

SOUTHERN STYLES
Three great examples
of Tasmania's fine,
fresh chardonnays.



I agreed on the warmth from alcohol, but found good restraint, too. It's generously flavoured but maintains style. It's ready, yet still age-
2008 Shaw and Smith M3, Adelaide Hills (A\$38/NZ\$42) headed a brace of wines from this region. Hooke loved it. "Rich, complex, yet restrained and subtle," he told us. "A full palette of chardonnay characters and all in balance. Great flavour and length." The wine has satisfying savoury nuances and complexity, finishing dry and taut. It's beautiful now and should hold for a while.
2007 Stonier Reserve, Mornington Peninsula (A\$45) pleased me greatly, as I found the fruit shone through more clearly above the oak than in some previous vintages. Certainly, the wine has outstanding fruit intensity, white peach to the fore, with the gun smoke and funky overtones sitting well with it. Forrestal agreed. "Harmony here," he told us. "Fine, complex, intense and elegant. Grapefruit and savoury nutty elements. A seamless balance of fruit and oak." The structure is tight and there's excellent length. It's close to its best now.

2008 Vasse Felix Heytesbury, Margaret River (A\$50/NZ\$52) shares Pietro's generosity, although it's bound more tightly. Hooke found "powerful, concentrated grapefruit, with smoky barrel-ferment and lees complexity. A seamless chardonnay with incredible depth and power. Immaculately framed!" I loved the way the wine combined honeydew and citrus flavours with subtle complexity and texture. A remarkable chardonnay that should hold its qualities for at least a couple of years.
2007 Voyager Estate, Margaret River (A\$42/NZ\$49) has intense citrus fruit with fabulous complexity from oak and subtle funkiness. The palate mixes sweet fruit flavours and savoury overtones and the well-judged crispness and texture are impressive. Caillard wrote: "Intense lemon curd, spicy oak and a touch of marmalade. Creamy mid-palate richness and a fine, al dente, chalky finish." Voyager stands as high as the best of its Margaret River companions and this vintage has the freshness and structure to age as well as any.

The Challengers

ORANGE
 Orange has taken a while to deliver on the potential that many of us have seen, but its current performance is impressive. I was delighted to find how many of its wines had emerged from our tasting. There's a wide range of terroirs in the region, driven by altitude – and therefore temperature – and soils. The wines were nevertheless united in showing depth of fresh flavour and good acid balance.

2008 Bantry Grove (A\$19) shows fresh grapefruit and pear aromas and great depth. I liked the subtle complexity and the way a light texture dries the finish. It excited Forrestal. "Fine, restrained and pure," he wrote. "Tight, lean and mineral with subtle flavours yet good intensity." Hooke chipped in with "grapefruit and nougat"; it's enjoyable now but will gain further richness over a couple of years.
2009 Belgavia The Apex (A\$30) is quite perfumed, with ripe lemon and lime aromas and hints of candied fruits. Bourne thought it had "an outstanding nose, with pink lady apples and lemon. It's delicate and spicy, with nectarine and oak. Nice texture and mouthfeel." Caillard and I agreed, but thought it lacked some complexity, although it will undoubtedly develop more intriguing flavours over two or three years.

fuller-bodied wines, but still fresh and poised.
2008 Hedberg Hill Laras (A\$19) was the richest of the Orange wines we tasted. It has plenty of peachy fruit and a little toastiness from development, yet retains freshness. Forrestal found the flavours "ripe, tropical and fruity", while Hooke added "honeydew melon". Several of us agreed it was not especially complex, although it is well balanced, and I thought it had excellent depth of flavour. It's ready now.

develop into further complexity.
2008 Brokenwood Forest Edge Vineyard (A\$30) appealed strongly to Hooke, who wrote: "Nutty but fresh bouquet, with deep-set grapefruit. Rich and with fruit sweetness, but still understated." Bourne added, "Pink lady apple, nutmeg and spices. Medium weight, fine and long." Caillard summed up with: "Refreshing acidity. Old-school style." It's a generously flavoured yet structured chardonnay and is close to its best right now.

2009 Bloodwood Schubert (A\$28) uses a light phenolic grip and savoury oak to match its sweet ripe fruit in a way that pleased Caillard. "Fresh lemon curd, chestnut, guava and wet stone," he noted. "Fruit sweetness yet mineral and with biscuity oak. Fine, long acidity." Another year or two should see the diverse characters in this wine

and other elusive nuances that made the wine satisfyingly complex. A disputed the last comment, finding nice funky overtones, obvious oak weight of mouth-tingling fruit. Long, but without great complexity." I the variety. Bourne noted, "Lime cordial, melon, fig and spices. Good for its age and will clearly continue to develop well.
2008 Printhie Mt Canobolas Collection (A\$33) appealed to us with its fragrance and depth. "Very good fruit intensity," said Caillard. "Juicy pear flavours, with vanilla and lemon curd. Marked acidity and good flavour length." I thought the wine had been immaculately