

matthew**jukes**

2013/14



100 BEST  
AUSTRALIAN  
WINES

10th Anniversary Edition

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



# MATTHEW JUKES

## 100 BEST AUSTRALIAN WINES 2013/14

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Welcome to my 100 Best Australian Wines list for 2013/14. As always, this century of greats is the result of exhaustive 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 for the 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.

Looking back over the last ten years I have compiled a list of my **TOP FORTY WINERIES** in order of the number of listings in the 100 Best since 2004.

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|-----|-----------------------|-----|-------------------------|
| 1.  | <b>Penfolds</b>       | 21. | <b>Pewsey Vale</b>      |
| 2.  | <b>Yalumba</b>        | 22. | <b>Hardy's</b>          |
| 3.  | <b>de Bortoli</b>     | 23. | <b>Brown Bros</b>       |
| 4.  | <b>Peter Lehmann</b>  | 24. | <b>d'Arenberg</b>       |
| 5.  | <b>McWilliam's</b>    | 25. | <b>Glaetzer</b>         |
| 6.  | <b>Wirra Wirra</b>    | 26. | <b>Keith Tulloch</b>    |
| 7.  | <b>The Lane</b>       | 27. | <b>Knapstein</b>        |
| 8.  | <b>Jim Barry</b>      | 28. | <b>Majella</b>          |
| 9.  | <b>St Hallett</b>     | 29. | <b>Mitolo</b>           |
| 10. | <b>Jacob's Creek</b>  | 30. | <b>Moss Wood</b>        |
| 11. | <b>Cullen</b>         | 31. | <b>Skillogalee</b>      |
| 12. | <b>Petaluma</b>       | 32. | <b>Jansz</b>            |
| 13. | <b>Tim Adams</b>      | 33. | <b>Leeuwin</b>          |
| 14. | <b>Tyrrell's</b>      | 34. | <b>Mount Horrocks</b>   |
| 15. | <b>Yering Station</b> | 35. | <b>Shaw &amp; Smith</b> |
| 16. | <b>Grosset</b>        | 36. | <b>Torbreck</b>         |
| 17. | <b>Stonier</b>        | 37. | <b>Wolf Blass</b>       |
| 18. | <b>Chapel Hill</b>    | 38. | <b>Brokenwood</b>       |
| 19. | <b>Fox Gordon</b>     | 39. | <b>Charles Melton</b>   |
| 20. | <b>Tamar Ridge</b>    | 40. | <b>Clonakilla</b>       |

Over the last twelve months the 100 Best Australian Wines Roadshow has travelled to all corners of the UK on twelve sell-out dates. The response from the ever-increasing band of independent merchants who host these events is amazing. Attendance numbers at every event are up year on year. The 2013/14 Roadshow is already being planned and I am determined that it will be even more dynamic than ever.

It goes without saying that every wine listed here 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 2013/14 – The retail stockists and UK agents will be listed on my website and updated regularly; because inevitably when this list is launched new stockists appear. It is available free of charge on [matthewjukes.com](http://matthewjukes.com). The guide prices are accurate at the time of printing and I have made an extra effort this year to force the UK agents to give me the correct information! I have left a space to make notes after every wine 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. I have also listed the wines in tasting order and not price order. This should make your lives easier, too.

Massive thanks goes to all of the Australian Wineries and UK representatives who have sent samples in for me to taste for this initiative. I would like to thank Elizabeth Cook for her invaluable expertise in organising the launch and the 100 Best Roadshow and also to Wine Australia for their support with my launch at Australia House.

Matthews 

# FIZZ

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## **NV Brown Brothers, Pinot Noir / Chardonnay / Pinot Meunier, Vic £18.00**

I have long been obsessed by Patricia Pinot Noir / Chardonnay Brut, the scintillating, top end, vintage fizz made by this dynamic family outfit in sleepy Milawa. But as we see little of this wine in the UK I regularly relax into a glass or two of this over-performing NV cuvée. If you haven't tasted it for a while you should. There is immense class and restraint on show and, whether this is relevant or not, it kicks every French, Spanish and Italian (I would include English in this list, but they are not inexpensive enough) sparkler at this price in the proverbials. Why restaurants and retailers haven't cottoned onto this is beyond me.

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## **NV Jansz, Tas £15.00**

One of the most reliable names in the world of sparkling wine, Jansz continues to impress fizz enthusiasts with its lush, layered, complex creations. With the sort of palate weight that you might expect from a vintage cuvée, just enough acidity to impress purists and also enough fruit to hypnotise newcomers this is a mightily clever wine. We all know that NV cuvées are more difficult to assemble than vintage cuvées and this shows off Natalie Fryar's innate understanding of her craft to a tee. It's stunning value, too!

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## **NV Seppelt, Salinger Select Cuvée, Australia £18.00**

Using all three fizz grapes and keeping the alcohol low and the acidity high this is a great wine and it deserves to be applauded for sourcing fruit from the premium regions of Adelaide Hills, Henty and Tumberumba while still keeping the price at the affordable end of the spectrum. I poured this (blind) for some Champagne experts the other day and everyone nodded sagely in approval. It's great to have Salinger in the UK at last – hopefully someone will spot it and it will become a welcome mainstay on our shelves.

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## **NV Jacob's Creek, Trilogy Cuvée Rosé, Australia £12.99**

JC is always a name to rely on and this spectacular, deep-coloured, decadently scented sparkler is incredible. I was blown away when I first sniffed its alluring blueberry perfume and I recommend that you fill the boot of your car with this stunning wine because there is nothing on the shelves that remotely comes close in the rosé discipline.

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## **SEMILLON & SAUVIGNON BLANC**

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### **2012 Brokenwood, Semillon, Hunter Valley, NSW £17.00**

Brokenwood is back with an even finer wine than last year's 2011. Ditch any Sauvignon Blanc that you have your eye on for lunch and put this wine in your glass. You will not look back. The rapacious acidity is neatly counterpointed with the most angelic of lemon blossom fruit and you are left in a magical state of satisfaction and glee. I am certain that Hunter Semillon adds ten points to your IQ and makes you more attractive, too – so what's holding you back? While we're at it, 2007 ILR Semillon, named after the great Riggsy himself, and the 2006 Maxwell Vineyard Semillon are two versions of this variety with doctorates in joy and abandon. Not content with nailing the Hunter's iconic white grape Iain Riggs swoops in with a bright, nervy, refreshing, plum-soaked 2010 Shiraz and a meaty, unnervingly grand 2009 Graveyard Vineyard Shiraz, too. This portfolio has never looked so imposing or so complete.

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### **2007 Mount Pleasant, Single Vineyard Lovedale Semillon, Hunter Valley, NSW £29.99**

One of Australia's most unique and impressive wines, Lovedale is starting to find some traction in the UK and even though I have been banging this drum for a decade it is still slow progress. Perhaps the style is too esoteric, perhaps people just want richer wines, perhaps they are not ready yet? Either way, the 2007 stands more chance of attracting attention than the last few vintages because it is a little more forward and easier to understand. The clarity of fruit in this wine is both mesmerising and life-giving. This is such a crowd-pleasing style that I will not give up promoting its mystical charms. Do give Lovedale a whirl – you may just fall in love.

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### **2007 Tyrrell's, HVD Single Vineyard Semillon, Hunter Valley, NSW £24.99**

With the spectacular 2006 Vat 1 Semillon still treading the boards this year (it made the list last year) I have switched my attention to the '07s and the wondrous, single vineyard beauty HVD Semillon. Weighing in at a feather-light 10.8% this forward-drinking temptress is made from vines which were planted in 1908! The elderflower and summer meadow notes are sensational and the agile acidity and gossamer texture cast a spell on you like no other wine in this list. Usually one has to wait a while for these unique, world class wines to mature, but I can assure you that 2007 HVD is already there and it will continue to blossom for another decade.

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### **2012 The Yard by Larry Cherubino, Channybearup Sauvignon Blanc, Pemberton, WA £19.99**

With leesy fruit and jittery acidity this is a wine that has designs on rearranging your dentistry (if you haven't already got it all tied down tightly). The burst of fruit here is something to behold. There is some ameliorating oak in the background but it's hard to pin it down because the cacophony of citrus flavours is just so in your face that you don't have the chance. Larry uses the very rare tasting note 'sweet pebble' to describe this wine. I have no idea what this means but I will be using it, too. Other than that, it is Australia's very own Sauvignon neutron bomb - a one-of-a-kind vinous deterrent to warn those rascally Kiwis to settle down and stop making so much fermented fruit salad.

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### **2012 Cherubino, Sauvignon Blanc, Pemberton, WA £25.99**

The 2011 Cherubino Sauvignon Blanc prompted the most extraordinary reactions on the Roadshow last year. They ranged from utter repulsion – the tasters were not expecting any oak; to mooning, dribbling adoration – they just tasted the wine with open arms and wanted to ravage what they saw. I quickly sent the first group to the Chardonnay table where they slid through seven wines (from unoaked to plushly upholstered and brocaded) and then they were instructed to return to re-taste this wine before heading off to the Pinots. Almost without exception they all then adored it. Funny that. Good lesson, too. This year many more people will be forewarned. Don't expect Marlborough Sauvignon when tasting this WA genius at work, because this is one of the most impressive white wines in Australia. Think Pavillon Blanc du Château Margaux and you won't be too wide of the mark.

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# RIESLING

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## **2012 Jim Barry, The Lodge Hill Dry Riesling, Clare Valley, SA £13.00**

This is the most exciting young vintage of TLHDR I have ever tasted. I know that it is widely available and if you hunt hard you can buy it for a tenner. This is insane. This is a genuine Grand Vin on the nose and palate, but if you are as talented as this outfit is you cannot fail to make a stunner in a vintage like 2012. It's not the wine's fault. Blame the weather, the vineyards and the vines themselves. Make it your mission that if you drink only one sub-tenner Australian Riesling this year it is this wine. It will change your life. Palate electrification has never tasted so good. And just to ratchet up your excitement levels even further - I have already had a good, long look at a tank sample of the 2013. It, too, looks utterly sublime. So much good wine and so little time!

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## **2012 Mount Horrocks, Watervale Riesling, Clare Valley, SA £17.99**

Not content with one listing in this year's 100 (the Cordon Cut Riesling has a parking spot in the sweet wine section in perpetuity) Mount Horrocks has also nailed the dry discipline in the cosmic 2012 vintage, too. I poured this wine at a massive event earlier in the year and in a manner more befitting Derren Brown, the entire audience, as one, converted to the dry, Clare Riesling movement. It is worth pointing out that very few people knew what this white-knuckle aperitif was, but on hearing it was Riesling they were all visibly shocked and at the same time delighted to have finally understood what we've all been banging on about for years. The lime leaf freshness, sheer dexterity and revitalising characteristics on the palate and thirst-quenching finish all make this wine the perfect, glorious, all-purpose, summery white. I love it, and now I know that you will (all!) love it, too.

