



ROCK REVIEW

THE NEWSLETTER OF POOLE'S ROCK WINES

Dear Wine Lover...

This issue of ROCK REVIEW is very timely – because it coincides with the release of the 2011 edition of James Halliday's *Australian Wine Companion*, unquestionably the country's most authoritative wine guide.

Its 750-plus pages review nearly 4000 of Australia's top wines, and among them, on page 517, is one entry that delights me. Poole's Rock Wines has for the first time been awarded Halliday's illustrious 5-Star status – 'Outstanding winery capable of producing wines of very high quality...'

Every producer in the wine industry will endorse the axiom that building brand success is a long-term project. Apart from sheer hard work, commitment and considerable investment, 5-star quality wines rely on meticulous viticulture and a fastidious winemaking team.

It's 22 years since I established the original Poole's Rock vineyard in Broke, a distinguished single site that is home to our dual flagship white wines – *Poole's Rock Chardonnay* and *Poole's Rock Semillon*, the latter highlighted by Halliday for its 'tremendous thrust and drive', characteristics that earned the 2009 vintage an impressive 96 Points – his top Semillon score.

According to Halliday, Hunter semillon is entering a 'golden age', one being nurtured by talented young winemakers like Poole's Rock's Usher Tinkler who can rightfully claim a feather in his cap for the trophy-winning 2009 vintage.

This ROCK REVIEW marks other milestones, notably the appointment of Lisa McGuigan as General Manager Sales & Marketing, an exciting challenge for Lisa who is no stranger to the Hunter Valley or the realities of the Australian wine industry. Born into a wine family, her track record will surely stand Poole's Rock Wines in good stead.

So too have the achievements of the ebullient Patrick Auld, Hunter legend and passionate winemaker who will now be playing a reduced role at Poole's Rock after nine vintages. His considerable contribution to the company and the evolution of its portfolio is greatly appreciated.

Less well known to some perhaps is my step-daughter Maxine Cooley who after 16 years with Poole's Rock Wines has decided to establish her own Sydney-based design company. Maxine has been pivotal in establishing our brand identity and will continue to monitor its management.

If asked to name some of the reasons for Poole's Rock's success, one of my first answers would be family and food. My nephew Andrew Clarke, chef at our ROCK Restaurant qualifies on both counts. ROCK has again been awarded Two Chefs Hats in the *2011 Good Food Guide*. A notable achievement in just four years.

In the banking industry such success would once have qualified for a bonus. Arguably, for a chef, a better deal is a memorable meal cooked by a master. That is why Andrew and I with our wives will travel to Spain later this year to visit El Bulli to dine at the table of the world's most revered and enigmatic chefs, Ferran Adria.

Rated consistently as the world's best restaurant and usually impossibly difficult to secure a reservation, El Bulli casts a whole new meaning to the term 'destination dining' – and we all can't wait to make the trip.

A shorter stretch is the drive to the historic Poole's Rock Post Office vineyard, and ROCK Restaurant where Andrew and his talented team continue to offer a marvellous dining experience. And you don't have to wait a year for a table. So why not head to the Hunter to celebrate your year's milestones with family and friends?

David Clarke

Dancing with the Stars



Usher Tinkler and David Clarke collect Best Current Vintage Dry White Trophy at the 2009 National Wine Show...for Poole's Rock Semillon 2009

Talk with anyone in television or politics at election time and before long they will inevitably refer to ratings – the score that market researchers and pollsters extrapolate to reflect viewer and voter preferences. Programs and politicians live and die by those ratings.

Australia's winemakers too, place considerable store by wine critics' new release ratings. Some offer stars, others points, but none count as much as James Halliday's annual appraisals in his bestselling compendium *Australian Companion to Wine*.

The definitive 2011 edition has just been published and for the first time Poole's Rock Wines has been granted 5-Star status. To be eligible for the accolade Halliday requires that the winery present at least two wines rated above 94 points.

