

Wine Orbit

Extensive Wine Reviews by Senior Wine Judge, Sam Kim

www.wineorbit.co.nz

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About Wine Orbit

It's a new publication featuring reviews of New Zealand wines and wines of the world. It is solely written by Sam Kim unless otherwise stated. Its aim is to provide the wine industry, trade and wine enthusiasts with extensive and detailed wine reviews from a senior wine judge's perspective. In each issue there will be themes focusing on a particular variety, style and/or region. Wines reviewed in *Wine Orbit* are either submitted by the producer/distributor, or from trade events. The entry fee is NZ\$34.00 per wine. For enquiries please contact Sam Kim: sam@wineorbit.co.nz or visit www.wineorbit.co.nz.

About the tasting and scoring

Tasting

Wines are tasted by Sam Kim at his home office unless otherwise stated. Each wine is rated out of 20 points then converted to 100-points and five-star scales – two of the most effective and easy to understand rating systems. Wines are tasted using Riedel Overture Magnum and Riedel Overture White Wine glasses.

Ratings

5 Stars	100 pts	
5 Stars	96 - 100	Exceptional quality exhibiting highest level of concentration and complexity.
5 Stars	93 - 95	Outstanding quality showing varietal purity and exemplifying regional type.
4½ Stars	89 - 92	Excellent quality showing high level of concentration and balance.
4 Stars	85 - 88	Very good quality displaying attractive flavours and good balance.
3½ Stars	81 - 84	Good quality, easy drinking with straightforward flavours.
3 Stars	78 - 80	Sound quality, pleasant and satisfactory.

Not all wines tasted by Wine Orbit are published including those rated below 3½ stars.

Prices

Prices quoted are supplied by the entrant (where not supplied, estimates are used) and are an indication only as they can vary considerably depending on the location, the type of promotion, etc. All prices are in \$NZ.

'At its best'

This indicates my conservative estimate of a period a wine will show its best. It is quite possible the wine will continue to improve beyond the suggested 'at its best' period, or hold at the peak for longer than estimated.

Subscription Info

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About Sam Kim

Sam immigrated to New Zealand from South Korea in 1981 with little understanding of English. Despite coming from a place with no wine culture, he soon developed an interest and passion for wine (he holds a Certificate in Winemaking from EIT – Hawke's Bay) and pursued a career in the wine trade and has been involved for the past 22 years in New Zealand, working in hospitality, retail, importing and distribution. He worked recently for a wine importer as the European wine specialist while also running wine-appreciation courses and master classes.

Sam has been judging wine for the last 13 years at various wine competitions and for magazines and is currently a senior judge at the New Zealand International Wine Show, The Royal Easter Show Wine Awards, the New World Wine Awards and The Air New Zealand Wine Awards. He is also a regular panel member for Cuisine magazine.

Sam does not have a financial interest, directly or indirectly, in a winery, importer, distributor or any company involved in wine marketing. He currently works for an independent retailer but is not involved in decision-making for buying or marketing wine for the outlet.

Sam lives in Auckland, New Zealand, with wife Lesley and baby Leah. He enjoys sports with his teenage son, Toby, and has a goal of running a sub-3 hour marathon.



New Zealand Chardonnay (150 wines reviewed)

Featuring predominantly the 2007 vintage.

Plenty of delicious wines with early appeal but will they age well?

Chardonnay has come a long way in New Zealand. *New Zealand Wine Guide* by Frank Thorpe in 1976 provides just 72 words on the introduction of the Chardonnay grape compared to several pages on sherry and port. Not surprising when you look at the vineyard acreage in 1976: Müller Thurgau (aka Riesling Sylvaner) was the most planted white grape with 649 hectares (ha) followed by the sherry grape, Palomino (338 ha); a romantically named hybrid Baco 22A (208 ha); Chasselas (126 ha); then, occupying a distant 5th spot, was Chardonnay with 52 ha (then known as Pinot Chardonnay). It was also a time when water was often added to grape juice, usually quite generously, to 'stretch' the production. It is hard to believe how much things have changed, from this 'turning water into wine' to today's green harvesting where excess bunches are cut off at the height of summer in order to concentrate the flavour in the remaining grapes during the last couple of months of ripening.

Styles have changed too. Chardonnays from the '80s were powerful, buttery and severely oaky. The bigger and more obvious the better, much like the way we used to have big hair and wear wide pants. Today's Chardonnays offer diversity in style from an elegant and pure expression of the variety to gloriously complex and richly textured wines. This tasting indeed revealed the full spectrum of flavours and shapes – some were retro, some looked lean and anaemic, many were succulent and tasty, and a few breathtakingly beautiful.

The 2007 vintage was the best vintage in recent years. Moderate temperatures and dry conditions ensured perfect ripening in most regions with reasonable crop levels achieved. The vintage saw 38,792 tonnes harvested from 3,918 ha (9.9 tonnes/ha), significantly up from the low yielding 2006 vintage which managed 26,944 tonnes from 3,779 ha (7.1 t/ha). Three regions dominate the plantings with Marlborough, Hawke's Bay and Gisborne taking roughly equal shares of 87% of the nation's Chardonnay plantings. What's interesting is that the price of grapes from Marlborough fetched 50 to 100% more than those from Hawke's Bay. More to do with supply and demand, or at least perceived supply and demand, rather than the quality of the grapes as both regions produce a similar number of outstanding Chardonnays.

The strength of the 2007 vintage is that the wines produced were appealing from very early on. Some of the everyday drinking wines are not destined for the long haul; top examples should give enthusiasts superb drinking

pleasure through to 2013, some even longer. The wines show excellent ripeness and lush mouthfeel yet the natural acidity provides both structure and a refreshing finish ensuring their longevity. The same cannot be said for the less consistent 2008 vintage.

What's exciting is that New Zealand Chardonnay is improving each vintage to show a greater depth of flavour, refined mouthfeel and balance, through the increased use of indigenous fermentation, lees maturation, an improved understanding of oak use and growing better balanced grapes. Outstanding Chardonnays are made from the stony Gimblett Gravels district in the Hawke's Bay to the clay-over-limestone hills of Waipara, as well as a few exceptions from lesser known regions. Some of them resemble the best examples of Burgundy with New World exuberance, promising that in time, New Zealand's best Chardonnays will have the quality and reputation equal to the finest Chardonnays in the world.

Wine & Food

There's a Chardonnay for just about everyone: from light and crisp with bone-chilling acidity to super opulent and powerful; from sparkling Chardonnay wines to sweet wines made using botrytised Chardonnay grapes. Therefore matching food with 'a' Chardonnay is no easy task. I generally stick to the basic rule of looking at the weight and richness of the wine against that of the dish. For example, fresh oysters go best with unoaked, cool-climate Chardonnay with bright acidity, while a roast chicken will require an oak-aged and richly flavoured Chardonnay, ideally with some maturity.

Here's one outstanding dish I had at Vidal Winery Restaurant in the heart of Hawke's Bay. It's a restaurant with an excellent reputation headed by an accomplished and insightfully clever chef, Ken O'Connell. Vidal Reserve Chardonnay 2007 was paired with crayfish tail. The moist crayfish tail enveloped in a rich sauce was served with a crayfish custard, a gently wobbling dollop of fragrance and silkiness, together with a confit of pork belly - a three-layered cube of succulent, beautifully seasoned meat, melting fat and crispy crackling. All sounds rich and heavy but a baby watercress and radish salad provided welcome crunch, texture and bite. All together a perfect infusion of sea freshness, savoury meat, perfumed sauce and the vibrancy of the garden. The dish was intensely flavoured yet beautifully proportioned, just like the wine.

Top Scoring Wines

Score	Wine	Region	Price NZD
94-96	Stonecroft Old Vine Chardonnay 2007	Hawke's Bay	\$45.00
95	Ata Rangi Craighall Chardonnay 2007	Martinborough	\$47.00
95	TerraVin Chardonnay 2007	Marlborough	\$36.00
95	Trinity Hill Gimblett Gravels Chardonnay 2007	Hawke's Bay	\$29.00
94	Church Road Cuve Series Chardonnay 2006	Hawke's Bay	\$27.00
94	Church Road Reserve Chardonnay 2007	Hawke's Bay	\$34.00
94	Craggy Range Les Beaux Cailloux 2006	Hawke's Bay	\$65.00
94	Fromm Clayvin Vineyard Chardonnay 2005	Marlborough	\$60.00
94	Pegasus Bay Virtuoso Chardonnay 2005	Waipara	\$50.00
94	Villa Maria Single Vineyard Keltern Chardonnay 2007	Hawke's Bay	\$39.00
94	Nautilus Chardonnay 2007	Marlborough	\$30.00

Smart Buys (under \$22.00)

Score	Wine	Region	Price NZD
93	Waimea Estate Chardonnay 2006	Nelson	\$22.00
91	Coopers Creek SV The Lime Works Chardonnay 2007	Hawke's Bay	\$21.00
91	Hunter's Chardonnay 2008	Marlborough	\$21.00
91	Wairau River Chardonnay 2007	Marlborough	\$20.00
90	Drylands Chardonnay 2006	Marlborough	\$22.00
88	Brightwater Vineyard Chardonnay 2007	Nelson	\$22.00
88	Cape Campbell Chardonnay 2008	Marlborough	\$19.00
88	Clearview Unwooded Chardonnay 2008	Hawke's Bay	\$21.00
88	Pencarrow Chardonnay 2008	Martinborough	\$17.00
88	Saints Chardonnay 2008	Gisborne	\$20.00

Review of wines scoring below 78 points (3 Stars) are not published.

Alana Estate **Chardonnay 2007** Martinborough **86** **4 Stars**
 A restrained and subtle wine displaying citrus, chalky mineral and a hint of cashew characters. The palate is well fruited and silky with crisp acidity and a lengthy finish. It's elegant and finely poised, a little tight at first but improved with time in the glass.
 At its best: now to 2012. \$42.00 13.5% Screw cap.

Alexia **Unoaked Chardonnay 2007** Hawke's Bay **83** **3.5 Stars**
 A gentle nose showing peach, citrus and subtle creamy characters. The palate is easy flowing and pleasant with crisp acidity and a juicy finish. A friendly and lighter style Chardonnay.
 At its best: now to 2011. \$20.00 13.5% Screw cap.

Anchorage **Chardonnay 2007** Nelson **87** **4 Stars**
 The nose has an attractive bouquet showing pineapple, citrus and floral characters with subtle spicy oak. The palate is gentle and rounded with fine texture and vibrant acidity. A youthful wine displaying clean flavours. It is sure to appeal to many consumers especially at this price.
 At its best: now to 2010. \$18.00 13.5% Screw cap.

Unwooded Chardonnay 2005 Nelson **87** **4 Stars**
 This is great drinking Chardonnay with bottle age for those enjoy pure expression of the grape. The nose is vibrant and lifted showing ripe peach and apricot flavours with subtle nutty, creamy complexity. It's rounded and silky on the palate with crisp acidity providing a refreshing balance.
 At its best: now to 2009. \$20.00 Limited availability. 14% Screw cap.

Unoaked Chardonnay 2007 Nelson **83** **3.5 Stars**
 The nose is delicate showing citrus, floral and subtle flinty characters. It's fruity and vibrant on the palate with zesty acidity and soft texture through the mid range. A pleasant wine with a crisp dry finish. At its best: now to 2010. \$18.00 Moderate availability. 13.5% Screw cap.

Ashwell	Chardonnay 2007 A savoury and Old World style Chardonnay displaying apricot, cream and nutty characters with a hint of earthy notes on the nose. The palate is medium-full and smooth with balanced acidity and a gently drying finish. At its best: now to 2012. \$27.00 13.5% Diam cork.	Martinborough	84	3.5 Stars
Askerne	Reserve Chardonnay 2007 A stylish bouquet displaying ripe stonefruit, floral, cream and a touch of vanillin oak characters. It's full and generous on the palate showing succulent mouthfeel, well balanced acidity and a long expansive finish. A rich and intensely flavoured style that's sure to please those who enjoy fuller-bodied Chardonnay. At its best: now to 2011. \$30.00 14% Diam cork.	Hawke's Bay	92	4.5 Stars
	Chardonnay 2007 An immediately appealing Chardonnay showing peach, mango and creamy oak characters on the nose. It's ripe and nicely textured on the palate with well balanced acidity. It's charming and very delicious. At its best: now to 2012. \$20.00 14% Screw cap.	Hawke's Bay	87	4 Stars
Ata Rangī	Craighall Chardonnay 2007 Made from over 20-year-old vines, this exceptional Chardonnay is all style and refinement, displaying fresh apricot, white peach and subtle vanillin oak characters on the nose. The bouquet is quite stunning. It's succulent and concentrated on the palate with creamy texture and beautifully integrated acidity. The wine is precise, detailed and extra long on the finish. A sensational wine that will gracefully evolve in the bottle. At its best: now to 2015. \$47.00 13.5% Screw cap.	Martinborough	95	5 Stars
Auntsfield	Cob Cottage Chardonnay 2007 A youthful, tightly framed wine showing delicate aromas of peach, cream and mineral/flinty notes with a hint of floral and vanillin oak. The palate is elegant and subtle yet engaging with excellent concentration of fruit, silky texture and well integrated acidity. The length is superb and memorable. A wine destined to shine with further bottle age. At its best: early 2009 to 2012. \$35.00 13.5% Screw cap.	Marlborough	93	5 Stars
Babich	Irongate Chardonnay 2004 This iconic New Zealand Chardonnay is known for its longevity. It's nicely lifted and complex on the nose showing vanilla, peach and citrus characters. The palate is superbly concentrated with silky texture and bright acidity leading to a very long finish. The wine is brilliantly structured with the firm acidity keeping the wine fresh and vibrant even at this age. Rather than big and opulent, this is tight and focused with a pleasantly dry finish. At its best: now to 2011. \$35.00 14% Natural cork.	Hawke's Bay	93	5 Stars
	Gimblett Gravels Chardonnay 2007 An elegant nose displaying white peach, a hint of cream and nutty oak characters. The palate is well fruited showing smooth texture, rounded mouthfeel and well harmonised acidity. An attractive and nicely poised Chardonnay. At its best: now to 2011. \$19.95 14% Screw cap.	Hawke's Bay	86	4 Stars
	Lone Tree Unoaked Chardonnay 2007 A subtle nose showing citrus, apple and mineral characters. It's nicely fruited on the palate with refreshing acidity and soft texture. A pleasant and approachable Chardonnay. At its best: now to 2010. \$16.00 13% Screw cap.	East Coast	82	3.5 Stars
Black Barn	Barrel Fermented Chardonnay 2007 A gloriously rich bouquet displaying stonefruit, cream, vanilla and nutty oak characters. The palate is silky smooth and well weighted with beautifully balanced acidity and a lingering finish. The wine is seamless and so well integrated. An intensely flavoured Chardonnay yet remains elegant and stylish. Very impressive. At its best: now to 2012. \$35.00 Moderate availability. 14% Screw cap.	Hawke's Bay	93	5 Stars
	Hawke's Bay Chardonnay 2007 Ripe and fragrant, the youthful nose displays peach, cream and nutty oak characters. It's full and almost luscious on the palate showing plenty of fruity weight, creamy texture and skillfully harmonised acidity. It flows so beautifully through the palate with an excellent refreshing finish. At its best: now to 2012. \$27.00 13.8% Screw cap.	Hawke's Bay	91	4.5 Stars
	Hawke's Bay Chardonnay 2008 An elegant Chardonnay displaying ripe stonefruit, citrus and creamy oak characters on the nose. It's well fruited on the palate with refreshing acidity, smooth texture and a lovely lingering finish. The wine is well proportioned and balanced with an appealing, succulent mouthfeel. At its best: now to 2012. \$27.00 13.5% Screw cap.	Hawke's Bay	88	4 Stars

Black Estate	Chardonnay 2007	Waipara	87-90	4.5 Stars	A complex bouquet displaying pineapple, apricot and vanillin oak with strong creamy characters. It's well focused and elegant on the palate with silky texture and well harmonised acidity. The wine appears restrained and not expressive at this stage but it is well poised to develop with further time in the bottle. At its best: 2010 to 2013. \$30.00
Brightwater Vineyards	Lord Rutherford Chardonnay 2007	Nelson	92	4.5 Stars	The nose is immensely appealing and stylish exhibiting tropical fruit, fresh cream and floral notes with a touch of vanilla. It's full and rich on the palate showing well rounded mouthfeel and refreshing acidity with a beautifully lingering finish. Quite stunning. At its best: now to 2011. \$30.00 Limited availability. 14% Screw cap.
	Nelson Chardonnay 2007	Nelson	88	4 Stars	An elegant Chardonnay showing ripe peach, rock melon and a hint of toasty oak on the nose. The medium-bodied palate displays excellent freshness and fine creamy texture through the mid range leading to a lengthy crisp finish. A very attractive and vibrant wine. At its best: now to 2010. \$22.00 Moderate availability. 14% Screw cap.
Brunton Road	Chardonnay 2007	Gisborne	90	4.5 Stars	This wine is for those who enjoy Chardonnays with full, delicious flavours. The nose is opulent and lifted showing peach, floral and creamy oak characters. It's succulent and richly textured on the palate with excellent fruit intensity and a lengthy finish. There's enough acidity to provide a lovely refreshing finish to this gorgeously attractive Chardonnay. At its best: now to 2012. \$27.00 14% Screw cap.
Burings	Unoaked Chardonnay 2006	Martinborough	82	3.5 Stars	The nose is subtle and developed showing citrus, hay and nutty characters. It's well weighted on the palate with mineral-like texture and crisp acidity. Very much in the Old World style without much fruit expression. It is firmly structured and finishes nice and dry. At its best: now. \$26.50 13.5% Diam cork.
Cable Bay	Chardonnay 2007	Waiheke Island	82	3.5 Stars	A gently aromatic nose showing cream, citrus, peach and nutty characters. The palate is refreshing and vibrant with crisp lemony acidity and a lingering dry finish. At its best: now to 2011. \$35.00 14.5% Screw cap.
Cape Campbell	Limited Release Reserve Chardonnay 2007	Marlborough	93	5 Stars	This young Chardonnay shows excellent intensity and complexity on the nose exhibiting white peach, floral and flinty characters with subtle toasty oak. The palate is full and generously weighted with lovely acidity and layered texture through the mid range. An immensely appealing wine with more complexity to develop with further bottle age. At its best: now to 2012. \$29.00 13.3% Screw cap.
	Chardonnay 2007	Marlborough	88	4 Stars	The nose is youthful and elegant showing peach and floral notes with a touch of fresh cream. It's ripe and appealing on the palate with fresh citrus acidity and silky, creamy texture. A well rounded and balanced wine showing plenty of appeal. At its best: now to 2010. \$19.00
	Chardonnay 2008	Marlborough	88	4 Stars	The nose is youthful and elegant showing peach and floral notes with a touch of fresh cream. It's ripe and appealing on the palate with fresh citrus acidity and silky, creamy texture. A well rounded and balanced wine showing plenty of appeal. At its best: now to 2011. \$19.00
Carrick	Chardonnay 2007	Central Otago	87	4 Stars	A beautifully elegant bouquet displaying stonefruit, citrus and gently pitched creamy oak characters. It's well concentrated and textured on the palate with creamy mouthfeel and crisp acidity. The wine is firmly structured and nicely balanced. A refined cool-climate style showing delicacy rather than big fruit and opulence. At its best: now to 2012. \$25.50 14% Screw cap.
Church Road	Cuve Series Chardonnay 2006	Hawke's Bay	94	5 Stars	This is a glorious Chardonnay with power and grace. After pressing the grapes the unsettled cloudy juice was fermented in French oak barriques (28% new) with indigenous yeasts. The nose is rich and fragrant showing stonefruit, cream and beautifully integrated toasty oak characters. It's rich and full on the palate with silky mouthfeel, excellent mid palate weight and an expansive finish. The wine is exquisitely harmonised and poised with plenty of mouth-pleasing flavours. At its best: now to 2012. \$27.00 13.5% Screw cap.

Church Road	Reserve Chardonnay 2007	Hawke's Bay	94	5 Stars	The nose is opulent and complex displaying tropical fruit, butterscotch and well integrated toasty oak characters. It's full and generous on the palate while maintaining elegance and freshness. The texture is satin smooth and seamless with an incredibly long finish. An outstanding Chardonnay. At its best: now to 2012. \$34.00 14% Screw cap.
	Chardonnay 2007	Hawke's Bay	82	3.5 Stars	The nose is fairly restrained showing subtle stonefruit, mineral and a hint of earthy characters. The palate is well rounded with smooth texture and refreshing acidity. Perhaps it's not showing its best today but the wine is balanced and elegant. At its best: now to 2011. \$26.00 14% Screw cap.
CJ Pask	Declaration Chardonnay 2006	Hawke's Bay	91	4.5 Stars	The wine shows lovely Hawke's Bay ripeness with a touch of Burgundy elegance, displaying white peach, cashew and mealy characters on the nose. The palate is refined and finely textured with beautifully integrated acidity and a gently expanding finish. A tightly structured and restrained Chardonnay showing class and delicacy. At its best: now to 2013. \$35.00 13.5% Screw cap.
	Gimblett Road Chardonnay 2006	Hawke's Bay	86	4 Stars	The nose is very inviting with its ripe citrus, apricot, mango and subtle oak characters. It's succulent and well fruited on the palate with vibrant acidity making the wine refreshing and lively. A well structured and balanced wine that will develop more complexity with time. At its best: now to 2012. \$24.00 13% Screw cap.
Clayridge	Tankbuster Chardonnay 2006	Marlborough	93	5 Stars	A beautifully lifted nose showing pineapple, lemon zest, cream and subtle nutty oak characters. The palate is superbly concentrated and textured with well integrated crisp acidity. It's rich and rounded yet retains excellent freshness and vibrancy. There are plenty of savoury, funky characters making this a fascinating wine to taste, and sure to match brilliantly to rich, savoury dishes. At its best: now to 2012. 13.5% Screw cap.
Clearview	Reserve Chardonnay 2007	Hawke's Bay	93	5 Stars	A complex nose exhibiting citrus, peach, cream and nutty oak characters. The bouquet is beautifully harmonised. The palate is elegant yet concentrated with silky texture and crisp acidity providing excellent balance and structure. It's long and expansive on the finish with firmness suggesting the wine will evolve gracefully with bottle age. At its best: now to 2012. \$42.00 14.5% Screw cap.
	Unwooded Chardonnay 2008	Hawke's Bay	88	4 Stars	Most unwooded or unoaked Chardonnays can look lean and characterless. This is one of the few exceptions, displaying peach, citrus and floral lift on the nose with a hint of chalky/mineral notes. The palate is ripe and rounded showing fine texture and crisp acidity. The wine is beautifully balanced and structured expressing the fruit elegantly. At its best: now to 2012. \$21.00 14% Screw cap.
	Beachhead Chardonnay 2007	Hawke's Bay	91	4.5 Stars	Another excellent wine from one of the country's best Chardonnay makers, this beauty is full of ripe peach and tropical fruit characters with creamy/nutty oak notes. The palate is succulent and opulent showing rounded texture and nicely balanced acidity. Fully barrel fermented in new and seasoned oak. At its best: now to 2012. \$25.00 14.5% Screw cap.
Cloudy Bay	Chardonnay 2007	Marlborough	92	4.5 Stars	Grapes were sourced from a variety of sites in the Wairau and Brancott Valleys (predominantly Mendoza clone), and were largely hand-harvested. The majority of the settled free-run juice was fermented in French oak barrels (less than 20% new) using indigenous yeasts. The remaining portion of the juice was fermented in stainless steel tanks using cultured yeasts then matured in oak. The nose is beautifully aromatic and youthful displaying tropical fruit, cream and vanillin oak characters. It's juicy and vibrant on the palate with refreshing acidity and creamy texture. A stylish Chardonnay that flows beautifully through the palate to an expansive finish. At its best: now to 2013. \$46.00 14% Screw cap.
Coopers Creek	Reserve Gisborne Chardonnay 2007	Gisborne	93	5 Stars	Grapes were sourced from Graham and Anne Maclaurin's vineyard on the Hexton Hills. The bouquet is rich and appealing displaying peach, vanilla, cream and toasty oak characters. The palate is intensely flavoured showing lush fruit, creamy texture and a lengthy finish. A beautifully opulent Chardonnay with plenty of mouth-pleasing flavours. At its best: now to 2012. \$26.00 14.5% Screw cap.

