



NED GOODWIN, MW - TASTING NOTES

BROKENBACK RANGE

Semillon 16: a youthful plump Semillon, utilising deft lees work to carve a groove of imminently approachable softness without sacrificing the Hunter postcode of lanolin, lemon drop and bright, transparent acidity. This is a delicious drink off the bat, but will service mid-term cellaring across the next five to eight years. 91

Semillon 17: more rapier-like of acidity, pungent mineral crunch and drive across the palate than the '16. Fine intensity of flavour, with a spurt of energetic acidity splaying lemongrass, fennel, grapefruit rind and lemon candy notes across a tensile weave. Long, pliant and impressive 93

Chardonnay 17: a Hunter Chardonnay for those who like plenty of flavour: stone and orchard fruit notes are melded to a core of creamed cashew, nougatine and ample toasty oak vanillins. A force of personality, with real thrust of fruit and parry of freshness. This, as with other slightly more aged examples from the estate, will come into its own in a year or three, burying the oak that sits atop at present 92

Chardonnay 16: an assemblage of tank and barrel fermented portions, the latter second and third pass. The result is a round, mid-weighted and highly appetising wine that has benefitted from time in bottle and the subsequent integration of the various components. Baked apple, cinnamon and hazelnut flavours expand across gentle seams of oak, nicely tucked into the fold. The finish has an effortless pulse, lingering nicely across the gums. Fine drinking already 90

Chardonnay 15: an example of just how well the Estate Chardonnay melds with a few years in bottle. Panneforte spice and toasted nuts at its core, this is a cushy Chardonnay that coaxes one into having another glass due to the sheer effortlessness of it all. A waft of white peach, quince and ginger spice trail along a skein of acidity. This has really come into its own 91

Blanc de Blanc: straight Chardonnay, tank fermented in the Charmat fashion. Creamy, gently doughy and mouth-filling. This is straight shooting apero-style fizz 88

Verdelho 18: the estate's approach to this exuberantly aromatic white variety, is to pick riper than the norm. The result is textural, layered and warm, spinning a narrative of quince, candied ginger, nashi pear and lychee across the palate with ease. This is in stark contrast to the sweet-sour tropical soprano of others. And all the better for it 91

Verdelho 17: the intensity of flavour embedded across '17's DNA is apparent. The length of flavour and sense of understated restraint, nicely juxtaposed against Verdelho's exuberant tendencies, is a winning combination. Grapey. Candied lime. Ginger and Chinese spice. 92

Pinot Gris 17: A frisky Gris, as reliant on a tangy twine of acid freshness as it is on a waft of gentle phenolic for focus and drive, layering notes of pear gelato, tarte tatin and cinnamon spice across the gums. This is a dangerously easy drink, in perfect poise with the enviable lifestyle of the region. 90

Gewurtztraminer 18: it is seldom that I think highly of Australian Gewürtztraminer. Too many are picked on acid. They are lean, astringent and hollow. Conversely, too many are picked overripe,



LEOGATE ESTATE WINES

only to become flaccid and washed out. This, however, as is winemaker Mark Woods' wont, is picked solely on flavour, textural detail, intuition and a heartfelt drive to express his coveted historic sites. Musk, grape spice and lychee is wound around a breeze of tactile phenolics, keeping it all on the straight and narrow. This is exceptional Gewurtztraminer. 95

Gewurtztraminer 17: a more restrained expression of Gewurtz. with grape spirit, lap sang and lychee scents, parading across a chassis of dutiful acidity and phenolic etch. This is a thrilling wine based on length and sheer intensity of flavour alone. Versatile across a broad table spread 94

Tempranillo16: sour cherry, baking spice, varnish and sarsaparilla scents meander along a twine of astringent, savoury tannins. Mid-weighted, this is a versatile wine for table, ready to be enjoyed on the younger side 88

Tempranillo 17: the vines, still young, seem to be finding their place with this vintage-admittedly a fine one for the Hunter. This is a mid-weighted, savoury expression of pucker, sap, spice and sneaky energetic length expanding across cherry pith, rhubarb and vanilla oak scents 90

Shiraz 14: still primary, exuding bing cherry and rhubarb to medicinal spice and leather blackstrap scents, effortlessly spooled across a dusty carapace of gently pliant tannin. This is quintessentially Hunter: medium to full bodied and very savoury with the best yet in store, despite the broachability of the wine in its fleshy youth 95

Shiraz 16: a challenging year marked by heat spikes and a cooler spell of wet weather. Nevertheless, these characteristics serve as a tattoo of immense drinkability, imbuing structural gristle, a lighter shade of red scented fruit and a passage of herbal inflected tannins, bright and invigorating. The sign of a good winemaker and site is just how well the wines carry across vintages such as these. And this carries very well 93

Shiraz 17: a stellar vintage, defined by its fidelity to place as much by the extract and exuberance of impeccably ripe fruit. 17 was, by all accounts, a 'no brainer'. In other words, hard to stuff up. Sarsaparilla, cherry ripe, a potpourri of dried herb and liquorice back-strap tannins, serving as pulse and sinew to pull it all together. Long and sinuous, the stuffing makes for desirous drinking young with better drinking to come with further age on the bones 96



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RESERVE RANGE

Creek Bed Semillon 16: a softer, more forward vintage by virtue of the wetter year. This has its advantages. Many. One, the approachability of the wine in its youth. Already softer than many, with a spool of lanolin, baked apple and lemon zest unreeled across a bridle of gentle acidity, the flavours are towed to good length without any edge or brittleness. A lovely wine to drink on the earlier side 93

