

# IMAGINING COONAWARRA

THE STORY OF JOHN RIDDOCH  
CABERNET SAUVIGNON



ANDREW CAILLARD  
M W

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ANDREW CAILLARD  
MW

WYNNS  
COONAWARRA ESTATE





COONAWARRA

## CONTENTS

Introduction	7
About Coonawarra	11

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### ONE

The Story of Coonawarra	17
-------------------------	----

### TWO

The Original Blockers	73
-----------------------	----

### THREE

Wynns Coonawarra Estate Vineyards	81
-----------------------------------	----

### FOUR

John Riddoch Cabernet Sauvignon Vintages	95
--	----

### FIVE

Important Coonawarra Milestones	115
---------------------------------	-----

### SIX

Langton's Classification of Australian Wine VII	129
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Acknowledgments	139
About the Author	141
Bibliography	142



W Y N N S  
COONAWARRA ESTATE

JOHN RIDDOCH  
CABERNET SAUVIGNON

6 x 750mL

W Y N N S  
COONAWARRA ESTATE

JOHN RIDDOCH  
CABERNET SAUVIGNON

6 x 750mL

## INTRODUCTION

It is exactly 40 years since I first worked vintage in Bordeaux and 30 years since I penned the inaugural Langton's Classification of Australian Wine. As a longstanding auctioneer, observer and participant in Australia's fine wine scene I have always been fascinated by the ambition and stories associated with fine wine.

Sourcing, cataloguing and working auction rooms before the arrival of the internet gave me a unique insight into how wine collectors think and behave. Over the last 20 years in particular I travelled frequently to Bordeaux to report from the *En Primeur* tasting event, which is a cornerstone of the international wine market. I have visited most of the great châteaux of Bordeaux and become friends with many winemakers, owners and international wine buyers and writers who frequent this annual 'croissant fight'.

Around the mid-2000s I found myself travelling to Asia quite regularly, collaborating with Wine Australia to build an international interest in Langton's Classification of Australian Wine in places like Hong Kong, Singapore, Shanghai, Beijing and Tokyo. These experiences collided when I found myself involved in *Red Obsession*, a documentary about Bordeaux and China, with film producer and director Warwick Ross. This intense period of back and forth between Australia, Bordeaux and China empowered me profoundly and the touchstones that created such an extraordinary market bubble (around 2009 and 2010) really resonated with me.

In writing various editions of *Penfolds Rewards of Patience* – a wine collector's guide – and more recently with *Langton's Classification of Australian Wine VII*, I delved quite deeply into the history of Australian wine and discovered a unique and moving story of courage, ambition, adventure and technological advances.

The underlying bass note for fine wine is history, something that many Australians feel they lack, although this is untrue. To start off with, a belief in oneself is the driving force. But success boils down



to a sense of identity and a feeling of meaning and purpose. As an Australian with a family heritage steeped in South Australia's earliest wine beginnings (John Reynell, my great, great, great grandfather, arrived in 1838 and planted one of the colony's earliest vineyards), I think the history of Australian wine is incredibly romantic and fascinating.

While driving through the Médoc with colleagues in 2017 we found ourselves talking about Bordeaux's 1855 Classification, Australian wine and the ultra-fine wine markets. We asked ourselves: Which Australian wines have the most international currency, and which have the most potential?

No one can deny that Penfolds Grange and Henschke Hill of Grace have made remarkable strides across the world and done much to build Australia's fine wine credentials. But on the other hand, Wynns Coonawarra Estate John Riddoch Cabernet Sauvignon, valued highly at home by wine collectors, is not so well known abroad, yet the generational work behind the label is extraordinary. It is an 'Australian First Growth' steeped in one of the great agricultural ambitions of the 19th century and it has earned its place as one of Australia's greatest Cabernet Sauvignons through nearly four decades of modern vintages.

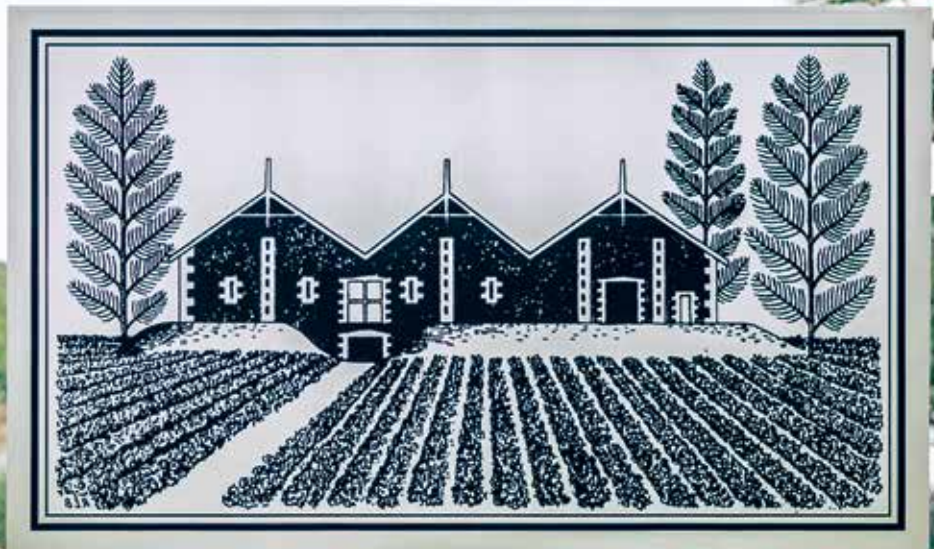
I have written this book because I think the John Riddoch Cabernet Sauvignon is one of the world's great fine red wines. Using the historical yardsticks of time and place, it exemplifies the way South Australia's Coonawarra wine region was shaped by its people during the 19th, 20th and early 21st centuries and it represents more than 130 years of wisdom, science and sensibility. What more can one ask of Australian fine wine?

ANDREW CAILLARD MW

JUNE 2020

RIGHT The entrance to the cellar door at Wynns Coonawarra Estate.

JOHN KRUGER









## ABOUT COONAWARRA

The Coonawarra wine region is equidistant between Adelaide and Melbourne. Carved out from John Riddoch's Coonawarra Fruit Colony and his enormous Yallum Park estate, it features a cigar-shaped outcrop of Terra Rossa soils some 27 km long and 2 km wide, with additional pockets of Terra Rossa soils that satellite the main strip. This soil produces some of the finest Cabernet Sauvignon wines in the world, although not all Coonawarra vineyards are located on this prized land.

Below the loamy and vivid-red soils, coloured by iron oxide, lies a weathered limestone cap that must be ripped up to allow the roots to reach into the softer calcareous sandstone and limestone through which permanent ground water flows at around five metres depth. This limestone aquifer was an ancient seabed, formed over a million years ago, and today the combination of free draining qualities and moderate water holding capacity make this type of soil ideal for grape growing and orcharding.

**Wynns John Riddoch Cabernet Sauvignon is entirely  
derived from Terra Rossa-grown vineyards.**

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**Cool, Mediterranean climate**

**Elevation:** 51 to 63 metres

**Geographic Indication Region:** 400 km<sup>2</sup>

**Growing Degree Days:** 1457 (LTA15 Oct to April inclusive)

**Annual Rainfall Winter Dominant:** 572 mm (LTA30)

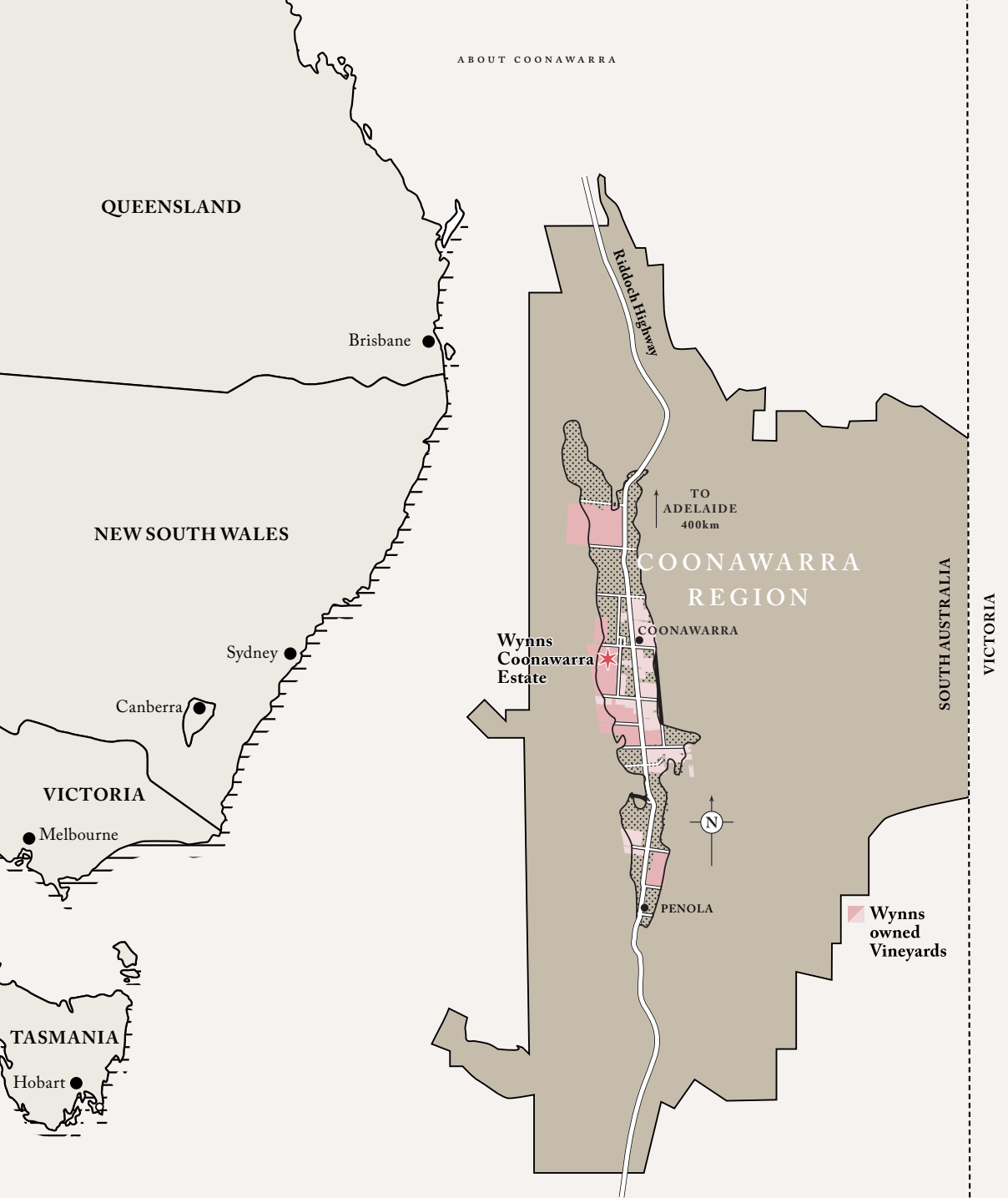
**Mean January Temperature:** 20.4 °C (LTA30)

LEFT Terra Rossa soils in Wynns' ALEX 88 Vineyard, Coonawarra.

JOHN KRUGER







★  
**WYNNS WINERY,**  
**Coonawarra, South Australia**





The entrance to Wynns Coonawarra Estate.

JOHN KRUGER









— *ONE* —

# THE STORY OF COONAWARRA





JOHN RIDDGOGH  
FURNISHED BY THE  
FURNITURE CO.  
OF THE  
CITY OF  
NEW YORK



## EARLY BEGINNINGS

When South Australia's first vice-regal proclamation was read at Holdfast Bay, on 28 December 1836, it was envisaged that the colony would become a source of wealth for the British Empire based on its agricultural and mineral resources. The free colony was settled by mostly English, Scottish and Silesian (German) settlers and the early few decades were difficult. Despite the colonial government teetering on bankruptcy, farms, orchards and vineyards were established near and around the areas we now call Adelaide, McLaren Vale, Langhorne Creek and the Barossa Valley during the late 1830s and 1840s.

Although there were great ambitions, viticulture and winemaking were initially cottage industries with mixed results. Most English settlers, who generally had more capital, invested in cereal crops and the Barossa, Clare Valley and McLaren Vale were better known for barley, wheat and wool rather than wine. At the Great Exhibition, held in London in 1851, South Australia was lauded for the quality of its wheat, with judges extolling it as the best in the world. But as the Steam Age progressed and new markets emerged, wine began to take a more prominent part in the colonial economy.

## THE 'NEW COUNTRY'

The Coonawarra wine region, which was given its name in 1897, lies approximately 400 km equidistant between South Australia's capital city of Adelaide and Victoria's capital city of Melbourne. Established in the late 19th century by pioneering pastoralist John Riddoch, it exemplifies an extraordinary ambition to build economic and social prosperity in the south-eastern corner of South Australia, known today as the Limestone Coast. This vast tract of land, which spilled over into the extreme western districts of the colony of Victoria, was known in the mid-19th century as the 'New Country' and was first occupied by European settlers in 1843. The early settlers arrived from both the east and the west, grabbing pastoral runs through occupation licences. These were secured from the South Australian colonial government by proof of stocking the land at 100 sheep per square mile.

LEFT Sculpture of John Riddoch by artist Ron Rowe. Coonawarra Park. c1994.

JOHN KRUGER



However, before European settlement the flat and occasionally forested landscape of south-eastern South Australia, which was interspersed with swamps and lagoons, had been the hunting ground of the Pinchunga people, one of five groups of Aboriginal peoples in the New Country, for over 50,000 years. Although proprietary rights of Australia's First Peoples were enshrined in law, their ways of living were vastly different to the patterns of European settlement. While records show some instances where integration with the farming community and assistance from the colonial government occurred, history shows that these rights were largely ignored, and the traditional landholders were ultimately displaced or perished, accelerated by new diseases, enclosure of lands, alcohol addiction or, in some cases, violence.

For the early settlers this strange yet beautiful land was hostile and remote compared to the more ordered centres of Adelaide and Melbourne. "While the productiveness of the country was never in doubt, its relative isolation was a serious drawback, and for a long period progress was comparatively slow," observed Henry Burgess in his *Cyclopaedia of South Australia* in 1909.

Several pastoral runs were established in what would become the Penola district in 1843. The 48-square-mile Penola Station was granted to Alexander Cameron in 1845, who became widely known as the 'King of Penola'. The area in which Coonawarra is now located was also first settled in 1845, although it was originally known as Glenroy. The area was surveyed in 1847 to formalise the exact border of South Australia and Victoria and in 1849 Eugene Bellairs led a government survey to South Australia's south east, which included mapping out the township that would later become known as Naracoorte and 80-acre sections of land for Alexander Cameron. Additional freehold was purchased in 1850, enabling the foundation of the new township of Penola.

## COONAWARRA – A SWAN BY ANOTHER NAME?

There are many contrasting opinions around the origins and meaning of 'Coonawarra'. Many observers have said that the name derives from an Indigenous Australian dialect where the word means 'honeysuckle'. There are other suggestions the Coonawarra name means variously 'honeysuckle ridge' or 'land of blossom'. Others have suggested it may be a Pinchunga word for the Terra Rossa soils. It is also believed local Aboriginal peoples called the Penola region *corartwalla*, meaning 'frosty or snowy country'.

By the 1880s an intercolonial steamer called Coonawarra connected Western Australian with the eastern colonies. And in 1893 there was already a cattle station called Coonawarra, in central New South Wales.

According to author and descendent of John Riddoch, Peter Rymill, the word Coonawarra is more likely to mean ‘swan’. He wrote in his historical study of Penola and Coonawarra that *kuunawarr* and *koo-no-war* – on each side of Victoria and South Australia respectively – are both Aboriginal words for swan. In the early 1900s the Coonawarra School House had a black swan as its emblem and in western Victoria, Lake Connewarre derives from a local Aboriginal word for black swan, suggesting that Rymill’s interpretation is the most accurate.

## SOUTH EASTERN HUNDREDS PROCLAIMED

The landholding of Yallum was originally settled by Donald MacArthur, but before he could sufficiently stock the land he was dispossessed by John Bowden, who claimed legal possession on behalf of the Austin brothers by running flocks of sheep on to the land at 100 per square mile.

These prized properties, particularly the Yallum pastoral lease, lay upon a long cigar-shaped band of weathered limestone and Terra Rossa soils shaped by a million years of geological activity and a local climate exposed to the influence of the Southern Ocean.

Oscillating weather patterns, sometimes maritime or continental dominant, in spring and autumn, were marked by cold wet winters and warm-to-hot summers. Although it rarely snowed, the Coonawarra region was a cold place in winter, with almost nothing between it and the Antarctic, and the summer heat could make the land as inhospitable as a desert. Yet the ample ground water underneath the weathered limestone Terra Rossa soils gave this place the enduring drought-proof quality that attracted the first European settlers to the area.

By 1860 the New Country around Penola was surveyed and a proclamation of the South Eastern Hundreds was made, enabling the freehold sale of pastoral land. These comprised Comaum, Penola, Killanoola and Monbulla, each one hundred square miles in size, with Coonawarra incorporated into the newly established Hundred of Comaum.

The revenue from these pastoral land sales was used by the colonial government treasury for works around Adelaide, rather than local investment in drainage, roads, railways and ports in South Australia’s south east. This provoked settlers to join



a separatist movement which proposed to carve out a new colony comprising the New Country and the western districts of Victoria. The colony of Princeland, named in honour of the Prince of Wales, was proposed to the Colonial Secretary and Queen Victoria in England, but it was rejected in 1863 after advice from the colonial governments of South Australia and Victoria. Although the plan predictably failed it shocked South Australia's political masters and resulted in more interest in developing the south-east region of the colony.

## THE GOLD RUSH

The Austin brothers' lease for Yallum was sold to Thomas and Harry Wells in 1851, coinciding with the discovery of gold in Ophir, New South Wales, and Bendigo and Ballarat in Victoria. Although gold had been discovered in New South Wales as early as 1820, most of these finds were downplayed by Australia's then colonial governments. But the 1851 discoveries sparked a rush for gold of unprecedented magnitude, mobilising prospectors from all walks of life and from parts of the world including Europe, Asia and North America. But it also emptied South Australia of manpower, causing the colony to teeter on the brink of bankruptcy.

Over in the new colony of Victoria plenty of revenue was running into the government's coffers, but the influx of thousands of gold miners from the Canton province of China resulted in political pressure to curtail their numbers. The Victorian Government introduced legislation that restricted the number of Chinese persons each vessel was permitted to carry and imposed a £10 fee for every Chinese person landing at a Victorian port. Between 1855 and 1857 over 17,000 Chinese prospectors landed at Robe, South Australia, to avoid the poll tax.

On their 440 km overland journey from South Australia to the goldfields of Bendigo and Ballarat the prospectors crossed the vivid-red Terra Rossa soils of farming land near Penola. Typically, they walked in groups over flooded wool trade tracks through the New Country. (In April 1857, a group of 700 stumbled across the richest shallow alluvial goldfield in Australian history: initially called the Canton Lead, it was renamed Ararat later that year.) Some Chinese immigrants stayed in South Australia and established market gardens or worked as farm hands or helpers to service the growing Penola township and surrounding grazing properties.

## AUSTRALIA FELIX

By 1860, the six Australian colonies were considered by many to be the most exciting places in the world. Victoria and the New Country were referred to by early settlers as *Australia Felix*, Latin for ‘fortunate Australia’ or ‘happy Australia’, a name coined by early explorer Thomas Mitchell in the 1830s. Despite relatively tough physical conditions and immigration policies at the time, Australia boasted one of the richest and freest societies with a rule of law and an immensely wealthy economy. Between 1858 and 1872 all colonies passed legislation to free up land and new taxes were imposed to improve government revenues. The population of Australia nearly quadrupled from 450,000 to 1.7 million between 1851 and 1871 as migrants skilled in mining, steel milling and maritime trades were encouraged to settle, along with those who had arrived for the gold rush. New manufacturing and agriculture flourished. Although the easy gold was running out by the early 1860s, an economic boom continued. Cities expanded, resulting in new suburbs, schools, churches, universities, libraries and art galleries. The first railway was constructed in 1854 and the telegraph lines around Australia were expanded.

