

"YOU JUST BLEW ME AWAY"

DRANKSTER - Philip White, December 2008

95+++ Points

"This baby instantly reminded me of the incredible Lindemans Bin 3455 and Bin 3450 semillons from 1968. Fortunately, the economic rationalist idiots of Southcorp subdivided and flogged those old Lindeman vineyards in 1996, and it took the drive, passion and obsession of the Margans to begin buying those five blocks, rejuvenating the old vines, and making wines like this splendid wonder. It's very special country, with the Fordwich Sill, a freakish plug of ferruginous clay of volcanic origins imparting style and flavour that compares to the distinction afforded wines like, say, Petrus, by their peculiarly miraculous geology.

This drink begins with classic semillon lemon butter and lemon sabayon aromas, with a nose-tickling top note that smells like that deep red Broke Fordwich dirt on a hot summer's day, dry grass pollens on the breeze; maybe even some juniper. But in the Hunter, 2008 was cooler than normal, and Andrew had to coax the grapes to ripeness with painstaking viticulture, giving us a wine even more focussed and fine than normal. Which is saying something. The palate is as lean, tight, and humourless as a slide rule, but we can already see a little cushioning softness giving it flesh akin to those mighty old Lindemans' Bins. While they drank beautifully - under the squishy old corks of their day - for twenty years, this wine will last even more satisfactorily under that beautiful screw cap. It has a particularly savoury, stony, appetising finish.

We can read the source of Andrew Margan's fanatical cold steel winemaking techniques in *The Grape And I*, the seminal wine volume written by his father Frank the year those Lindy's jewels were created. "...just inside is a gleaming mass of new equipment", he wrote of Lindemans' winemaker Karl Stockhausen's radical new German winemaking equipment. (Wineries had dirt floors and stinky old oak in those days.) "The Willmes air bag press is there ... beside it is a blue anodised centrifuge for cleaning up the white juice. Stainless steel tanks rear into the roof. There is not a speck of dust to be seen. Everything has a place and there is a place for everything. It shrieks Teutonic thoroughness, order, thought, hygiene and efficiency. It has peace, restfulness, and an immense feeling of security. It is all this that makes it to me the most absorbing and most beautiful winery interior I have ever seen. Largely because that equipment is there, because it allows the white grapes to come in and be gently crushed and quickly cleaned and kept from the air in stainless steel sealed tanks and fermented and put into bottle in a matter of six weeks, and then everybody breathes a sigh of relief because the air cannot get to it anymore and all that lovely golden colour and fresh, full flavour is trapped in the wine until you and I buy it and chill it and drink it and swoon."

Swoon indeed. This is the best new semillon I've tasted for many years; perhaps the top white release this year. It should be hung with more gold than the hoards of Attila the Hun. Who judges these wine shows?"



Margan Semillon 2008