

CHAMBERS ROSEWOOD NV RARE MUSCAT

Review Summary



95 pts “The Chambers family has been growing grapes in Rutherglen since 1858, maintain a stock of fortified wine in casks that they treat like a solera. Steve Chambers, the family’s winemaker since 2001, pulls his Rare Muscat from barrels filled with wine that’s more than a century old. Having put his Rutherglen stickies aside for a month between tasting them and writing them up, I found the freshness of this Rare Muscat, in particular, seemed turbocharged by that interlude. Unlike some of the other ancient wines from Chambers’s cellars, this has none of the crypt and all of the autumn sunshine, its vibrancy and supple textures gaining ground after a month, even if the initial scents of roses are gone.”

Joshua Greene, *Wine & Spirits Magazine*
October 2020

99 pts “Dense mahogany; incredibly concentrated and complex, yet has a quicksilver lightness on the back-palate; the layers of flavor are almost countless. This wine is truly something that all wine lovers must experience at least once in their lives. One sip was taken for this entire note and the flavor is still building. 375ml.”

James Halliday, *Halliday Wine Companion*
2020

98 pts/CELLAR SELECTION “Made in a solera system from wine going back nearly 100 years and from vines even older, this wine is, just as you’d expect from the name, a rare beauty. Coffee-colored and green-tinged, the nose is a heady mix of drying black cherries, orange rind, old books, molasses, tea leaves and crunchy autumnal leaves. Sure, it’s syrupy and unctuous in texture but it’s not the least bit heavy or cloying. Instead, it rolls over your tongue, unleashing a multitude of complex flavors that seem to last a lifetime, just like this wine will.”

Christina Pickard, *Wine Enthusiast*
February 2019

99 pts “Dense mahogany; incredibly concentrated and complex, and startling viscosity as it enters the mouth, yet has a quicksilver lightness on the back-palate; the layers of flavor are almost countless, with sour cherry/morello cherry, Turkish coffee and the finest black chocolate (Swiss or Belgian). This wine is truly something that all wine lovers must experience at least once in their lives; one sip was taken for this entire note and the flavor is still building.”

James Halliday, *Australian Wine Companion*
2018



96 pts “Rich and concentrated, this offers an unctuous, lush mouthful of date nut bread, candied ginger, chocolate-covered pretzel, candied orange zest and toasted cashew notes. The flavors are harmonious and expressive. A second wave of flavors and a jolt of acidity on the finish make this epic.”

MaryAnn Worobiec, *Wine Spectator*
April 2018

96 pts/100 BEST WINES OF THE YEAR “Stephen Chambers, the sixth-generation winemaker at this family firm, releases his Rare wines from stocks that are more than a century old. This muscat coats the glass in its almost black mahogany color, just as one small sip completely saturates the palate, a layer of darkness allowing only glints of flavor to get through, even as those flavors have intensity and energy. You might taste it as salt, iodine and figs if you try to break it into components, or you might taste it as time revealed through light, a canvas as complex as the night sky with no moonlight to soften the detail of the distant stars.”

Joshua Greene, *Wine & Spirits Magazine*
Winter 2017

96 pts “Deep, green-rimmed brown. Powerful aromas of caramel, fig paste, gingerbread, orange marmalade, toffee and candied date. Sweet, seamless and expansive on the palate, offering an array of candied pit fruit, toffee and molasses flavors and notes of mocha, caramel and candied nuts. Manages to be both powerful and lively, with absolutely no rough edges. Finishes extremely long and sweet, displaying resonating spiciness, a touch of baking spices and excellent clarity.”

Josh Reynolds, *Vinous*
October 2017

100 pts “This wine contains some material over 100 years old, but shows no signs of fragility. Instead, it’s concentrated through age and should hold in the bottle indefinitely. It’s dark coffee-brown in color, with delectable aromas of rancio, dried fig, molasses and black tea, yet despite enormous concentration avoids excessive weight. And it’s amazingly complex and fresh on the nearly endless finish.”

Joe Czerwinski, *Wine Enthusiast*
October 2016

99 pts “Tasted again in March 2016, the NV Rare Muscat has a deep brown color with a distinctive green tinge to the rim. The nose is, in a word, incredible and terribly difficult to describe, which is a great thing. Rancio doesn’t begin to capture the complex, oxidative signature: honey coated walnuts, molasses, dates, sandalwood, baking spices, old chesterfields, aniseed and potpourri with fleeting, ethereal wafts of incense, roasted nut and exotic spice notes. Rich, unctuous and gratuitously multi-layered, this is one for the hedonists.”