Coopers Creek	Swamp Reserve Chardonnay 2007	Hawke's Bay	91	4.5 Stars	Grapes were sourced from Middle Road vineyard near Havelock North. The wine went through malolactic conversion in French oak barrels (45% new) and matured on lees until assemblage. The lifted nose shows peach, cream and nutty oak characters. It's powerful and generous on the palate with beautifully integrated acidity and textured mouthfeel. Once again an impressive offering from this label. At its best: now to 2011. \$29.00 14% Screw cap.
	Unoaked Chardonnay 2007	Gisborne	84	3.5 Stars	A gentle nose displaying peach, citrus and creamy characters. It's juicy and rounded on the palate with balanced acidity and a lingering fruity finish. At its best: now to 2011. \$18.00 13.5% Screw cap.
	SV The Limeworks Chardonnay 2007	Hawke's Bay	91	4.5 Stars	An attractive and lifted nose displaying peach, tropical fruit, cream and toasty oak characters. The palate is juicy and rounded with creamy texture and nicely balanced acidity leading to a lingering tasty finish. A very approachable and friendly Chardonnay with excellent balance. At its best: now to 2011. \$21.00 13.5% Screw cap.
Cottage Block	Chardonnay 2007	Hawke's Bay	93	5 Stars	The bouquet is elegant yet multi-dimensional displaying citrus, peach, cream and toasty oak. It's rich and concentrated with beautifully integrated acidity providing freshness and structure. The length is superb and lingering. It's just starting to show its class and beauty, and will continue to improve in the bottle. At its best: now to 2013. \$36.00 14% Screw cap.
Craggy Range	Les Beaux Cailloux 2006	Hawke's Bay	94	5 Stars	From their Gimblett Gravels vineyard, this 100% Chardonnay was fermented by indigenous yeasts in French oak barriques (70% new) and matured for 16 months. That's a lot of new oak and a long time in barrel, yet the wine is refined and balanced showing peach, floral, cream and gentle toasty oak characters on the nose. The palate is beautifully weighted showing creamy texture, fine acidity and an extremely long, delicate finish. At its best: now to 2013. \$65.00 14% Screw cap.
	Chardonnay Gimblett Gravels Vineyard 2007	Hawke's Bay	93	5 Stars	A beautifully complex and refined bouquet displaying white peach, floral, cream and stylish oak characters. The palate shows excellent concentration, creamy texture and skilfully woven acidity leading to a lengthy finish. A sumptuous Chardonnay with loads of mouth-pleasing flavours. At its best: now to 2011. \$30.00 14.5% Screw cap.
Crossroads	Chardonnay 2007	Hawke's Bay	87	4 Stars	Ripe and fragrant, this appealing Chardonnay displays peach, pineapple and citrus characters with a touch of creamy notes on the nose. It's juicy and well fruited on the palate with smooth texture and a lingering, elegant finish. Very easy on the palate. At its best: now to 2012. \$20.00 14.4% Screw cap.
Cypress	Chardonnay 2007	Hawke's Bay	83	3.5 Stars	A gently aromatic nose displaying citrus, peach and pineapple characters. It's ripe and rounded on the palate with supple acidity and silky texture. An easy flowing Chardonnay with attractive flavours. At its best: now to 2011. \$19.99 13.5% Screw cap.
Dashwood	Chardonnay 2007	Marlborough	82	3.5 Stars	A softly flavoured Chardonnay displaying citrus, floral and subtle creamy characters on the nose. It's gentle and nicely fruity on the palate with rounded mouthfeel and a clean lively finish. At its best: now to 2011. \$17.00 12.5% Screw cap.
Distant Land	Reserve Chardonnay 2007	Hawke's Bay	87	4 Stars	The nose is ripe and youthful displaying peach, floral and a touch of creamy oak characters. It's juicy and refreshing on the palate with soft texture and fine acidity leading to a clean and lingering finish. An elegant and attractive Chardonnay. At its best: now to 2011. \$32.00 Screw cap.
Drylands	Chardonnay 2006	Marlborough	90	4.5 Stars	Vibrant and lifted, the attractive nose shows peach, tropical fruit and nutty oak characters. The palate is creamy smooth with excellent mid palate weight and well pitched acidity. A stylish and delicious wine that is sure to appeal to many Chardonnay fans. At its best: now to 2011. \$22.00 13.5% Screw cap.
Escarpment	Chardonnay 2006	Martinborough	91-93	4.5 Stars	The nose is complex and elegant displaying tropical fruit, cream and subtle mealy characters. It's lush and well weighted on the palate with silky texture and an expansive finish. The wine's excellent concentration and structure indicates the wine should evolve further to express greater intensity and complexity. At its best: now to 2013. \$35.00 14% Diam cork.

Esk Valley	Chardonnay 2007 A lovely fragrant nose displaying tropical fruit, cream and subtle toasty oak characters. It's full and rich on the palate with beautifully rounded mouthfeel and a lengthy finish. The wine is well balanced and poised with gentle flavours. At its best: now to 2012. \$24.00 14% Screw cap.	Hawke's Bay	87	4 Stars
Fairmont Estate	Block One Chardonnay 2007 The nose moderately aromatic showing peach and pineapple characters with subtle cream and nutty notes. It's full and generous on the palate with succulent fruit notes and beautifully flowing mid range. The acid balance is superb and combined with the broad mouthfeel make this wine so silky and supple on the palate. At its best: now to 2010. \$25.00 13.5% Screw cap	Wairarapa	89	4.5 Stars
	Chardonnay 2007 A rich, aromatic nose showing ripe tropical fruit, nutty and creamy characters. It's full and luscious on the palate displaying plenty of creamy texture and roundness with balanced acidity and a pleasant dry finish. The wine is starting show maturing characters making it very approachable now. At its best: now to 2010. \$22.00 13.5% Screw cap.	Wairarapa	84	3.5 Stars
Forrest Estate	Chardonnay 2005 The nose is restrained and tight showing subtle citrus, cream and nutty characters with chalky/mineral notes. The palate is well fruited showing smooth texture and bright acidity. The wine flows well and finishes crisp dry. At its best: now to 2011. \$20.00 13% Screw cap.	Marlborough	83	3.5 Stars
Foxes Island	Chardonnay 2006 The nose is elegant displaying citrus, white peach and flinty mineral characters. It's beautifully concentrated on the palate with firm acidity and stylishly layered mouthfeel. The wine is Burgundy-like in style and structure with its precision and harmony. At its best: now to 2012. \$40.00 13.5% Screw cap.	Marlborough	91	4.5 Stars
Framingham	Chardonnay 2007 A delicate nose displaying citrus, peach and a hint of creamy notes. It's juicy and finely textured on the palate with silky texture and beautifully balanced acidity. A perfectly balanced medium-bodied Chardonnay with excellent structure. At its best: now to 2012. \$21.99 14% Screw cap.	Marlborough	87	4 Stars
Frizzell	Chardonnay 2008 A pleasant and approachable Chardonnay displaying ripe apricot, vanillin oak and subtle creamy characters on the nose. The palate is rounded and generous showing a silky texture, well balanced acidity and a soft finish. A nicely flowing Chardonnay perfect for everyday drinking. At its best: now to 2010. \$21.99 13% Screw cap.	Hawke's Bay	83	3.5 Stars
Fromm	La Strada Chardonnay 2007 Made in the classic Chablis style, the wine was matured on lees for 10-12 months without the influence of oak. A rich and complex nose showing stonefruit, cashew and creamy oak characters with a hint of savoury mushroom notes. The palate is concentrated and richly textured with vibrant acidity providing excellent structure and a lovely crisp dry finish. An elegant and discreet at this stage but should evolve beautifully with time. At its best: 2010 to 2014. \$29.00 13.5% Diam cork.	Marlborough	91	4.5 Stars
	Clayvin Vineyard Chardonnay 2005 It's very much like nosing a great Burgundy. Less fruit intensity, more savoury notes. The beautifully matured bouquet displays mixed nut, subtle vanilla, beeswax and a hint of ripe citrus notes. The palate is superbly concentrated and textured with crisp acidity providing an excellent structure and a lengthy finish. Even a small mouthful explodes to show the wine's power and intensity. A beautifully poised and framed Chardonnay for fans of Old World style wines. At its best: now to 2011. \$60.00 14% Natural cork.	Marlborough	94	5 Stars
Glazebrook	Chardonnay 2007 A seriously delicious Chardonnay displaying nectarine, roasted cashew and vanillin oak characters on the nose. It's rounded and creamy on the palate showing a sumptuous mouthfeel and bright acidity providing a lovely refreshing finish. A generously flavoured and beautifully poised wine. At its best: now to 2013. \$27.00 13.5% Screw cap.	Hawke's Bay	90	4.5 Stars
Goldridge	Premium Reserve Chardonnay 2007 A nicely lifted and complex bouquet displaying stonefruit, cream and vanillin oak characters. The palate is full and richly textured with soft acidity and a generous mouthfeel. An opulent style for those who enjoy full-flavoured Chardonnays. At its best: now to 2010. \$19.00 13.5% Screw cap.	Hawke's Bay	86	4 Stars
	Premium Reserve Chardonnay 2008 The nose is ripe and rich displaying cream, vanillin oak and peach characters. The palate is well fruited with creamy texture and soft acidity. The wine is well rounded and easy on the palate. At its best: now to 2011. \$22.00 13.5% Screw cap.	New Zealand	82	3.5 Stars

Goldridge	Gisborne Chardonnay 2007 A subtle nose showing stonefruit, pineapple and subtle cream characters. It's fruity and smooth on the palate with a rounded mouthfeel and gentle acidity. A pleasant and approachable Chardonnay. At its best: now to 2010. \$16.00 13% Screw cap.	Gisborne	81	3.5 Stars
Goldwater	Marlborough Chardonnay 2007 It's ripe and gently aromatic on the nose displaying citrus, cream and mealy characters. The palate is vibrant and refreshing with rounded mouth feel and crisp acidity. A well structured and elegant style. At its best: now to 2011. \$24.00 14% Screw cap.	Marlborough	86	4 Stars
Hatton Estate	EC2 Chardonnay 2007 A fine nose displaying ripe citrus, stonefruit and chalky mineral characters. It's well concentrated on the palate with delicate texture, crisp acidity and a lengthy finish. A Chablis style showing lovely elegance and tighter mouthfeel. At its best: now to 2011. \$25.00 13.5% Screw cap.	Hawke's Bay	87	4 Stars
Haymaker	Chardonnay 2008 It's a fruit forward wine showing peach, pineapple and floral characters on the nose. The palate is juicy and vibrant with refreshing acidity and a crisp dry finish. Very approachable and friendly. At its best: now to 2012. \$17.00 13% Screw cap.	Gisborne	84	3.5 Stars
Highfield	Chardonnay 2007 It's beautifully scented displaying peach, pineapple and creamy oak characters. The palate is smooth and well weighted with nicely balanced acidity. It's a gorgeous Chardonnay with attractive ripe fruit flavours. \$33.00 At its best: now to 2011. 13% Screw cap.	Marlborough	90	4.5 Stars
Hunter's	Chardonnay 2008 An attractive nose showing succulent peach, cream and nutty oak characters. The palate is juicy and refreshing with silky texture and a lovely dry finish. The wine is gorgeously flavoursome and beautifully balanced. This wine has improved considerably in the past 6 months from a tight and retrained wine to a more opulent beauty. It's still not at its best yet as the wine is not yet fully expressive. Very delicious though. At its best: now to 2011. \$21.00 14% Screw cap.	Marlborough	91	4.5 Stars
Instinct	Chardonnay 2007 Grapes were sourced from Gimblett Road (predominantly Mendoza clone) and partially fermented in oak barrels for complexity and smoother texture. A lovely elegant nose showing peach, tropical fruit and subtle creamy characters. It's fruity and silky on the palate with well balanced acidity and a lingering finish. A well poised, refined style with a lovely expression of the Chardonnay fruit. At its best: now to 2010. 13.5% Screw cap. \$17.00	Hawke's Bay	87	4 Stars
Jackson Estate	Shelter Belt Chardonnay 2007 An elegant nose displaying white peach, grapefruit, cream and a touch of chalky mineral characters. It's full and concentrated on the palate with crisp acidity and a fine, lingering finish. A stylish and tightly framed Chardonnay with excellent potential to develop rich complex flavours. At its best: now to 2012. \$22.50 13.5% Screw cap.	Marlborough	91	4.5 Stars
Kawarau Estate	Reserve Chardonnay 2007 A complex nose showing orange peel, peach and nutty oak characters. It's generous and almost luscious on the palate with smooth texture and well harmonised acidity. The finish is long and expansive. The wine is nicely evolved and showing bottle developed characters. At its best: now to 2010. \$29.00 13.5% Screw cap. Certified Organic	Central Otago	89	4.5 Stars
	Reserve Chardonnay 2006 Fresh and vibrant, this appealing wine displays peach, pineapple and creamy oak characters on the nose. The palate is rich and weighty with grapefruit acidity and creamy texture. A stylish Chardonnay with elegance and firm structure combined with subtle mineral edge. \$29.00 At its best: now to 2011. 13.5% Screw cap. Certified Organic	Central Otago	86	4 Stars
Main Divide	Chardonnay 2007 A savoury, complex nose displaying tropical fruit, mixed nut and mealy, creamy characters on the nose. The palate is succulent and refreshing with cool acidity lengthening the finish. An intriguing Chardonnay with layers of flavours and a rich mouthfeel. At its best: now to 2011. \$20.00 13.5% Screw cap.		86	4 Stars
Man O' War	Chardonnay 2007 A rich and complex bouquet displaying peach, lemon curd, cream and subtle nutty characters. It's full and concentrated on the palate showing lovely silky texture, bright acidity and a very long finish. The wine expands beautifully on the palate with intriguing savoury notes. At its best: now to 2011. \$28.00 14.5% Screw cap.	Waiheke Island	90	4.5 Stars

Marsden	Black Rocks Chardonnay 2007	Bay of Islands	90	4.5 Stars	An opulent and complex nose displaying peach, pineapple and spicy oak characters. The palate is juicy and rounded with creamy texture and excellent mid palate weight. A generous style with plenty of rich flavours but finishes refreshing and dry. At its best: now to 2012. \$35.00 13.5% Screw cap.
Martinborough Vineyard	Chardonnay 2006	Martinborough	93	5 Stars	A beautifully elegant and complex nose displaying stonefruit and pineapple characters with mealy, nutty notes. The palate is concentrated and powerful yet finely textured and flows seamlessly. A stylish and well structured wine with beautifully proportioned fruit, acid and oak. It's starting to show some bottle developed complexities providing extra dimension to this outstanding wine. At its best: now to 2012. 13.5% Screw cap.
Matakana Estate	Chardonnay 2007	Matakana	78	3 Stars	A mature looking wine showing peach, beeswax and nutty characters on the nose. The palate is fruity and medium-bodied with creamy soft texture and moderate acidity leading to a dry finish. At its best: now to 2010. \$27.00 13.5% Screw cap.
Melness	Chardonnay 2007	Canterbury	83	3.5 Stars	An opulent nose showing pineapple, mango and nutty characters. The palate is generous and full with fruity mouthfeel and well balanced acidity. An approachable and flavoursome Chardonnay for everyday drinking. \$22.00 At its best: now to 2010. 14% Screw cap.
Mills Reef	Reserve Chardonnay 2006	Hawke's Bay	90	4.5 Stars	An opulent and big-flavoured Chardonnay displaying tropical fruit, peach and vanillin oak characters on the nose. The palate is rich, rounded and powerful with creamy texture and a refreshing finish. Once again this wine delivers gorgeous flavours. At its best: now to 2011. \$25.00 14% Screw cap.
	Elspeth Chardonnay 2006	Hawke's Bay	86	4 Stars	A bold and impressively flavoured Chardonnay displaying peach, apple and toasty oak characters on the nose. It's showing some bottle developed complexity as well as lusciously ripe fruit notes. The palate is full and generously flavoured showing a smooth mouthfeel and a gently drying finish. An evolved-looking wine that can handle richly flavoured dishes. At its best: now to 2011. \$32.00 14% Screw cap.
Mission Estate	Jewelstone Chardonnay 2006	Hawke's Bay	92	4.5 Stars	The grapes were sourced from the Te Awanga district and the wine was fermented then matured in French oak barrels for 19 months. A beautifully fragrant nose displays tropical fruit, cream and toasty oak characters. It's well fruited on the palate showing lovely weight, refreshing acidity and a textured mouthfeel. The wine finishes long and expansive. At its best: now to 2012. \$34.00 14% Diam cork.
	Reserve Chardonnay 2007	Hawke's Bay	88	4 Stars	This wine shows a lovely harmony between opulence and elegance. The nose is nicely lifted showing peach, cream and subtle vanillin oak characters. It's well fruited on the palate with silky texture and refreshing acidity providing a lengthy crisp finish. The wine is not too big but not too lean, just perfectly poised. At its best: now to 2012. \$23.00 14% Screw cap.
	Reserve Chardonnay 2006	Hawke's Bay	86	4 Stars	A subtle nose displaying apple, peach and slightly earthy mineral characters. It's fruity and smooth on the palate with silky texture and crisp acidity. The wine is well balanced and elegantly structured with a lengthy finish. At its best: now to 2011. \$23.00 14% Diam cork.
Momo	Chardonnay 2007	Marlborough	84	3.5 Stars	A subtle nose displaying citrus, floral and creamy characters. It's nicely fruited on the palate showing a refreshing mouthfeel and a crisp dry finish. The wine is well balanced and shows appealing flavours. At its best: now to 2011. \$23.00 14% Screw cap.
Montana	Terroir Series Waihirere Chardonnay 2006	Gisborne	88	4 Stars	From the Ormond district in Gisborne, this appealing wine shows plenty of ripe peach, pineapple and vanillin oak characters on the nose. The palate is fruit-forward and well textured with crisp acidity. Very easy on the palate and satisfying. At its best: now to 2011. \$29.00 13.5% Screw cap.
	Reserve Marlborough Chardonnay 2006	Marlborough	86	4 Stars	A charming and very easy drinking Chardonnay showing pineapple, citrus and peach characters with a nicely infused vanillin oak notes on the nose. The palate is fruity and smooth with soft texture and a lingering juicy finish. A well balanced and rounded Chardonnay. At its best: now to 2012. \$24.00 14% Screw cap.

Montana	Gisborne Chardonnay 2008	Gisborne	83	3.5 Stars	A gentle nose showing citrus, stonefruit and creamy notes. The palate is well weighted with silky texture and a good intensity of flavour. A pleasant and refreshing style for easy drinking. At its best: now to 2010. \$18.95 13% Screw cap.
Moutere Hills	Chardonnay 2007	Nelson	89	4.5 Stars	Ripe and complex, the attractive nose displays citrus, cream and roasted nut characters. The palate is full and intensely flavoured with lively acidity and very fine mid palate texture. There's a touch of savoury/chalky mineral notes too. At its best: now to 2012. \$38.00 14.3% Screw cap.
Mt. Difficulty	Chardonnay 2007	Central Otago	84	3.5 Stars	The nose is savoury and lifted showing roasted cashew, citrus and flinty mineral characters. It's elegant and well structured on the palate with grapefruit acidity and creamy texture. A zesty style with a crisp dry finish. At its best: now to 2011. \$35.00 14% Screw cap.
Muddy Water	Chardonnay 2006	Waipara	92	4.5 Stars	A beautifully complex bouquet displaying stonefruit, citrus and a touch of creamy/nutty oak characters. It's full and ripe on the palate showing bright acidity and fine texture leading to a gently expanding finish. The wine shows wonderful Burgundy-like structure and poise. At its best: now to 2012. \$30.00 14% Screw cap.
	Chardonnay 2007	Waipara	88	4 Stars	A subtle nose showing citrus, mixed nut and subtle mineral characters. It's bright and juicy on the palate with beautifully flowing texture, balanced acidity and a clean dry finish. The wine is elegantly poised with silky mouthfeel. A youthful wine nicely opening up in the glass indicating the wine will age gracefully. At its best: now to 2010. \$30.00 14% Screw cap.
Nautilus	Chardonnay 2007	Marlborough	94	5 Stars	This is an extremely stylish and elegant Chardonnay displaying white peach, roasted cashew and subtle vanillin oak characters with a touch of mineral notes on the nose. The palate is concentrated with silky texture and a lovely long finish. The wine is youthful at this stage but should evolve gracefully with further time in the bottle. This is certainly the most exquisite and beautifully detailed Chardonnay under this label. At its best: now to 2012. \$30.00 13.5% Screw cap.
Nga Waka	Home Block Chardonnay 2005	Martinborough	84	3.5 Stars	A developed nose displaying apricot, roasted nut and vanillin oak characters. The palate is medium-full and well textured with firm acidity leading to a gently drying finish. Not the easy-drinking style but should be a good food partner with its refreshingly dry palate. At its best: now to end of 2010. \$20.00 13.5% Screw cap.
Ngatarawa	Silks Chardonnay 2007	Hawke's Bay	87	4 Stars	It's a pristine and satisfying Chardonnay showing peach, cream and a hint of toasty oak characters on the nose. The palate is equally well poised with a succulent mouthfeel and a smooth finish. A stylish and well balanced Chardonnay showing elegance and subtle flavours. At its best: now to 2012. \$20.00 13% Screw cap.
	Stables Chardonnay 2008	East Coast	84	3.5 Stars	A subtle nose displaying citrus, floral and peach characters. The palate is ripe and refreshing with nicely balanced acidity and an easy flowing mouthfeel to a zesty finish. A friendly and accessible Chardonnay for everyday drinking. At its best: now to 2011. \$18.00
Obsidian	Chardonnay 2007	Waiheke Island	88	4 Stars	Ripe and fragrant, the nose is showing stonefruit, pineapple, cream and subtly infused sweet vanillin oak characters. The palate is concentrated and beautifully textured with good acidity and a lingering crisp finish. A nicely harmonised and elegantly framed Chardonnay. At its best: now to 2011. \$32.00 14.5% Screw cap.
Odyssey	Reserve Iliad Gisborne Chardonnay 2007	Gisborne	87	4 Stars	It's ripe and striking on the nose displaying peach, pineapple and creamy oak characters. The palate is equally bold and flavoursome with a rounded mouthfeel and nicely balanced acidity. A very tasty full-bodied Chardonnay. At its best: now to 2012. \$33.00 13.5% Diam cork.
Okahu	Chardonnay 2007	Northland	78	3 Stars	A rich oaky nose showing peach, cream and nutty characters. It's rounded and generous on the palate with crisp acidity providing a lengthy dry finish. At its best: now to 2010. \$25.00 12.5% Screw cap.

One Tree	Chardonnay 2007	Hawke's Bay	87	4 Stars	The nose is ripe and attractive displaying ripe stonefruit, cream and vanillin oak characters. It's generously flavoured on the palate with creamy texture and well integrated acidity. A delicious up-front Chardonnay. At its best: now to 2011. \$18.00 14% Screw cap.
Palliser Estate	Chardonnay 2007	Martinborough	93	5 Stars	An intensely aromatic nose displaying stonefruit, vanilla, cream and elegantly integrated toasty oak characters. It's full and rich on the palate with creamy texture, expansive mouthfeel and a magnificently long finish. The wine is fruit forward yet has lovely complex mealy notes as well as seamlessly flowing mouthfeel. Simply gorgeous. At its best: now to 2012. \$35.00 13.5% Screw cap.
Paritua	Chardonnay 2007	Hawke's Bay	91	4.5 Stars	A beautifully lifted nose displaying tropical fruit, cream and toasty oak characters. It's rounded and generous on the palate with rich mouthfeel, excellent weight and nicely harmonised acidity. The length is long and expansive. A very impressive offering from this new producer. At its best: now to 2012. \$30.00 14% Screw cap.
Passage Rock	Barrel Fermented Chardonnay 2007	Gisborne	87	4 Stars	An elegant nose displaying apricot, citrus and a touch of vanillin oak characters. It's juicy and fruity on the palate with lovely rounded mouthfeel and refreshing acidity. A very friendly and appealing Chardonnay. At its best: now to 2010. \$20.00 14% Screw cap.
Pegasus Bay	Virtuoso Chardonnay 2005	Waipara	94	5 Stars	This is an explosive Chardonnay with character and attitude, displaying white peach, floral, cream and flinty/mineral characters on the nose. It's full and weighty on the palate showing rounded texture, beautifully melded acidity and a sumptuous mouthfeel. The wine is superbly concentrated and intense leading to an almost endless finish. A truly memorable wine. At its best: now to 2016. \$50.00 14% Screw cap.
Pencarrow	Chardonnay 2007	Martinborough	88	4 Stars	This label always delivers excellent quality at such great price, and this vintage is no exception. A gently fragrant nose displaying ripe peach, cream and nutty oak characters. The palate is well fruited and smooth with creamy texture and balanced acidity. A satisfying Chardonnay with plenty of mouth-pleasing flavours. At its best: now to 2011. \$17.00 13% Screw cap.
Richmond Plains	Chardonnay 2008	Nelson	83	3.5 Stars	Gently aromatic on the nose showing sweet citrus, peach and subtle creamy notes. It's lively on the palate with luscious mouthfeel, balanced acidity and a pleasant lingering finish. An elegant and fruity Chardonnay with a tasty mouthfeel. At its best: now to 2011. \$19.95 Widely available. 13.5% Screw cap.
Rimu Grove	Chardonnay 2006	Nelson	89	4.5 Stars	A complex and evolved bouquet displaying stonefruit, roasted nut and butterscotch characters. The palate is concentrated and full showing smooth texture and well pitched acidity. A full-flavoured and impressively weighted Chardonnay showing plenty of character. At its best: now to 2011. \$27.00 13.5% Screw cap.
Riverby Estate	Chardonnay 2008	Marlborough	91	4.5 Stars	Grapes were grown on their vineyard on Jacksons Road (20 year old Mendoza clones) yielding a very modest 6 tonnes per hectare. The juice was fermented and matured in French oak (20% new) with regular lees stirring. 50% underwent malolactic fermentation. The nose is youthful and fragrant displaying white peach, cream and subtle vanillin oak characters. It's concentrated on the palate with superbly fine texture, well balanced acidity and a beautifully expanding finish. A beautifully crafted Chardonnay with lovely detail and precision. At its best: now to 2013. \$26.00 14.5% Screw cap.
Rockburn	Chardonnay 2007	Central Otago	89	4.5 Stars	An elegant and complex nose displaying peach, citrus, cream and a touch of mealy characters. It's vibrant on the palate showing smooth mid palate texture, crisp acidity and a fine length finish. Like Chablis, this wine is tightly structured and crisp on the finish. At its best: now to 2012. \$23.00 14% Screw cap.
Rongopai	Chardonnay 2007	East Coast	80	3 Stars	It's softly fragrant on the nose showing peach, citrus and subtle floral characters. The palate is fruity and lively with juicy mouthfeel and refreshing acidity. A friendly Chardonnay for casual drinking. At its best: now to 2010. \$13.95 13% Screw cap.

