



# INNOCENT BYSTANDER

AUSTRALIA: Yarra Valley, Victoria NEW ZEALAND: Marlborough and Central Otago

“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)



Phil Sexton

**OWNER:** The Sexton Family

**FOUNDED:** 1997 by Phil Sexton

**WINEMAKERS:** Phil Sexton and Steve Flamsteed

**HARVEST:** Early March to early May

**CLIMATE:** Varied with marked diurnal temperature variation: cold at elevation in the Alpine Valleys, cool in the King and Yarra Valleys, relatively cool maritime in Marlborough, and semi-continental in Central Otago.

## VINEYARD

**LOCATIONS:** AU (VIC) - Yarra Valley, King Valley, Swan Hill NZ (South Island) - Marlborough and Central Otago



**WEBSITE:** [www.innocentbystander.com.au](http://www.innocentbystander.com.au)

**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, an hour east of Melbourne, in the late 1990s to pursue cool climate viticulture. Beyond the pristine Pinot Gris and Pinot Noir he was able to produce in Yarra Valley, Phil discovered a number of vineyards in far flung corners of Victoria and New Zealand that inspired him to explore regional diversity.

Innocent Bystander is forever expanding its horizons to craft wines reflecting the purest interpretation of style available. This means, where necessary, exploring different regions to find the highest quality fruit available for each wine they produce. That is why they choose the Yarra Valley for Pinot Gris; go to the Swan Hill for Moscato; and across the Tasman to Marlborough for Sauvignon Blanc.

Sexton’s close-knit team has a long standing track record delivering a range of wines with a personality all their own: distinctly regional and varietally expressive.

**VITICULTURE:** Innocent Bystander wines are grown fastidiously in their estate and leased vineyards. Sexton and his team are committed to exploring biodynamic farming practices with the overall aim of embracing the unique personality of each site. He firmly believes that great wine at its best is like a fingerprint - inextricably linking the personality, mood, and growing season of the land from which it has sprung. Cool climate Shiraz from the Yarra is more savory and white pepper driven compared to the traditional, warm climate styles of Aussie 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. Pristine Pinot Noir, is grown on the steep, gravelly hillsides of the Yarra Valley and complements that of equally pure yet plummy, juicy Pinot Noir with perfumed aromatics that typify the Central Otago style. Sourcing fruit from the lower Wairau Valley right up to the hills of the Awatere Valley in Marlborough is a rewarding combination that gives luscious ripe flavors but also the savory acidity of the cooler sites.



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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 that reflect the climate, soil and topography of Victoria and New Zealand. 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 within one of the the estate vineyards and/or single clone.

## INNOCENT BYSTANDER WINES:

**Moscato:** Authentically made from old-vine Gordo and Black Muscat 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, ginger, cardamom and coriander aromas against a tight palate with a solid flick of crisp citrus, honeydew notes, melting acidity, and a bone dry finish.

**Yarra Valley Pinot Noir:** It's almost like an Australian translation of a Cru Beaujolais, deliciously drinkable, uncomplicated and fresh upon first meeting.

**Syrah:** Cool-climate fruit exposed to a long, slow ripening period. Red fruit driven aromatics and flavors. Earthy and spicy with a savory, long finish.

**Marlborough Sauvignon Blanc:** Bright aromas of citrus peel and fresh passionfruit. The palate shows lemons, peach and nectarine notes against a backsplash of welcome acidity.

**Central Otago Pinot Noir:** Perfumed aromatics lead into a characteristic plummy, juicy density that typifies this area. The rich tannin structure melts into a velvety mouthfeel.

## MEA CULPA WINES:

**Chardonnay:** Single block single clone Chardonnay from Tarrafrod Vineyard. Mineral and complex with notes of ginger, spice and grapefruit.

**Pinot Noir:** Single block Pinot Noir from Applejack Vineyard. Intense primary fruit characters and solid, natural acidity.

**Syrah:** Single clone Syrah from Tarrafrod 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 that are a joy to tease out.

**WINEMAKING:** Winemaking is carried out at Innocent Bystander's modern artisanal winery, a facility designed for hand-crafting small, individual batches of wine with a natural winemaking philosophy, whilst making quality the priority. Using 100% hand-picked fruit, wild ferments and gravity-flow winemaking techniques, the wines are made with minimal filtration and fining. Whole bunches, co-fermentation and hand-plunging aid integration in the Syrah, while the Pinot Noir fruit is treated to a three to five day cold soak and open vessel fermentation with small amounts of whole bunches to deliver lifted aromatics. 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



Gravity flow at the modern winery in Healesville



Innocent Bystander's tasting room in Healesville



Steep vineyards are hand-picked by local workers