

## 2015 YARRA VALLEY PINOT NOIR

If the Yarra Valley isn't Australia's leading pinot noir region, it's very close to it. That's an argument we don't wish to enter into, but the fact that we can come up with 32 wines of one vintage by issuing a simple request shows just how strong the variety is in the Yarra.

The Yarra Valley is quite diverse climatically.

*With its mild climate (cool winters and warm summers) and good, winter-dominant rainfall, the Yarra Valley is ideal for the production of high quality wines.*

*We make a distinction between the Lower Yarra, lying roughly between the Warburton and Melba Highways and comprising the townships of Healesville and Yarra Glen, and the Upper Yarra, some 30 kms upstream and to the south-east. The Upper Yarra is at a higher altitude, is cooler and receives higher rainfall than the Lower Yarra. Harvest normally commences one to two weeks later in the Upper Yarra and wines are characteristically elegant and finely structured compared with the more robust or opulent styles typical of the Lower Yarra.*

### **From the Coldstream Hills web site**

The Winewise panel of Lex Howard, Lester Jesberg, Deb Pearce and David Yeates tasted and scored all 32 pinots "blind". The wines were poured out of the judges' sight by stewards.

[Here's how the wines showed.](#)

**2015 Mayer Granite Upper Yarra Valley Pinot Noir** This is a stunning, fragrant pinot noir in which vibrant raspberry and strawberry varietal aromas are backed up by a herbal note derived from stems/whole bunch. The silky palate delivers very impressive length and supremely fine tannins. (\$55.00) ★★★★★  
[timomayer@bigpond.com.au](mailto:timomayer@bigpond.com.au)

**2015 Coldstream Hills Deer Farm Vineyard Yarra Valley Pinot Noir** Here's another very elegant wine from the Upper Yarra Valley. The perfumed varietal fruit is matched perfectly with French oak, and the length of palate is very impressive indeed. (\$50.00 but not yet released) ★★★★★

**2015 Rob Dolan Yarra Valley Pinot Noir** The Upper Yarra strikes again. Like the Deer Farm wine, this one is from Gladysdale. It's very fragrant, with a subtle stemmy input that adds complexity. The finely structured palate isn't big, but it certainly is long. (\$35.00) ★★★★★  
<https://www.robolanwines.com.au/product/2015-white-label-pinot-noir/>

**2015 Coldstream Hills Hazeldene Vineyard Yarra Valley Pinot Noir** Here we go again. From the Upper Yarra at Gladysdale comes this pinot noir which shows intense cherry characteristics and slightly chappy oak. The fruit persistence and fine tannins make it a winner. (\$50.00 but not yet released) ★★★★★

August 4, 2016

**2015 Seville Estate Yarra Valley Pinot Noir** Seville is also located away from the “heart” of the Yarra Valley – Coldstream and Healesville - in a cooler environment. This Seville Estate wine shows an attractive perfumed nose with some whole bunch complexity. The palate is delightfully fine and long. (\$36.00 but not yet released) ★★★★★



**2015 De Bortoli Villages Yarra Valley Pinot Noir** This is a skilfully blended pinot based on fruit from the estate vineyards near Dixon’s Creek and the Abbey vineyard at Tarrawarra. The vibrancy of the varietal dark cherry and beetroot aromas is impressive, and a touch of whole bunch character adds complexity. This is a delicious, well structured wine that delivers quality a long way above what its price may suggest. (\$17.00) ★★★★★  
<http://www.winestar.com.au/de-bortoli-villages-pinot-noir-2015>

**2015 Oakridge Local Vineyard Series Lusatia Park Vineyard Yarra Valley Pinot Noir** Very fresh red berry aromatics are enhanced by subtle sous bois (forest floor) complex notes. The palate offers enjoyable fruit sweetness backed up by a fine structure. Another “cool” pinot from the Upper Yarra. (\$38.00 but not yet released) ★★★★★

**2015 Helen's Hill Long Walk Pinot Noir** Aromas of dark cherry are enhanced by whiffs of potpourri. There’s a hint of mocha oak, and the satisfying varietal flavour is supported by firm, balanced tannins. The finish is acid-fresh. (\$35.00) ★★★★★

**2015 Hubert The Stag Yarra Valley Pinot Noir** The perfume of violets and cherries merges well with the faint char of oak. The palate is one of both substance and finesse. (\$20.00) ★★★★★  
<http://www.winestar.com.au/st-huberts-the-stag-yarra-pinot-noir-2015>

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**2015 Coldstream Hills Yarra Valley Pinot Noir** A comparatively rich, ripe pinot noir with slightly chappy barrel ferment overtones. It has flavour, freshness and structure. (\$26.00) ★★★★★  
<http://shortysliquor.com.au/coldstream-hills-pinot-noir>

**2015 Oakridge Local Vineyard Series Willowlake Vineyard Yarra Valley Pinot Noir** Complex, spicy and delicate, with hints of stems and new oak. The fruit carries the artifact well, although the oak starts to emerge on the finish. (\$38.00 but not yet released) ★★★★★

