



WINEWISE

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WE JUDGE AUSTRALIA'S BEST IN

**The WINEWISE
CHAMPIONSHIP**

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Next Issue

The next in our series of regional tastings. This time we go to Orange to follow up on the region's exceptional performance in the 2012 Winewise Championship. Get ready for a comprehensive report on the wines, the land, the climate and the people behind the wines.

Deb Pearce reports on a memorable tasting of Penfolds icon wines including the 1962 Bin 60A and the 1953 Grange.

Of course, we'll also provide our normal coverage of new releases as well.

A report on a benchmark chardonnay tasting at Eden Road, Murrumbateman.

For the third year we've conducted our unique event, the Winewise Championship. Only wines that have been awarded top gold medals and/or trophies at eligible shows may compete. Please check the Winewise web site for details. Huon Hooke and P-J Charteris had agreed to join Deb Pearce, Phil Trickett and myself on the judging panel. However Huon was struck down by a stomach lurgy and couldn't make it. We thank Tim Kirk for subbing for Huon on Day 1 at short notice.

As you will see in our detailed report, the wines were tasted in groups no larger than seven. Each judge was required to indicate his or her order of preference. For example, if there were five wines, judges would allocate the numbers 4, 3, 2, 1, 0 where four was given to their best wine and zero to the least. The wine with the highest total score therefore won the bracket.

Please bear in mind that we tasted over 200 of Australia's top wines – according to the wine show system. It follows that there would be far more *Outstandings* and *Highly Recommendeds* than normal. That's certainly the case, so don't think we've gone soft.

As usual, we found a lot of wines that are brilliant value, and we feel that is the great strength of this particular issue. Don't forget, these wines have impressed at least one panel of highly skilled wine show judges before we put them under the microscope. Any wines that shine after that sort of intense scrutiny simply have to be good. **Because of space and time issues we have only printed the prices of the *Outstanding* and *Excellent Value* wines in this issue.**

Enjoy them!



Lester

RIESLING

Group 1

Outstanding

2011 West Cape Howe Great Southern Riesling A very fresh and limey riesling, with excellent intensity and a long, bone dry finish. (\$19.00) *Excellent Value*
12.0% Screwcap

2011 Cherubino Porongurup Riesling Very fragrant and limey, with a decidedly linear palate and steely acidity. Well worth cellaring. (\$35.00)
12.0% Screwcap

2011 Richard Meyman Wines Waseca Tasmania Riesling Very fragrant and faintly grassy. The palate is impressively linear, with beautiful balance. (Sold Out)
12.5% Screwcap

Highly Recommended

2011 Seppeltsfield Elm Walk Eden Valley Riesling This is a very appealing young riesling. It's fragrantly limey, and has a delightfully "juicy" palate together with a long dry finish.
Screwcap

2011 Gallagher Wines Riesling This Canberra District wine is intense and lively, with good persistence and lingering acidity.
11.3% Screwcap

Group 2

Outstanding

2010 Lake George Winery Riesling An impressively fragrant and high-toned riesling which is quite austere, showing high acidity on a dry finish. (\$22.50)
11.5% Screwcap

2010 Pooley Margaret Pooley Tribute Riesling The nose is very attractive, showing lime blossom aromatics, and the palate is intense, with clean, uplifting cool area acidity. (\$23.00)
12.5% Screwcap

Highly Recommended

2010 Pressing Matters R9 Riesling Fresh and intense, but musky and gewürz-like Has very good intensity and is well balanced.
Screwcap

Agreeable

2010 Tim McNeil Wines Watervale Riesling Comparatively developed, has good acidity and offers limey varietal fruit.
12.5% Screwcap

Group 3

Outstanding

2009 The Blok Estate Coonawarra Riesling This wine combines limey riesling purity with just a touch of bottle age complexity. It's intense, balanced and drinking beautifully. (\$30.00)
11.5% Screwcap

2009 Pressing Matters R9 Riesling This is a very fragrant, restrained, pure aromatic style There's just a hint of residual sugar to balance the high acidity, and the flavour is very persistent. (\$N/A)
Screwcap

Highly Recommended

2008 Tertini Southern Highlands Riesling Shows attractive development while retaining limey fruit. A well made, long-flavoured riesling that is beginning to drink very well.
11.6% Screwcap

2009 Robert Stein Riesling Very fragrant and limey. A captivating young riesling.
11.0% Screwcap

Agreeable

2009 Eden Springs High Eden Riesling Has good varietal character, but shows a little too much development.
10.5% Screwcap

Group 4

Outstanding

2002 Peter Lehmann The Barossa Reserve Riesling Wonderfully varietal, pure and toasty. A great example of aged Australian riesling that is in the prime of its life. (\$N/A)
12.0% Screwcap

2005 Shaw and Smith Aged Release Adelaide Hills Riesling Intriguingly fragrant and grapefruity on the nose, and has considerable presence on the long, flavour-packed palate. (\$N/A)
13.0% Screwcap

2006 Pressing Matters R9 Riesling The nose is delightfully floral and vibrant, and the palate is long, lifted by racy acidity. (\$N/A)
13.5% Screwcap

2005 Peter Lehmann Wigan Eden Valley Riesling It shows some development, but this riesling is delicious, and at its peak. (\$30.00)
11.5% Screwcap

Agreeable

2006 Naked Run The First Clare Valley Riesling Quite honeyed. Just starting to lose its freshness. Beginning to dry out.
13.5% Screwcap

CHAMPIONSHIP FINAL

- 1st 2009 The Blok Estate Coonawarra Riesling (*Medallion Winner*)
- 2nd 2002 Peter Lehmann The Barossa Reserve Riesling
- 3rd West Cape Howe Great Southern Riesling
- 4th Lake George Winery Riesling

This was an extremely close vote. The Blok and the Peter Lehmann both polled nine votes, with one first place each. However, The Blok had three second place votes against the Lehmann's one. All four finalists are brilliant wines.

The "old world" Australian rieslings are under strong challenge from Western Australia, Tasmania, Southern Highlands and the Canberra District. Take note in particular of the great showing by Tasmania's Pressing Matters, made by Julian Alcorso.

VIOGNIER

Outstanding

2010 Baillieu Vineyard Mornington Peninsula Viognier (*Medallion winner*) This is a very fresh and gingery viognier which is texturally excellent. In fact, we believe that it's the best Australian Viognier we've yet tasted, and it's even better than it was a last year's Small Vigneron Awards. (\$20.00)
Excellent Value
13.5% Screwcap

Highly Recommended

2010 Hedberg Hill Claudia's Orange Region Viognier A very impressive nose of apricot and ginger leads to a slightly firm, but nonetheless completely satisfying palate.
13.5% Screwcap

2010 Yalumba Eden Valley Viognier The nose is very intense and strongly varietal, and the palate delivers masses of varietal flavour. Ready to drink.
13.5% Screwcap

Recommended

2010 Madeleines Nangkita Vineyard Viognier This wine lacks the varietal impact of the others, but still offers a good volume of stone fruit flavour. Ready now.
14.0% Screwcap

Viognier continues its fight for A-grade status, and this small group does its cause no harm. All four are worthy of your attention, but the top wine is something special.

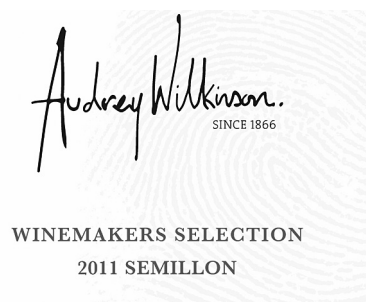
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We no longer have a fax. Subscriptions can be paid by bank transfer, cheque or over the phone by credit card.

SEMILLON

Group 1



Outstanding

2011 Audrey Wilkinson Winemakers Selection Semillon Very fresh and pure, with a hint of lime very linear, with just a hint of grass. (Not yet released)
11.0% Screwcap

2011 Audrey Wilkinson The Ridge Semillon Just a little forward, but it's strongly varietal. Delicious, classic palate. (Not yet released)
11.0% Screwcap

2011 Leogate Estate Creek Bed Hunter Valley Reserve Semillon Classic Hunter - fresh, intense and slightly soapy on the nose. The palate is powerful and long. (\$20.00)
11.0% Screwcap

Three magnificent young Hunter whites.

Group 2

Outstanding

2010 The Willows Vineyard Barossa Valley Semillon This is a very pure varietal expression, showing citrus characteristics. The palate is flavour-packed and perfectly poised. (\$16.00)
Excellent Value
12.0% Screwcap

2009 Pepper Tree Alluvius Hunter Valley Semillon Classic soapy lemon grass semillon. The palate is intense and racy, with lingering acidity. (\$N/A)
10.5% Screwcap

2009 Audrey Wilkinson The Ridge Reserve Semillon A very intense, lemony semillon that is richly flavoured and beginning to drink well. (\$35.00)
11.5% Screwcap

2010 Mistletoe Hunter Valley Reserve Semillon Shows just a hint of bottle age on the nose, but is fresh, pure and strongly varietal on a lively palate. (\$24.00)
11.3% Screwcap

Recommended

2009 Coolangatta Estate Wollstonecraft Semillon Shows a little grassy/straw development. Has plenty of flavour and is ready to drink.

Group 3

Outstanding

2006 Tyrrell's Vat 1 Hunter Semillon This is a very fresh, strongly varietal semillon that is only just beginning to show bottle age. The palate is vibrant and varietal, with refreshing acidity. (\$54.00)
10.7% Screwcap

2006 The Willows Vineyard Barossa Valley Semillon A very fresh semillon with the first signs of toasty maturity. The palate is intense, finishing with mouth-watering acidity. (\$N/A)
12.5% Screwcap

Highly Recommended

2005 Tyrrell's HVD Hunter Semillon Pure varietal fruit which is very fresh, with just a hint of bottle age. This wine is only just entering its drinking window.
11.5% Screwcap

2007 Thomas Wines Cellar Reserve Braemore Semillon Quite intense, with a faintly toasty note in the background. There's a lot of flavour on the acid-fresh palate.
10.5% Screwcap

2006 Peter Lehmann Margaret Barossa Semillon The nose is very rich and fully developed, and the palate is crammed with flavour. Satisfying and ready.
11.5% Screwcap

2007 Allandale Hunter Valley Semillon A full flavoured, mature semillon with a hint of age-derived vanilla. Good rich drinking.
11.0% Screwcap

2004 Tyrrell's Vat 1 Hunter Semillon
Has good fruit intensity and freshness, but has come forward quite a bit in the past twelve months. Nearly ready.
10.0% Screwcap

CHAMPIONSHIP FINAL

1st 2006 Tyrrell's Vat 1 Hunter Semillon (Medallion Winner)
2nd 2010 The Willows Vineyard Barossa Valley Semillon
3rd 2011 Audrey Wilkinson The Ridge Semillon

Four first place votes out of five made the Tyrrell's a comfortable victor. It's a classic Hunter with a long and illustrious life ahead of it.

