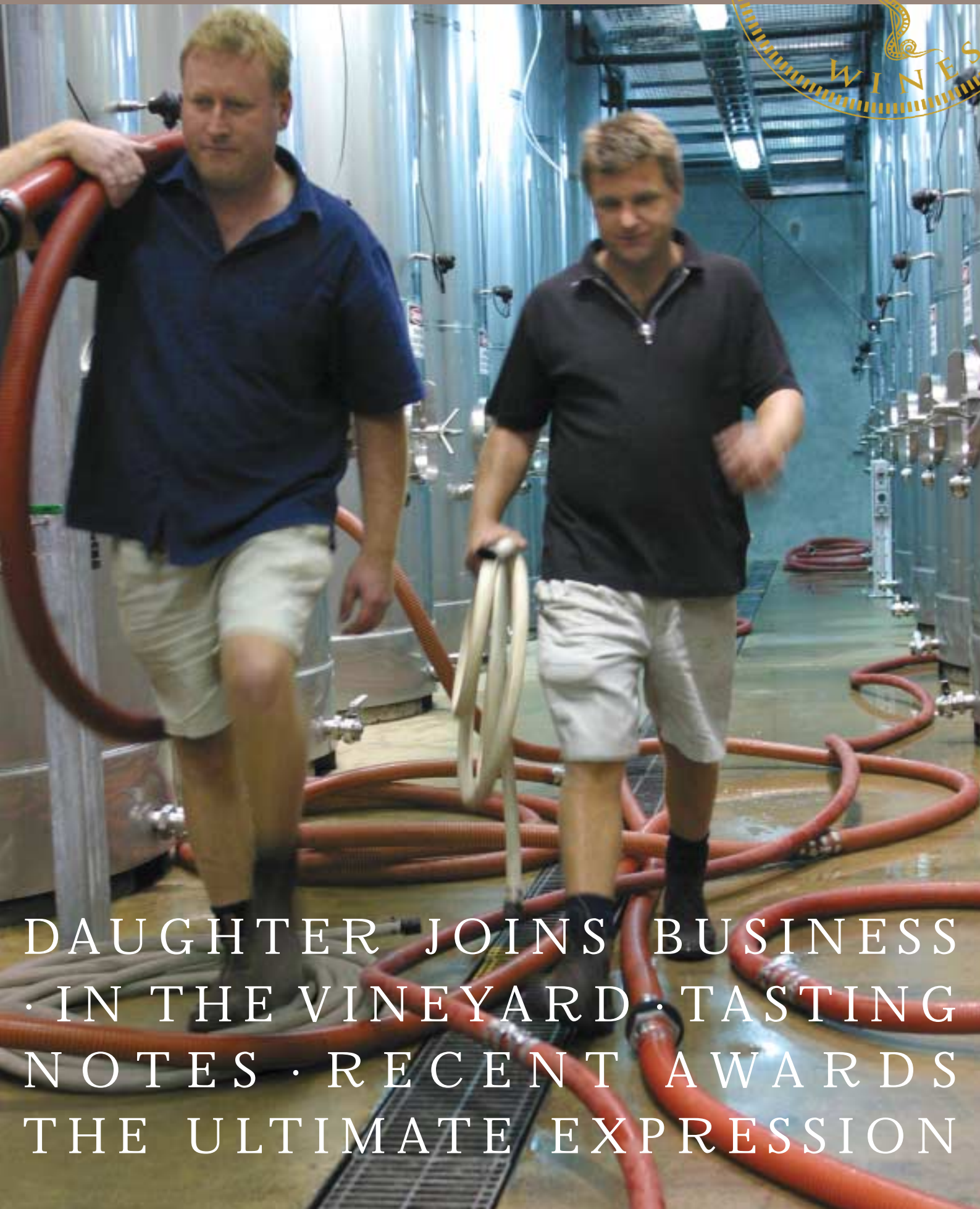


HOWARD PARK

THE NEWSLETTER OF HOWARD PARK WINES - AUTUMN 2005



DAUGHTER JOINS BUSINESS
· IN THE VINEYARD · TASTING
NOTES · RECENT AWARDS
THE ULTIMATE EXPRESSION

from Michael and Jeff

As I write we are in the middle of the 2005 vintage, everything is sticky with grape juice and the smell of fermentation fills every corner of the winery. Only two days ago we picked and crushed the 2005 Leston and Scotsdale Shiraz grapes, both parcels looked outstanding with dense colour and full ripeness giving every indication that the 2005 regional wines will continue to uphold the standards that have been set by this clutch of wines. The Leston and Scotsdale Cabernets are still a couple of weeks away from full ripeness.

