



Cherubino's all class



by john jens

Larry Cherubino has just released his first white wines under his own name. Larry who? Larry is a Swan Valley boy who went to the east to study winemaking.

After some years with Hardy's, Larry was transferred to WA's largest winemaker, Houghton, as senior winemaker a few weeks before the 1999 vintage began.

While he gives the credit to the viticulturalists, the wines that came from the Houghton winemaking team until his resignation in 2003 – about 3 per cent of Hardy's wine production – won about 70 per cent of their gold medals and trophies.

The Cherubino winemaking philosophy since the 1999 vintage has gained more than 300 gold medals and 80 trophies in major wine shows. Winemakers can be specialist red or white winemakers and some go so far as to focus on one variety only.

In contrast, Larry was responsible for gold-medal and trophy-winning wines, and often Champion Wines of Show, in virtually every style Houghton produces. After the 2003 vintage,

he set out on his own. He has made wine in Italy, South Africa and New Zealand and is currently doing his third vintage in California.

More recently, he and his wife, Edwina, have planted a Frankland River Vineyard and he is consulting to Australian wineries.

Last year he released the first of his own wines under The Yard label and this year he has extended the range. There are three price points: the Ad Hoc label, the most reasonably priced; then the mid-range The Yard; and now premium label whites, under the Cherubino label.

Larry has released small quantities of a sauvignon blanc and a riesling to Perth's finest restaurants and bottle shops.

The Yard Semillon Sauvignon Blanc 2007 (18.2 points and \$29.95) is a partially wooded Margaret River release. It is stunning.

The textures show crafted and fine-knit quality oak tucked away behind long and restrained quality fruit of real appeal. They come together in a seamless and delicious current drinking or short-term cellaring package.

Cherubino Sauvignon Blanc 2007 (18.2 points and \$34.95) is another stunner. This is beautifully textured and weighted. A hint of quality french oak and a dash of Margaret River semillon have added to the mouthfeel. This is young, classy, alive, silky and seamless. The best Australian sauvignon blanc in years.

The Yard Riesling 2007 (18.2 points and \$26) is young, fine, lean and very dry and has delicate, long riesling flavours. The inherent fruit richness is hidden behind racy acidity. The aromatics dance across the top of a hauntingly beautiful classic Australian riesling. The best value of these four releases.

Cherubino Riesling 2007 (18.5 points and \$35) shows classical, lean, long Australian cool-area riesling fruit of great length and quality. It has zest, aromatics and life from the apparently technically perfect modern Australian winemaking techniques. Lean, but with striking riesling purity, it has a classic acid crispness that should ensure a 15- to 20-year life span. The finest West Australian riesling I have seen.



Larry Cherubino is making his mark with his own releases.

