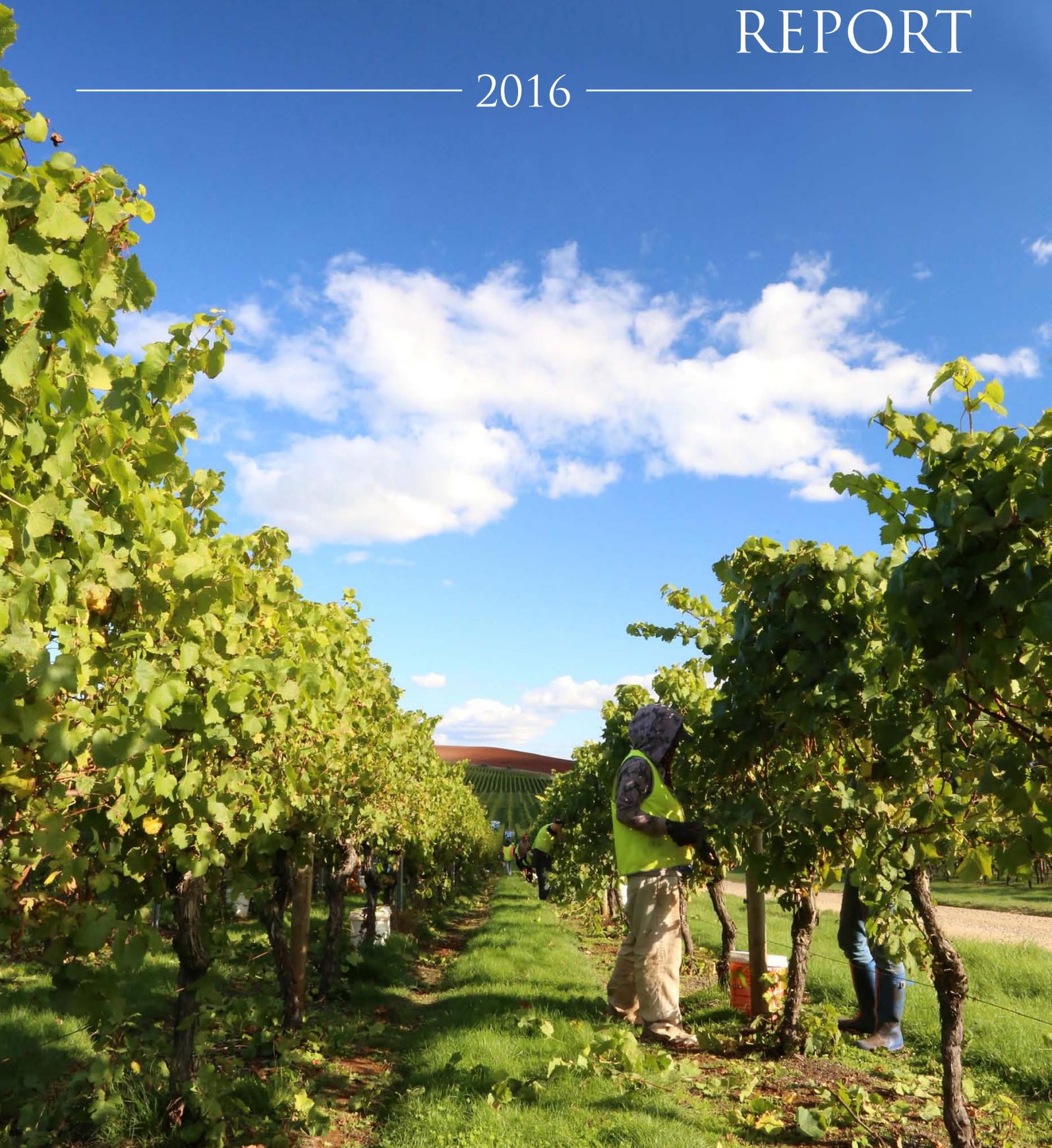

— TYSON STELZER'S —

AUSTRALIAN

SPARKLING

REPORT

— 2016 —





IOC

Révétons votre différence



Effervescence, a winning strategy

IOC 18-2007

The reference yeast for bubble forming

CLARIFIANT BK

To clarify your bubbly in bottle

INOBACTER

Bacteria for base wines very low pH

IOC FIZZ

IOC FIZZ+

Yeasts for 2nd fermentation by Charmat method

www.ioc.eu.com

LALLEMAND AUSTRALIA PTY LTD

T: (08) 8276 1200 F: (08) 8177 1802 E: australiaoffice@lallemand.com

LALLEMAND

CONTENTS

THE STATE OF PLAY OF AUSTRALIAN SPARKLING WINE IN 2016	5
USING THIS REPORT	8
HALL OF HONOUR	10
TYSON STELZER'S AUSTRALIAN SPARKLING WINES OF THE YEAR 2016	11
REGIONAL HEROES	13
SPARKLING CLOSURES	15
MAKING SPARKLING WINE	16
CELLARING SPARKLING WINE	18
SERVING SPARKLING WINE	20
THE BEST SPARKLING WINES OF THE YEAR UNDER \$20	22
THE BEST SPARKLING WINES OF THE YEAR UNDER \$30	24
THE BEST SPARKLING WINES OF THE YEAR UNDER \$50	28
THE BEST SPARKLING WINES OF THE YEAR OVER \$50	33
THE BEST BLANC DE BLANCS OF THE YEAR	36
THE BEST SPARKLING ROSÉS OF THE YEAR	40
THE BEST PROSECCOS OF THE YEAR	45
THE BEST SPARKLING RED WINES OF THE YEAR	48
THE BEST MOSCATOS OF THE YEAR	52
SPARKLING WINE GLOSSARY	54
ABOUT TYSON STELZER	56
SPARKLING EVENTS WITH TYSON STELZER	57

It is a great privilege to present Australia's first dedicated sparkling wine report. I invite you to download this document free of charge from TysonStelzer.com and to reproduce, forward and share it ad nauseam. This is made possible thanks to the kind support of my sponsoring partners:

LALLEMAND
RIEDEL
KENNARDS WINE STORAGE
SAVERGLASS
MYCELLARS.COM.AU
DIAM
ORORA CLOSURES STELVIN

THE STATE OF PLAY OF AUSTRALIAN SPARKLING WINE IN 2016

It was the eve of vintage 2014 in the remote north-east of Tasmania. A sunny, blue autumn afternoon was freshened by crystalline breezes whipping through from nearby Bass Strait, with perfect views all the way to the blue silhouette of Mount Ben Lomond on the horizon. Etched into the slopes of the gentle hills of Piper's River, rows of immaculate vines were clearly thriving here, bursting with emerald green leaves and tiny bunches of faultless grapes. The flavours were a revelation, a mouth filling explosion of intense apple and citrus fruit, pristine, fresh and enlivened by the electricity of Tasmanian acidity.

I often taste grapes straight off the vines in Champagne. But this was different. I have long admired Jansz, but this was the first time I had tasted Jansz grapes. And there it was, all that I adore about Jansz in the flavour of every grape. And in that moment, the story of Australian sparkling wine and its privileged place in the wine world snapped into crystal clear focus.

Australian sparkling wine is the essence of a rugged and harsh south land of ancient geologies, of icy latitudes and lofty plateaus. It is the story of terroirs more diverse and extreme than any other sparkling wine land, embracing the full sweep of contrast from the nervous tension of Jansz Vintage Chardonnay to the thundering exuberance of Rockford Black Shiraz. And it is the tale of an eternal fight against inconsistent yields, droughts, floods, frosts, heatwaves, bushfires, cashflow, oversupply, taxes and currency fluctuations. This is the thrill, and this is the terror, of sparkling winemaking in Australia.

We adore sparkling wine in Australia. Long our celebratory cheers of choice, in recent years we've come to appreciate that bubbles are the perfect match for our warm climate and our eclectic cuisine. No longer do we hold out for a special occasion to shower our friends in fizz.

Through fate and extremely good fortune, I find my life deeply immersed in the great sparkling wines of the world. I visit Champagne three or four times a year on blisteringly intensive tasting regimes or hosting intimate tour groups and I am currently researching the fifth edition of *The Champagne Guide* and the first ever *Champagne Atlas*. I have the privilege of reviewing all the Australian sparkling wines for *The Halliday Australian Wine Companion*, I consult on the First and Business Class champagne selection for Qantas and I showcase sparkling wines from across the planet at public and corporate tastings and dinners around Australia and the world most weeks of the year.

Australian sparkling wine is not champagne

Australian sparkling wine is not champagne. I am often asked if I ever choose to drink Australian sparkling wine. The answer is a resounding yes! All the time. Under \$40 it's almost impossible to find a champagne worth drinking. Yet Australia produces a plethora of truly great sparkling wines in this space. And let's be honest, we can't all afford to pop champagne every night.

But more than that, the reason I adore Australian sparkling wine so much that I devote a decent amount of my year to it is because it possesses a personality that is inimitable, the signature of this vast and temperamental land.

Is this stamp of place harder to capture in a bottle of sparkling wine than in still wine? Absolutely. Is the finesse of the one wine style that depends upon a cold climate more than any other a battle to uphold? Without doubt. Is sparkling wine production under greater threat from climate change than any other style in Australia? I would suggest it is.



*In spite of everything,
the calibre of Australian sparkling wine today
is higher than I have ever seen before*

And yet in spite of everything, the calibre of Australian sparkling wine today is higher than I have ever seen before, thanks to the resilience and sheer determination of a small set of extremely skilful hands in Australia's sparkling vineyards and wineries.

And yet Australian sparkling wine is in trouble.

Australian sparkling wine is in trouble

In the past twelve months, Australia has registered the fastest growth in champagne consumption in the world, leaping 24% to more than eight million bottles. The consumer interest in the sparkling category has never been stronger, and the pressure is on the Australian industry to compete like never before.

Despite the explosion in champagne in Australia, domestic sales of Australian sparkling wine actually dropped by 6% in 2015 to 44 million bottles, continuing a downward trend of 18% over the five years since 2010, when Australians popped 54 million bottles of home-grown fizz.

Australia represents the world's 10th largest sparkling wine market by volume, with 8.2 million Australians, just over half of all alcohol drinkers, drinking sparkling wine. But increasingly, this market is being snared by imports.

In 2015, sparkling wine imports surged by 13.5% to almost 18 million bottles (8.1 million of which were champagne), representing a more than 40% explosion in growth since 2010. This growth reflects the increasing popularity of imported sparkling wines, particularly champagne, Italian prosecco, cava and New Zealand sparkling.

Meanwhile, exports are in decline. Australia's sparkling wine exports dropped 16% by volume and 3% by value in 2015, compared with net rises in volume and value of still white, red and other wine exports.

These trends are nothing short of frightening for this crucial sector of Australian winemaking. In 2015-16, sparkling wine represented 7.2% of Australian wine production, with a total value of \$382M, and 9.1% of wine exports. And there is some promise in the trends. Reflecting a shift toward more premium sparkling wines and away from bulk wines, the value of bottled exports of Australian sparkling rose by 9.3% in 2015.



Is Australian wine off the international sparkling radar? In 2014, UK sparkling critic Tom Stevenson published a piece on the potential of sparkling wine regions beyond Champagne. His four top sparkling wine regions of the future were England, China, northeastern Germany and even New Zealand for sparkling sauvignon blanc (go figure!). Anderson Valley, Burgundy, Serbia, Greece and Slovenia also ranked. Australia did not even rate a mention.

My opinion is very different to Tom Stevenson's. I did not taste every Australian sparkling wine I could procure this year with the intention of writing this report. This report was inspired by the calibre of Australian sparkling wines in my tastings this year.

This report was inspired by the calibre of Australian sparkling wines

My inaugural *Australian Sparkling Report 2016* sets out to establish a benchmark as Australia's first comprehensive report dedicated exclusively to sparkling wines of all styles: méthode traditionnelle, charmat method, transfer method, blanc de blancs, rosés, proseccos, sparkling reds and moscatos.

At a time when the Australian sparkling industry has work to do in regaining its position in both domestic and export markets, this report serves to provide consumers and industry with an insight into Australia's finest sparkling wines of every style.

I have purposely avoided singling out just one sparkling wine of the year. The Oscars are not all about just one film. Every genre deserves its own recognition, so I have selected a sparkling wine of the year in each of four different price brackets as well as blanc de blancs, rosé, prosecco, sparkling red and moscato. In each category I have also showcased 10 or 20 runners up worthy of your attention this year.

My *Australian Sparkling Wine 2016 Hall of Honour* acknowledges the most successful producers in this category. I have also included commentary around the top performing regions this year, sparkling wine closures, how sparkling wine is made, cellaring and serving sparkling wine and a glossary of sparkling wine terms.

For more detail on Australian sparkling wines, I encourage you to seek out *The Halliday Australian Wine Companion 2017* where you will find almost 400 of my sparkling reviews.



Old vine Barossa shiraz ripe for harvest in the 2015 vintage
Tyson Stelzer Photography

USING THIS REPORT

Points are a quick way to highlight the best sparkling wines in each category. Readers of my *Champagne Guide* will be familiar with my 100 point scores. I assess Australian sparkling wines using exactly the same scale.

There has been much controversy surrounding wine scores in recent years. It is of course a travesty to reduce the grand complexities of wine to a single number, but I persist in doing so because many readers find this useful. As always, my descriptions are infinitely more informative than scores.

I persevere with the international 100 point system, not because I endorse it, but simply because it is universally understood. Broadly, anything less than 85 is faulty, less than 90 is sound but unexciting, and 91 is where the real fun begins. A 94 point wine has impeccable purity and immaculate balance – a gold medal in a wine show. Beyond, it's not greater concentration of flavour, more obvious fruit or more clever winemaking tricks that set it apart. True greatness is declared by something more profound: the inimitable stamp of place – 'terroir' to the French, articulated most eloquently in length of finish and palate texture. Persistence of aftertaste and depth of mineral character distinguish the very finest sparkling wines.

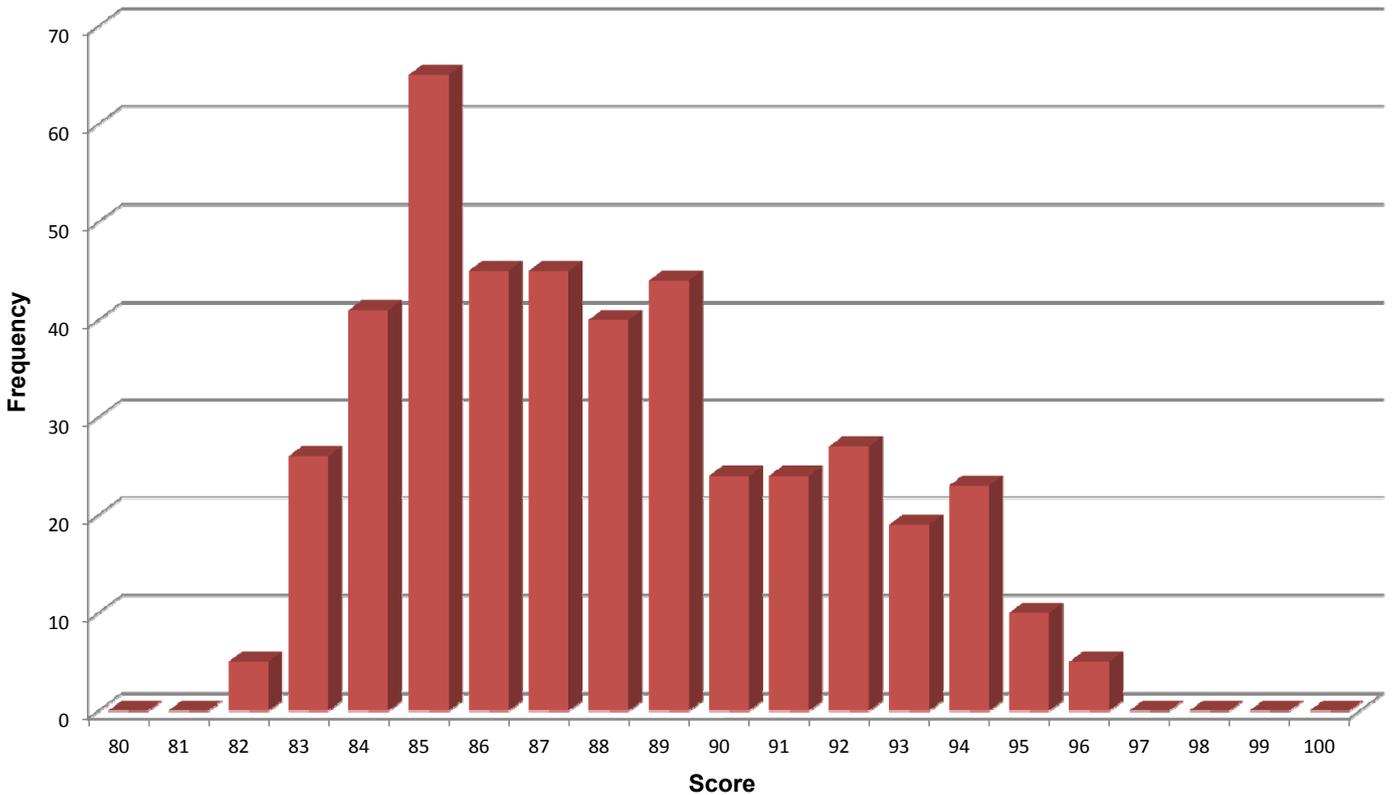
WHAT DO MY SCORES MEAN?

- 100 The pinnacle of character, balance and persistence. I am yet to score an Australian sparkling wine 100 points.
- 99 Almost perfection (20 on the 20 point scale). I am yet to score an Australian sparkling wine 99 points.
- 98 An exceedingly rare calibre of world-class distinction. I am yet to score an Australian sparkling wine 98 points.
- 97 More than exceptional. I am yet to score an Australian sparkling wine 97 points.
- 96 Exceptional. Top gold or trophy standard in a wine show (19/20); 1% of Australian sparkling wines tasted this year. Three Tasmanian sparkling whites and two South Australian sparkling reds. Look out for one cuvée at \$40.
- 95 Offering an edge that pushes beyond excellent; 2% of Australian sparkling wines tasted this year. Eight Tasmanian and one Adelaide Hills cuvées, including one at \$38.
- 94 Excellent champagne that I love. Gold medal in a wine show (18.5/20). 5% of Australian sparkling wines tasted this year. Thirteen sparkling whites, six sparkling rosés and four sparkling reds, including seven under \$35.
- 93 Almost excellent; 4% of Australian sparkling wines tasted this year. Look out for two cuvées under \$25.
- 92 A very good wine that characterises its place and variety; 6% of Australian sparkling wines tasted this year, including the best prosecco of the year.
- 91 Better than good, offering an edge of distinction. Silver medal (17/20); 5% of Australian sparkling wines tasted this year, including the best wine under \$20 of the year.
- 90 A good wine that I like; 5% of Australian sparkling wines tasted this year.
- 89 Better than sound and almost good; 10% of Australian sparkling wines tasted this year.
- 88 Sound. Worth buying if it's cheap. Bronze medal standard (15.5/20); 9% of Australian sparkling wines tasted this year.
- 87 Almost sound; 10% of Australian sparkling wines tasted this year.
- 86 Simple and ordinary; 10% of Australian sparkling wines tasted this year.
- 85 Ordinary and boring, though without notable faults (14/20); 15% of Australian sparkling wines tasted this year.
- 84 Borderline faulty. 9% of Australian sparkling wines tasted this year.
- 83 Faulty. Caution! 6% of Australian sparkling wines tasted this year.
- 82 Distinctly faulty (12/20). 1% of Australian sparkling wines tasted this year.
- 81 Exceedingly faulty. Stand well clear. Thankfully, no Australian sparkling wines to report here this year!
- 80 Horrid. You've been warned. Thankfully, no Australian sparkling wines to report here this year!

