

Wine Enthusiast

October 2014



Australian wines continue their resurgence in the US market and after one or two tastes it is easy to see why. Wine Enthusiast reaffirms what we have known for a while now: contemporary Australian winemaking is all about elegance and balance.

94 pts Kilikanoon 2010 Attunga 1865 Shiraz (Clare Valley)

Fruit from 900 of some of the planet's oldest vines goes into this wine, which gives it an interesting link to the past as well as being excellent. Cedary notes frame blueberry and blackberry fruit, picking up nuances of menthol, hickory smoke and mocha along the way. The supple tannins seem to gain grip as you sip, finishing firm enough to suggest cellaring up to 15 years. **Cellar Selection.**

93 pts Kilikanoon 2009 Attunga 1865 Shiraz (Clare Valley)

Looking back at my notes, I may have underrated this one a bit, as they're filled with classic descriptors: cedar, toast, vanilla, cassis and mint are among the aromas and flavors. It's full bodied and expansive on the palate, with a long, mouthwatering finish. Approachable now.

93 pts Cullen 2011 Kevin John Chardonnay (Margaret River)

Cullen's Kevin John remains one of Australia's classiest Chardonnays. The 2011 starts off with delicate scents of toasted almond and ripe pear, then develops strident citrus and tropical-fruit flavors. It's plump enough in the mouth to satisfy while remaining only medium bodied. The mouthwatering finish seems to last forever. Drink now-2020. **Cellar Selection.**

92 pts Chapoutier & Laughton Cluster M45 2010 Shiraz (Heathcote)

This joint venture between the Laughton (Jasper Hill) and Chapoutier families continues to impress. The 2010 is firmly built with raspberry and boysenberry fruit notes supported by hints of mint and chocolate. The finish is long and dusty, tinged with mocha. It's approachable now, but should age well through 2020, at least. **Cellar Selection.**

92 pts Chapoutier & Laughton Cluster M45 2009 Shiraz (Heathcote)

Firm and crisp, this gives lie to the notion that all Australian Shirazes are big-bosomed fruit bombs. Blueberry, cracked pepper, espresso and black olive flavors are packed onto a solid frame, finishing dry and dusty. Give it a couple of years to soften. Drink 2016-2025. **Cellar Selection.**



92 pts Kilikanoon 2009 The Oracle Shiraz (Clare Valley)

One of the more backwards 2009 Shirazes in these tastings, the Oracle only stubbornly gives up hints of mint, tar and blackberry. It's full-bodied yet quite drying and austere on the palate, where flavors of mocha, plum, blackberry and cedar dominate. Long and thickly textured on the finish, which bodes well for the cellar. Drink 2015-2025. **Cellar Selection.**

91 pts Kilikanoon 2009 The Duke Grenache (Clare Valley)

This is a smooth-textured, medium- to full-bodied wine loaded with scents of cedar and spice. Red berry fruit emerges on the palate and lingers alongside the cedar notes on the long finish. Drink now-2020.

91 pts Penley Estate 2009 Reserve Estate Grown Cabernet Sauvignon (Coonawarra)

Despite the relatively high alcohol, this comes across as a fairly classic Coonawarra Cabernet. Mint accents chocolate and cassis, and the wine is full bodied yet still seems a bit restrained on the palate. Firm tannins frame the dusty, appropriately drying finish. Drink 2016-2025.

91 pts Giant Steps 2011 Arthur's Creek Vineyard Chardonnay (Yarra Valley)

Marked by punchy, pineapple and citrus aromas, this is a medium-bodied Chardonnay with ample richness and texture. Custard and citrus flavors finish long and mouthwatering. Drink now-2018.

90 pts John Duval 2011 Plexus (Barossa Valley)

This wine's plum, mocha and cedar notes are carried by ample body and a silky texture. It's a round, supple blend of 59% Shiraz, 31% Grenache and 10% Mourvedre that finishes long, reverberating with fresh acids and mocha shadings. Drink it over the next several years.

89 pts d'Arenberg 2011 The Stump Jump Grenache-Shiraz-Mourvedre (McLaren Vale)

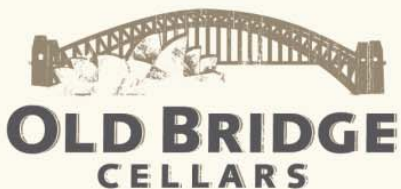
A terrific value for current consumption, the 2011 Stump Jump GSM blends 46% Grenache, 39% Shiraz and 15% Mourvedre into a plump yet firm wine that combines black cherry fruit with savory notes of chocolate, herbs and roasted meat. There's even a touch of mocha on the long finish. **Best Buy.**

89 pts Yeringberg 2011 Chardonnay (Yarra Valley)

Restrained aromas of roasted sweet corn and citrus lead into mild flavors of sweet corn, citrus and melon. This plump, medium-bodied wine finishes fully dry and a bit chalky in texture, and as good as it is, one wonders what if the grapes had gotten just a bit riper.

88 pts Kilikanoon 2009 Prodigal Grenache (Clare Valley)

This medium-bodied Grenache features vanilla and raspberry compote on the nose. It's a smooth, if not particularly textural wine, with berry flavors and hints of toast that fall away on the finish. Drink now.



88 pts Giant Steps 2011 Applejack Vineyard Pinot Noir (Yarra Valley)

This crisp, delicate Pinot Noir should be consumed over the next few years for its elegant cherry and rose petal notes and silky tannins. Hints of scorched earth and dry leaves add extra interest to the reasonably complex bouquet.

88 pts Giant Steps 2012 Sexton Vineyard Pinot Noir (Yarra Valley)

This is a bit more muscular than the other Giant Steps single-vineyard wines, so try to hold onto it for another year before cracking the seal. It's still appropriately light to medium in weight, with notes of mushroom, earth and dried mint wrapped around dark cherry fruit.

