De Bortoli Estate Grown Chardonnay 2008

14 Oct 2011 by Jancis Robinson

From £15.60, Ca$29.95, Sing$54, Aus$129.95 for six

Find this wine

This wine of the week represents our current preoccupation of ensuring that you realise how good Australian Chardonnay is at the moment. Our collection of tasting notes on more than 200 Australian fine wines includes many Chardonnays of enormous finesse, harmony and even in some cases really compelling interest. My free article tomorrow paints a portrait of Australia's under-sung artisan wine producers.

The talented Sarah Fagan (pictured) made this wine at De Bortoli's Dixon's Creek estate in the Yarra Valley and perhaps it is significant that the wine that lit the flame for her when she was only 16 or 17 was a fine white burgundy her winemaking parents shared with her. I met her for the first time at the table of her boss Steve Webber, pillar of the Yarra and now chairman of the Melbourne Wine Show, when we were all shell shocked by the devastation of the 2009 bushfires there. You can see her in the first of these videos.

De Bortoli Estate Grown Chardonnay 2008 Yarra Valley is made from the produce of four mature, relatively low-yielding vineyards on the Dixon's Creek estate. The 2008 growing season was attractively undramatic in comparison with the flames and smoke of the succeeding one and the grapes were hand picked and whole bunch pressed before being fermented in old French oak with some lees stirring. Alcohol is 12.5% and pH a classic 3.38.

I found the wine quite delightfully delicate and precise, offering gossamer-like texture, really interesting refreshment and great value. In my tasting notes I asked rhetorically, 'What could you get from Burgundy at this price?' I would happily drink it any time over the next three years - although I see that this wine has been tasted several times by us and should point out that Julia earlier this year was worried about a hint of old wood in the bottle she tried in August.

I also note from her tasting note that in the UK the wine has been sold by The Wine Society, Swig, Planet of the Grapes and Noble Green. I'm a little late to recommend this as the only current UK stockists seem to be Flint Wines, Richard Granger of Newcastle, Cambridge Wines and RS Wines of Bristol. According to winesearcher.com there are also stockists in Ontario, Singapore and - surprise, surprise - Australia. Presumably the 2010 was the next vintage in view of the bushfires.

Find this wine