

Corkscrew

Reviewed by **Jim McMahon**

Orange-based Patina Wines recently released its 2008 Patina pinot gris. The pale straw-lemon colour gives way to a perfumed nose; the wine is nicely textured on the palate and displays a rounded mouth-feel. Citrus and pear flavours together with a honeyed texture give this French-style wine an appealing, fruit-driven mid-palate weight. The wine has clean acids, juicy texture and is in balance. Although a first in this style for Patina, I figure that if winemaker Gerald Naef is pleased with this result, things can only get better as time goes on and the vine expresses itself more with age (rrp \$22). Staying with Patina, try its 2009 Sticky Tea riesling (375mls). Pale lemon and bright amber in colour, the nose offers lemon and lime with hints of orange rind. The palate is nicely textured, though not cloying like so many dessert-style wines. According to Naef, the Sticky Tea "is effectively a happy accident". He added: "The grapes are basket-pressed and subsequently each vintage I am frustrated at tipping out riesling pressings, knowing that there is still up to 25 per cent juice left due to the stingy nature of this variety. This year, I decided to experiment with the variety and add yeast to the pressed skins; not sure of the outcome." Well, I can assure Naef that the experiment has paid off and what you have is a fruit-driven style with good acidity and a rounded mouth-feel finish (rrp \$22). Keep it up, Gerald!



Next are three wines from the Cowra region. The Swinging Bridge 2008 shiraz is deep crimson with pink hues around the edge of the glass, and offers a compote of dark-berry flavours together with hints of plummy spice abounding on the nose. The palate is soft and juicy with the same flavours coming through. The wine displays nicely integrated oak and tannins that don't overpower the fruit flavours. A soft, fruit-driven, spicy finish (rrp \$20). The 2008 River Park rosé is vibrant pink in colour with the nose showing strawberries and raspberries. The palate is vivacious with crisp acids giving way to cherry, strawberry and raspberry notes with spicy hints. A summer wine that would marry well with grilled fish, a knob of butter and

a parsley garnish. A delightful wine (rrp \$19). The 2009 Rosnay sparkling rosé is see-through cherry in colour, and the nose offers slightly confected pear-drop fruit flavours. The palate has a spritzig zip to it with generous amounts of red-berry fruits in abundance. A slightly ripe, fruit-driven crisp acid finish. Just the go in the dying weeks of summer (rrp \$23).



Here are three wines from the King Valley-based Gracebrook Vineyards in northeast Victoria. First up is the 2006 Gracebrook sangiovese. Light purple in colour, the nose offers spicy herbal notes with black-cherry flavours coming to the fore. The palate is soft and spicy with an overflow of plum and sour-cherry flavours and hints of chocolate and liquorice. I very much enjoyed this medium- to full-bodied wine, which displayed silky tannins and light, wood flavours. A sit-up-and-take-note wine style from Gracebrook (rrp \$18). I also tried the 2008 Gracebrook sangiovese rosé (Stable Range). Light see-through cherry-red in colour, the wine has spicy, plummy notes on the nose. The refreshingly crisp and dry palate has lashings of raspberry, plummy fruit on a crisp, refreshingly dry, acid finish with raspberry fruits dominating. One of the best rosés I've tasted in a long time. I recommended this wine to my listeners on Radio 2UE on December 11, 2009 (rrp \$15). Next up is the 2005 Gracebrook riesling (Block Range). Green-straw in colour, it has a citrus nose that jumps out of the glass and on to the palate, with apricots and orange-peel flavours also part of the mix. The wine displays fresh, clean acidity with a citrusy, dry finish (rrp \$22). This wine has won a number of bronze and gold medals.



The Upper Hunter Valley-based Catherine Vale Vineyard recently released a swag of wines. First up is the Catherine Vale 2008 chardonnay. Lemon-straw in colour, the nose gives way to melon and peach flavours. The palate is soft and rounded with judicious amounts of the same fruits enveloping the palate. The ripeness of the fruit combined with the softness of the wine itself makes it all the more enjoyable. A soft, rounded fruit-driven finish. Why not try also

something different with the 2007 dolcetto (red). A vibrant light-purple colour with inviting pink hues around the edges. The nose offers rhubarb and spicy notes. The palate is soft and fruity with velvety tannins, and prune and raspberry notes evident. The wine finishes on a soft, medium-bodied, dry finish (rrp \$16 for both).



I recently tried Leeton-based Lillypilly Estate's 2008 Tramillon and the 2009 Red Velvet. The 2008 Tramillon is a white blend of traminer and semillon first introduced into the Lillypilly portfolio in 1982 which went on to win the trophy for the best NSW white wine at the 1983 Sydney Royal Easter Show. It has been a member of the Lillypilly stable ever since. Straw-lemon in colour, the nose offers citrus and green-apple flavours. The palate is refreshingly crisp with ripe fruits more than evident. The finish is dry and the acids are firm. The Red Velvet, a rosé style, was a firm hit at our street Christmas party (especially with the more mature who like something a little sweet). A bright cherry-red with overripe fruit, the palate was slightly sweet with a firm acid finish. A summer wine if ever there was one (rrp \$13.50 for both).



Finally, two wines from New Zealand-based Mud House Wines. The 2009 Mud House Marlborough sauvignon blanc reminds me very much of a mix between the sauvignon blancs from Hawke's Bay (tropical fruits) and Marlborough (green and herbaceous fruits). Green-straw in colour, the nose is a mix of both types of fruits. Very herbaceous with plenty of tropical fruits and a balanced acidity on a dry, firm acid finish (rrp \$22). The 2008 Mud House Central Otago pinot noir is deep crimson in colour with a pink hue around the edges. The nose is awash with black cherry, blackcurrant and the obligatory savoury spice. The palate is a follow-on from the nose with subtle French oak adding to the mix. A firm, dry acid/tannin/oak finish that will soften and shine as the wine matures (rrp \$28). These excellent wines have won either a trophy or a gold medal.

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