



Hunter Valley Winemaker of the Year 2008.

Despite being weaned on the full-throttle Shiraz of McLaren Vale where he grew up with his parents, the late Wayne and Pat Thomas, who established and formerly owned Fernhill Estate, and more recently Wayne Thomas Wines, Andrew (Thommo) Thomas developed a deep passion for the more refined wines of the Hunter Valley during his formative winemaking years.

In 1987, after graduating in Oenology at Roseworthy Agricultural College, Andrew began his journey at Tyrrell's Vineyards. It was here, under the careful guidance of the great Murray Tyrrell, he gained a respect for and an understanding of the two remarkable varieties that the Hunter produces – Semillon and Shiraz. During his thirteen years at Tyrrell's, Andrew not only had the opportunity to make great Hunter wines but also wines from some of the most famous wine producing areas in the world. He spent three vintages in the Sonoma Valley, California in 1988; in Tuscany and Piedmont, Italy in 1991; and in Aix en Provence, Southern France in 1995, quenching his thirst for knowledge and experience.

With the intention of returning to McLaren Vale, Andrew did not realise the impact Tyrrell's and the Hunter Valley would have on his future. For it was here that he not only fell in love Semillon and Shiraz, but it was also where he met the other love in his life, his wife Jo – “the beginning of the end”, as Andrew often endearingly explains. Jo, also a graduate of Roseworthy, has spent the past 20 years in the wine industry, starting out in the laboratory at Tyrrell's and finally finding her way into sales and marketing. With their combined experience and their enthusiasm and passion for the Hunter they were eventually steered towards making their own wines.

In 1997, Thomas Wines was born. This was soon followed by Andrew making wines for some smaller vineyards which included McLeish Estate, Pokolbin Estate Vineyard, Hungerford Hill, Warrarong Estate and Mount View Estate. All of which Andrew has produce award winning wines.

Thomas Wines prides itself on specialising in Semillon and Shiraz. Andrew sources premium quality grapes from (arguably) some of the Valley's most distinguished sites and produces individual vineyard wines. Our flagship wines, Kiss Shiraz and Braemore Semillon, head an amazing line up. The fruit for Braemore is sourced from Ken Bray's old vineyard on the sandy loam flats along Hermitage Road and Kiss is produced from the more 'muscular', mature and low cropping Pokolbin Estate vineyard which was planted in the early 60's.

Andrew has an intimate relationship with the individual sites and the fruit produced from those vineyards and this is reflected in the wines he makes. His wines have won many accolades including most recently:

- Best White Wine of Show at the 2007 Cowra Wine Show (for the second year in a row with Braemore Semillon)
- Best Red Wine of the Show at the 2007 Hunter Valley Boutique Wine Show with 2005 Kiss Shiraz.

However, probably the most prestigious accolade so far for Andrew and the one he is most proud of is, **Hunter Valley Winemaker of the Year for 2008**. Andrew was judged by his peers on his pursuit of excellence in winemaking and his contribution and dedication not only to his own wine company, but also to the Hunter Valley wine industry. It is a remarkable achievement for a small producer and it is Andrew's continued attention to detail, his dedication of making exceptional Hunter Semillon and Shiraz, and his hands on approach to every aspect of his winemaking that has earned him this prestigious award, enviable show success and a reputation as one of the Hunter Valley's leading Winemakers.

“Winemaker Andrew Thomas is an emerging superstar of the Hunter, producing peerless Semillon and classy Shiraz.” Peter Forrestal, QANTAS Magazine December 2007.