



**WINE WISE**

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## THE NEW BURGUNDY

The two great grapes of Burgundy, chardonnay and pinot noir, are the cutting-edge varieties of Australia at the moment. Fifty years and more ago, chardonnay and pinot noir were planted in totally unsuitable warm regions of Australia. Despite the examples shown by Europe for over 400 years, cool-climate viticulture was a difficult notion for the Australian wine industry to get its head around. The eighties saw a major change in mindset and, after a number of hiccups, we're now on a strong path forward.

This issue focuses strongly on pinot noir. Australia does not make burgundy, but we can learn some important lessons from France nonetheless. The first is that burgundy comes in a range of styles. The fragrant, approachable wines of Santenay are very different from the rich, round reds of Aloxe-Corton, and both are poles apart from the ethereal greats of Chambolle-Musigny and Vosne-Romanée. And there are no other burgundies quite like the muscular reds of Gevrey-Chambertin.

It's not just a matter of where the grapes are grown. Makers put their respective stamps on the wines. Some extract more tannins than others, some use more new oak. Some go 100% whole bunch, while others totally de-stem. There is no single correct approach, and that is one of the things that makes burgundy so fascinating.

We're still, to some extent, in uncharted waters with pinot noir, and much will depend on making the best of individual sites by sage viticultural and winemaking decisions. It will be a fascinating ride.

**Merry Christmas & a Happy New Year.**



## 2010 CHARDONNAY

**T**his is an interesting bunch of chardonnays led by one stellar example. If you think the Oakridge 864 is over-priced, just consider what you're asked to pay for white Burgundy wines of equivalent quality. Enough said. On the negative side, too many of these chardonnays show excessive development and lack the freshness expected of wines that are short of two years old.

### Outstanding

**2010 Oakridge 864 Yarra Valley Chardonnay** An impressively fresh, rich, complex chardonnay with prodigious length and powerful fruit drive. The palate is creamy and beautifully balanced by acidity and high quality oak. Worth every cent. (\$72.00) 13.3% Screwcap

### Highly Recommended

**2010 Ferngrove Frankland River Chardonnay** Although this chardonnay is slightly forward, it retains freshness and shows rich varietal character. The palate is beautifully textured and full of flavour. Short term. (\$20.00) *Excellent Value* 14.0% Screwcap

**2010 Seville Estate Yarra Valley Chardonnay** This is a restrained white peach style that offers good intensity on an attractively creamy palate. (\$30.00) 13.0% Screwcap

**2010 Shaw + Smith M3 Adelaide Hills Chardonnay** This release shows more at this early stage than some of its predecessors. There's plenty of varietal aroma and flavour backed by nutty nougat. The palate is rich and has a creamy texture. (\$33.00) 13.0% Screwcap

### Recommended

**2010 Willow Bridge Estate Geographe Chardonnay** This chardonnay is already showing a little development, and is slightly buttery, but the palate holds its own, offering richness, texture, hints of nougat and good acidity. 12.5% Screwcap



**2010 Capel Vale Debut Chardonnay** Quite restrained, showing citrus characteristics. The palate is appealingly textured and lively. (\$17.95) 13.5% Screwcap

**2010 Ferngrove Frankland River Diamond Chardonnay** An intense wine with a hint of sulphidic funkiness. The palate has some texture and good flavour, but there's a slight hardness on the finish. (\$25.00) 14.0% Screwcap

**2010 Cape Mentelle Margaret River Chardonnay** This is a richly flavoured chardonnay where peachy fruit is matched with slightly obvious oak. It just lacks a little in texture and complexity. (\$42.00)  
13.0% Screwcap

**2010 Angove Mount Benson Chardonnay** This chardonnay combines nutty overtones with slightly forward peachiness. The oak provides structure for the rich and ready palate. (\$18.00)  
13.0% Screwcap

### Agreeable

**2010 Penny's Hill The Handshake Adelaide Hills Chardonnay** The peachy aromas are slightly developed, but there's plenty of flavour, albeit simple, to be enjoyed here. (\$19.00)  
13.5% Screwcap

**2010 Scarborough Chardonnay** A simple peachy Hunter Valley chardonnay which shows some development, but provides pleasant, balanced current drinking. (\$20.00)  
13.0% Screwcap

**2010 Grant Burge Summers Chardonnay** A richly flavoured chardonnay with ripe peach aromas and flavours together with some oak. It's showing some development and is ready now. (\$21.95)  
13.5% Screwcap

**2010 Rymill Vineyard No.8 Coonawarra Chardonnay** The fresh white peach and nougat aromas are attractive, but the palate is a little too fat. (\$27.00)  
12.5% Screwcap

**2010 Hill-Smith Estate Eden Valley Chardonnay** Here we have a simple chardonnay with cling peach and oak aromas. The palate is full and firm. (\$20.00)  
13.0% Screwcap

**2010 Balnaves of Coonawarra Chardonnay** A very fresh style showing white peach and nougat characteristics. It's a little firm and angular on the palate at the moment. (\$28.00)  
13.5% Screwcap

**2010 Koomooloo Vineyard The Architect Chardonnay** This wine is a bit too advanced for its age, but offers sufficient flavour for current drinking. (\$20.00)  
13.3% Screwcap

**2010 Edwards Margaret River Chardonnay** Quite forward in nature, but has plenty of rich flavour. (\$35.00)  
13.5% Screwcap

### Acceptable

**2010 Margan Limited Release Chardonnay** This is a very richly flavoured chardonnay showing obvious toasty oak. It's a big mouthful of wine that is absolutely ready. (\$30.00)  
13.0% Screwcap

**2010 Ten Minutes by Tractor 10X Mornington Peninsula Chardonnay** Richly flavoured, but very forward, lacking vibrancy. (\$30.00)  
13.0% Screwcap

**2010 Ballabourneen The Stuart Hunter Valley Chardonnay** A simple light peach style that is fairly advanced for its age. (\$30.00)  
13.5% Screwcap

**2010 Hungerford Hill Fishcage Tumbarumba Chardonnay** A fairly forward style with simple peach aromas. Too developed. (\$18.00)  
12.8% Screwcap

**2010 McHenry Hohnen Rocky Road Margaret River Chardonnay** Peachy and advanced, with a slightly volatile edge. (\$32.90)  
13.5% Screwcap

**2010 McHenry Hohnen Burnside Margaret River Chardonnay** Very forward, rich and toasty, already showing signs of drying out. (\$32.90)  
13.8% Screwcap

In white wines, as in all wines, three things count - intensity, balance and freshness. The essence of chardonnay making is to capture richness, but, at the same time, retain freshness.

## SAUVIGNON BLANC & BLENDS

### Highly Recommended

**2011 Cape Mentelle Margaret River Sauvignon Blanc Semillon** A fresh young white with citrus and grass characteristics. There's plenty of fruit and acidity to enjoy on a very satisfying palate. (\$27.00)  
13.0% Screwcap

**2011 Angove Adelaide Hills Vineyard Select Sauvignon Blanc** The nose is very fresh, showing classic gooseberry/grass characteristics. The palate is no let-down, being flavour-packed, balanced by refreshing acidity. (\$18.00) *Excellent Value*  
12.5% Screwcap

**2011 Flametree Margaret River Sauvignon Blanc Semillon** A fresh, restrained young white showing citrus and grass characteristics. Very lively, packed with flavour supported by racy acidity. (\$23.00)  
13.0% Screwcap

### Recommended

**2011 Tiger's Tale Margaret River Sauvignon Blanc Semillon** The vibrant nose shows both gooseberry and grass characteristics which carry through to a satisfying palate balanced by lively acidity. Now. (\$17.50) *Excellent Value*  
13.0% Screwcap

**2011 Hayshed Hill Margaret River Sauvignon Blanc Semillon** A fresh, grassy well made young white with richness of flavour and a good acid balance. (\$20.00)  
12.5% Screwcap

**2011 Penny's Hill The Agreement Adelaide Hills Sauvignon Blanc** Quite a complex wine, with hints of butter and nuts as well as grassy fruit. The palate follows through nicely and has a pleasingly creamy texture. (\$19.00)  
12.0% Screwcap

**2011 Second Nature Adelaide Hills Sauvignon Blanc** The nose is very attractive, showing vibrant grassy aromas with a hint of lime. On the palate, this wine is very lively and pleasant. (\$19.00)  
12.0% Screwcap

**2011 Edwards Margaret River Semillon Sauvignon Blanc** The fresh aromas are striking, but quite grassy and nettle-like. There's plenty of flavour on a well balanced palate. Short term. (\$20.00)  
13.0% Screwcap

**2011 Taylors Jaraman Margaret River Adelaide Hills Sauvignon Blanc** Slightly forward, with lemony/grassy overtones. The palate is a little firm but delivers good flavour. (\$24.95)  
13.0% Screwcap

### Agreeable

**2011 Willow Bridge Estate Dragonfly Sauvignon Blanc Semillon** There's plenty going on here – gooseberry, stone fruit and some thiol sweatiness. It's a style that some will love and others will hate, but you get plenty of flavour for your money. (\$17.00)  
12.5% Screwcap

**2011 Alta Chapter 9 Adelaide Hills Sauvignon Blanc** This wine is quite full flavoured, but, although fresh, doesn't have a lot of varietal character. (\$19.00)  
12.5% Screwcap

**2011 Riposte The Foil Adelaide Hills Sauvignon Blanc** Powerful gooseberry aromas show out, together with a touch of thiol sweatiness. The palate reflects the nose, making this wine a very full-on varietal style with a good texture. (\$20.00)  
12.0% Screwcap

**2011 Howard Park Miamup Margaret River Sauvignon Blanc Semillon** Complex, showing pronounced oak on the nose. Although there's plenty of fruit flavour, the oak dominates. (\$27.00)  
13.0% Screwcap



**2011 Deviation Road Adelaide Hills Sauvignon Blanc** A restrained, grassy, minerally style which is a little lean on the palate, but provides fresh drinking. (\$18.00)  
12.0% Screwcap

**2011 Taylors Sauvignon Blanc** The nose is complex, showing faintly buttery hints, and the palate delivers attractive grass/melon flavour. (\$18.95)  
12.0% Screwcap

**2011 Secret Stone Marlborough Sauvignon Blanc** Very full-on with stone fruit and tropical fruit characteristics. There's enough acid, and a hint of grassy flavour. Definitely drink now. (\$19.00)  
12.5% Screwcap

**2011 Mud House Marlborough Sauvignon Blanc** Slightly advanced passionfruit/sweaty overtones show through, and the palate is a little soft, but adequate for current drinking. (\$22.00)  
13.0% Screwcap

**2011 Nepenthe Adelaide Hills Sauvignon Blanc** This is a richly flavoured wine combining stone fruit and grassy components. It's almost a cross between chardonnay and sauvignon blanc in character. (\$20.00)  
12.5% Screwcap

**2011 Pedestal Margaret River Sauvignon Blanc Semillon** The grassy aromatics are a little subdued, but carry a hint of complexity. However, the palate is fairly forward, firm and slightly sweet. (\$25.00)  
13.0% Screwcap

**2011 Mad Fish Grandstand Sauvignon Blanc** The nose is rich and powerful, with a vegetal overtone, but the palate is too big and shows some sweetness. (\$17.00)  
13.0% Screwcap

**2011 Dunsborough Hills Margaret River Sauvignon Blanc** Shows some development and a hint of volatility. Very richly flavoured but soft and comparatively advanced. (\$16.95)  
12.5% Screwcap

**2011 Juniper Crossing Margaret River Semillon Sauvignon Blanc** A little forward and plain, lacking definition. It has adequate flavour, but lacks drive. (\$19.20)  
13.0% Screwcap

**2011 South by South West Margaret River Semillon Sauvignon Blanc** A full, tropical fruit style with a suggestion of volatility on the nose. The palate is full and slightly advanced, but fresh enough. Drink now. (\$20.00)  
12.5% Screwcap

