



R.B.J.
theologicum
MATARO

RBJ Theologicum Mataro 2002

(\$27.50; 16% alcohol; screw cap; 93 points)

Think about alcohol. The vivacious grenache-dominant Vox Populi RBJ, which quickly sold out at 11%, (94/100) is cute. The 16% mataro/grenache (91) is party. But the smoked wurst/black pudding of this neat mataro handles 16%. With its complex velvet dryness replacing the simple silky sheen of grenache, it's a rival to the mighty Cascabel monastrell (Spanish for mataro). Stew pigeons with beetroot, bacon, herbs and juniper berries in red wine, and drink this. See?

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Diggers Bluff Stray Dog Barossa 2004

(\$16; 13.4% alcohol; screw cap; 93 points)

Bow wow. While neither the apostrophe, nor Simpson and his donkey, get a spot on this label, the wine still reminds me of old things, like the '60s and early '70s Ch. Reynella grenache mataro shiraz blends I drank in Paulos's Tanunda pub in the '80s. They weren't high alcohol, either. Waftage of leather, smoked meats, dust and blackberries stewing on the wood stove ooze up through this deep grainy tincture, making me very happy indeed. Pity it's not winter. Steak.



diggersbluff2@bigpond.com

Paracombe Holland Creek Adelaide Hills Riesling 2006

(\$19, 12.5% alcohol; screwcap; 93 points)

While Paul and Kath Drogemuller make big, soft reds at their beautiful vineyard at Paracombe, this riesling, from the deep ferruginous soil and shale of the Galipo family's vineyard nearby, is the opposite: austere, and crunchy with natural lemony acidity. Yet it reeks of powerful aromatics, with honeydew, honeysuckle blossom, even elderflower. It'll last for a decade beneath this trusty seal, but it's ravishing now. Whiting or garfish with lemon and fresh pepper.



www.paracombewines.com

Stoneleigh Marlborough Pinot Noir 2005

(\$19; 14% alcohol; screw cap; 89 points)

Burgundy must sweat when it sees pinot of this quality, made after its own traditional manner, at this price. The free-draining river stones of Marlborough, at the northern end of New Zealand's south isle, grow pinot effortlessly, reflecting the sun's heat from beneath the vines to ensure full ripening. Supple cherry, raspberry and prune flavours abound, with hints of dark charcuterie meats. It's not complex, but it's an enticing intro to a very cool grape. Saltimbocca.



www.stoneleigh.co.nz

Stonier Mornington Peninsula Reserve Pinot Noir 2005

(\$45; 14.5% alcohol; screw cap; 92 points)

It's a good thing, watching the Mornington wineries hit their straps. Stonier is one of the oldest and the vines that went into this fine pinot are around 25 years old. It's an elegant, yet complex red, with harmonious twists of dried fig and prune humming along beneath a dusting of lightly sooty oak and the beginnings of leathery maturity. There's some appropriately cute tannin, too, drying off the tail. Half an hour in the decanter really sets it loose. Confit of duck.



www.stoniers.com.au