

## “A \$10 dazzler”

TONY LOVE

The Courier Mail, 28th June 2010

AS Dr Phil Spillman walks across the red sandy Deakin Estate winery grounds he is scratching around for a cool, zippy angle to spruik his personal story. "I'll think of something," he promises. "There has to be something catchy that we can talk about." He's just been tasting his way through a very fetching line up of Murray Darling district wines that wear a trio of Deakin Estate labels. He doesn't actually need a catchy angle. The wines do their own quiet talking here...

The Deakin Estate winery is based at Red Cliffs south of Mildura. There's something assuringly prosaic about the name. It's sand-dune country. Red dunes... Dr Phil admits he probably had some prejudice about inland wine regions before he moved to Mildura and surrounds in 2004. He had come from New Zealand producer Villa Maria in 2004 - having got there via BRL Hardy and his WA home-state-based Chittering Estate - with a head full of sauvignon blanc and pinot noir technique in a region where it may not apply...

"There were some things I didn't think we could do well here," Phil says. "Sauvignon blanc was one of them, but the challenge was there." Having been used to turning out Marlborough savvy blanc, he soon learned he'd have to pick the Red Cliffs grapes much earlier to achieve the required flavour and wine quality. "I got my head around that, got used to the style differences, and that all works well," Phil says. Other varieties had similar stories. Many said you couldn't make a pinot from the Murray Darling. The question got asked and I thought I knew a few tricks of the trade, coming from New Zealand," Phil says. "So we had a try. I committed myself to the challenge. I guess I'm surprised at the results after each new challenge."

His humility is charming given the strengths of his current releases. The 2009 Sauvignon Blanc is not at all like a Kiwi. It's fresh and light with lime zest and tropical flavours. The pinot noir is nothing like a Burgundian, nor versions out of the Yarra Valley, Mornington Peninsula, Adelaide Hills or Central Otago. It has a little burnish in its tone, a smattering of typical forest woody spice & faint cherry fruit, but doesn't pretend to be anything but a light red style. Remind yourself here. Both are just \$10...

The current release cabernet has lots going for its price, the merlot honest and uncomplicated, an easy drinking, soft friendly red. Yep," says Phil. "That's exactly what we try to do. The right kind of structures and complexity for our price point. "That's what we do." Honest. Friendly. The wines reflect the man. There's your angle, Dr Phil. Right there, the hook you're looking for. And you didn't think that was catchy enough.

### Deakin Estate Sauvignon Blanc 2009



#### “88 Points”

This wine is the largest seller in Deakin Estate's export portfolio and leads its sales in New Zealand. It has a mix of grassy/herbal characters plus some tropical notes, and a commendably dry finish, which makes it food-friendly. Drink now. 88 Points  
**James Halliday, The Weekend Australian Magazine, 24-25 October 2009.**

### Deakin Estate Moscato 2009



#### “A really superb wine”

Watery pale with lemon/lime flashes and a gentle froth in the glass. The aromas are appeley, grapey and lemon sherbet. What a delight in the mouth! Juicy sweetness and a petillant sparkle, delicate and so refreshing. A really superb wine. Scrumptious.  
**International Wine & Spirit Competition judging, www.iwsc.net**

#### “Intensity of flavour”

This is one of the very few super-low alcohol examples that has intensity of flavour, and more importantly considerable length. 90 Points  
**James Halliday, The Weekend Australian Magazine, October 24-25 2009**

#### Silver Best in Class, IWSC 2009

### Deakin Estate Chardonnay 2008



Elegant aromatic varietal nose, broken twig, crushed leaf with lemon/lime overtones. Excellent balance of fruit and racy acidity in the mouth, long fruity finish continuing the theme running throughout. Very nice wine.

**International Wine & Spirit Competition judging, www.iwsc.net**

#### Silver Best in Class, IWSC 2009