

HD **Foresight ensures the future for family operation**

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BACK in 1969, Bill Taylor Snr **purchased** more than 200hectares of farmland on the banks of the Wakefield River just outside the hamlet of Auburn in the Clare Valley of South Australia. With fortified wines still very much in vogue; his decision to

plant a vineyard with mainly cabernet sauvignon was greeted with much bemusement by local grape growers.

TD

Three generations on, Taylor's foresight has been recognised by the inaugural release of a premium wine: the individually numbered Taylors 2009 The Visionary Cabernet Sauvignon, which comes in a special gift pack for \$150. Think brambly intensity

and smoky, cedary oak.

Over the past 40 years, Taylors has grown from a small family wine producer to a global concern that makes over a quarter of a million cases a year. With over 400 hectares under vine, the Taylors are today the largest grape growers in the

region.

Taylors, known as Wakefield **Estate** in Europe to avoid confusion with port producers Taylors, today export to over 50 countries, from **China** to Brazil, and are well known for ranges that stretch from the budget Promised Land range to the high- end

St Andrews releases.

And while the family operation may now be a major one, Clinton Taylor and his family live on the winery **site** and Mick Allen, who planted the first vines 43 years ago for Bill Taylor, still works for the family.

On a recent visit to the Clare (disclosure: I have given marketing advice to the **company**), I was amazed to find many of the employees have been employed by Taylors for decades - and yet this is not a **company** that stands still - it was the first

Australian winery to switch to 100per cent screw-cap closures.

And while many winemakers are obsessed with making the best shiraz, cabernet sauvignon or chardonnay, Taylors winemaker Adam Eggins marches to the beat of a different drum.

With one eye on the future (and global warming), Eggins is enthused about varieties ranging from fiano to merlot - and the Taylors **Estate** Merlot is certainly a wine worth looking out for with ripe dark berry flavours and silky softness on the

palate. There are some dark ripe fruit notes here, well-integrated oak and real approachability for a wine that is so young and costs under \$20.

Ripe opportunity

One of the smartest little vineyards in the state goes up for auction at the end of the month with the 'ese vineyard in the Coal River Valley on the market due to "retirement, age and ill health".

The **property** at Tea Tree is on two titles with 2.9 hectares planted with pinot noir, sauvignon blanc and chardonnay - and is just 25 minutes from Hobart CBD. A small home on the **site** could be converted to a cellar door, subject to council

approval.

The vineyards were established in 1994 by Elvio and Natalie Brianese at Tea Tree and will be auctioned by Roberts Real **Estate** on March 28.

New releases

Watch out for a new look from the wines across the McWilliam's portfolio over the next few months.

The 130-year-old New South Wales-based **company**, for whom part-time Tasmanian Jim Chatto is chief winemaker, aims to champion the high-altitude vineyards of that state, including the Hilltops and Tumbarumba regions.

Beginning with this month's launch of the new Appellation range, McWilliam's will progressively release five new tiers of NSW wines, ranging from \$13 to \$55.

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