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## TASTINGS BY HUON HOOKE

### WINE OF THE WEEK

**Koonowla Shiraz, Clare Valley 2006**  
**\$22-\$25**

This low-profile Clare Valley producer is unknown to many but the vineyard, at Auburn, is a substantial 100 hectares and the wines are contract-made very well at O'Leary Walker Wines. Dark chocolate, espresso, wheat and vanilla aromas are joined by some toasty bottle-age characters, resulting in a smooth, rich, full-bodied and very generously flavoured red wine. Almost opulent in style, it has plenty of soft tannins and the alcohol is not excessive at 14.5 per cent. At five years of age, it drinks beautifully and has a good 15 years left in it. It's a bargain. Try Cellarbrations, Abbotsford, or Bottle-O, Darlinghurst. [koonowla.com](http://koonowla.com). 91/100.

**Food** All red meats and hard cheeses, especially grilled steak, venison and barbecued meats.



### BARGAIN OF THE WEEK

**Salena Petit Verdot, Riverland 2009, \$15**

This is a lot of red wine for \$15. Inky, ironstone aromas with dark-chocolate and black-fruit scents and a peppery, gunpowder high-note. A big, solid wine with surprising depth and tannin grip for such a cheapie. It's smooth and rounded in texture. Really over-delivers. Now to 2016. 88/100.

**Food** Barbecued meats



**TOP AUSSIE WHITE**  
**Paulett's Aged Release Riesling, Clare Valley 2006, \$40**

Medium yellow, this semi-mature riesling is beautifully toasty and mellow, with candied citrus aromas and a fine, delicate palate structure with gentle softness – and no austerity. A gorgeous riesling, now to 2016. 95/100. [www.paulettwines.com.au](http://www.paulettwines.com.au) or (08) 8843 4328.

**Food** Pan-fried flathead.





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**BEST IMPORT**  
**A to Z Pinot Noir, Oregon**  
**2008, \$40**

A bright, cherry-plum aroma introduces this excellent and inexpensive pinot from the US's top pinot region. Smooth, fleshy palate of good length and textural qualities. Medium-bodied, bright and youthful, still with life ahead of it. Drink now to 2016 and beyond. 92/100.

**Food** Duck risotto.



**INDULGE YOURSELF**  
**Fleury Cepages Blanc**  
**Brut, Champagne**  
**2004, \$96**

A biodynamic grower is responsible for the grapes and the winemaking in this wine, crafted from pinot blanc and chardonnay in the southerly Aube region. Toasty, biscuity bouquet with candied-fruit, nutty complexities enhanced by subtle use of barrels. Refined and fresh. 96/100.

**Food** Oysters natural.



**FOR THE CELLAR**  
**Teusner MC Sparkling**  
**Shiraz, Barossa Valley**  
**2005, \$48**

Deep red-purple with a big frothy head of bubbles. Intense spice, earth and dark chocolate aromas, a lick of oak. Understated sweetness, soft tannins, beautifully balanced and long, finishing dry. Drink now to 10 years. 91/100.

**Food** Chinese-style pork ribs.



**BEST ROSE**  
**Foster e Rocco**  
**Sangiovese Rosé,**  
**Heathcote 2010, \$27**

Pale salmon-pink colour; straw, wheaty and dry-herb aromas. Subtle hints of complexing oak. A lick of mid-palate sweetness enhances the subtle fruit, before a clean finish. Light and refreshingly quaffable. Drink now. 92/100.

**Food** Brie and crackers.

