

2017 WINEWISE CHAMPIONSHIP

This time we present three categories – cabernet blends, other red blends and other red varieties. The latter pair are particularly strong and fascinating. Grenache comes into its own in the other red blends class, demonstrating once again that it often needs a little help from its friends.

“Usually” is the operative word because Geographe (WA)-based Bakkheia triumphed in the other red varieties class with a 100% grenache and, by the way, backed it up with two other gold medal-rated wines, the Tripartite and The Groszman Graciano.

Cabernet Blends



Medallion Winner 2015 Wynns Coonawarra Estate

Cabernet Shiraz Merlot The vibrant dark cherry and cassis aromas are attention-grabbers, and the palate is supple, fine, and cabernet-driven.

Amazing value. (\$17.00) ★★★★★

<http://www.bayfields.com.au/wine/wynns-cabernet-shiraz-merlot-750ml>

2013 Lindemans Pyrus Coonawarra This is a powerful, richly flavoured red packed with dense dark berry flavour. The tannins are firm, but well balanced. One to cellar. (\$40.00) ★★★★★

https://www.danmurphys.com.au/product/DM_560238/lindeman-s-coonawarra-trio-pyrus-cabernet-blend-2013

2015 Mandoon Estate Margaret River Cabernet Merlot A really good Australian example of the “Bordeaux” blend. It’s very youthful, needing time, and the blackcurrant fruit is beautifully supported by an ideal tannin structure. (Not yet released) ★★★★★

2013 Stonefields Arbitrage Wrattenbully Cabernet Merlot Shiraz A substantial blackcurrant/blackberry style which is long-flavoured, intense and firm. (Not yet available) ★★★★★

2014 Mandoon Estate Margaret River Cabernet Merlot Quite a mouthful of red – layers of cassis and leaf, with a hint of dark chocolate. A wine that’s impossible to ignore. (\$29.50) ★★★★★

<https://shop.mandoonestate.com.au/reds/2014-cabernet-merlot>

2014 Windance Estate Margaret River Cabernet Merlot An opulent red with strong cabernet sauvignon characteristics and very well managed tannins. (Not yet released) ★★★★★

2013 Jacob's Creek Johann Barossa Shiraz Cabernet An impressive wine with abundant dark berry, dried herb and cedar characteristics. It needs time to soften. (Not yet available) ★★★★★

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2015 Sanguine Estate Heathcote Cabernets Wall to wall flavour combined with firm tannins and a whiff of oak. A wine of distinction, with all the components required for successful cellaring. (\$24.95)

★★★★☆

<https://sanguinewines.com.au/shop/2015-cabernets/>

2014 Sandalford Margaret River Range Cabernet Merlot Classic Margaret River – cassis and leaf aromas and flavours, with a firm, fine structure. Good value. (\$19.00) ★★★★★

https://www.danmurphys.com.au/product/DM_916636/sandalford-cabernet-merlot

2014 Tyrrell's Vat 8 Shiraz Cabernet Fresh red and dark berry aromas complemented by a whiff of dried herb. It has the intensity and structure for cellaring. (Not available) ★★★★★

2014 Annie's Lane Winemaker's Blend (Cabernet sauvignon, cabernet franc, merlot, shiraz) No shortage of ripe dark berry aromas, and the palate is packed with flavour. ★★★★★

2015 Serafino BDX McLaren Vale Cabernet Sauvignon Cabernet Franc Carménère Merlot Another one that really lays it on with all manner of autumn berry flavours. A wine of substance. ★★★★★

2014 Jim Barry PB Clare Valley Shiraz Cabernet Sauvignon A rich red with a toasty oak influence. The palate is firm but balanced. ★★★★★

2014 Lindemans Pyrus Coonawarra There's no lack of power and depth here, but the oak is prominent. ★★★★★

2013 Metala Wines Langhorne Creek Shiraz Cabernet Sauvignon The generosity of Langhorne Creek flavour is evident in this very fresh red. Time will smooth out the tannins. ★★★★★

2012 Higher Plane Margaret River The Messenger The aromas and flavours are in the red fruits spectrum. However, the oak tends to be a little too prominent. ★★★★★

2015 Bleasdale Wellington Road Langhorne Creek Shiraz Cabernet Sauvignon A big, plummy red that is fairly solid in structure. ★★★★★

2014 Metala Wines Shiraz Cabernet Sauvignon Dark fruits with slightly chappy oak. There's no lack of substance. ★★★★★

2013 Ross Hill The Griffin Shows a little development, but the red fruits flavours are attractive. The oak makes its presence felt. ★★★★★

2014 Logan Cabernet Merlot Weak colour. A comparatively light and advanced red. ★★☆☆

2014 Heslop Wines Mudgee Shiraz Cabernet Merlot A jammy style with firm tannins. ★★☆☆

We applaud the effort that has been put into these cabernet blends. The average quality level is high, and several of these wines have been made with cellaring in mind.