Lisa Perrotti-Brown, *Robert Parker Wine Advocate*
June 2016



95 pts “Dark chestnut-brown with a greenish rim. Powerful, expansive aromas of brown sugar, molasses, dark chocolate and candied dates, with exotic black cardamom and Moroccan spice overtones. Lush, deeply concentrated and emphatically sweet, offering powerful, palate-coating fruitcake, cola, espresso and dark chocolate flavors. Downright relentless on the broad, emphatically sweet, clinging finish, which eventually leaves smoky molasses, black toffee and raisin bread notes behind.”

Josh Reynolds, Vinous
March 2016

96 pts/100 BEST WINES OF THE YEAR “Stephen Chambers is the sixth generation of the family to tend vineyards in Rutherglen, as well as their solera-like cellar that includes wines dating back more than 100 years. His Rare Muscat focuses on the oldest lots, an ebony, glass-coating liquid that seems to have captured the sun. What’s extraordinary about this wine is how something so dark can be so vibrant, how flavors of figs, dates and all-spice can feel fresh. One taster described it in parallel to ‘really good dark chocolate that has a fruitiness to it.’ Sophisticated and powerful, this is glorious wine.”

Wine & Spirits Magazine Annual Buying Guide
Winter 2015

94 pts “One drop is an explosion of flavor, a captivating, velvet-textured, viscous blast of caramelized, candied power that doesn’t stop until it becomes contemplative, clean, lasting in memory that brings you back for another drop. Founded in 1858 by William Chambers, the Rosewood Vineyards include vines that are more than 100 years old. This stickie is based on wines dating back to 1890, some of the rarest muscat in the family’s original cellars, blended by Stephen Chambers.”

Joshua Greene, Wine & Spirits Magazine
October 2015

98 pts/CELLAR SELECTION “So concentrated and aged, this wine’s color is nearly black, with a greengold rim. Pronounced rancio notes reflect the wine’s age, while the flavors include notes of candied dates, preserved lemons and hints of damp moss and earth. It’s full, smooth and rich, with an intense finish that never ends. This wine should be virtually immortal.”

Joe Czerwinski, Wine Enthusiast
March 2015

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Joshua Greene, Wine & Spirits Magazine
February 2015



99 pts/BEST OF FORTIFIED WINES 2015 “Dense mahogany; incredibly concentrated and complex, yet has a quicksilver lightness on the back-palate; the layers of flavor are almost countless. This wine is truly something that all wine lovers must experience at least once in their lives; one sip was taken for this entire note and the flavor is still building.”

James Halliday, Australian Wine Companion
2015

95 pts “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.”

Josh Reynolds, Stephen Tanzer’s International Wine Cellar
July/August 2014

98 pts “A towering wine, dense in color, unctuously sweet, with layers of toasted walnut, burnt orange peel, clove, coffee, dried cherry and spices, coming together smoothly and harmoniously on the rich finish.”

Harvey Steiman, Wine Spectator Insider
April 23, 2014

94 pts/100 BEST WINES OF THE YEAR “Six generations of the Chambers family have tended their stocks of rare, now ancient Muscat. This wine is so concentrated it feels compressed, a drop on the tongue expanding into layers of flavor – first raisins, then fresher fruit and a range of spices that make it compelling. The complexity of the structure makes it feel savory while the intriguing flavors draw you back for another drop.”

Joshua Greene, Wine & Spirits Magazine
February 2014

94 pts “Spend some time with a glass of this wine to find more than its immediate textural bliss. The lots for this blend average 60 to 80 years old, the oldest dating to World War I. Air transforms the nutty scents of salted pecans, walnut skins and black fruit skin into compelling layers of that nut skin and fruit with a jazz riff of acidity. Intensely sweet and ferociously complex.”

