

## 2017 WINEWISE CHAMPIONSHIP

**T**hese reviews complete the white wine section of the awards. Chardonnay continues to exert a dazzling presence, and for the umpteenth time we tell you that the best are right up there with fine white burgundy. Take advantage of the great value while you can.

### Chardonnay



#### Medallion Winner



**2015 Penfolds Reserve Bin 15A Adelaide Hills Chardonnay** It's been fascinating to watch the evolution of this style. Once very much a "show" wine, it has acquired subtlety and great finesse. The white peach aromas are greatly enhanced by complex barrel ferment notes, and the palate nears creamy perfection. A brilliant wine. (\$88.90) ★★★★★  
[https://www.danmurphys.com.au/product/DM\\_916214/penfolds-reserve-bin-a-chardonnay-2015](https://www.danmurphys.com.au/product/DM_916214/penfolds-reserve-bin-a-chardonnay-2015)



**2015 Shaw + Smith M3 Adelaide Hills Chardonnay** The 2015 M3 is probably the best yet from Shaw + Smith. The intensity and freshness are matched with texture and structure to create a chardonnay that not only tastes great, but feels great. Nougat complexity and a touch of A-grade oak complete the picture. (\$40.00) ★★★★★  
<https://www.nicks.com.au/2015-shaw-smith-m3-chardonnay>



**Medallion Winner**



**2013 Devil's Lair Margaret River Chardonnay** This chardonnay is drinking near a very impressive peak. It's utterly delicious, combining bottle age and barrel ferment complexity with great underlying freshness. The palate is a textural delight. (\$40.00) ★★★★★  
<http://shortysliquor.com.au/devil-s-lair-chardonnay>

**2013 Tyrrell's Vat 47 Hunter Chardonnay** Very fresh and packed with varietal aroma and flavour. A gentle nuttiness adds to the enjoyment, as does the pleasing grip and texture. (Not available) ★★★★★

**2014 Higher Plane Reserve Margaret River Chardonnay** Attractive white peach backed up by nougat complexity. The palate is a lesson in length and texture. (\$38.00) ★★★★★  
<https://www.higherplanewines.com.au/products>

**2015 McGuigan The Shortlist Adelaide Hills Chardonnay** An intense, funky, white peach style that is delightfully creamy. It's drinking very well indeed. (\$25.00) ★★★★★  
<http://www.jimmurphy.com.au/product/mcguigan-shortlist-chardonnay-2015>

**2015 Colmar Estate Chardonnay** This is a very pure, intense, yet delicate, chardonnay from Orange, NSW. The complexity is subtle and the palate is long and textured. (No longer available) ★★★★★

**2015 Stargazer Coal River Valley Chardonnay** The nose is a fascinating combination of grapefruit, white nectarine, nuts and butter. The long palate is creamy, finishing with typical Tasmanian acidity. A fine expression of grape variety and place. (\$45.00) ★★★★★  
<http://stargazerwine.com.au/>

**2015 Pike and Joyce The Kay Adelaide Hills Chardonnay** The aromas are slightly funky and nutty, supporting varietal white peach. The impressive palate is long and creamy. (\$318.00 for 6 bottles) ★★★★★  
<http://www.optionswines.com.au/products/product/PJKCH6?category=OYI OBJYI>

**2013 Devil's Lair Ninth Chamber Margaret River Chardonnay** A very complex, silky chardonnay with butter and toasted nuts overtones. The palate is impressively long. (Not yet released) ★★★★★

**2015 Coldstream Hills Deer Farm Vineyard Yarra Valley Chardonnay** Textbook chardonnay making. It's all there – white peach, nougat, top-class oak – in a vibrant, silky wine. (\$47.00) ★★★★★  
[http://www.winesattemplestowe.com.au/product\\_info.php?cPath=60\\_67&products\\_id=587](http://www.winesattemplestowe.com.au/product_info.php?cPath=60_67&products_id=587)

**2015 Penfolds Max's Adelaide Hills Chardonnay** The strong white peach aroma and flavour carry a hint gooseberry. The nicely structured palate is enhanced by subtle oak. (\$33.00) ★★★★★  
<https://www.nicks.com.au/2015-penfolds-max-s-chardonnay>

**2014 Gralyn Estate Reserve Margaret River Chardonnay** Here we find fresh stone fruit and grapefruit with attractive touches of barrel ferment complexity and oak. The palate is comparatively light. Give it a year or two. (\$75.00) ★★★★★  
<http://www.gralyn.com.au/crm/productdetails/100519-reserve-chardonnay.html>

