



Australia's Wine Values: Everyone Loves a Bargain

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Everyone loves a bargain, right? Most wine professionals agree that given the right piece of land, vines/vineyard management and a competent winemaker with all the latest winemaking tools, it's not particularly challenging to create a great wine at great expense... and with a great big price tag! High quality factors such as prime location, hand-tended vines, low yields, rigorous fruit selection, state of the art winery equipment and the best quality oak barrels all come at enormous costs. In truth, it is far more difficult to produce a superlative, knock-out wine cheaply. For some - present company included - the ability to do so is a true testament to the winemaker's skill.

While many wine reviewers are likely to dread diving into oceans of bargain wines in search of the odd pearl, these value reports are incredibly rewarding endeavors for me. And Australia, generally speaking, is a privileged beat within which to be nosing out value. In all but the most marginal areas and vintages of Australia, which are few and far between, the Southern edge of Australia is blessed with a climate that is ideal for viticulture. This, coupled with the gene pool of winemaking know-how and skill that contributes to the modern Australian wine industry, means that bad wine, at any price point, is almost inexcusable. In fact, if I had to finger any one factor that robs Australian wine from outshining any other country of the world in terms of value, it would not be much-touted albatrosses like today's exchange rate and cost of labor. It would be the greed manifested by high yields. A number of Australian wine producers don't seem to grasp the idea that there is a tangible tipping point whereby the climate, soil and vine can only produce so much in terms of ripeness and concentration. And here is the faltering point for some Australian wine values at the lower end, though admittedly this country is better than many others in this capacity.

If I had to name a best value wine grape/style from Australia that readers will find hard to beat with competition from anywhere else in the wine world, it is undoubtedly South Australian Riesling. For this report, and considering the many, many other tastings of Clare and Eden Valley Rieslings that I've done before, it is really hard to find better quality-to-price ratio anywhere else. What's more, the best of these beauties will cellar for decades, paying consumers back for their modest investments with some incredible dividends in terms of bottle-aged complexity. I do hope Riesling-loving readers (particularly those that gravitate towards dry styles) will take advantage of a few of the bargains I've highlighted in this report... you won't be disappointed!

Score Summary:

92+ pts	Kilikanoon Mort's Block Riesling 2013
90+ pts	Kilikanoon Killerman's Run Riesling 2013
90 pts	Kilikanoon Medly Proprietary Red 2012
90 pts	Penley Estate Hyland Shiraz 2012
89+ pts	Penley Estate Condor Shiraz Cabernet Sauvignon 2012



89 pts	Kilikanoon Killerman's Run Cabernet Sauvignon 2012
89 pts	Kilikanoon Killerman's Run Grenache Shiraz Mataro 2012
89 pts	Penley Estate Phoenix Cabernet Sauvignon 2012
88 pts	Penley Estate Aradia Chardonnay 2012
87 pts	Kilikanoon Skilly Valley Pinot Gris 2013
87 pts	Kilikanoon Killerman's Run Shiraz 2012

Full Reviews:

92+ pts Kilikanoon Mort's Block Riesling 2013

The 2013 Mort's Block Riesling is youthfully reticent on the nose with freshly squeezed lemons, yuzu zest and chalk dust plus hints of white pepper and dill seed coming through. Wonderfully intense and tightly knit in the mouth, the very crisp acid creates plenty of tension through the long, mineral-laced finish. Drink it 2015 to 2023+.

90+ pts Kilikanoon Killerman's Run Riesling 2013

With expressive, forward notes of white peaches, lime cordial and pink grapefruit accented by a touch of wet slate, the light-bodied and dry 2013 Killerman's Run Riesling has a very crisp line of lively acidity cutting through the fruit before it finishes long and clean. Drink it now to 2018+.

90 pts Kilikanoon Medly Proprietary Red 2012

Medium garnet-purple colored and offering a pronounced nose of red and black plums, mulberries and black cherry preserves with touches of Szechuan pepper, dusty earth and cardamom, the medium to full-bodied 2012 The Medley GSM gives plenty of expressive red and black fruit flavors in the mouth complemented by pepper and spice accents, a medium level of rounded tannins, and a long finish with a racy acid lift. Drink it now to 2018.

