

Under \$18

WEST CAPE HOWE CABERNET MERLOT 2006 \$15-\$17

West Cape Howe wines are benchmarks for quality and value in the Denmark and Great Southern regions of Western Australia. This cabernet has complex aromas of crushed dark plums and mulberries with light floral hints and a savoury, leafy touch. It's medium in intensity and body, with light, dusty oak in the background, and a fresh, clean palate. (13.5% alcohol; screwcap)

Ageing? Drink over three years.

Food ideas: Lamb.

Stockists include: Church Street Cellars, Richmond; Yarrville Cellars.

★★★★ \$\$\$



ALKOOMI SEMILLON SAUVIGNON BLANC 2007 \$14-\$16

This great value Frankland River white is another example of the good buys coming from Western Australia's far south. The appetising, savoury qualities of semillon lead the way, with hints of lemon, straw and tropical fruit from the sauvignon. It tastes clean with good presence and a tangy finish. (13% alcohol, screwcap)

Ageing? Drink over the next year.

Food ideas: Lemon grass chicken; grilled fish.

Stockists include: Parkhill Cellars, North Melbourne; Red Bluff Cellars, Black Rock.

★★★★☆ \$\$\$



\$18 to \$30

MCIVOR ESTATE MARSANNE ROUSSANNE 2006 \$23-\$25

From Tooborac, near Heathcote, this fragrant, aromatic dry white expresses the distinctive personalities of these two white Rhone varieties well. Aromas of flowering heather, wild honey and stone fruits introduce a clean, soft palate. It has a smooth, unctuous texture, nicely persistent flavour and an appetising dry finish. (13% alcohol; Diam cork)

Ageing? Drink over four years.

Food ideas: Mild cheeses; scallops.

Stockists include: Just released. Ask at your local wine shop or call Prime Wines on 9696 6366

★★★★☆ \$\$\$



KIRRIHILL SINGLE VINEYARD SHIRAZ BAILE AN GHARRAI 2006 \$18-\$20

Kirrihill's single vineyard Clare Valley reds have Gaelic names, reflecting the Irish influence in the region. This very likeable shiraz opens with spice, raspberry, blackberry and beef stocky aromas, seasoned with a hint of mint. It's a complex, medium-bodied drop of good texture, supported with soft tannins. (14.5% alcohol; screwcap)

Ageing? Drink over five years.

Food ideas: Roast beef.

Stockists include: Nillumbik Cellars, Diamond Creek; Purvis Cellars, Surrey Hills.

★★★★☆ \$\$\$



Ratings

★★★★★

A superb example, a near perfect wine of great character, worthy of the big occasion and the best company.

★★★★☆

First class, a wine of distinction not far below the top rating.

★★★★

A very good wine of real style and personality.

★★★☆☆

Good quality, a cut above average.

★★★

A sound, agreeable wine without faults or nasty bits.

Value

\$\$\$

A wine with a price tag that makes it a steal.

\$\$

Reasonably priced relative to quality.

\$

A price tag that stretches things.

Indulge yourself

SCORPO CHARDONNAY 2006 \$36-\$40

Increasing viticultural knowledge, winemaking expertise and vine age are making Mornington Peninsula chardonnay a new Australian classic. Scorpo '06 is a suave, understated wine combining suggestions of grapefruit, stone fruits, minerals and very subtle oak into an elegant, dry, structured chardonnay of length and finesse. (14% alcohol; Diam cork)

Ageing? Drink over three years.

Food ideas: Chicken breasts with grapes; salmon.

Stockists include: Randall the Wine Merchant, Hawthorn; Parkhill Cellars, North Melbourne.

★★★★★ \$\$\$



D'ARENBERG THE COPPER- MINE ROAD CABERNET SAUVIGNON 2005 \$55-\$60

Although best known for grenache-based reds, this McLaren Vale winery also has a long, successful history with cabernet sauvignon. This example has a concentrated, old-fashioned nose of earth, briary undergrowth, black fruits and chocolate. It tastes powerful with good depth and length, finishing with attractive ripe tannins. (14.5% alcohol; screwcap)

Food ideas: Braised oxtail.

Stockists include: Old & Rare Wines, Southbank; Porters Nepean Highway Cellars, Mornington.

★★★★☆ \$\$\$

