



EDITION #21

DISCOVER OUR BEST-KEPT SECRETS

OCTOBER 2024

BEST'S JOINS AUSTRALIA'S FIRST FAMILIES OF WINE



USTRALIA'S FIRST FAMILIES OF WINE represents the heart and soul of Australian wine, and we're delighted to announce that Best's is now a member of the family.

In 2009, several of Australia's oldest family-owned, multi-generational wine businesses joined together to form Australia's First Families of Wine. A unique collaboration of like-minded families, the intent was to change the narrative about the history, provenance, and quality of Australian premium wine, telling the stories behind these families that form the golden thread connecting them.

"As a fifth-generation family business, we value the unique perspective that a family business offers and look forward to further opportunities to share our stories. The families involved represent wineries with similar values and a shared understanding of the

landscape and opportunities, which makes us stronger as a collective group. For several decades, we've been friends and colleagues, and now the time is right for us to join and stand alongside fellow vintners who have such respect for their craft." Ben Thomson

The 10 founding winery members comprise the household names of Henschke, Tyrrell's, Tahbilk, Howard Park, Campbells, Jim Barry, Brown Brothers, Yalumba, Taylors and d'Arenberg, with Clonakilla and Best's now joining the esteemed collective.

We may be a small player by comparison, but we share a commitment to quality winemaking with some of the oldest pre-phylloxera vines in the world. We are excited to have our family stories and wines shared more broadly, bringing the unique style of Great Western wines, focusing on shiraz, to a greater audience.

SPARKLING HISTORY BUBBLING AWAY



WHO WOULD HAVE thought that our charming wine village of Great Western would become known for pioneering sparkling wines? It all began in the late 1890s when the renowned French winemaker Charles Pierlot joined forces with Hans Irvine at Seppelt, Great Western. With only shiraz grapes at their disposal, some ingenuity led to the invention of one of Australia's first Sparkling Burgundy wines. The idea paid off: in 1895, Hans Irvine's 1893 Sparkling Burgundy won an award in Bordeaux, placing our tiny town on the global wine map. This tradition of crafting exceptional sparkling wines from shiraz grapes has continued, earning Great Western its reputation as the home of Australia's finest sparkling red wines.

Over the years, Best's has innovated with quite a few sparkling styles. Anyone remember our Baby Bubbly, Great Western or Carbonated Pink Cham? The popular Carbonated Baby Bubbly was released in the 1950s and was produced until the 1980s. These baby bubbles were

released on the notion that people would enjoy and celebrate with them as young wines.

In 2006, after a 20-year absence, Sparkling Shiraz returned triumphantly at Best's, quickly becoming one of our most sought-after wines. We are thrilled to reintroduce a late-disgorged style with the 2018 Late Disgorged Sparkling Shiraz this year. With six years on lees, this wine is rich and complex, and showcases why this style is a regional hero.

As many of you are aware, the tradition of innovation continued in 2023 with the introduction of our Blanc de Noir, a white sparkling wine made from 100% shiraz grapes. The grapes were meticulously hand-picked and gently pressed to extract the beautiful flavours. The lack of skin contact meant that the red colour was not transferred. We've used the learnings from the initial vintage and are excited about the new 2024 Blanc de Noir – honing the flavours to craft a delicious wine. Let's raise a glass and toast to a future full of continued innovation.



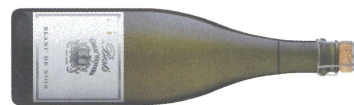
Viv Chats Over A Glass

Viv Thomson caught up with Shanteh Wale on the Over a Glass Podcast. They chat about some of our history, and what it means to join Australia's First Families of Wine. Scan to listen to the conversation.



BEST'S SPARKLING STYLES

With a range of sparkling wines to discover, there are plenty of options to start your celebrations. Look out for these wines over the coming months.



2024 BLANC DE NOIR

This delicious Blanc de Noir is made from 100% shiraz grapes from our Sugarloaf Creek Vineyard in Great Western.

2020 C.M.T. MÉTHODE
TRADITIONNELLE

Our finest sparkling wine. Made from chardonnay, pinot noir and pinot meunier, this elegant and finely beaded sparkling is worthy of any occasion.

2018 LATE DISGORGED
SPARKLING SHIRAZ

Having spent six years on lees, this exceptional new sparkling shiraz is bursting with flavour.



