



EDITION #22

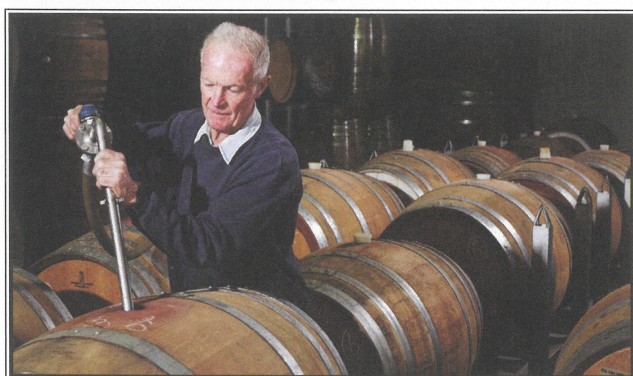
DISCOVER OUR BEST-KEPT SECRETS

APRIL 2025

THE THOMSON FAMILY'S SIGNATURE WINE

WE'RE EXCITED TO RELEASE OUR most sentimental wine – the 2020 Thomson Family Shiraz. This marks our 18th release since we created it in 1992 as "Centenary Shiraz" to celebrate 100 years of the Thomson family as custodian of Best's.

Hailing from a low-yielding vintage, this release shows great intensity and flavour. What makes this wine so special is its deeply rooted connection to our history; specifically 15 rows of gnarly old shiraz vines, planted by Henry Best back in 1868. These special vines, which Henry recorded as "Hermitage" in his journal, are now known by the CSIRO as the "Congongella clone" or "Best's Old Block clone" and serve as the mother vines for all our shiraz plantings at Great Western. They are now some of the oldest living shiraz vines in the world.



We only release a Thomson Family Shiraz in exceptional years, when nature gives us perfect conditions. The vines yield less than two tonnes per acre, and we hand-harvest, select, and sort every cluster with care. In the winery, we honour traditional methods – hand plunging the ferments in small open fermenters before aging the wine in our underground cellars for 14 to 18 months in French oak. There's only 20% new oak used to respect the fruit's character.

The Thomson Family Shiraz represents six generations of our family's commitment to this special site. Managing Director Ben Thomson noted, "We're aware of our responsibility as custodians of these special old vines and continue to ensure they play a significant part in Australian viticultural history. To release wine from 157-year-old vines that continue to bear fruit is truly remarkable."

Named among the finest wines in Australia, Thomson Family Shiraz was categorised in Langtons 2024 Classification VIII as "First Classified." The 2014 vintage was awarded Halliday Wine of the Year. Now, with this latest release, we've done the hard work for you with five years of bottle age. It's drinking beautifully now, but those with patience will continue to be rewarded if you lay it down for a few more years. Enjoy our latest release – a taste of history in every sip.

DID YOU KNOW?

The Thomson Family Shiraz has been acknowledged as an Australian Landmark Wine in *The Australian Ark*, by Andrew Caillard MW.



WHAT THE CRITICS HAD TO SAY



2020

THOMSON FAMILY SHIRAZ

"Oozes class and elegance. Destined for a long and fruitful life, Thomson Family Shiraz embraces blackcurrant, blood plum, bramble, briar, earth and spice. Fine in features, it can be deceiving because there is a strength here, built on old vines and the gentlest of oak which allows the fruit to sing." 95 points Halliday Wine Companion – Jeni Port



"Lovely colour, youthful cherry red in the glass. Lifted aromas of blueberry, dark cherry, blackberry, Asian spice, dried herbs, anise, clovey oak and sarsaparilla. Rich layered and quite seamless on the palate. There's a core of fleshy blue fruits, along with spice, cedary oak, satsuma plum and an earthy, woody lift. The tannins are really shapely and firm and deliver fabulous structure and presence. The acidity also plays its part nicely, bringing snap and brightness." 96 points The Real Review – Aaron Brasher, June 2024.



2024 LANGTONS ROADSHOW



IN 2024, OUR THOMSON Family Shiraz and Bin No. 0 Shiraz were highlighted as part of Langtons Fine Wine Roadshow across Australian capital cities. About 100 of the nation's finest wines were showcased, including those categorised as First Classified and Classified.

While those close to Best's know the pedigree and quality of these wines, we were humbled to hear from those who had only just discovered these best-kept secrets for the first time. Many picked the Thomson Family Shiraz as their wine of the night.