### Acceptable

**2011 Flametree Embers Margaret River Semillon Sauvignon Blanc** A plain white with stone fruit characteristics and a hint of grassiness. The palate is full flavoured but balanced. (\$18.00)  
13.0% Screwcap

**2011 Philip Shaw No.19 Orange Sauvignon Blanc** There's a very strong sweaty thiol impact on the nose which tends towards tropical fruit. There are also slightly bacony overtones which show through on a full, slightly fat palate. (\$23.00)  
12.5% Screwcap

**2011 Dunsborough Hills Margaret River Sauvignon Blanc Semillon** Fresh but quite vegetal. There's adequate flavour on a slightly sweet, advanced palate. (\$16.95)  
12.5% Screwcap

**2011 Angullong Orange Sauvignon Blanc** Just a little dull, lacking lift and with flavours that remain anonymous. (\$17.00)  
13.0% Screwcap

**2011 Swinging Bridge Orange Sauvignon Blanc** There's a dullness to the very plain fruit. A straightforward wine. (\$18.95)  
11.8% Screwcap

**2011 Four Sisters Sauvignon Blanc Semillon** Quite limey and grassy with plenty of impact on the nose – including a volatile element. Sweet and comparatively advanced. (\$14.00)  
Screwcap

**2011 Hill-Smith Estate Eden Valley Sauvignon Blanc** This wine is quite forward, and lacks freshness. (\$18.00) 11.5% Screwcap

**2011 Smith & Hooper Wrattenbully Sauvignon Blanc Semillon** This wine shows some development, and also methoxypyrazine greenness. Full flavoured but awkward. (\$16.00) 11.5% Screwcap

**2011 Ferngrove Frankland River Sauvignon Blanc** The nose lacks life, showing a touch of volatility which also comes into play on a full, slightly grassy palate. (\$20.00) 13.5% Screwcap

**2011 Angove Butterfly Ridge Sauvignon Blanc Semillon** A lean, grassy white that is fairly coarse, showing marzipan overtones. (\$7.00) 11.0% Screwcap

**2011 O'Leary Walker Clare Valley Adelaide Hills Semillon Sauvignon Blanc** Full and peach-like, showing development. Quite broad. (\$15.00) 12.0% Screwcap

**2011 Yealands Way Marlborough Sauvignon Blanc** Developed and pineapple-like, showing a touch of volatility. (\$15.00) 13.0% Screwcap

**2011 Grant Burge Kraft Sauvignon Blanc** Quite forward, already losing freshness. (\$19.95) 12.5% Screwcap

It's a very patchy year for sauvignon blanc. Margaret River comes out on top, but not everyone in the west was successful. There are some noteworthy wines from a difficult vintage in the Adelaide Hills.

## ATA RANGI

**W**e always look forward to new releases from Ata Rangi. Three decades of hard work and dedication has seen Ata Rangi grow from an unknown to a genuine world-class wine producer. Here's what we think of the current offerings.

**2011 Ata Rangi Sauvignon Blanc** The first thing to notice about this sauvignon blanc is that it's made from perfectly ripe grapes! Secondly, it is much more than just a fruit-driven dry white. The nose has the typical varietal grassy touch, but there are also aromas of tropical fruits and citrus. Lees-derived complexity adds to the attraction, and some barrel fermentation contributes texture to the intense palate. (\$25.00) *Highly Recommended*

**2011 Ata Rangi Lismore Pinot Gris** Nashi pear and blanched almonds (very gris!) with hints of mango skin. Tropical mango and pear follow through on the palate with slight phenolics on the finish and a moderate length. Low level residual sweetness helps fill out the palate. (\$35.00) *Recommended*

**2010 Ata Rangi Petrie Chardonnay** White nectarines, lemongrass and struck match hints on the nose. The palate has a creamy texture, and reasonable length, but also a greener than expected finish that is a tad disappointing. (\$35.00) *Recommended*

**2010 Ata Rangi Crimson Pinot Noir** Quite appealing on the nose, with fresh raspberry fruit. The palate, offers savoury tannins with a moderate length. Pleasantly quaffable and varietal. (\$35.00) *Recommended*

**2010 Ata Rangi Pinot Noir** Another classy pinot from Ata Rangi which shows vibrant dark cherry aromas and flavours enhanced by very subtle whole-bunch/stems complexity. The tannins are very fine, contributing to a silky texture. (\$80.00) *Highly Recommended*

**2008 Ata Rangi Celebre (35% Syrah, 35% Merlot, 30% Cabernet Sauvignon)** A brave attempt, but Martinborough is just too cool for these varieties. (\$40.00) *Agreeable*

## PINOT GRIS

Given that the Italians and Alsations have discovered screwcaps, the pinot gris/grigio market has suddenly hotbed up, and the competition from Europe (and New Zealand) is very strong. What we're saying is, based on this tasting, Australia is going to have to lift its game.

### Highly Recommended

#### 2011 Kingston Estate Adelaide Hills/Mount Benson Pinot Gris

This is a fragrant, Alsace-like style with pronounced floral overtones. The palate is seductively opulent and beautifully balanced. The rich fruit and low level residual sugar are matched to refreshing acidity. (\$15.00) *Excellent Value*  
12.0% Screwcap

#### 2011 Thorn Clarke Sandpiper Eden Valley Pinot Gris

This is a very good varietal expression, with perfumed pear and apple aromatics. The palate is supple and the firmness matches the weight of fruit and acidity. (\$16.00) *Excellent Value*  
12.5% Screwcap

### Recommended

#### 2011 Angullong Fossil Hill Orange Pinot Gris

A big, rich honeyed hazelnut style which provides a generous varietal mouthful. It is a little too grippy. Drink now. (\$22.00)  
13.5% Screwcap

#### 2010 Pinocchio King Valley Pinot Grigio

This wine is rich and malty, with a nicely textured palate. Ready to drink. (\$25.00) Screwcap

#### 2011 Lerida Estate Canberra District Pinot Grigio

This wine has pear-like aromas and flavours. A hint of sweetness eases the firmness on the fresh varietal palate in which the acid lifts the finish. (\$25.00)  
11.8% Screwcap

## Agreeable

#### 2011 Vinaceous Sirenya Adelaide Hills Pinot Grigio

The nose is fresh and varietal, showing poached pear with suggestions of malt. Although the palate has fruit and texture, it's too phenolic. (\$21.00)  
12.5% Screwcap

#### 2011 Grant Burge East Argyle Eden Valley Pinot Gris

A very fresh wine with malty varietal character. It's a little too firm, but has good weight of fruit. (\$19.95)  
13.0% Screwcap

#### 2011 Nepenthe Adelaide Hills Pinot Gris

This wine is full and rich, even developed, but it has strong poached pear varietal character. A very opulent wine with more than its share of phenolics. (\$20.00)  
13.0% Screwcap

#### 2010 Deviation Road Adelaide Hills Pinot Gris

A full, slightly buttery wine with some varietal character. It's just too firm. (\$23.00)  
13.5% Screwcap

#### 2011 Yealands Way Marlborough Pinot Gris

This is a very fresh pear varietal style with slight pistachio notes. The palate is too firm. (\$15.00)  
13.0% Screwcap

#### 2011 Swinging Bridge Orange Pinot Gris

This wine has an impressive pear-malt varietal character. With a little more fruit to match the acid and phenolics, this wine would have starred. It still has something to offer, but the hardness lingers. (\$18.95)  
13.3% Screwcap

#### 2011 Riposte The Stiletto Adelaide Hills Pinot Gris

The nose is rich, but has a banana edge. There's not quite enough fruit length. (\$18.95)  
12.0% Screwcap

#### 2011 Alta Adelaide Hills Pinot Grigio

Although fresh and varietal, this wine lacks that essential core of fruit. It's dry but needs more substance to match the phenolics. (\$22.95)  
13.0% Screwcap



**Acceptable**

**2011 Beelgara Estate Range Pinot Grigio** Although there's a little varietal character, this wine is quite advanced. The soft fruit impact is more than matched by phenolics. 11.0% Screwcap

**2011 Zonte's Footstep Doctressa Di Lago Langhorne Creek Pinot Grigio** There is some varietal character here, but there's also some premature development. The palate is too firm. (\$16.00) 13.0% Screwcap

**2011 Beelgara Black Label Mount Lofty Pinot Grigio** This is a dull wine with a smidgeon of varietal character but a broad, sweet palate and jarring acidity. 11.5% Screwcap

**2010 Essenze Waipara Pinot Gris** This wine has developed pear varietal character, but it's too advanced. (\$18.00) 14.0% Screwcap

**2011 Paxton Pinot Gris** While there is some suggestion of varietal character, this wine is hard and advanced. (\$23.00) 13.0% Screwcap

**2011 Tim Adams Clare Valley Pinot Gris** Slightly pink colour. The colour suggests a broad, phenolic wine, and that's what we get. High acid and sweetness do not work with the strong grip on the palate. (\$19.00) 12.5% Screwcap

**2011 Climbing Pinot Gris** Quite forward and dull. (\$12.95) 12.0% Screwcap

**2010 Ten Minutes By Tractor 10X Pinot Gris** Developed, showing brown-apple characteristics. (\$28.00) 14.0% Screwcap

**2010 Zilzie Adelaide Hills Pinot Gris** Very sweaty and grippy. (\$16.00) 12.5% Screwcap

**2010 Punt Road Yarra Valley Pinot Gris** Far too developed for its age. (\$23.00) 12.5% Screwcap

We've said it before. There are far too many coarse, phenolic wines in this line-up. Phenolic firmness is part and parcel of pinot gris, but it needs to be controlled.

**SHIRAZ**

We couldn't let an issue pass without some shiraz. There's good drinking to be had here including the Brokenwood Wade Block which delivers an object lesson on McLaren Vale shiraz. It's rich, fresh, not over-ripe and has a future.

**Highly Recommended**

**2008 Seppelt St Peters Grampians Shiraz** This is a vibrant, opulent blackberry shiraz with a suggestion of spice. The palate is medium-bodied and impressively long, balanced by silky tannins. (\$50.00) 14.0% Screwcap

**2007 Brokenwood Wade Block 2 Vineyard McLaren Vale Shiraz** A very fresh blackberry style of shiraz with overtones of freshly tilled earth. The palate is packed with lively varietal flavour and the tannins are fine. Cellar. (\$50.00) 14.5% Screwcap

**2009 De Iuliis Limited Release Hunter Valley Shiraz** This wine shows intense, voluptuous blackberry flavour with a whiff of spice. A delicious red with very fine tannins. Well worth cellaring. (\$50.00) 13.5% Screwcap

**2009 Tyrrell's Lunatic Heathcote Shiraz** Vibrant blackberry aromas with a hint of jujube show on the intense nose, and the palate is very satisfying, long and fine. (\$45.00) 13.9% Screwcap

**2007 De Iuliis Limited Release Hunter Valley Shiraz** A rich, ripe, minty-oak shiraz that is fresh, firm and well balanced. Good for the long term. (\$60.00) 14.3% Screwcap

**2010 The Lane Block 14 Basket Press Shiraz** This Adelaide Hills shiraz is impressive. The spiciness captivates, as does the long palate and very fine tannins. Needs time. (\$39.00) 14.0% Screwcap

**Continued Page 11**

## OTHER DRY WHITES

In this case, “other” covers a wide field. We included a couple of barrel-fermented, sauvignon blanc-based styles, a unique blend of verdelho, savagnin and roussanne (Chapel Hill) and a range of others to take on the “darlings” of the media, fiano, and vermentino.

