

MEDIA RELEASE: Tumbarumba wines amongst world's best

International wine critic Jancis Robinson has lavished praises on the premium cool climate wines hailing from Tumbarumba, NSW.

"I was hugely impressed by some of the wines, especially the Chardonnays," she writes in the Financial Times of London on 23 May. "The best of these Tumbarumba Chardonnays were just right: whistle-clean, well-constructed and packed full of interesting, savoury flavour. Oh, and cheaper than comparable white burgundy."

Voted the world's most influential wine critic in polls in the US, France and internationally in 2018, Jancis Robinson is a wine writer and author of many acclaimed books on wine. In May, Robinson tasted through 33 Tumbarumba wines – representing most Tumbarumba owners, growers and winemakers – and published her review of the region on both her website and in the Financial Times.

"The discovery of 100% Tumbarumba wines was well worth making," she writes on JancisRobinson.com. "Previously I had come across Tumbarumba fruit only as an ingredient in some of Australia's most ambitious Chardonnays from the big companies: Penfolds Yattarna and Eileen Hardy."

But tasting through 33 of the region's wines was a revelation. Robinson tasted sparkling wines, chardonnays, pinot noirs, as well as other varietal wines, and awarded seven of the 33 wines a score of 17, designating a "superior" wine. Most wines scored 16, recognizing a "distinguished" wine. From a world-leading critic such as Robinson, these scores are truly a testament to the quality of Tumbarumba.

Following a tough start to 2020, the endorsement from Robinson was heartily welcomed. The January 2020 bushfires tore through the Tumbarumba region. Some vineyards were completely burnt, and all 230 hectares under vine and an estimated harvest of 2000 tonnes were lost to smoke taint. Cellar doors in the region closed due to the Covid-19 pandemic and tourism, one of the region's main industries, ground to a stop.

President of Tumbarumba Vignerons Association, Juliet Cullen, said the recognition from one of the world's most respected wine judges was a real boost to the spirits of the Tumbarumba growers.

"Jancis Robinson is an icon in the wine world, so to receive her praise for the quality of our Chardonnay and Pinot Noir, is a real pick-me-up as we get on with growing an even better vintage for 2021.

"We've been knocked down, but we're getting back up again. The autumn weather has brought steady rain, so the vines are recovering from the summer stress. We now feel energized to start pruning in a few weeks, and there will be new areas planted this spring to meet the increased demand for Tumbarumba wine", she added.

The project was designed to focus the international spotlight on the tiny Tumbarumba region and the quality of the wines produced there.

"I wanted to increase the recognition of this pristine grape-growing region," Bill Mason of Kosciusko Wines says. "Although Tumbarumba is a young wine region, its high elevation, brilliant sunlight, and dedicated growers mean that we are producing some outstanding wines. From here, I can only see Tumbarumba's reputation growing - both nationally and internationally."

The project, coordinated by Mason, was the result of the wine community coming together in the toughest of times. Most Tumbarumba growers, owners and winemakers donated wines to be shipped to London, as well as winemakers from the neighbouring wine region of the Canberra District, and further afield. Alex McKay from Collector Wines, Celine Rousseau of Eden Road Wines and Bryan Currie of Hungerford Hill Wines volunteered their expertise in tasting and deciding the final selection of wines to be shipped.

“With Aussie wine exports globally reaching \$2.91 billion in the 2019 calendar year, our product is the toast of the world, no question,” says Minister for Agriculture, Drought and Emergency Management David Littleproud. “Our wine regions are among the most stunning landscapes you’ll find anywhere and I can personally vouch for the quality of drop from beautiful Tumbarumba. Tumbarumba is beautiful in its own right. Take in a glass of the locally produced wine as well and you’re knocking on heaven’s door.”

The project was kindly supported by Australia Post, who shipped the wines to London.

Robinson’s articles on Tumbarumba:

- Financial Times article, “Delivering the goods: wines from Australia’s Tumbarumba” (subscriber): <https://www.ft.com/content/e1b405f6-996a-11ea-8b5b-63f7c5c86bef>.
- Overview of Tumbarumba, “Snowy Mountain Magic”: <https://www.jancisrobinson.com/articles/snowy-mountain-magic>.
- Robinson’s Tasting Notes, “Tumbarumba Tasted” (subscriber): <https://www.jancisrobinson.com/articles/tumbarumba-tasted>.

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