

Wine Spectator Insider

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FIRST LOOK AT OUR EDITORS' MOST EXCITING NEW WINES

Special Report: Australia

Anyone who thinks that all Australian Shiraz is alike would have a hard time making the case after tasting these wines. Representing the best of those Harvey Steiman has reviewed in the past few weeks, they include some that seduce with ultraripe flavors and others that veer toward jazzier, brighter characters.

What they share, however, is a real sense of refinement and elegance. The best are polished, seamless red wines that would add grace to any occasion.

Shiraz plays the leading role in most but not all of these wines. Several of them add a touch of Viognier to the blend for silkier textures and hints of spice, emulating a French practice common in the Rhône Valley's Côte-Rôtie appellation, where Viognier grows alongside Syrah. Other wines use some Grenache, the dominant grape of the Southern Rhône, which lightens the texture and creates a different fruit profile. There are even a couple of straight Grenache bottlings, which has become an incipient trend in South Australia.

Most of these wines come from the 2005 and 2004 vintages, which were warm but not as hot as most years. The result: wines that are especially well-balanced. That said, the best of this bunch comes from the very hot 2003 vintage, albeit from Henschke's oldest plantings in Eden Valley, a cooler area than neighboring Barossa Valley. It may be the best Hill of Grace yet, precisely because it brings harmony and balance to an ultraripe vintage. You'll find it among the Hot Wines, on page 4.

Australia

Henschke

Shiraz Eden Valley Mount Edelstone 2004
94 points | \$100 | 35 cases imported | Red

Smooth, round and distinctive for its meaty, mineral-scented dark berry and cherry flavors, this is refreshingly balanced with just enough acidity to keep it honest. Refined tannins envelop the finish. Best from 2009 through 2020.—*H.S.*

Wolf Blass

Shiraz Barossa Platinum Label 2004
93 points | \$85 | 415 cases imported | Red

Dark and juicy. A harmonious, complex wine that has a welcome lift of acidity to the blackberry, cherry and licorice flavors, persisting on the fleshy finish against very fine tannins. Drink now through 2014.—*H.S.*

Grant Burge

Shiraz Barossa Meshach 2002
93 points | \$95 | 500 cases imported | Red

A big Shiraz with a flair for elegance, offering a crisp texture against a fleshy veneer of fine tannins, with a lively core of blackberry, cherry and minty, creamy notes on the long finish. Best from 2010 through 2020.—*H.S.*

Glaymond

Shiraz Barossa Valley The Distance 2004
93 points | \$60 | 128 cases imported | Red

A big, dark, brooding style, with a core of black cherry and peppery licorice flavors. This is balanced with tangy acidity, finishing with a supple, polished texture. The tarry, floral overtones add particular interest. Best from 2010 through 2020.—*H.S.*

Schild

Shiraz Barossa 2005

93 points | \$25 | 4,500 cases imported | Red

Smooth and round, this is impressive for its seamless balance, offering cherry and grilled pepper flavors against refined tannins. The open texture reveals sweet spices and mocha flavors as the finish lingers. Has complexity, depth and excellent detail. Best from 2008 through 2015.—*H.S.*

Tapestry

Shiraz McLaren Vale The Vincent 2004

93 points | \$41 | 160 cases imported | Red

Ripe, rich and distinctive for its black olive and sandalwood overtones to the dark plum and dried blueberry flavors, which linger on the supple finish. Balances the fruit and savory notes beautifully. Best from 2009 through 2016.—*H.S.*

Jim Barry

Shiraz Clare Valley The Armagh 2004

92 points | \$140 | 75 cases imported | Red

Bright and jazzy, with a red pepper edge to the cherry, green olive and spice flavors. The harmonious flavors linger against very fine tannins and lively acidity on the long finish. Drink now through 2014.—*H.S.*

Burge Family

Shiraz Barossa Valley Draycott 2005

92 points | \$60 | 185 cases imported | Red

Ripe and supple, showing a distinct black pepper note running through the rich cherry and sweet leather flavors, with the fruit lingering on the plush finish. Rich without being over the top. Best from 2009 through 2017.—*H.S.*

Kilikanoon

Shiraz Barossa Valley Testament 2004

92 points | \$40 | 750 cases imported | Red

Plush and ripe, with a gorgeous range of blackberry, plum and thyme flavors that mingle effortlessly on the long, dense finish. Also hits some licorice notes. Best from 2010 through 2020.—*H.S.*

Kilikanoon

Shiraz Clare Valley Oracle 2004

92 points | \$60 | 500 cases imported | Red

Dark and velvety. A vivid mouthful of violet-scented blueberry, blackberry and plum on a creamy texture that lets the finish roll on and on. The tannins are well-integrated. Best from 2009 through 2016.—*H.S.*

