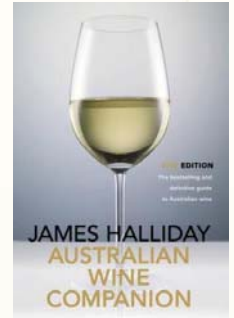




James Halliday 2015 Australian Wine Companion



Old Bridge Cellars Portfolio Reviews

BALGOWNIE ESTATE



2011 Balgownie Estate Bendigo Shiraz 90 pts

Bright crimson-purple; an elegant, savory/spicy shiraz, no more than medium-bodied, its black and blue berry fruits just holding onto the tannins on the finish. Good outcome.

BROKENWOOD



2007 ILR Reserve Semillon 98pts

Incredibly pale straw-green; this is the best ILR so far made; while delicate and elegant, the citrus, lemongrass and mineral components are utterly seamless, the palate of perfect balance and length. Arguably its Achilles heel is the pleasure it gives now, as few will experience the increased complexity of further age.

2011 Hunter Valley Shiraz 95pts

Made from young vines in the Graveyard Vineyard, and some barrels culled from the Graveyard wine proper. Excellent crimson-purple; this is stunningly fresh and vibrant, with more red fruits than usual joining the darker fruit flavors, tannins and oak, perfectly balanced and integrated. It will live and prosper for decades - leave it until '16 to glimpse where it is headed.

2011 Area Blend Shiraz 95pts

Matured in French and American oak for 18 months; this is the opposite play to the '12 Quail from the same regions - there it was McLaren Vale helping the Hunter Valley component, here a very good Hunter Valley vintage supports the lesser McLaren Vale vintage. The color is vivid purple, and the bouquet signals the intense and powerful dark fruit spectrum of the medium to full-bodied palate. A third of the price of Quail, and a cellaring super-special.

2013 Hunter Valley Semillon 94pts

Made from young vines in the Graveyard Vineyard, and some barrels culled from the Graveyard wine proper. Excellent crimson-purple; this is stunningly fresh and vibrant, with more red fruits than usual joining the darker fruit flavors, tannins and oak, perfectly balanced and integrated. It will live and prosper for decades - leave it until '16 to glimpse where it is headed.



2012 Cricket Pitch Red 89pts

Has that wonderful expression 'sourced from premium wine regions' (you get South Eastern Australia thrown in as a clue), to which Brokenwood's answer would no doubt be 'we have already specified the four varieties involved, regions simply overkill' - and it would be right. The crew at Brokenwood are far too clever to do anything to damage the value of the brand, so what you get is a full-flavored wine worth every cent of its asking price.

2013 Cricket Pitch White 89pts

Sourced from the meaningless 'premium regions', but whatever they may be, they work well together, aided by barrel fermentation of some of the wine. The result is a crisp and lively palate, with a laser light flash of passionfruit.

CHAMBERS ROSEWOOD



Rare Rutherglen Muscadelle NV 99pts

Dark mahogany; the impact of the wine in the mouth is as extraordinary as that of the Rare Muscat; a micro-sip floods the senses as they go into overdrive trying to capture the myriad of interlocking flavors. The everlasting finish and aftertaste is the key to understanding this wine: it is not just the 5% of so of the oldest component (say 90 years), but the 5% of the most youthful (say 5-6 years) that, by the skill worthy of Michelangelo has given the wine the vibrant freshness drawing you back again and again, but without diminishing its complexity.

Rutherglen Muscadelle NV 92pts

Golden orange; a truly perfect expression of young muscadelle: Callard & Bowser toffee, tea leaf, spices of every kind, nuts and toffee, leaving the mouth fresh. The value is quite extraordinary.

CULLEN WINES



2012 Cullen Wines Kevin John Chardonnay 98pts

Made according to the biodynamic calendar from vine to glass. Estate-grown 36-year-old vines were whole bunch-pressed and wild yeast-fermented in French oak (one-third new). Has the usual Cullen magic, pitting very complex fruit against fine, taut acidity, yet making it appear the two were made for each other; the length of the wine is prodigious, its finesse equally extraordinary. Reached towards the end of a 100-wine tasting, I found myself retasting it when I didn't need to do so, and even committing the mortal tasting sin of swallowing some.

2012 Cullen Wines Diana Madeline Cabernet Merlot 98pts

A 76/17/7% blend of cabernet sauvignon, merlot and cabernet franc aged for 19 months in French barriques (38% new). The palate has astonishing power and length given its alcohol, reflecting the years during which the vineyard has been managed biodynamically, the soil filled with life and beneficial micro-organisms that are indisputably having a positive impact on the vines. You might well be looking at a wine from Bordeaux's Left Bank, coiled up like a spring, but perfectly balanced, the finish almost painfully long.

2011 Cullen Wines Kevin John Chardonnay 97 pts

Harvested on fruit and flower days; hand-picked and whole bunch-pressed, then wild yeast-fermented in French oak barriques (32% new); 33% natural mlf during 7 months' maturation. An intense but supremely elegant wine; grapefruit and white peach has absorbed the oak without a tremor, the finish and aftertaste exceptionally long.

