

2016 WINEWISE CHAMPIONSHIP

The reds provided considerable interest and fascination. It was enthralling to observe winemaking trends as we tasted. The judging approaches at some shows were also a topic of conversation – particularly as they applied to pinot noir.

Liberal use of stems and whole bunches is successful sometimes, but in some cases the result is overwhelmed fruit and premature browning. A few pinotphiles maintain that colour is not important when judging pinot noir. That’s not true. A pale colour is quite acceptable, as long as it is bright. A dull, faintly brown hue in young pinot noir isn’t, and it’s always a harbinger of tired, overdeveloped fruit.

What the ratings mean

★★★★★	Outstanding	97-100 points	Gold medal
★★★★☆	Highly Recommended	93-96	Gold or high silver
★★★★	Recommended	90-92	Silver
★★★☆☆	Recommended	87-89	Bronze
★★★	Agreeable	85-87	Bronze
★★☆☆	Agreeable	82-84	
★★	Acceptable	80-82	
★☆☆	Acceptable	77-79	
★	Barely Acceptable	74-76	
☆	Unacceptable	71-73	
No stars	Undrinkable	<71	

Where prices are not shown, we could find no evidence of current availability. You’ll find class summaries at the end of this report.

2014 PINOT NOIR GROUP I

2014 Home Hill Estate Tasmania Pinot Noir There’s plenty of impact here – bright colour and vibrant red fruits. The palate is long and satisfying, with a dry, savoury structure. (\$38.00) ★★★★★☆

2014 Montalto Merricks Block Mornington Peninsula Pinot Noir An impressive, opulent dark cherry style with depth, structure and subtle complexity. (\$70.00) ★★★★★☆

2014 Paringa Estate Mornington Peninsula Pinot Noir A vibrant pinot noir, with attractive summer pudding aroma. The palate is firm, but balanced, with a touch of oak. ★★★★★

2014 Coldstream Hills Yarra Valley Pinot Noir The colour isn’t marvellous, but the nose offers varietal character backed by whole bunch complexity. The palate is open and approachable. Early drinking. ★★★★★☆

2014 Rowsley Fault Vineyards Pinot Noir Developed colour. Complexity dominates fruit. ★★☆☆

2014 PINOT NOIR GROUP 2

2014 Montalto Main Ridge Block Mornington Peninsula Pinot Noir Very perfumed, seductive nose. The palate is long and fine, with a silky feel. Very stylish. (\$70.00) ★★★★★☆

2014 Rockcliffe Single Site Pinot Noir This pinot from Denmark, Western Australia has performed very well against the “heavyweights”. It shows ripe varietal character within a firm structure, and will benefit from a year or two in bottle. (\$45.00) ★★★★★☆

2014 Montalto Estate Mornington Peninsula Pinot Noir The rich red fruits nose is complemented by an attractive earthy complexity, and the palate is long, with fine, firm tannins. (\$50.00) ★★★★★☆

2014 Seville Estate Yarra Valley Pinot Noir Intense, but slightly closed. Shows a little oak on the moment. Needs time. ★★★★★

2014 Lerida Estate Lake George Pinot Noir Fresh, but light. A little too firm for its weight. ★★★

2014 PINOT NOIR GROUP 3



MEDALLION WINNER

2014 Home Hill Kelly's Reserve Tasmania Pinot Noir The rich dark cherry aroma and flavour are backed up by subtle complex notes and a fine tannin structure. A pinot noir that speaks eloquently of its Huon Valley origins. It captures a unique Winwise Championship – Jimmy Watson Trophy double. (\$60.00) ★★★★★

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2014 Montalto Pennon Hill Mornington Peninsula Pinot Noir This wine is coming along nicely, showing some undergrowth complexity which complements the cherry-scented fruit. It's drinking very well now. (\$32.00) ★★★★★

2014 Mt Lofty Ranges Old Pump Shed Pinot Noir A solid pinot noir that lacks varietal elegance. ★★★

2014 Chanters Ridge Pinot Noir (Clonal Selection) Quite developed and firm. ★★

2014 Colmar Estate Pinot Noir Very weak colour. Light and advanced. ★★

2014 PINOT NOIR GROUP 4

2014 Little Yarra Pinot Noir The colour is a little feeble, but the complex notes of raspberry and green herbs have appeal. ★★★☆