THE SPREAD OF MY SCORES THIS YEAR

In the past I have largely not published reviews of wines scoring less than 90 points, leading some readers to draw the mistaken assumption that my scores are universally high. The following chart illustrates the distribution of my Australian sparkling wine scores this year. Less than 30% of the cuvées I tasted scored 90 points or more. These wines comprise the core of this report.

Australian Sparkling Wine Scores 2016



Good
"buying ^ wine has never been easier"

CALL 1300 MYCELLARS OR SHOP ONLINE

HALL OF HONOUR

TYSON STELZER'S AUSTRALIAN SPARKLING WINE REPORT 2016

My *Australian Sparkling Wine Report 2016 Hall of Honour* acknowledges the finest sparkling wine producers of the year. A brand is only as worthy as its current cuvées, so its rating is based exclusively on the quality of all of its sparkling wines in the market this year, not on past performance or museum wines. History and reputation count for nothing if the wines you can buy don't live up to expectation.

Readers of my *Champagne Guide* will be familiar with my champagne house ratings out of ten. My ratings for Australian sparkling estates are calculated using exactly the same scale. Roughly, to qualify for seven stars, an estate must produce prestige sparkling wine typically scoring around 96 points, vintage wines around 94 points and non-vintage wines around 93 points. To attain two stars, these drop to 91, 90 and 88 respectively.

There is by necessity some subjectivity in this process and it is of course meaningless to attempt to compare Brown Brother's portfolio of nine sparkling wines with Rockford's single sparkling shiraz.

These ratings are by their nature highly controversial. The vast diversity of Australian sparkling wines, from méthode traditionnelle, charmat method, transfer method, blanc de blancs, rosés, proseccos, sparkling reds and moscatos makes it an immense challenge to reduce their grand complexities to a single number. I encourage you to use these only as a guide to quickly home in on the very best houses and to then focus your attention on my commentary on each of their cuvées.

This year I tasted wines from 310 Australian sparkling producers. My *Hall of Honour* acknowledges just the top 20% of these. It must be emphasised that even my two star rating is a strong endorsement, ahead of 80% of Australian sparkling producers.

SEVEN STARS

House of Arras
Jansz Tasmania
Pirie Tasmania

SIX STARS

Deviation Road
Kreglinger
Stefano Lubiana

FIVE STARS

Apogee
Frogmore Creek
Hanging Rock
Kay Brothers
Leasingham
Merindoc
Rockford

FOUR STARS

Ashton Hills
Bay of Fires
Brown Brothers
Cannibal Creek
Chandon
Clover Hill
Curly Flat
Delamere
John Gehrig
Petaluma
Primo Estate
Seppelt
Swift
Taltarni

THREE STARS

Amadio
Balnaves of Coonawarra
Bleasdale
Coldstream Hills
Courabyra
Dominique Portet
Ghost Rock
Grant Burge
Greenstone
Hentley Farm
Hollydene Estate
Josef Chromy
Kyneton Ridge Estate
Lobethal Road
Moores Hill
Mount Avoca
Mt Lofty Ranges Vineyard
Ninth Island
Pipers Brook
Redbank
Sitella
Soul Growers
The Lane
Whistler
Wolf Blass
Yabby Lake
Yarra Burn

TWO STARS

Barringwood
Canobolas
Claremont
Gapsted
Gembrook Hill
Goaty Hill
Hardys
Majella
Mitchell Harris
Nova Vita
Punt Road
Sidewood
Steels Creek Estate
Temple Bruer
Ten Minutes by Tractor
Watershed
Woodsoak Wines

TYSON STELZER'S AUSTRALIAN SPARKLING WINES OF THE YEAR 2016

THE SPARKLING WINE OF THE YEAR UNDER \$20

WOLF BLOSS RED LABEL CHARDONNAY PINOT NOIR PREMIUM CUVÉE NV (PAGE 22)

THE SPARKLING WINE OF THE YEAR UNDER \$30

BAY OF FIRES TASMANIAN CUVÉE PINOT NOIR CHARDONNAY BRUT NV (PAGE 24)

THE SPARKLING WINE OF THE YEAR UNDER \$50

FROGMORE CREEK CUVÉE EVERMORE MÉTHODE TRADITIONNELLE VINTAGE 2008
(PAGE 28)

THE SPARKLING WINE OF THE YEAR OVER \$50

HOUSE OF ARRAS EJ CARR LATE DISGORGED 2003 (PAGE 33)

THE BLANC DE BLANCS OF THE YEAR

HOUSE OF ARRAS BLANC DE BLANCS 2006 (PAGE 36)

THE SPARKLING ROSÉ OF THE YEAR

PIRIE TASMANIA TRADITIONAL METHOD ROSÉ 2009 (PAGE 40)

THE PROSECCO OF THE YEAR

BROWN BROTHERS SINGLE VINEYARD KING VALLEY PROSECCO NV (PAGE 45)

THE SPARKLING RED OF THE YEAR

ASHTON HILLS SPARKLING SHIRAZ 2009 (PAGE 48)

THE MOSCATO OF THE YEAR

CHATEAU YALDARA RUBAN BAROSSA VALLEY MOSCATO 2015 (PAGE 52)

Our expertise
and yours.
A union for
exceptional
products.



Global specialist and market leader in the production and decoration of high-end glass bottles. Saverglass provides innovative solutions to organisations in the wine and spirit industries. www.saverglass.com

SAVERGLASS

REGIONAL HEROES

The simple rule in buying top sparkling wines is to stick with the coolest regions. The biggest challenge facing Australian sparkling winemaking today is that most of this country is too hot to produce truly great fizz. And climate change is only serving to exacerbate this situation.

The reaction for wine growers is logically to harvest earlier, so as to capture the grapes at moderate levels of sugar ripeness with sufficiently elevated acid levels to produce elegant base wines. The challenge in this response for Australian sparkling winemakers is that a shorter ripening period all too often produces hard, underripe acidity, making for astringent sparkling wines of assertive structure. And even, at times, an underripe, grassy flavour spectrum.

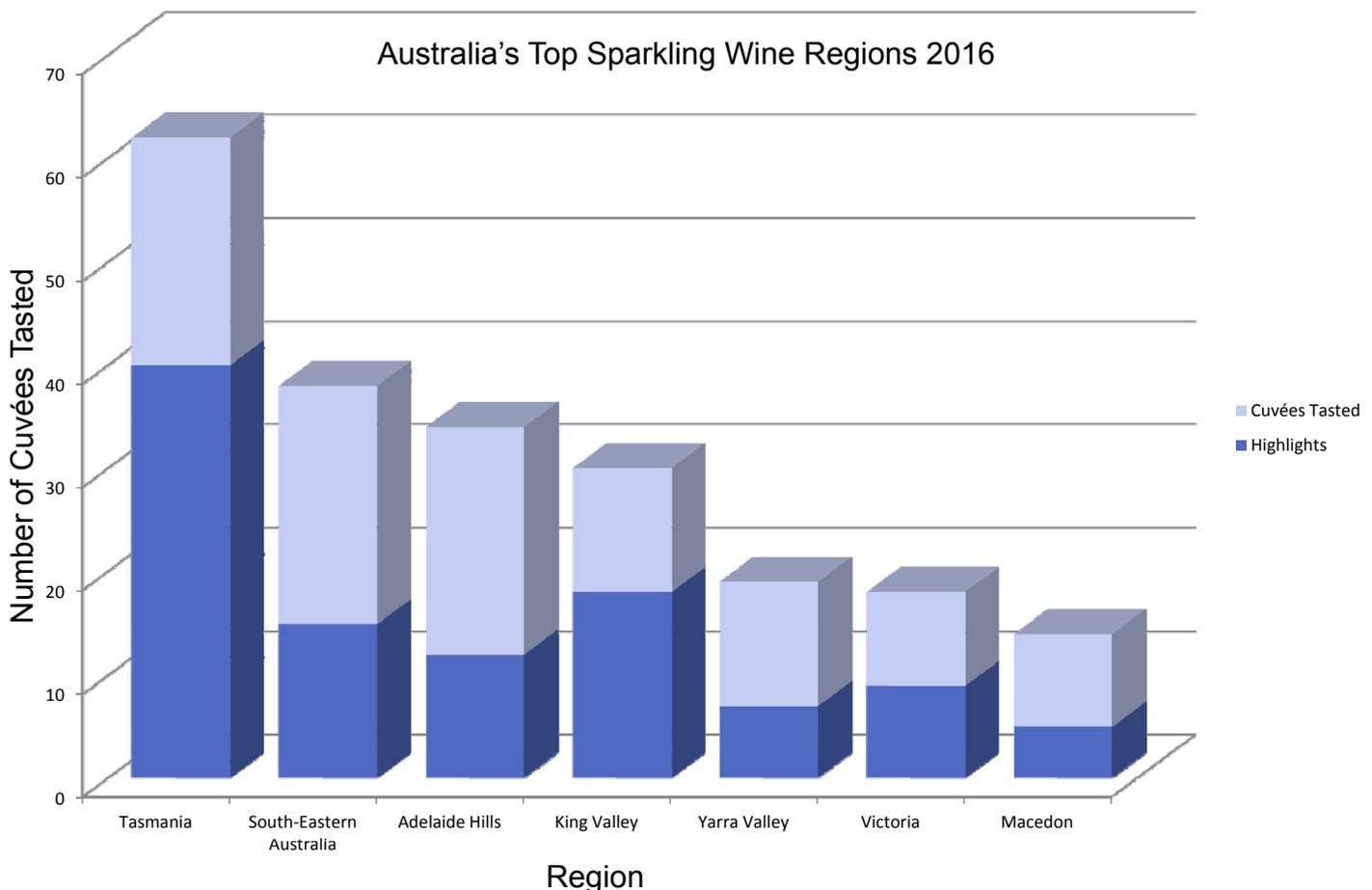
The natural response is to counter this challenging acidity with sweetness by increasing the dosage. However, rather than producing a seamlessly balanced and palatable sparkling wine, this response instead typically renders a wine not only hard, astringent and underripe, but sweet at the same time, producing a 'sweet and sour' effect. The only truly fool-proof answer is that there is no substitute for grapes to enjoy long 'hang time' (as winemakers call it) in a cool climate.

In my tastings for this report I assessed sparkling wines from 50 of Australia's 63 wine regions.

This year Australia's top sparkling regions are:

1. **TASMANIA** topped the charts this year on every measure: number of cuvées tasted (62) and number of highlight cuvées shortlisted for this report (40, representing almost two-thirds of cuvées tasted). Tasmania confidently holds its place as Australia's sparkling capital.
2. **KING VALLEY** rated second (with 18 out of 30, or 60% of cuvées shortlisted), largely for its performance with prosecco (20 out of 30 cuvées tasted). King Valley retains its position as king of this style.
3. Blends from across **VICTORIA** ranked third (with 9 out of 18, or 50%), thanks largely to Chandon and Brown Brothers.
4. Blends from across **SOUTH-EASTERN AUSTRALIA** came in fourth place (with 15 out of 38, or 40%).
5. **YARRA VALLEY** ranked fifth (with 7 out of 19, or 37% of cuvées shortlisted).
6. **ADELAIDE HILLS** (with 12 out of 34, or 36%) ranked sixth.
7. **MACEDON** (with 5 out of 14, or 36%) ranked seventh.

Australia's top regions for sparkling reds are the **BAROSSA VALLEY**, **COONAWARRA**, **CLARE VALLEY** and **MCLAREN VALE**, with **HEATHCOTE** and **LANGHORNE CREEK** also worthy of mention.





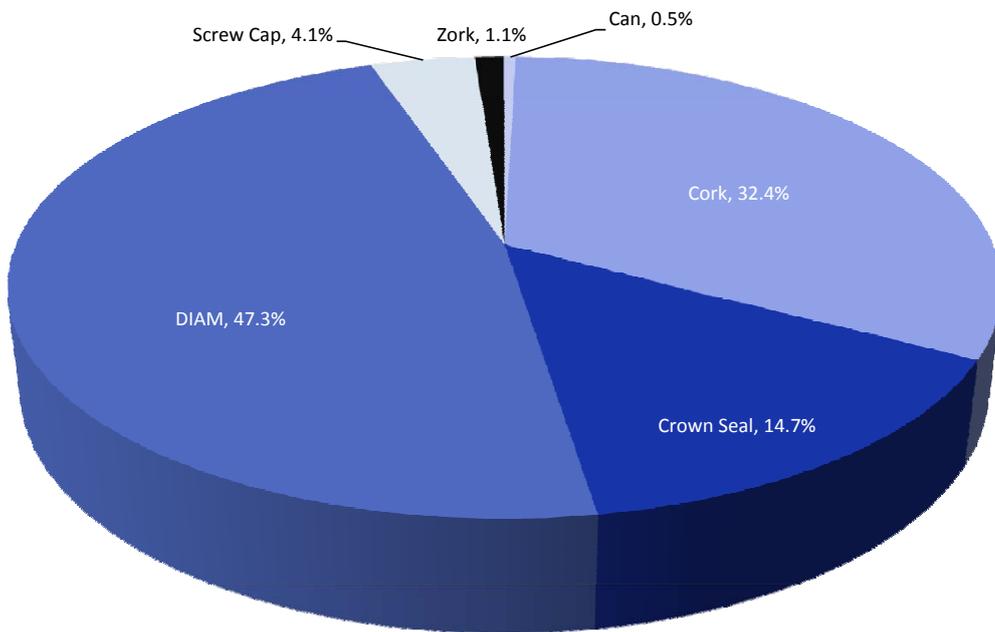
SPARKLING CLOSURES

I am delighted to report that after thirteen years of banging on about the abominable influence of corks on wine bottles, I finally have a number of positive announcements to make.

The first is that across my tastings, natural cork has now been relegated to less than one-third of Australia's sparkling wine labels. DIAM now accounts for almost 50%, crown seal almost 15% and screw cap more than 4% (mostly on moscato), all encouraging trends. I have not encountered any bottle variation in my tastings of sparkling wines sealed with DIAM, crown seal or screw cap this year.

The second encouraging development is that the level of cork taint in my tastings of Australian sparkling wines is now one-third of what it was five years ago. This year, of the 143 Australian sparkling wines I tasted under natural cork, just three were cork tainted (2%). This figure is still too high and it begs two questions. First, why sparkling winemakers persist with natural cork when two-thirds of the market has switched to more reliable technology. And, second, why cork producers continue to supply a flawed product.

Australian Sparkling Wine Closures by Number of Labels



MAKING SPARKLING WINE

Sparkling winemaking is among the most complex, labour-intensive and time-consuming winemaking processes of all. It begins with careful, selective harvesting and immediate, gentle pressing, capable of extracting white juice even from dark-skinned pinot noir and meunier grapes. The *coeur de la cuvée*, the heart or middle of the pressing, yields the purest juice. The *tailles* is the coarser, inferior juice that flows last from the press.

To create the finest sparkling wine, the juice is settled prior to fermentation to allow the solids and impurities to fall from the must (pressed grape juice), allowing clear juice to be drawn off from the top. This process is called *débourbage* in French and the most fanatical champagne houses perform it twice to achieve particularly exquisite and fresh *cuvées* (blends).

Following the first fermentation, sparkling wines from the coolest regions typically undergo *malolactic fermentation* to convert tart *malic* (green apple) acidity into softer *lactic* (dairy) acidity. With the advent of warmer vintages in the wake of global warming, an increasing number of sparkling winemakers are experimenting with blocking malolactic.

Sparkling wine is blended following its first fermentation, and perhaps a period of ageing on lees in tanks or barrels. Non-vintage wines are a blend of a base (youngest) vintage with *reserve* wines, older vintages aged in the cellar in tanks and sometimes barrels or bottles. Prior to bottling, a *liqueur de tirage* of sugar and wine is added so as to induce a secondary fermentation in the bottle, known as the *prise de mousse*. Held under pressure by a crown seal or cork, the second fermentation produces carbon dioxide which remains dissolved in the wine, creating sparkling wine.

Following the second fermentation, sparkling wines mature in contact with the lees (dead yeast cells) to mellow, soften and build complexity, mouth feel and texture, a process called *autolysis*. In Champagne, the mandatory minimum is 15 months for non-vintage and three years for vintage wines, but reputable houses always far exceed these minima.

Méthode traditionnelle is the ultimate sparkling winemaking process, mandatory in Champagne, and the standard for all of Australia's top sparkling wines, in which the second fermentation to produce the bubbles occurs in the bottle in which the wine is sold.

This process is often simplified in other sparkling wine producing regions in the *transfer method*, in which the wine is transferred to a vat and filtered after the second fermentation, invariably losing some gas. The *charmat* or *tank* method is a further simplification in which the second fermentation occurs in large tanks under pressure. *Carbonation* is the cheapest method of creating sparkling wine, by injecting the wine with carbon dioxide, in the same manner as lemonade.

Each of these simplifications tactically avoids the most labour-intensive stages of *méthode traditionnelle*: *riddling* and *disgorgement*. Second fermentation in bottle creates sediment of lees which must be removed without losing bubbles. *Riddling* is the process of moving this sediment into the neck of the bottle, traditionally achieved on a riddling rack called a *pupitre* by giving each bottle a quarter-rotation every day and slowly tilting it from horizontal to upside down. A good riddler can turn some 60,000 bottles a day, but this is a dying art. In modern times, riddling has been largely taken over by *gyropalettes*, giant robotic arms that slowly rotate large cages of bottles.



After riddling, the sediment is settled on the inside of the cork or crown cap. The neck of the bottle is then frozen, the cap released, and the plug of sediment shot out, leaving perfectly clear wine behind. This process is called *disgorgement*.