Some Excellent Chardonnays

David Bicknell continues to produce brilliant chardonnays at Oakridge. His latest releases are four 2011 single vineyard wines – Barkala Ridge Vineyard, Denton Vineyard, Guerin Vineyard and Lusatia Park Vineyard. They're perfect for "terroir" enthusiasts who enjoy comparative tastings, because all the wines are made the same way, and each has its own distinctive character. We leaned to the Barkala Ridge and Guerin wines, rating them both *Outstanding*. We accorded the Denton and Lusatia Park *Highly Recommended*. However, there's little between them all in quality terms, and all show the varietal purity, texture, complexity and acidity which are Bicknell trademarks. We suggest you try them all. They're well worth the \$38.00 each.

The 2010 Moorilla Muse Chardonnay shows nutty complexity, and fresh varietal fruit typical of its Tasmanian origins. The palate is impressive, with a strong line of acidity supporting the intense fruit and low-key oak. (\$45.00) *Highly Recommended*

Vanya Cullen ranks with the best chardonnay makers in Australia, and the 2010 Cullen Kevin John Chardonnay is a gem. The nose shows marvellous grapefruit, white peach and nougat aromas and the palate is intense, yet

SAUVIGNON BLANC

Highly Recommended



2011 Watershed Margaret River Sauvignon Blanc (Medallion Winner) Very attractive gooseberry/grass characteristics. The palate texture is excellent and the flavour-carry is impressive, as is the acid balance.
13.0% Screwcap

2011 Native Point Tasmania Sauvignon Blanc Shows a little maturity but is strongly grassy and varietal. Richly flavoured and ready.
12.5% Screwcap

Recommended

2010 Silkwood Pemberton Sauvignon Blanc Strong methoxypyrazine (vegetal) nose, but has decent palate weight.
12.8% Screwcap

A disappointing line-up numerically, reflecting a difficult vintage in some key regions. However, the winner can wear its medallion proudly.

Continued Page 11

CHARDONNAY

Group 1

Highly Recommended

2010 Higher Plane Margaret River Chardonnay This wine combines intensity with restraint, and the nose is complex, showing peach and nougat. There's some butteriness on the rich palate.

13.0% Screwcap

2010 Coldstream Hills Reserve Chardonnay Fresh and powerful with complex nougat overtones. The palate is creamy and taut, with a long finish.

13.5% Screwcap

2010 Clairault Margaret River Estate Chardonnay This is a full-on chardonnay with plenty of ripe peach fruit and oak. The palate is intense and fresh. Short term.

13.0% Screwcap

Recommended

2010 Greg Norman Eden Valley Chardonnay A comparatively simple chardonnay, but the palate is fresh and satisfying.

12.5% Cork

2010 Pooles Rock Wines Hunter Valley Chardonnay An attractively rich nose showing peach, toasted nuts and new oak. The oak is a little raw, but there's a mountain of flavour.

13.0% Screwcap

2010 Barwang Estate 842 Tumbarumba Chardonnay This is a full-on chardonnay with plenty of ripe peach fruit and oak. The palate is intense, creamy and fresh. Drink now.

Screwcap

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Group 2

Outstanding



2010 Yabby Lake Mornington Peninsula Single Vineyard Chardonnay This wine has a knockout nose showing white peach, subtle funk and toasty oak. The palate is vibrant and taut, the fruit carrying the oak well (\$40.00).

13.0% Screwcap

2010 Vasse Felix Heytesbury Margaret River Chardonnay A complex grapefruity style with funk and lovely oak. The palate offers intensity, freshness and texture. (\$60.00)

13.0% Screwcap

2010 Seville Estate Yarra Valley Chardonnay This wine is the essence of restraint, with fruit and oak in harmony on the nose. The oak comes through more on the palate, firming up, but not overwhelming, the finish. (\$20.00) *Excellent Value*

13.0% Screwcap

Recommended

2010 Yangoora Estate Adelaide Hills Chardonnay This is a big, rich wine with pineapple-like overtones. It's drinking very well now.

13.5% Screwcap

2010 Punters Corner Coonawarra Chardonnay A full-on peach, butter, nuts style that is powerful and oaky.
13.5% Screwcap

2010 Shaw and Smith M3 Adelaide Hills Chardonnay Surprisingly forward and full flavoured, tending to tropical fruit. Enjoyable now.
13.0% Screwcap

Group 3

Outstanding



2009 Philip Shaw No.11 Orange Chardonnay The nose is very attractive, with subtle oak and lees influence. The palate is reserved, long tight and complex, showing more oak than the nose. This wine will be even better after another year or two. (\$N/A)
13.0% Screwcap

Highly Recommended

2009 Barwang Estate 842 Tumbarumba Chardonnay The nose is fresh, with just-right struck match funky complexity. The palate is vibrant, long and delightfully creamy.
Screwcap

2009 Bay of Fires Tasmania Chardonnay An impressively intense chardonnay with attractive nutty complexity. The palate is creamy and packed with flavour.
13.0% Screwcap

Recommended

2009 Bunnamagoo Estate Chardonnay Very fresh, but has a green melon rind character on the nose. The palate is reserved, but delivers good texture and persistence of flavour.
14.0% Screwcap

2009 Toolangi Denton Yarra Valley Chardonnay This chardonnay is rich, but a little too oaky. The palate is a touch too dry on the finish.
13.5% Screwcap

2009 Curly Flat Macedon Ranges Chardonnay A tight, complex, but very reserved chardonnay that has a lot to offer but didn't put its hand up in this line-up.
13.0% Screwcap

Group 4

Outstanding

2009 Hutton Triptych Margaret River Chardonnay Very fresh, showing reserved melony characteristics and subtle oak on the nose. The palate is restrained, but delivers good texture and impressive persistence of flavour. (\$40.00)
13.6% Screwcap

2009 Pike & Joyce Adelaide Hills Chardonnay The nose is fresh, with just-right struck match funky complexity. The palate is vibrant, long and delightfully creamy. (\$N/A)
13.5 Screwcap

2009 Mistletoe Hunter Valley Reserve Chardonnay An impressively intense chardonnay with attractive nutty complexity. The palate is creamy and packed with flavour. (\$40.00)
13.5% Screwcap

Highly Recommended

2009 Stella Bella Margaret River Chardonnay The oak is a tad obvious, but the flavour and texture are impressive. Beginning to drink well.
13.0% Screwcap

2009 Shaw and Smith M3 Adelaide Hills Chardonnay Big, rich and creamy, with good underlying acidity. There's plenty to his wine.
13.5% Screwcap

Recommended

2009 Lucas Estate Granite Belt Chardonnay This chardonnay is a little simple and oaky. However there's good varietal character to reward the drinker.
13.5% Screwcap

Group 5**Highly Recommended**

2008 Montgomery's Hill Albany Chardonnay Quite exotic, showing guava and citrus characteristics. The intensity, balance and texture are commendable.

13.0% Screwcap

2008 Evans & Tate Redbrook Margaret River Chardonnay An intense, restrained chardonnay with hints of nougat and nutmeg. The palate is fresh, balanced and nicely textured.

14.0% Screwcap

2006 Lenton Brae Margaret River Chardonnay The very full nose tends to citrus, and the palate is rich and ready, with oak that is slightly too obvious.

13.6% Screwcap

Recommended

2008 Brown Brothers Patricia Chardonnay Rich and slightly buttery. Big-flavoured, but lacks finesse.

Screwcap

2008 Tyrrell's Vat 47 Hunter Chardonnay A mature but fresh wine that is still evolving. Has a good future, but is not showing at its best right now.

12.5% Screwcap

CHAMPIONSHIP FINAL

1st 2009 Philip Shaw No.11 Orange Chardonnay (*Medallion Winner*)

2nd 2010 Yabby Lake Mornington Peninsula Single Vineyard Chardonnay

3rd 2009 Hutton Triptych Margaret River Chardonnay

4th 2009 Pike & Joyce Adelaide Hills Chardonnay

5th 2010 Higher Plane Margaret River Chardonnay

6th 2008 Montgomery's Hill Albany Chardonnay

Chardonnay is probably the strongest segment of Australian wine right now. The top four wines are sublime, and the other pair aren't far behind.

PINOT GRIS**Outstanding**

2011 Bay of Fires Tasmania Pinot Gris (*Medallion winner*) This is a vibrant young wine showing nashi pear aromas. A hint of sweetness matches the pleasant firmness and contributes to texture very well. The intense varietal flavour persists on a perfectly balanced palate. (\$31.50)

13.5% Screwcap

Highly Recommended

2010 Pike & Joyce Adelaide Hills Pinot Gris This is a full-on pinot gris which delivers a lot of flavour supported by excellent structure and texture. Rich, rewarding drinking now. (\$20.00) *Excellent Value*

13.5% Screwcap

2011 Mount Majura Vineyard Pinot Gris The complexity of this wine immediately grabs your attention. There seems to have been work done with lees in tank, and perhaps even solids, to deliver a nuttiness that complements the rich fruit very well. Another impressive, textural wine.

12.0% Screwcap

2010 Barwang Estate Tumbarumba Pinot Gris A little forward in character, but offers plenty poached pear and malt aromas. A beautifully textured wine with plenty of flavour. Enjoy it now. Screwcap

2011 Bromley Joy Geelong Pinot Gris A strongly varietal wine with an appealing pear-like aroma. The palate is dry, long and nicely textured.

13.5% Screwcap

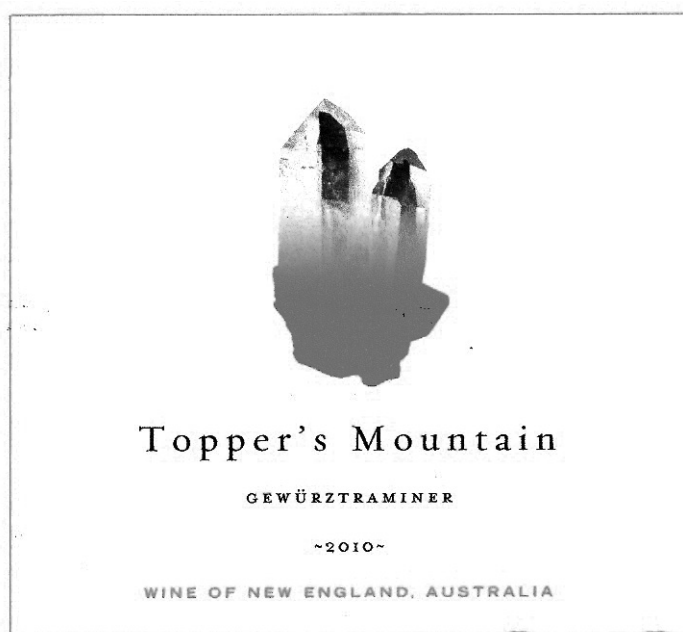
Recommended

2010 Tertini Southern Highlands Pinot Grigio Fairly forward, showing tinned pineapple and tropical fruit characteristics. A drink now wine.

12.8 Screwcap

We're happy to report that pinot gris is on the up, after struggling for several years. Let's hope the rise continues.

