



# Fact Sheet

## IMPORTANT EXHIBITOR INFORMATION

### Meet Chief Judge PJ Charteris

We would like to introduce you to the Royal Queensland Wine Show Chief Judge – PJ Charteris.

PJ Charteris has an outstanding reputation not only as one of New Zealand and Australia's leading winemakers but for his support of the local and international wine industry. After realising his love for winemaking at the age of 13, PJ has always been heavily involved in the industry through studying, winemaking and judging.

PJ has worked in New Zealand, Australia, Europe and the Americas in search of the perfect drop – his passions are making Pinot Noir and Chardonnay.

In 2010 the Hunter Valley Wine Industry Association honoured PJ by awarding him Winemaker of the Year. PJ joined the Royal Queensland Wine Show as Chief Judge in 2013. The show has gone from strength to strength under PJ's direction.

PJ splits his time between New Zealand's Central Otago and the Hunter Valley and runs his own successful label, Charteris Wines.

#### **When did this passion begin, and how did you make a career out of it?**

My father found me a holiday job pruning in a local vineyard when I was a young fella. Secretly I think he wanted to be kept in wine as an old man, I think his plan worked. But now I get him to help me prune my Pinot Noir Vineyard in Central Otago. Who's got the last laugh there.....  
Winemaking is a unique lifestyle, I'm not sure if I would call it a career, career sounds somehow a little painful. You get to be inside & outside - you are part farmer, part scientist, part artist. Your tastebuds are your best tool and you need to keep them well practiced which means eating, drinking and thinking. What a great existence.

#### **What region holds your heart?**

I love Central Otago but the Hunter Valley holds a special place in my heart because the wine styles are so unique to the place. A holiday house in Burgundy would be good, it's the home of great Pinot Noir.

#### **Tell us about your label – Charteris Wines**

I made my first Pinot Noir under Charteris in 2008, all 120 cases of it. We are now making about 800 cases of Pinot, Chardonnay and Riesling. It's still a tiny production but it's all about quality. I am striving to make the best wines I possibly can which means understanding the vineyard before anything else. Growing high quality grapes is a meticulous and very labour intensive business, that is why great things generally come in small packages when it comes to wine. If the grapes are of the highest quality it's up to me not to stuff them up in the winery and that means knowing when not to

**Enquiries:**  
Dianna Keir  
Competition & Events Coordinator  
p. 07 3253 3989  
e. [dkeir@royalqueenslandshow.com.au](mailto:dkeir@royalqueenslandshow.com.au)





interfere with nature. We are, after all, just letting some naturally occurring yeasts turn grape juice into wine.

**Are there any Australian wines or winemakers that we should be looking out for in 2014?**

Watch out for small producers. Thomas Wines from the Hunter Valley, Mac Forbes from the Yarra Valley and Snake and Herring from Margaret River are all ones to watch. One of the great things about the Australian wine landscape is that you don't have to go far to find exciting wine.

**Tell us about the RQWS – why is it so important to have these competitions?**

Within the wine industry the show system gives producers the opportunity to benchmark their wines against their peers. The marketing opportunities and awards provide a great way to engage those in the industry as well as consumers. We are continually working to refine the system with the aim of ease of understanding results for the wine buyer and drinker. Apart from that I just love coming to Queensland and working with the RQWS committee. They are a great bunch of people with a fantastic vision for the future.

**Tell us about your RQWS 2014 judging panel**

This year we go from 4 to 5 panels of judges. Each panel comprising a chief panel judge, 2 judges and 2 associate judges. We have a very strong team with collectively an enormous wealth of experience and knowledge. But the most important trait is humility. Without humility you have a very narrow field of view and the results will reflect that. With an open mind and sound tasting background you provide the opportunity for wines of all styles to challenge for top awards. I think this is a really strong point in our team and last year's results show this direction.

**Any tips on what we should be drinking this Autumn?**

Drink Riesling from just about anywhere in Australia and Hunter Valley Semillon, 2 of the most underrated and under-priced wine styles around. Also look for medium bodied Shiraz, you can drink more than 1 glass without feeling like you will wake up with a dry mouth. Chardonnay and Cabernet are also making a bit of a comeback.

**Enquiries:**  
Dianna Keir  
Competition & Events Coordinator  
p. 07 3253 3989  
e. [dkeir@royalqueenslandshow.com.au](mailto:dkeir@royalqueenslandshow.com.au)

