



Clairault has come a long way since Bill Martin bought the place a few years ago. In fact, those who haven't been back would find an operation that is a far cry from the quaint winery and cellar door it once was. It is now a modern winery and cellar area, with a magnificent bistro-style restaurant set in lawns and towering gums. It is one of the most marvellous settings I have seen in any Australian winery.

With a solid base in a vineyard that is one of the oldest in the area, and additional plantings undertaken, Clairault are well placed to make a strong assault on the market.

Already the signs under new winemaker, former Vasse Felix man Will Shields, point to significant improvements. In particular, sharper focus will be played in the vineyard as they go down a more organic path. The ranges offer both quality and value for money and recent developments show great promise.

A key stop on anyone's itinerary in the area.

RAY JORDAN'S GUIDE TO WINE 2005 - 2006

THE WINES

Estate Cabernet Merlot 2002

Still tight as a drum when tasted and was better after decanting. Smokey savory smells an overriding lifted of cedar. Underlying smells of cherry and earthy fruit cake flavours. The palate has a fine assertive strength and a long seamless finish. Very promising wine. 93/100

Estate Cabernet Sauvignon 2002

Elegant and focused cabernet with a firm tight structure. Chalky tannins, fine grained oak and a neatly woven palate structure add up to a classy wine with its best years ahead of it. One of the most stylish yet from Clairault. 90/100

Semillon Sauvignon Blanc 2005

Really intense and vibrant fruit aromas here dominated with fresh passion fruit over other tropical tones and a little touch of grassy herbaceousness. The palate sings a neat tune of fresh fruit and zingy fine acid. Nice current drinking wine. 90/100

Estate Chardonnay 2003

A full and forward chardonnay with a distinct buttery creamy aroma with deep stone fruit smells. The palate is richly flavoured with a creamy texture and toasty oak flavours. A wine that will be best over the coming year or so. 86/100

Cabernet Sauvignon 2003

A crowd pleaser offering quality at around the \$20 mark. Fruit black currant and plum aromas with subtle oak. Palate has a firm thread of tannin and oak that cuts an assertive tension through the lush fruits. Easy drinking. 85/100