
Optimiste Marquis Cabernet Merlot Petit Verdot

2006 RELEASE

Walsh appropriately labelled this a 'dinner-table wine'. It just has that feeling about it – the edge of sophistication, the sense that it's more about drinking with food than by itself. It's a blend of cabernet, merlot and petit verdot, and they team beautifully here. Flavours of toast and mulberries and dark cherries, all nicely knitted together. Licorice, dusty aftertaste. Delicious. **DRINK** 2009–2015.

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|---------|----------|
| Price | \$24 |
| Region | Mudgee |
| Alcohol | 14.5 |
| Seal | Screwcap |
| Value | ◆◆◆◆ |
| Auction | N/A |
| Score | 91 |

Optimiste Petit Verdot

There aren't many straight petit verdot wines doing the rounds, but those that are always seem to smell really good – this wine is an excellent case in point.

2006 RELEASE

It's a lovable wine. If the tannins didn't bite a little hard as the wine exits your mouth, we would have rated it higher. It smells and tastes of crushed summer berries, licorice allsorts, violets, dried herbs and woody, tobacco oak. It's medium-bodied, fresh and highly enjoyable – it tries really hard to be your friend. We like it! **DRINK** 2009–2012.

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|---------|----------|
| Price | \$18 |
| Region | Mudgee |
| Alcohol | 14.5 |
| Seal | Screwcap |
| Value | ◆◆◆◆ |
| Auction | N/A |
| Score | 89 |

Oxenberry Tempranillo Chardonnay

2008 RELEASE

You'd expect this book to be a chardonnay-free zone, but here's a red (tempranillo) blended with chardonnay. Indeed, about 14 per cent of the wine is chardonnay. It's so crazy ... it just might work. Indeed, it's fresh and sweetly fruited and does a fair rendition of deliciousness. It tastes of boysenberries, sweet strawberries and tar and, while it's only light- to medium-weight, there's enough flavour to satisfy. There's certainly good brightness and ripeness here, and the low alcohol allows it to glide easily through the finish. This would make for a great introduction to red wine – it's a sweetish crowd-pleaser. **DRINK** 2009–2011.

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|---------|--------------|
| Price | \$22 |
| Region | McLaren Vale |
| Alcohol | 12 |
| Seal | Screwcap |
| Value | ◆◆◆◆ |
| Auction | N/A |
| Score | 87 |