

Best's
GREAT WESTERN
EST 1866

CONGONGELLA CHRONICLE

EDITION #13

DISCOVER OUR BEST-KEPT SECRETS

OCT 2020

HALLIDAY'S BEST VALUE WINERY

WHEN YOUR FAMILY'S STORY spans over 100 years, you could become accustomed to significant milestones. And yet, whilst there has certainly been memorable moments that we've savoured over the years, the Thomson family has always been humble, not chasing accolades or the limelight. When the industry's brightest spotlight is shined upon what we're doing though, there's definitely reason to celebrate.

The Halliday Wine Companion results are always eagerly anticipated, but there was a pleasant surprise in store for the Best's team in early August with the release of the 2021 Wine Companion. In an innovative online ceremony Best's was awarded "Best Value Winery of the Year." Add to that the vast array of wines scoring over 95 points, and our 2019 Old Vine Pinot Meunier being named the 'Best of the Best' by variety. Certainly cause for celebration in the Thomson household.

Value often has many connotations, but in the eyes of James Halliday in this context, it highlights the winery with great scores, recognising where the products sit in a broader line up. This accolade is not based on the most inexpensive wines, but rather the quality to price ratio. Halliday noted "Ben Thomson and his father, Viv, would likely point to the \$25 price-tag for the core range of 2019 Riesling, 2019 Pinot Noir, 2018 Shiraz, 2018 Cabernet Sauvignon and 2019 Dolcetto, all given 95 points by



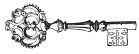
either Jane Faulkner or me. I haven't attempted a forensic search, but I can't remember a five-core-varietal brand coming up so consistently."

Our team always strives for excellence; in the vineyards, throughout the winery and also in our Great Western cellar door. This award means a lot. We extend our thanks to you our much-loved and valued wine club members and customers whom we recognize have supported us over many years. This accolade certainly places us amongst some legendary Australian wine brands, truly the best of the best!



Nine Best's wines scored over 95 points in 2021 Wine Companion and we retained our red 5-star winery rating. There are only 10% of wineries in Australia who have this ranking "Outstanding winery, regularly producing wine of exemplary quality and typicity."

A FITTING TRIBUTE



TO OUR BELOVED CHRIS THOMSON



HERE'S AN OLD SAYING THAT "BEHIND every great man is a great woman" and that's certainly the case with Viv and Chris Thomson.

In the 100th year that the Thomson family has been custodian of Best's wines, we thought it was fitting to pay tribute to our beloved Chris. She's very much the fabric of our winery and the local Great Western community.

Christine Mary Thomson was born on 7 October 1941, growing up nearby in Horsham on a Dorset Horn Stud. Educated at Horsham Primary and Secondary School, she finished school at Korowa Anglican Girls College in Melbourne. A love of teaching led her to Geelong to complete her teachers certificate and she then moved closer to home and taught at Ararat Primary School and Stawell Special School.

Chris met the charming Viv Thomson in 1961, and they were married on 12th January 1963. Not long after their eldest child Ben was born (1964), followed by Hamish (1966), Yvette (1968) and Marcus (1970). They moved their young family into the Best's homestead, at the back of the current winery in 1972. It was here they raised their children and have lived ever since.

Always one to get involved in the winery, Chris was often seen helping on the bottling line, picking grapes or driving the tractor for Viv. She also has a creative flair and designed all the early labels, letterheads and packaging – a pioneer of modern day wine marketing! When Viv started travelling overseas in the early 1990s Chris would travel with him, and with quite the palate herself, was equally knowledgeable about the range.

Chris played a fundamental role in championing our beloved region. In the early 1990s she joined the Grampians Winemakers Association, driving an application for Great Western to become a sub-region of the Grampians Geographical Indicator (GI). This was a significant achievement given the historical and geographical significance, allowing the Great Western name to be retained for winemaking use for years to come.