2011 Cullen Wines Diana Madeline Cabernet Merlot 97 pts

An 80/12/4/3/1% blend of cabernet sauvignon, merlot, malbec, cabernet franc and petit verdot; 18 months in French barriques (48% new). The bouquet is perfumed and very attractive, but doesn't prepare you for the sheer intensity of the quite beautiful palate, with gloriously juicy redcurrant and cassis cradled by fine tannins and integrated oak.



2012 Cullen Wines Mangan East Block **94 pts**

A 54/46% blend of petit verdot and malbec wild-fermented and basket-pressed, then matured for 5 months in 3-year-old French oak before a final month in new French oak, redoubling the unique make-up of this wine. It is an essentially juicy, fruit-driven style, the rich plummy fruit of the malbec filling the mid-palate of the more structured petit verdot, and also softening the tannin impact of the petit verdot. Give it 5 years, and it may be something special.

d'ARENBERG



2010 d'Arenberg The Dead Arm Shiraz **96pts**

An unambiguously top class version of a distinguished lineage; the color is as bright as the spicy red fruit aromas of the bouquet, the palate with a cascade of red and black fruits, spice, licorice and bitter chocolate flavors, yet providing all this with finesse and calm.

2010 d'Arenberg The Ironstone Pressings **96pts**

Excellent color for a 4-year-old GSM; the palate is as fresh and vibrant as the color suggests (and the alcohol confirms) with red cherry, raspberry and spice flavors, the tannins fine and persistent, all making for a very elegant wine.

2011 d'Arenberg The Other Side Single Vineyard Shiraz **96pts**

The star of D'Arenberg's single vineyard show from '11. Has a calm, confident authority to it. Dense black fruit, tannin that hits the finish and then arcs back through the wine, reinventing and re-presenting it. Smoky, cedary, creamy oak adds polish. It is a wine of luxurious force.

2011 d'Arenberg The Amaranthine Single Vineyard Shiraz **95pts**

Grown on a vineyard planted in 1968. Has routinely been a major source for Dead Arm Shiraz. This is rich and heady but not to an exaggerated degree. Chocolate, blackberry, tar, malt and dried herbs. Sees the finish and crashes a wave of flavor through it. Impressive.

2011 d'Arenberg The Vociferate Dipsomaniac Single Vineyard Shiraz **95pts**

Thin soil and a clay and limestone subsoil have produced an elegant shiraz with supple red and black fruits on the well balanced and long, medium-bodied, palate.

2010 d'Arenberg The Laughing Magpie Shiraz Viognier **95pts**

Still retains a bright crimson-purple hue; a fragrant bouquet of spicy red fruits leads into a bright and lively palate, with a delicious tension between the red and black players continuing through to the vibrant finish. It's easy to forget what a top vintage '10 was.

2011 d'Arenberg Little Venice Single Vineyard Shiraz **95pts**

Pure McLaren Vale shiraz. Showy oak of the toast and vanilla kind but ripe, dark, blackberried fruit is right there with it, step by step. Excellent intensity. Has laughed off the coolness of the '11 vintage. Strong tannin. Needs a long sleep.

2011 d'Arenberg The Sardanapalian Single Vineyard Shiraz **95pts**

Named after a Nineveh king renowned for his decadence. Needless to say this style of wine is likely to have been right up his alley. It's a thick, assertive, no-holds-barred style with intense blackberry, loam, tar and salt bush characters strapped securely to a cage of tannin. Dryness rather than fruit sweetness is a key attribute. Salty, earthen, dried herb notes give it a distinctiveness. It's barely taken its first deep breath; a long life is all before it.

2011 d'Arenberg Shipsters' Rapture Single Vineyard Shiraz **94pts**

Mouthfilling wine, by design. Fills the mouth with grainy notes of coffee grounds, mulberry seeds and blackberry. Feels cool and dense/rich/sweet at once. Chocolatey oak takes no backwards steps, but marries well enough with the fruit. Sizeable in all respects.

2011 d'Arenberg Tyche's Mustard Single Vineyard Shiraz **94pts**

Deep crimson-purple; the bouquet is pure McLaren Vale, with dark chocolate woven through plum and blackberry fruit; on the first taste these characters come through strongly on the fore-palate before giving way to somewhat austere tannins, but on retasting, the continuity of line is re-established, and a heartbeat of almost sweet fruit comes like a sparklet on the aftertaste.

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2010 d'Arenberg The Coppermine Road Cabernet Sauvignon 93pts

Good depth to the color; cassis fruit is confronted by more earthy/savory aromas and flavors than those of the other '10 d'Arenberg reds; however, this is cabernet, and perhaps it's not so surprising.

2011 d'Arenberg The Blind Tiger Single Vineyard Shiraz 93pts

From Blewitt Springs. It offers a big round ball of fruit flavor. Blueberry and blackberry, dense, sweet, ripe and mouthfilling. The mid-palate is so substantial it makes the wine feel round-shouldered; the start and finish seem lesser in comparison. Few will complain.

