

McHENRY HOHNEN CHARDONNAYS

It's always a fascinating exercise to compare wines of the same grape variety, made in the same way, from different vineyards. Three chardonnays from McHenry Hohnen provided considerable interest for the panel. They were sourced from three Margaret River vineyards that were planted on different soil types. The winemaking was identical:

Whole-bunch pressed straight to barrel for fermentation by indigenous yeasts. No added acid. 20% new French oak, the rest 2-3 years old. No malolactic. Barrel-aged on lees with battonage. All wines \$40.00.

2014 McHenry Hohnen Burnside Vineyard Chardonnay The nose shows fresh white peach backed up by nutty lees aromas and a touch of oak. Flavour-wise it's on the light side, finishing firmly. ★★★☆

2014 McHenry Hohnen Calgardup Brook Vineyard Chardonnay Quite restrained on the nose, but showing pure white peach varietal character with a subtle lees and oak influence. The palate has a creamy textural quality and good length. Needs 1-2 years. ★★★

2014 McHenry Hohnen Hazel's Vineyard Chardonnay The structure and acidity of this wine balance the intense, yet restrained, nectarine-like fruit beautifully, and the creamy mouthfeel completes the picture. The pick of the three in our view. ★★★☆

VALE EDGAR RIEK

Anyone who lived in or near Canberra, and had a strong connection with wine, was at least acquainted with Dr Edgar Riek. To me he was a friend, visionary and mentor. Edgar, aged 95, passed away yesterday from head injuries resulting from a fall.

Edgar was a pioneer of Canberra district viticulture, planting a vineyard at Lake George and selecting the site for what has become Mount Majura Vineyard. He came to Canberra in 1945 to work for CSIRO as an entomologist, but his interest in things botanical led him to write the first "Canberra Gardener" and plant his vineyard.

Edgar had an excellent palate and was one of the key figures in the establishment of the National Wine Show. He backed his palate up with firm opinions, and was never afraid to speak out when he thought an incorrect judgment had been made. I enjoyed that side of Edgar – even when I was on the receiving end.

My wife Adrienne and I invited Edgar to join us on a trip to Ribera del Duero, Bordeaux and Burgundy in 1999 and thoroughly enjoyed his company. He set a cracking pace for us, and we marvelled at his capacity for good food and wine at the age of 79. Although he slowed down somewhat over the past decade, he retained a sharp mind and palate to the end.

I last tasted with him on December 24, and I'm happy to say he approved of my views of the wines. You'll be missed Edgar. Rest in peace.

Lester Jesberg