

**FACES OF THE REGION**  
 Yarra Yering's Sarah Crowe (right). Below: Steve Flamsteed and Tony Fickers of Giant Steps tasting ferments.



## Top Ten Yarra Valley Wines

### 2016 Hoddles Creek Estate Road Block Chardonnay, A\$60

A new wine for Franco D'Anna and a stunning debut. It's all about texture with a hint of white stone fruit and citrus, creamed honey and leesy notes. Fuller bodied, but it has that tell-tale line of natural acidity and detail from the vineyard. Flinty, quite tangy, pure and astonishingly complex given its youth and vine age. 95 points

### 2015 De Bortoli Section A8 Syrah, A\$55

The vineyard was planted in 1971 and a select parcel goes into this A8. An insane colour – dark purple/garnet – and laden with pepper, spice and florals. The palate is medium-bodied savoury with dark red berries. Finely detailed with compact textural tannins – very fresh and long on the finish. 96 points

### 2017 Giant Step LDR Pinot Noir Syrah, A\$35

A new wine for Giant Steps. It's crisp, refreshing, juicy and supple. And it rocks. LDR stands for Light Dry Red and is full of fragrant red fruits, spice and it's cheery as anything. A lighter frame with a neat acid line and sweet tannins. It is really gluggable. 93 points

### 2015 Goodman Chardonnay, A\$40

Kate Goodman sources fruit from the expansive, by Yarra standards, Willowlake Vineyard as many do. A beautifully moderated wine with a sprinkling of powdered ginger, white stone fruit, and lemon zest with a floral lift and some oak spice. Tight and tangy with a balanced and persistent finish. 95 points

### 2015 Marli Russell by Mount Mary Marsanne Roussanne, A\$55

When this wine was in the conceptual stage, I tasted the individual components and thought, "Wow". Now as one, I still say, "Wow". Hints of honeysuckle, ginger flower and spice, it's all about texture though, creamy, luscious, round and smooth, but not heavy. The phenolics are bound in with the feel of this and the acidity keeps it fresh. 95 points

### 2015 Denton Yellow, A\$48/500ml

It comes in a long 500ml bottle, but don't be fooled: it's not sweet. It's chardonnay, but not as you know it. An oxidative style, protected by a layer of flor, and called Yellow in recognition of Jura's famed vin jaune. This is a beauty. It's full of salty, lemony goodness; umami through and through. It is really tangy with a twist of lemon and a very dry finish. 95 points

### 2017 Out of Step Willowlake Vineyard Sauvignon Blanc, A\$28

Out of Step make cracking sauvignon blanc, three of them, and the Willowlake Vineyard is a favourite. It has some skin contact adding to the texture and savoury layers. Laced with lemon barley water and zesty acidity with a crunchy daikon feel to it. It is tightly wound given its youth and will unfurl in time. 95 points

### 2015 Gembrook Hill Pinot Noir, A\$55

Gembrook Hill always produces divine, heady pinot noir – all perfume and restraint. This starts with a mix of charcuterie and savoury notes then some wild strawberry and cherries. It's medium-bodied with silky tannins, long and pure on the finish. This is something special. 96 points

### 2015 Luke Lambert Nebbiolo, A\$60

Nebbiolo specialist Luke Lambert is never truly satisfied with his

renditions of this great red. He should be chuffed with the 2015 – his most detailed and finest to date. There is no mistaking the variety with its perfume – all florals, woody spices, dried herbs – with crisp acidity and powdery tannins. There's depth and structure, yet the end result is a lithe wine. 95 points

### 2015 Yarra Yering Dry Red Wine No 2, A\$100

Sarah Crowe has transformed the Yarra Yering wines starting with less new oak and reducing the amount of time the wine is left in it. She's allowing the fruit to shine and it does in this No 2. Gorgeous aromatics, wafts of red plums, spice, florals and rose petals. The medium-bodied palate is flush with succulent fruit, super fine, velvety tannins and a brightness never seen before in this wine. Wow. What a drink. 96 points