

## 2016 WINEWISE CHAMPIONSHIP

**A**round 400 wines were tasted in just over three days of the Championship. They were presented to the panel in brackets of six or fewer, and the turnaround time for each bracket was usually 10-12 minutes. Although many wines were discussed by the judges, there was little chance to write extensive tasting notes, so in the majority of cases the reviews are, of necessity, brief.

Please bear in mind that to qualify for the Championship, a wine had to have been awarded a gold medal in any of 35 qualifying shows. Therefore it should come as no surprise that the majority rated very well. The overall high quality led to some very close decisions when it came to rating wines in order of preference in most of the brackets.

In the case of a bracket of six, judges scored the wines 5, 4, 3, 2, 1, 0 where 5 was allotted to the judge's most preferred wine and 0 to the least. Similarly, in a bracket of four, the scoring was 3, 2, 1, 0. Usually a number of heats were conducted, with the top wine going through to a semi-final or final. On a few occasions the scoring was so close that two wines progressed to the next round.

The wines are reviewed by bracket because it is impossible to determine an accurate order of preference if all brackets of one class are combined. The ratings reflect the weight of opinion of the judges, and the view of the chairman.

We consider that our approach is the best way to conduct a "grand final" of wine shows, and we are very grateful for the support of wine producers large and small.

Where prices are not shown, we could find no evidence of current availability.

You'll find class summaries at the end of this report.

### What the ratings mean

★★★★★	Outstanding	97-100 points	Gold medal
★★★★☆	Highly Recommended	93-96	Gold or high silver
★★★★	Recommended	90-92	Silver
★★★☆☆	Recommended	87-89	Bronze
★★★	Agreeable	85-87	Bronze
★★☆☆	Agreeable	82-84	
★★	Acceptable	80-82	
★☆☆	Acceptable	77-79	
★	Barely Acceptable	74-76	
☆	Unacceptable	71-73	
No stars	Undrinkable	<71	

**2014-2015 RIESLING GROUP 1**

**2015 Carillion Estate Grown Riesling** This dry, floral/citrus riesling from Orange, NSW is part of a new wave. It's pure and long-flavoured, with a strong line of acidity. (\$25.00) ★★★★★☆

**2015 Wolf Blass White Label Eden Valley Riesling** A very well made riesling showing both floral and lime characteristics. The length and acidity are impressive. ★★★★★☆

**2015 Colmar Estate Riesling** Just in case you thought the Carillion was a fluke, this riesling from Orange proves it wasn't. Orange is a riesling area on the rise. It's "juicy" and limey, with a long, dry finish. (\$32.00) ★★★★★☆

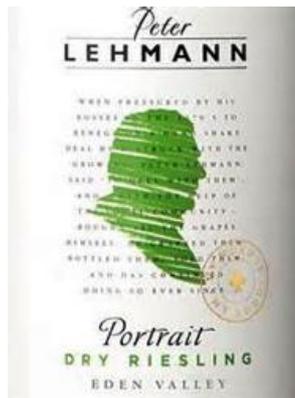
**2015 Reillys Wines Watervale Riesling** This wine delivers abundant Clare lime character with lively acidity. Enjoy over the next couple of years. ★★★★★

**2015 Saltram Mamre Eden Valley Riesling** On the big side, tending broad, but has plenty of varietal character. ★★★★★☆

**2014-2015 RIESLING GROUP 2**



**Medallion Winner**



**2015 Peter Lehmann Portrait Eden Valley Dry Riesling** Any short list of the best Australian riesling producers would have to include Peter Lehmann. This bargain-priced release is a perfect example of the company's depth of quality. It's a classic floral/lime style which is fine, long and delicate. Don't miss it. (\$18.00) ★★★★★☆

**2015 Naked Run The First Clare Valley Riesling** A very attractive limey riesling with a hint of spice. The palate is tight, with a strong line of acidity. (\$18.00) ★★★★★☆

**2015 Taylors Clare Valley Riesling** A rich citrus/stone fruit style that is a little forward, but drinking beautifully. ★★★★★

**2015 Wolf Blass Gold Label Eden Valley Riesling** There's no shortage of limey flavour here in a riesling that is beginning to drink well. ★★★★★

**2015 Robert Stein Reserve Mudgee Riesling** A full-on citrus/stone fruit riesling with a slightly firm finish. ★★★

### 2014-2015 RIESLING GROUP 3

**2015 Stage Door Green Room Eden Valley Riesling** A powerful wine for its region, tending more to lime than floral. The intense flavour is backed up by just-right acidity. (\$25.00) ★★★★★☆

**2015 Montara Gold Rush Grampians Riesling** Cool area characteristics like grapefruit mingle with varietal florals in this fine, stylish riesling. The palate offers excellent length and acidity. ★★★★★☆

**2015 Peter Lehmann Hill & Valley Riesling** A very marketable riesling that is ready to drink and packed with varietal flavour. ★★★★★

**2015 Larry Cherubino Ad Hoc Wallflower Riesling** No lack of flavour here either, tending lime and stone fruit with a lively acid finish. ★★★★★

