



WINEWISE

THE CONSUMER'S WINE GUIDE

DECEMBER 2014



Tolpuddle Vineyard

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2013 CHARDONNAY Panel Tasting

Three of Australia's most highly-acclaimed chardonnays feature in this report. Each illustrates a different approach style-wise, demonstrating how significant the winemaking role can be when it comes to chardonnay.

★★★★★



2013 Tolpuddle Vineyard Tasmania Chardonnay The epitome of restraint and finesse. Some Australian chardonnays are being “finessed” to the point of boniness, but not this one. It delivers intense grapefruit aroma and flavour with not-overdone funk. The palate is very fine and creamy, with beautifully integrated oak and acidity. (\$65.00)

<http://www.tolpuddlevineyard.com/Purchase>

★★★★★

2013 Grosset Piccadilly Chardonnay This is an absolutely seamless chardonnay packed with white peach flavour supported by subtle nougat complexity. It's a delicious drink now, and, while it is likely to improve, we see nothing wrong with enjoying it right away. (\$62.00)

2013 Tapanappa Tiers Vineyard Chardonnay Plenty of everything here, but it's all in balance. A powerful, structured chardonnay in which oak shows on finish at the moment. The richest, most mouth-filling wine of the top three. (\$75.00)

★★★

2013 Morambro Creek Padthaway Chardonnay Fresh and powerful, showing nutty lees with some supporting oak. Beginning to drink well. (\$31.95)

2013 Brangayne of Orange Chardonnay Fresh, with faint tropical fruit overtones and some lees complexity. Mouthfilling and creamy, with obvious acidity. (\$20.00)

★

2013 Deviation Road Adelaide Hills Chardonnay Shows strong butterscotch overtones and lacks fruit intensity (\$45.00)

2012 MALBEC Panel Tasting

We don't often focus on malbec, which is a pity. Although only about 450-500 hectares of malbec exist in Australia, some of the world's best has been produced here. To put matters in perspective, Cahors in France grows ten times the quantity we do, and it is dwarfed by Argentina, with six times that vineyard area.



2012 Bleasdale Double Take Langhorne Creek Malbec The vibrant blackberry/blueberry aromas are totally captivating and the palate is one of weight and concentration. Fine, firm tannins and balanced acidity complete an impressive picture. Cellar. 1,200 bottles only. (\$65.00)

2012 Bleasdale The Riparian Vineyard Langhorne Creek Malbec Very attractive blackberry/blueberry/spice. Excellent length and savoury tannin balance in a generous, full-flavoured style. This wine shows off all the best qualities of malbec, but be quick – only 300 bottles were produced. (\$35.00)
<http://www.bleasdale.com.au/>

2012 Bleasdale Generations Langhorne Creek Malbec Fresh dark berry with a touch of oak. Well balanced, substantial and vibrant, with lingering tannins. (\$35.00)



2012 Bleasdale Second Innings Langhorne Creek Malbec A deliciously fresh wine with appealing summer pudding aromas and primary fruit. Lovely drink. (\$22.00)

2012 Brothers In Arms Side by Side Langhorne Creek Malbec Rich, spicy and a little oaky, with some developed complexity. Quite savoury and firm. (\$27.00)



2012 Bleasdale The Bass Hill Vineyard Clare Valley Malbec Fresh but simple red fruits and cardamom. Lacks stuffing compared to the Langhorne Creek wines. (\$35.00)

2012 Bleasdale The Mullianna Vineyard Langhorne Creek Malbec A bit simple and jammy. Rich ripe flavour but lacks zip. (\$35.00)

2012 Vinaceous Voodoo Moon Margaret River Malbec Light, fresh, fragrant. Just a bit lean. (\$25.00)

We suggest you take a look at malbec. You'll be pleasantly surprised. Bleasdale is your starting point.

