

matthew**jukes**



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## MATTHEW JUKES 100 BEST AUSTRALIAN WINES 2012

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Welcome to my 100 Best Australian Wines list for 2012. As always, this century of greats is the result of an enormous number of tastings held in the UK and Australia over the last twelve months. It represents the finest one hundred Australian wines available on the shelves in the UK this coming year. It is designed as a balanced list of wines including sparklers, all styles of whites and reds, sweet and fortified wines. I endeavour to cover all price points and as many regions as possible in an effort to give you a complete Australian 'wine list' for the next twelve month's worth of entertaining, cellar-stocking and championing.

Last year saw the completion of my Hall of Fame initiative and I congratulate the names below for making this imperial grade. These estates are the most successful producers in the 100 Best during the first eight years of its inception and their wineries are denoted in this and future lists by a Hall of Fame logo.



CHAPEL HILL, CULLEN, DE BORTOLI, FOX GORDON, GROSSET, HARDY'S, JACOB'S CREEK, JANSZ, KNAPPSTEIN, LEEUWIN, MAJELLA, MCWILLIAM'S, MITOLO, MOSS WOOD, MOUNT HORROCKS, PENFOLDS, PETER LEHMANN, ST HALLETT, STONIER, THE LANE VINEYARD, TYRRELL'S, WIRRA WIRRA & YALUMBA.

Over the last twelve months the 100 Best Australian Wines Roadshow has travelled to all corners of the UK on twelve sell-out dates and this will happen again in the coming months to showcase some of the 100 Best Wines to Australian wine lovers in the UK.

It goes without saying that every wine listed in this century has won its place by gaining immense scores in my notes and they all have sufficient stock to see us through for the life of this initiative. As always, these are the only criteria for inclusion.

Changes for 2012 - I have not listed stockists in this booklet, for the first time, because inevitably when this list is launched new stockists appear and so this detail will be regularly updated and available free of charge on [matthewjukes.com](http://matthewjukes.com). The guide prices are accurate at the time of printing. I have left a space to make notes here in the hope that you will record your thoughts on these wines and then keep this document as your essential Australian wine guide for the coming year.

Massive thanks goes to Elizabeth Cook for her invaluable help in organising the launch and the 100 Best Roadshow and also to Wine Australia and Dartington Crystal for their support.

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads 'Matthew'. To the right of the signature is a simple line drawing of a wine glass, partially filled with a dark liquid.

# SERIOUS FIZZ

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## 2006 Jansz, Tas £14



Jansz always appears in my 100 and this because it is the most consistently excellent and great value Australian sparkling wine specialist on the shelves in the UK. From the delicious non-vintage cuvée to a delicate NV Rosé and including this magnificent, thoroughly over-specced '06 vintage wine, their Hall of Fame status is a fitting tribute to this stellar producer.

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## 2006 Este, Vintage Cuvée, De Bortoli, Yarra Valley, Vic £21



New to the UK market, and in search of somewhere to stay, Este is yet another triumphant release in the De Bortoli portfolio. With an open, accommodating palate and succulent fruit this is a flirty, titillating vintage fizz with considerable breeding under the alluring bodywork. Coming from the cool 2006 vintage, Este shows lustiness and complexity in the same breath and it is already drinking beautifully, so you can pop the cork with a guilt-free conscience.

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## 2009 Croser, Piccadilly, Adelaide Hills, SA £23

Croser has established itself as one of the most reliable sparklers in Australia. Never resting on its laurels, the recipe is tweaked every year building more complexity and greater length of flavour into this beauty – this is a very worthy Champagne substitute indeed. The 2009 has creaminess hitherto unknown in this creature, relaxing some of the previous vintages' S&M strictness by one or two notches.

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# SEMILLON & SAUVIGNON BLANC

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## 2011 Brokenwood, Semillon, Hunter Valley, NSW £17

Back with a bang, Brokenwood's wines have been re-launched in the UK and there is no better vintage than 2011 with which to unleash this devastatingly pure yet remarkably satisfying Semillon into the market. Unlike many edgy, raw 2011s this wine already has a pristine, linear, purity and an immediate enjoyment factor that wows the senses. Prepare to impale your palate on one of the most gripping and stimulating wines of the year.

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## 2005 McWilliam's, Mount Pleasant, Lovedale Semillon, Hunter Valley, NSW £18



I was struck dumb when I tasted this wine with winemaker Phil Ryan last year. At seven years old this is still an extraordinarily composed and calm wine with an everlasting finish and tremendous taut acidity. Lovedale is one of the great joys of the wine world and this vintage reveals its magical powers perfectly. Please don't forget that you can pick up 2006 Elizabeth Semillon (another 100 Best alumnus) for under a tenner and it offers everyday drinking at a remarkably high level of sophistication.

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## 2011 Cherubino, Sauvignon Blanc, Pemberton, WA £25

This is the only straight Sauvignon in this year's 100 but after one sip you won't be craving any others. The ultra-fine, slippery texture and languid, Zen-like calm in this wine differentiates it from virtually every other SB in the country. While Sauvignon Blanc has never aspired to Grand Cru status this wine is certainly in with a shout. If you would like to taste another of Larry's terrific creations, which won't break the bank, then look to The Yard SB, too, for a tenner less!

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## **2006 Tyrrell's, Winemaker's Selection Vat 1 Semillon, Hunter Valley, NSW £30**



This is my favourite vintage of Vat 1 in years, blended from three spectacular vineyards planted between 1920 and 1965. At a mere 10.7% the impact and complexity of flavour that this pale-hued wine delivers is nothing short of mind-blowing. Just starting out on a long life, '06 Vat 1 is, to my mind, the greatest dry Semillon in the world. Also, keep your eyes peeled for 2009 Rufus Stone Shiraz – it is a wonderful, crunchy cherry and blackberry-spiced Shiraz with beautiful life and vivacity in the glass – it is certainly 'one in the eye' for Heathcote Shiraz.

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## **WEIRD & WONDERFUL WHITE**

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### **2010 Tahbilk, Marsanne, Nagambie Lakes, Vic £10**

Bizarrely, this is a wine that still flies beneath the radar in the UK, but I will make it my mission to alert all of my readers to its charms because not only is this wine staggeringly good value, it is also the pure Marsanne model for the planet. With spiced pear, marzipan and baked apple notes this is a desperately rewarding white, with far more intellect and allure than the price point suggests. Shhh – it also ages forever, too!

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### **2011 Pewsey Vale, Riesling, Eden Valley, SA £11**

A perennial over-achiever and another wine in this section that represents awesome value for money, 2011 Pewsey Vale Riesling is more forward, openly floral, lemony and seductive than recent vintages and it already looks and feels ravishing. If you want to taste the A-Level version of this wine then track down 2006 The Contours whose added age and depth of fruit will graduate you from starters to main course in one fell swoop.

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## **2010 Yalumba, Eden Valley Viognier, Eden Valley, SA £11**

Yalumba's magnificent array of Viogniers always yields a star wine in the 100 Best. So imagine my surprise when 2011 Y Series (the epic cheapie glugger), this wine, 2009 Virgilius (the Captain Spock of the Viognier world) and 2009 FSW8B (a mentally scrummy, liquid luge of a sweetie) all achieved 18+ scores in my notes. I scratched my head and plumped for the classiest and best value wine among them - Eden Valley got the nod and it is not surprising because the build quality and sheer class of this Viognier are truly awe-inspiring. Spare a thought for some of the other bods in the diverse Y Series family this year - 2011 Vermentino and 2010 Cabernet Sauvignon both hit the bull's eye and this is a remarkable achievement in itself considering how exacting each of these varieties is (and also how clunky many other estates manage to make them)!

