

# ITALIAN RED VARIETIES – Panel Tasting

**I**taly abounds with wine-grape varieties, but it took a long while for Australian wineries to consider planting most of them. It follows, therefore, that it's early days, and even the fundamental question of where to plant most of the Italian red wine vines is very much open to question.

We may be seen to be very hard on some of these wines, but we looked for freshness and intensity of flavour, and did not award extra points for novelty value.

★★★★



**2013 Serafino Bellissimo Lagrein** The intense dark cherry aroma is enhanced by an interesting herbal note. Freshness is the trump card for this deliciously rich and savoury red wine. (\$20.00)

**2014 Serafino Bellissimo Montepulciano** The nose is appealingly fragrant, with cherry and raspberry notes. There's plenty of fresh flavour backed by balanced savoury tannins, and just-right acidity lifts the finish. (\$20.00)

<http://serafinowines.com.au/wine/buy-wine/>



**2013 Tar & Roses Heathcote Sangiovese** This wine is packed with impressive fresh dark cherry fruit. The palate is long and savoury, with a dryness that might be challenging for some. (\$23.00)

**2012 Hand Crafted by Geoff Hardy Limestone Coast Lagrein** Very fresh and powerful, showing dark cherry and wild berries. The palate is intense, fine and firm. There's slightly too much acid on the finish. (\$30.00)



**2013 Hesketh Barossa Valley Montepulciano** The colour is bright but light. Both nose and palate follow suit, being vibrant but on the light side. (\$25.00)

**2014 De Iuliis Sangiovese** Bright light colour. Needs more fruit but is very fresh and well made. Very much a luncheon wine. (\$25.00)

**2012 Hand Crafted by Geoff Hardy Teroldego** Good strong colour. Concentrated dark berries show through on a solid palate with obvious acid. (\$30.00)



**2013 Symphony Hill Reserve Lagrein** Vibrant cherry aromas. The palate is fresh but a bit light and simple. (NA)

**2012 Hand Crafted by Geoff Hardy Montepulciano** Slightly developed colour and nose. Lacks vibrancy and is drying out on the palate. (\$30.00)

**2011 Oliver's Taranga Small Batch 4135 McLaren Vale Sagrantino** Ripe red berry aromas, but is showing some age. Very dry and appears to losing fruit. (\$40.00)

**2013 Serafino Bellissimo Sangiovese** Light advanced colour. The fruit is showing development, and the finish is lean and dry. (\$20.00)

**2012 McIvor Estate Heathcote Sangiovese** Very light colour. Firm, dry and lacking fruit. (Not yet available)

I (Lester) once shared a dinner table with legendary Californian wine merchant Darrel Corti, and his words still resonate. "Do not continue planting sangiovese in Australia. You are wasting your time."

While I don't completely agree, I do believe that finding the right site-clone match is critical. Most haven't. The same applies to other "new" grape varieties. That process will take quite a while, and in the meantime we must accept that there will be more misses than hits.

# HOME HILL PINOT NOIR – One of Tasmania’s best

**I**f gold medals in wine shows count for anything (and they do), Home Hill Pinot Noir ranks with the best of them. I’ve lost count of how many golds I’ve helped award to Home Hill, so a visit during a recent Tasmanian sojourn was mandatory.

Home Hill, established by owners Terry and Rosemary Bennett in 1994, has blossomed to become one of Tasmania’s most important, though still very small, wine producers. Over the years Terry and Rosemary built a restaurant on site that is eye-catching, yet suits the environment beautifully, and makes the best of the views and natural light. The food ranks with the best in the state.



The winery has been the domain of Gilli and Paul Lipscombe since the 2011 vintage. Gilli and Paul work with about 20 tonnes of pinot noir split into 20 different ferments, allowing them some blending options. Home Hill is not a big new oak winery, and the Kelly’s Reserve Pinot Noir gets about 40% maximum.

Home Hill vineyard is located in the Huon Valley region, south-west of Hobart, on the edge of the village of Ranelagh which, in turn, is only three kilometres from Huonville. The prevailing climate is decidedly cool – around 1100 Heat Degree Days - but there is variation from site to site. Home Hill receives, on average, 800 ml of rainfall annually.

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**To learn more about Home Hill and purchase wines, go to**

<http://www.homehillwines.com.au/>

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## The Wines

**2013 Home Hill Kelly's Reserve Chardonnay** A subtle but intense chardonnay which is creamy and long, with nutty complexity and an impressive acid finish. (\$30.00) ★★★★★

**2013 Home Hill Estate Pinot Noir** Impressive dark cherry aromas lead to a ripe, fresh palate with fine, balanced tannins. It's a delightful drink now, but can be cellared for 2-3 years. (\$36.00) ★★★★★

**2013 Home Hill Kelly's Reserve Pinot Noir** The nose is very fragrant, with a hint of violets. The palate is opulence itself, underpinned by fine, firm tannins and classic cool climate acidity. (\$60.00) ★★★★★

**2012 Home Hill Estate Pinot Noir** Very fresh, but there's a herbal hint to the light cherry nose. There doesn't seem to be quite enough fruit for the structure. (\$36.00) ★★★

**2012 Home Hill Kelly's Reserve Pinot Noir** A very classy pinot with flavour and structure that is still coiled up and yet to show its best. The intensity of fruit, length and fineness of tannins are very impressive. ★★★★★

**2011 Home Hill Estate Pinot Noir** Fragrant raspberry and strawberry first impressions with a herbal overtone. Just trails off a little. (\$36.00) ★★★

**2011 Home Hill Kelly's Reserve Pinot Noir** Quite aromatic and cherry-scented with faint hints of undergrowth. The palate offers excellent weight and structure. Still has 2-3 years ahead of it. (\$50.00) ★★★★★

**2010 Home Hill Estate Pinot Noir** Shows a little maturity, but still offers delicious varietal flavour. Drinking well now. ★★★

**2010 Home Hill Kelly's Reserve Pinot Noir** Still fresh, yet beautifully complex. The varietal dark cherry character is intense, and the finish is long, with fine, savoury tannins in perfect balance. It's just entering its ideal drinking window. ★★★★★

This tiny estate is located in the heart of a small region that may eventually produce Australia's best pinot noirs. I was struck by similarities with Oregon's Willamette Valley when I visited, but it may have just have been the rainy day. Given the quality of the wines from vines that are not yet mature, Home Hill's future is a very exciting one.

Lester Jesberg

**STOP PRESS** Just last week the 2013 Kelly's Reserve Pinot Noir won the Best Pinot Noir and Best Red Wine of Show trophies at the 2015 Tasmanian Wine Show.