



ROCA AWARD OF MERIT 2009 – Ian Laurie Hickinbotham OAM

Ian Laurie Hickinbotham OAM (RDOen, 1950) has made an outstanding contribution to the progression of the Australian wine industry. He studied at Roseworthy in 1948 and 1949 and in this latter year captained/coached the premiership-winning football team.

His thesis at Roseworthy was on malo-lactic fermentation – the conversion by bacteria of malic acid to lactic acid. In 1952 at Wynns Coonawarra he introduced malo lactic fermentation to red wines thus improving their quality – a practice that became an industry norm for dry red wine production.

In his role as technical manager and later General Manager of the Barossa Cooperative Winery in the mid 1950s to 1964, Ian developed a sparkling wine facility. He also convinced Leo Buring Pty Ltd to utilise the established brand name "Rinegolde" to market "Sparkling Rinegolde". He was also instrumental in creating the highly successful "Kaiser Stuhl" label.

In the 1960s he moved to Melbourne and became very active in the Victorian wine scene. He was founding President of the Victorian Wine Press Club and he and his wife Judith, ran a highly regarded restaurant "Gini's" in Toorak for 10 years. He also established a family wine company business and became a widely read journalist.

Ian Hickinbotham's other contributions to Australia's wine industry include:

Production achievements. The introduction of polythene pipes to transfer wine; the use of a hermetic centrifuge to remove yeast immediately after completion of fermentation; the invention and use of a unique disgorging machine for sparkling wine production and the invention of a water seal applied to the lid of stainless steel storage vessels which allowed the tank to "breathe" with minimum oxidation.

Packaging – he spent a lot of time with inventor Charles Malpas in assessing and perfecting various types of taps, the *Epicurean*

Oenologists' View. He also wrote his autobiography "*Australian Plonky*" which when published in 2008 caused one reviewer to write – "Anyone (who) has any doubt as to how far the Australian wine industry has progressed in the past five decades...should read this book". And another – "His (Ian Hickinbotham's) influence can be seen in a table of our 24 top-selling wines in 1983. He initiated/made about a quarter of them".

and

Source: ROCA Award of Merit Nomination 2009