Sacred Hill	The Wine Thief Series Chardonnay 2008	Hawke's Bay	91	4.5 Stars	A youthful and fresh nose showing ripe nectarine, cream and nutty oak characters. The palate is well fruited and beautifully smooth with creamy texture. The acid balance is excellent and the length very long. This wine looks to be another winner under this reliable label. At its best: now to 2012. \$30.00 13.5% Screw cap.
	Barrel Fermented Chardonnay 2008	Hawke's Bay	87	4 Stars	An elegant nose showing citrus, peach and subtle chalky mineral notes. The palate is well concentrated and balanced with bright acidity, fruity mouthfeel and a lingering finish. A lovely medium-bodied Chardonnay displaying elegant structure and fine flavours. At its best: now to 2011. \$20.90 13.5% Screw cap.
Saints	Chardonnay 2008	Gisborne	88	4 Stars	The nose is nicely lifted showing stonefruit, pineapple and toast oak characters. It's immediately appealing on the palate displaying juicy mouthfeel and refreshing acidity with creamy texture. A nicely balanced and generously flavoured Chardonnay. At its best: now to 2010. \$19.95 13% Screw cap.
Selaks	Founders Reserve Chardonnay 2007	Hawke's Bay	88	4 Stars	An elegant nose displaying citrus, mineral and subtle creamy oak notes. The palate is well weighted and balanced with lovely silky texture and crisp acidity. A stylish, medium-bodied Chardonnay with lovely subtle flavours. At its best: now to 2011. \$34.00 14% Screw cap.
	Premium Selection Chardonnay 2007	Hawke's Bay	82	3.5 Stars	A subtle nose showing peach, floral and creamy characters with a hint of vanilla notes. The palate is juicy and broad with rich mouthfeel and creamy texture. The acid balance is excellent providing a nice crisp finish. A well structured wine with a wide appeal. At its best: now to 2011. \$16.00 13.5% Screw cap.
	Favourite Chardonnay 2006	Hawke's Bay	80	3 Stars	A subtle nose showing stonefruit, citrus and nutty characters. It's fruity and nicely balanced on the palate with a hint of creamy notes and a crisp dry finish. An easy-going Chardonnay for everyday drinking. At its best: now to 2010. \$21.00 14% Screw cap.
Sileni	The Lodge Chardonnay 2007	Hawke's Bay	90	4.5 Stars	A wonderfully expressive Chardonnay displaying stonefruit, cream and toasty oak characters on the nose. The palate is full and ripe showing excellent mid palate weight and crisp acidity. It's richly flavoured yet finely balanced by the acidity. Very stylish and well harmonised. At its best: now to 2012. \$35.00 14% Screw cap.
Spinyback	Chardonnay 2007	Nelson	86	4 Stars	The nose is ripe and attractive showing pineapple and stonefruit characters with subtle nutty, savoury complexity. It's rounded and broad on the palate with good weight and balanced acidity. It's gently fruity and shows good acid structure with a smooth mouthfeel. Excellent value. At its best: now to 2010. \$14.90 14.5% Screw cap.
Spring Creek	Unoaked Chardonnay 2008	Marlborough	84	3.5 Stars	A delicately scented Chardonnay displaying ripe peach and citrus characters with subtle creamy notes. The palate is attractive and fruity with smooth mouthfeel and nicely balanced acidity. A very pleasant wine for everyday drinking. At its best: now to 2010. \$16.00 13.5% Screw cap.
Spy Valley	Chardonnay 2007	Marlborough	86	4 Stars	This wine shows friendly style and appeal with its ripe apricot, apple and nutty characters on the nose. The palate is medium-weighted and nicely textured with refreshing acidity and a juicy finish. A very pleasing Chardonnay with ample fruit. At its best: now to 2011. \$23.00 13% Screw cap.
Stonecroft	Old Vine Chardonnay 2007	Hawke's Bay	94-96	5 Stars	From a block planted in 1983, fermented in barrel and matured on lees for 12 months then another 12 months in bottle before release. The nose is intensely aromatic displaying peach, apricot and mealy characters. It's succulent and powerful on the palate with bright acidity and creamy texture throughout the palate. The length is expansive and impressively long. A magnificent young wine with an exciting future. At its best: 2010 to 2017. \$45.00 Tasted not blind as part of a vertical line-up.
Stoneleigh	Chardonnay 2008	Marlborough	83	3.5 Stars	A well flavoured Chardonnay displaying peach, floral and subtle vanillin oak characters. The palate is well fruited with juicy mouthfeel and well balanced acidity. The wine flows easy and smoothly through the palate with a pleasant fruity finish. At its best: now to 2011. \$22.00 13.5% Screw cap.

Summerhouse	Chardonnay 2007	Marlborough	91	4.5 Stars	A stylish Chardonnay displaying ripe stonefruit, cream, vanilla and subtle chalky mineral characters on the nose. The palate is beautifully poised with silky texture, rounded mouthfeel and finely balanced acidity. The flavours are skillfully fused and harmonised. At its best: now to 2012. \$28.00 Limited availability. 14% Screw cap.
Te Mania	Reserve Chardonnay 2007	Nelson	91	4.5 Stars	Always a consistent performer and this vintage is another winner. The juice was fermented and matured for 10 months in French and American oak barrels. The nose is opulent and complex displaying ripe stonefruit, cashew, cream and leesy characters. It's full and generous on the palate showing excellent concentration, beautifully woven acidity and a very long finish with an expansive mouthfeel. A gorgeous, luscious style for those who prefer more flavoursome Chardonnays. At its best: now to 2011. \$27.95 Widely available.
	Chardonnay 2007	Nelson	86	4 Stars	The nose is pleasantly fragrant showing peach, cream and floral characters with a touch of nutty oak notes. It's succulent and refreshing on the palate with nicely textured mid range and a creamy finish. A well weighted and rounded Chardonnay. At its best: now to 2011. \$18.99 14% Screw cap.
TerraVin	Chardonnay 2007	Marlborough	95	5 Stars	Grapes were hand-harvested and whole bunch pressed into two-year old 500 litre French oak barrels for indigenous fermentation. A Burgundy-style wine displaying gentle aromas of stonefruit, citrus and nutty oak. It's stylish and complex on the nose with beautiful harmony and poise. The palate is superbly concentrated and impressively textured with well integrated acidity and expansive mouthfeel. It flows seamlessly and expands beautifully. An exquisitely proportioned and impeccably balanced Chardonnay with a wonderful future. At its best: now to 2015. \$36.00 14% Screw cap. 96 cases made.
Tohu	Unoaked Chardonnay 2007	Gisborne	87	4 Stars	A nicely lifted nose displaying citrus, floral and apricot characters. It's refreshing and fruity on the palate with a juicy mouthfeel and a clean dry finish. Very pleasant and approachable. At its best: now to 2011. \$19.00
	Gisborne Chardonnay 2006	Gisborne	86	4 Stars	Nicely fragrant on the nose displaying peach, floral and a touch of creamy characters. It's juicy and rounded on the palate with well rounded mouthfeel and a lingering creamy finish. At its best: now to 2011. \$22.00 13% Screw cap.
Tranquil Valley	Chardonnay 2006	Matakana	78	3 Stars	The nose is opulent and developed showing stonefruit, cream, beeswax and nutty characters. It's full and weighty on the palate with smooth texture and modest acidity. A matured Chardonnay with a rich mouthfeel. At its best: now to 2010. \$27.00 13.5% Natural cork.
Trinity Hill	Gimblett Gravels Chardonnay 2007	Hawke's Bay	95	5 Stars	From the God Father of New Zealand Chardonnay (John Hancock) comes yet another winner. The bouquet is simply gorgeous displaying white peach, pineapple, cream and roasted cashew characters. It's intensely concentrated yet flows so smoothly and effortlessly through the palate with creamy texture and nicely balanced acidity. The finish is so fine and lingering with tasty flavours. A stylish Chardonnay with potential to become something quite special. At its best: now to 2012. \$29.00
	Gimblett Gravels Chardonnay 2006	Hawke's Bay	91	4.5 Stars	This is a rich and opulent Chardonnay displaying stonefruit, cream, vanilla and nutty oak characters on the nose. It's concentrated and full of flavours on the palate with silky texture and a powerful finish. This is a very generously proportioned Chardonnay yet remains balanced and well structured. At its best: now to 2011. \$29.00 14% Screw cap.
	Chardonnay 2007	Hawke's Bay	83	3.5 Stars	A gently fragrant nose showing apple, peach and subtle creamy characters. The palate is nicely fruited with refreshing acidity and a clean crisp finish. A pleasant and approachable Chardonnay. At its best: now to 2010. \$19.00 13% Screw cap.
Vavasour	Chardonnay 2007	Marlborough	93	5 Stars	Ripe and opulent, this Chardonnay is bursting with ripe peach, mango and creamy oak characters on the nose. The palate is equally impressive showing silky texture and well harmonised acidity. The wine is thoroughly satisfying with plenty of tasty flavours. At its best: now to 2012. \$29.00 14.5% Screw cap.

Vidal	Reserve Chardonnay 2005	Hawke's Bay	91	4.5 Stars	A nicely developing nose showing stonefruit, cream and nutty oak characters with subtle savoury/waxy notes. It's full and richly flavoured showing expansive mouthfeel and well pitched acidity providing excellent structure and lengthy finish. The wine was fermented in French oak barrels and matured on lees for 11 months. At its best: now to 2011. \$35.00 14% Screw cap.
	Chardonnay 2007	Hawke's Bay	86	4 Stars	It's fine and subtly fragrant showing peach, mixed nut and creamy characters with a hint of chalky mineral notes. The palate is medium-bodied and juicy with citrusy acidity and a pleasant dry finish. A well rounded and approachable Chardonnay. At its best: now to 2012. \$20.00 14% Screw cap.
Villa Maria	Single Vineyard Keltern Chardonnay 2007	Hawke's Bay	94	5 Stars	It's elegant and stylish on the nose displaying stonefruit, floral and a touch of toasty oak characters. The palate is superbly concentrated and structured showing succulent mouthfeel, creamy texture and a very long fine finish. The wine looked a little tight at first but improved significantly with time in the glass. A class act. At its best: now to 2013. \$39.00 14% Screw cap.
	Reserve Barrique Fermented Chardonnay 2006	Gisborne	92	4.5 Stars	The attractive and complex nose displays citrus, floral and creamy oak characters. It's rich and intense on the palate showing good concentration, zesty acidity and a fine, long finish. A beautifully elegant wine showing excellent poise. At its best: now to 2012. \$34.00 14% Screw cap.
	Reserve Hawke's Bay Chardonnay 2006	Hawke's Bay	92	4.5 Stars	The nose is rich and complex displaying stonefruit, vanillin oak and mealy characters. It's ripe and weighty on the palate showing lovely silky texture and bright acidity providing excellent structure and a lengthy dry finish. A beautifully framed wine with a huge appeal. At its best: now to 2012. \$34.00 14% Screw cap.
	Reserve Marlborough Chardonnay 2006	Marlborough	90	4.5 Stars	The complex nose displaying peach, cream and earthy/savoury characters. It's concentrated and powerful on the palate with excellent mid palate weight and beautifully balanced acidity. A vibrant Chardonnay with an Old World influence. At its best: now to 2012. \$34.00 14% Screw cap.
	Cellar Selection Hawke's Bay Chardonnay 2007	Hawke's Bay	90	4.5 Stars	An immensely drinkable and attractive Chardonnay displaying peach, cream and gentle nutty oak characters on the nose. It's generously flavoured on the palate showing lovely fruit weight, smooth texture and well balanced acidity providing a pleasant crisp finish. At its best: now to 2012. \$24.00 14% Screw cap.
	Private Bin Chardonnay 2007	East Coast	84	3.5 Stars	A gentle nose displaying stonefruit, floral and nutty characters. It's nicely fruited on the palate showing juicy mouthfeel and a crisp dry finish. An easy and pleasant Chardonnay with a wide appeal. At its best: now to 2011. \$18.00 14% Screw cap.
Voss Estate	Reserve Chardonnay 2007	Martinborough	91	4.5 Stars	The fruity nose displays pineapple, peach and subtle creamy characters. It's generous and rounded on the palate with excellent creamy texture and well integrated crisp acidity. A beautifully structured and stylish Chardonnay. At its best: now to 2013. \$28.00 13% Screw cap.
Waiiau Estate	Chardonnay 2007	Hawke's Bay	84	3.5 Stars	The nose is subtle showing citrus, apple and mineral characters. It's well flavoured on the palate with lovely fruity mouthfeel and grapefruit-like vibrant acidity. A refreshing style Chardonnay with a lovely dry finish. At its best: now to 2011. \$22.00 13.5% Screw cap.
Waimea	Chardonnay 2006	Nelson	93	5 Stars	The nose is luxurious displaying peach, cream, floral and toasty oak characters. It's fruity and lush on the palate with silky smooth texture, layered mouthfeel and nicely balanced acidity. An immensely appealing wine showing excellent concentration of fruit and lengthy finish. At its best: now to 2010. \$21.90 14.5% Screw cap.
	SV Chardonnay 2005	Nelson	88	4 Stars	Slightly deepening pale gold colour. The opulent nose displays lemon curd, peach and toasty characters. The palate is full and generous with expansive mouthfeel, crisp acidity and a long rich finish. A fully matured Chardonnay showing bottle developed tertiary characters with vibrant acidity providing a good structure. At its best: now to 2010. \$24.90 14.5% Screw cap.

Wairau River	Home Block Chardonnay 2007	Marlborough	93	5 Stars	100% fermented in French oak barrels, this stylish Chardonnay exhibits apricot, grapefruit, cream and roasted nuts with a touch of flinty notes. The beautifully elegant palate shows excellent concentration of fruit, rounded texture and refreshing acidity. A graceful and finely poised wine. At its best: now to 2012. \$27.00 13% Screw cap.
	Chardonnay 2007	Marlborough	91	4.5 Stars	Beautifully elegant and complex, the gently fragrant nose displays white peach, cream, citrus and a touch of chalky mineral characters. It's juicy and vibrant on the palate with fine texture and bright acidity leading to a crisp dry finish. At its best: now to 2012. \$20.00 13% Screw cap.
Wild South	Chardonnay 2008	Marlborough	83	3.5 Stars	A subtle nose showing citrus and stonefruit characters with a hint of nutty, creamy notes. It's fruity and pleasant on the palate with easy flowing texture, nicely balanced acidity and a refreshing finish. At its best: now to 2010. \$19.00 13% Screw cap.
William Thomas	Chardonnay 2005	Marlborough	91	4.5 Stars	A complex and intriguing nose displaying peach, roasted cashew, subtle cedary oak and mealy characters. The palate is concentrated and beautifully harmonised with refreshing acidity and a lingering dry finish. A classically structured and refined Chardonnay showing some bottle matured complexity yet remains vibrant and crisp. At its best: now to 2011. \$28.00 14% Diam cork.
Wishart	Reserve Chardonnay 2005	Hawke's Bay	82	3.5 Stars	Pale gold colour. The nose shows developing aromas of apple and waxy characters with nutty oak notes. It's rich and broad on the palate with generous mouthfeel and crisp acidity. A bold and matured chardonnay. At its best: now to 2010. \$25.00 13.2% Screw cap.
	Te Puriri Unoaked Chardonnay 2007	Hawke's Bay	80	3 Stars	A fresh and fruity nose showing pineapple, peach and subtle floral characters. The palate is crisp and crunchy with moderately concentrated mouthfeel. A straightforward and pleasant Chardonnay. At its best: now to 2010. \$18.50 12.5% Screw cap.
Wither Hills	Chardonnay 2006	Marlborough	89	4.5 Stars	A complex and rich nose displaying roasted nut, cream and stonefruit characters. It's rich and powerful on the palate with creamy texture and refreshing acidity. The wine has nicely evolved showing excellent harmony and integrated flavours. At its best: now to 2011. \$20.00 14.5% Screw cap.

New Zealand Pinot Noir (156 wines reviewed)

Featuring predominantly the 2007 vintage.
The most delicious and attractive vintage in history.

The 2007 vintage has given what most Pinot Noir consumers are looking for – plenty of ripe fruit flavours, plump mouthfeel, velvety texture and ripe tannins. Most of the wines showed immediate appeal and some will age medium to long term to show greater complexity and a few might even develop the elusive ‘ethereal’ feel. A few winemakers and consumers have criticised the vintage as being too attractive and fleshy. Indeed some wines did show syrah-like opulence and merlot-like density, questioning whether these wines will age gracefully or turn into dried-out, chunky reds.

NZ Pinot Noir

Vintage	Hectares	Tonnes	Tonnes/ha
2006	3,611	16,580	4.6
2007	3,966	14,378	3.6
2008	4,189	28,093	6.7

From NZ Winegrowers Statistical Annuals. These figures exclude Pinot Noir used for sparkling wine production.

As you can see from this table, the 2007 vintage provided low cropping levels in most regions with Wairarapa (Wellington) at 2 t/ha and Waipara (north of Christchurch) at 1.2 t/ha. Not good for the growers and wine producers with reduced incomes but this vintage has given New Zealand some of the most impressive, powerfully structured and possibly long-living pinot noir, and undoubtedly very appealing wines at a time when pinot noir is gaining an unprecedented popularity. The average grape price reached new heights at NZ\$2,932 per tonne, up from \$2,807 in 2006. Central Otago led the charge at \$3,419 followed by Wairarapa (Wellington), \$3,061 and Marlborough, \$2,951. Of course some of the best parcels of grapes fetched much higher than these average prices.

Experienced growers and winemakers have made wines of superb concentration, rich texture and plenty of polished tannins with the all important balance and freshness. It appears this vintage has allowed an increased use of whole bunch in the fermentation, helping to firm up the structure and to provide subtle dried herb/thyme characters which should develop into floral/spice notes with time in the bottle. Unfortunately, there were some wines that showed over-ripe (dried fruit, stewed plum etc) and/or heavy charred oak characters.

By and large, 2007 pinots are supple, fleshy and beautifully textured making them drinkable upon release and through to 2012. The top examples should last until 2015, and maybe beyond. The vintage demonstrated moderate to low cropping is vital in pinot noir’s hallmark texture, mouthfeel and ripe tannins. I am looking forward to future vintages when vines are older, and grape growers and winemakers are even more experienced and knowledgeable, so that more pinots show intensity as well as grace, drinkability as well as age ability, and vineyard individuality and character.

Wine & Food

Here are three wonderful dishes I had with three distinctly characterful Pinot Noirs.

Misha’s The High Note Pinot Noir 2008 (Central Otago) with Roasted Quail at The Grove Restaurant (Auckland)

A well roasted quail is a lovely tender meat with delicate texture and flavour. It was perfectly cooked to medium-rare and served with mash and beetroot. It was a gently fragrant dish with subtle flavours and beautifully mouth-coating texture. Misha’s Pinot Noir comes from their spectacular home vineyard in the Bendigo district overlooking Lake Dunstan. The wine was youthful and nicely perfumed displaying red berries and a floral lift with a touch of savoury complexity. It’s silky and refreshing with gentle tannins. A renowned winemaker Olly Masters has crafted an elegant expression of the variety from this sub-region better known for opulent style pinot noirs.

The wine and food pairing worked brilliantly: full credit to the chef, Benjamin Bayly, for understanding the youthful fruit of the wine as well as the delicate mouthfeel. The wine and the food harmonised seamlessly. The gentle savoury notes in the quail highlighted the earthy tones in the wine, while the wine’s refreshing acidity and fine tannins provided counterpoint to the roasted meat and creamy mash.

Mt. Beautiful Cheviot Hills Pinot Noir 2008 (north Canterbury) with Rack of Lamb at Mollies (Auckland)

Cheviot Hills is a new wine region caught between Waipara and Marlborough. David and Leigh Teece established this property with help from Vern Harris and Ron Sutherland, and the wine is made by Sam Weaver, a winemaker well-known for his delicate touches. Mt. Beautiful Pinot Noir 2008 is a stylish wine displaying a sweet-scented bouquet of red cherries, spice and earthy mushroom. The palate is equally enchanting with a velvety texture and fine tannins. As expected it went magnificently with the lamb which was served with truffled spinach, potato purée and wild mushrooms. The heady fragrance of truffle and mushroom with the distinctive lamb flavours fused beautifully with the juicy Pinot’s subtle savoury notes. The dish was perfectly executed showing immaculate harmony, texture and flavour intensity, and so was the wine. A magical combination!

Wine & Food continued

Wither Hills Marlborough Pinot Noir 2008 & 2005 with Wild Venison Tenderloin at the Wither Hills Winery

When a fine young pinot noir develops gracefully after a few years in the bottle, it becomes something extraordinary. The mouthfeel becomes smoother than silk, the texture softer than velvet, and the flavours harmonised to a complex medley that almost defies description. The 2005 Wither Hills Pinot Noir was such a beauty. The bouquet has developed amazing complexity showing sweet-scented aromas of red/dark cherries, floral, spice and truffle. The palate was full and concentrated with fabulous texture and dense, chewy tannins. The wine flows effortlessly to a firm finish.

The 2008 wine is an elegant expression compared to the sturdy 2005, even though the wine is concentrated and shows excellent weight and depth of flavour. The nose is beautifully fragrant showing black cherry, thyme, spice and subtle floral characters. It's juicy and refreshing with a silky texture and fine, chalky tannins. A lovely drink already but it should evolve into a wine of refinement and style rather than one with richness and density. The dish served with them was wild venison tenderloin with parmesan risotto, pinot glaze and steamed asparagus. It was a beautifully proportioned dish with the fine-grained, gamey meat and creamy risotto, the pinot jus adding sweetness and pungency while the asparagus provided freshness and crunch. Both vintages of pinot worked well. The 2008's super smooth mouthfeel and subtle savoury notes were highlighted by the food but it was in the shadow of the older 2005 wine which made the food and wine combination sublime and created a perfect symphony.

