

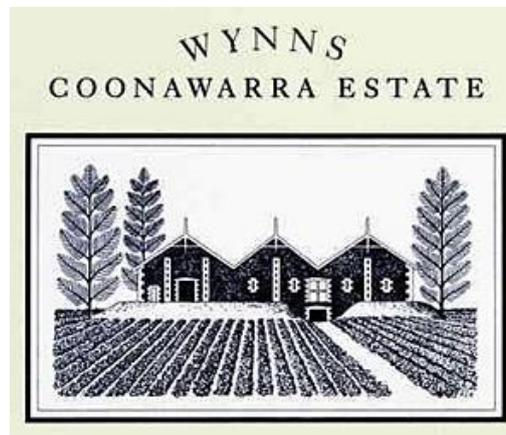
## International Cabernet/Merlot Tasting

**E**very year at the Winewise Small Vigneron Awards we conduct an international tasting to thank our judges, and to break the routine of show judging. If you think it strange that we take a break from tasting by doing still more tasting, you don't grasp how much our participants look forward to the international afternoon. We break for lunch and then spend a couple of hours on twenty wines.

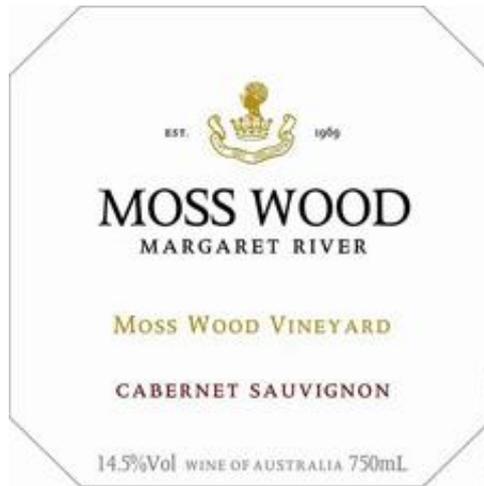
All 13 judges take part, and, of course, all wines are tasted "blind". They are poured by our stewards, so the judges don't even get a chance to glimpse the bottles. Discussion is not allowed until the judging sheets have been handed in to the chief steward. It's no place for "label drinkers".

The final order of preference was determined by median score after the worst two individual scores had been deleted. In the case of equal median score, the mean score has been used.

**Note:** Although this tasting was conducted in August, 2017, the results are just as relevant now, and most of the wines are still available. Before you post accusations of Australian bias on social media, consider that we love good Bordeaux wine, and are very experienced in tasting it, some of us for four decades. It's just that we don't allow ourselves to be influenced by labels.



**2010 Wynns Alex 88 Coonawarra Cabernet Sauvignon** Bright "juicy" aromatics. Great tension and power on a beautifully framed palate with perfectly integrated oak. Richness of flavour with great refinement. (\$85.00) **9 gold medal scores from 11 judges Mean score 18.3/18.5**  
★★★★★  
<https://www.jimmurphy.com.au/product/wynns-alex-88-cabernet-sauvignon-2010>



**2010 Moss Wood Margaret River Cabernet Sauvignon** The fragrant cassis aromas are enhanced by hints of spice and tobacco leaf. Plushness is the word for the palate which delivers layers of flavour, and has the essential fine, firm structure. (\$159.00) **6/11 18.1 ★★★★★**  
<http://www.mwwines.com.au/museum-wine-shop/wines/wine-item/Moss-Wood/Cabernet-Sauvignon/Cabernet-Sauvignon/2010/00044000460201000001>



**2010 Balnaves The Tally Reserve Coonawarra Cabernet Sauvignon** Dusty dark fruits plus tobacco leaf aromas which are strongly varietal. The palate is the essence of cabernet sauvignon, offering fine, lingering tannins, intensity and perfect oak handling. (\$90.00 Available in very limited quantities from a couple of retailers. Contact [editor@winewise.net.au](mailto:editor@winewise.net.au) for details) **6/11 18.0 ★★★★★**

**2009 Voyager Estate Margaret River Cabernet Merlot** The perfume of violets shows on a complex nose that also offers red and blackcurrant, spiciness and a whiff of high quality French oak. The beautifully poised palate is long and fine. Classical cabernet. (\$64.95) **6/11 17.7 ★★★★★**

**2010 Château Malescot St-Exupéry** Very attractive cassis fruit with notes of cedar and tobacco. The palate is long, finely structured and very satisfying, with high quality oak in the background. In Bordeaux terms, this wine from Margaux is a bargain. (\$174.00) **4/11 17.5 ★★★★★**  
[https://www.danmurphys.com.au/product/DM\\_774027/ch-teau-malescot-st-exup-ry-margaux-2010](https://www.danmurphys.com.au/product/DM_774027/ch-teau-malescot-st-exup-ry-margaux-2010)

