

RIESLING

Guide



AUSTRALIAN WINE DISCOVERED

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resources to discover and
share Australian wine



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supports the responsible
service of alcohol.





RIESLING



AUSTRALIAN WINE DISCOVERED



Crafted from grapes grown under vast and diverse climates, across landscapes millions of years in the making, every glass of Australian wine tells a story.

Like those who came before us, our modern growers and makers continue to be passionate, resilient and creative; constantly driven to explore new ways to perfect old techniques. Our community is connected by a mutual respect and shared love of crafting exceptional wine, while protecting the natural wonders for future generations to enjoy. Applying modern thinking to our ancient lands, we take playful experimentation very, very seriously.

So, if you're looking for the taste of adventure, let Australian wine be your compass. Because in every bottle of Australian wine, you'll experience the wonders of Australia – a reminder of the adventure and diversity that defines our culture and our land.

RIESLING MINIMAL INTERVENTION MASTERY

One of Australia's premier white grape varieties, Riesling is a delicate, expressive and versatile variety that benefits from a minimalist winemaking approach.

Australia is home to some of the world's oldest Riesling vines and a leading global producer.



LOOP VIDEO

Now is a great time to play the Riesling loop video in the background, as you welcome people.

FIRST TASTE – This may be a good opportunity to give everyone a taste of a classic Riesling. The full tasting comes later in the module.

RIESLING: MINIMAL-INTERVENTION MASTERY

Crisp, citrusy Riesling is a delicate beauty, shining most brightly when handled with a light touch. It has a long history in Australia, but like Riesling from around the world, its journey has had its highs and lows.

Australian stalwart:

Riesling was one of the original varieties planted, and from humble beginnings as a workhorse grape it has grown into one of our most renowned varieties – despite being misunderstood at times. Some of Australia's most admired winemakers are known for making great Riesling.

Leading global producer:

Australia is one of the world's top Riesling producers with production figures similar to the United States and higher than France (Germany takes the top spot). South Australia's Clare and Eden Valleys are famous for producing some of the best examples in the world. It's today grown in 40 of 65 of Australia's wine regions.

Pure expression:

Riesling is a delicate, expressive and versatile variety that benefits from a minimalist winemaking approach. Australian winemakers are exploring both new and ancient techniques that capture the purity of Riesling's inherent character while producing multifaceted wines.

Complexity over time:

This noble variety produces some of Australia's most age-worthy white wines, easily cellared for decades thanks to their high acidity and bright fruit characters.

Bittersweet reputation:

Riesling has battled misconceptions that it's a sweet wine, requiring it to be finer in quality and lower in price than its peers in order to overcome this perception. Today, however, its reputation is on the rise as people discover – or rediscover – the aromatic charms of this exciting variety.

**DID YOU KNOW**

It's rare to find a Riesling produced in Australia that's not bottled under screw cap.



TODAY WE'LL COVER

- The history of Riesling in Australia
- How it's grown
- How it's made
- Where it's grown
- Common styles
- Characteristics and flavour profiles

THE HISTORY OF RIESLING IN AUSTRALIA

1800s

First recorded as being imported by William Macarthur in 1837. Riesling is embraced by German, Polish and Czech settlers and soon finds a home in the Clare Valley, Eden Valley, Tasmania, Victoria, Mudgee and Western Australia.

Mid 1800s

Riesling is highly regarded and in demand, becoming synonymous with 'dry white wine'.

1930s

New technology makes its way into the Australian wine community. Refrigeration is used to cool fermentation temperatures, helping to preserve Riesling's delicate aromatics.



1960s

Riesling becomes Australia's leading variety in the white wine boom of the late 1960s and 1970s, despite a common misconception that it's always sweet.

1990s

Chardonnay's surge in popularity coincides with Riesling's decline from being Australia's most popular white wine.



1950s

Australian Riesling is further revolutionised when Colin Gramp uses cold-pressure fermentation to prevent the escape of carbon dioxide and control fermentation temperatures.

1970s & 1980s

The mislabelling of Riesling wines is corrected and Riesling shakes off its image as a sweet wine. Many famous Australian wine companies include dry Riesling in their ranges.

Today

Riesling is one of Australia's most important grape varieties – and its reputation is once again soaring.

THE HISTORY OF RIESLING IN AUSTRALIA

IN THE BEGINNING

Early 1800s

Riesling has a long history in Australia, potentially arriving with the James Busby collection in 1833. It's officially first recorded as being imported into Australia in 1837 by William Macarthur, with plantings at Camden Park.

Riesling soon found a home in areas of Australia that would become known for producing classic wines: Clare Valley, Eden Valley, Tasmania, parts of Victoria including Henty and the Grampians, Mudgee and the Great Southern region. It was embraced by settlers from Silesia (a historical region in Central Europe divided by the current boundaries of Poland, Germany and the Czech Republic) who were among the first to start making Riesling in Barossa.

In 1837 at the age of 18, Johann Gramp left Germany and headed for the new British colony of South Australia. He spent time on Kangaroo Island and in Adelaide before moving to the Barossa Valley in 1840. Johann settled on the bank of Jacob's Creek, planting a small vineyard in 1847 after recognising that the Barossa Valley was perfectly suited to vines.

Johann sent word back to Germany for cuttings of Riesling to be sent to the emerging wine region. The variety would soon become a classic Australian variety and a signature wine for Jacob's Creek.

Mid-1800s

By 1850, Eden Valley pioneer Joseph Gilbert had planted Riesling in an area of the Barossa Ranges that would become known as Pewsey Vale, one of Australia's first high-altitude, cool-climate vineyards.

Riesling was highly regarded and in demand, becoming synonymous with 'dry white wine'.

RIESLING REVOLUTION

1930s

In the early days of Australia's commercial wine endeavours, the demand for fresh, clean wines over sweeter fortified wines called for a new approach to winemaking. New technology began making its way into the Australian wine community in the early 1930s when key figures like Alfred Basedow and Rudi Kronberger pioneered the use of refrigeration to control fermentation temperatures in Australia – something that is now commonplace.

1950s

Australian Riesling was further revolutionised in the 1950s, when Colin Gramp pioneered the use of cold-pressure fermentation to prevent the escape of carbon dioxide and control fermentation temperatures.

Gramp's 1953 Riesling, which was made using this innovative method, was highly awarded and kickstarted the popularity of the clean, clear style with a succession of award-winning vintages.

