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**OH 692/88**

Full transcript of an interview with

**PETER AND MARGARET LEHMANN**

on 22 June 2000

by Rob Linn

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**OH 692/88**

**PETER AND MARGARET LEHMANN**

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**OH 692/88 TAPE 1 - SIDE A**

**NATIONAL WINE CENTRE ORAL HISTORY PROJECT.  
Interview with Peter and Margaret Lehmann on 22nd June, 2000.  
Interviewer: Rob Linn.**

**Peter and Margaret, thank you for doing this interview with us. Just to start off, Peter, you were born in 1930?**

**PL:** Yes.

**Tell us a bit about your father, Frank, and your mother, and your family here.**

**PL:** Well, Dad was a Barossan and born in Vine Vale, and God knows why but he obviously got a call to God and decided that he wanted to enter the ministry. Prior to that he had a few years up at Immanuel College, which was then headquartered up at Point Pass, just north of Eudunda. Only took the whole thing up to the equivalent of Intermediate, and maybe Leaving. I'm not quite sure. However, any would-be parson of that year either had to go to Europe or to America to study their theology, and the old man—I think he was about fifteen—went to St Paul, Minnesota, and studied his theology there. He was away for about four years and worked—and as luck would have it, when he came back he took a parish in the Barossa which, you know, maintained our identity as Barossans.

**He was about—what?—fifth generation?**

**PL:** He was fourth. Third born. Fourth generation.

**You're fifth?**

**PL:** I'm fifth, yes.

**And Peter, your mother?**

**PL:** Mum was a Yorke Peninsula girl. And Dad's first wife, after she died, mother was actually sent over because she was a relative, not to the old man but to the old man's first wife, and said that you'll have to keep house for Uncle Frank, I think it was, and his three young kids. She was there for, oh, a few years and then they married. So he actually married the niece of his first wife, which sounds a bit involved. Consequently he was in the situation where his second wife was step-mother to his first three children. Also their first cousin. Now this doesn't put us in this category (*Laughs*) of incestuous blood lines. And they were married in '26, and my elder brother, Lofty, was born in '28, and I was born in '30, and then my younger sister in Jo '36.

**What was your Mum's name?**

**PL:** Erna Linke. She was a Linke, and her mother was a Hasting, as was the old man's first wife. So that's, very briefly, the lineal lines of a true Barossan identity.

**Peter, I know a little bit about your education. You ended up at Scotch, I think, wasn't it, under Norm Grattan ?**

**PL:** Yeah, for a brief period. I went to—once I'd completed Grade 6—Year 7, I had an unfortunate car accident—I was run over by a motor car and I wasn't allowed to go to school for the rest of that year. And then my parents decided that they'd send me to Immanuel College at the age of eleven. And I was there for three years. Didn't enjoy it much because it was sort of in the latter part—well, during the War and we were made to feel a little bit like Krauts. You know, 'Here come the bloody box heads' etc etc. And the third year that I was there, that was 1945, Dad died. So I completed that year at Immanuel, and then it was decided that I'd stay at home in '46, substantially to help mother around the house and everything. I think about the only constructive thing—I bought her a lighter axe. I thought the one she was wielding was a bit heavy. (*Laughs*) So went to Nuri High for 1946, and then to Scotch in '47. I didn't complete that year. I left to become an apprentice at Yalumba.

**How did the appointment at Yalumba come about, Peter?**

**PL:** Well, I was, I suppose you could just say, a bit of a restless lad for lots of reasons, and I would've taken any job in the bloody world just to escape school. I suppose a classical drop-out. And Mum happened to be at a party in Angaston where she was talking to Alf Wark, who was then Secretary of Yalumba. He just mentioned, and passed on so to speak, that they were looking for a likely lad to train under Rudi Kronberger as, you know, an apprentice with a view of becoming winemaker. She mentioned this to me when I was home on an exeat so I wagged the Monday and got on my treadley and went up and had an interview with the same Mr Wark—Alf Wark. I don't know whether I would've described myself as a likely lad but, anyhow, I got the job. So that was—I completed that term at Scotch and then left and started at Yalumba in 1947.

**Peter, would you tell us about Yalumba, and particularly Rudi and the winemaking there?**

**PL:** Well, Rudi was a terrific bloke. He was the most patient, gentle man I think I've ever met. I suppose I was influenced strongly by three people there. One was Rudi, Alf Wark who was company secretary—great gourmet, great cook, raconteur and everything—and of course the big boss, Windy Hill-Smith. So their philosophy in life sort of—a lot of that's rubbed off onto me. I'm sure of that.

Yalumba was family owned. Still is for that matter. Those days it was, I suppose, 96/97% fortified wines. And I think their crush was maybe four/five thousand tons, including—they had a subsidiary called the Vintners, where subsequently I was winemaker there for three years prior to leaving Yalumba. And I can remember towards the end of the period I was with Yalumba, it would've been about '57 or '58, Johnnie Hill-Smith was sort of foreman of the crushing operation at Yalumba, and he threw a great party. He said, 'God, I never thought we'd do it but we've crushed 100 tons in one day'. *(Laughs)* And of course these days, you do it in a few hours. But it was all wagon and

horses. Principally wagon and horses. The odd truck. I remember later on actually starting to get Tippers. God, it revolutionised the whole industry. *(Laughs)* But, you know, they were great days in a sense, even though it was only fortified. Yalumba and Rudi's skill really, through his training—he was a Geisenheim graduate. Would've been white wines. Well, Yalumba did make a reasonable amount of Riesling in those days. Virtually no dry red. And I suppose really just his natural ability or something, he excelled in fortifieds because that was the market he had to satisfy. And Galway Pipe became quite legendary. And he was virtually the creator of that.

**And Peter, at the winery itself, was it set up in any particular way? Was it typical of its period?**

**PL:** Well, it was I think typical of those days. It was semi gravity. It was on, you know, two or three levels, and the intake was the highest point. And then from there it would gravitate down into the first layer of fermenting tanks, and there'd be another layer along there. So while they did have pumps—some of them hand pumps in those days—a lot of the transfer was gravitational.

**Rudi had methods and he had training. What about some of the other people working there?**

**PL:** Well, I think, you know, they'd learnt from their dads. There was a lot of sort of father and son relationships. The Smith family themselves never actually became—after I think Tiger's demise (that was Windy Hill-Smith's father). Windy's father married—Walter Smith married a Miss Hill. That was the introduction of the Hill-Smith. The others were just plain Smith. And from then onwards they were more interested in the management, not the actual hands-on winemaking side. But Windy actually had, although he wasn't a winemaker *per se*, he had a very, very good palate and a good understanding of the business.