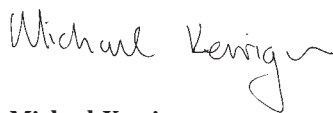
As the winemaker my focus is squarely on 2005 and even ahead to 2006 so it takes a bit of mental effort to think back to the 2003 regional series of wines which are the subject of this newsletter. We bottle these wines after about eighteen months in barrel and then release the wine to you in this newsletter with the benefit of six or so months in bottle. This allows the wines to recover from the initial trauma of the bottling process which 'bruises' the aromas and flavours of the wines. It is remarkable (and a relief) to see these wonderful fruity characters start to emerge and then surge from the wine over the six month bottle maturation period until at release they are at their fullest expression. At this stage the wines display only the most primary characters of fruit with secondary and complex characters still to develop over the next five to ten years or so.

The 2003 Howard Park Leston and Scotsdale wines are I believe the strongest group of four yet made in the series. I am undecided as to which Shiraz and which Cabernet I like best this year, all four wines showing, I think, greater density than previous years without compromising the essential elegance of the wines and still having the distinctive individual signatures of the sites from which they came.

Also in this newsletter we present only the second ever Howard Park Best Barrels Merlot also from the 2003 vintage. Some of the long term friends of Howard Park might remember the 1995 Howard Park Best Barrels Merlot. Back then we identified that four barrels of Merlot stood out from the others and decided to release the

first ever 100% Merlot from Howard Park. Despite all good intentions I failed to find another batch of Merlot half as good until this small parcel of grapes eight vintages later sourced from Block 1 on the Leston Vineyard in Margaret River. This time however with intensive effort in the vineyard with shoot thinning, leaf plucking and extensive fruit removal we have produced a top class Merlot with a density and depth of flavour that I have never seen before in the variety. The results of these efforts are simply stunning and we are delighted to offer an extremely limited volume of this 100% Merlot from Howard Park.

I hope and trust that you will enjoy the five new release red wines presented in the newsletter. I am confident that they all maintain the quality levels that are demanded of Howard Park.



Michael Kerrigan
Chief Winemaker

Dear Friends

In the past couple of months we have had several exciting visitors to Howard Park including a best selling author, an ambassador and an American marketing specialist.

Our first guests Li Cunxin (internationally acclaimed author of the best selling *Mao's Last Dancer*) and his lovely wife Mary joined us for a weekend in Margaret River. Li gave an enthralling talk on the lawns of Howard Park Wines to an engaged and excited four hundred guests. Please see page six for a full update.

Our second guest was the Chinese ambassador for Australia, Madame Ying Fu who visited to taste some wine and talk about opportunities for Australian wine in the Chinese market. A concise and very well informed lady, we certainly had some fun trying to explain that 'Howard' was not related to the Howard she knew in Canberra!

More recently we were joined by an American Steve Burns and fellow West Australian wine



NATALIE BURCH

producers for a special dinner held in the boardroom at the Howard Park Winery. Steve has been incredibly successful in promoting the Washington State wine region within America and his visit provided a great opportunity to gain some invaluable insights on promoting wine regions. Steve was particularly impressed with the united cooperation displayed between all West Australian wine producers and as such has agreed to take on the enormous challenge of marketing the Wines of Western Australia to America.

You will notice the newsletter has been posted as a C5 size. This has been done purely for postage reasons and the size and quality of content has not changed.

