2018 WINEWISE SMALL VIGNERON AWARDS

Gold medal reds

We don't know if you ever consider how difficult it is to make wine judging decisions. If you haven't, just take a look at twelve wines that were considered for the two shiraz trophies. Nine different regions, widely varying styles – from cool climate and elegant to full-bodied and robust – all tasted blind. It's a challenge, but the keys are freshness, intensity, length and balance.

2017 Montalto Estate Mornington Peninsula Pinot Noir Attractively floral nose with a dash of classy French oak. The palate is long, balanced and well structured, with very pleasing fruit weight. ($50.00) ★★★★☆
https://montalto.com.au/product-category/pinot-noir/

2016 Bream Creek Reserve Tasmania Pinot Noir There's plenty of everything here. It's a substantial pinot which is packed with red berry flavour backed up by skin tannin and oak. Although it clearly needs time, it delivers plenty now. (Not yet released $59.00) ★★★★☆
https://www.breamcreekvineyard.com.au/

2017 Sons of Eden Marschall Barossa Valley Shiraz This wine is no shrinking violet! It's Barossa through and through – fresh, ripe dark berry aromas, oak enhancement and layers of flavour. It's classy, but needs time. ($29.00) ★★★★☆
http://www.sonsofeden.com/our-wines/tribute-wines/marschall-sold-out-2017-due-for-release-may-2018-for-pre-release-orders-e-mail-biancasonsofeden-com/

2017 Andrew Thomas Kiss Hunter Valley Shiraz A powerful spicy red and dark fruits style with its share of oak. It has the intensity to carry and integrate the wood. Patience required. (Not yet released $85.00) ★★★★☆ https://www.thomaswines.com.au/

2017 Lerida Estate Canberra District Shiraz Viognier A bright, medium-bodied red which is perfumed and silky. It's a very stylish wine that has a great future. (Not yet released $75.00) ★★★★☆
https://www.leridaestate.com.au/

2017 Montalto Pennon Hill Mornington Peninsula Shiraz We couldn't resist the immediate appeal of this peppery, spicy, complex young shiraz. There also seemed to be some stems character and subtle oak complemented the plush, medium-bodied red berry fruit. Utterly delicious. ($32.00) ★★★★☆
https://montalto.com.au/shop/montalto-pennon-hill-shiraz-2017/

2017 Windance Estate Margaret River Shiraz Deep purple colour. It's an intense dark berry style that needs time to settle down, but everything is there for cellaring. (Not yet available $25.00) ★★★★☆
https://www.windance.com.au/

2016 Mandoon Estate Old Vine Swan Valley Shiraz A very well made young shiraz offering spice and floral aromas that complement the red fruits. A plush, welcoming wine. (Not yet available $29.50)
★★★★☆ https://mandoonestate.com.au/

2016 Paperboy Wine Company The Headliner McLaren Vale Shiraz This is a very fresh, faintly spicy shiraz with no shortage of flavour, yet it's very drinkable, devoid of hard edges. ($25.00) ★★★★☆
https://www.facebook.com/paperboywineco/posts/exciting-news-paperboy-wine-co-has-received-its-first-ever-gold-medal-at-the-201/1911669185809139/

2016 Mount Benson Estate Limestone Coast Syrah There's a lot going on aromatically in this shiraz which reflects its cool origins. Raspberry, black pepper, spices and mint combine in a captivating nose, and the long palate carries a lick of oak. ($30.00) ★★★★☆
http://www.mountbensonestate.com.au/products-category/mount-benson-estate-2016-syrah-30/

2016 Atze's Corner The Bachelor Barossa Valley Shiraz This wine displays everything that is positive about Barossa shiraz. The vibrant nose offers a suggestion of cherries leading to a core of dark berries. Hints of dark chocolate show out, and the high quality oak is very well integrated. (Not yet available $50.00) ★★★★☆ https://atzes.com/

2016 Garners Heritage Wine Shiraz Dark cherry and blackberry aromas are prominent and fresh. Background oak adds complexity, and the fine tannins provide just-right structure. ($30.00) ★★★★☆

2015 Garners Heritage Wine Shiraz A captivating dark fruits style with a very pleasing touch of spiciness. The oak is adeptly handled, and the varietal flavour flows long on a very satisfying well balanced palate. ($30.00) ★★★★☆
http://www.garnerswine.com.au/downloads/order.pdf
Note: Rosie Garner entered only two wines from her vineyard in the foothills of the Strathbogie Ranges (Vic.) for two gold medals.

