

GRANT BURGE

By Paul Foster

Grant Burge reckons his wines are over 150 years in their making.

It's a way of reminding us that Burges have been in the business of growing grapes and making wine for a serious stretch of Barossan time. One hundred and fifty five years, in fact, since 1855.

Not that the present shape of the Burge empire is that old. Rather that, as with lots of the Valley's producers, winegrowing here and winemaking there has been part of an ongoing process. So although the modern Grant Burge company was established as recently as 1988 its identity is the work of a man who's a very experienced industry veteran.

Impressively, the company today controls some 440 hectares of vineyards and produces more than 400,000 cases of wine each year. Apart from their vineyards and immaculately created stone cellar door operation at Jacobs Creek, Grant Burge owns the old Krondorf winery at Tanunda and the Illparra outlet in the nearby village.

Despite all this Grant Burge, the man, is remarkably humble. He pays tribute, frequently, to his treasured growers and at times on labels declares his debt to them.

He is a family man, too, conscious of his origins, and caring. And, to boot, he's generous. A year or two back - when a Wine Society

group visited the Valley - Grant and his wife welcomed the gang to Sunday breakfast at their home. Then Grant spent the rest of his morning guiding us through various of his best vineyards, the likes of Filsell (shiraz) and Cameron Vale (cabernet sauvignon) in the Barossa, and the Thorn family vineyard (Riesling) in the higher Eden Valley.

Grant Burge *Thorn Eden Valley Riesling 2009*

The Eden, with 500m altitude, fair rainfall and a coolish climate, is a source of serious Riesling. This one is classic Grant Burge, tight taut and minerally, reminds me of the Clare Valley style. With lemon lime and apple favours it's decidedly crunchy and crisp. Dry as. \$17

Grant Burge *Cameron Vale Cabernet Sauvignon 2007*

From the vineyard named after the property in Cornwall that the Burge family left behind when they migrated from Cornwall to Australia in 1839. Rich, deep, concentrated, complex. Plum, blackberry and blackcurrant fruit in a full, round and sooth palate. Dusty, crusty final tannins. \$20