A Couple of Others

2012 Majella Coonawarra Merlot It's rare that I write about a merlot in glowing terms, but this one certainly deserves some praise. The freshness and intensity are very strong points, as are the clearly defined dark berry and plum varietal characteristics. There's a typical hint of leaf that contributes to the complexity. The firm, balanced structure suggests that cellaring will be rewarded. (\$30.00) ★★★★★

2013 McWilliam's Hanwood 1913 Touriga The Hanwood 1913 label is reserved for wines grown on the McWilliams estate near Griffith, New South Wales. This has to be the best Aussie touriga I've tasted. It's perfumed but in no way cheaply so, and the structure is fine and savoury. Think blackberries and blueberries. It's not yet released, but won't be expensive. ★★★★★

2013 McWilliam's Hanwood 1913 Durif If you delight in the sort of durif that offers extreme ripeness, tannin and enough alcohol to work in a flambée, this isn't for you. If you enjoy balance and varietal character, it's worth a try. Not yet available. ★★★

Lester Jesberg

WINEWISE ALERT

I had the honour of chairing the panel for the premium sparkling class at the Hobart Wine Show a couple of weeks ago. It's considered to be the "blue riband" sparkling section of all the capital city shows, and this year drew 64 entries.

The trophy went to the 2002 House of Arras EJ Carr Late Disgorged, an exceptional ★★★★★ Australian sparkling wine that retails for \$130.00.

Not far behind, and also on gold medal points, was the **NV House of Arras "A by Arras"**, and this is the wine upon which this alert focuses.

NV House of Arras "A by Arras" This wine is 100% Tasmanian and comprises 59% pinot noir, 33.5% chardonnay, 7.5% pinot meunier. It spent three years on yeast lees.

The nose is complex, musky, nutty and bready, showing the influence of aged base material, pinot noir and lees contact. The palate is long, fine and creamy, with a freshening acid presence. It's drinking beautifully now, and is a perfect choice for the Christmas shopping basket. (\$20.90) ★★★★★ Note: This wine is a Dan Murphy's exclusivity.

https://www.danmurphys.com.au/product/DM_794486/a-by-arras-premium-cuv-e

Tomorrow the Winewise panel convenes for a day's tasting which will cover riesling, chardonnay, pinot gris, sauvignon blanc, pinot noir, shiraz and a wide range of "alternate" varieties. Shortly after we'll conduct our comprehensive tasting of current vintage Hunter semillons.

Reports on all of the tastings will reach you via Winewise bulletins before Christmas.

Lester Jesberg

2014 RIESLING Panel Tasting

Although we still await the “riesling revolution”, this great white grape has well and truly spread its wings in Australia. Eden Valley and Clare still hold positions of reverence in the minds of riesling lovers, but excellent wines are being made in many other locations.

★★★★



2014 Alkoomi Frankland River Riesling (Black label)

Aromatically fresh, rich and limey. The palate offers excellent concentration of varietal flavour and lively acidity. Good drinking, but should also reward 2-4 years' cellaring. (\$24.00)

<http://www.alkoomiwines.com.au/wines/details.aspx?item=10>

2014 Four Winds Vineyard Canberra District Riesling

A vibrant perfumed riesling showing apple and lime aromatics. The palate is crisp, clean and long, with uplifting acidity. (\$22.00)

<http://fourwindsvineyard.com.au/our-wines/riesling/>

2014 Pewsey Vale Eden Valley Riesling A riesling of finesse and length, with concentrated lime aromas and flavours together with classic Eden Valley acidity. (\$16.00)

<http://www.nicks.com.au/2014-pewsey-vale-riesling>

2014 Parish Vineyard Coal River Valley Riesling Powerful, fresh and limey. Intense, with a very good acid line and a dry finish. (\$29.95)



2014 Chalkers Crossing Hilltops Riesling Quite big and rich, but varietal, intense and dry. Good acidity. (\$20.00)

2014 St John's Road "Peace of Eden" Eden Valley Riesling Rich and varietal, but a little forward. Good concentration. Fresh acid finish. (\$22.00)

2014 Chalkers Crossing CC2 Hilltops Riesling Rich but forward, with limey varietal character. Drinking well now. (\$15.00)

2014 Heggies Riesling A richly flavoured riesling which shows a little development. (\$25.00)



2014 Vertigo Adelaide Hills TRKN Riesling Shows some varietal character but is quite broad. Developing quickly. (\$26.00)

2014 Alkoomi Frankland River Riesling (White label) Quite green, with tart acidity. (\$15.00)



2014 Eden Trail Eden Valley Riesling Some nougat development. Lean and hard.

2014 Majella Coonawarra Riesling Big and rich, tending to stone fruit aromas with sulphides. Hard fading finish.

The top four wines offer very satisfying drinking over the holiday period, especially with the ubiquitous Christmas prawns. However, all need at least a couple of years in bottle to lose some primary character and develop complexity.

