

# Every wine tells a story

**W**hat do you get when you cross a high-profile chef with a large nursery vineyard and an ideas man dedicated to the preservation of wine and food culture?

The answer is the Murray Darling Collection. Luminaries include chef Stefano di Pieri, Bruce and Jenni Chalmers – owners of an eco-friendly series of vineyards – and James Broadway, from Slow Food Australia.

Their aim is to make great wines in a region that has hitherto been synonymous with mass production.

The Murray Darling Collection focuses on low yields, hand-picking, minimal chemical intervention and winemaking techniques usually reserved for “premium” grape-growing regions.

This includes the use of expensive French oak, open top fermenters and the expertise of Sandro Mosele and Alberto Antonini.

Add to this the rich soils of the region and the Chalmers’ innovative techniques and you have a recipe for success.

But where does Stefano di Pieri fit in? As one who champions the Murray River area through his restaurants and the ABC series *A Gondola on the Murray*, and who is involved with a project that highlights the pedigree of the region, the MDC brand fits his philosophy. Stefano prefers to protect the environment, rather than destroy it, and this is the cornerstone of the Murray Darling Collection.

Every wine that is produced has a story behind it that relates to the region. This high regard for the history of this important part

of Australia makes the MDC an exciting one to watch.

The players are all genuine, and the product they deliver stands up to the taste test. Check them out and see what the Murray-Darling Region is truly capable of.

The medium cherry 2003 “Corowa 1902” sangiovese (the Corowa 1902 is a reference to managing the resources of the Murray and Darling rivers between the three states and the story is told in full on the label) displays bright, sour cherry aromas intermingled with notes of briar and violets. The light to medium-bodied palate delivers lively red berry fruits, very crisp acidity and plentiful tannins that are tantamount to sangiovese. This wine should be enjoyed over the next three years.

The deep garnet 2003 “Salt Pan” shiraz is a lavishly textured savoury wine with aromas reminiscent of roasted meats, oriental spices and juicy blackberries. The medium-bodied palate is beautifully balanced with plenty of fruit to complement the dry, savoury finish. This wine will further integrate as it matures over the next six months and will provide terrific drinking over the next three to five years.

*Ben Edwards is president of the Australian Sommeliers Association (Victoria) and distributes French wines.*

**VARIETIES** “Salt Pan” shiraz 2003 (\$23), “Corowa 1902” sangiovese 2003 (\$23)

**AVAILABILITY** Good restaurants and wine stores

**CELLAR DOOR** Strictly by arrangement

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