**2015 Robert Stein Mudgee Riesling** Loads of stone fruit flavour backed up by refreshing acidity. ★★★★★

**2015 Ravensworth Riesling** A little too advanced, but still drinking quite well. ★★★

### 2014-2015 RIESLING GROUP 4

**2014 Naked Run Place In Time Sevenhill Riesling** A classic regional style which is packed with limey flavour. Lively acidity completes the picture. ★★★★★☆

**2014 Peter Lehmann Wigan Eden Valley Riesling** This yet to be released riesling is restrained and floral, yet to really blossom. Look for it in a couple of years. ★★★★★☆

**2014 Chartley Estate Tasmania Riesling** A very impressive, linear, delicate, grapefruit-scented riesling. A classic cool area style. ★★★★★☆

**2014 Bream Creek Tasmania Riesling** The grapefruit and guava overtones are impressive and fascinating, and the delicacy and acidity reflect the cool origins. Pristine riesling. (\$26.00) ★★★★★☆

**2014 Reillys Wines Barking Mad Clare Valley Riesling** Rich and limey, showing some development. ★★★★★☆

### 2014-2015 RIESLING FINAL

**2015 Peter Lehmann Portrait Eden Valley Dry Riesling**

**2015 Carillion Estate Grown Riesling**

**2015 Stage Door Green Room Eden Valley Riesling**

**2014 Naked Run Place In Time Sevenhill Riesling**

### 2010-2013 RIESLING

**2012 Peter Lehmann Wigan Eden Valley Riesling** A beautifully floral riesling with the “slatey” Eden Valley aroma. It’s very restrained right now and clearly needs time. ★★★★★☆

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**2013 Jaeschkes Hill River Clare Estate Riesling** Decidedly limey and fresh with a touch of maturity. Very enjoyable drinking at a ridiculously low price. (\$11.00) ★★★★★

**2012 Taylors St Andrews Clare Valley Riesling** Limey, rich, ready and delicious. ★★★★★

**2012 Tamburlaine Reserve Riesling** Showing maturity but still offers good citrus varietal character and freshness. From Orange, NSW. ★★★★★

**2011 Naked Run Place In Time Sevenhill Riesling** Showing honeyed characteristics, but still offers very enjoyable drinking. ★★★★★

**2010 Pewsey Vale The Contours Eden Valley Riesling** An enticing honey/toast style that is at its peak. ★★★★★

## 2009 & OLDER RIESLING



### Medallion Winner

**2009 Petaluma Project Company Adelaide Hills Riesling** It's no surprise to see Petaluma picking up an award, but this one is with an Adelaide Hills riesling, which strikes yet another blow for the region. The remarkably fresh lemon/lime aromas carry a hint of grapefruit, and the palate is very long, finishing with fresh acidity. ★★★★★

**2005 Trevelen Farm Riesling** This Great Southern, WA riesling was a revelation. At ten years of age it retains its freshness and shows mature varietal lemon and floral varietal characteristics. It's drinking beautifully. ★★★★★

**2008 O'Leary Walker Watervale Riesling** Attractively toasty and drinking well. ★★★★★

**2008 Robert Stein Mudgee Riesling** Still looking good. There's even a hint of guava. ★★★★★

**2009 St Hallett Eden Valley Riesling** Pleasant honey/toast nose, but the finish is beginning to dry out. ★★★★★

**2008 O'Leary Walker Polish Hill River Riesling** Showing obvious development and is beginning to fade. ★★★★★

## RIESLING GRAND FINAL

2009 Petaluma Project Company Adelaide Hills Riesling

2015 Peter Lehmann Portrait Eden Valley Dry Riesling

2015 Carillion Estate Grown Riesling

2012 Peter Lehmann Wigan Eden Valley Riesling

### 2014-2015 SEMILLON Group 1

**2015 Briar Ridge Dairy Hill Hunter Valley Semillon** There's no lack of lemon grass/citrus flavour in this vibrant young semillon. Lively acidity provides balance and structure. (\$35.00) ★★★★★☆

**2015 Tyrrell's Johnno's Hunter Valley Semillon** A fresh, powerful semillon with classic citrus varietal character and a strong line of acidity. Excellent cellaring potential. ★★★★★☆

**2015 Two Rivers Stones Throw Hunter Valley Semillon** Strongly varietal, but a little forward. Nevertheless, it's fresh and offers very good short term drinking. ★★★★★

**2015 First Creek Premium Hunter Valley Semillon** A slightly advanced semillon with excellent flavour and good supporting acidity. ★★★★★

**2015 Brokenwood Hunter Valley Semillon** Shows slightly tropical fruit overtones and is comparatively forward. ★★★

### 2014-2015 SEMILLON Group 2

**2015 Briar Ridge Signature Series Stockhausen Hunter Valley Semillon** There's an attractive "soapy" overtone to the nose, and the intense varietal fruit is supported by a strong line of acidity. (\$28.00) ★★★★★☆

**2015 Silkman Reserve Hunter Valley Semillon** A very fresh, flavoursome semillon with lively, beautifully balanced acidity. Good cellaring potential. (Not yet released) ★★★★★☆

**2014 Wombat Crossing The Creek Flat Hunter Valley Semillon** Very well made, showing plenty of varietal flavour with a clean acid finish. ★★★★★☆

**2014 Gundog Estate Sunshine Vineyard Hunter Valley Semillon** Quite full flavoured, but vibrant, with linear acidity. A very attractive package. ★★★★★☆

**2014 Andrew Thomas Cellar Reserve Braemore Semillon** A richly lemony wine with excellent balancing acid. Attractive now, but will age gracefully. ★★★★★☆

An impressive bracket of young semillons with very little between them.

