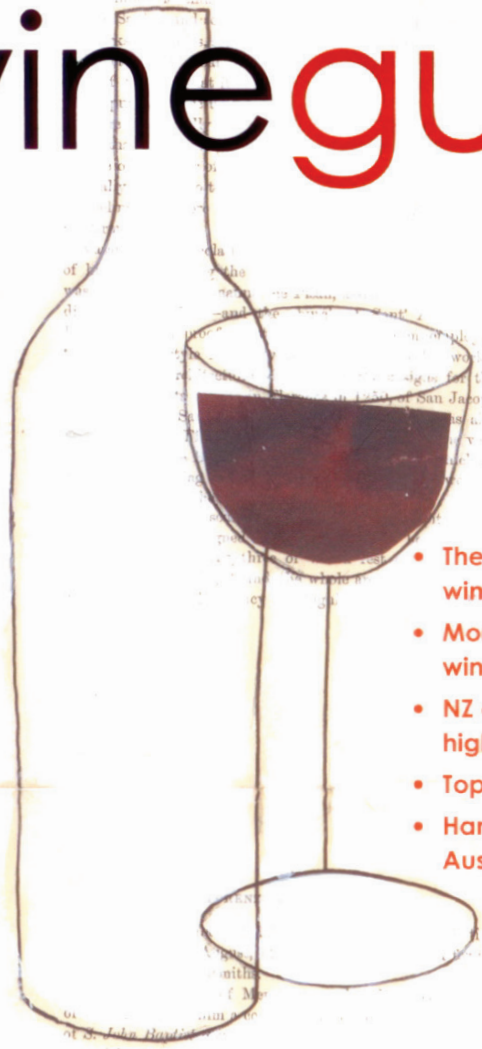




the **penguin** good australian

wine**guide**

2009



- **The ultimate Australian wine-lover's guide**
- **More than 1200 latest-release wines recommended**
- **NZ and other imported highlights**
- **Top-value wines under \$25**
- **Handy guide to the best of Australia's wine regions**

nick stock

## Penguin wine awards 2009



Following the initial tasting of more than 5000 bottles, I revisited these wines – sometimes more than twice – to arrive at what proved to be some very difficult decisions. Hence there are two joint awards this year, as the choice came down to either varietal and/or regional bias, rather than which wine was better than the other.

Each award is not simply handed to the wine that scores the highest points in its category. It's a process of looking at the whole picture and singling out wines that epitomise the very best that is possible for that style. Price, or value, and availability are also factored into the decision.

You'll note that points for the top wines are higher for some varieties and styles than others. All grape varieties and styles are not created equal, and their inherent strengths and weakness are reflected in the spread of points. Congratulations to this year's award winners.

# Semillon

The most esteemed semillon in Australia belongs to the Hunter Valley. There, the early ripening, low-alcohol fruit produces wines that are in their youth typically piercing, full of fine lemon flavour and even slightly grassy. Hunter semillons are revered for their capacity to age, evolving through the full array of lemon possibilities, eventually becoming toasty and delicate. They also represent extremely good value and are readily available as both young and old wines. The Barossa Valley has a long history with semillon, making a richer, riper style with cut straw as well as lemon character. Some Barossa producers wood-age their wines, while others prefer the unwooded styles, the latter being more suited to ageing. The Clare Valley has a number of excellent examples, and over in Margaret River the coastal conditions produce distinctly grassy semillon wines, pungent and easily distinguished. The common thread is that of value. **FOOD:** For the leaner Hunter semillons, think of simple steamed fish and crisp crunchy salads; tomato is great too, gazpacho in warmer weather. Aged examples and the richer Barossa styles complement chicken, grilled fish and some richer sauces.



## 2007 Andrew Thomas Braemore Semillon

Score **94**

### HUNTER VALLEY

Price \$25.00 ✓  
Quality ★★★★★  
Alc./Vol. 11%  
Drink 2013  
Closure Screwcap

The Braemore vineyard has a handy reputation among Hunter winemakers. Thomas crafts the restrained intense fruit into a traditional style: the nose sparkles with focused, pristine lemon fruit aromas, some dry straw in there too. Superb cut and brilliant sparkle on the palate, an unwavering line of lemon flavour, serious acidity to protect its future.

**PENGUIN BEST SEMILLON**

## 2007 Andrew Thomas The O.C. Semillon

Score **93**

### HUNTER VALLEY

Price \$20.00 ✓  
Quality ★★★★★  
Alc./Vol. 12%  
Drink Now  
Closure Screwcap

One of the great modern Hunter semillon wines of the last few years. Andrew Thomas captures a rich, flavoursome expression of ripe lemon fruit and waxy/savoury complexity. The palate has some weight and richness, delivered with elegant style, the acidity sails out through the finish, crisp and clean. Approachable, superb.

## 2006 Thomas Kiss Shiraz

Score **92**

### HUNTER VALLEY

Price \$50.00  
Quality ★★★★★  
Alc./Vol. 14.3%  
Drink 2012  
Closure Cork

This is one of the vanguards of the new Hunter school, unashamedly made in a modern style: deep colour, smelling very savoury ripe and dense, there's some musky oak and a twist of herbed meats. The palate starts out bright with plenty of dark fruit flavour, unfolding along ripe chewy tannins, finishing flavoursome and savoury.