

WINEWISE PANEL TASTINGS

We didn't need any convincing of the quality of top-end Australian chardonnay and shiraz, but everyone was glad they'd attended this tasting session. As usual, along with quality, came some exceptional value for money.

CHARDONNAY

★★★★★

2013 Giaconda Estate Vineyard Chardonnay The king of Australian chardonnays. This wine is, and always has been, strongly influenced by the white wines of Burgundy, and doesn't follow the trend towards leaner, more acid-driven chardonnay. This powerful, beautifully balanced wine is a complex, textural delight. (\$110.00)

<http://www.bellevuehillbottleshop.com.au/>

<http://www.nicks.com.au/2013-giaconda-estate-vineyard-chardonnay>

2013 Oakridge Guerin Vineyard Yarra Valley Chardonnay Oakridge has become "chardonnay central", with a range of high-quality single-site wines. This one is brilliant. A funky touch adds further interest to a complex, lees-influenced nose, and the long, creamy palate is packed with white peach flavour. Good Burgundy 1er cru standard at a "give-away" price. (\$36.00)

<http://www.oakridgewines.com.au/>

<http://www.nicks.com.au/2013-oakridge-local-vineyard-series-guerin-vineyard-chardonnay> (\$384.00/dozen)

★★★★☆

2012 Stella Bella Serie Luminosa Margaret River Chardonnay This is certainly a multi-dimensional chardonnay. Intense grapefruit and white peach aromas and flavours merge beautifully with nutty lees and lashings of oak. There's plenty of WOW here. (\$65.00)

2013 Oakridge Barkala Ridge Vineyard Yarra Valley Chardonnay

Both white peach and grapefruit show out here, together with a whiff of funk and a cashew-like input. The long palate is acid-fresh and just needs a little time to fill out. (\$36.00)

2012 Yering Station Yarra Valley Chardonnay This is a perfect example of the "house style" of one of the Yarra Valley's best producers. Flavour, texture and freshness are all key features in this beautifully balanced chardonnay that sits right in the middle of the white peach flavour spectrum. (\$40.00)

★★★★☆

2013 Oakridge Willowlake Vineyard Yarra Valley Chardonnay A distinctly grapefruity/melon rind chardonnay with obvious grip and a touch of funkiness. The leanest of the Oakridges. (\$36.00)

★★★

2012 Stella Bella Margaret River Chardonnay Although it's a little forward, there's plenty of peachy aroma and flavour backed up by oak. (\$32.00)

SHIRAZ

★★★★☆

2013 Giaconda Estate Vineyard Shiraz It's all there – red berries, dark cherry, spices. This is the classic medium-bodied, modern Australian shiraz that nods just a little towards the northern Rhône. Drinkable now, but there's a long life ahead. Cork seal
<http://www.mwwines.com.au/>

2013 Xanadu DJL Margaret River Shiraz Is there a shiraz that offers higher quality for your \$\$\$? It's all happening here. Vibrant blackberry, pepper and spice, viognier perfume and an attractive whiff of new oak – and that's just the nose. This is an utterly delicious young shiraz that can be enjoyed now or kept for 3-5 years. (\$21.00)
<http://www.boccaccio.com.au/buy/xanadu-djl-shiraz-2013/4316>

2013 John Duval Wines Entity Barossa Shiraz A very impressive Barossa shiraz in that richness and ripeness are allied with fruit freshness. But that's not all. There's even a hint of spiciness that adds considerably to the classic blackberry and dark chocolate. Oak is judiciously folded in and the tannins are beautifully fine. Cellar ten years at least. (\$40.00)

2013 Chandon Yarra Valley Shiraz This is a delightfully supple red fruits and spice, medium-bodied shiraz. You could cellar it, but we don't really see the point. (\$32.00)

★★★★

2013 Karrawatta Joseph Langhorne Creek Shiraz A very powerful, bright shiraz crammed with blackberry and dark chocolate framed by firm, balanced skin tannins. The oak isn't shy, and there's much to like about this full-on shiraz. (\$54.00)

