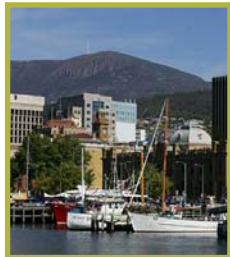


## Hobart rates highly in cities survey

Hobart's people feel safer, have lower levels of psychological distress and volunteer more than residents in any other Australian capital city, according to a Federal Government report released in November.



*The State of Australian Cities 2011* provides a snapshot of cities with populations of more than 100,000 and can be downloaded at:

[www.infrastructure.gov.au/infrastructure/mcu/soac.aspx](http://www.infrastructure.gov.au/infrastructure/mcu/soac.aspx)

Hobart rates particularly well as a place to live, with the shortest commuting distances of any capital and fewer men being overweight or obese. It is the safest city for both people and property.

The Premier, Lara Giddings, said: "The report confirms Tasmania's reputation as a great place to live and work with high levels of public safety, low unemployment and short commuting times."

The day after the report was released, the State's trend unemployment rate dropped to 4.8 per cent.

The Federal Minister for Infrastructure and Transport, Anthony Albanese, was impressed with Hobart's high levels of volunteering. "It is one of the surest signs of community connectedness and wellbeing," he said.

However, Mr Albanese said Hobart had a stubbornly low level of public transport patronage, a relatively low number of green-star rated buildings and a higher percentage of detached houses than other cities.

"This means that fewer people live in apartments or townhouses, which might be a better style of living for singles, the aged and less physically active, particularly in the future," Mr Albanese said.

The report shows Hobart's population grew from 197,282 people to 214,705 between 2001 and 2010. It predicts a population of 247,000 people by 2027.

*The Mercury* editorialised: "There is a terrific marketing opportunity for Hobart, and for Tasmania ... While our tourism industry has plenty of shiny ads out there, nationally and internationally, the same cannot be said for a campaign to sell the considerable virtues of Hobart, and therefore Tasmania, that are outlined in the cities report.

"Notwithstanding the work still to do, public safety, less stress and easy commuting are compelling reasons for people to consider making this state their home. Not to mention the clear air, the equable weather, and all those trim blokes."

Launceston, the second Tasmanian city to meet the survey qualification of 100,000 inhabitants, boasted the most affordable housing of any city. A home by the Tamar is three times cheaper than one on the Gold Coast.

Launceston also had the most affordable rental housing among the surveyed population centres.

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## Local scientists develop botrytis blocker

By Graeme Phillips



This year's rain-drenched grape vintage in Tasmania and neighbouring States was decimated by grey mould (*Botrytis cinerea*) and other fungal diseases. Even in a normal year, botrytis is estimated to cost the national wine industry about \$30 million.

Now, Derwent Valley scientists Dean Metcalf and Geraldine Colombo believe they have found a way to reduce this damage by up to 80 per cent.

As Metcalf Biotechnologies, the pair operates from a small laboratory isolated in the bush in the hills above Molesworth.

The botrytis fungus penetrates developing flowers on grape vines as they open for pollination. It then lies latent until veraison - when the grapes start to ripen - before attacking and rotting the fruit.

A predatory trichoderma fungi, known as *T. koningii* (Td67), is a natural predator of botrytis.

In 2003, Dr Metcalf found Td67 in a vineyard near Richmond in the Coal Valley. He isolated and cultured the spores, colonised and multiplied them and separated them again as spore dust which could be dissolved in water to be used as a spray.

That last sentence took only a few seconds to write. For Dr Metcalf, the process took seven years with "blood, sweat and tears," along the way.

At times, he worked two jobs to finance the project.

Eventually, patents were granted for a number of his scientific and technical breakthroughs.

Geraldine Colombo, a graduate in Applied Science and formerly the Manager of award-winning Richmond vineyards, Tolpuddle and GlenAyr, joined Dr Metcalf earlier this year to help conduct field trials and take his product, named Colonizer, to the wine industry.

Botrytis had wiped out the whole riesling crop at Tolpuddle in 2005, but the incidence of infection was reduced by about 90 per cent with an early application of Td67 spray the following season.

Trials conducted since have confirmed that figure at a reduction of 80 per cent and, in comparative trials with commercial fungicides, Td67 has been shown to be many times more effective.

Ms Colombo said: "With artificial fungicides now becoming less effective and with a growing emphasis on the environment and sustainability, Colonizer is being enthusiastically embraced by the Tasmanian wine industry as a natural and indigenous biological control and we now have some of the largest producers on the mainland trialling it."

Field trials have shown that Colonizer is most effectively applied at the time of flowering, but is less effective in controlling the onset of late-season botrytis.

So, Dr Metcalf has developed another product, called Nemesis, based on the *harzianum* Td81b species of trichoderma that specifically targets late-season botrytis. Nemesis is due to be released to the market shortly.

"It's important that each of these products is applied at the right time and that the application fits compatibly with the vineyard owner's otherwise normal spray schedule," Dr Metcalf said.

As well as infecting grapes, botrytis is a devastating disease in strawberries, raspberries, vegetables and many other crops, so the commercial potential for both Colonizer and Nemesis is huge.

There's even greater export-market potential.

Dr Metcalf started in the late '90s developing a biological control for white rot disease in onions. His next projects are aimed at botrytis in strawberries and brown rot in cherries.

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### Mona to spice up the party season

Crews from the 89 yachts still entered in this year's Rolex Sydney to Hobart blue water classic will be greeted in Hobart by a new-style and bigger Taste Festival. For the first time, they will also have the option of immediately exploring the Museum of Old and New Art, just a ferry-ride up the River Derwent.



The annual party season will also include a sold-out Falls Festival at Marion Bay and, from January 13, the eclectic diversions and global names of the Mona Foma Festival (Mo-Fo).

Tasmania's burgeoning festival line-up is fuelling an explosion in cultural tourism, according to the Chief Executive of the Tourism Industry Council, Luke Martin. He told *The Mercury* in November: "The potential of these events is off the planet because people have such a positive experience."

