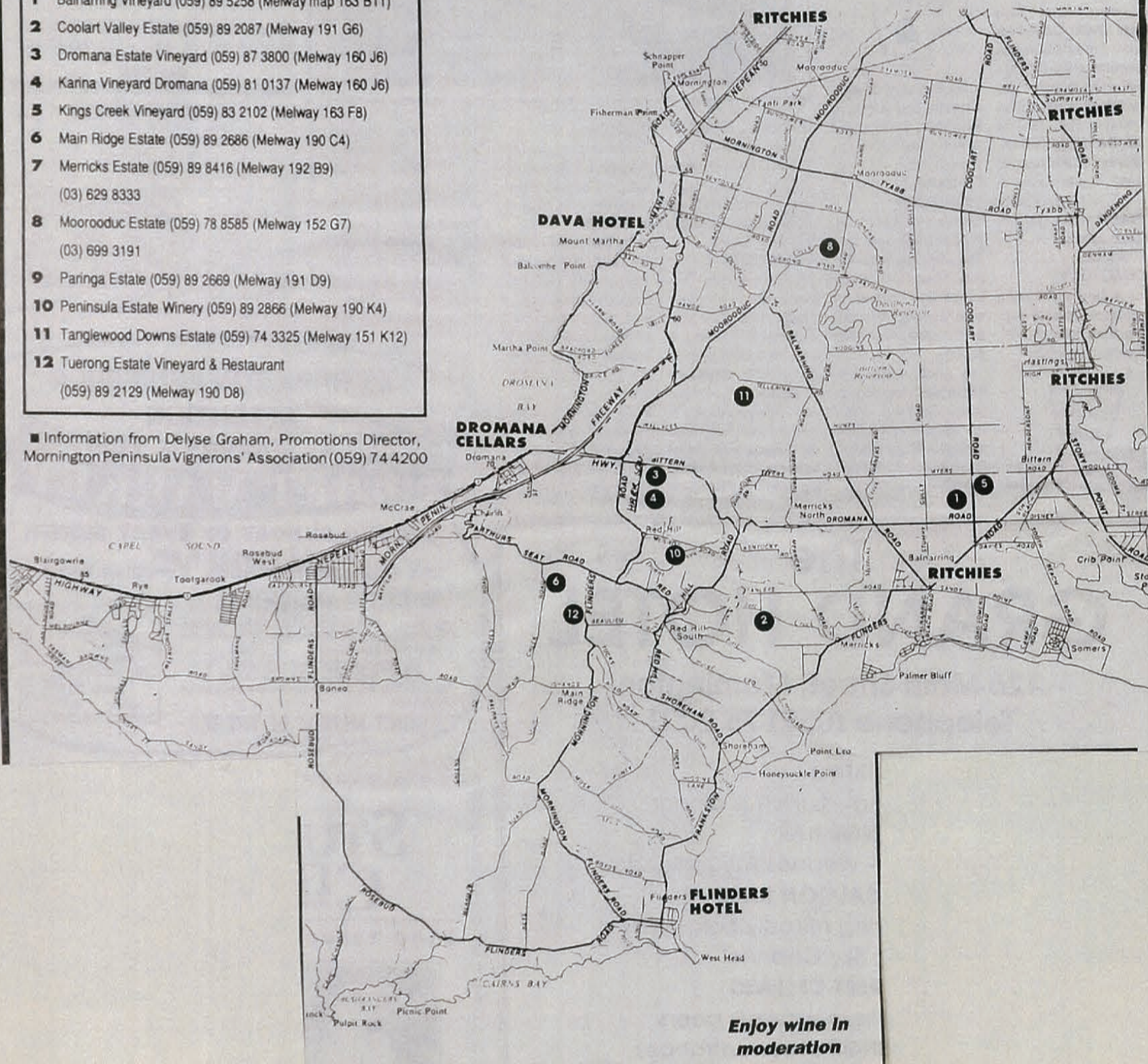
*Discover our cool climate elegance...  
at the Peninsula Summer of Wine*



## CELLAR DOOR SALES

- 1 Balnarring Vineyard (059) 89 5258 (Melway map 163 B11)
- 2 Coolart Valley Estate (059) 89 2087 (Melway 191 G6)
- 3 Dromana Estate Vineyard (059) 87 3800 (Melway 160 J6)
- 4 Karina Vineyard Dromana (059) 81 0137 (Melway 160 J6)
- 5 Kings Creek Vineyard (059) 83 2102 (Melway 163 F8)
- 6 Main Ridge Estate (059) 89 2686 (Melway 190 C4)
- 7 Merricks Estate (059) 89 8416 (Melway 192 B9)  
(03) 629 8333
- 8 Moorooduc Estate (059) 78 8585 (Melway 152 G7)  
(03) 699 3191
- 9 Paringa Estate (059) 89 2669 (Melway 191 D9)
- 10 Peninsula Estate Winery (059) 89 2866 (Melway 190 K4)
- 11 Tanglewood Downs Estate (059) 74 3325 (Melway 151 K12)
- 12 Tuerong Estate Vineyard & Restaurant  
(059) 89 2129 (Melway 190 D8)

■ Information from Delyse Graham, Promotions Director,  
Mornington Peninsula Vignerons' Association (059) 74 4200



Enjoy wine in  
moderation



## Exploring the Peninsula's cool climate wines

A TOUR through the Mornington Peninsula wineries is a sensory adventure. Arm yourself with a map, and let the day unfold before you.

No matter where you start you will be delighted by the surrounds, scenery akin to picture book perfection, and wineries ranging from the sleek and sophisticated to the original rustic country.

Start your tour wherever you desire, but decide on the conclusion now, by ringing Tuerong Estate Vineyard & Restaurant, and asking owner Gennaro Mazella to reserve a dinner table for you and your friends.

The most romantic route to Tanglewood Downs Estate is along Upsdowns Road, however the most practical is off Balnarring Road into Ellerina and left into Bulldog Creek Road.

Tanglewood Downs is on the right, and the entrance is well signposted. Ken and Wendy Bilham will welcome you to their charming winery set among superb old gums.

The serenity at Tanglewood gives the impression you must be miles from civilisation. While sipping a cool, clean chardonnay, enjoying the bay view and listening to the cacophony of bird life, you may decide to never leave.

A short jaunt down Balnarring Road to the Bittern-Dromana Road will find you on the doorstep of Bruce and Stan Paul's Balnarring Vineyard.

This well established

vineyard of five hectares produces a wide selection of varietal wines, including cabernet sauvignon, pinot noir, merlot and chardonnay. Balnarring Vineyard is the recipient of several awards and the wines will delight you.

Next stop is Kings Creek Vineyard. Only minutes from Balnarring Vineyard, along Myers Road, wonderfully prolific vines burst out of the landscape to inform you that you have arrived.

The drive into the property through the vineyard is delightful. Myriad roses planted at the row's end contrast the greenness with a burst of full bloom colour and provide an atmosphere as warm as the welcome that awaits you.

You will be pleasantly surprised to find that a beautifully prepared platter of tempting treats is available for you to nibble while sipping wines of superb quality. The proof is definitely in the tasting.

The most recent accolade bestowed on Kings Creek, The Le Concours des Vins du Victoria, is on display as testimony to the excellence of their 1989 chardonnay.

As difficult as you will find it to leave the hospitality of Kings Creek, it is time to move on. Heading down Coolart Road, turn right into the Frankston-Flinders Road, and drive through Balnarring until you reach the original Merricks General Store, now

contrasted dramatically by the development of the new Stonier's Merricks Vineyard.

The winery, due to open early in 1991, is an architectural showpiece

The Keffords are no strangers to receiving awards, and sitting at the raw wood tables, sharing a glass of shiraz with George, there is no questioning the Kefford

claimed Main Ridge Estate.

Nat and Rosalie White possess a wealth of knowledge and experience, and the combination of award winning wines, superb setting and warm personalities make visiting their winery mandatory.

Finding Main Ridge Estate provides little difficulty, as it is situated just off Arthur's Seat Road, Red Hill. The great difficulty is leaving the conviviality when it comes time to move to our final destination for the day.

If you must leave Main Ridge, there is no better reason than to travel to Tuerong Estate Vineyard and Restaurant. Gennaro Mazella and Gwen Riggs are the proprietors, and they invite you to enjoy a wide selection of Mornington Peninsula wines complimented by the magnificent food of the restaurant and the wonderful atmosphere - an ideal conclusion to a glorious day; a day in which all your senses have been stimulated and satisfied.

In this brief tour, there are several wineries we haven't visited. Time is always the tourists' greatest enemy.

Other excellent vineyards that can be added to your itinerary include the highly acclaimed Dromana Estate Vineyard, owned by viticultural consultant Garry Crittenden and wife Margaret; the showpiece vineyards of Graeme and Jan Pinney's Karina Vineyard; Rick and Jill McIntyre's Moorooduc Estate; and Coolart Valley Vineyard.

Whether you plan your tour over a day, a week-

end or a week, you can surrender yourself to the natural beauty and stunning scenery of the Mor-

nington Peninsula, and delight in the charm of this wonderful wine environment.

**i** Tourist information: (03) 781 5244  
54 Playne St, Frankston Mon-Fri 9-5

### PENINSULA VINEYARDS OPENING TIMES

VINEYARD	JAN	FEB	TIMES
Balnarring	Every day	Every day	10-4
Paringa Estate	Every day	Sat/Sun	10-5
Kings Creek	Every day	Sat/Sun	10-4
Karina Vineyard	Every day	Sat/Sun	11-4
Main Ridge Estate	Every day	Sat/Sun	12-5
Dromana Estate	Every Day	Sat/Sun	11-4
Tuerong Estate	Sat/Sun	Sat/Sun	12-5
Coolart Valley	Sat/Sun	Sat/Sun	11-4
Peninsula Estate	Sat/Sun	Sat/Sun	10-4
Tanglewood Downs	Sundays	2nd & Sun	10-4
Merricks Estate	12, 13, 28	9 & 10	1-5
Moorooduc Estate	6, 13, 20, 27	3 & 17	12-5

and is indicative of the commitment to the future of wine on the Mornington Peninsula.

Turning down Thompson's Lane, you follow the signs to Jackie and George Kefford's Merricks Estate. Cast your gaze over to the left and be spellbound by the view out over Western Port to the Heads.

The beauty that surrounds you is quite extraordinary, and you find yourself wishing you had brought all your friends, just to share with them the feeling of being absorbed in such splendour.

The Merricks Estate vineyard, which you can wander through at leisure, is beautifully maintained, and consistently produces wines of inimitable quality.

family's uncompromising philosophy of quality not quantity.

Drinking in the view as you leave Merricks Estate, you journey along the Frankston-Flinders Road to the Point Leo Road. Travelling along this road is again an experience in visual splendour. The roadside is cloaked with trees, and provides a sensation of being in an enchanted forest. The signs will inform you that the turn-off to Paringa Estate is imminent, and Lindsay and Margaret McCall and their children will provide a warm family welcome.

The vineyard, established since 1985, is planted to cabernet sauvignon, cabernet franc, shiraz, pinot noir and chardonnay, and provides a platform to a panoramic vista of hills and valleys.

Second last stop for the day is at the widely ac-

MELBOURNE 'SUN' 1990 Nov 11

## The summer just for wine

**Wine**  
PADDY KENDLER

TWELVE wineries will be participating in the Mornington Peninsula's first Summer of Wine.

From November through to March, the wineries will be open every weekend for tastings and sales.

Although there are a few Peninsula wineries which usually open at weekends, many of them have previously either never been open or open by appointment only.

Some of the wineries may charge a "refundable tasting fee", which will be deducted from the cost of any purchases. Although this may come as an unpleasant surprise at first, do not be deterred.

Remember that the wineries have to pay sales tax on all sample bottles and that these small wineries are based on relatively high cost structures.

Also, they wouldn't stay open for long if they had to cater for carloads of tourists looking for a day's cheap drinking.

The Peninsula winemakers are now starting to make a real impression within the Victorian wine industry. Most grape varieties flourish in the district to produce wines which are typically elegant and refined rather than robust and heavy.

My favorites overall have been the chardonnays but there have also been some delightful wines made from pinot noir, cabernet sauvignon and merlot.

Winelovers intending to visit the Peninsula wineries should find all of them in the Melway, but maps and brochures are available from Bill and Sara Glover. Phone 662 3422 or 376 3775.

Complete list of participating wineries:

1. Balnarring Vineyard, Bittern-Dromana Rd, Balnarring.
2. Coolart Valley Vineyard, Thomas Rd, Red Hill South.
3. Dromana Estate Vineyard, Harrisons Rd, Dromana.
4. Karina Vineyard, Harrisons Rd, Dromana.
5. Kings Creek Vineyard, Myers Rd, Bittern.
6. Main Ridge Estate, William Rd, Red Hill.
7. Merricks Estate, Thompson's Lane, Merricks.
8. Moorooduc Estate, Derrill Rd, Moorooduc.
9. Paringa Estate, Paringa Rd, Red Hill South.
10. Peninsula Estate Winery, Red Hill Rd, Red Hill.
11. Tanglewood Downs Estate, Bulldog Creed Rd, Mornington Rural.
12. Tuerong Estate Vineyard and Restaurant, Mornington-Flinders Rd, Red Hill.



THE LEADER, Wednesday January 30, 1991



BRIAN Stonier, left, of Stonier's Merricks Winery, celebrates the opening of his cellar door sales service with the construction manager who built the winery, Mr Rob Reilly, of Sorrento.

## Winery offers wine tasting

THE Peninsula's budding wine industry got a boost last week with the opening of a cellar door sales service at a local winery.

Stonier's Merricks Winery, corner Thompson's Lane and Frankston-Flinders Rd, Merricks, will be open at

weekends and holidays for cellar door tastings and sales from 11 am to 5 pm.

Appointments to visit the winery during weekdays can be made by phoning (059) 89 8300.

"This now makes 13 wineries open for tastings and inspections on

the Mornington Peninsula," said Mr Brian Stonier.

"A brochure giving full details is available from Delyse Graham, the newly appointed promotions director for the Mornington Peninsula Vignerons by phoning (059) 74 4200.

Page 10 — THE LEADER, Wednesday January 23, 1991



GARRY Crittenden and his vines: earning an international reputation. Picture: JANE OLLERENSHAW

## Vigneron set to spread the word

PENINSULA wine-maker Garry Crittenden has been invited to address vignerons in South America.

He will be the guest of noted champagne maker Moët et Chandon.

Moët is arranging a series of seminars at which Garry will talk on the viticultural practices on the Peninsula.

He said his talks would deal with grape growing techniques and not on winemaking as his vine-

yard did not produce sparkling wines.

He will leave for the UK on January 20 where he will undertake a marketing drive for Dromana Estate wines.

Many local vineyards will be open to the public over the holiday period and visitors interested in tasting and purchasing the various wines can obtain brochures and maps of the vineyards by phoning (059) 74 4200.

— TED SAUNDERS

Herald-Sun, Tuesday, March 12, 1991—Page 23

## Rolling out the barrel to fix the recession

VICTORIA'S economic gloom was lightened a little last night when Stonier's Merricks Winery was opened.

The winery, on the Mornington Peninsula, will process grapes grown on the peninsula into fine wines, many of them for export.

It was opened by the Governor, Dr Davis McCaughey.

Dr McCaughey compared the winery with a medieval cathedral, because hope for the future was inspired by good workmanship in the present.

The winery building has a grey-and-green striped roof. The architect, Daryl Jackson, said the design was inspired by rows of vines growing on the hills behind.

Brian Stonier, one of the partners who developed the winery, said Merricks was the biggest winery on the Mornington Peninsula, with a processing capacity of about 200 tonnes.

It would be in production in time for this year's harvest.

"The opening of this winery reflects the confidence we have in the Australian wine industry, and confidence in the export market for wine," Mr Stonier said.

"You could say it is a risk in the present economic climate, but it is an indication of a longer-term view.

"We feel the long-term



Noel and Brian Stonier celebrating at the opening of Stonier's Merricks Winery. Picture: JOHN CASAMENTO

future of Australian wine is very good.

"Not only are more people drinking wine, but people are drinking better-quality wine."

Mr Stonier said wine-making on the Mornington Peninsula was still a young industry.

"It's a beginning, you would have to admit that," he said.

"But we have been doubling our output every year since we started in 1982, and all the wineries here sell as much as they can produce."



By MARK SHIELD

Mooreoduc Estate chardonnay 1990 \$19.80 ★★★★★

No quibble about the price, you get what you pay for and more. There is a very complex palate with malolactic and barrel ferment characters astride grapefruit and peach flavors. But forget the technical jargon, the wine maker has worked hard to make an enjoyable wine. Try it with poached ocean trout or cellar for four years.

## The Doings

By JENI PORT

THE AGE, Tuesday 8 January 1991

THE confusion between the similarly named but definitely separate Mornington Peninsula identities — Merricks Estate and Stonier's Merricks — continues. As its latest victim I plead guilty to having named the Merricks Estate 1988 cabernet sauvignon as a finalist in the recent French-sponsored Le Concours des Vins du Victoria competition. The wine was in fact Stonier's Merricks 1988 cabernet sauvignon, a fine wine.

Attempts to keep these two vineyards, both located in Thompsons Lane,

Merricks, separate — mentally speaking — is a constant source of apoplexy. Fortunately, the wines are not. Merricks Estate (but not Stonier's Merricks) will be one of 12 Mornington Peninsula vineyards open for cellar-door trade during the summer months to come.

With so many holiday makers on the peninsula they would be silly not to open. Some, such as Main Ridge Estate, Merricks Estate, Mooreoduc Estate, Peninsula Estate, Tanglewood Downs, Kings Creek and Coolart Valley will be charging for a tasting (refundable upon purchase). Opening hours differ from vineyard to vineyard, so it is best to get a copy of winery hours and locations by telephoning (059) 87 3800 during office hours.



**EPICURE**

30 6 THE AGE, TUESDAY 12 MARCH 1991

Picture: SANDY SCHELTEMA

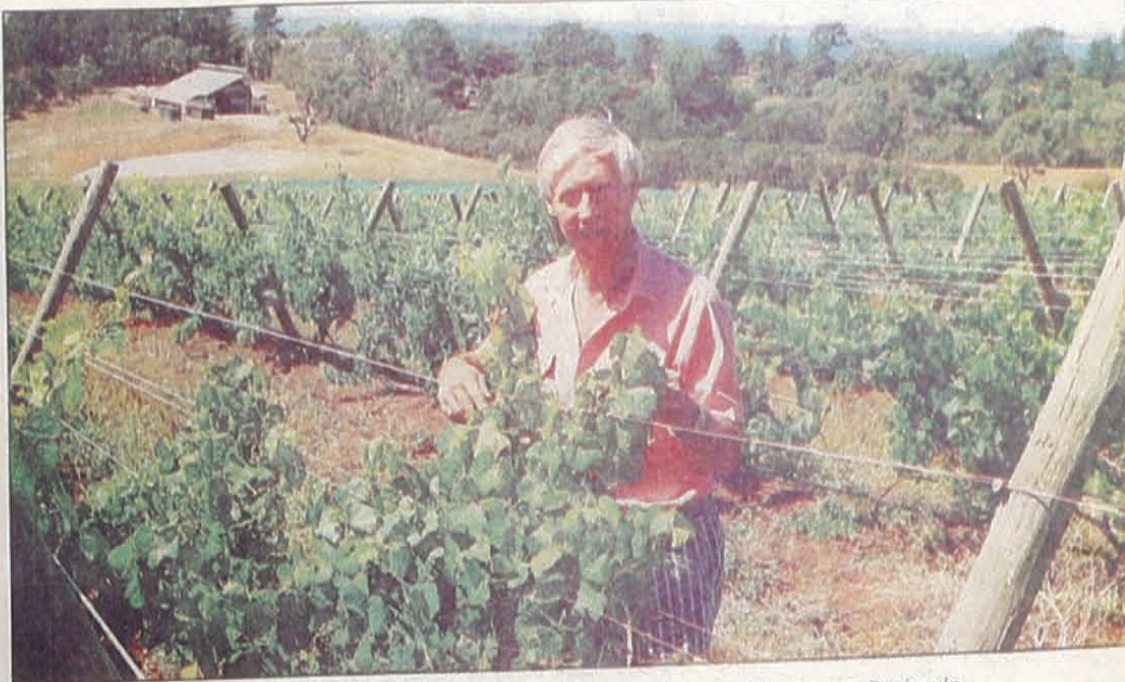
# Stonier thinks big-time for the peninsula

A few vines and a dream on a Merricks hilltop have blossomed into the makings of a great wine district. **MARK SHIELD** reports.

**A**T THE risk of raising the ire of the good folk on the Mornington Peninsula, it has been difficult to take the wines from their district seriously. That's not to say they are not serious wines. Just look at the prices and you could see that no one was fooling around. It was the limited production that made them difficult to write about, for readers quickly tire of reading

about wines that they could never get to taste. These growing pains are suffered by any emerging new era. The first wines come from young vines and suffer tentative wine-making and equally tentative marketing. Industry observers have seen it all before in the Adelaide Hills, Yarra Valley, Margaret River et al.

But Mornington was somehow different, with the exception of the big four — Main Ridge, Elgee Park, Merricks Estate and Dromana Estate — most of the vineyards will not produce more than 1000 cases. Even the big four's combined production would not exceed 10,000. To put that into perspective, consider that a medium-sized company such as Chateau Tahbilk produces 60,000 cases and big players like Wolf Blass admit to 400,000 cases.



Brian Stonier at his Merricks vineyard: thinking big on the Mornington Peninsula.

Most small players are fiercely proud of the 500-case production and blissfully unaware of the wine retail jungle because they sell all they make. It would be a low blow to point out that Penfolds probably lose that much per year in their filter pads.

Size might not be everything but Brian Stonier from Stonier's Merricks realised that it would be good for the district if one of the big players would set up camp in Mornington.

For example, there were high hopes that Domaine Chandon expressed interest in the district which on paper had a good case, including the presence of Napoleon's bed in the Briars Mansion.

But it wasn't to be. Domaine Chandon settled in the Yarra Valley and Stonier went back to his small plot of vines planted like a cargo cult symbol on the top of a hill at Merricks. If only a big company would settle, the small folk could catch on to the promotional coat-tails. A big company would bring technology and publicity.

So Brian Stonier tried to lure the likes of Mildara into the district and while they expressed enthusiasm for the land in a viticultural sense they did not settle. Stonier planted some more vines and sat back on the hill pondering the peninsula's future.

He concluded that if a big company wasn't coming, the next best thing was to become a big company in his own

right. He took on a couple of partners and set about an ambitious expansion and the construction of a modern winery.

If your impression of a modern winery is a block house with stainless steel tanks out the back, Stonier's architect-designed glass and porticoed building will have you thinking again. It sits in splendid contrast across the road from

If a big company wasn't coming, the next best thing was to become a big company in his own right.

the corner store and trading post in Thompsons Lane.

You enter the winery (which is open to the public) via a pergola-covered walkway that will eventually be vine-covered. Once inside you'll be invited to inspect the 200-tonne (13,000 case) winery which has been designed for ease of operation.

It also means there are economies of scale. One of the biggest problems facing small producers is the high cost of production. This forces the prices up into a bracket where there are few buyers.

Those with the money are rightly cautious. Why spend \$20-plus on a bottle with an unknown label from an unknown vineyard with young vines and a novice wine maker?

Stonier's wines will sell for less than \$20 and will be more widely circulated. In fact, you can drink the Stonier's Winery Selection chardonnay for \$15 a bottle at the Dogs Bar in St Kilda — and this is only the beginning.

This is only stage one, there is plenty of room for expansion to the side and to the rear. The plan is to produce two labels, Stonier's Merricks and Stonier's winery selection. There is no plan to buy grapes from other districts, but the winery is open for the purchase of fruit from other parts of the peninsula. In this way, Brian Stonier's wine maker, Tod Dexter, hopes to escape the tyranny of being a prisoner to the one vineyard.

By using grapes from the different micro-climates in the district the complexity of the wine is enhanced.

It is an exciting venture, but it would be wrong to trumpet that the peninsula has come of age. Not quite, but now there is something to see and taste. Some wineries of a similar scale or larger would also be a help.

Brian Stonier's cargo cult vineyard has become a serious venture that may well attract other sizeable ventures that will add further to the lustre of Mornington Peninsula.

## Southern Peninsula Gazette

AUSTRALIA'S BEST COUNTRY NEWSPAPER

TUESDAY, MARCH 26, 1991

## 'Cathedral' honors the winemaker's art

By TED SAUNDERS

THE Peninsula became recognised as a major wine producing area when Victoria's Governor, Dr Davis McCaughey, planted a symbolic shrub and officially opened Stonier's Merricks Winery on Monday, March 11.

Dr McCaughey likened the towering corrugated iron building at the corner of Thompsons Lane, Merricks, to a medieval cathedral.

"Like a great cathedral, it is a place of beauty ... and like a cathedral, it not only meets short term needs but points to the future."

"This winery and this vineyard have been built by people who approach the future with

hope and great confidence," said Dr McCaughey before the 280 guests gathered for the opening.

The building was designed by prominent architect Daryl Jackson, who lives at Flinders.

With walls and roof of iron and paved with terracotta tiles from China, the building is fitted with stainless steel fermentation equipment and several hundred French oak barrels for storage of the vintage.

It has the capacity to crush 200 tonnes of grapes — making it the largest winery on the Peninsula — and can handle the crops of other local growers.

Wine maker Tod Dexter

ter said the magnificent winery would give "exciting opportunities" to make outstanding Peninsula wines.

"This is the beginning of the Peninsula becoming a full scale wine producing area," he said.

Mr Brian Stonier, a director of Stonier Yuill and Limb Pty Ltd, owner of the winery, planted the first grapes almost 20 years ago so he could "look out the kitchen window and see the vines".

He told guests the new winery expressed confidence "in the Peninsula area, in our team, in our winemaker and in the future".

The winery will open at weekends and public holidays for inspection and cellar door sales between 11 am and 5 pm.



GOVERNOR of Victoria Dr Davis McCaughey toasts the Peninsula's newest venture, Stonier's Merricks Winery, watched by director Brian Stonier, far left, Mrs McCaughey and architect of the winery Daryl Jackson.

Picture: VALERIU CAMPAN



Page 10 - THE INDEPENDENT, Tuesday, March 26, 1991

## Wineries will brave winter

A NUMBER of Mornington Peninsula wineries will open every weekend throughout winter.

Twelve Cellar Door's will be open over the Easter break, each day except Good Friday.

The Mornington Peninsula is traditionally a summer playground, and although a sun tan from the early April sun may be difficult, a visit to enough wineries will be guaranteed a

warm glow.

One advantage of Mornington Peninsula wineries, is there is barely more than 10 minutes between stops, and the scenery along the way is captivating.

Moorooduc Estate and Kings Creek Vineyard, provide lunches. Easter Cellar Door openings (excluding Good Friday)

\*Balnarring Vineyard 10am to 4pm  
Coolart Valley Vineyard

11am to 5pm  
Dromana Estate 11am to 4pm

\*Karina Vineyard 11am to 5pm

Kings Creek Vineyard 11am to 5pm

\*Main Ridge Estate noon to 5pm

Merricks Estate 11am to 5pm

Moorooduc Estate 11am to 5pm

\*Paringa Estate 11am to 5pm

Peninsula Estate 10am

to 5pm  
\*Stonier's Merricks Winery 11am to 5pm  
Tanglewood Downs Estate 11am to 5pm

For the first time ever, all the above vineyards will be open for Cellar Door sales right through the winter. Those marked with an asterisk will open every weekend, the other for the first weekend of every month.

Page 22 - THE LEADER, Wednesday, March 20, 1991



DELYSE Graham, newly-appointed promotions director for the Mornington Peninsula Vignerons Association ... "a great move forward".

## Here's to a breath of fresh bouquet!

PENINSULA vignerons have a new face to promote their products and extol the virtues of locally grown and pressed grapes.

Delyse Graham has been appointed promotions director for the Mornington Peninsula Vignerons Association and regards the position as "a great move forward and a challenge".

She admits to having no experience in the wine industry although she has completed a wine appreciation course and

By TED SAUNDERS

has visited many of the world's wine regions.

"And I enjoy trying fine wines," she added.

"The wineries of the Peninsula are unified in their commitment to excellence, a fact that is gaining the region a reputation for wines of consistently high quality and wonderful varietal flavors."

Delyse brings to her new job 13 years marketing experience. The past 10 years were spent in

the Goulburn Valley, where she was involved in the marketing of broodmares.

One of her first achievements with the vignerons was to persuade Peninsula wineries to open for cellar door sales and inspection over the Easter holidays.

Twelve wineries will be open (Good Friday excepted) to provide a "not such great weather" alternative for those in pursuit of a leisurely few days on the Peninsula.

Details from Delyse on (059) 74 4200.

THE AGE TUESDAY 19 MARCH 1991 Page 27

### Balnarring Vineyard

FIFTEEN years ago, apple and pear grower Stan Paul decided he was sick of eating the fruits of his labor at every meal and concluded that wine would be a much more satisfactory alternative. After some concerted research in the Barossa, he and his son Bruce began planting in 1982, establishing varieties they felt were perfect for the cellar-door trade. They are now well established and the Pauls are content to produce about 2000 cases annually — sizeable enough by Peninsula standards.

The approach here is straightforward, the wines are honest and good value for money. David Wollan of Tarawarra makes Balnarring's white wines and they could not be in better hands. The 1987 pinot noir that I tasted is an extraordinary deep color and almost as robust as a shiraz. It is certainly not what you would normally expect from a Peninsula pinot, but it is a simple wine at a very reasonable price and that is precisely what the Pauls have aimed for.

Location: Bittern-Dromana Road, Balnarring (between Stumpy Gully Road and Balnarring Road). Telephone: (059) 89 5258. Cellar door: 10 am-4 pm Seven days. Wines: gewurztraminer, riesling, chardonnay, pinot noir, cabernet/merlot. Approx. prices: \$9-\$15.

### Paringa Estate

MORNINGTON PENINSULA

We would like to announce the appointment of **FLINDERS WHOLESALE WINES AND SPIRITS**

as our sole Victorian Wholesale Agent. Ph: 584 5233.

We are also open for Cellar Door Tastings and Sales.

Every weekend and most public holidays.

44 Paringa Road, Red Hill South. Ph: (059) 892 669.

APB15055-A

### KINGS CREEK VINEYARD

ANNOUNCES

RELEASE OF THEIR MELBOURNE SHOW TROPHY WINE

1990 PINOT NOIR

Part of the Mornington Peninsula Vineyards Queen's Birthday Weekend Open Days

Sunday and Monday 11 am-5 pm.  
Sunday — Gourmet Toasted Sandwiches.

237 Myers Rd., Bittern  
Melway Ref. 163 F8

Registered by Australia Post Publication No. VBG 6670 MARCH 1991

## Richmond Hill Pressings



WINE NEWS, VIEWS,  
REVIEWS, REPORTS,  
TASTINGS, COMING  
EVENTS AND THIS  
MONTH'S FINE BUYS.

NEW RELEASES Judy Farrow & Murray McLeod

'90 STONIER'S MERRICKS WINERY SELECTION CHARDONNAY, \$15.35. 100% Mornington Peninsula fruit but from 2 vineyards, 65% Tod Dexter's Merricks North and 35% from Stonier's Merricks. A very elegant cool climate Chardonnay with a delicate aroma of melons and figs and nicely handled oak and a delicious palate following on with the subtle flavours you expect from the nose. The fruit is quite sweet as would be expected from

a warmer year but the finish is dry with nice acid and good length. I had it with Antipasto and its high alcohol (13.2%) coped well with the strong flavours of the food. Undoubtedly would cellar for 2-3 years. Good value. J.F.

'90 MOOROODUC ESTATE CHARDONNAY, \$19.

Consistent quality, stylish elegance and great drinkability are the hallmarks of wines from Moorooduc Estate. This, their latest Chardonnay, is absolutely first class. Refined grapefruit and nutty nose from barrel ferment, leads to a very complex palate which hails quality Chardonnay fruit and subtle oak. The wine has undergone a full malo-lactic fermentation, of which the delicious soft acidity is one result. It has a lovely finish with a very slight grip and very good aftertaste. Excellent wine which will repay 3-4 years cellaring. M.M.



THE AGE, Tuesday 9 April 1991

## Upbeat episodes in 'Pinot Peaks'

**D**EAR Viewer: During 1990 there were three episodes of the unnerving mini-series 'The Dreams of Agonies of a Trainee Winemaker'.

Would you please stand by for episode four. When we left, you we had endured a very hard vintage. Even though we had placed pantie hose over individual bunches, predatory birds devoured at least 95 per cent of our grapes and we were left with just enough to fill a plastic rubbish tin and actually produced nine bottles of pinot noir.

In 1991 the word went around the entire bird population of the Mornington Peninsula that it was on again at Dunstan's. We netted the vineyard from end to end, not only netted, but nailed the nets to the ground with a nail to every third of a metre.

But please don't under-estimate the ingenuity of a starling. Yes, they actually wriggle and dig.

Now we have had poodles for 20 years. During the entire length of that time I have wondered whether there is any possible practical use for a toy poodle.

At last I have found it. Lotte turned into a brilliant starling router. She patrolled the vineyard from sunrise to sunset and the starlings were defeated even more significantly than Saddam Hussein's army. This year we picked more than three tonnes of pinot noir grapes.

We had hoped to maintain purity with foot tramping by virgins. Last year our two virgins were aged four and six, but this season we felt there was a certain difficulty. We needed at least 20 virgins, preferably ladies with big feet and tipping the scale at around 80 kilos.

Even considering today's inflated labor market we believed this a target difficult to achieve, so we settled for a veteran power crusher. It has a large augur which pushes the grapes towards the crushing jaws, spews stems out the back and pulverised skins and juice out the front.

**N**OW with all this mechanical aid we looked at the splendid must, wine and skins, bubbling in the fermenting vat and thought the hard labor was all over. Kevin McCarthy and Kathleen Quealy, our wine consultants, said "Certainly not. Every six hours that must has to be turned and pummelled to get the maximum color and flavor."

"But-but, that means getting up every night at 3 am."

"Precisely," said Kevin. "In Burgundy, really dedicated makers of pinot actually get into the vats and swim around in it to improve the process. If you want a good pinot you have to do that."

Dear viewers, we did actually get up nightly at 3 am shoving the must with a paddle, but as yet there have been no midnight swims."

It was Kathleen who told us we had to do a malolactic fermentation. This, she said, called for the wine to be held at a temperature between 20 and 25 degrees for at least a week and perhaps two weeks.

"But the barrels hold 220 litres each — you can't keep them at over 20 degrees in this weather."



**KEITH DUNSTAN**

"Yes you can," said Kathleen sweetly.

"How?"

"You use an electric blanket and a blanket off a double bed is ideal."

This indeed was the biggest crisis since the 1960s, when we used to make beer. It was one of those 40 degree days and it was absolutely essential that I get my brew down below 30 degrees. I took everything out of the refrigerator, all the butter, meat, soft drinks etc, and replaced it with the 30 litre beer fermenter. It was a success chemically but a failure socially.

This was even more serious. I have always considered the electric blanket the greatest contribution by science to the 20th Century, an item that is vital even in early April.

"Dear, could I please have our electric blanket for the winery?"

**I**HAVE to concede this wonderful woman conceded the electric blanket almost without a murmur. Thus began a long battle. Before we were getting up at all hours to stir the must. Now we had to get up to take the patient's temperature. I tell you it was easier when we merely had to look after babies.

But there have been other things to cause domestic strain. Careful wine production needs a wide range of equipment. One was forced to borrow the kitchen strainer, the kitchen scales, the kitchen wooden spoons, all the spare clean marmalade bottles for wine samples, the kitchen scissors, the kitchen basin, jugs, the precious stainless-steel cooking pot...

It was over the hair dryer that she almost cracked.

"Why do you need the hair dryer?"

"Well, you see, you have this malolactic thing and you have to check whether it has gone through by putting spots of wine on litmus paper. You have to get it perfectly dry and your hair dryer would be really splendid. Honestly."

Marie Rose thought it might have been easier had the winery been shifted into the kitchen or vice versa. Ah, but finally you take a sample out of the oak keg. It is in the tasting glass and you sip.

You know how mothers provide glorious instant love to the quite ghastly creatures at birth. You know how vegetable growers pick cauliflowers out of the garden, look at them with pride and triumph, even though cauliflowers twice the size and produced at a quarter the price, are down at the local store.

Well, it's a bit like that. Holding the first glass does give one quite a glow.

And do you know the biggest relief? Getting the nets off those vines. It's like taking off one's corsets. At least I imagine that's what it's like.

**S**EVENTEEN Mornington Peninsula vigneron will also be opening their doors on the Queen's Birthday weekend and four — Elgee Park, Main Ridge, Tanglewood Downs and Dromana Estate — have organised entertainment. To be sure of which wineries are serving food

6 THE AGE TUESDAY 26 MARCH 1991 Page 34

## Some people make you spit.

Just an hour's drive from the city on the Mornington Peninsula twelve of the most picturesque vineyards are presenting tastings of their excellent wines this Easter. And if you're driving you can spit out the wines in the time honoured tradition.

Call Delyse Graham, Promotions Director, Mornington Peninsula Vignerons Association on (059) 744 200.



HAM REES PHOTO

MERRICKS  
Stonier's  
MERRICKS

SEE A GREAT WINE DISTRICT  
(MARK SHIELD)

VISIT THE MORNINGTON PENINSULA AND  
STONIER'S MERRICKS WINERY  
NOW OPEN WEEKENDS, PUBLIC HOLIDAYS  
AND EASTER 11am-5pm

362 FRANKSTON-FLINDERS ROAD, MERRICKS 3916  
(CORNER OF THOMPSON'S LANE)  
MELBURN REF 192 F9  
ENQUIRIES: (059) 89 8300

OR IF YOU CAN'T VISIT,  
THE WINES ARE AVAILABLE AT

Gatehouse Cellars Albert Park, Hawthorn Cellars  
Auburn, Camberwell Junction Cellars, Nick's Doncaster  
East — Malvern — Melbourne and Frankston, Dromana  
Cellars, Wine Spot Ferntree Gully, Ritchies Frankston  
and Mt Eliza, Bannockburn Cellars Geelong, Hawthorn  
Wine & Food, Westernport Hotel Hastings, Mt Erica  
Hotel Malvern, Melbourne Wine Gallery Middle Park,  
Mornington Royal Hotel, North Balwyn Cellars, Red  
Hill Cellars, Richmond Hill Cellars, John's Discount  
Liquor St Kilda, Victorian Wine Centre South  
Melbourne, Agostino's South Yarra, Kendall's South  
Yarra, Melbourne Airport Fine Wines, Lynch in  
Warrnambool.

## The Doings

By TINA SKOLNIK

and which wineries are open and when, you can phone for a brochure and map on (059) 74 4200.

As usual, there will be wine tasting from participating wineries on the Saturday at the Mount Martha Country Club from 10 am - 4 pm. Ticket prices are unchanged from last year — \$20 at the door or \$15 prepaid. Send a cheque with a stamped, self-addressed envelope to the Ticket Secretary, PO Box 400, Mornington, 3931.

**V**IN EXPO, the world's largest wine exhibition, is to be held once again in Bordeaux from 17-21 June. Thirty-eight countries will take part and organisers say more than 50,000 visitors from 90 countries are expected to attend.

This year the Victorian Government's Office of Trade and Investment has selected three wine "ambassadors" to conduct seminars on Victoria's investment potential. After seeing the establishment of such large foreign corporations as Remy Martin (Chateau Remy), Pernod Ricard (Morris), Goodman, Fielder Wattle (Baileys and St Huberts) and Moet et Chandon (Domaine Chandon), it seems the economic possibilities of our wine industry are finally

THE AGE TUESDAY 21 MAY 1991

being recognised. Such companies have established wineries here to capitalise on a growing pool of oenological and viticultural knowledge, but also to exploit the Asian market, the world's largest growth sector in premium wines. In Japan alone, sales of sparkling wines are increasing by 18 per cent per annum and countries such as Singapore, Korea and Thailand are following close behind.

Tony Jordan of Domaine Chandon Australia, Garry Crittenden of Dromana Estate and Roy Moorfield from Aquarian Marketing will be conducting the seminars, which the Government hopes will help to improve Victoria's image as well as entice more foreign-based investment.









CRITTENDEN ESTATE®

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1991-1999



## GOING PLACES

# Peninsula a wine haven

THE Mornington Peninsula wineries open up on the Queen's Birthday weekend for the third year running. Seventeen vigneroners will gather at the Atrium, Mt Martha Country Club, to display over 50 wines. JAN BORRELL reports.

ONE of the Mornington Peninsula's best kept secrets is quickly becoming a dinner topic of conversation. This prolific wine-growing area boasts 80 vineyards with 20 producing their own labels.

A cluster of wineries are set inland within the perimeter of Red Hill, Main Ridge, Merricks, Balnarring and Moorooduc.

Amateur wine connoisseurs can enjoy dusty jaunts along gum lined tracks opening onto spectacular views as they amble (or roll) from one winery to another.

The first vineyard was established in the 1940s at the historic Briars Estate until interest waned and the vineyard disappeared. The real development began in 1974 when the first test patch was planted at Elgee Park, owned by Bailieu-Myer. No wineries had been built on the peninsula so Elgee Park shipped its grapes out for processing, releasing its first wine in 1978.

Main Ridge Estate winemaker, Nat White, pioneer in the peninsula vineyard industry and consultant winemaker to three local estates, built the first winery for processing on the peninsula in 1980.

Many of the wineries have been set up by wealthy professionals who can offset their operating losses against their normal income.



● Paringa Estate ... award winning shiraz.

ses against their normal income.

Unlike the Barossa, the heavily irrigated rich red soil and cooler climate of the Peninsula produces smaller grapes heavily concentrated with juice which make a fuller, fruitier wine.

Chardonnay and cabernet sauvignon are the most widely planted varieties, and pinot noir, merlot, cabernet franc and riesling are also well established.

The rich soil promotes enormous leafy growth shading the vines from the sun which gives the grapes their color and flavor. Pioneer wine-makers solved this problem by heavy pruning and planted long lines of eucalypts to shield the vines from the strong bay-side winds.

When Moorooduc Estate owners, Richard and Jill

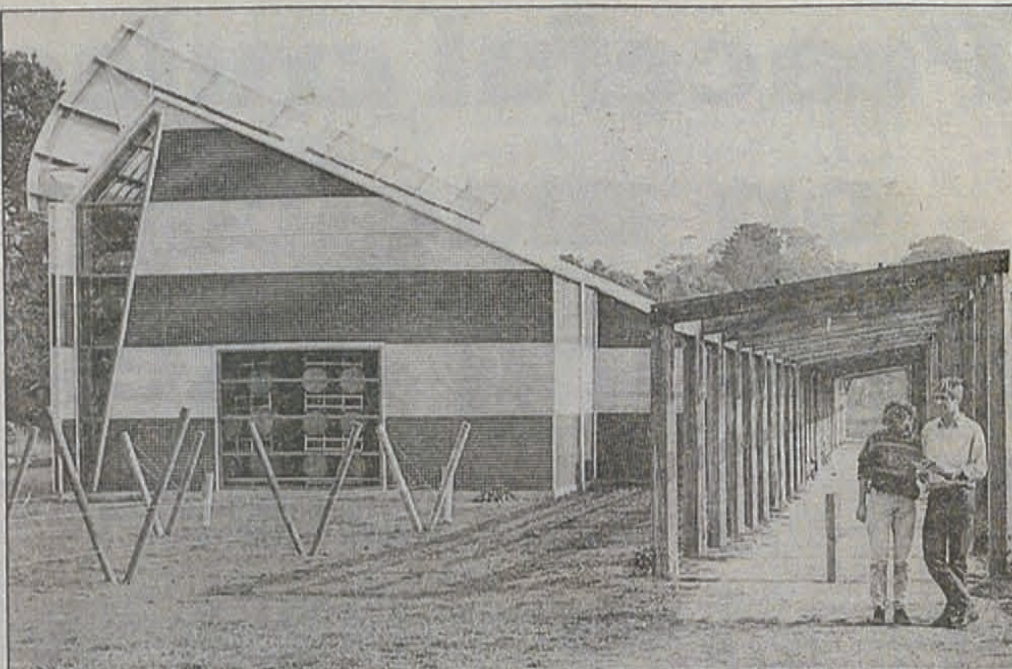
McIntyre, first stepped onto their land it was bare save for one solitary dead tree. They planted their first crop in 1983 and recently built their winery from rammed earth.

A practicing general surgeon, Richard, like many other vineyard owners, seizes every spare moment to travel from the city to establish the vineyard.

Lindsay McCall from the Paringa Estate is proud of his award winning shiraz which won gold at both the Victorian and Lilydale Wine Shows.

The Peninsula Queen's Birthday Wine Weekend will be celebrated for the third year, beginning on Saturday with 17 vigneroners gathering at the Atrium, Mt Martha Country Club, to display over 50 wines for tasting.

Tastings commence at 10am through to 4pm and



● Different ... the Stonier Merricks Estate contrasts dramatically with the rest of the Peninsula.

ticket prices are \$15 pre paid or \$20 at the door.

Fourteen vineyards will be open for cellar door sales on Sunday and Monday. Three have special entertainment organised including Elgee Park, Dromana Estate and Tanglewood Downs.

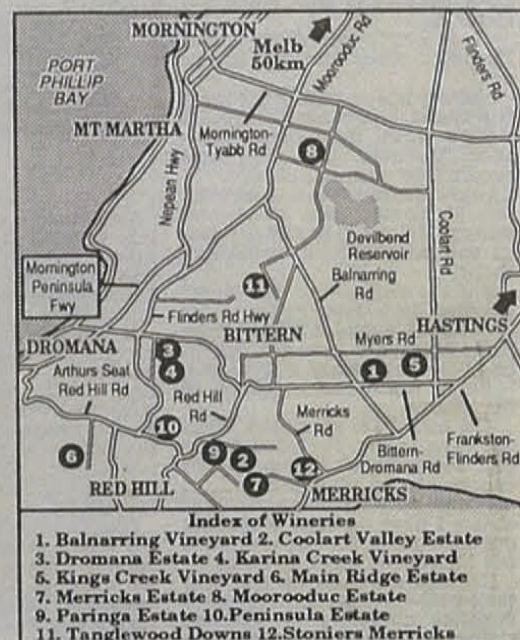
Elgee Park which is only open to the public twice a year plans an extravaganza with restaurant catering beneath marquees, a jazz band and mini carnival with face painting and clowns for the children, as well as tastings and sales.

Dromana Estate will host the Rouseabouts Bush Band with meals available on Sunday and Tanglewood Downs will entertain visitors with music and food on both days.

Tickets for the Atrium can be purchased by sending a cheque and self-addressed envelope to the ticket secretary, P.O. 400, Mornington, 3931.

## FAST FACTS

1. Bittern-Dromana Rd, Balnarring.
2. Thomas Rd, Red Hill South.
- 3 & 4. Harrison's Rd, Dromana.
5. 237 Myers Rd, Bittern.
6. William Rd, Red Hill.
7. Thompson's Lane, Merricks.
8. Derrill Rd, Moorooduc.
9. 44 Paringa Rd, Red Hill South.
10. Red Hill Rd, Red Hill.
11. Bulldog Creek Rd, Mornington Rural.
12. Cnr Frankston Flinders Rd and Thompsons Lane, Merrick.



- Index of Wineries
1. Balnarring Vineyard
  2. Coolart Valley Estate
  3. Dromana Estate
  4. Karina Creek Vineyard
  5. Kings Creek Vineyard
  6. Main Ridge Estate
  7. Merricks Estate
  8. Moorooduc Estate
  9. Paringa Estate
  10. Peninsula Estate
  11. Tanglewood Downs
  12. Stoniers Merricks

THE INDEPENDENT, Tuesday, June 4, 1991 - Page 15

# Peninsula ready for wine festival

IF you've previously attended any part of the Mornington Peninsula Queen's Birthday Wine Weekend you won't want to miss the 1991 event — from Saturday, June 8 to Monday, June 10.

Seventeen Peninsula vigneroners will gather at the Mt Martha Valley Country Club on Saturday, June 8 to present for tasting more than 50 wines.

Patrons will have the opportunity to sample outstanding wines, all made entirely from grapes grown on the peninsula, including new releases of some 1989 and 1990 vintages.

Thirteen vigneroners from last year will again exhibit: Balnarring Vineyard, Coolart Valley, Dromana Estate, Elgee

Park, Karina Vineyard, Kings Creek vineyard, Main Ridge Estate, Massoni Creek Vineyard, Merricks Estate, Moorooduc Estate Vineyard, Paringa Estate, Stonier's Merricks and Tanglewood Downs.

Four new vineyards are added this year: Craig Avon Vineyard, Elan Vineyard, Mornington Vineyard and Peninsula Estate.

Saturday tastings at the Mt Martha Valley Country Club commence at 10am through to 4pm and ticket prices at \$15 pre-paid or \$20 at the door, remain unchanged from last year and can be obtained by sending a self-addressed envelope to Ticket Secretary, P.O. box 400, Mornington, along with a cheque for tickets required.

Each patron will receive a professional tasting glass, included in the admission price.

ON Sunday and Monday 13 of the vineyards will open for cellar door sales.

Four have special entertainment organised: Elgee Park (open only twice each year) providing live Jazz, meals by McCarthy Restaurant, face painting and home made ice-cream.

Main Ridge Estate will be entertaining visitors with a brass quartet and satisfying hunger with their now famous Bouef bourguignonne and fine wine.

Tanglewood Downs will also be serving food throughout the day and a live musical group will perform.

Dromana Estate will

have the Rouseabouts Bush Band and meals available on Sunday only, but will open for wine tastings on Monday.

Peninsula vineyards have become known for their special aesthetic appeal, individual style and atmosphere. Enjoy the vineyard magic of wining and dining at Balnarring Vineyard, Coolart Vineyard, Kings Creek Vineyards, Main Ridge Estate, Merricks Estate, Moorooduc Estate and Peninsula Estate.

Karina Vineyard, Stonier's Merricks and Paringa Estate will be open for cellar door sales between 11am and 5pm.

Further information from promotion director, Delyse Graham on (059) 74 4200.

SOUTHERN PENINSULA GAZETTE, Tuesday, June 4, 1991 -

## Wine Weekend

Saturday 8th June will see 17 Mornington Peninsula vigneroners gather at the 'Atrium' Mt. Martha Valley Country Club, to display over 50 wines for tasting, making our third annual event the biggest yet.

Patrons will have the opportunity to sample outstanding wines, all made entirely from grapes grown on the Peninsula, including new releases of some 1990 vintages - some of those destined to be the best ever produced on the Peninsula.

Thirteen vigneroners from last year will again exhibit:

Balnarring Vineyard, Coolart Valley, Dromana Estate, Elgee Park, Karina Vineyard, Kings Creek Vineyard, Main Ridge Estate, Massoni Main Creek Vineyard, Merricks Estate, Moorooduc Estate Vineyard, Paringa Estate, Stoniers Merricks, and Tanglewood Downs.

Four new vineyards are added to the impressive line-up:

Craig Avon Vineyard, Elan Vineyard, Mornington Vineyard, and Peninsula Estate.

Saturdays tastings at the Atrium commence at 10 am through to 4 pm, and ticket prices are \$15 pre-paid or \$20 at the door, remain unchanged from last year and can be obtained by sending a S.A.E. to the Ticket Secretary, P.O. 400 Mornington, 3931 along with a cheque for tickets required.

Each patron will receive a professional tasting glass, price included in the admission.

The weekend will be made complete with 14 vineyards open for cellar door sales on Sunday and Monday.



## COOLART VALLEY VINEYARD

Thomas Road, Red Hill, Melway 191, G6

### Queen's Birthday Weekend Tastings and Sales

Saturday June 8th — at the Mt. Martha Valley Country Club  
Sunday and Monday June 9th & 10th — at the vineyard.  
Serving French Brioche and Venison (or other fillings) and a glass of wine — \$8.

## Paringa Estate

Queen's Birthday Weekend

### TASTE OUR DUAL GOLD MEDAL WINNING 1990 SHIRAZ

Saturday 8th June at "The Atrium" Safety Beach  
Sunday 9th & Monday 10th June at our Winery. Open 11 am-5 pm.  
44 PARINGA ROAD, RED HILL SOUTH.  
Melway Ref: 191 D9 Phone (059) 89 2669.



### QUEEN'S BIRTHDAY WEEKEND

Sat. 8th June — Open 12-5

Tastings and Sales only.

Sun. 9th June and Mon. 10th June

Open 11-5

Tastings of current vintages (\$2 refundable on purchase)  
New releases — Pinot Noir and Pinot Meunier.  
Sas Estoppel's fabulous Boeuf Bourguignonne \$6.  
Glass of wine \$3.

Music by The Occasional Brass Ensemble  
William Road, Red Hill, Melway 190, C4  
(059) 89 2686

## BAILLIEU MYER Elgee Park Wines



### 1991 OPEN DAYS

Sunday June 9 - Monday June 10

11.00 am - 5.00pm - both days

Wine Tasting and Sales

Cheese tasting by Gippsland Blue

Mary McCarthy's winelover's lunch

Entertainment and fun for all.

For enquiries please telephone:

(059)897 338 or (056)266 265

Elgee Park, Junction Rd, Merricks North  
(Mel 161/G3 - 161/J8)

## TUERONG ESTATE VINEYARD



Releases 1990 Chardonnay

June 8, 9, 10, 11am - 5pm.

Tastings and traditional Neapolitan light lunch  
or set restaurant menu available.

Complimentary lunch or dinner for two, value  
\$80.00 with first 50 dozens sold this weekend.

Mornington - Flinders Road

RED HILL

Mel. 190 D8 - (059) 89 2129

## FIRST RELEASE MORNINGTON VINEYARDS



### 1990 Chardonnay

Lillydale Show 1990 "Winestate  
Magazine" 4 Stars Award 1991

Launch at Mt Martha Country Club.

This Saturday June 8th.

Normal Price \$15.50 per bottle

SPECIAL RELEASE OFFER \$13.50 per bottle

(\$162 per 1 Doz. Case. Includes delivery.

Melbourne Metro. area.

(Order in 1 dozen case lots only)

Mornington Vineyards 665 2565

If you are not completely  
satisfied we offer our  
BUY BACK guarantee.

## Festival of wine on long weekend

THE annual Peninsula  
wine fest will be held over  
the Queen's Birthday  
weekend when 17 vign-  
erons will display more  
than 50 wines for tasting  
and buying.

The festival, an essen-  
tial calendar event for  
anyone interested in fine  
wines, is expected to be  
the biggest annual event  
to date.

The festival will open  
with a wine tasting at  
the Atrium, Mount Mar-  
tha Valley Country Club,  
on Saturday, June 8,  
from 10 am to 4 pm.

Wineries exhibiting  
again are Bainarring  
Vineyard, Coolart Val-  
ley, Dromana Estate,  
Elgee Park, Karina  
Vineyard, Kings Creek  
Vineyard, Main Ridge  
Estate, Massoni Main  
Creek Vineyard, Mer-  
ricks Estate, Moorooduc  
Estate, Paringa Estate,  
Stonier's Merricks,  
Tanglewood Downs,  
Craig Avon Vineyard,  
Elan Vineyard, Mor-  
nington Vineyard and  
Peninsula Estate.

Ticket prices for the  
tasting at the Atrium are  
\$15 pre-paid and are  
available by sending a  
cheque and SAE to the  
ticket secretary, PO Box  
400 Mornington 3931.  
They may also be bought  
at the door.

The price includes a  
free wine tasting glass.

On Sunday and Mon-  
day, 13 vineyards will  
open their doors for cel-  
lar door sales, tours of  
inspection, meals and en-  
tertainment.

Tuesday May 28, 1991

FRANKSTON STANDARD

## PENINSULA ESTATE VINEYARD



### QUEEN'S BIRTHDAY WEEKEND WINERY OPEN DAYS

JUNE 8th, 9th, 10th, — 11 a.m.-4 p.m.

Tastings and sales of new releases.

Light lunch available including hot foccacia, antipasto of seafood  
and selection of Victorian cheeses.

RED HILL RD, RED HILL (Mel. Ref. 190 K4) — (059) 89 2866.

## Immerse yourself in wine this weekend.

If you go to the Mt Martha Valley Country Club this Saturday  
between 10 and 4 you'll be able to try more than 50 wines. It's  
the Queen's Birthday Wine Weekend and 17 Mornington  
Peninsula Vineyards are presenting their elegant wines. The  
Club's just over an hour's drive from the city at Safety Beach  
(Melway 160 C5). Pre-paid tickets are only \$15. Door price is

\$20. And you get a free tasting glass.

Then on Sunday and Monday 13 of the  
vineyards are holding open days with wine,  
food and other entertainments. It's a very

enjoyable way of becoming well informed about one of  
Australia's finest wine growing regions. Call Delyse Graham,  
Promotion Director, on (059) 74 4200 or send the coupon  
no later than today with a cheque to the Mornington  
Peninsula Vignerons Association, P.O. Box 400, Mornington,  
3931 and your tickets will be waiting at the door.



Please have tickets at \$15 each waiting for me at the door  
in the name of:

I enclose a cheque to the MPVA for \$

THE LEADER, Wednesday June 5, 1991

## Wine for tasting

AS a curtain raiser to  
the wine festival over  
the Queen's Birthday  
weekend, Peninsula  
vignerons will host a  
pre-fest tasting and lun-  
cheon on Friday.

The tasting of some 50  
locally grown wines will  
be held at the Atrium  
Restaurant, Mount  
Martha Valley Country  
Club, to which wine  
writers and trade repre-  
sentatives will be guests.

This will be followed  
by a luncheon at Le  
Banque Restaurant,  
Mornington.

The public will have  
its chance to try Penin-  
sula wines at the Atrium  
from 10am on Saturday  
when wines from 17  
vineyards will be pre-  
sented.

And on Sunday and  
Monday, June 8 and 9,  
13 wineries will open.



GRAPES such as these from Elgee Park  
vineyard go into the making of some of  
Australia's finest wines.



2 THE AGE TUESDAY 4 JUNE 1991 Page 26

## EPICURE

Blue seas, golden vines and smitten consumers are all a wine and food region could desire. The peninsula celebrates its

# Peninsula wineries titivate the taste

Picture: TINA SKOLNIK

By TINA SKOLNIK

ANY wine maker will tell you that planting a vineyard is a humbling experience. Those who thought they knew it all realise how little they did know, and those who thought they had a disposable income usually dispose of it somewhere between planting the first vines and buying the \$40,000 press for the winery.

Yet the proof is out there — dozens of first-time vigneroni who seem to think their vineyards should grow in sympathy with their bank balance. They don't realise vines care little about recessions, mortgages, overdrafts or bank loans. Vines demand to be trellised, fed and tended and the grapes insist they be processed, the wine coddled, marketed and sold. Neglect in any one area shows up in the final product and if the quality isn't there, well, maybe they should never have started.

Vignerons from the Mornington Peninsula have heard it all before and they are sick and tired of being tagged as a group of bored Collins Street doctors with bilious bank accounts, a few hectares of vines in their back yard and a licence to charge for their wines as if we were paying for a long consultation.

I suppose the rumor mongering is natural enough when a toddling region like the peninsula produces great wines in their first few vintages while so many wine makers out there have been struggling for years. (The prices are enough to raise anyone's hackles, especially when other wineries are dropping prices like so many hot potatoes.) With unprecedented gall, the recession seems to have slipped by the peninsula, leaving it virtually unscathed; with the tiniest of stockpiles, wineries have used the down-turn in the market to consolidate their forces.

This weekend the peninsula vigneroni will be out to prove their metal with a tasting of all 53 wines available to the public at the Mount Martha Valley Country Club. For \$20 you'll be given a tasting glass and let loose to meet 17 wine makers and taste their wares. On the Sunday and Monday you can go and see the wineries for yourself — and they are well worth seeing — the atmosphere just isn't the same in a hall and there'll be food and music to keep the toes tapping.

Things are beginning to change from the days (only recently) when the peninsula was a "hands off" area to the visiting public, but then, the changes have been coming thick and fast. In only the past two years, nine wineries on the Peninsula have opened their doors (making 18 registered wineries in total) and production has doubled. For the first time there are now regular cellar-door sales: six wineries open every weekend while another six open on the first weekend of every month and there are more waiting for permits on the sidelines.

In the 20 years since Baillieu Myer planted the first 450 vines on the suggestion of David Wynn (one afternoon over lunch), 78 vineyards have been planted, producing more than 500 tonnes or 35,000 cases. No great threat, say other regions, except the changes are more than physical.

The wines are growing up, not just maturing in the cellar, but changing dramatically from vintage to vintage as wine making and viticulture becomes more and more compatible.



The Mornington Peninsula: 13 vineyards will open their doors for tastings next weekend.

On the peninsula, chardonnay and pinot noir have already shown their star quality. They have been fresh, fruity, lively wines with obvious appeal but they haven't been taken as seriously as they should.

