

CULTURE & LIFESTYLE / FOOD AND DRINK

# Back to basics: meet the guy revolutionising the way we drink

*A natural drop*



## Ed Loveday

Ed Loveday is the co-founder of Darlinghurst's The Passage bar and Potts Point restaurant ACME, which means he's a veritable goldmine of food, drink and entertaining knowledge.

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## It's safe to say there aren't too many Richie Harkhams in this world, says Ed Loveday

Part philosopher, dreamer, winemaker and philanthropist - there are few people with a more infectious vibe and passion for natural wine that I know. In 2005, drawn by the green pastures and sloping hills of the Hunter Valley, Richie and his father Terry set up Harkham Wines. Inspired by the wines Richie's grandmother Aziza used to make for the family, their vineyard is farmed using organic methods and focused on producing very small batches of extremely high-quality wine.

What strikes you most about Richie is his infinite amount of energy. Just asking him about his day can be exhausting... especially when you realise it's not even midday. Recently I managed to pin him down long enough to ask him a few questions about life, the universe and everything else.



### Tell me about the winemaking process at Harkham Wines.

For most of our wines we don't add yeasts, enzymes, acid, sulfur, sugar nor fining agents and the wine is completely unfiltered, so you're drinking 100 [per cent fermented grape juice. Our aim at Harkham is to give you nature, unadulterated in a glass - including all the wind, rain, sun and stones - all preserved in a bottle that you can open up anywhere in the world and it will give you snapshot of Hunter Valley

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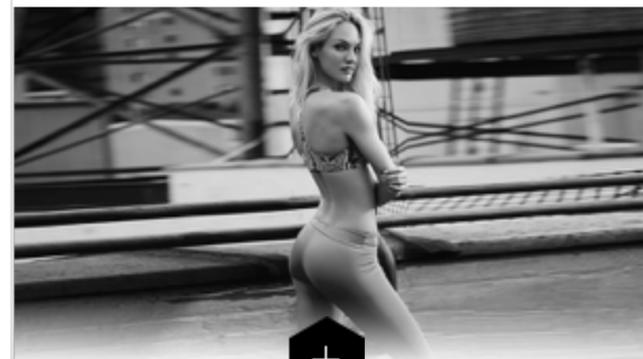
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that year.

And out of all this love and respect we decided not to craft or make the wine, but guide the grapes to become the best wine they can be and be a true expression of the place where they come from.

### **How was the 2014 vintage? How did it compare to recent years?**

2014 was the best vintage I've seen in the Hunter in the 10 years I have been here. Others say it's the best harvest in 50 years.



### **What does 'natural winemaking' mean to you?**

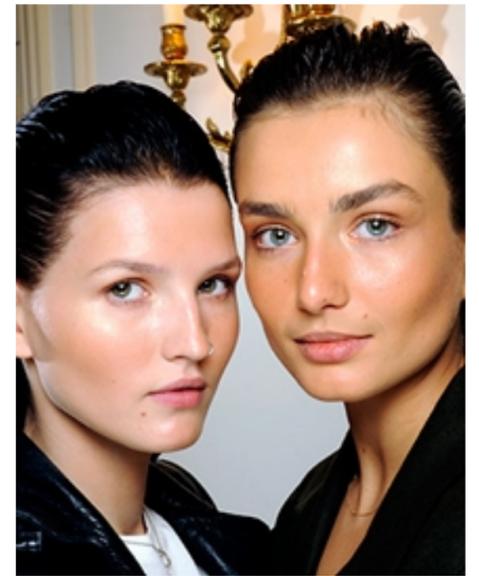
We believe wine is alive and a living being. We're sick of soulless wines manipulated and worked to the maximum. It's basically winemakers who are saying, 'Hold on - let's go the opposite direction that the world is going towards commercialisation and homogenisation. Let's go back to nature, forget about what science and numbers say. Let's go by taste and feel. Let's go back to the ancient ways of making wine. Let's think about our environment. Let's be sustainable. Let's give back to the earth.'

### **Harkham Wines do some inspirational work outside of winemaking. Can you tell me a bit about your philosophy?**

We take from the earth so we should give back to it. Our interpretation of giving back

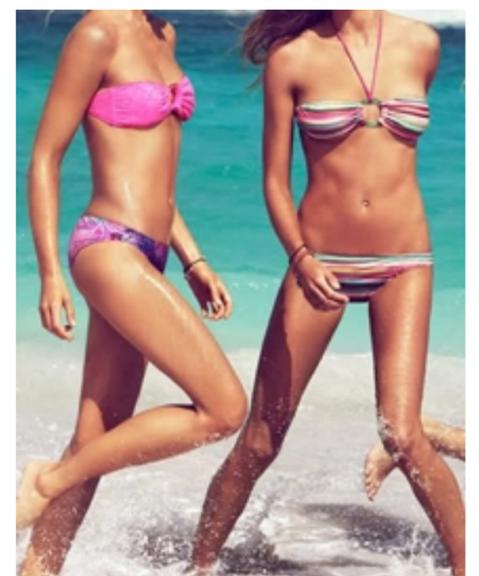


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has been by helping underprivileged children in Third World countries. I believe that the meaning of life is not only to be successful, but more importantly how we use that success to change the lives of other people in need.

In 2012 and 2013 we raised money by donating a dollar from every bottle sold in our cellar door (as well as other charity events) to build a dining hall in Kenya for 450 underprivileged children and their community. Last year we helped build a school in Myanmar.

### **What do you like to drink?**

As a proud Australian I'm excited by some of the new wines being produced here. I think we are moving in a great direction. I also love drinking natural wines from all over the world as they have different tastes and are full of soul. Every bottle is a surprise.



### **What does the future hold for your estate?**

We're excited to keep pushing the boundaries and experimenting by doing different wine projects. Every year we make better wine, because not only do we improve as winemakers, but we understand the vineyards better.

We also want to do more charity projects around the world. Recently we just signed off on a brand new Mexican restaurant called Casa Del Cazador (House of the Hunter), which will have an outdoor swimming pool, daybeds and outdoor bar. The restaurant will only sell natural wine and food, which we look forward to enjoying with everybody. We're hoping to be open by summer.

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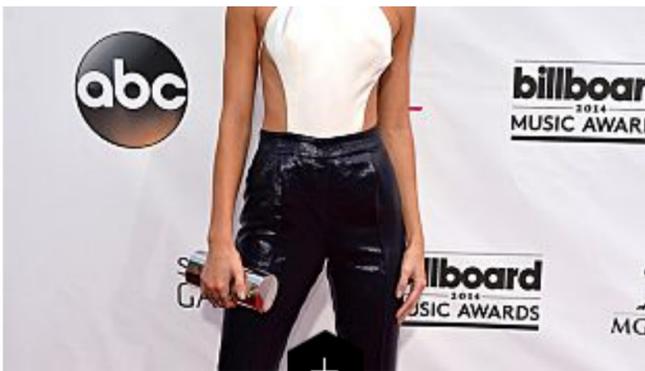
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Photo [Young Bacchus drinking \(Guido Reni, circa 1623\)](#)

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