2013 West Cape Howe Two Steps Mount Barker Shiraz This is a delicious young shiraz featuring dark berry, red berry and spice characteristics. The tannins are supple, inviting drinking now, but five years' cellaring would be beneficial. (\$30.00)

2013 Rufus Stone Heathcote Shiraz The generous flavour, fine tannins and freshness make this wine easy to engage with, and the dark cherry fruit is enhanced by a hints of pepper and oak. (\$25.00)

★★★

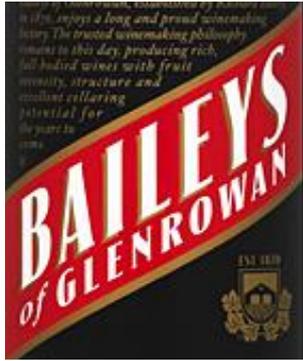
2013 Schild Estate Pramie Barossa Valley Shiraz There's no question about the generosity of the classic blackberry and dark chocolate Barossa flavour. It's a rich, ripe shiraz that didn't show quite enough freshness on the nose to make a big impression. (\$70.00) Cork

2012 John Duval Wines Eligo Barossa Shiraz Another substantial Barossa with plenty of licorice and mocha in the background, and appropriate tannin structure. Again the nose didn't "sing" in comparison to other wines in the tasting. (\$120.00) Cork

In a tasting where some wines are sealed with screwcap and others with cork, those under screwcap usually come out on top. The reason is simple – freshness. Add to that the fact that tasters often detect cork wood, which detracts from the aroma and flavour of any wine.

BAILEYS OF GLENROWAN

Baileys Bundarra, as it was once known, occupies a unique niche in Australian wine history. Some considered it part of the Rutherglen district, which it never was, and it established a reputation for reds which were challenging in terms of substance and extract – wines once described by Keith Dunstan as “steak and eggs”. A visiting Frenchman countered, “No. A three course meal – and a good cigar.” The wines show much more finesse these days.



<http://www.baileysofglenrowan.com.au/>

2013 Baileys of Glenrowan 1920s Block Shiraz If you enjoy reds of opulence and power that aren't “off the dial” with alcohol, this wine and the pair following will be of considerable interest to you. In the “blind” panel tasting this one took the honours because of the sheer harmony it possesses. The colour is dense and vivid, the nose is vibrantly blackberry, and the palate is rich, supple and utterly satisfying. This wine can be enjoyed now or cellared for a decade or three. (\$40.00) ★★★★★
http://www.aussiewines.com.au//wine_Growing_Regions.php?pid=1881&page=0&s=&f=&wines=Victoria

2013 Baileys of Glenrowan Varley Shiraz This is a pure expression of the Baileys style – decidedly fruit-driven, with layers of flavour. The tannins do their structural work but certainly don't overwhelm the dark berry and licorice flavours. (\$75.00) ★★★★★

2013 Baileys of Glenrowan 1904 Block Shiraz This is a genuine old block wine – 109 year old vines – and the depth of dark berry flavour is no surprise. Once again the tannins are beautifully managed. Most certainly a wine for the ages. (\$95.00) ★★★★★☆

2013 Baileys of Glenrowan Organic Shiraz A decidedly fragrant, plummy wine that is very approachable indeed. The honesty of Baileys flavour is here, and the fine tannins make it easy to see. (\$28.00) ★★★★★

2013 Baileys of Glenrowan Shiraz It's not quite as perfumed and welcoming as the Organic Shiraz, but it's vitally important to the Baileys story. If you want to test the water before you plunge into the old vine wines, this shiraz allows you to do it. (\$28.00) ★★★★★

It's important to preserve unique aspects of our wine history, but it's also important to move forward. Paul Dahlenburg has done both, and the Baileys light still shines brightly. Long may it continue to do so.