Joshua Greene, Wine & Spirits Magazine
October 2013



96 pts “Mahogany brown color. Potent, deeply pitched aromas of cherry pit, fig syrup, fruitcake and dried currants, with toffee and orange marmalade qualities emerging with air. Reaches every square inch centimeter of the palate, offering intensely sweet caramelized orchard and pit fruit flavors and strong coffee, roasted fig and bitter chocolate nuances. Unctuous and broad on what can't really be called a “finish”, because it refuses to let up, and I doubt that anybody who has the good luck to try this wine would call that a bad thing.”

Josh Reynolds, Stephen Tanzer's International Wine Cellar
July/August 2013

96 pts “Dark brown. Deeply pitched aromas of candied fig, quince paste and dark chocolate are lifted by notes of orange zest, clove and cinnamon. Smells like a liquified fruitcake and tastes like it, too. Lush, palate-staining and remarkably concentrated, offering dense toffee and pit fruit flavors and notes of burnt sugar and dates. The finish refuses to let up and leaves notes of toffee and molasses behind.”

Josh Reynolds, Stephen Tanzer's International Wine Cellar
July/August 2012

98 pts “Exuberantly spicy, with clove, cinnamon and cardamom accents weaving through the prune and tobacco aromatics. Very sweet but not at all cloying, as earthy, tarry notes give way to rich brown sugar and brandy flavors on the finish.”

Harvey Steiman, Wine Spectator Insider
March 14, 2012

98 pts “A full (and longer than usual) tasting note for this wine will be included in an upcoming book by James Halliday titled ‘1001 Wines Under \$20’, and will appear on the day of the release of the book, scheduled for 1 November 2011.”

James Halliday's Australian Wine Companion
2012

96 pts “Deep, amber-edged brown. A kaleidoscopic nose offers confectionery aromas of candied cherry, toffee, vanilla, sultana raisin, date and spice cake. Deeply sweet and penetrating, with notes of candied fig, quince paste, caramel and toffee apple complementing dense pit fruit and cherry flavors. Finishes very long and sweet, with a smoky nuance. This refuses to let up.”

Josh Reynolds, Stephen Tanzer's International Wine Cellar
September/October 2011



100 pts - #1: Top 100 NEW ZEALAND/AUSTRALIAN WINES 2011

“Not a Cellar Selection in the traditional sense of requiring additional aging, this venerable wine (it contains some material over 100 years old) is ready to drink now, but should not hold in the bottle indefinitely. It’s dark coffee-brown with delectable aromas of rancio, pressed flowers, molasses and honey, yet despite enormous concentration avoids excessive weight. Amazingly complex and fresh on the never-ending finish.”

Joe Czerwinski, Wine Enthusiast
February 2011

95 pts/100 BEST WINES OF THE YEAR “From a solera of wines over 100 years old, this wine’s potent complexity starts off in dark scents of treacle, then explodes on the palate in a heady rush of flavor that lasts for minutes. Age is one the specters that rushes past, the wine’s antiquity revealed in barrel scents of coffee beans and earth. Lively fruit rises over the warmth of the wine, feeding a fire that might be contained with a bite of pound cake.”

Joshua Greene, Wine & Spirits Magazine
Winter 2011

98 pts/BEST OF THE BEST BY VARIETY “Beautifully fragrant, with a sense of true age, depth and power; floral on entry, the acidity is extraordinary and gives the wine amazing life and nerve; the layers of flavor are almost countless, and this wine is truly something that every wine lover must experience at least once in their lives; one sip was taken for this entire note and the flavor is still building; thanks to the Chambers for sending these in this year.”

James Halliday’s Australian Wine Companion
2011

95 pts “Medium amber. Deep, smoky aromas of singed cherry, fig, dates and fruitcake, with a powerful spicy quality adding verve. Deeply concentrated pit fruit liqueur and molasses flavors completely stain the palate, with a fresh red berry note adding vibrancy. Incredibly complex wine with strong finishing spiciness and a resonating note of candied fig.”

Josh Reynolds, Stephen Tanzer’s International Wine Cellar
July/August 2010

98 pts “The NV Rosewood Vineyards Rare Muscat is deep brown in color with a faintly green rim. Earthy aromas of moss covered logs and damp earth lead to notes of raisin cake, gingerbread, toasted hazelnuts and anise plus a whiff of pepper. Very, very sweet, rich and thick, this wine is an extraordinary meal all its own. Epically long in the finish - this is an experience not to be missed.”

