



First Drop, MISSION: SUCCESSFUL

Photography by Beanpole Productions

Penny Boothman

A couple of months ago a DVD hit the *WBM* doormat, which featured Matt Gant and John Retsas jumping out of a plane and inviting us to take part in a top secret event called Mission: Possible.

No details of the mission would be revealed until the day. Were we game? Damn right we were. And it turned out to be one of the most inspirational bits of wine media tomfoolery we've ever encountered.

We can't tell you exactly what the day entailed, we'd have to kill you, but between the firing range shoot-out, the 'Iron Chef' lunchtime challenge and the Texas Hold'em tournament we were all glad to retire to the stretch Hummer limo for a cold Coopers or two.

In a really interesting twist, dinner at Bird in Hand Winery involved five other winemakers from regions around South Australia, who each presented a selection of wines that inspired them—and inspired some lively discussion. Few other wine companies would get the attention of eight national wine journos for the day and then invite their mates to talk about a bunch of entirely different wines at dinner.

Big budget big days out like this aren't exactly unheard of in the wine world,



Dead-eye dick Tyson Stelzer.

particularly from bigger organisations, but coming from a winery that's literally a two-man-band—and without a PR agent in sight—it's eyebrow-raising to say the least. When most wine companies are cutting their marketing spends it's refreshing to see a couple of thinkers like this putting their cards on the table, so to speak. Hats off to a brave stunt in a tough climate. To quote Gant, "If there was ever a time to make a noise with your wines, it's now."

And yes, we obviously did try a few wines throughout the day, and how were they? Don't be surprised if you see some rave reviews from the rest of the country's wine media over the coming months.



Nick Stock cooking up a storm.