

# Glaetzer

BAROSSA VALLEY



AMON-Ra



ANAPERENNA



BISHOP



WALLACE



## June 22 – July 5, 2011 Dorothy So & Andrew Sun

### \*Sip on this: Ben Glaetzer wines



Open any of Ben Glaetzer's wines and you'll taste plenty of personality in the bottle. Whites are crisp and reds are complex with interlaced flavours. It's the sort of tippie that's earned the young winemaker a spot as one of the industry's best.

Born into a family of winemakers in Australia, Glaetzer's early knowledge of the local topography and fruits has resulted in a solid portfolio that's won him multiple awards. He currently overlooks Glaetzer Wines (set up by his father Colin Glaetzer) based in the Barossa Valley and Heartland Wines in Langhorne Creek and Limestone Coast. Among his most notable bottles are his reds. His Heartland Dolceto Lagrein combines two underrated grape varieties in a blend that exudes berry notes with spicy finish. The Anaperenna from Glaetzer Wines is another solid offering. Made from a Shiraz and Cabernet Sauvignon blend, it was awarded 94 points by *The Wine Advocate* for its 2009 vintage. But perhaps the most iconic of Glaetzer's wines is the Amon-Ra, an unfiltered Shiraz that's been immortalised in the Japanese manga series *The Drops of God*. Both the 2006 and 2009 releases have won high praises as well-balanced wines that are rich with plenty of bright fruit expression. Glaetzer's wines are available for retail orders through Kedington Wines. Kedington also distributes to several hotels and restaurants, including the Grand Hyatt, Upper House, Aqua, Zuma and The Landmark Mandarin Oriental. **Dorothy So**



### The rising star of Australia's Barossa Valley winemaking region explains the art and science behind his craft.

Q&A Andrew Sun

**You say your wine is made "in the vineyard". How does that work?**

"It's like anything that involves raw ingredients, whether you're a chef or a winemaker. If it has flavour and balance, the fruit will produce a wine that has elegance and a tangible level of quality. So you have to understand the raw ingredients. A lot of winemakers don't understand that the fruit's flavour is paramount. There's the saying, 'You can't make a silk purse out of a sow's ear'. A lot of commercial wines are made out of ordinary fruit, but to get to the next step, you've got to have outstanding grapes."

**What did you learn from your father – himself a renowned winemaker – and the wineries you worked at in Europe?**

"I grew up in a wine family, so there's certainly an influence there. However, winemaking is very much about your own development when it comes to flavour and techniques, and I think more of that came externally. For me that was in Italy, France and even Armenia. The family side gives you a head start, but then you develop your own techniques and aspirations."

**Is winemaking an art or a science?**

"You need a science background to know how to push the artistic boundaries. I am guided more by the artistic side in flavours, aromatics and the overall personality of a wine, but have the scientific knowledge to know something artistic can become a failure if I push it too far. A good example is my Anaperenna, which is a Shiraz and Cabernet blend. I leave the Cabernet grape's skin on for a longer period, so it goes through primary and secondary fermentation. I have to know about airtight seals, pH balance, bacteria levels, temperatures and what to do at particular and critical times. Art comes into it when allowing a natural process to occur rather than trying to influence it. It's like minimalist painting the more you fiddle with it, the more you affect it. I'd rather guide a natural product."

**You were named new world winemaker of the year in 2006. Was that a backhanded compliment, like "you're OK, for Australia?"**

"Not so much. Certainly, when you're selling wine in Europe there is a huge differentiation and mindset between the new and old worlds. But new world is seen as emerging, fresh-flavoured, an exciting and cool place. The old world is more staid and tired. If I wore jeans and an open shirt like I am now to an old world wine dinner, I would probably be chastised. When I got that award, it was done positively – like the new world is up and coming, and you're the most up and coming of the up and coming."

**On Twitter recently, you wrote, "It takes a lot of beer to make good wine." Care to explain?**

"I like beer. And champagne. I think you'll find in Australia, South Africa and a few countries of that new world ilk, most winemakers are like that. When you're tasting wine all day – on some days, I'll taste 400 ferments – there's nothing better than cracking open a beer. When I drink wine I automatically analyse it and break it down. But a beer just has to be cold and clean. It cleanses the palate."

**Your wines are relatively small productions. Any plans to expand?**

The Glaetzer vineyards in the Barossa Valley are all generally small and we're already at maximum production. I don't want to increase that (and affect) the integrity of the brand. It's supposed to reflect a small sub-region."