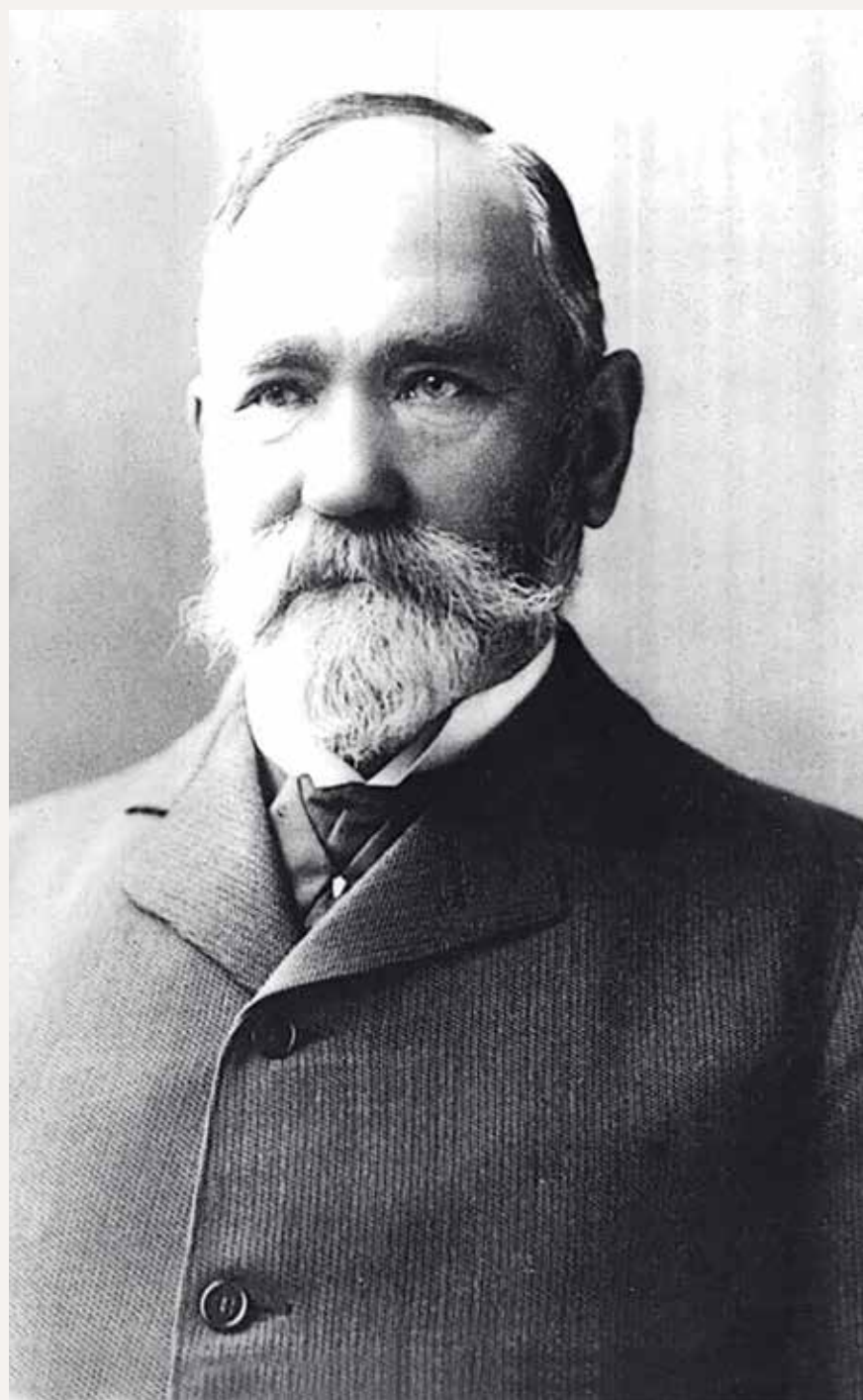
It was also the beginning of the first golden age of the Australian wine industry, which stretched from around 1855 until the First World War, and was profoundly linked to the gold rush in Victoria and the fortunes of the British Empire. It was during this time that Shiraz, and to a lesser extent Cabernet Sauvignon, became the ascendant premium varietal and new methods of mass production, particularly the introduction of steam-driven machinery, patented presses, and machine-made bottles, allowed winemakers to scale up with dazzling results.

## JOHN RIDDOCH

John Riddoch was born on 27 October 1827 at Turriff in Scotland’s Aberdeenshire. He migrated to Victoria with his brother, George, and his parents as the gold rush began in 1851. Riddoch worked as a carter, gold digger and buyer, eventually earning enough money to buy a general store at Geelong, where he became a successful wine merchant.

With heavy borrowings, John Riddoch purchased Yallum Park (including the adjoining Katnook Station) as a freehold property in 1861, shortly before the shearing season began in October. Wool production was seen as the next area of economic growth around this time and wool exports to England had increased from 33 tons in 1815 to 16,300 tons in 1849 due to improved farming practices.

Riddoch’s practice of washing sheep before shearing to remove grass seeds, twigs and





burrs from the wool improved the quality of the clip. He invested in new technology, including the lever press, which enabled wool to be washed and compacted into bales, and built a rectangular woolshed with dramatic timbered interior and accommodation for a whole team of shearers, designed by architect William Thomas Gore. With such fastidious attention to detail and the best-classed fibre in the district, his wool clip was realising the highest prices in South Australia by 1871.

During this time the wool industry dominated the colonial economy. Sheep numbers on the Australian continent exploded from 20.1 million in 1860 to over 106 million in 1892, with wool production increasing nearly tenfold, from 26,753 tons to 289,380 tons, also reflecting the improved fleece weights as a result of better breeding.

By 1865 Riddoch had successfully won a seat – along with the celebrated Australian poet Adam Lindsay Gordon – as a member of the colony’s vast political district of Victoria, which incorporated Mount Gambier and Penola and at that time was an electorate in the South Australian Government’s House of Assembly.

## STEAMING AHEAD

The 1860s also saw a massive expansion of vineyards around Adelaide, McLaren Vale, the Barossa and Melbourne, particularly in Geelong and the Yarra Valley, but the isolation of the Penola district from the main centres of population, sluggish development and remarkably successful wool production delayed the growth of its wine industry. Nonetheless the abolishment of Britain’s preferential duty of Cape wine (the name then given to the wines of South Africa) in 1860, the fall on ocean shipping costs and legislative changes in 1861 allowing the off-premise sale of wine in Britain encouraged colonial entrepreneurs to invest in wine production. This caused Australian wine exports, although off a small base, to quadruple during the 1860s and double again by the mid-1870s.

The arrival of phylloxera in Victoria in 1875 led to draconian quarantine laws in which vinestock was not permitted to be imported into South Australia, further entrenching the cause of wool production and forestry in the south east.

The South Australian Forestry Commission conducted the first experimental plantings of *Pinus insignis* (a Monterey pine native to California and Mexico) in 1876, but it was John Riddoch who planted the first pine trees at Yallum Park in 1863.

LEFT John Riddoch c1890s.  
COURTESY OF PETER RYMILL



John Riddoch's Yallum Park residence, c1881.

STATE LIBRARY OF SOUTH AUSTRALIA, B 21765





## THE MOST INFLUENTIAL MAN IN SOUTH AUSTRALIA

Riddoch, considered gentlemanly and kind by those around him, was by far the most influential man in South Australia's south east by 1880. His vast land holdings comprised Yallum, Monbulla and Glencoe Station, covering 385 square miles and holding at least 110,000 head of sheep (some say 160,000) and 3000 head of cattle. His younger brother George, who had invested in land of his own, managed Yallum Park, freeing up Riddoch to represent the district in South Australia's House of Assembly (from 1865 to 1870 and 1871 to 1873).

His residence, the newly completed Yallum Park homestead, became an unofficial staging post for governors and ministers visiting the district. In 1881 he hosted Prince George (who was to become King George V) and his elder brother Prince Albert Victor, who were travelling as midshipmen on the HMS *Bacchante*. While at Yallum they enjoyed wheelbarrow races on the lawns and formed a great affection for the people in the district despite the brevity of the visit.

John Riddoch's sense of duty, generosity, membership of the Australian Pastoralist Union, and patronage to the south east earned him great respect among the community, along with the unofficial nickname of 'the squire of Penola'.

## BIG JACK

Among John Riddoch's early employees was Big Jack, or Jackey Yallum, an imposing and extremely capable worker who was also known as Werrieotinna of the Pinchunga people. Born around the same time as John Riddoch, he was eventually responsible for hiring and looking after Yallum Park's Aboriginal farm hands. According to Peter Rymill's historical study of Penola and Coonawarra there were a number of Aboriginal workers at Yallum Park: "In 1878 these included Crankey Charlie, Jimmy Edwards, Narrey, Left Hand Charlie, Luke Munday, Neddy, and Big Jack, the King."

The population of Pinchunga people slowly diminished because of European diseases, including a high occurrence of pneumonia. Even though there were efforts to provide food, blankets and, in the settlers' opinion, improved living conditions, Yallum Park's Aboriginal workers were exposed to "the vices of civilisation," observed Penola priest Julian Tenison-Woods.



Jackey Yallum and wife Kitty, c1885.

PENOLA LOCAL HISTORY COLLECTION

## A GARDEN STATE

After the construction of his Yallum Park mansion, John Riddoch improved the surrounding grounds in the manner of an English estate. The house was “surrounded by ample parterres of flowers and lawns [and] traversed by broad and well-kept walks.... and choice trees from all parts of the world,” according to ‘A Visit to Yallum Park’, published in Melbourne-based newspaper *The Australasian* in January of 1886. There were also fruit trees, a deer park and a small home vineyard about which agricultural journalist W. Catton Grasby wrote in 1889: “some of the vines are thirty-years-old and are trellised as espaliers. They bear well, and the fruit is of fine quality, the sweetwaters being particularly delicious.”

John Riddoch was already experimenting with the idea of winemaking by 1867. That year, possibly inspired by Jules Guyot’s 1865 book *Culture of the Vine and Wine Making* (translated into English by Victorian winegrower Ludovic Marie), he sold a 10-acre block of land to his former gardener Robert Brewster with the understanding that he would plant grape vines and fruit trees, but these plantings did not eventuate because of the demand for Brewster’s services by other wealthy squatters in the region.

By the 1880s Australia’s economy was booming, creating pressure on colonial governments to release more land and to encourage closer settlement. Rapid transmission of people, trade and significant economies of scale were achieved through steam-powered mechanisation and industrialisation created a modern lifestyle and one of the highest standards of living in the British Empire. By this time, Melbourne had become one of the largest cities in the new world, with a higher population than Chicago or San Francisco. Australian workers were paid handsomely and conditions – compared to industrialised Northern England – were substantially better.

## THE WEALTH OF EMPIRE

The enormous Colonial and Indian Exhibition of 1886, held in South Kensington, London, epitomised this heady time. The Australian colonies – each with their own displays – exhibited their wares, which included Merino wool, South Australian wine and minerals. The exhibition was attended by John Riddoch, whose Merino wool was considered some of the finest in the world. While in England he observed the export success of Australian wine, which was in part aided by the devastating



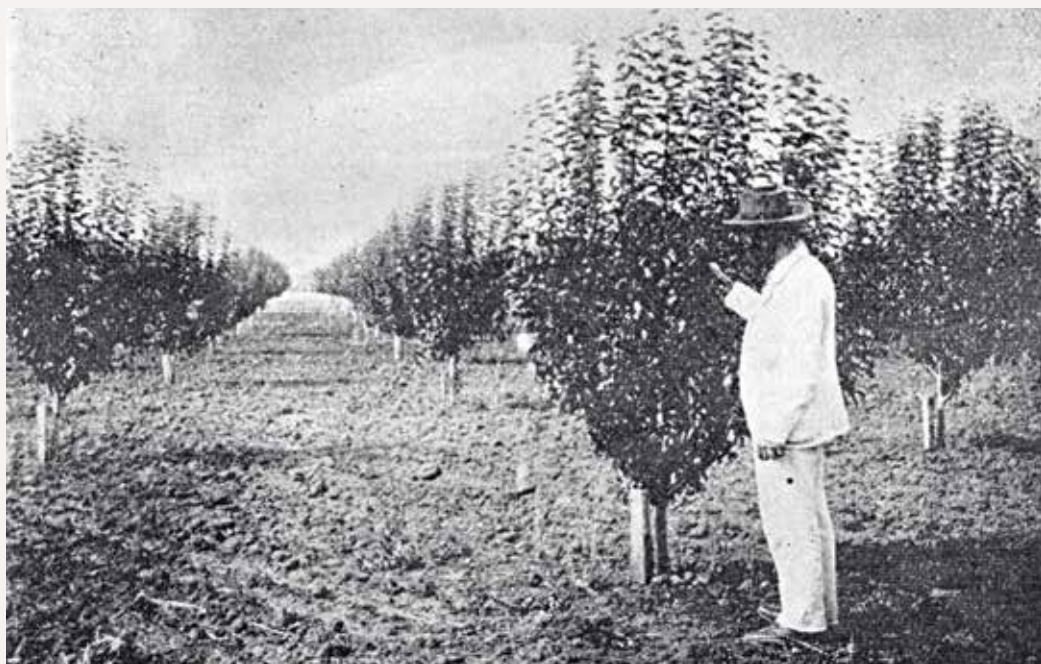
effects of phylloxera and downy mildew on European wine production over the preceding decades.

New winemaking science and technology also emerged in response to agricultural disasters of the mid-19th century. Scientific discoveries, including the invention of Bordeaux mixture and pasteurisation, revolutionised wine industries throughout the world. The introduction of electricity, telephone exchanges, steel building frames, new railway networks, steam turbines, faster ships and ‘form follows function’ architecture inspired entrepreneurship and huge winemaking visions. John Riddoch was an enlightened agricultural dreamer and he imagined a thriving self-sufficient community based on grape growing, orcharding and winemaking.

## INTERCOLONIAL NETWORKING

Riddoch’s interest and optimism in the social and political development of South Australia’s south east was linked to the increasing likelihood that the Australian colonies would join political forces. An intercolonial conference took place in Melbourne in late 1880 between New South Wales, Victoria and South Australia and the establishment of a federal court of appeal for all Australia, intercolonial railways, intercolonial free trade, a uniform duty on wines, spirits and tobacco, the eradication of the phylloxera, the restriction of Chinese immigration and the suppression of rabbits on the border of Victoria and South Australia were discussed. This conference began a momentum towards the creation of an Australian nation, but it would take 20 years to make it a reality.

The completion of the Adelaide to Melbourne *Intercolonial Express* and the Mount Gambier railway line (both in 1887) promised a new chapter in the region’s history. Some of the line was constructed through Riddoch-owned land and one of the steam engines was called *The Federator*. At the official opening ceremony of the Mount Gambier to Naracoorte section of the railway, on 16 June 1887, South Australian Governor Sir William Robinson said: “The contractors... have named one of their engines ‘*The Federator*’ because they believe, justly I think, that the line will be a means of drawing this colony and the neighbouring colony more closely together, to take advantage of both.”



Detail of a pear orchard at the Penola Fruit Colony, February 1899.

FROM A BOOKLET BY CATTON GRASBY

## THE PENOLA FRUIT COLONY

John Riddoch established the Penola Fruit Colony in response to demand for closer settlement and the opening up of the south east by infrastructure development, particularly government services, drainage, roads and railway. The cost of transporting goods by steam train was four times less than sending produce by bullock wagons – in theory the railway would bring Coonawarra much closer to the growing markets in Adelaide and Melbourne.

In April of 1890, John Riddoch exhibited samples of fruit from his Yallum garden at the Royal Oak Hotel in Penola. At this meeting of the Penola Agricultural Bureau he delivered a paper entitled *Vine and Fruit Growing*, in which he observed that his 29 years in the district qualified him to deem the region perfect for fruit growing and viticulture: “there can be no possibility of doubt that we have the soil and climate suited for their growth.”

On 21 July 1890 the *South Australian Register* published an article titled ‘Fruit Colonies. Experiment in the South-East’:

*Mr. John Riddoch, who is well known as a squatter in the South-East, and the owner of the Yallum Estate has resolved to provide facilities for the conversion of 1,000 acres of the estate into a fruit-producing colony for the benefit of all who may be inclined to settle there and follow the pursuits of fruit cultivators.*

*The land is situated about five miles from the Penola Railway Station and about a mile from a railway siding, and the climate and soil have the reputation of being extremely well adapted for fruit growing. An unlimited supply of water can be obtained in any of the proposed colony by sinking 8 or 10 ft, but as the average rainfall is nearly 30 in. it is hardly likely the settlers will have to resort to well-sinking to any great extent for irrigation purposes.*

For Riddoch, who has witnessed the migration of thousands of South Australian prospectors to Victoria during the gold rush and the near bankrupting of the economy as a result, the proposal to set up a fruit growing colony was both economic and social – he believed it would encourage local people, including the younger generations, to stay in the district.

After visiting Europe with his daughter Helen, in 1886, John Riddoch became aware of the significant opportunities for Australian wine in export markets.



He said at the time:

*We know many hundreds of thousands of acres of the vineyards in France have been ruined by phylloxera. This, together with the fact that our Australian wines and fruits have already established a favourable name for themselves throughout Europe, opens up for us a field of vast importance.*

The destruction of vineyards in France was a keen topic during the early 1880s. Although a remedy had been found, grafting *vitis vinifera* vine cuttings on American rootstocks, around half of its 2.2 million hectares of vineyards had been destroyed or were being attacked by phylloxera. The assistant director at the Royal Botanic Gardens in Kew, WT Thiselton-Dyer, wrote in a report following the International Phylloxera Congress of Bordeaux in October 1881: “The consumer in England, at least, will always pay well for genuine wholesome wine and the way is now clearly open to Australia to supply it.” Already a vast amount of bulk wine was being shipped from France and Italy, much of it being rebadged as ‘Bordeaux claret’. It is easy to see why John Riddoch was optimistic.

## FROM THE HIGHLANDS TO THE TERRA ROSSA LOWLANDS

John Riddoch may have sought advice from William Wilson, a then 70-year-old gardener who had arrived in the district in 1850 from Scotland. After a stint as a gardener for a large estate in Fife, Wilson served with the 42nd Royal Highland Regiment of Foot (also known as the Black Watch) on the Greek islands of Cephalonia, Zante and Corfu where he experienced fruit growing in a Mediterranean climate. William Wilson had joined the gold rush, but afterwards he returned to Penola with £300, which he used to purchase Lot 133 in Petticoat Lane where he built a small cottage and established a remarkable garden.

While John Riddoch was hatching his plan to establish the Penola Fruit Colony, he invited his friend Thomas Hardy, a distinguished vigneron, to the area. They visited William Wilson’s celebrated garden and, in a report to South Australia’s Central Agricultural Bureau later circulated by the press, Hardy wrote: “I do not think I have seen a more productive spot, not even in the irrigated gardens in Spain.”

John Riddoch had identified 1147 acres of prime Terra Rossa land, and the Penola Fruit Colony in the Hundred of Comaum was surveyed to comprise 110 10-acre blocks. The scheme attracted a wide group of investors and dreamers from all walks

of life including bankers, ex-colonial administrators, locals wishing to improve their fortune and others seeing out their ‘winter years’.

The terms of payment were £10 per acre, payable in 10 years with interest set at five per cent, and further conditions around the regular payment of interest and taxes, and finally an option to purchase after three years if planting and cultivating minimums had been met. These favourable terms and conditions were drawn up to encourage the rapid transformation of sheep run country to orchards and vineyards. The first allocation of blocks was sluggish but far from a failure: of the 1147 acres 877 were taken up by 26 investors who came primarily from Adelaide and Victoria.

## THE NURSERY AND SPRUIKER

John Riddoch initially engaged William Lumsden, from Ballarat, as a skilled nursery man and Abel French Spawn, an American entrepreneur, as the Penola Fruit Colony’s manager. However, Spawn would prove to be unreliable and untrustworthy. As the patentee and president of the Climax Evaporating Company he had promised to build a fruit preserving works at his own expense, but by early 1891 had asked Riddoch to advance him money to travel to America to source colonists, trees, machinery and tools to construct the facility.

John Riddoch clearly perceived a risk and declined to support this venture. After termination of his employment Spawn travelled to Horsham, Victoria, where a different fruit colony was being set up. Soon afterward he disappeared with funds advanced to him, emerging some while later spruiking a ‘hand grenade fire extinguisher’ and ‘Warner’s Safe Cure for kidney and liver diseases’. At the same meeting in which John Riddoch advised the fruit colonists of Spawn’s departure, and it was unanimously decided that “the best fruits to grow are apples, peaches, apricots, prune plums and pears; also vines for champagne, claret and other light wines and that each one now present interested in the colony pledges himself to carry out the programme of planting as far as possible.”

## COLONISTS OR BLOCKERS

The influx of fruit colonists initially created some resentment in the established township of Penola, and for a while there was friction with the newcomers whom the locals called ‘blockers’ because the land had been sold or leased to them in blocks of 10 acres.

# Plan

## "PENOLA FRUIT GROWING COLONY,"

being subdivisions of Sections 141, 144, 145, 149, 150, 152, 154, 155, 158, 159, and 162.

### HUNDRED COMAUM.

For and further particulars may be had on application to

JOHN RIDDOCH, Valdez, Alaska.

GEORGE RIDDOCH, Moravia Chambers, Victoria Square, Adelaide.

W. W. PEASE, Penola.

### SUBDIVISION

#### Hd. COMAUM



#### Hd. PENOLA

TOWN OF PENOLA

Note: Measurements are given in feet.  
 (Scale of blocks) (Measurements are given in feet, where otherwise shown.)

JAMES J. BARRON,  
 Licensed Surveyor.  
 Penola, 27th August, 1900.

