

WINESTATE

AUSTRALIA & NEW ZEALAND WINE BUYING GUIDE

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& blends
225 tasted

THE THIRSTY *Asian Giant*

ROBERT PARKER'S
SPANISH MASTERCLASS

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plus

Chardonnay & Blends • Central & Western Victoria
Barossa Valley & Eden Valley • Italian & Spanish • Marlborough (NZ)

PENINSULA'S LATEST LANDMARK

THE MORNINGTON Peninsula has a spectacular new cellar door/winery following the opening of the Port Phillip Estate facility - the new home for both Kooyong and Port Phillip Estate labels. The architectural landmark features a restaurant, cellar door and tasting room, outside deck overlooking vineyards and Western Port Bay, and state-of-the-art winemaking facilities.

The two labels are owned by Melbourne industrialist and yachtsman Giorgio Gjergja and his family, while the estate-grown, cool-climate wines are crafted by Sandro Mosele.

Designed by award-winning Wood Marsh Architecture, Port Phillip Estate appears as an elegant 120m wall spiralling out from the landscape. The estate has a spacious 85-seat dining room with spectacular views, where chef Simon West's contemporary, regional and seasonal-inspired menus will take centre stage. Simon, formerly at Meadowbank in Tasmania, has created a stunning menu.

While upstairs is the public face of Port Phillip Estate, hidden below ground is the impressive and extensive winemaking, storing and bottling facilities that have excited winemaker Sandro.

Six accommodation suites will also be available, boasting stunning views from the bedroom and living area across vines to the bay. The cellar door is open from 11am-5pm daily and the restaurant daily for lunch and for dinner Tuesday to Sunday. Phone (03) 5989 2708; www.portphillipestate.com.au.



MARGARET RIVER'S BIG PARTY

THE MARGARET River Wine Region Festival will be held at Leeuwin Estate on April 10-11 this year, with the 2011 and 2012 festivals to be hosted by the new Sandalford facility. "We are delighted the festival will return to Leeuwin Estate in 2010," said Margaret River Wine Industry Association president Leah Clearwater. "The event was well supported by both consumers and the wine industry alike and we felt there was a great atmosphere in the amphitheatre. Looking ahead, we have also reached in-principle agreement with Sandalford to host the 2011 and 2012 events, which allows us to rotate venues in the whole Margaret River wine region that encompasses both the shires of Augusta-Margaret River and Busselton and grow the festival geographically." For details see www.margaretriverfestival.com.

A GREAT WAY TO GIVE

WANT to buy a present for a travel-loving wine drinker, but not sure what to get? Put the decision back in their hands with the new Smartbox. The concept allows gift givers to tailor a present for their loved



ones while still letting recipients 'choose their own adventure' from up to 100 different activities or escapes at locations across New South Wales and Victoria.

There are seven different categories under four different themes already available online in Australia (www.smartbox.com).

Options in the Temptations for Two Smartbox (\$69.95) include enjoying a sweet chocolate fondue dessert and martini with a friend at The Victoria Room in Darlinghurst or a cheese platter lunch for two at Grampians Estate in country Victoria. If a romantic escape is more what you had in mind, then a recipient of the Wine Getaways Smartbox (\$249.95) might choose a night in a Premium Spa room at Country Guesthouse Schonegg at Murrumbateman, outside Canberra.

Australia has become the 18th country to launch the Smartbox brand, which is based on a successful concept launched in France just six years ago.

FRANCE ON THE ROCKS

SYDNEYSIDERS have a new slice of France right in The Rocks following the opening of Baroque Bistro Patisserie. The venue is part restaurant/part cafe/part wine bar, with a large open-plan pastry and cuisine kitchen, a retail area and a 100-seat bistro and bar with indoor/outdoor dining areas.



The atmosphere is relaxed, the traditional French menu affordable and there are some outstanding wines to choose from. Think drinks like Louis Roederer Champagne (\$17/\$99), Tyrrell's 2004 HVD Semillon (\$11/\$45) or 2008 Josef Chromy Pinot Noir (\$13/\$54) alongside several affordable French imports.

The ambience is post-industrial, with bar and counters in stunning rose copper, chrome pendant lights and hand-crafted Italian seating, while the walls in the 19th-century building have been stripped back. Frenchman Yann Fontaine, formerly of Quay and Bilson's, is head chef. Baroque is open daily from 8am-midnight. Phone (02) 9241 4811; www.baroquebistro.com.au.



SYDNEY'S NEW WINE MAGNET

IT'S been open only a few months, but the new The Winery By Gazebo wine bar is proving a huge success in the hip Sydney suburb of Surry Hills. From the same team that created the Gazebo Wine Garden in Elizabeth Bay, The Winery opened in September and was turning people away over the holiday period, so popular has it become.