2011 d'Arenberg The Swinging Malaysian Single Vineyard Shiraz 93pts

The weather-beaten 2-3 million year-old soil of this vineyard was first planted with shiraz in the '70s, then grafted to riesling before grafted back to shiraz in '01. All the wines in the Single Vineyard series broadly follow the open fermentation, foot-treading and basket pressing prior to dryness. This is very savory and spicy, with sombre black fruits and firm tannins. Needs time to loosen up.

2011 d'Arenberg The Fruit Bat Single Vineyard Shiraz 93pts

Highly aromatic. A generally succulent wine with a rumbling motor of tannin. Plum, pepper, clove and gun smoke. Feels light on its feet. Suggestions of crushed leaf character adds a cooler climate side to its personality.

2011 d'Arenberg The Lucky Lizard Chardonnay 92pts

How a chardonnay can be 'lightly crushed' and 'gently pressed' I don't know, but these grapes, it seems, were so treated before barrel fermentation and 10 months in French oak, followed by a selection of the best barrels. The problem is that the acidity takes this wine towards sauvignon blanc territory, even if it gives great freshness to the palate and finish.

2011 d'Arenberg The Eight Iron Single Vineyard Shiraz 92pts

From a vineyard on the Osborn property, home also to the winery and cellar door. The vineyard is about as wide, according to the marketing spiel, as a decent eight iron hit. It's a funky, ferrous, gamey red; it's shiraz wearing a loud shirt. Licorice, dry spice, sandy loam characters are in the field of play too. It's not thick or particularly dense but it's both particularly tannic and resinous on the finish. Schizophrenic.

2013 d'Arenberg The Broken Fishplate Sauvignon Blanc 91pts

Hits a core of flavors right in the middle of the bat. Passionfruit, gravel and citrus. Fills the mouth but keeps things crisp and refreshing. Above the ruck.

2010 d'Arenberg d'Arry's Original Shiraz Grenache 91pts

Traditional style. Little sign of oak, sweet core of fruit, deceptively assertive tannin but an overall impression of softness. It doesn't look to be an ageworthy style but it will be. Blackberry, iodine and raspberry notes. Ferrous tannin. Good length.

2011 d'Arenberg The Custodian Grenache 91pts

Upfront raspberried fruit gets the action going but a savoriness (clove, earth, herb) through the finish leaves you with something to ponder. Medium-weight. Impeccable shape through the mouth. Cool vintage has done more benefit than harm.

2011 d'Arenberg The Lucky Lizard Chardonnay 91pts

It's become a lot cleaner and more accessible wine over the years. It's now peachy and fruit-driven with good intensity and a succulent finish. Lean-ish but fruity. Well-honed through the finish.

2011 d'Arenberg The High Trellis Cabernet Sauvignon 90pts

Planted in the late 19th century and was the first to have a trellis above knee height. The standard modus operandi of d'Arenberg works well here, with soft tannins and integrated oak woven through the fresh cassis fruit flavors of the light-bodied palate.

2011 d'Arenberg The Stump Jump Sauvignon Blanc 89pts

This wine comprehensively over-delivers with its generous and bright array of tropical fruits balanced by lemony acidity (itself trimmed by subliminal sweetness).

NV d'Arenberg DADD Sparkling White 89pts

Refreshingly dry and crisp - indeed, the unsweetened grapefruit/green apple flavors are a little over the top.



2012 d'Arenberg The Feral Fox Pinot Noir **89pts**

Crushed and taken to open fermenters with a small amount of whole bunches added; foot stamped, pressed, thence to used French oak for 12 months. Has fractionally cooked fruit nuances, but not to the extent of compromising varietal expression, and has good all-up flavor.

2013 d'Arenberg Dry Dam Riesling **89pts**

Floral. Almost musky. Has fennel and blackberry aromas/flavors jabbering around the core of (sweet) lime fruit. Lively enough.

2011 d'Arenberg The Footbolt Shiraz **89pts**

Clean, juicy, blackberried/rasberryed red of medium intensity. Not to be written off. Peppery/leafy notes are the main give-away to the vintage. Has a simple, easy-going appeal.

GIANT STEPS

2012 Giant Steps Harry's Monster **96pts**

A vibrant and supple Bordeaux blend, the crimson-purple color flying a welcome flag before you even pick up the glass. Cassis leads the way, redcurrant, cedar and a little spice following on seamlessly. A great example of a style the Yarra valley should by rights make more of.

2012 Giant Steps Sexton Vineyard Chardonnay **96pts**

Light straw-green; has considerable attitude, with elements of grapefruit and a touch of Burgundian funk driving the palate through to a long, lingering and satisfying finish.

2012 Giant Steps Tarraford Vineyard Chardonnay **96pts**

Light straw-green; shares some of the characteristics of the Sexton Vineyard, with mineral notes joining the neatly judged touch of funk, all adding to complexity, but without compromising the delicious grapefruit and white peach flavors.