Nat White, one of the "pioneers" of the region who planted his Main Ridge vineyard in 1975, is leading the crusade towards a higher percentage of "malo-lactic" fermentation (a secondary fermentation which changes the natural malic acid of the grape to a softer lactic acid) in the final blend. It won't be long before his wines will be 100 per cent malo-lactic because, he says, "It's the

only way to give the wine the creamy, soft, complex palate we should be looking for."

He isn't sure the public or the media will understand the latest changes to the style because they have been used to the fruity chardonnays the Peninsula has made up until now, "but there will be plenty of people who appreciate it simply because the wines will have so much more length and finesse. It's a step towards the less obvious, more restrained flavors the French have understood for generations".

As for pinot noir, the variety that seems to have caused a lot of hype and

hyperbole, Nat feels the Peninsula still has a long way to go.

Kathleen Quealy, who was wine maker at Kings Creek Vineyard along with husband Kevin McCarthy (Kevin has now taken over the wine making while Kathleen takes care of the kids and handles the distribution), says "pinot noir used to be a licence for bizarre wine making". But, she says, that has abated a lot now.

"People aren't stupid," she says.

"They know there are vintage variations but that doesn't mean a lighter year is necessarily so bad. This is a marginal climate and the way you make wine here is to pounce on the viticulture and get it right. I suppose it's just a function of wine makers maturing and getting to know their fruit."

Yet out of all the latest wines to be released, it's not the chardonnays or the pinots which have produced the surprises. From a line-up of all the best wines the Peninsula has on offer (mostly from the 1990 vintage), only one chardonnay was really outstanding — the Massoni 1990 — and it is made in Lilliputian quantities. Overall it was a different story — the reds really shone, in particular a velvet-soft cabernet from Moorooduc Estate and a feisty shiraz from Paringa with a blast of pepper and flavor that would shame even central Victoria. Where did all this character and flavor come from? It is becoming crystal-clear that we can't pigeon-hole the peninsula into being a chardonnay and pinot producer — here are reds that could make the peninsula's reputation and the best fruit from these vineyards is yet to come. I have to keep reminding myself that these vines are only a few years old.

## The INDEPENDENT

HASTINGS

Telephone 79 3199

Tuesday, June 4, 1991

Vol. 7 No. 22-20

### Peninsula vines woo the wine lovers



MERRICKS Estate Vineyard manager David Potts is making sure that everything is right for one of the most important few days of the year for Mornington Peninsula wines.

Queens Birthday weekend marks the annual festival which includes public tastings at Mt Martha Country Club on Saturday and the opening of 13 wineries to the public on Sunday and Monday. SEE PAGE 15



county next weekend

## buds

Garry Crittenden, formerly a successful horticulturalist, planted his own vineyard in 1982 and he has been one of the peninsula's most enthusiastic showmen. He estimates the production on the peninsula will double again in the next two years and will be a force to reckon with, on a similar scale to the Yarra Valley.

Garry's Dromana Estate vineyard is by far the largest on the peninsula with an annual crush of 150 tonnes and the style of his wines, he says, is purposefully "commercial" — they are reliable, consistent and extremely competent, some are excellent, and you would have to bet his wines will provide much of the public perception of the peninsula in the market-place.

This coming weekend is probably the best opportunity to find out for yourself what the peninsula can offer. You will find plenty of hospitality, tastings and everything from face painting, jazz and home-made icecream at the magnificent Elgee Park (who said Mornington Peninsula vignerons aren't humble?), home-made lunches at Moorooduc Estate, traditional boeuf bourguignon at Main Ridge or antipasto and Atlantic salmon at Peninsula Estate. In all, 13 vineyards will be open for tastings.

Oh, and if you thought the rest of the state was beautiful, wait until you glimpse a vineyard dressed in autumn colours with a backdrop of sapphire-blue sea.

NOTE: The only way to find out which wineries are open and when is to phone for a brochure and map ((059) 74 4200) or you can pick one up from the Mount Martha Valley Country Club on your way through.

THE LEADER, Wednesday, July 3, 1991 —

## Wineries by the dozen

TWELVE Peninsula vineyards will open for cellar door sales and tastings next weekend.

Five wineries are open every weekend and 12 open on the first weekend of the month.

Lunches will be available at Kings Creek vineyard, Tanglewood Downs and Moorooduc Estate.

About 50 wines will be available for tasting, including an award-winning chardonnay, an exciting new release pinot noir and a rich and mellow cabernet sauvignon.

The recent Peninsula wine weekend was an unqualified success with more than 1000 people visiting Dromana Estate and Elgee Park alone.

The 15 other vineyards open on the weekend welcomed an average of 500 visitors a day.

Maps showing locations of the vineyards open this weekend are available from Main Ridge Estate, William Rd, Red Hill, or from Mornington Peninsula Vignerons Association, PO Box 400, Mornington 3931, or phone Delyse on (059) 74 4200.

THE LEADER, Wednesday, June 5, 1991 —

## Vigneron off to France

IT'S almost a case of coal to Newcastle. Peninsula winemaker Garry Crittenden is off to the heartland of the French wine industry.

The Dromana vigneron leaves shortly for Bordeaux in the interest of the Australian wine industry at Vin-Expo, the world's most important wine exposition.

The trip was arranged by Victoria's agent-general in London, Trevor Baldock.

But unlike his six previous overseas visits, Mr Crittenden, of Dromana Estate winery, will not be selling to the French: instead he will talk on the viticultural aspects of the Victorian wine industry.

He will also address seminars in Bordeaux on the potential for investment in the state's wine industry.

"I already have had many expressions of interest from French vignerons and winemakers on investing here," he said.

Garry regards his latest overseas trip as "the most important promotional event for Mornington Peninsula vignerons."

After Bordeaux he plans to visit England, Scotland and Wales to promote Dromana Estate wines which are selling "extremely well" in the UK.



GARRY Crittenden and his wine: well received overseas, and now hoping to encourage investment in the state's wine industry.

THE FLYER, June 2, 1991

## Wine Growing on the Peninsula

Melbourne and its surrounding regions have a climate that is well suited to the production of fine table wine.

The Yarra Valley is the best known of these regions, but the Mornington Peninsula has gained a reputation in recent years as one of the most exciting wine growing regions in Australia.

The wife of Victoria's first Governor, Charles La Trobe, came from the town of Neuchatel in Switzerland.

Encouraged by her example, many of her compatriots braved the long sea journey to settle in the new colony, bringing with them an interest in wine as well as expertise in viticulture and wine making.

That they settled in the Yarra Valley and in the Geelong district explains why these regions were pre-eminent when, in 1886, Hubert de Castella, himself a native of Neuchatel, wrote his charming book, "John Bull's Vineyard".

Little did he know that the booming Victorian

wine industry was about to collapse as a result of the introduction of the vine louse, Phylloxera, the misguided official response to its discovery and, perhaps most importantly, the depression of the 1890s.

The few attempts at wine growing on the Mornington Peninsula in the last century were, it would seem from scanty records, to have been dismal failures.

This was presumably due to a lack of understanding of the processes involved and the situation would probably have been different had the Swiss been involved.

The Seppelt family planted a vineyard near Dromana in the 1940s, but this did not arouse much interest and was later destroyed in a bush fire.

It was not until the mid-1970s that the present plantings began.

Pioneers such as

Baillieu Myer at Elgee Park and Nat and Rosalie White at Main Ridge showed the way.

Growth has been rapid in the 1980s and there are now more than twenty vineyards producing commercial quantities of wine. Most of these properties are small, so that the total production of a little under 500 tonnes in 1990 represents a small part of the total Australian crush.

The temperate climate of this part of Victoria ensures that the latter month or two of ripening of the grapes takes place in autumn rather than in summer — an important factor in producing quality table wine.

Being surrounded by water, the Mornington Peninsula's macro-climate is further modified. Extremes of heat and cold are reduced and this may be responsible for the intense varietal flavours that tend to be expressed in grapes grown there.

Wind is a major factor in this region and, while this can be useful in disease control in the vineyard, when extreme and persistent it can cause serious damage to the vines as well as reducing vigour and delaying the development of young vines.

Most of the vineyards are planted one of two quite different soil types — deep, rich, fertile, volcanic soil in the more southerly parts, and duplex soil with grey, sandy loam on a clay subsoil in the more northerly parts.

Chardonnay is the most widely planted variety and is probably the most successful to date.

Cabernet sauvignon is also widely planted and is often blended with Merlot and Cabernet franc.

Pinot noir is a variety

which excites much interest, and increasing quantities are being grown. There are some indications that the Mornington Peninsula may be one of the best regions in Australia for this unforgiving but tantalizing variety.

Two Peninsula vignerons grow Shiraz. The resulting wines have done extremely well in shows, suggesting a future for this variety also.

There are small plantings of Sauvignon blanc, Reisling, Traminer, Pinot meunier and Viognier.

Most Peninsula vignerons practise intensive canopy management within a range of systems.

The winemaking on the Mornington Peninsula has generally been of a high standard.

Trends are to exploit the high quality fruit by introducing more complexity to the wines using various techniques.

For example, with Chardonnay, barrel fermentation has become the norm.

An increasing number of Chardonnays are also undergoing partial malolactic fermentation. With red varieties, there is intense interest in prolonged maceration.

The Mornington Peninsula is fortunate in having a strong and unified association, the Mornington Peninsula Vignerons Association Inc.

In 1990, the M.P.V.A. took the unusual step of raising a levy from members to employ a promotions director.

This has so far been a great success and the Association is confident that there will be increasing opportunities for the public to discover and further explore the wines of this region.

In the past, it has been difficult for the public to visit more than one or two Peninsula wineries.

This is changing and there are currently twelve wineries open on a regular basis and visitors are welcome.

A brochure is available, giving details as well as a useful map.

The M.P.V.A. conducts an annual promotional event over the Queen's Birthday weekend.

Most individual producers also support the Victorian Wine Exhibition.

Some Peninsula vignerons vigorously promote their wines nationally and internationally, and these efforts enhance the image of the region as a whole.

For the wine industry on the Mornington Peninsula to be viable, the grapes and the wine produced must command a high price.

This will only happen if the quality of the products is outstanding.

The experience of the last fifteen years shows that this is an achievable aim.

The Mornington Peninsula will produce table wines that will stand up in any company.

It will also produce grapes that will be sought after for sparkling wine production.

As vineyards mature and sophisticated viticulture and wine making progress, the products will become even better than they are now and, despite the grave difficulties being suffered by the wine industry at the moment, it is certain that the Mornington Peninsula will consolidate its position both in Australia and overseas as an important quality wine producing region.

## 60 minutes from Melbourne — a wine world away

Twelve Mornington Peninsula Vineyards open for Cellar Door Sales this Weekend.

Tanglewood Downs	(Mel 151 K12)
Peninsula Estate	(Mel 190 K4)
Moorooduc Estate	(Mel 192 B9)
Merricks Estate	(Mel 192 B9)
Dromana Estate	(Mel 160 J6)
Coolart Valley	(Mel 191 G6)
Kings Creek	(Mel 163 F8)
Karina Vineyard	(Mel 160 J6)
Stoniers	(Mel 192 F9)
Paringa Estate	(Mel 191 D9)
Main Ridge Estate	(M 190 C4)
Balnarring Vineyard	(163 B11)

you're welcome at Peninsula Vineyards between 12 noon and 5 pm



Page 8 — SOUTHERN PENINSULA GAZETTE, Tuesday, June 18, 1991



TAKING in the atmosphere at Tanglewood Downs winery are Alex and Diana Bonner, James, Dorothy, David and Roger Savin. The wines are served by Ken and Wendy Bilham.



JAN, Jenny, Graeme, Geoff and Angela Pinney celebrate the success of open day at Karina Vineyard, Dromana.

## Wine buffs toast the Queen

THOUSANDS of wine lovers visited the Southern Peninsula on the Queen's Birthday weekend for winery open days promoted by the Mornington Peninsula Vignerons Association.

Despite the rain and cold wind, most of the 11 vineyards did a brisk trade.

At picturesque Tanglewood Downs vineyard, owner Ken Bilham said: "Today (Monday) is much better — much more pleasant."

"Yesterday was unbelievable. We had more than 400 people through. We had planned for about 60 lunches and served 120."

Mr Bilham said Tanglewood

By PHIL GANNON

had a lighter style of wines and had won recognition with its traminer.

"The 90-91 vintage is tremendous and I feel the wines coming through now are show class."

Musicians played at the Hickinbotham family winery in Dromana, and a log fire warmed one side of patrons as the other was chilled by the wind.

Viticulturist Andrew Hickinbotham was rightly proud of his Futures Champagne and was taking orders for strawberry champagne.

Mr Hickinbotham said the strawberry champagne was popular. "Dad (Ian Hickinbotham)

started Kaiser Stuhl and is right in with sparkling wines."

"We get the fruit from Mick Galace's Sunny Ridge Strawberries at Main Ridge".

Despite the weather, Mr Hickinbotham did a brisk trade with his more familiar cabernets and champagne.

Checking out the scene at Dromana was the owner of one of the Peninsula's newest wineries, Mr Rocky Tallarida of Tallarida Wines at the corner of Old Cape Schanck Road and Browns Road, Rosebud South.

Another busy winery was Dromana Estate Vineyard where vigneron Garry Crittenden described the day as "frantic — flat out".

He said that sales over the weekend had been "fantastic".

Business was also brisk at nearby Karina Vineyard, recently established by the Pinney family.

Graeme Pinney said he and his wife Jan looked after the vineyard, established in 1984, on their own, except for the picking.

"We are up to our fourth vintage and learning very quickly."

"We produce a riesling, sauvignon blanc, cabernet and next year will present a chardonnay."

Graeme said the open days had been attended by "very interested people, selective and thorough".

"The advertising attracted the right sort of people," he said.

Overall the open day weekend was the most successful promo-

tion organised by the Mornington Peninsula Vignerons — thanks to local press and the publicity, according to Mr Baillieu Myer of Elgee Park.

Mr Myer said about 1,250 people had passed through the estate, where a small fee was charged for tastings, and added attractions included Gippsland cheese, home made ice cream and a clown.

"We sold out of chardonnay and cabernet merlot, as well as our magnums of cabernet."

"Established in 1972, with our first vintage in 1975, we were the first of the local vineyards."

"Visitors included New Zealanders, who came to Melbourne for *Phantom of the Opera*, Pavarotti and Mornington Peninsula wines," Mr Myer said.



HELEN AND Bill Benson, Cheryl Fleming and Carolyn Chataway braved the cold to sample the fruity cabernet proffered by Andrew Hickinbotham.



PENINSULA residents David and Therese Mahony had praise for the pinot noir poured by Garry Crittenden at Dromana Estate Vineyard.



**Dine-out**

THE INDEPENDENT, Tuesday, June 18, 1991 - Page 51

VERY quickly, the peninsula wineries are coming of age and developing into what could be our number one export earner on a state, national and international level. Over the Queen's Birthday Weekend, more than a dozen local vigneron opened their doors for the third successive year, and, more successfully than ever opened the eyes of Melbourne's esoteric and elite, wine and dine aficionados to the quality of the local product.

A marvellous (as always) promotional lunch at La Banque brought more than kind comments from the many dineout Gurus present, including The Age's Claude Forell and wine wordsmith Mark Shield who notably commented that our wines are "currently very good, but have a future that promises that the best is yet to come."

And come it will, as local vintners enjoy the benefits of the learning process in the peninsula's cool climate cultivation. Locally the industry is a young one, with the oldest vines being at Elgee Park, where 400 were planted in 1970. On average the peninsula vines would be only about 10 years of age. Peninsula wineries, almost without exception, are producing product for the top three per cent of the market,



## Cheers for a grape-led recovery

this year releasing over half a million bottles priced between \$15 and \$20. This quiet apparently, injects more than \$10m into our economy. Our wineries are relatively small volume, labor and TLC intensive projects, most often family concerns,

1989 Cabernet Sauvignon  
• Stoniers 1989 Cabernet Sauvignon (produced by Tod Dexter, a winemaker to watch)  
• Massoni Main Creek Chardonnay 1990 (extra good white)

producing stuff that really rates. So, let's help them; and we will enjoy the trickle down benefits of their success.

Next time you talk to someone from Melbourne or Sydney or anywhere and the conversation leads locally, tell them how good the Peninsula wine is!

If lots of people do this, we will be contributing a little to that comforting insulative layer that begins a little to the north of Mt Eliza, and protects the quality of lifestyle we sometimes come to forget that we enjoy.

To this reporter's "no claim to fame" palate, only two adjectives are essential descriptive for good wine; nice and smooth. So, with reference to yours truly tasting notes, after a good examine of the reds, and a quick whip through the whites, I can recommend highly, if you number among the "other" 97 per cent of wine drinkers who may sometimes be searching for an extra good drop.

- Craig Avon 1990 Pinot Noir
- Kings Creek 1990 Pinot Noir
- Moorooduc Estate

- Haydn

# Southern Peninsula Gazette

AUSTRALIA'S BEST COUNTRY NEWSPAPER

TUESDAY, JUNE 18, 1991

1.



## Wine makes their day

"Here's to you", say BAILLIEU Myer and Daniel Green introducing Margaret and Tony Mojet and Mick Dyson to the delights of Elgee Park.

They were among the crowds who toured and tasted at Mornington Peninsula wineries over the Queen's Birthday weekend.

Mr Myer said about 1250 people passed through the estate.

• Taste the full story on PAGE 8.



THE AGE TUESDAY 16 JULY 1991 Page 21

## EPICURE

edited by P

Picture

So your fantasy is owning a vineyard? For **KEITH DUNSTAN**, the reality was a plague of birds, endless labor, a spraying scare and the joy of creation. They said he was mad to plant pinot noir, the problem grape, but (left) he answers back.

# Wine dreams and nightmares



Keith Dunstan pruning at his Main Ridge vineyard: "We discovered very early every vine is like a child, every one of them has to be

**W**HY does one do it? There's no money in it. Quite the reverse, it is absolutely ruinous. Tell my wife? I don't even dare admit to myself how much money it has cost.

I think it is the excitement of getting there. The thrill of creation, because wine is no ordinary thing. It is a living organism but the obstacle course of grape production, the intensive labor, is beyond any expectation.

Ah, but when you have made some wine, the glass is in your hand, and it is all yours. It is like seeing your first book, having it arrive in a parcel from the publisher. Or perhaps owning a horse and seeing the dear thing come down the straight first.

This glass of wine you have made, it is yours. Like all mothers you are blind, you think what a charming, beautiful, exquisite creation it is. Let no creature criticise it.

In the winery cellar, opened it at home, and it is rarely the same. Anyway, John Brown took me through the whole palate of artistry, explaining the qualities of riesling, shiraz, cabernet, and his own special blend, cabernet-mondeuse-shiraz. From then on we always called it CMS, in honor of the Church Missionary Society.

Nothing was ever the same for me again. I was a disciple of the grape, totally hooked. John Brown took over my wine needs and a glorious era of home bottling began. There was a barrel that went back and forth on the train and I also possessed a 15-gallon bottle, rather like those elegant bottles, filled with colored water, that old-time pharmacists kept in their windows. That, too, did a great deal of travelling.

One day John filled it for me with a special shiraz he had been saving. I put it in the back seat and we were driving

through Carlton, almost home to East Malvern. It was a warm day and I heard an ominous crack. Oh dear, I guessed immediately what had happened. Expanding gases had split the bottle.

It was one of those horrid disasters you never forget. All I could do was pull into the kerb, open the door and let the wine flow out, a crimson waterfall pouring into the gutter. An Italian was standing nearby. Now an Australian would have laughed, but this Italian was prepared to sob with us. He cried out: "Oh, mamma mia." He understood the depth of the tragedy.

#### Dear Potential Vigneron:

Are you likely to go to ruin in your dream to become a vigneron? Here are just some of the costs.

and we even moved into hogmounds. Our bottling set-up was splendid. There was a large tube that gravity fed into a lavatory cistern with ball valve. From the lavatory cistern there were two tubes that fed to taps, and we fed two bottles at a time. Behind the bottles were back-up men with corks. At the finish we pushed our bottles home in wheelbarrows.

I had home-bottled wine under the floorboards, in the wood shed, in the garage and I used to buy old wardrobes and fill them with bottles. I still have some of those Milawa reds dating back to 1960 and 1961. Lovely, well-developed, full-of-muscle creatures, they are. The cost at the time was a shilling a bottle. The home-bottling era came to an end abruptly in 1968. That was the beginning of the wine boom and from then on all producers, very sensibly, put their best wine into the bottle.

The dream remained to produce my own wine. The chance came after 1985 when we bought a property at Main Ridge, well elevated on the Mornington Peninsula. What a chance to produce a cool-climate pinot noir. So, with my son, David, we acquired some pinot cuttings. My old friend John Brown looked them over and said: "Keith, let me give you some very good advice. It's easier to get it out of the bottle."

It was a line I was to remember. I also remember a line I picked up in the 'Readers Digest': "Farming always looks beautiful through a car window."

In 1989 we put in 1200 pinot rootlings, put in a drip system, put in a 22,500-litre tank to feed them water, we soil tested, we fertilised. We discovered very early every vine is like a child, every one of them has to be nurtured, looked after, trained. Trained? We hadn't realised the creation of the canopy was a whole new science.

It was like being a hairdresser, every vine needed the correct hairstyle. There each row, 120 of them. Sprays that are good for the vines are also good for the roses.

"What's more, I sprayed your roses with the same stuff."

I thought this would be the end of my marriage, but she is a very calm and practical woman, my wife.

"Well, we will have to do something about it won't we?" she said.

Immediately she got out the hoses. She called Leon and Vivienne Masoni, who have a vineyard nearby. They came with backpack sprays. Friends Pat and Derek Rumbold also rallied. It took four hours solid labor to wash down all the vines and incredibly they were saved.

"Of course, you know what you will have to do now," said Leon in a tired voice. "You will have to get out and spray with the correct stuff."

There was another problem we had not anticipated — birds. In the great vineyards of the Barossa or north-east Victoria, birds are not a problem. But what with all our trees and nearby suburbia the birds gather at vintage, predatory, waiting to pounce like Saddam's army.

Local vigneronns have tried everything to get rid of birds. They have put up scarecrows. Bob Hawke, Keating, and even Dr Hewson are the most popular. They have put up revolving mirrors, put in gas guns, fake hawks that swing back and forth in the air. Some fire rockets. You can get shotgun cartridges that have a delayed fuse and explode over the vineyard. They cost \$1 a time.

Some valiant citizens tell their wives and children to get out at dawn and bang saucepan lids. Some have spent \$10,000 and more in covering their entire vineyard with wire netting, and that's just for half-a-hectare or more.

We put up some yellow plastic netting, but it wasn't good enough. The little silver eyes wriggled through and gobbled 90 per cent of our small crop. We saved the last 10, or five per cent, by covering

individual bunches with pantie hose. That was brilliantly effective. You get three bunches to a leg. Indeed your vines look quite nice dressed in green or dark-blue pantie hose.

My agony with birds was so great that I declared my pain in print and there were some amazing letters, so terrifying that this is the first time I have been brave enough to reveal them. One gentleman from northern New South Wales said the answer was simple. He had been using it for years. You put a tiny plate on top of a pole. You put a positive lead to one side, a negative to the other, place some feed on the plate and as soon as the bird alights, zap, it's electrocuted.

Another gentleman from the Riverina reported that he had some experience with bomb disposal in the Second World War. He had designed a cartridge that looked like a tempting piece of food, a mouse, or some such. It had a delayed-action fuse. The bird took it, flew into the air and then the cartridge exploded. "You have no idea what a marvellous deterrent that is," he said.

A kinder character from Western Australia said the real answer was to plant sunflowers down every row and the birds would go for the sunflower seeds every time in preference to the grapes.

It is amazing how quickly you change. We are devoted birds lovers. We have done everything we can to encourage them with cute bird feeders hanging from the branches, and bird baths all around the garden. Now I am thinking of a Ghoulish League of Birds, an organisation designed to make them go away. We have even thought of calling in the cooking writers to offer bird recipes.

After all, you don't Italy and France. The all.

In 1990 the birds of our grapes that sufficient to fill one bin. We needed so tramp the grapes. V it goes back to early virgins give the wine

It so happens we daughters, who ungins. They did in grapes. I did the laundry, and the fine through tea towels turned chair. I learn mother when she ma

So the wine event it produced nine bot at Christmas, and I our eyes misted ov this, our first home-first pinot.

Since then we have, and I can't tell know what they are French oak barrels estimating break-ev \$100 a bottle.

But our nets are time. I think we are tory over the army o you read this we n 2000 bottles instead

But I am worried need much bigger would be a good weighed about 90 would be a help if s Do you know where 90-kilogram, size-12





ARD YALLOP

AIG ABRAHAM



## A taste of vintage Dunstan

KEITH Dunstan is a journalistic institution.

His daily column, *A Place In The Sun*, was avidly read by Melburnians for more than a quarter of a century. His cause celebres made headlines, the most controversial one being his beloved Anti Football League. On Page 8, reporter DENISE GADD talks to Keith Dunstan about his autobiography, his foray into wine making and his passion for cycling.

Page 8 FRANKSTON STANDARD, Tuesday June 11, 1991

## Leader Page

# Keith finds his place in the sun

**W**RITING comes naturally to veteran columnist Keith Dunstan.

Yet when his son David suggested it was high time he wrote his autobiography, the 66-year-old journalist and novice vigneron was unnerved at the prospect.

With a number of books to his credit and literally thousands of pieces published all over the world, Keith Dunstan was surprisingly reticent about exposing himself, warts and all, to the public.

But David, a historian, kept up the pressure, and the result was *No Brains At All*. "David had a keen sense of history and thought every family should put down their history somehow or other," said Mr Dunstan.

"I thought about it and regretted that none of our family had recorded anything.

"I had a great-grandfather who came out from Cornwall. He was a mining engineer. He settled in Ballarat and would have been there during the Eureka uprising.

"All we know are the dates he was born and died so I thought I should do this and encourage others to do the same."

To Keith Dunstan's surprise and delight, his autobiography ended up on the best-seller list for weeks "and is going better than expected".

The pickings from his Mornington Peninsula vineyard were also better than expected this year resulting in 2000 litres of Dunstan Family Pinot Noir, compared with nine bottles in 1990.

A burning ambition to start a winery and a love of fine wines for 40 years motivated Keith Dunstan and his wife Marie to join the growing ranks of vigneron on the Mornington Peninsula.

Last year the starlings beat them to the ripened fruit on the 1200 vines at their Main Ridge property, but the Dunstons managed to salvage enough to fill two large plastic rubbish bins.

Like the days of yore, the grapes were "foot tramped", not by monks, but "two virgins", notably the Dunstons' five and eight-year-old grand-daughters.

Fermenting was done in the laundry and the fruity nectar strained through a tea-towel.

By DENISE GADD

This year they beat the starlings at their own game and salvaged two tonnes of grapes. Conventional methods were used to make the second vintage!

"We thought of advertising for about 16 virgins with big feet, preferably 16 stone, but they're pretty hard to come by on the Mornington Peninsula, so we used machinery instead," he quipped.

While his wine is still young, Keith Dunstan is a vintage journalist.

He admits to not being particularly gifted at anything "except maybe writing" during his years at Geelong Grammar.

During holidays he worked as an office boy at the *Herald and Weekly Times* where his father Bill was general manager.

After leaving school he enlisted in the RAAF and was promoted to officer at 18, "far too young".

He has vivid memories of one particular weekend when he was stationed at Maryborough in Queensland.

"The air force owned a beach house nearby and a squadron came back from New Guinea," he said.

"They were all sergeants and warrant officers and a pretty tough lot. I couldn't see how I could possibly control them. We went down to the beach house for the weekend and there must have been 20 WAAFs and 20 pilots. The first thing I know is that they've all paired off together.

**"B**EING young and naive I didn't know what to do about this so I sat up all night listening to all the obvious goings on and I thought 'my God, I'll get blamed if all these WAAFs have babies. I'll get the sack for sure.'"

Back in civvies, he joined the *Herald and Weekly Times* as a cadet reporter.

After a stint overseas and in Brisbane, he joined the *Sun News-Pictorial* and so began a 27-year association with *A Place In The Sun*, a witty daily column which Mr Dunstan has described as "a vast vacuum".

When "APITS" was changed to *Dawn To Dusk*, he was outraged and complained bitterly to the powers-that-be at Flinders St... "but nobody took any notice".



MARIE and Keith Dunstan with their three loves... each other, their vineyard and a tandem bike.

Picture: PHIL ROWLEY

He also complained to the football league for pilfering AFL — the acronym for his beloved Anti-Football League.

"It was outrageous," said Mr Dunstan. "I told them I'd take them to the High Court!"

Launched in 1967 by Keith Dunstan and colleague Douglas Wilkie, the Anti-Football League brought howls of protest from footy zealots. One was so incensed at this attack on Melbourne's sacred cow that he accused Mr Dunstan of being either "a commo or a poofster".

Despite the outrage, the AFL has survived and still has 3000 paid-up members with proceeds going to charity. Ironically, Keith Dunstan once covered football for *The Herald*.

"I used to be the Geelong expert," he said.

"Actually I liked writing about it but my knowledge of football was very thin. I remember there were a lot of complaints, particularly my choice of best players."

During his long stint on *The Sun*, Keith Dunstan was also responsible for the Ungodly Horror Award (UGH) presented each year for the ugliest edifice, the Pro Mini Club, an organisation to save the mini skirt, the Scrooge Society for those who couldn't stand Christmas, and the Society Against Progress.

When he's not tending his grapes and writing his weekly column for *The Age*, Mr Dunstan can be found riding around the countryside on a tandem bike with Marie.

Veteran riders, they have cycled around America and Tasmania and from Melbourne to Sydney. They plan to cycle around New Zealand in November.

"It's very relaxing and quiet and we don't cause any pollution," said Mr Dunstan.

"We can see the countryside, there are nice smells and Marie and I can talk. We've got granny gears so we can go up the hills. But we're getting to the stage where we almost need great-granny gears!"



PAGE 20 - THE FLYER, June 16, 1991

## The big wine-on

The annual Peninsula Queen's Birthday Wine Weekend saw the essential calendar event for anyone interested in fine wines.

Mornington Peninsula vigneron's gathered at the MtMartha Valley Country Club to display over 50 wines for tasting, making their third annual event the biggest yet.

Patrons sampled outstanding wines, all made entirely from grapes grown on the Peninsula, including new releases of some 1989 and 1990 vintages.

The flyer's photographer visited the event.



Debra Biggs enjoys a glass of red at the tasting.



Leon Massoni pours a Masori wine from the Main Creek Vineyard.



(left) Peter Harris of Willow Creek Vineyard, Rosalie and Nat White of Main Ridge Estate and Margeret Harrison from "The Flyer"



Stephen Glenfield and Rhonda Glew enjoying the wine tasting.

THE AGE TUESDAY 16 JULY 1991 Page 25

## A small wine maker de

By DAVID DUNSTAN

**K**EN LANG is unrepentant about the cost of his wine. Although a newcomer, his 1990 Craig Avon chardonnay retails in the top bracket of wines made from this variety with a recommended price tag of \$23 a bottle. At \$19 and \$18.80 respectively, his 1990 pinot noir and cabernet sauvignon do not come much cheaper.

"I based the prices on what I felt they were worth compared with the cost of wines I normally purchase," he says. "I think that if you're aiming at top quality then you should ensure that your quality remains at that level. You should be prepared to justify pricing it accordingly."

Ken and Helen Lang established their vineyard at Merricks North four years ago. They are part of an upsurge of interest in wine making that has occurred on the rural fringe of Melbourne in the past 10 years. Like many others they have made an extensive personal and financial commitment to a small vineyard. Now that their first wines are in bottle they are faced with the prospect of selling them.

With only two hectares of vines, the quantity is not so great that an extensive marketing and promotional effort is necessary. Herein lies the appeal of the small maker for both vigneron and consumer: the wines are hand-made and distinctive. But if they are good they are likely to be expensive. Lang cites the cost of production of small parcels of premium wine from cool areas such as the Mornington Peninsula as one reason for the high prices.

For example, there is the cost of top-quality French oak barrels (currently around \$800 a barrel), which Mr Lang regards as essential to the production of a top-quality chardonnay. "There are no shortcuts with premium wine," he says.



Ken Lang: quality costs money.

The marketing of the first wines from the Craig Avon vineyard has not been as straightforward as predicted, a fact which Mr Lang ascribes to the difficult economic times. But the response so far has been satisfying with sales being made to Melbourne retailers and restaurants, and some smaller parcels going to similar destinations interstate. The Langs do not have cellar-door sales.

The wines have met with more than their fair share of critical acclaim, the chardonnay in particular. It is a good wine indeed with a lovely mix of complex oak and fruit flavors and the structure to improve over five years or more.

The only barrier I can see to Mr Lang gaining an immediate and loyal following for his wines is their price. I asked him whether, initially, he shouldn't have pitched his wines at lower prices and then raised the stakes when market acceptance had been obtained.

"This is an argument which has been put to me before," he says. "I

don't see that a wine should have to gain its spurs. Price should be based on the quality of the wine. When I look back over the years I see that many other top wines were priced accordingly, and as newcomers."

Mr Lang has set himself high standards and wine making is a vocation he has not taken on lightly.

Trained as an industrial chemist, he built upon his amateur enthusiasm for wine with six years' solid part-time study as an external student with Charles Sturt University. He now has his wine makers' degree in applied science but still draws on the expertise of pioneer Mornington Peninsula maker Nat White as a consultant.

It was Mr Lang's commitment to making fine wine that attracted him to the peninsula. The Yarra Valley was also in contention but it was the early peninsula wines of the 1980s, and notably those of Nat White at Main Ridge, that tipped the balance.

Mr Lang thought that obtaining the right location would be difficult. But after only a couple of months of searching he was able to buy a property that satisfied his requirements for wine growing: a location on the richer, deep soil, a north-easterly aspect with good exposure to the sun and adequate protection from the elements. Three vintages on he has not changed his views.

The 1989 vintage can hardly be counted. It produced only half-a-tonne of grapes with the wines (about eight cases of chardonnay and 20 of cabernet) being made in a shed. A winery was ready for the excellent 1990 crop that produced the wines which are now before us. Mr Lang is confident that the 1991 wines still in oak are at least the equal of the 1990s.

In particular, he has great hopes for his 1991 cabernet which, in addition to its component of merlot, will benefit from an additional mix of clones of

Page 34 - THE MAIL, Thursday, June 20, 1991

## Here's to a grape-led recovery

**V**ERY quickly, the peninsula's wineries are coming of age and developing into what could be our number one export earner on a state, national and international level.

Over the Queens Birthday Weekend, more than a dozen local vigneron's opened their doors for the third successive year, and, more successfully than ever opened the eyes of Melbourne's esoteric and elite, wine and dine aficionados to the quality of the local product.

A marvellous (as always) promotional lunch at La Banque brought more than kind comments from the many dineout Gurus present, including The Age's Claude Forell and wine wordsmith Mark Shield who notably commented that our wines are "currently very good, but have a future that promises that the best is yet to come."

And come it will, as local vintners enjoy the benefits of the learning process in the peninsula's cool climate cultivation.

Locally the industry is a young one, with the oldest vines being at Elgee Park, where 400 were planted in 1970. On average the peninsula vines would be only about 10 years of age.

Peninsula wineries, almost without exception, are producing product for the top three per cent of the market, this year releasing over half a million bottles priced between \$15 and \$20.

This apparently injects more than \$10m into our economy.

Our wineries are relatively small volume, labor and TLC intensive projects, most often family concerns, producing stuff that really rates.

So, let's help them; and we will enjoy the trickle down benefits of their success.

Next time you talk to someone from Melbourne or Sydney or anywhere and the conversation leads locally, tell them how good the Peninsula's wine is!

If lots of people do this, we will be contributing a little to that comforting insulative layer that begins a little to the north of Mt Eliza, and protects the quality of lifestyle we sometimes come to forget that we enjoy.

To this reporters "no claim to fame" palate, only two adjectives are essential descriptive for good wine; nice and smooth. So, with reference to yours truly tasting notes, after good examine of the reds, and a quick whip through the whites, I can recommend highly, if you number among the "other" 97 per cent of wine drinkers who may sometimes be searching for an extra good drop.

- Craig Avon 1990 Pinot Noir
- Kings Creek 1990 Pinot Noir
- Moorooduc Estate 1989 Cabernet Sauvignon
- Stoniers 1989 Cabernet Sauvignon (produced by Tod Dexter, a winemaker to watch)
- Massoni Main Creek Chardonnay.

—Hav





## tends his prices

cabernet sauvignon which Mr Lang believes will add further complexity to the wine.

With two good vintages behind him and a winery replete with excellent wines, Mr Lang can afford to be confident that the public will accept that his efforts and his prices are justified. Not wishing to give in too easily, I put one last question to him.

What happens when the inevitable indifferent vintage arrives and your wines are not the equal of those of previous good years?

Do you then reduce your prices?

Mr Lang, who insists that he has not yet arrived at this impasse, says that there would be a number of options open to him. These include the possibility of a "second label" or selling off the wine off elsewhere.

"We certainly wouldn't release it at the prices that we have been asking. I think it would be a mistake to sell it under the Craig Avon label. I am consciously trying to build a prestige image for my wine," he says.

THE AGE TUESDAY 18 JUNE 1991

EPICURE

## Sirocco power and unwooded wines

**K**ATHLEEN QUEALY, the wine maker, is in a constant state of wheelspin. Time and progress are clearly passing too slowly, the industry is too conservative, the wine press is mentally constipated and consumers have closed minds...

Miss Quealy is a breath of fresh air but she's no gentle zephyr. She sweeps in like the Sirocco with a scorching tongue and a mind full of ready opinions. When something bugs her she usually picks up the phone and I end up saying "Really Miss Quealy" for the best part of an hour.

The latest annoyance is that she and her husband, Kevin McCarthy, have just made a chardonnay and they don't intend to give it any wood treatment. They want the fruit flavors to speak for themselves. What's wrong with that?

The problem is that during these tough times other wineries are cutting costs and are either using old oak or no oak at all. "It will make our wine look like a low-budget special," complained a furious Kathleen. "It's not like that at all. Last year we marketed a non-wooded chardonnay and we intend to do the same next year. It's our style and nothing to do with going broke."

She is direct in her delivery. She turned her hand to selling wine and it is safe to say there has never been a rep quite like her. Crying babe on one hip and sample bottle in hand, she blitzed the bars of Melbourne. The approach was direct, as are all her approaches. About as subtle as a dumpmaster truck in a back alley, but she won more than she lost. It is hard not to like such a refreshingly rough-and-ready personality. Older folk would describe her as "a trick" or "a card".

Last year the couple's T'gallant



### Noble Rot

By MARK SHIELD

label sold well but in some ways was misunderstood by some pundits. It certainly was a hit at places like the trendy Dogs Bar in St Kilda. It seemed to fit the food and the atmosphere although there is nothing particularly trendy about Kathleen Quealy.

If she was an actor she would be cast in the sci-fi role of dedicated scientist too busy discovering the antidote to bother about wearing make-up. She would also go well saving gorillas from bulldozers in the mist. There is a quixotic streak in her approach to wine making.

Apart from unwooded chardonnay, she is a champion of the variety pinot gris. Again this is another grape that will make a substantial wine without any oak treatment. She believes it to be well-suited to the Mornington Peninsula and is encouraging (some would say cajoling) others to plant it.

Unfortunately there are few examples of pinot gris available to the consumer. The best come from Alsace and they can be very powerful wines with a great depth of flavor. That's fine, but the name of the variety is a marketing nightmare. Pinot gris or grey pinot is hardly inspiring. It really needs an attractive brand name — but what?

When not pondering the marketing problems of pinot gris, this talented

wine maker finds time to consult to Shantell and Warramate in the Yarra Valley and Kings Creek on the Mornington Peninsula. For these wineries she makes more conventional wines.

Perhaps there is no such thing as a conventional pinot noir in Australia because wine makers are still wearing their L-plates. There are many methods being employed to make pinot noir.

For example, the Kings Creek pinot 1990 was made by crushing 80 per cent of the fruit.

This, plus the intact bunches was fermented in open tanks that were plunged thrice daily. After fermentation the wine was left on skins to macerate for another two weeks. Then it was lightly pressed and transferred into barrels.

That's fairly traditional but no less scary stuff and happily the Kings Creek turned out well enough to win a trophy in the national dry red class in 1990. "I think I'm impressed by winning a trophy," Kathleen said candidly. "I was very happy for Kings Creek because it is a very good vineyard."

She continued: "Kev and I are confident about the strength of fruit found in pinots and chardonnays grown on the peninsula. With the right viticulture it's possible to grow the best."

The right viticulture consists of canopy management and setting low crop levels. Bunches must be exposed to ripen in the sun and be free from disease pressures.

"The fruit was so bloody good, particularly the chardonnay, it's almost a shame to muck up the flavors by using oak." This declaration was delivered with eye-flashing fervor. That fervor is not necessarily shared by her wine-making peers.



Kathleen Quealy: eye-flashing fervor

Oak has become something of a black art with chardonnay. Some wineries tend to take things too far. It can be said there are too many over-wooded chardonnays on the market. Too many wines that taste like some one had been scraping burnt toast into the bottle.

It can also be argued that the use of oak was a matter of necessity. It was the only available storage and an easy way to move wine around. The flavors that oak imparted to the wine were considered a fact of life.

The advent of stainless-steel tanks was a liberating thing, particularly where the aromatic varieties such as riesling were concerned.

Whether we are ready for unwooded chardonnays is about to be tested. When the oak has been handled well, I think it makes for a more complex wine, but there should always be room for a new style, so why not an unwooded chardonnay? Kathleen Quealy would like everyone to know: "We made ours without wood on purpose." As well as the T'gallant chardonnay, stand by for pinot gris and much much more — really Miss Quealy.



## A T L I B E R T Y

## Sophisticated palate

*Observe the car parks of any cellar door in South Australia and you'll see a plethora of Victorian licence plates. It seems that Victorians don't realise they have vineyards on their door-step.*

The Mornington Peninsula is just 45 minutes from the centre of Melbourne and it now offers a bevy of cellar doors stocked with fine wines and eager folk willing to pour a drink and discuss the weighty matters of the world of wine.

The denizens of the Peninsula tend to be serious folk. Cellar door is new to them, winemaking is new to them and selling wine seems like a mysterious black art. The uncertainty adds a particular charm to a visit.

Take Stonier's Merricks, the largest vineyard on the Peninsula. Brian Stonier is the honcho at Macmillan Publishing and the founder of Sun Books. He was interested in wine and thought it might be "fun" to plant vines on his property at Mornington.

But suddenly the fun turned serious; there were spray programs, pruning schedules, there were cases of wine to sell, winemakers to employ, labels to design and the press to court. There was also a question of size.

Stonier's Merricks was neither a big hobby nor a full-time job. It was at an awkward stage where it was costing money, and that seemed endemic in

the wineries on the Peninsula, most of which were too small to take seriously.

It was Brian Stonier's hope that a large company would see the benefits of the Peninsula and set up a winery that would attract publicity and people, catching up existing vineyards in the promotional groundswell.

The folk on the Peninsula held their breath while Moët et Chandon debated about setting up there. The climate is perfect for growing champagne varieties like chardonnay and pinot noir and there was another attraction in the form of Napoleon's bed (from St Helena), which is housed at the historic Briars homestead.

But a keen sense of history was not enough, Moët opted for the Yarra Valley and built Domain Chandon. So the cachet associated with having an international maker in their midst was lost, even though Domain Chandon draws fruit from the district.

Brian Stonier's next move was to find a partner and become a large winery. So what started as a bit of fun became a 200-tonne winery capable of producing over 10,000 cases a year.

In the early days the late Stephen Hickinbotham was employed as a consultant. Stephen was killed in an air crash in 1986. He had always expressed great enthusiasm for the climate on the Peninsula and had plans to set up his own vineyard and winery. His brother Andrew has done just that.

After that came Dominique Portet from Taltarni, who is on record as saying that he enjoys handling Mornington fruit, which is harvested much later than the grapes on his Avoca vineyard.

Today Tod Dexter, a California-trained winemaker, is Stonier's full-time winemaker. Tod also manages his own vineyard as well as the 20ha planted at Stonier's Merricks.

One man who didn't don the mantle of hobby farmer turned serious vigneron is Garry Crittenden (no relation to the wine merchant family). Garry was serious from the start. He was a horticulturist who consulted to vineyards all over Australia. He chose Mornington as the site for his own label, Dromana Estate.

He planted a radical vineyard (for the times) using close spacing and delving of the rows. He used the service of Domain Chandon's Dr Tony Jordan to make wine and from the beginning marketed his products in a professional fashion.

Today there are over twenty wineries on the Peninsula and there are permanently-open cellar doors at Balnarring Vineyard, Karina Vineyard, Main Ridge Estate, Paringa Estate and Stonier's Merricks.

On Saturday, 8 June the Peninsula will be staging a wine exhibition at the Mount Martha Valley Country Club. Seventeen vineyards will be open for visitors on Saturday, and fourteen will participate in a winery walkabout on Sunday and Monday. The district is really coming of age.

Visiting the Peninsula can be a rewarding yet frustrating affair. Navigation is difficult and a map is essential. Happily the vignerons have addressed this problem and a vineyard map has been printed. It is available from the Peninsula's Promotions Director, Delyse Graham, P.O. Box 400, Mornington 3931, tel. (059) 744 200. ■

MARK SHIELD



JUNE 1991 LAW INSTITUTE JOURNAL



SMH Good Living Tuesday July 23 1991

## FINE WINE

HUON HOOKE

TACKLING THE PROBLEM AT THE ROOTS

**A** SMALL winery proprietor needs to be an expert viticulturist, winemaker, salesman and marketer. But rarely do you find two, let alone three, of these qualities in one person. Garry Crittenden is all four. And he has a pretty good palate as well.

In just a few years he has, with smart marketing, established Dromana Estate as the leading Mornington Peninsula winery and, with smart viticulture, avoided most if not all the snags his peninsula colleagues have been caught in.

The Dromana Estate cabernet merlot is exemplary. Deep-coloured, extravagantly scented and flavoured with brilliantly clear blackcurrant fruit and laced with top quality, well-harmonised oak, it has none of the vegetative aroma and thin, weedy palate structure of some of the peninsula's earlier efforts.

But Crittenden, a former nurseryman, didn't have to waste years fiddling with expensive changes of trellis design to solve that one. He simply used an original and intelligent approach.

First, he planted on the flat country, with its poor, shallow, grey sandy loam topsoil and clay subsoil, turning his nose up at the deep, rich, red-brown volcanic soils of the loftier hills. The grey soil may be terrible for spuds or market gardening, but for grapevines in such an area, it was just the ticket.

Then he planted his rootlings in hilled rows. The soil between the rows was damped up to give the roots 30 to 38 centimetres of soil before the clay subsoil.

The roots don't penetrate the clay; they restrict themselves to the small area under each plant, making them very vulnerable to water stress.

But, at the same time, the vineyard is under drip irrigation supplied by a huge dam which will never run dry.

The vines never lack water, but because of the small root-zone Crittenden has precise control over the vines' growth. Too much growth and he turns the water off. He can dry the soil out completely in three to four days and thereby starve the vines. (As long as it doesn't rain!)

He's worked out the right number of buds to leave on each plant at pruning time, and hence controls the number of bunches on each vine, the size of those bunches and even, he claims, the size of the berries and hence the skin-to-juice ratio, which is of fundamental importance to red wines.

He sidesteps the common peninsula problems of excessive shading of the fruit by the leaves. He controls the leaf growth by water regulation and by trimming the vines with a special machine.

This is fundamental. Upward-trained shoots leave the grapes hanging out in the sunshine, and the skins develop properly, which they don't if they're shaded. This means good colour and flavour development, both of which depend on the skins.

Exposed grapes also have much lower pH than shaded, and that means better colour, acidity, aging potential and so on. There's no thinness of the mid-palate and no nasty green "boiled vegetable" character. Just ripe red berry flavours. And these the Dromana reds have in great abundance.

The one thing they have occasionally been needed for is a lack of tannin and structure, but even this is coming as the vines mature, Crittenden says.

Having tasted the 1991 out of the barrels, I agree that this wine at least will have a real tannin spine and the structure of an age-worthy wine.

Crittenden reckons his '91's structure is the result of his vineyard practices, not the great year, which saw powerful, tannic reds made right across the

peninsula. He believes he can make similar wine every year from now on.

"The vineyard is the key," he says. "Some years the cabernet may be too tannic, but I can always fine some of the tannins out of it."

"There's been a recurring comment niggling away at me: that Dromana makes lovely, charming reds that just lack structure. I'm the first to agree that it's so with the '84 through to '88 and even '89, but from the '90 onwards they have real structure."

I did not taste the '90 (still in wood) but the '91 has it all: concentration and tannin as well as delicious fruit flavours.

"Our earliest vintages were drinkable straight out of the fermenter, which was very nice," he says. "Now they're undrinkable ex-fermenter, but they have structure."

Nat White's Main Ridge vineyard displays a very different philosophy from Crittenden's. White doesn't have irrigation, he's on a windy ridge at high altitude (240 metres compared with 50 at Dromana Estate) and he's on rich fertile red soil, which gives rise to high vigour and its problems.

These he's attempted to solve with a modified Scott Henry trellis to better expose the foliage. Like many vineyards, he now bird nets to stop the birds eating the grapes, enabling them to be left longer on the vines, achieving fuller ripeness.

Better wines are the result of all this, and the '89 cabernet sauvignon (\$24.50 ex-winery) is a big improvement on some of Main Ridge's early efforts.

It's an attractive cedary, berryish and slightly leafy wine with charcoal oak overtones, and an elegant palate profile.

Happily, an increasing number of peninsula wineries are turning out very fine cabernet-based reds. Baillieu Myer's Elgee Park has a magnificent 1991 cabernet in tank, and so do various other wineries.

But to talk wines that are available now, there's no lack of talent. Karina Vineyard (next door to Dromana Estate) has a stalky/minty, firm, robust 1989 cabernet sauvignon (\$19) and a promising 1990 which has dense colour and rather raw young flavours, seeming to have been bottled too early.

It should be good with a few years in the cellar.

Elgee Park's 1988 cabernet merlot (\$20) is a little too oaky, but it's very fine oak and the wine underneath is excellent.

The 1989 Stonier's Merricks cabernet sauvignon (\$22) is one of my favourites: a well-coloured, leafy, curranty scented and definitely cool-climate wine. Elegant, soft, round and modern, it's a low-tannin easy drinking style.

Tanglewood Downs has a clean, well-made but straightforward '90 cabernet sauvignon while Paringa Estate's '89 appeals for its mulberry-like flavours but is rather light and short.

The '89 Merricks Estate cabernet sauvignon (\$22) has good varietal character with red berries and only a little leafiness, but Moorooduc Estate's '89 cabernet (\$22) showed the tomato-leaf herbaceousness and leanness I dislike in peninsula reds. Moorooduc's '90 chardonnay and pinot noir are in another class, however: both '90s are sublime.

Kings Creek cabernet sauvignon '89 (\$16) appealed for its soft, sweet fruit, good colour and leafy, curranty, coffee-like flavours and elegance. Craig Avon's '90 cabernet sauvignon showed good deep red colour, some bigness and plenty of flavour, berries and tannin structure. It seems to promise a lot and just needs a little time.

Balnarring Vineyard's '87 cabernet merlot (\$15 ex-winery) is a big, hefty, dry, tannic and fairly extractive red with good flavour depth and structure. A definite keeper.

Another new name to me, Coolart Valley, has a very successful '89 cabernet merlot (\$15 ex-winery): deeply coloured, sweetly aromatic, raspberry styled, elegant and crisp. Impressive overall.

Peninsula Estate's '90 cabernet (\$14 ex-winery) is soft and very forward, with a touch of leatheriness showing and a certain lack of depth.

Elan Vineyard '90 cabernet sauvignon (with 40 per cent merlot) has good colour and full, rich, sweet flavour-packed and nicely structured, but just a trifle aldehydic.

Dromana Estate's '89 cabernet merlot (\$19) is my pick of the cabernet styles. It's a sumptuous wine with lashings of clean, fresh cabernet currants laced with charred oak and restrained leafiness. The palate has sumptuous depth of beautiful sweet fruit but it's surprisingly complex for its youth. It has just a trace of tannin on the finish and I've always felt these wines could use a little more. That's why I'm so excited about the '91.

Hot on Dromana's heels in my ranking are Stonier's Merricks '89 and Coolart Valley '89, with Kings Creek '89, Craig Avon '90 and Karina '90 not far back. All wines with prices other than ex-winery are distributed in Sydney. The Mornington Peninsula has arrived!

## DAVID JONES

presents

## A TASTE OF THE PENINSULA

MORNINGTON PENINSULA WINES  
ON TASTING  
at

## DAVID JONES 'FOOD GLORIOUS FOOD'

Thursday August 15th

11.30 am - 2.30 pm

Friday August 16th

11.30 am - 2.30 pm

5.30 pm - 7.30 pm

Saturday August 17th

11.30 am - 2.30 pm

Experience the Cool Climate Elegance of Mornington Peninsula Wine from these vineyards:

Balnarring Vineyard  
Coolart Valley Vineyard  
Dromana Estate  
Elgee Park  
Karina Vineyard  
Kings Creek Vineyard  
Main Ridge Estate  
Massoni Main Creek Vineyard  
Merricks Estate  
Moorooduc Estate  
Mornington Vineyards  
Paringa Estate  
Stonier's Merricks  
Tanglewood Downs

\*\*\*\*\*

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Inquiries to David Howarth

Manager, Liquor Shop.

Ph. (03) 655 1523

THE AGE TUESDAY 13 AUGUST 1991

## The Doings

By JENI PORT

### TASTING No. 1

The David Jones Food Hall plays host to the vignerons from the Mornington Peninsula on Thursday, Friday and Saturday, 15-17 August. Wineries not usually open to the public — Elgee Park, Kings Creek, Massoni Main Creek Vineyard, Merricks Estate, Moorooduc Estate, Mornington Vineyard, Paringa Estate and Peninsula Estate — will be among the 15 vineyards showing more than 40 wines in total.

Others a little more accessible like Coolart Valley, Balnarring Vineyard, Dromana Estate, Karina Vineyard, Main Ridge, Tanglewood Downs and Stonier's Merricks Vineyard will also be in attendance with their wine makers.

The opportunity to taste the peninsula's 1990 chardonnay and pinot noir should not be missed.

Tasting times each day are 11.30 am to 2.30 pm and on Friday evening between 5.30 pm and 7.30 pm.





# The Mornington Mail

Classified (059) 81 1000 (059) 79 3199

Thursday, August 22, 1991

Vol. 4 - No. 33 Price 20¢ at Newsagents

Home delivered FREE throughout the Shires of Mornington &amp;



• MORNINGTON Shire's engineering services director, Iain McPherson in front of the building destined to become a wine promotion centre at The Briars.

## A ploughman's at The Briars?

MORE details of the Mornington Council's plans to convert an old farm building on The Briars property at Mount Martha into a wine sales and promotions centre emerged at council's most recent meeting.

Councillors were asked to approve a planning application for the building which is currently used for storage.

The details were contained in the background paper prepared by the Engineering Services Director "on behalf of the applicant," the Shire of Mornington, included in the agenda papers.

The report said that the primary purpose was to provide a cellar door sales outlet for wines produced from grapes grown on "The Briars" property, either by way of bottle or case to the public.

In conjunction with the Mornington Peninsula Vignerons Association it is proposed to promote, including tasting, and to make available for sale all Peninsula wines, including fortified wines, with a charge being made available for tastings.

The report added that in keeping with the "boutique" nature of the Peninsula wineries, it is proposed to encourage the participation of a boutique cheesemaker to compliment the marketing of the wines.

It went on; "To provide another dimension

to the venture, 'Ploughman's Lunches' would be available for sale.

"To enable this to take place it is proposed that a small number of tables and chairs would be provided in the building with a similar number being available for patrons to sit outside and admire the views over the historic property."

The balance of the building would be used for display purposes including a display of historic wine making equipment, and a viticulture educational display.

It was also proposed that the existing annexe to the main building be converted to an administration office to be used by the promotion officer of the Mornington Peninsula Vignerons Association.

The report said it was not proposed to alter the external appearance of the property with the exception of construction of a ramp to the entrance on the north side of the building.

Its hours of operation would be 9am to 5pm seven days per week with the actual number of days of opening being varied to suit the market demands.

The building has a floor space of 98 square metres. The internal layout will consist of a wine bar, serving area, storage area, office and area set aside for tables and chairs.

It is envisaged that the building will hold a maximum of 30 persons.

Council notification of its plans to its own Engineering Services Division, Environmental Health Section, VicRoads, Liquor Licensing Commission, National Trust of Australia (Victoria), and the Historic Buildings Council.

Last week's council meeting approved the planning application; council had previously agreed to proceed with the conversion in concept. The cost is expected to be around \$40,000, which council will draw on from existing loan funds.

While the prospect of spending more development money at The Briars is opposed by some councillors, there is a strong feeling amongst probably the majority that any reasonable outlay which would help produce a return on the already considerable investment in The Briars property would be well worthwhile.

• The first vintage from The Briars five acres of vines — pinot noir, chardonnay and cabernet — was picked in April, producing more than 6000 bottles of wine made by Yarra Glen award-winning vigneron, Brian Fletcher of St Hubert's Winery.

Subsequent tastings have established that the wine holds promise of being top quality.

### WINEPRESS

of Winepress Cellar Club and Templestow  
TEMPLESTOWE CELLARS PTY. LTD.

#### 1990 STONERS MERRICKS CABERNETS

\$14-99 or \$168-00 per Dozen

A blend of 50% Cabernet, 40% Cabernet Franc and 10% Merlot, this is an outstanding example of the intensive berry fruit flavours of Mornington Peninsula wines. Crimson colour, herbaceous bouquet with sweet berry fruit which explodes onto the palate with its mouthfilling flavours and subtle wood characters, extremely soft on the finish. This wine caused great excitement with its Gold medal and 'Runner up' status for the Jimmy Watson Trophy. Bottled early in June, this wine is now currently available contrasting with most Jimmy Watson candidates which are often not released until the following year.

BUSINESS REVIEW WEEKLY, AUGUST 30, 1991

Victoria. The 1988 Merricks Estate Shiraz from the Mornington Peninsula was an award-winning wine. At about \$15, the 1989 wine is also good: a rich, ripe style with excellent color, "plummy" fruit on the nose and good "grip" and depth of varietal fruit.



Page 12 - THE MAIL, Thursday, August 22, 1991

## Wine key to tourism future, says grower

THE Mornington Peninsula's wine-making industry holds the key to a lucrative tourist industry, according to the district's pioneer commercial vigneron Nat White.

Mr White believes discerning tourists with high disposable incomes will be attracted to the peninsula which has the potential to lead Australia

in the production of quality popular wines like Chardonnay and Pinot Noir.

"Year by year the quality of our wines is increasing," Mr White told the Western Port Brunch Club last week.

"We have growers who are demonstrating that great wines result from a high proportion of science and fair degree of art.

"And I believe the industry is becoming fundamental to the push for quality tourism on the peninsula," he said.

There are now 80 or more vineyards covering more than 500 acres.

Six wineries open every weekend and another seven open on the first weekend of each month.

"The Mornington Peninsula Vignerons' Association last January

appointed a promotions person, indicating the professional approach taken by the growers to market their products," Mr White said.

Like most enterprises, the peninsula wine industry had low-key, experimental beginnings.

The Bailleu-Myer family planted 300 vines on a third of an acre in the central peninsula in 1972.

There had been early plantings at The Briers, Mornington, and at Mt Eliza in the 1850s. Recently, under the wing of Mornington Council, new vineyards have been established at the historic Mornington property which is now a tourist attraction.

Fifteen acres of vineyards were planted in the Hastings district at the turn of the century.

Around the early to mid 50s the Seppelts family planted a hobby vineyard at Dromana.

Nat White began planting in 1975 and opened the first winery, Main Ridge Estate, in 1980.

Nat White, a civil engineer, enrolled for a Bachelor in Applied Science in Wine course in 1977. He credits his father-in-law Gwyn Jones, a chemist, as the first technical wine producer on the peninsula.

### Full time

The Main Ridge Estate enterprise has been a full time operation for eight years. Nat White planted a six-acre vineyard and has not increased the size.

"I can look after the vineyard and the wine-making, too," Nat says. "I'm in it to make great wines, not great quantities."

His greatest compliment came from the owner of the Pipers Brook winery in Tasmania.

"Some vignerons around the country were asked to say what wines they would take with them to a desert island if they were to be marooned."

"I chose a Pipers Brook, but had to ring the winemaker for some details."

"He told me that he had been asked the same question and had selected one of my wines."

The most cynical will say that Mr White's choice is probably guided by a preference for wines produced in similar circumstances to his own. A wine lover will reply: "I should



• VIGNERON Nat White samples his Main Ridge Estate wine.

bloody well hope so."

There's no greater pleasure than drinking fine wine made by the vigneron who loves his work ... and the fruits of his labor!