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## **2012 Tim Adams, Riesling, Clare Valley, SA £11.00**

This wine is still available at Britain's largest wine retailer which has got to be some sort of record. I certainly wouldn't want to be the buyer that delists the UK's favourite dry Riesling and bearing in mind the quality of the 2012 vintage I can't see this happening any time soon! I reckon that 2012 is up there with the 2002 vintage in terms of sheer quality and the lime juice drive in this beauty underlines just how talented the great Bonecrusher Adams is at building his illustrious wine. Most people will drink this the moment they get home, but I still have a few bottles of the glorious 2002 left and they have never looked better. Tim's wines have incredible integrity and this is evident in his 2012 Pinot Gris, too. Yes, I know that I knock this grape more often than not, but Tim's version is a shimmering triumph.

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## **2012 Clos Clare, Riesling, Clare Valley, SA £23.90**

Run by Tom and Sam Barry, grandsons of Clare pioneer Jim Barry, this is a breathtakingly beautiful being with more grace and precision than any other wine in the region. It is not a big wine, nor is it a particularly firm wine either. Its appeal is centred on the miraculous harmony between the awesome situation of the vineyard and the laser-driven clarity of the fruit. It just goes to show how a tiny, 5 acre section of the Florita Vineyard, with three distinct soil profiles, and absolutely pristine winemaking, with no solids and no oxygen, captures the true voice of the vintage and the Clos itself with awesome resonance. 2012 Clos Clare is a mercurial wine that will reconfigure your whole vinous hard drive.

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## **2012 Wakefield, St Andrews Single Vineyard Riesling, Clare Valley, SA £23.00**

There is nothing flamboyant or immediately inviting about this wine right now. It is a steely ball of determination, tightly wound and in need of age. By contrast to some of the lighter, approachable 2012s, and there are many, this is a vin de garde and it will repay the patience of its keeper. With decent phenolic friction and a superb lime juice theme this stunning single vineyard Riesling is designed to age for a decade or more and it will do so without breaking sweat. It is nice to know that a handful of top end wines are still as carefully assembled as this hand-crafted beauty.

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## **2012 Grosset, Polish Hill Riesling, Clare Valley, SA £27.99**

Jeff Grosset's Polish Hill Riesling comes from belligerent terrain. It sits in a U-shaped ridge north of Mount Horrocks, where the vines are small, the bunches are smaller and the grapes are packed with intensity. The wines are always firm, savoury, mineral-soaked and often closed in their youth and yet every so often spectacular conditions allow them to reveal a tender side on release, with moments of juiciness and charm – 2012 is such a vintage. This is, of course, an illusion because I know that this wine will close up in a few months and settle down for a period of hibernation before revealing itself again in five or so years time to a standing ovation. You can catch it before it tucks its head back into its shell, but be quick. If you time it right you will see an aperçu of the epic quality of this wine. It is, quite simply, 'off the clock'. The punitive acidity and high tensile fruit will soften, but if you are feeling impatient, then slake your thirst on the fragrant and welcoming 2012 Springvale Watervale Riesling, his other legendary cuvée. Both wines scored 19+ in my notes. Both are world class, dry Rieslings with spectacular trajectories. Both form an essential part of any serious cellar.

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### **2011 Jim Barry, The Florita Riesling, Clare Valley, SA £28.00**

This is the most forward and delicate Florita release in recent years and it is a joy. While the 2008, 2009 and 2010 vintages are still in the market, and ought to give the keen Clare fan the opportunity to assemble an instant vertical worth its weight in gold, you cannot truly drink any of these vintages yet and so the 2011 is a rare commodity. With mouth-filling citrus flavours and a rapier sharp finish, 2011 The Florita is a thrilling elixir. The order of drinking this legendary quartet of wines is as follows – 2011, 2009, 2010 and lastly 2008. That said there is no rush because I tasted a 1977 Watervale Rhine Riesling with Peter Barry (the first wine he made for his Dad Jim) and it was still fresh as daisies and these wines are made of exactly the same stuff!

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### **2007 Pewsey Vale, The Contours Riesling, Museum Release, Eden Valley, SA £18.00**

The fascinating fact about the 2007 release of The Contours is that it is less Germanic and ‘aged’, particularly on the nose, than previous vintages and this fresh fruit character should mean that it will appeal to a wider demographic in the UK. Six years has mellowed it beautifully and the lime curd notes are more genial and less frenetic than those found in the awesome 2012 Pewsey Vale Riesling release which hits the shelves at the same time as its more senior relation. There is no doubt that 2012 is one of the most exciting new vintages in years for all styles of wine, but the Rieslings always lead the vanguard and this estate has the finest duo of simultaneous releases I have ever tasted. You mustn’t pick one or the other, you must have both.

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### **2007 Peter Lehmann, Wigan Riesling, Eden Valley, SA £14.49**

Wigan is one of the wines that has made the most impact on my Roadshows over the last three years and it is not surprising why. The combination of sheer deliciousness and value for money is world-beating and this continues with the new 2007 vintage. A lighter wine than last year’s 2006 and with more lemon and lime notes up front on the palate I venture that this will attract even more unsuspecting Brits to the aged Aussie Riesling cause and this is a good thing. Made in its namesake’s image, Wigan Riesling is a fresh, vital, lithe, energetic wine with.... I am sorry, scratch that. The wine tastes amazing and Andrew Wigan is a bloody good chap. Watch out for two more of Wigs’ and Ian Hongell’s beauties - 2009 VSV Orrock Shiraz, which is a generous, squelchy, damson-soaked stunner; 2007 Margaret Semillon, which shows that aged unoaked Barossa Sem does a similar thing to those heavenly wines from the Hunter only with the volume knob turned up and also the enigmatic 2008 Stonewell Shiraz, from last year’s list, which is still the finest value icon wine in the country.

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# AROMATIC

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## 2012 Skillogee, Gewurztraminer, Clare Valley, SA £19.00

Is there any point in trying to find another decent Gewurz in Australia when this one is so unutterably divine? I think it's futile. I was under the impression that that the 2011 was a celestial being until I tasted this incredible 2012. It's hard to imagine the dimensions of this wine if you haven't already tasted it before. It is nothing like any Gewurz I have seen. If you need a visual aid, just Google Juno Temple. If this is a little too crass and unimaginative for you then then read on. It's like someone from another dimension has taken this wonderfully stimulating, aromatic grape variety and ripped it apart and then re-assembled it leaving out the ugly bits. There is no headachy gloop or lard in this wine. There is no creeping, unnerving feral, bloom, like a skin complaint waiting to erupt. There is only crystalline purity and brightness, coupled with fresh, not bruised, tropical fruit and ball-busting acidity. Oh, I nearly forgot – 2012 Skilly Riesling is another 18.5/20 wine in my notes, too. These guys and gals really know what they're doing.

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## 2012 Yalumba, Eden Valley Viognier, Eden Valley, SA £14.00

I adore the 2010 vintage of this wine. It was in my list last year and I poured it blind on many occasions and not a single person thought it was anything other than smart Condrieu in the whole twelve month period. This year's releases mainly come from the 10/10, epic, jaw-dropping 2012 vintage. Starting with 2012 Y Series Viognier (a wine which retails for a tenner) – this is a work of art. In any other vintage I would have said it was the Eden Valley cuvée in a happy-go-lucky mood. It is already one of the finest sub-tenner white wines of the year and I don't expect much competition to trouble its position. Move up to my featured 2012 Eden Valley Viognier and you have a wine to which I awarded a vertiginous 19/20. This is not a typo. It scores the same as 2010 Virgilius, the top cuvée. It is certainly a much lighter wine with minimal oak contact. But it is also a wine with a sub-fifteen pound price tag and it is a jollier soul with pizzazz and masses of intrinsic cool. As you can gather I am a massive fan of what Louisa Rose is doing and as every vintage passes the wines become more refined and more memorable. The trick to this year's releases though is that the 2012 and 2010 vintages are two years apart and both epic and this doesn't happen very often. Please take advantage of this anomaly. Just to prove that it is not just Viognier which Yalumba has mastered, don't forget about 2012 Y Series Unwooded Chardonnay and the 2011 FDW(7C) Chardonnay from Adelaide Hills. Both scored the required point to make the grade. It is a busy year so they have to be content with a mention, but from a crazy, entry level, zesty little pocket rocket to a sultry, languid, decorous femme fatale, these two wines will also turn heads wherever they go.

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# CHARDONNAY

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## **2012 Innocent Bystander, Chardonnay, Yarra Valley, Vic £14.99**

With more complexity than you would ever have imagined this brilliant wine is bursting with charm and joie de vivre and it shows that IB is fast becoming the go to winery in the Valley for reliable, over-performing, eminently affordable, varietal wines. Add the 2012 Pinot Gris and the 2012 Pinot Noir to your shopping list, too, because these wines also capture the essence of the region, the fertility and lushness of their soils and the skill and great taste of their makers. Wine should always make you feel happy – Innocent Bystander wines can lift my mood in a blink of an eye and reward my palate, too. It should be a minimum requirement these days, but it is a very rare commodity.

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## **2011 St. Huberts, Chardonnay, Yarra Valley, Vic £18.00**

I have been desperate for this label to make it to the UK and it is finally here – three cheers. The St. Huberts style is a lush one but it is not a wine that leans too heavily on oak. If you like pear juice, almond blossom and creamy-nougat-style Chardonnays then you will fancy the pants off this wine. Only one third new oak is used and for only eight months so you can tell that fruit is the name of the game and opulence and generosity of flavour is definitely the St. Huberts mantra.

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## **2011 Seppelt, Jaluka Chardonnay, Henty, Vic £16.00**

Coming from the legendary Drumborg Vineyard, in Henty, which was planted in 1964 mainly to provide fruit for sparkling wines, this exquisite, 12.5% Chardonnay is one of the most riveting releases for years. The calm, lean, sinewy fruit is raspingly refreshing and vital and I love the haunting citrus finish which sends a shiver down your spine. This is not a wine loaded with 'struck match' and other unnecessary, self congratulatory wild ferment characteristics, but a clean, crisp, perfectly sourced wine where the vineyard provides the detail not the winemaker. For this reason is gets my vote because it is simply stunning and authentically rather than affectedly 'natural'.

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### **2012 Penfolds, Bin 311 Tumbarumba Chardonnay, Tumbarumba, NSW £30.00**

Every statistic surrounding this wine quickens the pulse – 12.5% alcohol; seven months seasoned French oak; 6.8 g/L acidity. YUM. This is a wine full of drama and thrills and you will not believe the precision and mouth-watering fruit in the glass. Flashes of greengage, white flowers, cold farmhouse butter, Sicilian lemons and on and on, this is a terrific wine and another great Australian Chardonnay set to terrify the rest of the world’s producers with its unprecedented, glittering, palate gymnastics.