1960s

In 1961 after years of neglect, the then-owner of Pewsey Vale, Geoff Angas Parsons, visited his friend Wyndham Hill-Smith of Yalumba and proposed they restore the vineyard entirely to Riesling. Vines were replanted on the contoured Eden Valley slopes.

At a similar time, legendary Riesling winemaker John Vickery created a crisp, tangy style of Eden Valley Riesling under the Leo Buring Label (bottled as 'Rhine Riesling'). Given sweet Rieslings were the trend at the time, this drier style was reflective of the shift to come.

A BITTER-SWEET REPUTATION

1970s and 1980s

The public's perception – or misconception – of Riesling being sweet affected its progress all over the world. In the 60s, 70s and 80s many sweeter Australian white wines containing various grape varieties were mislabelled as Riesling due to the variety's popularity. Despite potential confusion, Riesling became Australia's leading variety in the white wine boom of the late 1960s and 1970s.

By the early 1990s, thanks to concerted efforts from key producers across Australia, Riesling began to shake off its image as a sweet wine. Many large Australian wine companies included dry Riesling in their ranges – Seaview, Hardys, Lindeman's and Seppelt to name a few joining more boutique producers like Grosset and Crawford River.

Until the Chardonnay boom struck in the 1980s, Riesling was Australia's most widely planted white wine grape. Chardonnay's surge in popularity coincided with, or likely played a part in causing, Riesling's decline from its top spot as Australia's most popular white wine.

THE RIESLING REVIVAL

Today

Despite being somewhat misunderstood at times, today Riesling is one of the country's most important grape varieties – and its reputation is on the rise. The variety thrives in cooler climates such as Eden Valley, Tasmania and Great Southern, as well as the warmer climate of Clare Valley – which benefits from elevation and diurnal temperature variation – to produce world-class examples of this cellar-worthy, food-friendly wine.



SUGGESTED DISCUSSION POINTS

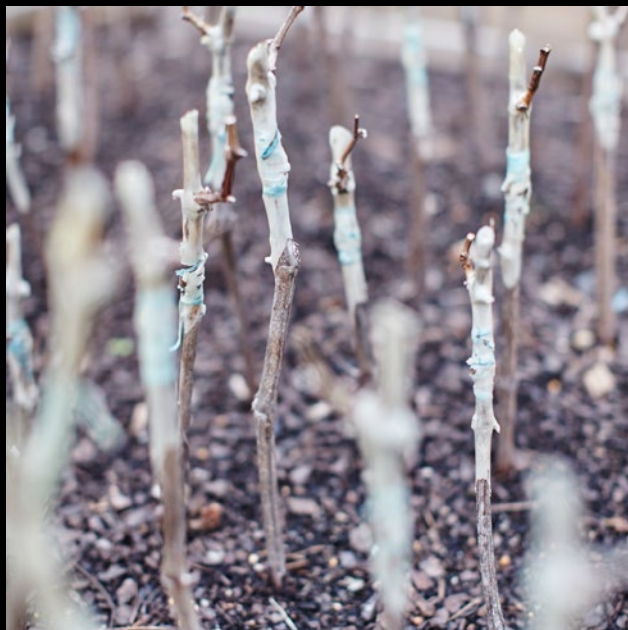
- How have broader wine-consumption trends over the past decades influenced Riesling and its popularity?
- Why were major technological advances such as refrigeration and cold-pressure fermentation more significant in the evolution of Riesling than in other varieties?

VITICULTURE

HOW RIESLING IS GROWN IN AUSTRALIA

Riesling is highly expressive of grape and terroir, showcasing the grapegrower's skill.

- Grows best in climates with cool nights and a long ripening season
- Thrives in a wide variety of soil types
- Small and compact grape clusters susceptible to disease
- Produces better quality wine when yields are kept low



VITICULTURE: HOW RIESLING IS GROWN

At its best, Riesling is a highly expressive grape, notable for its ability to reflect the place in which it was grown and bringing the grapegrower's skill to the fore.

Site selection

Riesling typically grows well in cooler climates with cool nights and a long ripening season. Some of Australia's top Riesling regions are influenced by the cooling effects of either ocean breezes or elevation. This produces wine with high acid levels, delicate aromatics and greater concentration of flavours.

Riesling also thrives in some of Australia's warmer regions, including Clare and Eden Valleys. Although classified as warm-climate regions, significant variations in altitude create multiple microclimates and mesoclimates and Riesling excels on sites where clear, sunny days enable slow ripening while cool nights maintain zesty acidity and fragrant aromatics. Include: Riesling is adaptable to a wide range of soil types. It generally prefers low fertility soils, keeping vine vigour and yield down.

The vine

Riesling is a low to moderate vigour variety, but it is quite fruitful and can develop long, trailing shoots when growth is vigorous. The grape clusters are generally small and compact, ranging from cylindrical to globular in shape.

Canopies and trellises

Open, divided trellising systems are often used to help prevent bunch rot within the tightly clustered grapes, with common trellis types including single wire, vertical shoot position (VSP) and the Scott Henry trellis system.

In warmer climates, canopy architecture techniques may be used to provide sufficient canopy shade and protect bunches from direct sunlight. This may involve modifying the trellis and training system to provide more shade (dappled as opposed to direct sunlight), or orientating vine rows to protect bunches from direct sunlight.

Pruning techniques

With its tight grape clusters, Riesling is susceptible to bunch rot, and particularly infection by *Botrytis cinerea*, a type of fungus. For specific regions where a benevolent form of *Botrytis cinerea* infection develops regularly, 'noble rot' dessert wine styles can be made. For other regions, growers use canopy management techniques such as leaf removal and sprays to prevent the formation of bunch rot and grey rot. Hand pruning is often used over mechanical methods.

Harvest

In cooler climates, Riesling ripens relatively late, and in Australia's cool-climate regions it is often one of the last of the white varieties to be harvested – generally February to April, depending on weather conditions. In the production of off-dry or sweet late-harvest styles, the retention of acidity through the very late stages of ripening allows the grapes to become concentrated by dehydration and still retain sufficient acidity to balance the high residual sugar. Extra care is taken during harvest to avoid damaging the grapes and releasing phenols that interrupt the purity of the juice and finished wine.

