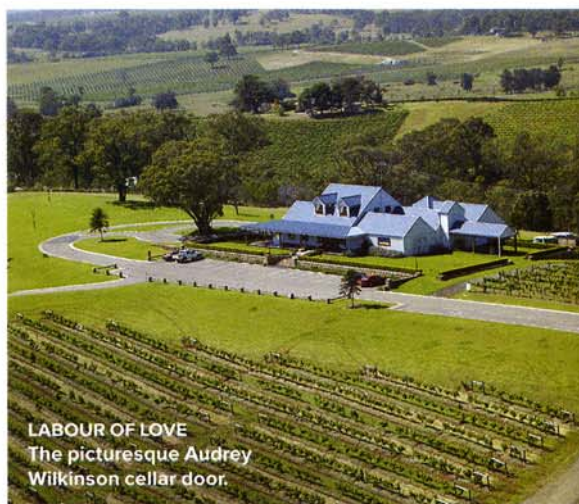


Unsung heroes

Museum to honour role of Hunter Valley founding family.

While pioneering Hunter Valley families such as the Tyrrells, Tullochs and Draytons have become household names (in wine-drinking households, at least), few people are aware that it was Frederick Wilkinson who first planted grapes in Pokolbin – the heart of the region – in 1866. This lack of recognition is set to change with the opening of a museum at Audrey Wilkinson Vineyard, on the site of that

first vineyard. The winery is named after Frederick's son, who took over at the tender age of 15, when his father died (and he reportedly never touched a drop of wine during his lifetime, at his father's dying request). As well as the detailed diaries and documents that Audrey kept all his long life – he passed away in his mid-eighties in 1962 – which give us a unique insight into the fledgling Australian wine



LABOUR OF LOVE
The picturesque Audrey Wilkinson cellar door.

industry in the late 19th and early 20th centuries, Audrey's brother Garth also left behind a photo album that has yielded a treasure trove of images of an extraordinary family leading everyday lives.

*Audrey Wilkinson Vineyard,
DeBeyers Rd, Pokolbin, (02) 4998 7411,
www.audreywilkinson.com.au.*



LABEL-CONSCIOUS
Easily the most stylish new label to pass across the tasting bench in recent months is Vineamaron. Made by Mario Marson (ex-Mount Mary and Jasper Hill) from grapes grown at his Heathcote vineyard, the intensely flavoured wines – a tangy rosé, savoury sangiovese and sumptuous syrah – are dressed in gorgeously simple, striking packaging by designer Ingrid Langtry, partner at hip Melbourne pizza restaurant, Ladro. www.vineamaron.com.

EVENTS

NOTE-WORTHY INDEED

The Clare Gourmet Weekend (6-7 May), one of the oldest food and wine festivals in the country, will feature an intriguing musical performance at Taylor's winery by some of Australia's less-introverted wine scribes – including, apparently, your correspondent. Another highlight will be the Vintage Tasting, which allows punters to sample the year's vintage before the winemaking process is complete. (08) 8842 2131, www.clarevalley.com.au.

TOP DROPS OF THE MONTH



BARGAIN
2005 Bellarmine Pinot Noir, Pemberton, WA, \$15
While I think that Pemberton in WA is best suited to later-ripening reds such as shiraz and merlot, occasionally the region throws up some succulent, more-ish pinots such as this bold, cherry-juicy, great-value example. **Drink with** mild duck curry.



RED
2003 Leconfield Cabernet Sauvignon, Coonawarra, SA, \$29
At its best, Leconfield has produced some of Coonawarra's finest, most elegant, most perfumed, age-worthy cabernets. This is a very good example, with bay leaf-tinged mulberry flavours and fine tannin. **Drink with** herb-crusted lamb cutlets.



WHITE
2005 The Matador Albariño, Barossa Valley, SA, \$35
As trendy new grape varieties go, Spain's albariño is right up there. This is a great example of why: it's perfumed, floral, crisp like a riesling, but also intense and full of apple/pear flavour, more like a pinot gris. **Drink with** bacallà (salt cod).



ONE FOR THE CELLAR
2003 Whistler Shiraz, Barossa Valley, SA, \$26
Although it's 100 per cent shiraz from a relatively young vineyard (planted in 1994), this is so exuberantly aromatic and so rich that it tastes as though it's from much older vines and has a splash of viognier in it. **Drink with** chargrilled kangaroo.



IMPORT
2004 Chivite Gran Fuedo Rosado, Navarra, Spain, \$14
Delicious example of why the Navarran rosado style is the model for many makers of dry pink wines. Perfect balance of spicy (leather, cumin), fruity (rosehip, raspberry) and savoury (terracotta dust). **Drink with** tapas (what else?).



SWEET
2005 Pettavel Late Harvest Riesling, Geelong, Vic, \$18
This extraordinarily sweet, almost painfully intense, wine is a ravishing pale lemon-gold colour, and tastes like the essence of riesling: lime juice, concentrated grape juice, nectarine juice, melon juice... **Drink with** passionfruit tart.

FOR STOCKIST INFORMATION SEE P166.