Top Scoring Wines

Score	Wine	Region	Price NZD
96	Rippon Pinot Noir 2007	Central Otago	\$58.00
94-96	Dry River Pinot Noir 2007	Martinborough	\$93.00
95	Ata Rangi Pinot Noir 2007	Martinborough	\$75.00
95	Muddy Water Slowhand Pinot Noir 2007	Waipara	\$65.00
95	TerraVin Hillside Reserve Pinot Noir 2006	Marlborough	\$54.00
94	Pyramid Valley Growers Collection Calvert Vineyard Pinot Noir 2007	Central Otago	\$55.00
94	Alana Estate Pinot Noir 2006	Martinborough	\$65.00
94	Craggy Range Pinot Noir Calvert Vineyard 2007	Central Otago	\$50.00
94	Palliser Estate Pinot Noir 2007	Martinborough	\$48.00
94	Cloudy Bay Pinot Noir 2007	Marlborough	\$58.00
94	Craggy Range Pinot Noir Bannockburn Sluicings Vineyard 2007	Central Otago	\$50.00
94	Voss Estate Pinot Noir 2007	Martinborough	\$40.00
94	Ma Maison Pinot Noir Reserve 2006	Martinborough	-
94	Jackson Estate Gum Emperor Pinot Noir 2007	Marlborough	\$60.00
94	Nautilus Pinot Noir 2007	Marlborough	\$40.00
94	Nautilus Four Barriques Pinot Noir 2007	Marlborough	\$55.00
94	The Crater Rim Blacks Lot 7' Pinot Noir 2007	Waipara	\$42.00

Smart Buys_(under \$33.00)

Score	Wine	Region	Price NZD
92	Main Divide Tehau Selection Pinot Noir 20006	Waipara	\$32.00
92	Riverby Pinot Noir 2008	Marlborough	\$29.00
91	Walnut Block Pinot Noir 2007	Marlborough	\$29.00
90	Pencarrow Pinot Noir 2007	Martinborough	\$22.00
90	Wairau River Home Block Pinot Noir 2007	Marlborough	\$30.00
90	Montana Terroir Series Gabriel's Gully Pinot Noir 2007	Marlborough	\$31.00
90	Rapaura Springs Pinot Noir 2007	Marlborough	\$22.00
90	Spy Valley Pinot Noir 2007	Marlborough	\$29.00
90	Wild Rock Cupid's Arrow Pinot Noir 2007	Central Otago	\$25.00

36 Bottles	Pinot Noir	Central Otago	92	4.5 Stars	Grapes were destemmed and fermented in open-top fermenters with regular hand plunging. The finished wine was then matured in new and older French oak barriques for 9 months. Ripe and opulent, this immediately appealing Pinot displays dark cherry, savoury mushroom and subtle spice characters on the nose. The palate is juicy upfront with satin smooth texture, nicely pitched acidity and fine-grained tannins. The wine is rich and sumptuous yet remains elegant and beautifully poised. At its best: now to 2012. \$36.00 14% Screw cap.
99 Rows	Pinot Noir 2008	Martinborough	88	4 Stars	The nose is ripe and lifted showing dark cherry, plum and subtle savoury mushroom characters. It's succulent and brightly fruited on the palate with smooth texture and soft tannins. It's immediately appealing on the palate and is nicely balanced. A very pleasant Pinot showing excellent varietal characters. At its best: now to 2011. \$30.00 13.5% Screw cap.
Alana Estate	Pinot Noir 2006	Martinborough	94	5 Stars	A gloriously nose exhibiting dark cherry, spice, savoury mushroom and subtle cedary oak characters. It's superbly concentrated and generously flavoured on the palate with satin smooth texture, bright acidity and gently firm tannins providing excellent structure to this impressive Pinot. The wine is beautifully layered and harmonised with an expansive and long finish. At its best: now to 2013. \$65.00 14% Screw cap.
	Lumière Pinot Noir 2008	Martinborough	89	4.5 Stars	The nose shows excellent breadth displaying dark plum, game, thyme and subtle spice notes. It's sweet and juicy on the palate with good mid range weight and texture. The acid and tannins balance is superbly done. A beautifully harmonious Pinot with savoury complexity. At its best: now to 2011. \$35.00 14% Screw cap.
Anchorage	Pinot Noir 2005	Nelson	80	3.5 Stars	Medium red colour. The nose shows developed aromas of savoury tomato, spice and game. It's sweet and gentle on the palate with balanced acidity and fine-grained tannins. At its best: now to end of 2009. \$22.00 Limited availability. 13% Screw cap.
	Pinot Noir 2007	Nelson	78	3 Stars	Bright medium red colour. The youthful nose shows red cherry and dried herb characters. It's juicy on the palate with vibrant acidity and soft tannins. At its best: now to end of 2009. \$22.00 Limited availability. 14% Screw cap.
Ashwell	Reserve Pinot Noir 2007	Martinborough	89	4.5 Stars	The bouquet is beautifully perfumed showing dark plum, game and savoury mushroom characters with a hint of dried herb notes. It's firm and sturdy on the palate displaying silky texture, refreshing acidity and fine-grained, compact tannins. A nicely drying finish makes this a superb food wine to partner rich meat dishes. At its best: now to 2011. \$45.00 13% Diam cork.
Ata Rangi	Pinot Noir 2007	Martinborough	95	5 Stars	The bouquet is irresistibly perfumed, displaying strawberry, dark cherry, spicy mushroom and subtle oak characters. It's velvety and seamless on the palate with well pitched acidity and supple tannins. The wine is impeccably balanced and beautifully flowing. A breathtakingly elegant expression of the variety. At its best: now to 2017. \$75.00 14% Screw cap.
Ataahua	Pinot Noir 2008	Waipara	86	4 Stars	Medium-light red/purple colour. A nicely aromatic nose showing red/black cherry, spice and subtle mushroom characters. It's well fruited on the palate with bright acidity, fine texture and nicely integrated fine tannins. A very appealing and refreshing Pinot with lovely elegant fruit characters. At its best: now to 2011. \$34.00 13.5% Screw cap.
Auntsfield	Hawk Hill Pinot Noir 2007	Marlborough	90	4.5 Stars	The nose is gently fragrant showing red cherry and raspberry characters with subtle mushroom and floral notes. It's fresh and vibrant on the palate with silky texture and easy flowing mouthfeel with fine-grained tannins. At this early stage it is showing promise to be a lovely Pinot with age. At its best: early 2009 to 2011. \$45.00 Moderate availability. 14% Screw cap.
Babich	Winemakers' Reserve Pinot Noir 2007	Marlborough	84	3.5 Stars	A nicely lifted nose showing red plum, cured meat and spicy oak characters. It's juicy and rounded on the palate with well pitched acidity and fine-grained tannins. A pleasant and attractive Pinot with a nice dry finish. At its best: now to 2011. \$30.00 13.5% Diam cork.

Babich	Pinot Noir 2007	Marlborough	78	3 Stars	The nose is gently fragrant displaying strawberry, red cherry and spice characters. It's light and juicy on the palate with crisp acidity and gently drying tannins. An easy Pinot with vibrant fruit notes. At its best: now to 2010. \$20.00 13.5% Screw cap.
Bald Hills	Single Vineyard Pinot Noir 2007	Central Otago	90	4.5 Stars	Grapes were sourced from a single vineyard in the Bannockburn district. Sweet and fragrant on the nose displaying dark cherry, plum and cured meat characters. It's juicy and vibrant on the palate with excellent mid palate weight, smooth texture and fine yet firm tannins. A well structured Pinot with bold flavours. At its best: now to 2012. \$47.00 13.5% Screw cap.
Bel Echo	Pinot Noir 2007	Marlborough	86	4 Stars	Medium-light red colour. The complex nose shows ripe red/black cherry and earthy mushroom characters. It's smooth and rounded on the palate with nicely integrated acidity and fine-grained, firm tannins providing excellent structure. A youthful wine showing much appeal already. At its best: now to 2010. \$27.00 13.5% Screw cap.
Bird	Pinot Noir 2007	Marlborough	85	4 Stars	Bright medium-light red colour. The fragrant nose displays red cherry, floral and subtle mushroom characters. It's vibrant and fruity on the palate with refreshing acidity and soft, fine tannins. The wine is beautifully balanced with a pleasing finish. At its best: now to 2010. \$35.00 Limited availability. 14.5% Screw cap.
Bishops Head	Reserve Pinot Noir 2006	Waipara	91	4.5 Stars	A lovely complex nose displaying dark cherry, spice, dried herb and subtle truffle characters. The palate is concentrated and beautifully textured with bright acidity and gently firm tannins. A wonderfully framed and balanced wine showing some maturity but will hold for a while. At its best: now to 2011. \$40.00 Diam cork.
	Pinot Noir 2007	South Island	88	4 Stars	The nose is beautifully ripe and complex displaying dark cherry, spice and savoury mushroom characters. It's juicy and well fruited on the palate with bright acidity and smooth texture. The finish is clean and nicely dry with fine tannins. A lovely complex Pinot with a refreshing mouthfeel. At its best: now to 2011. \$32.00 Screw cap.
Blind River	Pinot Noir 2007	Marlborough	90	4.5 Stars	It's warm and generous on the nose displaying black cherry, floral and a hint of dried herb and mushroom characters. It's well fruited on the palate with rounded mouthfeel and refreshing acidity. A finely textured Pinot showing lovely elegance and suppleness. At its best: now to 2012. \$40.00 14% Screw cap.
Boundary Vineyard	Kings Road Pinot Noir 2008	Waipara	78	3 Stars	A gently aromatic nose showing red cherry, strawberry and subtle mushroom notes. The palate is light and fruity with balanced acidity and a fine dry finish. An easy and approachable Pinot. At its best: now to 2010. \$23.00 13.5% Screw cap.
Bracken's Order	Pinot Noir 2008	Central Otago	87	4 Stars	A beautifully fragrant nose displaying red cherry, plum and subtle spice characters with a hint of mushroom notes. It's juicy and tasty on the palate showing lovely silky mouthfeel, bright acidity and fine-grained tannins. A well balanced and structured Pinot with plenty of mouth-pleasing flavours. At its best: now to 2011.
Burnt Spur	Pinot Noir 2007	Martinborough	93	5 Stars	It's intensely rich on the nose displaying dark cherry/plum, floral and a hint of dark truffle characters. It's succulent and full on the palate showing generous texture and long fine finish. A dense and beautifully weighted Pinot with plenty of mouth-pleasing flavours. At its best: now to 2013. \$34.00 14.5% Screw cap.
Camshorn	Pinot Noir 2007	Waipara	87	4 Stars	A nicely lifted bouquet showing red/black cherry, spice and dried herb characters. The palate is well structured with good acidity and fine-grained tannins. The wine shows lovely silky texture with a gently drying palate. At its best: now to 2011. \$37.00 13% Screw cap.
Cape Campbell	Pinot Noir 2007	Marlborough	80	3 Stars	It's brightly fruity on the nose showing red cherry and plum characters with a hint of dried herb notes. The palate is juicy and light-bodied with balanced acidity and fine-grained tannins. A straight-forward and easy-drinking Pinot. At its best: now to 2011. \$25.00 13.9% Screw cap.

Cape Campbell	Pinot Noir 2008 The nose is youthful and gently perfumed displaying red cherry, strawberry and a hint of spice characters. It's soft and light on the palate with bright acidity and fine tannins. At its best: now to 2010. \$25.00 13% Screw cap.	Marlborough	78	3 Stars
Clearview	Pinot Nor Des Trois 2006 Grapes were sourced from three highly regarded Pinot Noir regions, Central Otago, Waipara (Canterbury) and Wairarapa (Wellington). The nose is pristine and fragrant exhibiting dark cherry, floral and savoury spice characters. The bouquet is quite stunning. It's well weighted on the palate displaying lovely fine texture, rounded mouthfeel and refreshing acidity with gently firm tannins providing excellent structure to this impressive wine. Beautifully perfumed and poised. At its best: now to 2012. \$45.00 14% Diam cork.	New Zealand	92	4.5 Stars
Cloudy Bay	Pinot Noir 2007 Grapes were sourced from a variety of sites in the Wairau Valley including the Brancott, Fairhall and Ben Morven districts. A small yield of only 4 t/ha. Hand-harvested grapes were de-stemmed and fermented in open-top fermenters using indigenous yeasts with regular plunging. The finished wine was then matured in French oak barrels, about half new, for nearly a year. The final blend is made up of 25% Clone 5 (Pommard), 20% Clone 10/5, 20% Clone 667 and other Dijon clones making up the remaining blend. A Burgundy-like bouquet exhibiting red/black cherry, game, floral and subtle mushroom characters. The palate is concentrated and powerful yet graceful displaying silky texture, bright acidity and fine-grained tannins. A stylish and complex Pinot with extra dimension you don't find in fruit-dominated style. This is all class. At its best: now to 2012. \$58.00 14% Screw cap.	Marlborough	94	5 Stars
Cooks Beach	Pinot Noir 2007 A vibrant and attractive nose displaying red cherry and plum characters with subtle floral and cedar influence. It's juicy and refreshing on the palate with fine mouthfeel and nicely balanced acidity. The wine shows excellent varietal expression and is very well balance with fine-grained tannins. At its best: now to 2011. \$24.90 Limited availability. 13.3% Screw cap.	Coromandel	85	4 Stars
Craggy Range	Pinot Noir Calvert Vineyard 2007 A beautifully fragrant bouquet displaying black plum, thyme and a touch of savoury mushroom. A gorgeous wine to nose. The palate is succulent and rich showing excellent concentration of fruit, satin texture and polished supple tannins. The wine is superbly weighted with an expansive mouthfeel and a very fine lengthy finish. The varietal definition is beautifully combined with the expression of the vineyard. At its best: now to 2013. \$50.00 14% Screw cap.	Central Otago	94	5 Stars
	Pinot Noir Bannockburn Sluicings Vineyard 2007 From a single vineyard on the northern part of Felton Road in Bannockburn. The nose is sweet-scented displaying dark cherry, blackberry and subtle cedary oak notes. It's opulent and super smooth on the palate with excellent weight, generosity and body. The rich mouthfeel is brilliantly well balanced by the integrated acidity and supple tannins. An outstanding Pinot with grace and power, and is immensely appealing and approachable but will improve beautifully in the bottle. At its best: now to 2014. \$50.00 14% Natural cork.	Central Otago	94	5 Stars
	Pinot Noir Te Muna Road Vineyard 2007 Grapes were sourced from this single vineyard in the stony soils of Martinborough Terraces. Fermented using indigenous yeasts then the finished wine was matured in small French oak barrels for a year. The nose is complex and lifted showing dark cherry, dried herb, spice and subtle floral characters. It's juicy and beautifully flowing on the palate with excellent weight and texture. The palate is firmly structured with well balanced acidity and chalky tannins. At its best: now to 2013. \$50.00 13.5% Natural cork.	Martinborough	91	4.5 Stars
	Pinot Noir Zebra Vineyard 2007 From the Bendigo district, this sweet-scented Pinot Noir displays lifted floral and dark plum characters with a hint of vanilla notes on the nose. The palate is impressively ripe and succulent showing excellent mid palate weight and plenty of fine tannins. A concentrated and powerful wine. At its best: now to 2013. \$50.00 14% Natural cork.	Central Otago	91	4.5 Stars
Crater Rim	Central Otago Pinot Noir 2007 Ripe and complex, the nose displays dark cherry, spice and floral characters. It's refreshing and finely textured on the palate with firm acidity and fine, chalky tannins. The wine needed a few minutes to open up in the glass indicating there's much more to come with bottle age. At its best: now to 2012. \$31.00 14% Screw cap.	Central Otago	88	4 Stars
Crawford Farm	Pinot Noir 2007 Light red in colour. The ripe nose shows red cherry, ripe strawberry and subtle game characters. The palate is light and fruity with easy tannins and a gently savoury finish. At its best: now to 2010. \$22.50 14% Screw cap.	New Zealand	78	3 Stars

Desert Heart	Seduction Pinot Noir 2007	Central Otago	88	4 Stars	The attractive and fragrant nose displays red cherry, strawberry and a touch of savoury mushroom characters. It's juicy and fruity on the palate with fine texture and supple tannins. A well rounded and balanced Pinot with plenty of appealing flavours. At its best: now to 2011. \$27.00 13.5% Screw cap.
Domaine Georges Michel	La Reserve Pinot Noir 2005	Marlborough	88	4 Stars	Rich and complex, the nose displays dark plum, game and spice characters with a hint of earthy notes. It's concentrated on the palate with excellent mid range weight, balanced acidity and sturdy tannins. A bold, savoury and beautifully structured wine ideally suited to partner rich meat dishes. At its best: now to 2010. \$29.50 13.2% Diam cork.
	Golden Mile Pinot Noir 2007	Marlborough	84	3.5 Stars	The nose is beautifully perfumed showing red/black cherry, floral and savoury mushroom characters. Brightly fruited, the palate is juicy and refreshing with crisp acidity and fine tannins. An appealing, medium-light Pinot with lovely savoury complexity. At its best: now to 2011. \$24.50 13% Diam cork.
Dry River	Pinot Noir 2007	Martinborough	94-96	5 Stars	A tiny crop of 1 tonne/acre (2.4 t/hectare or 16 hectolitres/ha) was achieved for this exceptional wine. Dry River Pinot Noirs need a few years in the bottle to show their best but this wine even at this infancy shows class and charm. Medium-deep red in colour with a hint of purple. The nose is youthful displaying red plum, cherry, game and floral characters. It's ripe and weighty on the palate with silky texture and firm tannins. The wine shows Burgundy-like structure and sturdy profile - more Vosne-Romanée than Gevrey-Chambertin. Outstanding line and length. It's nothing like any other Pinot Noir made in New Zealand. At its best: 2012 to 2017. \$93.00 13% Natural cork.
Drylands	Pinot Noir 2006	Marlborough	78	3 Stars	Medium-light red in colour with a hint of browning on the rim. The nose is subtle and matured displaying spice, red cherry and savoury characters. The palate is soft and light with balanced acidity and easy tannins. A simple straightforward Pinot. At its best: now to 2010. \$22.00 13.5% Screw cap.
Durvillea	Pinot Noir 2008	Marlborough	86	4 Stars	A nicely perfumed nose displaying red cherry, floral and a hint of mushroom characters. It's fruity and smooth on the palate with well balanced acidity and supple tannins providing a pleasant dry finish. An attractive and refreshing Pinot. At its best: now to 2011. \$22.00 13.5% Screw cap.
Escarpment	Pinot Noir 2007	Martinborough	93	5 Stars	You can really get down and dirty with this wine. It's full of spice, game and earthy/compost characters with dark plum notes. The palate is juicy and silky showing bright acidity and fine, firm tannins providing a wonderful structure to this intriguing Pinot. It's full of powerful flavours and character. At its best: now to 2014. \$49.00 13.5% Diam cork.
Fiasco	Black Perle Pinot Noir 2008	Marlborough	89	4.5 Stars	Medium-light red/purple colour. The nose is bright and youthful showing red/black cherry, spice and subtle cedar notes. It's juicy and rounded on the palate with nicely flowing texture and fine-grained tannins. The wine shows excellent balance and frame. At its best: now to 2012. \$30.00 14% Screw cap.
Forrest	Pinot Noir 2007	Marlborough	87	4 Stars	A fragrant and complex nose displaying dark cherry, spice and savoury mushroom characters. The palate is juicy and silky smooth with rounded mouthfeel and supple tannins. It flows beautifully and finishes long and refreshing. At its best: now to 2011. \$30.00 14% Screw cap.
	Pinot Noir 2008	Marlborough	82	3.5 Stars	The nose is fresh and fragrant showing raspberry, red cherry and floral characters. It's juicy and rounded on the palate with soft texture and bright acidity. The finish is clean and fruity with fine tannins. A pleasant and approachable Pinot. At its best: now to 2011. \$30.00 13.5% Screw cap.
Framingham	Pinot Noir 2007	Marlborough	88	4 Stars	A gently fragrant nose exhibiting dark cherry, game, dried herb and subtle mushroom notes. The palate is rounded and satin smooth with lovely acidity and gently firm tannins. Very well balanced and structured with seamless mouthfeel and a lengthy finish. At its best: now to 2011. \$25.00 14% Screw cap.
Fromm	Fromm Vineyard Pinot Noir 2005	Marlborough	92	4.5 Stars	A nicely perfumed nose displaying red cherry, dried herb and subtle spice notes. It's classically structured on the palate with good acidity and fine-grained, firm tannins. The texture is silky and the weight excellent. A refined style Pinot showing charm and class. At its best: now to 2012. \$65.00 14% Natural cork.

Goldridge	Premium Reserve Pinot Noir 2007	Marlborough	83	3.5 Stars	A savoury wine showing dark plum, spice and subtle herbal characters on the nose. The palate is sweet and juicy with a broad mouthfeel and soft tannins at the end. At its best: now to end of 2009. \$22.00 14% Screw cap.
Hawkshead	Pinot Noir 2007	Central Otago	89	4.5 Stars	A rich and fragrant nose displaying dark plum, floral and spice characters. The palate is refreshing and well structured with bright acidity and gently drying tannins. The wine shows excellent Gibbston sub-regional elegance and perfume, and after a few minutes the wine showed greater intensity and complexity. An elegant style with a firm finish ideally suited to partner savoury dishes. At its best: now to 2011. \$38.00 13% Screw cap.
Highfield	Pinot Noir 2007	Marlborough	89	4.5 Stars	A beautifully fragrant and complex bouquet displaying red/dark plum, floral and mushroom characters. Very inviting. The palate is ripe and smooth showing fine texture and polished tannins with a lingering juicy finish. The wine is very friendly and accessible. At its best: now to 2012. \$37.00 14.5% Screw cap.
Instinct	Pinot Noir 2008	Marlborough	81	3.5 Stars	The nose is fine and subtle showing red cherry, strawberry and a touch of dried herb characters. The palate is juicy and easy flowing with refreshing acidity, soft texture and a crisp dry finish. A pleasant and tasty Pinot for everyday drinking. At its best: now to 2010. 13% Screw cap. \$20.00
Jackson Estate	Gum Emperor Pinot Noir 2007	Marlborough	94	5 Stars	Grapes (clones 114 and UCD5) were grown on their Gum Emperor vineyard on Waihopai Valley Road (30 cm silt loam over a heavy Waihopai clay/gravel pan). Grapes were destemmed but not crushed and fermented with indigenous yeasts after a 4-day cold soak followed by a warm 6-day ferment (temperatures reaching 33°C), then 12 day post ferment maceration. A beautifully fragrant and youthful wine displaying dark cherry, spice, subtle mushroom and a hint of cedar characters on the nose. The palate is concentrated, but not heavy, with silky texture and beautifully harmonised acidity and gently drying tannins. A stylish and elegant Pinot with the classic subtle power. At its best: now to 2013. \$60.00 14% Screw cap. Only 167 cases made.
Johanneshof	Pinot Noir 2006	Marlborough	83	3.5 Stars	The nose is nicely developed showing ripe strawberry, spice and savoury mushroom characters. It's rounded and silky on the palate with crisp acidity and fine tannins. A softer style showing some bottle developed complexity. At its best: now to 2011. \$25.00 13% Diam cork.
Kahurangi	Pinot Noir 2008	Nelson	82	3.5 Stars	A gently fragrant nose displaying red cherry, plum and subtle savoury mushroom characters. The palate is well fruited with silky mouthfeel and well balanced acidity. A nicely balanced wine with fine-grained tannins providing a gently firm finish. At its best: now to 2011. \$26.00 13.5% Screw cap.
Kaituna Valley	Pinot Noir Bone Hill Vineyard 2006	Canterbury	93	5 Stars	From a hillside vineyard in the Kaituna Valley, Banks Peninsula, this discreetly powerful wine exhibits medium-deep red/purple colour, complex aromas of blackberries and dark plums with subtle mushroom notes. It's succulent and rounded on the palate showing satin texture and fine-grained tannins. A graceful Pinot with immense appeal already. At its best: now to 2011. \$41.00 14% Screw cap.
	Pinot Noir Kaituna Vineyard 2006	Canterbury	89	4.5 Stars	This striking wine shows bright medium red colour, beautifully lifted nose displaying black plum, cherry and floral characters with a touch of spice. The palate is ripe and finely textured with excellent harmony and balance. At its best: now to 2010. \$41.00 13.5% Screw cap.
	Canterbury Pinot Noir 2006	Canterbury	84	3.5 Stars	A gently aromatic nose displaying spice, red plum and earthy mushroom characters. It's juicy and softly textured on the palate with well harmonised acidity and fine tannins. An easier style Pinot from this outstanding producer for early drinking. At its best: now to 2010. \$27.00 14% Screw cap.
Kawarau Estate	Reserve Pinot Noir 2007	Central Otago	91	4.5 Stars	A beautifully perfumed bouquet displaying red plum, floral, mushroom and subtle spice characters. The palate is superbly concentrated and textured with silky mouthfeel and gently drying tannins. An elegant Pinot yet with excellent intensity and length of flavour. At its best: now to 2012. \$43.00 13.5% Screw cap. Certified organic.
	Pinot Noir 2007	Central Otago	85	4 Stars	The bouquet is gently fragrant showing red cherry, dried herb, spice and a hint of game characters. The palate is elegant and well balanced with nicely textured mouthfeel, well balanced acidity and fine-grained tannins. A savoury and stylish Pinot. At its best: now to 2011. \$30.00 13.5% Screw cap. Certified organic.

Kim Crawford	SP Kim's Favourite Pinot Noir 2007	Marlborough	90	4.5 Stars	A wonderfully sweet bouquet displaying dark plum, thyme and a touch of spicy oak characters. It's lush and generously flavoured on the palate with bright acidity and fine tannins. A very appealing and approachable Pinot yet the wine is well concentrated and structured. At its best: now to 2012. \$34.00 13.5% Screw cap.
	Marlborough Pinot Noir 2007	Marlborough	78	3 Stars	A matured bouquet displaying leather, spice and stewed plum characters. It's fruity and softly textured on the palate with balanced acidity and fine tannins providing a gently drying finish. At its best: now to 2010. \$22.00 13% Screw cap.
Kingsmill	Tippet's Dam Pinot Noir 2007	Central Otago	91	4.5 Stars	Grapes were sourced from their Tippet's Dam vineyard in the Bannockburn area. Bright medium-light red colour with a purple rim. The nose is beautifully scented showing dark plum, cherry and floral characters with a hint of mushroom. It's sweet and juicy on the palate with silky texture and supple tannins. A very appealing, gorgeous wine. At its best: now to 2011. \$45.00 Moderate availability. 14% Screw cap.
Lawson's Dry Hills	Pinot Noir 2007	Marlborough	80	3 Stars	A subtle nose showing red cherry, plum and spice characters. The palate is light and easy with balanced acidity and soft tannins. At its best: now to 2010. \$29.00 14% Screw cap.
Lime Rock	White Knuckle Hill Pinot Noir 2007	Hawke's Bay	88	4 Stars	The nose is beautifully aromatic showing youthful dark plum, game and earthy mushroom characters with nicely integrated cedar notes. The palate is succulent and well weighted with crisp acidity and firm tannins providing excellent structure. A sturdy Pinot well suited to partner rich, savoury dishes. At its best: now to 2011. \$39.50 Limited availability.
	Pinot Noir 2007	Hawke's Bay	86	4 Stars	A fragrant nose showing dark cherry, spice and subtle mushroom notes with a hint of cedar. It's ripe and juicy on the palate with soft texture and bright acidity combined with fine grained tannins providing good frame to the wine. A refreshing and crisp style. At its best: now to 2010. \$28.50 Limited availability.
	Pinot Noir 2005	Hawke's Bay	82	3.5 Stars	A fully matured Pinot showing dark plum, leather and savoury characters on the nose. It's sweet up front on the palate with broad mouthfeel and firm, drying tannins at the end. At its best: now to end of 2009. \$25.50 13.8% Screw cap.
Ma Maison	Pinot Noir Reserve 2006	Martinborough	94	5 Stars	The colour is relatively bright and red. A beautifully perfumed nose displaying red cherry, spice, savoury mushroom and a touch of leather notes. The palate is superbly rich and generously textured with bright acidity and supple tannins. The length is extraordinary. It's multi-layered, concentrated and powerful yet elegant. You could be mistaken for drinking a top Premier Cru Burgundy. The wine is showing some maturity but should provide immense drinking pleasure for another 3 to 4 years. 13.5% Diam cork.
	Pinot Noir Reserve 2003	Martinborough	93	5 Stars	The colour is just starting to turn, showing a hint of tawny shade. It's gentle yet superbly complex on the nose displaying spiced cherry, leather, game and a hint of dried herb characters. The palate is succulent and rounded with intense concentration, satin smooth texture and fine chalky tannins. The wine is fully matured but still remains balanced and finishes refreshingly dry. A beautiful and graceful wine. It's perfect drinking now but should hold for another year or two. 13% Composite cork.
	Pinot Noir 2003	Martinborough	84	3.5 Stars	Medium red in colour. The nose is evolved showing brown apple, leather and spice characters. The palate shows superb ripeness and almost a sweet impression with fine texture and gently drying dusty tannins. The wine is fully matured and will not improve any further but should be a great partner to savoury game dishes. 13% Composite cork.
Main Divide	Tehau Selection Pinot Noir 2006	Waipara	92	4.5 Stars	The nose is impressively dense and powerful displaying dark plum, game, spice and a hint of floral notes. It's concentrated on the palate with richly textured mouthfeel, well integrated acidity and ripe compact tannins. An impressive offering from the team at Pegasus Bay. At its best: now to 2011. \$32.00 14% Screw cap.

