



Tower Estate

A new star in Australia's Lower Hunter Valley

Australia's beautiful Hunter Valley region has an abundance of top-class wines, and lies just two hours' drive north of Sydney.

Viticulture is not easy here. The conditions created by a particularly wet, hot and humid climate make grape growing difficult. But it's worth the effort. The clay and sandy loam soils of the lower Hunter Valley bestow sweet, spicy and earthy characteristics on some superb Shiraz wines, besides producing some of the finest Semillons in the world. A classic Semillon, in fact, will keep in the cellars successfully for up to twenty years.

Founders

Len Evans AO,OBE (Decanter Man of the Year 1997) is a Hunter Valley local and widely acknowledged as one of the Australian wine industry's founding fathers. With more than forty years' experience under his belt, his latest ambitious venture – a winery called Tower Estate, with a luxurious hotel nearby, called Tower Lodge, of course, and two restaurants – has been launched with characteristic verve and style.

A syndicate of 13 members, including such unlikely-sounding partners as Brian McGuigan and celebrity British chef Rick

Stein, has provided the investment capital to enable Tower Estate to source the best fruit from Australia's best viticultural regions.

The winery

Tower Estate is situated on Broke Road, the main artery through Pokolbin, and produced its first vintage in 1999. Early on Evans and his team realised that their declared objective of "excellence" was only feasible with the right winemaker in charge. So they were fortunate to find someone of Dan Dineen's calibre. Trained at Roseworthy College in South Australia and gaining vintage experience locally and in France, Dan made his name creating stylish wines for two premier Hunter Valley wineries, Mount Pleasant and Brokenwood. With his finely developed sensory skills, he was the ideal candidate to take the helm even before Evans & McGuigan succeeded in hiring him to Tower Estate.

With Evans charming parcels of high quality fruit out of his old mates, and Dan Dineen in charge in the cellars, the aim is to produce classic, regionally styled wines with distinctive varietal expressions. All wines are made from fermentation onwards at the Tower. There is a Cabernet Sauvignon from Coonawarra, a Riesling from the Clare Valley, a Sauvignon Blanc and a Chardonnay from the Adelaide Hills, a Shiraz from the Barossa, and a Semillon, Verdelho, Chardonnay and Shiraz each from the Hunter Valley.

In 2002, they have extended their reach further by extracting choice Pinot Noir from Tasmania, Cabernet Sauvignon from Margaret River; Barbera, Sangiovese and Merlot from Orange.

This a labour-intensive winery with hand picked grapes, and hand selected fruit. Attention to detail is all: it's all painstaking manual work, from spotting problems such as sun burnt grapes before pressing to sorting the corks before bottling.

There are 12 wine styles at present with