Events like the Taste, the Festival of Voices, Mona Foma, 10 Days on the Island and the Wooden Boat Festival, collectively contributed \$52 million to the local economy in 2011.

Hobart's foundation holiday event, the Rolex Sydney to Hobart will include crews from every Australian State this year, as well as entries from the United States, Britain, France, New Zealand and Hong Kong.

The Commodore of the Cruising Yacht Club of Australia, Garry Linacre, said: "This year's race has attracted a great group of yachts, with an exciting mix of brand new, newly acquired and well-established yachts that will provide strong competition for line honours and through the divisions.

"The race for the elusive Tattersall's Cup for overall honours will again be absorbing."

This year's armada, 100-strong at one stage, includes yachts ranging in size from 9.01 to 30.48 metres. Almost 80 years separates the oldest boat from the newest: *AFR Midnight Rambler*, a carbon-fibre creation launched in September.

Competitors are equally diverse. Around-the-world solo sailor, Jessica Watson, is one of a number of 18-year-olds preparing for their first Sydney Hobart. At the other end of the scale, Syd Fischer, 84, will be contesting his 43rd edition of the classic.

Watson sailed the 12-metre *Ella Bache Another Challenge* from Sydney to Hobart and back in November in preparation for the big race.

Bob Oatley's 100ft super maxi and race record holder, *Wild Oats XI*, is being groomed for a potential sixth line-honours win. A second 100-footer, Anthony Bell's *Investec Loyal*, will be trying to end *Wild Oats'* remarkable reign.

The usually tough 628 nautical mile contest will start in Sydney Harbour at 1pm on Boxing Day, 26 December.

Most leading crews in the Sydney to Hobart, as well as the two Melbourne to Hobart blue-water classics, would expect to celebrate their achievements and the New Year at the Taste Festival at Princes Wharf No 1 Shed on Hobart's waterfront.

A Sydney-based event-management firm, Humm, is running the festival for the first time this year.

Hobart City Council's Festival Committee Chair, Marti Zucco, said: "It's out-grown us and grown to the next level ... Last year's Taste attracted more than 300,000 visitors, contributing \$39 million to the State economy. More people are expected this year."

Nearly 7,000 people will visit the State specifically to attend the three-day Falls Festival. Tickets sold out a month earlier than last year with 48.7 per cent of the 14,000 allocation sold interstate and overseas.

Research from previous years shows that Falls patrons stay in the State for an average of 10 days, pumping valuable funds into the local economy.

Organiser Simon Daly said tickets to the sister festival in Lorne, Victoria sold out in 90 minutes, causing thousands of music fans to plan a trip across Bass Strait. This year's Marion Bay line-up features the Arctic Monkeys, Young MC, Tim Finn, Crystal Castles, The Kooks, CSS, Fleet Foxes, J Mascis, the John Butler Trio, Josh Pyke, Missy Higgins, Pnau, The Grates, The Jezabels, The Jim Jones Revue and many others.

Following a break after the Taste and Falls, Mo-Fo will take centre stage. This year's third edition will feature PJ Harvey, showcasing songs from her prize-winning album *Let England Shake*. Harvey will be joined in Hobart by a spectrum of performers, including Amanda Palmer playing with Dresden Dolls, Amiina, Japanese sound artist Ryoji Ikeda, musique concrète pioneer Pierre Henry, Tune-Yards, Julianna Barwick and Prince Rama.

Mo-Fo was conceived by MONA's founder David Walsh and his friend Brian Ritchie as an appetizer for MONA itself.

This year, most people visiting Hobart for Mo-Fo will also be able to take in the much-talked-about museum between Mo-Fo offerings.

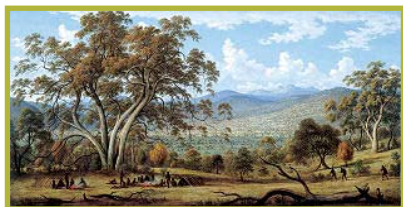
A columnist for *The Australian*, Nikki Gemmill, wrote after a recent visit: "MONA is the antithesis of a museum of hushed tones and fussy cabinets; it welcomes wonder."

"It outrages, seduces, moves, repels, but never, ever dulls ... It's taking on the world in the exhilarating way the [Sydney] Opera House did, or *The Female Eunuch*, or a filmic reimagining of *Romeo and Juliet*. There's something so Australian about the vaulting audacity of our best creative spirits springing from seemingly nowhere; the no-holds barred ambition."

"What a gift to the nation, but more importantly, what a gift to his home town. Lucky Hobart. Now can the rest of the country have a bit of you."

The answer, of course, is: "Yes. Just come on down."

### Firesticks sparkle in Gammage opus



Your Editor's father, who was born into white, suburban society in 1905, often said: "We

should give this country back to the black fellas and apologise to them for bugging it up."

Historian Bill Gammage's latest book, *The Biggest Estate on Earth. How Aborigines Made Australia*, makes that scantily educated plumber/fisherman sound like an oracle.

Gammage, an Adjunct Professor at the Australian National University, rolls out an unprecedented array of evidence to support the so-called "fire-stick" theory that the Australian environment of 1788 was not natural, but had been modified and maintained by man.

He demonstrates in convincing manner that Aborigines (he calls them "people" and uses other words in reference to non-Aborigines) changed the face of the continent, Tasmania and other inhabited islands by complex burning practices.

Different fire frequency and different intensity were used over 60,000 years to encourage or discourage Australia's unique array of fire-dependent, fire-tolerant and fire-sensitive plants.

This fire-related botany provided an unparalleled opportunity; and the people embraced it.

Gammage quotes an elder on method: "You sing the country before you burn it. In your mind you see the fire, you know where it is going and where it will stop. Only then do you light the fire."

We don't yet know whether such methods were developed after their arrival in Australia, or were brought here from mankind's cradle in Africa, or from lands in between.