Down a cobbled laneway from Crown St in a quiet courtyard, The Winery offers great views of the city skyline to go with its fine wines and food. Built in 1889, the former Sydney Water Workshop has been stripped back to its raw structure, high ceilings exposing original features contrasted against flamboyant furnishings.

Head sommeliers Andrew Jamieson and Tom Glenwright are sourcing wines from across the globe to find the most unusual top drops. While the wines are listed under headings like "slurpable" and "big and bold", the wines themselves are serious; from a selection of Grosset and Dr Loosen rieslings to Elderton Command and Penfolds Grange and imports from Lebanon, South Africa and the United States. Around 50, including Grange, are available by the glass, thanks to an enomatic storage system, and some are also available direct from the barrel. During summer, open-air chess games have proved popular.

The Winery is open Monday-Thursday 3pm-midnight and Friday-Sunday noon-midnight. Phone (02) 9331 0833; www.thegazebos.com.au/winery.

TWO HANDS TEMPTATIONS

BOUTIQUE Barossa Valley winery Two Hands has unlocked its cellar door collection, which will be available for the first time to visitors to cellar door, who can now get an exclusive look at a selection of the winery's museum and back vintage labels. Within the newly opened Bakehouse Cellar are wines that have been stored for several years in optimum conditions. Two Hands Wines' co-proprietor Michael Twelftree says the collection showcases the winery's award-winning premium shiraz wines dating back to its first vintage in 2000. "We want to make the cellar door experience a memorable one for our visitors," he says. "We have always made our wines to age and we are keen to give our customers the opportunity to try our older vintages that have been stored perfectly since bottling." The launch coincides with a new food offering of tasting platters and chocolate truffles made from Two Hands' Muscat and Moscato.

The cellar door is in a restored 19th century stone cottage with the adjacent Bakehouse, a former kitchen turned tasting and dining facility, featuring a glass floor overlooking the cellars. Phone (08) 8562 4566; www.twohandswines.com.

OLD PARTNERS REUNITED

LONG-TIME wine personalities Andrew Simon (right) and Nicholas Whitlam are back in the industry, having repurchased ownership of their Simon Whitlam brand, which was a big seller for many years. The duo has teamed up to create a new boutique range of six wines that Andrew says are "aimed at wine lovers wanting quality at a realistic price". The new Simon Whitlam range includes a 2009 Hunter Valley sauvignon blanc and a 2006 shiraz that's a blend of Hunter and McLaren Vale fruit. The brand was originally established in the 1970s and the wines are now being made by Graeme Scott at James Estate in the Upper Hunter.



GREEK CELEBRATION

A LARGE crowd gathered in Coonawarra to watch Deputy Prime Minister Julia Gillard open the region's newest cellar door at Raidis Estate in an occasion complemented by Greek food, music and dancing. Winemaker Steven Raidis said he and his family "aim to produce high-quality wine that you can grab to go to a dinner or a barbecue with friends; we want Raidis Estate wine to be a

part of the experience - not the centre of attention". The cellar door is open Thursday to Sunday 12pm to 6pm and on Mondays and Tuesdays by appointment. See www.raidis.com.au.

BURGUNDY'S GLASS ACT

IT'S not often that Burgundy follows in the footsteps of Australia but that is the case at the Loiseau Les Vignes restaurants at the venerable Hotel Le Cep in Beaune. Wines by the glass are a rarity in France, but you'll find more than 70, available in two different pouring sizes, at this innovative restaurant, which describes the concept as "unique in Europe". It's the perfect solution for any visitor from Down Under wanting to sample several great Burgundies without breaking the bank.

The list features rising stars like Vincent Dureuil-Janthial and Stephanie Aladame, along with big names like Bernard Morey, Simon Bize and Alain Gras and rarities like Comte Lafond and Coche-Dury. Prices per glass range from two to 47 euros and set lunches start from 23 euros. Phone +33 3 8024 1206; www.bernard-loiseau.com.

The lovely Hotel Le Cep, a collection of 14th-18th century buildings, is part of the Small Luxury Hotels group and the perfect base for exploring Burgundy. It's in the old town centre but within strolling distance of the vines. See www.slh.com/france/beaune/cepfra.html.

RUTHERGLEN REVELATIONS

VISITORS to Rutherglen are being offered free behind-the-scenes winery tours taking in four of the North-East Victorian region's iconic wineries. Visitors will have the chance to chat with winemakers



as they discover how sparkling shiraz is made, learn the journey of the grape from vineyard to bottle, experience barrel sampling of current vintages, and learn the difference between grapes varieties. Tours are offered daily from Monday to Thursday from 2pm and include Pfeiffer (Mondays), Campbells (Tuesdays), Rutherglen Estates (Wednesdays) and Cofield Wines (Thursdays).

