



# WINEMAKER OF THE YEAR

# 2011

It's that time again when we honour the Outstanding achievements of our finest talents.

The *Gourmet Traveller WINE* Winemaker of the Year Awards celebrates the recent history of Australian wine by focusing attention on the finest drops produced in the last decade and a half. The 2011 winner, House of Arras's Ed Carr, adds another dimension not only because he has dominated quality sparkling-wine production for such a long time, but because of his recent achievement in producing world-class fizz from Tasmania.

The stories of the finalists continue to delight. This year, there's a deserved focus on the Mornington Peninsula's Nat White, and long-serving Tasmanian great Claudio Radenti, both pioneers of their respective

regions and winemakers who have shown how boutique family operations can produce some of the finest, most detailed wines in the country. Clive Otto has revamped his career at Fraser Gallop and helped to showcase the wines of a budding new superstar in Margaret River. Atypically, the 2011 finalists include a larger brigade than usual with youth on their side – Dan Buckle revitalising an old favourite at Mt Langi Ghiran; Liz Jackson playing a significant part in the rejuvenation of the Hunter; Kym Teusner holding fast to his belief in the importance of old vines; and Mac Forbes focusing on new varieties and site-specific pinot and chardonnay.

The Len Evans Award highlights the importance of industry leadership. The judging panel aren't sure how well-known Canberra pioneer Edgar Riek is away from his home base. Even after he hit 90, we don't believe it's too late to acknowledge the leadership he's shown in that region.

The Wine Australia Medal encourages up-and-coming winemakers. Nick Glaetzer is the third member of his family to be in the spotlight on Winemaker of the Year night and follows older brother, Ben, as a winner of this award. **PETER FORRESTAL**