### 2011-2013 SEMILLON

**2013 First Creek Winemaker's Reserve Hunter Valley Semillon** A delightfully fresh semillon showing the first signs of bottle age, and hints of lime. The richness is well supported by acidity. (\$50.00) ★★★★★☆

**2013 Mistletoe Reserve Hunter Valley Semillon** Slightly more youthful than the top wine, with slightly "soapy" overtones. The palate is long, restrained and crisply acidic. (\$25.45) ★★★★★☆

**2011 First Creek Winemaker's Reserve Hunter Valley Semillon** A nicely developed semillon with attractive toasty overtones. Entering its ideal drinking window. ★★★★★

**2012 Peter Lehmann Margaret Barossa Valley Semillon** Showing maturity but retains its freshness. Very good drinking now. ★★★★★

**2011 Mistletoe Reserve Hunter Valley Semillon** A pleasantly toasty, richly flavoured semillon with good acidity. ★★★★★

### 2010 & OLDER SEMILLON Group 1

**2009 Brokenwood ILR Reserve Hunter Valley Semillon** Here we see why high quality Hunter Valley semillon should be given bottle age. This wine is just entering its golden era, showing gorgeously toasty maturity, but retaining the freshness of its youth. It will drink beautifully for at least the next three years. (\$75.00) ★★★★★

**2009 Pokolbin Estate Phil Swannell Hunter Valley Semillon** The Pokolbin Estate wines are under-rated, and because of that, they're often bargains. This is a case in point. It combines lemony varietal character and hints of toast beautifully, and is a delightful drink. (\$35.00) ★★★★★☆

**2009 Andrew Thomas Cellar Reserve Braemore Hunter Valley Semillon** Another lemon-toast style with a lot to offer. It's still very fresh and is beginning to drink well. (\$50.00) ★★★★★☆

### 2010 & OLDER SEMILLON GROUP 2



#### Medallion Winner

**2006 Tyrrell's Vat 1 Hunter Semillon** This wine has now assumed the mantle of the much-awarded 2005 Vat 1, and stood out in this small, prestigious group. Honey/toast bottle-age characteristics greatly enhance the powerful varietal flavour. Linear acidity completes the picture of a near-perfect semillon. ★★★★★

**2005 Tyrrell's Vat 1 Hunter Semillon** It may have bowed to the 2006, but this is still a brilliant wine. There's great depth of flavour supported by the classic Hunter acidity, and there's no sign of the fruit drying out. Another great semillon at the peak of its form. (\$65.00) ★★★★★

**2006 Coolangatta Estate Semillon** There's plenty of honey and toast here, and impressive fruit intensity. Without doubt, this is the best wine from the Shoalhaven Coast of New South Wales. Enjoy it over the next year or two. ★★★★★☆

**2005 Meerea Park Alexander Munro Hunter Valley Semillon** The most mature-tasting of the four, but it's still a very good, richly flavoured semillon with much to offer for current drinking. ★★★★★

### SEMILLON GRAND FINAL

2006 Tyrrell's Vat 1 Hunter Semillon

2009 Brokenwood ILR Hunter Valley Semillon

2013 First Creek Winemaker's Reserve Hunter Valley Semillon

2015 Briar Ridge Dairy Hill Semillon

2015 Briar Ridge Signature Series Stockhausen Hunter Valley Semillon



### 2014-2015 CHARDONNAY GROUP 1

**2014 Seville Estate Reserve Yarra Valley Chardonnay** An intense white peach/nutty chardonnay with a lick of new oak and a creamy texture. This classy wine is still evolving. ★★★★★

**2014 Coldstream Hills Reserve Yarra Valley Chardonnay** Rich, creamy, delicious and faintly funky. Very much at the cutting edge of Australian chardonnay. (\$55.00) ★★★★★

**2014 Carillion Wines The Crystals Chardonnay** A fresh white peach style from Orange with good fruit weight and a touch of oak. Tight and textured. ★★★★★

**2014 Penfolds Bin 14A Adelaide Hills Chardonnay** A vibrant complex chardonnay with nectarine and cashew overtones. The oak is a little prominent at the moment. ★★★★★