To replace the volume lost through disgorgement, the bottle is topped up with sweetened wine called *liqueur d'expédition* and a new cork is inserted. The sweetness of the finished wine is determined by the level of sweetness of the liqueur. *Zero dosage* sparkling wines are topped up with dry wine. In Champagne, *brut nature* or *brut zero* denote a wine of less than 3g/L of sugar, *extra brut* (extra dry) less than 6g/L, *brut* (dry) less than 12g/L, *extra dry* or *extra sec* less than 17g/L, *sec* (dryish) less than 32g/L, *demi-sec* (half dry) less than 50g/L and *doux* (sweet) more than 50g/L.

Sparkling rosé is made in the same manner as white sparkling, with colour achieved in one of three ways. *Rosé d'assemblage* is a blending method, the most common means of making rosé, in which a tiny quantity of pinot noir or meunier made as table wine is added to the white base wine. The *saignée* method adds free-run juice from just-crushed red grapes, while a *limited maceration* method produces darker, heavier wines through a quick soak on red grape skins.

Sparkling red wines begin their life in the same manner as still reds, fermented on skins to extract colour, flavour and tannin. The finest are then privileged to *méthode traditionnelle*, though transfer, charmat or carbonation simplifications are used for cheaper labels.

UNDERSTANDING DOSAGE

Throughout this report I've noted the dosage level for each cuvée wherever I can, measured in grams per litre of sugar. As a reference point, 16g/L is the same as one teaspoon of sugar in your cup of coffee.

12g/L dosage used to be typical in champagne and sparkling wine. These days, the trend is toward lower dosage and 6-9g/L is common. But don't read too much into the numbers. In high acid vintages in cool regions, sparkling wines can swallow high levels of dosage and appear almost dry.

Josef Chromy, Launceston, Tasmania
Tyson Stelzer Photography



CELLARING SPARKLING WINE

My drinking windows throughout this report offer an insight into the endurance of Australian sparkling wines, with Tasmania's top cuvées demonstrating the potential to live for up to thirty years, and the best sparkling reds at least as long.

Sparkling wines are among the most sensitive of all wine styles to adverse storage conditions, so never keep a bottle in the rack above the fridge or even in the light.

Méthode traditionnelle sparkling wines spend the first years of their life under dark, humid, stable and cold conditions, so they will get a rude shock if they're thrust into a warm environment. Unless you live somewhere particularly cold, if you don't have a climate-controlled cellar, err on the side of caution and drink your sparkling wines within a few years.

Fizz in clear glass bottles is remarkably light sensitive, so keep it in the dark at all times. If it comes in a box, bag or cellophane wrap, keep it covered until you serve it.



Josef Chromy, Launceston, Tasmania
Tyson Stelzer Photography

Your perfectly matured wine will be the talking point of every dinner party...

A treasured bottle of wine often represents a story or warm memory. It may be that you first enjoyed it with someone you care about, meeting the Winemaker at the Vineyard or where and for how long it was cellared.

Your wine is a valued and treasured asset, too important to risk being spoiled by poor cellaring. Kennards Wine Storage provides the ideal environment for long-term wine storage.

Our private cellars are available throughout Sydney, Melbourne, Brisbane and Adelaide. You can now easily enjoy the benefits of your own dedicated cellar space.

Help your wine mature to its full potential!

www.kss.com.au

Kennards
Wine Storage



SERVING SPARKLING WINE

SPARKLING WINE GLASSES

Using decent glassware is essential for fully appreciating wine, and all the more for sparkling wine. The more I visit and taste with the Champenois, the more I appreciate the way a large glass draws a sparkling wine out of itself. Sparkling wine holds its bead longest in an elongated glass, but don't select one so narrow that you can't get your nose in to appreciate the bouquet.

The Champenois prefer slightly wider glasses than typical champagne flutes, to allow their finest cuvées sufficient space to open out. Think halfway between a flute and a fine white wine glass.

All good glasses curve in slightly at the top. The finer the glass, the better they look at the table, and the less the wine will warm up when you pour it. Cut, engraved or coloured glasses make it harder to appreciate the wine's appearance.

The glass I use for all of my sparkling wine tastings is the Riedel Vinum XL Champagne. This is the largest glass I've found, with a bowl of white wine glass proportions that draws down into the stem sufficiently to produce a focused stream of bubbles.

My second-favourite glass is one-fifth of the price. The Luigi Bormioli Magnifico Flute is very nearly as large as the Riedel and just a little heavier. If you can't find these, grab a medium-sized white wine glass over a champagne flute for any serious bottle of fizz.

It's paramount that there is not the slightest residue of detergent in the glass, as this will instantly destroy the mousse (bubbles) and the taste. Riedel recommends washing under warm water without detergent, and polishing with microfibre towels. Never dry a glass by holding the base and twisting the bowl, as this may snap the stem.

SERVING TEMPERATURE

Sparkling wine is often served much too cold. Poured at fridge temperature, it will taste flavourless and acidic. The only exceptions are particularly sweet styles (moscato!), which are best toned down with a stern chill. In general, the finer the wine, the warmer I tend to serve it. The Champenois suggest 8–10°C for non-vintage and rosé styles, and 10–12°C for vintage and prestige wines. I prefer Australian sparkling reds a little warmer again, say 15–17°C.

If you're pulling a bottle out of a climate-controlled cellar, it will need to be cooled a little further, so pop it in the fridge for half an hour. If it's at room temperature to start with, 3–4 hours in the fridge or 15 minutes in an ice bucket might be in order. On a warm day, serve sparkling wine a touch cooler, as it will soon warm up.

Always hold a glass by its base or stem, to avoid warming the wine in your hand. This will also reduce the likelihood of any aromas on your hands interfering with its delicate bouquet.



OPENING SPARKLING WINE

Opening a sparkling bottle is pretty easy, but some people make such a fuss about it that they end up stuffing it up altogether. There are a few basic points to grasp before spraying your friends with fizz.

First, ensure that nobody has shaken the bottle before you get hold of it (not funny!). Always have a target glass nearby to pour the first gush into, but not too close (I once inadvertently shot the bowl clean off one of those expensive Riedels with a stray cork!). Check the firing range for chandeliers and unsuspecting passers-by and re-aim if necessary.

Remove the capsule using the pull-tab, if it has one. Hold the bottle at 45 degrees and remove the cage with six half-turns of the wire, keeping your thumb firmly over the end of the cork, in case it attempts to fire out of the bottle. I prefer to loosen the cage and leave it on the cork, which can assist with grip.

Twist the bottle (not the cork) slowly and ease the cork out gently. If you encounter a stubborn, young cork, use a clean tea towel to improve your grip. When the cork is almost out, tilt it sideways to release the gas slowly. It should make a gentle hiss, not an ostentatious pop. This is important, as it maintains the maximum bead (bubbles) in the wine and reduces the risk of a dramatic gush.

POURING SPARKLING WINE

Check that the wine tastes right, then pour half a glass for each drinker, topping them up after the 'mousse' has subsided. You can choose to tilt the glass to minimise frothing – I do. Sparkling wine is the only style where you can break the rule of never more than half-filling a glass, but do leave sufficient room for your nose so you can appreciate the bouquet!

Tyson Stelzer had a vision that one day...

"we might all be able to sit back, glass in hand, forget about closures, and simply enjoy the subtlety, the soul and passion of the wine."

Thanks to the quality of Stelvin, that day has come!



Tyson Stelzer

International wine & spirit communicator of the year 2015

www.ororagroup.com

STELVIN[®]

ORORA



THE BEST SPARKLING WINES OF THE YEAR UNDER \$20

As tempting as it is to lead out with the most expensive sparkling wines of the year, it's at the affordable end of the market that you must be most discerning in your effervescent purchases. Sparkling wines are among the most complex, labour-intensive, time-consuming and hence expensive of all wine styles to produce, and it takes an outfit of considerable expertise to pull this off with any level of finesse at this price.

The bottom shelf is dominated by variously coarse, hard, sweet and characterless sparkling wines, and there is a lot to be said for spending a few more dollars.

Economies of scale play heavily into this equation, so no surprise that my list of The Best Sparkling Wines of the Year under \$20 is led by the big players of Wolf Blass, Yarra Burn and Brown Brothers with large, multi-region blends. It's great to see the little Adelaide Hills estate of Nova Vita playing in this company, too.

This year I reviewed 41 Australian sparkling wines under \$20 (excluding blanc de blancs, rosés, sparkling reds, proseccos and moscatos – see below for reviews under these categories – taking all of these styles into consideration, the total mushrooms to more than 90) with a median score of 85 points. This equates to an ocean of bo-hum fizz, so buy carefully, and may the force be with you.

TYSON STELZER'S SPARKLING WINE OF THE YEAR UNDER \$20

WOLF BLASS RED LABEL CHARDONNAY PINOT NOIR PREMIUM CUVÉE NV

\$14 | SOUTH-EASTERN AUSTRALIA | CORK | 11% ALCOHOL | DRINK 2016

All things considered, this would have to be the most important wine in this report. All snobbery aside, this is singly the wine I recommend more often than any other for big receptions where budget is everything. It's a refreshingly balanced style that showcases the lemon, pear and peach flavours of young chardonnay and pinot noir to compelling effect, with a hint of honey and a shake of spice, culminating in a finish drawn out by well-defined acidity, nicely integrated dosage and surprising balance and appeal for the bottom shelf. Long the best sub-\$10 sparkling on the shelves (with recent street prices as low as \$6), this release secures Red Label's position for another year.

91 POINTS

THE RUNNERS-UP

YARRA BURN VICTORIA PREMIUM CUVÉE BRUT NV

\$17 | VICTORIA | CORK | 12.5% ALCOHOL | DRINK 2016-2017

The Champenois rightly insist that there is no substitute for age in achieving balance, complexity and texture in sparkling wine. Age is not something you'd expect at this price, which is why this is one of the most sophisticated sparkling wines on the bottom shelf. Based on the 2013 vintage, a full two-and-a-half years on lees in bottle has built a creamy bead and textured palate, bringing dimension to citrus and stone fruit flavours, finishing long and well integrated.

91 POINTS

BROWN BROTHERS NV CUVÉE PREMIUM SPARKLING BRUT NV

\$19 | SOUTH-EASTERN AUSTRALIA | CORK | 11.5% ALCOHOL | DRINK 2016

A new star has ascended in the affordable sparkling firmament. Long one of my top mainland sparkling producers, Brown Brothers has tactically slotted a new cuvée under its King Valley blend. My first encounter revealed a refreshing, pure and fruit-focused blend based on the 2015 vintage, boasting impressive length and line of clean lemon and apple fruit, finishing dry and crunchy.

90 POINTS

NOVA VITA GEORGE KOZNEK ASPIRATION NV

\$20 | ADELAIDE HILLS | CORK | 12% ALCOHOL | DRINK 2016-2017

This small estate in the Adelaide Hills is the only boutique producer to give the big boys a run for their money in the sub-\$20 sparkling stakes this year. It's an elegant and refreshingly fruit focused blend of chardonnay and pinot noir, energised by the vibrant acidity and citrus zest freshness of the Adelaide Hills, with the seamlessness and gentle texture of lees age.

90 POINTS

YELLOWGLEN PERLE VINTAGE 2012

\$20 | CORK | DRINK 2018-2022

Four year old vintage fizz under \$20? With the potential to age for a decade! Who would have thought? With a refreshingly pale straw for its age, the toasty and honey influences of maturity contrast the tension of zesty chardonnay fruit, backed with pinot noir and meunier. This is a dry and crunchy Yellowglen of taut acid line that will benefit from at least another year to soften and integrate.

89 POINTS

REDBANK EMILY CHARDONNAY PINOT NOIR BRUT CUVÉE NV

\$15 | KING VALLEY | CORK | 11.5% ALCOHOL | DRINK 2016-2017

Australia's coolest sites are responsible for its best sparkling wines. From vineyards between 500 and 700 metres above sea level in the King Valley, this inexpensive blend wears its cool climate credentials in a clean, crunchy refreshingly fruit-focused mood of nashi pear and lemon, completed with a finish of driving acidity. Value.

88 POINTS

JACOB'S CREEK TRILOGY CUVÉE BRUT NV

\$17 | SOUTH-EASTERN AUSTRALIA | CORK | 11.5% ALCOHOL | DRINK 2016

A bigger step up from the entry JC NV than it used to be, a pale blush tint announces a pinot-led blend of youthful fruit appeal, based on the 2015 harvest. Red berry fruits and citrus are underlined by tangy acidity that offsets a full dosage of 13g/L. It's short and primary but clean and appealing.

88 POINTS

THORNE-CLARKE SANDPIPER BRUT NV

\$19 | EDEN VALLEY | CROWN SEAL | 11.5% ALCOHOL | DRINK 2016-2017

The Eden Valley is not always the best place to grow pinot noir and chardonnay, but this 51/49% blend represents great value. With a pale blush tint, it's a refreshingly elegant style that captures youthful fruit vibrancy and marries it seamlessly with lively acidity and low dosage. A short six month spell on lees ensures that pink lady apple and lemon fruit remain the focus, lingering on a tangy finish. Value.

88 POINTS

HARDYS SIR JAMES BRUT DE BRUT PINOT NOIR CHARDONNAY NV

\$13 | SOUTH-EASTERN AUSTRALIA | CORK | 12.5% ALCOHOL | DRINK 2016

Based in the 2015 harvest, this is a youthfully fruitful style with nuances of toast and honey enhanced by a touch of oak. This is the 'dry style' version of the Sir James Cuvée, though in reality it still carries a full dosage of 12g/L, which it needs to soften phenolic grip, which disrupts the finish. You could do much worse for \$13 (and as little as \$9 on the street currently).

87 POINTS

JACOB'S CREEK CHARDONNAY PINOT NOIR BRUT CUVÉE NV

\$15 | SOUTH-EASTERN AUSTRALIA | CORK | 11.5% ALCOHOL | DRINK 2016

Built on the 2015 harvest, this is a young, fresh and fruity blend with subtle candied notes on the finish from a full dosage of 11.5g/L, though it upholds the acidity to carry it. An 85% chardonnay predominance infuses primary lemon fruit, while pinot noir adds pink lady apple and strawberry nuances.

87 POINTS

THE BEST SPARKLING WINES OF THE YEAR UNDER \$30

The \$20 to \$30 category is a hot spot in the Australian sparkling offering, representing a big step up from entry sub-\$20 cuvées. Your investment here buys into serious cuvées from top cool climate regions including Tasmania, King Valley, Yarra Valley, Henty, Adelaide Hills and Mount Gambier. These are the sparkling wines I buy when budget and occasion don't call for champagne.

This year I reviewed 69 Australian sparkling wines between \$20 and \$30 (excluding blanc de blancs, rosés, sparkling reds, proseccos and moscatos – see below for reviews under these categories) with a median score of 87 points.

TYSON STELZER'S SPARKLING WINE OF THE YEAR UNDER \$30

BAY OF FIRES TASMANIAN CUVÉE PINOT NOIR CHARDONNAY BRUT NV

\$30 | TASMANIA | CORK | 12.5% ALCOHOL | DRINK 2016-2017

Bay of Fires is the sister house to Arras, crafted by Australian sparkling front man Ed Carr. There's nothing to declare its glorious maturity on the label, but based on the 2006 vintage, this blend has enjoyed an astonishing nine years on lees. It retains an impressively bright, pale straw hue considering, but there is no mistaking its maturity on the nose and palate, singing with all the joy of bready, nutty complexity and waves of mouth-filling texture. For all this jubilation, it upholds its pinot-led substance and the acid line and lemon and apple fruit of its cool Tasmanian origins. The only question is why they can't sell it faster.

94 POINTS

THE RUNNERS-UP

HOUSE OF ARRAS A BY ARRAS PREMIUM CUVÉE NV

\$25 | TASMANIA | CORK | 12.5% ALCOHOL | DRINK 2016-2017

All the grandeur of the Arras outfit filters down to its entry cuvée, making this one of the most profound sparkling wines at its price again this year. Arras unites zesty Tasmanian fruit with the nutty tones of lees age and a ten percent portion of fermentation in old barriques. It exudes distinguished maturity thanks to magnificent, deep reserve stocks, this blend comprised of 15% 2014, 31% 2010, 9% 2009, 36% 2008 and 8% 2007. The result is a wonderfully textured cuvée of bright citrus fruit persistence and impeccable line and length, showcasing the intricate craftsmanship of Ed Carr.

93 POINTS

BROWN BROTHERS PINOT NOIR CHARDONNAY PINOT MEUNIER NV

\$27 | KING VALLEY | CORK | 12% ALCOHOL | DRINK 2016

With street prices as low as \$18, this is one of the best sparkling buys of the moment. I have long marvelled over the value of this cuvée, one of the most reliable, longstanding go-tos of affordable fizz. The latest blend based on the 2012 vintage is as elegant and complex as ever, seamlessly harmonising the pristine lemon and apple fruits of the King Valley with the delicate nougat and toast nuances of lees age. In line, persistence and texture it far outclasses its category even at full price.

93 POINTS

TALTARNI BRUT 2012

\$25 | SOUTH-EASTERN AUSTRALIA | DIAM | 12.8% ALCOHOL | DRINK 2016-2017

There is champagne on Australian shelves at this price and it's undrinkable. Taltarni is enviable in its dedication to champagne's full méthode traditionnelle across all of its cuvées. In fruit integrity and bottle-developed maturity (almost three years on lees), this is the full vintage champagne recipe. It over delivers for its price, and 2012 upholds the tradition. An enticing accord between citrus and stone fruit is set against a delightful backdrop of toast and honey, with a lingering, focused acid line on the finish, perfectly offset by low dosage of 8g/L. At a street price of \$20 currently, this is a bargain.

92 POINTS

HARDYS SIR JAMES VINTAGE 2009

\$28 | SOUTH-EASTERN AUSTRALIA | CORK | 12.5% ALCOHOL | DRINK 2016

A great way to experience the joys of secondary complexity of mature sparkling wine without breaking the bank, Sir James is a complex and mature blend that takes full advantage of a tiny touch of oak and five-and-a-half-years on lees to build texture and toasty, honeyed complexity. In the midst of this, it presents all the integrity of cool climate fruit from Tumbarumba and Yarra Valley, balanced with full dosage, making for a soft and even finish. The first bottle I opened was cork stripped. As always, be sure to return a suspect bottle for replacement.

92 POINTS

DELAMERE VINEYARDS NON VINTAGE CUVÉE NV

\$30 | TASMANIA | CORK | 12.5% ALCOHOL | DRINK 2016

Shane and Fran are increasingly focusing on sparkling wines in their Delamere portfolio, now one of the go-to names of modern Tasmanian fizz. Their NV is a fresh young sparkling based on the 2014 vintage that celebrates the vibrancy and fruit definition of the cool Piper's River district of northern Tasmania. A generous one-third of oak-matured reserve wines add toasty, spicy, biscuity depth that contrasts lively acidity on a refreshingly dry and long finish.