Nat White says that the peninsula wine industry is growing and consolidating quickly.

"All the owners have recognised the need to produce quality wines."

"We're now ranked with the Yarra Valley as one of Australia's premium wine-growing areas."

"My view is that the peninsula and northern Tasmania will produce in the next few years of some of the best Pinot Noir, Chardonnay and Cabernet in the country."

"We're already ranked highly. The climate lends itself especially to Pinot, which is will become one of the most desired wine styles in the country."

"Evidence of the interest in Pinot Noir is the first international conference on the production of this variety in Australia next week. Naturally it will be attended by several peninsula growers."

Pinot is the only variety of wine grape which creates enough interest to warrant an international conference.

In the US state of Oregon there has been an annual conference on Pinot over the past several years.

Another beauty nurtured in the peninsula's cool maritime climate is the already popular chardonnay.

"Until the mid 70s chardonnay was unheard of and now it is established as our premium white wine variety, as it is elsewhere in the world," Mr White said.

And he knows that in the Australian red wine market Pinot Noir is going the same way.

"Growers are aspiring to the great burgundies of France which are exclusively made from Pinot and those who have experienced these wines are continually searching for that Pinot experience."

### Experience

Sixteen years experience tells Nat White that the public palate for wines has changed dramatically.

"We once went for the sweet whites and gutsy reds, but now we appreciate not only a range of styles but the lower alcohol, more complex and finer flavors, more in the European vein."

The peninsula's commercial wine industry, which began in earnest during the mid 80s, is showcased at a wine festival each year on the Queens Birthday long weekend.

This year more than 700 people attended the wine tasting at Mount Martha Country Club's reception area, The Atrium.

"The wineries opened on the Saturday and Sunday and in two days between 500 and 1500 went through each place."

"This indicates the number of people interested in our wines," Mr White said.

"And as the result of increased promotion and heightening quality, we're getting people to our cellar doors all year round."

"Wineries and top restaurants are probably the only way of attracting people to the peninsula during winter."

Apart from owners about 20 people are working full time on peninsula vineyards, as well as contract teams working year round.

While the price of peninsula wine is high at between \$10 and \$20 a bottle, Nat White says it reflects the quality of the wine, rather than what could be called the boutique nature (or size and output) of the wineries.

Says Mr White: "I heard a bloke say peninsula wine is not expensive, it's just that some people can't afford it. You could say the same thing about a Mercedes Benz."

"We are appealing to about the top three per cent of the market."

And a thought on the peninsula's best year so far: "I think 1988 was the best. It was warmish and the grapes all ripened perfectly and full-flavored."

"The speaker at the next Brunch Club breakfast on September 6 will be John Halfpenny, secretary of the Trades Hall Council, speaking on Unions and Business: Marriage or Divorce? The 12.45pm lunch will be at The Victoriana, Hastings. For bookings, ring (059) 79 3399."

Page 4 - WESTERN PORT GOOD TIMES, SPRING 1991

## Peninsula Wine - A Southern Secret Uncorked

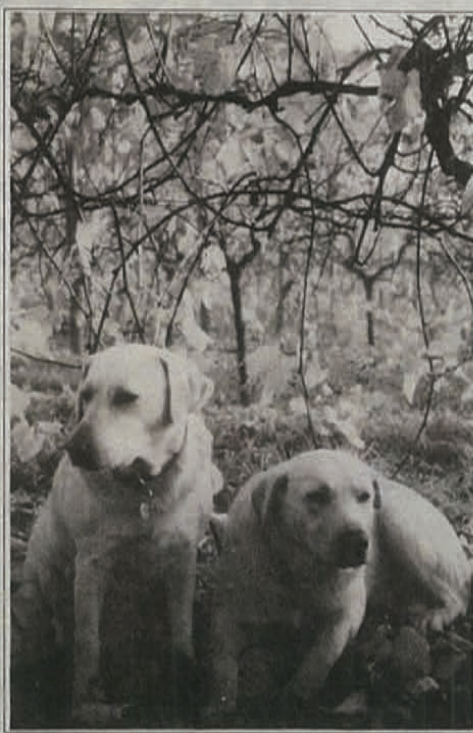
MELBOURNE is basking in it's reputation as the world's most livable city.

But, what is it that makes a city livable? In the over-populated 20th. Century, cities which offer easy escape to rural surrounds certainly give life an added dimension. Since Biblical times vineyards and wines have been synonymous with the "good life". Paris has its Champagne, Florence its Chianti, San Francisco has the Napa Valley.

Adelaide has the Barossa Valley, and Melbourne has finally discovered... THE MORNINGTON PENINSULA. Viticulture on the Peninsula, even in an economic recession, is a burgeoning industry, thanks to the pioneers in the late 1970's. It is certainly a latter-day success story.

Australia's wine districts were developed during the early years of European Settlement, not where the climate would produce the finest wines, but where the settlers brought a history of wine-making.

So, we saw the Barossa established by German migrants, Geelong by Swiss and the Yarra Valley by French and Austrian settlers. The Mornington Peninsula was largely settled by English migrants with no



• Fine dogs with a fine nose for fine wine at Stonier's, Merricks.

interest in the grape, but expertise with sheep, cattle and apple trees.

In the 1970's several wine enthusiasts realised the potential of the Mornington Peninsula, with its maritime climate and Burdundy look-alike terrain and temperature.

From this small group of believers (all still growing wine on the Peninsula) blossomed a flourishing industry, now supported by a 150 strong Association, which employs its own

Promotional Director. "Oh, you can't grow grapes down there, it is too cold!" was the inevitable remark.

One wonders what these doubters think today as thriving vines spread over our hills. Medal-winning wines are the norm rather than the exception. Wine is distributed nationally and internationally.

Cellar-door visitors make week-end pilgrimages to the Mornington Peninsula. The quality of the early vintages excited wine

lovers and wine writers, and the new-born industry acquired immediate publicity. Eager would-be vignerons joined the Mornington Peninsula Vignerons Association and quickly embraced the 'quality at all costs' ethos.

It is total devotion to quality and determination of every grower to avoid blending our beautiful Peninsula fruit with produce from other climates, that has enabled the extraordinary rapid acceptance of the Mornington Peninsula as a great wine area of Australia.

There is no doubt that our wines and vines weave a wonderful romance into the fabric of the Peninsula. Visitors to twelve cellar-door sales facilities are treated to a sensory adventure. Sampling not only the fruits of this labour of love, but drinking in the spectacular views and scenery which one is treated to, when travelling between the vineyards.

A weekend of 'wine-crawling' on the Peninsula is a total experience. Delightful lunches are available at some vineyards, and the warmth of the welcome often makes it difficult to leave.

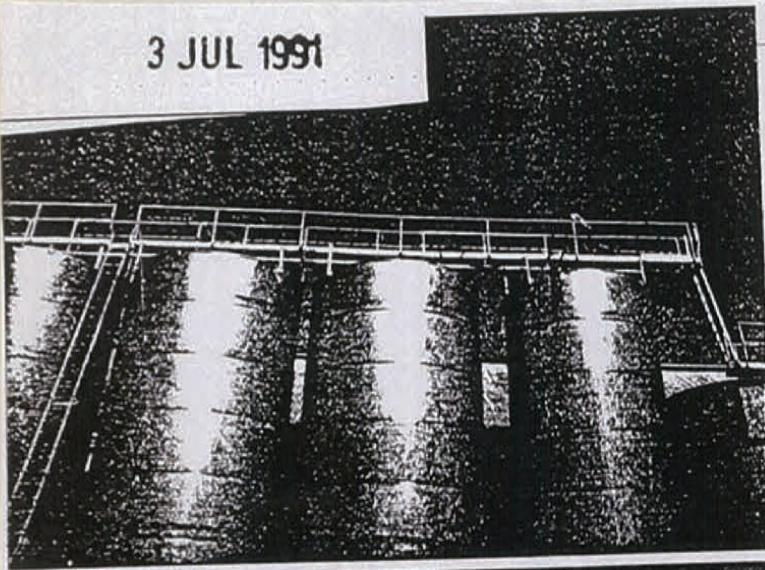
You must remember that missing even one Peninsula vineyard, could mean depriving yourself of the best wine discovery you have ever made!



# TOP DROPS

## A guide to winter's best red wines

3 JUL 1991



### WINE INDUSTRY

Victoria's winemakers are asking their European counterparts to come on down. The results so far augur well.

## Good news for Victorian winemakers

By Peter Maher

Garry Crittenden is tickled pink. **QUT French Airlines** has just selected his Dromana Estate chardonnay to serve to first class passengers on its international flights.

Crittenden says it won't have a big effect on his export volumes - Dromana Estate is already selling 50 per cent of its wine production in the UK and New Zealand - but it is "a bit of fun, a feather in our cap" to have the French recognise the quality of wine from his Mornington Peninsula vineyard in Victoria.

Dromana Estate's success is not isolated among the 150 or so vineyards that are part of an attempt, by interests from family concerns to large private and public companies, to re-establish Victoria's dominance of Australian quality wine production.

From boutique wineries through to larger companies such as **Mildara Wines, Mitchellton, Chateau Tahbilk, Brown Bros** and **Taltarni**, the new generation of vigneron is relying

on quality to underpin the marketing success it needs to get a return and to expand the Victorian industry.

Crittenden says: "The outstanding feature of fruit grown in Victoria is its fineness; it reverberates with true fruit quality. You couldn't find a better building block to start with to make top quality wine."

The quality comes from the variety of soil types and climates within what the industry calls "a cool climate" environment with many similarities to France's best winegrowing areas. The ability to produce a variety of top class grapes has already attracted France's biggest champagne maker, **Moët & Chandon**, part of the **Moët et Hennessy** group, to the Yarra Valley to establish **Domaine Chandon Australia**.

Moët has been successful so far through a mixture of technical and commercial achievement. The story of its Victorian experience is being taken back to Bordeaux by **Domaine Chandon** Australia's managing director, **Tony Jordan**, as part of a drive to attract more European investment.

Storage facilities at Mildara Wines  
A good base for exports to Asia.

Jordan's mission was initiated by Roy Moorfield of **Aquarian Marketing Group** and supported by Victoria's Office of Trade and Investment.

Moorfield, a veteran marketer of Victorian wines, says a marriage of European financial and marketing clout with opportunities opening up in Victoria will assist both sides.

The main incentives for European winemakers are the availability of suitable vineyard land at relatively low cost, a sizeable domestic market and an appropriate base from which to gain access to a growing Asian wine market. For locals, new investment promises larger, more economic production scale and the chance to enter overseas markets with established winemakers' names behind them.

The Victorian wine industry is estimated to account for around 14 per cent of Australia's annual wine production - about 52 million litres out of a total 371 million litres - and most of it in the quality end of the market.

Wine has been a high growth commodity in our exports. In the five years to 1990 exports increased by 380 per cent to 42 million litres. Early figures from the Australian Wine and Brandy Corp show shipments have increased a further 38.6 per cent in the 11 months to the end of May, suggesting export growth rates will top last financial year's 34 per cent increase.

Australian winemakers appear to have found a quality gap in the UK and North American markets and a pricing level below traditional quality wines. Wine sales over the past five years to the UK increased 10-fold, six-fold to the US, and three-fold to Canada.

The trend in recent years has been for an increasing proportion of wine exports to be at the premium end of the market, in bottles rather than bulk or cask wine. Last financial year, bottles made up 58 per cent of exports.

Victoria, while accounting for an estimated 14 per cent of Australian production, has a disproportionate share of quality grape production. It accounts for 22.8 per cent of cabernet sauvignon, 25 per cent of chardonnay and between 12 and 14 per cent of sauvignon blanc and pinot noir.

The industry in Victoria began a rapid decline at the turn of the century, in economic conditions similar to today. Rising land prices in the boom of the early 1890s pushed vineyards out of the near-Melbourne part of the Yarra Valley. In the depression, people sought comfort in stronger fortified wines, heavy reds and beer, substantially reducing demand.

What is now recognised as a minor

Australian reds are of a quality to match the best the world has to offer. Though more and more are being exported, we are just managing to keep the best ones at home. Here are recommendations of what is best now on bottle-shop shelves: reds of all prices to cellar, to quaff, to drink with meals, and even a few to keep for very special occasions.

The Mornington Peninsula has for years been Melbourne's holiday playground. In the past decade, a flourishing vineyard area has added a new dimension to its summer charms. **Dromana Estate**, though still small by other standards, is the leading vineyard in this promising region. Its **Pinot Noir 1990** is a typical soft-flavoured wine with strawberry both on nose and palate, though its palate needs one or two years longer in the cellar to soften its finishing acidity. For pinot noir, it is reasonably priced at \$18.50.

**Dromana Cabernet Merlot 1989** combines berry, plum and spice in a most complex bouquet, but the palate is dominated by the plum flavours of merlot, the whole wine finishing with a touch of acid and tannin astringency. For \$20, it's a red of excellent fruit depth in need of a year or so more in the bottle.

THE AUSTRALIAN MAGAZINE

August 1991

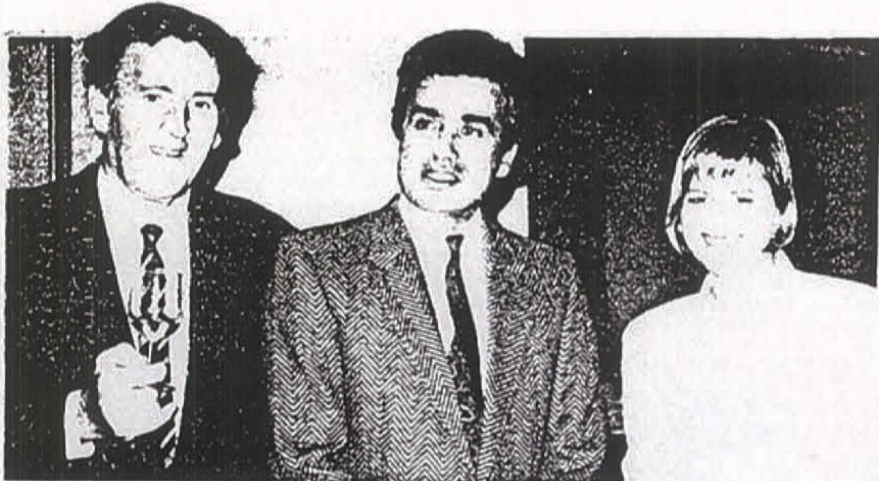
AUSTRALIAN BUSINESS, JULY 3, 1991





29 MAY 1991

Date



• Launching the introduction of Australian wines on UTA French Airlines were wine expert, John Beeston, UTA French Airlines/Air France Group general manager, Jean-Luc des Fontaines and public relations manager, Angela Clarke.

## Australian wines to fly with France's best

Australian wines soared to new heights last week with UTA French Airlines selecting four excellent vintages to include in its Cave de Bord.

The four Australian wines — DROMANA Chardonnay, 1990, ORLANDO Gramp's Chardonnay, 1989, LINDEMAN'S Limestone Ridge Coonawarra Shiraz Cabernet, 1987 and WYNN'S Coonawarra Cabernet Hermitage, 1988 — will be served in UTA, First Class along with France's best.

The *Courier's* Travel Editor, Paul Harris, attended the launch, a luncheon at the Sydney Hilton's Farm and Sydney Cove Room. What he discovered was an Australian industry on the path to success with an increasing international reputation for excellence.

The General Manager of the UTA French Airlines/Air France Group which includes Air Inter, Jean-Luc des Fontaines, said the idea to serve Australian wines was one which had been discussed with famous French chef, Paul Bocuse, about two years ago.

"We are now delighted to introduce Australian wines for the first time on board UTA," Jean-Luc des Fontaines said.

"Australian wines are World-renowned and will be a worthy addition to our Cave de Bord."

The four wines chosen by UTA were selected after stringent "on the ground" and "mid-air" tastings to determine the wines' ability to retain its character at high altitudes.

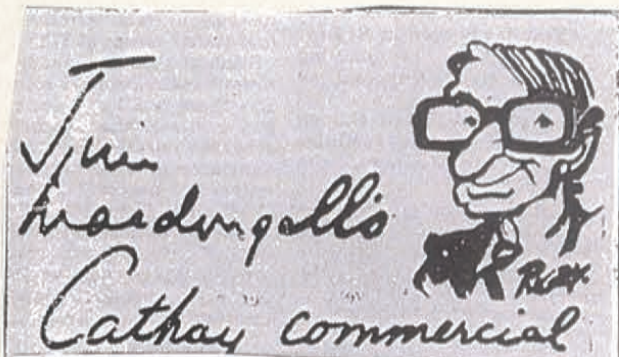
The chairman of the judging panel, well-known wine buff, John Beeston, claims selection was "extremely difficult". He said many wines lose "character" at high altitudes because of dehydration, in-flight noise, turbulence, stress and or vibration.

The mid-air, blind, tastings involved nine semi-finalists selected from 45 wines submitted by 11 companies.

Mr Beeston said the panel observed a difference in the flavour of the wines at 10,000 metres but more research would need to be done to determine the exact cause.

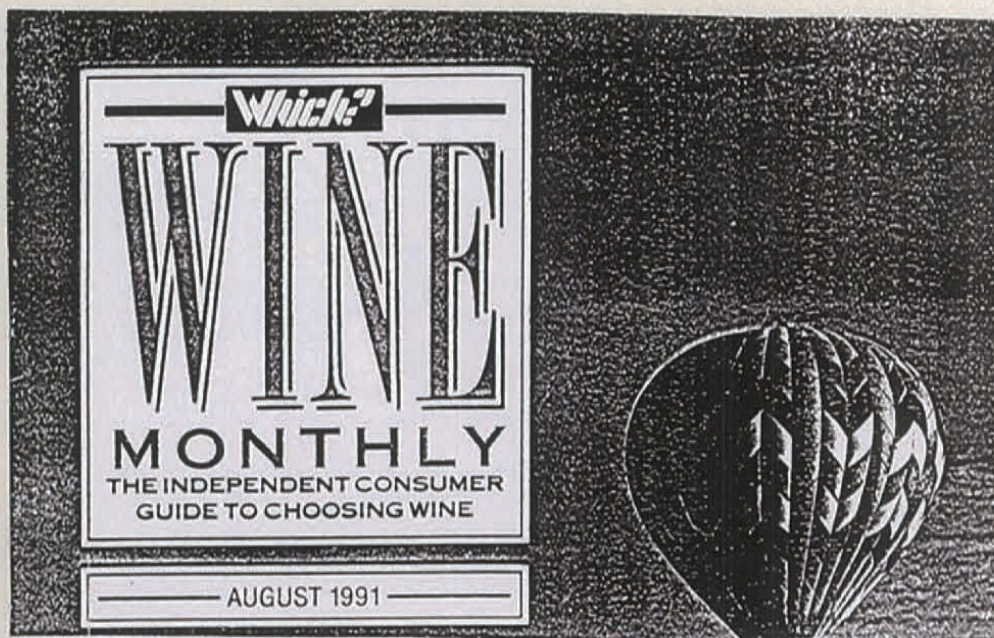
"Either the wines changed or the passenger's ability to taste changed at high altitudes - it could even be a combination of the two," Mr Beeston said.

From late August UTA will fly three direct flights from Sydney to Paris each week with one of these taking-off from Melbourne.



24 - THE AUSTRALIAN Wednesday August 28 1991 - 24

If anyone could stir the earth into productivity it had to be Garry Crittenden of Dromana, Victoria. In just a few years he has made the sandy loam country on Victoria's Mornington Peninsula bring forth with some of the most spectacular wines in the Southern State. He used his knowledge as a nurseryman and already his Dromana Estate Winery is marketing 12,000 cases a year, half going overseas. Garry is just back from France by Cathay Pacific after reading a paper at VinExpo at Bordeaux on investment in Australia. And the evidence is already there — Domaine-Chandon in the Yarra Valley is a successful subsidiary of the famous French champagne makers Moët & Chandon.



Garry Crittenden, perfectionist viticulturist on Victoria's Mornington Peninsula, revealed at the Australia Day tasting in January that he reads *Which? Wine Monthly*. Even if he didn't, we'd still wax enthusiastic over his wines; Oddbins' buyers obviously feel the same, having snapped up several of his second label (Schinus Molle) as well as the stunning **Dromana Estate Chardonnay 1990 (£8.49)**. The wine is barrel-fermented in new French oak and bottled before the oak becomes too assertive, letting the ripe tropical fruit (melon?) flavours, clean acidity and splendidly controlled concentration all make their mark. Crittenden believes that the wine will develop in bottle over the next four years.



## UP&amp;COMERS

## WINEGROWER CASHES IN ON HIS SCIENCE

A Victorian viticulturist is drawing on his nursery experience to help others to grow smarter and reduce costs. By DAVID DUNSTAN

SIX years ago Garry Crittenden's wine had no market presence. Now the winemaker and consulting viticulturist has an annual turnover of \$1 million and sales of 12,000 cases a year, with more than half going overseas.

Crittenden also runs Australia's biggest viticultural consulting business. His clients, in WA, Tasmania and NSW, include such notable establishments as Domaine Chandon and James Halliday's Coldstream Hills in the Yarra Valley. The two-year-old business, with an annual turnover of \$250,000, appears untouched by the economic downturn.

Crittenden — not related to the Crittenden liquor chain in Melbourne — had a successful earlier career in retail and wholesale nursery ventures. He insists that he is not a conscious risk-taker. He studied agricultural science at the University of Melbourne and spent five

Garry Crittenden: "Winemakers need to increase yields and reduce costs"

years working with the Victorian Government on weed control. In 1967 he left to start a nursery at Mt Eliza on the Mornington Peninsula, taking in as a partner a former government colleague, Bob Stark, who is still there. "I then went out and did what I had always wanted to do, which was to start a production nursery," he recalls.

By the mid-1970s this had become Victoria's pre-eminent production nursery, growing about 200,000 plants a year on one hectare of land at nearby Mount Martha. Like the Mt Eliza nursery before it, that business still trades under the Crittenden name, although he has sold both of them. "The secret of our success was being able to change. I studied consumer trends and sought to assess the market. When we started, the emphasis was on Australian natives. I perceived a move to ornamentals, perennials and cottage gardens. We predicted the trends," he says.

Crittenden's was the first production nursery to offer a money-back guarantee

for size and quality. Plants came back on only about three occasions, but as a marketing and a quality-control strategy the guarantee was very effective. His other innovation was to place a commission salesperson on the road, taking samples to clients. The first three days of the week were given over to travel, with Thursday and Friday left for delivery. This replaced the old cash van system and substantially reduced overheads.

Crittenden left the nursery business on a high note in 1985 when it had an annual turnover of \$500,000. Already his eye was on something else.

Crittenden had never encountered cool-climate Australian wines until, on holiday in Tasmania, he tasted a gewurztraminer wine made by Claudio Alcorso at his Moorilla Estate winery near Hobart. "It was a revelation," he recalls. "Here was an Australian wine that was similar in style to the great French wines made in Alsace from that variety."

He returned from his holiday intending to sell up and move to Tasmania to grow grapes. "After I had calmed down, my better judgment took over and I set about properly researching the matter," he says. He never lost faith in Tasmania and is now part-owner of a Tasmanian vineyard, a 24-hectare property near Richmond on which 12 hectares of vines are being developed to supply Domaine Chandon, the Yarra Valley-based subsidiary of the French champagne group, Moët et Chandon.

Early in the 1980s he became aware that grapes were being grown in his own backyard on the Mornington Peninsula by Nat White at Main Ridge and by Bailieu Myer at Elgee Park. Their wines had the same fine flavors and good primary fruit definition typical of cool climates.

A run-down farm near Dromana that cost \$875,000 was Crittenden's starting point. This has since been transformed into a \$1.5-million vineyard and winery showpiece. "I gave myself five years," he recalls. "By 1985 I had satisfied myself that it would work and that I could sell off my existing income-producing business without putting my family's future at risk."

"The initial fascination was with the wine end but I began to discover things about wine that had their origin in the vineyard, like the relationship between excessive shade and a dense canopy and poor color in red wine."

Crittenden began to merge his new learning with his professional and practical

commercial experience. "I saw the links between potted hydrangeas and grapes. Plants all have their different regimes under which they must be grown to achieve the maximum quality."

His first release in 1986 was 500 cases of the 1985 Dromana Estate cabernet sauvignon. Last year he introduced his second label, Schinus Molle, made from fruit from other vineyards, but principally from the Yarra Valley and the Mornington and Bellarine peninsulas. Total crush at the Dromana Estate Winery is now about 160 tonnes, with 60 tonnes coming off his own property.

His other business developed almost by accident. "People would come to my vineyard to draw on my horticultural and viticultural skills. At first I helped them for nothing. Then I thought I might as well sell those skills, which have not come cheaply to me." To cope with this new demand he took in a partner, Ian Macrae, who for eight years had been working for the Victorian Government, giving advice to grape growers.

Crittenden believes that viticultural expertise can help reduce costs in difficult economic times. "People are realising that they have to become smarter to survive. They need to increase their yields and reduce their costs. Increasingly, we are being asked to troubleshoot already established vineyards — to get people out of the difficulties they are in," he says.

His view is that 12 tonnes to the hectare in cool-climate viticulture is not only achievable but perhaps even mandatory for those who want to make a commercial success of their vineyards. "There is no evidence to suggest that a move to 12 tonnes is in any way deleterious in terms of wine quality," he says.

Crittenden has also been developing export markets as a hedge against any slump in his domestic sales. About 15 months ago he increased production and sent 4000 cases of wine to Britain. He now has an enduring market of 5000 cases a year. He also views New Zealand as a reliable market and is starting to look at South-East Asia.

For two years he has made two trips a year, which has cost about \$40,000 in airfares, samples, promotions and the like. But the investment is part of a five-year plan that has already begun to pay off. His next tour will take in the international wine exhibition Vinexpo at Bordeaux, where he has been asked to talk about the potential for international investment in the wine industry in Victoria. ■



## RICHMOND HILL CELLARS SEPTEMBER 1991

'90 STONIER'S WINERY SELECTION CABERNETS, \$13.95.

This wine was one of the many runners-up to the recent Jimmy Watson Trophy (equal points) and would have been one of the few, if only, wines that was actually bottled at the time of its entry in that class. Very stylish and graceful with lovely raspberry and cherry flavours balanced by subtle fine-grained tannins. Its drinking very well now and therefore maybe hard to put in the cellar, but should be able to cope with 3-4 years. Good value. J.F.



THE WEEKEND AUSTRALIAN, September 7-8, 1991

## Indulgence

*Wine/James Halliday*

# Rising early to national stature

**T**HE Mornington Peninsula wine district in Victoria continues to grow at a quite remarkable rate. In the six years that I have been closely watching its development I have none the less taken the view that it was unlikely to become a nationally important region. Now I am not so sure.

Certainly the raw statistics can lead one to either conclusion. On the one hand, there are now 92 members of the Mornington Peninsula Vignerons Association, 43 of whom have plantings in excess of four acres (the qualifying figure for a vigneron's licence). More than 25 producers are making wine, or have wine made for them under contract.

On the other side of the coin, the size of the vineyards and wineries is very small by Australian standards. In terms of plantings, the largest vineyards are Redhill Wines (20ha coming into bearing), Stoniers Merricks (with 14ha) and Willow Creek (also 14ha).

The largest producer is Stoniers Merricks, with 5000 cases of Mornington fruit; Dromana Estate is larger (more than 10,000 cases) if Schinus Molle (its second label, which uses grapes from various regions) and The Briars (an export-only label) are taken into account. At the present time only these two producers have significant national distribution, although Redhill Wines will become a key player within a few years, with an indicated production of up to 15,000 cases.

The question is whether production at this level can sustain the marketing effort (and expenditure) necessary to penetrate national consciousness and — better still — international awareness.

Once again, the answers are not clear cut. If one looks at the production of the great chateaux of Bordeaux, some surprising figures emerge. Ch Petrus makes 4000 cases a year, Ch d'Yquem 5500, Ch Latour 16,000 cases, with Ch Lafite and Ch Margaux topping the first growths with 25,000 cases each.

These wines make their way to virtually all developed countries, servicing a substantial market in the United States — which is not, however, the biggest single market. Yet these figures are far greater than those of the finest Burgundy estates, where as little as 50 cases of a particular wine may be made by a particular maker — but which still enjoy a worldwide reputation, even if not a worldwide market.

The reason is, of course, that such wines not only command high prices thanks to the law of supply and demand, but have a reputation forged over many hundreds of years.

So can an area such as the Mornington Peninsula create the demand necessary to support the higher prices which limited production necessarily implies? Remember that most of the wineries are producing fewer than 1000 cases a year, which makes the \$5-a-case margin which the largest Australian producers are happy to work with in their principal brands a quite illusory figure.



Yet again, the answer is not clear. There is a powerful section of the wine media which sees any wine selling for over \$15 a bottle as tantamount to a vicious attack on the social fabric of this country, an unjustified and unjustifiable attempt by the rich to get richer and make the poor poorer.

One writer is known for downgrading his estimation of quality (he makes no bones about it) if he thinks the wine is too expensive, an approach which Lewis Carroll would undoubtedly approve of but makes little sense outside the confines of the Mad Hatter's tea party.

*‘It's European rather than mainstream Australian . . . if you like big, gutsy reds and fleshy, opulent white wines, the Mornington Peninsula isn't for you’*

Another source of extreme pressure is coming from the price wars I wrote about in this column last year (September 10-11). It is one thing for a long established group of undoubted financial standing to protect its market share by reducing prices, an altogether different matter for an area going through the very expensive growth and establishment phase to do so.

Nor do the retailers help. The more aggressive are, it seems, happy to shear their margins to the bone if it is a leading brand of a leading company, but will not normally do so for a small winery. That, of course, is entirely the retailer's business, but it has the (presumably un-

intended) consequence of accentuating the price gap.

So it won't be easy. But the Peninsula has a lot going for it, as the annual Queen's Birthday Weekend tasting showed once again.

First and foremost, the overall standard of winemaking is very high. Uniquely for a small, new region with a high percentage of part-time wineries supported by other weekday professional lives (and incomes) almost all have resisted the ego trip of making the wine themselves. The proprietors have either installed qualified winemakers, or had the wine made elsewhere by contract (qualified) makers, or employed consultants to watch and direct their every move.

The reward has come in the form of wines which are almost invariably free from winemaking defects, a far cry from the early days of the boutique winemakers of earlier regions in the late '60s and '70s, when some truly awful wines were foisted on a (then) gullible and uncritical public.

The sting in the tail comes in yet another slice of unwanted cost, but it is the lesser of a choice of evils. On another plane, it accentuates the style of wine that the Peninsula makes. In broad terms, it is European rather than mainstream Australian, if one takes the Barossa Valley — let us say Rockford's Basket Press Shiraz — as an example of what I mean by mainstream Australian.

While a small percentage of wine drinkers can happily swap from one extreme of style to the other, appreciating what each has to offer, most cannot. And if you like big, gutsy reds and fleshy, opulent white wines, the Mornington Peninsula is not for you. Heaven knows where the dividing line falls, but I would guess that at least two-thirds of regular wine drinkers have a strong preference for the bigger wines upon which Australia made its reputation, leaving a maximum target market of one in three.

When it comes to the particular wine styles which the Peninsula does well, the picture becomes even more diffuse: chardonnay, cabernet sauvignon (and cabernet blends) and pinot noir are the leading wines, with shiraz, sauvignon blanc and rhine riesling of secondary importance.

Simply because chardonnay, cabernet

sauvignon and cabernet merlot are so in vogue, these wines can pass without undue comment, even if the particular wines are not especially well understood.

When it comes to pinot noir and to the less fashionable varieties (down to such outre examples as viognier) the problems compound. The Mornington Peninsula produces lovely pinot; the varietal flavour is bell-clear, the aroma all one could wish for, and the wine has exemplary fruit flavour. Yet some — perhaps most — are blind to these virtues: the wine is not brawny or robust, and therefore it is pale, insipid, wimpy.

Much the same comment can be made about the chardonnays and cabernets: the wines have subtlety, elegance, finesse and length of flavour. In a perfect world they should have a touch more power and structure, an additional soupçon of complexity. I think there is every chance time — more mature vineyards, more experience in the winery — will bring this.

All that is needed is for vignerons to keep their nerve and for that one-third of the public to ignore the cat calls from the pits.



THE AGE TUESDAY 8 OCTOBER 1991



## The Doings

By JENI PORT

The tasting will be at the Hyatt on Collins, 123 Collins Street, Melbourne on Sunday, 13 October from noon to 8 pm and on Monday, 14 October from 4.30 pm to 9 pm. Admission is \$15 and includes your tasting notes.

**T**HE Mornington Peninsula Vignerons Association has declared Melbourne Cup weekend the unofficial "opening of the season", and two members, Paringa Estate and Karina vineyard, have joined together to launch the first of the festivities.

On Saturday, 2 November, they will hold a dinner at Johnnie Come Lately's restaurant in Red Hill. A four-course meal will be teamed with four wines from those vineyards (sauvignon blanc, chardonnay, shiraz and cabernet sauvignon). The cost is \$55 per person. Bookings can be made to Karina Vineyards (059) 81 0137 or Paringa Estate (059) 89 2669.

**E**LGEE PARK'S state-of-the-art winery, built in 1984, will fall silent next vintage. Most of the production will take place at Stonier's Merricks Winery.

Owner Baillieu Myer says he is rationalising his production facilities in the most cost effective way.

THE AGE TUESDAY 29 OCTOBER 1991



## The Doings

By JENI PORT

"We have been fortunate on the Mornington Peninsula that Brian Stonier has built this massive facility at Merricks and I, for one, am going to take advantage of it," he says.

"Last year we crushed my crop and Leon Massoni's (Massoni Main Creek Vineyard) of around 50 tonnes when my crusher could do about 250 tonnes without difficulty. What we are on about is greater productivity and lower costs."

The Elgee Park winery will be used for storage, bottling and the production of small lots of vlognier, traminer and trial wines. Elgee Park winemaker, Daniel Greene, is leaving at the end of the year and looks like taking up a position with a large-scale Victorian winemaker.

### DROMANA ESTATE

OPEN MELBOURNE CUP WEEKEND  
Saturday 2nd November-Tuesday 5th November  
11:00am-4:00pm

Tastings and sales including our

## SCHINUS MOLLE WINES

Also available each day

- Gourmet Bagels or Ploughman's lunch platters
- Rolls and sandwiches suitable for children (free cordial)
- BYO lunch and use our picnic and BBQ facilities
- Wine may be purchased by the glass or bottle to accompany your lunch.

Harrison's Road, Dromana. Melway reference 160 J6.  
Phone (059) 87 3800.

Landscape KILDA

THE AGE TUESDAY 22 OCTOBER 1991

## VINE TALK - From around the Mornington Peninsula Wineries

It shouldn't come as a surprise to learn that there are now about 90 vineyards registered with the Mornington Peninsula Vignerons Association. The patchwork quilt-like appearance of rows of vines are becoming increasingly obvious, and locals discuss grape varieties and the potential of the 1991 Vintage, as intimately as they exchange anecdotes about their grandchildren.

The wine industry has become a significant contributor to the economic and social structure of the Mornington Peninsula, and has quickly gained the status as one of this area's most vital tourist attractions.

I wonder if the pioneers of this local industry, as they poked naked twigs into the fertile soil almost 20 years ago, ever imagined that their adventurous and almost experimental plantings would herald the discovery of one of Australia's newest, and most exciting wine producing regions.

From the very first vintages produced, the imaginations of wine critics and enthusiasts alike, were captured by the clearly superior fruit characters of Peninsula product. Although the vines were immature as were the wine making techniques in those early days, it was the potential displayed in these first vintages that persuaded other growers, some with serious commercial intent, to gamble with nature and invest their money and energy into an wine-growing area of relatively unknown capabilities.

The fact that their judgement was well placed is gloriously obvious. Mornington Peninsula wines regularly win critical acclaim in industry publication and wine shows and are applauded by wine connoisseurs and enthusiasts. They are now prominent on Restaurant tables and in fine wine shops throughout Australia, and form part of an Australian assault on the wine drinking community in Europe.

Whilst the soils and climate play a critical part in the success story of Mornington Peninsula Wine, it is the viticulture and wine making that ultimately determine the quality.

Grape growing methods and wine making techniques vary from vineyard to vineyard, however, each member of the Mornington Peninsula Vignerons Association embraces the quality at any cost ethos, and the association belief that a strong and unified commitment to excellence will ensure the continued reputation of Peninsula wines as being of consistently outstanding quality.

Another significantly important aspect of Mornington Peninsula Wine, is our Logo, (displayed above). When this logo appears on a bottle of wine, you are assured that the fruit used to make the wine was grown 100% on the Peninsula.

Now you know a little more about the vineyards, I will tell you how you can best enjoy them. There are several Peninsula Vineyards open every weekend, where you can taste and buy wine. Our summer season commences Melbourne Cup Weekend, and we are kicking it off with a vengeance.

Each day, November 2nd, 3rd, 4th and 5th, there are great activities planned around the vineyards.

**Stonier's Merricks Picnic on the Lawn.** Basket Picnics with wine, (\$15.00 and requires booking (059) 89 8300). Races on Big Screen. How wine is made tours and tastings and sales.

**Paringa Estate and Karina Vineyard - Dinner with the Winemakers, Saturday evening at Johnnie Come Lately's.** Bookings (059) 89 2669 or (059) 81 0137.

**Dromana Estate - Ploughman's Lunches and wine tastings and sales.**

**Hann's Creek Estate - Beef in Red Wine and Brandy, cooked by a French Chef, also native bush walks.**

**Main Ridge Estate - Barbecue on the Prunings.** Also vertical tastings of Main Ridge Estate Vintages.

**Balmuir Vineyard - Country Barbecue.** **Tanglewood Downs Estate - Country Lunches and musical entertainment.**

Note: Food is at a charge.

That is just an indication of the entertainment that will be found at Vineyards over the four day Cup Weekend. More information can be obtained from Promotions Director, Delyse Graham on (059) 74 4220.

And just to whet the appetite a little further, you can win a wonderful stay at Delgany Country House Hotel, Mornington Peninsula Wine and other prizes. This is a weekend not to be missed!

You are invited to the  
Mornington Peninsula Carnival of Wine  
at



## STONIER'S MERRICKS WINERY

362 Frankston - Flinders Road, Merricks  
(Melways 192 F9)

4 Day Cup Festival

Saturday, Sunday, Monday, Cup Day  
November 2, 3, 4, 5, 11am - 5pm daily

Picnic on the Lawn

Lunch Baskets including wine \$15 (BYO rug),  
prebookings appreciated to  
059 89 8300, fax 059 89 8709 or  
you are welcome to BYO lunch

Want something else  
to do next weekend?



## STONIER'S WINERY SELECTION

Wine tasting and cellar door sales  
Saturday and Sunday 11 a.m. - 5 p.m.

Non-football food available!

at

Stonier's Merricks Winery  
362 Frankston-Flinders Road  
Merricks (059 898 300)  
Melway Map Ref. 192 F9

## MORNINGTON PENINSULA FINE WINE AND FOOD

**Paringa Estate and Karina Vineyard**  
invite you to enjoy their fine wines served with a superb 4 course gourmet dinner prepared by Chef Andrew McIntosh at

**JOHNNIE COME LATELY'S RESTAURANT**

Red Hill Rd., Red Hill South - This Sat. Nov. 2nd.  
All inclusive cost \$55 pp. Prior bookings essential  
on (059) 89 2328.

Note - Both vineyards will also be open for wine tastings with light refreshments from Sat 2nd to Tues 5th Nov. 11 am to 5 pm.

For further information ph. (059) 89 2669 or  
(059) 81 0137

THE AGE TUESDAY 15 OCTOBER 1991

**S**OME spring carnival reminders: as part of the Mornington Peninsula Vignerons' Melbourne Cup celebration, Main Ridge winemaker Nat White will be holding a vertical tasting of his wines a 5.30 pm daily from 1-4 November. The cost, with food, is \$30 a head, and to book, ring 059 892 686.



# RED HILL FLYER

YOUR  
COMMUNITY  
NEWSPAPER

CIRCULATING TO BALNARRING, MERRICKS, BITTERN, SOMERS, SHOREHAM, PT. LEO, FLINDERS, RED HILL, MAIN RIDGE & DROMANA

OCTOBER 1991

## ENJOY OUTSTANDING LOCAL FOOD AND WINE



Pictured is Graeme Pinney from Karina Vineyard sampling one of his mellow reds.

A highlight of the opening of the summer wine season on the Peninsula will be a wine and food evening to be held at Johnnie Come Lately's Restaurant at Red Hill South on Saturday November 2nd. Winemakers Lindsay McCall from Paringa Estate and Graeme Pinney from Karina Vineyard will be in attendance to present four of their outstanding wines chosen to accompany a delightful four course meal.

### The menu includes:

**Appetiser:** served with Karina Vineyard Sauvignon Blanc. Malaysian dried pork and shredded chicken served with garnish salad.

**Entree:** served with Paringa Estate Chardonnay. Tasmanian smoked salmon accompanied by scalloped potato and turnip with a light lime mayonnaise.

**Main Course:** served with Paringa Estate Shiraz. Chicken breast filled with mushroom pate fused with red wine wrapped in puff pastry

OR

Eye fillet wrapped in bacon simply done with a rich beef and dried tomato glaze.

**Cheese:** served with Karina Vineyard Cabernet Sauvignon.

With 14 vineyards opening their cellar doors for tastings and sales over the Melbourne Cup Weekend (Saturday through to Tuesday) this provides an excellent opportunity to sample some of the local wines.

**Saturday - Sunday - Monday - CUP DAY!**  
**FOUR GREAT DAYS AT**  
**PENINSULA WINERIES**  
(NOVEMBER 2ND, 3RD, 4TH AND 5TH)



**YOU ARE  
INVITED TO:**



Choose a winery tour, join in our vineyard Barbeques and picnics, witness a symbolic "burning of the prunings" increase your wine knowledge with Tutored Tastings, enjoy a winemakers dinner and much more.

**Experience our welcoming Vineyard**

**atmosphere and best of all -**

**DISCOVER THE WONDERFUL WINES OF  
THE MORNINGTON PENINSULA.**

More information can be obtained by phoning (059) 74 4200 or pick up a leaflet from vineyards, local stores and Mornington and Dromana Information Centres. (available from 11th October)

★ ★ ★ ★ ★

**GREAT PRIZES TO BE WON -**  
**including a "Romantic Interlude" at**  
**Delgany Country House Hotel**  
**(just by buying a bottle of wine)**

RED HILL FLYER October 1991 - Page 3

## HANNS CREEK ESTATE

Opening of the Peninsula's newest winery  
on Cup Day Nov. 5th 1991.

Enjoy French Provincial cuisine and fine  
Hanns Creek wines.

Hours: 11am - 5pm

Situated on Kentucky Rd.

Merricks North

Tel: (059) 89 7266

Tony & Denise Slocock



Page 4 - THE INDEPENDENT, Tuesday, October 22, 1991



PICTURED at the discussion of a peninsula winegrowing network, from left, Natasha Proctor; Lesley Yates; Jim Filippone, of Vintino Estate; Graeme Pinney, Karina Vineyard; Jim Williamson, Williamson Wines.

## Growers look at new vine

FOUR Mornington Peninsula winegrowers are planning a "grapevine" that could lead to more success in the marketplace.

The growers met a state government adviser in Frankston last week to explore the possibility of starting a co-operative network.

The winegrowers met Ms Leslie Yates, project manager of the Department of Manufacturing and Industry Development, at Frankston Peninsula Business Advisory Centre.

The meeting was also attended by Department of Industry, Technology and Commerce representative Ms Natasha Proctor.

Business centre manager Mr Alan Stevens said he hoped the meeting would "have a multiplier

effect" by encouraging other peninsula manufacturers to investigate networks.

Those most likely to view the program as a "window of opportunity" were other winegrowers, software programmers and electronic component manufacturers, Mr Stevens said.

Networking programs help Victorian small manufacturers and service providers pool their skills and win a higher profile in the marketplace.

"Many small innovative enterprises frequently are unable to compete in key overseas markets because of their lack of size, resources, isolation or skills," Ms Yates said.

"The business networking program aims to help enterprises overcome such barriers by forming networks and joint ventures with other com-

plementary enterprises, so that they can collectively win key new markets.

"This can be achieved through the provision of advice and funding assistance, provided by the program."

"Networks can and are assisting enterprises obtain the know-how and capabilities essential for competing internationally."

"However networks are not an end in themselves and are likely to add value to the extent that they help enterprises realise strategic opportunities not attainable by enterprises working in isolation."

Ms Yates said that to be eligible for support the network must:

- Obtain three or more enterprises;
- Have strategic objectives for the network and commitment of members to

these;

- Have agreement regarding members respective roles in the project, their share of rewards and a nominated project leader;
- Contain enterprises which are sufficiently financially stable to ensure likely success in completion of the project; and
- Demonstrate commitment to the network by way of financial contribution to network costs.

"The concept is not new; networks have already achieved considerable success elsewhere in the world," Ms Yates said.

"Currently there are some 18 network projects throughout Australia."

Material on forming networks is available from Frankston Peninsula Business Advisory Centre, shop 21A Central Park, Wells St, Frankston, phone (03) 781 3344.

## Cup Day opening for winery

TONY and Denise Slocock will open the newest peninsula winery, Hanns Creek Estate, on Cup Day, November 5.

The Slococks have planted nearly eight acres of former apple orchards with Cabernet Sauvignon, Pinot Noir, Merlot and Chardonnay in

1987. Denise Slocock, who is French, has used her lifelong interest in horticulture to perform, what her husband describes, "magical effects on the vines".

A modern winery is about to be completed at the vineyard. The vintage now for sale was made at St Huberts, in Coldstream.

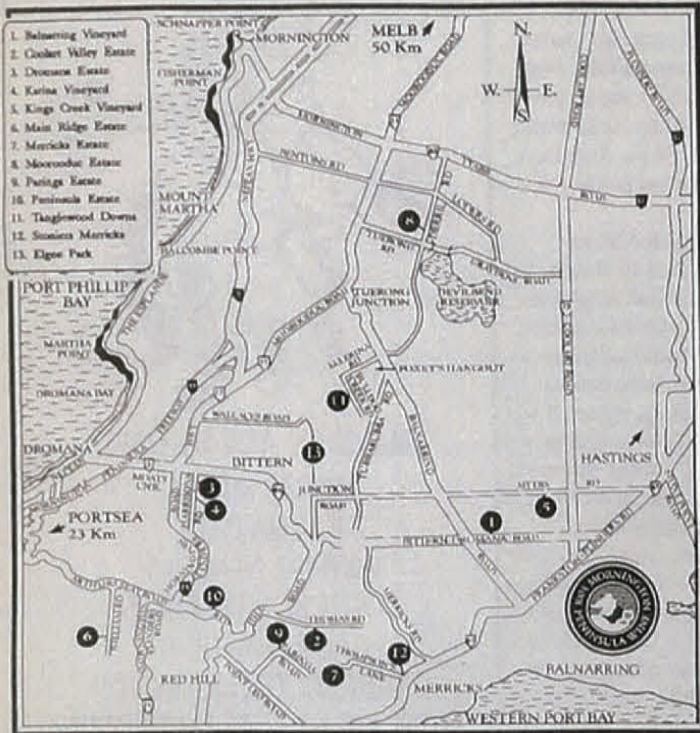
Tony Slocock was a professional actor, dentist and long-time rugby fan. He describes himself as having had "a lifelong love affair with rugby football and good wine."

Tony believes that the "the French connection" will have a notable bearing on Hanns Estate producing wines of real distinction.



## The vineyards of the Mornington Peninsula

...OPEN FOR CELLAR DOOR SALES



EVERY WEEKEND

FIRST WEEKEND  
OF EVERY MONTH

### 1 Balnarring Vineyard

Bittern-Dromana Rd, Balnarring  
(059) 89 5258  
10 am to 4 pm

### 6 Main Ridge Estate

William Rd, Red Hill  
(059) 89 2686  
Noon to 5 pm

### 9 Paringa Estate

Paringa Rd, Red Hill South  
(059) 89 2669  
11 am to 5 pm

### 4 Karina Vineyard

Harrisons Rd, Dromana  
(059) 81 0137  
11 am to 5 pm

### 12 Stonier's Merricks Vineyard

Thompson's Lane, Merricks  
(059) 89 8300  
11 am to 5 pm

**NOTE:** Some vineyards open on public holidays and/or by appointment. Phone for details.



WINES FROM THESE VINEYARDS ARE AVAILABLE FROM RESTAURANTS AND SELECTED STOCKISTS OF FINE WINES:

Craig Avon  
(059) 89 7465

Mornington Vineyards  
(059) 74 2097 (03) 817 3156

Elan Vineyard  
(059) 82 1858

### 2 Coolart Valley Vineyard

Thomas Rd, Red Hill South  
(059) 89 2087  
11 am to 4 pm

### 3 Dromana Estate

Harrison Rd, Dromana  
(059) 87 3800  
11 am to 4 pm

### 7 Merricks Estate

Thompson's Lane, Merricks  
(059) 89 8416  
11 am to 5 pm

### 8 Moorooduc Estate

Derril Rd, Moorooduc  
(059) 78 8585  
11 am to 5 pm

### 10 Peninsula Estate

Red Hill Rd, Red Hill  
(059) 89 2866  
10 am to 5 pm

### 11 Tanglewoods Downs

Bulldog Creek Rd,  
Mornington Rural  
(059) 74 3325  
11 am to 5 pm

### 5 Kings Creek Vineyard

Myers Rd, Bittern  
(03) 654 5822 (059) 83 2102  
11 am to 5 pm every Sunday

Massoni Main Creek  
(059) 89 2060

Elgee Park  
(059) 89 7338

Mt Martha Vineyard  
(059) 74 2700

Mornington Peninsula Vignerons information and details of special events can be obtained from:

## Top Attractions

### One man's dream: from apples to shiraz

LINDSAY McCall has always had his roots planted firmly in soil. Having grown up on the land, he knew that city dwelling was a temporary measure and ultimately he would be back sporting grubby hands and gumboots.

Weekend visits to his parents' home at Rosebud gave him the opportunity to experience the splendour of the Red Hill area, and his long-time desire of owning a patch of land came to fruition in 1984 when he purchased a property in Paringa Road.

The land wasn't purchased without a plan. For years Lindsay had watched the transformation of apple orchards to vineyards in the Bendigo area, and had a vision for his land. Lindsay could visualise uniform rows of neatly pruned vines traversing the hillside, where apples had once grown.

When the decision to plant a vineyard at Red Hill was made, Lindsay decided he'd better find out if anyone else was growing grapes on the Peninsula. To his surprise and delight, a wealth of knowledge was just around the corner, in the form of Garry Crittenden (Dromana Estate) and Nat White (Main Ridge Estate). Discovering he wasn't a pioneer enabled Lindsay to draw on the cool climate viticultural experiences of those already established in the area.

Plantings of chardonnay, pinot noir and cabernet sauvignon, together with the two acres of shiraz, make a total of 27 acres of vine, however, it is the shiraz variety that captures Lindsay's imagination, and although it does present its fair share of problems, he will plant more shiraz in the near future.



The 1988 Paringa Estate Shiraz was a wine that vindicated the McCalls' bold decision to plant this variety normally grown in warmer climates. A small parcel of fruit from very young vines produced an exceptional wine, and other Peninsula vignerons started to take notice.

With time and management, this potentially difficult grape variety looks set to become the flagship of Paringa Estate. The 1990 shiraz, recently released, confirms that the McCalls are on the right track. A wine described as the gutsiest red on the Peninsula, although not deep in colour, has a "huge mouth-filling flavour" and a rich peppery bouquet that is characteristic of a good shiraz.

Chardonnay and cabernet sauvignon produced from the estate's vineyard are of consistently good quality, and as the vines mature and techniques develop further, it would be expected that the wines will get better and better.

The neatly dressed geography teacher at Toorak College almost camouflages the aggressively serious winemaker that lurks behind the beard and spectacles. Lindsay McCall loves his vineyard.

He loves it with a passion, even when the workload weighs heavy on his shoulders. Daylight hours are all too short, and juggling teaching commitments with the demands of young family and a vineyard requires the kind of dedication that will ultimately ensure his success.

When the vineyard is fully planted, Lindsay hopes to retire from teaching to become a full-time vigneron and winemaker.

Until then, Paringa Estate Vineyard is open to the public every Saturday and Sunday, and

public holidays from 11 am to 5 pm. Tastings and sales take place among the vats and barrels right where the wine is made, and Lindsay is always there to guide the palate through wine tasting.

Check the map on this page for its location, or phone Lindsay or Margaret McCall on (059) 89 2669.

### Cool (climate) vineyards

A DOZEN Mornington Peninsula vineyards will open over the four-day Melbourne Cup long weekend, with tasting, sales, special events and entertainments.

It is a great chance to plan a vineyard walk-about, enjoy the splendour of the wine environment and stop for a "Barbecue on the Prunings" at Main Ridge Estate. Each vineyard has its own special plans to make the cup weekend a special wine event. Details from Peninsula Vignerons Promotions, phone (059) 74 4200.

TON PENINSU

## The four day Carnival

Saturday, Sunday  
November 2nd, 3rd

Four days of wonderful wine  
food and entertainment  
**MORNINGTON PENINSULA VINEYARDS.**

This LOGO is your guide to the PENINSULA  
WINE TASTINGS, BOTTLING  
ENTERTAINMENT AND WINE



Page 12 - THE MAIL, Thursday, October 24, 1991

## Their cup weekend will run over

**MORNINGTON Peninsula** vignerons love a party and they believe the Melbourne Cup festival provides a great opportunity to have one.

For the four days of the Melbourne Cup weekend from Saturday, November 2 through to Tuesday, November 5, thirteen peninsula wineries have got together to celebrate with a "carnival of wine."

Food, entertainment and other activities will abound, with the focus, naturally enough, on wine.

There'll be winery tours, vineyard barbecues, gourmet lunches, a basket lunch, winemakers' dinners and other attractions including a Coora Cottage herbs and rose display, races on a big TV screen, picnic facilities and native wood walks.

Participating vineyards are Balnarring, Coolart Valley,

Dromana Estate, Karina Vineyard and Paringa Estate, Kings Creek, Main Ridge Estate, Merricks Estate, Moorooduc Estate, Peninsula Estate, Tanglewood Downs Estate, Stoner's Merricks and Hanns Creek Estate.

A highlight of the carnival will be the opportunity for visitors to wineries to win an accommodation package at the beautiful Delgany Country House Hotel at Portsea.

Delgany is renowned for its Two Faces restaurant, top accommodation and grounds.

Some fortunate purchaser of a Mornington Peninsula wine during the "carnival" will be treated in luxury for a "romantic interlude" at Delgany, enjoying food, wine and accommodation.

Inquiries on any aspect of the carnival to (059) 74 4200.

## Growers look at new vine

**FOUR** Mornington Peninsula winegrowers are planning a "grapevine" that could lead to more success in the marketplace.

The growers met a state government adviser in Frankston last week to explore the possibility of starting a co-operative network.

The winegrowers met Ms Leslie Yates, project manager of the Department of Manufacturing and Industry Development, at Frankston Peninsula Business Advisory Centre.

The meeting was also attended by Department of Industry, Technology and Commerce representative Ms Natasha Proctor.

Business centre manager Mr Alan Stevens said he hoped the meeting would "have a multiplier effect" by encouraging other peninsula manufacturers to investigate networks.

Those most likely to view the program as a "window of opportunity" were other winegrowers, software programmers and electronic component manufacturers, Mr Stevens said.

Networking programs help Victorian small manufacturers and service providers pool their skills and win a higher profile in the marketplace.



•PICTURED at the discussion of a peninsula winegrowing network, from left, Natasha Proctor; Leslie Yates; Jim Filippone, of Vinfino Estate; Graeme Pinney, Karina Vineyard; Jim Williamson, Williamson Wines.

"Many small innovative enterprises frequently are unable to compete in key overseas markets because of their lack of size, resources, isolation or skills," Ms Yates said. "The business networking program aims to help enterprises overcome such barriers by forming networks and joint ventures with other complementary enterprises, so that they can collectively win key new markets."

"This can be achieved

through the provision of advice and funding assistance, provided by the program."

"Networks can and are assisting enterprises obtain the know-how and capabilities essential for competing internationally."

"However networks are not an end in themselves and are likely to add value to the extent that they help enterprises realise strategic opportunities not attainable by enterprises working in isolation."

Ms Yates said that to be eligible for support the network must:

- Obtain three or more enterprises;
- Have strategic objectives for the network and commitment of members to these;
- Have agreement regarding members respective roles in the project, their share of rewards and a nominated project leader;
- Contain enterprises which are sufficiently financially stable to ensure likely success in completion

of the project; and  
•Demonstrate commitment to the network by way of financial contribution to network costs.

"The concept is not new; networks have already achieved considerable success elsewhere in the world," Ms Yates said.

"Currently there are some 18 network projects throughout Australia."

VIGNERONS ASSOCIATION

## Melbourne Cup of Wine.

Monday, Cup Day 1, 4th, and 5th.

and the ISULA



ULA VINEYARDS.  
D GLASS SALES, FOOD,  
MAKERS DINNERS.

### BALNARRING

Gourmet Sausages on the barbecue. Wine sales by the glass and bottle. Wine tasting. (059) 89 5258 (Melway 163B11) 10am-4pm.

### COOLART VALLEY

Antipasto Luncheon available. Wine tastings and sales. Refundable tasting fee charged. (059) 89 2087 (Melway 191 G6) 11am-5pm.

### DROMANA ESTATE

Gourmet Bagels & Ploughman's Platters. Children catered for. B.Y.O. Lunch and use our Picnic or B.B.Q. facilities. Wine by the glass for lunch. (059) 87 3800 (Melway 160 J6) 11am-4pm.

### KARINA VINEYARD & PARINGA ESTATE

Winemakers' dinner at Johnny Come Lately's Restaurant. Saturday 2nd November - 4 courses with 4 wines \$55.00 per person. Bookings (059) 81 0137 or (059) 89 2660. Vineyards will be open for tastings and sales each day. 11am-5pm.

**Paringa Estate** will serve fresh baked tasty treats from 'All things Natural'.

### KINGS CREEK

Gourmet toasted sandwiches. Wine sales by the glass or bottle. Wine tasting. (059) 83 2102 (Melway 163 F8) 11am-5pm.

### MAIN RIDGE ESTATE

Symbolic burning of the winter pruning & B.B.Q. country style sausages. 12 noon-3pm \$5.00. Vertical Tastings of Main Ridge Estate vintages, with antipasto, in the winery with Nat White. 5.30pm to 7.30pm Friday to Monday - \$30.00 p.p. Bookings - (059) 89 2686 Wine tastings and sales 11am-5pm each day. Refundable tasting fee charged. (Melway 190 C4).

### MERRICKS ESTATE

Wine tasting. Wine sales by the bottle. Display of Coora Cottage herbs and roses. (059) 89 8416 (Melway 192 B9) 11 noon to 5pm.

### MOOROODUC ESTATE

Gourmet Lunches in the winery. Wine sales by the bottle or glass. Wine tasting (refundable tasting fee charged). (059) 78 8585 (Melway 152 H2) 11 noon to 5pm.

### PENINSULA ESTATE

Gourmet sausages with wine. Wine tasting & sausage \$2.00 Glass of wine and sausage - \$4.00 Wine sales by bottle or glass (059) 89 2866 (Melway 190 K4).

### TANGLEWOOD DOWNS ESTATE

Light lunch and musical entertainment each day from 11 noon to 5pm. (059) 74 3325 (Melway 151 K12).

### WINEMAKERS DINNER

At Madeines of Mornington. 3 course dinner at Tanglewood Downs. Estate wines \$45.00 per person. Jazz Band and automatic entry in a \$500 cup sweep. CUP EVE - November 4th. Bookings (059) 75 5655.

### STONIER'S MERRICKS

Picnic Lunch baskets including wine \$15.00 - Pre booking please on (059) 89 8300 or fax (059) 89 8709. Races on big TV screen. 'How wine is made' tours, hourly and half hourly. Wine tasting and sales-refundable tasting fee charged. 11 noon-5pm.

### HANNS CREEK ESTATE

Beef in red wine and Brandy, prepared by a French chef and served with rice and salad. Enjoy a walk in a Native Wood. The Peninsula's newest vineyard. (059) 89 7266 (Melway 192 A1) 11am-5pm.

# WIN

A ROMANTIC  
INTERLUDE  
FOR TWO AT  
**DELGANY  
COUNTRY  
HOUSE  
HOTEL**

(PORTSEA)  
Victoria's finest luxury retreat.  
One entry per bottle of wine  
purchased during the 4 days.



TUESDAY 22 OCTOBER 1991 THE AGE 29

## EPICURE

7

## A marriage of engineering and vines

## RETROSPECTIVE

By MARK SHIELD

NAT White is one of the pioneers of the Mornington Peninsula. In 1975 he established Main Ridge vineyard following accepted Department of Agriculture practices based on the Great Western system — the assumption being that the system should apply equally well in this new area.

