



Three in the running for ASVO Winemaker of the Year award

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BY ANTHONY MADIGAN ON MONDAY 10 SEPTEMBER 2018

NEWS

The Australian Society of Viticulture and Oenology has announced the finalists for the 2018 ASVO Winemaker of the Year award – Pete Bissell, Corrina Wright (pictured) and Bryan Currie.

The ASVO Awards for excellence are now in their sixth year and continue to grow. ASVO President Dr Tony Robinson said the awards recognise the achievements of some of the most dedicated and professional individuals in the wine industry.

“As an industry, we are fortunate to have many very skilled and professional people who are contributing significantly to the wine community, inspiring those around them to seek out and adopt innovative practices. The quality of this year’s finalists is absolutely outstanding, and I congratulate each of them on their achievements to date,” Dr Robinson said.

Winners will be announced at an Awards ceremony and dinner on 13 November at the National Wine Centre in Adelaide.

Corrina Wright

Corrina has dedicated herself to the development of innovative varieties and innovative wine styles. She led the planting of the first Mencia in Australia, on the back of being an early adopter of Fiano (including a sparkling version of this variety), Vermentino and Sagrantino, with a particular focus on planting varieties that are heat and drought tolerant, with high

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natural acidity and with a different flavour profile to their more traditional Shiraz and Grenache plantings.

Corrina has been involved in many aspects of the broader wine industry having been a Board member of the ASVO, South Australian Wine Industry Council and McLaren Vale Grape Wine and Tourism Association. Corrina has recently been appointed a McLaren Vale Ambassador, a role which provides leadership and information dissemination for the region.

With a clear commitment to the future of the industry, Corrina has further extended her involvement in the wine industry by being a key instigator in the Winemakers Federation of Australia (WFA) undertaking a gender and cultural diversity study for the industry and combined with her Board membership of the Australian Women in Wine Awards (AWIWA), is an important part of the leadership on cultural change for the whole wine community.



Pete Bissell

Pete has been a champion of the wine industry and of Coonawarra for many years. He has been a keen innovator both in the winery and the vineyard. Examples include early trial and adoption of new closure types, alternative yeasts and considerable investigation of long maceration ferments and tannin extraction. More recently trial work has focused on measuring total antioxidants in red wines as a potential way of measuring longevity in wine.

Pete's vineyard innovations have seen the planting of the first material from Yalumba's ENTAV clones of Cabernet Sauvignon and Merlot and trialling these on the terra rossa soils in Coonawarra.

Pete has also been involved with the development and commercialisation of berry sorting equipment. Together with the Balnaves viticulturist, they developed berry sorting conveyors that sit on trailers above the picking bins, thus allowing constant picking and the removal of foreign matter and gum leaf at the harvester stage, sorting and delivery of clean fruit, without slowing the winery operations. A commercially built prototype was trialled at Balnaves in 2018. The fact that the equipment can be utilised with existing bins and harvesters provides considerable cost advantages.

Keen to share his knowledge, Pete is the lead author of the Red Winemaking chapter of "Australian Winemaking", which is published online. Pete has spoken at several ASVO seminars over the years, judged at numerous wine shows and organised research extension and research to practice seminars and benchmark tastings. He was a foundation member of the Limestone Coast wine show, and has sat on reference groups such as the tannin reference group for the AWRI and the 2nd CRC on viticulture.

As a keen advocate for the Coonawarra region Pete put forward and developed the discussion of subregions within Coonawarra, leading to the production, in consultation with other Coonawarra winemakers, of the Coonawarra sub-region map. Finally, with an eye to the

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future of the region, Pete has worked closely with many wine industry groups and stakeholders to present various aspects of fracking to the SA Parliamentary enquiry into Unconventional Gas in the South East in 2016.

Bryan Currie

Bryan Currie has a clear vision to make wines that speak clearly of the place they are grown and their variety, and to express their unique distinct personality and authentic story. Throughout his career Bryan has strongly promoted the adoption of grape varieties that are suited to their regional climate and that require less winemaking intervention and therefore express more clearly their region and personality. He led the first planting of southern Italian varieties in the Riverina, NSW, such as Nero d'Avola, Aglianico and Montepulciano, wines which have now enjoyed critical acclaim both nationally and internationally.

Bryan focuses closely on fine tuning viticulture and winemaking practices to give these varieties more distinctive regional characters. To this end, Bryan has adopted a no sulphur addition approach and produced commercial preservative free wines over the past five years, strongly believing on the future of these wine styles. He has also keenly worked with industry research partners investigating nonsaccharomyces yeast and novel microbiological techniques.

Bryan has been heavily involved in regional and state based industry organisations such as NSW Wine Industry Association, Riverina Winemakers Association, MIA Vine Improvement Association and National Grape and Wine Industry Centre. Keen to further knowledge, education and mentoring opportunities, he established the Riverina Sweet Wine Tutorials, was key in developing the Riverina, Hilltops and Tumbarumba regional wine shows and the International Sweet Wine Challenge and is a regular judge on the Australian Wine Show circuit.

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