

TASTED THIS WEEK

This week delivered a big surprise. The best white is a pinot gris! Australian pinot gris has been damned by some influential writers as boring, and that's putting it kindly. Try the 2015 Ross Hill Pinnacle Series. It may provide you with a refreshed view of an often dismissed grape variety.

WHITES

2015 Yering Station Village Chardonnay The nose promises richness of flavour, and there's a hint of toasted nuts, but the palate fades to a firm finish. (\$24.00) ★★★

2015 Xanadu Exmoor Margaret River Chardonnay The fresh citrus/peach aroma and flavour are enhanced by a hint of nutty lees character. An enjoyable, but comparatively simple drink. (\$18.00) ★★★☆

2015 Ross Hill Maya and Max Orange Region Chardonnay The grapefruit and white peach characteristics combine well with subtle lees complexity. It's a nicely textural wine with a pleasant grip and decent fruit length. (\$18.00) ★★★★★

2015 Ross Hill Pinnacle Series Orange Region Chardonnay A rich, peachy chardonnay with butter and nuts complexity and some oak input. It may be a little overdone but there's no shortage of anything. (\$35.00) ★★★★★

2014 Gartelmann Sarah Elizabeth Hunter Valley Chardonnay Plenty of rich peachiness here, with a whiff of vanilla. The generous flavour is backed up by lively acidity. (\$25.00) ★★★☆

2015 Gartelmann Benjamin Hunter Valley Semillon A fairly lemony, fruity, approachable semillon with a fresh acid finish. (\$25.00) ★★★☆

2015 Gartelmann Jessica Hunter Valley Verdelho Citrus and fruit salad aromas are evident as is up-front sweetness which contributes viscosity. (\$20.00) ★★★

2015 En Soleil by Cape Jaffa Wrattenbully Pinot Gris It shows a little varietal character but is quite dull and firm. (\$27.00) ★★

2015 Brangayne of Orange Pinot Grigio The varietal pear nose has a faintly grassy edge and the palate delivers good fruit weight with a talc-like texture and lively acidity. It finishes a little too firmly for the fruit weight. (\$20.00) ★★★☆



2015 Ross Hill Pinnacle Series Pinot Gris This is a very impressive pinot gris. It backs up the intense poached pear varietal character with balanced firmness, a creamy texture and well balanced acidity. Most Australian pinot gris is bland. This one certainly isn't. (\$30.00) ★★★★★
<http://rosshillwines.businesscatalyst.com/pinnacle-series>

2015 Ross Hill Pinnacle Series Orange Region Sauvignon Blanc This isn't your typical herbaceous sauvignon blanc. There's a subtle funky complexity backed up by limey and grassy nuances. The palate is rich and creamy, with appropriate acidity. (\$30.00) ★★★★★

2014 Arrogant Frog Sauvignon Blanc A rich passionfruit/pineapple style with good fruit weight backed up by lip-smacking acidity. (\$13.00) ★★★★★

REDS

2014 Yering Station Village Yarra Valley Pinot Noir Both strawberry and beetroot show on the nose, but the fruit fades a little on the finish, allowing the tannins to take over. (\$24.00) ★★★

2014 d'Arenberg The Feral Fox Adelaide Hills Pinot Noir Very much in the ripe strawberry style with more than adequate flavour. The tannins are fairly furry. (\$30.00) ★★★

2015 Giant Steps Yarra Valley Pinot Noir This wine offers a delicate strawberry perfume with a herbal note from stems. It's a vibrant young wine that tapers to a slightly acid finish. (\$35.00) ★★★☆

2015 Windowrie Family Reserve Orange Pinot Noir This could be the best pinot noir I've yet tasted from the Orange region. It's from a north-easterly facing vineyard situated about 950 m above sea level and planted in 1999 to clones 114, 115 and MV6. It's abundantly cherry-like, with excellent fruit weight, and fine tannins. Bravo! (\$30.00) ★★★★★

2014 Yering Station Village Yarra Valley Shiraz Viognier The blackberry nose is both perfumed and spicy, but the firm tannins linger after the fruit fades. (\$24.00) ★★★

2013 Mount Langi Ghiran Billi Billi Shiraz A fragrant red berry/licorice shiraz. Attractive, but a little too light. (\$18.00) ★★★

2013 Xanadu Exmoor Margaret River Shiraz The fresh mulberry aromas are pleasant enough, but there's not enough palate weight for the very dry tannins. (\$18.00) ★★☆☆

2013 Michael Hall Flaxman's Valley Eden Valley Shiraz Blackberry teams with a slight mintiness and some new oak here. The impressive "sweet" fruit handles the drying tannins quite well. (\$48.00) ★★★★★

2013 Ironscrap (Hare's Chase) Barossa Valley Shiraz The blackberry and red berry nose carries a touch of spice, and there's plenty of varietal character on the satisfying palate that shows some oak on the finish. (\$35.00) ★★★★★

2014 Stella Bella Margaret River Shiraz It offers some red berry aroma and flavour, but is angular and hard on the finish. (\$30.00) ★★☆☆

2012 The Gate by Shingleback McLaren Vale Shiraz A vibrant and intense dry red showing fresh blackberry aroma and flavour with a suggestion of dark chocolate. The tannins are gentle and savoury. A delightful example of shiraz from the Vale. (\$34.95) ★★★★★
<http://www.shingleback.com.au/products/the-gate>

2013 Yering Station Yarra Valley Cabernet Sauvignon A stylish cabernet which offers good concentration of flavour together with red fruits and tobacco leaf characteristics. The oak is very nicely integrated, as are the elegant tannins. It's worth cellaring for at least five years. (\$40.00) ★★★★★

2014 Vignobles Paul Mas Cabernet Sauvignon This is a good varietal blackcurrant style with a hint of leaf. The lingering powdery tannins match the generous flavour well. Great value from Dan Murphy's. (\$8.00) ★★★★★



2012 Bremerton Walter's Langhorne Creek Cabernet Many don't realise it, but Langhorne Creek is one of Australia's best cabernet regions. Taste this example from Bremerton and you'll see why. Pristine cassis aromas and flavours are highlights, as is the fineness of structural tannins. The new French oak is beautifully integrated. Cellar ten years at least. (\$56.00) ★★★★★
<http://www.bremerton.com.au/>

2015 Four Winds Vineyard Sangiovese A very attractive young Canberra district wine that clearly shows the cherry (and cherry stone) character of sangiovese. It's drinking well, and has the classic savoury tannins, although they're not assertive. (\$30.00) ★★★★★

2014 Hay Shed Hill Margaret River Malbec This one wraps up the Hay Shed Hill varietal spree of the past few weeks, and it's a very enjoyable red. The purple colour signals powerful blueberry and blackberry fruit, and the dry tannins add a pleasantly savoury feel. (\$30.00) ★★★★★

Lester Jesberg

Future Tastings: In the next couple of months, leading up to the 2016 Small Vigneron Awards, we have two feature tastings planned.

2004 & 2012 Coonawarra Cabernets

2015 Yarra Valley Pinot Noir

And many tastings on special themes will follow the Small Vigneron Awards.

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