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## **2011 Redbank, Sunday Morning Pinot Gris, King Valley, Vic £13**

Redbank has spent a few years in the wilderness but I am delighted to announce that SMPG is back with a bang and it reminds me of why I fell in love with this label in the first place, all those years ago. This linear, sleek, mildly tropical PG is gymnastic in the tension between the crunchy pear and crisp apple notes. A smattering of spice and a whisper of wild flowers completes the picture. You know when to drink it - it says so on the front of the bottle.

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## **2011 Bremerton, Verdelho, Langhorne Creek, SA £13**

With Tamblyn taking a well-deserved rest this year from being the most popular Roadshow wine of the past 24 months, the spotlight falls on this unlikely hero, the jocular 2011 Verdelho. The racy, pineapple chunk and pink grapefruit aroma leads you to a palate with a little more structure than you might expect. This enables the wine to tackle far more complex duties than aperitif work alone. My ideal dinner request would be a continuous conveyor belt of the finest dim sum known to mankind. Take a break from mind-numbingly dull Sauvignon and dive into this jittery, eclectic little wine.

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### **2011 Coriole, Fiano, McLaren Vale, SA £15**

You may think that you know what you're getting when you unscrew Coriole Fiano bearing in mind that it has been Australia's model for this variety for years. But nothing can prepare you for the dramatic, tangy, citrus and fresh herbs notes which vault out of the glass and maraud your taste buds. With incredible acidity and pin-point minerality this is a wine to unleash on top flight creamy, fish dishes and hedonistic billowing soufflés.

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### **2011 Innocent Bystander, Pinot Gris, Yarra Valley, Vic £15**

Phil Sexton and Steve Flamsteed have aced this year's 100 with three 2011 Innocent Bystander wines all vying for a position. The Chardonnay, with its classy fruit, flecks of green herbs and waxy honey is a sensual delight. The Pinot Noir is perfectly balanced with fresh red cherry fruit and a velvety texture, showing that they have mastered Yarra's two mainstay grapes, but the star of the show, and arguably the most difficult to truly impress with, is this taut, focused, nerve-tingling PG. Let's hope they manage to convince people to come back to this much maligned variety because this is a thigh-slappingly delicious wine.

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### **2011 Skillogalee, Gewurztraminer, Clare Valley, SA £15**

Once again, the only Gewurz to make the cut comes from the monstrously talented Palmer Family operation in Clare. Skilly Gewurz (I don't have to teach punters how to pronounce it anymore because this estate's fame now precedes it!) is textbook accurate on the nose, however, there is no additional gloop or unwanted traction on the palate, as this wines speed-skates across your taste buds scattering pot pourri and crystallised ginger notes asunder. Be sure to check out its sibling '11 Riesling, too, which could easily have claimed a place in this 100 had its big brother, Trevarrick (q.v.), not made a very welcome re-appearance.

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### **2011 Fox Gordon, Princess Fiano, Adelaide Hills, SA £18**

Princess Fiano captured every single taster's heart on last year's 100 Best Roadshow and it thrills me to be able to report that the 2011 vintage is an even more devastatingly attractive incarnation of this hugely popular but little known Southern Italian variety. With statuesque greengage and honeysuckle fruit and a white pepper and grapefruit tang on the finish this is a must try wine. 2010 Eight Uncles Shiraz and 2009 Hannah's Swing Shiraz both made the short list for





this century of stellar wines and they continue to show Tash Mooney's complete understanding of the Shiraz variety. She manages to imbue so much life and energy into her wines it is incredible.

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## RIESLING

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### **2011 Jacob's Creek, Classic Riesling, SEA £8**

The shining star in JC's Classic range is this pristine, seamless, thirst-quenching Riesling. It will age like clockwork, delighting you and your pals for further six or seven years to come. The incredible new duo of red wines, 2010 Classic Shiraz and 2010 Classic Shiraz/Cabernet are also both model examples of wines whose boisterous bursts of fruit hide serious complexity and perfect balance. We all drink these wines far too young, but given their ability to develop it just shows how much integrity and breeding they have in the first place.

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### **2011 Knapstein, Ackland Riesling, Clare Valley, SA £13**

Both the Hand Picked and Ackland Rieslings are delicious in 2011 but Ackland has more precision and focus, although it is, curiously, a much more forward offering than in previous vintages. This means that you don't have to feel guilty for diving in to this soothing lemon balm plunge pool whenever you wish. Do seek out 2011 Three, the inspirational blend of Gewurz, Pinot Gris and Riesling which looks fabulous this year, too, and also join me in helping 2010 Knapstein Shiraz to find a home. At £12.99 it is an extraordinarily exciting proposition, with epic balance and only a kiss of oak and this makes it a vital part of everyone's fine wine diet.

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### **2006 Peter Lehmann, Reserve Wigan Riesling, Eden Valley, SA £14**

'06 Wigan Riesling is not only remarkable for its highly developed complex aromas and mature palate flavours, but it is also, pound for pound, one of the most incredible value white wines available anywhere in the solar system. Most tasters expect this wine to cost at least ten pounds more given its all-encompassing flavour joyride. It's also worth noting that 2006 Margaret Semillon, another late-released, ready-to-fly wine, is also widely available this year. With a new agent on board we can expect to see some fireworks from this imperial Aussie icon.

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### **2011 Plantagenet, Great Southern Riesling, Great Southern, WA £15**

There is something almost masochistic about the rapier-sharp lime zest flavours in this searingly dry WA Riesling. Some may find it a little too austere for their tastes whereas others will rejoice in its incredibly tangy, mouth-watering finish. Watch out for a fleeting glimpse of lemon meringue pie on the mid-palate and help yourself to the juiciest tiger prawns with chilli and lemongrass you can find.

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### **2011 Pikes Riesling, Clare Valley, SA £17**

An atypical 2011, Pikes Riesling still exhibits an introverted, shy exterior signifying more age-ability than many. There is structure here, too, making it a foodier proposition than others in this list, so I suggest that you grab a few cases, test drive a few bottles and then squirrel the rest away for 2-5 years. As always with Neil's wines you will be amazed at the kaleidoscopic beauty found in this bottle.

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### **2009 Jim Barry, The Florita Riesling, Clare Valley, SA £24**

Even though this wine is already three years old, it still defends itself with some fairly brutal acidity and awe-inspiring tension. This single vineyard Riesling commands extraordinary respect in the glass thanks to its profound mineral tones, cheek-sucking lemon and lime flavours and astute acidity. I am sure that, in years to come, this vineyard will be as revered in the same way as some of the finest Alsatian Grands Crus! For a more genial and less demanding experience slide yourself slinkily into a bottle of 2011 Lodge Hill Riesling which is sure to thrill you, too, perhaps in a tenderer and less urgent manner.