2014 PHI Yarra Valley Pinot Noir There's a complex earthiness here, but the fruit lacks vibrancy. ★★★☆

2014 Montalto Tuerong Block Mornington Peninsula Pinot Noir Red fruits with some herbal overtones. Fresh enough. ★★★☆

2014 Santolin Individual Vineyard Yarra Valley Pinot Noir Weak colour. A forward strawberry style with secondary notes. ★★★☆

2014 Lerida Estate Josephine Lake George Pinot Noir Quite firm and closed at this stage. ★★★

2014 PINOT NOIR FINAL

2014 Home Hill Kelly's Reserve Tasmania Pinot Noir

2014 Home Hill Estate Tasmania Pinot Noir

2014 Montalto Main Ridge Block Mornington Pen. Pinot Noir

2014 Little Yarra Pinot Noir

2013 & OLDER PINOT NOIR GROUP I

2013 Montalto Merricks Block Mornington Peninsula Pinot Noir Plenty of fresh dark cherry aroma and flavour. The palate is long, firm and fine. Good drinking now, but will age very well. (\$70.00) ★★★★★

2013 Paringa Estate The Paringa Mornington Peninsula Pinot Noir Abundant fresh varietal flavour within a fine firm structure. Beautifully balanced and built for cellaring. ★★★★★

2012 Bream Creek Tasmania Pinot Noir A vibrant, strongly varietal wine with subtle complexity and a rich, silky palate. Very stylish indeed. ★★★★★

2013 Montalto Estate Mornington Peninsula Pinot Noir Lightish colour. Persistent, delicate flavour backed by fine tannins. Easy to drink. ★★★

2012 Curly Flat Macedon Ranges Pinot Noir Quite complex nose which appeared to be a little advanced. However the palate delivered the goods in terms of intensity, length and structure. ★★★

2013 & OLDER PINOT NOIR GROUP 2



MEDALLION WINNER

2013 Paringa Estate Mornington Peninsula Pinot Noir A very bright, fresh pinot noir presenting dark cherry fruit backed by faintly herbal complexity. The palate is very well structured. ★★★★★

2013 Home Hill Estate Tasmania Pinot Noir A dark cherry style of pinot noir. It's beginning to offer plenty of drinking pleasure, but will continue to improve in bottle. (\$36.00) ★★★★★

2013 Montalto Tuerong Block Mornington Peninsula Pinot Noir The structure of this wine is impressive. It reminded some tasters of pinots from Nuits-St-Georges, and within that structure is impressively intense fruit. Give it a couple of years to bloom. (\$70.00) ★★★★★

2013 T'Gallant Tribute Mornington Peninsula Pinot Noir Shows a little maturity, but still offers good varietal flavour backed by a firm, balanced tannin structure. ★★★★★

2013 Wignalls Single Vineyard Pinot Noir The colour is a little weak, but the fragrant nose has appeal, and the palate is fine and long. ★★★★★

2013 Seville Estate Old Vine Reserve Yarra Valley Pinot Noir There's plenty of rich cherry flavour, but the finish is very firm, showing oak at this stage. ★★★☆

2013 & OLDER PINOT NOIR GROUP 3

2013 Montalto Pennon Hill Mornington Peninsula Pinot Noir There was nothing between the top three, and the majority of panel opted for the wine that was drinking at its best now. It's another stylish, bargain-priced pinot noir from Montalto that offers pure varietal flavour on a silky palate with very fine tannins. (\$32.00) ★★★★★

2013 Home Hill Kelly's Reserve Tasmania Pinot Noir The dark cherry aromas are so rich and powerful that they hint at cherry jam. Given the depth of flavour, good tannin framework is essential, and this wine has it. A substantial, balanced pinot noir. (\$60.00) ★★★★★

2013 Yabby Lake Single Vineyard Block 2 Mornington Peninsula Pinot Noir This wine has it all, and everything is starting to come together. The intense varietal aroma and flavour are powerful, yet restrained, and the tannins are firm but fine. The oak shows a little at the moment, but will fold in nicely. (\$100.00) ★★★★★

