

## ***Great Southern, Discover Great Shiraz What a record breaker!***

*IT'S just over 40 years since the first experimental vines were planted at Mount Barker, following recommendations from renowned viticulturalists Professor Harold Olmo and Dr John Gladstones in the 1950s and early 1960s. From a handful of pioneers – Houghton, Alkoomi, Plantagenet, Wignalls and Forest Hill among them – who took up the call to establish vineyards, Western Australia's Great Southern wine region has developed and flourished to now encompass five distinct sub-regions and more than 75 producers. In 2006, the Great Southern is enjoying something of a "coming of age", consistently receiving rave reviews from the most respected Australian and international wine critics and writers – and for no other variety more so than its superb Shiraz.*

Now, from an unprecedented collaboration of Great Southern producers and industry, comes the definitive regional blend of super-premium Shiraz, designed to celebrate the achievements of WA's vast and spectacular southern wine-growing region and showcase its stunning future potential. An expertly crafted blend of the best Shiraz parcels from across the Great Southern 2005 vintage, the wine has been christened "Five Virtues" and its striking black label adorned with the distinctive five stars of the Southern Cross. And to ensure wine and region really attract some attention, Five Virtues will be launched in a likely Guinness Record-breaking size bottle – all six foot four inches and 290 litres of it.

The idea was first proposed by North Road Liquor owner Kim Bullock, a confirmed supporter of the region's wines. Mr Bullock partnered up with a group of Great Southern wine producers and associated industry backers, led by the Great Southern Wine Producers Association Inc, to unite on this unique project to promote both wine and region to the world. The group has created one huge vessel to house 1935 glasses of the 2005 Five Virtues Shiraz, and hopes the Guinness Book of Records will declare it the biggest ever wine bottle. The project also includes a production run limited to 2000 six-pack cases of collectors' item replica 750ml bottles, retailing for \$35.00/bottle.

The Five Virtues name alludes to the five elements that form the Great Southern region: the maritime sub-regions of Albany and Denmark, where the spectacular Southern Ocean pounds an unspoilt coastline, to the inland sub-regions of Mount Barker, Porongurup and Frankland River, where rolling pastoral land patchworked with vineyards meets ancient granite ranges. But Five Virtues also refers to the five schools of thought and belief that each sub-region brings to the project: essentially producers and industry bringing the best of their talents and products to unite under one vision, the common cause of promoting their region. The group believes premium Shiraz and unlimited tourism potential – combining both wine and food experiences and the region's outstanding natural attractions – will become synonymous with the Great Southern.

Successful cross-industry collaboration is no mean feat, but Great Southern Wine Producers Association spokesman Anthony Wilkes, from Ferngrove Wines, says the group was determined to foster the regional reputation for producing great Shiraz.

“Having seen the potential of the region for many years, the passion in the winemakers and vineyard owners and the outstanding fruit this region can produce, we needed to get out more and let the consumer discover our unique region and unique wines ” Mr Wilkes said.

“Five Virtues recognises the Great Southern’s greatest strengths – its size, diversity and the people who belong to it – and celebrates those strengths in a never-before attempted collaboration.”

Given the ever-increasing marketing pressures faced by individual brands, Mr Wilkes said the group hoped the project and its associated marketing power would deliver tangible future benefits to both the region as a whole and its constituent producers, elevating the regional tourism profile and increasing product recognition and sales of Great Southern wines across the globe.

### ***The bottle***

Almost two metres high, the 290 litre Five Virtues will fill 1935 glasses and was a year in the making. It equates to 387 standard wine bottles, or 32.25 cases, and is made of 100% continuously formed glass. Following a grand tour of WA and Sydney wine shows, the bottle will come home to North Road Liquor in Albany. The previous biggest-known wine bottle was the 130 litre “Maximus”, filled with Californian Cabernet Sauvignon in 2004 – equating to a mere 1200 glasses. Wine bottle sizes are typically named after biblical and ancient kings, but the Five Virtues size will necessitate a new “king of kings” entry into wine nomenclature! The three largest sizes recognised at present are the Nebuchadnezzar (15l), Melchior (18l) and Sovereign (25l).

### ***The team***

Dave Cleary, Claire Darnaud-McKerrow, Kim Horton, Diane Miller and Richard Robson were the five Great Southern winemakers charged with the mammoth task of selecting and blending parcels of Shiraz from across the five sub-regions to comprise the Five Virtues. They met at a secret tasting of more than 30 of the best 2005 vintage samples in January 2006, emerging eight hours later with the genesis of the final blend. The wine consists of 15 different components in equal, 6.66 per cent proportions of the blend, sourced from eleven producers representing every sub-region. The parcels selected were produced by Plantagenet Wines and Goundrey Wines of Mount Barker, Howard Park Wines, Hamlet Vineyard, Forest Hill and West Cape Howe of Denmark, Castle Rock Estate, Xabregas and Mount Trio of Porongurup, Ferngrove Vineyards of Frankland River and Wignalls Wines of Albany.

### ***The wine***

The 2005 Five Virtues Shiraz shows a complex bouquet of blueberry, ripe mulberry, blackberry and hints of white pepper, spices, cloves, musk and vanilla, followed by a sweet fruit palate of mulberry and blueberry with touches of black jube and fennel. Good length and fine tannins balance a rich mouth feel and should enable the wine to further develop for the next ten years.

### ***The backers***

- Great Southern Development Commission (GSDC)
- North Road Liquor
- Great Southern Packaging Supplies
- Great Southern Wine Producers Association Inc and Wine Producers
- ASA CORK
- ANTHONY SMITH AUSTRALASIA
- Vale Displays
- Visy Board
- Peter McDonald Design
- O-I Asia Pacific
- Silverlock Packaging
- Wesfarmers Federation Insurance
- Supa-stik
- Sign-on
- CMS Events
- WAWIA
- Toll Holdings
- Landmark
- City of Albany
- Picasso Print & Design

### ***The promotion***

Five Virtues will be on show at the WA Wine and Food Festival at the Perth Convention & Exhibition Centre from June 3 to 5. The official launch will take place at Wine Australia in Sydney, July 14 to 17, and in WA at the Great Southern Wine Festival on October 1. The 750ml limited release six packs will be available for sale at North Road Liquor Store, Albany, from July 14 2007, where the big bottle will be permanently housed.

**For further information on the 2005 Five Virtues Shiraz project please log on to [www.greatsouthernwines.com.au](http://www.greatsouthernwines.com.au) or contact Anthony Wilkes on 08 9227 0297, email [awilkes@ferngrove.com.au](mailto:awilkes@ferngrove.com.au). For wine sales information please contact Kim Bullock at North Road Liquor on [northroadliquor@bigpond.com.au](mailto:northroadliquor@bigpond.com.au), 08 9842 6666, Shop 1&2 North Road Shopping Centre, Albany WA 6330.**