**2013 Voyager Estate Margaret River Chardonnay** Very fresh and restrained, showing white peach with faint hints of melon. The texture and length provide a real touch of class. (\$40.00) ★★★★★  
<https://www.nicks.com.au/2013-voyager-estate-chardonnay>

**2009 Wolf Blass White Label Adelaide Hills Chardonnay** Here's a delicious, mature chardonnay that is drinking beautifully. The toasty, nutty characteristics merge beautifully with the varietal flavour that still has plenty of life. (\$318.00 for 6 bottles) ★★★★★  
[https://www.qantasepicure.com.au/p/Wolf-Blass-White-Label-Adelaide-Hills-Chardonnay-2009/WBWHITECHA09\\_C](https://www.qantasepicure.com.au/p/Wolf-Blass-White-Label-Adelaide-Hills-Chardonnay-2009/WBWHITECHA09_C)

**2005 Freycinet Chardonnay** The honeyed citrus and stone fruit aromas are almost unbelievably fresh, and the palate is rich and long. A remarkable chardonnay. (Not available) ★★★★★

**2015 Penfolds Cellar Reserve Adelaide Hills Chardonnay** Penfolds obviously had some great 2015 Adelaide Hills chardonnay material to work with. This, the third of a trio, is beautifully textured and subtly complex. (Not yet released) ★★★★★

**2015 De Bortoli Yarra Valley Section A5 Chardonnay** A classy, restrained chardonnay with grapefruit aromatics. The palate is long, with just-right grip. Give it a couple of years. (\$45.00) ★★★★★  
<http://shop.debortoli.com.au/white-wines/yarra-valley-single-vineyard-section-a5-chardonnay-2015.html>

**2015 Devil's Lair Ninth Chamber Margaret River Chardonnay** It has all the components of an exceptional chardonnay, but is tightly coiled, needing 3-5 years. By that time it will have evolved into a spectacular complex chardonnay. However, you'll have to wait a while before it's released. ★★★★★

- 2012 Tyrrell's Vat 47 Hunter Chardonnay** Still very fresh. A richly flavoured chardonnay that has both structure and texture. Given the track record of this style, it has years left in it. ★★★★★
- 2015 Coldstream Hills Reserve Yarra Valley Chardonnay** This wine offers both freshness and complexity. It's creamy, but quite backward, needing time. ★★★★★
- 2014 First Creek Winemaker's Reserve Hunter Valley Chardonnay** A rich, ripe, complex, textural style that is ready to enjoy. ★★★★★
- 2015 Colmar Estate Block 1 Chardonnay** With aromas and flavours in the citrus-melon range, this is a restrained chardonnay with good acidity. It needs a little time to fill out. ★★★★★
- 2015 De Bortoli Estate Grown Yarra Valley Chardonnay** A fresh, ripe white peach style with texture and structure. ★★★★★
- 2015 Robert Oatley Reserve Margaret River Chardonnay** Fresh and peachy, with a positive hint of almond meal. The richness is backed up by good palate grip. ★★★★★
- 2015 Juniper Estate Margaret River Chardonnay** Plenty of white peach with nutty complexity. A mouthfilling style showing some oak on the finish. ★★★★★
- 2015 Oakridge Wines Local Vineyard Series Willowlake Vineyard Chardonnay** The intensity of flavour is impressive and the touch of nougat is attractive. However this wine appears to be evolving and isn't quite "together" yet. ★★★★★
- 2014 Smallwater Estate Chardonnay** A rich, ready-to-drink, nutty/white peach style of chardonnay from Geographe (WA). Most enjoyable. ★★★★★
- 2011 First Creek Winemaker's Reserve Chardonnay** Ripe peach, together with nuts, butter and vanilla. Seems to be at or near its peak. ★★★★★
- 2009 Bunnamagoo Mudgee Chardonnay** A rich style that still manages to offer restraint. The palate is attractively creamy. ★★★★★
- 2015 Tyrrell's Belford Hunter Chardonnay** There's plenty of white peach here, supported by barrel ferment complexity. It's beginning to drink well. ★★★★★
- 2013 Dawson James Chardonnay** Showing some maturity and "struck match". Complex and creamy but nearing its peak. ★★★★★
- 2015 St Huberts Yarra Valley Chardonnay** Ripe peach. Fresh but slightly forward. Good rich fruit. ★★★★★☆
- 2015 Lord Malmsbury Chardonnay** Fresh, nutty and creamy, with good weight and almond meal complexity. ★★★★★☆
- 2015 Stella Bella Margaret River Chardonnay** Funky and fresh. Good white peach varietal character. ★★★★★☆