In any event, the result was a mosaic landscape - an example of which is easily seen in the rainforest/buttongrass patchwork of Tasmania's south-west - that was ideal for kangaroos, wallabies, emus and other grazers.

Not only did this landscaping-by-fire benefit the grazers, it located them and made hunting them along forest-grassland margins so much easier.

In Gammage's words it made the people's food supply "not merely sustainable, but abundant, convenient and predictable."

The system endowed people with leisure time that bewildered early settlers.

The "estate" in the title refers to open tree-studded country, with good grass and little under-brush, that was widespread in Tasmania and elsewhere in 1788 (Gammage uses that date as short-hand for everything that existed before it).

His research has captured quotes from innumerable European explorers and settlers referring to the park-like grazing land as resembling a gentleman's estate in England.

"They used fire to replace one plant community with another," Gammage writes. "What plants and animals flourished related to [the people's] management. As in Europe land was managed at a local level. Detailed local knowledge was crucial."

"Each family cared for its own ground, and knew not merely which species fire or no fire might affect, but which individual plant and animal, and their totem and Dreaming links."

The thesis is supported with many contrasts between land described, painted or photographed in early colonial times as parkland or mosaic, with its contemporary cover of forest.

Examples include Tasmania's southern eucalypt forests, north-west rainforests and parts of the south-west that were quite different under the people's management.

Gammage knows from experience his book will spark fiery debate and attempts to head off potential avenues of attack in Appendix 1. He also uses the appendix to revisit a raft of old arguments with scientific sceptics.

A surprising part of his thesis is his strong case that the Dreaming - the people's belief system - not only imposed obligation to manage by fire, but ensured that the practice extended from the Tiwis to Tasmania and was adapted for every environment, from the hottest deserts to the coolest mountains.

"The Dreaming has two main rules; obey the law; and leave the world as you found it - not better or worse, for God judges that, but the same," Gammage writes.

"In most other societies an urge for change is so entrenched as to be thought natural ... but they dedicated their lives to conserving what they had inherited, and within the perception of living generations generally they succeeded."

Research has convinced him that all Australia obeyed the Dreaming. "By world standards this is a vast area for a single belief system to hold sway and [is] in itself cause for thinking Australia a single estate ... Tasmanians managed the land as mainlanders did and with similar mindsets.

"At the risk of their souls, people cared for every inch of their country, even after smallpox halved their numbers and management capacity," Gammage writes.

Among evidence on the urgent nature of the people's sense of responsibility for the land, Gammage cites an encounter between George Augustus Robinson and a dwindling group of Aboriginal survivors in Tasmania's north-west. The group's leader knew his people were being hunted down and would be betrayed by smoke, but he had, nevertheless, ordered them to proceed with the seasonal burn their country needed.

"In half of Tasmania fire replaced rainforest with other communities," Gammage writes. "To do this the Tasmanians probably burnt ... more than anywhere in mainland Australia."

"They burnt grass every 1-3 years, open forest every 3-5 years, wet forest rarely. They needed hot fire to burn back wet forests and cut roads and clearings through them, which may be why buttongrass is so common."

Cool fire was used to conserve grass and heath patches and plains which existed even in the wet south-west, between Mt King William and Frenchman's Cap.

In recent times, parts of north-west Australia have returned to fire-stick management and I have heard smoke-adverse Tasmanian tourists complain bitterly about the resultant smoke.

But mega bushfires were less frequent before 1788 because fuel loads were controlled and it was considered a serious offence to let any fire get out of control.

This is one clear lesson from 1788 that Australia has been slow to act on.

In his conclusion, Gammage contends that we need to make a start in reinstating lost wisdom and that the process might turn us into genuine Australians.

*The Biggest Estate on Earth. How Aborigines Made Australia.* By Bill Gammage. Allen & Unwin. RPP \$49.99.

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### Don't worry, we're on the cider wave

The axiom that travel broadens one's palate was reinforced when a nice young Latvian served a delicious, dry pear cider to two wandering Tasmanians in a little place off Cathedral Square in Riga's World Heritage-listed Old City. Pear cider was new to them and they were blissfully unaware that a cider boom was sweeping Australia and the world.



But, as they say, they liked the product.

Returning home they noted that many Hobart wine store cabinets were groaning with ciders - pear as well as apple - not only locally made but from around the world (except, sadly, Latvia, where a loopy exchange rate is a trade killer).

Cider sales in Australia are now growing by 13 per cent a year and Tasmania is riding the wave, with an upsurge in smaller producers complementing Cascade's traditional position at the apex of the Australian market.

Even Cascade has diversified from its highly successful Dry, Draft and Sweet Mercury range in reaction to the new popularity of farmhouse-style ciders.

The Hobart brewery's Matilda Bay Dirty Granny apple cider was the highest-scoring among 100 Australian ciders in the inaugural Australian Cider Awards organized in recognition of the tipples' upsurge. One of the judges wrote: "Thanks to its alluring golden colour, gentle fizz, bright apple flavour and slightly grippy, off-dry finish ... it's easily the best commercial Australian cider I've tasted."

Cascade's Head Brewer, Scott Vincent, said. "We thought it would be a niche product but it's sold spectacularly well. Clearly, you don't have to make bland lolly-water to be commercially successful."

Aware of the potential for the State to benefit from the cider boom, Tourism Tasmania recently arranged a Visiting Journalist Program tour for occasional *Sydney Morning Herald* travel writer, Sam Vincent.

Vincent subsequently reported: "Cider has joined skinny jeans, fixed-gear bikes and indie music as a must-have hipster accessory. There is one part of Australia, however, where cider isn't fashionable, simply because it never went out of fashion: Tasmania.

"Ever since the first orchards were established in the early 19th century, cider has been pressed for private consumption across the State. Now, drawing on this rich history - and capitalising on the whims of fashion - a group of artisan brewers has started bringing Tassie's ciders out of sheds and into pubs and cellar doors."

