

# Winemakers sold on joint marketing



MARK SMITH

IT'S not often you see Katrina Myburgh sitting still these days, let alone sitting still long enough for a photograph to be taken.

Time is a precious commodity for the busy communications and marketing professional. As former senior vice president and head of marketing (Asia Pacific) for Weber Shandwick, she's been living on a knife's edge these past 15 years - balancing family life in the suburbs with working remotely in her creative and managerial roles at an internationally renowned PR agency.

Besides, Myburgh says, she doesn't do photos. She'd rather be behind the scenes, 'getting stuff done.'

Myburgh is the founder and CEO of Wines of Tasmania. Based in Launceston, it's a new, fresh-faced, locally owned start-up, dedicated to the online sale and marketing of premium Tasmanian wines.

"We're not just an online wine shop," Myburgh notes.

"We're more like a genuine cellar door experience, where you come to know real, hard-working Tasmanian families who are experts in their craft and are authentic and passionate about what they do."

What's new and fresh is that the company sprang into being through the collaborative efforts of four highly talented Tasmanian winemaking families.

All live and work in the north of the state as owners and operators of Delamere, Holm Oak, Moores Hill and Sinapius Vineyards. Myburgh's husband Ockie also happens to be senior winemaker at Relbia's Josef Chromy Wines.

Project planning began back in March, just as Tasmania was closing its borders and vineyard cellar doors with the arrival of COVID-19. Myburgh knew then the state's 200 or so licensed wine producers were in for a bumpy ride.

But years of experience also told her many



BLEND: Katrina Myburgh (seated) with Sinapius Vineyards' Linda Morice. Picture: Adam Gibson

current trends in the global wine market - such as growing consumer preference for quality over quantity and increasing engagement with online shopping - could work in favour of Tasmania's cool climate wine producers.

With the state being so remote from much of the world, Myburgh believed a digital platform could still access discerning wine lovers, who knew little of Tasmanian wine and would be unable to gain access to vineyards here for some time.

Myburgh's sales and marketing pitch struck a chord with the handful of producers

she approached - Fran Austin and Shane Holloway (Delamere), Bec and Tim Duffy (Holm Oak), Fiona Weller and Julian Allport (Moores Hill) and Linda Morice and Vaughn Dell (Sinapius).

In late May, tragedy struck the embryonic venture when Dell died in his sleep from an undiagnosed heart condition. A 39-year-old doting father of two young girls, Dell was the driving force behind the vineyard operation he and Morice founded together in 2005.

Five months on, Morice remains firmly committed to the project she and Dell discussed at length with their winemak-

ing peers.

"Since losing Vaughn, I'm determined to take on the winemaking and winegrowing as there are so many more things yet to achieve," she adds.

"We've never resorted to using bells and whistles or a whole lot of marketing fluff to sell our wines. It's simply been about people experiencing them and then loving them enough to tell someone else."

Those same no-nonsense principles underpin Wines of Tasmania.

"Each month, carefully curated wine selections from all over the state are offered to our subscribers, who can choose to purchase red, white, sparkling or mixed wine packs, according to their needs, interests and wine-buying budgets," Myburgh says.

"We have an annual subscription, but subscribers can choose the frequency of their online purchasing. There are no lock-in contracts. People can cancel at any time."

Every bottle offered for sale on the company's website - [winesoftasmania.com.au](http://winesoftasmania.com.au) - is selected on merit.

"We use a panel of judges comprising no less than five people who taste and assess each wine," Myburgh explains.

"Our panel includes senior winemakers who regularly judge at national wine shows as well as everyday fine wine drinkers. Each wine is served blind - that is, its identity and origins are not divulged to the panel - to ensure neutral or unbiased assessments are made."

Every bottle then gets its own necktag which has a unique Wines of Tasmania QR code. When scanned with a smart phone, it enables a buyer to access the company's website to find a wealth of useful information about the wine and its producers.

Selections change on the tenth day of each month, though purchases can be made more or less frequently than that, depending upon the choices subscribers make when they first sign up to the scheme.

Wines of Tasmania? More like remarkable wines from exceptional producers.

Examiner columnist Mark Smith wrote his first weekly Tasmanian wine column back in 1994. He continues to chart the successes of the state's small scale, cool climate wine industry with regular contributions to some of Australia's leading industry publications.

## Pick of the crop

### NV Ninth Island Sparkling Rosé \$25

The 2019 Pipers Brook Vineyard Estate Pinot Noir, Kreglinger Wines has been on a winning streak.

In January, its Pinot-based Ninth Island sparkling won gold at the Tasmanian Wine Show and midyear, received quiet adulation from Tyson Stelzer, Australia's most respected sparkling wine critic.

His 'highlight among affordable fizz' unites complexity and elegance 'like nothing else at this price,' Stelzer wrote in his annual Australian Sparkling Report.

It's a charmer - neatly focused, with fine

### 2015 Bellwether Tamar Valley Chardonnay \$60

Relbia is surprisingly warmer and drier than the nearby Tamar Valley.

Former Hardys senior winemaker Sue Bell has been sourcing top-notch Chardonnay from a single site at Relbia for 12 years now and the resulting wines are truly astonishing.

This classy, barrel-fermented wine is the best Tasmanian white I have tasted in 2020.

At five years, it offers hints of Burgundy's finest - wonderfully intense citrus and white peach notes, elevated by smooth texture and persistent flavour that only an artisan like

### 2019 Invercarron Pinot Noir \$39

Know someone that doesn't understand all the fuss about Tasmanian Pinot Noir?

Let them loose with this new release from the Jordan Valley, north of Hobart.

Its plummy cherry fruit will warm the heart of any dyed-in-the-wool lover of juicy rich reds.

Skilfully made under contract by Justin Arnold at Ghost Rock, the wine was one of seven gold medal winners in Pinot Noir classes totalling 130-plus entries at last week's Royal Hobart Wine Show.

The secret wines of this quiet little valley are worthy of success.

