

50 STARS OF 2008

BROUGHT TO YOU BY WEMS

WBM is proud to present: 50 Stars of the Australian wine sector, as voted by the editorial panel, selected for their achievements, their entreprenuring spirit and their shared passion for the industry, which will underpin its future.

1/194 Sturt Hwy,
Nuriootpa SA 5355
08 8565 7270
08 8565 7271
sales@wems.com.au
www.wems.com.au



DESIGN • ENGINEERING • INSTALLATION

BRIAN AGNEW**Audrey Wilkinson Vineyard**

Since buying 142-year-old Hunter Valley winery Audrey Wilkinson Vineyard four years ago Brian Agnew has been hellbent on revitalising the famous brand. His efforts were rewarded this year when the '06 Audrey Wilkinson Hunter Valley Museum Reserve Semillon won the NSW Wine of the Year. Agnew, one of Australia's leading litigation lawyers, knows all about winners—he bred 1992 Melbourne Cup winner Subzero. It will be interesting to watch the progress of this important Hunter winery under new winemaker Jeff Byrne.

**FRAN AUSTIN****Bay of Fires**

Tasmania's killing 'em and one of the local stars is Bay of Fires winemaker Fran Austin. Her '07 Pinot won Best Pinot of Show in Brisbane this year while the Chardonnay, Riesling and Gewurztraminer are all attracting interest. Austin's involved in all things Tasmanian and thanks to her, Bay of Fires and neighbours won funding under the 'Envirofund' program to rehabilitate part of the Pipers River that flows through the property. Austin was nominated for the Young Gun of Wine Awards and took part in v-know's Wine, Women & Song event (for which the above glamorous photograph was taken). She was also invited to take part in the International Pinot Forum in the US.

**VICKI ARNOLD****Heartland/Glaetzer**

We all know that Ben Glaetzer is the rock star winemaker behind the phenomenal global success of the Heartland and Glaetzer brands, but what is probably less known is that Vicki Arnold is the marketing powerhouse behind it all, travelling the globe and meeting the trade and establishing longlasting relationships through her vast wine knowledge, engaging personality, sense of fun and portfolio of outstanding wines. Arnold is one of Australia's smartest wine marketers and when WBM needs information on anything to do with wine marketing we generally start with an email to her. It would make sense for more wineries to follow this one marketer/two brands business model.

**GLENN BARRY****Starvedog Lane**

The dog might be starving but this all-conquering Adelaide Hills brand from the Constellation stable is not starved of success, thanks to Brisbane born chief



winemaker Glenn Barry. He is a great champion of Adelaide Hills fruit and Starvedog Lane won four trophies at the Adelaide Wine Show including the Max Schubert Trophy (for the '06 Shiraz Viognier) for the second year running; 'The Dog' won seven trophies the previous year. Constellation Wines Australia president John Grant says he wants to be Australia's regional wine champions and it's quiet achievers like Glenn Barry who is helping to achieve the boss's goal.

LARISSA BRAY**Aldersyde Estate**

Western Australian Larissa Bray is a name to watch after being named Dux of the Len Evans Tutorial, described by James Halliday as the world's most exclusive wine school. A former solicitor, Bray was assistant winemaker at Cape Mentelle for three years before taking over her family's winery, Aldersyde Estate, last year. She has worked vintages in Bordeaux, Burgundy, the Rhône, the Loire Valley, NZ and Italy. As Dux, Bray has been guaranteed judging positions at the National Wine Show in Canberra and the Royal Sydney Wine Show, and has also been offered an associate judge's position at the Air New Zealand Wine Awards. (Photo by Francis Andrich).

**GRANT BURGE****Grant Burge Wines**

Burge captured the imagination of the wine trade and consumers with his In-Store Cellar Door Tour. He built a 10 square metre replica of his Barossa cellar door and placed it on the floor of Coles' 1st Choice stores across Australia. Another great innovation from Burge—celebrating his 20th year in business—was the release of the Moscato Frizzante with the very cool 'twisty' bottle pattern. The Accessorise campaign featuring a James Bond lookalike promoting the NV Sparkling Pinot Noir Chardonnay, was another great initiative. And while many winemakers struggle to nail Pinot Gris, Burge's '08 East Argyle Pinot Gris scored 95 points in *The Advertiser's* Top 100.

