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HOLM OAK



GLAETZER-DIXON

Tasmania's cool-climate vineyards have proved perfect for new-wave sparkling wines, brilliant pinots and stunning aromatic whites. Here are five exciting young Tasmanian producers whose wines are already hitting high notes.

STORY WINSOR DOBBIN

Winemaker Rebecca Wilson and viticulturist Tim Duffy, the partners behind Holm Oak, are constantly experimenting with new techniques and grape varieties at their pretty Tamar Valley winery 40 kilometres north of Launceston. They produce wines made from riesling, sauvignon blanc, chardonnay, pinot gris, arneis, pinot noir, cabernet sauvignon, merlot and cabernet franc along with two styles of moscato.

Holm Oak 2009 Pinot Noir (\$30)

Pinot noir can often be a big ticket wine but the Holm Oak wines are an exception to that rule, being both well-made and realistically priced. This is quite a big, forward pinot, atypically Tasmanian as was dictated by the warm 2009 vintage. A complex palate offers lively dark cherry fruit flavours along with forest floor earthiness and savoury notes. The alcohol level is well measured at 13.5%, meaning there is also some elegance.

Drink with duck pancakes.

Holm Oak 2010 Pinot Gris (\$25)

This is the first Holm Oak pinot gris release and it underlines the variety's immense promise in Tasmania. It's made in an attractive style that's midway between the richness of wines from Alsace and the crisp grigio styles of northern Italy. Produced from just one hectare of grapes established in 2007, this wine is delightfully drinkable with lovely balance between aromatics and soft, rich pear flavours on the palate. Natural acid gives the wine length and structure.

Drink with Vietnamese cuisine.

Nick Glaetzer is a member of one of the Barossa Valley's best-known winemaking families but after stints in Languedoc, the Pfalz in Germany, Margaret River, the Riverland, the Hunter Valley and Burgundy he's spent the last five years in Tasmania, working at Frogmore Creek and crafting small amounts of his own wine under his family label. Glaetzer's family may make big, rich wines but his obsession is using cool-climate, super-premium fruit to make wines that are fresh and easy to drink.

Glaetzer Dixon 2010 Uberblanc (\$28)

What a sexy wine this is! A classic riesling made from Coal River Valley fruit that is based on the German style which Glaetzer admires so much. It has delightful lifted floral and citrus aromas, crisp lime, lemon and grapefruit flavours, and steely minerality on a tightly structured palate that has lashings of refreshing acidity and minimal residual sugar.

Drink with pan-fried scallops.

Glaetzer Dixon 2008 Mon Pere Shiraz (\$42)

Glaetzer only produces around 300 cases of shiraz a year but says he is still the largest shiraz producer in the state. This wine, a tribute to his father Colin Glaetzer, is a textbook cool-climate shiraz with a laid-back red berry, blackcurrant and white pepper bouquet, with raspberry, spice and smoky bacon characters on the palate. This is a savoury wine with velvety tannins and moderate 13.3% alcohol.

Drink with fillet mignon.

CELLAR DOOR



GOATY HILL

This Tamar Valley winery is a real family affair, founded in 1998 by six friends from two Victorian families who shared a dream of making wine in Tasmania – and found the perfect spot near Kayena. Natasha and Tony Nieuwhof run the business with Markus Maislinger and his partner Kristine Grant. Part of the fruit from the 19.5-hectare vineyard is sold to Bay of Fires, at whose winery the Goaty Hill wines are made. Goaty Hill produces aromatic whites – sauvignon blanc, riesling and gewürztraminer – along with acclaimed pinots and chardonnays. Goaty Hill is also home to a lovely cellar door which is open daily from August to the end of May.

Goaty Hill 2010 Riesling (\$25)

Goaty Hill wines are notable for the purity of their flavours across the board – and none more so than this searingly good new release which underlines that riesling is right up there with pinot noir in terms of potential in Tasmania. It's a very linear wine, cool and charismatic, with racy acidity and slatey/citrus/Granny Smith apple characters. It is a vivacious youngster that is bone dry and would be a perfect partner for spicy Asian dishes.

Drink with Kung Pao chicken.

Goaty Hill 2009 Pinot Noir (\$34)

Cool-climate pinot is a wine style that is growing in popularity although this pushes the boundaries just a little, coming from a very warm year. It is quite a big pinot in Tasmanian terms; richly textured, plush and plummy, with dark red berry flavours alongside a melange of Asian spices, soft tannins and savoury oak. There's plenty of fruit sweetness on the palate along with a degree of power and genuine varietal character.

Drink with charcuterie.



DERWENT ESTATE

The Hanigan family has farmed its property on the southern banks of the Derwent River since 1913 and has been growing grapes since 1992, selling to labels that include Bay of Fires and Penfolds' iconic Yattarna chardonnay. Vigneron Andrew Hanigan, a fifth-generation farmer, says the Limestone-based alluvial soils and the riverside setting provide a perfect micro-climate for the production of cool-climate grapes and premium wine. The 10-hectare vineyard, adjacent to Stefano Lubiana's vines, is planted with pinot noir, chardonnay, riesling, pinot gris and sauvignon blanc – all of which produce impressive wines.

Derwent Estate 2010 Pinot Gris (\$26)

This is another of the new wave of impressive pinots gris from Tassie. Derwent Estate wines have a purity and linearity to them and this has a familiar freshness and liveliness to it, while also offering hints of white stone fruit flavours and lushness on the palate which, while dry, has tantalising textural qualities that are certainly more on the Alsace style of the PG spectrum.

Drink with char-grilled spatchcock.

Derwent Estate 2010 Rosé (\$22)

There has been a swing away from sweet, fairy floss styles of rosé towards more savoury, textural styles which are a better match for food. This Tasmanian offering is very much made in the new wave – it's fresh and spicy with a long, nicely balanced dry finish, but it also offers enough fruitiness (fresh strawberries, red cherries and nutmeg) to make it appealing to those who do not like their pinks ultra-dry. Chill and enjoy on a warm afternoon.

Drink with Middle Eastern dips and pita.



MOORES HILL

Moores Hill vigneron Julian Allport quit life as a successful businessman to take over his West Tamar vines just three years ago – and has quickly built an impressive reputation. The tasting facility was named best regional cellar door in 2010. The Moores Hill site, owned by Allport and his partner Fiona Weller, was first planted in 1997 by the Thorpe family and produces small parcels of premium fruit which Allport vinifies. The 4.9 hectares under vine include pinot noir, chardonnay, riesling and small amounts of cabernet, sauvignon and merlot. Pinot gris fruit is bought in. Moores Hill produces a range of seven still wines and one sparkler.

Moores Hill 2009 Chardonnay (\$28)

Cool-climate fruit is the star of this outstandingly elegant chardonnay; a thoroughbred that comes at a pit pony price. It's a generously flavoured wine, as you'd expect from a warm vintage, but it still has style and flair with lively lemon, lime and peach notes on the nose and lemon, grapefruit and pear notes on the palate, which has structure and length with oak very much in the background.

Drink with old-fashioned roast pork.

Moores Hill 2008 Cabernet Merlot (\$25)

Some parts of Tasmania experience difficulty ripening cabernet sauvignon grapes, but there are also several outstanding examples, including Meadowbank, Domaine A and this charming, medium-bodied red that is a 50-50 blend of estate-grown cabernet and merlot. It's a soft, caressing wine but has plenty of intense dark berry flavours and will probably cellar well for 10 years. A wine that's more metrosexual than macho.

Drink with lamb cutlets.