GEORGE RIDDOCH & SONS, PHOTOGRAPHERS, 41, 43, 45, 47, 49, 51, 53, 55, 57, 59, 61, 63, 65, 67, 69, 71, 73, 75, 77, 79, 81, 83, 85, 87, 89, 91, 93, 95, 97, 99, 101, 103, 105, 107, 109, 111, 113, 115, 117, 119, 121, 123, 125, 127, 129, 131, 133, 135, 137, 139, 141, 143, 145, 147, 149, 151, 153, 155, 157, 159, 161, 163, 165, 167, 169, 171, 173, 175, 177, 179, 181, 183, 185, 187, 189, 191, 193, 195, 197, 199, 201, 203, 205, 207, 209, 211, 213, 215, 217, 219, 221, 223, 225, 227, 229, 231, 233, 235, 237, 239, 241, 243, 245, 247, 249, 251, 253, 255, 257, 259, 261, 263, 265, 267, 269, 271, 273, 275, 277, 279, 281, 283, 285, 287, 289, 291, 293, 295, 297, 299, 301, 303, 305, 307, 309, 311, 313, 315, 317, 319, 321, 323, 325, 327, 329, 331, 333, 335, 337, 339, 341, 343, 345, 347, 349, 351, 353, 355, 357, 359, 361, 363, 365, 367, 369, 371, 373, 375, 377, 379, 381, 383, 385, 387, 389, 391, 393, 395, 397, 399, 401, 403, 405, 407, 409, 411, 413, 415, 417, 419, 421, 423, 425, 427, 429, 431, 433, 435, 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3189, 3191, 3193, 3195, 3197, 3199, 3201, 3203, 3205, 3207, 3209, 3211, 3213, 3215, 3217, 3219, 3221, 3223, 3225, 3227, 3229, 3231, 3233, 3235, 3237, 3239, 3241, 3243, 3245, 3247, 3249, 3251, 3253, 3255, 3257, 3259, 3261, 3263, 3265, 3267, 3269, 3271, 3273, 3275, 3277, 3279, 3281, 3283, 3285, 3287, 3289, 3291, 3293, 3295, 3297, 3299, 3301, 3303, 3305, 3307, 3309, 3311, 3313, 3315, 3317, 3319, 3321, 3323, 3325, 3327, 3329, 3331, 3333, 3335, 3337, 3339, 3341, 3343, 3345, 3347, 3349, 3351, 3353, 3355, 3357, 3359, 3361, 3363, 3365, 3367, 3369, 3371, 3373, 3375, 3377, 3379, 3381, 3383, 3385, 3387, 3389, 3391, 3393, 3395, 3397, 3399, 3401, 3403, 3405, 3407, 3409, 3411, 3413, 3415, 3417, 3419, 3421, 3423, 3425, 3427, 3429, 3431, 3433, 3435, 3437, 3439, 3441, 3443, 3445, 3447, 3449, 3451, 3453, 3455, 3457, 3459, 3461, 3463, 3465, 3467, 3469, 3471, 3473, 3475, 3477, 3479, 3481, 3483, 3485, 3487, 3489, 3491, 3493, 3495, 3497, 3499, 3501, 3503, 3505, 3507, 3509, 3511, 3513, 3515, 3517, 3519, 3521, 3523, 3525, 3527, 3529, 3531, 3533, 3535, 3537, 3539, 3541, 3543, 3545, 3547, 3549, 3551, 3553, 3555, 3557, 3559, 3561, 3563, 3565, 3567, 3569, 3571, 3573, 3575, 3577, 3579, 3581, 3583, 3585, 3587, 3589, 3591, 3593, 3595, 3597, 3599, 3601, 3603, 3605, 3607, 3609, 3611, 3613, 3615, 3617, 3619, 3621, 3623, 3625, 3627, 3629, 3631, 3633, 3635, 3637, 3639, 3641, 3643, 3645, 3647, 3649, 3651, 3653, 3655, 3657, 3659, 3661, 3663, 3665, 3667, 3669, 3671, 3673, 3675, 3677, 3679, 3681, 3683, 3685, 3687, 3689, 3691, 3693, 3695, 3697, 3699, 3701, 3703, 3705, 3707, 3709, 3711, 3713, 3715, 3717, 3719, 3721, 3723, 3725, 3727, 3729, 3731, 3733, 3735, 3737, 3739, 3741, 3743, 3745, 3747, 3749, 3751, 3753, 3755, 3757, 3759, 3761, 3763, 3765, 3767, 3769, 3771, 3773, 3775, 3777, 3779, 3781, 3783, 3785, 3787, 3789, 3791, 3793, 3795, 3797, 3799, 3801, 3803, 3805, 3807, 3809, 3811, 3813, 3815, 3817, 3819, 3821, 3823, 3825, 3827, 3829, 3831, 3833, 3835, 3837, 3839, 3841, 3843, 3845, 3847, 3849, 3851, 3853, 3855, 3857, 3859, 3861, 3863, 3865, 3867, 3869, 3871, 3873, 3875, 3877, 3879, 3881, 3883, 3885, 3887, 3889, 3891, 3893, 3895, 3897, 3899, 3901, 3903, 3905, 3907, 3909, 3911, 3913, 3915, 3917, 3919, 3921, 3923, 3925, 3927, 3929, 3931, 3933, 3935, 3937, 3939, 3941, 3943, 3945, 3947, 3949, 3951, 3953, 3955, 3957, 3959, 3961, 3963, 3965, 3967, 3969, 3971, 3973, 3975, 3977, 3979, 3981, 3983, 3985, 3987, 3989, 3991, 3993, 3995, 3997, 3999, 4001, 4003, 4005, 4007, 4009, 4011, 4013, 4015, 4017, 4019, 4021, 4023, 4025, 4027, 4029, 4031, 4033



By July 1891 planting was well underway to take advantage of early winter rains, and by the end of the year 95,000 vines and 10,000 fruit trees had been planted on 128 acres (73 acres trellised; 55 acres staked). Because it would take three years for the orchards and vineyards to reach production, the blockers also planted vegetables to secure an early income. On 19 January 1892 the first consignment of blocker-grown vegetables was sent to Penola by James Ah Suee, an enterprising Chinese immigrant and market gardener.

The blockers were required to plant primarily Shiraz and Cabernet with a ratio of roughly two to one, reflecting the commercial opportunities of the time – the export of claret-style wines to Britain and other corners of the British Empire was in full swing. During the 1890s Shiraz was considered the most reliable fine grape variety to grow in Australia, although there were hopes that Cabernet Sauvignon could also make high quality wines. In addition to these plantings, small plots of Malbec and Pinot Noir were also established.

The source of this vinestock material is largely unknown, although Thomas Hardy, by then the president of the South Australian Agricultural Society, advised John Riddoch to plant varieties that would best suit the climate and soils of Coonawarra. He was certain that Shiraz and Cabernet Sauvignon would flourish and also believed ‘Pineau Noir’ (Pinot Noir) would be most valuable for the country around Naracoorte and Penola.

## ECONOMICS AND SCIENCE

The Penola Fruit Colony, later called the Coonawarra Fruit Colony, was the first wine region in the world to be founded on principles of science, modern agriculture and economic opportunity. Although Bordeaux and Rioja had industrialised their wine production through steam-driven machinery, their wine industries were steeped in more than a thousand years of close settlement and cultivation. Most New World wine regions, such as California’s Napa Valley or South Africa’s Cape Winelands, evolved or were selected because of their proximity to population centres or ports.

The Penola Fruit Colony, although a beneficiary of the new railway, was founded because its climate and rich, uncultivated Terra Rossa soils were considered ideal for orchards and vineyards. It was also inspired by fruit colonies in California

LEFT A sub-divisional plan for Penola. Cartographer James J Barrow, August 1890.

COURTESY OF PETER RYMILL

that had been developed on a grand scale made possible by technological advances (before the commercialisation of refrigeration in the mid-1850s fruit could only be preserved for export by canning or evaporation drying). Winemaking was also a way of realising an economic value for grape production and with faster transport it was possible to get wine to the main population centres in good condition.

Despite favourable conditions, the establishment of the Penola Fruit Colony in 1890 was poorly timed – soon after the first plantings (and further allocations of land for development) the Australian economy was hit hard by the 1893 banking crisis. During the 1880s the Australian colonies had experienced an unprecedented land boom and commercial banks and building societies had been liberal in their lending to developers. After the collapse of the land boom after 1888 a spate of bankruptcies created a severe financial crisis and on 30 January 1893 the Federal Bank of Australia closed its doors. By 17 May, many banking institutions in New South Wales, Victoria and Queensland had temporarily or permanently ceased trading. The Penola District Council was affected, with £250 in cheques dishonoured, however the fruit colony was buffered from the full force of the crisis because it was privately bankrolled by John Riddoch. The economic depression, which lasted for years, made the first decade substantially reliant on Riddoch's financial support.

## APPLIED SCIENCE

Applied science became an underlying feature of the Australian winemaking scene during the post-*phylloxera* era when a better understanding of vines, pathogens, diseases and fermentation led to new innovations, applications and techniques. (The discovery of American rootstocks as a means of replanting vines in *phylloxera*-infested wine regions had also allowed France's wine industry to recover during the 1880s and 1890s, new iron spindle presses with ratcheting systems had been invented, and by the end of the century hydraulics and steam-driven patent presses were common.)

In 1894 the French agricultural expert Jean Marie Adrian Despeissis, a trained agronomist and graduate of the Institut Pasteur in Paris, presented a paper in Sydney titled 'The Vineyard and the cellar; with two chapters on wine fermentation and racking.' He predicted that distinct types of yeast would eventually be cultivated for the fermentation of red and white table wines, ports and sherries. Having worked in the vineyards of the *Médoc* at W & A Gilbey

he was up to date with modern winemaking practices and proved to be an important figure in Western Australia's developing agricultural scene. He was also interested in winery architecture and recommended air cavities in walls and roof insulation to keep fermentation cellars cool. The exchange of technical knowledge within the Australian colonies gathered speed during this time and Coonawarra was a significant beneficiary, especially through the interest of Professor Arthur Perkins.

In 1900 Raymond Dubois and W. Percy Wilkinson of the Rutherglen Viticultural Station translated into English Professor L. Roos' 1898 book *L'Industrie vinicole meridionale*, which highlighted the latest science and innovations of late-19th century winemaking. Known in Australia as *Wine-making in hot climates*, the text promoted the use of cooling coils in fermentation vats and the latest equipment for vigneron planning large-scale production. This publication influenced Arthur Perkins who, despite his youth, was a very popular, hard-working and highly regarded colonial viticulturist.

## PROFESSOR ARTHUR PERKINS

Professor Arthur Perkins was appointed as South Australia's government viticulturist in 1892. He also lectured in viticulture and oenology at Roseworthy Agricultural College, where he gained his professorship in 1895. Perkins' remarkable energy and foresight played a crucial role in developing sustainable viticultural practices and devising quarantine regulations to protect South Australia from phylloxera.

In 1895 he established 80 acres of vineyards and a winery at Roseworthy to progress the research and development of table wine production. He also experimented with copper coiling in vats (to keep ferments cool), having ordered the equipment in 1896. Between 1892 and 1914 he taught viticulture, winemaking and fruit culture, even while principal of the college. He also lectured on many of these subjects in wine-growing districts. Articulate and engaging, his interests and expertise across various disciplines of agriculture and mixed farming were astonishing – as editor of the *The Journal of the Department of Agriculture of South Australia* and a distinguished professor, his contribution to South Australia was immense.

It was also around this time that the first official technical manuals appeared for Australian vignerons, including *The South Australian vinegrower's manual: a practical guide to the art of viticulture in South Australia* by George Sutherland and monthly periodical *The Australian Vigneron and Fruit Growers' Journal*.



## THE 1895 VINTAGE

Just before the first Coonawarra vintage in 1895, Arthur Perkins visited Penola at the behest of John Riddoch and vigneron Thomas Hardy (in his capacity as the president of the South Australian Agricultural Society). Perkins wrote soon after in *Garden and Field* and the *Narracoorte Herald*: “I am persuaded that in time some of the wines of the highest quality yet made in South Australia will emanate from this district. It has everything in its favour – soil, climate and varieties of vines best suited for the purpose.”

By mid-March the first fruits of the vines were made into wine in the galvanised iron building constructed by John Davidson at John Riddoch’s nursery. The wines were made by nurseryman Frederick Wood in relatively basic conditions using 250-gallon (1140 litre) vats, and they were, according to an 1895 report in the *South Eastern Star*, “all that could be desired at the present stage, and when mature will be of very high quality.”

## WILLIAM SALTER

After the 1895 vintage John Riddoch realised that the Penola Fruit Colony needed a full-time, qualified winemaker. Arthur Perkins’ optimism about the district’s potential for winemaking was by now well publicised, with Mount Gambier’s *Border Watch* reporting: “[Arthur Perkins] is now quite satisfied that the district is eminently suitable for the production of the highest quality wines and looks upon the growth of the vines and fruit trees as extraordinary.”

On Perkins’ recommendation, John Riddoch hired William Salter, the grandson of William Salter Snr, founder of Saltram winery in the Barossa Valley. Although his tenure was short-lived his impact was substantial. Under his watch winemaking equipment was transferred to the Katnook Woolshed in time for the 1896 vintage and the four-year-old Shiraz and Cabernet Sauvignon vines yielded 51 tons of grapes, which were picked by local schoolboys. Riddoch’s own harvest comprised 20 tons while the remaining intake was purchased from 15 blockers at £7.10 per ton for Cabernet Sauvignon and £4.10 per ton for Shiraz. During vintage Robert Lear’s Cabernet Sauvignon grapes were deemed to have been damaged by powdery mildew, a fungal disease that had ravaged French vineyards during the 1850s, but it was controlled with the application of sulphur powder.

## COONAWARRA

By February 1897 a village for the Penola Fruit Colony had been surveyed, subdivided and approved by the Penola District Council. In August of the same year the Penola Fruit Colonists' Association unanimously agreed that the name chosen for the township by John Riddoch – Coonawarra – be adopted, and that it would also be known as the name of the settlement. Thus, the Coonawarra wine region was born.

At the same meeting the colonists' association established a Frost Vigilance Committee. The threat of spring frosts was now well known in the region. With the advice of Arthur Perkins, a system was put in place to respond to a threat as soon as the temperature fell to within one or two degrees of frost. After an alarm was given, the appointed watchmen would rush into the vineyards and light smoke-generating fires to heat the falling temperature. According to Mount Gambier's *Border Watch* newspaper, the smoke fires would be kept burning until after sunrise to prevent the rays acting upon the frost prism.

## PHYLLOXERA AND CODLING MOTH

The 1898 vintage heralded new optimism, with a bountiful harvest of 170 tons and an order for 50 hogsheads of Coonawarra Claret from the South Australian Government's wine and produce depot in London. (The year before 10 hogsheads had been sent to England as a trial with great success.)

The fruit trade was also working extremely well, with record prices for Coonawarra apples in England and South Africa, although the threat of codling moth – a world-wide problem – was on everyone's mind and fruit cases for shipping were frequently steam cleaned as a quarantine measure.

By this time phylloxera had taken hold in Victoria and destroyed many vineyards, especially in the Geelong area. Spooked by these threats the government passed *The Phylloxera Act 1899* in December and established the Phylloxera and Grape Industry Board of South Australia to quarantine and control outbreaks.

Although there were reports of bulbs and plants being sent by intercolonial post and evidence that vines, shrubs and trees were being moved across the border at Casterton, the severe threat to livelihoods and better policing ensured that the law was generally observed. *The Phylloxera Act 1899* was followed by amendments in 1911, 1922, 1926, 1930, 1935, 1936, 1937, 1940, 1948, 1963, 1966 and 1969, all of which (with the exception of 1969) ensured the prevention of new vinestock material

entering South Australia for 70 years. The latest legislation is the *Phylloxera and Grape Industry Act 1995*, which provides “for the protection of vineyards from disease and to assist and support the grape industry in South Australia.”

## THREE GABLES

John Riddoch’s new three-gabled winery received its first intake of fruit at 8am on 11 March 1897, with eight hundredweight (406 kilograms) of ‘carbinet’ (Cabernet Sauvignon) delivered by dray.

With the full confidence and encouragement of his employer, winemaker William Salter had based the winery design on his family’s Barossa Valley winery, Saltram Cellars. The brown sandstone structure, built by Penola stonemason William Blight, measured 94 feet (28.6 m) wide and 65 feet (19.8 m) deep. The floors and roof were supported by heavy eucalypt pillars and Oregon beams.

The design incorporated a receiving area in which horse and dray could deliver the fruit straight to the receiving bin to be weighed and then tipped down into a hopper at a lower level. A portable eight horsepower Robey & Co steam engine powered a continuous-belt elevator which delivered the fruit to a Bagshaw crusher and destemmer. The must was then gravity fed by chute into easy-to-clean glass-lined (sodium silicate) concrete vats with header boards. Typically, stalks and stems were placed over the cap of skins and seed to aid pumping over and extraction of colour and flavour. Coils in the vats, installed on advice of Arthur Perkins, could control the ferment by either heating (with steam) or cooling (with underground water) the must. At the end of fermentation the wine was racked off by manual rotary pumps into 1000-gallon storage casks and seasoned, 500-gallon Adelaide-coopered French oak casks. The winery also had a fully equipped laboratory and two offices. Although designed to hold 75,000 gallons the cellar was holding much more than that after a few years.

In July 1897 the first wines from the Penola Fruit Colony were bottled and labelled. The 1895 Coonawarra Vineyards Claret, generally considered an excellent wine with a fragrant bouquet that was very palatable, began a South Australian tradition and ignited hopes for greatness. Arthur Perkins considered the inaugural release as fine as he had tasted in the colony, and just the kind that would find a market in London among the higher classes.

By 1898 William Salter had left the Coonawarra Fruit Colony and returned to the Barossa Valley, where he was engaged by D&J Fowler to run the enormous 900-acre Kalimna vineyard, orchard and grazing property. Despite Salter’s



departure, Riddoch was full of enthusiasm for his great undertaking, believing that the export market would allow the Coonawarra region to develop quickly and by July of the same year he had offered up a further 78 allotments of 10 acres for lease. Propelled by great reports about the quality of apples and wines from Coonawarra, new blockers signed up and planted more orchards and vineyards.

## EWEN MCBAIN AND JACK RIDDOKH

Arthur Perkins recommend that Ewen Fergusson McBain, a gold medallist graduate and assistant government viticulturist of Roseworthy Agricultural College, replace William Salter. Powerfully broad shouldered and squat in stature, McBain would become known for meticulous attention to detail in the Riddoch vineyards and winery. He oversaw the completion of Coonawarra Cellars and his reputation for technical proficiency and winery hygiene was legendary. During the early 1900s he employed both Bill Redman and Arthur Hoffmann and trained them as assistant winemakers. Although he resigned from his winemaking duties around 1907, Ewen McBain remained in the area until 1922 before moving back to Adelaide.

The optimism for the Coonawarra Fruit Colony was reflected in the steady bearing of vines. After planting it usually takes three years to get a crop and yields are also dependent on growing conditions through the seasons. Yields gradually increased but not without dramas, especially with severe frosts in 1900 where only 50 tons could be saved for making wine.

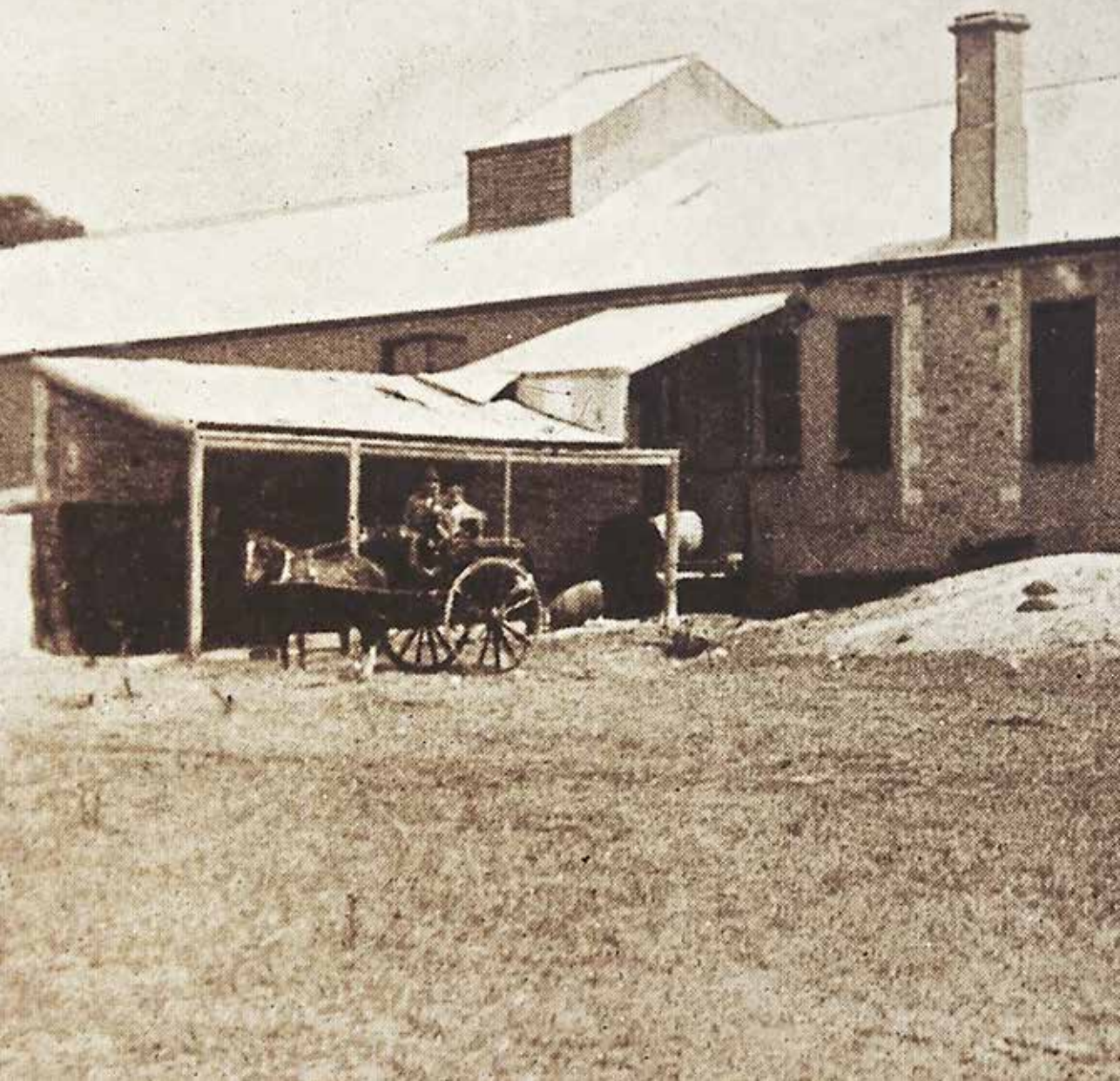
Coonawarra Cellars produced 16,000 gallons of wine in 1897 and 24,000 gallons in 1898. By this time John Riddoch, due to ill health, had asked his only son, John 'Jack' Riddoch, to take over the running of the family business and the development of the Coonawarra Fruit Colony. It was also around this time that John Riddoch began to unravel some of his agricultural holdings. In 1898, with his brother George, the substantial Nalang and Weinteriga properties were sold and their partnership in Glencoe Station was dissolved.

Although more interested in wool growing, Jack Riddoch worked hard in his new apprenticeship. By this time a portion of 1895 and 1896 vintages had been bottled and made available for release. With positive reviews and plenty of backslapping *The Adelaide Advertiser* reported in 1902 that "...the Coonawarra Fruit Colony stands there to-day as testimony to the quality of the land for closer settlement, and its suitability for fruit and vine culture. Indeed, the claret produced at the Coonawarra Cellars has been pronounced the best in Australia."