2013 Curly Flat Macedon Ranges Pinot Noir Already quite complex, delivering persistent varietal flavour on a long, fine, dry palate. The track record of Curly Flat Pinot Noir suggests cellaring. ★★★★★

2013 Riposte The Sabre Adelaide Hills Pinot Noir The colour is beginning to fade, and the varietal flavour, although adequate, is showing signs of drying out. ★★★

2013 Dawson James Tasmania Pinot Noir Showing advanced characteristics, but still offers cherry varietal flavour. ★★★

The chairman put two of the top three wines through to the final.

2013 & OLDER PINOT NOIR FINAL

2013 Paringa Estate Mornington Peninsula Pinot Noir
2013 Montalto Pennon Hill Mornington Peninsula Pinot Noir
2013 Home Hill Kelly's Reserve Tasmania Pinot Noir
2013 Montalto Merricks Block Mornington Peninsula Pinot Noir

PINOT NOIR GRAND FINAL

2014 Home Hill Kelly's Reserve Tasmania Pinot Noir
2013 Paringa Estate Mornington Peninsula Pinot Noir

2014 SHIRAZ GROUP 1

2014 Ballinaclash Sub Tuum Hilltops Shiraz The red berry aromas are enhanced by a hint of spicy complexity, and intense fruit flows the length of a beautifully balanced palate. Great value. (\$20.00) ★★★★★

2014 Rosemount Diamond Label Shiraz This is exactly the sort of wine that suffers at the hands of those who review while looking at the label. In its earlier days, Diamond Label was certainly on the sweet side, but this one is packed with shiraz flavour balanced by just-right tannins. It over-delivers considerably at the price. (\$10.00) ★★★★★

2014 Shaw + Smith Adelaide Hills Shiraz A delightfully supple wine with vibrant varietal fruit. There's a touch of whole bunch complexity which adds considerably to the overall picture. A very stylish wine which was the chairman's pick of the group. (\$42.00) ★★★★★

2014 Moppity Vineyards Reserve Hilltops Shiraz A powerful shiraz showing plenty of ripe fruit backed up by oak. Big, rich and fresh. Needs time. ★★★★★

2014 Gundog Estate The Old Road Shiraz A delicate, spicy, red berry style with fine, firm tannins. ★★★★★

2014 Mandon Estate Frankland River Reserve Shiraz A powerful, firm blackberry style with oak showing through. Cellar. ★★★★★

2014 SHIRAZ GROUP 2



MEDALLION WINNER

2014 Santolin A&R Central Victoria Shiraz Viognier This is a stunning, fragrant, silky, complex shiraz with whole-bunch fermentation overtones. It's a genuinely exciting wine, but if you're not at the top level of Naked Wines clients we don't like your chances of obtaining any. Nevertheless, Adrian and Rebecca Santolin deserve a resounding round of applause, and you should investigate their portfolio. ★★★★★
<http://santolinwines.com.au/>

2014 Maygars Hill Shiraz This Strathbogie Ranges (Vic.) red creates a big impression with its intense blackberry fruit supported by hints of toasty oak and black pepper. A shiraz of substance that will cellar. (\$28.00) ★★★★★

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2014 Brokenwood Kat's Block Hunter Valley Shiraz A vibrant, medium-bodied red berry style with a whiff of oak and beautifully balanced tannins. It will age very gracefully. (\$62.00) ★★★★★

2014 Windance Estate Margaret River Shiraz Intense dark berry fruit is well supported by firm tannins and oak. Everything required for cellaring is here. ★★★★★

2014 Gundog Estate The 48 Block Shiraz A medium-bodied style with a faintly earthy complexity and a dry, savoury finish. ★★★★★

2014 Ravensworth Shiraz Viognier It's very fragrant, with pronounced whole bunch complexity. Just a little lean. ★★★★★

2014 SHIRAZ GROUP 3

2014 Garners Heritage Wine Shiraz The two Strathbogie Ranges wines in the Championship did the region proud, and this impressive blackberry/dark cherry style topped this group. The richness of flavour is perfectly balanced by fine, firm tannins. Not yet released, but should be in the mid twenty dollar range. ★★★★★