In retrospect he's not unhappy: "You could do a lot worse for the area." But there was cause for much thinking and adjustment, and here Nat White's engineering background is evident in his viticultural problem-solving. In typical engineering fashion, you define the problem and work methodically towards a solution. "By the 1984 vintage we had a vineyard like a jungle," White recalls. "There was nothing to suggest that it should have been otherwise."

The previous winemaking efforts had masked the problem. "In 1982 my cabernet sauvignon had won a trophy at Lilydale. In 1983 there was the drought which kept the flavors up, but 1984, with the mass of leaves, left me with light wines." The 1985 vintage restored the balance by being a semi-drought, but the engineer's mind had already grasped that there was a viticultural problem.

About the same time the work of viticulturalist Dr Richard Smart, the Scott Henry System and the Sylvoz system were coming to the notice of the local winemakers. White studied all three



Nat White with his Labrador Ritchie: engineering background is evident in his viticultural problem solving.

and adopted what he thought would be appropriate to his location. By 1987 he had absorbed most of the Sylvoz system with some modification.

It was matter of trial and evaluation. A couple of vine rows at first, and when the results proved positive a few more rows would be converted.

Next he turned his attention to winemaking. "I started the winemaking course at Wagga (Agricultural College) in 1977, when Brian Croser was in the chair. The emphasis was on technically perfect wines and the maximum retention of fruit."

Wagga is a hot area and the techniques applied to the climatic conditions. "There were deficiencies in the course as far as cool-climate winemaking was concerned. We were taught to make red wines that avoided malo-lac-

tic fermentation (a secondary fermentation that converts malic acid into lactic acid, resulting in a much softer wine). In cool climates like Mornington we have too much acid."

Another legacy of Wagga was a bias against French winemaking techniques. "We were taught to find the technical faults in French wines." This was probably pretty easy, but for White a conversion was near at hand. "When you drink French wines, they are better food wines. Although Australian wines are technically correct, they are simple and boring."

He is careful not to reject his training at Wagga out of hand. "It was right for the times," he says. But to illustrate the shift in thinking, he poured 1988, 1990 and 1991 chardonnays.

The 1988 chardonnay is a "Wagga-style wine, fermented in stainless steel

and finished in oak". The result is a very enjoyable wine with fruit dominating the nose and palate. It is all about honest peach fruit flavors, and although the oak had three years to settle it is still quite aggressive. It is easily understood and quite commercial, and will be appreciated by many.

The 1990 chardonnay is entirely different, being barrel fermented on lees. The overt fruit is replaced by mouth feel and texture. It is also creamy, with more complex fruit flavors, and the oak fits like a glove.

Still in barrels, the 1991 already displays a wonderful softness (much softer than 1988), yet has great structure. It is a wine that will not be recognised at first because of the creamy texture and easy drinkability, but there are great hidden depths, mainly because the fruit was fully ripe. We can expect a complex wine that will reach great heights when mature.

Part of the reason for the outstanding success of the 1991 can be directly related to the netting of the vineyard, which allowed the grapes extra ripening time because the birds did not determine the picking time.

The other part of the equation is the rediscovery of long-established French practices, like barrel fermentation on lees that are stirred but not sulphured. It has been common practice for centuries in France, but only recently has it been hailed as cutting-edge winemaking in Australia.

● All the Mornington wineries will be running special events and tastings over the Victoria Derby-Melbourne Cup period from 2-5 November. For details of the Carnival of Wine, ring (059) 744 200, or fax (059) 756 566.

THE LEADER, Wednesday, November 20, 1991

## Facts wanted on The Briars

MT Eliza Riding councillor Richard Campbell has called for a report on council's running costs of the historic property, The Briars.

Cr Campbell asked for a report outlining the capital and expenditure of the property over the past three years at council's November 11 meeting.

Cr Campbell said he wouldn't know how financially viable the estate was until he saw the figures.

"My concern is that we don't overcapitalise at a time when revenue is pretty weak," he said. "I just

want to see the targets and costs of the property."

Cr Campbell acknowledged The Briars was "very worthy", but said he was "a bit cautious" about the amount of money being put into the project.

"It is a worthy project, but there is just a limit as to how much a small shire can invest," he said.

The Leader (October 9) reported Cr Bruce Rayment as saying council had spent \$120,000 to \$150,000 a year on the property over the past

three or four years. Cr Campbell said he was sceptical about suggestions that a commercial enterprises manager would market the proposed Briars vineyard cellar-door sales.

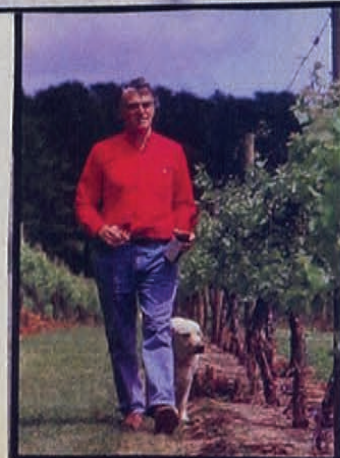
"It might do fabulously. I don't know," he said. "But without knowing the clear picture of the costs and capital there is some concern about the difficulty of selling boutique wine in a market not hungry for boutique wine."



CR Richard Campbell ... has asked for running costs of The Briars property.

SUMMER 1991-92

The INDEPENDENT &amp; the Mail





# Canny Garry puts vine first

BULLETIN SHOPPER, Wednesday, March 25, 1992

by MIKE FROST

**G**REAT wine starts in the vineyard... It might be a truism, but it took the wine industry in Australia quite a while to accept the idea.

Now, most wineries pay a lot more attention to their actual vines and the way they are grown and maintained, knowing full well that not to do so is just a slow form of economic suicide.

If you can't grow or buy quality grapes, you can't expect to make the best quality wine.

Australian winemakers have the technology and knowledge to make very good wines from even average grapes, but to go one step further to the highest quality wines means having access to grapes of a comparable standard.

One winemaker who knows better than most that the vineyard is a vital part of the quality equation is Garry Crittenden of Dromana Estate on the Mornington Peninsula south east of Melbourne.

Garry became involved in the wine industry through his work as a horticultural consultant, which led to a lot of work as a viticulturist in establishing and maintaining various vineyards.

From there he decided to establish his own vineyards at Dromana and subsequently producing his own wines.

The whole operation is top-notch, with the vineyard, as should be expected, almost a model operation.

It's no surprise that it has been voted the best vineyard in Victoria in an annual competition.

The fruit from the vineyard is always of the best possible quality, given that in some years there is almost nothing anyone can do to guarantee top fruit.

If it rains for six weeks during vintage, growers are not going to get fruit as good as if the weather had stayed dry.

Again, top fruit won't guarantee a top wine — it is possible for winemakers to turn good grapes into average wine if they try hard enough.

That's not a likely problem with any Dromana Estate wine — I've never tasted anything less than a very good wine under the label.



Even his 'second' label, Schinus Molle, would put a lot of other producer's quality wines to shame.

Schinus Molle, by the way, is the Latin name for the peppercorn tree.

The Dromana Estate wines are all made from fruit grown exclusively on Garry's own vineyard, while fruit for the Schinus wines is drawn from various sources — with Garry, naturally enough, getting grapes only from very well run vineyards.

The 1991 Schinus sauvignon blanc (\$13.50-\$15.50), for example, is made from fruit from the Yarra Valley and Coonawarra.

It is a sauvignon blanc style I can actually enjoy rather than just admire.

The varietal character is there, but it is not overwhelming, and there is good flavour on the palate with a fresh, crisp finish.

It's a good wine to go with seafood or with Thai or Chinese cuisine.

Similarly, the '91 Schinus Chardonnay (\$13.50-\$15.50) is a blend of 40 percent Mornington fruit, 30 percent Yarra Valley and 30 percent McLaren Vale (mostly from the vineyards of David Paxton, who is recognised as one of Australia's top grapegrowers).

The Schinus chardonnay has lovely smoky characters on the nose and palate from barrel fermentation and maturation.

There's also good peachy fruit with depth of palate and a crisp finish.

It could easily take a few more years in bottle to develop more character and complexity.

The '91 Dromana Estate Chardonnay (\$19-\$22) is a bigger, richer style with a lot of power and flavour on the nose and palate.

Some of the complex flavours derive from partial malolactic fermentation, the first time Garry Crittenden has employed the practice in his chardonnay.

The conversion of the malic acid (the green acid of apples) to lactic acid (the natural acid of milk) gives an almost buttery richness and mouth feel to white wines, especially chardonnays.

It's a great wine to give to people who believe that cooler areas cannot produce full-bodied, richer chardonnays.

Garry Crittenden also made a rose in 1991 that definitely does not fall into the traditional lightweight mould.

At 13.5 percent alcohol it is more potent than many allegedly full-bodied dry reds and would be a definite trap for the unwary drinker thinking it was a typical rose with its 11 percent or so of alcohol.

But the Schinus rose is not just a high-alcohol rocket fuel — it has genuine fruit flavours from the cabernet sauvignon, merlot and pinot noir which went into it.

It's a wine with a lot of style that is enjoyable just being sipped by itself while watching the sun go down over the Broadwater, which is about the only place you can find it in Queensland, anyway, since Aromas Cafe at Main Beach has a virtual monopoly in this State.

The Schinus Molle '91 Victorian Pinot Noir (\$13.50-\$15.50) is more readily available and will give you a good idea of why the Mornington Peninsula and the Yarra Valley are being regarded as among the better regions of Australia in which to grow pinot.

The wine is a 50-50 blend from the two districts and has lovely fresh strawberry and cherry fruit characters on the nose and palate with good flavours and of tannin.

I'd put it in the 'drink-young' class, to be consumed and enjoyed over the next 12-18 months while it still has all its fresh fruitiness.

The 1989 Dromana Estate Cabernet Merlot (\$19-\$22 and worth every cent) maintains the very high standards Garry has set himself with this blend.

I've never seen one of these reds that I did not enjoy immensely.

They have marvellous clear fruit characters, excellent oak handling and more power and flavour than you would perhaps expect from a cool climate region.

The fruit is in the blackcurrant and cherry spectrum with toasty oak and a long, lingering palate.

It's a wine which could be enjoyed now, but I'd personally put it away for a while yet.

The wines of Dromana have been on the market for only a few years, with the first commercial vintage really only being in the mid-'80s, but in that short time Garry Crittenden has built a highly-deserved reputation for consistently flavoursome and stylish wines. Dromana Estate would have to rate very highly on any list of Australia's best wineries, large or small.

Sunday Herald-Sun, March 15, 1992

## WINE TONY HITCHIN

### Export gamble pays off

**T**HERE are worse views in the world than the one from the Noon Gun bar in Hong Kong's stylish Excelsior hotel, but Melbourne lawyer George Kefford wasn't even looking.

In fact, "panoramic" is the word, as you look out over the gun that signals noon for the old naval colony, to colorful Kowloon across the teeming harbor at Causeway Bay. But George was too busy.

So what was a partner in one of Melbourne's leading insurance advisory firms doing in one of Hong Kong's better settings with a glass in one hand and an easy word for an attentive audience?

George was flogging grog, if you'll excuse the vernacular.

And in so doing he was an object lesson to every whingeing wine company and all lacklustre Aussie businessmen still sitting on their butts waiting for the world to come to them.

George and his lawyer wife Jacky are tiny Merricks Estate wines, overlooking Western Port Bay.

Last week they were part of the now annual Taste of Australia week-long promotion in Hong Kong, which in five years has become so popular it fills the Excelsior's main restaurant and spills into the Noon Gun bar.

The diners are the local sophisticated palates — British, Australian and Asian — curious to learn more of what we do well here.

They are George and Jacky's kind of audience.

"We may be small, but we're as interested as anyone else in winning a place in the export market," says George.

"There is a premium market here — they're certainly keen on French wines for instance."

"And some — I stress some — of our Merricks Estate wines can take on the French."

He is being modest. The acclaimed Merricks Estate 1988 shiraz has beaten highly expensive Rhone wines in blind tastings. His chardonnay style has international appeal.

Maybe that's why he has achieved "the impossible" and got himself on the books of one of Hong Kong's top wine agents.

Back here, less exclusively, you can buy Merricks wines for under \$20 at places like Crittendens, Gatehouse Cellars and the Victorian Wine Centre.

Try the Merricks Estate 1990 chardonnay, and buy and keep the 1990 shiraz.

And drink to a couple who think the world will love Australian wines — and have done something about it.



## EPICURE

### WINESCAPE: MORNINGTON PENINSULA

**T**HE Mornington Peninsula is, above all, chardonnay country. The grape seems to thrive here, and within the area of 50-square kilometres, you will find delicious, but different versions on the same theme: Moorooduc Estate, Main Ridge, Massoni, T'Gallant, King's Creek, Craig Avon, among many.

This isn't to deny that other grapes do well on the Peninsula (or to counter Brian Stonier's belief that pinot noir will eventually produce the same excellent results), but simply to state that wherever you go, and wherever it is planted, chardonnay seems to prosper.

Somehow, chardonnay, the sunshine wine, seems in its element on the Peninsula, always within sniffing distance of the sea. But the growing conditions alone do not take into account the care and learning-by-experience that have gone into the making of the wines. Barrel fermentation and malolactic fermentations have resulted in wonderfully complex wines, but if you want your wines simple, try the fruit-driven T'Gallant, with no wood, and, in its youth, tasting a bit like freshly bottled Macon blanc.

The conventional wisdom is that other white varieties are harder to grow in the Peninsula, but Karina Estate has an excellent riesling (although many people have found the grape hard to ripen here), and Tanglewood Downs has also had success with the grape. Elgee Park (with no cellar door, but a mailing list) has an auspicious riesling well worth searching-out. Coolart Valley has a rare Peninsula semillon, although Philip Ayton, a grower at St Neot's, one of the Peninsula pioneers, has persevered with the grape for many years.

The reds are there, too — the trophy-winning 1990 shiraz from Paringa Estate; the fruit-filled 1990 Dromana Estate pinot noir; the 1989 Merricks Estate cabernet sauvignon; most years' cabernets from Stonier's Merricks.

The Peninsula has come a long way in a short time. The wines are not the cheapest, but, with establishment costs and all the expenses, few of

BY RICHARD YALLOP

the new, small vigneron are making money, even selling at \$15 a bottle. For most, wine making in the Peninsula is a labor of love, warranting the financial sacrifices. These are wines that are nursed individually, and cared about, and it tends to show in the bottle.

The first pioneer was Baillieu Myer, who planted hobby vines at Elgee Park in 1972. He was followed in the late 70s by Nat White, at Main Ridge, George Kefford, at Merricks Estate, and Brian Stonier, next door in Thompsons Lane, Merricks.

In those early days the Peninsula was less of a wine growing area than a collection of enthusiasts having a go. But through the 80s the number of people planting grew rapidly, to the point where the Mornington Peninsula Vignerons Association presently has more than 80 members. That excludes all the little people planting their quarter-acres, and cultivating their folly.

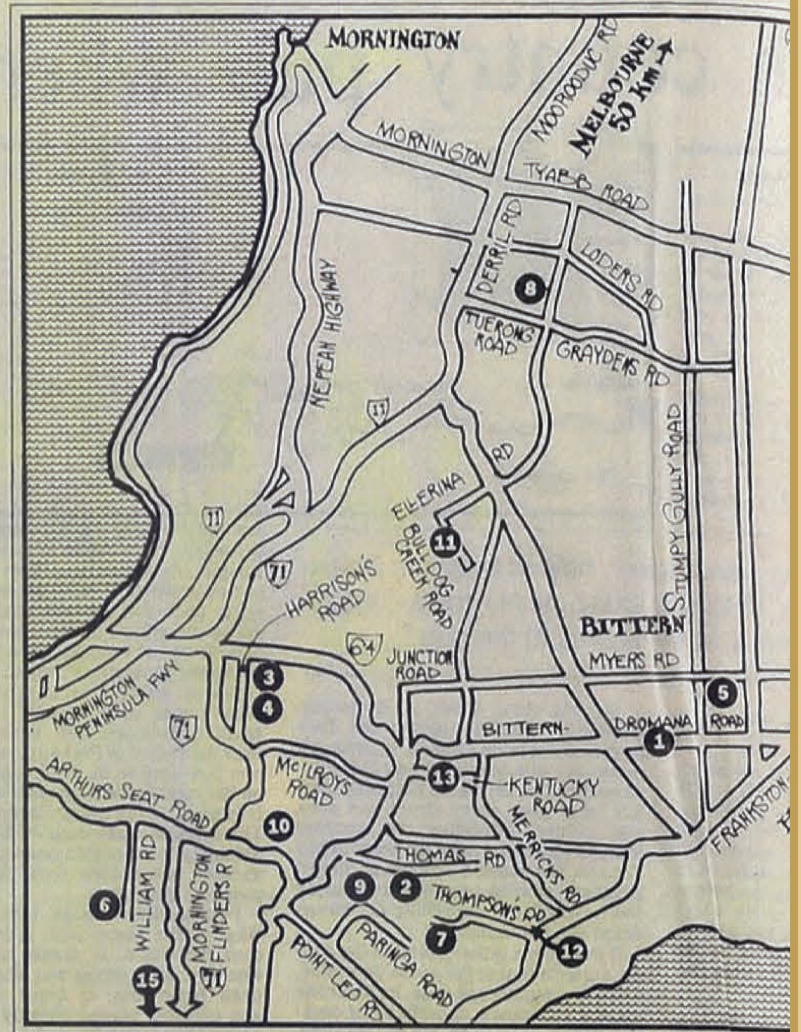
A turning point for the area came in March when Stonier's opened its grand new Merricks winery. The investment in the building was a great leap of faith, a statement that wine making in the Peninsula was here to stay, and had moved on to a professional footing.

That extended to more regular opening hours. One innovation is the introduction of the \$2 refundable tasting fee at several wineries. If you buy, it is deducted from the cost of your wine, and if you don't, you can leave without feeling obligated to get something.

In the past, the erratic opening hours of several of the vineyards has been a disincentive to cellar-door visitors, but more definite opening hours are now emerging. During holiday time in January, many vineyards will be open daily. A brochure listing opening times of vineyards belonging to the Mornington Peninsula Vignerons Association (practically all vineyards are members) can be obtained from the Association, PO Box 400, Mornington, or by phoning 059 744200.

### WINE MAPS of VICTORIA

The Peninsula  
has come  
a long way  
in a short  
time.



**Balnarring Vineyard** — Bittern-Dromana Road, Balnarring. 059 835258.

Open: 10 am to 4 pm, 7 days. Wines: gewurztraminer, chardonnay, pinot noir, cabernet/merlot, merlot (\$11-\$15).

Winemaker's pick: unwooded chardonnay (\$12).

**Coolart Valley** — Thomas Road, Red Hill South. 059 892087.

Open: 11 am to 5 pm, weekends and public holidays, and every day from 27 December to 2 February.

Wines: cab/merlot, chardonnay, riesling, semillon (\$11-\$15). Winemaker's pick: 1989 cab/merlot (\$15).

**Dromana Estate** — Harrison's Road, Dromana. 059 873800.

Open: 11 am to 4 pm, every weekend in February and March and every day from 27 December to 2 February.

Wines: Dromana Estate chardonnay, pinot noir and cab/merlot, and second label, Schinus Molle, chardonnay, sauvignon blanc, rose, pinot noir, cabernet (\$9-\$18).

Winemaker's pick: Dromana Estate 1989 cab/merlot (\$18).

**Erinaceas** — Devonport Drive, Rye. 059 886336.

Open: noon to 4 pm every weekend and on public holidays, and every day from 27 December to 2 January.

Wines: chardonnay, cabernet sauvignon, zinfandel (\$12-\$15). Winemaker's pick: 1991 zinfandel (\$12).

**Hanns Creek Estate** — 26, Kentucky Road, Merricks North. 059 897266.

Open: noon to 5 pm every weekend and on public holidays, and every day from 27 December to 2 February.

Wines: chardonnay, pinot noir, second label, Harlequin, riesling/chardonnay, and cab/shiraz (\$10-\$15). Winemaker's pick: 1991 pinot noir (\$15).

**Karina Vineyard** — Harrison's Road, Dromana. 059 810137.

Open: 11 am to 5 pm every weekend and on public holidays, and every day from 27 December to 2 February.

Wines: rhine riesling, sauvignon blanc, cabernet sauvignon (\$10-\$15). Winemaker's pick: 1990 cabernet (\$15).

### THE WINERIES

weekend and on public holidays, and every day from 27 December to 2 February.

Wines: cabernet sauvignon, chardonnay, pinot noir, shiraz (\$13.50-\$18). Winemaker's pick: 1990 shiraz (\$18).

**Peninsula Estate** — Red Hill Road, Red Hill. 059 892866.

Open: 10 am to 5 pm first weekend of every month and every Sunday in January.

Wines: cabernet sauvignon, chardonnay, semillon/sauvignon blanc (\$12-\$18). Winemaker's pick: 1990 Peninsula Estate chardonnay (\$15).



**Stonier's Merricks Winery** — Cnr Frankston-Flinders Road and Thompson's Lane, Merricks. 059 898300.

Open: noon to 5 pm every weekend and on public holidays, and every day from 27 December to 2 February.

Wines: Stonier's Merricks cabernet sauvignon, pinot noir, chardonnay, and second label, Winery Selection, chardonnay, cabernet sauvignon, and pinot noir (\$10-\$20).

Winemaker's pick: 1990 Stonier's Merricks chardonnay (\$20).

### WHERE TO STAY

**Bed and Breakfasts:** (belonging to Inn House chain) — Pines Ridge Country Retreat, Main Ridge (Bernard and Joan Joyce, 059 896170); Willome, Red Hill (Ray and Lorin Harper, 059 892191); Red Hill Retreat, Main Ridge (Trevor and Jan Brandon, 059 982035); The Outlook, Shoreham (Barry and Meg Merton, 059 898532); Tillabudgery, Mt Martha (Dick and Lee Wines, 059 743404).

Warrahee Homestead and Restaurant (Warrahee Rd., Balnarring, 059 831729). Old homestead set in beautiful gardens.

Delgany Country House Hotel (Portsea, 059 844000). Hermann Schneider's high quality eating-and-accommodation will become more accessible in January, when

Delgany is running a special package linked to the promotion of Peninsula wines. Twin share accommodation will be available at \$50 a head, provided a restaurant booking is made at the hotel, and a case of Peninsula wine is purchased. A voucher proving purchase will be needed at the hotel.

Brooklands (99, Tanti Ave, Mornington, 059 751168). Popular accommodation and BYO restaurant.

Portsea Village Resort (Portsea, 059 848484).

Whitecliffes Holiday Resort (2511 Nepean Hwy, Rye, 059 851020).

**Kings Creek vineyard** — 237, Myers Road, Bittern. 059 832102.

Open: noon to 5 pm every weekend and on public holidays, and every day from 27 December to 2 February.

Wines: chardonnay, cabernet sauvignon, pinot noir (\$16-\$18). Winemaker's pick: 1990 pinot noir (\$16).

**Main Ridge Estate** — Williams Road, Red Hill. 059 892686.

Open: noon to 5 pm every weekend and on public holidays, and every day from 27 December to 2 February.

Wines: cabernet sauvignon, chardonnay, pinot noir, pinot meunier (\$14.50-\$20). Winemaker's pick: soon-to-be-released 1991 chardonnay (\$20).

**Merricks Estate** — Thompson's Lane, Merricks. 059 898416.

Open: noon to 5 pm first weekend of every month and public holidays, and every day 27 December to 1 January, and Australia Day weekend.

Wines: cabernet sauvignon, shiraz, chardonnay (\$17.50). Winemaker's pick: 1989 cabernet sauvignon (\$17.50).

**Moorooduc Estate** — Derrill Road, Moorooduc. 059 788585.

Open: noon to 5 pm first weekend of the month and every weekend in January.

Wines: cabernet sauvignon, chardonnay, pinot noir (\$18). Winemaker's pick: 1990 chardonnay (\$18).

**Paringa Estate** — 44 Paringa Road, Red Hill South. 059 892669.

Open: 11 am to 5 pm every

**Tanglewood Downs Estate** — Bulldog Creek Road, Mornington Rural. 059 743325.

Open: Sat 2 pm to 5 pm, Sun 11 am to 5 pm, and every day from 27 December to 2 February.

Wines: chardonnay, riesling, pinot noir, cabernet sauvignon, merlot (\$11-\$15). Winemaker's pick: 1990 chardonnay (\$15).

**T'Gallant** — Red Hill Road, halfway between Stanleys and McIlroys Road, Red Hill. 059 777093.

Open: noon to 5 pm, every day through January.

Wines: Holystone pinot/chardonnay, chardonnay (\$13). Winemaker's pick: Holystone (\$13).

**Tuerong Estate Vineyard Restaurant** — Mornington-Flinders Road, Red Hill. 059 892129.

Open: wines sold during restaurant opening times, Friday, Saturday dinners 7.30 pm for 8 pm, and Sunday lunch 12.30 pm for 1 pm; also open for light lunches Fri/Sat through January.

Morning Star cabernet sauvignon and pinot noir (\$15) and Tuerong Vineyard chardonnay (\$25).

Winemaker's pick: Tuerong chardonnay (\$25).

The following Peninsula vineyards do not have cellar door sales: Craig Avon (059 897465); Elan Vineyard (059 831858); Elgee Park (059 896115); Massoni Main Creek Vineyard (059 892060); Mornington Vineyard (059 742097); Mt Martha Vineyard (059 742700); Port Phillip Estate (059 892708); Red Hill Estate (059 892400); Shoreham Vale (03 822 6624); Willow Creek Vineyard (059 897367).

### WHERE TO EAT

Licciardo's (Mt Eliza Way, Mt Eliza, 03 7877710), Italian Trattoria, BYO and Licensed.

La Banquet (62, Main St, Mornington, 059 759833). Modern French. BYO and Licensed.

Dell by the Sea, Main St, Mornington, 059 755287. Italian BYO.

Sages Cottage, Cnr Moorooduc and Sages Rd, Baxter, 059 711337. BYO Farmhouse lunches.

The Pig and Whistle (Purves Rd, Main Ridge, 059 896130). Fully licensed English Pub Style.

Johnnie Come Lately's (Red Hill Rd, Red Hill South, 059 892326). Country-style tavern-bistro.

Bittern Cottage (Frankston-Flinders Rd, Bittern, 059 839506). Country weekend cooking and afternoon teas.

### WHERE TO SHOP

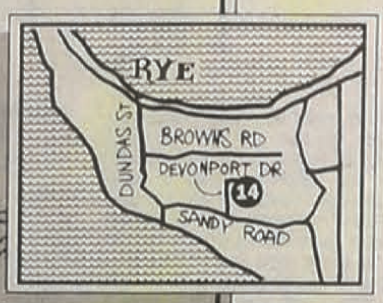
Houghton's Fine Foods (59, Barkly St, Mornington, 059 752144); Mornington Fish Market (234, Main St, Mornington, 059 756768); Flinders Bread (58, Cook St, Flinders, 059 8990632); Marmaduke's Deli (Shop 11, Balnarring Village, 059 831350).

**Local highlights:** Ashcomb Maze and Tea Rooms (Red Hill Rd, Shoreham, 059 898387); Red Hill Market (Red Hill Show grounds, first Sat of every month, Sept-May); Arthurs Seat (brilliant views of Port Phillip Bay from the chairlift); Coolart Homestead (Lord Somers Rd, Somers); Moorooduc Antiques Market (Tyabb Rd, Moorooduc); The Barn (Bittern-Dromana Rd, Merricks North, art and craft market); Seawinds National Park (Purves Rd, Arthurs Seat).



TUESDAY 17 DECEMBER 1991 THE AGE 27

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**RYE**

BROWNS RD  
DEVONPORT DR  
SANDY ROAD  
DUNDAS ST

1 Balnarring Vineyard	9 Paringa Estate
2 Coolart Valley Vineyard	10 Peninsula Estate
3 Dromana Estate	11 Tanglewood Downs
4 Karina Vineyard	12 Stonier's Merricks
5 Kings Creek Vineyard	13 Hanns Creek Estate
6 Main Ridge Estate	14 Erinacea (see inset)
7 Merricks Estate	15 Tuerong Estate Vineyard
8 Moorooduc Estate	

**SUGGESTED TOURS.**

**Westernport Bay Winery Tour:**  
5 Kings Creek vineyard. 1 Balnarring vineyard.  
7 Merricks Estate Vineyard. 2 Coolart Valley Vineyard. 12 Stonier's Merricks. 9 Paringa estate Vineyard. 2 Coolart Valley Vineyard. 13 Hanns Creek Estate

**Port Phillip Bay Winery Tour:**  
8 Moorooduc Estate Vineyard. 11 Tanglewood Downs Estate Vineyard. 3 Dromana Estate Vineyard. 4 Karina Vineyard. 6 Main Ridge Estate Vineyard. 10 Peninsula Estate Vineyard. 14 Erinacea. 15 Tuerong Estate Vineyard

## 10 NEWS THE SUNDAY AGE

# Wine tour set to boost exports

By Stephen Dabkowski

**V**ICTORIA'S wine exports are expected to receive a \$10 million boost by the arrival last night of 120 influential wine buyers and critics from Britain for an extensive wine tour of Australia.

The highlight of the 16-day tour of Australia's prime wine-growing regions will be a wine exhibition of 55 Victorian wines at Parliament House next Sunday. The exhibition aims to maximise the chances of local wine growers taking advantage of the visit.

The tour, organised by the London bureau chief of the Australian Wine and Brandy Corporation, Ms Hazel Murphy, hopes to capitalise on the growing popularity of Australian wines in Britain, and in particular the 400 per cent increase in exports of Victorian wines over the past three years.

It will be the first time so many wine buyers have at the one time been taken to an important international wine-growing region. Apart from tastings at Brown Brothers,

Mitchelton and Dromana Estate wineries, the group will visit wineries in the Barossa Valley and the New South Wales Hunter Valley region.

The Victorian co-ordinator of the tour, Mr Garry Crittenden, believes the visit gives local wine growers their best opportunity yet to increase their reach into British and European markets. "What this could potentially mean is an increase in sales by as much as \$10 million as a result of this visit."

Mr Crittenden said that the great attraction of Victorian wines to the overseas buyer was the great variety of wines available. "The breadth of wine styles produced here is unique, ranging from methode champenoise, made from the classic varieties, to fortified wines without peer, and encompassing all that lies between."

"The diversity of soils and climates guarantees our ability to compete in all these areas, offering both top quality and value for money."

Each year, Ms Murphy organises a the pop-

ular Australia Day wine tasting at the Lord's Cricket Ground.

"I think that Hazel felt that Australia was on the crest of a wave on wine exports, and we could either grab that wave or fall off the back, so she organised this tour," Mr Crittenden said.

This week the visitors will tour the Barossa Valley, visiting Wolf Blass, Orlando, Peter Lehmann, Yalumba and Penfolds. The emphasis on Victoria will begin next Sunday.

Wine exports in Victoria, which have risen dramatically in recent years, are now worth about \$20.3 million a year.

Mr Crittenden believes that the rebirth of Victorian wines has only just started. "Once again, exports of Victorian wine have reached significant and growing levels, and as the world has learned of the quality of Victorian wine, overseas investment in the industry has resulted."

"Already, Moët & Chandon and Remy Martin have established significant operations in Victoria, a sure note of confidence in the future potential of the state."

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**W**HEN a winemaker sits at my kitchen table in the Richmond Rat Shack, looks me directly in the eye and tells me that he has deliberately made a "Chablis" style chardonnay, I go cold inside.

I'm not rude enough to parry with the obvious — "couldn't you get the grapes to ripen?" So when I was told that the Cleveland Vineyard chardonnay 1991 was akin to a Chablis, my core temperature dropped 10 degrees.

Oh, ye of little faith. My suspicion turned out to be unfounded. The Cleveland is a thoroughly enjoyable bottle, and yes, it is like a fine Chablis. It is austere without being mean, and there is a marvellous, flinty quality that shines through. It will cost you about \$15 a bottle. The Cleveland Vineyard is situated in the ultra-cool Macedon Ranges, so no wonder this wine is Chablis-like.

The next evidence of my little faith is my reluctance to pull the cork on a bottle of Moorooduc Estate cabernet 1990 (\$19.80). I'd tasted the wine in barrel and it showed much promise, but the doubting Thomas in me expected less in the bottle. Don't ask me why.

So when I dashed off to Don Camillo for a quick, cheap meal, I took my Moorooduc along — and wow, what a

totally convincing wine. It dispels many of the lingering doubts I've harbored about the Mornington Peninsula. It can make great cabernet without the cool climate legacy of thin, green flavors and excessive herbaceousness.



## Wine Taster's Diary

By MARK SHIELD

## Visit to get the grapevine going

**S**OME of the world's top organoleptic talent will be put to the test this month when Garry and Margaret Crittenden play host to 120 British experts on "The Wine Flight of a Lifetime".

Organoleptic? Well, that's the refined sensory appreciation the visitors will use on February 17-18 when they sample some of the fine wines the Crittendens produce at their Dromana Estate Vineyard.

The influential British wine trade leaders and media experts on the two-week tour of Australia's major winegrowing regions will visit just three Victorian vineyards — Dromana Estate, Mitchelton and Brown Brothers.

Organised by Hazel Murphy, UK manager of the Australian Wine Centre in London, the tour is expected to be a boost for Australian wine, which is already making inroads into sales of French, German and Italian wines in Britain.

It will also give Australian producers a chance to meet and talk to the people responsible for marketing and promoting their wine overseas and the State Government has arranged a wine tasting in Queen's Hall, Parliament House, on February 16.

Garry Crittenden, originally a nurseryman in Mt Eliza, has put his horticultural talents to good use at his vineyard.

His passion for straight lines, hygiene and absolute tidiness is an example to wine growers throughout Australia and many of them employ him as a consultant.

Dromana Estate is now the largest small-producer exporter of wine in Australia with 6000 cases go-

ing to the UK every year as well as a substantial amount to Hong Kong and New Zealand.

And Garry says this year is shaping up to be a "boom year", not just for his estate but for other peninsula vigneron, with a dramatic increase in the number of tourists turning up at the winery doors.

Tour organiser Hazel Murphy says Australian wines have taken off in the UK whereas when she first started promoting Australian wine there in the 1970s she was laughed at.

"The jokes then were all about Chateau Chunder or Wallaby White."

With a total of 1.2 million cases of Australian wine now being sold in the UK, she said all that had changed and British wine buffs couldn't get enough of what they now saw as our fine, sophisticated wines.

For the Mornington Peninsula, the news is all good. Says Garry Crittenden: "This visit by such influential wine trade people proves that we are now

recognised on the international market."

"And, of course, it means export dollars for the Mornington Peninsula which means greater employment down here."

The visitors will spend two days at Dromana Estate attending wine tastings and vineyard tours.



GARRY Crittenden: host to British visitors.



# MORNINGTON GLORY



*The holiday peninsula just south of Melbourne is producing some of Australia's best cool-climate wines, says John Beeston.*

Photography: James Lavett

An easy hour's drive south from Melbourne is the city's land of beach and bay, the Mornington Peninsula. Long a favourite leisure area for Victoria's summer vacationers, this region of sand and surf now boasts an added dimension – wines of subtlety and elegance.

Yet unlike many of Victoria's born-again wine areas, the Mornington has no tale to tell of pestilence, and only one viticultural disaster. In fact its history is quite unremarkable.

Although there were a few local vineyards about a century ago (around 8 hectares in all), its story really begins circa 1950, when a member had a block at Mount M... ha of vine... Each... rived from... the vines... into bear... The pur... brother... bourne... Doug Se... batches... grown... vines beg... This... until the property

though a few examples of Seabrook's early Mornington wines still exist to delight some lucky Melbourne palates.

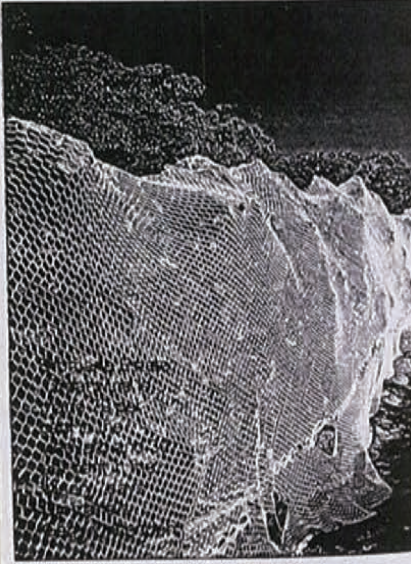
Then came the region's sole disaster: the vineyard was destroyed in the devastating Dromana bush-fire of 1967.

But Mornington did not forget the vine. In 1972 an experimental planting of 400 vines (now expanded to 4.8 ha) was made on the Elgee Park property of the Baillieu Myer family at Merricks North. And in 1975 Nat White began to plant his 2.5 ha Main Ridge vineyard at Red Hill. Other vineyards followed at Balnarring and at Merricks.

By 1980 the vineyard area of the peninsula, although a postage stamp in comparison with other Australian commercial areas, was slightly greater than it had been 90 years before.

Interest in Mornington was growing, not least in the mind of Garry Crittenden, a successful wholesale horticulturist based in nearby Mount Eliza who had been bitten by the wine bug in the mid-'70s. Although initially fonder of French wines than Australian wines, because of what he felt to be their greater freshness and acidity, Crittenden's mind and palate were changed while on a family holiday to Tasmania, where he tasted a local Moorilla Riesling for the first time. The wine astounded him. It was so crisp and different, "so Al-sace", as Crittenden recalled recently. "All of a sudden, everything turned upside down for me. There was a whole new meaning for Australian wine. It was so fresh and European."

Cri... mania... ately a... hortie... make... dersto... where... viticul... conclu... Tasma... Coal I... suitab... wante... But... ter co... garet)... Tasma... So... met N... tasted... net, a... young... ly he... of fre... found... So... suitab... that... highe... very... warn... the g... sauv... plant... too f... not p... hamp... In... shov... favor... clima... ques... spec... Drom... tially... a pre







the Seppelt family, who today home at nearby Dromana, purchased a 40 ha Dromana and planted 1.5 ha as an experiment. The vineyard workers at Great Western to prune out before the vines came to the property was sold. The owner happened to be a lawyer of a famous Melbourne merchant, the late Brock, who made small wine from the grapes the property once the vines to bear fruit. The arrangement continued until the mid-1960s, when the property was sold once more, al-

Crittenden's interest in Tasmanian viticulture was immediately aroused. After all, he had the natural skills necessary to assess sites, he understood climatology, and he knew to turn for specialised advice. He came to the conclusion that the southern part of the Mornington Peninsula, and in particular the Mornington Valley, would be very good for the type of wine he wanted to make.

Despite his enthusiasm, however, the decision (that of his wife, Margaret, and the move to Dromana) was put on hold. After, however, Crittenden tasted some of the wines of Elgee Park. Suddenly he realised that the same virtues of richness and lightness could be achieved in his own backyard.

He began to search locally for land. His criteria? A site was not too high, since the parts of the peninsula are exposed to cold winds; whose soil would comfortably support vines (particularly cabernet sauvignon) that he proposed to plant with a soil that was not too fertile, so that the vine would produce too much foliage and ripening.

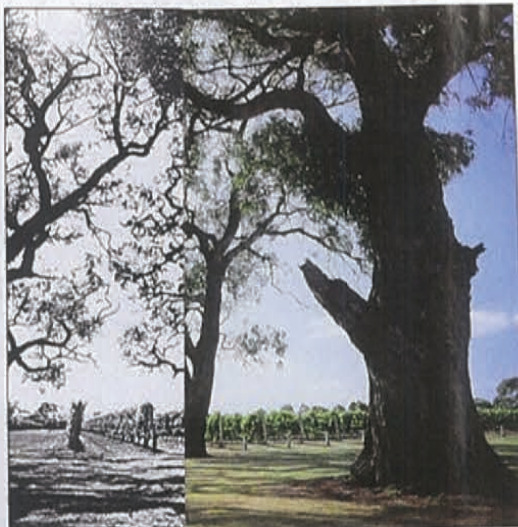
In 1981, armed with a map showing the locations of his vineyard, soil type and relevant climatic data, Crittenden began his search. Some months and many inquiries later he found his land at Dromana, although he was not immediately impressed. As he says, "it was a pretty ugly-looking property."

But on his third inspection he realised its potential. He took possession of Dromana Estate early in 1982, and later that year planted its first vines.

Today Dromana Estate has 4 ha under vine, planted on a sandy grey loam overlaying clay about 50 metres above sea level. Although distinctly maritime in environment (it is only 3 kilometres from Port Phillip and 10 km from Western Port Bay), it avoids the disadvantages of salty onshore winds and humidity usually associated with vineyards in similar locations, having a sheltered north-east aspect in the Mount Martha Valley, one of the warmest spots on the peninsula.

The grape varieties planted are classic: chardonnay for white; and three red – cabernet sauvignon and merlot (which are blended), and pinot noir. Crittenden's wide horticultural experience has helped him in good stead, as he is always experimenting with new trellising and canopy management techniques to achieve the best possible fruit ripening. For Mornington, this generally means training the vines to stand tall to allow the right amount of sunlight to reach the fruit. Crittenden firmly believes that all vineyards in cool climate regions should be designed this way so that fully ripe fruit is picked at the correct level of acidity. As he puts it, "great wine is made 70 per cent in the vineyard and 30 per cent in the winery."

Commercial production began at Dromana in 1985. It now makes on average about 12,000 cases of wine annually (half of which is ex-



Sheltered in the Mount Martha Valley, Dromana Estate enjoys one of the warmest spots on the peninsula.



The winery at Stoniers Merricks, which has the largest vineyard in the region.

ported), of which 4000 cases comes from Dromana Estate (all of it from estate-grown fruit) and about 8000 cases from fruit of other quality areas, marketed under the Schinus Molle label (the botanical name for the peppertree, one of Garry Crittenden's great marketing successes in horticulture).

Crittenden set about marketing his new label with vigour, confident that his region would be successful. Dromana Estate now produces some of Australia's most sought-after cool area wines: a Chardonnay, a Pinot Noir and a Cabernet-Merlot; as well as the respected Schinus Molle range, which presently consists of a Sauvignon Blanc (Yarra Valley and Coonawarra), a Chardonnay (Mornington Peninsula, Yarra Valley and McLaren Vale), a Rosé (cabernet fruit from Mornington and the Yarra Valley), a Pinot Noir (Mornington and Yarra Valley) and a Cabernet Sauvignon (Yarra Valley, Mornington and Coonawarra).

From Dromana Estate I have selected two favourites. The first is Dromana Estate Chardonnay 1991. A wine of a warm year, this was whole-bunch pressed and totally barrel fermented in new Allier and Vosges oak, with 30 per cent subject to malolactic fermentation. The result is a ripe wine with a slightly creamy "grapefruit" nose and a soft rich palate. Although attractive to drink now, it may be kept for two to three years as it will undoubtedly grow in complexity. Rating: 17.5 points out of 20. Cost: about \$19 per bottle.

The second is Dromana Estate Cabernet Merlot 1990. This is a

ripe, attractive red showing a complex nose of berries, plums and spicy oak, while its palate reveals rich soft "berry" flavours and excellent balance. There is no thinness or greenness here, just a beautifully made chunky red showing the benefits of slow ripening in a cool area in a great year. May be cellared for three to four years. Rating: 18/20. \$19 pb.

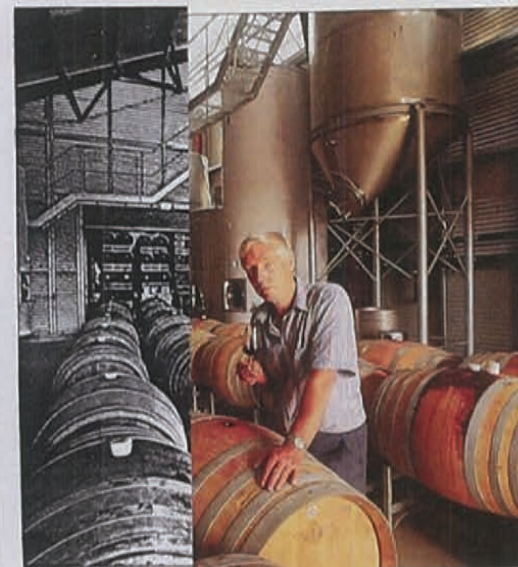
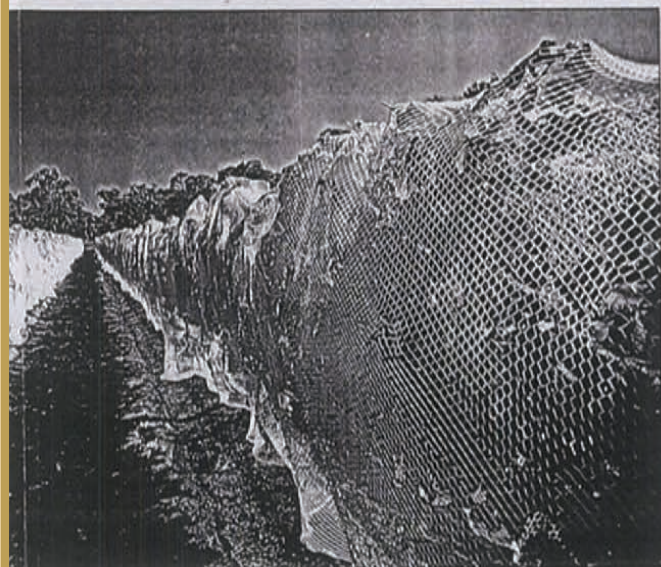
Although Dromana Estate is the most widely known of the Mornington vineyards, there are several others whose quality merits attention.

Foremost among them is Stoniers Merricks, the region's largest vineyard, with 14 ha planted to chardonnay, pinot noir and cabernet sauvignon. Outstanding in its current range are the Chardonnay and Cabernet Sauvignon, each from 1990.

Perched among the pine trees of Red Hill is the picturesque Main Ridge Estate of Nat White, which has 2.6 ha planted to chardonnay, pinot noir, a little merlot, merlot, cabernet sauvignon and cabernet franc. Its 1991 Chardonnay is full, soft and very good.

Excellent also are the 1991 Chardonnay of Elgee Park and the 1989 Shiraz of Merricks Estate, near neighbour of Stoniers.

In all, the Mornington Peninsula's vineyards, which now total more than 200 ha in area, are rather more than a holiday alternative to a wet afternoon on the beach. It is a region of finesse, with top quality in its chardonnay, pinots and cabernet merlot blends. And great sparkling wine is also to come.



The picturesque Main Ridge Estate (right): look out for the 1991 Chardonnay.



Brian Stonier, (left): his 1990 Chardonnay and Cabernet Sauvignon are both outstanding.



# Mornington Leader

A LEADER NEWSPAPER GROUP PUBLICATION

WEDNESDAY, MAY 6, 1992

TUESDAY 23 JUNE 1992 THE AGE 25

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## Up to my arms in cabernet

**O**UR grand maestro of the wine industry, John Brown, of Milawa, once gave some sound advice to eager new vignerons. "You will find it is much easier to get it out of the bottle," he said.

But then he added a rider. "If I can't talk you out of growing grapes, at least make your own wine. If you don't do that you're missing out on all the fun."

Fun indeed. The vineyard is finished for the 1992 season. Unnerving things are happening in the winery. We have a stainless fermenting vat full of cabernet. It is a patient in intensive care. We have everything on it but a cardiograph.

We are constantly taking its temperature, its pH, conducting tests for free sulphur, worrying.

There is a theory that cabernet should remain in the fermenter for four weeks, just sitting there on skins, picking up color and wondrous rich flavors.

But the evil element in every winery is oxygen. We tremble at the thought of air getting into that vat and turning the cabernet to vinegar. Right now it is done up like a Christmas parcel, covered in Scotch tape, so that not a vestige of air can get in.

Scotch tape has the habit of sticking to every spot except where you want it to go. Yet once a day I have to undo kilometres of the horrible stuff, feed in carbon dioxide, then strike a match to see if the patient is OK. If the match goes out there's no oxygen in there. Now Scotch tape it all up again.

As you may have heard, malolactic fermentation is all the go. The theory is that if you get rid of the malic acid you get a softer, rounder wine. Oh dear, one has to mix up a special culture, put it into the wine, and it can take a week, two weeks, even half a football season to go through.

Malolactic fermentations are quixotic, contrary, as strange as the happenings in the Marshall Islands. One is never quite sure what is happening. For a start the temperature of the wine should be right, preferably about 20 degrees or more.

Some people use kerosene heaters in the winery, some have radiators, some use electric blankets over the barrels.

Right now in the intensive care department, we have electric space heaters going round the clock. My wife says, very calmly: "You complain about electricity bills, turn off switches all around the house; but if it is for wine everything goes."

Did I say winemaking was unnerving? Just listen to what



### Seasons of the Vine

By KEITH DUNSTAN

happened next. You can speed up a malolactic fermentation by taking one batch that is already malolactic, then mix it with the rest.

I was pouring 200 litres of wine into the big fermenter when I decided to check on the time. My watch was not there. Could it have fallen off my wrist, but I heard no clunk on the ground.

Curious. I spent 20 minutes looking all over the floor, under barrels, on the shelf. Nowhere.

Suddenly, the thought occurred it could only be in one place. It had dropped into the vat, it was down there immersed in 1200 litres of cabernet. Leave it there? Well, this was the gold Omega presented to me for 25 years service with the one newspaper.

If I stretched right down to my armpits I could just touch the bottom. I did this for half an hour, it was like dragging the Yarra for a body. No luck.

My wife suggested that I get a stainless steel pole, then methodically tap the bottom, centimetre by centimetre. I did that and after half an hour heard a little clink. It was the watch, and glory be, it was still going. The instruction booklet said nothing about it being wine-proof to 30 metres.

From now on we propose to call it "Omega — the timeless cabernet."

But that wasn't all. That night there was another disaster. The fermenter was resting on bricks, and some time in the early hours one of the bricks had cracked. The fermenter had tilted about 10 degrees. Wine was flowing across the floor and out the front door.

It looked as though there had been an earthquake. Prime ministers have found all sorts of things to cry over, but is there anything to equal the misery of good wine flowing out the door?

I raised the fermenter with a car jack and got it on an even keel, pumped in CO<sub>2</sub> and bound up the Christmas parcel once more with Scotch tape.

Now I am worrying more than ever. Don't disasters always come in threes? We have only had two.

## WE'RE THE BEST . . .

THE Mornington-Hastings Leader is Number One with local readers.

Australia's most respected pollster, the Roy Morgan Research Centre, has released its newspaper readership survey for the period ending September, 1991.

Using a two-year data base, the research

proves that no other paper, including the metropolitan dailies, is as popular as *The Leader* in its distribution area.

*The Leader* has 39,000 local readers compared to the *Mornington Mail's* 13,000 and 32,000 for the *Frankston Hastings Independent*.

And according to divisional sales manager Robert Bradley, the figures are no real surprise.

"The results only confirm what advertisers have known for years, that nothing reaches the market better than the *Mornington-Hastings Leader*."



HOPING the sun will ripen cabernet sauvignon grapes . . . Mornington Shire President Pat Leech and viticulturist Fred Lemon at The Briars on Monday.  
Picture: PHILIP ROWLEY

## A taste of the good times

THE first wines to be produced from The Briars vineyard in more than a century were launched on Monday.

Shire President Pat Leech introduced the 1991 Briars pinot noir and chardonnay — made from the first grapes to be planted since the original vines were torn down in the 1890s.

"I am very enthusiastic about the Briars," Cr Leech said.

"These wines are a credit to all those involved."

Mornington Shire Com-

mercial Services Director Kevin Clarke said the new Briars Peninsula Wine Centre would be "the gateway to the peninsula wine region".

Mr Clarke said Cr Leech and columnist and peninsula vigneron Keith Dunstan would open the centre to the public on May 23.

"We would love to see this venue as an opportunity to call in and find out more about the Mornington Peninsula wine industry," he said.

"Three million cars a year pass this road."

Mr Clarke said the centre would give Morning-

ton Council the chance to promote wine from all over the peninsula.

"We hope Mornington Peninsula vignerons will use this building each weekend to promote their wines," he said.

Farm manager and viticulturist Fred Lemon said the vines were only 2½ years old.

Mr Lemon said 2ha were under vine — 1000 each of chardonnay and pinot noir and 1100 of cabernet sauvignon.

The 1991 cabernet was still maturing and yet to be released, he said.

"We are thrilled that we

have got such good wines from such young vines," he said.

Mr Lemon said merlot grapes might be planted in the future to blend with the cabernet sauvignon variety.

This year's cabernet crop was still to be picked due to the "overcast summer", he said.

Alexander Balcombe, who settled at The Briars in the mid 1800s, planted the original vineyard which he could view from the homestead.

But Balcombe ran into difficulties and by 1890 the vines had disappeared.





THE INDEPENDENT, Tuesday, April 28, 1992 - Page 3



## Pickings are good in the vine business

IT'S vintage time on the Mornington Peninsula and the grape pickers are out in force.

Most local growers have reported a good season and the mild summer should ensure a high quality vintage.

The wine industry is developing strongly on the Peninsula as the wines of more than 20 makers continue to establish a reputation under the Mornington Peninsula wine growers' appellation.

Mornington girls Jane Fyffe, 23, and Jacinta Le Huray, 20, are looking forward to the day they can buy a bottle of wine made with the grapes they picked with their own hands.

They have been working at Main Ridge Estate where the Pinor Noir variety were picked last week.

Owner Nat White is confident of a good vintage.

"However, the real test is a little further down the track," he said.

"It will be in the drinking in about two years time."

Like other Peninsula vigneron, Nat White is looking forward to the Queen's Birthday wine weekend when 19 vineyards will open for tastings and cellar door sales, along with food and entertainment at some wineries.

The Mornington Peninsula Winter Festival Supplement

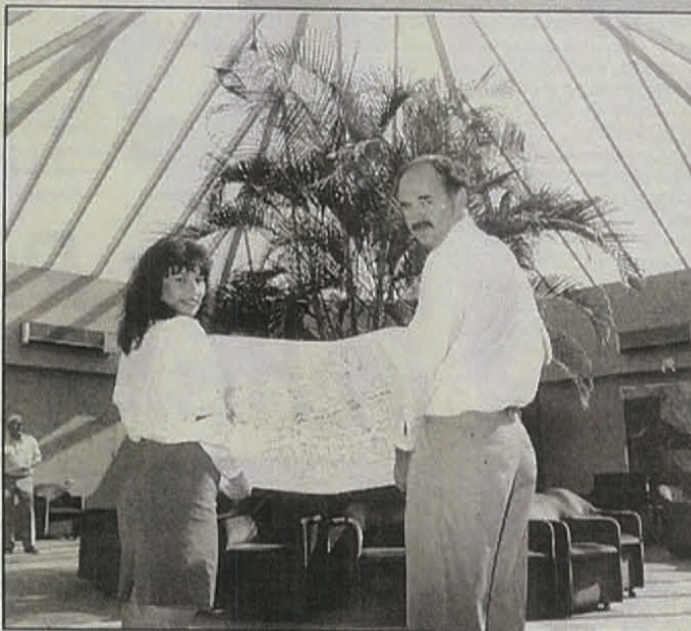
## WINTER FESTIVAL *June 6-14 1992*

### Wineries join the big party

COUNTDOWN has begun, and preparations are well in hand for the 1992 Mornington Peninsula Queen's Birthday wine weekend - this year a part of the inaugural Peninsula Winter Festival. Mt Martha Valley Country Club will be bursting at the seams on Saturday, June 6 when 22 local vineyards gather to show their wines. 66 of the Mornington Peninsula's finest wines will be presented for the tasting pleasure of the public.

Admission fee for this event remains unchanged at \$15 for pre-booked tickets or \$20 at the door - and the entrance charge includes a professional wine tasting glass. Sunday and Monday of this long weekend will see 19 vineyards open for tastings and cellar door sales. Wine will be flowing all over the peninsula, and many vineyards have food and entertainment planned, to ensure this is another memorable Queen's Birthday.

For inquiries ring Mornington Peninsula Vignerons Association promotions director Delyse Graham, (059) 74 4200, fax (059) 74 4276.



•Mt Martha Country Club.



The Independent & The Mail Winter Festival supplement, June 2, 1992 - 3

## Mornington Peninsula **WINTER FESTIVAL**

### Let's drink wine - rain hail or shine

THE weather hasn't been particularly kind to the Mornington Peninsula Vignerons, in fact it has rained on the Queen's Birthday Wine Weekend for the past two years. But the rain has not succeeded in dampening the spirits of enthusiastic wine connoisseurs, and each year thousands of people venture down to the peninsula to enjoy the wine, food and entertainment.

The Atrium at the Mount Martha Valley Country Club will be overflowing with keen tasters on Saturday, June 6, when 23 winemakers join together to present their wines. Seventy of the peninsula's finest wines will be on exhibition from 10am to 4pm and the winemakers will be there to chat about their latest releases. 1991 was a particularly successful vintage on the peninsula, and Saturdays tasting will be the first time many of the wines from this vintage have been available for the public to taste.

Tickets for the wine tasting can be purchased at the door for \$20, and in addition to the opportunity to taste 70 wines, beautiful Australian cheeses will be available to taste and purchase, and patrons will receive a souvenir wine glass. Tickets that are paid for before Friday, will be at the pre-paid price of \$15, and held at the door. Address for postage is PO Box 400, Mornington. More fun is in store for Sunday and Monday, when 21 vineyards



open their cellar doors, some for the very first time.

Two days of entertainment is assured, with live music, gourmet food, and of course the best of wines.

Some vineyards have attractions for visitors young and old. At Stonier's Merricks Winery, the 'grown ups' can discover how wine is made while the children enjoy a pony ride. There will be plenty of activity at Elgee Park, with a clown and an animal nursery, a vintage car rally and live musical entertainment. Main Ridge Estate, Tanglewood Downs, Dromana Estate, Moorooduc Estate, Hanns Creek Estate and Peninsula Estate, will

all provide live entertainment and gourmet food. Special 'wine drinking' food will also be available at Balmarring Vineyard, Mornington Vineyard, Coolart Valley Vineyard, Willow Creek, Kings Creek, Merricks Estate, Mt Martha Vineyard and Paringa Estate. As well as tasting wine, visitors to Karina Vineyard Dromana can enjoy a cup of tea or coffee and

some home-made shortbread. Among the vineyards open for their first Queen's Birthday are Port Phillip Estate, Craig Avon Vineyard, T'Gallant at Darling Park and The Briars Vineyard. All vineyards will be selling wine by the glass, in addition to bottle sales. Details about each vineyard's activities are available from the visitors centre at The Briars, Ritchies liquor stores, information centres at Dromana and Mornington, or from any of the participating vineyards. Further information is available by phoning the festival hotline (008) 804009 or the Peninsula Vignerons promotions office, (059) 74 4200.

#### THE MORNINGTON PENINSULA VIGNERONS ASSOCIATION INC.

4th Annual

### QUEEN'S BIRTHDAY WINE WEEKEND

#### 70 WINES ON TASTING

SATURDAY JUNE 6

Mt. Martha Valley Country Club Nepean Hwy  
Mt. Martha (Mel 160 C5) 10am to 4pm

Tickets available at the door - \$20.00 includes wine tasting, wine glass & tasting of fine Australian cheeses.

#### VINEYARD OPEN DAYS

SUNDAY JUNE 7 & MONDAY JUNE 8

21 Peninsula Vineyards Open.  
Wine tastings & sales, fine gourmet food  
& Live entertainment.

B.B.Q. & picnic facilities, and childrens activities are available at some vineyards

CALL THE HOTLINE FOR DETAILS 008 804009 or (059) 74 4200

Mornington Peninsula Vignerons Association P.O. Box 400, Mornington, 3934.  
Tel (059) 74 4220 Fax (059) 74 3276

#### DROMANA ESTATE VINEYARDS



Join us on the 7th & 8th June for wine tastings and bottle sales at special Queen's Birthday prices.

• Sunday: 11am-5pm - Dine on delicious home made lasagna or lamb fillet kebabs and a glass of wine for \$10, and be entertained by the exciting South American group "Chaski"

• Monday: 11am-5pm - Free wine tastings and bottle sales or BYO picnic by the lake with a glass of wine.