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### **2011 Henschke, Julius Riesling, Eden Valley, SA £24**

This is the finest Riesling that Henschke has produced in years and it possesses the most extraordinary amplitude of luscious, cool, near-tropical flavours on the palate. Its delightful trajectory of glistening fruit zooms along briskly to a crisp, bright, enlivening finish and you are left gasping for more. Just approaching drinking, Julius will no doubt age beautifully, but I will find it very hard to show the self-control required to allow it to do so.

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### **2010 Skillogalee, Trevarrick Riesling, Clare Valley, SA £27**

With no Trevarrick Riesling released in 2011 this incredible 2010 vintage wine must be secured as soon as possible because it is fast becoming one of the Clare Valley's finest cult creations. Single vineyard and single contour, Trevarrick's power and poise ratio is in perfect balance. It will age forever, but I can't help thinking that I adore the racy acidity and soaring lemon balm notes right now. Also, seek out 2007 Trevarrick Shiraz/Cabernet which exudes immense class and breeding and is also drinking beautifully already, by contrast to many of the other top flight examples of this style.

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# CHARDONNAY

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## 2010 Mountadam, Chardonnay (Barossa Cuvée), Barossa Valley, SA £10

Here is a unique opportunity to grab one of Con Moshos's celestial Chardonnays at a sub-tenner price point. This cheeky little wine gets the full Mountadam treatment but it is sourced from slightly less expensive fruit from the Barossa postcode as a whole. In spite of this, it lacks none of the brio and wizardry of its loftier stable mates, so I highly recommend this wine. It just shows that you can never predict when a wine might make the 100 Best grade, because on paper this wine wouldn't have stood a chance, but after just one sip it leapt onto the starting grid!

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## 2011 Peter Lehmann, EV Chardonnay, Eden Valley, SA £12

My surprise Chardonnay of the year comes from an unlikely source but a new Eden Valley pair which includes this wine and a 2009 Shiraz should, by all rights, explode onto the gastropub and wine bar scene because they are incredibly well put together and also remarkably complex to boot. The edge that this cooler region gives Chardonnay is amazing and if anyone ever needed an entry level red and white to entuse Oz-sceptics this must be the pair.

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## 2011 Wirra Wirra, 12th Man Chardonnay, Adelaide Hills, SA £17

Wirra manages not only to make extraordinary top end cuvées but it also it keeps its every day punters happy with high-spec, affordable wines (which is a sign of their integrity and inspirational work rate) and Twelfth Man offers us all a wondrous version of their take on Premier Cru Chablis. The fruit is controlled, the oak is in line, the length is considerable and the finish is delightful. This is a resounding success for a company that is perceived as red wine specialists. And lest you forget, the 12th Man carries the drinks and with this wine on offer he is clearly the most important chap in the team.

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## 2011 Logan, Chardonnay, Orange, NSW £17

The 2010 Logan Chardonnay amazed me with its epic tension and stunning, rakish lines. Sadly this vintage is set to change mid-season, so I summoned a 2011, crossing my fingers that it was of a similar calibre of ethereal beauty. It was. At 930m above sea level this gripping Chardonnay is built around a core of ultra-fine acidity and keen apple and pear fruit. While it may feel uncommonly razor sharp and high tensile, there is already beautiful texture emerging and bearing in mind its price point this is a wine that will have classicists on their feet applauding the undoubted skills of sagacious winemaker Peter Logan and his mission to make delicate, euro-trouncing white wines in New South Wales' secret weapon region, Orange.

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## 2009 Yalumba, FDW7c Chardonnay, Adelaide Hills, SA £19

Talk about downplaying the name of a wine – Fine Dry White hardly oversells this sensational Chardonnay but you will know by now that Yalumba is a modest operation and if they are to release a specialist Adelaide Hills Chardonnay it is always going to be a mind-blowing, top flight creation. The structure and density of this creamy, succulent Chardonnay are a wonder to behold. At this rate the Adelaide Hills is not far off being as well populated as the Côte de Beaune with stunning, seductress-shaped Chardonnays.

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## 2010 Stonier, Reserve Chardonnay, Mornington Peninsula, Vic £20

2008 Stonier Reserve Chardonnay is a mighty creation and we in the UK will be skipping the '09 and heading straight to this 2010 in the autumn. This is a complete result because '10 is the most assured and noble Chardonnay ever to be produced at this iconic Mornington estate. In spite of its youth there is a calmness and elegance about this wine that defies belief. It wears its oak beautifully, like a mink coat, and underneath... Well let's not talk about what's underneath.

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### **2009 The Lane, Beginning Chardonnay, Adelaide Hills, SA £23**

The stunning 2007 vintage of Beginning is coming to a close in the UK and the 2009 is taking up the baton. This is an extremely exciting time for The Lane because these are two of the most delicious wines that they have ever produced. Their iconic Sauvignon Blanc/Semillon blend, Gathering, takes a well-earned rest from the 100 Best this year, leaving us to focus solely on what this estate does best – crafting heart-achingly beautiful Chardonnay. The complexity of this wine is simply staggering and it further reinforces the point that The Lane is one of the most important destinations in Australia for the experienced and passionate wine lover.

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### **2010 Vasse Felix, Heytesbury Chardonnay, Margaret River, WA £23**

2010 ‘normal’ Vasse Felix Chardonnay is a lovely, fresh ‘lunchtime’ style wine but if you want to step up to a more senior level then 2010 Heytesbury is the haute-couture version assembled from wild yeast fermentation, nine months in eye-wateringly expensive oak and judicious battonage. The result is the vinous version of a liberally buttered, warm croissant groaning with tart, Seville orange marmalade. This is a heavenly creation with a long and mesmerising life ahead of it.

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### **2009 Leeuwin, Prelude Chardonnay, Margaret River, WA £25**

Leeuwin’s Prelude has always given us a glimpse of what this estate’s flagship wine, Art Series, is all about. But as 2008 Art Series is still in a state of stock, probably needing a few more years to gather its skirts (and it got a mention last year anyway), Prelude once again takes centre stage with this succulent, noble vintage. It’s interesting to ask tasters which Chardonnay they favour in a line-up of Australian classics. In my experience, if Leeuwin is in the reckoning, it will always grab the lion’s share of the votes. The Horgans can be extremely proud of their achievements at this phenomenal estate.

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### **2008 Brown Brothers, Patricia Chardonnay, Vic £25**

While 2006 Patricia Cabernet has already found some shelf space in the UK (do track it down, because it is a very elegant and distinguished style), 2008 Patricia Chardonnay, its luxuriously attractive sibling hasn’t even been to the prom, so this is your very first chance to mark her

card. This is the first Patricia Chardonnay for five years. The Browns are unbelievably proud of their Patricia wines and only the finest fruit makes the cut. Sourced from the Whitland and Coombe Farm vineyards and only utilising 35% new French oak this is a classical take on the cool climate Victorian Chardonnay model with staggering length and pristine stone fruit flavours. Corton-Charlie be on your guard!

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### **2011 Ocean Eight, Verve Chardonnay, Mornington Peninsula, Vic £27**

Even Elle Macpherson in her prime didn't possess vital statistics as jaw-dropping as 2011 Verve - Alcohol: 12.2%, TA: 7.4, pH: 3.36, RS: <0.5! The spanking new vintage of Verve displays even more knicker-elastic-snapping acidity than last year's bracing 2010 and yet it already looks utterly irresistible. This vineyard has seemingly been corseted for the past few years to perform its phenologically finest work at lowly levels of 'ripeness'. The resulting restraint is utterly breath-taking and it is matched by the delicacy and finesse of the enticing, faintly-oak-kissed Chardonnay fruit.

