

TASTED THIS WEEK

It's been an interesting tasting week. Fifteen different grape varieties added considerably to that interest, as did eight different regions. The highlights are high indeed, and they are backed up by a number of very strong wines.

WHITES

2015 Brangayne of Orange Sauvignon Blanc This is a lively white with grass and lantana blossom aromas. It's acid-fresh and is drinking very well now. (\$25.00) ★★★★★

2015 Zonte's Footstep Excalibur Adelaide Hills Sauvignon Blanc Fresh and quite pungent, showing gooseberry and lantana characteristics. It may have been better a few months ago. (\$20.00) ★★★

2015 Mistletoe Reserve Hunter Valley Semillon It's fresh, delicate and varietal. The dry palate has length and very good acidity. Cellar 3-5 years. (\$22.00) ★★★★★

2014 Ottelia Limestone Coast Pinot Gris A lightish nashi pear style with a hint of sweetness. Fresh easy drinking.(\$22.00) ★★★

2013 Rymill Coonawarra gt Gewürztraminer Rose petal and lychee scents are clearly evident, and the palate is sweet and quite rich, with good acidity and a slight grip. An adventurous style. (\$22.00) ★★★

2012 Josef Chromy Zdar Tasmanian Riesling A wine of delicacy and length, with Mosel-like "slatey" aromatics. The palate is intense and dry but is very fine as well. (\$35.00) ★★★★★☆

2015 Berton Vineyard Reserve Eden Valley Chardonnay A throw-back to a couple of decades ago – simple, peachy and plain. (\$17.00) ★★

REDS

2015 Josef Chromy Tasmania Pinot Noir The attractive cherry aromas are enhanced by a hint of whole bunch complexity and the long palate features fine, firm tannins. Good stuff. (\$35.00) ★★★★★

2015 Hayshed Hill Margaret River Nebbiolo The bright, light colour is typical of the variety. It's a very fresh young wine with a hint of rose petal, enough flavour, and dry, savoury tannins. Good drinking. (\$30.00) ★★★★★☆

2015 Hayshed Hill Margaret River Sangiovese The fresh dark cherry aroma and flavour are quite varietal and the palate is medium-weight, with balanced dry tannins. (\$30.00) ★★★★★☆

2014 Hay Shed Hill Margaret River Tempranillo Quite fragrant, with a hint of licorice, this wine is just a little on the light side, but the powdery tannins make it an attractive dink. (\$30.00) ★★★★★☆

2014 Hay Shed Hill Margaret River Merlot This wine captures the variety very well. The vibrant dark fruits nose is given interest by a whiff of leafiness. The palate has depth of flavour and is very well balanced fine tannins. (\$30.00) ★★★★★

2014 Hay Shed Hill Margaret River Cabernet Sauvignon A little light, showing fresh red fruits and leafy characteristics. (\$22.00) ★★★

2013 St Hugo Coonawarra Coonawarra Cabernet/Barossa Shiraz *What a gem of a red this is, rekindling the traditional Australian regional and varietal blend. The best of the Barossa merges beautifully with the best of Coonawarra in this case. The rich blackcurrant of cabernet drives the nose, but the remarkably elegant Barossa shiraz takes over on the palate. The fine tannins (mostly cabernet sauvignon) provide just-right structure. A magnificent wine. (\$40.00) ★★★★★*

2013 St Hugo Coonawarra Cabernet Sauvignon A lively, powerful red which displays the classic Coonawarra traits of blackcurrant, leaf and mint. The palate is long, satisfying, fine and elegant. (\$35.95) ★★★★★☆

2013 Ross Hill Isabelle Orange Cabernet Franc Merlot The raspberry of cabernet franc stands out on both nose and palate. Although the tannins are slightly dominant, this is a vibrant, enjoyable young wine. (\$25.00) ★★★☆

2014 Ross Hill Pinnacle Series Orange Cabernet Franc A very stylish red showing raspberry and other red fruits backed up by a subtle dusty complexity. The tannins are fine, firm and balanced. (\$40.00) ★★★★★

2014 Ross Hill Pinnacle Series Orange Cabernet Sauvignon The fresh blackcurrant aroma is very attractive, and the flavour runs long on a firm, nicely poised, palate. (\$40.00) ★★★★★

2014 Ross Hill Pinnacle Series Orange Pinot Noir The fruit characteristics are ripe and cherry-like, with sappy/stemmy overtones. It's certainly varietal, but the palate is a little angular and acid tends to drive the finish. (\$40.00) ★★★☆

2014 Arrogant Frog Croak Rotie Shiraz (Jean-Claude Mas) The label of this Dan Murphy's exclusivity may be quirky, but the contents offer great value for money. Think perfume, red berries, spice and fine tannins. (\$13.00) ★★★☆

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2014 Thorn-Clarke William Randell Barossa Shiraz A very impressive Barossa shiraz offering vibrant, rich blackberry varietal character backed up by precise oak handling. The finish is long and the firm, fine tannins linger. Well worth cellaring. (\$60.00) ★★★★★

2014 Wirra Wirra Church Block (Cabernet sauvignon, shiraz, merlot) Beautifully made within the constraints of cost of production. It's packed with dark berry and blackcurrant, and is very well balanced and easy to drink. The epitome of an Australian commercial dry red. (\$20.00) ★★★★★

2015 Tellurian Heathcote Nero d'Avola Winemaker Tobias Ansted has captured the essence of nero d'avola by picking the grapes before they reached the raisin stage. It's a delightful well rounded wine, offering varietal perfume and layers of dark berry flavour. (\$27.00) ★★★★★

2015 Red Knot McLaren Vale Shiraz Here's a very fresh blackberry style with lively acidity and fine tannins. It's a good drink. (\$14.95) ★★★★★

2013 d'Arenberg The High Trellis McLaren Vale Cabernet Sauvignon Although it's at the ripe end of blackcurrant, the varietal character is still obvious. The tannins are pleasantly firm. It just needs a little more middle palate. (\$18.00) ★★★

2013 d'Arenberg The Footbolt McLaren Vale Shiraz The blackberry aromas are quite inviting, and the flavoursome, straightforward palate is balanced by drying tannins. It drinks well now. (\$18.00) ★★★★★

2014 Patritti JPB McLaren Vale Shiraz It's hard to miss the new oak on the nose, but the intense blackberry fruit carries it very well. This is a wine of considerable flavour and structure. (\$50.00) ★★★★★

2013 Patritti Lot 3 Single Vineyard McLaren Vale Shiraz There's plenty of ripe fruit but it struggles to carry the obvious oak. (\$28.00) ★★★

2014 Penfolds Max's Cabernet Sauvignon This is an expertly blended cabernet showing ripe red berry and blackcurrant, with a hint of mint. The palate is long, satisfying and very well balanced. (\$35.00) ★★★★★

2014 Mistletoe Grand Reserve Hunter Valley Shiraz An impressive medium-bodied red with intense dark berry aromas and flavours enhanced by a hint of tilled earth. The tannins need a few years to soften. (\$68.00) ★★★★★

Lester Jesberg

NEXT WEEK

A feature tasting of Australia's finest rieslings.

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