

Max allen writes about wine:

## "HUNTER GATHERER"

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LOOK, I know some people take their Sydney-Melbourne rivalry very seriously but this was ridiculous.

A bunch of winemakers from the Hunter Valley recently packed up a truck full of their best booze and headed on down the Hume for a big trade tasting in Melbourne.

Hunter winemakers have always had trouble selling their wine in Melbourne, and they used to joke it's probably because the region is so strongly associated with Sydney.

So the Hunter boys had assembled a magnificent line-up of over 50 semillons from the excellent 2006 vintage, and over 40 shiraz from 2004 to lure the southern city's sommeliers, restaurateurs, retailers and booze hacks.

They're not joking any more: a pathetic thirteen people turned up to what was easily one of the best tastings of last year. The hordes of Melbourne wine trade types who didn't attend (far too busy fawning over some hyped-up Grand Cru Burgundy, no doubt) missed out on some cracking wines: superb, crisp, refreshing semillons particularly from Tinklers, Chatto, Briar Ridge, Stonehurst, Draytons, Krinklewood and Thomas; complex, regional shiraz from Chatto, Tinklers, Mount Pleasant, Brokenwood among others.

Okay, I might be biased (my in-laws own a Hunter vineyard), but these wines - particularly the semillons - are, by any measure, distinctive and delicious. Such a shame that parochialism should prevent more people having the opportunity to try them.

### WHITE BARGAIN HUNTER

2006 De Iulius Semillon \$16

One of the best wines in the line-up of young Hunter sems, and terrific value-for-money. A classic expression of both region and variety, with

enticing, grassy, lemony perfume and amazing intensity for such a delicate and dry wine. 10 % alc. [www.dewine.com.au](http://www.dewine.com.au)

**RED BARGAIN HUNTER**

2003 Mount Pleasant Philip Shiraz \$16

Brilliantly-priced Hunter shirazes have been produced under the Philip label for decades, but this is the best I can remember ever tasting as a youngster. Medium-bodied, spicy, earthy, savoury, satisfying. Just lovely. 14 % alc. [www.mountpleasantwines.com.au](http://www.mountpleasantwines.com.au)

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