

Checks out: Matt Bowness keeps a close eye on quality.

Small producer on song

Sittella Winery has evolved into an award-winning maker of quality wines, says **Ray Jordan**

Sittella has been part of the Swan Valley since being established by Simon and Maaïke Berns in 1998 but in the last couple of years it has really come of age.

I have been impressed with the wines for some time now but recent show success at Perth, the Swan Valley and the Sheraton has provided further confirmation of the quality of the wines.

For a relatively small producer, Sittella — it takes its name from the little birds living in the trees around the Swan River — makes an extensive range of wines sourced from vineyards in the Swan Valley and Margaret River.

The single vineyard wines from Margaret River are impressive but the classics of the Swan such as verdelho and a new fortified are also particularly good.

Interestingly, though, it has been a distinctive blend called Silk that has become Sittella's flagship.

Silk is a blend of Swan Valley

to the fore, hardly surprising when you consider that Sittella also has one of the best restaurants in the Swan Valley.

As well, there are four different sparkling wines and, perhaps most encouragingly, a fortified wine that has been boosted with the addition of some recently acquired new fortified material from the Swan.

With Spring in the Valley on this weekend, a trip to Sittella should be on the agenda.

The current releases are very good.

For instance, the verdelho 2007 (\$18) is an appealing aromatic verdelho loaded with tropical fruit on the nose.

The palate has intense, creamy tropical flavours with a little citrus and melon influence.

The semillon 2007 (\$18) is a beauty, sourced from Margaret River, showing lifted herbal lemon scents with some slight grassy influence.

The palate has beautiful texture with intense flavour and impressive length.

The semillon and verdelho have been developed with food to the fore, hardly surprising when you consider that Sittella also has one of the best restaurants in the Swan Valley.

verdelho, chardonnay and chenin with Margaret River semillon and is made only from free-run juice.

Winemaker Matt Bowness said Sittella had been working hard to create some new styles such as the 2007 barrel-fermented semillon, which won a silver at the Sheraton Awards, and a barrel-fermented verdelho, in addition to single vineyard chardonnay, merlot, semillon and cabernet sauvignon from the Wildberry Springs vineyard at Margaret River.

The semillon and verdelho have been developed with food very much

I liked the shiraz 2006 (\$18) which shows the plum and earthy savoury aromas of the Swan, with a soft fleshy and plump palate packed with fine tannins and neatly weighted oak.

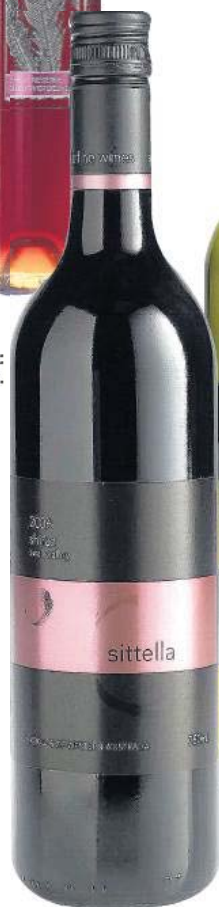
The Show Reserve liqueur verdelho (\$45) is a classic Swan Valley, fortified, that's all lovely, rich unctuous fruit with a mix of orange zest, honey and ice tea flavours.

The Show Reserve is a nice blend of older material with some youthful freshness.



Classic: Show Reserve Liqueur Verdelho.

Plum picnic 2006 shiraz.



Tropical taste: The verdelho is appealingly aromatic.



Lemon scented: The 2007 semillon is a beauty.