### Highly Recommended

**2011 Oakridge Limited Release Fumé** This is a restrained yet intense dry white. The grassy nose carries a little interesting sulphidic funk. The palate is very textural and understated, but long. (\$32.00)  
11.5% Screwcap

**2011 Yering Station Village Fumé Blanc** The citrus characteristics are complemented by attractive nutty barrel ferment notes. There’s excellent texture and length on a very well balanced palate. (\$24.00) *Excellent Value*  
12.0% Screwcap

**2010 Yalumba Eden Valley Viognier** Powerful, fresh apricot and ginger aromas show out on an impressive nose. The palate has some phenolic grip, but it works very well with the flavour and texture. (\$22.00) *Excellent Value*  
13.5% Screwcap

**2011 Tahbilk Viognier** This is a very fresh wine with restrained apricot overtones. The palate has both texture and length, and is well balanced. (\$15.25) *Excellent Value*  
Screwcap

### Recommended

**2011 Willow Bridge Estate Dragonfly Chenin Blanc** A rich, fresh young white with aromas of passionfruit. Well judged sweetness adds considerably to the rich, acid-fresh palate which is a little firm. (\$17.00) *Excellent Value*  
13.0% Screwcap

**2011 Primo Estate La Biondina Colombard** The nose shows strong gooseberry aromas with a slightly sweaty edge. There’s plenty of flavour backed by adequate acid. (\$16.00)  
12.0% Screwcap

**2011 Zonte’s Footstep The Love Symbol Langhorne Creek Savagnin** This is a fresh, restrained lemon sherbet style with some lees character. Drinking well. (\$18.00)  
12.5% Screwcap

**2011 Chapel Hill il Vescovo McLaren Vale White** A fresh but simple melon/white peach style. Mouthfilling but balanced. Drink now. (\$22.00)  
13.0% Screwcap

**2011 Devil’s Lair Dance With The Devil Margaret River Sauvignon Blanc Chenin Blanc** An intense nettle/gooseberry dry white with complex notes. The palate appeals with length, texture and structure. The finish is slightly firm. (\$25.00)  
13.5% Screwcap

**2011 Kalleske Florentine Barossa Valley Chenin Blanc** An attractive wine with plenty of richness, hints of hazelnut, texture and varietal character. It’s a little forward, so drink now. (\$18.00)  
12.0% Screwcap

**2011 Dowie Doole McLaren Vale Chenin Blanc** Very fresh, but decidedly grassy, with hints of passionfruit. Certainly vibrant and well made, but doesn’t identify strongly with chenin blanc. (\$16.00)  
12.5% Screwcap

### Agreeable

**2011 Oliver’s Taranga Vineyards Fiano** Intense and mineraly, with hints of sulphidic funk, butter and pineapple cheese cake. Round and ready. (\$24.00)  
11.5% Screwcap

**2011 Yalumba Organics Viognier** Comparatively forward, but offers plenty of apricot varietal aroma and flavour. The palate is slightly too firm and advanced. (\$15.00)  
13.5% Screwcap

**2011 Mitolo Jester McLaren Vale Vermentino** Subdued citrus fruit comes through on a fresh nose with a touch of SO<sub>2</sub>. The palate is restrained, with plenty of acid, like semillon. (\$22.00)  
10.0% Screwcap



**2010 Redbank King Valley Garganega** Fresh but plain and peachy. (\$19.95)  
12.5% Screwcap

### Acceptable

**2011 Heafod Glen Perth Hills Viognier** A little forward and subdued, lacking varietal impact on a broad palate. (\$29.00)  
12.5% Screwcap

**2010 The Dust Kicker by Schwarz Barossa Valley Chenin Blanc** Shows obvious development and phenolics, but is richly flavoured. (\$19.00)  
12.0% Screwcap

**2011 Oliver's Taranga Vineyards Vermentino** Nutty and forward, showing a hint of marzipan. Tends broad and firm on the finish. (\$24.00)  
13.0% Screwcap

**2011 Yalumba South Australia Vermentino** Forward, light and slightly dull. The palate is broad and firm. (\$13.00)  
11.5% Screwcap

**2011 De Bortoli Sacred Hill Semillon Chardonnay** A forward, broad lemon sherbet style. (\$9.00)  
12.0% Screwcap

It's too early to pass judgment on the Italian white varieties fiano, garganega and vermentino, but even in their home country they're hardly in the spotlight.



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### Recommended

**2009 Tower Estate Hunter Shiraz** A impressive red berry/pepper/spice style which is full of life. The oak is a little prominent at the moment. (\$38.00)  
13.5 Screwcap

**2009 Seppelt Chalambar Shiraz** The dark cherry aromas are supported by well-judged oak. Intense fruit fills the palate which is still quite firm. Give it 3-5 years. (\$22.00)  
13.5% Screwcap

**2010 Pfeiffer Carlyle Shiraz** The vibrant colour is reflected by a lively nose showing rich dark cherry aromas. The palate is just a little lean, but the firm, fine tannins don't overwhelm the fruit. (\$18.50)  
14.5% Screwcap

**2006 Margan Aged Release Shiraz** Colour, nose and palate all show obvious development, but the freshness and complexity of this wine have considerable appeal. There's plenty of flavour balanced nicely by the tannin structure. (\$65.00)  
14.5% Screwcap

**2010 Tournon Shays Flat Vineyard Pyrenees Shiraz** A rich, ripe style with hints of spice and leather. The palate is quite voluptuous, but balanced, and the flavour doesn't stray into over-ripeness. (\$35.00)  
14.0% Screwcap

**2009 Tower Estate Freeman Vineyard Hilltops Shiraz** A strong blackberry style that isn't quite jammy, staying on the right side of the freshness line. Satisfying drinking. (\$30.00)  
13.5% Screwcap

### Agreeable

**2008 Grant Burge Balthasar Barossa Valley Shiraz** The nose reflects very ripe fruit, but it's still fresh enough. A wine for the lovers of big, mouthfilling shiraz. (\$36.95)

Continued Page 13

## SWEET WHITE

This is an impressive line-up of sweet white wines. We're afraid this segment of the market would struggle to survive if it wasn't for by-the-glass pours with dessert in our better restaurants. We advise having a few of the better wines in stock for the home dining table. They team with blue cheese as well as they do with many desserts.

### Outstanding

**2011 Oakridge Limited Release Botrytis Riesling** This is a stunning wine, showing very fresh white peach/citrus aromas. But it's on the palate that it excels. It's clean, concentrated, and beautifully balanced in a beerenauslese style. (\$40.00/ 375 ml)  
8.0% Screwcap

### Highly Recommended

**2010 Dowie Doole Cane Cut Viognier** The nose is comparatively subdued, showing varietal apricot and ginger, but it still has power. The palate is viscous and intense, filled with stone fruit and citrus flavours. The richness and sweetness is beautifully balanced by acidity. (\$25.00/375 ml)  
10.0% Screwcap

**2010 d'Arenberg The Noble Botryotina Fockeliana Semillon Sauvignon Blanc** A very concentrated, unctuous wine which is fresh and shows obvious botrytis dried apricot character. (\$20.00/375 ml)  
8.0% Screwcap

*BOTRYTIS cinerea Pers:Fr (teleomorph: Botryotina fockeliana (de Bary) Whetzel) is a necrotrophic pathogenic fungus with an exceptionally wide host range of at least 235 species. H.J. Finkers from "Scientific Commons"*

**2010 d'Arenberg The Noble Wrinkled McLaren Vale Riesling** The nose is packed with apricot and peach aromas, and the palate delivers voluminous flavour and sweetness. Ready now. (\$20.00/375 ml)  
12.3% Screwcap

## Recommended

**2011 Grosset Clare Valley Noble Riesling** Shows fresh tropical fruits aromas, especially pineapple. The palate is fresh, sweet and intense, but needs time to develop complexity. (\$43.00/375 ml)  
11.0% Screwcap

**2011 Mr. Mick Late Harvest Riesling** Fresh, limey and aromatic. This is a well made, clean medium-sweet style with cleansing acidity. (375 ml)  
11.0% Screwcap

**2009 Leopardwood Botrytis Chenin Blanc** Fresh, peachy and intense, with a whiff of vanilla. The palate is quite luscious, complex and toasty. Ready to drink. (\$17.00/375 ml)  
12.5% Screwcap

**2008 Aurora Late Harvest Riesling** This wine had some tasters' minds wandering to Germany. It's fragrant and has a sulphides touch that reminded us of some JJ Prüm wines. It's medium sweet and a little firm. (\$N/A)  
11.0% Screwcap

### Agreeable

**2009 Berton Vineyard Botrytis Semillon** A big peach/vanilla style with a distinct VA lift. It's just a bit broad, and needs a little more acid. (\$17.00/375 ml)  
11.0% Screwcap

**2010 d'Arenberg The Noble Prankster Adelaide Hills Chardonnay Semillon** Intense and fresh, showing honeycomb and apricot. There's plenty of power, sweetness and botrytis. Ready now. (\$20.00/375 ml)  
9.2% Screwcap

**2010 d'Arenberg The Noble Mud Pie McLaren Vale Viognier Roussanne** There's plenty of rich peach/marmalade flavour here, but the palate is forward and sweet to the point of cloying. (\$20.00/375 ml)  
7.3% Screwcap



**2010 Punt Road Nehme Vineyard Botrytis Semillon** The aromas reflect intense, botrytised fruit, but the palate is a let-down, Lacking concentration and acidity. (\$30.00/375 ml)  
12.0% Screwcap

**2011 Houghton Late Picked Sweet Verdelho** Shows tropical aromatics, but is slightly broad. Medium-sweet.  
10.0% Screwcap

**2010 Mount Avoca Cordon Cut Sauvignon Blanc** Offers slightly grassy aromatics and a medium-sweet palate which is clean, with some phenolics. (\$25.00/375 ml)  
10.0% Screwcap

**2009 Keith Tulloch Botrytis Semillon** Very intense but developed, showing strong marmalade botrytis overtones. The finish cloy and needs to be fresher. (\$35.00/375 ml)  
11.5% Screwcap

14.5% Diam cork  
**Continued from Page 11**

**2007 Taltarni Heathcote Shiraz** Shows a touch of bottle age, but is still fresh enough. The palate is quite firm – to the extent that the tannins challenge the maturing fruit. (\$40.00)  
14.0% Screwcap

**2009 Balgownie Estate Bendigo Shiraz** This is a ripe red fruits style with elements of earth and menthol in the slightly reduced bouquet. The palate is richly flavoured and quite firm. (\$40.00)  
14.5% Screwcap

### Acceptable

**2008 Oakridge Yarra Valley Shiraz** Colour, nose and palate are too advanced for the age of the wine, and there's an overdone stemminess. (\$32.00)  
13.5% Screwcap

**2009 Aurora Central Otago Bendigo Syrah** Has fruit but is leathery and earthy. Too advanced. \$38.00)  
13.9% Screwcap

### Unacceptable

**2009 Man O' War Dreadnought Waiheke Island Syrah** Very dull, showing mushroom overtones. Oxidised, with suggestions of Brettanomyces. (\$36.00)  
14.5% Screwcap

## SUBSCRIPTION INFORMATION

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## WINEWISE HALF-DOZEN

Once again the cut-off time for the magazine has beaten us, and we are unable to announce the exact make-up of this issue's Winewise half-dozen. Needless to say, it will comprise six of our best *Excellent Value* wines.

Readers registered for our Winewise Alerts will have received the list before reading this. The list, and information for ordering are also available on [www.winewise.net.au](http://www.winewise.net.au).

## AUSTRIA – MAKING ITS MARK

**A**ustria is on the same latitude as Burgundy so its suitability for wine growing is unquestioned. However, it's only lately that the wine world has taken notice of the unique contribution this country is able to make to the field of quality wine.

Led by its signature variety grüner veltliner, and other white varieties such as riesling, Austrian wine is frequently encountered in Australia – particularly via the wine lists of our top restaurants.

There are 22 grape varieties officially classified for white wine production in Austria, including many local cultivars. However, grüner veltliner remains the star performer, accounting for over forty per cent of total wine production and, deservedly so, as the tasting notes below indicate.

Grüner Veltliner resembles riesling in its delicacy and high acid profile, but is characteristically marked by spicy aromas and flavours and a minerally (even slightly phenolic) texture.

The federal states of Niederösterreich, Burgenland and Steiermark are defined as the main wine regions, though there are also sixteen others including Wien [Vienna]. Niederösterreich is Austria's largest wine growing area. This includes the sub-regions of Wachau, Kremstal and Kamptal. This latter region, with a vineyard area of 3,802 hectares, gets its name from the river Kamp, that flows directly through it, and is also home to Austria's largest wine-producing town, Langenlois.

