



BEST NEW WINES FROM AUSTRALIA

Josh Raynolds | Jul/Aug 2014

While many American wine lovers understandably believe that all this sprawling wine-growing region produces are critter wines in big bottles, there are signs that upper-tier Aussie wines have begun to gain a foothold in the U.S. market. That has happened before, of course, but back in the late 1990s and early-to-mid-2000s Australia's vinous reputation was based on high-octane, super-fruity Xtreme wines that often tasted like nothing so much as gussied-up versions of their sweet, high-alcohol wine cousins. The market turned its back on those wines with a vengeance, and, sad to say, many Yankee wine geeks threw the whole Australian wine industry under the proverbial bus with the unwanted critters and ooze monsters.

Fortunately, a handful of American importers, mainly those who represent Australia's most iconic wineries, stuck it out, usually with fewer offerings as inventories had to be kept tight during the market turmoil. In addition, some intrepid new importers saw an opening that was created by the massive drop-off in boutique winery sales (keep in mind that most small-production Aussie wine available here during the 1998-2006 period was of the gloppy sort) and moved to represent producers of more elegant--dare I say "European"-influenced--wines.

Those wines appear to be gaining traction among open-minded American wholesalers, sommeliers and retailers, who in many cases are just now having their eyes opened to the vast range of wine styles that Australia produces. The fact is that many of the country's best vineyards sit near an ocean or atop a mountain, and those vineyards, by and large, range from cool to very cool. Wines produced in such conditions have more in common with wines from continental Europe than those from the sun-baked plains of South Australia or the Barossa Valley. It also happens that many of the country's most talented and experienced winemakers ply their craft in those cooler regions.

This isn't to say that the best producers in familiar regions like the Barossa Valley and McLaren Vale are just cranking out big ol' shirazes and butterscotchy chardonnays. The vast majority of red wines from South Australia that I tasted over the last few months manage their often high alcohol levels with aplomb. (These are, generally speaking, warm regions and ripeness, even superripeness, is a given.)

I have also noticed much less overt oak influence, especially of the American sort, in recent years, which is all to the better. Of course, traditional wineries whose wines didn't stray from the classical style during those dark days of excessive oak and alcohol are beneficiaries of the resurgence in interest in Australian wine. They stuck to their guns, and they're having the last laugh now: there aren't many Australian wines in the U.S. that fit the Xtreme stereotype anymore. Here's a great example of the observation that markets move in cyclical fashion.



BROKENWOOD WINES

93pts 2009 Brokenwood Semillon Oakey Creek Hunter Valley

(\$32) Light gold. Intensely perfumed aromas of pear skin, key lime, white flowers and pink peppercorn, with a dusty mineral nuance in the background. Dry and tightly wound, especially for its age, offering nervy citrus fruit and anise flavors and a touch of bitter quince. Closes stony, focused and very long, leaving chalk and citrus zest notes behind. Bet on this taut wine to age for at least another decade and probably well beyond.

92pts 2013 Brokenwood Semillon Hunter Valley

(\$20) (11% alcohol): Light yellow. High-pitched citrus and orchard fruit aromas are complemented by notes of white flowers, ginger and anise. Dry, nervy and sharply focused, offering zesty orange and green apple flavors and a refreshing touch of bitter quinine. Finishes firm, stony and very long, with resonating spiciness and excellent clarity. This is the most powerful and expressive rendition of this iconic Hunter semillon I've tasted to date.

90pts 2012 Brokenwood Shiraz South Eastern Australia

(\$36) Bright purple. Lively black and blue fruit aromas are deepened by notes of licorice and pipe tobacco. Peppery and precise on the palate, offering sharply focused cassis and boysenberry flavors and a slightly meaty quality. Closes sweet and long, with slow-building tannins and lingering hints of smoke and cracked pepper.

88(+?)pts 2013 Brokenwood Pinot Noir Beechworth

(\$22) Dark red. Fresh red fruit and floral aromas are complemented by notes of gingerbread and smoky minerals. Juicy and taut in the mouth, offering zesty redcurrant and dried cherry flavors and a touch of allspice. Closes with very good length, silky tannins and lingering florality.

CHAMBERS ROSEWOOD WINERY

95pts NV Chambers Rosewood Winery Rare Muscadelle Rutherglen (half bottle)

(\$350) Brown with an orange rim. Intensely perfumed aromas of molasses, orange marmalade, candied fig and pungent flowers communicate an impression of density. Lush and deep in the mouth, offering powerful pit fruit and sultana flavors with notes of caramel and toasted nuts. Spice and floral qualities dominate the finish, which features a smoky nuance and lingering spiciness. Serve this one by the thimbleful.

95pts NV Chambers Rosewood Winery Rare Muscat Rutherglen (half bottle)

(\$350) Dark brown. A heady, exotically perfumed bouquet evokes plum preserves, fruitcake, cherry pit and dried fig, with a subtle pipe tobacco quality coming up with air. Coats the palate with sweet dark berry and cherry compote flavors that show remarkable density and surprising vivacity. As much a solid as a liquid, finishing with amazing cling and power and resonating cherry character.

94pts NV Chambers Rosewood Winery Special Muscadelle "Grand" Classification Rutherglen (half bottle)

(\$140) Deep amber with an orange edge. Explosive aromas of toffee apple, candied orange zest, honey and gingerbread, with a smoky topnote and a touch of candied ginger. Sappy, sweet and densely packed but showing unlikely vivacity to its lush pit fruit compote, vanilla and fruitcake flavors. Really stains the palate and finishes spicy, sweet and extremely long, with a hint of bitter orange and no rough edges.

93pts NV Chambers Rosewood Winery Grand Muscat Rutherglen (half bottle)

(\$100) Dark amber. Intense, smoke-accented fruitcake and mocha scents are lifted by a spicy element and pick up notes of toffee, espresso and licorice candy with air. Lush, palate-coating cherry liqueur and molasses flavors show superb depth and a velvety texture, with a hint of mace adding bite. Really clings on the finish, which leaves smoky cherry and candied date notes behind.

91pts NV Chambers Rosewood Winery Muscadelle Rutherglen (half bottle)

(\$16) Bright orange-amber. Pungent aromas of orange marmalade and toffee, with a spicy note adding lift. Sweet and broad but lively on the palate, offering intense candied pit and citrus fruit flavors and a strong caramel nuance. Finishes sweet and long, with a touch of smokiness and excellent cling.



90pts NV Chambers Rosewood Winery Muscat Rutherglen (half bottle)

(\$16) Dark, amber-edged brown. Musky cherry pit and dark chocolate scents are enlivened by a hint of pungent herbs. Sweet and plush, offering broad pit fruit and cherry compote flavors and a hint of burnt sugar. Lingers with very good smoky intensity, leaving a note of maple syrup behind.

CULLEN WINES

94pts 2012 Cullen Wines Chardonnay Kevin John Margaret River

(\$109) (aged in one-third new oak): Greenish yellow. Heady aromas of ripe citrus and orchard fruits, honeysuckle, iodine and candied ginger, with subtle lees and smoky mineral qualities in the background. Juicy, incisive and pure, offering fresh tangerine, pear and chamomile flavors lifted by tangy acidity. This silky, seamless yet penetrating chardonnay finishes with a whiplash of lively citrus fruits and lingering floral character. I don't recall ever having a better example of this consistently outstanding Australian white wine. Incidentally, readers lucky enough to own some of the 2004 version of this wine (which was not called "Kevin John" back then) are sitting on some really outstanding chardonnay. A bottle that I drank in late May was still quite youthful, but beginning to show subtle nuttiness to go with its intense citrus fruit and pear skin flavors. I'd be in no hurry to drink it but wouldn't hesitate to enjoy it now either.

