



MARGARET RIVER

John Jens—Western Suburbs Weekly—31 March 2009

Clairault's outstanding offering

There is something about West Australian sauvignon blanc. This state produces less than 10 per cent of Australia's sauvignon blanc fruit but it picks up a disproportionate number of the gold medals and trophies awarded on the national capital city wine show circuit.

Now the Clairault majors show perspective for 2008—and this is significant for a tiny producer from an isolated state that produces less than five percent of Australia's wine. In 2008 it gained three gold medals at the Sydney International Wine Competition, a gold and trophy at Royal Sydney, a gold at Royal Melbourne, a gold and trophy at Margaret River, a gold at Royal Perth and two gold medals at the Royal Adelaide Wine Show. Even more significantly internationally than the results above are Clairault's two gold medals, culminating in two trophies at the London Wine challenge in 2008, a show with the greatest international standing of all. Clairault was the only WA winery to win gold at this show in 2008.

The 2008 Clairault Sauvignon Blanc is outstanding. It has gained three silver medals at major wine shows and a gold in Adelaide late last year. This has shown marvellously in three masked tastings in recent months. In each of the tastings of between 14 and 28 masked sauvignon blancs, this wine came in either first or second. About half of the wines tasted were from across the Tasman and this speaks volumes for the quality of this wine. Will Shields, the winemaker at Clairault, has quietly repositioned Clairault at the upper end of Margaret River quality. Despite the wine quality and the very reasonable prices, labels, like music and art, are a very subjective topic but these lacklustre ones are preventing sales that wines at these levels and prices really deserve.

Clairault Sauvignon Blanc 2008

Wow. This is alive and pristine. It shows green pea and herbal characters along with hints of gooseberries that can only be gained from very cool climates—is some of this fruit from further south in Margaret River? This has the mineralogy that cool areas can provide and that we see in European and New Zealand more often than in this country. In all three tastings, the complexity of the "worked" middle palate adds flavour and texture. Within all of its wine making craftsmanship, compared to most of its peers this wine has the lively zest associated the Margaret River's best Sauvignon Blanc fruit and the length provided by vines that are very happy just where they are. Mr Shields has done a marvellous job, providing a long, elegant and subdued mouthful of delicious sauvignon blanc flavour. This is yet another very good wine from Clairault and it is clearly one of Australia's very few finest and best value for money. 18.1 points



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