



EDITION #11

DISCOVER OUR BEST-KEPT SECRETS

SEP 2019

THE HISTORY OF WINEMAKING IN GREAT WESTERN

THE GREAT WESTERN wine region may not be as famous as our South Australian neighbours, however wine production in our region dates back to the early 1860s.

In 1857, Monsieur Durant and another Frenchman established a small vegetable garden on the Congongella Creek in Great Western. In 1858, this was purchased by Jean Pierre Trouette and, with the assistance of his wife Anne-Marie Blampied and her brother Emile, they began to cultivate vines in 1863 and were instrumental in the foundation of viticulture in the Grampians region.

Brothers Joseph and Henry Best established vineyards at Great Western and along the Congongella Creek using some of Trouette's cuttings. In 1865 Joseph Best established the Great Western Winery and Cellar.

Henry Best was also keen to establish his fortune and in 1866 purchased 73 hectares of land on a property known as Congongella, planting his first vines two years later. Known as 'Best's Wines', it had become a fully functioning winery by 1873.

By 1890, there were 120 vigneron in the region cultivating 908 hectares, and Great Western became known for its fine wines. In 1877, the phylloxera disease decimated wineries in Victoria, many never recovering. The Great Western vineyards survived unscathed.

In 1920, Frederick Thomson purchased the business, the stock, equipment and the name 'Best's Great Western' for £10,000.

Through the 1920s, other wineries focused on fortified-wine production, which was much in demand and helped to keep the industry alive through troubled wartime years.



The 1930s and 40s were difficult times, the industry struggling to stay afloat as war raged. The 1950s and 60s were buoyant years, with table wine now becoming an acceptable beverage and Great Western wines making their way onto the tables of many Australian consumers.

We are immensely proud that Best's Wines is still going strong, and that we are one of Australia's oldest continually family-owned and operated wineries.

In fact, Best's Wines is now the only operating winery/vineyard in Great Western and has some of the oldest grapevines in Australia.

2020 will mark 100 years since the Thomson family took custodianship of Best's Wines. The fifth generation of the Thomson family continue the long history of winemaking and viticulture in the region.

Wining & Dining in Sydney

THE EMERALD CITY may be famous for its harbour and coastline, but there are also plenty of places around the city to savour a glass or bottle of fine wine and some of the best food Australia has to offer.

ROCKPOOL BAR & GRILL

For a special-occasion dinner, there's not much to beat this grand dining room in the heart of the city. The extraordinary wine list (some 3,000 wines and counting) regularly wins accolades, and features some of Best's own gems. rockpoolbarandgrill.com.au

THE LODGE BAR

Over on the Balmain peninsula on Sydney's west side, The Lodge Bar is one of those snug, welcoming locals that every suburb needs. Settle into a comfy leather lounge and take your pick from the free-ranging wine list that takes its cues from varietal stars of Australia and around the globe. thelodgebar.com.au

BIBO

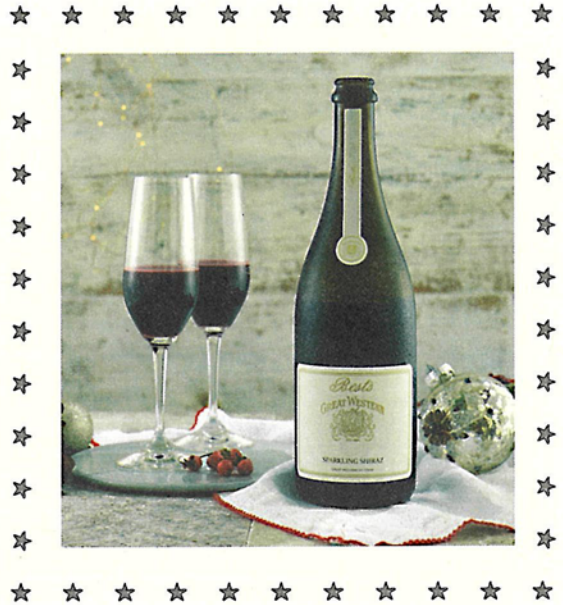
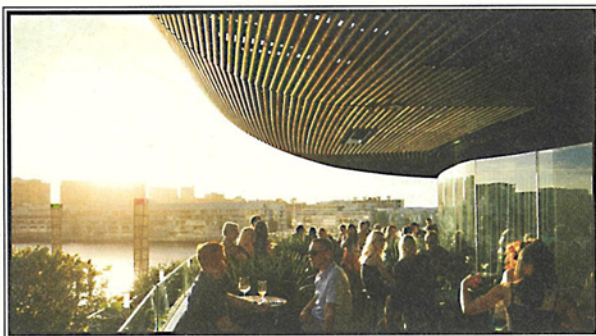
Drop into this Double Bay wine bar for a drink, lunch (Friday, Saturday and Sunday only) or dinner seven days a week. Work your way through a Portuguese-inspired menu of bar snacks or more substantial fare, and a wide-ranging wine list of fine local and imported drops, including Best's. bibowinebar.com.au