Shingleback

Shiraz McLaren Vale D Block Reserve 2004

92 points | \$50 | 1,000 cases imported | Red

Bright and spicy, with flashes of white pepper and carnation around a supple core of currant and blackberry. The fruit is most prominent on the long, expressive finish. The tannins are well-integrated. Drink now through 2016.—*H.S.*

Sons of Eden

Shiraz Barossa Valley Romulus 2004

92 points | \$65 | 200 cases made | Red

Dense and distinctive for the cherry and raspberry notes around a supple core of fruit. Open-textured and refined, hinting at sandalwood and cream as the fruit persists impressively against fine tannins. Best from 2008 through 2016.—*H.S.*

Spinifex

Indigene Barossa Valley 2005

92 points | \$55 | 70 cases imported | Red

Lithe, vibrant and distinctive for its meaty blueberry and burnt sugar notes that remain supple and refined through the generous finish. Has depth and persistence. Mataro and Shiraz. Best from 2008 through 2015.—*H.S.*

Burge Family

D & OH Barossa Valley 2005

91 points | \$48 | 208 cases imported | Red

Brightly fragrant, this is a silky, supple wine whose raspberry, strawberry and creamy spice flavors cascade over a medium-weight frame, all of it lingering effortlessly. Shiraz and Grenache. Drink now through 2011.—*H.S.*

Heartland

Shiraz South Australia Directors' Cut 2005

91 points | \$29 | 550 cases imported | Red

Velvety in texture, with bright, juicy plum and blackberry fruit up front, shaded with captivating nuances of mocha, tar and licorice. The finish rolls along without interference from the tannins. Drink now through 2015.—*H.S.*

Jasper Hill

Shiraz Heathcote Georgia's Paddock 2005

91 points | \$75 | 64 cases imported | Red

Bright and distinctly peppery on the nose, this is savory and appealing for its polished frame and range of dark berry flavors against notes of cedar and coffee. Not as tart as some Heathcote wines. Drink now through 2015.—*H.S.*

Langmeil

Shiraz-Viognier Barossa Valley Hangin' Snakes 2005
91 points | \$19 | 500 cases imported | Red

Polished and refined, this is generous with its red cherry, raspberry and floral spice flavors, which come together beautifully on the long, well-integrated finish, where they ride on refined tannins. Drink now through 2016.—*H.S.*

Red Nectar

Shiraz Barossa Valley 2005
91 points | \$30 | 600 cases imported | Red

Plush, round and generous with its black cherry and raspberry fruit, shaded evocatively with hints of licorice, prune and dried blueberry. The fruit keeps echoing on the finish, enveloped by soft tannins. Best from 2008 through 2017.—*H.S.*

Sons of Eden

Shiraz Eden Valley Remus 2004
91 points | \$65 | 150 cases made | Red

Rich and ripe, but also strongly minty, with a stalky note to the blackberry and licorice flavors. The tannins are highly polished, and the finish has length. Best from 2008 through 2014.—*H.S.*

Spinifex

Esprit Barossa Valley 2005
91 points | \$34 | 200 cases imported | Red

Supple and round. A plump mouthful of blackberry, cherry and roasted red pepper flavors that mingle artfully on the lithe texture, echoing beautifully on the long finish. Grenache, Shiraz, Cinsault, Mataro and Carignane. Drink now through 2012.—*H.S.*

Spinifex

Shiraz-Viognier Eden Valley 2005
91 points | \$55 | 20 cases imported | Red

Smooth and lively, this harmonious wine shows a spicy, floral character to the blackberry and white pepper flavors, finishing with grace. Drink now through 2015.—*H.S.*

Troll Creek

Shiraz Barossa Valley 2003
91 points | \$85 | 70 cases imported | Red

Rich, ripe and plush, with nicely articulated cherry and distinct spices mingling in the mouth. Hints at pepper, tamarind and cardamom as the finish lingers. The tannins are well-modulated. Drink now through 2015.—*H.S.*

Burge Family

Grenache Barossa Valley Garnacha 2005
90 points | \$45 | 184 cases imported | Red

Ripe and generous. A juicy mouthful of mint-scented black cherry and dried raspberry flavors that linger well. Drink now through 2011.—*H.S.*

Craneford

Grenache Barossa Valley 2005
90 points | \$29 | 1,200 cases made | Red

Smooth, gentle and spicy. A plush mouthful of meaty black cherry, eucalyptus and cinnamon, lingering attractively. Drink now through 2011.—*H.S.*

Glaetzer

Shiraz-Grenache Barossa Valley Wallace 2005
90 points | \$21 | 1200 cases imported | Red

Smooth and open-textured. A generous mouthful of blackberry and cherry flavors that hover beautifully in the airy atmosphere of the round finish. Drink now through 2011.—*H.S.*