## WINEMAKER OF THE YEAR 2011



**Ed Carr**

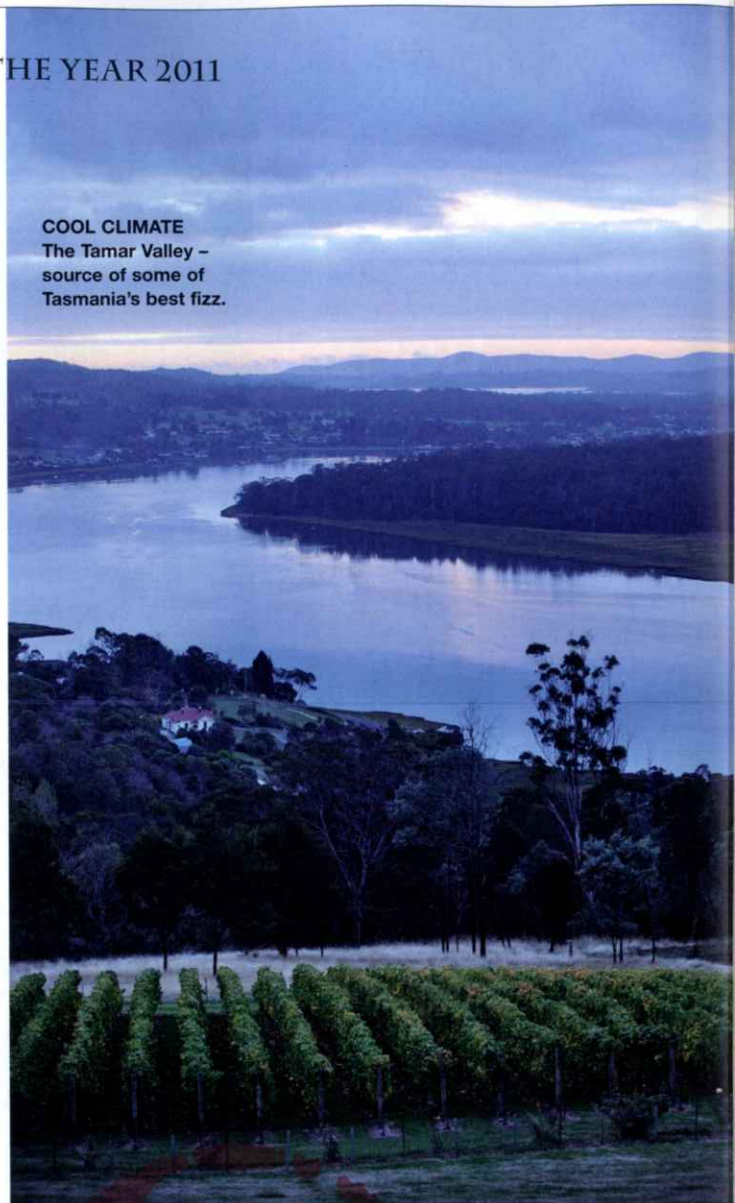
### House of Arras

Australian sparkling-wine production owes a huge part of its success to Ed Carr, whose vibrant late-disgorged sparkling Tasmanian wines have achieved international acclaim.

When Cassius says of Julius Caesar in Shakespeare's play: "He bestrides the narrow world like a colossus...", he may just as well have been referring to Accolade's group chief sparkling winemaker, Ed Carr. For the 25 years that Carr has been involved in sparkling winemaking he has been the country's master blender, the incomparable bubbly producer against whose achievements all others have been judged. The sheer weight of sparkling wine trophies that he has garnered from the Australian show system defies belief and comparison. His most recent achievement is his most amazing. He has transformed grapes from southern Tasmania into vintage bubbly (under the House of Arras EJ Carr label) that are disgorged after 10 years on

lees yet retain a freshness and vibrance that suggest youth rather than maturity, possess the depth of flavour, finesse and complexity for them to sell at the price of deluxe Champagnes, and have the critics gasping for superlatives.

Carr began his career as a microbiologist in 1977 in the laboratory of Wynn Winegrowers at Magill. He became more involved in the physical side of producing bubbly and, in 1986, was appointed sparkling winemaker for Seaview and Killawarra at Nuriootpa. He had reservations about Southcorp's decision to consolidate its sparkling wine production at Great Western and wasn't keen to live there, so an offer from BRL Hardy to head up the proposed expansion of its sparkling wine



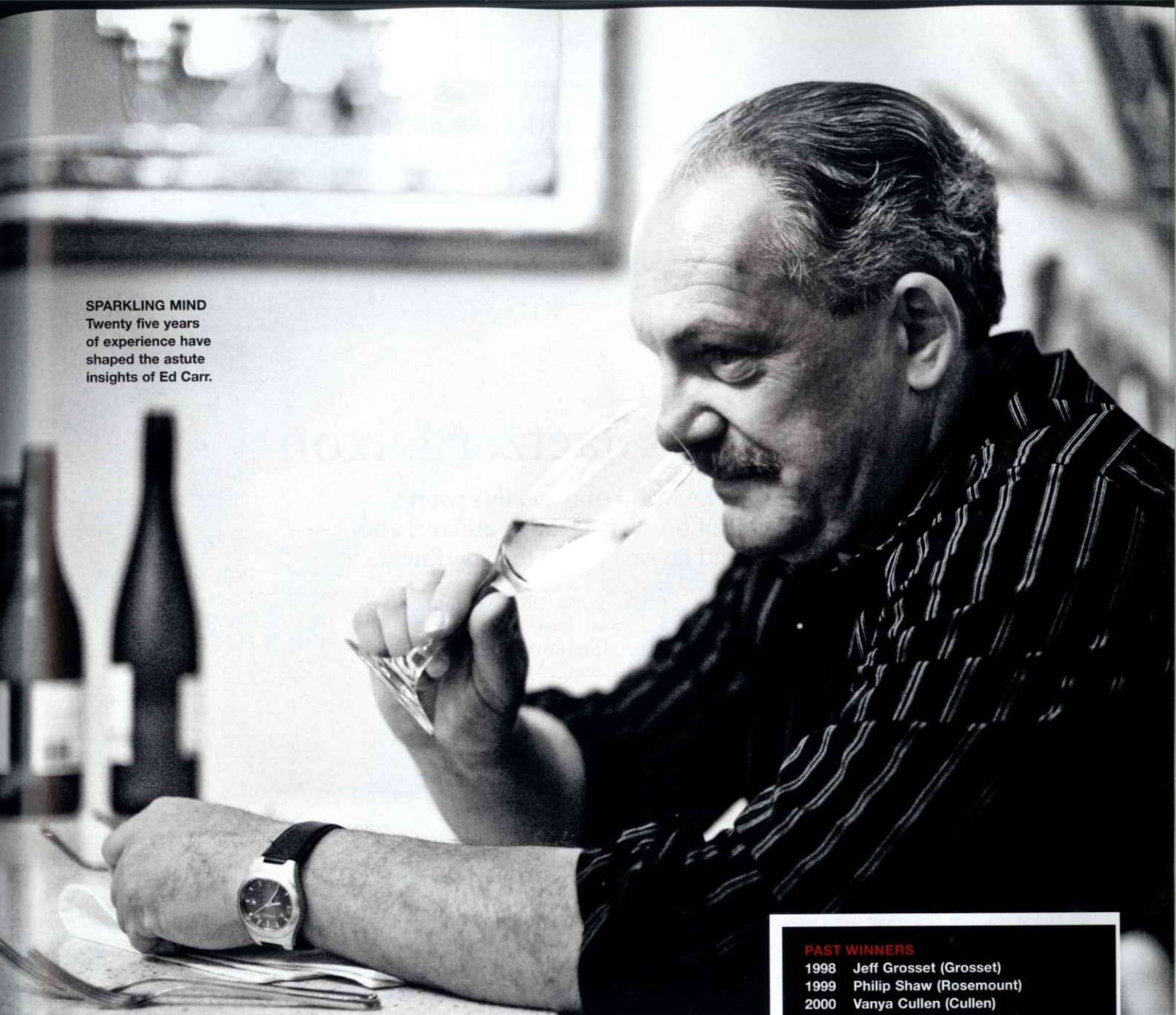
**COOL CLIMATE**  
The Tamar Valley –  
source of some of  
Tasmania's best fizz.