94pts 2012 Cullen Wines Diana Madeline Margaret River

(\$109) (76% cabernet sauvignon, 17% merlot and 7% cabernet franc; 38% new French oak): Inky ruby. Mineral- and smoke-laced blackcurrant and cherry aromas are complemented by deeper notes of licorice and mocha. Sappy, seamless and focused, offering sweet black and blue fruit flavors and a hint of anise. This rich yet animated blend finishes with excellent clarity and length and silky tannins that add shape. Extended aeration brought out a lively mineral character and a sexy lavender pastille quality along with added weight.

92pts 2013 Cullen Wines Sauvignon Blanc/Semillon Ephraim Clarke Cullen Vineyard Margaret River

(\$35) (71% sauvignon blanc and 29% semillon; 12.5% alcohol; raised in 50% new oak): Light, bright yellow. An exotically perfumed bouquet evokes tangerine, poached pear, vanilla and toasty lees, with a gingery note adding lift. Smooth and expansive on the palate, offering intense orchard and pit fruit flavors and a bracing jolt of candied citrus zest. The vanilla and smoke notes repeat on the finish, which shows excellent clarity and spicy persistence.

D'ARENBERG

94pts 2012 d'Arenberg The Sispheanic Euphoria Shiraz McLaren Vale

(\$85) Dark purple. Heady black and blue fruit scents, along with suggestions of licorice pastille, violet, cracked pepper and incense and a bright mineral overtone. Fleshy and deeply concentrated, showing a seamless texture to the powerful dark fruit liqueur flavors accented by smoky minerals and spicecake. This highly concentrated wine comes off as elegant and poised. Shows excellent focus and energy on the long, spicy finish, which is framed by smooth, even tannins.

94pts 2012 d'Arenberg J.R.O. Afflatus Shiraz McLaren Vale

(\$85) Inky purple. Exotically perfumed scents of dark berry preserves, potpourri and licorice, along with smoke and Asian spice overtones. Fleshy and expansive on the palate, offering energetic blackberry and cherry-cola flavors that put on weight with aeration. This rich yet lively shiraz finishes with excellent cut, supple tannins and lingering sweetness. According to Chester d'Arenberg these vines were 102 years old this vintage.

94pts 2012 d'Arenberg The Swinging Malaysian Shiraz McLaren Vale

(\$85) Youthful purple. Strongly perfumed scents of cherry-cola, blackberry, vanilla and smoky Indian spices, with an exotic floral touch emerging with aeration. Weighty but sharply focused dark berry and cherry-cola flavors offer striking clarity and palate-staining concentration but show no excess fat. The cola quality lingers on the strikingly long, sweet finish, which is firmed by silky tannins. This shiraz deftly balances richness and vivacity and drinks very well now after an hour of decanting.

94pts 2012 d'Arenberg The Other Side Shiraz McLaren Vale

(\$85) Dark purple. Intense, spice-accented aromas of cassis, violet, olive paste and smoky minerals; smells a lot like a high-end, ripe-year northern Rhone wine. Spicy dark berry and floral pastille flavors show superb focus and depth, along with a smoky



flourish on the back half. The extremely long floral finish features slow-building tannins and lingering sweetness. These vines were reportedly planted in 1916.

94pts 2012 d'Arenberg The Eight Iron Shiraz McLaren Vale

(\$85) Vivid purple. Intensely perfumed aromas of red and dark berry preserves, smoky minerals and dried flowers, with a hint of spicecake. A deeply flavored, focused shiraz that offers lively black raspberry and cherry flavors and a supple texture. Finishes with lingering sweetness, excellent clarity and silky, slow-building tannins. One of the more elegant and vibrant bottling in this vintage's Single Vineyard series, and delicious right now.

93(+?)pts 2012 d'Arenberg Shiraz Vociferate Dipsomaniac Single Vineyard McLaren Vale McLaren Vale

(\$85) Inky purple. Black raspberry, Indian spices and smoky minerals on the powerful nose. Fleshy dark berry and anise flavors become chewier with air and pick up a sexy floral pastille quality that builds in the glass. The licorice and floral notes carry through a long, sweet finish, which is firmed by dusty, harmonious tannins. This burly but energetic shiraz benefits quite a bit from decanting.

93(+?)pts 2012 d'Arenberg The Solopstic Snollygoster Shiraz McLaren Vale

(\$85) Dark purple. Powerful cherry and dark berry aromas display a brooding, deeply concentrated character, slowly giving up exotic floral and Indian spice qualities with aeration. Sharply focused, palate-staining dark fruit flavors deliver power and depth as well as finesse thanks to juicy acidity. Finishes with excellent thrust and length, leaving mineral-drenched dark fruits in its wake. Give this one some time.

93pts 2012 d'Arenberg The Blind Tiger Shiraz McLaren Vale

(\$85) Opaque purple. Exotically perfumed aromas of raspberry, boysenberry, cassis, rose oil and incense, with notes of licorice and spicecake emerging with air. Fleshy, appealingly sweet dark berry liqueur flavors coat the palate, with floral pastille and star anise notes providing complexity. Rich but also lithe and balanced, finishing with excellent clarity and persistent floral and spice character. These vines were planted in the mid-1920s.

93pts 2012 d'Arenberg The Sardanapalian Shiraz McLaren Vale

(\$85) Dark purple. Vibrant, expansive aromas of blackberry, Asian spices and violet. Lively, palate-staining and mineral-driven, with spicy blackberry and floral pastille flavors accented by a touch of cracked pepper. Finishes on a sweet note, with excellent length and silky tannins that subtly add shape and grip.

93pts 2012 d'Arenberg The Amaranthine Shiraz McLaren Vale

(\$85) Dark purple. Powerful black raspberry, anise and violet pastille scents expand with air, picking up a smoky nuance and a hint of black tea. Juicy dark berry flavors are complemented by vanilla and floral pastille notes and become spicier with air. Leaves bright floral pastille and blackberry compote notes behind on the long, penetrating finish, which features silky, well-knit tannins. The pH here is 3.49, which likely explains the wine's vivacity.

93pts 2010 d'Arenberg The Dead Arm Shiraz McLaren Vale

(\$65) Bright purple. Expansive black and blue fruit scents are complicated by notes of smoky minerals, licorice, cola and mocha, with a peppery nuance adding lift. Smooth and broad on the palate, offering sweet blackcurrant and bitter chocolate flavors and a sexy violet pastille quality. Velvety tannins give shape to the long, spicy finish, which features notes of fruitcake, vanilla and cherry compote. As forward and complex as this shiraz is right now, it should be even better with another five years of bottle age.

92(+?)pts 2012 d'Arenberg The Beautiful View Grenache McLaren Vale

(\$85) Deep ruby. Darker in character and more brooding than the Blewitt Springs grenache, with scents of blackberry, cherry compote and licorice enlivened by a hint of black pepper. Sappy and expansive on the palate, offering sweet dark berry flavors and a touch of bitter chocolate. Aeration brings more vivacity and spiciness to the persistent finish, which is firmed by tangy acidity and youthfully chewy tannins. Give this one some air, or bottle age.