2025 VINTAGE

THIS IS THE 105TH vintage that the Thomson family has collectively harvested in the Grampians region! So, there have been a few challenges over the years, but anything thrown our way is never a surprise as we navigate the seasons. This year we saw fires across the Grampians in early 2025, but our vineyards have not been impacted. Water continues to be a concern in some vineyards, and hot conditions have made it difficult to determine the optimal time to pick.

A bumper harvest, the fruit quality looked superb, and by the time you've read through this newsletter, we'll be done for 2025. It's exciting to see some new growth of the riesling vines that we planted out at Sugarloaf Creek a few years ago. The first fruit from these new vines now harvested. Stay tuned to our social media channels as we give you some behind-the-scenes insights into what to expect as the wine matures in barrel.



FUN FACT

It takes approximately three years from planting a young vine to start to bear fruit in sufficient quantities to make into wine.

BEST'S RECIPES



AUTUMN TAGINE WITH *Beef & Walnuts*

HAILING FROM MOROCCO, A TAGINE is a fragrant slow-cooked meat stew cooked in a conical lidded dish of the same name. This recipe from Chris Thomson is a family favourite. The combination of sweet and savoury flavours enhanced by heady spices is the ideal match for Thomson Family Shiraz.

INGREDIENTS

2 tbsp olive oil	1/3 cup Worcestershire sauce
500g blade steak	1/2 cup red wine
250g bacon	2 cups beef stock
1 brown onion, diced	3/4 green pepper, diced
2 cloves garlic, finely diced	1 celery stalk, sliced thinly
1 handful raisins	1 handful of walnuts, roasted and roughly chopped
1 sprig thyme	flat leaf parsley to taste
1 small bay leaf	coriander to taste
1/2 teaspoon cinnamon	
4-5 allspice	
3-4 whole peppercorns	

METHOD

In a tagine heat the oil. Brown the steak in batches, remove from the pan and keep warm.

Add the bacon to the tagine, brown slightly then add the onion, garlic, raisins, thyme, bay leaf, cinnamon, allspice and peppercorns. Sauté until the onion is just translucent, stirring occasionally.

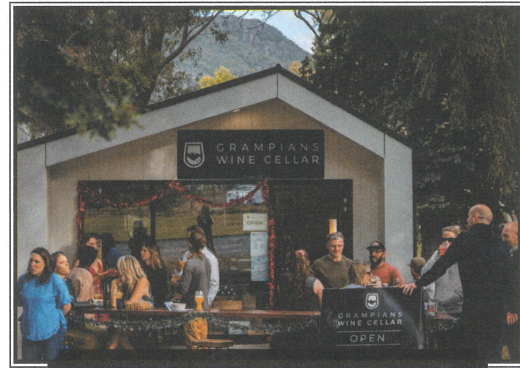
Return the meat to the tagine and add the Worcestershire sauce, red wine and enough beef stock to cover the ingredients. Simmer for an hour or until steak is tender. If more liquid is needed as it cooks, add more red wine or stock.

Just before serving add the green pepper, celery and a good handful of walnuts. Warm through. Serve garnished with equal amounts of chopped flat leaf parsley and coriander.

Serve with cous cous or mashed potatoes.

Note: If you don't have a tagine, a heavy bottomed casserole dish will suffice.

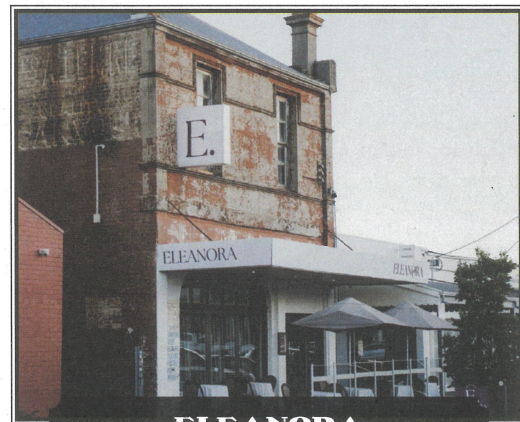
Best's on Pour OUT AND ABOUT



GRAMPIANS WINE CELLAR
Halls Gap, VIC

Nestled in the heart of Halls Gap, you'll find the Grampians Wine Cellar, a quasi-collective cellar door showcasing the best wines of the region. Simon and the team have been through a lot of late, but they continue to showcase our local producers and provide exceptional service to anyone in the region. Go and visit them if you're nearby.

