



# GIANT STEPS

Yarra Valley, Victoria

*TOP100 WINERIES "The two of them (Phil Sexton and Steve Flamsteed) focus on Chardonnay and Pinot Noir...They take a gentle approach in their gravity-flow winery...producing wines that communicate their power in cool clarity and fine detail rather than brawn."*



Phil Sexton

- Wine & Spirits (Winter 2018)

**OWNER:** The Sexton Family

**FOUNDED:** 1998 by Phil Sexton

**WINEMAKER:** Phil Sexton

**SIZE:** Sexton Vineyard - 75 acres

**HARVEST:** Early March to early May

**CLIMATE:** Cool climate, substantial meso-climatic variation between sites

**SOILS:** Brown sandy loam and rocky gravel over clay

**VARIETIES PLANTED:** Chardonnay (29 acres), Pinot Noir (21 acres), Merlot (14 acres), Cabernet Sauvignon (7.5 acres), Shiraz (1.5 acres), Petit Verdot (1 acre), Cabernet Franc (0.5 acres).

**WEBSITE:** [www.giant-steps.com.au](http://www.giant-steps.com.au)



The higher altitude Applejack Vineyard in the upper Yarra atop basalt-based volcanic soils



**PROFILE:** When John Coltrane split with Miles Davis in the late 50s, he wasted little time releasing his visionary Giant Steps album. Winemaker (and equally successful brewmaster) Phil Sexton was inspired by the album and Coltrane's foresight. When Sexton sold his Devil's Lair vineyard in Margaret River to relocate and replant in the Yarra Valley, he named his wine in Coltrane's honor. Sexton chose Yarra Valley because of his admiration for the long aging and fine boned wines produced by the new generation of wine growers reestablishing this historic wine region. Giant Steps has forged a reputation for delivering some of Australia's most consistent, over-performing, varietal wines reflected by its ongoing, praiseworthy global acclaim including being a sixtime Wine & Spirits Top 100 Wineries of the Year, 2013-2018. Giant Steps focuses primarily on the distinctive expression of single vineyard sites in the Yarra Valley. Grapes are drawn from estate and leased vineyards as well as fruit from longterm grower contracts, supported by strong relationships and meticulous supervision throughout the year.

**VITICULTURE:** Sexton and Giant Steps' grower partners are all committed to organic and biodynamic farming principles with the express purpose of further distinguishing each vineyard site while improving grape and wine quality. A particular objective is to enhance the natural microflora for the facilitation of indigenous fermentations in the winery.

Sexton's 75-acre estate vineyard is on a beautiful north facing hillside site located in the foothills of the Warramate ranges, rising from 425 to nearly 700 feet above the valley floor. A relatively cool site, management of Sexton vineyard is intensive with all tasks carefully done by hand. All vines are grafted to devigorating rootstocks and planted closely on carefully selected sites, namely the high slopes of the Valley's ranges away from the fertile soils of the valley floor. Shoots are vertically positioned to enhance ventilation and maximize sunlight capture on the coolest sites. The first vintage of Giant Steps was drawn from the Sexton Vineyard in 2001.



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## THE WINES

The Yarra Valley clearly displays the region's fruit in a simple, textural and affordable light. The Giant Steps Single Vineyard range personifies each site. These wines are produced from the most site-expressive fruit off the best vineyards in great years. Production of these wines is very limited with some vineyards producing as little as 200 cases. All Giant Steps' wines are produced using indigenous yeasts, gravity-flow winemaking, and minimal fining and filtration. This approach produces highly expressive wines, true to the climate, soil and topography of the Yarra Valley.

GIANT STEPS  
VIGNERONS

- Yarra Valley Chardonnay:** Aromas of citrus, fresh melon and crushed hazelnuts. The palate is long, elegant and broad with a beautiful creaminess from the extended aging on its lees. A backbone of crisp and punchy acidity carries flavors of stone fruits, citrus and shortbread.
- Yarra Valley Pinot Noir:** Lovely nose, color and generous mouthfeel. Powerful, lifted aromas of cherries, blue and red fruits are complemented by underlying savory characters.
- Tarraford Vineyard Chardonnay:** Tarraford has a distinctly cooler microclimate than its neighbors. Tarraford Vineyard has a discreet microclimate, that is cooler than neighbouring sites. Although located in a warmer part of the valley, the site produces Chardonnay with high natural acids (and low pH) expressing itself through its characteristically long palate, fine tight structure and a zesty lemon/grapefruit finish.
- Tarraford Vineyard Syrah:** Single clone Syrah from Tarraford Vineyard. The palate is medium-bodied, but surprisingly muscular and subtle at the same time, taking time to relax and reveal the layers of flavor and texture.
- Applejack Vineyard Pinot Noir:** Applejack Vineyard is located on a dramatic slope and is close planted and fastidiously managed. The basalt based underlying volcanic soil and rock produce a characteristically fine yet extended, spicy and firm palate.
- Wombat Creek Pinot Noir:** Wombat Creek Vineyard is the highest altitude vineyard in the Yarra Valley. The underlying ferrous (red) based volcanic soil and rock produce a distinctively soft yet long and firm palate that contrasts with the finer palates seen from the nearby Applejack Vineyard.

**WINEMAKING:** Creating wines of structure, finesse and longevity is no mean feat. Sexton is steadfast in his "winemaking without compromise" ethos. From the ground up, Phil has created an artisanal winery designed for hand-crafting small batches of wine. Built around gravity flow principles, the winery is an exercise in function over form. The building consists of a naturally insulated concrete shell offering a cool, stable temperature. Winemaking techniques are adapted to variety, clone and site - a cold soak may precede fermentation, whole bunches and stems are included where appropriate, yeasts are indigenous originating from each vineyard, additions are minimized and cap plunging and battonage, when required, are carried out by hand. Ultimately, the variety and the vagaries of vintage dictate the methodology, producing wines reflective of time and place rather than the maker.



The serene view from Giant Steps' Sexton Vineyard in the Yarra Valley



Winemakers Phil Sexton and Steve Flamstead



Phil's son, Harry, in the barrel cellar