92(+?)pts 2012 d'Arenberg Shipster's Rapture Shiraz McLaren Vale

(\$85) Bright purple. Pungent aromas of dark fruit liqueur, licorice, violet and smoky minerals. Densely packed, sweet and penetrating, showing very good heft to its smoky cassis, candied licorice and fruitcake flavors. Finishes ripe and long, with big, chewy tannins gaining strength with air. The most backward of this set of wines right now and in need of patience.

92pts 2010 d'Arenberg The Coppermine Road Cabernet Sauvignon McLaren Vale

(\$65) Vivid ruby. Heady aromas of dried cherry, red- and blackcurrant, cigar box and lavender, with a hint of vanilla emerging with aeration. Shows very good depth and energy to the flavors of bitter cherry, floral pastille and peppery spices. Firms up on the finish, which clings with excellent tenacity and focus and building sweetness.

92pts 2012 d'Arenberg The Piceous Lodestar Shiraz McLaren Vale

(\$85) Bright purple. Deeply concentrated dark berry aromas are brightened by zesty minerals and complicated by hints of smoked meat and Indian spices. Broad and fleshy on the palate, with dense cassis and blueberry flavors and a bitter note of cherry skin. Gains freshness with air and finishes long and floral, with chewy tannins adding grip.

92pts 2012 d'Arenberg Tyche's Mustard Shiraz McLaren Vale

(\$85) Bright purple. Warm, ripe, expansive aromas of cassis, licorice, smoky minerals and toasty oak. Sweet and broad on the palate, offering layered, concentrated flavors of spicy black fruits, violet, candied licorice and dark chocolate. Closes supple and sweet, with smoky persistence and velvety tannins that arrive late.

92pts 2012 d'Arenberg The Fruit Bat Shiraz McLaren Vale

(\$85) Inky purple. A perfumed bouquet evokes spicy dark berries and fresh flowers, with zesty minerality and a hint of black tea adding complexity. Pliant, fresh blackberry and bitter cherry flavors become deeper and sweeter with air. This open-knit, finely balanced shiraz plays depth against vivacity and finishes zesty and long.

92pts 2012 d'Arenberg Blewitt Springs Grenache McLaren Vale

(\$85) Brilliant ruby. Intense, highly perfumed aromas of candied red berries, floral oils, Asian spices and white pepper. Juicy raspberry and cherry flavors put on weight with air and show very good clarity. Spreads out nicely on the finish, which lingers with excellent tenacity and smooth, fully absorbed tannins. I find this sexy, emphatically fruity grenache highly appealing now but it also has the depth to age.

91pts 2012 d'Arenberg Chardonnay The Lucky Lizard Adelaide Hills

(\$32) Greenish yellow. A complex, perfumed bouquet evokes ripe pear, iodine and anise, with smoky mineral and floral accents gaining strength with air. Densely packed and lively on the palate, offering bitter pear skin and buttered toast flavors given spine by juicy acidity. Clings with excellent tenacity, leaving toasted nut and mineral notes behind.

91pts 2010 d'Arenberg The Ironstone Pressings McLaren Vale

(\$65) (70% grenache, 25% shiraz and 5% mourvedre): Bright ruby. Ripe cherry and plum aromas are enlivened by a spicy note, with a hint of licorice emerging with air. Fleshy and expansive in the mouth, offering hefty dark berry and bitter cherry flavors and a touch of mocha. The plum note repeats on the finish, which is firmed by supple, harmonious tannins. This decidedly rich, broad blend has the brawn to stand up to assertively seasoned braised beef or lamb dishes. I'd have guessed that there was a lot more shiraz in here.

91pts 2010 d'Arenberg The Galvo Garage McLaren Vale

(\$29) (68% cabernet sauvignon, 19% merlot, 9% petit verdot and 4% cabernet franc): Saturated ruby. Smoky cherry and dark berries on the intensely perfumed nose, with a hint of licorice in the background. Densely packed, chewy blackcurrant and bitter cherry flavors gain sweetness with air. Opens up more on the finish, which features youthful tannins and an echo of woodsmoke.



90pts 2010 d'Arenberg The Derelict Vineyard Grenache McLaren Vale

(\$29) Deep ruby. Medicinal cherry and pungent herbs on the exotically perfumed nose and in the mouth. Refreshingly bitter and precise, with good lift and building spiciness. Turns sweeter on the persistent finish, which is framed by chewy tannins. No way that I'd have guessed that this was an Aussie grenache; in fact, there's something Italianate going on here.

90pts 2012 d'Arenberg The Feral Fox Pinot Noir Adelaide Hills

(\$32) Bright ruby-red. Lively red berry, rhubarb and peppery spice aromas show good clarity and a hint of smokiness. Sweet and focused on the palate, with juicy raspberry and cherry flavors picking up a bitter chocolate nuance with air. Closes smoky and long, with sharp focus to the echoing red fruit and spice notes.

90pts 2013 d'Arenberg Riesling The Dry Dam McLaren Vale

(\$17) (10.6% alcohol): Pale yellow. Fresh citrus fruits, minerals, kerosene and white pepper on the fragrant nose. Silky and focused, with nervy lemon and green apple flavors giving way to a deeper melon quality with air. Finishes supple and long, with an echo of citrus pith and lingering spiciness.

90pts 2013 d'Arenberg Sauvignon Blanc The Broken Fishplate Adelaide Hills

(\$17) Bright silver-straw color. High-pitched lemon/lime, anise and ginger scents, with a subtle touch of grassiness in the background. Dry and incisive on the palate, offering bitter citrus zest and pear skin flavors that put on weight with air. The racy finish features very good clarity and length.

90pts 2012 d'Arenberg Viognier/Marsanne The Hermit Crab McLaren Vale

(\$17) (a 55/45 blend): Greenish yellow. Ripe peach and yellow plum on the deeply scented nose and in the mouth. Round and expansive, with a hint of lemon curd adding lift and focus. In an ample, intensely fruity but surprisingly lively style, finishing with nervy cut and a lingering note of honeydew melon.

90pts 2012 d'Arenberg Chardonnay The Olive Grove McLaren Vale

(\$17) Light yellow-gold. Exotic, expansive aromas of ripe pit fruits, honey, iodine and chamomile, with a smoky nuance gaining strength with air. Sappy and focused on the palate, offering gently sweet pit and orchard fruit flavors that become firmer with air. At once ample and lively, showing a smooth blend of weight and litheness. Closes on a spicy note, with repeating smokiness and very good length.

90pts 2011 d'Arenberg The Laughing Magpie Shiraz/Viognier McLaren Vale

(\$29) (a 90/10 blend): Bright purple. High-pitched dark berry and violet aromas show good focus and a hint of vanilla. Round and seamless in texture, offering lithe blackberry and bitter cherry flavors and a hint of allspice. Finishes subtly sweet, with lingering boysenberry and violet qualities. The proportion of viognier here is pretty high by Australian standards.

89pts 2011 d'Arenberg The Twentyeight Road Mourvedre McLaren Vale

(\$35) Opaque purple. Spice- and smoke-accented dark berries on the nose, with a touch of black tea adding complexity. Offers bitter cherry and cassis flavors, along with an undertone of juicy minerality that adds lift and bite. Picks up a floral quality on the finish, which is framed by supple, harmonious tannins.