2012 Giant Steps Sexton Vineyard Pinot Noir **96pts**

Significantly deeper color, although still bright and clear, compared to its Single Vineyard siblings. This sets the stage for a pinot with a great bouquet and a layered palate of black cherry and plum, gently, but insistently, filling every corner of the mouth, and lingering on the aftertaste.

2012 Giant Steps Applejack Vineyard Pinot Noir **96pts**

The color is bright but relatively light; the flowery, fragrant red flower/fruit bouquet an utterly logical precursor of the gloriously silky and supple red fruit palate. This is a compelling example of achieving more by doing less in the winery. Should have won the Jimmy Watson Trophy at the Melbourne Wine Awards '14.

2012 Giant Steps Arthur's Creek Vineyard Chardonnay **94pts**

Light straw-green; it's hard to go past the harmony and balance of this wine, melon, white peach and nectarine in a gentle wreath of fine French oak contributing as much to texture as to flavor.

2012 Giant Steps Gladysdale Vineyard Pinot Noir **92pts**

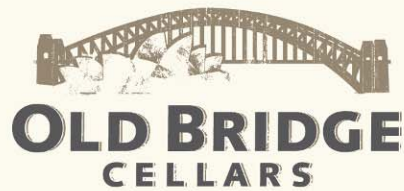
Light, clear crimson; the bouquet and palate offer inextricably bound red berry, herb and spice aromas and flavors, with a faintly savory underlay. Needs time for the inherent complexity to flower.

INNOCENT BYSTANDER



2012 Innocent Bystander Mea Culpa Shiraz **96pts**

From the Tarraford and Sexton Vineyards; hand-picked, whole bunch-fermented. A highly perfumed and striking wine, the vinification working to perfection, with red fruits ascendant, wreathed in spice and pepper, but no stinky/green characters whatsoever.



2011 Innocent Bystander Mea Culpa Chardonnay 96pts

From the Sexton, Tarraford and Arthurs Creek vineyards, the latter two some of the oldest plantings in the Yarra Valley; whole bunch-pressed 'with no meddling' in the winery; not filtered. Bright straw-green; an incredibly powerful, focused and linear wine with extraordinary minerality and citrusy acidity. Will live a lifetime.

2013 Innocent Bystander Chardonnay 94pts

A complex bouquet, with some funky elements sets the scene; the palate swells with stone fruit and creamy/figgy nuances, but just when you think this may be too much of a good thing, citrusy acidity sweeps the mouth clean and refreshed.

2012 Innocent Bystander Chardonnay 93pts

Light straw-green; an effortlessly elegant and effortlessly flavored wine, presenting Yarra Valley chardonnay without artifice or evident oak, simply caressing the mouth with its stone fruit flavors, the finish with that hallmark Yarra Valley length.

2013 Innocent Bystander Pinot Gris 91pts

Hand-picked, heavy bottle, leesy/yeasty complexity, enough fruit intensity but a clear sense that savoriness is a high priority. It's successful in its ambitions, if not spectacularly so. Lemon, pear, yeast, apple and nectarine but with a hand on the volume control, inching to turn it anticlockwise. Tastes though like the wine of a good year. Excellent composure.

2013 Innocent Bystander Pinot Noir 91pts

Estate-grown and hand-picked. A deliciously fragrant and lively pinot, red cherry and plum disputing primacy; does not aspire to greatness, just putting itself first and foremost for tonight's enjoyment - or for the next 2-3 years.

2013 Innocent Bystander Syrah 90pts

Bright, fresh and firm; medium-bodied, with a spray of red and black fruits, spice and cracked pepper. It's all about the fruit, not oak; all up mainstream cool climate style.

2013 Innocent Bystander Pink Moscato 90pts

Vibrant, Barbie pink color. Zippy, sweet and grapey with musk and citrus blossom adding to the flamboyance. Acidity gives the wine a line to hang on. You'd have to say it feels well balanced.

JASPER HILL

2012 Jasper Hill Emily's Paddock Shiraz Cabernet Franc 96pts

Bright crimson-purple; the wine has an exceptional spicy fragrance that permeates both its bouquet and palate, underlining its innate elegance; the blackberry, black cherry and licorice fruit flavors are precisely balanced by fine-grained, persistent tannins and oak on the long palate.

2012 Jasper Hill Georgia's Paddock Shiraz 96pts

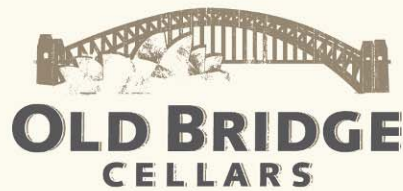
Strong crimson color; a thoroughbred from start to finish; the fruit aromas of spicy red and black fruits swing smoothly into the supple, gently mouthfilling fruits of the palate; it is luscious, but not extravagantly so, its tannins perfectly judged, oak likewise. Very different to Emily's, both equally good.

2012 Jasper Hill Cornella Vineyard Grenache 94pts

Strong crimson color; a thoroughbred from start to finish; the fruit aromas of spicy red and black fruits swing smoothly into the supple, gently mouthfilling fruits of the palate; it is luscious, but not extravagantly so, its tannins perfectly judged, oak likewise. Very different to Emily's, both equally good.