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### **2011 Cherubino, Chardonnay, Margaret River, WA £28**

You can never predict when you will come across a wine that will simply take your breath away but after one of my Roadshow events this year a parcel containing this wine and Larry's 2008 Shiraz arrived and I decided to open both bottles on the spot. They completely floored me with their complexity, passion and excellence. Brand new to the UK, this duo is set to challenge the status quo of these two varieties reminding us all that WA remains a force to be reckoned with and Larry is one of its most gifted residents.

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### **2010 Petaluma, Tiers Chardonnay, Adelaide Hills, SA £30**

Petaluma's current crop of whites is the finest that it has ever produced with 2010 Viognier rivalling some of the great Northern Rhône proponents of this variety and the 2010 Estate Piccadilly Chardonnay looking stunningly complex and wondrously engaging. 2010 Tiers is twice the wine that the Estate Chardonnay is though, and that is saying something. Admittedly, this is a demure, youthful wine but it is easy to see just how much class there is already on board. I cannot emphasise how much excitement and value there is in 2010 Petaluma Tiers – it is a truly astounding and accomplished creation.

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### **2011 Penfolds, Bin 311 Chardonnay, Henty, Vic £30**

My usual favourite, the Penfolds Adelaide Hills cuvée, 2010 Bin 10A, has had to stay on the touch line this year because it is so closed and introspective, allowing this mercurial Henty-sourced cuvée to storm the ramparts and blow us all away. With new wave, super-cool lime juice purity and a glorious Chablis-shaped, lip-smacking finish this fabulous wine shows exuberance, definition and panache in equal measure and it reminds us that Penfolds is still an exceptionally nimble and creative company with excellence as its unwavering goal.

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### **2010 Xanadu, Reserve Chardonnay, Margaret River, WA £36**

My tasting note for this wine read ‘lovely, balanced, rich, honey and nutmeg fruit – tastes like a very flash Meursault’. Xanadu has tamed its Reserve Chardonnay over the last few vintages, calming the oak and tempering the mandarin notes and we are left with a true beauty which, believe it or not, parades elegance and power in perfect harmony.

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## **ROSÉ**

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### **2011 Charles Melton, Rose of Virginia, Barossa Valley, SA £19**

With Turkey Flat selling like hot cakes and therefore due to change vintage mid-season, it writes itself out of this year’s line up, and so Rose of Virginia has the entire Rosé section to itself. I have not found any other worthy wines this year and I feel that the (fine) Australian Rosé offering seems to have run out of steam. Thank goodness that Charlie still waves his magic wand over this stunner though! At a more manageable 12.5% alcohol, but with every bit as much bravado and explosive red berry fruit, this world-class, fruit-drenched rosé will continue to excite our palates without wearing us all out.

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# PINOT NOIR

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## **2010 Stonier, Pinot Noir, Mornington Peninsula, Vic £13**

While I adore Windmill Pinot and also the Reserve 2010 releases, giving them both trophy-sized scores in my notes, I cannot overlook the beauty and persistence offered by the Estate Pinot at Stonier, particularly as it maintains its £13 price tag! This surely makes this wine one of the best value red wines, let alone Pinots, on our shelves? As much care and attention goes into this wine as the other showcase creations and this is to be applauded – Mike Symons take a bow please, you are a genius.

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## **2010 Pirie South, Pinot Noir, Tas £13**

With rumours that the estate wine may not appear after the glorious 2007 release (which I heartily recommend that you buy), 2010 Pirie South Pinot is a mightily worthy standard bearer wine for the great Dr. Andrew Pirie. With crisp, Côte Chalonnaise tannins and pert, earthy minerality this is a gutsy, yet brightly fruited Pinot which sells for a pittance by comparison to the experience you are rewarded with on the palate. Just before going to print I was lucky enough to taste the beautiful follow-on 2011 vintage and you are in for a real treat. It is a rascally, vibrant, fruit-driven wine with guaranteed appeal and it, too, is sensational value for money.

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## **2010 Tamar Ridge, Kayena Vineyard Pinot Noir, Tas £18**

Last year, Tamar Ridge and its second wine, Devil’s Corner Pinot, both won a spot in the list and this year exactly the same thing has happened. Focussing on the Estate wine this time, there is more richness than many might expect in these Tassie Pinots and this always provokes debate among Roadshow tasters. They simply can’t believe the value afforded here and with more than enough ‘Burgundian detail’ on the nose and palate to attach oneself to, this duo is a compelling listing in any modernist’s cellar.

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### **2010 Paringa, Peninsula Pinot Noir, Mornington Peninsula, Vic £26**

By contrast to last year's Paringa Estate inclusion, this year I am head over heels about the indulgent 2010 Peninsula Pinot Noir with its lush, mulberry and crimson cherry fruit notes. With a little more weight on its frame than the '09 it is sure to be a wild fire hit. The 2009 Estate Pinot is a noble creation, too, built to gather complexity over the next four or five years and following on from last year's triumphant 2008 vintage it is sure to cement this estates reputation at the top of the tree of Australian Pinot producers.

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### **2010 Mac Forbes, Yarra Valley Pinot Noir, Yarra Valley, Vic £26**

I rarely feel compelled to tweet when leaving a tasting, but Mac's range of 2010 Chardonnays and Pinots are such a complete and compelling group of wines that I couldn't help myself. We all love Mac and there is no doubt he knows a thing or two about fashioning mystical wines, but in 2010 all of the planets have aligned for him because he has the illusive red fruit core AND the more detailed, truffle-y and earthy notes at the same time in all of his wines. My pick of his reds is this super-smooth, cherry-smooched elixir and it's the cheapest of the range! Luckily I have more than 140 characters here to express my admiration for him and his wines.

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### **2010 Yabby Lake, Single Vineyard Pinot Noir, Mornington Peninsula, Vic £30**

The tiny production 2010 Block 2 is the pick of the 'Block' wines this year, but for half the price you must consider this sensational, so-called Single Vineyard wine because it only lagged half a point behind in my notes. A tad closed and firm right now, Tom Carson makes wines that dictate how and when you drink them rather than the other way round. I would recommend that you wait until 2013 before attacking this fabulously complex creation and then spend a fortune on the finest chicken you can find, roast it and eat it with your best friends in the world with this wine alongside – sheer, unadulterated bliss.

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### **2010 Tapanappa, Foggy Hill Vineyard Pinot Noir, Fleurieu Peninsula, SA £32**

With a highly aromatic and complex aroma akin to a 'warm vintage' Volnay, this is an aromatically hedonistic, Foggy Hill Vineyard Pinot with a cunning, middle-weight palate. The classic, garnet Pinot hue is spot on in this wine and it hasn't been allowed to put on too much weight making it a transcendental delight. Firm on the finish and only just peeking out of its

shell, you can happily swirl the '09 until this glorious 2010 takes over and commands your undivided attention mid-way through 2013.