In Poole's Rock's case those pivotal entries are *Poole's Rock Semillon 2009* 'a pure-bred semillon' that top-scored 96 Points and a place in the varietal 'Best of the Best'; and its stablemate *Poole's Rock Shiraz 2007* that collected 94 Points. Halliday cites his liking for its 'abundant savoury leathery regional character' and the 'long tangy palate of black fruits.'



From the rock...

In fact, winemaker Usher Tinkler can take a bow for a total of nine wines rated over 90 Points. Under the Cockfighter's Ghost label the front-runners are the Adelaide Hills Sauvignon Blanc 2009 – 93 Points; Adelaide Hills Premium Reserve Chardonnay 2008 – 93 points; Clare Valley Riesling 2008 and Hunter Valley Semillon 2009 – both 92 Points.

The Firestick range also impressed, especially *Firestick Chardonnay 2007* made, according to Halliday 'with considerable skill'.

'The real star in Halliday's book is Hunter Valley semillon – no other region comes close to achieving the extraordinary performance of this exceptional variety,' commented proprietor David Clarke.

Brut Force

If you believe in global warming you will surely be attracted to wines emanating from cool climate regions like Orange, NSW where both altitude and the prevailing continental climate have a role to play. Put simply, grapes like to cool down at night, especially those picked early for sparkling wine base.

That's why winemaker Usher Tinkler went to Orange in search of chardonnay and pinot noir grapes for the new *Cockfighter's Ghost Pinot Noir Chardonnay 2008*. A salmony pink (from the pinot component) this elegant sparkling wine is destined to launch more than ships.

For starters, it will christen the new Sydney Dance Company program *New Creations* and *We Unfold* to be launched in Sydney in October before touring nationally. But you don't need a tutu to enjoy this refreshing bubbly!



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ROCK Restaurant Again Awarded Two Hats

Sydney Morning Herald Good Food Guide 2011

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POOLE'S ROCK
WINES

New Releases

Winemaker Usher Tinkler has been busy creating a diverse selection of tempting award-winning wines. Try one or more soon...



Poole's Rock Shiraz 2007

'Deep red with purple hues, it has soft silky tannins supported by flavours of mulberry, wild blackberries and blackcurrant. This is an outstanding medium-bodied shiraz from an excellent vintage that will continue to develop gracefully over the next 10 or more years if cellared in optimum conditions.'



Cockfighter's Ghost Orange Pinot Noir Chardonnay 2008

'A blushing salmon pink colour this refreshing sparkling wine displays gentle strawberry acidity and fine flavours of fresh blood orange and cranberries complemented by delicate creamy bubbles that explore all corners of the mouth. Will continue to improve for five years if you don't celebrate before.'



Cockfighter's Ghost Semillon 2009

'Vibrant lime green in colour, this unwooded Semillon has aromas of citrus blossom, lychees and lime – tropical fruit characters that combine with fresh acidity on the palate to provide a dry, crisp, balanced finish. Bottled early to capture its fresh youthful appeal but like all classic Hunter Valley semillons it will develop complexity over 10 years when stored in optimum conditions.'



Cockfighter's Ghost Viognier 2009

'Pale straw in colour with enticing green apricot and citrus blossom aromas leading to a palate rich with yellow peach and notes of sweet kiwi fruit, finishing with hints of biscuity vanillin oak. This wine's complexity will continue to evolve over the next four years.'



Cockfighter's Ghost Verdelho 2009

'Pale straw green in colour with lifted musk fruit aromas and tropical flavours of rockmelon, mango, guava and pineapple that combine with fresh acidity to create a delicious wine with a dry, crisp balanced finish. An ideal drink now aperitif style.'



Cockfighter's Ghost McLaren Vale Shiraz 2007

'Deep black-red in colour. The palate is full with sweet fruit flavours of ripe mulberries and spicy blackberries combining with fine tannins to provide good depth of flavour and length. Cellar life: 5 – 8 years.'



Cockfighter's Ghost Langhorne Creek Cabernet Sauvignon 2007

'Deep red in colour with vibrant blackcurrant and ripe mulberry aromas, and a palate displaying concentrated flavours of blackberry and blueberry integrated with soft, super-fine chocolate tannins contributing balance and length. This rich, concentrated cabernet will continue to mellow for up to 10 years if cellared in optimum conditions.'