2013 Jasper Hill Georgia's Paddock Riesling 92pts

Powerful, rich, layered and succulent flavors of ripe citrus, lemon curd and green pineapple are brought into line and given focus by the rocky acidity that bursts through on the back-palate and finish.



JOHN DUVAL WINES



2012 John Duval Wines Plexus SGM 95pts

Armed with flavor and dangerously drinkable. Red and black berries, ground Asian spice, earth, aniseed and a quick kiss of cedary French oak. Puts on an impeccable performance.

2012 John Duval Wines Entity Shiraz 94pts

Warm at heart but with its eyes firmly set on savoriness. Sweet plum and vanilla meet notes of soy, crushed leaf, woody spice and clove. Intricately tannic. Winds up and lets fly with a style punch of flavor through the finish.

KILIKANOON



2010 Kilikanoon Revelation Shiraz 97pts

The inaugural release of this wine, a selection of the best barrels of the vintage, this year from Kilikanoon's estate plantings in the Clare Valley. It combines richness and intensity of black fruit flavor with surprising, and rare, elegance, most particularly on the long, finely structured finish and aftertaste.

2012 Kilikanoon Exodus Shiraz 95pts

The wine spent 24 months in French and American oak, but this has in no way impacted on the varietal fruit expression of clean-cut black fruits, the long, medium-bodied palate with abundant life and energy.

2012 Kilikanoon Blocks Road Cabernet Sauvignon 95pts

Estate-grown, and spent 22 months in French oak. Full crimson-purple; this is a seriously good Clare Valley cabernet, with abundant cassis fruit, gently savory tannins and a long finish.

2013 Kilikanoon Mort's Block Riesling 94pts

Light straw-green; the bouquet and palate focus on the intertwined lemon and lime fruit that opens with power and thrust, and finishes the same way, giving the wine that all-important length.

2013 Kilikanoon Killerman's Run Riesling 94pts

Bright, light quartz; most attractive, managing to combine plenty of citrus fruit with a crisp, minerally acid structure; a dead set candidate for 5+ years cellaring.

2012 Kilikanoon Prodigal Grenache 94pts

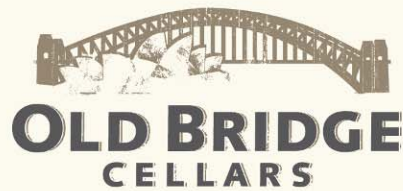
The grapes are grown on two 60-year-old vineyards in the Watervale district, open-fermented and matured in used barrels. The color is excellent, full and bright, the fruits luscious and expressive, but with no jammy or confection notes. Controlled alcohol is a key to the wine that will repay cellaring if you wish, but is delicious now.

2012 Kilikanoon Killerman's Run Shiraz 94pts

Bright crimson-purple; the palate is crammed to the gills with the luscious black and red fruits promised by the bouquet, expertly executed oak and tannin management the icing on the cake. Its value for money is a reflection of the quality of the two Kilikanoon tiers of super-premium wines above it.

2012 Kilikanoon Killerman's Run Cabernet Sauvignon 93pts

The Clare Valley doesn't always come up with the right answers with cabernet sauvignon, but in this vintage did so in spades. The wine is full-bodied, with a classic array of black fruits and savory/earthy tannins to provide texture and structure; the oak handling has also been spot on.



2012 Kilikanoon Covenant Shiraz **93pts**

A complex bouquet and medium to full-bodied palate reflects the vintage first and foremost, but also maturation in French and American oak; licorice and black chocolate are also components, ripe tannins providing the framework.

2013 Kilikanoon Mort's Reserve Riesling **93pts**

This is a hand-picked blend of the finest parcels from the Khileyre and Mort's Vineyards in the Watervale district. It is powerful and robust, and needs time to slim down, but patience will be rewarded.

2013 Kilikanoon Skilly Valley Pinot Gris **93pts**

An interesting decision to use a riesling bottle - after all, Alsace does the same. The wine comes from two high altitude vineyards in Penwortham, both hand-picked and separately fermented. This is a wine full of attitude and character, flooded with spiced pear fruit, and a dash of cream for good measure.

2012 Kilikanoon The Medley GSM **92pts**

A 50/40/10% blend, the hue good, although not particularly deep; raspberry and cherry aromas and flavors are the defining features, plus a dab of oak and fully adequate tannins. Has enough under the bonnet to give it until '16 to commence consumption.

2012 Kilikanoon Kavel's Flock Shiraz **92pts**

Good color; a pretty handy wine to have as the entry point for Kilikanoon's Christmas box of goodies from the '12 vintage. Light to medium-bodied black fruits, plum, dashes of chocolate and oak (French) make a complete wine at its best up to and beyond '20.

2012 Kilikanoon Killerman's Run GSM **91pts**

A 51/39/10% blend; this wine has always offered great value, and this is right up there with its forerunners; brightly colored, its juicy and fresh fruits are backed by good tannins. Will live, but is ready now.