**I think I'd like to, just for a short time, Peter, for you to tell some of the stories about the characters. The things you've learnt at the place.**

**PL:** Where? At Yalumba?

**Yes.**

**PL:** Oh, God, there were some characters. *(Laughter in voice)* I'll tell you what the—I suppose if you started on the winery floor, there was a bloke we called—he was known as Globey. Old Bert Blenkiron. And he used to be filterman but bald as a badger. Shiny top. Hence the term Globey.

The other character was the blacksmith-cum-engineer, which is a very glorified name. His nickname was Bloody-fuckin'-bastard. *(Laughter)* If anything went wrong, that expletive was uttered in a very loud voice.

There were, you know, some real characters. Percy Yates, he was a cooper but he also looked after Windy's horses. You know, a great character.

Another Yates—Billy Yates—was the distiller. Old Freddie Shippen, he was the boilerman. He was very keen on hunting—shooting. He used to take Mark and John Hill-Smith with him down the flat shooting, and he only had a—you know the old car with a dicky seat in the back? So he'd put the dogs and his son, Roy, which he called Bengal(?)—he put him in the dicky seat, closed the door, and John and Mark would sit in the front with Fred. His double barrelled shotgun, he referred to as his double barrelled hind loader. So he'd get to the top of Sedan and he'd stop and he said, 'Better see how the dogs and Bengal are getting on'. *(Laughs)* So he'd get out and he'd say, 'You alright, Bengal?' 'Yar'. So off he'd go down the flats. This is, of course, only related to me from Mark.

I think one of the other characters was Wyndham's Uncle Percy—also known as Snapper—who had a degree of meanness. I remember the day that Mark got married. The whole family cleared off to Adelaide for the ceremony and no sooner had the dust settled—and I happened to glance out of the lab window and I saw old Snapper coming out of Mark's vegie garden with a great bloody cauliflower, a couple of cabbages. Went back, got flowers. Subsequently heard that he went down to the local—Eddy Miles' shop—and flogged them for a few cents. *(Laughs)*

And on another occasion he had a bloke called Charlie Kraehenbuhl was his gardener. And Snapper thought that Windy was away. He would've been except that he was ill. Consequently he was home. And he said, 'Look, all those bloody walnuts over at Mr Wyndham's place, they're going to go to waste. You go and rake them all up. We might as well have them'. So Charlie spent the best part of the day knocking them down and shelling them and putting them all into bags. And Windy had been watching all this, and virtually when he put the last walnut in the bag, Windy suddenly appeared, and said, 'Oi! Thank Mr Percy for bagging my walnuts for me'. *(Laughter)* So that caused a little bit of a furore at the time.

Another one was old Bertie Pfeiffer. What a character! Rather fond of the little drop of the Port he was, old Bert. I remember—oh, early in my days, I was walking over to what was known as Mrs Sid's. Sid Hill-Smith was killed in the Kyeema in '38. His widow lived on the southern side of the winery(?) and it's quite a long drive, which had a cypress hedge, well trimmed and everything. To the east of that was Mark's vegie garden. And old Bert was in there one day supposed to be doing some weeding and everything. And I just happened along to—I've forget for what reason I was going over there. But as I came along I just saw Bert furtively shove a bottle in the hedge. Of course, I had no authority or anything but I just said, 'What are you up to, Bert?' 'Oh, you little bugger', he said, 'look!' And he pulled out a bottle and he said, 'Go on, smell it. Smell it. It was tea'. I said, 'Oh, yeah', because sometimes I just asked him. Just as I turned the sun suddenly—a glint. There's a bottle just to the left of that. I pulled that out and said, 'What about this one, Bert?' I said, 'Port'. He said, 'You little bugger, you put it back'. *(Sounds like, I didn't) say anything. (Laughs)*

Thus one learns to become a winemaker. *(Laughter)*

**I was going to say was that pretty typical of the time that wineries—did wineries allow their employees to -**

**PL:** Oh, yeah, they were allowed to. As long as they didn't get, you know, too smashed. They were allowed to have a drink at morning tea, lunch time,

afternoon break and so on. Plus they all had yo-yos, or snakes. Whatever you like to call it. You know, a siphon that they'd have planted somewhere. They'd always suck out of a good barrel.

Another bloke, he used to fill the jars for the growers. His name was Herb Nagel. He was generally smashed by about mid afternoon, and he'd occasionally get remonstrated from Wyndham Hill-Smith. He'd say, 'Mr Wyndham, I don't drink. It's when I'm sucking the hose to fill up the jars. It's the fumes that get me'. (*Laughs*) Oh, dear!

**Now, you also mentioned that you were looking out the laboratory window at Bert's behaviour down at Mark's garden. What was the lab like to learn in under Rudi?**

**PL:** Oh, it was quite—actually a well set up lab for those days. There was a room, I suppose about half this size, plus an adjoining one where we—Johnnie Hill-Smith and I—were both out in the laboratory (*sounds like, in the other thing*), and Rudi was in his section. And out there we used to do all the tests and analysis, which were somewhat sketchily explained to me but it didn't take long to pick that up. That was fairly routine. You'd test for, you know, sugars, acidity, pH, volatile acid etc. And the wines were, even in those days, regularly analysed during the make, and then periodically maybe every three/six months or so. But a lot of the time up there was spent also on—Rudi was very meticulous in keeping records of all the wine transactions, which he instilled into me and which I've—these days it's a very, very important part of winemaking. To keep a very accurate records of what's happened to a wine. Where it came from, how it was made etc etc.

**Was that unusual for the time, Peter?**

**PL:** I think he was ahead of the rest as far as accurate records were concerned. And what's more they had filing cabinets, you know. Lot of them, it'd be a book and they'd—half the time wouldn't be able to find out where the bloody hell it was.

**So you had nearly sixteen years at Yalumba?**

**PL:** No. Just under thirteen, and a bit. You know, I spent time in the laboratory and then I had a period on the cellar floor. And even a stint in the still house. They sent me up to look at the cooperage and I was not that way inclined. *(Laughs)* Percy Yates thought I could just look for a while and then—you know, you don't have to understand that. And I was spared the vineyard experience, which I think in some ways is a bit of a pity now because I—I can look at a vineyard these days and know whether it's been well pruned or not. But as for me doing it myself, I don't think I'd still be all that flash.

**Now, what took you away from Yalumba?**

**PL:** I suppose the lure for extra money. In those days the wine industry wasn't very well paid, and at regular intervals, cap in hand, you'd go and ask for a rise and, you know, it was always around the corner. And at the time a bloke called Bryan Dolan, who was winemaker at Saltram—and that was a wholly owned subsidiary of Stonyfell, and their winemaker, Jack Kilgour, left to go to Tatchilla. So Bryan was sort of either recalled or offered to go back to company headquarters, and that left a vacancy at Saltram for a manager winemaker. And I actually—on the QT, approached me whether I'd be interested. I think I was possibly picked because of my local knowledge. The fact that I lived in the district, near the growers and everything else. Those days, it was still a battle to get fruit because when I went—even up to that time, wine was actually rationed. You know, couldn't believe it. *(Laughter in voice)* It was actually scarce.

