

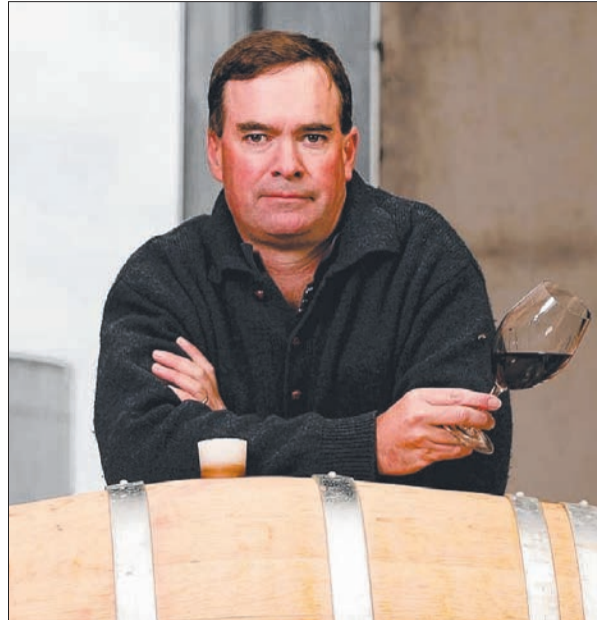


facebook

Talk to me on
www.facebook.com/DesHoughton

Email

If you have any news tips contact me on
houghtond@qnp.newsltd.com.au



Wine critic snubs 'angular' Grange

PENFOLD'S Grange, the legendary Australian wine, has again been left out of a list of the nation's top-10 reds.

Independent critic Jeremy Oliver admitted he was not overly impressed with the \$650-a-bottle Grange, describing it as "a little angular" despite its "floral, earthy perfume of deep blackberry, blueberry and dark plum aromas".

Oliver's 2011 *Australian Wine Annual* (\$29.95) names the 2009 Clonakilla Shiraz Viognier (right, \$85) as the leading red and wine of the year. In second place was Giaconda Estate 2008 Vineyard Shiraz (\$81), followed by Leasingham Classic 2004 Clare Valley Sparkling Shiraz (\$55).

Oliver, the son of a wine-loving Anglican priest, made no apologies for omitting

Grange. "I'm of a view that a critic should be critical," he told me.

He says he hasn't been invited back to a major tasting since describing one early Grange vintage as a "dog" that should not have been released.

However, he once awarded the 1953 Grange 99 points, describing it as sublime.



The Penguin 2010 Good Australian Wine Guide also left Grange out of its top-10, while James Halliday's 2011 *Australian Wine Companion* (Hardie Grant) named it equal seventh.

Oliver says the Clonakilla Shiraz Viognier is Australia's finest and a triumph for winemaker Tim Kirk (top), whose vineyard is near Canberra.

Oliver believes Australian wine quality is soaring, with 2010 generally delivering the best wine since 2004.

PS...

Sutton shifts spotlight but keeps cash

REPORTERS covering Brisbane City Council are incensed and just a little bewildered at the antics of Labor leader Shayne Sutton, who suddenly has gone media-shy. Even though she is paid handsomely to be the civic Opposition Leader, Sutton (pictured) is redirecting media questions to Ray Smith, Labor's lord-mayoral candidate. It's an obvious and rather grubby attempt to give Smith publicity on the cheap. If Sutton wants to improperly abdicate her role, perhaps she should consider handing back her pay. The election, after all, is more than a year away.



Language has been violated

TO politically incorrect old hacks like me, all euphemisms are lies. And the Psychologists Board of Queensland and the Physiotherapists Board have invented a new one to hide embarrassing wrongdoing by members. Their annual reports speak of investigations into "boundary violations". What can it mean? Did someone move a fence? I fear the poison of euphemism is working its way through our language and into our national consciousness.



Pollies politely at prayer

NOT all our parliamentarians are a godless lot. After being elevated to science spokesman in the LNP team, Indooroopilly MP Scott Emerson was circled by well-wishers when he arrived for mass at St Thomas's Catholic Church at St Lucia last Sunday. Emerson wasn't the only churchgoer to win a promotion in the LNP team. Kawana young gun Jarrod Bleijie, 28, is a member of the Uniting Church on the Sunshine Coast and sometimes invites the flock to services at his home.

Irritant of the week

EXTORTIONATE bank ATM charges as high as \$10 a transaction. I don't mind banks making a fair profit but this is profiteering. Treasurer Wayne Swan must pull them into line.

Fatty liver lover livid

SYDNEY superchef Serge Dansereau hit Brisbane this week to visit his mate Romain Bapst, chef at Drift, the fab river restaurant at Milton. There he launched his new recipe book *French Kitchen* (ABC Books) and admitted an obsession for foie gras. To hell with animal rights activists who claim force-feeding ducks is cruel, he reckons. He says ducks are now fed a soft corn paste in a procedure that is both quick and painless.



all worn out

the deception. No one believes Bligh and Treasurer Andrew Fraser didn't know about it before the last election.

• Water: The takeover of water by the State Government was a cynical ploy to shift costs to councils and blame them for price hikes. Someone has to pay for Labor's ineffective, \$9 billion water grid.

• Council amalgamations: The promised efficiencies didn't materialise. Instead, costs soared. A three-year freeze on forced redundancies means working families are paying the salaries of executives with nothing to do. Meanwhile, some rural landholders faced a 600 per cent rates rise, which will force them off their properties.

• Education: While we have some of the best teachers, we have some of the poorest academic results in the nation and no one can explain why. And there is the danger that

thousands of children have unknowingly contracted deadly mesothelioma. Asbestos dangers in schools are routinely covered up. Meanwhile, bush schools are closing, forcing bush families to drive for hours - often to other towns - to get their children to school.

• Health: Bureaucrats continue to outnumber hospital beds. We spend nearly \$1 million an hour on health and still don't have enough beds. Hospitals are too heavily unionised and too much money is swallowed by a vast bureaucracy. As well, the Beattie-Bligh plan to shut the Royal Children's and wind down the the Royal Women's was a travesty of decision making and has been politically costly for Labor. About \$2 billion will be squandered on a new hospital in South Brisbane that may deliver only 31 additional beds. And working families on Brisbane's northside won't

No matter how utterly useless the ALP has become, it will fight to the death

get the top emergency care that they now receive.

• Debt: Queensland has lost its AAA credit rating and we have a \$83.5 billion debt burden, the highest of any state.

• Coal-seam gas: Farmers and scientists say the gas boom will come at a heavy ecological price. There is a strong risk some of our best cropping land will be ruined.

As the lady said on the radio, Labor is on a slippery slope. Whatever.