**TOM CARSON****Yabby Lake Vineyard**

One of the big moves of the year was Tom Carson leaving Yering Station after 12 years and moving to Yabby Lake Vineyard and Heathcote Estate as group winemaker and



general manager. Yabby Lake launched a cellar door in Guangdong Province in China. It's been a busy year for Carson, taking on the chairman's role of the National Wine Show in Canberra and he was also chosen by the ABC to assist with the Landmark Australia Tutorial next year. Meanwhile wine quality remains exemplary with the '04 Yabby Lake Vineyard Roc scoring 97 points in the *Wine Companion*. Tom Carson, Tod Dexter and Larry McKenna—the dream team!

JOSEF CHROMY**Josef Chromy Wines**

Josef Chromy OAM fled his homeland of Czechoslovakia after World War Two and arrived in Australia penniless. But he ended up becoming one of Tasmania's most dynamic businessmen in the wine, beef and property development industries. Chromy has developed some of the Apple Isle's most acclaimed wineries including Rochecombe (now Bay of Fires), Jansz, Heemskerk and Tamar Ridge. His latest venture, Josef Chromy Wines, has won seven trophies and 82 medals in two years. Few have done more for the Tassie food and wine industry than Chromy, 78, who was awarded the Export Leadership Award at the Tasmanian Export Awards.

**DI DAVIDSON****Davidson Viticulture**

Industry visionary Di Davidson, managing director of Davidson Viticulture, is the consummate professional and she's in demand, spending much time in India this year helping to set up vineyards for emerging wineries. Davidson also consults to some of Australia's most important vineyards and she played a key role in averting the water crisis in Langhorne Creek (a pipeline is being built from Jervis on the Murray to the region). She is a firm believer in applying solid business principles to all vineyards, a mantra she reinforces often in her regular column in WBM. This year Davidson received the Chairman's Award from Wine Industry Suppliers Australia.



Design


WILLIAM DOWNIE**William Downie Wines**

This dynamic young Victorian winemaker is one of the new breed, selling more high-end Pinot than he can make.

Downie's producing the kind of wines that will help put

Australia's top-shelf stuff on the global map. The two current Pinots, a Mornington Peninsula and a Yarra Valley, sell for \$50. Downie's old boss at De Bortoli, Steve Webber, calls him Australia's best young winemaker and there's growing evidence to support that view. Downie's packaging is spot-on, too, with distinctive labels designed by Reg Mombassa. A finalist in the Young Gun of Wine Awards, Downie also makes Pinot Noir for R Wines, destined for the US.

**BEN EDWARDS****The Wine Guide**

Edwards, 37, is suddenly one of the most influential people in the Australian wine industry after winning the dream gig to help James Halliday with tastings for the *Wine*

Companion. A former Dux of the Len Evans Tutorial, Edwards has been working in the wine game for 19 years, mainly as a sommelier, and has been president of the Australian Sommeliers Association in Victoria since 2002. Edwards worked as the wine buyer for the Mathis group of restaurants before leaving to start his own wine consulting company, The Wine Guide. Edwards has progressed to the second year of the notoriously difficult Master of Wine.

**JEFF EGAN****JMP Holdings**

Egan is director of Melbourne-based JMP Holdings, crowned Supplier of the Year by Wine Industry Suppliers Australia. JMP entered the wine industry seven

years ago and has already earned the respect of winemakers. Its innovations include the Enviro Pallet and the Envirotuff thermal liner used inside shipping containers to protect wine against temperature fluctuations. Envirotuff is exported all over the world and has had six design changes in five years, with winemakers playing a key role in its refinement. Egan has vowed to keep the innovations coming in 2009. JMP Holdings adds more weight to the argument that Aussie winemakers would be lost without innovative suppliers.

**MAC FORBES****Mac Forbes**

"Mac Forbes" has a certain ring to it and his wines have a certain magic to them. Forbes' first vintage was in 2005 but already he has made his mark.