**2015 Fox Gordon The Empress Adelaide Hills Chardonnay** Comparatively simple and peachy, but very fresh. ★★★★★

**2014 Wolf Blass White Label Piccadilly Chardonnay** Oak shows over the attractive white peach fruit. ★★★★★

### 2014-2015 CHARDONNAY GROUP 2

**2014 Seville Estate Yarra Valley Chardonnay** A beautifully put together chardonnay offering grapefruit and white peach with a complex nutty lees influence and a touch of toasty oak. The palate is long, balanced and textured. (\$36.00) ★★★★★

**2014 Coldstream Hills Yarra Valley Chardonnay** Vibrant white peach varietal character is supported by lees complexity and texture. Amazing quality for such a readily available wine. Incredible value. (\$25.00) ★★★★★

**2014 Singlefile Family Reserve Denmark Chardonnay** This is a restrained, tightly structured chardonnay with intense varietal flavour that is yet to burst into full bloom. Very impressive. (\$40.00) ★★★★★

**2014 Xanadu Stevens Road Margaret River Chardonnay** Another skilfully crafted, seamless chardonnay of restrained varietal character and great texture. We loved the subtle complexity. ★★★★★

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**2014 Juniper Estate Margaret River Chardonnay** There's plenty of white peach fruit here, enhanced by positive lees and toasty oak inputs. This wine is in its ideal drinking phase. (\$36.00) ★★★★★☆

**2014 Galli Estate Chardonnay** Fairly deep colour. Plenty of ripe peachy fruit and oak. ★★★★★☆

**Note:** The Seville Estate and Coldstream Hills tied on points, and we put them both through to the final even though the Seville Estate had more first-place votes. The showing of the Seville Estate in the final earned it an extra half-star.

### 2014-2015 CHARDONNAY GROUP 3

**2014 First Creek Winemaker's Reserve Chardonnay** Who would have thought that the Hunter Valley would become one of the hot spots for Australian chardonnay? First Creek and Tyrrell's are leading the charge. This wine is intense but not big, showing attractive funky notes. The palate is long, creamy and beautifully balanced, with oak in the background. The 2013 is currently available. ★★★★★★

**2014 Brokenwood Forest Edge Vineyard Chardonnay** This one's also made in the Hunter Valley, but with material sourced from a high altitude vineyard at Orange. It's the epitome of the modern Australian approach, with the emphasis on restrained but intense fruit, lees complexity and texture. (\$55.00) ★★★★★★

**2014 Moppity Vineyards Estate Chardonnay** A rich, peachy, nutty chardonnay that delivers a lot in terms of flavour and texture. ★★★★★★

**2014 Robert Oatley Finisterre Mudgee Chardonnay** Rich varietal flavour is supported by toasty oak to create a well-rounded, satisfying chardonnay. Enjoy it now. ★★★★★★

**2014 Rob Dolan Wines White Label Yarra Valley Chardonnay** Fresh, but a little plain. Shows some oak on the finish. ★★★★★☆

### 2014-2015 CHARDONNAY GROUP 4



#### Medallion Winner

**2014 Sittella Reserve Wilyabrup Margaret River Reserve Chardonnay** Our readers may not have heard of Sittella before last year's Small Vignerons Awards, but the Sittella name is now writ large after this wine took out the SVA-Championship double. Add to that gold medals at both the Margaret River Wine Show and Wine Show of Western Australia, and it's been a big six months. This is another brilliant example of modern Australian chardonnay that expresses varietal and regional origins very eloquently, avoiding over-ripeness and excesses of oak, and relying on texture and quality of fruit. ★★★★★★

**2014 Clairault Margaret River Chardonnay** A chardonnay of considerable intensity backed up by a dash of classy French oak. It delivers considerable drinking enjoyment. ★★★★★☆

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**2014 Stella Bella Margaret River Chardonnay** There's a lot happening here – peach, grapefruit, orange rind and butter – all wrapped up in a textural package. (\$27.00) ★★★★★

**2014 Shaw + Smith Lenswood Vineyard Adelaide Hills Chardonnay** This is a classy, very structural chardonnay that is tight and textural. Within the framework you'll find intensity and complexity galore – all ready to evolve. ★★★★★

**2014 Smallwater Estate Geographe Chardonnay** A full flavoured, peachy chardonnay that is a little simple and lacking in structure. ★★★★★

#### 2014-2015 CHARDONNAY FINAL

2014 Sittella Reserve Wilyabrup Margaret River Reserve Chardonnay

2014 Seville Estate Yarra Valley Chardonnay

2014 First Creek Winemaker's Reserve Hunter Valley Chardonnay

2014 Seville Estate Reserve Yarra Valley Chardonnay

2014 Brokenwood Forest Edge Vineyard Chardonnay

2014 Coldstream Hills Yarra Valley Chardonnay

#### 2013 CHARDONNAY GROUP I



**Medallion Winner**



**2013 Tyrrell's Vat 47 Hunter Chardonnay** This wine is a study in structure and restraint – so far removed from Hunter chardonnays of even a decade ago. Barrel work plays a key part in the textural side of this wine, but, even though French oak aroma and flavour plays a part, it doesn't assert itself. The wine is driven by a core of intense fruit backed by acidity. ★★★★★

