



MEDIA RELEASE



Pete Bissell of Balnaves of Coonawarra wins Qantas/Gourmet Traveller Wine Winemaker of the Year Award

A South Australian hailing from Coonawarra's "red cigar" Pete Bissell, of Balnaves winery in Coonawarra, was named as the winner of the 2005 Qantas / Gourmet Traveller WINE Winemaker of the year Award.

Chairman of judges and Gourmet Traveller wine contributor Peter Forrestal said that Bissell's 15 years of hard work had paid off "His scientific approach to winemaking, and his need to understand the impact that each season has on each section of the vineyard, ensures that each of the wines he makes is imbued with a strong sense of place. His attention to detail and artistic sensibilities mean that he applies different winemaking techniques to different parcels of fruit."

The Winemaker of the Year award began in 1998 and has been consistently supported by Qantas, one of Australia's biggest wine purchasers (approximately three million litres or four million 750ml equivalent bottles of wine annually). Gourmet Traveller wine editor Judy Sarris said the magazine has established the award to celebrate individuals who have made an indelible mark on the Australian wine industry.

Doug Balnaves who attended the award night said "It was a very exciting night and no one knew until the very last minute, which one of the eight very talented winemakers who were in the room had won the highly sort after award"

"Judged a panel of Australian leading wine commentators, it placed Coonawarra at the forefront of quality winemaking in Australia. Pete Bissell paid tribute to Annette, Doug, Kirsty and Pete Balnaves and all the team at Balnaves of Coonawarra in addition to Coonawarra colleagues who provide healthy, vigorous but very friendly competition"

"A wonderful night for Balnaves and for Coonawarra."

... a winemaking magician
who belongs to an
enlightened movement of
winemakers who see
Coonawarra as an intricate
palette of regional colour"

Andrew Caillard MW

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