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### **2009 Brown Brothers, Patricia Chardonnay, Vic £26.65**

I poured last year’s 2008 vintage, which made the 100 Best for the first time, for six of the top sommeliers in the country and they were flabbergasted at the control, class and beauty of this wine. A year later I have again re-evaluated the potential of great, cool climate Victorian Chardonnay. Patricia is an exacting label. Virtually every wine wearing this badge of excellence (and there are lots that we don’t see in the UK) is a work of art. This 2009 scored a near perfect 19/20 in my notes. Now, I am not one to bandy around scores preferring for my enthusiasm for a wine to come through in the prose. But on this occasion, I think that this might encourage people to give Brown Brothers and its stunning Patricia range a whirl. The precision, incredible length and poise of this wine make many of my favourite Burgundies look leaden-footed and outdated. As a post script 2008 Patricia Cabernet Sauvignon is in the UK and it is another cool, calm, unruffled wine with an epic cranberry crunch topping off a lithe, cassis frame and pinpoint judged oak – it’s exactly what I am looking for in cool climate Cabernet.

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### **2009 Paringa Estate, Chardonnay, Mornington Peninsula, Vic £39.00**

This wine is in short supply, but it is one of the most succulent and exotic wild honey and meadow-flower-scented wines in Australia. With more density and chewiness than many this is a ripe, buttery Chardy which harks back to a bygone era with perfectly attuned oak and an incredible finish. By all means trade up two rungs of the ladder to 2009 The Paringa Single Vineyard Chardonnay, too, for a mesmerising onslaught of Grand Cru flavours and heady, creamy fruit. Don’t forget that as well as making stunning Chardonnay and Shiraz, winemaker Lindsay McCall is an acknowledged mastercraftsman with Pinot Noir. Here you are spoilt for choice with the 2009 Estate Pinot Noir and 2008 The Paringa Single Vineyard Pinot Noir being the finest young vintage releases I have tasted.

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## **2011 Vasse Felix, Chardonnay, Margaret River, WA £17.00**

The exceptional 2011 Heytesbury Chardonnay and this wine fought it out for lead billing this year and the estate wine won by a nose. No literally, by its nose. The fresh apple and pear fruit is wistful and heavenly and without the brioche and nougat-like oak which is carefully interwoven into the Heytesbury wine this seems like the freshest and most vital Chardonnay of the year. This, of course, is down to its origins. The cool Margaret River nights bless this wine with enviable restraint and also pin fresh acidity. I have long given up on comparing crisp Aussie Chardonnay to Chablis because this now seems about face. Vasse Felix is on top form at the moment and along with a few other estates it is dragging the whole of Margaret River's street cred with it around the world. WA owes these hard-working, highly talented people a debt of gratitude.

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## **2011 Robert Oatley, Finisterre Chardonnay, Margaret River, WA £19.99**

The Robert Oatley range is making its way onto various retailers' shelves as I type and I have tasted all of the wines and would like to crowd this entry somewhat with those that I feel deserve a special mention. Firstly, the 2012 Finisterre Porongurup Riesling with its rasping gooseberry and mojito tang. It's great to have a WA Riesling in the mix and it further underlines the success of this spectacular vintage. Next, the 2011 Finisterre Margaret River Cabernet Sauvignon and its little brother the 2011 Signature Cabernet Sauvignon, again from Margaret River. These are very smart wines, priced perfectly to undercut the more established names but without relaxing the criteria which make them accurate, vital and impressive. Finally my featured wine, which just goes to show that Leeuwin and Cullen don't have it all their own way and that for £20 you can still buy great wine in Margaret River. With perfect density, well-judged, fastidious oak selection and a long, mouth-watering finish this is a diva of a Chardonnay, so it won't surprise you to read that the winemaker signed up to ensure that this range kicks goals from all over the park is none other than the great Larry Cherubino (q.v.).

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## **2010 Leeuwin Estate, Prelude Chardonnay, Margaret River, WA £25.00**

Once again, Leeuwin's blockbuster 2009 Art Series Chardonnay is a phenomenal wine. Once again, Prelude Chardonnay has pipped it to the post in terms of top billing. Of course Art Series is everything you have ever dreamed of. Of course it should have the headline, but I am very conscious of the value that Prelude brings to the table and so Prelude wins for me! This is a wine which, on my Roadshow, the punters go nuts for. It is often the pick of the table of Chardies. Perhaps we, in the UK, with our diet of Meursault and Chassagne (if only), favour Leeuwin with its nougat and orange blossom allure embedded in the sleek, slippery body?

Perhaps people go for the last but one wine or the most expensive or whatever. Either way, this wine gets picked out too often for any of these theories to be true. I would venture that it is, more often than not, the finest wine – but maybe that’s just a little too obvious!

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### **2012 Wirra Wirra, The Twelfth Man Chardonnay, Adelaide Hills, SA £16.99**

Polished, cool, lemon and lime fruit with a whisper of mint and cucumber, this is an ice pick wine with dramatic acidity and lean, lithe lines. Not all of the Chardonnays that I adore are either baldly unoaked or full to the brim with cunning carpentry. Some are right in the middle with imperceptible nuttiness and taut, citrus fruit. This is one of them. The Twelfth Man is a gripping white from a winery that really specialises in red wines. It’s very clever to nail all of the skills and that’s without you turning to their little after dinner surprise at the end of this list!

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### **2012 Shaw & Smith, M3 Chardonnay, Adelaide Hills, SA £24.99**

The timing of the Shaw & Smith releases this year has played perfectly into our hands. You can buy this astonishing 2012 M3 Chardonnay at the same time as the brilliant, brooding, spicy, blueberry and plum-soaked 2010 Shiraz. You ought to track this red down because it will amaze Northern Rhône fans with its pepper-spice. 2012 M3 is a very fine wine, too. It has always been a beauty, but from time to time it has put on weight and become a little slow off the mark (I know what you’re thinking – pot, kettle...!). In 2012 the fruit has been given a jolt of electricity and the oak seems to have settled into best supporting role and this means that the whole experience tastes more prim and proper Puligny than mealy and mouth-filling Mâcon. Although this is early doors for a wine of this calibre I have sneaked a good few glasses of this beauty and am more and more impressed as the months tick by. This is a great effort from Michael and Martin and with a young lead guitarist, Adam Wadewitz, now part of this stadium rocker ensemble their future is set to be cram-packed with even more sure-fire hits.

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### **2010 The Lane Vineyard, Beginning Chardonnay, Adelaide Hills, SA £22.95**

Every year I think that the maximum potential from this idyllic estate has been reached with its heavenly Chardonnays but I am wrong. There appears to be no upper limit in the complexity and quality at The Lane. 2010 Beginning is a game-changer. Here is a full-bodied, rich, oaky Chardonnay on paper, which in reality is a weightless, graceful being with incredible length and staggering palate amplitude. Burgundian comparisons abound, but even these pale when

considering every single facet of intrigue which this wine holds in its grasp. In order to prove that there is Grand Cru prowess above this Premier Cru wine you must taste 2010 Reginald Germein Chardonnay. This is a different ball game with more purposeful oak and density. It is also more obviously exotic and layered. The energy, potential and nobility on display in these young wines is nothing short of awe-inspiring.

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### **2010 Penfolds, Yattarna Chardonnay, Tas £90.00**

I have cheekily written 'Tas' in this wine's title even though the label doesn't say it because although Penfolds reserves the right to source the fruit for this epic wine from anywhere in the country, in 2010 96% comes from the Derwent Valley and so I think that this little island should get some more credit for the stellar standard of its fruit and viticulture! With nougat and lime on the nose this is a Chassagne-style vintage and its pale colour and reticence on the palate suggest that this is built for the long run. With Burgundy suffering from much-debated problems surrounding 'Prem-Ox' the Aussies can show off their prowess in the ageing stakes and 2010 Yattarna will no doubt outlive many of the acknowledged heroes' wines from the Côte d'Or in due course. This is a beautiful Yattarna and with no 2011 Adelaide Hills sourced Reserve Bin Chardonnay on the horizon the Yattarna order hotline is sure to be mobbed.

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### **2009 Heggies Vineyard, Reserve Chardonnay, Eden Valley, SA £19.00**

I will put my hands up and admit that I have never really understood Heggies' Chardies. I taste them every year and they leave me scratching my head. I have been waiting for an epiphany for too long and just when I really ought to have given up all hope this shocking wine comes along. It's like the vineyard and winemakers have saved up all of their energies for this very vintage. The brooding, full fruit is already relaxed and into its stride but it is the sparks of acidity which ping around the palate and electrify the synapses so successfully which have transformed this wine. This is an animated Heggies – the bloody horse on the label ought to be galloping along and clearing vertiginous fences with ease. It's certainly what it feels like on the palate. The horse on the label was called Jack apparently – Jumping Jack Flash more like!

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## PINOT NOIR

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### **2012 Devil's Corner, Pinot Noir, Tas £13.95**

When I was getting into a bit of a panic about my everyday Pinot slot in this list I called in the ever-reliable Devil's Corner Pinot for succour. Sadly, the 2011 didn't make the grade, suffering a touch from 'eleven-itis' and so I asked if the 2012 was ready to go and it just about was. Phew – my heartbeat returned to normal and then dropped to elite sports level when I tasted this wine. It is stunning. The fruit is controlled and juicy with a freshness and crunchiness on the back palate that it woos your senses and sends you into raptures. Smooth, pliable, generous and refreshing, this is a world class entry-level Pinot and new owners Brown Brothers seem to have managed to continue their run of excellence in this remote Southerly outpost.

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### **2012 Ad Hoc by Larry Cherubino, Cruel Mistress Pinot Noir, Frankland River, WA £15.49**

'What the hell is a Frankland River Pinot doing in the 100 Best? I don't care who has made it!', I hear my reader cry. Well actually, that is the whole point. After tasting the 2011 vintage of this wine I was a tiny bit underwhelmed. My face gave me away (as usual) and before I knew it another bottle was being unwrapped from the longest piece of bubblewrap I have ever seen. Ah, Larry had sent over some secret squirrel wines! I knew what that meant. So I emptied my glass in readiness and crossed my fingers that this wasn't going to be a waste of a sniff. Oh joy. Oh sheer unadulterated joy. The dingy fruit had been replaced with a pristine, shiny, black cherry model. The grumpy, hesitant texture was now glistening with intent and gliding across my palate. This was a revelation. It was Pinot from WA that I not only liked, but I think I loved at first sight. I just goes to show that you never know what's going to hit you in the wine world (unless it's made by Larry in which case you should now have a pretty good idea).