Yields

Vine yield can vary depending on region, site and viticulture practices, but generally Riesling has a lower yield than some other white wine grapes such as Chardonnay. It can overcrop when grown in deep, fertile soils but produces a better quality wine when yields are kept low.



SUGGESTED DISCUSSION POINTS

- How might flavour and texture vary between cool-climate and warmer-climate Australian Riesling?
- Why is a long ripening season important for Riesling?

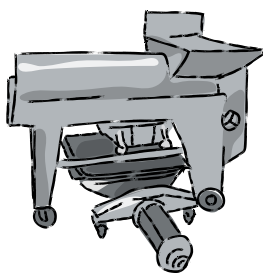
HOW WHITE WINE IS MADE

FEATURE VIDEO

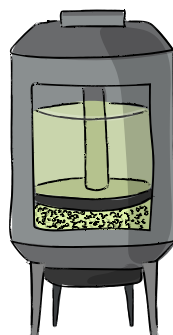
Now is an appropriate time to play the feature video, *How white wine is made*. While it's not specific to Riesling, it provides background context on the typical production process.



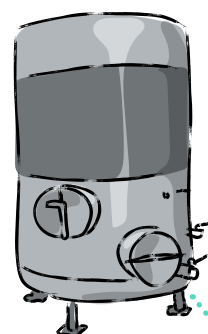
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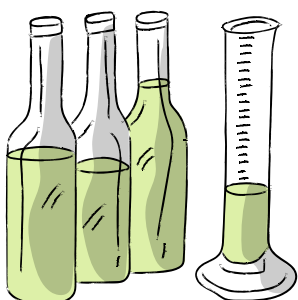
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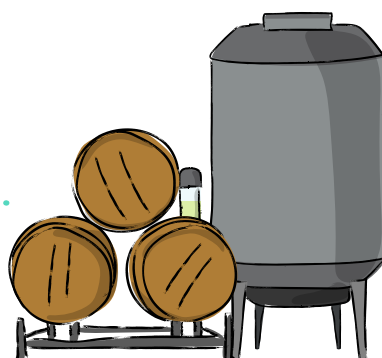
3. PRESSING



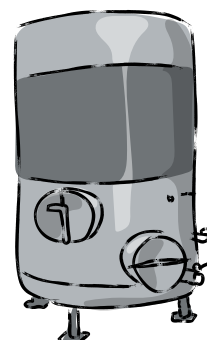
4. JUICE SETTLING



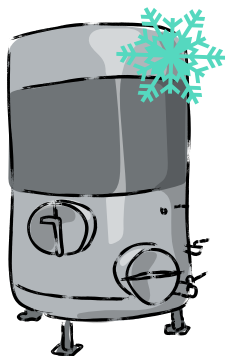
7. BLENDING



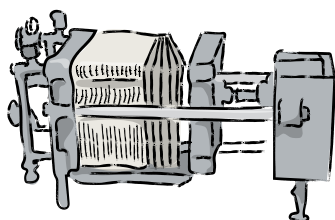
6. MATURATION



5. FERMENTATION



8. STABILISATION

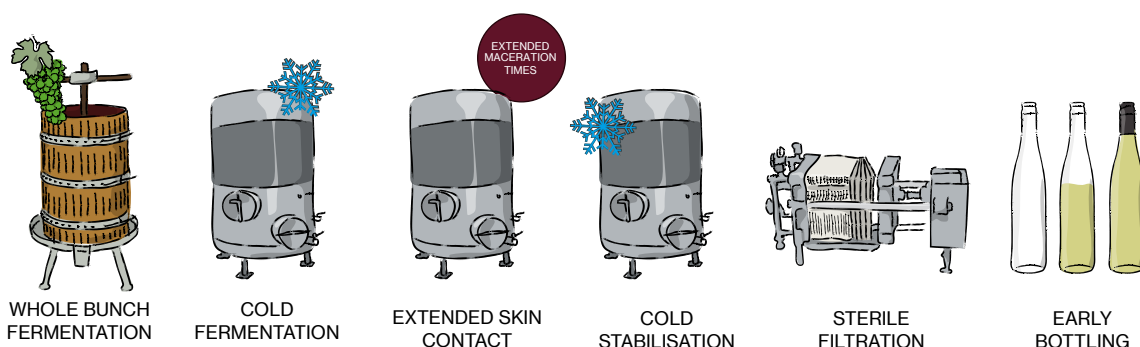


9. FINING AND FILTERING



10. BOTTLING

WINEMAKING: TECHNIQUES INFLUENCING RIESLING



WINEMAKING: TECHNIQUES INFLUENCING RIESLING

The best Australian Rieslings are about freshness, vibrancy and purity of fruit expression. The job of the winemaker is to preserve these qualities, typically using a relatively straightforward, minimal-intervention approach.

The majority of Australian Riesling today is made in a very dry style, but winemakers are starting to experiment with texture influenced by lees or skin contact. Off-dry and sweeter versions with considerable residual sugar are becoming more common, and are usually labelled with residual sugar levels.

Whole-bunch pressing:

Entire grape bunches are pressed, rather than crushed, to extract juice, rather than destemming before the crush. This minimises the extraction of tannins or other phenolics from the grape skins and seeds, and the presence of stalks in the press makes for effective drainage and promotes clarity of juice. The juice is often cooled after pressing. The result is a more refined, less astringent wine.



DID YOU KNOW

Juice that's naturally released from the grape and drains freely from the press is called free-run juice. It's considered to be better quality than pressed juice.

Cold fermentation:

Cool, temperature-controlled fermentation in stainless steel is common, preventing oxidation and keeping the juice in its freshest state. Riesling is prevented from undergoing malolactic fermentation – this preserves its acidic characteristic and produces a bright, vibrant quality without any buttery aromas.

Extended skin contact:

Some winemakers are experimenting with natural techniques such as extended skin contact to build texture and weight, and create interesting styles. The skins are left in contact with the juice, rather than pressing the juice off the grapes before fermentation, imparting phenolics and sometimes, depending on the style desired, an orange hue to the wine.

Cold stabilisation:

To help prevent crystallisation of tartrates (known as ‘wine diamonds’) in the bottle, Riesling may be cold-stabilised by cooling it to just above freezing point until the majority of the tartrates crystallise and are separated from the wine.

Sterile filtration:

Riesling is often sterile-filtered to remove remaining yeasts and bacteria.

