



# UNDERGROUND CELLAR WALK

Welcome to our historical Great Western cellars.

For your safety, shoes are to be worn at all times and children 14 years & under are to be accompanied by an adult. As you can appreciate, access to some areas is limited for safety reasons.

Please feel free to take photographs and look around, but we ask where possible that you don't touch any bottles or wine barrels. Thank you.

Best's Concongella Estate was named by Henry Best after the local creek running through the property and surrounding areas. Concongella is an indigenous name meaning "Special Meeting Place".

## The 'Stables'

Best's Cellar door sales and tasting area started out as a stable for Henry Best's vineyard horses. These original 1867 red gum slab stables, built by the Best family, took them a year of wet days to construct. Fine days were devoted exclusively to vineyard work and Sundays were faithfully kept as a day of rest.

The stable was relocated in sections from near a dam to become the cellar door in 1974.

## Renovations

We have expanded our cellar door area, which now offers a relaxed space that overlooks the original plantings of the Concongella Nursery block which are over 150 years old.

## Warehouse and Original Tasting room

From the 'Stables' cellar door, you can walk through the double glass doors. Our warehouse, part of the 1970's 'Stable' cellar door relocation, connects the front of house with an original tasting room from a 1920's extension of the cellar.

## Middle Cellar Entrance

The entrance into the middle cellar is a superb example of post and lintel construction. Reeds from the Concongella Creek were also used as a binder for the rammed earth walls. The cottage outside, the first building here on Concongella Estate is also constructed with rammed earth walls and now houses the restrooms.

## Fortified Wines

Walk past the top of the stairs and into the fortified shed, where some of our fortified wines are matured. The wines are not temperature sensitive as they have been stabilised, and can be stored in the top layer of the cellar under the corrugated roof.

## Original Cellar

The floorboards and staircase are all original, and some of the floorboards are lifted and moved to allow hosing to reach to the bottom of the cellar. 30% of the casks are not used anymore. They stay here for their beauty, as part of the living museum and they will not be moved. Some were coopered by David Best in the 1870's.





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You will notice that many of these older barrels have SOUS or a 'No. of rings' written on them. SOUS is a sulphur solution added to the casks and keeps the water from going stagnant. The SOUS liquid maintains the integrity of the casks. These range in age, the oldest being 145 years old.

The life span of the larger casks (2,300 litres) is unlimited providing they are well looked after. Previously, when these were empty and the air inside tested clean. A cellar hand had the task of climbing through the bottom opening to scrub them clean, removing winestone build up. Now the casks are cleaned using a removable cleaning system.

Turn left and continue to the end, then turn right and descend the ramp. Note the temperature change 2/3rds of the way down the ramp. The temperature is a consistent 14-15 degrees all year round underground.

This underground section was renovated in the 1940s for white wine maturation and a bottling area. At the bottom of the ramp, immediately to your right you can see one of the original wine storage tanks hand excavated by the Best family.

- c 1870- 1880s - Concrete wine maturation tank
- c 1960s - The Thomson family opened up the tank to create a room

The walls of the old underground tank are lined with bee's wax. Originally workers would be lowered in to scrape off the old wax and replace it with new wax every year. The wax acted as a protectant creating a barrier between wine and the vat wall. Today we use the tank for private wine tasting experiences.

### Cage area at the bottom of Stairs.

This cage holds the Family wines, the oldest being a 1952 Port. Old wines are used for Winemakers comparisons and appraisals at a later date. Most of these wines are still drinkable and brought up for special occasions, such as family birthdays, Christmas parties and our Museum Nights.

Continue right through the hand-dug tunnel into the original underground cellar. Mind your head when walking under the staircase.

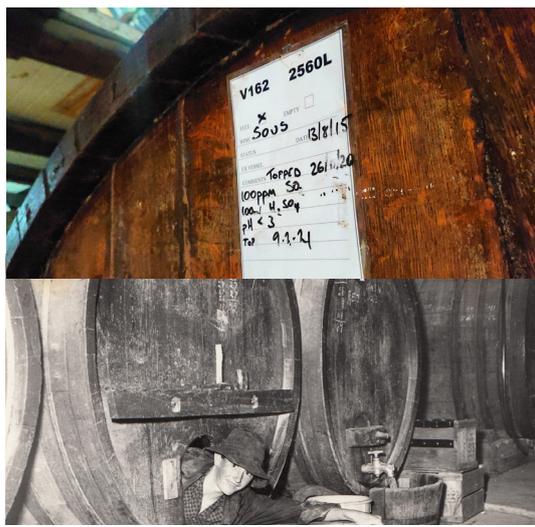
No nails or glue were used in the construction of the old cellar and the red gum used for the uprights and rafters came from the trees that were cleared to put in the original Nursery vines in 1868.

**Underground** is also home to our premium wines. During maturation, our Thomson Family and Bin No.0 Shiraz are kept down here on stillage for 18 months. These smaller barriques are brought back up the ramp when they are ready.

### Retrace your steps back to the Stables Cellar Door.

Walk back up the ramp and back to the middle cellar. Moving straight ahead to the bottling line assembly, you can see square covered concrete tanks. Originally used for fermentation holding 3 tonne of fruit, they now make excellent cool bottle storage. Above these are further Liqueur Muscat and Muscadelle maturation casks are kept.

You can view the bottling line where the bottles are filled, capped, labelled and packed. If Jamie our Warehouse Manager is around, he is happy to answer any questions you might have.



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