LEEWIN ESTATE



2011 Leeuwin Estate Art Series Margaret River Chardonnay **98pts**

There is always cause to genuflect in the presence of chardonnay royalty, such as that of Leeuwin Estate. It imposes its will without a flicker of effort; the line between citrus and stone fruit, and between oak and mineral comes and goes, leaving you grasping at straws; it's a wine of flawless balance, line and length.

2010 Leeuwin Estate Art Series Margaret River Chardonnay **97pts**

Bright yellow-green; the sheer purity and intensity of this wine is remarkable, even in the context of its imperious ancestry; it has its own flavor and tactile characters stemming from the perfect balance between the white peach and grapefruit flavors carried through the very long and detailed palate by bright acidity.

2010 Leeuwin Estate Art Series Margaret River Cabernet Sauvignon **96pts**

Bright crimson-purple; the fragrant cassis-filled bouquet sends its unequivocal message of that rarest of beasts: a totally delicious young cabernet that has a mellifluous palate of redcurrant and blackcurrant fruit supported by superfine tannins and subtle French oak.

2011 Leeuwin Estate Art Series Margaret River Shiraz **96pts**

Bright mid-garnet; a fragrant and expressive bouquet of red and black fruits, florals and a backbone of fine oak present; the medium-bodied palate is fleshy and fine boned, with taut acidity and finishing evenly balanced and poised.

2012 Leeuwin Estate Prelude Vineyards Margaret River Chardonnay **94pts**

Light straw-green; it is a tribute to the quality of the Art Series Chardonnay that this should be Leeuwin's entry point wine; there is a perfect balance between the grapefruit spectrum and the white peach spectrum, oak a near-invisible net holding the parts together, the length exceptional.



2011 Leeuwin Estate Siblings Margaret River Shiraz **94pts**

Lucky Leeuwin Estate, proclaims this wine. I was part of a discussion a decade ago about the style of Leeuwin's Shiraz, some feeling it needed more, perhaps a touch of viognier. Leeuwin's two Shirazs from '11 comprehensively answer the question in the negative: the elegance and restraint of the wines is of the same class as all the wines in the portfolio. Great value, too.

2013 Leeuwin Estate Siblings Margaret River Semillon Sauvignon Blanc **92pts**

A 65/35% blend that is delightfully crisp and crunchy, the undertow of minerally acidity running below the more sedate guava and gooseberry flavors, a twist of Meyer lemon on the finish the cream on the cake.

2013 Leeuwin Estate Art Series Margaret River Riesling **91pts**

Pale quartz; one of the most famous and instantaneously recognizable rieslings in Australia thanks to John Olsen's frogs on the label. The region's maritime climate means no matter how well it is made - very well indeed here - it is in a different category to Great Southern rieslings, and most is (sensibly) enjoyed when young and fresh.

2009 Leeuwin Estate Art Series Margaret River Cabernet Sauvignon **90pts**

Good hue, although light; has fresh cassis fruit on the bouquet and palate; purity alone cannot make up for the lack of complexity.

2009 Leeuwin Estate Prelude Vineyards Margaret River Cabernet Merlot **89pts**

Pale color; a pleasing blend of tropical fruit, cut grass and nettle on the bouquet; the fleshy palate provides a fresh and accessible experience; drink young and drink cold.

MOUNT MARY



2012 Mount Mary Quintet **97pts**

Bright crimson; the bouquet swarms with aromas of red and black fruits and quality oak; the medium-bodied palate is supremely elegant, yet boasts all the intensity one could wish for, with vibrant cassis and redcurrant fruit on a non-stop trip in a very fast train; of course there are tannins and French oak, but these characters are largely passive observers.

2012 Mount Mary Pinot Noir **97pts**

Bright, clear crimson-purple; an immaculately made pinot, immediately reflecting the special qualities of the site, the age (40+ years) of the vines, and the great vintage; the flowery, perfumed red-berried bouquet leads into an exquisitely flavored and structured palate, making the words 'elegance' and 'finesse' seem like cliches. This is a great pinot noir, even by the exalted standards of Mount Mary.

2012 Mount Mary Triolet **96pts**

A blend of sauvignon blanc, semillon and muscadelle, barrel-fermented in used French oak, and likewise matured in used oak. Shines brightly in the context of the vintage, with vibrant lemony fruit, crisp acidity and a long, cleansing and satisfying finish. Will become more complex with age in bottle, but that can be bypassed without committing vinous sacrilege.

2012 Mount Mary Chardonnay **96pts**

Pale but brilliant quartz-green; the bouquet and palate reveal a wine of ultimate refinement, with laser-like clarity and precision of its flavors; while barrel-fermented, it is the fruit that drives the very long palate, bolstered by perfectly weighted acidity; the flavors span white-fleshed stone fruits, a touch of cashew, finishing with grapefruity acidity.