89pts 2011 d'Arenberg The Sticks & Stones McLaren Vale

(\$29) (mostly tempranillo, with grenache, tinta cao and souzao): Brilliant ruby. Aromas of dried cherry, blackberry and anise, with a hint of rose emerging with aeration. Offers lively red and dark berry flavors and a touch of spicecake. A blood orange note adds bite to the finish, which is given grip by chewy tannins. Let this one unwind with a little aeration.

89pts 2011 d'Arenberg Shiraz The Love Grass McLaren Vale

(\$20) Inky purple. High-pitched dark berry and cherry pit scents are complicated by black pepper and espresso. Taut and wiry on entry, then fleshier in the middle, offering juicy blackcurrant and violet flavors that show a slightly bitter edge. Shows good energy on the finish but could use more supporting flesh.



89pts 2011 d'Arenberg Cabernet Sauvignon The High Trellis McLaren Vale

(\$20) Opaque ruby. Dark berries, cherry pit and pipe tobacco on the pungent nose, with a peppery element adding vivacity. Energetic blackberry and bitter cherry flavors show good clarity and a hint of licorice that builds with air. The tangy finish reveals repeating pepper and licorice notes, supple tannins and good length.

89pts 2011 d'Arenberg The Wild Pixie Shiraz McLaren Vale

(\$29) Bright violet color. Spicy, high-pitched aromas of fresh cherry and cassis, with a hint of mintiness building in the glass. Shows good focus and energy to its bitter cherry and dark berry flavors, with a smoky note adding complexity. Finishes with good lift and cut, leaving a peppery quality behind.

88pts 2011 d'Arenberg The Galvo Garage McLaren Vale

(\$29) (68% cabernet sauvignon, 19% merlot, 9% petit verdot and 4% cabernet franc): Bright purple. Dried cherry, blackcurrant and a hint of menthol on the pungent nose. Pliant, open-knit dark fruit flavors show good energy and a touch of peppery spice. The refreshingly bitter finish is firmed by dusty, slow-building tannins.

88pts 2013 d'Arenberg The Stump Jump White McLaren Vale

(\$13) (a blend of riesling, sauvignon blanc, roussanne and marsanne): Bright straw color. Dried citrus fruits, peach pit and beeswax and the spice-accented nose. Picks up a floral quality with air and offers gently sweet pit and orchard fruit flavors that provide good palate coverage. Smooth and round on the finish, with a lingering note of peach nectar. I'd serve this plush wine with a spicy Thai curry or salty charcuterie.

88pts 2011 d'Arenberg The Footbolt Shiraz McLaren Vale

(\$20) Dark violet color. Spicy black and blue fruits on the perfumed nose, with suggestions of licorice, woodsmoke and mocha in the background. Tangy dark berry flavors show a hint of candied licorice, with a peppery note adding bite. Closes with dusty tannins coming in late and adding subtle grip to the lingering bitter cherry and berry skin flavors. I'd have liked a bit more give.

87pts 2012 d'Arenberg The Stump Jump Sauvignon Blanc McLaren Vale Adelaide Hills

(\$13) Very pale yellow. Intensely fruity on the nose and palate, showing fresh citrus and orchard fruit qualities and a strong melon note. Starts off fleshy and smooth, then turns tart on the finish, which emphasizes bitter lemon pith and a hint of quinine.

FRISK WINES

88pts 2013 Frisk Wines Riesling Prickly Victoria

(\$11) (9.5% alcohol): Green-tinged straw. Displays scents of fresh melon and peach, with a hint of ginger adding lift and spiciness. Silky and seamless on the palate, offering juicy honeydew and pear nectar flavors and a sharp kick of white pepper. Finishes on a gently sweet note, with good breadth and cling. I'd serve this with spicy southeast Asian poultry or seafood dishes. The fruit here was sourced entirely from the cool King Valley region.

GIANT STEPS

93pts 2013 Giant Steps Chardonnay Tarraford Vineyard Yarra Valley

(\$42) Pale gold. Highly perfumed aromas of fresh orchard fruits, tangerine, white flowers and smoky minerals are complemented by a deeper hint of toasty lees. From a relatively warm vineyard but shows plenty of energy, offering juicy pear and citrus fruit flavors and a touch of shiso leaf. Finishes nervy and long, with resonating spiciness and excellent focus.

93pts 2012 Giant Steps Chardonnay Sexton Vineyard Yarra Valley

(\$42) Greenish yellow. An exotically perfumed bouquet displays scents of poached pear, peach nectar, tangerine and candied ginger, with an iodine-y quality building in the glass. Sappy, penetrating and pure, showing very good depth to its intense orchard and citrus fruit flavors. Really clings on the incisive finish, leaving smoky lees and mineral notes behind.



92(+?)pts 2012 Giant Steps Chardonnay Tarraford Vineyard Yarra Valley

(\$42) Light yellow. Vibrant, mineral-driven pit and citrus fruit aromas are complemented by a suave honeysuckle nuance and a strong note of gingery spices. Shows very good depth and energy to its peach pit and bitter pear skin flavors, along with a firming jolt of lemon pith. Very slow to unwind but possesses excellent concentration, finishing spicy, stony and very long, with lingering floral character.

92pts 2013 Giant Steps Pinot Noir Applejack Vineyard Yarra Valley

(\$42) Bright red. Sexy, complex scents of raspberry compote, cola, incense and peppery spices. Silky and expansive on the palate, offering sweet red fruit and floral pastille flavors that pick up a smoky nuance with air. Finishes on a spicy note, with subtle tannins and an echo of candied rose. Distinctly elegant and lithe in character; I'd bet on this pinot aging nicely on its balance.

92pts 2013 Giant Steps Pinot Noir Sexton Vineyard Yarra Valley

(\$42) Vivid red. Displays sexy, spice-accented red fruit and floral pastille scents and suggestions of dried flowers, anise and woodsmoke. An undercurrent of zesty minerality gives focus and lift to the plump raspberry and bitter cherry flavors, which flesh out and sweeten with air. The spicy quality comes back on the subtly tannic finish, which lingers with excellent clarity and tenacity. This suave pinot is delicious today but also has the stuffing to age.

92pts 2013 Giant Steps Chardonnay Sexton Vineyard Yarra Valley

(\$42) Light yellow-gold. Strongly floral scents of honeysuckle, jasmine and chamomile, along with suggestions of orange and melon. Vibrant, mineral-laced citrus fruit flavors put on weight with air while maintaining very good clarity. The mineral quality sharpens the finish, which clings with outstanding tenacity and subtle toastiness.

INNOCENT BYSTANDER

93pts 2013 Innocent Bystander Chardonnay Mea Culpa Yarra Valley

(\$60) Light yellow-gold. Powerful orchard and pit fruits on the smoke- and mineral-accented nose. Fleshy and deeply concentrated but quite lively too, offering pliant pear, honeydew and tangerine flavors and a touch of sweet butter. Shows excellent depth while maintaining energy thanks to juicy acidity, which lifts and sharpens the long, sappy, fruit- and mineral-driven finish.

