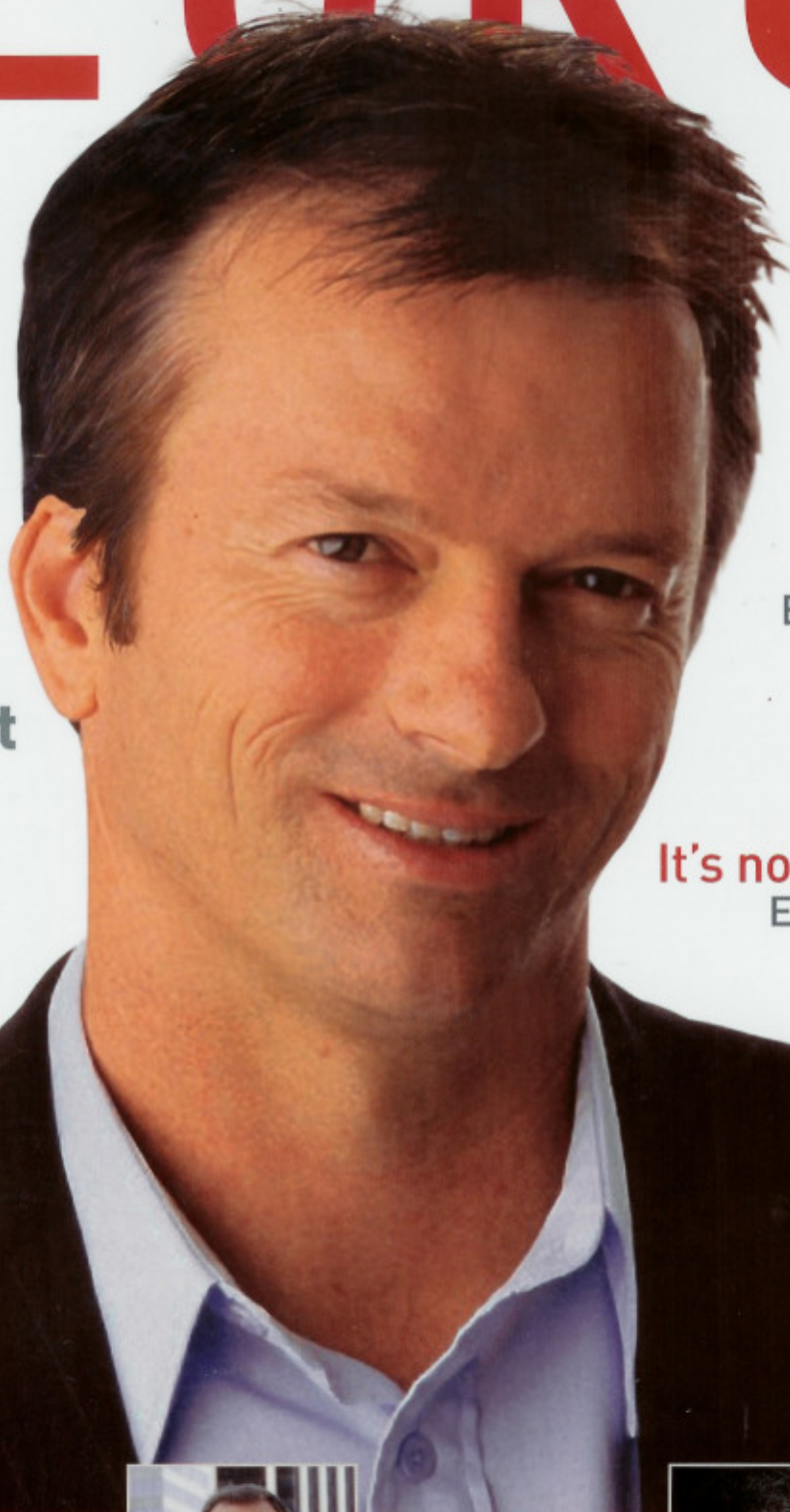


KEEPING YOU ONE STEP AHEAD IN BUSINESS

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# GEORGE

ISSUE 1



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# NEW GRAPES ON THE VINE

Wine expert **Winsor Dobbin** uncovers the latest trends on Australia's wine scene and the new grape varieties that are causing a stir.

There's a lot more to wine in Australia than chardonnay and shiraz. While the duo remains a firm favourite across the country, winemakers are experimenting with a range of grape varieties from countries as diverse as Italy, Spain and Georgia in a bid to produce wines that are just a little bit different.

If you find it hard to imagine enjoying a glass of aleatico or tempranillo, remember that 35 years ago chardonnay was an unknown variety in Australia. Today it is our undisputed favourite white grape. A decade ago, few knew what pinot gris/grigio was. Now it is hugely fashionable.

Things change quickly on the wine front and new trends are emerging as the local industry booms. Italian varieties such as sangiovese and nebbiolo are at the forefront as drinkers look for food-friendly, more savoury alternatives to some of our vinous fruit bombs.

Mornington Peninsula producer Garry Crittenden was at the forefront of the boom in Italian varieties such as nebbiolo and arneis, many of which he grew in the King Valley in north-east Victoria.

"Australian wine drinkers have become increasingly adventurous, but that wasn't the case a decade or more ago," says Garry. "When I started making Italian varieties in the early 1990s, it has hard work. We found

## And now for something completely different



### Freeman Vineyard Rondinella Corvina (\$35)

Rondinella and corvina are Italian varieties that make up the backbone of amarone and valpolicella wines.

They are traditionally dried before winemaking begins.

Brian Freeman has produced Australia's first wine made from the blend and it has a complex nose, elegant blackberry flavours, savoury nuances, massive tannins and tons of structure. With food, particularly Italian dishes like osso bucco, it blossoms.



### Dal Zotto Prosecco (\$30)

The Dal Zotto family believes it makes the only commercially available prosecco in Australia. This lighter-style sparkling wine is hugely popular as an aperitif in Italy. This

is a clean and fresh bubbly, straw coloured with a hint of lemon on the palate. It is a very refreshing style, delicately beaded wine that one critic described as being somewhat like "biting into a cold Granny Smith apple".



### Cape Mentelle Zinfandel (\$53)

Zinfandel, a star in California, is a rarity in Australia, with Cape Mentelle's muscular offering probably the best known; spicy with

concentrated dark berry character and generous mouth-filling flavours. This is a wine that needs food and it would be at its best with osso bucco or a rabbit casserole. Also look out for Wood Park and Rutherglen Estates' Renaissance.



### Crittenden Pinocchio Arneis (\$22)

Mornington Peninsula winemaker Garry Crittenden was at the forefront of promoting and the first to plant the dry white grape arneis,

originally from Piedmont. It's aromatic, flinty and disturbingly drinkable with fresh white pear flavours and refreshing minerality on the finish. Terrific with spicy dishes.



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in America and known as 'primitivo' in Italy. Until recently Australia's only noteworthy zinfandel, a giant blockbuster, had been made by Cape Mentelle in Margaret River.

The Spanish grape tempranillo (used in Rioja wines) has just started to boom, with Brown Brothers and Wagga-based Bidgeebong both making noteworthy examples. Albarino, also a Spanish offering, is making waves in Mornington Peninsula and the Yarra too.

Gapsted, in Victoria's Alpine Valleys, have also experimented with recent releases including a touriga, made from a Portuguese grape, and a petit manseng, made from a little-known grape from the south of France.

Brown Brothers, based at Milawa in north-east Victoria, has probably the biggest range of varieties in the country and is constantly experimenting with grapes from tarragono to vermentino. *花*