Winewise is On-line only - \$AUD35.00 per year
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2014 PINOT GRIS/GRIGIO Panel Tasting

Pinot gris, with a few exceptions, continues to languish. We suppose most PG consumers aren't particularly demanding, and the wines tend to reflect that.

Too many are coarse and/or lack intensity.

★★★★



2014 Philip Shaw The Gardener Pinot Gris Most producers of pinot gris should take some lessons from this wine from Orange. It's very fresh, showing nashi pear varietal character. The palate is nicely textured, with balanced phenolic grip, satisfying persistent flavour and good acidity. (\$20.00)
<http://www.philipshaw.com.au/wine-store>

★★★

2014 Vinaceous Sirenya Adelaide Hills Pinot Grigio Very fresh Williams pear aromatics show clearly. This is a well made wine, with an attractive mix of varietal fruit, phenolics, acidity and low-level sweetness. (\$21.00)

2014 Redbank Sunday Morning Pinot Gris A wine of good intensity, with a slightly malty overtone. There's plenty of flavour and grip. (\$22.95)

2014 Copia Pinot Grigio This is a delicate version with light pear aromatics. The palate fits the "grigio" style, being fresh, lively and dry. (\$18.95)

★★

2014 Ottelia Limestone Coast Pinot Gris The colour shows a hint of bronze. The aromas and flavours are musky and malty. This is a rich white with a grippy finish. (\$19.90)

2014 Lerida Estate Canberra District Pinot Grigio Very fresh and nicely textured, but sweetness compensates for a shortage of fruit. (\$24.50)

2014 Wild Oats Mudgee Pinot Grigio Although it's musky and fresh, this wine has a decidedly coarse, firm finish. (\$17.95)



2014 Yalumba Y Series Pinot Grigio Slightly dull Italianate nose. Has varietal character and a slightly sweet palate. (\$12.00)

2014 Singlefile Pemberton Pinot Gris Faintly bronze colour. Has flavour but is strongly phenolic. (\$30.00)

2014 Hesketh Lenswood Pinot Grigio Fresh but grassy. Padded out with sugar. (\$25.00)

2014 Redbank The Long Paddock Victoria Pinot Grigio Too broad and phenolic. (\$12.95)

It all comes down to style. Alsatian winemakers get away with strong phenolics because they retain significant sweetness. Phenolics in dry white wines present a challenging balancing act. Pinot gris, like chardonnay, needs some grip, but too much takes wines down the path to ugliness.

TASTINGS

2013 Ata Rangi Crimson Pinot Noir An appealingly fresh, approachable, luncheon pinot noir. Treat it like a good beaujolais. (\$28.00) ★★★

2012 Sandalford Estate Reserve Shiraz This is a generously flavoured shiraz which is packed with fresh blackberry flavour. The tannins provide just-right firmness. It's drinking well now, but can be cellared for a few years at least. (\$35.00) ★★★★★

2012 Oliver's Taranga Small Batch 4432 McLaren Vale Grenache If you like the big, rich, classic Aussie style of grenache, line up for this one. While the flavour volume is turned right up, it's delivered with commendable freshness. Expect red berries and plums with plenty of varietal punch. (\$30.00) ★★★★★

2012 Rosemount Estate GSM This wine fared very well in the 2014 Winewise Championship. It combines the plushness of grenache with the structure of shiraz and mourvèdre beautifully. This is nicely perfumed, balanced red with an abundance of fresh flavour. (\$32.00)

Lester Jesberg

PINOT NOIR Panel Tasting

Here's a diverse selection of pinot noirs from nine different regions. The top wine offers excellent value for money in terms of current drinking.



2013 Robert Oatley Yarra Valley Pinot Noir A vibrant strawberry/cherry style that offers very enjoyable fresh drinking. The satisfying fruit is supported by fine firm tannins. A high quality Christmas drink. (\$18.00)

<http://www.jimscellars.com.au/product/view-product/robert-oatley-signature-series-pinot-noir?id=4da9e6dd6c09eaadd35bbfb41955bcd>

2013 Tolpuddle Vineyard Tasmania Pinot Noir A pinot noir that is very fresh and delicate, with excellent length and fine tannins. (\$75.00)

2013 Rochford L'Enfant Unique Yarra Valley Pinot Noir This wine offers vibrant cherry aromas and flavours backed up by a caress of oak. It's fine and long, with a clean acid finish. (\$54.00)



