

The Browns' beloved Dorper sheep graze happily eating grass and weeds along the vine rows

a stellar
DROP

From a hidden valley in the premier wine-producing region of New South Wales comes an award-winning organic label: Ascella Pure Wine

By Diane Norris



Geoff and Barb Brown launched Ascella Pure Wine in 2009 — their very first vintage

Arriving at Riverpines Vineyard, home of Ascella Pure Wine, you'd be forgiven for thinking you had stepped into a secluded world that time had forgotten. Milbrodale is tucked into the foothills of the picturesque Brokenback Range in the renowned Hunter Valley region of NSW. It's here that Geoff and Barb Brown of Riverpines Vineyard are producing some of the highest-rated organic wines in Australia.

The couple hail from very different backgrounds — personal and professional. Geoff, a mechanical engineer, was born and raised in Australia and travelled to study and work in Canada in 1968. Barb, a Canadian educator and health professional, was committed to helping the people of remote Canadian regions to meet their challenges and become self-sufficient and self-reliant. The two met and married, relocating to Australia in 2007.

Having done a lot of research, Geoff and Barb bought Riverpines Vineyard that year.

It had been planted in 1999/2000 and was already an up-and-running certified organic vineyard but, as Geoff says, the property needed some attention and "tender loving care". And that's certainly what they gave it. The couple launched Ascella Pure Wine with the 2009 harvest, their very first vintage.

Organic wine in Australia has become a billion-dollar industry with more and more wine drinkers choosing organic. Once upon a time, organic wines were made by people who knew how to grow grapes organically but, by and large, didn't know how to make good wine. That has changed dramatically, though the perception lingers — quite wrongly. Organic wines made by top professional wine makers are becoming increasingly popular and Ascella Pure Wine is a stellar product of this new breed of winemakers.

Wine growers establish organic vineyards for many reasons: they want to work in harmony with nature and protect the biodiversity of our planet; they want to grow

grapes without using pesticides or other chemicals; they want to celebrate the organic culture of traditional agriculture; and they feel a commitment to good health and wellbeing as well as ensuring the land is protected for future generations to enjoy. So it was with Geoff and Barb.

By viticultural standards, Ascella Pure Wine was quick to be launched as an Australian Certified Organic label. The official naming of a wine is vitally important. After all, the label on the bottle is the first thing a buyer sees. It bears the name, which needs to be memorable, and carries perhaps the only information a potential buyer might want to know, so there is enormous pressure on wineries to create a label that promotes the image visually and with the right wording.

Ascella's label was, in part, a result of a design contest hosted by 99Design. Geoff and Barb forwarded their requirements out to contest tender and, with a little tweaking, the Ascella (pronounced *a-cellar*) label was born.