Reviews in *WBM100* have included 94 points for the '05 Mac Forbes Hugh, 92 for the '06 Yarra Valley Pinot, and 92 for the '07 Mac Forbes RS31 Riesling. Most of Forbes' wines have a link to wines made in the '70s (in his own words "less ripe characters with lower alcohols and without any modern intervention") and are made in small volumes. Forbes is a good marketer, too, and one of the highlights of the year is a foot-stomping day. He was a finalist in the Young Gun of Wine Awards. Attracting a Rockford-like cult following,

**BRIAN FREEMAN****Freeman Vineyards**

Former professor of wine science at Charles Sturt University Brian Freeman released his first wine from the Hilltops region in 2005: the '02 Rondinella Corvina, an

Amarone-inspired red. It was well received. Last year he released the '06 Fortuna, a blend of Pinot Gris, Riesling, Sauvignon Blanc, Chardonnay and Aleatico, inspired by the aromatic whites of Friuli and Alto Adige in Italy. Tom Stevenson described the Fortuna in the *Wine Report* as "one of the world's 100 most exciting wine finds in 2008" and praised Freeman for setting a new direction for Aussie whites. The '07 Fortuna was released this year. Freeman's willingness to try new things is his point of difference.

**PETER GAGO****Penfolds**

When one-time chalkie Peter Gago replaced John Duval as Penfolds chief winemaker in 2002 it was considered a hard act to follow. But Gago has taken Penfolds quality to

another level—a ray of sunshine for Foster's in an otherwise dismal year. Halliday gave the '03 Grange 95 points but said it's not in the class of the upcoming '04, '05 and '06—a "brilliant trio". The '05 Bin 389 won the Great Australian Red Challenge and the '05 Yattarna won the George Mackey Memorial Trophy. Gago is so enthusiastic about Penfolds it's as if he owns the brand himself. A wonderful ambassador not just for Penfolds but for all Aussie wine. Arguably the star of 2008.

**JOHN GLADSTONES****Scientist**

A WA scientist credited with uncovering the potential of Margaret River, Gladstones won the McWilliam's Wines Maurice O'Shea Award. Gladstones released his first paper in 1965

touching on the advantages of the Margaret River region. His second report a year later developed further his thesis that Margaret River was ideal for vines. In 1992 Gladstones published *Viticulture and Environment*, a study of the effects of environment on grapegrowing and wine quality. Gladstones is completing a new book examining the concepts of terroir and possible effects of climate change. Its working title is *Terroir and Climate Change: the Shaping of 21st Century Viticulture*.

**PETER GODDEN****Arrivo**

Godden is known across the globe for his groundbreaking AWRI research on wine closures but his growing reputation as arguably Australia's pre-eminent

Nebbiolo exponent threatens to overshadow his earlier work in the labs! It seems that every time you open a newspaper or magazine there's another review for Arrivo Nebbiolo. *WBM100* scores have included 96 points for the '06 Nebbiolo, 95 for the '06 Lunga Macerazione Nebbiolo (extended maceration version) and 92 for the '08 Rosato di Nebbiolo. Attention to detail is the hallmark of these awesome wines and the packaging is smart and distinctive. Oh, and Godden uses screwcaps



Engineering



JEREMY GORDON**Flametree Wines**

Gordon started his winemaking career in WA before moving east to broaden his horizons. But he recently returned to the west to "make his mark"—what a mark he made! He won the Jimmy Watson for the '07 Flametree Cabernet Merlot. Amazingly, the wine retails for only \$25 and it was the first red produced under the Flametree brand. It was no fluke; the wine has won three other trophies: Best Red Wine and Best Red Blend at the Qantas Wine Show, and Best Red Blend at the Perth Royal Wine Show. The new Flametree winery at Dunsborough in Margaret River is run by the Gordon and Towner families and they've released seven wines so far and won nine medals. Flametree's hot.