**WINEMAKER  
OF THE YEAR  
2011  
WINNER**

division was timely.

This expansion began with the non-varietal Riverland blend, Hardys Grand Cuvée, and Hardys Sir James which garnered popularity at 10 times the anticipated pace. He wanted to move towards the use of the classic Champagne varieties, chardonnay and pinot noir, with Riverland bubbly, something which was not common at the time. The launch of Omni and then Banrock Station provided this opportunity. The purchase of the Hoddles Creek vineyard in 1994 gave Hardys access to its cool-climate fruit and within a few years the company had committed to the Yarra Burn brand. The purchase of the Kambera winery gave them access to fruit from the Canberra region and Tumberumba, and led to the establishment of the highly successful Sir James Tumberumba label. This interest in cool-climate

**SPARKLING MIND**  
 Twenty five years  
 of experience have  
 shaped the astute  
 insights of Ed Carr.



sparkling wines led to other regional products, Wisdom from Pemberton and Starvedog Lane from the Adelaide Hills.

The move to Tasmania has arguably turned Carr from a superstar to a colossus. His finest made from outside Tasmania are first-rate Australian sparkling wines, while the best he's made from the chill of the island's south are world-class bubbly of power, elegance and finesse. He bought his first fruit from Tasmania in 1995, pressed it under contract, and released it under the Arras label in time for the millennium.

As his confidence grew, more sparkling wine was produced. The breakthrough came with the purchase of the Bay of Fires vineyard and winery in 2001. This gave them an important source of fruit and control over their own winemaking. A key figure in much of Carr's winemaking at Hardys has been viticulturist, Ray Guerin, whose cold-climate viticultural knowledge, Carr believes, would be hard to match. His practical know-how

has enabled him to guide growers and turn competent horticulturists into good grape growers in Tumberumba, the Yarra Valley, and Tasmania.

A key to the success of the Arras wines has been the house style that has evolved under Carr. For the EJ Carr wines, he has turned to the southern Tasmanian vineyard in the belief that finer, more elegant drops need ultra-cold climate and the chardonnay grape. A low sulfur regime is used giving the wines a slightly oxidative character. One hundred per cent goes through the malolactic fermentation thus reining in the powerful natural acidity. To keep them pristine, the wines are fined hard; and oak is used to build structure and complexity, without imparting oak character. There's a consistency about the first three vintages (1998, 1999, 2000) of the House of Arras EJ Carr Late Disgorged: a brightness and a remarkable youthful zest; complex quartz, shaly minerality and long, dry finishes that harness retained natural