92 POINTS

YARRA BURN VINTAGE 2010

\$28 | YARRA VALLEY | CORK | 12.5% ALCOHOL | DRINK 2016-2017

Another great value sparkling wine from Ed Carr, with a full five-and-a-half years on lees bringing all the joy of biscuity, honeyed complexity, while upholding a core of cool climate Yarra Valley citrus and stone fruit integrity. Phenolic presence brings a little grip to the finish, but it holds it with even persistence.

91 POINTS

FROGMORE CREEK FORTY-TWO DEGREES SOUTH PREMIER CUVÉE NV

\$28 | TASMANIA | DIAM | 12% ALCOHOL | DRINK 2016

A dynamic, refreshing and fruit-focused blend of 90% chardonnay and 10% pinot noir from Campania in southern Tasmania's Coal River Valley that captures lemon and red berry fruits of compelling purity, intricately crafted with beautifully ripe acidity and perfectly integrated dosage of 9g/L.

91 POINTS

HENTLEY FARM BLANC DE NOIR VINTAGE 2015

\$29 | BAROSSA | CORK | 12.5% ALCOHOL | DRINK 2016-2017

A youthful blanc de noir of second fermentation in pressure vessel, this cuvée does not pretend to carry the texture or persistence of a lees aged sparkling, instead it achieves a fruity and simple style with an air of elegant sophistication. It's a refreshing and compelling style of medium salmon hue and engaging fruit expression of pink pepper, red cherry and strawberry hull.

91 POINTS

SEPPELT SALINGER HENTY VINTAGE CUVÉE 2012

\$30 | HENTY | CORK | 11.5% ALCOHOL | DRINK 2016-2020

A stalwart of Australian sparkling, the wonderful news came through last week that, against all odds, Seppelt's historic drives at Great Western will be upheld and remain open for visitors. Meanwhile, Salinger remains on form, presenting an even and balanced accord between the strawberry and red cherry fruits of pinot noir, the lemon citrus of chardonnay and the finely textured mouth feel and subtle almond meal and toast nuances of lees age, balanced by cool, fine Henty acidity and a touch of candied dosage (8.6g/L). It holds line and length admirably.

91 POINTS

NINTH ISLAND TASMANIA TRADITIONAL METHOD NV

\$30 | TASMANIA | CORK | 12.5% ALCOHOL | DRINK 2016-2017

In the grand hierarchy of Kreglinger and Pipers Brook, Ninth Island is a refreshingly accurate entry point. The verve and zest of the cool Piper's River region are presented in a fruity blend of chardonnay, pinot noir and meunier of red berry, red apple and grapefruit flavours. Lively acidity unites with impressively mouth filling lees-derived texture, thanks to six to eight months on lees prior to bottling and another two years after, making for an impressive total of at least three years of age on release. It finishes long and well balanced.

91 POINTS

TEMPLE BRUER PURE WHITE CUVÉE NV

\$22 | SOUTH AUSTRALIA | CORK | 12% ALCOHOL | DRINK 2016

Australia makes sparkling from all manner of varieties, but the safest rule is to stick with the usual suspects. Very rarely does an exception arise, but this unusual blend of early picked chenin blanc and viognier from Langhorne Creek and Eden Valley is one of them. A core of elegant apple and lemon zest is enhanced with three years on yeast lees in bottle, building biscuity complexity, textured mouth feel, creamy bead and a persistent finish. The result shows impressive poise and integrity for its blend and its affordable price.

90 POINTS

SIDEWOOD SPARKLING PINOT NOIR CHARDONNAY NV

\$25 | ADELAIDE HILLS | DIAM | 12% ALCOHOL | DRINK 2016

From the cool 380m altitude Ashwood Estate vineyard in the Adelaide Hills, this is a well orchestrated and fruit-focused blend of 60% pinot noir and 40% chardonnay, with partial malic acidity retained to bring freshness and definition to the finish. Lees age has furnished integration, gentle texture and subtle almond meal nuances on a dry finish of 5.6g/L dosage.

90 POINTS

KOONARA THE GUARDIAN ANGEL SPARKLING CHARDONNAY PINOT NOIR 2015

\$25 | MOUNT GAMBIER | DIAM | 12% ALCOHOL | DRINK 2016-2017

Freshness and fruit focus are the priorities for this vintage cuvée, released within months of harvest. It's a vibrant celebration of youthful chardonnay and pinot noir, alive with lemon and red cherry fruit that finds refreshing balance between bright acidity and subtle dosage, even at this precocious age.

90 POINTS

CLAREMONT PINOT NOIR CHARDONNAY VINTAGE 2010

\$30 | SOUTH-EASTERN AUSTRALIA | CROWN SEAL | 13.5% ALCOHOL | DRINK 2016

A blend of Tumbarumba, Adelaide Hills and Mount Gambier may be unusual, but this cuvée achieves an admirable harmony of citrus and stone fruits with the subtle honeyed, toasty, spicy complexity of bottle age. Acidity and dosage strike a well-integrated balance, making for an immediately approachable style.

90 POINTS



Winter mist in Eden Valley
Tyson Stelzer Photography

THE BEST SPARKLING WINES OF THE YEAR UNDER \$50

The \$30-\$50 category represents the most exciting chapter of Australian sparkling wine at the moment. If there is one place where your investment pays the greatest returns in sheer drinking pleasure, this is it.

Why? Because, apart from the rare exceptions listed above, the high cost of sparkling winemaking in cool regions almost universally rules out truly great fizz under \$30. And because spending more than \$50 can land you a serious bottle of champagne.

Testimony to Tasmania's lead in the premium sparkling stakes, my top six wines in this category hail from the island state.

This year I reviewed 86 Australian sparkling wines between \$30 and \$50 (excluding blanc de blancs, rosés, sparkling reds, proseccos and moscatos – see below for reviews under these categories) with a median score of 89 points.

TYSON STELZER'S SPARKLING WINE OF THE YEAR UNDER \$50

FROGMORE CREEK CUVÉE EVERMORE MÉTHODE TRADITIONNELLE VINTAGE 2008

\$38 | TASMANIA | DIAM | 12% ALCOHOL | DRINK 2016-2020

Appropriately named, I first reviewed Evermore on release in 2013 and my score has progressively ascended on each tasting since. 2008 is a benchmark vintage for Tasmanian sparkling wines and this is a cuvée of towering magnificence. It's a wondrous panoply of the red apple, red cherry, strawberry and white pepper of pinot noir (87%), the toasty/nutty personality of a touch of 2007 vintage matured in old oak barrels and the citrus crunch and fine acid line that defines this outstanding season. A long, refined palate is perfectly balanced with 7.5g/L dosage.

95 POINTS

THE RUNNERS-UP

PIRIE TASMANIA TRADITIONAL METHOD BRUT 2009

\$40 | TASMANIA | CORK | 12% ALCOHOL | DRINK 2016-2019

From the cool slopes of the Tamar Valley, the fresh vivacity of Tasmania belies seven years of maturity, shining from a pale straw hue and delightful purity of the lemon, apple and pear fruit of a 50/50 blend of pinot noir and chardonnay. Toasty, nutty complexity is subtle considering its age and barrel-fermented base wines, culminating in a well-honed finish, sustained by bright Tasmanian acidity and the wonderfully mouth filling texture of long lees age. A marvellous vintage, and for all it represents, great value for money.

95 POINTS

STEFANO LUBIANA LATE DISGORGED 1996

\$45 | TASMANIA | CORK | 12.5% ALCOHOL | DRINK 2016

This cellar door only release must be the oldest current release sparkling in the country, and for all it represents it is grossly underpriced. After a full decade on lees and a further nine years on cork, its hue has evolved to a gloriously full yellow with copper tints and its flavours encompass an expansive universe of complexity of grilled pineapple, dried peach, ginger nut biscuits, burnt butter, glacé fig, baked apple and mixed spice. Nuances of smoky tertiary complexity are beginning to emerge. At a full twenty years of age, it has attained the wonderful twilight of its life, and it has done so with integrity and grace.

95 POINTS

JANSZ TASMANIA VINTAGE CUVÉE 2010

\$47 | TASMANIA | CORK | 12.5% ALCOHOL | DRINK 2016-2020

Jansz vintage is sourced exclusively from the Jansz vineyard in Piper's River in northeastern Tasmania, and the great 2010 vintage embodies the spirit of this exceptional site. The juxtaposition between fresh lemon and apple fruit of this cool vineyard and the gloriously toasty, spicy, honeyed, ginger theatrics of barrel fermentation (50%) and 4.5 years lees age has attained a thrilling crescendo in Jansz 2010. It's finely textured, magnificently persistent and driven by a scintillating acid line.

95 POINTS

PIRIE TASMANIA TRADITIONAL METHOD NON VINTAGE NV

\$32 | TASMANIA | CORK | 12.5% ALCOHOL | DRINK 2016-2018

Sourced primarily from the Tamar Valley (with a little from Tasmania's east coast), all the bright energy and endurance of northern Tasmanian chardonnay (55%) and pinot noir (45%) are elegantly framed in gorgeous lees-derived complexity. This makes for a cuvée at once vibrant and fresh and at the same time deeply textural and complex. The accord is captivating, and line and length are outstanding. The finest Pirie NV yet and with a street price of \$25, it's one of the best value sparklings on the shelves.

94 POINTS

AMADIO VINTAGE SPARKLING 2009

\$39 | TASMANIA | DIAM | 12.5% ALCOHOL | DRINK 2016-2019

There's no hint of four years on yeast lees (and a further two years in bottle since) in its pristine, pale straw, though such a creamy bead, seamless integration and subtle texture could come from nowhere else. Elegant precision of lemon and red apple fruit is upheld even at this age, set against a backdrop of brioche and completed with a subtle dosage of 5g/L on a long finish defined by pristine Tasmanian acidity.

94 POINTS

DEVIATION ROAD LOFTIA ADELAIDE HILLS VINTAGE BRUT 2013

\$45 | ADELAIDE HILLS | DIAM | 12.5% ALCOHOL | DRINK 2016-2021

Kate and Hamish Laurie have established one of Australia's finest sparkling boutiques, and this year's releases place them among the top sparkling producers on the mainland. Sourced from vineyards above 550m in the cool Lenswood district of the Adelaide Hills, their 2013 Loftia is a magnificently elegant sparkling that sings with a more than two-thirds majority of chardonnay, charged with the energy of partial malic acidity and low dosage of 8g/L and softened by almost three years on lees. The result is effortlessly harmonious, confidently walking the high-wire between lively fruit expression and graceful restraint. Magnificently crafted.

94 POINTS

CHANDON VINTAGE COLLECTION CUVÉE 2012

\$45 | VICTORIA | DIAM | 12.5% ALCOHOL | DRINK 2016-2017

Chandon's Vintage Collection represents a tiny tier in its production. This new release from the first Chandon vintage harvested by winemaker Dan Buckle represents a blend of depth, zest and concentration. With a medium straw hue, impacting layers of fig and white peach are impeccably countered by a spine of well-structured acidity and crunchy lemon zest. Disgorged in January 2016, almost four years on lees has built layered biscuity complexity and excellent creamy mouth feel, while upholding some enticing struck flint reductive notes that linger long on a finish of exacting line and persistence. It's ready to drink this year.

94 POINTS

BROWN BROTHERS PATRICIA PINOT NOIR & CHARDONNAY BRUT 2010

\$47 | KING VALLEY | CORK | 12.5% ALCOHOL | DRINK 2016-2018

At an elevation of 800m at the top end of the King Valley, the legendary Whitlands vineyard is one of the finest sources of sparkling wine on mainland Australia. Established by Brown Brothers in 1982, it was acquired by Chandon in January 2014 (lucky them!) after Brown Brother's sparkling focus shifted to Tasmania. 2010 Patricia presents the full glory of this magnificent site. Even after a full five years on yeast lees, its pale straw hue and elegantly pristine lemon and apple flavours declare a vintage of precision and stamina. Wonderful texture and understated almond meal and nougat nuances of maturity underline the gently sustaining presence of the acidity of this high plateau. Impeccably seamless line and length.

94 POINTS

SITELLA MÉTHODE TRADITIONNELLE PINOT NOIR CHARDONNAY 2009

\$32 | PEMBERTON | DIAM | 13% ALCOHOL | DRINK 2016-2017

For its exceptional performance in still wine production, Western Australia is not well suited to fizz, though this cuvée is a sparkling standout. A bright medium straw hue confirms a cuvée that has taken five years on lees in its stride. The lemon and apple fruit integrity of Pemberton remains, gloriously painted in sweeping brush strokes of toast, honey and spice. Lees-derived texture defines a long finish of well-integrated dosage, even line and just a touch of phenolic grip.

93 POINTS

PETALUMA CROSER 2012

\$35 | ADELAIDE HILLS | DIAM | 13% ALCOHOL | DRINK 2016-2022

The dynamic verve of a cool Adelaide Hills season is amplified twofold by partial malic acidity and low dosage of 7g/L, though the creamy and complex mood of Petaluma is preserved. Texture and seamless integration are achieved through fermentation half in old oak barriques, followed by more than three years on lees in bottle. Subtle savoury complexity lingers, but the focus remains on primary pinot noir (60%) and chardonnay (40%).

93 POINTS

CURLY FLAT MACEDON NV

\$45 | MACEDON | DIAM | 13% ALCOHOL | DRINK 2016-2018

A rare example of the blessing of barrel age in sparkling wine, this is a cuvée of dramatic contrast, juxtaposing the tense malic acid of 2011 in the cool heights of Macedon with the rumbling depth and generosity of more than two-thirds 2000 and 2001 aged in oak barrels. The accord is compelling and distinctive, rich with toasty, honeyed, truffley maturity while upholding the spicy lemon and apple of its youth. It's long, linear and masterfully composed.

93 POINTS

APOGEE DELUXE VINTAGE BRUT 2013

\$48 | TASMANIA | DIAM | 12.5% ALCOHOL | DRINK 2016

Tasmanian winegrowing pioneer Andrew Pirie has settled confidently into his own tiny estate in Piper's River, hand making (and hand disgorging) his small production of impeccably crafted wines. Pinot noir (62%) takes a confident and enticing lead here, presenting compelling depth and character of red cherry and strawberry fruit. Two years on lees, in concert with 15% fermented in old oak barriques builds texture more than toasty/nutty/spicy flavour, beautifully integrating refreshing Piper's River acidity on a finish of succulent depth and evenly crafted texture.

93 POINTS

GHOST ROCK CATHERINE SPARKLING 2013

\$49 | TASMANIA | DIAM | 12.5% ALCOHOL | DRINK 2016-2019

A sparkling of compelling fruit expression, a wonderful 50/50 juxtaposition of the jubilant red berries and red apples of pinot noir and the lemon tang of chardonnay, intricately massaged with the subtle nutty characters and finely-textured mouth feel of two years on lees. A touch of fermentation and maturation in old oak lends a note of spice. Dosage of 11g/L neatly balances a fine line of Tasmanian acidity on a long finish.

93 POINTS

CLOVER HILL TASMANIAN CUVÉE NV

\$32 | TASMANIA | DIAM | 12.5% ALCOHOL | DRINK 2016-2017

Clover Hill is back on form after a few troubled years, and its entry cuvée sets the pace. A faint blush tint heralds a blend of 59% chardonnay, 37% pinot noir and 4% meunier of great fruit presence of citrus, apple and stone fruits, with partial retention of malic acidity defining a well-honed and energetic finish. Two-and-a-half years on lees has produced integration and mouth filling texture, and an understated savoury elegance, topped off eloquently with a low 7.5g/L dosage.

92 POINTS

KYNETON RIDGE ESTATE MACEDON PINOT NOIR CHARDONNAY 2011

\$32 | MACEDON | DIAM | 13.2% ALCOHOL | DRINK 2017-2021

From the cool heights of Macedon, this is a youthful, elegant and tense cuvée that expresses the tense 2011 vintage in subtle crunchy apple and pear fruit. Almost a year in French oak has built texture without oak flavour, and a light dosage of 4g/L keeps the finish taut and zesty. Beautifully crafted and age-worthy.

92 POINTS

STEFANO LUBIANA BRUT RESERVE NV

\$34 | TASMANIA | CORK | 12.5% ALCOHOL | DRINK 2016-2017

Steve and Monique Lubiana have recently extended their portfolio of beautifully refined sparkling wines from their Granton Estate in Tasmania's Derwent Valley, and their NV blend remains rock solid. It's a beautifully expressive chardonnay pinot noir blend that upholds the tension of the 2011 base vintage and deepens it with the red apple fruit and toasty, spicy complexity of 2009 and 2010 reserves, half of which have been aged in large Austrian oak barrels. The current blend is a 2013 disgorged cuvée released in 2014, making for a particularly toasty and honeyed style, finished off neatly with less than 8g/L dosage.

92 POINTS

GREENSTONE ESTATE SERIES YARRA VALLEY MÉTHODE TRADITIONNELLE 2011

\$35 | YARRA VALLEY | DIAM | 12.5% ALCOHOL | DRINK 2016-2019

This 53/47% pinot noir/chardonnay blend is a pristine expression of the cool 2011 season, upholding fresh lemon and crunchy apple flavours. A small portion of old oak fermentation in concert with four years on lees (disgorged October 2015) has built subtle toasty/nutty complexity and soft texture, evenly balanced by a subtle dosage of 6g/L.

92 POINTS

PIPERS BROOK TASMANIA VINTAGE 2009

\$37 | TASMANIA | CORK | 12.5% ALCOHOL | DRINK 2016-2024

A compelling follow-on to the magnificent 2008 season, this is a vintage of impressive potential for Pipers Brook. A pristine pale straw hue even after seven years (less than two of which were on lees in bottle) announces an elegant and complex blend of Piper's River district pinot noir and chardonnay. A touch of fermentation in old French oak accents savoury complexity, while upholding primary red apple and lemon fruit. Nuances of struck flint reduction emphasise a long and bright finish, sustained by glorious northern Tasmanian acidity.

92 POINTS

MT LOFTY RANGES VINEYARD MÉTHODE TRADITIONNELLE PINOT NOIR CHARDONNAY 2012

\$40 | ADELAIDE HILLS | CORK | 11.5% ALCOHOL | DRINK 2016-2020

An elegant and clean expression of 550m altitude Lenswood pinot noir and chardonnay from the site of an old apple orchard, intricately polished by three years on lees and a subtle dosage of 6g/L. It captures the restrained apple and lemon fruit of Lenswood gracefully.

92 POINTS

DELAMERE VINEYARDS CUVÉE 2012

\$45 | TASMANIA | CORK | 12.7% ALCOHOL | DRINK 2016

A rich and faintly exotic fruit ripeness even in this slightly cooler season lends notes of ripe peach and fig, with all the complexity of three years of lees age contributing toasty, biscuity, wild honey to a long, dry finish of well integrated acidity and softly structured texture.