**BEN HAINES****Mitchelton**

Haines was named Young Winemaker of the Year by the Wine Society. The wine that won it for the young star was the '06 Mitchelton Print Shiraz. Haines said, "The support of my mentors and the entire team at Mitchelton has been invaluable. In particular my partnership with viticulturist John Beresford has been enormously rewarding and pivotal to our success. The responsibility of nurturing the legacy of previous winemakers Colin Preece, Don Lewis and Toby Barlow has been a fantastic opportunity." Haines started in viticulture before switching to winemaking. He joined Mitchelton as assistant winemaker and became winemaker only last year. Not a bad start!

**ROBERT HILL SMITH****Yalumba**

Hill Smith presides over a grand old treasure but he doesn't live in the past; in fact he's one of the industry's great innovators and tries more new things than most. Yalumba unveiled a special glass for Viognier (the variety it virtually 'owns') and published *Tell!*—a superb 'mega-brochure' that inspired the industry including WBM. Hill Smith was awarded the second Len Evans Award for Leadership, ironically in the same month as the 70th anniversary of the plane crash that killed his uncle, Sidney Hill Smith. When MC Peter Bourne announced Hill Smith as the winner, he chose three words to define his industry commitment: *innovation, conservation and elevation.*

**DENIS & TRICIA HORGAN****Leeuwin Estate**

Encouraged by John Gladstones' research into Margaret River as a potential wine region and inspired by the mentoring of Robert Mondavi, Denis and Tricia Horgan began commercial planting in 1975, setting out to combine their passions for fine wine, food, art and music. The venture was a success from the start. "One can only stand in awe of Leeuwin Estate and the Horgans in their unrelenting pursuit of excellence," Halliday once wrote. This year the AWBC included Leeuwin Estate Art Series Chardonnay in its exclusive list of Landmark Australia wines and the Horgans were presented with a Lifetime Achievement Award by the Margaret River Wine Industry Association.

**KIM HORTON****Ferngrove Wines**

Horton is the senior winemaker for Ferngrove in star region Frankland River and his offerings are starting to rack up some significant wins including a trophy for his '08 Sauvignon Blanc at the Adelaide Wine Show. Since July last year this humble winemaker and his team have collected eight trophies, 17 gold medals, 25 silver and 57 bronze. Horton is a great ambassador for Australian wine and loves talking it up, so much so that he has a regular gig on ABC regional radio.

**RORY KENT****Tongue**

Smart operator Rory Kent, owner of Melbourne marketing agency Tongue, is a breath of fresh air in a sometimes staid industry. He runs wine events in upmarket settings in the eastern states that engage cashed-up young professionals. This year's events included the Young Gun of Wine Awards—an increasingly important event—Champagnes at Circa, and Wine Women & Song. One of the more interesting events is Wine By Design where various designers come up with innovative and often 'out there' labels for top wineries. The AWBC should use this passionate young dynamo to help promote our top-shelf stuff. We need more young 'goers' like Rory Kent. Perhaps the AWRI can clone him.

**TIM KIRK****Clonakilla**

The last time we wrote about Tim Kirk in WBM he was counting the cost of the frost-ravaged 2007 vintage. But Kirk's a survivor and his wines have actually gone from strength to strength this year with most critics agreeing his Clonakilla Canberra District Shiraz Viognier (awarded 97 points by Tyson Stelzer in WBM100) is the finest example of the style in Australia. "Its lifted perfume, tannin texture and cacophony of every flavour that this label has ever encompassed put it into the league of the best of this style from anywhere on the planet," wrote Stelzer. The WBM100 Wines of the Year include no less than six wines from Clonakilla including the 96-point '08 Riesling.

**PETER LOGAN****Logan Wines**

This boutique producer in the NSW Central Ranges went for a new look for the Logan range this year and the new labels—featuring delicate embroidery work—look stunning. Meanwhile the wine quality is constantly improving with the '08 Sauvignon Blanc (Orange) winning a trophy at the Murrumbateman Cool Climate Wine Show and the '08 Weemala Riesling (Mudgee) winning gold. The '06 Logan Shiraz was named in the Liquorland New Zealand Top 100 International Wine Competition. Peter Logan has long been a champion of cold climate Shiraz and he's adamant that it's the future for the variety in Australia. His prediction is looking very solid indeed.