In closing, I would like to welcome my eldest child Natalie into the family business and say how proud Amy and I are to have her working with us. After finishing university in Perth and Sydney, including a short stint at Northeastern University in Boston Massachusetts, 'Nat' taught a range of subjects at high school. Nat is now working at the Margaret River winery and is learning the family business.

My father Leston, Nat's grandfather would be very thrilled and proud to see the next generation stepping up. Well done and welcome!

Cheers,
Jeff Burch

best barrels

in the vineyard with Dave Botting

In our previous newsletter we introduced our new Chief Viticulturalist Dave Botting, who has been traipsing around vineyards for quite some time. When I interviewed Dave between trips to vineyards it appears he has enthusiastically settled into his role.

'We've got a lot of exciting projects at the moment. The Leston Vineyard (in Margaret River) is fast coming out of what I call the juvenile phase. This means we are able to see its potential now and are trying to see how we can manipulate it for better fruit,' he said.

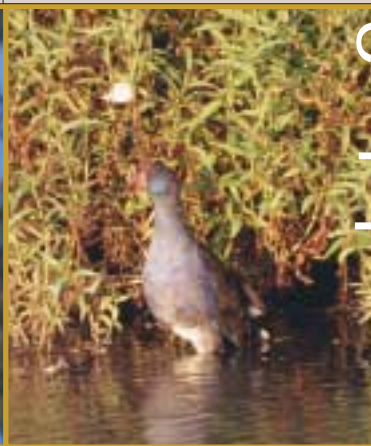
Dave pulled out a colourful, infrared, overhead view of the vineyard. *'This is known as remote sensing, it shows the variation in plant cell density within the vineyard blocks and will help us better manage them. We've already begun to separately harvest potentially different batches of fruit within some vineyard blocks to see if we can achieve further improvements in wine quality,'* he continued.

Dealing with the technical aspects of establishing Howard Park's new Scotsdale Vineyard in the Porongurup's has been occupying a lot of Dave's time since he joined the team. *'The Scotsdale site has some unique characteristics, its high elevation and southerly aspect especially, leading to some interesting challenges but also hopefully to good fruit,'* said Dave. Given that it is a new vineyard it's a great chance to implement Dave's ideas from scratch. He pointed out that catching and effectively utilising water as well as protecting the vines from wind is going to be among the biggest challenges at Scotsdale and these have required some thinking outside conventional viticulture. *'We are working towards irrigation laterals and drippers underground. It's called Sub-surface Drip Irrigation and should allow us to conserve water. SDI is not common in Western Australia and rare for viticulture worldwide. It puts most grape growers out of their comfort zone because you can't see the*

irrigation system working but the potential benefits can't be ignored,' he continued.

Apart from concentrating on Howard Park's own vineyards Dave is looking forward to working more closely with our growers to help them maximise the quality of the grapes they produce for Howard Park wines. According to Dave, *'I've already worked with many of Howard Park's growers in my former life as an independent viticultural consultant. Being able to be involved with all the growers vineyards more regularly over coming seasons will hopefully be even more mutually beneficial for them and Howard Park'.*

Dave has been referred to by some as a 'Brains Trust' in providing viticultural advice. This knowledge, along with his 'extremely likeable personality' is a great benefit to the team. We are very excited to welcome Dave Botting on board and know he will be a great asset to us and the growers.



Dr Ian Rooke, an expert in ornithology, has been conducting a study at our Leston Vineyard in Margaret River with some interesting results. When Dr. Rooke last appeared in the newsletter he had identified 26 species, now that number has grown to over 37. This includes an array of water birds such as ducks, egrets, ibis' and even a swan. He was particularly excited about the Brown Goshawk, a predatory bird, which is nesting somewhere near

the bridge. Though some of these birds are sometimes a hazard to the grapes they also support our vineyard ecosystem by eating a lot of the insects that threaten the vines. As a result we have been supporting the bird sanctuary by planting trees and shrubs that will support our bird habitat. In addition to these local dwellers we have been joined by 150 guinea fowl. These natives of South Africa are here to support the vines by eating vine pests and can eat up to their own body weight in insects

each day!! The guinea fowl has many predators such as the wedge-tailed eagle and the fox and unfortunately there have been some losses, but eventually they should instinctively wiser up. At the moment some of them still think the best place to hide from an eagle is on the roof of their shelter while others seem to be choosing the better option of using the vineyard cover. We hope peer flock pressure will lead them all into the vineyard soon.

