



drink

Paddy Kendler finds
some bargains for
winelovers

1 Banrock Station Shiraz Cabernet 2006 (\$9)

The currently available Banrock wines, from the Riverland, look smart in their new packaging. And the contents of the bottles are remarkably good value, too. For example, the latest shiraz cabernet features fresh red and black berry fruit flavour with just enough dry tannin towards the finish. Simple but effective . . . a handy quaffer.

★★★★½

2 McWilliam's Hanwood Estate Verdelho 2007 (\$10.50)

Could Hanwood be the best local brand at its price? The various members of the range certainly mount a strong case, and the latest verdelho can only enhance its reputation. Plenty of tropical fruit flavour, but what sets this apart from the average budget dry white is a certain vibrancy and vitality that is instantly appealing. Ready to party.

★★★★★

3 Ferngrove Shiraz 2007 (\$18.50)

Yet another example of the quality achieved by this Frankland River winery. It's a rich, full-flavoured shiraz holding plenty of ripe berry fruit flavour laced with pepper and sweet spice. Will mellow and improve over the next few years, but is already most

enjoyable, especially if decanted and breathed for an hour or two before serving.

★★★★½

4 Climbing Merlot 2006 (\$21)

Given the overall ordinary quality of merlot in Australia, a more-than-half-decent version is welcome. The latest Climbing, from the cool slopes near Orange, is marked by various berry and plum fruit characters . . . plus some leafy notes so often associated with the variety. The texture is soft and supple. For availability in Victoria, ph: (02) 8997 2817 or email smete@cumuluswines.com.au

★★★★

5 Tulloch Pokolbin Dry Red Shiraz 2006 (\$24.50)

The average Hunter Valley shiraz may not have the size and opulence of so many versions from South Australia and central and northern Victoria, nor are they usually as alcoholic, but they can possess a certain poise and elegance. The latest seems a reversion to a type of wine made in the 1950s and '60s, a well-measured dry red clearly designed more for the dinner table than the show judges' tasting bench. Definitely worth more than a passing glance.

★★★★

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weekly winery

Laanecoorie, Betley

ESTABLISHED in 1982 by John and Rosa McQuilten, the Laanecoorie vineyard and cellar door are at Betley on the Maryborough-Bendigo road. Though sometimes seriously affected by frost and more recently drought, the 8ha vineyard usually produces fruit of exceptional quality. Cabernet sauvignon, merlot and cabernet franc are combined for The Laanecoorie (\$20) and a smaller amount of prime fruit regularly produces a superb Reserve Shiraz (\$39). Open for tasting and sales most days but best phone first, 5468 7260.

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