

## STONIER PINOT MAKES ITS MARK IN UK

Mornington Peninsula winery Stonier stole a slice of the French limelight during the new release Burgundy tastings in January, staging its annual Australian event, the Stonier International Pinot Noir Tasting (SIPNOT) in London for the first time.

At a busy time in the UK wine calendar, with Burgundy en primeur tastings running back to back, the Australian event was a standout, enthraling the serious wine crowd at Australia House. Leading writers from *Decanter*, *Jancis Robinson* and the *Daily Mail* as well as buyers from Harrods attended. They were impressed by the quality of Australian and New Zealand wines, ranking them amongst the top wines of the tasting.

Twelve of the world's best Pinot Noirs from Burgundy, Central Otago, Oregon, Southern Tasmania, Yarra Valley and Mornington Peninsula were lined up for review. Bottles and

labels were covered to remove any prejudice and the tasting was conducted by a panel including UK communicators Matthew Jukes and Tim Atkin MW as well as Mike Symons, Stonier winemaker.

The objective of the tasting was to showcase top class Pinot Noir in all its forms with discussion about what makes a great Pinot. After the tasting, producers were revealed and informal consensus formed about favourite wines.

Significantly, top choices included Burgundy's JJ Confuron Vosne Romanee Les Beaux Monts 1er Cru 2007, which retails for about \$130, and Stonier's own Windmill Pinot Noir 2008, which sells for \$65.

Stonier exports 5% of its annual production of Pinot Noir and Chardonnay to the UK and is focusing on this region as a key export market alongside Asia.

### TOUGHING IT OUT

Leading Victorian winery Tahbilk Wines is prepared to wear losses in key export markets caused by the strong Australian dollar, rather than hurt long-term recognition of the brand, according to a report in *BusinessDay*.

"Re-entering export markets if and when the Aussie dollar weakens - which I'm sure it will as everything is cyclic - to re-enter a market is really painful, it costs a lot of money, it takes a lot of effort and it is much easier to take minimal profits and maintain your market and your presence," chief

executive Alister Purbrick told the news service. "Until the Aussie dollar starts to behave itself, it's going to be pretty tough work for all Australian winemakers."

*BusinessDay* says Tahbilk bounced back into the black in the year to June 30, reporting a profit of \$341,804 against a loss of \$3 million the previous year. The loss was mainly due to the write-down of an investment and losses on the sale of bulk wine. Tahbilk sales in the latest financial year fell to \$13.89 million from \$17.11 million.

## MOOROROO VINEYARD FLIES THE FLAG FOR AUSTRALIA

Schild Estate Wines' Moorooroo Vineyard has been honoured with inclusion in an exhibition at the San Francisco Museum of Modern Art. The exhibition, entitled 'How Wine Became Modern: Design + Wine 1976 to Now', runs until April 17 and has drawn large crowds.

The first of its kind, the exhibition explores a number of areas relating to wine production and packaging, including label design and advertising. The show also opens up the notion of terroir and the importance of creating a sense of place in a wine, by focusing on a handful of distinguished

vineyards from around the world, showcasing the unique attributes that make them special.

As part of the exhibit, Moorooroo Vineyard was the only site chosen to represent Australian terroir, alongside world-famous names including Château Cheval Blanc from St Emilion, Opus One from the Napa Valley, and Gaja from Piedmont in Italy. A soil sample from Moorooroo and a bottle of the highly-awarded 2006 Moorooroo Limited Release Shiraz now sit proudly in the Terroir Gallery.

"It was a massive honour to be invited to take part. Moorooroo is an

exceptional site and hugely important, not just to Schild Estate but to the Barossa as a region," said Schild Estate Wines general manager John Retsas. "Some of the vines are now over 160 years old and fall into the category of 'Ancestor Vines' as their genetic material has helped to populate the Barossa with vines, making it the high quality wine region it is today."

Winemaker Scott Hazeldine said, "It's great to be involved and expose the brand to a wider audience and reaffirm our position as a quality producer!"

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