bird sanctuary update 2

tasting notes

2003 REGIONAL SERIES

The Howard Park regional concept is designed to highlight the distinctive regional characteristics of Cabernet Sauvignon and Shiraz from the two premier West Australian grape growing regions of Margaret River and the Great Southern. From Margaret River under the Howard Park 'Leston' label 100% Cabernet Sauvignon and Shiraz are grown on designated sites on the company's Leston vineyard in the Wilyabrup valley – the heart of Margaret River red grape country. From the Great Southern under the Howard Park 'Scotsdale' label, named after the locality of our winery in the Great Southern, Shiraz from Frankland River, the up and coming star of Western Australian grape growing areas, and Cabernet Sauvignon sourced from one of the oldest vineyards in Mount Barker.

The same grape varieties made by the same winemaker with the same philosophy to highlight the regional characteristics, an opportunity to taste the difference.

THE 2003 VINTAGE

The most significant influence on the 2003 vintage was the weather conditions experienced in the latter part of 2002 during spring. Like most flowering plants grapevines flower in spring with a successful fertilization of a flower producing a single berry. The success of a grape crop is often directly related to the success of flowering and the subsequent fruit set. In the spring of 2002 it was unseasonably cool and windy across the larger part of the South-West of Western Australia, conditions which affected many vineyards and many grape varieties. Depending on local site geography many of the early flowering varieties such as Chardonnay, Sauvignon Blanc, and Merlot suffered some flower loss resulting in light open bunches with fewer berries and subsequently smaller crop loads. In most cases however the affects of poor fruit set were positive in a quality sense with lower crop levels set and more open disease resistant bunches. (An open bunch allows greater airflow between the berries which is the best way of preventing fungal rot formation.)

The resultant fruit was very good; the Shiraz was the strongest variety across the board with several outstanding parcels of Cabernet Sauvignon.



2003 HOWARD PARK 'LESTON'
CABERNET SAUVIGNON

Very dark opaque blood red. The classic vineyard character is expressed in a bouquet of ripe cassis with a dark cooking chocolate mint character. The palate displays massive fruit weight with dark cherry and blackcurrant flavours. The palate is remarkably fleshy for a wine made from 100% Cabernet Sauvignon. This is a classic new world style of Cabernet Sauvignon, very easy to like.



2003 HOWARD PARK 'SCOTSDALE'
CABERNET SAUVIGNON

Crimson red of medium density. The nose displays all the hallmarks of Mount Barker Cabernet Sauvignon with earthy dusty characters backed up by black berry and cassis fruits. The palate is intense with cassis flavours and cedary oak influences of great length of flavour persistence and firm ripe tannin. This is a wine much more in the classic old world style in which the textural components play a larger part than primary fruit influences.



2003 HOWARD PARK 'LESTON' SHIRAZ

This is the fifth Howard Park Leston Shiraz released and is, I believe, the most complete wine produced so far from Block 4 on the Leston Vineyard in Wilyabrup. The Leston Shiraz has consistently demonstrated concentrated ripe plum and fruit-cake like aromas and flavours but the 2003 vintage has greater depth of fruit than previously seen as well as some more complex flavour profiles of truffles and praline. The wines attributes are predominantly the pure expressions of primary fruit characters on both the nose and palate as well as the full fleshy nature of the mid palate.



2003 HOWARD PARK
'SCOTSDALE' SHIRAZ

Dark black colour with youthful purple hues this wine looks concentrated, a perception that is supported by both aroma and palate. Dark fruits and smoky spicy aromas lead to a palate of good fruit concentration and firm ripe tannin giving the wine an outstanding textural profile. In this wine it is the mouth feel elements that are the greatest palate influences backed up by dark cherry fruits and spicy flavour components.