IVY

Often referred to as Sydney's coolest bar precinct, ivy houses some of the most happening restaurants and bars, including the iconic Pool Club. Sit back with some friends and enjoy some of Best's finest drops such as Great Western Riesling, Bin No. 1 Shiraz and Sparkling Shiraz. merivale.com/venues/ivy

SMOKE BAR

Situated on the rooftop of 'the spaceship' – as Barangaroo House is affectionately known – Smoke Bar is the perfect place for sunset drinks overlooking the water. barangarohouse.com.au



2016 SPARKLING SHIRAZ

THE MUCH ANTICIPATED RELEASE of our 2016 Best's Sparkling Shiraz is almost here. Launching on 1 November 2019, it's the perfect choice for the festive season. It's only made in small quantities and never lasts long – keep an eye out on your inbox so you don't miss out.

NEWS FLASH!

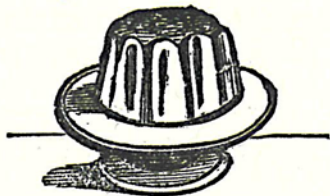
CHRISTMAS DELIVERIES!

It's hard to believe that Christmas is almost here. To enjoy your favourite Best's wines during the festive season, **ORDER BEFORE 3 DECEMBER** so we can ensure delivery in time for Christmas.

Need assistance with your selection? Check out our special offers online or call our cellar door team on (03) 5356 2250.



BEST'S RECIPES



Sparkling Shiraz & Raspberry Jelly

WITH CLOTTED CREAM

THIS FESTIVE RECIPE is from everyone's favourite food icon, Maggie Beer. Our sparkling shiraz is the true hero of this dish, paired with fresh raspberries for a chilled dessert that is sure to be a hit with friends and family on a hot summer night.

750ml Best's Sparkling Shiraz
 300g sugar
 8 x 2g gold strength gelatine leaves
 2 punnets of fresh raspberries
 Clotted cream, to serve

Bring the sparkling shiraz to a boil in a non-reactive saucepan, then light a match and touch it to the surface to burn off the alcohol. Turn off the heat and stir in the sugar until dissolved.

Meanwhile, soften the gelatine leaves in a small bowl of cold water for 5 minutes. Add the softened gelatine leaves to the wine mixture and stir over a low heat until gelatine is dissolved. Remove from the heat and allow to cool completely.

Place the raspberries into your chosen bowl or mould (it should hold about 2 litres) and slowly pour the cooled wine mixture over them so it doesn't froth. The raspberries will rise to the surface, gently press down on the raspberries with a spoon so they absorb enough of the liquid to set throughout the jelly. Refrigerate overnight to set.

Serve directly from the bowl or turn out the jelly by dipping the base of the mould into hot water and then inverting it over a waiting plate. Serve with clotted cream.

You could also divide the mixture between individual glasses or ramekins before setting in the fridge.

Meet the BEST'S TEAM



LUCY JOYCE
Cellar Door & Wine Club Manager

Born and raised in Melbourne, but with weekly trips to a country property at Cape Liptrap in South Gippsland, Lucy fostered a love of regional Victoria. She studied graphic design and photography, working in finance and advertising before joining the family business importing art and antiques from Japan and China. It was love that brought Lucy to Great Western, when she met and fell in love with Hadyn Black, a former cellar hand at Best's. Together they have purchased a small vineyard in Great Western where they raise their fur babies Hunter, an Irish wolfhound and Paddy, a greyhound.

Favourite Best's Wine? Old Vine Pinot Meunier



CAROLE NICHOLSON
Administration Manager

Carole moved to Ararat from the Northern Territory in 1994. It was here that she and her partner ran two businesses for a number of years. Family has always been a focus for Carole, with four children and one grandchild to keep her busy. When the weather allows, you can find her camping, fishing, boating and kayaking in Glendening with the family. She loves cooking all types of food and enjoying the fruits of her labour with friends, family and a good glass of red wine.