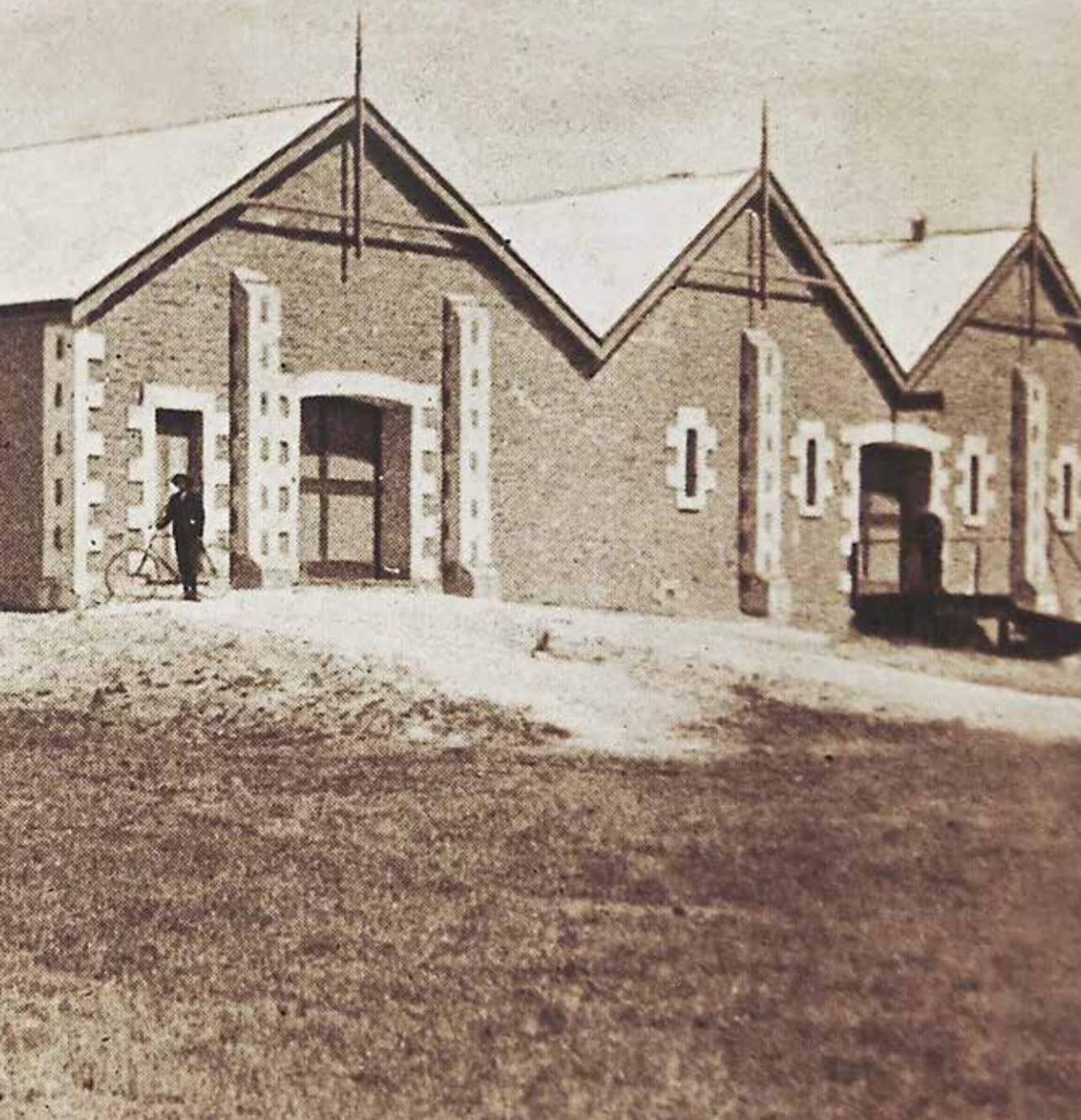
In 1899 weekly magazine the *Critic* published a photographic essay of Coonawarra

The famous triple-gabled winery (then named Chateau Comaum) in the 1890s.

WYNNS









Estate showing John Riddoch's residence, the gabled winery, the vineyard (including vine tying) and lemon and apricot trees.

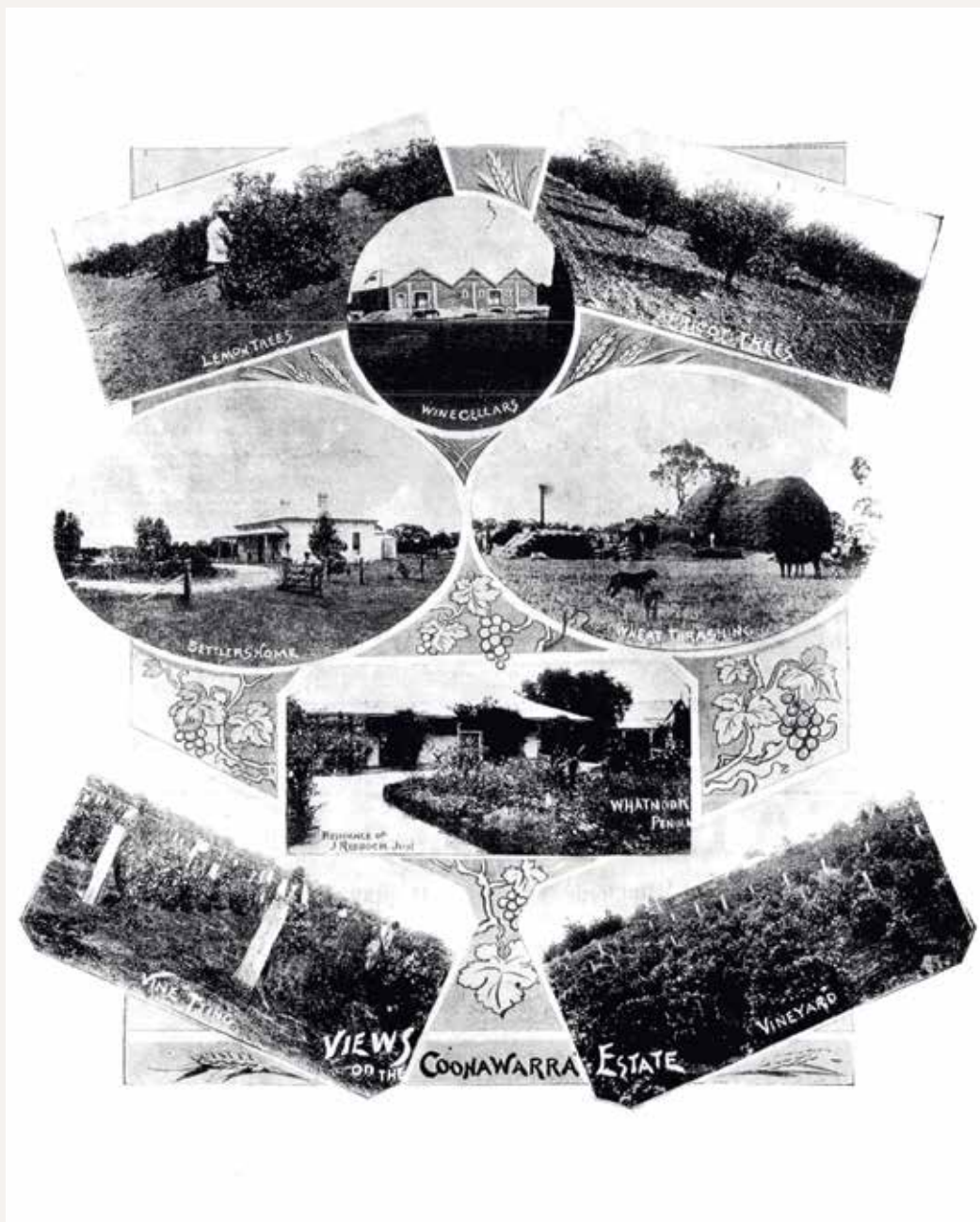
## FEDERATION

By the time of Australia's Federation, in 1901, the Coonawarra Fruit Colony comprised 700 acres of orchards and vineyards. The plantings primarily consisted of Shiraz (180 acres), Cabernet Sauvignon (120 acres) and Malbec (30 acres). There were also minor plantings of Pinot Noir.

Under the guidance of Ewen McBain the Coonawarra Cellars were substantially extended to increase storage capacity. The 1901 harvest was a bumper crop and all the growers received profitable prices for their grapes. Nonetheless, John Riddoch's low-yielding Pinot Noir plantings were unsuccessful and mostly grubbed up. In the same year Ewen McBain employed a then 14-year-old Bill Redman, who had arrived in the region with his 16-year-old brother, Dick. Although Dick was laid off after the picking season, Bill was kept on with full board and lodging for £1 a week – which represented 66 working hours. Strict working conditions such as these would enable Coonawarra's wine tradition to carry on through the worst of times.

Riddoch's Coonawarra Vineyards Claret was a much greater ambition than bringing a new wine to the market – it epitomised the spirit of the time and the belief that South Australia's south east could become something great. In 1899, when Jack Riddoch told a reporter for the *South Australian Register* "The success of this claret means that the land will be occupied by a prosperous community, who in turn will make the South East a busy part we would like to be," he was channelling the colonisation power of land theory promoted by French scientist Jules Guyot, whose *Culture de la Vigne et Vinification* had been translated into English. In a pre-amble to viticulture and winemaking practices Guyot had written: "One acre of the Château-Lafitte [*sic*], or the Clos-Vougeot, gives more wealth to the public than one hundred acres of poor wastes, planted with a forest or turned into an ordinary farm. To speak more precisely, in poor soils, the production of bread and meat will not create wealth, whereas wealth will always produce bread and meat." This agronomist theory was called 'the colonisation power of land' and it was central to John Riddoch's ideas for the Coonawarra Fruit Colony.

W. Catton Grasby, the editor of South Australia's *Garden and Field*, published a short illustrated book titled *The Coonawarra Fruit Colony*, which outlined the same principles. In it he wrote: "With intense culture the land might be made to support a



An early photo essay about Coonawarra Estate from weekly magazine the *Critic*. March 18, 1889.

large population, combining the advantages of rural, healthy life with the pleasures of social intercourse. No form of agronomical work combines these two conditions as does the culture of fruit trees and vines.”

## ERA'S END

John Riddoch passed away at his Yallum Park mansion on 15 July 1901 at 74 years of age.

Over the preceding decades he had watched the fledgling Coonawarra Fruit Colony develop into a promising enterprise. He was the first chairman of the Penola District Council and a benefactor to Penola's Presbyterian Church, institute and library. He had great influence over the colonial government's investment in new infrastructure, particularly government buildings in Penola, and the construction of an extensive network of drainage ditches and roads.

In a notice three days after Riddoch's death, the *Narracoorte Herald* reported that “Mr Riddoch represented the District in Parliament for many years, and made an energetic and useful member... and he promoted in Parliament many useful works which have done, and are now doing, much to develop the South East.” The article goes on to credit his efforts in developing the region's roads and railways line, as well as assisting to raise public funds for the district's hospital.

He was buried at Penola. His wife, three daughters and a son survived him, and his estate was sworn for probate at almost £250,000. A year later, in 1902, the last of the Pinchunga people, Big Jack Jackey Yallum, who had worked for John Riddoch for 40 years, died, marking the end of an era.

John Riddoch's legacy of generosity and influence on the community would not be forgotten. In 1906 the *Adelaide Advertiser* praised the late John Riddoch for showing practical proof of what could be done with land in the south east in the way of closer settlement. “The land had used to carry one sheep to the acre, but it had been turned into a thriving fruit garden, and during the last three years the revenue derived... was £2,500.” The article went on to observe that “Two men could look after 700 sheep, but on the 700 acres referred to there were now 26 settlers with their families.” This supported the idea that investment in high-end agricultural products created a great financial return, and that a successful farming enterprise would generate a local community and economy.



## THE WHEELS START TO FALL OFF

Although production steadily increased during the 1900s, the seeds of the Coonawarra Fruit Colony's demise had been sown with the Federation of Australia in January 1901 and the removal of intercolonial trade barriers, which exposed Coonawarra to severe competition from other wine regions and producers. (There is some irony in this, as John Riddoch believed that federation would improve the living standards and opportunities for South Australia's south east.)

While the fruit colony was not overly exposed to the disastrous Federation Drought (which lasted from 1895 to 1902) because of its substantial underground basin of ground water, the project's momentum began to decline due to a heavy reliance on export markets and the nation's increasing preference for fortified wines, especially after the First World War.

Agricultural journalist W. Catton Grasby had already identified the Coonawarra Fruit Colony's Achilles heel. In 1899 he observed that John Riddoch's grand scheme would rely heavily on his "ample capital" and inferred that without it the purchase of wine and making of wine would be at risk. By 1903 the vintage had increased to 540 tons (81,000 gallons), and in 1909 the winery had processed 493 tons (70,000 gallons), however sales did not match production and grape prices had declined as well, dropping from £7.10 a ton (Cabernet Sauvignon) and £4.10 a ton (Shiraz) to just £3 per ton for both in 1909 – if the crop could be sold. As James Halliday wrote in his book *Coonawarra: the history, the vignerons & the wines*, "growers sold grapes for as little as 15s a ton or fed them to pigs."

## THE GREAT CARVE UP

With John Riddoch no longer on the scene, in 1906 the trustees of Yallum Park carved up the land into lots ranging from 25 to 865 acres and put a vast area of the estate (17,000 acres) up for sale.

In 1909 the Redman family acquired an unsold 40-acre block of land from Yallum Park for £900. A further 13,736 acres was sold at auction in 1912 in 44 lots of varying sizes from 10 to 1000 acres. Although this encouraged closer settlement in the area, the Coonawarra dream had lost its reverie and the blockers were now alone.

In 1901 the Coonawarra Cellars held sixty 1000-gallon casks, two hundred 50-gallon casks and 600 hogsheads its cellars. An alarming stagnation of sales resulted in the need for increased storage and casks were moved over to the Katnook

Shearing Shed. Shortly afterwards, on the advice of Ewen McBain, the executors installed a pot still and brick chimney at Coonawarra Cellars to process the wine into brandy as a way of dealing with the oversupply of wine grapes.

## COONAWARRA BRANDY

On Christmas Eve 1910 Mount Gambier's *Border Watch* reported that "part section 150, H.d of Comaum, 70½ acres from trustees late John Riddoch" had been sold to Château Tanunda. This also included the sale of Coonawarra Cellars, which was progressively converted to brandy production including bond storage.

Fallow land around the winery was planted extensively with Doradillo – a neutral grape favoured for distillation, illustrating the move away from table wine production. Pedro Ximénez, a notable sherry grape variety, was also planted around 1907 or 1917, although records are not clear. Significant labour shortages and the increasing demand for hospital brandy further distanced Coonawarra from John Riddoch's dream.

The following is an extract from *The Château Tanunda : a brief review of Australia's greatest brandy distillery* (a promotional brochure written by Frank Smith):

*At Coonawarra, in the South East of South Australia, the Company have another fine property. It is here that the finest Brandy in the Commonwealth is being produced. The rich wine of this district produces a Brandy carrying all the delicate ethers and medicinal properties which render Château Tanunda such a valuable Spirit in the Australian Hospitals. Ninety-six thousand (96,000) gallons of wine were produced at Coonawarra this year, all of which will be distilled for Brandy, and with the advent of new planting and every energy to induce growers to plant larger areas of vines, a prosperous future seems assured for this charming district, which, for glorious exhilarating life amid the most healthy surroundings, is equal to the best in the Commonwealth.*

In 1913 Château Tanunda produced 173,939 proof gallons, or 180,712 cases, of brandy. The following year the managing director, Warren Edwards, told the press that his facility in Coonawarra had distilled 96,000 gallons of wine into brandy during the previous vintage. He declared, "Château Tanunda have stuck to their guns for the past twenty-four years, are out to specialise in pure brandy, have come to stay and intend to stay."

## WARTIME ECONOMY

The advent of the First World War in 1914 had a profound impact on wine production, markets and manpower. From a population of fewer than five million, 416,809 Australian men enlisted, of whom more than 60,000 were killed in action and 156,000 were wounded, gassed, or became prisoners of war. The war touched all communities including the township of Penola. Wine exports dropped sharply.

By 1916 all was not well with Château Tanunda. The troubled enterprise disposed of its Barossa assets – winery building and vineyards included – to B. Seppelt and Sons Limited, making the Seppelt family the largest wine and brandy producer in the Southern Hemisphere at the time. The Coonawarra Cellars distillery operated until 1923, when it was acquired by Milne & Co, an Adelaide-based spirits company that produced brandy, whisky, gin and rum.

## NEW BEGINNINGS

After the First World War soldier settlement schemes were established around the country to support returning soldiers with a new life on the land. These schemes involved subdividing Crown Land into small farming blocks and leasing them to discharged servicemen — South Australia's McLaren Vale and Coonawarra regions, along with New South Wales' Riverina district, were model examples of this initiative.

Many wine companies bought fruit from these new growers, although it was tough going – potential for exports to the British Empire, particularly England, kept optimism high but most of the soldier settlements were farmed by complete novices. Over 37,500 returning soldiers established farms, yet by 1929 almost half had given up and left their land as a lack of farming experience, isolation, a long drought and falling prices made life difficult.

During the post-war years South Australia became the dominant wine-producing state in Australia. The *Wine Export Bounty Act 1924*, in which the federal government subsidised wineries so they could compete with fortified wines imported from Portugal and Spain, meant fortified wine soon dominated the winemaking scene, arguably pushing back Australia's fine wine potential by decades. While many large wineries prospered because of preferential Empire trade with England and successful distribution for their wines within the Australian states, others began to fail, particularly small producers of table wine.





(L-R) Dick Modistash, Art Redman, Mr Hinton, Owen Skinner and Len Redman in the 1920s.

WYNNS

## VINEYARD DECLINE

Bill Redman had recognised the parlous state of the Coonawarra Fruit Colony after the sale of Coonawarra Cellars to Château Tanunda in 1910. Around this time, Redman had contacted Douglas Tolley, of Tolley, Scott & Tolley, who agreed to take his crop, as long as it was vinified into wine. Using rudimentary equipment, Redman managed to make a wine of adequate quality for bulk sale and for some years the arrangement worked well, but Tolley stopped buying Redman's 'Coonawarra Burgundy' in 1920 as his own fortunes began to decline.

Soon Redman was in contact with David Fulton, owner of Woodley's Wines and Lieutenant Colonel of the Australian Army's 3rd Light Horse Regiment. On Fulton's advice Redman altered his harvest dates and winemaking style to make a lighter claret (aged in oak for one year). These wines were sent to Woodley's at Glen Osmond in the Adelaide Hills for blending and bottling. For years the celebrated Woodley's Clarets comprised Coonawarra wine without any reference on the label to its regional provenance. Although recognition was scant, in 1928 Bill Redman tried to persuade the Coonawarra blockers to form a cooperative to sell fruit to Woodley's, but to no avail.

Coonawarra's potential was again noticed during the 1930s, mostly by those within the Australian wine industry, although the 1933 Woodley's St Adele Claret, made with fruit sourced from Redman, did win first prize at the Brewers Exhibitions Empire Competition in London in 1936.

But things were not looking good for Coonawarra's blockers. In 1936 the South Australian Government convinced many of the region's soldier settlers to pull their vines and establish dairy farms. Within a few years only 300 acres of the original 900 acres of vines remained.

## SECOND WORLD WAR

During the Second World War the isolated Coonawarra district benefited from Prisoner of War (POW) labour. Around 1943, 1070 Italian prisoners were put to work in country areas, especially in South Australia's south east and the Adelaide Hills. Apparently, the prisoners were dressed in old army jackets dyed mulberry so they could be easily spotted if they tried to run away. Rumours circulated the district that the Coonawarra Cellars distillery was mined with explosives amid fears of a Japanese invasion via Guichen Bay at Robe.

By 1945 the Redman family depended primarily on fruit and sheep for income.

They owned 30 acres of orchards, 500 acres of grazing land and 40 acres of vines. Bill Redman continued to enthusiastically make wine despite being married to a strict Presbyterian teetotaler. As a consequence, the Redman family never drank wine ‘except in the line of duty,’ according to Les Hinton’s 1971 profile on the winery.

In late 1945 Tony Nelson, managing director and cellarmaster of Woodley’s Wines, purchased John Riddoch’s original gabled winery from Milne & Co, plus 130 acres of vineyards. Wine merchants and producers Samuel Wynn and son David Wynn had also been interested in buying Coonawarra Cellars at the time, having observed the quality of Bill Redman’s table wines.

In the same year Bill Redman’s son Owen Redman returned to Coonawarra after serving with the 2/4th Armoured Regiment in New Guinea and Bougainville. The younger Redman took up a 35-year lease on unused land that had been made available through South Australia’s *Discharged Soldier Settlement Act 1934* and Tony Nelson hired the Redmans to manage the Coonawarra vineyards and make the wine on behalf of Woodley’s.

## YOU CAN WRITE FAILURE ACROSS THE FACE OF COONAWARRA

The new company created by Woodley’s was called Chateau Comaum, and Bill Redman and his sons Leonard and Owen made the wines while Bill’s cousin Jock Redman managed the vineyards.

When Bill Redman was interviewed some years later he remarked, “From 1890 to 1945 you can write failure across the face of Coonawarra.” Riddoch’s fruit colony had been designed to turn South Australia’s south east into a major agricultural centre and community, however ultimately Coonawarra’s isolation from the major centres of population, sluggish investment of roads and railways, scarcity of labour, economic depression and war slowed down development. It was Bill Redman who kept the vision going and his efforts are inextricably linked to the boom that would take place during the 1960s. He is credited for making every major red wine that came out of Coonawarra for the best part of the 20th century.

## POST WAR RENAISSANCE

Woodley’s first Coonawarra vintage was a disaster. In 1946 downy mildew swept through the region for the first time, but nonetheless table wine production

at Chateau Comaum was cranked up the following year. Woodley's St Adele Coonawarra Claret, rebadged with a distinct regional origin in 1949, enjoyed new brand awareness among consumers. The reputation of Coonawarra also improved within Australia's wine community, especially after the reinstatement of wine shows around the country in 1947. Meanwhile the economy began to gear up and many agricultural regions began to mechanise.

After the war the Coonawarra region received new immigrants from war-torn Europe. A group of Baltic immigrants – many Estonians and Latvians – arrived in 1948 and many worked in the vineyards at Woodley's. Although many came from professional backgrounds, this new life represented a fresh start.

Woodley's Chateau Comaum was the centre of life in Coonawarra and by far the largest winery in the district. Eric Brand, who had married Bill Redman's daughter Nancy in 1942, arrived in Coonawarra in 1950 and worked with the Redmans until their Rouge Homme winery was sold to Lindeman's in 1965. After this he went out on his own to create Brand's Laira with 60 acres of vines.