THE WINEMAKING

The Howard Park Leston and Scotsdale regional wines carry the Howard Park label and therefore are sourced from only the highest regarded vineyards. They are also given extraordinary attention in the vineyard where canopy management is designed to maximize fruit exposure to the sunlight and yields are low to achieve concentration in the grapes. The grapes are harvested according to flavour with little regard for analytical data, fermentation occurs in open stainless steel tanks with highly aerative pumpovers that are integral in tannin development. At completion of fermentation the Shiraz is pressed off into French oak barriques of which about 60% are new, the balance being one year old. The Cabernet Sauvignon is given some fifteen days on skins after completion of fermentation to further develop the tannin profile prior to going to French oak barriques; 75% new and 25% one year old. The four wines were matured in the barrel for approximately eighteen months. There was minimal fining and filtration performed.

2003 BEST BARRELS

Variety 100% Merlot
Region 100% Margaret River
Leston Vineyard Block 1

TECHNICAL NOTES

Merlot remains, along with Pinot Noir, the red grape variety in Western Australia that has most frustrated winemakers with the variety consistently failing to produce great wine. Occasionally we are able to produce something special from Merlot mainly through intensive effort in the vineyard. From the 1995 vintage I selected 4 barrels of Merlot that were clearly head and shoulders above the rest and bottled the wine as Howard Park Best Barrels Merlot. Seven vintages passed without seeing a parcel of Merlot as good until this wine from the 2003 vintage off the Howard Park Leston vineyard in the heart of the Wilyabrup Valley of Margaret River. The top 20 rows of Merlot in Block 1 of the Leston vineyard were chosen for special viticultural treatment: intensive shoot thinning, total fruit zone leaf

what they're saying about us



plucking and 75% fruit thinning produced vines carrying a very light crop of Merlot with an open canopy and full fruit exposure. The resultant grapes and wine have a level of flavour concentration and textural complexity rarely seen in Merlot. The grape must was fermented in open topped fermenters with twice daily aerative pumpover to enhance colour and flavour extraction. The resultant wine matured for 18 months in French oak barriques.

TASTING NOTES

This wine has great density of colour rarely seen in Merlot with a dark heart suggesting great fruit concentration. The aroma supports this suggestion with an intensity of fruit character only seen in top class wine. Ripe berry fruits with dark chocolate aromas are complemented by a cedary oak background. This wine has none of the weedy leafy characters seen so frequently in lesser Merlot. The palate is soft full and generous with sweet berry fruits supported by ripe silky tannin. The wine has extended flavour length.

CELLARING

This wine has all the attributes of concentration and mature tannin to suggest that it will grow and mature for some ten years.

2002 HOWARD PARK "SCOTSDALE" SHIRAZ

"This is absolutely beautiful. Spicy savoury aromas merge with fruity smells of plum and dark chocolate. The palate is a feast of goodies with deep, lush fruit washing over the tongue. Silky and very smooth mouth feel. Wonderful texture and concentration."

Rating: 92/100

Ray Jordan

*The West Australian – Good Drops
September, 2004*

2002 HOWARD PARK "SCOTSDALE" SHIRAZ

"Luscious, medium-weight, purple-coloured wine of interest and elegance. Pure Great Southern shiraz. Flavours of licorice and spice and aniseed, but its real charm is in its poise, its texture, its vigorous freshness – and in its difference. It's a beautifully even, balanced, low-in-oak wine."

Rating: 92/100

Drink: Now – 2010

Campbell Mattinson

*Winefront Monthly
August, 2004*

2002 HOWARD PARK "SCOTSDALE" CABERNET SAUVIGNON

"Deep, dark red in colour. Fragrant red berry and currant fruit aromas in concert with green herb and toasty wood. Harmonious flavours evolve in the mouth with a complex array of stylish fruit and oak characters."

Winestate

September/October 2004

2002 HOWARD PARK "SCOTSDALE" CABERNET SAUVIGNON

"If you've liked the classic Howard Park cabernet over the years...then you will love this, because its right in the Great Southern cabernet groove. Ripe sweet herbs match to a trademark swing of sandy blackcurrant and raspberry/ripe tomato fruit...There's a dusting of milk chocolate but this is very much a fruit and region-driven wine."