Firestick Chardonnay 2007

'Straw in colour with tropical aromas of pineapple and a hint of sweet oak. These intense characters continue onto the palate and integrate seamlessly with subtle vanillin flavours derived from the French oak. Finishes crisp and clean and will be appreciated by those who prefer a delicately oaked fruit-driven chardonnay.'



Firestick Cabernet Merlot 2009

'Deep red with purple hues and classic cabernet characters of sweet blackberry and currants, which combine harmoniously with the merlot's spice and mocha chocolate traits. Intended for immediate enjoyment, although will age for two to four years.'

Mission Possible

Prominent Australian wine industry figure Lisa McGuigan undertook an exciting new mission in 2010, becoming the General Manager Sales and Marketing for Poole's Rock Wines.

Lisa's successful 13-year wine career spans a variety of projects across all sectors of the industry, ranging from on-premise and wine retailing, to brand creation and business management. Her Tempus Two brand grew to become an impressive 150,000-case global success story prior to its sale in 2007.

'I have always admired Lisa's energy and capacity to evolve new wine markets and build brand recognition. To have her as part of the Poole's Rock team will undoubtedly contribute to the company's strategic expansion,' remarked Poole's Rock Wines proprietor, David Clarke.



Responsible for the global sales development of all three brands in the Poole's Rock Wines portfolio, Lisa will work closely with the sales team and the company's distributors in core export markets including USA, Canada, Scandinavia, UK, China, Japan, Singapore and Germany.

'The opportunity is both a challenge and a privilege, as is the chance to participate in another dynamic family-run wine company,' said Lisa.

Shining Bright



Chris O'Brien receiving his Chevalier Du Tastevin

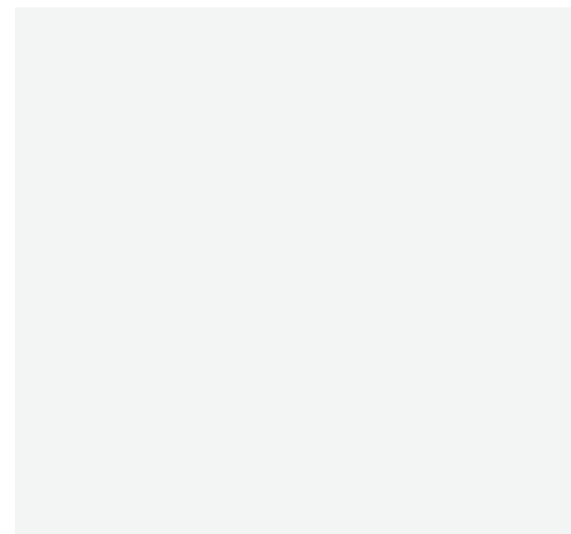
The vision of the late Professor Chris O'Brien for uncompromising cancer care took a big step forward at a recent fundraising dinner held at ROCK Restaurant, raising nearly \$250,000 for the Chris O'Brien Lifehouse at RPA.

ROCK Chef Andrew Clarke and guest chef Chui Lee Luk from

Claude's combined their four-hat talents to create a delicious degustation menu that ranged from Hiramasa kingfish matched with *Poole's Rock Chardonnay 2005* to rabbit terrine en croute, and Nulkaba spatchcock served with a bacon mousse. The evening was generously supported by neighbouring Hunter wineries including Tyrrell's, Bimbadgen, Brokenwood, Tulloch and McWilliams – a fine tribute to all concerned.

The Chris O'Brien Lifehouse will open its doors in 2013, its mission being to bring hope and empowerment to those living with cancer. The Centre will undertake leading edge research and offer world class medical and complementary treatment as well as education and integrated care for patients and carers – a truly holistic approach to cancer care.

Donors wishing to know more about this important project can visit www.lifehouserpa.org.au



Six Appeal

Next time you pop into your local wine shop for a bottle or six of your favourite Cockfighter's Ghost wine, look out for these eye-catching very convenient six-bottle cartons specially designed with hand-grips to make your dinner selection so much easier to transport home. They are currently available for Cockfighter's Ghost Chardonnay, Merlot and the newly released bubbly *Cockfighter's Ghost Pinot Noir Chardonnay 2008*.

