



2019 MARGARET RIVER WINE SHOW LIFETIME ACHIEVEMENT AWARD

I am pleased to talk about tonight's Lifetime Achievement Award recipients, John Evans and John Tate.

They first met in early 1949 – over 70 years ago as work colleagues in Fremantle. A great friendship quickly evolved and soon they had established their first business together in 1951.

The birth of Evans & Tate occurred over a long Sunday lunch (as one did regularly in the 1960's). John & Jan Evans and John & Toni Tate enjoyed many of these together as they shared their dreams and passions.

After several bottles of great French wine they decided they would take the plunge and make wine themselves. Further both couples had travelled to the wine regions in France, John Tate had established a specialty wine store in 1967 and was the Australian agent for the revered Burgundy and Bordeaux négociant Averys of Bristol for several years.

The first few years were truly a family affair with the first plantings on the Evans' farm in Baker's Hill occurring by hand by all members of the families.

Next, in 1972, they acquired a winery in the Swan Valley and transformed not only the winery but the image of the Swan Valley “..singlehandedly..” as expressed by James Halliday.

The decision to purchase land and plant a vineyard in Margaret River had been contemplated by them since 1969. This occurred in 1974. They named the vineyard Redbrook after a nearby creek.

They were truly part of the region's pioneers being contemporaries of Bill Pannell (Moss Wood), Tom Cullity (Vasse Felix) and Kevin Cullen (Cullen Wines). John Tate quipped he was the only non-medical practitioner in the embryonic region. Likewise, the house on the Redbrook vineyard became gathering spot for many local pioneers wanting to share the ideas and thoughts with John and Toni and tap their wisdom.

The first variety they wanted to plant was Shiraz. Soon after the vines were planted a well-known neighbour confronted them and ordered them to remove them.

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Unsurprisingly this did not happen. They also planted Cabernet Sauvignon, Chardonnay, Sauvignon Blanc and Semillon.

With John Tate as the inaugural winemaker, the first wines from the Margaret River vineyard were produced in 1978. John Evans provided much support and guidance together with his farming background having owned his Bakers Hill property since the 1960's.

Every week both partners visited the winery and their new venture peppered almost every conversation.

It was a legacy touch that everything they did was meticulously well planned, researched and executed in every part of their wine business.

In 1983, the Tate's divested their other businesses and purchased the Evan's share of the winery to assume full-time management.

Four years later, the extraordinarily successful Evans & Tate Margaret River Classic was launched and went on to become one of Margaret River's most successful wines.

In 1992, they established a new vineyard on Payne Road, Koorup, east of Willyabrup, followed by a second vineyard on Gale road in the Koorup. This was the beginning of commercial viticulture being practiced on fertile soils in this area.

The following year marked another big moment for the Margaret River region when Cape Mentelle won the Jimmy Watson Memorial Trophy. Ever the gentleman; John Tate wrote to David Hohnen remarking that "... It is was as much a win for Margaret River as it is for you David. Our sincere congratulations!!"

John Tate continued to play a major role in the wine industry including:-

- Founding Chairman of the Wine Industry Association of Western Australia
- Chairman and Judge of the Perth Royal Wine Show
- Councillor and Life Councillor of the RAS
- Founding member of the MR Wine Association
- Led an industry delegation to New Zealand and subsequent engagement of Richard Smart to overhaul viticultural practices of participating Margaret River wineries.

John Tate was also recognised for his contribution to the wine industry with:-

- An Order of Australia
- The Jack Mann award

John and Toni retired and sold the winery to Franklin and Heather Tate in 1997.

Their strong friendship with John Evans continues to this day as does their over-arching passion for the Western Australian wine industry.

Michaelangelo the great painter once said... "To have true vision one needs to stand on the shoulders of giants".

What a legacy they have left!

It is now my pleasure to present the award to Heather Tate (John Tate's daughter-in-law) and Sally Evans (John Evans' daughter) who will be accepting it on behalf of John Tate and John Evans.

Greg Wall, Chair
Margaret River Wine Association