Rating: 92/100

Drink: Now - 2015

Campbell Mattinson

*Winefront Monthly
August, 2004*

2002 HOWARD PARK "LESTON" SHIRAZ

"Interesting Cote Rotie aromas – this is more Syrah than Shiraz, with sweet leather notes. The palate is really good, with great depth, balance, grip and persistence."

Rating: 90/100

Richard Bampffield MW, UK

*Wine International – Australian
Terroir Tatsing
March, 2005*

2002 HOWARD PARK "LESTON" SHIRAZ

"This is deep and dark smelling: loaded with black fruits, wood spice, molasses and licorice, but there's tangier currant too. There's a big hit of ripe currants in the mouth too, really succulent and lush in the middle, with a tangy edge, and building brick dusty tannins. Finishes with wholemeal raisin toast. Will evolve in bottle for five years or so."

Rating: 92/100

Tim White

*Financial Review – Life & Leisure
September, 2004*

2002 HOWARD PARK "LESTON" CABERNET SAUVIGNON

"This is the little brother of the label's flagship cabernet and has similarities. The shy nose betrays its youth. The palate has weight and concentration, with extract and structure. Generous, smooth, ripe tannins. Screw-capped."

Drink: Now – 2012

Huon Hooke

*Sydney Morning Herald –
Good Living
August, 2004*

2002 HOWARD PARK "LESTON" CABERNET SAUVIGNON

"...The '02 Leston is a young cab with succulent cassis, dark chocolate and leafy characters. The elegant palate is underpinned by fine-grained tannins."

*Rating: **** 1/2*

Ralph Kyte-Powell

*The Age – Epicure
November, 2004*



events

2003 REGIONAL SERIES LAUNCH DINNERS

Howard Park Wines will launch the 2003 Regional Series throughout Australia this month. If you wish to attend one of these please make a booking with Robyn on (08) 9423 1200 or email robyn@hpw.com.au

When: Tuesday 10th May

Where: BRISBANE - Ecco Bistro

When: Wednesday 11th May

Where: SYDNEY - Omega Restaurant

When: Thursday 12th May

Where: MELBOURNE - Grossi Fiorentino

MUST MEET THE WINE MAKER

When: Tuesday 31st May

Where: Must Wine Bar, Highgate, Western Australia

Time: 6.00pm-7.30pm

Have a chat with our Denmark winemaker Andy Browning and sample our latest releases in this award winning Parisian style bistro.

WESTERN AUSTRALIAN WINE AND FOOD FESTIVAL

When: 4th - 6th June

Where: Perth Convention Centre

This years Western Australian Wine and Food Festival has changed locations to the new Perth Convention Centre. Open to the public come and discover WA's wines, cooking demonstrations, olive oil, beer, coffee and entertainment.

GOOD FOOD AND WINE SHOW

When: Friday 17th June 10am - 6pm

Saturday 18th June 10am - 6pm

Sunday 19th June 10am - 5pm

Where: Melbourne Exhibition Centre

Join us at the Good Food and Wine Show in Melbourne for a wine tasting. With over 300 exhibitors, celebrity chefs, wine tasting and cooking demonstrations this event will have something for everyone.

GREAT WINE ESTATES

When: Saturday 12th, November

Where: Voyager Estate, Margaret River

The Great Wine Estates of Western Australia bi-annual Auction V includes a live auction of approximately 50 lots from our premier producers including Howard Park, Cape Mentelle, Cullen, Devil's Lair, Houghton's, Leeuwin Estate, Moss Wood, Pierro, Plantagenet, Vasse Felix and Voyager Estate. Each producer will provide one barrel for auction along with a large format, the proceeds of which will go to the Busselton Population Research Foundation.

