



## Big reds and good bubbles

Jeff Gordon discovers a sparkling wine for discerning tastes

**I** START with a confession – I love bubbles. White, pink, red – I have preferences, but I will drink them, or at least taste them, whenever offered, and as they are not offered all that much I will seek them out anywhere. In fact, I must confess, I once went in for a haircut because I had been told they served bubbles. The drink was worse than awful, but the cut was ok.

The annual red and white bubble tastings are still a few months away but I recently had the Yarrabank Cuvée ('04, \$38 cellar door) and it was seriously good.

Utilising the experience of the French champagne house, Devaux, Yering Station in the Yarra Valley has produced a stunning bubbly. I have had three previous vintages and felt all were lacking something, but this vintage is a great pre-dinner drink. Dry and very delicate with a bit of apple and citrus on the nose and some nice layers of rich peachy flavours, it finished with an acidic bite that I really liked.

Two other very good, albeit pricey, wines have also recently been released. John Duval and David Fatches are very, very good winemakers and their two 2006 McLaren Vale shiraz, Songlines (\$110) and Bylines (\$75), are equally as good. I love the Bylines to drink now and for five years or so while waiting, patiently, for the Songlines to become one of the great wines of 2006 from anytime after 2012.

The highlight of both is the quality of the fruit and the balance of fruit, wood and acidity. While the Songlines still has the best to come, the potential is apparent. However, the Bylines surprises because it is already drinking beautifully, albeit after lengthy decanting, with everything coming together and the fruit simply magnificent.

Alternatively, and at a price we can afford, Chortles Edge ('06, about \$20) from Bendigo is a very drinkable shiraz made from Harcourt and Bridgewater fruit that shows off the talent of the BlackJack Wines winemakers. Good balance, mouth-filling berry fruit and soft tannins equals great drinking. Try it soon.