



Larry Cherubino at his Riversdale Vineyard at Frankland River, Western Australia.

Man with a plan

Lauded winemaker Larry Cherubino is an industry powerhouse, releasing new wines while juggling multiple projects across a range of labels, writes Darren Jahn.

Larry Cherubino has had a hand in yet another impressive wine range – Whipbird – by the Oatley family, adding to the veritable cornucopia that reflects his winemaking finesse. Cherubino has become one of Australia’s most important winemakers since launching his own label in 2004 and joining Bob Oatley’s second wine venture, Oatley Wines, in 2007. He gave up a successful stint of corporate winemaking for Hardys and Houghton Wines, utilising his extensive network of West Australian grape growers and knowledge of those on the eastern seaboard to develop his own range with wife Edwina. At the same time

the winemaker was spearheading the cross-country regional wines of the Oatley portfolio. His own range, Cherubino Wines, shows tremendous consistency despite the enormous variety on offer, with his vines grown in parcels across Western Australia’s Great Southern, Pemberton and Margaret River regions. There’s a number of different, stylish labels, with standout examples of chardonnay, riesling, shiraz and cabernet sauvignon, as well as a host of fascinating alternative varieties such as arneis, fiano, nebbiolo and mencía. Travellers can taste the ranges at his welcoming Margaret River cellar doors, his nearby restaurant Masseria or back in Perth, at the sophisticated

Cherubino City Cellar wine bar in Subiaco. Hamilton Island guests will also find them on the island’s wine lists and in the wine store. As if tending to more than 230 hectares of vines, managing a winery, two cellar doors, a restaurant, guest houses and city wine bar is not enough, Cherubino also heads up the winemaking of father-and-daughter team Sandy and Nicky Oatley. He oversees the pair’s NSW winery and winemaking team to produce their award-winning wines, led by the Robert Oatley Signature Series, Finisterre and The Pennant labels. In the past twelve months, Nicky Oatley has worked with Cherubino to release two new ranges: Nicole Oatley Wines (NOW.) and

PHOTOGRAPHY: MATT CHERUBINO.

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drops given the Cherubino treatment

by Darren Jahn



Whipbird Margaret River Chenin Blanc 2025

Cherubino responded to Nicky Oatley’s love of chenin blanc by crafting this bright, delightfully fruit-driven wine from Margaret River vines. A juicy and delicious alternative to the ubiquitous sauvignon blanc.



Robert Oatley Signature Series Great Southern Riesling 2024

The Oatley’s Signature range celebrates founder Bob Oatley. And while chardonnay was his favourite white variety, it is this crisp lemon-lime-accented riesling that frequently wins trophies in Australian wine shows.



Wild Oats Shiraz 2024

Wild Oats was Bob Oatley’s nickname, famously becoming the name of his race-winning supermaxi and also now the family’s popular table wines. This shiraz grown on family vineyards at Mudgee, NSW is full-flavoured, complex and easy drinking.



Cherubino Margaret River Chardonnay 2023

Chardonnay is Larry’s signature variety and this is his signature range. It is wild yeast-fermented in barrel with just a smidgeon of malolactic fermentation allowed. A citrus-driven and stylishly oaked chardonnay of the highest calibre.



Nicole Oatley Wines Cabernet Franc 2023

It’s somewhat rare to see solo bottlings of cabernet franc as invariably it is blended with its “bigger” cousin cabernet sauvignon. This is a super-drinkable, soft yet generously flavoured example.



Respected winemaker Larry Cherubino works with the Oatley family on its new wine labels Whipbird and Nicole Oatley Wines.

Whipbird. NOW. debuted at Hamilton Island Race Week 2024, with the unique chenin blanc from old Swan Valley vines. This year sees the launch of Whipbird, a contemporary set of wines including a pinot gris from Victoria’s King Valley, chardonnay from Pemberton in Western Australia and a rosé from McLaren Vale, South Australia. The new label references a whistle that has run through five generations of the family, from Bob Oatley’s father through to Nicky’s daughter Eva. The whistle is reminiscent of the distinctive call of Australia’s native whipbird. “We’ve teamed up with chef Alanna Sapwell-Stone to present these new releases over a special dinner for Hamilton Island Race Week 2025” says Cherubino. “I was fortunate to be invited to show the NOW. chenin last year, along with my Cherubino chardonnay and two red wines from the Robert Oatley portfolio, with chef Danielle Alvarez. “This year’s dinner will revisit the oceanside dining experience, with a special menu paired to the new wines.” Cherubino is enjoying working in a multigenerational wine business, seeing parallels to his own operations. “I first worked with Bob

Oatley, along with Sandy, and now Nicky has joined her dad and is driving some innovative new wines. Last year my eldest son Ilario worked his first vintage at our winery – Edwina and I hope to build a family wine company, too.” With three sons fast reaching wine-drinking age, their boys may gain some early hospitality experience in the Cherubino cellar door, restaurant or wine bar – not unlike Nicky Oatley, who worked in hotels, including the family’s Hamilton Island, before joining the wine business.

Cherubino relishes working with the next generations as “they bring a fresh set of eyes to what is often an old-school industry”, challenging him to constantly rethink what he takes to the market. With his fierce attention to detail and focus on quality over quantity, more fascinating wines are almost certain to follow. Little wonder he was declared Outstanding Wine Producer at London’s International Wine & Spirits Competition in 2023 – yet another trophy to add to his impressive swag of awards.