

Gourmet Traveller Winemaker of the Year

Howard Park Chief Winemaker, Janice McDonald, wins Australia's highest wine prize

The entire **Howard Park** team is extremely proud and in full celebration today after the announcement that its Chief Winemaker, Janice McDonald, has taken out Gourmet Traveller Wine Magazine's Winemaker of the Year award for 2018.

The announcement was made at a gala dinner in Sydney last night in front of the country's top winemakers, judges, critics and industry luminaries.

The win is also one for Western Australia: Janice was the only West Australian nominated, the first WA finalist since 2015 and the first WA winner since 2012.

"I am thrilled to win," Janice said. "This is the most wonderful recognition of what we've achieved at **Howard Park**. I feel I stand here as the representative of an enormous number of people who have such an important part to play – from the winemakers to the grape growers to the marketers to the people that sell the wine. Really the whole group of staff."

Janice McDonald has been Chief Winemaker at **Howard Park** since 2011, overseeing multiple wine brands across four vineyards in two of Australia's premier wine growing regions – Margaret River and the Great Southern.

She has worked closely with **Howard Park**'s owners, the Burch Family, for 7 years, and through her career has taken out Best Australian Sparkling Wine at the Champagne and Sparkling Wine World Championships last year; was nominated previously for GT's Winemaker of the Year in 2013; and was crowned Best Winemaker in the 2010 – 2011 edition of The Big Red Wine Book by Campbell Mattinson and Gary Walsh.

The Burch family is thrilled for Janice and congratulate her on her achievement. "For someone with such a career, we are just so honoured to have Janice working with us and believe this award really is testament to the esteem she is held in within the industry and among her peers," said Marketing Director Amy Burch.

"It is a huge validation of the work she has done not only in her years as a winemaker, but specifically at **Howard Park**. From taking on two quite different wine regions, spearheading our sparkling wine program, running a team of staff around the clock during prolonged vintages – she is tireless. We could not be prouder, and look forward to what she has in store for us in the future."

Janice had this to say upon hearing the news of her nomination earlier this year: "It is an honour, of course. When I think about it in the context of working at **Howard Park**, we make a big range of wine from various regions, different labels and at different prices. It's not all about winning stacks of trophies for one or two top wines, though we do see awards across the range. I've tried to bring that consistency in quality. To me, this nomination is recognition of our work in trying to attain that consistency."

Originally from New South Wales, Janice has had an illustrious career in Western Australia spanning 33 years, including positions as Senior Winemaker at Devil's Lair, Head Brewer at Matilda Bay Brewing Co and Senior Winemaker and Co-founder of Stella Bella.

In 2011 Janice made what she calls the "easy" decision to join **Howard Park** as Chief Winemaker.

During her tenure, Janice has made multiple professional ‘firsts’; overseeing the intricate methode traditionnelle sparkling wine program, juggling vintages in two different wine regions 4-hours apart, handling an expanded range of wines and brands and crafting varieties that were completely new to her, such as Riesling and Pinot Noir. She is responsible for **Howard Park**’s flagship wine, the Abercrombie Cabernet Sauvignon, which is rated in the ‘Outstanding’ category in the Langton’s Classification of Australian Wine.

Janice also directs the Australian Collection of the lauded Marchand & Burch range, in collaboration with Burgundian winemaker Pascal Marchand.

Peter Forrestal, Gourmet Traveller writer and wine critic, had this to say in the announcement of Janice as nominee: “Janice McDonald is an astounding winemaker: demanding of herself and others; rigorous; painstaking in her attention to detail.”

Gourmet Traveller Wine Magazine’s Winemaker of the Year Award celebrates its 21st year in 2018. It describes the accolade as “celebrat[ing] the most talented winemakers in the land.” The judging panel consists of well-known Australian wine industry names, including Peter Forrestal and Huon Hooke.

END

About **Howard Park:** One of Western Australia’s pioneering family-owned wineries, specialising in the state’s premier grape-growing regions of Margaret River and the Great Southern. Encompassing a 30-year history and overseen by two generations of the Burch family, **Howard Park** has vineyards in both regions, as well as a winery and an architecturally awarded Cellar Door in Margaret River. Since its inception in 1986, **Howard Park**’s philosophy has centred on an uncompromising commitment to quality and a focus on crafting wines that are expressive of the region’s terroir.