Favourite Best's Wine? Great Western Cabernet Sauvignon

TOP-RATED HALLIDAY WINES

BEST'S WINES once again scored highly in James Halliday's 2020 *Wine Companion*, with 13 of our wines scoring over 94 points. Best's also retained its five-red-star winery rating, as an "Outstanding winery regularly producing wines of exemplary quality and typicity."

99 **2017 THOMSON FAMILY SHIRAZ**
 "You'd stand up for royalty, and that's this wine. To use a spit bucket is *lèse-majesté*. Just savour it, drop by drop, as it magically finds its way down your throat. It's got the full rainbow of cool-grown shiraz flavours, a conjunction with a year made for it by Dionysus and, glory be, comes with a screwcap."

96 **2017 BIN NO. 0 SHIRAZ**
 "The deepest colour and largest build of Best's shiraz. Here, black and blue fruits have fine, but not apologetic, tannins running alongside the fruits – which don't give the tannins a passing glance."

96 **2018 GREAT WESTERN RIESLING**
 "The bouquet is enticing, but it's the palate that sends all the senses into overdrive. Intense lime juice intersects with shiny bright acidity. This takes mouthwatering flavours to new levels. Great length inevitably follows, promising a very long life."

95 **2017 LSV SHIRAZ**
 "Best's ancient clone and clone 1654, plus 2% viognier. How can 2% viognier give the wine its exotic perfume and ravishingly seductive palate? The answer is that it's the shiraz, not the viognier."

95 **2017 BIN NO. 1 SHIRAZ**
 "The cool climate of Great Western comes through the bouquet and palate in an unbroken stream of black cherry, licorice, spice and earth. The framework captures elegance and compelling flavour; finely tuned and ripe tannins joining a wisp of French oak providing length."

95 **2018 GREAT WESTERN PINOT NOIR**
 "From vines planted in the 1980s as cuttings from Best's ancient pinot planted in 1866. Deeply coloured, its bouquet and palate are driven by red cherry, pomegranate and rose petals. It is a pinot with power and no intention of falling over within the next 20+ years."



Did you know? Esteemed international wine critic James Suckling recently rated Best's Wines in his largest ever tasting of Australian wine. Our shiraz featured strongly – 2017 Bin No. 0 Shiraz (94 points), 2017 Bin No. 1 (93 points) and 2017 LSV Shiraz (94 points).

Our top tips for **CELLARING WINES** *under screw cap*

WE MADE THE SWITCH to screw caps as problems with cork increased and too much wine was being spoilt, but we are often asked how these wines cellar.

Our experiments reveal that screw caps seem to keep wines fresher for longer, even as the aged characteristics begin to assert themselves. We're just beginning to understand the possibilities of cellaring wines in this format.

Cellaring white wines under screw caps slows down the aging process and fruit is retained for longer. The secondary characteristics loved by those who age their wines start to emerge, but the fruit remains.

We've not seen a lot of really old red wines under screw cap, but our instincts for the reds follow the whites. We're about to discover a new longevity for red wines under screw cap.

What are our tips? Check for dings. Like cork oxidisation, this could ruin the wine you're cellaring. And remember, aging a bad wine doesn't make it better; just as with cork, screw caps will magnify any faults.

Did you know that decanting young red wines allows more air to get into the wine and enhances the flavour? Visit our Youtube channel for the latest wine wisdom from our team in a new series of educational videos.

youtube.com/BestsWines

CELLAR TREASURE

— ENJOY LIMITED RELEASE BACK-VINTAGE WINES —



UNCORKING AN OLD WINE can be a magical experience. Full of memories and an eager anticipation of what's to come. Deep in the underground cellars of Best's we've carefully nurtured a range of back-vintage wines.

From time to time, we release these wines to our valued members. They make the perfect gift for someone special, or a talking point at a dinner party if you're looking for something with a little more age.

Why are these wines so rare? Most wines are consumed within hours of purchase, so bottles that have been carefully cellared are rare gems.

Reap the rewards of our patience (and restraint), visit our website to find regular additions of back-vintage rarities. These wines are limited in nature, strike while the iron is hot to stake your claim. If you're looking for a specific vintage, be sure to call our cellar door team and they'll be happy to assist.



You can take a self-guided tour of our historic underground cellars on your next trip to Best's. The old red gum slab tasting room is housed in the original stables. View Henry Best's original diary, book in a guided tasting and discover why we're rated the #1 attraction in Great Western on Trip Advisor.