In a 2003 interview Brand recalled:

*I remember when I came here Coonawarra was just a quiet little village and everything seemed to rest around the winery over at Woodley's. They had the steam boiler going and they'd blow the whistle at twenty past seven and we'd all start working. Twelve o'clock, we'd knock off and go home for lunch. One o'clock, they'd blow it again and we'd all start work again. They'd blow it again at five o'clock and we'd knock off. We all seemed to be centred around the winery over there.*

Woodley's re-started Coonawarra and its Woodley's Treasure Claret, which later became known by collectors as the Woodley's Treasure Chest Series, had a great impact on the reputation of the region. The wines were predominantly Shiraz Cabernet blends but 'Australian Claret' in style, and they showed the brilliance and promise of Coonawarra's Terra Rossa soils. But these qualities were only discovered by the public well after Chateau Comaum and vineyards had been sold to David Wynn (in 1951) and renamed Coonawarra Estate.

## WOODLEY'S TREASURE CHEST SERIES

In the late 1950s Tony Nelson discovered eight batches of Bill Redman-made Coonawarra Claret wines in the tunnels of the old silver mines at Woodley's Winery in Glen Osmond. Nelson engaged Wyt Morro, the most influential wine



label designer of the era, to create ‘The Treasure Series’ for Woodley’s Coonawarra Claret with label designs matched to the character of the wine. The etching of Skeleton – a well-known 19th century racehorse — was paired with the gutsy 1956 vintage and the Queen Adelaide, which would later be used as a major Australian wine brand, was paired with the more delicate 1953 vintage.

This series, produced from 1949 to 1956, was sold through Australian Trade Commissioners around the world and selected wine shops around the country. Only the 1955 vintage (The Galatea) was labelled differently because it was blended with a small portion of other regional wine. The labels were over double the thickness of normal commercial labels and needed to be applied by hand, but the effort was worthwhile because they gave the wines a feeling of significance. The release of the series was announced by an accompanying brochure: *‘A portfolio for the connoisseur.’*

The first Woodley’s Treasure Clarets were made at Chateau Comaum, but after 1951 the wines were made at Bill Redman’s Rouge Homme winery. Inevitably a bust up occurred in 1956 between Woodley’s and the Redman family as a consequence of conflicting commercial interests, especially after the creation of Redman’s Rouge Homme brand. Nonetheless the Woodley’s Treasure Chest Series Coonawarra Clarets, as they have become known, represent one of the foundation blocks of Australia’s post war fine wine scene. They also showed winemakers and collectors what Coonawarra could be.

## WYNN AND COMPANY

In the 1920s, S. Wynn and Co was the most influential wholesale wine business in Melbourne. The Wynn family also had interests in restaurants, including Café Denat, which would eventually become Grossi Florentino, and large vineyard holdings and wineries in South Australia including Wynvale, between Adelaide and the Barossa Valley, and Romalo Sparkling Wine Cellars at Magill in South Australia.

Samuel Wynn had emigrated from Russia-occupied Poland, arriving in Australia in 1913. Although he came from a family of vintners, he built a substantial wine business through his own imagination and hard work. His son David Wynn rejoined the family business (after serving with the Royal Australian Air Force) in 1945 and expanded the business including a large vineyard development at Modbury in 1947, now a suburb of Adelaide called Wynn Vale.

Against the advice of his management team, in 1951 David Wynn purchased Chateau Comaum and its surrounding vineyards and renamed it Coonawarra Estate.

At the time land prices had increased markedly because of a strong demand for wool created by the Korean War, and there were rumours that the vineyards would be sold as grazing land and the cellars converted into a wool store.

Ken Ward, a Roseworthy-trained winemaker working at the Wynns-owned Romalo Sparkling Wine Cellars in Magill at the time, had listened to the negotiation, which took place on the phone. In a 2003 interview with Rob Linn, Ward recalled: “The offer was £15,000 .... It went up in £2,500 steps until they got to £25,000, which Tony Nelson accepted. That’s what they bought it for.”

The sale represented an enormous profit at the time and showed great confidence in the potential of Coonawarra. Eric Brand believed that it was the saving of Coonawarra and that in some respects the jigsaw puzzle was now complete. After decades of uncertainty, and fully aware of John Riddoch’s grand visions, David Wynn took control of the region’s destiny. With strong distribution in Melbourne coupled with wealth and a creative flair he set a new standard of wine making and marketing practices that quickly made Coonawarra Estate one of the biggest names in Australia’s rapidly expanding table wine market.

## REDMAN AND ROUGE HOMME

The sale of Chateau Comaum to Wynns changed the commercial outlook of Coonawarra. In 1952, Bill and Owen Redman began selling bulk wine to Thomas Hardy, Yalumba, Reynella, Leo Buring and Woodley’s. They also established the Rouge Homme brand (in 1953) to take advantage of their newfound independence. Their immediate success was not well received by Woodley’s, resulting in the end of that relationship, but the reputation of Coonawarra began to attract new entrants including Ron Haselgrove’s Mildara in 1955 and Penfolds in 1960. For a while Redman’s processed Mildara and Penfolds’ vintage intake at their Rouge Homme Winery, but an offer in 1965 by Lindeman’s to purchase the winery, 75 acres of vineyard and 400 acres of prime Terra Rossa land, was irresistible to the Redman family.

## HICKINBOTHAM – FATHER AND SON

During the early 1950s Coonawarra was still operating without mains electricity or refrigeration and Coonawarra Estate was reliant on steam or petrol-driven machinery for light and power.

During the 1952 vintage Ian Hickinbotham, the first winemaker at Wynns Coonawarra Estate, introduced a new method of winemaking where the addition of sulphur dioxide was minimised and, more importantly, delayed. This technique led to malolactic fermentation taking place after primary fermentation of the red wines. (Astonishingly the leading scientists of the day believed that warm climate grapes comprised no malic acid.) Ian's experiments, emboldened by the advice of Roseworthy Agricultural College's Alan Hickinbotham (his father), were spectacularly good and by 1954 all red wines were undergoing malolactic fermentation after their primary ferments, leading to further bacterial stability in Australian red wines. Likewise, Penfolds oenologist Ray Beckwith's 1930s advancements in wine stability and the understanding of malolactic fermentation in Australian red wine eventually led to a new era in winemaking, but all of this took time to distil through the system.

Hickinbotham's first vintages of Coonawarra Estate Claret (based on Shiraz) were well received, aided by new woodcut design wine labels by Richard Beck, and it is believed that the 1953 Wynns Coonawarra Estate Claret was taken to England on the royal yacht *Britannia*.

## WYNNS COONAWARRA ESTATE

In May 1954 the *Narracoorte Herald* reported that David Wynn told local growers "My prime aim is an extensive advertising campaign in Melbourne to make Coonawarra famous." That same year Norm Walker, the son of the legendary winemaker Hurtle Walker, replaced Ian Hickinbotham as winemaker and made the first vintage of Wynn Coonawarra Estate Cabernet Sauvignon from three tons of grower fruit. This was the first 100 per cent Coonawarra Cabernet Sauvignon in the region's history. The advertising campaigns, in which Wynns Coonawarra Estate was positioned as making the first quality wine in Australia, were a remarkable success.

## 1955

The 1955 vintage followed a magnificent growing season in Coonawarra. The Wynns Coonawarra Estate Michael Hermitage was a special bottling and is regarded as one of Australia's greatest wines from the era. Named after David Wynn's son Michael, it achieved extraordinary success. As author and wine critic James Halliday wrote in his 1985 *Australian Wine Compendium*: "1955 was an historical year; not only did Wynns plant the first Rhine Riesling in the district (and commence an expansion of

its Cabernet Sauvignon plantings) but it also produced a range of quite magnificent wines. The most exceptional of these was 1955 Michael Hermitage, a freak wine which gained much of its character from the secondhand fortified-wine cask in which it was matured.”

In 1955 the BBC Television service made a film titled *Coonawarra Vintage* that was devoted in part to the activities of Italian immigrants in the district. It formed part of a series called *Commonwealth Gazette*, which was a compilation of items from Australia, Canada and South Africa. The film depicted Italian workers on Wynns Coonawarra Estate, which had welcomed them to the district and provided accommodation and employment. Although the estate had three tractors at the time, the management of vineyard blocks and harvesting was all done by hand.

## A BRILLIANT DECADE

The 1960s was a brilliant decade for Australian wine, and Coonawarra in particular, as investment in vineyards, new wine regions and technology began to pay off. By the end of the decade Penfolds Grange had achieved enormous recognition for its ground-breaking house style and the most famous wines of this era represent an innovative waypoint in modern Australian wine history. Wynns, Penfolds, Mildara, Brand's and Redman's dominated the scene.

In 1960, when the post-war table wine market was still in its infancy and Coonawarra was barely known as a wine region, Bill Redman encouraged Jeffrey Penfold-Hyland of Penfolds to buy what is now known as the Sharam vineyard. After tasting examples of the region's wines, Max Schubert believed that the fruit profiles of cool-climate Coonawarra and warm-climate Barossa were complementary and would lead to an all-round and balanced wine. In 1965 Lindeman's joined the party by purchasing the prized Rouge Homme Winery, which had 75 acres of vineyard and 400 acres of open land.

Australian society rapidly changed with a growing middle class and a new level of sophistication. For the relatively few wine connoisseurs of the day, Bordeaux was the reference for fine wine. Throughout the 1950s and 1960s Australian claret, a style modelled on the wines of Bordeaux, spearheaded Australia's red wine revolution. Initially there was not much Cabernet Sauvignon grown in South Australia, but plantings increased as the market for claret styles developed. Although the Cabernet Sauvignon crop was unreliable and inconsistent in the Barossa Valley, Coonawarra's cooler climate, maritime influence and limestone soils represented greater reliability and potential for this variety.





## CHANGING OF THE GUARD

The end of the 1960s and 1970s marked a massive change in the Australian wine industry with a series of corporate takeovers of long-established family companies including Chateau Reynella, Penfolds, Wynns, Lindeman's and HM Martin (Saltram and Stonyfell).

The traditional way of doing business, when a handshake was as good as a contract, was numbered. The shuffling of Australia's winemaking businesses highlighted the difficulty of maintaining profitability and uneconomic vineyards, including the famous 19th-century Sunshine and Dalwood vineyards in the Hunter Valley, which were also sold. Other vineyards, in the way of urbanisation, were acquired by the government for housing. Around Adelaide, for instance, Penfolds lost its Auldana and Modbury vineyards, and a large part of its Magill vineyards. While the old ways of doing things were changing, these takeovers also represented the promise of a new horizon. The rapid development of Coonawarra was partially in response to dwindling vineyard resources around Adelaide.

During the 1970s and 1980s mechanisation, out of necessity, was introduced including machine harvesting, but Wynns never adopted minimal pruning practices. These techniques were controversial at the time, but viticulture in Coonawarra adapted as science and technology improved and the results, reflected in wine show results and sales, were spectacular.

## GREAT COONAWARRA REDS

When the Penola Fruit Colony was established in the 1890s and 1900s, Shiraz and Cabernet Sauvignon were planted at a ratio of two to one. However, by the 1960s Cabernet Sauvignon became a more important grape variety, partially because of its fame and history and more importantly because of its performance in wine shows and other forums.

A string of truly great Coonawarra reds captured the imagination of wine show judges and wine critics. Although it began with Wynns' 1955 Michael Hermitage, the success of the 1962 Penfolds Bin 60A Coonawarra Cabernet Sauvignon Kalimna Vineyard Shiraz, 1963 Mildara *'Peppermint Patty'* Coonawarra Cabernet Sauvignon, 1966 Penfolds Bin 620 Coonawarra Cabernet Sauvignon Shiraz and the

LEFT Samuel and David Wynn. c.1952.

WYNNS

1967 Penfolds Bin 7 Coonawarra Cabernet Sauvignon Kalimna Shiraz attracted massive interest from the wine industry.

Although Wynns Coonawarra Estate struggled during the 1950s and 1960s with limited capital investment in the winery, the brand began to achieve recognition in the Australian market, largely because of advertising and marketing. Nonetheless the decade had started badly with a disastrous frost in 1961 destroying the entire crop. The 1962 and 1966 vintages of Wynns Coonawarra Estate reds made by Jock Redman (1962 to 1968) and Warren Ward (1968 and 1969), were particularly well regarded for their time. In contrast, Max Schubert discontinued Penfolds' Bin 707 Cabernet Sauvignon, a multi-regional blend featuring Coonawarra fruit, after the 1969 vintage to concentrate on improving vineyard performance.

## COONAWARRA ON THE MAP

In 1965 Wynns Coonawarra Estate changed its brand livery by introducing its distinctive black bottle labels. Combined with varietal labelling and a map of Coonawarra as a back label, it was a masterstroke that enabled sales to increase during a time when claret-style wines were in vogue. Wynns also embarked on a significant vineyard expansion during the 1960s, purchasing close to 300 hectares of bare land, and by the end of the decade around 274 hectares were under vine. Wynns Coonawarra Estate was by far the most important land holder in Coonawarra.

By 1970 Coonawarra was home to six operational wineries or brands: Wynns, Lindeman's, Mildara, Penfolds, E&N Brand and Redman Wines. Almost every blocker had disappeared from the region and only seven growers remained. Wynns Coonawarra Estate was also in new corporate hands (Allied Vintners) and had benefited from an injection of capital. Ken Ward, a Roseworthy-trained winemaker who worked at Wynns from 1971 to 1977, oversaw new investment in the cellars including stainless steel fermenters and storage tanks and significant purchases of new oak barrels. This also coincided with an increasing crop of Cabernet Sauvignon as a result of new plantings.

## MORE SUCCESS

Meanwhile, Coonawarra winemakers began to pick Cabernet Sauvignon fruit early to encourage leafy capsicum characters, alongside the variety's trademark black fruit notes, to elicit high scores at wine shows. When the 1976 Wynns

Coonawarra Estate Coonawarra Cabernet Sauvignon and 1980 Lindeman's St George Coonawarra Cabernet Sauvignon each won the Royal Melbourne Wine Show Jimmy Watson Memorial Trophy, in 1977 and 1981 respectively, it heralded a new age of Coonawarra Cabernet Sauvignon and a remarkable level of technical enquiry and innovation. Without the same media fanfare, the newly minted 1976 Penfolds Bin 707 Cabernet Sauvignon and 1978 Lindeman's Limestone Ridge Cabernet Shiraz also promoted Coonawarra's fine wine credentials.

The arrival of the boutique wine scene across the country during the 1970s created new expectations among collectors and an increasing pride that Australian wine could and would be recognised for its unique voice of place. Coonawarra, dominated by just a few wineries for the most part of the 20th century, enjoyed a renaissance with the establishment of new smaller wine enterprises including Bowen Estate (1972), Leconfield (1974), Katnook (which took over John Riddoch's original winery in 1979), Petaluma (1979) and Hollick (1983).

By the 1980s Coonawarra had achieved recognition by critics and observers as the 'Médoc of the South Hemisphere', winning six Jimmy Watson Memorial Trophies in a decade. These high-profile accolades added a shine to Coonawarra and highlighted the substantial vineyard and winery investments that had taken place across the region during the 1970s and 1980s. The narrative of Coonawarra's exceptional Terra Rossa soils began to take centre stage during this time.

### Coonawarra's Jimmy Watson Memorial Trophy Winners of the 1980s

Year	Vintage	Wine
1981	1980	Lindeman's St George Cabernet Sauvignon
1982	1981	Mildara Cabernet Shiraz
1985	1984	Hollick Cabernet Sauvignon
1986	1985	Lindeman's Pyrus Cabernet Sauvignon, Merlot, Cab Franc and Malbec
1987	1986	Riddoch Coonawarra Cabernet Shiraz
1989	1988	Mildara Jamieson's Run Dry Red



WYNNS  
COONAWARRA  
ESTATE



WYNNS  
COONAWARRA ESTATE  
JOHN RIDDOCH  
LIMITED RELEASE  
CABERNET SAUVIGNON  
VINTAGE 1982

COONAWARRA ESTATE PTY LTD  
WINE PRODUCT OF AUSTRALIA

The isolation of Coonawarra promoted a unique relationship between winemakers and viticulturists in the region. Although the Coonawarra Fruit Colony no longer existed, there was a common cause within the community and the level of expertise and technical know-how in Coonawarra was exceptional. Most winemakers in the region were Roseworthy trained and belonged to a school of collaborative thought first established by Arthur Perkins in 1890. This shared knowledge base, epitomised by the Coonawarra Vignerons Association and handed down through three generations, has played a crucial role in building Coonawarra's reputation as one of the most technically proficient wine regions in the world.

## 1982 JOHN RIDDOKH CABERNET SAUVIGNON

The groundbreaking 1982 Wynns Coonawarra Estate John Riddoch Cabernet Sauvignon created huge excitement when released. Its 'essence of Coonawarra' style, based on older blocks of Terra Rossa vineyards, possessed a concentration, richness of flavour and ripeness rarely seen before in Coonawarra wines. There was conjecture at the time that the wine had a high proportion of drainings (the concentrated tail of free-run wine which flows through the press), which accentuated volume and density.

Wynns' winemaker John Wade (1978 to 1985) had ordered new French oak barriques and hogsheads and the 1982 John Riddoch was matured for two years in 100 per cent new oak before release. This concentrated and beautifully balanced wine possessed the hallmark characters of great Cabernet Sauvignon: its pure ripe blackcurrant cedar aromas, fine grained tannins and underlying vanilla nuances expressed a richness, density and vigour only seen in the greatest Cabernet wines in the world. Its aging potential was immediately recognised and its performance to date has more than fulfilled early expectations; in 1990 it was named Best Red and won the Len Evans trophy for Champion Wine of Show at the National Wine Show in Canberra.

In some respects, the 1982 John Riddoch Cabernet Sauvignon was a reaction to the leafier styles being pushed forward by wine shows at the time, foreshadowing the ripe and generous expressions of Coonawarra Cabernet Sauvignon we know today. Successive vintages of the John Riddoch Cabernet Sauvignon built the wine's reputation as the leading Coonawarra red and the spectacular 1986 vintage, made by Peter Douglas, winemaker at Wynns from 1986 to 1997, attracted a similar level of interest. By the time Douglas' wines were released it was generally recognised

that Wynns Coonawarra Estate possessed the oldest and best vineyards on the plum Terra Rossa soils in the northern part of the region.

## AUSTRALIAN ‘GRAND CRU’

Throughout the 1980s and 1990s, Wynns’ John Riddoch Cabernet Sauvignon achieved further notoriety on the wine show circuit and the collectible markets. Although barely a decade old, it was seen by many as a fulfilment of John Riddoch’s original vision. When the 1990 vintage was released (in 1993) renowned Australian wine show judge Len Evans said to Australian wine writer Chris Shanahan: “American and English wine writers... want excitement, and they’re about to get it.”

In response of its dream run on the secondary wine market it was included in the inaugural Langton’s Classification of Australian Wine (Outstanding B,) alongside Henschke Hill of Grace Shiraz, Mount Mary Quintet Cabernets, Penfolds Bin 707 Cabernet Sauvignon, Petaluma Cabernet Merlot, and Yarra Yering Dry Red No. 1.

By the early 2000s Wynns Coonawarra Estate’s senior winemaker Sue Hodder, winemaker Sarah Pidgeon and viticulturist Allen Jenkins embarked on an ambitious plan to improve the John Riddoch wine style and renovate vineyards established in the 1960s and 1970s. By the late 1990s there were problems beginning to emerge with machine pruned vineyards and over 150 hectares were gradually renovated with a complete cordon removal of all vines and the establishment of cane pruning to prolong the life of important heritage vineyards. The success of this program has led to further refinements in the vineyard including continued rejuvenation of older blocks and replanting with new vinestock, especially heritage selections on their own roots.

Although there is plenty of access to underground water, new clonal material has been grafted onto drought resistant rootstock which helps to reduce vigour and over cropping. During the 2010s the art of vineyard management was assisted greatly by precision viticulture, trellising, sustainable farming practices, heat mapping and biological controls. In general, the aim was to grow Cabernet Sauvignon without strong pyrazine characters, overly dense fruit or unevenness. At vintage the yields are around 5.5 to six tonnes to the hectare or roughly 40 to 45 hectolitres per hectare, which is similar to the average harvest of a first growth property in Pauillac.

## VINESTOCK

According to viticulturist Allen Jenkins, seasonal conditions, clones and site all impact wine quality and wine style:

*No two vineyards are the same, as no two vintages are the same. Imposing planned vineyard diversity is key in adapting to seasonal variability. Clonal material, rootstocks, and canopy management are all very useful in achieving diversity in Cabernet Sauvignon. A very detailed knowledge of individual vineyards, and the ability to react to the season via practices such as winter pruning methodology, shoot thinning, shoot trimming, shoot positioning, leaf removal, fruit thinning, soil and irrigation management are all important.*

Vinestock material in Coonawarra goes back to Australia's early colonisation. It is more than likely that Thomas Hardy supplied cuttings to John Riddoch and the fledgling Coonawarra Fruit Colony in 1890 and it is equally possible that material came from nurseries in Adelaide or from other wineries, including Reynella. John Riddoch was well acquainted with both Thomas Hardy, president of the South Australian Agricultural Society, and Walter Reynell.

The quarantine laws that were introduced to South Australia in 1875 were further strengthened with the *Phylloxera Act 1899*. As a consequence, it is highly likely that Coonawarra's earliest vinestock material is derived from cuttings with a direct provenance to Sir William Macarthur's vineyards at Camden Park Estate, which supplied an enormous number of vines to South Australia. The first cuttings of Cabernet Sauvignon were brought to New South Wales in 1837 by Didier Numa Joubert, of Barton and Guestier, at the behest of William Macarthur. Shiraz cuttings brought to Coonawarra in the 1890s were in all likelihood derived from James Busby-sourced vinestock first planted in 1832 at Camden Vineyards and sent over to South Australia during the 1850s and 1860s.