LI CUNXIN



Li Cunxin, best selling author of the acclaimed "Mao's Last Dancer" joined us in January at Howard Park Wines in Margaret River. As the sun set over the vineyard casting long shadows on the grounds lawns, Li gave an enthralling talk to a mesmerised four hundred guests about his life's journeys. As an eleven year old boy from a peasant village in rural China, he was by fate chosen to train with Madame Mao's Dance Academy. He spoke of defecting while on a cultural mission to America, meeting his lovely wife Mary and dancing in Australia where he now practices as a stockbroker!

Li spoke of his life with such honesty and inspiration that his connection with people was obvious, I don't believe there was a single dry eye in the audience. Almost every guest joined the line to meet with Li and get their copy of his book personally signed. West Australian ballet group Co.loaded dancers, Stephan Karlsson and Margrete Helgeby also performed two wonderful dances. This was a fabulous evening of fine wine, inspiration, music and dance. We will keep you posted on what will be happening next!



recent awards

SILVER

2005 VINALIES INTERNATIONALES, FRANCE

2002 Howard Park
Scotsdale Shiraz

GOLD

2004 INTERNATIONAL WINE & SPIRITS COMPETITION, UK

2001 Howard Park Leston
Cabernet Sauvignon

SILVER

2004 INTERNATIONAL WINE COMPETITION, UK

2001 Howard Park
Scotsdale Shiraz

1ST PLACE

2004 WINERY LIST OF BERLIN, GERMANY

2001 Howard Park Leston
Cabernet Sauvignon

GOLD

2004 MARGARET RIVER WINE SHOW

2003 Howard Park
Best Barrels Merlot



BONNIE TOLLAFIELD WITH JAMES NICHOLSON & Co.

REGIONALS LAUNCHED IN IRELAND

The Howard Park Regional Series was launched in Ireland recently at a series of trade and consumer functions hosted by our Irish distributors James Nicholson Wine Merchants and our Sales Manager Bonnie Tollafield. Two lunches were held for the trade at Franks in Dublin and James St South in Belfast. A dinner was also held at Shanks, a 1 Michelin Star Restaurant for all our supportive Howard Park consumers.



WEDDINGS AND BABIES

In typical Howard Park style we do things a little differently. So when our West Perth offices were designed, Feng Shui principles were applied with each office being painted a different colour to reflect the personalities of each department. Bright orange for the sales staff; those feisty, vibrant characters and a soft green for the Finance and Administration; the quiet, more conservative ones. Some strange forces must be working at our offices, as we have had two weddings this year already with one more on the way. We also seem to be very productive with two babies coming one more on the way. James Clark recently had a boy Huon, Sharon Scott had a beautiful girl Maya, 6 weeks early (right in the middle of vintage) and Gerry (our Irish lass) is due later in June. Howard Park seems to be doing its bit to add to the general baby boom....

FLYING HIGH

The 2002 Scotsdale Shiraz and 2002 Howard Park Leston Shiraz have boarded Qantas and taken to the sky. So next time you need something to calm those flying nerves or entertain the long haul be sure to check out the in-house wine list.

NEW AND OLD TIMERS

We welcome Ruth and Robyn who take on the positions of Assistant Accountant and Administrative Officer respectively. We have promoted Tarryn Leever to the position of Finance and Administration Manager. Tarryn is one of the legends of Howard Park, having been with us for 7 years, along with Peter Joensson 8 years, Annette Jacobs 9 years, Alan Simmonds 9 years, Vera Hook 9 years, Michael Kerrigan 10 years and Matt Burton 11 years.



THE FINANCE AND ADMINISTRATION TEAM. RUTH, GERRY, TARRYN AND ROBYN.

the ultimate expression



PHOTO COURTESY OF LUCY BRUNDLE

STUART GEORGE IS A FREELANCE WINE WRITER WHO WRITES FOR UNITED KINGDOM PUBLICATIONS INCLUDING DECANTER, HARPERS, WINE INTERNATIONAL AND THE WORLD OF FINE WINE. HE WAS RECIPIENT OF THE UNITED KINGDOMS YOUNG WINE WRITER AWARD IN 2003 AND HAS SINCE TRAVELLED EXTENSIVELY THROUGH SOUTH AFRICA, AUSTRALIA AND NEW ZEALAND.