2014 Moppity Vineyards Eclipse Shiraz An intense blackberry style of shiraz with a dash of classy new oak. It's a very well made wine that needs a few years in bottle. ★★★★★

2014 Thorn Clarke Sandpiper Barossa Shiraz An utterly delicious shiraz which is packed with blackberry varietal flavour and is very approachable. A bargain. (\$15.00) ★★★★★

2014 Oakdene Single Vineyard William Shiraz Here's a Bellarine wine with plenty of everything – rich, intense fruit, whole bunch complexity, oak – you name it. A fascinating drop. ★★★★★

2014 Montalto Estate Mornington Peninsula Shiraz A red berry style with punchy whole bunch character and very fine tannins. ★★★★★

2014 Pepper Tree CF Block Limited Release Shiraz A minty red berry shiraz with fairly firm, dry tannins. ★★★★★

2014 SHIRAZ GROUP 4

2014 Chalkers Crossing CC2 Hilltops Shiraz This wine shows vibrant dark cherry aroma with a pronounced whole bunch influence. The palate is supple, fine and complete. (\$18.00) ★★★★★

2014 Wignalls Shiraz A very impressive blackberry style of shiraz from Albany, WA with a whiff of oak. The palate is long and the tannins are fine. (\$29.00) ★★★★★

2014 Shingleback Davey Estate McLaren Vale Shiraz Rich, ripe, classic McLaren Vale. An intense, well structured wine that is full of life. ★★★★★

2014 Catlin Adelaide Hills Shiraz Dark berries and cherries abound, supported by whole bunch complexity. Fine, savoury tannins complete an impressive package. (\$45.00) ★★★★★

2014 Tellurian Redline Heathcote Shiraz Fresh blackberry characteristics show out, along with slightly toasty oak. The palate is rich, fresh and firm. ★★★★★

2014 Seppelt Chalambar Shiraz A solid wine with plenty of blackberry varietal flavour. ★★★★★

2014 SHIRAZ GROUP 5

2014 Oakdene Shiraz Where the Oakdene William Shiraz was considered by some to have too much of everything, this one practises more restraint. Its herbal complexity greatly enhances the dark cherry fruit, and the palate offers an appealing silkiness. (\$24.00) ★★★★★

2014 Tyrrell's Vat 9 Hunter Shiraz Here's a Hunter Valley gem that is intense and complex. There's a hint of grilled meat on the red berry nose, and the medium-bodied palate has length and structure. It definitely needs time. ★★★★★

2014 Heathcote Winery Cravens Place Shiraz A fresh, seductive dark berry shiraz with hints of dark chocolate and licorice. It can be enjoyed now, but a few years' cellaring will do it no harm. (\$22.00) ★★★★★

2014 Sandalford Margaret River Range Shiraz Shows fresh cherry aromas, and the palate offers good initial flavour, but doesn't have quite the length of the top wines. ★★★★★

2014 Silkman Reserve Hunter Valley Shiraz A good medium-bodied style showing attractive mulberry aromas and flavours. ★★★★★

2014 Barwon Ridge Shiraz Quite a rich, solid wine with its fair share of oak. ★★★★★

2014 SHIRAZ GROUP 6

2014 Lerida Estate Lake George Shiraz Viognier This is a very stylish Canberra district wine with an attractive spicy, perfumed nose and a captivating medium-bodied palate. ★★★★★

2014 Montalto Pennon Hill Mornington Peninsula Shiraz The aromatic red berry and spice are attention-grabbers, and the palate is fine and long. (\$32.00) ★★★★★

2014 Heifer Station Shiraz A fresh dark cherry style from Orange, NSW showing plenty of whole bunch complexity. Delicious drinking. (\$30.00) ★★★★★

2014 Montgomery's Hill Shiraz This shiraz from Albany, WA certainly doesn't lack varietal power. It's a wine of substance that needs time. ★★★★★