90 pts Penley Estate Hyland Shiraz 2012

Medium to deep garnet-purple in color, the 2012 Hyland Shiraz has a profound nose of ripe black cherries, mulberries and black plums with suggestions of baking spices, dried mint and black pepper. Medium to full-bodied with tons of juicy black fruit and menthol-laced flavors, it has a medium level of rounded tannins and a refreshing acid backbone, finishing with great length. Drink it now to 2020+.

89+ pts Penley Estate Condor Shiraz Cabernet Sauvignon 2012

Deep garnet-purple in color, the 2012 Condor Cabernet Shiraz has an expressive nose of warm black cherries, red currants and black raspberries with hints of chocolate-mint and cinnamon toast. Medium-bodied and quite taut in the mouth, it offers a good concentration of muscular berry flavors and chewy tannins, finishing with very good length. Drink it now to 2018+.



89 pts Kilikanoon Killerman's Run Cabernet Sauvignon 2012

Deep garnet-purple colored and scented of crushed blackcurrants, black plums and cloves with touches of dried mint and chocolate, the medium-bodied 2012 Killerman's Run Cabernet Sauvignon gives a good intensity of ripe black fruit and minty flavors, a medium level of grainy tannins and a lively acid backbone before it finishes medium to long. Drink it now to 2017.

89 pts Kilikanoon Killerman's Run Grenache Shiraz Mataro 2012

Medium garnet-purple in color, the 2012 Killerman's Run Grenache Shiraz Mataro is profoundly scented of red currant jelly, stewed red plums and kirsch with underlying eucalyptus and cinnamon stick nuances. Medium-bodied with mouth-filling red berry preserves and baking spice flavors, it has a medium level of velvety tannins, refreshing acid and a finish with good persistence. Drink it now to 2017+.

89 pts Penley Estate Phoenix Cabernet Sauvignon 2012

Medium to deep garnet-colored, the 2012 Phoenix Cabernet Sauvignon is intensely scented of crushed black and red currants with nuances of eucalyptus, cedar and dried herbs. Medium to full-bodied, it fills the palate with youthful black currant flavors supported by a firm backbone of grainy tannins and lively acid, finishing long. Drink it now to 2018+.

89 pts Penley Estate Aradia Chardonnay 2012

The 2012 Aradia Chardonnay has subtle notes of Golden Delicious apples, fresh peaches and pears with a waft of allspice. Medium-bodied with a good amount of apple and stone fruit flavors complemented by yeasty suggestions, it has a refreshing acid line and medium to long finish. Drink it now to 2016+.

89 pts Kilikanoon Skilly Valley Pinot Gris 2013

Opening with a nose of apple sauce, warm pears and allspice with a lemony lift, the light-bodied and dry 2013 Skilly Valley Pinot Gris is refreshing in the mouth and shows a good amount of pure apple and pear flavors before finishing with medium to long persistence. Drink it now to 2016.

89 pts Kilikanoon Killerman's Run Shiraz 2012

Medium to deep garnet-purple, the 2012 Killerman's Run Shiraz has notes of mulberries, plum preserves and blackberry coulis alongside hints of tar, chargrilled meat and pepper. Medium-bodied, it has a crisp line of acid cutting through the youthful berry and savory flavors, plus chewy tannins to texture the medium to long finish. Drink it now to 2017.

Other Noted Wines:

Frisk Prickly Riesling 2013

Opening with a fragrant nose of honeysuckle, fresh grape juice and apples with a hint of allspice, the lightly sparkling and medium-sweet 2013 Prickly Riesling gives plenty of uncomplicated spicy and grapey flavors, has just 9.5% declared alcohol and has a refreshing finish. Drink it now.

**Frisk Prickly Rosso 2013**

A blend of 53% Dolcetto and 47% Merlot, the pale ruby-colored 2013 Prickly Rosso is vibrantly scented of red cherries and wild strawberries with touches of anise and baking spices. Lightly sparkling and made in a medium-sweet style, it gives a good amount of straightforward, red berry flavors and a slight chew of tannins before finishing with good length. Drink it now.

Shoofly Shiraz 2012

Deep garnet in color, the 2012 Shiraz has notes of black cherries and blackberries with hints of tar, licorice and dirt. Medium-bodied with a decent amount of fruit, it is shaped by soft, rounded tannins and harmonious acid through to a medium length, straightforward finish. Drink it now to 2016.

