



Top Ten New Wineries – 2015 James Halliday Wine Companion  
 Finalist – 2015 Young Guns of Wine

# Ministry of Clouds

[www.ministryofclouds.com.au](http://www.ministryofclouds.com.au)



MINISTRY  
 OF CLOUDS

After almost three decades shared experience in the wine industry, Bernice Ong and Julian Forwood decided to have a crack at their own (ad)venture. For them, Ministry of Clouds represents the relinquishing of past security and structure for the beguiling freedom and independence inherent in this, their own voice.

They seek fruit from distinguished vineyard sites mostly in McLaren Vale, but also in the Clare Valley for a crystalline expression of Riesling and across the Bass Strait for a flinty and somewhat wild expression of a Tasmanian Chardonnay. Their reds revel in Grenache, Shiraz, Mataro and Tempranillo fruit from a variety of mature vineyard sites through McLaren Vale, some up to 90 years of age.

Ministry of Clouds produce classic wines that show careful attention to detail, wines that speak of the land, that reveal the essence of the season; wines with perfect ripeness yet showing some tension, restraint and poise complete with crunchy texture, delicate balance and a somewhat modest built. They are wines that beg to be shared on a convivial table consumed with various foods, flavours and textures.

*“For each year’s edition of my Australian Wine Companion, I list 10 of the best wineries making an appearance for the first time, and choose one as the best of the best. Last year Ministry of Clouds was one of the 10; what the proprietors Julian Forwood and Bernice Ong did not know and won’t until they read this) was that they came within a hair’s breadth of being nominated the best. And what I did not know was that they would be able to produce an array of new wines this year every bit as good as those from their first year”* James Halliday, The Weekend Australian Magazine, April 2015



## 2017 Clare Valley Riesling

Hand harvested in the cool of the night 50% of the fruit is sourced from high altitude rocky soils in the Eastern Hills of Penwortham. The berries are tiny and intense, ripening late in the season. The other component comes from a more fertile and generous Watervale vineyard to give more weight and flavour. The fruit is gently crushed and destemmed before a gentle pressing to a miserly 4.8hl/t. *“A deliberately delicate and crystalline expression of Clare Valley Riesling, exhibiting lifted floral notes, kaffir lime, freshly squeezed lemon juice, grapefruit peel, bath salts, and underlying talc. Classic citrus notes are complimented by the mouth-watering chalky and mineral texture on the palate, finishing with a fine and taut acid line.”*

## 2016 Tasmania Chardonnay

This wine is sourced from the exquisite north easterly facing Meadowbank vineyard sitting 75 meters above the Derwent River, and supplemented by fruit from the Tamar Valley. All fruit was handpicked, then whole bunch pressed direct to old barrels for a 100% wild ferment. Post fermentation, all barrels were topped and sulphured to prevent MLF and retain natural acidity. Lees were stirred only for the early part of maturation to build texture and complexity. Matured in old oak for 9 months. *“A textural wine combining the fineness and acid line from the Meadowbank fruit, and the muscle and intensity of the low yielding Tamar Valley... A shy and somewhat restraint nose exuding white flowers, peach, nectarine characters, and subtle hints of nougat and wood spice. The palate is tightly wound, with a bedrock of chalky minerality supporting a core of intense stone fruit, framed by lingering acidity.”*



MINISTRY  
OF CLOUDS

“We control what we can, the rest is chance”

### 2016 McLaren Vale Tempranillo Grenache

Both varietals were handpicked and gently destemmed to retain whole berries, and then cold soaked for 4 days. The 90 year old vine Grenache underwent carbonic maceration for 3 weeks prior to an extended maceration on skins (12 weeks). Both parcels were then basket pressed to old French oak barriques for 12 months of aging before bottling with a light fining and no filtration. *“This wine combines bright notes of pomegranate, violets and clove typical of dry grown Tempranillo, with the perfume and succulence of old vine Grenache. This medium bodied wine is pretty, juicy and deliberately more-ish. It errs on the blood orange, cherry, red berry spectrum supported by savoury tannins built around a fine boned structure.”*

### 2016 McLaren Vale Grenache

Hand harvested from 2 vineyards (80 year old vines and 22 year old vines) the fruit was lightly destemmed to ensure whole berries remained. A 5 day cold soak preceded open fermentation with a combination of hand plunging and gentle pump over to retain freshness and aromatics. The wine was basket pressed and aged in a combination of old French oak and large format oak tanks for 11 months. *“Entwined within a complex deep core of red and purple fruit aromas, violets, earth and herb tinged; the palate is pure with old-vine flesh, calming depth and purity, but kept necessarily fresh by grainy tannins and a bright line of natural acidity.”*

### 2016 McLaren Vale Shiraz

Hand picked from a 72 year old dry grown Blewitt Springs vineyard and a younger Clarendon vineyard. 35% whole bunch the remainder lightly destemmed to retain whole berries before a 4 day cold soak. Indigenous fermentation with hand plunging throughout the vinification. Elevation in 3 year old hogsheads and a large oak tank for 12 months. *“Cool blue and red fruit lift with layers of spice to entice, supported by a gentle old-oak creaminess, which progresses to the palate exhibiting bright, nervy, and fleshy persistence filed down nicely by fine and savoury tannins.”*

### 2015 Blewitt Springs Single Vineyard Shiraz

All fruit is sourced from a single vineyard, a 52 year old Blewitt Springs block owned by the Patritti family. All fruit is hand harvested and gently destemmed to ensure some whole berries remain during the ferment. Cold soaked for 4 days before fermentation some whole bunches remain. The ferment is plunged gently daily before basket pressing into old Francois Frères and Saury barriques for 11 months maturation. *“A dark, savoury, but bright expression of a Blewitt Springs Shiraz... Subtle complexity, with spicy blue and black berries, notes of cardamom, violets, and a gentle nuttiness from old French oak. On the palate, a tightly wound core of dark berried fruit, is supported by persistent driving tannins.”*

### 2014 McLaren Vale Mataro

Sourced from 2 McLaren Vale vineyards, one north facing bush vine vineyard, with richness and intensity, and the other a cooler Blewitt Springs site giving spice, lift and elegance. Both sites are hand picked and gently de-stemmed for a whole berry ferment in open vats. Plunged daily before basket pressing to old French oak barriques for 11 months elevation. *‘Shy and brooding, this is a bright and fragrant expression of Mataro. A gently complex nose of clove, cardamom and fennel seeds, Provencal herbs, and blue berry fruit. On the palate, a compact core of blue tinged fruit subtly supported by creamy oak, and carried by a ferruginous driving tannin structure which carries the fruit through the mouth.’ 96 points, James Halliday, October 2016.*

