

# Ten Minutes by Tractor

MORNINGTON PENINSULA

Ten Minutes by Tractor is the convergence of a series of journeys that began almost 30 years ago, a series of individual threads that fortuitously came together over time to create the winery that exists today.



Since the founding families first chose these three unique sites for vineyards, we have focused on making wine that is specific to our place in Main Ridge on the Mornington Peninsula.



## The Place

Ten Minutes By Tractor is about place. We are defined by place, our name hints at space and time but actually links three places. Our greatest expression is place.

Three vineyards, only ten minutes by tractor apart in space and time, but separated by aspect and altitude, by slope and soil, by the winds which flow through the valleys running south into Australia's Bass Strait. Cool places. Elegant places. Places defined, in our minds, by the wines we make: the refinement and vibrant acidity of Wallis; the elegance and power of McCutcheon; the alluring aromatics and fine structure of Judd.

Each vineyard is intimately linked to their place. What fascinates is the consistent thread emerging from each - whether Pinot Noir or Chardonnay; a consistency of place. What fascinates are the differences - a few kilometres is a world apart.

And the journey goes on and the learning goes on and the understanding grows - about place.

## Martin Spedding

Ten Minutes by Tractor owner, Martin Spedding, has spent much of his life in the pursuit of excellence. His passion for wine has been unyielding for many years and his search for the perfect sites to fulfill his dream of producing exceptional wines extensive. It is a journey he embarked on in 2002 after many years in financial services at the top of his game; Martin pursued his lifelong ambition with meticulous research into vineyards in several regions in Australia and New Zealand. His search ended in 2004 with the purchase of Ten Minutes by Tractor.

Ten Minutes by Tractor, the medium through which the dream is being pursued, had been formed five years earlier in 1999 by three families, the Wallis, Judd and McCutcheon families, each of whom owned vineyards close to each other (in fact ten minutes by tractor apart) on the Mornington Peninsula. Importantly, each vineyard had already been planted around 20 years ago in the early 1990s and each displayed unique *terroir* crucial to the production of artisanal wines with an overriding sense of place.

“Provenance is an essential  
element of our wine.”  
— Martin Spedding



## Main Ridge, Mornington Peninsula

Ten Minutes by Tractor cellar door and restaurant are in Main Ridge on the Mornington Peninsula.

The Mornington Peninsula is 65 kilometres south of Melbourne and lies between the south-eastern shores of Port Phillip Bay and the western shores of Westernport Bay. Its southern boundary is Bass Strait on the southern tip of Australia.

Main Ridge is the higher, cooler, southern portion of the Mornington Peninsula. From the roughly east-west running spine of Main Ridge (from Arthur's Seat to Red Hill), the ridges and valleys flow from north to south down to Bass Strait producing diverse pockets of *terroir*. This provides the varying topography for our unique vineyard sites.

## Pinot Noir

"There is enormous range in depth and style of the region's Pinot Noirs, ranging from hauntingly delicate to intense and lingering. The constant factor is the bell-clear varietal character; as many are at the lighter end of the spectrum, that varietal clarity is all the more pronounced."

- James Halliday, *Wine Atlas of Australia*

Main Ridge Pinot Noir is, above all, elegant with balanced acidity and fine tannins; it shows characteristic earthy, spicy, red fruit and red berry flavours.

Judd overlays this with sweet fruit and savoury notes; it is a sumptuous wine, buxom and round.

McCutcheon adds undergrowth and autumnal leaves; it is a controlled wine, poised and restrained.

Wallis superimposes morello and pomegranate; it is a full-flavoured wine, assertive and confident.

As we begin to use fruit from our "down the hill" vineyards in our 10X range we start to see some of the characteristics from these warmer sites – more immediate, delicious fruit flavours of cherries and plum.

## Chardonnay

"Distinctly different from any other Chardonnay produced in Australia. The background fruit flavour is quite delicate, with flavours in the melon/citrus/fig spectrum...sensitive to the effect of malolactic fermentation [which] overlays a strong nutty/cashew character."