**This is the post-War?**

**PL:** Post War. Up to—or even when I left in '59, grapes were still very hard to come by.

So, anyhow, they advertised for this position and I applied for it. I told Mr Wyndham Hill-Smith that I had applied. He wasn't all that thrilled about it. 'Alright', he said, 'you go and see what they offer you and come back and tell me and I might offer you a bit more'. But I said, 'No. I don't think I'm going to

start bartering myself. I've just decided that if I get the job I'll leave'. So anyhow I did. I was able to get it. I thought it was laid down misere at first but there were quite a few applications for the job. Anyhow, be that as it may, I landed the job.

I remember the interview was Henry Martin, a bloke called Mick Auld, Bill White who was company secretary. They'd advertised that the salary would not be less than £1250 per annum. So in the interview, Henry was scratching himself as usual and said, 'Well, of course, can't imagine that the successful applicant would start at 1250'. I said, 'Oh, God, I read that it would not be less than 1250. I wouldn't even consider it at 1250', which was somewhat more than I was getting then. Bill White said, 'I know that it's really embarrassing talking about money but what would you consider?' I said, 'I wouldn't consider it under 1500'. Well, Henry fainted. (*Laughter*) Bill nearly swallowed his pipe. And Mick Auld, I don't know what—he (*couldn't decipher words*). So they sort of smiled weakly and said, 'Oh, well, I think we've got all the particulars. We'll be in touch with you'. Don't ring me, we'll ring you. (*Laughs*) I waited and waited and nothing happened for about a fortnight. I thought, 'Gawd, I've blown this'.

Subsequently I found out that it was decided there and then that they'd offer me the job and Henry was to let me know but he was leaving the next morning for the West and he forgot to tell me. So I was in limbo for a couple of weeks. Anyhow, finally got in touch and said, 'Your application has been successful'.

**Peter, by the time you got to Saltrams had Bryan Dolan already created the Mamre Brook?**

**PL:** No. No, that was—I went there in 1959. And Bryan, when he went to Stonyfell, he created the name—we bought—Metala was a place down at Langhorne Creek, as Mamre Brook was the homestead at Saltram. 1963, that was my idea to bring out the Mamre Brook label with the fruit from down on—what we called—Hatch's flat, on the Mamre Brook vineyard. A local girl, Jenny Tuckwell, actually designed the label for me—well, for us. So that was one of my babies.

**So yours was Mamre Brook and Brian did Metala?**

**PL:** That's right, yes.

**And in the late 60's, Margaret comes on the scene, and we'll get to that in just a minute, but tell me about the 1960's in the Barossa, Peter. What was it like with the growers, with the wine industry as a whole? Was it a turbulent time?**

**PL:** No. Actually in the—as I said, from '59 when I went there there was—the crush at Saltram was only about 500 tons, and one of my jobs was to try and lift the production. So it was really a matter of going out in the ute with a boot full of booze and calling on growers that I knew who didn't deal with Saltram and try and chat them up. And gradually I got, you know, a few tons, and gradually they increased it. By the time I left I think we were up to close to 6,000 tons. So things were fairly stable up until the sort of—I suppose the big change happened in '72 when the family sold out to Dalgety. And of course they were going to take the whole Australian industry by storm but the Foreign Review Investment Board took control of that and didn't allow them to buy any more. So they were sort of just left in limbo, having bought three wineries with only about three or four percent. It was—not Arthur or Martha. And the real crunch came in the sort of late 70's. By that time Mark would've been on the scene for quite a while.

**Peter, just go briefly to the 60's. Was that the period in which the dry reds began to come into the industry?**

**PL:** It started to come—as I mentioned earlier, when I—even when I went there in '59 it was still principally a fortified market. And it was only sort of post War influence started to show through in the—in the early 60s there was a gradual awareness and a call for table wines, and we saw the gradual build-up which became the red wine boom. And that collapsed I suppose in—what?—about the 70s?

**ML:** I think—what?—about '75/'76 things started to get—that was after the Wine Bureau campaign to get people to drink white, which they did -

**PL:** I mean, people thought that as long as it was red you could sell anything. Well, the quality, you know, got worse and worse because of—they were starting to stretch. You know, the old practice we heard recently about putting sultana on Cabernet or Shiraz skins. That became quite rife. The industry wasn't prepared for the—well, able to handle the great demand for red wines. Consequent of that, the quality really dropped.

This is where I was very fortunate going to Saltram when I did because they had traditionally always been quite big dry red makers, principally for the export market. And so I reckon, without going back and looking at figures, that maybe thirty or forty percent of their production would've been dry red. The rest would've been fortified.

**Now, to that point, did you make much dry red yourself?**

**PL:** Very little. I'd made, in the last couple of years I was Vintners—well, the last year I was at Vintners I made one 6,000 gallon batch of red, which really I suppose was my first foray into red wine making. But as I said, when I went to Saltram, they had been making red. They were able to help me a lot. You know, it was pretty well straightforward what to do. I knew the theory, of course. And those fellows knew the practice. They were, you know, pretty good cellar hands.

**So in a sense you cut your teeth on reds at Saltrams?**

**PL:** Yes, definitely. But by the same token, I had some experience with white wines at Yalumba because they used to make white, and Saltram had never made any white wines. So when I went there I started making whites as well, which we were able to sell in bulk.

**And the apple Riesling?**

**PL:** Oh, that was 1966. '65, we made just a smidgen. In '66, a few of us got together and got hold of some apples and made it at Saltram, which we called Zugspitze Apfelwein. Now the Zugspitze was the name of a hill just to the north of the Kaiser Stuhl. Locals called it the Zugspitze. I was rather delighted when I heard the translation of it—was called Windy Hill. I thought that, well, what a fitting tribute to my former boss. He never knew he had an apple wine named after him—Zugspitze Apfelwein. So we had a lot of fun with that. Fooling lots and lots of people. Show it to them on the blind and, you know, say what do you think it was.

Always remember one was when we had the Ararat Wine and Food Society, and Colin Priest was in their company. Great old winemaker from Great Western. And it was a beautiful warm day and served this wine chilled out of—just cleanskins. No label. And they were sucking away at it quite cheerfully. And Colin Priest said, 'Young fellow, that's the best white wine you've ever made'. And instead of asking, 'What do you reckon it is? Riesling or something', I was so stunned by that I said, 'Oh, you rotten old sod. That's made from apples'. He had another go. He said, 'Is that right?' I said, 'Yeah'. He said, 'Well, young fellow', he said, 'if that's the case, you stick to apples and leave the grapes to us experts'. (*Much laughter*) Sort of the end of eonoligical prankmanship, so to speak.