92 POINTS



THE BEST SPARKLING WINES OF THE YEAR OVER \$50

The investment of effort and time makes sparkling wine the most costly of all wine styles to produce. Great sparkling wine is irrefutably dependent upon a cool climate, and cool climate viticulture notoriously entails vagaries in yields and inconsistency in quality from one season to the next. The result is that truly great sparkling wine is never inexpensive.

Sparkling winemakers are faced with a catch-22 in their pricing unlike any other wine style, thanks to the ever-present question, 'Why buy Australian when I can land champagne for the same price?' Thankfully some Australian sparkling wines have pushed through the glass ceiling of champagne pricing, and this section is dedicated to all those that are worthy of your purse this year.

Those that fly above \$100 do so thanks to miniscule production, and in the case of some late disgorged releases, just a few hundred bottles.

14 sparkling wines between \$50 and \$350 have won my tick of approval. More than half (including the top five) hail from Tasmania, with high altitude mainland sites snaring the remaining six places (Adelaide Hills, Macedon, Tumbarumba and Orange).

This year I reviewed 26 Australian sparkling wines over \$50 (excluding blanc de blancs, rosés, sparkling reds, proseccos and moscatos – see below for reviews under these categories) with a median score of 92 points.

TYSON STELZER'S SPARKLING WINE OF THE YEAR OVER \$50

HOUSE OF ARRAS EJ CARR LATE DISGORGED 2003

\$150 | TASMANIA | CORK | 12.9% ALCOHOL | DRINK 2016-2023

This Late Disgorged is one of Ed Carr's greatest achievements. For his wealth of experience, it impresses me that this humble sparkling wine legend is still always learning, and his peers tell me he even listens graciously to their ideas. His trajectory of evolution is evidenced by a current portfolio more refined than ever. Still a medium straw yellow hue at 13 years of age (12 on lees), this is a cuvée of breathtaking energy, propelling the primary lemon and white peach of an almost two-thirds majority of chardonnay with a laser line of enduring acidity. Nutty, bready, lees-derived complexity is beautifully presented and harmonises impeccably with a core of fruit integrity.

96 POINTS

THE RUNNERS-UP

HOUSE OF ARRAS 20TH ANNIVERSARY LATE DISGORGED 1998

\$350 | TASMANIA | CORK | 12.5% ALCOHOL | DRINK 2016-2017

Released for the third time, here after a glorious 16 years on lees (the first releases were after four years on lees in 2002 and the first Arras Late Disgorged with 11 years on lees in 2009), this is a cuvée that rejoices in the grand tertiary characters of green olive and warm hearth. It ripples with transcendental complexity of dried pear, fig, honey, fennel and buttered toast. Textural grip sits comfortably in its warm, glowing, succulent secondary fruit, lingering with enduring persistence and completed with a seamless dosage of 8g/L. Is it worth \$350? With only 300 bottles to speak of, price is a redundant question.

96 POINTS

JANSZ TASMANIA LATE DISGORGED CUVÉE 2007

\$56 | TASMANIA | CORK | 12% ALCOHOL | DRINK 2016-2017

Longevity is the evidence of greatness, and after almost a decade, 2007 Jansz has attained its prime, upholding the youthful character of chardonnay (51%) and pinot noir (49%) in crunchy lemon and red apple fruits and building to wonderful, pronounced layers of honey on toast, brioche, even hints of wood smoke and iodine. Extended lees age in concert with partial barrel fermentation and maturation (50%) has built wonderfully creamy texture, impeccable line and enduring persistence, invisibly offset with a judicious dosage of just 6.5g/L. Outstanding.

95 POINTS

HOUSE OF ARRAS GRAND VINTAGE 2007

\$70 | TASMANIA | CORK | 12.5% ALCOHOL | DRINK 2016-2019

Grand Vintage remains the core of Arras' portfolio of now seven cuvées. Led confidently by more than three-quarters chardonnay, this vintage upholds a refreshingly pale straw hue and exciting fruit energy of lemons, apples and white stone fruits. The engagingly reductive tendency of chardonnay has been captured to masterful effect in grilled toast and gunpowder nuances. A low dosage of just 6g/L is all it needs. Wonderfully fine, lees-derived mouth feel and outstanding persistence confirm a true Grand Vintage.

95 POINTS

HOUSE OF ARRAS BRUT ELITE CUVÉE 801 NV

\$50 | TASMANIA | CORK | 12.5% ALCOHOL | DRINK 2016-2020

Built on the outstanding 2008 harvest in Tasmania (hence 801 in its name), this is a cuvée of surprisingly pale hue, upholding elegantly fine lemon and apple fruit of 57% pinot noir and 43% chardonnay, layered with wonderful texture and fine-tuned almond meal lees complexity and compelling nuances of struck flint reduction. This energetic season blesses Brut Elite with captivating vivacity, well balanced with 9g/L dosage, and a long and focused finish that promises further potential.

94 POINTS

PETALUMA CROSER LATE DISGORGED 2003

\$55 | ADELAIDE HILLS | DIAM | 13% ALCOHOL | DRINK 2016

With all the exuberance of 80% pinot noir, full barrel fermentation and 11 years on yeast lees, the only thing that's small about this cuvée is its miniscule production of just 744 bottles. It's blessed with a golden yellow hue and filled with grilled pineapple, glacé fig, toast, toffee and nutmeg, lingering long with enticing, golden lusciousness. Such generosity makes zero dosage all it needs. Drink now.

94 POINTS

STEFANO LUBIANA GRANDE VINTAGE 2007

\$55 | TASMANIA | CORK | 12.5% ALCOHOL | DRINK 2016-2018

At almost a decade of age, after seven years on lees followed by a year on cork, this is a particularly toasty, nutty cuvée of medium straw yellow hue. It's beautifully creamy in texture, laced with spice and even a hint of early tertiary complexity in wisps of pipe smoke. A long finish is sustained by well integrated Tasmanian acidity.

94 POINTS

JOSEF CHROMY ZDAR VINTAGE 2005

\$105 | TASMANIA | DIAM | 12.2% ALCOHOL | DRINK 2016-2017

Nine years on lees has slowly unravelled an entire French patisserie of wonderful complexity, producing a beautifully silken, creamy and enticing style. An almost even blend of pinot noir and chardonnay leaves its impression in secondary red berry, stone fruit and citrus, polished with a light dosage of 6.5g/L. It's long, seamless and dreamy. Just 380 bottles produced.

94 POINTS

HANGING ROCK MACEDON BRUT CUVÉE IX LATE DISGORGED NV

\$115 | MACEDON | DIAM | 12% ALCOHOL | DRINK 2016

Hanging Rock is an unabashed, no-holds-barred, full-bodied Australian sparkling, ready for main course fare. Its late disgorged rendition is a celebration of all the power and complexity of the 1997 base vintage (50%) and an equal proportion of reserves spanning a decade (1996 back to 1987), all aged for two years in old oak (containing the lees of many previous vintages), followed by sixteen years on lees in bottle, no less. A blend of 60% pinot noir and 40% chardonnay, its age, barrel and lees treatment make it predictably savoury, toasty and secondary, with remarkable spicy complexity and heightened lees character reminiscent of Vegemite, culminating in a very long, dry finish (2g/L dosage) laced with great lees texture.

94 POINTS

COURABYRA 805 TUMBARUMBA LATE DISGORGED 2002

\$65 | TUMBARUMBA | CORK | 13% ALCOHOL | DRINK 2016

From the Courabyra vineyard at a lofty altitude of 730m in the heights of Tumbarumba, I have admired this wine many times since I first tasted it following its mid-2012 disgorgement (after a full decade on lees). It has taken additional time on cork in its stride, elevating its biscuit, spice and ginger nuances, while retaining its wonderfully creamy texture and long, seamless persistence. Full dosage of 12.7g/L is well integrated. It is only now entering the twilight of its life, with hints of burnt orange beginning to appear, yet lacking nothing in integrity.

93 POINTS

HANGING ROCK MACEDON BRUT CUVÉE XV NV

\$50 | MACEDON | DIAM | 12.5% ALCOHOL | DRINK 2016

A rare well executed example of the tricky art of long barrel matured sparkling, extended maturation in old oak (20 months for the 2010 base vintage and 2-6 years for reserves back to 1987 vintage) makes for a savoury and complex style of charcuterie and game character, finishing long, dry and balanced with a tiny dosage of 2g/L. Sourced from the Ellis' 1983 planted, 650m altitude Macedon vineyard, 60% pinot noir declares its presence in elegant red cherry and strawberry fruit notes.

92 POINTS

SWIFT VINTAGE BRUT 2011

\$50 | ORANGE | DIAM | 11.5% ALCOHOL | DRINK 2016-2021

With a little inspiration from legendary champagne grower Rodolpe Péters (Champagne Pierre Péters), Dave Swift, Drew Tuckwell and their Printhe Wines team have hit the ground running with some of the most elegant sparkling wines to emerge from the heights of Orange. 'If all we were making was sparkling wine, I'd ask for a vintage like 2011 every year!' Drew quips. Elegant, tense and lively, this is a cuvée that seamlessly juxtaposes the lemon and apple freshness of high altitude Orange chardonnay (75%) and pinot noir (25%) with the gently biscuity texture and flavour of almost four years of lees age. The synergy is compelling, with the structure and integrity to improve further still. Just 500 dozen produced.

92 POINTS

GRANT BURGE HELENE GRANDE CUVÉE 2006

\$55 | TASMANIA | DIAM | 12.5% ALCOHOL | DRINK 2016-2017

Long a Barossa institution, Grant Burge has tactically looked to Tasmania's cool Piper's River for flagship sparkling fruit. The result boasts an impressively medium straw hue at a full decade of age, with eight years of maturity on lees having built captivating layers of grilled toast, burnt butter, marzipan and nougat. A slight majority of pinot (55% pinot noir and 2% meunier) in the blend emphasises impressive fruit presence, while upholding the definition and precision of Tasmanian acidity, evenly topped off with 8.5g/L dosage, which offsets a little almond bitterness on the close.

92 POINTS

DE SALIS CANOBOLAS LOFTY CUVÉE 2010

\$65 | ORANGE | CORK | 12% ALCOHOL | DRINK 2016

At an altitude of 1,050m on the northern slopes of Mt Canobolas, Charlie Svenson's Lofty Vineyard is aptly named. After close to five years on lees, this is the third disgorgement of his sparkling cuvée, a toasty, bready and complex style of fine, lees-derived texture and wonderful integration. Nuances of ginger and honey linger on a long finish, though there is no dosage, and doesn't need to be.

92 POINTS

THE BEST BLANC DE BLANCS OF THE YEAR

As global tastes edge toward ever more elegant flavours and global warming threatens to drive wine styles in the opposite direction, the rising significance of chardonnay in sparkling blends cannot be overstated. While the Champenois fight over chardonnay allocations, in the warmer climates of Australia, the vital role of blanc de blancs has never been more important.

Australia's finest blanc de blancs hail from its coolest regions, with Tasmania again leading the charge this year.

In my tastings this year I reviewed 52 Australian blanc de blancs with a median score of 89 points.

TYSON STELZER'S BLANC DE BLANCS OF THE YEAR

HOUSE OF ARRAS BLANC DE BLANCS 2006

\$80 | TASMANIA | CORK | 12.5% ALCOHOL | DRINK 2016-2021

Arras Blanc de Blancs has attained a new pinnacle. At a full decade of age, the delightfully toasty/nutty/honey personality of chardonnay after eight years on lees has emerged with clarity and jubilation, backed by impeccably focused and enduring acidity, perfectly balanced with low dosage of just under 6g/L. Sourced from Tasmania's Derwent Valley, Huon Estuary and east coast, there is an effortless harmony here, at odds with this warm and advanced season, testifying to Ed Carr's exacting craftsmanship, promising enduring potential.

96 POINTS

THE RUNNERS-UP

KREGLINGER BRUT DE BLANCS VINTAGE 2003

\$65 | TASMANIA | CORK | 12.5% ALCOHOL | DRINK 2023-2033

Charged by a core of cool acidity, even at a glorious 13 years of age, it is yet only part way through its evolution and may go down as one of Australia's most enduring sparkling wines. The stamina of Piper's Brook district chardonnay is on full display in this energetic and taut cuvée. Fermentation entirely in old French oak barriques followed by a full eleven years, no less, on lees, has produced a wonderfully creamy texture and layers of toasty/nutty/bready complexity.

95 POINTS

JANSZ SINGLE VINEYARD CHARDONNAY 2010

\$65 | TASMANIA | CORK | 12% ALCOHOL | DRINK 2016-2022

This is a cuvée that achieves the ultimate contradiction of great sparkling wines, uniting presence and persistence with elegance and vitality. The definition and poise of the Jansz vineyard shine in a medium straw hue and magnificent white peach, grapefruit and pear character, intricately meshed with the nutty, biscuity nuances of almost five years on yeast lees. The finish is a revelation of the endurance of impeccable, cool Piper's River acidity and perfectly gauged nuances of struck flint reductive complexity, the signature of great sparkling chardonnay. Tiny production of just 2,724 bottles.

95 POINTS

DEVIATION ROAD BELTANA BLANC DE BLANCS 2011

\$85 | ADELAIDE HILLS | DIAM | DRINK 2021-2031

Sourced from 25 year old vines at a cool elevation of 550m in Lenswood, this cuvée sets a benchmark for the Adelaide Hills. The cool 2011 season has charged Beltana with a lightening bolt of acidity, yet, crucially, with a ripeness that keeps its balance in check. Focused lemon and apple fruit are accented with fennel and fleeting nuances of struck flint reduction, underscored by the wonderful, mouth-filling texture of almost five years on lees. This is a vintage that unites fruit presence with high-strung tension, promising exceptional endurance. Patience.

95 POINTS

HOLLYDENE ESTATE JUUL SPARKLING BLANC DE BLANCS 2008

\$50 | MORNINGTON PENINSULA | DIAM | 12.5% ALCOHOL | DRINK 2018-2023

Scintillatingly youthful stamina makes this an exceptional blanc de blancs for the Mornington Peninsula. A refreshingly pale straw hue announces a cuvée that rejoices in the lemon and apple freshness of chardonnay and tones it impeccably with a light dosage of 6g/L. Six years on lees and more than a year on cork (December 2014 disgorgement) have done nothing to interrupt graceful, primary fruit purity, while enhancing integration and texture. Great potential yet.

94 POINTS

PIRIE TASMANIA TRADITIONAL METHOD BLANC DE BLANCS 2009

\$58 | TASMANIA | CORK | 12.5% ALCOHOL | DRINK 2016-2019

Testimony to the endurance and energy of northern Tasmanian chardonnay, you'd never guess its age from its pale straw hue, but such thrilling layers of toast, ginger nut biscuits, exotic spice, honey and enticingly creamy texture can come from nowhere else. In the midst of this marvel of 4.5 years of lees-aged maturity, the spine and verve of Tasmanian chardonnay radiates in grapefruit and apple, with well-focused acidity providing tone and calm to a generous and persistent finish.

94 POINTS

CANNIBAL CREEK MÉTHODE TRADITIONNELLE 2011

\$32 | GIPPSLAND | DIAM | 11% ALCOHOL | DRINK 2016-2021

The elegance of this cool season is sustained in this west Gippsland blanc de blancs in a pristine pale straw hue and a focused palate of lemon and apple fruit, sustained by excellent line of beautifully ripe acidity. Four years on lees has brought wonderful integration and finely textured structure and just the faintest hints of almond meal complexity. It's charged with plenty of potential.

93 POINTS

CHANDON VINTAGE BLANC DE BLANCS 2012

\$41 | VICTORIA | DIAM | 12.7% ALCOHOL | DRINK 2016-2022

The cool heights of the Upper Yarra Valley (250m) and Whitlands Plateau (820m at the higher end of the King Valley) unite in a blanc de blancs of riveting energy, definition and endurance. A core of lemon and apple fruit is energised by an electric acid line, tempered by more than three years on lees, building subtle brioche and nougat character. A low dosage of 5g/L is all it calls for.

93 POINTS

PUNT ROAD YARRA VALLEY NAPOLEONE VINEYARD 2011

\$32 | YARRA VALLEY | CORK | 12.5% ALCOHOL | DRINK 2016-2017

Sufficient is the chardonnay in this blend (86%) that it could be labelled blanc de blancs, and in concert with the elegant 2011 vintage and majority blocking of malolactic fermentation, the blend makes for a restrained and energetic style. A tiny portion fermentation in old hogsheads followed by almost four years on lees in bottle has built nicely integrated texture and honey and ginger nut biscuit notes, finished neatly with low dosage of 4g/L.

92 POINTS

STEELS CREEK ESTATE BLANC DE BLANCS 2012

\$40 | YARRA VALLEY | DIAM | 12% ALCOHOL | DRINK 2017-2022

A tightly honed lemon-accented style of surprisingly pale straw hue; fermentation and maturation for six months in barrels, followed by three years on lees, has coaxed out spicy, toasty, biscuity nuances. Finely textured structure and excellent, bright acidity denote a long and linear finish.

92 POINTS

THE LANE CUVÉE HELEN BLANC DE BLANCS VINTAGE 2009

\$55 | ADELAIDE HILLS | DIAM | 12.5% ALCOHOL | DRINK 2016-2017

The follow-on to the inaugural 2008 Helen sets a new standard in refined elegance for The Lane. This is a sophisticated style that takes full advantage of 10% oak maturation followed by a full six years on lees to build mouth filling texture and subtle complexity of ginger nut biscuits and roast almonds. Gentle apple fruit lingers long on a tense finish defined by lees-derived mouth feel, exacerbated by zero dosage. It's long and structured.

92 POINTS

SITELLA MÉTHODE TRADITIONNELLE BLANC DE BLANCS NV

\$32 | PEMBERTON | DIAM | 12% ALCOHOL | DRINK 2016-2018

Sitella is the home of some of the best fizz in Western Australia. This is an elegant and refreshing Pemberton blanc de blancs that upholds the integrity of lemon and apple fruit, while introducing the subtle toasty, almond meal notes of more than two years on lees. Understated grilled toast reduction is well placed within this mix, lingering on a finish of sour acidity and well-judged dosage of 7g/L.

91 POINTS

LOBETHAL ROAD MAJA BLANC DE BLANCS 2012

\$35 | ADELAIDE HILLS | DIAM | 12% ALCOHOL | DRINK 2016-2017

An even and appealing expression of the cool citrus and apple fruit of Adelaide Hills chardonnay, from an altitude of 475m at the foot of Mount Torrens, comfortably supported by the subtle nutty nuances of three years on lees, neatly completed with an elegant dosage of 5g/L. It finishes with sour acidity and reasonable persistence.