2013 Lerida Estate Lake George Pinot Noir Pale colour. Shows attractive perfumed varietal character. It's not a big pinot, but there's certainly enough fruit and structure. Drinking now. (\$26.50)

2012 Di Giorgio Family Kongorong Pinot Noir The Di Giorgio crew are on to something here. The grapes for this wine were grown about 25 km south-west of Mount Gambier. There's good cherry fruit with a faint undergrowth aroma. It has weight and structure. (\$35.00)

2011 Yering Station Yarra Valley Pinot Noir The nose is light and forward, with some varietal character. It's better on the palate, offering decent fruit and fine, firm tannins. (\$32.00)



2013 Tapanappa Foggy Hill Fleurieu Peninsula Pinot Noir Fresh but simple - a little light and acid. Style-wise it's comparable to the Tolpuddle wine, but it lacks the intensity and backbone. (\$75.00)

2013 Grosset Adelaide Hills Pinot Noir A fresh raspberry jam style that provides simple early drinking. (\$74.00)

2012 Deviation Road Adelaide Hills Pinot Noir Fresh light cherry with a touch of oak. Fairly firm for its weight but is fresh enough. (\$45.00)

2014 Bilgavia Estate Hunter Valley Pinot Noir A fresh light dry red – no more, no less. (\$26.00)

2012 Robert Oatley Finisterre Denmark Pinot Noir Simple and slightly developed, with adequate fruit and freshness. (\$36.95)

2012 Robert Oatley Finisterre Mornington Peninsula Pinot Noir Slight burnt toffee overtone. Some varietal character. The tannins are quite furry. (\$36.95)

Traditional red wine drinkers often scoff at pinot noir because of a perceived lack of intensity. Unfortunately, a few in this tasting didn't deliver the goods in terms of length and strength of fruit.

For those who will be in the West on New Year's eve, here's a suggestion. Mandoon Estate has recently been one of the star performers in the Small Vignerons Awards and Winewise Championship.

**CELEBRATE NEW YEARS EVE
AT MANDOON ESTATE**

Enjoy a decadent degustation dinner prepared by Executive Chef, Michael Hartnell. Each course is paired with Mandoon Estate boutique wines.

5 Course - \$150
7 Course - \$190

Wednesday 31st December, 2014
10 Harris Road, Caversham, Western Australia
Seats are strictly limited

MORE TASTINGS

2012 Singlefile Reserve Chardonnay (Denmark, W.A.) This classy chardonnay is on the cusp of five stars. It's very much a Burgundy-influenced style with intensity, structure and texture. The powerful, balanced palate finishes with just the right amount of grip. (\$45.00) ★★★★★

2011 Oliver's Taranga McLaren Vale HJ Shiraz Let's be clear right from the outset – this ain't your average McLaren Vale shiraz. Winemaker Corinna Wright was downright adventurous, leaving some Rhône-like sulphidic funk as a complexing agent. There's certainly enough fruit to deal with it, although the palate is comparatively elegant, meaning that this wine is no "fruit bomb". In short, this is a stylish McLaren Vale red that all shiraz fans should try. (\$55.00) ★★★★★

Lester Jesberg

2014 HUNTER VALLEY SEMILLON 21 December, 2014

We always look forward to this fascinating, enlightening, arduous tasting. The wines were tasted in groups of 12, and the strongly supported ones were brought together for a taste-off. Sulphur dioxide and acid take their toll on nose and palate, and the break after every dozen wines was always appreciated.

On the subject of sulphur dioxide (SO₂), it was present in free form in all the wines tasted, and is mentioned only when it is particularly obvious. It can irritate the nasal passages and induce coughing, particularly in a large tasting like this. On the positive side SO₂ is a very effective preservative. It disappears over time, and extends the life of the wine.

Above all, we looked for freshness and ageing potential, because Hunter semillon is one of Australia's classic cellaring styles.



