

THE PENFOLDS WINEMAKERS





Although Peter Gago frequently notes that the Penfolds winemaking effort is very much team based, with talented staff assisting him to create the wines under Penfolds' masthead, there have been only four Chief Winemakers since 1948: Max Schubert, Don Ditter, John Duval and Peter Gago. All four have contributed to Penfolds' success.

MAX SCHUBERT

Born in 1915, Max Schubert joined Penfolds as a messenger boy in 1931, and became a member of the Magill winemaking team at the age of 21. He was appointed Chief Winemaker in 1948 and, having never formally studied oenology, went on to literally change the course of wine history through his 1951 groundbreaking creation of Grange (then labelled Grange Hermitage). Schubert was honoured many times for his lifetime contribution to the Australian wine industry, receiving Member of the Order of Australia, the Maurice O'Shea Award, South Australian Achiever of the Year, Wine Spectator's Hall of Fame, and Decanter magazine's Man of the Year. He died in March 1994 at the age of 79.



DON DITTER

Donovan John Ditter joined Penfolds in 1942 as a laboratory assistant. Having graduated from Roseworthy Winemaking College, he became a fully fledged winemaker in 1950, in time to witness the return of Max Schubert from Europe and the first production of Grange. He assumed the role of National Production Manager (the equivalent of Chief Winemaker) in 1973 and held that position until his retirement in 1986. With periods spent at Magill, Nuriootpa and the NSW wineries, Ditter's influence over the company's wines was comprehensive. He has enjoyed a long and happy retirement since 1986, living in Sydney, while still making appearances as a wine educator for Penfolds, and sharing his knowledge and enthusiasm for the wines he influenced over the four decades of his tenure with the company.



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JOHN DUVAL

John Duval was born in 1950. He joined Penfolds in 1974 and worked with both Ditter and Schubert in the formative years of his career. He took over from Don Ditter as Chief Winemaker in 1986. In 1989, just three years after taking over as Chief Winemaker, Duval was named International Winemaker of the Year at Britain's International Wine and Spirit Competition, as well as twice being named Red Winemaker of the Year at WINE magazine's International Wine Challenge (1991 and 2000).



PETER GAGO

After graduating Dux of his year at South Australia's Roseworthy Winemaking College, he spent four years in sparkling winemaking for the then Penfolds Wine Group. He entered the world of Penfolds red winemaking in late 1993 in time to lead the first 4,000 tonne vintage in the new red wine cellar at the Nuriootpa winery. The following year, his role was expanded. Peter Gago became the Penfolds Red Wine Oenologist, working very closely with John Duval to simultaneously maintain the Penfolds wine style and explore new territories. Appointed Penfolds Chief Winemaker in July 2002, he took over the mantle from his long-time friend and colleague, John Duval. Like Max Schubert, Don Ditter and John Duval before him, Peter, together with his team, continues to challenge winemaking excellence with every vintage.