

the drinks list

What labels will last the *next* 30 years? Greg Duncan Powell pops the question, and a few corks, in search of future icons



REGIONAL FOCUS GRANITE BELT, QLD

1 The attraction? Cool-climate Queensland with temperatures less like Noosa and more like Canberra. In the winter it gets down to minus 5 and sometimes snows. Queenslanders go there to experience log fires and overcoats.

2 What to drink? The picks of the bunch are: shiraz, cabernet sauvignon, tempranillo, pinot grigio/gris and verdelho.

3 Must-visit cellar doors? South of Stanthorpe – Hidden Creek, Symphony Hill Wines, Golden Grove Estate. Near Stanthorpe – Robert Channon Wines and Boireann.

4 Where to eat? The Vineyard Café does a lovely dinner (New England Hwy, Ballandean) and the Robert Channon winery, ABOVE, is a scenic spot for lunch. 50 Amiens Rd, Stanthorpe.

5 What to buy? Jamworks is a restored 1915 schoolhouse with an eclectic range of well-made preserves. The Zucchini Relish and Raspberry and Boysenberry Jam are favourites. Cnr Townsend Rd & New England Hwy, Glen Alpin.

VINTAGE TASTES

1998 MUMM CUVÉE R. LALOU, \$340 This is not a show-off Champagne. It's elegant and understated, and all about line, length and youthful vigour. With equal parts pinot noir and chardonnay, the lees development is not overt and the main feature is the purity of the fruit.

1998 TAITTINGER COMTES DE CHAMPAGNE, \$299 Lovers of blanc de blancs styles should taste this. It sets the standard and the 1998 vintage is brilliant. Complex, developed, yet fresh and light, it has a finish that lingers longer than most.

1999 MOËT & CHANDON DOM PERIGNON, \$250 Pale yellow with active mousse and tiny bubbles, its balance is perfect. The aroma covers high and base notes, from floral through spicy to nutty. The finish is supported by fresh, soft acidity.

CLASSIC FORMS

The Champagne flute evolved to catch the yeast sediment in its base. The shape hasn't changed much; however, with modern disgorging, it's no longer for sediment, but to preserve the bubbles and release the mousse in a steady stream. Non-vintage and younger bubbly work best with traditional flutes such as Dominique Portet's branded version, ABOVE LEFT, (\$8.50 each, see right for details) or the Luigi Bormioli Magnifico, RIGHT (\$69.95 per twin pack), which is almost unbreakable. Aged and vintage Champagnes and sparkling wines are said to suit a diamond-shaped, open-mouthed glass such as the Riedel Vitis, CENTRE, (\$134.95 per twin pack) and Luigi Bormioli Atelier (\$69.95 per set of four).

VE+T
LOVES

Ten-year-old Ardbeg Single Malt Whisky. It's not often that a malt would be better than its 17-year-old sibling, but it's the case with our favourite whisky.

next big things

Hardy's XO Brandy, \$145 A darling of the wine-show circuit, made from doradillo and palomino, it compares favourably with a high-end Cognac and Armagnac.

2007 Lost Valley Cortese, \$30 In Piedmont, the cortese grape makes a lithe white wine called Gavi di Gavi. Lost Valley is the only winery in Australia growing cortese, and is making a great version, with pristine nashi pear aromas and delicate acidity.

Matilda Bay Alpha Pale Ale, \$26 per six pack This is Australia's finest beer, with powerful flavours and excellent balance. Fragrant, bitter and quenching, it's a favourite of beer-drinking wine lovers.



Rusty Fig

NEW FIG IN TOWN Getting an unknown label, such as 2008 Rusty Fig Albarno, \$27, on a top wine list is hard, but winemaker Gary Potts has done it. "At dinner, I'll ask the sommelier if they have an albariño. Usually they don't, so I say, 'Well I do!'" Albariño is a Spanish white grape that's found a second home in Bermagui, NSW. Subtle aromas of pear, apple and almonds, and crisp acidity adore seafood.