

## A novel tasting for novel wines

25 Aug 2011 by Richard Hemming

De Bortoli of Australia have recently been running a series of tastings that embrace social-media channels in a way that might not be brand new, but still seems pioneering. At a set time, Steve and Leanne De Bortoli broadcast live via the ustream.tv website to a variety of bloggers, critics and consumers who have been sent the wines to taste simultaneously. Discussions then take place between all those logged in across channels such as Twitter and Facebook, which appear in a comments box alongside the live video.

It's a great idea but is an (increasingly rare) example of the technology not quite working – it unfortunately suffered from buffering interference and dropped connections. So I can tell you, for example, that:

'The really interesting thing about these wines is.'

'We thought there was too much emphasis on.'

And so on, but it is cruel to focus on the gremlins because there is something far more positive to mention – the wines themselves.

They are not the sort of wines to draw attention to themselves – even more clever, therefore, to run a tasting event that gives them time and space. Both are made in an understated, light and savoury style, a definite homage to traditional European tastes. The white is especially redolent of good Italian bianco, but the red has the ripeness of fruit and smoothness of tannin that seems more recognisably Australian.

Their objective was to make wines in the Mediterranean mould, where emphasis is more on style than variety. The results are successful in that respect – measured, balanced, restrained and food-friendly wines that illustrate the progressive face of Australian winemaking.

The live video was recorded and can be watched on the [De Bortoli ustream channel](#).

### **De Bortoli, Bella Riva Pinot Grigio/Vermentino 2010 King Valley** 16 Drink 2011-12

Very characterful nose, with some yeasty fermentation character? Six months on lees in both cask and steel. On closer examination, there is slightly pongy, sweaty, thiol sort of smell. Lovely neutral palate with a verdant finish. Smooth, pasty texture. (RH) 12.5%

£9.99 Tesco

### **De Bortoli, Bella Riva Sangiovese/Merlot 2009 King Valley** 16.5 Drink 2011-14

Cherry, leather, chocolate. Dry and with sculptured tannins. Black fruit, soft and round. Light body, but more like Australia than Tuscany on the palate, which isn't necessarily a bad thing! (RH) 13.5%

£9.99 Tesco