Other Red Blends



Medallion Winner

2015 De Bortoli Villages Heathcote Shiraz Grenache This is an impressive, complete wine that offers very satisfying drinking. The intense red fruits aromas and flavours are supported by complex notes of spices and earth. The long palate finishes with fine, savoury tannins. Great value. (\$20.00) ★★★★★

<http://shop.debortoli.com.au/red-wines/villages-heathcote-shiraz-grenache-2016.html>

2015 Shingleback Local Heroes Shiraz Grenache Rich, ripe dark berries with a touch of spice. An irresistible short-term dry red. (\$25.00) ★★★★★

<http://www.shingleback.com.au/products/shingleback/shingleback-local-heroes->

2015 St Hugo Barossa Grenache Shiraz Mataro Delightfully perfumed grenache with spicy overtones. A delicious wine with fine, savoury tannins. (Not yet available) ★★★★★

2015 Bakkheia Tripartite (Grenache, shiraz, mourvèdre) This fresh, eminently drinkable red is very much in the style of the southern Rhône. It's spicy, complex, savoury and medium-bodied. Another wine that offers exceptional value. (\$18.00) ★★★★★

<http://www.bakkheia.com.au/wines.html>

2015 Grampians Estate GST (Grenache, shiraz, tempranillo) The vibrant violet and rose petal aromas are very engaging, and the palate is impressively long and fine. ★★★★★
<http://grampiansestate.com.au/product/2014-grampians-gst/>

2015 Temple Bruer Preservative Free Mataro Shiraz Grenache A fresh, simple red fruits style that is long-flavoured and very easy to drink. Enjoy it in the short term. ★★★★★

2015 Wolf Blass Red Label Shiraz Grenache The nose offers intense raspberries, even Framboise liqueur, aromas, and the fresh, fruity “drink me” palate is a winner. ★★★★★ Available for \$102.60 per dozen at <https://justwines.com.au/wolf-blass-red-label-shiraz-grenache-south-eastern-australia>

2014 Cherubino Apostrophe Possessive Red The aromas and flavours bring to mind a rich compote of dark berries, and the palate is pleasantly supple. ★★★★★

2015 Shingleback Afficionado Red Blend Vibrant dark berry, spice and positive earthiness. Good fruit. Savoury tannins. ★★★★★

2014 Pepperjack Barossa Red Wine Fresh and ripe, with hints of licorice and a fairly firm finish. ★★★★★

2014 Risky Business Shiraz Tempranillo Grenache Powerful dark berry and spice. A generously-flavoured red. ★★★★★

2015 Mount Majura Vineyard TSG The intense fruit carries with it some reduced sulphides character. It was a little too much for us to completely ignore. ★★★★★

2014 Pokolbin Estate Phoenix Shiraz Tempranillo Fresh, complex and spicy. Medium bodied and savoury, but slightly short. ★★★★★

2014 Silkman Reserve Hunter Valley Shiraz Pinot Noir Light colour. Strawberry pinot aromas. Drinking well, but shows some acid on the finish. ★★★★★

2015 Rusty Bike The Penny Farthing GSM Fresh strawberry and mulberry aromas. Quite richly flavoured, with a firm finish. ★★★★★

2015 Bleasdale Wellington Road Langhorne Creek GSM Very fresh red berry aromas. Comparatively simple. ★★★★★

2015 Shingleback Red Knot Grenache Shiraz Mourvèdre Vibrant red berry aromas. Adequate fruit weight. Drinking now. ★★★★★

2015 McGuigan The Shortlist GSM Slightly weak colour. Earthy and savoury, but a bit too developed. ★★★★★

The big feature of this category is drinkability. We need to have wines on hand that appeal to a wide range of people, and you'll find several high-quality examples here. Not only that, they provide the bonus of handling a few years' cellaring as well.

Other Red Varieties

Break away from the norm. Familiarise yourself with some exceptional examples of “other” red varieties. Australian winemakers are crafting some real gems from grapes apart from cabernet sauvignon, pinot noir or shiraz. Do yourself a flavour and try some of these. You won’t regret it.

bakkheia



Medallion Winner 2015 Bakkheia The Wonderful Miss

Gerry Grenache (Geographe, WA) Grenache produces perfumed wine, but this one takes that to another level. It’s not rose water. It’s raspberries and cranberries, with a subliminal earthiness. Taste-wise, it is, thanks to the fine tannins, more savoury than sweet. Congratulations are in order. (\$35.00) ★★★★★
<http://www.bakkheia.com.au/>

2014 Bleasdale Second Innings Langhorne Creek Malbec Having won this category in 2016, the Second Innings very nearly did it again. It’s a delightfully fresh multi-berry style with perfectly balanced tannins, making it great drinking. (\$16.50) ★★★★★
<http://www.cloudwine.com.au/shop/red-wine/other-red-varieties/bleasdale-second-innings-malbec-2014>

2014 Bleasdale Double Take Langhorne Creek Malbec This is a more profound expression of malbec than the Second Innings, delivering layers of fresh cherry and blueberry flavours. It’s firm and classy, needing a few years’ cellaring. (\$65.00) ★★★★★
<http://www.bleasdale.com.au/products/15727-double-take-malbec/>