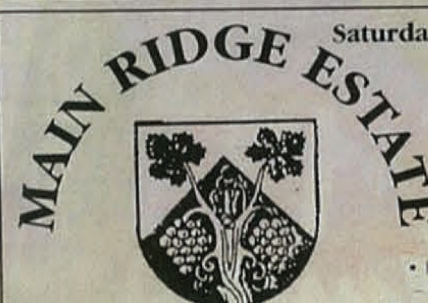
YOU WILL FIND US IN HARRISONS RD, DROMANA  
TEL: (059) 87 3800 MEL. REF: 160 J6

#### Massoni Red Hill Chardonnay



WHEN WINES BREATHE THEY MURDER MASSONI

Available from  
quality restaurants,  
liquor stores & hotels



Saturday 6th June - Open 12 - 5  
Tastings & sales only

Sunday 7th June &  
Monday 8th June  
Open 11 - 5

• Tastings of current vintages  
• Release of award winning '90 Cabernet

• Lunch supplied by "Potts" of Red Hill - Sasha's famous Beef Bourignonne -  
• Wine by the glass - including past vintages  
• Vineyard tours

• Classical music by "The Occasional Brass Ensemble"

William Rd., Red Hill, Melway 190 C4  
(059) 89 2681





June  
6, 7 & 8th

# THE BEST WEEKEND on the Mornington Peninsula

**SATURDAY JUNE 6th**  
**66 wines**  
from 18 Mornington  
Peninsula Vineyards,  
**on tasting**  
at the  
**Mt Martha Valley Country  
Club**

## QUEEN'S BIRTHDAY WINE WEEKEND



Sunday 7th & Monday 8th  
**WINE, FOOD & FUN**  
AT  
**18 PENINSULA  
VINEYARDS**



Tickets for Saturday's tasting are \$15.00 pre-paid or  
\$20.00 at the door. (See ticket application below)

### Let's drink to the health of the Mornington Peninsula Wine Industry

It has been recently reported that wine is the Mornington Peninsula's fastest growing industry. A statistic not difficult to believe. The first 'new generation' vines were planted in our fertile soils only 20 years ago, and now the landscape is blanketed by more than 80 vineyards.

Once you have passed through the 'gateway' of the region, it is difficult not to encounter local wine.

Restaurants wine lists are becoming dominated by local labels, a broad range can be found in most retail outlets, and around 15 vineyards now open their cellar doors on a regular basis for wine tastings and sales.

There is a good reason for this growing interest in our product. Mornington Peninsula wine is developing a reputation as being some of the best Victoria can produce.

A great opportunity to assess the wines, is at the annual Queen's Birthday Wine Weekend. The 1992 event will be the fourth year that the Mornington Peninsula Vignerons Association has conducted the tasting, and there is no doubt that this will be the best yet.

These vineyards will exhibit their wines at the tasting on Saturday 6th June, and those marked with an asterisk (\*), will also open their vineyards on Sunday and Monday. There will be plenty of wine, food and entertainment around the vineyards, and the public will have a unique opportunity to visit four vineyards not usually open to the public - Elgee Park, Mt. Martha Vineyard, Mornington Vineyards and Port Phillip Es-

- \* Bannering Vineyard Cloud Valley
- \* Coolart Valley
- \* Craig Avon
- \* Dromana Estate Elan Vineyard
- \* Elgee Park
- \* Hanns Creek Estate
- \* Karina Vineyard
- \* Kings Creek
- \* Main Ridge Estate Massoni
- \* Merricks Estate
- \* Moorooduc Estate
- \* Mt Martha Vineyard
- \* Mornington Vineyards
- \* Paringa Estate
- \* Port Phillip Estate Shoreham Vale
- \* Stoniers Merricks Winery
- \* T'Gallant at Darling Park
- \* Tantalus Estate

Patrons at Saturday's tasting of 66 wines, will have the opportunity to discuss the wines with each winemaker, and compare the styles that individual vineyards have developed. 22 vineyards are participating this year, which is almost double the number involved in the first event in 1989.

The Weekend represents a major element of the 1992 Peninsula Festival, which is being organised by Peninsula Tourism.



Vineyard  
magic at  
Main Ridge  
Estate,  
William  
Road, Red  
Hill

### A RECIPE FOR FINE WINE

It has been mentioned that the Mornington Peninsula has been fortunate in attracting some outstanding winemakers. There is no doubt this is true, however it is also true that this region has been responsible for the advancement of 'greatness' in many of these masters of the grape. You would expect this beautiful land to grow wines of the finest quality. Cool climate, rich fertile soils, gentle sea breezes and early Autumn sun - all ingredients vital in the development of exquisite wines.

Well after the fruit of other regions has all been harvested, Mornington Peninsula fruit is still languishing on the vine, growing rich in flavour in the early Autumn sunshine. Once picked, the winemakers role is critical - and his attention to his fruit is absolute. Mornington Peninsula winemakers are a very dedicated group - and that is just one more reason why our wines are special.



Barrel storage at Stonier's



Satisfied tasters enjoy the 1991

#### TICKET APPLICATION

I REQUIRE ..... TICKETS AT \$15  
each and enclose payment of \$.....  
Please send the tickets to:

Name: .....

at: .....

..... P/C .....

Ph: .....

Please send this ticket application and your  
cheque for payment to: THE TICKET  
SECRETARY, P.O. BOX 400,



26 THE AGE TUESDAY 2 JUNE 1992

### MERRICKS ESTATE

Is open on the Queens Birthday Weekend.

Sunday 7th & Monday 8th June, 11am - 5pm.

Thompsons Lane, Merricks (2.5kms from Merricks General Store).

Tasting and sales of 1990 Shiraz, 1989 Cabernet Sauvignon, and 1990 Chardonnay.

Family food available.

PH (059) 89 8416.

**MORNINGTON PENINSULA WINE WEEK-END**  
JUNE 7th AND 8th  
(TANGLEWOOD DOWNS ESTATE)  
SPIT, ROAST LUNCH, AND AUSTRALIAN BALLAD'S AMONGST  
THE GUM TREES  
11AM - 5PM  
MELWAY 151 K12  
PHONE (059) 74 3325

**MORNINGTON PENINSULA VIGNERONS 4th Annual QUEEN'S BIRTHDAY WINE WEEKEND**

**Saturday 6th June**  
23 Peninsula Vineyards present 70 fine wines  
Mt. Martha Valley Country Club (Mel 160 C5) 10am - 4pm  
Tickets \$15.00 pre-paid or \$20.00 at the door  
includes a wine glass, and a tasting of Australian cheeses.

**Sunday 7th & Monday 8th**  
21 Vineyards open for tastings, sales, fine food and entertainment.  
**The ultimate Winery Walkabout.**  
For information & brochure call Toll Free 008 80 4009

Please send me ☐ hold at the door ☐ tickets at \$15.00 each.  
Name ..... Address .....  
p/c ..... Total encl. \$ .....  
To: Ticket Secretary, MPVA, P.O. Box 400, Mornington, 3931 (Tick one ☐)

### COOLART VALLEY

Releasing 1989 Cabernet Sauvignon and 1991 Chardonnay

Queens Birthday weekend

Barbecued Continental snags available.

Thomas Road, Red Hill, (059) 89 2087

### Elgee Park Wines

1992 OPEN DAYS

SUNDAY JUNE 7 - MONDAY JUNE 8

11am - 5pm both days

Wine & cheese tasting and sales, vintage and classic Rolls Royce display, live Jazz band, lunch and afternoon tea, fun and entertainment for all  
Entry \$5 per car - Lucky draw gate prizes valued at \$600

for enquiries please telephone

(059)897 553

ELGEE PARK JUNCTION ROAD MERRICKS NORTH  
(Melways 161/G3 - 161/J8)

THE BEST WEEKEND ON THE MORNINGTON PENINSULA

## QUEEN'S BIRTHDAY WINE WEEKEND

Three days filled with wine, food & entertainment and only 1 hours drive from Melbourne

**SATURDAY JUNE 6**

23 Vineyards present 70 wines for tasting at the Mt. Martha Valley Country Club (Mel 160 C5) - 10 am to 4 pm.

Ticket price of \$20.00 includes a wine glass & tasting of fine Australian cheeses.

**SUNDAY JUNE 7 & MONDAY JUNE 8**

21 Peninsula Vineyards open with wine tastings & sales, fine gourmet food & Live entertainment.

B.B.Q. & picnic facilities, and childrens activities are available at some vineyards.

**CALL THE HOTLINE FOR DETAILS 008 804009 or (059) 74 4200**

Tickets to Saturday's tasting may be secured at the pre-paid price of \$15.00 by sending a cheque to: Ticket Secretary • PO Box 400 • Mornington 3934. Your tickets will be held at the door.

**MAIN RIDGE ESTATE**

Join a National franchise chain of 42 stores that sell an exciting range of gifts, novelties, cards and discount cigarettes. Two established locations are now available at:

**FOREST HILL CHASE** - T/O 1991 \$1.1 million  
**PARKMORE SHOPPING CENTRE** - T/O 1991 \$1.3 million

Both these businesses have been established for over 10 years and are proven profitable, well presented and priced for immediate sale at \$60,000 plus asset backing. Comprehensive figures are available.

We do everything possible to help our franchisees with full management support, training, group buying discounts, catalogues, TV advertising and experienced field personnel. If you are looking for a high cash flow business with a long history of success call Mark now BH 827 9555 or AH 500 9490.

TUESDAY 9 JUNE 1992 THE AGE

**MAIN RIDGE ESTATE**

**DID MAIN RIDGE ESTATE TURN OVER IN EXCESS OF 2 MILLION LAST YEAR? DEFINITELY NOT!**

But despite this we will not be flogging "an exciting range of gifts, novelties, cards and discount cigarettes" as was implied inadvertently in the advertisement under our logo in last Tuesday's Age Epicure.

Our only business interest will continue to be the production of fine hand crafted wines made entirely from grapes grown on our 2.5 Ha estate vineyard. The uncompromising search for excellence continues.

**We are open for Tasting and sales every weekend and public holidays 12-5 pm, William Road, Red Hill. Melway 190 C4 (059) 892686. Nat & Rosalie White.**

**THE MORNINGTON** Peninsula wine-tasting at the Mount Martha Country Club last Saturday revealed that Nat White, of Main Ridge Estate, is still doing what he loves best, making top-quality wines. Gremlins in 'The Age' system struck his advertisement in last week's Epicure, making the bizarre suggestion that Main Ridge was joining a national franchise chain. This can be refuted categorically, and the proof that White remains a committed wine man was in the Main Ridge 1991 chardonnay on display at Saturday's tasting. With a lovely, lingering finish, it was one of the stars of the show.

**T**HOSE not wine walking or skiing up north this weekend can taste the wines of the Mornington Peninsula during the vigneron's annual Wine Weekend. On Saturday, more than 70 wines from 23 Peninsula vineyards will be available for tasting at the Mount Martha Valley Country Club, Nepean Highway, Safety Beach. This is a good opportunity to compare the Peninsula's recent dynamic duo of good vintages, 1990 and 1991. Tasting is from 10 am to 4 pm.

Tickets are \$20 at the door (or \$15 pre-paid (cheques made to the Mornington Peninsula Vignerons Association, PO Box 400, Mornington, 3931, phone (059) 74 4200. On the Sunday and Monday, 21 vineyards will open for tastings, lunch and entertainment. Some new names to try will be Willow Creek at Bannarring, Port Phillip Estate at Red Hill, Mount Martha Vineyard, the Briars Vineyard at

Mount Martha (where an admission charge applies to the wetlands/homestead/vineyard centre) and T'Galant at Darling Park at Red Hill.

For more information, contact the association on (059) 74 4200 or fax (059) 75 6566.

**The Doings**  
By JENI PORT

THE WEEKEND REVIEW MAY 30-31, 1992

### INDULGENCE

**T**HE Mornington Peninsula goes on show at the Mount Martha Valley Country Club on Saturday, the first day of the Queen's Birthday weekend. From 10am to 4pm, 23 Mornington Peninsula vineyards will have a total of 70 wines for tasting. Six wineries will be exhibiting for the first time: Port Phillip Estate, The Briars Vineyard, Mount Martha Vineyard, Shoreham Vale, Cloud Valley and Hanns Creek Estate. The admission price is \$20, which includes a souvenir wine glass and tastings of fine Australian cheeses.

On the following two days, 21 of the Mornington Peninsula vineyards will be open for cellar door sales and tastings, many providing light food and/or entertainment.





Viticultural reform has seen unsuited varieties disappear from southern Victoria, and new growing techniques evolve constantly. Garry Crittenden's Dromana Estate is a leader.

But the investment of time, labour and capital is starting to produce many very good results. Take the Mornington Peninsula, for example. Only a few years ago, the cabernets and cabernet-blends were often lean and light, with the green fruit character which marked the earlier vintages from Tasmania.

But recent releases from the area show significant improvements. Aromas and flavors are genuinely complex and the structures are more solid. It would be easy to point to a couple of good vintages to explain the quality leap, but it's more than that.

Winestate, July/August 1992 17

by Paddy Kendler

**NEW RELEASES**

66 Winestate, May/June 1992

*Estate grown,  
hand-crafted  
wines from the  
Mornington  
Peninsula.*

**MOOROODUC**



**E S T A T E**

VICTORIA  
FLINDERS WHOLESALE WINES  
& SPIRITS (03) 584 5233  
NSW  
FINVIN AGENCIES (02) 310 2077  
QUEENSLAND  
FINVIN AGENCIES (07) 849 6896

MOOROODUC ESTATE VINEYARD  
DEKRIE ROAD, MOOROODUC,  
WIMBORNE (059) 78 8585;  
OFFICE (03) 696 4130

**CHARDONNAY**

30 TASTED ★ 10 RECOMMENDED

**Moorooduc Estate**

**Chardonnay 1990 ★★★★★**

A Mornington surprise. Delicate, lively fruit scent of lifted peach character and subtle oak have intriguing, elusive complexity. Denser fruit flavour has texture with elegance; oak is in harmony. A hint of malo-lactic character smooths the finish. Exemplary modern style. **\$21.00** **112**

**CABERNET SAUVIGNON**

9 TASTED ★ 5 RECOMMENDED

**Moorooduc Estate**

**Cabernet 1990 ★★★★★**

Perfumed and spicy oak matches delicately herbaceous, ripe cabernet fruit in a sweet, charming aroma. Soft and elegantly balanced taste with tight raspberry fruit and smoke complexity. Persistent. **\$21.00** **112**

**SOUTHERN VICTORIA**



**DROMANA ESTATE**

- 1989 Victorian Vineyard of the Year
- Home of the famous Dromana and Schinus Molle range of wines.
- Sold in all Australian States, New Zealand and the UK.

In Winestate's Southern Victorian tasting (July/August 1992 edition), our four entries yielded three five-star and one four-star ratings.

**Dromana Estate**  
**Cabernet Merlot 1990** ★★★★★  
**Dromana Estate**  
**Chardonnay 1991** ★★★★★  
**Schinus Molle**  
**Sauvignon Blanc 1991** ★★★★★  
**Schinus Molle**  
**Pinot Noir 1991** ★★★★★

*The results speak for themselves.*

**STONIER'S**  
MERRICKS

of the Mornington Peninsula  
are pleased to announce  
as of the 1st July  
our new agent will be

**RUTHERGLEN**  
Wine & Spirit Co Pty Ltd

Meet the winemaker Todd Dexter  
at  
1992 Rutherglen Wine & Food Trade Fair  
Sherton Towers, 5th and 6th July  
NB: Trade only. Ph. 646 6666



Winestate, July/August 1992 9

140-year-old homestead, The Briars, now a wine tourism facility.

**Mornington ratepayers fund wine experiment**

Council ratepayers provide the financial muscle behind a unique tourism/wine industry experiment on Victoria's Mornington Peninsula.

The Briars, a beautiful 235 ha property, with homestead buildings dating back 140 years, was taken over by the Mornington Shire six years ago and transformed into a flora/fauna park and vineyard, in recognition of its earlier glory days as a wine producer. With the first-release wines finally bottled, The Briars was officially opened late in May. Apart from the wish to make The Briars wines (a chardonnay and pinot noir will soon be joined by a cabernet sauvi-

gnon) a commercial success, the council has also renovated a barn on the property into a cellar door tasting area which will also act as a wine centre for the region.

The free enterprise experiment by local council was not without its detractors from both sides of the fence, with the council's own health inspector coming down hard on sanitary requirements in the cellar door area, and local winemakers becoming upset that the first two vintages of The Briars had to be made outside the area, in the Yarra Valley. —Jeni Port

18 Winestate, July/August 1992

**A WINESTATE REGIONAL TASTING**

**SAUVIGNON BLANC**

5 TASTED ★ 2 RECOMMENDED

**Schinus Molle**

**Sauvignon Blanc 1991 ★★★★★**

Exceptionally clear varietal character is fresh, lifted and classically herbaceous without being overdone. Sauvignon blanc depth is stylishly extended through a persistent taste of intense pungency. Great now, this wine may age to the style of the Loire Valley. **\$13.00** **112**

**Dromana Estate**

**Chardonnay 1991 ★★★★★**

This wine's superb aroma blooms in the glass to show fresh fruit lifting above a smoke and bacon complexity, strong oak and malo-lactic characters. The dense, medium-weight taste, of balanced fruit and toasty complexity, shows elegant persistence. **\$20.00** **112**

**Moorooduc Estate**

**Chardonnay 1990 ★★★★★**

A delightful peaches-and-cream aroma has a buttery complexity and nutty hints in rich, full-bodied style. On the palate, initial fruit impact is terrific, with oak distinct behind it. A very attractive wine now, and it may improve. **\$21.50** **112**

**Stonier's Winery Selection**

**Chardonnay 1991 ★★★★★**

Showing dramatic improvement in the glass, this wine's subtly complex fruit-oak aroma introduces a straightforward taste. Full on the middle-palate. **\$15.00** **112**

**Main Ridge Chardonnay 1991 ★★★★★**

Early to mature with rich, buttery barrel ferment characters and hints of charred oak on the nose. Very ripe fruit and toasty oak flavours are mouth-filling and robust. Enjoy now. **\$20.00CD** **112**

Style debate was one of the most important aspects of this tasting; it pays to keep reminding ourselves that Geelong, the Mornington Peninsula and even the Yarra Valley (with respect to pinot) are new regions yet to discover all their vineyards can do.

Chardonnay samples were dominant almost to the exclusion of other white varieties. The panel considered their marks of the 1991 chardonnays tough;

**Stonier's Merricks**

**Chardonnay 1990 ★★★★★**

Develops in the glass. A rich, buttery, fruit-dominant aroma has tobacco and smoke notes in support. Stronger, toasty oak features on the concentrated mid-palate ahead of a crisp acid finish. **\$20.00** **112**

**Schinus Molle Pinot Noir 1991 ★★★★★**

Dominant, fresh pinot noir cherry scents are superbly clear; supporting richer plum notes and gamey complexity follow on to the palate. The persistent taste is as fresh as a barrel sample, with moderate oak support and firm acid. **\$13.00** **112**

**Tanglewood Downs**

**Pinot Noir 1991 ★★★★★**

Pungent, floral nasturtium characters lift gamey, ripe plum fruit — one taster found a hot oak character. Full-bodied, ripe fruit flavours are sweet and mouth-filling, reinforced by strong oak. **\$15.90CD** **112**

**Merrick's Estate Shiraz 1990 ★★★★★**

Slightly green fruit offers vegetative scents, with pencil shavings and spice lift. Fresh, green fruit flavours are redolent of white pepper and ribena. **\$N/A** **112**

**Paringa Estate**

**Cabernet Sauvignon 1990 ★★★★★**

Cabernet varietal characters of berry and capsicum are intense in a lively aroma. The taste is less pungent; a soft, easy-drinking style. **\$16.00CD** **112**

**Moorooduc Estate**

**Cabernet Sauvignon 1990 ★★★★★**

A slightly-closed aroma with lifted, fresh fruit and pencil shavings oak scents. The taste is better — subtle tannins refine ripe fruit of muscatel-like liveliness. **\$21.50** **112**

**Dromana Estate**

**Cabernet Merlot 1990 ★★★★★**

Drinking well now, with a gilt future in the cellar. Stylish berry cabernet fruit has meaty merlot and excellent oak in support. Supple tannin frames a complete, elegant, very persistent taste. Full, rich fruit is refined by an astringent finish. **\$20.00** **112**

**V. Southern Victoria**



are, 23/6) that it is indeed pleasing to read of any effort being made in Victoria to promote Victorian wines.

The Premier constantly reminds us of the great contribution made to Victoria by the MCG, the Arts Centre and the National Tennis Centre. It is therefore disappointing to find that the wine lists of these prestige showcases for Victoria are also (like the World Trade Centre) full of South Australian wines.

There are Victorian wines that would fit into every price bracket, and yet those in charge of the cellars tell us: "There is no interest in local wines."

One of the great joys of travelling is to experience regional wines and food, and so it is reasonable to assume that tourists in Melbourne would expect that Victorians would be proud to offer a range of our delightful Victorian wines.

Rosalie White,  
Red Hill South

## A decade of dedication

BRISBANE - COONAWARRA MAIL

### Wine

with David Bray

**D**ROMANA Estate on the Mornington Peninsula is one of Australia's show vineyards, which is only to be expected since owner Gary Crittenden came to it after a successful career in horticulture.

The vines are disciplined and healthy, the trellising totally up-to-date. This was Victorian vineyard of the year in 1989.

Similar discipline and technical skill apply in the winery, which produces some of the best-made wine in the country.

Dromana turned 10 this month, and some wine writers were there for lunch on the precise anniversary date, a typically cold and wet Victorian spring day.

It is a pretty place, tucked in behind Arthurs Seat and sheltered from the cold south-westerly winds on a gentle north-east slope which catches the late summer and autumn sunshine.

Altogether 4ha is planted to pinot noir (1ha), chardonnay



GARY Crittenden in his Dromana Estate vineyard.

(1ha), cabernet sauvignon (1.8ha) and merlot (0.2ha).

Total production in an average year is about 3500 cases for the Dromana Estate range.

There is another label which made its name as Schinus Molle but has become simply Schinus.

The fruit for this label comes from all around southern Australia — the Yarra and King Valleys (as well as Mornington Peninsula) in Victoria, and Coonawarra and McLaren Vale in South Australia.

The 1992 Schinus rose is a dry blend of cabernet sauvignon, merlot and pinot noir from the Yarra Valley and Mornington. Last time we saw this wine, we were very enthusiastic and can only repeat that it is a delicious and refreshing drink on its own and would go well at picnics and summer lunches.

The 1992 Schinus chenin blanc is from the King Valley. The juice was fermented to near dryness at low temperatures using Dromana's new computer-controlled temperature-monitoring equipment. Look for pears and quinces, the classic characteristics of

good Loire Valley chenin blanc.

The sauvignon blanc came from the Yarra and King Valleys in Victoria and Coonawarra. Crittenden says he finds primary flavors of nectarines and gooseberries. Good with Thai and Chinese.

The 1991 chardonnay (40 percent Mornington Peninsula, 30 percent Yarra Valley, 30 percent McLaren Vale) has great barrel ferment aromas and flavors, supported by rich fruit character.

The 1991 pinot noir (Mornington Peninsula and Yarra Valley) is one of the best you'll find in this country, with plums and cherries on the nose and palate and a fragrant finish.

The Dromana Estate chardonnay 1991 is especially interesting. As well as whole bunch pressing and fermenting on solids in wood, this winery is now using a partial malolactic fermentation.

The 1990 Dromana Estate pinot noir, aged and partly barrel-fermented in new French barriques, is even better than the Schinus.

The 1990 Dromana cabernet merlot has considerably more opulence and weight than most of its predecessors.

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OFF LICENCE NEWS MAY 14, 1992

## Australian wine range launched by Waterloo

A SELECTION of wines from the Mornington Peninsula in Victoria, Australia, has been taken on by Waterloo Wine in London.

Brian Stonier's wines come in two ranges — the basic Stonier's Winery Selection, and the higher quality

Stonier's Merricks wines.

The white wines consist of two Selection Chardonnays — 1990 and 1991, and the Merricks 1990 Chardonnay.

There are two 1990 reds in the Selection range, a Pinot Noir plus a blend of Cabernet Sauvignon, Merlot and Cabernet Franc. The Merricks reds are a 1990 Pinot Noir and a 1989 Cabernet Sauvignon.

Trade price for five to 50 cases of the Selection wines is £55.10 a case, and the Merricks wines are £73.50.

BALNARRING Vineyard has won a gold medal for its 1991 Cabernet Merlot at the 1992 Royal Melbourne Show.

The vineyard, which has won medals for every wine it has produced, is especially proud of its Cabernet Merlot which has won a medal with every vintage.

But don't bother rushing out to buy the latest medal winner — it won't be released for sale until 1994.

Balnarring winemaker Bruce Paul said the wine should be at its peak between 1996 and 1998.

However the Bittern-

Dromana Rd vineyard has stocks of Cabernet Merlot from the 1987, 1988 and 1990 harvests.

Unfortunately, for local wine lovers, the 1989 vintage was bought in a single lot by an overseas client.

The vineyard, now totalling 15 acres, was started by Mr Stan Paul, a Hastings councillor, and his son, Bruce, in 1982. The first vintage of merlot, riesling and pinot were produced in 1985.

Balnarring this year will produce about 12000 bottles of wine after selling

portion of the crop to other winemakers.

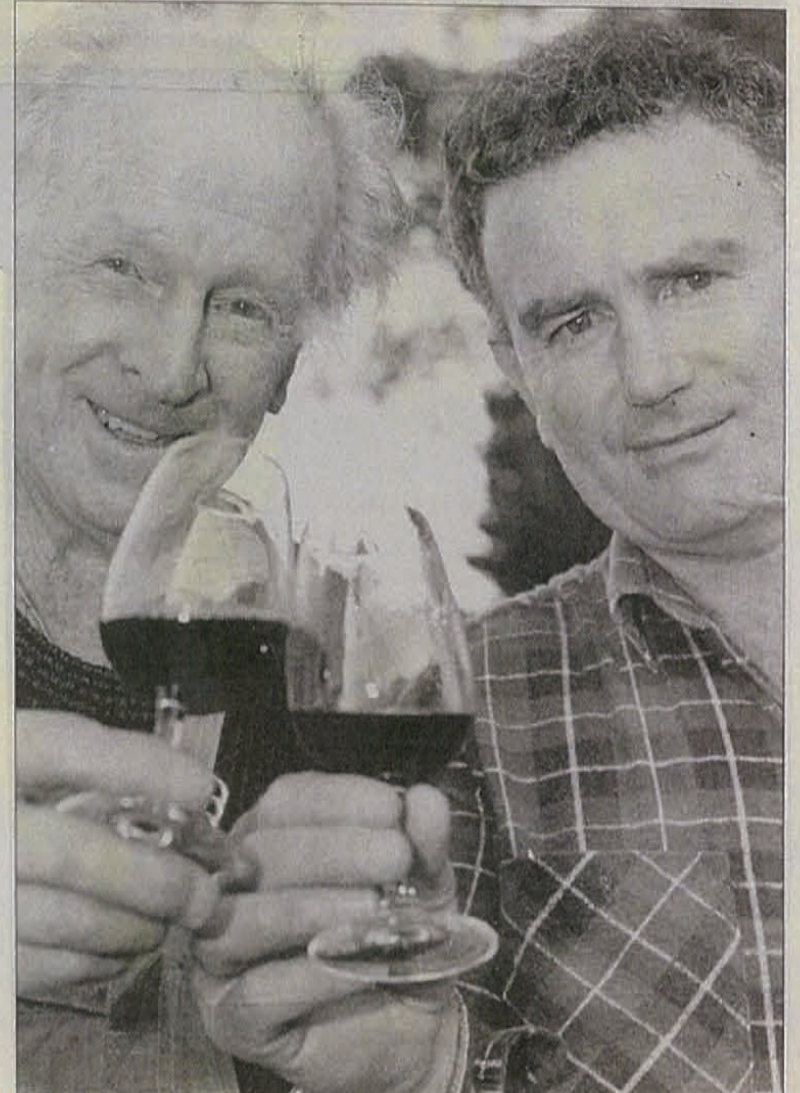
The vineyard this year produced six varieties — cabernet sauvignon, merlot, riesling, pinot noir, Gewurtz Traminer and chardonnay.

"We enjoy great satisfaction from our viticulture project and look forward to the day when it will pay wages," Mr Paul said last week.

"The continuing success of peninsula winemakers is due partially to our cool climate location and

the philosophical approach that because our costs are high we must continually aim for perfection.

"This is reflected in the medals won by many peninsula wine producers this year," he said.



FATHER and son wine-producing combination Stan (left) and Bruce Paul, of Balnarring Vineyards ... winners with their pinot noir.

### Wine pride

I WISH to thank you for the article (and picture) titled 'Pinot wins for the Pauls' in your September 1 edition.

We are indeed proud of our medal winning '91 Cabernet Merlot wine.

However I must point out that our '91 Pinot Noir was not entered for this year's Melbourne Show and therefore did not receive an award, also although all of our wines are of excellent quality they have not all won show medals as mentioned.

- Bruce Paul  
Balnarring





Winemaker Garry Crittenden who is to visit Toowoomba on Thursday.

## Top wine-maker recalls cricket days on Downs

By MILES NOLLER

Many years ago Garry Crittenden came to Toowoomba with a cricket bat.

He was then a student at Gregory Terrace in Brisbane and remembers the unpleasant summer heat and the red dust of the Downslands oval.

On Thursday Garry returns with a case or two of prestigious wines so it won't matter if the weather turns hot and parching.

Garry is now a rising star in the Australian wine industry.

He left Brisbane at the age of 16 and after graduating in horticulture he did research for the Victorian Department of Agriculture, then established one of the country's most innovative nurseries.

But a little more than a decade ago, he turned to vineyards and winemaking, establishing Dromana Estate on the Mornington Peninsula east of Melbourne.

The Dromana Estate and Schinus Molle labels are now highly regarded both in Australia and overseas and Garry is developing an enviable reputation for his expertise in grape growing and winemaking.

His viticultural consulting practice, which started 15 years ago, is now Australia's largest and most successful, with more than 30 client vineyards including industry forces such as Sepelts and Domaine Chandon.

Garry is coming to Toowoomba on Thursday to meet some of the people who have helped to make his wines increasingly popular in south-east Queensland.

While his products are widely regarded as "class" wines, he is astonished at how well they are selling in the Toowoomba, Brisbane, and Gold and Sunshine Coast areas.

He said sales in this region were beginning to challenge those in Victoria, his home base.

His estate at Dromana is regarded as a model for state of the art management practices which incorporate many joint projects with State and Federal research bodies.

As well as owning vineyards on the Mornington Peninsula, Garry also has a 12 hectare planting of Pinot Noir and Chardonnay in southern Tasmania. All of these grapes are sold for sparkling wine production.

Although categorised as a "small" wine producer, he annually exports about 5000 cases of high value wine, almost half of his total production.

He is vice-chairman of the Victorian Wine Industry Association, chairman of that group's Exporters Sub Committee, and a member of the Australian Wine Exporters Council.

Garry will be guest at a dinner at the Newtown Hotel in Toowoomba on Thursday night.

### Features

## Stanthorpe wines earn high praise

By MILES NOLLER

As the Granite Belt prepares for the second and final weekend of its Spring Wine Festival this weekend, and its Australian Small Wine-makers Show next weekend, it can take encouragement from a noted identity of the Australian wine industry, who says the region is producing some top-class wines.

SOME "astonishingly high quality" wines are being made at Stanthorpe.

But the sad thing is that there doesn't seem to be public recognition of that fact.

That's the judgment of noted Victorian viticulturist, winemaker and show judge Mr Garry Crittenden.

Mr Crittenden is producing highly regarded wines at his Dromana Estate winery on the Mornington Peninsula south-east of Melbourne; he has Australia's largest and most successful viticultural consulting practice; and he also grows wine grapes in Tasmania.

He encouraged Granite Belt producers to "just hang on in there" and hope that the public eventually recognises there are some terrific wines being made.

As a wine show judge, he said shows were seeing Queensland wines which were holding their own against anything produced in the traditional grape-growing areas of Australia.

"I speak to growers from Stanthorpe, and I know they have a battle to sell their wines in their own home market."

"It was only five to seven years ago that Victoria was in a similar situation, where Victorians preferred to drink Hunter Valley or South Australian wines."

"It has taken a long time to convince them that our wines are of international class."

Mr Crittenden said the high altitude of the Stanthorpe area allowed it to produce wines with fruit flavours which were very fine, very elegant, and very restrained.

"I could name two or three Stanthorpe wines which show fabulous, penetrating, concentrated fruit flavour, the equal of anything we can do in southern Victoria or Tasmania, which are if you like, the emerging areas which are getting the accolades."

Mr Crittenden said he was "absolutely confident" that the Granite Belt had the climate and the soils to produce top-quality wines.

And the winemaking skills and techniques at Stanthorpe were becoming more sophisticated, just as they did on the Mornington Peninsula.

"The wines my colleagues and I are making there now are not the wines we were making five years ago."

"We have learnt over that evolutionary period how to handle the fruit to enhance it in the best way possible."

However, wine-making techniques could not cover up for poor climate, and the best example of that was in the hotter areas along the Murray River.

These irrigation areas produced "worthy wines that are delicious and flavoursome, but they will never be seen as anything other than \$5 glass wines or cask wines. And there is nothing anyone could ever do to turn them into great wines."

However, the Stanthorpe region



GOOD JUDGE OF WINE: Viticulturist, winemaker and show judge, Garry Crittenden, who is telling Stanthorpe wineries to "hang in there".

had the climate to produce (and was producing) high-quality wines.

Other areas of south-east Queensland might also be climatically suited for wine production.

Mr Crittenden said the higher altitude range areas could well be capable of quality grape production, provided they had genuine coolness in the summer.

"It's got nothing to do with how cool it is in winter. What you require is genuine coolness, say, average maximum temperatures in the order of 25 to 26 degrees in January and February, with ripeness through to maturity taking place in mid- to late March."

"If you can adhere to those very crude indicators, then you can rely on fruit with very intense flavours."

"So it may be, for all I know, if you went into the back of Montville or Maleny, there could be suitable areas for growing grapes."

But until that happens, Mr Crittenden remains "delighted at the quality of wines that are coming out of the Stanthorpe area".



SUNDAY MAIL MAGAZINE, JULY 19, 1992

## WINE

## King of Dromana

MORNINGTON Peninsula is a fine place to go in search of a decent bottle of wine.

And, if the bottle you find happens to have come from the excellent Dromana Estate, you will not be disappointed.

The Mornington is one of those thriving Victorian farming regions that is sufficiently close to Melbourne to have enticed a few hyperactive city people intent on creating on their own farms.

Eighty people have already made the move. All have planted vineyards, and 26 are already making wine.

Dromana Estate's owner, that superman of grape growing, Garry Crittenden, quietly planned his special spot for grapes on both a scientific and business basis, and not simply on the basis of joyful enthusiasm. He is a pro.

He was once a successful nurseryman and, to change from striking shrubs to striking grape vines, he had to find a suitable place in which to plant the grapes he needed.

Garry bought land in Harrison's Road, near the town of Dromana, because, in his view, the soil was not too rich and the position on the peninsula looked to be just right for the growing of oodles of cool climate-style grapes.

The Mornington Peninsula is about 12km long, and, at its widest point, is 12km across. The entire region is a very cool grape-growing region — the cold seas outside, and the freezing Antarctic winds, make sure of that.

Crittenden, incidentally, was not the first grower to plant vines on the peninsula. In fact, it was having the opportunity to see how other vines fared on the richer soils that gave him the idea to seek the poorer sandy soils on which to plant his Dromana vineyard.

Some intense planting of vines resulted. Some pinot noir, merlot, cabernet sauvignon and chardonnay now flourish there. The first wines were sold in 1985. Now that he has had time to reflect on them, I asked him whether he was satisfied with his decision to plant grapes around Dromana town.

"The success of Dromana Estate has come from the flavor of the grapes that we have been able to grow here," he said.

"My wine has been successful because of the way we have achieved the obvious ripe flavors. And every year they keep getting better in each of our varieties."

Try the Dromana Estate Pinot Noir 1990 (\$16), unreservedly a wine of full pinot noir varietal flavor (and aroma).

Crittenden is enthusiastic about Dromana Estate Cabernet Merlot 1990 (\$20) because of its sheer opulence.

Then there is the Dromana Estate Chardonnay 1991 (\$20). This is fabulous cool climate fruit wrapped up in a cocoon of gentle oak flavors.

Cool area chardonnay is inclined to build up on your palate in this characteristic way, and, after 20 seconds of holding the taste of this wine in your mouth, you can start to respond to the effects of the fruit flavors — hints of lime, peach, quince, melon and probably others too subtle to identify.

PETER SCUDAMORE-SMITH MW

Page 6 - THE INDEPENDENT, Tuesday, August 25, 1992

## Peninsula pinot wins



•WINEMAKER Tod Dexter ... we'll be happy as long as Stoniers continue to produce good wines.

STONIERS winemakers in Merricks upheld its reputation as being one of the best wineries on the peninsula when it won the Royal Melbourne Show Australian and New Zealand Wine Industry Journal trophy. Stoniers won the trophy for its 1991 Pinot Noir,

the best dry red table wine for early drinking.

Winemaker Tod Dexter said Stoniers was one of many wineries on the peninsula to win prizes at the show.

The peninsula wineries brought home an impressive 25 medals and in doing so confirmed that the area produces some excellent wines.

Mr Dexter said Stoniers had won numerous

medals before at various shows, but this year's award would among the most prestigious.

Stoniers first started in 1978 when the owner, Brian Stonier, brought 35 acres for grazing.

Mr Dexter said that because Brian was interested in winemaking, he planted a few vines and eventually he had a paddock full of them.

"Stoniers wine went

on to the market in 1982 and together with the rest of the peninsula wineries, we have continued to grow," Mr Dexter said.

"With this big award behind us, we are now looking forward to doing well in the Canberra Wine Show.

"But when it all boils down we'll be happy as long as we can continue to produce good wines."

## EPICURE

## Pruning 1200 pinot vines exposes

IT was T. S. Eliot who said April was the cruellest month. Wrong! It is August. If you haven't completed your pruning by early September you are done.

We have 1200 pinot vines. Each one of them has around 30 canes that have to be clipped. That's 36,000 snips.

We have old vigneron around us who adore pruning. It's their chance to be absolutely alone for about three months on end.

They say each vine is an individual problem, like a chess game that has to be solved. What's more, it is a fine old art that can only be perfected after years of practice.

Out there in the vineyard nobody interferes, the telephone doesn't ring, the TV's not on. The dog will watch for a while, but then gets bored and pads off.

It's a chance to commune with the

birds, go into a meditation trance, talk to God or whatever.

We have found it hard going, a day's work just to do one row. We arch down the canes then tie the ends to a wire. Occasionally they come adrift then flick back with ugly results. One vigneron from the North East told me that on a frosty morning a cane flicked back and got him right across the behind. For a terrible moment he thought he was back at boarding school.

"We want better results from you next term, young Alfred."

I haven't had them across the behind but I have had them across the face and in the eye. Then there's the blood. Secateurs are ferocious weapons, particularly when you are tired

and not sure where you are snipping.

We try to keep all our fingers, but they are disappearing one by one. Marie snipped in the wrong place last week and there was the cry for Band-Aids. She needed four stitches in the wound, so there is no more pruning for two weeks.

I don't go in, quite so much, for Zen or meditation while I am pruning, but I do like to listen to music. I did cart a radio around but then the darned thing would get left at the far end of row 13 and I'd have to walk back.

Now I have a Walkman, marvelous. The Walkman hitches on to my belt and I have headphones. Last Tuesday I was listening to a lovely



## Seasons of the Vine

By KEITH DUNSTAN

piece of music by Virgil Thomson. It was a tribute to Picasso. Suddenly it all went dead, silence. I fiddled with the Walkman trying to get it to come to life.

Then the awful truth came clear. I

had snipped off the headphones with the secateurs.

Yes, August is awful. The well-do vigneron have gone off to No Nice and Napa, but we haven't time.

I mean there are 3000 bottles without labels. The labels all came from the printer last week. They are a bit like those awful registration labels that you have to put on windscreen of the car.

First you have to peel the bloody stuff off the back. Now you have a dangerous piece of paper that will stick to everything, the arm of your chair, your trousers, or, worse, double over and stick to self.

It has taken me 40 ruined labels



EPICURE

TUESDAY 13 OCTOBER 1992 THE AGE 23

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# wine industry: the vineyard

winemaker. Today there is growing recognition of the importance of the  
ARD YALLOP interviews two of the new breed.

## The vine doctor

**T**HE new doctor of the middle classes is the viticulturist, who does his calls of the vineyards, curing a case of powdery mildew here, and dealing with a bad dose of botrytis there.

One of these new vine doctors is Ian Macrae, a 37 year-old viticulturist based in Mount Martha. He works virtually from dawn to dusk, answering all the calls for advice from clients with vineyards in the Mornington Peninsula and the Yarra Valley.

One recent Friday began at 7 am in Musk Creek Road, in Flinders, checking out a doctor's new 10-hectare vineyard. At 8.30 he moved on to another two-hectare vineyard in Tucks Road, to supervise a contractor spraying the vines. At 10 he drove to a vineyard in Main Creek Road, to look at bud burst, and start the spraying. The morning ended at Stoniers vineyard at Merricks, checking vine growth.

The afternoon calls began at 2.30 at Elgee Park. Baillieu Myer, the owner, has set up a data logging station, which records all aspects of local climate, and Macrae had to check the readings. After that came more spraying.

At 3.15 it was on to Turramurra vineyard, to make sure some vineyard posts had been rammed into the ground properly. From there he went to Hanns Creek, to discuss the release of some wines, and back to Redhill Estate to talk with the owner, Peter Derham, about the opening of the winery.

At 6.30 he made it home to his wife and two young children in Mount Martha. After the evening meal he settled down to writing reports, which carried him through to 1 am. He was up again at six.

Macrae's busy schedule reflects two things: the extent to which it is now recognised that the key to great wine lies in the vineyard, rather than in the winemakers' hands; and the growing attraction to the middle classes of owning their own vineyard.

"The wine industry is seen as something that's very appealing," Macrae said. "It's



"Doc" Macrae: in the field from dawn to dusk.

Picture: CATHRYN TREMAIN

amazing how many people throw themselves into their vineyard at the weekend, as a relief from a high pressure job in the week. I don't regard them as hobby farms. I still think they should pay their way. These vineyards don't have to be bottomless pits, into which people pour money."

Macrae's interest in viticulture originated from his time studying agricultural sciences at La Trobe University. He graduated in 1980, and became a trainee viticulturist with the Department of Agriculture in Mildura. In 1988 he moved to the state government's Horticultural Research Institute at Knoxfield.

While there, he went to visit Dromana Estate and met Garry Crittenden. Crittenden, with his keen interest in horticulture, was keen to do some irrigation trials in his vineyard to see how grape yield and quality could be controlled by managing the stress on the vines. Working together with Ian Goodwin, from the research institute at Tatura, they found that a certain amount of stress did improve quality.

Macrae eventually joined Crittenden in his consultancy, Vitinational, and when Crittenden found he no longer had time to run that and his vineyard, Macrae took over the business.

He now has around 50 clients, mostly on

the Peninsula, and in the Yarra Valley. He consults on all aspects of vineyard management, but his key task is to maximise yield from the vines — in order to bring some return to the owners — without any loss of quality. Macrae said: "The conflict is between the winemaker, who wants a small yield, to improve quality, and the grower, who has to make a living."

The other challenge of the day is to find organic, non-toxic sprays for keeping vine diseases at bay. The "drugs" that "Doctor" Macrae carries around in his bag are generally sulphur, which is used for the prevention of mites and powdery mildew, and copper, which helps stop downy mildew.

Tod Dexter, winemaker at Stoniers, welcomes Macrae's input into the Merricks vineyard. "He keeps us up-to-date with current industry trends, and he makes sure the grapes are in the best possible condition. The science of grape growing is a lot more difficult than we thought," Dexter said.

Doctors keep up-to-date with latest thinking with the Medical Journal of Australia. For the vine doctors, like Ian Macrae, it's the 'American Journal of Oenology and Viticulture'. There's a lot more to having a healthy vine than you might think.

TUESDAY 18 AUGUST 1992 THE AGE 23

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## blems

work out how you get a label bottle without bubbles every- and how you get the darned on straight without actually a ruler or a spirit level.

e years ago we devised Dun-Law of labels. "The quality of ne is in inverse proportion to antity of information on the You will have noted that the wines of Burgundy and Bor-tell you nothing, not even the variety. All you get is the year e vineyard.

haven't been in business for ars so we have broken Dun-Law and we have the usual lian back label with details the glories to be found inside tile. Well, I tell you, once you

have fixed the front label correctly it is the very devil to get the other label in line on the back.

We have put aside a special time for labelling. Some people knit while they watch TV, this salves one's conscience; at least the hands and minds are doing something useful.

However, I find that I can't watch SBS. Four times out of five they are running a Continental movie with sub titles. You can't read sub titles when you are trying to get a label straight and bubble free.

Nor can I look at a program like 'Chances'. As soon as a program gets sexy and the girls take off their clothes I am done.

On Thursday I was checking the night's production. Very good really. No bubbles, all the labels perfect, smooth and straight.

There was just one ghastly problem. Three of the bottles had two back labels. It was all the fault of those nude women.

THE WEEKEND REVIEW OCTOBER 31-NOVEMBER 1, 1992

## INDULGENCE

### WINE James Halliday

**T**HEN there is a pair of wines which are restrained but absolutely correct: the fruit is less exuberant, but it has not been modified by yeast, oak, residual sugar or the use of semillon. These are 1992 Shaw & Smith (\$14) and 1992 Taitarni Fume Blanc (\$15.40), the former with more depth and strength, but the latter a more than useful wine.

1992 Schinus Molle (\$15) is in a similar mould, but just a little more aromatic, a little livelier in its fruit and crisp acidity. With the outstanding 1992 Stafford Ridge (\$14.50) one has classic gooseberry fruit, rich and mouth-filling, yet not the least bit cloying. Only those who really hate sauvignon blanc could dislike this wine.



Page 58 - THE INDEPENDENT, Tuesday, August 11, 1992

## Dine-out



• ABOVE: Madame Denise Slocock and chef James Roberts put a Parisienne priority on Hanns Creek.

## A touch of Paris

SHOULD the yearn for a Sunday sojourn take you the winery way, Hanns Creek Estate in Main Ridge brings a bit of provincial Paris to our own 'backyard'. Vignerons Tony and Denise Slocock (as French as French as French) apart from producing some sweet chardonnay and perky pinot, have teamed with the familiar face of chef James Roberts, and set aside a 'shed' to serve a lunch you're likely to like.

Fine for families, with strains of squeezebox that could accompany the Little Sparrow; the buffet style offering includes a selection of warm wet dishes, terrines, quiches, cheese, vine leaves, freshly sliced available vegies, dips and deserts like Mieuille Feuille and orange bavois.

Clothed tables set with sprigs of wattle, you may sit among a mix of people to take in their flavors of France; all very yummy.

Situated in Kentucky Rd, it's best to book on (069) 89 7266, with Fathers Day likely to be especially special.

SOUTHERN PENINSULA GAZETTE October 6 1992



SIR Peter Derham and his wife Averil, of Red Hill Estate, with his sparkling wine ... possibly the first for the peninsula.

## Race to release first local bubbly

THE Mornington Peninsula's first sparkling wine will be released this month.

By KYM SADDLER

Dromana Estate and Red Hill Estate vineyards are both in the race to release the first local methode champenoise.

Sir Peter Derham, of Red Hill Estate, said his 1991 methode champenoise, to be released "sometime in October", would be the first.

But Garry Crittenden, of Dromana Estate, said his 1990 methode champenoise could be the first.

Mr Crittenden said his sparkling wine would be released under the Schinus label on October 12.

Mr Crittenden will release a 1990 methode champenoise on October 12.

"I don't think it's right to say that it (Red Hill) would be the first sparkling wine," Mr Crittenden said.

"Theirs is a 1991 vintage and ours is a 1990."

But Sir Peter maintained Red Hill would be the first.

He said he decided on a sparkling wine to cater for a different market.

"When you are in business, you are always looking for something different," he said.

"When you compete with vineyards like Dromana Estate and Stoniers Merricks, which make five star wines, you need to try something different."

Elgee Park vineyard in Merricks North was likely to release a sparkling wine in 1994.

Owner Baillieu Myer said the wine would be made at Domaine Chandon using chardonnay and pinot noir grapes.

He said the grapes would be grown at Elgee Park from the 1991 vintage.

"The early tastings we have had have been very encouraging," Mr Myer said.



GARRY Crittenden ... believes he will release the first local methode champenoise.



TUESDAY 29 SEPTEMBER 1992 THE AGE 23

EPICURE

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# Viticulturist turned designer vigneron

*JENI PORT discovers Dromana's principal winemaker has his sights set on radical chic.*

**A** WALK through Dromana Estate's winery gives an interesting sneak preview into the inner workings of its founder-winemaker, Garry Crittenden.

Fastidiously clean. Organised. Tidy. It is a mixture of what is both practical as well as visually appealing. He opens a door to the lab and mentions that all labs probably look the same. I tell him I've seen labs sharing room with dirty breakfast dishes in winemakers' kitchens. He gives a barely audible gasp, "Oh." The eyes that seem constantly in a state of wonderment, became even wider.

Garry Crittenden, his wife Margaret and their children may share their home with their livelihood on that most picturesque green belt on the Mornington Peninsula between Dromana and Arthur's Seat, but in all conscience he could never allow such an unholy alliance between the clean and the unclean.

"I like things orderly," he said. "It helps me run my business." He is probably one of the few small winemakers to openly call what he does a "business". Others may think it, but rarely wish to break the illusion that making wine is somehow part of an enjoyable and interesting "lifestyle choice". Garry Crittenden has no such illusions; maybe 10 years ago when he started... not now.

"Sure, there's a lot of romance about making wine and I probably once believed it, but if you don't focus on the real issues then you have problems," he says.

And what are the real issues? "To my mind, winegrowing should represent about 25 per cent of your business, winemaking another 25 per cent and marketing represents 50 per cent. Marketing is of paramount importance in getting your wine sold."

This is a producer who makes just 12,000 cases of wine a year and at full capacity will only ever be able to squeeze out 15,000 cases, which is a mere bagatelle to the likes of Orlando, whose Jacob's Creek range alone sells more than one million cases a year! Why should marketing be that important?

The number of small Victorian wineries in dangerously deep debt to banks, or up for sale, should be a good enough reason. "Like many others, we've had a pretty torrid time these past two years, but we don't have the bank looming over us like some black spectre... I don't think I could handle that," Crittenden said.

The first of Garry's five-year plans started in 1986, in only his second vintage, when he appointed a national distributor. People thought him mad. Now, he sells his wine in every state and territory in Australia.

Eight visits to the United Kingdom,



Peninsula winemaker Garry Crittenden has been scouring Australia for traditional Italian grapes for his Schinus label.

set at the gruelling pace of two a year for four years, now means he can comfortably sell 6000 cases of wine (half his production) in the most prestigious wine market in the world. What's more, he has come under the attentive eye of influential wine writers like Oz Clarke, who has peppered his latest book 'New Classic Wines' with glowing references to Garry Crittenden and winemaking guru Brian Croser in the same breath.

Clarke, like many wine writers, has tended to concentrate on the man's incredible green thumb, his viticultural expertise, over any particularly gifted winemaking ability. A believer in the tired but true maxim that a good wine is made in the vineyard, Crittenden would probably admit that a "good, sound technical basis" to winemaking has probably been all that has been required of him in the past, although he

is becoming "more adventurous".

With viticulture, he was adventurous from the start. A horticulturist by training — he ran a retail nursery business before his mid-life career change in '82 — Garry brought the unblinkered eye of a grower rather than a traditionally trained viticulturist to the world of winemaking. He showed that young vines, mere babes in arms and still attached to Mother Earth, could be persuaded to produce wine earlier than expected, wine that could be converted into much-needed cash flow for a fledgling business. Wine off two-year-old vines? All it would be good for was blending, if that, said the traditionalists.

Said Crittenden: "I'm not saying the wine off two-year-old vines is of a fantastic quality, but I am sure if you went along to your bank they would be more

interested in giving you a loan in return for an early return of investment, than whether it was a top-quality wine."

And then there was the question of maximum yield per hectare of vine. Another quality question. His ideas must have had some merit. In one year alone, his viticultural consultancy business (of which he is no longer a partner) planted 243 hectares of vines in the Yarra Valley and the Mornington Peninsula.

Practical. Clean. Tidy. The main attributes of the man are apparent in his wines. Under Dromana Estate he makes wines that cannot be faulted, and in the case of the cabernet sauvignon/merlot, can often find the rare expression of a far more complex personality lurking underneath. But for every bottle of the estate's own wine that is sold, he sells two bottles of his cheaper, bistro-style, multi-region blends under the Schinus Molle label.

The Crittenden botanical background and his desire to give his second range of wine a distinctive name (schinu molle is the botanical name for peppercorn tree), had at least one wine writer betting the owner that the name would cease to exist after its first year. "He wanted to bet only \$50. I was willing to make it \$1000. I think he eventually paid me in wine. If he had held on a little longer, he would have won." As of this month, Schinus Molle becomes simple "Schinus". The distinctive peppercorn tree, looking increasingly like an island coconut palm against a setting sun, remains, but everything else — the color co-ordinated labels and capsules and clear Bordeaux bottles — is different. Very different.

"Schinus has gone radical chic," notes the pleased producer. "We are also the first and only company to do a commercial run of the new Cap-Vin capsules." The aluminium recyclable closures that "pop" open with the twist of a bottle, have allowed the unheard of freedom of matching any color label, be it brilliant pacific blue, rich burgundy or burnt orange, to the capsule.

The age of the designer wine is high and Garry Crittenden intends to take full advantage of the symbiosis. His 1992 Victorian rose looks positively daring in startling red and blue. More will follow as Garry seeks out chic Italian grape varieties to market under the equally chic Schinus packaging. Dolcetto has already been made and, with almost born-again zeal, the Peninsula maker is scouring Victoria and interstate for more traditional Italian grapes, like sangiovese, nebbiolo, barbera.

This time it's with less of an interest in things viticultural and with more of the eye of the wine marketer that has truly become.



Page 88 — Sunday Herald-Sun, October 25, 1992

## Taste

## Wine

By TONY  
HITCHIN

**A** CATCHY name can be just about everything in getting an unknown wine off to a flying start — but this one never really had much chance.

The name was hard to remember. It was too long. It was Latin. And anybody who wasn't a horticulturalist didn't know what it meant.

"The most ridiculous bloody name ever put on an Australian wine label," said a noted expert, concerned that someone whose wine he admired was going to go broke because of such a whacky decision. "It won't last 12 months," said an experienced marketing man.

But five years down the track the wine's success has never stopped growing and it is doing very nicely, thank you.

Schinus Molle. What a silly name for a wine.

However Garry Crittenden remained unperturbed. Schinus Molle was something of a good luck talisman for him.

You see, Garry was a nurseryman and he'd made more than a few bob selling *Schinus molle*, which is the botanical name for the peppercorn tree.

Well, the Schinus Molle cabernet and chardonnay took off from the start.

Delicious "drink-now" styles, they were a cash-flow while he built the reputation of his now 10-year-old Dromana Estate vineyard and winery on the Mornington Peninsula.

Now the range has expanded to include a pinor noir, two more white wines and a rather pretty pink, with at least one more style being planned.

At from \$9-plus to around \$13 they sell all over Australia and England.

But at least we doomsayers were right with one thing. That name couldn't last.

So starting now, Garry has changed it. Or rather shortened it to just Schinus.

But as a defiant little piece of nose-thumbing, he's kept the pep-

percorn tree emblem on the label, and tricked out his bottles in a range of bright colors that can't fail to catch the eye.

He's even introduced a new pop-up aluminium cap to save us the bother of cutting the top off a lead capsule to get at the cork — timely, because lead capsules will be banned from the end of the year anyway.

As ever, he seems to be ahead of the pace. And that's appropriate, because that's how Schinus Molle came into being in the first place.

"Because I was consulting to so

many other vineyards as a trained horticulturalist, I was seeing some excellent parcels of fruit all over the place," he said.

"Many of them were so good I could see they'd make into lovely fresh, easy-drinking, light vibrant wines.

"Sure, I could also have made them into the usual oak and tannin 'serious' wine styles — but like everyone else in the wine game I knew those figures which suggest something like 98 per cent of all bottles of wine ever bought are

consumed within 24 hours. And I wanted to capitalise on it."

Garry Crittenden is sharp at capitalising on things. His attractive winery and grounds — my major recommendation to anyone touring the Peninsula — was among the first down there to open for extended periods of cellar door sales, to cash in on the summer visitors.

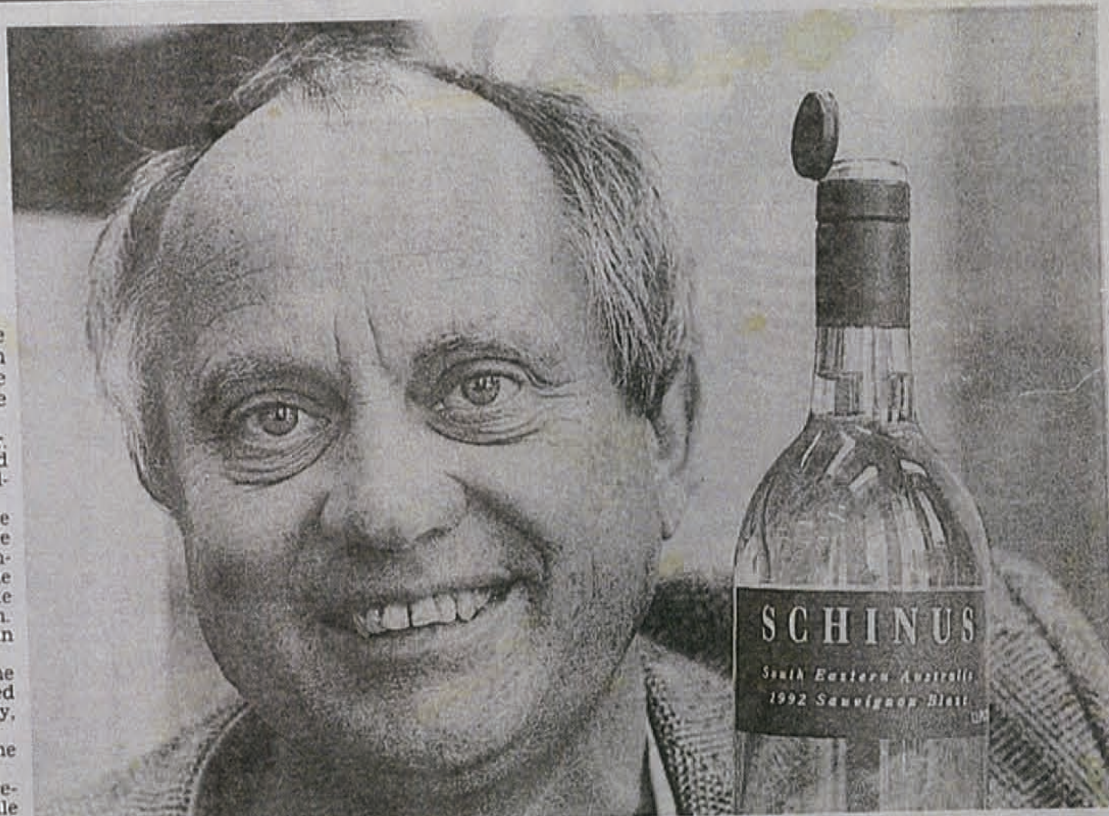
His Schinus Molle cabernet, chardonnay, pinot noir and now chenin blanc and sauvignon blanc, have latched on to the fact that bright bars and bistros, picnics and out-

door lunches, are now part of the Australian way of life.

They're even in clear bottles — to tell you at a glance they are drink-now styles, and not for cellaring.

But in case all this suggests his priority is no longer "serious" wine, just remember his Dromana Estate label. The 1990 cabernet merlot especially is a magnificent red, already the winner of several medals, with more no doubt to come.

Dromana Estate — now there's a proper wine name for you.



● Pop-up cap . . . Garry Crittenden and one of the "nice little earners" from his easy drinking Schinus range.

## New drop thrives under 'silly' name



6 TUESDAY 20 OCTOBER 1992 **THE AGE**

## EPICURE

**The 11 Doings**  
JENI PORT

# Wine aid for Somalia

**T**HE Mornington Peninsula vignerons are putting their money where their hearts are and raising much-needed aid for the starving people of Somalia.

A giant raffle with a first prize of 30 dozen bottles of wine (value \$5500) donated by Peninsula vignerons has been arranged, and organisers believe they can raise close to \$30,000.

Other prizes are one night's accommodation and dinner for two at Delgany Country House, Portsea; a meal for two at Tuerong Estate Vineyard and Restaurant, and an eight-kilogram round of fully mature parmesan-style cheese from the Siracusa Company.

The raffle is the brainchild of Ann Scally, of Mount Martha Vineyard, and Kathleen Quealy, of T'Gallant. Said Ann: "Though wine and starvation are totally incongruous, I saw an opportunity to raise some money and, hopefully, provide some impetus for other wine areas to maybe take on the idea."

Tickets in the Mornington Peninsula Wine for Somalia Raffle cost \$2 each, and can be bought from all Mornington Peninsula wineries; Phillip Murphy wine shops; Brighton Cellars; Gatehouse Cellars; the Cellar Fellar; Crittendens (Toorak); Community Aid Abroad; the Celtic Club; The George Hotel (St Kilda); Nicks Wine Merchants shops; Delgany; Portsea Hotel; Whitecliffs Restaurant (Rye); Continental Hotel (Sorrento); Richies stores; Blairgowrie Hotel, and the Peninsula Arts Centre, among others.