93pts 2012 Innocent Bystander Shiraz Mea Culpa Yarra Valley

(\$60) (made with 85% whole clusters): Brilliant ruby-red. Sexy, high-pitched aromas of black raspberry, Indian spices, violet and smoked meat, with an intense mineral overtone; smells a lot like a Cote-Rotie, and a really good one at that. Sweet, incisive and energetic on the palate, offering spicy red and dark berry flavors that gain weight and power with air. Clings with excellent tenacity and focus, leaving juicy berry and floral pastille notes behind. Phil Sexton and Steve Flamsteed are well known for their chardonnays and pinots at Giant Steps and it's clear that they know their way around syrah as well.

92pts 2013 Innocent Bystander Pinot Noir Mea Culpa Yarra Valley

(\$60) Vivid red. Spicy raspberry and cherry aromas are complicated by notes of smoky minerals, lavender and pungent herbs. Pliant, intensely sweet red fruit flavors are complicated by candied licorice and spicecake qualities, with a spine of minerality adding definition. The taut, energetic finish is framed by smooth tannins, leaving tangy mineral and bitter cherry skin notes behind.

91pts 2012 Innocent Bystander Syrah Yarra Valley

(\$20) (made with 40% whole clusters): Brilliant ruby. Assertive aromas of dark berry preserves, incense and Asian spices, with a suave potpourri nuance coming out with aeration. Juicy, focused blackberry and bitter cherry flavors are given lift by tangy acidity and a hint of cracked pepper. Shows excellent clarity and thrust on the finish, which clings with spicy urgency and gentle tannins.



90pts 2013 Innocent Bystander Pinot Noir Yarra Valley

(\$20) Bright red. Tightly wound red berry and spicecake aromas pick up a suave floral quality with air. Silky and precise on the palate, offering energetic raspberry and bitter cherry flavors and a touch of bitter orange pith. Closes tangy and long, with silky tannins building slowly.

JOHN DUVAL WINES

93pts 2012 John Duval Wines Shiraz Entity Barossa Valley

(\$40) Inky ruby. Explosive smoke- and spice-accented boysenberry and blackcurrant aromas show an exotic floral nuance and suggestions of licorice and allspice. Fleshy and broad on the palate, offering sweet dark fruit flavors and a bracing jolt of peppery spices. Finishes energetic, focused and pure, with silky tannins and a late touch of candied flowers. As attractive as this shiraz is right now, I'd give it at least another five years of bottle aging before digging in.

92pts 2012 John Duval Wines Plexus Red Wine Barossa Valley

(\$40) (51% shiraz, 30% grenache and 19% mourvedre): Deep ruby. Complex aromas of red and dark berries, pipe tobacco, peppery spices and fresh flowers. Juicy and precise on the palate, offering sweet black raspberry and cherry compote flavors that flesh out and become spicier with air. Tightens back up on the long, incisive finish, which is firmed by dusty, fine-grained tannins. This wine saw only 10% new French oak.

91pts 2013 John Duval Wines Plexus White Wine Barossa Valley

(\$30) (55% marsanne, 32% roussanne and 13% viognier): Light yellow. Ripe orchard and pit fruits on the deeply perfumed, spice-tinged nose and in the mouth. Round and fleshy yet lively, with slow-building spiciness and a touch of honeysuckle. The spicy quality repeats strongly on the finish, which leaves notes of peach pit and lemon curd behind. The richest rendition of this bottling to date, but not at all lacking for vivacity.

JASPER HILL

93(+?)pts 2012 Jasper Hill Shiraz Georgia's Paddock Heathcote

(\$85) Inky purple. Wild, intensely perfumed bouquet evokes dark fruit preserves, candied licorice, woodsmoke and violet oil. Plush, palate-staining cassis and blackberry flavors are lifted by juicy acidity and a strong jolt of peppery spices. Opens up with aeration, picking up a hint of medicinal bitterness that plays nicely with the powerful fruit. Sappy, peppery and strikingly long, with silky tannins coming on late to add grip. This one deserves some patience.

92pts 2012 Jasper Hill Grenache Cornella Vineyard Heathcote

(\$50) Dark ruby. A deeply scented bouquet evokes black and blue fruit preserves, licorice, cola and peppery spices, with a smoky note building in the glass. Takes a brighter turn on the palate, offering gently sweet black raspberry and cherry flavors sharpened by a peppery nuance. The smooth, expansive finish features velvety tannins and a touch of mocha. In a distinctly rich style for the variety, with the heft to work with strongly seasoned, grilled red meats.

92pts 2012 Jasper Hill Shiraz/Cabernet Franc Emily's Paddock Heathcote

(\$125) Inky purple. Smoke- and black pepper-accented dark berry and floral aromas are lifted by a bright mineral quality and pick up a hint of licorice with air. Offers palate-numbing cassis and bitter cherry flavors and a touch of violet pastille, with tangy acidity adding bite. No easy sweetness of fruit here. Closes firm and long, with very good focus and silky, even tannins coming on late.

KILIKANOON WINES

93pts 2012 Kilikanoon Tregua Reserve Cabernet Sauvignon Clare Valley

(\$70) Deep, bright ruby. Highly fragrant bouquet evokes dark fruit liqueur, potpourri, mocha and pipe tobacco, with a sexy oak spice note in the background. Smooth and expansive on the palate, offering intense cherry-vanilla and bitter chocolate flavors



that are nicely lifted and sharpened by tangy acidity. Shows a real push/pull of richness and vivacity and finishes smoky, sweet and very long.

93pts 2010 Kilikanoon Revelation Clare Valley

(\$50) (roughly 95% shiraz and 5% mataro; aged for 20 months in all new French oak): Inky purple. Explosive black and blue fruit aromas are complicated by pipe tobacco, smoky oak spices, licorice and tar. Sweet, palate-staining dark berry liqueur flavors show surprising vivacity and pick up a sexy violet pastille quality with air. The spice and floral qualities cling strongly on the finish, which is firmed by dusty, fine-grained tannins. I'd definitely let this one age for at least another decade.

92pts 2013 Kilikanoon Mort's Reserve Riesling Clare Valley

(\$35) Green-tinged yellow. High-pitched, mineral-accented citrus fruit aromas show excellent clarity and pick up a suave floral quality with air. Dry, nervy and sharply focused, offering bitter lime zest and Seckel pear flavors and a touch of anise. This pure, razor-sharp, mineral-driven riesling finishes spicy and very long, with lingering honeysuckle and chalk dust notes. Incidentally, the outstanding 2004 version of this wine, which was bottled under screwcap (like all Kilikanoon wines), is delicious right now. It still shows a remarkably youthful character, with vibrant, mineral-tinged citrus fruit flavors and just a hint of floral honey that betrays its age.

92pts 2012 Kilikanoon Baudinet Blend Grenache/Shiraz/Mataro Clare Valley

(\$50) (a 50/40/10 blend): Deep ruby. Powerful dark berry preserve, licorice and woodsmoke scents, along with suggestions of pungent herbs and mocha. Sweet, spicy and broad, offering intense blackberry and boysenberry flavors that are firmed and sharpened by tangy acidity. Strikes a suave balance of richness and vivacity and finishes with a sexy floral quality and supple, harmonious tannins.

92pts 2012 Kilikanoon Shiraz Exodus Barossa Valley

(\$40) Dark purple. Expansive, flamboyantly perfumed aromas of raspberry liqueur, potpourri and incense, with a sexy note of apricot in the background. Stains the palate with juicy red and dark berry flavors lifted by juicy acidity and a hint of peppery spices. A sweet lavender pastille quality appears on the finish, which lingers with excellent persistence and just a trace of tannins.