Maxine's Move

Poole's Rock Wines strong brand identity owes a great deal to the talent of Maxine Cooley who has decided to launch her own Sydney-based design company.

'This long held dream will allow me to independently pursue my passion for design, interior decoration, merchandising and brand identity development,' explained Maxine who has worked for 16 years with the PRW team. Maxine has relinquished her role as General Manager Branding and PR but will continue to support the company on a part-time basis.



Air Points

No matter what your airline allegiance may be, if you are hopping on either of Australia's leading airline carriers in the next few months you can look forward to a mile high selection from Poole's Rock Wines.

JetStar StarClass passengers flying to Melbourne, Bali and beyond can currently settle back and relax, sipping chilled *Firestick Brut NV* and soon will be able to swap to a spicy rich glass of *Firestick Shiraz*.

While from September, Qantas domestic flyers will be able to savour the latest vintage *Cockfighter's Ghost Pinot Gris 2010* offered in handy flight-size 187ml individual bottles. It doesn't yet have a Halliday rating, but we trust James may encounter a petite bottle soon!



High Seas



P&O Executive Chef Uwe Stiefel and Andrew Clarke

It takes more than steady sea legs to successfully present a seven-course menu to 1600 cruise passengers but ROCK restaurant chef Andrew Clarke was up to the challenge. P&O's gourmet mini-cruise program that sails the eastern seaboard between Sydney and Brisbane, showcases selected Australian regions, and earlier this year it was the Hunter's turn. Apart from wine and cheese tastings, cruisers on *Pacific Dawn* relished Andrew's degustation menu that included a suitably marine themed dish of steamed crab and grilled lobster served with shellfish bisque, followed by a Mediterranean inspired stuffed duck breast, matched with Hunter Valley wines.

According to P&O, the gourmet cruisers took to their high sea Hunter tour like ducks to... mmmm water, especially as the only after-dinner navigation needed was back to B-Deck.

China Syndrome

Typically, winter is a less frenetic time in the vineyard and winery. There are countless vines to prune, fermenting wines to stir, rack and pump over, and barrels to top, but these tasks can be undertaken by the well-drilled team allowing the winemaker time to jet off overseas.

To visit export customers of course, which is what Usher Tinkler did mid-winter. He first flew to Hong Kong to work with Poole's Rock Wines distributor Berry Bros & Rudd, and apart from bowls of congee, discovered the once colony's wine lovers have a penchant for *Cockfighter's Ghost Chardonnay* and *Firestick Shiraz*.

Next stop was China for the opening of the Ningbo Free Trade Zone that included a trade tasting held in conjunction with wine distributors – and the Asia Wine Connection. According to Usher the local audience was keen but still has a lot to learn about Australian wine.

Then it was off to Guangzhou for another trade event hosted by Topbrand Wines, where Usher reports the *Cockfighter's Ghost Shiraz* was the star of the show. Perhaps that's not so surprising given that cockerels are considered powerful omens by the Chinese.



Usher Tinkler explores free trade Chinese style



Asia Bound

Asia is an increasingly important market for Poole's Rock Wines, particularly for the *Cockfighter's Ghost* and *Firestick* portfolios. Cellar Door manager Paul Elliott recently travelled to Singapore to promote a selection of wines at the Jason's International Wine Fair held at the iconic VivoCity, Singapore's largest waterfront retail and entertainment complex designed by the internationally acclaimed Japanese architect Toyo Ito.

Paul Elliott ready to spread the word in Singapore...

From the Rock Kitchen...

SCALLOP TORTELLINI WITH SWISS BROWN MUSHROOMS AND RIESLING CREAM

You don't have to be a master chef to cook your version of Andrew Clarke's signature pasta dish!