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### **2011 Circe, Red Hill South Pinot Noir, Mornington Peninsula, Vic £31.20**

Dan Buckle, ex-winemaker of Mount Langi Ghiran and current winemaker at Domaine Chandon, has a hobby. It is called Circe and it consists of the tiniest private label of a pair of Pinots and a Chardonnay. He and partner Aaron Drummond started their dream in 2010, a stunning vintage, and only a smitheren of this stock has made it to the UK. The 2011 vintage was a whole new kettle of fish. The weather was so bad that a number of producers in Mornington didn't even make a wine. Dan said that he saw botrytis growing on the grapes before his very eyes. But, as it always the case, with staggeringly talented winemakers if you select only the finest

fruit and treat it with the utmost respect you can work miracles and this is what he has done. Half whole bunch, half cold soak, some saignée to concentrate the flavour a touch, minimal new oak intervention and you have one of the most wistful and thought-provoking wines of the year. I opened this cuvée for a group of highly sophisticated sommeliers and they were aghast at the delicacy and beauty in their glasses. It just goes to show that when the tables are turned and the weather turns Biblical, you better bloody well know what you are doing and be prepared to make some very fast judgement calls to save your wines. Some do, some don't and a very few make something altogether unforgettable.

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### **2010 Ocean Eight, Pinot Noir, Mornington Peninsula, Vic £29.80**

With 2011 Verve Chardonnay listed in last year's collection of wines, the stage is clear for the pristine aromatics of 2010 Ocean Eight Pinot to take a bow. 2010 was a warm, dry year and winemaker Mike Aylward acknowledges that this is his finest work to date. The 18 year old vines are now in the zone and when picked relatively early and subjected to only 10% new oak the energy and freshness of the fruit is allowed to pulsate through the wine. The resulting alcohol is 13.3% and the ultra-slick texture coupled with the aforementioned heady red fruit nose and palate panache makes this one of the sexiest wines in the country.

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### **2011 Ten Minutes by Tractor, 10X Pinot Noir, Mornington Peninsula, Vic £24.50**

The 2011 vintage was a bit of a dog and everyone in Mornington had to fight to make great wine. Some failed. TMBT is a hero estate and this cuvée is becoming a regular in this list. This is because these guys select, select and select again. Nothing goes into the wines if it doesn't fit and the results are thrilling. With a stunning, lifted, wild berry and red rose nose and a sleek, curvy palate this is a very sexy wine indeed. Gone is the muscle of a warmer vintage and also the darker hue and oakier outlook. 2011 welcomes clean lines and freshness and this vitality in Pinot cannot be underestimated. As is usually the case, the best estates make great wines in so-called off vintages and they are always more forward and engaging in their youth. 201110X is a perfect example.

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## **2011 Dalrymple, Pinot Noir, Tas £22.00**

Coming from the Pipers River and Coal Valley regions of Tassie, this is a brand new wine on the UK scene and I am going to sing about it from the rooftops. 2011 was a cool and challenging vintage and the apparent fragility on the nose is underpinned with stunning bright Pinot fruit and brio on the palate. The texture is otherworldly and the oak (thank God) is so finely tuned it will either make you weep or holler! Only 30% new and for a mere eight months was all that was needed to chaperone this seductive wine into the bottle. This is very alluring Tasmanian Pinot and I am all for a few of the more serious wines making their way over to the UK. At the very least it will keep the Mornington squad on its toes. There are two single vineyard releases coming our way, too, and my pick is still this estate wine. The Cottage Block and Block CV90 are more challenging and austere and while they need time and are undoubtedly impressive I feel that my chosen estate cuvée has the balance and grace to charm even the most sceptical of Pinot fans.

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## **2010 Dawson & James, Pinot Noir, Tas £54.99**

Tim James and Peter Dawson are two of the most renowned, experienced and charming of the Aussie old guard they have combined their not inconsiderable skills to launch a new range of Tassie wines. This impressive Pinot comes from the idyllic 2010 vintage and it benefits from a highly polished chassis and surprisingly powerful engine. There is indulgent, Vosne-like intensity here and this is what has stopped me in my tracks and commanded a very close look under the bonnet. What you see is a wine with considerable pedigree and design integrity and in spite of the richness the finish is neat and crisply acidic. The same can be said for the 2010 Chardonnay, too. This is stunning work from these seasoned professionals who have mellowed with age and used all of their knowhow to create a knockout duo of wines. Congratulations chaps.

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## WEIRD & WONDERFUL

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### **2012 Willunga 100, Tempranillo, McLaren Vale, SA £11.99**

This crunchy, vivacious Tempranillo has typically lusty raspberry and redcurrant fruit and a mule's kick of acidity on the finish and I love it. So often, Aussie Tempranillo is trying to be something it's not. There is no point setting out to make Vega Sicilia from young vines and Willunga 100 knows this. What they cleverly do is go for the summer pudding array of flavours and add to them spice without woodwork. This is clever and it's a lesson for all of the other numpties who continue to make sawdusty, stewed, mean wines with silly alcohol levels and insane extraction! In order to prove that Willunga 100 is not a one trick pony, the 2010 Grenache and 2012 Viognier, which are just hitting the shelves now, are two brilliantly judged wines. The Grenache is bright and cheery with green herb and rolling tobacco allure augmenting its strawberry juice theme and the Viognier is taut and athletic with none of the wobbly bits or heady alcohol of so many of the competition's gopping wines.

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### **2010 First Drop, Pintor Tempranillo, Barossa Valley, SA £20.99**

If the Willunga 100 wine above is a cunning Aussie 'Crianza', then Pintor is a revolutionary 'Reserva'. The trick with this First Drop wine is that the lads have judged the oak so carefully that they allow the fruit to shine through uninterrupted. This time, in the mind-blowing 2010 vintage, the recipe is 50% new French, 20% new American, 30% old French and all for 20 months of dunking. The fact that the alcohol is reined in at 13.5% means that this oak has not taken the lead and the Tempranillo has the firmness of character to express itself with its brooding strawberry compote and plum duff core. Served blind I would be lost, but happy. This is a great wine from Matt and John and they continue to rock the boat and ride the current, showing us that unpredictability is the norm.

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# CABERNET & MERLOT

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## **2008 Paulett Wines, Cabernet / Merlot, Polish Hill River, Clare Valley, SA £16.00**

Neil and Alison Paulett are lovely people and we don't see many of their wines in the UK but this fruit-driven Cab/Merlot is a wonderfully balanced and forward wine with generous blackberry fruit and irresistible juiciness. The UK agents, Ellis of Richmond, tend to sell to restaurants so this would be your first port of call if you want to track it down, but I am sure that a retailer will put their hand up soon such is the calibre of fruit and experience shown in this fantastically priced wine.

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## **2009 Brand's Laira, One Seven One Cabernet Sauvignon, Coonawarra, SA £39.00**

Pipe down, here's a buccaneering wine to put some wind in your sails. One Seven One is launched in the UK and it is shockingly good grog, chock-a-block with thrilling Cabernet fruit and scented with haunting eucalyptus. These guys know the ropes and with one foot in the past and a one planted squarely in today's palate you should give other wines a wide berth and head straight to this port of call. The bravado, blood and guts and richness of this Coonawarra Cab are all to be admired. Hoist the mainsail and prepare for engagement as this wine comes alongside you ready to board. For my part, Brand's Laira has passed with flying colours, but you'll be the judge of that. Phew.

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## **2010 Hollick, Cabernet Sauvignon, Coonawarra, SA £23.00**

I had to decant this and then observe it over two days to see what would happen to this wine over time. 2010 is, as you will have already gathered, a monumental vintage and so most of the wines from the top producers need some air. Ian Hollick's tightly-wound, cassis-soaked Cabernet is a mighty wine. The aroma is devastating with soaring oak and dense, dark, berry fruit. Once the palate is coaxed out of the bottom of the glass you can identify the true source of this wine's power – the red dirt on which it is grown. There is a considerable amount of extract and soil influence in this wine which gives it the power to live for a very long time. Congrats to the Hollick squad for managing to harness this force and get it all into the wine.

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### **2008 Wynns Coonawarra Estate, Cabernet Sauvignon, Coonawarra, SA £18.00**

This is the highest-pointing Wynns Cab I have ever tasted. The level of skill in this wine is jaw-dropping. The value is beyond beyond. I cannot imagine a finer 'entry level' Cabernet exists on planet Earth and so I bow to Sue Hodder and her team and thank her for tempering the new oak, chucking out any sub-standard fruit and making the sexiest wine under this label in its 53 years of history.

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### **2008 Yalumba, The Menzies, Coonawarra, SA £34.00**

The Menzies came of age with the 2005 vintage and we, in the UK, have jumped to the 2008 in one sweet move. I showed this wine at a South Australia Club event back in February, when it was fresh off the boat, and it looked astonishingly good. Re-tasting it in a less formal and much quieter surroundings and the fruit showed even more clarity and direction. There is flamboyant density here, which seems completely atypical, but I don't care – this is a desperately smart wine. There are dark chocolate and plum notes and the Coonawarra terroir shines through with every sip. The winemaking may have been finessed, but it is the raw materials which have been radically improved and The Menzies is now a vitally important member of the Coonawarra Premier League.

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### **2008 Tapanappa, Whalebone Vineyard Merlot / Cabernet Franc, Wrattontully, SA £50.00**

There is utterly brilliant tension between the Merlot and Cabernet Franc in this masterful wine. The are moments of leafiness which overlay the dense core of plum and mocha and the concentration of flavour is remarkable given that this is not a heavy wine at all. A tiny crop of 2 tonnes / hectare are responsible for this magical intensity and the fruit enrobes your tastebuds and permeates the senses in style. There are touches of mint here, too, and some typical warm earth notes all working in perfect harmony with the lush, berry fruit. Sadly only 300 cases were made which puts it in the garagiste camp, but this is Australia's finest Merlot-inspired wine and it deserves to be sitting alongside like blends from the Europe such is its class.

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### **2010 Grosset, Gaia, Clare Valley, SA £43.99**

Cue the drum-roll. Keep it going, find a few more drums and a few more please. Call those flash mob musicians on YouTube and ask them all to bring drums because in 2010 Jeff Grosset has created a perfect 20/20 Gaia. I have been stalking this wine for years. I bought loads at auction fifteen or so years ago and have been slowly working my way through the vintages. I always open them at home for wine bore pals, blind, and then without fail they name it as the wine of the night. Gaia, when the weather is kind, is one of the most moving and sensuous wines in the land. In 2010 it has everything I could ever want in a wine (apart from volume – only 900 cases were made). This blend of 85% Cabernet Sauvignon and 15% Cabernet Franc is utterly amazing with phenomenal depth and soaring cassis notes. The oak is sublime. I would eat one of the barrels if I could. It reminds me of the fruit texture and complexity of a great VCC and I would urge you to buy it now. Grosset is another one of the estates in my ‘100 Most Iconic Wine Estates’ book and most people think it is because of his Rieslings. He is undoubtedly a master of the Riesling variety and yet Gaia was the wine that secured his slot position in this book. Gaia is a goddess.

