

## THE SUNDAY TELEGRAPH

### Opportunity in adversity

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TIM Burvill, one of an exciting new breed of winemakers to emerge in the past decade, hasn't looked back since he suddenly lost his job at Penfolds in an industry rationalisation. Burvill had been going great guns at Penfolds' Nuriootpa winery, in the Barossa Valley, when the brand's parent, Southcorp, merged with Rosemount Estate in a \$1.5 billion deal.

"I got the heave-ho virtually the next day - but, looking back, it provided me with an opportunity of a lifetime," he reflects from his cellar door at Hahndorf, in the Adelaide Hills.

In 2001, Burvill launched RockBare, crafting a McLaren Vale chardonnay and a McLaren Vale shiraz working from the kitchen table at his home.

Ten years on, RockBare's portfolio has grown to seven wines and the employee count has jumped to six.

Along the way, RockBare has made its mark at home and in the skies, the latter resulting from the selection of its 2008 McLaren Vale Shiraz to serve to Cathay Pacific business-class passengers.

But Burvill's most memorable moment was being told that mining entrepreneur Clive Palmer had outlaid \$110,000 at a Perth charity auction for a bottle of 2004 RockBare McLaren Vale Shiraz that carried the monikers of then prime minister John Howard and deputy prime minister Mark Vaile. That made it the third-most-expensive bottle of wine ever sold.

Burvill has narrowed his fruit selection to the premium Barossa Valley, McLaren Vale and Adelaide Hills regions for his flagship RockBare and second-tier Mojo labels.

His current RockBare offerings - 2009 McLaren Vale Chardonnay (\$19), 2009 McLaren Vale Shiraz (\$21), 2006 Babe Barossa Valley Shiraz and 2006 "The Burvill" McLaren Vale Shiraz (both \$39) - are of exceptional quality. The Mojo range consists of 2010 Adelaide Hills Sauvignon Blanc, 2009 Barossa Valley Shiraz (both \$15) and an NV chardonnay-pinot noir fizz (\$18).

Burvill's sharp technical skills have enabled him to create early-drinking, fruit-driven wines that reflect their regional characteristics in full bloom.

Penfolds's loss has certainly been to RockBare's gain.