91 POINTS

MOORES HILL TASMANIA BLANC DE BLANCS NV

\$45 | TASMANIA | DIAM | 12.5% ALCOHOL | DRINK 2016-2018

Based on the 2012 vintage, this single vineyard Tamar Valley cuvée shows the texture and complexity of 30% fermentation in barrels and more than three years on lees in building honey, toast and fruit cake depth. The acid line of Tasmanian chardonnay defines a long finish, well supported by balanced dosage.

91 POINTS

TALTARNI BLANC DE BLANCS 2012

\$25 | SOUTH-EASTERN AUSTRALIA | DIAM | 12.5% ALCOHOL | DRINK 2016-2017

Finely crafted and refreshingly priced, this cuvée is sourced predominantly from the Pyrenees, with a little Adelaide Hills and Tasmania in the blend. Built on primary citrus and apple fruit, partial oak fermentation and almost three years of lees age build texture, seamlessness and complexity. It carries good persistence, well balanced with 9g/L dosage.

90 POINTS

WATERSHED MARGARET RIVER BLANC DE BLANC 2011

\$25 | MARGARET RIVER | DIAM | 12% ALCOHOL | DRINK 2016-2017

Well crafted and affordable, this is a standout for Margaret River sparkling. A portion of barrel fermentation in old French oak, in accord with four years on lees in bottle, produces a toasty and nutty complexity that contrasts the vibrancy and bright acid line of Margaret River chardonnay, finished neatly with a low dosage of 7.5g/L.

90 POINTS

JACOB'S CREEK JACOB'S CREEK BLANC DE BLANCS BRUT CUVÉE NV

\$15 | SOUTH-EASTERN AUSTRALIA | DIAM | 11.5% ALCOHOL | DRINK 2016

Fresh lemon and apple fruit and a fine bead make for one of the most elegant of the bottom shelf sparklings. It's a fresh and zesty blanc de blancs that captures a core of youthful 2015 chardonnay fruit and balances it with a nicely integrated 11.5g/L of dosage. With a street price as low as \$8, it's a good buy.

88 POINTS



THE BEST SPARKLING ROSÉS OF THE YEAR

If trends in the UK and US are anything to go by (and they usually are), sparkling rosé is a category with tremendous potential for growth in Australia in the coming years. Champagne houses who have registered the strongest growth in Australia in recent years are now targeting rosé as their key focus.

This is a style that Australia can produce extremely well. Our warmer climate can have the effect of accentuating phenolic grip, which tends to disrupt the elegance of white sparkling wines. Rosés are often able to handle this better, thanks to the fruit body and tannin presence of their red wine component.

Tasmania again dominates this category, with ten of my 13 top rosés of 93 points and above hailing from the island state.

This year I reviewed 52 Australian sparkling rosés with a median score of 88 points.

TYSON STELZER'S SPARKLING ROSÉ OF THE YEAR

PIRIE TASMANIA TRADITIONAL METHOD ROSÉ 2009

\$48 | TASMANIA | CORK | 12% ALCOHOL | DRINK 2016-2019

The saignée method of short contact with skins prior to fermentation is one of the most challenging ways to make sparkling rosé because gauging the colour, tannin and flavour balance prior to fermentation is exponentially more difficult than the accuracy afforded through blending trials with red wines prior to bottling or even at disgorgement. When it's done right, the result can be spectacular, as Pirie's saignée of almost 100% pinot noir attests. Its medium salmon crimson hue heralds rose petal fragrance and enchanting red cherry, wild strawberry, pink grapefruit and pink pepper flavours. Seven years of maturity (including four-and-a-half years on lees) has built wonderfully integrated texture without any impact on fruit purity, while a long and bright acid line hones an epic finish. Benchmark rosé.

95 POINTS

THE RUNNERS-UP

BAY OF FIRES TASMANIAN CUVÉE PINOT NOIR CHARDONNAY ROSÉ NV

\$30 | TASMANIA | CORK | 12.5% ALCOHOL | DRINK 2016-2017

The recipe belies the price: One-fifth matured in oak and almost a full decade on lees in bottle (2005 base vintage here) make for a pinot-led blend of captivating mouth feel and nutty, honeyed complexity. Sourced from across Tasmania (Piper's River, Tamar Valley and Derwent Valley), a pale salmon hue heralds its elegant, cool climate sophistication, finishing long and lively, propelled by cool Tasmanian acidity which masks a high dosage of 12.6g/L.

94 POINTS

DEVIATION ROAD ALTAIR BRUT ROSÉ NV

\$30 | ADELAIDE HILLS | DIAM | 12.5% ALCOHOL | DRINK 2016-2017

Deviation Road is a privileged first in its 30-year-old Lenswood vineyard and second in the delicate touch of Kate Laurie, who learnt her craft in Champagne. Her rosé frames gorgeous red cherry and strawberry fruit with pink pepper accents in a lively salmon pink guise (thanks to a light touch of less than 7% red wine) with pinot noir playing a more prominent role than its 20% representation might suggest. The elegance of cool, high Adelaide Hills chardonnay predominantly from the 2013 season takes the lead, with almost three years of lees age building seamless texture without diminishing youthful fruit expression. Excellent acid line is elegantly tweaked by a low dosage of 8.5g/L.

94 POINTS

JANSZ TASMANIA PREMIUM ROSÉ NV

\$32 | TASMANIA | CORK | 12% ALCOHOL | DRINK 2016

For pure, breathtaking restraint, Jansz remains the queen of Australian rosé. It declares its greatness in its delicate elegance, and the latest release is as pale and refined as ever. The faintest salmon blush tint subtly coaxes out dainty red berry and red cherry fruits, but the theme here is more about mouth filling lees-derived texture and cool, energetic Tasmanian acidity than it is about overt flavour. The first bottle opened showed corky flavours and aromas but the second was on form.

94 POINTS

CLOVER HILL TASMANIAN CUVÉE ROSÉ NV

\$32 | TASMANIA | DIAM | 12.5% ALCOHOL | DRINK 2016-2017

Introducing an exciting newcomer to the Clover Hill portfolio, a rosé of pretty salmon pink hue that effortlessly walks the tightrope between elegance and character. This blend of 54% chardonnay, 43% pinot noir and 3% meunier delivers nuances of pink pepper and pretty rose petals against a red cherry backdrop. Partial malolactic fermentation keeps its acidity energetic, while more than two years of lees age brings integration and texture to its 2013 base vintage. An invisible 7.5g/L dosage completes a long, vibrant and elegantly focused finish.

94 POINTS

APOGEE DELUXE VINTAGE ROSÉ 2013

\$54 | TASMANIA | DIAM | 12% ALCOHOL | DRINK 2016

Andrew Pirie's single vineyard blanc de noirs rosé bursts with a pretty pale salmon hue and wonderfully expressive cherry, cherry kernel and strawberry fruit. Subtle spicy/toasty complexity and softly integrated texture are the blessing of more than two-and-a-half years on yeast lees and 15% old oak barrique ferment. It captures the characterful fruit depth and refreshingly elegant tension of northern Tasmania.

94 POINTS

KREGLINGER BRUT ROSÉ 2005

\$65 | TASMANIA | CORK | 12.5% ALCOHOL | DRINK 2016-2018

Elegant, long-aged rosé is one of the most delicate arts of sparkling winemaking, and Kreglinger has nailed the finesse of this cuvée, which remains delicately youthful, even at eleven years of age. This feat is all the more admirable considering the limited blending options available in this single vineyard, single vintage and single variety (pinot noir) style. It has achieved a gorgeously pale salmon coloured personality of layered complexity. Partial fermentation in old French oak followed by almost six years on lees in bottle has produced palate grip and texture that underline secondary strawberry and red cherry flavours which carry long and restrained through the finish.

94 POINTS

TALTARNI CUVÉE ROSÉ MÉTHODE TRADITIONNELLE 2011

\$25 | SOUTH-EASTERN AUSTRALIA | DIAM | 12% ALCOHOL | DRINK 2016

Conceived in the cool 2011 vintage, considered the best sparkling vintage on record by the Taltarni team, and built around a core of almost two-thirds chardonnay, this is a gorgeously elegant rosé of pale salmon hue. Pristine strawberry hull and tangy morello cherry fruits meet the subtle savoury nuance and textural influence of almost four years on lees. Beautifully poised acidity carries a long and linear finish, perfectly offset by an invisible 6g/L dosage.

93 POINTS

DELAMERE VINEYARDS NON VINTAGE ROSÉ NV

\$30 | TASMANIA | CORK | 12.5% ALCOHOL | DRINK 2016-2017

A delightful expression of 100% pinot noir, this is a pretty pale salmon rosé of fragrant rosé petal, strawberry and red cherry aromas. A refreshingly dry palate (just 4g/L dosage) celebrates the tension and razor cut of cool Piper's River Tasmanian acidity, softened a touch by the creamy texture of two years of lees age, twice that of Delamere's NV Cuvée (the base is 2013 here).

93 POINTS

CHANDON VINTAGE BRUT ROSÉ 2012

\$41 | YARRA VALLEY | DIAM | 12.5% ALCOHOL | DRINK 2016-2017

Sourced exclusively from the Upper Yarra, an elegantly pale straw hue contrasts the depth of colour of Chandon's NV Rosé. Almost four years on lees makes for a complex and biscuity style of creamy mouth feel. Strawberry and red apple fruit of succulent presence fills out a succulent palate, flowing gracefully into a long finish of bright acidity. In its pre-release guise (February 2016 disgorgement) its dosage sits comfortably and just needs a few months to integrate.

93 POINTS

STEFANO LUBIANA BRUT ROSÉ 2010

\$45 | TASMANIA | CORK | 12.5% ALCOHOL | DRINK 2016

This cuvée sings with the elegant restraint of southern Tasmania, an impressive feat for a 100% pinot noir of full, pretty salmon hue, even after four years on lees and one year on cork. Cherry and strawberry fruit is becoming toasty and nutty, with a long and even finish balanced by subtle dosage of less than 8g/L

93 POINTS

JANSZ TASMANIA VINTAGE ROSÉ 2012

\$53 | TASMANIA | CORK | 12% ALCOHOL | DRINK 2016-2022

The child of a warm and early harvest, 2012 is a refreshingly and unexpectedly understated and tangy Jansz Rosé of gorgeous, pale salmon hue and elegant flavours of strawberry hull and morello cherry. It takes French oak barrel fermentation and three years on lees in bottle in its stride, upholding a resolute focus on the fruit character of 100% pinot noir from the Jansz vineyard, delivering wonderful acidity that is at once integrated and approachable, yet simultaneously tense and energetic, with perfectly integrated dosage of 8g/L, furnishing great promise of potential in the cellar.

93 POINTS

HOUSE OF ARRAS ROSÉ 2005

\$80 | TASMANIA | CORK | 12.5% ALCOHOL | DRINK 2016

Sadly, the fanatical effort exerted on the production of Arras is not replicated by its sales team and to their discredit, 2013 disgorged Arras Rosé still lingers in the market, having faded a little from the freshness of its initial release to now copper hues and savoury characters of tomato and toast. It upholds gentle stone fruit integrity, mouth filling, lees-derived texture and excellent line and length. Wait for the 2006 instead.

93 POINTS

TALTARNI TACHÉ 2012

\$25 | SOUTH-EASTERN AUSTRALIA | CORK | 12% ALCOHOL | DRINK 2016-2017

With a street price around \$19 and a fully-speded méthode traditionnelle production regime, Taché is consistently one of the best pink offerings on the shelves. A lively, pale salmon pink hue heralds another gorgeously elegant release, capturing delicate red fruits, pink grapefruit and the understated biscuity notes of almost three years of lees age. The finish is fine and lively, well balanced by an invisible 7g/L of dosage.

92 POINTS

YARRA BURN PINOT NOIR CHARDONNAY ROSÉ VINTAGE 2007

\$28 | YARRA VALLEY | CORK | 12.5% ALCOHOL | DRINK 2016

Another win for the consumer in the ongoing saga of slow-moving Accolade sparkling wines, with a street price of \$22 and all the fanfare of a full seven years on lees. Mid-2014 disgorged stock still lingers on the shelves, having lost a little of its freshness, but upholds its ultra-pale salmon hue, wonderful persistence and the textural mouth feel that can only come from long lees age. It still remains one of the best rosé buys going.

92 POINTS

HANGING ROCK MACEDON ROSÉ NV

\$39 | MACEDON | DIAM | 12% ALCOHOL | DRINK 2016

Derived from the same glorious base as all Hanging Rock sparkling wines, dating from 1987, matured for an average of four years on lees in old barrels, with a touch of pinot noir added at dosage for colour. The result is a pretty, medium salmon pink hue and aromas of red cherries, poached strawberries and pink pepper, heralding a rosé of characterful fruit expression and fine tannin structure. Old oak maturation has been well handled, subtly contributing texture and gentle toasty complexity without disrupting fruit purity. 6g/L dosage is well integrated on a long finish.

92 POINTS

DOMINIQUE PORTET YARRA VALLEY BRUT ROSÉ NV

\$28 | YARRA VALLEY | DIAM | 13% ALCOHOL | DRINK 2016-2017

With a gorgeous, ultra-pale salmon hue, this is more clearly a rosé on the nose and palate than it is in colour, thanks to beautifully expressive strawberry and red cherry fruit and spice bounding from the glass. Yarra Valley pinot noir takes a strong lead (60%) in a full-flavoured and ripe palate, with two years on lees (2013 base vintage) serving to integrate acidity, topped off neatly with 6g/L dosage.

91 POINTS

ASHTON HILLS PICCADILLY VALLEY BRUT SAUVAGE SPARKLING PINOT NOIR 2011

\$35 | ADELAIDE HILLS | DIAM | 13% ALCOHOL | DRINK 2016

I never expected a zero dosage 2011 Adelaide Hills sparkling to present so seamlessly, nor so enticing. No sugar is needed in this fleshy blanc de noirs rosé, attaining admirable body and succulence of strawberry, red cherry and raspberry fruit even in this cool, wet season. It's clean, spicy and impressively fresh, with refreshing acidity heightened by its absence of dosage on a long finish.

91 POINTS

CHANDON BRUT ROSÉ MÉTHODE TRADITIONNELLE NV

\$32 | VICTORIA | DIAM | 12.5% ALCOHOL | DRINK 2016

Led by pinot noir, this is a pretty rosé of depth and character, with a full salmon pomegranate hue infused by just 6% pinot noir red wine. It presents a compelling synergy between the tang of pink grapefruit, the crunch of pomegranate and pink pepper and the succulence of elegant strawberry fruit. The result is a rosé of refreshing balance and creamy texture from 18 months on lees in bottle, with a touch of tannin providing grip to the finish. A low dosage of 6g/L is well integrated.

90 POINTS

MIKE PRESS ADELAIDE HILLS SINGLE VINEYARD PINOT NOIR ROSÉ 2015

\$12 | ADELAIDE HILLS | CORK | 13.5% ALCOHOL | DRINK 2016-2017

Cult bargain boutique Mike Press has launched into the sparkling world with a pop! His bargain fizz contrasts the juicy exuberance of pinot noir with the tension of cool, high Adelaide Hills acidity. A medium crimson hue heralds flamboyant fruit expression of candied strawberries, red skins and raspberry jam, juxtaposed by a taut, dry finish.

88 POINTS

CURRENCY CREEK ESTATE RESERVE BRUT PINOT NOIR CHARDONNAY 2015

\$17 | CURRENCY CREEK | ZORK | 12% ALCOHOL | DRINK 2016

The moderating influence of Lake Alexandrina and the southern ocean in Currency Creek produces a compellingly fruit-focused, youthful bargain rosé. There's no suggestion of rosé on the label, but the colour is a glorious sunburst crimson. An almost equal blend of pinot noir and chardonnay, it's the pinot that speaks most emphatically, filled with candied strawberries, ripe raspberries and red cherries. A little sweetness on the finish cleverly masks a touch of tannin grip. A value rosé in the charmat style (second ferment in tank).

88 POINTS

JACOB'S CREEK TRILOGY CUVÉE ROSÉ NV

\$17 | SOUTH-EASTERN AUSTRALIA | CORK | 11.5% ALCOHOL | DRINK 2016

A fresh rosé of medium salmon hue, based on the 2015 harvest, with pinot noir taking the lead in strawberry and red cherry fruits. It's soft and primary, with 13g/L of dosage adding more sweetness to the finish than it really calls for. That said, with a current street price is as low as \$10, it's well worth a try. Just give it a stern chill to tone down that dosage.

87 POINTS



Bringing in the nets after harvest at Delamere, Piper's River, Tasmania
Tyson Stelzer Photography

THE BEST PROSECCOS OF THE YEAR

By contrast to the complexity, texture and sophistication of méthode traditionnelle sparkling wines of chardonnay, pinot noir and meunier, the glera variety of the Prosecco region of northern Italy typically yields simple, young, fruity fizz. It's refreshing, affordable and immensely popular in these lingering days of GFC-induced conservatism.

The King Valley remains far and away the uncontested king of this category, claiming 12 of the 15 places in my list of highlights.

This year I reviewed 29 Australian proseccos with a median score of 87 points.

TYSON STELZER'S PROSECCO OF THE YEAR

BROWN BROTHERS SINGLE VINEYARD KING VALLEY PROSECCO NV

\$21 | KING VALLEY | CORK | 11.5% ALCOHOL | DRINK 2016-2017

My prosecco of the year stands head and shoulders ahead of the pack thanks to texture, persistence and acid line rarely seen in this category. The elegant purity and verve of the Banksdale vineyard at 485m of elevation in the upper reaches of the King Valley is captured in a prosecco of articulate, pristine definition. Varietal integrity is exact, lifted by an energetic acid line, gently textured mouth feel and a long, dry finish. A benchmark of Australian prosecco.

92 POINTS

THE RUNNERS-UP

REDBANK PROSECCO 2015

\$22 | KING VALLEY | SCREW CAP | 11% ALCOHOL | DRINK 2016

Charged with the tang of the cool, high King Valley, this is prosecco in all of its youthful, crunchy, fruit-focused glory, delivering nashi pear, fennel and lemon with a hint of pepper. It finishes refreshingly dry and lively, lingering with well-poised acid line and compelling persistence.

91 POINTS

BROWN BROTHERS PROSECCO NV

\$18 | KING VALLEY | CORK | 12% ALCOHOL | DRINK 2016

Prosecco's signature hallmarks of nashi pear, fennel, lemon and lime unite in a pristine cuvée based on the 2015 vintage, with crunchy fruit purity, refreshing King Valley acidity and just a touch of sweetness.

89 POINTS

SANTA & D'SAS PROSECCO NV

\$22 | KING VALLEY | CROWN SEAL | 11% ALCOHOL | DRINK 2016

A refreshingly zesty and dry prosecco defined by crunchy King Valley lemon, lime and nashi pear, gaining texture, bready complexity and a fine, creamy mouth feel from weekly stirring on yeast lees.