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### **2009 Wakefield, The Visionary Cabernet Sauvignon, Clare Valley, SA £45.00**

This cleanskin sample was entitled ‘a work in progress’. Well stop working Wakefield please because you have exceeded whatever the brief was for this remarkable wine. The resonance and lift of fruit on the palate in this glorious Cabernet are captivating. This is not a big wine but it is packed with blackcurrant fruit and lushness and the oak is heavenly, adding spice and savoury notes but no dryness or astringency. Adam Eggins made one of last year’s most commented upon wines, the 2006 St. Andrew’s Shiraz, and he has done it again this year with this miraculous creation. I just shake my head in disbelief at the acumen and élan shown by this pair of renegade wines.

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### **2010 Cullen, Diana Madeline, Margaret River, WA £67.99**

The 2012 Mangan Vineyard Semillon / Sauvignon Blanc is the finest release of its kind in years. Unfortunately 2010 Kevin John Chardonnay is perpetually sold out, which is a travesty because it is one of the finest white wines in the world. Both of these wines are seriously high quality beings and for this reason, and also my featured red, this estate is another to gain a place in my ‘100 Most Iconic Wines’ book. 2010 Diana Madeline is only one half of a point out of twenty off a perfect wine. I feel a little tight typing this but I know that another 20/20 will be achieved at this estate soon. This wine is stupendous in every way. The nose is orchestral with thousands of layers of sublime fruit, earth and wood nuances all swirling around. The palate is surprisingly

juicy and appealing in spite of its youth and the oak notes and tannins are embedded into the centre of the flavour as opposed to their usual position of exoskeleton. This serves to make the wine impossibly attractive already. All in all, this is a wine that will live for twenty years with ease, but its epic balance is already tempting people to open it, which is a travesty. Please exercise some restraint because this is one of Australia's truly iconic red wines.

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### **2010 Moss Wood, Cabernet Sauvignon, Margaret River, WA £45.00**

Funnily enough 2011 Amy's is pretty closed right now and while it could easily have found a berth on this mighty ocean liner of wine I have chosen to promote, and rightly so, the leader of the Moss Wood academy to the captain's deck this year. 2010 is a work of art. It is incredible in every way, from the exceptionally attractive aroma of crushed blackcurrants and cedarwood to the mind-blowing texture and hour long finish. It took me an age to unravel this wine in my glass and even then it was still swirling around in a vortex of sheer perfection. This is one of the great Cabernets of the world and 2010 is a legendary vintage.

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### **2008 Henschke, Cyril Cabernet Sauvignon, Eden Valley, SA £85.00**

My goodness me this is a striking wine. I opened a few bottles for a huge tasting earlier in the year and people were struck dumb by its beauty and majesty. The colour alone is worthy of a standing ovation, such is the depth and richness of its purple hue. The term chocolate is used a lot in tasting notes, but this wine needs the word truffle bolted onto it, too. This is a ridiculously smooth, velvety chocolate truffle of a wine with demented cassis notes and an hour long finish. Cyril was undoubtedly hit with the heat wave in 2008 like everyone else, but the cool position of this vineyard must have meant that it took the energy from the sun's rays and none of the cooked elements that so many other wines show. It is an awesome wine. If you would like to taste a brilliant Shiraz from Henschke but don't want to remortgage the house for Hill of Grace, then head to 2009 Mount Edelstone and you will be met by another ultra-plush, beautifully textured wine with epic Shiraz seasoning and a heady, mesmerising finish. This estate is on top form right now.

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## **2009 Haan Wines, Wilhelmus, Barossa Valley, SA £31.49**

I remember meeting Hans Haan over a decade ago in his winery in the Barossa. I was very impressed with his fine wines and oompah music. I then lost touch with him until I saw him again this year. He hasn't changed one iota and his wines are indeed as imposing and well-crafted as ever. Wilhelmus is his top of the range red blend featuring Cabernet Sauvignon, Merlot, Cabernet Franc, Malbec and Petit Verdot. Only around ten barrels are made and so it is not going to have enormous distribution over here, but it is a wine worth seeking out because while it utilises the five varietal Bordeaux message on paper, it also manages to capture the essence of Barossa and ends up tasting so exotic, showy, wild and spicy it is incredible. Plush and luxurious on the one hand and then untamed and savage on the other – just brilliant and the sort of wine that will appeal to a massive crowd.

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## **2010 Joseph, Moda Cabernet Sauvignon / Merlot, McLaren Vale, SA £31.00**

Moda is a reference to Moda Amarone, but of course the great Joe Grilli cannot use this term on his wine anymore. On the one hand this is a shame, but on the other it's exciting to be in the 'in club' armed with this knowledge. 2010 is Joe's apogee vintage. Moda always possesses dramatic, daring and dangerous fruit. But in 2010 this edginess is tempered with a sense of sheer class and distinction such that it competes on a much higher plane with the more structured wines of the Veneto and other dried berry styles of red from further afield. The ridiculously deluxe cassis flavours remain, but they are now given an honorary Professorship from a Swiss finishing school and so rather than feeling that you are drinking an Amarone wine you just marvel at the density, controlled power delivery and monumental finesse.

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## **CABERNET SAUVIGNON/SHIRAZ**

### **THE GREAT AUSTRALIAN RED BLEND**

## **2012 Rosemount Estate, Blends Shiraz / Cabernet, SEA £7.99**

This is the finest, inexpensive Australian red wine that I have tasted in the last twelve months. Granted there is a lick of residual sugar which you must expect, but it doesn't get in the way of a brilliant blend of 85% Shiraz, cut with 15% upright, edgy and determined Cabernet. Every merchant in the land needs this secret weapon in their armoury. This is such an important wine in the line up because it will bring people into the Aussie wine world feeling excited and wanting more. Awesome effort!

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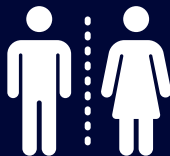
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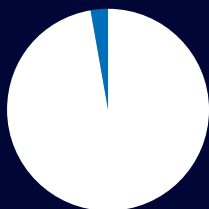
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**2,000,000**

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**16,000**

HOURS SPENT WRITING



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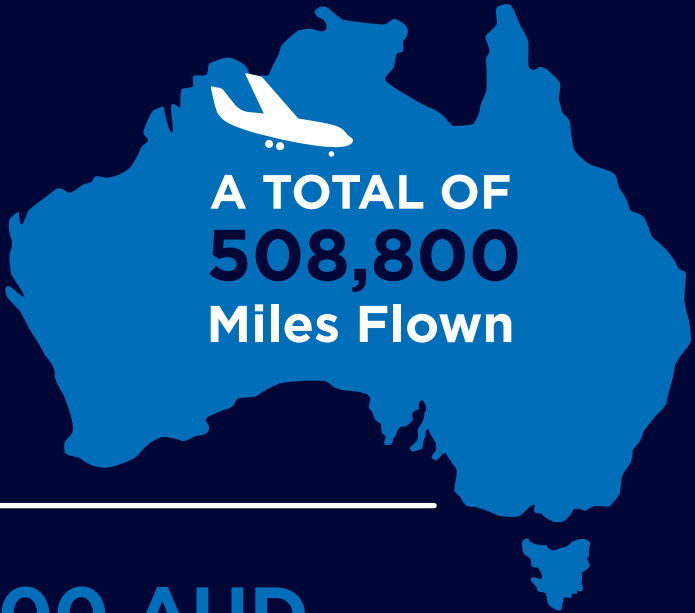
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### **2010 Yalumba, The Scribbler Cabernet Sauvignon / Shiraz, Barossa Valley, SA £14.00**

It should be no surprise that this wine has made the grade this year. The Scribbler, the junior Signature (q.v.), is one of the finest value red wines in the whole of Australia. 2010 is a monumental red wine vintage in South Australia.  $1+1=3$ . My kind of maths and you will see what I mean when you taste it. Just because the price seems to place it in the everyday bracket rather than the birthday dinner section of the wine rack don't be fooled. There is a fair whack of tannin and intensity here and this is certainly the finest Scribbler to date. I would even go so far as to suggest that this might be a wine to buy in case quantities and to lock away for a minimum of five years, as you would a decent Cru Bourgeois claret, and then open it for grander dinner parties than you could ever imagine. By then this Scribbler will most definitely be a competent essayist at the very least.

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### **2008 Yalumba, The Signature, Barossa Valley, SA £35.00**

There is no doubting the commitment of Yalumba to the Cabernet / Shiraz cause. This is the 46th vintage of this statesmanlike wine and it is my favourite to date. With spectacular balance and epic weight the flattering black fruit encourages you into its core when you should strictly speaking be resisting its charms for another four or five years minimum. Regardless, this is a seductive wine and one which will no doubt enrapture any taster. I usually describe The Signature as the old-style Cab/Shiraz wine by comparison to the 2009 FDR1A which typically has a more forward and juicy appeal. This wine enchanted tasters on my Roadshow last year and everyone delighted in picking their favourite between the 'Fine Dry Red' style and last year's star wine 2006 The Signature. I would say that the vote was probably fifty fifty, but this 2008 vintage The Signature is certainly more luxurious and I think it would tip the scales in its favour. Only time will tell. If you would like to hunt down a monster of a wine then 2004 The Reserve Cabernet / Shiraz is still out there in a few independent specialists and this is a truly pagan offering with raucous tannins and ritual slaughter in every sip. Bring it on.

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### **2009 Lake Breeze, Bernoota Shiraz / Cabernet Sauvignon, Langhorne Creek, SA £23.60**

The Follett family has been growing grapes in Langhorne Creek for 120 years and they have also been making their grapes into wine for 30 years of these. Winemaker, Greg, was raised on the family farm and he is part of the 4th generation of Folletts to work there. The first two wines that Greg made under the Lake Breeze label, from the 1992 vintage, both won trophies – these were The Bernoota and the Cabernet Sauvignon. Fast forward to 2013 and the 2009 vintages of each of these have hit our very own shores. My annual The Great Australian Red competition is no stranger to Bernoota – it is one of the most serious blends in the country. The calibre of Greg's Langhorne Creek fruit is sublime. The wines are dark, introspective, spicy and

macho. You must taste them because they are so profound and memorable. The Cabernet has been served blind against exceptionally expensive wines and it always looks sublime. Broaden your vinous horizons with Lake Breeze.