**PAST WINNERS**

- 1998 Jeff Grosset (Grosset)
- 1999 Philip Shaw (Rosemount)
- 2000 Vanya Cullen (Cullen)
- 2001 Gary Farr (Bannockburn)
- 2002 Phil Laffer (Jacobs Creek)
- 2003 Rick Kinsbrunner (Giaconda)
- 2004 Andrew Spinaze (Tyrrell's Wines)
- 2005 Pete Bissell (Balnaves)
- 2006 Stephen & Prue Henschke (Henschke)
- 2007 Steve Webber (De Bortoli)
- 2008 Louisa Rose (Yalumba)
- 2009 Andrew Wigan (Peter Lehmann)
- 2010 Sue Hodder & Allen Jenkins (Wynns)
- 2011 Ed Carr (House of Arras)

acidity. These give an added dimension to Australian sparkling wine production.

In playing the dominant role in his specialist segment of the industry, Ed Carr laid an admirable foundation for his most recent success. For the range of possibilities he has shown with Tasmanian fizz, he is a most deserved winner of the 2011 *Gourmet Traveller WINE* Australian Winemaker of the Year.

PETER FORRESTAL



# Nick Glaetzer

## Frogmore Creek/Glaetzer Dixon

Hailing from a family deep-set in the world of wine, this young winemaker is making fresh tracks of his own, creating ethereal and approachable Tasmanian wines, and he isn't afraid to experiment.

So what's a nice, warm-blooded Barossa boy like Nick Glaetzer doing in the icy chill of Tasmania? The Barossa is central to the wine-making life of Glaetzer's family: father, Colin was chief winemaker at Barossa Valley Estate before starting the contracting winemaking business Barossa Vintners and his family company with second son, Ben. Oldest son, Sam, is a senior winemaker with Treasury Wine Estates based in the Barossa. Ben, a former winner of this award is also based in the Barossa, and makes wine with his family company, Mitolo and Heartland. There's little doubt that the blood of the Barossa throbbed in the veins of John Glaetzer, Colin's twin, during his 25-year career as chief winemaker for Wolf Blass. It was his uncle who was most scathing of Nick's decision to to make Tassie pinot ("it's like light beer").

It was the combination of Nick's now wife, Sally Dixon, being posted to Tasmania as a reporter with the ABC in 2005 and a fascination with pinot noir, which were responsible for his urge to make wine there. Ironically, the interest in pinot came from his father, Colin, who had worked in Burgundy, understood its wines and shared them with the family. His comment that pinot noir was the hardest grape to transform into good wine intrigued the young Nick.

The most formative influence on his eventual career path was, understandably, growing up in a winemaking family with its associated memories: the excitement of vintage with its distinctive sounds and smells, strolling through near-ripe vineyards tasting



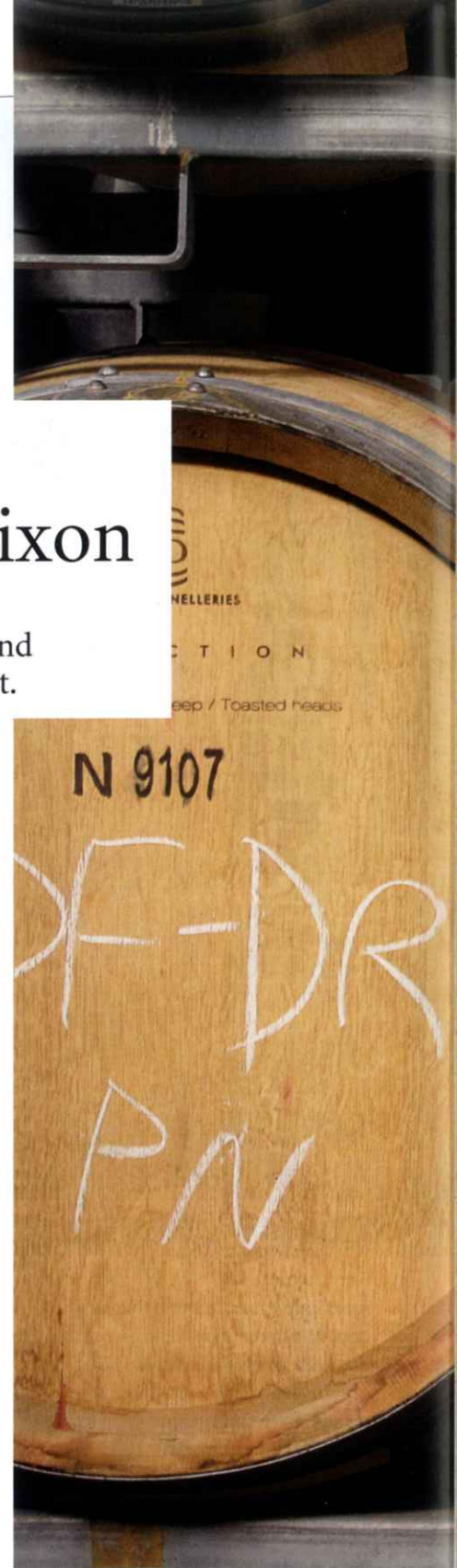
the grapes, drinking ripe, sweet grape juice during fermentation. Like so many of his contemporaries, he, studied in another field, completing a mechatronic engineering degree at the University of Adelaide, before settling down to a science degree in winemaking and viticulture at Curtin University. The tug of winemaking continued to call to him while he was studying for his first degree. During this time he worked harvest each year at Barossa Vintners and completed vintage in the Minervois and the Pfalz in 2001. The combination of modern and traditional winemaking practices in Pfalz was a significant influence on his riesling making.

