



**HUON HOOKE**

## **CELLAR TALK**

### **The lagar crush**

The new owners of Seppeltsfield have decided to really get down and dirty and make some port the old-fashioned way – in a lagar. In Portugal, port was always made in lagars until stainless steel tanks largely replaced them. A lagar is a wide, flat, low fermenting vessel that is more like a fishpond. About one metre deep, with stone sides and base, it is filled with grapes up to about thigh-height and workers link arms and walk back and forth in a line, treading the grapes and squashing them in the process while traditional music is played on an

accordion. It is still used by the great port houses of Taylors and Fonseca, who swear it makes the best port. Last Thursday, Seppeltsfield lagar crushed Barossa touriga and grenache grapes that will go towards 2008 vintage port and 100-year-old Para. Winemaker James Godfrey says some of the original open fermenting vats in the 1880s gravity-flow cellar were partly filled with sand to convert an eight-tonne fermenter to two-tonne capacity, resembling a Portuguese lagar.



Footloose ... crushing the old-fashioned way at Seppeltsfield. Photo: Candice Williams