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WINE RICK ALLEN

■ Sandalford Element cabernet sauvignon, 2008

There's a lot of bang for your buck here. The Element range is all about over-delivering on value – and this does it in bucketloads. Rich, dark berry and plum flavours, and a nice kick of lingering spice. Margaret River is renowned for its top-range cabernets, but some of the budget-priced stuff is ridiculously good, too. Outstanding value. **\$14**

■ Aja, 2008

Pronounced with a soft "j" (as in Asia). Which is the key – it's made specifically to go with Asian food. An unusual blend – verdelho, semillon and sauvignon blanc – although it doesn't say that on the label. We tried it with Thai food and tested it against four other crisp whites. It's nice enough on its own but certainly moved up a notch with food. **\$20**

■ Logan Gewurtztraminer, 2009

Looking for something a bit different for the hotter months? This fragrant white from Orange should tick all the boxes. It's a German varietal that has taken a real liking to some of Australia's cooler climates. This has an intense musk and floral bouquet, and a delicate palate of sweet apple, green banana, passionfruit and spicy cinnamon. Also probably at its best with Asian food. **\$17**