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THE CURIOUS WINEMAKER 2021

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A journey from the vine to the bottle.



A close-up, high-angle shot of a person pouring a vibrant purple wine from a wooden barrel into a large, dark plastic bucket. The wine is thick and bubbly. A hand is visible on the right, holding a small, clear wine glass filled with the same purple liquid. The background is a blurred outdoor setting with a wooden deck and a green plant. The text "Can a bunch of enthusiastic amateurs make a truly special wine?" is overlaid in white serif font across the center of the image.

Can a bunch of enthusiastic amateurs
make a truly special wine?

A man in a dark blue polo shirt is smiling and looking down at a wooden barrel. He is holding a wine glass filled with red wine in his right hand. The barrel is made of light-colored wood and has a green metal band with a red handle. A vertical wooden post is visible on the right side of the barrel.

Not just a plonk but a wine
worthy of savouring, falling
in love with and sharing.



We are gathering a small team
of “curious winemakers” together
to find out.

A sneak peak of winery life

Most of us have always wanted to ‘look under the bonnet’ of a winery and now here is your chance to not just look, but to help take the fruit from the vine to the bottle, learning the processes, then making the creative decisions and getting your hands (and feet) dirty along the way.



*“It’s been great fun making
new friends and creating
our wine in a fun new team...”*
Sam, Curious Winemaker



Under the coaching of our winemaker John Harris (curious in his own way), you can do it! This is the perfect opportunity to create a dozen of your very own hand-crafted wine to delight, impress and surprise friends, family and yourself!





Curious?



All you need to know

What is the Curious Winemaker project?

In 2021, you'll meet to learn about winemaking in a no-nonsense way, and take a parcel of your own hand picked Shiraz grapes all the way from vine to bottle, with a series of wine experiences throughout the year. Our winemaker John Harris will lend his expertise to help you experience a winemaking vintage, and what it's like to create your very own wine.

Who are the Curious Winemakers?

Most Curious Winemakers love wine, and would love to explore the inner workings of a winery. Some have been gifted the project as the 'tricky-to-buy-for' Christmas present, or as a 'cooking class' for the wine-lover. Some of your crew even have their own backyard vineyard starting to fruit, and are keen to learn how to make their own wine in the years ahead.

With the guidance of John Harris, they set out learning the ropes of how a great wine might be put together from the most basic beginnings.



What does the program involve?

12pm, Sunday 7th February at Mitchell Harris

MEET THE CURIOUS WINEMAKERS

You will meet the 2021 crew, work out the plans of your project ahead, pick up a few winemaking basics, all whilst splashing around some previous Curious Winemaker wines.

9:30am, Sunday 22nd February

VISIT THE VINEYARD

You will board the bus, and set off to explore the vineyard at Moonambel, nestled in the Pyrenees Ranges in Western Victoria - a bastion of great cool-climate Shiraz fruit for decades. Shiraz loves it here in these hills - it's a safe bet for our curious winemaking harvest. Amongst the vines you will learn about the ripening process, testing sugar and acid, tasting the nuances in different blocks of the vineyard. You will plan which fruit to pick, and importantly, when to pick. The Curious Winemaker project is a democracy: questions of fruit choice and winemaking techniques are discussed and settled with online voting.



What does the program involve?

TBC date depending on picking time

CRUSH AND PRESS

The nature of harvesting grapes means you won't know exact picking times until closer to harvest. Picking times will be affected by temperature, rain, availability of pickers, but we'll let the team know as soon as possible. Once picked, you will bring the grapes back to our Urban Winery at Mitchell Harris in Ballarat.

For small-batch winemaking like this, it's back to all the old practices. Yep, the best way to crush our Shiraz bunches is with the crushers on the end of our legs! Pigeage is the age-old practice of jumping into the fermenter and gently breaking up the berries with our heels and toes. It doesn't hurt that this is also one of the most fun parts of the job! After a couple of weeks in a big open-top fermenter, the fermentation process is through - the sweetness of the fruit on the vine replaced with some classic cool-climate Shiraz tastes: pepper, spice and a lovely black-cherry tang. It's time to press!

Once again, the old ways win out: a small basket press and plenty of shared muscle! Soon our "Curious Winemaker Shiraz" runs freely away from the skins, bunches and press, and into old French Oak barrels to further mature.



THE
CURIOUS WINEMAKER
2021

What does the program involve?

11:00am, Sunday 16th May at Mitchell Harris

TASTE THE BARREL

Our Curious Winemaker Shiraz has fully fermented and softened with malolactic fermentation - it's time for a sneak preview tasting!

11:00am, Sunday 15th August at Mitchell Harris

THE BENCHMARK SHIRAZ TASTING

Just how does Shiraz made by Curious Winemakers stack up against great examples from around Australia and the rest of the world? This is a great chance to learn more about the world of Shiraz in a comparative tasting environment.

October

A COOL WINE NEEDS A COOL LABEL

A hand crafted wine needs to taste good - but here is your chance to make it look good too! Put your design skills to the test by designing and choosing a label for your wine.

10:00am, Sunday 21st November at Mitchell Harris

BOTTLING DAY

It's grand finale and it's all hands on deck! Take your wine from barrel to bottle, seal and carefully label, and then take a dozen 2021 Curious Winemaker Shiraz bottles home to enjoy!

Want to join The Curious Winemakers in 2021?



FOR FURTHER INFORMATION

Contact John Harris or Alicia Mitchell

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Phone: 03 5331 8931

Online: mitchellharris.com.au/curious-winemaker

BOOK ONLINE

Online: mitchellharris.com.au/shop

Mitchell Harris Wines Bar

38 Doveton St Nth, Ballarat VIC 3350

Phone: 03 5331 8931

THE 2021 CURIOUS WINEMAKER EXPERIENCE

Cost per person **\$550.00**

Department of Economic Development, Jobs, Transport and Resources has contributed to the ongoing prosperity of the Curious Winemaker program through the wine growth fund.

