

Hardy chardy

Chardonnay was in its heyday 20 years ago but it's coming back better than ever

Chardonnay is one of the most widely planted grape varieties on the planet and although it peaked in popularity in the late 1980s, there is a groundswell rising in its favour once again. It's a fairly malleable grape variety reflecting its terroir and the intentions of the winemaker, resulting in a broad range of styles. In our list there should be a Chardy to suit just about every white wine drinker, and at least one to tempt you to be a part of the Chardonnay revival.

2007 Salitage Unwooded Chardonnay, Pemberton WA

For the aromatic wine drinker, this lighter fruit-driven style has tropical fruits on the nose and palate but maintains good acidity and minerality on the palate. There is just a hint of almond and texture here too, but it is the crisp finish that I really love about this wine. RRP \$18-22.



2007 Bouchard Aine & Fils Chardonnay, Vins de Pay d'Oc France

From the south west of France, this massive region produces a significant volume of wines. This is still fruit-driven in style with pear, pineapple and citrus fruit with a zingy acid finish. Certain to please the masses. RRP \$19-23.



2006 Tin Cows Chardonnay, Yarra Valley Vic

Another example of a budget beauty from the renowned TarraWarra Estate. With citrus aromas and more melon fruits the oak is barely discernable. Fresh, bright and light this again offers cool climate style for a tiny price tag. RRP \$19-23.



2007 West Cape Howe 'Styx Gully' Chardonnay, Great Southern WA

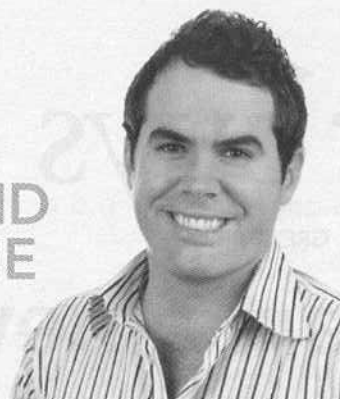
From the very cool region south of Margaret River, this has to be the best Chardonnay I have tried from this producer. White peach on the nose, with stunning grapefruit acidity running through a lovely honeyed viscosity. This is a beautifully balanced Chardonnay. RRP \$20-25.



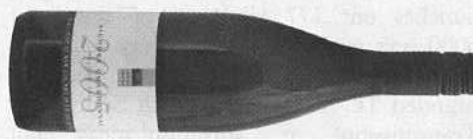
2006 d'Arenberg 'Lucky Lizard' Chardonnay, Adelaide Hills SA

This is a little heavier in style and headed towards the more traditional Aussie Chardonnay, with ripe fig on the nose and flavours of green melon marmalade and

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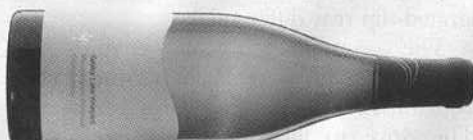


Nelson, north of Marlborough. This wine treads the path between weighty depth and texture while maintaining length and finesse. Plenty of buttery notes underneath stone fruits, with hints of freshly baked ginger cookies. Hard to find, but worth the search. RRP \$30-35.



2006 Yabby Lake Chardonnay, Mornington Peninsula Vic

This benchmark Mornington producer makes very tidy Pinot Noir and, of course, Chardonnay. This vintage shows peach, white flowers and lemon peel on the nose. Plenty of cashew and brioche flavours from a whack of high grade French oak, this wine typifies why I drink Chardonnay. RRP \$37-42.



Wines from chalk & cheese www.chalkncheese.com.au

2007 Mr Frog Chardonnay, Yarra Valley Vic

This entry point Chardy is from the more premium Yering Station stable and offers ridiculous value. Medium weight with a nose packed with nectarine fruit, the palate has hints of toasty French oak and offers cool climate finesse for a minute price. RRP \$12-16.

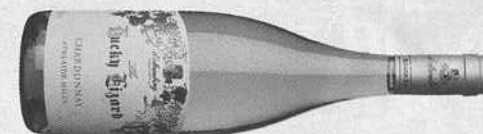
Home for the ageing

Storing wine is an art, and can make or break a wine collection which is why more and more people are turning to specialists to cellar their wine for them.

Home-based cellars are still a novelty and most Queensland homes don't have the luxury of an underground room, but managed cellars are catching on quickly. Wine-Ark is Australia's largest wine storage business and now provides facilities in Fortitude Valley where people can store wine in ideal conditions. Nationally, the company's cellars hold almost 5million bottles of wine and the newest branch at the Valley is set to add to that capacity by about 350,000 bottles. CEO Dean Taylor is expecting the first Brisbane cellar to be full within 18 months and is already looking for a second site. The first bottle to be entrusted to Wine-Ark Brisbane was a rare French vintage worth more than \$5,000 and Taylor said some wines the company has in its care are worth upwards of \$50,000.

The cost to cellar wine at Wine-Ark varies from \$1.50 to \$2.50 per bottle per year, with the price going down the more bottles you store. The minimum storage is based on one case of wine (12 bottles) at a cost of \$2.50 per month. Wines can be stored up to 20 years or more, with the average cellar time being six to seven years. Private cellaring is also available at extra cost. The company can help determine how long your wine should be cellared and send reminders when it's approaching that date, and then their delivery service can bring the bottle back to you for your enjoyment!

melted butter on toast coming from some time in French oak. Think big. RRP \$21-26.



2005 Neudorf Chardonnay