89 POINTS

SAM MIRANDA LA PROVA KING VALLEY PROSECCO 2015

\$25 | KING VALLEY | CROWN SEAL | 11% ALCOHOL | DRINK 2016

This is a well crafted prosecco that accurately captures the cool heights of the upper King Valley in elegant, crunchy, clean and fruity nashi pear, lemon and fennel character, finishing refreshingly dry.

89 POINTS

AD HOC CARTE BLANC PROSECCO NV

\$27 | PEMBERTON | CORK | 12% ALCOHOL | DRINK 2016

Is there nothing Larry Cherubino cannot do? All 1,000 cases of his new prosecco were allocated on the spot. It's a refreshingly fruit-focused, youthful style that captures the understated and crunchy mood of prosecco in notes of grapefruit and golden delicious apple. It finishes dry and clean with respectable length.

89 POINTS

FEATHERTOP VINTAGE PROSECCO 2013

\$35 | ALPINE VALLEYS | CROWN SEAL | 12% ALCOHOL | DRINK 2016-2017

It's good to see prosecco with the savoury complexity and textural mouth feel of bottle fermentation and lees age (two years here). Primary fruit has been replaced with neutral lees character, finished off neatly with low dosage. An interesting style and well executed, though it hasn't yet had time to build lees character to properly replace its primary fruit.

89 POINTS

DAL ZOTTO L'IMMIGRANTE PROSECCO 2014

\$36 | KING VALLEY | CROWN SEAL | 12% ALCOHOL | DRINK 2016

L'Immigrante stands out among proseccos for its finely textured mouth feel, layered with flavours of red apple and beurre bosch pear, finishing dry and bright, thanks to well-structured King Valley acidity.

89 POINTS

BROWN BROTHERS PROSECCO ROSATO NV

\$18 | KING VALLEY | CORK | 12% ALCOHOL | DRINK 2015

Based on the 2014 vintage, this blend has already lost its freshness and vitality, its salmon hue taking on copper tones and its flavours edging toward savoury tomato notes. Nonetheless, it's balanced and appealing.

88 POINTS

EDDIE MCDUGALL KING VALLEY PROSECCO NV

\$20 | KING VALLEY | CROWN SEAL | 10.5% ALCOHOL | DRINK 2016

The flying winemaker's own prosecco is a primary and fruity style that unites the crunch of nashi pear with the bite of grapefruit pith and the generosity of mandarin, finishing clean, refreshing and off-dry. It's simple but well made and crowd-pleasing.

88 POINTS

SAM MIRANDA KING VALLEY PROSECCO 2015

\$20 | KING VALLEY | CROWN SEAL | 11% ALCOHOL | DRINK 2016

Charged with the wonderful acid line of the upper King Valley, this is a tangy and dry prosecco of clean, refreshing fruit focus, lifted lemon and lime zest and an exotic guava note.

88 POINTS

CHRISMONT LA ZONA KING VALLEY PROSECCO NV

\$22 | KING VALLEY | CROWN SEAL | 11.5% ALCOHOL | DRINK 2016

An elegant and crunchy prosecco of pale straw hue and lemon, nashi pear and fennel fruit, with a pristine, almost dry finish that celebrates the verve of King Valley acidity.

88 POINTS

BOX GROVE VINEYARD PROSECCO 2015

\$22 | GOULBURN VALLEY | CROWN SEAL | 11.4% ALCOHOL | DRINK 2016

A simple but well balanced charmat method (tank fermented) style, this is a clean and refreshing prosecco of classic nashi pear, red apple and lemon fruit, with acidity and low dosage of 7g/L melding seamlessly on a fruit-focused finish.

88 POINTS

DAL ZOTTO PUCINO PROSECCO 2014

\$23 | KING VALLEY | CROWN SEAL | 10.5% ALCOHOL | DRINK 2016

A well made charmat method prosecco, the step up from Dal Zotto's Pucino NV to vintage is \$3 well spent. A cleaner, more precise fruit profile of nashi pear and lemon flows seamlessly into a dry finish defined by well integrated King Valley acidity.

88 POINTS

SORELLINA KING VALLEY PROSECCO NV

\$16 | KING VALLEY | CROWN SEAL | 12% ALCOHOL | DRINK 2016

This Coles brand prosecco says on the label that it tastes like fairy floss. Thankfully it doesn't. For \$10 on special you could do much worse than this creamy and crunchy nashi pear and lemon style. Yes, it's clearly targeted at a sweet audience, but King Valley acidity wins out on the finish, ultimately holding things in balance.

87 POINTS

THE BEST SPARKLING RED WINES OF THE YEAR

Dollar for dollar, point for point, reds represent a strong category in Australia's sparkling offering. Unlike its white counterparts, sparkling shiraz is a characteristically Australian style, thriving in our warmer regions and not afraid of warm seasons.

The result is greater regional diversity among my highlights than any other sparkling category (Tasmania can't always have the fun to itself!). Standout regions this year include the Clare Valley, McLaren Vale, Heathcote, the Barossa, King Valley, Langhorne Creek, Pyrenees and Coonawarra.

While sparkling reds can be polarising, I have converted many friends who now regularly ask for this style. I admire its versatility with our warm climate and diverse international cuisine. The trick is not to over chill a sparkling red, for risk of over-accentuating its tannins. Just be super careful when you open the bottle as a sparkling red spray isn't nearly as endearing as a champagne shower!

This year I reviewed 63 Australian sparkling reds with a median score of 87 points.

TYSON STELZER'S SPARKLING RED OF THE YEAR

ASHTON HILLS SPARKLING SHIRAZ 2009

\$40 | CLARE VALLEY | DIAM | 13.5% ALCOHOL | DRINK 2016-2024

I have long adored Ashton Hills Sparkling Shiraz, ascending in recent vintages to a lofty position among the finest of its style in the country. 2009 meets the high expectation set by 2006 and 2008, but for completely unexpected reasons. This vintage has an altogether different mood to the brooding complexity of its forebears. There is nothing blockbuster about its medium red hue. A red cherry and strawberry elegance takes the lead here, with delicate rose hip overtones, underscored by the black olive and liquorice strap personality that defines this label's dimension. Its craftsmanship show impeccable Stephen George precision, seamless and silky, structured with the ultra-fine, inimitable, mineral tannins of ancient Wendouree vines, half of which were planted in 1919, culminating in an exceptionally long finish. This was the very last wine that I tasted for this report and when I finished my review I put away my spittoon and poured a glass.

96 POINTS

THE RUNNERS-UP

PRIMO ESTATE JOSEPH SPARKLING RED NV

\$80 | ADELAIDE | CORK | 13.5% ALCOHOL | DRINK 2016-2020

The latest disgorgement of this iconic sparkling red captures all the mystery and the theatrics of a blend of every vintage since the late eighties and some from the early sixties and seventies. McLaren Vale shiraz brings its vibrant, full purple hue and its black fruit depth, while cabernet and merlot contribute their bright blackcurrant crunch and fine tannin grip. The finish explodes into an endless panoply of dark chocolate, black olives, exotic spice, dried fruits and coal dust. Masterful.

96 POINTS

MERINDOC HEATHCOTE SPARKLING SHIRAZ 2013

\$35 | HEATHCOTE | DIAM | 13.7% ALCOHOL | DRINK 2016-2023

For an inaugural release, this is a skilfully crafted and delightfully captivating sparkling shiraz. Refreshingly elegant, it captures the spicy, peppery fruit profile and the granitic ironstone texture of Heathcote geology. Black cherry and blackberry fruits have been impeccably upheld with depth, tang and bright definition.

94 POINTS

KAY BROTHERS 125TH ANNIVERSARY SPARKLING SHIRAZ NV

\$45 | MCLAREN VALE | CROWN SEAL | 14% ALCOHOL | DRINK 2018-2031

A grand entry into the world of sparkling shiraz for this great historic estate, this is a cuvée packed with all the depth and intrigue of Kay's legendary still reds. It's built primarily around 2008 shiraz aged in old oak for more than five years and tweaked with touches of merlot, cabernet and grenache, subtly dosed with Kay's Old Tawny. Packed with wonderful layers of black fruits, liquorice and dark chocolate, it's scaffolded in well-handled, finely structured tannins that bring great promise in the cellar.

94 POINTS

ROCKFORD BLACK SHIRAZ NV

\$63 | BAROSSA VALLEY | CORK | 13.5% ALCOHOL | DRINK 2016-2025

The iconic Rockford Black is as multifaceted as ever in its August 2015 disgorgement, spanning a magnificent depth of maturity. It delivers the deep black fruits and pepper of Barossa shiraz, set against a backdrop of dark chocolate, liquorice, game and even a hint of Christmas cake and orange rind. Impeccably handled tannins are softly integrated, while promising great potential over the next decade.

94 POINTS

LEASINGHAM CLASSIC CLARE SPARKLING SHIRAZ 2006

\$68 | CLARE VALLEY | CORK | 14% ALCOHOL | DRINK 2021-2031

At a decade of age, this is a sparkling shiraz of impressively deep yet vibrant purple hue, towering fruit integrity, grand maturity and masterful structure. Depth and intensity of black fruits of all kinds melds with the most subtly emerging nuances of sweet leather and game. Tannins are at once fine and integrated, yet confident and enduring, promising an exciting future.

94 POINTS

SEPPELT ORIGINAL SPARKLING SHIRAZ 2013

\$27 | VICTORIA | CORK | 13% ALCOHOL | DRINK 2018-2023

Seppelt pioneered Australia's sparkling shiraz style since the 1890s, and its depth of expertise culminates today in a sparkling shiraz of captivating fruit and intricately balanced structure. An elegant, medium-bodied feel contrasts with deep black plum and black cherry fruit, framed in finely structured tannins and dark chocolate oak that promise medium-term potential.

93 POINTS

JOHN GEHRIG KING VALLEY SPARKLING MERLOT NV

\$35 | KING VALLEY | CROWN SEAL | 14% ALCOHOL | DRINK 2016-2019

Impeccably crafted, this cuvée singly redefines what sparkling merlot can achieve, doing so with both enticing appeal and promising longevity. All the best things about this variety are captured in this sparkling style: fragrance, dark berry fruits, well-defined acidity and finely textured tannins. A surprise worth discovering.

93 POINTS

BLEASDALE LANGHORNE CREEK SPARKLING SHIRAZ NV

\$23 | LANGHORNE CREEK | DIAM | 13.5% ALCOHOL | DRINK 2015-2018

This is the affordable sparkling shiraz I recommend (and buy!) more than any other. Bleasdale boasts the best-selling sparkling red in Australia, and it's easy to see why. Based on the cool, elegant 2011 season, it's alive with pretty violet lift and enticing plum, rhubarb and black pepper fruit flavours, backed with dark chocolate oak. It embodies classic Langhorne Creek shiraz personality with calibre, character, refined restraint, low alcohol, finely textured tannins and good persistence.

92 POINTS

TALTARNI SPARKLING SHIRAZ 2014

\$25 | PYRENEES | CORK | 14.7% ALCOHOL | DRINK 2016-2024

Central Victoria is extremely well suited to sparkling shiraz, and I'm surprised we don't see more offerings from this part of the world. Especially when they can be as accurate and affordable as this one. With a full, vibrant purple hue, this is a sparkling shiraz that holds nothing back in black plum and black cherry depth, pepper and spice complexity, a finely crafted yet confidently structured tannin profile and a long, dark chocolate-accented finish. Value.

92 POINTS

BALNAVES OF COONAWARRA SPARKLING CABERNET NV

\$35 | COONAWARRA | CORK | 14% ALCOHOL | DRINK 2019-2029

A standout in the sparkling cabernet stakes, this is cuvée that is true to the character of Coonawarra cabernet, while singing with all the complexity of deep reserves (a blend from 2014 back to 1995). Black- and redcurrant fruit meets dark chocolate and notes of red capsicum on a long and bright finish. Firm, fine tannins are well handled, promising a long future.

92 POINTS

JOHN GEHRIG KING VALLEY CREMANT DE GAMAY 2006

\$40 | KING VALLEY | CROWN SEAL | 13.5% ALCOHOL | DRINK 2016-2021

With great length and seamless integration, this is a versatile and food-friendly sparkling alternative. The soft tannins of gamay lend themselves well to a sparkling style, here upholding impressive primary black fruit integrity at a full decade of age. It's spicy and savoury, offering a refreshing cool climate acid line that melds evenly with finely textured tannins and medium-bodied fruit depth.

92 POINTS

MOUNT AVOCA JACK BARRY SPARKLING SHIRAZ NV

\$40 | PYRENEES | DIAM | 13% ALCOHOL | DRINK 2016-2020

A sparkling shiraz carried by line and persistence, completed with nicely integrated dosage and attractive mouth feel. Black fruits meld with pepper and layers of enticing spice, dark chocolate and coffee, backed by finely textured, well-handled tannins.

92 POINTS

SOUL GROWERS BLACK CELLAR SPARKLING SHIRAZ 2006

\$55 | BAROSSA VALLEY | CORK | 14% ALCOHOL | DRINK 2016-2018

At a decade of age, this is a deep and brooding Barossa shiraz that resonates with rumbling depth of maturity in notes of leather, game and savoury spice, while upholding a core of signature Barossa black fruits, liquorice and dark chocolate. Its finely structured tannin backbone is enveloped seamlessly into its folds, as is 35g/L of dosage.

92 POINTS

CHANDON PINOT NOIR SHIRAZ NV

\$32 | VICTORIA | DIAM | 14.2% ALCOHOL | DRINK 2016-2018

Pinot shiraz is an eminently sensible blend for sparkling red, yet surprising unusual. This cuvée unites the gentle red cherry and strawberry personality of pinot with the pepper and spice of shiraz, yielding a style of bright fruit integrity, finely structured tannins and eminent appeal. It lingers with hints of dark chocolate and a little sweetness.

91 POINTS

MAJELLA SPARKLING SHIRAZ 2009

\$30 | COONAWARRA | CROWN SEAL | 14% ALCOHOL | DRINK 2016-2019

This spicy Coonawarra shiraz has had many years in bottle since it was disgorged in 2011 to begin to build gamey, black olive and roast tomato complexity over its layers of black fruits, pepper, spice and high cocoa dark chocolate. It upholds finely structured tannins and good persistence.

90 POINTS

LECONFIELD SYN ROUGE SPARKLING SHIRAZ NV

\$18 | COONAWARRA | CORK | 13.5% ALCOHOL | DRINK 2016-2018

Based almost entirely on the 2015 vintage, this is a youthful and fruity sparkling shiraz, layered with deep black cherry and black plum fruit. Firm, fine tannin grip contrasts full dosage. More age and less sugar would certainly benefit it, though you can't go wrong at a street price of \$15.

89 POINTS

BUNDALEER SPARKLING SHIRAZ SOUTHERN FLINDERS RANGES NV

\$22 | SOUTHERN FLINDERS RANGES | ZORK | 13% ALCOHOL | DRINK 2017-2019

Bundaleer's sparkling shiraz delivers more depth than you'd expect for the price, built around 2013 shiraz and tweaked with 2012 and 2014 and a touch of cabernet. Oak is more apparent this year, which is surprising, as there's no young barrel input. Firm, fine tannins bring plenty of promise to age.

87 POINTS

THE BEST MOSCATOS OF THE YEAR

Above all else, moscato should be cheap. Let's face it, if you're after a sweet, grapey, bubbly hit, you're hardly looking for a profound drinking experience and you're not about to break the bank.

What am I looking for in moscato? Clean fruit and balance of sweetness and acidity.

As always, super chill it in the freezer to tone it down. The more ice crystals, the better! Moscato slushi, anyone?

This year I reviewed 28 Australian moscatos with a median score of 85 points.

TYSON STELZER'S MOSCATO OF THE YEAR

CHATEAU YALDARA RUBAN BAROSSA VALLEY MOSCATO 2015

\$16 | BAROSSA VALLEY | SCREW CAP | 9% ALCOHOL | DRINK 2016

As far as moscatos go, this one is not overtly sweet, allowing its lemon-like acidity to define the finish. Barossa Valley white frontignac makes for a pale coloured and exotically fruity moscato of frangipane, lychee and spicy lemon character. What puts it ahead of my other four 88 point moscatos this year? It's cheap.

88 POINTS

THE RUNNERS-UP

KELMAN VINEYARD MOSCATO 2015

\$18 | HUNTER VALLEY | SCREW CAP | 6% ALCOHOL | DRINK 2016

This is a lot to pay for a half bottle of moscato, but it is a good one, with a pretty pale salmon hue, clean and bright flavours of lemon, strawberries, musk and ginger and bucket loads of sweetness (93g/L). You know the drill... cue the ice bucket.

88 POINTS

WIRRA WIRRA MRS WIGLEY MOSCATO 2015

\$18 | MCLAREN VALE | CROWN SEAL | 4.5% ALCOHOL | DRINK 2016

A full, bright crimson hue and truck loads of sweetness (122g/L) make for a dramatic and flavoursome moscato of red frontignac grapes, with strawberry and raspberry fruit character holding on a surprisingly long finish.

88 POINTS

PIZZINI LANA KING VALLEY MOSCATO 2015

\$20 | KING VALLEY | CROWN SEAL | 6.5% ALCOHOL | DRINK 2016

The lively acidity of the King Valley tones a whopping dose of 185g/L of residual sugar, making for a balanced style of lemonade and ginger flavour. It carries impressive length for the category.

88 POINTS

BROWN BROTHERS WHITE GOLD MOSCATO 2015

\$25 | VICTORIA | SCREW CAP | 5.5% ALCOHOL | DRINK 2016

Spicy lemon, musk and ginger define a clean, fresh and sweet moscato of balanced sweetness and good persistence.

88 POINTS

BROWN BROTHERS MOSCATO VINTAGE 2015

\$16.50 | VICTORIA | SCREW CAP | 5% ALCOHOL | DRINK 2016

Grapey, musky and accented with hints of ginger, this is a fresh and clean moscato of respectable persistence, balanced acidity and plenty of sweetness.

87 POINTS

BROWN BROTHERS MOSCATO ROSA 2015

\$16.50 | VICTORIA | SCREW CAP | 7% ALCOHOL | DRINK 2016

Medium crimson hue and flavours of ginger and blood orange define a moscato of clean, fresh fruit focus and balanced sweetness.

87 POINTS

YALUMBA CHRISTOBEL'S MOSCATO 2015

\$15 | SCREW CAP | 8.5% ALCOHOL | DRINK 2016

A clean, well-balanced and affordable moscato of lemonade, ginger and lychee personality, with bright acidity well offset by plenty of sweetness. Value.