Although there are still some late 19th and early 20th century plantings of Shiraz vines in Coonawarra, notably Brand's Laira vineyard (1893), Wynns Undoolya vineyard (1894), Wynns Johnson's Block (1925), the earliest surviving plantings of Cabernet Sauvignon date back to the early 1950s. The exact origin of these heritage vines is unknown, although it is certainly colonial vine stock material.

In 2020 around half of Wynns Coonawarra Estate vineyards are older than 35 years and 20 per cent are greater than 45 years. The oldest surviving Cabernet Sauvignon vines were planted in the Johnson's Block by Wynns Coonawarra Estate in 1954. In the 1960s and 1970s new selections arrived in Coonawarra for planting,



including the famed Reynella selection. The major clones planted by Wynns Coonawarra Estate are SA125, CW44, G9V3, LC10 and more recent clones and more recent clones ENTAV 412, 338 and 169.

Significant work has been done on Wynns heritage selections, primarily from the Redman, Childs, Johnson's, and Davis vineyards. In more recent times clonal selections (rather than mass selections) have been an important focus to improve vineyard performance. The Harold and Glengyle Vineyards have also contributed selected cuttings. This propagated material is already providing fruit with more evenness and moderate baumé levels. While the vineyards are planted on their own roots, the threat of phylloxera in South Australia has become extremely high with the movement of machinery across the Victorian and South Australian border, necessitating the use of a selection of rootstocks. Although not all would be lost, the arrival of phylloxera in the South Australia would threaten the state's remarkable old vine tradition.

## ON THE RIDGE

Although the fruit colonists recognised the advantages of Coonawarra's Terra Rossa soils and intuitively planted their vines where they would grow best, there has been an ongoing discussion about the best plots of land. Observations through the generations have always resulted in favour of the ridges that run along the cigar shaped 20 kilometres of Terra Rossa soils. Although the differences in elevation on this flat land are only 14 metres at their greatest, it has been noticed that the average temperatures in vine canopies during the growing season can drop significantly at lower elevations. The slightly higher vineyards located on or near the ridges are less likely to succumb to frost events and more likely to ripen evenly, thereby reducing the level of pyrazines in the fruit. From Wynns Coonawarra Estate's perspective Cabernet Sauvignon fruit is always best grown on free-draining Terra Rossa soils which have adequate water holding capacity. They are generally described as red sandy loam to clay loams with open crumbly structure and very good aeration and drainage. The best plots of land have uniform but surprisingly shallow soils that are just 50 cm deep. These Terra Rossa soils consistently produce balanced, exhibiting ripe tannins and flavours at 13 to 13.5 baumé.

RIGHT Allen Jenkins - Wynns Viticulturist, 2020.

JOHN KRUGER



## 21ST-CENTURY VISIONS

By the turn of the century, Wynns Coonawarra Estate had embarked on a new project to renovate its extensive vineyard holdings (over 500 hectares) in Coonawarra. Over three years new trellising, improved frost protection using low volume sprinklers, retraining and replanting took place with precision viticultural techniques and heat mapping.

Wynns Coonawarra Estate John Riddoch Cabernet Sauvignon was not made in 2000, 2001 and 2002 (because of vineyard restoration work) but vintages from 2003 showed the logic of such a massive viticultural project. With such a vast resource of vineyards it may have been possible to make wine, but the integrity of fruit sourcing and winemaking has always been a foundation of the style.

The 2004 Wynns John Riddoch Cabernet Sauvignon was bottled under screwcap for the very first time in response to the technical challenges of cork. A review of vintages highlights the brightness, freshness and vivacity of vintages under this type of closure.

Oak maturation trials have been ongoing for many years with a gradual finessing in style. From the mid 2000s to 2020 the vineyards steadily matured to a new standard of exactness and they represent some of the finest vineyards in Australia because of the extreme lengths taken in renovating and replanting. The absence of the 2007, 2011 and 2014 vintages highlight Wynns John Riddoch's 'Grand Cru' bloodlines, in which only the best vintages are made.

The winemaking philosophy has been refined during the 2000s to match the work in the vineyard and the fruit quality. The wines are batch fermented and then gently pressed before maturation in a combination of new (around 30 per cent) and seasoned French oak hogsheads and barriques for 16 to 20 months depending on the vintage.

## AUSTRALIAN FIRST GROWTH

Wynns Coonawarra Estate John Riddoch Cabernet Sauvignon was first classified 'Exceptional' in Langton's Classification of Australian Wine in 2014. Steeped in the historic background of the region, it is the quintessential 'essence of Coonawarra' Cabernet Sauvignon thoroughbred. Based on the best parcels of each vintage, it articulates the magical qualities of the region's unique Terra Rossa soils, swinging climatic influences, superb precision viticulture and empathetic winemaking. Ample in structure yet fine grained and supple, it is

typified by intense liquorice, blackcurrant and herb garden aromas interwoven with violet and camomile notes, chocolaty rich tannins and underlying new oak. Richness of fruit and fine-grained lacy tannins pervade across the palate. The flavours are lasting and lengthened by a plume of tannins. As youngsters they have a richness, buoyancy of fruit and tannin quality that promise longevity. In cooler years wines of this calibre can sometimes display a faint peppermint note.

Coonawarra Cabernet Sauvignon has an unmistakable voice evoking the smell of soil, airy calmness of place and vast pure blue skies.





A vertical wooden post stands in a field of dry grass and brush. The entire image is covered with a semi-transparent red overlay. A thin white rectangular border is centered on the page.


— TWO —

# THE ORIGINAL BLOCKERS









Only a scant amount of information is available about the original fruit colonists. The locals called them ‘blockers’ because the land had been acquired in blocks of 10 acres. However, we do know, through reports and advertising, that John Riddoch’s proposed Penola Fruit Colony attracted a wide group of prospectors. In July 1890, 1147 acres of prime Terra Rossa land were subdivided into 110 10-acre blocks for the specific purpose of developing orchards and vineyards. The first blocks were offered for lease and subsequent sale by ballot at the Royal Oak Hotel in Penola.

The blockers were required to plant primarily Shiraz and Cabernet with a ratio of roughly two to one, reflecting the commercial opportunities of the time, and many also planted vegetables to secure an early income. The fledgling fruit colony was hit hard by the 1893 banking crisis, for the first decade it was propped up by John Riddoch’s finances, but the blockers persevered – many would go on to purchase more land as their wealth increased while others would leave the colony and sell their blocks.

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## VINTAGE 1895

1175 acres surveyed

1109 acres under lease or ownership

630 acres planted (326 acres of vineyards  
and 304 acres of orchards)





Grower		Vines	Trees
James Ah Suee	Chinese-born market gardener and Penola townsman; 10 acres. Became insolvent in 1897. His block 17 was sold to Rothwell Stanley Pounsett in 1900.	2	8
James Alexander	Scottish-born banker; 40 acres. Planted with Cabernet Sauvignon and Shiraz. Pinot Noir (three acres) was grubbed up. Blocks 24, 25, 26, 27 and 28. Later bought the 100-acre grazing 456 block from the carve up of Yallum Park in 1906. Sold blocks 25, 26, 27, 28 and 456 to Mildara in 1970. Block 456 sold to Wynns Coonawarra Estate in 1982 and renamed Alexander 84 and Alexander 88.	23	15
John Thomas Born	A labourer; acres unknown. Doesn't supply grapes to Coonawarra Cellars.	-	4
Edward Augustus Butler Stoney	Civil engineer (ex-Indian Civil Service); blocks 63, 64, 65, 66, 67, 68, 71, 72, 73, 74 and 75. Vineyards were removed in the 1930s and replanted in the late 1960s by Wynns Coonawarra Estate.	18	5
William Joseph Born and Theodore Gustav Hankel	Bakers and confectioners from Woodside, South Australia; blocks 53 and 54. Doesn't supply grapes to Coonawarra Cellars.	-	10
Joseph Darwent	Publican of the Royal Oak Hotel, Penola; initially 30 acres but increased to 40 acres in 1893. Blocks 86, 87, 88, 89, 90, 96 and 99. Sold blocks 86, 89 and 90 Penfolds in 1965 (and renamed blocks 5 to 11).	20	17
Charles Goldsack	Batchelor blacksmith; block 36. Eventually planted two acres of vines.	-	8

Grower		Vines	Trees
John Forbes Gordon	Glen Roy station manager; blocks 3, 4 and 5. Sold to Wynns Coonawarra Estate in 1967.	10	10
John Forbes Gordon	Glen Roy station manager; blocks 3, 4 and 5. Sold to Wynns Coonawarra Estate in 1967.	10	10
John W Gordon	Congbool station manager; blocks 7 and 8. Sold to surgeon-major Henry Benjamin Hinton in 1900.	13	3
Robert and William Lear	Boundary riders and farm hands from Englefield station, Balmoral Victoria; blocks 6 and 9.	10	10
William Neilson	Penola farmer and sawyer. Uncle of lyric poet John Shaw Neilson and father-in-law to Bill Redman.	5	1
Charles Pavey	Farmer from Victoria's Wimmera district; block 12.	8	8
Henry Richardson	Adelaide businessman; blocks 55 and 56. Later acquired blocks 52, 88, 77, 79, 91 and 92. His wife, Bessie Richardson, purchased block 166 (now known as block 14) in 1915.	26	50
John Riddoch	Substantial holdings including the Nursery (block 76) and blocks 78, 81, 82, 85, 106, 107, 108, 109 and 110. In 1894 Riddoch acquired the 30-acre Caird's Vineyard, which comprised blocks 29, 30 and 31.	128	67
John 'Jack' Riddoch	Son of John Riddoch. His second vintage was made at the Katnook wool shed; block number not available.	10	10



Grower		Vines	Trees
William and Sarah Rothwell Pounsett	Postmaster William Rothwell Pounsett and wife Sarah Pounsett; blocks 43 and 44. Planted Undoolya Vineyard (2.3 acres) to Shiraz in 1894. Also leased blocks 41 and 42 from John Riddoch.	8	12
William Senior	Original blocker and future federal senator for South Australia; blocks 45 and 48. Had an altercation with John Riddoch in 1893 and did not persist with the development of a vineyard, instead investing in orcharding.	-	18
Robert Samuel Sharam	Originally acquired by brothers Christopher, James and Robert Samuel Sharam. By 1900 Robert Sharam (a road maker and veterinarian) was the sole title holder. Initially block 40; later purchased blocks 71, 72 and 73. Block 40 was sold to Penfolds in the 1960s, blocks 71, 72 and 73 were sold to Wynns Coonawarra Estate in 1968.	5	5
Kenneth Simson	Block number unknown.	3	3
Henry Snelling	Metalworker; blocks 93, 94, 97 and 98.	15	15
Henry Stentiford	Master mariner; blocks 11, 13, 14 (purchased in 1901) and 95.	9	15
Andrew, Edwin and James Ernest Wallace	Labourers from Nhill, Victoria; blocks 1 and 2.	5	5
Wells and Dodd	Block number unknown.	3	5
Samuel Barton Worthington	Farmer, originally from Angaston; blocks 37, 38, 39 and 70. Block 70, which was acquired by Emily Jane Worthington (née Wallace) in 1892, is now Mulligan Vineyard. It was purchased by Wynns Coonawarra Estate in 1982.	7	-





— *THREE* —

WYNNS  
COONAWARRA  
ESTATE  
VINEYARDS

Wynns Coonawarra Estate John Riddoch Cabernet Sauvignon draws from several vineyards in Coonawarra and is based on the best parcels of fruit harvested each vintage. The sourcing of (primarily hand-picked) fruit is linked with Coonawarra's history and John Riddoch's 19th-century ambition, hope and renewal.

Trial and error, together with increasing attention to matching vineyard practices with plots of land, have created a more exacting approach to viticulture and a combination of intuition and science-based research, both in the vineyards and the cellars, has seen a steady progress in developing a uniquely Australian Coonawarra Cabernet Sauvignon of the highest calibre.

Wynns John Riddoch is a selection that expresses the very best character and understated power of Coonawarra Cabernet Sauvignon in any given vintage. The source blocks have changed over the decades reflecting the development, ownership and quality of vineyards through time.

The best vineyards are located on free-draining, Terra Rossa soils with sufficient water holding capacity and structure to allow Cabernet Sauvignon to develop evenly during the growing season. Typically, these red sandy loams to clay loams are open and crumbly in structure with good aeration and drainage. The highest quality fruit is generally sourced from uniform soils with a depth of around 50 cm.



30  
HYDROD.

25  
SAND & RUM

43  
NO. 1000000

8  
SUFF. 80

35  
SUFF. 8000

26  
SAND





**ALEX 88**

CAS  
REYNELLA  
OWN ROOTS  
287-316

## ALBERT

Publican Joseph Darwent (an original blocker) purchased block 471 in the great Yallum Park carve up of 1906. The block became known as Albert Paddock and was acquired by Wynns Coonawarra Estate from Bob Childs in 1966. The vineyard contributed to Wynns John Riddoch Cabernet Sauvignon in 1984, 1997 and 1998, but since extensive replanting of heritage selections in 2013 and 2014 the dry-grown vineyard is yet to reach its full potential.

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25.2 hectares

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## ALEXANDER

Alexander is increasingly looked upon as a sub-region of Coonawarra. It comprises several contiguous blocks. It is named after James Alexander, a Scottish-born banker who acquired 40 acres in 1892 before expanding his holdings to 150 acres, including the 100-acre Recreation Block. This property has been gradually replanted since the land was purchased from Mildara in 1982. The vineyards ripen up to three weeks later than usual for the region, bringing bigger, darker and firmer tannins. This is most likely due to the Reynell selection, which is well known for its high skin to juice ratio.

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Alexander 84: 19.3 hectares; planted 1984; Alexander 88: 15.1 hectares; planted 1988;  
Alexander 6.64: 6.64 hectares; planted 1997

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## BLOCK 6

One of the original 1892 blocks acquired by Joseph Darwent and planted with the 'claret and Champagne varieties' of Cabernet Sauvignon, Shiraz and Pinot Noir. The vineyard was pulled up during the 1930s and replanted by Penfolds in 1965. As a highly regarded low-yielding vineyard best known for its contribution to Penfolds Bin 707 Cabernet Sauvignon this is first and foremost a Penfolds block; however, fruit was used for Wynns Coonawarra Estate John Riddoch Cabernet Sauvignon in the cool 1993, 1996 and 1999 growing seasons.

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2.47 hectares

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JOHN RIDDOCH DYE



## CHILDS

John Childs purchased the prime 165.5 acre block 474 in 1906, when Yallum Park was carved up after the death of John Riddoch. The property was purchased by Wynns Coonawarra Estate in 1968 and replanted in 1969. Completely restored, with extensive layering of vines and re-trellising, this vineyard was a top performer for the John Riddoch Cabernet Sauvignon in the 2010s. “I love that vineyard!,” said senior winemaker Sue Hodder, “It reliably gives us a beautiful core of dark cherry Cabernet – distinctly Wynns-like.”

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16.7 hectares; planted 1969

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## DAVIS

This vineyard was originally part of block 464, which was purchased at the Yallum Park sale in 1906. It is believed that Wynns’ 1957 plantings of Cabernet Sauvignon are the second oldest in the region. The vineyard was extensively renovated in 2002 and it is an important source of heritage Cabernet Sauvignon cuttings.

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2.5 hectares; planted 1957

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## GLENGYLE

A fragment of the original block 474, which was purchased during the closer settlement sale of Yallum Park in 1906. The land was planted by the Coonawarra Machinery Company in 1969. Its heritage Cabernet Sauvignon material is of unknown origin.

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20.21 hectares; planted 1969; heritage vine selections are currently underway for replanting

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## HAROLD

Although named for previous owner Harold Childs, this vineyard belonged to the original parcel of land purchased by civil engineer Edward Augustus Butler Stoney in 1892. It was here, in 1897, that the blockers unanimously adopted the name Coonawarra for the new township and the Penola Fruit Colony. The vineyard was pulled up in the 1930s when the South Australian Government introduced a vine pull scheme to encourage dairy farming. The land was acquired from Harold Childs in 1966 by Wynns and planted in 1971.

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8.86 hectares; planted 1971; dry grown until 2002 when supplementary drip irrigation was installed; heritage vine selections are currently underway for replanting

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## JOHNSON'S

The Johnson's block – the oldest planted vineyard at Wynns Coonawarra Estate – takes its name from an adjoining parcel of land (block 461) acquired by WB Johnson at the Yallum Park sale of 1906. The Cabernet Sauvignon vineyard lies across the eastern sections of the original Penola Fruit Colony blocks 106 to 110 and was purchased by Wynns in 1951, at the sale of Chateau Comaum, and still comprises a plot of 1925 planted dry-grown Shiraz. The entire vineyard was retrellised and retrained in the late 1990s and early 2000s.

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18.7 hectares; planted 1954 (10 hectares) and 1958 (8.7 hectares); selection of 10 drought-tolerant vines as future adaptive clones for climate change is underway, with field trials planted

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## LYNN (GROWER VINEYARD)

An exceptional parcel of fruit was sourced from the Lynn family's property (now known as Majella) in 1982. Originally a sheep grazing property it was first planted in 1968 with subsequent plantings of Wynns-sourced Cabernet Sauvignon during the early 1970s. The vineyard no longer contributes to the John Riddoch Cabernet Sauvignon due to Wynns' investment in its own vineyards.

## MESSENGER

Another parcel of land in the southern part of Coonawarra originating from the Yallum Park carve up of 1906. Comprises blocks 520 and 521 from that sale and was also known as Ravenswood. The dry-grown vineyard, planted in 1975, was acquired by Wynns Coonawarra Estate in 1988.

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3.6 hectares; planted 1975

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## MACKILLOP

This 1972 vineyard was acquired by Wynns in 1994 and renamed in 1995 for Sister Mary MacKillop (1842–1909), who founded the Sisters of Joseph of the Sacred Heart at Penola and achieved sainthood in 2010 for her work with the poor and destitute. The heritage Cabernet Sauvignon vines are planted on their own roots. The vineyard has been retrellised and the vines retrained to improve growing conditions.

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16.1 hectares; planted 1972

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## NURSERY

The Nursery Vineyard was established in 1890 by John Riddoch to provide cuttings for the Penola Fruit Colony. The neighbouring Pyrus Vineyard was developed by Harold Richardson, who also had an operating winery, during the 1920s. The two blocks were purchased by Lindeman's in 1968 and inherited by Wynns through corporate takeover. In 2004 a part of the vineyard was replanted with heritage selection cuttings of Cabernet Sauvignon and Shiraz.

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5.47 hectares of Reynella selection; planted in 2003.  
A further 14.8 hectares of LC10, SA125 and CW44

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## O'DEAS

Section 449 was purchased at the 1906 Yallum Park sale by Patrick and Phillip Lynch – second generation Australians whose parents had immigrated to South Australia in 1854. The block was open farming land until 1966, when it was acquired from Martin O'Dea by Mildara.

The northern part of the block was planted in 1970 and 1971 in long, half-mile rows. Soon after, the original 0.67-hectare block was established based on colonial vine stock brought to South Australia by John Reynell during the 1850s. Extensive replantings of heritage and other clonal material took place between 2012 and 2015. Another vineyard that ripens up to three weeks later than average on account of the character of the Reynella selection.

A 3.31-hectare parcel of O'Deas was planted with Bordeaux varieties Cabernet Sauvignon, Cabernet Franc, Merlot and Malbec by Mildara in 1980 to identify clonal performance. The Wynns' winemakers call it the 'Hobbit vineyard' because of its short vines, big feet and wide rows. The fruit is sometimes made into a field blend, but on occasions the Cabernet Sauvignon is a component of the John Riddoch Cabernet Sauvignon.


## REDMAN

This historic vineyard is named after the Redman family, who played a crucial role in the development of Coonawarra. Its heritage Cabernet Sauvignon vines contributed to Wynns Coonawarra Estate's replanting program, but the vines have since been pulled up because of dead arm and leaf roll virus. Replanted spring 2019.

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4.4 hectares; planted 1962

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03.13 (HOBBIT)  
CAS  
G9V3  
OWN ROOTS  
1-5



Петр. Нехорош иль

Сестра моя Нехороша

## SHARAM

Named after the Sharam brothers, who were founding Coonawarra blockers. The vineyard incorporates blocks 71, 72 and 73 (which were purchased by Robert Samuel Sharam in 1923). The property was sold to Wynns in 1968. The 1974-planted Cabernet Sauvignon vines, which contributed to the 2004 vintage, were replaced in 2014 with mixed clonal selections.

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37.28 hectares; planted 1974

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## V & A

V & A Lane was named by the Penola District Council in 1861. The vineyard's northern boundary follows Eugene Bellair's county line, which was surveyed in 1851 and divided the south east into the two state electorates of Victoria and Albert (named in honour of Queen Victoria and her consort Prince Albert). The vineyard is a sub-section of block 498, purchased by D Adamson at the Yallum Park sale in 1906. The vineyard was planted by Hungerford Hill but sold off in 1983. The land was acquired by Wynns Coonawarra Estate in 1993. The vineyard still comprises 1971 plantings of Cabernet Sauvignon, but extensive renovations, including retrelicing and replantings, took place in 2003 and 2013.

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44 hectares; planted 1972

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LEFT Eugene Bellair's early map of the V & A vineyard. c.1851. WYNNS



— *FOUR* —

JOHN RIDDOCH  
CABERNET  
SAUVIGNON  
VINTAGES



VYNN'S

WARRA ESTATE



Winemaking at Wynns Coonawarra Estate has evolved over the decades in response to improved viticulture and refinements in technology and style. The very early vintages were made in rudimentary conditions and equipment with no three-phase power. Over the course of several decades, new ownership and commercial success led to more investment into the acquisition of Terra Rossa soil vineyards, viticulture and winemaking technology. A better understanding of growing conditions, increased vine age and improved winemaking skills have also shaped the progress of Coonawarra wine. John Riddoch Cabernet Sauvignon exemplifies the increasing detail, care and imagination in making ultra-fine Australian wine.

Since 2015 the primarily hand-picked John Riddoch harvest has been optically sorted to improve the purity of fruit characters and to reduce matter other than grape and any green berries. After sorting the grapes are lightly crushed. The wine is primarily batch-vinified – matched to vineyard block – at around 28°C to 30°C in small stainless steel open-fermenters with a small percentage of additional parcels made in static or occasionally vinimatic fermenters. After around 12 to 15 days the wine is pressed-off into a combination of medium-toasted French coopered hogsheads and barriques. During maturation the wine is minimally racked to preserve brightness, sheen and fruit definition. Barrel selections, after rigorous tastings, take place after 14 to 20 months.

