

RECENTLY TASTED

The highlights of this bulletin are three wines – all from the Yarra Valley, and all from the 2014 vintage. For those looking for bargains, there are a few wines in the \$20-\$30 range that are rated four stars and are drinking very well indeed.

WHITES

2014 Giant Steps Tarraford Vineyard Yarra Valley Chardonnay

Cool site grapefruit aromas intertwine with those of white peach and whiffs of lees nuttiness and funk. The palate is a knockout – long and textured, with uplifting acidity and low-key oak. (\$45.00) ★★★★★

<http://www.innocentbystander.com.au/shop/#GiantSteps>

2014 Giant Steps Sexton Vineyard Yarra Valley Chardonnay This chardonnay from Giant Steps has more initial peachy power than the Tarraford, and again the texture is excellent. It's not quite as complex, and may be ready sooner. (\$40.00) ★★★★★

2013 Stella Bella Serie Luminosa Margaret River Chardonnay

Margaret River and Yarra Valley are where the chardonnay strength of Australia lies at the moment. This one exemplifies the modern regional approach – intense white peach and cashew, long creamy palate and a strong line of acidity. Very impressive. (\$65.00) ★★★★★

2014 Frogmore Creek Fumé Blanc Several Australian producers are displaying deft hands when it comes to barrel-fermenting sauvignon blanc. Alain Rousseau is one of them. This wine shows an artist's touch, turning the sauvignon blanc volume down slightly and harmonising the fruit with subtle oak and lees characteristics. The palate is dry, long and very fresh. (\$28.00) ★★★★★

2015 Bremerton Special Release Langhorne Creek Fiano Have you noticed the publicity fiano is receiving? There's a big push happening, and although it won't be the "next chardonnay", it can have a lot of appeal. This one is full of life, showing apple and pear characteristics, and the palate is rich and acid-fresh, without the obvious phenolics that often come with the variety. (\$24.00) ★★★★★

2014 Tarrawarra Estate Yarra Valley Chardonnay Fresh, clean and almost too fruit-driven. It needs a little more barrel character, but is varietal, lively and balanced. (\$28.00) ★★★★★

2015 Rob Dolan Yarra Valley Chardonnay Ripe stone fruit characteristics combine with oak to provide a full flavoured drink-now style. (\$30.00) ★★★★★

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2014 Bremerton Battonage Langhorne Creek Chardonnay Fresh and peachy, with a liberal dash of vanilla oak. Slightly firm on the finish. Drink now. (\$32.00) ★★★

2015 Bremerton Special Release Langhorne Creek Vermentino A lively “crunchy” green apple style that is fresh, but fades a little on the finish. (\$24.00) ★★★

REDS



2014 Giant Steps Mea Culpa Yarra Valley Syrah Australia is producing some of the world’s best medium-bodied shiraz. Examples may come from the Hunter Valley or Canberra District, but this one shows just how well suited to shiraz some Yarra Valley sites are. Raspberries and violets shine out on the nose, greatly enhanced by subtle whole bunch complexity. The palate is a silky delight. (\$75.00) ★★★★★
<http://www.innocentbystander.com.au/shop/>

2014 Oakridge Local Vineyard Series Oakridge Vineyard Shiraz Backing up the Yarra Valley’s shiraz credentials is this gem from Oakridge. The theme of violets, red berries and whole bunch holds true, and the fineness of tannins and length of palate put a strong stamp of quality on this marvellous red wine. Brilliant value for money. (\$38.00) ★★★★★
http://www.oakridgewines.com.au/PurchaseWine/Local_Vineyard_Series.aspx

2010 Saltram The Journal It’s expensive, but The Journal is a classic Eden Valley cellaring style. Made from a single 100 year old vineyard, this stylish red shows rich blackberry aromas and flavours with balanced oak and fine tannins. It has decades ahead of it, and is a modern take on an old classic. (\$175.00) ★★★★★☆

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2014 Soumah Single Vineyard Yarra Valley Syrah An attractive red berry style with a hint of leathery complexity. The tannins are firm but balanced, on a medium-bodied palate. (\$37.00) ★★★★★

2013 Stella Bella Margaret River Sangiovese Cabernet Sauvignon Both varieties come into play clearly here, with red berry, bun spice and blackcurrant characteristics showing out. There are also some complex cedary notes. The dry palate has a certain Italianate quality. (\$30.00) ★★★★★

2014 Bremerton Special Release Tempranillo Graciano Attractive licorice nuances are complemented by tilled earth complexity in a supple, easy to drink red. The palate has a pleasant savoury twist. (\$24.00) ★★★★★

2014 Tokar Estate Yarra Valley Shiraz A plummy shiraz that shows some oak. It offers good weight of varietal flavour with a firm finish. (\$35.00) ★★★☆

2015 Rob Dolan Yarra Valley Pinot Noir Bright and varietal, but on the light side. Short term. (\$30.00) ★★★☆

2014 Terre à Terre Rouge A cleanly made Wrattenbully red with whiffs of red berry and blackcurrant. It's very easy to drink, but really needs more weight and structure. (\$32.00) ★★★☆

2014 Bremerton Special Release Malbec A fresh, simple, early-drinking red showing raspberry and blueberry characteristics. (\$24.00) ★★★

Lester Jesberg

PENINSULA PIERS & PINOTS

The annual Peninsula Piers & Pinots will be held on Sunday 13 March from 12 - 3pm at Flinders foreshore - 22 wineries, local food and music in a beautiful setting by the seaside. The perfect way to spend a Sunday afternoon - all things Pinot. Tickets are available at <http://mpva.com.au/events/detail/Peninsula-Piers-Pinots> until midday 9 March or simply come along on the day (please note numbers will be limited).

Participating wineries are:

Baillieu Vineyard, Bittern Estate, Dexter Wines, Dromana Estate, Elgee Park Wines, Handpicked Wines, Merricks Estate, Miceli, Montalto, Moorooduc Estate, Nazaaray Estate, Ocean Eight, Paringa Estate, Quealy Wines, Red Hill Estate, Stonier, The Duke Vineyard, Trofeo Estate, Tuck's Ridge, Willow Creek, Yabby Lake Vineyard, Yal Yal Estate.