SILKMAN

2014 Silkman Reserve Semillon This is a restrained, classic Hunter semillon with fresh lemon grass aromas. The palate is linear and limey. It has everything one could hope for in a young semillon, and can be cellared for at least five years. (\$30.00)
<http://www.silkmanwines.com.au/>



2014 Two Rivers Stones Throw Semillon A fresh lemon/lime style that is crisp and clean. The palate is intense but restrained, with an excellent acid line. Cellar 2-3 years. (\$16.00)
<http://www.tworivers.com.au/wineShop>

2014 First Creek Winemaker's Reserve Semillon This is a vibrant, mouthfilling semillon supported by seamless acidity. The intensity and acid suggest at least 4-5 years' cellaring. (\$45.00)

2014 Gundog Estate Poacher's Semillon Intense, fresh and classic, with a hint of lemon grass. The palate is impressively rich and racy. Keep 4-5 years. (\$30.00)

2014 Tyrrell's Vat 1 Semillon Strongly varietal and intense. There's an extra soapy dimension which may be lees-derived, and impressive linear acidity. Cellar 5+ years. (\$42.00)

2014 Pokolbin Estate Phil Swannell Semillon An attractive lemon/lime style. It's comparatively full flavoured, but fresh and lively, and will follow in the path of the 2009 which is beginning to show its best. (Not yet released)

2014 Bimbadgen Signature Semillon Very fresh, showing citrus and hay characteristics. Restrained fruit and lively acidity suggest that this wine needs at least a couple of years (\$22.00)

2014 Tinklers School Block Semillon A restrained grassy mineral style showing SO₂. The palate is taut and racy. Well worth cellaring about five years. (\$22.00)

2014 Briar Ridge Dairy Hill Semillon Fresh intense citrus/hay aromas show on the nose. The palate has excellent length and acidity. (\$35.00)

2014 Brokenwood Hunter Valley Semillon The nose reflects quite ripe fruit, but it's fresh and varietal, with a hint of lime. A full flavoured semillon with great acid support. (\$25.00)

2014 Tinklers Reserve Semillon Shows SO₂ on a fresh, soapy nose. Good fruit is backed up on the palate by lively acidity. (\$35.00)

2014 Mount Pleasant 1946 Vines Semillon An intense, limey semillon which shows some SO₂. This is definitely one for cellaring. (\$75.00)

2014 Tyrrell's Stevens Semillon Here we have a fresh lime/grass nose followed by excellent palate intensity, with a slight grip on the finish. The label has a great cellaring record and this vintage follows suit. Keep for five years. (\$23.00)

2014 Tyrrell's Belford Semillon Shows a fair bit of SO₂ and slightly peachy aromas. The palate is tight, with good acid support. Cellaring? As per the Stevens. (\$23.00)

2014 Andrew Thomas Braemore Semillon There's plenty of fresh, slightly limey varietal character here, backed up by more than adequate acidity. Cellar 2-3 years. (\$30.00)

2014 Pepper Tree Limited Release Rhodes Semillon Lemony but ripe. It's a little forward, but the rich flavour is backed up by good acidity. Short term. (\$28.00)

2014 Leogate Estate Creek Bed Reserve Semillon Quite restrained and grassy at the moment. The palate is delicate and long. Cellar for a few years to allow richness to develop. (\$30.00)

2014 Silkman Blackberry Semillon Fresh grassy/citrus aromas. There seems to be a slight touch of residual sugar to fill out a well balanced palate with acid drive. (\$30.00)

2014 Mount Pleasant Lovedale Semillon Slightly forward colour. Fresh grassy/limey aromatics. Lovely acid-fresh, rich palate. (\$64.00)

2014 Pepper Tree Alluvius Semillon Strikingly different aromas of fresh passionfruit suggest the influence of a particular yeast strain. Plenty of flavour supported by acidity. Nearly ready. (\$35.00)

2014 Mount Pleasant 8 Acres Semillon Rich and full flavoured, but has delightfully fresh acidity. (\$27.00)

2014 Pepper Tree Limited Release Semillon Subdued lemon grass aromatics. The palate is restrained but varietal, with a little grip on the finish. (\$22.00)



2014 Cockfighter's Ghost Hunter Valley Reserve Semillon Plenty of SO₂. Good fruit and acid. A keeper. (\$26.50)

2014 Briar Ridge Stockhausen Semillon Fresh and varietal but comparatively forward. Ready soon. (\$28.00)

2014 Draytons Hunter Valley Semillon SO₂ and citrus nose. Attractive racy, limey palate. Worth cellaring. (\$20.00)

2014 Audrey Wilkinson Winemakers Selection Hunter Valley Semillon Slightly forward and shows SO₂. Better palate, with good acidity. Keep 2-3 years. (Not yet released)