We even offer special helicopter tours with Grampians Helicopters – the perfect way to explore our beautiful region!



Congratulations to our Assistant Winemaker Brigitte Rodda and her fiancé Ryan Jon, who were recently engaged! Ryan literally ran from Perth to Great Western to execute a romantic proposal in the Concongella Vineyard at Best's.



THE BEST OF THE BEST

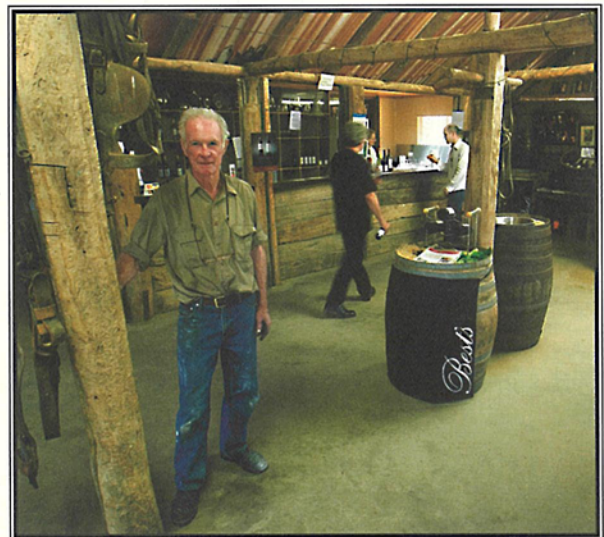
WE'RE PROUD TO HAVE been listed at #19 in *The Real Review's* Top Wineries of Australia and also been awarded a Certificate of Excellence.

A place on the Top Wineries of Australia list is no small feat, as *The Real Review* now tastes more wines in Australia and New Zealand than any other publication, with over 10,000 wines reviewed each year.

The Real Review Certificate of Excellence is awarded to a select group of wineries that consistently produce excellent wine.

The
Real
Review 2019

CERTIFICATE OF
EXCELLENCE



WE READ IT ON THE GRAPEVINE

JUST AS HUMAN BEINGS have unique ways of being identified, grapes have their own kind of fingerprint in the form of their leaves.

READING THE LEAVES — NOT JUST FOR FORTUNE TELLERS

Ampelography is the study of vine leaves. Things began to get serious on the ampelography front in the 19th century, when diseases and pests from the New World, such as phylloxera and mildew, began to threaten Europe's vines. Knowing the grape variety and the disease resistance of the rootstock was vital when it came to treatments. Knowing how the leaves should look when they are healthy also helps you recognise when the vines are under stress or something is amiss.

THE FATHER OF AMPELOGRAPHY

It wasn't until the 1950s that Frenchman Pierre Galet produced his seminal work, *Précis d'Ampélographie Pratique (A Practical Ampelography)*, an astonishing database of 9600 types of grapevines. His other landmark books include *Varieties and Vineyards of France*.



HOW LEAF IDENTIFICATION WORKS

If you think of a leaf like a hand, then its veins are fingerprints and tell their own story. Its lobes are fingers, which can be pronounced on some (like nebbiolo, cabernet franc and merlot, which have five), while others have three and some are little more than a stubby 'fist' (barbera, grenache). The gap between the fingers is known as the lateral sinus. The space between the middle finger and the two either side is called the lateral sinus superior; the lower one between those two fingers and the 'pinky' and 'thumb' is the lateral sinus inferior (also known as sinus upper and lower). They tell you a lot about what grape the vine produces. The leaf shape itself might be circular, pentagonal, wedge- or kidney-shaped (known as reniform). Then there's the petiolar sinus – the gap between the stem and lower lobes – which, like those higher up, can vary from overlapping to U- and V-shaped, or nothing at all. Also, the leaf's teeth can be quite pronounced and serrated, while others will be more rounded.

Combine these elements and the shapes of the individual leaves are distinctive enough to easily pick the difference between the main Bordeaux red varieties this way.

BEST'S NURSERY BLOCK – THE MYSTERY CONTINUES

We're not alone in having a vineyard with different grape varieties planted together (39 in all, with eight still unidentified). Ampelography offers a fast and fairly easy way to identify what's on the 1.3ha block, compared to the expense and time required by DNA testing. But alas, neither method has been able to determine what all the vines growing in our Nursery Block are...

VISIT OUR CELLAR DOOR

In the area over summer? We'd love to see you at our cellar door. We are open Monday to Saturday from 10-5pm and Sundays from 11-4. Closed Christmas Day.

SOCIALISE WITH US

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