Installation



STUART MacGILL**Wine commentator**

Wine doesn't get much of a go on TV and food and wine shows come and go, but former Aussie cricketer Stuart McGill is giving our wines the type of plugs money can't buy on *Stuart*



MacGill Uncorked, which appears on the LifeStyle Food Channel on Saturday. He also pens a column for the *Sunday Telegraph Magazine*. MacGill sets out to demystify wine which is refreshing to see. With his instant media profile carried over from his cricketing days, MacGill, who retired from the game this year after taking 207 Test wickets, could be the next big thing in wine writers. Send some samples to this guy—you never know, your wines may just bowl him over.

EWEN MacPHERSON**Symphony Hill**

Queensland wine came in from the cold this year when ex computer programmer Ewen MacPherson's '03 Symphony Hill Reserve Shiraz won the first ever Queensland gold medal at the Sydney Royal Wine Show—and it was the top scoring red wine of the show. How's a relatively new Queensland winery going in these tough times? Err, everything sells out every year, with the winery's primary market being Brisbane's top restaurants. Four of the Symphony Hill wines retail for \$45 and two for \$65. Queensland wineries have been mocked by southern cousins over the years but savvy wine business operators like Ewen MacPherson appear to be having the last laugh.

**BILL MARTIN****Clairault**

Margaret River winery Clairault has had a year to remember—five stars from the great man Halliday for the first time; two trophies at the International Wine Challenge in London; and two Top 100 wines at the Sydney International Wine Competition. In November Clairault was named Most Outstanding Wine Brand (under 300 tonnes) at the WA Wine Industry Awards. The Martin family has owned Clairault since 1999 and spent a massive amount of time and energy getting the vineyard right using a low intervention approach. Bill Martin is the managing director but winemaker Will Shields deserves equal recognition for the rise and rise of this great WA brand.

**HELEN McCARTHY****Taylors**

Taylors senior winemaker has had her most successful year yet, winning the Members' Choice Award at the Wine Society's Young Winemaker of the Year Awards, clinching the Kernen's Medal for Australia and NZ's most outstanding up-and-coming winemaker at the *Gourmet Traveller WINE* Winemaker of the Year Awards, and being offered one of 12 scholarships at the Len Evans Tutorial. The many gongs have included gold medals for the '05 Jaraman Cabernet at the Shanghai International Wine Challenge and the Japan Wine Challenge. *WBM* scribe Nick Bullied recently described McCarthy as the best new wine judge he had come across.

**JANICE McDONALD****Stella Bella Wines**

Stella Bella is one of those wineries that has a bit of fun with its marketing but at the end of the day the wine quality is just about as good as it gets in this country. The whizz behind this sharp operation is winemaker Janice McDonald. James Halliday blessed this Margaret River winery with his famous red ink in the *Wine Companion*, awarding no less than five wines 94 points or more. Suckfizzle is surely one of the most engaging names for a wine (besides its stablemate Skuttlebutt of course). Quirky names, great packaging, stunning wines, an ounce of fun and something to talk to the punters about at cellar door—it's a winning formula. Stellar performance!

**DAVID MORRIS****Morris Wines**

Morris Wines, home to some of the country's oldest booze, has had yet another year of triumphs and trophies across the globe. Current custodian David Morris has applied his own style to the wines with extraordinary results, the 2008 medal tally standing at 21 trophies, 66 gold and 50 silver. David Morris remains as humble as ever: "The success is attributable to the quality of fruit that Rutherglen is capable of producing. The assistance of our viticulture and winery staff and their attention to detail ensures that, as a team, we can produce wines of the highest standing." Morris chalks up 150 years in 2009 and look out for a new super-premium fortified to celebrate the big milestone.

**RAY NADESON****Lethbridge Wines**

Wine writers everywhere are heaping praise on Victoria's Lethbridge Wines which dominated the Geelong Wine Show with four trophies including Best Wine of Show for the '07 Allegra Chardonnay. Winemaker Ray Nadeson and Maree Collis' philosophy is to practise organic techniques influenced by biodynamic methods "to establish a healthy vineyard". The winery is built from straw bales which provide excellent thermal qualities and the building needs no heating or cooling. "Now and then someone comes into the wine world who learns so fast and produces excellent wines so quickly that it takes your breath away. Ray Nadeson is such a person," Huon Hooke wrote.