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### **2010 Penfolds, Bin 389 Cabernet Sauvignon / Shiraz, SA £50.00**

I haven't tasted every vintage of Bin 389, but in the last 27 years (Bin 389 is twice my age in the trade) this is my preferred vintage by a very long chalk. 19.5/20 is my shout which puts it on a par with 2008 Grange. This is one of the most moving and profound wines I have tasted from Penfolds and it is the epitome of the blend which defines Australia. Made from mainly Barossa Shiraz and Coonawarra Cabernet, the plum, prune and awesome pepper and spice notes are nothing short of mind-blowing. While I keep my 20 point scores dry in a small pouch attached to my belt I remember reaching down there on multiple occasions while tasting this wine. Who knows whether 2010 Grange will get a perfect score or not. All I know is that within the current crop of Penfolds releases Bin 389 is the pick of the wines. If you are interested in this blend then 2011 Bin 8 is a new design Cabernet / Shiraz, which doesn't set out to be a mini-Bin 389, but just a forward drinker so that you don't feel tempted to crack on with your Bin 389s too early. It is a delicious and beautifully balanced wine made all the more surprising by the vintage. With a lovely fragrance and crystal clear blackberry fruit this is a wine to taste as soon as you can. In the Cabernet camp, 2010 Penfolds Bin 169 Cabernet Sauvignon from Coonawarra is another fantastic release. With 100% fermentation in French oak and no time on skins this is a very modern take on Cab from this historic company and it works extremely well indeed. Back to the past and 2010 Bin 707 Cabernet, sourced from across South Australia, only uses American hogsheads and this will never change. This wine is huge in 2010 and it shows immense style and even a little flashiness which I adore. No 2011 will be released of this wine, so if you are a collector you might want to double your order this year – that is if you can find some stock!

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### **2006 Jim Barry, Pb Shiraz / Cabernet Sauvignon, Clare Valley, SA £36.00**

I have broken a self-imposed rule this year. 2006 Pb was featured in this list two years ago and it sold out in the UK in a second at one of my Roadshow events. Peter Barry has released some more stock of the wine that he created in 2002 as his very own 'Private bin' and we are the winners. The reason for including this wine again is simple - I made a misjudgement last time. I wrote that this wine gained a nose-bleed 19/20 in my notes. This was clearly an error because it is clearly a 19.5! Big, ballsy, blood and guts wines do not get better than this and once you taste this wine's sheer magnificence you will realise that 71% The McRae Wood Shiraz, blended

with 29% The Benbournie Cabernet is nothing short of sheer genius. I have more. A preview of the 2007 vintage of Pb reveals another awesome wine, but this time with more control and spice. I adore the different moods of this Pb and will buy every vintage from this day onwards because they tell the story of the vintage in Clare with perfect clarity. If you would like to enjoy a slice of this skill at an everyday price then make it your mission to track down 2012 Jim Barry Clare Red Shiraz / Cabernet Sauvignon. This wine sells for £13 and it is worthy of a place in this line up – if only there was space. I have given 2005 The Benbournie Cabernet Sauvignon a mention already and the 2004 made last year’s list. In 2005 it is majestic and swaggering and it moves me more than any Californian Cabernet I have tasted in the last twelve months. Jim Barry wines could have ten wines in the list this year – they actually have finished up with five which is simply mind-blowing. This is the reason why this winery is one of only eight Australian producers listed in my 100 Most Iconic Wines Estates of the world book.

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### **2006 Wolf Blass, Black Label Cabernet Sauvignon / Shiraz / Malbec, SA £65.00**

Black Label has been the most awarded wine in The Great Australian Red competition since its inception. This wine is nothing short of intergalactically awesome. The 2006 vintage is a monolithic ogre with exceptional complexity and a forty year life span. With unmistakable opulence and grandeur in every facet of its flavour this wine will be sure to knock you over with its class and distinction. The 2008 vintage which follows it is another wine which reduced me to a blithering wreck. The trophies and awards speak for themselves – the wine experts of the world agree that this is one of the truly great red wines of the world.

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## **SHIRAZ, GRENACHE & MOURVÈDRE**

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### **2010 d’Arenberg, d’Arry’s Original, McLaren Vale, SA £10.99**

Whisper it, but d’Arry’s Original has often been my pick of the range in years gone by and it is the least expensive wine in the line up. Things have changed in recent years and the rest of the range has caught up with the balance and succulence of this wine. In 2010, however, d’Arry’s O has skipped up a few more levels and it is glorious. The pungent, fruit-packed palate

is augmented with dry brush, stems and stalks and these curious elements work so well with the hedgerow berry theme. I adore this vintage – 2010 is a perfect year with fruit and acidity in dreamy balance. This is a very special d'Arry's, too, so if you have missed this wine in the past you must taste it now.

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### **2011 Spinifex, Papillon Grenache / Cinsault, Barossa Valley, SA £22.00**

The 2011 vintage of Papillon is an outstanding wine. Where some threw their hands in the air in despair at the incorrigible 2011 vintage Peter Schell and Magali Gely made the most of it and this wine shows that they have succeeded in style. This wine has one of the most attractive aromas in my 100 Best. Tobacco, violets, peppercorns, bouquet garni and parched bark all overlaying cool, red berry drenched Grenache and Cinsault. You can drink it now, you can chill it with Indian food, you could keep it if you wish for five years, too - there are no rules. One thing is certain – this is a wine with a clear identity and direct message and it will not fail to enchant you and your friends. If you are looking for the alter ego to the 13.5% demure Papillon then look no further than the dark, swarthy, cut-throat Syrah, 2010 Bête Noir. Here Peter and Magali have loaded power and malevolence into the glass and after Papillon has wooed you and put you at your ease, this marauder will frighten you back into the real world.

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### **2010 d'Arenberg, Blewitt Springs Grenache, McLaren Vale, SA £31.99**

With a brain-expanding fragrance of raspberry, rhubarb, pipe smoke and leather this wine is one of the most aromatherapeutic in my line up. Chester Osborne champions Grenache and you would if you had fruit of this calibre in your estate. Polished to gleaming perfection this is a sensational brew which seems more charismatic and swaggering than any Châteauneuf I can think of. It also parades the true essence of the variety with its tenderness on the front palate and soaring depth later on. There seems to be an extra dimension of fruit here, too, and the alcohol is under control, coming in at a very reasonable 14%. If you would like to taste the antithesis to this Fred Astaire-shaped rouge then look to the demonic, thrash-metal front man 2009 Dead Arm Shiraz. This wine is hectic, all-powerful, loaded with combative tannins and it's massively forceful. It's a superb Dead Arm and for my money a step up on the top heavy 2008.

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## **2012 Lindemans, Bin 50 Shiraz, SEA £8.99**

This inexpensive, mass-produced wine is a lesson to the world in winemaking. It is clean, fresh, varietally precise and it doesn't taste in any way cheap. It requires massive skill to do this and yet every other country routinely cocks it up. Wayne Falkenberg, you sound like a super-hero and if you wear a lycra onesie in your spare time it is none of my business because you are a super-hero to me if you can make a £7.99 wine score 17.5/20 in my notes! This is party wine if ever I tasted it and there should be a bottle in every single self-respecting wine lover's kitchen ready to pour at a moments notice.

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## **2011 Wolf Blass, Yellow Label Shiraz, SA £9.99**

This wine and the 2011 Yellow Label Cabernet are both examples of how, when the chips are down, the big company reach and expertise will bail you out. In fact, this wine and its sibling go much further down the quality route than you could dream of in the face of adversity. With American oak spice and espresso bean notes woven into the fabric of this hearty wine you are definitely onto a winner. Drinking now, get it down your throat and don't look anywhere else until the 2012 turns up!

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## **2012 De Bortoli, Windy Peak Heathcote Shiraz, Heathcote, Vic £10.99**

Steve Webber's 2010 Yarra Valley Shiraz glides along like a stunning, serene black submarine, with the great man in the conning tower looking out for torpedoes to launch and mayhem to ensue with a huge, cheesy grin on his face. This is a gorgeous wine with intent and accuracy. Taste it because it is one of the Valley's leading lights and many, in due course, will follow De Bortoli's lead. This year though the Heathcote programme has caught my eye, in particular this simply brilliant 2012 Windy Pants Shiraz. With bright blueberry fruit, telltale Heathcote earthiness and dried herb nuances this is a wine that has been designed to take an underperforming and little-known (at least in the UK) region and put it on centre stage. It does it with style. The label is clean and expressive. The wine is, too. Clever, sensitive, accurate and with serious business sense, too, this is the De Bortoli way! Bloody impressive.

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### **2010 Tyrrell's, Vat 9 Shiraz, Hunter Valley, NSW £34.99**

Hunter Valley Shiraz is often dismissed as being too light and gamey and this can certainly be levelled at a few producers today, but there is a band of highly skilled wineries making Shiraz which bucks the trend and these are wines which fly in the face of the massive, dark, higher alcohol wines from other regions in the country. Bruce Tyrrell's Vat 9 is a mere 13.0%. It is harmonious, smooth and crammed with violets and lavender and it is also a wine which you can approach and enjoy right now. I know from experience that this wine will age for many years to come and the gamey, leather and tobacco nuances will come into play in due course, but for now this is a wine which shows more finesse and elegance than many French versions and it really must be tasted to be believed.

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### **2010 Paringa Estate, Peninsula Shiraz, Mornington Peninsula, Vic £27.60**

The newly released 2010 Peninsula Shiraz is the most animated and hypnotic version of this wine that I have ever tasted. With magnificent spice and tender, yet vibrant cherry fruit the momentum on the palate and density of flavour here is staggering. Lindsay McCall makes his Shiraz wines with 'Pinot hands' and it is this sensitivity and gentleness which tempers any latent power in the wines and allows the herb, pepper and cherry notes to sing. If you want to experience Lindsay's ultimate expression of Shiraz, then I suggest that you take a deep breath and swallow dive into 2008 The Paringa Single Vineyard Shiraz. Scoring a meagre 19.5/20 in my notes this wine is dense, earthy and peaty Shiraz you could ever hope to taste with the most luxurious, elemental coffee and plum palate imaginable. Total and utter heaven.

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### **2011 Jamsheed, Garden Gully Vineyard Syrah, Great Western, Vic £35.00**

New to my 100 Best list and worthy of four spots, if I had space, Jamsheed's current crop of wines in the UK is a revelation. This is the top Syrah and it hails from Old Bests clones planted in the 1890s. The grapes are 50% whole bunch fermented and no acid, enzymes or additives are used other than a touch of SO<sub>2</sub>. After 10 months in old oak it is bottled without fining or filtration. This is winemaking at its most elemental and the wine tastes as raw and un-buggered-around-with as any I have seen. Drinking this wine is a gripping experience. The elaborate spice and blackberry velvetiness combine and you are left breathless. If you love Clape, Chave or Rostaing you will fight to get a case of this wine. Also consider the 2011 Moonambel Syrah, another spectacular and moving wine; the 2011 Jamsheed Beechworth Roussanne which weighs in at a trim 12.5% and looks as devastating and 2011 Garden Gully Riesling, Great Western which boasts inconceivably dry, floral fruit and a heavenly finish.

