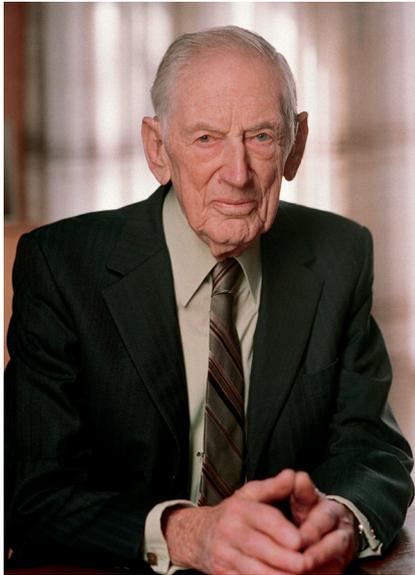




PENFOLDS MEDIA RELEASE
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INDUSTRY PIONEER, DR RAY BECKWITH, OAM CELEBRATES HIS 100TH BIRTHDAY



Dr. Ray Beckwith (OAM), one of the world's most distinguished wine scientists, celebrates his 100th birthday today. Although history will remember Max Schubert as the creator of Penfolds Grange, it may have never eventuated without Ray Beckwith's groundbreaking science and flair.

Born in 1912, Dr Beckwith is a significant pioneer of the modern Australian wine industry. His research, discoveries and applied science profoundly altered the course of modern winemaking. In 1936 Beckwith, while working as a scientist at Penfolds, observed that *"pH may be a useful tool in the control of bacterial growth."* With the aid of a Morton glass electrode pH meter, he discovered a way of stabilising wine by adjusting its acid balance. For those less technically minded, he discovered a way of keeping

wine fresh and drinkable, paving the way for a viable and prosperous Australian wine industry. Prior to his discovery wineries were throwing out 30% of their production because of bacterial spoilage or sweet wine disease.

Andrew Caillard, MW – the author of Penfolds Rewards of Patience said, *"If Beckwith's discoveries and prescriptive remedies had saved lives rather than wine, he may have achieved extraordinary fame. Although barely known outside Australian wine industry circles, Beckwith's applied science is arguably the foundation of modern winemaking thought."*

In 1932, Ray Beckwith graduated from Roseworthy Agricultural College with an honours diploma in Agriculture (and oenology). Shortly afterwards he was invited back as a faculty cadet and began work on a yeast research project. In 1933 he joined Hardys at Mile End as a junior winemaker with industry legends Colin Haselgrove and Roger Warren. But his published findings on fortified yeast strains caught the eye of Leslie Penfold Hyland, a director of Penfolds Wines at Magill. In 1934 he visited Ray Beckwith's father at his Murray Bridge hardware store and asked *"Where is that son of yours? - I want him."*



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Over several decades Beckwith developed systems at Penfolds, which are now standard throughout the industry. This went beyond the laboratory to practical winemaking solutions at every quality level. The list of innovations and inventions is extraordinary. He designed and improvised new plant and equipment, introduced new technology and quality control procedures. He designed quality standards in a time before consistency and standardization became an industry norm. His early work with the mass production of floor sherry and solving the issues of contamination were critical to the success of Penfolds during the 1940s and 1950s.

Ray Beckwith worked closely with Max Schubert, who became Penfolds Chief Winemaker in 1948. The influx of immigrants, refugees and returning soldiers after World War Two led to increasing demand for white and red table wines. The market, previously dominated by fortified wines, was changing fast. Many of Beckwith's discoveries and innovations were veiled in secrecy by Penfolds to optimise its competitive advantage. Indeed Beckwith's work was so important that management told him, *"He could go to the local horse races, but was not to talk to any other wine people on technical subjects!"*

While Max Schubert and his winemaking team dreamed up new table wine styles, Ray Beckwith provided the science and practical solutions to make them a reality.

During the 1950s Penfolds was a hive of experimentation and excitement. The launch of Grange Hermitage, St Henri "Claret" and Bin 389 Cabernet Shiraz during this period began a remarkable dynasty of fine wines that would capture the imagination of collectors and fine wine drinkers. By the 1960s and 1970s Penfolds had developed a distinctive Penfolds House style, a signature method of winemaking that would be the envy of the wine world.

Ray Beckwith, who retired from Penfolds in 1973, was the quintessential winemaker's 'boffin'. While seemingly always in the background, his contribution to wine quality, Australia's technical winemaking reputation and Penfolds enduring fame is inestimable.

Ray Beckwith is the recipient of an Honorary Doctorate from the University of Adelaide (2004), the prestigious Maurice O'Shea Award (2005), and the Australian Government's Medal of the Order of Australia (2008).

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