**MICHELLE NUGAN****Nugan Estate**

Griffith dynamo Michelle Nugan, CEO of Nugan Estate, is responsible for one of our great business success stories. Her business career began in 1986 when her husband died of cancer. The mother of three took over the struggling fruit and veg business and diversified, turning it into one of Australia's most successful agricultural enterprises. Annual turnover now is \$80 million. In 1993 Nugan planted 590ha of vines and it is now our 13th largest wine exporter, having collected 22 trophies and 1,077 medals in seven years. This year Nugan was named Ernst & Young Entrepreneur of the Year (Eastern Region) in the Products category. A timely source of inspiration for inland wineries.



Hygienic Fabrication



CHESTER OSBORN

d'Arenberg

This loud-shirt-wearing McLaren Vale wine guru knows how to have fun and attract attention, but don't be fooled: when it comes to wine quality Osborn's deadly serious. d'Arenberg won four gold medals, four silver and seven bronze at the Adelaide Wine Show—its most successful showing ever at that event. The *Wine Companion* ran 33 reviews for d'Arenberg wines, 20 of which scored 90 points plus. The winery continues its varietal exploration with plantings of Petit Manseng and Albariño which will be released in coming years. And look out for d'Arenberg's new cellar door which promises to be as 'different' as some of the things in the bottom of Osborn's wardrobe.



STEPHEN PANNELL

S.C. Pannell

Aussie Aussie Aussie Oi Oi Oi! Thank God we have stars like Steve Pannell giving it back to our friends across The Ditch; his '07 Sauvignon Blanc was named Best Sauvignon Blanc at the Tri Nations Wine Challenge, breaking a six-year stranglehold by the Kiwis. Pannell releases his Sauvignon a year after vintage. Halliday awarded the '05 McLaren Vale Shiraz 96 points, and at the Australian Alternative Varieties Wine Show the '06 Adelaide Hills Nebbiolo was the only wine awarded gold in its class. Pannell also consults to clients in Argentina, the UK and Spain. Halliday wrote in the *Wine Companion*: "This label is well on the way to icon status." The packaging's first rate too.



ANDREW PIRIE

Tamar Ridge Estates

When you think of Tasmanian wine you think of Andrew Pirie, who has produced some of the greatest wines to come out of that state. His wines continue to rack up awards and one to watch is the '06 Tamar Ridge Botrytis Riesling, which won Best Dessert Wine at the Tri Nations Wine Challenge and gold at the Royal Hobart International Wine Show. "There is no longer any doubt in my mind that north-east Tasmania has the capacity to produce dessert-style Rieslings to rival the legendary late harvest wines of Germany," Pirie said recently. The CEO of Tamar Ridge Estates was awarded the Australia Post Award for outstanding service to the Tassie wine industry.



MIKE PRESS

Mike Press Wines

In this David-versus-Goliath industry chalk one up for David! Ex Mildara chief winemaker Mike Press planted a vineyard in the Adelaide Hills but got sick of the big boys taking him for a ride with grape prices and so sold \$7 cleanskins as a value-add. After the success of the '05 Shiraz in wine shows Press put labels on them. He not only makes the wine, but delivers the SA orders himself! Press sells 2,000 cases a year but aims to sell 10,000. The '07 Shiraz (\$11) was on the cover of the August *WBM100* as the '1 in 100' wine. "Mike Press has redefined the benchmark for value-for-money Shiraz," Tyson Stelzer wrote. The '07 Cabernet is good too, with Stelzer giving it 93 points. Not bad for \$12.



SAKKIE PRETORIUS

AWRI

It's been a big year for the AWRI under Isak Stephanus Pretorius. In a world first, the genome sequence of a wine yeast was determined and compared to the genetic blueprints of other non-wine strains of *Saccharomyces cerevisiae*. The analysis is leading to fresh insights into what makes a wine yeast tick and will provide a powerful resource for wine yeast strain development programs. The AWRI is part of the new Wine Innovation Cluster launched in November and Pretorius played a key role in making that happen. Pretorius is originally from South Africa but you would be hard pressed to find someone more driven about improving the breed for Aussie winemakers than this guy.