2015 Brash Vineyard Margaret River Shiraz Very much a medium-bodied red fruits style. However, it certainly doesn't lack intensity or length. A wine that is beautifully balanced and full of life. ($34.95) ★★★★☆
https://www.brashvineyard.com.au/shop/

2017 Artwine The Good Life Clare Valley Cabernet Sauvignon A very bright young cabernet showing lively blackcurrant characteristics. There's a hint of regional mintiness, and the palate delivers wall to wall flavour backed up by balanced tannins and oak. ($30.00) ★★★★☆
https://www.artwine.com.au

2016 Kimbolton The Rifleman Langhorne Creek Cabernet Sauvignon The Langhorne Creek region produces some of Australia's best cabernet sauvignon. Even so, it doesn't receive the media attention of the likes of Margaret River and Coonawarra. Kimbolton has fared with distinction in previous Winewise shows, and narrowly missed a trophy this time. Classic blackcurrant and tobacco characteristics are evident, and are backed up by high-quality oak and the essential fine, firm cabernet tannins. Cellar with confidence. ($55.00) ★★★★★
https://kimboltonwines.com.au/product/the-rifleman-cabernet-sauvignon/

2016 Symphony Hill Granite Belt Reserve Cabernet Sauvignon This is a cabernet that leans to the herbal, "dusty" traditional Médoc style. It certainly shows leafiness, but it isn't green. The tannins are ripe, as is the blackcurrant fruit which flows the length of an impressive, firm, balanced palate. ($95.00) ★★★★☆
https://symphonyhill.com.au/shop/2016-reserve-cabernet-sauvignon/

2016 Mandoon Estate Research Station Reserve Margaret River Cabernet Sauvignon This is an intense, tightly structured cabernet which is deeply coloured, strongly varietal and built to last. The impressive length of flavour and cellaring potential took it to the head of the cabernet sauvignon class. (Not yet released $79.00) ★★★★★
https://shop.mandoonestate.com.au/

2015 Redman Coonawarra Cabernet Sauvignon Here's a cabernet of substance, depth and firmness. There's a hint of regional mintiness and leafiness, but ripeness of fruit drives this wine. Another one to cellar. ($29.00) Cork ★★★★☆
https://www.redman.com.au/

2012 Sacacen Estates Margaret River Reserve Cabernet Sauvignon Although it displays its oak proudly, this wine is maturing very well indeed. It's still fresh, showing cassis and leaf varietal characteristics on a very engaging nose and long palate. ($56.00) ★★★★☆
https://www.saracenestates.com.au/product/2012-reserve-cabernet-sauvignon/

2017 Dogrock Pyrenees Grenache The spiciness and pepperiness of this wine captivated all three judges. One even mentioned garam marsala! However, the clincher was the raspberry-like flavour which was delivered with delicious persistence, and the fine tannins that went with it. ($30.00) ★★★★☆
https://www.wineboss.com.au/Order.aspx?ref=cge&wsrc=cge

2017 Broke Estate Hunter Valley Barbera The red berry and dried herbs, typical of barbera, are most evident. The flavours are very fresh and run the length of an appealing palate which is framed within fine tannins. ($26.00) ★★★★☆
https://www.brokeestate.com.au/product/2017-barbera-6-pack/

2016 Gibson Discovery Road Nero d'Avola A vibrant, beautifully made wine with delightful dark fruits perfume and flavour. The velvet palate has a long tail of sweet fruit. Delicious drinking. ($23.50) ★★★★☆
https://www.gibsonwines.com.au/product/2016-discovery-road-nero-davola/

2016 Artwine Leave Your Hat On Clare Valley Montepulciano A substantial plummy-spicy red in which the mouth-filling flavour is supported by firm, balanced tannins. Montepulciano is attracting considerable attention in Australia and this wine is one of the reasons why. (Not yet released $45.00) ★★★★☆
https://www.artwine.com.au

2016 Symphony Hill Heathcote Reserve Lagrein The nose is fascinating and complex, showing floral and spicy notes including bergamot. The dense, fine-grained palate is long on flavour, and really delivers the goods. A landmark Australian lagrein. ($95.00) ★★★★☆
https://symphonyhill.com.au/

