

## 2017 WINEWISE CHAMPIONSHIP

**T**he shiraz category is both exciting and daunting. Having over eighty gold medal-winning Australian shiraz to taste sounds like one of the greatest jobs in the world of wine but, in reality, it becomes a difficult hair-splitting process. The task of ranking six meritorious wines in order of preference – over and over again – requires strong mental application, and the judges are taken on quite an emotional ride as one style is compared to another.

Is this excellent cool-region wine better than this classy one from a warm area, or is this spicy example from an in-between climate better than both? So it goes for most of a day.

### Shiraz



#### Medallion Winner

**2015 Clonakilla Hilltops Shiraz** Violets, spices and cherries abound in the bouquet. Selling for less than a third of the price of the Clonakilla Shiraz Viognier, this wine is easily dismissed by label drinkers. However, just as much care and attention to detail goes into this exceptional medium-bodied shiraz. The whole bunch component (about 20.0%) contributes an intriguing herbal complexity, and the finely structured palate offers prodigious length of flavour. Surely it's the best release under this label to date. (\$28.00) ★★★★★

<http://www.clonakilla.com.au/wine/2015-hilltops-shiraz/>



#### Medallion Winner 2014 Jim Barry The Lodge Hill Shiraz

We're very impressed with this one. It's something of a "new look" Clare shiraz in that it's in the vibrant, spicy, dark cherry/red berry style. The palate features silky tannins, making it deliciously drinkable. Buy a case and enjoy the dozen over the next five years. (\$19.00) ★★★★★

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

**2014 Moppity Vineyards Estate Shiraz** This is a classy medium-bodied shiraz featuring lively red fruits and a multitude of spices. Two out of the top three for Hilltops, NSW. Now there's a region clearly punching above its weight. (\$35.00) ★★★★★  
<http://www.moppity.com.au/index.php?route=product/category&path=59>

**2015 Wynns Coonawarra Estate Shiraz** When we're asked about red wines that consistently offer outstanding value for money, this label is often recommended. The 2015 is a spicy red fruits style of intensity, length and finesse. Classic regional character is very much a part of its personality. (\$17.00) ★★★★★  
<http://www.bayfields.com.au/wine/wynns-shiraz-750ml>



**Medallion Winner**



**2013 Dandelion Vineyards Red Queen of the Eden Valley Shiraz** It's absolutely typical of Eden Valley. The fresh red and dark berry aromas carry a hint of mint, and the palate is intense and long, reflecting perfect ripeness. A wine well worth cellaring. (\$85.00) ★★★★★  
<http://www.eastendcellars.com.au/category-list/red-wine/dandelion-red-queen-of-the-eden-valley-shiraz-2013.html>

**2010 Saltram The Journal Barossa Shiraz** If you're looking for something special to cellar long-term, this could be the wine for you. It wouldn't be out of place tasted alongside Grange. The blackberry and dark cherry aromas show little sign of age, and a cedary/tobacco leaf complexity is beginning to emerge. A great example of a classic Australian style. (\$140.00) ★★★★★  
<http://shop.saltramwines.com.au/index.cfm?method=storeproducts.showList&productcategoryid=0a505317-96f6-cdd7-e001-4010ad9f8cc4&maxrows=9>

**2015 Clonakilla O'Riada Shiraz** Intense dark cherry, spice and whole-bunch aromas compete for attention. The palate is stunningly long and fine, but we found the whole-bunch impact a tad too obvious at this early stage. Nevertheless, this wine will age gloriously. (\$36.00) ★★★★★  
<http://www.clonakilla.com.au/wine/2015-oriada-shiraz/>

**2014 Seppelt St Peters Grampians Shiraz** A very complex expression of a long-standing Australian benchmark. The freshness of the dark cherry, spice, black pepper and rose petal aromas is delightful, as is the long palate framed by savoury tannins. (\$60.00) ★★★★★  
<http://www.winestar.com.au/seppelt-st-peters-shiraz-2014>

**2014 Shaw + Smith Adelaide Hills Shiraz** This is a very cool climate style – even for the Adelaide Hills - but it works. The perfumed, spicy red berry nose brings with it some whole-bunch character, and the palate is long and very fine. (\$38.00) ★★★★★  
<http://www.winestar.com.au/shaw-smith-shiraz-2014>

**2015 Serafino Sorrento McLaren Vale Shiraz** McLaren Vale is built on shiraz, and this modestly-priced gem shows the depth of the foundations. The nose hints at rose petals, cherries and spice, and the palate is fine and savoury. (\$20.00) ★★★★★  
<https://serafinowines.com.au/wine/shop/2015-serafino-sorrento-shiraz/>

