

NEW RELEASES

Two of the best producers in our part of the world have just released their latest. There is always a great deal of expectation when these wines hit the market. Here's how they shaped up.

OAKRIDGE



2015 Oakridge Over The Shoulder Yarra Valley Pinot Grigio This has become one of Australia's best examples of the grape variety. It embraces the pear characteristics and lemony acid of north-east Italy, but is true to its Coldstream origins. A vibrant, racy white that is ready to drink. (\$22.00) ★★★★★

2015 Oakridge Local Vineyard Series Barkala Ridge Chardonnay It's not hard to like this one – complex, restrained, tight and intense, with a hint of toasted nuts. It's still comparatively closed, and acid drives the finish, but this chardonnay is all class. (\$38.00) ★★★★★☆

2014 Oakridge 864 Pinot Noir (Lusatia Park Vineyard) Fragrantly varietal and somewhat restrained, with attractive touches of oak and forest floor. It's delicate, tight and long, showing its acid on the finish right now. The tannins are very fine. Give it 2-3 years to fill out. (\$78.00) ★★★★★☆

2013 Oakridge Baton Rouge (Cabernet sauvignon, merlot, shiraz) The nose is attractive, showing blackcurrant, raspberry and spice. The medium-weight palate offers enjoyable flavour. It's easy to drink. (\$28.00) ★★★★★☆

Both the chardonnay and the pinot noir need some time in bottle to really shine, but their quality is already undeniable. Do try the pinot gris, especially if you normally shun that grape. I think you'll be pleasantly surprised.

TE MATA ESTATE



We always look forward to the annual premium release from Hawke's Bay-based Te Mata Estate, and we weren't disappointed.

2014 Te Mata Estate Cape Crest Sauvignon Blanc (87% Sauvignon blanc, 10% semillon, 3% sauvignon gris) I've written in the past that the Cape Crest is one of the world's best barrel-fermented sauvignon blancs. This wine gives me no reason to change my mind. It shows subdued tropical fruit, gooseberry and green plum characteristics, with the input of barrel ferment lees à la Graves. The wine has an excellent acid spine, and is complex and racy, but in no way strident in a varietal sense. (\$35.00) ★★★★★

2014 Te Mata Estate Zara Viognier The vibrant apricot and ginger aromas show the best of viognier, and are enhanced by a subtle, nutty barrel ferment note. It's a beautifully textured wine without fatness or harsh phenolics. The very best of Australian and New Zealand viogniers teach the top Rhône producers a thing or two. Masterly winemaking. (\$35.00) ★★★★★

2014 Te Mata Estate Elston Chardonnay Through the past few years of funky trendiness, Te Mata's Peter Cowley has stood firmly opposed, saying varietal character is what chardonnay is all about. Interestingly, there aren't too many funky chardonnays around right now. This release of Elston is a very harmonious wine offering intense white and yellow peach aromas and flavours backed up by almond meal lees nuances and seamless oak. (\$43.00) ★★★★★

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2014 Te Mata Estate Awatea Cabernets Merlot The cassis and dark plum aromas and flavours are very appealing, and a hint of tobacco leaf adds complexity. This is a most approachable red which has very fine tannins. (\$45.00) ★★★★★

2014 Te Mata Estate Bullnose Syrah A delightful medium-bodied red offering perfumes of violets, star anise, red berries, dark cherry, black pepper and mixed spices. The palate is delightfully fine and silky. (\$53.00) ★★★★★☆

2014 Te Mata Estate Coleraine (60% Cabernet sauvignon, 28% merlot, 12% cabernet franc) From the flashes of purple in the colour through the intense blackcurrant, blueberry, plum and tobacco aromas to the opulent, supremely fine-grained palate, this wine is world-class. Cellar for a decade with confidence. (\$90.00) ★★★★★
<http://www.winestar.com.au/te-mata-coleraine-cabernet-merlot-2014>

It's a tribute to Te Mata Estate's site selections, viticulture and the Hawke's Bay climate that Bordeaux, Rhône and Burgundy varieties all thrive. There's even a decent gamay in the portfolio. Once again we applaud the quality across the range.

Lester Jesberg

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