## **TAPE 1 - SIDE B**

### **Peter, just getting back to the apple wine. Was it Peter Wall and Ray Ward were involved with that -**

**PL:** Yeah. We'd formed a bit of a syndicate at that time, and full of bright ideas. Norm Hanckel was in the background there as well. And I think he wasn't actually involved in the apple wine but Wardy and Wally, you know, thought this was a terrific idea. And as I said, we made it at Saltram. I was able to use the—did it on a Saturday morning, and just put the apples through

a coq crusher and over the drainer and into the basket press and press it out. We didn't get a very high extraction. Flogged a bit of Riesling juice—yeast—might've helped the flavour a bit. And as I said, it was a lot of fun. Except subsequently, Colin Priest—who I told you—I was, on an occasion once where I was asked to speak on a masked wine . I gave it quite a good wrap-up and said that, you know, I thought it was a Semillon, and great was the joy of everyone around. It was bloody apple wine. (*Laughs*) So he got me with it as well.

**I gather from Wolf Blass that he retaliated at one occasion with a peach red—that's correct—where he actually crushed some peaches to put over some red grape juice.**

**PL:** Yeah. I've only heard that. I never actually saw the wine.

**He was so insulted at the thought of the apple wine - (*Laughter*)**

**PL:** Yeah, old Wolf, when he came out, as you know, he was with Kaiser Stuhl. He was their maker of pineapple and cherry pearl. When his contract had finished there he worked with Tollana as their winemaker, and he was also allowed at that time to do a bit on the side for himself. So that was the start of Bilyara. And I know getting close to the time of him leaving Tolleys and starting up there, he came and saw me one day and he suggested that I leave Saltram and join him and we go into partnership. You know, to cut it very—to précis it down quite a bit, I said, 'You know, Wolf, that sounds quite interesting. By the way, who's going to be boss?' 'Oh', he said, 'Cooky, I think you'd better stay here'. (*Laughter*) I don't think Wolf and I would've made a perfect team somehow.

**And Margaret, you come into the Valley as a teacher in '68?**

**ML:** No. I actually started teaching in '70 but I met Peter in 1968. And as you said, that was the time of real interest in red wines. And I think if you look back, it was the time when Frank Margan was writing and Len had the cellarmaster column in *The Bulletin*. And so you actually had more, I suppose,

greater exposure to wines, and newspapers started to have wine columns and wine writers so that it tapped into an interest and then helped to feed the interest. And I was always interested in wine. My father was an oenophile.

**Are you South Australian?**

**ML:** Yes. I was born in Adelaide. And we had wine at home. And in fact, we had John Vickery's wine at home because John Vickery's father was my father's best friend. And of course, John and Peter are very close friends. So all that seemed to mesh in and make sense.

**Was there, Margaret, a very united Barossa community at that time? If you were in wine, did you know lots of people?**

**ML:** Oh, absolutely. And I think that was the thing—coming from Adelaide—that really struck me very forcibly, was the degree of camaraderie between the wine companies and winemakers. And people were always dropping by and saying—particularly during vintage. It doesn't happen so much now. But in those days I could—if somebody had made a particularly good wine, they'd come by at 10 o'clock at night during vintage because you actually—it's much more hands-on then. And so there'd be lots of sharing of wine, sharing of discussions. We lived by a winery so it'd be, say, somebody from Yalumba or Kaiser Stuhl or down in that complex at Nuri—Tolleys. And sitting up and chewing the fat and so on. And it's still, even though things have changed and the way—well, just the processes—that camaraderie is still there.

So that if you were running a function—I mean, Peter was Chairman of the prewine auction dinner and the wine auction. The people on the committees were people like—I seem to remember Nick Seppelt, Peter Wall, John Vickery. And you'd have a lot of fun. As you can imagine, a lot of gossip. And so that tradition of putting a good committee together of fellow winemakers to get something done, it's exactly the same thirty years later.

**So, Peter, there was a tradition of the Barossa people working together even though they were competing on one level?**

**PL:** Oh, yes. I think that's still true today. I mean, the first thing, if someone's in trouble, the rest of the industry and the Valley would help them. Do what they could to help them. But it was much more laid back in those days. I mean, Christ, you'd never think of working on a Thursday. That was lunch, then golf. Much—you know, far more—relaxed. I mean, these days it's a little more frenetic and tighter. You know, we're busier and busier and busier. But that camaraderie and exchange of ideas still exists. I mean, the winemakers of the district still have a tasting every year after vintage and, in theory, everyone takes along two or three of their top wines to comment on and exchange ideas.

**ML:** Actually it's tomorrow.

**PL:** It's tomorrow, is it?

**ML:** The tasting.

**PL:** But all that we know, including us, we always keep one or—you know, maybe the absolute screamer up your sleeve. Show that when the show circuit comes around. You might surprise someone. *(Laughs)* But of course, these days, I think none of the show societies do have the class now for year of vintage. In those days all the national shows, they'd have year of vintage wines, which became less and less meaningful when they were used for—I suppose you could almost say—improper advertising reasons. Because who would know what was going to happen to that wine. A bit like the Jimmy Watson, you know. It's still the most sought after trophy in the Australian wine arena, and yet it's normally for wine that is only one year old and still in bulk. But, you know, ourselves included, it's still the most coveted and sought after trophy in the Australian wine circuit.

**I wanted to ask you both about that, and may be, Peter, you're the first to answer.**

**Was the show circuit a very important thing to you?**

**PL:** Oh, yes, definitely. I still think it is important but it does show your peers, and the public to that extent, what you are capable of producing. And it also—

when you go along to a tasting you can also see how your wines compare with the best of wines of this State and other States as well. So I think it's very important.

**Margaret, would you share(?) with that, too?**

**ML:** Oh, absolutely. I think it might've been—I was just trying to remember when the Adelaide Wine Show, which I think was generally held in the highest esteem, decided that they could have exhibitor judges. Melbourne still doesn't, I don't think -

**PL:** No.

**ML:** - and Brisbane still doesn't. But I think it must've been about '75.

**Yes, I reckon it is '75/6.**

**ML:** Because I seem to recall Philip was—you tend to flag things by how old the children were at the time. Whether we had one or two. So that Peter had started off as an associate and then moved into full judging. And that was the time when you had Brian Barry, yourself, as active winemakers. Who else was in that? Robert Hesketh, of course, was part of that. But there was a very -

**PL:** Tim Knapstein.

**ML:** And Tim. So that there were a group of highly—you know, good winemakers with palates at their peak, who were actually doing, say, Adelaide—would start off with Perth, Adelaide, and then moved into Canberra. And what you actually had was, I think, a consistency of judging, which still happens.

But the other really important thing was that people were picking up faults, and out of that winemaking standards were raised. And they were actually passing on technical expertise in a way perhaps, say, an amateur, but good palate, wasn't. So do you remember that tainted carbondioxide in Perth?