Main Divide	Pinot Noir 2007	Marlborough	89	4.5 Stars	The fragrant nose displays dark cherry, plum and savoury spice characters on the nose. It's starting to develop earthy, game notes too. The palate is ripe and rounded with excellent weight, refreshing acidity and fine-grained tannins. The wine is beautifully integrated and showing lovely complex flavours. At its best: now to 2011. \$25.00 14% Screw cap.
	Tipinui Selection Pinot Noir 2006	Marlborough	89	4.5 Stars	A fragrant nose displaying dark cherry, floral and a hint of spicy oak notes. The palate is succulent and rounded with excellent weight and gently drying tannins. A superbly well structured wine with ripe tannins and a lengthy finish. It's rich and opulent with plenty of mouth-pleasing flavours. At its best: now to 2011. \$32.00 14% Screw cap.
Maori Point	Pinot Noir 2006	Central Otago	86	4 Stars	A seductive nose displaying red plum, savoury mushroom and subtle spice characters. It's juicy and nicely flowing on the palate with silky texture and soft tannins. A supple and generously flavoured Pinot. At its best: now to 2011. \$30.00 13.5% Screw cap.
Margrain	Rivers Edge Pinot Noir 2007	Martinborough	84	3.5 Stars	Bright medium red/purple colour. The nose is lifted showing red plum, savoury tomato and subtle dried herb characters. It's nicely fruited on the palate with balanced acidity, elegant texture and gentle tannins. A friendly and tasty Pinot for everyday drinking. At its best: now to 2010. \$28.00 13.5% Screw cap.
Matakana Estate	Pinot Noir 2007	Marlborough	87	4 Stars	A complex bouquet displaying dark plum, game, spice and mushroom characters. It's juicy and rounded on the palate with well balanced acidity and supple tannins. A reasonably full and generous style with a pleasantly drying finish. At its best: now to 2011. \$29.00 14% Natural cork.
Misha's	Audition Pinot Noir 2007	Central Otago	88-91	4.5 Stars	Medium-light red colour. Grapes were grown on their vineyard at the edge of Lake Dunstan in the Bendigo sub-region. A youthful wine showing a complex bouquet of dark cherry, smoked meat, dried herb and subtle cedar notes. It's succulent and rounded on the palate with fine texture and well balanced acidity together with fine-grained tannins providing a gently firm finish. An elegantly framed and poised wine. At its best: now to 2010. \$44.95 100 cases produced. 13.5% Screw cap.
Mission Estate	Reserve Pinot Noir 2007	Central Otago	84	3.5 Stars	A beautifully lifted nose displaying dark cherry, spice and dried herb characters. The palate is juicy and rounded with soft texture and refreshing acidity leading to a pleasantly finish. Tannins are fine and nicely integrated. At its best: now to 2011. \$35.00 13.5% Natural cork.
	Reserve Pinot Noir 2006	Central Otago	82	3.5 Stars	The bouquet is ripe and fragrant displaying dark plum, spice and savoury mushroom characters. It's well fruited on the palate with smooth texture and gently firm tannins. A well balanced Pinot showing some bottle matured notes. At its best: now to 2010. \$35.00 14% Diam cork.
Momo	Pinot Noir 2007	Marlborough	87	4 Stars	A gently fragrant nose showing red/black cherry, game, spice and dried herb characters. It's juicy and well flavoured on the palate with crisp acidity and firm tannins. A well concentrated and structured wine with firmness on the palate. This wine should be brilliant with rich meat dishes. At its best: now to 2011. \$27.00 13.5% Screw cap.
Montana	Terroir Series Gabriel's Gully Pinot Noir 2007	Marlborough	90	4.5 Stars	The nose is ripe and dense displaying dark plum, game and a touch of mushroom notes. The palate is generous and richly textured with relatively firm tannins providing excellent structure to this opulent Pinot. At its best: now to 2012. \$30.95 13.5% Screw cap.
	Terroir Series Forgotten Valley Pinot Noir 2007	Marlborough	88	4 Stars	The nose is nicely lifted showing dark cherry, plum and subtle spice characters. It's generously fruited on the palate with silky texture, well integrated acidity and fine-grained tannins. A beautifully balanced Pinot Noir showing classic Pinot elegance and supple mouthfeel. At its best: now to 2011. \$30.95 13.5% Screw cap.
Mount Riley	Pinot Noir 2008	Marlborough/Nelson	86	4 Stars	Fresh and fragrant, a nicely lifted nose displaying red cherry, plum and a touch of savoury mushroom characters. The palate is silky smooth and fruity with beautifully flowing texture and supple tannins. A medium-bodied, easy drinking Pinot showing perfect balance and harmony. At its best: now to 2011. \$22.00 13.5% Screw cap.

Mount Riley	Pinot Noir 2007	Marlborough/Nelson	84	3.5 Stars	A reasonably complex nose displaying dark cherry, plum, floral and earthy mushroom characters. The palate is ripe and smooth with a fruity mouthfeel and fine tannins. A nicely balanced and savoury Pinot. At its best: now to 2011. \$22.00 13% Screw cap.
Moutere Hills	Pinot Noir 2007	Nelson	80	3 Stars	A youthful nose showing raspberry, strawberry and floral characters. It's light and fruity on the palate with bright acidity and gently firm tannins. At its best: now to 2010. \$40.00 13.2% Screw cap.
Mt. Beautiful	Pinot Noir 2007	North Canterbury	84	3.5 Stars	A lovely fragrant nose displaying red/black cherry, dried herb and a touch of spice notes. The palate is juicy and smooth with fine mid range texture, crisp acidity and gently drying tannins at the end lengthening the palate. A light-weight and friendly wine. At its best: now to 2011. 12.5% Screw cap.
Muddy Water	Slowhand Pinot Noir 2007	Waipara	95	5 Stars	Grapes were grown on their north-facing vineyard and hand-harvested grapes were fermented with indigenous yeasts. The finished wine was then matured in oak barrels for 16 months. This is certainly the best Pinot I have tasted from Muddy Water. Medium red/purple colour. A beautifully aromatic nose displaying dark cherry, spice and a hint of dried herb characters. It's multi-layered and almost dense on the nose. The palate is rich and powerful with superb mid palate weight and silky texture with well balanced acidity and gently firm tannins. An impressive Pinot showing opulence yet is beautifully poised. At its best: now to 2013. \$65.00 13.5% Screw cap.
	Hare's Breath Pinot Noir 2007	Waipara	93	5 Stars	Grapes were grown on limestone slopes at their property, the home of a large hare. Fermented with indigenous yeasts then matured in barrels for 16 months. Medium red/purple colour. A rich and complex bouquet displaying dark plum, cherry, dried herb and subtle mushroom characters. The palate is concentrated and intensely flavoured while showing elegant silky texture and well harmonised acidity and fine-grained tannins. The finish gently expands and lasts for quite some time. At its best: now to 2013. \$60.00 13.5% Screw cap.
	Pinot Noir 2007	Waipara	92	4.5 Stars	A gently fragrant and complex nose shows dark cherry, game and subtle spice characters with a touch of dried herb notes. It's well weighted on the palate displaying fine silky texture, nicely balanced acidity and fine-grained tannins. The wine is superbly poised and appealing. A lovely expression of Pinot Noir as it expresses the variety's elegance and fine mouthfeel together with a subtle influence of savoury characters. At its best: now to 2012. \$42.00 13.5% Screw cap.
Murdoch James	Fraser Pinot Noir 2006	Martinborough	88	4 Stars	A complex and gently aromatic bouquet displaying red plum, spice, game and a savoury mushroom characters. The palate is smooth and rounded showing lovely silky mouthfeel and nicely balanced acidity. It finishes elegantly with fine tannins. This wine should partner beautifully to rich savoury dishes. At its best: now to 2010. \$45.00 14% Natural cork.
	Pinot Noir 2007	Martinborough	87	4 Stars	A complex and savoury nose displaying red/black plum, spice, game and dried herb characters. The palate is ripe and succulent with bold tannins making the finish firm and drying. A sturdy Pinot showing good bottle development, and will be brilliant with rich, savoury dishes. At its best: now to 2011. \$29.00 13% Screw cap.
	Blue Rock Pinot Noir 2007	Martinborough	84	3.5 Stars	A gently fragrant nose displaying red cherry, floral and strong cedary oak characters. The palate is ripe and smooth with a fruity mouthfeel and fine tannins providing a pleasant dry finish. At its best: now to 2012. \$60.00 13.5% Screw cap.
Nautilus	Pinot Noir 2007	Marlborough	94	5 Stars	Grapes were sourced from 6 vineyards (5 clones) and processed at their purpose built winery for Pinot Noir. It's impressive on the nose showing complex aromas of dark cherry, spice, mushroom and subtle nutty oak characters. The palate is superbly concentrated with satin smooth texture, well integrated acidity and fine yet firm tannins. The structure of this delicious Pinot is outstanding. A sumptuous example of New World wine with Old World class. At its best: now to 2013. \$40.00 14% Screw cap.
	Four Barriques Pinot Noir 2007	Marlborough	94	5 Stars	A beautifully scented nose displaying dark cherry, spice, earthy mushroom and a hint of cedary oak characters. It's powerful and intensely flavoured on the palate showing satin smooth texture, well pitched acidity and supple tannins. The wine is sumptuous and delicious yet superbly structured with a lovely dry finish. At its best: now to 2012. 14% Natural cork.

Nobilo	Icon Pinot Noir 2007	Marlborough	83	3.5 Stars	A fragrant nose showing spice, red plum and subtle cedar characters. The palate is gently fruited and textured with well balanced acidity and fine tannins. An easy flowing and slightly savoury Pinot. At its best: now to 2011. \$24.00 13% Composite cork.
Odyssey	Pinot Noir 2007	Marlborough	87	4 Stars	A ripe opulent nose displaying dark cherry, plum and a hint of dried fruit characters. It's juicy and well weighted on the palate with bright acidity and gentle tannins. A refreshing Pinot showing excellent structure. At its best: now to 2012. \$30.00 13% Diam cork.
Omaka Springs	Falveys Pinot Noir 2007	Marlborough	86	4 Stars	Savoury and earthy on the nose showing dark plum, spice and subtle compost characters. It's weighty and full on the palate with well balanced acidity and gently firm tannins. A sturdy style ideally suited to partner rich flavoursome dishes. At its best: now to 2011. \$21.00 13.5% Screw cap.
Opawa	Pinot Noir 2007	Marlborough	86	4 Stars	Made by the team at Nautilus Estate, this is a very appealing and friendly Pinot Noir yet with classic flavours and structure. It's ample and generous on the nose showing ripe red/black cherry, dried herb and subtle mushroom characters. The palate is juicy and smooth with fine texture, well balanced acidity and supple tannins. It's very Pinot and effortless on the palate. Made from hand-picked grapes, 7 day cold soak followed by indigenous ferment. At its best: now to 2011. 14% Screw cap.
Paddy Borthwick	Pinot Nor 2007	Wairapa	93	5 Stars	Grapes were grown on their estate vineyard on Darkins Road. Hand-harvested and fermented with indigenous and cultured yeasts. The finished wine was then matured in French oak barrels (40% new) for 10 months. A sweetly scented bouquet displays ripe cherry, floral, mushroom and a hint of game characters. It's succulent on the palate showing silky texture, refreshing acidity and supple tannins. A beautifully rounded and smooth Pinot with excellent balance. At its best: now to 2012. \$42.00 14.5% Diam cork.
Palliser Estate	Pinot Noir 2007	Martinborough	94	5 Stars	Intensely rich and complex nose displaying dark plum, spice, floral and a touch of cedar notes. With time in the glass the wine developed subtle black truffle aromas. The palate is succulent and richly textured with excellent weight and satin smooth mouthfeel. A powerful Pinot yet with refinement and elegant structure. Very impressive. At its best: now to 2013. \$48.00 14% Screw cap.
Pencarrow	Pinot Noir 2007	Martinborough	90	4.5 Stars	A rich nose displaying dark plum, game and spice characters. It's full and richly textured on the palate with lovely rounded mouthfeel and refreshing acidity providing structure and freshness. Tannins are well integrated and finely drying. A most impressive Pinot at this price. At its best: now to 2011. \$22.00 14% Screw cap.
Peregrine	Pinot Noir 2007	Central Otago	91	4.5 Stars	The nose is complex displaying dark cherry, spice and subtle earthy mushroom characters. It's brightly fruited on the palate with succulent mouthfeel, refreshing acidity and fine-grained tannins. A well structured and intensely flavoured Pinot well suited to partner rich, flavoursome dishes. At its best: now to 2012. \$40.00 13.5% Screw cap.
Pyramid Valley	Growers Collection Calvert Vineyard Pinot Noir 2007	Central Otago	94	5 Stars	Grapes were sourced from Michele McNabb and Owen Calvert's vineyard in Bannockburn (Felton Road and Craggy Range also make wines from this vineyard). A stunningly complex wine exhibiting dark cherry, savoury game and a touch of earthy compost characters on the nose. The bouquet is beautifully fragrant and inviting. It's ripe and full on the palate with textured mid palate and fine tannins lengthening the finish. An outstanding Pinot. At its best: now to 2013. \$55.00 13.5% Screw cap.
	Growers Collection Pinot Noir Eaton Family Vineyard 2007	Marlborough	92	4.5 Stars	Grapes were sourced from the steep hillside Eaton family vineyard in the Omaka Valley. A complex nose with some maturity showing red plum, spice and game characters. It's superbly silky and expansive on the palate with skilfully harmonised supple tannins. Not heavy and intense but elegant and smooth. A wine refinement and purity. At its best: now to 2012. \$55.00 14.2% Screw cap.
Quartz Reef	Pinot Noir 2007	Central Otago	93	5 Stars	The nose is dense and ripe displaying dark cherry, plum, spice and a touch of thyme characters. It's succulent and rounded on the palate with silky texture, well integrated acidity and gently firm tannins. The wine is impressively seamless and superbly structured without any hard edges. A youthful looking at this stage even though the wine is very appealing already but should evolve gracefully with further time in the bottle. At its best: now to 2015. \$40.50 14.5% Screw cap.

Ra Nui	Pinot Noir 2007	Marlborough	82	3.5 Stars	It's nicely lifted on the nose displaying plum jam, nutmeg and earthy mushroom characters. The palate is ripe and juicy with smooth texture and soft tannins. An easy flowing Pinot with some complexity. At its best: now to 2011. \$30.00
Rapaura Springs	Pinot Noir 2007	Marlborough	90	4.5 Stars	A beautifully lifted and appealing bouquet displaying dark cherry, spice and floral characters. It's succulent and nicely weighted with silky texture and fine yet gently firm tannins. Lovely balance and structure. At its best: now to 2012. 13.9% Screw cap.
Richmond Plains	Pinot Noir 2007	Nelson	84	3.5 Stars	An intriguing nose showing dried herb, spice and dark cherry notes. The palate has good fruit weight, rounded mid palate and balanced acidity with a gently firming finish. A savoury style Pinot with good structure. At its best: now to 2011. \$22.95 Widely available. Diam cork.
	Pinot Noir 2008	Nelson	78	3 Stars	Soft and fruity on the nose showing red cherry, raspberry and subtle spice characters. It's light and easy on the palate with fine texture and fresh acidity. A vibrant and pleasant Pinot for early drinking. At its best: now to 2011. \$23.00 13.5% Diam cork.
Rippon	Pinot Noir 2007	Central Otago	96	5 Stars	The bouquet is stunning! It's ripe and complex displaying dark cherry, spice, dried herb and subtle cedary oak characters. The palate is superbly concentrated and beautifully layered showing satin texture, bright acidity and fine, compact tannins. It's succulent yet firm, powerful yet graceful. A young wine destined for greatness. Rippon's 2006 was outstanding, this is even better. An exceptional wine that has soul. At its best: now to 2017. \$58.00 13% Diam cork.
	Jeunesse Young Vines Pinot Noir 2007	Central Otago	93	5 Stars	A youthful and gently perfumed nose displaying dark cherry, game, spice and subtle floral characters. It's ripe and well weighted on the palate with smooth texture, good acidity and gently drying fine tannins. The wine is beautifully balanced and structured. An impressive wine made from 'young vines'. At its best: now to 2014. \$40.00 13% Diam cork.
Riverby Estate	Pinot Noir 2008	Marlborough	92	4.5 Stars	Once again a small yields of around 6 tonnes per hectare from their home vineyard on Jacksons Road. De-stemmed grapes were fermented in open-top fermenters following a three-day cold soak. The finished wine was matured in French oak (20% new) for 11 months. A magnificently perfumed and complex nose displaying red/dark cherry, savoury mushroom and a hint of cedary oak characters. The palate is concentrated and finely textured with perfectly pitched acidity and gently drying tannins. The wine is beautifully poised and elegant destined to develop even greater complexity with further time in the bottle. At its best: now to 2013. \$29.00 14% Screw cap.
Rose Tree Cottage	Pinot Noir 2007	Marlborough	83	3.5 Stars	The nose is ripe and gentle showing dark plum, cherry and savoury mushroom characters. The palate is soft and rounded with smooth texture and supple tannins. A reasonably generous and flavoursome wine well suited to partner rich savoury dishes. At its best: now to 2010. \$24.00 13% Screw cap.
Sandihurst	Pinot Noir 2007	Central Otago	86	4 Stars	Ripe and savoury, the nose is nicely fragrant showing red/black cherry, cured meat and spice characters. The palate is succulent and smooth with balanced acidity and fine-grained tannins. A well balanced, medium-bodied Pinot with attractive flavours. At its best: now to 2011. \$30.00 13.5% Diam cork.
	Pinot Noir 2007	Waipara	85	4 Stars	It's lifted on the nose showing bitter cherry, spice and game characters. The palate is juicy and well fruited with smooth mouthfeel and refreshing acidity. The wine finishes firm with gently drying tannins. At its best: now to 2011. \$30.00 14% Diam cork.
Selaks	Founders Reserve Pinot Noir 2006	Central Otago	87	4 Stars	The bouquet is ripe and gently fragrant displaying dark cherry, spice and savoury mushroom characters. It's juicy and well fruited on the palate with bright acidity and soft tannins. The mid palate is smooth and well harmonised. An appealing Pinot with a refreshing mouthfeel and a lingering finish. At its best: now to 2011. \$33.00 13.5% Screw cap.
Soho	Pinot Noir 2007	Marlborough	84	3.5 Stars	A fragrant bouquet displaying red cherry, plum and cedar characters. It's sweet and juicy on the palate with refreshing acidity and fine-grained tannins. An attractive Pinot with freshness and a pleasing finish. At its best: now to 2010. \$31.99 Moderate availability. 14.5% Screw cap.

Spinyback	Pinot Noir 2007 Medium-light red colour. The aromatic nose shows stewed plum, spice and subtle dried herbal characters. It's light and juicy on the palate with balanced acidity and soft tannins. An easy-going Pinot with pleasant mouthfeel. At its best: now to end of 2009. 14% Screw cap.	Nelson	78	3 Stars
Spring Creek	Pinot Noir 2007 The nose is ripe and fragrant showing red cherry and strawberry characters with a hint of spice notes. It's juicy and smooth on the palate with balanced acidity and soft tannins. A light and easy Pinot. At its best: now to 2010. \$20.00 13.5% Screw cap.	Marlborough	80	3 Stars
Spy Valley	Pinot Noir 2007 A richly scented nose displaying dark plum, spice and savoury mushroom characters. The palate is generous and rounded with silky texture and supple tannins. It's refreshing and immediately appealing. Very delicious. At its best: now to 2011. \$29.00 13.5% Screw cap.	Marlborough	90	4.5 Stars
Stoneleigh	Rapaura Series Pinot Noir 2008 A nicely lifted nose showing red cherry, plum and a hint of spice and nutty characters. It's well fruited on the palate modest acidity and soft, supple tannins. An appealing and easy to enjoy. At its best: now to 2011. \$32.00 14% Screw cap.	Marlborough	87	4 Stars
	Rapaura Series Pinot Noir 2007 An appealing savoury style showing red/black cherry, spice and mushroom characters on the nose. The palate is silky smooth and refreshing with lovely fine texture and well balanced acidity. The tannins are ripe and gentle leading to a lengthy finish. A beautifully poised Pinot with juicy mouthfeel. At its best: now to 2011. \$32.00 13.5% Screw cap.	Marlborough	87	4 Stars
	Pinot Noir 2008 Ripe and generous, the nose is nicely lifted showing dark cherry, plum and subtle spice characters. It's juicy and light on the palate with fruity mouthfeel and soft tannins. A well balanced and easy-going Pinot. At its best: now to 2010. \$22.95 Widely available. 13.5% Screw cap.	Marlborough	81	3.5 Stars
Sugar Loaf	Pinot Noir 2008 Ripe and gentle, the bouquet shows dark cherry, plum and subtle spice characters. It's well-fruited on the palate with good mid palate weight, silky texture and fine-grained tannins. The wine is supple and elegant with excellent balance. At its best: now to 2011. \$25.00 13% Screw cap.	Marlborough	83	3.5 Stars
Summerhouse	Pinot Noir 2007 A youthful Pinot displaying red plum, cherry and spice characters with a touch of tarry reductive notes. The palate is juicy and smooth with well balanced acidity and fine-grained tannins. A very approachable wine with rounded mouthfeel. At its best: now to 2011. \$30.00 Moderate availability. 13.5% Screw cap.	Marlborough	84	3.5 Stars
Tarras Vineyards	Pinot Noir The Canyon 2007 It's rich and aromatic on the nose displaying dark plum, cherry and subtle savoury mushroom characters. The palate is well concentrated and textured with beautifully harmonised acidity and supple tannins. The wine is elegant and fine yet is opulent and superbly structured. At its best: now to 2013. \$38.00 14% Screw cap.	Central Otago	92	4.5 Stars
	Pinot Noir 2006 A lovely complex bouquet displaying dark plum, spice and a touch of cedary oak characters. The palate is succulent and rounded with excellent acid balance and gently firm tannins leading to a lingering finish. \$38.00 14.5% Screw cap.	Central Otago	90	4.5 Stars
	Pinot Noir The Steppes 2007 The nose is nicely lifted showing red plum, cherry and a touch of spicy oak characters. It's beautifully fruited on the palate with smooth texture, well balanced acidity and fine tannins. The wine is beautifully fragrant and flows nicely through the palate with a pleasantly long finish. At its best: now to 2012. \$38.00 13% Screw cap.	Central Otago	87	4 Stars
Te Mania	Reserve Pinot Noir 2007 A beautifully perfumed nose exhibiting dark plum, game, spice and subtle truffle characters. The palate is concentrated and superbly textured with silky smooth mouthfeel, well integrated acidity and supple tannins lengthening the finish. The wine is rich and intense yet beautifully poised and stylish. At its best: now to 2012. \$35.00 14.5% Diam cork.	Nelson	93	5 Stars
	Pinot Noir 2007 Rich and complex, the nose displays dark cherry, spice and savoury mushroom characters. The palate is gently fruity and finely textured with bright acidity and gently drying tannins. A sturdy and well structured Pinot showing layers of flavours. At its best: now to 2011. \$20.00 13.5% Diam cork.	Nelson	86	4 Stars

