

2009 Victorian Wines Show. The Wines

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We are continuing to see the results of the recent past tough viticultural conditions across the regions. Not with-standing this though there are many highlights.

The judges found some excellent young Rieslings. The cooler regions continue to impress with their tight minerality and long, fine, palates. Chardonnays were very good and from a style perspective we are seeing wines now that really fit into the international scene with ease while still retaining their regional heritage. There are still some 'old fashioned' examples about but we see fewer of these relics as time goes by. There is continuing confusion in the Pinot Gris arena as we continue to see oenologists and viticulturists searching for a definitive style here. Sugar levels need attention , with many wines out of balance due to levels that are too high . Again we have seen the ageing potential of Marsanne and some wines of great flavour and wonderful development and complexity available to those consumers prepared to cellar these wines for some time. Sauvignon blanc classes saw some very powerful examples but not many wines exhibited that 'moreish', 'drink me', appeal that the better wines from this variety can.

Red wines continued to impress. Duriff wines continue to improve as tannins are handled with increasing skill along with more suitable oak selection. Cabernet sauvignon wines really showed well here. Many wines showing their cool region heritage and fine 'claret' like style. Good use of appropriate oak in many wines ensures that consumers are getting access to some excellent wine from this variety that have varietal punch and mid palate flavour. In my mind, this section of the show was a highlight. The Pinot's were also of excellent quality at the top end although there needs to be more attention paid to attracting other wineries into the show. Shiraz classes were strong without being standout. There is great potential for those 'Rhône like' styles to shine in this show and there were some great examples here. Many wines though, showed either poor oak choice or overuse of oak. Over extraction can be a challenge as well and there is only one way to get length and flavour as they must inherently be in the fruit to begin with and require no overworking or over pressing to be expressed.

Fortified wines always do well and form a critical part of the Victorian scene. The strength of these wines across the board was extraordinary.