Vincent found that pear cider hadn't escaped the notice of Tasmania's niche-market specialists. Known as 'perry' to the English and 'poire' to the French, pear cider is, in fact, not nearly as unusual as it had appeared to those rustic Tasmanians in Riga.

In the Derwent Valley, Vincent visited the Two Metre Tall craft brewery where the towering Ashley Huntington greeted him with a roar: "This job is about getting some passion up ya! ... It's sticky and dirty and that's why I love it."

The one-time Head Winemaker at La Baume in the south of France, told Vincent he and his wife, Jane, were making a "crackingly dry" English-style apple cider and a poire from pears sourced at Nubeena on the Tasman Peninsula.

The Huntingtons considered it important that their ciders were made from freshly crushed whole fruit, not concentrate.

"We have chosen the word 'poire' in recognition of our preference for French sparkling farmhouse ciders," the company's website says.

Vincent's next stop was at Dickens Cider near Launceston, where Corey Baker told him: "We realise the Australian palate thinks of cider as being something sweeter than what it is in France and the UK and we're catering to that ... We don't want to tell Australians what to drink."

After sipping a selection of uniquely Tasmanian-style sweet ciders, Vincent concluded: "My favourite is the smooth and subtle perry to be officially launched this winter."

The Dickens team has opened a cellar door for the summer season. "This valley has a rich apple history," Baker said, "so it's nice to continue the tradition through making cider."

At Railton, Vincent called on noted beer writer Willie Simpson who runs Seven Sheds brewery and is experimenting with a strong cider (8 per cent to 10 per cent) made from a secret mix of apple varieties.

This tipples is on tap at Hobart's New Sydney Hotel as 'Cradle Mountain Dry'.

"Cider has been privately pressed in this State for 150 years," Simpson said, "but it's only now that people want to drink it in pubs."

Vincent also called at Wilmot Hills Vineyard, in the shadow of Cradle Mountain, where wine-makers John and Ruth Cole are producing a tan-coloured cider that their visitor found was "so dry it's hard to believe it's wet."

"It came to me in a dream," John Cole told Vincent. "I'd been offered grafts from several cider varieties but wasn't sure; then one night I dreamt I was making cider and that it was delicious."

When Vincent asked Coles why cider had become flavour of the month, he said: "It's natural, refreshing and delicious, plus many people tell us that, unlike another amber ale, cider doesn't leave them feeling bloated."

A young Hobartian, Matt Osborne, has set up a small operation producing Captain Bligh's Tasmanian Cider in the historic Tasmanian Brewery Co building in the CBD.

Osborne sources his apples from the Huon Valley and *set sail* in the fourth quarter of 2011 aspiring to "create world class beverages from the end of the Earth while keeping the balance between hard work, profitability and fun."

Tasmanian Inn Cider at North West Bay markets its own apple cider, plus an apple-pear Tasmanian Perry Cider. The addition of pears, according to the brewers, creates a medium-sweet flavour that is soft on the palate.

Rowella's Holm Oak vineyard, noted for its pinot noir, has launched a Small Players cider label.

The cider wave may have passed some people by, but key Tasmanians are certainly catching the break.

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## European plunge for Stormy Lifejackets



Tasmanian inflatable personal flotation devices are now being marketed into Europe through a British distribution facility and an

e-commerce website:

[www.stormylifejackets.co.uk](http://www.stormylifejackets.co.uk).

Mornington-based Stormy Lifejackets, a Brand Tasmania member, is well placed to expand its export activities after being accredited with the international standard ISO12402-3.

The Stormy Jacket provides protection from the elements as functional wet-weather clothing that can inflate to become a personal flotation device (PFD) when required.

The company's expanding range was on show in November at METS, the world's biggest marine leisure industry trade exhibition.

The products were well received at the Amsterdam event and reported on positively by the maritime press. A British online blog has attracted several thousand impressions.

The company is also planning its entry to the Canadian market in late 2012.

Stormy Lifejackets was the first business in the world to release a full range of comfortable jacket and vest-style PFDs following its international ISO accreditation earlier this year.

Given the success of the jackets and vests in Australia's southern States, they are expected to work well in colder European climates and weather conditions.

"Worn rather than stowed, Stormy inflatable clothing is the ultimate safety accessory," Helen Moore, the company's Managing Director and Chief Designer said.

Her company has been constantly improving its award-winning product range and now incorporates a sailing harness option for jackets and vests, in addition to sailing-specific vests for offshore racing.



The Rescue Grenade, an inflatable life ring that can be easily stored and accurately thrown, is now in production. The company aims to have SOLAS (International Convention for the Safety of Life at Sea) accreditation in early 2012 for its commercial range for the oil and gas industry.

All products are water-activated with a manual inflation option and the various styles offer between 165 and 300 Newtons of buoyancy.

Stormy Lifejackets has developed products to suit all levels of sailing from recreational sailors to extreme offshore racing enthusiasts.

"We have always focused on on-going research and development to make the best possible products for the sole purpose of saving lives," Ms Moore said. "We now want to share our technology with the rest of the world."

After the horrendous Sydney to Hobart yacht race in 1998, when eight competitors perished, Stormy Lifejackets saw the need for an internationally accredited range of inflatable PFDs with deck harnesses.

The combined lifejacket and harness means a sailor only needs to wear a single item over his or her clothing. The user remains warm and dry and safety is never compromised.

"The success of Stormy Lifejackets in the commercial and recreational fishing industry has proven the quality of our products. Incorporating a top-of-the line harness system to our inflatable PFDs was a logical progression," Ms Moore said.

The Stormy range of sailing lifejackets includes a variety of yokes developed for extreme environments.

The Pro Sailing Yoke has 180N of buoyancy and can have added features of an expanding spray hood and SOLAS-approved water-activated light. Starting at \$260 the product is popular with sailors nationwide and is suitable for offshore racing.