92pts 2012 Kilikanoon Cabernet Sauvignon Blocks Road Clare Valley

(\$30) Bright purple. Textbook cabernet aromas of cassis, pipe tobacco, pungent herbs and cedary oak, with a smoky topnote. Smooth and expansive on entry, offering pliant dark fruit preserve, vanilla and licorice flavors that tighten up with air. A peppery, spicy quality adds cut to the finish, which features fully enveloped tannins and a touch of sweet chewing tobacco. Flamboyant and fruit-driven to be sure, but there's good structure here as well.

91pts 2012 Kilikanoon The Medley GSM Barossa Valley

(\$30) (50% grenache, 40% shiraz and 10% mataro): Vivid ruby. Spice- and smoke-laced red fruit aromas show very good clarity and hints of licorice and lavender. Spicy and incisive on the palate, offering lively raspberry and bitter cherry flavors that gain in weight and sweetness with air. Silky, focused and pure on the finish, which shows just a hint of fine-grained tannins.

91pts 2012 Kilikanoon Shiraz Covenant Clare Valley

(\$40) Bright purple. Exotically perfumed scents of ripe blueberry, incense and potpourri, with a smoky quality gaining strength with air. Fleishy and broad on the palate, offering intense black and blue fruit flavors and a subtle hint of spicecake. Becomes livelier and spicier with air and finishes sweet, precise and long, with just a touch of dusty tannins.

91pts 2012 Kilikanoon Grenache Prodigal Clare Valley

(\$40) Brilliant ruby. Aromas of blackberry, cola and anise are lifted by a spicy quality that gains power with air. Fleishy and broad on the palate, offering sweet dark berry and floral pastille flavors and a touch of tangy acidity. At once rich and energetic, finishing with strong thrust and cut and silky, harmonious tannins that come up slowly.



91pts 2013 Kilikanoon Riesling Mort's Block Watervale Clare Valley

(\$20) Bright straw. Highly floral scents of jasmine, honeysuckle, green apple and lime, all lifted by a zesty mineral topnote. Juicy, focused and spicy, offering good lift to its fresh pear and citrus zest flavors. Closes with repeating floral character, a hint of bitter herbs and excellent persistence.

90pts 2012 Kilikanoon Wines Shiraz Kavel's Flock Barossa Valley

(\$20) (includes roughly 2% each cabernet sauvignon and mataro; 10% new French oak): Bright purple. Smoky dark berry compote and cola scents show a vaguely jammy quality and a touch of black pepper. Fleshy and broad in the mouth, offering sweet blackberry and boysenberry flavors and a suggestion of licorice. Soft tannins shape the finish, which clings with good persistence and a bit of heat.

89pts 2012 Kilikanoon Killerman's Run Cabernet Sauvignon Clare Valley

(\$30) (includes about 4% merlot): Youthful purple color. Aromas of fresh dark berries and cherry pit, with notes of black pepper, violet and woodsmoke adding complexity. Tangy and sharply focused, offering bitter cherry and berry skin flavors that put on weight with air. Opens up on the back end, finishing with dusty tannins and a hint of mocha.

89pts 2013 Kilikanoon Killerman's Run Riesling Clare Valley

(\$20) Pale yellow. Fresh lemon and apple scents give way to deeper pit fruits with air, picking up a hint of white flowers. Smooth and fleshy on entry, then firmer in the mid-palate, offering bitter citrus fruit and pear skin flavors firmed by juicy acidity. Closes with good focus and bite, leaving a subtle peppery note behind.

89pts 2012 Kilikanoon Killerman's Run Grenache/Shiraz/Mataro Barossa Valley

(\$20) (a 50/40/10 blend; raised in 10% new oak, the rest 2-, 3- and 4-year-old barrels): Bright ruby. Peppery dark fruit aromas show good depth and complicating suggestions of exotic fruits and succulent herbs. Spicy and focused on the palate, offering bitter cherry and floral pastille flavors and a hint of tartness. Sweeter on the finish, which is framed by smooth tannins that fade into the fruit.

88pts 2012 Kilikanoon Killerman's Run Shiraz Clare Valley

(\$20) (includes roughly 2% each cabernet sauvignon and mataro; 10% new French oak): Bright purple. Smoky dark berry compote and cola scents show a vaguely jammy quality and a touch of black pepper. Fleshy and broad in the mouth, offering sweet blackberry and boysenberry flavors and a suggestion of licorice. Soft tannins shape the finish, which clings with good persistence and a bit of heat.

87pts 2012 Kilikanoon Wines Shiraz The Lackey South Australia

(\$15) Bright ruby. Slightly jammy blueberry and licorice aromas and flavors are complemented by a smoky quality and pick up a peppery nuance with air. Shows good energy and lift, finishing with a touch of heat and dusty, gripping tannins.

LEEWIN ESTATE

94pts 2011 Leeuwin Estate Chardonnay Art Series Margaret River

(\$89) Pale, green-tinged gold. Potent scents of lime pith, orange, iodine and white flowers, with an intense mineral overlay. Juicy, tightly focused and concentrated, offering nervy citrus and orchard fruit flavors complicated by anise, chamomile and a hint of buttered toast. Shows superb energy and clarity on the finish, which clings with serious, mineral-dominated tenacity. I was reminded of a very serious Chablis here; the style of this bottling has become more taut and Old World-like in recent years, which is just fine with me.

93pts 2010 Leeuwin Estate Cabernet Sauvignon Art Series Margaret River

(\$60) Bright violet color. Ripe blackcurrant, cherry, licorice, rose oil and cedary oak on the complex, deeply perfumed nose. Supple and expansive, offering sweet dark berry and cherry-vanilla flavors that turn spicier with air. Weightier on the finish, with the floral and spice notes emphatically echoing. Distinctly elegant, as usual for this bottling, finishing with excellent finishing clarity and smooth, even tannins that build slowly.



91pts 2012 Leeuwin Estate Chardonnay Prelude Vineyard Margaret River

(\$36) Green-tinged yellow. High-pitched, spice-tinged aromas of dried citrus and orchard fruits, with a touch of anise coming up with aeration. Dry and precise on the palate, offering lively pear and melon flavors and a jolt of bitter lemon pith that adds bite. The iodine-tinged finish shows lingering notes of anise and buttered toast.

91pts 2011 Leeuwin Estate Shiraz Art Series Margaret River

(\$35) Youthful purple color. Vibrant dark berry, floral and cracked pepper scents are given an exotic twist by notes of patchouli and candied violet. Supple and gently sweet, offering juicy blackberry and floral pastille flavors and a touch of olive; in an elegant style, with no excess weight. Finishes with a kick of peppery spices, smooth tannins and repeating floral and berry notes.

90pts 2013 Leeuwin Estate Riesling Art Series Margaret River

(\$22) Bright straw. Displays nervy, mineral-laced citrus fruit and floral scents, plus a building note of quinine. Dry and steely on the palate, offering tangy grapefruit and green apple flavors and a hint of tarragon. The refreshingly bitter finish displays very good clarity and bite.

