

## JOHN LEWIS WINE LIST

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### Margan 2013 Hunter Valley Merlot, \$22

MADE from grapes grown on Andrew Margan's Ceres Hill vineyard at Broke, this juicy drop has 14.5 per cent alcohol, is ruby red and has berry pastille and lavender scents. The front palate has ripe mulberry flavour, the middle rhubarb, spearmint, spice and cedary oak and earthy tannins come through at the finish. It is at [margan.com.au](http://margan.com.au), at the 1238 Milbrodale Road, Broke, cellar door, and in some wine stores.

**DRINK WITH:** curried lamb neck chops

**AGEING:** four years

**RATING:** ●●●●



### Voyager Estate 2014 Margaret River Sauvignon Blanc Semillon, \$24

HERE'S a Margaret River sauvignon blanc-semillon blend that brings relief to my sauvignon blanc-jaded palate. It is green-tinted straw and has passionfruit aromas. Zesty gooseberry flavour features on the front of the palate and lemon, gunmetal and basil chime in on the middle palate. The finish has slatey acid. Get it at [capementelle.com.au](http://capementelle.com.au) or in fine wine stores.

**DRINK WITH:** prawn and whitebait fritters

**AGEING:** three years

**RATING:** ●●●●●



## TOPSHELF

### Rusden 2012 Good Shepherd Cabernet Malbec, \$38

THIS multi-faceted Barossa blend of 74 per cent cabernet sauvignon and 26 per cent malbec has 14 per cent alcohol and glows deep purple in the glass. Rich, ripe blackcurrant flavour rolls on to the front palate, plum, caramel chocolate and cloves fruit characters meld with savoury oak on the middle palate and minty tannins show at the finish. It can be bought at [rusdenwines.com.au](http://rusdenwines.com.au) and from the winery at 221 Magnolia Road, Vine Vale, Tanunda.

**DRINK WITH:** char-grilled kangaroo fillet

**AGEING:** eight years

**RATING:** ●●●●●



# Schooled in the wine arts

A second generation is helping take a family wine business to new heights, writes **JOHN LEWIS**.

IT all began with Russell and Dennis, two school-teacher mates who shared a taste for a good drop of red but whose financial resources didn't match their vinous aspirations.

So in 1992 the pair teamed up to make a barrel of their own Barossa Valley cabernet sauvignon, which was bottled, proudly labelled Rusden and consumed with great gusto.

Russell Gehling and Dennis Canute followed up in 1994 with a home-made Rusden shiraz, which earned considerable local appreciation and was nicknamed "Black Guts" and "alcoholic Ribena".

Russell Gehling didn't continue his involvement, but the wines set in train a much more ambitious venture by the Canute family.

Dennis and his wife Christine both had careers as school teachers but Christine was steeped in wine-growing, having come from the Hage family – pioneer settlers and vigneron in the Bethany area.

In 1979 this influenced the couple to buy a 16-hectare property with a run-down vineyard at Vine Vale. The original idea was simply to have a hobby farm on which the school teachers could relax and their children could run free.

But Christine's background as a fifth generation of vigneron changed that comfortable concept. She set to work to rejuvenate the vineyard, which included some old grenache and shiraz vines that had escaped the South Australian government vine pull scheme of the 1980s.

Soon she quit her school day job, leaving Dennis to teach on and provide funds for vineyard improvements that produced grapes that were sold to big Barossa wineries.

Small batches of the vineyard's grapes went into the 1992 and 1994 wines made by Dennis and Russell Gehling and proved to the Canutes that they were able to grow fruit that could make the Rusden label more than a home-made sideline.

They were dissatisfied with the grape prices offered by the big wineries and the corporate "we'll grow the quality, you grow the quantity" attitude.

And so in 1997 Dennis and



Christian, Dennis, Hayley and Christine Canute with sales manager Craig Phillips.

Christine and their son Christian, who was then working at Rockford winery, produced the first commercial-release Rusden label wines.