Tickets will be on sale until the first week of December. The draw is scheduled for 12 December. For more information or tickets contact Ann Scally on (059) 74 2700.

**TANGLEWOOD DOWNS**  
ESTATE  
**CUP CARNIVAL OF WINE**  
Sat-Tues 12-5 pm  
Winery Luncheon and Australian Ballads  
Sunday 12-3 pm  
Picnic area and playground. Ph. (059) 74 3325  
Melway 161 K2



**DROMANA ESTATE**

### WINERY MELBOURNE CUP CARNIVAL WEEKEND

Open 11 am-5 pm  
Saturday, Sunday, Monday,  
Tuesday.

- Free Tastings of Dromana Estate & Schinus Wines.
- Light Lunches
- Wines can be purchased by the glass, including the 1st release of our Sparkling Wine.

**HARRISON'S ROAD  
DROMANA**

MEL. REF. 160 J6  
Tel.: (059) 87 3800

THE AGE TUESDAY 27 OCTOBER 1992

## Melbourne Cup

### Carnival of Wine

on the Mornington Peninsula  
Oct 31st to Nov 3rd

- 19 Vineyard open every day.
- Tasting & Sales of new release wines.
- Winery lunches with wine by the glass.
- Musical Entertainment.
- Watch the races on TV screens.
- Grand opening of new winery.
- Children's activities.
- Cheese tastings.
- How wine is made tours.

Pick up a map from: All Vineyards,  
The Briars (Mt. Martha), Ritchies  
Liquor Stores, information centres  
or call Toll free (008) 80 4009.



**L**IFE is never dull on the Mornington Peninsula! When the local vignerons aren't raising money for Somalia, there is always another grand opening and open days planned. This weekend sees a combination of both, with the second annual Melbourne Cup Carnival of Wine.

From Saturday 31 October up to, and including, Melbourne Cup Day, 3 November, a total of 19 Peninsula vineyards plan to be open every day, many showing their new-release 1992 whites and 1991 reds. Most important of all, most wineries will have a TV to watch the big race on.

The weekend will also see the grand opening of Sir Peter and Lady Derham's Red Hill Estate vineyard (see page 7).

Nat White of Main Ridge will be holding a special winemaker dinner at Poff's Restaurant on Cup Eve with a comparative tasting of back vintages of his chardonnay, pinot noir and cabernet sauvignon. The cost is \$48 a head and bookings can be made on (059) 89 2566.

The 19 participating Carnival of Wine wineries are: Balnarring, Willow Creek, Hanns Creek, Karina, Kings Creek, Main Ridge, Paringa Estate, Peninsula Estate, Red Hill Estate, Stonier's Merricks, The Briars, Tanglewood Downs, Coolart Valley, Dromana Estate, Elan, Merricks Estate, Moordooduc Estate, Port Phillip Estate and T'Gallant at Darling Park.

**RED HILL ESTATE**

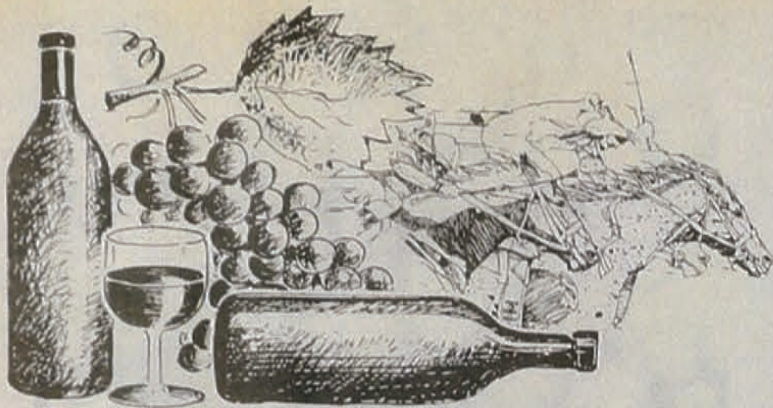
Join us as we celebrate the opening of our cellar door this weekend. We will be open from noon to 5 pm Saturday 31/10 through to Tuesday 3/11.

Our range of wines includes the first sparkling wine from Mornington Peninsula grapes. Come and share our fine wine and spectacular view. Vineyard tours, cheese tastings, light lunches and entertainment for the children.

**Red Hill Estate**  
53 Red Hill-Shoreham Road, Red Hill South, Melway Map Ref. 190 K12  
Phone (059) 89 2838



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## Melbourne Cup Carnival of Wines

**October 31 to November 3**

MELBOURNE Cup fever will strike the Peninsula with a vengeance later this month, when 19 of the regions vineyards open for the second annual Carnival of Wine. Many vineyards have special activities planned, and the newest Peninsula winery will celebrate its

grand opening.

Peter and Averil Derham plan to open their new Red Hill Estate vineyard with the pop of a cork from their sparkling wine, one of the first to be released on the Peninsula. The spectacular view over Western Port Bay can be enjoyed from the tasting

room, or while on one of the vineyard tours that will run regularly each day. Red Hill Estate will provide plenty of activity with a cheese tasting, light lunches, and entertainment for children.

Main Ridge Estate Vineyard will be catering well for visitors and locals, and will serve their now famous Coq au vin and fresh Red Hill Bakery Bread for lunch on each of the four days. A special wine makers' dinner will be held at Poff's Restaurant on Cup Eve, where various vintages of Main Ridge Estate Wines can be compared and enjoyed. Cost of the dinner is \$48 incl. and bookings can be made on (059) 89 2566.

Roses on hats are a familiar sight at the Cup, but none are so spectacular as those that grow beside the vines at Graeme and Jan Pinney's Karina Vineyard Dromana. Visitors to Karina are encouraged to stroll through the picturesque garden and vineyard while savouring fine wines that the Pinneys make on their Estate.

Ken and Wendy Bilham at Tanglewood Downs Estate Vineyard also lovingly tend their garden, and whilst the focus is definitely on fine wine, visitors to the rustic winery set among towering gums will be almost as delighted by the cherry blossoms as they are by the warm hospitality (and wonderful

lunch) that is always evident at Tanglewood Downs.

Just down the road at Moorooduc Estate vineyard the aroma of Jill McIntyre's own home made sausages (filled with the finest ingredients including Moorooduc wine) will mingle with the strains of beautiful classical music, played on strings from the loft in the winery.

The range of foods and entertainment at vineyards the length of the Peninsula, will provide visitors with the opportunity to be as relaxed or as adventurous as they choose.

It is a common sight at Hanns Creek Estate to see visitors to that winery with a glass of wine in one hand and a French Boule in the other. Hanns Creek proprietors Denise and Tony Aubrey-Slococ encourage diners at their casual winery Restaurant to join in a game, and inevitably lunch becomes a long and leisurely afternoon.

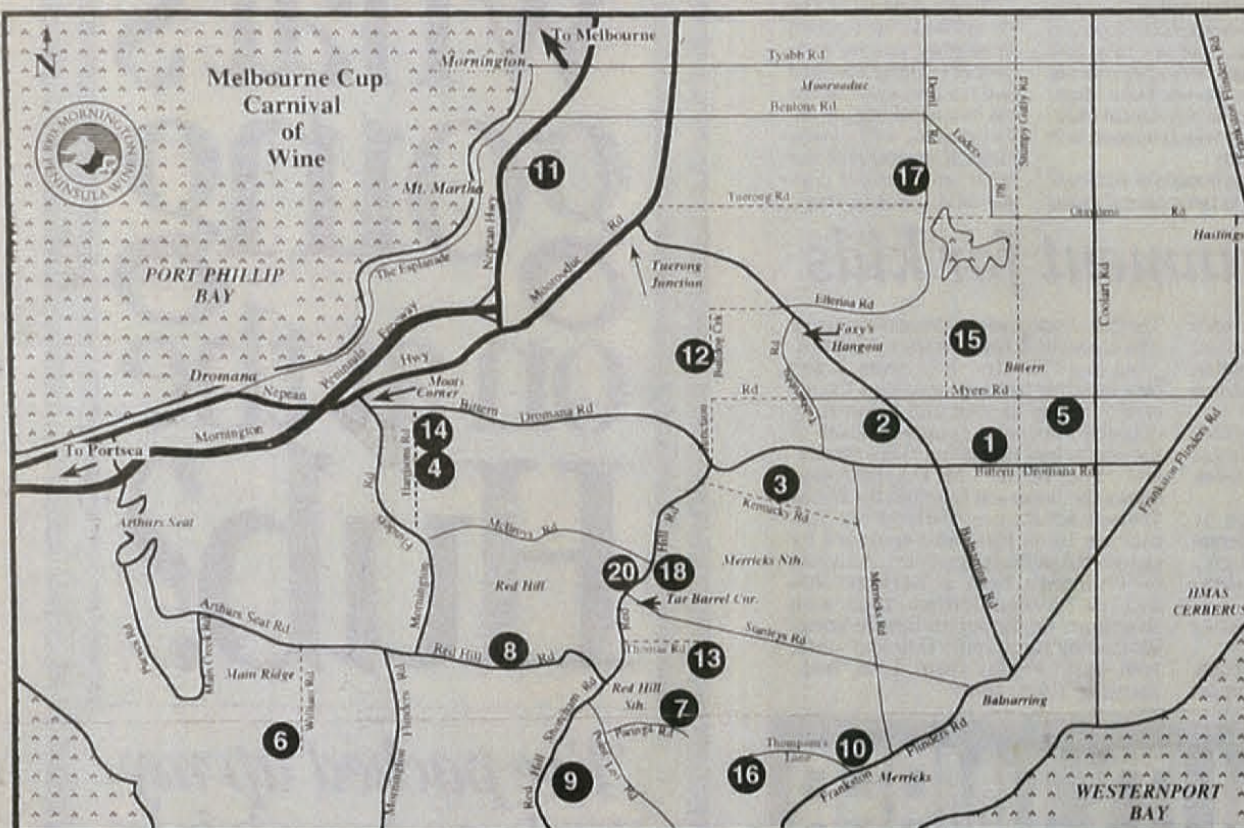
Leisurely afternoons are usually the order of the day at Kings Creek Vineyard, where the atmosphere is relaxed and the welcome is warm. Stonier's Merricks Winery is no stranger to special events, and the dramatic design of this spectacular building is well suited to hosting large groups of visitors. Stonier's Wine maker, Tod Dexter will explain the process involved in taking wine from the vineyard to the bottle, and following a winery tour a bottle can be enjoyed with a basket lunch.

Visitors to The Briars Vineyard will be delighted by the natural History and abundant fauna that is evident on the walk up to the Cellar Door Sales Centre. Three additional peninsula wine makers will present their wines in the beautifully restored barn, and the Briars own wine will also be available for tasting and sale. Food will be served and live musical entertainment will entice visitors to relax.

The emphasis of the Carnival is on enjoying fine wines in the wonderful environment of the Mornington Peninsula, and the famous Dromana Estate Vineyard will present a wide range of tasting. The picturesque lake will provide a perfect setting by which to enjoy the first release of their new sparkling wine.

This is just a 'taste' of what is available around the wineries every day from Saturday October 31st until Tuesday November 3rd. Full Details can be obtained by contacting the promotions office on (059) 744 200 fax (059) 74 3276 or toll free 008 804009.

Other vineyards open for the Carnival of Wine include: Port Phillip Estate, Balnarring Vineyard, Coolart Valley vineyard, Merricks Estate, Willow Creek, Peninsula estate, Paringa Estate, T'Gallant at Darling Park, Elan vineyard and Coolart Valley Vineyard.



### VINEYARD TOUR No. 1

- 17 Moorooduc Estate**  
Delicious Estate made sausages and fresh salads - served with rolls  
Entertainment: String Music.
- 12 Tanglewood Downs**  
Light Buffet Luncheon (Sunday only). Picnic facilities and Childrens playground.  
Entertainment: Piano player.
- 15 Elan Vineyard**  
A selection of fine cheeses and local breads. Enjoy a glass of wine in the Rotunda overlooking the vineyard.
- 2 Willow Creek**  
Gourmet Steak Sandwiches and afternoon teas.  
Play Bocce or fish for yabbies in the vineyard dam!
- 5 Kings Creek**  
Enjoy delicious gourmet barbecued sandwiches, in the tranquil rustic setting.
- 1 Balnarring Vineyard**  
Gourmet snags will be sizzling on the Barbeque, and you're welcome to take a break with a cup of tea or coffee
- 3 Hanns Creek**  
Seasoned cold roast chicken and ham off the bone with fresh home made salads.  
Strawberries & Cream.

(refer numbers to map for vineyard location)

### VINEYARD TOUR No. 2

- 18 Port Phillip Estate**  
Relax with a glass of wine in the tranquil setting overlooking the expanse of our manicured vineyard.
- 20 T'Gallant at Darling Park**  
Tasting and Sales of T'Gallant and Darling Park Wines, among the barrels in the winery
- 13 Coolart Valley**  
Reimer's Red Hill continental sausages barbequed and served in a fresh bread roll.
- 7 Paringa Estate**  
Home Style Croissants with savory fillings and a selection of sweet treats.
- 10 Stonier's Merricks**  
Country style Basket Lunches to enjoy under the pergola or on the lawns. 'How wine is made' tours every hour.
- 16 Merricks Estate**  
Tasty snacks of mini pizza to accompany a glass of wine. Stroll through the vineyard for spectacular Westernport Bay views.

(refer numbers to map for vineyard location)

### VINEYARD TOUR No. 3

- 11 The Briars Vineyard**  
The Briars will host Cloud Valley, Shoreham Vale & Mornington Vineyards. Picnic & B.B.Q. Hampers  
Entertainment: String Trio on Cup day.
- 14 Dromana Estate**  
Choose from Harry's home made pies, a grape pickers platter or a cheese platter. Enjoy a glass of our new sparkling wine.  
Picnic or B.B.Q by the lake.
- 4 Karina Vineyard**  
Days of Wine and Roses.....Stroll through the vineyard and enjoy the magnificent rose gardens
- 6 Main Ridge Estate**  
Coq au vin with Red Hill bread for lunch daily. Melb Cup Sweep - (free entry with 3 pack purchase)  
Cup Eve winemakers dinner at Poff's - bookings (059) 89 2566
- 8 Peninsula Estate**  
The B.B.Q will be sizzling all day with Gourmet Sausages, which will be complimentary with each bottle of wine purchased.
- 9 Red Hill Estate**  
Grand Opening!  
Release of Methode Champenoise, Light Lunches, Cheese tasting, Vineyard Tours & childrens activities.

(refer numbers to map for vineyard location)



6

TUESDAY 3 NOVEMBER 1992 THE AGE

EPICURE

The **II** Doings  
JENI PORT

## They're off in the Delgany Cup

*The Yarra Valley and the Mornington Peninsula face the wine tasters in a race to decide the best vintages in three categories.*

**F**RIENDS or foes, the rivalry that exists between the Yarra Valley and the Mornington Peninsula is set to become far more tangible with the arrival of the Delgany Cup. It's not a horse race, but a race of another kind, a wine-tasting competition in which an independent judging panel assesses the wines from both regions in three categories, and decides a winner.

The categories for the inaugural 1992 Delgany Cup are 1991 vintage chardonnay, 1990 vintage pinot noir and 1990 vintage cabernet sauvignon (or any traditional Bordeaux blend).

Delgany Country House hotel manager, Hermann Schneider, who chooses to live on the Peninsula but whose heart has been known to favor the wines of the valley, is the instigator. Of course, the emphasis is on "strengthening inter-industry ties" as well as a bit of PR, but two years ago when the cup was first mooted there was quite vocal opposition to the idea, and it had to be dropped.

According to the president of the Yarra Valley vignerons, Steve Webber, "a few people felt, and some still do, that although it is a friendly competition there is too much to lose. But I hope it will be seen in a positive way and highlight the fact that there are some fantastic wines made in both regions."

Wines from each region have already been selected by independent people and will be put before the judging panel — Huon Hooke ('Sydney Morning Herald'), Trevor Mast (Mt Langi Ghiran winery) and Graeme Lynch (retailer) — and the region that wins two or more of the categories will be the winner.

The big announcement is this Friday night, 6 November, at Delgany. If I were a betting woman I would put money on the valley to win with the age of the vines, especially in the case of pinot noir and cabernet sauvignon, pushing them first past the post.



Hermann Schneider: Delgany Cup his idea.

**T**HE Yarra Valley is the winner over the Mornington Peninsula in the inaugural Delgany Cup, a contest between the two wine regions to find the best wines over three categories.

The Valley won the chardonnay and cabernet categories, but the Mornington Peninsula won the pinot section at the tastings on Friday at Delgany Country House hotel.

It was a close call. The Yarra Valley scored a total of 470 points for 18 wines; the Peninsula scored 466.

The first Delgany Cup was full of surprises. The Mornington Peninsula won the pinot class, which was as unexpected as the Yarra Valley taking out the chardonnay.

The first surprise, however, was that there had been so much hostility to the cup in its early stages. Hermann Schneider had the idea a few years ago — when he first took over Delgany at Portsea — for a friendly play-off between two wine regions close to Melbourne. In his earlier years as a wine merchant at Seabrook, he had given much support to the winemakers of the Yarra Valley; since settling on the Mornington Peninsula, he has supported those local wineries. The idea was to promote the quality of the two regions, and to bring them together in amicable rivalry.

An attempt to hold the Delgany Cup a couple of years ago failed because too many people in both regions felt there was too much at stake. Amicable rivalry? Not a bit of it; this was seen as a serious competition.

Even for the first cup, there were some who did not enter their wines.

The rules of the competition were a surprise, too, especially to the judges. Wineries from both regions were invited to submit wines in three classes — chardonnay, pinot, and cabernet sauvignon. In each region, the wines submitted were tasted blind by two independent judges, who then selected three wines in each class from each region.

Last Friday the finals judges tasted the 18 wines. They were tasted "blind", that is, without the judges knowing what they were drinking. The judges were Huon Hooke ('Sydney Morning Herald'), Trevor Mast (Mount Langi Ghiran winery) and Graeme Lynch (retailer). Their notes and scores were taken from them at the end of their judging — to their chagrin, according to one source. All the wines were presented again at dinner, at a multi-course meal that showed Hermann Schneider's cooking at its best.

The scores had been tallied, but the judges had to taste the wines again over dinner, without any of their notes. Meanwhile, the winemakers and other guests were tasting the wines over dinner and making their own judgments.

Food makes an enormous difference to wines. It's not just the good fellowship of a fine meal in amiable company, but the reactions of wine to food. Graeme Lynch spoke of the judges' disappointment with the wines overall "in the sterility of the tasting room", and the other judges, Huon Hooke and Trevor Mast, also spoke of the ways in

TUESDAY 10 NOVEMBER 1992 THE AGE

## Yarra Valley in a photo finish

*The judges had a tough job separating two Victorian wine regions in the inaugural Delgany Cup. RITA ERLICH reports.*



Delgany Cup runners: Steve Webber (left), president of the Yarra Valley Winemakers' Association, accepts the trophy from chef Hermann Schneider, the man behind the cup. On the right is Brian Stonier, of the Mornington Peninsula. Picture: JAMES LAURITZ

which the wines were different with food.

"Any wine tasting is just a snapshot, a moment in time," he said. He spoke of how the wines changed with food, how they changed in the glass during the course of the meal. The following morning he said that although he would not have altered his judgments, he thought the wines showed better with food.

Clearly, the Delgany Cup was more than a challenge between two wine regions. It also looked like a challenge to the traditional wine judging system.

The cup itself was made by silversmiths Flynn of Kyneton. It is of Bacca-

rat crystal, with a silver overlay showing the tea tree and turrets of Delgany, and a bunch of grapes. It will stay at Delgany between challenges.

The chardonnays presented at the table were all 1991, and were from Merricks, de Bortoli, Elgee Park, Yarra Edge, Moorooduc Estate, and Green Point. The 1990 pinots were de Bortoli, Moorooduc Estate, The Briars, St Huberts, Yarra Ridge, and King's Creek. The 1990 cabernets were Shan-tell, Peninsula Estate, Karina Estate, St Huberts, Dromana Estate, and Oakridge.

No one has decided yet whether the Delgany Cup will be an annual or a biennial event.



## Richmond Hill

### T'GALLANT NEW RELEASES

Kathleen Quealy and Kevin McCarthy have released their second vintage of fresh unoaked wines and have made improvements to their CHARDONNAY, \$12.95 and HOLYSTONE \$12.95, and released a miniscule amount of their first PINOT GRIS, \$14. The '92 Holystone is a blend of chardonnay and pinot noir, made to a very light rose petal pink colour (a quiz question for the sailors amongst our readers - what is the link between the name Holystone and chardonnay and pinot noir?). Sweet cherry and melon/grapefruit aromas, fragrant and fresh. Pinot noir flavours (reminiscent of rose petal delicacy) and ripe melon chardonnay characters fill out the palate. A good style, well suited to summer drinking. The '92 Chardonnay shows ripe grapes with melon and slight peach flavours - a more weightier mouthfeel than the '91. A balanced wine offering medium weight and strong sweet fruit flavours that should be served slightly chilled with pasta or a salad dish. PINOT GRIS. Several Australian wineries are becoming very interested in this grape variety, including Browns, from their distinctly cold climate Whitlands vineyard and Pipers Brook. The wine is very delicate with a distinct spicy/melon overtone. While it probably needs to settle in bottle, it definitely captures the delicacy and mouthfeel we have come to expect from this variety. P.S.

'90 DROMANA ESTATE CABERNET MERLOT, \$19.95  
A superb return to form for Dromana Estate with clearly their best Cabernet Merlot yet. A complex Bordeaux-like nose that would be at home amongst the classed growths of the Medoc. Tobacco, cedarbox and blackberry scents lead into a wonderfully complex and fully ripe palate that balances fruit, oak and tannin in a way that highlights the true capability of the Mornington Peninsula to produce magical cabernets (when everything goes well!). Excellent value and highly recommended. P.S.

DECEMBER 1992

### RICHMOND HILL CELLARS

'91 KARINA VINEYARD RIESLING, \$11.95.  
Newsletters go in cycles - Italian one month, sauvignon blancs another - this is riesling month! The Karina riesling is one of the few from the Peninsula and this one has the benefit of some bottle age. Pale straw colour with green hue - quite intense, focused flavours and an apple/grapefruit/spicy aroma. Full, mouth-filling flavours that are beautifully integrated. Finishes with a dry, almost Alsatian finish. Quite intense and very good. P.S.

'90 MAIN RIDGE CABERNET SAUVIGNON, \$21.50.  
Aromas of chocolate, violets, mulberries and a slight herbaceousness introduce this superb wine from Nat White. It has mouth-filling weight, ripe, integrated flavours and long, drying tannins. An excellent long finish rounds off what our tasting notes summarize as "a bloody good drop". Highly recommended as an example of what the Peninsula can achieve with cabernet. Quite St. Emilion like. P.S.

THE AGE TUESDAY 17 NOVEMBER 1992

## EPICURE

The Doings  
JENI PORT

### Craig Avon 1991 chardonnay \$23

Commiserations to the Mornington Peninsula on not winning the chardonnay section of the recent Delgany Cup. Perhaps they should have included this blinder from Ken Lang at Merricks North. It's punch (13.2 per cent alcohol) is more than matched by rich, sweet peachy fruit and barrel-ferment flavors. Well integrated, its true class shows on the long, drawn-out finish that probably would have seen the Delgany judges still savoring it, had it been in the line-up. Match with tandoori chicken (it can take it). Available from Gatehouse Cellars, Glenhuntly Cellars, Gipps Street Cellars and Bannockburn Cellars.

Jeni Port

**W**HAT happens when the customer finds it hard to get to you? In these times, you go to the customer, which is exactly the reason for the novel marketing philosophy of brothers Tim and Jamie Sutcliffe, of Peninsula Estate on the Mornington Peninsula.

They have taken their cellar door outlet to town, the Melbourne Central shopping centre, where they are handing out tastings by the glass and offering cellar-door prices on both their premium Peninsula Estate label and their new Point Nepean range.

The shop fronts Little Lonsdale Street (next door to The Tower Retreat Tavern in Melbourne Central). "The cellar door outlet will operate from now until Christmas," says Jamie Sutcliffe. "It's a promotion for us to show people where we are on the Peninsula and to get people to try the wines."

Three years old, the Peninsula Estate wines could still be considered relatively new to most consumers. Newer still is the Point Nepean label, due for official launch in December, a second \$10 range of blended wines from the Peninsula, Yarra and King Valleys.

Visitors to the Sutcliffe's city cellar door can expect a suitable, attractive inducement with prices approximately \$1 cheaper than recommended retail. The Estate range chardonnay and cabernet sauvignon sell for \$14.95, and the Point Nepean classic dry red and white both for \$8.70. The cellar door is open Monday to Friday from 9 am to 5 pm and Saturday from 11 am to 3 pm, and when Sunday trading occurs.

THE AGE TUESDAY 24 NOVEMBER 1992

The Doing  
JENI PORT

**L**AST week Peninsula Estate down Mornington way announced a rather novel way for people to try its wines, bringing its cellar door to the city. This week it is the turn of the delightfully named Tanglewood Downs.

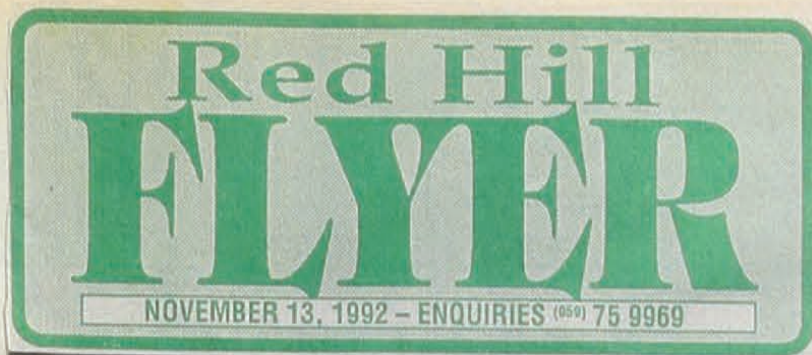
Owner Ken Bilham has decided to open for Sunday lunch on the first Sunday of each month in order to give his customers two good reasons to make a detour to his property in rural Mornington. "We are a little bit off the beaten

track," he says, "not being on a main road. But we are in a lovely spot overlooking the bay and it is a delightful setting."

Ken's daughter, Leisa, works as a glassblower from a studio on the property along with Felicity McGaw, a jeweller, so I suppose they offer a third reason to make a detour with their work on display (and for sale!). Lunch, beginning on 6 December, will comprise a buffet style selection of terrines and salads etc for \$12. Tanglewood Downs wines by the glass are available for \$3-\$4 as well as by the bottle.

Available for sale will be Ken's 1992 gewurztraminer and riesling, 1991 chardonnay and pinot noir and 1990 cabernet/merlot. Bookings are preferred by ringing (059) 74 3323, and you can use the opportunity to ask for directions to the winery in Bulldog Creek Road.





## NEWS

### Mornington wines - award winners

The reputation of Mornington Council's own wines, The Briars chardonnay and pinot noir, has been further enhanced with two medal wins at a Queensland wine show.

Last week the pinot noir was awarded a gold medal and the chardonnay a bronze at the Australian Small Winemakers' Show, Stanthorpe.

Just a week earlier, the chardonnay won a silver medal at the 1992 Victorian Wines show.

The chardonnay rated 54.5 points, just one point behind the entry from Stoniers Merricks Winery which won gold with 55.5 points.

Both wines from The Briars, an historic property

owned and run by Mornington Council at Mt Martha, are favourable reviewed in the latest edition of The Penguin Good Australian Wine Guide.

The guide says the chardonnay is "extremely good" and the pinot noir "very good".

Coordinator of The Briars activities David Gray, said the wine guide ratings were particularly pleasing as they came from a highly regarded independent authority.

The chardonnay was rated four out of five, being an "extremely good wine which can cause no complaint, even with the most fastidious drinker. No grave faults and drinks very well."

The authors described the

1991 first release vintage as a "light yellow colour, the nose shows some complex barrel-ferment smells with a tropical fruit overlay and a soft accessible palate of peaches and melons and well integrated finish."

It was recommended that the chardonnay be enjoyed with local seafood.

Rating 3.5, the pinot noir was noted as being a "very good wine with a semblance of style and class, drinks well and causes no disappointment."

The wines were described as being the result of an entrepreneurial exercise by the Mornington Council which would become successful if they continued to produce quality wines such as these in

the future.

Mornington is the only Victorian municipality that can boast being a wine producer.

Grapes grown at the 230 hectare Briars property are processed and bottled at Yarra Glen by renowned winemaker Brian Fletcher, of St Hubert's.

Orders for The Briars municipal wine can be made through Mornington Civic Centre, phone (059) 75 4155, or at the property's wine centre, Melways 145/D11.

The wines can be sampled at the property's wine tasting centre.

The wine tasting centre at The Briars is open on Saturdays and Sundays from midday to 5 pm.

### LEON'S LARGESS

At least half of Melbourne's dining public must owe Leon Massoni a drink. For more years than he cares to remember he dispensed largess and free drink in such famous restaurants as Florentino, Tolamo and Balzac.

I particularly enjoyed the Massoni attitude to bringing your own. There

was no corkage charge, but Leon reserved the right to try the wine if the bottle looked interesting. Wine was one of his consuming passions and you felt honoured if your bottle was interesting enough for him to demand a glass.

Many diners were saddened when he left the restaurant industry and retired to the Mornington Peninsula. But blokes like Massoni don't really retire, they turn into winemakers.

These days he is pounding the hustings selling his latest pet, the Massoni chardonnay 1991. What a wine! It is as generous as its maker and twice as complex. It sells for \$22.50 but that's not a heavy fine for what you are getting.

There are spice, nuts and grapefruit smells on the nose and the palate offers peach and citrus flavours that are married to a sophisticated oak treatment. It is dashing, with a certain rakish charm. It would be a great aid to seduction, because drinking a bottle is a heady, sensuous experience.

But that's only half the story: there is a yet-to-be-released lethal weapon waiting in the wings, the Massoni pinot noir 1991. It will weigh in at a heady 14 per cent alcohol by volume and it is not for wimps or timorous wine virgins. It is a wanton, bawdy wine with slabs of flavour and mouth feel. Although in very limited supply, it is an indication that, with the right weather, the Mornington Peninsula can make substantial wines.

With Leon Massoni still spreading joy to hedonists, the Massoni label is a symbol that the good times are here again.

MARK SHIELD



GOOD WEEKEND

28/11/92

THE AUSTRALIAN  
THE WEEKEND REVIEW DECEMBER 6-6, 1992

### HALLIDAY'S CHOICE

A MONTH or so ago my choice fell on the un-oaked 1992 Plantagenet Omrah Vineyard Chardonnay. For those wishing to avoid oak, yet end up with a wine of substance, Mornington Peninsula's T'Gallant (run by the husband and wife team of Kevin McCarthy and Kat Quealy) provides just two wines, neither of which is oaked.

\* They are the 1992 Chardonnay and the 1992 Hollystone (both around \$13), the latter a blend of pinot noir and chardonnay. 1992 was an outstanding vintage in the Mornington Peninsula, and both of these wines have considerable richness and character, notwithstanding their youth. What is more, while designed to be sold and drunk while young, I would not mind betting they will develop considerable complexity with 10 years' bottle age. The wines are reasonably well distributed in Melbourne, but if you have difficulties locating them, telephone (059) 831 058.



The Sydney Morning Herald

## GLIMBIBES

# Victoria's Delgany Cup brings out

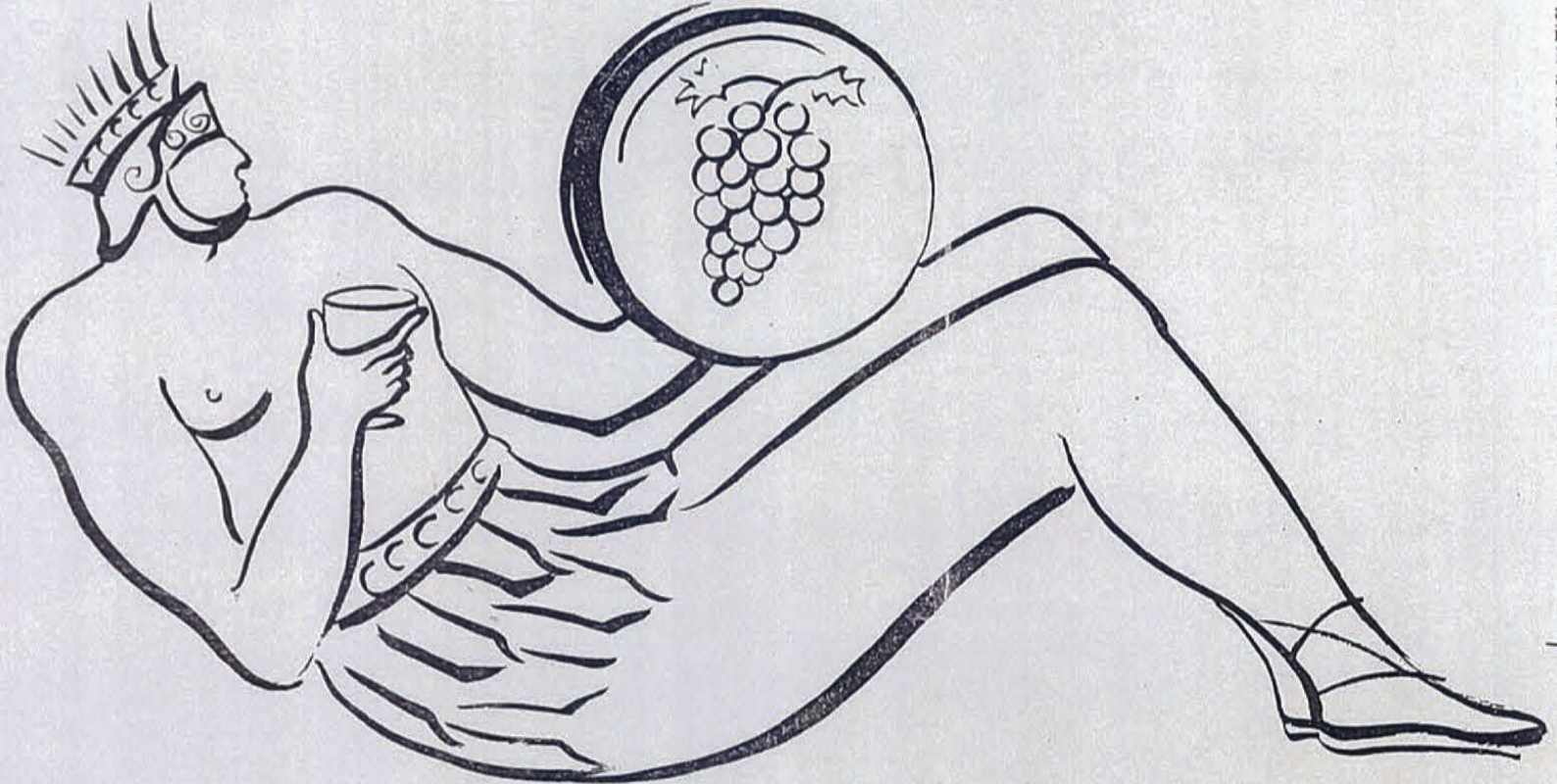
**FINE WINE**  
HUON HOOKE

**T**HE Yarra Valley has waxed victorious in the inaugural Delgany Cup: a competition which pitted the Yarra's wines against those of its rival neighbour, the Mornington Peninsula. But it was touch and go: the Yarra won by a mere four points and there could easily have been an upset.

The idea of judging three chardonnays, three pinot noirs and three cabernet-based reds from each district first came to Hermann Schneider, renowned Two Faces chef and manager of Delgany House at Portsea, over a year ago. Rather than a do-or-die contest between the regions, it was to be a lighthearted, fun exercise and the precise details of the result were never to be revealed. Even the judges: myself, winemaker Trevor Mast (of Mount Langi Ghiran) and Melbourne retailer Graeme Lynch, were not told the identities of the wines during or after the judging.

Only when the wines were served with a sumptuous six-course Hermann Schneider dinner for 85 people were we allowed to retaste the wines, this time knowing their identity.

Of course, like the Qantas Cups between the US and Australia several years ago, the critical factor is the selection of the wines for the final. If they aren't the best available, this is a major handicap. One Mornington chardonnay, which shall remain nameless in the interests of the spirit of the event, showed a bad oak character and/or volatility at both the judging and the dinner.



Bad bottles? Maybe. If this wine had not been included the Yarra, which must have started the overall favourite, would almost certainly have eaten crow.

The Yarra has an advantage in being a bigger and longer-established region. In its disfavour, however, was the fact that several key wineries declined to participate in the tournament.

As it happened, the Yarra won the chardonnay and cabernet sections, Mornington the pinots. The event was judged at a leisurely pace in Delgany's conference centre, a sandstone building which had been the stables in Mr Harold Armytage's original, grand country house, which he built in the 1920s.

The Armytage family, landed gentry of a most Victorian kind, also owned

the historic house Como in South Yarra.

After Harold Armytage's passing, his sisters at Como inherited Delgany House, a grand place with Roman arches and Tudor battlements inspired by castles in the "old country". It later served as a convalescent hospital, a school for deaf children and a headquarters for the 62nd Australian Camp Hospital during World War II. Extensions added in 1951 and '68 were strictly in keeping with the original Armytage buildings.

Armytage's Delgany was not the first building on the site: Judge a'Beckett built his home there in the 1880s. The stone from his house was used to build Armytage's stables, which served as an excellent, naturally-lit tasting room.

A seriously luxurious guesthouse

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### 1990 Dromana Estate Cabernet Merlot

By far the most concentrated and rich wine so far to come from this producer of wines more often noted for their fruity fragrance. Dark berry, blackcurrant fruit is balanced by well-integrated oak and fine-grained tannins, leading to a long, smooth finish. For sweet, richer meat dishes or creamier cheeses. \$19.95



THE AUSTRALIAN MAGAZINE 31



Tuesday, November 17, 1992 45

## it the best

aurant, way down the Morn-  
eninsula, across the bay from  
ne, was perhaps a bit remote  
gany has not had an easy time  
new life began in 1988. It's  
n receivership, but the Schnei-  
rmann and Fay, soldier on and  
uld never know there were  
ns to visit this immaculate  
Beautifully tended lawns,  
nd flower beds, quietly elegant  
elaxed rooms and restaurant  
t indeed and well deserve their  
t Chateaux ratings for both  
odation and cooking.

Swiss-born Hermann Schneider  
erful matcher of food and wine  
ne out by the dinner, where each  
eemed to partner each of the  
e styles of wine superbly. With  
hardonnays there was a timbale  
in a light herb jelly with lamb's  
alad and sauce grelette. It was  
with the delicate cool-climate  
nays, all 1991s, especially the  
ght DeBortoli, the crisp, tart,  
Green Point (from Domaine  
n), the fine Chablis-style Stoni-  
also the richer, more complex  
duc Estate.

grilled rosette of Atlantic salmon  
paragus spears and orange-  
beurre blanc was also an  
choice with the chardonnays.

the six 1991 pinot noirs,  
er chose a cassoulet of squab  
with lentils and young peas.  
owed off the fuller wines, such  
ra Ridge and Moorooduc  
admirably, but the Kings  
ny favourite in the bracket, was  
ine harmony. The latter is quite  
/vegetal pinot, aromas which  
thinness and acidity. But this  
so: there was wonderful depth  
plex, sweet, sappy pinot fruit  
lingering finish.

The Yarra Ridge may have been  
criticised in some circles for a slightly  
meaty aroma, but its weight and  
structure were most impressive and it  
improved the more it aired.

By now the progress score was  
one-all, and the crowd was on the edge  
of their seats.

Cabernet could be expected to  
favour the Yarra Valley, where many  
delicious examples have been made,  
especially in the nominated year, 1990.  
And yes: the elegant ripe-berry  
flavours, classy oak treatments, the  
beautifully finished wines of the Yarra  
came out on top.

Oakridge Reserve and St Huberts  
were my favourites, but Mornington's  
Dromana Estate Cabernet Merlot was  
a close third. Hermann Schneider  
chose saddle of spring lamb served on  
eggplant puree with a ratatouille jus  
flavoured with tapenade: another  
highly sympatico dish.

The wines from both these fashion-  
able Victorian regions seem to improve  
in leaps and bounds each year and if  
French wisdom that vine age is  
important holds true, we can expect  
they will continue to better themselves  
as the young vines — as well as  
winemakers and viticulturalists —  
mature.

The fears of some Yarra vigneron  
that the competition was dangerous,  
that it would degenerate into tooth-  
and-nail winners and losers, that the  
Yarra had nothing to gain but every-  
thing to lose, were unfounded.

I predict that this intelligently  
conceived, elegantly executed and  
civilised bi-regional promotion will  
become an annual event. Not only that  
— wangling a seat at next year's  
Delgany Cup dinner will be the only  
gladiatorial part of the proceedings.

FOR READERSHIP

THE INDEPENDENT, Tuesday, November 17, 1992

## Dine-out

## WINE

# Yarra Valley takes wine cup

**B**y a margin of only  
three and a quarter  
points the Yarra Val-  
ley won the Delgany Cup

The inaugural 1992 Del-  
gany Cup was contested  
by the Mornington Penin-  
sula Vignerons and the  
Yarra Valley Wine Growers  
on Friday November 6,  
at the magnificent Delgany  
Country House Hotel.

Wines from both re-  
gions, in three classes  
(1991 chardonnay, 1991  
pinot noir and 1990 caber-  
net) had been judged dur-  
ing the afternoon, and  
as the gala dinner com-  
menced excitement and  
anticipation was growing  
— which wine region would  
collect the magnificent  
(perpetual) trophy crafted  
by master silver smiths

Dan and John Flynn of  
Kyenton.

The six chardonnays  
were served with the first  
two courses of a mag-  
nificent dinner created  
by Hermann Schneider.  
The wines beautifully com-  
plimented a Timbale of  
King Crab meat in alight  
herb jelly, and the Char  
grilled rosette of Atlantic  
Salmon with green as-  
paragus spears served  
with an orange scented  
beurre blanc.

Following these first  
two dishes, Graeme Lynch  
(member of the judging  
panel and wine retailer)  
described the special char-  
acteristic and qualities  
found in those wines before  
announcing that the win-  
ning region in the chardon-

nay class was the Yarra  
Valley.

The pinot noir class fol-  
lowed and the wines were  
enjoyed with a Cassoulet  
of Squab pigeon with  
lentils and young peas.  
Huon Hooke (chairman  
of the judging panel  
and Sydney Morning  
Herald Journalist) cap-  
tured the attention of  
the 85 dinner guests  
with his comments about  
this class and his rev-  
elation that the winner  
of the pinot noir cat-  
egory was the Morn-  
ington Peninsula.

With the regions locked  
at one class each, there  
was much consideration  
of the cabernets as they  
were served with a Saddle  
of Spring Lamb boned,



served on  
an egg-  
plant  
puree  
and a ratatouille jus  
flavoured with a tapenade.

Speculation was running  
high, and it was observed  
that money was changing  
hands in the final betting  
for the winner of the caber-  
net class, the region which  
then of course would au-  
tomatically be the winner  
of the inaugural 1992 Del-  
gany Cup.

Almost everyone in the  
Two Faces dining room

were on their feet,  
anticipating every  
comment made  
about the cabernets  
by Trevor Mast  
(member of the judging  
panel and winemaker from  
Mt Langi Ghiran).  
Finally, after expres-  
sing his delight at  
the quality of all  
of the wines from  
both regions, he an-  
nounced the winner  
— The Yarra Valley.

As the strong con-  
tingent of winemakers  
and supporters from both  
regions settled down to  
reflect on the result over  
a wonderful Medley of  
new seasons fruits  
and berries served  
with dairy delicacies,  
the clear consensus

was that the event had  
proven an outstanding  
success for all. The at-  
mosphere was electric  
with camaraderie and  
good cheer. Wine makers  
and growers embraced  
the occasion with a sense  
of fun, and the business  
of enjoying fine wine and  
superb food was the only  
serious item on the agenda.

Final score: Yarra Valley  
470pts; Peninsula 466.75.





## Results vindicate Garry Crittenden's 'over the top' grape growing technique

By Alan Hill

"MOST winelovers have a fantasy about growing their own grapes and making their own wine," says Garry Crittenden. For Garry and his wife Margaret, the dream started to become reality in 1981, when the Crittendens bought a superb piece of land near the township of Dromana on Victoria's Mornington Peninsula, about an hour's drive south-east of Melbourne.

Having managed a plant nursery on the Peninsula for 20 years, Garry recognised the importance of climate and soil. "At Dromana Estate we are only a few kilometres from Port Phillip Bay, and the gentle sea breezes have a moderating effect, extending but also slowing down the growing season," says Garry. "Our soil is sandy, grey loam over well-drained clay – it's good, but not good enough to encourage over-vigorous vine growth."

Garry and Margaret set about building a sprawling, colonial-style house and constructing a one hectare lake which holds more than 20 million litres of water for drip irrigation of the vines in summer. Then Garry planted his long, straight rows of vines. As they



Left: Garry and Margaret Crittenden:  
"Great wine is made mostly in the vineyards."

# DROMANA

grew, he trained the vine shoots upwards to allow the fruit to mature in the best possible way, with plenty of sunlight.

Garry continues his experiments with new trellising and canopy management techniques, aimed at bringing the correct level of light exposure to the grapes so that fruit ripeness is balanced by moderately high acidity, essential for the production of quality table wines. "Great wine is made mostly in the vineyard," Garry asserts.

Rival winemakers who scoffed at Crittenden's "over-the-top" vineyard management techniques were confounded by his first wines, which collected show awards and rave reviews from wine writers. They wanted to know if they could do it, too. "I was giving so much free advice," says Garry, "that I decided to start a viticultural consultancy service."

The new business gained even more clients when Dromana Estate was chosen as Victorian Vineyard

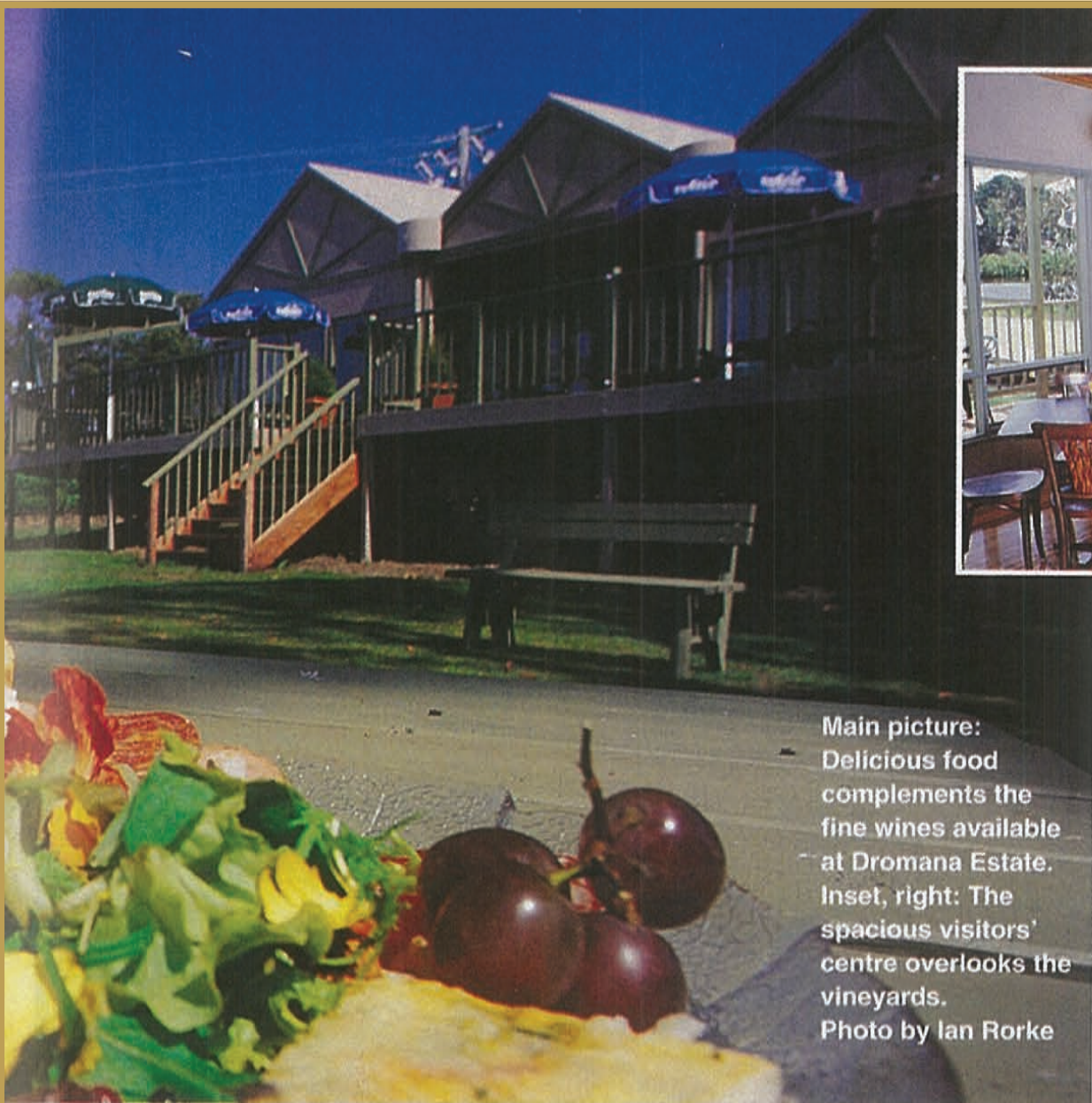
of the Year in 1989.

Dromana Estate wines are made in small quantities from grapes grown only on the property. Garry's small winery combines time-honored traditions with the latest in high-tech equipment; a computer monitors the fermentation process and tank temperatures, and an air-conditioned barrel store houses the finest of French oak casks.

The distinctive circular Dromana Estate label carries a motif by Melbourne artist David Wright, which has been reproduced from a stained glass panel in the Crittenden's front door. It depicts "the birth of wine and its progression to the mind of man".

On his trips around Australia advising on improved vineyard layout, Garry found small batches of excellent grapes that were being sold to bulk producers. Why couldn't these grapes be made into individual wines, which would retain varietal flavors while demon-





Main picture:  
Delicious food  
complements the  
fine wines available  
at Dromana Estate.  
Inset, right: The  
spacious visitors'  
centre overlooks the  
vineyards.  
Photo by Ian Rorke



# DREAMING

strating the diversity of styles attributable to different soils and climates? Thus a "second label" was born, with fruit obtained from premium wine regions in Victoria and South Australia, as well as from some of the 85 vineyards now planted in the Mornington Peninsula region.

Garry initially had trouble naming these wines. "At first we called them 'the Garry Crittenden Selection'," he explains, "but this was confused by wine stores and consumers with Melbourne's Crittenden Cellars (no relation). Then we gave rein to my eccentricity with 'Schinus Molle', the botanical name for the peppercorn tree, a favorite of mine from the nursery business." This has now been streamlined to 'Schinus', with the bottles featuring distinctive blue and gold strip labels and a new capsule, called a 'cap-vin', which flips open when you are ready to remove the cork.

The world has come to appreci-

ate the fresh fruit primary flavors of the Schinus whites and rich plummy character of the reds. Forty per cent of production is now exported, principally to Britain, and Garry visits Europe regularly to promote his wines. He is an executive of the Victorian Wine Industry Association and is chairperson of the exporters' sub-committee of that body. Recently, he was invited to join the newly-formed Victorian Wines Tourism Council.

Garry and Margaret's latest contribution to wine tourism opened last Christmas. It's an impressive, free-standing visitors' centre, where guests may enjoy complementary tastings of the complete Dromana Estate and Schinus ranges. There are barbecue and picnic facilities, and gourmet snack platters are offered at weekends. Dromana and Schinus wines are available for sale, by the bottle or the glass, to visitors who are comfortably seated in the air-conditioned interior, on the outdoor deck overlooking the vine-

yard, or in the garden beside the lake. The Crittendens welcome visitors every day of the year 11am to 4pm, with the exception of Christmas Day, Boxing Day and Good Friday.

The Schinus wines include Garry's second chenin blanc, a King Valley wine with fresh and quince characters. *Schinus Sauvignon Blanc* has masses of herbal flavor and bracing crisp acidity, and the 1990 Schinus sparkling fizz made predominantly from pinot noir. A 1993 chardonnay was released in July. Schinus reds include a fine, full 1991 cabernet sauvignon, made predominantly from Coonawarra grapes, with significant Yarra and Mornington contributions, and a soft, mouth-filling 1992 chardonnay, an Italian grape variety grown in the central west of Victoria.

*Dromana Estate 1990 Cabernet Merlot* is Garry's biggest and most concentrated red so far. It has integrated oak and fine tannins, balancing rich blackcurrant tastes; a delicious wine to enjoy with veal or lamb. The 1992 pinot noir from Dromana Estate has all the attributes of a top class pinot – fragrance, spice, and softness on the palate. Try it with duck, quail or Tasmanian salmon. *Dromana Estate 1992 Chardonnay* is a delight, exuding tropical fruit flavors and grilled nuts, with superbly well-married oak. Cellar some.

Queen's Birthday weekend (12-14) is a good time for wine lovers to visit the Peninsula. Mornington Wine Festival starts on Saturday with a tasting, in the Mornington Arts Complex, of wines from 20 producers. For the remainder of the weekend there will be wine days at a number of vineyards, tastings, food and entertainment. Contact the promotions office on 744-200 for further details.



TUESDAY 8 DECEMBER 1992 THE AGE 29

5



Their wines are winners (from left): Beverley Campbell (Tisdall/Mount Ida), Katherine de Puy (Yeringberg), Jean Pierre Gutierre, president of the French Chamber of Commerce, Suzanne Halliday (Coldstream Hills) and Brian Stonier (Stonier Merricks).

Picture: CRAIG ABRAHAM

## Judges say *bon* to Victorian chardonnays

*JENI PORT reports on the winners of the annual Concours des Vin awards.*

**T**HEY said it would never last, but three years on Le Concours des Vin awards for Victorian wines, sponsored by the French Chamber of Commerce, still has its supporters. And none more enthusiastic than this year's winners: Coldstream Hills for best 1991 chardonnay; Stonier's Merricks for best 1991 pinot noir; Tisdall/Mount Ida for best 1990 shiraz and Yeringberg for best 1990 cabernet/cabernet blend.

It is hoped that a win of this type will help Victorian wine companies "reinforce their credentials" on the export market, particularly in Europe. It is an ironical turn of phrase given the recent French demonstrations in protection of their domestic industries, but then Australia seems to have enjoyed a privileged position with the

French as a result of substantial investment in our wine industry.

The judges this year — Hermann Schneider of Delgany Country House Hotel, Brett Crittenden of Domaine Chandon, restaurateur Daniel Gerard, wine importer Berek Segal and wine writers Tony Hitchin and myself under the chairmanship of Claude Foulon of the French Chamber of Commerce — had more than 100 wines to taste.

As in previous years, the chardonnay class (1991 vintage only) was far and away the most exciting and challenging, with well-made, balanced wines with good integration of fruit and new oak. Special distinctions went to Chateau Tahbilk, Yeringberg, Mitchelton and Scotchmans Hill.

The pinot noir class ('91 vintage)

continued to be populated with a variety of styles, but at least the number of strawberry cordials was well down on previous years. Distinctions went to the Briars (Mornington Peninsula) and Coldstream Hills. The shiraz class ('90 vintage) was small and distinguished by sharp tannins and a lack of fruit. However, there were some highlights, and distinctions went to Boynton's of Bright and Craiglee.

In contrast, the cabernet sauvignon/cabernet blend class ('90 vintage) was a delight to judge with a clear dividing line between cooler, finer textured wines and those with obvious ripe fruit and fuller in style. The distinctions were a mixture of the two: Mitchelton, Moorooduc Estate, Redbank and Ian Hanson (Yarra Valley).





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2000+







## THE PENINSULA'S FIRST FAMILY OF WINE

*Reunites under a New Banner*

There's a touch of the 'dynastic' when Rollo Crittenden wanders the vineyard, tending the vines he planted in 1982 as a six year old boy with his father, Garry.

While it's not a vineyard succession story of Burgundian magnitude, the return of the Crittenden children to help consolidate and grow a new family venture has brought a smile to many Peninsula faces.

The recent growth of the Peninsula's wine and tourism industry has obscured the major roles played by Margaret and Garry Crittenden to re-image the region during the 1980s and '90s.

Always canny marketers and the first to establish a quality cellar door eatery, they paved the way for the viticultural and gastronomic success of today's local industry. Garry also headed-up the then new regional tourism body, which first united tourism and wine operators under a common marketing cause.

The Crittendens still occupy the parcel of land in Harrison's Road, Dromana that they bought in the early '80s, but nowadays the bucolic lakeside property also features luxury villas, an award winning restaurant and a hip cellar door facility.

Daughter Zoe has temporarily put aside a career as an educational psychologist to help with the marketing. After five years as chief wine maker for a rival business, Rollo returned to the fold last July to also help build the new brand 'Crittenden Estate'. It embraces Gepetto Wines and the Pinocchio line of Italian varieties.

A new look, new varieties and a new attitude are on the way. Far from wearying the 65 year old Crittenden Senior, he finds the new challenge invigorating, even after spending half a lifetime establishing his former wine brand.

2003 was a watershed year for the family, when Garry broke ties with the company he founded,



Dromana Estate, and started afresh with the small scale Gepetto and Pinocchio wines.

"I thought I'd just dabble in semi-retirement with a couple of thousand cases of wine. I went back to basics, with wine tastings, talks and working the media. There was no real pressure to reach any great heights. I just wanted to doddle along and have some fun.

"The residual good will towards us on the Peninsula saw us grow from a standing start to where we are now in just four years, in an era when it's very hard to start a new label. It's only recently that we have had business plans and have started to worry about growth.

"We commissioned a brand-audit and discovered that the market was actually confused by the name, location and personnel changes during recent years.

"So, we've made sure that our new brand and venture clearly communicates that we're still here at Harrison's Road and that we will be doing some exciting things over the years ahead. We're re-branding and re-imaging everything to emphasise the connection with our family and the property. Even in the vineyard, a major grafting program is underway to introduce new varieties and new clones."

While Rollo has taken-on the winemaking aspects of the business, including establishing a new wine-making facility at Patterson Lakes, Garry does not see it as an opportunity to slide into his slippers and a few rounds of midweek golf.

In fact, it was his father's vision and ongoing enthusiasm for trying new things that appealed to Rollo.

"I can't see any time when he will not be involved in the company, but he wants to work 'on' the business rather than 'in' it. He's always coming up with ideas and new

strategies, so I guess I'll be running around after him, picking up the threads to put the projects into action."

Crittenden Senior says that Rollo's time away from the family business, establishing a new winery and as its chief winemaker for five years, gave him invaluable experience and helped to build his industry profile.

"He certainly didn't given up a well paid job to work under his father again. He works alongside me and will eventually work for himself. There's certainly an element of succession planning in our thinking. His business card says 'Wine Maker', but he has a much broader role than that."

Rollo recently married Linda Wilde, his partner of seven years, who, while not working in the wine business, shares his passion for quality food and wine (see panel).

Margaret Crittenden's love of quality food and local produce still finds expression through her highly regarded home-made chutneys, relishes, jams and marmalades, which are available at cellar door. However, her own mid-life rejuvenation has taken the form of three luxury lakeside villas established on the property. She masterminded them from concept through to planning, design and construction.

Re-working of the lake has ensured that there is always water under the front balconies of the villas. A number of promontories around the perimeter are linked by a wetland walk. It completes the resort feel of the property, which has grown enormously in its reputation for fine food since Jacquie and Zac Poulier leased the restaurant in 2004.

Two year old grandson Fin is the third generation of Crittendens to grow up among the vines and if his activity and burlings around the kitchen table are any indication, the future of the dynasty is in good hands.

- Tim Bracher  
www.gdlife.com.au | 5



Where else does a winemaker propose to his partner, but in the hills of Italy's Piedmont, and while the honeymoon in Tasmania was a little cooler, it was not lacking in supplying the fruits of the vine and the Apple Isle's renowned food.

The newest Mrs. Crittenden, 29 year old Linda Wilde, is a local property valuer and having been born and raised on the Peninsula, she knows every piece of our beautiful boot of land.

The Mornington couple share a love of travel and despite not having any previous association with wine, Rollo Crittenden says his wife is rapidly developing a 'smart' palate, is passionate about quality food & wine, & enjoys the social opportunities that his job brings - what more could a winemaker want in a wife?

October 28, 2007 escape THE SUNDAY TELEGRAPH

### A taste of luxury

Where: Mornington Peninsula

When: Now

Cost: \$220 a night low season to \$250 high

Details: (03) 5987 3275,  
www.lakesidevillas.com.au

VICTORIA'S Mornington Peninsula is one of Australia's favourite wine-tasting destinations, and now the seaside region has a luxurious new place to stay.