OTHER DRY WHITE



Highly Recommended

2010 Topper's Mountain Gewürztraminer (Medallion winner) This is a very perfumed, clean varietal expression showing lychee and rose petal characteristics. The dry palate is flavour-packed and well balanced.
12.6% Screwcap

2011 Coriole McLaren Vale Fiano The fresh pear-like aromas are very appealing, and there's good weight of fruit to match the pleasant grip on the well-textured palate.
13.0% Screwcap

2010 Michael Hall Barossa Valley Roussanne A little advanced, but offers some poached pear and malt aromas. A firm wine with plenty of flavour.
12.9% Screwcap

Recommended

2011 Brygon Reserve Bin 828 Semillon Sauvignon Blanc Shows hints of gooseberry, but is a bit too green and grassy. Has enough flavour for current drinking.
Screwcap

2011 Scott Adelaide Hills Fiano There's good mid palate weight of apple/pear and faintly tropical fruit, but this wine is slightly too firm on the finish.
13.5% Screwcap

2010 Xanadu Next of Kin Margaret River Sauvignon Blanc Semillon Fairly forward, showing tinned pineapple characteristics, and beginning to lose the attributes of both varieties, but is still drinking quite well.
12.0% Screwcap

2003 Tahbilk 1927 Vines Marsanne There's a hint of development, but the honeysuckle aroma shows through nicely. The palate is drying out a little. This wine is just beginning its decline.
12.5% Screwcap

"Emerging" varieties are making news in Australia, and the Coriole and Michael Hall wines demonstrate why. However, gewürztraminer, which "emerged" decades ago, stands firm this time. The most exciting aspect of this class is the triumph of a wine made from grapes grown near Armidale in the New England region of New South Wales – a truly "emerging" wine area.

BEST DRY WHITE

We sometimes wonder whether we should compare wines made from different varieties, but we think it's a worthwhile exercise. The judges are not told the variety of each wine, and must give careful consideration. Of course, it's seldom difficult to pick the variety, but it does discourage the practice of automatically creating an "A group" of riesling, semillon and chardonnay, and a "B group" of the rest.

1st 2009 Philip Shaw No.11 Orange Chardonnay **27 points, three 1st places**

2nd 2006 Tyrrell's Vat 1 Hunter Semillon **23 points, one 1st place**

3rd 2010 Baillieu Vineyard Mornington Peninsula Viognier **19 points, no 1st places**

4th 2009 The Blok Estate Coonawarra Riesling **18 points, one 1st place**

5th 2011 Bay of Fires Tasmania Pinot Gris **8 points, no 1st places**

6th 2009 Topper's Mountain Gewürztraminer **8 points, no 1st places**

7th 2011 Watershed Margaret River Sauvignon Blanc **2 points, no 1st places**

Continued from Page 6

restrained, with a creamy texture and a finish that shows very clean acidity. Cellar for best results. It's a costly wine, but the quality is the equal of more expensive white burgundies. (\$105.00) *Outstanding*

On the subject of white burgundy, the "cheapie" from Comte Lafon is worth trying. The 2010 Mâcon-Villages is a very modern, fruit-driven style that is very fresh and clean, with good persistence of flavour. (\$40.00) *Highly Recommended*

Another chardonnay worth a look is the **2011 Bobar Yarra Valley**. It offers white nectarine varietal flavour enhanced by nougat, lees-derived characteristics. Very pleasant drinking. (\$27.00) *Recommended* 13.0% Screwcap

SWEET WHITE**Group 1****Outstanding****2010 Pressing Matters R139 Riesling**

This is a pure, Germanic and floral riesling, with squeaky-clean botrytis character and glorious balance. The palate is very long, with racy acidity and beerenauslese sweetness and intensity. A must-try wine. (Not yet released) Screwcap

2011 Riposte Reserve Noble Traminer

Here's another wine that raises the varietal bar. It's a brilliant example of gewürztraminer, showing the richness and unctuousness of the grape, and balancing the considerable sweetness with fresh acidity. (\$N/A) Screwcap

Highly Recommended**2009 Brown Brothers Patricia Noble Riesling**

Very deep colour. Spicy, advanced, and strongly botrytised on a very sweet palate with a balanced, slightly drying finish. Screwcap

Recommended**2010 Delatite Catherine Gewürztraminer**

This is an interesting, complex wine showing some sulphidic influence. It's a medium-sweet spätlese style with a fresh acid finish. 10.0% Screwcap

Group 2**Outstanding****2008 Lillypilly Noble Blend**

Very sweet, clean and intense, with stone fruit overtones and perfectly clean botrytis. Intense and lingering, with refreshing acidity. (\$22.50/375 ml) 11.0% Screwcap

2009 Yalumba FSW8B Wrattenbully Botrytis Viognier

A very intense citrus/apricot style, with impressive botrytis input. This is a wonderfully fresh wine of great length. (\$25.00/375 ml) 11.0% Screwcap

Highly Recommended

2002 Lillypilly Noble Blend Super intense and sweet, showing butterscotch, orange rind and stone fruit. At its peak. 12.5% Screwcap

Recommended

2010 Lerida Estate Lake George Botrytis Pinot Gris Very rich and sweet, but quite forward as well. It's an appealing wine right now. 11.7% Screwcap

CHAMPIONSHIP FINAL

1st 2010 Pressing Matters R139 Riesling
2nd 2008 Lillypilly Noble Blend

The taste-off was a great, closely-fought finale to a particularly enjoyable judging. The two finalists represent different ends of the style spectrum; the Pressing Matters wine is a pure, monovarietal style that leans to Germany for inspiration, while the Lillypilly (75% semillon, 15% muscat, 10% riesling) is richer and more mouthfilling. The decision was a difficult one to make, but the majority of judges decided to reward a wine that is an exciting ground-breaker.

Continued

2009 Deviation Road Adelaide Hills Brut Fresh, apple-like, and well made, but it lacks complexity. 12.0% Cork

The Brown Brothers wine is a worthy winner, and is a cutting-edge example of Australian sparkling wine. It's a pity that Accolade did not see fit to accept our invitation to enter Arras.

SPARKLING

Highly Recommended

2005 Brown Brothers Patricia Pinot Noir & Chardonnay Brut (*Medallion winner*) A very complex style, with plenty of brioche, nuts and butter. The palate is intense, the mousse is fine and racy acidity lifts the finish. 13.0% Cork



Deb Pearce under observation. We were judging at a racecourse after all.

2005 Hugh Hamilton The Strumpet Chardonnay Pinot Noir Fresh, with a complex breadiness. The palate is long and fresh, with a very fine mousse. 13.0% Cork

Recommended

NV Centennial Limited Blanc de Blancs Very fresh, with a faintly dusty autolysis character. The dosage is slightly sweet. 12.0% Cork

Continued previous column

PINOT NOIR

Group 1

Highly Recommended

2010 Cannibal Creek Pinot Noir Very fragrant, fresh and intense, reflecting cool-grown fruit. The palate is silky, long and fine. This is a very classy pinot noir indeed.
13.4% Screwcap

2010 Ponda Estate Bellarine Peninsula Pinot Noir An intense dark cherry style with a touch of oak. The palate is opulent, and balanced by fine tannins. An intriguing herbal overtone adds to the very positive impression.
13.5% Screwcap

Recommended

2010 Tower Estate Panorama Vineyard Tasmania Pinot Noir The fresh cherry and dried herbs aromas are attractive, but on the palate is on the lean side.
14.0% Screwcap

2010 Home Hill Tasmania Pinot Noir This is a big, comparatively solid pinot that has some green edges. Power without the elegance of the top wine.
Screwcap

Group 2

Outstanding



2010 Hubert The Stag Yarra Valley Pinot Noir This is a delightfully drinkable pinot that is seductively silky and fragrant, with hints of spicy complexity. (\$22.00) *Excellent Value*
13.5% Screwcap

2010 Riposte The Sabre Adelaide Hills Pinot Noir Here we have a beautifully crafted pinot noir that is just beginning to show itself. The perfumed red berry fruit matches the subtle oak, and the firm, fine tannins need some time to soften. (\$30.00) *Excellent Value*
14.0% Screwcap

2010 Silkwood Pemberton Pinot Noir The vibrancy of this young wine is captivating, and the fineness of the tannins and length of flavour are impressive. There's also a herbal/undergrowth hint that adds complexity to the nose. (\$20.00) *Excellent Value*
14.2% Screwcap

2010 Coldstream Hills Reserve Pinot Noir This is a comparatively "showy" wine, and that cost it in the eyes of some judges. The classy oak shows out, but the flavour is impressively long, and the fine tannins reflect artful handling. Cellar. (\$75.00)
14.0% Screwcap

Recommended

2010 Sidewood Adelaide Hills Pinot Noir A substantial pinot. There's too much furry tannin, and that deprives the wine of elegance.
14.5% Screwcap

Group 3

Outstanding

2009 Riposte The Sabre Adelaide Hills Pinot Noir Definitely a pinot noir that stands up to be counted. The fine tannins and well handled oak provide just-right structure for the intense berry fruit. This is a classy pinot with the classic "peacock tail" finish. It deserves cellaring. (\$26.00) *Excellent Value*
14.0% Screwcap

Highly Recommended

2009 Freycinet Vineyard Tasmania Pinot Noir This wine continues an impressive run of pinots from winemaker Claudio Radenti. The trademark dark cherry fruit is there as are the beautifully integrated tannins. Give it at least two years – if you can.
13.5% Screwcap

2009 Yabby Lake Mornington Peninsula Single Vineyard Pinot Noir The richness of the dark cherry fruit can't fail to impress, but it's the structure and balance of this wine that lifts it into elite class. Cellar 3-5 years.
13.5% Screwcap

Recommended

2009 Tertini Southern Highlands Pinot Noir This is an impressive pinot noir in terms of freshness, varietal character and elegance. However, the fruit intensity struggles to carry the faintly green tannins. Although this wine didn't quite make it in this company, there's no doubt that it is a standard-bearer for the Southern Highlands of NSW, and it is evident that the future is bright.
13.5% Screwcap

2009 Pooley Butchers Hill Coal River Valley Tasmania Pinot Noir The very appealing dark cherry aromas presage a supple palate. Very drinkable indeed.
13.8% Screwcap

2009 Pooles Rock Tasmania Pinot Noir A fragrant pinot which is on the firm side. The palate is a little under-fruited.
13.3% Screwcap

Group 4

Highly Recommended

2008 Barringwood Park Mill Block Tasmania Pinot Noir This wine offers lovely fresh, ripe varietal fruit with subtle undergrowth complexity. The palate is silky and fine.
13.8% Screwcap

2008 Curly Flat Macedon Ranges Pinot Noir The nose is strongly varietal, showing faint leathery hints. The palate is fairly firm, but has the fruit intensity to continue evolving.
12.6% Screwcap

Recommended

2008 Home Hill Tasmania Pinot Noir This is a big pinot which is packed with rich red berry flavour, but lacks subtlety.
Screwcap

CHAMPIONSHIP FINAL

1st 2010 Hubert The Stag Yarra Valley Pinot Noir

2nd 2009 Riposte The Sabre Adelaide Hills Pinot Noir

3rd 2010 Cannibal Creek Pinot Noir

4th 2008 Barringwood Park Mill Block Tasmania Pinot Noir

The St Hubert narrowly edged out the Riposte, with the other two wines close behind. The result prompted several discussions. First, we're reliably informed that the Coldstream Hills crew were surprised (to say the least) at the judges' opinions last October when the St Huberts topped the Yarra Valley Wine Show and scored Gold in our Yarra Valley pinot noir tasting on the same day. They'll be even more amazed after this! Apparently the wine was blended at Coldstream Hills after the CH Reserve and "standard" wine were given first preference. It simply goes to show the quality of the 2010 Yarra vintage, and the fact that there are many ways of looking at pinot noir stylistically.