Typically, the wines are released with at least 18 months bottle age to allow the wine to settle down after screwcapping. While the winemaking team aims to make the wine every vintage there is little compromise. After the success of the 1982, John Wade decided not to make a 1983 vintage. No John Riddoch was made from 2000 to 2002 (while the vineyards were being rejuvenated) nor 2007, which followed a severe frost in late November which caused unevenness in the fruit. 2011 was unusually wet with disease pressure and in 2014 and 2017 the fruit intensity and density were not quite right for the John Riddoch style.

John Riddoch Cabernet Sauvignon was first screw-capped in 2004 and is made on average four years out of five.

LEFT Winemaker Sarah Pidgeon in Coonawarra.

JOHN KRUGER





WYNNS COONAWARRA ESTATE  
JOHN RIDDOCH CABERNET  
SAUVIGNON



Classified ‘Exceptional’ in Langton’s Classification of Australian Wine, a rating equivalent to an Australian ‘First Growth’, it is one of the most prized and highly sought-after Australian wines. These vintages were tasted at Wynns Coonawarra Estate in May 2019. The 2016 was tasted again in July 2019. The 2018 and 2019 vintages were tasted in Sydney, October 2019.

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*“In reality the John Riddoch Cabernet Sauvignon represents much less than one per cent of our vintage crop.”*

SUE HODDER – Senior winemaker.

LEFT Senior winemaker Sue Hodder, 2020.

JOHN KRUGER



1982

Drink now to 2030

95 POINTS

Medium deep crimson brick red. Fresh developed praline, tobacco leaf and cassis aromas with forest floor notes. Supple dark chocolate, truffle, tobacco and roasted almond flavours with fine, loose-knit grainy tannins, an attractive mid-palate richness and long, fresh integrated acidity. A complex and well-developed wine with a lovely, inky plume at the finish. Still showing freshness although corks are variable.

**Vintage report:** Warm and hot with top up rains in spring.

**Vineyard provenance:** Johnson's, Lynn (grower vineyard)

1983

Not made

1984

Drink now to 2030

94 POINTS

Medium deep crimson, brick red. Fragrant blackcurrant pastille, *sous bois* and leafy, star anise aromas with mocha and espresso notes. Well-concentrated blackcurrant pastille, marzipan and mocha flavours with fine, lacy al dente tannins, some leafy notes and attractive mineral length. Finishes slinky and long with some developed orange notes.

**Vintage report:** Mild conditions with intermittent rains. A forgotten vintage.

**Vineyard provenance:** Johnson's, Albert

1985

Drink now to 2035

96 POINTS

Medium deep crimson. Intense blackcurrant, mulberry graphite aromas with mocha and leafy notes. Well-concentrated with inky blackcurrant, dark chocolate and chinotto flavours, fine sinuous grainy tannins and underlying savoury notes. Finishes graphite and al dente firm with some leafy notes. In very good condition.

**Vintage report:** A mild growing season with intermittent rains.

**Vineyard provenance:** Johnson's, Redman, Childs

1986

Drink now to 2030

94 POINTS

Deep crimson. Violet, blackcurrant, dark chocolate and inky chinotto aromas with graphite notes. A generous and deep-set wine with dark chocolate and chinotto flavours, fine dense yet supple chocolaty tannins and espresso-roasted chestnut oak notes. Finishes chocolaty with a long graphite plume. A heralded vintage when first released.

**Vintage report:** A classic Coonawarra year with a warm and dry growing season.

**Vineyard provenance:** Childs, Johnson's, Harold

1987

Drink now to 2030

97 POINTS

Deep crimson. Fresh and intense blackcurrant pastille, cedar and mocha aromas with leafy notes. Well-concentrated and classic in structure, with fresh blackcurrant leafy flavours, fine persistent grainy tannins, mid-palate inky notes and underlying vanilla mocha. Finishes grainy firm with a lovely cedar length. An impressive wine.

**Vintage report:** A cool and dry growing season.

**Vineyard provenance:** Albert, Childs, Lynn (grower vineyard)

1988

Drink now to 2028

93 POINTS

Medium deep crimson. Intense cassis, tobacco, dried leaves and chinotto aromas with some dark chocolate notes. Generous and supple, with cassis, strawberry, tobacco and leafy flavours, with fine-bitter graphite tannins. Sinewy, dry and inky finish with pronounced acidity.

**Vintage report:** A moderately warm growing season preceded by severe spring frosts.

**Vineyard provenance:** Redman, Johnson's, Childs, Messenger

1989

Not made

1990

Drink now to 2040

98 POINTS

Deep crimson. Intense blackcurrant, dark chocolate and cedar aromas with herb, star anise and flinty notes. An inky textured and voluminous wine, with fresh blackcurrant, dark cherry flavours. Cedar, mocha, oak and leafy notes, fine supple grainy yet slightly grippy tannins and integrated acidity. Finishes chocolaty firm with some cassis and leafy notes at the finish. A superb wine.

**Vintage report:** A warm and dry growing season. A classic vintage.

**Vineyard provenance:** Redman, Childs

1991

Drink now to 2040

99 POINTS

Deep crimson. Fresh espresso, roasted coffee, roasted chestnut, dark chocolate, and dark berry aromas with earthy notes. A generously proportioned wine with deep set inky cassis and dark chocolate flavours, fine dense but grainy tannins and underlying savoury oak. Finishes firm with a long graphite plume. A glorious wine.

**Vintage report:** A hot summer followed by a mild autumn. A classic Coonawarra vintage.

**Vineyard provenance:** Childs, Johnson's

## 1992

Drink now to 2028

92 POINTS

Deep crimson. Developed notes of carob, dark chocolate, wet bitumen, marzipan, mulberry and dried roses. A well-concentrated wine with mulberry, dark chocolate and herb flavours, fine sinewy textures, mocha oak complexity and integrated fine acidity. Wood varnish finish.

**Vintage report:** Spring frosts and windy weather during flowering. A cool, low-yielding year.

**Vineyard provenance:** Childs, Davis, Redman

## 1993

Drink now to 2028

93 POINTS

Deep crimson. Intense dark chocolate, Turkish delight and mulberry aromas with shellac notes. Concentrated, almost soup-like, in structure with deep set dark chocolate, fine dense grainy tannins and long fresh acidity. Finishes firm and chocolately with inky plume. Not hugely well-regarded as a vintage but the wine has developed well.

**Vintage report:** A mild, dry year with a late autumn harvest.

**Vineyard provenance:** Alex 84, Davis, Johnson's, Block 6

## 1994

Drink now to 2040

98 POINTS

Deep crimson. Intense cassis, blackberry, vanilla and marzipan aromas with leafy notes. Generous and supple with warm cassis and blackberry fruits, grainy and slightly al dente textures and an attractive mid-palate richness with integrated mocha, marzipan and oak notes. Finishes firm with inky length. A superb wine.

**Vintage report:** A very warm to hot, dry summer.

**Vineyard provenance:** Glengyle, V&A, Johnson's, Alex 84





1995

Not made

1996

Drink now to 2035

99 POINTS

Deep crimson. Lovely, intense glossy blackcurrant praline aromas with inky graphite notes. A superb wine, with classic blackcurrant and cedar flavours, fine persistent grainy tannins and underlying espresso mocha oak. Finishes grainy firm with a lovely graphite, inky plume. Has great potential still.

**Vintage report:** A very cool growing season with superb fruit development.

**Vineyard provenance:** Block 6, Johnson's, Childs

1997

Drink now to 2026

92 POINTS

Deep crimson brick red. Fresh developed wine with leafy tobacco, cassis and tomato leaf aromas with hint of sage. Well-concentrated, slightly soup-like wine with leafy tobacco and cassis flavours, fine and loose-knit chalky tannins. Finishes firm and minerally with tomato leaf notes at the finish. Delicious to drink but doesn't have the stature of other vintages.

**Vintage report:** A cool spring and a hot, dry summer.

**Vineyard provenance:** Harold, Childs, V&A, Glengyle, Albert

1998

Drink now to 2028

96 POINTS

Deep crimson. Dark chocolate, dark berry, truffle and dried roses; this is a slightly brambly wine with inky chinotto notes. Generous and chocolaty with deep set dark berry, panforte flavours, fine dense chocolaty tannins and plentiful mocha and vanilla oak. Finishes firm and long with chocolaty plume.

**Vintage report:** A dry, warm vintage. A classic year.

**Vineyard provenance:** Childs, V&A, Glengyle, Albert

1999

Drink now to 2040

97 POINTS

Deep crimson. Intense blackberry, dark chocolate and peaty aromas with leafy sage notes. Well-concentrated and buoyant with deep set dark chocolate blackberry fruits, vigorous brambly textures and underlying mocha oak complexity. Finishes bitter graphite firm with lovely mineral length. Lovely shape and vinosity. A powerfully structured wine.

**Vintage report:** A dry and warm early vintage. In the shadow of 1998.

**Vineyard provenance:** Redman, Block 6, V&A

2000, 2001 AND 2002

Not made

2003

Drink now to 2025

91 POINTS

Deep crimson. Fragrant violet and cassis aromas with cola and graphite notes. A mineral wine with cassis, light red cherry fruits, fine loose-knit chalky textures and underlying savoury oak. Finishes chalky al dente firm with lovely mineral length. A medium-powered wine but expressive in character.

**Vintage report:** A cool spring followed by a warm to very hot summer.

**Vineyard provenance:** Childs, Davis, Harold

2004

Drink now to 2040

98 POINTS

Deep crimson. Intense blackcurrant pastille, dark chocolate and espresso aromas with notes of dried roses and leaves. Dense and generous, with deep set inky cassis flavours, fine plentiful graphite but vigorous tannins and espresso mocha oak. Inky plume at the finish. Fresh and delicious to drink; this is a magnificent wine.

**Vintage report:** A warm to hot summer with intermittent rains. A fine year.

**Vineyard provenance:** V&A, Sharam, MacKillop, Johnson's



2005

Drink now to 2035

99 POINTS

Deep crimson. Fresh intense blackcurrant, blackberry, dark chocolate and shellac aromas with herb garden notes. Rich and voluminous with inky dark berry fruits, fine supple yet chocolaty textures and plentiful espresso and roasted chestnut notes. Finishes chalky bitter firm with an inky plume. Powerful and expressive with lovely vinosity.

**Vintage report:** A mild to warm, dry growing season.

**Vineyard provenance:** Messenger, Redman

2006

Drink now to 2035

96 POINTS

Deep crimson. Intense pure blackcurrant pastille aromas with mocha herb garden notes. Well-concentrated wine with beautiful blackcurrant flavours, some dried leaves, fine loose-knit bitter al dente yet grainy tannins, balanced with savoury oak notes. Persistent minerally finish. Acidity touch high.

**Vintage report:** A warm, dry growing season with intermittent top up rains in February.

**Vineyard provenance:** Alex 84, V&A, O'Deas, Messenger

2007

Not made

2008

Drink now to 2040

97 POINTS

Deep crimson. Espresso, dark cherry, blackcurrant and dark chocolate aromas with violet notes. Pastille-like flavours of blackcurrant and dark cherry fruits, fine supple grainy tannins, underlying leafy notes and espresso and roasted chestnut oak with integrated acidity. Finishes firm, vigorous and long with an attractive graphite plume.

**Vintage report:** Generally warm to hot, with a freak heatwave from early to mid-March.

**Vineyard provenance:** Alex 6.64, Childs, Glengyle, V&A



2009

Drink now to 2030

94 POINTS

Deep crimson. Fresh cassis and mulberry aromas with vanilla-roasted chestnut and herb garden notes. Inky, mineral wine with cassis and mulberry fruits, fine grainy slightly grippy tannins and vanilla and mocha oak notes. Finishes slightly sappy firm. Classic in style with attractive vinosity.

**Vintage report:** A cool dry spring and a warm dry summer with a freak heatwave in January.

**Vineyard provenance:** V&A, Alex 6.64, Messenger

2010

Drink now to 2040

96 POINTS

Deep crimson. Intense pure blackcurrant, mulberry and violet aromas with roasted chestnut and herb garden notes. Beautifully concentrated with blackcurrant and musky dark plum flavours, fine slinky chalky tannins and underlying espresso and roasted chestnut notes. Finishes chocolaty firm with attractive mineral length.

**Vintage report:** A heat spike in November followed by a warm, dry summer and late beneficial rains. **Vineyard provenance:** Alex 84, O'Deas

2011

Not made

2012

Drink now to 2030

93 POINTS

Deep crimson. Expressive wine with petrichor, geosmin, cassis and dark chocolate aromas with dried leafy notes. Well-concentrated inky wine with deep set blackcurrant and blackberry fruits, dark chocolate and mocha notes and chalky firm persistent tannins. Finishes gravelly, inky and long. Generous wine with plenty of vigour and energy.

**Vintage report:** Mild to warm conditions prevailed, leading to perfect ripening.

**Vineyard provenance:** Alex 84, Alex 88, O'Deas

## 2013

Drink now to 2030

95 POINTS

Deep crimson. Intense elemental elderberry, blackcurrant and mulberry notes. Rich and voluminous with pure dark berry fruits, fine supple tannins and underlying vanilla mocha notes. Finishes lacy, al dente firm with lovely mineral length. Impressive purity of fruit.

**Vintage report:** A warm dry season with cooler weather towards harvest.  
**Vineyard provenance:** Childs, Alex 84

## 2014

Not made

## 2015

Drink now to 2045

98 POINTS

Deep crimson. Intense blackcurrant, roasted chestnut and vanilla aromas with a touch of herb garden. Generous and buoyant with superb ripe blackcurrant, mulberry and dark cherry fruits, supple sweet ripe-yet-vigorous tannins balanced with a vanilla mocha oak. Finishes chalky firm long with lovely lacy, inky plume. A delicious wine with superb ripeness and vinosity.

**Vintage report:** A warm spring and mild summer  
**Vineyard provenance:** Alex 84, V&A

## 2016

Drink now to 2050

100 POINTS

Deep crimson. Lovely pure blackcurrant, elderberry and herb garden aromas with hints of espresso and roasted chestnut. A beautifully concentrated wine with blackcurrant, elderberry, chinotto and herb flavours, fine-grained and plentiful-yet-vigorous tannins, superb mid palate richness and integrated roasted chestnut and cedar oak notes. Finishes chalky firm with a long inky graphite plume. Made for the long haul. A powerfully expressive yet unforced wine with superb vinosity, richness, density and volume. Wait a few years to let it unfold.

**Vintage report:** A very dry, mild to warm growing season.

**Vineyard provenance:** V&A, Nursery

## 2017

Not made

## 2018

Drink now to 2050+

99 POINTS

Deep crimson. Intense and fresh crème de cassis and dark plum aromas with vanilla mocha notes. Generously concentrated wine with creamy blackcurrant, dark plum fruit, fine loose-knit chalky firm but sinuous tannins, underlying vanilla mocha oak complexity. A crescendo of cedar and graphite at the finish with bitter-sweet notes. A brilliantly composed wine with superb richness, structure and fidelity. A great consort to the 2016 vintage.

**Vintage report:** A wet winter and spring, followed by a mild to warm growing season.

**Vineyard provenance:** V & A, O'Deas, Alex 88

## 2019

Drink now to 2055+

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97 POINTS (BARREL SAMPLE)

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Deep crimson. Elemental but expressive wine with intense blackcurrant dark cherry cranberry aromas and cedar, roasted chestnut and nutmeg notes. Rich, concentrated and dense and with saturated inky blackcurrant, dark cherry fruits, supple yet gravelly textures and cedar, roasted chestnut oak notes. Finishes grippy/muscular firm and tight with a long expansive tannin plume. Lovely definition, density and power. A long career ahead of it.

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**Vintage report:** A dry warm growing season with a heat-spike in January and cool conditions at vintage.

**Vineyard Provenance:** Hobbit, Alex 84

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— *FIVE* —

# IMPORTANT COONAWARRA MILESTONES





**The following wines give context to the imagination and generational effort that built the reputation of the Coonawarra region. Without them, there would be no Wynns John Riddoch Cabernet Sauvignon.**

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**1895**

### Coonawarra Vineyards Claret

Coonawarra's inaugural vintage. In 1897, The *South Eastern Star* newspaper reported that Arthur Perkins, professor of viticulture at Roseworthy Agricultural College, had declared the wine as "excellent quality, as fine as he had tasted in the colony and just the kind that would find a market in London among the higher classes." It was also the first time the phrase 'Coonawarra Claret' was depicted on a label from the region.

**1933**

### Woodley's St Adele Claret

In 1936, Lieutenant Colonel David Fulton of Woodley's Wines entered the 1933 St Adele Claret into the Brewers Exhibitions Empire Competition in London, where it was judged the best claret of the competition. But this empirical recognition did not help Coonawarra because the wine's origins were not stated on the label.

Years later George Fairbrother, a leading Australian wine judge from the 1940s until his retirement in 1977, reportedly said "It was one of the best Australian reds I have ever been privileged to taste." After the reinstatement of wine shows around Australia in 1947 winemaker Bill Redman began winning prizes and soon his rebadged Woodley's St Adele Coonawarra Claret began to attract notice from wine drinkers.









WOODLEY'S TREASURE CHEST IMAGES SUPPLIED BY LANGTON'S

## WOODLEY'S 'A NATURAL HISTORY VIGNETTE' TREASURE CHEST SERIES

The famous Woodley's Treasure Series clarets (later known as 'Treasure Chest') belonged to a large cache of residual inventory lying in the drives of Woodley's in Glen Osmond. There were eight contiguous vintages of museum stocks, from 1949 to 1956, all claret styles based on Shiraz and all made by Bill Redman, whose fame was quickly spreading across the Australian wine market.

The 1949 vintage was known as 'the magnificent young Woodley' and bottled by David Sutherland Smith. Subsequent releases, especially the 1954, 1955 and 1956, were highly regarded.

The Treasure Chest Series was sold as:

**Treasure Pack:** three bottles each of the  
1949, 1950, 1951 and 1952 vintages

**Vintage Box:** three bottles each of the  
1953, 1954, 1955 and 1956 vintages

Single bottles were released for the 1953 and 1955 vintages only



1949

## A Natural History Vignette

This label shows Australian flora and fauna with a French château in the background. The words '*la nouvelle hollande mieux connue vegetaux utiles naturalises en France*' wrapped around the frame translate to 'New Holland's best-known useful plants naturalised in France'. The image is from *Atlas historique, Voyage de découvertes aux Terres australes* (part 1; 1807) – a collaboration between naturalist François Péron, engraver Frères Lambert and artist Charles Alexandre Lesueur, who had joined the Baudin expedition to Australia (a French exploration to map the coast of New Holland, as Australia was then known, between 1800 to 1803).

1950

## Government House

This label illustrates Sydney's new Government House from the viewpoint of the botanical gardens. It is a hand-coloured engraving of a sketch by Frederick C. Terry – a prominent landscape artist of his day. His name appears erroneously as Fleury on the original work.

1951

## Terre Napoleon

This engraving of the southern coast of Australia, extending from South Australia to Victoria, was based on a sketch by explorer Louis de Freycinet, a member of the Baudin expedition. The cartouche, by Charles-Alexandre Lesueur, is taken from *Atlas historique, Voyage de découvertes aux Terres australes*, (part 2; 1812).

1952

## Captain Cook

This engraving of Captain James Cook, who landed on Botany Bay and claimed possession of the land for Great Britain in 1770, comes from a painting by Sir Nathaniel Dance. Engraved by J Chapman and London published as the Act directs September 20, 1800 by J. Wilkes.

1953

### Queen Adelaide

The city of Adelaide, founded in 1836, was named after Queen Adelaide, the German princess and wife of Britain's King William IV whose portrait (circa 1820) appears on this label. The engraving, by H Cook, was taken from a drawing by H Dawe published in William Jerdan's *National portrait gallery of illustrious and eminent personages of the 19th century: with memoirs*. The artwork later was reprised for the highly successful Queen Adelaide brand.

1954

### Views in Bathurst Plains

The most famous of all the Treasure Chest labels, Views in Bathurst Plains, comes from Joseph Lycett, a former convict turned artist to the Governor of New South Wales. Lycett's *Views in Australia* collection was published from 1824 to 1825 in monthly parts and dedicated to Earl (Henry) Bathurst, secretary of state for the colonial department.

1955

### The Galatea

Taken from the front cover of sheet music for *The Galatea – Polka Brillante* by Frederick Ellard, which was published in Adelaide in 1867 to celebrate the visit of Prince Alfred, Duke of Edinburgh and second son of Queen Victoria.

1956

### Skeleton

This label shows the celebrated stallion Skeleton, a famous Irish-bred racehorse owned by Alexander Riley, an early New South Wales pastoralist and possibly the first importer of Shiraz into Australia. The engraving comes from a painting by BM Chalon, a well-known artist of the period.





## 1955

### Wynns Coonawarra Estate Michael Shiraz

David Wynn's investment in Coonawarra put the region on the map and began a gold rush-style land grab by prominent producers including Penfolds, Lindeman's and Mildara. Wynns Coonawarra Estate enjoyed early success with Ian Hickinbotham as winemaker for the 1952 and 1953 vintages. However, it was Norm Walker who made the 1955 Michael Hermitage, named after David Wynn's son Michael. The wine is regarded as one of the greatest Australian wines of this era. It had a richness, complexity, drive and freshness that was rare for the time.

## 1962

### Penfolds Bin 60A Coonawarra Cabernet Sauvignon Kalimna Shiraz

In a world where egos readily clashed, the 1962 Penfold Bin 60A unified wine critics and show judges. Considered as one of the greatest Australian wines ever made, it is Penfolds' most successful show wine, winning 19 trophies and 33 gold medals. A confluence of oenological, physical and philosophical achievement, 1962 Bin 60A was a cross-regional blend which exemplified the emerging Penfolds house style. In seeking his 'ethereal' wine, Max Schubert identified that the perfumed cassis/violet aromas, elegant flavours and fine-grained tannins of cool-climate Coonawarra Cabernet Sauvignon would be complemented by the warm-climate characteristics of ripe fruit and the round chocolaty textures of Barossa Valley Shiraz. The fame of Bin 60A has reached all corners of the globe. According to leading wine expert of the time Len Evans, Max Schubert's direct contemporary, André Tchelistcheff, the founding father of the modern Californian wine industry, once told a room of startled Napa Valley vignerons "Gentlemen you will all stand in the presence of this wine!"

