

\$18 to \$30

SCORPO PINOT GRIS 2006
\$28-\$30

Pinot gris/grigio white wines are reaching plague proportions but really good examples are still a rarity. This Mornington Peninsula wine is better than most, offering interesting aromas of pear, spice, minerals and a whisper of sulfur, all very savoury and Euro-accented. The silky palate flirts slightly with sweetness but it finishes long and clean.

Ageing? Drink over two years.

Food ideas: Chicken liver pate; charcuterie.

Stockists include: Cloudwine, South Melbourne; Randall The Wine Merchant, Albert Park.

★★★★ \$\$

**PEPPERJACK CABERNET SAUVIGNON 2005**
\$21-\$24

This is a beautifully put together wine for the price (and I suspect it might be sub-\$20 at some places). From Saltram in the Barossa, it combines intense blackcurrant, dark berry, beef stock, chocolate and sweet oak aromas, with a smooth, lush palate of depth and lasting flavour. Balanced, ripe, fine-grained tannins provide a sound foundation for age.

Ageing? Drink over six years.

Food ideas: Roast beef; steak and kidney pie.

Stockists include: Vintage Cellars stores; Dan Murphy stores.

★★★★☆ \$\$\$

**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**PENFOLDS BIN 707 CABERNET SAUVIGNON 2004**
\$150-\$170

This esteemed cabernet, released with the outstanding 2002 Grange recently, doesn't enjoy the same hype, nor the \$500 tag. It's still pricey and very impressive. Concentrated blackcurrant and fruitcake aromas are woven through vanilla and mocha-like oak. The dense, power-packed palate is profound, ripe and long, with beautifully textured tannins.

Ageing? Yes, three to 15 years.

Food ideas: Roast leg of lamb.

Stockists include: Boccaccio Cellars, Balwyn; Strathmore Cellars.

★★★★★ \$\$\$

**BALNAVES CHARDONNAY 2005**
\$30-\$33

Like all top-shelf Coonawarra wineries, Balnaves' fame is based on excellent red wines. Chardonnay is a bit of an also-ran, despite state-of-the-art quality and style. The '05 has citrus and stone fruit varietal cues at its heart, with complex nutty touches, oaky spice and barley sugar-like elements in support. It's smooth and fine in texture, finishing dry.

Ageing? Drink over two years.

Food ideas: Seared tuna; salmon.

Stockists include: Strathmore Cellars; Nicks Wine Merchants stores.

★★★★☆ \$\$\$