Early bottling:

Most Rieslings are bottled early, usually within three to four months of vintage, to capture the vibrant fruit character and fresh, mineral flavours. Nearly all Australian Riesling is bottled under screw cap, further preserving the purity of the wine.



DID YOU KNOW

While the use of new oak has traditionally been uncommon in Riesling production, a small number of winemakers are using large-format old oak barrels during fermentation or maturation to build texture and complexity in dry and off-dry styles.



SUGGESTED DISCUSSION POINTS

- Why are malolactic fermentation and new oak almost never used in the production of Riesling?
- Discuss the characteristics of skin-contact Riesling. How does it differ from Riesling produced off the skins?
- Discuss the pros and cons of screw cap versus cork closures.



ADVANCED NOTES

THE SCREW CAP REVOLUTION

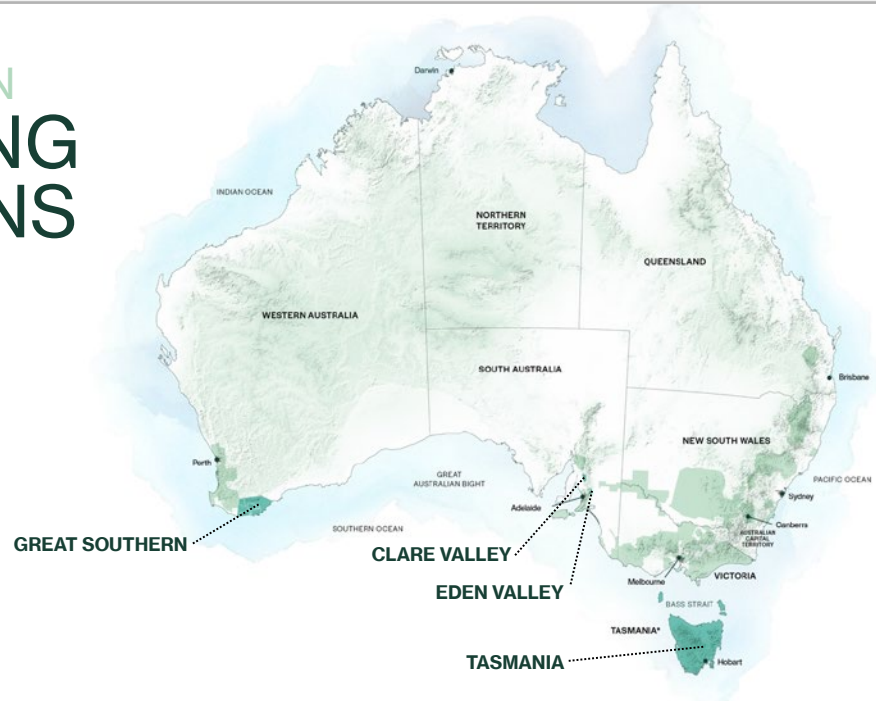
It was the winemakers of the Clare Valley, keen to retain the pristine freshness and vitality of their Riesling, who drove the screw cap revolution in Australia. The first trials were instigated in the 1970s by Yalumba with Pewsey Vale Riesling and Orlando, who bottled a batch of John Vickery's Richmond Grove Riesling under screw cap – a bold move at a time when consumers were convinced that screw caps meant ‘cheap’.

Encouraged by the positive results, 13 Clare Valley winemakers banded together in 2000 to champion the French Stelvin screw cap closure for their premium Rieslings. The consistency, freshness and vitality of the screw cap-sealed wines appealed to consumers, and screw caps soon became part of everyday Australian wine.

The best Australian Rieslings can be cellared for decades, with their bright, acidic, floral fruit mellowing into richer nutty, toasty characters. In most Australian wines and especially Riesling, a screw cap is used to help prevent oxidation, faults and cork taint (TCA).

The Australian-specified screw cap design adopted back in 2000 set the standard that virtually all screw caps follow today, and in 2016, 98% of white wines in Australia and New Zealand were sealed with screw caps. Today it is rare to find an Australian Riesling bottled under cork.

AUSTRALIAN RIESLING REGIONS



SOUTH AUSTRALIA



AUSTRALIAN RIESLING REGIONS

Grown throughout Australia, the best Rieslings are produced in cooler climates that benefit from ocean breezes or elevation. Riesling's most prominent wine regions, which we'll explore here, are:

- Clare Valley
- Eden Valley
- Tasmania
- Great Southern

Other notable regions include:

- Henty, Victoria
- The Grampians, Victoria
- Canberra District, New South Wales



CLARE VALLEY

- Five distinct areas
- Picturesque and geographically blessed
- Tradition of winemaking innovation
- World-famous Riesling region

FUN FACT

Clare Valley has its very own Riesling Trail, which runs along a disused railway line.

FEATURE VIDEO

Now is a good time to play the feature video, *Clare Valley Riesling*.

The Clare Valley consists of five distinct areas: Auburn, Watervale, Sevenhill, Polish Hill River and Clare. The styles produced in each region reflect the influence of climate, soil and geography. Clare Valley has a well-deserved reputation for premium wines of quality and consistency, producing both delicate whites and full-bodied reds.



FUN FACT

Clare Valley has its very own Riesling Trail, which runs along a disused railway line. Popular for walking, cycling and picnicking, it follows the contours and curves of the old train line from Auburn through the township of Clare and about 10 kilometres (6.2 miles) north to Barinia.

Geographically blessed:

Clare Valley is one of Australia's most picturesque wine regions, with undulating hills, meandering streams and gum trees twisting through vineyards and around old stone houses. The geographical advantages that make it such a lucrative farming and agricultural region also provide the basis for fine wine production.

Tradition of innovation:

Clare Valley is an influential wine region, thanks to its cornerstone of classic, traditional producers, coupled with a history of experimentation and a new generation of winemakers keen to throw out the rule book.

Famed Riesling region:

Some of Australia's finest Riesling is grown in Clare Valley, with the region's winemakers setting the benchmark for classic Riesling flavours and internationally acclaimed, age-worthy wines.



CLARE VALLEY SNAPSHOT

Latitude

- 33° 89'S

Climate:

The region enjoys a warm, moderate continental climate, with warm to hot summer days moderated by cooling afternoon and night breezes.

- Temperature data can be misleading due to the large diurnal variation (variation between a high temperature and a low temperature during the same day). Drops of temperature from as high as 40°C (104°F) during the day to 1°C (33.8°F) at night are common during the main ripening months, slowing ripening and adding complexity – especially important for aromatic vines such as Riesling.
- The undulating geography means sites receive protection from or exposure to cool breezes.