Glen Eldon

Shiraz Barossa Dry Bore 2004
90 points | \$27 | 1,000 cases imported | Red

Firm in texture, this dense Shiraz shows a savory edge of meat and herb to the black fruit flavors, finishing with a licorice note. The tannins have some grip. Best after 2008.—*H.S.*

Mount Langi Ghiran

Shiraz Victoria Langi 2004
90 points | \$45 | 500 cases imported | Red

Effusively aromatic, with black pepper prominent in the mix, segueing into bright, tart blackberry and plum fruit as the flavors ride the racy acidity to the finish. Best after 2008.—*H.S.*

Penley

Shiraz Coonawarra Hyland 2005
90 points | \$20 | 1,500 cases imported | Red

Smooth and generous. The rich blueberry and plum flavors are balanced with refined acidity, hinting at white pepper and cream as the finish lingers. Drink now through 2015.—*H.S.*

Zonte's Footstep

Shiraz-Viognier Langhorne Creek 2006
90 points | \$17 | 1,500 cases imported | Red

Broad and generous. A real mouthful of smoky, tar-scented blackberry and licorice flavors, persisting against fine tannins on the long finish. Best from 2009 through 2015.—*H.S.*

HOT WINES

These are the most exciting discoveries from our editors' most recent tastings, published exclusively in Wine Spectator Insider. They are high-scoring, low-production wines from around the world that may be difficult to find, but are worth seeking out.

Henschke

Shiraz Eden Valley Hill of Grace 2003

99 points | \$400 | 16 cases imported | Red

Rich, polished and absolutely seamless, this is harmonious and expressive, with tremendous depth. Offers licorice-scented blackberry, black cherry, pomegranate and dusky spices in such a cohesive package that it's hard to pick them out. Hints of mineral and spice add nuance to the finish. Great stuff. Will only get better with cellaring. Best from 2010 through 2028. *From Australia.—H.S.*

Kilikanoon

Shiraz Barossa Valley R 2004

94 points | \$100 | 250 cases imported | Red

Polished and generous, this is beautifully focused, plush and layered with cream, nutmeg and bitter-sweet chocolate-tinged blueberry, plum and currant flavors, which are wrapped neatly in refined tannins that let the finish roll on. Best from 2009 through 2020. *From Australia.—H.S.*

Torbreck

RunRig Barossa Valley 2004

94 points | \$220 | 450 cases imported | Red

Firm in texture, this is raw around the edges but very juicy underneath, brimming with blueberry, blackberry and a distinct floral note from the Viognier. The finish lingers effortlessly against fine, crisp tannins. Shiraz and Viognier. Best from 2010 through 2020. *From Australia.—H.S.*

Yalumba

Shiraz-Viognier Barossa Hand Picked 2005

94 points | \$30 | 225 cases imported | Red

Seamless, polished and remarkably expressive. A wine of uncommon balance that plays its ripe cherry, plum and mulberry flavors against wisps of cream, clove and white pepper, all of it mingling harmoniously on the long, refined finish. Best from 2009 through 2020. *From Australia.—H.S.*

Wine Spectator's Tastings

Wine Spectator reviews more than 12,000 wines each year; our senior editors comprise the most experienced staff of professional wine tasters of any publication in the world. Each editor specializes in the wines of specific regions; their initials identify the taster of each wine reviewed.

We always taste wines blind, in our offices in San Francisco, Napa, New York and Tuscany, and in the vineyard regions of Europe. This is your guarantee that a wine's reputation or price does not influence its score. We score wines using our 100-point scale, explained below.

James Laube Senior editor, Napa

Joined *Wine Spectator* in 1983. Tasting beat: California

Kim Marcus Managing editor, New York

Joined *Wine Spectator* in 1988. Tasting beat: Austria, Greece, Portugal, southern France

Wine Spectator's 100-Point Scale

95-100	Classic
90-94	Outstanding
85-89	Very good
80-84	Good
75-79	Mediocre
50-74	Not recommended

Thomas Matthews Executive editor, New York

Joined *Wine Spectator* in 1988. Tasting beat: New York, Spain

James Molesworth Senior editor, New York

Joined *Wine Spectator* in 1997. Tasting beat: Loire Valley, Rhône Valley, South Africa, South America

Bruce Sanderson Tasting director, New York

Joined *Wine Spectator* in 1993. Tasting beat: Alsace, Burgundy, Champagne, Germany

Harvey Steiman Editor at large, San Francisco

Joined *Wine Spectator* in 1983. Tasting beat: Australia, New Zealand, Oregon, Washington

James Suckling European bureau chief, Italy

Joined *Wine Spectator* in 1981. Tasting beat: Bordeaux, Italy, Port

Tasting staff: **Jo Cooke** (Veneto), **Daniel Sogg** (New Zealand)