



Off the vine



10 great wines under \$15

Save money without scrimping on quality. By *Mike Bennie*

Affordable wine can often be a migraine roulette – one wrong sip and you're bucket-deep in a five-star hangover. But genuine bargains have been emerging recently.

Cheap fizz

Redbank Emilys Pinot Chardonnay NV A surprisingly good Aussie sparkling, the wine shows squeaky-clean fruit, sprightly acidity and an overall freshness usually reserved for fancier wine. Around \$10. ▶ *Best Cellars, 91 Crown St, East Sydney 2010. (02 9361 3733 www.bestcellars.com.au).*

Hands down value for money

Yalumba 'Y' Series Sauvignon Blanc 2008 Sauvignon blanc can be insipid at this price point. However, this wine is one of the cleanest, crispest, most drinkable white wines under \$10 on the market. ▶ *Shortys Liquor, Shop 22, 1 Rider Blvd, Rhodes 2138. (1300 746 789 www.shortysliquor.com.au).*

Tetra-fabulous

Long Flat Chardonnay 2008 This wine shows fresh melon/peach flavours and is bright, fresh and satisfying. It also comes in a handy rectangular one-litre tetra-pak so storage is easy. Usually under \$10.

▶ *Dan Murphy's; various locations. (www.danmurphys.com.au).*

Picnic sip

Yalumba Galway Shiraz 2008 This has some decent structure for a wine often found on heavy discount. It offers a combo of red berry and mocha. Juicy and smooth, it can cope with pasta, pizza and barbecue foods. Around \$10.

▶ *Vintage Direct. (1800 069 295 www.nicks.com.au).*

Cultured red

Mike Press Adelaide Hills Shiraz 08 Whoa! This is the kind of wine that sends shockwaves through wine circles for its value-to-size ratio. Clanks around with muscular, dark berries and stewed plum fleshiness. Around \$12. ▶ *Mike Press Wines. (www.topdrobwines.com.au).*

Big name, small price

Three Brothers Reunited Shiraz 08 Winemaker Ben Riggs sure seems to crop up in a lot of places. This is an impressive, plush wine with loads of juicy blackberry fruit, depth of flavour and a perky, spicy finish. Around \$10. ▶ *Vintage Direct. (1800 069 295 www.nicks.com.au).*

Date night special

Taylor's Promised Land Shiraz Cabernet 2007 As date night looms may we suggest a block of dark chocolate and this wine? This has enough dusty tannin and sweet spice to complement the chocolate, yet has enough warm glow to spark off some lovin'. Around \$12. ▶ *Jacks Wine. (www.jackswine.com.au).*

Random party guest red

Wirra Wirra Scrubby Rise Red 2007 Keeping the budget down yet looking like you're being reasonably generous to a host is a fine art. The wine bottle looks good, while the wine itself has a serious inky colour, comes from a prestige

winery and punches above its weight in flavour. Around \$13.

▶ *Vintage Cellars, various locations. (1300 366 084 www.vintagecellars.com.au).*

Affordable sophistication

Auka Malbec (Argentina) 2007 While Europe swims in South American wine, Australia is just coming to grips with the generous, affordable grape styles. This one has big mocha and mulberry fruit with ample mouthfeel. Crying out for hunks of meat at around \$11.

▶ *Combined Wines, 70 Belmore Rd, Riverwood 2210. (02 9533 7955 www.combinedwines.com.au).*

Feel good for less

Shaw Vineyard Estate Laughter Series Cabernet Sauvignon 08 Eye-damaging packaging aside, this cheery red has blackberry fruit and firm tannins. Elegance normally doesn't come at around \$11 a bottle and some proceeds end up with children's charity Camp Quality.

▶ *Shaw Vineyards. (02 6227 5827 www.shawvineyards.com.au).*