WINE FOR SOUPS

THESE WELL-PRICED DROPS WILL HELP BRING OUT THE BEST IN YOUR BROTH

BARGAIN BUY

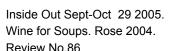
Hoddles Creek Yarra Valley Chardonnay 2004 (\$17)

This is a wine that blows value-for-money equations out the window. It's scary how good this is. When you first open it there's a gentle glide of lemon and nectarine-like flavour, but give it some air and it sings a creamy, dreamy, elegant song. It's a perfect chardonnay – not too heavy, not too light. You could be excused for recommending it as part of a balanced diet. Rice soup? What an attractive match.

BUY THE CASE

Seppelt Chalambar Shiraz 2003 (\$23)

This is the wine that announces to the world how hard it is to sell a bottle of wine right now – because this is the standard of a \$50 wine. It's sweet and spicy and many more things nice, but whether it tastes like blueberries or chocolate or a raging mash of plums isn't really the point. What is the point is its balance, its great style, its power and elegance – all of which means it'll romp and pomp when served with any food that says to you, "Give me a bottle of red!"



PRETTY DAMN GOOD

Scorpo Vineyard Mornington Peninsula Rosé 2004 (\$23)

Whenever a meal has a bit of the "in-betweens" about it – warm salads, tapas, pre-dinner nibbles, soups and suppers – the rosé flag should shoot straight up. Fish, cold meats, light cheeses – you name it, rosé stands up to the plate. This Scorpo is particularly good. It's perfumed and dry, with the flavour of red cherries.

BLOW THE BUDGET

Seville Estate Reserve Pinot Noir 2003 (\$45)

There was a time when this winery was one of the hottest names in the Yarra Valley – and then it all went deathly quiet. No more. This wine's a beauty, all pale cherries on sap and undergrowth, the funk of which gives it a head start in the food-friendliness stakes. Its low oak and spicy feel keep the good times rolling and make it a monte for just about any wonton-based soup.

FANCY SOME FIZZ?

Clover Hill Pipers River Sparkling Brut 2000 (\$38)

It's fresh, fine and citric, with nuances of strawberry pips and fresh bread dough – a fancy way of saying that just about any soup that begs a piece of crusty white bread would also suit a glass of this lovely bubbly. Any of the broth-based Provençale-type soups beg to be accompanied by a glass of a fizz like this.

SOMETHING SPECIAL

Penfolds St Henri Shiraz 2001 (\$65)

St Henri Shiraz has a tradition dating back almost as far as its sister wine – Penfolds Grange – and if the truth be known, it's very often a much better drink, especially from vintages such as 2001. This is slick, supple and low on oak, which means that it could even pair well with a soup that carries a lick of spice. Its also a nice wine to kick back with on the couch.





