

# The RED STRIPE Pressings

*d'Arenberg*

... Monthly Report ...

## SPECIAL EDITION

### *James Halliday Reviews the Amazing Sites Shiraz Wines*

From *The Weekend Australian*, 15 September 2012

I have never doubted that terroir is a real thing, not a metaphysical concept incapable of proof. I have seen its impact as a grape grower, as a grape purchaser, as a winemaker, and as a visitor to vineyards in many parts of the world. On the other side of the coin, it is not always obvious why it should have a strongly beneficial impact in one place, and fail to deliver in another.

I recently had a tasting with Chester Osborn (and father d'Arry) that was the most compelling demonstration of terroir I have encountered in Australia. As part of d'Arenberg's centenary celebrations, it has released 15 wines, 12 shirazs and three grenaches, all made in 2010, a very good vintage in McLaren Vale.

Over years of observing certain blocks of vines, the grapes they produced and the wines they made, Chester became increasingly convinced that he should keep separate nine barriques (200 dozen bottles equivalent) of each of these wines (the remainder continuing to be part of his Dead Arm Shiraz). A trial with three sites in '09 convinced him he should keep the wines from 12 sites separate in 2010.

He set the same parameters for each wine: the aim should be 14% alc/vol or less; the oak French and between one and three years old; the wines should spend between nine and 14 days on skins, with a peak of 30 °C; the last stages of fermentation should be completed in barrel; all would spend 20 months in oak; there would be no fining or filtration; and the first and only time they were to be racked was immediately before being bottled under screwcaps.

Each wine was distinctly different to its siblings, some trenchantly demanding time, others more forthcoming, the common link their quality. For any group of wine enthusiasts seeking more knowledge, the 12 wines would create the ultimate self-guided masterclass.

*96 points*

### The Garden of Extraordinary Delights Shiraz 2010



Situated on the inland part of the McLaren Sand Hills subregion, the soil is sandy loam overlying sand and clay, the vines 42 years old. It's a particularly beautiful spot – hence the name. The wine shares the excellent colour of the group, with a fragrant bouquet punctuated by soot/earth/olive nuances along with the black fruits. The palate soars and dives like a kite, with juicy fruit and a tannin mille-feuille that's perfectly pitched. 14% alc; screwcap

96 points; drink to 2040; \$99

*95 points*

### The Amaranthine Shiraz 2010



The 44-year-old vines are planted on an east-facing slope in the Beautiful View subregion with its loamy sand on limestone. Once again, the colour is impeccable, the bouquet a mix of dark and milder chocolate and cooking

spices; licorice joins the dark chocolate on the palate, which has delicious mouthfeel thanks to the very fine tannins. 13.8% alc; screwcap

95 points; drink to 2045; \$99

*95 points*

### The Bamboo Scrub Shiraz 2010



From the Blewitt Springs subregion, the 18-year-old vines are youngsters but already providing quality grapes. This is the coolest of the subregions, endowing the wine with a fragrant bouquet of dark fruits merging with the red on the palate, which has a fine structure built on classy tannins; the end result is a wine with effortless power and drive. 13.9% alc; screwcap

95 points; drink to 2035; \$99

*94 points*

### The Swinging Malaysian Shiraz 2010



The 42-year-old vineyard was planted in loamy sand soils over limestone, originally to shiraz before being grafted to riesling in the late 1970s, returning to shiraz in 2001. Is built in an austere mode, with more earth, tar and dark chocolate nuances; has impressive structure and more texture than most of the wines in the line-up.

94 points; drink to 2040; 13.8% alc; screwcap; \$99

*94 points*

### J.R.O Afflatus Shiraz 2010



The naming of all these wines is pure Chester Osborn, and is explained at length on the website. The 102-year-old vines were planted by tee-totaller Joseph Rowe Osborn in the Beautiful View subregion on sandy loam over clay. The bouquet is distinctly savoury, with earth, spice and dark olive nuances, the palate multi-dimensional thanks to 3D tannins, yet finishing fresh and harmonious.

94 points; drink to 2040; 13.9% alc; screwcap; \$99

*94 points*

### The Fruit Bat Shiraz 2010



The vineyard is one kilometre from the winery, the soils half brown loam on limestone, and half sandy loam on limestone. Bright crimson-purple, the fragrant bouquet leading into a supple, medium-bodied palate with juicy, sweet red fruits, structure coming from fine tannins and subtle oak.

94 points; drink to 2030; 14.1% alc; screwcap; \$99

*94 points*

### The Vociferate Dipsomaniac Shiraz 2010



The most obscure name, the word ‘vociferate’ a transitive and intransitive verb. The colour is very bright, especially on the rim; a distinctly different bouquet with nuances of brush/silage, the palate with full-on black fruits and tannins to match, but those tannins are not dry, the overall balance excellent.

94 points; drink to 2040; 14.3% alc; screwcap; \$99

*93 points*

### The Little Venice Shiraz 2010



The soil is shallow brown earth over a limestone base. Deep, bright purple-crimson; fuller and deeper than the Fruit Bat, with plum, black fruits, licorice in a layered tapestry, finishing with ripe but firm tannins.

93 points; drink to 2030; 13.8% alc; screwcap; \$99

*92 points*

Shipsters' Rapture Shiraz 2010



The vineyard was planted in 1969 on a steep, south-facing slope, the soil loamy sand on the limestone-based Blanche Point Formation. The bouquet is less voluminous than most of the other wines, with an almost flowery character, the palate a powerful, layered, dark berry core to the somewhat angular tannins.

92 points; drink to 2030; 14% alc; screwcap; \$99

*92 points*

The Blind Tiger Shiraz 2010



Here the 87-year-old vines are planted on sandy loam over sand, but are in the Blewitt Springs subregion. It is the most dense of all the wines in the group, with dark chocolate, licorice and blackberry swathed in ripe tannins, yet providing a twitch of juicy flavour on the finish.

93 points; drink to 2040; 14.1% alc; screwcap; \$99

*92 points*

The Other Side Shiraz 2010



The vines were planted in 1916 on the northern side of the family homestead, the soil a mix of clay, sand and loam on a base of limestone and clay. Deeply coloured, it is as yet very confronting on the bouquet, then a blockbuster palate with strong black fruits which are more savoury than any of the other wines in the group, and will be very long-lived. Needs time.

92 points; drink to 2040; 14% alc; screwcap; \$99

*91 points*

Tyche's Mustard Shiraz 2010

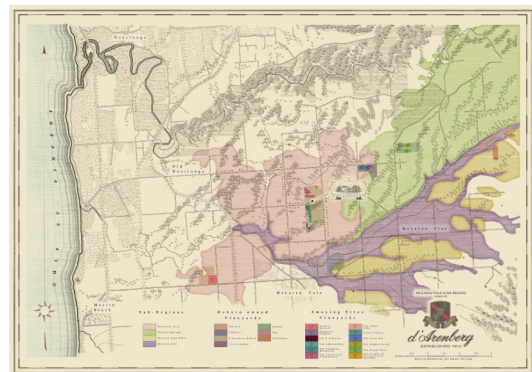


The young (17-year-old) vines are planted on loamy clay on limestone, and right from the first vintage produced intensely-flavoured wine. The pungent bouquet has strong spicy elements, the palate a tightly-wound ball of string, the secrets of the dark/black fruits still to be revealed. Another long-lived wine with strong tannins at its base.

91 points; drink to 2045; 14% alc; screwcap; \$99

## *Amazing Sites Maps*

To request copies of the specially commissioned Amazing Sites map, please email [winery@darenberg.com.au](mailto:winery@darenberg.com.au) with the amount you would like to order.



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