

HALL OF FAME 2023 CITATION ROBIN BROCKETT. GAIL THOMAS

With no thoughts of becoming a winemaker, tonight's inductee into the Hall of Fame originally began helping his mother make fruit wines in New Zealand. Now he has been treading the same soil and tending the same vines on the Bellarine Peninsula for over 35 years - it's Robin Brockett!

Starting out at ag college doing agricultural finance Robin was intending to work in an agricultural bank. After a year he started working at a vineyard and winery, later deferring to begin studying viticulture. After getting a scholarship he moved to Charles Sturt University at Wagga to study and came to Scotchmans Hill thinking he would be there two or three years, but has never left.

As Chief winemaker and past President of Wine Geelong Robin has been a constant figure at the winery since 1988 when he started working there as a vineyard manager. When he came there were only four vineyards on the Bellarine. Scotchmans Hill was second vineyard, having the highest perched plantings on the Peninsula, but was the first winery in the region.

Scotchmans Hill's first vineyard, a 2ha block was planted beside the winery in 1982 with another 18ha of vines planted in 1983. Between 1995 and 1998 the winery saw a major expansion and development including a new crusher and grape press and the building of the tank farm and the barrel hall. Recently expanding the range, 20ha has been planted to alternative varieties that will provide information as to the varieties best suited to the region while also taking climate change into consideration.

As well as having some 50ha planted to vine, plus leasing other nearby vineyards brings the total to around 100ha and sees Scotchmans Hill as the biggest operation in the Geelong region.

In 2014 Scotchmans Hill changed ownership. Now with eight shareholders, including Robin, they have invested a lot of money back into the business to ensure it stays locally-owned. Along with their Scotchmans Hill and Swan Bay labels there is the flagship Cornelius single vineyard range with all fruit being sourced from the Bellarine.

Scotchmans Hill has continuously won awards and accolades including remaining in The Halliday Top 100 Wineries and as a Halliday top 5-star winery for over twenty years. At last year's Geelong Wine Show Scotchmans Hill was awarded the Most Successful Exhibitor Trophy along with the 2020 Cornelius Sutton vineyard also taking out Best Chardonnay.

The 2021 Scotchmans Hill pinot noir was the Gold Medal Winner at the Australian Pinot Challenge Geelong Region while at the 2022 Royal Melbourne the 2021 Shiraz won Best Victorian Shiraz together with the coveted Trevor Mast Trophy for Best Shiraz of the Show, an accolade never before bestowed on Geelong wine.

At the 2022 Ballarat Wine Show the same wine took out three trophies including the Ray Mackay Gold Sovereign Champion Wine of the Show. The Scotchmans Hill 2021 chardonnay also brought home two trophies at that show.

Every winemaker has a dream of having their own little label and as his ‘retirement project’ Robin established Robin Brockett wines in 2013 sourcing fruit from a couple of growers at Wallington and making the wines differently to how he makes the wines for Scotchmans. This has included playing around with amphora wines under his own label.

Robin cites that as his training was originally viticulture, his view is to get it right in the vineyard. His ultimate aim is to showcase the Bellarine by making wine from one end of the peninsula to the other. Even though the peninsula is only about 25km long and 12-13km wide, there are some unique pockets that actually show the differences between the individual areas. Robin also recently featured on Channel Nine’s Beach House Hunters highlighting our region’s tourism and wineries.

So, in recognition for his contribution to putting the Geelong region on the winemaking map, it is with great pleasure this evening that we induct Robin Brockett into the Geelong Wine Hall of Fame.
