

Great Red Tasting

Cabernet

Once again it was encouraging to see some really high-class cabernets in the tasting. And while all winemakers have definitely lifted their game across Australia, it was the cabernets of Margaret River and Coonawarra which were the most impressive.

That's hardly surprising, because these are Australia's two great cabernet-producing areas.

Perhaps a little disappointing was the lack of high-class, value-for-money cabernets, although in the under-\$20 segment of the market a lot of cabernet is combined with merlot to make a more complete wine.

It was in the top-end \$25 to \$40 bracket where cabernet really shone, with some quite marvellous examples capturing perfectly the power, grace and style of this variety.

It must also be said that a lot of WA's best cabernets sell for a lot more than the \$40 upper limit and you should start to see these appearing soon from the exceptional 2007 vintage.



UNDER \$15

1. Houghton cabernet sauvignon 2008 (\$14)

Juicy, lively and brimming with fresh cabernet from the South-West. Gentle and generous wine with a sappy raspberry palate supported with light, fine tannins and light cedar oak. Easy current drinking.

2. Evans & Tate Ngarara cabernet sauvignon 2007 (\$14)

A product of an ideal vintage for this variety. Soft plum and blackcurrant flavours with a light dusting of cedary oak. It's pleasant and soft in the mouth.

\$15-\$20

3. Rosemount Show Reserve Coonawarra cabernet 2006 (\$19.95)

Exotic spicy floral aromas of Coonawarra cabernet. A refined and thoroughly poised cabernet with fine-grained oak and tannins supporting some quality fruit. A stylish example of a classy Coonawarra cabernet at a good price.

4. Moondah Brook cabernet sauvignon 2007 (\$18)

Excellent value cabernet from a good season in WA. Leafy varietal cabernet on the nose with a perfectly balanced palate built with seamless oak and fruit integration. Long finish.

\$20-\$25

5. Capel Vale Regional Series cabernet sauvignon 2007 (\$22.50)

One of the most improved and impressive producers in WA. This wine is sourced from some quality Margaret River vineyards. It translates into this exceptional wine of poise and effortless length and persistence.

6. Zema Estate Coonawarra cabernet sauvignon 2005 (\$24.95)

Excellent example of Coonawarra cabernet. Leafy aroma with intense blackcurrant and mint characters. The palate is silky and fine with a long, sustained finish. Nice cedary oak treatment in a wine made for drinking over the next couple of years.

7. Forest Hill cabernet sauvignon 2007 (\$24)

One sniff and you know you're on to something special. Distinct red berry and mint with a slightly leafy spectrum in there. The palate is stylish, with real finesse, yet there is power and structure that sustains the wine to a long, powerful finish.

8. Merops cabernet sauvignon 2005 (\$22)

Impressive cabernet that's really



a sound structural foundation to build on. Bouquet of black olive, dark blackcurrant and a sliver of mint.

\$25-\$40

9. Ferngrove Majestic cabernet sauvignon 2007 (\$29)

Lovely opulent and powerful example of what this vintage delivered.

Masses of dark blackcurrant and black olive aromas with a palate that combines firm structure and elegance with supple fruit appeal. Classy wine.

10. Hardys HRB/D636 cabernet sauvignon 2006 (\$39.95)

A combination of Coonawarra and Margaret River cabernet designed to take advantage of these two great regions. Seamless, pure and precise cabernet with the lift of Coonawarra mint unmistakable and the mid-palate grunt of Margaret River. Elegant and stylish.

11. Wynns Coonawarra Estate cabernet sauvignon 2006 (\$32)

A famous name in Australian wine. The

classic label featuring the gabled winery of Wynns has adorned many great vintages. This is a more elegant and restrained wine, with typical fine structure and elegance supporting some attractive mint and red berry fruit flavours.

12. Hamelin Bay cabernet sauvignon 2007 (\$31)

This winery has been a consistent and often underrated producer from southern Margaret River. This is a lovely stylish, elegant, medium-bodied wine with strong mint and leafy red berry characters augmented with a light dusting of cedary oak. Just gorgeous drinking.

13. Evans & Tate The Reserve cabernet sauvignon 2005 (\$39.95)

This is an exceptional wine from a good Margaret River vintage for cabernet sauvignon. There's power and elegance in the very best example of cabernet. Tannins are ripe and firm while the oak and fruit integration is superb. A wine that raises the bar for cabernet and a multi-trophy winner nationally.

14. Xabregas Show Reserve cabernet sauvignon 2007 (\$26.50)

Continues the outstanding form of this wine, which won a gold at the Mt Barker Show last year. The 2005 was very good but this one brings a degree of refinement and style to the table. Lovely, elegant and beautifully presented cabernet.

15. Kilikanoon Blocks Road cabernet sauvignon 2006 (\$36.45)

Clare is often underrated for cabernet, yet when you taste wines like this you wonder why. Minty and blackcurrant dominance with a neat touch of cedar on the nose. The palate has a deliciously rich and dense feel with flavours that just roll on for ever. Excellent wine.

16. Langmeil Blacksmith cabernet 2006 (\$30)

Ideal year for cabernet. An elegant and polished wine with the intense cabernet fruit supported with fine sinewy and slightly grainy tannins and well-judged use of mainly used French oak. Great structure to support extended cellaring.



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