

TORBRECK BIG GUNS !

Torbreck
(www.torbreck.com)

Torbreck Descendant Barossa Valley Shiraz 2004 (\$140):

Background: The idea of the 'Descendant' is that everything about it descends from Torbreck's ultra wine, the RunRig Shiraz. The Descendant vineyard was planted from cuttings off the Run Rig vineyard. Run Rig Shiraz is a shiraz-viognier blend, and this Descendant shiraz is fermented on the skins of the viognier used in Run Rig (two things to note: this means that the Descendant sees viognier skins only, and not viognier juice; the viognier skins though often provide more aroma and power than viognier juice, hence it can tend to a more obviously "viognier affected" red wine). The Descendant is also matured in barrels passed down from RunRig. REVIEW: It's made off relatively young vines but this release is the breakthrough vintage for this label – the mammoth, concentrated, overwhelming power of this wine says anything but immaturity. It's a monster. But an exceptionally pure monster. Full of warm, floral, plummy, porty fruit with a nutty aftertaste and a carve of finely tailored tannins. It makes you sit straighter in your chair. It is over the top, but it is as fine as such a style can be.

Drink: 2012-2028. 95 points.



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Torbreck RunRig 2003 (\$230):

Background: In many ways it's a wine that breaks the rules – accepted wisdom is that when you make a shiraz-viognier blend (as this famously is) you should ferment the shiraz and the viognier together, so that they're married in the blend from the start. This takes no such tack. The shiraz is fermented separately and then aged in all French oak, (blessedly) only 60% of it new. The viognier is fermented and treated separately, indeed itself spending time in oak, roughly around six months. The two don't come together until a few months prior to bottling, when they're blended, the viognier forming about 3% of the final wine. REVIEW: I don't like the 2003 Barossan vintage. It's largely a dog of a year. This wine though completely thumbs its nose at that, its silken class obvious in every drop – you hear a lot of people say that it's difficult to drink more than a glass of big Barossan reds (what absolute rubbish) but my wife and I knocked back a bottle of this in about 25 minutes flat. Blueberry, coffee, cedar, plums dripping with ripe juice, chocolate, meat bathing in a blackcurrant sauce, a mere hint of portiness and an aromatic marmalade-like lift that is subtle more than overt. I would not call this massively concentrated, even though it's clearly a full-bodied wine, and has a melt of oozing tannin the likes of which any red wine lover should crave. I'd call it immaculate.

Drink: 2007-2017. 96 points.



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Torbreck Barossa Valley The Struie Shiraz 2004 (\$50):

One thing about Torbreck is that they really know how to lay the complexity on thick. This is a carnival of a wine. Cinnamon, florals, meat, plum, game, toast, rubber, black pepper, cedar – no kidding, it's all here, and it's all very showy too. It's a beautifully weighted, sweet-sour wine with an extra dimension of roasted-aniseed, rum-and-raisin swinging right through it – there is no doubt that this wine flies pretty close to the edge, and that's what I love about it. It works. Give it at least half an hour in the decanter before drinking it. And then settle back and be seduced – this is a great Barossa Valley/Eden Valley shiraz.

Drink: 2007-2013. 94 points.