I attended a trade function courtesy of the Austrian Wine Marketing Board in Sydney in August. After a marathon morning tasting, we lunched at Guillaume at Bennelong and enjoyed a top class meal with specially selected Austrian wines. The tasting notes below represent most of the wines tasted.

While some reds were sampled, only one really made an impression, the **2007 Gesellmann Opus Eximium Cuvée** (Burgenland Region). Notwithstanding praise from Jancis Robinson, I found the

reds (well made though they were) were not distinctive enough and generally lacked depth of fruit. However, I look forward to further developments.

### TASTING NOTES BY VARIETY

#### Riesling

(All sealed with a screwcap)

**2008 Nigl Privat Reserve Riesling** (Kremstal Region) Powerful Alsace-like aromas, attractive and fragrant. Great depth of vibrant fruit on a long, fine palate displaying a minerally texture, perfectly balanced by citrus-like acidity. *Outstanding* [A]

**2009 Hirsch Gaisberg Reserve Riesling** (Kamptal Region) Very attractive, delicate stone fruits aromas. The flavours are fine and lingering, the palate having a delicate mineral texture and great balancing acidity. *Outstanding* [B]

**2009 Alzinger Smaragd Loibenberg Riesling** (Wachau Region) Delicate stone fruits aromas, very Rheingau-like. The wine has a delicate texture, with long flavours and a mineral backbone. The touch of residual sugar is beautifully balanced by the fresh, steely acidity. *Highly Recommended* [B]

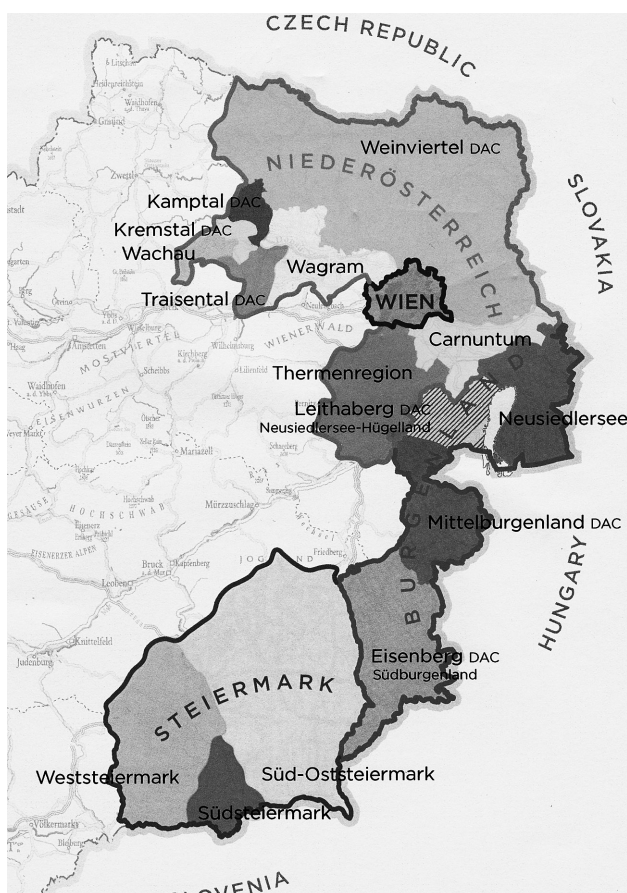
**2009 Hiedler Heiligenstein Reserve Riesling** (Kamptal Region) Subdued aromas initially, opening to delicate floral notes. A reserved wine with softer texture than the others in the line-up. It has reasonable depth of fruit and good freshness. *Recommended* [B]

#### Grüner Veltliner

**2009 Salomon Lindberg Reserve Grüner Veltliner** (Kremstal) Enticing aromas of white rose petals and spice. The palate is very vibrant, with great intensity of flavours, yet it's framed by a delicately firm structure. The long finish is crisp, with a balancing mineral grip. *Outstanding* Screwcap [C]

**2009 Schloss Gobelsburg Steinsetz Grüner Veltliner** (Kamptal) Delicate, spicy aromas and lingering fresh flavours are a feature of this wine which is finely textured, crisp and very moreish! *Highly Recommended* Cork [B]





**2009 Prager Federspiel Hinter der Burg Grüner Veltliner** (Wachau) Rich, spicy, vibrant aromas. Good depth of spicy flavours, underpinned by a lingering chalky texture and balancing crisp acidity. *Highly Recommended* Screwcap [D]

**2009 Rudi Pichler Smaragd Kollmütz Grüner Veltliner** (Wachau) Rich aromas with stone fruits nuances and spicy notes. Packed with flavour, but beautifully balanced by lingering acidity and characteristic mineral grip on the finish. *Highly Recommended* Vino-Lok [B] & [E]

**2009 Johann Donabaum Federspiel Spitzer Point Grüner Veltliner** (Wachau) Spicy/floral aromas. Plenty of flavour with a subtle minerality and real persistence. A great introduction to the variety. *Highly Recommended* Screwcap [B]

#### Sweet Wines

**2006 Wenzel Ruster Ausbruch Am Fusse des Berges** (Burgenland Region) Made from a blend of *sauvignon blanc*, *pinot gris* and *welschriesling*, this wine is very youthful and refined. The aromas are enticing, with vibrant, fresh and

dried apricot notes, while the palate is intensely flavoured. Beautifully balanced by fresh, limey acidity and a touch of grip. (375ml) *Outstanding* Cork [B]

**2006 Wenzel Ruster Ausbruch Saz** (Burgenland Region) Made from a blend of *furmint* and *muskateller*, this wine has a deep gold colour with rich dried apricot botrytis character. The palate is luscious and long, with balancing acidity. (375ml) *Highly Recommended* Cork [B]

#### Other Wines Tasted

I was also impressed by the **2010 Heinrich Harti Rotgipfler** (Thermenregion), with its very delicate floral aromas and texture. There was also a sauvignon blanc, **2008 Tement Zierregg Sauvignon Blanc** (Südsteiermark region). This wine is not your Marlborough style. It had intense guava aromas, but the palate was very lively, with some minerality and balancing zesty acidity.

There is no doubting the quality of Austria's best wines and the versatility of its principal grape variety *grüner veltliner* which is very food friendly. There are a number of Australian distributors for the different labels, as listed below. Get your local retailer to contact the relevant importer.

A. **Nigl** – Déjà Vu Wine Company: [www.dejavuwines.com.au](http://www.dejavuwines.com.au)

B. **Alzinger, Johann Donabaum, Hiedler, Hirsch, Rudi Pichler, Schloss Gobelsburg, Wenzel** – Enoteca Sydney: [www.enotecasydney.com/contact.html](http://www.enotecasydney.com/contact.html)

C. **Salomon** – Vintage & Wine: <http://vintageandwine.com/contacts/>

D. **Prager** – Cellarhand: [www.cellarhand.com.au/](http://www.cellarhand.com.au/)

E. **Rudi Pichler** – Lester & Adrienne Jesberg: [adrjes@bigpond.net.au](mailto:adrjes@bigpond.net.au)

**Len Sorbello**

## PINOT NOIR

The focus is on pinot noir this issue. The advances being made with pinot noir in the cool areas of Australia and New Zealand make it the “hot” variety. Style factions have already developed and, like most factions, some are very one-eyed. In our view, there is no simple answer regarding pinot noir styles. As in Burgundy, big wines, elegant wines, wines with stems and wines without stems all have their places. The key quality factor is balance.

### Outstanding

**2009 Curly Flat Pinot Noir** The nose shows rich raspberry fruit complemented by a hint of stems that add a touch of complexity. The palate has power but also finesse, finishing long, and balanced by firm, fine tannins. (\$53.00)  
13.9% Screwcap

### Highly Recommended

**2008 Seresin Home Vineyard Pinot Noir** This is a very classy pinot that was close to *Outstanding*. It delivers a combination of intense red berry fruit and forest floor complexity. The palate is silky, fine and long. (\$48.00)  
14.0% Screwcap

\* This is one of six 2008 Seresin Pinot Noirs reviewed. Details of each wine are shown at the end of the article. Wooden cases containing one of each are available. Contact the importers Fesq & Company for details.

**2010 Brokenwood Indigo Vineyards Beechworth** The powerful, fresh dark cherry aromas combine very well with subtle oak. There’s plenty of flavour and structure. Needs time. (Not yet released – expected to be \$30-\$35)  
14.0% Screwcap

**2008 Seresin Sun & Moon Marlborough Pinot Noir** The dark cherry aromatics are very appealing, and are enhanced by brambly and licorice notes. The tannins are firm, but fine and are carried easily by the intense fruit. Cellar 4-5 years at least. (\$120.00)  
13.5% Screwcap

**2008 Seresin Racheal Marlborough Pinot Noir** This pinot shows attractive floral notes that merge very well with the red berry and hints of tilled earth. The palate is fine and long. (\$55.00)  
13.8% Screwcap

**2008 Seresin Leah Marlborough Pinot Noir** Fragrant and ripe, showing secondary earth and undergrowth components. A rich, complex, savoury pinot noir. (\$42.00)  
14.0% Screwcap

**2010 Ten Minutes By Tractor 10X Pinot Noir** The nose is fresh and varietal, showing red berry fruit with a pronounced undergrowth component. The palate flows beautifully, with a silky feel, and fine, firm tannins. (\$32.00)  
14.0% Screwcap

**2008 Seresin Raupo Creek Marlborough Pinot Noir** This Seresin offers impressively intense dark cherry aromas and flavours backed by positive gamey overtones. It’s big on structure but has the fruit weight to handle it. Cellar. (\$48.00)  
13.5% Screwcap

**2009 Maude Central Otago Pinot Noir** This wine shows a little maturity on the nose, but the ripe dark cherry fruit is very attractive. Although the palate is on the big side, it’s strongly varietal, balanced and fresh. (\$35.00)  
14.0% Screwcap

### Recommended

**2010 Yering Station Village Pinot Noir** This moderately priced pinot noir offers a good mix of fruit and complexity. The cherry aromas and flavours are given an extra dimension by hints of dried herbs and tilled earth. (\$23.00)  
*Excellent Value*  
13.5% Screwcap

**2010 Little Yering Yarra Valley Pinot Noir** There’s an appealingly subtle complexity to this wine, together with perfumed red fruits. The palate is balanced by very fine tannins. (\$17.00)  
*Excellent Value*  
13.5% Screwcap

**2008 Babich Winemakers' Reserve Pinot Noir** Light colour. The nose is fragrant and sappy, while the elegant palate has persistence and structure. (\$28.00)  
14.0% Screwcap

**2009 Lerida Estate Cullerin Pinot Noir** This wine is packed with dark cherry fruit, but is still a little closed. Complex notes are beginning to evolve on the nose, and the dark cherry fruit is ready to blossom. (\$35.00)  
13.9% Screwcap

**2008 Seresin Tatou Marlborough Pinot Noir** This pinot shows complex forest floor notes, sweet spices and dark cherry, but it's too firm at the moment. However, it has power and length. Cellaring will ease the astringency. (\$48.00)  
14.0% Screwcap

**2009 Ten Minutes By Tractor McCutcheon Pinot Noir** This is a very elegant pinot with a sublimely silky palate, but there's a lot of forest floor complexity which is almost overwhelming. (\$75.00)  
13.5% Screwcap

**2010 Nepenthe Adelaide Hills Pinot Noir** Although the nose shows lightish, fragrant red fruits, the palate offers substance, length and structure. OK for the price (\$20.00)  
14.0% Screwcap

**2009 Tomboy Hill Ruby's Picking Pinot Noir** A powerful dark cherry style which is very fresh, but heading to shiraz in character. Big, strong pinot noir. (\$70.00)  
13.0% Screwcap

### Agreeable

**2009 Barringwood Park Tasmania Pinot Noir** Light but perfumed and varietal. Shows some oak but has structure and just enough fruit. (\$29.00)  
13.2% Screwcap