**2014 Moppity Vineyards Lock & Key Shiraz** Moppity Vineyards has a phenomenal medal strike-rate at shows, and it's easy to see why. Red fruits are complemented by spice, and the tannins are beautifully balanced. (\$22.00) ★★★★★  
<http://www.moppity.com.au/index.php?route=product/category&path=20>

**2010 Saltram No.1 Barossa Shiraz** Impressive rich blackberry aromas merge with those of “sweet” oak. It's a true Barossa style that has decades ahead of it. (Not available) ★★★★★

**2014 Craiglee Shiraz** The cherry compote and black pepper aromas are very appealing, and the palate is long and fine. Another success for this highly-respected Sunbury producer. (\$50.00) ★★★★★  
[www.craigleevineyard.com/](http://www.craigleevineyard.com/)

**2014 Audrey Wilkinson The Lake Hunter Valley Shiraz** The red fruits aromas merge beautifully with a touch of whole-bunch character. This is a beautifully crafted Hunter red with great length of palate. (\$90.00) ★★★★★  
<http://audreywilkinson.agnew.cru.io/product/the-lake-shiraz-awv-2014/>

**2015 Dogrock Degrares Road Pyrenees Shiraz** The vibrant dark cherry/red berry/spice nose is a winner, and the palate revels in a certain opulence that is accentuated by very fine tannins. This wine is bursting with life. (\$35.00) ★★★★★  
<https://www.wineboss.com.au/Order.aspx?ref=cge&wsrc=cge>

**2014 Pokolbin Estate Reserve Shiraz** This stylish Hunter red shows floral and spice aromatics which are precursors to a long, fine, medium-bodied palate. A classy shiraz. (\$60.00) ★★★★★  
<https://www.pokolbinestate.com.au/product/2014-reserve-shiraz/>

**2012 Sanguine Estate Heathcote Shiraz** A supple blackberry/spice style that is just getting into its stride. Yet another top-class wine from Sanguine Estate. (Not available) ★★★★★

**2015 St Hallett Dawkins Single Vineyard Eden Valley Shiraz** The fresh dark cherry aromas carry hints of dried leaf, spice and mint. Is there a touch of whole bunch character? The palate offers intensity, structure and balance. (\$50.00) ★★★★★  
<https://www.sthallett.com.au/>

**2014 Artwine The Kelly Surrender Shiraz** Aromas of fresh mulberry. The palate is very satisfying, fine and long. (\$30.00) ★★★★★  
<https://www.artwine.com.au/product/The-Kelly-Surrender-Shiraz-2014?pageID=70C099CA-94FF-FC48-B4FA-2132CAFA8EC7&sortBy=DisplayOrder&maxRows=10&>

**2015 Moppity Vineyards Reserve Shiraz** This supple, rich red is packed with dark cherries and spice. The persistent palate finishes with a touch of oak. (\$80.00) ★★★★★  
<http://www.moppity.com.au/index.php?route=product/category&path=60>

**2015 Moppity Vineyards Estate Shiraz** Intense dark berry aromas and flavours show out in a stylish red that is satisfyingly long and firm. (\$35.00) ★★★★★  
<http://www.moppity.com.au/index.php?route=product/category&path=59>

**2015 Windowrie The Mill Shiraz** Cherry, spices and dried herbs feature in this delightful, bargain-basement medium-bodied shiraz. It's hard to resist – especially at the price. (\$17.00) ★★★★★  
<http://www.summerhillwineshop.com.au/wines/2015-windowrie-the-mill-shiraz-central-ranges/>

**2015 Harcourt Valley Vineyards Barbara's Shiraz** Fresh, perfumed, and plummy, with dried herb overtones. The impressive palate is long, fine and firm. (No longer available) ★★★★★

**2015 Four Sisters Shiraz** A vibrantly spicy dark cherry style with a medium-bodied palate. It's an utterly delicious drink. (\$13.95) ★★★★★  
<http://store.foursisters.com.au/Category/shiraz/four-sisters-2015-shiraz>

**2015 Deep Woods Estate Block 7 Reserve Shiraz** The bright dark cherry aromas are enticing, and the plush fruit is matched with fine tannins. ★★★★★

**2014 Balgownie Estate Shiraz** Hints of dried herbs enhance the fresh blackberry aromatics, and there's a hint of licorice as well. An attractive mouthfilling style. ★★★★★

**2015 Mount Majura Vineyard Shiraz** A stemmy touch adds complexity to the red fruits bouquet. The fine, firm, lengthy palate is typical of quality shiraz from the Canberra district. ★★★★★