Te Mania	Pinot Nor 2008	Nelson	82	3.5 Stars	A savoury nose displaying red cherry, spice and a touch of leather characters. The palate is juicy and rounded with balanced acidity and fine, supple tannins. A well flavoured and balanced Pinot for early drinking. At its best: now to 2011. \$20.00 14% Diam cork.
Te Whare Ra	Pinot Noir 2007	Marlborough	89	4.5 Stars	Six different clones (including modern Burgundy clones) grown on their home block were fermented separately: 8-10 day pre-fermentation cold soak was followed by 7-9 day ferment and 5-7 day post ferment maceration. The finished wine was matured in French oak barriques (30% new) for 12 months. A sensual Pinot displaying lovely lifted aromas of dark cherry, floral and subtle nutty oak. It's smooth and generously textured on the palate with well balanced acidity and fine, supple tannins. At its best: now to 2011. \$36.00 14.5% Screw cap. 308 cases made. 308 cases made.
Terrace Edge	Pinot Noir 2006	Waipara	84	3.5 Stars	Medium-light red colour. The nose is nicely lifted showing sweet red berry, spice and floral characters. The palate is juicy and smooth with silky texture and easy flowing mouthfeel. It's nicely balanced with well integrated acidity and supple tannins. At its best: now to 2010. \$27.50 14% Screw cap.
TerraVin	Hillside Reserve Pinot Noir 2006	Marlborough	95	5 Stars	Grapes were grown on their immaculately tended Hillside vineyard in the Omaka Valley with a miniscule 1 kg of grapes per vine. An almost haunting bouquet exhibiting dark cherry, spice, game, dried herb and savoury mushroom characters. The palate is extremely concentrated and powerful, yet not heavy, with satin smooth texture and plenty of gently drying fine tannins. The mid palate weight is superb and the acidity beautifully harmonised providing a wonderful frame to this beauty. An exceptionally refined and most satisfying Pinot. At its best: now to 2015. \$54.00 14% Screw cap. 400 cases made.
The Crater Rim	Blacks Lot 7' Pinot Noir 2007	Waipara	94	5 Stars	A powerfully framed Pinot from a single vineyard on the Omihia hills shows lifted aromas of dark cherry, truffle, spice and floral characters. The palate is dense and richly textured showing excellent fruit intensity and loads of polished tannins. It's sumptuous, well structured and very, very long on the finish. At its best: now to 2013. \$42.00 14% Diam cork.
	Waipara Pinot Noir 2007	Waipara	89	4.5 Stars	The nose is complex and lifted showing dark cherry, floral and savoury mushroom characters. It's concentrated and silky on the palate with finely textured mouthfeel and refreshing acidity. A richly textured and showing plenty of appealing ripe fruit notes. At its best: now to 2012. \$35.00 14% Screw cap.
The Ned	Pinot Noir 2007	Marlborough	80	3 Stars	A savoury nose showing red cherry, spice and nutty characters. The palate is fruity and juicy with bright acidity and fine tannins leading to a bracing finish. At its best: now to 2010. \$25.00 14% Screw cap.
Tranquil Valley	Pinot Noir 2008	Marlborough	78	3 Stars	Light red colour. The fresh and subtle nose shows raspberry and strawberry characters. The palate is easy and light with sweet fruit notes and balanced acidity. At its best: now to end of 2010. \$27.00
Trinity Hill	High Country Pinot Noir 2007	Hawke's Bay	89	4.5 Stars	The nose is bright and lifted showing red/black plum, spice and a hint of vanilla characters. The palate is well fruited and juicy with bright acidity and fine tannins. As the wine sat in the glass it developed a lovely game and earthy notes too. An impressive Hawke's Bay Pinot with excellent varietal expression and poise. At its best: now to 2012. \$39.00 14% Diam cork.
	Pinot Noir 2007	Hawke's Bay	86	4 Stars	Rich and complex on the nose displaying dark cherry, plum and spice characters. It's well flavoured on the palate with smooth texture, good acidity and gently firm tannins. The wine is starting to show bottle developed characters of savoury notes but is well structured and balanced. At its best: now to 2010. \$19.00 13.5% Screw cap.
Triplebank	Pinot Noir 2008	Marlborough	88	4 Stars	The nose is fresh and gently fragrant showing red cherry, plum and subtle spice notes. It's well fruited on the palate with a juicy mouthfeel and nicely harmonised acidity. The finish is elegant and dry with fine-grained tannins. A beautifully balanced medium-bodied Pinot with subtle complexity. At its best: now to 2011. \$27.00 13.5% Screw cap.
Valli	Pinot Noir Bannockburn Vineyard 2007	Central Otago	93	5 Stars	The bouquet is opulent and superbly ripe showing black/blueberry, floral and subtle thyme notes. It's rich and full on the palate with lavish mouthfeel and beautifully balanced acidity and rounded tannins. A sumptuous Pinot with excellent structure and multi-dimension. \$55.00 At its best: now to 2013. 14% Screw cap.

Valli	Pinot Noir Gibbston Vineyard 2007	Central Otago	89	4.5 Stars	A beautifully scented nose shows dark cherry, dried herb and subtle spice characters. The palate is focused displaying fine silky texture, crisp acidity and supple tannins. A well structured wine with excellent refreshing mouthfeel. At its best: now to 2012. \$55.00 13.0% Screw cap.
Vavasour	Awatere Valley Pinot Noir 2007	Marlborough	88	4 Stars	A nicely fragrant nose displaying dark cherry, spice and dried herb characters. The palate is ripe and well weighted with a juicy mouthfeel and fine, chalky tannins. A beautifully balanced Pinot with a pleasantly drying finish. At its best: now to 2012. \$30.00 14% Screw cap.
Voss Estate	Pinot Noir 2007	Martinborough	94	5 Stars	Grapes were hand-harvested from (one tonne per hectare) from vines up to 20 years old. Fermented in small batches and racked to French oak barriques (20% new) for twelve months then bottled without filtration or fining. Yet another stunning wine from one of New Zealand's finest Pinot Noir producers. A delightful and complex nose exhibiting dark cherry, plum, thyme and floral characters. The palate is concentrated and succulent showing satin smooth texture, superb mid palate weight and gently firm tannins. It's beautifully balanced and structured with a promise to age magnificently. At its best: now to 2013. \$39.95 Limited availability. 13.5% Diam cork.
Waimea	SV Pinot Noir 2007	Nelson	87	4 Stars	Medium red colour. The nose is nicely lifted showing dark plum, espresso, spice and floral characters. It's ripe and fruity on the palate with nicely textured mid range and a lush mouthfeel. Tannins are fine and supple. A bold and powerful Pinot yet with grace and balance. At its best: now to 2010. \$23.90 14.5% Screw cap.
	Barrel Selection Pinot Noir 2007	Nelson	87	4 Stars	A brightly lifted nose showing dark cherry, subtle spice and a hint of thyme notes. The palate is juicy and super smooth with succulent acidity and soft tannins. An immediately appealing Pinot Noir with plenty of mouth-pleasing flavours. At its best: now to 2011. \$24.00 14.8% Screw cap.
Wairau River	Home Block Pinot Noir 2007	Marlborough	90	4.5 Stars	A Burgundy-like Pinot Noir displaying red cherry, truffle and floral characters with subtle nutty oak notes on the nose. It's ripe and well weighted on the palate with gentle texture, well integrated acidity and fine-grained tannins. A delightful and complex Pinot with a gradually expanding finish. At its best: now to 2010. \$30.00 13% Screw cap.
Walnut Block	Pinot Noir 2007	Marlborough	91	4.5 Stars	The vibrant nose displays ripe red/black cherry, plum, floral and a hint of mushroom characters. It's well fruited on the palate with a juicy mouthfeel, crisp acidity and a silky long finish. Tannins are soft and fine providing good structure and a pleasantly drying finish. At its best: now to 2011. \$29.00 14% Screw cap.
Weka River	Pinot Noir 2007	Waipara	88-91	4.5 Stars	The nose is fragrant showing red cherry, plum and dried herb characters. It's concentrated and tight on the palate with excellent mid palate weight and texture. The finish is gently drying with compact tannins. A wine yet to evolve to show its full potential. At its best: 2010 to 2013. \$34.00
	Pinot Noir 2006	Waipara	91	4.5 Stars	A youthful looking Pinot displaying dark cherry, plum and game characters with subtle savoury mushroom notes on the acid and tannin balance providing a superb structure to this classically framed Pinot Noir. At its best: now to 2012. \$34.00
Wild Rock	Cupids Arrow Pinot Noir 2007	Central Otago	90	4.5 Stars	It's nicely fragrant on the nose displaying dark plum, floral and spice characters. The palate is ripe and rounded with silky texture and gently firm tannins. A very appealing style with plump mouthfeel and well harmonised flavours. At its best: now to 2011. \$25.00 13.5% Screw cap.
Wild South	Reserve Pinot Noir 2007	Marlborough	89	4.5 Stars	The wine shows lifted aromas of red cherry, blueberry, floral and subtle mushroom characters. The palate is juicy and rounded with firm acidity and soft tannins. It's very smooth and finely textured with plenty of appealing, youthful flavours. At its best: now to 2010. \$22.00 13.5% Screw cap.
William Thomas	Pinot Noir 2006	Marlborough	88	4 Stars	The nose is gentle showing red cherry, spice and subtle dried herb characters with a hint of earthy mushroom. It's ripe on the palate with bright acidity and soft texture. The finish is crisp dry with fine tannins. A nicely developed and harmonised Pinot with lovely savoury influence. \$32.00 At its best: now to 2011. 14% Diam cork.

Wither Hills	Pinot Noir 2007	Marlborough	93	5 Stars
It's rich and complex on the nose showing dark plum, game and savoury mushroom characters with a touch of creamy oak notes. The palate is concentrated and beautifully weighted with silky texture and gently firm tannins prolonging the finish. A sturdy and firmly structured Pinot with wonderful harmony and complexity. At its best: now to 2012. \$38.00 14.5% Screw cap.				
Woollaston	Pinot Noir 2006	Nelson	89	4.5 Stars
A lifted bouquet displaying red cherry, plum and savoury mushroom characters. The palate shows good concentration, silky texture and beautifully integrated acidity. It finishes long with fine-grained tannins. A earthy, savoury style Pinot with excellent structure and balance. At its best: now to 2011. \$35.00 13.5% Screw cap.				

Around the Orbit

Review of wines from tastings outside this month's themes.

Wines are tasted blind by Sam Kim at his home office unless otherwise stated.

- **New Releases New Zealand & Australia** (41 wines, p32-36)
- **New Releases Other Countries** (20 wines, p36-38)
- **Craggy Range 2007 Vintage Prestige Release** (5 wines, p39-40)
- **Ken Moon & Graeme Cavanagh's Super Tuscan Tasting** (12 wines, p40-41)
- **Negociants New Zealand Icons from the Cellar** (25 wines, p42-44)
- **Penfolds Single Bottle Dinner** (p45-47)

Around the Orbit – New Releases New Zealand & Australia (41 wines)

Barossa Valley Estate	E Minor Chardonnay 2008	Barossa	82	3.5 Stars
A gently fragrant nose displaying pineapple, peach and ripe apple characters. It's nicely weighted on the palate with soft texture and slightly creamy mouthfeel. The finish is refreshing and pleasant. A lighter style Chardonnay showing good balance and fruit intensity. At its best: now to 2011. \$22.00 13.5% Screw cap.				
Boundary Vineyards	Lake Road Syrah 2007	Gisborne	84	3.5 Stars
Medium-deep red colour. The nose is fragrant showing dark plum, cherry and subtle spicy oak characters. It's bright and juicy on the palate with refreshing acidity and gently drying tannins. A well fruited and vibrant style for easy drinking. \$22.95 At its best: now to 2011. 13.5% Screw cap.				
C J Pask	Gimblett Road Syrah 2006	Hawke's Bay	86	4 Stars
Medium-deep red colour with a hint of purple around the rim. The nose is sweet scented showing ripe black/red plum, black pepper and lovely floral characters. It's juicy and well weighted on the palate with refreshing acidity and gently firm tannins providing excellent structure to this medium-full bodied red. A youthful wine but beautifully harmonised and supple on the palate. At its best: now to 2012. \$20.00 13% Screw cap.				
Contour Estate	Reserve Syrah 2007	Matakana	86	4 Stars
From Takatu Peninsula in the north of North Island, this elegant Syrah displays medium red colour, fragrant aromas of red plum, spice and cured meat characters on the nose. The palate is fruity and smooth with vibrant acidity and soft, fine tannins leading to a gently lingering finish. At its best: now to 2010 \$38.00 Moderate availability. 13% Diam cork.				

Coopers Creek	Syrah 2007	Hawke's Bay	87	4 Stars	Bright medium red/purple colour. The youthful nose shows ripe blueberry and red cherry characters with subtle spice notes. It's fruity and rounded on the palate with smooth texture and fine-grained tannins. A lovely medium-bodied Syrah exhibiting excellent balance and harmony of flavours. At its best: now to 2011. \$20.00 13% Screw cap.
	Chardonnay Viognier 2007	Gisborne	88	4 Stars	A subtle bouquet displaying peach, lime zest and floral characters. The palate is well fruited and rounded showing creamy texture, vibrant acidity and a lengthy finish. The oily textural component of Viognier is coming through nicely. At its best: now to 2011. \$18.00 14% Screw cap.
Corbans	Private Bin Syrah 2005	Hawke's Bay	91	4.5 Stars	Bright medium-deep red/purple colour. An opulent nose displaying dark plum, blackberry and floral characters with well integrated vanillin oak notes. The palate is concentrated and well structured with refreshing acidity and fine-grained tannins. The wine is still youthful looking and the mid palate should fill out with further age. At its best: 2010 to 2013. \$24.00 13% Screw cap.
Cypress	Syrah 2007	Hawke's Bay	89	4.5 Stars	Medium-deep red/purple colour. A lovely lifted nose showing red/black plum, cherry and subtle black pepper characters. The palate shows good concentration, smooth texture and nicely balanced acidity. It's long and lingering with fine-grained tannins. A vibrant, medium-full-bodied Syrah with lovely plump mouthfeel. At its best: now to 2012. \$24.50 13.5% Screw cap.
Domaine Chandon	Chardonnay 2007	Yarra Valley	89	4.5 Stars	A stylish Chardonnay displaying peach, cream and nutty oak characters on the nose. It's rounded and beautifully textured on the palate with bright acidity and a lingering finish. The flavours are so well harmonised and balanced. An elegant with a crisp dry finish. At its best: now to 2012. \$28.00 13% Screw cap.
	Barrel Selection Chardonnay 2006	Yarra Valley	91	4.5 Stars	A lifted and complex bouquet showing peach, cedary oak, cream and mealy characters. It's concentrated on the palate exhibiting fine texture, grapefruit acidity and a lengthy finish. A wonderful expression of a temperate-climate Chardonnay with a firm structure. At its best: now to 2013. \$48.50 13% Screw cap.
	Barrel Selection Pinot Noir 2006	Yarra Valley	90	4.5 Stars	The nose is elegant and gently fragrant displaying red/dark cherry, spice and a hint of floral characters. The palate is well structured with bright acidity and relatively firm tannins. The silky fine texture fills the mid palate well and leads to a pleasantly drying finish. At its best: now to 2011. \$47.00 13% Screw cap.
Dry River	Estate Gewurztraminer 2008	Martinborough	94	5 Stars	An opulent and exotic Gewurztraminer displaying spice, ginger, lychee and floral characters. The medium palate is concentrated and richly textured with beautifully integrated acidity. This is a lush, exquisite and most satisfying wine that will be even better with bottle age. At its best: now to 2016. \$50.00 14% Natural cork.
	Pinot Gris 2008	Martinborough	92	4.5 Stars	The nose is delicately fragrant displaying apricot, floral and subtle chalky mineral notes. The palate is concentrated and beautifully textured with excellent mid palate weight and subtle sweetness. A tightly framed Pinot Gris at this stage but showing excellent precision and structure, destined to develop gracefully in the bottle. At its best: 2010 to 2014. \$55.00 13.5% Natural cork.
	Late Harvest Riesling 2008	Martinborough	94	5 Stars	A multi-layered wine exhibiting honey, beeswax, apple and floral characters on the nose. The palate is sweet and luscious with finely textured mouthfeel and bracing acidity (pH 2.75) balancing the sweetness superbly. An exceptionally well poised and structured sweet wine. At its best: 2011 to 2016. \$55.00 375 ml 10% Natural cork.
Glazebrook	Merlot Cabernet 2007	Hawke's Bay	91	4.5 Stars	Bright medium-deep red/purple in colour. The nose is beautifully fragrant and complex displaying blackberry, cedary oak, spice and a hint of dried herb notes. It's well concentrated on the palate with textured mid range, refreshing acidity and fine chalky tannins prolonging the attractive flavours. The wine is medium-full-bodied, beautifully structured and has potential to develop gracefully in the medium term. At its best: now to 2014. \$28.00 14% Screw cap.

Glazebrook	Merlot 2008 Bright medium-deep purple/red in colour. The nose is youthful and lifted showing blueberry, dark plum and floral characters with a hint of spicy oak characters. It's well fruited on the palate with beautifully rounded mouthfeel and well balanced acidity. The finish is long with gently drying fine tannins. This is a wonderful expression of the variety showing the classic plump mid palate and nicely perfumed bouquet. At its best: now to 2013. \$28.00 13.5% Screw cap.	Hawke's Bay	89	4.5 Stars
Green Point	Chardonnay 2006 A subtle bouquet displaying citrus, stonefruit and a hint of dried herb characters. The palate is beautifully poised and structured with excellent concentration, bright acidity and silky mid palate texture. A youthful looking wine yet with a stylish rounded mouthfeel. At its best: now to 2012. \$27.00 13% Screw cap.	Yarra Valley	88	4 Stars
Hardy's	Oomoo Grenache Shiraz Mourvedre 2006 Medium red colour. The bouquet is rich and complex showing game, dark cherry and plum characters with a whiff of spice notes. It's juicy and supple on the palate with generous mouthfeel, silky texture and rounded tannins. Grenache really shines here providing expansive palate and gentle acidity. Very easy and effortless. At its best: now to 2011. \$18.00	McLaren Vale	89	4.5 Stars
Instinct	Syrah 2007 Medium-deep red/purple colour. The nose is complex and ripe displaying dark plum, game and subtle spice characters. It's succulent and generous on the palate with textured mouthfeel and fine-grained tannins providing a pleasant dry finish. A well balanced and attractive Syrah representing brilliant value for money. At its best: now to 2012. 14% Screw cap. \$19.99	Hawke's Bay	88	4 Stars
Jackson Estate	Vintage Widow Pinot Noir 2007 Fruit was predominantly sourced from the clay bound soils of the Waihopai Valley with a small parcel from their Homestead Vineyard on the central Wairau River plain. Grapes were hand-picked and destemmed before going through around 4-day ambient soak then indigenous ferment reaching temperatures up to 32 – 34 °C. The finished wine was left on skin for further 10 days before being transferred to new and older French oak barrels for maturation. The nose is gently fragrant showing red cherry, plum and floral characters with a touch of spice notes. It's juicy and silky on the palate with vibrant acidity and supple tannins. The wines is beautifully balanced and poised to age gracefully. At its best: now to 2012. \$39.95 13.5% Screw cap.	Marlborough	89	4.5 Stars
Jacobs Creek	Reserve Cabernet Sauvignon 2006 Bright medium-deep red/purple in colour. The nose is nicely lifted showing blackberry, mint and subtle spice characters. It's well fruited on the palate with rich texture and gently firm tannins. Very appealing already but will be better in a year or two. This has been extremely reliable label delivery excellent quality and value. At its best: now to 2012. \$20.00 14% Screw cap.	South Australia	89	4.5 Stars
	Chardonnay 2008 Soft and easy, this reliable Chardonnay seems to deliver each vintage. The nose is gently aromatic showing peach and floral characters. It's gently fruity and rounded with modest acidity and a clean pleasant finish. A light and pleasant Chardonnay for easy sipping. At its best: now to 2011. \$14.00 13% Screw cap.	Australia	80	3 Stars
Matakana Estate	Merlot Cabernet Franc 2007 Bright medium-deep red/purple in colour. The nose is rich and complex displaying dark plum, spice, dried herb and a touch of cedary oak characters. It's well fruited on the palate with good weight, balanced acidity and gently firm tannins. A well proportioned and rounded wine with a pleasant dry finish. At its best: now to 2012. \$29.00 13.5% Natural cork.	Hawke's Bay	89	4.5 Stars
	Elingamite Merlot Cabernet Franc 2007 Deep red/purple in colour. The nose is impressively ripe and intense displaying blackberry, dark plum and cedary oak characters. The palate is concentrated and beautifully integrated with dense texture, balanced acidity and plenty of ripe tannins. A superbly structured wine destined for graceful development but it is so well balanced making the wine great drinking already. Very impressive. Made from 60% Merlot and 40% Cabernet Franc. At its best: now to 2015. \$59.00 67 cases made. 13.5% Natural cork.	Matakana	93	5 Stars
Matariki	Quintology 2005 Grapes were sourced from the Gimblett Gravels district with the blend made up of 41% Merlot, 30% Cabernet Sauvignon, 12% Malbec, 10% Cabernet Franc and 7% Syrah. Medium-deep red in colour. The nose is complex showing red plum, savoury spice, dried herb and well integrated nutty oak characters. It's starting to show a hint of leather notes adding to the overall complexity. The palate is well concentrated and textured displaying nicely pitched acidity and gently drying chalky tannins. A superbly harmonised red with plenty of savoury notes. At its best: now to 2013. \$50.00 13.6% Natural cork.	Hawke's Bay	91	4.5 Stars

Mills Reef	Elspeth One 2005	Hawke's Bay	95	5 Stars
	Medium-deep red colour with a hint of purple around the rim. The bouquet is opulent and richly complex exhibiting blackberry, dried fruit, dark chocolate and spicy oak characters. It's sumptuous and luxurious on the palate showing saturated fruity mouthfeel, well integrated acidity and ripe, firm tannins leading to a big finish. An extraordinary and majestic wine. Made from 30.8% Syrah and equal portions (17.3% each) of Cabernet Sauvignon, Cabernet Franc, Malbec and Merlot. At its best: now to 2015. \$69.00 14% Natural cork.			
	Elspeth Syrah 2006	Hawke's Bay	94	5 Stars
	Medium-deep red/purple colour. The nose is not as lifted as some but is very ripe and dense showing pure blackberry, dark plum and subtle spice characters. The palate is intense and concentrated with a superbly weighted mid palate, silky texture and bold, compact tannins providing outstanding structure and a lovely dry finish. A multi-layered and brilliantly crafted wine. At its best: now to 2015. \$40.00 14% Natural cork.			
Mission Estate	Jewelstone Syrah 2007	Hawke's Bay	93	5 Stars
	Bright medium-deep red/purple colour. The nose is dense and tight exhibiting dark plum, spice, game and subtle cedar notes. It's succulent and rich on the palate with smooth texture, excellent mid range weight and firm tannins providing outstanding structure and length. An impressive young Syrah. At its best: now to 2013. Tank sample finished blend ready for bottling.			
	Reserve Syrah 2007	Hawke's Bay	91	4.5 Stars
	Bright medium-deep red/purple colour. A fragrant bouquet showing blue/blackberry, dark plum and subtle black pepper characters. The palate is intensely rich yet silky smooth with beautifully balanced ripe tannins. A youthful wine with immense appeal already but will age nicely. At its best: now to 2012. 14.5% Screw cap. Tank sample finished blend ready for bottling.			
Muddy Water	Deliverance Red Table Wine 2008	Waipara	83	3.5 Stars
	A blend of Pinotage and Syrah displaying medium red/purple colour, youthful aromas of ripe cherry, spice and subtle floral characters. The palate is medium-light and juicy with smooth mouthfeel and soft tannins. As with All Muddy Water wines this is beautifully balanced and elegant. At its best: now to 2011. \$20.00 13% Screw cap.			
Newton Forrest	Syrah 2006	Hawke's Bay	92	4.5 Stars
	Medium-deep red/purple in colour. An impressive and youthful nose displaying blackberry, dark plum and subtle nutty, spice characters. It's superbly concentrated on the palate with excellent weight, texture and firm acid/tannin structure. It's bold and powerful and wonderful richness suggesting the wine will age beautifully. At its best: now to 2014. \$45.00 14% Screw cap.			
Okahu	Syrah 2007	Northland	84	3.5 Stars
	Bright red in colour. The nose is fragrant displaying dark plum, spice, smoked meat and black pepper notes. It's succulent and rounded on the palate with silky mouthfeel and nicely integrated acidity and fine tannins. \$28.00 12.5% Screw cap.			
Pikes	The Red Mullet Shiraz Grenache Mourvedre Tempranillo 2006	Clare Valley	88	4 Stars
	Medium-deep red colour. The nose is ripe and lifted showing red/dark plum, spice and subtle floral notes. It's juicy and refreshing on the palate displaying medium body, silky texture and bright acidity providing excellent vibrancy. The tannins are fine-grained and well balanced adding subtle firmness to the finish. Very supple and friendly. At its best: now to 2011. \$20.00 14.5% Screw cap.			
	Luccio Sangiovese Merlot Cabernet Sauvignon 2006	Clare Valley	85	4 Stars
	Medium red colour. The nose is gentle but complex displaying red cherry, spice and dried herb characters with a hint of cedar notes. The palate is well proportioned displaying juicy mid range and nicely drying tannins. The classic Sangiovese acidity provides crisp edge to the palate. Italian influenced but the supple New World characters make this an approachable wine to partner savoury dishes. At its best: now to 2010. \$20.00 14.5% Screw cap.			
Sacred Hill	Basket Press Merlot Cabernet 2008	Hawke's Bay	83	3.5 Stars
	Bright medium red/purple in colour. It's fresh and fragrant on the nose displaying red plum, blackberry and a hint of dried herb characters. The palate is juicy and softly textured with well balanced acidity and fine tannins. A very pleasant and refreshing red for easy drinking. At its best: now to 2011. \$21.00 13.5% Screw cap.			
Selaks	Favourite Syrah 2007	Hawke's Bay	91	4.5 Stars
	Bright medium-deep red/purple colour. The nose is sweet scented showing blackberry, dried fruit and subtle spice characters. The palate is richly textured and concentrated with excellent weight and ripe, firm tannins. Already approachable and delicious but should continue to improve in the bottle to develop more savoury characters. At its best: now to 2012. \$21.00 13.5% Screw cap.			