**2013 Renzaglia Bella Luna Chardonnay** Here's a noteworthy chardonnay from the Bathurst, NSW district. It has attractive nuts and butter complexity and a very satisfying, balanced palate. ★★★★★

**2013 Rowlee Wines Chardonnay** Very good weight of fresh cool area (Orange, NSW) varietal flavour supported by acidity and structure. ★★★★★

**2013 Paringa Estate The Paringa Chardonnay** Peachy and lemony with oak support. Fresh and flavoursome. ★★★★★

**2013 De Bortoli Villages Yarra Valley Chardonnay** Ripe fruit characteristics with citrus peel overtones. Fairly plain. ★★★★★

## 2013 CHARDONNAY GROUP 2

**2013 Coldstream Hills Reserve Yarra Valley Chardonnay** This long time pacesetter continues to hold a place at the pointy end. It's powerful but stylish and fine, beautifully textured and seamless. A magnificent wine. (\$55.00) ★★★★★

**2013 Voyager Estate Margaret River Chardonnay** It would have topped most categories, but this very classy chardonnay was edged out here. It reflects the current Margaret River push for complexity with restraint, and is a beautifully structured wine that delivers the goods in spades. ★★★★★☆

**2013 Dawson James Tasmania Chardonnay** An attractive chardonnay that is beginning to show some development together with peach and lemon characteristics. The richness of flavour is supported well by acidity. ★★★★★

**2013 Hutton Triptych Margaret River Chardonnay** Another richly flavoured chardonnay that is showing some maturity. It's drinking very well. ★★★★★

**2013 Lanes End Chardonnay** Plenty of ripe varietal flavour. Showing some broadness. ★★★★★☆

## 2013 CHARDONNAY GROUP 3

**2013 Devil's Lair Ninth Chamber Margaret River Chardonnay** It's all there – strong, reserved white peach, nutty lees, creamy texture, seamless oak. A classy wine. Not yet released. The 2011 sells for \$100.00. ★★★★★☆

**2013 Shaw + Smith M3 Adelaide Hills Chardonnay** This well known chardonnay is another where the volume has been turned down to great advantage. It's a long flavoured wine with a structure that suggests it will be even better in a year's time. (\$40.00) ★★★★★☆

**2013 Tyrrell's Belford Hunter Chardonnay** Beginning to show some richness of flavour with a slightly lemony twist. Commendable balance and length of flavour. ★★★★★

**2013 Coppabella Sirius Tumbarumba Chardonnay** Showing development and has pronounced “wet fur” complexity. ★★★

**2013 Peter Lehmann Hill & Valley Chardonnay** Looking quite plain. Shows some peachy fruit which is beginning to fade and expose the oak. ★★★

## 2013 CHARDONNAY FINAL

2013 Tyrrell's Vat 47 Hunter Chardonnay

2013 Coldstream Hills Reserve Yarra Valley Chardonnay

2013 Devil's Lair Ninth Chamber Margaret River Chardonnay

## 2012 & OLDER CHARDONNAY

**2012 PHI Yarra Valley Chardonnay** This De Bortoli chardonnay is showing positive honeyed development but retains freshness of varietal character. Well balanced grip adds considerably to the palate. (\$45.00) ★★★★★☆

**2012 Xanadu Reserve Margaret River Chardonnay** Very richly flavoured, but also well endowed with complexity and acidity. This wine is very enjoyable now. (\$80.00) ★★★★★☆

**2012 Canobolas Smith Shine Chardonnay** A chardonnay from Orange that is intense and slightly funky, with excellent texture and acidity. ★★★★★☆

**2010 Seville Estate Reserve Yarra Valley Chardonnay** Delightfully complex and intense, and still remarkably fresh. A very stylish chardonnay. ★★★★★☆

**2012 Bream Creek Tasmania Chardonnay** Quite full flavoured, with slight tropical fruit overtones and good acidity. ★★★★★

**2012 Xanadu Stevens Road Margaret River Chardonnay** Drinking at its peak, offering plenty of varietal flavour backed up by a dash of classy French oak. ★★★★★

### CHARDONNAY GRAND FINAL

2014 Sittella Reserve Wilyabrup Margaret River Reserve Chardonnay

2013 Tyrrell's Vat 47 Hunter Chardonnay

2012 PHI Yarra Valley Chardonnay

## 2015 SAUVIGNON BLANC & BLENDS Group I

**2015 Larry Cherubino Straw Man Ad Hoc Sauvignon Blanc Semillon** Plenty of grassy and gooseberry here, backed up by excellent acidity. (\$19.00) ★★★★★☆

**2015 Shaw + Smith Adelaide Hills Sauvignon Blanc** Very fresh gooseberry. Lively and textural. (\$22.00) ★★★★★☆

**2015 Clairault Margaret River Sauvignon Blanc Semillon** Powerful gooseberry aroma and flavour. Beginning to show a little development. ★★★★★

**2015 Xanadu DJL Sauvignon Blanc Semillon** Fresh lantana blossom aroma. Slightly lean. Racy acidity. ★★★★★

**2015 Barking Owl Semillon Sauvignon Blanc** Has some grassy varietal character but undoubtedly was better six months ago. ★★★