**2015 Coppabella Crest Chardonnay** Fresh, rich, nutty. Good weight and structure. ★★★☆

**2015 Mandoon Estate Reserve Margaret River Chardonnay** Peach, nuts, vanilla, butter. There's plenty going on, but the integration isn't seamless at this stage. ★★★

**2011 Dawson James Chardonnay** Peachy and mature. Quite honeyed, but supported by good acidity. ★★★

**2012 Philip Shaw No.11 Chardonnay** A bit too developed, but still holding up ok on palate. ★★★

**2015 Robert Oatley Finisterre Mudgee Chardonnay** Restraint, complexity, nice oak. Just a little lean, showing its acid. ★★★

**2015 Gralyn Estate Reserve Chardonnay** Fresh, but a little lean, with grapefruit overtones. ★★★

**2015 Dawson James Chardonnay** Has plenty of flavour and complexity but seems to be developing comparatively quickly. ★★★

**2013 Robert Oatley The Pennant Mudgee Chardonnay** A plain, peachy style showing some oak. Fresh enough. ★★★

**2014 Printhe Super Duper Chardonnay** There's a lot happening here – a bit too much in fact. Big on flavour and artefact, but lacks finesse. ★★★

**2015 FlameTree SRS Wallcliffe Margaret River Chardonnay** Rich, funky and a bit oaky, with a gooseberry-like, “green” overtone. ★★★

**2016 De Bortoli Sacred Hill Chardonnay** Simple fresh peachiness. Good value for a single figure price. ★★★

**2010 First Creek Winemaker's Reserve Chardonnay** Fully mature, with honeycomb aromas. Fading but hanging on. Drink now. ★★★

**2014 Peter Lehmann Hill & Valley Chardonnay** Quite forward. Seems to be developing quickly. ★★★

**2013 McGuigan Personal Reserve Blackberry Vineyard Hunter Valley Chardonnay** Slightly too advanced. Ok now. ★★★

**2015 Pepper Tree Orange Chardonnay** Slightly green, herbal and short on the finish. ★★★

**2015 Mount Majura Vineyard Chardonnay** Too forward and funky.★★

Out of 51 chardonnays assessed, 19 were deemed to be of gold medal standard and several others were knocking on the door. That demonstrates just how strong chardonnay is at the moment.

## Other Dry White



### Medallion Winner 2016 Artwine Wicked Stepmother

**Fiano** This is a powerful, fresh fiano with the faintest tropical fruit overtone like many from southern Italy. The grip and talc-like texture of the long, satisfying palate are strong quality features. (\$25.00) ★★★★★  
<https://www.artwine.com.au>

**2015 Yalumba Eden Valley Viognier** Although the Virgilius takes viognier a step further, this wine always demonstrates that Yalumba is right up with the world leaders of this enigmatic variety. There's apricot, ginger, intensity and texture. We challenge anybody to show us a better-value viognier anywhere in the world. (\$19.00) ★★★★★  
<http://www.winestar.com.au/yalumba-eden-valley-viognier-2015>

**2016 Tahbilk Marsanne** A fascinating release of one of Australia's wine treasures. This vintage shows vibrant stone fruit with faintly tropical touches. It has texture – new territory for Tahbilk Marsannes. Exciting stuff. More lees contact perhaps? A little more alcohol? Just guessing. (\$17.95) ★★★★★  
<http://www.tahbilk.com.au/buy-tahbilk-wine-online/white-wines-online/tahbilk-white-wines/tahbilk-2016-marsanne.html>

**2016 Juniper Small Batch Margaret River Fiano** Fresh, lemony, intense, creamy and very satisfying. Another fiano that excites with its flavour, balance and structure. (Not available) ★★★★★

**2016 Hanging Rock The Jim Jim Three (Riesling, pinot gris, gewürztraminer)** Vibrant, restrained stone fruit aromas with floral, perfumed overtones. The palate offers intensity, length and texture. A very successful blend. (\$30.00) ★★★★★  
<http://www.hangingrock.com.au/buy-wine/white-wine/the-jim-jim-three-2016-148751329>