At the foot of Red Hill, five minutes from the ocean beaches and an hour's drive from Melbourne, is Lakeside Villas, in the Crittenden Estate winery and vineyard.

Each villa features open-plan living and dining rooms, a kitchen and laundry, LCD television, a DVD/CD player and a double spa bath.

There's also a tennis court, a wine-tasting room (which is open from 11am to 4pm daily) and the award-winning Stillwater Restaurant.

Fare at the restaurant includes double-cooked pork belly; crisp-fried, soft-shell crab; roasted free-range spatchcock; and daube of lamb rump in red wine sauce.

### DRINK: 2010 Crittenden Estate Pinot Noir, Mornington Peninsula, A\$33

Onion, carrot and leek give substance to this traditional pie but it's the density and intensity of the prawns and fish (especially the smoked haddock) that defines this dish. A robust, white could work but the buttery rich cushion of the mashed potato adds another dimension, making a pinot noir (with its extra depth and structure) the obvious choice. Avoid a big, brash overtly tannic pinot and head to Tasmania or the Mornington Peninsula for a more genteel, seductive style. Rollo Crittenden's latest release displays sweet red-berry fruit flavours that work well with the prawns and salmon with sufficient acid to cut the buttery richness. The weight of the wine and that of the dish are in perfect balance, sealing the partnership.

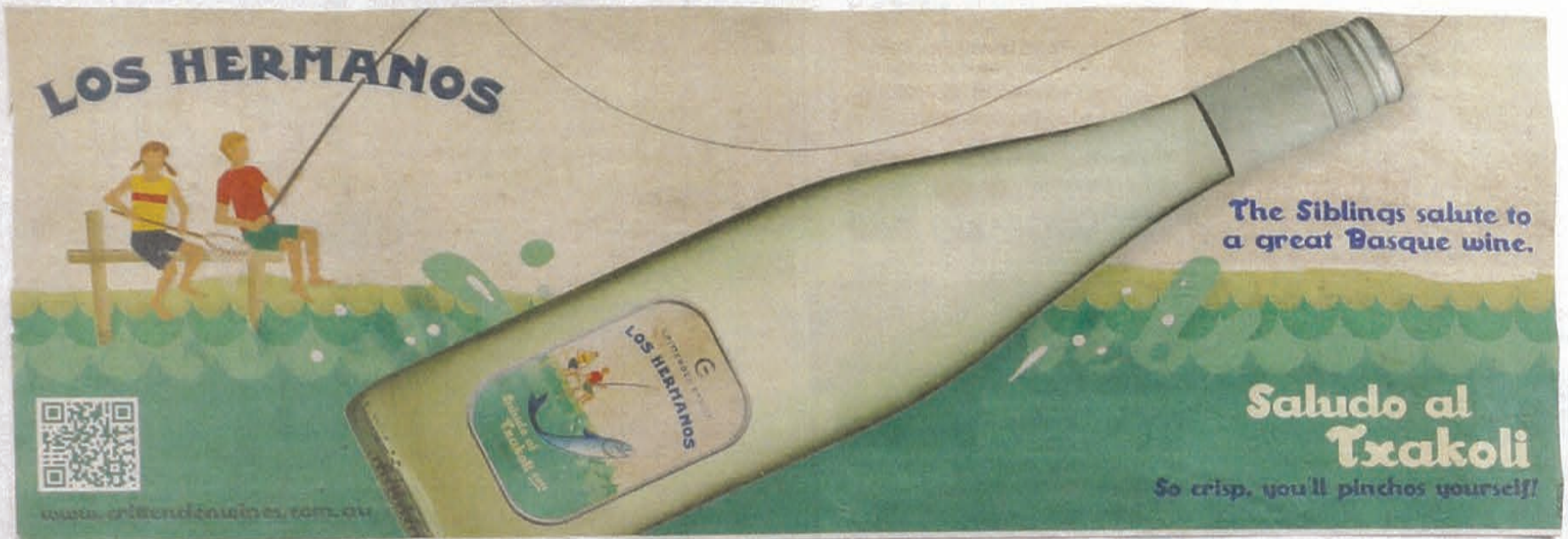
One of my absolute favourite varieties is produced by Garry Crittenden on the Mornington Peninsula under his Gepetto label. It is made from 100 per cent semi-ripe pinot noir grapes and is a gorgeous rose colour. He suggests using it to make a verjus spritzer by combining equal quantities of verjus and soda. It's a sensational summer tippie.

So this ancient condiment turns out to be one of the most versatile, celebrating freshness, lightness and complexity in a single, time-honoured product. What do you know? Everything old is new again! GW

GW Living **food** BY CATH CLARINGBOLD

Good Weekend October 25, 2008





NEWS WEEKLY - YOUR COMMUNITY VOICE August 31, 2011

## 'Family' drop in wine awards

BY JO WINTERBOTTOM

A MORNINGTON Peninsula wine has been chosen to represent Australia in a prestigious international wine challenge.

Crittenden Estate's 'The Zumma' pinot noir obviously impressed wine judge Huon Hook and it also has a special place in the large stable of Crittenden family wines.

The wine is one of seven judged Australia's best examples of this famed classic variety and will be tasted as part of the 2011 Five Nations Challenge, in which wines from Australia, South Africa, New Zealand, Argentina and Chile will compete in what is believed to be the only by-invitation wine show in the world.

Mr Hooke chose the Australian wines and will be joined by judges from the other countries for the tastings in Sydney next month. There will also be events in Hong Kong and China, two emerging and potentially large markets for Australian winemakers.

The Zumma, Crittenden Estate's flagship pinot noir, is named after Zoe Crittenden, daughter of Crittenden Estate founder and director, Gary Crittenden.

It was the name given her by brother Rollo when he was rodding around the winery in



Family success: A wine named after Zoe Crittenden, pictured in the family vineyard at Dromana with brother Rollo and father Gary, will represent Australia in an international competition. Picture: Yanni

Harrisons Road, Dromana, as their father set about putting the Mornington Peninsula on the wine map.

His vines in Harrisons Road, planted in 1982, are among the oldest on the peninsula.

With the added complexity and character of age, these are the grapes reserved for the best wines, including The Zumma pinot noir.

Now Rollo is the winemaker for the Crittenden Estate, Pinocchio, Geppetto and Los Hermanos labels and Zoe handles marketing.

Ms Crittenden said being chosen for the Five Nations Challenge was a fillip for the company and the Mornington Peninsula region, which has steadily built a reputation as one of Australia's premier pinot noir regions.

By Jane Faulkner.

THE AGE Saturday, January 8, 2011

### 4 LOS HERMANOS HOMENAJE A CATALUNA 2009, \$25

LOS HERMANOS, or siblings Zoe and Rollo Crittenden, continue on their Spanish theme with this terrific blend of tempranillo, mataro and garnacha — their "homage to Catalonia". They've created a red that's perfect for summer: on the lighter side of medium bodied, not at all heavy as there's no new oak, with supple tannins. It's vibrant with bright, juicy fruit, really spicy and spiked with peppery notes. Drink young with a plate of jamon or a barbecued steak. Available Prince Wine Store, South Melbourne.



Stillwater At Crittenden (and top far right); Montalto (right and below far right)





## Matt Skinner Uncorked

Food-friendly reds



sunday life



JUNE 5 2011

**McIVOR Estate Sangiovese 2008**  
Heathcote, Vic, \$25

Expect a pure and textbook sangiovese nose of bitter cherry, tobacco and dried leather. In the mouth, it's beautifully fruited, mineral and has terrific structure courtesy of sangiovese tannin and acidity. Drink it with pizza margherita.

**Crittenden Estate Los Hermanos Homage a Catalunya 2009**  
Multi-regional, Vic, \$30

With a nod to the wines of Spain's north-east, locally grown tempranillo, matoro and grenache join forces to provide a bright and perfumed red that smells of blackcurrant, lavender, white pepper and earth. Soft and spicy on the palate, it has lots of dark, chewy fruit and dry, grippy tannin. Pair it with chargrilled chorizo.

**Tschierke The Curse Zinfandel 2008**  
Barossa Valley, SA, \$35

Deep, dark and multi-layered, this delivers smells of fruitcake, spice and spirit along with cool earth, sandalwood and tobacco. The palate is fruit-forward and generous, with lots of plum and raspberry flavour, but not over the top. Oak, tannin and alcohol are all kept nicely in check. Drink it with lamb shanks and polenta.

## Working Partnerships - Keeping it in the Family ZOE & ROLLO CRITTENDEN

Crittenden Estate is a story about two generations of a celebrated winemaking family who have come together to achieve something really significant. With more than 25 years of viticulture and winemaking experience, Garry Crittenden is widely regarded as a leader of the Mornington Peninsula wine industry. When he sold Dromana Estate - a brand he took over twenty years to develop - he began working on a new venture and invited his daughter, marketing manager, Zoe, and winemaking son, Rollo, to join him. Crittenden Estate is a boutique, family business with great energy and a focus on innovative winemaking and wines that have quickly caught the public's imagination. Visitor Magazine spoke to Rollo and Zoe - siblings who grew up immersed in the family wine culture - about how they came to work together.

**How long have you two worked together?**

"We'd really like to say all of our lives," says Zoe. "But in reality, I worked as a secondary school teacher before coming to work for Dad in 2004. Rollo came across and started working during the 2007 vintage. In the Dromana Estate days, it was very much a family affair: Rollo worked during vintage, Margaret, our mum, was in the restaurant, Dad made the wines and I grew up amongst it," she says.

**What key factors made you decide to work together?**

All the Crittendens are passionate about wine. Recently Dad made the decision to step back a bit which allowed us kids to take more control of the business. We wanted to work as a family and work on common goals so we saw this as an opportunity to build something for our own children & something that they could eventually take over," says Rollo.

**What is the best thing about working with your sibling?**

We feel very lucky that our families are living together on the Peninsula. The scenario almost is the classic Italian model in that the grandparents now look after the grandchildren and the children in the middle have taken over and run the family business," Rollo adds. "We know, respect and care for each other - an ideal environment to build a successful business."

**What is your greatest achievement?**

Children are by far my greatest achievement," says Zoe. Rollo is quick to point out that they are the next generation - the future. Both agree that they are

proud about the wonderful relationship they share with the winery and sales staff. "They can have a laugh and we genuinely enjoy our time together. The staff at Crittenden is a close knit team, very much an extended family" says Zoe.

**Most memorable moment at work?**

Rollo recently won the prestigious 2010 Australian Young Gun of Wine Award. Both acknowledge that this has lifted his standing and profile considerably, allowing him the opportunity to progress interests close to his heart, particularly organic farming and expanding the range of wine styles and varieties.

**If you had to advise someone who is about to go into your situation what would you teach them?**

"Set parameters; people need to have distinct roles, structure and an element of formality. I would also suggest that when you have family events don't always talk about work. This, of course, is tricky especially at our family events as there's always a wine focus but you must remember, family first and business second," says Rollo.

**What drew you to the Mornington Peninsula?**

"We were both born in Frankston Hospital, so the Peninsula is very much home," says Rollo. "If we weren't here already then we would have been drawn to the region as it is so beautiful and you can make some really flavoursome wines, particularly Pinot Noir."

**How do you see the tourism future on the Mornington Peninsula?**

"The industry has evolved down here. Today it is a far more serious player; the region really flies the flag for pinot noir. Vested interest has grown and we all need to keep up. Having said this, we all still enjoy the good natured banter in the region. People are interested in genuine experiences and a wholesome, heartfelt product. This is the strength of the region and I hope that as it continues to grow it is able to retain this organic element. People love to discover things and the Peninsula is still very much somewhere you will find hidden treasures up a secret



laneway. You can meander around not just wineries but cheese makers, art galleries, a brewery & it offers a lovely child-friendly experience, a place to discover & fill your hamper with goodies," says Rollo.

**How and where do you like to relax when not at work?**

"We both do lots of entertaining and most of our friends either work in the industry or in restaurants etc," Zoe continues. "Most leisure time is spent eating good food, drinking wine and spending time with friends and family."

**If you could have done anything else in life what would it have been?**

"Even before you get a passion for wine, living right next door to a winery there was always something going on - machinery, a foreign visitor, trucks coming and going it's a pretty alluring place for anyone and really I never had to think too hard when it came to what I wanted to do in life. I did what I was already passionate about," explains Rollo.

**What does the future hold for you?**

Rollo says, "This vintage will see twenty different grape varieties going through the winery so education is becoming increasingly important." By experimenting with Italian varieties and alternative wine styles, the Crittendens are diversifying and becoming perhaps more relevant to younger drinkers. Zoe adds, "We are always keen to embrace technology and finding new ways to tell our story. It is so important to engage with young customers and we want to do this more. The internet allows people to learn more about what is happening. Wine is a complex narrative and the idea of putting out information about lesser known varieties that is particularly relevant to younger consumers - marrying the two - appeals. We want to tell people the story hopefully in a lighter, fun way. We want to see these people getting more confident in drinking our wines, enjoying themselves, so we will always aim at educating but making it fun."

- Arthur O'Bryan

## A taste of luxury

**Where:** Mornington Peninsula

**When:** Now

**Cost:** \$220 a night low season to \$250 high

**Details:** (03) 5987 3275,  
www.lakesidevillas.com.au

VICTORIA'S Mornington Peninsula is one of Australia's favourite wine-tasting destinations, and now the seaside region has a luxurious new place to stay.

At the foot of Red Hill, five minutes from the ocean beaches and an hour's drive from Melbourne, is Lakeside Villas, in the Crittenden Estate winery and vineyard.

Each villa features open-plan living and dining rooms, a kitchen and laundry, LCD television, a DVD/CD player and a double spa bath.

There's also a tennis court, a wine-tasting room (which is open from 11am to 4pm daily) and the award-winning Stillwater Restaurant.

Fare at the restaurant includes double-cooked pork belly; crisp-fried, soft-shell crab; roasted free-range spatchcock; and daube of lamb rump in red wine sauce.

AT CRITTENDEN, winemakers Garry and his son Rollo Crittenden work side-by-side to make an exciting range of handcrafted boutique wines. Fastidious and hard-working, they bring the same working values to their business, laying a family foundation of hard work, honesty, trust and a steadfast passion for wine. Every day at the winery Garry and Rollo strive to craft wines to celebrate life. The aim is to produce small batches of wines that emphatically speak of their varietal and geographic provenance under the Crittenden Estate, Pinocchio and Geppetto ranges. The portfolio includes new & exciting Italian and Spanish varietals and other regional classics from the Mornington Peninsula and further afield.

The centerpiece of the Crittenden property is the STILLWATER AT CRITTENDEN RESTAURANT which is managed by husband and wife team Zac and Jacqui Poulter. The dining room is the perfect place to feast as you overlook the impressive vineyard, lake and immaculate, cloistered gardens. This fine a-la-carte restaurant is a welcoming experience over winter. Stunning views and extensive facilities make Stillwater at Crittenden one of the Mornington Peninsula's premier event locations. Plan a memorable, romantic wedding or corporate event in the heart of the region.

72 Peninsula Visitor ... April-October 2011

## THE WINE GENERATION

THERE IS A CHANGING OF THE GUARD WITHIN THE AUSTRALIAN WINE INDUSTRY,  
AND THE CHILDREN OF THE GRAPE ARE FULL OF PASSION AND PROMISE.

STORY BY WINSOR DOBBIN

www.luxurytravelmag.com.au

Garry Crittenden, who was at the forefront of making wines from Italian varietals, now operates under the Crittenden Estate umbrella with labels including Pinocchio and Geppetto. His son Rollo, formerly chief winemaker at Dromana Estate, recently began working with his father again.

"Australian wine drinkers have become increasingly adventurous, but that wasn't the case a decade or more ago," says Crittenden. "When I started making Italian varieties in the early 1990s it has hard work. We found people were happy to buy a glass of wine made from a variety they hadn't heard of, but were unwilling to splash out on a bottle. After they'd tried a wine, they'd come back and buy a few bottles. It was an interesting marketing exercise."

Crittenden says he's enjoying working with his son again and "he'll be responsible for all aspects of the winemaking, except for those I interfere in." Crittenden expects Rollo, the first second-generation winemaker on the Peninsula, to eventually take control of the business.





## Water boosts grape harvest

By LESLIE WHITE

ESTIMATES of the size of Australia's wine grape harvest have dramatically increased halfway through picking.

The pre-harvest estimate of 1.22 million tonnes, made by the Australian Wine and Brandy Corporation, has been revised to between 1.55 and 1.65 million tonnes.

The revisions were made on the back of improved water allocations and active trading in the inland regions.

AWBC acting chief executive Jack Osborne said the higher projection would reassure overseas markets of Australia's ability to maintain supply.

However, Riverland Grape Growers Association chief executive Chris Byrne said the renewed figures showed Australia could have a problem with oversupply next season if reasonable rain eventuated.

"If the water comes back, then the signs are ominous," Mr Byrne said.



**More grapes:** Mornington Peninsula winemaker Rollo Crittenden was busy harvesting pinot noir last week. Across the country, the wine industry is roughly halfway through vintage. Picture: ZOE PHILLIPS

As late as November, predictions for the Riverland were 180,000 to 200,000 tonnes.

However, Mr Byrne said the region now expected to harvest about 350,000 tonnes or more, as water allocations had been increased to 32 per cent.

Riverina Wine Grapes Marketing Board chief executive

Brian Simpson said projections in the Riverina had been raised from 220,000 to 240,000 tonnes prior to Christmas, to about 260,000 tonnes.

"We get weekly surveys from wineries — this is based on hard data," Mr Simpson said.

Murray Valley Winegrape

Growers chief executive Mike Stone said predictions didn't matter.

"We've had every man and his dog trotting out projections — it's academic," Mr Stone said.

He said Murray Valley had predicted 300,000 tonnes to be harvested from the region all

along, and had seen no reason to change this.

Although projected yields per hectare for this year are below average, the total yield will still rank in the top five results on record, according to the AWBC.

● Climate provides a lot to wine about, Page 99

## Lakeside Villas At Crittenden

It's a crisp, bright evening as I stand on the expansive timber deck adjoining Stillwater At Crittenden, the vineyard cafe that underwent a complete transformation last year and has reopened as an upmarket dining spot.

The restaurant, in the grounds of Crittenden Estate vineyard on Victoria's Mornington Peninsula, is headed by local boy Zac Poulter and his wife Jacqui, and we're shooting the breeze over aperitifs before Poulter has to nip back into the kitchen to start cooking. As I gaze across Crittenden's gardens, edged by a sea of grapevines and three wooden villas perched over a lake, it occurs to me there are much worse places to work. It's an impressive vista indeed.

Poulter tells me he left the peninsula in 1998, when you could count the number of decent restaurants on one hand, but returned seven years ago after stints at London's Oxo Tower and as Russell Crowe's private chef on film locations. Today, the area is a thriving culinary destination and the pair are making the most of it, incorporating the fruits of local producers' labour into Stillwater's menus. For supper, we tuck into the likes of poached asparagus, Main Ridge goat's curd and slow-cooked free-range egg drizzled with truffle oil, parsley and lemon pangrattato; and to drink, Crittenden's 2010 pinot gris. There's little



chance of running out of wine, what with Crittenden Estate's cellar door on site, and that age-old problem of who's going to drive home disappears with the reassuring presence of the three luxury villas just a few steps away.

These chic, one-bedroom oases, with fully-fitted kitchens, open-plan living spaces (with flat-screen digital TVs) and private decks on which one can watch the ducks float past while stoking the barbecue, are some of the most luxurious digs in the area. Could there be a more propitious marriage than that of vineyard, fine-dining restaurant and chic lakeside lodgings? I don't think so. MICHELLE ROWE

**Where:** 80km south of Melbourne

**Cost:** \$310 a night for two adults at weekends, including breakfast and a bottle of sparkling, minimum two-night stay; \$280 a night weekdays

**Activities:** Eating, relaxing, exploring the Mornington Peninsula

**Eating:** On site, in the restaurant

lakesidevillas.com.au; (03) 5981 9555

We just can't believe the interest."

Crittenden says his winery is committed to making four wine styles with Spanish origins. The Los Hermanos brand includes a tempranillo, the Tributo and the Homenaje a Cataluna. Txakoli, a dry

white with a touch of fizz, has just been released and Crittenden believes it may be the only version made outside Spain's Basque region.

Sangria may have been Melbourne's first introduction to Spanish-style drinking (although insiders say in Spain it's strictly for tourists) but kalimotxo, the surprisingly zingy combination of Coca-Cola and red wine, may become Melbourne's next drinking craze. Garcia & Soris Nick Garcia is a fan and says it's the perfect drink for hot weather. Basque bar Naked for Satan also offers a version, served by the glass or the carafe.

Given that sherry was once solely the domain of the ladies' lounge in Australian pubs, the makeover of its image may have played the biggest role in our appreciation of Spanish wines. Now, we expect to drink it with tapas, as an aperitif, a table wine, or simply on its own. We've learned the words fino, amontillado and oloroso and are starting to appreciate regional differences and individual winemakers. Pedro ximenez, once the preserve of after-dinner drinkers, now turns up on the ingredients list of plenty of dessert menus.

"It's just now taking its rightful place in the mix," Wasley says of sherry. "It belongs in the fridge. You should always have a bottle of it. You can drink it and cook with it, and it's a lot of fun to do both."

EPICUR E THE AGE Tuesday, November 15, 2011





CRITTENDEN ESTATE®

# Crittenden Memories

THE AGE Saturday, October 1, 2011

Saturday, October 1, 2011 THE AGE

## Victoria



Shimmering ... (from left)  
Terricks General Wine  
store; the over-water  
houses at Crittenden Estate.

Christmas ... in Europe. Inside it's elegant – big-city style with country grace.

The wine list is as fat as a phone book, while the menu reads as if the chef has spent the morning in the back paddock wrangling rabbit, goat and venison and plucking tufts of watercress and saltbush.

The drive to Crittenden Estate is brief. Its been producing pinot noir and chardonnay for almost 30 years but the business extends far beyond its cellar door.

The Stillwater restaurant serves superb food. Willows weep at the edge of the lake. Three villas reach out across the water. Even the ardent pinot tragic will find their focus dragged from the contents of their glass to be mesmerised by the surroundings. Spend the night here and you'll sleep in the arms of Morpheus only to rise to the gentle quacking of ducks heralding the new dawn of your pinot pilgrimage.



## Going Green WITH GARRY

As I write this column in late February there is already a touch of autumn in the air. Even the warmer days have lost that drying, burning heat and given over to a gentler warmth, ideal for ripening the vintage for 2010. Although rain has been absent for a time I must



say our

vines are looking in tip top shape with no signs of distress due to lack of water. The crop level is, as we would hope, modest and the bunches are ripening uniformly. Once again the start of vintage will be early, maybe in the first week of March, a by-product of global warming brought about by climate change.

As I often muse in this column, what is the real effect of our ongoing commitment to farm our vines in a more considerate and sustainable way? It may be years before we can categorically say, with scientific proof, that the grapes are "better" than before. In the meantime we must rely on keen inspection of the ecosystem surrounding the vines, and as far as I'm concerned this observation leaves no doubt about the changes we have wrought. Soil moisture retention is vastly improved and this can only be attributed to the increased amount of organic matter in the soil as a result of our composting and mulching program. I just took a walk through our chardonnay vines and whereas in past years the soil by now would be bare, hard and compacted today there is a lovely spring in the surface of the soil which is covered with a mat of slowly decaying litter from our recent flail mowing. Maybe it's just my imagination but the ripening grapes seem to have an extra dimension to the concentration of flavours: at least that's what I believe anyway!

The undervine banks, on close inspection, harbour a myriad of bugs and worms all happily making their own contribution to the well being of the soil. A recent audit of our chemical inputs for the growing season, now coming to an end, demonstrates a dramatic fall in the number of sprays applied and the amount of [soft] chemicals used in each tank of water, and I'm happy to report that there has been no sighting of any disease whatsoever right throughout the growing season! Except in the most recalcitrant parts of the vineyard our herbicide use is negligible or non-existent. Our huge compost heap, built after last winter, is gently fermenting away in the far corner of the block in readiness for spreading after harvest.



Three photos accompany this article. One shows the old cabernet block having a crop of fava beans being ploughed in during the spring of 2009 and the second shows the growth of vines on

the same block replanted to a newly imported clone of pinot noir. The growth is nothing short of remarkable with some vines having reached a height of 2 metres. All this has been achieved without the use of any fertilisers, pesticides or weedicides, simply a green manure crop turned in 4 months ago.

I rest my case for organic farming. The third photo (top of column) shows the first crop of our exciting new variety savagnin used in the "tributo a galicia" label. Once again these vines were grafted over only two summers ago and have had nothing more applied to them than green manure crops and broadcast compost. The future of biological viticulture is not in any doubt in our vineyards! - Garry Crittenden



## SO CLOSE YET A WORLD AWAY

Stillwater at Crittenden is destination dining at its best but literally only 10 minutes from Mornington and sitting on the delightful deck you could be anywhere in the world.

Stillwater offers the whole package - a cellar door with over 13 wines and great local produce to taste including their own house dressings, the multi-award winning Stillwater Restaurant with fabulous alfresco areas, 4 1/2 star Lakeside villas and plenty of wide open space in a beautiful setting.

Zac and Jacqui Poulter have earned an enviable reputation for being great hosts in their popular restaurant and they have recently taken over the running of the lakeside villas, which are luxuriously perched on the lake, complete with ducks, gourmet country breakfast hamper and bottle of sparkling wine included in the tariff. Stillwater is also one of the most sought after wedding venues on the Peninsula and the lakeside villas just add to the appeal.



The restaurant itself was recently reviewed in the Age by Tricia Welsh who noted "Stillwater is one of the best on the Peninsula" and with very good reason. Zac's skills as a chef are well documented and his smooth running of the restaurant ensures a great dining experience whether you're there for lunch or dinner.

Special occasions at Stillwater are guaranteed to delight. Their private dining room which seats 40 has its own private decking or you may enjoy drinks and canapés by the lake at sunset with gorgeous receptions in the main Dining Room.

## STILLWATER AT EASTER

Live music, a la carte dining, casual dining on the terrace, a chocolate hunt..... it's all happening at Stillwater this Easter!

Autumn is one of our favourite times at the Estate and Easter falls smack bang in the middle of it! The vine leaves are turning their reddish brown colour, the lawns are lush and green and its perfect pinot noir drinking weather. On Easter Saturday evening we celebrate the best of Autumn's seasonal bounty with a beautiful 2 or 3 course a la carte menu. Choose your own wines, or let us expertly match wines to each of your courses. Our Easter Sunday luncheon features our a la carte menu -

choose 3 courses for \$70pp.

We have "The Warrains" playing live on the terrace, why not indulge in one of our vignerons platters with a glass of wine whilst enjoying the wonderful music and atmosphere beside the lake and vines?

Of course, it wouldn't be Easter without a chocolate Easter egg hunt for our Stillwater littles.

The hunt begins at 3pm throughout the lawns and gardens in front of the restaurant. Fun for everyone! Bookings for this weekend are especially important, being one of the busiest ones of the year.

Special Mother's Day Lunch 4 courses \$80  
Spoil mum and treat yourself to a wonderful day at Stillwater

## WEDDINGS & SPECIAL EVENTS AT STILLWATER

Stillwater is the ideal venue for one of the most important days of your lives. A ceremony beside the lake and vines is a unique and special way to exchange your vows. Whether it be a grand sit down affair, an elegant cocktail style or even a gourmet BBQ, Stillwater can cater to your individual needs with experienced advice ensuring your event is memorable & a complete success.

Imagine your perfect evening with champagne and canapés beside the lake for sunset and photos, before hosting a true feast of the senses in the restaurant for your guests.

The cornerstone of the philosophy at Stillwater lies in our commitment to sourcing and using only top quality ingredients and the freshest of produce in our unique and special setting on the Mornington Peninsula.



Sunday Herald Sun, April 5, 2009 **escape** 27



## Our great vineyards

WITH so many great wineries to tempt our taste buds throughout Victoria, it is always hard to choose a few to showcase.

**POSTCARDS PICK OF THE WEEK**

Join Suzie Wilks and the Postcards team at 5.30pm on Channel 9 today as they visit some of the best - De Bortoli, Jinks Creek, Michelini, Ainsworth Estate and Crittenden Estate.

Crittenden Estate, in Dromana, is home to one of the Mornington Peninsula's most outstanding wine families, with the vineyard having been around for more than 25 years.

Now it not only offers a cellar door, but also a produce store, restaurant (Stillwater at Crittenden) and accommodation.

This week's Pick of the Week winner will spend two nights at Lakeside Villas at Crittenden Estate, including a gourmet breakfast hamper and bottle of Geppetto NV Brut on arrival, valued at \$560.

Lakeside villas has three standalone one-bedroom villas, all with king-size beds, spa baths, LCD TVs, wood heaters, luxury amenities and balconies over the lake.

So after an afternoon lunching on the deck at Stillwater, it's a quick stroll along the lake back to the villa.

To enter call 1902 552 403 or SMS to 1995 2403 your name, address and daytime phone number.

Calls through Fifth Finger are 55c, including GST. Phone lines close at noon Tuesday.

Entrants must live in Victoria and be over 18. Terms and conditions apply. Prize subject to availability and blackout dates apply.

For information on Postcards email Jo Ramage at postcards@nine.com.au or log on to www.visitvictoria.com/postcards.

**More:** www.crittendenwines.com.au or 5987 3275



## NEWS FROM STILLWATER

The leaves are turning color, and the nights are cooler and darker earlier - autumn is well and truly here.

We are kicking off autumn with a brand new menu design and some beautiful new creations from Zac and the kitchen team. Think smoked eel with local organic beets, rabbit rillettes on house made brioche, wagyu ox tail in a sticky, dark braise and an array of locally grown figs and pears.

There is so much happening this season and into Winter at Stillwater and Lakeside Villas - Read on for our upcoming news and events and we will see you at the restaurant very soon!

- Regards, Zac & Jacqui Poulier

### MID WEEK RESTAURANT EXPRESS LUNCHES

They are back! Mid week, 2 delicious courses and a glass of Victorian wine for just \$42! Available Monday to Friday right thru autumn and winter. Perfect for a group catch up or a lunch with family and friends. An affordable way to experience the delights of a lunch at Stillwater!

Bookings essential on 59819555

### EASTER AND ANZAC DAY 2011

Join us over the Easter for a long weekend to remember.

Cellar door specials will be running all weekend and detailed wine tastings of the Crittenden Estate range of wines - over 13 wines to choose from!

At Stillwater, the dining room is open right thru the Easter break; offering our full A la Carte menu featuring contemporary, produce driven cuisine from Chef Zac Poulier.

For those wanting a casual lunch, the terrace by the lake is the perfect place, taking in our beautiful lake and surrounds whilst enjoying one of our vignerons platters with a glass of estate chardonnay. Our sandpit keeps the kids entertained, as do the wide-open spaces to explore & play. We also have live music from 12 noon on both the Easter Sunday & Monday on the terrace!

Our annual Easter egg hunt is on again for kids big and small! Meet Jac at the cellar door on the Sunday for a 3pm start! Don't miss out on this great family day with live music, delicious food, & beautiful wines in our delightful setting.

### MOTHERS DAY SUNDAY 8TH MAY

What better way to spoil mum & say thanks for all that she does than a beautiful lunch at Stillwater. Begin with a detailed wine tasting in the cellar door before enjoying our full a la carte menu (3 courses for \$80) & then finishing with a walk around the lake & garden. Stillwater has a special gift for mum too! We are offering lunch at 11.30 or 2.30pm, bookings essential.

### LAKESIDE VILLAS SPECIAL AUTUMN & WINTER OFFERS

Our 4/12 AAA rated luxury lakeside villas are the perfect getaway, overlooking the tranquil lake at Crittenden estate. The open plan living and kitchen, which spills out onto your own private balcony over the lake, creates a feeling of spaciousness and warmth.

Facilities also include: Double spa bath, authentic wood heater, 32 inch LCD TV and DVD/CD player, quality amenities, under cover car parking for one car, full kitchen facilities and award winning Stillwater restaurant a stroll away.

Amenities such as your own walk in wardrobe and laundry ensure your practical needs are met. Breakfast hamper of local free-range eggs, bacon, sourdough, fresh fruit, organic juices, cereals and tea and coffee as well as a bottle of sparkling wine is included in your tariff.

Once again this autumn and winter we have our wonderful Stay 5 Pay 4 deal on for the villas. Available anytime from now until 30/10/11.

Includes breakfast daily, a bottle of sparkling wine and a \$50 voucher to use at Stillwater.

Or for a shorter break, stay 3 consecutive nights and receive a \$100 voucher to use at the restaurant.

Simply call the villas on 5987 3275 for rates and availability.

### ZAC AND JAC'S KITCHEN PRODUCE - PENINSULA PRODUCE MADE WITH LOVE. RIGHT HERE AT STILLWATER!

Zac and Jac's kitchen produce is getting rave reviews from our retailers and customers alike.

We are in the middle of sourcing some beautiful Mornington Peninsula pears for our Spiced Pears, and production for these will begin next week.

Our preserved lemons have been busy doing their thing since last year and are ready for sale now. Zac preserves each lemon in its own jar, and the result is superb.

You can now buy the range at the following good food stores: Stringers in Sorrento, Tully's in Moorooduc, Blairgowrie Food and Liquor, Cellar and Pantry in Red Hill, Tasting Station in Rosebud, Houghton's in Mornington and of course at our cellar door here at Crittenden Estate.

Pop in to Stillwater to sample this fabulous Peninsula produce, made right here on the Peninsula.



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THE AGE Saturday, February 20, 2010



## SUNDAY LUNCH STILLWATER AT CRITTENDEN

THIRTY years ago when Garry and Margaret Crittenden offered simple antipasto platters to encourage people to linger longer while sampling their wines, little did they know the trend they were setting.

As one of the first vignerons on the now wine-rich Mornington Peninsula, they were not only viticultural pioneers but also paved the way for local produce to sing alongside the region's wines.

Today, with winery-restaurants more popular than picnics on the beach, Stillwater is one of the best on the peninsula. Leased to husband and wife Jacqui (front of house) and Zac Poulier (chef), it prides itself on sourcing as much free-range and regional produce as possible to match the Crittenden wines - plus an extended wine list that includes some interesting Italian and French wines.

Zac was personal chef to Russell Crowe for a number of years. He picked up on the tantalising flavours of Middle Eastern food in Morocco when catering for Crowe during the filming of *Gladiator* and then absorbed the spices of Mexico during the filming of *Master and Commander: the Far Side of the World*. He has also worked in Greece, the Cayman Islands and was executive sous chef at the Harvey Nichols cafe and the Oxo Tower in London.

But five years ago, the Poulis decided to call Australia home again and injected their energies into this light-filled restaurant.

We order warm sourdough bread rolls with locally made Geppetto olive oil and home-made dukkah and check out the menu. On Sundays, there's a set price with a choice of two courses for \$55 and three for \$65. It's hard to go past the home-made terrine or twice-cooked pork belly with black pudding and apple and fennel salad for starters - perfect with a Crittenden pinot noir (\$11, \$48 a bottle).

Zac's 150-day grain-fed Angus steak is now a signature, along with his grilled duck breast.

Sunny Ridge strawberries drizzled with vincotto and peninsula honey and cardamom-scented yoghurt pannacotta desserts are tempting but we decide to share the outstanding vanilla creme brulee.

**Reviewed by Tricia Welsh**

Stillwater at Crittenden, 25 Harrisons Road, Dromana, 5981 9555. Open daily noon to 3.30pm, Friday-Saturday from 6pm. See [stillwateratcrittenden.com.au](http://stillwateratcrittenden.com.au). To stay: nearby options include Lakeside Villas at Crittenden Estate ([lakesidevillas.com.au](http://lakesidevillas.com.au)), Woodman Estate ([woodmanestate.com](http://woodmanestate.com)) and Istanian ([istanian.com](http://istanian.com)).



weeklytimesnow.com.au

## CSIRO under fire for Spanish variety 'ring-in'

## White wine fiasco

By LESLIE WHITE

GRAPE growers and wine makers are fuming over a CSIRO bungle that has seen it supply vineyards with the wrong grape variety for more than a decade.

Producers who thought they had bought the promising Spanish white wine variety albarino — and poured marketing dollars into carving a niche for that variety — have been bottling the almost unheard of French variety savagnin blanc, not to be confused with sauvignon blanc.

A visiting French expert asked questions last year, and DNA testing has confirmed winemakers' worst nightmare: the material CSIRO sourced from Spain is savagnin.

Winemaker Rollo Crittenden, from Crittenden Estate in Tasmania, is distraught.

"We've worked hard to build up this variety. Now we have to start again," he said.

It is an offence to intentionally sell, export or import wine with a false description.

"DNA testing should have been carried out before the cuttings were sold," he said.

"One would have to assume a lot of wine in Spain planted as albarino is also savagnin. Are they going to stop calling their albarino?"

Because its name was so similar to another variety, calling the variety savagnin blanc would be a "debacle", Mr Crittenden said.

Trentham Estate co-owner Tony Murphy was stunned that the wine fermenting in his tank had been "substantially reduced in value".

"Who will pick up a wine they've never heard of?" he said. "It cost thousands to plant



Sam Miranda

HAVE YOUR SAY  
weeklytimesnow.com.au

it... something was on a roll and all of a sudden it stops.

"We'll talk to our marketing people and see whether they're even interested in selling it."

Sam Miranda Wines owner Sam Miranda was adamant that what he bought was albarino.

"The French variety has two seeds whereas ours has four seeds," Mr Miranda said.

Winegrape Growers Australia executive director Mark McKenzie said Spain's own national wine collection had made the same mistake.

"Almost all (Australian) wine previously labelled albarino will be savagnin," he said.

Mr McKenzie said there was a chance to use the publicity to promote the wine to new consumers.

CSIRO program leader Dr Rob Walker said the material had been imported in 1989 when there was no DNA typing available.

"We imported it in good faith as albarino," he said.

CSIRO sourced the material from connections it had with researchers in Spain, he said.

• New vintage a corker, Page 8

• Rule's View, Page 15

• Editorial, Page 16



Corker: Rollo Crittenden with bottles of his family's wine labelled as albarino but which is now believed to be savagnin blanc. Picture: ZOE PHILLIPS

## Rollo's vines draw a blanc

By LESLIE WHITE

ROLLO Crittenden has just under half a hectare of albarino planted at his vineyard, and also buys significant amounts from another grower.

At least up until last Friday, he thought he did.

Like many other progressive wine businesses across the country, he now understands what he's got is the obscure variety savagnin blanc, not the fashionable albarino.

"Our plantings are from two different sources, but we're confident of the link back to the CSIRO mother

block," Mr Crittenden said.

"I suppose (the CSIRO) are confident (the variety is actually savagnin), but you'd think they would have been confident in the first place that what they brought out was albarino."

Mr Crittenden, who has what he now assumes to be savagnin fermenting in the tank, said he was keen to "forge ahead" with the variety.

The industry should get together to discuss how to market the wine, he said.

"I'm excited about wine making from these grapes, it's

exciting wine," Mr Crittenden said. "Time is on our side, let's get all the facts, see where we stand in regard to how CSIRO has stuffed up, and answer serious questions about what's planted in Spain."

"Do they want to come up with a new name? Should we follow suit?"

Mr Crittenden said he was curious to know what the point of reference was in DNA testing which found the variety was savagnin, as the bunches of grapes, leaves and seeds all appeared closer to being albarino than savagnin.

WINE

A2 SATURDAY, OCTOBER 25, 2009

## Spanish acquisition

Patterson Lakes doesn't immediately spring to mind when talking about wine, unless the conversation is with Rollo Crittenden. As it turns out, that's exactly where he's making wines now. He leases the modern winery to accommodate all the work, but this young winemaker also produces pinot noir and chardonnay with a fair smattering of Italian varieties and has added Spanish to the mix. Just for fun. And it's good. Crittenden's latest label is Los Hermanos, meaning siblings. Not surprising, as his sister Zoe is involved in the brand, too, and it will only ever feature two wines — an albarino and tempranillo. The latter will be released next year and it won't be an "overworked, over-oaked" example, he says, but the exciting addition is the albarino, which is out now and has a very cute label. There's not much albarino planted in Australia. The variety hails from Galicia in north-west Spain but its popularity is growing. Crittenden sourced fruit from a vineyard in the King Valley and he sure is pleased with the result. (For a comparison try the Symphonia albarino as it's the same fruit but a differently made wine — a touch more phenolic and richer, excellent nonetheless.) For Los Hermanos, Crittenden put half the juice in stainless steel to retain freshness and vibrancy of the fruit and the other half in old oak with some batonnage to add a touch more complexity and palate weight. "I think we've nailed it varietally," he says. "This is aromatic, crisp, zesty with good acidity and it's perfect with food. What more do you want?" Well, nothing really, as we're

trying it with food on this day and sure enough, the wine is down a treat. Albarino is not acid so it can cut through but seafood works best. Crittenden is renowned for its fish, plus the wine is cool so the variety lends itself with ripeness hence that crisp acidity. However, albarino is quite a full and rich palate, deceptive. Grown in the wine with an appellation known as Baixas (pronounced ree-ahs) albarino is Spain's most trendy you'll find it in bars from Madrid to Barcelona. And if you head to the variety's called albarino in the Vinho Verde region, often blended. Thanks to the of Spanish wines generally some great examples come including Valminor, and the just-released 2007 is in the Fresh is best as it's young wine. (Several wines tried during a line-up were well and truly gone.) Valminor's winemaker, San Mauro, another new to the market, which is just what. Finally, another Spanish seeking out is Valdamor — wines only from albarino styles including a fresh, one, and one know as baton has been aged in French eight months. It's an more complex wine.

janefaulkner@winematters

## CRITTENDEN ESTATE LOS HERMANOS ALBARINO \$28

Plenty to enjoy here, with its attractive floral lift and hints of pear and apple.

As the variety promises, it's quite textural without being heavy, round before finishing fresh and clean with fine acidity. A delightful Aussie albarino.



## PAZO SAN MAURO ALBARINO RIAS BAIXAS 2007 \$40

Oooh, loving this new wine with its citrus scent, especially grapefruit, with a hint of pear too that follows through on the palate. Plenty of palate weight, a touch phenolic but balanced with a crisp, almost bitey acidity and fresh finish.



## VALDAMOR BAIXAS 2007

A delicious style with lots of honeyed poached pear and honey notes that follow through on the palate, touch phenolic but lovely mouthfeel, length with plenty of acid to cut through and clean.



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EPICURE THE AGE Tuesday, March 3, 2009

**IN MODERATION**

# Double-act eyes Iberian for success

A brother-and-sister team has found the local climate ideal, writes **Ben Canaider**.

**N**OW that Melbourne's love affair with Spanish cuisine has settled into a stable relationship, it isn't surprising to see this city awash with Spanish wine. Spanish tempranillo wines have led the charge, and over the past year we have also seen a strong trend towards the Spanish white wine albarino — as shown by on-premise sales of the Castro Martin brand. The popularity of such styles has no doubt been helped by good imported wine sales per se — a point to which Australian winemakers have not been blind. More than just a few local, niche wineries are having a stab at growing and making Iberian wines.

Tempranillo plantings are up 8% over the past year, and the white grape albarino is getting more than a dabbling interest from such little-known South Australian companies as Yalumba, Peter Lehmann Wines, and Penfolds, and

Tamar Ridge in Tasmania.

Closer to Melbourne, on the Mornington Peninsula, there's a family known for its experimentation with alternative wine varieties. Crittenden Estate's founder Garry Crittenden first played with other varieties nearly two decades ago. His "I" range of Italian reds brought wines such as barbera, sangiovese and nebbiolo before a wider, bistro-drinking audience.

Garry's son, Rollo, is trying a similar thing with Spain. With his sister, Zoe, Rollo has released the Los Hermanos range of wines. Los Hermanos: the siblings. A brother and sister double-act: the former making the wine, the latter responsible for the label design. Both drink the stuff too — an important point.

The wines are drinkable in the get-me-another-bottle sort of way. The albarino is not too waxy or alcoholic; Rollo likes the variety's crunch and minerality. He also likes



Rollo and Zoe Crittenden: he makes she designs.

PICTURE: EDDIE JIM

that it has some texture. Asked if albarino is Australia's newest weapon against New Zealand's sauvignon blanc, he replies, "That's miles from the truth." Rollo reckons sauvignon blanc is an overpowering wine, whereas albarino has the ability to be subtle. "The thing is, albarino can be a really good drink — that's what the

tannins are high, I worked the wine quickly through fermentation, and left it on skins for just a short time. It's fruit-driven, but a pretty good drink."

And he's right. It's fast wine. Like the albarino, you quickly want more.

The more-is-better principle has some problems nowadays, it must be said. And I'm not talking about health concerns. Rather, climate. Anecdotal evidence from growers reckons that some of the Iberian varieties are better suited to Australia's tougher, drier climate patterns. Rollo sees some of that bringing success. Taking fruit for his label from the King Valley (and more from the family estate in the Mornington Peninsula as grafts and plantings of tempranillo and albarino come on), Rollo likes the vines' natural predisposition. "The albarino seems to handle the high temperature well; it fruits really well without too much loss of vigour, and the acid seems to stay — but these are King Valley vineyards where there's mountain shading. Tempranillo also seems happy here — it's got big leaves, so it protects the fruit more — much better than pinot and cabernet, that's for sure."

For Rollo and Zoe, the potential for albarino and tempranillo — and the whole Iberian wine thing — is a winemaking, wine marketing, and family project rolled into one.

The collaboration matches all too well our recent food trends towards tapas and informal dining — that moment when food and wine are the happy backdrops to conversation and society — not the other way around. Quality wine comes at a price, however. Members of the Los Hermanos range (which will this year include a Spanish red blend) are \$28.

www.crittendenwines.com.au

## Goats to legends in a land of food and wine

By **KARL QUINN**  
ENTERTAINMENT EDITOR

**ANN-MARIE** Monda can still recall the moment she got the seal of approval from Sutton Grange, the little town near Castlemaine where she and Carla Meurs, her partner in cheese-making and in life, have lived since 1999. "About five years ago we were having a bit of a do on our verandah and our neighbour came, a man of few words who hasn't travelled much beyond Sutton Grange, and he said, 'You two are doing all right,'" she said yesterday. "He wouldn't touch the cheese, but it was like, 'OK'."

Yesterday Meurs and Monda, creators of Holy Goat cheese, were inducted as legends by the Melbourne Food and Wine Festival. Their co-inductees were winemaker Garry Crittenden; chef and restaurateur Neil Perry; Attica executive chef Ben Shewry; Anthony Lui, owner and executive chef of Flower Drum; and writer Terry Durack.

"We're really proud to be here today to represent our goats and our staff for the beautiful cheese we make," said Monda. She added that a recent visit from a

French cheesemaker had her believing "small farms like ours can revitalise regional Victoria".

Whether a cheese-led recovery was on Lui's mind or not we will never know. "I'm sorry. I speak not very good," he said as he stepped to the microphone. "Thank you very much."

Ben Shewry, from *Age Good Food Guide* restaurant of the year Attica, spoke in praise of wrong turns. "This is quite an honour considering 10 years ago I arrived here to learn how to cook Thai food," said the New Zealand-born chef. "I guess that says a lot about all the different influences and opportunities I've been given."

In becoming a legend, Durack joins the illustrious company of, among others, his wife Jill Duplex. "I accept this award only as full compensation for having had to live with another legend for bloody six years."

The former restaurant critic of Britain's *The Independent* newspaper, Durack said he was often asked in London how he knew so much about Greek, Chinese and Spanish food.

"Easy," he would reply. "I'm from Melbourne. This is what we do."



Appetite for achievement: The latest legend inductees for the Melbourne Food and Wine Festival yesterday are (from left) Anthony Lui, Ben Shewry, Carla Meurs, Garry Crittenden, Terry Durack and Ann-Marie Monda.

PICTURE: JUSTIN MCMAHON



Tuesday, September 15, 2009 THE AGE EPICURÉ

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WINE

# A crisis of identity

Albarino? Savagnin? Confusion reigns in a naming fiasco, writes **Jane Faulkner**.

**W**E'VE all heard the children's rhyme about sticks and stones breaking bones but names never hurting — and we all know it's erroneous. Just ask the winemakers who thought they were successfully growing and selling the trendy Spanish white variety albarino.

As far as names go, Aussie-grown albarino is a sore point.

And why? It turns out what has been planted here for more than a decade is not albarino at all but savagnin. Doesn't sound half as sexy, but we need to familiarise ourselves with that name — it is here to stay and already the Australian 2009 albarino wines, sorry, savagnins, are starting to appear in bottle shops under their new varietal name.

So what happened? Good question. No one really knows except how the mystery unfurled in Australia. It started in November when consultant viticulturist Libby Tassie noticed an uncanny similarity between "albarino" vines growing in a Barossa vineyard and white traminer. While unfamiliar with albarino,

she asked a visiting French ampelographer (an expert on identifying grape varieties), associate professor Jean-Michel Boursiquot, for an opinion. No doubt about it: the grapes were indeed traminer, aka savagnin.

"I didn't believe it," says winemaker Damien Tschärke. "I consider myself a pioneer of this variety [and the largest commercial producer in Australia with 4.5 hectares] and it's nothing like traminer, so it was a shock."

From shock came uncertainty and frustration because growers had to wait until April for the CSIRO to confirm Boursiquot's ampelographic findings with DNA analysis. By then, the 2009 vintage had been made and there wasn't much time to decide on an alternative moniker (it is a legal requirement that labels not mislead), so albarino was out and the Australian Wine and Brandy Corporation suggested choosing an alternative from a list of 64 synonyms that included christkindlestraube, weisskloevner, feuille ronde and dreifpeennigholz. Growers agreed on savagnin without the often-appended blanc, to avoid confusion with sauvignon blanc.

So the stuff-up really is about mistaken identity. The eight original cuttings, sourced from Spain, were sent to the CSIRO in 1989. But the mislabelling occurred in Spain. While it's not about apportioning blame, as misidentification of varieties happens from time to time, it appears other savagnin cuttings from the same collection have also been sent to Portugal, Italy, Germany and no doubt other countries. What is frustrating is that the Spanish authorities knew of the mix-up years ago but no one was informed sooner.

The story becomes even more complicated and convoluted because the source of Spain's savagnin is unclear and for every feasible story, there's also a tall tale about how it arrived. For example, some suggest that more than 700 years ago, pilgrims took it to Galicia en route to Santiago de Compostela; another theory is that after phylloxera wreaked havoc in Galicia, Spain sourced new cuttings from France in the early 1950s. Experts suggest

there are no extensive plantings of savagnin in Galicia; others disagree, claiming the variety has been there for hundreds of years. From all of this, there is a notion the Spanish savagnin might be a variation of albarino. One day, perhaps, its heritage will be accurately pinpointed.

"There's no doubt this varietal will continue to blossom here, but just because we've accepted what we're growing in Australia is savagnin doesn't mean we've heard the last of this issue," warns Tschärke, who believes there's a link between our savagnin and albarino.

So if Australia is only concerned with a name, what's the big deal? The problem is, historically, the variety has its roots in France's Jura region. Savagnin there is mostly made into vin jaune, an extraordinary style reminiscent of dry sherry and therefore very different to the fresh table wines being made here and in Spain with albarino.

"The savagnin we grow here is nothing like what's growing in the Jura region," says Tschärke. "So if we're calling it savagnin, then we

need to make it clear that it is from the Spanish collection and refrain from saying it's French."

The producer of the funky new Iberian-influenced Los Hermanos label, Rollo Crittenden, agrees: "There are important stylistic and historical reasons to keep the link [with our savagnin and Galician albarino] because it's more in line with our style."

"We are making savagnin the Spanish way and that is a dry, fresh, zesty and aromatic table wine."

To drive that point further, Crittenden's Los Hermanos label now includes the words "tributo a Galicia" in recognition of the style's origin. Yes, albarino from Galicia, its traditional home.

He also observes that Europeans are less concerned with variety — and varietal names — and more influenced by regionality, style and terroir. "It's the wine that matters and that should be our attitude, too. That's why I'm past the frustration stage as we are now the largest producer of this wine style and that's really exciting. It means Australia is defining that style of savagnin."





Saturday, September 29, 2007 **THE AGE**

## DISCOVER CELLAR DOORS



Take a seat on the terrace at Stillwater.

# A slice of Italy

**Jeni Port** discovers the spot to satisfy serious foodies in Stillwater at Crittenden.

**Z**AC POULIER, former personal chef to Russell Crowe, knows all about Gladiator-size appetites ... and demands.

He hosted an Australian-style barbie for the actors during the making of Crowe's film *Gladiator*, and says he has never seen so much meat and protein consumed by so few in one sitting.

Life now for the Frankston-born and London-trained chef and his wife Jacqui is a little less frenetic as they settle into their third year at Stillwater at Crittenden.

Zac and Jacqui are running a serious foodie haunt; the mood at Stillwater is a little Mediterranean, a little Australian combining the Crittenden love of Italian grape varieties - released under their Pinocchio range - with Zac's clean, focused food flavours.

Winemaker Garry Crittenden's non-winemaking fancies such as homemade verjus, vin cotto, dukkah and olive oil are also liberally used here, providing a farm gate feel to the vineyard

restaurant. On-site bread making will be another addition within 18 months.

Arrival at the mustard and ochre-toned restaurant is through the cellar door. A free wine tasting here will help you decide what to order over lunch or you can take advantage of a personally guided tour of the wines when seated by ordering a wine flight (\$10 for three 60 ml pours of wine). The Italian white flight (pinot grigio, arneis, moscato) and the Italian red flight (rosato, sangiovese and barbera) offer a particularly good introduction to Italian styles.

If the weather is fine, take a seat on the terrace overlooking the brimming lake or at a shaded table on the lake foreshore.

Be prepared for a leisurely, fine dining experience: two courses for \$48, three courses are \$65 (plus wines).

Entrees include St Peter's Island oysters served four ways: tempura with soy, truffle oil, verjus and shallots and natural. They're briny, fresh and a good accompaniment to the newly released '07 Crittenden Estate sauvignon blanc (\$8.50 a glass).

Another recommended entree is the crispy fried soft-shell crab. The smooth crab texture contrasts with a crunchy roasted corn salsa and lime aioli salad. The '05 Crittenden chardonnay (\$8.50 a glass) is lighter and less developed than

past releases and more food friendly for it.

A menu favourite is the 120-day grain-fed Angus eye fillet in a red wine jus topped with a foie gras and madeira butter. However, I can't see too many passing the rack of spring lamb on a thin slice of vin cotto-glazed braised lamb shoulder. It's served on soft polenta with vegetables and a madeira and thyme jus. Rich but not too heavy, the lamb is perfect with the lightly savoury Pinocchio '05 barbera (\$8.50 a glass) or the ripe and fragrant Crittenden '05 pinot noir (\$9 a glass).

Desserts run from a lemon curd ice-cream meringue vacherin to a wicked Belgian chocolate plate. But do make a special effort to try the moscato-poached pear and roasted quince terrine with verjus sorbet. It is the taste of spring. Enjoy it with a glass of the same Crittenden Pinocchio '06 moscato (\$8 a glass) that was used in the dish.

Map coffee finishes the meal.

### Stillwater at Crittenden

25 Harrisons Road, Dromana.  
Phone 03 5981 9555;  
stillwateratcrittenden.com.au.  
Open daily. Dinner Fri-Sat (winter)  
Thurs-Sat (daylight saving).



Crittenden Estate cellar door; olive trees and bottles at Montalto (right)

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**Rollo Crittenden, 35**  
CRITTENDEN WINES/  
LOS HERMANOS,  
MORNINGTON PENINSULA

At 34, Crittenden might have been pushing the envelope a bit when he won last year's Young Gun of Wine. But he looks like he's about 17 and his wines, especially the Los Hermanos range of alternative varietals, are full of youthful enthusiasm, from the Little Prince-like illustration on the label to the juicy cherry fruit and supple, chorizo-friendly tannins of the Los Hermanos tempranillo.

More:  
[crittendenwines.com.au](http://crittendenwines.com.au)

"There's a real sense of a new generation of wine-makers emerging," says Rollo Crittenden, last year's Young Gun of Wine.

"They're pushing winemaking boundaries, doing it on a budget, taking their regions in a new direction. They've travelled a lot more, worked overseas a lot more, they're open to different techniques."

"It's very exciting."





In need of a short break and can't bear the thought and cost of travel?

Stay locally in four and a half star luxury at Lakeside Villas at Crittenden Estate.

(www.crittendenwines.com.au) You could be a 1000 miles from home!

Stay any Monday and Tuesday OR Wednesday and Thursday, two people per villa for two nights between now and September 30th for only \$320 (normally \$440). Phone 03 5987 3275 to book and quote this 'Advert'.

Includes self cooked gourmet breakfasts for two and a bottle of Geppetto NV Brut on arrival. and furthermore experience the delights of a winters lunch at Stillwater with our weekday luncheon, Monday to Thursday, exclusive to Villa occupants and their guests only.

Enjoy a comprehensive tasting at the cellar door followed by your choice of ANY TWO COURSES from the a la carte menu, a glass of Geppetto wine plus tea or espresso coffee for just \$39 per person (normally \$65 approx). Not feeling too hungry, how about a tasting platter with a glass of wine for \$25. Bookings on 5981 9555.



**CRITTENDEN ESTATE**  
MORNINGTON PENINSULA

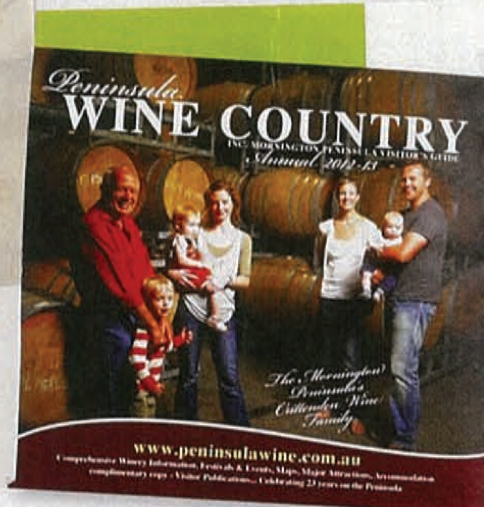
stillwater  
AT CRITTENDEN

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Our family vineyard has morphed into an iconic site in a region that is now achieving great acclaim for its cool climate wines. Our estate offers beautiful views over the vineyard, luxury lakeside villas (03 5987 3275) and an award winning restaurant & cellar door (03 5981 9555).

[www.crittendenwines.com.au](http://www.crittendenwines.com.au)



## The Peninsula's Crittenden Wine Family

Dynasty is an overblown word in a world of wine industry hype, but the second generation of Crittendens seem just as determined as their father to build-on the family reputation.

With a fine crop of third generation wine makers recently arrived on the scene, the very personal style of doing business looks set to continue for quite some time.

One of the family's favourite album photographs is of a very young Rollo running among the young vines being planted by Garry at Harrisons Road more than 30 years ago. Rollo has been imbued with the romance of wine production ever since, though it was never an expectation that he would follow in his father's footsteps.

In fact, you get the impression that the Crittenden family's involvement in 'the farm' - as they call it - has been because they loved the lifestyle, rather than out of any sense of obligation.

Margaret Crittenden was always a smiling face behind the scenes at the cellar door, the café and, in later years, the lakeside villas. These days, Margaret's fine food involvement is enjoyed on the

other side of the counter, among the cafes and restaurants of McCrae, to where she & Garry have moved.

Zoe has turned her psychological studies and teaching experience to good effect in steering the marketing and publicity side of the company, including a soon to be produced pictorial brochure depicting their 30 years at Harrisons Road. Rollo, Zoe and their partners have been busy creating the

next generation of the Crittenden wine line - Finn aged six, Maia three, Oscar two and Digby, born in September.

The antics of the grand children and Rollo's 2010 award as Australia's 'Young Gun Winemaker of the Year' bring a smile to his face, but the 'legendary' Garry Crittenden assumes a more pensive look when asked what is his greatest career satisfaction.

"It's not awards or accolades, but a deep sense of satisfaction that my two children have been interested enough to want to continue something I began 30 years ago. We don't have a dynasty, but we have two generations of knowledge to build upon, and a third generation to look forward to possibly being involved in it".





## stillwater at Crittenden

...has evolved to become one of the best dining destinations in the region, spearheaded by husband and wife team Zac and Jacqui Poulier. Their philosophy today is the same as it was when they first opened their doors 8 years ago...  
... to provide a quality and memorable food and wine experience for all.

### Summer at Stillwater

There is something very special about dining on the deck at Stillwater in summer. Overlooking the lake, glass in hand, fabulous food from Zac's kitchen on its way and there is little more you could ask for. Day or night it's a dream. If you have a family there's an added bonus. Come for lunch and the kids can play on the terrace, run on the grass and generally entertain themselves.

As always fresh produce is the order of the day, creating dishes that allow their individual components to stand out and also combine to bring the flavours of the season to you with every mouthful. A particular favourite of mine is the individual platter of 4 tastes from the kitchen. The selection changes so ask your waiter what's on today and enjoy. Where possible they source from local sustainable organic producers or grow it in their kitchen garden. Open 7 days for lunch, dinner Friday and Saturday evenings and Thursday nights in December and January.

