



MEDIA RELEASE: AUGUST 2011

Wicks Estate finds a shining light in a decidedly challenging vintage

- Wicks Estate 2011 Sauvignon Blanc (\$18–19)
- Wicks Estate 2009 Chardonnay Pinot Noir (\$25)

The 2011 vintage will go down as one of the most challenging and demanding in recent memory throughout much of south-eastern Australia.

For Simon and Tim Wicks, it forced some decisions that most wine producers would regard as extremely difficult. Normally, their Adelaide Hills vineyard would yield grapes for three dry white table wines to be released under their Wicks Estate label — Chardonnay, Riesling and Sauvignon Blanc.

This year, however, they decided not to produce the former two wines and concentrate their efforts on the latter, as well as harvesting some early-picked Chardonnay for their sparkling wine.

“As farmers we regarded the roll of the dice as bad luck, but we certainly didn’t regard the decisions we took to be difficult ones,” said Simon Wicks, who looks after the business and marketing sides of the operation.

“We’ve worked way too hard to establish Wicks Estate’s reputation to diminish it by releasing wines that aren’t up to the standards we’ve set ourselves, and clearly the wet season and associated mildew issues meant that the Riesling wasn’t going to make the cut at all and that the Chardonnay could only be harvested very early for sparkling base.”

His brother Tim, who manages Wicks Estate’s vineyard and winery, near Woodside, did, however, spot some bright light at the end of the tunnel for Sauvignon Blanc.

“Sauvignon Blanc seems to develop quite distinct varietal flavours early in the season, so it was a matter of protecting the fruit — and those flavours — once the wet set in,” he said.

“We did a lot of leaf plucking to make sure that the canopy was clean and that our rigorous spraying program could have maximum impact on keeping the berries free from disease.”

Then it was up to the winemaking team — Tim Knappstein, working his 50th vintage, Leigh Ratzmer and Chris Parsons — to keep the momentum rolling.

“It was never going to be easy for them to follow up their 2010 Sauvignon Blanc, which won two trophies and four gold medals, and, I think, firmly established Wicks Estate as one of the country’s leading exponents with the variety,” said Simon.

“But the signs are good. At the recent 2011 Cowra Wine Show, Wicks Estate won the only gold medal for a 2011 Sauvignon Blanc, and, indeed, just one of handful of gold medals awarded to 2011 white table wines.

“It really does jump out of the glass, delivering a burst of extremely attractive tropical-fruit flavours, and then there’s some beautiful length and depth on the palate to encourage a second glass.”

Meanwhile, the early-picked 2011 Chardonnay will be used in a successor to the Wicks Estate 2009 Chardonnay Pinot Noir sparkling, which topped its class at the same Cowra 2011 wine show.

“This is a wine we take very seriously,” said Simon.

“We give it the full treatment — selecting individual parcels of fruit, whole-bunch pressing, secondary fermentation in bottle, traditional riddling during two years of maturation on lees, creating a true traditionally made vintage sparkling wine.

“Making this sort of wine isn’t easy, and we’re very fortunate that our winemakers have such an excellent relationship with Yalumba, which has the elaborate traditional facilities to undertake the exercise.”

For further information and national distribution details, please contact Simon Wicks on 08 8212 0004, or visit www.wicksestate.com.au.

High-resolution colour images can be downloaded from WineMedia’s website (www.winemedia.com.au).

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