Ship Wreck Bay	Syrah 2007 Bright red colour. The nose is lifted and fragrant showing red plum, spice and dried herb characters. It's fruity and smooth on the palate with balanced acidity and fine, soft tannins. A medium-light bodied red with a crisp dry finish. At its best: now to 2010. \$16.00 12% Screw cap.	Northland	80	3 Stars
Taylor's	Pinot Noir 2008 The nose is bright and youthful displaying raspberry, red cherry and floral characters. It's fresh and fruity on the palate with soft texture, crisp acidity and gentle tannins. A well fruited and easy drinking style. At its best: now to 2010. \$21.00 14.5% Screw cap.	Adelaide Hills	82	3.5 Stars
Terrace Edge	Syrah 2007 Medium-deep red colour with a hint of purple. A savoury wine showing dark plum, game, mushroom and cedar characters on the nose. The palate is juicy and refreshing with bright acidity and fine-grained tannins. A well structured wine ideally suited to partner savoury dishes. \$27.50 At its best: now to 2010. 12.5% Screw cap.	Waipara	84	3.5 Stars
Villa Maria	Cellar Selection Syrah 2006 Grapes were sourced from the Gimblett Gravels district in the heart of Hawke's Bay. Medium-deep red/purple colour. The nose is dense and rich displaying blackberry, dark plum and beautifully integrated nutty oak characters. It's opulent and lushly textured on the palate with plenty of ripe tannins. An impressive and powerful Syrah and brilliantly balanced and structured for graceful ageing. At its best: now to 2013. \$29.99 14% Screw cap.	Hawke's Bay	93	5 Stars
Waimea	SV Bolitho Sauvignon Blanc 2008 The nose is lifted displaying green capsicum, fresh herb, currant and lime zest characters. It's zesty and vibrant on the palate with racy acidity and finely textured mouthfeel. The finish is long and crisp dry. A superbly concentrated and intensely flavoured Sauvignon capable of handling richly flavoured seafood dishes. At its best: now to 2011. \$22.00 13.5% Screw cap.	Nelson	90	4.5 Stars

Around the Orbit – New Releases Other Countries (20 wines)

Finca Sobreno	Tinta de Toro 2007 Medium-deep red/purple colour. A vibrant and youthful nose shows red plum, blueberry and spice characters. The palate shows excellent fruit expression with juicy mouthfeel and good acidity. The tannins are firm but well integrated providing a lovely dry finish. A modern style Spanish wine while retaining savoury/spicy character with a firm palate. At its best: now to 2013. \$20.00 14% Natural cork.	Toro, Spain	90	4.5 Stars
Millaman	Reserva Chardonnay 2007 A youthful wine showing delicately perfumed aromas of peach, lime zest and subtle earthy complexity. The palate is vibrant and refreshing with creamy texture and crisp acidity. A well balanced wine displaying plenty of appeal. At its best: now to 2010. \$20.90 Moderate availability. 13.5% Natural cork.	Curico, Chile	88	4 Stars
Purato	Nero d'Avola 2008 IGT You've got to love this beauty. Bright medium red/purple in colour. The nose is ripe and opulent displaying blackberry, dried fruit and spice characters. It's sumptuous and rounded on the palate with succulent mouthfeel and modest acidity leading to a nicely dry finish. The firm tannins at the end make this a superb food partner. A most satisfying red for everyday drinking. At its best: now to 2011. \$18.00 13% Screw cap. Certified organic.	Sicilia, Italy	89	4.5 Stars
Torres	Gran Reserva Coronas Cabernet Sauvignon 2004 Made from 85% Cabernet Sauvignon and 15% Tempranillo. Medium-deep red in colour. The nose is beautifully perfumed displaying red fruit, spice, dried herb and a hint of floral notes. It's well weighted and balanced on the palate with smooth mouthfeel and sturdy tannins. A superbly structured wine with lovely savoury notes and a firm dry finish. At its best: now to 2011. \$33.00 14% Natural cork.	Penedes, Spain	91	4.5 Stars
	Nerola Syrah Monastrell 2005 Medium-deep red colour. It's earthy and complex on the nose displaying dark fruit, game, spice and savoury mushroom characters. The palate is medium-full-bodied showing well balanced acidity and fine, firm tannins providing a pleasant dry finish. This should be lovely with rich, game dishes. At its best: now to 2011. \$30.00 14% Natural cork.	Catalunya	89	4.5 Stars

Torres**Celeste 2005**Ribera del Duero **90** **4.5 Stars**

Made from 100% Tinto Fino (Tempranillo). Medium-deep red in colour. The nose is gentle and savoury displaying dark cherry, game and subtle spice characters. It's succulent on the palate showing plenty of ripe fruit notes and rich texture. A beautifully balanced and structured wine with refreshing acidity and ripe, firm tannins. This wine should be quite stunning with rich savoury dishes. At its best: now to 2012. \$35.00 14.5% Natural cork.

Sangre de Toro 2006Catalunya **86** **4 Stars**

A beautifully fragrant nose displaying dark plum, game and cedary oak characters. The medium-full palate is well structured with nicely balanced acidity and fine, firm tannins. It's smooth and well textured showing plenty of charm. At its best: now to 2011. \$22.00 13.5% Screw cap.

Coronas 2005Catalunya **90** **4.5 Stars**

Made from Tempranillo (86%) and Cabernet Sauvignon (14%), this excellent label delivers the charm and lush mouthfeel from Tempranillo with the firmness from Cabernet. An appealing savoury nose showing dark plum, earthy mushroom and spice characters. It's juicy and easy flowing on the palate with supple mouthfeel and nicely drying finish. A well structured and balanced wine perfect for rich savoury dishes. At its best: now to 2012. \$22.00 13.5% Composite cork.

Trapiche**Malbec 2007**Mendoza, Argentina **85** **4 Stars**

Medium-deep red/purple in colour. Fresh and fragrant, the youthful nose displays black/blueberry, floral and subtle spice characters. It's smooth and fruity on the palate with nicely balanced fine tannins. The wine is very approachable and easy on the palate. At its best: now to 2011. \$13.50 13.5% Screw cap.

Malbec 2008Mendoza **82** **3.5 Stars**

Bright medium red/purple in colour. The nose is nicely lifted showing red cherry and blueberry characters with a hint of spice notes. It's juicy and soft on the palate with well pitched acidity and fine tannins. A pleasant and refreshing red for everyday drinking. At its best: now to 2011. \$13.50 Screw cap.

Oak Cask Malbec 2005Mendoza **88** **4 Stars**

Medium-deep red/purple in colour. The nose is complex and nicely lifted showing blackberry, game, spice and a touch of cedary oak characters. It's richly textured on the palate showing good weight, bright acidity and gently firm tannins. A beautifully balanced and structured red with a lovely influence of savoury notes. At its best: now to 2012. \$15.50 13.5% Natural cork.

Oak Cask Malbec 2007Mendoza **87** **4 Stars**

Bright medium-deep red/purple in colour. A beautifully ripe and savoury nose displaying blackberry, game and a hint of savoury mushroom characters. The palate is full and well fruited with silky texture, dense mid palate and gently drying fine tannins. A well structured and balanced wine with showing excellent varietal expression. Great value for money. At its best: now to 2013. \$15.50 Natural cork.

Broquel Malbec 2006Mendoza **90** **4.5 Stars**

Rich and opulent on the nose displaying black/blueberry, spice, game and floral characters. It's beautifully fragrant and inviting. The palate is full and weighty with rounded texture and firm tannins. A superbly structured yet generous and approachable. At its best: now to 2012. \$23.00

Single Vineyard Malbec Federico Villafane 2006Mendoza **95** **5 Stars**

Each year the winemaking team at Trapiche select best parcels from their growers and make Single Vineyard wines honouring the grower by putting their name on the label. Grapes for this vineyard were sourced from La Consulta in San Carlos at an altitude of 1100 metres. Deep red/purple in colour, this is a stunning wine showing class and style. A youthful nose displaying black/blueberry, chocolate, spice and vanillin oak characters. The palate is concentrated and powerful with dense mid palate, rich texture and firm chewy tannins. The wine is seamlessly woven and finishes extremely long. At its best: now to 2020. \$55.00

Manos Malbec 2004Mendoza **94** **5 Stars**

This extremely rare and hand-crafted wine comes from the Altamira district in the Uco Valley. Actually I prefer the Federico Villafane Single Vineyard Malbec for its structure and poise as well as intensity and richness. That said, this wine is unmistakably impressive and powerfully constructed with extravagant ripeness, luxurious texture and an opulent finish. It feels like the wine is dripping in gold. The nose is superbly rich and lifted exhibiting blackberry, game, dried fruit and sweet oak characters. It's amazingly concentrated and intensely flavoured with layers upon layers of delicious flavours. An outrageously grandiose wine. At its best: now to 2020. \$140.00

Trapiche**Single Vineyard Malbec Viña Francisco Olivé 2005** Mendoza **94** **5 Stars**

Grapes were sourced from Agrelo vineyard in Luján de Cuyo. From 66 year old vines, at 5500 vines/ha, a miniscule crop was achieved at 2.3 tonnes/ha. Total 27 days of fermentation and maceration followed by 18 month maturation in new French oak barrels. The wine was fermented in Medium-deep red in colour. A lifted savoury nose displaying game, dark plum, spice and earthy truffle characters. It's succulent and richly textured on the palate with smooth mouthfeel and plenty of chewy tannins. It's impressive and delicious. A wine showing plenty of power and intensity with style and character. At its best: now to 2014. \$46.00 14.5% Natural cork.

Single Vineyard Malbec Viña Fausto Orellana 2005 Mendoza **94** **5 Stars**

Grapes were sourced from La Consulta vineyard in San Carlos. From 57 year old vines at 5000 vines/ha with a miniscule crop of 2.6 tonnes/ha. Total 23 days of fermentation and maceration followed by 18 month maturation in new French oak barrels. Medium-deep red in colour. It's opulent and lifted on the nose showing dried fruit, plum, spice and a hint of cedary oak characters. The palate is brilliantly concentrated showing excellent mid palate texture, weight and firm tannins. The balance and structure of this wine is stunning. Very ripe and lush yet finishes dry and very long. At its best: now to 2016. \$46.00 14.5% Natural cork.

Malbec Tributo Felipe Villafane 2003 Mendoza **96** **5 Stars**

Grapes were sourced from La Consulta vineyard in San Carlos. Over 50 year old vines, at 5000 vines/hectare planting density, produced tiny 3.5 tonnes per ha. Total maceration time 25 days and the finished wine was matured in new French oak barrels for 18 months. It was pity to stop tasting this wine as it continued to improve in the glass. A gloriously rich and complex wine. Medium-deep red in colour. The nose is super ripe and sweet, displaying dark plum, chocolate, spice and subtle cedary oak characters. It's intensely flavoured with succulent mouthfeel, multi-layered texture and plenty of ripe, polished tannins. Once again the wine is sumptuous and lavishly crafted with impressive richness. At its best: now to 2015. \$49.00 14.5% Natural cork.

Single Vineyard Malbec Viña Eleodoro Aciar 2005 Mendoza **95** **5 Stars**

Grapes were sourced from Perdriel vineyard in Luján de Cuyo. From 95 year old vines at 5000 vines/ha with a small crop of 9 tonnes/ha. Total fermentation and maceration of 25 days followed by 18 months maturation in new French oak barrels. Medium-deep red in colour. The nose is really lifted and fragrant showing dried fruit, soy, spice and a hint of leather characters. It's powerful and densely structured with weighty mid palate, smooth texture and loads of compact tannins. It's super ripe and luxurious with an extremely long dry finish. Definitely needs a big piece of steak with this wine. At its best: now to 2015. \$46.00 14.5% Natural cork.

Les Volcans**Syrah 2007** Languedoc, France **90** **4.5 Stars**

Grapes were sourced from low cropping old vines from Languedoc, this is a collaboration between Louis Barruol and New Zealand's Theo Coles at The Crater Rim in Waipara. A warm and generous red from Southern France exhibiting deep red /purple colour, lifted aromas of super-ripe dark berries, espresso and floral notes. The palate is succulent and smooth with soft acidity, while the firm tannins provide excellent structure and a dry finish to the wine. An impressive offering representing superb value for money. At its best: now to 2010. \$19.90 Limited availability. 13% Screw cap.

Around the Orbit

The 2007 Vintage Craggy Range Prestige Release

O'Connell St. Bistro, Auckland
27th May 2009

The Craggy Range Prestige wines from the 2007 vintage have to be one of the most profound collection of wines released in New Zealand history. Each wine showed individual character and style, and of course exceptional quality. It's mind boggling to think what they can do with greater vine age and more experience in the future. Steve Smith MW and the team have shown true understanding of their single vineyards, pushing for perfect ripeness while showing restraint not to lose varietal purity and vineyard attributes.

Hawke's Bay 2007: The final wines turned out to be exceptional but it wasn't all plain sailing. An average November and December provided moderate crop load. The ripening period from January to April was unusually dry with less than 50% of the usual rainfall with warm days (not excessively hot) and very cool nights (lowest summer night time temperatures recorded) which delayed ripening and retained acidity. These dry conditions allowed them to leave the grapes 3-4 weeks longer on vines to achieve desired flavour/tannin/acid ripeness. Also more leaf-plucking was done around the fruit zone to expose bunches to avoid any unripe herbal edge in wine. Resulting wines show superb concentration, textured mouthfeel and ripe tannins without the green bitterness or leafy aromas.

Martinborough 2007: You can hardly believe the miniscule crop they've managed in 2007: 3.2 hl (320 litres) per hectare. That's less than a half tonne per hectare (one might expect 6 t/ha for quality Pinot Noir). Unusually cold and wet November and December caused a terrible flowering which in turn resulted in dramatically reduced crop levels. The ripening progressed slowly, and after careful selection at harvest, there were just enough grapes to produce 70 cases of Craggy Range's Prestige Pinot Noir, Aroha, which means 'love' in Maori. A labour of love indeed.

There were slight changes made in the cellar too. They held back a little during fermentation, in reaching and the duration of peak temperatures; used less SO₂ in barrels; and the assemblage was done earlier during maturation, after about six months in barrels (rather than 12 months), as they believed longer time as final blends was more beneficial in harmonising and integrating components.

Craggy Range	Les Beaux Cailloux 2007	Hawke's Bay	94-96	5 Stars
	Vines were planted in 1999 with Chardonnay clones 95, 96 and 15. Hand-harvested, fermented in French oak barrels (54% new) using indigenous yeasts, full malolactic then matured for 17 months in oak. A long time in barrel yet the bouquet is daisy fresh, displaying fresh bread, peach, cream and subtle nutty characters. The nose is gentle, not over the top, yet it is engaging and most appealing. It's finely textured and focused on the palate with bright acidity and a gradually expanding mouthfeel. A beautifully poised and framed wine. It's certainly the most complete Les Beaux Cailloux so far. At its best: 2011 to 2015. \$63.00 Limited availability. 14.5% www.craggyrange.com . Tasted not blind.			
Craggy Range	Aroha 2007	Martinborough	95	5 Stars
	This impressively complex Pinot Noir comes from their Te Muna Road vineyard. Grapes were fully destemmed, fermented in small oak cuves using indigenous yeasts then matured in French oak barrels (42% new) for 14 months. Medium-deep red/purple in colour, the nose is fragrant and harmonious, displaying dark plum, cherry, cured meat and floral characters. It's succulent and beautifully weighted with silky texture and polished tannins. The length is outstanding. A stylish Pinot showing elegant mouthfeel and poise rather than just relying on brash ripe fruit intensity. Only 70 cases made. At its best: now to 2015. \$85.00 13.5%. Tasted not blind.			
Craggy Range	Le Sol 2007	Hawke's Bay	98	5 Stars
	In a relatively short space of time Le Sol has become an iconic New Zealand wine. Much work is done in the vineyard, including going through up to five times to cut off unripe bunches or less ripe portions of bunch during ripening. Grapes were hand-harvested from their Gimblett Gravels vineyard, fully destemmed and fermented spontaneously in open-top oak cuves then matured in French oak barrels (42%) for 20 months. From an outstanding vintage, and without doubt the best Le Sol made yet, this exceptionally refined Syrah displays black/blueberry, dark plum, floral and vanillin oak characters on the nose. It's very ripe but showing restraint too. The palate is lush and opulent with satin texture, dense mid palate and plenty of supple tannins. A beautifully perfumed wine showing ample fruit and a hint of earthy/peaty complexity making it immensely delicious as well as intriguing. At its best: 2014 to 2027. \$95.00 14.2%. Tasted not blind.			

Craggy Range	Sophia 2007	Hawke's Bay	96	5 Stars
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Grapes were sourced from two blocks (out of 30 odd) within their Gimblett Gravels vineyard. The blend is made up of 81% Merlot, 10% Cabernet Franc, 7% Cabernet Sauvignon and 2% Malbec - the Merlot content is a little higher than normal due to slightly cool temperatures during the ripening period, otherwise a higher percentage of Cabernet Franc would have been in the blend. However, the winemaking team must have been confident about the fruit quality as they have done a massive four-week post ferment maceration before putting the wine into French oak barrels (50% new) for 18 months. The resulting wine is intensely aromatic and powerful, displaying blueberry, dark plum and gentle cedary oak characters on the nose. The palate is rich and concentrated yet graceful and textured with loads of ripe tannins. This is one for the cellar but already showing huge appeal. At its best: 2014 to 2020. \$56.00 14.3%. Tasted not blind.

Craggy Range	The Quarry 2007	Hawke's Bay	96	5 Stars
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The Quarry is not as popular as Le Sol or Sophia, probably because it is a Cabernet Sauvignon dominant wine. For me, this would be the preferred drink if I had to choose one from Craggy Range's exceptional Prestige Collection. This is classic Bordeaux in a modern frame. The blend is 83% Cabernet Sauvignon, 9% Merlot and 8% Cabernet Franc. Grapes were fully destemmed, fermented in closed oak cives then matured in French oak barrels (64% new) for 20 months. It's beautifully perfumed on the nose exhibiting cassis, dark plum, spice and subtle nutty oak characters. The palate is focused and sturdy showing lovely fleshy mid palate and bold, firm tannins. The wine was a little tight and restrained at first but opened up beautifully in the glass. A compelling wine. At its best: 2015 to 2025. \$65.00 14.4%. Tasted not blind.

Around the Orbit

Ken Moon & Graeme Cavanagh Wine Tasting Group

Twelve 'Super Tuscans' from the excellent 2001 Vintage

Once again Ken Moon has compiled a glorious line-up of 'Super Tuscans' from the highly regarded 2001 vintage. Now they have had time to settle down and starting to show bottle aged complexity and, indeed, true character. The wines have been stored in ideal conditions prior to the tasting. The wines were served blind. It's always interesting to contrast Sangiovese dominant wines with Cabernet wines, and compare wines from Chianti to those from Bolgheri.

Fontodi	Flaccianello della Pieve 2001	Tuscany IGT	92	4.5 Stars
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A 100% Sangiovese wine matured in new Troncais and Allier barrels for at least 18 months. Medium-deep red in colour, the nose is complex and fragrant showing game, dried herb, dark cherry and cedary oak characters. The palate is rich and weighty with bright acidity and beautifully flowing texture. It finishes firm with chalky tannins. The wine is savoury and meaty showing excellent structure in a sturdy frame. Modern yet classic. At its best: now to 2017. \$170.00 Apr 2009.

Antinori	Tignanello 2001	Tuscany IGT	94	5 Stars
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A blend of 85% Sangiovese, 10% Cabernet Sauvignon and 5% Cabernet Franc matured in barriques for 14 months. Always beautifully poised, this outstanding 2001 wine is one of the most appealing Tignanellos, exhibiting deep red colour, lifted aromas of red/black plum, floral, thyme and spice. The palate is rich and weighty with a textured mouthfeel and a lingering juicy finish. Good acid and fine, compact tannins provide gentle firmness but this is an opulent and richly flavoured Tignanello. At its best: now to 2017. \$145.00 13.5%. Apr 2009.

Tenuta San Guido	Sassicaia 2001	Bolgheri Sassicaia DOC	[91]	4.5 Stars
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The most famous Super Tuscan, Sassicaia has a strong following among Italian enthusiasts world over. This bottle wasn't the best I've tried as I had scored the wine 96 points in another tasting. Bearing that in mind here's my observation. The usual blend for Sassicaia is predominantly Cabernet Sauvignon with around 15% Cabernet Franc, and matured for 24 months in French oak barriques (third new). Medium-deep red in colour with a hint of brown. The nose is lifted showing game, leather, earthy mushroom and dried herb characters. The palate is ripe and finely textured with refreshing acidity and fine, dusty tannins. The wine flows well to a very long savoury finish. \$220.00. Apr 2009.

Antinori	Solaia 2001	Tuscany IGT	95	5 Stars
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A single estate wine made up of 75% Cabernet Sauvignon, 20% Sangiovese and 5% Cabernet Franc, and matured in new Troncais and Alliers barriques for 24 months. Deep red in colour, the nose is beautifully perfumed showing red/dark cherry, sweet oak, floral and meaty characters (just a touch of brettanomyces). The palate is plush and powerful showing excellent concentration, bright acidity and firm tannins. A rich Tuscan red, but not too heavy, with an outstanding length. At its best: now to 2020. \$500.00 13.5%. Apr 2009.

Fèlsina	Fontalloro 2001	Tuscany IGT	91	4.5 Stars	Fèlsina's vineyards cover two appellations, Chianti Classico and Chianti Colli Senesi. Made from over 50-year-old Sangiovese vines, the wine was matured for 18-20 months in barriques. Medium-deep red/brown in colour, the nose is fragrant displaying dark plum, cherry, tar, floral and earthy mushroom characters. The palate is medium-full showing lovely fine texture, bright acidity and firm tannins. A well structured and balanced wine that expresses the variety and the region superbly. At its best: now to 2015. \$90.00 Apr 2009.
Antinori	Guado Al Tasso 2001	Bolgheri DOC Superiore	96	5 Stars	From the Maremma district, this single estate wine is made up of 60% Cabernet Sauvignon, 30% Merlot, 10% Syrah and other red grape varieties. Grapes were fermented separately with fermentation temperatures not exceeding 30°C. The finished wines were transferred to French oak barriques for malolactic fermentation then racked, blended and put back into barrels for 14 months. A glorious red wine exhibiting cassis, cedar, vanilla and dried herb characters with a touch of leather on the nose. The palate is succulent and dense with good acidity and plenty of ripe, supple tannins. The wine is rounded and lush yet brilliantly structured with well pitched tannins. Very, very impressive. At its best: now to 2020. \$140.00 Apr 2009.
Terrabianca	Campaccio 2001	Tuscany IGT	89	4.5 Stars	The grapes were grown in two sub-regions, Maremma (60%) and Chianti Classico (40%), and made up of 70% Sangiovese and 30% Cabernet Sauvignon. The wine was matured in French and American barriques for 12 months. A gentle and well balanced wine displaying medium-deep red colour with a touch of brown, and complex aromas of game, earthy mushroom, red cherry and dried fruits. The palate is well fruited showing good weight, bright acidity and firm tannins leading to a lingering dry finish. A very satisfying red with appealing savoury notes. At its best: now to 2015. \$85.00.
Mazzei	Tenuta Belguardo 2001	Tuscany IGT	96	5 Stars	From the Maremma district, this outstanding red is made up of 70% Cabernet Sauvignon, 20% Sangiovese and 10% Merlot. The wine was matured in French oak barrels for 18 months. Deep red in colour, the nose is surprisingly youthful displaying cassis, cedar, floral and cigar characters. The palate is full and succulent with a richly textured mid palate and firm, bold tannins providing an excellent structure and length. The wine is generously proportioned while remaining sturdy and dry. At its best: now to 2020. \$85.00 Apr 2009.
Fontodi	Vigna del Sorbo 2001	Chianti Classico DOCG	94	5 Stars	A magnificent Chianti Classico Riserva made from 30-year-old vines: 90% Sangiovese and 10% Cabernet Sauvignon. The wine was matured in Tronçais and Allier barrels (50% new) for 24 months. Deep red in colour, the nose is ripe and youthful for its age, displaying dark plum, floral, game and dried herb characters. It's juicy and beautifully flowing on the palate with medium-full weight, crisp acidity and gently drying tannins. It's very Chianti and very good. At its best: now to 2018. \$95.00 Apr 2009.
Mazzei	Castello di Fonterutoli 2001	Chianti Classico DOCG	95	5 Stars	A blend of 85% Sangiovese, 10% Cabernet Sauvignon and 5% Merlot, this is an impressive Chianti displaying deep red colour, cassis, cigar box, dark plum and spice characters on the nose. The palate is ripe and focused, but not heavy, with a refreshing mouthfeel and masses of bold tannins. The huge tannins almost overpowers the refined palate but it is a top-flight Sangiovese after all. At its best: now to 2020. \$130.00 Apr 2009.
La Massa	Giorgio Primo 2001	Chianti Classico DOCG	97	5 Stars	This was the best wine of the tasting beating more illustrious names (at least on that day), and at under \$100. Deep red in colour, the nose is sweet-scented and complex showing dark plum, cedar, cured meat and spice characters. It's concentrated and beautifully weighted on the palate with fine, yet compact mid palate, bright acidity and classically drying firm tannins. The finish is exceptionally long and mouthwateringly delicious. The wine is providing enormous pleasure while remaining true and showing sturdy structured. At its best: now to 2025. \$80.00 Apr 2009.
Tenuta dell' Ornellaia	Ornellaia 2001	Bolgheri DOC Superiore	96	5 Stars	One of the most highly sought-after wines in the world, this striking wine is made up of 65% Cabernet Sauvignon, 30% Merlot and 5% Cabernet Franc. Each parcel of grapes were fermented separately, some in wooden fermenters and the rest in stainless steel tanks with a considerable post ferment maceration (25-30 days), then transferred to French oak barriques (70% new, 30% 1-year-old) for malolactic fermentation. The finished wines were kept separate and matured for 12 months before blending then the final blend was matured in oak for further 6 months. The bouquet is intriguing and complex displaying game, truffle, dark plum and seaweed characters. It's succulent and weighty on the palate showing excellent concentration, great acidity and firm tannins. A generously proportioned wine showing superb structure and length. At its best: now to 2022. \$590.00 Apr 2009.

