Hughie's favour brings out flavour

The West July 22, 2010 "Fresh"

Once again old Hughie has smiled on the State's winemakers, delivering a very good vintage for the fourth consecutive year. And some of these wines from 2010 are starting to hit the shelves.

The indications are these white wines will provide good short-term drinking with varieties such as sauvignon blanc, semillon and riesling all showing excellent varietal characters and flavour intensity.

While these wines don't have the extraordinary combination of power and delicacy of the previous vintage, in many ways they will probably be more the crowd pleasers, with a full palate of intense flavour in wines from all regions of the State.

A word of warning: if you are buying 2010 wines now the chances are they have only just been bottled. This can result in a phenomenon called bottle shock where the wine appears quite dumb, tight and without much flavour as a result of the bottling process, that invariably involves pushing the wine through a filter before going into the bottle. This usually disappears after a month and even with some breath before you drink it. So don't be too quick to judge these wines if they don't quite measure up immediately.

The sauvignon blanc and semillon sauvignon blanc blends I have chosen this week were all drinking surprisingly well when tasted, so the chances were they had had time to settle down. I know we are in red wine weather but I reckon when you strike one of those fresh, clear blue-sky Sundays a crisp, white wine with a little barbecued chorizo or calamari on the hotplate is hard to beat.

Lenton Brae semillon sauvignon blanc 2010 ($24)
Another superb example of this style from Lenton Brae. This is unbelievably powerful and intense on the palate after an attack on the nose of similar intensity. It's balanced with beautiful fruit supported by fine lingering acid. 94/100

Amberley Secret Lane sauvignon blanc 2010 ($19.95)
Punchy vibrant fruit-driven sauvignon blanc simply bursting with tropical fruit on the nose and palate. It has a crunchy, lively mouth feel with a racy acidity that sustains an impressive balanced finish. 90/100

Fifth Leg Margaret River sauvignon blanc semillon 2010 ($20)
Fragrant fresh and vibrant blend busting with snow pea, tropical fruits and a generous squeeze of lime. It is a crunchy, lively wine in the mouth with stacks of current drinking appeal. 90/100

White Classic Houghton Original 2010 ($14)
A slightly more fruit-driven and punchy version of this West Australian classic. Chock-full of tropical fruit with a crunchy slice of lemon adding some zip on the finish. A wine that will cellar beautifully over a further five to eight years. 90/100

Sittella Margaret River sauvignon blanc semillon 2010 ($22)
Another beauty from fruit sourced down at Margaret River. A crisp and pristine palate and nose with a zippy, minerally mouth feel. The crunchy tropical and slightly herbal fruit flavours are just perfect for this style. 91/100

McHenry Hohnen 3 Amigos White 2008 ($24)
A blend of marsanne chardonnay and roussanne. This has a deep colour yet the wine is fresh and lively on the palate. It is in the Rhone mould with opulent richness that at the same time has a leaner and more precise mouth feel than previous vintages. A little barrel fermentation, natural yeast and lees ageing have contributed to the extravagant palate. A beautiful alternative style. 93/100

Mr Riggs VOR-GS Adelaide Hills riesling 2009 ($22)
This has become one of my favourite wines. It carries a little residual sugar which adds a delicious appeal to the palate. Still has a nice mineral citrus edge to it but the palate friendliness is striking. 90/100

Mr Riggs Watervale riesling 2009 ($22)
A tight and minerally riesling from the Watervale region. It is a superb example of this excellent vintage for riesling. The bracing acidity sustains the palate to a very long finish. Promising for the cellar. 92/100

Wirra Wirra The 12th Man Adelaide Hills chardonnay 2008 ($28.50)
Wirra source this fruit from the Adelaide Hills. It has been crafted into a fine and delightfully elegant chardonnay displaying mineral grapefruit characters on the nose and a fine restrained stone-fruit richness on a tight palate. Excellent wine. 92/100

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