Lisa Perrotti-Brown, Robert Parker Wine Advocate
June 30, 2010



100 pts “As has been noted in Issues 168 and 173, they are the product of a solera system so there is total consistency from year to year. The lower end wines are spectacular values and the Rare bottlings approach perfection. They should not be missed.”

Jay Miller, Robert Parker Wine Advocate
December 2009

96 pts “Dark amber. Toffee, roasted nut, molasses and caramel aromas add depth to bitter orange peel, apricot and roasted cherry. Deep, palate-saturating pit fruit and mocha flavors are complicated by notes of fruitcake, candied fig and burnt sugar, with a marzipan quality gaining power on the back end. A zesty red berry note sneaks in on the finish, adding improbable energy to this deep, sweet black hole of a wine.”

Josh Reynolds, Stephen Tanzer’s International Wine Cellar
September/October 2009

100 pts “The Rare series has achieved perfection frequently in these pages. Happily nothing has changed. The Non-Vintage Rare Muscat is brown/black in color with an awesome bouquet of fig, dates, brown sugar, molasses, and chocolate. Layered, amazingly rich, and concentrated, it is a tour de force in winemaking as are all of these Chambers gems.”

Robert Parker Wine Advocate
February 2009

100 pts “The Rare series has achieved perfection frequently in these pages. Happily nothing has changed. The Non-Vintage Rare Muscat is brown/black in color with an awesome bouquet of fig, dates, brown sugar, molasses, and chocolate. Layered, amazingly rich, and concentrated, it is a tour de force in winemaking as are all of these Chambers gems. Chambers Rosewood Vineyards makes my short list of greatest fortified wine producers.”

Robert Parker Wine Advocate
October 2007

96 pts “Liquid bliss. Swirl this and the wine slowly drips down the glass, making it look antiqued. As air nestles into the flavors it brings up layers of complexity, from flowers to herbs to minerals, all lasting together in balanced sweetness, almost unbearably delicious. Pour with care. It’s made from late harvested grapes that are crushed, partially fermented, then fortified and aged in a solera system, the “Rare” bottling containing wines more than 100 years old.”

Wine & Spirits Magazine
February 2006

100 pts “Reveals a dark amber color, a fabulous bouquet, great concentration, as well as remarkable sweetness and length, but manages to avoid being cloying or over the top. I have cellared half bottles of these fortifieds for over 15 years, and there has been no degradation of quality during that time.”

Robert Parker Wine Advocate
July/August 2004



100 pts “The rare Muscat may be even better, but the system stops at 100 points. It is equally rich, profound, concentrated, and unctuous, with explosive aromatic fireworks.”

Robert Parker Wine Advocate
August 2003

100 pts “The four other offerings range from one degree of awesome to another. They are made from the solera system, with the Grand Tokay and Grand Muscat including material from the 1930s. In the Rare Muscadelle (Tokay) and Rare Muscat, some of the solera (or base blend) dates back to the 1890s. These are all sweet, but their extraordinary concentration of flavor, explosive aromatic fireworks, and singular characteristics make them nearly impossible to describe accurately. Aromas of caramel, toffee, fig, molasses, maple syrup, and oranges macerated in cognac emerge from all four. These change quickly in the glass, providing an orgasmic smorgasbord of flavors. They are almost unbelievable in their richness and aromatic complexity. Life’s too short not to drink at least a few glasses of William Chambers’ fortified Muscats and Tokays.”

Robert Parker Wine Advocate
October 2002

100 pts “It is amazing how many sensational efforts emerge from this country. This luxurious offering possesses such extraordinary unctuousness, thickness, complexity, and richness that it must be tasted to be believed. It is not just a big, thick sugar ball, because it has sound underlying acidity as well as remarkable complexity and freshness. A spoonful or two is enough for most non-gluttons to appreciate the riveting heights this cuvee represents. The wine possesses notes of smoke, roasted nuts, coffee, brown sugar, maple syrup, prunes, honey, fruitcake, overripe orange/apricots, and remarkable spicy characters. This is a riveting example of a fortified dessert wine that I enthusiastically recommend. I use the Rosewood sweeties for many charitable meals/wine tastings I donate, and guests always go ga-ga over these rarities. In summary, life is too short not to try this wine ... a true Australian treasure.”

Robert Parker Wine Advocate
June 2001