## 1963

### Mildara 'Peppermint Patty' Coonawarra Cabernet Sauvignon

The 1963 Mildara Cabernet Sauvignon is one of the most famous Australian wines of the 1960s. As Len Evans wrote in his *Complete Book of Australian Wine*:



*Of the wines that have appeared under this label, the 1963 was the first and by far the most outstanding. The wine had an incredibly intense flavour, fantastic fruit and beautiful oak, and it was so outstanding that it simply walked away with all the honours when first shown at the Royal Sydney Wine Show.*

The wine was intensely perfumed, reminiscent of a mint-scented Australian confectionary from which it takes its nickname, and around 1250 cases were made.

## 1964

### Penfolds Bin 707 Cabernet Sauvignon

The 1964 Bin 707 Cabernet Sauvignon was Penfolds first commercial release of a single Cabernet-based wine. After a stop-start beginning, it is regarded today as one of Australia's most important Cabernets; a distinct Penfolds house style and a foil to the great regional Cabernets of Coonawarra and Margaret River. Breaking with a tradition of using storage bin numbers, Bin 707 was named after the Boeing 707, the aircraft that brought Australia closer to the rest of the world during the 1960s. Bin 707 is linked to Max Schubert's dream of making a great Australian red wine that would last at least 20 years – if Penfolds had access to a consistent supply of Cabernet Sauvignon during the 1950s, the story of Grange may have turned out differently. Bin 707 was discontinued after the disappointing 1969 vintage. After a six-year intermission, the line was reignited with the release of 1976 Penfolds Bin 707 Cabernet Sauvignon.

## 1966

### Penfolds Bin 620 Coonawarra Cabernet Sauvignon Shiraz

The 1966 Bin 620 Cabernet Sauvignon Shiraz is almost as famous as Penfolds' 1962 Bin 60A. It enjoyed plenty of success at Australia's major capital wine shows and as a younger wine it was almost always talked about whenever the Bin 60A was mentioned. The wine was considered a classical claret-style wine and it inspired the 1982 Bin 820, 1990 Bin 920 and 2008 Bin 620, which were all based on Coonawarra Cabernet Sauvignon.

1967

## Penfolds Bin 7 Coonawarra Cabernet Sauvignon Kalimna Shiraz

The 1967 Bin 7, a two-thirds Coonawarra Cabernet Sauvignon and one-third Kalimna Shiraz blend, was a famous show wine of its day. Although it never reached the legendary status of Bin 60A, it is regarded as one of Penfolds' most important experimental wines of the 1960s and further cemented Coonawarra's reputation for Cabernet Sauvignon.

1976

## Wynns Coonawarra Estate Black Label Cabernet Sauvignon

This Jimmy Watson Trophy-winning wine further built Wynns Coonawarra Estate's fine wine reputation and expectations of the modern claret aesthetic. Known as Wynns 'Black Label', it belongs to a series of contiguous vintages from 1954 to the present day. With a reputation for longevity, this style is regarded as an enduring Coonawarra benchmark.

1976

## Lindeman's Limestone Ridge Shiraz Cabernet Sauvignon

A successful show-winning wine that crossed over into the imagination of collectors. Together with the St George Cabernet Sauvignon and then a little later its Pyrus Cabernet blend, this trio set a benchmark for Coonawarra and was a foil to Wynns Coonawarra Estate (although by Lindeman's, Rouge Homme, Wynns Coonawarra Estate and Penfolds are all under the same corporate umbrella today). Lindeman's also produced a 100 per cent Cabernet Sauvignon under the Limestone Ridge label.

1979

## Petaluma Cabernet Shiraz

Petaluma's 1979 Cabernet Shiraz, which derived from the 1969-planted Evans Vineyard in the Coonawarra region, represented a strong new narrative pioneered

by founder Brian Croser. He was the first person to introduce the concept of ‘distinguished vineyard sites’ in explaining the unique qualities of wine character. The wine was labelled Petaluma Coonawarra and omitted the varietal blend to further push forward the idea of regional definition. The blend itself showed the complementary qualities of Cabernet and Shiraz in which elegance and richness combined beautifully. Croser was never a fan of machine pruning or harvesting, which became the leitmotif of Coonawarra viticulture at the time.

## 1980

### Lindeman’s St George

The 1980 Lindeman’s St George Cabernet Sauvignon was one of the most successful show wines of its era. Together with the success of its 1976 Limestone Ridge Cabernet Shiraz, the St George spearheaded the reputation of Coonawarra as Australia’s premium Cabernet Sauvignon region, but it also marked the end of cane pruning at Lindeman’s and the beginning of a lacklustre period. The 1986 vintage, the last great wine under this marque, was heavily discounted and the brand never really truly recovered. The 1980 vintage was subsequently criticised for its shaded fruit character, although its leafy characters still give the remaining bottles a real character of place. As an aside, the 1980 Chateau Reynella Coonawarra Reserve Cabernet Sauvignon actually scored more highly than the 1980 St George in the preliminary classes of the Jimmy Watson Trophy, but few people remember it today.

## 1982

### Wynns Coonawarra Estate John Riddoch Cabernet Sauvignon

The release of 1982 Wynns Coonawarra Estate John Riddoch Cabernet Sauvignon – the first vintage of this flagship wine – was a significant milestone in Coonawarra’s modern winemaking history. Developed by winemaker John Wade, it harnessed a new bold winemaking philosophy and confidence in the potential of Coonawarra’s unique Terra Rossa soils and climate. The gradual finessing of the wine style and leadership in viticulture and winemaking has made John Riddoch the reference for Coonawarra Cabernet Sauvignon.









— *SIX* —

LANGTON'S  
CLASSIFICATION  
OF AUSTRALIAN  
WINE VII





**Langton's Classification of Australian Wine is the benchmark listing of Australia's most collectible and admired wines.**

**First published in 1990 and updated every four to five years it reflects the reputation of individual wine brands through the prism of the secondary market. Wynns John Riddoch Cabernet Sauvignon has been included in every edition and is rated 'Exceptional' – the equivalent of an 'Australian First Growth'.**



**PENFOLDS** Bin 95 Grange Shiraz, South Australia  
**HENSCHKE** Hill of Grace Shiraz, Eden Valley South Australia  
**LEEUEWIN ESTATE** Art Series Chardonnay, Margaret River Western Australia  
**MOUNT MARY** Quintet Cabernet Blend, Yarra Valley Victoria  
**WENDOUREE** Shiraz, Clare Valley South Australia  
**BASS PHILLIP** Reserve Pinot Noir, South Gippsland Victoria  
**BEST'S GREAT WESTERN** Thomson Family Shiraz, Grampians Victoria  
**BROKENWOOD** Graveyard Vineyard Shiraz, Hunter Valley New South Wales  
**CHRIS RINGLAND** Dry Grown Barossa Ranges Shiraz, Barossa South Australia  
**CLARENDON HILLS** Astralis Syrah, McLaren Vale South Australia  
**CLONAKILLA** Shiraz Viognier, Canberra District New South Wales  
**CULLEN** Diana Madeline Cabernet Merlot, Margaret River Western Australia  
**GIACONDA** Estate Vineyard Chardonnay, Beechworth Victoria  
**GROSSET** Polish Hill Riesling, Clare Valley South Australia  
**HENSCHKE** Mount Edelstone Shiraz, Eden Valley South Australia  
**JIM BARRY** The Armagh Shiraz, Clare Valley South Australia  
**MOSS WOOD** Moss Wood Cabernet Sauvignon, Margaret River Western Australia  
**PENFOLDS** Bin 707 Cabernet Sauvignon, South Australia  
**ROCKFORD** Basket Press Shiraz, Barossa Valley South Australia  
**SEPPELTSFIELD** 100 Year Old Para Vintage Tawny, Barossa Valley, South Australia  
**TORBRECK** RunRig Shiraz, Barossa Valley South Australia  
**WYNNS COONAWARRA ESTATE** John Riddoch Cabernet Sauvignon,  
 Coonawarra South Australia





- BALNAVES OF COONAWARRA** The Tally Reserve Cabernet Sauvignon,  
Coonawarra South Australia
- BAROSSA VALLEY ESTATE** E & E Black Pepper Shiraz, Barossa Valley South Australia
- BASS PHILLIP** Premium Pinot Noir, South Gippsland Victoria
- BEST'S** Great Western Bin 0 Great Western Shiraz, Grampians Victoria
- BINDI** Block 5 Pinot Noir, Macedon Ranges Victoria
- BINDI** Original Vineyard Pinot Noir, Macedon Ranges Victoria
- BY FARR** Sangreal Pinot Noir, Geelong Victoria
- CHARLES MELTON** Nine Popes Shiraz Grenache Mourvedre,  
Barossa Valley South Australia
- d'ARENBERG** The Dead Arm Shiraz, McLaren Vale South Australia
- DOMAINE A** Cabernet Sauvignon, Coal River Valley Tasmania
- FOX CREEK** Reserve Shiraz, McLaren Vale South Australia
- GRANT BURGE** Meshach Shiraz, Barossa Valley South Australia
- GREENOCK CREEK** Roennfeldt Road Shiraz, Barossa Valley South Australia
- HENSCHKE** Cyril Henschke Cabernet Sauvignon Blend, Eden Valley South Australia
- HENSCHKE** Keyneton Estate Euphonium Shiraz Cabernet Merlot Blend,  
Barossa Valley South Australia
- HOUGHTON** Jack Mann Frankland River Cabernet Sauvignon,  
Great Southern Western Australia
- HOWARD PARK** Abercrombie Cabernet Sauvignon,  
Mount Barker and Margaret River Western Australia
- JASPER HILL** Emily's Paddock Shiraz Cabernet Franc, Heathcote Victoria
- JASPER HILL** Georgia's Paddock Shiraz, Heathcote Victoria
- KAESLER** Old Bastard Shiraz, Barossa Valley South Australia
- KATNOOK ESTATE** Odyssey Cabernet Sauvignon, Coonawarra South Australia
- KAY BROTHERS AMERY** Block 6 Old Vine Shiraz, McLaren Vale South Australia
- LANGMEIL** The 1843 Freedom Shiraz, Barossa Valley South Australia
- LEEWIN ESTATE** Art Series Cabernet Sauvignon, Margaret River Western Australia
- MAIN RIDGE ESTATE** Half Acre Pinot Noir, Mornington Peninsula Victoria
- MOUNT MARY** Pinot Noir, Yarra Valley Victoria
- NOON** Reserve Shiraz, Langhorne Creek South Australia
- PENFOLDS** Bin 144 Yattarna Chardonnay, South Australia
- PENFOLDS** Bin 389 Cabernet Shiraz, South Australia
- PENFOLDS RWT** Shiraz, Barossa Valley South Australia
- PENFOLDS** St. Henri Shiraz, South Australia
- PETER LEHMANN** Stonewell Shiraz, Barossa Valley South Australia



Senior winemaker Sue Hodder and winemaker Sarah Pidgeon.

JOHN KRUGER

**PIERRO** Chardonnay, Margaret River Western Australia

**ROCKFORD** Sparkling Black Shiraz, Barossa Valley South Australia

**SEPPELTSFIELD** Para Liqueur Port (Vintage), Barossa Valley South Australia

**TAHBILK** 1860 Vines Shiraz, Nagambie Lakes Victoria

**TYRRELL'S** Vat 1 Semillon, Hunter Valley New South Wales

**VASSE FELIX** Tom Cullity Cabernet Sauvignon Malbec, Margaret River Western Australia

**WENDOUREE** Cabernet Sauvignon, Clare Valley South Australia

**WENDOUREE** Cabernet Malbec, Clare Valley South Australia

**WENDOUREE** Shiraz Malbec, Clare Valley South Australia

**WENDOUREE** Shiraz Mataro, Clare Valley South Australia

**WOODLANDS** Family Series Cabernet Sauvignon, Margaret River Western Australia

**YALUMBA** The Signature Cabernet Shiraz, Barossa South Australia

**YARRA YERING** Dry Red Wine No.1 Cabernet, Yarra Valley Victoria

**YERINGBERG** Cabernet Blend, Yarra Valley Victoria



**BOWEN ESTATE** Cabernet Sauvignon, Coonawarra South Australia  
**BY FARR** Tout Pres Pinot Noir, Geelong Victoria  
**CAPE MENTELLE** Cabernet Sauvignon, Margaret River Western Australia  
**CASTAGNA** Genesis Syrah, Beechworth Victoria  
**CHAMBERS ROSEWOOD** Rare Muscadelle, Rutherglen Victoria  
**CHAMBERS ROSEWOOD** Rare Muscat, Rutherglen Victoria  
**CORIOLE** Lloyd Reserve Shiraz, McLaren Vale South Australia  
**CRAIGLEE** Shiraz, Sunbury Victoria  
**CRAWFORD RIVER** Riesling, Henty Victoria  
**CULLEN** Kevin John Chardonnay, Margaret River Western Australia  
**d'ARENBERG** The Coppermine Road Cabernet Sauvignon, McLaren Vale South Australia  
**DALWHINNIE** Eagle Shiraz, Pyrenees Victoria  
**DALWHINNIE** Moonambel Shiraz, Pyrenees Victoria  
**DE BORTOLI** Noble One Botrytis Semillon, Riverina New South Wales  
**DEEP WOODS ESTATE** Reserve Cabernet Sauvignon, Margaret River  
**ELDERTON** Command Single Vineyard Shiraz, Barossa Valley South Australia  
**FREYCINET VINEYARDS** Pinot Noir, East Coast Tasmania  
**GIACONDA** Warner Vineyard Shiraz, Beechworth Victoria  
**GLAETZER WINES AMON-Ra** Shiraz, Barossa Valley South Australia  
**GROSSET** Gaia Cabernet Blend, Clare Valley South Australia  
**GROSSET** Springvale Riesling, Clare Valley South Australia  
**HARDYS** Eileen Hardy Shiraz, South Australia  
**HENTLEY FARM** Clos Otto Shiraz, Barossa Valley South Australia  
**HODDLES CREEK** 1er Pinot Noir, Yarra Valley Victoria  
**JOHN DUVAL WINES** Plexus Shiraz Grenache Mourvedre, Barossa Valley South Australia  
**KALLESKE** Johann Georg Old Vine Shiraz, Barossa Valley South Australia  
**KATNOOK ESTATE** Cabernet Sauvignon, Coonawarra South Australia  
**KILIKANOON** Oracle Shiraz, Clare Valley South Australia  
**KOOYONG** Haven Pinot Noir, Mornington Peninsula Victoria  
**LAKE'S FOLLY** Cabernet Blend, Hunter Valley New South Wales  
**LEO BURING** Leonay DW Riesling, Eden Valley or Clare Valley  
**MAJELLA** Cabernet Sauvignon, Coonawarra South Australia  
**MAJELLA** The Mallee Cabernet Shiraz, Coonawarra South Australia  
**MOUNT LANGI GHIRAN** Langi Shiraz, Grampians Victoria  
**MOUNT MARY** Chardonnay, Yarra Valley Victoria

**MOUNT PLEASANT** Lovedale Semillon, Hunter Valley New South Wales  
**MOUNT PLEASANT** Maurice O'Shea Shiraz, Hunter Valley New South Wales  
**NOON** Reserve Cabernet, Langhorne Creek South Australia  
**OAKRIDGE** 864 Chardonnay, Yarra Valley Victoria  
**OLIVER'S TARANGA VINEYARDS** HJ Reserve Shiraz, McLaren Vale South Australia  
**PARINGA ESTATE** The Paringa Pinot Noir, Mornington Peninsula Victoria  
**PARKER COONAWARRA ESTATE** First Growth Cabernet Blend,  
 Coonawarra South Australia  
**PENFOLDS** Bin 28 Kalimna Shiraz, South Australia  
**PENFOLDS** Bin 128 Shiraz, Coonawarra South Australia  
**PENFOLDS** Bin 407 Cabernet Sauvignon, South Australia  
**PENFOLDS** Magill Estate Shiraz, Adelaide South Australia  
**PETALUMA** Coonawarra Cabernet Blend, Coonawarra South Australia  
**PEWSEY VALE** The Contours Riesling, Eden Valley South Australia  
**SEPPELT** St Peters Shiraz, Grampians Victoria  
**ST HALLETT** Old Block Shiraz, Barossa Valley South Australia  
**ST HUGO** Cabernet Sauvignon, Coonawarra South Australia  
**THE STANDISH WINE COMPANY** The Standish Single Vineyard Shiraz,  
 Barossa Valley South Australia  
**TIM ADAMS** The Aberfeldy Shiraz, Clare Valley South Australia  
**TORBRECK** Descendant Shiraz Viognier, Barossa Valley South Australia  
**TURKEY FLAT** Shiraz, Barossa Valley South Australia  
**TYRRELL'S** Vat 47 Chardonnay, Hunter Valley New South Wales  
**VASSE FELIX** Cabernet Sauvignon, Margaret River Western Australia  
**VASSE FELIX** Heytesbury Chardonnay, Margaret River Western Australia  
**VOYAGER ESTATE** Cabernet Sauvignon Merlot, Western Australia  
**WIRRA WIRRA RSW** Shiraz, McLaren Vale South Australia  
**WOLF BLASS** Black Label Cabernet Shiraz Blend, South Australia  
**WYNNS COONAWARRA ESTATE** Cabernet Sauvignon, Coonawarra South Australia  
**WYNNS COONAWARRA ESTATE** Michael Shiraz, Coonawarra South Australia  
**XANADU** Reserve Cabernet Sauvignon, Margaret River Western Australia  
**YABBY LAKE VINEYARD** Single Vineyard Pinot Noir, Mornington Peninsula Victoria  
**YALUMBA** The Octavius Old Vine Shiraz, Barossa South Australia  
**YARRA YARRA VINEYARD** The Yarra Yarra Cabernet Sauvignon, Yarra Valley Victoria  
**YARRA YERING** Dry Red Wine No.2 Shiraz, Yarra Valley Victoria











WYNNS  
COONAWARRA ESTATE



## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

While this book is about Wynns Coonawarra Estate, I would like to think it reflects well on Coonawarra's many vignerons who have worked hard to build the reputation of the region in Australia and on the world stage. The story of John Riddoch Cabernet Sauvignon, which is interconnected with the history of Coonawarra and its people, is one of shared success and aspiration. In writing this narrative I relied heavily on research by Peter Rymill, the great grandson of John Riddoch and a longstanding vigneron in Coonawarra. I greatly appreciate his sensitive approach to the region's earliest beginnings, acknowledgement of Aboriginal culture and displacement and the difficulties of establishing a wine industry.

I would like to thank Wynns' senior winemaker Sue Hodder, winemaker Sarah Pidgeon and viticulturist Allen Jenkins for providing background material. This exceptional team has created a standard of excellence that defines modern Australian technical proficiency in winemaking and viticulture. Their empathy with the land and sense of history resonate in their wines and they belong to the generations of Coonawarra vignerons who have collaborated and supported each other through the best and worst of times.

Wynns enabled this project by funding the publishing and printing of this book. I would like to point out, however, that I have researched and written this text purely as a vocational interest and the belief that the story of Wynns Coonawarra Estate John Riddoch Cabernet Sauvignon, told through the prism of Coonawarra's history and landmark wines, deserves a fresh perspective.

Nola James of Hardie Grant, who has a keen eye and an interest in Australian wine history, has polished this text with extraordinary love and attention. She is proof that a writer is only as good as their editor! Courtney Nicholls, also of Hardie Grant, has steered this project into fruition by pulling all the elements together.

LEFT The downstairs barrel cellar at The Gables, built by John Riddoch in the 1890s.

JOHN KRUGER



Australian wine experts Tom Portet and Emma Thienpont have embarked on a project to build Australia's fine wine agenda through La Place de Bordeaux. In some respects, this book is inspired by that aspiration. Through my work with *Langton's Classification of Australian Wine*, with colleagues Jeremy Parham and Tamara Grischy, we have a long-term ambition to build an international conversation and secondary wine market for Australia's finest wines.

Recently I visited the National Gallery in London and discovered works by Australian impressionist painters Arthur Streeton and John Peter Russell in the company of Claude Monet, Auguste Renoir, Paul Gauguin and Vincent Van Gogh. Here was proof that greatness is always recognised in the long term and that it takes time – sometimes several generations – to achieve success. For most winemakers, artists or writers, the art or craft is all about seizing the moment and shaping it into a form or an aesthetic. History has to look after itself, although a belief in the future can lead to fulfilment and a sense of purpose.

Writing in the long form is a solitary and completely anti-social pursuit. I would like to thank my wife Bobby Caillard for her loving support and patience through several months of research and transcribing.



## ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Andrew Caillard is a graduate of Roseworthy Agricultural College and a Master of Wine (winning the prestigious Madame Bollinger Medal for excellence in wine tasting). As the co-founder of Langton's, Andrew has been a key figure in shaping Australia's fine wine agenda for more than 30 years. He is the author of the Penfolds Rewards of Patience series (seven editions), Marques de Riscal's A travel through time and the driving force behind Langton's Classification of Australian Wine. He has worked with Australia's largest drinks retailer, Endeavour Drinks, as its fine wine principal since 2009.

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WYNNS  
COONAWARRA ESTATE



*Imagining Coonawarra*  
*The Story of John Riddoch Cabernet Sauvignon*

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# WYNNS

## COONAWARRA ESTATE

IMAGINING COONAWARRA is more than the story of one of South Australia's most renowned wine regions. It is the story of John Riddoch's pioneering spirit, resilience and agricultural ambition.

From the fledgling beginnings of his Penola Fruit Colony to the advent of modern mechanisation and finally, Wynns Coonnawarra Estate's tribute John Riddoch Cabernet Sauvignon, this book is the culmination of more than 130 years of Australian fine wine.



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