Ingredients

Serves 4

200g	fresh plump scallops diced
200g	king brown mushrooms diced
50g	Swiss brown mushrooms diced
8 thin slices	pancetta
1 egg	beaten
3g	salt
125g	all-purpose flour
30ml	water
100ml	Riesling
30g	butter
100ml	thickened cream
1 tsp	chopped dill
1	eschallot
1 punnet	baby sorrel

Method

Pasta:

- In a medium-sized bowl, combine flour and salt. Make a well in the flour, add the slightly beaten egg, and mix. Mixture should form a stiff dough. If needed, stir in 1 to 2 tbsps water.
- On a lightly floured surface, knead dough for about 3 to 4 mins. Rest in the fridge for 1 hour.
- With a pasta machine or by hand, roll dough to desired thinness. Cut into circles 7cm in diameter. Sprinkle with semolina and cover with a damp cloth.

Tortellini Mix:

- Melt 10g of butter in a pan and cook the diced scallops quickly. Strain and keep the juices.
- Melt 10g of butter in the pan again and cook the mushrooms.
- Return the scallop juices to the pan with the mushrooms and reduce to 20%.
- Add 40ml Riesling, reduce again, add cream, reduce again.
- Remove from the heat and add reserved scallops and dill, season to taste.
- Pulse 2/3 of the mixture in a blender and add back to the remaining mix.
- Put a teaspoon of the mix on one side of the pasta rounds and fold over to form a half moon. Fold the two ends to meet each other in a tortellini shape.

Sauce:

- Cook the pancetta in the oven until crispy.
- Finely dice the eschallot and sweat with 10g butter.
- Add the Swiss browns, season and cook for 2 minutes.
- Add 60ml Riesling and reduce to 20ml. Then add 60ml of cream and reduce to sauce consistency.
- Cook the tortellini for 2 minutes in salted boiling water. Strain and toss with the mushroom cream. Plate and garnish with sorrel and pancetta.

RESERVATIONS www.rockrestaurant.com.au T: (02) 4998 6968



Chef Andrew Clarke's signature scallop parcels

French Connection



Stephane Pommier tastes the wine of the week at ROCK Restaurant

The terroir of Poole's Rock's Post Office Block vineyard and the Chablis region of northern Burgundy don't have a great deal in common but that hasn't stopped Frenchman Stephane Pommier from feeling he belongs in the Hunter Valley where he has lived with his young family since 2005.

Originally trained in viticulture and winemaking, Stephane opted in his later career to 'jump the vat' and can now be found front-of-house as the manager and sommelier at ROCK Restaurant.

Born in Gien near the Loire River, Stephane cut his teeth in Chablis where he worked variously as apprentice, cellar-hand, foreman and manager at several Domaines, roles that have honed his wine knowledge from vine to vat. Then he got itchy feet and came to explore Australia.

For over two years, Stephane has guided the front-of-house ROCK team to Two-Hat status, while in his sommelier capacity overseeing the extensive ROCK cellar and wine selection. His wealth of wine knowledge and hospitality continues to impress diners, who would no doubt marvel even more if they spotted Stephane driving the forklift, or calibrating the bottling machine. He's the kind of guy you come to rely on around a winery.

Steak Out

Sam Kekovic has done his bit as Australia's lamb ambassador, but he isn't the only national meat champion. Novotel Hotels will be showcasing top grade sirloin in an Australia-wide campaign (August - October) all 250 grams seared to perfection and accompanied by a glass of Gold Medal-winning *Cockfighter's Ghost Langhorne Creek Cabernet Sauvignon 2006*. And you don't have to wait for Australia Day to be served...



Cap It Off

Look for the exciting FIRESTICK collection in your nearest wine shop. The entire range including the Cabernet Merlot and Shiraz now sport these striking silver Stelvin screwcaps. Twist one off soon!

Home Away

Looking for a secluded, country style comfortable cottage for your next trip to the Hunter Valley? Cockfighter's Ghost Cottage has two double bedrooms and every amenity including a breakfast hamper and well-stocked fridge and wine rack. It is available year-round. Call Paul Elliott (02) 4993 3688 for details. Email: cellardoor@poolesrock.com.au



All the comforts of home – surrounded by vines

What's On

Catch Poole's Rock Wines on pour at...