PENLEY ESTATE



2010 Penley Estate Chertsey Bordeaux Blend **96pts**

A Bordeaux blend of 38% cabernet sauvignon, 32% merlot and 30% cabernet franc. This is a no-holds-barred full-bodied wine yet is superbly balanced, and is the best ever Penley's red wine; the fruit flavors are multifaceted, but with a common link of juicy length; oak and tannins are exactly where they should be. Pity about the wine-stained cork.

2010 Penley Estate Steyning Cabernet Sauvignon **95pts**

Deep color; some wine staining up the side of the otherwise pristine white cork is disconcerting, although there is no impact at this stage; an elegant, medium-bodied cabernet, it has obviously spent a prolonged time in French oak (most new, I assume), cassis, mulberry, and savory tannins also adding to complexity.

2009 Penley Estate Steyning Cabernet Sauvignon **94pts**

Would be a more than worthy partner to the '10 were it not for the wine-staining up all sides of the cork, a truly worrying sign for the future of what is at this stage a high quality wine, with all the indices of seriously good Coonawarra cabernet (and quality oak). Its points are for the near future alone.

2010 Penley Estate Reserve Cabernet Sauvignon **94pts**

Made with header boards keeping the cap submerged, and finishing fermentation in barrels. The color is good, and the flavors are in the cassis heartland of cabernet, but the tannins are in an argumentative mood, and need to get out of the bottle on the right side - I think they will in a few years.

2012 Penley Estate Condor Shiraz Cabernet **93pts**

Good color; a 65/35% blend that works to perfection; take your choice of black and red cherry, blackcurrant and redcurrant, add some spice, oak and tannins - hey presto, it's ready.

2012 Penley Estate Phoenix Cabernet Sauvignon **92pts**

Bright, youthful hue; an appealing medium-bodied palate brings cassis, spice and cedary French oak onto centre stage, tannins in the wings. A good commercial cabernet from the right region.

2012 Penley Estate Aradia Chardonnay **92pts**

A fragrant and seriously savory example of the variety, ready to go; medium-bodied fresh and fleshy, enjoy in the full flush of youth.

2010 Penley Estate Tolmer Cabernet Sauvignon **92pts**

Good retention of color for a wine that spent 24 months in French oak; it is potent, and laden with blackcurrant fruit mixed with Coonawarra earth, in turn framed by ripe tannins. Needs, and will repay, extended cellaring.

2011 Penley Estate Aradia Chardonnay **90pts**

Bright straw-green; the cool vintage presented an opportunity for chardonnay to shine, and this wine did just that; peach, melon and fig fruit is balanced by bright acidity; good length, too.

2012 Penley Estate Gryphon Merlot **89pts**

Bright crimson-purple; Coonawarra should effortlessly produce quality merlot, but with a few exceptions (Penley included) it is either blended or not made in the first place. Here, the fruit is poised between red berry and black olive flavors, the only issue as of now the amount of French oak. Worth patience.

2011 Penley Estate Gryphon Merlot **89pts**

A light to medium-bodied wine with clear red varietal fruit flavors, and also some hints of green (not black) olive - a bequest of the cool vintage.

2012 Penley Estate Hyland Shiraz **88pts**

A pleasant, well balanced, medium-bodied shiraz; goes along to get along style.



PLANTAGENET



2012 Plantagenet Mount Barker Cabernet Sauvignon 96pts

Impressive from the outset and yet never more than medium-bodied. Flavors run through blackcurrant, leather, wood smoke, cloves and bay leaves. Long chains of dusty tannin are a key component. The good die young; the outstanding go on for decades. This has a long life ahead.

2012 Plantagenet Mount Barker Shiraz 95pts

Composed, well-tailored wine. Complex nose of autumn leaves, tar, sweet blackberry and smoky oak. Blends savory, spicy, leafy elements with powerful, dark-berried fruits confidently and well. Has a seamlessness to it. Has a reach of fine, rippling tannin working positively throughout. Difficult to fault.

2013 Plantagenet Mount Barker Riesling 94pts

The wine is predominantly sourced from the Wyjup Vineyard (43-year-old vines), fleshed out with lesser amounts from two local vineyards which add complexity to the profile. The wine is a little bit behind the all-conquering '12 Riesling, but is seriously good, with a fragrant, flowery, lime blossom-filled bouquet, a long palate gaining strength and energy on the finish, with touches of slate and talc forming part of the impact of acidity.

2011 Plantagenet Hazard Hill Shiraz 91pts

Standout release under this label. Attractive mix of pepper and clove savory elements with sweet cherry-plum fruit. Medium-bodied, well-shaped and well-formed. Tannin is modest and mannered but it draws back impressively through the wine. Will be at its best now or medium term.

2012 Plantagenet Omrah Pinot Noir 90pts

Good colour and clarity; a very handy pinot at this price, with clear varietal expression in a red and black cherry spectrum; while the structure needs a little more conviction, the fruit flavors are persistent, and carry the day.

2012 Plantagenet Omrah Unoaked Chardonnay 89pts

Pale color; very consistent winemaking, the emphasis on varietal fruit and freshness comes through strongly in this wine with grapefruit and stone fruit to the fore; rightly, unoaked.