2014 Bimbadgen Estate Hunter Valley Semillon SO₂ with soapy overtones. Decent fruit weight plus adequate acid. Early drinking. (\$22.00)

2014 Midnight's Promise Unwooded Semillon Rich, fresh and lemony. Yes, lemony is definitely the word. Good drink. (\$18.00)

2014 Tintilla Angus Semillon Has good fruit weight and acidity, but is a little too forward. (\$30.00)

2014 Andevine Vineyard Reserve Hunter Valley Semillon A fresh lemon sherbet style with good fruit. Short term. (\$30.00)

2014 Audrey Wilkinson The Ridge Semillon Slightly advanced and shows some SO₂. A little sweet and sour. (Not yet released)

2014 Wynwood Estate Reserve Semillon Fresh and grassy, but a little grippy on the finish. (\$45.00)

2014 Tulloch Hunter River White Ripe lemony nose. Slight sweetness supported by adequate acid. Drink now. (\$25.00)

2014 Brokenwood Trevena Semillon Shows some development, but there's plenty of varietal flavour. (\$50.00)
Release date 10/15

2014 Ridge View Generations Reserve Semillon Slightly grey colour. Dull nose. Some grip. Ok fruit and acid. Release date 03/15

2014 McGuigan Bin 9000 Semillon Full fresh citrus tending to peach. Good short term drinking, but, given the track record of this label for cellaring, we could be wrong. (\$13.00)

2014 Andrew Thomas The O.C. Semillon Fresh but a little forward. Good fruit and acid. 2-3 year wine. (\$23.00)

2014 Keith Tulloch Field Of Mars Block 3B Semillon Shows SO₂. Very lemony, giving a good flavour hit. (\$45.00)

2014 Gundog Estate Somerset Vineyard Semillon Varietal but a little forward. Fresh acidity lifts the palate. (\$30.00)

2014 Allandale Hunter Valley Semillon Fresh and strongly lemony. It has flavour and acid, but the latter jars. (\$20.00)

2014 Keith Tulloch Field Of Mars Block 2A Semillon Full and limey with a little hint of salami on the nose. Finishes with good acidity. (\$45.00)

2014 Tyrrell's HVD Semillon A little forward and shows obvious SO₂. The palate seems lees-influenced. (\$23.00)

2014 Tyrrell's Hunter Valley Semillon Peachy but advanced. Rich drinking now. (\$23.00)

2014 Gundog Estate Sunshine Vineyard Semillon Forward and peachy, showing big fruit, but it's balanced. Drink soon. (\$30.00) Release date 04/15

2014 Mount Pleasant Elizabeth Museum Semillon Fresh, full, and peachy. Has some grip on the finish and seems to be a short term wine. (\$19.50)

2014 Margan Family Wines Aged Release Semillon Fresh but already slightly honeyed on the nose. However, the palate is better, showing lively acidity. (\$40.00) To be released in 2019.

2014 Margan Semillon Fresh but tending tropical-fruity. Full flavoured and ready. (\$18.00)

2014 Hart & Hunter Oakey Creek Semillon A lean semillon showing SO₂. Could be a long term prospect. (\$30.00)

2014 Gartelmann Benjamin Semillon Fresh citrus aromas with hint of oatmeal. A little lean and acidic. (\$25.00)

2014 Pooles Rock Hunter Valley Semillon Slightly forward nose. Adequate fruit with pronounced acidity. (Not yet released)

2014 Margan Family White Label Semillon Forward but fresh. Good weight and acid. Phenolic. (\$30.00) Release date 05/15.

2014 Marsh Estate Holly's Block Semillon Forward stone fruit aromas and flavours. Ready. (\$32.00)

2014 Gundog Estate Vernon Vineyard Semillon Lemon/green pea aromas and flavours. Good acid. (\$30.00)

2014 Tempus Two Copper Series Semillon Fresh, quincy – even slightly tropical. Has good acid but is too sweet. (\$25.00)

2014 Bimbadgen Signature Palmers Lane Semillon Fairly lean and acidic but has potential. (Not yet released)



2014 Margan Family White Label Semillon Forward but fresh. Good weight and acid, but is fairly phenolic. (\$30.00)

2014 Hart & Hunter The Remparts Semillon A little dull on the nose and lean on the palate. (\$30.00)

2014 De Iuliis Sunshine Vineyard Semillon Fresh lemon/lime aromatics together with good fruit and acidity. The finish is too firm. (\$25.00)

