

PENFOLDS' PATHFINDER REDS

By Paul Foster

Paul Georgiadis has a vineyard at Marananga in the Barossa. In the past he has worked for Penfolds and he's one of their valued Shiraz suppliers, his fruit finding its way into *Grange* in four years out of five. His vines are a relatively 15 years young and the secret, he says, is ruthless control. Severe pruning, shoot picking and bunch dropping, all in pursuit of reduced yield and maximum quality. In the past, he jokes, perhaps a touch seriously, growers cropped so heavily that their vineyard management could best be called 'controlled neglect'.

Paul also grows Sangiovese, the grape that's king in Chianti. He spent some time in Florence with the historic House of Antinori, the company whose reds led the Tuscan renaissance of the 1970s, and the signs suggest he did something smart. Sangiovese is a variety that Australian growers and winemakers, both, are struggling to tame but with vines he planted in 1995 Paul has experience on his side and something like 80% of the material used in a Penfolds *Reserve Barossa Sangiovese* is his. So if you're looking a wine that's different, try the current release, the '08. It is nothing short of exciting and is the best local Sangiovese I've tasted, a savoury and beautifully-fruited red of persistent licorice and berry flavours and disciplined by ripe suck-your-teeth tannins. Significantly, it was aged only old oak.

Paul has been on the road recently showing off Penfolds products, alongside an exceptional Shiraz under his own *Paulmara* label, and another must-try wine is the *Reserve Adelaide Hills Pinot Noir 2008*. It is predictably Penfoldian, with weight and an element of oak, but it boasts genuine elegance and a long, complex, softly-textured palate. The fruit came from eight cool-climate sites and from vines of a spread of clones. The importance of this, Paul explains, is that unlike earlier Australian efforts, that were based on Champagne Pinot clones, these are all true blue Burgundian.

Reserve wines are available cellar door and at Penfolds' marvellous *Magill* restaurant in Adelaide.

Penfolds *Hyland* Cabernet Sauvignon 2008

Quality Cab. Blackcurrant and chocolate fruit with charry oak. Full-bodied, deep and disciplined. Grainy tannins and lingering flavours. Ripe cool-climate material. Outstanding value at \$17 from *The Wine Society*.

Penfolds *Hyland* Adelaide Chardonnay 2009

Stylish. From the cool Picadilly vineyard. Green apple, grapefruit and white peach fruit flavours with almond/vanillan oak. Fresh and vital, a modern Aussie Chardonnay. \$17 from *The Wine Society*.