The ultimate host, Chris is well known as an entertainer, with many esteemed wine guests, mates or distributors visiting from near or far enjoying a home-cooked meal



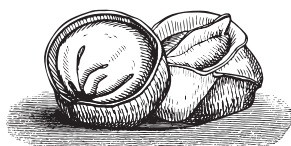
**INTRODUCING THE
2016 CMT SPARKLING**
Made *méthode traditionnelle*
Pre-released 7 October 2020
Chris Thomson's birthday



and a special bottle of wine. It's her love of people and bubbly personality that certainly shines through. Which is why in 2020 we've launched a limited release sparkling wine "CMT Sparkling" in her honour!

Nowadays, Chris has more time to spend with family but still actively pursues her hobbies. She loves to paint, enjoys her weekly Bridge game with local girlfriends and gets out and about in the bush, at one with nature. Cheers to you Chris Thomson!

BEST'S RECIPES



JAPANESE INSPIRED

Pork Gyoza

Delightfully crispy on the outside, and equally juicy inside, gyoza (or dumplings as we like to call them) are the perfect accompaniment to a dry riesling. A tasty mid-week treat!

INGREDIENTS

2 teaspoons vegetable oil	2 shallots, trimmed, thinly sliced
2 teaspoons finely grated fresh ginger	1 tablespoon soy sauce
2 garlic cloves, finely chopped	2 teaspoons caster sugar
3/4 cup coarsely chopped green cabbage	1 teaspoon sesame oil
2 tablespoons water	24 gow gee wrappers
250g pork mince	1 1/2 tablespoons vegetable oil, extra
	2/3 cup water, extra

METHOD

Heat vegetable oil in a saucepan over medium heat. Cook the ginger and garlic, stirring for 1 minute or until aromatic. Add cabbage and water. Cook, stirring occasionally, for 3 minutes or until the cabbage wilts. Transfer to a bowl. Set aside to cool. Stir in pork, shallot, soy sauce, sugar and sesame oil. Season with salt.

Place 1 wrapper on a clean bench space. Add 2 teaspoonfuls of pork mixture in the centre of the wrapper. Brush edges with water, fold over to enclose and pinch edges together. Place on a tray lined with baking paper. Repeat with remaining wrappers and pork mixture.

Heat half the extra vegetable oil in a non-stick frying pan over high heat. Cook half the gyoza for 2 minutes or until bases are golden. Add half the extra water. Cook, covered, for 5 minutes or until cooked and liquid has evaporated. Transfer to a serving platter. Cover to keep warm. Repeat with remaining oil, gyoza and water. Serve with chilli sauce or soy sauce and a glass of Best's Foudre Ferment Riesling!

Meet the
BEST'S TEAM

ROBIN KUCHEL
Sugarloaf Creek Vineyard Manager

Born and raised in the Adelaide Hills German town of Hahndorf, Robin was initially a mechanic by trade. After a stint of travel around Australia, he stopped in the beautiful Clare Valley and decided on a new career in viticulture. Honing his craft in many of the local estate vineyards in the Clare Valley he learned from some of the best, before relocating to Victoria.

Robin began working at Seppelt Great Western as the Maintenance Co-ordinator before moving to nearby Hyde Park. When Best's purchased this vineyard in late 2018, renaming it Sugarloaf Creek Vineyards, he became a much loved part of our family. A fondness for the Grampians is evident, there's nothing he loves more than the quiet rural life with his beautiful family.

Favourite Best's wine? Best's Bin No. 0 Shiraz



SUELLEN BLACKIE
Cellar Door Sales

Suelen was born and raised in the Grampians region but left as a teenager to discover the world. She got as far as Melbourne, after a stint in Perth, where she joined the corporate world. When the Publican of her local watering hole slowly weaned her off beer and onto wine she married him!

