



top drops
CHRIS SHANAHAN

I've selected today's Top Drops to give summer refreshment without a big alcohol hit. They're all regional specialties offering character and flavour - and a clear head after a glass or two for those with kids in tow.



Mistletoe Hunter Valley Silvereye Semillon 2006
(8.1 per cent alcohol), \$17

You might call this a Hunter semillon for people who don't like Hunter semillon. The classic style tends to have low alcohol and a bone-dry austerity in youth. Although time adds meat to the bone, its appeal remains limited. But Silvereye captures the fresh, lemony flavour and crisp acidity of semillon, without the austerity. It's simple enough to do. All someone had to do was to do it. And Ken Sloan did. He made the wine, then arrested the fermentation before the yeasts consumed all the natural grape sugar. The resulting wine smells and tastes of semillon. But the residual sugar gives it a delicious sweetness. See www.mistletoe.wines.com



Chrismont La Zona King Valley Marzemino Frizzante
(12.5 per cent alcohol), \$18

Try Marzemino Frizzante for something different: a slightly effervescent (frizzante) red made from the Italian variety Marzemino. It's totally unlike traditional Aussie red sparklers - which tend to be older and more serious red-wine-like. Marzemino's flavours, to me, seem more summer-pudding-like with lots of tangy berry character. A touch of residual sugar balances this with delightful berry flavours and acidity. I tried it recently with Thai food and it worked well. The makers also suggest it as company for light cheese or tortellini skewers with pesto. See www.chrismont.com.au



Tulloch Upper Hunter Semillon 2007

(11.5 per cent alcohol), \$12.80-\$16

Tulloch Hunter "Julia" Semillon 2006

(10 per cent alcohol), \$22.40-\$28

While based at Pokolbin, in the Lower Hunter Valley, Tulloch sources fruit from the distinctly different Upper Hunter Valley, too. The younger of the two semillons expresses this difference. It's still "Hunter" semillon in its lemony freshness. But it's slightly rounder and softer than many and has great drink-now appeal, especially with delicacies like fresh seafood. "Julia", from the Pokolbin property, is in the classic, somewhat austere Lower Hunter style. It's taut, intensely flavoured, bone dry and destined to take on mellow "toasty" character with age. The lower prices given above are "club" prices. See www.tulloch.wines.com.au