ALISTER PURBRICK

Tahbilk Wines

Many Aussie winemakers shake their heads in disbelief at the popularity of NZ Sauvignon Blanc in our country but few offer alternatives. Victorian icon Tahbilk offers a great alternative with its outstanding Marsanne which sells for about \$10 a bottle and is attracting higher and higher scores. Tyson Stelzer gave the '08 Marsanne 93 points in *WBM100* saying, "There is no white wine on the planet at this price that can age as reliably from vintage to vintage as this wine. This is the most lively young Tahbilk I have ever seen." Tahbilk had a great year for awards topped off by *Wine & Spirits Magazine* in the US nominating it as one of its international wineries of the year.



LINCOLN RILEY

Sommelier

Head sommelier at Taxi Dining Room at Melbourne's Transport Hotel in Federation Square, Lincoln Riley was the inaugural winner of the Judy Hirst Sommelier of the Year Award at the *Gourmet Traveller WINE*/Fine Wine Partners Australian Wine List of the Year Awards. His list for Taxi also took out the prize for Best Restaurant Wine List in Australia. Riley's list is designed to be a stress-free experience for the average punter while also providing enough breadth and depth from the wine world's classic and new-wave offerings to keep any visiting wine geek entertained. With relationships with the trade now more important than ever, it may be worth getting to know young Lincoln Riley.



LOUISA ROSE

Yalumba

Everything Yalumba's chief winemaker touches turns to gold and the industry was thrilled to see her named Winemaker of the Year by *Gourmet Traveller WINE*—only the second woman to win it after Vanya Cullen in 2000. Yalumba does not produce one bad wine and quality across the range is exemplary. Rose is doing amazing things with Viognier, a variety that Yalumba virtually owns, and the inaugural release of the Pewsey Vale Prima Eden Valley Riesling (off-dry) left Halliday (96 points) and others gobsmacked. Rose has notched up 17 vintages with Yalumba; it says much about the culture of Hill Smith's empire that it's the only winery she's ever worked for!



Stainless Steel Supplies



ALEX SAS**Constellation Wines**

Meet the quiet achiever behind all the trophies Constellation Wines Australia has been winning lately—viticulturist Alex Sas. He completed a degree in Agriculture Science at the University of WA before joining the Department of Agriculture. Sas worked in research for the table grape and wine industry before heading east to become the AWRI viticulturist. He joined Constellation in 1999 and was promoted to group viticulturist in November 2007. Sas and his team are doing a remarkable job—this year CWA won 60 trophies (39 at capital city shows) and 1,000 medals including 180 gold. Sas is a star. Let's see more viticulturists acknowledged on the podium in 2009.

**PETE SCHELL****Spinifex**

Pete Schell and his wife Magali started Barossa Valley winery Spinifex just seven years ago but already their soulful wines are well on the way to legendary status. The '05 Eden Valley Shiraz Viognier scored 97 points, and the '05 Indigene 96 points, in the *Wine Companion*. To complete a good year Nick Stock named Spinifex Winery of the Year in *The Penguin Good Australian Wine Guide*. *WBM100* scores have included 96 points for the '06 Spinifex Esprit and 92 for the '07 Spinifex Papillon. Stock gave the '05 Indigene 95 points, noting it had "more soul than James Brown". It was no surprise to see Schell named Young Gun of the Year.

**TYSON STELZER****Wine writer**

Is Tyson Stelzer Australia's most prolific wine writer? This year Stelzer and his mate Matthew Jukes produced the third edition of their book *Taste Food & Wine* (which won the award for Best Food and Wine Writing in the Australian Food Media Awards); he punched out 600 reviews for *WBM100*; and wrote a new book called *Down To Earth: Burgundy Vintage 2006*. Stelzer doesn't just write books, he designs, typesets and publishes them himself. He even took the photos for *Burgundy!* Stelzer and Jukes also organised the second annual Great Australian Red Competition for Shiraz Cabernet. To complete a massive year Stelzer welcomed his first child Linden into the world.