Growing season rainfall (GSR)

- 232mm (9.1in)

Calculated from October to April in Australia, GSR is a good indication of how much water is available to the vine. Rainfall in the Clare Valley arrives in winter, kickstarting the soil for the dry growing season ahead.

Mean January temperature (MJT)

- 22.3°C (72.1°F)

MJT refers to the mean temperature of the warmest month. Clare Valley features a warm to hot summer, but cooling afternoon breezes play a major role in slowing down the ripening process.

Please check the Wine Australia website for up-to-date information. Altitude refers to the highest and lowest vineyard in the GI region, not necessarily the highest or lowest point within the region and is calculated using the National Vineyard Scan and state contour datasets. Latitude is taken at the central point of the GI region. Meteorological data is taken from the national climate data bank of the Bureau of Meteorology: the Australian Data Archive for Meteorology (ADAM). Climate indices have been calculated across the whole GI region by the Antarctic Climate and Ecosystem CRC as part of a research project co-funded by Wine Australia. Growing season rainfall (GSR) and mean January temperature (MJT) based on 1991–2017 averages from the Bureau of Meteorology (2018). GSR is calculated from October to April.



SOIL

Clare Valley has 11 recognised soil types, ranging from classic terra rossa red topsoil over limestone (Watervale) to broken slate (Polish Hill River). Vineyards in the northern Clare Valley are grown in deep, fertile alluvial soils, while vineyards in the west are grown in sandy loam dotted with fragments of quartz.

SOIL

Clare Valley has 11 recognised soil types, most of which hold enough water to sustain vines, though in some areas minimal irrigation is needed in the hottest months. Dry-grown Clare Valley grapes deliver a great intensity of flavour and colour. Pockets of the Clare Valley, such as Watervale, hold classic terra rossa topsoil over limestone, similar to that found in South Australia's famed Coonawarra. Polish Hill River vines are planted in grey loam soil over sandstone interspersed with broken slate. Vineyards in the northern Clare Valley are grown in deep, fertile alluvial soils, while areas in the west are planted to sandy loam dotted with fragments of quartz.

The slate and limestone soils of Clare Valley, combined with its cool nights, produce a very distinctive style of Riesling that is typically medium-bodied with fruit richness and a long lingering acid sensation. They display spice and fresh citrus aromas. Many can be aged for decades.

Notable producers include:

- Grosset Wines.
- Jim Barry Wines.
- Mount Horrocks Wines.
- Petaluma.
- Pikes.
- Tim Adams Wines.
- Vickery.
- Wines by KT.





EDEN VALLEY

- Cool-climate neighbour of Barossa Valley
- Strong winemaking tradition
- Renowned for producing premium wines

FUN FACT

Eden Valley was named by the surveyors of the area after they found the word Eden carved into a tree.

EDEN VALLEY

Known as the ‘Garden of Grapes and Gums’, the elevated, cooler-climate region of Eden Valley is a small pocket of bustling vineyards surrounded by rolling hills and ancient red gum trees.

Neighbour to Barossa Valley:

Eden Valley is one of two regions in South Australia’s Barossa Zone, the other being the famous Barossa Valley. It is the smaller of the two, but a prominent region renowned for its top-quality wines.

Strong winemaking tradition:

Eden Valley is home to some of the world’s oldest Shiraz and Riesling vineyards dating back to 1847. Traditional grape growing continues with a focus on sustainability and authenticity, with fifth and sixth generations of the original settlers continuing to apply their craft.

Premium wines:

As well as Riesling, Eden Valley notably produces Chardonnay, Cabernet Sauvignon and Shiraz. Its wines are distinctive in their character, displaying impressive aromatics, elegance, complexity and finesse.



EDEN VALLEY SNAPSHOT

Latitude

- 34° 62'S

Altitude

Elevation is an important factor in determining mesoclimate in this hilly region. At an altitude of around 500m (1640ft), the Pewsey Vale, Heggies and High Eden vineyards at the southern end of the Eden Valley are considerably cooler than the more northerly Henschke vineyards at an elevation of 380 to 400m (1247 to 1312ft) around Keyneton.

Climate

- Cool climate with growing season temperatures significantly lower than those of the Barossa Valley.
- Multiple mesoclimates due to varying altitudes, aspects and slopes.
- Typified by warm days and very cool nights, with long periods of sunshine during the growing season.

Growing season rainfall

- 229mm (9in)

Growing season rainfall in Eden Valley is quite low, with more of its rainfall occurring in winter.

Mean January temperature

- 21.1°C (70°F)

The final stages of grape ripening and harvesting in Eden Valley take place in much cooler conditions than in the other regions of South Australia.

Heat degree days

- 1660



SOIL

Varied soil types ranging from grey to brown in colour, and from loamy sand to clay loams. Soils are generally well-suited to dry land viticulture, but there are patches of weaker sandy soils on the slopes, which have reduced water-holding capacity.

SOIL

The varied terrain of Eden Valley means there are a number of soil types. The most common range from grey to brown in colour, and from loamy, well-drained sand to clay loams. Ironstone gravels, quartz gravels and rock fragments are present in the surface and subsurface. These are well-suited to dry land viticulture, but there are also patches of weaker sandy soils on the slopes, underlain by weathered mica schists, which have reduced water-holding capacity.