2014 Tellurian Pastiche Heathcote Shiraz A rich, ripe dark berry style that is firm but balanced. Cellar. ★★★★★

2014 SHIRAZ FINAL

2014 Santolin A&R Central Victoria Shiraz Viognier
2014 Chalkers Crossing CC2 Hilltops Shiraz
2014 Ballinaclash Sub Tuum Hilltops Shiraz
2014 Garners Heritage Wine Shiraz
2014 Lerida Estate Lake George Shiraz Viognier
2014 Oakdene Shiraz

2013 SHIRAZ GROUP I

2013 Wolf Blass Gold Label Adelaide Hills Syrah There's plenty of dark berry and spice varietal character here. The palate is well structured, and the tannins need time to soften, but this wine delivers. ★★★★★

2013 Warramunda Estate Yarra Valley Syrah This is a fascinating medium-bodied shiraz in which herbal whole bunch complexity adds to the dark cherry fruit. Good young drinking. (\$35.00) ★★★★★

2013 Tahbilk Shiraz Rich, ripe, fresh and slightly plummy, this wine has everything required for a long cellaring life. (\$20.95) ★★★★★

2013 Tellurian Tranter Heathcote Shiraz This wine is packed with shiraz goodness. The blackberry and spice is supported by a good cellaring structure. (\$40.00) ★★★★★

2013 Andrew Thomas Elenay Hunter Valley Shiraz A classy regional style. Dark cherry fruit flows long on a fine, savoury palate. Cellar. (\$45.00) ★★★★★

2013 Chalkers Crossing Hilltops Shiraz Quite dull nose. Lacks middle palate. ★★

2013 SHIRAZ GROUP 2

2013 Mandoon Estate Frankland River Reserve Shiraz The rich, ripe dark cherry fruit carries with it a hint of dried herbs, and the oak complements an impressively long palate. Cellar. ★★★★★

2013 Two Rivers Reserve Hunter Valley Shiraz A delightfully plummy, fresh, medium-bodied shiraz with excellent length and balance. (\$28.00) ★★★★★

2013 Seppelt Mount Ida Shiraz A pristine dark cherry style which reflects masterly oak handling. This Heathcote wine will age beautifully. (\$57.00) ★★★★★

2013 Pepperjack Barossa Shiraz A richly flavoured shiraz with balanced savoury tannins. Well made. ★★★★★

2013 Jim Barry Wines The Veto Clare Valley Shiraz A powerful dark fruits style which is long-flavoured and well balanced. ★★★★★

2013 Moppity Vineyards Eclipse Shiraz Plenty of dark cherry fruit in a fine, firm structure. Well worth cellaring. ★★★★★

2013 SHIRAZ GROUP 3

2013 Majella Coonawarra Shiraz Complex and cedary, with rich dark berry flavour. It finishes a little hot. ★★★★★

2013 Cape Grace Margaret River Shiraz Impressive fresh varietal flavour with prominent oak on the finish. ★★★★★

2013 Jack Estate Coonawarra Shiraz An opulent dark cherry style showing some high quality oak. ★★★★★

2013 Blue Pyrenees Estate Richardson Shiraz This is a firmly structured, full flavoured shiraz with a touch of mint. It will benefit from cellaring. ★★★★★

2013 Sanguine Estate Heathcote Shiraz There's plenty of power and structure in this wine, but the oak is a little prominent. ★★★★★

2013 Briar Ridge Dairy Hill Hunter Valley Shiraz The attractive red berry characteristics are enhanced by a faint tilled earth complexity. The finish is a little acidic. ★★★★★

2013 SHIRAZ GROUP 4

2013 Sanguine Estate Progeny Heathcote Shiraz The Progeny has been one of the most successful wines in Winewise competitions, and the 2013 fares very well here. It's full of spice and blackberry, and delivers above its price point. (\$19.00) ★★★★★☆

2013 Huntington Estate Special Reserve Mudgee Shiraz An impressive, vibrant, richly flavoured shiraz that shows just a little too much oak at the moment. Time in the cellar will be of benefit. ★★★★★☆

2013 Blue Pyrenees Estate Section One Shiraz This is an impressive dark cherry shiraz with some fragrance and forest floor undertones. It just needs a little time to soften the tannins. ★★★★★