**2015 St Huberts Yarra Valley Pinot Noir** The nose shows powerful fresh cherry plus oak. It's an intense and varietal pinot noir that is slightly too oaky. (\$33.00) ★★★★★

**2015 De Bortoli Estate Grown Yarra Valley Pinot Noir** Strawberry aromas incorporate a touch of oak. Good sweet fruit drives a fairly firm, but well balanced palate. (\$20.00) ★★★★★

**2015 Journey Wines Yarra Valley Pinot Noir** A fresh pinot noir with a light stems influence. Vibrant raspberry flavour runs the length of a silky palate. A good drink. (\$38.00) ★★★★★

**2015 Seville Estate Old Vine Reserve Yarra Valley Pinot Noir** A complex red berry style with decided forest floor overtones. It's fine, firm and tight, needing time in bottle. (\$70.00 but not yet released) ★★★★★

**2015 De Bortoli Windy Peak Yarra Valley Pinot Noir** Fresh raspberry aromas introduce a palate which is both delicate and satisfying. Here's a drink-now wine of amazing value for money. (\$11.00) ★★★★★  
[http://www.aussiewines.com.au//wine\\_Growing\\_Regions.php?pid=309&page=558&s=&f=&wines=Victoria](http://www.aussiewines.com.au//wine_Growing_Regions.php?pid=309&page=558&s=&f=&wines=Victoria)

**2015 Denton Shed Pinot Noir** Light colour. A perfumed wine with hints of white pepper. The palate is delicate, with good length. (\$30.00) ★★★★★

**2015 Ingram Road Single Vineyard Yarra Valley Pinot Noir** A light red fruits style with the weight of a good Beaujolais Villages. Slightly herbal overtones contribute complexity. (\$20.00) ★★★★★

**2015 Balgownie Estate Yarra Valley Pinot Noir** Intense yet restrained, showing some oak. It's closed at the moment, and needs time to make its true worth evident. (\$45.00) ★★★★★

**2015 Balgownie Black Label Yarra Valley Pinot Noir** A briary, cherry style with fine tannins and decent fruit weight. It drinks well now. (\$25.00) ★★★★★

**2015 Santolin Syme On Yarra Vineyard Pinot Noir** The perfumed, spicy, intense cherry nose carries a little too much oak. The palate has length and silkiness, but finishes firmly. (\$45.00) ★★★★★

**2015 Vinoque (De Bortoli) Yarra Valley Pinot Noir** The fruit weight is adequate, as is the varietal character, but the palate is a little too firm. (\$17.00) ★★★★★

August 4, 2016

**2015 Soumah Equilibrio Yarra Valley Pinot Noir** This is a pretty solid pinot at the moment, packed with ripe fruit backed by firm tannins and finishing with oak. Time will tell. (\$68.00) ★★★

**2015 Coldstream Hills The Esplanade Yarra Valley Pinot Noir** It certainly doesn't lack flavour, but this wine is surprisingly solid, lacking the finesse of the Deer Farm and Hazeldene. We'd like to revisit it in a few years' time. (\$50.00) ★★★

**2015 Domaine Chandon Yarra Valley Pinot Noir** This one has lightish aromas and flavours of slightly peppery red fruits. Oak is fairly noticeable. (\$27.00) ★★★

**2015 Soumah Yarra Valley Pinot Noir** There's plenty of ripe varietal fruit here, together with a touch of reduction. It's quite big and firm, needing time to soften. (\$35.00) ★★★

**2015 Denton Pinot Noir** A wine the Burgundians would call "nerveux", or nervous. It's delicate and perfumed, with forest floor overtones, a balsamic hint and a slightly acid finish. It certainly doesn't lack interest. (\$45.00) ★★★

**2015 Santolin Willowlake Vineyard Yarra Valley Pinot Noir** Stems play a prominent role here, and at the moment, dominate the perfumed fruit. (\$45.00) ★★★

**2015 Tarrawarra Estate Yarra Valley Pinot Noir** There's plenty of ripe pinot aroma, but the palate is quite simple and firm. (\$28.00) ★★★

**2015 Rob Dolan True Colours Yarra Valley Pinot Noir** Forward and herbal, showing some red fruits. Palate weight is only adequate and overall the wine is quite simple. (\$24.00) ★★★

**2015 Oakridge Over The Shoulder Yarra Valley Pinot Noir** Comparatively forward, and showing some "stewed" fruit character. (\$23.00) ★★★

**2015 Seville Estate The Barber Yarra Valley Pinot Noir** Slightly reductive red fruits with a herbaceous edge. (\$24.00) ★★★

Yarra Valley pinot noirs from vintage 2015 certainly deserve space on your shopping list. Whether you're looking for ready to drink bargains or wines to put away for a few years, there's plenty from which to choose. The cooler parts the region came to the fore in this tasting, and given the gradual increase in average temperature experienced over the past decade, is likely to continue to do so.

When it comes to delivering pinot noir that exceeds expectations at low price points, nobody touched De Bortoli. The De Bortoli family commenced planting in the Yarra Valley about 30 years ago, and did so in earnest – with great intelligence and vision. The rewards are now being reaped.

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