



Sarantos Merlot Soft Press
VINTAGE: 2010
PRICE: \$15
RATING: 8.3/10

I'm told I am a soft press ... or something-or-other. This was \$14 in 2001, talk about soft inflation.



Bremerton (Langhorne Creek) Coulthard Cabernet Sauvignon
VINTAGE: 2010
PRICE: \$22
RATING: 8.6/10

Grab this by the Langhorne and buck off. Very serviceable stuff for the cost of Grange's packaging.



Vinrock McLaren Vale Grenache
VINTAGE: 2010
PRICE: \$25
RATING: 8.8/10

When catching a spaceship to colonise other planets with only a \$500 wine budget, you'd grab 20 of these over one Grange every time.



(Mount Eyre) Three Ponds Hunter Valley Semillon
VINTAGE: 2011
PRICE: \$20
RATING: 8.8/10

Straight semillon is somewhat scarce, so stock up and savour the sibilance. Universal food white. Salubriously simple.



Mount Riley Marlborough Sauvignon Blanc
VINTAGE: 2011
PRICE: \$18
RATING: 8.9/10

NZ sav is a different pot of passionfruit, and in the right dose, right time and right place, just right. Like any wine really, Riley.

G spot only \$500



Grape Expectations with Max Crus

THAT monument to Australian wine, the latest vintage of The Big G, The G Spot, or simply The G, was launched onto a 'suspecting' public recently.

Widely known yet seldom enjoyed first hand, the closest most come is its press release, amid speculation about its price.

With more going on than the Complete Works of Shakespeare and apparently with a value far beyond its not inconsiderable price tag, ownership of the G elevates purchasers immediately to the top rung of vinous society, from whence they may bask in the glow of newfound prestige.

No, it's not to the MCG (which admittedly would cost somewhat more) nor Gruntley the Wander Dog, but The Guide. The Australian and New Zealand Wine Industry Guide. That bible-like tome of essential oils of the wine industry and a fair whack of non-essential stuff too.

Want to know anything about the wine industry? This is your book. Myriad glorious statistics, googles of phone numbers and fabulous trivia.

For instance, did you know Australia's wine industry has been "growing by an average of one wine producer every five DAYS for the past 30 years"? And it's still growing!

Or more worryingly, wine production in 2011 was twice our consumption – so get cracking.

Queen Chardonnay has ascended the throne, as whites outstripped reds in the



Hahndorf Hill Winery Adelaide Hills 'Blueblood' Blaufrankisch, 2010, \$35. Fabulous, novel characters, but that's why you like anything, including people. Dry as Adelaide summers, so have something meaty handy – it's red. 9/10.

total crush. Shiraz still sits beside her, ahead of Prince Cabernet, while upstart Princess Sav Blanc is threatening suitor, the Duke of Merlot, as third heir to the grape kingdom.

Mercifully, perennial bridesmaid, Semillon, comes next in line on the white side of the family, two places ahead of

the ugly sister Pinot Gris. The shy Countess Colombard in between. Colombard?

Amazing. Incidentally, another notable G, Penfolds Grange, was released recently too. However my sample was lost in the post and, alas, I am too poor to indulge

my own research despite the venerable flagship becoming more accessible this year as Woolies, Coles and Costco launched a price war, bringing it under \$500 per bottle.

You're still better off getting the guide – a measly \$125 – and you'll still have enough left for three each of these.



Gardening with Pattie Gilbert

Winter's bloom

WE are now only two weeks away from the official winter season and I believe we are going to have a fairly cool one. So now is the time to get ready to protect your precious plants.

You can either cover them up, bring them indoors or place them into a sheltered position in your garden.

You can also spray your plants with a product like Envy or Stress Guard, which will protect them for up to six weeks. It may protect them for temperatures down to minus 5 degrees.

We spray our hedge along the front fence and other frost tender plants each year so we recommend it.

This time of year we often refer to as camellia time. You can't beat camellia sasanquas for unrivalled garden versatility, mostly because now is the time they are all covered in masses of flowers, in all the different shades of pinks, white and reds.

Camellia sasanquas are often used as flowering hedges or screens, and they

IN SEASON

Plant type

Zygo cactus or schlumbergera is a small genus of cactus with six species from the coastal mountains of south-eastern Brazil. Plants grow on trees or rocks in habitats which are generally shady with high humidity and can be quite different in appearance from their desert-dwelling cousins. Most species of schlumbergera have stems which resemble leaf-like pads joined one to the other and flowers which appear from areoles at the joints and tips of the stems. Zygo-cactus are now available in a huge selection of colours from nearly white to pinks, purples, creamy yellow, orange and reds, and make wonderful gifts.

look delightful in large pots or as specimens in the garden. They are extremely tough and easy to maintain, and their massed flowering will brighten up the dullest garden. They grow in full sunshine and are frost hardy.

When the camellia sasanquas are finished flowering, the beautiful camellia japonicas will then burst into bloom, with their magnificent formal blooms also in all the shades of pinks, creams, red and now many variegated blooms.

They prefer light shade and definitely no lime.



The colourful and sculptural zygo cactus.

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