2015 Green Door Amphora Tempranillo (Geographe, WA) There’s more than a little Iberian character in this fresh dark fruits style that shows hints of leather and licorice. Savoury tannins provide balance and add to the drinkability. (\$35.00) ★★★★★
<https://greendoorwines.com.au/wines/>

2015 Juniper Small Batch Margaret River Tempranillo A very attractive dark fruits/licorice style of red with a long, fine, savoury palate. (\$25.00) ★★★★★
<http://www.summerhillwineshop.com.au/wines/2015-juniper-crossing-margaret-river-small-batch-tempranillo/>

2015 Bakkheia The Groszman Graciano A vibrant young red with a hint of earthiness that is so typical of the variety. The palate is long, with a pleasantly dry “European” finish. (\$25.00) ★★★★★
<http://www.bakkheia.com.au/>

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2015 Dogrock Degraves Road Pyrenees Grenache The fresh, perfumed cherry/plum nose is impressive, and the flavours are backed up by fine, firm tannins. This wine, like the medallion-winner, is a serious challenger to the established order of grenache. (\$35.00)

★★★★☆

<https://www.wineboss.com.au/Order.aspx?ref=cge&wsrc=cge>

2015 Willunga 100 Clarendon Grenache A fragrant raspberry style of grenache with excellent fruit weight and nicely balanced tannins. It's drinking beautifully. (\$35.00)

★★★★☆

<http://www.willunga100.com/shop-1/2015-the-hundred-grenache-clarendon>

2015 Tamburlaine Orange Reserve Malbec Red fruits, dark cherry and spice. A very impressive medium-weight varietal expression. (No longer available)

★★★★☆

2015 Vinoque Roundstone Vineyard Yarra Valley Gamay Noir A very good Aussie interpretation of the grape of Beaujolais. The aroma and flavour bring to mind raspberry and there's a faint dried herb edge. Very enjoyable drinking.

★★★★

2015 St Hallett Wines Barossa Touriga Nacional Very fresh ripe dark cherry aromas with a floral lift. A wine that is full of life but fairly firm and solid.

★★★★

2015 St Hallett Barossa Mataro Fresh strawberry/red fruits. Gentle handling has made this an appealing young drink.

★★★★

2014 Woody Nook Limited Release Graciano Complex dark berries with hints of earth. Firm but balanced.

★★★★

2013 Kilikanoon The Attunga Mataro Dark berries, black truffle and toast. Supple and savoury.

★★★★

2015 Moppity Vineyards Lock & Key Reserve Tempranillo Fresh red fruits. Very youthful. Fine tannins round off an attractive package.

★★★★

2015 Willunga 100 Tempranillo A vibrant and spicy young red with very satisfying flavour and savoury tannins.

★★★★

2015 Myattsfield Durif Rich and powerful, as we expect durif to be, but it's not ponderous, jammy or over-extracted. Well done.

★★★★

2015 Smallwater Estate Zinfandel Fresh, tending to raspberry jam aromatically. The palate is long and balanced.

★★★★

2015 Bakkheia United & Undaunted Mourvèdre Dense dark fruits with a touch of oak. Good length and balance. Well managed tannins.

★★★★

2015 Mount Majura Vineyard Tempranillo Quite gamy on the nose. Good red berry/cherry fruit. Well balanced.

★★★★

2015 Hay Shed Hill White Label Margaret River Malbec Vibrant blueberry/dark berry. The palate is fine and savoury. ★★★★★

2015 Willunga 100 Blewitt Springs Grenache Hint of confection – rose water. Good fruit. Balanced firm tannins. ★★★★★

2014 Bremerton Special Release Malbec Concentrated dark berry with fairly firm tannins. ★★★★★

2015 Faber Vineyard Ferguson Valley Malbec Fresh, powerful dark berry with a slightly charry overtone. ★★★★★

2015 Farmer and the Scientist Heathcote Tempranillo Very fresh dark cherry/licorice. Slightly hollow on the mid palate. Shows acid on the finish. ★★★★★

2015 Green Door El Toro Tempranillo Dense dark berry aromas and flavours. Chewy tannins. ★★★★★

2015 Woody Nook Killdog Creek Tempranillo Fresh fragrant red fruits nose. Lingering tannins dominate. ★★★★★

2015 Tellurian Heathcote Grenache Rich and earthy. Big, slightly jammy flavour. ★★★★★

2015 Tellurian Heathcote Mourvèdre Fresh red and dark berry. Just a little hollow on the mid palate. ★★★★★

2014 Logan Weemala Tempranillo Ripe with a leather/char overtone. Adequate fruit. ★★★

2014 Heslop Wines Mudjee Touriga Nacional Very ripe and dense. Stewed fruits overtone. ★★☆☆

WINEWISE RATING SCALE

★★★★★	Outstanding	97-100 pts	Gold medal
★★★★☆	Highly Recommended	93-96	Gold/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	

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