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WINE DOWN with Max Cruz

Sit down ... in front

I'VE given up on air travel.

No, not because of Qantas, or out of protest over Alan Joyce's pay packet, there's just no suitable seats available.

You can't sit over the wing because the best part of flying is looking out the window, so you can't see anything except the wing and the engines, one of which, one day, will blow up and you'll be the first to see it.

On longer flights you can't sit in a window seat anyway, wing seat or not, because you will have to get up at some stage and that will annoy other passengers.

This is no less relevant even if they are family members who are much more inclined to be annoyed, so you will sit there cross-legged instead, which as anyone who has flown economy will know, is impossible.

But you can't sit in the middle seat either, or indeed in the middle rows in big planes, that's just no man's land.

You can't see out and you can't get up.

You can't sit in an aisle seat, unless you don't mind people clambering all over you because

they have a bladder condition or DVT or are one of those people who cannot leave their overhead luggage alone.

You can't sit near a loo, for obvious reasons, but you can't sit too far away either, just in case.

You certainly don't want to sit near a service area either, that racket goes all night, and smells of overheated nuclear food possibly worse than the smell of the toilets.

You can't sit at the back of the plane, that is the truly weirdest part of the cabin.

It is noisy, quite "whippy" like the last car of a roller-coaster, and good fun for kids, another reason you don't want to sit there, that's where they go.

Along with insomniacs, intellectuals and exercise freaks who hang out intellectualising, stretching and pulling up their funny socks.

The only place you want to sit is right up the front, but you need a licence, they lock the doors and there's no alcohol allowed.

Strewth, just give me another 187ml Jacob's Creek then.



**Aramis Vineyards
 McLaren Vale Shiraz
 Cabernet 2009, \$20.**

Not to be confused with the aftershave of the same name, this is nevertheless suitable for behind the ears at a barbecue or long flight. Great with meat.

— 8.5/10

**Clover Hill Tasmania 2007
 Methode Traditionelle,
 \$47.**

Catching up with old mates deserves a decent bubbly. Catching up with young mates deserves one too and this is about as decent as they get.

— 9/10

**Ross Hill Tom and Harry
 Cabernet Sauvignon
 2009, \$22.**

Best in show at Orange, we showed it due reverence but it was lunchtime so perhaps didn't show its true colours. Have it Christmas night rather than lunchtime turkey.

— 8.5/10

**Tempus Two Copper
 Series Grenache Shiraz
 Mourvedre 2010, \$20.**

It's not often screw caps go bad, but when they do they are dangerous. If this hadn't been such delicious wine, I'd be suing for stress and cut fingers.

— 8.7/10