

## Great Red Tasting

## Cabernet blends

A quick scan down the best of the cabernet blends shows the strength of the combination of cabernet and merlot. In particular, this is most evident in the lower-priced wines where this combination has become synonymous with polished, quality easy-drinking wine. From the time it started to appear 20 years ago as an alternative to the traditional Australian choice of shiraz to work with cabernet sauvignon, merlot has made quite an impact. It is an ideal bedfellow for cabernet because it plugs any palate shortcomings with its warm ripe fleshiness, allowing the power and linear structure of cabernet to drive palate length.

It is worth noting that the cabernet merlot combination wasn't as strong in the top price bracket.

A few wines featured variations of the traditional Bordeaux blends with the addition of cabernet franc, petit verdot and malbec. And a pleasing development is the use of other varieties such as tempranillo to create a slightly more savoury, food friendly style of wine.

In the main this was a strong class of wine with something for just about everybody in all price points.



## UNDER \$15

## 1. Barwick Crush cabernet merlot 2007 (\$14.95)

An appealing, fruit driven, medium bodied blend from the South-West. Minty red berry with deeper flavours of plum. Soft and round with fine tannins in support.

## 2. Xabregas cabernet merlot 2005 (\$14.95)

Chock full of lush fruit cake and plum pudding. Has an earthy briary edge with the lifted minty red berry of cabernet carrying the long finish. Current drinking wine.

## 3. Jane Brook Plain Jane cabernet shiraz 2007 (\$15)

A blend of Margaret River and Swan Valley fruit that sits together nicely. Soft and warm with fine tannins, understated oak and generous medium weight fruit. Smooth and very easy drinking.

## 4. Miles from Nowhere cabernet merlot 2007 (\$14.95)

This is your stock standard cabernet merlot from this region. It fits snugly into the current drinking-friendly style you expect for this price and blend. Minty red berry with spicy cedary lift.

## 5. Fergrove Symbols cabernet merlot 2007 (\$14.95)

Balanced and stylish wine for this price point. Typical plum and blackcurrant characters with the fine grained oak and silky tannins completing an easy drinking wine perfect for the current year.

## \$15 - \$20

## 6. Brookland Valley Verse 1 cabernet merlot 2007 (\$19.95)

This delivers well above its fighting weight. Powerful yet with finesse and poise. Leafy cabernet with more substantial palate filling, fruit cake merlot. Light cedary overlay is appealing.

## 7. Tiger's Tale cabernet sauvignon merlot 2008 (\$18)

One of the early wines from this vintage. It's a good example of the generous full-flavoured Margaret River blend of these varieties we have come to expect. Leafy cabernet floats effortlessly over the savoury plummy merlot. Nice drinking.

## 8. Wynns Coonawarra Estate cabernet shiraz merlot 2007 (\$19.95)

Simple fruit blend from Coonawarra under this famous label. Cabernet

provides the central core of length and palate persistence with the shiraz and merlot adding some plumpness and softness into the middle palate. Easy current drinking or the next five years.

## 9. Temple Bruer Preservative Free cabernet merlot 2008 (\$19)

If preservatives are a problem, then this is a damn fine wine to meet your needs and still keep you headache free. It's created from certified organic vineyards and delivers a hefty amount of generous fruit flavour. An appealing wine for the next year or so.

## 10. Wild Oats cabernet merlot 2007 (\$19)

This is part of the increasing and emerging Robert Oatley stable of very good value for money wines. Opulent generous wine with heaps of appeal and style. Rich sweet fruit with a pleasant overlay of oak.

## 11. Sandalford Margaret River cabernet merlot 2008 (\$19)

Beautiful aromas of redcurrant and cedar with some plummy fruit cake characters. The palate has incredible intensity with a lingering persistent finish. Poised and powerful at the same time. Tannins are very strong and ripe. This is one that will easily cellar for a few years.

## \$20 - \$25

## 12. McHenry Hohen cabernet merlot 2007 (\$21.50)

A precise and fragrant blend that offers some wonderful drinking. Bouquet of red berry, dark plum and minty fruit cake. The palate is seamless, finely textured and sublimely silky. It's medium bodied but there is stacks of intense and quite powerful fruit.

## 13. Amberley cabernet merlot 2007 (\$22.50)

Beautifully rich and robust blend from this very good vintage. It retains a supple richness while packing some real kick with ripe assertive tannins and a little oak infusion. The palate is warm and fleshy and ideal for drinking over the next few years.

## 14. Vasse Felix cabernet merlot 2007 (\$25)

Sumptuous and generous fruit in this delicious blend with the obvious plum and blackcurrant fruit cake of merlot adding substance to the firm structural cabernet. Really well-made wine with that leafy cabernet overlay a feature.

## 15. Balnaves of Coonawarra The Blend 2006 (\$20.50)

A soft, rich and flavoursome, value for money blend of merlot and cabernet

sauvignon. Rich, ripe tannins and sinewy fruit on the finish. Retains typical minty red berry characters of Coonawarra.

## 16. Thorn Clarke Shottfire Quartage 2007 (\$24)

This is a nice blend of cabernet, petit verdot, merlot and malbec. It's perfumed and elegant with a tight controlled palate. Like the sweet berry influence on the palate which builds effortlessly to a long finish.

## 17. Goundrey-G cabernet tempranillo 2007 (\$24)

Wonderful spicy, enticing perfume on the nose combines some beautiful fragrances of mint and cedar. Great palate structure with a long flavour profile of cedary, savoury, sour cherry and spice. Lovely wine for current drinking. A beauty.

## 18. Redgate Bin 588 2007 (\$22.50)

A blend of cabernet merlot and just a smidgeon of shiraz. It's been a consistent value for money wine over the years and this vintage is certainly one of the best. Cedary red berry aromas and a medium weight palate of some style and poise.

## 19. Wirra Wirra Church Block 2007 (\$22)

One of the most successful and popular commercial wines on the market.