The Super Yoke offers 300N of buoyancy and is for floating heavier weights due to wet weather gear or a tool belt, or for individuals over 120kg. An extended waist strap is also suitable for bigger individuals.

A junior yoke with harness is available for 15-40kg sailors, while a sailing vest without sleeves has also been added to the product range.

For more information visit:  
[www.stormylifejackets.com](http://www.stormylifejackets.com)

## Blustery Banks tops nation's pinot noirs

By Graeme Phillips

After five days with 15 national and international judges assessing 2,341 wines from all States, the 2011 Wrest Point Royal Hobart International Wine



Show included a series of trade and public tasting events and a pinot noir masterclass presented by Burgundy expert John Avery, a Master of Wine from England.

The show in November wrapped up with the presentation of trophies at a gala dinner at Wrest Point.

In a great result for Tasmania, our wines took out five of the 20 open-class trophies on offer and a total of 19 gold medals, with more than half of the 304 Tasmanian entries winning medals. Proportionately this was the best result of any State.

The happiest man at the trophy presentation dinner was Brett Squibb whose 2009 Blustery Banks Pinot Noir beat a record 204 other pinot noirs from around Australia to win the show's most prestigious prize: the Etihad Airways-sponsored trophy for the Best Pinot Noir in Show.

From a well-known apple-growing family, Mr Squibb took over a neglected 2ha vineyard at Wesley Vale in 2005. He took a TAFE course and learnt the practicalities of grape growing on the job, producing his first full crop of chardonnay and pinot in 2008.

The winning wine was made for him by Rebecca Duffy at Holm Oak Winery in the Tamar Valley.

Mr Squibb's prize includes a return Etihad flight for two to Paris, enabling him to visit Burgundy with his wife Linda and their children to see how they do things in the home of pinot noir.

"We go to the local Devonport farmers markets, you know, selling a case or two per market," Mr Squibb told *The Mercury* on the day after judging. "I met a lot of people last night who have all of a sudden shown interest in our wine. I don't know why! I think we'll just hang on for the ride and see where it takes us."

At the dinner, Josef Chromy, OAM, was presented with The Tasmanian Award for his outstanding contribution to the State's wine industry.

Mr Chromy's CV includes the Rochemcombe, Heemskerck, Jansz and Buchanan vineyards, the development of Tamar Ridge and, most recently, his large vineyard at Relbia in the Tamar Valley, as well as the Josef Chromy and Pepik range of award-winning wines.

For the second year running, the trophy for the most successful Tasmanian exhibitor went to Pressing Matters from Tea Tree in the Coal Valley. The vineyard also collected a trophy for the Best Dessert Wine in Show, plus five other gold medals.

Other open-class trophy winners were the 2006 Kyra Chardonnay/Pinot Noir from Iron Pot Bay (Best Sparkling Wine in Show), Bream Creek's 2010 Sauvignon Blanc (Best Sauvignon Blanc in Show) and the Craigow 2008 Riesling (Best Individual Vineyard Wine). Craigow's riesling also won trophies as the Best Tasmanian Wine and Best Tasmanian White Wine.

This year, malt whiskys from around Australia were judged, a first for any wine show in the country. Gold medals were awarded to the Tasmanian Distillery's 2000 Sullivans Cove Double Cask, and to the Lark Distillery's non-vintage Single Malt Cask Strength Whisky, which went on to win the trophy as the Best Whisky in Show.

The show results are the culmination of an outstanding year for the Tasmanian wine industry.

The Glaetzer-Dixon 2010 Mon Père Shiraz won the Jimmy Watson Trophy and Best Rhone-style Trophy at the Melbourne Wine Show; Nick Glaetzer was nominated as *Gourmet Traveller Wine* Young Winemaker of the Year; Ed Carr of Tasmania's House of Arras won the *Gourmet Traveller Wine* Winemaker of the Year; Waterton Vineyard's 2009 Riesling won the International Riesling Challenge and three other trophies; while eight other sparkling wines, pinots, sauvignon blancs and rieslings amassed a total of 11 trophies at major national and international wine shows.

As Wine Tasmania's CEO, Sheralee Davies said, "What a year!"

And what a perfect run-up to the International Cool Climate Symposium for Viticulture and Oenology when Hobart will host some 300 researchers, wine media people, trade, viticulturists, winemakers, marketers and consumers from across the globe from January 31 to February 4 next year.

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## Pennicott is State's Aussie of the year



Conservationist and eco-tourism operator, Robert Pennicott, who recently circumnavigated the nation in an inflatable boat, is Tasmania's Australian of the Year.

The award in November recognised Mr Pennicott's achievements in establishing and running his world-renowned wilderness adventure business, as well as his passion and commitment to the community and the environment.

After receiving his award from the Premier, Lara Giddings, at a ceremony at Meadowbank Estate near Richmond, Mr Pennicott thanked his wife Michaye and children Georgina, Mia and Noah.

He now travels to Canberra to represent Tasmania in the national Australian of the Year awards, which are announced on 25 January - the eve of Australia Day.

Mr Pennicott's cruise business provides direct economic benefits to the communities of Bruny Island and the Tasman Peninsula and he has supported coastal landcare by founding the Tasmanian Coast Conservation Fund, as well as the Pennicott Foundation.

Mr Pennicott's Australian circumnavigation raised \$300,000 towards an international drive to eliminate polio.

Ms Giddings, also announced the winners of three divisions of the Tasmanian 2012 Young Australian of the Year awards:

- Greg Irons, 27, from Brighton, is Tasmania's Young Australian of the Year. As director of Bonorong Wildlife Sanctuary, he set up the State's first community-run wildlife assistance program - Friends of Carers Wildlife Program.

- Keiran Brown, of Devonport, was named Senior Australian of the Year for a remarkable teaching career and devotion of time and energy to St John Ambulance Australia.
- Viktor Zappner, of Burnie, a gifted pianist who founded the Jazz Action Society and remains the driving force behind the promotion of jazz in the north-west, won the annual Local Hero Award.