Notable Eden Valley producers

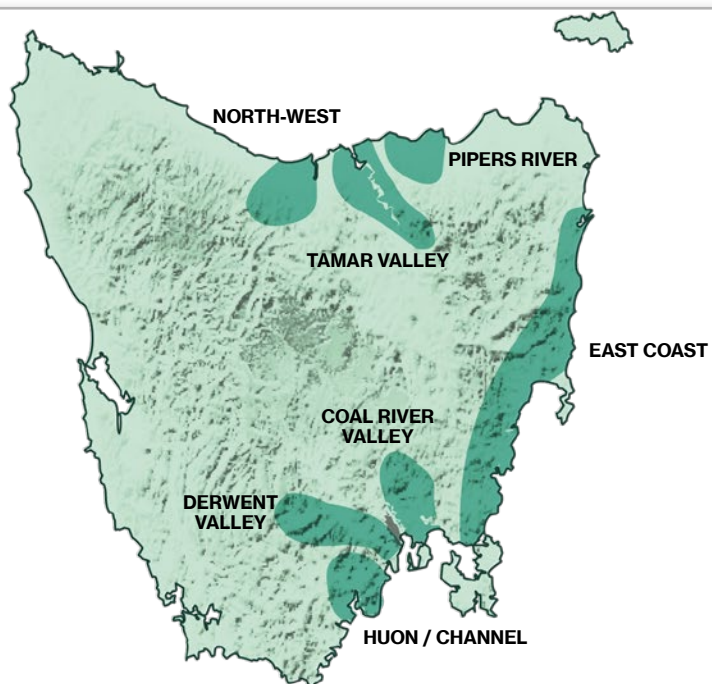
Eden Valley Rieslings typically display a signature slate, mineral character, strong lime juice and fragrant floral aromas and great intensity of flavour on the palate. As the wines age, toasty nuances appear on the nose and palate. Good Eden Valley Riesling will take 10 years or more to reach its peak.

Notable producers include:

- Chaffey Bros Wine Co.
- Dandelion Vineyards.
- Henschke.
- Peter Lehmann.
- Pewsey Vale.
- Smallfry Wines.
- Sons of Eden.
- Tim Smith.

TASMANIA

WINE GROWING AREAS





TASMANIA

- Fine cool-climate region
- Innovative wine community
- Gourmet paradise

TASMANIA

Cool-climate region:

Tasmania is one of Australia's finest cool-climate wine-producing regions, well known for producing award-winning sparkling wine, Pinot Noir, Chardonnay and Riesling. With a cool climate that has long, sunny and dry autumns, Tasmania boasts ideal growing conditions for developing naturally elegant, intensely flavoured and aromatic wines.

Innovative wine community:

Third-generation family wineries sit alongside corporate outposts and young winemakers pushing the boundaries, creating a diverse winemaking scene.

Gourmet paradise:

Tasmania is a picturesque gourmet paradise. It has the perfect climate for producing cheeses, premium beef, specialty honey, mushrooms and some of Australia's leading boutique beers and whiskies.



TASMANIA SNAPSHOT

Latitude

– 43° 08'S

Growing season rainfall (GSR)

– 477mm (18.8in)

Mean January temperature (MJT)

– 15.6°C (60°F)



DID YOU KNOW

Tasmania is Australia's coolest-climate winemaking region.



SOIL

On the lower slopes, the vineyard soils feature ancient sandstones, mudstones, river sediments and igneous rock of volcanic origin. Sandstone and schist appear in Derwent Valley. Peaty alluvial and sandy low humus soil appear in Coal River Valley. Pipers River boasts deep, free-draining, friable soils, while Tamar Valley is gravelly basalt on a clay and limestone base.

Notable Tasmanian producers

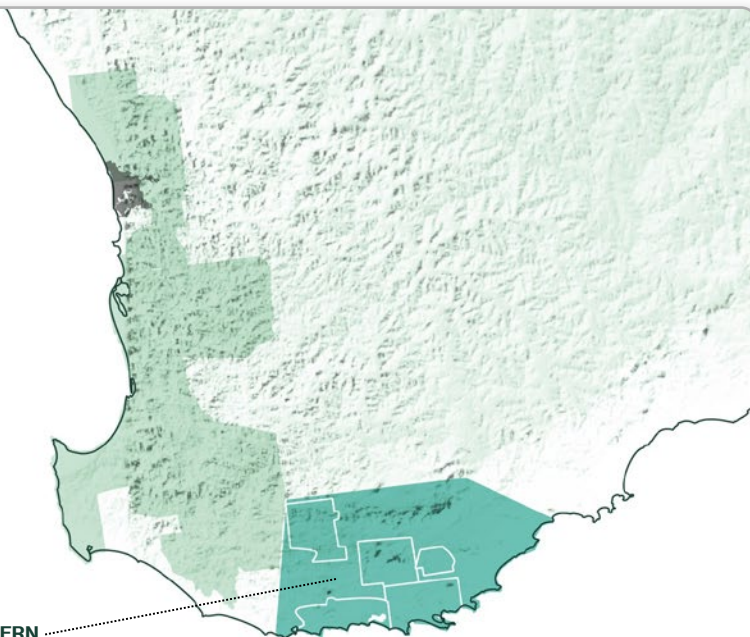
Tasmania's inherent cool climate right across the island makes it ideal for the production of high-quality dry Riesling. Typical Tasmanian style has great length, with citrus and mineral characters and high levels of natural acidity.

Notable producers include:

- Bay of Fires.
- Goaty Hill.
- Josef Chromy.
- Pooley Wines.
- Tamar Ridge.
- Waterton Vineyards.

WESTERN AUSTRALIA

GREAT SOUTHERN





GREAT SOUTHERN

- Vast wine region
- One of Australia's most rugged and remote
- Produces established and emerging styles

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The vast Great Southern region is Western Australia's largest wine region, boasting five distinct sub-regions: Porongurup, Mount Barker, Albany, Denmark and Frankland River. The three northern regions, Frankland River, Mount Barker and Porongurup, have built particularly strong reputations for their Riesling.

A vast expanse:

It's as large as it is diverse, stretching 150 kilometres (93 miles) in length and 100 kilometres (62 miles) across and providing an ideal environment for creating distinctive regional wines.

Rugged and remote:

Located in the south-west corner of Australia, the windswept Great Southern is one of Australia's most remote and visually striking wine regions. The nearest major city is Perth, a five-hour drive.

Established and emerging styles:

The region is best known for its Riesling and Cabernet Sauvignon but also produces quality Chardonnay, Pinot Noir and Shiraz, as well as emerging varieties such as Tempranillo.



GREAT SOUTHERN SNAPSHOT

Latitude

- 34° 59'S

Climate

- Climate varies greatly across sub-regions, creating multiple microclimates and mesoclimates.
- The inland, Riesling-producing regions of Mount Barker, Porongurup and Frankland River have a continental climate.
- Less rainfall and humidity occur in the northern sub-regions than in those farther south.

Growing season rainfall

- 251mm (9.9in)

The inland sub-regions of Great Southern receive moderate rainfall but less than the regions nearer the ocean.

Mean January temperature

- 20°C (68°F)

This varies slightly across the Great Southern Region, though the sub-regions of Mount Barker, Porongurup and Frankland River see identical or very similar January temperatures.

