



THIRSTY WORK

NICK HILDEBRANDT

Working in restaurants, I'm inundated by people trying to sell me wine - from everywhere! Two of my new favourites are from Luxembourg and Slovenia. They're unique, interesting and good value.

The level of imported wine in contemporary restaurants is on the up. Why? Is there suddenly something wrong with our wines? Well, while Australian wines are among the cleanest, brightest and best value in the world, frankly they're starting to bore some of us.

The best Australian producers are responding by making wines that stand out from the pack, whether it's by producing lesser-known varieties such as tempranillo or using smart packaging and labels.

Scorpo is a classic example. A relative newcomer from the Mornington Peninsula, the **2006 Aubaine Chardonnay, \$28**, oozes the personality and charm often associated with more expensive bottles. It's modern and clean, with balance and complexity that make me want to drink chardonnay again.

Torbreck, from the Barossa Valley, combines great wines with clever marketing. The **2006 Woodcutter's Shiraz, \$18.99**, is an early-drinking classic, juggling flavour, texture and tannins to make a serious wine for less than 20 bucks.

Nick Hildebrandt is an award-winning sommelier.

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