

2015 Canberra District Shiraz

The local news media in all its forms carried reports of the excellence of the 2015 vintage in the Canberra region. The panel tasted nine examples of 2015 Canberra District shiraz last week, and here are the results.

2015 Four Winds Vineyard Canberra District Shiraz A very fresh blackberry/licorice, floral shiraz with an appealing spiciness and silky feel on the mid palate. Fine tannins and typical regional acidity provide the essentials for precise balance. (\$30.00) ★★★★★
<http://fourwindsvineyard.com.au/shop/>

2015 Lerida Estate Canberra District Shiraz Viognier Richly perfumed, showing violets and blackberry. It's mouth-filling and satisfying, yet still medium-bodied. The tannins are fine and lingering, requiring time to soften. (Not yet released) ★★★★★

2015 Clonakilla O'Riada Shiraz It's all there - blackberry, violets and spice. Everything is in proportion. This is a tight, acid-fresh, long-flavoured wine that needs cellaring. (Not yet released) ★★★★★☆

2015 Nick O'Leary Shiraz This one conveys decidedly floral notes, pepper, spice and stems. It's long, firm, elegant and acid-fresh, but needs time to bring all these striking components together. ★★★★★☆
<http://www.nickolearywines.com.au/>

2015 Clonakilla Shiraz Viognier The berries and exotic spices of cool area shiraz are there, as is the apricot of viognier and prominent stemmy character. The palate is rich, ripe, firm, and shows its acid. Given the track record of this wine, we must be optimistic about its future. (Not yet released) ★★★★★☆

2015 Nick O'Leary Bolaro Shiraz Rose petal, black pepper and classy French oak cohabitate happily here. The palate is firm at the moment, and quite closed. All the good things will happen – given time. ★★★★★☆

2015 Ravensworth Murrumbateman Shiraz Viognier Spicy and crammed with red fruits in a very elegant package, with some stems influence. This wine speaks very eloquently of the Canberra District. ★★★★★

2015 Mount Majura Vineyard Shiraz An intense dark berry shiraz with a hint of spices. It's firm and showing some stems character. This one definitely needs time to open up. ★★★★★

2015 Lerida Estate Canberra District Shiraz Slightly developed colour. It's on the light side, but has spicy varietal character. (\$26.50) ★★★

There's no doubt that 2015 ranks with the best vintages of the Canberra District. We're mindful of the fact that we tasted these wines at an early stage, and that some need time to settle down – particularly the Clonakilla Shiraz Viognier and the Bolaro. The history of the former suggests that we probably tasted it when it was at its most awkward.

John Duval Wines

John Duval's annual release always attracts attention. This year we have another fascinating foursome.

2015 John Duval Wines Plexus Marsanne Viognier Roussanne The peach and apricot aromas line up with expectations, and the textural palate carries good depth of flavour, backed up by adequate acidity and balanced phenolic grip. (\$30.00) ★★★★★

Fermentation commenced in stainless steel but some of the marsanne and viognier finished fermentation in, and was aged in French oak (10% new) for six months. The remaining marsanne and roussanne was aged on lees in tank. JD

2014 John Duval Wines Plexus Shiraz Grenache Mourvèdre

Perfumed and spicy, with admirable intensity of dark berry and licorice. The grenache component softens the palate which is greatly enhanced by savoury tannins. A stylish red that goes right to the top of the GSM (or SGM) class. (\$40.00) ★★★★★

Only 10% new hogsheads were used. The rest were 3-6 years old.

2014 John Duval Wines Entity Shiraz The Barossa Valley is a great shiraz region and, as I've written often in the past, too many producers fail to capture its essence. That isn't true of John Duval. The Entity is a shiraz that lives by the rule that freshness is a vital key to quality. The vibrancy of blackberry aroma, subtly influenced by oak, testifies to that. The palate is long, dry and lively. Cellar at least a decade. (\$50.00) ★★★★★

2013 John Duval Wines Eligo Shiraz As the price indicates, this wine is the pride of the Duval range. It's a blend of 60% old vine Barossa and 40% Eden Valley shiraz aged in 75% new French hogsheads, with the balance going into two and three year old hogsheads. The richness of fruit and "sweetness" of the French oak nod to John's Penfolds roots, but this wine copies no other. Fans of classic Barossa reds will love it and cellar it – and so they should. (\$120.00) ★★★★★

Lester Jesberg

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