

THE 2005 TORBRECK MARANANGA DAM WAS FEATURED IN AN ARTICLE BY JANCIS ROBINSON, ALONG WITH A MENTION OF THE CUVÉE JUVENILES.



T O R B R E C K

TORBRECK, MARANANGA DAM 2005 BAROSSA VALLEY

It's extraordinary how little is currently written outside Australia about Australian wine. This is perhaps a reaction to the intensity of past love affairs between British and American wine commentators and wine drinkers on the one hand and Australian wine on the other.

Australian wine seems well and truly out of favour on both sides of the Atlantic and the strength of the Australian dollar has of course not helped.

Despite its grape glut, climate problems and domestic price wars, Australia is still making some extremely fine wine, however. And this particular wine, **Torbreck, Marananga Dam 2005 Barossa Valley**, has to be one of the greatest bargains on the British high street. Torbreck is one of the gold standard names of South Australia's most famous wine region, Barossa Valley. Its top wine RunRig has just been elevated to the top rank (Exceptional) of the new Langton's Classification of fine Australian wine and Torbreck's Descendant, the Barossa's first co-fermented Shiraz/Viognier blend, was officially classified Excellent.

Most of Torbreck's wines are priced so as to reflect the status of Dave Powell's winery and famously ancient vines. Indeed he has just released a new single-vineyard Shiraz which, according to Sydney Morning Herald wine writer Huon Hooke, is the most expensive current-release Australian wine. Dave Powell reported to me recently, 'we have already sold three of the four hundred dozen bottles produced, none of which is in the US, and with little or no press coverage, hopefully a measure of the trustworthiness of the brand'.

So a mature wine from Torbreck is something not to be sniffed at, and to find one that tastes delicious, has benefited from five years' ageing and is available at 150 M & S stores in the UK for just £11.99 is unusual to say the least. It is also selling out fast, so I advise wine-loving Brits to take advantage of the offer while they can if they enjoy warm, gentle, rich Rhôneish blends without a hint of oak or tannin.

This is another example of how GSMs – blends of Grenache, Shiraz/Syrah and Mataro/Mourvèdre – can be absolutely delicious without the aid of oak. It is still possible to find relatively mature vintages of Juveniles on the US market, presumably a reflection of how unfashionable Barossa Valley reds have become there. According to wine-searcher.com, the price of Juveniles in the US ranges from \$16 to \$35 a bottle, although one retailer is offering the 2005 at just \$12.99 as I write.



This blend is made up of the offcuts from Torbreck's unoaked Juveniles blend and the rather more complex Steading blend of old-vine Shiraz, Mourvèdre and Grenache and this was my somewhat fanciful tasting note on it when I tasted it last month:

I'm afraid this precise blend is available only in the UK at M&S but I can commend **Torbreck's Cuvée Juveniles**, originally blended especially for Tim Johnston's eponymous wine bar in Paris, to wine drinkers everywhere.

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TORBRECK IS ONE OF THE GOLD STANDARD NAMES OF SOUTH AUSTRALIA'S MOST FAMOUS WINE REGION, BAROSSA VALLEY. JANCIS ROBINSON

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