**2008 Tomboy Hill Smythe's Creek Pinot Noir** Has varietal flavour and structure but shows development by way of slightly "stewed" fruit. (\$50.00)  
13.5% Screwcap

**2009 Berton Vineyard Tasmania Pinot Noir** Attractive dark cherry with hints of spice. The palate is substantial, with a firm structure. (\$N/A)  
13.5% Screwcap

**2010 Oakridge 864 Bateman Vineyard Pinot Noir** Good fresh perfumed fruit with pronounced brambly notes. Has length and silkiness, but there's a greenness to the tannins which can't be ignored. (\$60.00)  
12.5% Screwcap

**2010 Madfish Grandstand Pinot Noir** A fresh, light, red fruits style with a herbal edge. (\$18.00)  
13.5% Screwcap

**2009 Tyrrell's Vat 6 Hunter Valley Pinot Noir** Developed colour. Shows maturity, but still has enough freshness. The palate is dry and savoury, but has fruit and length. (\$85.00)  
13.5% Screwcap

**2009 Deviation Road Adelaide Hills Pinot Noir** A bit dull on the nose. Firm, tending to dry red. (\$32.00)  
13.2% Screwcap

**2009 O'Leary Walker Adelaide Hills Pinot Noir** Firm, ripe and muscular. A solid pinot noir. (\$22.00)  
12.5% Screwcap

**2010 Seville Estate The Barber** Ripe, but firm and dry. A bit too austere. (\$22.00)  
13.0% Screwcap

### Acceptable

**2010 Ross Hill Pinnacle Series Pinot Noir** Very developed colour backed up by complex mature forest floor nose. Too worked at the expense of fruit. (\$40.00)  
14.5% Screwcap

**2009 Aurora Bendigo Central Otago Pinot Noir** Varietal but shows slightly baked, advanced Vegemite characteristics. Dull and extracted. (\$38.00)  
13.9% Screwcap

**2007 Domaine A Pinot Noir** Very dull and dry. Almost certainly cork-affected (random oxidation). (\$65.00)  
14.0% Cork



## The Seresins

### Winemaking

All the wines were made in the following way:

Grapes hand-picked and hand-sorted  
Fruit totally destemmed  
Pre-fermentation cold soak  
Wild yeast ferment – no stems added  
Post-ferment maceration  
Drained and lightly pressed before transfer to French barriques

Further explaining the differences:

#### Home Vineyard Pinot Noir

Fruit source: the lower terraces of the Seresin Home Vineyard  
Soil: alluvial origin with basalt pebbles which facilitate draining  
Clone(s): 115  
Elevage: 15 months in French barriques (35% new)

#### Sun & Moon Marlborough Pinot Noir

Fruit source: Raupo Creek Vineyard step hill block  
Soil: clay-based  
Clone(s): 115, 777, 10/5  
Elevage: 15 months in French barriques

#### Racheal Marlborough Pinot Noir

Fruit source: Raupo, Tatou & Home Vineyards  
Clone(s): 115, 777, 10/5, 667  
Elevage: 15 months in French barriques (30% new)

#### Leah Marlborough Pinot Noir

Fruit source: Raupo, Tatou & Home Vineyards  
Clone(s): 113, 114, 115, 667, 777, 6, 5, 10/5  
Elevage: 11 months in French barriques (25% new)

#### Raupo Creek Marlborough Pinot Noir

Fruit source: Raupo Creek Vineyard 60% step hill block, 40% flats  
Soil: clay-based  
Clone(s): 115, 777, 10/5  
Elevage: 15 months in French barriques (30% new)

#### Tatou Marlborough Pinot Noir

Fruit source: Tatou Vineyard, Wairau Valley  
Soil: stony, free-draining  
Clone(s): 115, 667, 777  
Elevage: 15 months in French barriques (30% new)

## THIRTY VINTAGES OF DALWHINNIE

**S**ituated near Moonambel in the Pyrenees Region of Victoria, Dalwhinnie was established in 1973 by leading architect Ewan Jones. In 1994, Dalwhinnie was purchased by Ewan's son David and his wife Jenny who, together, manage all the day to day operations of the enterprise.

At 595 metres above sea-level, the vineyard comprises 18 hectares producing a total of around 4,500 cases a year. In addition to the Dalwhinnie vineyard, the Joneses have an eight hectare site situated on Taltarni Road named 'Forest Hut', planted to a number of varieties including pinot noir. 'The Hut' range of wines is sourced from these vineyards, and the first release is from the 2010 vintage.

Since the first vintage in 1980, Dalwhinnie has produced a Moonambel Shiraz and Moonambel Cabernet Sauvignon. These were joined in 1984 by a Moonambel Chardonnay, while the first of the Eagle Series single block shiraz wines was produced in 1986. More recently, 2003 saw the introduction of the first Southwest Rocks single block shiraz and, in 2008, the Pinnacle single block shiraz saw the light of day.

Recently, David and Jenny presented 30 vintages of Moonambel Shiraz and Moonambel Cabernet at venues in Sydney and Melbourne. David saw an opportunity to reflect on the long journey to the present day, from extreme weather conditions like the drought of 1982-83, to the more successful run of vintages in recent years.

I attended the Sydney tasting after meeting David privately in Canberra. Here are the notes on the wines I tasted.

### Hut Range

(all sealed with a screwcap)

**2010 The Hut (by Dalwhinnie) Chardonnay** Rich, vibrant honeydew melon aromas; there is good depth of fruit with a balancing chalky texture and some mineral grip on the finish. Very attractive current drinking. (\$25.00) *Recommended*

**2010 The Hut (by Dalwhinnie)**

**Pinot Noir** Ripe, plummy nose of some intensity; very good depth of fruit, finely textured tannins and long flavours. This well balanced wine will provide vibrant drinking over the next three years. (\$25.00) *Highly Recommended*

**2010 The Hut (by Dalwhinnie)**

**Shiraz** *This wine was co-fermented with 2.0% sangiovese and 2.0% viognier.* Maceration aromas of red and dark berries with a spicy/minty lift - very fresh; the palate doesn't quite deliver, with herbal/minty eucalyptus flavours but, commendably, the finish has an attractive savoury edge. (\$28.00) *Agreeable*

**Moonambel Chardonnay****1994 Dalwhinnie Moonambel**

**Chardonnay** Rich, honeyed but vibrant aromas; the palate is still lively, with plenty of fresh fruit, good length and balancing acidity. Cork *Recommended*

**2000 Dalwhinnie Moonambel**

**Chardonnay** Gloriously vibrant colour; fresh stone fruits aromas; the fruit is intense but nicely balanced by the lively acidity and touch of mineral grip on the finish. Cork *Highly Recommended*

**2005 Dalwhinnie Moonambel**

**Chardonnay** This is a different style to previous years. Subtle creamy, white stone fruits aromas; elegant structure with fine depth of fruit, good length and pleasing mineral texture. Should age well. Cork *Highly Recommended*

**2007 Dalwhinnie Moonambel**

**Chardonnay** Beguiling Burgundian matchstick aromas; lovely elegant palate with a creamy/leesy texture and balanced by a long, fine acid backbone. Attractive drinking now but should age a little while longer. Screwcap *Outstanding*

**2008 Dalwhinnie Moonambel**

**Chardonnay** Subtle creamy aromas; good depth of undeveloped fruit with a subtle creamy texture and persistence of flavours. Needs time. Screwcap *Recommended*

**Moonambel Cabernet****2008 Dalwhinnie Moonambel**

**Cabernet Sauvignon** Fragrant aromas of capsicum, tobacco leaf and blackcurrant; very good depth of fruit, with fine tannins and a pleasingly long finish. Screwcap (\$50.00) *Highly Recommended*

**Single Block Shiraz****2005 Dalwhinnie Eagle Series**

**Shiraz** Lovely spicy aromas with a hint of mint; intensely flavoured palate, but in a medium-bodied and, indeed, elegant style; nicely polished tannins and good length, with a little new oak showing. Approachable now but really needs more time in the cellar. Cork (\$150.00) *Outstanding*

**2008 Dalwhinnie The Pinnacle**

**Shiraz** Made from a Barossa clone, and matured in French oak, its clonal origins are very evident. The aromas speak of a big wine, with fruit cake and licorice notes. Similar flavours persist on the palate which also has plenty of plummy, crunchy tannins and some oak on the finish. However, the wine is very vibrant, suggesting all it needs is time to develop. (\$70.00-\$75.00) *Highly Recommended* 15.0% Screwcap (Only 120 cases made)

**2008 Dalwhinnie Southwest Rocks**

**Shiraz** This shiraz clone was sourced from the original Best's 1860s vineyard in Great Western. Again, the clonal origins show clearly. Very fragrant red berry aromas with a touch of spice; on the palate, there is great depth of red fruits with brambly hints, underpinned by persistent velvety tannins and vibrant acidity. (\$70.00-\$75.00) *Outstanding* 14.5% Screwcap (Only 120 cases made)

**30 Years of Dalwhinnie Moonambel Shiraz**

(Bottled under cork until 2007, screwcap thereafter; 'Bordeaux' bottles until 1996, 'Burgundy' bottles since)

**1981** (appeared to be cork-affected)

Mature aromas, light mushroom flavours, somewhat firm for the weight of fruit. *Acceptable*

**1982** Rich spicy aromas; very good depth of fruit, elegant texture with long flavours, hint of firmness on the finish. *Highly Recommended*

**1983** No wine produced.

**1984** (appeared to be cork-affected) Minty and volatile. *Not rated*

**1985** Ripe, mature, dark berry aromas; palate is very fresh with plummy flavours and obvious vibrant acidity. *Recommended*

**1986** Attractive, fragrant dark berry aromas; elegant palate, very fresh fruit of considerable intensity and a touch of spice; long flavours, fine tannins and well balanced. *Outstanding*

**1987** Musty aromas with mushroom development; earthy and very firm palate. *Acceptable*

**1988** Fragrant spicy aromas; good depth of fresh fruit, nice length and polished tannins. May have some life left. *Recommended*

**1989** Earthy and gamey. The palate is hard. *Not rated*

**1990** Spicy red berry aromas; the palate is very fresh, displaying lots of undeveloped dark berry fruits; the tannins are fine and long. This wine has considerable appeal. *Highly Recommended*

**1991** Gamey red berry aromas; sweet fruit (over-ripe?) with hints of mint; the tannins are surprisingly soft. *Agreeable*

**1992** Earthy aromas; ripe fruit but the earthiness and firm tannins detract. *Acceptable*

**1993** Vegetal aromas; green herbal flavours. *Acceptable*

**1994** What a difference a year makes! Great colour; rich, powerful aromas of dark berries; the palate is prodigiously long, displaying vibrancy and polished tannins. Still developing. *Outstanding*

**1995** Fresh, spicy aromas; nicely flavoured palate, some earthiness and firm tannins. *Recommended*

**1996** Spicy Rhône-like aromas; lighter style which has aged well, showing some freshness. *Agreeable*

**1997** Rich, dark berry aromas; good depth of fruit, pleasing length and fairly firm tannins. Drinking well now. *Recommended*

**1998** Spicy red berry aromas; an elegant style, almost pinot noir-like in body, but with long savoury elements. *Highly Recommended*

**1999** Spicy Rhône style; elegant palate with good fruit depth and nicely stated tannins. Ready now. *Recommended*

**2000** Dumb nose; the palate is also very closed, lacking vibrancy. *Not Rated*

**2001** Spicy, red berry aromas; the fruit is fresh, with regional herbal hints, but the flavours are somewhat short. *Acceptable*

**2002** Very dull and earthy; the palate is hard. *Not Rated*

**2003** Ripe, plummy aromas and flavours; tannins are too astringent. *Acceptable*

**2004** Great purple colour; fragrant aromas of red and dark berries; the palate is equally inviting, displaying great depth of flavour, a touch of new oak and nicely structured tannins (which are still little firm). Cellar! *Highly Recommended*

**2005** Strongly minty aromas; bitter palate (was it cork affected?) *Not Rated*

**2006** One of my favourite wines. Winewise first tasted this one for our 25<sup>th</sup> anniversary edition. We said then: "This is a wine of presence and opulence, yet there is considerable finesse as well, as shown by the finely polished tannins which support pristine spicy dark cherry varietal fruit of considerable depth. One senses that this impressive wine will blossom in the next 5-10 years to reveal its hidden charms. Certainly it is a red that can be cellared long-term with confidence." Those comments remain valid. I'd also add that, while it can easily be consumed now, the best will come in a few years time. *Outstanding*



**2007** Fragrant red berry aromas; light-medium bodied with lots of spicy fruit but the tannins seem a bit green to me. *Agreeable*

**2008** (Current release) Rich, clean, dark berry aromas with a considerable volume of ripe fruit having black olive nuances. The ample tannins display some polish, and the persistent finish has an attractive savoury touch. Needs much more time. (\$58.00) *Highly Recommended*

**2009** Lovely vibrant aromas, showing a touch of class and spice; this is a well balanced wine with all the elements - fruit, oak and tannins - melding together nicely. *Highly Recommended*

**2010** (Barrel sample) Fragrant red berry aromas with a hint of mint; very fresh palate which is more minty than usual. At this stage, it doesn't seem to have the depth of fruit of the '08 or '09 but let's wait and see.