- James Halliday, *Wine Atlas of Australia*

Like our Pinot Noir our Main Ridge Chardonnay is, above all, elegant with balanced acidity; it also shows a characteristic spicy savouriness.

McCutcheon overlays this with grapefruit, basil and caramel; it has an elegant power and is, relatively speaking, full and luxurious.

Wallis superimposes peach and pineapple; it is lithe and slender, precise, lean and linear.

“Wines... allow us to eavesdrop  
on the murmurings of the earth.”  
— Matt Kramer,  
*Making Sense of Wine*



## The Winery & Winemaking

The key component of the Ten Minutes by Tractor winery is the three vineyards, the places we wish to put on show through our wines, and Alan Murray, TMBT's vineyard manager since inception, has intimate knowledge of every square metre of these vineyards which he has walked and hand tended from 1999 through all seasons.

This care and nurture of the vines perfectly matches the traditional winemaking techniques used by our winemaker Richard McIntyre. Richard was one of the very early pioneers of viticulture on the Mornington Peninsula, planting his own vineyard, Moorooduc Estate, in 1983; 27 vintages later he has become a wise counsel to all on the Peninsula. Richard was the instigator of wild yeast fermentation on the Peninsula and has won consistent widespread praise for his artisan winemaking approach to Chardonnay and Pinot Noir.

We have a traditional approach to winemaking using techniques that help enhance the flavour, complexity, elegance and balance of our wines. Richard McIntyre and Martin Spedding are heavily influenced by Burgundian winemaking traditions; we choose to follow unhurried methods with our winemaking – this ancient craft and our own ambitions demand an artisanal perspective.

Richard McIntyre and Martin Spedding are responsible for all winemaking and work closely together on all aspects of our winemaking process throughout the year. The selection and blending decisions for our Single Vineyard, Estate and 10X wines are made by Martin and Richard in December and January each year.

All our wines are bottled under screwcap to prevent cork taint and random oxidation and to preserve the pristine characters of our wines.

## Chardonnay

Our Chardonnay is whole bunch pressed and the unsettled juice transferred to a mixture of new and old French oak barriques for fermentation by indigenous or "wild" yeasts - we, like many traditional winemakers, believe this enhances complexity and texture. A partial malolactic fermentation in spring and regular stirring of lees (*bâtonnage*) occurs over approximately 9-12 months of barrel maturation. The wine is bottled after light fining and filtration.

## Pinot Noir

Our Pinot Noir is usually 100% destemmed then macerated for 4-6 days before beginning a 100% wild yeast fermentation. The must is then pressed (after a total of 19-22 days on skins) before being transferred to a mixture of new and old French barriques. After 100% natural malolactic fermentation in barrique, and 9-14 months of oak maturation, the wine is bottled lightly fined and unfiltered.

We use between 15% and 33% new French oak for our Chardonnay and Pinot Noir - proportions vary depending on the vintage and the label. Our French oak barrels are sourced from the best coopers and oak available in France. The oak, the forests, the type of grain, the toasting regime and most importantly the cooper have an important impact on the characters that are imparted to the wines from the barrels. We continually strive to find the best combination of barrels that provide the structure, integration and flavours that best support the quality and character of our fruit.

Being on a peninsula we enjoy the moderating influence of water, suffering neither the frosts experienced in other cool climate regions nor excessive heat.





## Climate

Both Pinot Noir and Chardonnay require about 1150 heat degree days to ripen - it is how those units are accumulated that is important and we believe long and slow is best; most commentators agree that marginality is key to quality (Pinot Noir will obviously ripen quickly in a hot climate but it will be of poor quality).