2020 SPARKLING SHIRAZ

"The value is amazing" writes Huon Hooke in The Real Review.

BEST'S RECIPES



Jellied Smoked Trout with Fennel Salad

SERVES 6 | GLUTEN FREE

This is one of our matriarch Chris Thomson's classic recipes. It pairs beautifully with our Great Western Rosé. All measurements are approximate. It's a family classic and, like all good chefs, Chris cooks to taste.

FOR THE JELLIED SMOKED TROUT:

500 ml clear fish stock, warmed
1-1 1/2 tbs gelatine
2-3 saffron threads
1 whole smoked trout, cut or torn into bite-sized pieces
35 g green peas, cooked
sea salt and freshly ground white pepper to taste
6 individual jelly moulds

FOR THE SALAD:

1 small fennel bulb, trimmed and diced
2 spring onions, finely sliced
zest of 1 lemon, finely grated
1 tbs dill, finely chopped
lemon-pressed extra virgin olive oil
sea salt and black pepper to taste

FOR THE SAUCE:

1/2 cup sour cream
1-2 garlic cloves, crushed
2-3 tbs horseradish
sea salt and black pepper to taste

Serve with a lighter style of wine. Best's 2024 Great Western Rosé would be a perfect choice.

SCAN TO READ THE METHOD



Meet the BEST'S TEAM

The Thomson family have been custodians of Best's since 1920. With the fifth generation now at the helm, we thought it timely to reintroduce Ben and Hamish Thomson.



BEN THOMSON
Managing Director

Ben is Best's Managing Director, the eldest of Viv and Chris Thomson's children. He has a love of the land and a fascination with applying new viticultural and harvesting techniques. You'll often find Ben driving the harvesters, tending to the vines and researching some of the more unique varietals planted. His passion for large-scale machinery has developed into a second business, Stressless Harvesting, which operates a fleet of harvesters. Ben's most proud moment was in 2012, watching his parents accept the Jimmy Watson Trophy and the Trevor Mast Memorial award. For a change of landscape, he's also a keen water skier throughout the summer months.



HAMISH THOMSON
Regional Sales Manager

Our Regional Sales Manager Hamish grew up in Great Western and has been involved in the family winery since childhood. Just like his dad Viv, Hamish is known for his ability to tell a tale. He has a refined palate, which he honed during vintage in France and while working as a sommelier in restaurants. He has many fond memories working at Best's, including emptying a drainer and getting juice sprayed on him in a solid red curtain as he scrambled to seal the tank! Outside of work, he has a passion for woodwork, specifically building wooden boats.

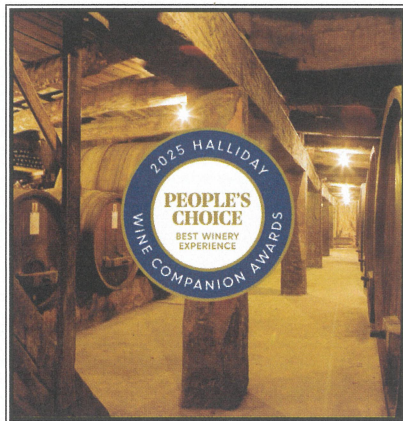
HALLIDAY PEOPLE'S CHOICE

Best's was once again named a red 5-star winery in the 2025 Halliday Wine Companion. This highest accolade recognises:

"Outstanding winery regularly producing wines of exemplary quality and typicity. Will have at least two wines rated at 95 points or above and has typically held a 5-star rating for the previous three years. A winery generally acknowledged to have had a long track record of excellence, typically having held a 5-star rating continuously for 10 years – truly the best of the best."

We also were a finalist in the

Halliday People's Choice awards, coming in at number eight. Thank you to everyone who voted and continues to support our family-owned winery.



AN AUSTRALIAN FIRST:

— THE BURRA GRANDE —

It's no secret that Ben Thomson loves to tinker in the vineyards. So, how could he resist when Wine Australia approached him to test a fully autonomous vehicle using UV light to control powdery mildew on the vines?



As an Australian first, we'll test this new vehicle in a four-month commercial trial at our Sugarloaf Creek Vineyard. The new vehicle, Burra Grande, will work at night between 9pm and 5am. As well as

measuring the impact of purpose to control the spread of powdery mildew, the trial will also measure the effect on other diseases that can affect the vines. The UV light does not kill the powdery mildew disease but boosts the immunity of the vines to protect themselves.