'I'm sitting down to write this article with a glass of wine next to me – it's thirsty work, after all. The wine is a dry Riesling, with many of the classic characteristics of this variety – it's lemony and citrusy, with a pronounced streak of acidity. Is it French? No. There's something about it – a generosity and elegance of flavour while still being quite austere – that suggests Australia. Is it from the Clare Valley? No way Jose. Or perhaps it's from the Eden Valley? Not on your nelly. This Riesling has a distinctive mineral note... Western Australia? Maybe. The Great Southern? Definitely maybe!

The mystery wine that is helping to fuel this article, in case you were wondering, is a 2004 Howard Park Riesling (which comes from Great Southern grapes), a good example of how Australia is placing increasing importance on regionalism and – I'm afraid that I will have to revert to French here – terroir, that stubbornly French word that still has no English (or Strine) translation.

Although regionalism is indeed gaining greater prominence, the current UK picture of the Australian wine industry – at least from the consumer point of view – is still of the big wine companies and their wines (which shall remain

anonymous...), and even though it is true that 90% of Australian wine is made by 10% of the wine companies, there are in fact over 1,500 Australian producers. Relatively few wine drinkers are aware of the real diversity and depth of Australian wine.

The Australia Day Tasting held in London in February was a great opportunity for writers, sommeliers and buyers to sample some of the best wines that Australia produces and see how the increasing move to defining regional styles is progressing.

In my opinion, it's coming along quite nicely. It's great that people like Howard Park are championing regionalism and individuality and proving that there is far more to Australian wine than the big brands.

Benchmark styles for specific regions already exist, such as Sauvignon Blanc in the Adelaide Hills, Semillon in the Hunter, Shiraz in the Barossa, Riesling in the Clare Valley, and Cabernet Sauvignon in Margaret River and Coonawarra. These regions represent the best-known and developed 'classic' wine producing areas of Australia, with the Coonawarra boundary dispute surely proving that Australia is developing highly-strung notions of terroir. You've either got the soil and the climate to make what it says on the label, or you haven't.

The Great Southern – home of the aforementioned Howard Park Riesling – could well be the next region to assert itself and become a 'classic'. It's a huge area but five sub zones – Albany, Denmark, Mount Barker, Frankland, and the Porongurups – have already been identified as having particular characteristics.

Howard Park is one of the protagonists in Australia's search for terroir – linking flavours in a wine to a specific region or even vineyard. Howard Park's Leston Shiraz – part of their Regional Series wines – is a fine example of how specific and refined terroir can be. The Leston Shiraz is one of Howard Park's single vineyard wines, made with fruit from the 'Block 4' of the Leston vineyard surrounding the winery – the ultimate expression of terroir, like a Grand Cru Burgundy, or Henschke's Hill of Grace or Tahbilk's 1860 Shiraz, for that matter. The wine has plenty of

plummy fruit, with firm tannins on the finish. It's distinctive and certainly different to the Scotsdale Shiraz – also part of the Regional Series – that's made from grapes from a single estate in the Great Southern. The cooler climate produces wines that are leaner and earthier than the equivalent Margaret River wines, which are unmistakably 'classic' – they couldn't come from anywhere else other than Margaret River, and a particular part of Margaret River (Wilyabrup) at that.

I think that it's time that Australian wines stood up by themselves, without constant comparisons to French classics. Declaring that 'Margaret River Cabernet is like red Bordeaux' is fine in principal but in reality the wines are quite different – and this comparison is perhaps a little flattering to Bordeaux. They don't make excellent Shiraz in Bordeaux, nor do they have the Fremantle Doctor, so it's obvious that the terroir – and therefore the wine – is different.

Well, I've almost finished the bottle of Riesling... In the Spring 2004 Howard Park newsletter my UK wine writing colleague Simon Woods declared that he would open his bottle of 1997 Howard Park Riesling when England won back the Ashes. Simon, that's very generous of you – your place or mine?

Stuart George

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DENMARK WINERY
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DENMARK WA 6333
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west australian regionalism