86 POINTS

VITA PIENA PINK MOSCATO NV

\$11 | SWAN HILL | SCREW CAP | 7% ALCOHOL | DRINK 2016

There should be more moscatos at this price. Lemonade and candied strawberry flavours denote a simple and fruity style.

85 POINTS

DE BORTOLI EMERI PINK MOSCATO NV

\$11 | SOUTH-EASTERN AUSTRALIA | DIAM | 8% ALCOHOL | DRINK 2016

A simple, clean, fruity style of medium salmon hue, without excessive sweetness, at the right price for moscato.

85 POINTS

SCOTCHMANS HILL HILL MOSCATO NV

\$13 | SOUTH-EASTERN AUSTRALIA | SCREW CAP | 6.5% ALCOHOL | DRINK 2016

With a pretty pale salmon hue, plenty of flavour of rose water, ginger, lychees and lemonade and a finish that upholds both acid tang and plenty of sweetness, why pay any more for moscato?

85 POINTS

SPARKLING WINE GLOSSARY

ACIDITY A crucial element that gives sparkling wine its tangy freshness, vitality and life, and a sharp, clean taste on the finish.

APÉRITIF A drink used to get the taste buds humming before a meal (sparkling wine, naturally!).

ASSEMBLAGE The process of blending a sparkling wine.

AUTOLYSIS The breakdown of dead yeast cells during ageing on lees, improving mouth feel and contributing biscuity, bready characters.

BARRIQUE Small oak barrel of 225-litre capacity.

BÂTONNAGE Stirring of the lees in barrel or tank.

BEAD Bubbles. The best sparkling wine always has tiny bubbles, the product of the finest juice fermented in cold cellars.

BIODYNAMICS An intensive viticultural regime of extreme organics, eschewing chemical treatments and seeking a harmonious ecosystem.

BLANC DE BLANCS Literally translates as ‘white from white’. White sparkling wine made exclusively from white grapes, usually chardonnay.

BLANC DE NOIRS Literally ‘white from black’. White sparkling wine made exclusively from the dark-skinned grapes pinot noir and/or meunier. This is achieved by gentle pressing removing the juice from the skins before any colour leaches out.

BRUT Raw/dry, in champagne containing less than 12g/L sugar (formerly less than 15g/L sugar).

BRUT NATURE OR BRUT ZÉRO No added sugar (less than 3g/L sugar in champagne).

CAPSULE Crown cap.

CARBON DIOXIDE The gaseous by-product of fermentation that is responsible for the bubbles in sparkling wine.

CARBONATION The cheapest method of creating sparkling wine, in which the wine is injected with carbon dioxide in the same manner as lemonade.

CHARMAT A method of bulk sparkling wine production in which second fermentation occurs in a pressure tank.

CORKED Cork taint is an all too common wine fault resulting from the presence of 2,4,6 trichloroanisole (TCA) in natural cork. It imparts an off-putting, mouldy, ‘wet cardboard’ or ‘wet dog’ character, suppressing fruit and shortening the length of finish.

CORK TAINT See ‘corked’.

CROWN CAP A metal seal like a beer cap, used to seal a sparkling wine bottle during second fermentation and lees ageing. In Australia, some disgorged sparkling wines are sold under crown cap, a very reliable closure.

CUVÉE The first pressing of the grapes (in Champagne 2,050 litres from 4,000 kilograms of grapes), yielding the best juice. Also refers to an individual blend or style.

DEGREES POTENTIAL The ripeness at which grapes are picked, which determines the alcohol content of the finished wine.

DIAM Mytik DIAM is a brand of sparkling wine closure made by Oeneo, moulded from fragments of cork which have been treated to extract cork taint. Its reliable performance has made it an increasingly popular choice for sparkling wine in recent years.

DISGORGEMENT Removal of a frozen plug of sediment from the neck of the bottle.

DOSAGE The final addition to top up the bottle, usually a mixture of wine and sugar syrup called *liqueur d'expédition* or *liqueur de dosage*. A dosage of 10–12g/L of sugar is typical.

EXTRA BRUT Extra raw/dry (less than 6g/L sugar in champagne).

EXTRA DRY OR EXTRA SEC Off dry (12–17g/L sugar in champagne).

FERMENTATION The conversion of sugar to alcohol by the action of yeasts. Carbonic gas is produced as a by-product.

FLUTE Narrow sparkling wine glass.

GYROPALETTE A large mechanised crate to automatically riddle sparkling wine bottles.

INOCULATE To seed a ferment with yeast.

LATE DISGORGEMENT A sparkling wine that has been matured on its lees for an extended period.

LEES Sediment that settles in the bottom of a tank, barrel or bottle, primarily dead yeast cells.

LIGHTSTRUCK The degradation of wine exposed to ultraviolet light. Sparkling wines in clear bottles are most susceptible.

LIQUEUR DE DOSAGE See ‘*Liqueur d'expédition*’.

LIQUEUR D'EXPÉDITION The final addition to top up the bottle, usually a mixture of wine and sugar syrup.

LIQUEUR DE TIRAGE A mixture of sugar and wine or concentrated grape juice added immediately prior to bottling, to produce the secondary fermentation in bottle.

MACERATION Soaking of red grape skins in their juice in the production of red or rosé wine.

MALIC ACID A naturally occurring acid in grapes and other fruits, particularly green apples. It is most pronounced in grapes in cold climates and is responsible for sparkling wine's searing acidity, which is usually softened through malolactic fermentation.

MALOLACTIC FERMENTATION 'Malo' is the conversion of stronger malic (green apple) acid to softer lactic (dairy) acid.

MÉTHODE TRADITIONNELLE The official name for the traditional method of sparkling winemaking, in which the second fermentation occurs in the bottle in which the wine is sold.

MINERALITY The texture and mouth feel of a wine derived from its soil.

MOUSSE See 'Bead'.

MUSELET Wire cage to hold a sparkling wine cork in the bottle.

NON-VINTAGE (NV) A sparkling wine containing wine from more than one vintage. In Australia, it is permissible to label a wine as a vintage with up to 15% of other vintages.

ORGANICS A viticultural regime that avoids the use of any synthetic pesticides, herbicides, fungicides or other treatments. Copper is permitted, though criticised in some circles for a toxicity higher than that of some synthetic products.

OXIDISED A wine that has reacted with oxygen. At its most extreme, oxidation can produce browning in colour, loss of primary fruit, a general flattening of flavours, a shortening of the length of finish, or even a vinegar or bitter taste.

PH The level of acid strength of a wine expressed as a number. Low pH equates to high acidity; 7 is neutral.

PHENOLICS A grape compound responsible for astringency and bitterness in the back palate. It is particularly rich in stems, seeds and skins, and especially prevalent in sparkling wines from warm regions.

PRESTIGE CUVÉE The flagship sparkling wine or wines of a brand, typically the most expensive.

PRISE DE MOUSSE The second fermentation that creates the bubbles.

PUPITRE Hand riddling rack.

REDUCTIVE A wine made or aged with limited contact with oxygen may develop reductive characters, hydrogen sulphide notes akin to struck flint, burnt match and gunpowder. At their extreme, these can manifest themselves as objectionable notes of rubber, rotten eggs, garlic, onion or cooked cabbage.

REMUAGE The riddling process.

RESERVE WINES Wines held in the cellar for future blending in a non-vintage cuvée. Usually aged in tanks, although sometimes kept in barrels or bottles.

RIDDLING The process of moving the lees sediment into the neck of the bottle prior to disgorgement, either by hand or by gyropalette.

SAIGNÉE A technique in which rosé is made by 'bleeding' off juice from just-crushed pinot noir or meunier grapes after a short maceration (soaking) on skins prior to fermentation.

SEC Dryish (17–32 g/L sugar in champagne).

SOLERA A system of fractional blending through a system of wines of different ages, with the bottled wine drawn from the last stage. Sometimes also used in sparkling wine production to refer to a simplified system of perpetual blending, in which successive vintages are added to a single tank.

STALE Lacking in fruit freshness.

TAILLES Coarser, inferior juice that flows last from the press.

TCA See 'Corked'.

TERROIR A catch-all term for anything that defines the character of a vineyard – soil, micro-climate, altitude, aspect, exposure, slope, drainage, and even the hands that tend it.

TIRAGE Bottling of the blended wine with an addition of sugar and yeast, so as to provoke the second fermentation in bottle.

TRANSFER METHOD A method of sparkling wine production in which second fermentation occurs in bottle before the wine is transferred to a tank and its lees removed, invariably losing some gas, before rebottling.

VIN CLAIR Still base wine that has undergone its primary fermentation and (potentially) malolactic fermentation, but not its secondary fermentation.

VINTAGE Wine from a single year. Australian law permits a wine to be labelled as a vintage provided it contains less than 15% of other vintages.

ZERO DOSAGE No sweetness is added during the final addition to top up the bottle.

TYSON STELZER

Tyson Stelzer is a multi-award winning wine writer, television host and producer, author of 15 wine books, international keynote speaker and wine show chairman and judge. He is the author of four editions of *The Champagne Guide*, the sparkling wine reviewer for the *Halliday Australian Wine Companion* and the host and co-producer of the television series *People of the Vines Tasmania* and *People of the Vines Barossa*. An accomplished presenter, Tyson has 12 years experience presenting at international events in the UK, Japan, Italy, South Africa, New Zealand and across Australia.



Communicator
of the Year

International Wine & Spirit Communicator of the Year
THE INTERNATIONAL WINE & SPIRIT COMPETITION 2015



Australian Wine Communicator of the Year

WINE COMMUNICATORS OF AUSTRALIA 2015 AND 2013



Digital Wine Communicator of the Year

WINE COMMUNICATORS OF AUSTRALIA 2015



Best Wine Book of the Year

WINE COMMUNICATORS OF AUSTRALIA 2014

Best French Wine Book in Australia

GOURMAND AWARDS 2014



Best Trade or Technical Writer of the Year

WINE COMMUNICATORS OF AUSTRALIA 2013



International Champagne Writer of the Year

THE LOUIS ROEDERER INTERNATIONAL
WINE WRITERS' AWARDS 2011



Award for the Best Food and Wine Writing

THE AUSTRALIAN FOOD MEDIA AWARDS 2008



YOU ARE INVITED



Black Events Presents

TASTE CHAMPAGNE

2016

HOSTED BY INTERNATIONAL WINE COMMUNICATOR OF THE YEAR

TYSON STELZER

The most awesome champagne tasting in Australia.
MATTHIEU RABET, HEAD SOMMELIER, THE BRIDGE ROOM

Showcasing more than 30 champagne houses, growers & cooperatives

AGRAPART
ALFRED GRATIEN
AR LENOBLE
AYALA
BILLECART-SALMON
BOLLINGER
BRIMONCOURT
CANARD DUCHÈNE
CHARLES HEIDSIECK
COLLET
DE SAINT GALL

DEUTZ
DEVAUX
DOM PÉRIGNON
DUPERREY
JACQUART
JACQUESSON
LAHERTE FRERES
LALLIER
LANSON
LARMANDIER-BERNIER
LOUIS ROEDERER

MOËT & CHANDON
NICOLAS FEUILLATTE
PALMER
PALMES D'OR
PIPER-HEIDSIECK
POL ROGER
RUINART
THIÉNOT
TAITTINGER
VEUVE CLICQUOT
VEUVE FOURNY & FILS

PRESTIGE CHAMPAGNE MASTERCLASS HOSTED BY TYSON STELZER

KRUG VINTAGE 2002
BOLLINGER R.D. EXTRA BRUT 2002
PIPER-HEIDSIECK RARE MILLESIME 2002

BILLECART-SALMON CUVÉE ELISABETH SALMON ROSÉ 2002
JACQUESSON AVIZE CHAMP CAIN RECOLTE EXTRA BRUT 2005
EGLY-OURIET GRAND CRU BLANC DE NOIRS VIEILLES VIGNES NV

Canapés matched to each cuvée. Numbers at each masterclass are strictly limited.

SYDNEY

MON 15 AUGUST 2016
PUBLIC TASTING 6-9PM FOUR SEASONS

MELBOURNE

MON 22 AUGUST 2016
PUBLIC TASTING 6-9PM PLAZA BALLROOM

BRISBANE

MON 29 AUGUST 2016
PUBLIC TASTING 6-9PM CUSTOMS HOUSE

PUBLIC TASTING TICKETS \$95 EACH. VIP TICKETS INCLUDING
PUBLIC TASTING & PRESTIGE CHAMPAGNE MASTERCLASS \$220 EACH

PURCHASE TICKETS TASTECHAMPAGNE.COM.AU

SAVE THE DATE

Tyson Stetzer

INTERNATIONAL WINE & SPIRIT COMMUNICATOR OF THE YEAR 2015

INVITES YOU TO JOIN HIM FOR

The Ultimate
CHAMPAGNE
DINNER & LUNCH

Barossa Valley

SATURDAY 13 AUGUST 2016 | 6:30 FOR 7PM
LAMBERT ESTATE | 55 LONG GULLY ROAD ANGASTON

Adelaide Hills

SUNDAY 14 AUGUST 2016 | 12 FOR 12:30PM
ARTWINE | 72 BIRD-IN-HAND ROAD WOODSIDE

*Ten Courses by Stuart Oldfield
Matched to Ten Cuvées for Dinner
Six Courses & Cuvées for Lunch*

FULL LIST OF COURSES & CUVEES TO BE ANNOUNCED SOON
PLACES ARE STRICTLY LIMITED
TICKETS RELEASED MAY 2016



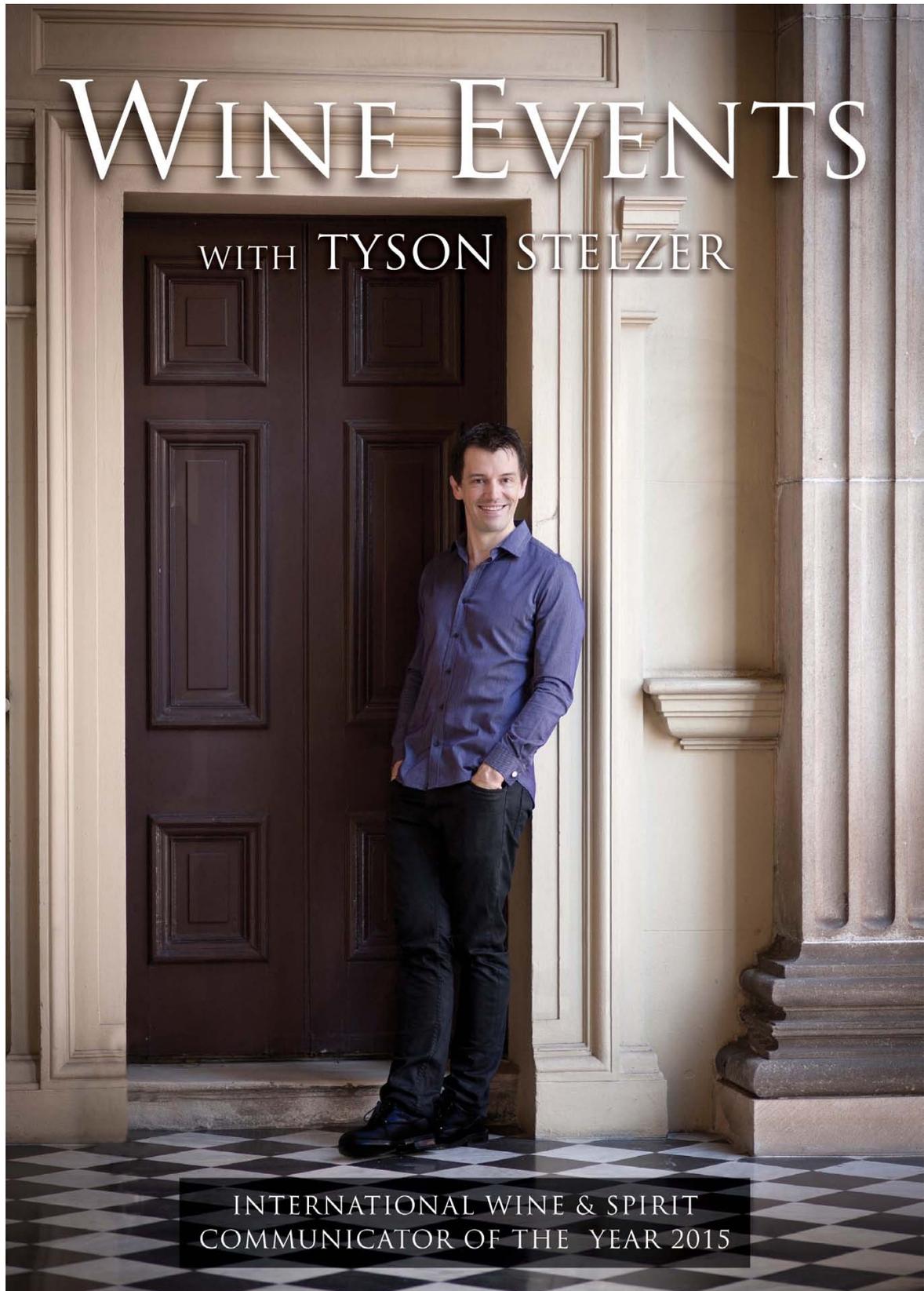
TYSON STELZER'S CHAMPAGNE TOUR IS AN EXCLUSIVE OPPORTUNITY TO EXPERIENCE THE FINEST CHAMPAGNE HOUSES, GROWERS, RESTAURANTS AND ACCOMMODATION THAT THE REGION HAS TO OFFER, IN THE INTIMATE COMPANY OF ONLY TEN GUESTS.

EVERY CELLAR AND WINERY VISIT AND TASTING ON THE TOUR IS EXCLUSIVE, PRIVATE AND NOT OTHERWISE AVAILABLE TO THE PUBLIC.

YOU ARE INVITED TO JOIN TYSON FOR EXCLUSIVE LUNCHEES AND DINNERS IN THE LAVISH PRIVATE DINING ROOMS OF THE GRAND ESTATES OF CHAMPAGNE'S GREATEST HOUSES AND GROWERS.

PLACES ARE STRICTLY LIMITED.

REGISTER YOUR INTEREST.



Tyson Stelzer is one of the world's leading wine presenters. From a structured boardroom wine tasting, hosted dinner, keynote presentation, informal client meet and greet, product launch or even a wedding, Tyson Stelzer brings a wine perspective to any event. An accomplished presenter with 11 years experience presenting at international events in the UK, Japan, Italy, South Africa, New Zealand and across Australia, Tyson will educate and entertain audiences from 3 to 3000.

His dynamic and informal approach encourages interaction, making wine enjoyable and unpretentious.

[READ MORE ABOUT WINE EVENTS WITH TYSON STELZER](#)

CONTACT

Tyson Stelzer

Mob 0402 821 230

Ph 07 3848 6605

Fax 07 3848 9905

stelzer@winepress.com.au

www.tysonstelzer.com