2013 Plantagenet Omrah Sauvignon Blanc 89pts

Alive with tutti-frutti tropical fruit scents with more of the same lavished on the palate. For all its exuberance it still feels polished and tidy. Citrus and passionfruit flavors make themselves well known before a juicy, slightly grassy, textural finish.

2011 Plantagenet Omrah Shiraz 89pts

Light, but bright, color; a fragrant, light to medium-bodied wine with juicy plum, cherry and spice flavors supported by fine tannins and a flick of vanillin oak. Ready now.

2011 Plantagenet Omrah Cabernet Merlot 89pts

Healthy color, although not especially deep; an easy going light to medium-bodied wine with enough cassis and plum to satisfy, and not hammered by oak or tannins. Ready to go right now.

SHOOFLY

2013 Shoofly Shiraz 89pts

Full crimson-purple; full-bodied, dense and rich, overflowing with black fruits and plums. Made for early consumption but deserves, indeed needs, more time in bottle - '17 would be a starting point. Worth the wait, and worth the price.



2012 Shoofly Chardonnay **89pts**

Good quality Adelaide Hills chardonnay has been largely left to communicate its message without embellishment, other than a well-judged touch of oak. Very good value.

YARRA YERING ★★★★★

2012 Yarra Yering Dry Red Wine No. 2 **98pts**

Shiraz, with a small percentage of mataro, was co-fermented with viognier and marsanne. While the color is not particularly deep, the fragrance of the wine is exceptional, the intensity of the juicy spray of red fruits on the vibrant palate even more so. This is an iron fist in a velvet glove, the flavors lingering long after the wine has been swallowed. The inheritance of the late Bailey Carrodus is being carefully guarded.

2012 Yarra Yering Underhill Shiraz **97pts**

The promise of the excellent crimson-purple color is duly delivered; the bouquet has a fragrant blend of red fruits, spice and French oak, the medium-bodied but very long and pure palate with the full spectrum of flavors, but it is the finesse and elegance that make it special.

2012 Yarra Yering Dry Red No. 1 **97pts**

A cabernet sauvignon-dominant blend, with lesser amounts of merlot, malbec and petit verdot. Excellent hue and depth; this is a top-flight No. 1, fully reflecting the excellent vintage; the flavors are bold and luscious, yet the wine never threatens to lose its shape; first there is the multi-variety complexity, second the perfectly balanced ripe tannins. It almost seems superfluous to mention the new French oak, but it, too, helps weld the wine into its utterly coherent whole.

2012 Yarra Yering Pinot Noir **96pts**

Clear, bright, light color does not send a true signal for the wine, which has an intense and focused, gently spiced red varietal fruit bouquet, the palate treading in the footsteps of the bouquet; supple and elegant, the overall balance and length are exceptional.

2012 Yarra Yering Chardonnay **92pts**

The decision to continue to use one-piece natural cork with any white wine, chardonnay in particular, flies in the face of both cutting edge research at the AWRI, and common sense - unless you are sending a message to the consumer to drink the wine within 3 years of vintage, and even then run a range of risks. Since the reputation of Yarra Yering is rightly founded on its red wines, this probably matters little in the scheme of things, and there are other, far better, Yarra chardonnays excluding any consideration of the closure.

YERINGBERG ★★★★★

2012 Yeringberg Marsanne/Roussanne **96pts**

This 54/46% blend is all you could wish for, supple yet precise, with a lovely mix of honey, citrus, honeysuckle and acidity. Looks back to the great '81. 100% marsanne and has a very long life ahead.

2012 Yeringberg Chardonnay **95pts**

30% wild yeast barrel-fermented, part tank, then in barrel with cultured yeast; 30% new French oak barriques, 30% mlf, and kept on lees with stirring for 11 months. The wine is deep, complex and rich, balanced and lengthened by good acidity. Better than either the '10 or '11.'

2011 Yeringberg Cabernet Blend **95pts**

A 56/15/14/8/7% blend of cabernet sauvignon, cabernet franc, merlot, malbec and petit verdot. A true 'vineyard' wine: if the fruit is in good condition it is picked and included in the wine without any blending trials, notwithstanding that each variety is separately fermented and matured in barrel. It has excellent color for the vintage, and has a deliciously juicy, supple, ultra-smooth light to medium-bodied palate - one of the best '11 reds of any description from the Yarra Valley.



2012 Yeringberg Viognier 94pts

Gleaming yellow-green; apricot and ginger aromas are followed by a particularly well balanced and textured palate, unusual for viognier, and all the better for that.

2011 Yeringberg Shiraz 93pts

Excellent bright crimson of medium depth; the vintage and the alcohol would suggest some green/minty fruit nuances, but it's just savory/foresty/earthy characters that underlie the cassis fruit, came close to escaping scot-free.

2011 Yeringberg Pinot Noir 91pts

Very light color, although the hue is bright; the floral bouquet is the bellwether for a palate that has greater depth of fruit than the bouquet would suggest; soft red cherry and a dash of plum have balanced savory tannins on the finish. A valiant effort from the 40-year-old vines.

