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ISSUE 32, 2007 \$7.95



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rising stars



Hurley Vineyard

Legal eagles Kevin Bell and Tricia Byrnes make only pinot noir at their Mornington Peninsula winery. The wines, produced in tiny quantities, are made with the help of family and volunteers. The winery only produced its first vintage in 2001 but was given a five-star rating – the highest available – in James Halliday's 2007 *Australian Wine Companion*, Australia's leading guide to wines and wineries.

- Hurley Vineyard 2004 Garamond Pinot Noir (\$45)**
 This individual vineyard wine screams Burgundy but actually comes from an east-facing vineyard opposite the family stables and winery. You'll find a fragrant nose and some lovely soft fruit, aided and abetted by some funky wild mushroom/forest floor characters. This is a powerful and fulfilling wine, but at the same time it is very elegant. **Drink with** Chinese roast duck.
- Hurley Vineyard 2004 Lodestone Pinot Noir (\$38)**
 This pinot is made in a far more Australian style than its Burgundian sibling. You'll find riper, richer fruit in a bigger, inkier and more forward wine which offers blackcurrant and plum flavours and a fair whack of alcohol. There's a lovely silky finish. The wine is made from a north-facing, mineral-rich vineyard in a style that will appeal more to mainstream drinkers. **Drink with** gourmet sausages.



Patina Wines

Orange has built a formidable reputation for the quality of its cool-climate wines over the past couple of years and one of the most exciting new labels is Patina, the brainchild of Californian-born winemaker Gerald Naef, who has been obsessed with wine since growing up among the vines of CA's central valley. His 2003 Chardonnay, the first wine he made, won the trophy for Best White Wine at the 2006 Orange Wine Show. His vineyard also produces excellent rieslings and sauvignon blancs.

- Patina 2003 Chardonnay (\$32)**
 Naef's very first release is picking up show trophies and underlining the quality of the fruit he has at his disposal. There are some lovely pear and white peach characters on the soft palate with French oak playing a delightfully subtle support role. Soft, elegant and very food friendly, this wine is a real find. **Drink with** grilled fish.
- Patina 2005 Sauvignon Blanc (\$22)**
 Sauvignon blanc is proving a real hit in Orange and the region may eventually rival the Adelaide Hills. Several very good judges who have tasted both wines preferred the Patina sauvignon blanc to the chardonnay and it certainly shows the grape at its best. This is a beautifully balanced wine with tropical fruit flavours and herbaceous characters in perfect harmony. A wine to be enjoyed over the next 12 months. **Drink with** chargrilled squid.

Wine buffs are constantly on the lookout for the tiny winery that produces outstanding bottles yet to be discovered by mainstream drinkers. These five newcomers produce wines of such excellent value for money it will pay to put your name on their mailing list.

STORY WINSOR DOBBIN



Claymore Wines

Wines with gimmicky labels are usually worth avoiding but there's an exception to every rule and that's certainly the case at Claymore, an exciting newcomer to the Clare Valley, whose wines are named after classic rock albums. There's Joshua Tree Riesling, Walk on the Wild Side Shiraz, Viognier and Dark Side of the Moon Shiraz. Claymore principal Anura Nitchingham, an Adelaide doctor, started the business in 1999 with the aim of having fun while making serious wines. Today Claymore has vineyards at Leasingham and Penwortham, and produces wines with vibrant fruit flavours.

- **Claymore Joshua Tree 2005 Riesling (\$20).**
The Clare Valley produces crisp and minerally wines that bear no resemblance to the sweet rieslings of yesteryear. This is up there with the best of them, a gold medal winner that has typically regional lemon and lime aromas, some delicious slate characters on the citrusy palate, and tremendous intensity of fruit flavours. It will cellar for five years or more. The soon-to-be-released 06 Riesling is also excellent.
Drink with Vietnamese spring rolls.
- **Claymore 2004 Dark Side of the Moon Shiraz (\$27)**
This is a ripe and fleshy shiraz that has spent 18 months in oak. There are dark berries and cherries on the nose, and the palate packs a powerful fruit punch with ripe berries very much to the fore. There's plenty of persistence and some nice soft tannins. A wine for medium-term cellaring.
Drink with rabbit ragout or full-flavoured cheeses.



Wedgetail Estate

Canadian-born oenologist and photographer Guy Lamothe and his partner Dena Ashbolt have long been enamoured with fine wine and started planting their own vines in 1994. Lamothe adores the classic wines of Burgundy and makes his own wines very much in that style – elegant and complex. The grapes are grown on some steep slopes in Victoria's Yarra Valley and Lamothe, who has studied winemaking at Charles Sturt University and in Meursault, is extremely hands-on in the vineyard. He makes wines of classic structure.

- **Wedgetail Estate 2004 Chardonnay (\$30)**
Lamothe specialises in chardonnay and pinot noir, and this outstanding and surprisingly affordable chardonnay is a wine with some wonderful cool-climate characters. You'll find white peach and cashew flavours on the palate and the oak treatment serves only to add complexity and interest. This is a style midway between chablis and meursault.
Drink with roast chicken salad.
- **Wedgetail Estate 2004 Reserve Pinot Noir (\$60)**
Wedgetail only releases reserve wines in outstanding years – the previous reserve pinot was released in 2000. It's quite light in colour but this is a classic pinot – concentrated, elegant and savoury. You'll find ripe plums and spices on the nose along with a long, smooth palate on which the use of 50 per cent new French oak is apparent, although the oak is never intrusive. This wine will cellar well for several years.
Drink with game dishes.



Di Lusso Wines

Mudgee in New South Wales has long been known for its big, powerful red wines, but Robert Fairhall's dream was to establish a winery specialising in Italian varieties. Di Lusso today grows barbera, sangiovese, nebbiolo and pinot grigio. In addition, the estate produces olive oils, while the cellar door serves magnificent wood-fired pizzas which can be enjoyed in the winery grounds. The wines are made by Drew Tuckwell, an expert in Italian varieties.

- **Di Lusso 2006 Vino Rosato (\$18)**
This sensational little wine has been made from a blend of three traditional Italian varieties – sangiovese, barbera and lagrein – and is a very versatile food wine. It's a lovely soft and approachable rosé, crimson in colour and dryish with some delightful red berry fruit flavours. A wine for drinking young, straight out of the fridge.
Drink with Lebanese dips.
- **Di Lusso 2004 Nebbiolo (\$25)**
Nebbiolo is a popular grape from northwest Italy that produces earthy, sometimes tart wines that blossom when paired with food. They are wines for savouring rather than wines for quaffing. This one comes from a very good vintage and offers herbal aromas, a depth and breadth that come from ageing in oak and dryish tannins. It's a savoury wine.
Drink with a rich beef stew, or pasta with porcini mushrooms.

PRICES ARE APPROXIMATE