



MEDIA RELEASE: AUGUST 2011

Gamay in the Hunter: Len Evans was at loggerheads ... Ballabourneen reckons his support was well based

- Ballabourneen 2011 Gamay Noir (\$25)
- Ballabourneen 2011 Moscato (\$26)

When Ballabourneen Wines took a lease on part of the late Len Evans' Hunter Valley property, they gained much more than a cellar-door outlet on Pokolbin's "golden mile".

The boutique Hunter Valley producer also gained access to one of Australia's very few plantings of gamay, or gamay noir à jus blanc, in more grandiose verbage — the variety best known for making the delightful light-to-medium-bodied dry reds of Beaujolais.

"Len named his property Loggerheads because that's where he reckoned he always was with people, and certainly he argued long and hard about the possibility of the Hunter's rather eccentric terroir providing ideal conditions for gamay," said Ballabourneen's winemaker Daniel Binet.

Having had three vintages of experience with the variety, Daniel reckons Len was just about right.

"I definitely see this as a serious red," said Daniel.

"It obviously doesn't have the weight of our shiraz, but it has some fine dark berry flavours, a distinct tannic edge and complete dryness.

"That said, I could also see a case for chilling it down a bit as the warmer weather heads in, or even throwing an iceblock into the glass."

With the Ballabourneen 2011 Sparkling Moscato, Daniel has definitely refined the style of the previous two vintages.

The source of the fruit is the same — an old Gresford vineyard, probably planted to black muscat, aka muscat hamburg — and the ripeness at harvest still at about 11°Baumé.

But this year Daniel allowed the ferment to go a couple of degrees further, producing a wine with nine per cent alcohol rather than seven.

“It still has the same rich pink colour and the same enticing muscat aromas, but there’s definitely less obvious sweetness and more body,” he said.

“Alcohol acts as a flavour carrier, and that means more of those varietal flavours carry through on to the palate and provide an even more appealing experience.”

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