Being on a peninsula we enjoy the moderating influence of water, suffering neither the extremes of spring and autumn frosts that can attack other cool climate regions, nor the excessive heat continentality can bring. While some higher latitude regions (we are at latitude 38°S, and Beaune in Burgundy is 47°N ) achieve ripeness from higher average temperatures associated with long summer daylight hours but a shorter growing season, our ripeness evolves more slowly from earlier budburst and longer, more stable autumns which produce complex, elegant flavours, high natural acidity and fine tannins.

Main Ridge forms the higher, southern part of the Mornington Peninsula; its highest point, Arthurs Seat, is at 305m and our vineyards range from 206-142m – altitude reduces temperature by 0.6°C/100m so Main Ridge is naturally cooler. Also, although the Peninsula as a whole benefits from the cooling influence of sea breezes from Port Phillip and Westernport Bays in the southern portion, Main Ridge, we experience additional, very cool ocean breezes directly off Bass Strait. These find their way up the valleys which lead from the coast up to the spine of Main Ridge and intensify the difference between Main Ridge and the warmer, lower, northern Peninsula. In addition, in the evening, cool katabatic winds flow down from the ridge, through the valleys, creating a further cooling influence, particularly on the lower Wallis Vineyard.

## Soil

Of particular interest to us in Main Ridge are the rocks extruded during the Tertiary geological period (55 to 33 million years ago) when basaltic lava flows erupted over much of the eastern half of Victoria. Around Main Ridge the residuals of these basaltic flows form a broad plateau that gradually slopes towards the south-west from about 200m to 100m terminated by prominent cliffs at Bass Strait. Elsewhere on the Peninsula these residuals are deeply buried. As an aside, the outcrops of Arthur's Seat, Mt Martha and Mt Eliza are not basalt but granite intrusions.

Compared to other rocks, basalts weather relatively fast; they weather down into red (due to iron oxide) loamy soils called ferrosols which have moderate to high fertility and water-holding capacity. These soils display a gradual increase in texture (clay content) with depth; surface soils are often clay loams that grade into light clays in the subsoil. On the Mornington Peninsula these soils are unique to Main Ridge, in other areas of the Peninsula soils are largely sedimentary.

We believe the way soil interacts with water is how it makes its contribution to *terroir*. Soil, how it drains, how it retains moisture, works intimately with rainfall patterns to determine whether the vines receive what they need when they need it; the two are inextricably linked and cannot be considered in isolation. Soil controls how water is made available to the vine. The Peninsula's pattern of good winter and spring rains and a relatively dry summer works perfectly with our soil's ability to store winter and spring rain through summer; we irrigate very rarely, certainly not in an average year. Burgundy's rainfall, in contrast, is much more evenly distributed throughout the year and therefore requires the much more freely draining limestone soils.



## Ten Minutes by Tractor Estate Wines

Ten Minutes by Tractor Estate Pinot Noir and Chardonnay are sourced exclusively from our three original “home” vineyards – Judd, McCutcheon and Wallis – in Main Ridge, one of the highest, coolest parts of the Mornington Peninsula, and therefore are a Main Ridge expression of each variety. The altitude, aspect of the ridges and valleys to the cooling influence of Bass Strait, and the soils of Main Ridge are all very different to the northern Peninsula.

## In The Vineyard

In the vineyards the focus is an unrelenting effort to grow the best fruit possible with meticulous care of our premium blocks. This includes pruning, shoot thinning, shoot positioning, leaf plucking and cluster or bunch thinning (*vendange verte*), all by hand – although the tractor is an essential piece of equipment in the vineyard, about 95% of all work completed by the vineyard team is done by hand. Observing and managing the requirements of each vine and the fruit that it is producing ensures that we maintain healthy and balanced vines throughout the growing season and produce fruit which has the flavour, complexity and balance which we aspire to.

We use technology, precision viticulture tools such as annual photographic flyovers at veraison which monitor canopy density and soil mapping that highlight ground anomalies, to accelerate our understanding of our vineyards and to pinpoint variations within blocks to enable multiple picks (*tries*) to ensure greater consistency.