Mention pinot noir, and most people think Victoria, Tasmania or New Zealand. They forget that there are several outstanding cool sites in the Adelaide Hills, and that people like Tim Knappstein of Riposte have considerable experience with pinot in the Hills. Riposte, in our view, has established itself as one of Australia's leading pinot noir brands.

Finally, keep your eyes on Gippsland. Exciting things are beginning to happen there with pinot noir.

2010 Cullen Diana Madeline

I commented on this wine on twitter, and I think in this case brevity works better than a long-winded review. Here's the tweet.

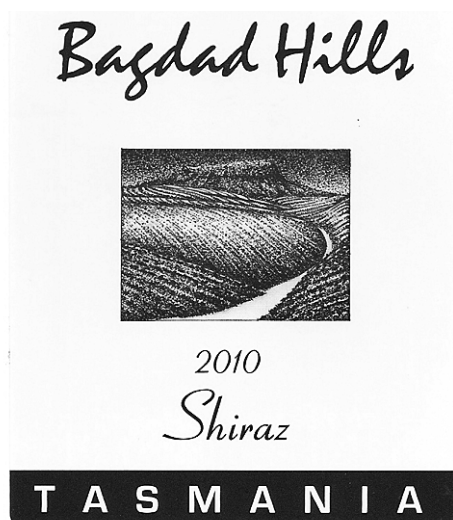
Blown away by the 2010 Cullen Diana Madeline. Why waste your money on obscenely priced cru classé Bordeaux when you can have this gem. \$115.00

Enough said. Follow me on Twitter for the latest tastings. @LesterJez

SHIRAZ

Group 1 (2010)

Outstanding



2010 Bagdad Hills Tasmania Shiraz

A seductive medium-bodied fragrant shiraz showing cherry, blackberry and cassis. The palate is supple and satisfying, the fine tannins being a major feature. Tasmanian shiraz hasn't even made a blip on the Australian wine radar until the Mon Père surprised just about everybody by taking out the 2011 Jimmy Watson Trophy. We don't know how often the weather will allow beautiful wines like this to be made, but we keep our fingers crossed. (\$40.00)
13.2%

Highly Recommended

2010 Xanadu Next of Kin Margaret River Shiraz This is a lively blackberry style with complementary oak. The palate is tight, long and vibrant, with very fine firm tannins.
14.5% Screwcap

2010 Yarrowood Tall Tales Yarra Valley Shiraz The captivating blackberry perfume and spice of this wine are attention-grabbers, and the opulent palate really delivers.
14.5% Screwcap

2010 Mon Père Shiraz This is a very attractive wine which offers plenty of rich dark cherry aroma and flavour. The palate is beautifully balanced and long.
13.7% Screwcap

2010 Printhe MCC Orange Shiraz This shiraz is gorgeously "Rhône" and spicy on the nose, and the complex, medium-bodied, savoury palate has considerable appeal.
14.0% Screwcap

2010 Payne's Rise Redlands Yarra Valley Shiraz There appears to be more white pepper character than it did when we last tasted it. Nevertheless, the long, finely structured palate delivers a lot of drinking pleasure.
14.0% Screwcap

This was a controversial group. The Xanadu scored no first place votes, yet tied the Bagdad Hills that was strongly supported. The majority agreed that the Bagdad Hills was the superior wine, but the fair approach was to put both wines through to the 2010 final where they would meet again.

Group 2 (2010)

Highly Recommended

2010 Sandalford Margaret River Shiraz Powerful and rich, but has a beguiling spicy element. This is great example of full-bodied shiraz that is both fresh and varietal.
14.0% Screwcap

2010 Knotting Hill Estate Vineyard Margaret River Shiraz Big, ripe and fresh, with faint menthol/eucalyptus overtones. The palate is firm, but very well balanced, and the structure and length suggest cellaring will be successful.
13.0% Screwcap

2010 Eden Road The Long Road Shiraz This is a rich but vibrant blackberry style of shiraz that is very satisfying. The fine tannins and oak match the fruit very well.
13.4% Screwcap

2010 Pepper Tree Limited Release Tallavera Hunter Valley Shiraz A ripe, plummy, dark berry shiraz which is a big, rich, juicy mouthful.
14.5% Screwcap

2010 Ernest Hill Shareholders Shiraz This wine packs a lot of plum/dark berry flavour that appeals right now, but a couple of years will see the tannins soften slightly and make the wine even more drinkable.
13.2% Screwcap

Recommended

2010 First Creek Winemaker's Reserve Hunter Valley Shiraz A ripe blackberry style that offers intense flavour and a "sweet" oak element. Traditional but good.
13.5% Screwcap

2010 Pfeiffer Shiraz The strongly varietal fruit is challenged by what appears to be a barrel ferment component – mocha/bacon bone character. An eye-catcher that flaunts the oak a little too much.
14.5% Screwcap

Group 3 (2010)

Highly Recommended

2010 Rosemount Estate Diamond Label Shiraz The success of Rosemount Diamond Label is often attributed to skilful sweetening. However no judge mentioned the S word in this case. What impressed us all was the varietal character, richness and balance. Very well made, and great value for money.
13.5% Screwcap

2010 Kirrihill Regional Range Clare Valley Shiraz Another wine of incredible value. It's balanced, rounded and crammed full of blackberry and blackcurrant fruit. Opulence itself.
14.5% Screwcap

2010 Head The Blonde Stonewell Barossa Valley Shiraz Viognier Very ripe and plummy but fresh, rich and regional. For all that, it's comparatively light on its feet.
14.0% Screwcap

Recommended

2010 Wirra Wirra Woodhenge McLaren Vale Shiraz Very ripe, verging on too big. However, there's no doubting its mouthfilling qualities and supporting tannins.
14.5% Screwcap

2010 Madeleines Nangkita Vineyard Shiraz This is a substantial wine with intense blackberry with dried herbs notes, together with faint roast almond oak.
13.9% Screwcap

2010 Hentley Farm Caretaker Barossa Valley Shiraz Here's a classic, big Barossa that certainly delivers in terms of rich blackberry and plum fruit. However, the tannins are a little unyielding and need time to soften.
14.3% Screwcap

Best 2010 Shiraz

2010 Bagdad Hills Tasmania Shiraz
2010 Sandalford Margaret River Shiraz
2010 Rosemount Estate Diamond Label Shiraz
2010 Xanadu Next of Kin Margaret River Shiraz

The Bagdad Hills goes through to the shiraz final.

Group 4 (2009)

Outstanding

2009 Shaw and Smith Adelaide Hills Shiraz This wine continues to impress, and certainly places Shaw and Smith in the upper echelon of Australian shiraz. It shows very powerful blackberry and red berry characteristics with Rhône overtones, and the palate is seamless, fine and silky. (\$35.00) *Excellent Value*
14.5% Screwcap

Highly Recommended

2009 Honey Moon Vineyard Adelaide Hills Shiraz This is a powerful dark cherry style which shows a faint spicy complexity. A fresh and very satisfying shiraz with excellent length of flavour.
14.5% Screwcap

2009 Nova Vita Adelaide Hills Firebird Shiraz Fragrant and spicy with real depth of blackberry flavour and good persistence with a fresh-acid finish.
14.0% Screwcap

Recommended

**2009 Pepper Tree The Gravels
Wrattonbully Shiraz Viognier** Rich
and ripe but very fresh and appealing.
Just a little simple at this stage.
14.5% Screwcap

**2009 Nepenthe Gate Block Adelaide
Hills Shiraz** Has good varietal fruit
with leathery nuances and a real
savoury feel on a persistent finish.
14.0% Screwcap

Group 5 (2009)

Outstanding

**2009 Lerida Estate Lake George
Shiraz Viognier** This wine shows all
the qualities of a great vintage in the
Canberra district. The knockout dark
cherry/blackberry characteristics are
supported by classy oak and a hint of
spiciness. The palate is silky, opulent
and fine.
14.9% Screwcap

**2009 Voyager Estate Margaret River
Shiraz** The vibrant red fruits aromas
merge with high quality oak, and the
oak supports the great mid palate drive
very well. The tannins are fine and firm.
Screwcap

**2009 Harcourt Valley Barbara's
Bendigo Shiraz** This is a captivating
dark cherry style with a faint
undergrowth complexity. It's a very
classy medium-bodied, textural red.
13.8% Screwcap

2009 Barwang Hilltops Shiraz A very
powerful shiraz with slightly closed dark
berry aromas. The palate is intense,
long and fresh. Cellar.
14.0% Screwcap

2009 Ravensworth Shiraz Viognier
This is a very attractive spicy, perfumed
wine of excellent length and balance.
Keep for at least another couple of years
for best results.
14.0% Screwcap

Group 6 (2009)

Highly Recommended

**2009 Wolf Blass Gold Label Barossa
Shiraz** A great example of rich, ripe
blackberry/licorice full bodied style. It's
very fresh and well balanced, reflecting
picking at the optimal time and precise
winemaking.
14.5% Screwcap

2009 Seppelt Chalambar Shiraz The
nose is very appealing - ripe yet fragrant
- with a slight hint of bacon bones oak.
The palate is taut and firm, with good
length and balance.
13.5% Screwcap

2009 Tyrrell's Vat 9 Hunter Shiraz
A very fresh blackberry style with hints
of tilled earth. The palate is medium-
bodied and very long on the finish.
Cellar.
13.0% Screwcap

**2009 Tyrrell's Stevens Hunter
Shiraz** This is a vibrant dark cherry
shiraz, which is fragrant, showing hints
of dried herbs. It's fresh and satisfying
but needs time.
13.0% Screwcap

Recommended

**2009 Jim Barry Wines The Armagh
Shiraz** A big ripe blackberry style with
hints of blackcurrant. The palate is
concentrated, and shows some new oak.
Obvious but good.
14.5% Cork

**2009 Andrew Thomas Sweetwater
Hunter Valley Shiraz** The fresh dark
berry varietal character has appeal,
although the oak is obvious at this stage.
13.5% Screwcap

Best 2009 Shiraz

1st 2009 Shaw and Smith Adelaide Hills
Shiraz
2nd 2009 Lerida Estate Lake George
Shiraz Viognier
3rd 2009 Wolf Blass Gold Label Barossa
Shiraz

**The Shaw and Smith goes through
to the shiraz final.**

Group 7 (Older than 2009)**Outstanding**

2008 Winburndale Solitary Shiraz Hey! This red is from Bathurst. It can't be this good. We guess that's what some reviewers who don't taste blind would say. Well, let us tell you that this is a wine that will shine the spotlight on a sub-region that few know about. It's a powerful, but not over-ripe, shiraz that has strong blackberry/spice varietal character and very well integrated oak. It brings together cool and warm area varietal expressions, yet has its feet placed firmly in the former. We strongly suggest you try Winburndale Shiraz. (\$30.00) *Excellent Value*
13.5% Screwcap

2008 Honey Moon Vineyard Adelaide Hills Shiraz It probably won't surprise you when we say that the Adelaide Hills region is likely to become South Australia's best source of shiraz. This wine, with its impressive dark berry flavour, classy oak and vibrancy is a great example why. (\$47.50)
14.5% Screwcap

Highly Recommended

2008 Chalkers Crossing Hilltops Shiraz This is an opulent, complex shiraz showing Rhône-like deli meats character. It's very seductive and savoury, delivering varietal flavour that lingers beautifully on the finish.
15.0% Screwcap

Agreeable

2008 Redman Coonawarra Shiraz There's attractive red berry shiraz character here, but also a slight hint of cork taint. This was only one bottle, and obviously others will be much better. Pity.
14.8% Cork

An unbreakable tie for first place sent both the Winburndale and the Honey Moon Vineyard through to the Older Shiraz taste-off.