2013 Mitchell Harris Pyrenees Shiraz Rich and ripe, but needs to be a little fresher. ★★★★★☆

2013 St Hallett Dawkins Single Vineyard Shiraz Offers very good varietal flavour, but is a little too oaky. ★★★★★☆

2013 Tagai Scar Tree Langhorne Creek Shiraz A very rich blackberry shiraz with a firm structure. ★★★★★☆



2013 SHIRAZ GROUP 5

2013 Lord Malmsbury Zeina Shiraz This stylish wine hails from just north-east of Kyneton, Victoria. It's vibrant and spicy, reflecting its cool origins, and the tannins are appropriately firm, but fine-grained.

★★★★☆

2013 Wynns Coonawarra Shiraz Having punched above its price point for decades, the Wynns Shiraz continues to deliver. The very fresh, slightly spicy raspberry aromas and long, finely structured palate speak eloquently of Coonawarra. (\$15.00) ★★★★★

2013 Twisted River Shiraz Viognier This Central Ranges (NSW) wine is very fragrant and spicy. The long, silky palate is a delight, and has an elegance not often found in Australian shiraz. We can't believe it's still available for \$216.00 per dozen. ★★★★★

2013 Riposte The Cutlass Adelaide Hills Shiraz Shows some dark cherry/berry characteristics, and the finish is quite dry. Drinking now. ★★★★★

2013 Blue Pyrenees Estate Shiraz Richly flavoured, but very firm at this stage. ★★★★★

2013 SHIRAZ GROUP 6



Medallion Winner

2013 Rosemount District McLaren Vale Shiraz It's hard to believe the Rosemount winery was shut down when we taste wines such as this. It's a classic, vibrant McLaren Vale shiraz in every sense. The blackberry varietal characteristics are boosted by hints of dark chocolate and spice. Balanced tannins invite cellaring. (\$18.00) ★★★★★

2013 Alkoomi Black Label Frankland River Shiraz Viognier The nose is very attractive, displaying aromas such as dark cherry and violet. Palate-wise, it's delightfully supple. (\$23.00) ★★★★★

2013 Redman Coonawarra Shiraz An elegant red berry shiraz with faintly minty regional overtones. ★★★★★

2013 Windance Estate Margaret River Shiraz A rich shiraz with firm, puckering tannins. ★★★★★

2013 Collector Reserve Canberra District Shiraz The whole bunch overtones are quite pronounced, and tend to dominate the elegant fruit. ★★★★★

2013 SHIRAZ CLASS FINAL

2013 Rosemount District McLaren Vale Shiraz

2013 Mandoon Estate Frankland River Reserve Shiraz

2013 Sanguine Estate Progeny Heathcote Shiraz

2013 Lord Malmsbury Zeina Shiraz

2013 Wolf Blass Gold Label Adelaide Hills Syrah

2013 Majella Coonawarra Shiraz

2012 SHIRAZ

2012 Tatiarra Cambrian Heathcote Shiraz A wine with excellent depth of plummy and blackberry flavours, hints of licorice, grilled meat and vanilla oak. One of the standard-bearers for the Heathcote region. (\$30.00) ★★★★★

2012 Sanguine Estate Heathcote Shiraz Speaking of Heathcote, here's a wine from another producer that does the region proud. It's packed with blackberry and spice, and has the tannin structure for cellaring. ★★★★★

2012 Mandoon Estate Frankland River Reserve Shiraz So dense it's almost inky. This is a wine of power in all respects. It's intense, backward and built for cellaring. ★★★★★

2012 Saltram Mamre Brook Barossa Shiraz A classic Barossa shiraz which offers blackberry aromas and flavours with faint licorice overtones. A mouthfilling, supple dry red. ★★★★★

2012 d'Arenberg The Dead Arm McLaren Vale Shiraz A substantial blackberry style in the true McLaren Vale tradition. The firm tannins demand cellaring. ★★★★★

2012 Balgownie Estate Bendigo Shiraz The colour is slightly advanced, but there's plenty of varietal flavour within a firm structure. ★★★★★