**2016 Symphony Hill Gewürztraminer** Very clean, fresh and floral aromatically, suggesting rose petal. The palate is out of the ordinary, delivering Alsace-like texture and grip. (\$40.00) ★★★★★  
<https://symphonyhill.com.au/shop/2015-gewurztraminer-3/>

**2015 Lillypilly Vermentino** Here's a great example of not trying too hard with vermentino. The delicate citrus-based aromas are matched with a gentle textural quality. Quite simply, it's a very enjoyable drink at a most agreeable price. (\$16.50) ★★★★★  
<http://store.lillypillywines.com.au/2015-vermentino/>

**2016 Saltram Winemakers Selection Fiano** Big, rich, tending tropical. It has power, freshness, texture and grip. Well done. ★★★★★

**2016 Yalumba Organic Viognier** This is an ever so slightly scaled-down version of the Eden Valley Viognier. The flavour isn't quite as intense, but all the boxes are ticked. Good drinking. ★★★★★

**2016 Higher Plane Margaret River Fiano** A delicious white wine with aromas and flavours tending to white nectarine. Like all good fianos, texture plays a positive role. ★★★★★

- 2015 Tahbilk Viognier** Comparatively restrained apricot aromas. The palate is impressively rich and textured. ★★★★★
- 2015 Tahbilk Roussanne** Fresh and understated, with attractive pear and stone fruit characteristics. Very enjoyable drinking. ★★★★★
- 2016 Alejandro Fiano** A very lively, well made wine. There are hints of nectarine and the faintest whiff of pineapple. The palate is long and satisfying. ★★★★★
- 2016 Colmar Estate Gewürztraminer** Nicely perfumed and restrained, with length and texture. ★★★★★
- 2016 Cape Barren Wines Funky Goose Grüner Veltliner** A full-flavoured tropical fruit/honeysuckle style with considerable impact. ★★★★★
- 2011 Tahbilk 1927 Vines Marsanne** Honeysuckle and stone fruit show out on both nose and palate. A wine that is richly flavoured and in its drinking window. ★★★★★
- 2015 St Huberts Roussanne** Stone fruit, nutmeg and cinnamon feature here, as does a textural palate. A good varietal expression. ★★★★★
- 2015 Symphony Hill Wines Fiano** Rich, intriguing and perfumed, showing stone fruit and tropical fruit characteristics. A very nicely structured wine. ★★★★★
- 2013 Tahbilk Marsanne** The classic rich, mature honeysuckle of marsanne shows clearly. This wine is probably at its peak. ★★★★★
- 2016 Vinoque Oval Vineyard Pinot Blanc** Fresh and slightly floral. Plenty of flavour from an underrated variety. ★★★☆
- 2016 Wild Oats Mudgee Pinot Grigio** A fresh, clean delicate varietal white that is just a little too sweet. ★★★☆
- 2016 Serafino Bellissimo Fiano** A substantial wine with slightly nutty overtones and a fairly firm structure. ★★★☆
- 2016 Chalk Hill Vermentino** Fresh, but a little light. Easy to drink. ★★★
- 2015 Symphony Hill Barrel Fermented Gewürztraminer** Shows rose petal aromas, but it's slightly forward, and a little too oaky. ★★★
- 2016 The Little Wine Company Vermentino** Citrus aromas with a faint hint of tropical fruit. Pleasant drinking.
- 2015 Symphony Hill Wines Moscato Giallo** Very much white muscat/frontignac, but the nose is sweaty. The palate delivers good weight of fruit. ★★★
- 2016 Artwine In the Groove Grüner Veltliner** Citrus and spice richness together with some advanced notes. Ok now. ★★★
- 2016 Josef Chromy Gewürztraminer** Intense, spicy rose water nose. Shows quite a bit of development. ★★★☆

## Sweet White



### **Medallion Winner 2015 Heggies Vineyard Botrytis**

**Riesling** This is a stunning wine – an Australian expression of a German beerenauslese if you like. Lime marmalade and candied citrus peel feature in the stunningly fresh bouquet, and the palate, although very sweet, is linear and acid-fresh. Brilliant wine. Brilliant value. (\$24.00/375 ml) ★★★★★

<http://www.wineboxwarehouse.com.au/White-Wine/Dessert-Wines/Heggies-Eden-Valley-Botrytis-Riesling-2015-375ml>

**2002 Lillypilly Family Reserve Noble Blend** Having already attained legend status, this wine continues to show well in all forums. The nose is very complex due both to botrytis and bottle age. There's even a hint of barley sugar, but it's the underlying freshness of flavour that is the most impressive factor. Although very sweet, the wine is in no way cloying. Bravo! (\$65.00/375 ml) ★★★★★

