

AUSTRALIAN GOURMET TRAVELLER

WINE



Qantas/Australian Gourmet Traveller WINE

Our annual award has come to be regarded as the most prestigious of its kind in Australia. Here we introduce the first four finalists for 2004.

The roll call of past winners - Jeffrey Grosset, Philip Shaw, Vanya Cullen, Gary Farr, Philip Laffer and Rick Kinzbrunner - resonates with the names associated with some of Australia's greatest wines as the award enters its seventh year.

In this and the June/July issue, we will profile the eight finalists, drawing attention to those whose work has resulted in some of the most exciting wines produced in the country over the past year. Last year we placed no restrictions on the number of previous finalists who could be part of the shortlist of eight. We ended up with six newcomers and two former finalists. The same has happened in 2004.

The judging panel for 2004 is Peter Forrestal (chairperson), Peter Bourne, Nick Bulleid MW, Huon Hooke, Sophie Otton and *AGT WINE* editor Kayte Nunn. As ever, the criteria that informed all our discussions was the quality of the wines produced over the past 12 months.

Once again, Qantas is keen to underline its commitment to the future of the Australian wine industry by presenting the Qantas Medal - an award made to an up-and-coming winemaker as part of its Sharing the Spirit program.

Qantas will present the Winemaker of the Year 2004 with travel to the value of \$10,000 and the Qantas Medallist with travel to the value of \$3,000. Both winners will be announced in the August/September issue of *AGT WINE*.

PETER FORRESTAL

WINEMAKER of THE YEAR 2004

Nominee Colin and Ben Glaetzer Glaetzer Wines and Heartland Wines

"Colin Glaetzer is a Barossa stalwart who has for many years worked without fame or fortune. Ben Glaetzer typifies the new generation of confident and decisive winemakers, whom Colin proudly edges towards the limelight, while remaining content to bask in his son's aura" PETER BOURNE



The Facts Region

Barossa Valley

Years in the Industry

Colin Glaetzer, 34 years
Ben Glaetzer, 11 years

Annual Crush

7-8000 tonnes

Standout Wines

Glaetzer Shiraz,
Amon-Ra Shiraz,
Mitolo Serpico, Cabernet Sauvignon

IT'S HARD TO DENY - winemaking is in the Glaetzer blood. Winemaker Colin Glaetzer and his wife, Judith, have three sons, all of whom have followed in their father's footsteps, with two of the boys having also married winemakers. Add to this Colin's twin brother, John, and there's a tally of seven Glaetzer winemakers in the family. It is, however, the partnership between Colin and his second son, Ben, and the complementary philosophical differences they bring to it, which ultimately makes their work so worthy of attention.

From 1969-71, after his graduation from Roseworthy, Colin spent time working for Murray Tyrrell in the Hunter Valley, then spent two years at Renmano Wines, followed by two years working in the wine industry in the UK and France before moving on to B Seppelt & Sons in Rutherglen and later Seppelt Great Western. In 1985, the Barossa Valley Estate (BVE) was established.

A cooperative owned by 165 growers, it appointed Glaetzer as winemaker and winery manager. In 1988, he conceived and made the first E & E Black Pepper Shiraz, now an Australian benchmark wine, and in 1995 he was invited to head up the newly established Barossa Vintners.

Simultaneously, conditions were ripe for Colin to realise the dream of his own family label.

As for Ben, he began life scooting around the cellars at Seppelt Great Western on his bike. At age 15 he was a cellar-hand at BVE and, with Roseworthy done and dusted by 20, also spent time at Tyrrell's Wines. In 1998 he returned to the Barossa to work with his father at both Barossa Vintners and Glaetzer.

The primary role of this father-and-son team at Barossa Vintners is to manage the operations

of a 10,000-tonne winery near the town of Tanunda. The pair produce wine for nine winemaker shareholders (including Glaetzer Wines), as per their specifications, as well as host of other producers. In 2003, this resulted in 960 wines being made from 26 different grape varieties.

Colin and Ben are also the force behind the Glaetzer label. Made from ridiculously old, dry-grown vines, the resulting wines are rich and powerful, exhibiting a softness and elegance that Colin attributes to the fruit from the Ebenezer district.

In addition to Barossa Vintners and the family label, Ben, at 26, is involved with a project called Heartland Wines, a mid-priced range sourced primarily from the Limestone Coast and Langhorne Creek.

In partnership with Frank Mitolo, he makes the high-profile Mitolo Wines and all the wines for Woodstock in the McLaren Vale. Then there is the Amon-Ra Shiraz, of which 400 cases have been fashioned from low-yielding Ebenezer fruit. Ben describes this as his "figurehead" wine, and it has got the US critics raving.

It is true to say the Glaetzer personalities are mirrored in their wine styles. Colin is traditional and conservative in his approach, mindful of the art and craft of winemaking. Ben, by comparison, is intent on proving himself as a modern and innovative winemaker, always experimenting, constantly evolving. Yin-ish, yang-ish, the halves create the whole, and together these two fulfil the criteria for this nomination for Winemaker of the Year. SOPHIE OTTON