All the award recipients become national finalists in their categories.

Biographies of the finalists and further information on the Australian of the Year Awards can be found at [www.australianoftheyear.org.au](http://www.australianoftheyear.org.au).

### Horticulture honour for Buz Green

Tasmanian agricultural pace-setter, L.R. "Buz" Green, has won the Australian horticulture industry's most prestigious accolade, the Graham Gregory Award.



Mr Green, the founder and Executive Chairman of agricultural consultancy business Serve-Ag Pty Ltd, was presented with the 2011 award at a Horticulture Australia dinner in Sydney in November.

He was among an imposing list of Tasmanians in various fields who collected major awards during November.

Mr Green's award recognises his career achievements and is named after the late Graham Gregory, AO, who was the first chairman of the Horticultural Research and Development Corporation, predecessor of Horticulture Australia Ltd (HAL).

The HAL web site said: "Buz has been a significant influence on Tasmania's earned reputation as a reliable supplier of both processed and fresh market horticultural products over the past 35 years. He received a \$10,000 cash prize for his efforts, in addition to a commemorative bronze medal.

"Buz established Serve-Ag in 1976 with partner Mike Gow to provide advice, specialised crop inputs and technology to Tasmanian farmers. He has served on various Tasmanian agricultural Boards and had significant input into the strategic direction of the Tasmanian Vegetable Industry, particularly in helping the industry identify its brand."

"He has travelled extensively throughout the world's agricultural areas during his career, assisting numerous industry sectors, including vegetables, hops, pyrethrum, poppies, berry fruit and vines in obtaining registrations or minor use permits for new chemistry."

Serve-Ag was established in Devonport, but now operates from nine locations throughout Tasmania and has a reputation as one of Australia's leading agricultural technology companies.

Serve-Ag offers a range of technical and consultancy services to the rural and corporate sectors. It is known as a leader in the introduction and development of new technology and has spawned a series of successful specialist businesses.

Mr Green, an Honours graduate in Agricultural Science from UTAS, has served on both public and private sector boards and is a Director of Rotary Club of Devonport North. He has been a driving force in the club's Learn.Grow project, a dynamic international campaign that uses a database on plant nutrition to tackle malnutrition around the world.

Other notable Tasmanian successes during the award season included:

#### **Peter Grant and the Port Arthur Historic Site**

The Tasmanian Parks and Wildlife Manager for Interpretation and Education, Peter Grant, has won the Georgie Waterman national award for his outstanding contribution to the profession of interpretation in Australia. Mr Grant received his award at the 2011 Interpretation Australia National Awards for Excellence in Perth in November. The Port Arthur Historic Site won two awards:

- The Gold Award for a project of more than \$20,000, awarded to the Conservation and Interpretation of the Separate Prison.

- The Silver Award for a project of more than \$20,000, awarded for Port Arthur's Education Program.

### **Ralph's Seafood**

Four-year old Tasmanian business Ralph's Seafood has won a National Seafood Business Award. The North West Bay operation, which employs 30, is Australia's largest abalone exporter to China and has a turnover of \$35 million. The Australian Seafood Industry Association said the company had invested in 15 new value-added abalone products, had built new processing plants and holding tanks, developed expertise in abalone biology and quality, and built strong relationships with its markets. Ralph's Seafood General Manager, Mark Webster, said: "Every decision we made was based around plugging a hole, identifying a risk and then filling it. Look for the next risk and then plug that, so we are just working down the list."

### **Saffire Resort**

Tasmanian architectural firm, Circa Morris-Nunn Walker, has won the major prize at the 2011 Australian Timber Design Awards for its work at the Saffire resort at Freycinet. Peter Walker of Circa Morris-Nunn Walker also won the Rising Star award for the project. "The organic curves of the resort roofs rise gradually above the bush like small hills, reminiscent of the gentle peaks of the nearby Hazard Ranges," the judges commented. "These complex curves could not have been achieved without the design flexibility of pre-fabricated structural timber - a fact that ultimately gave Saffire the edge over other timber-rich finalists."

### **Ramez Alhazzaa**

A PhD candidate with the Australian Maritime College, Ramez Alhazzaa, was named Tasmanian winner of the AusBiotech/GSK Student Excellence Awards, which aim to encourage more students to pursue research and careers in bio-sciences and to reward early career successes. Mr Alhazzaa subsequently received a Student Encouragement Award after a presentation at the American Oil Chemist Society - Australasian Section, in Adelaide. He said: "Plants and plant-derived ingredients are renewable sources [of omega-3] and can be included in our diet and have a great potential in replacing fish oil, which is finite. This is directly relevant to human nutrition and health."

### **Edward Doddridge**

Edward Doddridge, 25, a mathematician who specialises in the study of ocean currents and their impact on climate, is Tasmania's 2012 Rhodes Scholar. A sailor and volunteer teacher with Sail Tasmania, Mr Doddridge is also a kayaker, bushwalker, mountain bike rider, hockey player and volunteer.

"I will get to meet some exciting researchers at Oxford," he said after the announcement. He intends to return to Hobart after his scholarship because of the city's strength in ocean research. Lawyer Bridget Dunne has been nominated as the State's applicant for the 2012 national Rhodes scholarship.

### ***Spirit of Tasmania***

*Spirit of Tasmania* has won the Major Tour / and or Transport Operator award at the 2011 Tasmanian Tourism Awards in November. About 450 industry representatives attended a dinner to celebrate the awards, which are designed to promote and reward business excellence in the Tasmanian industry. TT-Line Chief Executive, Charles Griplas, said staff, crew and management took great pride in winning the award. "Our marketing team has launched a new travel tool on our website to assist visitors to plan their next trip to Tasmania," he said.