2014 Capercaillie The Creel Semillon A forward stone-fruit style. (\$45.00)

2014 Tempus Two Pewter Semillon Fresh, but the yeast-derived passionfruit/sweaty characteristics make it a dead ringer for sauvignon blanc. (\$30.00)

2014 Tulloch Julia Semillon Slightly dull, with a ginger beer-like attenuated ferment character. (\$30.00)

2014 Scarborough Semillon Plenty of colour. Forward, with hints of pineapple. (\$20.00)

2014 Audrey Wilkinson Hunter Valley Semillon Slightly dull nose. Looks to be developing quickly. (\$22.00)

2014 First Creek Hunter Valley Semillon A lot of SO₂. The palate is slightly broad. (\$22.00)

2014 Draytons Heritage Vines Semillon Fairly forward in colour and flavour, yet shows quite a bit of SO₂. (\$60.00) To be released 2016



2014 David Hook Old Vines Pothana Vineyard Belford Semillon Forward colour and nose. Plenty of flavour shows too much development. (\$25.00)

2014 Keith Tulloch Hunter Valley Semillon Quite forward, showing apricot characteristics. (\$28.00)

2014 Oakvale Limited Release Semillon Light grassy nose. Tart palate. (\$40.00)

2014 James Estate Reserve Semillon Forward and peachy. Lacks vibrancy. (\$23.00)

2014 Draytons Vineyard Reserve Semillon Slightly dull nose. Lean, firm palate. (\$30.00)

2014 Adina Vineyard La Belle Helene Semillon Developed colour. Forward tropical fruit flavour with tart acidity. (\$25.00)

2014 McLeish Estate Hunter Valley Semillon Advanced colour and nose. Slight VA. (\$20.00)

2014 Cockfighter's Ghost Hunter Valley Semillon Ripe, forward, with a hint of VA. (Not yet available)

2014 Krinklewood Broke Fordwich Semillon Slightly dull nose. Advanced, slightly sweet palate. (\$24.00)

2014 Crush House Project X Semillon Very peachy and broad. More like chardonnay. (\$22.00)

2014 Glandore Elliott Semillon Cheesy lees character. Firm palate. (\$35.00)

2014 Draytons Susanne Semillon Slightly dull – sulphidic and cheesy. (\$45.00)

2014 Mistletoe Reserve Semillon Advanced and peachy, with a VA twist. (\$24.00)

2014 Mistletoe Home Vineyard Semillon Marzipan/straw overtones. Dull and too developed. (\$22.00)

Rated below

2014 Meerea Park Hell Hole Semillon Advanced colour. Obvious vinegary VA. (Not yet released)

For the benefit of those, particularly Hunter Valley wine producers, who wish to compare our ratings with show results, here's a guide.

★★★★★ Top gold (19.0/20.0)

★★★★ Gold (18.5/20.0) down to silver (17.0/20.0)

★★★ Bronze (16.5 – 15.5)

Vintages in regions all over the world are talked up, and this one certainly has – with some justification. We'll wait and see if it's one of the great semillon years, as has been suggested, but we doubt it. The top wines look like they'll deliver their best in five years rather than ten, but we don't see that as a problem. We envisage, for the most part, richly flavoured, balanced semillons that will be delightful to drink after a few years.

On the negative side, there were quite a few prematurely developed wines, suggesting sunburn and later than ideal picking. The semillon harvest for many wineries commenced in the second week of January in mild, dry conditions after a week of temperatures over 30°C. From 7-9 January, temperatures dropped to the mid twenties providing a window of opportunity for some.

Following that, the heat climbed back into the 30s, peaking at 38.6°C on 18 January, hastening ripening and lowering acidity. Picking continued through until the end of the month. Viticulture clearly played a big part because some producers were more successful than others. In such hot conditions, night-picking is often a significant quality factor, and, as always, timing was critical.

We thank the Hunter Valley vigneron for their continued support. Without doubt their semillons are one of the world's great dry white cellaring styles, and we feel no serious collection of wine is complete without them.

Winewise is On-line only - \$AUD35.00 per year
Telephone 61 (0) 412148577
Direct transfer BSB 082902 Acc 617374440

In the case of direct transfer, please include your name in the transfer details and then email your name to winewisesubscriptions@gmail.com