**PL:** That's a really good example. There was a period when the CO<sup>2</sup> being supplied to the industry was being recovered from other than natural sources. Generally comes from Mount Gambier through a—and they were recovering it through the petroleum industry I think. And it was tainted. And suddenly at the Perth Royal Show, it showed up in quite a few wines. And boy! You know, it was—without that—that's a good example. I think without that show being there possibly it could've gone much further.

**ML:** And ironically it was showing up in the better winemakers' wines who were -

**PL:** Yeah. The more careful they were, i.e. the more CO<sup>2</sup> they were using to blanket their wine in the handling and bottling of the wine, the worse the fault was.

And other examples was the crusade led I think—well, Brian Barry, myself, Len Evans. You know, we really got stuck into wine for showing sulphide faults. You know, from—all wines will generate some H<sub>2</sub>S during fermentation. It's fairly easy to remove, either during fermentation or immediately post fermentation, but if it's left there for any time it'll form a radical and you get all those funny—what they used to—you know, the hunted sweaty saddle or the cowyard smell, or something. Well, they're all radicals caused through H<sub>2</sub>S. So we really started hitting the wines showing that fault, including some of our own. That did clean up the Australian industry.

**Peter, are there many technical advances in this period as well?**

**PL:** Oh, enormous. I think a lot of this goes back to the Wine Research Institute. They made some discoveries, which they could then show the winemakers things to avoid. What sort of condition to keep your fermenting juice in to avoid certain faults. And the combination of science, the art of winemaking and care, better equipment, or something, has seen an enormous upgrading of the quality of Australian wines.

**ML:** When did you get your first refrigeration at Saltram? Was that '67? I mean, it was a very small unit.

**PL:** Oh, very small thing.

**ML:** But that was fantastic because you could control the temperature—the fermentation of wines, which was enormously important. And of course, Orlando and so on had their refrigeration in much earlier. And Saltram was sort of medium sized winery. It needed to be a little bit later.

**PL:** Yeah, we had well water and copper tubes, and sitting on top of the fermenting tanks, which would keep them more or less, you know, reasonably under control. What we called a cold ferment there was anything under 90<sup>0</sup>F, (*Laughs*) which actually isn't all that bad for reds anyhow. But it's much better to be able to control them with refrigeration right on the spot, and as many as you need to at the time. But I think Orlando, Leo Burings, all the bigger companies, when they put in refrigeration you saw an immediate improvement in the quality of white wines.

**Mid 60's—late 60's, would've been the first of the big Pewseys coming through too.**

**PL:** Yeah.

**Peter Wall making those Rieslings. Can't remember the Stelvin cap. It might've been '69**

**PL:** '69, I think it was.

**And that was a surprise.**

**PL:** Yeah, it's still very fresh. I don't know what the future of the Stelvin is going to be. I mean, to me it makes a lot of sense for wines for, you know, quick turnover. Pointless using a cork when you can use a Stelvin but there's still definitely a buyers resistance to other than the traditional closure. And you know, wines like our—well, Eight Songs Shiraz is a good example, or stonewell or mentor or something like that, I'm still very loathe to put them in a Stelvin

closure because the wines are then going virtually mature very, very slowly. At least with a cork you do get the natural exchange through the cork—or alongside the cork, or whatever—of some ageing.

**Now, Margaret, through the 60's, too, in the industry—this is the beginning of—I guess you'd call it the modern era of promotion of the industry with young Wolf coming in with his bow ties and his (*couldn't decipher word/s*) completely different view of the world. Did you see that changing at the time—the way that wine was being promoted?**

**ML:** Well, I suppose I think that, as I said, you started to get some quite serious writing. I mean, you'd have Walter Jones and so on but these were in more readily available publications and were not so esoteric and said that wine is fun, and so you started to get winemakers being known as people. And I suppose the parallel today is the way that chefs are now identified. So winemakers were being pulled out. So in fact, I must say that Peter at that time, when I met him, did have a name.

**That's nice to know, Peter. I'm pleased for you that that was the case.**

**PL:** I thought it was my body she was after. (*Laughter*)

**ML:** But as Peter mentioned, I mean it was a very much more laid back—much more time for people to enjoy each others company. And I guess it was about the end of September/early October that I seem to remember that the wines were bedded down, you finally tucked them away, you'd put them in a barrel and they'd been cleaned up after vintage. And after that there's virtually two or three months where—very, very easy because the winemaker was not pushed into the major promotional trail to give—which is what's happening now with that huge proliferation of labels. People saying that we want to hear the winemaker talk. So the marketing department are pulling the winemakers out. So you think of, say, the role of John Duval's playing now with promotional Grange in the Grange clinics. And in those days I suppose, the winemaker, you didn't have the linkage of huge number of winemaker dinners. You went to

the restaurants. You had a few wine clubs like Bacchus, and Beefsteak and Burgundy.

**PL:** Yeah, Beefsteak and Burgundy, and wine and food societies.

**ML:** Wine and food societies, who were very important. Always treated as honoured guests if they wanted to see the wines.

**PL:** Just get an invitation from one of those and, you know, you'd go to it like a shot just to get some exposure. No question of them buying the wine. You'd donate all the wines for the dinner.

**ML:** So they were very, very important.

**PL:** As Margaret said, they were fairly rare. You know, you might have two or three a year. Except for your local club.

**ML:** And I mean, marketing. The whole concept of a marketing department wasn't formalised or wasn't as important as it is now. Although I do recall when Dalgety came in—I mean the Stoneyfell market(?) (*couldn't decipher words*). (*Laughs*) But it wasn't—I mean it had its traditional markets whereas Dalgety did attempt to market, and had a few interesting moments when they changed—remember the skittle bottles?

**PL:** Yeah.

**ML:** Where it seemed like a good idea. Changed labels, of course. But it's not with the degree of what I call flair, style, sophistication that you have today. And for all the obvious reasons. And of course, export hadn't started. I mean, you got very excited if somebody came in from overseas and said that your wine's good. That was a real rarity. Now, of course, we're moving totally between all the worlds. I mean, people in our company—I think all the key people would've been overseas this year, just as a matter of course. Say, 'Right. It's your turn. Off you go to America'. Or to Europe. Or whatever. So

the whole wine—it has become a wine world and not just a little neck of the woods where you're struggling to have your name made.

