

The Sunday Telegraph
On the Grapevine w/ John Fordham
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IAIN Riggs is a self-confessed cricket tragic. The long-serving Brokenwood winemaker once turned up to a tasting decked out in creams and pads. It was his way of going into bat for his Cricket Pitch label.

Riggs launched his Cricket Pitch red in 1993. A blend of 1991 Goulburn Valley cabernet sauvignon and merlot, it made its debut with the endorsement of former Test fast bowler Mike Whitney.

"Being a dry year, the 1991 Hunter vintage yielded no fruit whatsoever from our own vineyard," Riggs recalls.

"With fruit purchased from the Goulburn Valley, the Cricket Pitch label was on its way."

Buoyed by the red's instant success, Riggs added a white Cricket Pitch batting partner the following year, a blend of sauvignon blanc and semillon.



Cricket Pitch has long been Brokenwood's cash cow, representing a huge chunk of the Hunter Valley winery's 100,000-case-a-year production.

At \$19 a bottle, 2007 Cricket Pitch Cabernet Sauvignon-Merlot (Coonawarra-McLaren Vale and Langhome Creek blend) and 2008 Cricket Pitch Sauvignon Blanc-Semillon (Hunter-Cowra-King Valley combo) represent excellent value, featuring first-class fruit selection and very tidy winemaking.

Also doing the rounds is 2008 Brokenwood Pinot Gris (\$25), a refreshing citrus/honeysuckle-flavoured drop from

Victoria's Beechworth region. This trio will end up with plenty of runs on the board.

Semillon showcase

LOVERS of semillon, the Hunter Valley's signature white variety, will head to Tyrrell's next month for a special tasting of 150 of the region's finest drops.

The feature event of the annual Hunter Valley Semillon and Seafood extravaganza, the 10.30am-4pm tasting on Saturday, April 18, will be hosted by semillon specialists Andrew Spinaze, Keith Tulloch, Bruce Tyrrell, Andrew Thomas and Phil Ryan.

Andrew Clarke, from award-winning Rock restaurant at Poole's Rock winery, will present a cooking demonstration of char-grilled bugs, while Port Stephens oysters and prawns will be plentiful. Go to www.huntersemillonandseafood.com.au for more details.