



Trust the west to set the new riesling pace



By **JOHN JENS**

THE best Australian rieslings have never been so exciting, nor so good – and WA is producing an ever-increasing number of this country's finest.

When WA began to produce great new-world chardonnays in the early 1980s, some locals wondered aloud as to how long it would be before the majority of the eastern states wine writers would acknowledge it in print.

It took 10 years, until 1995.

When WA began to dominate Australian cabernet quality, the same questions were asked.

James Halliday and the masked wine tastings in the Australian National Wine Show circuit came to our aid.

It was more clear cut with the west's semillon sauvignon blanc blends but the east still has no idea, or at least certainly don't comment on how wonderfully our varietal sauvi-

gnon blancs are.

Halliday's latest *2012 Australian Wine Companion* though, released five weeks ago, rates six West Australians in his highest ranked 18 sauvignon blancs (33 per cent) and 19 of his top 56 (34 per cent) – from the State that produces just 4.5 per cent of this country's wine.

This State's rieslings have changed in style over the past four years and our regular masked and comparative riesling tastings clearly indicate that the west is coming to be Australia's dominant riesling force as well.

Larry Cherubino has just released his 2011 Ad hock Wallflower riesling (\$19.50 and 18.3 points – yes, 18.3!). The Yard Riversdale Vineyard (\$27.50 and 18.3pts) and the Cherubino Porongurup (\$39.50 and 18.4 pts) and Great Southern (\$36.50 and 18.6pts)

rieslings.

Larry's 2010 sweeter, or as the young wine people say these days, "off dry" release, the Bimbimbi riesling (\$27.50 and 18.4pts) is probably the best of this style in the country.

These wines are delicious, and they actually are exciting, and we are just starting to see older bottlings and they indicate that they are going to age magnificently as expected.

Cherubino says that nothing has changed in the winery.

He says that recent vintages are marvellous and that he is surprised that even more winemakers didn't capitalise on the Great Southern riesling fruit after seeing how the early releases developed. This is the best riesling range in Australia.



Edwina Egerton-Warburton and Larry Cherubino with their son Ilario among the vines.