grampianswinecellar.com.au



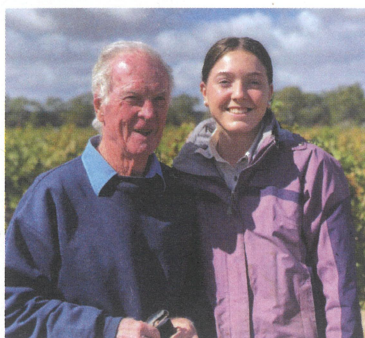
ELEANORA
Ballarat, VIC

Eleanora in Ballarat is the sister restaurant of Eclectic Tastes Café & Pantry. Located in the old Mitchell Harris cellar door, it's staffed by a fantastic team delivering modern, seasonal food matched with a selection of fine Australian wines. The coffee is pretty good, too, if you're passing through.

eleanoraballarat.com.au

MEET THE 6TH GENERATION - ISABELLE

We're loving having the sixth generation of the Thomson family helping again with 2025 vintage. After two years travelling, Viv and Chris' granddaughter Isabelle is back in the vineyards and winery lending a helping hand. Stay tuned to our socials as Izzy helps to give you a behind-the-scenes glimpse into life at Best's during vintage.

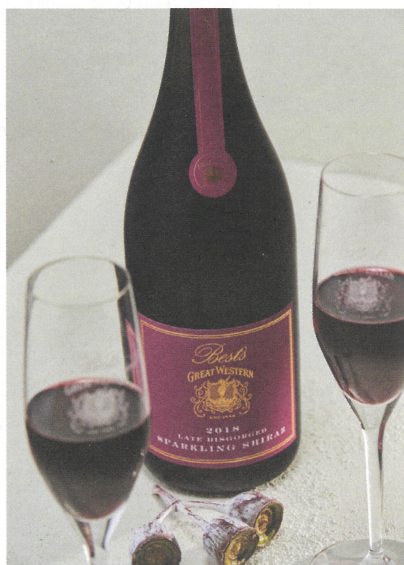


NEW: A WINE TO LOOK OUT FOR

INTRODUCING THE 2018 Late Disgorged Sparkling Shiraz. Those of you who love our sparkling shiraz will devour this new wine, which we'll release in a small parcel in April 2025. Having spent six years on lees, it's rich, complex and bursting with delicate beads. Don't just serve this style of wine at Christmas; it's perfect to kickstart any occasion.

Sparkling Shiraz has been made in the Great Western region since the 1890s. When Best's re-released the Great Western Sparkling Burgundy in the 1950s, it felt like a natural progression for our shiraz production. This new release is a more refined example of the style, with incredible depth of flavour given the extended time developing complexity in the bottle before release.

With six years on lees, it's savoury and rich, with tertiary spices of cracked pepper and Christmas spice. Slightly creamier on the sides of the palate and textural. A hidden gem that is cellar worthy.



What gives our shiraz the peppery characters?



Why does shiraz from the Grampians have such a distinctive black pepper aroma?

There are a few major flavour compounds in wine that come directly from the grape berry and the compound rotundone is important to shiraz wine flavour. Research has shown that the Grampians and Pyrenees regions of Victoria, along with the Rhône in France, have higher levels of rotundone than other regions like the Barossa and McLaren Vale. Don't worry if you can't pick it up, it's thought that 25% of the population cannot pick up this character, even at very high levels.

NEW RELEASE

👉 WINES 👈



2020 THOMSON FAMILY SHIRAZ

Our finest shiraz, sourced exclusively from the Thomson Family Vineyard, planted by Henry Best in 1868.



2024 FODRE FERMENT RIESLING

Aromatic and textural, a little more complex than our other rieslings.



2024 HOUSE BLOCK RIESLING

Picked a little earlier to make a slightly sweeter style, but full of light white florals.



2024 PINOT NOIR

Medium-bodied, full of red berry, bramble, strawberry, raspberry flavours.



2024 YOUNG VINE PINOT MEUNIER

A vibrant wine with crunchy red notes of cherry, cranberry, and sweet strawberry.