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## **2011 Fox Gordon, Eight Uncles Shiraz, Barossa Valley, SA £18.75**

Picked early to avoid rain damage, this 2011 is the most expressive and aromatic Eight Uncles in a long time and while it might not pack a predictable Barossan punch to the midriff this is a wine which will broaden the Fox Gordon message thanks to its balance freshness and aromatic appeal. A shortish fermentation and lower doses of new oak all make this a wine that you can get along with from day one rather than having to shadowbox for a few years. If you would like to turn the volume knob up a few notches and load a few more pounds onto the framework then 2010 By George Cabernet / Tempranillo is a modern take on a Super-Spanish wine and it works so well. This wine and my two other Tempranillo heroes in this year's 100 Best further reinforce what I have been banging on about for years. South Australia is Spain, not Italy. Finally, consider 2009 Hannah's Swing Shiraz, a wine which delivers a more traditional Barossa Shiraz message, but with Tash Mooney's unmistakable flair and attention to detail. The tar is matched with the plum and the oak is balanced with the blackberry notes and so on. For every action there is an equal and opposite reaction and this is why her wines are so captivating.

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## **2011 Wirra Wirra, Catapult Shiraz, McLaren Vale, SA £13.99**

M&S is the main retailer for this wine and they have chosen to stay on the 2010 for the foreseeable and I don't blame them, because it is a jolly nice, if slightly predictable wine. I have decided to pitch ahead a few months to a wine which will replace it. 2011 Catapult is every bit as delicious as the lusty 2010 but with a little more guile and definition. The 2010 is a spaniel bounding up to you full of enthusiasm – good boy. The 2011 is a Jack Russell, who knows that you have just come in the front door but he will finish what he's doing and then saunter over in due course for a casual high five – cooler and a little more interesting! Either way you'll love both wines for what they are and hopefully marvel at just how professional and accurate the Wirra team is at getting the vintage into the bottle without losing any of its charm. Oh, a quick shout out to the 2010 RSW Shiraz – this is a Great Dane on steroids taking you for a walk.

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## **2011 Chapel Hill, Shiraz, McLaren Vale, SA £23.49**

Meaty, foresty, dark and wintry, the palate attack on this tremendous wine is riveting. Loads of 2011s lack power and drive or otherwise show slightly mouldy notes - this wine is quite simply the diametric opposite. It is an unqualified success. Winemaker Michael Fragos has only selected the finest fruit from this vintage and it shows in his creations. A beacon of excellence and a reference point for the Vale in 2011, he has nailed 2011 The Vicar Shiraz, too, with its tremendous ultra-fine tannins and a resolute mulberry core. The Inkwel Block components keep on doing their thing and Michael coaxes the minerals and richness of their soils and plugs it into the soul of his wines. If you look beyond Shiraz he has made a glorious Mourvèdre, a

fit, chiselled Cabernet and a highly scented Bush Vine Grenache, too. All lovely wines and all seemingly impossible in this tricky year. I take my hat off to you.

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### **2012 Teusner, The Riebke Shiraz, Barossa Valley, SA £19.99**

I held off my final 100 until the very last moment in the hope that the 2012 Teusner samples would arrive – they did and I am delighted because not only do they showcase the awesome potential of the reds from the 2012 vintage, very early in the game, but they also demonstrate that Kym Teusner is one of the most attuned and skilled technicians in the business. The Riebke is a triumph with its slick, deep purple fruit and beautiful, gleaming palate. The energy in this wine is awe-inspiring and yet it is not held back by intrusive tannins or fruit sourness so often found in young, grand wines. This is a cult classic in the making and it has a modernity and style to it which is enviable. If you want to add two awesome GMS blends to your shopping list then look no further than the 2012 Joshua (the unoaked version) and 2012 Avatar (it's big brother, using oak in the mix). They will show you that increasing the weight and adding even more layers of complexity doesn't change the balance of the wine at all. These newborns are impeccably well made and they will continue to jet along wowing everyone they touch for a very long time to come.

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### **2010 Wynns Coonawarra Estate, Shiraz, Coonawarra, SA £14.00**

I didn't expect Sue Hodder to bowl me over with two wines in quick succession! She has aced the Cabernet discipline this year but also managed to showcase her Coonawarra Shiraz acumen, too. Just ten months were needed in French and American oak to set this wine up for a stunning life. It leads with its fruit, thank goodness, and this fruit is peppery, cool and savoury. The blackberry and cherry notes are tempered with cinnamon and clove and you are able to drink this wine now in spite of its youth because it is so well-judged.

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### **2010 Mount Pleasant, Maurice O'Shea Shiraz, Hunter Valley, NSW £34.99**

In the Hunter Valley scheme of things this wine is a fairly rich proposition, but with greater Australia in mind this is a cruiser-weight wine with nimble footwork and a devastating jab. Maurice O'Shea Shiraz captures the historic essence of Hunter but presents it with a modern outlook for today's experienced wine fanatic. It is a story and a snapshot in one glass. The density of fruit is beguiling and imposing in equal measure. There seems to be power here but

it is evenly distributed and handed down with grace and calm. This is a noble wine with a fair price which should be enjoyed by many because in one sip it informs you about the Hunter Valley like no other red wine. With the news that Jim Chatto is taking up the reins at this iconic winery Maurice and the other Hunter pioneers' legacies are in very good hands.

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### **2011 Clonakilla, Shiraz / Viognier, Canberra District, ACT £66.99**

It will be no surprise to learn that the challenges which the 2011 vintage gave most winemakers have merely glanced off the perfectionists at Clonakilla. The only change that you will note in this vintage is that this is a more forward wine than usual. Tim Kirk's operation is incredible. I tasted every barrel with him last November and I was gob-smacked with the stellar quality of his wines. He is a Shiraz King, but imagine my surprise when I tasted a phenomenal Chardonnay and even a heart-achingly beautiful Pinot Noir, too! Clonakilla is a member of my highly exclusive '100 Most Iconic Wine Estates' collection and this position has principally been won by his celestial Shiraz/Viognier. The 2011 vintage shot into this list and its splendour and magical flavours will entrance all who are lucky enough to taste it. With a seductive, blackberry juice theme studded with white pepper and violet notes 2011 Hilltops is another delight from this imperial winery. Already drinking beautifully but with another five glorious years to roll this is another highly successful wine from a conundrum of a vintage.

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### **2009 Best's Great Western, Bin O Shiraz, Great Western, Vic £39.99**

There is something very special about the wines from this property and this nostalgic cuvée is one of my favourites. Bin O is a mighty wine with a brooding core of earth and spice which in some ways dominates the fruit. You encounter a landslide of old vineyard flavours when you drink these wines and it reminds me of the great wines from Cornas and Hermitage. I get enormous satisfaction from pondering the intricacies of Bin O. It is like trying to crack the un-crackable. I like that sort of challenge.

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### **2008 Giaconda, Warner Shiraz, Beechworth, Vic £75.00**

If there was a prize for most awesome white wine of the last twelve months I would be tempted to award it to 2010 Giaconda Chardonnay. It is sublime. A veritable 20/20. A living and breathing goddess of a bottle. Sadly, there are only about four bottles in the UK and they have probably disappeared while I am typing these notes. Not to worry, because Warner Shiraz is

an oft-overlooked wine in Rick Kinzbrunner's stable and his 2008 is a gobsmackingly serious creation. With heady pepper and pastrami notes overlaying a dark, macerated fruit core, this is an indulgent and immensely enjoyable red which should remind you of one particular single vineyard wine from the Northern Rhône, but without all of the unnecessary preening and pomp!

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### **2009 Jim Barry, The McRae Wood Shiraz, Clare Valley, SA £27.00**

The McRae Wood Shiraz is one of the most faithfully followed £25 Shiraz in the UK. There is something very special going on with this wine. It is not cheap, it is big and lusty and it is also a proven crowd pleaser. This is a recipe that you shouldn't tinker with. So imagine when last year's awesome 2006 vintage is improved upon with the crazy, discombobulating 2008. This is an unhinged wine with inky purple fruit and an explosive nose. The palate is mouth-coating and slick and I adore its brazen power. This vintage gives way to my featured 2009 which is not quite as theatrical as the 2008, but it is a step up on the heroic 2006! How is this possible? The juicy, cherry fruit is more red than black and there is liquorice and tar, with rolling tobacco and cedar, too. This is a suave, cultured McRae Wood and strode into my 100 Best without even waiting for the nod. Everyone I know will fall at its knees.

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### **2010 Penfolds, Bin 150 Marananga Shiraz, Barossa Valley, SA £46.00**

2010 Bin 28 Kalimna Shiraz is incredible in 2010. You could have guessed that I am sure. It has such class year in year out this was always going to be the case, but I didn't for a second think that I would score the new kid on the block wine, Bin 150 Marananga Shiraz, higher in my notes! This is sacrilege, surely? 'In 2010 nothing went wrong' – Peter Gago. Bin 28 is charismatic, complex, decadent and wondrous. If there were ten more slots in the 100 Best, then Penfolds could fill them all with its recent red releases, but there are not and so I have to make a choice. Which bottle do you grab when it comes down to the crunch? Mine would be the Bin 150. The third release of this wine is hedonistic, awesome and heroic. Grange (q.v.), St. Henri and Bin 389 (q.v.) fruit comes from this vineyard. I can taste it. Bin 150 is more opulently scented than all of these wines. It is a little more forward and engaging, too. It is perhaps more obvious and less cagey and certainly more affordable, but with all of this in mind I still marvel at its telemetry. It won this little joust with ease, like a young knight who hasn't a clue just how talented he is but he keeps on slaughtering his opponents for the fun of it. Bin 150 is the future and I want it now.

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### **2010 Charles Melton, Nine Popes, Barossa Valley, SA £14.99**

It's a shame that the 2012 Rose of Virginia will most likely run out of stock mid-season this year because this 100 Best is rosé-less and Charlie's 2012 version is a bittersweet plum and cranberry delight and it weighs in at only 13%. Not to worry though because Nine Popes, in 2010, is a force of nature. With an explosive nose, strident oak and firm, muscular tannins this is not a wine you can crack on with, but a wine to own and treasure. There is a faithful band of Nine Popes followers out there and they will be transfixed when they get the chance to taste this power-packed wine. The weld between the Shiraz and Grenache is imperceptible and the brawn and rippling muscle on display is awe-inspiring. You know you deserve a six-pack!

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### **2010 Ulithorne, Frux Frugis Shiraz, McLaren Vale, SA £34.95**

I have followed this wine since its very first vintage. I was given the privilege of being the first wine writer in the world to taste the inaugural 2001 and I have not stopped eulogising since. Frux Frugis is a wonder to behold and every single bottle has moved me. Made from impeccable grapes, of the very highest grade, this vineyard supplies the greatest names in the business with premium fruit and it also keeps a small tranche to use for its own wines under the Ulithorne brand. The 2010 is the finest young vintage I have tasted to date. The herb and spice elements knit perfectly with the serene black fruit. This is a fit wine – there is not an ounce of fat on its athletic frame. There has been no body-building either. It is perfectly proportioned with damson, liquorice and plum compote leading the attack. Rose Kentish, one of the most talented winemakers in the region, also crafts an elemental Cabernet/Shiraz called Paternus. The 2008 is a force to be reckoned with. There is also a zany sparkling Shiraz made from the same fruit source called Flamma and this is categorically the best sparkling red in the UK!

