



## Weinbau Wenzel, Rust, Austria

The beautiful little town of Rust in Austria's Burgenland has long been a winemaking centre, with the houses of its winemakers leading straight off the main street into long, narrow courtyards, behind which vines flow up the hillside. The tasting room at Weinbau Wenzel is 300 years old, with a vaulted ceiling and a delightfully rustic atmosphere.

Michael Wenzel has worked in Margaret River in Western Australia, and Cloudy Bay and Martinborough in New Zealand, and speaks excellent English, though you're more likely to encounter his talkative 76-year-old father at the cellar door. Drop in to try some of Wenzel's delightful Sauvignon Blanc 2007 or some Furmint 2007, a local variety only revived some 20 years ago that has become popular in recent years, and which, incidentally, can be tracked down in Australia. The spiciness, mineral and floral character of the wine is reminiscent of fresh green apple.

But what you should really look out for is the Ruster Ausbruch, a local and very limited Botrytis dessert wine. The Wenzel Am Fusse des Berges 2004 has a complex taste, reminiscent of ginger, rosehip and



elderberry, while the rare SAZ 2004 (a blend of local varieties Furmint and Gelber Muskateller) has a smoky, apricot flavour and is worth every *pfennig* of the €35 you'll pay for it at the Wenzel cellar door. Such fine wines, coupled with the charming old town and beautiful surrounding countryside, exemplify an Austrian wine tour at its best.

**Weinbau Wenzel**  
**Hauptstrasse 29**  
**Rust, Austria**  
**Phone +43 2685 287**  
**Cellar door open 9am-5pm daily**

*By Brian Johnston*

## Amisfield Wine Company, Queenstown, New Zealand

Amisfield is a small specialist producer of Pinot Noir, aromatic whites and *méthode traditionnelle* wines, regarded as one of the leading producers of the Central Otago region. The vines here are close-planted on a range of alluvial and glacial schist soils, imparting balance in the vines' growth and productivity. Yields are kept low to provide concentrated fruit flavour, with complexity derived from using grapes grown on the range of sites within the vineyard.

Taking its name from the location



Main: The delightful Austrian wine town of Rust

Left: Big sky over Lubiana Vineyard in Tasmania

Far left: Amisfield just outside Queenstown



of the spectacular winery and bistro on the shores of the lake, the Lake Hayes range of wine offers clean, fruit-driven flavours and delivers consistent quality and style. Guests can pick up a bottle of wine or stop for a tasting at the cellar door, which provides an interactive experience and an informative wine presentation. The adjacent bistro, with its stunning courtyard setting, provides a daily changing menu of organic and locally sourced produce to complement the range of estate-grown wines.

**Amisfield Wine Company**  
**10 Lake Hayes Road**  
**Queenstown, New Zealand**  
**Phone +64 3 442 0556**  
**Visit [www.amisfield.co.nz](http://www.amisfield.co.nz)**  
**Cellar door open 10am-6pm daily**

### Stefano Lubiana Wines, Granton, Tasmania

This vineyard and winery at Granton in the Derwent Valley is just a 15-minute drive north of Hobart. Fifth-generation winemaker Steve Lubiana established the vineyard in 1991, bringing to Tasmania a family winemaking legacy stretching over 200 years. The family-owned, family-operated vineyard produces small quantities of handcrafted, cool-climate Tasmanian wines that include Chardonnay, Pinot Noir, Merlot, Sauvignon Blanc, Pinot Grigio, Riesling and Nebbiolo.

The cellar door offers a behind-the-scenes insight into a working winery; visitors can taste and purchase a range of wines here, including the winery's acclaimed Pinot Noirs. The complex, savoury Estate Pinot Noir has a soft and seamless palate; the Primavera boasts good fruity characteristics, smoothness and structure. A range of other nationally and internationally acclaimed red and white table and sparkling wines are also available for tasting and purchase.

