



# WIZARD OF AUS

With its fantastically crafted wines and unique origins story, Penfolds is not only one of the oldest partners in iDealwine history, but also one of the most important

**WHEN CHRISTOPHER** and Mary Penfold arrived in Adelaide in 1844, the city was populated by fewer than 20,000 people, and almost no one outside of Australia had ever heard of South Australian wine.

Today, the bustling city counts over one million inhabitants, and the nearby wine-producing regions of McLaren Vale, Barossa Valley, and Coonawarra are household names for wine enthusiasts around the world. This well-deserved global recognition is in part thanks to the pioneering winemaking duo who sought a new home for Christopher’s medical practice nearly 180 years ago.

In the early days of the Penfolds’ winemaking, Christopher and Mary primarily made wine for Christopher’s medical patients, believing that the

beloved liquid contained healing properties. The original vineyard, situated on the famous Magill Estate, experimented with many different grape varieties, including Rieslings and classic Bordeaux blends. Much of their early successes were a testament to great female winemakers who proved to be ahead of their time.

**NEW HEIGHTS**

Upon the death of her husband Christopher in 1870, Mary Penfold assumed full responsibility of the winery, and proceeded to take Penfolds to new heights. By the time she retired and handed the reins to her daughter, Georgina, Penfolds accounted for one third of all Australian wine production. In 1907, still under Georgina’s leadership,

the winery became the largest producer in South Australia.

The wine that would ultimately launch Penfolds into oenological legend, and stretch the possibilities of Australian winemaking, arrived in 1952 by way of head winemaker Max Schupert. This was the year he would produce the first commercial vintage of his experimental Grange Hermitage. The immensely successful cuvée, emblematic of all that is possible in Australian Syrah, comes from the humblest of beginnings.

Schupert, who began his Penfolds career as a messenger boy when he was a teenager, had only become the head winemaker in 1948. Inspired by a trip to Europe in 1950, the maverick winemaker set out to bring Australian wine to the world stage by producing an ageworthy

## auction update – in association with iDealwine

Top five Wines of May 2023, adjusted to 750ml bottle								
Region	Colour	Lot description	Starting price	Lot selling price	Unit selling price	La Côte iDealwine®	% Change	Buyer's profile
Burgundy	Red	1 Bottle Romanée-Conti GC Domaine de la Romanée-Conti 1980	€10,141	€11,894	€11,894	€11,797	1%	Private – US
Burgundy	Red	1 Bottle Bonnes-Mares Grand Cru d'Auvenay 2003	€10,705	€10,705	€10,705	€10,705	–	Private – South Korea
Burgundy	White	1 Bottle Montrachet Grand Cru Domaine de la Romanée-Conti 2007	€8,514	€8,514	€8,514	€8,662	–	Private – Hong Kong
Burgundy	White	1 Bottle Montrachet Grand Cru Leflaive 1997	€6,260	€7,262	€7,262	€6,760	7%	Pro – France
Burgundy	White	1 Bottle Montrachet Grand Cru Domaine de la Romanée-Conti 1999	€6,260	€6,385	€6,385	€6,385	–	Private – Singapore

cuvée that could rival the Old World classics in Bordeaux. According to Schupert, “the objective was to produce a big, full bodied wine containing maximum extraction of all the components in the grape material used”. Fermentation was strictly controlled over a much longer period than usual, with maximum extraction constantly serving as the North Star. In 1957, the first few vintages were put to the test in a tasting organised for top management. To the astonishment and horror of Schupert, they were universally disliked.

Disheartened, and asked to abandon the project entirely, Schupert was forced to make the following three vintages in secret. This stripped him of the opportunity to age them in new oak, thus rendering these three vintages slightly less ageworthy. However, in the early 1960s, as the original wines improved with age, the board of directors changed course and decided to reintroduce the cuvée, leading to decades of success and renown.

**HERITAGE WINE**

The 1955 vintage is listed as a heritage wine by the Australian National Trust, while the most recent vintages continue to receive perfect scores from wine critics all over the world, cementing Grange as a true icon of new-world wine production.

Penfolds and its Grange cuvée represent nearly all of the characteristics iDealwine seeks to display in its fixed price and auction catalogues – creativity, perseverance, style, and never resting on one’s laurels. Over the course of a year, Penfolds wines typically appear around 20-25 times in iDealwine auctions, with

bottles selling for an average price of €414 (£356) in 2022. The 2008 vintage of Grange was the highest-priced Australian bottle to be featured in 2022 iDealwine auctions, fetching €595, while the 2014 vintage sold for an impressive €901 just a couple of months ago.

Additionally, the highest-priced lot of 2022 included three bottles of Grange in the 1998 vintage, selling for €1,723.60 (€574.50 per 750ml bottle).

**MORE THAN GRANGE**

Outside of Grange, there were plenty of other Penfolds bottles that enjoyed success at iDealwine auctions. The Bin 707, a full-bodied Cabernet Sauvignon named for its ‘batch identification number’ in the cellars of the famous Magill Estate, is a perfect reflection of the Penfolds house style. Its 1998 vintage sold for €260.40 in a 2022 iDealwine auction.

There is also the RWT Shiraz, which stands for Red Winemaking Trial, from its days in early development in the late 1990s. The RWT sources its grapes entirely from the company’s Barossa Valley property in a departure from Penfolds’ trademark multi-regional approach. A bottle of the 1999 vintage sold for €117.80 in a 2022 iDealwine auction.

Penfolds buyers on iDealwine come from all over the world, including Hong Kong, Germany, France, and Sweden, highlighting the global appeal of these masterfully crafted wines. Their impressively broad appeal serves as inspiration for iDealwine to continuously diversify its offering to share great wines with wine enthusiasts from all over the globe.

About iDealwine.com

- Founded in 2000, iDealwine is France’s top wine auctioneer and leading online wine auction house worldwide.
- Fine Spirits Auction (FSA) is iDealwine’s dedicated spirits platform, launched in partnership with La Maison du Whisky, a French specialist in high-end spirits since 1956. Seven auctions of the finest whisky, rum, Cognac and more take place annually.
- Based in Paris, and with offices in Bordeaux and Hong Kong, iDealwine sources rare bottles from European cellars, private collections, and direct from producers before meticulously authenticating and shipping to enthusiasts, collectors, and trade customers worldwide.
- iDealwine provides wine and spirits market data and analysis, with over 60,000 price estimates, based on more than three million auction prices.
- If you are keen to sell your wines or spirits then check out iDealwine’s current auctions, sales, and price estimates at [www.idealwine.com](http://www.idealwine.com) or at [FineSpirits.Auction](http://FineSpirits.Auction)