**NICK STOCK****Wine writer**

Nick Stock is no longer referred to as a 'former sommelier'—these days he's just plain old Nick Stock, star wine writer. Stock the pocket-rocket had big shoes to fill this year when he took over as author of *The Penguin Good Australian Wine Guide* from Huon Hooke and Ralph Kyte-Powell. It was a mammoth task but he's done a sterling job and the word is the book's selling like hot cakes. Stock and Tyson Stelzer write monthly tasting notes for *WBM100* and they have helped to put this new wine trade publication on the map in the space of just 12 months. Perhaps a little known fact is that Stock makes some excellent wines 'on the side' with his brother.

**ANDREW THOMAS****Thomas Wines**

Thomas is the Hunter Valley Winemaker of the Year which completes a wonderful 12 months for him. Specialising in Shiraz and Semillon, Thomas won gongs galore including a trophy for the '07 Braemore Semillon at the Hunter Valley Wine Show and a trophy for the '06 Braemore Semillon at the Small Vignerons Awards. He's doing well with reds, too, with the '07 Kiss Shiraz winning gold at the Australian Small Winemakers Show and the '07 Deja vu Shiraz winning gold at the NSW Small Winemakers Show. Observed Peter Forrestal this time last year: "Thomas is an emerging superstar of the Hunter." You're a good judge, Forrie. Just love that name Kiss Shiraz (say it quickly).

**KERRI THOMPSON****KT & The Falcon**

Clare winemaker Kerri Thompson made her name with Leasingham before taking the plunge with KT & The Falcon in 2004. Like Arrivo, KT has massive support in the trade and media and the wines are soaring. Attractive packaging too. Tyson Stelzer gave the '08 Peglidis Single Vineyard Watervale Riesling 94 points. Thompson is also making wines for Crabtree which is starting to chalk up some major gongs (the '08 Riesling is a cracker). After all of her success at Leasingham Thompson was under pressure to produce the goods 'out on her own' but she's handled it like the star she is. And we love the fact she's not afraid to ask premium prices for premium wines.

**BRUCE TYRRELL****Tyrrell's**

As superbly portrayed on *Australian Story* Bruce Tyrrell typified the spirit of mateship within the wine industry when he helped the Drayton family in January after an explosion killed winemaker Trevor Drayton and boilermaker Eddie Orgo, and seriously injured young winemaker William Rikard-Bell. Tyrrell, along with good samaritans McWilliam's and Australian Vintage Ltd and others, processed Drayton's grapes. Like Robert Hill Smith, Bruce Tyrrell is one of the industry's genuine leaders. And wine quality? In its 150th year in business Tyrrell's won 19 trophies, 41 gold medals and 18 silvers. It won 14 of 21 trophies up for grabs at the Hunter Valley Wine Show.

**STEVE WEBBER****De Bortoli Wines**

We all know this winery is right in the zone but one of the great things De Bortoli is doing is making quality Pinot affordable to the masses, enabling everyone to experience the joy of this wonderful grape that was perhaps once only the domain of the elite. *WBM100* gave the '07 Gulf Station Yarra Valley Pinot 91 points, and the '08 Windy Peak Pinot 92 points. Those wines sell for \$18 and \$13 respectively! Outside of his De Bortoli work Webber is making big changes to the Melbourne Wine Show as chairman of judges, and to complete a big year he was elected to the AWRI board. Like d'Arenberg, De Bortoli has never made better wine and Webber is the key to the purple patch.

**ANDREW WIGAN****Peter Lehmann Wines**

Downturn? What downturn? Peter Lehmann Wines produced an after-tax profit of \$9.6m on revenue of \$61.9m for the past financial year, its strongest ever performance with a 61% jump in net profit. PLW is excelling in wine quality with its whites in particular on fire. The '02 Margaret Barossa Semillon won three trophies including Best Wine of Competition at the Sydney International Wine Competition. That wine and the '02 Reserve Eden Valley Riesling won trophies at the Decanter World Wine Awards. Take a bow, chief winemaker Andrew Wigan. PLW loves Wigan so much it named a wine after him; the '03 Wigan Riesling. Halliday gave it 96 points. They can do no wrong.