It's incredible to think about the progress we've made with technology to drive efficiencies in viticulture. The Burra Grande has already been successfully tested in measurable trials in New Zealand and France. We are always keen to embrace new methodologies and innovation that improve on practices and allow us to make better wine. We can't wait to see how this new machine works, so stay tuned as we keep you updated on its progress.

TOP HALLIDAY WINES



2023 OLD VINE
PINOT MEUNIER



2022 HAMILL
CABERNET SAUVIGNON



2023 YOUNG VINE
PINOT MEUNIER



2021 LSV SHIRAZ



2021 BIN NO. 0 SHIRAZ



2023 FODRE FERMENT
RIESLING

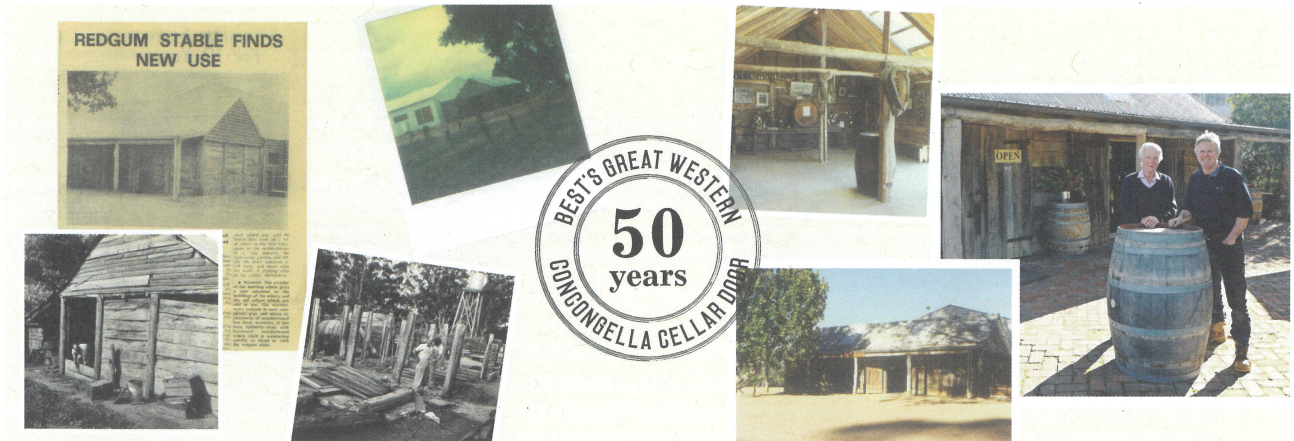


How did Great Western get its name?

Legend has it that in the late 1880s, when a gold commissioner passing through the area asked the region's name, one miner proposed Great Eastern after a steamship making news worldwide. Another miner pointed out that they were, in fact, in the west and perhaps Great Western would be more appropriate. The rest, as they say, is history.

— CELEBRATING 50 YEARS —

BEST'S WINES CONCONGELLA CELLAR DOOR



ON THE 26TH OF August 2024, Best's Wines celebrated 50 years of our Concongella Cellar Door. Originally Henry Best's old horse stables from the 1870s, the cellar door was meticulously relocated plank by plank to its current location at the front of the winery. Since its opening on the 26th of August 1974, the cellar door has welcomed visitors seven days a week, offering a variety of wine tastings, guided underground cellar tours, and special tastings, all steeped in rich history.



At the time of opening, only a handful of wineries existed in Victoria, and few were familiar with the cellar door concept. Despite this, visitation was increasing, and the Thomson family wanted a place to share their wines and sell directly to the public. The stables beautifully

fit the cellar-door bill by providing more space close to the winery and the historic underground cellars dug by hand in the 1870s.

Ben Thomson noted, "This 50-year milestone further cements the longevity of the Best's brand. People walk through the door and are immediately taken by the history and the story. Many have heard about the cellar door, but until you've visited, it's hard to visualise how special this place is. It's not shiny but oozes character, and the people who work here take great pride in sharing our stories with customers."

Visitors to the cellar door can still see some of Henry Best's original possessions and the tasting bench, assembled using some old timber from the stables. The charm and character of the stables provide a great backdrop for tasting wines and sharing stories of the family business.