A great tasting, and congratulations to David and Jenny Jones for having the courage to host such an event. With the number of wineries closing these days, it takes persistence and strength to survive (and indeed improve) over such a long period. Under their stewardship, the Dalwhinnie vineyard has produced some great wines over the years, and it's clear that there are many more to come.

**Len Sorbello**

Our long journey concluded in Alsace, where we stayed at the Hotel Le Parc in St-Hippolyte ([www.le-parc.com](http://www.le-parc.com)) which is a gem. The in-house restaurant offers exceptional value for money, and the warm hospitality was much appreciated.

After a couple of days soaking in the beauty and wines of Alsace, we undertook the easy drive to Frankfurt airport where a Cathay Pacific Boeing awaited us.

**Lester Jesberg**

## European Wine Journey

We hadn't spent time in the Loire Valley for several years, but when we set up base in Amboise, we wondered why we had left it so long to return. Strolling along the banks of the river, taking in the views of the château and the abundance of spring flowers was a great tonic after weeks on the road. Batteries recharged, we headed for Burgundy.

We had managed to secure a first floor apartment on the rue d'Alsace in central Beaune, and on future trips we won't stay anywhere else. The accommodation was very comfortable, and it was easy to park nearby. The location put us within walking distance of all the attractions of Beaune. Although most of our meals were in-house, two exceptional restaurant meals were highlights of our week in town.

Every time we visit Beaune, we dine at *Ma Cuisine* at least once. The uncomplicated food is of high quality, and not expensive, while the wine list is extensive and very reasonably priced. A simple dish of sautéed veal liver was stunning, with a texture that was not far removed from foie gras. The splurge of the week was Sunday lunch at *Loiseau des Vignes* ([www.bernard-loiseau.com](http://www.bernard-loiseau.com)) where the expense was totally justified by the excellence of the food, wine and service.

We revelled in a series of marvellous tastings at a number of wine producers, but, as expected, the highlight was Domaine de la Romanée-Conti. The 2010s in barrel show promise. The colours are good, and the wines are true to appellation, the La Tache being especially fragrant. I was particularly interested in the new addition to the line-up, the Corton. Significantly it was the first sample M Noblet drew from barrel, and the elegance and delicacy were more indicative of DRC than typical Aloxe-Corton. Of the older wines tasted, the 1989 Le Montrachet and 1967 Richebourg reached heights few wines ever do.

*Continued previous column*

## SPARKLING WHITE & ROSÉ

**J**ust a small selection this time, but there are some good choices for Christmas drinking. Unfortunately, one of the leading contenders was ruined by cork taint.

### Highly Recommended

**2007 Clover Hill Pipers River Tasmania** This is a rich, intense and fresh sparkling wine with attractive breadiness. The palate is long, creamy and complex with, in our view, a slightly high dosage, but that won't bother most drinkers. (\$47.00)  
13.0% Cork

**NV Chandon Australia Brut** A fresh, fruit-driven wine, in which the strong core of flavour is greatly enhanced by breadiness, complex notes on a long creamy palate. (\$29.00)  
12.5% Cork

**NV Chandon Australia Brut Rosé** Bright pink-orange colour. There is a good combination of freshness and complexity to be enjoyed here. The palate is creamy and satisfying, showing pinot noir muskiness. (\$29.00)  
12.5% Cork

### Recommended

**2010 Taltarni Taché** Very pale pink. Very fresh, restrained, breadiness and musky. Just a touch too sweet for the lightish fruit. (\$26.00)  
12.5% Cork

**2008 Sirromet Seven Scenes Sparkling Pinot Noir Chardonnay** Very fresh and lively, showing a subtle breadiness. Plenty of flavour for the price. (\$20.00)  
11.6% Cork

### Agreeable

**2008 Passing Clouds Macedon Ranges Sparkling Chardonnay** A simple peach/tropical fruit style. Has plenty of flavour, but is simple. (\$35.00)  
12.7% Cork

**NV Vinaceous Burlesque Sparkling Chardonnay** Very primary and flowery - simple and grassy, with zippy acidity. (\$28.00)  
12.5% Cork

**NV Vinaceous Burlesque Resplendant Rosé** Deep pink. A straightforward red fruits style. (\$28.00)  
13.0% Cork

### Also Tasted

**2007 Yarrabank Cuveé** Corked

The top three wines offer complexity and freshness, making them well worth their respective asking prices. Simple fruity sparkling wines retailing for over \$20.00 don't cut it with us.

## Taste of Sydney 2012

**O**ld favourites return and exciting newcomers join the fold as the premium food and wine event of the year, Taste of Sydney, announces the initial line up of leading restaurants for 2012. Promising to tantalise and excite, the internationally renowned fine dining festival fuses an idyllic Sydney outdoor experience with the city's love of innovative cuisine and produce. Now in its fourth year, Taste invites Sydney's top chefs to set up temporary kitchens in the scenic surrounds of Centennial Park. Last year chefs served signature dishes to more than 25,000 food-lovers over the four day feast.

New to the 2012 line up are sushi master Shaun Presland from **Sake**, Somer Sivrioglu with his modern Turkish twist at **Efendy** and James Privett of contemporary steakhouse **The Cut Bar & Grill**. Returning favourites include Peter Kuruvita's **Flying Fish**, Richard Ptacnik's **Otto Ristorante**, Eugenio Maiale's **A Tavola** and Alessandro Pavoni's **Ormezzio at the Spit**.

**8-11 March, 2012**

[www.tasteofsydney.com.au](http://www.tasteofsydney.com.au)

## SPARKLING RED

**W**hat's Christmas without a bottle or two of sparkling red? Here are some of the more interesting examples that are currently available.

### Highly Recommended

**2006 Seppelt Original Sparkling Shiraz** This wine has a fresh, intense dark berry nose with attractive hints of leather. The tannins and sweetness are beautifully balanced. (\$20.00) *Excellent Value*  
13.5% Cork

### Recommended

**NV Shingleback Black Bubbles Sparkling Shiraz** Vibrant and youthful, with a blackberry-like bouquet. It's a powerful, spicy young shiraz which is very tight and primary. Needs a little time. (\$22.50)  
13.0% Cork

**NV Chandon Australia Pinot Noir Shiraz** Shows some maturity, but is fresh and spicy. Towards the drier end of the scale, but is drinking well. (\$29.00)  
14.0% Cork

**NV Blue Pyrenees Sparkling Shiraz** A fresh, attractive, blackberry/spice style with a firm but well balanced palate. (\$28.00)  
14.0% Cork

### Agreeable

**NV Balnaves of Coonawarra Sparkling Cabernet** Shows blackberry, and licorice overtones with a touch of development. Offers some complexity and a fairly tannic finish. (\$28.00)  
14.0% Cork

**NV Grant Burge Shiraz Cabernet Méthode Traditionnelle** A fresh rich blackberry style which is fairly dry but has reasonable balance. (\$22.00)  
14.0% Cork

**2009 DogRock Pedro's Sparkling Red** An intense, young, plummy, dark cherry, spicy style. Has plenty of flavour but it's too austere, and a little more sweetness is required. (\$29.00)  
13.0% Crown cap

**2006 Majella Coonawarra Sparkling Shiraz** The nose shows a touch of attractive development and noticeable oak. Minty and fairly dry on the palate. (\$28.00)  
14.5% Crown cap

**2010 Balgownie Sparkling Shiraz** Fresh, ripe and plummy, but raw and simple. Needs a bit more sweetness for balance. (\$29.00)  
13.0% Crown cap

### Acceptable

**2005 E & E Black Pepper Sparkling Shiraz** Rich, dense and jammy, with firm tannins. There's enough sweetness, but the palate is clumsy and oaky. (\$50.00)  
14.0% Cork

**2009 Di Giorgio Sparkling Merlot** Developed colour. The nose is quite mature, and the palate is on the verge of drying out. (\$20.00)  
13.0% Cork

Surprisingly, we found a few of these wines to be too dry. In a way it's encouraging because it indicates a swing away from the over-sweet potions which have seriously injured the style. However, the key word is balance, and sweetness is an essential part of that.





## BLENDS OF CABERNET & SHIRAZ

**H**ere we have what is often referred to as the “classic Australian blend”. Makers obviously have different views of what that means. Some pitch very serious wines at the top end of the market. Others seem to see it as an “every person’s” wine. There also seems to be a fascination with cork that is very unhealthy for the wines and consumers.

### Highly Recommended

**2009 Tyrrell’s Vat 8 Hunter Valley Hilltops Shiraz Cabernet** There’s a lot of depth to this powerful, vibrant red. The palate is opulent and the oak folds in seamlessly. Generously flavoured and delicious. (\$85.00)  
13.5% Screwcap

**2005 Taltarni Pyrenees Reserve Shiraz Cabernet** If there is a model for the classic Aussie red, this is it! The delicious ripe flavour is matched very well to the oak, and the tannins are user-friendly. Cellar as long as you wish. (\$50.00)  
14.0% Cork

### Recommended

**2009 Aramis McLaren Vale Shiraz Cabernet** A very intense, reserved, yet fresh wine showing cassis, blackberry and spice. This is a delightfully bold, full flavoured, yet balanced red. (\$20.00)  
*Excellent Value*  
14.5% Screwcap

**2010 Penny’s Hill The Specialized McLaren Vale Shiraz Cabernet Merlot** Although the aromas reflect a high level of ripeness, the freshness of this wine is impressive. If you like a huge mouthful of red with comparatively soft tannins, this is for you. (\$22.00)  
14.5% Screwcap

**2006 Yalumba The Reserve** What a powerful, brooding red this is. It’s fresh, super-intense and firm, demanding at least a decade. (\$145.95)  
Cork

### Agreeable

**2010 Deviation Road Ironbark Adelaide Hills Shiraz Cabernet** An opulent wine packed with blackberry aromas and flavours. The raw youthfulness of the palate will appeal to some now, but this wine really needs 2-3 years in bottle. (\$18.00)  
14.5% Screwcap

**2009 Majella The Mallea Coonawarra** This is a powerful, but oak-driven red that is simply leans too far towards the wood. (\$75.00)  
14.5% Cork

**2009 Mr. Mick Clare Valley Cabernet Shiraz** This is a fresh, but spicy, medium-bodied red that will provide enjoyable drinking over the next couple of years. (\$14.00)  
14.0% Screwcap

**2008 Passing Clouds Graeme’s Blend Shiraz Cabernet** The ripe blackberry aromas are slightly dull. There’s a lot of flavour here, but it’s on the fade. (\$29.00)  
14.5% Cork

**2008 Ferngrove The Stirlings Shiraz Cabernet Sauvignon** Although intense, the fruit is comparatively forward and the oak is raw. The dusty oak dominates the finish. (\$60.00)  
14.0% Screwcap

**2009 Cat Amongst The Pigeons Fat Cat Barossa Shiraz Cabernet** This is a thumping big red with a touch of volatility that takes no prisoners. Do not cellar. (\$16.00)  
14.5% Screwcap

### Acceptable

**2008 Chalice Bridge The Quest Margaret River Shiraz Cabernet** This wine reflects very ripe fruit indeed; in fact the flavour is over-ripe. (\$23.00)  
14.5% Screwcap

There’s something for everyone here in this compact selection.

