

JACOB'S CREEK, RICHMOND GROVE & STEINGARTEN RIESLINGS

Ask a few dozen Australian wine professionals and enthusiasts to name Australia's best riesling, and you'll receive a (limited) range of answers. Everyone will have reasons for their choices, but I'm confident that there are no better rieslings than those made by Barossa – based Pernod Ricard Winemakers.

The key brands are Jacob's Creek, Orlando, Steingarten and Richmond Grove. The man responsible for white wine production, Don Young, welcomed us to a tasting that would bring a smile to the face of any riesling fan.

Jacob's Creek

This label often makes a mockery of riesling retail pricing, out-performing wines of three times the price in wine shows. It's usually a multi-region blend.

2002 Jacob's Creek Riesling The nose shows delightfully mature toasty, lemon butter aromas. It's drinking at a delicious, mature peak. ★★★★★

2012 Jacob's Creek Riesling Nicely limey, aromatic and drinking beautifully. The palate is long, finishing with refreshing acidity. ★★★★★

2014 Jacob's Creek Classic Riesling Very perfumed, showing some lime as well, on a vibrant, expressive nose. The palate follows suit, delivering pure riesling flavour. There's a significant portion of Langhorne Creek material in the blend. Outstanding value for short-term drinking. (\$8.00) ★★★★★
<http://www.jimscellars.com.au/>

2009 Jacob's Creek Reserve Riesling (Barossa, Eden Valley, Clare) The nose is still very fresh, with just a touch of toast. This is an impressive, linear dry white with an uplifting acid finish. ★★★★★☆

2012 Jacob's Creek Reserve Barossa Riesling A very delicate, perfumed riesling with lively acidity and crisp green apple characteristics. ★★★★★

Richmond Grove

Year in, year out, the Richmond Grove label offers exceptional quality and value through its Watervale Riesling in particular.

2005 Richmond Grove Limited Release Watervale Riesling Limes, butter and toast all show out on a fully mature nose. This wine is at or near its peak, but offers plenty of rich riesling flavour with clean acid back-up. ★★★★★

2008 Richmond Grove Limited Release Watervale Riesling Another typical, very limey/buttered toast style. The palate is still youthful, and this wine has entered its drinking window which will extend for at least a couple of years. (\$21.85) ★★★★★

2012 Richmond Grove Limited Release Watervale Riesling Very restrained and delicate for a Clare riesling. The lime blossom aromatics are particularly impressive, and the palate is long, dry and acid-fresh. One for the ages. Cellar. (\$19.00) ★★★★★
<http://www.jimscellars.com.au/>



2013 Richmond Grove Limited Release Watervale Riesling There's a real WOW factor about this riesling. It's an absolutely classic "mineral" and lime Clare with a linear palate that doesn't deliver too much too soon. Pay peanuts and cellar up to ten years to enjoy one of Australia's great white wines. (\$14.00) ★★★★★
<http://shortysliquor.com.au/richmond-grove-watervale-riesling-2013>

Orlando St Helga

2012 Orlando St Helga Eden Valley Riesling The essence of Eden Valley riesling is restraint, "flinty" dryness and length. This wine has them all, and, for the record, the dryness is recorded as 1.5 gm/l residual. Sugar. A true purist's wine. (\$17.00) ★★★★★☆
<http://www.jimscellars.com.au/>

2014 Orlando St Helga Eden Valley Riesling Here's another true-to-style Eden Valley. The nose is very floral and the palate is tight, dry and very unevolved. What to do? Cellar. Obviously! (\$16.00) ★★★★★☆
http://www.winesearcher.com/merchant/21554?wine_id_F=1037010&from_page_F=WSL

Jacob's Creek Steingarten

If we had to nominate Australia's most under-rated riesling, well, here it is. Such is the low-key presence of Steingarten Riesling in the wine market, it wouldn't surprise us if some riesling fans are unaware of it, yet it is certainly part of Australian wine's A team.

The miserable little Steingarten vineyard sits on a weathered, exposed hill, almost 500 m above sea level, a short distance south-east the Rowland Flat winery. It plays little or no part in the blend these days, but it certainly provides a name – and a talking point. Although Colin Gramp had a dream of making a “German” riesling when he planted the bare, rocky Steingarten vineyard in 1962, the harshness of Australia's weather made that dream nigh impossible.

Steingarten is now basically the “top cut” of the Eden Valley material available to the Pernod-Ricard winemaking team.

2002 Jacob's Creek Steingarten Riesling Is there a better, more pure expression of aged Australian riesling than this? It's beautifully mature yet fresh, with great power, linearity and acid drive. The lime curd and honey aromas are particularly enticing. ★★★★★

2006 Jacob's Creek Barossa Steingarten Riesling Although it shows some mature notes, this vintage is still remarkably youthful. The lime blossom aromatics are entrancing but subtle, and the long, fine palate is only just beginning to evolve. (\$26.90) ★★★★★
<https://www.jimmurphy.com.au/product/steingarten-riesling-2006>

2012 Jacob's Creek Steingarten Riesling This is a superb, precise, delicately floral riesling that is long, dry and built for the long haul. It will slowly evolve into an Australian classic. (\$24.00) ★★★★★
<http://www.jimscellars.com.au/>

2013 Jacob's Creek Steingarten Riesling A bigger than usual vintage. There are hints of lime with florals, but, comparatively speaking, the delicacy and razor-edge acidity, aren't there. Nevertheless, this is a classy riesling. Maybe it's a ten year, rather than 20 year wine. (Not yet released) ★★★★★

2014 Jacob's Creek Steingarten Barossa Riesling Another in the less reserved style, but it's fragrantly floral and typical of Eden Valley. The finish is persistent and steely. There is some wow factor here. Let's wait and see. (Not yet released) ★★★★★☆

What we see here is riesling made by riesling people. There's no attempt to be immediately showy in the best wines of the regional styles. Other producers work to be the darlings of “critics” by creating wines that show more in their youth. Stay strong Don Young and chief winemaker Bernard Hicken. Your way is the right way.

Lester Jesberg

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