

## MEDIA RELEASE EMBARGO 29<sup>TH</sup> JUNE 2012

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THE PENFOLDS AMPOULE

**The ultimate reflection of winemaking heritage, innovation and artistic collaboration delivers a ground breaking work of art encapsulating a rare and significant wine.**

To celebrate the provenance of a truly extraordinary wine, the 2004 Kalimna Block 42 Cabernet Sauvignon and in the spirit of Penfolds reputation of innovation and experimentation, the winemakers are breaking new ground by releasing a limited edition glass ampoule, containing a rare wine in a truly distinctive format. Essentially a hand-blown glass ampoule that provides an ideal wine environment and a bespoke glass plumb-bob that suspends the ampoule within a wooden Jarrah cabinet.

With only twelve handmade vessels in existence (each individually numbered), the Penfolds Ampoule is testament to the respect that Penfolds has not only for fine wine, but for its South Australian heritage and the skills of the region's finest artists and craftsmen, four of whom were commissioned to collaborate on this distinctive project. Together they have crafted a beautiful, thoughtful, unique objet d'art, designed to store wine in an ideal environment.

The Penfolds Ampoule is not only a compelling work of wine art - it also provides a truly memorable experiential and sensory engagement. When a decision is made to open the ampoule a senior member of the Penfolds Winemaking team will personally attend a special opening ceremony for the owner (essentially your very own master-class). The winemaker will travel to the destination of choice, where the ampoule will be ceremoniously removed from its glass plumb-bob casing and opened using a specially designed, tungsten-tipped, sterling silver scribe-snap. The winemaker will then prepare the wine using a beautifully crafted sterling silver tasteevin.

The glass sculpture was designed and hand-blown by Nick Mount, an internationally recognised glass artist. To encase the ampoule, Nick has designed and hand blown a conical, elongated plumb-bob of transparent grey glass with a ruby red 'cotton-reel' top. The plumb-bob is suspended in a bespoke Jarrah cabinet, with the ampoule held securely at its core.

Prominent Australian designer-maker Hendrik Forster prepared all the precious metal detailing. Furniture craftsman Andrew Bartlett designed and made the bespoke Jarrah cabinet, where the ampoule is suspended. The scientific-grade ampoule, designed to store the wine in an ideal environment, and encased within the glass sculpture, was created by veteran scientific glassblower Ray Leake.

The passion and technical skill of blowing glass by hand; the painstaking hours of crafting and refining a perfectly mitred cabinet; the clockwork precision of mechanisms and metal fixtures made from precious metals: these time-honoured artisan skills have created a fitting time capsule for an extraordinary wine.

The wine contained within the ampoule, first released in the 1950s, holds a particular significance among generations of Australian and international wine collectors. Deeply connected to Australian wine culture, each release has in a way represented a point in the progress of the modern Australian wine industry.



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Penfolds 2004 Block 42 is a rare, single-vineyard wine, only released in stellar vintages and produced from the oldest continuously-producing Cabernet Sauvignon vines in the world. Underpinning the technical and scientific aspects of wine – of which a winemaker must have a deep understanding – is the artistry of winemaking: the imagination, intuition, talent and sensitivity that create a great wine. So it was fitting that Penfolds commissioned some of Australia’s finest artists to work on the ampoule project.

Penfolds Chief Winemaker Peter Gago comments: “Behind every Penfolds wine is the joy, energy, research and science that shapes it. The ampoule project is typical of the pioneering philosophy behind Penfolds winemaking evolution. The collaboration with South Australia’s finest artists has been a fitting tribute for one of South Australia’s finest wines.”

Price on application.

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**Editor’s Notes**

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**Please note the RRP will be around \$168,000.00 AUD.**

**Price may differ slightly in different markets around the world.**

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**The Wine – 2004 Block 42 Kalimna Cabernet Sauvignon**

Planted in the mid-1880s, the Block 42 vineyard is located at the edge of the Penfolds Kalimna property in the Moppa area of the Barossa Valley, about 60 kilometres north of South Australia’s capital, Adelaide. This is an ancient, undulating landscape of rich brown soils and alluvial sands. The ten-acre Block 42 vineyard is composed of Cabernet Sauvignon vines of ancient genetic origins. It belongs to a national heritage of great old 19th century pre-phylloxera Australian vineyards, and is thought to be the oldest plantings of Cabernet Sauvignon in the world. For almost 130 vintages these vines – planted on their own roots – have produced flavour-intense, mineral-rich fruit with exceptional concentration and balance. While the vineyard produces unusually high quality fruit in most vintages, limited yields mean that Penfolds rarely releases a single-vineyard wine from Block 42.

