

Larry goes out on a limb

Bold move by winemaker unafraid of doing the hard yards

A few years ago Houghton winemaker Larry Cherubino was cruising on top of the world. He was in charge of one of the jewels in the Hardy Wine Company crown and making award-winning wines that saw him emerge as one of the shining lights of the Australian wine industry.

Then, in a surprise move, he decided the corporate winemaking life wasn't for him. It was a bold move to leave the security of a major wine company to try his luck in the wider world doing things a little out of left field.

For a short time, he joined Forest Hill but has mainly been involved in projects around the world, including Italy, California and New Zealand.

I managed to get a short time in his hectic schedule recently to taste the first of a range of wines that will be released under his own label.

It's called The Yard and is a 100 per cent Frankland River shiraz. Hardly surprising that he would choose a shiraz given his longtime affection for the shiraz of this region in Western Australia.

The Yard will be a single vineyard range that in the coming 12 to 18 months is going to include a riesling from the Great Southern Region, a

Bordeaux blend from Margaret River and a Pemberton white.

The wine is good, and I'll get to that in a minute, but to me one of the most striking features is the packaging. It is stunning in its simplicity and impact. I reckon a lot of people could learn from this. I see so many labels in my tastings that have me scratching my noggin in amazement.

Quite why people expect some of these labels to actually entice a wine drinker to buy these wines is beyond me. But the Yard will do that.

Initially it is going to be a restaurant wine with places like Jacksons and Eminem and in retail at Beaufort Liquor. Small quantities will also be available via mail order from orders@larrycherubino.com.

"Creating the range has been challenging but hugely satisfying," Mr Cherubino said. "It has taken time to bring everything together; from the philosophy, to packaging, fruit sourcing and developing the final style.

"Having full control over these elements has meant I have been able to create wines that I am truly proud of and this has brought me closer to achieving my end goal — creating the Cherubino label, which I hope will represent the very best that I can do."

The wine comes from the



Winemaker Larry Cherubino has created a new label, The Yard.

Powderbark vineyard in Frankland and, according to Mr Cherubino, has been made in a hands-off way, using a mix of French oak 500-litre puncheons. It is relatively low in alcohol at 13.2 per cent and he admits that it is one of the lower alcohol wines he has made.

"Maybe I'm getting older because I'm starting to like the softer, finer styles of wine," he said.

To that end, he's achieved his aim perfectly. The wine has a seductive perfume of sour cherry and spicy plum with a deep and lingering palate of supple texture. This is going to be a name to look out for in the future.



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