

2018 WINEWISE SMALL VIGNERON AWARDS

Silver medal white & rosé



I have always had misgivings with the rating of wines. First, it's just an expression of opinion – in our case, well considered and well informed opinion – but opinion nonetheless. A different, equally well informed, panel may taste the same wine and come up with a different score. Often the scoring sits on a knife edge. Let me give you an example. This actually happened in the latest Small Vigneron Awards.

One of the panels called me (the chairman) over to discuss a wine. I tasted it and questioned whether it had enough intensity for a gold medal. One judge supported it, another sat on the fence and the third was against. After retasting it, I said one word – “silver” – and the wine missed out on a gold. As it turned out, two judges were originally on gold and the third was on bronze. That's how close it can be.

The message is to not dismiss silver medal wines as inferior. They are not. In fact, they are usually wines of high quality that could be awarded gold at the next wine show.

Here are the 2018 Small Vigneron Awards silver medal winners in the white and rosé classes. All are most worthy of your consideration.

2018 Forbes & Forbes Single Vineyard Eden Valley Riesling The aroma is attractively ripe and citrus-like. A hint of sweetness shows initially, but the palate is long, finishing with balancing acidity. (\$22.00) ★★★★★

2018 Four Winds Canberra District Riesling A very lively, lemony riesling of medium weight, with an excellent acid line. Enjoy it over the next couple of years. (\$27.00) ★★★★★

2018 Robert Stein Reserve Mudgee Riesling Fragrant and full flavoured, with good acidity to match. It's not far from entering its ideal drinking window, and should hold form for at least a couple of years. (\$50.00) ★★★★★

2017 Bream Creek Tasmania Riesling This riesling provoked considerable discussion, but it wasn't about quality or lack of it. Residual sugar was the topic, but regardless of apparent sweetness in a dry riesling class, this rich, limey, acid-fresh style received the thumbs-up. (\$29.00) ★★★★★

2016 Sons of Eden Freya Cellar Release Eden Valley Riesling The floral bouquet is very appealing, but there's a little too much development. The palate is long and satisfying, with a fresh acid lift on the finish. (\$35.00) ★★★★★☆

2018 Andrew Thomas Braemore Hunter Valley Semillon Vintage 2018 in the Hunter Valley was hot, and it shows in this full flavoured, forward semillon. It's the complete opposite of the acid-driven cellaring style. (\$33.00) ★★★★★

2015 Two Rivers Stones Throw Hunter Valley Semillon Two Rivers is one of the most under-rated labels in the Hunter Valley. The 2015 shows a faint hint of toast, but is fresh and bright, with good persistence and acidity. (\$45.00) ★★★★★☆

2009 Coolangatta Estate Wollstonecraft Semillon This Shoalhaven Coast (NSW) semillon is bright and slightly toasty, with the faintest green edge to the bouquet. The palate is long, satisfying and well balanced. (\$50.00) ★★★★★☆

2007 Tintilla Estate Angus Hunter Valley Semillon Very fresh nose for the age of the wine. The palate is still quite "mineral" and unevolved, but very varietal. (\$40.00) ★★★★★☆

2018 Rosily Vineyard Margaret River Sauvignon Blanc Passionfruit and lime leaf aromas. Fresh, but finishes slightly short. (\$22.00) ★★★★★

2017 After Hours Margaret River Chardonnay Stone fruit and citrus aromas and flavours show through as well as some obvious oak. The palate offers good texture and persistence. (\$32.00) ★★★★★

2017 Rosily Vineyard Margaret River Chardonnay Shows imaginative work with fruit, lees and oak. Fresh and complex, but not quite as seamless as it could be. (\$27.00) ★★★★★☆

2017 Two Rivers Vigneron's Reserve Hunter Valley Chardonnay Delicate peachiness with a lees influence contributing complexity. It has texture and weight on a balanced palate. (\$26.00) ★★★★★☆

2016 Cannibal Creek Reserve Gippsland Chardonnay The fresh white peach nose carries attractive nutty complexity, but the creamy palate is just a little light on the finish. (\$50.00) ★★★★★☆

2016 Freycinet Vineyard Tasmanian Chardonnay An appealing chardonnay built on a typical Tasmanian acid backbone. The nose is fresh, showing pink grapefruit and white peach, while the palate is long, but tight, needing time to evolve. (\$45.00) ★★★★★

2018 Risky Business King Valley Pinot Gris The nose shows a typical fresh pear varietal aroma, and the palate is of adequate weight and is nicely textured. (\$25.00) ★★★★★

2018 Artwine In The Groove Adelaide Hills Grüner Veltliner

Varietal spiciness is a strong point of the nose which also shows some stone fruit. The firmness of the palate challenges the fruit intensity, but this wine is still unquestionably a good example of grüner veltliner. (\$26.00) ★★★★★

2017 First Ridge Mudjee Vermentino A lemony dry white with a hint of spiciness. The palate offers good length of flavour, textural phenolics and well judged oak support. (\$20.00) ★★★★★☆

2018 Robert Stein Half Dry Mudjee Riesling Fresh and lemony, with rose petal notes. The palate offers decent fruit weight and low-level sweetness backed up by balanced acidity. (\$35.00) ★★★★★

2018 Eden Hall Opulence Eden Valley Riesling An aromatic varietal sweet white with lemon meringue overtones. Lively acidity gives the finish a lift. (\$25.00) ★★★★★

2016 Lillypilly Noble Harvest A luscious, complex sweet white showing some citrus peel botrytis character. The palate is attractively rich and honeyed. (\$32.00/375 ml) ★★★★★

2018 Artwine Temptress Clare Valley Rosé A very fresh rosé suggestive of strawberries and cream. The sweetness is balanced by fresh acidity. (\$22.00) ★★★★★

2018 Riverbank Estate Rebellious Rosé A very pretty, pale pink, strawberry-scented rosé from Caversham (W.A.) with a touch of sweetness. It's fresh and ready to drink. (\$25.00) ★★★★★

Our Rating Scale

★★★★★	Outstanding	97-100 pts	Gold medal
★★★★☆	Highly Recommended	93-96	Gold/silver
★★★★	Recommended	90-92	Silver
★★★☆☆	Recommended	87-89	Bronze
★★★	Agreeable	85-87	Bronze
★★☆☆	Agreeable	82-84	
★★	Acceptable	80-82	
★☆☆	Acceptable	77-79	
★	Barely Acceptable	74-76	
☆	Unacceptable	71-73	
No stars	Undrinkable	<71	

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