

MEET THE WINEMAKER – Chris Pfeiffer

Chris Pfeiffer has devoted over 30 years to the wine industry, working for Lindemans before setting up his own winery, Pfeiffer Wines, in Rutherglen in 1984.



Chris Pfeiffer's choice of Rutherglen for his vineyard and winery was driven by his love of the region and the affection he has for nurturing some of the regions world famous, fortified wines.

Chris Pfeiffer graduated with a B.Sc Agr degree from Sydney University in 1974. By 1980 he was Chief Fortified winemaker at Lindemans, at age 29, one of the youngest chief winemakers in Australia at the time.

In 1984, Chris and wife Robyn purchased the "Old Distillery" winery in Rutherglen. The property dates back to the 1880's and was one of the original producers of brandy in Australia.

These days Chris and his youngest daughter Jennifer produce over 30 wines at the winery, from the elegant, award winning Rieslings, to the world famous fortified styles. The philosophy used at the winery is simply to capture the fruit developed in the grapes and use winemaking techniques to enhance them. The winery has pioneered styles too, like Gamay, a dessert style Muscadelle and Seriously Pink and was the first winery in Australia to adopt the name Topaque.

As the immediate past Chairman of Judges of the prestigious Royal Melbourne Wine Show and current Chairman of the Rutherglen Wine Show, Australia's longest running wine show, the Geographe Wine Show, and the Australian Fortified Wine Show, and a former Chairman of Judges of the Australian Small Winemakers, Griffith & Swan Hill Wine Shows, Chris Pfeiffer puts as much back into the industry as he can. As a wine judge, he considers it an honour to be asked to evaluate what each winemaker considers to be his or her best wine, across every style of wine in Australia.

Chris Pfeiffer is the current Chairman of the VWIA and sits on the committee of the Australian Small Winemakers Association and the Wine Industry National Environment Committee. He is the immediate past Chairman of the Winemakers of Rutherglen, Rutherglen Wine Tourism and the Victorian Viticultural Society. He is a past board member of the National Wine Centre, a committee member of the 2010 Fortified Sustainability project and was Chairman of Vintage 2010, a strategic planning body for the Victorian wine industry.

In 2007 Chris Pfeiffer was awarded the Distinguished Service Award by the Victorian Wine Industry Association, for his contribution to the industry. This same year he was also honored for his 22 years of leadership whilst chairing the Winemakers of Rutherglen.

Chris Pfeiffer continues to be actively involved in the wine industry and plays an important role in promoting objectives of the industry as well as providing representation and advocacy to government, industry groups and the wider business community.