



Sunday Age
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Desperately seeking sauvignon



\$25, Mornington Peninsula, Vic

Barney Flanders and David Chapman produce a small range of delicious wines that juggle elegance with intensity, like this brilliant new-wave sauvignon. Fermented on skins and with oak playing a role, expect a nose of rockmelon and green herbs, while in your mouth it opens broad, with a lovely mineral texture.

\$20, Adelaide Hills, SA

Former Torbreck winemaker Kim Teusner continues to craft brilliant, understated wines. This is a cracking sauvignon blanc where a bright nose of passionfruit, gooseberry, lanolin and green herb smells make way for a mouthful of wine that is intense with focused acidity and a racy, drying finish.

\$25, Mt Barker, WA

Larry Cherubino's Yard sauvignon – from the Channybearup Vineyard in Pemberton – has more than a hint of sancerre and is drinking beautifully now. Lean and perfectly formed, expect a nose full of green apple pear and grassy smells, while in the mouth it's soft, pure, vibrant and bone dry.

Perched 70 metres above a narrow rock-lined gorge, and with nothing more than a large rubber band separating you and mortality, I doubt there's a better time to ponder life's big questions than as they begin to count me down to the bungee jump. Have I been a good person? FIVE! Am I happy with what I've achieved? FOUR! Have I lived life to the full? THREE! Did I treat everyone with respect? TWO! Am I wearing clean undies? GO!

New Zealand sauvignon blanc is the liquid equivalent of bungee jumping. An adrenalin-fuelled assault on the senses that in seconds shocks, thrills and yanks you back to reality leaving you wondering, "What on earth just happened?" Do it often enough, however, and like anything in life, it slowly begins to lose its appeal.

If you're feeling a little jaded with sauvignon blanc – and you wouldn't be alone if you did – the good news is that there are some really exciting things currently happening with this variety closer to home.

Bucking the trend, and in a bid to create a richer and more textured style of wine, great examples are slowly beginning to emerge from regions like the Yarra Valley, Orange, Wrattobully, the Adelaide Hills, Margaret River and Mount Barker.

But the truth is the new face of Australian sauvignon blanc owes more to France's Loire Valley than it does New Zealand's Marlborough. Beyond simply finding the right site in which to plant the vines, there are lots of things that can be done in the winery to subtly enhance the flavours of sauvignon blanc.

Some choose to leave the grape skins in contact with the juice in a bid to add more weight and texture; some choose to ferment their wines with specific types of yeast; some choose to blend in a small percentage of another variety; some mature their wine in oak; and some choose to do all of the above and more. If you're keen to check out a little slice of what I'm talking about, here are three great locally produced examples of sauvignon blanc to add to your shopping list.