**2015 SAUVIGNON BLANC & BLENDS Group 2**



**JOSEF CHROMY**  
T A S M A N I A



**Medallion Winner**

**2015 Josef Chromy Fumé Blanc** Here's A little masterclass on how to barrel-ferment sauvignon blanc. This northern Tasmanian wine shows gooseberry and lantana character moderated by lees and oak complexity. A fresh, intense, textural wine. (\$28.00) ★★★★★

**2015 Coppabella Tumbarumba Sauvignon Blanc** A little forward, but packed with grassy varietal character. Drink soon. ★★★☆

**2015 Riposte The Foil Adelaide Hills Sauvignon Blanc** Another slightly forward wine, this time with varietal nettle characteristics. ★★★☆

**2015 Printhe Mountain Range Sauvignon Blanc** A powerful grassy/lemon/passionfruit style that is ready to drink. ★★★☆

**2015 Andrew Thomas Two of a Kind Semillon Sauvignon Blanc** Has lost some of the vibrancy it showed at the Small Vignerons Awards. Tending pineapple/tropical. ★★★

**2015 SAUVIGNON BLANC & BLENDS Group 3**

**2015 Josef Chromy Sauvignon Blanc** A fresh, very drinkable, gooseberry style that is showing a touch of development. ★★★★★

**2015 Xanadu Next of Kin Sauvignon Blanc Semillon** Rich and forward, offering satisfying passionfruit flavour. ★★★★★

**2015 Sandalford Margaret River Classic Dry White** Fruity and grassy, but just starting to lose its freshness. ★★★☆

**2015 Edwards Margaret River Semillon Sauvignon Blanc** A grassy style with good fruit weight that would have been better a few months ago. ★★★☆

## 2013-14 SAUVIGNON BLANC & BLENDS

**2014 Robert Oatley Signature Series Margaret River Sauvignon Blanc** There's an attractive touch of barrel ferment complexity here, and the lemony/grassy palate is textural and full of life. (\$22.95) ★★★★★☆

**2013 Symphony Hill Barrel Fermented Sauvignon Blanc** Although it has its share of oak, this Granite Belt wine is impressively powerful, creamy and Graves-like. ★★★★★

**2014 Thompson Estate Four Chambers Sauvignon Blanc Semillon** Ready to drink, with intense lemon and tropical fruit flavours. ★★★★★

**2014 Topper's Mountain Barrel Aged Sauvignon Blanc** Has good weight of varietal fruit, but the oak and lees characteristics are beginning to assert themselves. ★★★★★

### SAUVIGNON BLANC & BLENDS GRAND FINAL

2015 Josef Chromy Fumé Blanc

2015 Larry Cherubino Straw Man Ad Hoc Sauv Blanc Semillon

2014 Robert Oatley Signature Series Margaret River Sauv Blanc

2015 Shaw + Smith Adelaide Hills Sauvignon Blanc

2015 Josef Chromy Sauvignon Blanc

## ITALIAN WHITE VARIETALS Group I

**2015 Briar Ridge Limited Release Hunter Valley Fiano** This wine has some characteristics that the variety shows in Campania, Italy. Lemon and faint honeysuckle characteristics are enhanced by lees-derived texture and well-judged phenolic grip. (\$28.00) ★★★★★☆

**2015 Davis Premium Vineyards Verduzzo** An original, quite exceptional version of verduzzo. Aromas of pear and white flowers show through, and the palate has depth and just-right grip. ★★★★★☆

**2015 Saltram Winemakers Selection Fiano** Ripe peach aromas and flavours show through here, supported by appropriate firmness. ★★★★★

**2014 Redbank Fiano** Rich stone fruit with breadly overtones. Quite mouth-filling. ★★★

## ITALIAN WHITE VARIETALS Group I

**2015 Zerella La Gita Arneis** An attractive McLaren Vale white showing rich green apple flavour and fruit-derived sweetness on a rewarding, nicely structured palate. ★★★★★

**2014 Glendon Vineyards Landaire Single Vineyard Vermentino** This is a very enjoyable Padthaway dry white with white peach and apple characteristics and a savoury mouthfeel. ★★★★★

**2014 Calabria Private Bin Vermentino** There's plenty of rich apple-like varietal flavour, but oak shows a little too much. ★★★★★

**2014 Beach Road Wines Greco** This is greco with the volume turned up – deep colour, forward honeycomb/peach, power and grip. ★★★

## VIOGNIER



### Medallion Winner

**2014 Tellurian Heathcote Viognier** The vibrant apricot and ginger aromas and flavours make this a text book viognier. Add palate opulence and perfectly balanced phenolics and you have something special. (\$27.00) ★★★★★☆

**2014 Gatt Accent Barossa Valley Viognier** Richly flavoured, with plenty of apricot varietal flavour backed by appropriate firmness. (\$19.90) ★★★★★☆

**2014 Yalumba Eden Valley Viognier** Probably Australia's most readily available premium quality viognier, this wine doesn't disappoint. Apricot and ginger abound on a pleasantly firm palate. ★★★★★☆

