

STILL PRESSING

After selling his namesake label, veteran winemaker Mike Press has opened a new chapter with family-run label, Pressed Wines



FOR MORE THAN five decades, Mike Press has been a familiar name in Australian wine – a winemaker whose career has included tenures at Penfolds, Seppelt, Mildara Blass and his own eponymous label, Mike Press Wines. Now, with decades of experience under his belt, Mike Press, along with his wife, Judy, and family, has embarked on a new venture: Pressed Wines.

Mike's journey into wine, like many, wasn't the most linear; it began not in a vineyard, but in the lab. "After some time studying engineering and chemistry, I obtained a position with Penfolds Wines as a lab assistant," says Mike. "After several years I was offered a scholarship by Penfolds to study oenology at the Roseworthy campus in SA."

That scholarship set the course for a career that culminated in the role of chief winemaker for Mildara Blass, but it was the Press family's 1998 move to the Adelaide Hills that reshaped his trajectory. There, Mike and wife Judy decided to "start winemaking from the first step", as Mike says, and planted 24 hectares of vines.

Their plan was to sell grapes, until the market shifted and the downturn in grapes meant they had to rethink. "I decided to make wine but make it at a cost that the grapes would have returned. My wife Judy and I pounded the streets, leaving order forms for our clean skins at affordable prices." When those wines – still cleanskins – won top awards at the Adelaide Hills Wine Show in 2006, the labels had to be printed in time for the show lunch.

In 2017, many years and many awards later, Mike and Judy sold the successful label they'd built, Mike Press Wines, to overseas owners. They continued running the company for another seven years, until it became more cost advantageous for the new owners to employ a new winemaker. "This turned into an opportunity," says Mike. "I wanted to once again make wine with my family without the constraints of a corporate identity or an outside owner. So Pressed Wines was born."

The name is both literal and personal: "We wanted to incorporate the family name Press and it seemed to fit the purpose," Mike says. "With Pressed Wines the whole family is involved. Andrew, my son, can procure the grapes and James and Rachel also work in the family company."

The wines are predominantly sourced from the Adelaide Hills (bar the grenache), and the wines reflect Mike's enduring love of classical varieties. "I have always believed the classic varieties are what I like to make. I was trained with Penfolds and worked under Max Schubert so shiraz and American oak are my greatest loves."

What should new customers expect? "We can categorically say that they can expect to enjoy our wines for a very affordable price, they are well made and can also be cellared," says Mike. As for the future of Pressed Wines, the mission for Mike is simple: "To build the brand and keep doing what I love, safe in the knowledge that the next generation of the Press family is involved."●

To find out more about Pressed Wines and become a member for exclusive discounts, visit [pressedwines.com](https://www.pressedwines.com).