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### **2009 Torbreck, The Factor, Barossa Valley, SA £89.00**

Pay attention because this is THE pick of the current crop of Shirazes from Dave Powell Aladdin's Cave of wines. Without wanting to lean on another winery's collection, The Factor is a little like Penfolds' St. Henri, in the fact that it uses older oak and this allows the fruit to come to the fore. While I appreciate that this is somewhat of an anomaly it also means that you can drink this wine earlier. The tannins are somewhat more genial in 2009 The Factor and it sits between the insane 2008 and what I would imagine will be a stupendous 2010. In this regard it is going to be thought of as the 'weakest' of the three vintages depending on your predilection. This is not so. This is the most forward and generous of the wines and it suits this style, too. You must taste this wine for another reason, too. Dave's bottles cost the earth and this cuvée along with 2009 Steading (the crazily underrated and underpriced GSM which is awesome in 2009) are fairly priced. They are also the only two that I buy every year!

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### **2010 John Duval, Entity Shiraz, Barossa Valley, SA £29.99**

Welcome back Mr Duval, we've been waiting for you. I always enjoy tasting John's wines because there is a sheen to them which makes them so appealing. In 2010 there is also some grunt and more spice overlaying the chocolate, plum and mulberry theme and it is these extra elements which have caught my eye. The oak is rather more exotic than normal, too, and with Entity weighing in at half the price of Eligo the decision has been made very simple for me. If you enjoy grandiose, Le Mans-style cruising then this is the wine for you.

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### **2007 Jim Barry, The Armagh Shiraz, Clare Valley, SA £120.00**

With magnificent weight, erring towards the medium rather than heavy, and exceptional leather, clove and scorched undergrowth notes, this is a heavenly Armagh and one which fits neatly between 2011's 100 Best entry, the Titanic 20/20 2006 vintage and next year's (it has already reserved a spot in the line up), the insanely closed and muscular 2008 vintage. With this 2007 you can take a well-deserved break in the action and bathe your senses in silky, mint leaf, pot pourri and damson fruit all topped off with a beautiful, ethereal finish. Having been privileged to attend a monumental vertical tasting of The Armagh in March I can tell you that twenty years is a blink of an eye when it comes to ageing these wines. That said, 2007 is the most forward vintage I have tasted in a long while so load up and lock half away while you decant and pour the other bottles for your very best friends.

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### **2010 Glaetzer, Bishop Shiraz, Barossa Valley, SA £35.00**

Load Up Load Up (and roll up, too) because you cannot avoid a mini-catastrophe which is nearly upon us. Ben Glaetzer did not make any 2011s apart from Amon-Ra and that is simply so that mentalist collectors and obsessive wine nerds can keep their verticals going. Why? He just didn't like the quality of fruit enough. So load up with this immensely impressive 2010 Bishop because it is a gorgeous black liquorice and plum coulis monster. The glossiness suggests that you would have to tip your head back further than normal to allow it to roll out of the glass such is the density of fruit and style on offer here. Ben has masses of fans around the UK, and I have met many of them on the Roadshow. This band of happy followers alone should be enough to mop up the 2010 Bishop, so get in quick if you want to jump the queue.

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### **2010 Rosemount Estate, Balmoral Syrah, McLaren Vale, SA £78.00**

I fell out of love with this cuvée years ago and was sceptical about our reunion. What a fool I was because Rosemount is surfing a massive wave of quality right now and this wine is the chap in charge. With inspirational density and power balanced against fit tannins and fresh acidity this wonderful wine shows just how spectacular the 2010 was in McLaren Vale. With <sup>3</sup>/<sub>4</sub> new oak and a decent mix of French and American, winemaker Matt Koch has thrown all of his skills at this wine and they have all paid off. This is a truly great red and it has the aristocratic air of a top Super-Tuscan and its impressive gloss and spice combo permeates every sip.

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### **2008 Grant Burge, Meshach Shiraz, Barossa Valley, SA £88.00**

With an insanely pungent nose of black fruit, smouldering furnaces and molten pitch, this is a massive wine and one which should require you to ditch your Riedel and purchase a large be-jewelled pewter goblet. 2008 Meshach is a beast with dusty, mouth-coating tannins which detonate on your tongue. It's the wine I have been waiting for because the impossibly ripe 2008 fruit has filled this warhorse wine out and it balances the oak and grime beautifully. If you like big reds you will prostrate yourself wailing for a sip of this spectacular, pagan concoction.

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### **2008 Penfolds, Grange, SA £500.00**

Tannic, strong, spicy and minty with a massive amount of barrel influence and huge power, this is an exotic, forceful, swarming Grange and it is nearly perfect thanks to the almost impossible degree of balance achieved in this wine. Everything is BIG in 2008 Grange. For my part I would like some more control, but it was never on the cards in 2008 and so what you see is what you get and what I see is a Bugatti Veyron in vinous form. It will undoubtedly blow your mind as it simultaneously blows your budget, but who cares. Grange is an entity these days which carves a mighty furrow around the world and I will be the first person to tell you if it drops the ball. 2008 Grange is a towering colossus and I could not take my eyes off it for the half an hour it took me to dissect 50ml of wine in the bottom of my glass. If you would like to taste another spectacular Penfolds red, from an even finer vintage and pitched at a more affordable (by comparison) price point then 2010 RWT is simply sublime. Only a point off my Grange score this is my preferred vintage of RWT since the game began back in 1997.

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# SWEET

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## **2012 Wirra Wirra, Mrs Wigley Moscato, McLaren Vale, SA, (half bottle) £7.99**

Don't think about it, don't worry who's watching just order it and drink it. Then smile and realise that the joke is on whoever has missed out. Yes, Mrs Wigley is not the most serious or macho wine in the rack but it is one of Australia's most delightful, sweet, sparklers and I just love that ginger beer / rhubarb stem / elderflower / pomegranate tang and you will, too, so man up!

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## **2012 Yalumba, FSW8B Botrytis Viognier, Wrattenbully, SA (half bottle) £15.00**

I don't know how they do it either because I am not a massive fan of the faddy, sweet Viogs from the Northern Rhône, but this wine really does have something special going on and it makes me smile. There are only a handful of wines on the planet with this levity and succulence ratio. I venture that even people who profess to not liking sweet wines will go gaga when they taste the haunting and yet arresting fruit in this golden tube of Yalumba joy.

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## **2012 Mount Horrocks, Cordon Cut Riesling, Clare Valley, SA (half bottle) £22.99**

With stewed rhubarb, apple crumble with cinnamon and the lightest of crème caramel textures this is one of my favourite ever vintages from Stephanie Toole and it is the balance between luscious fruit and racy acidity which is the reason for this high drama. The sweet notes are thrilling and all-encompassing, but they are offset by a nerve-tingling current of ever-present acidity which always tethers the ostentatious flavours to the ground. Drinking perfectly already, but with ten years to soften and billow this is a work of art and it underlines that fact that this is the finest sweet Riesling estate in the country.

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**2009 Mc William's, Morning Light Botrytis Semillon, Hunter Valley, NSW (half bottle) £12.99**

I suppose it makes sense that the Hunter Valley should be able to make great sweet Semillon given that it is the number one dry Semillon region in the world, but I am always pleasantly shocked when I taste these wines and this year I have two in my 100 Best. While the KT below is a rich, dark, exotic number Morning Light does what it says on the label... It is bright, fresh and uplifting, like a clean, youthful Monbazillac. It shows delicacy and faint orchard notes as well as lightly honeyed fruit and a clean finish. There are passion fruit hints which come and go and also mandarin scent, too. This is a demure creation with refinement and breeding and I am sure that it will capture your heart.

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**2011 Keith Tulloch, Botrytis Semillon, Hunter Valley, NSW (half bottle) £19.99**

Keith Tulloch posted me a range of his wines for consideration this year and they were very impressive indeed, in particular the 2012 Field of Mars Chardonnay and the 2012 Field of Mars Block 3 Semillon. These are wines that show incredible levels of composure and finesse. They are water white, lean and tense but on the palate exhibit amplitude and grace that seems almost unnerving. They are made in minuscule quantities so if you have the chance to buy a few bottles, don't hesitate. My chosen wine from Keith's impressive portfolio, however, is this phenomenal sweetie. Keith has always fashioned exceptional botrytised Semillons and I feel that this recently released 2011 is a landmark wine. The brûlée and orange blossom notes are nothing short of perfect but it is the texture and length which will take your breath away. There are precious few wines in the world that can compete with this dreamy creation and that includes all of the Châteaux in Bordeaux!

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## FORTIFIED

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### **Campbell's of Rutherglen, Topaque, Rutherglen, Vic (half bottle) £13.49**

I have gone for a lighter Topaque (the ugly new term for Tokay) this year and it is the butterscotch, orange zest and almond notes which have won me over. As a nation, we have fallen slightly out of love with fortified sweeties but I feel that the Aussies are making headway with their unique Topaques and Muscats and this version is the special agent who will surely go deeper into the enemy territory than any before him. Wish him luck. The prize is large – if only we could remember what the game was and how to play it.

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### **NV Yalumba, Museum Reserve Muscat, Rutherglen, Vic, (half bottle) £14.50**

I have tasted many a Muscat over the last twelve months (tough job) and while I adore the old ones and think that All Saints, Campbells and Stanton & Killeen all deserve medals (which they have along with countless trophies, too), I keep coming back to this entry level version because it does so much of what the 'Grands' and 'Rares' do, without some of the manky old wood notes, and at a stunningly affordable price. With seven years spent in large French oak barrels the fig, treacle, brûlée, rose petal, cinnamon, espresso and ginger lily notes are simply sublime. Super-sweet and hedonistic this is a pudding or after dinner wine that will stun your pals. It will keep for an eternity and not spoil once opened so the future is only bright with this monumental, but affordable sticky, in your collection.

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### **Grant Burge, 20 Year Old Tawny, Barossa Valley, SA £46.00**

It has taken ten years to find the right Tawny for this list and it has now arrived. Chez Jukes we drink a fair quota of Tawny Port and so we know a thing or two about this style and also those 'Johnny Foreigner' imposter wines, too. With this in mind, I can assure you that this wine measures up to the mark and dare I say it exceeds it with its bramble, toffee, mocha, fig and burnt treacle notes. It is gloriously over the top and also brilliantly balanced and it just goes to show that those clever Aussie dynasties, inspired by the Portuguese, have come up with not just copies of their wines but improvements in many cases and this wine is just that.

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

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



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