**Stefano Lubiana Wines**  
**60 Rowbottoms Road,**

**Granton, Tasmania**  
**Phone 03 6263 7457**  
**Visit [www.slw.com.au](http://www.slw.com.au)**  
**Cellar door open 11am-3pm Sunday to Thursday, closed in June**

### Blasted Church Vineyards, Okanagan Falls, Canada

If you never imagined Canadians as wine producers, you've obviously never been there. The canny Canadians drink most of their comparatively small wine output themselves and British Columbia, in particular, has some very fine wines and some well-known scenic wine-growing regions that are one of the joys of a visit to western Canada.

Perched high on a rolling hillside that cascades into Skaha Lake, Blasted Church is undoubtedly one of the most majestic vineyard sites in the Okanagan Valley, which is home to numerous wine estates. The cascading topography results in exceptional western exposure, perfectly angled for the capture of precious sunlight during the growing season. The lake below serves to moderate the extremes of summer heat and winter cool – good for the



Left: Fine dining at Mandala Wines  
 Above: Blasted Church Winery & Vineyard, Okanagan Falls

Mandala a must-visit destination. With vines as old as 20 years, Mandala's family-owned Yarra Valley vineyards produce Sauvignon Blanc, Chardonnay, Pinot Noir, Shiraz and Cabernet Sauvignon, all available for tasting at Mandala's new cellar door.

**Mandala Wines**  
**1568 Melba Highway,**  
**Dixons Creek, Victoria**  
**Phone 03 5965 2016**  
**Visit [www.mandalawines.com.au](http://www.mandalawines.com.au)**  
**Cellar door open 10am-5pm daily**

wines – and provides lovely views for the visitors. Now into its second decade of grape production, Blasted Church is a purveyor of premium-quality grapes to many of British Columbia's leading wineries, and visitors are welcomed at both vineyard and winery.

**Blasted Church Vineyard**  
**378 Parsons Road, Okanagan Falls**  
**British Columbia, Canada**  
**Phone +250 497 1125**  
**Visit [www.blastedchurch.com](http://www.blastedchurch.com)**  
**Cellar door open 10am-5pm daily**  
**between 1 May and 31 October**

### Mandala Wines, Dixons Creek, Victoria

Renovations are complete and the Yarra Valley's newest wine and food destination, Mandala Wines, has just opened its doors. Visitors can enjoy tastings at the cellar door and casual *tapas* in the lounge or settle in for a meal in the restaurant, looking out onto the vineyard. The team behind the restaurant and lounge has significant experience in the Melbourne food and wine scene: head chef Mauro Callegari, formerly of Fenix, and his partner, front-of-house manager Lily Gray, formerly of Bar Lourinha, have relocated to the Valley, and are both committed to making



## tastingnote



### Optimiste Petit Verdot 2006 (AU\$18)

The carefully cultivated, well drained gravel slopes of the Optimiste vineyard give this late-ripening grape the very best chance of developing slowly, softening out the tannins and filling out the palate with its true varietal characters; aromas of violets, blueberries and blackberries combine with savoury black olive and dark chocolate. The palate is richly layered with berry fruits supported by firm, ripe tannins. It's delicious with strongly flavoured red-meat dishes. Visit [www.optimiste.com.au](http://www.optimiste.com.au)

### Rolling Chardonnay 2007 (AU\$21)

This wine was made in the Orange region of NSW with grapes from the largest and, arguably, the best cool-climate vineyard in the region. The Rolling winemaking team has the advantage of being able to select from a large source of top-quality fruit: the result is a rich, clean wine with vibrant fruit, presenting the finest peach and melon aromas and refreshing white-peach flavour, with a beautiful long finish. Minimal barrel maturation is used to avoid the over-the-top, oaky wines that one sometimes tastes on the Chardonnay circuit. Visit [www.cumuluswines.com.au](http://www.cumuluswines.com.au)



### Leylines Shiraz 2007 (AU\$25)

Leylines is made by Songlines Estates, which also bring us the gorgeous and highly acclaimed (and therefore pricey) Songlines Shiraz. Leylines is different, in that it is designed to be consumed young, being softer and more approachable, and is available at a more everyday price. Releasing attractive aromas of fresh raspberry, mulberry and soft plum, the palate starts with cloves and vanilla, then fleshes out, giving more succulent mulberries and sweet red fruits with complex dusty tannins on the long finish. Visit [www.songlinesestates.com](http://www.songlinesestates.com)