Heat Degree Days:

- 1680



SOIL

The predominant soils are similar to those of the Margaret River region – either lateritic gravelly sandy loams (marri country) or sandy loams deriving directly from granite and gneissic bedrocks. They are typically brown to grey-brown in colour, with the percentage of clay varying from one location to another. Fertility is moderate, as are typical yields.

Notable Great Southern producers

The Great Southern region is known for producing Rieslings of great intensity, typically in the citrus spectrum with an underlay of herbs. Fresh and nervy in their youth, they typically age superbly, seldom reaching the peak of their development in less than 10 years.

Notable producers include:

- Alkoomi Wines.
- Castle Rock Estate.
- Frankland Estate.
- Forest Hill.
- La Violetta.
- Plantagenet.



SUGGESTED DISCUSSION POINTS

- Why is Riesling grown so successfully in the Clare Valley, which is technically a warm-climate region?
- What are some of the differences between Clare Valley Riesling and Tasmanian Riesling?
- Why is site selection so important in the Great Southern region?

COMMON RIESLING STYLES

Riesling is a versatile variety that's all about tension and balance, with styles ranging from dry to sweet.

3 common styles in Australia:

- **Dry:** Lean, citrus-driven, low residual sugar
- **Off-dry:** A hint more residual sweetness balanced by acidity
- **Dessert wine:** Sweet, age-worthy, rich



COMMON RIESLING STYLES

Riesling is all about tension and balance. It can express a crisp, nervy nature with a racy backbone of acidity or be made in a rich, fruitier style that walks a tightrope of sweetness and acidity. Ranging from dry and off-dry to semi-sweet and sweet, the most common styles in Australia are dry and off-dry, with some dessert wines also produced.

Dry Riesling

The vast majority of Riesling in Australia is harvested for crisp, dry wine production, with the prominent regions renowned for their lean, citrus-driven styles. Riesling wines fermented dry generally have less than 5g/L residual sugar and moderate levels of alcohol (11% ABV and above), the sugar having been converted to alcohol. The best examples retain Riesling's natural fruitiness to prevent the naturally high acids from making the wine too tart.

Off-dry Riesling

Off-dry styles are becoming more common in Australia, as winemakers explore a wider range of Riesling wines. Off-dry Rieslings show a hint more sweetness than a dry wine due to their slightly higher level of residual sugar, without tasting very sweet. They retain fresh citrus and spring blossom characters, with acidity balanced by residual sweetness more reminiscent of fresh fruit than sugar.

Sweet, dessert Riesling

Late harvest Rieslings are made from grapes that are left on the vine and harvested later in the season, when they are riper and higher in sugar.

Select winemakers, including Mount Horrocks and Vasse Felix, are experimenting with 'cordon cut' wines. Cordon cut is the practice of cutting either the individual cane with bunches attached, or one of the growing arms (cordons) with multiple canes attached. This allows the grapes to raisin naturally on the vine, concentrating both flavour and sugar levels.

Some Botrytis ('noble rot') wines are produced in regions where the right conditions occur, such as Riverina in New South Wales. The grapes are naturally infected with *Botrytis cinerea*, a type of fungus, which rots and shrivels the grapes and concentrates their flavour.

These sweet, age-worthy Riesling styles are typically rich in colour and mouthfeel, with citrus, marmalade and apricot aromas and intense, complex flavours.



DID YOU KNOW

The best Rieslings can be cellared for decades. The acidity and bright fruit characters provide the perfect framework for maturation. High acidity aids longevity and screw caps ensure only minimal oxygen ingress.



ADVANCED NOTES

NOBLE ROT: FRIEND AND FOE

Botrytis cinerea is one of a number of different fungi that can cause bunch rot in grapevines. It's a weather-driven disease that can cause significant loss of grape yield and quality. Grapegrowers use a range of management measures to help prevent *Botrytis*. However, there are times when growers actually encourage rotting grapes – specifically, when they wish to create sweeter, more complex dessert wines. This can only be done in regions and conditions where the development of its benign form is possible (e.g. humid misty mornings and warmer/dry afternoons with breezes to dry out the grapes).

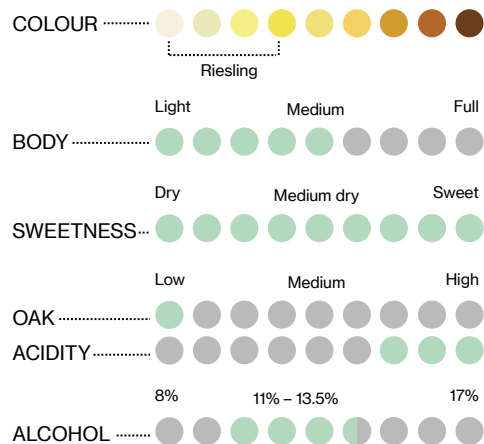
Botrytis causes grapes to dehydrate while maintaining the sugar levels, resulting in sweeter and more viscous wines. Riesling has a particular affinity for *Botrytis*, with the resultant sweet wine typically showing exotic citrus and spice aromas, as well as toffee, honey and apricot notes.



SUGGESTED DISCUSSION POINTS

- What would you expect to be the main differences between a dry and an off-dry style of Riesling?
- What foods might you pair with an off-dry Riesling that may not work as well with a dry wine?
- How do *Botrytis* Riesling dessert wines differ from late harvest or cordon cut styles?

RIESLING CHARACTERISTICS AND FLAVOUR PROFILES



FLAVOURS

- Lime zest
- Preserved Lemon
- Apple
- Orange blossom

TIME TO TASTE

Now is an appropriate time to taste and discuss your selected mix of wines.

