



The 2024 Halliday Year in Review

A Halliday Wine Companion Production

Halliday Wine Companion acknowledges the Traditional Owners of the Country on which we work, the Wurundjeri People of the Kulin Nation, and recognises their continuing connection to the land, waters and culture. We pay our respects to their Elders past and present.



Tasting for the *2025 Wine Companion*, which ran from May 2023 to March 2024, saw the **Halliday Tasting Team sniff, swirl and scribble notes on over 7500 wines** from every region of Australia, from Margaret River to Canberra.

This report is a summary of the team's findings from the *2025 Companion* tasting season. It includes figures around the number, styles and varieties tasted, emerging or existing trends, and some general observations.

The 2024 Year in Review report includes:

- Further emphasis on value in wine
- Greater focus on quality
- Australia's top-performing wine regions, with a spotlight on the Yarra Valley
- Why chenin blanc is the one to watch
- A first for Tasmania
- Reds vs whites & varieties





Value



Value

Last year, we reported that there were a number of affordable wines that received high scores in the *2024 Halliday Wine Companion*, and we're happy to see that this is a recurring trend. In the *2025 Halliday Wine Companion*, a staggering 32 per cent of wines reviewed received the Special Value rosette – happy news for consumers who are no doubt feeling the pinch in these costly times.

Of course, 'value' doesn't always mean 'cheap', and it's true that a \$500 wine awarded a perfect 100-points would qualify. But in this case, we can confirm that there are 2077 wines awarded the Special Value rosette that cost under \$50, including the Riesling of the Year (Rieslingfreak No. 12 Riesling 2023 Clare Valley, \$37). The Sparkling of the Year (Brown Brothers Patricia Brut 2018 King Valley) is also a steal at \$60.





Rise in quality



Rise in quality

Australia has undeniably been producing high-quality wine for decades, yet there was a notable increase in quality across the board this year and it is interesting to look at the reasons why. Aside from the obvious run of very strong vintages experienced by many regions over the past few years, we also found that difficult market conditions have played a part.

To mitigate higher-than-usual production costs, many wineries have opted to produce fewer wines, but with the same output in effort. In essence, they're opting for quality over quantity, and it's paying off. We're also seeing sustainability and future-proofing initiatives coming to fruition, in particular climate-led planting.

Take Yarra Yering's Dry Red No. 3, winner of the 2025 Other Reds & Blends of the Year. A wine made from a blend of touriga nacional, tinta cão, tinta amarela, tinta roriz, alvarelhão and sousão, all sourced from 1990 plantings.



“There’s a reason why alternative grape varieties are so important in the Australian wine context. And that is because they are so well suited and have been chosen in many cases because they hold their acidity in a dry and warm climate.”

Jeni Port, Halliday Tasting Team



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Australia's top performers



Australia's top performers

It's not surprising that South Australia's Barossa Valley (54), Victoria's Yarra Valley (51), and Western Australia's Margaret River (44) are home to the highest number of 5-star wineries in the country, however these rankings change when we look at percentages rather than the number. The Yarra Valley (at 79 per cent) and the Barossa Valley (at 46 per cent) are still up there, but are joined by smaller regions such as New South Wales' Hunter Valley, with 47 per cent of its wineries rated 5-stars, and the Pyrenees and Rutherglen, both in Victoria, with 50 per cent and 70 per cent respectively.

Overall, Victoria was the highest performing state, winning awards in 11 varietal categories. Five of those went to the Yarra Valley, which was the top performing region, and had the highest number of 97+ point wines. It also had the most major award wins including Winery of the Year and Wine of the Year.





All eyes on chenin blanc



All eyes on chenin blanc

Although it accounted for just 1.5 per cent of white wines tasted for the *2025 Wine Companion*, chenin blanc won the Other Whites and Blends category for the second year in a row. Western Australia, notably the Swan Valley and Margaret River, has been flying the flag for this adaptable variety for years – it was the mainstay in Jack Mann’s Houghton White Burgundy, the John Kosovich Bottle Aged Reserve Chenin Blanc 2018 won this category at the 2024 Companion Awards, and let’s not forget the International Chenin Symposium and Sausage Sizzle, established by L.A.S Vino winemaker Nic Peterkin in 2019. But clearly, influence from the west is spreading. This year’s winning wine, the 2022 MMAD Blewitt Springs Chenin Blanc from South Australia, is described by Marcus Ellis as “a superb wine, thrillingly refined and detailed.”





A first for Tasmania



A first for Tasmania

The Sweet Wine of the Year category has traditionally been dominated by NE Victoria and NSW, but this year the award was won for the first time by a Tasmanian winery. Pressing Matters won with its R139 Riesling 2022, a late-picked wine made in the German style.

“A wonderful sweet riesling sporting 139g RS from Tasmania's Coal River Valley. The acidity is the key here. It tempers the sweetness and provides a minerally frame on which the unctuous fruit is tautly stretched. Green apple, lime, fresh and candied rinds, an array of wildflower notes, apple pie, crushed stone and toffee apple. Pure, focused and showing great balance and an impressive length of flavour and vitality.”

Dave Brookes, Halliday Tasting Team



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Reds vs whites vs varieties



Reds vs whites vs varieties

Once again, still red wines dominated, making up 54 per cent of all wines tasted for the *2025 Halliday Wine Companion*. Still white wines made up 34 per cent, rosé 5 per cent, sparkling 4 per cent (a 1 per cent increase on 2024), with fortified (2 per cent), sweet (1 per cent) and skin-contact whites (less than 1 per cent) bringing up the rear.

But with Wine Australia reporting that chardonnay overtook shiraz as the most-crushed variety in the 2024 vintage, and with a white wine – again, chardonnay – winning the 2025 Halliday Wine of the Year, it will be interesting to see whether these statistics change over the coming years.

As to the varieties tasted in each category, while it's no surprise that shiraz (37 per cent), cabernet (18 per cent), pinot noir (16 per cent) and grenache (8 per cent) accounted for most of the reds, it was exciting to see that montepulciano again made the top 10, with nero d'Avola and gamay falling just shy of it. Italian and Spanish varieties, including barbera, aglianico, graciano, dolcetto, mencia and mataro, also made generous contributions.

For whites, again no surprises to see chardonnay (34 per cent), riesling (21 per cent), pinot gris/grigio (8 per cent) and sauvignon blanc (7 per cent) make up the lion's share of varieties tasted. But, like reds, there is an increasing amount of Italian and Spanish grapes, including albariño, verdelho, grenache blanc, arneis, greco, pecorino and friulano, and lesser-known French grapes including savagnin and gros manseng, in the mix.

“The chardonnay we tasted this year was scintillating... it was fantastic. It proves what I think most of us already know but I’m not sure the rest of the world has fully cottoned on to is just how world class Australian chardonnay is.”

Philip Rich, Halliday Tasting Team



“There are so many compelling styles that are not what we think is the old style of red, and there are great ones of those as well. But wines of place, wines that have spice and detail and interest and complex natural tannin structure.”

Marcus Ellis, Halliday Tasting Team





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