

2014 VINTAGE WRAP TAS

TASMANIA The Coal River Valley had excellent winter and spring rainfall. Flowering was somewhat hampered in parts of the valley by wind resulting in some patchy fruit set and lower yields. On the whole, with cool nights and sunny, mild days quality is looking promising. We are in the final stages of cleaning the winery and have started sampling the fruit [4 March]. With the smaller bunches out there in some blocks I don't want any surprises. Pinot noir is less than 2 weeks away from picking on one of our vineyards so we're all getting very excited. It's all looking good so far and it should be an 'easier' vintage for us this year with the winery all set up and ready to go, plus we now know how much is too much fruit to be processed in a day.

ANNA POOLEY, Pooley.



Mann Up

Houghton wines has released the latest vintage of its flagship wine, 2011 Jack Mann Cabernet Sauvignon.

First produced in 1994, the wine pays homage to Jack Mann, who completed 51 consecutive vintages at Houghton from 1922, 43 of those as senior winemaker.

One of Mann's great legacies was his creation of the Houghton White Classic in 1932. The 2011 Houghton Jack Mann Cabernet Sauvignon (A\$115) is 96 per cent cabernet sauvignon, three per cent malbec and one per cent shiraz with all the fruit sourced from the Justin Vineyard in Western Australia's Frankland River. JK

NEWS



Ochota Barrels

It was a love of music that brought wunderkind winemaker **Taras Ochota** into the orbit of US importer Ronnie Sanders who saw his wine named after the punk band Fugazi. "I had to meet this guy. It was so wild to see this on a bottle," Sanders says.

A trip to the US ensued. Sanders, a friend of Maynard Keenan from the rock group Tool, suggested visiting Caduceus, Keenan's winery and vineyards in Arizona. Ochota did, a friendship was struck, and that was the catalyst for this intriguing new release wine, the 2013 Ochota Barrels A Sense of Compression (A\$100).

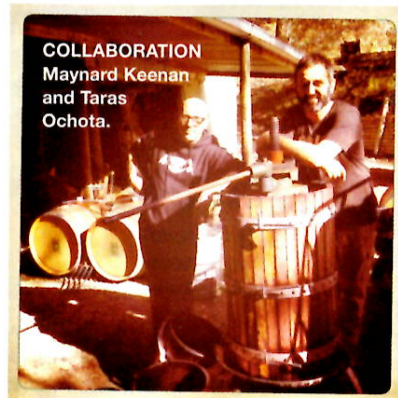
The idea of compression was discussed over a number of glasses of wine, and it worked hand-in-hand with the relaxed, experimental, freed-up winemaking that would result. "I want all the wines I make to have a tightness; a coiled nature; a sense of compression. In terms of music styles, compression probably relates to an idea of density of sound. In wine, it's about picking a bit earlier, spending some more time on skins, and getting density but with lightness. The mid-palate holds the compression, it pulls everything together," explains Ochota.

Keenan came to Australia in 2013 with his other band, Puscifer. Ochota picked him up from the airport and they got straight into winemaking ideas. According to Ochota, Keenan suggested co-fermenting grenache with another variety. So they applied the mantra of the late Sam Hughes from Natural Selection Theory "you can improve anything with gewürztraminer." Ochota and Keenan went to The Green Room vineyard in McLaren Vale, a site planted in the 1930s that produces wonderful grenache fruit.

Keenan returned on another tour in 2013 with Tool and joined Ochota at his family home in the Adelaide Hills for a spot of winemaking. Fruit was picked, grapes were handled, two per cent gewürztraminer went into the mix, the wine spent a long time going through the magic of carbonic maceration, and was born on 1 March 2014.

It is chewy, concentrated and dense but fresh acidity whips the wine to attention. Fine, dusty tannins pull long through the finish, lending structure and control. It's fantastic to drink; full-flavoured, but with a freshness in tow. Compression? A richness in this case, the whiff of earth and briar something akin to old school rusticity, but again, the vitality is there making it approachable now.

Will there be a volume two? "Who knows man?" quips Ochota. "I'm pretty keen to do something again, Maynard has said that he's keen. Stay tuned." **MIKE BENNIE**
To order wine, visit www.ochotabarrels.com.au.



COLLABORATION
Maynard Keenan
and Taras
Ochota.

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