2011 & OLDER SHIRAZ GROUP 1

2010 Rosemount Balmoral McLaren Vale Syrah The essence of McLaren Vale – layers of fresh blackberry supported by persistent, but not aggressive tannins. It has a long life ahead of it. (\$50.00) ★★★★★

2009 Tatiarra Cambrian Heathcote Shiraz A vibrant shiraz that carries its seven years comfortably. The blackberry and licorice aromas are enticing, and the palate is beautifully balanced, with a savoury edge. (\$40.00) ★★★★★

2010 Saltram Single Vineyard Eden Valley Shiraz A fresh, powerful shiraz packed with blackberry varietal character. The tannin structure is quite fine. Eden Valley to the core. ★★★★★

2010 Saltram The Journal Eden Valley Shiraz An attractive, richly flavoured shiraz that is showing the first signs of maturity. It will drink well for several years. ★★★★★

2011 & OLDER SHIRAZ GROUP 2



Medallion Winner

2010 Saltram No.1 Barossa Shiraz A rich, vibrant dark berry style that appears younger than its six years. The tannins and oak are perfectly balanced, matching the intense fruit. One to cellar. ★★★★★

2011 Pokolbin Estate Reserve Hunter Valley Shiraz A very impressive red berry style with attractive, subtle tilled earth complexity. It certainly has the depth and structure for cellaring. (\$60.00) ★★★★★

2011 Mandoon Estate Frankland River Reserve Shiraz Layers of dark berry fruit supported by firm tannins. It's all in balance, but patience is required. ★★★★★

2011 RidgeView Impressions Hunter Valley Shiraz An attractively complex red berry style with fine, savoury tannins. It will continue to improve in bottle. ★★★★★

SHIRAZ GRAND FINAL

2014 Santolin A&R Central Victoria Shiraz Viognier
2014 Chalkers Crossing Hilltops CC2 Shiraz
2013 Rosemount District McLaren Vale Shiraz
2010 Saltram No.1 Barossa Shiraz
2010 Rosemount Balmoral McLaren Vale Syrah
2012 Tatiarra Heathcote Cambrian Shiraz

The top three were too close to split, so they were retasted.

SHIRAZ GRAND FINAL TASTE OFF

2014 Santolin A&R Central Victoria Shiraz Viognier
2014 Chalkers Crossing CC2 Hilltops Shiraz
2013 Rosemount District McLaren Vale Shiraz

CONCLUSIONS

PINOT NOIR

Even though a 2014 wine was awarded the Best Pinot Noir medallion, the 2013s, as a group, were stronger. The use of whole bunches in fermentations was very common. Sometimes that procedure works. Sometimes it doesn't. Domaine de la Romanée-Conti ferment with 100% whole bunches, but they have vineyards like La Tache and Romanée-Conti to draw on. To ferment middle of the road grapes with stems is asking for trouble.

Weak colours and green stemmy characteristics are evidence of the folly of rushing into whole bunch fermentations when the fruit simply isn't up to it.

Home Hill, Montalto, Paringa Estate and Yabby Lake were towers of strength this year, and we suggest that pinot noir fans should pay great attention to all four producers.

SHIRAZ

Whole bunches seem to have captured the imaginations of shiraz producers too. As Tim Knappstein quipped while judging shiraz, "I wouldn't like to be selling crushers to shiraz makers at the moment."

As with pinot noir, successful whole bunch fermentation of shiraz depends on the quality of the grapes. If whole bunch character sticks out like the proverbial sore thumb, there is clearly a lack of balance.

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Whole bunch fermentation is a useful winemaking tool, but like new oak, it can be overdone. We strongly suggest that the negatives and positives be weighed up. In many cases it would be wise to ferment some batches with whole bunches and use crushed grapes and whole berries in others. The aim should be to achieve subtle complexity.

Although whole bunch is the latest trend, we strongly acknowledge the traditional styles that fared very well in the Championship. We always applaud progress and innovation, but sometimes the adage “If it ain’t broke, don’t fix it” also holds true.

See below for some of the best-value wines, and where to obtain them. There’s something for everybody.