2017 Hahndorf Hill Zsa Zsa Adelaide Hills Zweigelt Nouveau We always enjoy "nouveau" or "joven" red wines that genuinely fit the bill in terms of immediate drinkability. This one certainly does. It appears to have the carbonic maceration character familiar to fans of young beaujolais, but there's much more to it than that. The palate offers plenty of appealing flavour supported by just-right structure for drinking this summer. ($35.00) ★★★★☆
https://www.hahndorfhillwinery.com.au/Buy-Online

2016 Risky Business Margaret River Malbec A wine that is bright in all respects. The juicy dark cherry aroma and flavour has a lot of appeal, and the palate finishes with firm, ripe tannins. Very good value. ($25.00) ★★★★☆
http://www.riskybusinesswines.com.au/wp-content/uploads/2018/04/risky-business-order-form-for-web-site-2018.pdf

2017 Mayford Tempranillo This Porepunkah (Alpine Valleys, Vic.) wine completely dominated the tempranillo class. It impressed from the bright colour right through to the long finish. The aromas covered the entire berry range – blue, red and black – and the rich fruit fills the delightfully savoury palate. The chairman declared that this was probably the top red wine of the 2018 Winewise Small Vigneron Awards. (Not yet released $38.00) Release is imminent, and demand is strong, so put your name on the waiting list. ★★★★★
https://mayfordwines.com/

2017 Naked Run Hill 5 Clare Valley Shiraz Cabernet A vibrant red berry style with a touch of elegance. The fruit carries hints of florals, spices and mint, and the tannins are fine on a long palate. ($24.00) ★★★★☆
https://www.nakedrunwines.com.au/products/hill-5-shiraz-cabernet

2016 Mandoon Estate Margaret River Cabernet Merlot The Mandoon Cabernet Merlot has won this trophy five times in the past six years. Enough said. Once again the wine is driven by vibrant blackcurrant fruit and the tannins are particularly fine. A great example of the Australian "Bordeaux" blend. ($29.50) ★★★★☆
https://shop.mandoonestate.com.au/reds/

2017 Windance Estate Margaret River Cabernet Merlot Here's another consistently excellent Margaret River blend. The intense plum-cassis aromas and flavours carry a hint of mint and the finish is firm but balanced, needing some time to soften. (Not yet available $24.00) **Note:** Last year's trophy-winning 2016 is still available. ★★★★☆
https://www.windance.com.au/

2015 Arlewood Margaret River Cabernet Merlot Margaret River dominated the cabernet blends. Although the oak is at the limit for our liking, the fruit is very impressive, carrying the load well. It's a matter of style, and this is a very good example of its genre. ($25.00) ★★★★☆
https://arlewood-estate.myshopify.com/products/arlewood-2012-cabernet-merlot

2017 Z Wine Roman Barossa Valley GSM This is a lively, aromatic blend with a generous, soft mid-palate. There are hints of cranberry and Ribena which add to the attraction of this very drinkable red. (Not yet released $40.00) ★★★★☆
https://zwine.com.au/

2017 Dogrock Pyrenees El Rojo This debut red blend from Dogrock made it three gold medals for the producer from this year's SVA. It's spicy, peppery and plush, with hints of licorice and great drive of red fruits flavour. (To be released October, 2019) ★★★★☆
http://dogrock.com.au/

2018 Grancari Preservative Free McLaren Vale Grenache Shiraz Very much a vibrant drink-now style, but it's no lightweight. Voluminous blackberry fruit fills the palate, and is backed up by savoury tannins. Ideal for outdoor dining events this summer. ($15.00) ★★★★☆
https://grancariwines.com.au/product/2015-nap-grenache-shiraz/

2017 Grampians Estate GST This is a fragrant, spicy, peppery style with excellent weight and length. Savoury tannins provide a fine, textural component. (Not yet released $28.00) ★★★★☆
https://grampiansestate.com.au/

If you can't find something that appeals among the three dozen gold medal reds, you're difficult to please. We apply high judging standards and stand by all of these wines. Some are due for release over the next few months, so stake a claim with the winemakers concerned.

September-November Features

Here's some of what to expect over the next few months
The Penfolds collection including 2014 Grange
Tyrrell's Vat 1 Semillon – the 15 screwcap years
2017 Yarra Valley Pinot Noir
Our annual champagne report
36 vintages of Brown Brothers Shiraz Mondeuse Cabernet
Castagna Sangiovese & Un Segreto – a total of 20 vintages

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