**2015 Tim Smith Eden Valley Viognier** Comparatively restrained, but shows varietal apricot and ginger. Well balanced. ★★★★★

**2014 Quartz Hill Pyrenees Viognier** Plenty of apricot flavour without the freshness of the top three. ★★★★★

## MARSANNE & BLENDS, ROUSSANNE

**2014 Blue Pyrenees Estate Champ Blend Blanc** Very fresh stone fruit (almost chardonnay) aromas and flavours heightened by an apricot viognier spike. This is a complete, textural wine led by viognier, but not overwhelmed by it. (\$32.00) ★★★★★☆

**2015 St Huberts Yarra Valley Roussanne** No doubt roussanne is under-rated. This one has hints of mango and peach, but it's dry and long-flavoured. Try it with poached salmon. (\$33.00) ★★★★★☆

**2010 Tahbilk Marsanne** Experience tells us that the ideal drinking window for Tahbilk Marsanne is 5-6 years of age, and this one is right in it. There's all the classic mature honeysuckle one could want, and the typical acidity provides excellent balance. (\$22.95) ★★★★★☆

**2014 Tahbilk Marsanne** A classic young honeysuckle-scented marsanne that is still quite reserved, needing time in bottle. (\$16.95) ★★★★★

**2013 Tahbilk Roussanne Marsanne Viognier** A well-rounded stone fruit style that is drinking beautifully now. It reminded us of a St-Péray from the Rhône Valley. ★★★★★

**2014 Meerea Park Indie Marsanne Roussanne** There's plenty of toasty, honeysuckle flavour, but this wine has peaked, and the oak is taking over. ★★★★★☆

### **PINOT GRIS/GRIGIO or VERDELHO**

**2015 Mandoon Estate Swan Valley Verdelho** The typical tropical and citrus varietal aromas show out clearly, and the palate is rewarding, offering a good mouthfeel and fresh acid finish. (\$23.00) ★★★★★☆

**2015 Montalto Pennon Hill Pinot Grigio** Restrained, but varietal and fresh, offering good length of flavour. ★★★★★

**2015 Risky Business Western Australia Pinot Grigio** Slightly malty overtones. The palate is rich but fairly firm. ★★★★★

**2015 Bass River Single Vineyard Gippsland Pinot Gris** Another malty pinot gris. This one is fairly forward and full-on, with a firm finish. ★★★★★

### **ALL OTHER DRY WHITE**

**2014 Topper's Mountain Gewürztraminer** A complex, beautifully textured young gewürz from New England, NSW which shows primary rose petal and lychee characteristics and real power on the palate. (\$35.00) ★★★★★☆

**2012 Topper's Mountain Barrel Ferment Petit Manseng** A complex white with a beguiling mandarin overtone backed by palate texture and acidity. This is a marvellous interpretation of a SW France classic. (\$34.00) ★★★★★☆

**2015 Topper's Mountain Gewürztraminer** Plenty of musk stick and lychee with the beginnings of texture. Give it another year or two. (Not yet released) ★★★★★

**2013 Topper's Mountain Gewürztraminer** A rich and well structured wine in which the mature rose petal and honey flavours are balanced by phenolic grip. (\$35.00) ★★★★★

**2014 Ravensworth Wines Seven Months** For an “orange” wine, this is pretty darned impressive. For a start, it owes nothing to amontillado sherry and shows attractive peach and floral characteristics. The palate is fairly firm, but long and balanced. (\$32.00) ★★★★★

### **OTHER DRY WHITE GRAND FINAL**

2014 Tellurian Heathcote Viognier

2014 Blue Pyrenees Estate Champ Blend Blanc

2014 Topper's Mountain Gewürztraminer

2015 Briar Ridge Limited Release Hunter Valley Fiano

2015 Zerella La Gita Arneis

2015 Mandoon Estate Swan Valley Verdelho

## SWEET WHITE RIESLING



### Medallion Winner

**2015 Josef Chromy Botrytis** This sweet Tasmanian wine is jaw-droppingly good. It holds its own against top-notch German beerenausleses with its intense, vibrant grapefruit and guava aromas and flavours. The balanced acidity is quite steely and the botrytis is clean and complex, imparting a faint marmalade overtone. (\$28.00/375ml) ★★★★★

**2015 Robert Stein Half Dry Mudgee Riesling** Fresh, lemony and well made, offering a little sweetness, intense fruit and well balanced acidity, with a slightly firm finish. ★★★★★

## SWEET WHITE OTHER

**2013 De Bortoli Noble One** Very complex and luscious, with powerful honeyed semillon flavour, orange peel botrytis and oak. A fine example of what is now an Australian classic. (\$27.00/375ml) ★★★★★

**2013 Freeman Dolcino** A very impressive sweet white from Hilltops, NSW that, even though made from viognier, is Sauternes-like. It's sweet, but not heavily so, and the fresh stone fruit and barley sugar characteristics are very appealing. (\$25.00/500ml) ★★★★★