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### **2010 Ten Minutes by Tractor, Pinot Noir, Mornington Peninsula, Vic £36**

2010 10X Pinot Noir had this slot sewn up with its ebullient mulberry and plum fruit and roasted nut oak seasoning until DHL banged on my door with a bottle of the 2010 Estate wine. Sourced from Judd, McCutcheon and Wallace vineyards, in the prime Main Ridge parish of Mornington, the sheer purity, outstanding depth and seriousness of this wine knocked me sideways on the very first sip. The tannins are as fine as I have ever seen from this region and the complexity already dumbfounds the olfactory system, all meaning that TMBT is a major force to be reckoned in the world of global Pinot Noir worship.

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### **2009 Kooyong, Haven Pinot Noir, Mornington Peninsula, Vic £43**

Sandro Mosele's single vineyard Pinots always provoke debate among tasters. Which is your favourite? Which is the most forward? Which is the most profound? Often the answer to these questions mean that you have to buy all three, but in 2009 Haven ticks all of these boxes for me and more on account of its exoticism, heavenly texture and multi-layered red and black fruit palate. This pioneering Mornington estate has jumped straight back into our consciousness with their incredible 2009 releases and Haven is exactly what the name suggests it is.

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## **CABERNET & MERLOT**

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### **2010 McWilliam's, Hanwood Cabernet Sauvignon, SEA £8**

The budget Cabernet award this year goes to Hanwood (as it has done many times before). The reason for this is that this wine has such a splendid core of mid-palate fruit that it delights the punter and confounds the critic. How they managed to do this for the money is beyond me but I do hope that they continue because it is a model Cabernet for the country to follow. Retailers up and down the land should benchmark this wine against their entire sub-tenner Cabernet category and they will get a very big surprise.

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### **2010 Moss Wood, Amy's, Margaret River, WA £15**

In 2010 Amy's has a whopping 32% Petit Verdot component which could conceivably unbalance everybody's favourite Moss Wood heroine. Instead it adds yet another layer of glamour and sophistication and, for my money, this is the most captivating Amy's to date. Bear in mind that 2009 Moss Wood Cabernet is a phenomenal creation, gaining a nose-bleedingly high score in my notes, but it really ought to be cellared for a minimum of ten years, so in the meantime, you are fortunate to have a flight of incredible Amy's vintages to play with culminating in this ballistic 2010.

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### **2005 Yalumba, Menzies, Coonawarra, SA £27**

I fell out of love with Menzies some time ago and wondered if I was ever going to get back on speaking terms with this famous Aussie stalwart. Thank goodness that the 2005 now shows some delightful civility and complexity because, at seven years old, it has mellowed sufficiently to allow the true Coonawarra Cabernet essence to emerge without being occluded by the more forceful and raw edges which I have been used to of late. It turns out that time not only heals all things, but it positively gives them a makeover, too. Well done Yalumba for bringing Menzies back to life.

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### **2009 Wirra Wirra, Dead Ringer Cabernet Sauvignon, McLaren Vale, SA £35**

One of the more structured, powerful, imposing wines in this list, Dead Ringer and its Shiraz partner RSW are both incredible in 2009. For a wine of this density and inkiness Dead Ringer has a surprisingly compact palate and this can only be unravelled and interpreted fully by decanting and vigorous swirling. The Pauillac-like density softens a touch and points to a glorious future for this Cabernet-championing estate. At half the price of some of the big boys, Dead Ringer is playing a very intelligent game indeed.

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### **2009 Grosset, Gaia, Clare Valley, SA £39**

Gaia is usually an elemental and somewhat belligerent force in its youth. However, in 2009 it is a truly beautiful and dare I say it, ever so sexy, red wine that somewhat catches you unaware. There is no doubting the fact that this single vineyard wine is usually unnervingly wild and untamed, but in 2009 it has taken a sabbatical from its more intellectually challenging mode, so if you are yet to fall under its messianic charms now is the time to dip your toe into Gaia. You will find that it isn't half as menacing as you might expect.

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### **2004 Jim Barry, The Benbournie Cabernet Sauvignon, Clare Valley, SA £50**

A massive brooding, black Cabernet with magnificent complexity and a heroic finish, '04 Benbournie is fashioned along an ancient, untamed recipe for Cabernet which we rarely get to see these days. A little more muscular than you might expect for a Jukesy-wine, Benbournie guarantees its spot in the 100 by virtue of its devastating purity, hypnotic aroma and rampaging core fruit. If you love Super Tuscan wines and top flight Napa Cabs, then this towering red will exceed your expectations by a mile.

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### **2009 Lindemans, St George, Coonawarra, SA £60**

St George and his tri-varietal cousin Pyrus (a Cab Sauv, Malbec, Merlot blend) have both played a blinder in 2009. It's a long time since these wines were shown in the UK and with a name like St George it ought to be received by the English with open arms. This damson and cassis-soaked Coonawarra classic is augmented with juicy liquorice and espresso notes and, with an hour to breathe, it is one of my favourite Cabernets of the year.

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### **2009 Cullen, Diana Madeline, Margaret River, WA £67**

This is the most backward and introverted Diana Madeline made in a while and it is possible to agitate the molecules of this elixir such that they give forth a mesmerising aroma, but you have to be persistent and they are sure as hell reluctant to do so. This, in truth, means that you really ought to allow this beauty to slumber for a further three or four years minimum before waking her up. Having said this DM has never been as sought after as it is today so you need to stick your hand up immediately for fear of losing out. At a time when some of the Bordeaux Châteaux are thinking of shelving their en primeur system, there is a distinct possibility that some in Australia might have to introduce one!

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### **2005 Henschke, Cyril Cabernet Sauvignon, Eden Valley, SA £75**

My enthusiasm for Henschke was reignited earlier this year when I showed '05 Mount Edelstone Shiraz at one of my masterclasses. It went on to be the best selling wine of the evening in spite of its lofty price tag. A tasting followed and Cyril '05 leapt out at me, confirming that this phenomenal estate, high in the Eden Valley, can make Cabernet to rival anywhere in the world. The beauty about this wine's inclusion is that it's just about ready to drink, allowing you to bathe in its glory the second that you get the bottle home.

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### **2009 Penfolds, Bin 707, Barossa Valley, SA £175**

Of the mega-icon Penfolds releases this year, 707 waltzes away with the award of most senior wine of the lot. With nothing short of Las Cases-like power and distinction this is one of my favourite 707s in a long while. Seemingly oakier than one might expect, this is still a wine in perfect balance because the fruit is absolutely incredible and the whole experience left me panting with joy.

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# CABERNET/SHIRAZ & SHIRAZ/CABERNET

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## 2010 Willunga 100, Cabernet / Shiraz, McLaren Vale, SA £10

With Sainsbury's punting out Willunga 100 The Olive Branch Grenache at a tenner, the high street is a much more comfortable place to be than in the past. However, the independent merchants can take advantage of this wine, the fabulous Cab/Shiraz blend, in order to compete on a level playing field, price for price. With more balance, great shape and spicier tannins than the 2009 this excellent wine is set to make even more friends than ever before. Once tasted, never forgotten, this is one wine that slips into the 'house red' role in an instant.

