

Jacob's Creek Reserve Riesling 2009 South Australia

2 Mar 2010 by Jancis Robinson

From \$9.99, £8.99, Aus\$17.99

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Sitting here in San Francisco, having just flown across the Pacific from Beijing for a couple of days' worth of celebrations to mark Ridge Vineyards's 50th anniversary (in exceptionally cold, wet weather), I realise it may seem a bit perverse to choose an Australian wine this week, but I think this is such a bargain, especially on export markets, that I want to spread the word.

As many of you know, Australia in general and South Australia in particular is one of the world's most prolific producers of dry Rieslings. In recent years, perhaps driven by [Jeffrey Grosset's](#) admirable success with bone-dry Clare Valley Rieslings, Australian Riesling producers seem to have been making their wines more and more austere so that some of them are actually almost painful to drink when they are released at one or two years old. This is infinitely preferable to the old days when the typical Australian Riesling had a bit too much residual sugar and could turn syrupy after two or three years in bottle, but still I am always on the look-out for Rieslings with real fruit in the middle however dry there are. (You might like to see [Julia's account](#) of a Riesling tutorial presented in the Barossa Valley at last year's Landmark Tutorial.)

In my recent tasting [encounter with Phil Laffer](#), head winemaker at Orlando and therefore responsible for the Jacob's Creek range, I was especially impressed by the current vintage of their superior Riesling, **Jacob's Creek Reserve Riesling 2009 South Australia**, and gave it the thoroughly enthusiastic score of 17+ out of 20, indicating that I think it will improve in bottle - more so than the 2002 Reserve that I tasted alongside it, which seemed to me slightly too sweet and heavy. (The Reserve Riesling 2009 seems to me streets ahead of the basic Riesling 2009, by the way, lest you think Phil Laffer cast a spell on me and that I have lost my marbles in a ridiculous pro-Jacob's Creek haze.) The great thing about the Reserve Riesling 2009 is that although it is dry, it is also lip-smackingly juicy on the mid palate – not one of these dry wines that seems to suck the saliva out of your mouth. Laffer suggested that this extra weight comes from the Barossa element in the blend.

The Reserve Riesling is supposed to be equal parts Clare, Barossa and Eden Valleys but they have been increasing the Barossa portion to such an extent that this year's vintage will be all-Barossa. (The image is Mick Rock of Cephas's picture of the famous Steingarten Riesling vineyard owned by Orlando - Purple pagers can find it on this [Eden Valley map](#) from *The World Atlas of Wine*.) The regular price in the US seems to be around \$14.99 although you can find it cheaper, while the recommended retail price in the UK, where Booths and CostCo are reputed to stock it, is £8.99. This seems to me an exceptionally good price for such an ageworthy wine. It is worth noting that, according to Wine-Searcher.com at least, Australians are prepared to pay considerably more for it.

Here's a super-refreshing wine at just 12.5% alcohol that would make a great aperitif but could also be paired with many an Asian-influenced dish. Shame it's the wrong colour for the Chinese...

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