

WINE

February/March 2003

WINE + FOOD FOR SEDUCTION

**NZ vs AUS: TOP
SAUVIGNON BLANCS
GOING GREEN:
THE GROWING FUTURE
OF ORGANIC WINE
ADELAIDE HILLS**

\$7.95 (inc GST)
NZ \$9.95 (inc GST)



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VEUVE CLICQUOT LA GRANDE DAME | CHATEAU LATOUR | VISITING CHAMPAGNE

WHO'S WHO OF PRODUCERS

AUSTRALIA

Pacesetters

Carlei Estate/The Green Vineyards 15ha within Victoria, in three parcels: 8ha, Heathcote (shiraz – certified organic BFA); 3ha Upper Beaconsfield (chardonnay, pinot noir – certified organic BFA but biodynamically managed); and 4ha, Streamville (cabernet sauvignon, merlot, sauvignon blanc – biodynamically managed). Additional fruit is sourced from a further 21.5ha and a total of 14 growers, most of whom are in the process of, or considering, conversion to organic status.

Castagna Vineyard 8ha, Beechworth, Vic (sangiovese, shiraz, viognier – 100 per cent biodynamic).

M. Chapoutier Australia 35ha, Mount Benson, SA (cabernet sauvignon, shiraz, marsanne, viognier – certified organic BFA, biodynamically managed). Additional 8ha in joint venture with Jasper Hill at Heathcote, Victoria (shiraz – organically managed).

Cullen Wines 28ha, Margaret River, WA (cabernet franc, cabernet sauvignon, chardonnay, merlot, sauvignon blanc, semillon – organically managed with certification expected next year). Additional fruit bought in from 32ha of organically managed vineyards.

Highbank 4ha, Coonawarra, SA (cabernet franc, cabernet sauvignon, merlot – organically managed).

Jasper Hill 18ha, Heathcote, Vic (cabernet franc, nebbiolo, riesling, semillon, shiraz – 100 per cent organic).

Temple Bruer 27ha, Langhorne Creek, SA (cabernet sauvignon, chenin blanc, grenache, malbec, merlot, petit verdot, shiraz, verdelho, viognier – 100 per cent organic, independently audited to meet ISO 9000 standards).

Picking up the pace

Bindi 167ha, Macedon Ranges, Vic (160ha devoted to regeneration of native flora, 6ha planted to chardonnay, pinot noir – organically managed, looking at biodynamics).

Cape Mentelle 50ha, Margaret River, WA (cabernet sauvignon, chardonnay, sauvignon blanc, merlot, semillon, shiraz, zinfandel – 8.1ha, Trinders Vineyard, organically managed; 42ha, Foxcliffe vineyard, 100 per cent organically managed. Sparing use of herbicide in both vineyards).

Henschke 65ha, Eden Valley, SA, three parcels: 9ha, Hill Of Grace (mataro, riesling, semillon, shiraz – which is organically managed); 16ha, Mt Edelstone (shiraz – organic mulching, cover crops); 37ha, Eden Valley (cabernet franc, cabernet sauvignon, chardonnay, gewürztraminer, merlot, riesling, sauvignon blanc, semillon, shiraz, tempranillo – organic mulching, cover crops); 3ha, Home Gardens (grenache – organically managed).

Lark Hill 5ha, Bungendore, NSW (cabernet sauvignon, chardonnay, merlot, pinot noir, riesling, shiraz and sauvignon blanc – organically managed, sparing use of herbicide). Bought-in fruit from similarly-managed vineyards.

Mount Langi Ghiran 75ha, Grampians, Victoria (cabernet franc, cabernet sauvignon, chardonnay, merlot, pinot gris, sangiovese, shiraz – organic practices, minimal use of herbicide).

Rymill 160ha, Coonawarra, SA, in two parcels: 90ha Riddoch Run (cabernet sauvignon, chardonnay, gewürztraminer, merlot, pinot noir, sangiovese, sauvignon blanc, shiraz) and 70ha Three Mile Lane (cabernet sauvignon, merlot, sauvignon blanc, semillon – no insecticides used for the past 12 years; decreasing use of herbicides, fungicides and non-organic fertilisation).

Stefano Lubiana 14ha, Granton, Tasmania (chardonnay, merlot, pinot grigio, pinot noir, riesling, sauvignon blanc – sustainable viticulture, looking at biodynamics). Bought-in fruit from similarly-managed vineyards.



Facing page, David Bruer, whose Temple Bruer winery at Langhorne Creek in South Australia, is the only organic vineyard in Australia to have its environmental bona fides enshrined in ISO 9000 certification; this page, from above, Trinders Vineyard; and Stephen and Prue Henschke in their Eden Valley vineyard

After plenty of study and a lot of advice from Millton, the couple are happy with the course they took. The flagship Genesis shiraz from their debut vintage in 1999 went straight to number one in wine critic Philip White's list of Australia's Top 100 Wines. In fact, Castagna wines have topped the list for the past three years. It has been a spectacular arrival. In four short years, Castagna has gone from comparative neophyte to arguably Australia's leading biodynamic viticulturist.

Familiar with the European market, Castagna could, if he chose, develop a thriving export market for his wines. Trouble is, the vast majority of his production is sold to existing clients on an ever-lengthening mailing list.

However, he does have one telling observation: "People are starting to say about Australian wines: 'But they don't taste so good.' It's not that they don't taste so good; it's that they are all starting to taste the same."

It's a point many top international wine writers have been making about Australian wines for some time. It could be there is too great a reliance on cultured yeasts, too many chemical treatments in the vineyard, too great a uniformity of clonal selection, or that too many of our winemakers are unwilling to depart too much from the sort of orthodoxy of thought they are exposed to at places like Roseworthy and Charles Sturt.

But in an increasingly crowded export marketplace, if you can make your wine stand out by improving its quality through the pursuit of environmentally responsible viticultural practices, then the quiet revolution already underway in Australia's vineyards could become a whole lot noisier.