### Cup Day 2012

The 2012 Stillwater Cup Day extravaganza promises to be bigger than ever! There are two options up for consideration. Keep it sophisticated with a sublime local produce focused, 3 course, a la carte luncheon in the restaurant for \$85pp. Or keep it simple with the outdoor gourmet BBQ grill by the lake for \$45pp.

You won't miss a minute of the Cup action, with big screens running all day long and the famous Stillwater Cup Sweeps will run from the first race until the last.

### Selections from the Menu

#### Entrées

Twice cooked pork belly, honeyed onion puree, shaved radicchio, fennel & apple salad & spiced orange caviar.

Ocean trout cured with Asian flavours on a salad of asparagus, radishes and garden leaves with a miso crusted roasted scallop.

Main ridge goat's feta cheese with a roasted vegetable & quinoa tabouleh, smokey babaganoush, eggplant crisps & a pomegranite molasses dressing.

#### Mains

Baked rotolo filled with dukkah spiced roasted pumpkin and ricotta with sautéed spinach and a sage, burnt butter and mustard fruit sauce.

150 day grain fed Diamantina eye fillet, thyme roasted chat potatoes, red onion tart, spring pea puree & "estate" wine sauce.

Slow cooked Tuscan style lamb shoulder with a 2 point rack, fondant potato, spinach puree & pepperonata.

#### Dessert

Vanilla Crème Brûlée made with free-range eggs, poached quince & a hazelnut tuille.

Hot Belgian chocolate fondant with a salted caramel sauce, pistachio ice cream & peanut brittle.

Hot lemon & raspberry friands with spiced crème anglaise & lemon curd ice cream.

Live music on the terrace from 12 noon till 5pm. The annual 'Fashions In The Vines' competition will be hotly contested with some sensational prizes up for grabs. The winners will be announced mid afternoon, and with great prizes make sure you frock up to win! The kids will be occupied with face painting on the terrace. Cricket and bocce will be on and then there's all that wide-open space for big and small people to relax and take in the day. The tradition continues! It's always a sell out so get your group together and book early this year.



### Christmas Parties & Group Bookings

Now is the time to book your next event at Stillwater. The private dining can comfortably seat up to 50 guests and features floor to ceiling glass windows, which boast panoramic views over the vineyards lake and gardens. Beautiful glass sliding doors open to the decking, perfect for pre drinks or a break away area during a meeting or conference. The Private dining room features a fully lined curtain for privacy, and offers air-conditioning, heating, separate sound system and microphone. For groups over 60 pax why not book the venue exclusively for your private use.



ABOVE: Well known for its excellent wining and dining options, Stillwater is owned by husband and wife team Jacqui and Zac Poulier and is a prime example of the best the Peninsula has to offer. Very recently Zac & Jacqui were thrilled to win the Frankston and Mornington Peninsula Excellence in Business Awards in the Hospitality category 2012.

### Lakeside Villas

Visiting friends or relatives over the holidays or just want a break from routine?

Perched right over the lake a stones throw from Stillwater are 3 boutique luxury 4 1/2 star AAA lakeside villas. Featuring facilities such as full kitchen, laundry, family sized bathroom complete with double spa and shower and wood fired heater, the villas really are a home away from home. The villas have a modern feel and all the little extras such as a complimentary bottle of Crittenden Sparkling wine and a gourmet breakfast hamper included in the tariff.

Priced from just \$280 per night the lakeside villas are an affordable luxury and second to none in the region. You can even book and pay online at [www.stillwateratcrittenden.com.au](http://www.stillwateratcrittenden.com.au) or 5987 3275



### Christmas Treats in a Box!

Zac and Jac's kitchen produce is getting rave reviews from retailers and customers alike.

Zac and Jac's kitchen produce offers a range of gourmet hampers for the festive season. Featuring

locally produced goodies, jams, nougat, wine, dukkah, olive oils and wine gadgets. Priced from just \$25 and ranging through to \$150, there is something to suit everyone's budget. Beautifully packaged and a true gourmet's delight!

Orders can be placed online at [www.stillwateratcrittenden.com.au](http://www.stillwateratcrittenden.com.au) or by calling the freindly team at Stillwater on 5981 9555. Hampers can be delivered to yours or the recipient's door or picked up at Stillwater.

Mornington Peninsula produce made with love right here at Stillwater! Pop in to Stillwater to sample this fabulous produce, made right here on the Peninsula.

### Cellar Door

The Crittenden Estate cellar door is a must visit for anyone interested in the wines of the Mornington Peninsula, or indeed, anyone who enjoys good wine!

With over 13 wines on tasting at all times from the four labels under the Crittenden Wines banner - Crittenden Estate, Geppetto, Pinocchio and Los Hermanos, knowledgeable & welcoming staff will take you on a journey from the Mornington Peninsula, through to Italy & Spain via regional Vic.

There is something to suit everyone's palate! The cellar door is open every day 11am & 4pm.

Large groups are catered for from hen's days, birthdays, probus groups, wine groups and more! Tasting fees do apply.

### Weddings - Still loving the romance

Weddings at Stillwater offer the very best in food, wine and service for your special day. Stylish, contemporary, intimate, secluded.

Wow your guests with drinks and canapés by the lake at sunset, before hosting a reception to remember in their beautiful restaurant.

Call 5981 9555 for further information



### ROLLO READY TO ROLL

It's all change at Crittenden Estate at Dromana on the Mornington Peninsula, where the prodigal son has returned home and three luxury over water cottages have been opened. Rollo Crittenden has come back to work with his father Gary, the pioneer of Italian varietals in Australia, after spending several years as winemaker of rival Dromana Estate. "Rollo will be responsible for all aspects of winemaking, except those I interfere in," jokes Gary. "He's very pleased to be returning to the site of his childhood and the now very mature vines that he helped to plant as a six year old." Rollo's plans include grafting some of the best pinot noir clones and moving towards biodynamic vineyards. Gary's wife Margaret has poured all her energies into the creation of the new Lakeside Villas. There can be fewer more idyllic settings. The three villas overlook the vineyard's lake and vines and have been equipped to a degree of luxury comparable to a five-star hotel. Each of the open-plan villas has a private balcony over the lake, high quality furnishings, a well-stocked pantry, laundry, wood fires, top-notch TVs and music systems, quality toiletries, fluffy towels and a complimentary bottle of Geppetto NV Brut Sparkling in the fridge. Just 100m away is the cellar door and the outstanding Stillwater at Crittenden restaurant, open daily for lunch and on Friday and Saturday evenings for dinner. Lakeside Villas at Crittenden Estate, 25 Harrisons Road, Dromana, Ph: (03) 5987 3275, [lakesidevillas.com.au](http://lakesidevillas.com.au).





**Herald Sun**  
Friday 1.10.10

**Escape.**

DESTINATIONS, DREAMS & DEALS

**GOURMET GETAWAY**  
Stillwater at Crittenden

## STAY AT MY PLACE ...



### STILLWATER AT CRITTENDEN DROMANA

**T**HE Mornington Peninsula has plenty to offer those wanting to escape their hectic city lives for a weekend. There are award-winning wineries, food shops showcasing local produce, beaches and notable restaurants to visit. And, for those wanting to tick most of those boxes in the one place, there's Stillwater at Crittenden, a winery with its own restaurant, cellar door and lakeside villas.

#### ACCOMMODATION

Waking in a villa is not unlike waking on a cruise ship. Of course, Stillwater's water views aren't never-ending but the ornamental lake, over which the villas are built, has a big novelty factor in the view-from-the-bed stakes.

Both the bedroom and the open-plan living area have extensive views of the man-made lake, and the veranda extends over the water. When the sun is out, the swinging seat on the deck is a prime possie. There's also a table and a barbecue for outdoor dining.

The open-plan living area has a comfortable couch positioned to take in the best of the view and a flat-screen digital television (there's also a TV in the bedroom). There are DVDs, books and magazines, but if time out in the spa is more your thing, candles, robes and L'Occitane toiletries are provided to ensure your tub time is top-notch.

#### FOOD

One of the most convenient things about the villas at Stillwater is the fine dining restaurant on your doorstep.

The Stillwater restaurant has chef and owner Zac Poulier at the helm and offers a contemporary menu with ingredients such as Red Hill cheese, Macleay Valley rabbit and a fish of the day. Main meals cost \$30-\$35 and the wine list offers plenty of opportunities to taste the wines made from Crittenden grapes, including the highly regarded Zumma pinot noir (\$15 a glass).

Each villa has a fully equipped kitchen and is stocked for brekkie with a hamper that includes bacon, local free-range eggs, organic Mornington Peninsula fruit juice, a

loaf of locally baked sourdough, preserves and cereals.

#### FUN

As tempting as it is to curl up with a book on the villa's veranda and watch the dozens of ducks and water fowl frolic in Stillwater's lake, it would be a shame not to explore the Mornington Peninsula surrounds. Foodies can make the most of the dozens of wineries, cheesemakers, fruit growers and farm-gate stalls on offer while those with a green thumb should visit Heronswood (105 LaTrobe Pde, Dromana), which is one of Victoria's most stunning historic gardens with sweeping views to Port Phillip Bay. It's also the home of the Digger's Club, which operates a nursery on site that is fully stocked with a mind-boggling range of heirloom vegetable seedlings and gardening accessories.

**MORE** Villa rates are \$310 a night, which includes a brekkie hamper and a bottle of Crittenden sparkling wine on arrival.  
[www.stillwateratcrittenden.com.au](http://www.stillwateratcrittenden.com.au)  
**ZOE SKEWES**

### 5. Balnarring Races

Australia Day at Balnarring celebrating 150 years of Country Racing – great excuse to dress up or down – and just have fun.

### 6. Crittenden Estate

were sponsors of the Balnarring Australia Day Races and entertained friends and associates in a trackside marquee – great company, food and of course wine. We were all winners!





Mornington Peninsula Leader August 31, 2010 | 11

# Murphy's Lore

A casual chat with Teresa Murphy



Rollo Crittenden was named Young Gun Winemaker of the Year.

Picture: TANYA FRY: N06MLS03

## Rollo Crittenden says it's an exciting time to be a peninsula winemaker

**Congratulations on winning Young Gun Winemaker of the Year. Is this your most prestigious gong so far?** I'd say so, because it's a national award. The great thing for the Mornington Peninsula is that Mike Aylward from Ocean Eight in Shoreham was also a finalist; we were both finalists last year. Judging was based on wines themselves, their novelty and the individuals' contribution to the industry.

**What wines did you enter?** From our Los Hermanos range, they're Spanish wines: a dry white called Savagnin and a dry red blend. Most of the fruit was actually grown at Bangholme, near Carrum, where we have 14 acres under vine.

**You're a second-generation peninsula winemaker, working with your dad Garry.** Yes, it's very much a family business. My sister Zoe looks after the website etc, and Dad and I run the company. Mum did run the accommodation side until last year. Dad's background is viticulture, before that horticulture – he had Crittenden's Nursery in Mt Eliza before starting up the winery here in Dromana in 1982. Basically he's got two very green thumbs. We work closely in the vineyard and winery together –

**In 1982, Dad literally doubled the vines on the peninsula by planting five acres**

ROLLO CRITTENDEN

my expertise is more in the winery, whereas his is in the viticultural side.

**You'd want to get on pretty well, wouldn't you?** We do actually. We don't have arguments, more passionate discussions at times. We've got a very similar goal and similar tastes in wines.

**You helped your Dad plant vines from when you were eight years old. Are those vines still producing?**

Oh yes. We've got some of the oldest vineyards on the Mornington Peninsula – pinot and chardonnay. We have 12 acres under vine here in Dromana.

**It must have been amazing growing up here.** It was a fantastic rural life. It was a different peninsula then: in 1982, Dad literally doubled the vines on the peninsula by planting five

acres. I now live in Mornington, with my wife, Linda, who's expecting our first child in October.

**And you're the family cook, apparently.**

Yes, I'm a passionate home cook plus I have a veggie garden at home so you can see a theme – I enjoy food and wine. And travel – combining the three, drinking regional wines and eating local cuisines – are among my fondest wine-tasting memories.

**What are your favourite restaurants on the peninsula?**

I love Stillwater, of course, here on our property; Ten Minutes by Tractor in Main Ridge and La Petanque. In Mornington, The Rocks and the new DOC pizzeria, which reminded me so much of my time working in Italy; Pizza Doh in Blairgowrie and Two Buoys in Dromana.

**Would you ever leave the peninsula?**

I don't think so. It really is such an exciting time to be here, especially with the second generation of winemakers coming through, bringing more passion and drive. I have no doubt there'll be third and fourth generations. Peninsula wines are becoming force to be reckoned on the world stage.



## AUSTRALIAN GOURMET TRAVELLER

### Spring table

## What's in a name?

Savagnin, the grape formerly known in Australia as albariño, is producing some truly delicious wine despite its identity crisis, writes Max Allen.

It was all going so well. Earlier this decade, as the tempranillo 'n' tapas revolución took hold in our wine shops and restaurants, Australian grape growers and winemakers started looking around for a suitably Spanish white variety to plant in their vineyards.

As it happened, the CSIRO had imported cuttings of albariño – the grape that produces delicious, fragrant, full-flavoured whites in the Rías Baixas region of Galicia, in Spain's green north-west – back in the late 1980s, and the variety was available from many Australian vine nurseries.

So plants were planted, grapes were picked, wines were made, and the first few examples of home-grown albariño – from producers as diverse as Tschärke in the Barossa, Gemtree in McLaren Vale and Crittenden on the Mornington Peninsula – were so good that many others planted the grape too. Industry observers were beginning to quietly refer to the variety as the Next Big Thing, even the Great White Hope – the new pinot grigio, perhaps, or sauvignon blanc.

And then, late last year, disaster. A visiting French ampelographer (grapevine specialist), Jean-Michel Boursiquot, identified an albariño vine he was shown in the Barossa Valley as white traminer, also known as savagnin, a grape most closely associated with the Jura region of France, where it produces sherry-like wines called vin jaune.

Subsequent DNA tests confirmed Boursiquot's suspicions: almost all the "albariño" planted here is in fact savagnin. The mistake occurred back in the 1980s: apparently, a Spanish vine nursery accidentally sent savagnin cuttings and didn't realise its error until the late 1990s. So the Australian Wine and Brandy Corporation had no choice but to rule that, because of this misidentification, local producers can no longer use "albariño" on their labels, or sell their wines as albariño – at least, not until real albariño cuttings have been imported, propagated, planted and harvested, which will take years.

Not surprisingly, the Aussie "albariño" producers were mightily pissed-off about this, especially as many of them had adopted a Spanish brand and/or Spanish imagery on their labels to match the Spanish albariño name: First Drop's Matador, Rollo and Zoe Crittenden's Los Hermanos... Suddenly, winemakers found themselves with thousands of litres of fresh new 2009 vintage white wine in tank and barrel, and no varietal name for it.



## WINE

Initially, many winemakers argued vehemently that they couldn't possibly call it savagnin. Too similar to sauvignon blanc, they said. The consumer will be confused, they said. And traminer was simply out of the question: too many memories of the sweet, cheap traminer rieslings of the 1980s (remember TR2?).

As the dust of the albariño fiasco has settled, though, and winemakers have moved through the anger and denial stages of grief (one described the whole episode as "like being handed a newborn baby in a maternity ward, only to be told a few years later that it wasn't your baby after all" – and he was only half joking), most have resigned themselves to the situation, and have labelled their 2009 wines as savagnin.

Some producers such as Gemtree had cleverly (in hindsight) already adopted non-varietal brand names for their new wines: so while the 2008 Gemtree Moonstone was an albariño, the 2009 Gemtree Moonstone is a savagnin, even though they're made from the same grape (if you see what I mean). Similarly, Rollo and Zoe Crittenden have decided to continue with their Los Hermanos theme – with its label image of the siblings in a sailboat – but where the 2008 was simply called albariño, the 2009 is called Tributo a Galicia, and the name of the boat, in tiny print, is *Savagnin*.

The fact remains, though, that whatever it's called, the grape formerly thought to be albariño and now known as savagnin has thrived in a wide range of Australian climates, from the cool King Valley to the hot Riverland, and produces some absolutely delicious white wines: lean, crisp and lemony but with a core of grape-pulpy richness and a hint of musk-like perfume. In fact, there's every chance that when real albariño is eventually planted and produced here, it won't be anywhere near as good.

### Albariño and savagnin: a user's guide

If you want to taste good, modern albariño, the real thing, from Rías Baixas in Spain, buy a bottle of 2007 Castro Martin Albariño (\$35-ish): the wine is a gorgeous amalgam of citrus freshness and peachy richness – in some respects like a cross between a riesling and a viognier, flavour-wise.

If you want to taste authentic, traditional savagnin from France, you'll have to track down a bottle of 2004 Jacques Puffeney Arbois Savagnin (\$65): this complex white has a nutty, sherry-like perfume (some of the wine is aged in barrels under a film of flor yeast, like Spanish fino), and exceptionally intense, mineral, grape-pulpy flavour and texture.

Now try a bottle of Australian "albariño" (you might still be able to find some of the 2008 vintage wines from Gemtree, Tschärke, Trentham, Crittenden and others lurking in bottle-shop fridges and on wine lists), or a bottle of Australian savagnin (the 2009 wines are appearing now) and see for yourself how the confusion arose: unlike riesling and chardonnay, which could never be mistaken for each other, even by the most inexperienced taster, savagnin made in a clean and fruity Australian style does taste remarkably similar to modern Spanish albariño.\*





## Going Green WITH GARRY

There is no doubt that one of the best ways of determining soil health is by counting the worm population for a given volume of soil.

Well if that is anything to go by we must have the healthiest soils on the Mornington Peninsula! I'm staggered by the increase in the number of worms in our vineyard since we moved to our biological approach to farming; it's nothing short of a miracle.

I guess in the main this is due to our extensive use of green manure crops plus the application in Autumn of our first batch of bulk compost brewed here on the property and of which I wrote in previous columns. Of course this would be aided by our much softer approach to the application of all chemicals but especially the non use of herbicides.

Having said that I still look askance at the weed growth in our under-vine banks. But what is a weed anyway? I have researched the word WEED and have now almost convinced myself that what we have are not weeds, simply companion plants, all adding to the biodiversity of our farm operations.

Last May we broadcast the first batch of bulk compost then sowed a crop of FAVA beans [dwarf broad beans] in the inter rows.



The accompanying photo (above) shows the magnificent green manure crop being ploughed back into the soil in late October and the adjoining photo (below) shows the germinating Summer inter row crop of buckwheat planted in early November; maybe I'll make my own soba noodles.

The buckwheat serves a dual purpose as it flowers at a critical stage of the annual growth of the vine and acts as an alternative and preferred food source for light brown apple moth, which if left unchecked can do so much damage to the developing grape bunches. Is this biological control at its best? We were fortunate to have an abundance of winter rain, almost back to pre drought levels, so not only is our lake full but our



soils are at what is known as field capacity, that is they have stored for crop use over summer the maximum amount of moisture possible for the types of soils we have here.

It says something about the two countries approaches to intensive horticulture I guess, and I must concede that in some areas New Zealand has a more enlightened approach to farming than we do, but it irks me a little that to have a proper bio- assay done of the microbial, bacterial and fungal populations in our soil we have to send samples to a laboratory over there. None the less we have just sent our second soil sample across the Tasman and I await the results with great interest to see what a scientific analysis comes up with in soil improvement since our adoption of biological methods.

The third photo accompanying this article shows the current size of our 2009/2010 compost heap which is considerably larger than last year.



I estimate the bulk is around 200 cubic metres and it is made up of last vintage grape skins and stalks, a mountain of rye corn harvested from the vineyard and some mulched hard prunings from our trees, so all materials recycled from the property. The idea is to broadcast this compost after vintage 2010 and once again sow a winter green manure crop.

As the seasons unfold a rhythm is developing in our new style of vineyard management. Time will tell as to whether the grape and wine quality show the benefits but one thing is patently obvious, the soil on which we grow our crops has turned the corner and is almost palpably breathing a sigh of relief.

- Garry Crittenden.



## Second Time 'Round THE CRITTENDENS

The evolution of the Crittenden Family mirrors the transformation of the Peninsula in recent times. In fact, many would say that Margaret and Garry Crittenden played the major role in initiating the region's image 'make-over'.

The Crittenden name first came to prominence on the Peninsula during the 1970s, when Garry - a Queensland born agricultural scientist - and Margaret - a Melbourne nurse - established a plant nursery in Mt Eliza.

Never one for resting on his laurels, by the early 1980s Garry was ready for another challenge, when he bought land in Harrison's Road Dromana and turned his horticultural training to help establish a local wine industry.

By the early 1990s the Crittenden wine brand was well established. Garry and Margaret then re-focused their energies into establishing a stylish cellar door facility and fine food café. It was the first on the Peninsula and it heralded a new era of wine tourism that has since transformed the region from a seaside summer haven to a sophisticated year-round destination.

Garry's personalised wine-making style and his savvy marketing ability helped to win the region a significant profile and it saw him as a finalist in the Gourmet Traveller Winemaker of the Year competition in 2000.

Rollo Crittenden finished at The Peninsula School in 1997 and understudied his father for a few years before heading overseas. He then returned to establish a new winery in Tuerong and was its head winemaker for five years.

The family reunited in business in 2007, when Rollo and Garry combined forces to launch Crittenden Estate wines, which embraces Gepetto Wines and the Pinocchio line of Italian varieties.

Rollo has taken-over the winemaking aspects of the business, including establishing a new wine-making facility at Patterson Lakes. During July, Rollo was selected as one of the top 'Young Guns' of winemaking; an Australia-wide selection process to determine 12 of the nation's most promising rising stars of the winemaking industry.

Daughter Zoe left her role as an educational psychologist to assist with the marketing and to help Margaret in running a suite of stylish lakeside villas on the property. She also found time to start the next generation of the Crittenden clan.

Margaret Crittenden's love of quality food & local produce still finds expression through her highly regarded home-made chutneys, relishes, jams and marmalades, which are available at cellar door.

*What's the secret to families working together?*

**Garry:** "knowing when to let go and allowing the next generation to take responsibility"

**Zoe:** "Communication, a united passion, clear roles, and to remember that you are a family first and foremost"

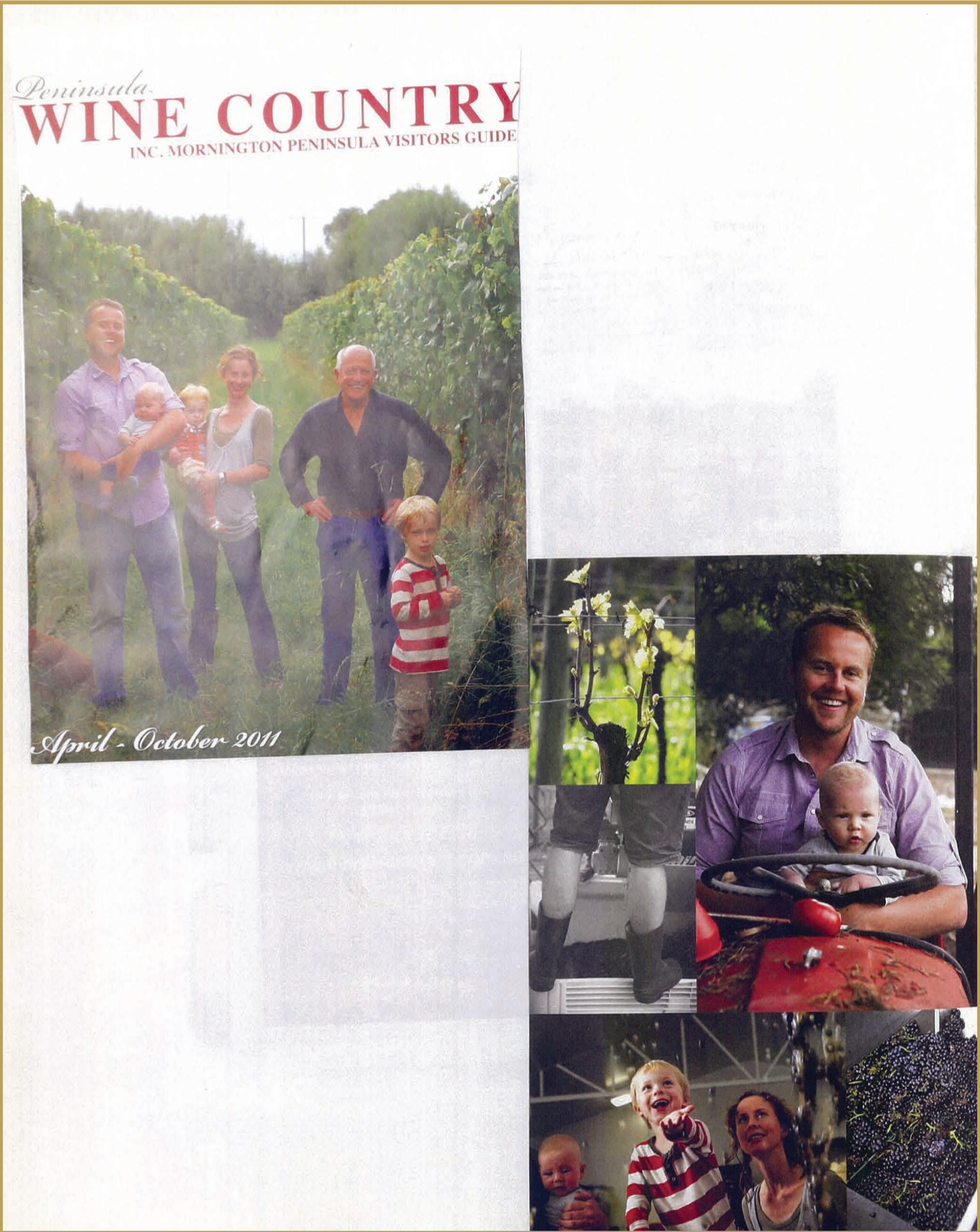
**Rollo:** "Respecting the strengths of each individual and allowing each family member to have freedom within their defined role"

www.crittendenwines.com.au

www.visitor.com.au 101

peninsula wine country













Stillwater has evolved to become one of the best dining destinations in the region, spearheaded by husband and wife team Zac and Jacqui Poulter.

For a relaxed fine dining experience, a lunch or dinner at award winning Stillwater overlooking the lake and vines is an absolute must this summer.

Fresh, seasonal produce is treated with simple reverence to create dishes that allow their individual components to stand out for themselves, but also combine beautifully with others to bring the flavours of the season to you with every mouthful.

Where possible they source ingredients from local, sustainable, organic producers or grow it in their kitchen garden.

For a more casual lunch, visit their outdoor terrace by the lake where they serve platters, light lunches, share plates and desserts.

Families are always welcome at Stillwater, whether in the dining room, where kids receive their very own menu, coloring pencils and books, or outside on the terrace, where families can enjoy an alfresco lunch and try their hand at bocce, cricket or the totem tennis set up on the lawn.

## Private Dining Room

Ideal for Birthdays, small gatherings, christenings, conferencing & meetings. If you have a special occasion coming up then make sure you check out our private dining room.

The private dining can comfortably seat up to 50 guests and features floor to ceiling glass windows with panoramic views over the Vineyards.

## Lakeside Villas

Need to accommodate visiting friends and relatives or just spoil yourself with an indulgent getaway?

Perched right over the lake a stones throw from Stillwater are 3 boutique luxury 4 1/2 star AAA lakeside villas. Featuring facilities such as full kitchen, laundry, family sized bathroom complete with double spa and shower and wood fired heater, the villas really are a home away from home.

## Extended Summer Trading Hours

We all know that Stillwater is open 7 days per week year round, (they only close Christmas day!) but did you know that from 27th December 2012 right thru to 13th January 2013 Stillwater will be open for lunch and dinner every day!

So for those long summer nights, enjoy a dinner at Stillwater any day of the week!

**Bookings recommended on 59819555**

## A Snapshot of our Menu

### Entrées

Twice cooked dry cured pork belly, honeyed onion puree, shaved radicchio, fennel & apple salad and spiced orange caviar  
Ocean trout cured with Asian flavours on a salad of asparagus, radishes & garden leaves with a miso crusted roasted scallop  
Roasted supreme of quail on a tomato & onion, tarte tatin with our beetroot relish, herb fine salad & a sherry vinegar dressing

### Mains

150-day grain fed Diamantina Angus eye fillet, thyme roasted chat potatoes, red onion tart, spring pea puree & "Estate" wine sauce  
Pan seared duck breast, roast butternut pumpkin puree, Sarladaise potato, pomegranate jelly, honey & clove jus  
Slow cooked Tuscan style lamb shoulder with a 2-point lamb rack, fondant potato, spinach puree & pepperonata

### Desserts

Vanilla Crème Brûlée made with free-range eggs, poached rhubarb & a hazelnut tuille  
Deconstructed goats' curd cheesecake with gingerbread crumbs, cassis jelly & fresh blueberries & a sesame crisp  
3 tastes of chocolate- bittersweet Belgian chocolate tart, chocolate & baileys mousse with a choc-orange ice cream

**Open 7 days per week for lunch, dinner Friday & Saturday evenings  
Extended summer trading hours Bookings essential ph. 59819555**



Still moments watching the view



## Discover Stillwater this Summer

Explore one of the Peninsula's largest range of wines and produce in the Cellar door, take in the views from the shimmering lake then enjoy a sophisticated lunch or dinner in the dining room. Bring the family down for platters and live music on the terrace complete with bocce, cricket and games for the kids

Sit back and take it all in from your own private deck at the lakeside villas or say "I do" by the lake and follow with a reception to remember.

Produce driven cuisine, exciting flavours, luxury lakeside villas, cellar door, weddings and events.....

Still amazed that one place can deliver so much?

**Find out more at [www.stillwateratcrittenden.com.au](http://www.stillwateratcrittenden.com.au)**

**OPEN** daily for lunch and dinner Thursday, Friday and Saturday evenings  
Also open every evening 27/12/12 to 13/1/13



TELEPHONE 03 5981 9555  
25 HARRISONS RD DROMANA  
[WWW.STILLWATERATCRITTENDEN.COM.AU](http://WWW.STILLWATERATCRITTENDEN.COM.AU)

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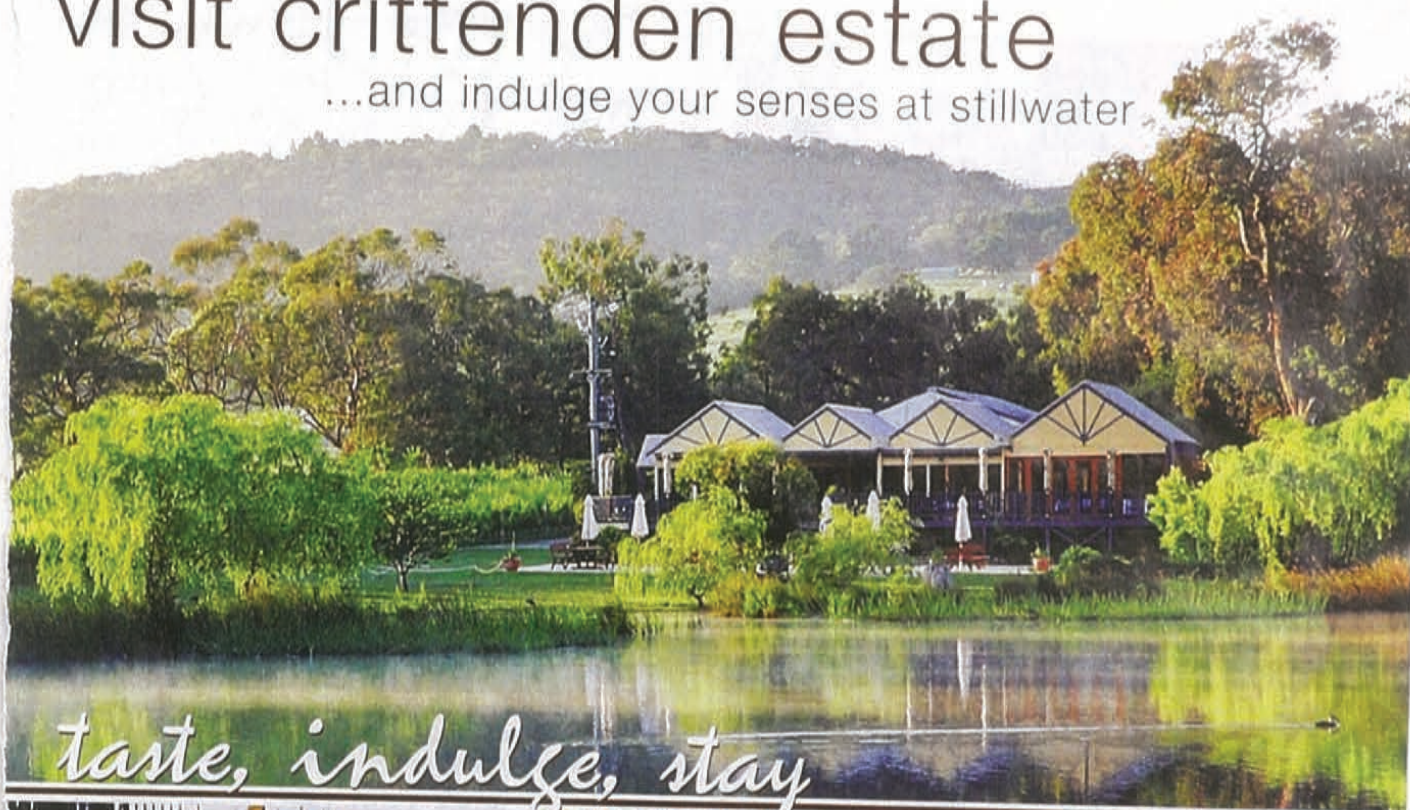


CRITTENDEN ESTATE®

Crittenden Memories

## visit crittenden estate

...and indulge your senses at stillwater.



*taste, indulge, stay*



Restaurant • Lakeside Villas • Cellar Door • Weddings

### Restaurant

Come and enjoy this multi award winning dining room overlooking our tranquil lake and vines. Indulge in modern, produce driven cuisine by chef owner Zac Poulier and browse our extensive wine list with over 30 wines available by the glass. For a more casual lunch try a vigneron's platter with a glass of estate wines by the terrace and lake.

*"Stillwater is one of the best on the Peninsula"*

—Tricia Welsh The Age 20/2/10

### Cellar Door

No trip to the Peninsula would be complete without a visit to the Crittenden Estate cellar door. We offer 13 wines available to taste as well as gourmet Goodies, produce tastings, estate made jams and chutneys as well as plenty of wine and food related gift items.

### Luxury Villa Style Accommodation over the Lake

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## PENINSULA PEOPLE *Steve Robin*

**These days, Steve Robin's main involvement with local events is running the International Cool Climate Wine Show and publicising the Australia Day festivities, but there was a time when he had a hand in most civic events held on the Southern Peninsula.**

For 13 years as the right-hand man for the CEO of the then Shire of Flinders, he masterminded the Council's PR, marketing, tourism and events. As one of Victoria's most progressive and controversial councils, it was an ideal working environment for someone whose early talents were honed through politics.

After Caulfield Grammar, then a stint of National Service, Steve's political nous was finely tuned through presidency of the Young Liberals and as an assistant to the then Minister for Immigration and Ethnic Affairs, Jeffrey Gibb Kennett. With the fall of the Liberal Government in 1982, he headed to Tasmania to work with the Commonwealth Minister for Administrative Services, Kevin Newman.

The Liberals lost power in Canberra and Steve took his insiders knowledge of government to Rosebud, assisting the Shire CEO, Larry Jones. Some of his early work involved helping to form a nascent regional tourism organization, forging links with tourism groups in Melbourne and across the bay, as well as bridging the gap between the embryonic wine and tourism industry.

He left the Shire in 1995, shortly after amalgamation, but still does consultancy work for the Mornington Peninsula Shire Council. Following a hectic period in which he held management roles with the Department of Conservation and Natural Resources, with Chisholm TAFE, and then as a tourism and marketing consultant, he settled into the next phase of his career with the Balnarring-based ASN Events.

In charge of marketing, sponsorship and trade management for the events management company, he helps to stage trade shows, conferences and conventions across Australia. However, one of his fondest and most rewarding projects is still the International Cool Climate Wine Show, held every March at the Red Hill Showgrounds. Now in its ninth year, it's one of the biggest regional wine shows in Australia.

### **What was the inspiration for the wine show ?**

In my early days with the Shire, Garry Crittenden and I would often get our heads together to discuss what was needed to build the emerging local wine industry. We had three things on our wish list: the first was something to fill beds in the off-peak, which the Queens Birthday Wine Weekend has done for the past 20 years. The second was a special local food-wine promotion, which now happens in a variety of ways through the Vignerons Association and MP Gourmet. The third was to hold a local wine show, but that was the hardest to achieve.

However, soon after I started at ASN in 1998, the Red Hill Show Society approached us to consider running a local wine show - it was my third wish handed to me on a platter.



### **Who determines which wines are 'cool climate'?**

Over the years 'cool climate' has become a bit of a marketing throw-away line used by many wine regions, but we strictly adhere to Dr. Richard Smart's criteria of either a vineyard that operates south of 37.5 degrees latitude, or has a mean January temperature below 19 degrees celcius. Some wineries also have distinct micro-climates, so we allow them to present long-term evidence of their 'coolness'.

### **How international is it ?**

It's truly an international event and over the years we have attracted many entries from France, the U.S., Canada, New Zealand and Chile. However, the very different style of Chilean wines didn't really fit. Even Oregon and Alsace wines are quite a different style and, after a few years, the judges felt that they were not able to compare 'apples with apples'.

I knew from the start that New Zealand was going to be a big player in the cool climate wine stakes. These days the show has settled into an 'Australia vs New Zealand' competition. About a third of the 700 entries come from New Zealand, a third from the Mornington Peninsula and a third from other cool climate areas of Australia, especially Tasmania.

### **After 25 years living on the Peninsula, what are your fondest memories ?**

On a personal level, it would be bringing up my family in the very supportive community and beautiful environment of Sorrento. Professionally speaking, it was being part of such a progressive and well managed shire council and particularly working with tourism pioneers like Roger Penman, Ron Neary, Tony Sheer and Richard Hudson. Over the years I have been part of every tourism organization on, or connected with, the Peninsula. I've always enjoyed working with tourism operators because they are very hospitable people and have a genuine sense of enjoyment about their work; they love doing things for people.

### **What has changed most about the place in your time ?**

Tourism wasn't 'tourism' when I started down here - it was just 'visitation'. People would come here when the weather was fine and stay away in droves when it wasn't. Gradually a few brave operators started to open their businesses all year round. The Peninsula and especially its tourism industry has become so much more professional. The Peninsula's level of service used to be very ordinary, but now there's a major concentration by most businesses and institutions like Chisholm TAFE on providing excellent service.

### **Is it inevitable that the Peninsula will become an extension of the southern suburbs ?**

No, I'm confident that the Council will police the planning provisions of the State Government's 2030 plan and I know that most residents and other property owners will see that they do. Mornington has become a little overrun in recent times, but the Council is holding the line south of Moorooduc and there's still a distance gap that provides some breathing space. When I started with the Council in 1983 there were about 30,000 vacant blocks of land; now there is something like 5,000, which increases the price of land and therefore reduces the ability to move here.

## ...In A Nutshell...

### **Favourite part of the Peninsula ?**

The bushland just up the hills behind Rosebud, near Greens Bush. You still get a sense that you can get lost up there. The view is across Lamantina's vegetable fields in Boneo, to the seascapes of the Southern Peninsula and Bass Strait.

### **Favourite drive ?**

I've travelled about a million kilometres around the Peninsula in my time, so there's no road I haven't done. The views across farmland to Westernport makes Stanleys Road in Red Hill a great country drive. The other one is Meakins Road, from Mornington-Flinders Road down towards the blow hole - quite spectacular, but it's unmade, so you need to be a bit adventurous.

### **Favourite restaurant ?**

For location, location, location, you couldn't beat the brand new bistro at the Sorrento Sailing and Couta Boat Club, but we have so much to choose from. I could suggest Tanglewood Downs as a great wedding venue, Box Stallion for its lovely views and good food at a reasonable price, or Montalto for a more upmarket dining experience. We're very lucky.

### **Favourite winery ?**

It's horses-for-courses, because so many people are doing different things so well, like Lindsay Mc Call's great Pinot, Selma Lowther's Shiraz and Cabernet and Kathleen Quealy's brilliant Pinot Gris....the list goes on and on. I think we'll get to a situation similar to France, where each of our localities becomes known for excellence in a particular style.

### **Where would you live if not on the Peninsula ?**

Tasmania, where the balance between development and environmental protection still seems right and it has a population density like the Peninsula had when we first arrived.

*by Tim Bracher*





## WINEMAKING

Crushing  
& Pressing

## Solid solutions for dealing with leftover grape marc

When it comes to what many in the industry view as the 'problem' of marc disposal after the pressing of grapes, there are a number of options available for wineries. **Hans Mick** spoke to several producers to get an insight into how they've utilised the winemaking waste product.



Efforts are taken at Tintilla Estate, in the Hunter Valley, to ensure the smell from marc used in vineyard compost doesn't adversely affect cellar door visitors.

**A**mong winery operators across Australia, there are numerous different approaches to the disposal of the grape marc left over from the winemaking process. For many of the country's larger wineries, the solution is simple: to use the services of Tarac Technologies, the South Australia based company that processes more than 120,000 tonnes of grape marc each year. This represents an 'easy option' for many, ensuring that the 'problem' of marc is, in the words of one Barossa chief winemaker, 'out of our hair, done with, disposed of properly'. A small number of wine producers are using their marc as the basis for producing high quality compost for vineyards. A number of producers shared their methods of marc disposal with *Grapegrower & Winemaker*.

**James Lusby, winemaker and viticulturist, Tintilla Estate, Hunter Valley, New South Wales**

Basically we just compost the marc and mix it in with our canes that we burn

off at the end of the pruning season. So It's just a very basic mulch process, then mixing it and then it's normally spread back out over the vineyard or over our olive trees.

Once you mix it with the ash from the burning off of the cane, it's more time consuming than anything else, just spreading it out. We've just got a little tractor with a bucket on the front of it, so it's basically [spread] bucket by bucket. The bucket is probably half a square metre - it's tiny - so you're taking time in picking it up. It's a slow process really.

It's really very simple and i don't think there's anything tricky about it. Normally we throw a bit of lime on it just to help to take it down.

I don't think many people [in this region] do much more than just pile it up and spread it out. Occasionally you do hear of people who might try to separate it to try and remove the seeds, the grape seed



Rollo Crittenden shows the richness of compost produced on site using grape marc.

extract, but i don't think that's a very common practice.

As we go along we do try to reduce the smell more than anything else, we keep covering it with older material so it doesn't get too stinky. It does get a bit of a smell at certain times of the year when it's fresh and that can be a bit undesirable for customers when you have a cellar door like we have. We try to minimise that by covering that up and layering the mulch.

We've got 17 acres which is fairly small. Shiraz is our main variety but we also have Semillon, Chardonnay, Sangiovese, Merlot, Cabernet that we process as well.

From about a tonne of grapes you probably end up with about 100-200kg of marc by the time you press it. Our press load is about three tonnes and by the end of it we've probably got about half of that, so about 500kg is grape marc.

We're also a contract winemaker, so we get in an extra amount of fruit from other people, up to 40 tonnes [per vintage], although that varies from year to year.

The marc we produce is not enough to replace the need for external compost. By the time we're done with it and it breaks down, obviously it dries out over time and [reduces] down over time. It doesn't really count as a big enough volume to say, 'I can survive just on that'. Basically



it wouldn't be enough and it's really just complementary. So, as far as mulching is concerned it's a fairly simple program that we use.

**Rollo Crittenden, winemaker and viticulturist, Crittenden Estate, Mornington Peninsula, Victoria**

We process about 200-250 tonnes of fruit through our winery in any given vintage. We basically utilise all of our grape marc, whether that be pressed out whites or pressed out reds and also stalks from destemming reds. We collect those and have a large skip on site, so we basically just bin tip it straight into the skip. We then transport that to another site on the property and we combine that with locally-sourced horse manure and lignified woods of different types: there might be some straw, there might be some wood chips. We then make a huge, about 400 cubic metres of compost on the property. We then spread that out to the vineyard.

Not only do we use our own marc but we've started to use marc from three other local wineries as well. So we'd probably be taking in fruit processing close to a thousand tonnes worth of fruit.

Compost needs to be made from three main ingredients: you need manure, green material and lignified organic material, roughly in equal proportions. So the grape marc provides us predominantly with the non-lignified material. There's a component of lignified material which goes into the stalks depending on their status; if they do dry out they form that lignified material. ▶

That's the foundation of any good compost so you don't have to use grape marc but it makes a great source of nitrogen in the compost and we find that the compost is really just excellent in terms of what it does for the vines.

We've been doing this for about ten years now on increasing levels. The result is that our vine health has increased dramatically, we have far more disease resistant vines; we are less reliant on chemicals in the vineyard for disease pressures; and, our soil health has increased the microbial activity in the soil. Our soils are alive [and] they're spongy and have a very high level of organic material. The result is the fruit that we're producing is far better.



Turning compost comprising grape marc by machine on the Mornington Peninsula

We turn the compost about once a month which we do with a front end loader. So we basically bring a bulldozer in or a bucket on a tractor and we flip it and aerate it, and we'll water it if required.

So we have a fairly good system. We don't have a compost turning machine, but we do find we are getting very good. There's no way that we could purchase the quantity of compost that we require. So, this has gone from being beneficial in terms of simply using a bi-product of wine production to being beneficial for the quality of the fruit. Basically, it began as a mechanism to use something but now it's created an outcome of its own.

Some people just spread the marc back out into the vineyard in its current form but we certainly find that converting it into compost makes it break down a lot more quickly [and] increases that microbial growth that we're introducing which is of paramount importance to the vineyard. I would say that a lot more wine producers are looking to utilise the bi-product but I think that over time they'll also find the benefits are excellent.

It's fairly labour intensive the way that we do it. It does require that periodic turning. You have to capture the marc, you then have to store it on site, source the manure and then actually spread the compost once it's complete. A vineyard of our size, which is only 11 acres, we do need to outsource a lot of that mechanical work because we don't have the appropriate machinery for the turning and the spreading of the compost. But rather than a race to the bottom, this is a race to the top. Every year we see the quality of our fruit increasing and, in turn, we see the quality of our wines increasing. So we feel that this is an investment in the future. It does mean that the cost of our production does go up but so does the quality and that's where the investment is. ▶



**WINEMAKING**

The current compost heap at Crittenden Estate in August standing at 2.5m high.

We are 11 acres, we have seven acres of Pinot Noir, we have about two and a half acres of Chardonnay and we have about 0.7 acres each of Arneis and Savagnin. The vineyard was planted back in 1982 by my father, Garry.

[Our] broader process of non-intervention in viticulture, soil health and elimination of synthetic chemicals we've been doing for 10 years now, and this was a direct action in response to a noticeable decline in fruit quality and health 10-15 years ago. We started seeing our soils being stripped bare, and the balance of the fruit at the time of harvest declined, so over a period of time we embarked on this process of rejuvenating soil health and that's been a turning point for our wines as well.

Using the marc really is now part of the core of our viticulture; it's no longer utilising a bi-product, it's really important to us. I think that's the transition that a lot of producers are going through currently in various forms.

**Peter Tavella, winemaker,  
Mollydooker Wines, McLaren  
Vale, South Australia**

We crush around 50-100 tonnes [annually] and we have predominantly red, and a little bit of white marc.

We donate all our marc to a local landscaping company that does composting. They blend it with manure, turn it over and actually make some great veggie compost and organic matter.

The company had the marc tested and it's obviously quite rich in nitrogen and magnesium and other elements as well, so I think it works very well for what they need.

There's no cost and we just donate it to them and they just love it. There are only a couple of wineries in this area that give them their marc and we're one of them, which is fantastic.

It's been for at least the last four to five years that we've been giving them the marc. It hasn't gone to Tarac for a long time now. The decision to change was due to logistics. There was a cost involved to get it to Tarac. So at the time, we had a chat to these local guys; they were willing to take it. We just wanted it off site so this new set up was beneficial for us as well.

Moving forward, there are talks with the company about turning it over into compost and actually potentially reintroducing it into the vineyard. We haven't got that far yet, but I don't know of any other winery in the region contemplating that. Obviously, we've got to do due diligence and actually look at the chemistry behind the actual matter and see if it will work here. But this may potentially happen.

**Rob Wignall, chief executive  
and viticulturist, Wignalls  
Wines, Great Southern,  
Western Australia**

The overall tonnage, including clients' wine, that we do is about 160 tonnes per annum. Quite simply, we just take the marc off site about half a kilometre away from the winery and we put it into a heap that's adjacent to some indigenous forest. Because we've been doing it so long we have a massive worm population. So, within 12 months that marc converts into one of the best mulches I've ever seen. We produce about 10 to 15 cubic metres per annum.

We started the winery here in 1997 and we've always had a clean and green mentality on the property. So trying to recycle a product is the common philosophy of what we do here. We don't use insecticides on the property or any other sort of poisons. We have a very strong worm population and a strong frog population and those things are good indicators, and we just rely on old Mother Nature just to do the hard work for us.

We believe that the Wignalls vineyard was one of the very first in Western Australia to go down the sod culture system in propagation; so, in other words, you encourage growing product in your vineyard instead of the old days when they used to hoe everything and spray everything out [...] We only use very soft chemicals on the property so we're right on the edge of semi-organic effectively.

We would never, ever bring [commercial] compost onto our property because when you don't have a guarantee of cleanliness it's just not worth the risk. So we don't use normal compost, we just use a different form of agronomy to look after our vineyard. So, all this marc actually does not go back into the vineyard at all. We just use it for the good old fashioned growing of vegetables and things like that in the garden. At the moment it's only about ten cubic metres, which is just one truck load, but what's produced is a great product.





Moisture and shade are the most important factors to promote worm growth for the Wignalls marc mulch pit.

When it comes to the disposing of grape marc, I've been asked numerous times about what to do with this problem and I always say, 'what problem? It's a great product to use'.

But if do you look at the Great Southern region and you go up into the Frankland region where the big wineries work, they've got the big tonnages of marc. Those areas are very dry so I would suggest that their worm population is nothing like the population we get on the coast. Once you start looking into those dry zones, you find they can't break [the marc] down as effectively as we can break it down just due to the size of the amount produced. Imagine if you're a huge 4000 tonne winery and you live 100 kilometres inland [...] you're only philosophy is you could convert it back into the vineyard. But then there could be concerns about that with disease and things like that.

The other big issue with marc, of course, is the pH level with the product. But that's exactly why the worms do such a good job on it here. And I'm talking about serious worms that we have. If you dig out a shovel full, you've got a thousand worms on your shovel; you've got a worm farm effectively.

I have seen some of the bigger marc locations and I do understand that the size of that produced can be a problem; whereas where we are we've got seven acres of gardens, so I can get rid of our marc with relative ease.

**GW**

## AT A GLANCE

- A small number of wine producers use grape marc to produce high quality compost in their vineyards
- One tonne of grapes can produce around 100–200kg of marc after pressing
- Compost can be made from manure, green material and lignified organic material in roughly equal proportions
- Grape marc compost can significantly increase vine health, leading to disease resistant vines and increased microbial activity in soil health which helps produce better fruit
- Some wine producers recommend layering the compost with mulch to fight off the smell of grape marc
- Grape marc is rich in nitrogen, magnesium and other elements that benefit organic matter
- Dry-zone wine regions can be a problem for high producing wineries using grape marc as it does not break down as easily and can be a problem to dispose of.



Crittenden Family Winemakers  
The Peninsula at its best!



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# IN MEMORIAM

Margaret Crittenden  
1942-2020



# Margaret Jacqueline Crittenden

1942-2020



Marg was an only child, born at St Andrew's Presbyterian Hospital East Melbourne, to Jack and Marion Down, on the 18th of October 1942. Upon leaving hospital, Marg was taken to the family home at Domain Rd South Yarra. She spent all her childhood and teenage years living in South Yarra and Prahran and her entire school life was spent at Melbourne Girl's Grammar in South Yarra, where friendships formed and endured until the end of her life.

Marg demonstrated her sense of adventure at an early age by frequently, unbeknown to her parents, escaping through her bedroom window to hitch a ride in the early dawn light on the horse drawn milk carts around the streets of Prahran. It was this exposure to horses, including harnessing and feeding them at the milk depot stables, that gave her a life-long love of them. She became a member of a suburban pony club in her teens and was very enthusiastic and supportive when daughter Zoe became interested in horses 20 years on. But more about that later. Marg of course also used the same window escape route in her early teenage years, to meet up with some of the local lads!

On leaving school, she entered the nursing academy at The Alfred Hospital in Commercial Rd and lived for part of her time in the student nurses' accommodation there.

Goodness knows what larks she and her fellow students got up to, given it was a time of liberation for the young, heralded by pop groups such as The Beatles.

Graduating in 1963, Marg continued to work at The Alfred until the call of Europe beckoned, as it did in those days for so many girls in their late teens and early twenties. Embarking in Melbourne on the SS Orcades in 1965, Marg ended up in London. She then travelled around England, Scotland and Wales, before taking a job, of all places, at a mink farm in Southern England.



*Margaret on her graduation day*



The possible highlight of her time away was purchasing an Austin A30, shipping it across the channel to France (goodness knows how), and with a girlfriend, spending months driving around France, Spain, Italy, Germany and perhaps the ultimate adventure for the cold war period, going as far east as and travelling around Czechoslovakia.

Marg returned to Australia via the Panama Canal, travelling through the Pacific, briefly stopping in New Zealand, and then home to Australia, where she resumed her nursing career. By the late 1960s, her parents had moved to North Balwyn, so Marg purchased a flat in the conservative suburb of Hawthorn, which is where she was living when she met Garry through mutual friends in 1969.

By now, she had left the disruptive shift work of day to day hospital nursing, and had secured a job in the pathology research laboratory at Prince Henry's Hospital in St Kilda Rd. After a courtship lasting 2 years, the happy couple were married in Christ Church South Yarra on the 26th of February 1972, and in lieu of a honeymoon, the groom gave his new bride a toaster and a washing machine.



*Margaret and Garry on their wedding day.*

Garry had started Crittenden's Nursery in Mt Eliza in 1967, specialising in the then increasingly popular Australian native plants. For a while, they lived in Marg's flat in Hawthorn and Garry drove to the Peninsula 7 days a week. Such were the nurseries opening hours. Eventually the rigours of driving over an hour in each direction daily, before the advent of freeways, became too much, so they decided to pick up sticks and move down to the Peninsula, purchasing a house in Birdrock Ave Mt Martha in 1973. They spent the next two years there, and their first born, daughter Zoe, came into being at Frankston Hospital on Christmas Eve 1974.

By now, Marg was working in a private pathology service lab in Frankston and the daily travel and once again odd hours, became a bit onerous on life with a new child, so the decision was made to move closer to her work. That is how the family came to purchase 106 Kars St Frankston in 1975; a landmark house in the locality, due to its mock Tudor façade and ample gardens on three building blocks, enough for a large vegetable garden indeed.

The house was in need of some love and attention, so Marg relished the opportunity to show her flair for period decoration by giving the interior a thorough make over. Garry satisfied himself by digging a wine cellar under the house for his ever-growing collection of bottles. It was while living there, that Rollo entered the world on the 13th of June 1976, eighteen months after Zoe.



In 1978, the family took a holiday, driving a hire car around Tasmania (Zoe was four and Rollo two and a half at the time), including getting bogged and rescued on an abandoned rail track on the West Coast near Strachan (Garry was driving). On that holiday, the family had dinner one night in Hobart at a restaurant purporting to sell Tasmanian wine; something Marg and Garry had never heard of. After being convinced by the waiter that it was legitimate and being given a name and address, they returned to the motel where Garry rang the now legendary Claudio Alcorso at 9pm.

Claudio generously granted a meeting at Morilla Estate the following day and tasted them through his astonishing range of virtually unknown wines, grown on his property at Berridale on the Derwent River in the northern suburbs of Hobart – known today as Mona. The rest, as they say, is history.

Mulling it over for a few weeks after returning from the holiday, Garry proposed over dinner one evening that maybe the family should sell up everything and move to Tasmania to plant a vineyard. Margaret quietly observed that “you might find it a little lonely”. (That said, exactly 9 years later in 1987, they did plant a vineyard in the Coal River Valley near Hobart with Margaret’s full support).

Back on the mainland, the kids were in preschool and prep at Minimbah in Frankston where the family got to know, surprise surprise, one the first vineyard owners on the Mornington Peninsula, Nat White of Main Ridge Estate. It took little time to convince Marg that it could be a bit of fun to plant a vineyard somewhere on the Peninsula, especially, as she realised that she and the kids would be able to have horses on a country property, unlike Frankston.

After spending the best part of a year combing the Peninsula for likely sites, they eventually found and purchased the place they still occupy to this day in Dromana. And they didn’t have to sell up everything either, just the family home. The nursery business remained intact for the time being.

In September of 1982, family and friends gathered to plant on the property over one weekend, the first 5 acres (two hectares) of vines, and in so doing, doubled the entire aggregated area of vines planted on the Mornington Peninsula at that time, from five to ten acres. Naturally, Margaret provided a sumptuous lunch on both days for the assembled multitude.



*Garry and Marg toasting the opening of the new cellar door*



Margaret embraced farm life enthusiastically, from planting the vines in 1982, to providing the workers with generous lunches and designing her dream home, which in 1984, after their first vintage, the family moved into. Today, it still stands and serves as the office in one part, and the Wine Centre in another. As the years rolled on, Marg was the mainstay of the family and for many years during the 10 to 12 weeks of vintage from March to May, she provided endless meals for family, friends and itinerant workers engaged in the process; so much so, that it gave her the inspiration for what became her crowning glory - her restaurant and wine-tasting room, which today houses Stillwater Restaurant.

How she ever found time to continue her normal pathology career, raise two boisterous children and put up with an absent-minded husband, beggar's belief.

Marg's lifelong ambition to have horses came to fruition, and she and Zoe cared for them. Zoe's interest in horses increasingly grew, until she was regularly riding competitively. Marg thought nothing of getting up before dawn on cold and rainy winter's mornings to hitch up the horse float, load the horses and a lunch basket, and head off to Pony Club. On the only occasion Garry was asked to fill in and be the float driver, he took a corner too fast, the horse slid and fell onto its side and it took a half hour to get it, luckily uninjured, upright on its feet. Needless to say, Garry wasn't asked again.

Zoe completed her schooling at Toorak College and went to Swinburne University to do a psychology major, followed by a teaching career which went on to include post-graduate degrees in education at Melbourne Uni and Monash, and teaching in the public and private education sector.

She returned to the family business in 2004 and is a major contributor to its ongoing success.

Rollo completed his schooling at Peninsula Grammar and attended Charles Sturt University in Wagga to study winemaking and spent vintages in the King Valley, Hunter Valley, Oregon, California and Piemonte in Italy, by way of gaining exposure to broader industry matters. Today, he heads up the family business and serves as President of the local vigneron's association, as well as sitting on a number of national industry boards and committees. Margaret was justifiably immensely proud of her children's achievements and was hoping to see her grandchildren follow suit and flourish in their careers.



*The Crittenden family*



There are two things that should be highlighted about Margaret's contribution to the family wine business, as well as her MAJOR contribution to the broader Mornington Peninsula Wine Industry. Almost by sleight of hand, Margaret erected a trestle table in the then winery building, during the January 1988 summer holidays. With nothing more than a notepad, pen and a cash tin (there was no such thing as a till or credit card devices in those days), she opened the Peninsula's first "Cellar Door."

By sleight of hand? Yes, Garry didn't know, as he was away at the London Wine Trade Fair aiming to develop an export market. He only found out about Marg's "cellar door" when he returned home in early February after the summer holidays were over. She was so taken with the potential, she went on to conceptualise, design and build her real cellar door AND restaurant, and worked behind the stoves there, 7 days a week, for the next 13 years after opening in 1992.

It was, categorically, the first cellar door restaurant on the Mornington Peninsula. Today, it still operates as Stillwater Restaurant.

After Marg hung up her apron in 2005, she then went on to conceptualise, design, build and manage (for the next 5 years), the three multi tourism award winning Lakeside Villas, that adorn the lake on the property and are today so ably managed by Rollo's wife Linda.

A leader and innovator of her time, Marg made such an immense contribution to the Peninsula Wine industry. In 2003 Garry was inducted as a Legend by the Melbourne Food and Wine Festival for his contribution to the Wine Industry in Victoria. He firmly believes Marg would have been a more worthy recipient of that honour, for the years of unstinting service and sacrifice she made on behalf of the wine, food and tourism industries of our state.

For the last ten years, despite Margaret's health decline, she never complained and always remained positive.

Marg will be remembered as a devoted wife to Garry, Mum to Zoe and Rollo, Granny to Finn, Maia, Oscar and Digby, and a very loyal friend to countless others.

By Garry Crittenden





