

Fresh Wine and Beer

RAY JORDAN AND VIC CROSSLAND

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Vintage bad for some, good for others

With all the rain we've had this year it's hard to comprehend how dry it was last summer in Western Australia. Equally hard to come to grips with was the amount of rain dumped on the Eastern States, causing all manner of problems for winemakers.

The result was a vintage that was a disaster for many but surprisingly good for some, with the whites in South Australia, in particular, very good in some cases.

It proves the folly in writing off some vintages as too hot, or too cold, or too wet, or too dry. Because such is the size of this country that while some may have suffered, others may have prospered. There is no logic. That's just the luck of the draw.

In recent months I have been surprised and heartened by some of the whites that have emerged

from the 2011 vintage in South Australia, and the Eden Valley and Barossa Valley in particular. These were varieties picked early, before the rain and cold made things impossible for later-ripening varieties, especially the reds such as grenache.

Two wines that have impressed recently are from Grant Burge, whose vineyard holdings are the biggest in the Barossa and span a wide cross-section of the many sub-regions of this area.

Both the Thorn riesling and Kraft sauvignon blanc are excellent aromatic wines showing precise and refreshing flavours ideal for current drinking.

Another wine in this week's line-up that I thoroughly enjoyed was the Paul Conti Roccella grenache shiraz 2011. This is a delicious current drinking young red that ticks all the boxes for immediate slurpability.

Wine of the week

GRANT BURGE THORN RIESLING 2011 (\$19.95)

Most of the winemakers will tell you that 2011 was a struggle for reds but pretty good for whites. This one is a good example of that. It's light and delicate yet with pure riesling character that is held precisely with a fine lingering acid. Persistent and finely balanced through to the finish. **91/100**



GRANT BURGE KRAFT SAUVIGNON BLANC 2011 (\$19.95)

One of the better sauvignon blancs you will find from the Barossa. It is the result of the cool and wet vintage with the fruit being removed early to retain its freshness and zing. Not a big tropical number but one with good flavour intensity and palate structure. Easy drinking wine with a touch of grassiness adding to the finish. **90/100**



ALKOOMI SHIRAZ 2010 (\$15.90)

A medium-bodied elegant shiraz displaying the cool-climate spice and light pepperiness of the region. It's a well-made wine with fine silky tannins, a little subtle oak influence and rather persistent fruit that is carried effortlessly to a focused finish. Bright and lively wine of some class for this price. **90/100**



PAUL CONTI ROCCELLA GRENACHE SHIRAZ 2011 (\$17)

If you want an honest red for current drinking then this little beauty is perfect. Loaded with sweet, supple fruit characters sprinkled with a little spice and overlaid with crushed flowers. The light plummy fruit has been complemented with a little vanillin oak sweetness but with dry tannins, fine acid control and a lovely fruity finish. Best in the short term. **89/100**



EVANS & TATE MARGARET RIVER CLASSIC CABERNET MERLOT 2010 (\$20)

Soft and supple fruit-driven Margaret River blend of cabernet and merlot. The red berry cedary influence is striking with the supple tannins and silky fine oak working together. It's an easy drinking wine designed for the gums right now. **87/100**



PEOPLE'S CHOICE AWARD