

## THIS WEEK

Avo fad a smashing success; adrenalin rush in 'dishwasher'; a triptych of terrific artists; banksias are the best bird magnets

# goodlife

FOOD & WINE/ART/BOOKS/TRAVEL/GARDENING ... AND OTHER WEEKEND TREATS



## GRAPE ESCAPE

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**D**on't be afraid to go out on a limb and try something you might really like, even if it's daunting and you are not sure if you are going to get there. Just have a go. Think it through carefully. Make some plans and take a step towards it. It's amazing how many doors will open when you try to achieve something you really want.

That's the advice from Gilli and Paul Lipscombe, who in 2005 quit corporate jobs in London to follow their shared dream of making wine.

Since 2010, they have run their Sailor Seeks Horse winery in Cradoc, just outside of Cygnet in the Huon Valley. And this year, they have been short-listed as one of 50 finalists in Australia's Young Gun of Wine competition.

Of the finalists, four are from Tasmania.

"We are living our dream," Gilli says. "We asked the UK's most respected wine writer 13 years ago if he had any tips for setting out on your own and planting a vineyard, and he said: 'Don't do it'. It wasn't really the advice we wanted to hear," she laughs. "But we had the confidence and a drive to do it, so we were pretty determined to give it a go and to make it work."

The couple spent five years getting practical, hands-on experience in some of the best vineyards and wineries in the world. They studied winemaking and viticulture at Margaret River, in Western Australia.

"I don't know if you ever feel ready, but you are sort of ready enough," Gilli says. "It's about doing something you really want to do and seizing the moment and just doing it. I'm not sure if it's courageous or a little bit silly, but finding something that you love to do and being able to go and jump straight into it has been amazing."

She says the key to their success was finding the perfect location. The couple had no previous ties to Tasmania but honeymooned on the Apple Isle in 2008, with the goal of buying a block of land. It took about two years before they found what was an abandoned and dilapidated 6.5ha vineyard. Half the vines were dead, but they coaxed the remainder back to life - and planted more.

Their first commercial vintage came in 2013 - a pinot noir released in 2015. Their 2016 vintage is this year's product, with about 1300 cases produced. The couple's long-term goal is to produce the best pinot noir and chardonnay in Australia. "For us, it's about saying, 'This is us and it's what we've spent our lives doing'," Gilli says.

You can sample the couple's Sailor Seeks Horse wines by the glass at Elizabeth Street's Etties and North Hobart's Willing Brothers, or buy a bottle at Drink Co in Salamanca.

Gilli says while it's humbling to be nominated for the competition, she's more excited that three other Tasmanian winemakers are also in the top 50 - Ricky Evans from Two Tonne, Peter Dredge from Meadowbank and Jonathan Hughes from Mewstone.

*Australia's Young Gun of Wine will be announced at Mona on June 18, during Dark Mofo.*