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## 2010 Penfolds, Koonunga Hill Seventy Six Shiraz / Cabernet, SA £12



Last year's 2009 vintage won the hearts of many on the Roadshow and this year the recipe has been finessed somewhat, such that there is truly beautiful balance in place of raw power and floral, violet notes intertwine with the more classic blood and guts theme. With increased freshness and poise, I expect this talented red to appeal to an even wider audience this year. The retro label also helps enormously to explain where this historic wine is coming from.

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## 2010 Wirra Wirra, Church Block, McLaren Vale, SA £13



Once again, Church Block storms into its position in the 100 by virtue of the incredible blending skills at Wirra HQ. With a hearty 18% Merlot in the mix this wine is somewhat of an imposter in the Cab/Shiraz category but we forgive it because it is so damn right delicious and RTD. Made in surprisingly large quantities this is a wine that every serious Aussie wine lover should be considering as their emergency red because it still manages to hit the shelves at around the £13 mark.

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## 2009 Hollick, Stock Route Shiraz / Cabernet, Coonawarra, SA £15

Ian Hollick's classy take on the Shiraz/Cab model gives us a great value wine with masses of integrity, a medium weight palate and a superb, lingering spice on the finish. The tannins may make you want to keep this for a few years but I would suggest that you drink Stock Route while the fruit maintains its exuberance. It's great to see a top estate delivering a classic Coonawarra wine at this price – nice work Hollick.

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## 2009 Penley, Condor Shiraz / Cabernet, Coonawarra, SA £18

With honed fruit and a long, dark, spicy palate, this briary wine is neither too heavy, too oaky, nor is it too furtively tannic for you to crack on now and experience its cultured fragrance and mellow palate. Condor sounds more threatening than it really is! This is another excellent and controlled piece of talented winemaking by the great Kym Tolley. I wish that we saw more of his work in the UK.

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## 2009 Yalumba FDR1A, Barossa Valley, SA £23

FDR1A 2009 carries on the fabulous run of form for this bizarrely named wine. Made from 64% Cab and 36% Shiraz this is a decadent, velvety smooth, top flight red wine which is already drinking beautifully and I happen to know that the 2010 is also another phenomenal beast leaning even further towards Cabernet and loading yet more American oak into its complex leather and cedar-studded chassis. FDR1A will soon be on everyone's lips.

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## 2009 McWilliam's, 1877, Australia £26

Made from a selection of top flight fruit coming from Hilltops, Heathcote and Coonawarra, this is an exquisite wine loaded with mulberries and plums on the nose and carrying a rich, well-appointed mid-palate, soaked in bold oak and strident pepper. On the youthful side, you can expect '09 1877 to live for a decade or two so try not to be too hasty when it comes to drinking it. Also consider the price of other grand estates' top wines and pinch yourself when you do the maths and realise that you could get a six-pack of this leviathan for the price of a bottle of some of its rivals.

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### **2006 Yalumba, The Signature, Barossa Valley, SA £28**

Still fairly backward, with crunchy tannins and dark, spicy fruit, Signature's classical recipe prevents it from embracing your palate prior to its fifth birthday. Now that this has come and gone you are at liberty to decant and swirl this wine in order to coax it out of its cave. When you do, make sure you have some mighty carnivorous fare to enjoy alongside. If FDR1A is the modernists take on Cabernet and Shiraz, then this is a wine for those of you with a penchant for the Middle Ages! Bring on the jousting!

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### **2009 Wolf Blass, Grey Label Shiraz / Cabernet, SA £29**

This vibrant, punchy, lusty red wine, doesn't have anything like the tannin or oak that you might expect and so it is raring to go. Coming from Mount Benson and Robe fruit it shows that these 'lesser regions', under the right tutelage, can perform at the highest level. I adore the mulberry and loganberry notes in this more genial style of wine. If you have ever tasted Black Label, then this is the one that isn't made in Mordor.

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### **2008 Majella, The Malleea, Coonawarra, SA £40**

The flagship wine from Prof. Lynn is Malleea and it is a sublime, example of the heroic Cabernet/Shiraz partnership with a welcome Coonawarra twist of mint leaf and sweet leather. While not as muscular as other South Australian versions of this magical mix of grapes, '08 Malleea is a genial, sensual experience with mouth-watering savoury tannins and devastating balance.

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### **2010 Glaetzer, Anaperenna, Barossa Valley, SA £44**

Ben Glaetzer's stylish red wines seem to be tailor-made for the UK audience and people swoon at their flavours. Last year's 2009 Bishop Shiraz gives way to a stunning 2010 but as no 2011 Bishop was made, stock will be tight, so get in quick. This leaves the coast clear for Anaperenna, Ben's mighty Shiraz/Cabernet blend, to do some serious damage to peoples credit cards. If you haven't tasted this wine before, or perhaps remember Godolphin from the old days, then this wine has never been better than it is in 2010. Crash-helmets on, rev the engine up to several thousand rpm and let the tyres squeal – this is one nail-biting ride.

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### **2009 Penfolds, Bin 389, Barossa Valley, SA £50**

A member of last year's 100, '08 Bin 389 went on to win a Trophy for Best Wine Over \$50 at The Great Australian Red competition in November 2011. This year's 2009 release is a silkier, more suave proposition with exceptional spice and a seamless join between the two varieties. I venture that it will do extremely well once again in this hard-fought contest.

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## **SHIRAZ, GRENACHE, MOURVÈDRE**

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### **2008 Rolf Binder, Heinrich Shiraz/Mataro/Grenache, Barossa Valley, SA £16**

This SMG blend benefits from the inclusion of a dollop of 100 year old Mataro (Mourvèdre) and while you might imagine that this would weigh Heinrich down it in fact brings levity and freshness in spite of the hot weather conditions in the 2008 vintage. The beautiful fruit integration and clean tannins mean that this intense, but not heavy, wine is a testament to Rolf Binder's widely admired winemaking skills. It's also worth noting that the price is devilishly affordable, too, bearing in mind the sheer excellence of this wine.

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### **2009 d'Arenberg, The Derelict Vineyard Grenache, McLaren Vale, SA £19**

With twelve months spent in American oak this fragrant, herbal, pipe smoke and mulberry-imbued Grenache is absolutely captivating. d'Arenberg's recent red releases are among the best that I have seen in a decade, with 2008 Dead Arm surely being the epitome of its indomitable McLaren Vale style. There were very few pure Grenache wines that rocked my boat this year, which is a shame, so allow this wine to soothe your hectic tastes buds with its mellifluous, calming, other-worldly flavours.

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### **2009 Penfolds, Bin 28 Kalimna Shiraz, SA £19**

With creamy oak and beautifully smooth layers of subtle, liquorice and cassis, '09 Bin 28 is a guaranteed winner and with its sub £20 price tag it is sure to carry the Penfolds message far and wide this year. 2010 Thomas Hyland Shiraz is another triumph in the Penfolds stable, so you can be thankfully assured of drinking great value Penfolds reds as well as the much-vaunted, more eye-wateringly expensive creations!



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### **2009 Brokenwood, Shiraz, Hunter Valley, NSW £19**

Now that Graveyard Shiraz is up around the £80 mark (and this confines it to only the most flamboyant of dinner parties), I was compelled to look more closely at the Estate Shiraz this year and it amazed me with its incredible, bright purple fruit, touch of tar, game and mouth-watering spice. Good Hunter Shiraz is a rare beast, but it also has dimensions which I find immensely attractive. '09 Brokenwood Shiraz is crunchy, modern and vital and it will certainly attract a lot of attention to this legendary estate.

