



International wineries of the year

From Austria to Spain, Argentina to New Zealand, here are the 65 best international wineries we discovered in the last 12 months. Some are familiar names, like Penfolds, which has made the list 19 times in the last 23 years. Others may be new discoveries, such as Moric, a producer turning out exceptional reds from Austria's Burgenland.

Our critics selected these wineries on the basis of their performance in our blind tastings; all of them excelled in both the percentage of wines we recommended out of the total tasted, and in the average score of the recommended wines. Only wineries with three or more recommendations are eligible for the honor; you'll find plenty of other great producers—particularly Bordeaux châteaux—that release only one or two wines a vintage among our 100 Best Wines of the Year, starting on page 97.

On the following pages, *W&S* editors Joshua Greene, Chris Hallowell, Peter Liem, Patricio Tapia, Tara Q. Thomas and Wolfgang M. Weber provide insight into what makes these wineries stand out. With each profile, you'll find the producer's top three recommended wines (and the issue date in which our review first appeared). For a complete list of recommended wines from our International Wineries of the Year, go to wineandspiritsmagazine.com.

Brokenwood

HUNTER VALLEY



Iain Riggs

Founded: 1970
Winemaker: Iain Riggs
Viticulturist: Keith Barry
Acres owned: 35.5 in Hunter Valley
Annual production: 100,000 cases
Estate grown: 12%
Managing Partners:
 Iain Riggs & Jeff Krieger
Known for: Complex, single-site shiraz and age-worthy semillon
Importer: Old Bridge Cellars, Napa, CA
Website: brokenwood.com.au

Winemaking was a hobby for Tony Albert, John Beeston and James Halliday when they purchased ten acres of an old community cricket ground in 1970. They paid a record price at the time—\$970 an acre—and set out to plant cabernet sauvignon and shiraz. Brokenwood quickly grew into a commercial venture: Five years after their first 75-case vintage, there were new partners and a new winery. In 1978, they purchased the Graveyard Vineyard, a site originally intended by city planners as a cemetery (but never used as such). Keith Barry helped plant the vineyard in 1968 when he was a boy, and is now in charge of farming it. He grows concentrated fruit at Graveyard, where the heavy clay soil naturally limits yields, and the vines produce Brokenwood's flagship shiraz. In 2005 four hailstorms left the 12 acres of old vines relatively unscathed; they produced a classic Hunter shiraz, with mineral-driven tannins that contrast the bright, fragrant dark berry fruit.



In 1982, with the addition of chief winemaker Iain Riggs, Brokenwood began to produce semillon. Their range includes a blend from two vineyards, Brycefield and Belford: Fermented and aged exclusively in stainless steel (as are all Brokenwood semillons), the 2005 shows a wealth of cumin and cardamom spice. The top semillon, ILR Reserve, grows in soils composed of sandstone and shale sediments, remnants of an ancient seabed; it's released a minimum of five years after the vintage. The '04 balances fresh scents of wildflower honey and tangerine with more mature notes of golden raisins and butterscotch; the '03 is nutty, with the brisk scent of corn silk.

In recent years, Brokenwood has expanded beyond the Hunter, with projects that include the Indigo Vineyard in Beechworth, where the first pinot noir came into production in 2002. The latest release, from 2008, is fragrant with forest floor scents of mushrooms and wild strawberries, a clean style of pinot noir that shows the potential for the variety in this cool region of Victoria. —C.H.

TOP-SCORING WINES

- 94** '05 Hunter Valley Graveyard Vineyard Shiraz \$125 (2/09)
- 91** '05 Hunter Valley Brycefield, Belford Vineyard Semillon \$32 (10/09)
- 91** '03 Hunter Valley ILR Reserve Semillon \$48 (2/09)