## 2008 CABERNET

**T**here are a few impressive wines here, but quality is patchy – particularly in the case of Margaret River. Given the positive reports from the west, this is surprising. However, we can only report on what's in the glass.

### Highly Recommended

**2008 Brand's Laira Blockers Coonawarra Cabernet Sauvignon** This is an intense, vibrant cassis-scented cabernet with the faintest hint of leaf. It represents classic, intense Australian cabernet with everything you need for cellaring. (\$28.00) *Excellent Value*  
14.8% Screwcap

**2008 Howard Park Miamup Margaret River Cabernet Sauvignon** Cassis and red berry notes merge very well with cedar and leaf characteristics. The palate is intense, with savoury tannins, and, although showing a little development, it is impressive. (\$23.00) *Excellent Value*  
14.0% Screwcap

**2008 Edwards BCE Margaret River Cabernet Sauvignon** Here we have a very attractive meld of blackcurrant, dark berry, oak and leaf. All the classic cabernet aromas and flavours are there, together with tannins that are uncompromising. (\$60.00)  
14.0% Screwcap

### Recommended

**2008 Di Giorgio Family Coonawarra Cabernet Sauvignon** A powerful, ripe, varietal red that is tight and firm, with a long, strong finish. Definitely needs time to soften. (\$26.00)  
14.0% Cork

### Agreeable

**2008 Di Giorgio Family Lucindale Cabernet Sauvignon** The vibrancy and strong varietal character are impressive, but this wine is on the big, ripe side and could age quickly. (\$20.00)  
14.0% Screwcap

**2008 Quarisa Treasures Coonawarra Cabernet Sauvignon** Very ripe plummy characteristics go beyond classic cabernet. It's a good value wine for big red lovers. (\$15.00)  
14.0% Screwcap

**2008 Cape Mentelle Margaret River Cabernet Sauvignon** This is a very varietal ripe, cassis-scented cabernet, but the palate is too developed and does not encourage cellaring. OK now. (\$85.00)  
13.5% Screwcap

### Acceptable

**2008 Stella Bella Serie Luminosa Margaret River Cabernet Sauvignon** The nose combines both ripe and green varietal characteristics. This carries through onto a palate where the ripe fruit is good but the green tannins are not. (\$75.00)  
14.0% Screwcap

**2008 Man O' War Waiheke Island Merlot Cabernet Franc Malbec** Red fruits with green edge. Oaky and firm for fruit. (\$N/A)  
14.5% Screwcap

**2008 Chalice Bridge The Quest Margaret River Cabernet Sauvignon** Developed and green. (\$23.00)  
14.5% Screwcap

**2008 Koonara Angel's Peak Coonawarra Cabernet Sauvignon** A very dull wine. (\$15.95)  
13.5% Screwcap

**2008 Passing Clouds The Angel (Cabernet sauvignon, cabernet franc, merlot)** This wine is dull and jammy, with a volatile finish. Could this be yet another victim of random oxidation? (\$39.00)  
13.0% Cork

Time has proved that Coonawarra and Margaret River are the premier cabernet-producing regions in Australia.

This tasting and the next (2009) do nothing to challenge that belief.

## 2009 CABERNET

Australian cabernet sauvignons, except those from a handful of high fliers, have languished on the shelves over the past few years. If the better examples in this issue are any indication, that situation is due to change.

### Highly Recommended

**2009 West Cape Howe Book Ends Cabernet Sauvignon** This is a fresh, powerful dark berry style with hints of blackcurrant. The palate is strongly varietal, with firm, balanced tannins and excellent length. (\$24.00) *Excellent Value*  
14.0% Screwcap

**2009 Xanadu Margaret River Cabernet Sauvignon** Fresh, but very much at the ripe end of the cabernet spectrum. Still, it's strongly varietal and intense, with powerful cassis flavour and a structure to match. (\$35.00)  
14.0% Screwcap

**2009 Majella Coonawarra Cabernet Sauvignon** This is a classic Coonawarra cabernet. It's fine and firm, with good length of blackcurrant flavour, and a dry finish in which oak shows through. (\$33.00)  
14.5% Screwcap

**2009 Ring Bolt Margaret River Cabernet Sauvignon** A vibrantly varietal cabernet showing cassis, tobacco and cedar. The palate is tight, with fine, firm tannins. Needs a bit of time. (\$25.00)  
13.5% Screwcap

### Recommended

**2009 Cape Mentelle Wilyabrup (Cabernet sauvignon, merlot, cabernet franc)** The colour lacks a little depth, but there's no denying the ripe blackcurrant/dark berry flavours with hints of cedar. The finish tapers off slightly. (\$49.00)  
13.5% Screwcap

**2009 Kerrigan + Berry Mountt Barker - Margaret River Cabernet Sauvignon** Rich and ripe, but strongly varietal. However the tannin structure is quite firm at the moment. Needs time. (\$55.00)  
14.0% Screwcap

**2009 Balgownie Estate Bendigo Cabernet Sauvignon** This wine has a very pure cabernet nose with hints of toasty oak. It's just a little too firm and oaky for the weight of fruit at the moment. (\$40.00)  
13.5% Screwcap

### Agreeable

**2009 Tower Estate Coonawarra Cabernet Sauvignon** A powerful cassis varietal with a touch of leaf. The solid, firm palate lacks finesse, and there are hints of menthol. (\$35.00)  
13.5% Screwcap

**2009 Man O' War Waiheke Island Ironclad** Intense dark berry with a hint of leaf. Some development. Good fruit with plenty of structure. Will age quickly. Hard finish. (\$N/A)  
14.5% Screwcap

**2009 Taylors Jaraman Clare Valley Coonawarra Cabernet Sauvignon** Very powerful and ripe, but still very raw and primary. Needs time. (\$29.95)  
14.5% Screwcap

### Acceptable

**2009 Forester Estate Margaret River Cabernet Sauvignon** Light colour and nose. Plain but varietal. A bit hollow. (\$25.00)  
13.5% Screwcap

**2009 Elevation Pedestal Vineyard Margaret River Cabernet Sauvignon** This wine is dull in all respects – colour, nose and palate. (\$49.00)  
13.8% Screwcap

**2009 Pedestal Margaret River Cabernet Merlot** Dull colour. Flat nose. Advanced. Drying out. (\$25.00)  
14.5% Screwcap



## OTHER REDS

**M**any toes are being put into the waters all over Australia when it comes to “other” reds. The Italian varietals demand a lot of work in the vineyard and winery, and only a few producers can claim any degree of success so far. Tempranillo seems a little more accommodating, and that is reflected in this tasting.

## Highly Recommended

**2010 Juniper Crossing Western Australia Tempranillo** The nose is fresh, and leans to dark cherries and licorice. This is a satisfying, well balanced varietal style. (\$20.00)  
*Excellent Value*  
15.0% Screwcap

**2010 Nepenthe Adelaide Hills Tempranillo** This is a very vibrant young wine, crammed full of cherry and licorice sensations. The juicy, vibrant palate is set in a framework of dry, savoury tannins. Enjoy it now. (\$20.00)  
*Excellent Value*  
14.0% Screwcap

## Recommended

**2009 Mr. Riggs Montepulciano d'Adelaide Hills** A rich plummy/blackberry style with mouthfilling flavour and firm but balanced tannins. (\$25.00)  
14.0% Screwcap

**2010 West Cape Howe Tempranillo** Rich, ripe and plummy, with firm tannins and rich, but slightly confection-like flavours. (\$19.00)  
14.0% Screwcap

**2010 La Línea Norteno Adelaide Hills Tempranillo** Characteristics of dark fruits and licorice show out in this very approachable red. It's a well balanced drink now style with fine, savoury tannins. (\$32.00)  
14.0% Screwcap

## 2005 DOMAINE A CABERNET SAUVIGNON

The 2007 Cabernet from Domaine A is a stylish red with considerable cellaring potential. (\$70.00) More on the web.

## Agreeable

**2009 Margan Limited Release Barbera** The nose shows attractive, fresh red fruits with a hint of undergrowth complexity. The palate is supple, with fine tannins and obvious acidity. (\$30.00)  
14.0% Screwcap

**2010 Chapel Hill il Vescovo McLaren Vale Sangiovese** This is a slightly tarry red with plenty of secondary character. The palate is certainly dry as a result of assertive, but fine tannins. (\$25.00)  
14.0% Screwcap

**2009 Mr. Riggs Tacca Paddock Tempranillo** This is a very dense, ripe red that is jammy at the expense of varietal character. The ripeness and oak are over the top. (\$25.00)  
15.0% Screwcap

## Acceptable

**2010 Zonte's Footstep Canto Di Lago Sangiovese Barbera** Slightly dull and jammy, with very firm tannins. Not a good mix. (\$17.50)  
14.5% Screwcap

**2010 Paxton McLaren Vale Tempranillo** This is a very fresh red, with suggestions of dark cherry, licorice and undergrowth. The palate doesn't deliver as much as the nose, offering puckering tannins and suggestion of volatility. (\$23.00)  
12.5% Screwcap

**2009 Trentham La Famiglia Nebbiolo** Insipid, and showing oxidation. (\$16.00)  
13.0% Screwcap

Tempranillo is on the rise. There's still a lot of work to be done, but we finally have a “new” red grape that suits the Aussie palate.

## 2008 DOMAINE A “Lady A”

We tasted a number of “fumé” styles for this issue, but the report will now be published on our web site. The star was the 2008 Domaine A “Lady A”. (\$60.00)

## 2010 YARRA VALLEY PINOT NOIR

**E**arly tastings of the 2010 Yarra Valley pinot noirs, and reports from winemakers suggested that this was a special vintage. We approached Wine Yarra Valley, and in a short time, a comprehensive tasting was organized for us. All the wines were tasted “blind” by Deb Pearce, Lester Jesberg and Lex Howard. Each wine was discussed and final scores agreed upon, before any were unmasked.