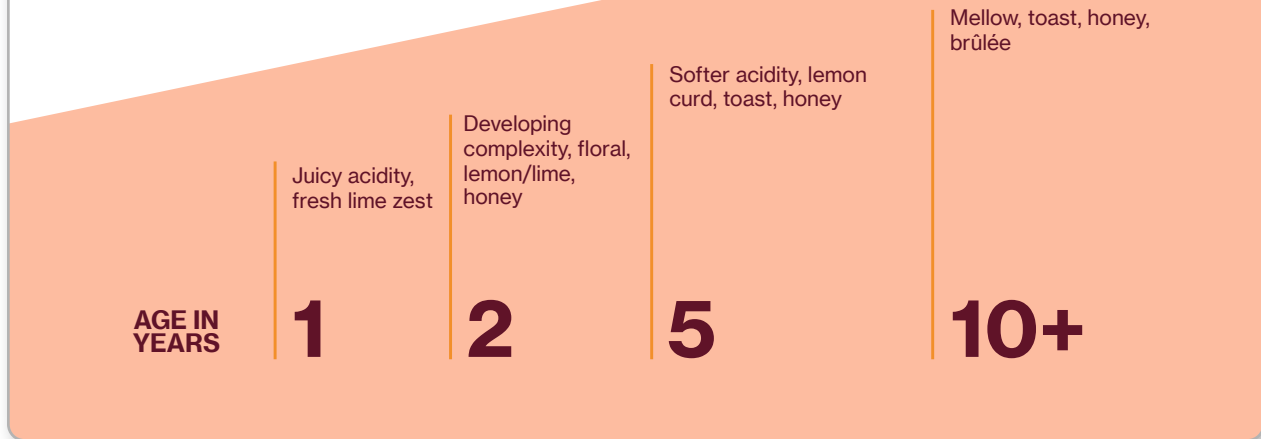
RIESLING CHARACTERISTICS AND FLAVOUR PROFILES

Australian Rieslings are some of the most pure and elegant dry white wines in the world. Riesling grapes produce light-bodied to medium-bodied wines with high acid presence. Depending on the region, typical Australian Rieslings generally have a floral perfume, strong citrus notes, green apple and exotic spice characters.

Australian Riesling is zippy, fresh and drinkable when it's very young, but the best wines can mature for decades. The vibrant, citrus-based characters transform into flavours of honey, toast and lemon curd, while the crisp, juicy acidity softens over time, giving the wines a smoother texture and richer mouthfeel.

RIESLING

COMPLEXITY OVER TIME



FOOD PAIRINGS



OYSTERS



PRAWNS/SHRIMPS



WHITE FISH



CHICKEN



PORK



SPICY FOOD



SOFT CHEESE

FOOD PAIRING

It's no surprise that versatile Riesling is a perfect partner for food.

Crisp, dry Riesling with lemon-lime characters:

Fish, shellfish and crustaceans are ideal pairings, especially served with a touch of lemon, capers, butter sauce or Asian dressings. Chicken and pork dishes work well with a medium-bodied style.

Off-dry Riesling:

A great partner to rich pâté or ripe, soft cheeses, providing a foil to the creamy richness. With its balance of sugar and acidity, it's also one of the few wines that pairs well with spicy Asian dishes, especially chicken and pork.

Mature or sweet Botrytised Riesling:

Sings alongside a pungent blue or soft white-rind cheese.

AUSTRALIAN RIESLING A FUTURE OF POSSIBILITY AND POTENTIAL



THE FUTURE OF RIESLING: POSSIBILITY AND POTENTIAL

With Riesling once again enjoying a glowing reputation as growing numbers of consumers discover, or rediscover, its charms, the future is bright for this noble grape. We can expect to see a greater diversity of styles as innovative winemakers throw out the Riesling rule book and experiment with different techniques that push the boundaries of possibility.

KEY POINTS TO REMEMBER

- Riesling is one of Australia's oldest varieties. For much of the 19th and 20th centuries, it was the most popular white variety until Chardonnay overtook it in the 1990s.
- Riesling has been in and out of fashion throughout its history in Australia, overcoming the misconception that it is a sweet wine. Today, its reputation is again soaring.
- Winemakers typically take a minimal intervention approach, allowing this delicate, expressive variety to sing. However, forward-thinking producers are also exploring new and ancient techniques to produce fascinating and complex wines.
- Australian styles are typically dry, with off-dry and dessert wine styles becoming more common. Dry styles are known for their racy acidity and bright fruit characters of lemon and lime.
- The best Rieslings can be cellared for decades, their high acidity aiding longevity and citrus fruit characters mellowing into richer nutty, toffee-like characters.
- The best Australian Riesling comes from cool-climate regions or regions with elevation or cooling ocean breezes, including Clare and Eden Valleys, Tasmania and Great Southern.

Suggested timings

This module is designed to be taught in one to three hours. How long you spend on each topic – or whether you cover it at all – will depend on your attendees as well as time allocation. Below are two different examples of how you may wish to divide your time.

ONE-HOUR CLASS

Topic	Time
Welcome and introduction	5 mins
The history of Riesling in Australia	3 mins
How it's grown	3 mins
How it's made	5 mins
Where it's grown	15 mins
Common styles	3 mins
Characteristics and flavour profiles (including tasting)	20 mins
Food and wine pairings	3 mins
Summary and class close	3 mins

THREE-HOUR CLASS

Topic	Time
Welcome and introduction	10 mins
The history of Riesling in Australia	15 mins
How it's grown	15 mins
How it's made	20 mins
Where it's grown	20 mins
Common styles	10 mins
Break	15 mins
Characteristics and flavour profiles (including tasting)	55 mins
Food and wine pairing	10 mins
Summary and class close	10 mins

SUGGESTED WINES TO TASTE

These are just suggestions – you can select whichever wines best suit your tasting and audience. Wines may or may not be available in your area.

Clare Valley

- Grosset 'Polish Hill' Riesling
- KT 'Peglidis Vineyard' Watervale Riesling
- Pikes 'Traditionale' Riesling

Eden Valley

- Pewsey Vale Riesling
- Rieslingfreak 'No. 8 Schatskammer' Riesling (medium sweet)
- Smallfry Riesling
- Sons of Eden 'Freya' Riesling

Great Southern

- Byron & Harold 'The Partners' Riesling
- Frankland Estate 'Isolation Ridge' Riesling
- Plantagenet Riesling

Canberra District

- Clonakilla Riesling
- Helm Riesling
- Ravensworth Riesling

Victoria

- Crawford River 'Young Vines' Riesling
- Jasper Hill 'Georgia's Paddock' Riesling
- Mac Forbes 'RS' Riesling (off-dry) (Strathbogie Ranges)

Tasmania

- Glaetzer-Dixon 'Überblanc' Riesling
- Goaty Hill Riesling
- Josef Chromy 'Delikat SGR' Riesling (medium sweet style)

Other recommended

- Crawford River Reserve Riesling
- Grosset 'Alea' Riesling (off-dry)
- Pewsey Vale 'The Contours' Riesling (aged example)

THANK YOU