



AN AUSTRALIAN ICON WINE

If you've only heard of one quality wine made in Australia, you've heard of Grange Hermitage - a name that makes wine connoisseurs round the world salivate.

The 1999 vintage was declared by Wine Spectator to be the best red wine in the world.

"Grange" – as it's known to you wine buffs, was a trailblazer within Australia ... and was first Australian wine to be taken seriously by the rest of the wine world. Its first vintage in 1951 changed the course of Australian red winemaking, although it took ten years to be accepted in the country and winemaker Max Schubert was ridiculed about his "experimental" shiraz-based wine at the time.

Today Grange Hermitage remains a flag bearer for the industry. It fetches top prices at auction around the world – up to \$US 23,000.00... and is officially listed as a Heritage Icon of South Australia, the state that houses its birthplace – Penfold's Magill Estate.

One of the earliest wineries in Australia, Penfold's Magill Estate has been a place of pilgrimage for wine lovers for years. Nestling in the foothills behind the city of Adelaide – the capital of South Australia, it is easily accessible - only 7 kilometres from the CBD (about 12 minutes by cab).

You can visit the historic winery and museum – still a working winery, every day of the year. I was amazed to find the daily guided tour and conducted tasting operating during the sacred season of vintage, with only a few parts of the winery taboo.

Travelling through the suburbs, the winery remains a hidden secret, emerging suddenly down a drive, between a sea of houses. Turn the corner and you are immersed in an oasis of vines – tight rows either side of the sweeping drive.

In the middle sit a collection of low redbrick and local bluestone buildings – a charming marriage of old and new, original stone tanks, lavender borders ...

You can see Dr Penfold's first home - the stone cottage he built with his wife Mary in 1845, which they named Grange Cottage after Mary's home in England.... nestled among the other 19th Century buildings – interspersed with the modern developments...including a modern five star restaurant with huge windows gazing over the vines.

I recommend taking the tour to immerse yourself in the history and philosophy of the remarkable Doctor. You will swear you can feel his spirit preserved in the vintage cellars, alongside the fruit of his labours. The good doctor had a firm belief in the medicinal value of wine and prescribed his fortified wines – port and sherry for his patients. As his practice grew, he expanded production.

After his death, Mary Penfold took over the winery and continued to develop the business. According to record, almost 500,000 litres of wine was stored at Magill in 1881 – a third of all wine stored in South Australia at the time.



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They produced mainly fortified wines till end of WW2, when consumer's tastes in Australia moved towards table wine.

It was after a trip to Europe in 1950, that Max Schubert made the first experimental vintage of Grange Hermitage. He wanted to produce a red wine capable of staying alive for a minimum of 20 years, comparable to those made in Bordeaux.

A shrine to his wine is the centrepiece of the cellars - a reverent row of the plain-labelled bottles, showing the patina of age, from each of its vintages.

However, don't expect to find Grange in the line-up of interesting wines offered in the tasting after the tour— unless by prior arrangement – or by ordering a bottle to enjoy in the winery restaurant looking out over the vines for lunch.

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