Creek Bed Semillon 17: a warm year, marked as much by the ripeness of fruit as it is by its freshness and palate-staining intensity of flavour and vigour. Vigour across a pungent, match struck mineral twine and juicy acid crunch. The melody of candied citrus zest and lemon drop notes unwind, while one salivates for another glass. Everything is in synchronicity. Nothing is out of place. This will be a stellar expression of the Hunter postcode. Bury it 96

Creek Bed Reserve Chardonnay 16: a pointed, restrained and highly sophisticated aroma of toasted nuts, brioche and marzipan, skirting skinny phenolic rails and a breeze of acidity. Good sappy length. Moreover, nice drinking nearly on. To be rewarded for this 93

Creek Bed Reserve Chardonnay 17: this has drive, gusto and plenty of flavour, wound around a judicious dollop of vanilla pod oak and cylinders of pungent mineral force. Long. Compellingly so. White peach, nectarine, nashi pear, nougat and toasted hazelnut. Meursault as an inspiration; Hunter loams, the revelation 95

H10 Block Chardonnay 17: a blowsier expression, massaging abundant new oak across a warmer site with longer ripening hours. The result, bumptious and mouth-coating, is impressive in a fuller, richer idiom. Cashew cream, nougat, cinnamon-vanilla oak spice, apricot pith, melon and white peach scents ooze across a gentle framework of high quality oak and gentle acidity 93

Vicki's Choice Chardonnay 15: sourced from a creek flat block, the rows north to south oriented, maximising sun exposure with the proclivity for ripeness accentuated further by abstemious yields. The effect is one of toasted hazelnut, melon and crème brûlée. This mid to fuller weighted expression manages to bridle a fulsome richness with a certain je ne said quoi tension. Like all good wines, this juxtaposition of textures and edge, makes for complexity 93

Vicki's Choice Chardonnay 16: rallying across the olfactories, this mid-weighted Chardonnay spouts notes of white nectarine, cinnamon and apricot liqueur. Tangy and vibrant, with an attractive lick of volatility, this wins on energy alone. Crunchy, brimming with flavour and best drunk on the earlier side 92

Vicki's Choice Chardonnay 17: packing an intensity of muscular flavour effortlessly hinged to a cage of bright acidity, 17 is a winning year. Hazelnut, vanilla pod, brioche and cinnamon, all. The oak is tucked in nicely, imparting a polished sheen to a shimmer of stone fruit tang. Fine length. Winning gulpability 95

Malabar Shiraz 17: a winemaker selection of either the western or eastern blocks across the estate's holdings that is increasingly and inevitably, I am told, from the eastern side. With the shading and attenuated ripening pattern, justifiably so. The result compacts a density of dark to mulberry fruit scents, with a leafy freshness embedded across a sinewy, firm tannic fibre. Far more structured and authoritative than the other blocks due to tighter packed, compact grapes. This

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LEOGATE ESTATE WINES

higher quotient of skin to liquid ratio imparts a full-bodied textural intrigue. Almost Italianate in its dry, structural pose. Savoury and inimitably Hunter. Very fine 97

Western Slopes Shiraz 17: another plot borne of Len Evans' original plantings of the '60's, this boasts pine to herbal inflected cherry sass cola notes, basted with saddle leather to anise-flecked tannins. Dry-grown, to boot. There is abundant textural intrigue here, embedded in the morass of flavour. Earth, air and fruit meld mellifluously. A delicious wine 96

The Basin Shiraz 17: a crowd-pleasing style, serving up a smooth sheen of milk chocolate tannin, inflected gently by a herbal to leather varnish and abundant red to dark fruit allusions, too. A verdant rasp defines the finish, conferring zest and brightness. What's not to like? 95

THE GATECRASHER RANGE

Balmain 15: this is a meld of organically grown fruit from sites in farther western NSW, encroaching on Mudgee. The altitudinal influence (to 600 metres) is palpable, embedded in a skein of freshness. The fruit, a blend of Shiraz, Cabernet and Merlot is plummy and approachable, with a skirting board of leafy tannin for detail, form and lift. Eminently approachable drinking 90

The La Perouse 16: a traditional Bordeaux blend of Cabernet and Merlot, apt for the name. Organically grown as with all the fruit for this value tier, the Cab bakes a doughnut of structure; the Merlot, a plummy dollop of fruit in the middle. Good value drinking 91

Shiraz 16: light to mid-weighted, plying a reductive tension to baking spice and sour cherry fruit. The tannins, gently pliant, are licked with iodine, spice and tapenade. An easy-going quaffer 89

Merlot 16: this variety performs well in these parts, often maligned in the rest of the land. And yet, it is juicy and grapey, brimming with damson plum flavour bridled nicely to a gently astringent finish, serving to shape the flavours as much as drive the wine to a satisfying length 90

Cabernet Sauvignon 16: strictly Cabernet, defined by a firm beam of astringent tow from fore to aft. Thankfully, the structural attributes are embellished by a flow of black currant, graphite and herb inflected notes, reeled off effortlessly. Polished 90

Hilltops

Pinot Noir 16: plump, herbal, spicy and juicy, particularly in lieu of the early endeavours to transit site and winemaking hand in the subalpine reaches of Tumbarumba. A smattering of stems to the ferment imparts complex notes of clove, mezcal, cardamom and tamarind to the equation. This needs time to foment. Stay tuned 88

Pinot. Noir 17: this early endeavour sees circa 12% of whole-bunch in the mix to confer structural authority and herbal complexity to a kaleidoscope of root spice, mulch, Bing cherry and Chinese medicine notes. Needs a little more flow, but cannot be doubted for its juicy fruit notes 87

Rosé: this drinks more akin to a light-weight red, skirting notes of candied orange rind, coolaid, maraschino cherry and rhubarb licked with a dollop of residual sugar. Thrills with a chill! Drink on the cooler side 87