**I think that's a very good description about being a wine world. But back in the Saltram days it was still very parochial, wasn't it?**

**PL:** Very, yeah.

**What actually took you away from Saltram, Peter? Perhaps you answer that.**

**PL:** Well, really it was the company reneging on their agreement with the growers. I mentioned earlier that my job was to increase the tonnage, and this was done by trust. You know, a handshake. You look after us and we'll look after you, which went well until suddenly we ran into the start of the wine glut. And in 1977, Dalgetys were having a pretty torrid time throughout Australia. Even though it was an English company, most of its activities were in Australia, and most of them rural, and they were having a hell of a time. Bad time, that is. And I was just one day opened the mail and there was a letter from the company secretary just advising me not to buy any grapes from the Barossa growers from the coming vintage. I couldn't believe my bloody eyes. I mean, (a) I thought a phone call would've—you know, discussion. But this just came out of the blue. So I got hot on the phone and tried every trick in the trade. And they just said that, no, you've got to send—and I said, 'I'm not sending out any letters'. So one of the other members of the team at Stoneyfell said, 'Well, we'll send them out'.

So they just sent out a letter to all the growers saying that, you know, regrettably we won't be able to take any of your grapes for the 1978 vintage, which left me in a hell of a position because where was this trust? This handshake deal?

And to cut a very long story short, Dalgetys finally allowed me permission—granted me permission—to form an outside company to—also offered, you know, a reasonably priced charge to contract crush at Saltram, which I was able to with the help of Margaret's relations and some of our friends. We raked

up 180 grand, and with that proceeded to buy a couple of million bucks worth of grapes. Pretty well on the never-never.

But I was able—in the early stages I could see this coming. White wines were still in demand. There was still a shortage of whites. It was the reds that were the problem. So I was able to pre-sell all the white which I knew would be coming in, principally to Lindemans at that time. And of course, then suddenly Saltram, or Dalgetys, said, 'Hey you'll have to—we'll need some'. So they became our second biggest customer. You know, it was that bloody ludicrous.

### **This is Masterson?**

**ML:** This is Masterson.

**PL:** Yeah. So we called the company Masterson. I was told, you know, that I had to keep an arm's length. So a mate of mine, Robert Hesketh, had been overseas and he just came back and I spoke to him. *(Laughter)* So he and Margaret became—that's how arm's length it was. Margaret was the partner in this Masterson enterprise.

So we proceeded to buy all the fruit, and the income from the white sales was sufficient to pay the crushing fees and all the grape purchase costs. So we got the red virtually in the cellar for nothing. And near enough to break even. We weren't hopelessly in debt. So it was a success. Dalgetys were that delighted with the operation—because they -

*(Interruption)*

**Margaret, we were talking about Masterson and that whole period in your life. That must've meant a lot of tumult in the family.**

**ML:** Well, it was—Peter sort of, I think, skated over the enormity of attempting to achieve what he achieved. Because I can recall—I think it was probably about October 1977—there had been a Board meeting—because you'll have to appreciate I had two small children at that stage so quite a bit of the actual ins and outs of companies and Board meetings tended to pass me by—where Dalgety at that Board meeting had taken on a grower 100%, who was a

significant grower, and then the next month came out with this directive. And Peter went through—oh, it was just an agony of—it was anger, frustration, mixed with ‘I must honour my word’. I mean, it was destroying him as a person. So there was a lot of conversation, a lot of debating, a lot of, well, how can we achieve this? I remember the Chairman had come out from London. What’s his name? Rupert Withers?

**PL:** Yes.

**ML:** And Peter had put this to him, that if he could set up an outside company to process the fruit would that be alright.

**PL:** No, actually that’s not quite right, Margaret. What I said to Rupert was that I tried to show them the blueprint of how they could finance the vintage themselves, doing exactly what subsequently we did do, and they could at no cost to themselves, and in fact, make a profit. But he said, ‘Oh, it’s Dalgety policy not to interfere in the domestic scene’. I said, ‘Well, if that’s the case, you’re the ones who told them what to do. Now you say that you’re not going to interfere’. I said, ‘The old argument’. He said, ‘No, we just can’t interfere in this. That’s a local management decision’.

**ML:** So the important thing was, however, out of that came the permission, if you like, to do it.

**PL:** Yeah.

**ML:** So then you had to raise money. And so it was—as Peter said, we managed to raise about 180,000 through friends and relations, and people who genuinely responded to what he was attempting to do, on an ethical basis.

**So from that time on, Peter, was your relationship with Dalgety a little bit rocky?**

**PL:** Well, they didn’t hang around much longer than that because that was in ‘77/’78 vintage and, as I said, they were that delighted with the outcome because (a) there was no egg on their face, outwardly, because the grapes

were still seen to be going to Saltram, (b) they recovered something like 240,000 from overheads through contract fees that we paid, and thirdly, they could just take the pick of the wines they wanted. And in this case it was only whites. So that was fine. So much so that they shouted Margaret and me a trip around the world. First time Dalgetys had ever signed an oath of secrecy that the company were paying for her because traditionally Dalgetys had never before ever sent a wife on such a trip.

**ML:** And there I was, I was saving up all my money so that we could pay for it. *(Laughs)*

**PL:** Just told me just to enjoy myself. When the bills came in, I remember David Crosby was General Manager, he said, 'Christ, I said enjoy yourself but I didn't mean to quite this extent'. *(Laughter)*

However, the other thing was also—as I said, they were that delighted that they said would you like to do it again in 1979? And we said, 'Yes, we would. That's fine'.

So letters were exchanged agreeing to this. And while we were in England I was doing my best to try and just buy Saltram from Dalgetys because I knew they were desperate to unload, and they would've sold them off individually. But unbeknown to me, whilst I was negotiating with their henchmen in the UK, Seagrams came on the scene in Australia and bought the whole bloody lot. So when I came back I was just told, 'Oh, by the way, bad news about you buying Saltram. Seagrams have bought the whole operation—the whole Dalgety trading companies'. Roxton, Krondorf, Stoneyfell, Saltram. Oh, well, that's that. And Lindsay Point. But Seagrams still had to honour the '79 vintage, which we did much the same way—profitably.

The other thing that happened in '79 was that, out of the blue, Penfolds bought all the dry red. So, you know, we were laughing. And gave us enough confidence to even run a pool in '79 for distressed growers who couldn't sell their—this is not Saltram growers but other growers. You know, their fruit would've rotted on the thing so we just ran an emergency pool. Over the years

I think I did five of them and scrambled out of it in every case, which was much better than the grapes rotting on the vine.

Another reason I did that was that I thought it was not good advert for the Barossa if visitors come through and they see vineyards unpicked and fruit rotting there. 'Well, obviously people can't think much of the Barossa if that's what they think of their grapes. They let them rot'. So for all those reasons, you know, it was very much a salvage operation.

However, back to the '79 vintage which Seagrams had to honour. They made it very clear to me that there's no way that I'd be able to use the Saltram premises subsequent to that to handle any of my fruit. So that was enough to—that might I resign from the company. Gave them three months notice, expecting them to say, 'Give us your keys and off', but they actually gave me the three months and said, 'Look, we know you'll be busy setting up your own thing. That's fine as long as you're on hand if we need anything. Out of the length of time that you've been here we'll give you the three months grace and do your own thing', which was unexpected but it was very pleasant the way that they took that.