Negociants New Zealand Icons from the Cellar

Kelliher Estate, Puketutu Island, Auckland, New Zealand
14th August 2009

Negociants New Zealand (www.negociantsnz.com) have long been known for their stunning collection of rare and fine wines from around the world. This was probably the greatest tasting of world's iconic wines put together in New Zealand. Prices quoted are indication only as some of them are not available for sale.

Bollinger	La Grande Année 1999	Champagne	97	5 Stars	This is Champagne Bollinger's Prestige Cuvée and therefore it tastes like a Bollinger but with greater structure and tighter mouthfeel. This complex wine shows yeast, cream and nutty characters on the nose. It's full, silky and rounded with excellent acid balance and outstanding length of flavour. The wine is firm yet expands beautifully on the palate. A very special wine for true Champagne lovers. At its best: now to 2016. \$217.00 www.champagne-bollinger.com . Tasted not blind. Aug 2009.
William Fèvre	Chablis Grand Cru Bougros Côte Bouguerots 2006	Burgundy	95	5 Stars	Domaine William Fèvre is one of the great producers in all of Burgundy, not just in Chablis. This outstanding wine comes from 2.11 ha plot (out of 12.6 ha Bougros), showing youthful aromas of citrus, stonefruit and flinty mineral characters on the nose. The palate is fine and gentle with creamy texture, excellent concentration and a lingering crisp finish. The wine is reasonably rich for Chablis and the balance and structure are most impressive. At its best: now to 2018. \$155.00 www.williamfevre.fr . Tasted not blind. Aug 2009.
Giaconda	Chardonnay 2002	Beechworth, Victoria	97	5 Stars	Arguably the best Australian Chardonnay name, Giaconda is also one of the rarest. This extraordinary wine exhibits stonefruit, earthy mushroom and nutty characters on the nose. The palate is incredibly powerful and intense with great acidity and extreme length. It's beautifully poised and balanced despite the richness, making it an irresistible wine to drink now but no doubt it will hold for a little longer. At its best: now to 2015. \$179.00 www.giaconda.com.au . Tasted not blind. Aug 2009.
Vinoptima	Gewurztraminer 2004	Gisborne	95	5 Stars	Gewurztraminer is the only varietal made at this immensely dedicated estate based in the Ormond district. The bouquet is hauntingly perfumed displaying floral, spice and stonefruit characters. The palate is intense and concentrated with gentle sweetness, velvety texture and an amazing length. Drinking an unctuous wine like this is surely one of life's great pleasures. At its best: now to 2016. \$58.00 www.vinoptima.co.nz . Tasted not blind. Aug 2009.
Nautilus	Pinot Noir 2008	Marlborough	91	4.5 Stars	Grapes were hand-harvested from six vineyards for this beautifully elegant Pinot Noir. The nose is ripe and fragrant displaying red/black cherry, plum and floral characters with a hint of mixed spice. It's refreshing and focused on the palate with silky texture and fine tannins. Although this looked lighter and less complex against other superstar Pinot Noirs at the tasting, the wine held up well. Graceful rather than powerful. At its best: now to 2013. \$39.00 www.nautilusestate.com . Tasted not blind. Aug 2009.
Palliser	The Great Harry Pinot Noir 2006	Martinborough	95	5 Stars	A barrel selection of six casks (four of them new oak), this sensational Pinot is made from Burgundy clones (777 & 667) grown on their East Base vineyard. The nose is impressive and opulent showing dark cherry, dried herb and cedar notes. It's tight and concentrated on the palate with a finely textured mouthfeel and firm tannins. The lengthy is exceptionally long. Needs time. At its best: 2012 to 2020. \$95.00 www.palliser.co.nz . Tasted not blind. Aug 2009.
Rippon	Pinot Noir 2007	Central Otago	95	5 Stars	Since Nick Mills' return from Burgundy a few years ago, Rippon wines are now made using biodynamic practices. Their 2006 was a stunning effort but this is a step up again, displaying red/black cherry, savoury mushroom and spice characters on the nose. The palate is beautifully poised and seamless with concentrated mid palate and fine tannins providing a lingering dry finish. A wine of complete harmony and balance. At its best: now to 2018. \$58.00 www.rippon.co.nz . Tasted not blind. Aug 2009.
Chanson	Chambertin Clos de Bèze Grand Cru 2006	Burgundy	95-97	5 Stars	It was certainly the least impressive Pinot Noir at the tasting but given time, this wine will surely show more complexity and depth of flavour. Since Bollinger's acquisition, the quality from this domaine has improved steadily, and now produces some of the most refined Burgundies. This youthful wine shows gentle and complex aromas of red berries, cedar and savoury mushrooms. The palate is restrained and tight with a beautifully layered mouthfeel, crisp acidity and firm tannins. While it's not generously flavoured, the wine is concentrated and structured indicating it needs time to evolve. At its best: 2014 to 2022. \$440.00 www.vins-chanson.com . Tasted not blind. Aug 2009.

Antinori	Tignanello 2005	Tuscany	95	5 Stars
	Among the Super Tuscans this is the best value wine by far. Made from predominantly Sangiovese with small amounts of Cabernet Sauvignon and Cabernet Franc, this modern twist on the traditional Chianti displays blackberry, spice, dried herb and cedar characters on the nose. The palate is powerful and generous with refreshing acidity and sturdy tannins providing a firm grip on the finish. A wonderfully structured wine starting to show bottle matured leather and earthy notes. At its best: now to 2020. \$147.00 www.antinori.it . Tasted not blind. Aug 2009.			
	Solaia 2005	Tuscany	98	5 Stars
	A Cabernet Sauvignon, Cabernet Franc and Sangiovese blend, this outrageously good wine displays tar, dark cherry, leather and cedary oak characters on the nose. The palate is dense and succulent showing exceptional power and length of flavour. The richness is well tamed by the firm acidity and tannins. A majestic wine. At its best: now to 2025. \$500.00 www.antinori.it . Tasted not blind. Aug 2009.			
Tenuta San Guido	Sassicaia 2004	Tuscany	94	5 Stars
	A refined and complex bouquet displaying cassis, dried herb, cedar and a hint of leather characters. The palate is medium-full, juicy and finely textured with firm tannins. Wonderful structure and length. This is not as big and dense as some Super Tuscans but the overall balance is superb and it always displays an extra dimension of intrigue. At its best: now to 2020. \$220.00 www.sassicaia.com . Tasted not blind. Aug 2009.			
Château Lafite Rothschild	1999	Bordeaux	95	5 Stars
	This wine comes from the year when parts of Europe, including Bordeaux, experienced solar eclipse, and hence the bottle sports an engraved '1999' and a depiction of the eclipse to mark that historical event. And the wine lives in the shadow of the much hyped and exceptional 2000 vintage. As they often say in Bordeaux, this is a classic elegant vintage. I have no doubt the wine will develop gracefully and show amazing complexity and character, as top wines from less than super-ripe vintages often manage to. The bouquet is gently fragrant showing dark fruit, cigar box and subtle leather characters. The palate is ripe and seamless with an elegant mouthfeel and firm tannins. The finish is very, very long. Great poise and style. At its best: now to 2025. \$950.00 www.lafite.com . Tasted not blind. Aug 2009.			
Aldo Conterno	Barolo Romirasco 2004 (magnum)	Piedmont	95	5 Stars
	Barolo is one of the most unique wines of the world, and this wine shows why. The bouquet is lifted (bordering on volatile) displaying leather, red cherry, spice and floral characters. It's ripe and succulent with refreshing acidity and firm compact tannins. The length is impressively long. The wine has incredible perfume - ripe and savoury - while the palate is smooth and fruity yet finishes mouth-puckeringly dry. One for the Barolo fans. At its best: now to 2018. \$190 (750 ml). www.poderialdoconterno.com . Tasted not blind. Aug 2009.			
Gaja	Barbaresco 2004	Piedmont	98	5 Stars
	You can't help but be seduced by wines of Gaja. They are powerful, dense, textured and modern. This is a profound expression of Barbaresco exhibiting red berry, potpourri, spice and cedary oak characters on the nose. The palate is succulent and superbly concentrated showing rich texture, a seamless mouthfeel and firm, bold tannins. The wine is opulent and expansive but the firmness brings it right back to the Barbaresco frame. Impressive, memorable and utterly delicious. At its best: now to 2024. \$370.00 Tasted not blind. Aug 2009.			
Vega Sicilia	Unico 1999	Ribera del Duero	96	5 Stars
	A magnificent Spanish wine of exceptional pedigree and style, this multi-layered wine shows rich dried fruit, vanillin oak, spice and floral characters on the nose. The palate is weighty, dense and rounded with firm yet supple tannins. The wine is staggeringly complex expressing flavour upon flavour in this richly textured frame. At its best: now to 2025. \$550.00 www.vega-sicilia.com . Tasted not blind. Aug 2009.			
Guigal	Côte Rôtie La Mouline 2004	Rhône	98	5 Stars
	This is the feminine wine of the three 'La La' single vineyard wines made by this exceptional producer. The bouquet is youthful showing red berry, floral, cedar and subtle spice characters. It's full and concentrated on the palate with velvety texture and fine, polished tannins. The wine is seamless and beautifully harmonised. Amazing poise and refinement. This is so well drinking now as it has the perfect balance between the youthful fruit and matured savoury notes, but for those who wait (and privileged to have a bottle of this rare gem) will be rewarded with even greater complexity and seductive aromas. At its best: now to 2020. \$490.00 www.guigal.com . Tasted not blind. Aug 2009.			

Yalumba	The Octavius 2004	Barossa Valley	95	5 Stars	This old-vine Shiraz (most of them between 70 and 100-years-old) is powerful yet elegant at the same time, displaying blackberry, vanilla, and spice characters on the nose. It's succulent and rounded on the palate showing excellent mid palate weight and smooth texture with plenty of fine tannins which beautifully lengthens the finish. A gloriously sumptuous wine that really shows off old-vine Barossa fruits. At its best: now to 2022. \$110.00 www.yalumba.com . Tasted not blind. Aug 2009.
Jim Barry	The Armagh 2000	Clare Valley	95	5 Stars	If Yalumba's Octavius is an elegant expression of Australian Shiraz, this is bold and opulent style of the variety. The bouquet is intensely aromatic displaying blackberry, dried fruit, vanilla and cedar characters with a touch of leather. It's generous and expansive on the palate with a succulent mouthfeel and loads of polished tannins. At its best: now to 2020. Current vintage \$220.00. www.jimbarry.com . Tasted not blind. Aug 2009.
	The Armagh 1999	Clare Valley	93	5 Stars	Much more evolved than the 2000 wine, the nose displays dried fruit, vanilla and sweet fruit cake notes. The palate is plush, silky and rounded with supple tannins. At its best: now to 2015. Tasted not blind. Aug 2009.
	The Armagh 1998	Clare Valley	96	5 Stars	A classic and dramatic Armagh exhibiting super-ripe aromas of dried fruit, dark plum, spice and vanillin oak characters. The palate is concentrated, opulent and smooth with a generous amount of ripe tannins. A breathtaking Australian Shiraz. At its best: now to 2020. Tasted not blind. Aug 2009.
Henschke	Hill of Grace 1996	Eden Valley	97	5 Stars	This famous single vineyard wine, made from old vine Shiraz (the original vines are now over 145 years old), lived up to its billing, displaying a lovely medley of dark plum, leather, spice and floral characters on the nose. The palate is succulent and dense with velvety texture and refreshing acidity. The wine is luxurious and impressive with firm tannins providing an imposing structure. At its best: now to 2020. \$750.00 www.henschke.com . Tasted not blind. Aug 2009.
González Byass	Del Duque Amontillado NV	Jerez	96	5 Stars	Over 30-years of ageing in oak casks (the solera was started over 300 years ago) has produced this very old (Muy Viejo) sherry of distinction. The nose is lifted and incredibly complex displaying roasted nut, dried fruit, beeswax and spice characters. The palate is pungent and explosive with a multi-layered mouthfeel and a refreshing bite. The wine finishes extremely long with a warm alcohol glow. Drinking an aged Amontillado is surely one of life's great pleasures. \$53.00 www.gonzalezbyass.com . Tasted not blind. Aug 2009.
Hugel	Riesling Vendange Tardive 1998	Alsace	95	5 Stars	One of the pioneers in Alsace, Hugel family have been making wine since 1639, and this rare late harvest wine is made from forty-year-old vines grown on their estate Grand Cru Schoenenbourg vineyard. Grapes were gently pressed and briefly settled before fermented in seasoned barrels and vats at relatively warm temperatures (18-24°C) before stopping at 53 g/l of residual sugar. The resulting wine is one of great harmony and balance. The bouquet is beautifully fragrant displaying marmalade, lemon curd, beeswax and subtle nutty characters. It's sweet and silky on the palate with excellent acidity and a fine, long tail. An exquisitely elegant sweet wine. At its best: now to 2022. \$130.00 www.hugel.com . Tasted not blind. Aug 2009.
Château d'Yquem 2003		Bordeaux	100	5 Stars	No big surprise that this wine receives a full mark. From one of the outstanding vintages (although not trouble free as careful selection was required to achieve perfection), this mind-boggling wine displays crème brûlée, marmalade, cream and honey characters on the nose. The palate shows staggering intensity and concentration with seamless texture, luscious sweetness and beautifully integrated acidity. After the wine has left the palate, flavours continued to build and expand to an almost endless finish. A complete wine. At its best: 2015 to 2040. www.yquem.fr . Tasted not blind. Aug 2009.
Warre's	Vintage Port 2000	Douro	98	5 Stars	From one of the great and smallest port vintages, this classically framed port comes from 50 to 55-year-old vines achieving only 420g of fruit per vine. It's super rich and powerful displaying blackberry, dark plum, dried fruit and floral/spice characters on the nose. The palate is saturated and opulent with wonderful acid and tannins. The wine ticks all the boxes and much more. This is not as sweet as some others (about 77 g/l of residual sugar) yet it taste plush and mouthfilling. A stunning young port with a great future. At its best: 2015 to 2030. \$186.00 www.warre.com . Tasted not blind. Aug 2009.

Penfolds Single Bottle Dinner

The French Café, Auckland, New Zealand

15th September 2009

Eating good food with great wine is always a treat. Eating exquisite food and drinking glorious, matured wine is sublime. And Penfolds Single Bottle Dinner held at Auckland's The French Café was just that. Each guest was encouraged to bring an aged Penfolds wine from his or her cellar to share with fellow diners. Some magnificent bottles showed up at this momentous occasion and the dinner was the first one to be held in New Zealand.

On arrival.

Penfolds Bin 51 Eden Valley Riesling 2008

A youthful wine displaying lime zest, floral and chalky mineral characters. It's as pure as spring water. The palate is elegant and tightly structured with bracing acidity and finely textured mouthfeel. A serious dry Riesling, perfect as an aperitif.

Marinated salmon cone

These things are great to eat. Tiny cubes of rich salmon in a tangy marinade were patiently stuffed into baby ice cream cones. You NEED to eat these morsels to balance the crisp acidity of a dry Riesling. A lovely way to ease into the dinner.

The First course.

Penfolds Yattarna Chardonnay 2006 (Magnum)

There are two Icon wines made by Penfolds, Grange (Shiraz) and Yattarna (Chardonnay). Unlike the Grange, which was first commercially released back in 1952, Yattarna is a relative newcomer (since 1995) yet it has quickly established itself as one of Australia's finest Chardonnays. This vintage is probably the best they've made, showing a perfect balance of rich stonefruit, vanilla, stylish oak and mealy notes. It's powerfully constructed yet elegant and silky smooth with a lengthy finish. Already lovely to drink but will age graciously over the next 4 to 5 years.

Seared langoustine tails with cauliflower cream, parmesan gnocchi, truffle butter, pancetta and smoked bacon foam

This sounded complex, and it was, but the dish was elegant in beautiful harmony with precise flavours that were skilfully layered. The gently firm shellfish and densely textured gnocchi provided a rich, full mouthfeel. The cauliflower cream, bacon foam and truffle butter adding an exotic fragrance as well as mouth-coating deliciousness. Despite the richness, the dish was remarkably light and seamless on the palate, waiting for a sip of Chardonnay to cleanse the luxurious mouthfeel.

Wine with food: the Chardonnay tasted refreshing and lively with the food. The wine was perfectly weighted, and the mealy, savoury notes in the wine came through beautifully. Both wine and food were multi-layered yet elegantly structured making the match sublime.

The Second Course.

Penfolds Cellar Reserve Pinot Noir 2002

A perfectly matured and complex wine displaying stewed plum, leather, compost and mushroom characters. The colour is still relatively dark and dense. It's silky smooth on the palate with ripe mouthfeel, soft acidity and fine tannins. The wine must've been a little monster when young but has aged beautifully and is showing excellent varietal character and poise.

Penfolds Bin 7 Cabernet Shiraz 1967

A blend of Coonawarra Cabernet Sauvignon and Kalimna (Barossa) Shiraz, this fully matured Australian 'claret' displays dried fruit, leather, earthy mushroom and generous oak characters. It's still rich and full on the palate with satin smooth mouthfeel, opulence and fine-grained tannins. The wine peaked a few years ago and is now on its gradual, inevitable decline but a gloriously charming wine nevertheless.

Slow cooked rabbit tortellini with crushed peas and morel mushrooms

The savoury, tender meat was beautifully wrapped in small parcels of nice firm pasta. It was perfectly seasoned. The crushed, semi-pureed peas provided an elegant contrast and freshness to the flavour-packed tortellini. A spoonful of savoury jus, shavings of *parmigiano* and flat-leaf parsley all added discreet background notes.

Wine with food:

Cellar Reserve Pinot Noir 2002: the wine tasted even better; why am I surprised? The sweet impression (the ripeness) of the wine really came through against the savoury meat and mushroom. Once again, the wine's weight was perfectly matched to that of the dish.

Bin 7 Cabernet Shiraz 1967: the wine appeared more youthful with the food. The acidity in the wine seemed more pronounced, providing refreshing mouthfeel. The mature savoury notes in the wine also harmonised well with the food. On its own, the wine was showing its age but with the food it tasted beautifully seamless and silky.

A Special Wine.

Penfolds Bin 60A Cabernet Shiraz 1962

A multi-regional blend, Cabernet Sauvignon from Coonawarra (Sharam's Block & Block 20) and Shiraz from Kalimna Vineyard's original Shiraz blocks, the wine was made at the Magill Estate in wax-lined concrete fermenters with wooden header boards. Towards the end of fermentation the wine was basket pressed and barrel fermented. It is Penfolds most successful show wine, winning 19 trophies and 33 gold medals. That aside, the wine has been regarded by wine enthusiasts and critics as one of the finest Australian wines every made. And recently, and finally, James Halliday, Australia's most highly respected wine commentator, put it in writing stating that this is the finest Australian wine made in the 20th Century. Bin 60A is one of those experimental Penfolds wines and there have been only two vintages ever made, 1962 and 2004. You will need AU\$5000 (NZ\$6000) to secure a bottle of Bin 60A 1962 at an auction today. So there it was, this legendary, almost mythical, wine brought over from Australia for this special dinner.

The wine was amazingly perfumed, exhibiting sweet fruit, truffle, leather, espresso and floral notes. Superbly intense and complex, a gracefully matured majestic wine.

(technical details were sourced from *The Rewards of Patience, Sixth Edition*)

The Third Course.

Penfolds Bin 95 Grange Shiraz 1990

The nose is sweetly scented showing dark fruit, vanillin oak and spice characters. It's wonderfully opulent and sumptuous on the palate with richly textured mouthfeel and plenty of ripe tannins. One of the great vintages, this is still full of life with refreshing acidity and perfectly pitched tannins. Extremely delicious.

Penfolds Bin 95 Grange Shiraz 1991

Again a beautifully lifted nose showing dark fruit, cedary oak and spice notes. The palate is concentrated and dense with firmer, drier tannins than the 1990. A more structured Grange still luscious and very tasty.

Penfolds Bin 95 Grange Shiraz 2004

A striking nose displaying loads of sweet fruit and vanillin oak characters. The palate is powerful and intense yet seductive and beautifully polished. It flows effortlessly and seamlessly. A stunning, young Grange.

Venison loin "sous vide" with black pepper, celeriac purée, cherries, sprout leaves, caramelized shallots and red wine jus.

The venison was perfectly cooked to retain its juice and flavour; it was dense yet so tender. Meat, of course, loves rich red wine as the tannins in wine polymerize with protein to provide the palate with smooth mouthfeel. I was relieved to find the cherries were not overly sweetened, if at all, so they didn't taste like jam which would have been quite tragic. As with all other dishes, the flavours were exquisitely harmonised and had enough intensity to match these opulent reds.

Wine with food:

Grange 1990:

I thought the wine may have been too powerful and intense but the deceptively rich dish more than handled the roaring power of this Aussie red. The wine tasted refreshing and textured at the same time with dark chocolate flavours coming through.

Grange 1991:

The ripe fruit notes in the wine were beautifully highlighted by the succulent meat and elegant jus. The firmer tannins in this wine worked brilliantly with the meat. The best match with the dish.

Grange 2004:

A magnificent wine on its own and the same calibre as the 1990 and 1991, if not better, yet the youthfulness of this wine didn't quite go as harmoniously as the other two wines with the meat. The match was still more than a pleasing partnership but it was outdone by the two gloriously matured reds.

The Fourth Course.

An assortment of French cheeses served with quince paste.

Two pairs of Penfolds Luxury wines were served with a selection of delectable cheeses. St. Henri is made from Shiraz and does not see any new oak during maturation. Bin 707, on the other hand, is a Cabernet Sauvignon wine and is matured in 100% new American oak barrels. Two very different styles of Penfolds wines: St. Henri is sensual and seductive while Bin 707 is a real knock-out, but both have the capacity to age incredibly.

Penfolds St. Henri 1990

St. Henri has been one of my favourite Australian Shiraz for a long time and this wine reaffirms my belief that this label is world-class and is a breathtakingly refined expression of Shiraz. The wine displayed staggering complexity on the nose without the new oak influence, with its intensely rich fruit, savoury mushroom, spice, leather and floral characters. It was mesmerizing. The palate showed richness, a dense mid palate, opulent texture and plenty of fine chalky tannins. Simply sensational.

Penfolds St. Henri 1991

Another intense vintage for St. Henri but a shade lighter than the profound 1990. Sweetly scented on the nose again displaying rich fruit, spice and dried herb characters. It's succulent and lavishly textured on the palate with excellent acidity and compact tannins. A wine showing lovely integration and maturity now but should go for another 10 years.

Penfolds Bin 707 Cabernet Sauvignon 1998

From one of the greatest vintages of all time, this wine was formidable and commanding when it was released. 11 years in the bottle has tamed the raw power somewhat, and it is now a gracious and glorious wine displaying game, spice, dried herb and sweet fruit characters on the nose. The palate is beautifully integrated with satin smooth texture, well pitched acidity and firm, bold tannins. The wine is superbly structured with an extremely long length. Very impressive and should go for another 15 years or more.

Penfolds Bin 707 Cabernet Sauvignon 2005

No matter how good a wine is, and this is outrageously good, a young wine always looks awkward next to a perfectly matured red, in this case three exceptional reds. The wine is saturated with blackberry, cedary oak and floral characters on the nose. It's intense and concentrated on the palate with a densely packed mid palate and loads of firm tannins providing excellent structure. A wine of immense power and grunt.

The Finale.

Penfolds Grandfather Fine Old Tawny Port

Lavish, sweet, opulent and complex, this delicious old port can handle any rich desserts. It's so rich it is verging on liqueur Muscat in thickness. Multi-layered and creamy smooth, this made the rich chocolate even more sinfully delicious.

Valrhona chocolates

By now I had forgotten that I just consumed a weekly calorie allowance in three hours, so when faced with three scoops of different chocolate desserts sitting on rich caramel sauce, I ate them without hesitation, and with a sense of duty just to see all three expressions of chocolate went with a generous serving of port. And they did.

Coming up:

Issue 8: June 2010

New Zealand Riesling & Other White Wines
New Zealand Syrah
Australian Riesling
Australian Shiraz & Blends

Around the Orbit

New Releases
Champagne Bollinger
Louis Roederer Champagne
Dry River Vertical Tasting
Ken Moon & Graeme Cavanagh's Chateaufeuf du Pape Tasting
Two Special Barolos 1961 & 1988 at an Italian Long Lunch