They relocated back to the Grampians where they bought land with an established vineyard and she obtained a viticulture degree. When the youngest of her four daughters commenced school, she joined local winery, Garden Gully in their cellar door. After 12 years she moved 'down the road' to Best's Wines where she has become an important part of our own cellar door team.

Favourite Best's wine? House Block Riesling

A TASTE *OF* WHAT'S *TO* COME



THERE'S ALWAYS MUCH ANTICIPATION about the new vintage releases, with much time being spent nurturing these wines in the barrel, waiting for just the right time for you to enjoy. We asked our winemakers Justin Purser and Brigitte Rodda to share a few thoughts on Best's shiraz from 2019 vintage. These wines won't be unveiled until 2021 but here's a sneak preview of what's to come.

2019 BIN NO.1 GREAT WESTERN SHIRAZ

The cool climate of Great Western shines through on this wine with spice and pepper notes. Lower yields in 2019 gave us a concentration of flavour while remaining elegant and perfumed. Bin No. 1 is always a crowd favourite that typifies our special style of Great Western Shiraz. You'll just love this vintage when it's ready to release!



2019 LSV SHIRAZ

Shiraz co-fermented with a small portion of viognier, inspired by the wines of the old world. Matured in French oak puncheons, a larger format oak, helping to retain the beauty and elegance of this wine. Viognier gives a lift of exotic spice and florals to the nose while giving a glossiness to the palate. A distinctive wine that very much speaks of the vineyards from which it's grown.



2019 WHITE GRAVELS HILL SHIRAZ

Named after the ancient soils of this vineyard site, the fruit is hand-picked and fermented in small open fermenters with a portion of whole bunches, basket pressed and matured in French oak barriques in the underground cellars. The whole bunches give an added complexity to this modern style of shiraz. Olive brine, bay leaf and spice, lifted florals with layers of flavour, fine tannins giving length. This wine will age gracefully for those with patience. It's going to be hard to hold onto this one.



2019 BIN NO.0 SHIRAZ

Made in a traditional style from hand-picked fruit sourced from our historic Congella vineyard using 20% whole bunches. The wine was matured for 14 months in French oak barriques in our underground cellar with around 15% new oak. Careful barrel selection creates the final blend of this classic wine. The 2019 is full of savoury spice and depth of black fruits, the palate is defined by silky tannins and a long finish, savour this wine with great friends and food.



2019 THOMSON FAMILY SHIRAZ

A wine made only in exceptional vintages; this will be one for the cellar, needing time to show its true character. Sourced from our Best's Old Block Clone shiraz planted in 1868, hand-picked, sorted and fermented in small open fermenters, hand plunged daily, basket pressed and matured in French oak in our underground cellar. Ageing the wine underground next to the soil it was grown in is a unique feature that adds to the character of the wine.



Did you know that we give away a twin pack of wine each month for our favourite fan photo? To enter, share your photo enjoying your favourite Best's Wines and post it on either Facebook or Instagram. Make sure you tag @bestswines and use #bestswines



Out and About IN THE VINEYARDS

It's certainly been an unusual time here in Victoria over the last few months. Luckily it's the time of year where we're busy in the vineyards with much pruning to be done whilst we await the 2021 vintage. With approximately 150 hectares of vineyards in our care, we've been able to use this time to innovate and trial some new pruning techniques.

As all winemakers know, weather conditions like frost can have an impact on the growing season, so we're always looking for ways to help the vines to thrive. We have been trialling the use of arch cane pruning in addition to two bud spur pruning in certain parts of our Sugarloaf Creek Vineyard. It is thought that canes bare more fruit than two bud spurs due to sunlight exposure during the previous growing season. In theory, a more fruitful bud beyond bud two will be produced. This will then increase bud numbers on each vine and supplement the short fall of spur pruning due to the dud fruitfulness.

We're hoping it will offset the berry/fruit set if poor weather conditions present during the critical flowering period. It may also offset some budburst, which then can assist in the scenario of the dreaded frost to which some of our vineyards are prone. Fingers crossed that it will be a successful trial and a fruitful exercise!