The next thing was to find partners, which we did - *(tape ceased)*

## **OH 692/88 TAPE 2 - SIDE A**

**NATIONAL WINE CENTRE, WOLF BLASS FOUNDATION, ORAL HISTORY.  
Interview with Peter and Margaret Lehmann on 22nd June, 2000.  
Interviewer: Rob Linn.**

**Margaret, I was going to actually come back to this anyway so we might as well go on with what you've just raised. And that's to do with the question of the ups and downs in the industry, if you like, and the way things go in and out of favour, be it the reds or the whites, but it did happen at one point that the Barossa as a region, if you like, hit the pits, didn't it? Because suddenly there was a cool climate search on.**

**ML:** Well, the cool climate philosophy really, I think, came through in the early 80's. And what had happened was that in the 60's you had red wine. So then

there was that campaign, I think in the early 70's, to get people to drink more white wine and just think about drinking wines. And that of course, coincided with the improvement in white winemaking techniques and, in particular, refrigeration.

And then there'd been a huge surge in white wine—white grape plantings—in the 70's. Especially Riesling. And then, for example, Hardys I think—I don't know whether we—but they had been encouraging growers here to plant Riesling, but meanwhile were developing Padthaway. And so suddenly the growers were left because they were focusing on the Padthaway vineyards, while still calling it Siegersdorf.

And then we—I'd written (*couldn't decipher word*) so I think I was very fortunate at the time that I met Peter because it was still very much the family companies. There were Gramps in at Orlando, there were Seppelts at Seppeltsfield. Of course the Smiths still had—were there at Yalumba, and still are. And Saltram was part of a family—the Stoneyfell, H.M. Martin group. So I saw the older ways—companies. And then it was a period historically where -

### **Orlandos first off the rank?**

**ML:** Yes. With Reckitt & Colman. And the shock-waves of that through the Valley were huge.

**PL:** Falling over like bowling pins there for a while.

**ML:** Oh, yes. And there was Reed paper and -

**PL:** Distillers.

**ML:** Yes.

### **Sorry, what was that, Peter?**

**PL:** Distillers. They bought Tollana.

**ML:** And it was a time when I think the prevailing corporate philosophy was to diversify. So if you look at Dalgety, they decided that it was time to pick up wineries but they were in Bonaire air-conditioning, apart from being -

**PL:** Coach building and—apart from their pastoral interests.

**ML:** And their pastoral interests which, if you like, was their core business. And of course in the 90's, what you see with these companies—these great agglomerates—is people—the tag phrase is 'get back to your core business'. At the same time the Barossa, as I perceived sort of coming in as an outsider, lost its way because of the lack of focus, as it were. Reckitt & Colman didn't succeed with Orlando in the way that they'd anticipated. Neither did Dalgety. And you had a rise in new areas being opened up. And through Roseworthy and the teaching institutions there was a growth in, what I'd say, the cool climate wines philosophy. And so the Barossa was put into, 'Excuse me, you're a hot area basket', which then made the wines unfashionable. And it wasn't until the early to mid 80's that you actually had the development of smaller region specific wineries. So I think Elderton could well've been one of the first cabs off the rank, 'We're proudly Barossa'.

You had things like Barossa Settlers where growers—the Haeses—were sick of the ups and downs and concern about whether or not their fruit was going to be bought. And so they then value-added to their own vineyards.

Then you had Rockford with Robert O'Callaghan coming in, and then Charlie leaving us here to set up Charles Melton Wines. And then of course, McLean coming in the late 80's to refocus St Hallett.

**PL:** And The Willows.

**ML:** And The Willows. Oh, then there were various other—Steve Hoff and so on.

**PL:** *(couldn't decipher word)*.

**ML:** So it was where people—it was the smaller companies that actually started to refocus and say that these are Barossa regional wines. And for a long time we were the only ones, if you like—I think Jancis Robinson, or somebody's, described Peter as the pilot light because he never ever lost faith

in the Barossa—not once—where it was fashionable to slam it. And if I look back to -

**PL:** It's like marrying an ugly wife though, you're stuck with it.

**ML:** Yeah. *(Laughter)* But if I look back—when we go back through the files to descriptions or writings of Peter on wines from the 60's and 70's, and he did a few articles at that time, they're words that are being used today. And so the wheel has turned full circle. And of course, then it was the pits in the Barossa—because we were hanging on by our fingernails.

**That's what I want to ask now, Peter, of you. Was setting up Masterson and then into Hoffmanns—all that part of your life—was that really a pretty nail biting time?**

**PL:** Oh, was it ever! I mean, just setting up Masterson itself—Hoffmanns didn't come into the scene at all except that we bought the land from Hoffmanns. We were able to buy—get a subdivision through for eight acres for the winery and eight acres for our house site. And the other partner, who also was significant shareholder in Hoffmanns, a bloke called Brian Anders, eleven acres for the tank farm. Because he'd traditionally supplied all the storage for us, at cost of course. But that was a very, very traumatic, you know, period. I really went into the 'blacks' for quite a period because at one stage it didn't look like succeeding.

And funnily enough, the bloke who had the dream of Dalgetys being successful in the wine industry, a fellow called Arthur Dunstan, was also Chairman of Cerebos, and he was that incensed when Dalgety sold to Seagrams that he resigned from the Dalgety Board. And knowing his passion for the wine industry—one thing I'll say about Arthur was that I think everything that he fought—you know, as far as the future of the wine industry, he was just about ten years before his time. It all happened subsequently. But he really had this passion that the Australian wine industry had an enormous future. And knowing this, I don't think I exploited him, but I certainly made use of this knowledge, and asked him whether Cerebos would be interested in becoming

a partner in the new winery. He said that he was only Chairman but he'd get the Managing Director of Cerebos to talk to us.

And they flew us to Sydney on, I think, three or four occasions. Eventually said, 'Yes, we'll become partners', which was enormous—they took 51% of the company, which gave them control. Didn't have to put in a lot of money. We should've actually raised more as it happened but their borrowing capacity was virtually unlimited. Far more than we needed. So that was their strength. And they were terrific partners.

And the other partner was the bloke that I mentioned before, Brian Anders. So Cerebos had 51%, Anders family had 29 and we had 20. So that was our beginnings. And we started building in October 1979 and we were up and running in February 1980 for our first vintage.

**ML:** With a huge storm in the middle.

**PL:** Yeah. *(Laughs)*

**ML:** That was in about November 15th or something.

**I remember that.**

**PL:** I missed it because I was judging the Canberra Wine Show at the time, and I couldn't believe my eyes when—I was summoned back, of course, and could not believe the devastation that had occurred in parts of the Barossa.

