



# DAMIAN HUTTON

Head Winemaker, Nikola Estate

*How did you get your start in wine?*

My Uncle, Ron Page, got me a job in the vineyards at Houghton Wines during my summer school holidays. Once I finished high school, I moved to the winery for my first vintage in my gap year.

*What is the best thing about working in the wine sector?*

The wine, of course. At the end of each day, there is always a glass of something delicious to be had.

*What have been some of the highlights of your career in wine?*

Establishing and building the brands of Millbrook and now Nikola Estate, from the ground up is a hugely rewarding challenge, and through these endeavours come the highlights. Watching the brand awareness in the market, and the success of the business grow into an established brand is great.

*What are some of the aspects of Australian winemaking that make our market unique?*

The fact that we have the freedom to produce any Variety we want, and blend anything we want, to make eclectic and delicious wines, make us unique across the world.

*How have you been able to explore viticulture throughout your career and across different regions?*

Working closely with growers from

across the state, growing many different varieties, and allowing these growers to use their own initiative when growing their fruit for me to make into wine, is always a learning experience.

*What are some of the challenges involved with being a part of the winemaking industry?*

The wine industry is very competitive at all levels. The market is full of product that compete directly with each other, and then there is the greater drinks sector to compete with also. Making good wine at competitive prices is getting harder and harder.

*What would be your advice to someone just entering the industry?*

Don't enter it if you don't love it. You can't just 'sort of' like making wine. You will just make another average drink. You must fully love it, or there is simply no point.

*Why is it important for the wine industry to explore innovation and connect with new people?*

Finding a point of difference, through innovation, can often become the norm. The evolution of Western Australian Chardonnay is a good example of how trying something different can redefine a style. So, it's important to embrace innovation, listen and learn from other people, to develop the industry as a whole.

Grapegrower & Winemaker magazine is an easy to digest, educational read that, for me, continuously teaches you that what we do is predominantly agriculture. From this comes the wine, and in that respect, you realise that you never stop learning. You also realise that we are all pretty much nerds who happen to make really cool wines.

Daman Hutton on the *Grapegrower & Winemaker*

**Location:**

Middle Swan, Swan Valley

Western

Australia