### Outstanding

Yering Station winemaker, Willy Lunn



**2010 Yering Station Reserve Pinot Noir** Slightly closed and brooding on the nose, and subtly complex, with faint herbal notes. There’s an excellent core of fruit on the long, firm, balanced palate. This is a multi-dimensional pinot noir with layers of flavour. (Not yet released)

**2010 Coldstream Hills Reserve Pinot Noir** Coldstream Hills made the pace-setting pinots of the Yarra over 20 years ago, and continues to build on that foundation. In this wine, there’s varietal intensity on a nose with positive secondary influences, and a gorgeous, long, silky palate, with a dry, savoury finish reflecting perfectly balanced tannins and oak. (Not yet released)

### Highly Recommended

**2010 St Huberts The Stag Pinot Noir** Beautifully fragrant dark cherry with positive earthy and herbal influences. Opulent, silky and perfectly balanced. (\$23.90) *Excellent Value*

• *This wine was top pinot noir at the 2011 Yarra Valley Wine Show, and is obviously an incredible bargain.*

**2010 Mandala Wines Pinot Noir** A very appealing Côte de Beaune style which is very much in the dark cherry zone. The palate has great depth and structure. Cellar. (\$24.00) *Excellent Value*

**2010 Giant Steps Sexton Vineyard Pinot Noir** Very fragrant red fruits aromas backed by high quality oak and a beguiling herbal hint. A delicious wine of considerable length. The tannins are firm but fine. Cellar 3-5 years at least. (\$34.00)

**2010 Wedgetail Estate Single Vineyard Pinot Noir** This is a complex, spicy red fruits style with a suggestion of edgy volatility in the manner of many burgundies. It’s a wine packed full of interest. (Not yet released)

**2010 Yering Station Pinot Noir** This is a vibrant, perfumed red berry style with a palate that is long and silky. A totally seductive pinot to enjoy in the short term. (\$38.00)

**2010 Shelmerdine Yarra Valley Pinot Noir** The nose is restrained, offering red berry aromas, attractive oak and slightly herbal notes. The palate is tightly wound. Needs time. (\$34.00)

**2010 Giant Steps Gladysdale Vineyard Pinot Noir** Here we have the almost ethereal perfume of a cool site, allied with a hint of stems-derived complexity. The stems influence imparts a faintly green edge to the palate, but this is an impressive wine that will grow in bottle. (\$39.00)

**2010 Seville Estate Pinot Noir** The nose is fresh and cherry-like. Although the tannins are firm, they are fine, and the fruit intensity is enough to carry them. Definitely needs time to settle down and integrate the tannins. (\$27.00) *Excellent Value*

**2010 The Wanderer Yarra Valley Pinot Noir** This is an enticing, delicately perfumed pinot. The palate is long, and the tannins are firm and fine. Give it time to blossom fully. (\$35.00)

**2010 Oakridge Pinot Noir** The nose shows attractive cherry/strawberry aromas, and the palate is fine, linear, savoury and dry. An excellent pinot to enjoy now or cellar 2-3 years. (\$32.00)

**2010 Oakridge Lieu Dit Pinot Noir** The nose shows fragrant, spiced cherry, and there's good palate weight which is challenged at this stage by the dry, savoury tannins, but in a couple of years this wine is likely to be harmony itself. (\$46.00)

**2010 Hoddles Creek Estate Pinot Noir** A vibrant wine packed with dark cherries and raspberries. This is a tight, strongly structured wine with intensity and potential. (\$20.00) *Excellent Value*

**2010 Seville Estate Reserve Pinot Noir** The perfumed red fruits nose is attention-grabbing, but the high quality oak shows through. This wine has good length, intensity and structure. Needs time. (Not yet released)

## Recommended

**2010 Maddens Rise Estate Pinot Noir** This wine has a knockout nose, delivering opulent, perfumed dark cherry aromas and complementary oak. The palate flavour is satisfying, and the tannins are quite firm, needing time to soften. (\$27.00)

**2010 Trellis Wines Pinot Noir** A very appealing pinot with fresh raspberry aromas and flavours. Although this is a comparatively rich style, it stays on the right side of the varietal line, shows some briary notes, and has plenty of cellaring potential. (\$35.00)

**2010 PHI Pinot Noir** The nose is quite secondary in nature, having earthy, spicy and balsamic notes. There's enough dark berry fruit there to cope with all the interesting bits, and the tannins are on the firm side. Needs time to develop. (\$46.00)

*See summing up.*

**2010 Warramate Pinot Noir** Attractive red fruits with an intriguing spicy element. The excellent fruit freshness and intensity cope well with the complexity. (\$25.00)

**2010 Mandala Wines Prophet Pinot Noir** The complex spices and forest floor enhance the red fruits nose. The palate is based on impressive structure and intensity, although there are slightly herbal notes, and an acid twist on the finish. (Not yet released)

**2010 Yarrawood Tall Tales Pinot Noir** The nose offers attractively ripe cherry-plum aromas, and the palate is quite supple and fleshy. It's little on the forward side, so is probably at its best now. (\$24.00)

**2010 Medhurst Wines Red Shed Pinot Noir** An intense perfumed dark cherry style of pinot, with ripe, almost raisined flavour. The palate shows some oak. (\$21.50)

**2010 Punt Road Pinot Noir** Nicely perfumed, with a touch of herbal complexity. A well made wine with a fine, firm structure and good length. It just needs a bit more fruit weight for a higher rating. (\$29.00)



**2010 Hoddles Creek Estate 1ER**

**Pinot Noir** Seductive red berry aromas with forest floor nuances, a hint of reductive character and subtle oak. It's quite firm on the palate and shows its acid on the finish. Will benefit from bottle age. (Not yet released)

**2010 Yering Station Village Pinot**

**Noir** Shows restrained cherry fruit with earthy, herbal notes. The palate is dry and savoury, but carries good fruit intensity. (\$23.00)

**2010 St Huberts Pinot Noir**

This is an intense dark cherry style with subtle complex notes. It's a substantial pinot with a juicy palate and balanced tannins that need time to soften. (\$33.90)

**2010 Maddens Rise Reserve Pinot**

**Noir** This wine shows impressive freshness and dark cherry intensity together with some spicy complexity. The palate is supple. (Not yet released)

**2010 Coldstream Hills Pinot Noir**

The nose shows strawberry jube-like aromas, but the palate is much better, delivering good fruit weight and fine tannins. (\$27.00)

**2010 Toolangi Vineyards Pinot Noir**

The nose makes an impact, showing fresh raspberry confiture aromas together with some oak influence. This wine offers richness, freshness, and a good tannin structure. (\$25.00)

**2010 Mayer Close Planted Pinot**

**Noir** The approach of Timo "bring back the funk" Mayer is clearly evident in this wine. The perfumed cherry aromas meet reductive sulphides head-on here. The fruit and tannins are impressive, and it remains to be seen how this wine will evolve. A polarizing style. (\$46.00)  
Cork

**2010 De Bortoli Estate Pinot Noir**

The fresh varietal aroma is aligned with quality oak. The palate offers good flavour, but finishes a bit dry. (\$36.00)  
Cork

**2010 Yarra Yering Pinot Noir**

This wine reflects grapes at the top end of ripeness, showing dark cherry, some VA, undergrowth and oak. Interesting – in the positive sense. (Not yet released)  
Cork

**Agreeable****2010 Oakridge Over The Shoulder**

**Pinot Noir** A fresh red fruits style with slightly savoury notes. Pleasant, fairly simple, short-term drinking. (\$20.00)

**2010 Helen's Hill Pinot Noir**

The aromas and flavours are ripe – almost plummy. The palate is quite plush, with a firm tannin balance. (Not yet released)

**2010 Tokar Estate Pinot Noir**

The nose is big and rich, with bacon/char oak overtones. It's a satisfying pinot which is soft and rich on the palate, showing oak. However, it lacks the subtlety of the top wines. (\$25.00)

**2010 Sticks Pinot Noir**

Fresh, fragrant red fruits show on the nose, together with some obvious oak. It's delicious, juicy and varietal, but the oak and tannins make the wine quite firm on the finish. (\$22.00)

**2010 Seville Estate The Barber Pinot**

**Noir** Vibrant dark cherry aromas show on a very attractive nose. Flavourwise, this is a taut, dry style with an acid twist on the finish. (\$17.00)

**2010 De Bortoli Riorret Emu Pinot**

**Noir** Very fresh red fruits aromas with herbal notes. A little bit green and sour cherry-like on a firm palate. (\$N/A)  
Cork

**2010 Innocent Bystander Pinot**

**Noir** An attractive red berry pinot with a faintly herbal edge. The palate offers honest varietal flavour with a slight green twist. (\$20.00)

**2010 Tarrawarra Estate Pinot Noir**

The very fresh cherry aromas carry a hint of spice and dustiness. The palate is firm, fine and savoury, needing to develop a little more fruit weight. (Not yet released)

**2010 Punt Road Chemin Pinot Noir**

A very fragrant pinot with an obvious stems character that is a little peppery. The palate is long, but not big. However it carries the stemminess reasonably well. (Not yet released)

**2010 Tibooburra Pinot Noir**

Restrained nose with a subtle herbal and game complexity. Tight and taut, showing adequate fruit within a positive tannin structure. Dry and savoury. (\$26.00)

**2010 De Bortoli Riorret The Abbey Pinot Noir**

Shows strong red fruits with slight secondary overtones. The palate has good intensity, but is firm at this stage. (\$35.00)

Cork

**2010 Yarrawood Pinot Noir** This is a spicy style, showing cherry and coconut characteristics. It's fresh and varietal, but needs a bit more weight. (\$N/A)

**2010 Domaine Chandon Yarra Valley Pinot Noir**

Comparatively light colour and nose. Has adequate fruit and some savoury notes, but is one-dimensional and firm for its weight. (\$25.00)

**2010 Sticks No.29 Vineyard Select Pinot Noir**

This is a ripe powerful dark cherry style. There's a hint of forest floor, and the acid and tannins come to the fore on the palate. (\$45.00)

**2010 De Bortoli Reserve Release Pinot Noir**

Sour cherry characteristics show out here, together with herbal notes. Needs to build more mid palate, which it may do with age. (Not yet released)

**2010 The Wanderer Upper Yarra Pinot Noir**

Complex and perfumed, reflecting whole-bunch fermentation. Just a bit lean and dry. (\$55.00)

Cork

**2010 De Bortoli Gulf Station Pinot Noir**

Light, with vegetal notes on the nose. The fruit intensity is only adequate. (\$16.00)

**2010 Medhurst Wines Pinot Noir**

The nose shows, ripe cherry/plum aromas and also a touch of raisin character. The flavours are very ripe, and the oak shows on the finish. (\$40.00)

**2010 Giant Steps Applejack Vineyard Pinot Noir**

Shows fresh but lightish cherry aromas with a touch of oak and a stemmy component. Has adequate initial flavour, but tapers to a slightly green finish. (\$39.00)

**Acceptable****2010 Elmswood Estate Reserve Pinot Noir**

Light colour and nose. The nose shows greenness. Overall, it's just too lean and vegetal. (\$33.00)

**2010 Coldstream Hills Deer Farm Vineyard Pinot Noir**

Shows fresh but light varietal fruit with a white pepper/green stems component. Too lean and green. (\$42.00)

**2010 Long Gully Estate Pinot Noir**

Light, perfumed strawberry nose showing strong herbal notes. The palate is on the green side. (\$N/A)

**2010 Fratelli Wine Company Red Saint Pinot Noir**

Comparatively light colour. The nose lacks vibrancy, and the palate needs more fruit intensity. (Not yet released)

**2010 Gembrook Hill Pinot Noir**

Weak colour. Light, dry and oxidised. (I was shocked when the identity of this wine was revealed after rating it *Outstanding* in the October issue. However, I wasn't shocked when the cork seal was pointed out. Caveat Emptor!) (\$55.00)

**2010 Whispering Hills Hoddles Creek Pinot Noir**

Poor, dilute colour. Lean and green. (\$22.00)

**Summing up**

This certainly is a high quality vintage. Sound, balanced, supple wines with subtle complexity fared very well in the tasting. Some of the firmer styles will probably soften and improve over the next couple of years. It's up to you if you wish to place your trust in them.

There was quite a bit of comment in the social media about my review of the 2010 Phi Pinot Noir in the October issue, especially after it won the best red trophy at the National Wine Show. It averaged just under silver medal points in this tasting, but it's a wine I find hard to warm to. C'est la vie.

There are about three dozen top level wine judges in Australia. When it comes to pinot noir there are inevitably differences of opinion, and that's fine. I respect that, and results often depend on





the mix of judges, and how persuasive one or two of them may be. I consider the opinions of those few dozen judges equal. The handful of big egos among them may not.

In the end, it's up to you. Do try the Phi and make up your own mind. That's what wine is all about.

Depending on the make-up of wine show judging panels, we will probably see a leaning to pinots showing obvious stem character. Stemmy pinots are very easy to detect, and we're sure some judges will push the stems agenda.

A few of those judges may not even recall the late 80s and early 90s when some Australian producers, fresh from the hospitality of Jacques Seysses at Domaine Dujac, returned to Australia

with the fervent belief that 100% stems was the only way to go. What resulted was a wave of hard, green, vegetal pinot noirs which even misguided media support couldn't sustain.

We thought wines like that had passed into history, and now we have another generation of winemakers and some sycophantic members of the media heading down the same precipitous path.

I read a comment somewhere that I'm pushing an anti stems agenda. I'm not. Like any other complexing component in wine, stems are ok if they don't dominate. In fact, in some cases use of stems can be an extremely positive enhancement.

**Lester**

**Coldstream Hills  
Amphitheatre  
Vineyard**