**2009 Te Mata Coleraine** This Hawkes Bay (NZ) blend is firmly structured, with red fruits and dried herbs showing on an expressive nose. Although the finish is comparatively dry, there's plenty of flavour to carry the tannins on a satisfyingly long palate. (\$110.00) **4/11 17.4 ★★★★★**  
<http://canterburywines.net/Categories/CabernetSauvignon.htm>

**2010 Mandoon Estate Margaret River Cabernet Merlot** The fresh cassis aromas and flavours are impressive, and the fine, firm tannins fold into the palate beautifully. The oak is a little prominent, but this wine has a long life ahead of it. (Not available) **4/11 17.3 ★★★★★**

**2010 Domaine de Chevalier (Graves)** Red fruits and plum aromas are enhanced by complexing notes of cigar box. The palate is long, fine and very well balanced. (\$219.00) **3/11 17.1 ★★★★★**  
<http://www.randalls.net.au/store/domaine-chevalier-rouge-2010-p-28243.html>

**2009 Craggy Range Sophia** This Gimblett Gravels (NZ) wine shows its 60% merlot component in a fresh, plummy way, and the secondary dried herb overtones are attractive, but the oak is prominent. **2/11 16.7 ★★★★★**

**2010 Domaine A Stoney Vineyard Cabernet Sauvignon** Cabernet sauvignon shouldn't work in Tasmania, but sometimes it does – at least partly. Although there's a vegetal component to both nose and palate, there's enough flavour. The tannins are on the edge of greenness. **2/11 16.5 ★★★★★**

**2009 Antinori Solaia** A big solid red with a hint of aldehyde creeping in. Quite oaky too. **0/11 16.4 ★★★★★**

**2010 Petaluma Coonawarra** Certainly offers varietal flavour, but is fairly oaky and has green edges. **2/11 16.3 ★★★★★**

**2010 Cullen Diana Madeline** On the lean side, with asparagus and capsicum overtones. **2/11 16.1 ★★★**

**2010 Château Pavie-Decesse** Super-ripe. Over-extracted and overdone. Quite oaky too. **0/11 15.9 ★★★**

**2009 Ornellaia** Big, almost porty. Lots of flavour and oak, with a slightly volatile lift. **0/11 15.6 ★★★**

July 16, 2018

**2010 Château La Dominique** Meaty/Marmite overtone on nose and palate. Has fruit intensity but is spoiled by the mercaptan-related characteristics. 1/11 15.1 ★★★

**2010 Château Mouton-Rothschild** Well, well, well. We paid \$1,800 for this. Money wasted! The nose is tainted by barnyard brettanomyces, and the palate has been dried out by a serious brett attack. 0/11 14.4 ★★

**2010 Yarra Yering Dry Red Wine No.1** Volatility is taking over. 0/11 14.3 ★★

**2010 Château Certan-de-May** Destroyed by brett. 0/11 14.1 ★★

**2009 Château Ducru-Beaucaillou** So bretty it almost whinnies! A horsey nose carries through to a short, drying palate. 0/11 13.7 ★★

It's obvious that several wines disappointed, but none more so than Mouton-Rothschild and Ducru-Beaucaillou. It's time for the relative handful of international wine writers who understand wine faults to forsake the largesse of Bordeaux château owners and speak up. Sadly, many prominent reviewers, in their ignorance, simply accept gross wine faults as part of "style". Now that we have filthy rich Chinese, with little or no knowledge of wine, stampeding to buy this highly priced rubbish, there's little hope for change.

## Judges

Bryan Currie	Hungerford Hill Wines
Kate Hibberson	Mount Majura Wines
Lex Howard	Winewise
Simon Killeen	Simão & Co Wines
Lester Jesberg	Winewise
Nick Knappstein	Riposte Wines
Jo Marsh	Billy Button Wines
Helen McCarthy	Mountadam Wines
Ian McKenzie	Consulting Oenologist
Jeremy Nascimben	Calabria Family Wines
Nick O'Leary	Nick O'Leary Wines
Deb Pearce	Winewise & The Real Review
David Yeates	Winewise

For information on brettanomyces please refer to:

[https://www.awri.com.au/industry\\_support/winemaking\\_resources/frequently\\_asked\\_questions/brettanomyces-faq/](https://www.awri.com.au/industry_support/winemaking_resources/frequently_asked_questions/brettanomyces-faq/)

*Next month we taste Australia's top chardonnays against New Zealand's finest and Burgundy grand and premier cru. Expect a full report in September.*

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