

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.



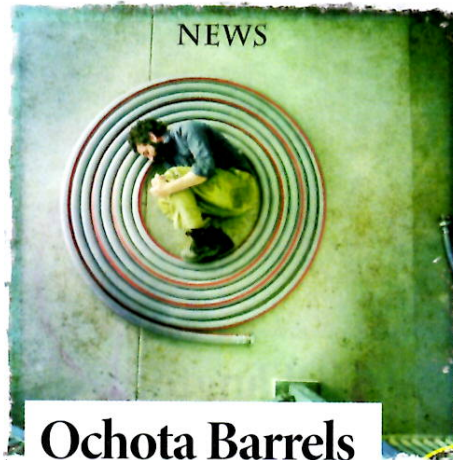
Mann Up

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).

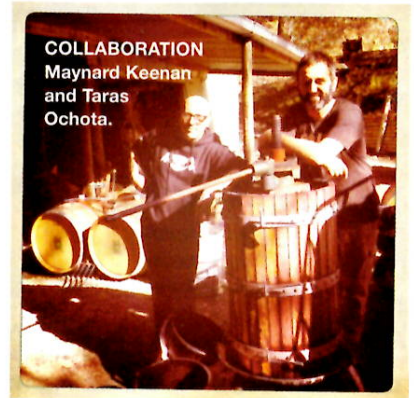
The idea of compression was discussed over a number of glasses of wine, and it worked hand-in-hand with the relaxed, experimental, freed-up winemaking that would result. "I want all the wines I make to have a tightness; a coiled nature; a sense of compression. In terms of music styles, compression probably 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.

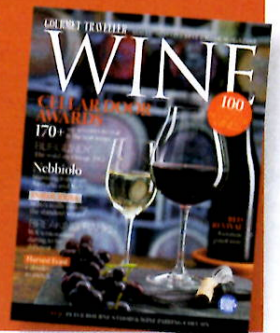
Will there be a volume two? "Who knows man?" quips Ochota. "I'm pretty keen to do something again, Maynard has said that he's keen. Stay tuned." **MIKE BENNIE**
To order wine, visit www.ochotabarrels.com.au.



COLLABORATION
Maynard Keenan
and Taras
Ochota.

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1st XI Wines

Summer is upon us, the sun is gleaming, the pitches are hard and those whites need to be dusted off. It's time to select the 1st XI of Australian Wine, because if our stars in the baggy greens can't beat England at the moment, our winemakers and viticulturists certainly can. With the help of Mike Bennie, here is *GT WINE*'s 1st XI of Aussie Wine.

1 & 2. A rock-solid pair with a formidable record, they provide variety and have ticked off plenty of milestones. Offering plenty now and will show form for many years. **Wynns John Riddoch Cabernet Sauvignon** and **Giaconda Estate Vineyard Chardonnay**.

3. Elegant and technically outstanding. A slick and seamless player, look up at the scoreboard and it's on the verge of 100. **Bass Phillip Reserve Pinot Noir**.

4. Long regarded as the country's premier player, a leader and often picked as captain. Garners a reputation around the world.

Penfolds Grange.

5. From a small town and with exceptional pedigree, a perfect middle order player of medium weight, tension and control. Patience rewards too – here for the long haul. **Forest Hill Block 5 Cabernet Sauvignon**.

6. Burst onto the scene with vitality and youthful intent but has proven a stayer. Shows elegance, yet idiosyncrasy. A versatile, exciting participant in any line-up. **Ochota Barrels The Fugazi Vineyard Grenache**.

7. We're after a great ambassador to guard the stumps. A real team man, but also offers exuberance, cheer and vibrancy. **Brokenwood ILR Reserve Semillon**.

8. Freshness. Uniqueness. Personality. Coming from a different angle and showing flight and guile that keeps people guessing, but entranced.

Mac Forbes EB04 Tradition Riesling.

9. This trooper backs up day after day to get the job done in style. Extremely smooth action and great balance. **Spinifex Rosé**.

10. Plenty of zip and bounce, always opens play with a bang, making an impression on all who face-up to it. Intimidatingly good! **House of Arras Blanc de Blancs**.

11. Clean crisp, long and strong yet unbelievably controlled and focused. Sure to produce the goods on the hottest test-match days. **Pikes The Merle Riesling**.

NEWS



MORE CORKS POPPED!

The sparkling wine market in Australia looks bright, with just consumers (that is over half of all those who drink alcohol in a glass of fizz at least once a month. Of these 8 million drinkers 3.5 million drink sparkling wine at least once per week. Bette supplying the Australian market with sparkling wine, nearly expect to be drinking more fizz in the future.

Despite the recent growth in Champagne sales in Australia confirms that this is still a niche category, with the majority (cent) only getting it in their hands (and mouths) less than on Champagne looks set to remain the preserve of the few, with current Champagne drinkers stating that they'll drink more future, whilst 29 per cent think they will drink less. This is a to continue, as Champagne prices are set to rise in the face of Australian dollar.

Wine Intelligence's recently published Australian sparkling report observes that growth in the Champagne market has the sales from the Australian sparkling category. However, from consumer perspective, domestic sparkling wine looks stable these consumers telling us that they expect to be drinking about of Aussie fizz in the future. The recent drop in the Australian a golden opportunity for local wine producers to make the most thirst for sparkling wine in international markets. **STEP**

Wrong Number The review of the Stunned Mullet, which rating in our Wine List of the Year guide, was unfortunately by the wrong contact details. The correct number for The Port Macquarie is (02) 6584 7757. Apologies for any inconvenience.

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