**2014 Peter Lehmann VSV Valley View Road Shiraz** Rich, fresh blackberry characteristics, typical of the Barossa Valley, show out clearly in this well balanced red. ★★★★★

- 2014 Wolf Blass Medlands Estate Platinum Label Shiraz** A powerful dark berry style that shows quite a bit of oak. It has the richness and structure for cellaring if you enjoy the oak. ★★★★★
- 2014 Silkman Reserve Hunter Valley Shiraz** This is an attractive medium-bodied style which shows red berry aromas and flavours enhanced by a faint hint of tilled earth. Fine tannins provide balance. ★★★★★
- 2014 Mandoon Estate Old Vine Shiraz** This Swan Valley shiraz is densely blackberry-like. Although substantial and firm, it has the balance for cellaring. ★★★★★
- 2014 Wolf Blass Gold Label Barossa Shiraz** There's a touch of chocolate-mint here, which is typical of parts of the Barossa. The powerful fruit and ripe tannins make an excellent match. ★★★★★
- 2007 Audrey Wilkinson The Lake Hunter Valley Shiraz** Fresh red and dark berry. Looking good at ten years of age. ★★★★★
- 2014 Pepperjack Barossa Shiraz** Rich, ripe, fresh and fleshy – here's another well crafted, satisfying Barossa shiraz. ★★★★★
- 2015 Brothers At War Fist Fight Barossa Shiraz** As the label suggests, this wine doesn't take a backward step. It's in the mulberry range of flavours and delivers plenty. ★★★★★
- 2015 Four Winds Vineyard Shiraz** A rich dark cherry/red berry style that is relatively big in Canberra District terms. Balanced tannins match the generous flavour. ★★★★★
- 2015 Bit O Heaven Think Outside The Circle Shiraz** An attractive cherry/spice Hilltops (NSW) red with fine tannins and excellent length of flavour. ★★★★★
- 2015 Domaine Naturaliste Rachis Margaret River Shiraz** Shows a touch of whole-bunch complexity which complements the fresh red fruits features. A fresh, well made medium-bodied shiraz. ★★★★★
- 2014 Majella Coonawarra Shiraz** A rich dark cherry/berry shiraz that is well rounded and shows some toasty oak. ★★★★★
- 2015 Mountadam Eden Valley Shiraz** A fresh, spicy, supple red berry style that offers very enjoyable drinking. ★★★★★
- 2014 Capercaillie The Ghillie Hunter Valley Shiraz** The dark cherry aromas are attractive, as is the touch of spice. Fine tannins complete the picture. ★★★★★
- 2014 Austins and Co. Spencer Shiraz** Fresh red berry with a touch of whole-bunch complexity. The palate is long and fine. ★★★★★
- 2015 Gundog Estate Shiraz** Very fresh cherry/spice aromas with excellent fruit and tannins. ★★★★★

- 2014 Blue Pyrenees Estate Section One Shiraz** A very fresh shiraz showing complex notes of mint, pepper and bay leaf. The palate is intense and long, finishing with a lick of oak. ★★★★★
- 2013 Wolf Blass Gold Label Adelaide Hills Syrah** Opulent blackberry with a hint of spice. The palate has substance and structure. ★★★★★
- 2014 Tyrrell's Special Release Hunter Valley Shiraz** A true-to-form medium-bodied Hunter shiraz with fine tannins. It's just a little simple. ★★★★★
- 2015 Grove Estate The Cellar Block Shiraz Viognier** The quality Hilltops wines keep rolling in. This one is quite complex, with floral and herbal notes. The tannins are quite savoury. ★★★★★
- 2008 McGuigan Shortlist Barossa Valley Shiraz** Rich dark berry and licorice aromas are evident. The palate is fresh, firm and full of fruitiness. ★★★★★
- 2014 Tellurian Tranter Heathcote Shiraz** Plenty of dark cherry and spice show out in a fresh, well made shiraz. ★★★★★
- 2011 Shingleback D Block Reserve McLaren Vale Shiraz** Concentrated ripe and fresh. Nice savoury tannins. ★★★★★
- 2015 Bleasdale Bremerview Langhorne Creek Shiraz** Spicy red fruits abound in a red that is fresh and rich. ★★★★★
- 2015 Shingleback Vin Vale McLaren Vale Shiraz** A fleshy, satisfying, blackberry shiraz typical of the Vale. ★★★★★
- 2014 Ballinaclash Subtuum Shiraz** Yet another success from the Hilltops region. The ripe red fruits aromas and flavours are enhanced by hints of dried herbs. The well balanced palate is lifted by fresh acidity. ★★★★★
- 2008 Malone Wrattenbully Shiraz** Nicely mature. The palate has weight, length and freshness. ★★★★★
- 2014 Thomas Wines Synergy Shiraz** Fresh and rich, showing a touch of blackcurrant. Firm but balanced. ★★★★★
- 2014 Malone Wrattenbully Shiraz** A fresh blackberry/dark chocolate style that shows a lot of oak at the moment. ★★★★★
- 2015 Robert Stein Black Label Shiraz** A slightly spicy red fruits style that shows varietal character, but is slightly light. ★★★★★
- 2015 After Hours Oliver Shiraz** The fresh dark cherry aromas are appealing. The palate needs just a little more middle. ★★★★★
- 2014 Briar Ridge Single Vineyard Dairy Hill Shiraz** Quite ripe and substantial, lacking a little finesse. It will soften and improve with age. ★★★★★

