

WHAT TO DRINK... WITH CHEESE

Some of the best matches for cheese are white wines or richer styles, such as dessert or fortifieds, writes **Jane Faulkner.**

UP TO \$25

ROBERT STEIN HARVEST GOLD 2009 \$25

THIS sensational little Mudgee sweetie is made from botrytised semillon grapes so it's intensely flavoured, full of saffron spice mixed with honey and toasty notes, plenty of citrus freshness and candied peel plus a touch of ripe apricot. The palate is rich, luscious and complex without being mawkish, and there's plenty of acid too, great length and superb balance. It's a really gorgeous drink and a style that's fabulous with blue cheese and pungent washed rinds as it tempers their powerful flavours.



UP TO \$40

DOG POINT VINEYARD SECTION 94 SAUVIGNON BLANC 2009 \$30

GOAT'S cheese from creamy curd to strongly flavoured crottins has lots of tart acids so it clashes with many red wines but it does have a perfect match — sauvignon blanc. Section 94 is one of the most complex and beguiling Marlborough sauvignon blancs I've tasted, with its pine needle freshness and aromatics, smoky, stony mineral notes offset by citrus tang, and ripe and rich leesy nuttiness adding texture to the palate.



MORE THAN \$40

S.C. PANSELL GRENACHE 2009 \$52

IT'S the tannins in reds that often jar with cheese but some, such as grenache, work brilliantly with nutty tasting varieties such as Jarlsberg, Swiss, gouda and occasionally cheddar. Plus it's very good with Italian cow's milk cheese fontina. Stephen Pannell is a champion of grenache. His is a dry-grown old vine grenache, 100 per cent, so it's full of bright raspberry and dark briary fruit, really floral yet has all the seductive spice and verve of this variety. Grainy, fine tannins, medium-bodied to a persistent long finish, make it outstanding.



SPLURGE

DEVAUX 2002 \$160

YEARS ago, Sydney sommelier/ restaurateur Stuart Knox from Fix St James matched aged Parmigiano-Reggiano with a glass of Aussie sparkling during a food-wine pairing competition. What a revelation. The saltiness in the cheese plays with the bubbles and the dry finish even in vintage champagne such as Devaux. The outstanding '02 has an almost equal blend of chardonnay and pinot noir, its fine bead leads to delicate nougat and brioche notes, hint of candied peel, baked pear and apple, and super fine on the palate.

