

GOOD DRINKING

by john fordham, october 2009



Andrew Margan's passion, energy and commitment have taken him to the forefront of Hunter Valley winemakers.

His latest eponymously labelled releases reflect his growing technical excellence and ability to sniff out the palate preferences of his growing band of followers.

With wife Lisa, Margan planted his first vineyard at Broke 20 years ago at the time Andrew was still working for his great mentor Murray Tyrrell over at Pokolbin.

Working for the 'Mouth of the Hunter' - as the late great Tyrrell was affectionately known - enabled Margan to tap into the master vigneron's substantial knowledge bank. The two decades he spent picking M.D. Tyrrell's brain, on top of six vintages he worked in France, provided Andrew with the technical ammunition - and the confidence - to launch the Margan brand in 1997.

Over the years, he's built an impressive track record with semillon and shiraz, varieties that comprehensively secure the Hunter's annual success. Verdelho is another frontrunner, while barbera and mourvedre are odd-bit red varieties he's mastering.

Margan's White Label wines feature single vineyard fruit selection from the vineyards he either owns or manages at Broke and Pokolbin. Stylistically different to the Margan core bottlings, their release is wholly dependent on top drawer vintage results. The 2003 White Label Semillon and 2007 White Label Semillon are true examples of this unique Hunter style, the older version showcasing early signs of the classic complexity resulting from cellaring. The younger wine is a bundle of youthful excitement, delivering soft lemon flavours punctuated by sharp acidity.

Hailing from 50 year old vines, 2007 White Label Shiraz Mourvedre, 2007 White Label Shiraz and 2003 White Label Aged Release Shiraz capture the earthy, spicy characteristics that are synonymous with grand Hunter reds.

Finally, the 2007 White Label Barbera is a rousing alternative for shiraz aficionados. Entry point reds that will encourage pursuing

Margan's top order bottlings are 2007 Margan Shiraz, 2007 Margan Merlot and 2007 Margan Cabernet Sauvignon. While the latter is a rare varietal in the Hunter, Margan has clearly shown that it's worth a flutter.