

Quaff 2011 - By Peter Forrestal

Premium Reserve 2 litre Casks

Bloody Good

Premium Reserve 2 litre Pinot Grigio

The Quaff 2011 Cask wine of the Year

As it was last year, this is one of the best casks around. It has fresh, clean, lifted aromatics, appealing savoury (rather than fruity) flavours that are quite intense, feels smooth and lively in the mouth, with a gentle, crisp finish. Quite similar to last years and a style to follow if you are looking for lightness of touch and a dry mouthfeel.

Bloody Good

Premium Reserve 2 litre Verdelho

This is a full-throttle fruity cask white that is cleaner, fresher and fruitier than last year, with a crisp, refreshing finish that lingers.

Good

Premium Reserve 2 litre Semillon Sauvignon Blanc

This is a straightforward cask wine that is clean and fresh and has a good mouthfeel. Although it is less intense and less fruity than some, it offers pleasant drinking.

Pretty Good

Premium Reserve 2 litre Cabernet Sauvignon

This is quite restrained: ripe sweet red berry flavours, smooth texture with some juiciness, and a pleasing gentle grip.

Pretty Good

Premium Reserve 2 litre Tawny Port

There's some ripe plum and sweet treacle and toffee here, smooth texture, viscous and easy to drink.

Premium 4 litre Casks

Good

Premium 4 litre Traminer Riesling

When you see a traminer riesling blend, you need to know that this will be in the sweeter spectrum. It won't disappoint anyone liking their wines with some sweetness. There are lovely spicy aromatics, ripe sweet flavours, finishing fresh, clean and sweet. I repeat what I said last year, it's a decent quaffer especially with a mild curry or a Chinese, Thai or Vietnamese stir fry.

Good

Premium 4 litre Liqueur Muscat

I found this needed a vigorous swirl to release all the aromas. After it was all a bit hard to resist. I finished by saying, 'This is surprisingly good.' There's butterscotch toffee, a hint of treacle, wild honey and muscaty grapey flavours, silky smooth almost lush texture and an irresistible finish with a touch of sweetness.



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Sacred Hill

Good

Sacred Hill Traminer Riesling

Here is a more penetrating floral aroma, more intensity of flavour on the mid-palate: overall, its sweeter, bolder and less subtle. Heaps of flavour and a crisp, clean finish.

Pretty Good

Sacred Hill Riesling

This is a clean, fresh, well-made riesling that is soft and round in the mid-palate and makes for satisfying, easy drinking.

Pretty Good

Sacred Hill Cabernet Merlot

This Riverina blend delivers a wine that is medium-bodied with a round, soft and supple palate highlighting redcurrant and cassis and some firmness to finish.

Pretty Good

Sacred Hill Shiraz Cabernet

A decent, easy drinking Riverina red that has dark plum and blackberry flavours, a slight grip to finish, yet is still pleasantly approachable.



Gulf Station

Bloody Good

Gulf Station Pinot Noir

Finding good pinots for less than \$20 is not easy and this will be available on promotion for much less than that. What you are looking for is a light - to medium bodied red that has intensity of flavour and silky smooth texture. The 2009 'Gulf Station' has good varietal character, is seductively fleshy with ripe dark cherry, strawberry and redcurrant flavours and fine, gentle tannins.

Good

Gulf Station Chardonnay

Still in good condition thanks to its zippy acidity, lean, tight, white peach flavours and admirable balance.

Good

Gulf Station Pinot Grigio

From De Bortoli's Yarra Valley range we have an impressive pinot grigio that has some talc aromatics, savoury flavours with some mineral notes, good viscosity, and a vibrant, zesty finish.

Good

Gulf Station Shiraz Viognier

When wineries get the blending of shiraz and viognier right there appears to be a thick seductive viscosity that adds to the wine's charm. This also has juicy, fleshy texture, dense plummy flavours and a pleasing approachability.