90pts 2010 Leeuwin Estate Cabernet Sauvignon/Merlot Prelude Vineyard Margaret River

(\$22) Bright straw. Displays nervy, mineral-laced citrus fruit and floral scents, plus a building note of quinine. Dry and steely on the palate, offering tangy grapefruit and green apple flavors and a hint of tarragon. The refreshingly bitter finish displays very good clarity and bite.

89pts 2013 Leeuwin Estate Sauvignon Blanc/Semillon Siblings Margaret River

(\$20) (a 65/35 blend): Light yellow. Lively, focused and spicy on the nose, displaying scents of lime zest, green apple, jalapeno and fresh-cut grass. Dry and taut on the palate, offering zesty citrus and orchard fruit flavors and a hint of anise that builds with air. The jalapeno note comes back on the finish, which shows good clarity and firm grip. This wine was raised in a combination of stainless steel and used oak casks.

89pts 2011 Leeuwin Estate Shiraz Siblings Margaret River

(\$20) Brilliant ruby. Displays mineral- and pepper-tinged cherry and dark berry aromas, with a subtle floral nuance slowly emerging. Juicy, focused and appealingly sweet, showing good lift to its cherry/berry flavors. Picks up a smoky element on the gently tannic finish. This drinks well now with some air.

MOUNT MARY

94pts 2012 Mount Mary Vineyard Chardonnay Yarra Valley

(\$90) Bright yellow. Pungent smoke- and mineral-tinged orchard fruit and melon aromas show very good clarity and pick up a sexy floral nuance with air. Chewy, focused and pure, offering intense pear and honeysuckle flavors along with suggestions of tarragon and vanilla. Exudes an exotic seashell quality on the incisive finish, which clings with outstanding tenacity and focus. Quite rich for this bottling, which does not go through malolactic fermentation.

94pts 2012 Mount Mary Vineyard Quintet Yarra Valley

(\$125) (half cabernet sauvignon, with merlot, cabernet franc, malbec and cabernet franc): Bright ruby. Potent blackcurrant, cherry pit, pipe tobacco and incense aromas are lifted by lavender note. Stains the palate with bitter cherry and dark berry liqueur flavors that are braced by zesty acidity and a kick of black pepper. This seamless, focused blend finishes with powerful thrust, smooth slow-mounting tannins and a whiplash of sweet dark fruit. A baby for sure, but this wine's assertive fruit and well-knit tannins make it surprisingly approachable now with some air.

93pts 2012 Mount Mary Vineyard Pinot Noir Yarra Valley

(\$125) Vivid red. Sexy, Asian spice-accented raspberry and cherry scents are complemented by deeper notes of licorice, black tea, rose and musky underbrush. On the palate, sweet red and dark berry flavors are complicated by vanilla, spicecake and



bitter chocolate, with a smoky nuance gaining strength with aeration. Picks up energy and minerality on the finish, leaving behind intense black raspberry and floral pastille notes. This suave pinot benefits significantly from being open a while.

PENLEY ESTATE

92pts 2010 Penley Estate Steyning Cabernet Sauvignon Coonawarra

(\$65) Inky purple. Deeply pitched black and blue fruit aromas are lifted by peppery spices and a smoky mineral quality. Sweet blackcurrant and cherry-vanilla flavors provide very good palate coverage, turning livelier with air and picking up a licorice note. Showing a very youthful character, with zesty acidity adding clarity and bite to the strikingly persistent finish.

92pts 2009 Penley Estate Steyning Cabernet Sauvignon Coonawarra

(\$65) Saturated ruby. Deeply pitched cassis and dark chocolate aromas are complicated by pipe tobacco, woodsmoke and cedar. Very cabernet and distinctly rich, offering ripe dark berry flavors and an enlivening jolt of peppery spices. The spice and tobacco notes resonate on the long, broad finish, which is framed by smooth, harmonious tannins.

90pts 2013 Penley Estate Pinot Noir Coonawarra

(\$15) Brilliant red. Highly perfumed red berry and floral pastille aromas are complemented by deeper-pitched notes of mocha and licorice. Juicy and tightly focused on entry, then fleshier in the mid-palate, offering bitter cherry and black raspberry flavors and a hint of smokiness. Silky and seamless, finishing with supple tannins, very good back-end thrust and lingering sweetness.

90pts 2012 Penley Estate Merlot Gryphon Coonawarra

(\$20) Deep ruby. Aromas of ripe cherry, plum and dark chocolate, with a peppery note adding vibrancy. Fleshly and seamless in texture, offering sweet dark fruit flavors and a touch of mocha. Open-knit, fruit-driven and very drinkable; this is the style that made merlot popular with wine lovers in the first place. Closes supple and broad, with good length and no obvious tannins.

90pts 2012 Penley Estate Shiraz/Cabernet Sauvignon Coonawarra

(\$20) (58% cabernet sauvignon and 48% shiraz this vintage): Glass-staining ruby. Ripe cherry, vanilla and cured tobacco on the nose, with a peppery quality adding lift. Juicy and precise on the palate, offering bitter cherry and cassis flavors and a touch of candied licorice. Sweeter on the finish, framed by supple tannins and sharpened by building spiciness. A nicely balanced blend with the stuffing to age.

90pts 2012 Penley Estate Cabernet Sauvignon Phoenix Coonawarra

(\$20) Youthful purple color. Vibrant redcurrant and cherry scents are complemented by peppery spice and mineral nuances. Lively red berry and bitter cherry flavors become sweeter with air and pick up a smoky quality. Finishes tangy and incisive, with excellent cling and smooth mounting tannins.

88pts 2012 Penley Estate Shiraz Hyland Coonawarra

(\$20) Dark ruby. Ripe cherry and plum on the smoke- and spice-accented nose and palate. Plush, round and open-knit, showing very good depth and appealing sweetness to its cherry compote and blackberry flavors. Reveals a bit of warmth on the finish, which is firmed by dusty tannins and a touch of tangy acidity.

PLANTAGENET WINES

91pts 2012 Plantagenet Shiraz Great Southern

(\$29) Deep ruby. Smoke-accented aromas of black raspberry and violet, with a hint of licorice emerging with aeration. Juicy red and dark berry flavors gain sweetness and flesh with air. Packs a solid punch of flavor but comes off as quite lithe, finishing with strong cut, very good length and smooth, harmonious tannins that provide grip. This wine was aged in one-third new oak but it barely shows.



90pts 2013 Plantagenet Riesling Great Southern

(\$21) Light yellow. Quinine, lemon pith, pear and jasmine on the perfumed nose. Taut and sharply focused, offering vibrant orchard and citrus fruit flavors and a zesty mineral underpinning. Opens up and deepens on the long finish, which features a hint of agave and echoing minerality.

90pts 2012 Plantagenet Chardonnay Great Southern

(\$21) Greenish yellow. Tightly wound, mineral-laced aromas of fresh citrus and orchard fruits and white flowers. Taut, linear and refreshingly bitter, offering nervy lime and green apple flavors and a kick of white pepper. Clean and precise on the finish, with the mineral and lime notes strongly echoing. This incisive chardonnay benefits a lot from aeration.

89pts 2012 Plantagenet Hazard Hill Shiraz Western Australia

(\$13) Saturated ruby. Fresh black and blue fruits on the pepper- and smoke-accented nose. Offers pliant dark fruit flavors that put on weight and gain in sweetness with air. This smooth, accessible shiraz finishes with good clarity and no obvious tannins. It's pretty tasty right now.