Group 8 (Older than 2009)**Outstanding**

2005 Saltram No.1 Barossa Shiraz Here's a brilliant example of Barossa shiraz. It's wall to wall blackberry fruit, and at seven years it's as fresh as the proverbial daisy. Oak plays a part, but it's very well integrated. (\$70.00)
14.5% Screwcap

Highly Recommended

2008 Jeanneret Rank and File Clare Valley Shiraz This shiraz is very much at the big end of town, but it's very fresh and all the components come together beautifully. Give it another couple of years.
16.0% Screwcap

2008 Penfolds RWT Barossa Shiraz As we've pointed out often before, this is the Penfolds red we hold in highest regard. It's classic Barossa – rich yet fresh, and the oak is a very good match for the intense fruit.
14.5% Screwcap

2008 Tassell Park Wines Margaret River Private Bin Shiraz We were impressed by the intensity and freshness of this wine, and it could have gone to the top if the oak was more subtle.
14.5% Screwcap

Best Older Shiraz

1st 2005 Saltram No.1 Barossa Shiraz
2nd 2008 Winburndale Solitary Shiraz
3rd 2008 Honey Moon Vineyard Adelaide Hills Shiraz

The Saltram and Winburndale tie. Both go through to the shiraz final.

CHAMPIONSHIP FINAL

1st 2010 Bagdad Hills Tasmania Shiraz
2nd 2008 Winburndale Solitary Shiraz
3rd 2009 Shaw and Smith Adelaide Hills Shiraz
4th 2005 Saltram No.1 Barossa Shiraz

Who would have thought it? A shiraz from Tasmania edges out one from Bathurst (NSW) in the strongest and most hotly contested category.

CABERNET SAUVIGNON

Group 1

Outstanding

2010 McWilliams Mt Pleasant Jack Cabernet Sauvignon This is a powerful, strongly varietal cabernet of considerable finesse. There is blackcurrant aplenty, and the tannin and oak management are excellent. But why use the Mt Pleasant name for a Coonawarra? (\$15.00) *Excellent Value* Screwcap

2010 Juniper Estate Margaret River Cabernet Sauvignon Although this is an intense and very varietal wine, it's almost guilty of being too young. This wine ticks all the elements in terms of varietal character, richness of fruit and quality of oak. However the judges have looked to its potential in rating it this highly. Cellar 5-7 years at least. (Not yet released) 14.5% Screwcap

2010 Penley Estate Phoenix Coonawarra Cabernet Sauvignon Rich and ripe, but has varietal character and excellent depth of flavour. The supple tannins make it approachable and quite delicious. A delightful regional style. (\$20.00) *Excellent Value* 14.5% Screwcap

Highly Recommended

2010 Elmswood Yarra Valley Reserve Cabernet Sauvignon This wine has excellent varietal character, and commendable intensity of fruit. However, the oak is a little too obvious. 13.0% Screwcap

Group 2

Outstanding

2010 Nannup Ridge Cabernet Sauvignon Here's a cabernet with classic cassis and cedar characteristics and a long palate with very fine tannins. Text book stuff. Cellar. (\$25.00) *Excellent Value* 14.1% Screwcap

Highly Recommended

2010 Kirrihill Tullymore Vineyard Clare Valley Cabernet Sauvignon Rich and ripe, still showing very primary characteristics, but unquestionably varietal. Definitely needs time to soften. 14.5% Screwcap

2010 Pfeiffer Cabernet Sauvignon Although this wine is full-on and ripe, it still has varietal character, excellent depth of flavour, and balanced tannins. 14.5% Screwcap

Agreeable

2010 Battle of Bosworth McLaren Vale Cabernet Sauvignon A bit jammy, and lacking varietal character. It's slightly unbalanced and shows a hint of alcohol-derived sweetness. 15.0% Screwcap

Group 3

Outstanding

2009 Brown Brothers Patricia Cabernet Sauvignon A rich, intense and spicy cabernet. It's big, but has cassis varietal character on a powerful, firm palate. This is a very good example of the substantial cabernet in which toasty oak plays a role. (\$N/A) Screwcap

2009 Evans & Tate Redbrook Margaret River Cabernet Sauvignon This is everything a Margaret River cabernet should be – intense and varietal, yet elegantly firm. The oak handling is impeccable. (\$35.00) Screwcap

Highly Recommended

2009 Xanadu Margaret River Reserve Cabernet Sauvignon Classic Margaret River again - very classy cabernet varietal nose, and a palate which is intense and long with very fine, firm tannins. Cellar five years at least. 14.5% Screwcap

2009 Juniper Estate Margaret River Cabernet Sauvignon This is a very intense, slightly closed cabernet, showing cassis and some toasty oak. The finish is impressively long. 14.5% Screwcap

2009 Brand's Laira The Patron Coonawarra Cabernet Sauvignon Rich, fresh, ripe and varietal, with lovely oak. It's at the big end, but is a very good varietal and regional expression of cabernet sauvignon.
Screwcap

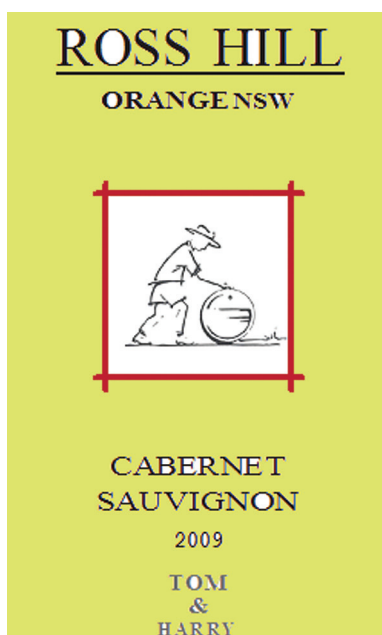
2009 Higher Plane Margaret River Cabernet Sauvignon Shows ripe characteristics, but still has good varietal aromatics, power, structure and length.
14.5% Screwcap

Recommended

2009 Clairault A79 Margaret River Cabernet Sauvignon The colour lacks depth, but the nose has varietal character. Although firm, the palate shows some cassis and leaf. We suspect this wine will develop fairly quickly. Drink over the next couple of years.
14.5% Screwcap

Group 4

Outstanding



2009 Ross Hill Tom & Harry Orange Cabernet Sauvignon This is a cabernet of substance in which balance has been achieved between the potent blackcurrant fruit, firm powdery tannins and high quality oak. It needs time, probably 3-5 years, to start showing its form, but that's the nature of cabernet. (\$22.00) *Excellent Value*
14.5% Screwcap

2009 Bowen Estate Coonawarra Cabernet Sauvignon Here's a wine that's Coonawarra through and through. The cassis and blackcurrant fruit carry a faint hint of regional mint, and the palate is long and fine. Oak contributes rather than dominates. A very impressive wine. (\$24.00) *Excellent Value*
14.5% Cork

Highly Recommended

2009 Hungerford Hill Hilltops Cabernet Sauvignon This is a tightly structured wine that isn't too big but has varietal character and length within a firm structure. It just needs time to blossom.
13.0% Screwcap

2009 Wynns Coonawarra Estate Cabernet Sauvignon A very impressive expression of Coonawarra cabernet that is intense, long and fine. Year after year, this is one of the most consistently high quality reds in Australia.
14.0% Screwcap

Recommended

2009 Huntington Estate Block 3 Cabernet Sauvignon No doubting the quality of this red, but it's a strapping young boy that needs to evolve. At this stage of its life it has a mountain of dark berry flavour, but doesn't express cabernet sauvignon as elegantly as the top wines in this group. It's more regional than varietal.
13.2% Screwcap

2009 Fernfield Wines Triple C Eden Valley Cabernet Sauvignon Big and ripe - a bit too much so. A very solid red. It should soften with time.
15.0% Screwcap

Group 5

Outstanding

2007 Xanadu Margaret River Cabernet Sauvignon This wine shows all the classic cabernet sauvignon characteristics such as blackcurrant, leaf and cedar. The palate is intense, long and fine, with beautifully balanced oak. (\$46.00)
14.0% Screwcap

2008 Winburndale Fontana Cabernet A very rich cassis style with a hint of leaf. The palate is powerful, firm and balanced, needing a bit of time. (\$30.00)
15.0% Screwcap

2008 Kerrigan + Berry Mt Barker Margaret River Cabernet Sauvignon There's impressively intense blackcurrant aroma and flavour here, together with a suggestion of leaf. The classic cabernet fine, firm tannins balance the very long palate. A cellaring special. (\$55.00)
14.0% Screwcap

2008 Mildara Coonawarra Cabernet Sauvignon Rich, ripe and carrying some regional mint. This is an impressively intense cabernet that certainly needs more time in bottle to show its best. (\$21.95) *Excellent Value*
15.0% Screwcap

Group 6

Outstanding

2008 Xanadu Margaret River Cabernet Sauvignon A true steel fist in velvet glove cabernet. This wine has both power and finesse. Most importantly it also has intense varietal character, and the balance and structure to age a long time. (\$30.00)
14.0% Screwcap

2008 Xanadu Next of Kin Margaret River Cabernet Sauvignon As the market price would suggest, this is the little brother of the above. It's not quite as intense, but it's just as well balanced and is beginning to drink beautifully. (\$18.95) *Excellent Value*
14.0% Screwcap

2008 Saracen Estates Reserve Margaret River Cabernet Sauvignon This wine has all the varietal character, intensity and structure you could expect from Margaret River cabernet. There's a lick of toasty oak as well. Cellar. (\$70.00)
13.1% Screwcap

2008 Minot Margaret River Cabernet Sauvignon Here's one for the fans of cabernet that shows the dusty, tobacco leaf aromas of the Médoc. The palate is long, firm and fine.
14.4% Screwcap

Not Rated

2008 Ringbolt Margaret River Cabernet Sauvignon Badly corked.
13.5% Cork

Cabernet Sauvignon is back. However we shook our heads in dismay when we saw that a progressive company like Yalumba is still using cork.

Interesting isn't it. Six reds under cork - two showing TCA. Are we surprised? No.

CHAMPIONSHIP FINAL

- 1st 2009 Ross Hill Tom & Harry Orange Cabernet Sauvignon
- 2nd 2010 Nannup Ridge Cabernet Sauvignon
- 3rd 2008 Xanadu Margaret River Cabernet Sauvignon
- 4th 2010 McWilliams Mt Pleasant Jack Cabernet Sauvignon
- 5th 2009 Brown Brothers Patricia Cabernet Sauvignon
- 6th 2008 Xanadu Next of Kin Margaret River Cabernet Sauvignon
- 7th 2007 Xanadu Margaret River Cabernet Sauvignon

This was an incredibly close taste-off, with only three points between the top four wines. Producers Ross Hill, and the Orange region can be rightly chuffed for edging out two Margaret Rivers and a Coonawarra in a photo finish.

