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## vintagereport

### THE WINE:

Rosemount Estate 2002 Sauvignon Blanc

### COUNTRY OF ORIGIN:

Australia (Adelaide Hills in South Australia, Victoria, Orange and Western Australia regions)

### GRAPE VARIETY:

Sauvignon Blanc (cool, fermented in stainless steel tanks)

### COLOUR:

Pale straw with a tinge of green

### NOSE:

True varietal grassy nose with gooseberry overtones

### IN MOUTH:

Tropical fruit, Kiwi, good acidity, good long finish

### FOOD:

Seafood, tomato based pastas & salads, blue cheese, soft goat cheeses

### VALUE:

A better than average Sauvignon Blanc, as the vintage was cool in the spring and summer but warm in the fall, giving the fruit optimum acidity and flavour. Priced right for summer deck drinking.

### RATING:

4 grapes (0 lowest - 5 highest)  
Silver medal winner in San Francisco International Wine Competition.  
Drink now.



# Vintage.

## WINE COSTS

BY LEN STECKLER

**\$14.50. KA-CHING. \$21.35. Ka-ching! \$54.40. Ka-CHING!** That's the sound the cash register makes as it rings up your wine purchase. People often ask me why wine costs so much, they're only 750 ml bottles. In this issue, we will touch on why wines cost what they do. There are a lot of reasons.

First, grapes must be purchased from growers. Growers would say they don't get enough for their product, and perhaps many don't, but the winery must still pay however much in dollars per tonne. If a winery grows its own grapes, they've paid thousands of dollars per acre to purchase land. Land costs vary, being more expensive in France or California than in Chile, Argentina or Australia.

The grape root stock must also be purchased. A premium vinifera varietal like Chardonnay, Cabernet Sauvignon, Sauvignon Blanc or Merlot can be an expensive proposition. Once planted, there are chemical costs to combat plant maladies as well as insect infestations. In California, the glassy winged sharp shooter has already cost the wine industry millions of dollars. In growing regions where frost is a concern, giant fans or smudge pots are needed in certain years to ensure a crop. In overly dry regions, irrigation systems are needed in times of severe drought. Think of what a simple deck heater or sprinkler system cost to install in your own yard, then imagine the cost over hundreds of acres.

There is a time factor involved in growing grapes. The root stock can take three years to produce fruit. Five years can pass before the fruit is of a high enough quality to produce even the most basic wine product. With Bordeaux, twelve years can pass before the grapes may be used in a first growth.

Once the grapes are grown, they need to be harvested. If the grapes are hand-picked, the cost can be enormous. Icewine grapes are picked when the grapes are frozen. Sauternes from France may have harvesters going through the vineyard many times, just to pick the boytritis affected grapes that impart that sweet apricot-honey flavour. Grapes may also be picked mechanically, by harvesting machines costing more than \$100,000 each.

Once harvested, the grapes need to be processed. It requires a large investment, tens of millions of dollars, to purchase equipment to de-stem, press, cold ferment, store and bottle. French oak barrels cost up to \$800 US each, with American oak not far behind. Bottles and bottling lines are not inexpensive and something as simple as a cork can cost up to \$1.25 each.

The winery goes through all these processes to produce cases of well-made (or not) wine. They now have to market their product to consumers. Print media, television, radio and internet advertising all have a cost factor. Unfortunately, many consumers get caught up in the hype of the advertising, and that helps put unrealistic prices on some wines that are average, at best. Don't let price be your guide when buying wine. That's not to say expensive wines are over priced, simply be aware of what makes a wine a good value and purchase accordingly.

If I could afford to invest millions of dollars in an investment that could take five years or more to get a return (with no guarantee of how much a return), would I? Let's just say, that 750 ml bottle of wine isn't so expensive after all. Till next time, CHEERS!

LEN STECKLER received his Cellar Masters Diploma in 1995 and is a member of the Wine Educators Society. He has visited wineries in every major wine region in the world and does wine seminars for sales groups, customer appreciation groups, and restaurants (staff training and wine list building and maintenance). If you are interested in learning more, call Len at 306-933-4393.

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