



# *Generic wine and a* **three-day growth**

## Grape Expectations with **Max Crus**

FINDING sugar in supermarkets these days is a struggle.

Okay, not the kind of struggle that people in Afghanistan face, admittedly, there's no RPGs or IEDs, so we should be grateful that there is any on the shelf at all. But a struggle nevertheless, by our soft-bottomed existence.

Indeed sugar on the shelf isn't the problem, it's the myriad home brand options that bedazzle and befuddle the shopper. With one small portion of shelf space devoted to independent manufacturers, of which, recently, there was but one.

Unfortunately the brand was packaged in such inappropriate plastic - brittle and tearable (good word for it actually) so sugar goes everywhere when you open it - that I nearly didn't buy it. But I did, in protest, and also because home-brand prices are the same as brands' now.

This scenario was repeated for other items too, the transformation to which seems to have happened while we were on holidays.

Of course the reality that two companies now control 127% supermarkets hasn't happened overnight and the only one we can blame for these giants' dominance,

their fattened executive salaries, their ownership 245 percent of our service stations, 113 percent of our hotels and recently 135 percent of our poker machines, is ourselves.

One day, probably next week, we will look back and wonder, was it worth it? Was it worth it to stand in a queue for 20 minutes with 20 others to buy a carton of "local" milk, while a teenage shop assistant tries to funnel us through self-serve checkouts, just to have air-conditioning, trendy music and the convenience of being able to buy a kitchen sink.

How paradoxical then that extension of this democratic and capitalist paradigm, that eventually all items will be Home Brand, will cost twice what they should, taste twice as bland, and still use the wrong plastic, aptly describes shopping in Soviet Russia.

Dread the thought the Big Two will get their hands on wine. What, they already control 350 per cent of it? How did that happen?

Oh well, at least there's air-conditioning and you can get a kitchen sink. You may not be able to get these however :

- Mount Trio Riesling, 2010,

\$19.50. Not to be confused with the three sisters, the three mounts makes much better riesling, albeit quite 'out-there'. 8.1/10.

- Alta Pinot Grigio, 2011, \$18ish? Maybe it's an Italian thing, but give me grigio any day over gris and give me this any day too. 8.8/10.

- O'Leary Walker Clare Valley Cabernet Sauvignon 2010, \$22. Oh, clearly the Clare is a colourful place to cultivate cabernet and consumption should be conspicuous if not compulsory. 8.5/10.

- Alkoomi Frankland River Riesling 2010, \$18. It is easily forgotten that WA make fabulous riesling. Actually it's not, but it doesn't hurt to be reminded...frequently. 9/10.

- Temple Bruer (Riverland) Vermentino (Organic Wine), 2011, \$19. You have to applaud a winery brave enough to label their wine Riverland, which combined with the organic factor is most (app)laudable. 7.7/10.

- Di Giorgio Coonawarra Cabernet Sauvignon 2008, \$26. Slightly vegetal, earthiness will make greenies feel at home and anyway, we all need our veggies, and our earth. 8.6/10.