Ben and Hamish grew up on site and fondly recall the old stables flanked by a peppercorn tree where their dad, Viv Thomson built them a treehouse. They also remember creating mischief during the relocation project. Each plank of the stables was numbered and taken apart piece by piece for careful reconstruction. The

brothers thought it would be funny to rub off some chalk markings. Consequently, some of the beams did not fit together when relocated!



The cellar door opened without any ceremonial grand opening, more of a sigh of satisfaction that the stables were still intact. Today, it remains true to the values of the Thomson family – humble, welcoming and understated.

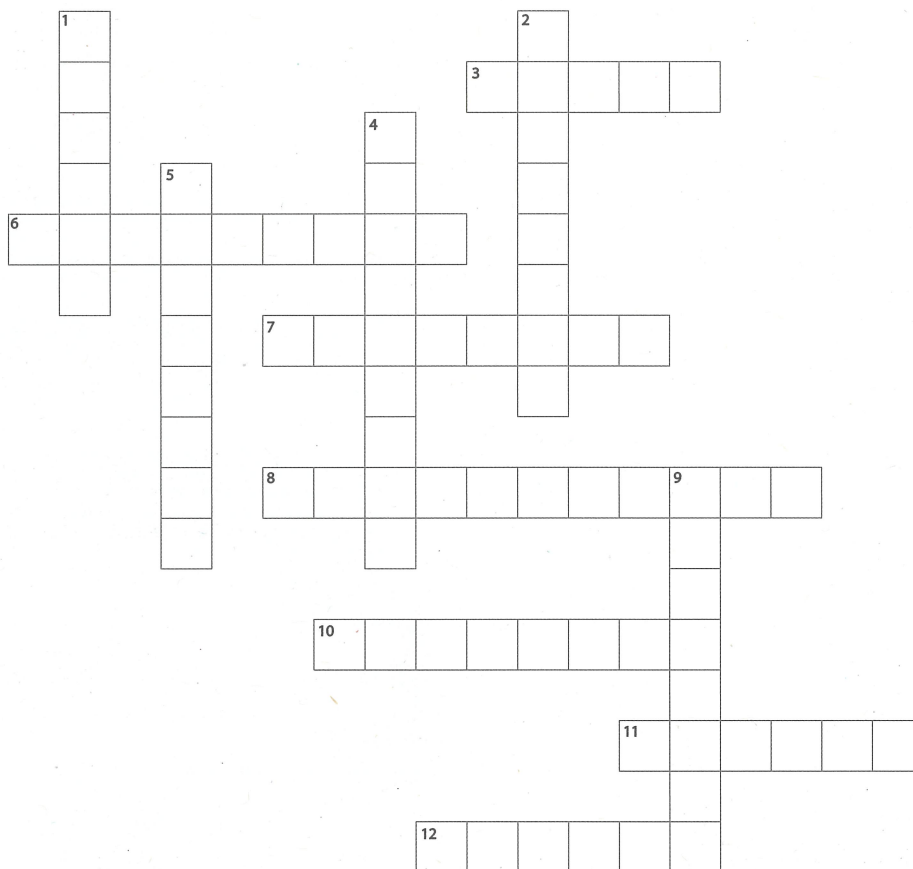
CELLAR DOOR TASTINGS

Stay updated with the latest events and special tastings at Cellar Door over summer.

SCAN FOR ALL THE DETAILS



CONGELLA CROSSWORD



Across:

3. How old is Best's Cellar Door this year?
6. Name of our newest vineyard in Great Western
7. Six litre bottle of wine
8. Creek alongside our winery property
10. Our most popular white grape varietal
11. Large wooden vat to hold wine
12. Where wine comes from

Down:

1. 1.5 litre bottle of wine
2. State where our winery is located
4. Victorian region where our winery is located
5. Famous wine critic, just retired
9. Australian classification of fine wine

CHRISTMAS CUT-OFF DATES

Don't miss out on your wine deliveries for the festive season. With delivery delays across Australia, get in early to avoid disappointment.

Order before: 3rd December: NSW, ACT, QLD, WA, SA, TAS, NT. 13th December: VIC.

Answers: Across: 3. Fifty 6. Sugarloaf 7. Imperial 8. Concongella 10. Riesling 11. Foudre 12. Grapes
Down: 1. Magnum 2. Victoria 4. Grampians 5. Halliday 9. Langtons

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