



things at Xanadu. This wine is varietally correct, showing ripe cassis, cherries and Ribena aromas.

The Growers 2008 Reward Cabernet Sauvignon, \$25
Awarded: **Bronze** (16)

The Growers Reward is a premium range produced exclusively from grapes grown in Margaret River. The newly released 2008 has lifted plums, dark berries and spicy French oak aromas leading onto a dense palate with blackcurrant and plum



PICK OF THE REGION

Wine By Brad 2007 Cabernet Merlot, \$18
Awarded: **Gold** (18.5)

Brad Wehr has gone from strength to strength with this brand. Although the label masquerades as a fun and light-hearted take on wine, the contents are serious. Brad's 2007 Cabernet Merlot shows spicy, cedary oak and a hint of tobacco leaf framing a core of plum and dark berry fruit. The wine is medium-bodied, neatly balanced and finishes clean and fresh.



fruitcake flavours. It needs time, but if this is a preview of wines from the 2008 vintage, we can look forward to some pretty smart reds from Margaret River in the next year or two.

Wine By Brad 2005 Cabernet Merlot, \$18
Awarded: **Bronze** (16)

Wine by Brad's 2005 Cabernet Merlot is remarkable for its freshness and fruit vibrancy, considering its age. This wine has bright cassis, redcurrant aromas and an attractive hint of dusty herbs and tobacco leaf. The palate is medium-bodied with smooth, dark mocha chocolate flavours.

Edwards 2007 Cabernet Sauvignon, \$32
Awarded: **Bronze** (15.8)

With Mike in the winery and Christo in the vineyards (when they're not out surfing), it's no surprise the Edwards brothers are producing top-notch varietal wines from grapes grown on their family vineyard on Caves Road. Their 2007 Cabernet Sauvignon shows shy cassis, herbal notes and a structured, savoury palate. A wine to cellar.

Edwards 2007 Shiraz, \$30
Awarded: **Bronze** (15.5)

This is an elegant expression of cool climate shiraz. The wine opens with blueberries, white pepper, anise and wet stone, and leads to quite a restrained palate showing spicy blackberries and ripe fruit tannins. Good balance and length.

Xanadu 2007 Dragon Shiraz, \$16
Awarded: **Bronze** (15.5)

We loved this wine's spicy oak, anise and berry flavours, although one panellist questioned whether the bottle (under screwcap) was showing some sulfide characters.

GREAT SOUTHERN

The Great Southern is the largest wine region in Australia, which would suggest a diversity of soil types, microclimates and landscapes.

Although this diversity can be seen in the

expression and profile of the wines coming out of the area, there remains an underlying identity of provenance, which was evident in this tasting.

The wines showed modern, sophisticated winemaking, with only a handful of the 52 tasting showing minor faults.

The fact that 50 percent received medals (and quite a few just missing out) is testament to the quality of winemaking, and the varietal expression and "sense of place" showed in the wine.

Despite the consistency of the wines, few were articulate enough to really impress. Many of the best performers were strongly represented by reputable producers including Howard Park, Fernglen Plantagenet, Alkoomi, Frankland Estate, Cape Mentzelia and the more recently established, Xabregas.

The strength of the region was predictably noticed in the shiraz wines, but there were also attractive cabernet-based examples suggesting that the region has the cool-climate character suited to a range of red varieties. Overall, the higher point wines showed sensitive handling with defined varietal expression, vigour and balance. — PM

Xabregas Show Reserve 2007 Shiraz, \$27
Awarded: **Silver** (17.2)

This wine has purity and freshness with layers of ripe, vivid, succulent fruit. Good depth and structure, with a sense of youthful brightness, make this accessible and appealing. There is a finish of sturdiness that offers a degree of seriousness.

Frankland Estate Smith Cullam 2007 Shiraz Cabernet, \$54; Awarded: **Silver** (17)

There is depth of fruit that is quite clenched and contained in this wine. It has focus and precision with the generosity of shiraz and the tightness of cabernet. It is quenching, has thickness with surging black fruit and will continue to offer interesting drinking for many years to come.

Castle Rock 2005 Shiraz, \$29
Awarded: **Silver** (17)

This shiraz is a genuine cool climate expression with medium weight with fresh acidity and calm