He gained important commercial experience working vintage in the Murray Darling (2005), Riverland (2006) and the Hunter (2007) in between working with Alain Rousseau and Andrew Hood at Frogmore Creek (vintage 2006) and marrying Sally (August 2006), followed by three months in Europe and vintage in Burgundy. His appointment to a full-time winemaking position at Frogmore Creek in 2007 led to a more settled lifestyle, albeit with the winery in expansion mode – moving from 28 to 84 hectares of vineyard and 3000 to 28,000 cases of wine in four years.

He enthuses about life at Frogmore with the estate vineyard "consistently providing the best riesling in Tassie"; the opportunity to experiment alongside Rousseau: fermenting riesling, gewürztraminer and chardonnay on skins; co-fermenting two to three per cent of whites such as chardonnay, pinot blanc, pinot gris and gewürztraminer with pinot

noir. With 35 different labels in the portfolio since the purchase of Meadowbank, there's little time to get bored.

Which brings us to his 1000-case family label, Glaetzer-Dixon, that produces pinot noir, riesling and shiraz. With help from Rousseau, who has known the Tasmanian landscape since 1991, Glaetzer has sourced fruit from a dozen vineyards in the Coal Valley and the Derwent. Experimentation is rife. With riesling, he is moving away from florals, looking for complex secondary characters.



**BRAVE NEW WORLD**  
Nick Glaetzer loves to challenge orthodoxies within the industry.



PHOTOGRAPHY BY  
FROGMORE CREEK/GLAETZER DIXON.

He's using slower-working yeasts and controlling fermentation at 16-18°C until the acid is balanced by the sugar. The 2010 Glaetzer-Dixon Überblanc Riesling is subtle, delicate and textural, balancing fresh appley characters and slaty notes, finishing fresh, dry and zingy. There are two pinot noirs: Avancé, a seductively delicious, fresh and bright style from younger, higher-yielding grapes, given no new oak; and the aspirational Rêvur, an ageworthy, more complex and deeply concentrated wine that in 2008 is fleshy, even velvety

with violet and brambles, fine and balanced. The secret to Mon Père Shiraz is that it is sourced from three vineyards, two of them planted in 1972 and 1973 – and they have no problem with ripening. This is cool-climate shiraz, co-fermented with a touch of pinot gris, he says, made more in the style of pinot noir than shiraz. In 2009, it has restraint, redcurrant and black cherry flavours with some white pepper notes, fleshy texture, and balanced fine-grain tannins. Approachable and food-friendly.

Nick Glaetzer continues to pack far too much into his busy life. Experimentation and the desire to challenge orthodoxies remains at the core of his winemaking, whether it be at Frogmore Creek or Glaetzer-Dixon. In the quality of the wines for which he's been responsible, he's shown all the attributes which make him a worthy Wine Australia Medallist.

PETER FORRESTAL

