

CHARTER - ADELAIDE HILLS – BIRD IN HAND

Bird in Hand is a fabulous name for a gold mine and a wonderful one for a winery. And, yes, it's the name of the very successful venture that is the Nugent family's estate in the Adelaide Hills, an operation that once was the site of a gold field and which now bears a vineyard yielding its share of treasure in bottles.

The Nugents have been careful in following their dream and clever, too. Michael Nugent planted their first vines in 1997 but the family took time before opening the remarkable cellar door outlet that today boasts a barrel hall that can cope with as many as 600 guests for events. They engaged Tim Milne, one of the first of Australia's famous Flying Wine Makers, as a consultant and along the way built a state-of-the-art winery. They now make and bottle all wine on site and Michael's son Andrew, a Roseworthy graduate, heads the team that makes many of the district's most impressive wines.

The maze of slopes and valleys that is the Adelaide Hills means that there's more climatic variation in the region than you'll find elsewhere in Australia and with the 400 metre contour line defining three of its boundaries it's an undeniably cool climate. With all that variation, though, you get different sites suiting different varieties and the Nugents, for instance, can crop ripe Cabernet Sauvignon where others can't. So as at the same time as producing the district's best Cabernet, Andrew craft fine wines from earlier ripening varieties like Sauvignon Blanc and Chardonnay.

The Nugent range is a broad one, with a super-premium selection that's appropriately labelled *Nest Egg*, a premium selection (that includes one of Australia's better Merlots and a top Riesling sourced from the family's Clare Valley vineyard) that's under the *Bird in Hand* brand, and the lower priced *Two in the Bush* wines.

When you visit the Adelaide Hills take care to obey the lady in the GPS. The roads twist and turn and with vineyards that hide in unlikely spots you're sure to get lost without her direction. The scenery, though, is beautiful.

Bird in Hand Adelaide Hills Sauvignon Blanc 2010

Adelaide Hills is the source of many of our best Sauvignons; here's an example. Elegant and juicy. Delicate, lemony, tropical fruit flavours. Barely grassy. Lingering and fresh. Lovely acidity. \$25

Bird in Hand Adelaide Hills Cabernet Sauvignon 2009

Wonderful. Aristocratic. Complex aroma with matching palate. Minted, chocolatey, blackcurrant fruit and well-judged cedary oak, all nicely integrated. Long, deep and firm. Fine ripe tannins. \$25