We're very happy to report the resurgence of Australian cabernet. Of the 31 wines tasted, 25 rated Highly Recommended or better. Of that 31, eighteen came from Coonawarra or Margaret River. Obviously that's where the strength is, but the winner came from New South Wales, as did two other strong contenders, the 2008 Winburndale Fontana (Bathurst) and 2009 Hungerford Hill Hilltops.

Well done Xanadu for making three of the seven finalists.

OTHER RED VARIETAL

Group 2

Group 1 (Merlot)

Highly Recommended

2010 Pfeiffer Merlot Fresh, plummy and attractive on the nose, as young merlot should be. The palate is lively, long and has good structure. Well grown. Well made.

14.0% Screwcap

2009 Mount Majura Vineyard Merlot This vibrant young wine is both plummy and spicy, with good intensity of fruit. The very well managed tannins balance the fruit beautifully.

14.5% Screwcap

2010 Majella Coonawarra Merlot Hints of leaf and mint enhance the bouquet of this wine which offers appealing red berry fruit backed up with some toasty oak.

14.0% Screwcap

2008 Coldstream Hills Yarra Valley Merlot Quite complex, with hints of deli meats and leaf. The dark berry fruit is well balanced by fine tannins.

13.5% Screwcap

Recommended

2009 Charnwood Estate Charlie's Row Merlot A big, ripe, blackberry pastille style with faintly herbal flavours and a firm structure.

14.5% Screwcap

Acceptable

2009 Logan Weemala Central Ranges Merlot Quite farm-yardy and "out there".

14.0% Screwcap

This was a better line-up of merlots than we saw last year, but we feel justified in including them in the Other Red Varietal group. The top wine has excelled on the show circuit, and we can see why. It has depth of varietal flavour and good balance, qualities we don't often see in merlot.

Highly Recommended

2009 The Old Faithful Sandhill McLaren Vale Grenache Powerful and ripe, with hints of dried herbs and soy sauce. The palate is very rich, packed with red fruits flavour supported firm, but balanced, tannins.

14.5% Cork

2009 Hugh Hamilton The Oddball McLaren Vale Saperavi Big and ripe but still fresh, showing hints of licorice. There's a lot of substance and tannin here. For those who like the bigger styles.

15.5% Cork

Recommended

2010 Topper's Mountain Nebbiolo Offers red berry fruit, but doesn't have enough intensity to match the tannins.

13.5% Screwcap

Acceptable

2008 Protero Adelaide Hills Nebbiolo Poor colour even for nebbiolo. Fairly lean and dry.

14.5% Screwcap

CHAMPIONSHIP FINAL

1st 2009 The Old Faithful Sandhill McLaren Vale Grenache

2nd 2010 Pfeiffer Merlot

The sheer concentration (and freshness) of the old vine McLaren Vale grenache took it to a comfortable win over the precocious young merlot.

Brilliant sparkling wine

Breaking news! A day before going to print, I tasted what I consider to be one of the best sparkling wines yet made in Australia. The **2001 Courabyra 805** is 100% Tumbarumba, and a blend of pinot noir, chardonnay and pinot meunier. It was disgorged last year, and is amazingly fresh, with a perfect touch of autolysis complexity. It's supremely fine, and to my mind, is a landmark wine. (\$55.00) www.courabyrawines.com

Lester Jesberg

BORDEAUX BLEND

Group 1 Outstanding

2010 Amelia Park Margaret River Cabernet Merlot This is an exceptional wine which brings together intensity and finesse beautifully. It is the epitome of the "claret" style in which the fine, dry tannins complement the long flavour perfectly. (\$29.00) *Excellent Value*
14.5% Screwcap

2010 Credaro Margaret River Cabernet Merlot A powerful, plummy, fresh, balanced wine with strong red berry and plum flavours and savoury tannins. Another excellent wine from this consistent producer. (\$24.00) *Excellent Value*
14.0% Screwcap

Highly Recommended

2010 Tiger's Tale Margaret River Cabernet Merlot A big, firm red that shows some blackcurrant pastille aroma. The richness of the palate is impressive, and reflects both varieties.
14.0% Screwcap

Recommended

2010 Seville Estate The Barber Yarra Valley Cabernet Merlot The fresh, lively fruit is appealing, but the oak is a little too obvious.
13.0% Screwcap

Group 2 Outstanding

2009 Evans & Tate Metricup Road Margaret River Cabernet Merlot This is one of those wines that impresses from go to whoa. From the fragrant red berry/tobacco leaf nose to the long, fine, firm palate, it delivers the goods. (\$16.00) *Excellent Value*
14.0% Screwcap

Highly Recommended

2009 Annie's Lane Clare Valley Cabernet/Cabernet Franc/Merlot/Shiraz This is a big, rich wine, but it works. The cassis/dark berry aromas and flavours are very fresh and the palate is close-knit. Well worth cellaring.
14.5% Screwcap

2009 Leconfield Coonawarra Cabernet Merlot It's just a little forward, but this wine is fresh and powerful, packed with dark berry fruit plus a hint of regional mint. Cellar 2-3 years.
14.0% Screwcap

2009 De Beaurepaire Captain Starlight Series Merlot Cabernet Petit Verdot Made from grapes grown at Rylstone, near Mudgee, 600 m above sea level, this wine is quite an achievement. It's a rich, ripe red which is very fresh, and shows some oak.
13.0% Screwcap

2008 Wine By Brad Margaret River Cabernet Merlot This is a genuinely interesting, ripe, savoury style that is now getting into its stride. The palate is packed with fruit, and finishes pleasingly dry.
Screwcap

2009 Logan Orange Cabernet Merlot There's plenty of ripe fruit aroma and flavour here, leaning to plum. A richly satisfying wine with balanced oak and acidity.
14.0% Screwcap

2009 Saracen Estates Margaret River Cabernet Merlot This was a 50-50 wine. The panel was split over the aspect of leafiness on the nose. The positive side saw this wine as a classic Bordeaux-leaning style and supported it strongly.
14.4% Screwcap

CHAMPIONSHIP FINAL

1st 2010 Amelia Park Margaret River Cabernet Merlot
2nd 2009 Evans & Tate Metricup Road Margaret River Cabernet Merlot

The Evans & Tate is a top-notch wine, but the Amelia Park is something special, and it won accordingly. It does appear that Margaret River is the home of the cabernet merlot blend.

CLASSIC AUSTRALIAN BLEND

Highly Recommended

2009 Sandhurst Ridge Fringe Shiraz Cabernet Sauvignon (*Medallion winner*) Here we have utterly opulent dark berry aroma and flavour aided and abetted by just-right oak. The layers of flavour are supported by balanced tannins.

14.8% Screwcap

2010 Yalumba FDR1A Barossa Cabernet Sauvignon Shiraz There's great depth of rich blackcurrant here, together with other dark fruits. The fine tannins linger on a good, persistent finish. The oak is obvious at the moment, but this wine is one for the long haul. Cork

2010 Jim Barry Three Little Pigs Clare Valley Cabernet Shiraz Malbec This wine shows very powerful and fresh dark berry tinged with cassis. There's power and structure, together with impressive length of flavour. It's a cellaring special.

13.8% Screwcap

Recommended

2009 Wolf Blass Grey Label Shiraz Cabernet The nose shows very rich blackberries enhanced with spice. There's good initial impact but the finish tapers off slightly.

14.5% Screwcap

2008 Pepper Tree Strandlines Wrattobully Cabernet Shiraz The fresh, ripe blackberry aromas almost reach the jammy point. The palate is intense, tight and firm.

We continue to promote this category as a separate class because of the deep roots the shiraz and cabernet blend has in Australian history.

Sandhurst Ridge has had a dream run with Winewise. It has topped this class at the past two Small Vigneron Awards, and now wins a Championship medallion. Congratulations to wine-maker Paul Greblo.

WINEWISE HALF-DOZEN

This is a brilliant half-dozen – a well chosen selection of the finest of the value wines of the Championship. Included are probably the best young viognier and best young merlot in the country. As well as that there are two top Margaret Rivers and a Coonawarra – not to mention one of the Barossa's best whites. It's a bargain.

2010 Baillieu Vineyard Viognier

2010 The Willows Barossa Semillon

2010 Sandalford Margaret River Shiraz

2010 Penley Estate Phoenix Coonawarra Cabernet Sauvignon

2009 Evans & Tate Metricup Road Margaret River Cabernet Merlot

2010 Pfeiffer Merlot

\$127.00 plus freight

NSW/ACT \$11.00 per carton

VIC \$8.00

SA \$11.00

QLD to Mackay \$19.00

QLD north of Mackay \$22.00

NT \$30.00

WA \$27.00

TAS \$15.00

To order, contact:

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Telephone: 03 5821 2051

Fax: 03 5831 5173

Payment by cheque or credit card

OTHER RED BLEND

Group 1 (Blends containing grenache)

Highly Recommended

2010 Red Knot by Shingleback McLaren Vale Grenache Shiraz Mourvèdre The typical raspberry/spice grenache fragrance shows through, together with some Turkish delight. This is a very good fresh wine that ranked first here due to its sheer drinkability.

14.5% Screwcap

2009 DogRock Degraives Road Pyrenees (Shiraz, Grenache, Tempranillo) This wine has length and structure. Consequently it needs a little time to soften, but the red berry and spice characteristics are very attractive indeed.

13.5% Screwcap

2009 Sons of Eden Kennedy Barossa Valley Grenache Shiraz Mourvèdre The Barossa is captured beautifully in this opulent, satisfying red. There's a very pleasing savoury edge to the flavour-packed palate.

14.5% Screwcap

2010 Seppeltsfield Grenache Shiraz Touriga Another Barossa style that certainly doesn't lack flavour. There's a lot of punch and structure to this big, ripe, firm, mouth-filling red.

14.0% Screwcap

Group 2

Outstanding

2010 Mount Majura Vineyard TSG (Tempranillo, Shiraz, Graciano) This is a very fresh wine that is impressively fragrant. The attractive medium-bodied palate shows dark cherry and licorice flavours with a pleasing savoury edge. The TSG has gained a well-earned reputation, and the time is right to consider a change of name. TSG simply doesn't cut it for us in the premium red market. (\$N/A)

14.0% Screwcap

Highly Recommended

2009 Mount Avoca Trioss Red (Merlot, Shiraz, Cabernet Sauvignon) This isn't a complex red, but it's fresh and packed with flavour. The tannins are supple, inviting early drinking. A bargain. (\$14.00) *Excellent Value*

13.5% Screwcap

2010 Dolan Family Wines Barossa Shiraz Tempranillo There's plenty of richness and substance here. Nigel Dolan demonstrates how the licorice and dark cherry characteristics of tempranillo merge very well with the blackberry of shiraz.

14.5% Screwcap

Recommended

2006 Chambers Rosewood Vineyards Anton Ruch Rutherglen Shiraz Mondeuse This is a solid red. There's a density and power to this wine that really demands cellaring. However, if you enjoy young reds with grip and grunt, you'll like this.