Lester Jesberg

2014 Ballinaclash Sub Tuum Hilltops Shiraz (\$20.00)

<http://www.ballinaclash.com.au/all-products/2014-sub-tuum-shiraz.aspx>

2014 Rosemount Diamond Label Shiraz (\$10.00)

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

2014 Maygars Hill Shiraz (\$28.00)

<http://www.maygarshill.com.au/order-form/>

2014 Thorn Clarke Sandpiper Barossa Shiraz (\$15.00)

<https://www.nicks.com.au/2013-thorn-clarke-sandpiper-shiraz>

2014 Chalkers Crossing CC2 Hilltops Shiraz (\$18.00)

<http://www.chalkerscrossing.com.au/wines/red/2014-cc2-hilltops-shiraz>

2014 Wignalls Shiraz

http://www.wignallswines.com.au/place_an_order.php

2014 Oakdene Shiraz (\$24.00)

<http://www.oakdene.com.au/All-Wines>

2014 Heathcote Winery Cravens Place Shiraz (\$22.00)

<https://www.nicks.com.au/2014-heathcote-winery-cravens-place-shiraz>

2014 Heifer Station Shiraz (\$30.00)

<http://heiferstation.com/our-wines/>

2013 Tahbilk Shiraz (\$20.95)

<http://www.tahbilk.com.au/buy-tahbilk-wine-online/tahbilk-2013-shiraz.html>

2013 Two Rivers Reserve Hunter Valley Shiraz (\$28.00)

<http://www.tworivers.com.au/shop/products/show/id/43>

2013 Sanguine Estate Progeny Heathcote Shiraz (\$19.00)

<http://www.winestar.com.au/sanguine-progeny-heathcote-shiraz-2013>

2013 Wynns Coonawarra Shiraz (\$15.00)

<http://www.winestar.com.au/wynns-coonawarra-estate-shiraz-2013>

2013 Twisted River Shiraz Viognier (\$18.00)

<http://twistedriverwines.com.au/buy-wines/>

2013 Rosemount District McLaren Vale Shiraz (\$18.00)

<http://www.winestar.com.au/rosemount-district-mclaren-vale-shiraz-2013>

2013 Alkoomi Black Label Frankland River Shiraz Viognier (\$23.00)

<http://www.wineseek.com.au/products/4255-alkoomi-frankland-river-shiraz-viognier-2013/>

2012 Tatiarra Cambrian Heathcote Shiraz (\$30.00)

<https://www.nicks.com.au/2012-tatiarra-cambrian-shiraz>

ORANGE F.O.O.D WEEK

Orange F.O.O.D Week festival celebrates the region's abundance and diversity, as well as the clever and creative people who make it all happen. An acronym for the Food of Orange District, F.O.O.D Week celebrates its 25th anniversary in 2016 and as such is recognised as Australia's longest-running regional food festival. The festival is also a Destination NSW flagship event. Founded in 1991 by a group of passionate local foodies and vigneron, Orange F.O.O.D Week was created with an ethos of showcasing the region's excellent fresh produce and award-winning cool climate wine, as well to provide a platform for its food producers; providers; innovative chefs, cooks and caterers; and its wine growers. Run by a voluntary committee, the objective of the festival is to promote the diverse and excellent regional produce from the district covering the three local government areas of Orange, Blayney and Cabonne. The festival incorporates a number of signature events designed to appeal to both residents and visitors, as well as over 90 satellite events held by local restaurants, cafes and wineries – resulting in a ten-day feast of the senses that you won't want to miss, and will keep coming back for again and again.

Friday 8 – Sunday 17 April

<http://orangefoodweek.com.au/>

VINCENT WINE BAR, CANBERRA

I confess to having something to do with the wine selection and wine and food matching, and it's made me very enthusiastic about this new Canberra venue. Adrienne and I tried all the dishes with a large range of wines last week, and the result is a list of twelve wines available by the glass only - at very reasonable prices. A wine is suggested with each food course. Vincent is a true wine bar in that wine is the only beverage served. Opening at 4:00pm, Tuesday, 15 March.

It's located in the new building development at 45 Macquarie Street Barton.

Lester Jesberg