Cofield Wines winemaker Damien Cofield is excited about his winery's participation in the new tour: "This is something we've been wanting to get involved with for some time, so it's great that we're now in a position to offer these regular winery tours on a weekly basis. We're finding that cellar door visitors are now looking for an 'experience' rather than just a tasting." For details and bookings, contact Damien Adams at the Rutherglen Wine Experience, Phone (02) 6033 6302; www.rutherglenc.com.

WINE SOCIETY'S DIFFERENT BREW



THE WINE Society has branched out with the launch of its own beer; John Boston Premium Lager. The new brew was created by master brewer Bruce Peachey to a specific brief prepared by Wine Society members. His mission was to produce a beer displaying the same complexities of flavour, aroma and texture as those found in premium wines.

John Boston Premium Lager is named after the free settler who became the colony's first brewer in 1796. Bruce describes his new creation as a "luxury lager". The brewing technique is 100 per cent natural, using only the highest-quality natural ingredients and no preservatives or additives. "We use prime malted barley, premium local hops and specially selected yeast, and the purity of flavour is outstanding," he says.

The 2010 John Boston brew is more palatable than the 1796 drop, which was brewed from malted maize bittered with the leaves and stalks of cape gooseberries. Boston himself had little opportunity to develop the quality of his beers. In late 1804, trading opportunities took him to Tonga, where he received a warm welcome and was invited to a banquet. If the story is true, he was the main course. John Boston Premium Lager is available in six-packs or in cartons of 24 330ml bottles.

BIG WEEK OF CELEBRATION

THE THIRD annual New South Wales Wine Week - designed to appeal to consumers at all levels - has been scheduled for March 14-20. The event kicks off on March 14 with Sydney Cellar Door in Hyde Park South, which is predicted to be the state's biggest outdoor wine event. That will be followed by a week-long celebration of NSW wine in restaurants throughout the city and state.

It's expected more than 20,000 people will converge on Hyde Park for an event which will see over 110 wineries from all over NSW travel to the city. Food from regional producers and Sydney restaurateurs will complement the wine on offer and all-day entertainment will help create a festival atmosphere. Tasting glasses will cost \$5 and tasting tickets \$4 each.

The Sunday festivities will be followed by Dine with New South Wales Wine, during which participating restaurants will offer a special lunch and dinner meal matched with a glass of premium NSW wine for under \$50; and four Tour of the Regions dinners, at which leading chefs will craft degustation menus matched to the state's best wines. For program details see www.nswwineweek.com.au.

REGIONS FORM A DUET

WINEMAKERS from the Cowra and Canowindra regions have united to promote their district, which they believe is undervalued both in New South Wales and around Australia. Cowra has long been a source of top-class chardonnay, providing the fruit for the initial Petaluma Chardonnay and for Rothbury Estate for many years, but is reinventing itself as a boutique region.

"As the industry monoliths move out of the district, the remaining family-orientated winegrowers are focused on developing their regional identity through careful winemaking with the least environmental impact of any region in Australia," says John Geber of Cowra Estate. "We are not the first families of Australian wine," says Cowra Regional Vineyards Association president, Swinging Bridge owner Tom Ward, "but we are winegrowing families with a rich history and heritage, and we are the icon winemakers of our region with a vested interest in its success."

Vignerons are committed to ensuring that the wines deliver both quality and value. Local grapes, once taken from Cowra for processing, are now made into wine locally. On-site wineries include Wallington, Tom's Waterhole and the oldest winery in the region, Windowrie. The group plans regular roadshows to Sydney and other states to make sure their wines remain visible in a fierce market.

The Cowra region is one of the first to develop the Sustainable Wine Partnership, a framework for sustainability which encompasses the Eight National Environmental Outcomes of the National Heritage Trust, the Winemakers' Federation of Australia's Australian Wine Industry Stewardship Program (AWIS) and the priorities of the Lachlan Catchment Management Authority. While Cowra and Canowindra's reputation was built on the quality of chardonnay, the new generation of wineries, including Mulyan, Windowrie, Swinging Bridge and Spring Ridge, have received a number of national trophies and awards for other varieties such as shiraz, sangiovese and shiraz/viognier blends.

"Although Cowra and Canowindra have been making wine for over 30 years, it is the future that we are excited about," said Tom Ward. "We have the vineyards, people, and commitment and we are pleased to be seeing in a new era for our region."