15.3% Screwcap

Group 3

Highly Recommended

2009 Topper's Mountain Red Earth Child (Petit Verdot, Barbera, Nebbiolo, Tannat) Although there's a hint of mint to the nose, the fragrant red berry fruit shows through. There's a savoury grip to the palate which makes this wine a good pasta partner. At first appearance this may seem to be a "fruit salad", but the reality is that it demonstrates skilful and imaginative blending.

13.4% Screwcap

2010 Ross Hill Isabelle & Jack Cabernet Franc Merlot A very appealing wine with impressive fragrance, spice and richness of red berry and plum fruit. The tannins are very fine.

14.5% Screwcap

2004 Freeman Rondinella Corvina Secco Aged Release This wine didn't come out on top here, but it demonstrates and justifies the vision of producer Brian Freeman. The nose is mature but still fresh, showing complex dark cherry, leather and mace aromas. The palate is intense, supple and satisfying.
15.0% Screwcap

OTHER RED BLEND TASTE-OFF

1st 2010 Mount Majura Vineyard TSG (Tempranillo, Shiraz, Graciano)
2nd 2010 Red Knot by Shingleback McLaren Vale Grenache Shiraz Mourvèdre
3rd 2009 Topper's Mountain Red Earth Child (Petit Verdot, Barbera, Nebbiolo, Tannat)

Blends, both white and red, are becoming a very interesting segment. The exploration of the interactions between grape varieties is becoming fascinating for maker and consumer alike. Allen Hart at DogRock and Frank Van De Loo at Mount Majura are showing the way, using tempranillo artfully.

CHAMPIONSHIP FINAL

1st 2010 Amelia Park Margaret River Cabernet Merlot
2nd 2009 Sandhurst Ridge Fringe Shiraz Cabernet Sauvignon
3rd 2010 Red Knot by Shingleback McLaren Vale Grenache Shiraz Mourvèdre

BEST DRY RED

1st 2010 Bagdad Hills Tasmania Shiraz **12 points, two 1st places**
2nd 2010 Hubert The Stag Yarra Valley Pinot Noir **12 points, one 1st place**
3rd 2010 Amelia Park Margaret River Cabernet Merlot **10 points, no 1st places**
4th 2010 Juniper Crossing Margaret River Tempranillo **5 points, one 1st place**
5th 2009 Ross Hill Tom & Harry Orange Cabernet Sauvignon **4 points, no 1st places**
6th 2009 The Old Faithful Sandhill McLaren Vale Grenache **2 points, no 1st places**

There were certainly a couple of surprises here. Pinot from the Yarra Valley, a Cabernet Merlot from Margaret River, a Grenache from McLaren Vale and even a Margaret River Tempranillo didn't raise any eyebrows. But a cabernet sauvignon from Orange? A shiraz from Tasmania????

It simply demonstrates that the Australian wine landscape is undergoing constant change. Reviewers who don't taste blind would have backed away from the Bagdad Hills and the Ross Hill. They simply don't fit the template. Surely the top cabernet should have come from Coonawarra or Margaret River and the shiraz from central Victoria or somewhere in South Australia? In 2009 Orange obviously had a vintage that smiled on cabernet and Tasmania in 2010 was warm enough to produce a cracking good shiraz.

We like upset results. Wine tasting could become boring otherwise.

2011 Cullen Vineyard Sauvignon Blanc Semillon

This is a thought-provoking wine. It's a mere 11.5% alcohol yet the aromas and flavours, though restrained, are ripe. Is this the result of Vanya Cullen's biodynamic vineyard regime? Margaret River semillon, picked at low baumé, is notoriously green, yet there's no trace of under-ripeness in this impressive white blend. Just over 30% of the wine was fermented in new oak, yet the wood is very low impact - unsurprising for a chardonnay, but eye-opening for a sauvignon blanc - semillon blend. This wine has great potential. Don't pay silly prices for Bordeaux blanc. Buy this and cellar it for at least a few years. (\$35.00) *Outstanding*

Lester Jesberg

WHISKY-WISE

Guid day from the Brisbane Whisky Expo, held at the Transcontinental Hotel on February 29.

Arranged by the Queensland Malt Whisky Society, this show is believed to be the largest exhibition in Australia of fine whiskies from the Scottish highlands to lowlands, the islands of Japan and Tasmania, the USA and beyond.

The Expo is held annually in Brisbane around the end of February. It is a fantastic opportunity for all levels of whisky lovers to taste, compare and learn. It would also put you on the road to accessing the very old, very rare and very expensive, if that's your wish.

Enquiries about the Expo - contact Lance Currie of the Queensland Malt Whisky Society by email: lfcurrie@yahoo.com

Several Master Distillers from Scotland attended the show, in full tartan regalia. Their artisanal products might be reviewed in a later edition, along with some highly-awarded whiskies from much closer to home in Tasmania, and perhaps some from Japan where whisky-making is a serious art. It may surprise you that several famous Scottish distilleries are Japanese-owned. In this edition, I'm concentrating on mainstream Scottish malts.

A lone piper stirred our Scottish souls (I had found mine by then, hiding in an old Lagavulin). Then, as ye might expect, we were further fired by the fine words of Rabbie Burns on the merits of whisky.

I'm not pretending to be a whisky expert, but I've had a few drams in my time and know a wee bit about it. However, my comments below are decidedly from a wine-taster's perspective - maybe that's not a bad thing.

We received some guidance early in the evening, luckily, on whisky tasting. It's important to open your mouth when breathing in the aroma so you don't get overwhelmed by the alcohol. Also a few drops of filtered water will suppress the

alcohol fume and release the aromas and flavours to your nose and palate. From there it's pretty much like wine tasting, though spitting is probably even more essential....though you do often get the more intense flavours right at the back of the tongue....

Here are my thoughts on the Scottish malts I enjoyed. All are single malts, except for the Dewar's which are blends. The region is shown after the maker, e.g. *Highland*. Those considered worthy have been accorded our revered *Outstanding* and *Highly Recommended* ratings.

THE WHISKIES

Aberfeldy 12 year old, *Highland*

Beautifully rounded. On the nose, nuances of honey and nougat, some tropical fruits. These follow through to palate with spice and syrup. Pleasing orange liqueur finish. (This is the heart of the Dewar's blended whiskies - the "heart" is the main component of a blended malt whisky.)

Dewar's 12 year old, *Blended*

Currants and raisins on the nose. Noticeable bite on the front of the tongue on entry but then a nice velvety texture. Multi-faceted palate, with some sweetness and almond and cinnamon overtones. Spicy finish.

Dewar's Signature, *Blended*

Pleasing nose of dried cut flowers. Full, round palate - delightfully tiered with butterscotch notes, as well as honey, spice and pear. Great mouthfeel, smooth, even-textured. Nice finish, slight nuances of chocolate. Elegance and structure seem to be the keynotes here - the art of blending, I presume.

Highly Recommended

Ardmore Traditional Cask, *Highland*

Quite a complex array of flavours, nicely balanced. Peat and vanilla give way to plenty of citrus - orange and lime - combined with spice and marzipan. Finishes strongly and agreeably. A clever well-made package.

Dalmore 12, 15 and 18 year old, Highland

These three were generally in the same flavour profile, increasing in intensity with age. Exotic spice and marmalade nose, followed by rich toffee and chocolate nuances on the palate, with some vanilla and pronounced sherry flavours coming late. Quite complex and fresh and clean - with a modern feel. The flavours are subtle and definitely build to form a very clever and very good drink. The 15 year old was the pick for me. *Highly Recommended*

Oban 14 year old, Highland

Smoky charcoal nose, pleasing not overpowering, combined with fine old honey and cut flowers and spice. Fabulous mouthfeel - weight and texture seemed just right. Great array of flavours - notably figs and citrus. Good dry finish with a touch of seasalt. *Highly Recommended*

Auchentoshan Three-Wood, Lowland

Something a bit different. Triple-distilled. Nose reflects the American Oak - you definitely get the vanilla, along with raisins and oranges. Pleasant fruity palate, with syrup and butterscotch, slightly sweet but not overly. Much like bourbon up front, but finishes in great whisky fashion with long lip-smacking sweet oak.

Cragganmore 12 year old, Speyside

An extraordinary complex nose that kept developing and changing. Peat and tar were there but only as equals with floral and spice. Beautiful velvet texture took the complex flavours around your mouth in a seemingly ordered progression. Tropical fruits, marzipan and white pepper. Then a delightful lingering finish. *Highly Recommended*

Glenfarclas 15, 21, 25, 30 & 40 year old, Speyside

15 - Some smoky character, with fruit and spice and sherry notes. Entry somewhat harsher than most. Noticeable sherry and vanilla in the mouth. Good flavour but relatively simple.

21 - Add nutmeg to the nose. Richer and fruitier on palate, with lovely caramel nuances. Somewhat short finish.

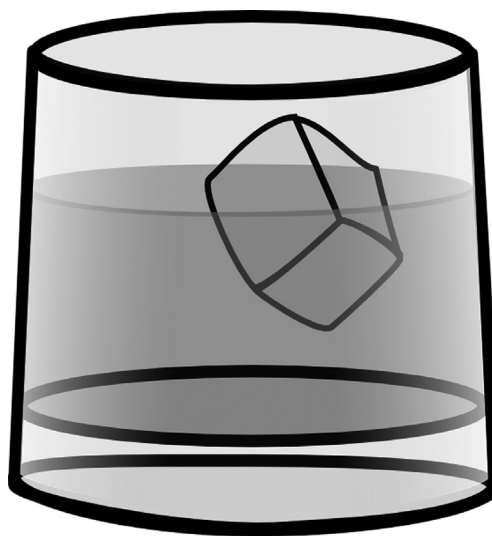
25 - This goes up more than 4 notches! Now we're getting marmalade and coffee and almonds added to the nose, and mandarin to the palate. Followed by a rich deep finish with pronounced dark chocolate. Elegant, balanced, full-flavoured - very good.

30 - Showing more smoothness and citrus flavour, with peat playing an intriguing binding role. Nuances of chocolate and toffee there as well, while smoke lingers throughout. Excellent long finish. *Highly Recommended*

40 - Same spectrum as 25 & 30 but even richer and more intense. The depth of flavour is spectacular. *Outstanding*

Macallan 18 year old, Speyside

Citrus and ginger notes on the nose. Very smooth texture, perhaps even delicate by these standards. Palate of dried fruits through to orange caramel. Pleasant but quick finish. Nice but not exciting.