88pts 2012 Plantagenet Omrah Shiraz Great Southern

(\$20) Brilliant ruby. Fresh blueberry and cherry scents show good clarity and a hint of white pepper. Bright and energetic on the palate, offering minty dark fruit flavors and a touch of licorice. The blueberry note lingers on the finish, which reveals no obvious tannins. This fruity, easy-drinking shiraz shows well right now.

88pts 2012 Plantagenet Omrah Pinot Noir Great Southern

(\$20) Brilliant red. Dried cherry and rose aromas are complicated by hints of musky herbs and woodsmoke. Taut and sharply focused, offering good thrust to its bitter cherry and orange pith flavors. A spicy note appears on the finish, which features dusty tannins and a hint of bitter chocolate.

88 pts 2013 Plantagenet Chardonnay Great Southern

(\$21) Light, green-tinged gold. Aromas of ripe pear, nectarine and honey are lifted by suggestions of lemon pith and ginger. Juicy orchard and citrus fruit flavors are complicated by tarragon and white pepper flourishes and a jolt of bitter quinine. Closes firm, chewy and dry, with a lingering pear skin quality.

88pts 2012 Plantagenet Omrah Unoaked Chardonnay Western Australia

(\$15) Light yellow. Spice-accented orchard fruits on the nose and palate. Picks up a note of tarragon with air, along with hints of orange pith and white pepper. Closes firm and dry, with good clarity and tangy bite. In a taut, linear style that makes it a refreshing drink.

88pts 2011 Plantagenet Hazard Hill Shiraz Western Australia

(\$13) Bright ruby. Dark berries, cherry and licorice on the pungent nose and in the mouth. A floral quality comes up with aeration, adding complexity to the wine's dark fruit character. Shows a hint of bitter chocolate on the smoke-tinged finish, which is firmed by dusty, slow-building tannins. Give this one a little air time.

88pts 2011 Plantagenet Omrah Cabernet/Merlot Great Southern

(\$20) Deep ruby. Lively aromas of blackberry and cherry, with a hint of pipe tobacco in the background. Shows good energy and lift to its bitter cherry and cracked pepper flavors, with a minty accent emerging with air. Finishes with good cut and clarity and gentle tannins, leaving a refreshingly tart cherry skin note behind.

88pts 2013 Plantagenet Hazard Hill Sauvignon Blanc/Semillon Western Australia

(\$13) (47% sauvignon blanc, 46% semillon and 7% riesling): Light, bright yellow. High-pitched citrus and orchard fruit aromas show good clarity and a hint of candied ginger. Silky and warm on the palate, offering plump pear and tangerine flavors and a hint of anise. Closes smooth and broad, with subtle spiciness and good length.



87pts 2013 Plantagenet Omrah Sauvignon Blanc Great Southern

(\$15) Bright straw. Dried citrus fruits, quinine and chalk dust on the nose. Firm and incisive, with good clarity and a tart edge to its lemon/lime and bitter herb flavors. Shows a refreshingly bitter quality on the finish, which comes up a bit short.

SHOOFLY WINES

90pts 2013 Shoofly Wines Pinot Noir Yarra Valley

(\$14) Bright red. Intensely perfumed red berry and blood orange aromas, along with suggestions of five-spice powder and white pepper. Racy and precise on the palate, showing sweet raspberry and cherry flavors and bracing minerality. Finishes juicy, focused and long, with building floral character and silky tannins.

90pts 2012 Shoofly Wines Shiraz South Australia

(\$14) Bright violet color. Exotic, high-toned aromas of dark berries, passion fruit and pungent herbs show good clarity and a peppery nuance. Pliant, sweet and expansive, offering focused blackberry and floral pastille flavors and a touch of licorice; quite complex for the price. Finishes with zesty cut, silky tannins and an echo of candied flowers.

89pts 2012 Shoofly Wines Chardonnay Adelaide Hills

(\$14) Greenish yellow. Ripe citrus fruit, melon and honeysuckle aromas are sharpened by a hint of candied ginger. Supple and expansive on the palate, offering juicy tangerine and white peach flavors plus a touch of sweet butter. Closes on a spicy note, with good clarity and lift.

89pts 2013 Shoofly Wines Shiraz South Australia

(\$14) Vivid ruby. Musky cherry and raspberry preserve aromas are lifted by a peppery note and a hint of fresh flowers. Plush, fruity and open-knit, offering round red and dark berry flavors and a touch of licorice. Closes warm and spicy, with smooth tannins coming on late and adding gentle grip.

YERINGBERG

92pts 2013 Yeringberg Marsanne/Roussanne Yarra Valley

(\$50) (a 55/45 blend): Light yellow-gold. Spice- and mineral-accented orchard fruit aromas are given depth by suggestions of honey and peach pit. Sappy and penetrating on the palate, offering bitter pear skin and tangerine flavors sharpened by tangy acidity and a dusty mineral nuance. Puts on weight with air while maintaining vivacity and focus. Finishes spicy, stony and very long, with a hint of floral character and no rough edges. This is the best bottling of this wine I've had to date; it would pair up nicely alongside some serious northern Rhone whites.

92pts 2013 Yeringberg Chardonnay Yarra Valley

(\$35) Light gold. Intense mineral-accented aromas of fresh citrus and orchard fruits, with notes of anise and honey adding depth. Concentrated but also lithe and precise, offering sappy orange and bitter pear skin flavors braced by a smoky mineral quality. Closes with excellent focus and lift, leaving a subtle floral note behind. This wine has a solid track record for aging and is still extremely young, so hands off.

92pts 2012 Yeringberg Shiraz Yarra Valley

(\$80) Youthful violet color. Primary dark berries, incense, violet and black pepper on the highly perfumed nose. Palate-staining blackcurrant and boysenberry flavors are underscored by juicy acidity and accented by a bright, spicy nuance. Powerful yet lively shiraz with excellent back-end thrust and smooth finishing tannins that shape the persistent, sharply focused blue fruit and floral flavor qualities.

91(+?)pts 2012 Yeringberg Red Wine Yarra Valley

(\$90) (a blend of cabernet sauvignon, cabernet franc, merlot, malbec and petit verdot): Bright purple. Intense spice- and mineral-accented aromas of red- and blackcurrant, pipe tobacco and rose show very good clarity and lift. On the palate, juicy



cassis and bitter cherry flavors pick up sweetness with air, along with a hint of mint. Chewy tannins give grip to the taut, smoky finish, which repeats the cherry and tobacco notes. This is still quite young.

91pts 2013 Yeringberg Viognier Yarra Valley

(\$60) Light yellow. Lively orchard and pit fruit aromas are complicated by ginger, white flowers and dusty minerals. Silky and open-knit, showing very good energy to its white peach and bitter pear skin flavors. Displays firm bite and zesty lift on the finish, with the floral and ginger notes repeating. In a fat-free, elegant style that's distinctly Rhone-like in character.

92pts 2012 Yeringberg Pinot Noir Yarra Valley

(\$80) Bright red. Assertive aromas of raspberry, cherry and candied rose, with Asian spice and woodsmoke accents adding complexity. Juicy and focused on the palate, offering lithe red fruit flavors and a hint of blood orange. Shows impressive energy and clarity on the energetic finish, with the raspberry and spice notes echoing.