HUNTER VALLEY SEMILLON & SEAFOOD FESTIVAL

Saturday 9 October 10.30am - 4pm
Tyrrell's Vineyard, Broke Rd, Pokolbin
Oysters, prawns and picnic time!
www.huntersemillonandseafood.com.au

SYDNEY DANCE COMPANY

New Creations Opening Night
Tuesday 12 October
www.sydneydancecompany.com

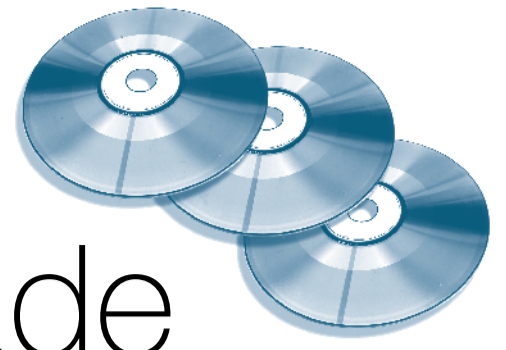
FRIENDS OF ROCK LUNCH

Saturday 20 November
ROCK Restaurant
Bookings: 02 4998 7356
E: cellardoor@poolesrock.com.au

BONDI SHORT FILM FESTIVAL

Saturday 27 November
www.bondishortfilmfestival.com

Hit Parade



What the experts are saying about Poole's Rock Wines...

Poole's Rock Semillon 2009

'A very restrained classic style, which is very linear showing subtle lemongrass characteristics. The acidity is very clean and drives a long, fresh finish.'

WINEWISE

Poole's Rock Shiraz 2007

'The label looks expensive, the wine smells and tastes expensive and to be frank, it is. But don't let that stop you, and if you had to it probably wouldn't. Sophisticated stuff.'

Max Crus, GRAPE EXPECTATIONS

Poole's Rock Shiraz 2006

'A dark horse...it tastes of red berries and a light, clean Hunter-style earthiness. It has positive oak influence and firm, fine tannins. Best years ahead, drink 2012-2018.'

93 Points, THE BIG RED WINE BOOK 2010/11
Campbell Mattinson & Gary Walsh

Cockfighter's Ghost Hunter Valley Semillon 2009

'A precocious young semillon already flaunting its wares; will provide enjoyment now or any time over the next decade thanks to its citrusy boost.'

92 Points, James Halliday
AUSTRALIAN WINE COMPANION 2011

'A lovely semillon that Len Evans used to call an each-way style. Drink it now or keep it for a while. Delicate, tangy lemon-essence aromas, which re-appear in the mouth where it's light, soft and fruity...the aftertaste has lip-smacking dryness and lingers well.'

BEST BUY, Huon Hooke, GOURMET TRAVELLER WINE

Cockfighter's Ghost Clare Valley Riesling 2008

'Nice floral aromas mixed with lots of lemongrass character. Fresh floral lime palate that's clean as a whistle, with more-ish acidity and nice mineral finish.'

4 Stars, WINESTATE

Cockfighter's Ghost Cabernet Sauvignon 2007

'This wine creeps up on you...the more you drink the better it seems...'

92 Points, THE BIG RED WINE BOOK 2010/11
Campbell Mattinson & Gary Walsh

Cockfighter's Ghost Tasmania Reserve Pinot Noir 2007

'Intense red fruit characters, with a lively restrained palate and long finish. Very more-ish.'

NATIONAL LIQUOR NEWS

Firestick Chardonnay 2007

'Made with considerable skill; the fruit flavours are delicate but varietal, and the touch of oak is perfectly balanced.'

89 Points, James Halliday
AUSTRALIAN WINE COMPANION 2011

'Creamy style with a touch of gunsmoke character on the nose and citrus fruit with nutty notes on the palate. Long finish.'

TOP 40, WINESTATE

ROCK COLLECTION

If you would like to become a subscriber and receive FREE copies of ROCK REVIEW, the newsletter of Poole's Rock Wines please contact us:
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