The wine has received plaudits from wine critics around the world and in 2011 it was awarded 100 points by James Suckling, the renowned U.S. wine critic.

“There is something really magical about the 2004 Block 42 Kalimna Cabernet. It has an ethereal dimension and a saturated blackness on the palate, it’s extraordinarily perfumed with layer upon layer of flavour. ‘Essence of Cabernet’. Purity.” Peter Gago, Penfolds Chief Winemaker.

**The Glass Sculpture – Nick Mount**

Nick Mount is one of Australia’s leading glass artists, with a career spanning four decades. His work is represented in major private and public collections, and he regularly exhibits in Europe, the United States and Japan. Mount’s recent work has featured a recurring motif of the plumb-bob – a builder’s instrument used since the time of ancient Egypt for determining a vertical line. To encase the ampoule, Mount has designed and blown a conical, elongated plumb-bob of transparent grey glass with a ruby red ‘cotton-reel’ top. The plumb-bob is suspended in the cabinet, with the ampoule held securely at its core. “The ampoule to me signifies timelessness and permanence, as well as the integrity of the individual,” says Mount. “I think there is a lot of similarity between winemakers and artists. We share a sense of passion for what we create.”



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### **The Ampoule – Ray Leake**

Ray Leake is a scientific glassblower with more than 40 years' experience creating customised laboratory glassware. This is a specialised field of glassblowing, requiring precise control of shape and dimension. Leake learnt his craft in the United Kingdom agrochemical industry where the professors would make a sketch of a particular shape, and he would then create it. The glass Leake used for the ampoule is laboratory-grade Borosilicate glass, perfect for the job because it is transparent, chemical-resistant and heat-resistant. Leake's task was to blow the twelve glass ampoules to exactly the same specifications. "This was a job with an unusual twist – a bit different from my usual line of work," says Leake.

### **The Precious Metal Detailing – Hendrik Forster**

Hendrik Forster commissions include Australia's gift for the Royal Wedding in 1981; tableware for the Australian Prime Minister's residence, The Lodge; and the church silver for St Stephen's Cathedral in Brisbane. Forster's designing mind and meticulous craftsmanship were in demand in this project, as he and Nick Mount worked through the challenges of how to separate the cone, secure the ampoule inside, and then suspend the plumb-bob in a steady position. The solution is elegantly simple. The two parts of the glass cone are joined with a bronze and brass bayonet fitting, plated in rhodium. The metals were chosen for their working qualities and the rhodium, a precious metal more expensive than gold, was used for its lasting shine and resistance to tarnish. The plumb-bob is suspended by means of a stainless steel thread, and the rhodium-plated metal tip of the cone is held in place by neat conceit – an inverted sommelier's tasting cup, a tastevin, crafted from sterling silver with a gold dome. Forster reveals "It was wonderful to be involved in this project, to work with a world-class glass artist, and stretch my skills and imagination... it was a real conceptual and technical challenge."

### **The Bespoke Cabinet – Andrew Bartlett**

Andrew Bartlett designs and makes bespoke furniture using traditional age-old methods out of his studio in the Jam Factory in Adelaide. The wood selected is native Australian Jarrah from forestry-certified timber grown in Western Australia's Margaret River region. The rich, dark stain of the wood is the result of an old-fashioned technique whereby steel wool is soaked in vinegar and then rubbed into the wood. The vinegar reacts with the tannins in the wood, and the resulting 'queen ebony' stain still allows the natural grain and warm red of the Jarrah to shine through. This traditional method of staining has the added benefit of being completely natural and chemical free. The interior of the cabinet is lined with bevelled, grey smoke-backed mirror. Bartlett's exceptional craftsmanship is on display in every aspect of the cabinet. Bartlett adds "While the Ampoule cabinet is a display cabinet, it is also a piece of art in itself. I was conscious of not wanting to overshadow, but to complement and frame the other artists' work and the wine."

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### **About Penfolds**

Penfolds has been producing an impressive array of wines since 1844 and indisputably led the development of Australian fine wine into the modern era. The introduction of Penfolds Grange in 1951 forever changed the landscape of Australian fine wine. Since then a series of standout wines, both white and red, have been released under the Penfolds masthead.

**For more information on the wines, including in-depth tasting notes visit, [www.penfolds.com](http://www.penfolds.com).**

**For further information:**

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