<http://store.lillypillywines.com.au/2002-museum-release-family-reserve-noble-blend/>

**2013 Bunnamagoo Autumn Semillon** A very well made Mudgee wine in the style of Sauternes. It's complex and long-flavoured, with suggestions of crème brûlée. Although sweet, it's not cloying on the finish. (\$25.00/375 ml) ★★★★★☆

<http://www.bunnamagoowines.com.au/Order-Online/.aspx?categoryID=1160>

### **2015 d'Arenberg The Noble Botryotinia Fuckeliana Semillon Sauvignon Blanc**

Another very classy sweet white with Sauternes leanings, this time towards Barsac. It's luscious, lemony, satisfying, and offers hints of candied citrus peel. (\$20.00/375 ml) ★★★★★☆

[http://shop.darenberg.com.au/index.php?option=com\\_platform&view=crm&layout=productdetails&productId=3413&Itemid=102](http://shop.darenberg.com.au/index.php?option=com_platform&view=crm&layout=productdetails&productId=3413&Itemid=102)

**2012 Lillypilly Noble Harvest Semillon Gewürztraminer** Citrus peel, honey and rose petal all show in a bouquet that has plenty of life. The palate is decidedly sweet, but finishes with cleansing acidity. A well made dessert wine that should age beautifully. (\$32.00/375 ml) ★★★★★☆

<http://store.lillypillywines.com.au/2012-noble-harvest/>

**2014 Riversdale Estate Botrytis Riesling** A powerful riesling with lime marmalade complexity. The sweet, captivating palate is backed up by steely Tasmanian acidity. (\$29.00/375 ml) ★★★★★☆

<http://riversdaleestate.com.au/the-vineyard-en/riversdale-estate-cygnus-riesling-en/>

**2015 Lillypilly Noble Blend** Orange brûlée overtones are on display in a complex, comparatively restrained bouquet. The long, luscious palate confirms the impressions from the nose. Another brilliant Lillypilly sweet white. (\$32.00/375 ml) ★★★★★☆

<http://store.lillypillywines.com.au/2015-noble-blend/>

**2008 Lillypilly Noble Blend** There's plenty of fresh honeyed citrus flavour, but the finish is slightly cloying. ★★★★★

April 21, 2017

**2011 De Bortoli Deen Vat 5 Series Botrytis Semillon** It shows quite a bit of development, but the nougat, oak and orange peel complexity provide a lot of interest to a rich, luscious wine. ★★★★★

**2008 De Bortoli Noble One Botrytis Semillon 750** Very deep colour. Plenty of sweetness and varietal flavour with nutty, citrus overtones. It's still holding up well. ★★★★★

**2013 De Bortoli Deen Vat 5 Series Botrytis Semillon** Smoky orange peel aromas signal plenty of botrytis. The palate is rich and sweet, but a little too firm. (Not yet released) ★★★★★

**2009 De Bortoli DB Family Reserve Botrytis Semillon** Quite mature. Very complex and sweet. Still fresh enough. Oak shows through. ★★★☆

**2012 Petaluma Cane Cut Riesling** Rich, mature and limey. The sweetness is balanced by good acidity. ★★★☆

**2016 Josef Chromy Botrytis Riesling** Deep colour. Sweet and viscous, but quite developed. ★★★

**2013 Saddler's Creek Botrytis Supreme** The nose shows some honeyed citrus peel. It's certainly sweet, but isn't very complex. ★★★

**2010 Conte Estate Sticky Gecko Noble Rot Gewürztraminer** Barley sugar nose. The palate is on the edge of cloying. ★★★

**2015 Mount Majura Vineyard Noble Pinot Gris** Comparatively advanced and honeyed, but still fresh enough. Very sweet on the finish. ★★★

**2014 De Bortoli Noble One Botrytis Semillon 500** Deep colour. Complex and slightly toasty, but sweetness rules the roost. ★★★

**2016 Shut The Gate Blossom 26GRS Riesling** Restrained lime. In that difficult category of being only slightly sweet. ★★★

**2006 Lark Hill Auslese Riesling** Mature and rich, but shows signs of drying out. ★★★

The key features of sweet wines (apart from sweetness) are freshness and balance. The problem with many Australian sweet whites is a tendency to cloy. That's fine for those of you with particularly sweet teeth, but some of these wines had the same effect on us as baklava. There can be too much of a good thing.

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