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### **2009 St Hallett, Blackwell Shiraz, Barossa Valley, SA £19**

St Hallett is in the middle of a phenomenal purple patch right now, with 2010 Faith looking better than ever, 2009 Old Block back on track as one of the region's most revered reds, 2010 Mattschoss Shiraz rumoured to be appearing in the UK this year (watch this space because this is one of the most sensational Eden Valley Shiraz I have ever tasted) and my chosen wine, 2009 Blackwell, showing more dexterity and finesse than the superb, if a little scary, 2008 which made last year's cut. Toby Barlow pours all of his energies into this magnificent company and every single release is a triumph – and you can't say that about many producers these days!

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### **2009 Chapel Hill, Mourvèdre, McLaren Vale, SA £20**

With meaty, dark fruit, great depth, determined tannins and commendable authenticity this swarthy Mourvèdre is an essential part of your wine diet giving you an opportunity to take a few days off from Shiraz and Grenache in order to wallow in its devastating well of spicy, inky fruit. In addition to this staggeringly beautiful, if a little daunting red wine, there is also a 2009 Bush Vine Grenache which is another blinding piece of work from the great Michael Fragos and it loads more intensity and black cherry fruit than most McLV Grenaches can even dream of.

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### **2010 Petaluma, Shiraz, Adelaide Hills, SA £20**

With true Northern Rhône pepper and freshness on the nose, this is a wonderfully cool example of crunchy, medium-weight Shiraz and it is certainly a style that is gathering momentum in the UK. With crisp tannins and black cherry fruit this open, evocative wine is sure to make a new crowd of friends in no time at all.

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### **2008 Saltram, Mamre Brook Shiraz, Barossa Valley, SA £21**

We have not seen Mamre Brook in the UK for years but if there was ever a vintage with which to reunite our palates it is this wine, the tremendous 2008. With utterly stunning, juicy, rich blackcurrant and mulberry fruit coupled with overtly aromatic vanillin oak this is a true slice of generous Barossa Shiraz which will bear hug your taste buds and make you grin from ear to ear.

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### **2006 Jim Barry, The McRae Wood Shiraz, Clare Valley, SA £24**

I have tasted this wine many times this year and on every occasion the word phenomenal pops up in my notes. My symbol for a potential inclusion in the 100 Best is the number 100 with a circle drawn around it and Jim Barry Wines has no fewer than seven of these symbols this year. Rather than giving this exceptional winery seven listings though, I have condensed them somewhat and doubled up the write-ups, but '06 McRae Wood needs to be trumpeted to the nation so it gets its very own slot. The velvety texture, heavenly, sweet woodsmoke notes coupled with the blackberry and vanilla crumble palate are nothing short of delectable.

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### **2009 Shaw & Smith, Shiraz, Adelaide Hills, SA £25**

Shaw & Smith has picked up a place among the reds this year for the very first time and it is this turbo-charged, Crozes-Hermitage taste-alike that has mightily impressed me. With considerable swagger and a modern fruit core overlain by bright pepper and iodine notes, this is very impressive creature to add to their already excellent portfolio of whites. Adelaide Hills is attracting a lot of interest for its dynamic, pin-sharp Shiraz wines and this is one of the best.

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## 2008 Tim Adams, The Aberfeldy Shiraz, Clare Valley, SA £28

Tim's 2011 Riesling is a cracker and it is widely available so re-introduce yourself asap to one of the UK's longest standing Riesling stars. But if you want to see what this estate can really do go right to the top of the tree and pour yourself a glass of The Aberfeldy Shiraz. With black forest gâteau notes, prunes soaked in Armagnac and a liberal dusting of cracked pepper this is one of the finest Shiraz in Clare and in 2008 Bonecrusher may well have made his best vintage ever. Tim – we all salute you!

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## 2009 The Lane, Reunion Shiraz, Adelaide Hills, SA £29

With the everyday hero, 2010 The Lane Shiraz/Viognier, due in this summer and 2010 19th Meeting Cabernet (the finest vintage of this wine to date) due to arrive in November, you might think that you have The Lane's reds covered, but no! 2009 Reunion Shiraz brings a gravitas and depth of fruit hitherto unseen from this excellent Domaine and the texture and complexity on the mid-palate shows just how special the micro climate is in the hills above Hahndorf. The Edwards family perfected their enigmatic Shiraz recipe long before their fellow Hillbillies and this is clear to see in Reunion. The layering of fruit and oak is sublime and the seamless, powdery tannins are mouth-watering and invigorating pulling you back to the glass over and over again.

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## 2009 Mitolo, GAM Shiraz, McLaren Vale, SA £29

2010 Jester Shiraz neatly takes up the reins from last year's 2009 so everyone can relax on that account. But this year my attention has been grabbed by the top wines from Frank Mitolo, notably 2009 Savitar, 2009 Serpico and this spectacular 2009 GAM. The least expensive of the trio, GAM is more forward and has more expressive fruit than the brooding Savitar and Amarone-styled Cabernet, Serpico. GAM also matures at a slightly faster rate, too, meaning that it will be at the top of its game by Christmas so you should really investigate what lies above the Jester level because it will be sure to impress you enormously.

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## 2006 Wakefield, St Andrew's Shiraz, Clare Valley, SA £30

I am always shocked by the level of winemaking shown in the inexpensive Wakefield wines and 2010 Promise Land Shiraz, at a mere £9.50, is a star player this year. But for the very first

time I have leap-frogged up to the top of the Wakefield ladder in order to recommend to you this insanely attractive, 100% barrel fermented St Andrew's Shiraz. The fruit quality and sheer amount of action on the palate is staggering and the way in which it has absorbed all of the profound oak notes takes your breath away. This is daring winemaking, and those who dare sometimes win!

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### **2008 Torbreck, Steading, Barossa Valley, SA £32**

Steading is, for some reason, one of the least expensive Torbreck wines around. Having said this, I gave it incredible notes this year, not least because it manages the GSM juggling skill without allowing any of the individual varieties in what should be a collaborative partnership to dominate. Without the herbal tang of many Grenache-dominant wines and with more chocolaty, black fruit notes, this is a wine that will appeal not only to fans of this time-honoured recipe but also to Shiraz monsters, too. Do look out for 2008 Descendant Shiraz/Viognier as well - at £95 it's a big ticket item, but on a global stage it is certainly worth the spend.

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### **2009 Grant Burge, Abednego, SGM, Barossa Valley, SA £34**

This is only the second time that Grant Burge has appeared in my 100 and, interestingly, it was this exact cuvée that made the grade last time. Coming from 100 year old plus Shiraz and Mourvèdre vines, Abednego is a pantechnicon of a proposal. With a massive, dark, brooding nose and a sensationally impactful palate, admittedly you would not expect to drink this wine at only three years old preferring to allow it to mature, but there is so much daring and showmanship involved in the glass it is pointless trying to deny yourself the pleasure of diving in.

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### **2009 Charles Melton, Nine Popes, Barossa Valley, SA £34**

While I adore the 2009 Grains of Paradise Shiraz with its proud oak, dusty tannins and languid, smooth palate, my excitement was diverted wholly by 2009 Nine Popes with its epic weight, supreme mid-palate complexity and intricate spice and pepper notes. Thank goodness this wine is still relatively affordable because it means that more people can open it alongside top Châteauneuf and marvel at Charlie's skill – because this is where Nine Popes truly belongs.