Want to know more about pruning a grapevine? Head over to our blog on our website and we'll fill you in on the finer details. bestswines.com/blog



NEW RELEASES



2020 GREAT WESTERN ROSÉ

Will this be the wine of this summer? Made from pinot noir, pinot meunier and shiraz, it's pale, dry and absolutely delicious! Give it a try.

Retail.....	\$25
Discovery Club	\$22.50
Magnum Club	\$21.25
Imperial Club	\$20



2020 LATE HARVEST MUSCAT

This 2020 Late Harvest Muscat is made in an aromatic style, superbly balanced, slightly sweet with a clean, almost dry finish. Enjoy luscious flavours of pears, honeysuckle, ginger nut biscuits and a fresh floral finish. A bit of a retro look because everything old is new again!

Retail.....	\$20
Discovery Club	\$18
Magnum Club	\$17
Imperial Club	\$16



2017 SPARKLING SHIRAZ

Christmas in a glass! This is a wine that's so eagerly anticipated we can't release it fast enough each year. Start your Christmas Day with a glass of red bubbles, or toast your roast with this essential festive drop.

Retail.....	\$35
Discovery Club	\$31.50
Magnum Club	\$29.75
Imperial Club	\$28

Available November 2020

CHRISTMAS CUT OFF DATES

There's less certainty around delivery times this year, with COVID-19 playing havoc across Australia. If you are looking to stock up on wine for the festive season, be sure to get your order in by:

Monday 6 December
NSW, ACT, QLD, WA, SA, TAS
Friday 11 December
VIC

— A SMALL PARCEL PINOT NOIR RELEASE FROM THE — THE WORLD'S OLDEST PINOT NOIR GRAPES

MANY OF YOU KNOW OUR ICONIC Old Vine Pinot Meunier vineyard, planted in 1868. It sits next to what used to be the pig sty in the late 1800s. Back in the day, Great Western was isolated from many major cities, so the Best family were rather self-sufficient, farming pigs and other livestock in addition to making wine.

This vineyard is now a piece of living history. Scattered throughout the pinot meunier vineyard (once known as Miller's Burgundy) is a small parcel of pinot noir. There's 141 pinot noir vines, a mixture of French and Swiss clones, which typically produce a much lighter coloured wine.

Our winemaker Justin Purser first made a single varietal wine from this vineyard in 2014, but in 2017 he saw a magnificent parcel of pinot noir fruit developing throughout vintage and knew he could craft something remarkable from these historical vines. In 2017 this old vineyard (affectionately known as the pigsty vineyard) produced an exceptional crop, and so Justin meticulously handpicked the fruit, nurturing it in the winery to produce one barrel. It's rare and limited and a special wine to release in the 100th year of the Thomson family being custodians of Best's wines.

It was a love of pinot noir that led Justin to winemaking. He'd worked in both Burgundy in France and in Central Otago New Zealand before joining Best's. It's very much a winemaker's dream to be able to craft something so special



from this vineyard. Always one to appreciate the finer details, Justin took it upon himself to do some further research about the origin of the vines through various avenues. To our knowledge there are no older pre-phyloxera pinot noir vines in the world.

The 2017 PSV141 Pinot Noir is packed with crunchy red fruits, savoury baking spices and long silky tannins. Voluptuous and expansive yet light on its feet. Good to drink in the short-term but it will reward cellaring in ideal conditions for 15 years or more. This is the wine to pull out of your cellar at a dinner party when you need a wine with a story that will trump all others! Exceptional value.

One bottle limit applies to purchases. Visit our website or call the Cellar Door team if you are interested in securing a bottle of the PSV141 Pinot Noir for your collection.

DID YOU KNOW:

Give Nicole a call to discuss our range of back vintage wines available for those special occasions. Also available through our cellar door are gift and corporate wine options – there's something for everyone!

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