**Tomatin 18 year old, Speyside**

Initial attention-grabbing hit of peat and tar with some spice and fruitiness. Apple and malt on palate, with some very attractive complex charry notes reminiscent of grilled capsicum, maybe with tabasco. Somewhat fiery, but also rich and complex. Great cleansing finish. *Highly Recommended*

Ardbeg 10 year old, Islay

Nose makes a big statement - very complex array of spices, cloves and ripe citrus sitting nicely in the peat/smoke frame. In the mouth, very intense citrus - concentrated cumquat - with hints of

chocolate, coffee and tar. An almost too smooth finish but long and satisfying. The intensity combined with the smooth texture is very impressive. *Outstanding*

Ardbeg Corryvreckn (20 year old), *Islay*

Wow! – There are a lot of flavours in this. As well as plenty of smoke and spice, notes of guava and lemon and the sea came through. The citrus flavours, mainly orange, hit the palate first, but then an amazing cascade of diverse flavours - berries, spices, through to coffee, licorice and even roast quail(!), and a distinctly violet touch at the end. Then a chewy long satisfying finish. The incredible tiered-flavour structure makes this very special - it was sort of like watching a pinball drop through a machine lighting up flavour-bumpers! *Outstanding*

Bowmore 12 year old, *Islay*

Silky smooth and subtle, but full-flavoured. Slightly salty and peaty nose - but not too much. Full round palate, tropical fruits perhaps, but nothing really dominant - great balance and harmony. Long, slightly salty, dry finish. *Highly Recommended*

Bowmore 18 year old, *Islay*

Very complex on nose and palate. Peat and smoke are present, but bound in with caramel and fruit notes to give a fresh toffee effect. The palate is a captivating ripe fruit-salad mixture with a dash of chocolate. Long balanced finish. There is a deft artisan quality about this whisky - Islay peatiness offset by fruit flavours. Fabulous balance. *Outstanding*

Lagavulin 16 year old, *Islay*

Ahhh!! That wonderful huge peaty nose, like having your nostrils cleaned out by smoke but in a totally refreshing uplifting way. The rich smoky character follows through to the back palate. Rich intense flavours - nearest I can come to it is charred pork emerging from a well-done hangi, with cooked fruits and some toffee, caramel and perhaps a touch of beeswax. Incredibly long finish. Unmistakeable and brilliant. *Outstanding*

Laphroaig 10 year old, *Islay*

Full-on Islay peat and smoke and sea-salt. Some nice toffee and vanilla aspects. Good drink but relatively simple and one-dimensional.

Highland Park 12 & 18 year old, *Island*

These have some honey notes on nose and palate, combining some sweetness with pleasant smoky character. The 12 has fresh fruits character - apple and pear - while the 18 tends to richer flavours like butterscotch and almond. Both finish clean but abruptly.

Jura “Vintage” 1993, 1995, 1999, *Island*

1993 - Beguiling nose of delicate peat and smoke combined with rose petal and some citrus. On the palate, intense flavours of coffee, Manzanilla sherry, figs and lemon meringue, with spice kicking in late. Fabulous velvety texture - the feel of liqueur without the sweetness. Extraordinary long intense finish. *Outstanding*

1995 - Very different to 1993, much lighter style all-round. Still smooth and beautifully textured, with lemon and lime peel and spice on the nose, and glacé fruits on palate, but lacking the intensity of 1993. Good peaty, slightly salty, finish. (1995 & 1999 were matured in Bourbon barrels; 1993 in Sherry.)

1999 - Different again, with considerable wow factor. More peaty on the nose, but not over the top, and in harmony with citrus and spice notes. Very rich complex palate with distinctive smoked fish and meat flavours, intermingled with fruits and pepper and seasalt. Fabulous in the mouth. Great long finish. *Outstanding*

Jura Prophecy, *Island*

Delightful nose of wafting peat, seaweed and heather. Designed, I guess, to take your mind to the Isle of Jura. Smoother textured than the “vintages”. Deep and complex flavours on the palate, with poached pear, toffee and licorice. Finished very smoothly, leaving lingering coffee flavour. Great nightcap. *Highly Recommended*
Slainte!

Bob Clancy

Penfolds 2012 Bin Releases

The release of the Penfolds Bin range is always an occasion. This year, the Sydney launch was held at Berowra Waters restaurant, and it was one hell of an event! Everything was laid on from 1998 Krug through a 'blinged up' boat that rapper Jay-Z hired when he was in Sydney. They also threw in some rare back vintage Penfolds wines for dinner – but more about that in the next issue.

This year's Bin releases saw good and indifferent vintages, as well as a notable price hike. I have included a brief summary of vintage conditions, where possible, for the single region wines and some winemaking info. So, without further ado let's jump right in.

2011 Penfolds Bin 51 Eden Valley Riesling

This single region wine was created as part of the Penfolds white wine development program in the 1990s.

Vintage conditions: 2011 was not the kindest of vintages, with plenty of rain and lower than average temperatures during the growing season.

Pale in colour, it showed lots of aromas in the citrus spectrum with slight florals and tropical hints. The palate had a chalky texture with a high-pitched acidity making the finish a little sharp right now, but could see it through the next few years. (\$33.00) **Recommended** 11.0% Screwcap

2011 Bin 311 Henty Chardonnay

Since its first vintage in 2005, Penfolds have experimented with cool-climate regions and high elevation vineyards. Previously, the fruit has been sourced from areas such as Tumbarumba and Tasmania, but 2011 saw the use of fruit from Henty in Victoria sourced from the Seppelt Drumborg site.

Peter Gago stated that he did not like the term 'Chablis-esque', but admitted this wine could be described in those terms – and I concur. Pale in colour, the nose was very lees-driven, together with white nectarines and citrus rind. The palate is quite zippy, grapefruity

and minerally, with a creamy edge and a reasonable length. A nice medium-term wine. (\$40.00) **Recommended** 12.0% Screwcap

2010 Bin 138 GSM (50% Grenache 27% Shiraz 23% Mourvedre) – Barossa Valley, S.A.

I must admit, I have always thought that the Bin 138 has lived in the shadow of other Bin wines, but was always consistently good (maybe because it is a blend) and represented good value for money compared to some of its Bin friends - especially when you think it is a single region wine produced from old vine Barossa fruit.

Vintage conditions: The 2010 vintage in the Barossa saw healthy levels of rain until December. Then followed a hot January that saw early ripening varieties do it tough, with leaf loss and berry-shrivel. From then on it was generally dry, but yields were well below average.

This Bin 138 was medium to full-bodied in appearance with vibrant purple tints. The nose showed an abundance of red and blue fruits that reminded me of a fruit flan – complete with shorter crust pastry! There were supporting elements of exotic spices and olive tapenade that came long for the ride. The palate had a sweet fruit entry, was quite well balanced, showed no overt oak and coated the mouth with chalky, dusty tannins before a reasonable finish. (\$38.00) **Highly Recommended** 14.5% Screwcap

2010 Bin 128 Shiraz – Coonawarra, S.A.

Since its inception in 1962, the Bin 128 has had its fans. It has always been a Coonawarra wine reflecting a more elegant Penfolds style. The most notable change to the Bin 128 style was the change from American to French oak usage in the 1980s.

Vintage conditions: Coonawarra saw a warmer than usual vintage in 2010. Winter rainfall was average, and was followed up by above average rainfall from flowering to harvest. 2010 was characterised by even, early ripening and moderate yields delivering bold fruit and ripe tannins.

Medium to full-bodied in style, it showed highly spiced black cherries with slight herbaceous and cedar undertones. The palate was tightly wound, but came across as a little austere at present, with some real grip to the tannins. Maybe time will heal and it will score higher down the track, or even a good decant might help! (\$38.00) **Agreeable**
14.5% Screwcap

2009 Kalimna Bin 28 Shiraz – Padthaway, Barossa Valley, Langhorne Creek, McLaren Vale & Robe, S.A. The Bin 28 has been a stalwart of the Penfolds Bin range since its creation in 1959. Back then, it was a single vineyard wine sourced from the Kalimna vineyard in the Barossa Valley - purchased by Penfolds in 1945. These days it is a multi-regional wine.

Full-bodied in nature, this is a ripe wine showing lots of black fruits with a slight dried date edge. The spiciness tends earthy, with the palate showing red and black fruits along with mocha, chocolate and anise. It does appear to be quite balanced though, with fine chalky tannins and no really overt oaky grippiness. Very approachable now. (\$38.00) **Recommended**
14.5% Screwcap

2009 Bin 150 Marananga Shiraz – Marananga, Barossa Valley, S.A. Marananga is a small 'blink and you'll miss it' village located on the valley floor of the Barossa. It is home to such wineries as Greenock Creek and Torbreck, and now it represents Penfolds venture into sub-regional wines, of which this is the second vintage.

Penfolds also dabbles in a range of oak treatments with the Bin 150. This version is matured for 14 months in 25% new French, 25% new American, 25% older French and 25% older American!

This medium to full-bodied wine showed lots of spicy, dark fruits, savoury delicacies and a generous lick of oak. On the palate it is luscious, with a good acid backbone, firm, savoury-edged tannins and a decent length. It's a lovely, almost 'old-fashioned' style and appears balanced. Is it worth the \$75 price tag? You be the judge. (\$75.00) **Highly Recommended**
14.5% Screwcap

2009 Bin 407 Cabernet Sauvignon – McLaren Vale, Coonawarra, Robe, Mt Benson, Adelaide Hills & Barossa Valley, S.A. Since its launch in 1993, Bin 407 hasn't really tried to be anything else except a varietal Cabernet Sauvignon. It is another multi-regional blended wine and plays the role of the little bro to Bin 707.

The 2009 model Bin 407 has a very dense crimson appearance with tints of purple. The aromas are of hedgerow berries, leaves, and shaved pencils, with herbaceous and menthol twists. The palate is tightly wound, with dark berries and mint coming through, together with chalky, slightly grippy tannins and upright acidity. It probably needs a couple of years to come together or a double decant. (\$65.00) **Recommended**

Matured 12 months in 27% new French and 7% new American oak hogheads. The remaining 66% saw seasoned American oak.
14.4% Screwcap



2009 Bin 389 Cabernet Shiraz – Padthaway, Barossa Valley, McLaren Vale, Coonawarra, Wrattenbully & Robe, S.A (51% Cabernet Sauvignon 49% Shiraz) Often referred to as 'Baby Grange', Bin 389 saw the light of day in 1960. It has many fans across the globe, and 2009 celebrates the 50th consecutive release.

This release is full-bodied to the palate and deep purple to the eye. Vibrant, spicy, pungent black fruits rise out of the glass and smack you between the eyes before a black pepper, chocolate and star anise follow-through. The palate is curvaceous, rich and juicy, showing those sweet, ripe black fruits mid-palate, balanced acidity and powdery, firm tannins that linger. This comes across as



Penfolds chief winemaker Peter Gago

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We no longer have a fax. Subscriptions can be paid by bank transfer, cheque or over the phone by credit card.

a big wine with evident oak, but it is just about in check and needs a few years to settle. (\$75.00) **Highly Recommended**
Matured 12 months in 21% new and seasoned American oak hogsheads. 14.5% Screwcap

Deb Pearce

For more information www.penfolds.com

Next issue: Penfolds icon range featuring multi-vintage Grange, plus the rare and the wonderful including 1962 Bin60A and the 1953 'hidden' Grange.

Yering Station

The 2010 Yering Station Reserve releases, Chardonnay and Shiraz Viognier are both exceptional wines. There's a strong trend in the Yarra towards acidic chardonnays and stemmy reds. This pair from Yering Station shuns those trends. The chardonnay is rich, fresh and complex, and the Shiraz Viognier is vibrant and spicy. They are both world-class wines. Both \$90.00 Both *Outstanding*. By the way, the **2010 Yering Station Cabernet** is deliciously drinkable. (\$38.00) *Highly Recommended*

Lester Jesberg

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