

# Light and delicious fits bill

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WINE



**T**his is my final column in this space, though I will continue writing about wine for other Fairfax publications.

Like the last day of the school year, when all we did was play hangman and longball (does anyone play longball any more?), I thought I'd go for lightness and good cheer.

These are qualities in wine that are too often not given their due. I'm as guilty as anybody of writing mostly about wines with depth and stature – thoroughbreds, if you like. It's important I do that; these are fine and deserving examples of the winemakers' art.

But no one wants to read Shakespeare every night before going to sleep. Similarly, not many of us want to (or can) drink cerebral vino every night.

Light and delicious are the right prescription for a lot of wine-drinking situations. Of course, light and delicious aren't enough on their own. Balance is always important. A wine that sags under the weight of excessive sweetness, for example, doesn't fit the bill. Nor does one where a clumsy oak presence obscures the fruit.

The French have a good term for the kind of wine I'm talking about. The first time I heard it I was sitting on the terrace of a

bistro in Paris on a warm spring evening. The house red, served slightly chilled in carafes, was a Morgon from Beaujolais (made from the gamay grape). It was instantly loveable – fruit-filled, young and innocent. I expressed my admiration for it to the sommelier, who replied: “Oui, c'est un vin de soif.”

“Vin de soif”

literally means a “thirst quenching wine”, but it is not a pejorative handle. It refers to wine that is ready to give immediate pleasure and is refreshing, undemanding yet soundly and honestly made.

A lot of New Zealand sauvignon blanc fits this description, which is – in part – why it's such a hit around the world.

It is not a complex wine, yet it ticks all the boxes mentioned above and still speaks of its place of origin.

A perfect example is the Graham Norton's Own Sauvignon Blanc 2017, which was also my introduction to this year's vintage.

This label's celebrity-centredness and its wild success (two million bottles sold last year) shouldn't mask the fact that it's a pleasurable drink.

## **Graham Norton's Own Sauvignon Blanc 2017 \$19**

Already slaking thirsts in the talk show host's green room, this new release is green-edged, passionfruit-infused and driven by tight, zingy acidity.

## **Lime Rock Pinot Gris 2014 \$24**

Grown on Central Hawke's Bay limestone, this pinot gris has great flavours (pear, green apple, a touch of salinity) and real energy. I love the long, dry, mineral finish. Go to