Our transition from vineyard to winery commences with *triage* – French for sorting or grading – in the vineyard; in effect pre-sorting to ensure quality and health before harvesting. In our ultra premium blocks we target very low yields of around 3 tonne/ha (1.2 tonne/acre) for Pinot Noir and about 7 tonnes/ha (2.8 tonnes/acre) for Chardonnay.

Once the grapes are hand harvested at optimal ripeness we again hand sort the fruit when it reaches the winery. Individual blocks and clones are treated as separate batches throughout the winemaking process.



## Single Vineyard Wines

When appropriate, Ten Minutes by Tractor produces Single Vineyard Pinot Noir and Chardonnay from its three original “home” vineyards.

These wines are from the highest performing blocks of the Judd, McCutcheon and Wallis vineyards in Main Ridge. Harvesting from small carefully selected parcels and attention to detail in the vineyard and winery are designed to ensure the clearest expression of the *terroir* of these vineyards.

Single Vineyard wines are only made in vintages that produce wines of appropriate quality. Production is usually less than 200 dozen. They are truly limited edition wines.

## Judd Vineyard

Judd is our oldest vineyard, first planted in 1990, 21 years ago, and, at 206m, our highest vineyard. Judd faces due west so has slow morning warming as the sun rises over the ridge and experiences great summer and autumn afternoon and evening heat loads right up to the point of sunset and, for soil temperatures, into the evening. Partly due to this the Judd Vineyard is much more generous in its fruit flavour profiles.

## McCutcheon Vineyard

First planted in 1992, now almost 20 years old, the easterly fall of McCutcheon offers perfect gentle warming from sunrise through to the late afternoon. During the day the vines receive very good light without the intense heat which keeps the fruit cooler during the growing and ripening season. This leads to more elegant flavours with great structure and fine tannins. At 200m at its highest it is just slightly lower than Judd though is home to our highest blocks of Pinot Noir and Chardonnay.

## Wallis Vineyard

Aside from a few vineyards in Gippsland, Wallis is one of the most southerly mainland Australian wineries (38°26' S). It was planted almost 20 years ago in 1992. It has a gently sloping north easterly aspect and is our lowest Main Ridge vineyard at 142m. It is also our warmest vineyard as it receives good daytime light and heat exposure throughout the day, although ocean sea breezes keep this site cooler than it otherwise would be. At night, temperatures fall quickly as the valley acts as a drain, drawing cooler night air down through the vineyard and off into Bass Strait 5km away.



## 10X by Ten Minutes by Tractor

Ten Minutes by Tractor has produced 10X Pinot Noir, Chardonnay, Pinot Gris and Sauvignon Blanc since 2000.

10X wines are sourced from several vineyards on the Mornington Peninsula, all under our complete control, and therefore a regional expression of each variety. These include the “home” vineyards and three new vineyards that have been added in recent years; one on the site of the cellar door and restaurant, which is organically certified and is used to trial organic viticultural practices which are progressively being employed across all the vineyards. The other two are in the north of the Peninsula. We carry out all the work on these vineyards and the wines are made by Richard McIntyre and Martin Spedding.

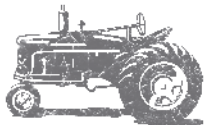
## Handcrafted Wines

The French word *élevage* means literally “breeding” or “rearing” but when used in the context of wine it is often limited to aging, to time in barrel. We prefer to think about *élevage* in the wider sense. It is what we do - a process that began decades ago with the planting of our vineyards and only ends when the wine is finally consumed, perhaps decades from now.

Time is the key dimension. The practice of gently, patiently taking our time over every element of the wine’s upbringing is an essential component of the end product. It is this unhurried time commitment, this nurturing, that we feel makes the difference to every bottle of Ten Minutes by Tractor wine.

# Ten Minutes by Tractor

MORNINGTON PENINSULA



Ten Minutes by Tractor  
Mornington Peninsula  
1333 Mornington Flinders Road  
Main Ridge, Victoria 3928 Australia  
T + 61 3 5989 6455

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