**2012 Lillypilly Noble Harvest** Rich and honeyed, this wine will satisfy those of very sweet tooth. It's fresh and very mouthfilling indeed, with attractive citrus peel complexity. (\$33.00/375ml) ★★★★★

**2002 Lillypilly Noble Blend** It might be 14 years old, but it still has much to offer. It's heading to golden syrup in character, but the lusciousness and freshness are commendable. ★★★★★

**2011 Peter Lehmann Botrytis Semillon** Sweet but mature. Holding on, but showing its age. ★★★★★

## SWEET WHITE GRAND FINAL

2015 Josef Chromy Botrytis

2013 Freeman Dolcino

2013 De Bortoli Noble One



## SPARKLING WINE GRAND FINAL



### Medallion Winner

**2009 Sitella Methode Traditionelle Pinot Noir Chardonnay** A fresh, powerful and bready sparkling wine made from grapes that were sourced from the Pemberton region of Western Australia. The complexity reflects time on lees, and the palate is creamy and acid-fresh. Sold out, but we did tell you about it when it took the best sparkling trophy at the 2015 Small Vigneron Awards. ★★★★★

**2011 Bunnamagoo Estate Pinot Chardonnay** A very enjoyable bubbly from Mudgee. Complex, bready and creamy. ★★★★★

**2011 Blue Pyrenees Estate Vintage Brut** Lemony and fresh with a fine mousse and good acidity. ★★★★★

**2005 Chandon Prestige Cuvée** Plenty of complex brioche character and good acidity. ★★★★★

Take out the proseccos and moscatos and we had only about 20 eligible wines. We appreciate the support of the four entrants, all of which are of high quality, but numerically the class was disappointing. We will have to consider its future.

## CONCLUSIONS

### RIESLING

The standard of Australian riesling remains high. Despite global warming the traditional regions Clare and Eden Valley held sway here. But was our judging too conservative? Did we fail to give enough weight to the aromatic qualities, fineness and linearity of the Tasmanian rieslings? This will be a major topic for the inevitable post mortem that follows major events such as this.

**Tip:** Orange, NSW is a riesling region on the rise.

If you want to discover the joys of Tasmanian riesling, obtain one of the ★★★★★ wines, 2014 Bream Creek Tasmania Riesling (\$26.00)  
<https://www.breamcreekvineyard.com.au/buy-wine/2014-riesling/>

### SEMILLON

The Hunter Valley once again demonstrated why it is the world's best semillon region.. Tyrrell's delivered the goods with two brilliant mature wines, but First Creek (including Silkman) and the Pepper Tree group, through Briar Ridge, showed they have well and truly arrived.

**Try** 2013 Mistletoe Reserve Hunter Valley Semillon (\$28.00)  
<http://www.mistletoewines.com.au/our-wines/all-products/2013-reserve-semillon.aspx?lv.crumb=46982>

2009 Pokolbin Estate Phil Swannell Hunter Valley Semillon (\$35.00)  
<https://www.pokolbinestate.com.au/wines/semillon/>

## **CHARDONNAY**

Australia is now producing some of the world's best chardonnay. I was extremely frustrated to observe at a recent major wine show dinner how much our winemakers are in awe of such names as Montrachet and Corton-Charlemagne. I even heard one of the attendees opine that we should embrace the obvious botrytis character that one of the \$300 French wines showed. Shudder.

Our best chardonnays, as demonstrated by our 2014 international tasting, are right up there with those of Burgundy, and are much more reliable through the use of screwcap.

Margaret River and Yarra Valley cemented their positions at the front of the pack, but their challenger, as unlikely as it seems, is the Hunter Valley. Tyrrell's and First Creek lead the charge.

**Try** 2014 Coldstream Hills Yarra Valley Chardonnay (\$25.00)  
<https://www.nicks.com.au/2014-coldstream-hills-chardonnay>

## **SAUVIGNON BLANC**

February 2016 isn't the best time to judge some of the sauvignon blancs that were awarded golds in August-September 2015. The timing favours barrel fermented styles, and we tasted some excellent examples, notably those from Joseph Chromy in Tasmania and Symphony Hill, based in Queensland's Granite Belt.

**Try** 2014 Robert Oatley Signature Margaret River Sauv Blanc (\$22.95)  
<http://buywine.robert oatley.com.au/home/wines/?ref=wine-searcher&brand=robert-oatley-signature-series#brand>

## **OTHER DRY WHITES**

The viogniers were the strongest. There was very little between the Tellurian Heathcote, Gatt Accent and Yalumba Eden Valley. The Tellurian prevailed and went on to win the grand final against a diverse range of wines.

Viognier is unfairly ignored, and any of the above wines would be an ideal partner for the still-ubiquitous pork belly.

The Italian white varieties are showing great promise, but those hailing from the Rhône Valley in France did best this time.

**Try** 2014 Tellurian Heathcote Viognier (\$27.00)  
<https://www.tellurianwines.com.au/secure-order-form/>

The ten medallions were spread over five states, with doubles to Josef Chromy, Sittella and Tyrrells. All's well with Australian white wine.

**Lester Jesberg**