- 2013 Wood Block Wines Single Vineyard Shiraz** On the edge of jammy. Big but fresh. ★★★☆
- 2013 Saltram Mamre Brook Shiraz** Powerful ripe blackberry aromas and flavours. The tannins are slightly furry. ★★★☆
- 2014 Serafino McLaren Vale Shiraz** Rich and ripe. Flavourful, but fairly simple. ★★★☆
- 2014 Pepper Tree The Gravels Wrattonbully Shiraz Viognier** Fresh ripe dark cherry with a hint of clove. Savoury tannins. ★★★☆
- 2014 Naked Run BWC Barossa Valley Shiraz** Ripe and straightforward, with a touch of charry oak. ★★★☆
- 2015 St Hallett Scholz Single Vineyard Barossa Valley Shiraz** Verging on stewed fruit character. Plenty of flavour. ★★★☆
- 2015 Harcourt Valley Vineyards Mount Camel Range Shiraz** There's plenty of flavour here, but it gets close to jamminess. Still, the finish is fresh and the tannins are balanced. ★★★☆
- 2015 Brygon Reserve Wines The Bruce Shiraz** Fresh and ripe, but a bit oaky. ★★★☆
- 2015 Balgownie Estate Centre Block Shiraz** Ripe and oaky. Fairly solid. ★★★☆
- 2015 Moppity Vineyards Escallier Shiraz** Ripe dark berry. Shows its oak. Firm finish. ★★★☆
- 2015 Vintelooper Wines VNTLPR SH/15 Shiraz** Rich ripe dark berry. Fairly solid. ★★★☆
- 2013 Kimbolton Rifleman Langhorne Creek Shiraz** Fresh berry with toasty oak. Adequate fruit weight. ★★★☆
- 2014 Peter Lehmann Hill & Valley Shiraz** Dark berry. Hint of mint. Reasonable fruit intensity. ★★★☆
- 2014 Robert Oatley Finisterre Great Southern Syrah** Ripe red berry. Faintly minty. Slightly lean finish. ★★★☆
- 2014 Brash Vineyard Margaret River Shiraz** Fresh and ripe. Slightly raw oak. ★★★
- 2015 De Bortoli Woodfired Heathcote Shiraz** Rich dark berry. A substantial, firm red. ★★★
- 2014 Domaine Naturaliste Margaret River Syrah** Ripe red berry with a hint of dried herbs. It's just a little too forward. ★★★
- 2012 Taylors St Andrews Shiraz** Mature colour and nose with just enough freshness. It doesn't lack flavour. ★★★
- 2014 Bleasdale Bremerview Langhorne Creek Shiraz** Slightly advanced but still offers decent varietal flavour. ★★★

**2015 Bellarine Estate Two Wives Shiraz** Shows adequate red fruits flavour with spicy overtones. The cool-region acidity kicks in on the finish. ★★★

**2014 McGuigan Personal Reserve Bainton Vineyard Hunter Valley Shiraz** Slightly pruny fruit with a very dry finish. ★★★

**2015 Katnook Founder's Block Coonawarra Shiraz** Comparatively advanced. Chewy tannins. ★★★

What a brilliant group of wines! Eighty-one were tasted and 53 rated at silver medal level or better. Deciding on an order of preference was a nightmare and, to be bluntly honest, it was impossible.

How did we decide on the top wine when so many excelled? In the end it was based on excitement level. Drinkability also came into it, but all the ★★★★★ and ★★★★☆ wines offer at least five years' cellaring potential.

Once again we find that shiraz is the red grape variety that Australia does best.



## 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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