### **Wynyard**

Wynyard has been named the Keep Australia Beautiful Tasmanian Tidy Town for 2011-12, its fifth success in the annual award. "The community's efforts to protect and rehabilitate the coastal precincts are significant and are a great example for other Tasmanian coastal towns to follow," judge Barrie Muir said. Devonport won the KAB Tasmanian Sustainable Cities award and Mr Muir said it had groomed itself into a very welcoming and attractive city for people arriving on the two *Spirit of Tasmania* ferries.

### **Trent Butler**

Trent Butler, an outstanding Tasmanian cameraman working for the BBC in Moscow, won a Gold Award at the Vic/Tas Awards for Cinematography in Melbourne for a story he shot in Libya on the recent popular uprising. Mr Butler also won the Bronze award in the News category for a story about celebrating Christmas in Afghanistan. In the Current Affairs category, he won a Silver Award for a story on Russia's Japanese history.

## Blue Rocket

Hobart multi-media business, Blue Rocket, won the *New Media Producer of the Year* award at the Screen Producers Association of Australia's independent producer's awards in November.

## Meadowbank Estate

Meadowbank Estate, near Richmond, has won the Best Informal Dining Award at the National Restaurant and Catering Awards. The judges praised Meadowbank's Chef, Wayne Smith, and his team.

## Marina to ease boat berth squeeze



Hobart's holiday-season squeeze on boat accommodation will be eased this year by a \$3 million state-of-the-art marina development at Prince of Wales Bay that is set to open by Christmas.

The 160-berth project, being built by Incat's Clifford family and Pieter van der Woude of CleanLift Marine, will use Mediterranean-style decking and cater for boats of up to 35 metres.

Incat Managing Director, Craig Clifford said: "I understand that all the marinas around southern Tasmania have waiting lists at the moment. And that's particularly difficult when yachts need to move out for Sydney-to-Hobart finishers or the Wooden Boat Festival."

He said European design would make the marina world-leading practice and the first stage would be ready in time for the festive season. "We will have just under half the berths available for Christmas. We'll have 60, maybe even up to 80."

The Premier, Lara Giddings, who helped launch the project in November, said it was another sign of private sector confidence. "Private capital investment has been growing for five consecutive quarters, with more than \$4 billion invested in the past year," she said. "This project will have positive flow-on effects for the Prince of Wales Bay area, including existing businesses."

Mr Clifford said Tasmania remained a good place to do business despite international financial uncertainty.

"We have been doing business in Tasmania for a long time and will continue to do so in to the future," he said. "The global economy goes up and down, but Tasmania is a good stable place to do business and we enjoy it."

## \$50m plan for UTAS Arts hub

UTAS is applying to the Federal Government's Education Infrastructure Fund for support for a proposed \$50 million creative industries building connected to the Theatre Royal. "It would be linked into [the university in] Launceston and Burnie, should we get the opportunity to build it," Vice-Chancellor, Professor Peter Rathjen, said. "It would bring together visual arts, performing arts and creative arts and a fair dose of IT sits there as well, because IT impinges on all the creative industries." The proposal is a partnership between UTAS, the State Government, and the Theatre Royal, which has long wanted to improve its facilities through a development on State-owned vacant land at the corner of Campbell and Collins streets. Professor Rathjen said the project would position Tasmania as an Australian leader in creative industries.

Theatre Royal Chief Executive, Tim Munro, said the theatre was hoping to get an additional performing space; additional back-of-house facilities, including dressing rooms and technical facilities for performers and crews; as well as improved front-of-house facilities, including public toilets.

## Processor contains abalone disease

A Stanley abalone processor has contained an outbreak of viral ganglioneuritis believed to have originated in wild shellfish from King Island waters. The Managing Director of TOP Fish, Michael Hardy, said in November only a small number of abalone had been infected. "Once you put them all together in a tank system, [like putting] a heap of humans in a room, the germs are going to spread," he said. "But the thing is the germs are contained in that system, [they] can't go anywhere else. We've just cleaned the tanks out, got rid of the abalone that were there and that eliminates the virus." Water from all tanks is being treated before being released back into the ocean as a biosecurity measure.

The Department of Primary Industries, Water and the Environment is monitoring the situation and testing abalone held by other processors as a precaution. TOP Fish lost 80kg of abalone, worth about \$4,000.

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### Maddock is 'nation's greatest printer'

Launceston artist Bea Maddock is Australia's greatest printer and ranks as an artist with Fred Williams, Tom Roberts and Tasmania's celebrated John Glover. The Senior Curator of Australian Prints, Drawings and Illustrated Books at the National Gallery of Australia, Roger Butler, delivered this judgment in Launceston in November when he launched Maddock's *Catalogue Raisonne Volume 1 1951-1983* at Queen Victoria Museum and Art Gallery at Royal Park. "Bea is Australia's greatest printer, she has produced the greatest body of prints of any artist in Australia," Mr Butler said. "And while her paintings are less numerous, she is up there with Williams, Roberts and Glover."

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### Tasmania among 'hot' destinations

Luxury travel company, Abercrombie & Kent, has included Tasmania in its "hot list" of world destinations for 2012. "Quaint historic villages, seaside towns, national parks, fine food and wine and exquisite boutique accommodation make Tasmania a unique and fascinating short-haul getaway," the company said. "It's also home to the thought-provoking Museum of Old and New Art and Australia's newest super lodge, Saffire at Freycinet National Park." Tasmania featured with 11 other destinations: the Amazon; Cuba; Mongolia; Myanmar; Nepal; Orissa (India); Russia; Tanzania; and Uganda. Details: [www.abercrombiekent.com.au](http://www.abercrombiekent.com.au)

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### Oceanographers find lost islands

UTAS scientists are among a team that has discovered two Tasmania-sized sunken islands, 1.5 km below the surface of the Indian Ocean. They are believed to be scraps of the super-continent Gondwana that were isolated as India and Australia drifted apart about 130 million years ago.

