



INNOCENT BYSTANDER

Yarra Valley, Victoria



Phil Sexton

“Produced by Phil Sexton at his Giant Steps winery, Innocent Bystander isn’t a second label but a different philosophy of wine. It involves the blending of individual Victorian (Yarra) vineyards....Phil is not one to do things by halves and it shows in his wines.” Robert Parker’s *The Wine Advocate* (June 2010)

OWNER: The Sexton Family

FOUNDED: 1997 by Phil Sexton

WINEMAKER: Steve Flamsteed and Phil Sexton

HARVEST: Early March to early May

CLIMATE: Varied: cold at elevation in the Alpine Valley, cool in the King Valley and Strathbogie Ranges and warm and continental in Heathcote

VINEYARD LOCATIONS: Central, North East and Southern Victoria; specifically Yarra Valley, King Valley, Strathbogie Ranges, Alpine Valleys, Heathcote

WEBSITE: www.innocentbystander.com.au



A crisp winter's morning in a Victorian vineyard



PROFILE: An experienced vigneron counting more than 20 years in the Australian wine industry, Phil Sexton relocated from the warm, coastal region of Margaret River to the gravelly slopes of Victoria’s Yarra Valley in the late 1990s to pursue cool climate viticulture. Beyond the pristine Chardonnay and Pinot Noir he was able to produce in the Valley, Phil discovered a number of vineyards in far flung corners of Victoria that inspired him to explore regional diversity in this small state. Thus the Innocent Bystander label was created, and his talented winemaking team tasked with delivering a range of wines with a personality all their own: distinctly regional, varietally expressive and definitely not your run of the mill blends.

VITICULTURE: The Sextons firmly believe that great wine at its best is like a fingerprint, inextricably linking the personality and mood of the land from which it has sprung. Managing a total of 17 vineyards spread throughout Victoria’s diverse landscape, the team draws on an array of distinctly regional fruit and is able to showcase the inherent personalities of each area. Shiraz from the warm, continental Heathcote region complements that of the elevated Strathbogie Ranges, a much cooler area than the traditional planting grounds for Australian Shiraz. The gently sloping vineyards of the King Valley provide aromatic Viognier while vineyards at the foothills of the Victorian Alps offer crisp, mineral-driven Pinot Gris fruit. Finally, pristine Pinot Noir, Chardonnay and Merlot are grown on the steep, gravelly hillsides of the Yarra Valley.



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THE WINES

Innocent Bystander wines have forged a reputation for delivering some of the Yarra Valley's most consistent, over-performing, affordable, varietal wines. Using 100% hand-picked fruit, wild ferments and gravity-flow winemaking techniques, their wines, made with minimal filtration and fining, reflect the climate, soil and topography of the Yarra Valley. The Mea Culpa wines articulate a different sensory narrative but use the same winemaking techniques. With great success, they reflect the winemaker's lasting fascination with crafting wines that are a faithful expression of a single site and single clone.

INNOCENT BYSTANDER WINES:

Moscato: Authentically made from old-vine Gordo (brown) and Black Muscat (Muscat of Hamburg) grapes grown in the sun-drenched vineyards around Swan Hill. A delicious balance of natural sweetness, natural fizz, crisp acidity and low alcohol.

Pinot Gris: Lemon peel, preserved ginger, cardamom and coriander aromas against a lively palate with a solid flick of crisp citrus. Honeydew melons and fresh pear notes, this wine is tight but with a melting acidity and a bone dry finish.

Pinot Noir: This Yarra Valley Pinot Noir deserves to be enjoyed with gusto. It's almost like an Australian translation of a Cru Beaujolais, deliciously drinkable, uncomplicated and fresh upon first meeting.

Shiraz: Cool-climate fruit exposed to a long, slow ripening period. Showing varietal pepper and summer berry aromatics on a lively red fruit-driven palate with dusty tannins. Earthy and spicy with a savory, long finish.

MEA CULPA WINES:

Chardonnay: Focused single appellation Chardonnay, with a natural winemaking philosophy, whilst making quality the priority. Minimal intervention in the vineyard, hand-picked, no additions in the winery. Mineral and complex with notes of ginger, spice and grapefruit.

Pinot Noir: Focused single appellation Pinot Noir, with a natural winemaking philosophy, whilst making quality the priority. Minimal intervention in the vineyard, hand-picked, no additions in the winery. Intense primary fruit characters and solid, natural acidity.

Shiraz: 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 that are a joy to tease out.

WINEMAKING: Winemaking is carried out in the Sexton's artisanal winery, a facility designed for hand-crafting small, individual batches of wine. Taking advantage of the broad palate of flavors available to them, the Innocent Bystander team uses a combination of winemaking skill and intuition to blend a consistent range of wines offering unique personality and definitive regional expression. Co-fermentation and hand-plunging aid integration in the Shiraz, while the Chardonnay fruit is whole bunch pressed and fermented with wild yeast. Pinot Noir fruit is treated to a three-day cold soak and open vessel fermentation to deliver lifted aromatics, while the Pinot Gris is whole bunch pressed to retain delicacy, meanwhile oak maturation and lees stirring contributes complexity. These are wines from somewhere rather than anywhere - and they're determined not to take a back seat.

innocent bystander
MOSCATO
Mea Culpa



The modern winemaking facility in Yarra Valley



Innocent Bystander's tasting room in Healesville



Steep vineyards are hand-picked by local workers