

LIQUID ASSETS: BEST BUYS

What to drink, when, where and how... by Kim Hoepfl

The new

ABC



These days the term “ABC” (Anything But Chardonnay) can be redefined as “All Beautiful Chardonnay”. Leaden chardonnays made crunchy with over-exposure to oak have been replaced with more elegant versions. Here are a few new releases

Chardonnay may have been ubiquitous 10 years ago, but it's rarer these days. Failure to handle its natural affinity for oak with restraint put many a drinker off chardonnay and consequently it has declined in popularity. Fiona McDonald, former editor of *Wine* magazine, proclaimed it to be the “queen of white wines” and she is not far wrong. While sauvignon blanc possesses instant appeal, zesty and bright chardonnay offers a gentle alternative to the acid in sauvignon blanc. It is a wine that can be complex, subtle and big. These new releases show how it's done.

LINTON PARK CHARDONNAY 2007
Something of a blockbuster with 15 percent alcohol, its great fullness is tempered by zesty lime, making a citrusy, toasty wine. R60 per bottle at selected boutique wine shops.

AMANI CHARDONNAY 2006
A soft little number with a lingering aftertaste of vanilla, honey and lime – its smoothness and delicacy will have you flattening the bottle without realising it. Find it at selected boutique wine shops for around R75 per bottle.

GROOTE POST CHARDONNAY 2007
This is a seriously good, sumptuous, wooded chardonnay lifted with a sharp injection of limey acidity. Bottles are sealed with an elegant glass stopper, as effective as a screw cap but more beautiful. Find it at selected wine shops for R95 per bottle.

OAK VALLEY CHARDONNAY 2006
A cool-climate chardonnay from Elgin, made from the concentrated fruit of 16-year-old vines, it's marked by a delicate balance of creamy pear with zingy lime and grapefruit flavours, wrapped in a mineral savouriness. Winner of a gold medal at the prestigious London-based International Wine Challenge. R100 from specialist wine shops.

JORDAN 9 YARDS CHARDONNAY
Gary and Kathy Jordan are known for their meticulous winemaking and this wine represents the lengths they take their winemaking to. Its intense mineral backbone is overlaid with lemon and lime, and creamy, zesty deliciousness. R180 at specialist wine shops.

CHARDONNAY LOVES
• Rich, buttery sauces

- Smoked fish and grilled tuna
- Crispy chicken basted on the braai
- Cauliflower cheese
- Cheese soufflé



For special occasions

Philip Jonker of Weltevrede Estate is so nuts about chardonnay that he makes it in three different styles, one for each of his different soil types. His wines are characteristically concentrated and opulent, weighty and elegant. Look out for any one in the range: Poet's Prayer Chardonnay (made in small quantities only, R300); Rusted Soil Chardonnay (R105); and Place of Rocks Chardonnay (R90). He also makes a cap classique from chardonnay. All available at specialist wine shops.