

Autumn Drop

A selection of local wines for cool climate tasting (and cellaring).

Ross Hill Pinnacle Series Chardonnay 2009

Similar to many other Orange wineries, Ross Hill Wines was established in the mid 1990s. Owned by the Robson and Jones families, the winery now has vineyards on the western side of Orange and on the slopes of Mount Canobolas. A defunct apple packing shed-cum-new-winery was built in time for the 2009 vintage and crushed 320 tonnes. The current tranche of 2009 wines are looking very impressive, but one of the standouts is the 2009 Ross Hill Pinnacle Series Chardonnay. Orange is growing its reputation as a producer of great cool climate chardonnay and this will help further the cause. Loads of stone fruit and white chocolate flavours are set amongst a lovely, well balanced French oak background. There is great flavour intensity with a silky, textural mouth-feel and an attractive linear structure.

Windowrie Family Reserve Sparkling 2010

Windowrie Wines have unveiled their new 2010 wines including their 'Family Reserve' Sparkling made from 100 per cent Chardonnay grapes, grown on a 920 metre vineyard on the slopes of Mount Canobolas in Orange. Windowrie winemaker Anthony D'Onise is a firm believer that the long cool ripening season and the natural acidity in the region's fruit are perfect. Windowrie picked the Chardonnay early, when the fruit was showing a pristine green apple and lime flavour - and luckily before the rain came. They were after a vibrant style and so whole bunch pressed, and fermented in stainless steel. The wine was then matured on gross lees for a period to build texture on the palate. This is a crisp and refreshing sparkling wine with floral candy, lime and green apple flavours. There is some sweetness, but it is well balanced, with a crisp citrus finish.

Lowes Wines Organic Shiraz 2006

David Lowe is making some cracking wines in Mudgee, but also has a strong connection with Orange, making a number of the Tinja wines from grapes sourced from the slopes of Mount Canobolas at an elevation of around 1000 metres. The Lowe Shiraz 2006 (organic) is made from Lowe's 'Block 8' vineyard, hand picked and fermented in open wax lined concrete fermenters prior to 12 months maturation in oak casks. They were not looking for overt oak influence in the wine, but rather a softening of the strong natural tannins, to balance the rich fruit flavours. They have found this, with a wine tasting and smelling of blueberries, licorice, vanilla and violets. It is a wine to savour, and to tuck away in the cellar for a few years where it will mature and improve.