Christian, who gained "at the coalface" wine experience from a childhood on a vineyard, from a cellar rat job in the Yalumba winery, a sales post in an Adelaide bottle shop and then working with Chris Ringland at Rockford, is now Rusden's winemaker.

With his mother, now 65, still keeping an eagle eye on the vineyard and his father, now at 67 retired from teaching and in charge of Rusden export sales, Christian has developed a remarkably wide range of wines from the up-market Traditional Series to the more affordable Nine-Pane label.

The wines can be bought at [rusdenwines.com.au](http://rusdenwines.com.au) and from the winery at 221 Magnolia Road, Vine Vale, Tanunda.

### Infamously named red

BLACK Guts, says Christian, was the nickname given by locals to the original 1992 and 1994 reds made by Dennis and Russell but, when the Canutes made their first commercial releases, they didn't put the Black Guts name on the shiraz label. This earned such ire from

customers that the name was quickly restored next vintage.

Christian, now aged 38, and his Barossa artist wife Amy, have four children who all enjoy vineyard life, and his sister Hayley also works in the family business.

He says the family is dedicated to producing top-quality, hand-made wines sourced from its own vines and made in its on-site winery.

There is certainly an interesting varietal line-up.

The Nine-Pane wines include the 2014 Christian Chenin Blanc (\$28) the 2014 Poco Loco Rose, a \$24 blend of grenache, mourvedre, cinsault and ugni blanc, and the 2012 Good Shepherd Cabernet Malbec (\$38), which is reviewed today in Wine List.

The flagship of the Traditional Series is the Rusden 2006 Sandscrub Shiraz, which comes in a presentation box and sells for \$395 a bottle. The range also includes the 2012 Christine's Vineyard Grenache (\$40), which I reviewed in Weekender on March 14, the 2013 Chookshed Zinfandel (\$49) and the powerful \$85-a-bottle 2012 Black Guts Shiraz.

### Raisin a good wine

ITALY'S highly prized Amarone-style wines are made by taking the ripest grapes harvested during

October and placing them on cane mats inside winemakers' cellars.

The grapes are left there until the following January, when the raisined fruit is pressed and the juice placed in small oak casks for at least four years.

Former Charles Sturt University Professor of Wine Science Brian Freeman produced the dried fruit component of his recently released \$35 Freeman 2010 Secco Rondinella Corvina by putting some of the rondinella and corvina grapes through a neighbour's solar-powered prune dehydrator.

Brian has the only Australian plantings of the rondinella and corvina varieties, which are the backbone of Italy's Amarone and Valpolicella wines.

It's the eighth vintage of rondinella corvina made by Brian Freeman and I reviewed it in Weekender on April 18. It's available at [freemanvineyards.com.au](http://freemanvineyards.com.au) or by phoning 6384 4299.

### The Tinkler's tippie

USHER Gordon Tinkler, the man who launched his family into winegrowing, is remembered in the Tinkler wine portfolio.

The Usher Gordon Muscat fortified sells for \$25 a bottle and is available at [tinklers.com.au](http://tinklers.com.au) and at

the Pokolbin Mountains Road, Pokolbin, cellar door.

The great-grandson of the first Tinkler to come to Australia, Usher Gordon planted the muscat gordo blanco vines that provide the grapes for the wine.

In 1968 McWilliam's asked the Tinklers to plant wine grape vines to meet the neighbouring Mount Pleasant winery's demand for extra fruit. Usher Gordon formed the U and I Tinkler partnership with his two sons, Usher William and Ian Geoffrey, to establish three hectares of shiraz. It was a planting that thrived and has now grown to 40.5 hectares of shiraz, semillon, chardonnay, verdelho, merlot, traminer, viognier and muscat gordo blanco vines.

After initially selling all their grapes to McWilliam's and other producers, in 1996 the Tinklers decided to retain some of their premium fruit for their own-label wines.

Now, with their own winery in the skilled hands of sixth-generation family member Usher John, the Tinklers' wine operations have grown alongside the family grazing property at Merriwa, its peach, plum, nectarine and avocado orchards and its Pokolbin Mountains Road, Pokolbin, cellar door, fruit and vegetable stall.