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### **2008 Peter Lehmann, Stonewell Shiraz, Barossa Valley, SA £35**

After last year's 2006 vintage I have neatly side stepped the somewhat 'Burgundian' 2007 vintage in favour of racing to the line with this bombastic 2008. Still one of the best value iconic red wines in Australia, Stonewell already has a legion of faithful followers in the UK and this 2008 will doubtless increase this throng to new levels.

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### **2009 First Drop, Fat of the Land, Greenock Shiraz, Barossa Valley, SA £45**

Matt and John have pushed the boundaries even further in 2009 and Greenock Shiraz is my pick of the excellent Fat of the Land range. With a splendid retinue of tannins supporting an amazing lush blackberry, plum and sweet liquorice palate, this is a very easy wine to adore on the first sip and that is what distances it from its more belligerent siblings. There are bitter dark chocolate, cool peat and even raspberry high notes to be found in this epic sub-regional Barrosan beauty and I think that we are all now being treated to the most complex and intricate work that the lads have ever done, so don't miss out on this erudite Titan of a wine.

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### **2007 Mount Langi Ghiran, Shiraz, Grampians, Vic £50**

'07 Langi Shiraz is my highest scoring red wine ever from this outstanding estate and with firm tannins, superb length and a very stylish and long mid-palate this is a more suave and elegant take on last year's 2006. Sandwiched between two exuberant vintages this '07 stands the chance of being viewed down the line as one of the most classic reds ever made at this estate. Due into the UK in September and with the imposing and impressive '08 following on a year later we should all have ample opportunity to savour this incredible wine.

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### **2008 Wynns, Michael Shiraz, Coonawarra, SA £56**

I've always been a massive fan of the mighty wines from Wynns but for some reason or another they always seem to be too tannic to really enchant my palate. Perhaps this is because I have focussed on their Cabernets – I'm familiar with Michael Shiraz but it is rarely seen in the UK, so when the latest shipment arrived I was first in the queue to taste. This is without doubt the most exciting Coonawarra Shiraz of the year, with controlled tannins, calm, perfectly poised fruit and a hedonistic cedary oak theme running the length of the wine. With a long life ahead of it, it is perhaps surprising that this wine is already showing remarkably well.

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### **2008 Penfolds, St Henri, Barossa Valley, SA £60**

'08 St Henri received my highest score of any Australian wine this year and I will sing its praises at every opportunity possible because this is one of the world's most heroic and downright delicious red wines. An atypical, fairly rich and big-boned St Henri this is a superbly glossy and incredibly rich style with limpidity and devastating density. It's already drinking (at a push), but with 30 years ahead of it this is one of the greatest wines ever to emerge from the Penfolds stable.

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### **2010 Clonakilla, Shiraz/Viognier, Canberra District, NSW £67**

A near perfect Shiraz/Viognier (19.5/20 in my notes) with sensational balance in spite of its youth, Clonakilla rules the roost with this succulent blend and the race is on to secure stock because only a small quantity of this wine is made each year. If you would like to experience Tim Kirk's majestic winemaking for less than twenty quid, look no further than 2010 Hilltops Shiraz where you will find a mightily impressive crunchy blackberry and blueberry-infused delight.

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## **SWEET & FORTIFIED**

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### **2010 Petaluma, Cane Cut Riesling, Clare Valley, SA half bottle £13**

This dreamy, languid, enchanting elixir is the best value Australian sweet wine of the year and it will entrance your taste buds with its heavenly, soothing, sybaritic fruit. Brand new and a complete interloper in this 100, this is the diminutive, sweet sister of the exceptionally strict and lime curd-tinged 2011 Petaluma Hanlin Hill Dry Riesling. It has taken the place this year of its Clare Valley pal 2011 Mount Horrocks Cordon Cut Riesling which, as you can imagine, after having spent virtually every single year setting up camp in this section is allowed a little time off (even though it scored 18.5/20 in my notes)!

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### **NV Dandelion, Legacy of the Barossa PX 30 year old, Barossa Valley, SA half bottle £18**

Superbly sexy, thoughtful, with great weight and complexity, Zar Brooks is one of the nicest people in the business and this wine is presumably made to ape his very own admirable



characteristics. It is a mightily impressive wine with just the right amount of rancio and acidic twang to keep all of that lustiness in order – a bit like our aforementioned hero!

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### **NV Campbells of Rutherglen, Classic Muscat, Rutherglen, Vic half bottle £19**

If you happen to have the cash then Campbells Merchant Prince Rare Muscat, at £61 per half bottle, is one of the most staggeringly delicious fortified wines around. I awarded it 19.5/20 in my notes and I am still wondering why I left that half point off! For those of us who can't quite stretch to this spend, but who want to drink wines of the highest order imaginable then this 'Classic' Muscat is a worthy and very classy substitute. We are so slow off the mark in the UK with Aussie Muscats and Topaques, but little by little these wines are seeping into our psyche and converting people, one by one, to the cause.

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### **NV Stanton & Killeen, Classic Topaque – Muscadelle, Rutherglen, Vic half bottle £19**

With waxy, ultra-smooth, caramel sauce and fig notes this is my favourite Topaque of the year. Lighter in body and more refreshing, if you can believe it, than the Muscats, this is an epic creation. If you want to pair this up with its portfolio Muscat for completeness then grab the Classic Muscat (for the same dosh) and you will find greengages, coffee, prunes and all manner of other delightful artefacts in the glass!

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### **2008 De Bortoli, Noble One, Riverina, NSW half bottle £20**

Noble One is sensational year in year out and this 2008 is a more forward proposition than recent vintages with intense honey notes and a fat mandarin palate and an apricot-skin-fresh finish. The 2009 vintage which rolls our way around the end of the year is another exceptional wine (19/20!!) with a haunting aroma, telltale ripe citrus theme and there are even some 500ml bottles available if you stick your hand up now! The thought that the traditional 375ml container can be improved by 125mls is too much to handle – pass the smelling salts, or better still a glass of Noble One!

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## **2008 Brown Brothers, Patricia Noble Riesling, Vic half bottle £22**

The drama-laden 2006 vintage of sweet Patricia is a truly magnificent wine. How on earth do you follow this bravura performance – there is only one way, with an even finer wine. This 2008 Noble Riesling is a little lighter and livelier than the lusty 2006 and it even has some cucumber and mint hints among the opulent apricot and marmalade excitement. Made from 1/3 botrytised, 1/3 raisined and 1/3 ‘normal’ sweet wine it is this layering of styles which results in this otherworldly experience. This is one of the most accomplished sweet wines in the world, from one of the true masters of the art.

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Amelia Jukes & Elodie Cameron own Hallowed Ground Ltd, a company importing fine boutique Australian wines into the UK. Their portfolio includes Fox Gordon, Ocean Eight, Ulithorne, Clos Clare and Paringa. For the avoidance of doubt any wines that appear in my 100 Best are listed on merit alone.

# TASTING NOTES



[www.matthewjukes.com](http://www.matthewjukes.com)



A<sup>+</sup> AUSTRALIAN WINE