Working with researchers from the University of Sydney and Macquarie University aboard the Hobart-based *Southern Surveyor*, the Tasmanians helped make the discovery while mapping the seafloor of the Perth Abyssal Plain, west of the city. "We expected to see common oceanic rocks such as basalt in the dredge, but were surprised to see continental rocks such as granite, gneiss and sandstone containing fossils," the Chief Expedition Scientist, Dr Simon Williams of the University of Sydney, said. The discovery could cause a reassessment of Indian Ocean plate tectonic theory.

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### Southwood sawmill set to re-open

Dell Vista Forest Products, the new owner of the Huon Valley's Southwood sawmill, expects it to re-open early in 2012. The recently-formed Victorian company bought the mill from Gunns Ltd in October and appointed Tasmanian forest industry businessman, Ken Last, as General Manager. The company negotiated a 40,000 cu m supply of native sawlogs with Forestry Tasmania (FT) in November. FT Managing Director, Bob Gordon, said: "The investment by Dell Vista is a welcome sign of confidence in the timber industry, and we certainly welcome the company with open arms, as I am sure will those workers who have found jobs in the mill."

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### Exports rise despite high dollar

Tasmania increased its international merchandise exports by 3.9 per cent in the year to September 2011, recording \$3.23 billion in sales. In the September quarter, exports rose 6.6 per cent compared with the previous year. "Tasmania's industry profile means we are more affected by the high Australian dollar than the rest of the nation," the Premier, Lara Giddings, said. "It is pleasing to see that despite the significant pressure on our local exporters we are still seeing growth." China (including Hong Kong) now accounts for around a quarter of all Tasmanian exports.

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## Less of Webber at Webber Challenge

Formula One motor-racing star Mark Webber had to miss part of his own charity race around Tasmania this month because of a commitment with his Red Bull Racing team in England. Webber was required at Milton Keynes on December 10, the penultimate day of the Swisse Mark Webber Tasmania Challenge which started at Freycinet on 7 December and finished in Hobart on 11 December. Webber was able to race in the first Mark Webber Adventure Run, a 6.5 km event through Hobart's streets and over the Domain on December 4.

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## Wine research to be decanted

Local researchers are poised to unveil new viticulture and winemaking findings when Hobart hosts the 8th International Cool Climate Symposium for Viticulture and Oenology from 31 January to 4 February. The cornerstone of the symposium will be a presentation of results of an innovative, three-year, \$1.8-million research project funded by a Tasmanian-based consortium led by Wine Tasmania and AusIndustry on "Improving the Quality of Cool Climate Pinot Noir and Sparkling Wines." Led by Dr Richard Smart and Dr Bob Damberg, the project undertook more than 30 individual trials in several research areas of pinot noir and sparkling viticulture and vinification.

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## Wood donates \$2m to Menzies2

WOT.IF travel website founder Graeme Wood donated \$2 million in November towards the second stage of the Menzies Research Institute in Hobart. Mr Wood was responding to a challenge grant from a foundation established by Irish-American philanthropist Chuck Feeney. Mr Feeney's Atlantic Philanthropies contributed \$7.5 million to the \$58 million first stage of Menzies which opened in 2009. Funding for the second stage building is coming from the Australian Government (\$45 million), the University of Tasmania (\$15 million), Atlantic Philanthropies and the Tasmanian Government (each \$10 million).

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## State selects forest carbon assessor

The Tasmanian Government has appointed CO2 Australia to estimate the volume of carbon stored in Tasmania's forests. The company said the study was needed ahead of the implementation of a national carbon price next July and would showcase its carbon expertise, gathered over seven years operating within domestic and international carbon markets. "We have some unique experience in forest carbon accounting and assessing the commercial potential for forest carbon projects, all of which align very well with the objectives of this study," CO2 Group CEO, Andrew Grant, said.

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## Cherry exporters eyeing China

Tasmanian cherry growers are hopeful they could be exporting into the huge Chinese market before the end of 2011. Representatives from Cherry Growers Australia and Fruit Growers Tasmania returned in November from a trip to the China World Fruit and Vegetable Fair. The Cherry Growers' Chief Executive, Simon Boughey, said two Chinese biosecurity officers visited the State in late November, hopefully clearing the way for an early agreement.

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## Publicity burst follows chef's visit

Tasmanian produce will be written about in four special features over four months in Japan's *Gourmet Journal*, following a Brand Tasmania-sponsored visit to the State by leading chef Kitaoka Katsunobu. After enjoying the hospitality and lavender-flavoured treats at Bridestowe Estate and sampling Tasmania's fresh truffles at a master-class, the chef, who is famous for his French-style cuisine, said he would be back in the State early in 2012.

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## NZ recruits UTAS dairy expert

UTAS academic, Dr Danny Donaghy, has been appointed Chair in Dairy Production Systems at Massey University, the university and DairyNZ announced in November.

Dr Donaghy, who is leader of the Dairy Centre at the University of Tasmania's Tasmanian Institute of Agriculture, will take up the position as professor in February. He will work closely with the New Zealand dairy industry to help achieve its goals of improved profitability, sustainability and competitiveness.

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### Grant for plant adaptation study

UTAS scientists have received a \$285,000 Australian Research Council grant for a project they hope will enable them to predict how plants will adapt to climate change. Senior lecturer at the School of Plant Science, Dr Greg Jordon, said DNA examinations will indicate how plants have responded to past climate changes and this evidence will be used to appraise their likely future success.

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### Aurora Energy back in black

Aurora Energy bounced back from its first annual loss to record a \$39.5 million profit for 2010-11. The energy retailer's annual report showed a \$60 million turnaround on the previous year's \$19.6 million loss. Aurora's board has recommended that a \$11.9 million dividend be paid to the State.

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### The Hunter grosses \$1m

The Tasmanian-located film, *The Hunter*, broke the \$1 million mark for box office earnings in November, with Hobart's State Cinema leading the film's earnings nationwide. Village Eastlands, Village Launceston and Devonport CMAX were also in the film's top 10 cinemas nationally.

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