

## Crawford River, Young Vines Riesling 2010

29 Mar 2012 by Jancis Robinson

From £15.50, Aus\$24.90

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What a joy it is to be able to point out that an Australian wine is cheaper on the other side of the world in London than it is in its native land. Crawford River's UK importers OW Loeb are selling this stunning wine for just £15.50 a bottle (the 2011 will be £17.20).

Usually, bottlings of wines made from young vines are thin, weedy things with no more than a shadow of the appeal of the grown-up cuvées but I have tasted both the Young Vines and the regular Rieslings of this excellent producer recently and I think for drinking now I actually prefer the cheaper, Young Vines version. The regular Riesling 2010 (£23.80 OW Loeb) is finer, crisper and more transparent. It will probably last much longer and may even last as long as the hugely impressive Crawford River Riesling 1988 that was in such fine form as recently as last month when I tasted it in Sydney along with some of the most admired mature dry Rieslings in the world - see [For Riesling addicts](#).

But I tasted the Young Vines 2010 (£15.50 OW Loeb) immediately after tasting a range of dry Mosel Rieslings and the Australian knocked the spots off them - so to speak. The sugar-acid-alcohol balance seemed absolutely spot on (whereas some of the Germans had been a bit austere. There's a little residual sugar in the Crawford River but its overall impact is just off dry with the most impressive bright, vivacious, super-clean but interesting fruit. With lovely Riesling purity and 13.5% alcohol, this is the sort of wine that could be drunk with great pleasure either with or without food.

It is perhaps worth noting that these 'Young Vines' are already 11 years old. Even Château Latour puts the fruit of 12-year-old vines into the *grand vin*. The older vines were presumably planted in the late 1970s or early 1980s, just after John Thomson (pictured with his beloved Riesling vines) returned to the family from a career in finance in London and thought that the volcanic soils and cool marine influence from the Southern Ocean 30 km to the south might suit Riesling.

Crawford River is in the far south west of the state of Victoria, only about 90 minutes' drive east of Coonawarra and nowhere near any of Victoria's most famous wine regions. The only other wine producer within striking distance is Tarrington Estate, which makes an interesting Pinot Noir. The official Geographical Indication is Henty but you have to search hard on the label to find this less-than-household name. You can read more about [Crawford River Riesling back to 1989](#), published in 2008. Since then, John and Catherine Thomson's daughter Belinda has become an even more accomplished winemaker, not least in Rueda, where she is based for the northern hemisphere harvest.

You can buy Crawford River wines direct from [their website](#), where they have already moved on to the 2011 vintage for their Young Vines and Regular Rieslings.

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