Penfolds

The global spread of the Penfolds label continues. Over the past couple of years, a small amount of spectacular champagne and then some Californian reds were released. California is again represented in this tasting, and now we have some Bordeaux offerings along with the Australian wines that we know so well.

2021 Penfolds Bin 311 Chardonnay Very much white peach/white flowers with attractive toasty oak. Textural, with lingering acidity, perhaps a little too much, but the fruit length is impressive. ($50.00)
★★★★
Adelaide Hills, Tasmania. Nine months in French barriques – 38% new, 28% one year old.

2021 Penfolds Reserve Bin A Adelaide Hills Chardonnay Intense white peach with a layer of French oak and low key funk. Excellent fruit weight and texture with beautifully integrated oak. ($125.00) ★★★★★
Fruit hand-picked into small bins and then whole bunch pressed. A portion of the juice is incrementally filled to barrel from the press and allowed to ferment naturally. Nine months in French barriques – 50% new, 22% one year old.

2020 Penfolds Yattarna Chardonnay Prominent oak slightly over intense white peach on nose. The palate is better, in that the intense fruit carries the oak and acidity very well. Cellar. ($175.00) ★★★★☆
Tasmania, Adelaide Hills. Nine months in French barriques – 86% new, 14% one year old.

2019 Penfolds FWT 585 Cabernet Sauvignon, Merlot & Petit Verdot Pronounced cassis with a surprising hint of mint. The palate is opulent and fine – French ingredients with an Australian chef. Firmness lingers on the finish, requiring at least 5-6 years to soften. ($120.00)
★★★★
100% Haut Médoc. 53% cabernet sauvignon, 34% merlot, 13% petit verdot. 14 months in French (44% new) and American (14% new) barriques.

2019 Penfolds II Cabernet Shiraz Merlot Rich blackberry shiraz and quality oak drive the nose. Powerful fruit floods the palate, and there's a faint mintiness. The tannins are on the furry side and need plenty of time to become less prominent. ($500.00) ★★★☆
Bordeaux and Barossa Valley. 59% cabernet sauvignon, 29% shiraz, 12% merlot. 18 months in French (70% new) and American (30% new) barriques and hogsheads.

2019 Penfolds Bin 600 Cabernet Shiraz Powerful fragrant dark berry nose. Beautifully integrated spicy oak. Wall to wall opulence with persistent fine tannins. ($90.00) ★★★★☆
Napa Valley, Sonoma, Paso Robles. 17 months in American oak - 40% new

2019 Penfolds Bin 704 Cabernet Sauvignon The nose gives us dark berries with prominent oak. This is a wine with plenty of fruit weight and slightly furry tannins that pucker. A substantial, solid red that needs plenty of time. ($120.00) ★★★★
100% Napa Valley. 12 months in French oak - 40% new

2019 Penfolds Bin 149 Cabernet Sauvignon Vibrant cassis with classy perfumed oak. Very stylish and fine, with a very long finish and perfectly balanced tannins. ($225.00) ★★★★☆
Napa Valley, South Australia. 17 months in French (80% new) and American (20% new) oak.

2021 Penfolds Bin 23 Pinot Noir Bright, light and minty. Adequate weight. Soft tannins. ($50.00) ★★★
Tasmania. Eight months in French barriques – 40% new.

2020 Penfolds Bin 138 Barossa Shiraz Grenache Mataro Rich, ripe dark fruits/plum with a whiff of vanilla oak. Opulent, and driven by the shiraz component. ($60.00) ★★★★
65% shiraz, 29% grenache, 6% mataro. 12 months in French hogsheads – 12.5% new.

2020 Penfolds Bin 128 Coonawarra Shiraz A rich but regional nose – red fruits with a hint of Coonawarra minty. Firm, fine tannins support a long, medium-bodied palate. ($60.00) ★★★★
12 months in French hogsheads – 20% new.

2020 Penfolds Bin 28 Shiraz Delightful blackberry/plum nose. Plush palate with comforting tannins. It's full of life and is enjoyable to drink now, but will cellar. ($50.00) ★★★★☆
McLaren Vale, Barossa Valley, Padthaway, Clare. 12 months in American hogsheads – 16% new.

2020 Penfolds Bin 150 Marananga Shiraz This wine often leans to ripeness over vibrancy, but the 2020 vintage accentuates freshness. Rich dark fruits lead out with a lick of toasty oak. A firmly structured and robust shiraz. ($100.00) ★★★★
12 months in American (24% new) and French (23% new) hogsheads and puncheons.

2020 Penfolds Bin 407 Cabernet Sauvignon Fairly light, minty nose. Straightforward. Firm for its weight. ($120.00) ★★★
McLaren Vale, Barossa Valley, Coonawarra, Padthaway, Wrattonbully. 15 months in French (24% new) and American (12% new) hogsheads.

2020 Penfolds Bin 389 Cabernet Shiraz Attractive cabernet-driven nose with pleasing oak overtones. The surprisingly approachable palate features fine persistent tannins. ($100.00) ★★★★
51% Cabernet sauvignon, 49% shiraz. McLaren Vale, Barossa Valley, Padthaway. 12 months in American hogsheads – 33% new.

2018 Penfolds St Henri Shiraz Striking purple colour. Vibrant blackberry aroma. Opulent, long and fine. Classic Australian shiraz with striking purity of varietal expression. ($135.00) ★★★★★
McLaren Vale, Barossa Valley, Padthaway, Wrattonbully, The Peninsulas. 12 months in large seasoned oak vats.

2020 Penfolds Magill Estate Shiraz Knockout perfumed dark berry with perfectly managed oak. Intense and long, with a tannic spine. Reclaiming its position as one of Australia's best single vineyard shiraz wines. ($150.00) ★★★★★
15 months in French oak (30% new, 40% one year old) and American hogsheads (30% one year old)

2019 Penfolds Bin 169 Coonawarra Cabernet Sauvignon Very powerful ripe cassis aroma with an oak overlay and a touch of mint. The plush fruit sits comfortably within a firm varietal structure. ($300.00)
★★★★
17 months in French oak hogsheads (56% new, 44% one year old)

2020 Penfolds RWT Bin 798 Barossa Valley Shiraz Decidedly ripe nose. Is it as bright as usual? Very much blackberry. Obvious oak. Plenty of grip. ($200.00) ★★★★
16 months in French hogsheads (49% new, 51% one year old)

2018 Penfolds Grange A substantial red with strong ripe fruit characteristics – almost to the point of dullness. Plenty of "sweet" oak. Firm, with background volatility. Big but not beautiful this time.
($1,000.00) ★★★★
McLaren Vale, Barossa Valley, Clare. 18 months in new American oak hogsheads.

Another fascinating Penfolds tasting where the average quality was high. My three five-star wines may surprise some, but to my palate they were the stars of the tasting.

Lester Jesberg

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