**I can remember where I was. Driving between Mount Pleasant and Angaston—in disbelief. Power lines going everywhere. Tanks being—just shredded.**

**PL:** Well, we had all these—all our future storage tanks were just in—never been used. Brand new. There were 28 of them, and they were all pulped. One, a 30,000 gallon tank, was lifted from here and blown right across the Para Creek and landed in, what was then, Leo Burings. Today, Richmond Grove.

**ML:** It was just extraordinary.

**PL:** Would've been half a kilometre. The stobie pole—you know, they're pretty solid things—just outside here at Hoffmanns was just bent over like a butter knife. You know, it was incredible. And the devastation of the trees was -

**ML:** And yet we had some tanks in front of the winery—smaller tanks -

**PL:** Which were only about 400 metres up the road.

**ML:** Didn't shift.

**PL:** And they weren't touched. Incredible. Such a narrow swathe.

**And, look, one of the things that I want to explore with you is the evolution of Peter Lehmann Wines as it came to be, and I know it is (*sounds like, that public mystique and then onto that*). But before we each get on to that side of the (*sounds like, corporate's tale*), how did your idea of the labelling start to evolve? The fact that—there's something peculiarly Barossan about your wine bottles and the labelling. Because I was talking to Wytt Moro last week and Wytt still thinks that you're one of the few wineries that are doing proper labels. (*Laughter*)**

**ML:** Did you tell Robert Edwards that?

**PL:** Well, actually when I put this proposal to Cerebos to come in as partners, our initial conception was that we would carry on the way we'd completed our first two vintages while we were still at Saltram as Masterson. In other words, just be bulk suppliers to the Australian wine industry, which logically sounded very sound, and we'd done very well out of those two vintages. So consequently we did not envisage bottles, bottling line or labels or anything at that stage. It was only after we did the 1980 vintage and the surplus situation, you know, became worse, and by '81—fortunately was a very light vintage. And by '82, people to whom I was expecting to be selling in bulk were out there selling bulk themselves. And we realised that the only possible way we'd survive was for us to go into what, you know, I call the glass jungle—i.e. the bottle market. And to do that we needed a label. And I prevailed upon my good mate, Rod Schubert, who's a local artist, to design our first label. And we had called the company Masterson Barossa Vignerons. This was principally because Masterson was firmly entrenched in the growers' minds. They felt

comfortable with it and they knew they paid. So rather than call it anything else we just added the words Barossa Vignerons to differentiate it from Masterson Pty Ltd—company we still own. And so the reason we chose Masterson was because if anything was a gamble, this was. That was back in '77 when we started and we drew on Damon Runyon's character, Sky Masterson, from Guys and Dolls. He was an inveterate gambler so we thought if anything's a gamble, this is. That's how the name Masterson came into being.

So Schubert, armed with all this knowledge, came up with his first label, and the logo was the Queen of Clubs. I just said to him, 'Rod, what's with the Queen of Clubs?' He said, 'Peter, Peter, the gamblers card'. Well, to me, 52 cards are the gamblers cards. *(Laughter)* Anyhow, so that's how the logo came to pass. It was all Schubert's doing.

**So what about the evolution into some of your modern(?) labels using a lot of Schubert's paintings. Was that a logical progression?**

**PL:** Well, all these things happened—well, I think it's logical. *(Laughs)* But let's go from—just back a minute. Seagrams, having shown us the way not to do things—and Cerebos had some pretty good marketing blokes there and they said that this Masterson Barossa Vignerons is too unwieldy, and they said that we're going to rename the company Peter Lehmann Wines. Well, I felt, you know, a little bit—subsequent to that when I heard Peter Lehmann, I was looking around thinking, you know, talking to me but after a while you get used to it. So it's Peter Lehmann the company completely devoid from Peter Lehmann the person. So that's how Peter Lehmann came to appear on the labels.

**ML:** That was about 1982 I think.

**PL:** '82/'83, yes. And then we used the same label that Rod had designed, and then we just used variations of colour for different styles. And I think it was principally Robert Edwards, who's our marketing manager, when he joined us, he said, 'Your labels are too plain and too much of a muchness'. I would've stayed with them *(Laughs)* but he came up with this conception together

with—he and Ian Kidd—an input from quite a few but principally Edwards and Kidd(?) came up with this conception of getting local artists, or Adelaide artists, or Australian artists—whoever—to each be given a description of a particular wine, whether its Shiraz, Cabernet Sauvignon, Chardonnay or whatever, and for them to paint their interpretation of that wine with their particular queen. So that's how we came up with—what is it?—eight or nine different queens.

**ML:** Yeah. And that's been I think -

**PL:** It's been very successful.

**ML:** (a) Successful but (b) I think it's successful because it has meaning. It flows from the wine, which is very hard to describe in words. So you're using—I mean, wine's a sensory experience. So you're using other sensory triggers, if you like, which mean a huge amount to Peter and me, and to everybody else in the company, because it's the Queen of Clubs.

**Margaret, this might seem a strange question but do you feel a bit like you and Peter are survivors in the industry?**

**ML:** Well, you have to, don't you? (*Laughs*)

**PL:** You can say that we're more survivors than pioneers in many ways, aren't we?

**ML:** Because I don't think—I mean, now if you ever tried to do that, you couldn't. (a) It was in the time of surplus, (b) nothing—there were no business plans. I mean, you were just doing it on stubborn faith and conviction and saying that this is the right thing to do. And somehow it succeeded. But not without an incredible team. And Peter's always been a very strong team man. So you could never have done it on your own. Andrew Wigan came. The original staff or the group at Saltram. So we see ourselves very much as a family of people, and it was that decision back in 1982 which put Peter's name on the label. Because we had a small shareholding then—or shareholding. But it was never set out the way, say, somebody might do it today. And so, in a sense, it's a symbolic thing. I think we—not so much survivors really when you

ask that question now, I think it is saying that the things that we believe in, and the whole team believed in, we've finally actually been vindicated. That we were not wrong at that time. You just had to go through some pretty rocky times to get to the other end. *(Laughs)*

**PL:** Very important for someone with my birthline is to be not wrong.  
*(Laughter)*

**I can understand that, Peter.**

**I was going to actually ask you, Peter, is it a peculiarly Barossa thing—that sense of team and family? Because where your training was, at Yalumba, is still very much about the same ethos of the team, the family. Is that something that you think's been with you all the time?**

**PL:** Well, I think it has. You know, I said right at the beginning that a lot of my philosophy came from these three blokes, and I think the one thing in common was pride in what you're doing, and don't ever imagine that you're doing it yourself. You're part of a team. I've always espoused that teamship. And also I think one difference these days is that we do reward the team members better than they used to in those days. The only way to have really satisfied people working with you is to look after them adequately, and that includes a decent salary, which in the old days, as I said, cap in hand didn't engender a feeling of as much pride in what they're doing as it should've.