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Windy Peak

Bloody Good

Windy Peak Nouveau Shiraz

What I particularly like about the Nouveau Shiraz is that it is perfectly suited to the Australian climate. It's the kind of wine we should be making - and do far too rarely. One of the things that I love about De Bortoli is its restless experimentation and innovation. Best of all this wine has been made in sizeable volumes, so its widely available. Chief winemaker in the Yarra Steve Webber mentioned that it was a blend of regions, largely Heathcote and King Valley, and that he pushed boundaries in order to get bright vibrant fruit characters. In the heat of summer when you need a red, you could even quaff it with an ice block or two. It's inspired by the best wines from Beaujolais. I tasted it a year ago and loved its wild fragrances 'bright raspberry, mulberry and redcurrant flavours, juicy succulent maceration character and ripe gentle tannins. I tasted it just before Quaff 2011 went to print and felt that it was as fresh and lively as ever and loved its juicy macerated black cherries and vibrant, quaffable character.



Bloody Good

Windy Peak Classic White

A new white to accompany the delicious 'Windy Peak' Nouveau, a unique blend of sauvignon blanc, pinot grigio, semillon and vermentino that just works. It's clean, fresh and vibrant, has restrained but pleasant savouriness and lively zesty acidity. A summer quaffer with character.



Good

Windy Peak Sauvignon Blanc Semillon

This Victorian white blend is fresh, clean and viscous, with cool apple flavours and lively, zesty acidity.



Pretty Good

Windy Peak Chardonnay Pinot Rosé

There's bright strawberry flavours on this lively bubbly, which has refreshing crisp acidity to finish.



Pretty Good

Windy Peak Chardonnay

This Victorian chardonnay is soft, round and easy to drink, finishing crisp and clean.



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Deen Vat Series

Good

Deen Vat 2 Sauvignon Blanc

This is textural rather than relying on its fruit flavours: it's fresh, clean and lively, with good intensity and mouthfeel, a vibrant tang and refreshing natural acidity.

Good

Deen Vat 6 Verdelho

Here is a lively, fresh, fruity white that has plenty of flavour, weight and cleansing acidity. Uncomplicated, easy drinking.

Bloody Good

Deen Vat 9 Cabernet Sauvignon

I love it when cabernet gets those ripe, floral fragrances, that ripe sweet blackcurrant fruit, medium body and supple, approachable finish. It's rich and gently concentrated and is attractive drinking now.

Bloody Good

Deen Vat 1 Durif

This combines the power and dense concentration of durif with the irresistible softness that it gets in warm regions like the Riverina. In 2008, the Vat 1 is soft, round and fleshy, with rich, intense blackberry and dark plum flavours and some vanilla bean, almost coconutty oak. There are substantial though soft ripe tannins and so the wine is approachable now.

Good

Deen Vat 4 Petit Verdot

I don't think anyone in the world does a varietal petit verdot better than Australians and especially those Aussies in places like the Riverina. This is soft, round and fleshy, almost syrupy with redcurrant, black cherry and vanilla bean flavours and a pleasantly approachable finish.

Bloody Good

Deen Vat 5 Botrytis Semillon

Here is a worthy successor to the great 2006 'Deen'. While it may not have been referred to as a poor person's Noble One, much of the fruit that ends up here didn't make it into Australia's best dessert wine, De Bortoli's 'Noble One'. It's certainly often released younger and so appears fresher than its more expensive cousin. While this isn't the case at present, there's not much between these two excellent stickies, so at the price, 'Deen' looks Bloody Good. There is that hint of decadent marmalade on the bouquet, opulent, concentrated apricot, peach and wild honey flavours, satiny smooth texture, beautiful balance and a crisp, clean finish that lingers.



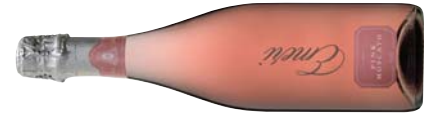
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Emeri

Good

Emeri Pink Moscato

There's wild strawberry fragrance to begin the seduction process, ripe sweet redcurrant and strawberry flavours, gentle fizz and a fresh, clean, sweet finish.



Pretty Good

Emeri Sparkling Sauvignon Blanc

This is quite subdued on the nose but has a lively, fruity palate and a refreshingly clean finish.



Montage

Bloody Good

Semillon Sauvignon Blanc

The 2009 De Bortoli Montage Semillon Sauvignon Blanc is clean, fresh and vibrant, and has some interesting mineral, sea shell complexities. It's a bit like the smell you get from freshly shucked oysters and is usually only found in expensive chardonnays. Anyway, I tasted this with three other experienced members of the panel and we all rated it a strong silver medal, which for a white that costs less than \$10 is remarkable. Enjoy.

