

Quench

with KERRY SKINNER

Seek these out

It's been interesting to track the rise of the Southern Highlands wine region over the past couple of years.

In that time tens of millions of dollars have been pumped into vineyards and infrastructure in a region that now boasts more than 60 winemaking operations.

Importantly the investment has been transformed into some high-quality wines, recognition on the world and national stage, an upsurge in visitors and an increasingly rosy future.

Wineries like **Cuttaway Hill**, **Tertini**, **Centennial Vineyards**, **Southern Highlands Wines** and others are now regularly recognised on the show circuit.

For **Cuttaway Hill** (www.cuttawayhillwines.com.au), on the slopes of Mt Gibraltar near Mittagong, the rise to prominence has come through the work of Mark Bourne, an astute, no-nonsense industry professional, and the financial commitment of Sydney-based Irishman Laurence O'Neil, his wife Philomena and their family who planted the original vineyards.

It was Bourne who tapped the potential of the cool-climate varieties like pinot noir, chardonnay, sauvignon blanc and pinot gris that have formed the nucleus of **Cuttaway Hill's** impressive portfolio.

If there is a downside, though, it's the fact that **Cuttaway** doesn't have a cellar door because it is producing some seriously good wines which are worth seeking out.

In the meantime, wines can be ordered online and the website also has an extensive list of stockists.

Cuttaway Hill 2010 Sauvignon Blanc \$20: Classic cool-climate sauvignon blanc and a fine example of the quality of wine coming out of the Southern Highlands. It's aromatic, bright and breezy with pristine passionfruit, tropical and stonefruit flavours, integrated herbaceous characters, lively acidity, and a clean, crisp finish.



Cuttaway Hill 2010 Semillon Sauvignon Blanc \$20: Nicely structured blend of semillon (51 per cent) and sauvignon blanc (49 per cent) from **Cuttaway's** Seven Daughters label which melds together flawlessly. Flavours in the citrus, tropical fruit spectrum, spice and cut grass characters, a zesty acidic backbone and a crisp finish.

