

RIESLING GETS COOL

The popularity of riesling comes and goes. But with the advent of some exciting, off-dry and approachable West Australian Rieslings, the variety might yet get to hang with the cool kids.

From the Great Southern, riesling devotee Martin Cooper's contributions to the movement are the 2010 Xabregas Figtree and Spencer Vineyard rieslings, a pair of off-dry, single-vineyard wines.

In the glass they're both delicious and lip-smacking - the Figtree gilded with citrus flavours, the joyously Germanic Spencer all florally and perfumed - with an easygoing charm that hints little at the delicate balancing act involving lees stirring, residual sugar, natural acidity and fermentation-derived carbon dioxide performed by Martin in the winery.

"It'd be extremely easy to simply ferment our best parcels dry and live with the final outcome," says the Xabregas winemaker. "But these styles are serious. They deserve first-rate treatment and best selection of fruit rather than being an afterthought.

We need to be unique in offering a style of our own and forging ahead with a Mount Barker riesling that focuses on purity of fruit while delivery complexity and interest.."

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For further information please contact;

Xabregas Wines
on 1300 780 123 or
email sales@xabregas.com.au



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