TO BORDEAUX AND BEYOND

BEST'S GLOBAL WINE JOURNEY



OUR FINEST WINES FEATURED IN BORDEAUX

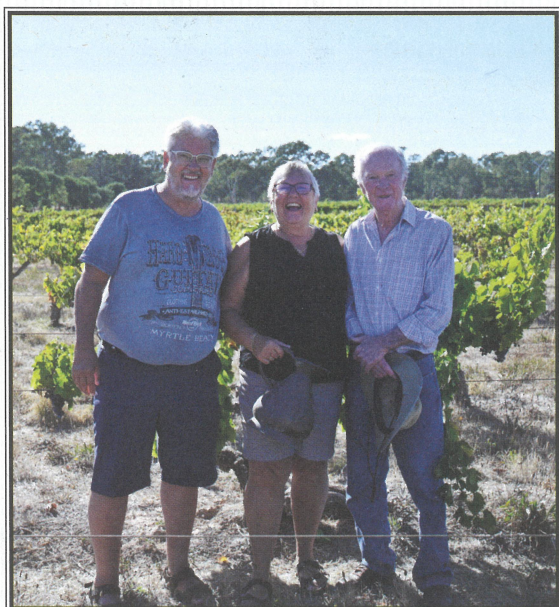
A CITÉ DU VIN IN BORDEAUX, FRANCE IS A museum dedicated to wine. Some would say it's like Disneyland for the wine lover! With more than 400,000 visitors each year, showcasing some of the finest wines and experiences in the world, it's a must-visit location on any wine tour.

We were absolutely honoured to have our Bin No. 0 Shiraz and our LSV Shiraz selected to be featured over the next year. WineVictoria and a delegation of guests showcased six Victorian producers at a recent visit, including Best's, Ten Minutes by Tractor, William Downie, Yarra Yering, Brown Brothers and Chambers Rosewood Vineyards.



FINDING BEST'S WINE IN THE USA

DID YOU KNOW THAT SMALL PARCELS of our wines make their way to the United States each year through our American importer, Little Peacock Imports? Based in New York, Little Peacock are a family-owned and operated company dedicated to showcasing a range of small and independent wineries from across Australia. little-peacock.com



A SPECIAL TRIBUTE

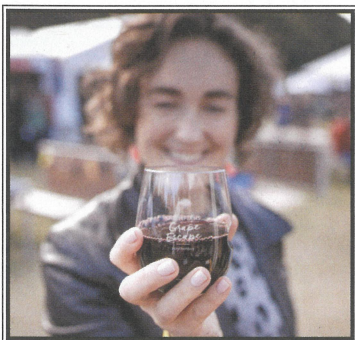
The late Kerry Allred was a devoted ambassador of Australian wine in Calgary, Canada, first meeting Viv Thomson many years ago during his time at Richmond Wine Cellars. A remarkable individual, Kerry passionately championed Australian wines for many years.

In a touching gesture that speaks to the special connection Kerry and Viv shared, his brother Milt and sister-in-law Judy travelled from their Canadian home to honour Kerry. In a touching ceremony, they chose our Congella Vineyard as Kerry's final resting place—a fitting tribute to their special bond and meaningful friendship.

His memory lives on in the vines he so eloquently championed. Vale Kerry.

WELCOMING YOU BACK TO THE GRAMPIANS

After facing fires earlier this year, we're thrilled to announce that the Grampians region is fully open for business. Now is the perfect moment to gather your friends and plan that weekend escape you've been dreaming about. The mild autumn weather, wonderful walks, and fabulous wine create an ideal atmosphere for exploration and relaxation. Here are some dates for your diaries:



GRAMPIANS GRAPE ESCAPE

Sip, savour and celebrate your way through a weekend of award-winning wine tasting, delicious farm-to-plate food, live music that'll get you dancing, and of course, stunning Grampians scenery in the heart of Gariwerd National Park from 2-4 May.

There will also be a variety of exhibitor masterclasses, guest chef cooking demonstrations, free kids' activities, and the prestigious Grampians Winemakers Barrique Auction.

Book tickets. grampiansgrapeescape.com



STABLES - OPEN 'TIL 8

Our Cellar Door, affectionately known as the Stables, is open 'til 8pm on Friday nights. Settle in with a glass of your favourite Best's wine and enjoy a grazing platter with friends. Every second Friday, we have a gourmet pizza pop-up in conjunction with the local bakery, Great Western Granary. Be sure to put in your orders for pizza in advance.



AN INTIMATE DINNER AT CELLAR DOOR

We have set the table... Join us for dinner? The Thomson family and our cellar door team are delighted to host the Stables dinner. With just 20 seats on our long table, this intimate wine and dining event in the heart of our cellar door offers a memorable culinary journey. In collaboration with local talent Jody and Co, let the Thomson family take you through some of our finest wines. Book via our website, limited seats remaining.

Our next dinner date May 10, 2025

SCAN TO SEE ALL UPCOMING EVENTS AT BEST'S AND THE GRAMPIANS AREA



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CONTACT US

111 Best's Road, Great Western, Victoria, 3374, Australia
P: (03) 5356 2250 E: info@bestswines.com W: bestswines.com